



Census of Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the statistical agency for the U.S. Department of Justice, is designing a new data collection effort called the Census of Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies (CTLEA). CTLEA will collect information from tribal law enforcement agencies serving federally recognized tribes, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) operated law enforcement agencies and Alaskan Village Public Safety Offices (VPSOs). By developing three separate surveys, one for each type of tribal law enforcement agency, CTLEA will provide a detailed picture of law enforcement for each of the agency types and will aid federal, state, local and tribal governments in their future policy and funding decisions. The surveys are expected to have a set of core questions to be asked of all agencies and a series of questions that will focus specifically on items relevant to the agency type.

What information will be collected?

CTLEA will collect information from the surveyed agencies on their administrative structure, responsibilities, operations, and resources. Information will also be collected on the potential obstacles faced by tribal law enforcement agencies and VPSOs when providing services. BJS anticipates that questions will be asked requesting information about the following topics:

- Recruitment and staffing
- Training and certification
- Funding sources
- Current crime levels and emerging crime and justice problems
- Criminal justice workloads
- Coordination for other justice agencies
- Equipment
- Technology uses and needs
- Data sharing with other tribal, local, state and federal agencies

Who is working on the program?

CTLEA partially fulfills the BJS mandate from the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (TLOA) that BJS “establish and implement such tribal data collection systems as the BJS Director determines to be necessary.” BJS is working with NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the IACP’s Indian Country Law Enforcement Section (ICLES) to develop the three surveys.

How will the surveys be developed?

Project staff will seek input from panels of tribal leaders, justice experts, and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as from Federal agencies including Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Three expert panel meetings will also be convened as a platform to collect input and feedback during the survey development. Each meeting will focus on one survey so that topics of concern to each type of agency may be fully explored.

When will data collection begin?

BJS anticipates that surveys will be mailed in early 2017 and will ask questions about calendar year 2016.

Why is it important to collect these data?

This is the first BJS statistical data collection effort that focuses specifically on tribal law enforcement agencies and will provide information to tribal justice agencies, state and local agencies, policy makers, and the general public about the responsibilities, size, and structure of tribal law enforcement agencies; the services provided; agency needs; and challenges faced.

Collecting these data will benefit tribal law enforcement agencies by:

- providing a means for tribal justice agencies to educate and inform others about their work
- providing factual, unbiased and comparison information that can be used to justify budgetary requests
- providing baseline information to gauge the changing environment in which tribal law enforcement agencies work
- describing the unique challenges that tribal law enforcement agencies face
- informing national, state and local policymakers and funding sources of the needs of tribal law enforcement agencies.

How can you contact us?

If you would like to contribute to the development of the CTLEA surveys or have any questions about the CTLEA program, please contact NORC at CTLEA@NORC.org.