



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*National Institute of Justice*

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Re: Non-Substantive Change Memo / Pilot Study Update for the Fourth National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (OMB No. 1121-0374)

This memo reports on the findings from the pilot study conducted as part of the Fourth National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (N-JOV4). The OMB authorization for the study requested updated information based on the results of the pilot study designed to 1) review the mail screener and case identification process, and 2) test the case information follow-up telephone interview.

This pilot study is intended to inform the national N-JOV4 study, which has been approved under OMB No. 1121-0374. Thus, this document serves as an informational memo to appraise OMB on the pilot study results.

The pilot study was conducted between December 2021-March 2022. The first component involved the identification of eligible cases of technology-facilitated sex crimes against minors in

2018 from four Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces and 20 smaller agencies with no ICAC affiliation, as well as 10 debriefing interviews to gather feedback about the survey and process. The second component involved case interviews that covered each of the four main types of crimes under study – online enticement, possession of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), production of CSAM, and youth-produced sexual images to identify any problems with the interview.

#### Mail screener

All non-ICAC agencies that responded found the mail screener easy to complete and lacking any major problems. Some ICAC Commanders, however, found the mail screener challenging in its current design (requesting information first about online enticement cases and then CSAM cases separately) because their record management systems cannot easily disentangle these elements for the target case types. They told the research team it was easier and less burdensome to simply provide a total number and list of arrests meeting criteria for either or both crimes. Given that all cases are aggregated prior to sampling for case interviews, the research team decided to collapse the online enticement and CSAM screener questions into one section and ask for a total number of cases (revised Q3 and 4 - Arrest Cases). The ICAC Commanders confirmed this made sense, was much less burdensome, and felt they could provide the information the screener requested if presented this way.

The research team also received feedback from non-ICAC agencies that the question about jurisdiction over qualifying cases was not a simple yes/no answer. Many had investigative jurisdiction but typically handed such cases over to another local agency that had more resources and training on this topic for investigation. As a result, this screener question now includes the following response options to reflect this nuance: no jurisdiction; jurisdiction, but they are usually handed to a different agency; and jurisdiction, and they conduct these investigations (revised Q1- Arrest Cases). This would be applied to the non-ICAC mail screener as all ICACs have jurisdiction to investigate these crimes and thus do not need this question.

It was also noted by the ICAC Commanders that the identification of non-arrest youth-produced image cases could be difficult for some agencies given that these situations are not always captured in their computer systems. To better identify when this is the case, we have included a third response option when asking agencies to report on these cases: 1) yes, 2) no, 3) cannot provide this information (specify why) (revised Q1 – Youth Produced Sexual Images). Further, we have included one open-end question asking about how these cases come to police attention and are handled by agencies (new Q3 – Youth Produced Sexual Images). This will provide a broader understanding of this issue, even if there were no eligible cases in the reference period. Finally, a question was added about how the respondent searched for the requested cases (new Q1- Additional Questions).

All non-ICAC agencies confirmed the 10-minute burden estimate as stated in the original OMB package was accurate; ICACs confirmed the same with the planned changes noted above. No agencies felt eligible cases would be missed based on how the questions were asked. Copies of the revised ICAC mail screener survey and that which will be used for all non-ICAC agencies are available.

The mode of the final outreach attempt prior to non-responder telephone calls will be changed from an email to a short form mailing. This mailing will consist of a short form screener comprised of four critical item questions to determine if agencies handled qualifying cases. The inclusion of this type of mailing successfully increased response rates by more than 10% in a prior national law enforcement study by the research team using a similar methodology (the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children-NISMART).

#### Case level telephone interview

Based on the pilot case level interviews with investigators, a few minor clarifying changes were made to the telephone interview. First, the telephone interview was updated to be inclusive of live streaming technology, mainly in the inclusion of additional response options to existing questions. One item was added to the youth-produced images section to reflect whether live streaming videos were saved and two items were added to the CSAM production section: whether there were any live streaming videos and, if yes, whether any were saved. In the CSAM possession section, one item was added to determine whether any of the possessed material was sold for monetary gain to help inform the current public and policy interest in commercial sexual exploitation. Second, to help with the identification of duplicate cases, an existing item will be modified to ask for the suspect's month and year of birth. This information, combined with existing questions about the additional agencies involved in the case, will serve the same purpose and be less intrusive to participants than the item used in prior N-JOVs which collected the last four digits of the suspects social security number. Based on the pilot interviews, these changes will not result in a change to the burden hours requested.

The overall conclusion from the pilot study is that the mail screener and telephone interview performed as expected and was satisfactory to the interviewed investigators with only minor changes needed. No substantive changes are being proposed to the survey for the national N-JOV4 study.