

What is the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)?

NCRP collects offender-level data on admissions to and releases from prisons and post-confinement community supervision. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has administered the NCRP since 1983. State departments of correction and community supervision provide these data, which are used at the federal and state levels to monitor correctional populations and address policy questions related to recidivism, prisoner reentry, and trends in demographic characteristics of the incarcerated and paroled populations.

What is the Bureau of Justice Statistics?

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

What is Abt Associates' role in NCRP?

Abt Associates has been collecting NCRP on behalf of BJS since 2010. Prior to then, the U.S. Census Bureau was the NCRP data collection agent. Abt is responsible for collecting, processing and analyzing data submitted by state departments of corrections and community supervision. Working with BJS, Abt has implemented BJS's vision to enhance and expand the NCRP system. Abt has over 40 years of experience working with the U.S. Department of Justice and other criminal justice agencies across the country.

What data are collected under NCRP?

Most states submit NCRP data annually, for prisoners or individuals on community supervision during the previous calendar year. State departments of correction are asked to provide three data files:

- Prison Admissions (Part A): one record for each *admission* of a sentenced offender to the state's prison system.
- Prison Releases (Part B): one record for each *release* of a sentenced offender from the state's prison system.
- Prison Custody (Part D): one record for each sentenced offender in the physical custody of the state's prison system at year end.

State agencies responsible for supervising offenders on a term of community supervision immediately after release from prison are asked to provide two data files:

- Post Confinement Community Supervision Admissions (Part E): one record for each *admission* to a post-confinement community supervision program.
- Post Confinement Community Supervision Releases (Part F): one record for each *release* from a post-confinement community supervision program.

The NCRP data request documentation contains complete information on all the requested data elements. While the data elements differ somewhat across the five data files, they generally include:

- Offender characteristics (e.g., unique agency identifier, name, last known address, SSN, date of birth, race, sex, veteran status, country of citizenship, country of birth)
- Sentence characteristics (e.g., county where sentence imposed, offenses, sentence length)
- Date and type of admission to prison
- Date and type of release from prison
- Date and type of admission to post-confinement community supervision
- Date and type of release from post-confinement community supervision

What if all of the data can't be provided?

BJs understands that the requested data elements may not be collected by all agencies or some agencies' policies may not allow sharing of certain data. You may provide a portion of the requested items. The data request documentation also highlights the "core" data elements that are most important to NCRP.

How long will it take to respond to the NCRP?

The amount of time depends on the characteristics of your agency's offender information system, the type of data extraction tools available for the system, and the level of expertise agency staff have in using those tools. The biggest time commitment is in the first year of participation, when data extract procedures must be developed. BJS estimates the time needed to develop computer programs to extract data and to prepare a response to be 24 hours, on average, per type of database containing the information needed for the first year of participation, and 8 hours, per type of database, during the second and subsequent years. Feedback during data processing and review is estimated to take 3 hours. Average total burden for reporting year 2019 is 29 hours per state. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspects of the collection of this information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 810 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531, and to the Office of Management and Budget, OMB number 1121-0065, Washington, DC 20503. For more information on the NCRP reporting burden (OMB No. 1121-0065 Exp. 11/30/2021), see the NCRP's OMB submission.¹

When is the data submission due?

The submission date for NCRP data is March 31 of each year. If it is not possible to meet this date, the Abt NCRP site liaison assigned to your state will work with you to determine a submission date.

Is there a specific format or coding scheme for the data?

There is no required format or coding scheme for the data you submit. The codes provided in the NCRP Data Request Instructions are suggested, but BJS and its data collection agent can convert state-specific codes to the standard NCRP ones if you provide documentation for the codes you submit.

How are data submitted to the NCRP?

The preferred method for submitting data to Abt Associates is via the NCRP data transfer site (transfer.abtassoc.com). This site is compliant with FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standard) 140-2 and meets all the requirements of the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the Privacy Act. The data are automatically encrypted during transit.

How does BJS keep the NCRP data secure?

BJs and Abt are bound by federal law (34 USC 10231) which provides that, "No officer or employee of the Federal Government, and no recipient of assistance under the provisions of this chapter shall use or reveal any research or statistical information furnished under this chapter by any person and identifiable to any specific private person for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was obtained in accordance with this chapter. Such information and copies thereof shall be immune from legal process, and shall not, without the consent of the person furnishing such information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or other judicial, legislative, or administrative proceedings." Both BJS and Abt are required to follow the BJS Data Protection Guidelines (<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/BJSDataProtectionGuidelines.pdf>).

What happens after data are submitted?

