DARYL FOX: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, "Generating National Estimates of Crime Using NIBRS Data, Understanding the Transition," hosted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Alex Piquero, Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics for some welcoming remarks and to introduce our presenters.

ALEXIS R. PIQUERO: Thank you, Daryl. Good afternoon, everybody. It's great to not see all of you in person. Hopefully, one day in the future, we'll be able to do that. But it's my pleasure to be here this afternoon. My name is Alex Piquero. I am the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics and honored to have been appointed by President Biden to serve in this role. I've been a large fan of BJS since I was a grad student at the University of Maryland and have used the data a number of times, and still appreciative of the hard work that the team has put forward here with respect to working hand-in-hand with the FBI and RTI on the penultimate release of the crime data, but also the estimation process.

I think as everybody knows when the FBI UCR Program was created in 1929, the charge was to provide timely data to the public and to police departments to make better decisions about dealing with the prevention of crime and criminals. I actually read that today from the actual book which I bought on Amazon, that's not a plug, that's a reality. And I think that we've been going that route for a long period of time, but for the past several years, we have transitioned to NIBRS and we're moving really quickly, especially in the last few years in the direction of providing a more expansive set of data that captures the various incidents that occur in a particular crime, but also generates the kind of information that is important for academics, for researchers, for policymakers, for practitioners, and most important, the local police departments. And having worked with many PDs in the course of my academic career, they need data to guide their decision making, just like all of us need data to do what we need to do in different kinds of ways and different kinds of reasons.

And so I think what we're going to do today is I always like to have a lot of time and room for questioning, and I can speak less because if you ever give an academic a microphone, they'll never stop talking, but I've learned my lesson to be very brief in my duties.

It's a pleasure today to host this event but also to have the BJS team here, and I will have two of my great teammates here. Erica Smith, who has been leading the effort on the NIBRS transition for BJS, she is the Chief of the Law Enforcement Incident-Based Statistics Unit at BJS. As well as Deputy Director, Statistical Operations, Kevin Scott who will moderate the Q&A Session. So without further ado, I will turn it over to Erica

and then she'll go over a presentation on her part and then Ed will discuss his part from the FBI. At least that's the running order I received, but we live in a real world where things happen, so hopefully, we are in that process.

ERICA L. SMITH: Actually, it'll be flip-flopped, Alex. So I'm going to let Ed go first and he's going to essentially…

ALEXIS R. PIQUERO: Okay.

ERICA L. SMITH: …set the stage for the work before discussing the estimation project. So Ed, if you want to go ahead and talk, give the update on the transition to NIBRS and the estimation work, that will be great.

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Thank you, Erica, and thank you, Alex. Appreciate BJS hosting today and thank you to the participants who are joining us. So for years, the FBI's UCR Program has provided annual snapshots of crime in the nation. In 2015, a recommendation was made by FBI law enforcement partners to retire the Summary Reporting System, or what you know as SRS, for the National Incident-Based Reporting System. In December of 2015, the CJIS Advisory Policy Board endorsed the transition with a deadline of January 1st, 2021 and the FBI Director approved in February 2016. The FBI message to law enforcement agencies, it would transition to the more comprehensive NIBRS-only collection. This year, users will notice a difference in the data because it was exclusively collected via NIBRS in 2021. Next slide. Thank you.

So despite the 11,794 law enforcement agencies that submitted NIBRS data, participation for 2021 remained below a statistically acceptable level to be nationally representative. The data about Crime in the Nation being released on October 5th are comprised of four parts as being referred to as 2021 Crime in the Nation.

These four parts, the first is Crime in the United States, 2021, NIBRS, 2021, NIBRS Estimates, 2021, and lastly, the Transition to NIBRS, A Comparison of 2020 and 2021 NIBRS Estimates. All four of these data sets will be discussed in more detail on the following slides. Next slide.

So what is included in Crime in the United States, 2021? You're going to get agency-level data for cities, universities, colleges, metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, state, tribal, federal, and other agencies, murder, robbery, and aggravated assault by state with types of weapons used, and lastly, arrest by state. Next slide.

Included in NIBRS 2021, you receive agency-level data for cities, universities, and colleges, again, metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, state, tribal, federal, and other agencies. And that data is presented for 51 offense types, including the eight available through Crime in the United States. You'll also receive data about victims, offenders, and persons arrested by age, sex, and race for all the offenses in addition to relationship of victims to offenders, crimes against person's property and society by location and time of day, weapon use and force involved in eight offense categories, circumstance for three offense types, offense categories by state, completed and attempted offenses, clearances, and lastly, offenders suspected use of drugs, narcotics, and alcohol. Next slide.

What's included for NIBRS Estimates 2021 are the 31 offense types and the categories of crimes against persons, crimes against property, and crimes against society. Included are age, sex, and race of victims and persons arrested, victim age category by offender age category, victim sex by offender sex, victim race by offender race. Juvenile dispositions of persons arrested. You'll get indicators of multiple arrests of persons arrested. Weapon possession of persons arrested, time of day incidents and offenses, incident and offenses by population group, incidents and offenses by agency type, clearances of incidents and offenses, and lastly, type of property loss. Next slide.

