

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

### A. Justification

#### 1. Necessity of Information

On September 4, 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA or the Act) was signed by President George W. Bush (Public Law 108-79). The Act requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to “carry out, for each calendar year, a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape.” The Act further instructs BJS to collect survey data, “...the Bureau shall...use surveys and other statistical studies of current and former inmates...” The law was passed in part to overcome a shortage of available research on the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence within correctional facilities. A data collection program of this complexity and scale on such sensitive subject matter is unprecedented.

To implement the Act, BJS has developed the National Prison Rape Statistics Program (NPRS), which includes five separate data collection efforts: the Survey on Sexual Violence (SSV), the National Inmate Survey (NIS), the Survey of Youth in Custody (SYC), the Former Prisoner Survey (FPS), and a medical surveillance project to track medical and behavioral indicators of sexual violence. Due to the sensitive nature of violent victimization and potential reluctance to report sexual assault, BJS will collect multiple measures on the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault.

Each of these collections are independent and, while not directly comparable, will provide various measures of the prevalence and characteristics of sexual assault in correctional facilities. The SSV series reports what incidents of sexual violence are reported to and substantiated by correctional authorities. The NIS will collect allegations of sexual assault self-reported by adult inmates to a confidential computer questionnaire. The SYC will collect similar allegations from youth in residential placement. The FPS will measure allegations of sexual assault experienced during their last incarceration, as reported by former inmates on active supervision. Finally, the medical surveillance project will demonstrate whether there is a correlation between results from the administrative records and inmate allegations with medical measures of sexual activity in a subpopulation of sampled facilities.

This submission is to seek clearance for the Former Prisoner Survey (FPS). This is a self-report survey administered to former prisoners under active parole supervision after release from prison. BJS has a cooperative agreement with National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago to collect data for the FPS.

The first part of the survey will be a traditional Computer-Assisted Personal-Interview (CAPI) interaction wherein an interviewer will read a series of questions to a former prisoner and enter the answers directly into a laptop computer. The questions asked in the CAPI mode will include demographic and criminal history items. All respondents will receive a brief training in how to use the Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview

(ACASI) methodology which involves former prisoners responding to a computer questionnaire using a touch-screen, following audio instructions delivered via headphones.

BJs requests approval for all data collection activities related to the FPS. It is anticipated that these activities will span a 12-month period from July 2007 through June 2008. BJS requests authorization for 3 years of data collection. BJS will produce national estimates of sexual victimization of former prisoners on active parole supervision. Those estimates will be reported to Congress in June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

The package submitted to NORC's Institutional Review Boards (IRB) is attached (Attachment A). The approval was received by the IRB and the certificate of approval is attached (Attachment B). Any additional IRB approvals required from sampled jurisdictions will be obtained prior to conducting any data collection under this clearance.

Data collection for the FPS project is authorized under the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-79), a copy of which is attached. The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Act of 1968 (see attachment) as amended (42 U.S.C. 3732), authorizes BJS to collect and disseminate statistical data on all aspects of criminal justice, including criminal victimization, occurring in the United States.

2. Needs and Uses

This clearance request is to obtain approval to conduct national data collection required under the Act. Data collection is necessary to measure the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault within correctional institutions through a survey of former prisoners, as required under the Act.

The purposes of the Act include: "to develop and implement national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of prison rape," and "increase the available data and information on the incidence of prison rape, consequently improving the management and administration of correctional facilities."

The data that are collected will be used to develop national-level estimates of sexual assault.

Users of these data include the following:

U.S. Congress – Each year Congress will receive a report on data collected under the Act. The report will include information about the prevalence of sexual assault in prisons as reported by former prisoners.

U.S. Department of Justice – The Review Panel on Prison Rape will solicit testimony from correctional administrators in facilities with the highest and lowest rates of sexual violence as identified in the June 30 annual reports.

National Prison Rape Elimination Commission – “...shall carry out a comprehensive legal and factual study of the penological, physical, mental, social, and economic impacts of prison rape in the United States...” Duties to be performed by the Commission include: a review of the procedures for reporting incidents of prison rape, an assessment of correctional staff training, and an evaluation of the safety and security of correctional facilities. Information obtained from Former Prisoners will be used as an alternative measure of the incidence and prevalence of sexual assaults, obtained from individuals no longer in custody and under pressures inherent in the prison environment.

