

Glossary for 2026 Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) Excel Workbook

The monthly county fee-for-service per capita cost calculation is a component used in determining the Medicare Advantage benchmarks. This glossary defines variable names and formulas used in the development of the county fee-for-service per capita costs. All calculations are performed at the county-level unless otherwise noted.

Fee-for-service (FFS):

The original system of obtaining care under Medicare wherein beneficiaries can choose to obtain health care services from any Medicare-approved doctor or hospital, or other health care supplier that accepts Medicare reimbursement.

There are five worksheets in the Excel workbook:

- (1) County Overview: Displays FFS per capita cost for a selected county based on the re-priced claims data, and provides intermediate step-by-step formulation of the projected FFS cost.
- (2) ffs_worksheet: Contains county-level re-priced claims and other relevant data used to calculate the FFS costs.
- (3) absplits: Part A and Part B USPCC percentages used to calculate a county's composite enrollment (CTYNUMYR) formula #13 below.
- (4) payment_data: The calendar year 2019-2023 original claims, claims adjustments by type of services, and the resultant re-priced claims.
- (5) risk_scores: Calendar year 2019-2023 risk scores based on the CMS-HCC v28 (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System) HCPCS model.

The workbook contains Macros and/or ActiveX content, which must be **enabled** to work properly. By default, Excel protects the user from running macros. When this workbook is opened, Excel may display a prompt asking if you want to enable macros – respond positively. If not prompted, you may have to manually change the protective security settings in your version of Excel. If for some reason you obtain unexpected results, completely exit from all open Excel applications and restart the workbook.

The workbook provides two ways to initiate the calculation and display of a specific county's FFS cost. On the County Overview worksheet, directly enter a valid county code into cell G5. The available valid county codes can be looked up in column B of the ffs_worksheet sheet, where the data is sorted by county codes within state. Alternatively, you may use the State and County drop down lists in the 5th row of the County Overview worksheet to initiate the calculation. The valid county code will then automatically be entered into cell G5 and the FFS cost calculations will display.

For further information, contact Ann.Hoover1@cms.hhs.gov.

Formulas and explanation of terms used in the Excel Workbook**1. FFS7_IMEKAC = FFS6_IME – KAC**

The final projected calendar year 2026 monthly county FFS per capita cost less the Indirect Medical Education (IME) deduction and kidney acquisition cost adjustment.

2. KAC = FFS5_CRED_BN × AV GKAC

The kidney acquisition costs (KAC) expressed as a dollar amount. The 21st Century Cures Act authorized this payment adjustment.

- a. AV GKAC: Kidney acquisition costs (KAC) as a percent of total FFS claims based on 5 years of data.

$$AV GKAC = \frac{\sum_{19}^{23} \text{Kidney Acquisition Costs}}{\sum_{19}^{23} \text{Total Parts A \& B payments}}$$

3. FFS6_IME = FFS5_CRED_BN – PHINDOLR

The projected calendar year 2026 monthly county FFS per capita cost less the Indirect Medical Education (IME) deduction.

4. PHINDOLR = PHINPCT × AV GIME × FFS5_CRED_BN

The indirect medical education (IME) deduction expressed as a dollar amount. Section 161 of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2009 (MIPPA) required CMS to phase out indirect medical education (IME) amounts from MA capitation rates.

- a. PHINPCT: The maximum allowed percentage of the AV GIME that can be deducted in the contract year from the FFS rate.
- b. AV GIME: The per capita costs for IME payments as a percentage of FFS costs. (5 year average)
- c. FFS5_CRED_BN = FFS4_CRED × BN_FAC_C: The blended credibility FFS per capita cost adjusted for budget neutrality.

5. BN_FAC_C

A budget neutrality factor applied to the blended credibility FFS per capita cost (FFS4_CRED). This factor ensures that combined projected FFS payments in counties where the credibility approach is used will be equal to the combined payments that would have been paid without the credibility approach. It is calculated based only on counties within the state where the credibility factor has a value less than 1.0 (average enrollment less than 1000).

$$BN_FAC_C = \frac{a}{b},$$

$$\text{where } a = \sum_{\text{all ctys cred} < 1} \left(FFS_MIL \times \sum_{YR=19}^{23} \frac{ADNUMYRB}{5} \right)$$

$$\text{and } b = \sum_{\text{all ctys cred} < 1} \left(\text{FFS4_CRED} \times \sum_{\text{YR}=19}^{23} \frac{\text{ADNUMYRB}}{5} \right)$$

6. **FFS4_CRED =**

$$(\text{FFS2_MIL}) \times (\text{CRED_FAC}) + (\text{FFS3_CBSA}) \times (1 - \text{CRED_FAC})$$

The blended credibility FFS per capita cost calculation for counties where the enrollment is less than 1000.

$$\text{a. } \sqrt[2]{\frac{\sum_{19}^{23} \frac{\text{ADNUMYRB}}{5}}{1000}}$$

7. **FFS3_CBSA**

The term “core-based statistical area” (CBSA) refers to a geographic region based around an urban area of at least 10,000 people. The two categories of CBSAs are metropolitan statistical area (50,000 or more people) and micropolitan statistical area (10,000 – 49,999 people.)

