simply not designed to provide a complete assessment of law enforcement effectiveness. An agency's emphases and resources; and its crime, clearance, and arrest rates; along with other appropriate factors, must be considered to obtain a valid picture of its effectiveness.

Because of its concern regarding the proper use of UCR data, the FBI has the following policies:
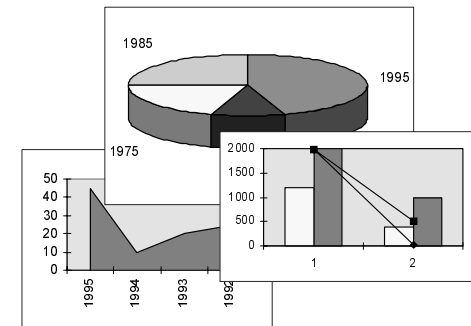
- The FBI does not analyze, interpret, or publish crime statistics based solely on a single-dimension interagency ranking.
- The FBI does not provide agency-based crime statistics to data users in a ranked format.
- When providing/using agency-oriented statistics, the FBI cautions and, in fact, strongly discourages data users against using rankings to evaluate locales or the effectiveness of their law enforcement agencies.

Promoting Responsible Crime Analysis

The FBI maintains a staff to answer data-related questions and provide guidance in the appropriate use and analysis of UCR statistics. A toll-free Help Line has been established for the use of data contributors. The number is 1-888-UCR-NIBR.

Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics:

Their Proper Use

Since 1930, city, county, and state law enforcement agencies have voluntarily provided the Nation with a reliable set of crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The FBI, which administers the Program, periodically releases the crime statistics to the public.

Utility of UCR Data

UCR crime statistics serve many purposes and are used in many ways. They provide law enforcement with timely and accurate data for use in budget formulation, planning, resource allocation, assessment of police operation, etc., to help address the crime problem at various levels. Chambers of commerce and tourism agencies examine these data to see how they impact the particular geographic jurisdictions they represent. Criminal justice researchers study the nature, cause, and movement of crime over time. Legislators draft anti-crime measures using the research findings and recommendations of law enforcement administrators, planners, and public and private entities concerned with the problem of crime. The news media use the crime statistics provided by the UCR Program to inform the public about the state of crime.

Pitfalls of Ranking

UCR data are sometimes used to compile rankings of individual jurisdictions and institutions of higher learning. These crude and/or incomplete analyses have often created misleading perceptions which adversely affect geographic entities and their residents. For this reason, the FBI has a long-standing policy against ranking cities, counties, states, and universities/colleges on the basis of crime data alone. Despite repeated warnings against these practices, this position continues to be challenged and misunderstood by crime data users.

Locales should not be ranked because there are many factors that cause the nature and type of crime to vary from place to place. UCR statistics include only jurisdictional population figures along with reported crime, clearance, or arrest data. Rankings ignore the uniqueness of each locale. All jurisdictions are affected to some degree by:

- population density and degree of urbanization of the locality and its surrounding area;
- variations in composition of the population;
- the number of residents versus the "policing population," i.e., residents plus daily commuters, transients, tourists, shoppers, etc.;
- economic conditions;
- modes of transportation and highway systems;
- cultural conditions;
- family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness;
- climate;
- effective strength of law enforcement agencies;
- administrative and investigative emphases of law enforcement;
- policies of other components of the criminal justice system, i.e., prosecutorial, judicial, correctional, and probational.

The attitudes of a jurisdiction's citizenry toward crime and the crime reporting practices of its residents are known to have an effect on the number of crimes coming to law enforcement attention.

Ranking agencies, cities, towns, counties, states, or colleges and universities has serious implications. For the sake of illustration, let us say that we want to measure the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. Since effectiveness measurements are not available, a user may choose to substitute UCR clearance rates, rank them by agency, and attempt to infer the effectiveness of individual law enforcement agencies. This inference is flawed because all the other measures of police effectiveness were ignored. For example, the nature of the offenses that were cleared must be considered, as those cleared may not have been the most serious, like murder or rape. The agency's clearances may or may not result in conviction, the ultimate goal. The agency may make many arrests for non-Crime Index offenses, like drug abuse violations, which demonstrate police activity but are not considered in the clearance rate. The agency's available resources are critical to successful operation, so its rate of officers to population and budget should be considered. The UCR clearance rate was