National Institute of Corrections (NIC) – is responsible for establishing a “national clearinghouse for the provision of information and assistance to Federal, State, and local authorities responsible for the prevention, investigation, and punishment of instances of prison rape.” NIC will also develop periodic training and educational programs for “... authorities responsible for the prevention, investigation, and punishment of instances of prison rape.”

National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance – are responsible for studying characteristics of victims and perpetrators and identifying trends in sexual violence within correctional settings. Findings from the FPS activities disclosed in any Congressional report may be used to inform research proposals for grant funding opportunities provided in the Act.

Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice – may use data from the Congressional reports to understand the magnitude and scope of sexual violence within correctional facilities as they relate to the violation of inmate civil rights.

Federal, State, and local corrections and juvenile officials and administrators – will use data from the Congressional reports to assess and compare trends in inmate-on-inmate, youth-on-youth, staff-on-inmate, and staff-on-youth sexual violence. The NIS, SYC, and FPS questionnaires will provide a common set of concepts, standard definitions, and counting rules that administrators will be able to use as a baseline for comparisons.

### 3. Use of Technology

Using the latest technology in survey methodology, NORC interviewers will conduct interviews using laptop computers. Being mindful of the sensitivity of the sexual assault questions, former prisoners will enter the answers themselves using touchscreen-audio computer-assisted self-interview (T-ACASI) technology (see Attachment C for questions). This will allow them to hear the question being read over headphones as it appears on the screen. In addition, the T-ACASI methodology allows even respondents with low literacy levels to participate because the audio component provides clear instruction for how to enter answers and questions and corresponding answers are highlighted as they are read. The survey will be offered in both English and Spanish.

CAPI and T-ACASI technology improves the flow of the interview through built-in skip patterns and filled-in reference periods that tailor specific questions to individual

respondents. This allows for the instrument to be tailored by gender, and type of assault. This technology also produces more accurate data through built in edit checks. Furthermore, research with T-ACASI suggests respondents provide more honest reporting of sensitive behaviors when the questions are administered via T-ACASI as opposed to traditional interviewer-assisted methods.

Records form data are being requested from each parole office on all sampled respondents. These data will primarily be used for weighting the data for non-response and validation of interviews. The short eight-question form includes gender, date of birth, ethnicity, race, date of release to parole, date of admission to prison, and number of required contacts per month. While this form (FPS-1, see Attachment D) will be e-mailed or mailed to each parole office, the information may be completed via a secured web-base entry platform or through an automated file transmission. This information is available in most state parole automated systems; however, some states may require completion of paper forms.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This research does not duplicate any other questionnaire design work being done by BJS or any other Federal agencies. BJS will be the only government agency that collects National data on the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence within correctional settings.

5. Impact on Small Businesses

This research does not involve small businesses or other small entities. The respondents are former prisoners, now being supervised by parole officers.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is required by law to collect these data annually.

7. Special Circumstances Influencing Collection

This data will be collected in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. Federal Register Publication and Outside Consultation

The research under this clearance is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6. The 60 and 30-day notices for public commentary will be published in the Federal Register.

In developing the survey for the FPS, BJS has consulted with Federal, State, and local corrections and parole administrators as well as representatives from their professional organizations, prisoner rights advocates, specialists in prison rape research, practitioners, and survey methodologists. These individuals have and will continue to provide valuable input regarding the development of the questionnaires, definitions and counting rules,

anticipated data analysis, and data presentation. The following experts have been consulted:

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During the 60 day comment period following the publication of this proposed information collection in the Federal Register (Volume 72, Number 90, Page 26,646 on May 10, 2007), BJS received ten sets of comments. Comments were received from representatives of Stop Prisoner Rape, the American Probation and Parole Association, the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, and the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. These comments focused on the wording of several questionnaire items (noting items which were unclear or perhaps missing response options), as well as the psychological impacts of asking about sexual victimization experiences. In response to these comments, BJS has revised the questionnaire instrument by rewording 72 items and deleting seven questions entirely.

