

December ##, 2009

Name  
Title  
State Department of Corrections  
Address 1  
Address 2  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

Thanks to your efforts and those of prison administrators nationwide, the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Deaths in Custody Reporting Program has been a great success since its inception in 2001. I am writing to announce the resumption of data collection for 2009.

As we indicated to you earlier this year, the Deaths in Custody collection was undergoing a renewal of its periodic clearance from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In addition, BJS was in the process of selecting a new data collection agent for the program, to replace the U.S. Census Bureau. Due to these considerations, BJS postponed our collection of all 2009 death records until yearend 2009. At this time, we are happy to report that BJS has obtained a renewed OMB clearance through yearend 2012. Furthermore, BJS has selected RTI International to act as our new data collection agent for state prison death records.

In selecting RTI International to partner with us on this project, BJS was committed to providing our respondents with a professional organization with deep expertise in collecting correctional data and handling sensitive information. RTI has gained valuable experience in both regards as BJS' data collection agent for the National Inmate Surveys, conducted pursuant to the *Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003*. They will collect prisoner death records with the same safeguards demanded by BJS in previous years, and your data will still be protected by the confidentiality regulations directing BJS activities (see attached copy of Title 42, USC §3735 and 3789g).

Enclosed are the *Deaths in Custody, 2009* questionnaire forms, as well a comprehensive reporting instructions packet. For each calendar quarter, you should submit a *Quarterly Summary of Inmate Deaths in State Prisons* (form NPS-4), along with a *State Prison Inmate Death Report* (NPS-4A Addendum) for each death. As in previous years, you may choose to submit these data in the form of an electronic file (such as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or Microsoft Access database) if you prefer. You can also submit these death records online, using the online reporting instrument developed by RTI International. Please visit the data collection website at: <http://ww.rti.org/dcrp.htm> and refer to the enclosed flyer for login instructions.

If you have any questions about the 2009 collection of state prisoner death records, please feel free to follow up with Christopher Ellis, the RTI project director at 919-541-6480, or [ellis@rti.org](mailto:ellis@rti.org). You could also feel free to contact us directly at any time, using the contact information below. If you would like to see the latest data from the Deaths in Custody Reporting Program, please visit the BJS website at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/dcrp/dictabs.htm> . We thank you for your participation in the program and look forward to resuming our work together.

Sincerely,

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Attachments: *Quarterly Summary of Inmate Deaths in State Prisons* (form NPS-4)  
*State Prison Inmate Death Report* (NPS-4A Addendum)  
42 USC §3735 and 3789g  
Online data reporting guidelines flyer