

**CHILDREN IN CUSTODY QUESTIONNAIRE REDESIGN PROJECT:
RESULTS FROM PHASE 1 EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides results on the Phase 1 background research and site visits for the Children in Custody (CIC) questionnaire redesign project. Sources of data used for this report include information supplied by experts, a review of previous census forms, and interviews and observations conducted from August to December, 1994 at 40 purposively selected juvenile facilities in 10 states and the District of Columbia. The distribution of facility types included in our sample was roughly proportionate to the distribution of official facility types marked off on the 1993 census form. A few interviews were conducted with respondents at nonresponding facilities and at new types of facilities identified by write-in responses on the 1993 forms. Additional stratifiers included public/private administration, state, size, central reporter/umbrella agencies, and urban/rural locations.

Whenever possible, we selected as respondents facility personnel who had completed the CIC census form in the past. During each facility site visit, we conducted a taped, semi-structured interview with open probing, asked for respondent comments on the CIC census, and toured the facility to see the layout and security arrangements.

The following problems with the questionnaire were noted:

- We asked each respondent to identify the type of his/her facility. A comparison of these verbally reported facility types with those listed on the 1993 census form indicated that the current printed categories do not completely cover the universe of facility types, or permit respondents in multi-purpose facilities to mark more than one category.
- The respondents identified several alternative meanings of the term "security." The term can be interpreted as referring to physical security (hardware and devices) or to supervision ratios. It can also be interpreted as security to keep children confined within or security to keep intruders out. Thus some facilities with minimal security hardware and relatively open access to the community were classified as medium or maximum security because they had high ratios of staff to juveniles. The ranking of security levels on the none-to-maximum scale appeared to be more a subjective than objective exercise, since the form does not provide any objective standards for ranking. Some respondents reported that they could not accurately portray the differing security arrangements at their facilities because the form allows them to designate just one security level.
- The concept of "community access" is not defined on the form, leaving these questions subject to alternative interpretations by respondents. Another problem is that the concept is based on an unstated assumption that juveniles either do or do not have "routine access to community resources and/or activities." The actual arrangements in most of the more open facilities are not dichotomous. These facilities have graduated levels of access to the community, through which a juvenile moves as s/he progresses through treatment.

- The current algorithmic classification of institutional/open based on answers to the security and community access questions is very complex and subject to accumulated errors from each of the classifying questions.
- The algorithmic classification of facilities as short- or long-term is currently based on the responses to "Reason for Custody," a functional variable. Use of a temporal variable, such as average length of stay, may provide a more direct indicator of short- or long-term stays. The sizable proportion of respondents who classify their facilities as mixed-term suggests that some respondents would prefer to provide a range, rather than a single answer, for the length of stay in the program. Other respondents in multi-purpose facilities wanted to be able to provide length-of-stay information for each program separately. A related question on average length of stay is whether this should be the average length of stay to date for all juveniles currently residing in the facility, or the average completed length of stay, based solely on those who have completed the facility program and been discharged.
- Most of the respondents had no problems in identifying their facilities as public or private, even when they described their arrangements as private agencies with public (government) contracts to hold certain types of children. A few respondents had trouble, interpreting public/private in the sense of public/private access, rather than ownership or administration.
- According to three central reporters (for public facilities) and 7 umbrella reporters (for private facilities) we interviewed, one agency person finds it faster and more efficient to complete forms for all of the facilities. These (usually high-level) persons often have access to centralized data or levels of knowledge they claim makes it better for them to complete the task. Several complained about the time it took to complete the forms and a few devised shortcuts that adversely affect the accuracy of the data. Some of these central/umbrella reporters indicated that they had trouble completing the census form because the data elements in their databases do not always correspond to the questions asked in the census. Most problematic were questions on admission dates and most serious offenses. The lack of fit between variables in central/umbrella reporters' databases and those requested by OJJDP have implications for data quality and comparability in the CIC and Juveniles Taken Into Custody (JTIC) data collections.
- Variation by state was found in the use of key terms for types of juveniles held in facilities. The term "delinquent offender" is a contradiction to respondents in New York state. The term "status offender" is not used in New York and may not be used in Maryland. It is problematic in Pennsylvania and Washington state where children are no longer adjudicated for status offenses. Some respondents with mixed offender and nonoffender populations were not sure who was to be included on the census form.
- Respondents were also concerned about how to classify juveniles being waived to adult criminal court and California Youth Authority children. They were also not sure whether

to include dependent, abused, neglected, and abandoned children, those in off-site community housing associated with the facility, babies of girls residing in the facility, or those who had been adjudicated in the past but were not currently in placement *because* of offenses.

- On the form, the word "committed" is restricted to the meaning of committed to a facility. Respondents in half of the states visited indicated that children are committed to an agency, and *placed* in a facility, not *committed* to it. These respondents who differentiate the meanings of "committed" and "placed" would be likely to ignore or be confused by the current census definition on page 2 that indicates these terms are synonyms. Additionally, the census form instructions and questions are not consistent in defining the target population to include for "commitment." In some places on the form commitment applies just to offenders, in others it includes nonoffenders as well, and elsewhere, there may be no instruction on whom to include.
- Several factors associated with the concept of "age for juveniles subject to the authority of juvenile court" could be sources of error. First, the definition does not provide a specific age, leaving the determination of the appropriate age range to each respondent. This may be necessary since the same form is sent to states with different age ranges, but it may be a source of error as well. In some states, respondents were not consistent in the maximum age for juveniles subject to juvenile court. Additionally, respondents in facilities with some nonoffenders may set the age range differently than those with just offenders. Also, states may have one general maximum statutory age for juveniles subject to the authority of juvenile court, but also have lower maximum ages for certain heinous crimes. It is not clear whether juveniles being waived to adult court should be included on the form. Finally, in at least one state, an offender is classified as a juvenile or an adult, not on the basis of age, but on the court with jurisdiction.
- The term "youthful offender" was not in common usage among the respondents, including those in the California state systems. Just a few of the 40 respondents provided definitions similar to that on the census form. It is currently not clear whether this term is to be applied to children being waived to adult court for selected serious crimes, if they are still below the general statutory age limit for juvenile court authority.
- In regard to data availability, the information OJJDP wants is available for almost all facilities, but it is usually located in individual case files which are not computerized. Case files are more difficult and time consuming for respondents to use. The change to a roster-based format may involve an increase in respondent burden for those facilities with large populations and/or those that do not use computers. The data elements that some respondents identified as difficult included admission date, most serious offense, status offense, and county/state of origin. A few respondents indicated they did not keep complete information on offenses.

- Fluctuations in facility populations appear to be very consistent across facility types and geographical areas. They are associated with the school year, with higher populations coming in October and November, and again in March and April, and lower populations during school vacations and holidays. Fluctuations in facility population may also occur depending on day of the week and on time of day.
- Many respondents were interested in computerization but most did not have adequate equipment and/or experience to fill out an electronic questionnaire. Some were interested in doing so, while others wanted to continue with a paper version because it is easier to pass the paper version around when more than one respondent participates in completing the questionnaire. In terms of new methods for collecting data, some respondents were willing to fax data, but few were willing to transmit electronic records. Confidentiality concerns were mentioned in regard to transmitting electronic records, transmitting by modem and by the Internet, and in allowing Census Bureau enumerators to use the facility records to complete the forms.
- Most respondents indicated they could probably provide first names, zipcodes, and birthdate as identifying information for a roster questionnaire. Some indicated that before this could be provided, they would need to obtain approval from some higher board, agency, or legal office. A few respondents indicated that they would not give any information on an individual level.

The following list summarizes the major recommendations for OJJDP that have been made in the body of this report. These recommendations cover definitional issues for the target populations as well as key concepts, classification issues, methods, procedures, and timing and scope of the proposed new roster-based questionnaire. The first fifteen recommendations identify critical decisions that need to be made in order to finalize the new roster-based questionnaire in Phase 2. The remaining three recommendations can be considered at some future time. These recommendations are discussed in more detail in "Conclusions and Recommendations," starting on page 53.

Critical Decisions for Phase 2 Questionnaire Development

1. Develop specific criteria for determining which facilities and/or programs within facilities are in scope.
2. Establish basic definitions and categories for differentiating facility types and distinct subdivisions within multi-purpose facilities that are consistent with OJJDP's data needs. Decide if subdivisions within facilities are to be considered separate facilities or separate functional units.

3. Decide if the screening for in-scope status of facilities (and possibly functional units) by respondents should be done in a new pre-census mailout, or as part of the census data collection.
4. Decide if the *de jure* method of counting juveniles who are on the rolls, but not necessarily present in facilities on the reference day should be used in the new roster-based questionnaire.
5. Resolve issues on the definition of the target population of children. Does OJJDP want full individual data only on children placed in facilities by the police, courts or correctional agencies as a result of an offense? What data, if any, does OJJDP want on nonoffenders?
6. Decide whether to adopt an attribute-based checklist to determine security levels in facilities (and possibly in programs).
7. Decide whether, for multi-purpose facilities, separate roster lists should be based on differences in facility/functional unit type or on security levels within the facility.
8. Resolve issues revolving around the concept of "commitment" and develop a new definition.
9. Decide whether the data elements "institutional/open" and "community access" should be dropped or reformulated.
10. Decide if the term "youthful offender" should be retained, since very few respondents defined the term in a manner consistent with the CIC definition. If the term is to be redefined, who should it cover?
11. Develop a list of offenses ranked by seriousness to print on the new questionnaire to reduce the likelihood that respondents use differing criteria for ranking offenses.
12. Is average length of stay in each facility an important variable for the new roster-based questionnaire or just for the facility-based instrument? Should it be based on a functional or a temporal variable? Should it be collected for *functional units* in multi-purpose facilities?
13. Decide if respondents will be asked on the new form to self-classify ownership and administration. If the answer is yes, we recommend using the response categories of "government" (rather than "public") and "private."
14. Consider developing one version of the new roster-based format for both public and private facilities, rather than separate versions. This would necessitate moving the

confidentiality and respondent burden statements to a new cover letter in order to avoid putting two potentially differing confidentiality statements on the questionnaire. This could result in cost savings.

15. Decide on the reference month, day, and whether a reference time should be included. We recommend moving the reference day for the split-panel test from late October to late February or March to allow adequate time to develop, test, and revise the new questionnaire as well as plan and implement the split-panel test.

Other Issues for Future Consideration

16. Plan and conduct research on the degree of fit between the definitions of standard variables in state, county, or agency databases with the definitions used in the CIC and JTIC data collections.
17. Consider adding juvenile units within adult facilities to the frame of in-scope facilities for this census.
18. Decide whether regional and/or county-level breakdowns are desired.

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CHILDREN IN CUSTODY QUESTIONNAIRE REDESIGN PROJECT: PHASE 1 REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION: PROJECT AND GOALS

In 1994, Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR) researchers were asked by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) analysts to redesign part of the Census of Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities. This census, commonly known as the Children in Custody (CIC) Census, has been conducted biennially since 1977 by the Census Bureau Governments (GOVS) Division for OJJDP. It provides national data on facilities housing children who have committed offenses as well as on the children residing in these facilities. These data on the numbers, characteristics, and offenses of juveniles in custody and on the types of programs and facilities available to them are the basis of reports to Congress. The data are also used by policy makers and researchers.

This census uses the facility as the unit of selection. Respondents at facilities on the facility frame are asked to complete the census form, providing one-day and annual data on all residents in the facility, whether they have committed offenses or not. Data provided by the respondent are used at the final data cleaning stage by Census Bureau personnel to decide which facilities are in and out of scope. The rules for determining if a facility is in scope are that the facility 1) "housed more than 50% juveniles, 2) had a juvenile offender population greater than 1% of the total population, and 3) indicated it had authority to hold juveniles adjudicated by the juvenile court" (Moone 1993).

This is a census of juveniles who are housed in eligible juvenile facilities; it is not a census of all pre-adjudicated and adjudicated juveniles currently involved with the legal system for specific offenses. Juveniles in non-facility arrangements, such as those on home detention or parole without placement, and those in foster homes with fewer than three children are not included in this census. In addition, juvenile delinquents held in non-juvenile facilities such as adult jails, prisons, or police lockups are not included in this census.

¹ We wish to thank Joseph Moone and Barbara Allen-Hagen of OJJDP, Alan Stevens, Diana Cull, Charlene Sebold, Peggy Ferguson, Regina Yates, and Art Ciampa of the Census Bureau Governments Division, and Theresa DeMaio, Bonnie Carver, Lorraine Randall, and Becky Bartelt of the Center for Survey Methods Research for their contributions to this project. We also wish to thank Drs. Dale Parent and Valerie Leiter of Abt Associates for consultation and for permission to review their Conditions of Confinement protocols. Finally, we wish to express appreciation to Theresa DeMaio, Diana Cull, Alan Stevens, Charlene Sebold, Peggy Ferguson, Art Ciampa, and Regina Yates for their helpful comments and suggestions on previous drafts of this report.

The current questionnaire collects aggregate data on juveniles, such as the numbers of juveniles who have been detained, committed, or voluntarily admitted to the facility. It requires the respondent to complete complex crosstabulations. With this aggregate table format, it is not possible to generate profiles of the children's characteristics across tables, such as offender status by race/ethnicity.

Evidence of the need for questionnaire redesign came from survey administrators, respondents and outside juvenile justice experts. In editing forms, Governments Division personnel found that a high proportion of facility questionnaires had missing or inconsistent data or notes that required follow-up calls, which delayed production of the database. Outside experts lobbied OJJDP to move toward a roster-based individual format that would make it possible to do cross-classifications of the characteristics of juveniles in facilities.

These problems led OJJDP to request and later accept a proposal from CSMR for questionnaire redesign research. The specific goals of this questionnaire redesign project are to: 1) revise and test new question wording for facility screening and classification questions (Sections I-IV); and to 2) develop and test a questionnaire that collects individual-level data concerning juveniles in custody (Sections V-VII). The ultimate goal is to produce a new stand-alone roster-based questionnaire ready for use in late 1996.

The questionnaire redesign project has been divided into three phases. Phase 1, which has just been completed, included a review of the literature, discussions with CIC census experts, and semi-structured interviews with respondents who have completed the CIC census form in the past. Phase 2 encompasses the development of a new questionnaire, field-testing it with at least 20 cognitive interviews, and questionnaire revisions. Phase 3 involves the design and implementation of a split-panel test of the old and new questionnaires in 400-500 facilities, as well as analysis and preparation of the final questionnaire.

This is the first project report, providing results on the Phase 1 background research and site visits. We have restricted this report to findings from the 40 in-scope facilities to document existing issues with the census form.²

II. METHODOLOGY

² A separate report will be submitted soon on the results of interviews at 9 out-of-scope substance abuse centers. OJJDP asked us to include some of these facilities in the on-site interviews in order to identify problems that might be encountered if they tried to add this type of facility to the current census frame. We decided to issue a separate substance abuse facility report to avoid having findings from out-of-scope facilities influence recommendations that might adversely affect the in-scope facilities reported on here.

Preliminary Research

In the early stages of our research on this project, we received valuable information from OJJDP and GOVS on the CIC census and from Abt Associates on the Conditions of Confinement study, a survey of some of the facility types discussed here. Prior to our site allocation and facility interviews, we looked at the 1993 questionnaires for problem questions, write-in responses and clues to possible questionnaire design flaws on the current forms, particularly in Sections III to IX. We reviewed a total of 267 forms. The number of forms examined per state (2-10 for public facilities and 0-10 for private facilities) was roughly proportional to the numbers of completed questionnaires for that state. California and Pennsylvania had the most completed questionnaires while Vermont had the fewest. We looked at Question IV.B. (Type of Facility) for every questionnaire.

We discovered many potential problem areas during this preliminary questionnaire review and the discussions with GOVS personnel. Because of difficult questions on the form, there is extensive editing of certain sections of the questionnaire using callbacks by GOVS employees. Upon editing the questionnaires, they discover inconsistencies with the data and must correct them. Also, respondents often leave questions blank, so GOVS employees must fill in data, usually based on a phone conversation with the respondent.

According to the preliminary research, Section V (Juvenile Residential Population [on the reference date]) caused the most problems for respondents. The most common problems included breaking out juvenile populations into categories of "committed," "detained," and "voluntary," counting the same juveniles in more than one place, entering data in the wrong columns, and entering incorrect data (discovered after a call back).

Site Selection Methodology

We visited 40 in-scope sites for this portion of the roster design research.³ We wanted to include a wide variety of the types of facilities covered in the census, so we selected facilities on the basis of public/private administration, facility type, state, size, central reporter/umbrella agencies, and urban/rural location. Since this is not a random sample, it should not be assumed that our findings necessarily represent the entire universe for this census. We tried to get a variety of sites with varying characteristics, but could not make the allocation represent the entire universe.

Using 1993 data, we determined the proportion of respondents marking each type of facility on the form and tried to represent these facility types proportionately in our study. We also wanted to include additional types of facilities that respondents wrote in on the questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, we looked at the responses for question IV.A. (Type of Facility) on each returned 1993 questionnaire. We discovered a variety of "write-in" responses. The most common included residential treatment center and multi-purpose facility. Others included boot camp, foster care,

³ The nine respondents at out-of-scope substance abuse facilities were interviewed during this same time period. As noted earlier, a separate report will be issued on these facilities.

maternity home, chemical dependency treatment program, youth prison, and correctional facility. In addition, OJJDP asked us to try to interview at some facilities that have not responded in the past. GOVS staffers gave us a list of nonresponding facilities and we included some of these in the study.

Some respondents fill out questionnaires for more than one facility. These respondents are called "central reporters" if they fill out public questionnaires, and "umbrella reporters" if they fill out private ones. We wanted to include some of these agencies in our study, since they have unique situations and centralized data.

After determining the proportion of sites in the universe, we divided our 40 sites accordingly, trying to include nonrespondents and some facilities identified in the write-in responses. We knew that we would not necessarily be able to stick to the original allocation since we would encounter problems recruiting respondents in the limited areas we could cover. Our proposed and actual allocations of sites are shown in Attachment A, page A-2.

The 40 sites were selected in California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington State. Whenever possible, we scheduled interviews with the facility staffers who had completed the CIC census form in 1993. We conducted semi-structured interviews using a series of structured questions with a lot of open-ended probing. At the end of the interview, we asked for the respondents' comments on the census questionnaire (included in Attachment E, starting on page A-8). We also tried to arrange a tour of each facility so that we could see the physical layout and security arrangements. Interviews ranged from 1 to 5 hours, depending on the knowledge of the respondent and his/her willingness to talk, the amount of time the respondent had, the amount of probing necessary to get all the information, the size of the facility, and whether we talked with both a central/umbrella reporter and a respondent at the facility.

During the facility interview, we asked the respondent "What type of facility is this?" Often, the facility type answer did not match what was on the prior year questionnaire (discussed below). When this occurred, we considered the facility whatever it was originally designated for the purpose of the allocation. In other words, we did not modify our allocation based on what respondents in early interviews indicated for facility type.⁴

III. TYPE OF FACILITY

⁴ For a complete list of the proposed allocated facility types and the actual facility types when interviewed, see Attachment B, page A-3. For the final tabulations of facility breakdowns by urban/rural, public/private, central reporter/umbrella agencies, size, and facility type, see Attachment D, page A-7.

