

**CDR** Contextual Data Resource  
for Aging Surveys

Documentation for

# Particulate Matter 2.5 FAQSD Files

Version 3.0, released February 2024

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## Requested Acknowledgment

If you used the Contextual Data Resource data in a written analysis, please include the following acknowledgement:

This analysis uses data or information from the Contextual Data Resource (CDR): United States Environmental Protection Agency Particulate Matter 2.5 FAQSD Files by Census Tract, 2002-2020, Version 3.0 as of February 2024, developed by Jennifer Ailshire, Jong Woo Nam, and Eun Young Choi at the USC/UCLA Center on Biodemography and Population Health. The development of the CDR was funded by the National Institute on Aging (R21 AG045625, P30 AG017625).

## Suggested Citation

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## Data Sources

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). RSIG and FAQSD Files, <https://www.epa.gov/hesc/rsig-related-downloadable-data-files>

## Version Note

Version 3.0 updates the data with the most recent 2020 measures. Variables names are consistent with earlier versions.

## Linking CDR Data with Survey Respondent Data

The Contextual Data Resource is designed to be linked with geocoded survey data. All geographic identifiers are in string format, and match US Census Bureau geographic identifiers and boundaries.

- To link census tract level data, merge using the 11-digit LINKCEN2010 geographic identifier, which is [the 2-digit state + 3-digit county + 6-digit census tract FIPS code](#). The LINKCEN2010 geographic identifier has been harmonized to the 2010 census tract boundaries.

## Dataset Overview

Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) measures pollutants in the air which are smaller than 2.5 micrometers. The US Environmental Protection Agency Fused Air Quality Surface Using Downscaling (FAQSD) Files provide estimates for local average concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) across the United States using monitoring station data and Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) output. Data are available at census tract level and include annual, quarterly, and monthly averages for 2002 through 2020.

## Data Summary

Dataset Name: Fused Air Quality Surface Using Downscaling (FAQSD) Files

Data Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Data Source URL: <https://www.epa.gov/hesc/rsig-related-downloadable-data-files>

Data Collection Method: Primary data collected by the EPA.

Years Collected: Annual, quarterly, and monthly averages available for 2002 through 2020.

Geographic Level: Census tract; CDR uses the daily predictions available at the 2010 census tract boundaries to be comparable across the years.

Geographic Coverage: FAQSD Files cover the contiguous U.S.

## Technical Information about Fused Air Quality Surface Using Downscaling

The downscaling fusion model uses both air quality monitoring data from the National Air Monitoring Stations/State and Local Air Monitoring Stations (NAMS/SLAMS) and numerical output from the Models-3/Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ).

The FAQSD model is a Bayesian space-time downscaler model which integrates census-tract level 24-h average monitoring data from the National Air Monitoring Stations and State and Local Air Monitoring Stations (NAMS/SLAMS) with 12 km gridded output from the Models-3/Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) model. The CMAQ model uses emissions data from the EPA's National Emissions Inventory and includes model emissions, daily continuous emissions monitoring data for significant point sources, and meteorological data

There are areas with few or no air monitoring sites. In these areas, it may be difficult to adjust gridded CMAQ output to provide accurate predictions of air quality. For such areas, the bias-adjustments have been made based on the available monitoring data which may be located in areas with different emissions and geography.

For further information on the fused air quality surface using downscaling files, please see following published journal papers:

Berrocal, V. J., Gelfand, A. E., & Holland, D. M. (2010). A bivariate space-time downscaler under space and time misalignment. *The annals of applied statistics*, 4(4), 1942.

Berrocal, V. J., Gelfand, A. E., & Holland, D. M. (2010). A spatio-temporal downscaler for output from numerical models. *Journal of agricultural, biological, and environmental statistics*, 15(2), 176-197.

Berrocal, V. J., Gelfand, A. E., & Holland, D. M. (2012). Space-Time Data fusion Under Error in Computer Model Output: An Application to Modeling Air Quality. *Biometrics*, 68(3), 837-848.

Bodnaruk, E. W., Kroll, C. N., Yang, Y., Hirabayashi, S., Nowak, D. J., & Endreny, T. A. (2017). Where to plant urban trees? A spatially explicit methodology to explore ecosystem service tradeoffs. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 157, 457-467.

US EPA. (2012a). Technical Information about Fused Air Quality Surface Using Downscaling Tool: Metadata Description. Available online: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-07/documents/data\\_fusion\\_meta\\_file\\_july\\_2016.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-07/documents/data_fusion_meta_file_july_2016.pdf)

## Variable List

Name	Definition	Geography	Years
<b><u>Geographic Identifiers</u></b>			
LINKCEN2010	2010 Census Tract FIPS code (11 digits: 1-2 state, 3-5 county, 6-11 tract)		
<b><u>PM2.5 Annual Average Estimates</u></b>			
p205tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> Annual	Tract	2002-2020
<b><u>PM2.5 Quarterly Average Estimates</u></b>			
p206tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Q1: Jan-Mar)	Tract	2002-2020
p207tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Q2: Apr-Jun)	Tract	2002-2020
p208tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Q3: Jul-Sep)	Tract	2002-2020
p209tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Q4: Oct-Dec)	Tract	2002-2020
<b><u>PM2.5 Monthly Average Estimates</u></b>			
p210tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Jan)	Tract	2002-2020
p211tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Feb)	Tract	2002-2020
p212tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Mar)	Tract	2002-2020
p213tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Apr)	Tract	2002-2020
p214tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (May)	Tract	2002-2020
p215tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Jun)	Tract	2002-2020
p216tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Jul)	Tract	2002-2020
p217tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Aug)	Tract	2002-2020
p218tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Sep)	Tract	2002-2020
p219tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Oct)	Tract	2002-2020
p220tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Nov)	Tract	2002-2020
p221tr	Mean PM <sub>2.5</sub> (Dec)	Tract	2002-2020