

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

### A. Justification

#### 1. Necessity of Information Collection

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), sponsor of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS; OMB No. 1121-0111), requests an extension of the generic clearance (OMB Number 1121-0325) to continue developmental activities as part of the redesign program, *Methodological Research to Support the Redesign of the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCVS-RR), through September of 2018. The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) current approval expired July 31, 2015.

The NCVS was initiated in 1973 in response to recommendations from the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. The 1967 Commission Report emphasized the importance of having information on crime and its consequences that was independent of police recording practices and available on an on-going basis. The NCVS was developed to complement the information available in police records by including crimes not reported to the police and was designed to provide greater detail about the characteristics of criminal victimization, including victim-offender relationships, weapon use, the extent of injury, receipt of medical care and victim services, and police and criminal justice response.

Title 42, United States Code, Section 3732 of the Justice Systems Improvement Act of 1979, authorizes BJS to collect statistics on victimization (see attachment 1). The NCVS provides national data on personal and household victimization, both reported and not reported to police. The data collection allows the BJS to fulfill its mission of collecting, analyzing, publishing, and disseminating information on victims of crime. Together with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI), statistics on crimes reported to law enforcement agencies, the NCVS provides an understanding of the nature of and changes in the nation's crime problems.

Over the past three decades the ability of the survey to meet the goals for which it was designed has been threatened by increasing costs of data collection and reductions in response rates. In 2007, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) sponsored an expert panel to develop an agenda for reconfiguring the survey and restoring its ability to effectively measure the extent and consequences of crime. The Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Research Council reviewed the survey's methodology and provided recommendations for redesigning the NCVS in 2008. The panel's initial recommendations are contained in *Surveying Victims: Options for Conducting the National Crime Victimization Survey*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12090/surveying-victims-options-for-conducting-the-national-crime-victimization-survey>.

To address these recommendations, BJS has structured the NCVS-RR program to reflect an emphasis on cost containment, survey utility, and data quality. Since 2012, BJS has implemented a series of projects to focusing on the redesign of the NCVS field operations, sample design, and instrumentation. BJS and Census implemented changes to interviewer performance metrics and training (described here: <http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/rrs2013-07.pdf>). In addition, the NCVS sample design has been modified to generate estimates for the largest 22 states. Finally, BJS awarded a cooperative agreement for the NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project in 2013 to support the activities associated with the scientific and technical support for the redesign and testing of the NCVS roster control card, crime screener (NCVS-1), and crime incident (NCVS-2) instruments.

#### Status of Ongoing NCVS-RR Projects

**Subnational companion survey.** The NCVS was designed to provide national-level estimates of criminal victimization; however, there has been emerging interest in sub-national estimates. To some data users at the state, metropolitan and local level, national-level data are of limited value. In response, BJS has undertaken a multi-prong approach to generating subnational estimates including: model-based estimates, a direct boost to the core NCVS sample and a low-cost companion study alternative to the core NCVS collection. The model-based estimates and direct boost projects are not addressed with this generic.

The Companion Survey (CS) explores design options for producing a low-cost alternative approach to producing sub-national estimates. In the initial study, two data collection approaches were tested, both using an address based sample (ABS) frame.

- One approach will screen by mail only those addresses for which we are unable to obtain a valid telephone number from directory services. The purpose of this mail screener is primarily to obtain a telephone number.
- The other approach will screen all selected addresses by mail with a goal of oversampling households that are likely to include a victim of a crime.

The ABS design was piloted in the Chicago MSA. BJS learned that the reliance on a phone component severely limited contact rates resulting in low response rates. The decision was made to field a self-administered paper survey and this was administered to a small nationally representative sample in 2014. An initial goal of the NCVS Companion Study was to test the ability to use low cost screening methods in combination with statistical methods for blending the results of the survey with the NCVS. These results determined that blending estimates with the core NCVS was not feasible, but that the self-administered ABS design was successful, having high cooperation rates and stable

estimates.

BJS submitted a separate request for a full OMB review for the field test portion of the Companion Survey (OMB No 1121-0351). Currently, the project is entering the field for 40 CBSA 2-wave collection to estimate level and change. In addition to producing estimates of violence and property crime victimization, the study will capture residents' perceptions of disorder, fear, and police performance/legitimacy. BJS expects to complete the data collection by the end of 2016 with results disseminated in 2017.

