



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Strategic Plan FY 2005-2008

April 2005

## Introduction

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) was established on December 27, 1979, under the Justice Systems Improvement Act of 1979 as an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. Previous criminal justice statistical efforts were authorized within the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration created by the 1968 Act.

As the statistical arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, BJS is responsible for the collection, analysis, publication, and dissemination of statistical information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operations of justice systems at all levels of government.

Since its inception, BJS has emerged as the principal criminal justice statistical agency in the Nation. BJS' most fundamental accomplishment is providing accurate, timely, and objective information to Federal, State, and local policymakers, to assist them in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. Whether through national data collections or assistance to States and communities, BJS is dedicated to improving the quality of our national intelligence on crime and enhancing the quality of the national discourse concerning criminal and civil justice.

BJS is dedicated to developing, maintaining, and disseminating all of its statistics in accordance with the highest professional and statistical standards. BJS has long maintained the strongest commitment to integrity

and objectivity while striving to produce impartial, timely, and accurate statistics as established in its governing statute. In carrying out its mission, BJS adheres to the principles and practices established by the Federal statistical community.

BJS maintains over three dozen major statistical series designed to cover every stage of the American criminal and civil justice system. BJS statistics are published annually on the following topics: criminal victimization, populations under correctional supervision, and Federal criminal offenders and case processing.

In addition to its annual series, BJS maintains periodic data series that cover the following:

- the administration of law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities
- prosecutorial practices and policies
- State court case processing
- felony convictions
- characteristics of correctional populations
- criminal justice expenditure and employment
- civil case processing in State courts
- special studies on other criminal justice topics.

BJS provides financial and technical support to State and local governments to develop their capabilities to provide criminal justice statistics. This BJS support targets the development of information systems to foster State participation in national statistical programs —

- implementing the National Incident-Based Reporting System
- improving the accuracy, utility, and interstate accessibility of criminal history records

- enhancing the availability and completeness of records of protective orders involving domestic violence and stalking
- enhancing the availability of sex offender records
- improving automated identification systems and other State systems supporting national records systems and their use for background checks.

## Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency

- ♦ A clearly-defined and well-accepted mission
- ♦ A strong position of independence
- ♦ Continual development of more useful data
- ♦ Openness about the data provided
- ♦ Wide dissemination of data
- ♦ Cooperation with data users
- ♦ Fair treatment of data providers
- ♦ Commitment to quality and professional standards of practice
- ♦ An active research program
- ♦ Professional advancement of staff
- ♦ Coordination and cooperation with other statistical agencies.

Source: *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency*, National Research Council, (National Academy Press, 3rd ed., 2005)

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BJS provides technical expertise on issues relating to criminal records policy, covering topics such as State criminal history record procedures and systems, privacy and security standards, and interstate exchange of criminal history records for noncriminal justice purposes.

### **Performance Mandate**

In recent years, the Department, the Office of Justice Programs, and the Federal Government in general, have begun implementing performance-based management and budgeting. At its core, performance-based management encourages organizations to focus on their mission, agree on goals, and report results — a process which is designed to guide organizations toward improved performance. Congress has mandated performance-based management primarily through the enactment of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 which requires agencies to identify their strategic goals and the outcomes necessary to achieve these goals.

### **Organization of the BJS Strategic Plan**

The BJS Strategic Plan includes five components:

- I. Overview of recent crime and justice trends for purposes of identifying and measuring the problem
- II. Statement of BJS' mission, strategic goals, and performance measurement concepts
- III. Description of each strategic goal and associated outcomes
- IV. Measures of BJS' operational efficiency
- V. Description of the role of professional review in strategic and program planning.

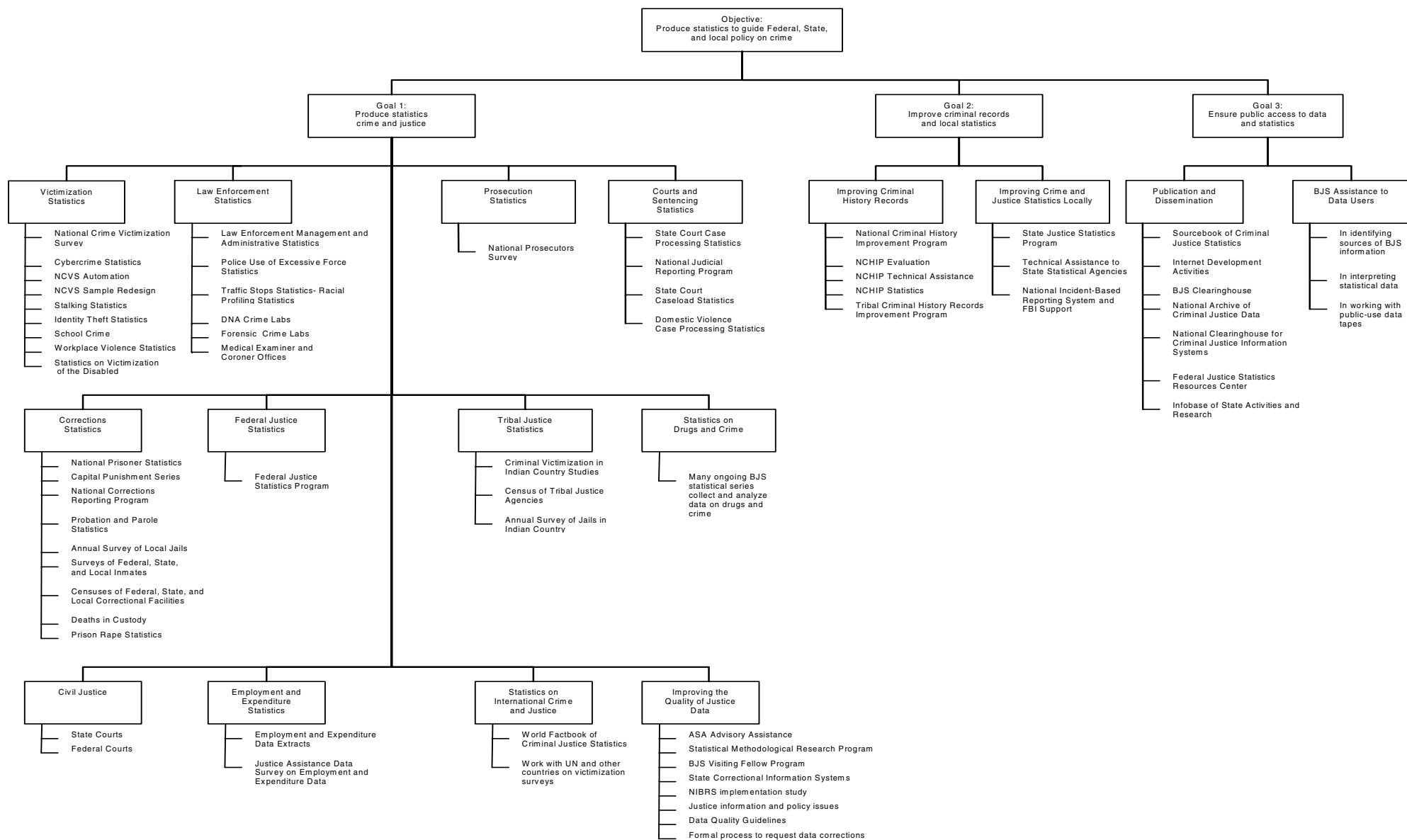
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Section I.      **Overview of recent crime and justice trends:  
identifying and measuring the problem**

Violence  
Law Enforcement  
Courts and Sentencing  
Corrections  
Tribal Justice  
Federal Criminal Justice  
Fairness in the Criminal Justice System  
Justice-Related Expenditure and Employment  
Criminal History Records

**Figure 1. Strategic Plan for the Bureau of Justice Statistics:  
Strategies to Achieve the Objective with Principal Series and State and Local Assistance Programs**



## I. Overview of recent crime and justice trends

As the national repository for statistical information on crime and the administration of justice, BJS maintains data on victimizations experienced by the public and the response of the nearly 50,000 offices and agencies which compose the criminal justice system.

This section of the strategic plan briefly presents key facts and nationwide trends. BJS is a user of its own data in carrying out program planning, development, and implementation. In order to successfully fulfill emerging data needs and build long-term statistical series for longitudinal and trend analyses, it is necessary to be informed about the major developments in crime and justice and challenges facing the justice system.

### Violence

Serious violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) has continued to decline as measured through both victim accounts and the number of incidents reported to law enforcement agencies. The number of these violent crimes experienced by the public in 2003 was the lowest recorded since 1973 when BJS initiated collecting data from crime victims.

The per capita rate of homicide in 2002, about 5.6 per 100,000 persons, is one of the lowest recorded since the mid-1960's.

In 2003, there were an estimated 367,000 serious violent crimes in which the victim faced an offender armed with a firearm, accounting for about 7% of all serious violent crime. In 2002, there were an estimated 10,808 murders with firearms, about 67% of all murders that year.

About 5% of murders in 2002 were identified as drug-related by local law enforcement agencies. About 1 in 10 victims of violence believed the offender had been using drugs at the time of the offense. Based on self-reports from probationers, jail inmates, and those serving time in Federal and State prisons, an estimated 20% of convicted offenders had been using drugs at the time they committed the

offense for which they were convicted. This translates into about 1.1 million offenders involved with the criminal justice system nationwide. Offender use of alcohol at the time of the offense was described about twice as often as drug use by both victims and offenders.

**School crime** Data for the school year ending June 30, 2000, indicate that there were 32 school-associated violent deaths including 24 homicides and 8 suicides.

During 2002, there were an estimated 88,000 serious violent crimes against school children (ages 12-18) while at school and an estimated 309,000 away from school.

**Drugs and crime** About 5% of murders in 2002 were identified as drug-related by local law enforcement agencies. (Source: *Crime in the United States, 2002*, FBI.) About 1 in 10 victims of violence believed the offender had been using drugs at the time of the offense. Drug use at the time of the offense was common among convicted offenders: 14% of probationers, 33% of State prisoners, 22% of Federal prisoners, and 36% of local jail inmates self-reported that they were under the influence of drugs when they committed their offense. Offender use of alcohol at the time of the offense was described about twice as often as drug use by both victims and offenders.

### Law Enforcement

**State and local law enforcement:** In 2000, approximately 18,000 State and local law enforcement agencies nationwide employed over 700,000 full-time law enforcement officers.

In 2002, State and local law enforcement agencies made about 14 million arrests; of these, nearly 1.5 million were for drug violations (11%), 621,000 were for violent crimes (5%), and 164,000 (1%) were for weapons violations.

