

# **Random Moment Sample (RMS) Manual**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The federal government requires some form of cost allocation for employees who provide services in more than one federal program area. RMS is the cost allocation process used by the state of Ohio as an alternative to other more cumbersome and time-consuming measurement devices. The process is required by each county department of job and family services (CDJFS), child support enforcement agency (CSEA), public children service agency (PCSA), and combined workforce investment agency (WIA), called “populations”, to accurately determine the administrative costs association with the operation of any one of several state and federally assisted programs. RMS statistically validates the method for determining the percentage of effort expended by a given population on behalf of any variety of specific programs and activities.

This manual is designed to assist users in the administration of the random moment sample (RMS). The RMS is required to be used by each county department of job and family services (CDJFS), child support enforcement agency (CSEA), public children service agency (PCSA), and combined workforce investment act (WIA) area to accurately determine the administrative costs associated with the operation of state and federally assisted programs that are supervised by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). Stand alone WIA areas have the option of allocating their costs by other federally approved methodology.

Workers in the 88 Ohio counties participating in the RMS are randomly selected to complete a simple observation form on a random date and time. RMS responses are compiled and tabulated using the methodology described in this manual. The results are used to determine, in part, the costs of administering state and federally assisted programs.

This manual presents a historical overview of the RMS, describe the basic cost allocation methodology for the RMS, and provide an overview of the RMS process. County agencies are required to use the RMS for identifying, allocating, and charging costs within the Income Maintenance, Social Services, Child Support, and Workforce cost pools. ODJFS will update the manual as the need arises.

## **HISTORY**

The state of Ohio has used a number of time study methods prior to the current RMS process. Every time study method has advantages and disadvantages. Most time studies utilize staff that has direct client contact or perform direct program activities. The amount of time employees spend on individual program activities is used to divide the costs in their respective cost pool. That cost pool may include the supervisor’s salary along with materials and equipment used to support the staff in that cost pool.

Until the RMS was adopted, Ohio used a full time reporting system. For the first two weeks of each quarter, employees recorded their program activities. These study results were used to distribute costs for the entire quarter. Employees had to report their activities either every half hour or every fifteen minutes, depending on whether they were in the Income Maintenance or Social Services cost pool.

Some of the disadvantages of this system included difficulty in accounting for the work of vacationing employees and the activity reporting frequency which consumed valuable work time. In addition, when employees were involved in an activity such as a food assistance desk review during the first two weeks, it would result in proportionately more charges to the food assistance program for the entire quarter, which may not accurately reflect actual activity throughout quarter.

To resolve this, Ohio implemented a Random Moment Sample time study. The goal was to determine the activities of employees at random moments during a given sampling period. This method would more accurately determine the percent of total time employees were spending on various activities. After some negotiation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agreed to the system. The RMS system uses enough samples to develop statistically valid numbers to distribute costs. Initially, 354 random moments were considered the minimum needed to develop the percentages used to allocate costs. In very small counties, this can result in each employee getting a relatively large number of moments, or hits, during the quarter.

Originally the federal government wanted the RMS statistics to be gathered for the same time period as the expenditures. Because of reporting deadlines, Ohio requested that the study be offset by one month so reports could be submitted on time. For example, costs for April through June are split by RMS statistics gathered from March through May. This allows time for the state to allocate costs and to complete federal reports timely.

The random moment time study for Income Maintenance activities was implemented in July 1987, on a trial basis, with full implementation taking place during the October-December quarter. The Child Support RMS was implemented a year later. The Social Service RMS was not implemented until July, 1992. Subsequently, separate RMS was added for stand alone Children Services and Workforce Development agencies.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Random Moment Sampling (RMS) is a statistically valid method for determining the percent of effort expended by a given population on behalf of any variety of specific programs and activities. The computerized RMS system used in Ohio is an alternative to more cumbersome and time-consuming measurement devices, such as daily time sheets and activity logs. The system depends on accurate, timely and objective observations by workers. Successful outcome of the RMS system in each county agency rests on the understanding and diligence of the agency's RMS Coordinator.

