

Attachment A: Communications

**Draft Invitation letter with FAQ to be sent via email**



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Bureau of Justice Statistics*

*Washington, DC 20531*

Dear <<Insert Name of Jail Administrator>>:

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) would like to invite you to participate in the Local Jail Reporting Program (LJRP) Feasibility Study. The goal of this study is to explore the feasibility of collecting inmate-level, case-management record data. Local jails that participate in this study will not be asked to provide any records or data; rather, they will be asked to take part in a phone interview. The interview will help BJS better understand inmate management data systems, data sharing practices, and challenges that may be encountered in the course of jails sharing data with BJS in a future data collection.

To provide comprehensive national statistics on local jails, BJS has been conducting jail surveys and censuses, and face-to-face inmate surveys, since 1970. In the spring of 2020, Congress directed BJS to collect information specific to persons confined pretrial in the nation's local jails, including case disposition, duration of pretrial detention, bail amount, and specific charges and charge categories. Due to the high turnover rates of the pretrial jail population, BJS's existing jail collections are not suited to collecting detailed data about the pretrial population. To respond to this congressional requirement, BJS has initiated this feasibility study.

As part of this voluntary feasibility study, we are seeking feedback from local jail administrators. We are writing today to ask for your assistance. (A duplicate letter is being mailed to you to ensure that your jail receives this invitation.) We would like to interview you, or a jail representative identified by you, about how your management information system tracks inmates and their movements; what individual-level data elements are available; and what technical, legal, and confidentiality issues would be involved in sharing your administrative records directly with BJS, if requested in the future.

This feasibility study includes a small number of jails. Your jail was specifically selected, and I hope you will participate. The phone interviews will occur during October and November, and will last about 1 hour. Please let BJS know by email or phone (information below) whether you will be able to participate, and, if so, provide the appropriate contact information. Upon hearing from you, our data collection agent, Abt Associates, follow-up to schedule an interview.

We have included an FAQ to address questions you may have about this study. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the BJS LJRP Project Manager, Dr. Zhen Zeng, at [Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov](mailto:Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov) or (202) 598-9955.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey H. Anderson  
Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics  
U.S. Department of Justice

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What is the Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study?*

The Local Jail Reporting Program (LJRP) Feasibility Study is being conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to determine the feasibility of collecting inmate-level administrative data (i.e., booking records) from local jails. Abt Associates (Abt), BJS's data collection agent for this study, will conduct a phone interview with a representative to discuss how jails use inmate case-management data systems to track inmates and their movements, what individual-level data elements are available from these systems, and what technical, legal, and confidentiality issues would be involved in jails sharing their administrative records directly with BJS, if BJS requests these data in the future. BJS will use the results of this feasibility study to decide whether to collect individual-level inmate records from a limited number of jails in the coming years, and to ultimately determine whether to develop an individual-level administrative data collection from local jails across the U.S. **BJS is not asking jails to provide any inmate data during the current feasibility study.**

### *What is the Bureau of Justice Statistics?*

The BJS is a component of the Office of Justice Programs within the U.S. Department of Justice. BJS is the United States' primary source for criminal justice statistics. BJS's mission is to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. This information is critical to federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded.

### *What is Abt Associates' role in this study?*

Abt Associates (Abt) is BJS's data collection agent for the LJRP Feasibility Study. Abt will be responsible for scheduling interviews with jail administrators, conducting phone interviews, coding responses, analyzing coded responses, and producing a study report for BJS. Abt has over 40 years of experience working with the U.S. Department of Justice and other criminal justice agencies across the country.

### *How long will the interview take?*

The interview will take about 1 hour.

### *Is participation in the Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study voluntary?*

Yes, participation in the study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any and all questions, or stop the interview, at any time. However, we ask for your assistance with this study because your response is valuable for BJS to understand how jails keep records on inmates, what information is recorded, and the capability of jails to share this information, so that BJS can make an informed decision on whether and how to proceed with a pilot study of collecting individual-level administrative records.

### *What questions will be asked during the interview?*

The interview will consist of a series of questions that focus on three areas:

1. Your jail's inmate management system, including system vendor, software product name, types of offenders tracked, and types of transactions and timestamps recorded.

2. The availability of specific data elements in your system, including inmate demographic characteristics, criminal history, bail amount, and unique personal identifiers such as Social Security Number (SSN), FBI number, and state ID.
3. Your jail's capability and burden experienced in sharing individual-level records on inmates if requested by BJS in the future, including technical, legal, and confidentiality issues involved in sharing your administrative records.

The interview will be conducted by an experienced interviewer from BJS's data collection agent, Abt Associates. The interviewer will take notes during the phone interview, but will not record the conversation.

