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## A Picture of Rural Justice: Alaska Judicial Council Studies

Teresa W. Carns

Six years ago, the Alaska Judicial Council made access to justice services in rural Alaska its top research priority. At that time more than one hundred villages throughout the state lacked resident justice services beyond the presence of a Village Peace Officer (VPO) or a Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO). Relatively few had a resident magistrate or trooper. Most probation officers, state court judges, attorneys and other justice personnel worked out of hub communities, traveling to smaller communities as needed and as weather permitted. Many smaller communities felt strongly that, in order to prevent problems from escalating, they needed to respond more quickly to local disputes than was possible if they worked directly through the state's justice system. This situation had existed for decades, but in 1987, because of one of the worst economic situations in Alaska's history, no additional funds were available to respond to rural justice needs and existing programs were being cut back. The Judicial Council wanted to explore the rural justice situation in all aspects and work with rural communities, as needed, to create solutions.

By 1993, the picture had changed dramatically. Now more than one hundred tribal courts and councils provide services to residents of their communities. In the context of increasing self-governance, most regional Native non-profit corporations of-

fer assistance to the villages in their areas to develop tribal courts or councils. In spring 1993, the eleven-year-old Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program became, under statute, a part of the Department of Public Safety, thus giving it more certain funding status. Also in spring 1993, Cook Inlet Region, Inc., a Native profit-making corporation, took the initial steps to establish a Native justice center. In addition, in April 1993, the joint state-federal Alaska Native Commission's Governance Task Force heard testimony that state and local governments throughout Alaska worked informally, but frequently, with tribal courts and councils to resolve disputes involving families and children and criminal and quasi-criminal matters, to supervise probationers, and to assist in law enforcement.

What has changed during the past six years? Above all, local communities have taken the initiative to create their own organizations to resolve disputes. In addition, an increasing number of interactions have begun to take place among organizations such as the University of Alaska (both the Anchorage and Fairbanks branches), the Judicial Council, the courts, and the state's executive branch agencies, especially those working with families and children. In 1987, a number of tribal courts and councils had been resolving disputes for some years, and VPSOs had been working with them to enforce local ordinances, supervise probationers and resolve disputes informally. From 1987 through 1990 the governor's office worked actively to encourage continued development of such local dispute resolution. In addition, the federal government, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, increased funding and support for tribal courts. In 1987, some regional non-profits — Tanana Chiefs in particular — already had been actively helping villages to draft and enforce ordinances. Now, in 1993, most other regional Native non-profits have initiated formal or informal programs to encourage local dispute resolution, whether through tribal courts or through tribal councils.

The Alaska Judicial Council has documented this increased attention to rural justice in a series of reports. The first report, published in 1991, presented a bibliography of selected rural justice materials. The second, which was funded by the State Justice Institute and published in 1992, evaluated the Minto and Sitka tribal courts and the PACT conciliation organization in Barrow and analyzed the Indian law applicable to tribal courts in Alaska. The third, published this summer, described the roots of tribal justice in Alaska and interactions among state agencies, tribal councils and courts and provided names and addresses for those organizations throughout the state which have been identified as offering dispute resolution services.

The evaluation of the Minto and Sitka tribal courts and PACT, a non-profit conciliation organization in Barrow (*Resolving Disputes Locally: Alternatives for Rural Alaska*, 1992), revealed that low-cost, volunteer-staffed organizations could respond to local needs by resolving disputes among neighbors, handling children's and family cases, and enforcing local ordinances. The two tribal courts served non-Natives as well as Natives, either because the non-Natives were related through marriage to Natives or because they lived in the community. Compliance with the decisions or processes of all three organizations was voluntary for all parties, but did not appear to present a problem for non-Natives.

