



Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument (GADCS):

Top 10 Tips

Andrew Mulcahy (RAND)

Lisa Sontag-Padilla (RAND)

May 12, 2022

Today's session...

Covers our top ten GADCS tips

Is intended as a resource to all ground ambulance organizations

Draws on prior webinars, Q&A sessions, and the GADCS FAQ

Does not assume you participated in prior GADCS educational sessions

Agenda: 10 GADCS tips

1. Learn about GADCS resources on [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov)
2. Confirm when your organization needs to collect and report information
3. Identify your “primary” and “secondary” service areas ahead of time
4. Plan to allocate expenses and revenue where appropriate
5. Make sure you know how to categorize your staff

Read up on how to report expenses in specific scenarios:

6. When you have expenses paid by your local government
7. When you contract out services to other companies
8. When you respond to calls jointly with another organization
9. Choose whether to use a template to submit facility/vehicle data
10. Ensure you can report revenue received, not billed

Tip #1: Learn about GADCS resources on cms.gov

All the resources below are available on the Ambulances Services Center website:
<https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Ambulances-Services-Center>

| Resource | Direct Link |
|--|--|
| GADCS Quick Reference Guide | https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Quick-Reference.pdf |
| GADCS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) | https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-FAQs.pdf |
| A printable version of the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument (in English and Spanish) | English: https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Data-Collection-System-Instrument.pdf Spanish: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-ground-ambulance-data-collection-instrument-printable-spanish-version-posted-02102022.pdf |
| Prior educational webinars and Q&A sessions | Listed directly on the Ambulances Services Center website, including separate sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A GADCS overview• GADCS changes in the CY 2022 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule• For fire department and other public safety-based organizations, for Medicare providers of services like hospitals, organizations billing under multiple NPIs, and volunteer organizations• On specific sections of the GADCS instrument (Labor, Revenue) |

Tip #2: Know when your organization needs to collect and report information

CMS already selected and notified the first two groups of GADCS participants

- “Year 1” and “Year 2” organizations
- Account for about half of all Medicare ground ambulance organizations
- Must **collect data** starting in 2022 and **report data** starting in 2023

CMS will post the next two groups later this year

- “Year 3” and “Year 4” organizations
- Account for about half of all Medicare ground ambulance organizations
- Must **collect data** starting in 2023 and **report data** starting in 2024

Year 1 and Year 2 of selected National Provider Identifiers (NPI) are on the Ambulance Services Center website:

Year 1 NPIs: https://www.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/cmsambdata_y1sample_forposting20feb.zip

Year 2 NPIs: https://www.cms.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/CMSAmbdata_Y2sample_post.zip

Know whether your organization will report over a calendar year or your organization's fiscal year

For example, organizations with a fiscal year starting July 1 have two timeline options: They may select a calendar year or their organization's fiscal year.

