State of the Nation's Federal Justice Statistics

Companion report as part of the:
Campaign for Criminal Justice Data Modernization
Because the Road to Reform is Paved by Data

Jane Wiseman

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State of the Nation's Federal Justice Statistics

Executive summary

The nation spends $300 billion[1] a year on the administration of justice across federal, state, and local government. Society at large incurs significant indirect cost through protective and avoidance measures, costs of victimization and injury, and costs of crimes not reported to the police, with annual estimates ranging to $2.6 trillion.

How much does our nation invest in data and statistical infrastructure to understand crime and criminal behavior? At the federal level, the answer is $45 million. This annual appropriation for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) ranks tenth out of the thirteen federal statistical agencies, just above the funding level for the study of statistical and research function of the Social Security Administration.

As noted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel in its 2008 review of BJS operations, BJS "is one of the smallest of the U.S. principal statistical agencies but shoulders one of the most expansive and detailed legal mandates among those agencies." Funding for BJS has declined 25% since 2010, and 37% when accounting for inflation. This keeps the agency from completing its work in a timely fashion -- the vast majority of its statistical series (64%) have lacked either data collection or publication of results for five years or more.

The lack of sufficient funding also hampers the agency's ability to keep current with rapidly advancing analytics methodologies and modern tools for linking data across sources. It hinders BJS in leading on advancing the state of science and in addressing key policy issues such as the difficulty in measuring racial bias in the criminal justice system. As a result, we lack the modern data infrastructure necessary for research and the advancement of evidence-based practices.

The role of BJS as collector, curator, and publisher of national data and as the authoritative source of statistics is important, and in need of greater resources to keep pace with modern demands.

[1] Note that the most recent data is from 2016 and is preliminary data, so this estimate may be conservative.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks Arnold Ventures for funding the research that made this report possible, along with the related report, Campaign for Criminal Justice Data Modernization. The author wishes to thank Dr. Stuart Buck of Arnold Ventures for helpful feedback on the draft report. All those interviewed as part of the Campaign for Criminal Justice Modernization contributed either directly or indirectly to this report, and their names are listed at the end of that report. Dr. Jeffrey Sedgwick, Executive Director, Justice Research and Statistics Association provided feedback that improved the accuracy and completeness of this report. All errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the author.

Introduction

This document was completed as part of a research project undertaken by the Institute for Excellence in Government and funded by Arnold Ventures. The project explored ideas to improve the quality and availability of criminal justice data for research and evidence-based policy making addressing the challenge that too often, criminal justice data is incomplete, inaccurate, out of date, or inaccessible to researchers and policy makers.

The project involved interviews with criminal justice experts, facilitation of a roundtable discussion, and the publication of a report with recommendations on modernizing the nation's criminal justice data infrastructure. The report, "Campaign for Criminal Justice Modernization: Because the Road to Reform is Paved by Data" reflects the input of the experts who were interviewed and who participated in the expert roundtable discussions. The pages that follow describe the current situation and the need for additional investment in the nation's federal criminal justice data and statistical infrastructure, based on the input of those experts, along with review of federal justice statistics funding and activity, and best practices for data and digital services in government.

Federal justice statistics investment is insufficient and falling behind

Primary responsibility for collecting and compiling national criminal justice data lies with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). BJS was created in 1979 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."

Funding for federal criminal justice statistics is small compared to the mission

BJS makes progress toward this mission remarkably well given its limited budget. As noted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel in its 2008 review of BJS operations, "We conclude that BJS's data collection portfolio is a solid body of work, well justified by public information needs or legal requirements and a commendable effort to meet its broad mandate given less-than-commensurate fiscal resources." The inadequate funding noted by the NAS panel in 2008 is 25% greater than the current BJS funding level.

The investment in BJS is not sufficient to achieve its mission evenly across of the justice system, with areas of strength and numerous areas where collections are inadequate or greatly delayed. Nor has the investment in BJS grown as the complexity of the system has grown since its founding four decades ago.

Federal investment in justice statistics ranks low compared to other federal statistical efforts

The federal investment in BJS does it match investments in other areas. As can be seen in the table below, the total federal investment in the two agencies responsible for statistics for

