A Word About UCR Data

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program serves as the national repository for crime and law enforcement data. Its primary objective is to generate reliable information for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. Considered a leading social indicator, UCR data is used for monitoring fluctuations in crime levels, evaluating policies, and regulating staffing levels. In addition to the American public relying on the data for information, criminologists, sociologists, legislators, city planners, the media, and other students of criminal justice use them for a variety of research and planning purposes.

To ensure these data are uniformly reported, the FBI provides contributing law enforcement agencies with user manuals that explain how to classify and score offenses using standardized crime offense definitions. Acknowledging that offense definitions may vary from state to state, the FBI cautions agencies to report offenses not according to local or state statutes, but according to those guidelines provided in the user manuals. Although the FBI makes every effort through its editing procedures, training practices, and correspondence to ensure the validity of the data it receives, the accuracy of the statistics depends primarily on the adherence of each contributor to the established standards of reporting. It is the responsibility of each state UCR Program or individual contributing law enforcement agency to submit accurate monthly statistics or correct existing data that are in error. In a given year more than 18,000 agencies could voluntarily contribute data to the FBI, and most agencies make a good faith effort to comply with established guidelines. However, because of understaffing, underfunding, implementation of a new records management system, or a number of other reasons, some agencies cannot provide data for publication. The FBI appreciates the conscientious efforts made by law enforcement personnel throughout the nation to report accurate and reliable crime data on a monthly basis. Their efforts make it possible for the FBI to provide assessments of the nature and type of crime in the United States.

Through the UCR Program, the FBI publishes the statistics most commonly requested by data users. Typical presentations include alphabetical tabulations of crime data for states, metropolitan statistical areas, cities, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties, colleges and universities, and state, tribal, and other agencies. Since crime is a sociological phenomenon influenced by a variety of factors, the FBI discourages ranking the agencies and using the data as a measurement of law enforcement effectiveness.

Data Dissemination

The FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division, which operates the FBI UCR Program, disseminates UCR data to the public in accordance with various Federal authorities, including those that require the federal government to work towards paperless records. In addition, UCR data has transitioned to the electronic arena to modernize and improve dissemination methods without sacrificing customer service. Explanations of the methods for the dissemination of UCR data follow.

Crime Data Explorer (CDE) is the digital front door for the UCR data online. As an interactive tool, the CDE enables law enforcement and the public to more easily access, view and understand the massive amounts of UCR data currently collected and published by the FBI UCR Program.

The CDE allows the user to view crime data and law enforcement data in a variety of ways. They can see the data in visualizations, such as charts and graphs, download data in excel format, and advanced users can use the CDE application programming interface to create a customized view of data available on CDE. The CDE can be accessed at fbi.gov/cde

Web publications In May 2021, Law Enforcement Officer Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) data for 2020 and all future UCR data will be released exclusively on the FBI's CDE website. The content of the CDE comes from data collections such as *Crime in the United States*, *UCR Quarterly Crime Report, National Incident-Based Reporting System, Hate Crime Statistics, and National Use-of-Force.* Previous editions of the *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted publication from 1996 - 2019* can be accessed at www.ucr.fbi.gov/leoka/. The UCR program information, special compilations, and UCR manuals can be accessed at ucr.fbi.gov.

Master files for each year of the UCR data collection are also available from the FBI's CJIS Division via download from the CDE. Master files are fixed-length, written in an ASCII text format, delivered with file compression software, and require some programming knowledge to extract data. The following master files are available:

Return A Master File. The Return A Master File furnishes the number of Part I Offenses (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft) and additional offense data (e.g., burglary: forcible entry, unlawful entry, and attempted entry) for each agency reporting data to the FBI; the number of clearances which involved only juveniles (individuals under age 18); and the reported number of police officers killed and assaulted. (1960–current). Return A Master files from 1985 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Supplement to Return A Master File. The Supplement to Return A Master File provides breakdowns for the types of robberies (e.g., bank robberies), information regarding burglary type (i.e., residential or nonresidential), time of burglary (i.e., day, night, or unknown), larceny-type (e.g., shoplifting), and type of value of property stolen and property recovered by the submitting agency. (1960–current). Supplement to Return A Master files from 1985 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) Master File. The SHR Master File contains details about the murders for which supplemental data were provided to the FBI: situation type (e.g., single victim/single offender); the age, sex, race, and ethnicity of the victim and the offender; the weapon used in the homicide; the relationship of the victim to offender; and the circumstance surrounding the offense. (1962–current). SHR Master files from 1985 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Police Employee Master File. The Police Employee Master File furnishes law enforcement employee data for the participating agencies regarding both sworn officers and civilian employees with breakdowns by gender. The file also includes officer assault data indicating whether the officer sustained injury; the officer's shift (e.g., the time of the assault as well 2 as the month of assault); duty-type (e.g., two-man vehicle, etc.); the weapon used in the assault; and the circumstance type (e.g., disturbance call). (1960–current). Police Employee Master files from 1991 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Arson Master File. The Arson Master File supplies the number of arson offenses reported or known to law enforcement; the type of structure involved in the arson (e.g., residence, storage, motor vehicle, etc.); the total number of arson offenses cleared and the number of clearances involving only juveniles; the number of unfounded offenses; and the estimated value of property damage. (1980–current). Arson Master files from 1985 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Arrest Master File. The Arrest Master File provides the total number of arrests for each of the 28 arrest classifications for male, female, and male/female combined. The arrest data by gender are presented by age. The file includes race and ethnicity breakdowns for total juvenile arrestees and total adult arrestees by offense type. (1974–current). Arrest Master files from 1985 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Flat File. The NIBRS Flat File supplies all incident-based crime data captured by the NIBRS via the Group A Incident Report (comprised of 6 segments with 58 data elements) and the Group B Arrest Report (made up of 13 data elements). Currently, about a third of UCR crime data are reported via the NIBRS; therefore, data are not yet nationally representative. (1991–current). NIBRS Master files from 1991 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Hate Crime Master File. The Hate Crime Master File contains data that are submitted by each participating agency reporting to the UCR Program. For each incident, the file provides the quarter in which the incident occurred, the date of the incident, the victim type, the total number of individual victims, the total number of offenders and their perceived race/ethnicity, the offense, the location, and the bias motivation. (1991–current). Hate Crime Master files from 1991 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Cargo Theft Master File. The Cargo Theft Master File contains data that are submitted by each participating agency reporting to the UCR Program. For each incident, the file provides the month in which the incident occurred, the date of the incident, the hour the incident occurred or the report date indicator, the cleared exceptionally indicator, the offense(s), location, weapon/force involved, the victim type, property loss type, value of property stolen and property recovered; and offender and arrest data by age, gender, race and ethnicity. (2012-current). Cargo Theft Master files from 2012 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Human Trafficking Master File. The Human Trafficking Master File supplies the number of commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude for human trafficking offenses reported or known to law enforcement; the total number of human trafficking offense cleared and the number of clearances involving only juveniles; and the number of unfounded offenses. (2013–current). Human Trafficking Master files from 2013 to present can be downloaded from the CDE.

Our Goal

The CSMU's first priority with data dissemination is to meet the needs of customers who include law enforcement, academia, media, private citizens, and government. Questions or data requests should be directed to:

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division
Crime Statistics Management Unit
Module E3
1000 Custer Hollow Road
Clarksburg, West Virginia 26306-0159//
Telephone: (304) 625-2000
E-mail: crimestatsinfo@fbi.gov

Data requests sent via e-mail must include the requestor's full name, a mailing address, and a telephone number in order to be processed.