Option 1:
Calendar Year

Jan. 1, 2022 to Dec. 31, 2022

*Jan. 1, 2023 to
May 31, 2023*

Option 2:
Fiscal Year

Jul. 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

*Jul. 1, 2023 to
Nov. 30, 2023*

2022

2023

2024



Organization **collecting** data



Organization **reporting** data

Tip #3: Map out your “primary” and “secondary” service areas ahead of time

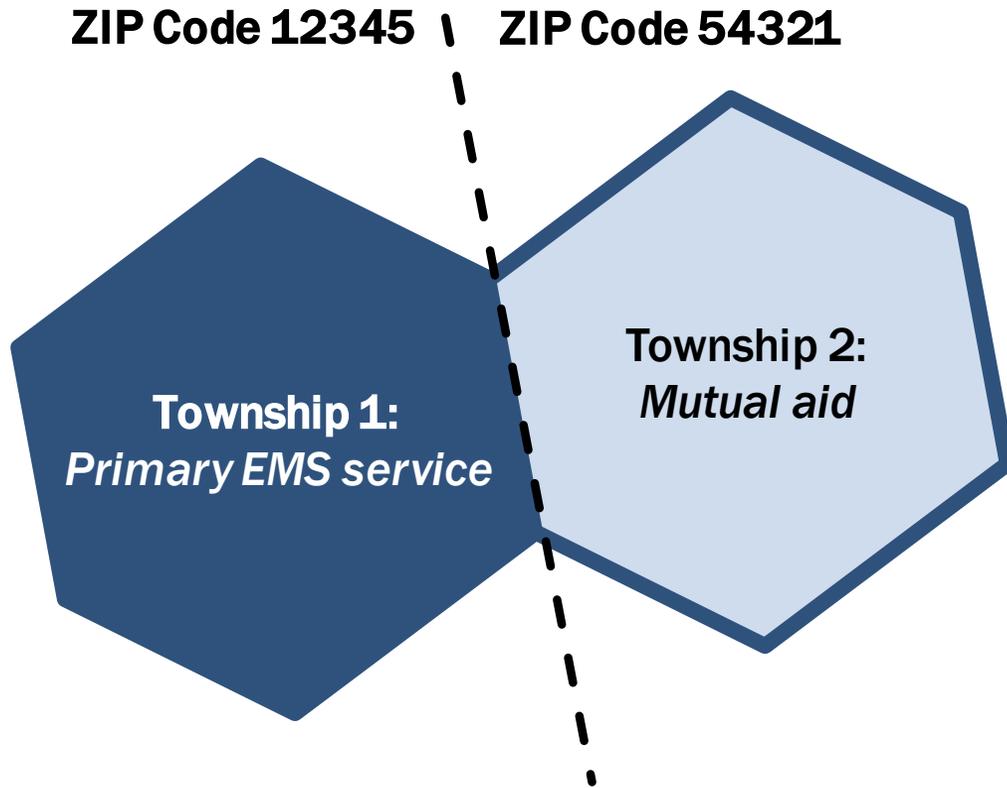
Primary Service Area: The area in which you are exclusively or primarily responsible for providing service at one or more levels and where it is highly likely that the majority of your transport pickups occur.

Secondary Service Area: Other areas where you regularly provide services through mutual or auto-aid agreements.

- You can list the same ZIP Code(s) as part of both your primary and secondary service area
- Not all organizations will have a secondary service area
- Both service areas are reported using ZIP Codes
- The web-based GADCS instrument gives you the choice of typing ZIP codes manually, selecting from a list, copy/pasting a list, or a combination of these

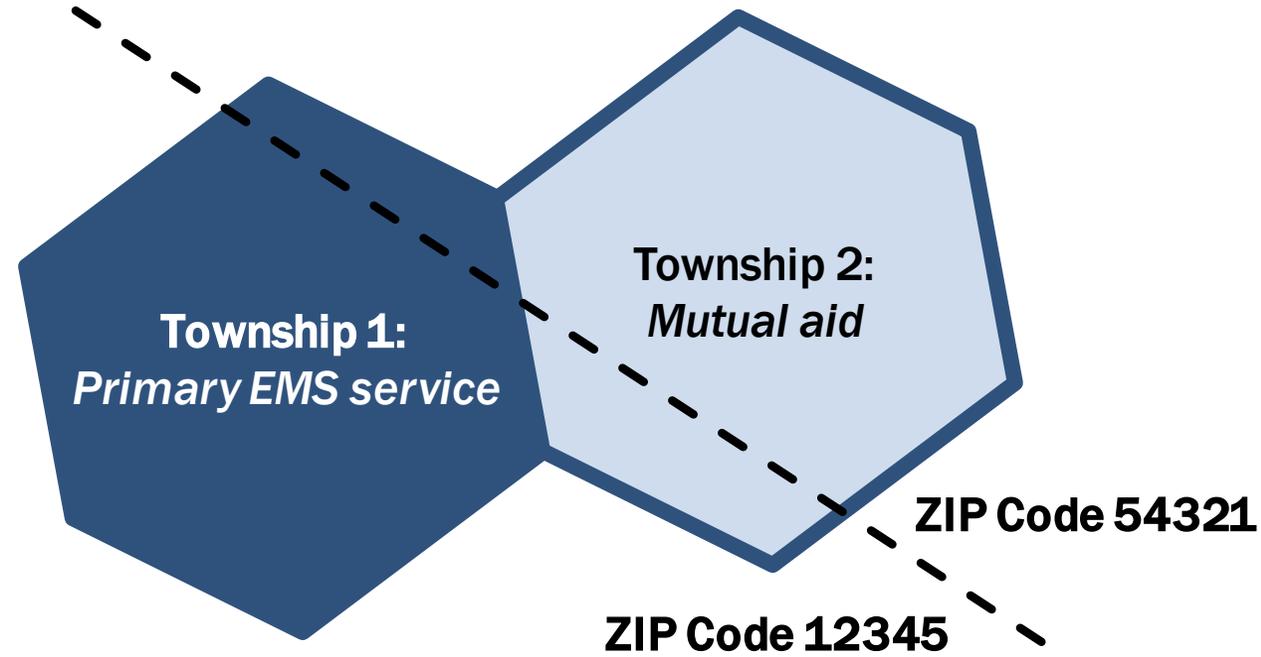
You can report the same ZIP Code(s) in both your primary and secondary service areas