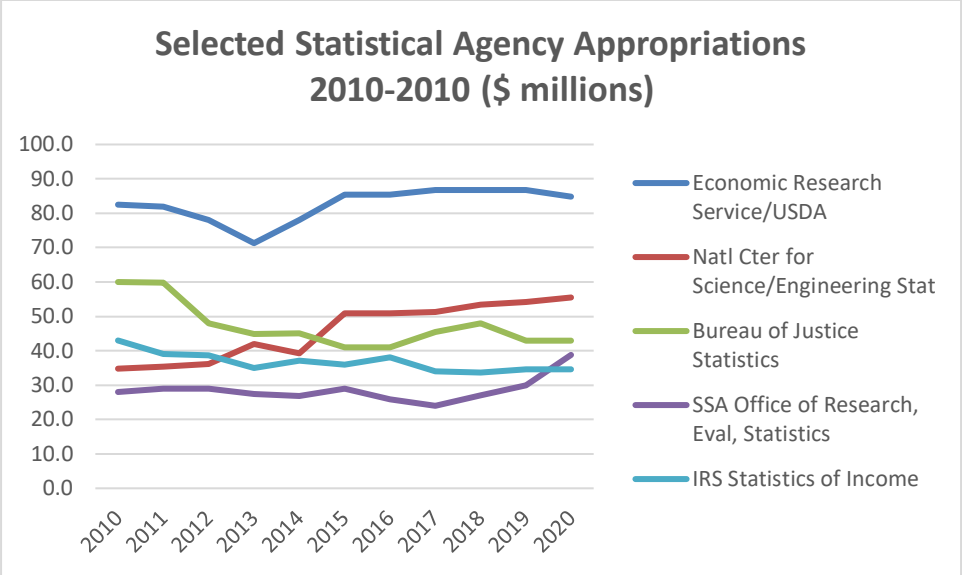
agriculture is six times the investment in criminal justice data, and the federal investment for the Energy Information Administration is nearly triple the amount of investment in criminal justice statistics.

Funding for the Thirteen US Statistical Agencies

STATISTICAL AGENCY	FY 2020[2] Appropriation ($ million)
Bureau of the Census	7558.3
Bureau of Labor Statistics	655.0
National Agricultural Statistics Service/USDA	180.3
National Center for Health Statistics	160.4
Energy Information Administration	126.8
National Center for Education Statistics	110.5
Bureau of Economic Analysis	108.0
Economic Research Service/USDA	84.8
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics	55.1
Bureau of Justice Statistics	**43.0**
SSA Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics	38.8
IRS Statistics of Income	34.7
Bureau of Transportation Statistics	26.0

Further, the decrease for BJS over the past decade exceeds that of other similar sized federal statistical agencies. The graphic below compares BJS to the agencies closest in total appropriation, two smaller and two larger. The other statistical agencies show either a steady state or an upward trend, while for BJS the overall trend is downward. Also, while the 2021 appropriation for BJS increased funding from $43 million to $45 million, there is a $3 million carveout that effectively reduces the funds available for current operations by $1 million.

[2] Note that 2020 data are used because not all statistical agency 2021 funding levels have yet been made public.



Delays hinder data collection, analysis, and publishing at BJS

With its constrained resources, BJS is not able to execute on its mission in a timely fashion, with significant lags in publishing the data that it collects – **the average time lag between data collection and publication across all active series is three years.** The politicization of release of some reports in recent years has been troubling for the field and dims the excellent reputation of BJS, which had for so long been a respected source of truth in a system of opacity. Restrictions on the publication of studies contracted to outside researchers by BJS has further slowed the dissemination pipeline.

Most of the BJS statistical series lack current data

There are 45 active statistical series of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) according to the BJS web site as of February 16, 2021 and listed in Appendix A to this report. Arguably, there are statistical series listed as active by BJS but that have not had publications in a number of years and may not be rightly considered "active" in the usual sense of the word, yet they are publicly declared active by BJS. In sum, highlights of the active statistical series include:

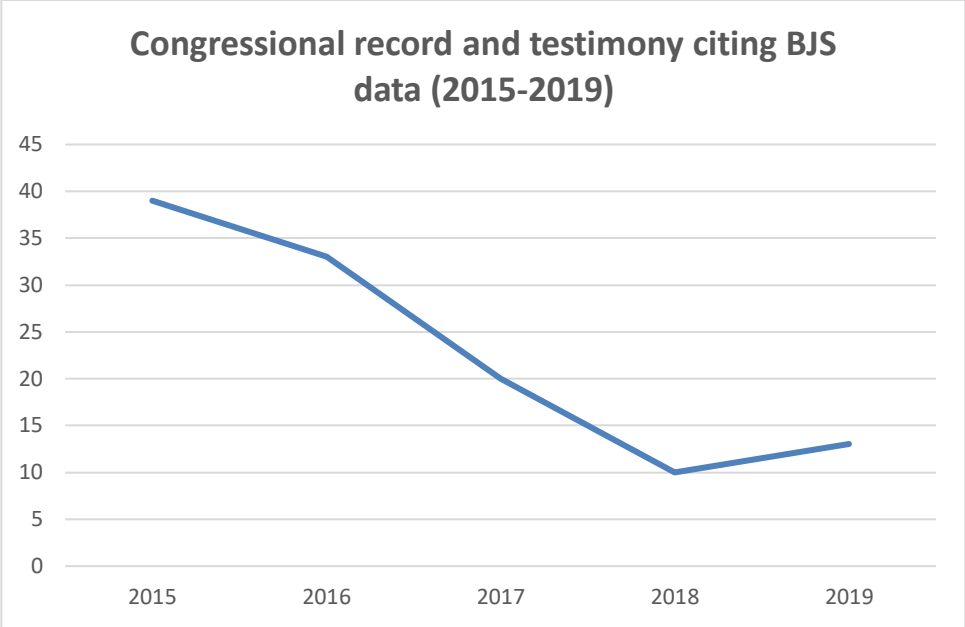
- 29% of statistical series have had a publication in the last year (13 out of 45)
- 91% of the statistical series have gone three or more years since either the most recent data collection or the most recent publication (41 out of 45)
- 64% of the statistical series have gone five or more years since either the most recent data collection or the most recent publication (29 out of 45)
- 9 years is the average time elapsed since the last data was collected in the series. A number of outliers skew the average high, but only three series have collected data in