9. Payment or Gift to Respondents

Former prisoners will receive \$50 in cash as a token of appreciation for participation in the study. During the single-state pretest stage, a team of three appointment

setters were used during the pretest to contact former prisoners to request their participation. All appointment setters indicated that the \$50 compensation was a tremendous motivator. Most respondents wanted to come in as quickly as possible. Field interviewers indicated similar experiences. Given that former prisoners needed to make special arrangements and trips to the parole office for the interviews, it is felt that this provides them with an incentive to make the effort to participate.

BJS has had prior experience of compensating offenders under community supervision for participation in survey research. In 1995 BJS conducted the first (and only) national survey of adults on probation. At that time, respondents were given \$15 to compensate for transportation, parking and related expenses of coming to the probation office for the survey. This compensation was found to be essential to secure participation; however, the survey still experienced a low response rate. Fewer than 50% of selected probationers completed an interview (using only those selected probationers whose offices allowed interviews to take place as the denominator). And that survey was far less sensitive in terms of the nature of the information sought.

With the passage of 12 years of inflation and the sensitivity of the topic, anything less than a \$50 compensation would likely result in response rates well below 50%. Pretest of the sexual assault survey determined that the \$50 level provided a 64% response rate (based on eligible cases).

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

BJS and NORC hold in confidence any information that could identify an individual according to Title 42, United States Code, Sections 3735 and 3789g. All respondents who participate will be given written assurance that they will be protected as required under Title 42 (see Attachment E). This confidentiality pledge was originally modeled after the similar one developed for the PREA National Inmate Survey. It was redesigned to meet requirements for this project and the IRB that reviewed it. It was used during the pretest with no difficulties reported by field staff in its application. Rates of sexual violence reported by former inmates will only be published at the national level.

All interviews will be conducted in a private room, and names and other personal identifiers will not be linked to the questionnaire data, such that if someone were to somehow obtain the survey data, they could not associate any data with a particular individual. As required under Title 42 USC, section 3879g (see Attachment F), BJS and its data collection agents will take all necessary steps to mask the identity of survey



respondents, including suppression of demographic characteristics and other potentially identifying information, especially in situations in which cell sizes are small.

BJS and NORC have submitted the required documentation for review by the appropriate Institutional Review Boards (IRB) to ensure that the data collection procedures are in compliance with human subjects protection protocols and confidentiality regulations and have received required approvals (see Attachments A and B).

The parole office staff will only know that a parolee has been sampled for the survey, and will not know which parolees have participated or the content of their. NORC staff will be contacting the sampled parolees and setting up the appointments. There will be no use of parole officers or staff to facilitate contact or participation. Unlike the survey of inmates in prisons and jails, parole officers will not physically escort participants to and from the interview site. As a result, parole officers and staff will not know how long the parolee spends on the interview.

Interviews will only be conducted if the office can provide a space that appropriately ensures the privacy of the interview. Interviews will be administered one parolee at a time, preventing the disclosure of their participation to others offenders as well as staff.

#### 11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The Act requires BJS to collect highly sensitive information. See Section 4 of Public Law 108-79. To gradually obtain sexual victimization information, the FPS survey begins broadly and then narrows into more sensitive topics. BJS has employed this approach by asking first about general victimization in prison, including threats, fights or assaults. This serves two main purposes. First, it is believed that general assault victimization questions are non-threatening to this population. Once comfortable and asked about any prison violence, a transition into general sexual assault questions is less dramatic. Identification of broad sexual threats or assaults gradually leads into more specific identification of the nature of such activity and its severity.

BJS has implemented several safeguards to protect former prisoners against undue trauma or distress. All respondents are told in the consent process that they will receive a questionnaire about violent and sexual assaults in prison. Respondents are also reminded that participation is voluntary and they may quit the survey at any time or skip any questions that make them feel uncomfortable. In an effort to minimize distress, the sexual assault sections of the questionnaire are set up to skip the respondent to the beginning of the next section if the respondent hits the “refuse” button provided on the screen three times in a row. BJS also worked with Stop Prison Rape ([www.spr.org](http://www.spr.org)) to create a flyer listing resources for former prisoners who may want to talk to an outside source about issues of sexual assault; separate flyers are provided for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

#### 12. Estimate of Hour Burden

We estimate that each parole office will take one to two hours to provide a roster of parolees under active supervision. This includes working with a member of NORC’s Site Set-Up Team to determine the most efficient manner for submitting the roster to NORC. In addition, Site Set-Up staff will work with each parole office to purify and verify the roster before sampling. An additional ten minutes, using the roster verification form (FPS-2, see Attachment G), via telephone, is estimated for the verification process.