The RMS procedure involves a calculated number of randomly selected observations to be made for each population. An observation is comprised of two basic elements: the specific program being serviced by the sampled worker and the specific activity being performed at that moment by the sampled worker. A truly random survey of worker observations provides a highly accurate picture of what all workers in a given population are likely to be doing, within an acceptable degree of error.

In Ohio, the RMS method is applied to the population of employees in a Income Maintenance, Social Services, Child Support or Workforce Investment Act unit. Because each county has different work methods, routines, and policies, each agency is constituted as a separate population. Thus, each agency is required to execute "a predetermined number of observations" for employees randomly selected on various days and at different times of the day. The RMS system selects the employee, date, and time for the observation to be performed in each agency.

Stand alone Public Children Services Agencies use an abbreviated version of the Social Services RMS form showing only those codes used by Children Service workers. Stand alone Workforce Investment Act agencies use an abbreviated version of the Income Maintenance RMS form showing only those codes that apply to the Workforce Investment Act.

The RMS system enables each local agency to enter completed observation forms into the system and to tabulate, validate, and analyze the data. The system also allows an agency to produce printed copies of the results at any time during the reporting period. This useful feature can assist an agency in estimating the costs likely to be charged to various funding sources during that period.

Rules 5101:9-7-20 (Income maintenance, workforce, social services, and child welfare random moment sample time studies) and 5101:9-7-23 (Child support random moment sample time study) of the Ohio Administrative Code establish the RMS requirements.

### **COST ALLOCATION METHODOLOGY FOR RANDOM MOMENT SAMPLING**

In each county agency or workforce area, employee salaries and all forms of compensation, including travel costs, are allocated to cost pools. All stand alone county job and family services agencies have a minimum of three cost pools: shared, income maintenance and social services. In addition, some combined family services agencies may also have a Child Support cost pool. In the case of a combined family service agency that includes PCSA, the Child Welfare workers will be in the Social Service cost pool. Stand alone CSEA, PCSA, and WIA agencies/areas have only a single cost pool.

Random moment sampling is a method for charging costs when a worker provides direct services for more than one program. RMS allows ODJFS to determine how much time workers in a cost pool spend on various programs.

The following are examples of primary activities included in the RMS:

- Income Maintenance (IM) cost pool: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Case Management, Healthchek, Disability Financial Assistance (DA), Food Assistance, Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAET), and TANF-related Child Welfare and Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
- Social Service (SS) cost pool: Case Management, Abuse and Neglect Investigations, Day Care Operating, Title IV-E, Title XX, Title XX TANF Transfer, TANF Related Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services (APS), non-allocated Child Welfare, Kinship Navigator, Medicaid, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
- Child Support (CS) cost pool: Title IV-D and non Title IV-D activities such as parent location, paternity establishment, establishment of support orders, support enforcement, medical support, collection and disbursement of payment, distribution, and TANF.

Since the advent of welfare reform, workers within a combined CDJFS may provide a greater variety of program activities. Programs traditionally considered “exclusively” income maintenance or social services now appear on both observation forms.

### **SHARED COST DISTRIBUTION**

Shared costs are indirect costs which are incurred for a common purpose that benefit more than one major function and are not readily assignable to any specific cost center. Shared costs benefit two or more of the following major program areas: Income Maintenance, Social Services, and Child Support. Workers

whose activities meet the definition must be classified and reported as “shared.” Some examples are agency director, personnel, management information systems, and fiscal officers.

The shared cost pool includes salaries, related compensation and operational costs inclusive of rent, leases, utilities, supplies, etc., for all employees assigned to indirect local agency functions and may include administrative contracts related to more than one major program areas. Shared costs are identified in both combined and stand alone CDJFS.

Shared costs are allocated by a two-phase process. In the first phase, shared costs identified are allocated to IM, SS, and CS cost pools based on the average number of full time equivalent (FTE) positions reported for these categories for the pay periods that occur in the previous quarter. The automated Quarterly Report of CDJFS Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Positions report (JFS 04290) shows the number of staff for each category and calculates a quarterly percentage for each category. The Quarterly Report of CDJFS Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Positions report (JFS 04290) is submitted to ODJFS by counties in two formats: a hard paper copy and a Quarterly Information Consolidation Plus (QuIC+) upload. Percentages are calculated for each category of IM, SS, and CS by dividing the total average number of full time positions into the average number of full time positions reported for IM, SS, and CS.