I won't go back. Third slide, please. We're also going to get gang-involved regarding victims. Sorry about that. Next slide.

So what's included in the Transition to NIBRS, A Comparison of 2020 and 2021 Estimates? For the current year, you're going to get national violent crime and property crime volume and rates, national arrest volumes and rates, current year violent crime and property crime volume and rate figures for colleges and universities, college and university violent crime and property crime volume and rates, college and university arrest. Tribal violent crime and property crime, and tribal arrest of volumes. For year-over-year trend, national violent crime and property crime, national arrest, violent crime and property crime by recent volume and rate, national clearance and exceptional clearance percentages, national violent crime aggregate with firearm volume, national number of arrestees armed with a firearm volume, national drug offenses by type of drug volume, national violent crime victimization by demographics volume, national fraud aggregate volume, and lastly, violent crime and property crime by state, volume, and race. Next slide.

So for Estimation and Trend Analysis, low participation in 2021 caused a heavy reliance on estimations. Each year, since the beginning of the transition in 2016, NIBRS has seen an increase in agency participation at the start of the new collection year. The FBI

will continue to engage and support its state UCR Programs on all law enforcement agencies. Ongoing efforts to communicate the importance of NIBRS to the law enforcement and user communities will also continue. And the FBI consistently engages the major law enforcement agencies and organizations to communicate the importance of NIBRS data and how NIBRS can provide more useful statistics to promote constructive discussion, measured planning, and informed policing. Thank you. Erica.

ERICA L. SMITH: Thank you so much for providing the background information on what users can expect to see from the new set of publications this year based on the NIBRS data. I would like to speak a little bit about the process that both the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the FBI CJIS Division used to develop the method for estimating crime in the U.S. My name is Erica Smith. I'm a Unit Chief with BJS overseeing the Law Enforcement Incident-Based Statistics Unit. I have been part of the broader collaboration between BJS and FBI almost since it began back in late 2012, early 2013. So I'm going to give a little bit of a background on the work that we have done to support agencies in making the transition. But then spend the majority of the time talking a bit at a high level about the estimation processes and how we went about establishing those since that project began several years ago.

So a number of you are probably familiar with the project the National Crime Statistics Exchange, or NCS-X as we had referred to it. This was an effort between BJS and the FBI to transition a sample of law enforcement agencies to NIBRS reporting. Our original goal had been to take the existing NIBRS data that was reported by about 30% of agencies at the time and add a specific sample of law enforcement agencies to those reporting agencies, and then we would be able to use those data to generate national estimates in crime.

So that was our initial goal when we started this process. It led to a pretty large-scale partnership between the two federal agencies and allowed us to provide out funding, technical assistance, training, and a host of other resources to law enforcement agencies and to state uniform crime reporting programs over the years. We have invested approximately $120 million in funding since 2015 and that is supported not just state uniform crime reporting programs in becoming NIBRS certified, but also supported upwards of around 90 local law enforcement agencies and the funding to those 90 agencies had supported far more than that number of 90. There had been a number of different agency consortia where 10 agencies transitioned through one particular grant, so we've been able to leverage those types of established connections between law enforcement agencies in order to support their efforts to transition to NIBRS even more broadly.

In early 2018, we kicked off the NIBRS Estimation Project. This was devised as the next step and sort of the ultimate culmination of the NCS-X efforts to develop the methods and procedures that would be needed to generate national, regional, and state-level crime estimates. And this is a large-scale and full partnership with the FBI and we have been working on this together every step of the way.

I usually don't read through the slides very much, but I do want to talk a little bit more about the key differences between the Summary Reporting System, or SRS, the way that law enforcement reported crime data has been collected by the FBI for a very long time, and NIBRS, the massive change in how data are captured and the amount of data that's captured.

So under NIBRS, we're getting incident-specific data. So rather than getting accounts of, let's use a number, 10 murders in a location, we would have an individual incident record for each of those 10 murders as opposed to just one data point that said 10 murders occurred in that month in this place. So you can imagine the scope of the information is much broader and deeper than we were able to see under the Summary Reporting System, for collecting incident-specific data on far more offense types both on the crime incident side of the equation, as well as information that is collected only on arrest reports. And we're capturing all of this information about the circumstances and context of the incident, so whereas the Summary Reporting System data, there were a lot of questions that could not be answered using that information. With NIBRS, we're able to take a deeper dive and understand more about crime in its context at the community level within states specifically.

So with all of this additional information available within NIBRS, we had as one of our primary objectives for the estimation project to determine what the subset of key indicators from NIBRS would be that we would pursue developing estimates for. So we really needed to key in on those very early in the process because identifying that set of indicators guided the rest of the estimation process in terms of setting the stage for the data quality investigations that we would be doing of the data over time and identifying the schema essentially that we would use for determining the imputations and then the waiting schemes at the end of the day.