For all sampled cases, parole offices will be asked to provide contact information and brief records data on each parolee. It is estimated that collection of this information on each parolee will take no more than 5 minutes per case, even if completed in a non-automated format.

Based on results of the FPS Pretest, it is expected that each T-ACASI former prisoner who completes the survey will spend 30 minutes in the interview. Victims (estimated to be 13% of those interviewed) will take approximately 10 minutes longer than non-victims.

The total respondent burden, including both parole staff and former prisoners, is summarized in the following chart:

<b>Respondent Burden</b>				
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Description of Service</b>	<b>Burden hours per Response</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Total Expected Burden Hours</b>
<b>Parole Offices</b>				
Each	Provide roster	2.0 hour	200	400 hours
Each	Verify roster	10 minutes	200	33 hours
Small Offices Only	Provide contact and records data on sample of 130	5 minutes per case/ 10.84 hrs.	140	1,517 hours
Large Offices Only	Provide contact and records data on sample of 260	5 minutes per case/ 21.67 hrs.	60	1,300 hours
<b>Total Parole Office Burden</b>				3,250 hours
<b>Average Burden per Office</b>				16.25 hours
<b>Parolees</b>				
Non Victims (87%)	T-ACASI interview	30 minutes	14,355	7,178 hours
Victims (13%)	T-ACASI interview	40 minutes	2,145	1,430 hours
<b>Total Parolee Burden</b>				8,608 hours
<b>TOTAL BURDEN (Office plus Parolees)</b>				<b>11,858 hours</b>

### 13. Estimate of Respondent Cost Burden

The total respondent cost to the parole office to prepare and verify the parolee selection roster and to provide contact and background data on sampled cases is 3,450 hours. This includes 633 hours for providing and verifying the roster and 2817 hours for providing

contact and background information. At an estimate of \$20 per hour for 3718 hours, the estimated parole office cost burden for the national survey is \$74,360.

BJs anticipates that most states will provide this information in an automated form for all their offices. If state automated data is unavailable, offices may be burdened by filling out a form on each case. In these instances, BJS has decided to compensate parole offices for the provision of records data (at \$5 per case) if requested due to a burden on the office. These offices may use temporary staff or other means to complete these activities.

In addition, BJS will request that staff be made available for one or two evenings during the interview period to allow for interviews of former prisoners that are otherwise unavailable due to daytime jobs. BJS will compensate for overtime hours in this situation.

Parolee burden for completion of the interview is approximately 30 minutes for each non-victim and 40 minutes for each victim. It is estimated that 13% of the 16,500 completed interviews will involve victims. \$50 will be provided those who complete the interview as a token of appreciation for their participation.

14. Estimated Cost to Federal Government

The total estimated cost to the government for survey development and implementation is \$10,042,949

*NORC Former Prisoner Survey Cost Estimate*

Survey and instrument planning, development, management, and processing	\$2,400,000
Equipment and supplies	\$255,000
Appt. Setting, Training, travel, data collection (including pretest)	\$7,300,000
Total costs	\$9,955,000

Bureau of Justice Statistics costs – \$56,608  
 25% of GS-13, Statistician (\$19,338)  
 15% of GS-15, Supervisory Statistician (\$20,100)  
 10% GS-13, Statistician (\$7,735)  
 Benefits (@20% - \$9,435)

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

There are no changes in burden as the FPS is a new data collection.

16. Plans for Publication

BJS anticipates releasing at least 2 reports from the survey:

The first report will address the prevalence of sexual assault (by type) for the totality of the period of incarceration. For comparative purposes, the facility-based rates calculated from other PREA-mandated collections are bounded by a 12-month period or since arriving at the prison (whichever is shorter). But the Former Prisoner Survey will look at the total period of incarceration (including jail, all prison facilities and community-based facilities).

