

Population Estimate System Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

What is the Population Estimate System or PES?

PES is OFM's new web-based application designed to collect the data OFM needs for its April 1 population estimates.

What are the benefits of using PES to submit Form A data?

There are a number of advantages to using PES over the paper-based method of data collection:

- The system performs automatic calculations and displays running totals on many of the screens
- Built-in controls to prevent data entry errors
- Data submitted through PES will be available to jurisdictions in subsequent years
- Jurisdictions can access a variety of reports through PES (see the Reports section for more detail)
- Users can create user accounts through PES any time of the year. This reduces the need to have to wait for the OFM Form E.

Can I provide feedback about PES?

Absolutely! We would love to hear feedback from you. Please send comments to your jurisdiction analyst or use our general email box at pop.estimates@ofm.wa.gov. Please include your name, jurisdiction and the version of the web browser you are using in your message.

Accessing and Using PES

How do I get access to PES?

The PES application can be accessed from <https://pop.ofm.wa.gov>.

Access to PES requires a SecureAccess Washington (SAW) account and a registration PIN from OFM. See the document [Setting up a SAW Account and Registering with PES](#) for more information.

Why am I getting an unauthorized error when accessing PES?

You must have a SAW account and your First Name, Last Name and email address must match exactly what OFM has on record for access to PES.

Another reason might be that you did not provide the PIN that was issued to you by OFM when your PES account (not your SAW account) was set up.

Contact OFM at pop.estimates@ofm.wa.gov and we will help you get authorized.

How do I fill out Form A?

To learn how to use the PES application to enter Form A data, see the [PES User Guide](#).

Each section includes Instructions. This area is minimized by default. It can be expanded for full instructions. Some sections also include an Examples section.

A screenshot of the PES application interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Manage Accounts', and 'Reports'. Below that, a main title 'Population Estimate System' is displayed, followed by a subtitle 'Housing Unit and Population Survey (Form A)'. On the left, a sidebar lists sections: 'A. Frame Housing' (with sub-sections 'A.1. New permits', 'A.2. Carryover permits', and 'A.3. Housing loss'), and 'B. Manufactured Homes' (with sub-sections 'B.1. Inside units' and 'B.2. Outside units'). The main content area shows a section titled 'A3. Housing lost or removed from April 2, 2023 through April 1, 2024'. This section contains a 'Instructions' button with a minus sign icon, which is highlighted with a red arrow. Below the button is a detailed list of instructions. Further down is an 'Examples' button with a plus sign icon, also highlighted with a red arrow.

For questions about Form A, see the [Form A Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

Why can't I provide data for some Group Quarters?

OFM receives population data for some Group Quarters from administrative sources. Users are not required to provide this data, therefore the system disables the ability to modify those Group Quarters.

How do I logout or quit PES?

There are two ways you can logout or quit.

- 1) Click the 'Logout' button at the top right of the page. This will take you to the OFM April 1 page.



- a. If you use your browser back button, you will be returned to PES. This is due to your browser session history. You can Close your browser window to get completely out.
- 2) Close out of your browser session.

I already have a SAW account and I don't see 'Population Estimate System' in the services list. What should I do?

The Population Estimate System is not a service in SAW.

You must access PES from <https://pop.ofm.wa.gov>. This URL will redirect you to the SAW login page where you must log in using your SAW credentials. You will then be taken to the PES application.

I already have a SAW account. How can I find out if my SAW user name matches the name OFM is using?

The name OFM has on file is in the body of the email you received from pop.estimates.wa.gov that contains your PES registration PIN.

You can find the name and email address associated with your SAW account by logging into SAW (<https://secureaccess.wa.gov>). Click on the ACCOUNT button. Your account profile will be displayed.

The First Name, Last Name and email address must be the same. If they are not the same, you can update your information in SAW to match the OFM email or you can contact us at pop.estimates@ofm.wa.gov and we can make changes on our end to match your existing SAW credentials.

If the name and email addresses match, you must still activate your PES account. Go to Step 5 in [Setting up a SAW Account and Registering with PES](#) for instructions.

What do I do if I am unable to use (or don't want to use) the PES online system?

We encourage jurisdictions to make an effort to use the web application and will be happy to assist you if you run into difficulties. If needed, we can send you a PDF version of the form that can be filled out and mailed back to us.

What is the difference between an error message and a warning message?