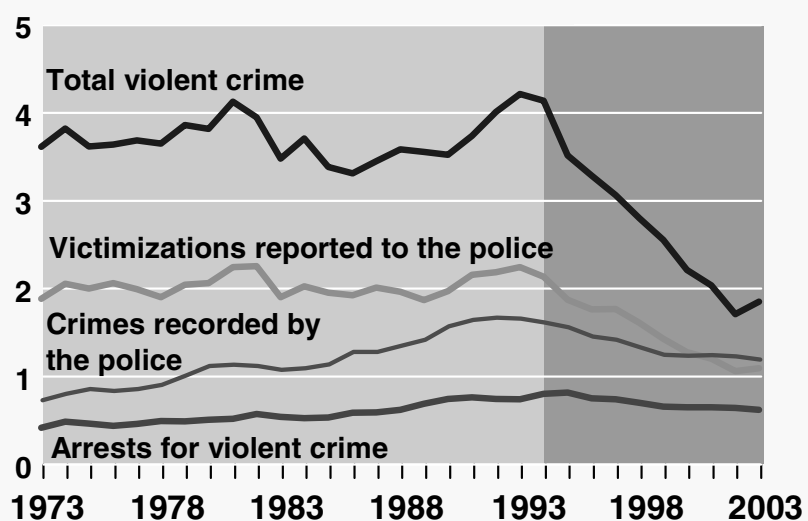
**Federal law enforcement:** In 2002 Federal law enforcement agencies employed more than 93,000 persons with arrest powers and authority to carry a firearm.

In 2001, Federal law enforcement officers made almost 119,000 arrests; of these, 33,589 (29%) were for drug violations, 6,007 were for weapons offenses (5%), and about 4,850 (4%) were for violent crimes.

**Forensic crime laboratories:** During 2002, there were a total of 351 crime labs in the nation: 203 state or regional labs, 65 county, 50 municipal and 33 federal labs in the U.S. with a total of about 9,400 full-time employees.

## Four measures of serious violent crime

Offenses in millions



Nationwide, crime laboratories received about 2.7 million requests for forensic laboratory services and were able to process just under 2.5 million of these requests in 2002.

In 2002 the backlog grew from about 290,000 pending requests for laboratory services at the beginning of the year to just over 500,000 at the end of the year — about two-thirds of the growth in backlogged requests was due to pending analyses to determine the presence of a controlled substance.

### Courts and Sentencing

**Criminal case processing:** State courts convict an average of about 1 million persons of a felony each year. Violent felonies accounted for about 19% of the total conviction caseload, property offenses comprise 31% of all felony convictions, drug offenses make up 32% of those convicted of felonies, and weapons offenses are just over 3%.

An estimated 95% of persons convicted of a felony pleaded guilty. In State courts, the average time between arrest and sentencing for a felony offense was 184 days.

**Criminal sentencing:** Of those convicted of felonies, 41% are sentenced to prison, 28% to a term in a local jail, and 31% receive a sentence to probation. In 2002, the average (mean) prison term imposed by State courts after conviction for a felony was 53 months — for violent offenses the average sentence was 84 months, for property offenses the average sentence was 41 months, 48 months on average was imposed after conviction for a drug felony, and weapons offenders received an average term of 38 months.

**Civil trials in State courts:** Civil cases disposed of by trial in State courts of general jurisdiction located in the Nation's 75 largest counties have declined 47% from 22,451 trials in 1992 to 11,908 trials in 2001.

### Corrections

**Correctional population:** At yearend 2003, nearly 6.9 million people were on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole. About 3.2% of all U.S. adult residents

or 1 in every 32 adults were under correctional supervision at yearend 2003, compared to 2.7% of the population in 1995.

**Prison population:** The total number of prisoners under the jurisdiction of Federal and State adult correctional authorities was 1,470,045 at yearend 2003. From yearend 1995 to yearend 2003 the Nation's prison population grew on average 3.4% a year. There were an estimated 482 prison inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents, up from 411 at yearend 1995.

**Capital punishment:** The number of prisoners under sentence of death at yearend 2003 decreased for the third consecutive year, the first decreases in this population since capital punishment was reinstated in 1977. At yearend 2003, 37 States and the Federal prison system held 3,374 prisoners under sentence of death, 188 fewer than at yearend 2002. Eleven States and the Federal Government carried out 65 executions in 2003, 6 fewer than the year before.

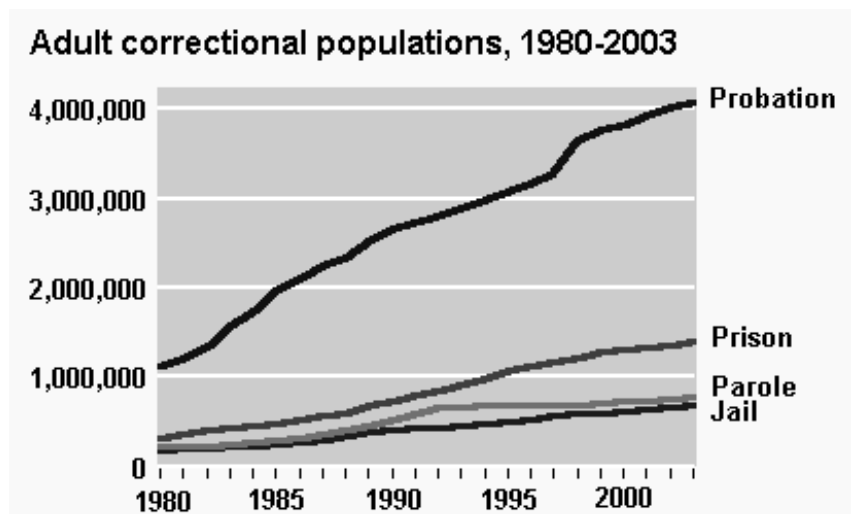
**Jail population:** In 2003, 691,301 inmates were held in the more than 3,000 local jails nationwide. From 1990 to 2003, the number of jail inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents rose from 163 to 238. From midyear 2002 to midyear 2003, the 12-month increase of 3.9% in the jail population was similar to the average annual increase of 4.0% since 1995.

**Probation and parole population:** The 1.5% growth in the probation and parole population during 2003 — an increase of almost 73,574 during the year — was about half the average annual growth of 2.9% since 1995. At the end of 2003, among the 4,073,987 offenders on probation, 49% had been convicted for committing a felony, 49% for a misdemeanor, and 2% for other infractions.

Among the 774,588 adults on parole, 95% had served time for a felony offense and 5% for a misdemeanor.

**Recidivism:** BJS studied the rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of 272,111 former inmates who were tracked for 3 years after their release from prison. The former inmates, discharged in 1994 from 15 States, represent two-thirds of all prisoners released in the United States that year.

Released prisoners with the highest rearrest rates were robbers (70.2%), burglars (74.0%), larcenists (74.6%), motor vehicle thieves (78.8%), those in prison for possessing or selling stolen property (77.4%), and those in prison for possessing, using, or selling illegal weapons (70.2%). Within 3 years 2.5% of released rapists were arrested for another rape, and 1.2% of those who had served time for homicide were arrested for a new homicide.



As part of the study, BJS tracked 9,691 male sex offenders following their release from prison in 1994. Within 3 years following their release, 5.3% of sex offenders (men who had committed rape or sexual assault) were rearrested for another sex crime. Compared to non-sex offenders released from State prisons, released sex offenders were 4 times more likely to be rearrested for a sex crime.

### **Tribal Justice**

American Indians experience violent crime at a much higher rate than members of any other racial groups in the United States. The average annual violent crime rate among American Indians from 1992 to 2001 (101 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) was about 2.5 times the national rate (41 per 1,000 persons).

American Indians were victims of aggravated assault (25 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older), which is 2.5 times higher than the national rate (9 per 1,000), nearly double the rate for blacks (13 per 1,000) and 3 times that of whites (8 per 1,000).

The majority (66%) of American Indian victims of violent crimes described the offender as either white or black.

### **Federal Criminal Justice**

*Criminal case processing:* In 2002, U.S. Attorneys opened matters for investigation against 124,335 suspects. Of these, 31% were investigated for drug offenses, 9% for weapons offenses, and 5% for violent offenses. About 14% of all suspects were investigated for immigration violations. About 3 out of 4 suspects were referred for prosecution or disposed by U.S. Magistrates.

During 2002, criminal cases were commenced against 87,727 defendants in district courts. Thirty-five percent of these defendants were charged with a drug offense and 15% were charged with an immigration violation. Among Federal defendants whose cases terminated during the year (80,424), 89% were convicted. Among those convicted, 96% pleaded guilty or no-contest.

*Criminal sentencing:* Among convicted defendants in 2002, 75% received a sentence to imprisonment. The average prison term imposed was 57 months. Weapons felonies (84 months), violent felonies (89 months), and drug felonies (76 months) received the longest average sentences.

During 2002, the Federal Bureau of Prisons received just over 50,400 inmates from district courts and slightly more than 17,000 from other sources including supervision violators. Federal inmates entering from district courts could expect to serve 88% of the sentence they received.

### **Fairness in the Criminal Justice System**

In 2002 an estimated 45 million persons age 16 or older had a contact with a police officer. About 40% of those contacts involved a traffic stop. The likelihood of being stopped by police in 2002 was about the same for white (8.7%), black (9.1%), and Hispanic (8.6%) drivers. Following the stop, black and Hispanic drivers were more likely to be searched or to have their vehicles searched than white drivers.

Comparison of what victims report in BJS surveys and what police report in arrest data for the FBI reveal a close correspondence in the distribution of offender characteristics (race, sex, and age).

### **Justice-Related Expenditure and Employment**

In 2001 Federal, State, and local governments spent \$167 billion for operations and outlay of police protection, corrections, and judicial and legal activities. This represents a 366% increase from \$36 billion in 1982 (a 165% increase in constant dollars).

In 2001 the Federal expenditure of \$30 billion on the justice system accounted for 18% of the total; in 1982 the Federal share was 12%.

The total number of justice-related employees grew 81% between 1982 and 2001. State governments had the largest percentage increase (117%).

### **Criminal History Records**

Between FY 1995 and FY 2004, BJS distributed nearly \$470 million to the States to support improvements to State records systems which would permit participation in national background check systems for point-of-sale firearms sales, sex offender registries, national protection order files, and automated fingerprint identification systems.

At the close of 2003, States and the FBI maintained criminal history records on approximately 68 million individuals. Of these, over 50 million records were available for interstate background checks.

Since the initiation of the BJS National Criminal History Record Improvement Program (NCHIP) in 1995, the number of criminal records has increased 35%, and the number of records which are now shareable among the States increased 97%.

BJS estimates that between March 1, 1994, and December 31, 2003, about 1.1 million, or 2.1% of all applications to purchase firearms have been rejected from among the 53 million applications received.



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Section II.

**Bureau of Justice Statistics:  
Mission and strategic vision**

BJS Mission  
BJS Strategic Goals  
Performance Measurement

## II. Mission and Strategic Vision

### BJS Mission

The central purpose of BJS is described in its enabling legislation (42 USC §§ 3731-3735). This statutory statement of purpose has been operationalized by BJS into the following mission statement:

It is the mission of BJS to collect, process, analyze, and disseminate accurate and timely information on crime and the administration of justice and to assist States and localities to improve criminal justice record-keeping.