### *How will the results of this study be used by BJS?*

The results of this study will be used by BJS for planning purposes to determine whether BJS should try to gather individual-level jail inmate data from a limited number of local jails in the future. Individual jail responses collected from this feasibility study will not be published or released outside of BJS. Eventually, if that pilot project occurs and is successful, BJS will consider the feasibility of the LJP to collect data from more jails.

### *Why is BJS interested in obtaining personally identifiable information of inmates?*

One goal of this feasibility study is to learn whether jails can provide BJS with inmates' personally identifiable information (PII), such as their name, Social Security Number, inmate IDs, FBI number. This information is needed to link jail records to other criminal justice record data, such as prison and arrest records. In addition to allowing BJS to calculate rates of jail recidivism, collecting PII would permit the expansion of existing efforts to link data from other administrative records, such as criminal history information from records of arrest and prosecution (i.e., RAP sheets). Linkage of such records would permit BJS to examine the movement of jail inmates through other parts of the criminal justice system over a longer period of time (e.g., arrest, prosecution, sentencing, incarceration, including state or federal prison), and identify persons who have been incarcerated in multiple jails.

As a federal statistical agency, BJS protects all data at the highest level of security . Data security and protection is paramount to our mission, and. According to federal law (34 USC § 10231), BJS and its contractors are required to use the data for research and statistical purposes only, maintain and protect the data securely, and ensure that any aggregate statistics generated go through the proper disclosure review prior to dissemination to confirm that a person's identity is not disclosed. See also next, "How does BJS keep data secure?"

### *How does BJS keep data secure?*

BJS and Abt are bound by federal law (Title 34 U.S.C. § 10231), which provides that "No officer or employee of the Federal Government, and no recipient of assistance under the provisions of this chapter shall use or reveal any research or statistical information furnished under this chapter by any person and identifiable to any specific private person for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was obtained in accordance with this chapter. Such information and copies thereof shall be immune from legal process, and shall not, without the consent of the person furnishing such information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or other judicial, legislative, or administrative proceedings."

BJS has numerous confidentiality and security protections governing the data collected by BJS and its data collection agents. BJS and Abt are required to follow the [BJS Data Protection Guidelines](#), which

summarizes the federal statutes, regulations, and data security procedures governing BJS and its data collection agents in more detail. These guidelines ensure the confidentiality of all data, including PII.

*Who do we contact for more information?*

For more information, please contact Zhen Zeng (BJS's LJP Project Manager) at [Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov](mailto:Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov) or (202) 598-9955.

## Duplicate draft invitation letter with FAQ to be sent via mail



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Bureau of Justice Statistics*

*Washington, DC 20531*

<<Insert Date>>

Dear <<Insert Name of Jail Administrator>>:

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) would like to invite you to participate in the Local Jail Reporting Program (LJRP) Feasibility Study. The goal of this study is to explore the feasibility of collecting inmate-level, case-management record data. Local jails that participate in this study will not be asked to provide any records or data; rather, they will be asked to take part in a phone interview. The interview will help BJS better understand inmate management data systems, data sharing practices, and challenges that may be encountered in the course of jails sharing data with BJS in a future data collection.

To provide comprehensive national statistics on local jails, BJS has been conducting jail surveys and censuses, and face-to-face inmate surveys, since 1970. In the spring of 2020, Congress directed BJS to collect information specific to persons confined pretrial in the nation's local jails, including case disposition, duration of pretrial detention, bail amount, and specific charges and charge categories. Due to the high turnover rates of the pretrial jail population, BJS's existing jail collections are not suited to collecting detailed data about the pretrial population. To respond to this congressional requirement, BJS has initiated this feasibility study.

As part of this voluntary feasibility study, we are seeking feedback from local jail administrators. We are writing today to ask for your assistance. (A duplicate letter was emailed to you on <<Insert Date>> to ensure that your jail has received this invitation.) We would like to interview you, or a jail representative identified by you, about how your management information system tracks inmates and their movements; what individual-level data elements are available; and what technical, legal, and confidentiality issues would be involved in sharing your administrative records directly with BJS, if requested in the future.

This feasibility study includes a small number of jails. Your jail was specifically selected, and I hope you will participate. The phone interviews will occur during October and November, and will last about 1 hour. Please let BJS know by email or phone (information below) whether you will be able to participate, and, if so, to provide the appropriate contact information. Upon hearing from you, our data collection agent, Abt Associates, follow-up to schedule an interview.

We have included an FAQ to address questions you may have about this study. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the BJS LJRP Project Manager, Dr. Zhen Zeng, at [Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov](mailto:Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov) or (202) 598-9955.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey H. Anderson  
Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics  
U.S. Department of Justice

Attachment.

