

B. Statistical Methods

The survey will be provided to the central criminal history record repositories in 53 jurisdictions including the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. These entities represent the entire population of central criminal history repositories. Thus, the survey does not involve any sampling, methods for stratification, imputations or similar statistical methods.

For most of the numerical data collected, SEARCH will primarily calculate simple totals, percentages, and perhaps cumulative percentages. In some cases, simple frequencies will be compiled and some distributional statistics will be calculated including means, medians, modes, and ranges.

Respondents will have access to online, password-protected reporting forms. The web-based forms will automatically populate databases which will be accessible by respondents online. The functionality will include a built-in utility for respondents to complete and submit individual sections of the survey, examine/update previously submitted portions of it, and will allow other maintenance and reporting capabilities. It is possible that some respondents will prefer to complete a paper version of the survey. This capability is also being provided.

Response rates will be maximized through email reminders after the initial contact. Where necessary, respondents will be contacted via telephone. This follow-up will be performed by SEARCH. Past surveys have achieved 100% response rates without a great deal of follow-up. The survey is the only existing source for complete and comprehensive data on the status of state-maintained criminal history records. As such, users at both the state and federal levels have come to depend on its production on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of programs designed to improve criminal record quality and to identify priorities for federal funding. It is the most cited publication produced by SEARCH and the survey is very popular among respondent agencies. As a result of the follow-up efforts, and due to the survey's popularity and importance, nonresponse has not been an issue.

Respondents will be asked to verify submitted responses, and will also be given the opportunity to review individual and compiled responses prior to publication.

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