The second report will assess risks to victimization, include individual as well a facility level risk factors. The survey has been designed to provide this multi-level assessment of risk. Data from the most recent facility censuses will be linked as part of the institution history.

All reports will provide only national estimates. The sampling procedures do not permit state level or facility level estimation. Other reports may be produced, but are dependent on completion of the two primary reports.

All BJS data sets are released to the public through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) at the University of Michigan. BJS will produce microfiles that ensure the confidentiality of the individual responses and respondent identities. The public use file will be heavily masked; facility identification or other geographic or administrative identifiers will be suppressed. In addition, other individual level items will be assessed and suppressed as needed.

17. Expiration Date Approval

The OMB Control Number and the expiration date will be published on all forms given to respondents.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the Certification Statement. The Collection is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.9.

## B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

### 1. Universe and Respondents Selection

#### 1.1. Parole Districts and Field Offices

The frame for sample selection will be provided by the 2006 Census of State Parole Offices. The Census will include aggregate-level data on the number and characteristics of those under post-release supervision, by state, regional, administrative, and field offices. The universe for the FPS will include all parole offices in the Census; preliminary estimates include 1,804 individual field offices and 562,611 parolees.

A simulated sampling strategy was developed for the national survey plan. This strategy may be slightly altered pending actual Census results (e.g., exact number of certainty districts may be altered). However, the intended strategy involves a multi-stage selection. At the first stage a nationally representative sample of 100 parole districts (administrative level above the field office) will be selected with probability proportional-to-size (PPS), with each of the district total active client estimates used as the measure-of-size (MOS).

Based on NORC's sampling simulations, it is estimated that approximately 300 districts will be included in the final district level frame. This frame will be partitioned into two parts – certainty districts and non-certainty districts. Based on the simulation, it is estimated that approximately 41 districts (with the highest parolee counts) will be selected into the sample with certainty. Approximately 59 additional districts will then be selected PPS from the remaining districts, for a total of 100 districts selected.

Prior to selection, small districts will be collapsed with adjacent districts to allow for a sufficient sample size to complete 65 interviews. Also, non-certainty districts will be ordered using a serpentine sorting technique which will maximize the stratification effects and ensure a) a geographic spread of districts among census divisions and states within census divisions, as well as, b) a spread of districts within states based on district size.

NORC will contact each state to obtain permission to survey within the state and to obtain a listing of all offices within the chosen districts. The number of clients under active supervision at each office on a selected date will be obtained.

- For the Field Office file, the full sample of field offices will be selected as a probability proportional to size (PPS) sample, and this full sample will be split randomly into a released sample and a reserve sample. The offices in the reserve sample will be kept in a random order. As released cases refuse, BJS will replace them by releasing reserves in order. Replacements will increase the sample size; BJS views the final sample size as the size of the final released sample, and completion rates are defined with respect to this final sample.

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The District Office file will require an additional stage of sample selection. Once the district is selected, a request will be made to provide a listing and population size for each field office. A second stage of selection will use PPS methods to select offices from the district. As with the field office sample, when the first stage of selection occurs, a reserve list of districts will be generated and ordered as selected, for substitution in case of refusal to cooperate. At the second stage of selection, again a reserve will be randomly selected (within the district) and ordered in case of refusal to cooperate.

Few district level refusals are anticipated; refusals are more likely to be at the office level, due to lack of resources and space constraints. State departments of corrections have been extensively involved with implementation of PREA. To date, no state has refused to participate in the related administrative records collections (in 2004, 2005, and 2006). In addition, all states have participated in the prison-based collections.

Field offices will be collapsed into geographic groupings using the same specifications used to collapse districts. From one to seven field office groups will be selected from each district, again using PPS sampling. The final sample, based on actual numbers of districts, offices, and active clients, is likely to vary. However based on earlier simulations, it is estimated that 200 field office grouping will be included, with 60 involving the largest offices and 140 field office groups with smaller sizes.