As mentioned earlier, we discovered problems with the current classification of facilities during the preliminary review of 1993 census forms. The "Type of Facility" question looks like this:

IV.A. Facility Type

This facility is primarily a -

Mark (X) the one box that best describes the facility.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detention Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Training School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Ranch, forestry camp, or farm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reception or diagnostic center | <input type="checkbox"/> Halfway house or group home |

Not all facility respondents can fit their facilities into one of the predetermined types listed for this question. Others can fit their facilities into one of the predetermined types, but would prefer to call the facility something else. Still others are in facilities that have multiple programs that would fit into more than one type of facility. In addition, there are some respondents who wanted some qualifying adjective, such as "residential" or "treatment" added to the facility type to describe their facilities.

We got a variety of responses to the question, "What type of facility is this?"⁵

* Eleven respondents gave an answer that exactly matched the facility type we used in our allocation. These included:

- 1 (of 2) multi-purpose facilities,
- 3 (of 6) detention centers,
- 1 (of 4) training schools,
- 1 (of 2) reception or diagnostic centers,
- 1 (of 5) shelters,
- 2 (of 4) residential treatment facilities, and
- 2 (of 11) group homes.

* Nine respondents gave an answer that was included in the list of facility types used for our allocation, but differed from the facility type identified for them on the previous census form and in the sample. The following list shows the allocated facility types first and the actual facility types as reported by respondents second. The respondent(s) at:

- 1 shelter and 1 residential treatment center identified their facilities as multi-purpose facilities,
- 1 multi-purpose facility identified the facility as a reception center,
- 3 halfway houses or group homes identified their facilities as residential treatment facilities,
- 2 halfway houses or group homes identified their facilities as residential

⁵ The two respondents selected as nonrespondents in our sample were not included in the numbers in this section. They had not been assigned to a specific facility type in our allocation.

- treatment centers, and
 - 1 halfway house or group home identified the facility as a residential treatment program.
- * Six respondents gave answers similar to the facility type used in our allocation, but added some qualifier(s). These included:
- Secure detention (2),
 - Emergency Shelter (1),
 - Secure Diagnostic and Treatment Center (1),
 - Non-secure Detention Group Home (1),
 - Probation Camp or Drug Treatment Boot Camp (1), and
 - Juvenile Shelter Hall (1).
- * Six other respondents initially gave us a reply that was not included on our list of facility types, but after being read the list we had, could easily place their facilities into one of the categories.
- Short-Term Offenders Program (could be classified as a halfway house),
 - Program for Runaway and Homeless Youth (could be classified as a shelter),
 - Behavioral Assessment Center (could be classified as a reception or diagnostic center),
 - Adolescent Assessment Center (could be classified as a diagnostic center), and
 - Residential and Educational Center (could be classified as a group home).
 - Community Residential Placement Program (could be classified as a halfway house or group home).
- * Three respondents initially gave us a reply that was not included on our list of facility types, but after being read the list could, if forced, place their facilities into one of the categories. These respondents were not comfortable with the classification but wouldn't object to it either.
- Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution (could fit into training, but says the term is outdated),
 - Residential Care Facility (the ranch and group home classifications fit loosely, but not exactly), and
 - Private Wilderness Facility (could classify as a ranch if there was no other choice).
- * One respondent initially gave us a reply not included among the facility types used in our allocation, and after being read the list, could not place his facility into one of the categories.

- Short-Term Offenders Program

* There were respondents who wanted to check more than one category on the list of facility types. Some of the facility types were already listed, while others were not. In general, these facilities had multiple programs within the same facility. These facilities included:

- Long-Term Secure Treatment (the respondent would need a combination of training school and reception/diagnostic center),
- detention and training,
- shelter, residential treatment, and detention,
- residential treatment, diagnostic, boarding homes, and group homes, and
- emergency shelter, drug and alcohol program, independent living program, group home facilities (entire facility is classified as a residential treatment facility).

It appears from the above findings that the current facility type question and response categories are not fully capturing the range of actual facility types.

Attributes of Facilities

We asked each respondent to describe the attributes that fit his/her facility's type. The specific characteristics respondents used to classify facilities are included in Attachment C, page A-5. Respondents from some types of facilities use the facility type designated on their state operating licenses. State licensing requirements may therefore be an important factor in how respondents decide what to mark for facility type. Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution and Secure Treatment Facility are two examples of facility types that are licensed in some states.

Some of the facility types have been called outdated by some respondents. One respondent from a training school (as identified in the census) says that the term "training school" is long outdated. She preferred to call her facility a "residential rehabilitation center" because this more closely fit. Others said that the term "halfway house" applies to facilities for adults, not those for children.

Suggestions

After compiling all of the statements from various respondents regarding facility type, we have a few suggestions for changes to be made to the questionnaire. First, there are a few facility types that may

be added to the current facility type list: "Boot Camp", "Residential Treatment Center" (RTC) and/or "Residential Treatment Facility" (RTF). The reason we have both RTC and RTF is that in at least one state, RTC and RTF mean different things. In New York, an RTF is a mental health facility, while RTC refers to non-mental health treatment programs.

Also, there should be a method by which respondents can indicate the multi-purpose composition of their facilities. In our study, we identified some facilities with multiple programs, falling under separate categories, such as:

- A facility that has a detention center and a boot camp (the respondent would classify the boot camp as a training school if he had to choose from the current list). The programs had different security levels and different types of children (one had all adjudicated children, the other had all detained children). The respondent became frustrated when he realized that the questionnaire only allowed him to respond for one program at the facility.
- A multi-purpose facility that offers a detention center, residential treatment center and group homes as three separate programs. The programs are similar in having about 70 children each, but differ in terms of the age, sex and types of juveniles as well as in security levels. As a result, the respondent had a difficult time deciding how to fill out the facility-oriented questions which assume that there is just one undifferentiated program. We feel that this type of respondent should be given the opportunity to represent the varying aspects of the different programs in order to give more accurate data.
- A facility complex that offers distinct programs with different security levels to different types of children. Some of these programs are even run by separate organizations. One of these is not a program but an *ad hoc* arrangement due to overcrowding: a joint administrative-service area in the complex not intended to provide living quarters currently holds more than 20 detention children in the gym on cots. There is a question whether these distinct programs and the overflow area should be classified as one facility or as separate facilities in the same building.
- A multi-purpose facility that includes a residential treatment program, several diagnostic programs, a group emergency foster care program and a family support center on a common campus, as well as several boarding homes in the local community. According to the respondent, the boarding homes have minimum security while the others are medium security. The diagnostic programs have fewer adjudicated children, while the residential treatment programs have more. Children in the residential treatment program stay in the facility for 9-12 months, while those in the group emergency foster care program, on average, stay for just 60 days. The respondent wants to combine all of these programs and juveniles on one form, rather than filling out the multiple forms sent by GOVS.
- One facility respondent thought the easiest way to categorize the children in his facility was by "status" category or the reason why a juvenile is staying in the facility, even though he thought this may not be applicable to most other facilities. He can divide the children by

program type, but there are slight differences in the security levels within each.

One approach to dealing with this issue is to send multiple forms and ask the respondent to fill out a separate form for each program within the same facility. Some of the facilities described above did receive multiple forms, some did not. Filling out multiple 13-page forms becomes burdensome for many respondents; they would be completing budget and personnel information multiple times. Some respondents cannot separate out these aspects of their facilities. Others currently receive multiple forms, but fill out only one, trying to fit in as much information as they can about all programs. As they do so, however, they become frustrated trying to decide which programs to include for certain questions.

The plan to develop a new data collection instrument focused primarily on child-level data means that only a few critical questions on facility level classification will be needed in the new form. This will greatly reduce the burden on respondents in multi-purpose facilities by eliminating the need to complete a 13-page form for each functional unit. We suggest OJJDP might consider asking the respondent near the beginning of the new questionnaire, something like, "Does this facility have one program or more than one program? Examples of programs include: shelters, detention center, group home, residential treatment facility or center, etc...." Respondents marking the "more than one" category would be asked to fill out additional blocked sections on the same form, or attachment sheets, each with a very brief list of classification questions, followed by the roster of children in that subdivision of the facility. For example, one respondent would be able to answer classification questions (e.g., security level, custodial authority, legal status of children) and roster questions for his detention center and boot camp separately.

Allowing respondents to list all of the children by program might make it easier for them to complete this task. This approach would enable the census to obtain specific information on each of the programs without adding substantial respondent burden. If this is done, there should be some definition of program given, or an algorithm developed in the questionnaire processing to determine what constitutes separate programs. This way, the respondents could fill out the questionnaire from their perspectives, and GOVS could decide afterwards (using an algorithm) how to classify the various programs within the facility.

Universe coverage is another issue related to facility type. Respondents mentioned several types of facilities or parts of facilities that may or may not currently be included in the census. Some examples are small family homes with 2-4 beds, juveniles staying in facility gyms and detention foster homes because of overcrowding and facilities that run programs that are "off campus" in several states. Since there are no instructions specifically relating to this, it is unclear whether respondents for these types of facilities receive a form, and if they do, whether they include all of the relevant children. At least four facilities had independent living programs in the community that they have been including on their census forms in the past that probably should be considered out of scope. We suggest OJJDP might want to decide which of these newly identified facility types should be considered in scope so that clear directions can be given to respondents on the types of residential arrangements to include.

An alternative to a facility type check-off response is to develop and use a list of facility criteria. Respondents would mark each attribute fitting the facility and an electronic algorithm would classify the facility. It is not clear that this very new approach would provide a better way of classifying facilities. We recommend expanding the list of facility types instead.

IV. CLASSIFYING THE FACILITY

In addition to identifying the facility type in the current census format, the respondent is asked to classify the facility in terms of security, community access, and reason for custody. These variables are used in the creation of two composite variables: whether the facility is institutional or open, and whether it is short- or long-term. These latter questions are not asked of the respondents directly. As a result of their multiple uses in facility classification and potential inclusion in the new roster-based questionnaire, we included a series of questions on security, community access, length of stay, and facility characteristics (institutional/open) in our site visit protocol and discuss them here.

Security

The current census form contains three questions on security arrangements in facilities.⁶

IV.D.1. How would you describe the physical security for MOST juveniles at your facility?

Mark (X) one box.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strict (maximum) | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

IV.D.2a. Is your facility one that is designed and operated to ensure that all entrances and exits are under the control of the staff of the facility?

Mark (X) one box.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

IV.D.2b. Does your facility rely on construction fixtures such as locked rooms, buildings, and fences to physically restrict free access of MOST residents into the community?

Mark (X) one box.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

⁶ The question wordings in this section are identical to those appearing on the census form. Due to print limitations in this document, the formatting here differs from that on the actual form for some questions.

In our review of the 1993 questionnaires, we found what appeared to be inconsistent answers among these responses to security questions as well as between these responses and other data elements, particularly facility type (Ott 1994). Some facilities that we expected to be maximum were not classified as such, while others that we thought would be minimum had indicated medium or maximum security.

In the field interviews, we collected data on facility security by two methods. The first method involved asking respondents to provide security information. We included two types of questions on facility security. The first was a ranking question similar to that currently used; the respondent was asked to characterize the level of security at the facility as none, minimum, medium, or maximum. We probed to find out why the respondent answered as he/she did. The second type was descriptive. The respondent was asked to describe physical features, devices, or fixtures (such as fences, cameras, and locks) around the perimeter and within the facility, as well as security procedures used by staff to prevent escapes. With these questions, we built in the option to develop an objective list of security elements that might be used in later scale development. We asked the ranking question first to avoid the possibility that our detailed questions on security arrangements might affect the way the respondent assessed the overall security level.

The second data collection method we used was unobtrusive observation of security features, devices, and procedures during the post-interview tours of each facility. This step enabled us to find out the extent to which the respondent who usually completes the census form was familiar with the security arrangements at the facility (some central reporters have never visited some facilities on which they report) and whether the actual security arrangements seemed to fit the rank order security classification the respondent assigned to it. The observational method also enabled us to look for any differences in security levels within different wings, buildings, or components of a facility as well as to develop a rough rank order of security levels across facilities and states.

We found that the task of ranking security level was problematic. The first problem lies in the respondents' interpretation of the meaning of security. The interviews showed us that there are two major dimensions for assessing security levels. The first is physical security: the extent and nature of external and internal features, fixtures, and devices used to limit movement. Physical security can have the goals of keeping juveniles confined within the facility and/or limiting access of outsiders into the facility. The second dimension for assessing security levels is supervision, a broad term that can be assessed in terms of staff-to-juvenile ratios, or can be viewed in terms of the extent and nature of procedures to restrict the movement and/or behavior of children.

The physical dimension for assessing security within the facility is more applicable to the types of facilities holding serious delinquent offenders, where the security emphasis is on keeping juveniles confined. Facilities in this category include detention centers, some training schools, and some diagnostic centers.

This physical security dimension was less applicable in facilities focusing on status offenders, nonoffenders, and selected types of delinquent juveniles, such as shelters and group homes. Shelters

and group homes often do not look like facilities at all; they look like typical large houses on suburban or urban streets with no external sign or indication that they are juvenile facilities. Respondents in these places strive to create a home-like environment for juveniles to receive treatment and allow them more access to community schools and activities. They tend to have few, if any security devices, other than an alarm to indicate when someone goes out. A number of respondents in these types of facilities told us that the security arrangements they have are designed not to keep kids locked in, but to keep intruders out.

Most of these group home and shelter respondents reported that they had either minimal or no security. Some of those who initially said no or minimal security changed their minds, saying they didn't want to give the impression they did not protect their children from intruders. One respondent said that her facility had maximum security for the girls, minimum security of the girls. Hence, a few of these facilities may list medium or higher security, which, in our opinion, was not accurate.

A few of the respondents in these group homes and shelters told us they had maximum security. When asked why, they said they were maximum staff secure, in that they maintain the highest ratio of staff to juveniles according to their own state laws. This response of maximum security for a house-like facility was heard in three facilities in three different states. In at least two states, respondents reported differences in the levels of supervision among their internal programs. Sometimes the respondents equated these differences in supervision with differences in security levels, sometimes they did not.

These findings of inconsistent rankings on security for the more open facilities reveal a second problem with the security ranking question. Lacking any definitions or criteria for assessing security levels on the census form, respondents may use differing criteria for deciding how to classify their facility security level. The question assumes that respondents have some knowledge of the various security arrangements at juvenile facilities in general, ranging from wilderness camps through open shelters to lock-down detention centers, and that they can place their own facilities accurately on this scale. Some, but not all, respondents may be able to rank their facilities on a scale within their own states, based on state licensing requirements and the types of children that they accept. However, states may vary considerably in their standards for ranking security levels at facilities; physical security arrangements considered medium in one state may be classified as maximum in another.

We think that relatively few respondents would have sufficient objective knowledge of the components of security levels to classify their facilities accurately on a national scale of none, minimum, medium, and maximum security. We do not know if there are any lists of definitions of these security levels that might be incorporated into future questionnaires. Without this knowledge of security arrangements, the ranking question is more a subjective than an objective assessment of security, and thus, more prone to error.

In summary, our research shows that facility security levels may be officially or informally ranked by respondents in terms of physical security, supervision levels (staff to juvenile ratios) or a combination of these two. Many respondents may answer our ranking question in terms of physical

security, but some unknown number of respondents may ignore the word "physical" in the question and provide a ranking answer in terms of supervision. Other standards that might affect responses to these security questions include: state or county classification systems of security levels, the respondent's subjective scale of security arrangements, and the desire of the facility respondent to show that residents are being adequately protected from intruders. Differing standards for answering the question represent a source of error.

A third source of error comes from the part of the question that asks for the security arrangements under which most juveniles are held. As we have seen from the preceding section, a number of facilities run two or more distinct programs on the same grounds or under the same facility name. Two respondents in multi-purpose facilities and four in other facilities reported two different security levels. An additional respondent said that one subpopulation had higher security than the rest, without labeling the second security level. Finally, another respondent said that security for a girls' group home was medium during the week and maximum on the weekends (based on supervision levels).

The census form permits only one answer to each security question. Respondents in these facilities must decide which of the two security levels more accurately represents their facilities. Either choice can lead to problems. First, if the facility is classified as minimum security because the majority of children there are nonoffenders or status offenders, the security arrangements under which the delinquent offenders are held will not be recorded on the form. Data analysts will know from the population sections that delinquents are housed in the facility, but will report them as being held under minimum, rather than medium or maximum security. This is an important problem because OJJDP concentrates on analyzing the characteristics of offenders and the conditions under which they are held, but has a very narrow interest in data on nonoffenders.

If, on the other hand, the facility respondent chooses to record maximum security to characterize the facility with mixed security levels, it appears that nonoffenders are being held in a maximum security facility. This is not only a source of error in classifying security for nonoffenders, but also an indication that nonoffenders and status offenders are being held in a maximum security site. This is against OJJDP regulations and could lead to a cutoff of juvenile justice funds to that state, according to some respondents.

As a result of these findings, we recommend replacing the current security questions. Rather than asking the respondent to rank his/her facility in terms of security levels, we could provide a checklist of specific objective security features and supervision levels and ask the respondent to check all that apply. Census Bureau analysts could use this attribute-based checklist to develop a scale of security levels that can be applied to all facilities nationwide. We suggest that OJJDP might want to consider developing two separate scales, one for physical security and the other for staff security.

The development of a roster-based questionnaire will require the respondent to distinguish among different security levels within the facility. This could be done in one of two ways. Different codes could be assigned to these security levels to permit the generation of one list for all children in the

facility. Alternatively, the respondent could provide separate lists of juveniles for each security level in the facility. A problem with the latter approach is that differences in security may not covary identically with differences in facility or functional unit type. Is it more important to OJJDP to have separate lists by facility/functional unit or by different security levels? This needs further examination.

Community access

The current census form has three questions on community access:

IV.E.1. How would you describe the extent to which juveniles in the facility have routine access to activities and resources in the community such as schools, treatment, training, or employment?
Mark (X) one box. Do not include court appearances.

- Most juveniles (50% or more) have routine access to community resources and activities.
- Some juveniles (50% or less) have routine access to community resources and activities.
- Generally, no juveniles have routine access to community resources and activities. *Skip to F.*

IV.E.2. How often are MOST juveniles allowed to leave your facility to routinely attend activities and utilize resources in the community?
Mark one box.

- Daily or almost every day
- About once a week
- Less frequently than once a week, but at least once a month
- Less frequently than once a month

IV.E.3. For those juveniles who have routine access to community resources, are they usually accompanied by an official for supervision reasons?
Mark one box.

- Yes
- No

Question IV.E.1 and IV.E.2 on community access are used in the algorithm for classifying facilities as institutional or open. During our field interviews, we discovered significant problems with these community access questions.

The concept of "routine access to community resources and/or activities" is held constant in each question, but is not defined. The lack of a clear definition leaves this vague term open to alternative interpretations and thus represents a source of error. Another problem with this concept is that it is based on an unstated assumption that there are just two options: juveniles either do or do not have routine access to the community. The facility respondents have no way of indicating variations in access to the community.