The organizations not only served a wide range of residents, they also appeared, in some instances, to save the state money. The Fairbanks District Attorney's office reported no misdemeanor prosecutions from Minto for several years and only a few felony prosecutions. In contrast, this office prosecuted numerous misdemeanor and felony charges from other interior villages. In Barrow, the PACT organization handled landlord-tenant and small claims cases which might otherwise have gone to the state

Please see *Judicial Council*, page 4

### HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics examines the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in U.S. prisons (page 2).
- SEARCH, Inc. assesses Alaska criminal history record information (page 5).
- The Justice Center presents figures on homicide in Alaska since 1975 (page 7).

## A BJS Report

In 1991, 2.2 per cent of federal and state prison inmates were reported to have the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS (Table 1). In state prisons, 2.3 per cent of inmates were reported testing HIV-positive; in federal prisons, 1.0 per cent.

States reporting the highest percentage of prisoners infected with HIV were New York (13.8%), Connecticut (5.4%), Massachusetts (5.3%), New Jersey (4.0%), Rhode Island (3.5%) and Georgia (3.4%). Twenty-nine states reported less than 1.0 per cent. The percentage of inmates in prison on December 31, 1991, known to be HIV-positive, is related in part to the testing policies of the individual prisons or departments of corrections.

Of the inmates who tested HIV-positive, 73.0 per cent were asymptomatic and 17.3 per cent had symptoms but had not developed AIDS. The remaining 9.7 per cent had AIDS. The west had the highest

### Recent BJS Reports

In addition to the report summarized in the accompanying article, the following recent studies and reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available from the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Unit:

*"Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 1992," a nationwide profile of police agencies, with information on staffing, resources, duties, and policies, NCJ-142972.*

*"Crime and the Nation's Households, 1992," the results of the annual National Crime Victimization Survey, NCJ-143288.*

*"Correctional Populations in the U.S., 1991," statistical information on populations under state and federal correctional supervision, NCJ-142729.*

*"Murder in Large Urban Counties, 1988," an analysis of murder victims, offenders, crime circumstances and justice system case handling, NCJ-140614.*

## HIV in U.S. Prisons

**Table 1. Inmates in Custody of State or Federal Correctional Authorities Known to be Positive for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Yearend 1991**

Jurisdiction	Type of HIV infection/AIDS cases			Confirmed AIDS	HIV/AIDS cases as a percentage of total custody population
	Total	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic		
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>17,479</b>	<b>12,765</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>2.2 %</b>
Federal	630	422	91	117	1.0
State	16,849	12,343	2,941	1,565	2.3
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>10,247</b>	<b>7,420</b>	<b>1,922</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>8.1 %</b>
Connecticut	574	229	264	81	5.4
Maine	1	1	0	0	0.1
Massachusetts	484	100	362	22	5.3
New Hampshire	18	8	6	4	1.2
New Jersey	756	0	694	62	4.0
New York	8,000	6,833	474	693	13.8
Pennsylvania	313	247	34	32	1.3
Rhode Island	98	0	88	10	3.5
Vermont	3	2	0	1	0.3
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>0.7 %</b>
Illinois	299	216	66	17	1.0
Indiana	62	60	0	2	0.5
Iowa	19	17	0	2	0.5
Kansas	13	1	6	6	0.2
Michigan	390	124	194	72	1.1
Minnesota	14	13	1	0	0.4
Missouri	127	125	0	2	0.8
Nebraska	11	10	1	0	0.4
North Dakota	1	1	0	0	0.2
Ohio	152	129	0	23	0.4
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	40	37	0	3	0.5
<b>South</b>	<b>4,314</b>	<b>3,513</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>1.5 %</b>
Alabama	178	178	0	0	1.1
Arkansas	68	59	5	4	0.9
Delaware	85	78	0	7	2.6
District of Columbia	*	*	*	*	*
Florida	1,105	1,015	0	90	2.4
Georgia	807	774	10	23	3.4
Kentucky	27	25	0	2	0.3
Louisiana	100	100	0	0	0.7
Maryland	478	324	135	19	2.5
Mississippi	106	106	0	0	1.3
North Carolina	170	116	35	19	0.9
Oklahoma	74	64	0	10	0.7
South Carolina	316	298	0	18	2.0
Tennessee	28	0	20	8	0.3
Texas	615	251	307	57	1.2
Virginia	152	121	0	31	0.9
West Virginia	5	4	1	0	0.3
<b>West</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>0.7 %</b>
Alaska	9	7	0	2	0.4
Arizona	84	74	0	10	0.5
California	714	407	136	171	0.7
Colorado	82	37	41	4	1.0
Hawaii	19	17	1	1	0.8
Idaho	10	3	3	4	0.5
Montana	7	7	0	0	0.5
Nevada	117	72	39	6	2.0
New Mexico	10	10	0	0	0.3
Oregon	24	11	12	1	0.4
Utah	35	0	5	30	1.3
Washington	42	32	0	10	0.5
Wyoming	7	0	1	6	0.6