the last two years (National Criminal Victimization Survey, National Prisoner Statistics Program, and the Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities)
- 6 years is the average number of years elapsed since the last publication
- 3 years is the average time from collection of data to publication, with a range of one year for National Criminal Victimization Survey and a lag of six years for the Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies and seven years for the National Inmate Survey

By comparison, while BJS has seen its lag time in releasing reports increase over the past few years, other federal statistical agencies have shown an ability to quickly react to emerging events and produce relevant and topical data series. The COVID-19 pandemic saw the rise of innovation in statistical agencies nimble enough to engage in responsive data collection, such as the Census Bureau's "pulse" surveys, which provided near real time data about the public's response to the crisis, and provided data visualizations and maps to enable users to explore data on factors such as job loss, difficulty paying bills, telework and the like. The National Center for Health Statistics created public dashboards showing the excess deaths calculated that provide an estimate for the number of COVID-19 deaths.

BJS is no longer the nation's definitive source for justice data

Many experts confide that they no longer view BJS as the definitive source for justice data because of the lag in reporting, and instead rely on other sources of information for certain topics. Congressional testimony citing BJS data is one key indicator of the relevance, recency, and reliability of BJS data to the national policy debate. According to the February 2020 OJP performance report and shown in the graph below, the reliance of Congressional testimony on BJS data has declined in recent years and for the most recently available period (2019) was one third as frequent as it was five years earlier (13 versus 39). With the federal government not providing timely accurate data, other sources will be used and the loss for policymaking is that not all experts use the same authoritative federal source, opening to contention of source accuracy or bias.



Source: US Department of Justice, FY 2021 Performance Budget, Office of Justice Programs, February 2020.

BJS publishing and dissemination have not changed in over a decade

The navigation, layout and the look and feel of the BJS web site remains unchanged for at least a decade. As shown by its archived web pages from 2011, which is as far back as recordkeeping goes, the BJS web page has not changed – all while technology has rapidly changed and user-friendly navigation has been adopted by many government agencies. The BJS site has very few self-service tools for data extraction, analysis, or visualization, and the tools that do exist are difficult to find and far from comprehensive or intuitive. As one expert noted, BJS dissemination is largely "stuck in the 20th century," focused on the written word shared via PDF reports, rather than tools that allow users to engage with and analyze the data. A number of justice policy and advocacy organizations have stepped into the void left by BJS in making user-friendly data visualizations and issue briefs available to the public on topics such as policing, adult criminal court case processing, and incarceration. While excellent, these independent sources should not have to substitute for timely, accurate, well curated official government data.

Best practice government agencies have user-friendly websites and accessible data

The open data and digital government movements of the last decade and a half have dramatically improved access to information and transactions with an increasingly customer-oriented government. Navigation has been made intuitive and user-friendly at federal websites like Data.gov, performance.gov, and USASpending.gov, where users can access both data and mapping tools to analyze the data. The World Bank open data portal makes it easy for users to search for information by topic or by country, and also includes a "what you can learn with

open data" visualization of key topics like poverty rates, inoculations, access electricity, education access for girls, and the like.

Taking the user experience even further, the U.S. Department of Education created College Scorecard to help families compare outcome data across schools when choosing a college. The tool brings together college course offerings, costs, admission rates, average test scores for students accepted, graduation rates, and average earnings upon graduation for different fields of study, along with student debt. The site also shares racial and ethnic information about students as well as the percentage of students receiving financial aid.