### BJS Strategic Goals

In fulfilling its mission, BJS produces statistics and supports assistance programs which are used to guide and inform Federal, State, and local policy-making on crime and the administration of justice. This encompasses the following set of strategic goals:

**Strategic Goal 1** To produce national statistics on crime and the administration of justice that facilitate measurement over time and across geographic areas.

**Strategic Goal 2** To improve record-keeping by State and local governments and to improve the ability of States and localities to produce statistics on crime and the administration of justice.

**Strategic Goal 3** To ensure public access to statistics and criminal justice data.

### Performance Measurement

According to a panel convened by the Interagency Council for Statistical Policy (ICSP), the consortium of Federal statistical agencies, "the relationship between statistical program outputs and their beneficial uses and outcomes is often complex and difficult to track." The panel noted that there are primarily two kinds of outcomes associated with statistical

work, (1) identifying or tracking the performance of indicators which are important for public policy, and (2) contributing to the decision-making process with respect to the mission of government and the public.

The output of a statistical agency is information which, most often consists of statistics, analyses, forecasts, or research. BJS performance measures are conceptualized to satisfy three major elements or components to an information-generating activity: how well was the activity operationalized, how well did the activity do in generating the desired knowledge, and how

#### **U.S. Department of Justice and Office of Justice Programs: Mission Statements**

By carrying out its fundamental purpose to provide accurate and objective information to Federal, State, and local policymakers, BJS inherently supports the missions of the Department and the Office of Justice Programs and the strategic goals and objectives as established under the Department's Strategic Plan.

##### *Department of Justice*

The mission of the Department of Justice is "...to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans."

##### *Office of Justice Programs*

The mission of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is "To provide federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist crime victims."

well did the activity meet the needs of users and policymakers. Each goal, therefore, has three sets of measures associated with it: measures of operational outcome, measures of educational outcomes, and measures of evaluative outcome.

Measuring the output of a statistical agency often entails both quantitative and qualitative performance measures. While BJS' performance measures tend to emphasize measurable achievements, there are many indices describing performance which may not be easily quantified. For example, citation of BJS data with respect to major legal issues and significant court cases may be more important than the frequency of such citations. In addition, issues of integrity and trustworthiness associated with statistical data are not easy to measure. Finally, BJS data often play a direct role in policy development which cannot be characterized with traditional quantitative methods for cataloguing performance. BJS, along with other statistical agencies, endorses the concept of reporting the achievement of final outcomes by documenting examples that demonstrate use of agency data. An illustration of uses of BJS data can be found in Attachments A and B.

In its largest single grant program activity - the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) - BJS uses a large number of measurement activities to provide estimates of the effectiveness of the National Instant Background Check System (NICS) in stopping prohibited firearms purchasers.

In addition, there are collected in each State numerous recurring measures of record quality which identify progress in record improvement and serve as the basis for subsequent year funding allocations.

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Other BJS grant activities encompass support to the States for the centralization of State statistical functions in a Statistical Analysis Center (SAC). BJS monitors SAC program performance by tracking the research and evaluation portfolios maintained by the State SACs. In addition, BJS provides limited grant funds for a variety of technical assistance, privacy research, and other activities related to statistical issues and concerns.

Measuring an agency's achievements related to providing public access of its data and statistics centers on the creation of customer satisfaction — and the elimination of dissatisfaction — among all the audiences for BJS numbers, as measured by continuous surveys and monitoring of feedback. These consumers include the research and academic community, all components of the media, State and city officials from jurisdictions of all sizes, and their Federal counterparts.



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Section III. **Strategic Goals and outcome measures**

Goal 1. Produce statistics on crime and justice

- 1.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes
  - Major statistical series conducted
  - Levels of accuracy and operational coverage
  - Levels of reliability and validity
- 1.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes
  - Measuring data utilization
  - Measuring report utilization
- 1.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes
  - Measuring temporal change
  - Measuring spatial variation

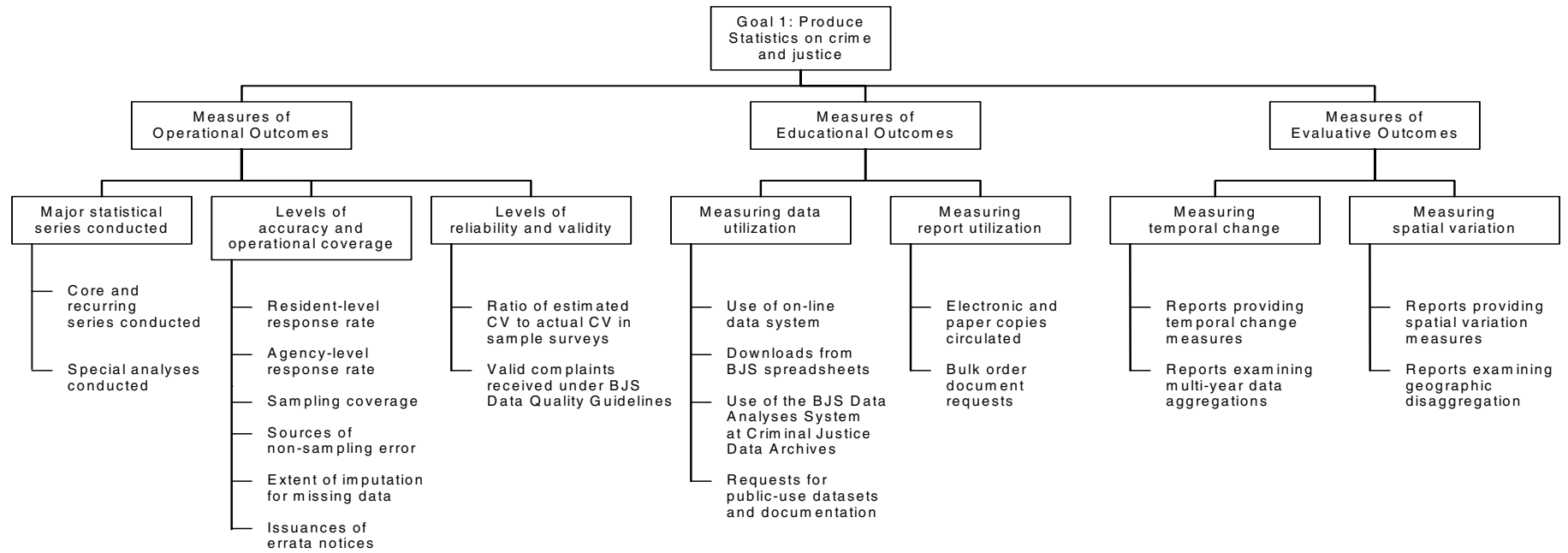
Goal 2. Improving criminal records and local statistics

- 2.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes
  - Status of criminal history records and interface between States and national system
  - Status of National Incident-Based Reporting System implementation
- 2.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes
  - Provide technical assistance for improved statistical reporting
- 2.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes
  - Effectiveness of criminal history record system improvements

Goal 3. Ensuring public access to data and statistics

- 3.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes
  - Products and services available
- 3.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes
  - Addressing customer needs
- 3.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes
  - Measuring customer satisfaction

**Figure 2. Strategic Plan for the Bureau of Justice Statistics:  
Goal 1 Outcome Measures**



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## **Strategic Goal 1. Produce statistics on crime and justice**

BJS carries out this goal through a series of recurring statistical programs covering criminal victimization, law enforcement, prosecution, courts and sentencing, corrections, Federal justice, and tribal justice. BJS also provides data needed by other OJP components for use in formula-based grant programs or other program initiatives involving State or local crime and justice data.

**Victimization statistics** The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collects data from a nationally representative sample that contacts approximately 42,000 households comprising nearly 76,000 persons on the impact, frequency and consequences of criminal victimization. Survey data, collected through more than 100,000 interviews annually, reveal the number of rapes, sexual assaults, robberies, assaults, thefts, household burglaries and motor vehicle thefts U.S. residents and their households experience each year.

The NCVS provides details on victims and offenders and the circumstances under which they come together and the contingencies of crime, such as weapon use, place and time of occurrence, costs of crime, and perceived alcohol and drug use by the offender.

The NCVS enables BJS to conduct small-area analyses and to study discrete population segments. In addition, NCVS serves as a national platform for measuring school crime, workplace violence, racial profiling, and other topical concerns and has been enhanced to capture data on hate crime, computer crime, and crime against the disabled. It provides the largest forum for victims to describe their experiences of victimization, the impact of crime, and the characteristics of violent offenders.

The public uses the information provided in these reports to better understand the extent and nature of crime, to evaluate their susceptibility to

crime and to learn how to avoid placing themselves into situations that may increase their vulnerability to crime. Policy makers use the data from these reports to develop laws, policies, and programs to combat or prevent crime. The media rely on NCVS data as one of the most reliable sources of crime statistics in the Nation, and researchers rely on these reports as benchmarks for their own research findings. The NCVS has been continuously conducted since 1973.

**Law enforcement statistics** This data collection is the only source for complete national counts of law enforcement personnel in the United States. It also provides information on the primary duties and the operations of law enforcement agencies and forensic crime laboratories across the Nation.

BJS collects and analyzes sample data drawn to represent over 18,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide on the organization and administration of police and sheriffs' departments. Censuses of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies are conducted periodically, as well as a survey of campus law enforcement agencies. These programs allow for the examination of changes over time in staffing levels, minority and female representation among officers, officer education and training requirements, operating budgets, salaries and special pay for officers, UCR crime rates, type of special units operated, drug enforcement activities, sidearm and armor policies, type and number of vehicles operated, and new technologies being employed. The data are used by law enforcement agencies nationwide to provide systematic comparative information.

Surveys of DNA and forensic crime laboratories provide national data on the personnel, budgets and expenditures, workloads, equipment, and procedures and policies of these publicly operated laboratories. In addition, BJS collects information from the public about the nature and

outcomes of their interactions with law enforcement officers, including data on traffic stops and use of force. This program has been of signal importance to the COPS program, the bullet-proof vest program, and other programs across OJP which require management and administrative data on the operations of these agencies. Data collected on traffic stops and use of force, as well as the operations of law enforcement training academies have been used by Police Corps, COPS, and other components in the Department. The collection of administrative data from law enforcement agencies began in 1986.

**Prosecution statistics** BJS collects data on resources, policies, and practices of local prosecutors from a nationally representative sample of chief prosecutors who handle felony cases in State courts. These data cover a variety of topics including the use of innovative prosecution techniques, intermediate sanctions, plea bargaining and work-related assaults and threats. This collection provides data on temporal change in the administration of prosecution activities and the emerging types of cases and knowledge now required (such as DNA and computer crime), and it documents the costs associated with prosecution activities. This data collection has been ongoing since 1974.

