



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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The National Juvenile Court Data Archive Web Site

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) established the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (the Archive) to provide juvenile justice professionals, policy-makers, researchers, and the public with the most detailed information available on the activities of the Nation's juvenile courts. The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), which has maintained the Archive for OJJDP since 1975, developed the Archive Web site as a component of OJJDP's *Statistical Briefing Book* (ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/index.html) to inform researchers of data sets housed in the Archive and the procedures for accessing them.

workloads of juvenile courts across the Nation, including demographic information about the juveniles involved and case processing characteristics for delinquency and status offense cases.

The Archive Web site displays these data sets with variable lists and with user guides—technical manuals that contain information about a data set (e.g., record layout, variable descriptions, and code values). A user guide contains the documentation needed to read and manipulate the data when using a statistical software package.



Data collection

Jurisdictions containing nearly 70% of the U.S. juvenile population contribute more than 1 million new juvenile court case records to the Archive every year. The Archive does not require courts to use Federal definitions and standardized data forms. Instead, it accepts data as collected at the local level based on the individual reporting requirements of each information system. As a result of this unique data collection effort, the Archive maintains an extensive set of disparate data files detailing the



Ease of use

For users who are uncertain if the Archive contains a data set to meet their research needs, the Web site provides a search engine that explores the contents of the data holdings in different ways. For example, searching “by variable” allows the user to retrieve all user guides and variable lists that include specific words in their variable labels. This option includes a link to a help screen with tips on how to perform a search, instructions on how to expand or narrow a search, and strategies to use when confusion exists about the spelling of a term. Searching “by concept” enables the user to select from a list of predefined categories (concepts) pertinent to a topic. For example, a researcher may

be interested in data sets that contain information on the use of detention. Using the dropdown list provided to search for the concept of “detention” results in a listing of data sets that contain such variables as “interim placement,” “number of days in detention,” “secure detention,” and “detention screening outcome.”



Information on the Web site

The Archive houses two types of data sets. “Annual disposition” data files contain case-level records for all referrals disposed by a court in a calendar year. “Birth cohort” data files are constructed based on the juvenile’s date of birth and contain a record for every referral in a juvenile’s official court career.

The site contains information about the Archive, a brief history of the project, the procedure for ordering data sets, and an explanation of NCJJ’s compliance with U.S. Department of Justice regulations regarding confidentiality of identifiable research and statistical information. A list of products and publications supported by Archive data and links to related juvenile justice resources are also posted on the site.

Researchers are encouraged to browse the Web site and download user guides for the data sets of interest. In addition, Archive staff are available via e-mail, telephone, and regular mail to discuss research interests and help researchers select the data sets they need.

For further information

For more information on the National Juvenile Court Data Archive and the Archive Web site, contact:

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Anne L. Stahl is the Manager of Data Collection for the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is supported by an OJJDP grant.

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