Many governments have designed user-centric websites that are easy to navigate. One example is the state of Mississippi which not only has an easy site to navigate, they also have made use of AI technology to create a chatbot named MISSI, and are also using Alexa skills and Google Assistant to enable the public to access information and services.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought to light the importance of data provided to the public by government, with many examples notably the Johns Hopkins dashboard that updates daily drawing from a variety of government data sources. Alameda County, CA has developed an excellent real time dashboard that not only provides curated, relevant COVID-19 information to the public such as cases, case rates, and testing information by neighborhood, it has also developed a chatbot to provide interactive responses to public requests 24-7.

Governments are increasingly providing the public with self-service analysis tools to exploit the value of open data. One example is the city of Los Angeles, where the public has access to a wealth of geographic data for many city services, along with self-service tools to create maps using nearly 1,000 city data sets. The GeoHub is the city's public platform for exploring, visualizing, and downloading location-based open data. It lets departments across the city plan and do their work in closer coordination with each other and communities, and provides a platform for data storytelling on topics such as pedestrian safety and clean streets. Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, pioneered a shared data warehouse for person-level data by connecting multiple disparate departments and services in its human services data warehouse and now makes available to the public a variety of interactive tools, data visualizations, and dashboards, including a real time data dashboard of the jail population.

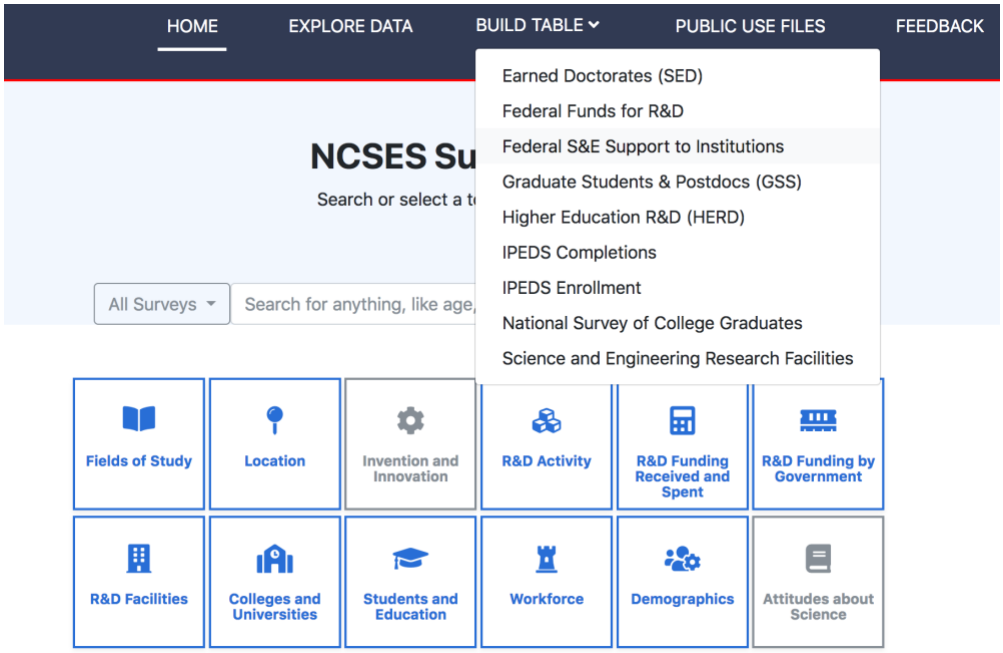
Leading statistical agency websites provide a rich and user-centric digital experience

Federal statistical agencies exist to "collect and transform data into useful, objective information; making it readily and equitably available to government, private businesses, and the public." The thirteen Principal Statistical Agencies (PSAs) are charged with developing new methods for collecting and combining data from multiple sources to "expand and improve the quality and timeliness of statistical evidence needed to make important decisions in today's

