State and Federal Corrections Information Systems

An Inventory of Data Elements and an Assessment of Reporting Capabilities

A joint project:

Association of State Correctional Administrators
Corrections Program Office, OJP
Bureau of Justice Statistics
National Institute of Justice

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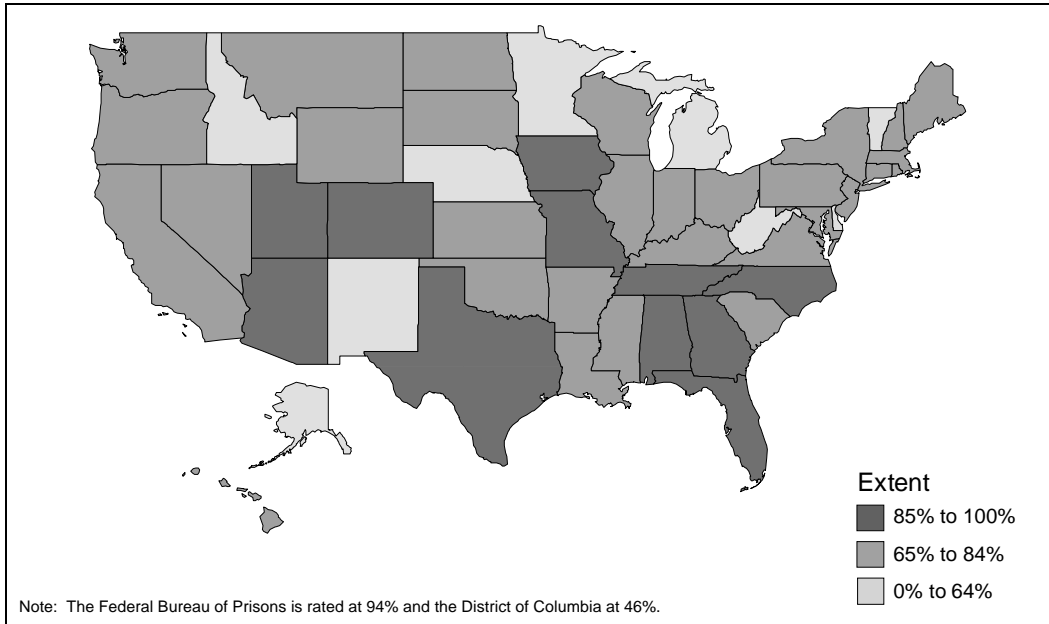
Committing offenders into correctional authority

Note: The Federal Bureau of Prisons is rated at 94% and the District of Columbia at 46%.

Figure 2. Extent to which departments maintain all core commitment data electronically for most offenders

Data elements described in chapter 2 — committing offenders
Dimension and data element

Criminal incident
  Date of incident
  Location of incident
  Number of victims
  Sex of victim
  Race of victim
  Age of victim
  If victim knew offender
  Relationship of offender to victim
  Weapon involved
  Type of weapon
  Victim injury information
  Extent of victim's property damage
  Amount of restitution due to victim
  Address of victim

Conviction offenses
  Number of conviction offenses
  Type of conviction offense
  Title and section of criminal code
  Written description
  Charges from indictment
  Charges from commitment
  Severity of offense

Criminal history
  Criminal justice status at time of arrest
  Offender's record of prior arrests and
    convictions
  Severity level of prior offenses
  Number of prior arrests
  Number of prior convictions
  Date of prior arrests
  Date of prior convictions
  Habitual offender

Sentences imposed
  County of sentencing court
  Sentencing judge
  Date of sentencing
  Number of sentences imposed
  If concurrent or consecutive sentences
  Total length of sentences imposed
  Length of sentence imposed for each offense
  If sentence is mandatory minimum
  Reason for mandatory sentence (e.g., drugs)
  If sentence is split or mixed
  Length of community supervision
  Imposition of monetary sanctions
  Amount of monetary sanctions

Current commitment
  Type of commitment
  Date of commitment
  Agency with authority to release offender
    from custody

