

June 1, 2011

Contact
Title
Name of the Facility
Address
City, State, Zipcode

Dear Contact:

In our ongoing effort to balance the interest of special topics in corrections with concerns of respondent burden, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is temporarily suspending the NPS-1A midyear collection. In order to avoid losing data unique to the NPS-1A we have amended the NPS-1B to include these items from the NPS-1A (the counts of persons under the age of 18 and non-citizens). You will receive the revised NPS-1B form by mid-December for the yearend count.

We feel this action is warranted for several reasons. Prison growth has stabilized in recent years, making the need to check in on the prisoner count at midyear less crucial in tracking growth than it was previously. At the same time, there is great interest among correctional researchers, legislators, and in the general public to collect items on special topics within the prison population, including information on medical and mental health policy and treatment, measures of inmate safety, and improved measures on the incarceration of non-citizens, to name a few.

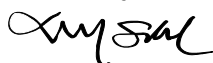
Such interests were confirmed at a recent workshop conducted by BJS with research directors from dozens of state Departments of Correction. One concern universally stated at the workshop was that with the onset of the budget crisis, the staff and related resources necessary to provide basic data have been drastically impacted, making data collection increasingly challenging. BJS acknowledges the need to reduce redundancy within and across correctional data collections while making modest efforts to increase information on special populations. The temporary suspension of the NPS-1A to relieve you from reporting responsibilities for the midyear count while BJS staff design special topic supplements to replace the existing NPS-1A reflects this reality.

It is anticipated that BJS will develop three to four NPS-1A forms on special topics to supplant the existing form; these would be rotated cyclically (one form per year) to minimize burden while enhancing available information on the prison population. BJS will then return to the Office of Management and Budget for review, burden hour adjustment, and approval of the supplement forms.

We welcome your suggestions on special topics and core items of interest in corrections. We may also be contacting a few of you to review draft supplements for comment and to confirm whether the proposed data items and definitions are consistent with your data systems.

Thank you for your continued support of BJS' statistical programs. If you would like to share ideas for the proposed supplements, please contact me at (202) 514-1062 or at William.Sabol@usdoj.gov.

Sincerely,



William J. Sabol, Ph.D.,

Deputy Director, BJS