LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA)

POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT	Policy and Procedure Manual for Release of Computer Data
PROJECT NUMBER	76-100/065
FOR	California Department of Justice Bureau of Criminal Statistics
CONTRACTOR	Public Administration Service 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W. Washington, D. C. 20036
CONSULTANT	Martin Qualters
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PREFACE

Mr. Willard H. Hutchins, Chief of the California Bureau of Criminal Statistics, requested technical assistance from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to "develop a formal method to assure the orderly flow of data to the academic community, LEAA and others." LEAA provided the technical assistance through a consultant under its contract with Public Administration Service, Washington, D.C.

The task involved a review of existing documentation, the conduct of personal interviews, and an examination of existing policies and procedures. It was apparent that Mr. Hutchins had given the problem of data release a great deal of attention. He had methodically established internal controls, written various memos, and had contacted several LEAA and state officials regarding the problems of data release. After discussing BCS policies and procedures with Mr. Hutchins and his staff, and after reviewing the existing documentation, it became apparent that the main task was to assemble the existing internal memoranda and informal policies and procedures into a draft document. Next, continuity between diverse memos was provided and some concepts expanded.

The following employees were interviewed:

Mr. Willard Hutchins, Chief

Ms. Barbara Berry, Project Management Control Coordinator

Mr. Peter Narloch, Director,
Statistical Analysis Center

Mr. Robert Livingston, Technical
Assistance Administrator

Ms. Sandi Grout, Technical
Assistance Staff.

I wish to thank them for their assistance.

INTRODUCTION

The California Bureau of Criminal Statistics (BCS) has been collecting, analyzing, and publishing criminal justice statistics for many years. The number of requests for data has grown rapidly over the past few years. This year almost one thousand special requests are expected. As more potential data users become aware of the vast amount of data at BCS, the number of requests will increase even more. Part of the demand for data is a result of the Comprehensive Data Systems (CDS) program, funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the U.S. Department of Justice. The CDS program encourages states to develop Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) programs, Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) programs, Management and Administrative Statistics (MAS) programs, and provides for the establishment of a Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) and a Technical Assistance (TA) component.

As data becomes available from the programs, and as data users become aware of the availability of such data, the demand grows. The growth in demand is also attributable to the users' knowledge of the regular programs of BCS. The demand for data for planning, operations, and research is expected to grow with the availability of data. Too often in the past, decisions made in criminal justice agencies were based on factors unsupported by hard statistics.

The impact on BCS of this large demand for data has been significant. In previous years, requests were handled on an ad hoc basis. As the number of requests rapidly increased, and as the demand on the Bureau's limited resources grew, the Bureau Chief began to develop policy and procedures for the release of data.

Three organization charts showing the relationship of the Bureau of Criminal Statistics to the Identification and Information Branch and to the Division of Law Enforcement follow.

Part I of the following report describes BCS Data Release Policy: Part II describes BCS Data Release Procedures.