We also had as one of our objectives to develop or identify, I should say, a set of population data that could serve as the base for population-based rates that we would calculate with NIBRS. The population data needed to be something that could be split by key demographic characteristics, such as age, race, and sex, which the previous source of population data could not. And then, we also needed to develop population served estimates for agencies that were traditionally classified as zero population

agencies. Those types of law enforcement organizations like college and university agencies, as well as tribal agencies.

So in terms of key indicators for our estimation, again, as I mentioned, these were really critical because they prioritized a lot of the rest of the tasks that we would be undertaking for the estimation project. The specific set of key indicators, we identified with a great deal of stakeholder input. So this first started with, of course, our own subject matter expertise within the FBI and BJS. But then we also relied upon some of the input that we received through groups, I should say, that had already been established for somewhat similar purposes.

First was the Crime Indicators Working Group, which BJS had established in, I think the last meeting had been in the late 2010s. I can't remember the date exactly right now, but it was made up of a number of law enforcement executives, and other stakeholders, high-level stakeholders, who identified a set of metrics that were valuable to them as law enforcement executive, things that they wanted to be able to message out to their organizations, and to their constituencies.

So we started with that list, and then we also took input from the panel on modernizing crime statistics from the National Academies of Science. There was a lot of valuable information in the work that that group put together as well, and we were able to draw upon that for the initial set of key indicators. And then we also ran that past a methodology review committee that we established as part of the estimation work in order to make sure that we were touching on all of the most important aspects of the indicators to include. And one of the great things about the list is that it can definitely be expanded over time, as the quality and coverage of the information within NIBRS improves. And then as additional indicators, measures, et cetera are added to NIBRS over time, we will be able to modify this list, and adjust the estimation procedures to account for new indicators.

So this is for reference, I won't read through everything, but this particular slide showcasing the key indicators by offense type is included to showcase the much larger number of offenses that we can estimate using the NIBRS data. So in the summary reporting system, there were 10 offenses captured. Seven of them were estimated. You can see that it's a much larger number here that cuts across for all three, I should say, areas crimes against persons, so your more traditional violent crimes, crimes against property, and then crimes against society.

And then we also have a number of other additional indicators that really capitalize on the rich detail at the incident level that is provided within NIBRS. So we're able to look at

things like the characteristics of individuals, the age, sex, and race of victims, alleged offenders, and persons who are arrested. We're also able to see if the arrestee was armed at the time, what the relationship, or multiple relationships were between victims and offenders. And then in terms of specific characteristics of the incident, we're able to look at incidents that occurred by place, both cities and counties, as well as states and the nation. We're able to look at things like property loss and bias motivation connected with the details of an incident that we did not have before. And then we're also able to see if a weapon was involved, and if there was any type of clearance for the incident, whether that's through arrest or through some other exceptional means.

So I want us to switch gears for a second and talk a little bit about coverage, and the number of agencies reporting to NIBRS, and the percentage of the population covered. So in 2016, the baseline that I'm starting with is 2016 because this is when the FBI announced the formal transition to NIBRS, and set the target date of January 1st, 2021 as the transition timeframe. So when we look at what reporting looked like for NIBRS in 2016, this was sort of the lay of the land across the United States. The lighter- colored states that you see here are those with lower coverage in terms of the percentage of agencies reporting by state. And you can see there's a lot of light blue in this map. And then when we look at 2021, you see that there's a lot more dark blue in this map, thankfully. And we were pretty successful in getting a lot of agencies to transition. We still have some pockets where some states don't have quite the coverage that we may have wanted. But we are seeing still positive movement in terms of the number of agencies that are continuing to work toward transitioning within each of these states.

And on the population coverage side, I would actually say it's an even more positive picture than what we see what the agency is reporting. In 2016 again, a lot of light-colored states here, not a lot of population coverage across a pretty large percentage of the states themselves. And then in 2021, that map is much darker. You're seeing a lot more population coverage. And this is due in part to a pretty good rate of success at getting agencies that represent larger cities to make the transition. So of the approximately 85, the number wobbles from year to year a little bit, of cities that have a population of 250,000 or more, we now have 62 of those agencies that reported data as of mid-June—I think it was June 2022. So we've seen a lot of growth in those larger population centers making the transition, and that's looking specifically at agencies that represent cities of that size. So that does not include some of those county-based law enforcement agencies that we know report to NIBRS as well, places like Montgomery County, Maryland, Fairfax County, Virginia, and other similar type of places throughout the country.