## 1.2 Parolee Selection

Each office included in the sample will be asked to provide a gender-identified roster of former prisoners under active parole supervision. All eligible parolees must be 18 years of age or older. Individuals who are currently incarcerated, have absconded, have a warrant out for their arrest, or have completed parole, or have been transferred to another office are ineligible.

Prior to parolee selection, the roster of parolees in each field office of the selected grouping will be checked for completeness and eligibility. The site set-up staff will select approximately 130 or 260 parolees depending on whether 65 or 130 completed interviews are expected. Having identified the gender of each rostered parolee, female parolees will be oversampled, to the extent possible, to provide for similar precision in results. In addition, a 20 percent reserve sample will be held to allow for differences between estimated and actual numbers of completes.

In the 2006 parole office census, approximately two-thirds of the

states provided office level information and many indicated very small offices. (The remaining one third provided only regional/district office information, requiring follow-up at the second stage of sampling.) To maintain cost controls and maximize efficiencies in the survey operations, BJS and NORC decided that all cases could be included in the smaller offices. In addition, offices with fewer than 40 former prisoners would be grouped with another office within 75 miles (or eliminated if farther than 75 miles from another site) to form a field office grouping from which to sample.

For most offices, BJS expects that roster and records data are likely to be provided by the state automated systems. Parole offices will be asked to provide roster information five weeks prior to beginning interviews. As each state/office is contacted, BJS will assess their ability to provide this information within a given time frame, and schedule the interview period accordingly.

Once the sample is selected, we have allotted a two week period for the parole office liaison to provide contact information on the sample. We anticipate that this will be accomplished in one of two ways – either administrative staff will gather this information, or each parole officer will be asked to provide this information on their own cases. We anticipate that address information will be available from the state automated systems for many offices.

Final former prisoner completed interviews are anticipated at approximately 16,500. Based on the census received, it is expected that a sample of 33,000 parolees will be needed. Sample sizes by office will be adjusted as needed to obtain the projected number of completes. An additional sample of 6,000 rostered parolees will be held in reserve in the event of an imminent short fall. The NORC statistician will monitor sampling assumptions throughout the data collection period, including eligibility and completion rates, and release of reserve sample.

### 1.3 Nonresponse Bias Analysis and Adjustment

BJS has extensive experience in addressing non-response errors in previous inmate surveys. The sexual assault survey of former inmates has been designed to identify and address potential non-response error. A records form (see Attachment D) will be completed for the entire sample based on administrative data. Items that may co-vary with the likelihood of victimization and non-response have been included. Specific items include age, gender, race/Hispanic origin, time served on parole, length of stay in prison and frequency of contact

with parole offices. BJS and contract staff at NORC will utilize these items to develop appropriate non-response weighting adjustments.

A model-based approach, utilizing logistic regression, will be used to adjust the basic design weights of respondents for the design weights of non-responding former inmates with similar characteristics. The model will utilize information gathered from the records form to predict the propensity to complete an interview. Many of the variables to be used in the model have been found to co-vary with the likelihood of sexual victimization in the recently completed National Inmate Survey conducted in State and Federal prisons. In developing the model, consideration will also be given to the inclusion of possible interactions (e.g., gender by age); reasons for non-response (e.g., distinguishing offenders who refused to participate from offenders who were not contacted due to inadequate or outdated contact information); and clustering of offices (e.g., region and size of office).

The result of this logistic regression will return a probability of response to each respondent. The inverse of the probability will then be used as non-interview adjustment factor.

Further non-response adjustment factors will be introduced to control distributions to the entire population of former inmates under active parole supervision. Regional counts by gender are available from BJS' annual survey of parole. These post-stratification adjustments will be designed so that the sums reflect the distributions nationwide and not just the former inmates who were randomly sampled within selected field offices.

## 2. Procedures for Information Collection

Data collection procedures include computerized interviewer-administered interviews and Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviews.

The methods proposed for use in data collection are as follows:

### a. State/District Recruitment

Once sampling has been completed, state and district level administrators will be approached to obtain approval. Each sampled parole office will be contacted to solicit participation. A contact person will be designated at each facility.