\* Not reported.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics-1

percentage of HIV-positive inmates with confirmed AIDS (21.1%), compared to the northeast (8.8%), midwest (11.3%) and south (6.7%).

**Prison Policies for Testing for HIV**

All the states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons tested inmates for HIV on some basis. Seventeen jurisdictions tested all prisoners, either at admission, release, or during custody. The remaining 35 jurisdictions tested at least some inmates. Thirty-nine of the 52 jurisdictions tested when asked by an inmate and 40 when an inmate exhibited symptoms suggestive of HIV infection.

Testing policy	Number of jurisdictions
All incoming inmates	16
All inmates currently in custody	3
All inmates at time of release	5
High risk groups	15
Upon inmate request	39
Upon clinical indication of need	40
Upon involvement in incident	20
Random sample	7
Other	10

*Note:* Detail adds to more than total because a jurisdiction may have more than one policy.

**AIDS-related Deaths**

Of the 1,863 deaths of prison inmates in 1991, 528—or 28 per cent—died of AIDS (Table 2). In New York and New Jersey two-thirds of the reported deaths were caused by AIDS. These two states also had the largest number of AIDS-related deaths, 210 in New York and 66 in New Jersey. Twenty-one states had no AIDS-related deaths.

Of inmates who died of AIDS in prison, three per cent were women. Eleven of the 15 women who died of AIDS were imprisoned in the northeast.

**HIV Test Results, by Inmate Characteristics**

For inmates reporting test results, a higher percentage of women than men tested HIV-positive (3.3% to 2.1%; see Table 3). Hispanics were more likely than blacks and blacks were more likely than whites to have antibodies to HIV (3.7%, 2.6%, and 1.1%).

An estimated 6.8 per cent of Hispanic women were HIV-positive, as were 3.5 per cent of black women, 3.5 per cent of Hispanic men, and 2.5 per cent of black men. Among white inmates, 1.9 per cent of the women and one per cent of the men were positive.

Inmates 35 to 44 years of age were more likely than those in other age groups to be HIV positive; 3.7 per cent were positive. Inmates in prison for drug, property, and

public-order offenses were more likely than violent offenders to be HIV-positive.

