

August 17, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO: Lynn Bryant
Deputy Program Manager, PRA
Information Management and Security Staff
Justice Management Division

FROM: Michael Sinclair
Acting BJS Director

THROUGH: Allen J. Beck
Senior Statistical Advisor

SUBJECT: Submission of changes to the National Inmate Survey for
approval for testing by the Office of Management and Budget

Attached please find the OMB Form 83-c and associated materials submitted to request approval to test survey changes to Year 3 of the National Inmate Survey (NIS). The proposed changes serve two purposes: (1) to provide additional inmates characteristics normally obtained through our Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, which have been on hold due to the burden imposed by the surveys required on the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003; and (2) to gather some facility level data in an effort to better understand and explain differing prevalence rates of sexual assault between facilities.

For the first two years of collection we randomly assigned inmates to an alternative survey on substance abuse and treatment, and also used these questions to pad out time for those who completed the survey on sexual assault quickly. For Year 3 of the NIS, we would like to field questions on mental health and medical problems and treatment, which are topics of great interest within corrections. We propose to use the residual burden hours from Year 2 to pilot test the questions in up to five facilities (two prisons and three jails) with up to 750 completed interviews. The short facility form would be tested in the same facilities.

The attached documents include the 83-c form (83-cfill.pdf), the proposed test instrument (Draft Year 3 NIS.doc), the facility survey (Facility Survey.doc), the rationale for each change (ItemChanges.doc), and the supporting statement explaining the scope, purpose, and expected outcome of the pilot test (Supp Statement.doc).

If there are questions related to this request, please contact Paige Harrison, Statistician, at (202) 514-0809 or by email at paige.harrison@usdoj.gov.