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CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE DATA SYSTEM

USER SURVEY OF STATISTICAL OUTPUT

NCJRS

MAY 26 1976

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FINAL REPORT

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Prepared by

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2129 HACIENDA WAY, SUITE A

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2129 HACIENDA WAY, SUITE A, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825, (916) 488-4757



September 29, 1975

Mr. Willard Hutchins, Chief  
Bureau of Criminal Statistics  
77 Cadillac Drive  
Sacramento, California

Dear Mr. Hutchins:

Submitted herewith is our final report on the California Comprehensive Data System: User Survey of Statistical Output.

It was a pleasure to have served the Bureau and participate in a research assignment which may have wider application to the criminal justice field. We wish to express our appreciation to the Bureau staff for the assistance they provided over the course of the project.

We have drawn heavily upon the time of the program administrators of each CDS component. Each made valuable contributions in designing the survey instrument.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arlen Bean".

Arlen Bean  
Project Director

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

AB/k

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PUBLIC POLICY • FISCAL ANALYSIS • EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report presents the results of a survey of 430 agencies and individuals who made special requests for information answered from the Comprehensive Data System. The purpose of the survey was to provide feedback to the Bureau of Criminal Statistics on (1) characteristics of users and special requests, (2) users' satisfaction with the data supplied from CDS, (3) strengths and weaknesses in the presentation of CDS output, (4) workload and costs associated with servicing special requests, and (5) users' future informational needs.

Based on the analysis of the 277 responses to the User Survey and Evaluation Questionnaire that was used to assess the statistical output of the California Comprehensive Data System, the following findings are presented in this report.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CDS USERS AND SPECIAL REQUESTS

The Bureau of Criminal Statistics received 300 special requests for information in 1974 and expects to service over 1000 similar requests in 1975. The requests came from every type of agency in the criminal justice system.

The heavy users are law enforcement agencies (22%), state and local criminal justice planning agencies (15%), probation and correctional agencies (19%), state legislature (8%), colleges and others outside the criminal justice system (23%), and courts and Attorney General (14%). Every size agency in these groups have been assisted through information supplied from the Comprehensive Data System. One-third of the requests came from agencies with over 125 employees.

The subject matter of the questions presented to the Bureau was too broad to categorize, but the Comprehensive Data System data bases included enough detail to answer 88% of the inquiries. Sixty-nine percent of the users asked for data to be supplied in a specific form. Users

CDS in the future, the Bureau needed to know how organizations expect to use the system and how they want output assembled. Generally, the primary information need of all agencies is for basic crime and arrest information in the form of general statistics, trends and projections, or specific crime data. The courts, probation departments, and the legislature expressed the need for superior court prosecutions and juvenile probation caseload information. The users' secondary information needs shifted slightly, but 68% of the users still ranked general crime statistics, trends, and specific crime data as the most important.

Cost and workload information and technical assistance was a prominent third level need. The state legislature, planning agencies, and correctional agencies expressed the greatest interest in this information.

When asked what kind of information systems the Bureau should develop, over half of the users said that BCS should just supply basic crime and arrest statistics which the user would analyze and interpret. Secondly, the users want the Bureau to develop the capability of answering specific questions. The Bureau must also have the ability to assemble data for any type of jurisdiction or geographical area and for several different time periods. There was some tendency to want data reported by fiscal year on a basis that corresponds to the users' own jurisdictional responsibility.

#### USERS' FAMILIARITY WITH BCS

In spite of the fact that 80% of the users consider BCS as the primary source of criminal justice information, they are not familiar with the Bureau's publications or the type of information that can be furnished through the Comprehensive Data System. Seventy-five percent of the users said they would make more requests if they knew more about BCS. Many of the respondents suggested that the Bureau publish a guide as to what services and publications are available.

#### COSTS, PERSONNEL, AND TIME REQUIRED TO COMPLETE SPECIAL REQUESTS

Fifty percent of the requests are being answered



within nine days. Only 37 (13%) of the 277 requests in the sample required more than a month to answer.

The requests which came from the Attorney General's Office, colleges, the Legislature, and the courts accounted for 36 of the 37 requests in the sample that required more than one month to answer. Forty-five percent of the requests required less than one hour of clerical or technical time. The cost of a special request in these cases was about \$10.00-\$13.00. Only 13% of the requests took more than six hours each of clerical or technical time. This suggests that the majority of requests are being filled with, basically, machine prepared output.

A considerable amount of previous special request activity can be expected to continue as an ongoing part of the Bureau's workload. Thirty-four percent of the users said they expected to make the same request again on an annual basis.