**Courts and sentencing statistics** BJS provides data on the following:

- State court sentencing of convicted felons, including demographic characteristics of felons, conviction offenses, types of sentences, sentence lengths, and length of time from arrest to conviction and sentencing (ongoing since 1986)
- criminal justice processing of persons charged with felonies, including demographic characteristics, arrest offense, criminal justice status at time of arrest, prior arrests and convictions, bail and pretrial release, court appearance record, rearrests while on pretrial release,

type and outcome of adjudication, disposition, and type and length of sentence (ongoing since 1974)

- State-by-State data on civil and criminal workload in all State and local courts including case type, case filings, case processing, disposition, and appellate opinions (ongoing since 1975). In 2002 BJS, with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, began a statistical series to gather domestic violence case-processing data.

The data series provide the only national source of information on judicial decision-making and the manner in which cases are managed and adjudicated as they traverse the justice system.

Through this collection, BJS prospectively tracks felons from arrest through final disposition in order to determine the outcomes of case decision-making at each decision-point in the justice system. Estimates are provided on the number of persons convicted of a felony in State courts nationwide during the year, the different types of sentences they receive, the demographic characteristics of the convicted felons, and the sentences received by type of offense.

This collection represents the only national data on time required from arrest to conviction, on sentencing by jury and bench trials, and detailed information on defendants sentenced after entering a plea.

**Federal justice statistics** BJS provides annual data on workload, activities, and outcomes associated with Federal criminal cases collected from the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys, the Federal Pretrial Services Agency, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP) provides a key benefit to DOJ in that it is the only source for combined data from both the Executive and Judicial branches on the

handling of Federal offenders. These data are heavily utilized by DOJ (particularly the Office of Legal Policy and the Criminal Division) for planning initiatives, evaluating performance, and setting budget priorities. The website for these data permits additional customized analyses and has been a continuing source of District-level data on Federal justice. This statistical series has been ongoing since 1980.

**Corrections statistics** Information is provided on correctional populations and facilities gathered from Federal, State, and local governments, and covers the major components of the corrections system — probation, jails, prisons, and parole. The corrections program consists of the following:

- annual and midyear counts of incarcerated persons in State and Federal prisons and local jails (ongoing since 1850 and 1933, respectively)
- annual counts and characteristics of persons entering or exiting probation and parole (ongoing since 1965)
- annual statistics on persons admitted to or released from State and Federal prisons and on persons released from parole supervision (ongoing since 1926)
- annual counts and characteristics of persons sentenced to death (ongoing since 1930)
- data on deaths of offenders in custody (ongoing since 2000)
- quinquennial surveys of prison and jail inmates and adult probationers (ongoing since 1974)
- censuses of State and local correctional facilities and parole and probation agencies (ongoing since 1970)
- the study of recidivism of State prisoners (ongoing since 1983).

These series detail information on the resources and demand for correctional sanctions and are highly valued by both policymakers and the practitioner community for the capability to

introduce consistent measures of correctional activity. These data have been used by every component in OJP and have been heavily used by divisions of the U.S. Department of Justice including the Criminal Division and the Office of Legal Policy.

**Tribal justice statistics** BJS supports development of statistics on crime and the administration of justice in Indian country. The work in tribal statistics is designed to fill an informational gap by pursuing diverse efforts, including the following:

- Criminal victimization studies in three American Indian jurisdictions with special emphasis on the role of alcohol in violent crime victimizations and the characteristics of domestic violence incidents.
- Census of tribal justice agencies in Indian country is the first comprehensive data collection to identify tribal justice in Indian Country, the services provided by the agencies, and other information concerning court systems and law enforcement.
- The annual survey of jails in Indian country obtains data from all 70 confinement facilities, detention centers, and jails operated by tribal authorities or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- The Tribal Criminal History Improvement Program began in 2004 as a pilot program. The program supports the development of complete, updated, and accurate criminal history records for individuals in Indian country.

**Justice expenditure and employment** BJS provides expenditure and employment data from Federal, State, and local criminal justice agencies nationwide. This series includes National and State-by-State estimates of government expenditures and employment for the following justice categories: police protection, all judicial functions (including prosecution, courts, and public defense), and corrections. The justice

employment and expenditure data are the Nation's only source for tracking the Nation's financial commitment to the justice system. These data are used to support all major formula programs in OJP and by other by Federal, State and local officials to assess their relevant justice costs in terms of financial and human resources. This statistical series has been ongoing since 1972.

**International statistics** Through the International Statistics Program, BJS cooperates with other countries and the United Nations to improve the collection of statistics on crime and criminal justice systems. A long-term goal is to enable cross-national comparisons and examination of the relationship between crime trends in the United States and those in other countries.

World Factbook of Criminal Justice Systems provides narrative descriptions of the criminal justice systems of 45 countries. These descriptions, available electronically through the BJS Internet site, are written to a common template to facilitate comparisons.

**Drugs, alcohol, and crime** Many of BJS' ongoing statistical data series collect drug and alcohol-related information, including data on victim perception of offender substance use; drug-related programs of State and local police agencies; adjudication and sentencing of drug offenders at the Federal and State level; and inmate past drug and alcohol use, substance use at the time of the offense, and participation in substance abuse treatment programs. The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics presents data on drug use in the general population, on public opinion toward drugs, and on enforcement of drug laws. A complete online reference to statistics on drugs and crime is accessible on the BJS website.

**Improving the quality of justice data** BJS conducts, supports, and implements methodological and statistical research and initiatives designed to

improve the quality and coverage of justice statistics, records, and information systems. These activities include assessing the technology and legislative status of criminal history and other record systems and participating in the development and implementation of privacy, security, and information policies which impact on Federal and State operational and statistical activities.

*Statistical methodological research*  
Under the aegis of the **American Statistical Association (ASA)**, BJS administers a methodological research program designed to foster improvements in the methods used to obtain, analyze, and report national level data on crime and criminal justice. BJS supports studies designed to yield new insights to affect current practice in areas such as developing the methods, definitions, and protocols to obtain nationally representative data; analyzing longitudinal data to examine reporting variations and their effects on estimates of national rates; and examining new ways of addressing missing and incomplete data.

The **BJS Visiting Fellows Program** selects researchers to come to Washington, D.C., to conduct crime-related studies using the agency's rich array of datasets and software. BJS Visiting Fellows interact with BJS staff and gain first-hand knowledge of some of the most recent developments in the field of criminal justice statistical research.

*Justice information and privacy*  
Technological development has raised new questions about privacy policy relevant to justice records and systems. To meet these needs, BJS has for over 20 years supported a privacy program to identify and analyze the privacy impact of changes in the systems environment, to provide a forum for the discussion of these issues, and to develop standards which may be applicable to the collection,

maintenance, and dissemination of criminal record data. BJS provides technical expertise to States in implementing privacy regulations governing access to criminal justice data. Primary emphasis is on accuracy and completeness of records, limitations on dissemination, commingling of juvenile and adult records, data auditing techniques, and the interstate exchange of records. Technical expertise has been provided since 1972.

**Strategic Goal 1.** Produce statistics on crime and justice

### **1.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes**

#### *I. Major statistical series conducted*

BJS carries out over three dozen separate data collection programs covering crime and the administration of justice. These series generally recur at specific intervals in order to facilitate trend analysis. In general, all BJS recurring and core programs are considered to be a part of the statistical portfolio, regardless of whether a collection is occurring in a particular fiscal or calendar year. The following outcome measures are used to assess the implementation of these series:

#### **Core and recurring series conducted**

The number of data collection series scheduled to be conducted during a particular calendar year and the number actually conducted.

**Special analyses conducted** BJS periodically conducts special collections or analyses for specific purposes, such as a collaborative effort with other Federal agencies or fulfilling a congressional mandate. The number of special analyses conducted is maintained as an indicator of the utility of specific datasets for unanticipated requirements.

## II. Data quality and accuracy

BJS establishes standards and collection protocols for each statistical program. These methodological considerations are the best gauge of the quality of the data ultimately produced. Outcome measures systematically examined for each statistical program are:

**Resident-level response rate** Calculated as the percentage of respondents who voluntarily participate in the BJS data collection activity. Changes in response rates indicate a change in the willingness of respondents to participate in the data collection program. Reductions in response rate may result in increased project costs due to more extensive follow-up to attempt to secure participation.

### Agency-level response rate

Calculated as the percentage of agencies which voluntarily participate in the BJS data collection activity. Changes in response rates indicate a change in the willingness of respondents to participate in the data collection program. Reductions in response rate may result in increased project costs due to more extensive follow-up measures needed to secure adequate participation.

**Sampling coverage** The probability of being selected to be in a representative sample. Changes in the probability of selection directly affect the size of the error associated with estimates derived from sample data and key determinants of the reliability and precision of the sample data. The sample must also be evaluated to ensure its representativeness if it is to be considered valid.

### Sources of non-sampling error

Non-sampling error is attributable to a wide variety of sources and BJS must continually examine the impact on sample estimates of factors which are external to the data collection process but which may affect estimates. The ability of respondents to recall or record

information, tendencies to telescope incidents, or failure to be able to describe certain contingencies of an incident in terms of the categories being asked are examples of non-sampling errors about which BJS must be concerned. For example, the NCVS sampling procedures utilize a panel design which means that the same households may be in sample for up to 3 years. A source of non-sampling error would be conditioning of respondents not to describe victimizations because of their experience that such descriptions trigger a series of additional questions and a lengthier interview.

### Extent of imputation for missing data

When BJS establishes that a reliable and valid data collection procedure has been used, it is necessary to address the problem of missing data because not every respondent will complete every item on a data collection inventory. Imputation is normally done through a ratio adjustment where the distribution of known responses is applied to the responses for which data are missing. BJS must continuously monitor problems of missing data, ascertain the reasons, and determine the optimal procedure for imputing the value to a case. The amount of missing data is an important indicator of the quality and utility of the data collected.

**Issuance of errata notices** BJS maintains a period of several weeks between report release and the final printing of a report. During that period, errors in text or data may be discovered which remained undetected during the verification process. Prior to printing such errors can be corrected. Occasionally, errors may appear in a final version of a report. In such cases, BJS issues an errata sheet and notes the modification on the electronic version of the report. Proper management of statistical releases requires BJS to examine the reasons for such errors and verification improvement which may be needed.

## III. Reliability and validity

BJS places a high emphasis on the reliability and utility of the data collected. In addition, a core value of BJS is that all data should be accessible and replicable. Outcome measures include:

### Ratio of estimated coefficient of variation (CV) to actual estimates of error calculated from the sample data

At the time of sample development, BJS establishes a threshold for the precision of the data collection activity to be undertaken. This decision is a key determinant of the size of the sample needed. BJS must continuously evaluate year-to-year changes in CV to assess changing levels of precision in sample surveys. Decreasing precision, which is usually the result of budget reductions, is a major concern for recurring estimates of both the magnitude and rate of occurrence of what is being estimated.