$$\text{FFS3_CBSA} = \frac{a}{b},$$

$$\text{where } a = \sum_{\text{all ctys in CBSA}} \left(\text{FFS2_MIL} \times \sum_{19}^{23} \frac{\text{ADNUMYRB}}{5} \right) \text{ i. e., ffs payments in CBSA}$$

$$\text{and } b = \sum_{\text{all ctys in CBSA}} \left(\text{FFS4_CRED} \times \sum_{19}^{23} \frac{\text{ADNUMYRB}}{5} \right) \text{ i. e., avg enrollment in CBSA}$$

8. **FFS2_MIL = FFS1_GME × MIL_FAC**

FFS per capita cost with an adjustment, where MIL_FAC is a predetermined value that adjusts for health care services received by dual-eligible military retirees and veterans outside of Medicare, under the Department of Defense’s (DoD) TRICARE health program, or the Veterans Health Administration’s health care system.

9. **FFS1_GME = CTYAGA × USPCC × (1 – AVGGME)**

Projected county per capita cost less GME adjustment.

- a. CTYAGA: The standardized average geographic adjustment, where ZERO_CL is a percent adjustment applied to the Puerto Rico MA rates to reflect the prevalence of zero-dollar-claimants enrolled in FFS.

$$\text{CTYAGA} = \frac{\text{AGA}}{\text{NATAGA}} \times (1 + \text{ZERO_CL})$$

- b. USPCC: The combined Medicare Parts A and B projected national average Medicare per capita cost (USPCC) in the FFS sector in the contract year.

- c. **AVGGME**: Direct graduate medical education (GME) payments as a percent of total FFS claims based on 5 years of data. This payment adjustment was authorized by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

$$AVGGME = \frac{\sum_{19}^{23} DGME \text{ payments}}{\sum_{19}^{23} \text{Total Parts A \& B payments}}$$

10. AGA

This average geographic adjustment is an index which measures the 5-year average historical relationship of a county's per capita Medicare expenditures to the national average per capita Medicare expenditures. Division by AVG5SCOR serves to remove the effects of the health status and demographics of the beneficiaries in the county – also called standardization.

$$AGA = \frac{1}{AVG5SCOR} \times \sum_{19}^{23} \left(\frac{GEOIN YR}{5} \right)$$

11. NATAGA

The national average geographic adjustment is the enrollment weighted average of all the county AGA's (uses 2023 enrollment.)

$$NATAGA = \frac{\sum_{all \text{ ctys in US}} (AGA \times CTYNUM23)}{\sum_{all \text{ ctys in US}} CTYNUM23}$$

12. AVG5SCOR

The 5-year enrollment weighted average of all a county's fee-for-service enrollees' risk scores.

$$AVG5SCOR = \frac{\sum_{19}^{23} (RISCOR YR \times RISNUM YR)}{\sum_{19}^{23} RISNUM YR}$$

13. GEOIN YR = CPCCYRAB ÷ NPCCYRAB

An annual index which measures the Parts A and B county per capita costs relative to the national per capita cost. For any year, this index is the ratio of all actual Medicare program per capita costs for the county, divided by the actual program per capita cost for the nation. Geographic indices are calculated for five consecutive annual periods (2019-2023), and then averaged to reduce variation. See AGA calculation.

14. NPCCYRAB

The national average per capita cost for Part A and Part B for a calendar year is the enrollment weighted average of all the county per capita costs for the year.

$$NPCCYRAB = \sum_{all \text{ ctys in US}} (CPCCYRAB \times CTYNUM YR) \div \sum_{all \text{ ctys in US}} CTYNUM YR$$

15. CTYNUM YR = (ADNUM YRA) × (PT_A_PCT) + (ADNUM YRB) × (PT_B_PCT)

Composite Part A and Part B enrollment

The county per capita cost for a calendar year is based on the actual fee-for-service payments made for all beneficiaries residing in the county. The payments made for the Aged (age 65 and over) and the Disabled (less than age 65) are grouped together. However, payments for Part A (ADCOSYRA) and Part B (ADCOSYRB) are totaled separately.

Similarly, the number of beneficiaries in the county is summarized separately for Part A (ADNUMYRA) and Part B (ADNUMYRB).

Next, the Part A (CPCCYRA) and Part B (CPCCYRB) county per capita costs can be calculated by dividing the payments by the number of beneficiaries. Finally, these two per capita costs are summed to give the overall county per capita cost (CPCCYRAB).

16. CPCCYRAB = CPCCYRA + CPCCYRB

Combined Per Capita Costs for Parts A and B, Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

17. CPCCYRA = ADCOSYRA ÷ ADNUMYRA ÷ 12

Per Capita Cost for Part A Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

18. CPCCYRB = ADCOSYRB ÷ ADNUMYRB ÷ 12

Per Capita Cost for Part B Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

19. ADCOSYRA

Total Part A payments for Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

20. ADCOSYRB

Total Part B payments for Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

21. ADNUMYRA

Total number of Part A Aged and Disabled beneficiaries

22. ADNUMYRB

Total number of Part B Aged and Disabled beneficiaries