

## B. Statistical Methods

### 1. Universe and Respondent Selection

This collection involves the entire universe of state, federal and locally administered parole and probation departments. For probation these include 33 central state reporters, the federal system, the District of Columbia, and 428 separate city, county, or court reporters. For parole these include 50 central state reporters, the federal system, the District of Columbia, 1 city agency, and the California Youth Authority. In 2006, the response rate for the Annual Parole Survey was 98% and the Annual Probation Survey response rate was 100%. We expect similar rates in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Number</u>
<b>Probation:</b>	<b>464</b>
Central State	33
Federal System	1
District of Columbia	1
Local	428
<b>Parole:</b>	<b>54</b>
Central State	50
Federal System	1
District of Columbia	1
Local	1
CYA	1

### 2. Procedures for Collecting Information

There are two modes of data collection, a paper questionnaire sent directly to all respondents and a web option that looks just like the paper questionnaire. Each respondent is provided with an individual user ID and password to enter the website and can view their data and print their data, but do not have access to another agency's data. Currently, the website is hosted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, our collection agent: <http://harvester.census.gov/aspp/>.

The surveys will be mailed out to respondents along with a cover letter (see attachment 10) explaining the importance of the survey, stating that the survey is voluntary, and making it clear that no other sources are available to provide all of the data requested in the surveys. A copy of the bulletin, presenting the prior year's probation and parole data, will be included with the survey package. Also to be included are draft copies of the detailed tables being prepared for electronic release on the BJS website. In an effort to maintain a current list of centralized

reporting agents, the name of the respondent and address mailing list is updated yearly.

Respondents are asked to submit the data by the due date on the forms either by web, fax, or mail. Staff from the Census Bureau receive surveys and send reminders until the last 4-5 respondents remain; these are often the same agencies from year to year due to information system issues or the agency 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

A second letter and questionnaire are mailed to nonrespondents to increase response rates. Correspondence encouraging participation will be made through telephone calls and e-mails. In addition, as needed, the collection agent will assist respondents in completing the survey if the respondent has questions or is confused by some items. Data for nonrespondents will be imputed for two core data elements. In addition, the CJ-8A (Short Forms) is sent to local probation agencies which have limited information systems and resources. Also, support will be enlisted from state and local corrections officials and from the American Probation and Parole Association, the National Institute of Corrections, the State Executives of Probation and Parole Network, the National Institute of Justice's Community Corrections Research Network, and the Association of Paroling Authorities International. All of these methods have proven sufficient enough to yield a minimum response rate of 98%, but typically both surveys result in a 100% response rate.

4. Testing of Procedures

Any significant changes to the form requires that BJS obtains feedback from several state and local agencies as well as the federal system 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 2006, BJS and Census staff tested the instrument extensively.

BJS is concerned about placing any additional burden on respondents while simultaneously understanding how important it is to provide representative estimates of parole and probation movements during the year. In an attempt to understand more about the imputations generated using the ratio estimation method, BJS is currently exploring other methods of imputation in order to potentially compare imputed estimates across methods and potentially estimate the imputation error; for example, using the method of multiple imputation as a way of generating imputation error, or a way to add a measure of uncertainty due to missing data.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The Correction Statistics Unit at BJS takes 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:

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**C. Attachments**

Attachment 1: *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2006* (06.bulletin.pdf)

Attachment 2: Copy of telephone and e-mail follow-up scripts (scripts.doc)

Attachment 3: Screenshots of the web option (webshots.doc)

Attachment 4: Draft of 2008 CJ-8 Annual Probation Survey (CJ-8.2008.draft.pdf)

Attachment 5: Draft of 2008 CJ-8A Annual Probation Survey (Short Form) (CJ-8A.2008.draft.pdf)

Attachment 6: Draft of 2008 CJ-7 Annual Parole Survey (CJ-7.2008.draft.pdf)

Attachment 7: 2005 Annual Probation Survey (cj8.2005.pdf)

Attachment 8: 2005 Annual Probation Survey (Short Form) (cj8a.2005.pdf)

Attachment 9: 2005 Annual Parole Survey (cj7.2005.pdf)

Attachment 10: Draft letter sent to respondents announcing collection  
(cover.letter.doc)