



## **About the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program**

This section provides updates to the crime data modernization efforts of the UCR Program and its new system as well as the new and revised submission criteria for participating law enforcement agencies. In addition, it outlines the history of the UCR Program and its subprograms.

### **Recent developments**

#### ***Modification of Crime in the United States***

During a review of publication processes, the UCR Program staff analyzed Web statistics from previous editions of *Crime in the United States (CIUS)* to determine the tables that users access the most. The program also considered which tables provide data that are now available in other data tools (see below). Based on these criteria, the UCR Program streamlined the 2016 edition by reducing the number of tables from 81 to 29. The publication, however, still presents the major topics (offenses known, clearances, and persons arrested) that law enforcement, researchers, and the public have come to expect. Although the table numbers used in this edition do not correspond to the table numbers from previous editions, the *CIUS* homepage provides a link to a crosswalk that correlates the table numbers for 2016 compared to previous editions to assist users with finding the data tables they usually access. The crosswalk also identifies tables that have been discontinued. Data that are no longer represented in the publication may be requested by contacting UCR customer service via email at <[crimestatsinfo@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:crimestatsinfo@ic.fbi.gov)>.

#### ***Crime Data Modernization***

To support the growing need for more comprehensive information, the staff of the national UCR Program, members of the UCR advisory groups, and the nation's law enforcement agencies continue to collaborate to improve the way the nation collects, analyzes, and uses crime statistics. The goal is to increase the reliability, accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness of crime data, as well as to expand the wide range of data collected through the Crime Data Modernization Initiative.

On June 30, 2017, the UCR Program launched the Crime Data Explorer (CDE), which provides law enforcement and the general public with crime data at the agency, state, and national levels. Offering multiple pathways to reported crime data, the CDE provides data visualizations of high-level trends and incident data with more detailed perspectives through downloads and a system enabling developers to create software applications. Planned enhancements to the CDE include additional tools to create dynamic data presentations, progressing beyond the static data tables of *CIUS* and the *National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)*.

To further the CDE, the FBI is progressing in the following objectives to meet the Crime Data Modernization Initiative:

*Fully implement NIBRS as the exclusive crime data collection at the national level by January 2021.* The FBI has supported law enforcement agencies throughout the transition from the Summary Reporting System (SRS) to NIBRS. As part of this effort, the FBI has provided funding and technical assistance, including five regional NIBRS training events in 2017, to state UCR programs with limited or no NIBRS capability.

In partnership with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) Initiative, the FBI and BJS are in the process of expanding NIBRS reporting to 400 identified agencies whose data will be the basis of a nationally representative sample of incident-based crime statistics. As of September 2017, 22 state UCR programs and 35 of the 400 identified agencies have been funded. The goal for all law enforcement agencies is to develop, upgrade, and deploy NIBRS as their method of reporting data to the UCR Program. For more information about the NIBRS transition, visit <<https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs-overview>>.

*Collect use-of-force statistics on officer-involved incidents (fatal and nonfatal) at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.* The national UCR Program completed its initial build of a collection management system for these data separate from the criminal incident and offense information. In July 2017, the FBI launched the Use-of-Force Pilot Study in which participating law enforcement agencies committed to submit data on instances in which the use of force by law enforcement officers resulted in a fatality, serious bodily injury to a person, or firearm was discharged at or in the direction of a person. Following the 6-month pilot, the system will become fully operational in January 2018.

*Fulfill FBI participation in the UCR Program as a federal contributor in accordance with the Uniform Federal Crime Reporting Act (UFCRA) of 1988.* The UFCRA requires all federal departments and agencies that “routinely investigate complaints of criminal activity . . . report details about crime within their respective jurisdiction to the Attorney General in a uniform manner...” As an interim step, the FBI published summary crime data in *CIUS* for 2014 and 2015. In addition to the types of data reported for 2015, the FBI published crime data and employment figures—now presented in the NIBRS model—for the FBI; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the U.S. Marshals Service for 2016. The FBI is implementing technical changes that allow federal agencies to collect and submit NIBRS data before the 2021 cutover date.

