



Census of Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the statistical agency for the U.S. Department of Justice, is planning 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 and law enforcement agencies operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). By developing two 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 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 agencies on their administrative structure, responsibilities, operations, and resources. Information will also be collected on the potential obstacles faced by the agency when providing services. Questions will be asked requesting information about the following topics—

- recruitment and staffing
- training and certification
- budget and funding sources
- equipment
- coordination with other justice agencies
- technology uses and needs
- data sharing with other tribal, local, state and federal agencies
- current crime levels and emerging crime and justice problems
- criminal justice workloads.

Who is working on the program?

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

How were the surveys developed?

Project staff sought 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 BIA.

A tribal law enforcement expert panel meeting was convened in October 2016, with representatives from tribal police departments, BIA agencies, the FBI, and other DOJ offices as a platform to collect input on information needs and survey content.

When will data collection begin?

BJS anticipates that surveys will be mailed to agencies around August 2017, pending Office of Management and Budget final approval. Surveys will ask questions about 2017 agency characteristics and 2016 crime statistics.

Why is it important to collect these data?

This is the first BJS 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 have any questions about the CTLEA program, please contact Steven W. Perry, BJS Statistician, at Steven.W.Perry@usdoj.gov or (202) 307-0777.