Expected time to be served
  Expected date of release
  Expected parole release date
  Date of expiration of sentence

Risk assessment
  Weapon used during offense
  History of violence
  Gang membership
  History of escape/AWOL

Needs assessment
  Type of need
  Psychological history
  Medical condition at admission
  Program participation prior to commitment
  Tested for drug use at admission
  Results of drug tests at admission

Classification decisions
  Security level at admission
  Agency making decision
  Date of initial classification
  Classification index or score
  Risk assessment index or score
  Psychological index or score
  Medical classification index or score
  Reason for change in classification
  Date of classification change

Confinement characteristics
  Type of facility housing the offender
  Type of housing unit in which the offender is
    placed
  Special unit housing the offender

Chapter 2

Committing offenders into correctional authority

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Highlights

- All 52 departments maintain data for the type and date of commitment into prison and the length of sentence imposed. More than 45 maintain several detailed data elements that describe offenders commitment offenses and their expected release dates.

- At least 48 departments collect data about sentencing: date of sentencing, county of conviction, total length of sentences imposed, and whether sentences are concurrent or consecutive. A few maintain these elements in paper form only.

- Thirty-seven departments maintain data about the date of the criminal incident underlying the conviction; 27 do so about whether a weapon was involved; 21 about the number of victims in the incident; and 16 about victim injuries. In most cases, these departments maintain this information on criminal incidents in paper form.

- Most departments (between 39 and 47) maintain data electronically about offenders needs, their security classifications, and units in which they are housed.

- Data describing conviction offenses, sentences imposed, current commitment, expected time to be served, risk assessment classification decisions, and confinement characteristics are more commonly collected than data describing other areas of committing offenders.

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The Inventory includes 70 data elements that describe the second stage of corrections processing: committing offenders into correctional authority—specifically, committing offenders into prison. This stage includes elements that describe the offenses and sentencing decisions leading up to the commitment into prison and elements describing the assessment and placement of offenders upon commitment. The 70 data elements in this stage are organized into three broad categories that provide information about the offenses leading to the conviction and sentences, about the sentences imposed by the court, and about the assessment and confinement decisions made by corrections officials upon receipt of an offender from the court or other authorities. Among the categories, the data elements are further divided into 10 dimensions that describe more finely defined aspects of this stage.

In describing offenses leading to the conviction underlying a commitment, the 29 data elements are organized into 3 dimensions:

- Criminal incident underlying the conviction offenses, including the data elements that describe the victims of crimes (14 data elements);
- Conviction offenses (7 data elements); and
- Offenders criminal histories and records of prior arrests, convictions, and criminal justice supervision status at the time the conviction offense was committed (8 data elements).

The 19 data elements about sentencing outcomes and type of current commitment are organized into 3 dimensions that describe:

- Sentences imposed by the court (13 data elements);
- Type of current commitment (3 data elements); and
- Upon commitment, expected time to be served until release from prison (3 data elements).

Finally, the 22 data elements that describe assessment, classification, and confinement decisions made by corrections officials are organized into 4 dimensions:

- Risk assessment data elements describing the characteristics of offenders leading to placement decisions (4 data elements);
- Needs assessment describing the needs of offenders for treatment or placement (6 data elements);
- Classification decisions including 9 data elements that describe an offender's security level at commitment; and
- Confinement characteristics describing the location and housing into which an offender is placed (3 data elements).

Offenses leading to commitments

Within this area, the data elements are organized into three dimensions, those that describe the criminal incident, the conviction offense, and the offender's criminal history.

Few departments maintain any of the data elements on the criminal incident in a high-availability form (table 2.1). This includes data elements about the incident itself, victim-related information, and other damages. The exception to this is the data element on the date of the criminal incident, which is collected by 21 of the departments. About one quarter of all departments reporting maintain data elements about the criminal incident in paper form. Few retain descriptive data about the victims of offender crimes. Overall, the majority of departments do not maintain data elements about victims.

