

Welcome to the National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS, Knowledge Corner. This video provides an overview of the two types of NCVS datasets: the Public-Use Files and the Restricted-Use Files.

Public-Use Files refer to datasets where personally identifiable information, or PII, and other possible risks of disclosure, such as finer points of respondent geographic location, have been removed. Public datasets include single year, or combined files, which include all data from 1993 to the current year. These are referred to as concatenated files.

Restricted-Use Files are those that include confidential PII, or data at risk of disclosure concerns, that could lead to the identification of the respondent, including the block or city where the respondent lives, or information about the interviewer. Researchers may require more detail that the public-use file can offer to test their hypothesis. To help protect the privacy of respondents while allowing access to crucial data, access to NCVS restricted datasets require a thorough application and approval process. For more information and to apply for access, visit [ResearchDataGov.org](https://www.researchdata.gov).

There are a few variables that differentiate the restricted data from the publicly available data.

Restricted data includes geographic microdata like Census Tracts, metropolitan statistical areas, and towns which could be used to identify respondents. The files also include geographic block groups that can be directly linked to other surveys, such as the Census' American Community Survey. You can use the restricted datasets to do small-area estimation, like state-level victimization rates, or use variables that have not been de-identified, primarily to link NCVS restricted items to other national datasets. Some variables which have been collapsed in the public-use files to protect survey respondents' confidentiality may also be available behind the firewall.

If you have a non-geographic research question, you will likely be able to use the Public-Use Data. The public datasets include information, such as de-identified household and victim demographics, as well as detailed victimization incident characteristics. The data allows for analyses at both the population and individual level. For example, you could explore the likelihood of victims reporting crimes to police based on the type of crime and the victim offender relationship. You can also conduct rich subgroup analyses, such as victimization rate among hard-to-reach populations, such as sexual and gender minority persons. Most research questions can be addressed using the public datasets.

Public data can be accessed from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data website shown on this slide. You need to create an online account but can download the NCVS public files and begin using them immediately.

However, you must apply for and go through a review process to gain access to restricted data. This includes providing a detailed research proposal. The NCVS' restricted data is made available by the U.S. Census Bureau's Federal Statistical Research Data Centers. More

information on how to apply and what information to include in the application can be found on the website here.

This has been an overview video of the NCVS public- and restricted-use files. For more information regarding accessing NCVS datasets, please visit the NCVS data user page.

You can also email [ASKBJS@usdoj.gov](mailto:ASKBJS@usdoj.gov) and your email will be forwarded to a statistician with topical expertise.

Thank you.