EXAMPLE 1



| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Primary service area: | 12345 |
| Secondary service area: | 54321 |

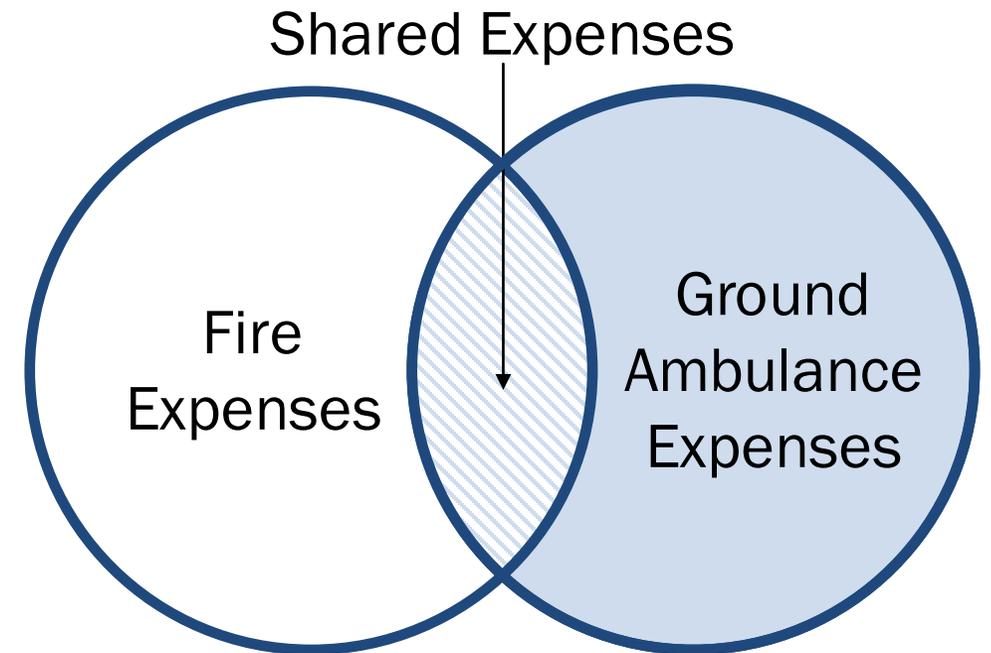
EXAMPLE 2



| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Primary service area: | 12345; 54321 |
| Secondary service area: | 12345; 54321 |

Tip #4: Only collect and submit expenses and revenue related to ground ambulance services

- Some ground ambulance organizations provide other services (e.g., fire departments, police departments, and hospitals).
- For these organizations, some costs/revenue are entirely related to ground ambulance operations while others must be *allocated*.