*Encourage the Department of Justice and other federal agencies to participate in the UCR Program.* Based on the criteria of the UFCRA of 1988, approximately 120 federal agencies are required to report crime data to the UCR Program. In addition to the agencies whose crime statistics were previously published in *Federal Crime Data*, the U.S. Marshals Service submitted data that appears in the 2016 edition of *Crime in the United States*. As of September 2017, 18 agencies are working with the FBI to develop a NIBRS capability. UCR Program staff continue to provide assessments of data reporting capabilities and offering assistance to all federal agencies that investigate crime.

### ***Update of NIBRS Manuals***

Agencies developing systems to transition to NIBRS should use the following resources, which are available at <<https://ucr.fbi.gov/>>.

- *NIBRS User Manual.*
- *NIBRS Technical Specification.*
- NIBRS Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD).

### ***Addition of animal cruelty offenses, two new fraud offenses, and a new location type***

In 2016, NIBRS began collecting animal cruelty data as well as the two new fraud offenses of identity theft and hacking/computer invasion. In addition, cyberspace was also added as a location type. The cyberspace location type will also be reflected in *Hate*

*Crime Statistics, 2016*, and those data will be published in *NIBRS, 2016*, which will be released later this year.

### ***Expanded criteria for LEOKA***

In 2016, the FBI expanded the criteria for participation in the national Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program to include military police, civilian police, and law enforcement officers with the Department of Defense (DoD) who are killed or assaulted while performing law enforcement functions or duties. This does not include deaths of officers who were in military combat or deployed-for-mission status. This includes DoD police and law enforcement officers who perform policing and criminal investigative functions while stationed (not deployed) on overseas bases, just as if they were based in the United States. The collection of these data began in 2016, and the FBI will begin publishing them in *LEOKA, 2016*, which will be released later this year.

### ***Discontinuance of rape data using the legacy definition***

Beginning January 1, 2017, the UCR Program discontinued collecting rape data via the SRS according to the legacy definition. Therefore, the 2016 editions of *CIUS* and *Hate Crime Statistics* are the final publications which include the legacy definition of rape. Only rape data submitted under the revised definition will be published for 2017 and subsequent years. This change did not affect agencies that submit rape data via NIBRS.

### ***Addition of domestic and family violence data***

Beginning January 1, 2018, the national UCR Program will begin collecting domestic and family violence data via NIBRS. The Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB) approved the definition of domestic and family violence as:

“The use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force of a weapon; or the use of coercion or intimidation; or committing a crime against property by a current or former spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim; a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian; or by a person who is or has been similarly situated to a spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim.”

Agencies that submit crime data via SRS will not be affected.

### **The role of UCR**

The FBI's UCR Program is a nationwide, cooperative statistical effort of more than 18,000 city, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies eligible to voluntarily report data on crimes brought to their attention. Since 1930, the FBI has administered the UCR Program and has continued to assess and monitor the nature and type of crime in the nation. The program's primary objective is to generate reliable information for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management; over the years, however, the data have become one of the country's leading social indicators. Criminologists, sociologists, legislators, municipal planners, the media, and other students of criminal justice use the data for varied research and planning purposes.

Currently, the UCR Program is comprised of four subprograms: the SRS, NIBRS, the LEOKA Program, and the Hate Crime Statistics Program. In addition to annual reports for these data collections, the UCR Program publishes a preliminary semiannual report of summary data each winter, as well as special compilations of data as available, e.g., cargo theft, human trafficking, and NIBRS topical studies.

### **UCR advisory groups**

The Criminal Justice Information System's Committees of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) provide vital links between local law enforcement and the FBI in the oversight of the UCR Program. The IACP, representing thousands of police departments nationwide, and the NSA, serving sheriffs throughout the country, encourage agencies to participate fully in the program. Both committees fulfill advisory capacities concerning the UCR Program's operation.