***Developing and testing optimum survey methods for collecting data on rape and sexual assault.*** BJS has initiated two projects to identify, develop, and test the best methods for collecting self-report data on rape and sexual assault.

- In June 2011, BJS charged an expert panel from the National Research Council's Committee on National Statistics to examine conceptual and methodological issues surrounding survey statistics on rape and sexual assault and to recommend to BJS the best methods for obtaining such statistics on an ongoing basis. In 2014, the panel produced recommendations for the measurement of rape and sexual assault in the NCVS in a publication titled, *Estimating the Incidence of Rape and Sexual Assault*.<sup>2</sup>
- In September 2011, BJS also made a competitive award to Westat, Inc., to develop and test two different survey designs for collecting self-report data on rape and sexual assault. One design is to be an optimal design identified in collaboration with the CNSTAT panel. The other will be similar to designs used in the public health field that collect data on rape and sexual assault (e.g., National Women's Study and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Surveillance System). BJS will compare estimates from these two alternative designs with estimates from the current NCVS.

BJS submitted a full OMB clearance package for a pilot test (OMB No. 1121-0343). Currently, field testing of these alternative designs is currently ongoing with findings expected to be delivered in early 2016. The findings from these projects will be used to inform the NCVS instrument redesign work.

#### Current Clearance Request

BJS is seeking an extension of the 2012 generic clearance to permit pretesting and developmental work primarily for the revisions to the NCVS instrumentation and data collection protocol. The field test of the sub-national companion study is currently underway. There will be no further requests under the 2015 generic clearance for this project. The project with Westat that examines optimal methods for collecting data on

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18605/estimating-the-incidence-of-rape-and-sexual-assault>.

rape and sexual assault is also underway. This project may require additional burden drawdown under the renewed generic clearance to permit additional testing as needed.

***NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project.*** BJS is seeking the generic clearance to permit pretesting and developmental work associated with the NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project. BJS initiated this project in early 2014 through a competitive award to Westat, Inc.. The NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project is a major multi-year effort to overhaul the existing survey instrument. The overarching objective of the project is to provide scientific and technical support for the redesign and testing of the National Crime Victimization (NCVS) roster control card, crime screener (NCVS-1), and crime incident (NCVS-2) instruments in support of BJS' efforts related to increasing the efficiency, reliability, and utility of the NCVS. Through the project, BJS aims to evaluate and modernize the organization and content of the NCVS; improve the efficiency of the instruments and the current core-supplement design; and develop a procedure for introducing routine improvements to the survey in order to capture emerging crime types and time-relevant topics.

One of the first steps in the project was a comprehensive assessment of the instrument to determine which survey items are being utilized and how, which survey items are problematic in their language and placement, and where there are gaps in the content of the instrument. The initial assessment provided a better understanding of the substantive and procedural issues with the instrument and helped to identify areas where the content could be improved to enhance current knowledge of victimization and its correlates.

Through the initial assessment work, several major areas in need of modernization became apparent. The first involves enhancing the socio-demographic information collected about respondents to better address policy-relevant questions about victimization. The types of socio-demographic variables being considered for inclusion are veteran status, citizenship, sexual orientation, and expanded information about cognitive and physical disabilities. Because these measures have been identified in other research as correlates of victimization, their inclusion in the NCVS will allow researchers to better understand the relationship between these variables and experiences with criminal victimization.

Another area of focus is on improving the measurement of and increasing the crime types covered by the survey. The current NCVS captures rape and sexual assault, robbery, physical assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle through the core survey instrument and uses routine supplements to collect information on other crime types like identity theft and stalking. However, the rates of victimization for these supplemental crimes are not incorporated into the overall victimization rates. Other growing crimes like financial fraud are not measured by the survey at all. One of the goals of the redesign is to expand the crime screener to incorporate a broader range of crimes, including

some, like fraud, that are not typically reported through official police statistics. Additional efforts are on improving the measurement of highly sensitive crimes like rape and sexual assault and intimate partner violence. The anticipated changes to and improvement of the types of crimes measured by the NCVS, may require changes to the survey methodology to ensure that the information collected is accurate and reliable. Through the NCVS redesign project, BJS is examining the feasibility of using self-administered approaches to obtaining responses to at least the most sensitive of the questions.