Use the easier of two approaches to collect and report allocated expenses

Option 1: Report total amount and ground ambulance share separately:

Total Expenses:
\$100,000

AND

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | % Ground Ambulance: 70% |
|--|----------------------------|



*GADCS calculates $\$100,000 * 70\% = \$70,000$*

Option 2: Calculate a ground ambulance amount yourself:

*(Total Expense * % related to ground ambulance operations)*

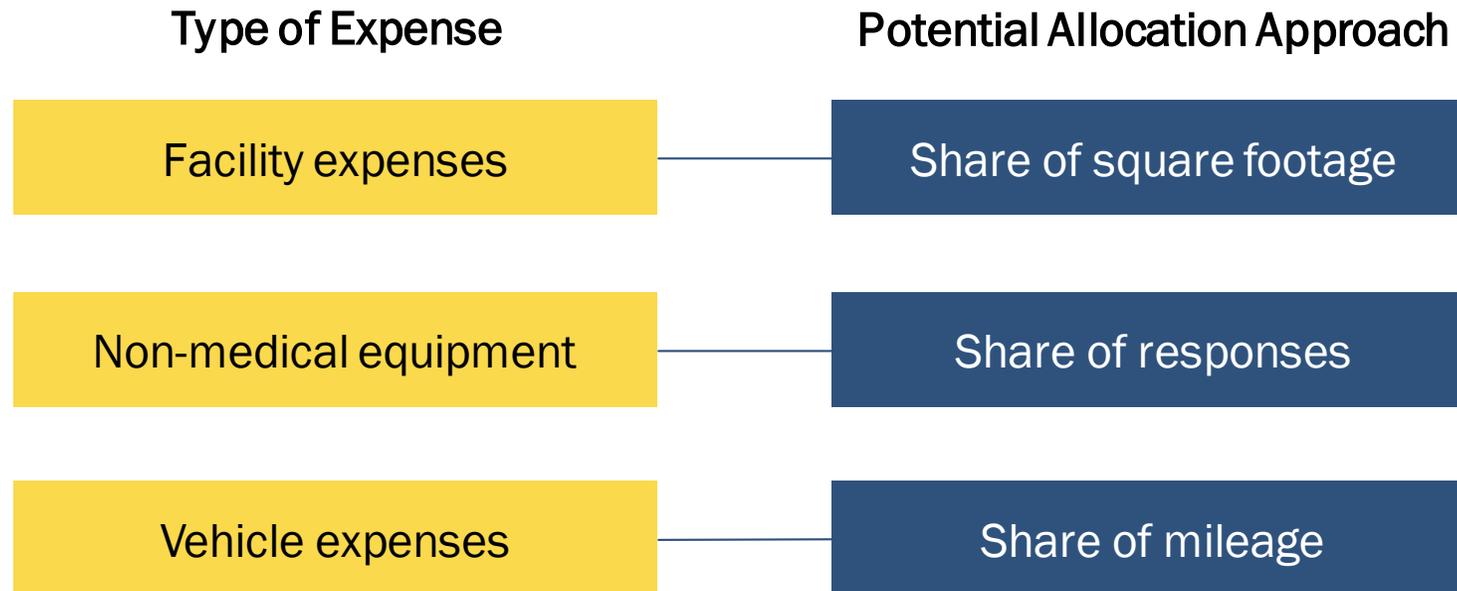
Ground Ambulance
Expense:
\$70,000



*GADCS uses the expense as provided (**\$70,000**)*

You can use your current allocation approach or a new one

