FlexFile Training Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What do the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report replace?

The FlexFile and Quantity Data Report (QDR) replace the CWBS Dictionary and the 1921 Series reports. This includes the 1921, 1921-1, 1921-2, and 1921-5. All of the cost and quantity data that were reported as part of the CWBS Dictionary and 1921 forms will be reported on the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report. The FlexFile and Quantity Data Report CDRLs can be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

The FlexFile and Quantity Data Report (QDR) do *NOT* replace the technical data reported on the 1921-2 (weight, speed, power, etc.), nor do they replace the Contractor Business Data Report (CBDR), also known as the 1921-3. There are separate initiatives that look to improve on tech data reporting and business base reporting. More information regarding those initiates can be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/techdata

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/1921-3

What does the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report actually provide?

Saying that the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report (QDR) will replace DD 1921 Series entails that *ALL* of the cost and quantity elements found in the DD 1921 Series can be found in the FlexFile and Quantity Report. In addition to WBS, Nonrecurring and Recurring, and the Standard Functional Categories, the FlexFile provides monthly time-phased data, "Account" level detail, and insight into the contractor's native functional categories. The Quantity Data Report provides roughly the same quantity information as the 1921 Series report did, with a few additional reporting elements. More information regarding the reporting elements can be found in the DIDs, available at:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

How will we ensure that FlexFile and Quantity Data Report (QDR) will be submitted together?

Because the quantity data in the QDR provide crucial context for the cost data in the FlexFile, the two must always be submitted concurrently. During the CSDR Planning process, the CWIPT should ensure that each FlexFile submission event on the DD 2794 also includes a QDR submission if the QDR is being required. Then, during Validation, DCARC will ensure that both reports are Submitted and Accepted.

Why do you keep talking about the –Q ("dash queue") and the –T ("dash tee")?

Because "1921" has been synonymous with all things CSDR (or at least all things CCDR), two of the new forms were referred to as the 1921-Q and 1921-T while they were in the development and pilot phases. Now that the final DIDs have been published, they are more properly referred to as the Quantity Data Report (QDR) and the Technical Data Report (TDR), respectively. (We apologize for an inadvertent confusion with the Quadrennial Defense Review….)

What do you mean that the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report replace the CWBS Dictionary?

The CWBS Dictionary is part of the FlexFile DID requirements and must be submitted as part of every FlexFile. More information regarding the WBS Definitions can be found in Data Group C in the FlexFile DID and Section 4h of the FlexFile Implementation Guide, available at:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

With the CWBS Dictionary no longer a separate deliverable, will there still be an "Initial Report" FlexFile deliverable on the CSDR Plan?

Yes, an Initial FlexFile Report should still be required as a deliverable. An "Initial Report" is even more crucial with the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report to ensure industry is able to report and submit the new requirement correctly.

What are the thresholds and policy regarding FlexFiles and Quantity Reporting? Does it extend to ACAT II programs?

As of March 16, 2020, the DoDI 5000.73, "Cost Analysis Guidance & Procedures", Section 4: Data Collection, Table 1: Cost Data Reporting Requirements, highlights the requirements for ACAT I-II Programs, Information System (IS) Programs, Middle-Tier Acquisition Programs, and any other programs greater than $100M. All contracts, subcontracts, government-performed efforts, and major components (e.g., government furnished equipment), including FMS and programs in sustainment, regardless of acquisition phase and contract type, including non-FAR agreements, valued at more than $50 million, then-year dollars, for current and former ACAT I – II programs.   High-risk or high-technical-interest, as determined by the CSDR plan approval authority, or software contracts priced between $20 million and $50 million, then-year dollars. Contractor Cost Data Reports consist of either the Cost and Hour Report (FlexFile) and the Quantity Data Report or the DD Form 1921 series of forms and contract work breakdown structure dictionary, subject to the requirements in the approved. The latest guidance can be found on the CADE website:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/csdr-timeline

Per OSD CAPE's March 2019, "Implementation of Cost and Hour Report (FlexFile) and Quantity Data Reports Within the Cost and Software Data Reporting (CSDR) System": As of May 15, 2019, the default for all new CSDR Plans shall be the FlexFile & Quantity Data Reports, in place of the legacy DD 1921 forms. Format tailoring, to include the use of the legacy formats, will be considered on a case-by-case basis through the current Cost Working Integrated Product Team (CWIPT) process. The memo can be found on the CADE website:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

CSDR plan
How is a contractor to submit these new data formats? (And what is a JSON?!)

For one submission event on the approved CSDR Plan, the contractor will submit a FlexFile and a corresponding Quantity Data Report (if applicable). The contractor will have three options to choose from when submitting the data:

1. Contractor Format
2. Three Part Template
3. JSON Data Model

Ultimately, the report needs to make its way into the JSON Data Model to be fully ingested in the CADE database. (JSON refers to JavaScript Object Notation, and the FlexFile in the JSON Data Model is essentially a zip file of database tables in JSON.) If the contractor chooses to submit Contractor Format, then the DCARC will organize the data in the JSON Data Model. This may require some additional coordination with the contractor to ensure the data being submitted is being interpreted correctly.

More information regarding these three submission formats can be found in Section 3c of the FlexFile Implementation Guide. More information on how these submission formats fit within the overall validation process can be found in Appendix C of the FlexFile Implementation Guide. The Technical Documents that define the JSON Data Model can also be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

How can I pull FlexFile data from CADE?

