Benefits of NIBRS Participation

When used to its full potential, the UCR Program's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) identifies with precision when and where crime takes place, what form it takes, and the characteristics of its victims and perpetrators. Armed with such information, law enforcement can better define the resources it needs to fight crime, as well as use those resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

Although most of the general concepts for collecting, scoring, and reporting UCR data in the Summary Reporting System (SRS) apply in NIBRS, such as jurisdictional rules, there are some important differences in the two systems. The most notable differences that give NIBRS an advantage over the SRS are:

- No Hierarchy Rule—In the SRS, the Hierarchy Rule requires law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to report only the most serious offense per incident; therefore, they do not report lower-listed offenses in multiple-offense incidents. In NIBRS, LEAs report every offense occurring during an incident provided the offenses are separate and distinct crimes, not just as part of another offense, i.e., a "mutually exclusive" crime. (For more information about mutually exclusive offenses, refer to the *NIBRS Technical Specification*, Data Element 24, Victim Connected to UCR Offense Code, at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/ucr-program-data-collections#National>.)

- Revised, Expanded, and New Offense Definitions—The FBI UCR Program revised several SRS offense definitions for NIBRS (e.g., the definition of assault to include the offense of intimidation, the definition of burglary to include self-storage units with regard to the Hotel Rule [i.e., since all units are under a single manager, the burglary will count as one offense, but up to 99 individual units can be reported]. Furthermore, NIBRS defines and collects specific sex offenses, including such crimes as rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object (which together meet the revised, broader UCR definition of rape), and fondling; and sex offenses, nonforcible, including such crimes as statutory rape and incest.

- Greater Specificity in Reporting Offenses—Using NIBRS, law enforcement can report offense and arrest data for 23 Group A offense categories (including 49 specific crimes) as opposed to the 10 Part I offenses in the SRS. In addition, NIBRS captures arrest data for 10 Group B offense categories (including 10 crimes), while the SRS collects arrest data for 20 Part II crimes. Also, because the SRS collects most of its crime data in the form of categories (e.g., age groupings and property value groupings), it provides very little capability to break down the resulting data into specific subcategories. However, because NIBRS collects the details of crime incidents, it allows much greater specificity

in reporting. Some of those details include type of victim, residential status of victim and arrestee, weapons data for several crimes, and the value of property stolen or recovered.

- Distinction between Attempted and Completed Group A Crimes—Except for the offenses of rape and burglary, the SRS does not differentiate between attempted and completed Part I crimes. NIBRS recognizes the difference between attempted and completed crimes for all Group A offenses.

- Additional Scoring Category—In addition to the categories of Crimes Against Persons (e.g., murder, rape, and aggravated assault) and Crimes Against Property (e.g., robbery, burglary, and larceny/theft) in the SRS, NIBRS offers the category of Crimes Against Society. These crimes are not against persons because they do not actually involve an injured party; nor are they against property because property is not the object of the crime. Program developers created the category to represent society's prohibitions of engaging in certain types of activity, such as drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, and prostitution offenses.

- Expanded Victim-to-Offender Relationship Data—In the SRS, law enforcement reports the relationship of the victim to the offender (e.g., the victim was the husband, wife, employer, or employee, of the offender) only for homicides (i.e., murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, manslaughter by negligence, and justifiable homicide). In NIBRS, however, law enforcement reports an individual victim's relationship to the offender(s) when the individual was the victim of a Crime Against Person, such as an assault offense, homicide offense, kidnapping/abduction, or sex offense. LEAs also report victim-to-offender relationship data for robbery (Crimes Against Property) because one of its elements is an assault, which makes it a violent crime. (NIBRS also collects other types of victims, i.e., law enforcement officer, business, financial institution, government, religious organization, and society/public.)

- Expanded Circumstance Reporting—The SRS and NIBRS both provide for collecting circumstance data for homicides, but NIBRS also allows law enforcement to report circumstance data for aggravated assault. Furthermore, NIBRS permits the entry of up to two circumstance codes for each murder or aggravated assault.

- Expanded Collection of Drug-Related Offenses—In the SRS, the subcategories of drug violations are limited to sale/manufacturing and possession. However, in NIBRS, LEAs can report the unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic. Agencies can also report the suspected drug type in one of the expanded drug-type categories. In

the event of a drug seizure, agencies can report the estimated quantity. NIBRS also allows agencies to report the unlawful manufacture, sale, purchase, possession, or transportation of drug equipment (paraphernalia).

- Use of Drugs—In addition to capturing actual drug offenses, LEAs using NIBRS can report whether they suspect offenders of various other offenses of having used drugs or narcotics during or shortly before the commission of the crime(s).

- Capturing Computer Crime—To combat the growing problem of computer crime, (i.e., crimes directed at and perpetrated through the use of computers and related equipment) NIBRS provides the capability to indicate whether a computer was the object of the reported crime and to indicate whether the offenders used computer equipment to perpetrate a crime.

- Association of Update Reports—LEAs handle information updates, such as unfounding an offense with subsequent submissions via the SRS, but there is no way to tie the update to the original offense. In NIBRS, however, updated information is available with, and directly tied to, the original incident.

- Identification of Common Problems or Trends—Aside from national data requirements, many individual LEAs have very sophisticated records systems capable of producing a full range of statistics in their own jurisdictions. Some local and state incident-based reporting systems include additional data elements and data values to satisfy their local and state needs. As a byproduct of all of those systems, NIBRS provides more common links among agencies. As more LEAs use NIBRS, it will allow the identification of common crime problems or trends among similar jurisdictions. Agencies can then work together to develop possible solutions or proactive strategies for addressing the issues.

- More Useful Data—Once the majority of LEAs that participate in the UCR Program submit their data via NIBRS, legislators, municipal planners and administrators, academicians, penologists, sociologists, and the general public will be better able to assess the nation's crime problem. Law enforcement is a public service and as such requires a full accounting from the police commissioner, chief, sheriff, or director as to the administration of the agency and the status of public safety within the jurisdiction. By participating in the NIBRS, agencies will have statistics to fulfill this responsibility. The NIBRS furnishes information on nearly every major criminal justice issue facing law enforcement today. The FBI's UCR Program collects NIBRS data from all levels of law enforcement (i.e., city, university/college, county, state, tribal, and federal) and aggregates the data at the level and in the manner best meeting the informational needs of the data user.

For More Information

LEAs that want more information about making the transition to NIBRS should e-mail the FBI at <UCR-NIBRS@ic.fbi.gov>. LEAs should direct questions about specific facets of the UCR Program to the appropriate area. A listing of UCR Program contacts is available at <www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/contact-the-ucr-program>. For questions about the NIBRS publication, please direct your e-mail to <crimestatsinfo@ic.fbi.gov>.