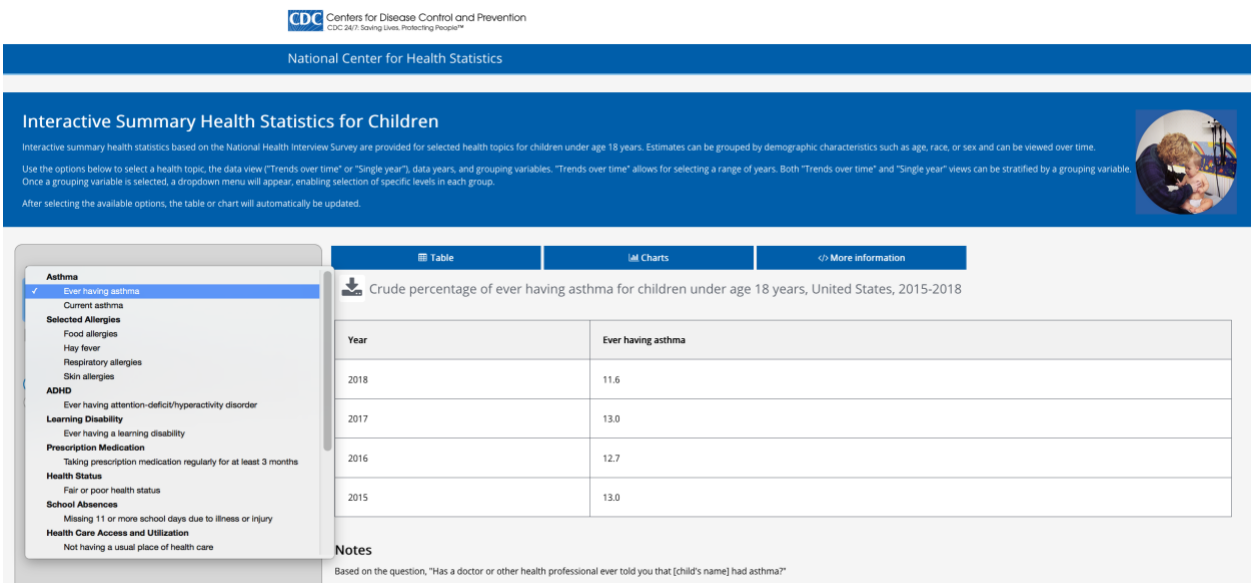
information-rich society." A wide variety of statistical agency innovations have emerged over the past few years.

For example, the U.S. Census Bureau allows exploration of its data using both data search and mapping tools. With the mapping tool, a user can explore topics such as housing, education and income. With the micro data search, a user can drill down into data not provided in the summary and profiles on the site which allow user-defined searches across many demographic characteristics. A Census Bureau collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis now provides users with economic indicator data at any time, on any device.

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics makes finding data on their website visually easy to navigate. The site's data explorer also enables search by survey or by variable in an intuitive navigation. NCSES also provides users with the ability to extract custom data tables, using the "build a table" tool, with easy access to a menu of data sources as shown below.



Another statistical agency, the National Center for Health Statistics has a number of user-friendly tools to explore data and to create visualizations of the data, along with a data visualization gallery. One example is an explorer tool that allows the user to choose from a variety of childhood health issues (asthma in the example shown) and to explore incidence rates over time.



Becoming digital leader doesn't happen overnight or without investment – leading e-government Estonia began their path by investing 1% of GDP in technology in 1994 with aspirations of catching up with the West. This small country is now the clear leader in digital government, with 99% of government transactions all available online including voting and paying taxes (which takes three minutes).

Conclusion

For BJS to address its mission more completely and to provide the criminal justice practitioners, researchers, policy makers and the public with timely accurate data to inform decision-making will require a long-term vision, followed up by the commitment of commensurate investment, and the patience since great work takes time.

APPENDIX A: Active BJS Statistical Series as of February 2021

Characteristics of Active BJS Statistical Series								
Statistical Series	**Description**	**Most recent data**	**Most recent pub**	**Years since data**	**Years since pub**	**Years data to pub**	**≥3 yrs since data/ pub**	**≥5 yrs since data/ pub**
Annual Probation Survey and Annual Parole Survey	Collect administrative data from probation and parole agencies in the United States.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Annual Survey of Jails (ASJ)	Collects data from a nationally representative sample of local jails on jail inmate populations, jail capacity, and related information.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Capital Punishment (NPS-8)	Provides an annual summary of inmates admitted to and removed from under sentence of death (including executions) and of statutes pertaining to capital punishment and annual changes to those statutes.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers	Collects data from all federal law enforcement agencies with arrest and firearms authority.	2016	2019	5	2	3	√	√
Census of Jail Inmates	Conducted approximately every five to seven years. Based on a complete enumeration of each jail jurisdiction, the census provides information on supervised populations, inmate counts and movements, and persons supervised in the community.	2017	2019	4	2	2	√	
Census of Jails	Conducted approximately every five to seven years. Provides information on one-day counts and average daily populations of jurisdictions, staffing, programs, and individual jails.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies	Collects data on the number and types of staff employed at state and local law enforcement training facilities, budgets, sources of funds, number of officers trained, and policies and practices. In addition to basic organizational data, the survey collects information on training curriculum issues critical to current law enforcement policy development.	2013	2016	8	5	3	√	√
Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices	Provides data on the personnel, budgets, and workload of medical examiner and coroner offices by type of office and size of jurisdiction. The census gathers information on the number of unidentified human decedents handled by these offices, record-keeping practices, and use of national databases for unidentified remains.	2004	2007	17	14	3	√	√
Census of Problem-Solving Courts (CPSC)	The 2012 Census of Problem-Solving Courts (CPSC) involved the collection of data from all active problem-solving courts.	2012	2016	9	5	4	√	√
Census of Public Defender Offices (CPDO)	Provides data on the staffing, caseloads, expenditures, and standards and guidelines in state- and locally-funded public defender offices across the 50 states and the District of Columbia.	2012	2015	9	6	3	√	√
Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories	Provides a comprehensive look at the forensic services provided by federal, state, and local crime labs across the nation and the resources devoted to completing the work.	2014	2016	7	5	2	√	√
Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities (CSFACF)	Conducted approximately every five to seven years, the Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities provides detailed information on the types of inmates housed,	2019	2020	2	1	1		