BJS anticipates that it will request OMB clearance to perform the following tasks for the NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project under the generic information collection:

- Assess the wording of potential new and revised questions on the NCVS crime screener and incident forms.
- Assess the effects of changes in question sequence on the NCVS instruments.
- Estimate the length of revised NCVS crime screener and incident forms.
- Perform up to 400 cognitive interviews on new questions and revised instruments, as needed.
- Develop and conduct feasibility testing of alternative data collection modes, including self-administered approaches.
- Conduct feasibility testing of the redesigned NCVS crime screener and incident instruments. This will include feasibility testing of layout and design for web-based data collection.
- Conduct small-scale pilot study of the redesigned NCVS crime screener and incident instruments, including multiple data collection modes and experimental versions of the instruments that are candidates for the main field test.
- Conduct field test of the redesigned NCVS crime screener and incident forms to measure feasibility of administering the revised instruments, the use of data collected, and the impact of the instrument revisions on victimization estimates.

BJS will submit to OMB supporting materials for each project as materials are developed. BJS and its collection agents will obtain approvals from the appropriate Institutional Review Boards (IRB) prior to conducting any testing under this clearance. Results of each project will be made available as methodological reports and disseminated on the BJS Website.

## **2. Needs and Uses**

The purpose of this generic clearance request is to obtain approval to conduct developmental work necessary under the NCVS-RR. Data collected under this clearance will be used to refine and revise the survey questionnaires and procedural designs. The results from the pretests will have a minimal impact on the privacy of the respondents, as their participation is confidential and voluntary. Development and testing are needed

in order to adequately assess methodological changes being considered for the redesign of the NCVS.

Data from ongoing projects will inform decisions regarding —

- methodological improvements for collecting self-report data on rape and sexual assault; and
- the viability of producing sub-national estimates as part of the NCVS program.

Data from anticipated projects will also be used to inform improvements in the —

- NCVS screener and crime incident instruments;
- mode of data collection for the NCVS;
- flexibility to measure emerging crime types; and
- capability to capture indicators of safety and security and perceptions of police that go beyond experiences with victimization.

Data from these projects will be included in methodological reports published by BJS and made available on the BJS website. BJS produced similar publications during the development of the early National Crime Survey (NCS) and subsequent to the NCVS redesign in 1992.

Users of these data include the following:

- U.S. Department of Justice – The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the sponsor of the NCVS data collection. BJS will use these data to make decisions about the future design of the NCVS.
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – OMB shall be given access to results of these studies and consulted as BJS makes decisions regarding future data collection efforts and related funding requirements.

### **3. Use of Information Technology**

An important goal of the NCVS-RR under this generic clearance is to reduce the cost incurred by screening for crime victimization, possibly adopting self-administered interview modes. Several of the research projects plan to utilize new technologies, including Web and Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI). All of these projects under the NCVS-RR program involve the application of new technologies to the current NCVS protocol.

### **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The purpose of the research under this clearance is to study the impact of methodological changes for the NCVS. The NCVS is the only ongoing national program that collects data on the incidence, characteristics and consequences of reported and unreported nonfatal violent and property crime.

This research does not duplicate any other questionnaire design work being conducted by BJS. Moreover, for each of the methodological projects, BJS's data collection agents are required to review the existing survey literature to incorporate current knowledge of survey methodology and to avoid any duplication of effort with other Federal agencies. All OMB clearance requests will include this literature review.

**5. Minimizing Burden**

N/A. This research does not involve small businesses or other small entities. The respondents are non-institutionalized persons living in households in the United States.

**6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection**

This clearance involves developmental work for projects that measure the impact of methodological changes to the NCVS. The developmental work will be conducted only once for each project. If these studies are not conducted, it would not be possible to make informed decisions about the redesign of the NCVS.

**7. Special Circumstances**

The NCVS currently faces escalating costs, declining precision, and circumstances that demand research into how to redesign the survey. Additionally, BJS recognizes the need to increase the utility of the NCVS for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. Furthermore, the information must be collected in a manner that places minimal burden on each respondent. As such, all data will be collected in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.9.