Chart I

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

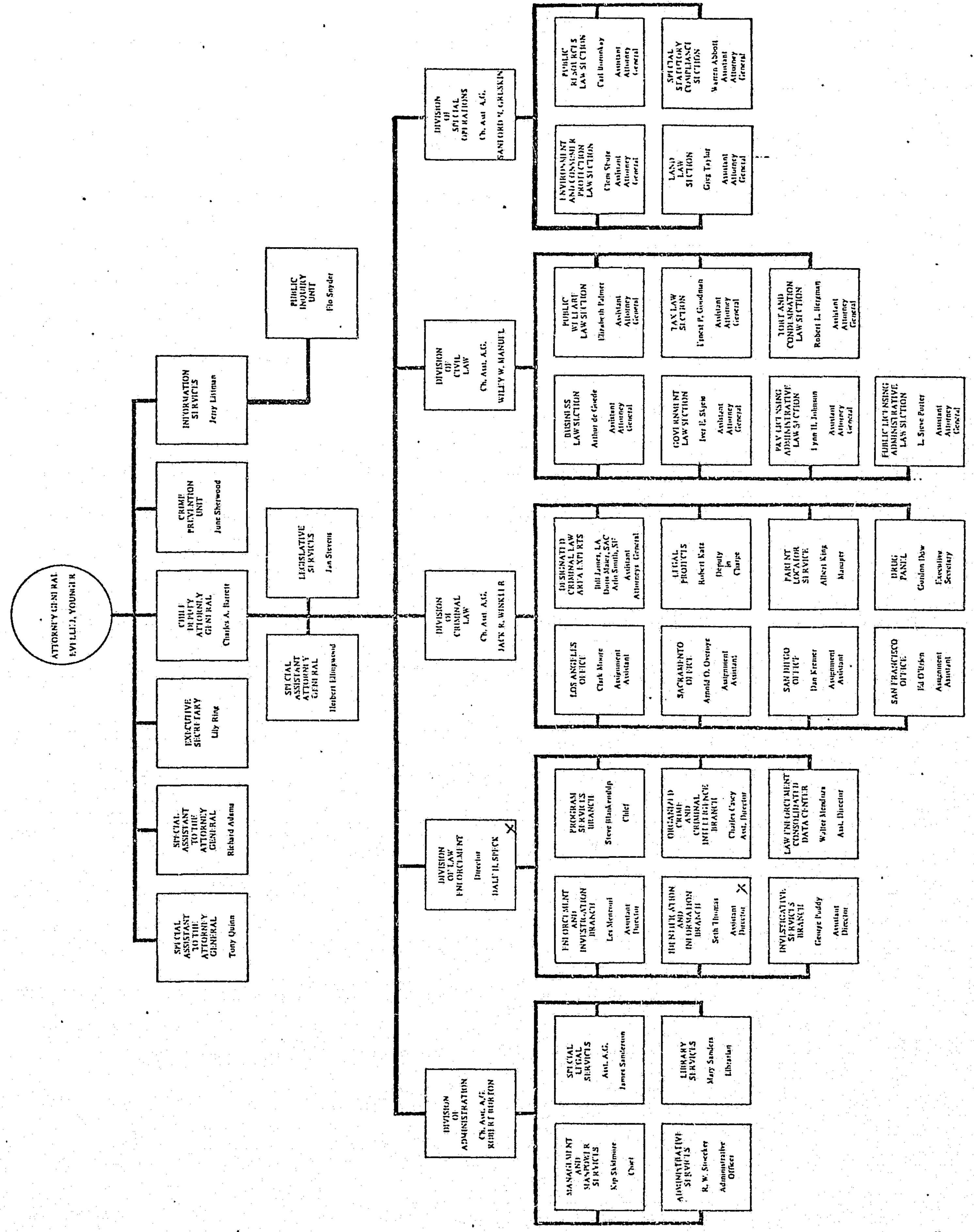


Chart II

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Identification and Information Branch

DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

(A) IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION BRANCH
- Assistant Director*

(B) PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

DOJ Admin. I	1

(C) CRIMINAL RECORD SECURITY UNIT

Cr.Jus.Spec. III	1
Cr.Jus.Spec. I	1
Jr. Staff Analyst	1
Senior Steno.	1
Clerk Typist II-B	1

(D) ADMIN. ASSISTANT

Assoc. GPA	1

(E) CLERICAL UNIT

Secretary I	1
Clerk Typist II-B	1

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS (See Chart III)

BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION

* Peace officer

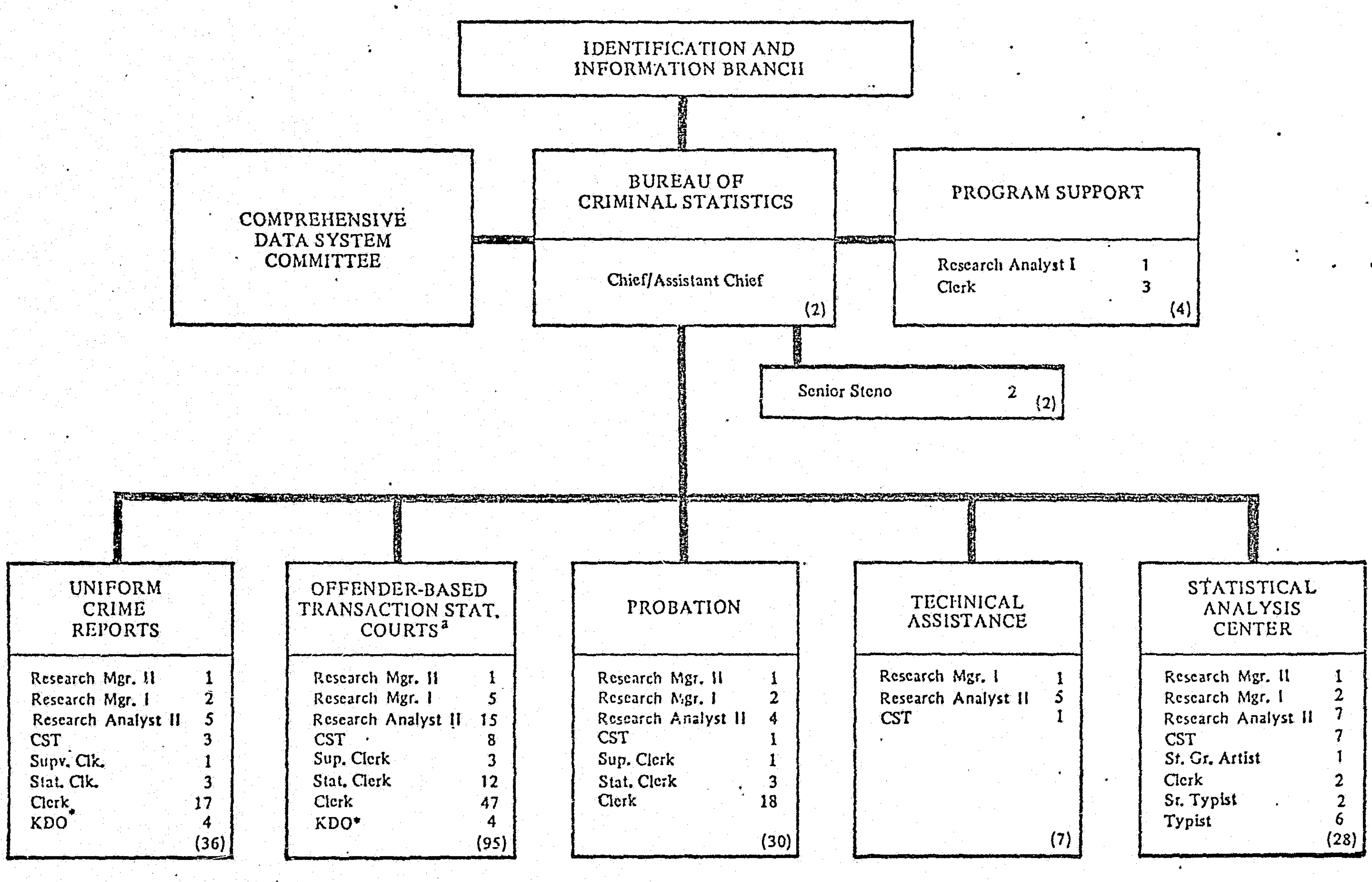
April 1, 1975

Chart III

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bureau of Criminal Statistics



* Assigned to LECDC

(a) One Research Mgr. I assigned to Assistant Director, one Research Mgr. I assigned to FSB. Three Research Analyst II's assigned to FSB. Three Research Analyst II's assigned to LECDC.

(a) One Clerk assigned to FSB.

