



# Office of Criminal Justice Statistics

## Needs Assessment – Preliminary Results

August 2010

### **Introduction**

The Office of Criminal Justice Statistics (OCJS) is the statistical research arm of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI). As such, OCJS researches criminal justice-related topics for Oklahoma. To determine the research needs of the criminal justice community, staff administered a law enforcement needs assessment in 2010. Based on the preliminary findings, staff developed a research agenda, which is presented below.

### **Survey Methodology**

Staff designed the survey as a self-administered paper survey containing both ranked responses and open-ended questions. Data collection began in February 2010 and is ongoing. The target audience for the survey includes local and state law enforcement officers, county sheriffs, correctional officers, researchers, and victim advocates. Staff distributed the survey at the 2010 Oklahoma Law Enforcement Summit, the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Additionally, staff e-mailed and faxed the survey to all county sheriffs' offices and major police departments.

The survey is divided into two parts: areas of research and dissemination of research. Part one of the questionnaire includes questions about law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication, corrections, recidivism and reentry, victimization, and special topics. Part two of the questionnaire includes questions regarding dissemination of future research publications, format preferences for future publications, and optional resources and services. The survey also includes demographical questions and future survey preferences.

### **Survey Analysis**

Survey results provided well-rounded insight into the research needs of the law enforcement community in Oklahoma. The majority of the survey consisted of ranked responses, which allowed the respondent to identify research needs for their community. Staff expected each topic would be ranked "most important" by the same number of participants (25% for a four-option question, 33% for a three-option question, and 50% for a two-option question). Thus, if respondents rated a topic from a four-option question "most important" 25% percent of the time or more, it is a topic that is at least as important as the other topics listed and was considered a research priority. However, if a four-option topic was rated to be "most important" less than 25% of the time, it is less important than the other topics and was not considered a research priority.

Part two of the survey allowed respondents to select support services from a predetermined list. For these questions, staff determined that a two-thirds majority would indicate sufficient interest to be considered a research priority. If more than two-thirds indicated interest in a certain service, the service was considered a primary research priority. If the topic received only a simple majority (50%), it was considered a secondary research priority.

---

## Participant Demographics

As of July 31, 2010, OCJS received 144 of the 343 surveys distributed, for a 42% response rate. Staff collected demographic information (see Table 1) and profession type (see Table 2). The majority of respondents were from police departments (54%) and served populations smaller than 25,000 (47%). OCJS received 77 of the 341 police departments completed surveys (23%), and 32 of the 77 sheriffs' offices completed surveys (42%).

**Table 1. Size of Population Served**

Population	Frequency	Percent
24,999 or Less	68	47.2
25,000-49,999	14	9.7
50,000-74,999	13	9.0
75,000-99,999	1	0.7
100,000 or More	24	16.7
Missing Survey Question *	24	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* = Survey question was not added until April 2010

---

**Table 2. Respondent Profession**

Profession	Frequency	Percent
Law Enforcement	77	53.5
Sheriff	32	22.2
State Law Enforcement	8	5.6
District Attorney	2	1.4
Corrections	1	0.7
Victim Service Provider	18	12.5
Researcher	2	1.4
Other	4	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0</b>

---

## Survey Results

As mentioned, staff designed the research agenda using the survey results (see Table 3). Respondents identified several key research areas including rearrest statistics (79%), domestic violence (62%), sex offender reentry (55%), and crime type, location, and time of day (51%).

Staff is already working on several of the topics that respondents identified as high priority (see Table 3). Researchers will continue to collect statistics from other sources on those topics not addressed in the current research agenda. The needs assessment results are particularly helpful in identifying areas not covered by current unit research or outside

agencies. Staff plans to incorporate identified areas into ongoing projects, while others, like the research areas listed as “special topics,” may be addressed in a single-issue bulletin or newsletter.