### Number of valid complaints received under BJS Data Quality Guidelines

BJS makes available a complaint facility through our website for data and statistics users to offer complaints and suggestions indicating errors or other presentational problems or analytic non-duplicability.

**Strategic Goal 1.** Produce statistics on crime and justice

## 1.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes

### I. Measuring data utilization

BJS data releases are intended for wide distribution and use. Data and statistics are made available in a variety of formats including traditional paper, electronic datasets and files, on-demand tabular presentations, and archived data and spreadsheets. In addition, detailed files and analytic setups are made available to ensure complete documentation of all public-use data. Outcome measures include:

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**Use of online data system** The number of user accessions to the BJS Data Online are counted with a particular emphasis on identifying user interest and priorities with respect to specific data sources and collection programs.

**Downloads from BJS spreadsheets** BJS currently maintains an inventory of over 7,500 staff-generated spreadsheets covering current and historical data on crime and the administration of justice. The frequency of use for individual spreadsheets are measured to assess user interests.

**Use of BJS Data Analysis System at the Criminal Justice Data Archive** The Data Analysis System permits users to replicate and extend BJS report findings. The Archive gathers systematic data on customer use of BJS datasets.

**Requests for public use datasets/documentation** Number of requests to BJS or the Archive for datasets and documentation either directly via download or by other means.

## *II. Measuring report utilization*

BJS reports, both electronic and in paper, CD or other format, receive wide distribution. Current usage of the website shows up to 20,000 users per day with multiple locations visited and multiple document downloads occurring per user visit. Outcome measures include the following:

**Number of electronic and paper copies distributed** BJS measures the distribution of reports annually.

**Number of bulk order document requests** Data on large user requests provide a measure of the distribution of documents among primarily educational users and institutions.

**Strategic Goal 1.** Produce statistics on crime and justice

### **1.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes**

#### *I. Measuring temporal change*

A major responsibility for any statistical agency is to generate measures of variables of interest over time. Prisoner counts, for example, have been conducted since 1850 by the Federal government. Outcome measures include:

**Number of reports providing temporal change measures** This represents a key measure of activity for BJS as describing changes over time in rates and levels of criminal events or workload of the criminal justice system is a basic responsibility.

**Number of reports examining multi-year data aggregations** Multi-year data aggregations or topical aggregations represent a set of procedures used by BJS with sample data for ensuring periodic information on low-rate events or small subgroups of the population.

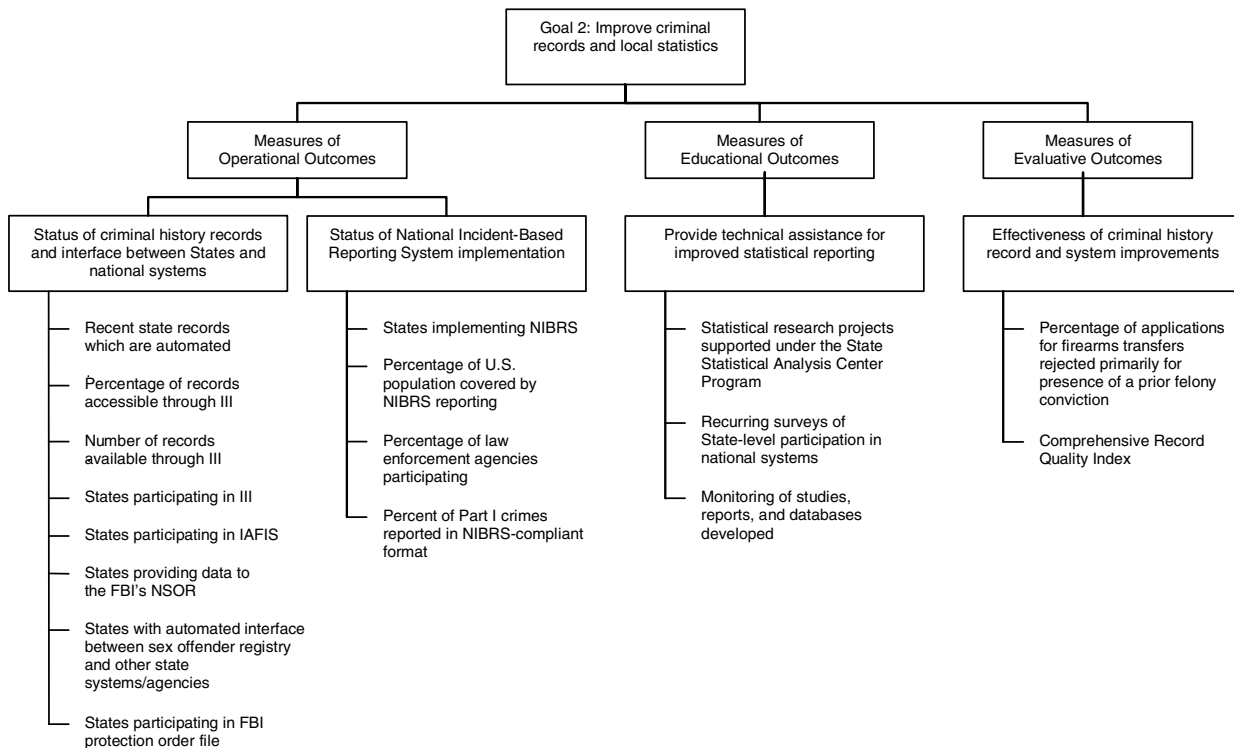
#### *II. Measuring spatial variation*

Geographic distributions of criminal activity have long been a concern. The first prisoners report in 1850 provided the per capita rates of imprisonment for each State and territory. Outcome measures include the following:

**Number of reports providing spatial variation measures** This represents a key measure of activity for BJS as describing changes and differences across geographic areas in rates and levels of criminal events or workload of the criminal justice system is a basic responsibility.

**Number of reports examining geographic disaggregations** BJS provides relevant data, where budget permits, for sub-national geographic units. This may require the development of new procedures, such as rolling multi-year data from self-representing sampling units together, to be able to detect certain geographic trends and differences.

**Figure 3. Strategic Plan for the Bureau of Justice Statistics:  
Goal 2 Outcome Measures**



**Strategic Goal 2. Improving criminal records and local statistics**

BJIS' enabling legislation focuses not only on national statistics, but on systems to support the development of data systems for states and local communities calling for "primary emphasis to the problems of state and local justice systems." Thus the Bureau recognizes the objectives of improving the quality and coverage of such systems and supporting the entire statistical research and development process for critical analysis and criminal record utilization.

**Improving Criminal History Records**

BJIS has been assisting States to improve their criminal records since 1972. In 1994, the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act provided a national grant program, the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP).

*National Criminal History Improvement Program* The goals of the NCHIP program are to ensure that accurate records are available for use in law enforcement, including sex offender registry requirements, and to permit States to identify ineligible firearm purchasers, persons ineligible to hold positions involving children, the elderly, or the disabled, and persons subject to protective orders or wanted, arrested, or convicted of stalking and/or domestic violence. Recent emphasis has been placed on anti-terrorism and homeland security issues related to the use of criminal history records.

Direct funding and technical assistance are provided to States to:

- improve the quality, timeliness, and immediate accessibility of criminal history and related records

- build their infrastructure to connect to national record check systems both to supply information and to conduct the requisite checks, including the FBI-operated National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR), and the National Protective Order File.

*Technical assistance* Direct assistance is provided to States to implement programs, policies, and technologies to upgrade criminal records and improve interface with the FBI's national systems. Technical assistance is provided through onsite visits, web training, telephone, training classes, and workshops and conferences. Onsite technical assistance visits are coordinated with the FBI to facilitate participation in FBI programs such as the Interstate Identification Index (III).

*Evaluation efforts* A comprehensive record quality index is currently being developed which will evaluate State

progress in record improvement and allow for comparison across states.

*Statistical data collections* BJS conducts several statistical series to produce annual estimates of the results of the background checks and to ascertain the quality of record-holdings in each State to identify areas where additional resources or concentrations of effort are required.

- The Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) series collects data on the number of inquiries processed by States in connection with presale firearm checks and the number and basis for rejection of such applications. Data are also collected describing procedures followed by each of the 50 States in connection with firearm checks.
- The 50-State Survey of Criminal History Information Systems provides information on the technology, policy, and legislative status of criminal history records.
- The National Instant Background Check (NIC) Survey collects data from the States to identify major impediments to disposition completeness, with a primary focus on the linkage between criminal records repositories and the courts and prosecutors.

### Improving Local Data

*State Justice Statistics (SJS) Program for Statistical Analysis Centers* In 1972, BJS initiated incentives to the States to create statistical centers in each State and to provide liaison to BJS in the collection of data from State and local agencies. Under the BJS State Justice Statistics Program, all States and most territories have established these Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) designed to centralize and integrate criminal justice statistical functions within the State. BJS provides limited funds to each State to coordinate statistical activities within the State, conduct research as needed to estimate impacts of legislative and policy changes, and serve a liaison role

in assisting BJS to gather data from respondent agencies within their States.

*Technical assistance for SACs* Technical assistance is provided to coordinate statistical activities across the States; provide training to all SACs in statistical and presentational methods; and foster shared knowledge about methodologies which have been used across the States to address common measurement concerns.

*National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Implementation Program* The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, which began in 1929, collects information about crimes reported to the police. In 1982 BJS and the FBI sponsored a study of the UCR Program with the objective of revising it to meet law enforcement needs into the 21st century. Since this time, BJS has participated in the design and development of NIBRS and supports several related efforts to encourage the use of incident-based data.

The NIBRS Implementation Program is designed to improve the quality of crime statistics in the United States through technical support to States for implementation of NIBRS-compliant systems. The technical assistance and research program builds upon extensive previous efforts to review ongoing NIBRS activity and to identify impediments to NIBRS implementation and recommend solutions to these problems.

*The Incident-Based Reporting Resource Center* This online resource for incident-based crime data seeks to put practical analytical information and tools into the hands of analysts who want to work with incident-based data, and to provide a forum where analysts can exchange information and ideas about using incident-based data.

**Strategic Goal 2.** Improve criminal records and local statistics

### 2.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes

#### *I. Measuring the status of criminal history records and the interface between state and national systems*

Since 1970, BJS has promoted both the technical and conceptual improvements in the maintenance of information systems related to criminal history records. Since 1995, BJS has provided substantial funding to the States, largely as a consequence of the Brady Act, to upgrade these records and make them shareable for purposes of a background check prior to a firearms purchase. Such improved record systems have substantial utility for other types of background check applications. BJS maintains on a continuous basis, a variety of program performance measures including:

**Percentage of State records which are automated** Biennially, BJS conducts a data collection activity among criminal records repositories to estimate the level of automation of records.

**Percentage of records accessible through the Interstate Identification Index (III) of the FBI** The III is the national system for sharing criminal records. On a near-monthly basis, BJS keeps track of the status of each State with respect to participation.