June 1976

Part I

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS DATA RELEASE POLICY

Let us look at how data is released by BCS. The several methods are:

1. Standard publications
2. Tabulation
3. Computer tapes
4. Computer-oriented microfiche
   (in developmental stage)
5. Press releases and briefings
6. Lectures
7. Special requests

We will concern ourselves in this document only with the release of data via computer tapes, microfiche, and special request.

As information developed from CDS components became available, BCS released data to several universities, LEAA and others. Several questions have arisen from this process. What should be the format of the data? That is, should BCS reformat the data to that requested, or should BCS release the data in the normal BCS format? Should BCS attempt to establish a standard format in conjunction with other states and LEAA? What can BCS require of the user in terms of publication or re-release of data? Can BCS require anything of the user? How should costs be allocated? Should BCS charge out-of-state users and not in-state users? Can BCS protect itself against potential misuse of data? What procedures should be established to insure that the data is indeed accurate? What additional information can

BCS provide the user to minimize inaccurate assumptions about the data? The State Data Center of the University of California was a recipient of data from BCS via computer tapes. In the process of releasing this data, the following reasons, benefits, possible problems, and policy criteria were identified.

Reasons for Data Release

Some reasons for the Statistical Analysis Center to release this information are:

1. Data developed by CDS come from defined and controlled statistical systems and usually cross various jurisdictions and time periods. Only a state center is able to provide such a large body of consistent and uniform information.
2. Data development is usually the most costly aspect of research. Many data bases built by researchers merely duplicate information, on a limited scale, already established by BCS. Existing CDS data could be used to satisfy many inquiries or serve as a basis for more extensive research.
3. BCS information is considered public information three weeks after its initial release. The release of magnetic tapes simply extends this concept.

4. The Bureau has legal authority to work with criminal justice agencies. It is an accepted practice. Academic researchers lack this acceptance and statutory authority. As a result, their data bases are often incomplete.
5. Machine readable information is already being released upon special request to colleges, universities, law schools, and other governmental agencies subject to departmental approval. Making selected data routinely available to the total research body possibly would reduce individual requests.

Benefits

Benefits accruing to the Department would include the following:

1. The Department's reputation for supporting scholarly inquiries into criminality would be further enhanced.
2. Releasing information fulfills some of the general objectives of the Comprehensive Data System, the Statistical Analysis Center, and Technical Assistance grants.
3. A different level of analysis may be accessed at no cost to the state budget, and little or none to the CDS grants.

4. Problems of a statewide nature addressed through special data bases developed by CDS would be available for local researchers while issues are relatively current.
5. Some reduction in academic research costs, many subsidized by LEAA or state funds, would be possible.

Problems

Problems associated with release of information could include the following:

1. Once information is released, both analysis and interpretation are removed from BCS control. This has never been a serious problem in the past, even with volatile issues. Further, researchers often provide drafts to BCS for review and screening out of obvious errors even though they are not required to do so.
2. Proprietary rights are often ignored. Thus, even if the state colleges and universities agreed not to release duplicate tapes, it would be almost impossible to actually control. The data are essentially public information anyway, available from BCS by special request.

Policy Criteria

Information released must meet the following policy criteria:

1. Statistical records must have passed human and machine edits before their release in statistical format.
2. All data released must be the product of an official BCS/CDS data base.
3. The data center must give final review and approval of the quality of information in terms of the logic behind the data elements and coding schemes, insure machine edits were performed, and in general verify data are consistent and clean.
4. Security and privacy policies must be met. These require the removal of all individual identifiers including name, local identification number, state identification number, and any individual case number that would permit linking an event or process to an individual offender.
5. Jurisdiction identifiers must be limited to a county code with the exception of census tract information.
6. Technical assistance staff must provide a technical format description of the data base for adaptation by the user.

7. All correspondence, exchange of tapes, and other transactions must be keyed to a single job stream number assigned and controlled by the Bureau Chief.
8. Each tape must be accompanied by an abstract prepared by the analyst who developed the data, and approved by the Data Center administrator.

User Data Restrictions

No restrictions need to be placed against users. Records stored should be available to all scholars, planners, and administrators who meet the user requirements of the state college or university storing the data.

