



Implementing a NIBRS RMS: Working the Plan

Once a law enforcement agency selects a Records Management System (RMS) that is compliant with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the next step is to execute the plan. Collaboration between local and state Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Programs as well as between state UCR Programs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is critical to the successful implementation of a NIBRS-compliant RMS.



Whether your agency chooses a commercial off-the-shelf RMS or partners with another agency on a shared solution, here's where you'll find out how well your new RMS complies with the requirements of the FBI's UCR Program and, in the case of local law enforcement agencies, your state's reporting requirements. Several factors will come into play as your agency carries out the plans that make an incident-based reporting system a functional reality. Note: Groundwork mentioned in the key considerations below should be made as the project begins and PRIOR to actual implementation.

Key considerations

Manage the business of implementation. Like any construction project, the scope, schedule, and cost will invariably affect how smooth your transition is to NIBRS. Continuous monitoring will confirm that the work being performed meets or exceeds your business requirements.

Ensure the appropriate levels of testing occur to work out the bugs. The national UCR Program desires that states and agencies report each of the 58 data elements along with each of the 52 offense categories. Despite the best laid plans, there will likely be technical issues. Testing throughout the development phase is an integral component of implementation, and it will minimize problems when the system becomes operational. To help with—and perhaps expedite—this phase, a couple of tools are recommended to assist in developmental testing:

- ***NIBRS Extensible Markup Language (XML) Conformance Testing Assistant (XCOTA) Tool***, developed by the FBI, performs XML schema validation, as well as NIBRS business rule checks to assist agencies and vendors in testing sample data during system development. The tool tests agencies' data against the standards provided in the FBI's *NIBRS Technical Specification*. It does not include state-specific rules or replace the need for state or FBI NIBRS certification. NIBRS XCOTA is available online at www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/data-documentation in the NIBRS section.
- ***NIBRS Pre-Certification Tool (PCT)***, developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics through RTI International and SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, assists agencies in understanding how well their data align with the FBI's *NIBRS Technical Specification*.



It does not include state-specific rules or substitute the need for state or FBI NIBRS certification. NIBRS PCT is available online at www.nibrs.search.org/nibrs-web/.

Verify the integration of your system with other systems. Secure interconnectivity between your agency's system and your state system (or the FBI for state UCR Programs) will help ensure efficient data processing. More information about this topic is available in the following documents:

- [Data Integration Assistance and Technical Support](#)
- [NIBRS State Certification Requirements](#)
- [Criminal Justice Information Services Security Policy, Version 5.6, 06/05/2017](#)
- [Law Enforcement RMSs as They Pertain to FBI Programs and Systems](#)

Train for the optimal operational environment to prevent garbage in, garbage out. Before the rollout, make sure the staff who will be entering data are trained in the intricacies of the data connections with incident-based reporting. In some agencies, police officers report incidents directly into an RMS; in other agencies, administrative staff make UCR submission from officers' incident reports. Such reporting may be done through the ease of a system interface with dropdown boxes or through the entry of data values for various data elements. Regardless, the quality of the data is a direct correlation of how well the staff who enter the data understand the differences between a legacy system versus a new RMS and adhere to the standards of reporting. As a result, the data your agency needs to aid in effective policing will only offer the level of detail your staff are willing to capture from incident reports. Assistance with NIBRS training is available through your state UCR Program. In addition, the national UCR Program offers a series of 14 computer-based NIBRS tutorials through the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP). To apply for a LEEP account go to www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/leep. UCR NIBRS training staff are also available by telephone at 888-827-6427 and by email at UCRTrainers@leo.gov.

Assess and adjust your course of action as needed. A good risk management plan allows agencies to be proactive and prepared to identify problems and mitigate risks. Heeding the lessons learned by other agencies may help you avoid the same mistakes, and having a defined corrective action plan will help you get back on course as soon as possible when issues arise.

Determine how best to use the data. Analytics bring data into life. Maximize the potential of incident-based data to help your department identify specific crime issues and develop strategies to combat them. Data analysts or computer programs can help accomplish this important task.

Take the next step. Once your agency implements a NIBRS-compliant RMS, it will begin submitting data to your state UCR Program. In turn, the state will submit test data to the FBI's UCR Program to be evaluated according to the standards of the NIBRS Certification Process. Upon certification, the FBI will continue to monitor your state's data to ensure it maintains the NIBRS data quality standards.

Further questions about implementing a NIBRS RMS can be addressed to the FBI's NIBRS staff of the UCR Program via email at UCR-NIBRS@fbi.gov or phone at 304-625-9999.