In our interviews, we found that access to the community is not granted routinely. Of course, this

is true for detention centers and for some training schools and diagnostic centers intended to confine children. (These may have been the models from which the community access questions were originally developed.)

However, restrictions on community access are also used at most of the more open facilities, such as group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and ranches/camps/farms. These types of facilities often use level-based behavior modification treatment programs that restrict community access for newcomers in the program and gradually relax the restrictions as the juveniles are promoted from one level to the next. However, this is not always a straight progression toward open community access; a juvenile who breaks the rules can be demoted and lose his/her level of access to some or all community activities.

Thus, on any one reference date, juveniles in most of the non-secure facilities we visited will be spread out among 4 or more levels of community access. Some may be restricted to the facility, some may go to school each day but not be permitted to engage in other community activities, some may be chaperoned and others may go out alone. The proportions of juveniles in each level could vary daily.

Graduated restrictions on community access by level are not uncommon: more than half of our non-detention facility respondents specifically mentioned using level systems to regulate juveniles' access to the community. The question on characterizing access to the community is even more problematic when it is applied to multi-purpose facilities where each program has separate rules. It may be difficult for a respondent using a level system with graduated access to the community to draw a line between what is and is not routine access. We do not learn much about the extent of confinement in this facility if the respondent can only give us one answer in each question on community access. The reliability of the data is questionable if the answers are subject to change each day. These are all potential sources of error in the community access question.

Based on our field interviews, we do not think that community access as currently written is a reliable indicator of whether a facility is open or institutional. We recommend that the concept be reconceptualized or dropped.

Institutional versus open

In the section above, we identified problems with current questions on community access and security arrangements that are used in the composite variable of institutional/open. We now look at how this composite variable is constructed.

The algorithm path starts with community access, and proceeds from physical and staff security arrangements to the respondents' subjective assessments of security level. The combinations of answers dictate whether the facility is classified as institutional or open.

The key questions, in the order in which they are processed, are

- IV.E.2: How often are MOST juveniles allowed to leave your facility to routinely attend activities and utilize resources in the community? *Mark one box.*

- Daily or almost every day Less frequently than once a week,
 About once a week but at least once a month
 Less frequently than once a month

IV.D.2a: Is your facility one that is designed and operated to ensure that all entrances and exits are under the control of the staff of the facility?

- Yes No

IV.D.2b: Does your facility rely on construction fixtures such as locked rooms, buildings, and fences to physically restrict free access of MOST residents into the community?

- Yes No

IV.D.1: How would you describe the physical security for MOST juveniles in your facility?

- Strict (maximum) Minimum
 Medium None

This system produces inconsistencies and is cumbersome to apply. It is also subject to accumulated errors from each of the classifying questions. In our field interviews we asked respondents whether they considered their facilities to be institutional or noninstitutional. We also asked them what criteria they would use to decide whether a facility is institutional or not.

Eighteen of the respondents classified their facilities as institutional and 21 indicated noninstitutional (the last respondent did not answer this question). However, this classification was not very helpful to us, because some open group homes and shelters were considered institutional and some detention centers were self-classified as non-institutional. Training schools, ranches/forestry camps/or farms and residential treatment centers could be classified either way.

We think that part of the reason the word "institutional" is not helpful in classifying facilities is that it is subject to multiple meanings and sometimes negative connotations. The most frequently mentioned criteria for determining whether a facility was institutional or not were, in descending frequency: physical security (16 responses), large size (10), rigidity of system, pertaining to structure and regimentation (8), restricted access to the community (7), self-contained services so that juveniles do not have to leave the grounds (5), fixed, standardized program regulated by a larger organization or government agency (5), non-family type environment, such as sleeping in dormitories and eating in a central cafeteria (5), continuous residence 24 hours per day (3), the requirement of wearing uniforms (2) and involuntary placement (2). A few respondents had considerable difficulty in identifying criteria for deciding whether a place was institutional.

The current classification questions listed above are based on some of the dimensions respondents listed for determining whether a facility is institutional or not, such as physical security and restricted access to the community.

According to GOVS division personnel, the variables, "community access" and "institutional/open" were developed in the past to find out if status offenders were being held in secure facilities. Are these variables still needed or would improved security questions be sufficient? Does OJJDP want to have an institutional/open variable in the new roster-based data collection or not? If yes, we request guidelines on the dimensions on which the new indicator should be built.

Length of facility program: short- or long-term

In this census, the classification of facilities as short- or long-term is not asked directly of respondents, nor determined on the basis of average length of stay (Question IX.A). Instead, classification as short- or long-term is accomplished by using a proxy variable, "Reason for Custody," as shown here:

IV.C. For which of the following purposes does the facility usually hold juveniles?

Mark as many boxes as apply and circle the box that applies to the largest group of juveniles usually held.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis and/or classification | <input type="checkbox"/> Probation or aftercare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detention pending adjudication, commitment, or placement | <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary admission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment/placement for treatment (except on probation or aftercare) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>Specify</i> |

In the past, diagnosis and classification as well as detention pending adjudication, commitment or placement (categories 1 and 2) were assumed to be short-term in duration, while the remaining four were considered to be long-term. As a result, this variable on purpose for housing juveniles became a proxy indicator of short- versus long-term stay at a facility. GOVS staffers have found increasing numbers of inconsistent matches between the assumed length of these programs and the mean length of stay recorded in Question IX.A, attributing this to change in the types and diversity of programs offered at juvenile facilities.

Both of the reception or diagnostic centers selected in the sample were labeled by respondents as short-term, with durations of 90 days and three to six months, respectively. One facility selected in the sample as a residential treatment center turned out to be an assessment center with a maximum 90-day stay, while a group home in the sample was classified by the respondent as an assessment center with a variable length of stay from a day to a year. Thus the field visit findings indicate short, medium, and variable length stays. It should be noted that 4 cases are far too few to make any generalizations about whether most reception or diagnostic programs are primarily short-term.

Our interviews in six detention centers revealed that the majority of juveniles held in these facilities are there for short durations, ranging from averages of 10 days to a maximum of 90 days, with the rest stating averages between 30-60 days. These averages cover the pre-adjudicated and post-adjudicated awaiting placement categories.

However, the assumed short length of stay in detention centers does not fit the situation of a small number of the most serious juvenile offenders who are housed in detention centers while they are being waived to and tried in adult courts. Three of the respondents indicated that they held some of these most serious offenders. One of these was also holding juveniles sentenced to the CYA and awaiting acceptance and transfer to the CYA diagnostic center. These most serious offenders, who comprise a minority of the detention center populations, may remain in the facility for a year or more while awaiting transfer. By assuming that detention centers have only one purpose and one length of stay, the long-term stays of these most serious offenders cannot be represented separately on the census form. Depending on how many such offenders a facility houses, the mean length of stay for the facility could be skewed significantly if respondents include the lengths of stay for these offenders when averaging. Other respondents might delete, as outliers, these serious offenders when calculating or estimating the average length of stay.

In addition to long-term transfer cases, one detention center also houses on its grounds a self-contained, long-term drug treatment facility with different rules on community access. This facility within a facility is not identified with the current census form because only one facility type can be recorded.

In general, treatment programs for committed or placed children do tend to be longer-term than those for detention centers, as suggested by the algorithmic model. A problem arises with response category 4, however, because it links the word "probation" with aftercare. The most common connotation of the word "probation" is a warning issued without concomitant confinement to a facility. In two states, it was found that a juvenile on probation could be involuntarily placed in a facility. In Colorado, a judge can put a child on probation with the stipulation that he/she must spend up to 60 nights in a detention center or boot camp. This falls into the short-term, not long-term stay category. However, in California, a sentence of probation often includes a long-term stay in one of the "probation camps" used for committed delinquent offenders, according to two respondents. In this California county and perhaps others, "probation" is most definitely not synonymous with "aftercare," as indicated in response category 4.

In our field interviews, we asked respondents if their facilities were short-, long-, or mixed-term. A surprisingly high seventeen (45%) of the respondents answered "mixed-term." Of these seventeen, about half mentioned very wide ranges of stay, depending on the treatment needs of the children and whether or not they had families to which they could return. For example, one respondent said that children stayed from two months to four years. The other half who answered "mixed term" mentioned different average stays by program within their facilities. For example, one multi-purpose facility respondent said she had a mixed-term facility because the detention center and shelter each had an average length of stay of 30-45 days, but the residential treatment center program length averaged 10 months. According to the classification rules, this facility would be classified as short-term only. At another facility, the majority of children are committed delinquents with an average length of stay of 12-15 months, classifying this facility as long-term. Here the shorter length of stay for dependent children (an average of 12 months) and the much shorter stay for detained children of 1-30 days could not be picked up with the current census format.

Most of the respondents who said they had short-term programs held juveniles for up to 90 days. One respondent thought of short-term as 90-180 days, but this is not consistent with other subjective responses of short- or medium-terms. The one respondent labeling her facility "medium" had a program ranging from 15 to 40 weeks. The eight respondents who answered long-term usually meant programs lasting more than 6 months. If we were to develop a new scale based on these responses, the cutoff points might be as follows: short-term (up to 3 months), medium-term (3-7 months) and long-term (8 or more months).

The switch to a roster-based format will reveal variation in the length of stay that has not been picked up with the current approach. One could obtain data on average length of stay by asking the respondent to provide this by program as part of the preliminary facility-level screening questions, or by asking for the number of days each juvenile has been in the facility.

With the latter numerical approach, some limitations of length of stay need to be noted. First, the number of days that have elapsed since the juvenile was admitted to the facility is not a reliable estimate of the completed average length of stay at the facility, because juveniles in the facility have not yet completed their stays. Second, length of stay by facility may be skewed by factors extraneous to the types of crimes juveniles commit, such as frequent movement of juveniles among facilities as mentioned by respondents in Massachusetts and Colorado (due to overcrowding, in those cases). Third, this census of facilities can only produce length of stay per facility for individuals at the facility on the reference date, not completed length of time spent in custody at facilities for a particular type of crime. A state or county longitudinal database on juveniles' histories of detention and movements among facilities up to the time of release would be needed for this purpose. State or county databases identified during our fieldwork that may permit calculation of completed length of stay by offense may be available from Massachusetts, Maryland, California, Colorado and possibly other states.

Does OJJDP plan to have a variable on average length of stay in the new roster-based questionnaire or not? If the answer is yes, we recommend that a time-based variable would be a better indicator of short-, medium- or long-term stays than the current proxy variable, "Reason for Custody." We also recommend that average length of stay be asked for each separate program or *functional unit* in multi-purpose facilities. This would be part of the larger effort to develop principles and questions for identifying functional units within multi-purpose facilities. Finally, we recommend clarifying whether average length of stay refers to the average length of stay for juveniles in the facility on the reference date or to average completed length of stay for those discharged.

V. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES AND CENTRALIZED REPORTING

Classification of Facilities as Public or Private

Presently, there are two versions of the form: one for public, the other for private facilities. Respondents are not asked to verify if they have received the correct form. However, they are asked in Section IV.I to specify whether they are administered by one or more governments or by a private organization.

In our initial research, we learned that some states, such as Massachusetts, contract out many facility programs to private contractors and non-profit agencies. We decided to look into the kinds of public/private arrangements under which facilities are run and learn if these mixed partnership arrangements caused difficulties for respondents in deciding whether their facilities were public or private. If respondents did not have trouble in classifying their facilities as public or private, we might be able to develop just one questionnaire version, simplifying questionnaire design and reducing production time and costs.

In the interview, we asked the question, "Do you consider this to be a public or a private facility?" Just under half of the 24 private facilities in the sample were part of larger non-profit agencies. Some of these larger organizations were social service agencies and others were religious groups or orders. Some were independent stand-alone private facilities, and one was a private, for-profit company. These private facilities had contracts or arrangements with state and county government agencies to take referrals from government agencies. Some had contracts to take children solely from agencies supervising children currently in the juvenile legal system for committing offenses, while others had contracts just with agencies supervising abused, neglected, abandoned and dependent children. Still others had contracts with both types of agencies. Sometimes the facility buildings and grounds were owned by a federal, state, or county governmental agency and made available to the private contractor.

Of the 16 public facilities, 10 were owned and run by state governments, 5 by county governments, and 1 was run by the county but received some state money. In some cases, the facility buildings and land used by the government agency were leased from religious orders or private companies.

Most of the 40 respondents interpreted this question in terms of ownership and/or administration, as we had intended. However, two respondents initially interpreted the question in terms of public access to the facility and its grounds. One respondent said her (county) facility was private because "Someone from the community cannot come here and camp out in the grass," and another from a state facility said "One doesn't allow the public to get close."

This latter respondent as well as two others continued to have some difficulty with the public/private distinction after they were asked directly about the ownership and administration dimensions. One group home respondent said that the facility was owned by the Maryland Department of Human Services, but the program was run by the staff of a private, non-profit organization. She then concluded that it was private, consistent with the way we intended the question.

Another respondent (who has not filled out the form in the past) initially declared her facility to be public because the facility 1) is open to the public, 2) open to public referrals, and 3) receives 70%

of its funding from public funds. The building and land are rented from the county with state money. However, the agency running the program is a private, non-profit organization, hiring its own employees. This respondent was less sure of her final determination of this facility as private.

Finally, one respondent did not associate public ownership with the government. In his words, "This is not a publicly owned facility. The state owns it. It is owned and staffed by employees of the Department of Youth Services."

These examples indicate that there can be some confusion in making the public/private distinction. Does OJJDP want to ask respondents to self-classify ownership and administration directly? If the answer is yes, consideration should be given to using the response categories of "government" and "private," rather than "public" and "private," to reduce the possibility that respondents erroneously interpret the question in terms of public access.

Does OJJDP want to develop one version of the new roster-based format for both public and private facilities or continue with separate versions? If the answer is to create just one version, OJJDP will need to consider moving the confidentiality statement and the respondent burden statements off the questionnaire and into a new cover letter. This would be necessary to avoid putting two potentially differing confidentiality statements on the questionnaire, which could confuse respondents and possibly affect response rates.

Centralized Reporting

Since this is a facility-based census, the aim is to obtain one completed form for each facility. However, this does not mean that the number of respondents equals the number of facilities. Many states have requested that all forms for some or all types of public facilities be sent to a designated *central reporter*, who is then responsible for completing and sending in all of the forms. Some private agencies operating more than one juvenile program have also indicated that they want one *umbrella reporter* to receive and complete all forms. This approach does help to standardize the responses by agency so that they are at least consistent (but some of the data elements may be consistently wrong!).

A potential problem is that only one facility address is listed on the frame; it is not clear whether this is the actual facility address or the name of the facility coupled with the address of the central or umbrella reporter. Hence, one reporter's mailing address in Arizona may appear in conjunction with more than 10 facility names, but this does not convey information about the geographical distribution of these facilities across the state. They could be concentrated on one campus, in one local area, spread throughout the state, or have some other pattern. We have already notified OJJDP of this problem. GOVS has added a space at the end of the 1995 census form to enable OJJDP to examine whether respondents are willing to identify these locations.

This limitation on accurately identifying the actual locality of the facilities covered by

central/umbrella reporters prevents any analysis of local or regional variations in the locations of juvenile facilities. Do data users want breakdowns below the state level? After we identified this problem, OJJDP and GOVS added a request for the facility address at the end of the new 1995 census form and will assess whether respondents are willing to identify these locations or not. (See note 8 below.)

For site visits, we deliberately selected some public and private facilities known for having forms completed by central or umbrella reporters. We wanted to learn more about their reasons for central reporting, the implications of this practice for data quality, and the geographical spread of constituent facilities.

Of the 40 in-scope respondents, three were state central reporters⁷ and eleven were private facilities that were part of larger umbrella organizations. Of the latter eleven, five respondents were umbrella reporters, in that they completed forms for more than one facility. Five other respondents who said their facilities were parts of larger organizations completed just one form for the facility in which they worked. Finally, one respondent fell between the umbrella and individual reporters.⁸ The latter six were not classified as umbrella reporters and have been omitted from analysis in the remainder of this section.

Central reporters

The three state central reporters completed forms for 6, 13, or 17 facilities within their states. These reporters all indicated that they had access to and experience in using statewide computer databases on juveniles in custody and that it was easier or more efficient for them to complete the census forms rather than having personnel at each facility do it. Only one of these three reporters had visited the facility we targeted for discussion during the interview, and this one admitted not having gone through the whole facility. One central reporter even said that it wasn't necessary to see the facility in order to complete the census form; his work was all driven by forms! If he couldn't answer a question for a facility, he could obtain the information by calling a staffer at the facility. This central reporter does not complete all sections of the form: there is at least one other person who fills in

⁷ We selected one county level central reporter from the GOVS mailing list, but learned during the interview recruitment call that this is not a true central reporter; he just distributes the blank forms and reviews the completed forms before sending them in. We obtained his permission to interview the staffer at the facility who actually completes the form.

⁸ In this case, the census form is sent directly to the umbrella agency office and is completed by an administrator there, not at the facility some miles away. However, this umbrella agency person just completes one form, since her other programs are out of scope. This differentiates her from other umbrella agency reporters who complete multiple forms. She is not willing to provide the street address of the facility, but would give the town name and zipcode, if asked.

parts of it.⁹

Two of the three state central reporters mention significant differences between the meanings of the variables in their own databases and those variables requested on the census form. In particular, both mentioned problems with pulling out most serious offense for stay and admission date. One state has a variable field for "primary commitment offense" which may or may not be the most serious offense. It would be difficult for this respondent to identify and provide the most serious offense for each juvenile. The other state only lists offense at the time of first admission to the overall correctional system, not offense at the time of admission to the current facility. If the child had been moved to a second or subsequent facility (which is very common for detention centers in this state), most serious offense would not be recorded in the new facility's computer entry. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to track down this information.

The same central reporters also said they would have major problems with generating admission dates to specific facilities. Their state-wide data systems are set up to track individual juveniles through the course of their stays in public facilities. Hence there is a need to make sure that each juvenile is listed once and only once, not counted at several different facilities over time.

The juvenile is the unit of analysis used in these state systems, not the facility, as in the CIC census. It would be difficult for these central reporters to come up with numbers of admissions and discharges (or "departures," as one system labels them) by facility.

While two state central reporter cases certainly aren't sufficient for drawing conclusions, the results do raise concerns about the degree of fit between variables in state computer files and those on the census form. The state variables may have similar or identical variable names and be transferred easily onto the census form, but may be based on different, incomparable units of analysis and/or have different meanings that introduce error into the CIC database.

This is a very important issue, not only for the Children in Custody Census but also for the Juveniles Taken Into Custody Project, which collects and merges computerized data from many state systems. We suggest that OJJDP and GOVS develop research on the comparability of central reporter database variables with those requested in the ongoing surveys.

Umbrella reporters

Of the 11 facilities selected as potential umbrella reporters from the GOVS frame, five actual umbrella reporters in as many states were identified. A brief description of the facilities covered by each central reporter shows considerable variation.

⁹ Many respondents reported that more than one person was involved in completing the census form. A commonly reported division of labor was for one person to complete the population questions while one or more others completed the personnel and/or expenditures sections.