Administrative Restrictions

An administrative structure within the university or college research community is essential to properly administer academic research data bases. Data centers chosen should have a group of scholars, planners, and persons otherwise familiar with criminal justice administration to screen abstracts provided by the BCS/CDS. They would specify those records that meet academic needs. Such centers would be required to maintain records so that the BCS can determine types of persons using specific statistical records, and the probable uses of the data. Further, these centers should provide the BCS with a copy of all printouts.

Part II

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS DATA RELEASE PROCEDURES

This part describes procedures for project management control, computer tape release, release of data by special request, and release of data to LEAA.

Project Management Control

PMC was designed to make job assignments, to fix responsibility on individual employees, to assess costs of proposed projects, to monitor workflow, to establish review procedures to see that due dates are met, to establish quality control over statistical and other products, to methodically inform Branch and Division management of BCS efforts, to determine data needs, and to help evaluate the Comprehensive Data System.

PMC provides:

1. A control log which lists all special requests in order of date assigned
2. A program for assigning responsibility, due dates, and costs
3. A computer program for follow-up controls on due dates
4. A computer program which summarizes data output

PMC has been administered by the Bureau Chief with the assistance of a Coordinator who reports directly to him. PMC is now in the process of being transferred to the Statistical Analysis Center Director from the Bureau Chief. The normal flow of assignments is from Chief to Program Administrator. The Chief sets priorities and affirms or restates goals and objectives of assignments. He will continue to make individual job assignments.

Responsibilities of the PMC Coordinator

The Coordinator collates and logs all incoming special requests, assigns them a job stream number, administers the computer control program for checking due dates, writes a parameter-based computer program summarizing these requests, and keeps a chronological file of completed special requests. All major programs, Project Implementation Plans (PIP), and special requests are monitored by the PMC Coordinator, under the direction of the Chief, to see that assigned jobs are done on time. Major programs are on-going tasks such as the Arrest Register, OBTS file, etc., and other continuing programs requiring a major effort or expenditure. Project Implementation Plans (see publication of same title for more detail) are those jobs which require a formal work plan to describe milestones, estimated completion dates, and approval signatures. The Bureau Chief determines tasks requiring formal plans. Division policy requires PIP when significant data processing services are needed. Special requests are requests for information or special studies from outside sources which require preparation of data either already published (xeroxing), syntaxing, posting tables, or preparing analytical presentations.

The Coordinator produces a biweekly status report on major programs, PIP programs, and all special requests. These reports show the status of special requests and the per cent of milestones completed for major programs and PIP programs. (See Appendix for PMC forms).

If milestone dates have not been met, the Coordinator notifies the Chief so he can make the assigned Program Administrator accountable. If justified, a new due date may be set by the Chief. Each succeeding milestone date is also to be examined and reset if necessary.

Requests for Data Which Exceed a Cost of $250

When the Attorney General, Director of the Division of Law Enforcement, or the Assistant Director of Identification and Information Branch approves special requests that require additional effort beyond that normally expended in the daily routine (exceeding $250), the Program Administrator assigned that task completes the staff work for the appropriate top manager.

If there are no reimbursable costs, the steps in paragraph one under "Procedures for Special Requests" described later in this report, are followed. If there are reimbursable costs from private vendors or commercial source requestors, a mini contract is set up. Reimbursable projects costing $250 or more require a contract.

Computer Tape Release

Two procedures have been developed for the release of data by computer tape.

Release of New Data to Original Requestor

Procedure 1 is used when a request is received for data which has not been previously released by the Bureau. This procedure involves the preparation of the release tapes, technical manuals, and data abstracts.