### b. Sampling of Parolees

Approximately 4-5 weeks prior to data collection, the parole office will provide a roster of parolees under active supervision who are 18 and older ,



and who have not absconded, been reincarcerated, been transferred, or had a warrant issued. A random sample of parolees will be drawn from the roster.

c. Contact and Background Information Data Collection

A site set-up team will supply the parole office with the list of sampled cases. They will be asked to provide contact and background information on the sample. The site set up staff will work with the parole office (and state agencies) to determine the most efficient manner for collection of this information. If automated data is available, it may be provided in that manner. If not, a records form (FPS-1, see Attachment D) will be provided to be completed in paper-and-pencil format, or through a web entry screen. If the parole office agrees to provide access to the data, field staff from the contractor could also enter the data electronically.

Contact information will be used to set appointments for the interviews with the sampled parolees.

Administrative records data will allow researchers to compare demographic characteristics of responding parolees with those who did not participate, in order to determine if there is any bias introduced from non-respondents.

d. Appointment Setting

Approximately two weeks prior to the interview period, a letter inviting participation will be mailed to each sampled parolee. In addition, staff from the contractor will begin to call all sampled parolees to set appointments. After the interview period begins, interviewing staff will continue to call sampled parolees to set appointments or to reschedule missed appointments.

e. Interviewing at Parole Offices

Interviews will take place at each parole office for an approximate two week period. Two to four interviewers will be available, depending on office size, to complete the interviewing process. Interviewers will follow the protocol determined with each office as to parole office entry. In most sites during the pretest, parolees checked in at a front desk and interviewers were buzzed to meet them in the waiting area.

Interviews will take place in a private interviewing area. The interviewer will read a consent form to the former prisoner and solicit his/her participation. If the respondent consents, the interviewer will begin administering a brief set of demographic questions that includes age, race, ethnicity, length of incarceration, and reason for incarceration. After completing the demographic section, the respondent will receive a brief tutorial on answering questions on the touch screen computer, and will begin the more sensitive sections of the interview in complete privacy. In order to allow parolees with reading difficulties to participate, the respondent will wear a set of headphones and hear the questions being read as they appear on the screen. The former

prisoner will enter his response by touching a button on the screen – no computer expertise is required. Neither the interviewer nor any parole office staff will be aware of the parolees' responses. At the end of the questionnaire, the respondent will turn the computer back to the interviewer, receive the incentive, and be escorted back to the waiting area. The interviewer will then finish the process by answering a set of debriefing questions about the interview.

### 3. Methods to Maximize Response

Every effort is being made to make the survey materials clear and simple to use. The confidential nature of the data collected is clearly and repeatedly explained in the consent process. The FPS questionnaire has been designed to maximize respondent comprehension and participation and minimize burden. Some examples include an easy to use touch-screen interface with the questions simultaneously delivered via headphones. A Spanish version of the questionnaire will be available for non-English, Spanish speaking respondents. Field staff from the contractor will be available to answer any questions that respondents may have, including bilingual staff who can answer questions in Spanish. A flyer with a listing of local counseling services will be provided to all respondents, with telephone numbers listed for those interested in obtaining counseling services or assistance following the survey.

The greatest difficulty in obtaining response for the parolee population is locating the respondent to invite participation. During the pretest, parolees were often found to have unstable residences and/or non-working phones. The letter mailed to each respondent, providing a toll-free number increased response in this population. Often the mailing address used by the parole office was a parent or family member who could see that the respondent received it. This letter both increased the number of call-ins for appointments and facilitated response when calls were made to them, as they were familiar with the project. The \$50 compensation was also instrumental in increasing response among this population.

During the pretest, some respondents were unable to get to the parole office during the scheduled interviewing period due to work obligations. Staff will work with each office to determine if some late afternoon and evening hours can be available for interviewing, with reimbursement for parole office staff who will keep the office open after hours.

### 4. Test of Procedures or Methods

The interview and data collection procedures were tested in a pilot study conducted Oct. – Dec. 2006, results of which have been cited throughout the supporting statement.

### 5. Consultation Information

The Corrections Statistics Unit at BJS takes responsibility for the overall design and management of the activities described in this submission, including sampling

procedures, development of the questionnaires, and the analysis of the data. BJS contacts include:

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