**Number of records shareable through the III** The number of III records maintained by the States versus those maintained by the FBI is an important measure of the ability to decentralize the background check system.

**Number of States participating in III** This is an important measure of the quality of criminal records in each State and the extent to which they may be conforming to national record quality standards.

**Number of States participating in the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS)** This measures the transition among the States to digitized fingerprint systems from rolled and inked prints.

**Number of States providing data to the FBI's National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)** This important component of the background check system is based upon State submission of data on sex offenders meeting registry requirements.

**Number of States with automated interface between sex offender registry and other State systems and agencies** This is primarily a concern in Point-of-Contact background check States where the State-conducted check must integrate State sex offender information.

**Number of States participating in FBI National Protection Order File** This important component of the background check system is based upon State and local submission of data on protection orders issued by local courts.

*II. Measuring the status of National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) implementation*

In 1984, BJS designed NIBRS as the next-generation of law enforcement agency data on crime. The FBI and its Advisory Policy Board have embraced the transition to NIBRS by the Nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies. BJS has played a supportive role to the FBI through occasional funding and ongoing technical assistance. Outcome measures include the following:

**Number of States implementing NIBRS** States must first become certified as NIBRS-compliant prior to the submission of data to the FBI.

**Percentage of U.S. population covered by NIBRS reporting** An ongoing measure of the reach of NIBRS statistical information and an

annual change indicator on growth in participation.

**Percentage of law enforcement agencies participating in NIBRS** An ongoing measure of the reach of NIBRS statistical information and coverage among agencies nationwide and an annual change indicator on growth in participation.

**Percent of Part I crimes reported in NIBRS-compliant format** Since 1930, annual measurement of Part I crimes has been available; this measure will document the transition from summary UCR-based data to NIBRS data.

**Strategic Goal 2.** Improve criminal records and local statistics

**2.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes**

*I. Provide technical assistance for improved statistical reporting*

Since its initiation, BJS has always perceived the production of statistical data on crime and justice as the product of its partnership with the 50,000 agencies, offices, and institutions which compose the criminal justice system nationwide. To facilitate that relationship in order to generate these data, BJS has continuously provided assistance to the States to centralize and give impetus to the collection and analysis of data at the State level. Over this period, the awareness of and recognition of the need for data-driven policies and practices has become an important element of the improvement in the administration of justice.

**Number of statistical projects supported under the State Statistical Analysis Centers (SAC) Program**

BJS has encouraged a wide range of statistical and methodological research and development in the States and has encouraged the exchange of findings through the Infobase System.

**Recurring surveys of statewide participation in national systems**

The SAC program often requires State centers to assist BJS by conducting surveys within their States to address emerging national policy issues or new legislative mandates.

**Monitoring of studies, reports, and databases developed.** BJS annually collects information via the SAC program concerning new State and local databases that are developed or enhanced with BJS funds. BJS also monitors the studies, reports, projects, and analyses that are generated as a result of SAC funding.

**Strategic Goal 2.** Improve criminal records and local statistics

**2.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes**

*I. Effectiveness of criminal history record and system improvements*

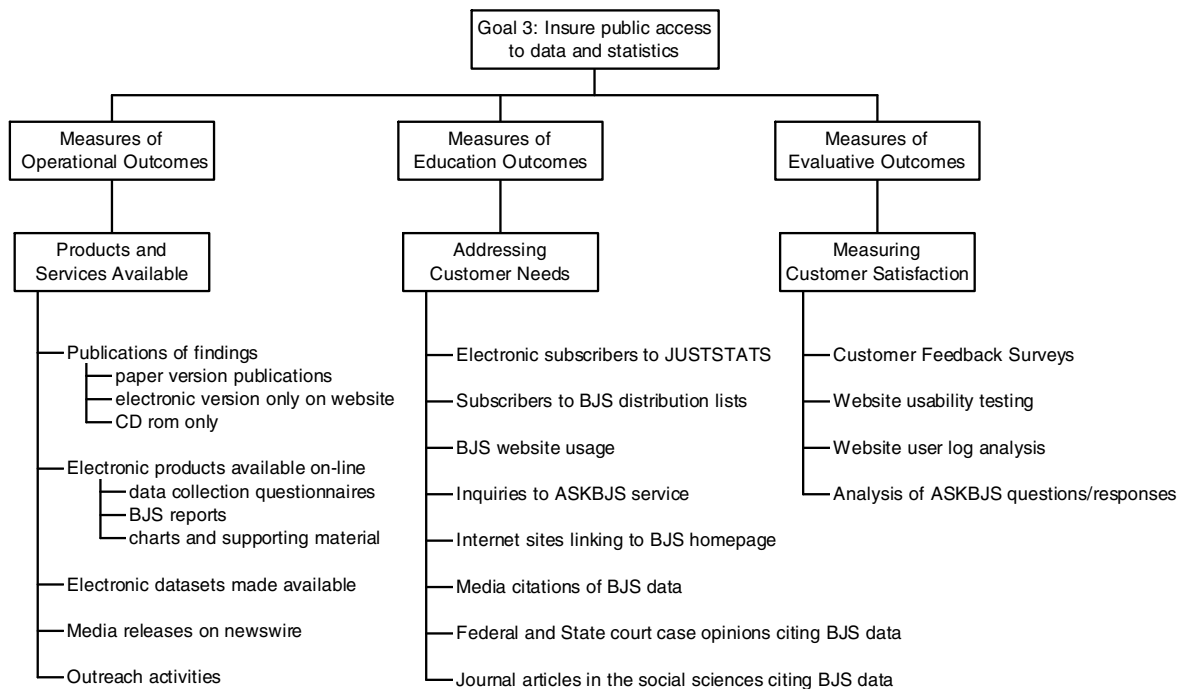
With the appropriation of funds to build the infrastructure to support the NICS, BJS simultaneously initiated the use of measures of the most important outcomes sought in terms of firearms checks and the upgrading of records nationwide to facilitate a wide range of additional types of checks associated with employment and licensing, sex offenders, stalkers, domestic violence offenders, and non-citizens.

**Percentage of applications for firearms transfers rejected primarily for the presence of a prior felony conviction history** BJS has maintained the Firearms Inquiries Statistical System (FIST) since passage of the Brady Act. This statistical series measures the results of the NICS checks conducted.

**Comprehensive Records Quality Index for comparisons across States**

This statistical effort measures a number of variables related to the completeness, timeliness, and shareability of records by producing a composite index for each State of performance measures.

**Figure 4. Strategic Plan for the Bureau of Justice Statistics  
Goal 3 Outcome Measures**



**Strategic Goal 3. Ensuring public access to data and statistics**

BJS' audience is primarily the entire nation — every institution and individual concerned with any aspect of crime and the response to crime — as well as an international one. The potential pool of customers and constituents is endless. The objectives are to provide useful, timely products, increase electronic access and online capabilities, and assist users in understanding BJS' interpretations and underlying methodologies.

**Publish, disseminate, and facilitate electronic access** BJS publishes approximately 40-50 reports annually and produces thousands of electronic spreadsheets. The BJS website has become the principal vehicle for dissemination. It receives up to 20,000 users per day with downloads of thousands of reports each day and

hundreds of datasets weekly. Over the last several years, BJS has recorded nearly 7 million visitors to the BJS website, utilizing the data or statistical reports.

*BJS Internet World Wide Web site* Providing information on the Internet has proven to be the most timely, efficient, and cost-effective way BJS can make its data accessible. BJS information is updated continuously. The site provides:

- summary findings including statistical graphics, publications, selected statistics, and related sites presented by crime and justice topic
- every BJS report produced by BJS since 1994 is available electronically
- data for analysis, including spreadsheets, datasets, and online tabulation capabilities
- descriptions of BJS data collections and assistance programs.

From 2003 to 2004, BJS website usage increased nearly 30%.

*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* This compilation, maintained by the State University of New York at Albany, is available online at <[www.albany.edu/sourcebook](http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook)> with continuously updated data from more than 150 sources. Annual editions of the Sourcebook with over 600 tables are also available on CD-ROM.

**Clearinghouses and archives** BJS maintains national archives of data and reports for dissemination and direct, interactive access by the public. This permits any researcher or member of the public to replicate any number published by BJS.

*Reference Service* The National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) provides information about crime and justice statistics. The clearinghouse offers products and services tailored to the needs of the criminal justice professional and serves as the primary repository for BJS products for distribution.

By referral from BJS, NCJRS handles major distributions as needed for White House and DOJ events and attends major conferences representing the statistical products available from BJS.

*National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD)* The Archive, located with the central staff of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, maintains data files, documents them and makes them available to researchers, scholars, journalists and other users.

The data from most BJS statistical series — more than 300 individual data sets — are held by the archive and distributed through electronic and traditional means, including downloading from NACJD Internet site, datatapes, CD-ROM or diskettes. Online data analysis can now be conducted from the NACJD website. The NACJD provides all data management services for BJS and public access for the replication and secondary analysis of BJS statistics and findings. The NACJD produces the required documentation for data users and provides electronic access to source data for public data users around the world.

*National Clearinghouse for Criminal Justice Information Systems* The clearinghouse operates an automated index accessible through the Internet of more than 1,000 criminal justice information systems maintained by State and local governments throughout the Nation, issues technical publications, provides technical assistance and training for State and local government officials, and operates the Justice Technology Resource Center. The clearinghouse provides linking services for BJS data users to all accessible public information systems. This vehicle promotes the cross-jurisdiction use of data and permits localities to systematically examine the types of information systems and capabilities for data management present in other jurisdictions.

*Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center (FJSRC)* The Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center maintains the BJS Federal Justice Statistics Program database which contains information about suspects and defendants processed in the Federal criminal justice system. Data are currently obtained from the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Attorneys, Federal Judiciary, U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. These data are available for online query and analysis.

*Infobase of State Activities and Research (ISAR)* The ISAR database contains current information about the research, activities, and publications of the State Statistical Analysis Centers which conduct research and analyze statistics concerning criminal justice issues of State interest. The ISAR is searchable by State, keyword, and date and includes over 4,000 research projects, publications, and other state-level products and activities.

### **BJS Support for Data Users**

*BJS staff* provide direct assistance to users by identifying sources of BJS information, interpreting statistical data from BJS statistical series and data collections, and providing technical assistance related to methodologies of BJS surveys.

*BJS Clearinghouse staff* who specialize in BJS statistical resources assist users in locating data that best meet their particular information needs. BJS specialists also have access to a variety of other criminal justice data and can direct users to those resources.

*National Archive staff* supply technical assistance in analyzing data collections and selecting the computer hardware and software for analyzing data efficiently and effectively and offer training in quantitative methods of social science research to facilitate secondary analysis of criminal justice data.

