THE TEXAS UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING PROGRAM 1

PURPOSE OF UCR

The objective of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program is to produce reliable crime statistics for law enforcement administration, operation, and management. This information is available as a tool for measuring the fluctuations in the type and volume of crime in Texas. The means utilized to attain these objectives are: to measure the extent, fluctuation, distribution, and nature of crime through the collection of data on the ten serious Crime Index Offenses; to measure the total volume of serious crime known to police; to show the activity and coverage of law enforcement agencies through arrest counts and police employee strength data.

HISTORY OF UCR

The National Program

Summary Reporting System (SRS)

The Uniform Crime Reporting program of the Federal Bureau of Investigation grew from the need for a national view of law enforcement statistics. In the 1920s, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) formed the Committee on Uniform Crime Records to develop a uniform system of police statistics. The IACP's voluntary national crime collection program began in 1930, with the participation of 400 police agencies representing some 20 million citizens in 43 states. In that same year, the U.S. Congress authorized the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to serve as the national clearinghouse for the crime statistical information collected by the program.

In the UCR program, crime reports are obtained from law enforcement agencies throughout the nation based on uniform classifications and procedures of reporting. A meaningful overview of crime was made available through examination of the seven Crime Index offenses selected for their seriousness, frequency of occurrence and likelihood of being reported: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. By mandate of the U.S. Congress, arson became the eighth index offense in 1979, and in 2013, commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude, both human trafficking offenses, became the ninth and tenth index crimes.

National Incident Based Reporting System

With the SRS, the UCR program historically provided a steady, reliable stream of information about crime across the nation, but, data about individual crime incidents was not available. The summary-based methodology, despite its reliability, is limited in many aspects. Limitations of the summary system include a lack of information on offenses, arrests, and victim/offender relationships. To take advantage of new technological capabilities, the FBI, in conjunction with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), took part in a thorough study of how to modernize the UCR program. The findings from this study were presented at the 7th Annual National UCR Conference in July 1984. The resulting document, *Blueprint for the Future of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program*: Final Report of the UCR Study, released in 1985, outlined the emerging Incident Based Reporting (IBR) system. Since its implementation, IBR collects data on the circumstances of each crime incident in electronic form. The detail provided by IBR data greatly enhances the speed, availability, accuracy, and usefulness of crime statistics.

The FBI is working with states across the nation to increase NIBRS participation by offering training in partnership with state programs, collaborating with BJS to award grant funding to targeted agencies, and providing informational documentation and tools to assist agencies in their transition. On December 2, 2015, the Criminal Justice Information Services Division's Advisory Policy Board (APB) approved the recommendation to sunset the traditional Summary Reporting System and replace it with the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) by January 1, 2021.

The Texas Program

On January 1, 1976, the State of Texas adopted the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) as its official statewide crime report. The Department of Public Safety accepted the responsibility to collect, validate and tabulate UCR data from all reporting jurisdictions in Texas. To handle this task, the Incident Based Reporting Bureau, (IBR), formerly known as the Uniform Crime Reporting Section (UCR) within the Crime Records Services; coordinates the collection, processing and publication of information regarding the extent of major crime in Texas. Policy makers and members of the public, including the media and academia, rely heavily upon this data for information on the fluctuations in the level of crime from year to year in their communities and throughout the state.

As the UCR program evolved at a national level, and the demand for transparency continued to increase, Texas recognized the importance of data collection under the NIBRS methodology and became certified to collect NIBRS data in 1998.

In 2015, House Bill 11 (HB11) was enacted which required the Department to implement a universal goal for Texas to transition to NIBRS, which would model as the standard reporting methodology for the national UCR program. Texas has made great strides in its transition within UCR from the traditional Summary Report System (SRS) to the more robust National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). FBI requires full NIBRS submission by January 1, 2021. Texas is on track to meet this goal with approximately 50% of law enforcement agencies having transitioned to NIBRS by the September 1, 2019 goal. The UCR state program will continue to assist the remaining agencies who have not committed to transition by the 2019 deadline through developing mitigation strategies and transition plans to meet the goal of 2021.

Houston Police Department – NIBRS Certified 2018

"Houston PD's transition from SRS to NIBRS was an overall smooth one. Challenges were faced during the transition, but that is to be expected with change, especially dealing with an agency our size. As with anything new there is always a learning curve. However, we were well prepared with good training with all HPD stake holders fully involved with the transition."

– Office Supervisor, L.Traylor, Houston Police Department

Dallas Police Department – NIBRS Certified 2018

"The Dallas Police Department has successfully transitioned to NIBRS reporting as of March 2018. As part of our "Service First" commitment we are here to assist other agencies with their transition."

– Chief U.Renee' Hall, Dallas Police Department

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Reporting Procedures

Law enforcement agencies report the number of known index crime offenses from their records of complaints from victims, reports from witnesses and from crimes discovered by the agency during its operations. Reports that are later determined to be unfounded are eliminated from the totals. The resulting number of 'offenses known to law enforcement officials' is reported without regard to whether arrests were made, stolen property was recovered or prosecution took place. Agencies report additional information on the value of stolen and recovered property, the circumstances surrounding homicides, family violence, hate crimes, sexual assaults, and reports of persons arrested for all crimes; the arrest reports are categorized on age, sex, race, and ethnic origin.