1. The respondent runs two residential treatment centers and one independent living program in an apartment building. These three places are spread around an urban area. He wants to combine the kids from the two residential treatment centers on one form. In talking about the 1993 data collection, this respondent bluntly stated, "I may have lied on this form, I may have put two together on one form ... It's silly for me to do it over and over."

2. The respondent fills out forms for 14 facilities, spread across more than one state. He completes forms because he has access to the central records and the facility personnel need to focus on treating the children, rather than completing forms. The forms are currently sent to the actual facility addresses, but he asks that they all be sent directly to him. He said that he may not be able to report the most serious offense for each child in each facility because of limitations in his database. In addition, he finds it difficult to compare the terms for crimes used on the census form with those in his database. He gets frustrated filling out so many redundant questions for so many facilities and would prefer to complete just one form, or complete forms on just a sample of his facilities.

3. The respondent runs nine non-contiguous group homes spread around a medium-sized urban area. Considering them all to be the same program, he ignores the nine census forms that arrive at the facilities and fills out just one summarizing form. When answering questions on this one form, he stated bluntly that he does not "go digging through the files" to compile data; he estimates. He says candidly, "It's probably not as accurate as you'd like, but it's close." He attaches a list of the specific facilities when he mails the one form to GOVS. When GOVS calls requesting that he split the data out by facility, he refuses to comply and tells them to just divide the population equally among the homes on his list. He indicated it was easier for him to report on all facilities, because he has access to the central computerized records and he can do the task fast. If he asked house parents to do the forms, he'd have to train them and answer many questions and that would take too much time.

The respondent's statement that all of the homes are the same may not be true for our purposes. He told the interviewer that delinquent offenders were put only in the 5 group homes that take kids 13 and above. It is possible that the remaining 4 group homes would just hold nonoffenders, and thus be ruled out-of-scope at the data cleaning stage. His refusal to split out the data by facility makes this final screening impossible with the current census form.

4. The research director of the agency completes forms on one shelter and on six group homes, scattered around a metropolitan area. The building with the shelter houses another transitional program that she thinks should be recorded on a separate form. The shelter is limited to females only; any males are placed in a small group home for less than three children in another part of town. She would include kids of

both sexes in the shelter program on the one shelter form, even though they do not reside together. (This is an error, since homes for fewer than three children are out of scope.) She completes the form because she runs and updates the central computer file and does the agency's data analysis.

5. The managing director completes forms on four facilities spread over a rural and urban area. She completes the form because she has better access to the central records and it is more efficient for her to do them all than to have to train and oversee employees in the facilities.

The common thread running through these central/umbrella cases is that one agency person finds it faster and more efficient to complete forms for all of the facilities. These persons often have access to centralized data. This does not mean they enjoyed the task; several complained about the time it took and a few devised shortcuts that adversely affect the accuracy of the CIC data. In some of these cases, forms were being sent to the central/umbrella reporters' addresses, in others, they were still being sent directly to the facilities. Thus, the facility frame appears to have inconsistencies and one cannot use it to reliably distinguish facilities that do and do not have central reporters.

In addition to the five umbrella reporters identified above, there were two other facilities not initially classified as umbrella agencies or reporters in the sample, but which we consider to be such as a result of the interview. These were two multi-functional facilities located on one or more campuses that had received multiple forms in the census for the different programs, but that balked at doing more than one form. One of these ignored the multiple forms and completed one form covering such diverse facility types as an emergency shelter, a substance abuse program, a group home, and an independent living program. Also ignoring multiple forms, the other respondent completed just one covering a residential treatment program, several diagnostic programs, community boarding homes, a group emergency foster care program, and a family support center.

These two "should be" umbrella reporters are important because they show us how respondents can react to our request that they do more work to give us information on functional units within facilities. With the current format, the latter respondent who combined the diverse functional units on one form would have had to complete five to eight thirteen-page forms, rather than one. This is indeed a very substantial increase in respondent burden!

If OJJDP wants to proceed with trying to distinguish and gather data on functional units within facilities to obtain more accurate data, we will need to keep the classification questions simple and short so as not to add substantial burden and increase the probability of nonresponse. The good news, though, is that there will be far fewer facility-level questions on the redesigned roster-based questionnaires than are on the current forms, so the amount of perceived duplication will be far less for these respondents.

VI. JUVENILES IN FACILITIES

Terminology

We have discovered a few terms now used in the census that are not consistent across states. There may be more such cases that have not yet come to light.

Some of the current census definitions are listed on page 2 of the questionnaire. Definitions are provided for "juvenile," "adult criminal offender," "youthful offender," "committed or commitment," and "detained or detention."

The term "juvenile" had specific implications for a respondent from a New York facility. In explaining what the study was about, we said we would be asking about the types of "juveniles" in his facility. This respondent immediately said that he didn't have "juveniles" in his facility. He further explained that his perception of a "juvenile" was a child who had committed some crime.

When he was shown the definition on page 2 of the questionnaire, he said that he never noticed those definitions before. He used his own definitions for terms as they came up throughout the questionnaire.¹⁰

Some New York State definitions for juvenile delinquency do not match the terms used in the census. The term "delinquent offender" is used on the questionnaire. This is a contradiction to New York respondents because there are very specific legal meanings in that state for the terms "juvenile offender" and "juvenile delinquent." According to all 4 respondents in New York, a juvenile offender is a child who has gone through adult court, while a juvenile delinquent is one who has gone through juvenile court. The term "delinquent offender" combines these two terms, thus confusing the New York respondents we interviewed. This can lead to inconsistencies among New York facilities in classifying children.

Also, respondents in some states (such as New York and Maryland) do not use the term "status offender." They use CHINS or CINS (Children in Need of Supervision) or PINS (Person in Need of Supervision). Since the actual offenses were specified on the questionnaire, the respondents did not have much difficulty with these terms, but definitions and terms were crucial to the respondents' initial understandings of questions. Using standard terms as much as possible should avoid some confusion and frustration of respondents. One suggestion is to include definitions in the form where the respondent will use them. For example, include a definition of status offender in the sections that use that term.

¹⁰ There are indications that other respondents had not noticed the definitions on page 2. For more information, see "Definitions" in Attachment E, page A-13. We do not have data to determine how many respondents do not read the page 2 definitions.

One respondent said that Pennsylvania no longer adjudicates children for what are considered to be status offenses on the form, so there would be no status offenders included on the questionnaire. This respondent felt that this was a misrepresentation of the actual population, and did not want to include children who had done these acts because she would be forced to label them falsely as offenders. Another Pennsylvania respondent used the term "status offender" interchangeably with "dependents" for some children at that facility.

Further, the emphasis on offenders seems to confuse respondents with mixed populations. One respondent was unsure whom to include in totals where there was no breakdown by offense category. She said that the form seemed to dwell on offenders (as opposed to nonoffenders), so when questions didn't specify whom to include, she assumed it was just offenders. She classified all of the children at the facility in Section V (Population), but only included offenders in Section VI (Race and Ethnicity) and Section VII (Age).¹¹

Types of juveniles

There are a few different types of juveniles to be concerned with in this census. We have noticed a few subpopulations that are problematic for respondents.

First, there are different reasons why juveniles may become wards of the state. There are children under the custody of a probation, justice and/or corrections department, and there are those in the custody of a social or children's services department. The first group consists primarily of those juveniles who have committed some crime or offense and have gone through a court proceeding because of it. In some states, such as California, Colorado, and Massachusetts, the judge's decision on whether the child is put in the custody of a law enforcement agency specifically for juveniles, or in the custody of an adult corrections department, or in some mid-tier system depends on the type and severity of the juveniles' crimes and their ages.¹² The second group is comprised of children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned, and have gone through a court proceeding because of being a dependent, not an offender.

Both types of children may go through court proceedings. The same juvenile judges may determine whether a justice agency or social service agency is more appropriate for the child. Both types of juveniles may be placed in the same facility, for similar or different treatment problems.

It is interesting to note that many respondents in facilities with mixed populations of nonoffenders, status offenders, and nonviolent offenders indicated that there were very few differences in these juveniles. They had similar life experiences, attitudes, and reactions to treatment programs.

¹¹ Additional comments related to the emphasis on offenders on the census form may be found in the sections, "Target Population" and "Applicability of the Census Form to the Facility" in Attachment E, pages A-9 to A-11.

¹² Juveniles put under the custody of an adult correctional facility or mid-tier program would not be counted in the CIC census if they are held in an adult correctional facility.

Status Offenders

In many sites we visited, "status offender" is not a useful term, for several reasons. First, juveniles are not necessarily arrested for many of the offenses listed on the questionnaire as status offenses. Second, some children in private group homes and other facilities may have been placed by a law enforcement agency for a "status offense" while other children are placed by parents and teachers, sometimes not because of a particular offense. The children placed by parents and teachers may have been involved in the same behaviors, but were not charged or even caught for their "offenses." A respondent from a shelter summed up the problem: **"Is a status offender only a kid who is going through Juvenile Services and declared one, or is he just somebody who is doing the behavior?" This ambiguity makes it difficult for respondents to decide whom to include as a status offender on the form.**

Numerous respondents said that nearly all of the children in their facilities exhibited some type of behavior equivalent to a status offense, but not all of them are in the facility because of such offenses. This is common in the halfway houses, group homes, residential treatment facilities and centers, and shelters. Respondents need guidelines to decide whom to include in this section.

According to respondents in Pennsylvania and Washington state, children are no longer adjudicated for status offenses. Many facility respondents indicated that more serious offenses are becoming so numerous that courts do not have time to adjudicate children for status offenses and lesser crimes. Massachusetts appears to continue to adjudicate children for status offenses.

Juveniles waived to adult court

Other juveniles to be concerned about are those waived to adult criminal court. There was variation among states in laws and policies regarding how these juveniles are handled and where they are housed.

Some respondents in California and New York mentioned that there are juvenile sections in jails to house juveniles waived to adult court. These children are not currently counted in this census since jails are out of scope. Some states may put these juveniles into adult facilities without having "sight and sound" separation from the adults. Since these facilities for adults are out of scope, we did not include any of them in our site visits.

In addition, if juvenile facilities (particularly detention centers) do house juveniles who are waived to adult court, some respondents have trouble determining where to include them on the form. They don't know if these children are considered to be adult offenders or juveniles.

We suggest that OJJDP consider adding these juvenile functional units within adult facilities to the frame of in-scope facilities. Currently, these most serious offenders are not included in the CIC database, presenting a statistical portrait of children in custody skewed to some

unknown extent toward the less serious offenders. Due to this exclusion, the CIC database cannot fully document the increase in juveniles going into custody for the most serious crimes.

California Youth Authority (CYA) Juveniles

In California, a juvenile judge has the options of sentencing juvenile offenders to county level facilities, committing them to the CYA, or remanding them to adult criminal court. The CYA has a unique system for handling young criminals. Juveniles committed to the CYA must go through a 90-day assessment program and a Youthful Offenders Parole Board evaluation and are then given an indeterminate sentence and placed in a CYA facility under CYA custody. The sentence given to a CYA child can include both institutional time and parole time.

The data element, "most serious offense for stay," is difficult to pinpoint in many cases for CYA. This is because California law allows judges to give consecutive terms for certain crimes. The consecutive term rules apply to only certain offenses, so multiple offenses need to be put in an exact order. Normally, this order would have the most serious crime first. In some cases, however, a less serious crime is put first so that the consecutive term rules apply. Hence, a CYA central reporter may not necessarily be able to provide the most serious offense for each juvenile.

In addition, there are children held in CYA facilities who are actually in the custody of the California Department of Corrections. These are juveniles being treated as adults under California law. These children in the custody of another agency may be included on questionnaires because they are residents of CYA facilities. There are no instructions on the form concerning whether and how to report children physically present in the facility, but under the custody of a separate agency. Incomplete instructions can lead to differing interpretations among respondents and inconsistencies in the data.

Pre-adjudicated versus Post-adjudicated

Some facilities (mostly detention centers and training schools) primarily house juveniles who are going through the adjudication process or who have been adjudicated. One respondent from such a facility wants to see more specific breakdowns of the adjudication process in census form sections V.B. and V.C. Currently, the questionnaire includes "pending adjudication" and "adjudicated." This respondent wanted to see such categories as "never been adjudicated," "currently pending adjudication," "previously adjudicated," "currently pending a new charge", and "dispositional sentence given."

The decision to include these categories depends on whether OJJDP wants this detailed information. If not, instructions need to be provided when asking respondents to classify custody status for each rostered juvenile. It is not known whether other respondents would be able to use such detailed categories.

An example will help illustrate the problem. A juvenile is in a detention center now because of a fourth offense. He is pending adjudication for this offense, but has already been adjudicated on three other offenses. The questionnaire does not state clearly where this child should be counted - under "pending adjudication" or "adjudicated."

One respondent indicated that the term "legal status" refers to whether a child is pre-adjudicated, committed, or sentenced. This respondent may have difficulty fitting children into the census categories.

A potential problem is that some facilities will not have this detailed data. For example, one respondent indicated that a child charged with an offense, but not adjudicated would not be distinguishable from a nonoffender since the child can conceal that information. This could happen with some unknown number of juveniles referred to or placed in facilities by non-law enforcement agencies.

Nonoffenders

As mentioned previously, abused, neglected, and abandoned children (sometimes called "dependents") who have not committed offenses may be placed in the same facilities housing juveniles currently involved in the legal system due to their offenses. Other children may have voluntarily admitted themselves to facilities (especially runaway and homeless shelters) or been referred by parents, teachers, or other non-law enforcement agencies. These nonoffenders are to be included in some sections of the form, but not in others.

Currently, if the nonoffenders comprise more than 50% of the facility population, they define the overall security level and community access for the entire facility, masking the conditions under which the offenders are kept. Since OJJDP currently focuses almost exclusively on offenders, it is questionable whether these nonoffenders should be included in the roster-based questionnaire. The sponsor, OJJDP, may want to include them in the initial screening questions to determine whether facilities and/or functional units are in scope or not, but might not need individual-level data on each of these children. Additionally, several respondents told us that adolescent girls in their facilities had borne babies. These respondents wanted to know if the babies should be included in the facility totals (there are no instructions for this on the form). In one of our interviews, the answer to this question was particularly important. If the babies are included, the facility is classified according to the nonoffender population; if they are excluded, the facility might be classified according to either the offender or the nonoffender subpopulation by the respondent.

We recommend that OJJDP develop clear guidelines on the target population of children and include these guidelines on the roster-based form. The guidelines should cover status offenses, juveniles waived to adult court, CYA juveniles, children falling in both pre- and post-adjudicated categories, and nonoffenders. What data does OJJDP want to collect on nonoffenders in the new questionnaire?

VII. CONCEPTS

Committed, placed

"Commitment" is one of the central concepts in this census. Commitment is used as a response category in "Reason for Custody," as a stratifier of the overall, delinquent, and status offender population tables, and in the "Population Movement and Length of Stay" tables.

In general, the term is used on the form in the sense of committed to a facility, as compared to being detained or voluntarily admitted there. Here are the official definitions of committed and detained from page 2 of the questionnaire.

"Committed or commitment - Refers to placement of juvenile offenders following adjudication and any placement procedure. May be referred to as 'placement.'"

"Detained or detention - Refers to juveniles who are pending adjudication or who have been adjudicated but are awaiting disposition or placement. Include those juveniles undergoing diagnosis or classification before disposition or placement."

There are three problems with the use of the word "committed" on this form. First, there is inconsistency as to whether this term should be restricted to offenders. Second, the word "commitment" is restricted to the meaning of commitment to a facility; it does not encompass commitment to an agency. Third, the word "committed" is equated with "placed" on the form, but some respondents distinguish these concepts.

Committed offenders (and Nonoffenders?)

The definition above for "committed" appears to be restricted to juvenile offenders. However, as we move through the various sections of the form that request data on committed children, we find inconsistencies as to which juveniles are supposed to be included in the tabulations.

The response category in "Reason for Custody" (IV.C, page 3 on the form) is worded "Commitment/placement for treatment (except on probation or aftercare)," omitting the reference to juvenile offenders found in the preceding definition. This would include consideration of committed or placed nonoffenders, particularly for some unknown number of respondents who had not read the definition on page 2.

The response categories in the general one-day population breakdown of Section V.A.2, page 5 on the form are phrased as "**COMMITTED to the facility.**" Response category c requests data on "**Committed dependent, neglected, or abused *nonoffenders***" (italics added). This inclusion of nonoffenders among the committed

appears to contradict the official definition on page 2 that limited commitments to offenders.

The questions and headers in the population breakdown sections for delinquent and status offenders in Sections V.B, page 6, and V.C, page 7 respectively, do not include any definitions of "commitment." Nonoffenders are omitted from these tables.

The instructions for the "Population Movement and Length of Stay" table in Section IX.B, page 9 include, "committed to the facility" without any statement as to whether this includes average lengths of stays for just offenders or both offenders and nonoffenders. Respondents remembering page 2 may omit nonoffenders while those recalling the most recent definition on page 5 may include them.

Given these inconsistencies in whom to include, it is not surprising that respondents interpret the questions in different ways. One respondent at a private group home with a mix of delinquent offenders, status offenders, and dependent children, read the page 2 definition of committed. Ignoring the phrase about juvenile offenders, he declared that all of his children should be recorded as committed, including the nonoffenders. His reasoning was as follows. Even though some of his children were admitted to the facility as nonoffenders without having gone through a court hearing, they would have to be court-ordered to the facility if they stayed beyond three months, according to Colorado law. Since his program lasts for more than three months, virtually every child ends up being court-ordered, or committed, to the facility eventually. Hence, they are all "committed." This interpretation would lead to an overcount of offenders on the reference day in his facility.

The opposite reaction came from another respondent who reads all of the definitions and instructions as she completes the form. She said that the term "commitment" is not used in her facility. She read the page 2 definition and interpreted it to mean that "placement" can be used instead of "commitment." Her facility does use the word "placed" to refer to juveniles who have chosen to enter her program rather than one of the other two programs suggested by the judge. Then she saw that the definition refers to juvenile offenders and she wondered if that included status offenders, since there are so many questions on the form about status offenders. This puts her in another quandary, because all of her kids have exhibited the status offender behaviors listed in Section V.C, but Pennsylvania doesn't adjudicate juveniles for these behaviors. Since they are not really "offenders," her juveniles don't meet the definition of "committed" or "placed" on page 2 and she just puts zeros in the offense sections. She lists the children in the shelter as voluntarily admitted.

This respondent mentioned an alternative interpretation she had used in past years. She listed nonoffenders as "committed" juveniles (in Pennsylvania, it appears that one can be adjudicated and "committed" as a dependent). Maryland may also "commit" juveniles to its non-justice state agency for children (Department of Social Services), and Texas commits juveniles to what may be a non-justice agency (Dept. of Protective and Regulation Services). At least in the past, Connecticut committed abused, neglected and abandoned children to the state welfare department. We wonder whether these dependent, abused, or neglected children should be included among the committed

on this census form for either "reason for custody" or "length of stay for committed children."