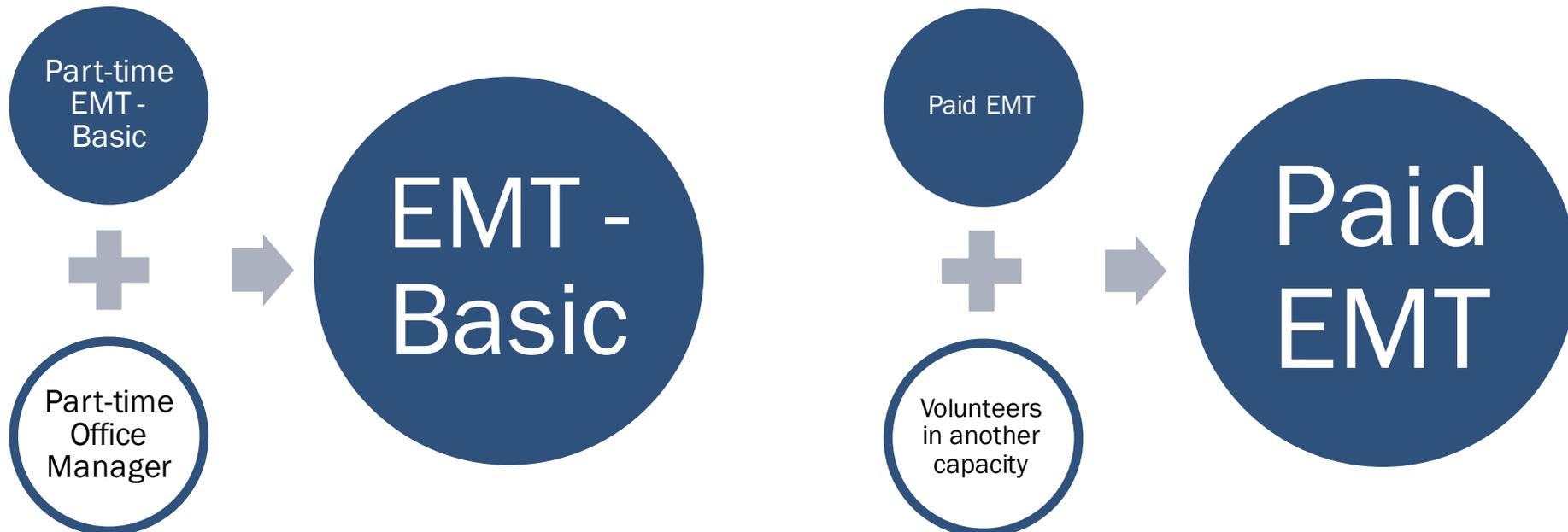
The GADCS ensures flexibility for organizations to choose their allocation method which can vary by Section and Question



CMS will host a separate webinar dedicated to allocation. Please check the Ambulances Services Center website for more information.

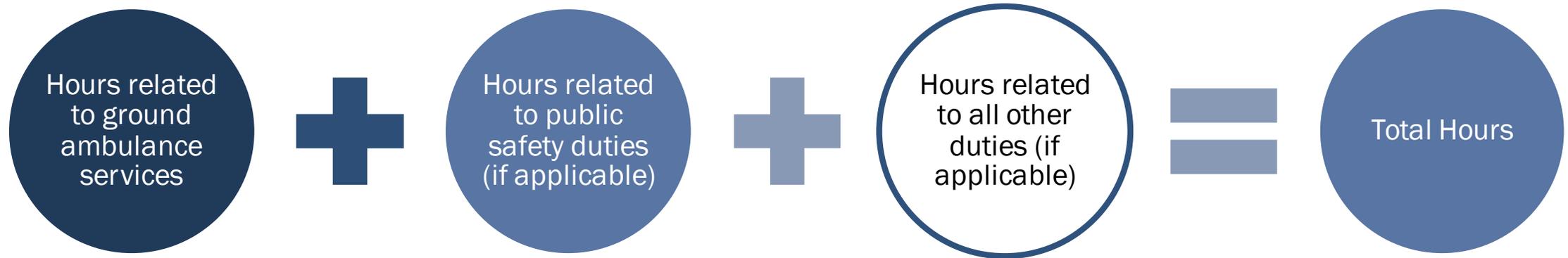
Tip #5: Know how to categorize your staff

- Section 7 asks organizations to classify staff into those with and without EMS response duties
 - If staff have EMS/Response + other duties, report them in a EMS/Response category.
 - If a staff person is paid at any point in the year, do not report them as a volunteer.



