

Additional Information about the Data

The data presented are compiled from the BJS Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP) database. The FJSP database includes data provided by the U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Executive Office for the U.S. Attorneys, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and U.S. Sentencing Commission. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, in addition to providing data describing defendants in criminal cases processed by the federal judiciary, provides data describing defendants processed by the federal pretrial services agencies and the federal probation and supervision service. The data can be downloaded from the Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center at <http://fjsrc.urban.org>.

Each agency reports on cases processed during a given year in an annual statistical report. These reports are often not comparable across agencies due to the varying methods used by the agencies to report case processing activities. As reported by an interagency working group headed by BJS, the differences in the case processing statistics are attributable, in part, to the different needs and missions of the agencies. The working group found the following differences in the statistics reported:

- the universe of cases reported during a given period—some agencies report on those case processing events that occurred during a particular period, whereas others report on those events recorded during a particular period; and
- many of the commonly used case processing statistics—suspect or defendant processed, offense committed, case disposition, and sentence imposed—are defined differently across agencies.

BJS, through its FJSP, has recognized the incomparability of these annual statistical reports and has attempted to reconcile many of the differences identified by the working group. By combining databases from several years, BJS is able to report on those cases that actually occurred during the reporting period. Commonly used case processing statistics are made comparable across stages by applying uniform definitions to data obtained from each agency. Because definitions in the FJSP are consistent with those categories in BJS programs describing state defendants convicted, sentenced, or imprisoned, the comparison of federal and state case processing statistics is facilitated.

Federal Justice Statistics 2008, Statistical Tables replaces the *Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics*, published for the years 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 and describes defendants processed at each stage of the federal justice system. It includes arrests by federal law enforcement agencies, and investigations and prosecutions by U.S. attorneys (section 1), federal pretrial release or detention, adjudication in the U.S. district courts, sentencing, and the appeal of the conviction and/or sentence imposed (section 2), and federal supervision, including probation, parole, and imprisonment (section 3).

Federal Justice Statistics 2008, Statistical Tables cover the 12-month fiscal period ending September 30, 2008 (or fiscal year 2008). Generally the tables include both individual and organizational defendants. Organizational defendants are not included in tables showing defendants sentenced to incarceration, or tables describing offenders under post-conviction community supervision. Juvenile offenders charged as adults are included in the reported statistics. Felony and misdemeanor distinctions are provided where possible (see "Offense classifications" in *Methodology*).

Organization of the *Statistical Tables*

Each section describes a major stage in the processing of criminal suspects and defendants:

Section 1 describes federal law enforcement and prosecution. This includes arrests made by federal law enforcement agencies for violations of federal law, including the characteristics of arrestees. It also describes suspects investigated by U.S. attorneys and decisions made by federal prosecutors in screening criminal matters and the type of offense for which suspects were prosecuted or declined for prosecution. (Data on warrants initiated and cleared by the U.S. Marshals Service are forthcoming.)

Section 2 describes federal pretrial, adjudication, sentencing, and appeals. This includes pretrial release and detention practices of the federal judiciary system, including the characteristics of defendants detained or released pending trial. It also describes actions taken by the federal judiciary in adjudicating defendants in cases filed by the U.S. attorneys and the sentences imposed by the federal judiciary on convicted defendants. This section includes a description of appeals of criminal convictions and sentences imposed in the federal courts, including the original offense charged.

Section 3 describes offenders under federal correctional supervision—probation, parole, and supervised release—including the outcome of the supervision (successful completion or violations). It also describes offenders imprisoned in federal prisons—the offense at commitment and demographic characteristics of the offender.

The *Methodology* section describes the procedures followed in analyzing data and developing tables.

The Glossary contains definitions for terms used in the tables. Many terms used in the text and tables have specialized meanings either because they refer to federal law or because of reporting procedures by the federal agencies supplying the data. Therefore, readers are encouraged to check the glossary for exact definitions of tabulated data.

Notes to Reader

The *Federal Justice Statistics 2008* tables were constructed to permit valid comparisons within each table and to allow the reader to compare percentages (but not raw totals) across tables. It should be understood, however, that the total number of subjects/defendants shown in a particular table may not equal the number of subjects/defendants involved in a particular stage of processing, since some records could not be linked and some data sources did not include information on particular data elements classified in a particular table. Data notes indicate the exact universe for individual tables.

Federal Justice Statistics 2008 is a statistical presentation of federal criminal justice information with limited analyses of trends or explanatory factors underlying the statistics. Analyses of federal justice statistics may be found in special reports and other publications, some of which are cited in the *Federal Justice Statistics 2008*. Assessment of changing patterns in the *Federal Justice Statistics 2008* tabulations may depend on detailed examination of sub-categories not shown in the tabulations or may require other sources of information, such as knowledge of legislation or federal agency procedures.