



U.S. Department of Justice


Office of Justice Programs


Bureau of Justice Statistics

Washington, D.C. 20531

November 9, 2011

MEMORANDUM TO: Lynn Murray
Clearance Officer, Justice Management Division

THROUGH: James P. Lynch, Ph.D. 
Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics

FROM: William J. Sabol, Ph.D. 
Deputy Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics

SUBJECT: Delivery of requested report on BJS compliance with OMB race/
ethnicity classifications in the National Corrections Reporting Program
(NCRP) (OMB Control Number 1121-0065)

Attached please find the report requested by OMB as a condition of 2009 clearance for the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) (OMB Control Number 1121-0065). OMB asked that BJS document our progress in bringing the NCRP into compliance with OMB standard race and ethnicity classifications. NCRP requests race/ethnicity data from respondents in the two-question format, but prior to the 2009 clearance, the question on race did not include the OMB approved "two or more races" or "additional categories in your information system" categories, and instead collected "other" and "unknown" racial classifications for state prison inmates. This report describes the results from analyses of several BJS corrections collections that measure the reporting consistency of racial and ethnic data.

Our analyses show that the distribution of racial and ethnic data collected in NCRP is comparable to other administrative data and establishment surveys conducted by BJS. There are differences between the NCRP racial/ethnic distribution and the National Inmate Survey (NIS), but this is probably a result of the method of data collection (administrative records versus self-identification by sampled prisoners, respectively). We continue to encourage our NCRP data respondents at the department of corrections for each state to submit data in accordance with OMB guidelines, but since we rely on the good will of respondents to provide data, BJS is working to achieve both consistency with OMB guidelines and continued participation in the collection. As states update their information systems, BJS is requesting they adopt OMB guidelines on race and ethnicity data collection.