So why does coverage matter? I think this has been the question that everyone has been asking relative to the NIBRS transition. How can we be sure that these estimates are sound if you don't have all of the agencies reporting? And that is due to the fact that when you have a lower coverage rate, the uncertainty in the estimate tends to be greater. Not always, but it tends to be, right? So we needed to come up with a way to understand the amount of uncertainty in each of the estimates that we were producing through this process. And we did that by calculating a confidence interval around each of the estimates. The process that was employed for this is something that takes into account, not just the variance that's associated with the process, but also the bias that might exist in the estimate based on the fact that agencies in some way—there were a number of agencies reporting to NIBRS that self-selected themselves into that reporting status. There were a number of agencies that we, the federal agencies, selected for that process. And then there were those that came along as part of that process. And so we needed to have a way to account for the bias that was inherent in the fact that this wasn't a random selection of agencies, and some of the other quirks to how the transition had occurred over time.

And one of the critical points that we need to make, as folks are looking at how the data come out for 2021, and are seeing the estimates, is that they're going to look very different from the summary-based UCR estimates that everyone's used to seeing. So, those were based on reporting percentages that were really pretty high, right? Anywhere between, 95 to 98, sometimes a little lower, sometimes a little higher. Percent of agencies reporting their summary statistics to the FBI—reporting crime data, I should say, to the FBI. So while there were estimates generated as part of that process, the confidence intervals that would have been associated with those estimates would have been pretty small, because there is a far less uncertainty around those estimates, because of the high-coverage rate.

So now we're going to be messaging out that all of these estimates are associated with some confidence interval, and folks need to take that into account as they're evaluating the information that is being supplied to them through the UCR program.

So what are some of the implications then for National Estimation? I'm going to actually start at the bottom of this slide, and say that we needed to develop precision-based suppression rules that would guide how we determine if an estimate can be released. So those suppression rules were really centered around determining how precise is the estimate, what are some of the other metrics that would make it either more or less reliable based on the way the data array for that particular estimate. And then we put those in place so that we had a clear set of rules, so to speak, to follow when evaluating whether an estimate could be published or whether it should be suppressed.

So all of that said, we know that there are some geographic areas and agency subgroups that are still not at the coverage rates that we would like them to be. So they were going to have a little bit of lower coverage, and estimates in some of those subgroups will be suppressed due to low precision. I am happy to say that it's far fewer than I think anyone would have anticipated. We were quite happy to see how well the estimation process worked, and how good the estimates were at the end of the day, once we started looking across the full array of different estimates that we generated. This also meant that separate weights were required to generate regional estimates. So rather than having the traditional method where you would create a state-level estimate that would roll out to the region, and then roll out to the nation, we did have to generate separate weights at the regional level because coverage isn't even across each of the four major regions of the country. And all of this is expected to improve over the next few years as agencies continue to adopt NIBRS.

We also looked at using the NCS-X sample structure to improve the precision of estimates. This was due in part because we had a fairly large number of the NCS-X sample agencies that transitioned to NIBRS reporting by the end of 2020 when we were making some of these final decisions. And one of the other things was, too, we had a subset of strata—I should say, a stratum of the NCS-X sample structure devoted to tribal agencies and that is one of the big success stories of this transition. The FBI was able to establish an online reporting tool for tribal agencies to use to report their data that would go directly to NIBRS. And that allowed a lot more tribal agencies to begin reporting to the system. So now 87% of tribal agencies are reporting NIBRS data, which is just a phenomenal improvement over previous years.

Ultimately, we did not have to fully rely on the NCS-X sample. I think I mentioned that a little bit earlier, in order to establish the estimation procedures, but it did give us the structure within which to evaluate the precision of the estimates that we were producing.

And in terms of implications for state-level estimation, we do see the progress in the adoption of NIBRS varying from state to state, as you had seen in the maps that I presented a few minutes ago. And there are a few that have much lower coverage rates than others. All of that said, though, we do have 33 states that have an 80% or greater population coverage rate, and only two states that have less than a 15% coverage rate. And we are seeing significant growth in a couple of our most populous states, California and Florida being the two that have the lowest population coverage, and then New Jersey has had a lot of movement over the last year as well. And we expect to see significant gains in terms of the data provided in 2022 from agencies in those states.

And in general, the higher coverage rates are going to be better for state-level estimation procedures. We've done work to assess which states had sufficient coverage in 2021 to produce state-level estimates. And I'm very happy to say that we are able to generate state-level estimates of violent crime and property crime for more than 80% of states in the country. And we also took the time within that process, so that 80% number is based upon the final process that was used that included an assessment of whether a state-level estimate could be generated even if the largest agencies in the state were not reporting, and determining if tribal law enforcement agencies were going to be critical to that state-level estimate for those states that have a higher representation of a tribal population within their boundaries.

So where does that leave us? How does estimation change reporting crime statistics? We see some major improvements, of course, that are generally centered around the much more detailed and comprehensive information that is available for NIBRS compared to the summary system. We get counts of all offenses in the crime incident instead of just the most serious. We are able to generate a much more complete picture of reported crime, which tells us not just about crime in the community, but about what police are dealing with within that particular jurisdiction as well, which I think is an important item to note. And then, we also are getting much more detail on the specifics of each crime incident. Where did it occur? What time of day did it take place? What were some of the characteristics of the actors involved that would tell us more about what the risk for certain types of incidents really is?

