

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Potential Respondent Universe

The potential National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) universe is all movements and year-end population status of all offenders in custody in the 50 states' prison systems and all movements of all offenders under post-custody community supervision (PCCS; formerly known as parole) in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Movements of federal prisoners are excluded from the NCRP because BJS obtains these data directly from the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in its Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP), a collection of administrative records from federal criminal justice agencies that BJS uses to track federal criminal case processing. Persons sentenced to prison in the District of Columbia Superior Court enter federal prison, and their movements are tracked by the BOP.

The NCRP universe is defined by cohorts, specifically --

- offenders admitted into state prisons during a year,
- offenders released from state prisons during a year,
- offenders held in state prisons at year-end,
- offenders entering PCCS in the 50 states during a year,
- offenders discharged from PCCS in the 50 states during a year.

The NCRP collects administrative records on each prisoner movement (or year-end status) through state departments of corrections. There are 56 total possible respondents in the NCRP data collection universe including the department of corrections (DOC) in each of the 50 states, 5 separate contacts for PCCS data in six states (Alabama, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nevada, and South Carolina) where the DOC does not keep data on persons on PCCS, and the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia, which tracks PCCS data for Washington, DC. For data year 2019, 43 states provided data on prison admissions, 45 states provided data on prison releases, 44 provided information on the year-end stock prison population, 33 provided records on entries to PCCS, and 33 on exits from PCCS. These numbers are expected to increase as states are encouraged to provide more NCRP record types (see item B.3., "Methods to Maximize Response," below).

BJS does not sample states for inclusion in NCRP, but rather tries to obtain data from all states due to wide variation in the laws, sentencing practices, and socioeconomic and racial/ethnic populations of the states. Failure to capture states with smaller prison populations will only enhance the effects of the large states when the offense, time served, admission and release type distributions are presented at a national level. By collecting data from each state, BJS is able to track individual jurisdictional changes in sentencing practices and answer requests from state legislators.

2. Procedures for Information Collection

The data collection agent for NCRP asks states to upload data files in any convenient format to them to a secure server via Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP). The site is compliant with Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2 and meets all the requirements of the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the Privacy Act. All respondents currently provide data in electronic format, and no manual submissions are expected in the future. States are contacted during January for data from the previous calendar year, and asked to submit their NCRP data by March 31; however, BJS

and its data collection agent work with states to develop a schedule for data submission that meets the states' individual needs. In general, BJS "closes" data collection at the end of September, after more populous states like Texas and California have had time to prepare and submit their data. After processing by the data collection agent, BJS receives the final files in November. BJS archives the NCRP files at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) once a year (generally in March or April of the following year), but if states submit NCRP data after the files have been archived, they are updated in the following year's submission.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

BJS's data collection agent will continue to make the annual request for NCRP data as clear and concise as possible, and accept data in any format so that states do not need to process the data to meet specific BJS submission standards. BJS and its collection agent contact data providers solely for the purposes of submission follow-up and clarification, and are careful to not place undue burden on respondents. Examples of the follow-up contact from data reporting year 2019 can be found in Appendix K.

Since the previous OMB clearance for NCRP, BJS and its data collection agent have had success in engaging more states to participate in NCRP. All fifty states provided at least one type of NCRP record in 2011-2014, with at least 48 submitting data in 2015 through 2018. As of August 2021, 45 states have submitted at least one type of data in 2019. Some states submit after the traditional data collection period, and can lag 1-2 years behind in their submission of annual data. Multiple states have also submitted previous years' data to extend back their contributions.

BJS has taken steps to more directly engage with the corrections data providers and researchers about issues that are germane to understanding prison population change. In conjunction with the National Institute of Corrections' (NIC) Institutional Corrections Research Network (ICRN), in September 2019, BJS and NIC held a data providers and corrections researchers' workshop in St. Louis, Missouri. The meeting was attended by 52 representatives from 37 states. This was the sixth such meeting sponsored by BJS, and has proven to be very popular with the state data providers as a way to share best practices on data collection and information systems, and to get DOC administrators to use the statistics they develop in policy discussions.

At the 2019 meeting, BJS presented Center for Economic Studies (CES) work with NCRP linkage to other administrative datasets, and future plans for NCRP. Providers from several states gave presentations about how they use their data to address policy research questions in their states, including conditions of confinement on recidivism as well as other recidivism topics; research in corrections practices including engaging corrections practitioners in research through innovation and experimentation; and a variety of other topics discussed in breakout sessions over a day and a half.

BJS used the opportunity to discuss with state researchers the key policy issues in their states, to learn about their uses of the data and potential issues that NCRP could address, and to more firmly establish the connections between the data providers and BJS's data collection agent. BJS hopes to hold another data providers meeting in 2022. These meetings have the added bonus of accelerating submission of the NCRP data in the months and weeks leading up to the event. During the COVID-19 pandemic, BJS and NIJ hosted two webinars to give a platform to data providers to discuss impacts of the pandemic on policy and procedures as well as other topics suggested by providers.

During the upcoming collection cycle, BJS will work to maintain 50-state participation in the NCRP, and encourage states not submitting certain cohorts to consider doing so. BJS will also work with individual jurisdictions to improve data quality, and is working on a project to review and reclassify offense codes from each state into a standardized BJS format. The crosswalks between the states' offenses and BJS codes are updated each year when new laws are passed, but older laws and those that have been modified require review to ensure they are still converted to the correct BJS offense category.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods

BJS is not proposing any changes to the NCRP data collection for this OMB clearance.

5. Contact Information

The Corrections Statistics Unit at BJS is responsible for the overall design and management of the activities related to the NCRP collection including: data collection; data elements, definitions, and counting rules; and data analysis and dissemination. The BJS contact for the NCRP is --

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The current data collection agent for NCRP is Abt Associates, Inc. The contact information for the NCRP program manager at Abt is --

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