

JWeiss@JRSA.ORG
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To: David C. Childs A-76comments/OMB/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: Comments to proposed revision to OMB A-76

JRSA

*Justice Research and Statistics Association
777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 801
Washington, DC 20002
202-842-9330 ? www.jrsa.org*

December 18, 2002

Mr. David C. Childs
Office of Federal Procurement Policy
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
New Executive Office Building, Room 9013
Washington, DC 20503

Re: Proposed Revision to Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-76,
Performance of Commercial Activities

Dear Mr. Childs:

The Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA), a nonprofit organization, and the State Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) it represents have worked closely with the Bureau of Justice Statistics since 1974. Our mission is to improve the policy relevance of justice data and research and to increase information sharing among the states. JRSA programs include multistate research; training, technical assistance, and evaluation capacity building; and a range of publications designed to enhance the degree to which data and research inform policy. Details about JRSA programs, as well as links to the state SACs, are available on our web site at www.jrsa.org.

We wish to express our concern about the proposed revision to OMB Circular A-76, specifically, the presumption that "all activities are commercial in nature unless an activity is justified as inherently governmental." There is widespread agreement on the importance of objectivity and independence with regard to statistical studies that are supported and disseminated by the federal government. Further, the integrity and quality of justice data are

critical to policy decisions at the national, state and local levels. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has enjoyed virtually an unblemished record with regard to its programs and products throughout its history, which agencies throughout this country depend on.

We believe that the responsibilities inherent in those tasks and products and, by extension, the positions involved in managing and overseeing how they are carried out, are inherently governmental and should not be presumed "commercial in nature." We respectfully submit that to consider such activities otherwise, and to subject them a competitive, outsourcing process, would not only be costly and counterproductive, but would not serve the citizens or policymakers in this country well. Thank you for your serious consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

Robert McManus
President, JRSA
and
Joan C. Weiss
Executive Director, JRSA
jweiss@jrsa.org

<<OMB A-76 Comments Dec 02.wpd>>