But then on the other hand, we do have some major differences that users of the information will really need to keep in mind as they work with the data. Of course, we have a reduced number of reporting agencies in general. And because of a reduction in overall coverage, we will need to suppress some of the estimates. So, there in my site it says it's likely to occur but we do have some suppression that needs to occur because there are several estimates, not that many, that just don't rise to the level being precise enough for publication. And then, the biggest one is that estimates will be expressed with their associated confidence intervals. So, when you see a point estimate for say 2020 and a point estimate for 2021, you may actually be able to do some math to see a difference between those two numbers. But those confidence intervals around each of the estimates may overlap and that means that there's not a statistically significant difference between those two numbers. And that's something that we really need to message out and get folks to understand out in the community a little bit more broadly. So, with that, I think I'm turning it over to Kevin Scott who is the BJS Deputy Director for Statistical Operations. He is going to emcee our Q&A session with you all. So, Kevin, I turn it over to you.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Thank you, Erica. As noted on the sign in front of you, please type your questions into the Q&A part of the WebEx presentation and make sure that you select All Panelists so that we can make sure that they get to the right person. And as you do that, we'll start with a few questions. And, again, feel free to include your own questions. First, when I get the questions in, I'll try to get an initial referral to either the FBI or to BJS. But I want to encourage all of the panelists to weigh in if they decided it's appropriate.

So, starting with maybe the FBI, a lot of the narrative around transition to NIBRS has been that some of the largest law enforcement agencies have not yet done that transition to NIBRS. How do you encourage greater participation so we can see the whole picture for the United States?

ERICA L. SMITH: So, Kevin, I will try to take that question. I think that it's important to note that participation in NIBRS has always been and remains voluntary. The FBI and BJS do continue to work diligently with law enforcement agencies to bring them honest poll participants in NIBRS. And as those participation rates increase, we can ensure that the data available through NIBRS are robust and paint a much more vivid picture of crime in the United States than we were seeing under the previous system.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: And how reliable do we feel that the data are if they aren't complete from every state? So, Erica, looking at your coverage maps and as you acknowledged, there are some states where we don't have the reporting that we need. How reliable do we think that the data are overall and what are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

ERICA L. SMITH: So, I would say that the value of the additional information available in NIBRS is going to be immediately clear and it's only going to showcase its value more and more over time as more agencies come online. It is true that the submitted data may not be complete for each state, but we have through the statistical procedures that we put in place to the estimation project, we've implemented robust methods that account for missing information which does make it possible to ascertain some of those trends and extrapolate information from participating jurisdictions when data are unavailable from others. The FBI and BJS have a very long history of and experience with collecting and compiling crime statistics. So, the analysis that uses NIBRS data to generate estimates of violent and property crime for both 2020 and 2021 are able to provide a confident comparison of crime trends across the nation.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: So, let's talk a little bit about the data release. So, the first question I think is, how do people get to the data and are those sources secure? And I suspect

that many people on this call have spent much time over their professional careers trying to find the right table on the crime in the U.S. publication. And then, moving with the transition to the crime data explorer for last year's publication, what does the data release look like for the 2021 data?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: We take this…

ERICA L. SMITH: Ed did you want to speak to the FBI side of things?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Absolutely. So, this year's annual release of crime data will look different than previous years as it was comprised to basically four reports. Crime in the US 2021 has one of those components. However, because several large population centers are among those that aren't represented in the traditional report, it will not include violate crime trends. But just one last thing to add. So, tomorrow when we release the data, all of this will be available there on the crime data explorer documents and downloads.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Okay. And…

ERICA L. SMITH: And, Kevin…

KEVIN M. SCOTT: …well, tomorrow's data…

ERICA L. SMITH: And, Kevin…

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Go ahead. Sorry.

ERICA L. SMITH: Kevin…

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Go ahead, Erica.

ERICA L. SMITH: …can I just add—no, no, no. That's okay. Sorry. I just wanted to add too that BJS is making several different NIBRS data files available through the National Archives of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan. I think a good number of the attendees that we have here today are probably familiar with finding data through NACJB. So, we will be releasing a number of those data files including NIBRS extract files for the years 2017 through 2020 with 2021 hopefully to follow in two to three weeks from now is our hope. Two to three weeks after the day release, I should say. And BJS is also getting ready to launch its own tool, the Law Enforcement Agency Reported Crime Analysis Tool or LEARCAT which we like to call it, which is a data access

platform that uses the NIBRS data and other contextual information and makes that available through an online platform to folks. So, I just wanted to give a little plug for that because hopefully it will be a place that people can go as a resource for the crime data as well.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: What are the implications for hate crimes data? There's obviously an issue of increasing public policy concern. And NIBRS become the only way to report and record hate crimes data with the full transition to NIBRS. Will the estimates for hate crime be released tomorrow? Will estimates be used for hate crime data and will those estimates be part of the data released tomorrow?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: We could take this one.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Yeah.