Start collecting hours worked in three categories

- For each staff category, you will report hours worked in three buckets:



- Report total compensation just once, without breaking out compensation by activity.

Tip #6: Connect early on with others that need to send you information

- You may need to collect and report expenses paid by other parts of your municipal government (e.g., fuel, benefits, facility maintenance).
- As a rule of thumb:
 - If the expense is paid by the same overarching entity that owns/operates your ground ambulance organization (e.g., a local government entity), then you must collect and report this information.
 - If not, then you should not collect and report the expense, but you should report that the expense was donated/at no cost to your organization.

Tip #7: Report contracted services in Section 11 (Other Costs) even if they seem to fit in earlier sections

- Report the total amount paid during your organization's continuous 12-month data collection period in Section 11, Question 1.
- Many organizations pay others to provide crucial inputs:
 - Dispatch
 - Vehicle maintenance
 - Billing
 - In some cases, EMS staff and ambulances
- If you contract out for EMS capabilities, you should report staff hours worked, facilities, and vehicles from your contractor in Sections 7 (Labor), 8 (Facilities), and 9 (Vehicles), respectively, with \$0 associated costs in these sections.

Tip #8: Consider your *entire* ground ambulance operation when collecting and reporting data

- Expenses and revenue related to care provided to patients other than Medicare beneficiaries are *in-scope* for GADCS.
- Expenses associated with providing care that is not ultimately billed/paid are *in-scope* for GADCS.
 - You will not separately report on uncompensated care
- Expenses associated with joint responses is *in-scope* for GADCS.
 - Report payments to/from other responding organizations in Sections 11 and 13 (Revenue), respectively
 - Report the share of your responses that are joint in Section 5 (Ground Ambulance Service Volume).

Tip #9: Larger organizations should consider importing data on individual facilities and vehicles

- Sections 8 (Facilities) and 9 (Vehicles) ask for information on individual facilities and vehicles.
- GADCS gives you the choice to enter facility/vehicle-level information **by hand** or to **import a completed Excel template**.
 - Organizations with many facilities and vehicles may prefer the template
 - Those with few (e.g., <5) facilities and vehicles may find it easier to enter information directly
- The import template is available only for facility/vehicle-level tables in Sections 8 and 9.
 - You will have to answer other Section 8 and Section 9 questions via the web-based instrument (i.e., not via the imported Excel file)
 - All other sections must be answered in the web-based instrument.

CMS will host a separate webinar dedicated to the Excel templates and the GADCS import functionality. Please check the Ambulances Services Center website for more information.

Tip #10: Report revenue received (not billed)

- Report information response time, service volume, and service mix (Sections 4, 5, and 6, respectively) for responses and services furnished over your organization's continuous 12-month data collection period.
- Report information on expenses (Sections 7-12) over your organization's continuous 12-month data collection period.
 - If you amortize capital expenses, you can report annual depreciation expenses
 - If not, you can report acquisition costs for purchases during your continuous 12-month data collection period (but not before).
- Report revenue **received** over your organization's continuous 12-month data collection period.
 - CMS understands this amount is different than the billed amount for services rendered during your organization's continuous 12-month data collection period.

Where can I get more information and help?

- There are many resources on the Ambulances Services Center website:
<https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Ambulances-Services-Center>

| Resource | Direct Link |
|--|--|
| GADCS Quick Reference Guide | https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Quick-Reference.pdf |
| GADCS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) | https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-FAQs.pdf |
| A printable version of the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection Instrument (in English and Spanish) | English: https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/Downloads/Medicare-Ground-Ambulance-Data-Collection-System-Instrument.pdf Spanish: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-ground-ambulance-data-collection-instrument-printable-spanish-version-posted-02102022.pdf |
| Prior educational webinars and Q&A sessions | Listed directly on the Ambulances Services Center website |

- Contact AmbulanceDataCollection@cms.hhs.gov for ground ambulance data collection inquiries.
- Contact AmbulanceODF@cms.hhs.gov for other ambulance services inquiries.