

## Attachment A: COVID-related Restrictions Assessment and Emails

- NIS-4 Jails – BJS Email
- NIS-4 Jails – COVID-related Restrictions Assessment – Facility Administrator
- NIS-4 Jails – COVID-related Restrictions Assessment – Stakeholder
- NIS-4 Jails – BJS Reminder Email

SUBJECT: National Inmate Survey (NIS-4 Jails) Facility COVID-19 Impact – Request for Your Input

I am writing to request your input on how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect the collection of the upcoming National Inmate Survey (NIS-4) in jails during or after the pandemic. Your input will help us understand how to collect the data effectively and minimize burden on the facilities visited, so I am eager to get your feedback via a brief form.

BJS is working with Westat to conduct the NIS-4 Jails. **Please complete and submit the attached form to NAME, a Westat employee, via email no later than <date>**. The expected time to complete this form is 10 minutes.

NAME can be reached at EMAIL or by phone at PHONE. Please let us know if you are unable to respond by this date and we will work to find a time that fits your schedule. If you think you will not be able to respond at all, please do let us know that, too.

Part of Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), the NIS asks inmates about sexual assault in correctional facilities and related topics. PREA requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, to publish national and facility-level estimates of sexual victimization in correctional facilities and common characteristics of these victimizations. The NIS is a key part of this requirement.

BJS originally planned to conduct an iteration of the NIS beginning in the fall of 2020. The agency delayed collection to protect the safety of the inmates, staff, and interviewers during the COVID-19 pandemic. BJS now plans to begin collection in early 2023.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (202) 307-0711 or [Amy.Lauger@usdoj.gov](mailto:Amy.Lauger@usdoj.gov). Jessica Taylor, the Project Director from Westat, is also available to address questions and comments at (240) 314-5852 or [JessicaTaylor@Westat.com](mailto:JessicaTaylor@Westat.com).

Sincerely,

Amy Lauger  
PREA Program Manager  
Bureau of Justice Statistics

FORM APPROVED

OMB No.: XXXX-xxxx

EXPIRATION DATE: XX/XX/20xx

## **COVID-Related Restrictions Assessment for the National Inmate Survey (NIS-4 Jails)**

03-03-22

### Introduction to the National Inmate Survey (NIS)

Part of Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), the National Inmate Survey asks inmates about sexual assault in correctional facilities and related topics. PREA requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, to publish national and facility-level estimates of sexual victimization in correctional facilities and common characteristics of these victimizations. The NIS is a key part of this requirement.

To collect the NIS data, a research team typically visits a selected facility for up to several days. Data are collected directly from inmates in a private setting using audio computer-assisted self-interview (ACASI) technology, which uses a laptop computer to allow inmates to see the questions on the screen, hear the questions being read through headphones, and answer the questions in complete privacy by touching the computer screen in the appropriate place. During the previous NIS collections, we found this methodology to be effective in producing high quality data while protecting the confidentiality of the responses from inmates. Each interview lasts an average of 35 minutes.

BJS originally planned to conduct an iteration of the NIS beginning in the fall of 2020. The agency delayed collection to protect the safety of the inmates, staff, and interviewers during the COVID-19 pandemic. BJS now plans to begin collection in early 2023.

### **Our current request**

**We are asking for your input to see how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect the collection of the NIS in jail facilities, beginning in early 2023.**

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The expected time to complete this form is 10 minutes.

Please email your completed form to <EMAIL ADDRESS> by xx/xx/xxxx.

If you have questions, please email NAME at EMAIL or contact Westat at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

1. Is your facility currently allowing in-person visitation from...

	Yes	No
a. Researchers or research teams?		
b. Friends/family of inmates?		
c. Other individuals? If yes, please specify _____		

2. Does your facility have any of the following pandemic-related precautions currently in place? Please check yes or no for a research team and for other visitors.

	Research team			Other visitors		
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A
a. Visitors must show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19						
b. Visitors must show proof of being up-to-date with all COVID-19 booster vaccinations						
c. Visitors are required to wear masks at all times						
d. Visitors are required to maintain social distancing at all times						
e. Visitors are subject to a COVID-19 screening questionnaire (e.g. recent exposure, symptoms or recent travel)						
f. Visitors are subject to a temperature check						
g. Visitors must provide proof of a negative COVID test within 24 hours of the visit						
h. Inmates must be vaccinated to receive visitors						
i. Inmates must be masked to receive visitors						

3. What other COVID-19 precautions related to inmate visitation does your facility have in place?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. From which of the following governing organizations does your facility obtain its COVID response guidance?