Table 2.1. Number of departments with data elements that describe the criminal incident

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for— More than 75% of offenders	In electronic format for— Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
Date of incident	43	21	4	11	37	15
Location of incident[a]	44	6	3	13	22	30
Number of victims	45	6	5	10	21	30
Sex of victim	46	1	2	11	14	37
Race of victim	47	0	0	9	9	41
Age of victim	48	2	2	12	16	34
If victim knew offender	49	1	2	12	15	35
Relationship of offender to victim	50	2	2	12	16	34
Weapon involved	51	13	5	9	27	24
Type of weapon	52	8	3	9	20	30
Victim injury information	53	5	0	11	16	34
Extent of victim's property damage	54	0	0	14	14	36
Amount of restitution due to victim[b]	55	11	6	8	25	25
Address of victim	56	5	5	8	18	34

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]Several departments record only the committing county.
[b]One department records this information if the victim contacts the department.

Forty-six departments have conviction offense information in high-availability form* (table 2.2). Most of the departments (42) obtain their conviction offense information from court commitment orders and maintain them as high-availability data elements and most (43) maintain high-availability data elements about the severity of the offenses (e.g., felony or misdemeanor). A majority of departments have specific information about criminal codes and written descriptions of offenses; 31 departments maintain some data elements with detailed offense descriptions in high-availability form.

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*High-availability format is defined as maintaining data electronically for more than 75% of offenders.

Table 2.2. Number of departments with data elements that describe the conviction offense

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for— More than 75% of offenders	In electronic format for— Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
Number of conviction offenses[a,b,c]	36	46	0	2	48	4
Type of conviction offense[a]	37	47	1	2	50	1
Title and section of criminal code	38	34	1	5	40	12
Written description	39	31	1	9	41	11
Charges from indictment	40	17	1	11	29	23
Charges from commitment	41	42	0	5	47	5
Severity of offense[d]	42	43	1	3	47	4

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]One department can calculate this information from other data elements.
[b]One department records up to five offenses.
[c]One department records up to seven offenses.
[d]One department records this information only for the State penal code.

More than half of the departments (31) maintain high-availability data on the criminal justice status of the offender at commitment (table 2.3). But, a large majority of departments do not capture other data elements on criminal history in high-availability form. Nearly half (25) of the departments maintain data elements on offenders' prior record of arrests and convictions in a high-availability form. Twenty-five maintain high-availability data elements on the severity level of prior offenses, and 24 departments do so on the actual number of prior convictions. Relatively few departments have high availability to produce data on arrests, and a sizable number (23) do not maintain data elements on the number of prior arrests. Only 20 departments collect data elements that describe whether offenders were habitual offenders in high-availability form. Finally, many of the data elements about criminal history are collected in paper form, or in electronic form for smaller segments of the population. For example, data on the number of prior arrests is collected by an additional 20 departments in either electronic form for smaller segments of the population or in paper form.

Table 2.3. Number of departments with data elements that describe the criminal history

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for— More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
Criminal justice status at time of	26	31	5	7	45	7
Offender's record of prior arrests and convictions[a,b,c,d]	110	25	4	17	46	6
Severity level of prior offenses[a,d]	111	25	5	10	40	12
Number of prior arrests [d]	112	9	7	13	29	23
Number of prior convictions [d]	113	24	8	10	42	10
Date of prior arrests [d]	114	8	4	14	26	26
Date of prior convictions [d]	115	19	5	12	36	16
Habitual offender [d,e]	116	20	6	8	34	17

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]Several departments record only felony convictions.
[b]One department records a maximum of six offenses.
[c]One department records priors in electronic format when the offender is placed in DOC custody.
[d]Several departments record this information only if the offender was incarcerated or convicted.
[e]One department records the six most recent offenses.

Sentencing information

Most departments collect data elements about the sentences imposed by courts in the high-availability format (table 2.4). More than 44 departments maintain high-availability data elements on the date of sentencing, the number of sentences imposed, whether the sentences imposed were concurrent or consecutive sentences, the length of sentence for each offense, and the total length of sentence. In addition, 47 departments maintain high-availability data elements on the county in which the offender was sentenced, and 34 maintain elements that identify the sentencing judge.