**8. Federal Register Publication and Outside Consultation**

The initial research projects under the NCVS-RR were informed by CNSTAT panel recommendations. BJS has identified further areas for research under the NCVS-RR designed to increase utility and data quality in the survey while maintaining affordable costs.

The research under this clearance is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6. Comments on this data collection effort were solicited in the Federal Register, Vol. 80, No. 156, on Thursday August 13, 2015 and in Vol. 80, No. 202, October 20, 2015. No comments were received in response to the information provided.

### **Measurement of Rape and Sexual Assault Panel**

In 2011, BJS commissioned the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Research Council to convene an expert panel assessing the measurement of rape and sexual assault. The panel was tasked with determining the optimal procedures and methodology for the collection of self-report data on rape and sexual assault. The final report was released in November of 2013 and provided a number of recommendations for how the NCVS could be improved to better collect data on rape and sexual assault. These recommendations are consistent with the BJS-led research effort to test different strategies for measuring rape and sexual assault in general population surveys and in high-risk groups such as college campus population. The results will be used to inform the NCVS instrument redesign work, taking place under a separate award.

### **NCVS Technical Review Panel**

In October of 2014, BJS held the first meeting of the NCVS Technical Review Panel (TRP). The TRP brings together a group of relevant federal and nonfederal NCVS stakeholders on a routine basis to weigh in on issues and developments related to the NCVS. The TRP's primary objectives are to assist BJS in the assessment of the NCVS instruments; to evaluate the goals, purpose, performance, burden, and value of each item and topical section; and review and comment on proposed item additions/deletions and the testing of such recommendation. However, while the initial work of the TRP revolves around the instrument redesign, the TRP is seen as a long-standing panel that will assist with ongoing maintenance of and improvements to the NCVS. The second TRP panel was convened in May of 2015. Panel members include:

- Rachel Hansen, Statistician, National Center for Education Statistics
- Dr. Dan Hartley, Coordinator for Workplace Violence Prevention Research, National Institute for Occupation Safety and Health
- Dr. Allyson Holbrook, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Dr. Kristy Holtfreter, Arizona State University
- Dr. Frauke Kreuter, Survey Methodologist, Joint Program of Survey Methodology
- Dr. Janet Lauritsen, University of Missouri, St. Louis
- Dr. Colin Loftin, University of Albany
- Dr. James Lynch, Chair, Department of Criminology, University of Maryland
- Anne Menard, Chief Executive Officer, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- Meagan Meuchel, NCVS Survey Director, US Census Bureau
- Dr. Michael Reisig, Arizona State University
- Dr. Wes Skogan, Northwestern University

## **9. Paying Respondents**

BJS is considering the use of incentive payments in the testing for the NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project as a method for increasing response rates, minimizing costly non-response follow-up with the two waves of data collection, and due to the sensitive nature of survey topic. If BJS decides to pursue incentives as part of that design, the request and accompanying justification will be presented under the clearance request for that project.

Compensation may be offered to cover travel and time for persons participating in focus groups or cognitive testing of questions. The stipends for this compensation will not exceed \$75 for focus groups and \$40 for cognitive interviews. The clearance packages for specific projects will discuss the amount and rationale for such compensation.

#### **10. Assurance of Confidentiality**

BJS and all contractors will hold in confidence any information that could identify an individual according to Title 42, United States Code, sections 3735 and 3789g. All respondents who participate in pretest activities will be given written or oral assurance that the identity of all participants and respondents will be protected as required under Title 42.

Results from data collected as part of the cognitive and pretest interviews will not be linked to individual respondents, either directly or by inference. As required under Title 42 USC, section 3879g, BJS and its data collection agents will take all necessary steps to mask the identity of survey respondents, including suppression of demographic characteristics and other potentially identifying information.

Prior to beginning any pretesting activity under this clearance, BJS and its collection agents will obtain the requisite approvals from the appropriate Institutional Review Boards (IRB) to ensure that the data collection procedures are in compliance with human subjects protection protocols and confidentiality regulations.

