

Part B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The 2013 Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies (CLETA) will utilize procedures successfully employed in the prior two administrations of CLETA program to identify the universe of eligible respondents, which is defined to include any academy conducting basic law enforcement training.

- These procedures begin with a review by PERF, the data collection agent, of the agencies included in the 2006 Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies. This will be supplemented by another BJS data source, the 2008 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, which asked each law enforcement agency if they operated a basic training academy.
- The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), a sub-contractor on the project for PERF, will provide a current list of the training academies in each state, as maintained by their membership, the State POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) directors. The POST agencies have state authority to certify law enforcement officers and, therefore, know about newly formed and newly disbanded training academies.
- PERF will also utilize the most recent commercial listing of law enforcement agencies produced by the National Public Safety Information Bureau. This listing, known as the National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators includes a list of training academy directors.

This information gleaned from the sources described above will be combined to produce a current universe list of all regional, state, and local law enforcement training academies. Any duplicates will be identified and removed by examining the file for identical or nearly identical addresses, phone numbers, or names of academy officials.

As in 2002 and 2006, the 2013 CLETA will be a census rather than a sample survey. The reasons for this decision include the following:

- The population is expected to be approximately 700 academies. Moving to a sample survey with a universe of this size will not result in significant cost savings given the stratification dimensions needed to capture critical aspects of the universe, such as academy type, size, and jurisdictional characteristics.
- Data flowing from this collection will be linked by BJS in its Law Enforcement Agencies Indicators Crosswalk file with data from the law enforcement agencies that each academy serves. This linkage can be used to better understand patterns and trends within the individual agencies. Having data from the universe of training academies will assure that these linkages can be made without diminishing the representativeness of selected law enforcement sample.

- A census provides BJS with an opportunity to show how training academies vary across and within states. Being able to compare academies is particularly important in light of the variability that exists among these organizations in terms of their administration, policies, curriculum, etc.
- Other Federal, state, and local agencies are interested in the CLETA data because of their ability to measure the programs and needs in individual training academies so that funds can be targeted at individual states and academies. With a census design, these data can be used to support expansion and enhancement of law enforcement training programs through funding from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and other sources.
- A census is preferred because it provides an opportunity to build a foundation for conducting future surveys of academies by other federal agencies. .Completing the census, for example, will provide .the necessary information for producing .samples .based on a more informed and fuller understanding of how each state and locality administers its training academies (e.g., academies with training modules on elder abuse). Attempting to generate samples of training academies without this crucial information would be more time intensive and costly.
- While not essential for national estimates, the small increase in effort to conduct a census over a sample would allow BJS to report on training academies in all 50 states. Having data from all academies would increase the audience for the data analysis tool that will be used to disseminate the information collected by this effort.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Phase 1: Send a pre-notification letter. PERF will send a pre-notification letter from the President of IADLEST on IADLEST letterhead (see Attachment 10) to each of the approximately 700 training academies identified as eligible to receive the 2013 CLETA form. The letter will be addressed to the director of each academy. (In most cases, the director will be the person completing the survey. If they choose to designate another person to complete it, all future correspondence will be updated to reflect this.) The letter will highlight the importance of the 2013 CLETA and encourage their participation. It will also highlight IADLEST’s support for this data collection effort. The letter will also provide PERF contact information for academy directors who require additional information or have any questions.

Phase 2: Send two waves of invitation letters. An invitation cover letter (see Attachments 11 and 12) will be used for the first two mailings. The letters will be sent to each training academy director and reference the pre-notification letter sent in phase 1. The invitation cover letters will stress the purpose and importance of the 2013 CLETA and the need for their cooperation in completing the survey. Further, the letters will provide a three-week deadline, direct respondents to submit their survey online, and advise them to contact PERF with any questions or comments. The letter will clearly state that the online method is the preferred modality for survey submission. If respondents are unable to complete the online survey, they will be provided instructions for printing a hardcopy from the online survey. Based

on prior data collections, it is anticipated that 30 percent of the academies will reply to these first two invitation letters.