*Please see BJS, page 4*

Jurisdiction	Total deaths	AIDS-related deaths			AIDS-related deaths as a percentage of all deaths
		Total	Male	Female	
<b>U.S. total<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1,863</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28.3 %</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51.5 %</b>
Connecticut	75	11	11	0	14.7
Maine	4	0	0	0	0.0
Massachusetts	27	8	8	0	29.6
New Hampshire	6	0	0	0	0.0
New Jersey	96	66	66	0	68.8
New York	318	210	199	11	66.0
Pennsylvania	83	19	19	0	22.9
Rhode Island	3	1	1	0	**
Vermont	0	0	0	0	0.0
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8.5 %</b>
Illinois	55	10	10	0	18.2
Indiana	27	5	5	0	18.5
Iowa	3	0	0	0	0.0
Kansas	10	2	2	0	20.0
Michigan	56	*	*	*	0.0
Minnesota	10	0	0	0	0.0
Missouri	20	0	0	0	0.0
Nebraska	2	0	0	0	0.0
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	0.0
Ohio	41	2	2	0	4.9
South Dakota	7	0	0	0	0.0
Wisconsin	5	1	1	0	**
<b>South</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19.1 %</b>
Alabama	52	0	0	0	0.0
Arkansas	22	1	1	0	4.5
Delaware	6	2	2	0	**
District of Columbia	*	*	*	*	*
Florida	133	59	57	2	44.4
Georgia	62	13	13	0	21.0
Kentucky	22	2	2	0	9.1
Louisiana	35	0	0	0	0.0
Maryland	42	14	13	1	33.3
Mississippi	16	1	1	0	6.3
North Carolina	46	14	14	0	30.4
Oklahoma	32	3	3	0	9.4
South Carolina	49	12	12	0	24.5
Tennessee	37	1	1	0	2.7
Texas	111	18	18	0	16.2
Virginia	106	8	8	0	7.5
West Virginia	4	0	0	0	0.0
<b>West</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18.8 %</b>
Alaska	1	0	0	0	0.0
Arizona	34	4	4	0	11.8
California	135	38	37	1	28.1
Colorado	10	1	1	0	10.0
Hawaii	2	1	1	0	**
Idaho	7	1	1	0	**
Montana	8	0	0	0	0.0
Nevada	9	0	0	0	0.0
New Mexico	5	0	0	0	0.0
Oregon	15	0	0	0	0.0
Utah	4	0	0	0	0.0
Washington	9	0	0	0	0.0
Wyoming	1	0	0	0	0.0

\* Not reported.

\*\* Not calculated on fewer than 10 deaths..

a. The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the departments of corrections for the District of Columbia and Michigan did not report whether inmates died from AIDS-related causes.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics-1

**BJS**  
(continued from page 3)

Recidivists were more likely to be HIV-positive than inmates who had not

previously served a sentence to either probation or a term in a correctional facility.

This article was based on the Bureau of

Justice Statistics report NCJ-143292, "HIV in U.S. Prisons & Jails." Copies of the entire report are available through the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Unit, Justice Center.

**Table 3. State Prison Inmates Ever Tested for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Results, by Selected Characteristics, 1991**

Characteristic	Percentage of all inmates who were ever tested	Tested inmates who reported results	
		Number	Percent who were HIV positive
<b>All inmates</b>	<b>51.2 %</b>	<b>364,515</b>	<b>2.2 %</b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	50.3 %	338,608	2.1 %
Female	66.8	25,907	3.3
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>			
White non-Hispanic	52.6 %	132,594	1.1 %
Black non-Hispanic	52.1	168,873	2.6
Hispanic	46.0	54,563	3.7
Other	50.5	8,485	0.9
<b>Sex and race/Hispanic origin</b>			
<b>Male</b>			
White non-Hispanic	51.7 %	123,020	1.0 %
Black non-Hispanic	51.2	156,866	2.5
Hispanic	45.2	51,103	3.5
<b>Female</b>			
White non-Hispanic	68.3 %	9,574	1.9 %
Black non-Hispanic	67.3	12,007	3.5
Hispanic	62.7	3,460	6.8
<b>Age</b>			
24 or younger	50.2 %	78,242	0.8 %
25-34	53.1	172,772	2.1
35-44	51.1	82,614	3.7
45-54	47.0	21,832	1.9
55 or older	41.0	9,105	0.7
<b>Offense</b>			
Violent	47.9 %	157,224	1.4 %
Property	56.8	99,103	2.7
Drug	52.4	78,729	3.2
Public-order	52.1	25,266	2.1
<b>Criminal history</b>			
No previous sentence	47.6 %	63,879	1.3 %
Violent recidivists	50.3	171,302	2.0
Nonviolent recidivists	55.6	124,044	2.8

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of State Correctional Facilities, 1991



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**Judicial Council**  
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court. In Sitka, the tribal court handled many cases involving children from the tribe. The Judicial Council found that the local organizations had established informal, yet strong, relationships with a number of state agencies.