The number of departments maintaining high-availability elements on manda-tory sentences, combinations of sentences, and supervisory sentences is lower than the number having high-availability elements on the basic sentencing infor-mation, but a majority or near majority of departments maintain high-availability elements on these other aspects of sentencing (table 2.4).

In general, departments are less likely to have data elements about sanctions other than prison sentences than they are about the prison sentences. More than half of the departments (30) have a high availability to produce data on length of community supervision, but only 23 departments have this availability for monetary sanctions, and even fewer (19) have it for the amount of the monetary sanction.

Table 2.4. Number of departments with data elements that describe sentences imposed

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for— More than 75% of offenders	In electronic format for— Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
County of sentencing court	34	47	1	0	48	4
Sentencing judge	35	34	3	6	44	8
Date of sentencing	57	46	1	2	49	3
Number of sentences imposed[a,b]	58	44	0	2	46	6
If concurrent or consecutive sentences	59	49	0	1	50	2
Total length of sentences imposed[a]	60	46	1	1	48	4
Length of sentence imposed for each offense	61	46	1	4	51	1
If sentence is mandatory minimum[a]	62	30	1	5	36	16
Reason for mandatory sentence (e.g., drugs)	63	21	0	5	26	24
If sentence is split or mixed	64	31	1	6	38	13
Length of community supervision	65	30	1	1	32	18
Imposition of monetary sanctions	66	23	3	7	33	18
Amount of monetary sanctions	67	19	4	9	32	18

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]Several departments can calculate this information.
[b]One department records up to seven sentences.

All departments can provide data on type and date of commitment in electronic form, and all but two can provide both of these data elements in high-availability form (table 2.5). Fewer departments maintain data on the agency having the authority to release the offender (28).

Table 2.5. Number of departments with data elements that describe current commitment

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for— More than 75% of offenders	In electronic format for— Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
Type of commitment	31	50	2	0	52	0
Date of commitment	32	51	1	0	52	0
Agency with authority to release offender from custody	33	28	1	2	31	19

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.

As with data elements about sentencing, most departments also maintain high-availability data elements about expected release dates of offenders. Of the 52 reporting departments, 48 maintain high-availability elements on the expected

date of release, 43 on the expected parole release date, and 45 on the date of expiration of sentence (table 2.6).

Table 2.6. Number of departments with data elements that describe expected time to be served

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for—		In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
		More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders			
Expected date of release	71	48	1	0	49	3
Expected parole release date	72	43	3	1	48	4
Date of expiration of sentence	73	45	1	0	46	5

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.

Assessment and confinement decisions

About half of the departments maintain data elements that are used in assessing offenders' risk in high-availability form. More specifically, 28 departments maintain high-availability data elements on offenders' history of violence, 22 on the use of a weapon, and 16 on gang membership. Additional departments maintain these data elements as in medium availability or paper form, but relatively sizable numbers of departments do not maintain elements on these aspects of offenders' behavior (table 2.7).

Table 2.7. Number of departments with data elements that describe risk assessment

Data element	Question-naire item number	In electronic format for—		In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
		More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders			
Weapon used during offense[a,b]	91	22	4	7	33	19
History of violence[b]	92	28	5	7	40	12
Gang membership[b]	93	16	11	8	35	17
History of escape/AWOL[b,c]	94	40	4	4	48	4

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]One department only records if firearms were used during the offense.
[b]One department only records this information for offenders within 1 to 6 years of release date.
[c]One department can calculate this information.

On the data elements that measured needs assessment, departments were split. For the data element on the type of needs that offenders had, 34 departments maintained it in high-availability form. For offenders' psychological and medical histories, 20 and 26 departments, respectively, maintained elements in high-availability form. Conversely, for program participation prior to

imprisonment and drug testing upon admission, most departments did not collect data elements to measure these activities (table 2.8).

Despite the interest in medical conditions of offenders, and the concern over the increasing incidence of tuberculosis infection and HIV-infected populations in prison, only 26 departments maintain high-availability data elements on medical conditions. However, an additional 17 departments maintain data elements in some other format on medical conditions. In addition, 15 departments do not collect data on psychological history at time of admission. Twenty departments have psychological history data for large segments of their populations.