"Committed" to a facility or "committed" to an agency

In addition to these concerns about which juveniles fit the existing census definition of "committed," there is another problem. The word "commitment" on the form is restricted to the meaning of confinement to a facility. In our interviews, some respondents told us it was inappropriate to say that children are committed to the facility; they are committed to an agency. These respondents explained that at adjudication, a judge *commits* children to a court, law enforcement, or social service agency, which in turn *places* the child in a facility. We heard this meaning of "commitment" from public facility respondents in such states as Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington.

One respondent in a public detention center said that her facility mission is to detain children. Children are not committed to the detention center, they are committed to another state agency. Although she houses juveniles who have been adjudicated and committed to that agency, she adamantly refuses to break them out as "committed" on the form. She marks all of her kids as detained, whether adjudicated and committed or not. In her closing comments, she asked us to note that a child can be both detained and committed at the same time. In looking at the definition of "detained" several pages back, it can be seen that the adjudicated kids in detention centers who have been committed to an agency (not to a facility) and who are awaiting placement could arguably go into either the "detained" or "committed" definitions. Presumably some respondents completed the form in this way without differentiating the committed while other respondents may have broken out the committed and detained on their forms. This ambiguity is a source of error in this census.

In some states, some children might be committed to agencies, then placed, while others are committed to facilities. This is the case in Colorado, where the judge can commit a juvenile to the Department of Youth Services, which then places the child, or can put the child under Department of Social Services supervision and court-order (or commit) him/her to a facility. A public respondent in Colorado interpreted commitment in the first sense, while a private respondent interpreted it in the second. Both appear to be right; they are describing what happens to different segments of the juvenile population: those committed to the law enforcement agencies and those in the custody of the social service agencies.

The implication here is that some facilities that accept placements from both types of agencies are going to have some kids committed to the facility and others not committed to the facility. Michigan was noteworthy in this regard; juveniles can either be *committed to the facility* by the county court and individual judges or *committed to the State Department of Social Services* and *placed* in or *court-ordered to* a facility. Respondents in three Michigan facilities reported having both types of

committed children within their facilities. It is not clear whether these respondents would tabulate one or both types as committed on the form. One other Michigan respondent appeared not to have any children committed to the facility; they were all committed to an agency.

California appears to have a different arrangement. Nearly all of the private and public county facility respondents reporting on non-California Youth Authority children interpreted the word "committed" to refer to confinement within a place for some length of time. This is part of the legal language of commitment as a component of the *sentence*, explained one respondent. However, judges can commit juveniles not just to facilities, but also to the CYA. Some of the most serious offenders in California are committed to the CYA.

To add more confusion, a California judge can order a child to the CYA for a diagnostic examination without committing the juvenile to the CYA. Are these children to be considered *committed to the CYA facility* since they are confined there involuntarily by a judge as a result of offenses? Should these non-CYA committed children be included in the totals for committed on the questionnaire? In his view, the committed children wanted by OJJDP are those who have been committed directly to the CYA. As a result, he tabulated these children as "detained." It is not clear how one would classify the children who aren't committed to the CYA initially, but are later accepted at a CYA facility.

And to add yet more confusion, the CYA facilities also house juveniles who have been *committed to prisons* by a judge. These juveniles are housed at CYA facilities, but are not under CYA custody. Should these juveniles be included on the form? Should they be classified as committed or as detained? Given these multiple applications of the word "committed" it is not clear that the data provided on the breakdowns of committed and detained children by facilities that have custody of some, but not all, of their residents, are comparable to those from other and/or facilities in other states.

These examples indicate that the census form definitions restricting the meaning of commitment to commitment to facilities may cause uncertainty for some respondents who have some children committed to the facility and others to an agency, and those who have children just from a committing agency. This uncertainty may lead to inconsistent reporting across facilities.

"Committed" or "Placed"

The definition on page 2 equates "commitment" with "placement." There were two problems identified in our research with this equation of terms. One has already been identified: for some respondents, commitment refers to a custody relationship with an agency, while placement refers to the physical placement of the child in a facility. As mentioned earlier, respondents in five states said that children are "*committed*" to a court or agency, and "*placed*" in the facility.

A second problem comes up with the equation of "commitment" and "placement." Some respondents, particularly those in private facilities, have a negative visceral reaction to the word

"commitment" as it implies involuntary confinement. These respondents would not use the word "commitment" but indicated they would be willing to use the more neutral word, "placement" to refer to the way children are housed in the facility.

Interestingly, the facility respondents most willing to use the word "placement" if it were separated from "commitment" tended to be those who either have a lower ratio of offenders to nonoffenders or who are at the margins of being in scope in this census. For example, one facility has a total of 87 children, but only 7 of these were specifically placed there by a law enforcement agency for offenses. Two facilities in another state also fall in the category of those with half or less of the total being offenders. Another facility is one that may or may not be in scope at the time of the census: this facility can accept children in connection with offenses, but reports that very few of these children have actually been placed there. The same would be the case for a runaway and homeless shelter. A group home would only take current offenders if there were an emergency. While juveniles at this latter facility may have a long record of past offenses, they are not currently placed in the facility because of offenses, but rather because they are difficult to place and have nowhere else to go.

In addition to these two problems in equating "commitment" and "placement," there is variation in the way the term "placement" is applied by respondents. For example, one respondent said that "placed" children were considered to be there voluntarily. However, another said that the word "placement" in California means that total custody of the child has been transferred to the Probation Department for placement of the child in a foster or group home, drug treatment or psychiatric facility. In other states, that is the definition of "commitment."

In summary, there are three problems with the wording on "commitment." First, the word was inconsistently applied throughout the questionnaire, sometimes including nonoffenders, sometimes not. Second, the word "commitment" on the form was limited in meaning to commitment to a facility or "commitment" of a crime, but did not include an important meaning used in at least half of the sampled states, "committed" to an agency. Third, the census form definition on page 2 equated the words "committed" and "placed" when some respondents considered these to have different meanings.

It is clear that some change in the usage of the word "committed" is needed. We see two options: either drop it from the form (leaving only the word, "placement") or clarify the meaning of the term.

We do not see dropping it from the form as a viable alternative. As seen in the preceding sections, the more general word, "placement," is not an equivalent for commitment. Use of the word "placement" may not be an acceptable synonym where children are "committed to the facility." Also, based on our current knowledge, we do not know how respondents would distinguish placements from detentions and from voluntary admissions on page 5. Finally, the more neutral word "placement" could lead more private facility directors to include nonoffenders on the rosters at the very time that OJJDP appears to be considering moving away from collecting data on nonoffenders.

The second option, clarifying the concept of "commitment," would lead to a longer, more technical definition than we currently have, given the multiple meanings of the term. Such a definition would need to:

- Specify whether commitment just means commitment to facilities or to agencies, or both;
- State clearly whether commitment must be officially declared, or whether confinement to the facility is considered the equivalent of commitment;
- Specify whether the juveniles must be either committed to the facility in which they reside or the agency that runs it, or whether juveniles just housed there but under commitment to some other agency or facility should be included;
- State clearly whether the definition is restricted to current delinquent offenders or whether status offenders are to be included (keeping in mind earlier results that states are inconsistent in whether they still adjudicate children for status offenses or not, and in what behaviors are considered status offenses); and
- Specify whether dependents and other nonoffenders who may be committed to the facility or to a state agency are to be included.

It is possible that OJJDP would want to differentiate the types of children that would be included in the initial screener questions from those that would be covered in the sequence of roster questions. Nonoffenders might be included in the initial overall facility questions but excluded from the roster.

A definition like this should clarify the task for respondents and potentially reduce the sources of errors in the census data, if it is both brief and placed near the relevant questions.

This definition of "commitment" will be at the heart of this data collection. It should present a clear statement of the subpopulation that OJJDP wants to analyze and wants the respondent to report on. As such, some of the components to this definition (listed above) will require policy decisions from OJJDP. We request that OJJDP review these components and tell us which they want to include in the definition.

Sentence

Respondents in four of the states used the term "sentence" to describe adjudication outcomes for

children. This term is not presently used on the Children in Custody form and we do not recommend that it be added. However, the use of the term may have an effect on how respondents in some states complete the census form, so we will give a brief overview of how the term is applied in these four states.

One respondent in a California county explained that the sentence is the declaration that a child is a ward of the court. There appear to be several types of sentences in this state. A sentence of probation in this county involves three steps: the child is declared a ward of the juvenile court, placed on probation, and placed in the custody of a probation officer for suitable placement for a specified length of time. The sentence of probation often includes commitment to a facility for a specified time period, then return to the parents with rules and regulations to follow. Hence in this California county, a child can be simultaneously on probation as well as committed to a facility. This does not fit the common meaning of probation as supervision without placement in a facility.

Another form of sentencing is direct sentencing to the California Youth Authority, which then assumes custody of the child. This sentencing may be done by the juvenile court for juvenile offenders and by the adult court for those juveniles 14 and above who have been convicted for certain crimes. The sentences at both the county and state levels may include both commitment time in a facility and additional time on the probation sentence (county level) or parole (state level). Some California respondents may have difficulty with disaggregating length of *commitment in facilities or to the CYA* from length of sentence.

In Colorado, the "sentence" can refer either to the specific time period the juvenile is to be kept in a facility or to the commitment to DYS. A child can be sentenced to probation without commitment. A part of this sentence may require the child to spend up to 60 days in a detention center or boot camp. As a result, facilities in Colorado can hold pre-adjudicated, committed, and sentenced children (these are their main categories for legal status). It is not clear how Colorado respondents would record these sentenced, but uncommitted children on the census form, particularly in Sections V.A. and V.B. On the one hand, one could record them as detained and adjudicated (since they are not committed to the state agency). On the other hand, one might record them as adjudicated and committed (since they have been "committed" to the facility). We suggest that OJJDP should develop clear instructions for situations like this.

Hence, in both California and Colorado, children can be on probation and committed or detained in a facility. This situation doesn't fit any of the response categories in "Reason for Custody" (Section IV.C, 3 and 4) where commitment/placement for treatment is explicitly separated from probation or aftercare.

In Massachusetts, the only sentence a juvenile court judge can give is a probationary sentence with a suspended sentence to DYS or a straight commitment to DYS, said one respondent. A new law now specifies a minimum sentencing provision for murder, called a "dual sentence." If found guilty, the juvenile receives a sentence in the juvenile system up to age 21 and a subsequent sentence in an adult correctional facility. A similar program is in effect in California for children remanded to adult

court. Colorado has also started a Youthful Offenders System where a juvenile convicted of certain crimes is given a full adult sentence that is suspended while the juvenile spends up to 6 years in the YOS. If the juvenile commits more crimes, the suspended sentence is reinstated. These dual or split sentencing arrangements are also relevant to the JTIC data collection.

Finally, one Washington respondent indicated that the word "sentence" refers to the range of time the judge stipulated the child should be in custody. The judge commits to the Juvenile Rehabilitation Agency, which then takes responsibility for placing the child and deciding when the child should be released.

For Massachusetts and Washington it would appear at this time that the use of the term, "sentence" would not have a negative impact on the data collection, since the sentence involves commitment to the state agency. As long as OJJDP develops a way to incorporate "commitment to agencies" into the commitment definitions, it would seem that we do not need to be concerned about "sentence." We will keep this term in mind, however, as we do interviewing in new places in the second phase.

Age for juveniles subject to the authority of juvenile court

Some parts of the census form require that respondents disaggregate their facility populations by juveniles and adults. The definitions for juveniles and adults provided on page 2 are as follows.

"Juvenile - a person subject to the exercise of juvenile court jurisdiction for purposes of adjudication and treatment based on age and offense limitations as defined by State law.

For the purposes of this census, a person of juvenile age is still considered a juvenile even though tried as an adult in criminal court."

"Adult criminal offender - A person subject to the original jurisdiction of the criminal court, rather than the juvenile court, because at the time of the offense the person was above a statutorily specified age."

"For purposes of this report, **youthful offenders** should be considered adults. A **youthful offender** is a person adjudicated in criminal court, who may be above the statutory age limit for juveniles, but below a specified upper age limit, and for whom special correctional commitments and special record-sealing procedures are made available by statute."

These definitions indicate that the respondent should use statutorily specified age limits for juvenile court jurisdiction to divide the facility population into the categories of adult offender and juvenile. We would like to note several aspects of these definitions. First, the terms are not symmetrical; the form defines adult and youthful *offenders*, but just juveniles. It is possible this was done on purpose to include juvenile nonoffenders in the facility in the census. Second, there is no age specified. This

is probably due to the fact that states vary in the statutorily specified ages for juvenile court jurisdiction. Third, there is no statement that there might be both upper and lower boundaries on the statutory ages.

The conjunction of the three factors identified--the lack of the word "offender" in the juvenile definition and the omission of specific ages and a statement about upper and lower age boundaries--may lead to differing interpretations of which juveniles to include on the form.

In the field interviews, we asked each respondent to tell us the age range for juveniles subject to the authority of the juvenile court. We can get some sense of the accuracy of these reports by comparing the respondents' answers to the statutory upper age limits by state presented by Sickmund (1994). For the most part, respondents knew the upper statutory age for juvenile courts, but this varied by state. In Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Washington state, all of the respondents gave the upper age limit listed by Sickmund. In California, Maryland, and New York, one of the respondents either said they did not know or gave an upper age that doesn't match Sickmund's statutory age for the state. In the remaining states of Florida, Texas, and Massachusetts, two or more respondents gave upper age limits that did not match those provided by Sickmund.

A few of these mismatches may be due to respondents giving the age range up to 21. This is not necessarily wrong, because some states, such as Massachusetts, allow the DYS to request that the judge "extend" some juveniles in juvenile facilities beyond the upper statutory age to 21 (Massachusetts) or 25 (California).

Respondents varied in how they defined the low end of the range for juvenile court jurisdiction. Twelve of the respondents specified the low end for juveniles subject to court for offenses. For example, one respondent said that children from 8 to 18 were subject to juvenile court jurisdiction. However, 5 respondents did not specify a lower boundary (e.g., "up to age 18") and 10 respondents specified the lower age as birth.

These differing lower bounds indicate that respondents may be interpreting our field question differently. Some are interpreting juvenile court jurisdiction to apply just to adjudication for offenders, while others are interpreting juvenile court jurisdiction to apply to nonoffenders as well. Both interpretations are correct.

These differing lower boundaries given by our respondents indicate that some are interpreting the target population as just offenders while others are deciding it includes both offenders and nonoffenders. This inconsistency occurs, in part, because the term defined on the census form is just "juvenile," not "juvenile offender." The respondents interpreting the definition to include both offenders and nonoffenders would include in their facility counts babies, infants, and young children who would not be included in those facilities that only accepted offenders.

The age profiles, then, for nonoffenders and offenders may differ because of different in-scope age ranges for juvenile court jurisdiction. In those facilities housing just offenders, this would not be a problem. However, in those facilities with both offenders and nonoffenders, it would not be possible to disaggregate the offenders and nonoffenders to generate accurate age breakdowns just for offenders.

Another problem with age is that in some states, individuals may be classified as juveniles or adults, not on the basis of age, but rather on the basis of whether the juvenile or criminal court has jurisdiction over the case. This was heard from a respondent in California who at some point in the past discovered that he had not been applying the CIC definitions correctly when tabulating juveniles on the form.

A partial solution to these problems with age on the current form is to write the definitions more clearly and to position the definitions as close to the relevant questions as possible (they seem to be easily overlooked in their current location on page 2). **Another potential solution OJJDP might consider is to set one specific cutoff age for all states, such as below 18, as BJS appears to be doing for the jail population. If OJJDP gives final approval to go ahead with the tentative plan to limit the target population for roster-based data collection to offenders, we will need to define more clearly which juveniles subject to juvenile court jurisdiction should be included on the roster.** The new method of collecting data on individual juveniles will also mitigate this problem to some extent, because data users will be able to crosstabulate data on age and offense, thereby excluding any nonoffenders that get listed on the roster.

Youthful offender

The term, "youthful offender," is defined as follows.

"For purposes of this report, **youthful offenders** should be considered adults. A **youthful offender** is a person adjudicated in criminal court, who may be above the statutory age limit for juveniles, but below a specified upper age limit, and for whom special correctional commitments and special record-sealing procedures are made available by statute."

To learn whether this term has the same or a similar meaning to respondents, we asked our field interview respondents if the term "youthful offender" was used in their facilities. Respondents who answered affirmatively were asked, "Who is included in the category, 'youthful offender?'"

Most of the respondents either said they were not familiar with the term or indicated that it might be used as a synonym for juvenile offender. One respondent said the term referred to a juvenile who had committed his/her first crime, for which a reduced punishment could be expected.

The respondents who came close to the CIC census form meaning associated the term with older children or those who were waived to adult court. One respondent said the term referred to young adult offenders between 17 and 21, perhaps the closest to the CIC definition. Respondents from two states indicated the term referred to children waived to adult criminal court. A Colorado respondent explained that the term is applied to children waived to adult courts for certain violent crimes or other felonies who are placed in a new mid-tier program called the "Youthful Offenders System." These juveniles are given full adult suspended sentences and placed in the YOS for up to 6 years.

If they do not do well in the YOS, their adult prison sentences are reinstated. This is somewhat similar to the census definition.¹³

Finally, a California respondent told the interviewer that juveniles committed to the California Youth Authority are subject to sentencing and review by the "Youthful Offenders Parole Board." However, the respondent did not use the term "youthful offender" to refer to these juveniles.

Our guess is that the term "youthful offender" may have been put on the census form initially to exclude from facility counts those California youth between the ages of 17 (the maximum juvenile court age) and 25 who are subject to the California Youth Authority. However, none of our California respondents used this term to refer to children in facilities.

Since this term isn't in common usage among the respondents, does OJJDP want to retain this term, "youthful offender?" If so, we would need to write a clear definition for youthful offender and place the definition very close to the relevant questions. If it is to be retained, does OJJDP want this term to refer to 1) those individuals above the general statutory age for juvenile court in each state, 2) those juveniles below the general statutory age, but at or above the statutory minimum age for transfer to adult criminal court for certain specified crimes, or 3) both?

During our field interviewing period in late 1994, we heard from a number of respondents that new state laws were being put into effect to either lower the minimum age for transfer of juveniles to adult court for some crimes, or to increase the number and types of crimes for which juveniles would automatically be transferred to adult court. For example, a new law was put into effect in California in November, 1994 reducing the remand age for juveniles from 16 to 14 for some specific crimes. This would mean that some 14 and 15 year olds will be transferred to criminal court and committed to the CYA or to a prison, even though they are under the general statutory maximum age of 17 for juvenile court jurisdiction. Does OJJDP want the definition of youthful offender to apply to these children too?

These legal changes will increase the numbers of children who will be adjudicated in adult criminal court and placed in either adult or special facilities other than those now covered in the census. At present, the children adjudicated in criminal court who are placed in adult facilities are not being included in this census, although those that are in detention centers awaiting transfer to adult court are now included. Should a child be included as a youthful offender if he is required to go to adult court but has not yet been tried?

¹³ Massachusetts passed new minimum sentencing laws in 1994. Children who have committed murder would be given a "split sentence" (sometimes called "dual sentence") with the years up to age 21 spent in a special new facility set up within a specific correctional facility, and the rest of the sentence spent in an adult facility. None of the Massachusetts respondents associated the term "youthful offender" with these or other remanded children.

