

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The universe for the LFIOS is the Nation's estimated 400 State and local law enforcement agencies that house and maintain an AFIS used for latent fingerprint searching in the course of criminal investigation. This number was provided by AFIS practitioners during the development of the questionnaire, and obtaining an accurate count for the size of the frame is a goal of the survey process. It is also anticipated that more than one person will be required to complete all the survey questions (e.g., AFIS or IT managers, latent examiners, or latent unit managers may be better suited to know the information of some questions over others).

The estimated number of agencies permits collection from the entire universe rather than using systematic sampling, and the only stratification that is assumed is to divide the respondent population into the categories of State or local. Furthermore, sampling from this universe does not make sense given the size of the universe and the goals of the project to understand interoperability. For any numerical data that can be analyzed to determine aggregate information, the sample size would converge to the universe to arrive at acceptable degrees of precision given the estimated number of respondent agencies.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

All respondents will be contacted by email with a link to the online LFIOS form, however the print version will be available on request. All State and local law enforcement agencies that house and maintain an AFIS used for latent fingerprint searching in the course of criminal investigation will be contacted. Once respondents reply to the canvas, they will be issued a login and password for instant access to complete the questionnaire in a secure online system. Once respondents reply to the canvas, they will be issued a login and password for instant access to complete the questionnaire in a secure online system. Where agencies need more than one person to complete the survey, answers can be saved and the survey returned to a later time by the same or a different person.

Nonrespondents to the canvas will be contact directly by follow-up email and/or telephone to encourage them to reply to the online or print questionnaire. Since this is a new data collection effort that will be unfamiliar to State and local practitioners, NIJ requests that OMB permit at least one year to complete the data collection as there may be a significant need to reach out repeatedly to nonrespondent agencies.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

To maximize response rates, NIJ will employ the best practices for survey nonresponse follow-up. Particularly for the online data collection system, the LFIOS is relatively simple in format with questions in black text behind a light gray background. Most questions are Yes/No or multiple choice that can be answered by clicking on radio buttons. Where text information is requested, information can be typed into a box and the questions have been designed to request the least amount of necessary information.

The data collection forms submitted for this collection involve data that are available from the current law enforcement agencies, and iterative input from practitioners and subject matter experts regarding the survey content, wording, and length so that the questionnaire is best targeted to the individuals in the law enforcement agency best suited to provide the needed information such as AFIS managers and latent print examiners. All State and local law enforcement agencies that house and maintain an AFIS used for latent fingerprint searching in the course of criminal investigation will be contacted. Follow-up email and telephone calls to nonrespondents will be used to encourage high response rates. Once respondents reply to the canvas, they will be issued a login and password for instant access to complete the questionnaire in a secure online system.

Where agencies need more than one person to complete the survey, answers can be saved and the survey returned to a later time by the same or a different person. This approach is anticipated to translate into higher response rates by allowing the respondent time to gather the necessary information and not feel overwhelmed by having to answer the entire survey at once and minimizes the burden on any one person. Instructions for the survey will stress that more than one individual may be needed to accurately answer all the questions on the survey to make this point clear. Respondents will also be given the choice to answer some questions in a manner that they may not know the answer right now but will find out and respond.

4. Testing of Procedures

Through stakeholders who provided feedback during the development of the LFIOS questionnaire, NIJ found general satisfaction with the current survey and its Addendum, in that the questions cover important topics and the accompanying instructions for completing the survey are clear. An advanced draft version of the data collection instrument was publicly presented at the International Association for Investigation (IAI) in August 2011 in Milwaukee, WI where stakeholders were able to go through the all questions and provide feedback. This was a valuable exercise towards developing a consensus understanding of the data collection instrument. Common and insightful recommendations were incorporated into the submitted version attached in Section C.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The Office of Science and Technology of NIJ takes responsibility for the overall design and management of the activities described in this submission, including data collection procedures, development of the questionnaires, and analysis of the data.

NIJ contacts include:

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A. ATTACHMENTS

1. NIJ Authorizing Legislation, Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Street Act of 1968, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 3722

2. OST Authorizing Legislation, Homeland Security Act of 2002, 6 U.S.C. 162
3. Data Collection Instrument (LFIOS-C)
4. Data Collection Instrument (LFIOS-S)
5. Data Collection Instrument (LFIOS-L)
6. Public Comment Form