Warning messages typically notify users that the data they have entered is not what is expected. Jurisdiction users can save and submit data with warnings. We recommend that users add a comment to explain why their data deviates from expectations.

Error messages typically alert users to missing or inaccurate information. Users cannot save data until the errors are resolved.

Why does PES time out after 60 minutes?

The 60 minute time limit is imposed by SecureAccess Washington for security purposes. OFM has no ability adjust this time limit.

Account Management

What do I need to know about PES account management?

The PES Manage Accounts page allows the management of user accounts. We encourage you to maintain user accounts for your jurisdiction using this page.

Each user must have their own login credentials and SAW account. Users can be assigned one of three roles described below:

Population Contact:

- Edit Form A data
- The user authorized to Certify and submit Form A
- Add, edit or remove user accounts
- Edit Form A data
- Run reports

Editor:

- Edit Form A data
- Run reports

Reviewer:

- Review Form A data
- Run reports

Only one person can be assigned the role of Population Contact. The Population Contact is responsible for submitting Form A and managing user accounts for your jurisdiction.

One person is assigned the title of 'Highest Elected Official' or HEO. The HEO is assigned a 'Reviewer' role by default and are not sent a registration PIN. If the HEO needs to edit data in the system, simply request a registration PIN from OFM.

Certify and Submit

Why can't I see the 'Certify and Submit' page? It is grayed out.

The Certify and Submit page is only available to the designated Population Contact who submits data to OFM on behalf of the jurisdiction.

Why do I have to 'Certify and Submit'?

State laws requires jurisdictions to provide OFM with the information requested on Form A. Having one responsible jurisdiction official certify and submit through PES creates a digital record of the transaction that helps satisfy the reporting requirements. The 'Certify and Submit' process takes the place of a signature on the paper form.

How do I find out the name of my jurisdiction's designated Population Contact?

- 1) If you are logged into PES, go to the Manage Accounts page.
 - a. You will find the information within the gray box labeled 'Population Contact'.

The screenshot shows the 'Population Estimate System' interface. At the top, there are links for 'Home', 'Manage Accounts' (which is highlighted in blue), and 'Reports'. Below the header, a section titled 'Manage Accounts' contains a button '+ Add New User'. Underneath, a table lists 'Accounts for Aberdeen - Grays Harbor County':

Contact Information
Highest Elected Official
Sally Mac 111 Washington ST Some City, WA 98555 (360) 555-3456
Population Contact
Jane Doe 111 Washington ST Some City, WA 98555 (360) 555-1212

The 'Population Contact' row is highlighted with a red box. To the right of each contact entry are 'Edit' and 'Remove' buttons.

- b. Contact your OFM analyst directly
 - i. From the PES Home Page, click the email link for your OFM analyst. This opens a blank email window that is auto filled with your OFM analyst email and default Subject.



- 2) If you are not in PES, contact OFM at pop.estimates@ofm.wa.gov. Please include your name, title, and the jurisdiction you work for in your message.

Reports

What is the purpose of the PES Reports?

The PES reports are designed to help get you the information you need for the April 1 estimate process.

The following reports are available from the system:

- **Form A – Unedited:** Form A report without any markup
- **Form A – City Edited:** Form A with the data you have saved
- **Form A – OFM Edited:** Form A with the data you submitted to OFM and any OFM analyst edits and comments
- **Census Summary:** Information about the most recent jurisdiction census
- **Census PPH and Occupancy Rates:** Historical data for any census from 1990 to present
- **Annexation List:** Annexations approved by OFM from 2010 to present
- **Estimate Review Worksheet:** OFM's preliminary population determination for jurisdiction review
- **Preliminary Population Determination:** OFM's preliminary population determination for all counties and jurisdictions

Why are some reports grayed out?

There are a couple of reasons. Some of the reports are only available at specific times. For example the current year Estimate Review Worksheet and Preliminary Population Determination are only available during the estimate review period in early June. Some reports are only available when there is data to report. For example Form A – OFM Edited is not available until you have submitted your data and OFM analysts have had time to review it.

Where can I find Form A report with data I submitted to OFM?

From within PES, go to Reports in the upper blue ribbon. Click on “Form A – Jurisdiction Edited” report. This will display the data you have saved while working on Form A or the complete data you have submitted to OFM.

The link to the report is enabled after Form A reporting is open and you’ve saved Form A data.