VIII. DATA AVAILABILITY/ISSUES

Most facilities keep a central list of all children at the facility on any given day. However, these lists do not contain much information that is useful for the census. In general, they are used for staff control and keeping track of the location of juveniles in the facility.

The information OJJDP wants is usually found in individual case files which are not computerized. In general, case files are more useful for the census than lists, but case files are more difficult and time consuming for respondents to use. In small facilities, the respondents know much of the information for each child without looking it up. Respondents in larger facilities, however, would need to look up individual files for each child in order to complete a roster-based questionnaire.

When asked how long they thought it would take to fill out individual data for each child in the facility, responses ranged from a few minutes to a few weeks. Some facilities do not have all the relevant data, while others have all the information, but it is in a number of places (lists, files, log books), making compilation of the data more difficult.

According to almost every respondent we interviewed, it is important to get the questionnaire mailed before the census reference day. In general, this is so that they can use current case files. Some respondents indicated that files are separated at the time a child leaves the facility. These separate storage areas are often more difficult to access and contain numerous files, so it is time-consuming to get data.

Almost all facilities have most of the information we need in one form or another. However, exceptions include admission date, most serious offense, status offenses, and county/state of origin. These data are problematic for various reasons depending on the facility.

One general problem with the population section is who to include. There are subpopulations that respondents in many facilities are unsure how to classify. Such populations include children in host or foster homes that are in facility programs, children housed in one facility because another facility is overcrowded, children waived to adult court, but housed in a juvenile facility, juveniles present only on weekends, etc. These types of children create problems for respondents as they decide whom to include on the questionnaire. We ask OJJDP to clarify these questions on the target populations of facilities and juveniles.

Admission date

Almost all of the respondents defined "admission date" as the day the juvenile entered the facility, and indicated that they would be able to supply this data element for each juvenile. However, there were several notable exceptions.

Two state central reporters indicated problems with this data element. One of these explained that "admission" and "discharge" in the state computerized database used to complete the census forms refer not to entries and exits from individual facilities, but rather to the start and end dates of a juvenile's commitment to the state agency responsible for delinquents. The dates that juveniles enter specific facilities are kept separately and are difficult to get within the computer system. The respondent indicated that he would not take the time to go back and get facility-specific admission and discharge dates for this census. In this case and potentially others like it, data from these facilities would not be comparable with those from other facilities.

Another state reporter indicated that admission date does refer to the date that the juvenile was most recently admitted to the detention facility. However, this date may or may not be the first admission of this juvenile in connection with the most recent offense. If it is the first admission for the current offense, the charge field on the facility admission form and in the database would contain the most serious offense. However, if the pre-adjudicated juvenile was moved to another facility, as happens very often in this state, the variable, "charge" would not contain the most serious offense, but rather an administrative code.

The reason that "most serious offense" is recorded only at first admission is that this state produces unduplicated counts of juveniles in its juvenile system. Listing the most serious offense at each admission for pre-adjudicated children would lead to doublecounting. Hence the admission date to the current facility generated for the rostered children who have been moved will not provide data meaningful to the CIC census on "most serious offense." In order to give meaningful answers for pre-adjudicated children who have been moved, this respondent or facility personnel would have to trace back a child's records to the admission that carried the most serious offense. This would take a lot of staff time and resources that the facility does not have.

A respondent at a detention center in California said that he would have both booking date (the date the juvenile was brought in and started serving time) and entry date (the date the juvenile entered the facility for any reason, including transfer). The census form would need to specify what OJJDP wants: the most recent admission or the first admission for the most serious crime. To be consistent with other facilities where data users cannot identify whether this is the first or a subsequent stay for a specific offense, it would seem that OJJDP might want to collect the most current date for stay here, even if it is just a transfer.

Finally, a respondent at a private assessment center said that children are discharged any time they leave the facility overnight. They may be readmitted and discharged a number of times over several months or years. Hence it is not clear which admission date she should record for each child, especially since these children are not placed here because of a current offense (although many of them have a history of past involvement with the legal system for offenses). These (current) nonoffenders are placed here by a non-juvenile justice social agency because they are dependent, have difficult emotional problems, and have no other place to go. The admission date for juveniles in this facility thus has no connection to a specific current offense and consequent involvement with the law enforcement system. Does OJJDP want to collect data on children who are not currently

offenders, but have been offenders in the past?

One other problem with admission date has relevance to conducting a census of juveniles at some facilities. At least four facilities included in our site visits have children who stay in the facility only on weekends. If the reference date is a weekday, juveniles who are admitted just on successive weekends are not likely to show up on the roster.

These children would be missed in the census. We do not recommend changing the reference day to a weekend day, however, because of the relatively small numbers of facilities and children involved, and because we do not know if this would lead to a decrease in the number of continuous-stay children (due to home visits) that we want to include in the count.

The issue of juveniles admitted just on weekends also has data quality implications for the variables "annual number of admissions" and "annual number of discharges." Each weekender with relatively minor charges would produce several admissions to and discharges from the facility during the year, while a serious offender may only produce one admission per year. If enough juveniles were involved, this could give a misleading view of the number of children served over the year and also affect the average length of stay. This problem applies to the facilities cited in the previous paragraph. It also appears to have relevance in Washington state, where children being released into the community from (not necessarily juvenile justice) institutions may be required to spend one night a week in the nearest facility over the course of a month or so. In one small Washington state facility, all successive one-night stays by these "guests" were included in the tabulations of annual admissions and discharges. In another facility, they were not included. Thus Washington state facilities may vary in the extent to which they accept such "guests" and in whether they include them on the census form.

Other factors which may influence the "annual numbers of admissions" and "annual numbers of discharges" include whether or not juveniles are discharged and readmitted whenever they leave the facility for home visits or visits to other facilities. There was variation among facilities in these regards. In general, highly structured, short-term facilities discharge children every time they leave for the night, while less structured, long-term facilities do not.

We did not find any facility that changed the admission date for children when they changed status from detained to committed.

Most serious offense

Many respondents have trouble with "most serious offense." First, multiple respondents wanted to know how to rank status offenses. There was no scale to judge whether truancy was more serious than incorrigibility or running away. If a child is guilty of all of those "offenses," the respondent does not know which to report. In addition, one respondent said that the status offense that a child

commits is not as serious as the abuse the child suffered, so s/he reports the child as a nonoffender who was abused, neglected, or abandoned.

Second, alcohol use and possession is a status offense in some states, and a delinquent offense in others. On the census form, "alcohol-related offenses" are listed in the delinquent offense table, but possession, purchase or consumption of alcohol is listed in the status offense table. In those states where possession, purchase or consumption is classified as a delinquent offense, respondents would have a hard time recording kids with these crimes, since they do not fit well into the response categories in either table. Clear instructions should be included for how to classify alcohol use and possession for the purpose of this census.

One suggestion is to include alcohol offenses as a separate category, not under status offenses or delinquent offenses. This way, the respondents would not be confused about how to classify alcohol-related offenses. The numbers could be combined with status or delinquent offenses as appropriate during processing.

Third, as mentioned previously, the CYA makes a distinction between a primary offense and secondary offense if a child is charged with multiple crimes. Usually, the primary offense is the most serious, but not always. California law permits judges to implement consecutive terms, depending on the ordering of the crimes. Therefore, if a judge feels that a child should be incarcerated for a longer period of time, s/he can change the order of the crimes to accommodate that. The respondent would check the computer file for primary offense only, because otherwise, he would need to check every single juvenile record. This could affect comparability since the most serious offense will not always be used for juveniles in the CYA system.

Fourth, at least one facility respondent in Pennsylvania does not keep offenses categorized. It would be difficult for the respondent to break down the offenses into categories.

Fifth, an umbrella reporter indicated that he might not be able to complete "most serious offense" for each child because of constraints in his database. He also said that the breakdown of crimes on the census form differs from that in his database. This situation and others like it may affect the comparability of results.

Sixth, one central reporter system will show "charge" for each admission to a facility, but charge can be either a "most serious offense" (for the first detention on the crime) or an administrative code (for any subsequent admissions to detention centers on the same crime, to avoid doublecounting of crimes). The central reporter would have to do a frequency distribution of "charge" and separate out the children showing administrative codes. Staffers would then need to trace backward through each of these children's computer records to find the first admission for this continuous stay in order to obtain the "most serious offense." Using this computer system, it would be difficult, time consuming, and frustrating for staffers to make sure they had correctly identified the first admission

related to the most serious offense. Also, there was a question as to whether the questionnaire wanted the offense the child had committed, or the reason they were being held. These could be completely different.

Seventh, Washington state has an offense category called "manifest injustice" which is applied to juveniles who have committed a multitude of minor crimes. The child is not really that serious of an offender, but he is habitually offending. Declaring it to be a "manifest injustice" to leave this child in the community, the judge gives the juvenile a harsh sentence for this "offense." It is not clear how children adjudicated for manifest injustice would be recorded in Section V.B.

Finally, respondents are unsure how to answer for multiple offenders. One respondent from Washington said she determined that most serious offense means the offense for which the juvenile received the longest sentence. It is likely that there will be variation by state in terms of the rank ordering of offenses from least to most serious. We suggest that OJJDP develop a list of offenses ranked by seriousness to print on the new form. Standardizing the response categories will help to reduce variance in the ways respondents determine what constitutes the most serious offense.

Status offenses

One central reporter does not think status offenders can be identified with the computerized program in the state.

County/State of origin

Many facilities take children from their own state only. In these cases, most respondents have county and state of origin available to them. If the child is from outside the state, however, the respondents may not have complete origin information for them. They may have state, but not county, of origin. This seems to be consistent across many states.

County/State of Commitment

As discussed earlier, many respondents do not want to refer to a child as committed, so this term had problems. When phrased "County or State where they committed the offense," it was better received. Most facilities have this information and would not have trouble accessing it.

Race/Ethnicity

Many respondents had trouble with the breakdowns for race and ethnicity. Some keep their records with different breakdowns; it is difficult to change them to the census breakdowns. For example,

a Michigan facility uses Black, White, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander and Unknown. They do not break Hispanics into Black and White, instead they include them in Unknown.

Not one of the 40 facility respondents had a breakdown of Hispanics into black or white. In general, they have Hispanic as a category of race/ethnicity, but do not break this down further.

One respondent does not keep any official race or ethnicity information in the paper files. He could guess the race/ethnicity if he received the form before the census reference day, but he absolutely would not ask kids to identify their race or ethnicity. Another respondent says she always asks each child to identify his/her race or ethnicity and records exactly what each child says. A third respondent said he would only ask a child to state his/her race or ethnicity if it wasn't obvious from the child's appearance. These examples indicate that the responses to race and ethnicity are often subjective and not necessarily consistent. The use of different methods of collecting race/ethnicity data raises questions about the comparability of race/ethnicity data among facilities.

One respondent wanted additional categories so she could include Portuguese and Cape Verdans because these comprise much of her population. Another wanted a category to record biracial children because they have African-American children who are part black and part white.

The current race and ethnicity breakdowns are not being used consistently by respondents. The use of very different methods for classifying juveniles by race and ethnicity raises strong concerns about the quality and comparability of these data. We will revise the question wording to the extent possible, given current federal regulations on collecting race and ethnicity data.

Security

Some facilities have varying security levels by child, building, program, or facility. First, most group homes and residential treatment programs have some type of graduated system where children enter at the bottom level with few privileges, but work their way up the system to earn additional ones. In these programs, it is difficult to assess the facility's security level as a whole.

Second, some facilities have entire wings or buildings that have different security levels. One facility in Michigan had two buildings, one is "open" and considered minimum security while the other is "secure" and considered maximum security. The children in the "open" building are allowed to leave the facility once a week and their doors are not locked. The children in the "secure" building are not allowed to leave and their doors are sometimes locked. This respondent would say that the facility is multi-purpose because of the two different security types, even though the children all go through the same assessment program and education system.

Custody Status

One respondent in a private facility noted that custody status could be problematic. She relies on the child's word regarding past offenses and adjudications. The respondent does not receive a

background history, so she could only report what the juveniles tell her.

Other data availability concerns

A respondent indicated that s/he has separate files for race, most serious offense, and county and state of origin. These items, therefore, would be difficult to get out of the system for each individual.

Another respondent has a small subpopulation within his facility about which he has little information. These are detained children who are temporarily placed in the gym, due to overcrowding. They may only be there for 3 or 4 days.

IX. CENSUS REFERENCE AND MAILOUT DATES

More than half of our respondents described fluctuations in their facility populations over the course of the year. These fluctuations are very consistent across facility types and geographic areas. Many respondents associated fluctuations with the school year, with low populations during the winter holidays and summer vacations and higher numbers when children are in school. The general pattern was rising populations in September and/or October, with the higher populations coming in late October or November. Populations tend to decline around Christmas, stay low in January and start rising in February, especially in facilities that primarily house abused, neglected, and abandoned children. March and April were mentioned as months with higher populations and a few respondents extended this into May.

Since our research plan set the third Thursday in October as the tentative reference date for the roster-based census, we specifically asked respondents if that time period would yield a typical, high, or low population. Of the 26 respondents who described population fluctuations in their facilities, 14 said that the October date would be high, 11 indicated it would be typical, while the remaining respondent said it would be low. The remaining respondents who had not noticed fluctuations or whose facilities were nearly always full said that date in October would be typical.

It was interesting to note that two of the state central reporters were not aware of any fluctuations in the facility populations over the months (we did not have an answer for the third state reporter). One of the five umbrella reporters had not noticed fluctuations. This respondent completes 14 census forms. These respondents differed from the other central/umbrella reporters in being located in an administrative office, rather than in an actual facility where they would be more likely to observe fluctuations in the population.

These results on reference month suggest that the third Thursday of October would be a good time to conduct this census. The reference date could be moved to a mid-week day up to about the middle of November, but no later than a week before Thanksgiving. Alternatively, our results suggest that

comparable counts could be obtained if the reference day were scheduled sometime between late February and early April.

We strongly recommend that Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention analysts consider using a late February or March reference date for several reasons. First, the proximity of these dates to the traditional CIC data collection in mid-February would provide more comparability between the data on juveniles collected in the past and those collected in the future with the new roster-based instrument. This would assist us in the analysis of differences in data from the two forms resulting from questionnaire changes we have introduced, rather than those that result from collecting the data in a new month for which we have no previous benchmarks.

Second, moving the reference date into early 1996 would give us more time to test the new roster-based questionnaire and plan the split-panel test. We would be extremely hard-pressed to develop and test the cognitive questionnaire adequately as well as plan and implement the split-panel test in October. To meet that deadline, we would need to reduce the testing of the new questionnaire, which might save time in the short run but could reduce the quality of the experimental questionnaire that we field in the split-panel test. For these reasons we strongly suggest that OJJDP consider rescheduling the split-panel test for late February or March.

In terms of day of the week, no respondent indicated a problem with Thursday. We would suggest that Tuesday and Wednesday could also be used. Weekend days as well as Friday and Monday may produce skewed counts because of home visits and the presence of "weekenders" and "guests" at some facilities.

In addition to specifying a reference month and day, we recommend that a reference time be specified. Interviews in detention centers in four states indicated that there can be considerable amounts of movement in and out of facilities during the course of the day. This can be due to new admissions and discharges (either because of adjudication outcomes or as a result of movements between facilities due to overcrowding). Most respondents indicated 8 p.m. to midnight as the time that they would have a final record of who was either staying in the facility overnight or had beds reserved that night. We recommend that a reference time of 11:30 p.m. be added to the census form to avoid duplications and omissions.

A related question here is who to include in the facility count at the reference time. Does OJJDP want to count all children who have an assigned bed at the facility, even if temporarily away (a *de jure* count) or just those children who are physically present in the facility at the reference time (a *de facto* count)? The *de jure* count would include children physically present as well as those out temporarily on home leave, visiting another facility, and AWOL. This choice will introduce some bias since facilities that discharge children whenever they leave for the night may have somewhat

lower counts than those that continue to report on children who are away from the facility for some nights. However, the number of facilities in our study that discharge children for such temporary stays is much lower than the number of facilities that keep them on the books. **Our data suggest that a *de jure* count would be more consistent with the way respondents keep records. This would reduce respondent burden for some respondents who don't keep specific records of home visits on a list. We therefore recommend using a *de jure* count in the new roster-based questionnaire.**

Virtually all respondents want to receive the form prior to census day, with preferences ranging from a few days to 6 weeks (there was one respondent who wanted the form after the census reference day). This is because most facilities keep inactive files separate from active files. If the questionnaire is received after the census date, some children may have left, therefore, their files are inactive. It is much more difficult for most facilities to access the files once they are inactive. One facility has a cross-referencing system for files because they remove last name and/or address from the actual file. These systems make it especially difficult to access information in a timely manner once a child has left the facility.

Also, if the respondent receives the questionnaire prior to census day, s/he can fill out the questionnaire that day. One respondent indicated that it would take about 15 minutes to fill out the form if she filled it out on census day, but it would take much longer if she received the form later. **We recommend that the census form be mailed out before the reference date.**

X. COMPUTERIZATION

Many respondents are interested in computerization, but most do not have adequate equipment and/or experience to fill out an electronic questionnaire.

There were a variety of opinions regarding an electronic versus paper version of the questionnaire. Some respondents only want a paper copy, others would like to try an electronic version, but are not equipped for it, still others would love an electronic version, and some would like to try an electronic version in the future.

Most of the apprehension toward using electronic reporting seems to be caused by the inaccessibility of computerized records. Most facilities did not have complete computerized records. Instead, they had limited electronic records that contained only certain information. In addition, respondents often have to pass the questionnaire to various people to fill out sections. It is easier for most respondents to do this using a paper version or a photocopy of the questionnaire.

There were some respondents whose electronic records contained most or all of the information we need for the census, but most still preferred a paper copy of the census form. The reasons for this were time (most thought it would save little if any time filling out an electronic version), convenience, and the need to give the form to various people within a facility.

XI. NEW METHODS TO COLLECT DATA

We asked if respondents would be willing to transmit data in new ways. These new transmission methods would not require the Bureau to develop new software.

Faxing

Just under half of the respondents indicated they would be willing to fax their forms to the Bureau, while an additional 7 said they would agree to do this either if we did not ask for names, or if they were able to obtain approval to release confidential data. The only advantage we would gain from faxing would be faster delivery time. Potential disadvantages include the higher cost of faxing over mailing, the potential for confidential data to be sent to a wrong phone number, and potentially less legible data.

Transmitting electronic records

Respondents were not enthused about this method. Most said they either were not willing to transmit records or the issue was moot because their records were not computerized. Only two said yes to this method, while another two gave conditional agreements. Seven stated that they would need to request approval from some higher authority before they could give an answer.

Transmitting by modem

Seven respondents were willing to transmit data via modem, while three would do so if their concerns for protecting confidentiality were met and three others said they would consider doing so. The remaining majority said they either did not have the equipment or were unwilling to send data via this method.

Allowing a Bureau field representative to use the facility records

Ten respondents were willing to let Bureau enumerators come in and use facility records to fill in the questionnaires. Another nine said they would be willing to do this if a higher authority approved it. Just about equal numbers said that they would not give Bureau personnel access to their files.