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: So, hate crime data is absolutely dependent upon NIBRS participation. Tomorrow, you are not going to see hate crime data be released, but it will be released later this fall.

ERICA L. SMITH: Estimates. No estimates.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Okay.

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: But that's without estimates.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Okay. Terrific. What are some of the speed bumps that agencies are running into with the transition to NIBRS? And I know both FBI and BJS have been very closely involved with the agencies on the transition. And what kind of assistance to those agencies can be provided to get some of those agencies over those last two hurdles as they move forward into NIBRS?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Yeah. We could…

ERICA L. SMITH: I think I can…

KEVIN M. SCOTT: We should specify a response order on that.

ERICA L. SMITH: That's okay. I can speak to that from the perspective of myself and my staff who've been involved with working directly with agencies through their grant process for those that we've been able to fund. It's been a whole variety of hurdles that

agencies have run into more than I think I ever could have anticipated. Early in the process, we had, I think assumed, quite honestly, that the major issues would be money and staffing, right? Typical—you don't have anyone to manage a technology project like this. You don't have the money to implement it. Some of the same kinds of things that lots of us in our day-to-day are used to dealing with, but it's turned out that there were a lot of agencies that had an appetite to do this work. They received grant funds or they got funding from whatever their local source of funding is, whether it's at the state level, county, city, et cetera.

But then they ran into other additional problems. There have been a number of speed bumps, I would say. I like that terminology calling. There have been a number of speed bumps associated with the service providers that are implementing a new record management system or an upgrade to the record management system within the law enforcement agency itself. There have been some delays associated with the state UCR programs process and progress, I should say, in implementing a NIBRS-certified data collection mechanism within the state and providing out that sort of technical specification that agencies need in order to make the transition.

And then there's also been some of these oddities. We've had a number of large cities and then one state agency actually that waited, and waited, and waited, and waited for approval from either the state legislature or the county or city commissioners or things of that nature to be able to use their grant funds for the purposes for which they received the money. So, it was odd little things like that that actually ended up creating many more hurdles than any of us had ever anticipated. So, I say all that and give all that detail because I think it's important for people to note that there are very few places—very few agencies—that I've engaged with anyway that just don't want to do this. And I think that's a popular misconception that LAPD hasn't transitioned because they can't be bothered. That's as far from the truth, particularly for that agency as it could be. And so, I just give a bit of a shout out to the agencies for the efforts that they have been making despite the roadblocks that keep popping up in front of them.

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Erica, I want to add about that crime perception being a concern because we've determined that's actually a misconception. Some of these agencies believe, that the more granular data is going to make it appear as if crime's risen but that doesn't inherently mean the crime is up. It's just getting a more comprehensive picture with more data.

ERICA L. SMITH: Absolutely.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Alex wanted to say something at this point if that's okay. But—so I just…

ERICA L. SMITH: Of course.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: …want to make sure he gets an opportunity.

ALEXIS R. PIQUERO: So, thank you very much so far for the great back and forth that Ed and Erica have and all the comments and questions here that are showing up in the chat. So, it's really important about messaging on policymakers, I'll let the FBI deal with that. High-level summary, the estimation process, yes, we'll have more documents coming up on that, Sharon. And there will be recordings made available.

I want to remind everybody that we're all in this together in the sense that we're all consumers of these data in various ways. I, for one, my entire career and seeing lots of people on this call who I've worked with, whether on the NAS panel on modernizing crime data or other facets of my career. I want to say that we all want these data to be as populated as much as we can, recognizing that it's always voluntary. And having worked with PDs my entire career, a lot of them have a lot of resource issues and a lot of staffing issues and a lot of RMS issues. So, this is not as simple as flipping the switch as a lot of people think it is. But I want to remind everybody, since I'm a consumer of first-print books and you can find anything on the Internet these days, I got the original "Uniform Crime Reporting," a complete manual for the police that was published in 1929 by the Committee on Uniform Crime Records, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 261 Broadway, New York City. And I say that because I want to read the foreword to everybody.

The urgent need for National Crime Statistics in the United States is so well-recognized as to require no debate. Criminal justice administrators and others engage in the prevention and suppression of crime have for many years expressed regret upon the absence of reliable information concerning crime and criminals.

I think we can all agree that NIBRS is what we're trying to do. And we have made a lot of strides, particularly in the last five to seven years, to get police departments to continue moving over to NIBRS. And we're moving the needle on that. And so, I hope that the stakeholders out there in the user community recognize the amount of work that is being done on a day-to-day level, not just by the FBI and BJS but the actual people who work in police departments. Sometimes it's really easy to sit back hiding behind the Internet and playing with datasets and downloading them left and right and not appreciating the hard work and time it takes to make these transitions when there's a

financial cost to them and a human cost to them. So, I just want to remind everybody that we all are really interested in the same things and we're all really working as hard as we can to get to that point. I think it's always good to have a positive statement when it comes to these kinds of things. So, I thought I would throw that out there just to have a nice and positive comment at the end of the day here. So I'll shut up now.