In the second phase, shared costs are further distributed to various programs based on the results of the IM, SS, and CS quarterly time studies as follows:

- The IM portion of shared costs identified through phase one is added to the IM combined costs to create an IM administrative cost pool. These costs are distributed to TANF, Medicaid, Food Assistance, DA, FAET, WIA, Health Chek, SSI Case Management, and other IM-related programs based on percentages derived from the quarterly IMRMS results.
- The SS portion of shared costs identified in phase one is added to the SS combined costs to create a SS administrative cost pool. These costs are then distributed to SSI case management, TANF, workforce RMS (WFRMS), Title XX, Health Chek, Child Welfare related Medicaid, Title IV-E, non-allocated Child Welfare activities, and other social services related programs based on percentages derived from the quarterly social services social services RMS (SSRMS) results.
- The CS portion of shared costs identified in phase one is added to the CS IV-D and non Title IV-D costs to create a CS administrative cost pool. Costs are distributed between IV-D and non Title IV-D activities based on percentages derived from the quarterly results of the CSRMS.

## **RANDOM MOMENT SAMPLE (RMS) PROCESS**

### ***Purpose***

The RMS process is based on a calculated number of random observations for each population. The Random Moment Sample Observation form data is used to distribute combined administrative costs for Income Maintenance, Social Services, Child Support and Workforce Development. The data gathered on a county agency’s observation form determines the percent of effort expended by the population of a cost pool on behalf of any variety of specific programs and activities. These percentages are used to distribute the program administration expenditures reported on the automated monthly financial statements.

### ***Time Study Coordinators***

The county must assign a RMS time study coordinator and alternate coordinator(s) to administer the time studies. At least one alternate must be selected to complete the RMS process in the coordinator's absence. Each county determines the number of alternates needed based on the location of the sample population, the sample size, available staff time, and/or other pertinent factors. For purposes of this manual, the rules applicable to the “coordinator” are also applicable to the “alternate coordinator.” The responsibilities of the coordinator include:

1. Act as the liaison for communications with the ODJFS RMS time study administrator.
2. Provide quarterly updates to ODJFS regarding new appointments, terminations, transfers, staff assignments, staff work hours, staff lunch time, or other information likely to affect RMS operations.
3. Receive, distribute, monitor, collect, and return RMS forms. If alternate coordinators have been appointed, the coordinator will work with the alternates to track the RMS forms. This specifically refers to the distribution and collection of forms, the monitoring of returned forms for completeness, and the submission of the final RMS data to ODJFS.
4. Personally interview four percent of the selected individuals at the moment of observation to assure sampling accuracy, form completion, and quality control. See the Sample Control Group section for more detailed information.
5. Complete observation forms with appropriate leave codes when a position is idle due to an absence when an observation moment occurs. (worker’s supervisor may also complete this task)

### ***Staff Included in the Time Study***

Workers included in the time study are those performing direct program functions, with the following general exceptions: administrative, supervisory or administrative support.

If a staff member assigned to a supervisory position also provides direct services over fifty percent of the time, a county agency or stand alone workforce investment area may choose to add that person to the RMS roster. Documentation must be retained by the agency to support the inclusion of the position in the time study, must be signed by the agency head, and a position description that attest to the directly related program activities performed by the position. If the position description includes the information required in this paragraph and is signed by the agency head, the agency is not required to retain separate documentation.

If a staff member assigned to an administrative support position also performs direct services, a county agency or stand alone workforce investment area may choose to add that person to the RMS roster. Documentation must be retained by the agency to support the inclusion of the position in the time study, must be signed by the agency head, and a position description that attest to the directly related program activities performed by the position. If the position description includes the information required in this paragraph and is signed by the agency head, the agency is not required to retain separate documentation.