Table 2.8. Number of departments with data elements that describe needs assessment

| | | In electronic format for— | | | | |
Data element	Question-naire item number	More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders	In paper format	Have it in any format	Do not collect
Type of need	95	34	5	6	45	7
Psychological history	96	20	4	12	36	15
Medical condition at admission	97	26	3	14	43	9
Program participation prior to commitment	98	7	2	10	19	32
Tested for drug use at admission	99	10	2	10	22	28
Results of drug tests at admission	100	10	2	9	21	29

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.

In general, most departments maintain as high-availability elements, the data about classification decisions (table 2.9). For example, 45 departments have a high availability to produce data on security level, 43 have a high availability on date of initial classification, and 45 have a high availability to produce date of classification change. The outcomes of these procedures, however, are produced in a high-availability range at slightly lower levels: 40 departments have data representing a classification index or score, and 30 departments collect data identifying the agency making the decision on classification. Four departments (Alaska, District of Columbia, Idaho, and New Mexico) do not collect data on security level (not shown in a table).

Relatively few departments have a high availability to produce data on various types of scores and indices related to classification. Only 18 departments collect data at a high-availability level on a psychological index or score, and 23 departments collect data at this level on a medical classification index or score.

Table 2.9. Number of departments with data elements that describe classification decisions

| Data element | Question-naire item number | In electronic format for— | | In paper format | Have it in any format | Do not collect |
		More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders			
Security level at admission[a]	101	45	2	1	48	4
Agency making decision	102	30	1	2	33	19
Date of initial classification[a]	103	43	3	3	49	3
Classification index or score[a]	104	40	4	3	47	5
Risk assessment index or score[a]	105	31	2	4	37	15
Psychological index or score	106	18	0	7	25	26
Medical classification index or score	107	23	0	8	31	21
Reason for change in classification	108	32	1	3	36	16
Date of classification change[b]	109	45	1	2	48	4

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.
[a]One department records this information about initial classification until the classification is updated.
[b]One department can calculate this information from other data elements.

Similarly, all departments collect data on the type of facility to which the offender is placed at admission (table 2.10). Fifty departments maintain it as a high-availability data element, and only one (New Mexico) does not collect data on type of facility at placement (not shown in a table). Slightly less than all departments collect information about the type of housing into which offenders are placed at admission (table 2.10). Thirty-eight departments have a high availability to provide data on the type of housing unit in which the offender is placed, and 40 departments have a high-availability level on data on the type of special housing which offenders are placed. Seven departments (Alaska, Indiana, Idaho, Louisiana, New Mexico, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) do not collect data on the type of placement housing at admission and five (Alaska, District of Columbia, Idaho, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) do not collect data on special units housing the offenders.

Table 2.10. Number of departments with data elements that describe confinement characteristics

| Data element | Question-naire item number | In electronic format for— | | In paper format | Have it in any format | Do not collect |
		More than 75% of offenders	Less than 75% of offenders			
Type of facility housing the offender	68	50	0	1	51	1
Type of housing unit in which the offender is placed	69	38	2	5	45	7
Special unit housing the offender	70	40	3	4	47	5

Note: Data elements with incomplete information are included in 'Have it in any format'. Totals of 'Have it in any format' and 'Do not collect' may not add up to 52 departments due to missing information about individual data elements.

Summary

Among the 70 data elements in the committing offenders stage of corrections processing, the 42 data elements that measure conviction offenses, sentences imposed, current commitment, expected time to be served, risk assessment, classification decisions, and confinement characteristics are the most commonly collected by the reporting departments. The data elements that measure the criminal incident leading to the conviction offense, which include data elements that describe victims of criminal incidents, are the least commonly collected by the departments.

For the more commonly collected data elements, more than 45 departments maintain in high-availability form the data elements on number and type of conviction offenses, county of sentencing court, date and length of sentence, whether sentences are imposed concurrently or consecutively, type and date of commitment, expected dates of release, type of confinement facility, and date of classification changes.