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## INTRODUCTION

## I. INTRODUCTION

The California Bureau of Criminal Statistics (BCS) is charged with the responsibility of gathering and disseminating information on crime and delinquency from hundreds of local criminal justice agencies. Since 1974, the Bureau has been in the process of reorganizing its administrative and technical resources around a program concept proposed by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), broadly referred to as the Comprehensive Data System (CDS).

The development of the Comprehensive Data System was announced in 1972 as part of LEAA's national strategy to assist the states with the improvement of their criminal justice information systems. In announcing the program, LEAA recognized that rational planning and more effective uses of resources were highly dependent on the development of improved systems for handling criminal justice information.

LEAA visualized all states eventually having a Comprehensive Data System, but financial assistance was initially limited to those states, like California, who were already committed to the centralized collection of criminal justice statistics.

Every Comprehensive Data System was to have five major components. The California Comprehensive Data System, closely following federal guidelines, consists of:

1. Statistical Analysis Center (SAC)

The Statistical Analysis Center functions as the central control and coordinating unit for the entire Comprehensive Data System. SAC has the responsibility of analyzing, integrating, and reporting data collected or produced from the other four components. SAC sets quality control standards and specifies the data that will be collected from

local criminal justice agencies.

2. Uniform Crime Report System (UCR)

This component of CDS has statewide responsibility for the collection of all crime reports from local police agencies, and audits the data to assure compliance with federal standards.

3. Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS)

This component of CDS has the capability of tracking an offender from the point of arrest to his final exit from the criminal justice system. The unit of count is the individual offender, and the objective of OBTS is to record the sequence of all significant actions as the offender is handled by the police, prosecution, courts, and corrections.

4. Management and Administrative Statistics (MAS)

The purpose of this component is to collect data on expenditures, personnel, facilities, equipment, and workload in criminal justice agencies which can be used to identify needs, allocate funds, and evaluate programs.

5. Technical Assistance

The purpose of this component is to help local and state agencies implement and use CDS. Technical staff attached to CDS assist contributing agencies in developing the record keeping and reporting procedures that are necessary to adhere to the crime reporting standards issued by the Statistical Analysis Center. The unit advises the Statistical Analysis Center on matters related to computer resources, system's design, and specification.

Prior to 1974, most of the Bureau's reporting and analytical output was represented in a series of annual, fixed format publications. These primarily consisted of summary reporting of offenses, persons, or processes based on unit counts of information submitted by contributing agencies.

The design of the Comprehensive Data System now allows the Bureau to show not only the extent of the crime problem but who handles it and how they do it, who the offenders are, what is done to them, and what it costs.

In planning CDS, the Bureau made provisions for accessing its computerized data bases for highly specific information and types of analyses that are often requested by individual agencies or users. The Bureau received over 300 such requests in 1974 and expects to service about a 1000 special requests in 1975. The requests covered a wide variety of subjects and most involved some form of special analysis and presentation that goes beyond the Bureau's regular publications. The requests came from a broad variety of users which include the Legislature, Attorney General, the Governor, and state and local policy bodies.

#### SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is concerned with an evaluation of the Special Request Program. The study was commissioned because it is important that the Comprehensive Data System be planned with a better understanding of the user's information needs and his uses of the data than the Bureau has at present.

The purpose of the survey was to provide feedback to the Bureau on:

1. Characteristics of users.
2. The overall degree of satisfaction with information supplied by the Comprehensive Data System.

3. Strengths and weaknesses in the presentation of CDS output.
4. Workload and costs associated with servicing special requests.
5. The type of information users want and expectations for future needs from CDS.

This report presents the results of a survey of 430 agencies and individuals who made a special request for information to the Bureau between January 1974 and March 1975.

#### LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

All of the data bases and technical resources which make up the Comprehensive Data System are utilized in servicing special requests, but there are many types of routine statistical output and user services provided through CDS which are not addressed in this study. The study also does not encompass the organizational, operational, or technical considerations involved in answering these requests.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Most of the data for the study was collected from a questionnaire survey of the agencies who made special requests for information answered from the Comprehensive Data System between January 1974 and March 1975. A questionnaire survey was used because the number of agencies involved precluded the possibility of making personal contacts with as many agencies as would be necessary for an adequate analysis of the users' reactions. The questionnaires also ensured more uniformity in the data than would have been possible through telephone or personal interviews.

### QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION

Staff from all five CDS components assisted in the development of the questionnaire. The questions were based on a review of 50 completed special requests. The 22 questions included in the survey were designed to obtain information on (1) the user's satisfaction with the Bureau's response, (2) the use of the data, (3) the user's future need for information, (4) the user's preference for the assembly of data, (5) the user's familiarity with routine BCS publications, and (6) the types of information systems the Bureau should develop. A copy of the final questionnaire is included on the following page.

### DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Four-hundred-thirty questionnaires were distributed in April. Three-hundred-eleven of the questionnaires concerned requests answered in 1974 and 119 of the requests were completed in 1975. Each questionnaire was accompanied with a personal letter that explained the pur-



USER SURVEY AND EVALUATION  
OF THE BUREAU OF CRIMINAL STATISTICS  
COMPREHENSIVE DATA SYSTEM

Individual Responses Will Remain Confidential

Information Will Be Utilized Only To Prepare Statistical Summaries

Control Number

1. From the response BCS made to your request, did it appear that the Bureau understood the nature of your request or problem:

- ☐ 1 Correctly  
☐ 2 Partly right

☐ 3 Misunderstood it completely

2. Did you ask for the data to be supplied in the form of:

- ☐ 1 Computer print-outs  
☐ 2 Charts or graphs  
☐ 3 Typed tables  
☐ 4 Summary totals  
☐ 5 Projections

- ☐ 6 Interpretation and written analysis  
☐ 7 Duplication of cards or report forms  
☐ 8 Did not specify  
☐ 9 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you request an interpretative analysis of the data?

☐ 1 Yes

☐ 2 No

4. If an interpretative analysis of the data was provided, how would you rate the thoroughness and extent of the analysis?

- ☐ 1 Sufficient in interpretation and detail  
☐ 2 Not enough interpretation and detail  
☐ 3 More interpretation and detail were supplied than was really needed  
☐ 4 More interpretation and detail were supplied, but it was useful

5. Considering your needs and the use you eventually made of the data, how satisfactory was the information BCS supplied?

- ☐ 1 Entirely satisfactory  
☐ 2 Helpful, it served the greatest part of my need  
☐ 3 Helpful, but it served only a limited part of my need

- ☐ 4 Not at all useful  
☐ 5 BCS did not have the data

6. If the data BCS supplied were not satisfactory, what were the main problems? (Check all answers that apply)

- ☐ 1 The data did not answer the question  
☐ 2 It took too long to get the answer  
☐ 3 The statistics needed more interpretation and analysis  
☐ 4 All the basic data were provided, but the form and organization of the analysis was not useful

- ☐ 5 The data were not current enough  
☐ 6 Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. If the data BCS supplied were not satisfactory, did you request further clarification or more information?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

8. How did you use the data BCS supplied? (Check all that apply)

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Budget preparation	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or lecture
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Annual reports	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Routine department reference
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Special report to management	9 <input type="checkbox"/> Long-range planning
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Grant application	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____
5 <input type="checkbox"/> A special request or need	
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Research	

9. Did you republish the data BCS supplied in another report?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

10. If yes, who was the report prepared for?

11. Did you attempt to obtain the information from any other source before making your request to BCS?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

12. If yes, where?

13. Do you expect to make this same request to BCS again?

1 ☐ No 2 ☐ Yes--on an annual basis 3 ☐ Yes--more than once a year 4 ☐ Unknown at this time

14. What kind of information do you think others in your organization are likely to request in the future? (Number all that apply in order of their importance, 1 being the most important.)

1 _____ General crime and arrest statistics	7 _____ Adult probation (caseloads, referrals, etc.)
2 _____ Projections and trends on crime	8 _____ Juvenile probation (caseloads, referrals, etc.)
3 _____ Cost and workload statistics	9 _____ Probation subsidy
4 _____ Information on specific crimes and arrests	10 _____ Drug diversion
5 _____ Lower court prosecutions	11 _____ Assistance from BCS staff
6 _____ Superior court prosecutions	12 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

15. If BCS were supplying you information on any of the subjects listed in Question 14, how would you or your agency like to have the data assembled?

1 <input type="checkbox"/> County-wide basis	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Basis that makes comparisons between cities or counties of similar size
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide basis	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Regional basis	
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdictional basis	

16. If BCS were supplying you information on any of the subjects listed in Question 14, how would you or your agency like to have the data assembled?