An analyst with the "CSDR Reviewer" role will have the option of viewing the data when it's first submitted in the CSDR Submit-Review (SR) portion of CADE, as part of the DCARC Validation Process. Once the submission has been accepted, an analyst with the "CADE Analyst" role in CADE Data & Analytics can access the submission via the "CSDR Browse" tool. In either case, four different Excel-based formats are available

1. Export Excel Template- FlexFile data according to Excel data model structure
2. Export Pivot Data- Actual dollars and labor hours according to the data elements in Data Group E of the approved FlexFile DID. *This version is generally recommended for analysis, as it is the most detailed and versatile*
3. Formatted File Export- Excel version of formatted 1921 DD Form, rolled up from FlexFile detail
4. Export to Excel- Analysis-ready Excel file with Metadata, Functional Cost & Hours Report, Remarks and Definitions

CADE CSDR-SR
Search – Search Submissions – File Type = Flex File (plus other Filter settings as desired). Validation – Flex Files – View Reports – View Report Data – Report Data – Header Data / 1921 Cost Data

CADE Data & Analytics
FlexFiles can be accessed using the Browse CSDR Submissions feature in Data & Analytics (via the home page or Data menu). Report Type = CCDR (plus other Filter settings as desired). In results table, Report Type contains "flex".

- "Submissions" – Allows users to bulk download the original, contractor-submitted files, as well as JSON files.
- "CCDR Reports" – Allows users to bulk download FlexFiles and legacy 1921/1921-1 data in a single Excel file.

If it is the case that the contractor submits an Excel Compatible format (see the previous question), then the DCARC will include that file as a hanging file and will also be made available to analysts.

What am I supposed to do with a file that big?

As part of the CADE Data & Analytics Export options, when a user selects the option for "Export Pivot Data", a "FF Pivot Template" with instructions will be included as a separate file along with the FlexFile Pivot Data. The purpose is to provide the analyst with a starting point for pivoting the data. Analysts can follow the embedded instructions within the "FF Pivot Template" to import the "FF Pivot Data", and view the following:
- Actuals To Date ($) by WBS (1921): Example demonstrates using a pivot table to create a format analogous to a 1921, with data filtered by Order/Lot and End Item, and broken out by WBS element and Nonrecurring/Recurring.
- Actuals To Date ($) by Standard Category (1921-1): Example demonstrates using a pivot table to create a format analogous to a 1921-1, with data filtered by Order/Lot, End Item, and WBS Element, and broken out by Standard Category and Nonrecurring/Recurring.
- Actuals To Date ($) by Unit or Sublot (1921-2): Example demonstrates using a pivot table to create a format analogous to a 1921-2, with data filtered by Order/Lot, WBS Element, and Nonrecurring/Recurring, and broken out by Standard Category, End Item, and Unit/Sublot.
- Actuals To Date ($) Matrix: Example demonstrates using a pivot table to create a non-traditional format, with data filtered by WBS Element, and broken out by Order/Lot, End Item, Nonrecurring/Recurring, Standard Category, and Reporting Period.

Additionally, some of Excel's essential features – Filters, SUMIFs, and PivotTables and PivotCharts – help us leverage the power of FlexFiles. Courses in using PivotTables to manipulate FlexFile data are available in the Bridge learning management system (LMS), https://cade.bridgeapp.com/.

What changes were made to the DD 2794 (CSDR Plan) to accommodate FlexFiles?

For the most part, the new plan format should look fairly similar to the previous versions. Some changes include moving the metadata to a separate page and including new fields and tables to accommodate the new data formats. The new plan format and instructions on how to fill it out can be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/dd2794

More information regarding the new plan format can also be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

A new version of cPet Web is available online and will enable the analyst to efficiently populate and export the new plan format, or the tool can be downloaded here:

http://portal.tecolote.com/dcarc/cPetRequest.aspx

Do you have any training material that describes all the updates in more detail?

Yes! We host live training, as well as a Learning Management System (LMS) for those who cannot attend in-person or would like a refresher. All information regarding both our training events and the LMS can be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/support

The slide deck that is used in our live trainings can also be found here:

https://cade.osd.mil/policy/flexfile-quantity

Can Industry and Support Contractors get access to online training related to FlexFiles?

Absolutely! All training materials, including presentations, how-to videos, and hands-on exercises, are designed to use only representative non-proprietary data so as to be available to Government, Industry and Support Contractors alike. All may have access to both the Bridge learning management system (LMS), where online course materials are hosted, and the Functional Academic version of CADE, FACADE (pronounced "fake-CADE"), which mirrors the functionality and interface of the real CADE system.

What does the May 15th "deadline" really mean? Will current contracts be grandfathered?

Starting on May 15th, all *NEW* CSDR plans will be required to use the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report as the default CSDR requirement. This does not apply to contracts that currently have approved CSDR plans that require the 1921 series reports. However, if it is the case the CWIPT and/or a contractor sees the benefits of the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report and would like to revise their current requirement, then we are more than happy to accommodate.

If it is determined that for a certain contract or program, the additional detail provided by the FlexFile and Quantity Data Report does not provide any additional value, then we may revert back to using the 1921 series reports. However, this will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will need to be agreed upon by the entire CWIPT.

If a prime contractor is reporting using a FlexFile, are reporting subcontractors required to report as well?

If a subcontractor meets the threshold that requires them to report CSDRs, then they will be required to submit a FlexFile and Quantity Data Report on all new plans after May 15th. See the previous FAQ for an explanation of when it would be appropriate to revert back to the 1921 series reports.