

Purpose: Describe comment received during 30-day notice regarding the extension and revision of the Annual Parole Survey (CJ-7) and the Annual Probation Survey (CJ-8); OMB control number 1121-0064

Source of comment: (see e-mail)

William J. McDevitt, Jr.
Director
Bureau of Probation Services
PA Board of Probation and Parole
1101 South Front Street
Suite 5900
Harrisburg, PA 17104-2545
Phone: (717) 787-7461

Leslee Magulick
Statistician
Bureau of Probation Services, Division of Grants and Standards
PA Board of Probation and Parole
1101 S. Front St.
Suite 5900
Harrisburg, PA 17104-2545
Phone: (717) 787-5699 x400

Description of comment:

The last racial category on the draft parole (CJ-7) and probation (CJ-8) forms, which is “No information available,” does not allow the parole/probation agency reporting the data to differentiate between parolees/probationers classified as races other than the racial categories provided on the forms (i.e., additional categories in their information system) and parolees/probationers for which race is unknown.

At one point during 2007, there appeared to be some direction from OMB that the “No information available” category was the required category to collect race data if the data could not be reported in any of the specific racial categories provided on the survey form, and that this held true regardless of whether or not the data were collected through administrative records or directly from individuals through self-reports. This is the reason why the “No information available” category currently appears on the draft 2008 parole (CJ-7) and probation (CJ-8) forms.

However, to remain consistent with recent BJS survey forms approved by OMB and to also take into account the comment received by William McDevitt (see e-mail) on September 16, 2008, I am proposing that the 2008 forms revert back to the original method of collecting race data. The original method included the “Additional categories in your information system” category, which also included a “specify” option, and the “Not known” category. There are two benefits to this type of construction: 1) this allows for additional detail to be reported because the parolees/probationers for which race data

is not available or not known will be reported separately (i.e., in “Not known”) from the parolees/probationers classified as a race other than the ones provided on the forms (i.e., in “Additional categories in your information system”); and 2) this will allow the parole/probation agency responding to explain the races/information reported in “Additional categories in your information system.” If the races/information they list indicate that the data actually reflect one of the specific racial categories provided on the forms, BJS analyst will then have the ability to reclassify those data into the appropriate racial categories. This will improve data quality.