Each contributing agency compiles and submits its own crime reports to the UCR program on a monthly basis. The UCR program accepts direct online entry into the Texas UCR system, as well as, flat-file submissions for NIBRS reporting agencies. As of December 31, 2018, hard copy submissions will no longer be accepted.

Verification Procedures

A major concern in the collection of crime statistics is the validity and uniformity of the data received. With the receipt of voluntary monthly reports from 1,179 law enforcement agencies, the problem of attaining uniformity is readily apparent. Each incoming report is examined for

accuracy and reasonableness through the use of numerous cross-checking procedures. Quality control checks of agency submitted reports are conducted regularly, as well as, reviews of aggregated data in statewide reports within the UCR online system. As the UCR program continues to evolve with the transition to NIBRS, processes and procedures are implemented to ensure that the integrity of agency data is intact, through means to include: increasing of Quality Control Analyst staff, back-end system quality reviews, and increasing communication with agencies on data received.

Field Representation

In compliance with national guidelines and in an effort to ensure the accurate reporting of crime information, the Incident Based Reporting (IBR) Bureau has staffed six IBR Trainers to assist in training local agencies in crime reporting procedures as well as navigation and report submission in the UCR system. Each field representative is assigned a specific region of the state, and is responsible for assisting local police agencies in the resolution of reporting problems, as well as, ensuring that agencies are properly trained on reporting guidelines, NIBRS, use of the UCR system, and the procedures for transitioning to NIBRS reporting.

In addition, field representatives will conduct online and regional trainings to ensure that all agencies are knowledgeable in the NIBRS reporting guidelines and procedures.

ADDITIONAL UCR COLLECTION

Family Violence

Violence within Texas families has been recognized as a growing threat to the safety of Texans. In an effort to quantify the incidents of abuse occurring within Texas families, the 71st Texas Legislature directed the Department of Public Safety to collect information on family violence incidents. Senate Bill 68 of the 77th Legislature amended the Family Code to include "Dating Violence". The "Dating Relationship" is described as a relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. This data collection began in 1991 and is included in Chapter Five.

Hate Crime Data Collection

Under mandate of state and federal law, in 1992, the Texas UCR program began collecting hate crime information. The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 directed the U.S. Attorney General to collect data, "about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity." Disability was added to the list of bias categories in 1997.

Shortly after passage of the national law, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Government Code to require the Department of Public Safety to "Establish and maintain a central repository for the collection and analysis of information relating to crimes that are motivated by prejudice, hatred, or advocacy of violence." The passage of this law impacted every law enforcement agency in Texas through the requirement that, "Local law enforcement agencies shall report offenses described by Subsection (a) in the form and manner and at regular intervals as prescribed by rules adopted by the department." The results of this effort are illustrated in Chapter Six.

Sexual Assault

In response to a growing concern about Sexual Assault incidents, the 80th Texas Legislative Session passed House Bill 76. The Bill requires Texas DPS to establish guidelines and collect, as part of the UCR Program, data about incidents that contain specific sexual assault offenses. Sexual Assault crime data collection was required to begin in 2008.

Campus Crime

In 1990, the federal Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act was enacted into law. The act requires eligible educational institutions to maintain certain crime and arrest data in accordance with UCR definitions. Index Crime numbers reported by Texas campus police departments are available in Chapter 10A of this report.

Crime Factors

Statistics gathered under the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program are submitted by the law enforcement agencies of Texas and are used to project a statewide picture of crime. Awareness of factors that influence the resulting crime statistics is necessary in order to draw fair conclusions. As these crime factors influence the crime experience of each community, comparisons of crime statistics between communities should not be made without consideration of the individual factors present. Crime is a social problem of grave concern in which the police are limited in their role of suppression and detection. As stated by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice, "The fact that the police deal daily with crime does not mean that they have unlimited power to prevent it, or reduce it, or deter it. The police did not create and cannot resolve the social conditions that stimulate crime. They do not enact the laws that they are required to enforce, nor do they dispose of the criminals they arrest. The police are only one part of the government; and the government is only one part of society. The criminal process is limited to case by case operations, one criminal or one crime at a time." Set forth below are some of the conditions which affect the crime types and volume which occur in differing jurisdictions:

> ➢ *Crime reporting practices of the citizenry.*
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> ➢ *Public attitudes toward law enforcement and crime.*
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> ➢ *The size, density and demographic composition of a jurisdiction's population. Economic status of the population and area unemployment rates.*
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> ➢ *Population stability including the number of commuters, transients, and seasonal population variations.*
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> ➢ *Climate, such as weather, political etc.*
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> ➢ *Cultural conditions, such as educational, recreational, and religious characteristics.*
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> ➢ *Community family values.*
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> ➢ *Law enforcement employment standards and relative strength.*
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> ➢ *Policies of the prosecuting officials and the courts.*
>
> ➢ *The administrative and investigative efficiency of the local law enforcement agency, including the degree of adherence to crime reporting standards.*