Workers engaged in directly related program functions participate in the RMS time studies, but cannot participate in more than one type of study (i.e., child support, income maintenance, social service, child welfare, or workforce).

### ***Grouping Positions***

Each agency will set up and submit the staff work hours to ODJFS, based upon the actual hours the agency is open unless entering separate employee groups. If the agency has employees working flex

time, the agency has the option of setting up separate employee groups. If an agency exercises this option, the separate employee groups are based on the actual hours each employee group is scheduled to work. RMS coordinators may opt to group positions that share the same building, work location or working hours in order to produce observation forms in distinct sets. This may be useful when an agency has multiple sub-groups, based on floor, section or similar flex schedules.

### ***Quarterly County Information Update***

When certain types of changes occur, the county or area agency must send updated roster information to ODJFS before the start of the next reporting period. The following changes would necessitate a new roster upload.

1. New employee and/or changes in positions;
2. New work location;
3. Terminated employee;
4. Closed work location;
5. Changes in employee data (job title, phone number, name change, reassignment, etc.); or
6. Location changes (employee work hours or days)

Changes to the roster must be sent to BCFTA by the last day of the second month of a reporting period. E-mail roster changes to the GroupWise address BCFTA-RMS-NONQUIC\_UPLOADS.

### ***Sample Selection***

ODJFS, through the RMS system selects the quarterly sample from the employee roster provided by the county as detailed in rules 5101:9-7-20 and 5101:9-7-23 of the Ohio Administrative Code. The selected sample information is sent by ODJFS via e-mail to the county agency for import into the local agency RMS system. The county agency or workforce investment area uploads the sample into the local RMS software and prints the observation forms. The import will contain the designated random moments and the current database listing of all participating workers in the RMS group. Once a sample has been selected, no changes are made to the sample data during the reporting period. Any changes or additions to the roster or staff work hours cannot be changed until the next sample is selected.

### ***Sample Size Per Quarter***

<b>RMS Type</b>	<b>Agency Size or Type</b>	<b>Number of Observations</b>
IM	Metro	2,300 Total
IM	Suburban/Rural	354 Total
WF	WIA Area	354 Total
CS	CSEA	Minimum of 354
SS, CW	1 – 10 Participating Positions	Minimum of 33 Per Worker
SS, CW	11 – 74 Participating Positions	Minimum of 354
SS, CW	75 or more Participating Positions	Minimum of 2,400

### ***Observation Moment***

The observation form is distributed by the (alternate) RMS coordinator to selected workers as close to the observation moment as possible, preferably the same day, but no more than twenty-four hours in advance. The worker completes the form within twenty-four hours based on what he or she is doing at that designated time. Either the RMS coordinator or the (former) worker's supervisor completes the form when, at the observation moment, the position is idle or vacant.

The completed form shall be returned to the RMS coordinator or alternate coordinator within two business days. Forms not completed and returned within two business days are to be considered invalid.

### ***Absences and Vacancies***

For RMS purposes, a position is idle due to an ***absence*** when the worker assigned to the position is on paid or unpaid leave but intends to return to work in the future.

A position is idle due to ***vacancy*** when the worker who was assigned to the position has left it and does not intend to return. This includes situations in which a worker is promoted, demoted, or transferred to another position or separates from the county agency or stand alone workforce investment area.

If a position is idle at the time of an observation due to absence, vacancy, lunch, break, or personal business, the RMS coordinator or the worker's supervisor will mark the form with the appropriate codes:

- Section I - Case Information: 001 (not working on a case);
- Section II – Programs: 999 (position idle or invalid response); and
- Section III - Activity Codes: 999 (position idle or invalid response).

The following charts illustrate the procedures for handling absences and vacancies of time study participants.