ERICA L. SMITH: Well, and to that end, Kevin, if it's okay, I'd like to speak to a little bit more to Sharon's question about the plans for releasing more technical documentation. We had very lofty goals of releasing a number of technical reports prior to the release of the data and just didn't quite get to the finish line in terms of all the review and formatting and things. All that said though, we do have a number of technical reports that are slated to be released over the next couple of months that will provide a lot more detail about the processes that we used within that estimation project. It'll provide a summary of what we evaluated and where we ended up ultimately at the end of the day.

And in addition to those more detailed technical reports that BJS will publish when the FBI releases the data, they will be putting out a series of primers that give a much higher-level summary of a number of those processes. So you'll see information about the suppression rules that I mentioned earlier, some additional information about the data quality evaluations and how we adjusted the coverage adjustments that were conducted as part of the process, too. So, you'll see a smattering of that detail when the data are released, and then we'll have more technical documentation later. And we would love for researchers to take a look at what we did and provide their input on it, because at the end of the day, if you've got ideas that can help us strengthen this process, we definitely want to know about them. We have staff internally at BJS, and I want to give a shout out to Joe Conklin, who is our Senior Statistical Advisor. He is always looking for new or different methods that could improve the precision of the estimates that we generate through this process. So we're always looking for that.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: The other thing is that I think that complete clarity on the technical documentation is a lot easier after the data have been released, trying to explain in detail the technical steps that were taken will not before the data could be released probably would have confused people. So I think that to some point it makes sense to do some of that after the fact. But we also understand that we want people to do more than just take it on faith, that we were serious about the efforts that the FBI and BJS certainly undertook to get to the point that we're headed to.

One more question out of the Q&A. And I think this is a question that bedevils both sides of us, especially those of us who aren't accustomed to messaging to policymakers. But the question is, how do we do that? How do we message to

policymakers and to the other stakeholders who may not be experts on crime statistics? Why there are going to be some states and there are going to be some estimates that are just not going to be available for 2021?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Can we go first on that one, if you'd like?

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Yeah.

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: So, you know, ever since 2016, there's been a great deal of assistance that's been offered. I think you're going to find that both FBI and BJS have been very active with many of the organizations that we work with on a day-to-day basis. We've been at conferences. We've offered no-cost training. We continue to provide all of our participants hands-on data integration, support, training and technical assistance. But I think it's important, I think, going forward that we continue to have the same messaging. I think we've got several conferences, throughout the rest of this year and then obviously into next. But the message is consistent. We need more participation. And anything that we can do to help get that done, we're standing by to do so.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Erica or Alex, do you want to take that one at all?

ERICA L. SMITH: I would underscore what Ed just said about part of the message needs to be about how, even in those states that have decent coverage, we have gaps in reporting across agencies in those. So we still need to be looking to provide resources and support, whatever that looks like to those agencies, but it's even more critically important in those states with lower coverage rates. So one of the messages I think that we could look to put out there is the states for which we were not able to generate estimates in 2021, they are those that we really need to focus state, local, state, and federal resources on. And I don't just mean money, but I mean trying to understand what it is that those agencies can use and what some of their impediments are to making the transition. That it's not just, as Alex alluded to, it's not just a negative story that they didn't make it for 2021. It's that there was some type of roadblock that got in the way, whatever that may have been. And that rather than looking at it from the negative perspective, let's go out and say—how can we continue to support these agencies to get their data into the system? Because it's critically important for all of the rest of us that this happen, not just for that agency in that community.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: So kind of looking out over the next several years for this project, the current question is how long do we think or for—at what point do we think that we can stop doing estimation to account for missing agencies and missing data? Is there a

point at which the coverage is good enough that we think that at some point you can turn off the estimation machine and say that these are no longer estimates or is that going to be a feature for the foreseeable future?

ERICA L. SMITH: I would jump in here first real quickly and then ask the FBI if they have any follow up too. I don't envision a day when we won't need estimates at all. And I say that because under the summary reporting system, estimates were produced as well to account for gaps in reporting. So, you had some agencies that didn't report one year. You also had agencies that only reported a partial year of data. Estimates were generated—estimates and weights were used to account for that coverage issue in the summary reporting system as well. So, there will be a point in time where we get to a coverage rate with NIBRS where it may just "just be" those types of issues that we're dealing with. But we're also still going to have a need to conduct the quality assessments of the data to determine if we need to do item level imputation, to account for any gaps in the specific incident data that were reported as well. So, I think that's my long way of saying I don't really foresee a reason why we would not want to estimate. So, it isn't really that we're standing this system up as a stopgap. It's that we are engaging with the information in a different way to make it as useful to the public and to policymakers and other stakeholders as possible. And that that process really shouldn't ever be sunset, so to speak, even as coverage increases over time.