*Resolving Disputes Locally: A Statewide Report and Directory* (1993) expanded the scope of the council's documentation of the range and extent of dispute resolution activity to include every region of the state. The Council found that, throughout the state, tribal councils and tribal courts work on Indian Child Welfare Act cases, handle traditional adoptions, enforce local ordinances, especially those relating to

alcohol control and minor criminal matters, and maintain community harmony. As was the case in the three communities evaluated in the earlier report, parties participate in tribal court or tribal council proceedings voluntarily, although social pressures to do so may play some role. The actions of tribal courts and councils range from imposing small fines, to requiring community work service, to asking offenders to leave the community. In family cases, council members or tribal judges may offer parenting advice or may help decide adoption or foster care placements. If offenders are unwilling to pay fines or participate in recommended solutions, villagers ask for assistance from state agencies.

Some tribal courts or councils handle

only one or two types of cases, while others cover a wider range. Relatively few villages maintain tribal courts distinct from their village councils. More commonly, the council performs legislative, executive and adjudicative functions as the need arises. When performing judicial functions, councils typically meet as a group to consider the appropriate response to a situation. The councils might use the same procedures for legislative/executive functions and for adjudicative functions, or they might adopt different procedures for adjudication of cases.

Where tribal councils have established separate tribal courts, judges have often been elected to the court, typically sitting in groups of three or more rather than singly. Many tribal courts have elders as judges, but



## Alaska Criminal History Data

Each state has a central repository which maintains and disseminates criminal history information to authorized users and cooperates with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the operation of a nationwide criminal history system. In Alaska, the central repository functions are performed by the Records and Identification Division of the Department of Public Safety (DPS-R&I), using the computer and telecommunication resources of the department's Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN).

The FBI and the Bureau of Justice Statistics have developed a set of ten recommended standards for maintaining criminal history information. Although compliance with these standards by states is voluntary, the federal government has made money available to the states for achieving such compliance. Expenditure of this money requires a prior "baseline" assessment of data quality and the development of a state plan for quality improvement.

In 1992, SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, under contract with the Department of Public Safety, began an assessment review of Alaska criminal history data. (SEARCH is a non-profit organization of the states which focuses on improving the justice system through information technology.) In undertaking this assessment, SEARCH met with a working group representative of Alaska criminal justice agencies to discuss the project and elicit suggestions. The group included members from the Alaska Depart-

ments of Public Safety, Law, and Corrections, the Anchorage Police Department, the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Unit at the Justice Center, Alaska Judicial Council, and the Alaska Court System.

Following the meeting of the working group, SEARCH conducted several site visits to meet with criminal justice representatives and to review the content and operation of current databases. Visits were made to the Departments of Law and Public Safety in Juneau; the Department of Public Safety and the Alaska Court System in Anchorage; and the police department, Adult Probation Department, district court, Alaska State Troopers, and district attorney in Kotzebue.

In spring 1993, SEARCH released its report on Alaska criminal history data. The SEARCH assessment considers three major areas—1) data completeness; 2) data timeliness; and 3) data accuracy—and makes recommendations for improvement of criminal history records.

### Data Completeness

The main findings concerning data completeness are:

1. Source documents for computerized criminal history (CCH) data entries, primarily arrest fingerprint cards, criminal case intake and disposition (CCID) forms, and court judgments, are often not on file. This absence stems from the data entry techniques used and also from destruction of

source documents to save space or filing labor.

2. The proportion of arrests reported to CCH seems to be high, but measurement of the reporting rate is difficult; provision of a specific arrest tracking number, already implemented, will make measurement easier in the future. (Some arrests are reported by telecommunication, and the arrest fingerprint cards are not subsequently submitted.)

3. The proportion of arrest charges for which dispositions are posted is reasonably high. Explicit charge numbering and charge tracking are recommended to increase the disposition reporting rate in the near future, while reporting of data directly from case management information systems used by prosecutors, courts and corrections facilities is recommended as the long-term solution in this area.

4. Post-sentence incarceration data are not regularly reported to CCH, nor is parole/probation status. A Department of Corrections supervision status file linked to the CCH file is recommended.