#### **11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

The NCVS asks about experiences that may be sensitive for some respondents (e.g. rape and sexual assault). Given the objective of the NCVS — to estimate the amount of victimization in the nation — this is inevitable. The importance of estimating crime levels, as well as the potential value of detailed information about victimization for designing crime prevention strategies, will be explained to any respondent who seems hesitant to answer. We have structured the questions and interviewer application of them to lessen their sensitivity. All respondents have the option of refusing to answer any question.

#### **12. Estimate Respondent Burden**

Table 1 shows the estimated respondent burden for anticipated NCVS-RR projects under this generic clearance. The estimates are based on the estimated number of respondents that will be contacted for each project. We estimate that cognitive interviews will take about 1.5 hours and all other testing will take 30 minutes to an hour. Burden hours reflect the relative rarity of crime and the need to screen a large number of people to obtain sufficient numbers of victims to enable comparisons across all conditions.

**Table 1. Burden Hour Calculation**

Study	Contractor	Interview Type	Number of respondents	Estimated number of hours per response	Estimated total burden hours
NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project	Westat	Cognitive	400	1.500	600
		Feasibility (pretest)	500	0.500	250
		CAPI, Web (small-scale pilot)	1,000	0.500	500
		CAPI, Web (field test)	19,000	0.500	9,500
Other methodological research TBD Methods for collecting data on rape/sexual assault	Westat	TBD	300	1.000	300
<b>Total planned burden request under 2015 generic clearance:</b>					<b>11,150</b>

### **13. Estimate of Cost Burden**

With the exception of their time, there is no actual cost to respondents to participate in NCVS-RR projects.

### **14. Estimated Cost to the Federal Government**

The total annual cost to the federal government for the projects that are underway is approximately \$3 million annually (based on the total estimated cost to complete divided by 3, for the period of the generic clearance). See Table 2.

In addition to contractor costs, BJS annual cost to manage these studies is approximately \$260,000. These costs were calculated using 2015 GS scale rates at step 5 levels and applied to each of the 3 years under this clearance.

**Table 2. Estimated costs for NCVS-RR**

Data collection	Expenditures to date	Estimated cost to
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			complete
NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project		\$865,788	\$7,359,707
Methods for collecting data on rape/sexual assault		\$10,331,890	\$1,439,077
	Contractor subtotal	\$11,197,678	\$8,798,784
<b>BJS Staff Costs to Complete Projects</b>			
Staff salaries	Base salary (step 5)	Fringe	Salary estimates
SL-0-Senior Statistical Advisor (1 @ 10%)	\$183,300	\$51,324	\$23,462
GS14-Senior Statistician for BJS (1 @ 20%)	\$121,635	\$34,058	\$31,139
GS13-Statistician for BJS (1 @ 60%)	\$102,932	\$28,821	\$79,052
BJS Visiting Fellow (1 @ 70%)	\$102,932	\$28,821	\$92,227
	Subtotal: Salary & fringe		\$225,880
	Other administrative costs of salary & fringe (15%)		\$33,882
	Subtotal: BJS costs @ 3 years		\$779,285
	<b>Total: Estimated costs</b>	(contractor subtotal + BJS 3 year costs)	<b>\$9,578,069</b>

## 15. Reasons for Change in Burden

There are no changes in burden since the NCVS-RR projects are either ongoing or new data collections.

## 16. Plans for Publication and Project Schedule

In calendar years 2015 through 2018, BJS expects to perform data collection for the following contracts:

- Cognitive, feasibility, pilot and field testing for the NCVS Instrument Redesign and Testing Project.

Work to be determined is expected to begin in 2016 and conclude in 2018. All work under this clearance is expected to be completed by 2018.

At the conclusion of each research project, a final report based on each project will be released via the BJS website. Additional methodological research papers may be issued by BJS staff as resources permit. The types of statistics that will be available in these reports include response rates, measures of productivity such as offenses reported per respondent or household, and counts and rates for the purpose of evaluating changes in estimates due to methodology. Data collected under a generic clearance will not be used to calculate substantive results/estimates that will be released outside the agency.

**17. Expiration Date Approval**

The OMB control number and expiration date will be published on all forms given to respondents. In instances where information is collected electronically (e.g. Web, CAPI, and CATI), information will be displayed or read describing the nature of the survey and authority to collect the information.

**18. Exceptions to the Certification**

N/A. There are no exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions. Collection is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.9.