**Strategic Goal 3.** Ensuring public access to data and statistics

### **3.1 Measures of Operational Outcomes**

BJS provides a wide array of products and services each of which can be counted and measured in terms of customer demand and use. These operational activities are designed to place statistical findings, prepared data, and datasets for public use in the hands of the public, including the media, policymakers, students, and researchers.

**Publication of findings** The number of paper reports, electronic reports, and CD-ROMs made available to the public and the number requested or downloaded.

#### **Electronic products available online**

BJS has been expanding the number of products available on the BJS website to address growing demand for electronically formatted questionnaires, tables, charts, and spreadsheets. The measure tracks the number and types of products that BJS makes available via its website.

#### **Electronic datasets made available**

Datasets with supporting documentation are made available in a variety of formats ranging from online direct electronic access to traditional ordering of datasets or remote mounting of datasets through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data's University of Michigan terminal system. BJS counts the number of accessions of each type to measure data usage.

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**Media releases on newswire** BJS releases reports and other announcements directly to the media via the newswire. BJS keeps track of the number of releases to the media and the number of accessions to electronic versions of press releases and announcements on the BJS website.

**Outreach activities** BJS makes substantial effort to ensure that new audiences for reports and data are continuously developed. Measures of the number of conferences attended and the number of BJS reports distributed and requested are maintained.

**Strategic Goal 3.** Ensuring public access to data and statistics

### 3.2 Measures of Educational Outcomes

Among the most important measures of accomplishment for BJS is the use of BJS data in promoting a better understanding of crime and the administration of justice. Among the measures indicative of the public's access to BJS data are:

**Electronic subscribers to JUSTATS** This database of interested data users has grown dramatically since it was created by BJS. Counts of both membership and items requested or used are maintained by BJS in order to assess utilization.

**Subscribers to BJS distribution lists** BJS maintains listings of persons who have indicated a particular topical interest and who would like copies of reports on those topics. The number of such subscribers is another measure of utilization of BJS products and services.

**BJS website usage** BJS maintains detailed information on web users and their method of entry to the BJS website as well as their level and type of activities while visiting the site.

**Inquiries to ASKBJS service** The BJS website provides a portal to BJS staff for users to inquire about findings, methods, and additional information. BJS maintains detailed logs of these transactions with the public and uses these data to evaluate the quality and responsiveness of staff to these external requests.

**Internet sites linking to BJS homepage** BJS, in its analyses of web usage, can ascertain the number of websites linking to the BJS homepage. The number of such links is an important measure of the utility other web users have attributed to the BJS website.

**Media citations of BJS data** BJS measures the frequency and use of BJS data by the media. BJS calculates an estimated number of media citations based on — the number of press releases issued by BJS multiplied by fifty percent (for a conservative figure) of the total daily newspapers on the AP newswire; and the number of press releases issued by BJS multiplied by fifty percent of registered radio stations and television stations (also a conservative figure of those likely to pick up AP news stories).

**Federal and State court opinions citing BJS data** BJS tracks the appearance of reports and findings in case decisions using Lexis/Nexis and Westlaw database searches.

**Journal articles citing BJS data** BJS tracks the citations of BJS reports and findings in social science periodicals, law reviews, criminal justice journals.

**Congressional Record and testimony citing BJS data** BJS monitors the citation of BJS data in the Congressional Record and in testimony given by and to the U.S. Congress.

**Strategic Goal 3.** Ensuring public access to data and statistics

### 3.3 Measures of Evaluative Outcomes

Measuring customer satisfaction with BJS products and services is an ongoing process. Learning about the customer's ability to navigate the website is, in many ways, as important or more important than the data or information they sought to acquire. BJS uses a variety of techniques for measuring customer satisfaction including:

**Customer feedback surveys** BJS periodically conducts surveys among those using both electronic and print materials. The findings of these surveys are regularly published on the BJS website.

**Website usability testing** BJS utilizes a vigorous program of usability testing prior to initiating any change in the content or presentation of web-based BJS materials or information.

**Website user log analysis** In order to optimize access to the most sought-after BJS information, BJS maintains data on user sessions to identify areas most frequently visited.

**Analysis of ASKBJS questions/responses** Apart from measuring whether a response was given and how timely the response was, BJS examines the content of all questions and replies to identify opportunities for data needed by the public which are not currently being collected.



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Section IV. **Measures of BJS' operational efficiency**

Efficiency Goals

BJS' Index of Operational Efficiency

## Measures of BJS' Operational Efficiency

Because it is important to BJS that the agency is able to determine whether the achieved results justified the cost and resource burden, a set of efficiency indicators have been developed to review the operational contingencies of performance.

Efficiency indicators typically represent productivity relative to resources expended; however, efficiency indicators also represent operational goals. BJS utilizes an efficiency index which is comparable to the Dow-Jones Index of bell-weather stocks to integrate GPRA

performance measures with data on appropriations and staff resources.

This performance barometer is referred to as the BJS Index of Operational Efficiency. It combines a variety of productivity indicators into a convenient index for monitoring performance across operational goals and tasks. These measures are then combined into an Index of Operational Efficiency, described more fully below.

### Efficiency goals:

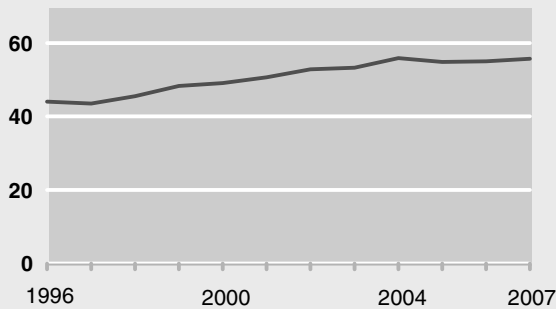
1. Reduce staffing required per collection unit
2. Increase customer contact and data access per staff member

3. Increase customer access to analytic facilities per staff member
4. Increase conversion from paper-based products to electronic products
5. Reduce cost of providing data services per user

Annualized performance metrics with respect to the five efficiency goals are defined by creating a set of measures establishing the value of each data collection activity, the numbers of users of each BJS-provided service (e.g., publications, datasets, spreadsheets for download, and interactive data analysis features), and the

### Index of Operational Efficiency

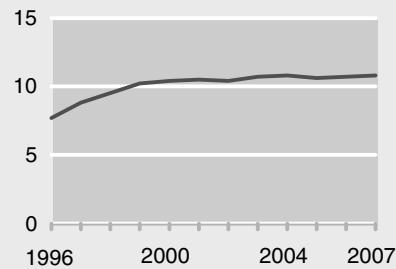
Index value



1996-07 change

### Cost score

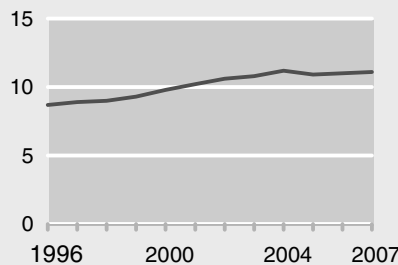
Index value



1996-07 change

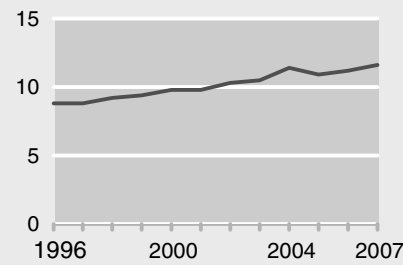
### Public contacts score

Index value



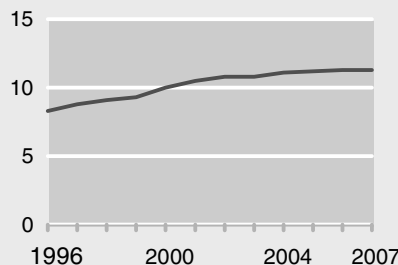
### Analytic accessibility score

Index value



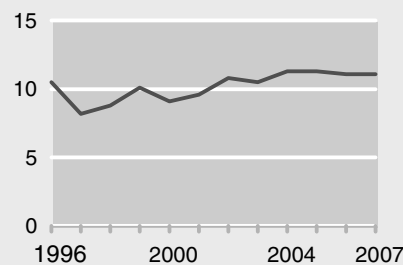
### Distribution score

Index value



### Collection unit score

Index value



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appropriations and staff resources required to accomplish the mission of the agency.

The result is a set of five efficiency measures: (1) number of staff per collection unit, (2) number of public contacts per staff member, (3) number of unique analyses produced or made electronically accessible per staff member, (4) the number of paper products disseminated per 100 users or customers, and (5) the agency appropriation per user/customer.

The five annualized efficiency measures have been generated for the years 1996 to 2004 and have been forecasted for 2005 – 2007.

For the first efficiency goal, BJS staff per collection unit has declined since 1996 by an estimated 17% reflecting fewer employees doing more work.

For efficiency goals 2 and 3, substantial improvements in the numbers of users and customers have also been made relative to the number of BJS authorized staff since 1996.

Efficiency goal 4 evidences a 90% reduction in the use of paper per user/customer indicating the enormous growth in electronic distribution of data.

Finally, the calculation of performance with respect to efficiency goal 5 shows a 65% decrease in the cost of BJS services per customer/user – from \$23.76 in 1996 to \$8.27 in 2004 (in constant dollars).

Standardizing these efficiency measures for purposes of indexing can be accomplished by generating a distribution of deviations from the average performance over the 10-year period.

To eliminate negative values for these deviations (as would occur in below average years), a constant value (in this case +10) is added to each efficiency deviation unit in each year and the total score is summed across

the five measures. The higher the aggregate score, the better the performance above the average efficiency measured over the period.

### **Index of Operational Efficiency**

The Index of Operational Efficiency gives equal weight to each of the 5 efficiency goals. The Index shows that since 1997, BJS has experienced annual increases in efficiency. Relative to the average efficiency for the period since 1996, BJS is estimated to be 30% more efficient in 2004 than it was in 1996. Over the period, the greatest improvement occurred in the reduced cost per user of BJS services and products – a 40% higher level of efficiency in 2004 than in 1996.

In addition to obtaining the underlying data and deriving an historical 10-year index for examining operational efficiency trends, BJS is evaluating the feasibility of developing an index of data quality to identify those statistical programs from among the more than 3 dozen conducted by BJS which yield the smallest non-response/missing data adjustments and those which generate larger adjustments or less precise estimates. These data efficiency measures will ultimately serve as a complement to the Index of Operational Efficiency and should help data users to obtain a more systematic understanding of the distribution of data quality.

In particular, measures of data efficiency may serve as estimators of the extent of changes in data quality associated with revised sampling methods and other data collection modifications (such as non-response follow-up) which are a direct consequence of changes in Appropriations.



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Section V. **Importance of a professional review process  
in strategic and program planning**

Internal Assessments

External Assessments

Public Access and Replicability of Findings

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## Importance of a Professional Review Process

*The Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency*, issued by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), documents the importance of employing various mechanisms for obtaining both internal and external review of a statistical agency's data collection program and methodologies.