### Data Timeliness

The main findings concerning data timeliness are:

1. It is not possible to routinely measure reporting timeliness for arrest data because fingerprint cards are not date-stamped when

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in some areas, separate elders' councils advise the courts and councils. A few tribal organizations have planned regional and appellate courts, but none were operating actively at the time of the assembly of the Judicial Council's directory.

The tribal courts and councils constitute an informal network of organizations that routinely interact with state justice system agencies such as the court system, troopers and VPSOs, prosecutors, public defenders, and the Division of Family and Youth Services. Nearly always, arrangements are worked out on a case-by-case basis with state agency personnel and judges. Despite this informality, however, many of the relationships have continued over a decade of work. The Judicial Council directory documents numerous instances of cooperation between the state and tribal organizations. In child neglect cases state social workers have exchanged information with tribal social workers about appropriate

foster care and other needs. Other state social workers have worked through tribal courts and councils to secure the cooperation of the affected family, to monitor the family's progress, and to report problems to the social worker. Some tribal courts and councils have assisted the state by supervising sentenced offenders doing community work service or on probation or parole in their home town. Prosecutors' offices note that communities with strong tribal courts and councils typically have very few offenders in the criminal justice system. This suggests that local organizations can be effective in reducing state costs.

As a result of its findings, the Judicial Council concluded that such cooperation permits all the groups involved to serve the needs of local residents more appropriately and efficiently. Both state and local tribal organizations would benefit from increasing and formalizing their cooperative dispute resolution efforts. The local institutions can

handle many types of cases or can specialize, depending on the needs of the area and the people available to help with the organization. The local institutions can also try new programs, such as victim-offender mediation. The Judicial Council has encouraged the governor and legislature to support and further the efforts of state agencies and tribal courts and other organizations to resolve disputes locally, especially because of the state's inability to pay for justice services in many areas. State courts, social workers, and other justice system professionals have been urged to further their interactions with tribal courts and councils. The Judicial Council has also recommended that Native organizations support and collaborate fully with local initiatives for resolving disputes at a community level.

*Teresa W. Carns is senior staff associate with the Alaska Judicial Council.*

**SEARCH**

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they arrive at DPS-R&I. A special measurement performed on a small sample indicates reporting timeliness of 15.4 days.

2. It is not possible to routinely measure processing timeliness for arrest data because the CCH record does not contain a date-of-entry field. A special measurement on a small sample indicates processing timeliness of 15.1 days.

3. It is not possible to routinely measure reporting timeliness for decline-to-prosecute disposition data because CCID forms are not date-stamped when they arrive at DPS. A special measurement on a small sample indicates reporting timeliness of 41.8 days.

4. It is not possible to measure process-

ing timeliness because the CCH record does not contain a date-of-entry field. A special measurement on a small sample indicates processing timeliness of 4.2 days. Receipt of disposition data directly from the prosecutor case management system is recommended in order to improve reporting timeliness and processing timeliness.

5. It is not possible to measure reporting timeliness for court disposition data because judgment forms are not date-stamped when they arrive at DPS. It also is not possible to measure processing timeliness because the CCH record does not contain a date-of-entry field. An attempt to produce a special measurement yielded no conclusive information. Receipt of court disposition data directly from the court case management system is recommended in order to improve

reporting timeliness and processing timeliness.

**Data Accuracy**

The main findings concerning data accuracy are:

1. Arrest charges are often incorrect. This inaccuracy stems from the use of literal descriptions and the use of an inappropriate coding table for charge description. Correction of this problem will require redesign of the source documents and changes to the CCH computer program to permit statute citation use instead of National Crime Information Center (NCIC) offense codes.

2. Disposition charges, both from the prosecutor and from the court, are reasonably accurate.

3. Because there is no explicit charge number in CCH, and because prosecutors "re-use" charge numbers (e.g., the prosecutor might decline to prosecute police charge number two, then shift the former police charge number three to number two when filing), the attribution of a disposition to a certain charge is left as an exercise for the data entry clerk.

These findings and their relation to the recommended national standards are summarized in Table 1.

