

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The NPS covers the entire universe of State and Federal prisons. A form is sent to the research arm of each Department of Correction and the Bureau of Prisons and is usually completed by a statistician or research analyst. NPS does not include private prisons or local jails, but we do collect counts of any state or federal prisoners held in these facilities (NPS questions 3-5). Our response rate is 100%.

2. Procedures for Information Collection

Data collection mode is both paper forms sent directly to all Departments of Correction and the Bureau of Prisons and a web option that looks just like the form. Each jurisdiction has an individual password to enter the website and can view their data, but no one else's. The website is hosted by Census, our collection agent:
<http://harvester.census.gov/nps/index.asp?bhcp=1>.

The NPS-1A and 1 are sent out the each year on last week of June and December, respectively, along with a letter from BJS. Respondents are asked to submit the data by the due date on the forms either by web, fax, or mail. Staff from the Census, our collection agent, receive surveys and send reminders until the last 4-5 respondents remain; these are often the same jurisdictions from year to year due to data system issues or the state being short-staffed. By this time BJS is often already working with the data to produce a report, thus, it increases efficiency to have BJS handle the remainder of the data collection.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Phone calls and emails have proven sufficient in obtaining a 100% response rate from the jurisdictions in the universe.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods

Any significant changes to the form requires that we obtain feedback from several Departments of Correction and the Bureau of Prisons to ensure definitions and counting rules are clear and consistent across jurisdictions. In addition, OMB approval must be obtained, which includes an outside review of the survey (see Section A, 8). Prior to offering the web option beginning in 2003, BJS and Census staff tested the instrument extensively.

5. Consultation Information

The Correction Statistics Unit at BJS take responsibility for the overall design and management of the activities described in this submission, including fielding of the

survey, data cleaning, and data analysis. BJS contacts include:

Heather Couture
Corrections Statistics Unit
Bureau of Justice Statistics
810 Seventh St, NW
Washington, DC 20531
(202) 305-2469

William Sabol
Chief, Corrections Statistics Unit
Bureau of Justice Statistics
810 Seventh St, NW
Washington, DC 20531
(202) 514-1062