Data programs, analysis, and statistical reports are subject to thorough internal reviews to monitor and maintain their quality. These varied vehicles of professional peer review are conducted to maintain the quality of agency programs and to ensure that users and other experts can have an impact on them.

BJS maintains a stringent oversight program for its national statistical programs. As with many other statistical agencies, BJS' programs are typically subject to ongoing and periodic professional reviews by experts to ensure validity and relevance. BJS meets with external groups to review current programs, solicit input on program initiatives, suggest new products, and recommend changes. Program managers frequently meet with academic researchers, government data users, government policy experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders, to review and evaluate products, programs, and technical methodology.

Through a variety of peer review activities as described below, BJS maintains the quality and utility of programs, and encourages data users and other stakeholders to contribute to the agency's data collection and dissemination program. Brief written statements summarizing these activities and their impact on agency programs serve as performance indicators.

### Internal Assessments

On a continuous basis, BJS staff and managers examine emerging data needs as expressed through Attorney General priorities and Congressional mandates. BJS staff regularly evaluate

new legislative initiatives and required reporting programs to ensure conformity with data collection and reporting requirements imposed. In addition, BJS staff meet regularly with Federal, State, and local officials to identify emerging data needs or desirable modifications to existing collection and reporting programs.

Finally, where available, BJS carries out systematic comparisons across both BJS and non-BJS data series; for example, BJS posts on our website the relationship between FBI-recorded crime data gathered from State and local police departments and NCVS data on reporting the same crimes to the police as described by victims.

BJS staff maintain a rigorous verification procedure to ensure accuracy and replicability for all published numbers and estimates. In addition, all analytic routines and protocols are independently verified and tested.

### External Assessments

BJS utilizes a variety of external organizations to regularly critique ongoing statistical programs and series.

*American Statistical Association* For nearly 30 years, BJS has utilized the ASA to review and critique statistical programs through a Technical Committee established to address Law and Justice Statistics. The Committee, composed primarily of academic statisticians and criminologists, provides technical advice and methodological evaluations to BJS and identifies substantive and methodological issues that BJS should address.

In addition, the ASA sponsors a program of research designed to tap high-quality researchers to periodically study issues of interest to BJS relating to methodology and/or analyses drawn from our statistical series. For example, BJS has had a growing interest in the problem of survey non-response and missing data; BJS and ASA jointly sponsored a meeting to better understand the reasons for growth in non-response and techniques for ameliorating the problem. Through

this relationship, ASA ensures that BJS activities and procedures are regularly reviewed and evaluated before receiving the organization's imprimatur.

*Office of Management and Budget* BJS, as one of the ten principal Federal statistical agencies, adheres to common policy and practice expectations defined by OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs as well as the notice and review requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act. In this regard, BJS practices are continually subject to the review of the Chief Statistician of the U.S. located in OMB. BJS collection programs are regularly subject to OMB and public scrutiny as set forth in OMB regulations governing Federal statistical series and the operations of statistical agencies.

*The Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council* CNSTAT works to improve the understanding of national issues through improvement to the statistical methods and information on which important public policy decisions are based. BJS has had a long standing relationship with NRC to systematically evaluate the suitability of BJS findings and data for inclusion in reports on crime-related issues. BJS staff frequently present or serve on NRC panels and submit papers for inclusion in NRC published reports.

*Interagency Council on Statistical Policy* BJS is a member of the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP), a council of federal statistical agency heads that is chaired by OMB. Since its inception, the ICSP has been an important vehicle for coordinating federal statistical agencies and their practices, particularly when statistical activities and issues overlap or cut across agencies. The ICSP has also facilitated the exchange of information about agency programs and activities, and has provided advice and counsel to OMB on statistical matters.

*FedStats* To ensure one-stop shopping for the public as users of BJS statistical data, BJS seeks to conform its data dissemination and distribution procedures to the requirements of *FedStats* — an electronic window on a full range of official statistical information available to the public from the Federal Government. BJS statistical programs, analytic procedures, and reports and datasets made available to the public are all continuously evaluated in terms of these external requirements and standards. BJS has been a major contributor to those Federal initiatives devised to ensure greater access to such data.

*Public Interest Organizations* BJS regularly seeks the advice and input of public interest groups and organizations with respect to collection instruments, collection procedures, and publications. Among the organizations that are regularly solicited for their assessments of our products are: International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Sheriff's Association, American Correctional Association, Association of State Corrections Administrators, American Jail Association, American Probation and Parole Association, National District Attorney's Association, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys.

BJS also utilizes periodic focus groups composed of experts, both from the practitioner and academic communities, to evaluate new initiatives and ongoing programs. In addition, the BJS Visiting Fellows program affords staff the opportunity to obtain additional external review and comment.

*Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics* COPAFS has been an ongoing partner to BJS in assuring the utility and value of BJS statistics for a wide variety of user communities. COPAFS, as a consortium of many dozens of member and affiliate organizations relying upon Federal statistical data, provides a superb sounding-board for BJS initiatives. In particular, BJS has asked COPAFS for comments on the usefulness and usability of the BJS website. BJS staff have made presentations at COPAFS meetings designed to elicit evaluative criticism and such exchanges have proven to be helpful and constructive opportunities to gather feedback on how to improve the utility of the BJS website.

### **Public Access and Replicability of Findings**

Another element of the evaluation process within BJS is the self-imposed requirement to make all datasets and accompanying documentation available to the public as soon as possible after the release of a report from that dataset. This is perhaps the most important evaluation tool as every reported finding should be replicable by those external to BJS. BJS facilitates such use of the data by providing analytic tools directly to users.

Through use of our two main online data repositories, the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data and the Federal Justice Statistics website, BJS has provided both access to BJS data and easy-to-use software which permits any user to conduct analyses from the data without prior training in the use of the software. In this fashion, even an untrained user of BJS data can challenge a number in our reports and ascertain whether the number can be reproduced.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is director.

The FY 2005-2008 BJS Strategic Plan was prepared under the direction of Lawrence A. Greenfeld. Maureen A. Henneberg, Associate Director, managed the implementation of the planning process. Peter Brien and Lara Reynolds prepared the Strategic Plan for publication. Tom Hester and Marianne Zawitz assisted in production.

**BJS Data – An invaluable resource to policy makers  
and the criminal justice community**

Those responsible for determining or operating the criminal justice process – legislators and their staff, policy makers, police, prosecutors, and corrections officers – rank among the most frequent users of BJS statistics. The following represents a small sampling of requests for data per year.

<u>BJS Data requester</u>	<u>Type of data</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
U.S. Trustee Program	Statistical trends in Federal bankruptcy fraud	To expand the scope of the United States Trustees database
DOJ, Deputy Attorney Generals Office	Statistical tabulations and Federal criminal case processing statistics	To assist a project to reallocate U.S. attorney resources nationwide
DOJ, U.S. Marshals Service	In-depth analysis of warrant information database to describe fugitives	To provide statistical support in broadening the analytical Scope of the warrant information database
DOJ, Office of Legal Policy	Statistical trends in human trafficking	To provide data for the "Report to Congress from Attorney General John Ashcroft on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in FY 2003"
Department of Education, National Library of Education	Federal expenditure on prisons in 2000	To compare the Federal government's expenditures on education and prisons
<b>State and local:</b>		
Gastonia, NC Police Department	Local police departments that require a 90% or better qualification score for hire	To determine if the Gastonia PD's 90% requirement should be changed
Massachusetts District Attorneys Association	District Attorney salaries	To compare the Massachusetts DA's salaries with other jurisdictions
Michigan Department of Community Health	Intimate partner violence rates in hospital emergency departments	To determine the prevalence of intimate partner violence against women who present to emergency departments
Pennsylvania State Senate	State policies on criminal record expungement	To examine state policies regarding the expungement of criminal records
Military Department of Tennessee, Tennessee State Guard	Statistics on accidents involving less-lethal munitions and diversionary devices employed by Tactical Operations teams	To provide a foundation for the development of a tactical security force
Burnsville, MN Police Department	Statistics on officers injured or killed while on duty where the officer's weapon was taken away	To compare Level 2 retention holsters for duty with Level 3 holsters
Denver Sheriff's Department	The top 50 largest local jail jurisdictions	To determine where the Denver County Jail in Denver, CO ranks among large jails in the U.S.
<b>Educational/Institutions</b>		
Old Dominion University - Department of Sociology	Data on the number of sworn officers in State and local agencies	To prepare educational materials
University of Cathilique de Lille	Statistics on prison overcrowding in the United States from 1970 to present	To prepare for an academic conference on prison privatization
Binghamton University (SUNY) – Department of Psychology	HIV and AIDS incidence in the prison population in comparison to the general population	To prepare for a lecture
<b>Community Organizations:</b>		
Center for Society, Law & Justice	Data on the number of agencies placed under consent decree for ethics and integrity issues	To compile information on how to measure, assess and enhance climates for integrity in law enforcement agencies
Boys and Girls Clubs of America	Statistics on the prevalence of gang activity	To develop a grant proposal
WA Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs	Statistics on female sex offenders in cases where there are multiple offenders	To answer a request made to the coalition
Pennsylvania Prison Society	Data on the number of veterans who have been incarcerated for homicide in PA since 1980	To determine whether the use of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a mitigating factor at trial led to reduced sentences for veterans after 1980

## Recent Federal and State court cases citing BJS statistics

<u>Court</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>BJS data cited</u>
U.S. Supreme Court	Schriro v. Summerlin	Data on the size of the state prison population
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit	U.S. v. Kincade	Data on the number of offenders under correctional supervision from "Probation and Parole in the United States, 2003"
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit	U.S. v. Crawford	Recidivism of state prisoners from "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994" and the number of federal prisoners released on parole from "Offenders Returning to Federal Prison, 1986-1987"
United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York	Pulinario v. Goord	Data indicating that rape is an underreported crime, from "Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992-2000"
United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts	Kane v. Winn	Data on violence by inmates from "Census of State and Federal Corrections Facilities, 2000" and data on prisoner petitions from "Federal Habeas Corpus Review: Challenging State Court Criminal Convictions"
United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts	U.S. v. Green	Prevalence of imprisonment from "Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001"
Supreme Court of Florida	B.C. v. Florida Dep't of Children and Families	Data from "Incarcerated Parents and their Children"
Supreme Court of Colorado	People v. Bryant	Data on the underreported nature of rape crimes from "Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992-2000"
Supreme Court of Michigan	People v. Goldston	Violent crime rate trends
Supreme Court of Illinois	People v. Huddleston	Data on sexual assault trends from "Sex Offenses and Offenders"
Supreme Court of Missouri	State ex rel. Hope house, Inc. v. Merrigan	Domestic violence data from "Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey"
Supreme Court of Mississippi	Doe v. State ex rel. Mississippi Dep't of Corrections	Parole population statistics
Supreme Court of Tennessee	State v. Davidson	Death penalty statistics