



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20531

December 16, 2009

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Federal Coordination Working Group, a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), is updating tribal leaders concerning our ongoing efforts to improve tribal crime data in Indian country. We are reaching out directly to the tribes to share important information.

Our primary goal is to support each and every tribe in the development of an ongoing system in which they can successfully report tribal crime data and receive the funds to which they are entitled. We further hope to better understand the challenges facing tribal communities and the rates and types of crimes committed in Indian country.

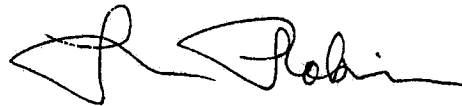
The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) provided DOJ with funding for grants to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement to combat violence against women, to fight internet crimes against children, and to construct or renovate correctional facilities on tribal lands. Under the BJS Recovery Act - Tribal Crime Data Collection, Analysis, and Estimation Project (RA-TCD), DOJ has awarded funds to help improve the availability and quality of tribal criminal justice data and statistics in Indian country. These data can then be used for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program formula grant calculations (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/jag.html). Grantees may use JAG funds for a wide variety of purposes to improve or enhance law enforcement programs related to criminal justice. However, jurisdictions cannot be eligible for JAG funds if they do not submit crime statistics to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. The RA-TCD project is a collaborative effort to help tribes more accurately describe crimes committed in Indian country through technical assistance, training, and information sharing.

The RA-TCD project is designed to improve the data available for submission to the FBI's UCR program—not to replace any current submission activities. Tribes who are currently submitting monthly crime reports to BIA's District Offices should continue

to do so. BIA, as a member of this coordination team, will then submit the data for each tribe to the FBI's UCR program. The crime data will continue to serve a number of purposes at BIA, including the Government Accountability Reform Act of 1993. These monthly reports are also used to assess funding requests received by tribal programs for the High Crime High Priority funding initiatives.

To ensure that those who benefit from the RA-TCD initiative have the information they need to be successful, BJS has partnered with two firms familiar to Indian country, Westat of Rockville, Maryland, and the Northern Arapahoe Tribal Industries of Riverton, Wyoming, to provide information and training about these data to any tribe interested in participating. For more information, please see the enclosed Q&A sheet. You may also contact Steven W. Perry, Bureau of Justice Statistics, at (202) 307-0777 or Steven.W.Perry@usdoj.gov for follow-up questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Robinson", written in a cursive style.

Laurie O. Robinson
Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure

Recovery-Act Tribal Crime Data Collection, Analysis, and Estimation Project

Questions and Answers

1. Why is this project tied to the Recovery Act?

Project funds will be used to hire Native Americans to provide training and technical assistance in an effort to increase the number of tribes submitting crime data to the FBI. More sustainable economic benefits may be realized by your tribe as a result of submitting crime data to the FBI and thereby becoming eligible to receive JAG funds set aside by Congress. JAG funds can be used for a number of law enforcement activities all directed at increasing criminal justice resources in Indian country. JAG grantees may utilize the funds for local initiatives, technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and information systems for criminal justice, as well as research and evaluation activities that will improve or enhance law enforcement programs related to criminal justice. The crime data gathered by tribes also can provide significant support for pursuing grants beyond the JAG funding and for leveraging other financial resources.

2. Why do tribal crime data matter?

While this project is examining all criminal justice system statistics in Indian country, the key focus is to increase the number of tribes that are correctly submitting timely counts of selected crimes (those on the UCR Return A form) to the BIA, their state, or the FBI. Once these data are submitted, they can be included in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report database. The current requirement for JAG funding is that an entity submits FBI UCR data in at least 3 years of the last 10 years. The systematic collection and reporting of law enforcement data provides tribes and communities an opportunity to better understand criminal activities in their lands and communities. With this information, tribal leaders and law enforcement staff are better able to plan their services and allocate resources.

3. What is the role of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program?

The FBI's UCR Program has provided reliable, uniform crime statistics since 1930. Today, its annual statistical publication, *Crime in the United States*, is produced from data provided by nearly 17,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide. However, few tribes report – individually or through state UCR programs – to this FBI program. Many tribes report their UCR data to BIA which, in turn, forwards only aggregated UCR data to the FBI's UCR Program. This new initiative will enable BIA data to be disaggregated so that individual tribes are identified as governmental units that may be eligible for JAG funding. Most importantly, these data will enable the FBI, BIA, and BJS to identify missing and/or under-reported tribal crime statistics, and reach out to these tribes to provide any needed information, training, or technical assistance.

4. Are tribes required to participate?

While participation in this project is voluntary, tribes with contracts to conduct police functions are strongly encouraged to continue report their data on a monthly basis and to their BIA District Offices. Assistance will be available to train and support both current and "new" participants to meet the requirements of the FBI's UCR program reporting in their monthly reporting activity. Westat, Inc., of Rockville, MD, and the Northern Arapahoe Tribal Industries (NATI) of Riverton, WY are preparing to provide information, training, and technical assistance about these data to any tribe interested in participating.

5. What do tribes need to do in the immediate future?

All federally recognized tribes with an official police department or BIA law enforcement service agency should submit monthly law enforcement reports to the BIA. The tribal police departments should provide accurate counts of offenses known to the law enforcement agency (i.e., offenses applicable for the UCR, based on Return A). Tribal police should authenticate the monthly submission as correct and official.

If a tribe currently submits monthly law enforcement reports to the state, the BIA, or both, the tribe should continue to do so as directed by the appropriate state agency.

Tribes are invited to participate in a specialized UCR training provided by the FBI in coordination with the BJS Recovery Act initiative and BIA. Expenses for travel, lodging, and meals (per diem) will be provided for up to two persons per tribe. The dates (anticipated first week in June 2010) and locations for the training will be determined based on all requests received by **March 1, 2010**. To participate in this planned UCR training, **submit a request to Steven.W.Perry@usdoj.gov** as soon as possible to ensure adequate planning. Include “**UCR Training**” in the subject line, as well as the following in the body of the message:

- Official tribal/reservation name;
- Official name of the tribal law enforcement agency;
- Name, title, and contact information of the law enforcement officer nominated to attend and responsible for submission of crime data on behalf of your tribal organization; and
- Name, title, and contact information of a tribal leadership representative that may also wish to attend.

6. What will Westat and NATI and the federal partners do to assist tribes improve the collection, quality, and utility of data?

The project is a two-year effort, with several specific tasks to complete during this timeframe. Among other things, the project will assess and improve how FBI and BIA standards are applied to crime reporting in tribal law enforcement agencies and help these agencies meet UCR submission standards.

For example, project staff will seek tribal input into tribal challenges and possible solutions in collecting crime data through local and national conferences. Please participate in these conference listening sessions to help us better understand the challenges faced in Indian country. The project staff also will facilitate information dissemination about training sessions in Uniform Crime Reporting conducted by the FBI and provide tribal-specific training in this data submission process. Tribal leaders will also receive material in the mail about ways to receive individual help and guidance on data collection and reporting by telephone through this project.

7. Who do tribes contact with questions about Recovery Act project or their crime data or the planned Recovery Act UCR training?

If your tribe is interested in attending UCR training sessions in the future or have additional questions or comments about the Recovery Act project, tribal crime data, or JAG eligibility please send an e-mail to ASKBJS@usdoj.gov and enter “BJS Recovery Act,” in the subject line. Be sure to include your contact information. Also, if your question is not addressed here, please free to contact **Steven W. Perry, Statistician** and BJS Recovery Act Program Manager, at Steven.W.Perry@usdoj.gov or at 202-307-0777.