1. The SAC or component receives the request for data. Components are units within BCS that have data, for example, the UCR component has arrest data.
2. The PMC creates a job folder for the request and routes it to SAC.
3. The appropriate component initiates an internal job folder to work on data base.
4. The component and SAC work together to create a clean data file - run conditional checks, perform edits, and select data elements for release.
5. The component routes the clean data tape and description of data elements to TA component.
6. The component closes its internal job folder.
7. The TA initiates an internal job folder for working on the technical manual and tape.
8. The TA prepares a technical manual and tape with selected data elements for release. A technical manual describes the physical structure of the tape, e.g. 9 channel, 800 BPI.
9. The TA routes the technical manual and tape to SAC.
10. The TA closes internal folder.

11. The SAC prepares a data abstract and cover memo, and forwards the data tape, abstract, and technical manual to requestor.
12. The SAC routes the request folder to PMC to close.
13. The TA establishes internal file of all documents to answer future requests (by other agencies) for the same data.

Release of Duplicate Data to New Requestor

Procedure 2 is used when a request is received for data which has been previously released to another requestor by the Bureau. This procedure involves the duplication of technical manuals and data abstracts, and the preparation of duplicate data release tapes.

1. The SAC or component receives request for data.
2. The PMC creates job folder for request and routes to SAC.
3. The TA creates data release tapes, and duplicates technical manuals and data abstracts for SAC.
4. The TA prepares data release form for the internal file.
5. The SAC forwards data tape, abstract, and technical manual to requestor.
6. The SAC routes request folder to PMC to close.

Computer-Oriented Microfiche

Data will also be released via microfiche to major users. Procedures are now being developed for microfiche release that will be similar to release of data via computer tape.

Selected data have been loaded on to microfiche cards capable of being displayed on a CRT type device. The unit also has a copier attached. Plans are underway to develop a HOTLINE response system that will work as follows: A telephone request to any Bureau employee is routed to the microfiche operation. The analyst determines whether the data on microfiche can fulfill the request. If so, the requestor gets an immediate answer to his question via telephone, with a hard copy of the data released mailed the same day. If the request cannot be answered from the microfiche file, the request is routed to PMC, to be handled as a special request.

The HOTLINE approach is being considered carefully because it has several advantages. It can provide an immediate response to a large number of requests for data. As the number of requests and the size of the file grow, the cost/benefit ratio of using an analyst full-time on the microfiche operation improves significantly.

Procedures for Special Requests

1. Requests are received by mail or telephone by the Director, Bureau Chief, analyst, etc. All requests are routed to the PMC Coordinator for processing.

2. The Chief decides if the request can be filled, a due date is negotiated with the Program Administrator, and the PMC Coordinator assigns a folder and job control number.

3. If any of the requests for information are estimated, by the Bureau Chief, to cost over $250, approval is obtained through Department channels before study is started.

4. The PMC Coordinator maintains a control log of all incoming requests: (1) job number, (2) description of information requests, (3) date request is received, (4) due date, and (5) analyst responsible. The log is kept in numerical order by job number.

5. A Program Administrator is identified as the analyst responsible for the final report on the job assignment form. The administrator may assign any of their technical or clerical staff to complete the assignment.

All correspondence relative to the request is kept in the folder. A copy of the response, plus enclosures, is also kept in the folder. If computer printouts are sent, two or three pages of reduced xerox copies are included as examples. Each person contributing time for completion of special requests must account for his time using the formula .1 = 6 minutes, and sign in the appropriate box on the assignment sheet in the folder. The Coordinator computes the dollar cost from the times indicated by each person.

6. If the special request requires data from more than one component, the Bureau Chief notifies the requestor his request will be answered by two components within the Bureau. The request is handled as separate requests and each component involved is assigned a folder to be handled as any regular folder.
7. The PMC Coordinator is responsible for distributing the folders to the appropriate Program Administrator.
8. The Program Administrator then assigns one of the analysts in his component to answer the request.
9. The analyst assigned the folder is responsible for preparing the requested information which may include one or several of the following examples:
    (1) letter containing requested information
    (2) letter and table containing requested data
    (3) Syntax, MARK IV computer tabulations
    (4) xerox of printed materials
    (5) publications

10. The SAC reviews all letters and reports prior to transmittal to the requestor.

11. The SAC coordinates the release of all reports. It establishes a schedule for the release of data and maintains it through its control of PMC, the word processing center, reproduction facilities, the graphic artist, and through the establishment of priorities.

