



**Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics**



**National Criminal History Improvement Program
(NCHIP) Fact Sheet**

The National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), administered by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), is designed to improve the nation's public safety by enhancing the quality, completeness, and accessibility of the nation's criminal history and sex offender record systems. NCHIP is part of the Department's overall effort to ensure that states have the capability to compile accurate and complete criminal record information.

All states which applied for Federal grant funding will receive an NCHIP award to facilitate their participation in the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), a system designed under the permanent provisions of the Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act as a means for determining whether firearms purchasers are prohibited purchasers under the 1968 Gun Control Act. NCHIP provides the funding program to improve the quality of states' criminal history records and increase the number of complete records that will be immediately available to all states through the FBI's Interstate Identification Index (III). The III is the primary system through which the FBI accesses state-held data for background checks of firearm purchasers.

Under the program, direct funding and technical assistance are provided to improve the quality, timeliness and immediate accessibility of criminal history and related records. Funds and technical assistance are also provided to support the interface between states and national record systems, including the NICS, established pursuant to the permanent provision of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, as well as the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR). Funds are also awarded for collection of data on presale firearm background checks.

NCHIP funds provided through BJS allows states:

- to develop and enhance automated adult and juvenile criminal history record systems, including arrest and disposition reporting;
- to implement and upgrade Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS), which are compatible with the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS);
- to establish programs and systems to facilitate full participation in the Interstate Identification Index of the National Crime Information Center;
- to develop systems to facilitate full participation in the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) established under the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which requires that a background check be conducted using the NICS to identify potential purchasers who are prohibited from purchasing firearms;

(OVER)

- to support court-based criminal justice systems that report dispositions to the state repository and the FBI and are compatible with other criminal justice systems;
- to support the development of accurate and complete state sex offender identification and registration systems that interface with the FBI's Sex Offender Registry; and
- to identify, classify, collect, and maintain records of protection orders, warrants, arrests, and convictions of persons violating protection orders to protect victims of stalking and domestic violence.

Initiated in 1995, NCHIP is an umbrella program that encompasses evolving state efforts to establish record systems and the collection and use of criminal history and related records. Since 1995, NCHIP awards have totaled more than \$354 million and every state has received NCHIP funds.

NCHIP funds allow states and territories to implement grant provisions of the:

- Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act);
- National Child Protection Act of 1993;
- Crime Identification Technology Act;
- relevant requirements of the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act, Megan's Law, and the Pam Lyncher Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act; and
- related laws pertaining to the identification, collection, analysis, and interstate exchange of records relating to domestic violence and stalking (including protection orders) and to the establishment of sexual offender registries and exchange of information between them.

NCHIP awards are made to state agencies designated by the governor, but programs must be implemented on a statewide basis. Awards are based on the amount requested and several other factors, including the condition of the applying state's records; the anticipated impact the improvements will have on availability of records throughout the national system; the extent to which the state has fulfilled goals of previous NCHIP awards; and the technical feasibility of the state's proposal.

For more information on BJS or NCHIP, please contact the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at 202/307-0703 or consult the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Website at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/nchip.htm>

October 2001