In 1988, a Data Providers' Advisory Policy Board was established to provide input for UCR matters. That board operated until 1993 when it combined with the National Crime Information Center Advisory Policy Board to form the CJIS APB to address all issues regarding the FBI's criminal justice information services. The current APB ensures a continued emphasis on UCR-related issues. In addition, the Association of State UCR Programs (ASUCRP) focuses on UCR issues within individual state law enforcement associations and promotes interest in the UCR Program. These organizations foster

widespread and responsible use of uniform crime statistics and lend assistance to data contributors when needed.

### **Historical background of UCR**

Recognizing a need for national crime statistics, the IACP formed the Committee on Uniform Crime Records in the 1920s to develop a system of uniform crime statistics. After studying state criminal codes and making an evaluation of the recordkeeping practices in use, the committee completed a plan for crime reporting that became the foundation of the UCR Program in 1929. The plan included standardized offense definitions for seven main offense classifications, known as Part I crimes, to gauge fluctuations in the overall volume and rate of crime. Developers also instituted the Hierarchy Rule as the main reporting procedure for what is now known as the SRS of the UCR Program.

The seven Part I offense classifications included the violent crimes of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as well as the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. By congressional mandate, arson was added as a Part I offense category in 1979, and human trafficking/commercial sex acts and human trafficking/involuntary servitude were added as Part I offenses in 2013.

### ***The FBI becomes clearinghouse for crime data***

In January 1930, 400 cities representing 20 million inhabitants in 43 states began participating in the UCR Program, then administered by the IACP. That same year, Congress enacted Title 28, Section 534, of the United States Code authorizing the Attorney General to gather crime information. The Attorney General, in turn, designated the FBI to serve as the national clearinghouse for the crime data collected beginning in September 1930. Since that time, the FBI has obtained data based on uniform classifications and procedures for reporting offenses and arrests from the nation's law enforcement agencies.

### ***LEOKA Program emerges in UCR***

Beginning in 1937, the FBI's UCR Program published general information about law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in its annual publication, *CIUS*. Statistics regarding assaults on officers were added in 1960. In June 1971, executives from the law

enforcement conference, “Prevention of Police Killings,” called for an increase in the FBI’s involvement in preventing and investigating officers’ deaths. In response to this directive, the UCR Program expanded its collection of data to include more details about the incidents in which law enforcement officers were killed and assaulted.

Using this comprehensive set of data, in 1972, the FBI began to produce two reports annually, the *Law Enforcement Officers Killed Summary* and the *Analysis of Assaults on Federal Officers*. These two reports were combined in 1982 to create the annual publication, *LEOKA*.

### ***Redesign of UCR***

Although the data collected and disseminated by the UCR Program remained virtually unchanged throughout the years, in the 1980s, a broad utility had evolved for UCR. Recognizing the need for improved statistics, law enforcement called for a thorough evaluative study to modernize the UCR Program. The FBI concurred with the need for an updated program and lent its complete support, formulating a comprehensive three-phase redesign effort. The first two phases of this effort, guided by input from representatives of the FBI, the BJS, the IACP, and the NSA, culminated with the release of a comprehensive report.

The final report, the *Blueprint for the Future of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (Blueprint)*, was released in May 1985. It specifically outlined three areas of enhancement to help the UCR Program meet future informational needs. First, agencies would use an incident-based system to report offenses and arrests. Second, the national UCR Program would collect data on two levels (i.e., limited and full participation), and third, the national UCR Program would introduce a quality assurance program.

In January 1986, the FBI began phase III of the redesign effort guided by the general recommendations set forth in the *Blueprint*. Contractors developed new data guidelines and system specifications while the FBI studied various state systems to select an experimental site to implement the redesigned program. Upon selecting the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), which enlisted the cooperation of nine local law enforcement agencies, the FBI developed automated data capture specifications to adapt the SLED’s state system to the national UCR Program’s standards, and BJS

funded the revisions. The pilot demonstration ran March 1–September 30, 1987 and resulted in further refinement of the guidelines and specifications.