Phase 3: Mail two waves of hardcopy surveys. While use of the online submission option will be emphasized, some respondents will prefer to complete their survey in hardcopy format. To obtain the participation of these academies, two waves of hardcopy surveys will be mailed to each of the academies that have not yet responded after the first two waves of invitation cover letters. Each survey will be sent with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope (PPE), as well as an invitation (see Attachments 13 and 14) to submit the survey via the Internet or facsimile. The PPE will be included to increase the response rate, as past experience has shown that respondents are more likely to respond to a survey request when postage is already taken care of in a convenient manner. Initially, the training academies will be given three weeks to respond to the survey since past experience fielding the CLETA has shown this to be reasonable. By this point, the response rate is projected to be 55 percent.

Phase 4: Contact by telephone all those academies that did not respond to either of the first two waves of surveys, the three reminder letters, or the faxed survey reminder letter. The remaining non-respondents will be contacted by phone (see Attachment 15). They will be reminded of the purpose and importance of the survey and informed of our goal of receiving a completed survey from each academy. They will be asked to submit the survey online, but will be sent another hardcopy version of the survey if they request one. Subsequent phone calls will be made by PERF staff until surveys are received and will reference the most recent communication (e.g., reminder letters, reminder fax, etc.). IADLEST, which has longstanding relationships with hundreds of academy directors, will assist in improving the response rate by calling the directors of non-responding academies.

Phase 5: Following the two invitation letters and two waves of hardcopy surveys, PERF will send three waves of reminder letters to all non-responding academies. Immediately following the second hardcopy survey wave deadline, three waves of reminder letters will be sent to all training academies that did not respond to any of the preceding mailings. The first of the reminder letters will be on IADLEST letterhead (see Attachment 16) to capitalize on the academy directors' familiarity with our partner's organization. The IADLEST letter and subsequent reminder letters from BJS (see Attachments 17 and 18) will request that the academy representative complete and submit the survey online or contact PERF to obtain another hardcopy version. Respondents will also be directed to contact PERF if they have any questions or comments. All comments will be incorporated into the automated tracking database. It is anticipated the response rate will be 80 percent after completion of Phase 5.

Phase 6: Send a faxed reminder letter to all non-responding academies. All remaining non-responding academies will be faxed a reminder letter (see Attachment 19). This has proven to be an effective and efficient way to increase the number of survey respondents. The response rate at this point is expected to be 85 percent.

Phase 7: Send a personalized letter via Federal Express (FedEx). After exhausting the above-referenced non-response conversion methods, a personalized FedEx package will be sent to all remaining non-respondents. This package will include a letter (see Attachment 20) requesting their assistance with this very important project. Following response to the FedEx delivery, the projected response rate is 88 percent.

Phase 8: Final non-response conversion. The National Opinion Research Center (NORC), an organization with proven expertise in converting non-respondents, will assist PERF by working to get the final non-respondents (projected $N \approx 60$) to complete the survey. NORC will send a final mass fax (see Attachment 21) and email blast (see Attachment 22), another wave of surveys via U.S. Priority Mail (see Attachment 23), and a “last chance” postcard (see Attachment 24). The postcard will alert respondents to the scheduled data collection end date. This type of mailing has also helped prompt final non-responders to complete and return the survey. Finally, NORC staff will make another round of reminder phone calls (see Attachment 25) to the non-responding academies to verify receipt of the various correspondences, and urge the academy to complete the survey in a timely manner. NORC has implemented these strategies on other previous BJS-funded projects to increase the overall agency response rate and ultimately obtain a 99 percent response rate. These same strategies will be used to increase the 2013 CLETA response rate. Although not anticipated to be necessary, NORC could also offer non-responding academies the option of completing critical survey items over the phone with their responses being recorded online.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates

The previous two iterations of the CLETA have achieved very high rates of survey response (exceeding 95%). BJS and the PERF will undertake various procedures to ensure that high response rates are again achieved for the 2013 CLETA. BJS will use a web-based instrument supported by various online help functions to maximize response rates. A helpdesk will also be available to provide both substantive and technical assistance.

Prior CLETA administrations have enjoyed widespread support among national law enforcement professional associations, and this continues to be case for 2013 project. The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) has strongly encouraged participation of its membership in the past and has partnered with PERF for the 2013 CLETA. IADLEST will be directly involved with encouraging non-respondents to participate. BJS has also garnered the support of the two foremost professional law enforcement organizations in the U.S. for the 2013 CLETA: The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA).