ALEXIS R. PIQUERO: This is Alex Piquero. I would also like to underscore that. All of us as people, independent of our jobs in this area, we work on estimates all of the time, every day of our lives. When we think about, I've said this before when we're watching election news coverage and 2% of the counties are in, we're, "Okay, look, let's wait some more." And 30%. "Okay, let's wait some more." And the same thing with Gallup polls, plus or minus this or, when you buy a car and the miles per gallon, the city says 25 and miles per gallon in the highway says 30. You never going to get exactly that number. It's going to be a range. So, I actually like the idea of bounds and I like the idea of confidence intervals. And maybe it's just that Michael Maltz has been hounding this in me since I was a kid in grad school, but I think it's good for people to have a sense of, there is a little bit of uncertainty around every estimate that we deal with. And I think that that's okay because it's actually being more transparent with people about where the true value lies. So, I actually would hope that we continue down this road for a period of time. It's very common in statistics these days and certainly in the criminology field.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Is the NIBRS process—and this, I think, both the FBI and BJS again have worked very closely with agencies to handle this transition. So I'm curious and I think this is a nice question. Is the NIBRS process also moving agencies to more

standardized data collection and system? Is that something that you see as you get out there in the field with those agencies?

EDWARD L. ABRAHAM: Yes, absolutely, Kevin. As record management systems become more compliant, the standardization of the collection is going to occur. So as agencies transition, the data is going to become more standardized. And that's exactly what we're trying to reach.

ERICA L. SMITH: I would also say too, that it's even beyond whether the systems themselves or the data collection that we are capturing, on the federal side, is standardized. It is also what comes down range from that, which is, as we publish more and more the findings from the NIBRS data collection, the hope is, and I know this may sound relatively, maybe, Pollyanna, and I'm going to come back to you all and say, I told you so if it works later on down the road. But is to say that we're going to put all this information out about the quality of the data and what we can learn from it. And in those places where the data are captured with great fidelity and are very complete, they're going to learn more about crime in their community than a place that doesn't do this as well.

So, we know that what exists out there as we start to look at data quality is that agencies want to become NIBRS-compliant. States want their agencies to be NIBRS-compliant. And some of the actors involved in this process, whether it's on the agency side, analyst side, the record management service provider side of the equation, I'm not casting any doubt on what they're trying to do, but there are a number of ways that you can circumvent data quality and still get the data into the system. And we've seen that play out agency by agency. And in certain states where you're getting a lot of unknowns or those types of values that are being reported, those agencies aren't going to get as much out of their data. So, as we start to learn that and we can start socializing out that, "Hey, you might be sending your data through, it's not really providing much of a background, though." I think you're going to see improvement, not just because it's standardized and we can see it because of that process, right? But also because agencies are going to see the value in improving their reporting over time. That's one of the critical roles that BJS has for the kinds of technical assistance that we want to be providing out to agencies as we move forward.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Well, in the time—we're in danger of time since in the last four minutes, no additional questions have come in. So, I think this might be a good point to pause for a moment. And if we don't see any more questions come in. I think this is a good time, first of all, to thank those of you who joined us. I really appreciate it. Hopefully you found the information that you're looking for. And as more information—I

don't want to say, bursts into the public domain over the coming days—please feel free to reach out, both to BJS and to the FBI with questions that you might have on understanding and interpreting. And please, send people who are asking you questions, send them our way to the extent that we can be helpful.

I think that from both agencies, one of the things that's been really nice about this process has been it's been a real collaboration between the BJS and FBI CJIS and it's been really a nice thing to see from any different vantage points. And we certainly expect it to continue because we engage complementary and overlapping, but to some degree distinct communities. And so we want to encourage those of you who are on this call to send people our way and to send questions our way as the data release and as those questions continue and as you see more reports and publication utilizing these data and discussing the logistics behind the data. Again, we're happy to answer your questions on behalf of both agencies. So, to those of you who attended and asked questions, again, thank you to our panelists, thank you all very much for taking the time to walk through what's been going on behind the scenes for a while now. And we are—I think, collectively committed to transparency as we move forward. And so, I appreciate you taking the time to give your presentations and to answer questions from our audience today.

ALEXIS R. PIQUERO: Yeah, thank you, Kevin. And if I could just want to take a minute, we're looking through the participants here and we see a lot of familiar names, both agencies that we work with, state program manager, CSOs. And I just want to reiterate that, when things come out tomorrow, we stand by to answer any questions that you have, offer any assistance interpreting that data, but also want to offer assistance if there's anyone out there who's struggling to become an active participant or needs help in any way, do not hesitate to ask, because that's what we're here for.

KEVIN M. SCOTT: Thank you all very much.

DARYL FOX: Great. So, on behalf of BJS and the FBI, I want to thank you for joining today. This will end today's presentation.