Characteristics of Active BJS Statistical Series								
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	facility age and type, building plans, security level, court orders, programs, facility operations and security conditions, confinement space, and staff characteristics.							
Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies	Provides data on all state and local law enforcement agencies operating nationwide. Data collected include the number of sworn and civilian personnel by state and type of agency, and functions performed by each agency.	2008	2014	13	7	6	√	√
Census of State Court Organization	This collection serves as the primary source for detailed information on the structure and framework of state courts.	2011	2013	10	8	2	√	√
Clinical Indicators of Sexual Violence in Custody (CISVC)	The CISVC is part of the Bureau Justice Statistics' National Prison Rape Statistics Program which gathers mandated data on the incidence prevalence of sexual assault in correctional facilities, under the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA; P.L. 108- 79). The CISVC is a passive surveillance system in which medical staff complete an incident form for each inmate exhibiting symptoms or injuries consistent with sexual violence.	2009	2012	12	9	3	√	√
Compendium of State Privacy and Security Legislation	References and classifies state legislation on privacy and security of state criminal history record information. Statutes are grouped into 29 categories and presented by classification and state. It is compiled every two years.	2002	NA	19	NA	NA	√	√
Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP)	The FJSP provides annual data on workload, activities, and outcomes associated with federal criminal cases.	2016	2019	5	2	3	√	√
Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program	Designed to collect annual data describing the number of inquiries made in connection with presale handgun checks and the number and basis for rejection of such inquiries. Data are collected directly from state agencies conducting background checks and from local checking agencies and include the number of firearm applications made to the agency, firearm applications rejected by the agency, and the reasons for rejection. Data collection procedures are adjusted to reflect the differing presale check procedures under the permanent system (which became effective on 11/30/98) and the interim period (02/28/94 - 11/29/98).	2017	2021	4	0	4	√	
Justice Assistance Data Survey	The JADS collect detailed data for three justice functions (police protection, judicial and legal, and corrections) and for three character and object classes (current operations, capital outlay, and intergovernmental expenditure).	2010	2013	11	8	3	√	√
Justice Expenditure and Employment Extracts Series	Every year since 1980, BJS has extracted justice expenditure and employment data from the Census Bureau's Annual Government Finance Survey and Annual Survey of Public Employment.	2017	2020	4	1	3	√	
Juveniles in Criminal Court	Dataset from 40 urban counties used to describe the characteristics of more than 7,000 juveniles charged with felonies in State courts. The findings indicated that prosecution of juveniles in criminal court is generally reserved for those	1998	2003	13	8	5	√	√

Characteristics of Active BJS Statistical Series								
Statistical Series	**Description**	**Most recent data**	**Most recent pub**	**Years since data**	**Years since pub**	**Years data to pub**	**≥3 yrs since data/ pub**	**≥5 yrs since data/ pub**
	charged with the quite serious crimes of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault.							
Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS)	Beginning in 2016, the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey adopted a core and supplement structure.	2016	2019	5	2	3	√	√
Mortality in Correctional Institutions (MCI) (Formerly Deaths in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP))	Collects inmate death records from each of the nation's 50 state prison systems and approximately 2,800 local jail jurisdictions.	2014	2018	7	3	4	√	√
National Census of Victim Service Providers (NCVSP)	The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) National Census of Victim Service Providers (NCVSP) collection provides national data on all programs and organizations that served victims of crime or abuse within the year prior to the survey.	2017	2019	4	2	2	√	
National Computer Security Survey (NCSS)	The goal of NCSS is to produce reliable national and industry-level estimates of the prevalence of computer security incidents (such as denial of service attacks, fraud, or theft of information) against businesses and the resulting losses incurred by businesses. The first national survey of thousands of businesses is being conducted in 2006. It is cosponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Cyber Security Division (NCSD) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The RAND Corporation is the data collection agent.	2005	2008	16	13	3	√	√
National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)	The National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) collects offender-level administrative data annually on prison admissions, releases, and yearend custody populations, and on parole entries and discharges in participating jurisdictions.	2016	2018	5	3	2	√	√
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is the nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization.	2019	2020	2	1	1		
National Inmate Survey (NIS)	The National Inmate Survey (NIS) is part of BJS's National Prison Rape Statistics Program that gathers mandated data on the incidence of prevalence of sexual assault in correctional facilities under the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA; P.L. 108- 79). Data are collected directly from inmates in a private setting using audio computer-assisted self interview (ACASI) technology with a touch-screen laptop and an audio feed to maximize inmate confidentiality and minimize literacy issues.	2012	2019	9	2	7	√	√
National Judicial Reporting Program (NJRP)	This data collection provides detailed information on felony sentencing from a nationally representative stratified sample of state courts in 300 counties.	2006	2009	15	12	3	√	√
National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) Program	Produces annual national and state-level data on the number of prisoners in state and federal prison facilities.	2019	2020	2	1	1		