## Nonresponse draft follow-up email



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Bureau of Justice Statistics*

*Washington, DC 20531*

Dear <<Insert Name of Jail Administrator>>,

Recently, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) sent you an email inviting you to participate in the Local Jail Reporting Program (LJRP) Feasibility Study. I am following up today on that request. As part of the feasibility study, I am requesting your feedback to help us explore the feasibility of collecting inmate-level administrative record data (i.e., booking records) from local jails. BJS will not be asking for any jail inmate records or inmate data for this feasibility study. Rather, the study will consist of a phone interview to help BJS better understand your inmate management system, data sharing practices, and challenges that may be encountered if BJS requests your facility to provide individual-level records on inmates detained, for statistical purposes in a future collection.

Phone interviews for the study will be scheduled to occur in October and November 2020, and would take about 1 hour of your time. If you are able to take part in this study, please let BJS know by email or phone (information below) the contact information of your jail's representative for the interview (this could be yourself, or someone else familiar with your jail management system and data sharing practices). Upon hearing from you, we will have our data collection agent, Abt Associates (Abt), follow-up with you or your representative to schedule the phone interview with an experienced researcher from Abt.

For your reference, we have attached below the original email we sent, which contains additional information about this feasibility study and an FAQ to address questions you may have. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the BJS LJRP Project Manager, Dr. Zhen Zeng, at [Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov](mailto:Zhen.Zeng@usdoj.gov) or (202) 598-9955.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey H. Anderson  
Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics  
U.S. Department of Justice

[Paste invitation letter with FAQ here.]

## **Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study Sample Call Script for Nonresponse Calls**

Hello, this is <<INSERT NAME>> calling from the Bureau of Justice Statistics regarding the Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study. I am following up on an email that we sent to <<Jail Administrator Name>>. May I speak with <<Jail Administrator Name>> or <<Other Facility Contact>>?

### **[IF LEAVING MESSAGE ON VOICEMAIL OR WITH JAIL ADMINISTRATOR]**

Hello, this is <<INSERT NAME>> calling from the Bureau of Justice Statistics regarding the Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study. I am following up on an email that we sent to you on <<Date>>. I was hoping to speak with you or someone in your office to help the Bureau of Justice Statistics better understand your jail management system and data sharing policies and practices as part of this feasibility study that we are conducting. We recently sent you a letter via email inviting you to participate in the study. I wanted to follow-up with you to confirm that you received the request and to find out if you have identified a representative from your jail who would be able to participate in the study. <<Insert for voicemail: Please give me a call back at [PHONE NUMBER] for details on the feasibility study and the opportunity to participate in the feedback process. Thank you, and have a good day!>>

[ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY USING THE FAQ AS A GUIDE]

### **[IF CALL REACHES OR IS ROUTED TO FACILITY CONTACT OTHER THAN THE JAIL ADMINSTRATOR]**

Hello, this is <<INSERT NAME>> calling from the Bureau of Justice Statistics regarding the Local Jail Reporting Program Feasibility Study. I am following-up an email that we sent to <<Jail Administrator Name>> on <<Date>>. I was hoping to speak with <<Jail Administrator Name>> or someone in your office to help the Bureau of Justice Statistics better understand your jail management system and data sharing policies and practices as part of this feasibility study that we are conducting. I wanted to follow-up with <<Jail Administrator Name>> to confirm that <<he/she>> received the request, and to identify a representative from your jail who would be able to participate in the study. <<Insert for voicemail: Please give me a call back at [PHONE NUMBER] for details on the feasibility study and the opportunity to participate in the feedback process. Thank you, and have a good day!>>

[ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY USING THE FAQ AS A GUIDE]

[IF FACILITY HAS NOT RECEIVED EMAIL]

Let me review the information we have on file for your facility.

[REVERIFY EMAIL ADDRESS AND OFFER TO RE-SEND THE INFORMATION]

[IF FACILITY IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW]

Great! Can you please let us know who will be the contact person for the interview to obtain your facility's input? The contact person can be yourself or someone else who is familiar with your jail's case

**Duplicate draft invitation letter with FAQ to be sent via mail**

management data system and your data sharing policies and practices.

[REQUEST TO PROVIDE THE CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE DESIGNATED JAIL REPRESENTATIVE IF DIFFERENT FROM THE JAIL ADMINISTRATOR]

Thank you. We will have an interviewer from our data collection agent, Abt Associates, contact you to schedule the interview to obtain your facility's input. We appreciate your facility's participation!

[IF AGENCY REFUSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW]

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and for considering this request.