March 1–3, 1988, the FBI held a National UCR Conference to present the new system to law enforcement and to obtain feedback on its acceptability. Attendees of the National UCR Conference passed three overall recommendations without dissent: first, that there be established a new, incident-based national crime reporting system; second, that the FBI manage this program; and third, that an APB composed of law enforcement executives be formed to assist in directing and implementing the new program. Furthermore, attendees recommended that the implementation of national incident-based reporting proceed at a pace commensurate with the resources and limitations of contributing law enforcement agencies.

### ***Establishing NIBRS***

From March 1988 through January 1989, the FBI proceeded in developing and assuming management of the UCR Program's NIBRS, and by April 1989, the national UCR Program received the first test submission of NIBRS data. Over the course of the next few years, the national UCR Program published information about the redesigned program in five documents. The handbook and its four associated volumes provided the definitions, policies, and procedures of NIBRS; the offense codes, reports, data elements, and data values used in the system; explanations of mandatory and optional data elements, data element edits, and error messages; data submission specifications; and approaches for implementing an incident-based system.

More recently, the national UCR Program staff presented pertinent documentation in the *NIBRS Technical Specification* (Version 3.1 dated February 1, 2017), the *NIBRS User Manual* (Version 1.0 dated January 17, 2013), and the NIBRS IEPD (Version 4.1 dated May 2, 2017.)

Originally designed with 52 data elements, NIBRS currently captures up to 58 data elements via six types of data segments: administrative, offense, victim, property, offender, and arrestee. In the late 1980s, the FBI refrained from making any changes to NIBRS as data contributors implemented the system. However, modifications have become necessary over time. Accordingly, the system's flexibility has allowed for the collection of additional information to be captured within an incident: bias-motivated



offenses (1990), the presence of gang activity (1997), data for law enforcement officers killed and assaulted (2003), data on cargo theft (2005), and offender ethnicity (2013). It has also permitted the addition of new codes to further specify location types and property types (2010). Beginning in 2016, NIBRS began collecting animal cruelty data as well as the two new fraud offenses of identity theft and hacking/computer invasion; cyberspace was also added as a location type.

The FBI began accepting NIBRS data from a handful of agencies in January 1989. As more contributing law enforcement agencies became educated about the rich data available through incident-based reporting and as resources permitted, more agencies implemented NIBRS.

For several years, the UCR Program has maintained its long-running time series of data via the submissions of both SRS and NIBRS contributors. Though the FBI continues to convert NIBRS data to provide equivalent summary statistics for the annual publication *CIUS*, the FBI established an annual *NIBRS* publication beginning with the 2011 data. It has also published a number of monographs to demonstrate the utility of NIBRS data and has made available NIBRS master files for those interested in studying them. The annual NIBRS publication is anticipated to grow as more agencies begin submitting NIBRS data.

### ***Hate Crime Statistics Program established***

On April 23, 1990, Congress passed the Hate Crime Statistics Act, 28 U.S.C. § 534, which required the Attorney General to collect data “about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” The Attorney General delegated the responsibilities of developing the procedures for implementing, collecting, and managing hate crime data to the Director of the FBI, who, in turn, assigned the tasks to the UCR Program. Under the direction of the Attorney General and with the cooperation and assistance of many local and state law enforcement agencies, the UCR Program began collecting hate crime data to comply with the congressional mandate.

The UCR Program’s first publication on the subject was *Hate Crime Statistics, 1990: A Resource Book*, which was a compilation of hate crime data reported by 11 states that had collected the information under state authority in 1990 and were willing to offer their data as a prototype. The UCR Program continued to work with agencies familiar

with investigating hate crimes and collecting related information so it could develop and implement a more uniform method of data collection on a nationwide scale. *Hate Crime Statistics, 1992*, presented the first published data reported by law enforcement agencies across the country that participated in the UCR Hate Crime Statistics Program.