ABSENCES (sick, vacation, disability, lunch, etc.)	
Duration of Absence and Assignment of Work	Actions to be Taken by RMS Coordinator
Position idle due to a short-termed absence.	The RMS coordinator or worker's supervisor will mark the observation form with the appropriate codes for "position idle or invalid response."
Absence will last through the majority of the next RMS reporting period.	The RMS coordinator will remove the position from the RMS roster at the earliest opportunity. Once the absent worker has returned to the position, the RMS coordinator will add the position back on the RMS roster.
Position's duties are assigned to another worker or supervisor not currently in the time study.	The RMS coordinator will make note of the reassignment on the form and initial the form and that worker will complete the RMS observation generated for the vacant position. If an absence is expected to last through the majority of the next RMS observation period, the RMS coordinator will revise the name associated with the position on the RMS roster at the earliest opportunity. Once the absent worker has returned to the position, the RMS coordinator will update name on the RMS roster.
Position's duties are assigned to a worker currently in the time study and the worker is also fulfilling their originally assigned duties.	The RMS coordinator or worker's supervisor will mark the observation forms for the absent worker's position with the appropriate codes for "position idle or invalid response." Under no circumstances may a worker complete observation forms for more than one position.

Duration of Absence and Assignment of Work	Actions to be Taken by RMS Coordinator
<p>Position's duties are assigned to a worker currently in the time study and the worker's originally assigned duties have been reassigned to another worker.</p>	<p>The RMS coordinator will make note of the reassignments on the RMS observation forms for both positions and initial the forms, and each worker will complete the RMS observation forms generated for their reassigned position. If the absence and reassignments are expected to last through the majority of the next RMS observation period, the RMS coordinator will revise the names associated with the positions on the RMS roster at the earliest opportunity. Once the absent workers have returned to their original positions, the RMS coordinator will update the names associated with the positions on the RMS roster. Under no circumstances may a worker complete observation forms for more than one position.</p>

VACANCIES	
Duration of Vacancy and Assignment of Work	Actions to be Taken by RMS Coordinator
<p>Position becomes vacant during the period and the position is not reassigned to a worker who is not currently in the time study.</p>	<p>The RMS coordinator will code forms generated for that position as an invalid response.</p>
<p>Worker not currently in a time study assumes the responsibilities of a vacant position that is on the RMS roster.</p>	<p>The RMS coordinator will make note of the reassignment on the observation form and that worker will complete the RMS observation generated for the vacant position.</p>
<p>Worker currently in a time study leaves one position to assume the responsibilities of a vacant position on the current RMS roster.</p>	<p>That worker will discontinue completing the RMS observations generated for his or her former position and will begin to complete the observations assigned to his or her new position. Under no circumstances may a worker complete observation forms for more than one position.</p>
<p>Vacancy is expected to remain unfilled through the majority of the next RMS observation period.</p>	<p>The RMS coordinator will remove the position from the RMS roster at the earliest opportunity. Once the vacancy has been filled, the RMS coordinator will add the position back on the RMS roster.</p>

### ***Sample Control Group***

To ensure sampling accuracy and quality control, four percent of all RMS samples are selected as a control group. The selected forms will be printed with the words “Control Member”, which appears to the right of the time and date of the observation moment. The right side of the form contains a space for the observer to write his or her name; the RMS coordinator or alternate serves as the observer.

For the control samples, the observer asks the individual assigned to the position which program or activity he or she is working on at the specified moment and for the case number or unique identifier associated with that work and completes the form. The observer and the individual initial the observation form.

### ***Form Completion***

The RMS observation form has three sections:

- Section I - Case Information;
- Section II – Programs; and
- Section III - Activity Codes.

The worker or coordinator completes the observation form by indicating whether the worker is working on a case, selecting the program category, and type of activity being performed at the time designated. ***Only one program and one activity may be selected.*** When there is a question regarding the proper completion of the form, the worker should discuss the question with the RMS coordinator.

**Section I:** The top part of the form indicates whether the worker was engaged in a case activity. When the worker is not doing case related work, but is ~~instead~~ on break, at lunch or attending training, for example, the worker checks the box marked 001; i.e., “Not Working On a Case.” When 001 is marked, at a minimum, the worker will write a description of the activity being performed in the comment section of the form. Alternately, the observation may be substantiated by documentation attached to the form.

When the worker is interviewing a participant or working on a case, he or she should mark 002 and write in a unique case identifier, such as a case number, locally assigned number, or name. Case identifiers must be provided to form an audit trail.

