



OJJDP FACT SHEET

John J. Wilson, Acting Administrator

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Innovative Information on Juvenile Residential Facilities

by Joseph Moone

In October 2000, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will conduct the first Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC), a new effort designed to collect information about the facilities in which juvenile offenders are held.

JRFC is one component of a multitiered OJJDP effort to describe both the youth placed in residential facilities and the environments of these facilities. The other components include the following:

- ◆ **The National Juvenile Court Data Archive** project provides information on the court processing of youth and the sanctions imposed on them. OJJDP publishes these data annually in *Juvenile Court Statistics*. This Report includes information about youth committed to residential placement and compares it with information about youth given probation and youth whose cases are dismissed.
- ◆ **The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP)** collects detailed information on youth held in residential placement on a specific reference date. This information includes the age, race, gender, and most serious offense of each youth. CJRP is the only source of national data on all youth held in residential placement as a result of contact with the juvenile justice system. Because CJRP compiles information on both the States in which youth are housed and the States in which they committed their offenses, OJJDP is able to report State-level comparisons of commitment and detention rates and indicate which States use out-of-State residential facilities.
- ◆ **The Survey of Youth in Residential Placement** is a new survey OJJDP is developing to interview individual youth in residential placement. It will survey the youth covered under CJRP and will provide a broad range of self-report information on their experience in custody, past offense histories, education, and other important life events.

The new JRFC will complement these three data collection efforts by focusing on the facilities that hold juvenile offenders

and the services these facilities provide. Together, this national data collection series will provide a comprehensive picture of youth sanctioned to residential placement and the facilities and services the youth are provided.

Information in JRFC

JRFC will collect basic information on facility characteristics, including size, structure, security arrangements, and ownership. It will provide information on the use of bedspace in the facility, which will help indicate whether the facility is experiencing crowding. OJJDP has also included questions in the census about the type of facility, such as detention center, training school, ranch, or group home. This information will be complemented by a series of questions about other residential services provided by the facility, such as independent living, foster care, or other arrangements.

JRFC also will collect information on the health care, education, substance abuse treatment, and mental health treatment provided to youth in these facilities. While not evaluating the effectiveness or quality of these services, the census will gather important information about the youth the services are directed toward and how the services are provided. The census will also indicate the use of screenings or tests conducted to determine counseling, education, health, or substance abuse needs and will examine prominent issues about conditions of confinement, including the restraint of youth and improper absences from the facility. Congress requires OJJDP to report annually on the number of deaths of juveniles in custody, and JRFC will collect information on such deaths for the 1-year period just prior to the census reference date.

Biennial Survey

JRFC, like CJRP, will be conducted biennially. The two surveys will take place in alternate years. JRFC will be conducted in even-numbered years (2000, 2002, 2004, and so on), while CJRP will be

conducted in odd-numbered years (2001, 2003, 2005, and so on). Both will use the same reference date—the fourth Wednesday in October—to allow for comparisons from year to year.

A Collaborative Effort

In 1996, OJJDP entered into a long-term agreement with the U.S. Bureau of the Census's Center for Survey Methods Research to develop this new census. The two agencies worked together to design a questionnaire and methods of survey implementation that would ensure valid and reliable results. OJJDP also concentrated on reducing the burden of the census on the respondent facilities. The census was developed with input from more than 50 facilities, which provided guidance on the questionnaire and survey methods. The Census Bureau tested the census in 1998 using a large sample of facilities. As a result of these development efforts and tests, OJJDP and the Census Bureau have arrived at a quality census that will provide a comprehensive picture of the facilities that hold juvenile offenders in a residential setting.

Dissemination Plans

To disseminate the results of the census, OJJDP will develop a Web site that will provide the results of JRFC in tabular form. Beginning with the 2002 JRFC, OJJDP will be able to provide trend information as well. The Office plans to publish Fact Sheets and Bulletins that will highlight JRFC data and alert readers to the Web site.

For Further Information

For further information about JRFC, contact Joseph Moone, Program Manager, OJJDP, 810 Seventh Street NW., Washington, DC 20531; moone@ojp.usdoj.gov (e-mail).

Joseph Moone is the Program Manager for the Juvenile Residential Facility Census in OJJDP's Research and Program Development Division.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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