Transmitting via the Internet

This option is not desirable or feasible at present. Only two respondents agreed to transmit data this way. The remaining respondents do not have the equipment or training, or in some cases the willingness, to use the Internet.

In short, none of the new methods examined appear to be both acceptable to the respondents and advantageous to OJJDP and the Bureau. We do not recommend the adoption of any of them.

XII. CONFIDENTIALITY

In general, most facility respondents indicated that they could probably provide first name, zip code and birthdate as identifying information for a roster questionnaire. Some respondents also indicated that they could give an internal number that was assigned at the facility. Again, the respondent would need approval by a Board of Directors, Attorney General, state or local government official or legal office within the facility before releasing any individual data.

Most respondents would not give address or last name for any child. In general, they were very apprehensive about giving such specific identifying information on an individual level.

The generalities indicated above do not hold true for all of our respondents. There were a few who indicated that they would not give any information on an individual level. These respondents would only give aggregate numbers. A few others said they would give first name, but no birthdate or vice versa.

For example, one respondent said that each parent would have to sign a release form before she could give out any individual-level information. Another respondent said he could probably give out name and address, but not together. A third respondent would not give first or last names, but would make up an identifier to use instead.

XIII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding pages we have identified a substantial number of problems associated with the Children in Custody Census. Some of these problems involve definitional issues, such as definitions of the target populations for facilities and for juveniles and definitions of key concepts, such as "commitment" and "status offender." Other problems have to do with classification issues, such as facility typing, security, and community access. Additional issues identified relate to operations, procedures and methods of data collection.

The following list summarizes the recommendations that have been made in the body of this report. We request that OJJDP review these recommendations and give us guidance as we begin developing the new individual-based questionnaire.

Critical Decisions for Phase 2 Questionnaire Development

1. Develop specific criteria for determining which facilities and/or programs within facilities are in scope.
 - A. The current criteria leave in scope some number of facilities that have very small proportions of offenders, and also those that house offenders sporadically. The establishment of 1) a reference period of two or three months to screen out those facilities that rarely accept offenders and 2) an increase in the minimum ratio of offenders to all residents, would reduce the number of facilities that need to respond to the census. We suggest that OJJDP consider screening out runaway and homeless shelters.
 - B. Respondents are unsure if they should include children in facility programs off-site in host or foster homes or in independent living arrangements. Provide guidelines on whether these off-site program locations and the children in them should be included in the counts. We suggest writing guidelines to exclude children in foster homes with fewer than three children (as is now done), but to include children in independent living arrangements in the community that are seen as the last phase of treatment by the facility.
2. Establish basic definitions and categories for differentiating facility types and distinct subdivisions within multi-purpose facilities that are consistent with OJJDP's data needs. Decide if subdivisions within facilities are to be considered separate facilities or separate functional units. We recommend classifying these as separate functional units.
3. Decide if the screening for in-scope status of facilities (and possibly functional units) by respondents should be done in a new pre-census mailout, or as part of the census data collection. We recommend doing this at the time of census data collection.
4. Decide whether to conduct a *de jure* or a *de facto* count of juveniles at facilities in the roster-based data collection so that clear instructions on whom to include can be printed on the questionnaire. The former includes all children on the rolls, whether they are physically present on the reference date or not, while the latter includes just those who are physically present. We think the *de jure* count (the method currently used in the CIC census) is more consistent with the way that most facility respondents keep track of admissions and discharges. We recommend that the *de jure* method be used in the roster-based instrument.
5. Resolve issues on the definition of the target population of children. Are we proceeding with the tentative January, 1995 guideline, entitled "Juvenile Custody Population Census," which states that OJJDP wants full individual data only on children placed in facilities by the police, courts or correctional agencies as a result

- of an offense? What data, if any, does OJJDP want on nonoffenders? We suggest that data be collected on the numbers of offenders and nonoffenders as well as the total number of juveniles and adults in the facility, for screening purposes. We ask for clear guidelines on whether OJJDP wants the nonoffenders included in the individual roster section or not.
6. Decide whether an attribute-based checklist to determine security levels in facilities (and possibly in programs) should replace the current subjective ranking question. We recommend this.
 7. For questionnaire formatting purposes, decide whether, for multi-purpose facilities, separate roster lists should be based on differences in facility/functional unit type or on security levels within the facility. Differences in security may not covary identically with differences in facility or functional unit type. We suggest that roster lists based on facility/functional unit type might be more useful to OJJDP.
 8. Resolve issues revolving around the concept of "commitment" (see bullets on page 36-37) and develop a new definition that clarifies the subpopulations on which respondents should report.
 9. Decide whether the data elements "institutional/open" and "community access" should be dropped or reformulated. These variables were created to find out if status offenders were being held in secure facilities. Are these variables still needed or would improved security questions be sufficient?
 10. Decide if the term "youthful offender" should be retained, since very few respondents defined the term in a manner consistent with the CIC definition. If the term is to be redefined, should it cover: 1) just those children above the maximum general statutory age for juvenile court jurisdiction; 2) just those children under the maximum general statutory age for juvenile court jurisdiction who are being remanded to adult criminal court for specific serious offenses (e.g., murder); 3) both of these; or 4) some other combination? Should a child be included as a youthful offender if he/she is required to go to adult criminal court but has not yet been tried? Consider whether one specific maximum age (such as below 18) would be useful for this census.
 11. Develop a list of offenses ranked by seriousness to print on the new questionnaire. This list would be intended to reduce variance in the ways respondents choose criteria for ranking offenses.
 12. Is average length of stay in each facility an important variable for the new roster-based questionnaire? If OJJDP wants to retain this indicator, we suggest that a time-based variable would be a better indicator of short-, medium- or long-term stays than the current proxy variable, "Reason for Custody." We also recommend that average length of stay be asked for each subdivision or *functional unit* in multi-purpose

facilities. This would be part of the larger effort to develop principles and questions for identifying subdivisional units within multi-purpose facilities.

13. Decide if respondents will be asked on the new form to self-classify ownership and administration. If the answer is yes, we recommend using the response categories of "government" (rather than "public") and "private." We recommend this change to reduce the possibility that respondents erroneously interpret the question in terms of public or private access, rather than administration.
14. Consider developing one version of the new roster-based format for both public and private facilities, rather than separate versions. This would necessitate moving the confidentiality and respondent burden statements to a new cover letter in order to avoid putting two potentially differing confidentiality statements on the questionnaire. This could result in cost savings. We recommend this option.
15. Decide on the reference month, day, and whether a reference time should be included. Consider moving the tentative reference day for the split-panel test from late October to late February or March. The latter reference months would provide data more comparable to that from previous censuses collected in mid-February and would provide more time to develop, test, and revise the new roster questionnaire and plan and implement the split-panel test. We strongly recommend a late February/March data collection.

Other Issues for Future Consideration

16. Plan and conduct research on the degree of fit between the definitions of standard variables in state, county, or agency databases with the definitions used in the CIC and JTIC data collections. The state variables may have similar or identical variable names and be transferred easily onto the census form, but may be based on different, incomparable units of analysis and/or have different meanings that introduce error into the CIC database. Look especially at "most serious offense" and "annual admissions" and discharges, which were found to be problematic for some central reporters in this study.
17. Consider adding juvenile units within adult facilities to the frame of in-scope facilities for this census. Currently, these most serious offenders are not included in the CIC database. As a result, these census data cannot be used to document fully the increase in juveniles going into residential custody for the most serious crimes. If this is a relevant objective of the CIC census, the universe of in-scope facilities should be expanded.

18. Decide whether regional and/or county-level breakdowns are desired. If they are, consider developing a method to identify addresses for both the central/umbrella reporter and the facility.

SECTION XIV: REFERENCES CITED

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Schwede, Laurie and Kathleen Ott. 1994. Letter to Joseph Moone at OJJDP describing problems in identifying the target populations in this census.

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XV. APPENDIX

Attachment A: Proposed and Actual Allocation of Facility Sample	A- 2
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ATTACHMENT A: PROPOSED AND ACTUAL ALLOCATION OF FACILITY SAMPLE

Type of Facility	Private		Public	
	Proposed Allocation	Actual Allocation	Proposed Allocation	Actual Allocation
Detention Center	1	1	4	5
Shelter	4	4	1	1
Reception or Diagnostic Center	1	1	1	1
Training School	2	1	2	3
Ranch, Forestry Camp, or Farm	2	2	1	1
Halfway House or Group Home	8	9	3	2
Multi-Purpose Facility	1	0	2	2
Residential Treatment Facility	4	4	0	0
Other Write-in Respondent	2	0	1?	0
Boot Camp	0	0	1	1
Nonrespondent	2	2	0	0
Total	24-25	24	15-16	16

ATTACHMENT B: ALLOCATED FACILITY TYPES VERSUS "ACTUAL" FACILITY TYPES

FACILITY FOR SAMPLE	ACTUAL TYPE WHEN INTERVIEWED
Public Shelter	Public Multi-Purpose (including detention and training)
Public Multi-Purpose	Public Reception Center
Public Multi-Purpose	Public Multi-Purpose (including Shelter, Residential Treatment, Detention)
Public Detention Center	Public Detention
Public Detention Center	Secure Detention
Public Detention Center	Public Detention
Public Detention Center	Public Detention
Public Detention Center	Public Secure Detention
Public Training School	Long Term Secure Treatment Training/ R or D
Public Training School	Public Training
Public Training School	Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution
Public Halfway House or Group Home	N/A
Public Halfway House or Group Home	Public Short Term Offenders Program
Public Halfway House or Group Home	Residential Treatment Facility
Public Ranch/Farm/Camp	Public Short Term Offenders Program
Public Boot Camp	Public Probation Camp or Drug Treatment Boot Camp
Public Reception or Diagnostic Center	Public Reception Center
Private Shelter	Private Emergency Shelter
Private Shelter	Private Shelter
Private Shelter	Juvenile Shelter Hall (seems to be a detention center)

Private Shelter	Program for Runaway and Homeless Youth
Private Reception or Diagnostic Center	Secure Diagnostic and Treatment
Private Detention Center	Private Non-secure Detention Group Home
Private Residential Treatment	Adolescent Assessment Center R or D
Private Residential Treatment	Private Residential Treatment Program
Private Residential treatment	Residential Treatment Facility
Private Residential treatment	Multi-Purpose Facility: Residential Treatment, Diagnostic, Boarding Homes, Group Homes
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Behavioral Assessment Center
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Residential and Educational Center
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Residential Treatment Center
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Residential Treatment Facility
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Private Residential Group Home
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Private Residential Care Facility
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Residential Treatment Program
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Private Group Home
Private Halfway House or Group Home	Private Community Residential Placement Program
Private Training School	N/A
Private Training School	Private Residential Treatment Center
Private Ranch/Farm/Camp	Private Wilderness Facility
Private Ranch/Farm/Camp	Private Residential Treatment Facility
Nonrespondent	Private Training School: Residential Treatment Facility
Nonrespondent	Private Group Home

ATTACHMENT C: CHARACTERISTICS RESPONDENTS USED TO CLASSIFY FACILITIES

<p>Shelter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -length of stay -voluntary admissions -runaway and homeless youth -stabilize behavior -build socialization -provide recreation 	<p>Group Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -residential care -small facility (less than 6 beds in one state, no more than 8 beds in another) -long term care for adolescents
<p>Detention Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -detention and assessment -closed population -pre-trial juveniles -short term stay -pending in juvenile court -detained by the courts -that's the way it's licensed by the state 	<p>Halfway House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -for adults only -outdated term for adult facilities
<p>Training School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -outdated term -more community based with kids integrated in the community on a full time basis (from a respondent who considered her facility a training school and a Reception or Diagnostic Center) -sole purpose of rehabilitation for adjudicated juveniles -not just a penal institution, but also an education and treatment program 	<p>Reception or Diagnostic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -diagnostic center for assessment -treatment facility -evaluation and diagnostic for placing newly committed children (from a respondent who considered her facility a training school and a Reception or Diagnostic Center)

<p>Juvenile Rehabilitation Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -rehabilitation -treatment 	<p>Residential Treatment Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -intensive treatment -that's the way it's licensed by the state -clinicians at each housing unit -individual, group and family therapy with professional staff -concentration on treatment of youth, peer culture and group settings -groups of youth learn to cooperate and function as a unit -focus on adolescents with significant behavioral and emotional disorders -least restrictive environment -structured living environment -specialized care
<p>Secure Treatment Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -combination of training and reception/diagnostic center 	<p>Residential and Educational Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -community bases -unlocked -could be a group home
<p>Short Term Offenders Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -short term -all adjudicated children -mostly first time offenders 	

ATTACHMENT D: FINAL SITE CHARACTERISTICS OF FACILITIES VISITED

Facility Type

Shelters	5
Detention Centers	6
Training Schools	4
Halfway Houses or Group Homes	11
Ranch, Forestry Camp, or Farm	3
Reception or Diagnostic Center	2
Residential Treatment Centers	4
Boot Camps	1
Multi Purpose Facilities	2
Non-respondents	2

Public/Private

Public = 16
Private = 24

Urban/rural

Urban = 27
Rural = 13

Central Reporters/Umbrella Agencies

Central Reporters = 3
Umbrella Agencies = 11
Umbrella Reporters = 5

Number of children

0-9	8
10-19	8
20-29	10
30-39	1
40-49	1
50-99	6
100-199	1
200-299	3
300-399	2

* Total number of sites = 40

ATTACHMENT E: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY RESPONDENTS

This section is divided into two parts. The first part presents general comments and suggestions by respondents on the Children in Custody Census. The second address problems identified in specific sections of the questionnaire.

1. General Comments and Suggestions on the Children in Custody Census

Census Name, Methods, and Procedures

Use a different title for the census. The respondent feels the title "puts bias" into the data from the beginning.

Mail report 30-60 days in advance to give them notice that the census day is coming.

Send out the form closer to the census date, whether it is before or after.
This would make it easier for us to get the data.

Could the Census Bureau streamline the form for the facility that's filling it out? If the census is done every two years, then 6 months before the census is due a state agency or agencies would have to do their own census to give you a description of what facilities exist and what their criteria are, so you could be specific as to what you are sending out to each agency for the second stage of their census. I ask if he's talking about tailored forms and he says yes.

The other thing is to send facilities feedback a year after the data collection. If the Bureau was unclear on something that was included, it would be designed in a way that they would send the form back with a note asking what something means. So maybe the Census Bureau can give feedback as well as receiving information. A lot of this will come out in stats that we get in paperback each month, but if there was more correspondence between the local and the state government with the Census Bureau as to what the Bureau needs and define that more.

You need to have a comments section.

The respondent said that he has called the 800 number for help and reached people who are not familiar with the census.

The respondent thought it would be great to go to a roster-based questionnaire. She thought that would work. It's so close to what she's already doing. "That won't take any time at all. I think that would make sense, that would be good. You could grab that and it would not be the least frustrating and that wouldn't be putting square pegs in a round hole. I think that would be great, that would be

the way to go. It wouldn't raise terror in my heart when it comes out."
"I feel better that you guys are looking at this."

CIC Census Data quality

The respondent indicated that every year he realizes some mistake he made the previous year. He is concerned about the validity of the data when different individuals fill out the questionnaire each census year.

"I hear that one state is doing things different from another state. So how can you then have uniform data from a national standpoint as well as on what your population is like?"

A one-day count is questionable because things change so much in detention centers daily. Providing annual information would be just as easy.

Census as of a certain day is impossible to get. They have reports at the end of the year, but a daily count is difficult. It is good to receive the form ahead of time so he can be ready.

At the other facilities [run by this umbrella agency] talking about detention and commitment just doesn't fit. You get inconsistencies. Okay, this year, I decide, I'll call them committed 'cause they are dependent neglected or abused nonoffenders, but another year, I'm not sure I did think that way. This year when I did this I might have called them dependent neglected, even though it says juvenile offender, I'm going to decide that's what they want, which turns out to be right, but it's a struggle. But I'm not saying that's what I did four years ago, I don't remember...[If you don't know] you go to the one you did the year before.

Target population

She felt she was filling out the form for half of her population, the offenders. She wasn't sure if later questions then referred to that half of the population, or the entire population.

The respondent has not filled out this questionnaire in the past because he did not feel that it applied to his facility. After paging through the questionnaire, he believed that OJJDP was interested only in children who have committed a crime and gone through a court proceeding. The respondent did not want to waste his time filling out a tedious form since he felt that his information would not be used anyway. He does remember Census Bureau personnel calling and leaving messages for him, but he doesn't remember if he returned their calls. He would like more information on the kinds of data that this questionnaire is used for before he fills out the questionnaire in the future.

"It seems to be leaning a lot more towards delinquents than status offenders. Everybody is a status offender and sometimes they are delinquents. To get a more accurate picture of their problems, the form would have to deal more with status offenders." The R feels the questionnaire is not portraying the facility in the best way.

"You're not trying to find out how many kids have committed these crimes...because then you don't want to look at facilities, you want to look at arrest rates. See what I mean? There are thousands of kids running the streets who have committed all sorts of crimes that have never been detained, that have never even gone beyond sitting down with a juvenile intake worker. And then there are other kids who are detained and some are not.

"Wouldn't it be better to direct the forms to the County Probation Departments? You'd only have to send the forms to 26 places, rather than 150+ facilities, some of which have only a few delinquent kids. Those departments would know who they have in care and what their offenses are."

Applicability of census form to the facility

"It's very difficult to make my kind of program fit this form. I feel like I almost have to skew information that I would give in order to make it fit into one of their neat little boxes. There's no "not applicable" or escape route, so you sit there and try to figure it out, and sometimes you can't figure it out, so you don't do it. As I said, you get frustrated and throw it away. It's enough to make you crazy." Just overall, this needs to be reworked to better fit a different type of system, other than a pure locked system. You've got that, one way or another, in just about every state. You've got a system that's institutionalized. I understand that it would be tough to come up with one form for every purpose.

That's been my major problem. I look at this form when they send it to me. Why are they sending this to me? Why don't they just send this form to people who warehouse kids? Send them to big facilities. What we do here, it doesn't make any sense on this form. I can't make that fit onto this form to show that."

"My comment is that this is directed primarily at those kids who are adjudicated. For a facility like ours, it means spending a lot of time going through this questionnaire, trying to answer a lot of things that don't pertain to us. These kids are such a small proportion of our population that, from my point of view, it hardly seems worth the investment in time, considering the minimal number of kids I'm actually reporting on, that you're going to do anything with. If it is all 87 of my kids, it's one thing, but when it's only three kids, it doesn't make sense to me to do this." ... "I don't see that this applies to our situation. It affects such a minimal number of kids, I don't see how you can be getting anything useful out of it."

"The questionnaire does not fit shelters; it is not designed for the population he deals with at the shelter. He asks himself every two years "Why am I doing this?"

R1: "This section V.A. again addresses the same issue on kids being committed. If I want to fill this out for this runaway and homeless shelter, I'm sure I'd struggle each time, because it really doesn't fit anywhere because of the word, "committed." I would have said these were voluntary, though I probably would have just had the total up here, not the next part, because I wouldn't have known what to do with it. This is all committed, detained, those are the only references you are talking

about. But the language even makes it a totally separate".... R2: "Some folks that aren't as compulsive as us look at this and say, why even bother? So little of this applies to us. If Justice and HHS and maybe Labor and Education, if they could all get together and come up with something that is more uniform and build a central database, people could take out of it what they need. But that's pie in the sky..."