12. The completed folder is returned to PMC Coordinator by the Librarian for closing. A notice is sent from the Librarian to each component indicating when the special request was mailed.

13. Included with the special request response transmittal to the requestor is a questionnaire that asks the user to evaluate the response of BCS.

14. SAC/PMC reviews the evaluation by the user and incorporates it into the work folder.

Release of Data to LEAA

In the past, BCS has released data to LEAA upon request. As more data becomes available at BCS and in other states, a data release or publication schedule should be developed by the various states and LEAA. The schedule should define what data is available, the format, and when LEAA and other states can expect to receive it.

The SAC can utilize the already existing procedure 1 or procedure 2 to release data to LEAA, if and when BCS and LEAA can agree on a schedule for release of data. Since LEAA has not taken an official position on the formats of requested state data, BCS/SAC and other states' SAC's should encourage LEAA to cooperate in developing standard reporting formats.

LEAA can also obtain BCS data through the Center for Advanced Computation, University of Illinois. BCS has sent that Center a tape containing 11,000 OBTS records, with 115,000 to follow. California criminal justice planners and users will also be able to access these files, which will be stored on-line.

Standards must be developed for storage and access to the University of Illinois files. Technical manuals, developed for the release of computer tapes, will be made available to LEAA and others in order to promote the development of standard manuals for data input and output. BCS can also provide an evaluation of data bases in terms of their usage. This service is provided through PMC.

Of course, the release of data to LEAA should be incorporated into the regular procedures of BCS, as should the release of all data. After all, the basic role of BCS, once it has the data, is to analyze and publish it.

APPENDIX

Project Management Control Forms

Bureau of Criminal Statistics

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

	Code
Project Number	
Request Date	
Due Date	
Release Date	

BASIC INQUIRY

Description ______

Requestor ______

Question ______

Product ______

Analyst ______

Program Administrator ______

Approval: Chief/Assistant Chief ______

Remarks: ______

COMPUTE PERSONNEL HOURS TO 10th OF HOUR (.1=6 Minutes)

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME		PERSON
		CLERIC	TECH	
STUDY DESIGN				
DATA COLLECTED CODED				
DATA PROCESS				
TABLES POSTED				
REPORT				
TYPING/ PROOFING				
GRAPHICS				
XEROX				
OTHER				
TOTAL				

REVIEW SCHEDULE

Appropriate initials must appear before next step is initiated.

1. OUTLINE APPROVED (Publications Only) — ______ Component Admin.
2. OUTLINE DISCUSSED AND REVIEWED (Publications Only) — ______ Component Admin. ______ SAC Admin.
3. FINAL DRAFT APPROVED (Letters & Publications) — ______ Component Admin. ______ SAC Admin.

ANTICIPATED DATE TO EDITORIAL STAFF FOR FINAL REVIEW (Publications) ______

4. FINAL REWRITE APPROVED (Letters & Publications) — ______ Component Admin. ______ SAC Admin.
5. OK TO PRINT OR SEND (Letters & Publications) — ______ SAC Admin.

Bureau of Criminal Statistics

SPECIAL REQUEST

COMPONENT:

- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Sac
- ☐ OBCA
- ☐ Probation
- ☐ OBTS
- ☐ TA
- ☐ UCR

Date of Contact ______________________

Initiated by:

Due Date ______________________

- ☐ BCS Personnel
- ☐ In Person
- ☐ By Phone
- ☐ Further Action Needed
- ☐ No Further Action

Name ______________________

Agency ______________________

Address ______________________

Telephone ______________________

Description of Request ______________________

Signed ______________________

Reviewed ______________________

Bureau of Criminal Statistics

JOB ASSIGNMENTS

Log Number	Request	Technician Assigned	Date	
			Received	Due