Follow-up plans to insure a response rate in excess of 95% are designed to give respondents the opportunity to complete the survey at a pace consistent with their own day-to-day workloads. In this way, their personal burden will be minimized. Please refer to the eight-phase data collection process outlined in Section 2 - “Procedures for Collecting Information” for more information.

In order to promote 100% item completion, PERF will monitor item responses on all surveys as they are completed and submitted. PERF will have a management system linked to the web-based data collection system that will be designed to flag non-response items and invalid responses as surveys are completed. PERF will also flag non-responses on hard copy submissions on a rolling basis. The data collection manager will oversee personal telephone or e-mail contacts with individual respondents to clarify missing or invalid responses and to take corrective action. These changes will also be tracked for follow up, if necessary. Three full-time staff members at PERF, in addition to the project manager, will have primary responsibility for the response follow up. They will be supplemented on an as-needed basis by one senior PERF researcher, and the BJS project manager.

4. Final Testing of Procedures

The 2013 CLETA will maintain similar respondent recruitment and support procedures as previous CLETA iterations, which have been field tested and successfully employed. As noted above, response rates for previous iterations of the CLETA program have exceeded 95%. It is expected that response rates for the 2013 CLETA will remain similarly high.

PERF has previously utilized web-based survey instruments that are substantially similar to the format in design for the 2013 CLETA. These include the 2002 CLETA data collections, and the 2003 and 2007 LEMAS data collections. The web-based survey administration procedures successfully employed in these previous survey designs will be substantially retained, but modified as necessary to accommodate the 2013 CLETA instrument and respondents.

The proposed new questions in the 2013 CLETA data collection instrument and the minor revisions made to those retained from 2006 were reviewed by eight officials from seven law enforcement training academies. Two municipal police academies, two county police academies, one regional academy, one university police academy, and one state police academy were represented. Input regarding the clarity and accuracy of the survey instrument was sought through a follow-up focus group discussion with representatives of these academies. BJS and PERF reviewed all feedback, and appropriate revisions were incorporated into the final proposed survey instrument.

PERF has conducted thorough testing of the web-based survey administration system. This was done in two ways. First, there was internal bugs and crash testing by the PERF survey team and members of the BJS project staff. Then there was a field test of the web-based system with the aforementioned academy officials in order to identify any confusion with using the system or any systematic problems that will need to be corrected before full survey roll out. No data were collected as part of this testing effort.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

a. BJS contacts include:

- Howard Snyder, Deputy Director
howard.snyder@usdoj.gov
202-616-8305

- Brian Reaves, Statistician
brian.reaves@usdoj.gov
202-616-3287

b. Persons consulted on statistical methodology:

Vince Welch, NORC
Senior Survey Methodologist
welch-vince@norc.org
312-759-4085

Allen Beck, BJS
Senior Statistical Advisor
allen.beck@usdoj.gov
202-616-3277

c. Persons consulted on data collection and analysis:

Bruce Kubu, PERF
Deputy Director of Research
bkubu@policeforum.org
202-454-8308

Kari Carris, NORC
Associate Director
carris-kari@norc.org
312-759-4295

Stephanie Poland, NORC
Survey Director
poland-stephanie@norc.org
312-759-4261

Attachments:

1. Title 42
2. Paperwork certification
3. 60-day Federal Register notice
4. 30-day Federal Register notice
5. OMB cover letter
6. 2013 CLETA questionnaire – pilot version
7. Pilot test and focus group comments
8. 2013 CLETA questionnaire – latest version
9. 2013 CLETA questionnaire – web version (screen shots)
10. Pre-notification letter from IADLEST
11. First invitation letter from BJS
12. Second invitation letter from BJS
13. First hard copy wave letter from BJS
14. Second hard copy wave letter from BJS
15. Reminder phone call talking points for PERF
16. First reminder letter from IADLEST
17. Second reminder letter from BJS
18. Third reminder letter from BJS
19. Fourth reminder letter faxed from PERF
20. Final FedEx reminder letter from BJS
21. Final reminder fax letter from NORC
22. Final email reminder text from NORC
23. Final reminder letter from BJS
24. Final reminder postcard from BJS
25. Telephone scripts for NORC