	Yes	No
a. The <b>county/municipality Public Health Department</b>		
b. The <b>state Public Health Department</b>		
c. The <b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</b>		
d. Other, If yes, please specify <hr/>		

5. Has your facility hosted a researcher or team of researchers to conduct in-person research or survey activities since March 2020?

- Yes  
 No

6. How does your facility's current inmate population compare to pre-pandemic levels (prior to March 2020)? Please provide your best estimate.

- Significantly more inmates now  
 About the same number of inmates  
 Significantly less inmates now

7. How does your facility's current staffing level compare to pre-pandemic levels (prior to March 2020)? Please provide your best estimate.

- Significantly more staff members now  
 About the same number of staff members  
 Significantly less staff members now

8. Do you have any additional information that would help us determine the factors that may challenge a research team visiting jails beginning in early 2023?

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Please email your response to <EMAIL ADDRESS>

Thank you for your participation!

FORM APPROVED

OMB No.: XXXX-xxxx

EXPIRATION DATE: XX/XX/20xx

## The National Inmate Survey (NIS-4 Jails) COVID-Related Restrictions Assessment

03-02-22

### Introduction to the National Inmate Survey (NIS)

Part of Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), the National Inmate Survey asks inmates about sexual assault in correctional facilities and related topics. PREA requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, to publish national and facility-level estimates of sexual victimization in correctional facilities and common characteristics of these victimizations. The NIS is a key part of this requirement.

To collect the NIS data, a research team typically visits a selected facility for up to several days. Data are collected directly from inmates in a private setting using audio computer-assisted self-interview (ACASI) technology, which uses a laptop computer to allow inmates to see the questions on the screen, hear the questions being read through headphones, and answer the questions in complete privacy by touching the computer screen in the appropriate place. During the previous NIS collections, we found this methodology to be effective in producing high quality data while protecting the confidentiality of the responses from inmates. Each interview lasts an average of 35 minutes.

BJS originally planned to conduct an iteration of the NIS beginning in the fall of 2020. The agency delayed collection to protect the safety of the inmates, staff, and interviewers during the COVID-19 pandemic. BJS now plans to begin collection in early 2023.

### Our current request

**We are asking for your input to see how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect the collection of the NIS in jail facilities, beginning in early 2023.** Please answer with respect to what you've learned in your role about jails affiliated with your association.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The expected time to complete this form is 10 minutes.

Please email your completed form to <EMAIL ADDRESS> by xx/xx/xxxx.

If you have questions, please email NAME at EMAIL or contact Westat at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

1. Which association do you represent?

- a. American Jail Association (AJA)
  - b. National Association of Counties (NACo)
  - c. National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
  - d. Other (please specify):
2. Are you familiar with jail facilities currently allowing in-person inmate visitation?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
3. What sort of COVID-related restrictions/requirements do these jail facilities currently have in place regarding in-person inmate visitation?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you aware of any jail facilities that have hosted a researcher or team of researchers to collect data in-person in the past six months?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
5. What sort of COVID-related restrictions/requirements do these jail facilities currently have in place regarding in-person research?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. Thinking about the changes in practices and policies in jail facilities due to the pandemic, what parts of hosting a team of researchers to conduct an in-person survey might be challenging to facilities?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
7. As far as you can tell, what COVID-related practices and policies in jails might change between now and 2023?
8. Do you have any additional information that would help us determine the factors that may challenge a research team visiting jails beginning in early 2023?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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Please email your response to <EMAIL ADDRESS>

Thank you for your participation!



SUBJECT: National Inmate Survey (NIS4 Jails) Facility Visitation amidst COVID-19 – Reminder Request

A few weeks ago, we asked for your input on how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect the collection of the upcoming National Inmate Survey (NIS-4) in jails during or after the COVID-19 pandemic. This email is a reminder that your input will help improve the survey operation and minimize impact and burden on the facilities visited, and we would greatly appreciate your review by <date>.

Please let us know if you are unable to respond by this date and we will work to find a time that fits your schedule. If you think you will not be able to respond at all, please do let us know that, too.

I am re-attaching the brief feedback form for your convenience.

BJS is working with Westat to conduct the NIS-4 Jails. Please complete and submit the attached form to NAME, a Westat employee, via email no later than <date>. NAME can be reached at EMAIL or by phone at PHONE.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (202) 307-0711 or Amy.Lauger@usdoj.gov. Jessica Taylor, the Project Director from Westat, is also available to address questions and comments at (240) 301-5852 or [JessicaTaylor@Westat.com](mailto:JessicaTaylor@Westat.com).

Sincerely,

Amy Lauger  
PREA Program Manager  
Bureau of Justice Statistics