Years later, with a number of changes in the data collection due to subsequent legislation, the Hate Crime Statistics Program continues to report annually on the nature and frequency of crime motivated by offenders' bias against race, gender, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Beginning in 2015, the FBI began collecting data for one ancestral bias type (Anti-Arab) and seven additional religious bias types (Anti-Mormon, Anti-Jehovah's Witness, Anti-Eastern Orthodox [Russian, Greek, Other], Anti-Other Christian, Anti-Buddhist, Anti-Hindu, and Anti-Sikh). These additions were also made in NIBRS.

## **Major Changes within the UCR Program**

### ***Suspension of the Crime Index and Modified Crime Index in the SRS***

In June 2004, the CJIS APB approved discontinuing the use of the Crime Index in the UCR Program and its publications, and it directed the FBI to publish a violent crime total and a property crime total. The Crime Index, first published in *CIUS* in 1960, was the title used for a simple aggregation of the seven main offense classifications (Part I offenses) in the SRS. The Modified Crime Index was the number of Crime Index offenses plus arson.

For several years, the CJIS Division studied the appropriateness and usefulness of these indices and brought the matter before many advisory groups including the UCR Subcommittee of the CJIS APB, the ASUCRP, and a meeting of leading criminologists and sociologists hosted by the BJS. The prevailing opinion of the advisory groups was that the Crime Index and the Modified Crime Index were not true indicators of the degrees of criminality because they were always driven upward by the offense with the highest number, typically larceny-theft. The sheer volume of those offenses overshadowed more serious but less frequently committed offenses, creating a bias against a jurisdiction with a high number of larceny-thefts but a low number of other serious crimes such as murder and rape.

### ***Move to exclusively electronic publication***

Following decades of making hard copies of its annual reports available, the FBI began electronically publishing the main publications of its annual UCR series in the 1990s. As technology expanded and more data users accessed information online, the FBI discontinued the printed versions of *CIUS*, *LEOKA*, and *Hate Crime Statistics* in 2006.

### ***Collection of Human Trafficking data***

In response to the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, the FBI began accepting data on human trafficking (commercial sex acts, involuntary servitude, and purchasing prostitution) in January 2013. The national UCR Program staff continues to refine its data collection methods and to encourage agencies to submit related data.

### ***Change to the definition of rape***

At its fall meeting in 2011, the CJIS APB approved changing the definition of rape. Since 1929, in the SRS, forcible rape had been defined as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will,” (*UCR Handbook*, 2004, p. 19). Beginning with the 2013 data collection, the SRS definition for the violent crime of rape was modified to:

“Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”

In addition, the APB approved removing the word “forcible” from the name of the offense and also replacing the phrase “against the person’s will” with “without the consent of the victim.” Those changes also applied to the definitions of other sex-related offenses in the SRS, NIBRS, the Hate Crime Statistics Program, and Cargo Theft. Data contributors were given the option of reporting their rape data using either the legacy definition or the revised definition. Although the slight revision did not have as great of an impact on NIBRS data, the UCR Program converted the NIBRS offenses of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object to the SRS revised definition of rape for publication and trending purposes in *CIUS*.

Beginning in 2017, the UCR Program will no longer publish rape data collected using the legacy definition. The program will continue to publish the sex offense data in the annual *NIBRS* report as submitted by law enforcement.

### ***Revision of Race and Ethnicity categories***

In response to a directive by the U.S. Government's Office of Management and Budget, the national UCR Program has expanded its data collection categories for race from four (White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Asian or Other Pacific Islander) to five (White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander). Also, the ethnicity categories have changed from "Hispanic" and "Non-Hispanic" to "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino." These changes are reflected in data beginning in 2013.