**Recommendations**

SEARCH made the following specific recommendations regarding Alaska criminal history records:

1. Management improvements including clarification of lines of authority and responsibility for the central repository functions (Recommendation 1); provision of adequate resources to fulfill the responsibilities (Recommendation 2); provision of data by which to measure performance (Recommendation 3); and tightened relationship between CCH and the Alaska Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AAFIS) (Recommendation 4);

2. Improvements to the structure of CCH including achievement of a user consensus on the data requirements to be fulfilled by CCH (Recommendation 5); implementation of a true fingerprint-based state identification number, improvement of the recently introduced arrest tracking number and introduction of explicit charge tracking numbers (Recommendation 6); use of statute citation as the primary offense descriptor (Recommendation 7); development of a rap sheet format responsive to user needs (Recommendation 8); and revisions to the CCH computer program to enhance its usability, accuracy and auditability

Issues	FBI/BJIS voluntary reporting standard <sup>a</sup>	Alaska measure
Completeness; accuracy	1) Maintain fingerprints for each arrest	39%
Completeness; accuracy	2) Fingerprint cards to include certain data elements	83% arrest date 83% arrest charges 100% name 100% date of birth 100% sex 96% race 98% social security number
Completeness; accuracy	3) Submission of fingerprints for serious offenses to national criminal records system	See measure for Standard 1
Completeness; accuracy	4) Disposition information to include elements	97% Court name 91% Court offense literal (other elements measured, but not applicable to this list)
Completeness	5) Dispositions reported to state repository and FBI to include felony flags	88%
Timeliness	6) Submit arrests and/or confinement fingerprints to state repository within 24 hours	15.4 days
Timeliness	6) Submit arrest and/or confinement fingerprints to FBI through state repository within two weeks <sup>b</sup>	At least 30.5 days
Timeliness	7) Submit dispositions to state repository and FBI within 90 days of disposition imposition	Inconclusive results on submissions to state repository; no current submissions to FBI
Completeness; accuracy; timeliness	8) Annual audits of state and local criminal justice agencies	None
Security	9) Physical security procedures required	Compliance at state repository level
Completeness; accuracy	10) Institute felony flagging procedures	See measure for Standard 5

a. Numbers preceding the summarized standards in this table refer to the numbers of the standards as originally promulgated in Federal Bureau of Investigation/Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Recommended Voluntary Standards for Improving the Quality of Criminal History Record Information," 50 Fed. Reg. 5849 (February 13, 1991).

b. This assumes status as a "single-source state" where fingerprints are submitted to the FBI only through the state repository and not directly by local and other state agencies.

**Source:** SEARCH, Inc., "Alaska Criminal History Record Processing—Baseline Assessment," Sacramento, 1993.

(Recommendation 9); and

3. Changes in the relationship between CCH and other Alaska computerized information systems, including methods to assure that CCH requirements are taken into account when other systems are improved (Recommendation 10); eventual direct reporting of arrest data and fingerprints (Rec-

ommendation 11); direct prosecutor filings and disposition reports (Recommendation 12); direct court disposition reporting (Recommendation 13); and correctional status data provided by the Department of Corrections (Recommendation 14).

The findings and recommendations presented in the SEARCH report are now be-

ing examined by the agencies affected.

*This article was based on the SEARCH report, "Alaska Criminal History Record Processing—Baseline Assessment." Access to the complete report may be obtained through the Department of Public Safety, Division of Administrative Services.*

## Homicide in Alaska: 1975–1992

In recent months the media have again focussed public attention on violent crime patterns. Because public perceptions of crime have economic and social consequences, statistical information concerning levels and rates is extremely important. Table 1 (on following page) and Figure 1 reveal the pattern of homicides (classified as murder and non-negligent manslaughter in FBI Uniform Crime

Reports) in Alaska from 1975 to 1992. Except where otherwise noted, figures were drawn from *Crime in the United States*, the annual publication of the FBI. Among conclusions supported by these data are the following points:

- The Alaska homicide rate has been below the national average since 1988. In 1991, the national average rate per hundred thousand for homicide was 9.8, and the

Alaska rate was 7.4. In 1992, the national rate was 9.3, and the Alaska rate was 7.5.