Characteristics of Active BJS Statistical Series								
Statistical Series	**Description**	**Most recent data**	**Most recent pub**	**Years since data**	**Years since pub**	**Years data to pub**	**≥3 yrs since data/ pub**	**≥5 yrs since data/ pub**
National Survey of DNA Crime Laboratories	Provides national data on publicly operated forensic crime laboratories that perform DNA analyses. Data are collected on personnel, budgets, workloads, equipment, procedures, policies, and data processing. BJS first surveyed forensic crime laboratories in 1998, focusing solely on agencies that performed DNA analysis. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded the 1998 study as part of a DNA Laboratory Improvement Program.	2001	2002	20	19	1	√	√
National Survey Of Indigent Defense Systems (NSIDS), 2013	In 2013, the National Survey of Indigent Defense Systems (NSIDS) was designed as a census of all forms of indigent defense public defender, contract counsel and assigned/appointed counsel in all fifty states and the District of Columbia.	2013	2016	8	5	3	√	√
National Survey of Prosecutors (NSP)	The data obtained from the National Survey of Prosecutors (NSP) provided data on prosecutorial activities nationwide as well as a variety of administrative and legal issues facing prosecutors who handle felony cases in state courts	2007	2011	14	10	4	√	√
National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC)	The National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC) is part of BJS's National Prison Rape Statistics Program, which gathers mandated data on the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault in juvenile facilities under the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 as specified in PREA; P.L. 108-79.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
NICS Act State Record Estimates	Annual collection of estimated available state and local records, and other information pursuant to the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-180). Estimates are collected of records pertaining to persons prohibited from purchasing or possessing a firearm under the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968, as amended, 18 U.S.C. 921 et. seq.	2017	2021	4	0	4	√	
Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS)	Provides detailed information on the characteristics of persons who had some type of contact with police during the year, including those who contacted the police to report a crime or were pulled over in a traffic stop. The PPCS interviews a nationally representative sample of residents age 16 or older as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The survey enables BJS to examine the perceptions of police behavior and response during these encounters.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Recidivism of State Prisoners	BJS uses criminal history records to study the number and types of crimes committed by state prisoners both prior to and following their release.	2005	2019	16	2	14	√	√
State Court Processing Statistics (SCPS)	Formerly National Pretrial Reporting Program (through 1994), SCPS provided data on the criminal justice processing of persons charged with felonies in 40 jurisdictions representative of the 75 largest counties.	2009	2013	12	8	4	√	√

Characteristics of Active BJS Statistical Series								
Statistical Series	**Description**	**Most recent data**	**Most recent pub**	**Years since data**	**Years since pub**	**Years data to pub**	**≥3 yrs since data/ pub**	**≥5 yrs since data/ pub**
Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies	Provides data describing campus law enforcement agencies serving U.S. 4-year universities or colleges with 2,500 or more students. Also surveyed were 2-year institutions with 2,500 or more students and a sample of 4-year institutions with 1,000 to 2,499 students. Data were collected on personnel, functions, expenditures and pay, operations, equipment, computers and information systems, community policing activities, specialized units, and emergency preparedness activities.	2012	2015	9	6	3	√	√
Survey of Inmates in Local Jails (SILJ)	A periodic survey based on personal interviews conducted with a sample of inmates in local jails. The survey is broad in scope, collecting a wide range of data. The data from the survey provides a nationally-representative profile of inmates in local jails over time.	2002	2006	19	15	4	√	√
Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities (SISCF)	A periodic survey based on personal interviews conducted with a sample of inmates in state prisons.	2014	2015	7	6	1	√	√
Survey of Jails in Indian Country (SJIC)	Collects detailed information on confinement facilities, detention centers, jails, and other facilities operated by tribal authorities or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.	2018	2020	3	1	2	√	
Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI)	Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI) is a periodic, cross-sectional survey of the state and sentenced federal prison populations.	2016	2019	5	2	3	√	√
Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) (Formerly Survey of Sexual Violence)	The Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) is part of BJS's National Prison Rape Statistics Program, which gathers mandated data on the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault in correctional facilities, under the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA; P.L. 108-79).	NA	2021 (planned)		0			
Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems (*This is now being done by SEARCH, and while not noted on BJS site, the data can be found here: https://www.search.org/resources/surveys/)	Collects data used as the basis for estimating the percentage of total state records that are immediately available through the FBI's Interstate Identification Index (III) and the percentage that include dispositions. Other data collected include the number of records maintained by each state, the percentage of automated records in the system, and the number of states participating in the FBI's III.	1999*	2000*	22*	21*	1	√	√
Average/count				8.8	5.8	3	41 (91%)	29 (64%)
Source: Author analysis of data on Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) web site, accessed February 16, 2021								

