

Bureau of Justice Statistics

2015 Criminal History Record Assessment and Research Program (CHRARP)

Description of the research extracts

Relational Research Database

The relational research database includes arrest, prosecution, court, and supervision tables. Each row in the arrest table of the relational database provides information on an individual arrest charge recorded in a subject's criminal history. The charges are stacked on top of one another and arranged from the earliest arrest date to the latest. If an arrest cycle includes more than one offense, the charges are sorted by a hierarchy of seriousness.

The seriousness of an arrest charge is determined by arranging separate charges that occurred on the same arrest date by the BJS hierarchy: (1) charge severity (ACHGSVR) followed by (2) offense seriousness. Felonies are more serious than misdemeanors, and misdemeanors are more serious than minor infractions or violations. Within the "charge severity" levels, charges are sorted from most to least serious. "Offense seriousness" for the CHG variable (detailed offense codes) is determined by sorting on the CHG16 (major offense codes) and OFFH (offense hierarchy codes) variables. If charge severity is missing for any charge within a particular arrest cycle (ACHGSVR=9), the charges should then only be sorted on offense seriousness. Information on the offense hierarchy of seriousness is provided in the "FY2015 BJS CHRARP-format of research extracts.xls" file.

The ACHGSEQ variable provides the sequential order of each charge within an arrest cycle after the charges are sorted by the BJS hierarchy of seriousness. This variable allows one to identify the three most serious arrest charges within each cycle for the criminal history flat file.

Each row in the prosecution table provides information on the prosecution outcome of an individual offense recorded in the subject's criminal history files. The seriousness of a charge is determined by arranging separate charges that occurred on the same date by the BJS hierarchy: (1) charge severity (PCHGSVR) followed by (2) offense seriousness. Felonies are more serious than misdemeanors, and misdemeanors are more serious than minor infractions or violations. Within the "charge severity" levels, charges are sorted from most to least serious. "Offense seriousness" for the CHG variable (detailed offense codes) is determined by sorting on the CHG16 (major offense codes) and OFFH (offense hierarchy codes) variables. If charge severity is missing for any charge within a particular cycle (PCHGSVR=9), the charges should then only be sorted on offense seriousness. The PCHGSEQ variable provides the sequential order of each charge within a cycle after the charges are sorted by the BJS hierarchy of seriousness.

Each row in the court table will provide information on the adjudication outcome of an individual offense recorded in the subject's criminal history files. The seriousness of a court disposition of an offense within a cycle is determined by the BJS hierarchy: (1) sentence type (e.g., prison more serious than jail or probation); (2) court disposition (e.g., conviction more serious than non-conviction); (3) charge severity (e.g., felony more serious than misdemeanor); and (4) offense seriousness. Within the sentence type, court disposition, and charge severity levels, offenses are sorted from most to least serious. "Offense seriousness" for the CHG variable is determined by sorting on the CHG16 and OFFH variables. If charge severity is missing for any offense within a particular cycle (CCHGSVR=9), the disposition offenses should then only be sorted by sentence type, court disposition, and offense seriousness.

The CCHGSEQ variable provides the sequential order of each charge within a cycle after the charges are sorted by the BJS hierarchy of seriousness. This variable allows data users to identify the three most serious court offenses within each cycle for the criminal history flat file.

The following variables allow data users to identify and link individual cycles within the relational research database.

- CASENUM – Unique project ID number assigned to each subject.
- CYCLE - This variable provides the "final cycle number" based on data captured in the relational research database. Each cycle number is based on the chronological order of the arrest cycles from earliest to latest. The cycle number links together an arrest with the prosecution action, court disposition, sentence, and supervision events associated with that arrest. Cycles created for the relational research database exclude certain records from the standardized relational database. When this occurs, the cycle numbers are renumbered in the relational research database.

Demographic Flat File

This rectangular file flattens each set of demographic records (or "demographic profile") found on a subject onto a single row of information in alphabetical order by the state that supplied the demographic information. Each demographic profile provided by the FBI or a state criminal history repository is built from data in the demographic table of the standardized database. The "demographic flat file" worksheet provides the specifications for a demographic profile in the relational research database. A separate demographic profile is created for each state or FBI criminal history file found on a subject. For instance, a person with an FBI rap sheet and separate rap sheets from two states would have three profiles: demographic profile #1 (DSTATE1, SEX1, RACE1, etc.), demographic profile #2 (DSTATE2, SEX2, RACE2, etc.), and a demographic profile #3 (DSTATE3, SEX3, RACE3, etc.).

Criminal History Flat File

In this flat rectangular file, arrest cycles are no longer stacked in separate arrest and court tables, but merged and flattened onto a single row that captures each subject's criminal history in chronological order. The flat file consists of the same set of variables that are repeated for

each arrest cycle. The only difference between the sets is the number used in the variable names. For example, the variable for year of first arrest is A001YR, year of second arrest is A002YR, and so forth up until the person's last arrest. "A" variables are arrest variables. "J" variables are court disposition and sentencing variables. The flat file records the date of the first-ever arrest with the three variables A001YR, A001MO, and A001DA. The date of second-ever arrest is recorded with the three variables A002YR, A002MO, and A002DA. The date of 100th-ever arrest is recorded with the three variables A100YR, A100MO, and A100DA. Each arrest cycle also records the date of any court disposition that may have arisen from the arrest that day. For example, date of adjudication arising from a subject's first arrest is recorded with the three variables J001YR, J001MO, and J001DA.

The flat file captures the three most serious arrest charges and three most serious court disposition offenses within each arrest cycle. For example, the variables that record the three most serious charges at first arrest have the names A001OFF1, A001OFF2, and A001OFF3. The cycle number (CYCLE) and sequence number (ACHGSEQ/CCHGSEQ) variables from the relational database are used to produce the criminal history flat file. The three most serious arrest charges are selected based on the sorting rules for the BJS hierarchy of seriousness (i.e., charge severity and offense seriousness). If a cycle includes more than one instance of the same "BJS detailed offense code" (CHG), only the most serious one should be captured as one of the three most serious charges within that cycle.

The variables that record the three most serious charges for the subject's first arrest are A001CHG1, A001CHG2, and A001CHG3. The A001TOT variable records the total number of offenses the person was charged with under his or her first arrest.

The flat file also records the three most serious offenses for which there were court dispositions (J001CHG1, J001CHG2, and J001CHG3); along with a count of the number of adjudicated offenses within each cycle (J001TOT). The three most serious court offenses are selected based on the sorting rules for the BJS hierarchy of seriousness (i.e., sentence type, court disposition, charge severity, and offense seriousness). If a cycle includes more than one instance of the same "BJS detailed offense code" (CHG), only the most serious one should be captured as one of the three most serious offenses within that cycle. The flat file also records the adjudication for the three most serious court offenses within an arrest cycle (e.g., J001DSP1, J001DSP2, and J001DSP3).

Criminal History Summary File

The criminal history summary file provides aggregate statistical counts of the number of arrests, adjudications, and incarcerations in a subject's criminal career before and after a particular event or target date (e.g., prison release date). The summary file also reports the number of days between the target event date and the first new arrest, court adjudication, conviction, and incarceration. For instance, the follow-up period for the *BJS Recidivism Study of State Prisoners Released in 2005* was five years after each prisoner's date of release in 2005. If an arrest occurred within this time period, it was counted as a new arrest.