- The 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992 Alaska homicide rates have been the lowest of the period since 1975.

- The Anchorage 1991 and 1992 rates of 10.3 and 7.0 homicides per hundred thousand residents are lower than average rates (1991, 12.2; 1992, 12.5) for U.S. cities of similar size.

**Figure 1. Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter in Anchorage, Alaska, and the Nation, 1975-1992**

Rates per 100,000 in Anchorage, Alaska overall, and nationwide.



\* Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau rates for 1975–1978 are based on population figures as found in *Crime in Alaska* (Alaska Criminal Justice Planning Agency, 1975–1978).

Source of Data: *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1975–1992).

### Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter in Alaska, 1975-1992

Number and rates per 100,000 in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Alaska overall, and nationwide.

Year	Anchorage			Fairbanks			Juneau			Alaska overall			Nationwide		
	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate
1975	74,596	11	14.7*	18,000	2	11.1*	**	0	0.0	352,000	43	12.2	213,124,000	20,505	9.6
1976	83,429	15	18.0*	32,975	2	6.1*	**	0	0.0	382,000	43	11.3	214,659,000	18,784	8.8
1977	112,956	13	11.5*	36,874	2	5.4*	**	0	0.0	407,000	44	10.8	216,332,000	19,121	8.8
1978	120,348	16	13.3*	39,287	5	12.7*	9,080	3	33.0*	403,000	52	12.9	218,059,000	19,555	9.0
1979	177,478	16	9.0	32,126	6	18.7	18,644	4	21.5	406,000	54	13.3	220,009,900	21,456	9.8
1980	173,992	15	8.6	**	0	0.0	19,483	1	5.1	400,142	39	9.7	225,349,264	23,044	10.2
1981	179,148	18	10.0	23,188	5	21.6	**	0	0.0	412,000	60	14.6	229,146,000	22,516	9.8
1982	190,454	22	11.6	**	0	0.0	21,326	3	14.1	438,000	81	18.5	231,534,000	21,012	9.1
1983	208,297	16	7.7	26,959	4	14.8	**	0	0.0	479,000	66	13.8	233,981,000	19,308	8.3
1984	223,316	16	7.2	28,176	3	10.6	1	0	0.0	500,000	58	11.6	236,158,000	18,692	7.9
1985	229,579	14	6.1	28,538	5	17.5	24,106	2	8.3	521,000	51	9.8	238,740,000	18,976	7.9
1986	238,235	17	7.1	27,973	5	17.9	**	0	0.0	543,000	46	8.5	241,077,000	20,613	8.6
1987	231,039	15	6.5	**	0	0.0	**	0	0.0	525,000	53	10.1	243,400,000	20,096	8.3
1988	217,429	13	6.0	67,495	1	1.5	25,689	3	11.7	513,000	29	5.7	245,807,000	20,675	8.4
1989	223,363	11	4.9	69,337	1	1.4	26,390	1	3.8	527,000	42	8.0	248,239,000	21,500	8.7
1990	226,338	10	4.4	30,843	4	13.0	26,751	2	7.5	550,043	41	7.5	248,709,873	23,438	9.4
1991	243,571	25	10.3	31,961	1	3.1	27,721	0	0.0	570,000	42	7.4	252,177,000	24,703	9.8
1992	241,565	17	7.0	32,914	2	6.1	28,547	0	0.0	587,000	44	7.5	255,082,000	23,760	9.3

\* Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau rates for 1975–1978 are based on population figures as found in *Crime in Alaska* (Alaska Criminal Justice Planning Agency, 1975–1978).

\*\* Population figures were not given for years in which no murders or nonnegligent manslaughters were reported.

Source of Data: *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1975–1992).

**Alaska Justice Forum**  
**Justice Center**  
**University of Alaska Anchorage**  
**3211 Providence Drive**  
**Anchorage, AK 99508**

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