"The focus was just on kids who had been placed by the Juvenile Probation Department, that's all it seemed to be. They (the Bureau) is getting all the information on program, but they are not getting all the information about why the kids are there."

The form is difficult for her facility since it is geared towards the juvenile justice system, not treatment centers.

It is totally confusing in the respondent's facility (a detention center) to try to separate out the detained from the committed. The census form doesn't fit this facility. Her mission is just to detain kids. She does not provide treatment. The commitment relationship between the DJS and juvenile is not relevant to her. As a result, it doesn't make sense to her to divide up the detained and committed as we expect her to do. When GOVS called her to check on some numbers in this form, she insisted that the committed and detained kids could not be listed separately on the form.

Respondent burden

The census form categories don't match those the respondent uses. As noted earlier, he volunteered, "I think you can see...that your form drives us nuts." We try as best we can to match your questions with what we have, given the type of population we have ... It's difficult: it takes us quite awhile to get this form completed. We run all our data and then we have to mix and match with what you want."

"If you really wanted to zip through this you could lie. If the thing made you crazy enough, you could just lie. Believe me, I thought about this once or twice. But I didn't do it. I don't believe in doing that. That's a useless waste of energy for me and for the folks who have to process that information. But I bet a lot of people have fabricated answers just out of frustration alone to make it work. Just putting something down, because I can't think, I've got no idea what they want, so I'm putting this, cause this is what makes sense to me. And that's not lying, that's just frustration, trying to do the best you can."

When I asked for her comments on the census form she said, "I hate it!" "But I definitely have a feeling of accomplishment when I have completed it. I don't mind the statistical part. I guess the part I hate is that it takes me so doggone long and I have to go in so many places to get the information.

Just be as concise as possible, don't ask for anything you don't need just because you are curious. If someone says, Oh, I'd kind of like to know x, x might only be one question for that person but by the

time it gets down to the bottom where x has to be answered for 150 kids that requires a lot of looking things up, and record keeping and trying to find something and correlate it, so it's not just one simple question. It escalates as you get toward the bottom."

Percentages were hard to get accurately.

Form takes too long to fill out.

Form takes a long time to fill out. She had to do an entire roster to get the information in a form to do the counts we asked for.

Two other individuals who work on the form came in for the middle of the interview. They both agreed that the form takes "forever" to fill out. Their computer files are apparently kept somewhere else, and they have problems getting what they want from that facility.

Questionnaire is long, tedious and time consuming. There are many repetitious questions that seem to ask the same thing.

"It's just kind of cumbersome...maybe. I don't think there's anything wrong with it. It just takes time.

If there were a way to speed this up in some sections by going multiple choice or no and yes, that would help.

"There's no place for comments..or you would have heard some when we no longer had status offenders. At one point I filled that out. It took me days longer to do it. I had to research every one of the kids in the agency to find out if they have been status offenders.

"My other comment addresses the whole systemic view of data collection. We are asked to report on populations that are of interest to various funding sources, or federal departments or national groups, and they are interested in their own segment. It's increasingly a burden on us to respond. We do want to respond. We get a questionnaire that's very much juvenile justice oriented, and then next week we get one on mental health questions. We're constantly being asked to slice the apple in 100 different ways. Ideally, we would like to respond once, in a comprehensive way, for everybody. I know that's not possible, but it would certainly be a time saver if we could get there."

Request for more information about or from the census

"What is the reason for this census? Are we trying to count noses, trying to count the kids in detention?" (I explain about the census being conducted every two years to count kids in facilities. The data are used to write reports).

"I would like to see their reports. I don't need a whole database."

"Do we get the results of this? Are we included on the mailing list?"

"Data that OJJDP prints are misleading. People think that detention centers are warehouses where there is no treatment, but in actuality, there is. The publications should include the definitions."

He would like more information on the kinds of data that this questionnaire is used for before he fills out the questionnaire in the future.

New Data Needs and Requests

"As a practitioner this information is not very helpful to me. I need to know what programs are out there."

I'd like a census that would go into the day to day operations around the recidivism rate from state to state program and more specifically for secure treatment facilities, and their rates for sex offenders, violent offenders. Maybe there is something somebody else does in another state that would be helpful.

2. Comments and Suggestions on Specific Sections of the Census Form

Section II: Definitions

Include a list of definitions for terms.

Include a list of definitions.

The definition of juvenile is clear, but the first time he completed the form, he didn't even notice it was there.

In general, more terms should be defined where you use them in the form. That way, you don't need to keep looking back.

The definition of juvenile bothers him. He thinks of the word "juvenile" as a child who has committed a crime.

Define "committed."

"The definition for committed is not clear to me for placing juvenile offenders. Our kids are not juvenile offenders. Are they talking about status offenders, because the form keeps asking about them? If it is, then they are not committed..... It says [placement] of juvenile offenders, and in my mind that's a status offender or a juvenile delinquent. If that definition said, juvenile offenders or dependent and neglected youth... That was the problem. You've got dissonance in the questionnaire. The definitions didn't fit. Again, like the status offender. I couldn't find us in that.

Section IV: Classification issues

Facility type (multi-purpose)

It is hard to fill out because the facility is multi-faceted.

The respondent would rather have one form to fill out, with space for two answers where appropriate. He would rather not fill out 2 forms for the facility since some information is the same (budget, administrators), but he would fill out two forms if asked to do so.

Questionnaires were sent to each program. This was very time consuming. He would rather fill out one form.

The respondent did say that he had received some clarification calls on his census form answers. This is one long sequential program, the primary difference in the cottages, group homes and apartments is the level of supervision. He doesn't see these as separate functional units.

Other classification questions

(IV.B, D, and E) "Most" of population is problematic since the facility has 3 programs with very different security levels and types of kids (he has written letters in the past about this). The number of children in each program is often pretty close.

"Custodial authority (IV.B). I wonder what I actually put down there. I remember being just agonized over it. I wonder why that is called custodial authority. But of course you'd better keep that in there because there are juveniles who are committed and I think someone wants to know if they are detaining status offenders. We may accept delinquent offenders, if it's a minor offense. We go the other way; we'll take anyone we think we can help."

Community access (IV.E) There is a question on community access that includes schools and medical care. This doesn't fit his situation because those services are all provided within the facility.

Section V: Classifying children by custody status and by crime

1. Section V.A, V.B, and V.C.

Some kids can be both detained and committed, if they have been picked up and detained for a new crime since becoming committed. There is no way to record this dual status on the form.

She had trouble with children who were there on probation. She considered these kids as "detained" because they weren't committed, and yet they are "not necessarily voluntarily admitted". They really didn't fit anyone on the form.

She had trouble putting children in categories of delinquent and status offenders. She wasn't sure what we wanted here.

I asked her to look over the census form and she did. "It doesn't seem like they can be a status offender and a delinquent. It is either one or the other. All of the kids are status offenders and some of them are delinquents." At this point I asked her, where on the form would you put down information on the girl who stole a car? Would you put her on page 6 as a delinquent with a crime against property or would you put her on page 7 in the status offender section? "I think I'd probably put her here (in the status offender section) because usually status offenses are what gets them involved with DSS. I asked, "Do you think you would write a note on the form to explain this?" She indicated that she would write a note if there were space to do it. She says we need a comment section on the form.

"Some of the language in here doesn't match our vernacular, but it is not difficult to figure out what you are asking for. The big one is trying to squish all of our information into your categories. The big one is kids who are both pre- and post-adjudicated; there are no instructions on the form to record this."

Pre-Adjudicated, Adjudicated, Post-Adjudicated. This should be broken down more or described better, and more detail should be given. For example: "never been adjudicated, currently pending adjudication", previously adjudicated, currently pending a new charge", "dispositional sentence given", etc.

Section V.A: Custody by offender status

"What is this, committed delinquent offenders, adjudicated, what am I going to do with this? Adjudicated, pending adjudicated, committed delinquent offenders, adjudicated. That's not going to be any of ours."

"Page 5 as I think you can tell from our conversation is very difficult for me to figure out. That's where we're talking about the detained and the pending and the adjudicated, because of the system I'm responding from."

"The biggest issue is the one we already talked about. We no longer have status offenders in Pennsylvania. There is a lot of information the Census Bureau is not getting about our youth because the questions addressing those issues also address status offenders. They are tied in together. So our youth aren't necessarily covered on this form." In Section V. A., we would just put all of them in category 4 for juveniles who admitted themselves include runaways.

Section V, p. 5 is difficult to fill out because she does not have delinquent versus status offenders.

Sections V.B. and V.C: Offenses

Her facility does not log type of crime for every case.

The offense section is difficult because she does not have the information requested.

"The one difficulty was this breakdown on what kind of crimes we had. That was a biggie. We don't really keep that kind of record. We would have to pull the files. That was the most difficult. So many of them have multiple offenses, crossover offenses; that was really the most difficult."

I: "So on these two pages... you had all zeros for delinquent offenders and all zeros for status offenders"..."Out of curiosity, you said this program is oriented toward runaway kids. Now we have runaway in Section V labeled status offenders but I don't think it appears anywhere else. Would you be tempted to put the runaway kids here in Section V?"

R: I was frustrated, I was tempted, yes. I wanted to put it there and write a whole story.

I: "What's your story? I'm here to listen."

R: "We no longer have status offenders in this state"... "One hundred percent of the youth in this program are running away or homeless and you don't know that [because] they are not status offenders. We can't put it down...And truancy, a major issue for a lot of these kids. Incurable is probably 100% too. Curfew violations, 100%..."

R2: "It's frustrating to have the information and not be permitted to give it to you because of the way you write the questions."

R1: "It just left me with, what do I do with this?"

I: "So you sent it in with that area [Section V.C] as zeros. Did you write any kind of note to go along with this?"

R1: "No, I did not. Each time I've done this I've been under high pressure time and get it done by the deadline. They are calling for it."

R2: "I wouldn't write a note unless there was some indication that it was wanted."

R1: "This was a form thing that I saw, almost as a computer response to a computer was going to receive it, and there wasn't any space for that kind of thing."

I: So even at the time that they were considered status offenses, you would not have routinely written that in any specific place that was readily accessible.

I: "Oh yes, I didn't want to mislead by saying we had status offenders so I didn't fill it out. I was very frustrated because there was so much of this that didn't apply." "It's because of the way the questions are framed. You're not getting the information you want."

What does "charged" mean? Does this mean initial charge? Charge after plea bargaining? What if charges are dropped? [Authors' note: The word "charge" does not appear on pages 6 and 7, but the word "offenses" does and can be taken as a synonym. This same problem for pre-adjudicated children was raised by a respondent in another state. The offense for which the juvenile is held may

change as he/she moves from arresting offense to charged offense to adjudicated offense].

It is difficult to categorize the kids if they have a number of offenses. The kids who have been adjudicated as serious offenders might be easier to record. There is a totally different perspective, depending if you are more of a social worker or if you are from juvenile rehab (the agency that places and works with offenders).

Section V.B: Delinquents by offense, custody status, and sex

On page 6, I remember this well, this is the residential population on a snapshot day. It says "committed delinquent offenders: adjudicated." Okay, I understand that. Then we have pending adjudication and adjudicated. I just leave that blank, I just put 0000. I don't have pending adjudication, I have adjudicated, but I also have committed adjudicated delinquent. Get rid of this page. You need to redo this page. Some of your questions were fairly pointed around probably this page. Then you talk about committed and detained. I'm glad we talked about this because I get the sense that a lot of people basically complain about that big time and I'm just adding to their ranks. It's crazy."

When the respondent looked at Section V.B., all she saw was "crimes against persons", so she didn't fill any of that out.

There is a need better definitions of the crimes in section V, p. 6.

The way the census form lists offenses differs from the way they are recorded on the facility's "demographic" list. In particular, drug offenses in their records are not as specific as we request. She ended up putting all of the drug offense cases on the "other drug related offenses" V5b line, since she couldn't distinguish those who had distribution offenses, line V5a.

I: "If you have a juvenile who committed a serious crime on page 6, Section V, would you list him in this category or not?"

R: "No, it says committed, detained."

I: "So even though you might have had someone who was a delinquent offender, you would not fill this out because it says delinquent offender?"

R reads the line again: "Indicate the number of committed and detained.." "Yes." I: "So committed and detained status offenders.."

R: We're going to take the words committed out, right? and detained?

I: Would you call that a status offender then?

R: Well, I don't know. What is this question.. This is a person that has done a crime but has not been adjudicated, will not be adjudicated, because they are dropped at intake. I can't really tell you who decides to drop it at intake, but that's what happens... He's never prosecuted for this, but he'll tell you, yeah, I stole 27 cars. I cannot say he's a criminal, he hasn't gone to trial.

Response category 7: Technical Probation or parole violators. He doesn't know this count as of a particular day. He writes in "unknown".

Section V.C. Status offenders by offense, custody status, and sex

Most serious charge alleged is difficult with status offenders and neglect. It depends on how you look at it. If a kid is abused and runs away, the abuse may be looked at more seriously, but the kid was the victim, not the criminal.

Section V.C. has to do with the total number of status offenders and detained status offenders who are runaways, truancy, incorrigibility, curfew violations, all that kinds of stuff. You don't know that, but our kids are not status offenders." I asked what would she do with this question? She says I don't do anything with it; I put down zero. I don't have those status offenders. This implies to me that this is information about status offenders. I don't have any status offenders. This is a semantic distinction. In V.C. she noticed that the column headings were "adjudicated" and "committed". Since her children didn't fit here, she left that section blank.

What is the difference between running away and truancy? They are sometimes lumped together and sometimes not. He defined running away as gone less than 24 hours and truancy as more than 24 hours.

Section VII Race

She does not have ethnicity on her records. She only has black/white breakdown, not Hispanic origin (this also goes for section 10 on staff ethnicity).

She also commented on the breakdowns by ethnicity and gender. In the past, they didn't break this out. When GOVS called to get this information, she had to guess. She thinks they may be able to do this breakout now since they have improved the computer programs.

Race is not broken down into White, Hispanic, African American, Asian, and Other. There are no further breakdowns.

"Race and ethnicity need to be expanded upon. Racial groups we pick up frequently are Portuguese and Cape Verdans, and there doesn't seem to be a place to put them. They don't consider themselves black or Hispanic, so we need an "other" category and there isn't one. I get kids who don't fit this categorization. They are not unknown, we have them, but there's just no place to put them on the form."

The Race categories do not match what Michigan uses. Michigan uses white, black, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander and unknown. They do not keep Hispanics broken out by black/white. They include them in "unknown". The problem is that both parents are needed to prove Hispanic origin.

Under race, we just classify black, white, or Hispanic. Asian, or Pacific-Islander covers a multitude of people. For awhile we were getting a number of Asians, Koreans, and some Vietnamese, although we don't have any now. I think you would might want to know if it is a Korean or Vietnamese.

Race was difficult to classify. There is no "mixed" race category such as bi-racial or multi-racial.

"I was curious about just focusing on Hispanic and American Indian. There wasn't a place for biracial, that is white/black." (I explain about the federal classification of race/ethnicity). "Around here about 60% of the population uses "African American." You might want to do this.

There's no place for Italians...but we never get into trouble.

Section VIII Average Daily Population

Average Daily Population (Section 8) is difficult since they don't have admissions information by facility.

Section IX Length of stay

He is never able to get length of stay (page 9) accurately because length of stay [in his facility] includes institutional time and then parole time. He can't approximate institutional time for some of the categories.

For census purposes, it's very frustrating. Juvenile residential program puts down different ages. Then it talks about length of stay and movement. I need a space for comments because I have no way to explain that I'm talking about a different age population when they talk about movement and length of stay. Some girls have got infants that were born while they were with us. It doesn't make any sense to talk about the baby's movement separate from the mother's. I have no place to explain that we have a whole different situation at those facilities.

So you really need a place, maybe down at the bottom of the page, for "additional relevant information." I have answered all of those but never thought I was being consistent, that it was making sense. The information is not there (about length of stay).

Section X: Personnel

Sometimes Section A and B (Personnel) don't add up. The respondent has a lot of trouble making distinctions among categories.

The respondent had difficulty with the staff sections. These are not fully computerized, as the juvenile records are. She had to get this from headquarters.

Race of personnel/staff falls into different categories.

Section XI: Educational, Treatment, and Medical Programs

"On page 11, halfway down, it has treatment programs. All of the therapy provided for children is off the grounds, as this is not a therapeutic facility.

"The form doesn't seem to, and maybe is not intended to, relate to whether anything happens within the facility. It asks for what kinds of programs you have but it doesn't seem to have a lot of knowledge about what kinds of programs might exist, and there's no room to reflect whether the program is successful or not and that may not be anything that this form is meant to do. But somebody somewhere should be collecting this. On page 10 for treatment programs, there's not much room to list other programs, other than what's already listed."

The R is not sure the treatment programs and type of program sections (page 10, section XIB) tell us a whole lot. In her words, "These are pretty broad categories. I marked "Yes" to services available, but these services are pretty generic. I'm not sure if that would be real helpful information if I wanted to know what kind of treatment a kid went through. It is so broad. [Section XI.B] talks about whether the service is available. Maybe that is why you are interested in it. But if you wanted to know how it is provided to their juveniles, things like family counselling. I'd say, 'yeah, we have it available,' but it is not well utilized by the juveniles, they often don't take advantage of it. I do not know that your report would say that the majority of the programs have family counselling available, but I could tell you how the majority of the youth's families are not getting that counselling because they chose not to participate. Things like that, if you wanted to get picky about it. I would say that is probably not information, as far as I'm concerned.

Section XII Expenditures

The budget section is a problem every year. This information makes sense to administration staff, but not to institutional staff. No one does a budget from January to Dec. We do the budget from July to June.

When I asked for her comments on the census form she said, "I hate it!" "But I definitely have a feeling of accomplishment when I have completed it. I don't mind the statistical part. I guess the part I hate is that it takes me so doggone long and I have to go in so many places to get the information. "With this type of facility, all of our expenditures are handled in other departments outside the facility, so I can't tell you what the annual salary is. And I can't tell you how much we

spend for bread and milk. And I can't tell you how much the facility's improvements are. Everything is done by another branch of the county. Someplace in here they ask about capital improvements. I can't answer that, we don't build new buildings, but if we have to build another roof, we have to go to another branch of the county. That's not a decision that we get to make, we can ask for it, we can say we need it, but we don't get it until somebody says it's okay."

The budget is for the entire division. It is difficult to extract the budget for this program alone.

"There's something else where they want a salary range. I don't give those. It's absolutely against my grain to give salary ranges. I think it's a violation and I am not going to give it. That's wrong. They should know how low-paid people are. They don't need to have it reinforced how low they are. I just won't give it, but that's me. I know other people have issues with that too, and a lot of my other colleagues won't give that kind of information. They think it's wrong." [Authors' note: Salary ranges are not requested; the form just asks for the total for gross salaries].

She had a hard time separating personnel and budget.