



UCR Focuses on NIBRS and Other Tools to Make More Relevant Data Available to Users

January 1, 2021, marks a new era in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's partnership with law enforcement to provide more meaningful data to help understand crime in our communities and in our nation as a whole. Not only is the UCR Program completing its transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), but it is also completing its migration from traditional electronic publications to dynamic data presentations through the Crime Data Explorer (CDE). With each of these changes endorsed by law enforcement, the UCR Program remains committed to making available the types of data that aid in combatting crime and promoting transparency.

Since the CJIS Advisory Policy Board recommended the FBI transition to the NIBRS-only data collection five years ago, thousands of agencies have made the move from the Summary Reporting System (SRS) to the more detailed data of NIBRS, and thousands more are committed to making the switch. As of October 31, 2020, 43 states were NIBRS-certified, i.e., the states have records management systems that meet the FBI's requirements for collecting crime data according to established technical specifications. At that time, 8,742 law enforcement agencies representing 48.9 percent of the population were reporting NIBRS data to the UCR Program. The FBI also collaborated with federal and tribal agencies to develop the NIBRS Collection Application as a solution for these agencies to submit their data. The UCR Program conducted virtual training for approximately 45 federal and tribal agencies since from June through November 2020. The FBI continues to assist all law enforcement agencies with their transition through training, data integration, and technical assistance with NIBRS data specifications and reporting requirements.

Chosen in part because of its flexibility to serve as a robust electronic records management system for its users, NIBRS continues to evolve to capture the details of specific criminal occurrences. Changes in the NIBRS data collection effective January 1, 2019, include allowing the offenses of identity theft and hacking/computer invasion to now be reported in conjunction with cargo theft; collecting domestic and family violence by reporting the circumstance of domestic violence with select relationships (including the new option for ex-relationship); and expanding the definition of negligent manslaughter to include impaired, distracted, and reckless drivers of both vehicles and vessels. As more agencies complete their transition to NIBRS, they can use data collected from these changes to identify when and where these specific problems occur and to develop effective strategies that may protect potential victims from harm.

In 2020, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and RTI International (formerly Research Triangle Institute) continued their collaboration with the FBI on the National Crime Statistics Exchange NIBRS Estimation Project. (Like SRS, NIBRS is a voluntary data collection that will not always represent 100% of the populations of the more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies that are actively enrolled in the UCR Program, and an estimation methodology is necessary.) The joint effort will help the FBI and the BJS produce national estimates with NIBRS data. Current plans involve finalizing the methodology to produce national-level estimates of offense counts and rates, as well as estimates of other key indicators available in NIBRS (e.g., victim and offender characteristics, weapon involvement, and location type). For long term trends, the UCR Program intends to continue national and subnational (state and regional) estimates using NIBRS data converted to the SRS format. The FBI plans to publish



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national NIBRS estimates as part of the release of 2021 data during calendar year 2022. Future work will involve producing the methodology for NIBRS estimates of the same key measures at the state-level once state coverage is sufficient to support them.

In addition to the transition to an all-NIBRS data collection, the location and frequency of the publication of UCR data will also be changing for the better. As part of the FBI's broader effort to modernize the reporting of national crime data, the UCR Program is completing the migration of data releases exclusively to the CDE beginning on January 1, 2021. As announced two years ago, the 2020 publication cycle that includes 2019 UCR data will be the last release shared in the traditional format on FBI.GOV. Since the announcement, the UCR Program has been publishing data from the SRS, the NIBRS, and its other data collections on both FBI.GOV and on the CDE's interactive platform. The technology enhancements available within the CDE also enable the UCR Program to publish data more frequently. In September 2020, the UCR Program began releasing data quarterly to make UCR statistics more timely for data users. Quarterly releases are scheduled for March, June, September and December each year. In the future, those in the law enforcement, criminal justice, government, academia, media, and public communities—can count exclusively on the CDE to query, view, and download the UCR data that so many rely on. Users can also extract data in machine readable and open-source formats that can enable tech-savvy users to share UCR statistics on their own Internet platforms.

As NIBRS moves exclusively to the CDE, it is notable to mention that both the UCR Program's crime data and its law enforcement data exist side-by-side within the CDE system. This includes Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) statistics and the National Use-of-Force Data Collection. Previous years' annual LEOKA data and current year preliminary LEOKA data are available in the CDE. (Note, the UCR Program will continue to collect supplemental LEOKA data via the forms available on the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal. Collection of this data is not dependent on the NIBRS data submissions. Both NIBRS agencies as well as others that do not make the January 1, 2021, NIBRS transition deadline can use those forms.) The UCR Program issued the first use-of-force release on the CDE in July 2020 and the second in November 2020.

Beyond the milestone of ending SRS and transitioning to NIBRS-only in 2021, the UCR Program aims to provide data that are useful to all types of users and broaden the value for law enforcement agencies that submit data to the FBI. Agencies that transition to NIBRS demonstrate their commitment to improving crime data for our nation. But, in addition to furthering the value of these national data collections to our country, the FBI is working to develop programs that enable participating agencies to use these data to better understand local crime and public safety trends, in turn, helping them to more effectively serve and protect their own communities.