



## Message from the Director

For decades, the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program has used statistics and information provided by law enforcement agencies to measure our nation's crime problem. While tallying the numbers of homicides, armed robberies, aggravated assaults, and other crimes is useful, it does not go far enough to help us determine how these crimes occur and what we can do to prevent these crimes in the first place.

One way to better understand what is happening in our communities is to increase participation in the National Incident-Based Reporting System. This database, known as NIBRS, doesn't just include statistics. It gives the full picture—the circumstances and the context involving each incident. It asks: What happened? Where did it happen? What time did it occur? Who was there and what is their demographic information? What is the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim?

NIBRS data provides a clearer and more complete picture of the nature of crime in the United States. Unfortunately, only a little more than a third of the nation's law enforcement agencies feed data into this system. We need every agency, from the largest to the smallest, to submit data via NIBRS. The more comprehensive the data, the better prepared we will be to fight crime. And with this data, we can grow and adapt to ever-changing criminal threats.

To get our own house in order, the FBI is starting to publish crime data from our field offices, including the number of arrests for human trafficking, hate crimes, and cyber intrusions. These data offer additional perspective on the FBI's operations, and we are working toward collecting data for all applicable UCR offenses so we can report those as well.

In addition, UCR program staff are working with other federal agencies to encourage them to submit their own crime data like the U.S. Department of Interior has for several years. Optimally, all federal UCR participants will submit their data via NIBRS. To date, the U.S. Department of Defense has agreed that their agencies will do so.

Next, to address the ongoing debate about the appropriate use of force by law enforcement, we plan to collect more data about shootings (fatal and nonfatal) between

law enforcement and civilians, and to increase reporting overall. Currently, the UCR program collects the number of justifiable homicides reported by police as well as information about the felonious killing and assault of law enforcement officers. These data are available in *Crime in the United States* and *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*. As helpful as this information is, however, we need more law enforcement agencies to submit their justifiable homicide data so that we can better understand what is happening across the country. Once we receive this data, we will add a special publication that focuses on law enforcement's use of force in shooting incidents that will outline facts about what happened, who was involved, the nature of injuries or deaths, and the circumstances behind these incidents. We hope this information will become part of a balanced dialogue in communities and in the media—a dialogue that will help to dispel misperceptions, foster accountability, and promote transparency in how law enforcement personnel relate to the communities they serve.

Most worthwhile changes involve growing pains. Even though we are taking steps to minimize the anticipated bumps and bruises, this undertaking will require tremendous effort and resources by our law enforcement and government partners, as well as the understanding of the media and the public. But to continue in our current system without comprehensive data only stalls meaningful conversation and fuels empty debates, both within law enforcement and in the communities we serve. Developing the UCR Program into a collaborative effort that gives all of us useful information and clarity can tell us more about where we may have problems and how we can improve.

Jim Comey, Director

\*Editor's note: This message was also published in *Crime in the United States, 2014*.