APPENDIX B: Research questions left unanswered by current data

As part of the Campaign for Criminal Justice Data Modernization, the author interviewed criminal justice researchers to ask the question, "What important research questions remain unanswered because of gaps in the available data?" Responses addressed both the underlying administrative and operational data systems at the state and local level as well as the summary level statistics collected by BJS and addressed in the body of this report. The pages that follow summarize key insights from the experts. In sum, far too little information is available to paint an accurate picture of who is in the system, why, and for how long. For example, as one expert pointed out, "Nobody even has good information on what fraction of people in a given group were ever in prison."

Much data is simply not collected, for a variety of reasons. Missing data and topical data collection gaps include:

- Crimes not reported to police are never recorded, investigated, prosecuted or adjudicated. Given the large percentage of crime that goes unreported, this is a major weakness in understanding how crime impacts society. As one expert said, "We don't know enough about what's not getting reported and why it's not getting reported."
- We don't have data on how enforcement is related to system legitimacy (or lack thereof), data that would be valuable by neighborhood type and demographics.
- Emerging categories of crime (e.g. bullying, cyber crime, internet fraud, etc.) are not documented by national sources. White collar crime is not subject to any national data collection, nor is the growing area of the use of civil summons in lieu of arrest. Police use of force against the public, and the outcome of those uses of force is not cataloged and made public. Diversions from prosecution and declinations are not well or consistently documented across jurisdictions.
- One expert noted the potential to use gunshot detection technology in urban areas to document gunshots not reported to police and to answer the open research question, "How much shooting is going on, and how many gunshots have to go off in a neighborhood to have people experience trauma?"

While it is challenging to connect data across silos, such connections could generate significant insight. One expert noted, "We can't currently say anything about a person's journey through the system, how long they're detained pretrial, or how efficient the court processing is. This limits our ability to say things about the system as a whole." Other research questions answerable with cross-silo data sharing include:

- It's possible to do a much better job understanding and delaying the onset of criminality and advancing the onset of desistance. Most offenders are "one and done," but the ones who are persistent long term offenders, those are the ones we could identify to "shorten criminal careers and weaken their intensity."
- By linking data, we could describe what % of people arrested for a particular type of crime (e.g. firearm related crime) are eventually found guilty and prosecuted. Of those prosecuted, linked data could show how many go to prison and how many are placed on

probation. To get that now, would have to go in and manually link police data to court outcome data, which is difficult and in some places impossible.

- It's hard to know what fraction of those arrested on a given charge are held pretrial versus released on bond. The necessary data come from different sources – police give arrest info, DA gives charge info, court info gives the outcome, corrections provides the recidivism info, etc. As one expert said, "Merging data is much easier said than done – it took months and months and we didn't even get all the data we wanted."
- Data integration outside of the criminal justice area is another unexploited area for research. It would be useful if data from schools, welfare agencies and employment were integrated with CJ data. As one expert noted, "We don't have a descriptive picture of who the people in courts and prisons are. Are they people who grew up in single family homes, had low test scores as kids, had health challenges early on, people who typically are working in a legal formal sector job before they got in trouble or are they idle? Did they have any experience in higher ed or did they drop out of school early? And are there differences between those who do something bad once and don't do it again and repeat offenders? We are making some progress by merging data sets but it's quite patchy because it takes an awful lot with the school system to get them to sign because of FERPA."

Community-level insights would be possible with more and better data. For example:

- One significant unanswered research question is whether it is possible to identify a set of communities of a given size or poverty rate, age structure, etc. that are the canaries in a coal mine, to know when you've hit an inflection point in crime trends. As one expert noted, "We think about that all the time in defense policy, early warning systems. Why don't we do the same thing with crime? It would be so interesting to understand "what causes crime" – then we could set up an early warning system."
- With current data, we can't describe the level of CJ system penetration into the lives of people and communities - who are indirectly touched by but not directly involved in the system – who are the family members and children of those who are incarcerated or victimized, etc.

Finally, there are many open questions that might be answered if there were ways to use technology to blend survey and administrative data. Better, more accurate and more timely data could answer basic operational questions, like: Does this program work? How much does it cost? Does it improve outcomes?