Abt will verify the contents of the data files and conduct a series of validity checks, including comparing the submitted data to your submissions from prior years. Typically, this will be accomplished within 1 to 3 weeks of receipt of your data. Your Abt site liaison will then contact you to review the findings.

¹ https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewICR?ref_nbr=201208-1121-005

How will the NCRP data be used?

NCRP data are used at the federal and state levels to address policy questions related to recidivism, prisoner reentry, and trends in demographic characteristics of correctional and community supervision populations. BJS uses NCRP data to monitor these issues at the national level. Abt Associates actively solicits ideas from state NCRP contacts on how NCRP data can be used in their state. Researchers at universities and other institutions can access NCRP data - minus offender unique identifiers and names - at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/>), following a review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Why is BJS requesting SSNs?

One of the unique features of the NCRP is the potential to link individual offender records to other administrative records. By adding SSNs to the NCRP, BJS will be able to link NCRP data to records from a variety of federal administrative datasets that contain information on income, employment, mortality, or public assistance histories of prisoners and their families before and after incarceration. This will enable a broader understanding of the factors that contribute to successful prisoner reentry into society, and a better understanding of the inter-relationship of poverty, health, crime, and other social-economic indicators. Linking will be performed in a way that protects personal information. BJS will produce state-level statistical reports from the linked datasets and provide these back to the state departments of corrections' separately.

How will NCRP data be linked to other administrative data sets?

BJS has partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Administrative Records Research and Applications (CARRA), which has obtained person-level data from other federal agencies, including data on supplemental security income from the Social Security Administration, assistance from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and subsidized health insurance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Linking occurs only behind CARRA's firewall at Federal Statistical Research Data Centers by individuals who have gone through a security background check, taken data security training, and received BJS and Census Bureau approval for individual projects. Currently, these individuals are from BJS and its NCRP data collection agent (Abt Associates), but state officials may also request access to CARRA.

Once a link is made, all personally identifiable information (PII) that you provide to us for NCRP (names, SSNs, inmate IDs, FBI IDs, addresses) are deleted from the NCRP data file housed at CARRA.

How are offenders' SSN, last known address, and other personal information protected?

NCRP computer files containing SSNs and other personal information are protected at each point in the process, from submission by states to linking the data at CARRA. See the FAQ on page 2 "How does BJS keep the NCRP data secure?" for further information.

In addition, only aggregate analyses of linked data are permitted, and CARRA carefully screens all output to ensure that it does not contain any personal identifiers or information that could be used to reconstruct the identity of an individual.

Are there any legal impediments to including SSNs in the NCRP?

From the federal government's perspective, there are no legal impediments and the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved BJS's request to include SSNs and addresses in the NCRP beginning on 10/31/2015.

As necessary, BJS and its data collection agent will sign a Data Use Agreement that specifies how SSNs can be used.

What if nine-digit SSNs can't legally be provided? Is it ok to provide only the last four digits?

Yes. CARRA is also set up to link records using only the last four digits of the SSN. However, the linkage rate is higher with the full SSN, so if your agency can legally provide all 9 digits, we ask that you do so.

Why is BJS requesting the offender's last known address prior to incarceration?

Collection of an inmate's home address prior to imprisonment, helps link NCRP to other sources of administrative data and it allows BJS to produce accurate imprisonment rates for areas smaller than states. The only other

geographic variables captured in NCRP are the custodial state where the inmate is held, the state with legal authority over the inmate, and the county in which the inmate was sentenced.

Can other federal agencies and researchers get access to the NCRP data through CARRA?

No. BJS has requested that CARRA classify the NCRP data as 'restricted,' meaning BJS must approve any request to use the data. Only those people designated by BJS and given Special Sworn Status by the Census Bureau will be able to access the NCRP data.

What is new this year in NCRP?

To meet a Department of Justice request that BJS provide more statistics on citizenship status of prisoners, BJS is adding the following variables for the 2018 data year: country of current citizenship of prisoner, country of birth of prisoner, and whether the prisoner is currently a U.S. citizen. As always, BJS stresses that the submission of these items, along with all variables on NCRP, is voluntary. If your DOC does not feel comfortable providing these items, or provision of these items would cause undue burden, please feel free to not submit them.

BJS is also removing seven variables from the NCRP that have poor response rates. Please see the NCRP Data Collection Request Instructions for details.

Who do we contact for more information?

- **Tom Rich** (Abt Associates Project Director and site liaison) - tom_rich@abtassoc.com or 617-349-2753
- **Michael Shively** (Abt Associates site liaison) - michael_shively@abtassoc.com or 617-520-3562
- **Danielle Kaeble** (BJS Corrections Unit Statistician) - danielle.kaeble@usdoj.gov or 202-305-2017
- Or, visit www.ncrp.info