**Section II:** The worker must choose the program he or she is working on at the particular moment. When not working on a case or a program specific activity, the worker can select codes for general administrative activities that redistribute to programs.

**Section III:** The worker chooses the activity related to the work that is being performed at the particular moment. When the worker’s work is neither associated with a case nor a direct program, an appropriate redistributable activity code should be selected.

**Initials:** Each form must also be initialed by the worker on the line marked “Form Completed By.”

**Documentation:** Documentation will demonstrate that the selected program and activity codes match the work being performed by the assigned position at the time of the observation. The documentation requirement does not apply when the observation form indicates:

- the worker was involved in a non-reimbursable activity; non-reimbursable activities would include, activities that are not being reimbursed or are being reimbursed through a mechanism other than an agency's specific program allocation, such as a special project allocation, contract or memorandum of understanding with another family services agency or workforce development agency;
- Worker was not scheduled to work; or
- The position is idle or there is an invalid response. This would include when a position is idle due to vacancy, absence, meal or other break, personal business, or an incorrect label on the observation form.

For those activities coded 002 (Case Number), examples of acceptable documentation include:

- A screen print from Client Registry Information System Enhanced (CRIS-E), Family and Children Services Information System (FAC SIS), Support Enforcement Tracking System (SETS), CRIS-E/SETS automated interface, or Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) that shows the case identifier and what activity was taking place at the time of the moment;
- An appointment book or calendar showing when the participant corresponding to the case identifier was interviewed;
- A telephone log that documents when a call was placed, to whom, and its purpose;
- A time log showing where workers were when the moment occurred for those providing transportation or home care services;
- Excerpts from case note supporting the worker's work on the case and showing the date and time of the observation.

Documentation needs to link the worker with the case identifier and support the selection of both codes to the date and time of the observation. In other words, the agency must be prepared to document the program and activity the worker was performing when the moment occurred.

**Corrections:** Only the individual completing the observation form may revise and initial changes to the form.

- Incorrect information on the form must be crossed through and initialed by the worker who originally completed the form.
- Do not use "white out" on the form.

If the employee who originally completed the form has separated from the agency or is on an extended absence, the former employee's supervisor or the RMS coordinator may complete and initial the change and will document the reason for the substitution.

**Data Submission Dates**

Once the observation forms are received from the employees, the agency transfers the data information to the county's QuIC+ system. The information is also forwarded to ODJFS. The sample sizes allow for a 95% confidence level plus a sample error of +/- 2.00 percent for those responses with an occurrence rate of 5.00 or more percent and a +/- 5.00 percent for those responses with an occurrence rate of less than 5.00 percent. The ODJFS RMS administrator reviews this information quarterly to assure counties are meeting these precision rates.

Counties use the Maximus Ledger Suite RMS county software to submit information electronically to ODJFS. The hard copy RMS observation forms are retained by the county for future reviews and audits.

All RMS data must be imported to the QuIC+ system and e-mailed to ODJFS no later than the twentieth of the month following the end of the RMS reporting period or the next business day following the twentieth if the twentieth is not a business day.

Sampling Period	Financial Period	Quarter	Due Date
June – August	July – September	3	September 20
September – November	October – December	4	December 20
December – February	January – March	1	March 20
March – May	April – June	2	June 20

Two uploads are required to be submitted to ODJFS:

- The upload from the RMS system contains data used to run precision reports on a statewide basis.
  - a. Non-QuIC+ RMS results should be e-mailed to the GroupWise address BCFTA-RMS-NONQUIC\_UPLOADS.
  - b. Files from the RMS side of the county agency's ledger suite application have file extensions of “.RMP”.
- The RMS upload from the QuIC+ portion of the Ledger Suite contains only the information used to allocate costs.

**Records Retention**

Financial, programmatic, statistical, recipient records and supporting documents must be retained for a minimum of three years after ODJFS acceptance of the final closeout expenditure report or as otherwise provided by any minimum retention requirements specified by applicable state or federal law. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records has started before the expiration of the three-year period, the records must be retained until the completion of the action and resolution of all issues that arise from it or until the end of the regular three-year period, whichever is later.