**Table 3. Preliminary Research Agenda Based on Results**

Topic	Research Area	Percent*	Related Project
State Incident-Based Reporting	Law Enforcement	33	Using SIBRS Data to Analyze Domestic Violence Trends in Muskogee
Criminal History Records	Law Enforcement	28	Using SIBRS Data to Analyze Domestic Violence Trends in Muskogee
Public Attitudes About Crime and Police	Law Enforcement	34	Oklahoma Crime Victimization Survey
Evaluation of Prevention Programs	Law Enforcement	26	Evaluation of the OKC Gang and Violent Crime Program**
Felony Sentencing Data	Prosecution and Adjudication	49	***
Domestic Violence Case Processing	Prosecution and Adjudication	28	Using SIBRS Data to Analyze Domestic Violence Trends in Muskogee
Plea Bargaining	Prosecution and Adjudication	37	***
Case Processing Time	Prosecution and Adjudication	27	***
Violent and Nonviolent Incarceration Rates	Corrections	43	***
Prison Gangs	Corrections	27	***
Jail Population Trends	Corrections	27	***
Probation	Corrections	36	***
Incarceration Costs	Corrections	36	***
Drug Courts	Corrections	49	***
Rearrest Rates	Reentry and Recidivism	79	***
Rehabilitation Programs	Reentry and Recidivism	28	***
Sex Offender Reentry	Reentry and Recidivism	55	***
Public Perception of Released Offenders	Reentry and Recidivism	49	Oklahoma Crime Victimization Survey
Characteristics of Crime	Victimization	51	Oklahoma Crime Victimization Survey
Crime Prevention Measures	Victimization	47	Oklahoma Crime Victimization Survey
Domestic Violence	Victimization	62	Using SIBRS Data to Analyze Domestic Violence Trends in Muskogee
Juvenile Justice	Special Project	50	***

\* Percent of Respondents that Ranked Response “Most Important”

\*\* Project is Complete

\*\*\* Project in Planning Stages

With regard to dissemination of research and research services, 90% of respondents expressed interest in criminal justice statistics and 80% indicated interest in an annual needs assessment survey. Also, 78% of respondents were interested in grant application assistance, 76% in criminal justice directories, and 76% in crime maps (see Table 4). Sixty-two percent

of respondents preferred future research and statistics presented in a quarterly newsletter format. Based on results, staff plans to offer several services to the criminal justice community including research requests (58%), program evaluations (58%), and a monthly calendar (54%). In addition to a quarterly newsletter, staff will continue to disseminate research findings in two main formats: key findings (54%) and bulletins (52%).

**Table 4. Online Services Requested (Two-Option Questions)**

Primary Services	Percent	Secondary Services	Percent
Criminal Justice Statistics	90	Research Requests	58
Yearly Survey	80	Program Evaluations	58
Grant Application	78	Monthly Calendar	54
Law Enforcement Directory	76	Key Findings	54
Crime Mapping	76	Bulletins	52
Quarterly Newsletters*	62		

\* = Listed as a primary service due to highest scoring distribution

## Conclusion

The 2010 Law Enforcement Needs Assessment provided valuable insight into the research needs of the criminal justice community. Due to the strong response rate, staff identified several key projects for the upcoming year. In addition to the projects listed above, staff is also working on the unit's new web site, which will be accessible in spring 2011. Overall, the needs assessment proved to be an extremely valuable tool. The Office of Criminal Justice Statistics' Staff plan to continue administering the survey annually to assist in determining future research agendas for the Office of Criminal Justice Statistics.

## Current Unit Projects

### Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) Projects

- Deaths in Custody Reporting (collect and report deaths that occur in Oklahoma in the process of arrest)
- Victimization Survey (administer the first crime victimization survey for Oklahoma)
- Web Site Design (design and create a link on the OSBI Web Site; research online SIBRS dataset access)

### Other Projects

- Oklahoma Law Enforcement Needs Assessment (ongoing assessment of criminal justice research needs)
- Using SIBRS to Analyze Domestic Violence Trends in Muskogee (ASA/BJIS Research Program Grant)
- Law Enforcement Bulletins (UCR supplemental data; hate crimes, homicide, officers killed/assaulted)
- Quarterly Newsletter: *Numbers Now* (distributed in October, January, April, and July)