

What to Expect When Engaging with Biostatistics and Epidemiology Consultants:

[RUBIES](#) stands for the Rutgers University Biostatistics & Epidemiology Services center, which is under the umbrella of [Rutgers Health](#) and is housed within the [Rutgers School of Public Health](#). We are the “action arm” of the [Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Research Design \(BERD\)](#) core within [NJACTS](#) primarily responsible for facilitating the translation of science into practice by providing easily accessible advanced clinical study design and data analysis support. Our team of biostatisticians and epidemiologists cover a wide range of expertise, and we are committed to offering the highest quality of service to our investigators.

If you’re at the early stages of your study design, have already collected data and are unsure how to analyze it, or need help drafting up your manuscript, the RUBIES team is here to help at any point. Below is a guide that includes recommendations for how to engage with RUBIES to ensure our collaboration is productive and successful!

- 1- **Request Portal Best Practices:** All new requests to RUBIES should be submitted through our [request portal](#) on our website. This is a streamlined form that allows us to capture all relevant details regarding the study. It is best that you complete this form with as much detail regarding your study as possible. You’ll have the option to attach documents as well as de-identified data and draft proposals that need review.
- 2- **Create a plan for RUBIES to access your data/system:** If a RUBIES staff member will need to be added to the [IRB](#), complete an eCOI form, complete training certifications or DUA to access a system, etc., please come prepared with a plan for how our staff can access these data/systems to respond to your request.
- 3- **Budget:** Our goal is never to have budget or funding be a roadblock to providing service. We are a not-for-profit consulting department and our hourly rates have remained unchanged since 2018. The funding we receive from studies allows us to cover our team’s salaries and is used to grow our department, allowing us the ability to hire more staff and better serve the research community. We encourage investigators to be upfront and honest with their budget and funding limitations. RUBIES can often work within your budget and will provide realistic estimates for service prior to beginning the study so you’ll always know what to expect.
- 4- **The earlier the better!:** Bringing an epidemiologist or biostatistician into the picture at the study design stage is always encouraged. There are so many moving parts to study design and clinical research that we tend to focus on immediate goals. A biostatistician thinks steps ahead to the analysis and can help inform how the project is built to make sure the data will answer the questions posed by the hypothesis. An epidemiologist can offer improvements to efficiency, creative ways to attract participants, and insight into methods and workflows that have proven successful in other studies.
- 5- **Informed brainstorming:** We have a foundation in team science that informs our collaborative process, granting researchers the space to partner with us to realize their study’s full potential. In the past, some researchers have been hesitant to engage with us if they don’t feel prepared or are unsure where to start. In these circumstances, we ask investigators to finetune the “why”, or shore up your hypothesis and goals for the study, and engage RUBIES when you are ready to discuss the “how”, or study design/methods/etc.
- 6- **Realistic timelines:** We hope to offer realistic timeframes for completing projects. Therefore, we encourage our partners to consider unforeseen circumstances or factor in “buffer” time to

ensure deadlines are met. Our best experiences with collaborative projects have clear timelines, realistic deadlines for our team to accommodate, and a clear understanding of deliverables.

- 7- **Research Ethics and Best Practices:** When engaging with RUBIES at the onset of your study, we work with you to finalize a statistical analysis plan that will dictate our analyses once the data is in hand. Our team highly values [data quality and data integrity](#) and thus discourages methods such as p-hacking or significant fishing expeditions when completing statistical analyses. However, as we provide results, we are more than happy to brainstorm new directions for the study or significant areas of exploration within the data while maintaining our commitment to integrity.
- 8- **We Are Your Partners:** Our biostatisticians and epidemiologists are equipped to support your research with experience in comprehensive data management and covering a wide range of statistical methods from simple summary statistics to sophisticated modeling. RUBIES is also open to allowing investigators, especially trainees or students, the space to take the lead on coding as we provide guidance and support throughout the process or to work alongside our team as we execute the analyses to learn how they are performed. We are also open for requests to lead statistical bootcamps, small group trainings, and coding walkthroughs for our partners who are interested in learning more.

Ready to work with [RUBIES](#)? We offer a complimentary 1-hour initial consultation for all new project requests. These consultations are meant to get everyone on the same page about project goals/aims as well as brainstorm the study design and analysis plans. You are welcome to submit an application for service on our portal: [RUBIES Request Portal](#). Questions? [Contact](#) the RUBIES Project Manager, Natale Mazzaferro, at natale.mazzaferro@rutgers.edu. Ask us about our [Canvas page](#) where we house our biostatistics and epidemiology workshops!