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal year	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Semiannually
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar year	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Five-year trends
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative quarters
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____

17. In terms of your agency's needs, do you think BCS should develop information systems which: (Number each answer in order of its importance to you.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Supply basic crime and arrest statistics which you will analyze and interpret

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Are capable of answering specific questions which are of concern to you as an individual user

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Produce generalized trends, projections, and analyses of crime and arrest statistics without a particular user in mind

4 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

18. Can you list the titles of any BCS published reports on various crime subjects which your agency or organization received or requested in 1974?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 ☐ Don't know

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 ☐ Do not receive any BCS publications

19. Of the publications you listed in Question 18, which two do you consider to be the most valuable and widely used in your organization?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you and other members of your organization understand the type of information that the Bureau is capable of supplying?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

21. If you knew more about the type of data BCS has available, do you think you would:

1 ☐ Make requests to BCS more often

2 ☐ Have made your last request in more detail or asked for different information

3 ☐ Try to get more of the BCS publications on a regular basis

22. Considering the long-term needs for criminal justice data in your agency, which of the general areas of information below do you consider the most important? (Check your answers by numbering them in the order of their importance.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Basic counts of crime and arrest statistics by agency

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Basic information about prosecution and court disposition for the arrest

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Basic information about juvenile and adult probation

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Information which shows what happens to the offender at each point in the criminal justice process

5 \_\_\_\_\_ Information about the costs, personnel, and workload associated with the individual parts of the criminal justice process such as law enforcement, courts, etc.

6 \_\_\_\_\_ Information that will show statewide changes and trends in crime

7 \_\_\_\_\_ Information that will project or show local trends and changes in crime

8 \_\_\_\_\_ Information that will be useful for such management and policy purposes as budgeting, planning, and allocating resources, etc.

9 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Please comment on any area you feel needs further clarification, or any area not covered by the above questions.

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Name of person filling out questionnaire:

Telephone number:

Number of personnel in your agency or organization:

Please return questionnaire to:

Criminal Justice Research Foundation  
2129 Hacienda Way, Suite A  
Sacramento, California 95825  
Telephone (916) 488-4757

pose of the survey, the date the request was made, and a brief statement describing the subject of the original request. This information was extracted from the completed job folders and control records the Bureau maintains on every special request. A copy of the accompanying letter is included in Appendix A.

About 50% of the questionnaires were returned within two weeks. A second follow-up questionnaire was mailed in May. Based on the rate of return and the completeness of the responses, it appeared that the agencies were interested in the subject of the survey. Many of the respondents made additional comments that were helpful in interpreting the responses in the questionnaires.

#### FOLLOW-UP

Thirty telephone interviews were held with a cross section of the users. About half of these occurred as a result of the users contacting us for additional information about the survey. The other interviews we initiated and were mainly with larger or more frequent users whose response seemed especially significant to the survey.

Table 1 shows the number of questionnaires that were distributed and the number of users who responded to the survey.

#### ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The responses from different types of CDS users were correlated with a number of other variables such as:

1. The product requested.
2. Data base used in answering the request.
3. Response time.

4. The amount of technical and clerical time used to fill the request.

5. Size of agency using CDS data.

The computer program that was used in processing the responses was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences at Stanford University's Computation Center in Palo Alto, California.

TABLE 1  
USERS RESPONDING TO SURVEY

<u>Special Requests</u>	<u># of Users Surveyed</u>	<u>Users Responding To Survey</u>	
1974	311	176	63.5%
1975	<u>119</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>36.5%</u>
TOTAL	430	277	100.0%

Overall Rate of Return: 64%

### III. EVALUATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DATA SYSTEM SPECIAL REQUEST PROGRAM

This section reports the analysis made of the 277 responses to the User Survey Questionnaire. The discussion and analysis of the responses is organized around 18 tables. Each table presents either descriptive or evaluative data which describes either (1) the characteristics of the special requests, (2) the user's overall satisfaction with the response, (3) the use of the data, (4) the user's familiarity with the Bureau, and (5) the user's information needs.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL REQUESTS

Table 2 shows the type of users who made special requests to the Bureau that were answered from the Comprehensive Data System in the 15 month period covered in the study, and how the users are represented in the survey. The Bureau received special requests from every type of agency in the criminal justice system. The heavy users are law enforcement agencies (22%), criminal justice planning agencies (15%), local probation and state correctional agencies (19%), and state policy bodies (8%). Colleges and others outside the criminal justice system accounted for another 23% of the special requests. The 277 agencies who responded to the questionnaire corresponded quite closely to the composition of the total group surveyed.

#### SUBJECT MATTER OF THE INFORMATION REQUESTED

The subject matter of the questions presented to BCS is too broad to categorize. The few examples on the following page illustrate the broad range of questions the Bureau received:

TABLE 2  
CDS USERS BY TYPE OF AGENCY  
(JANUARY 1974--MARCH 1975)

<u>Users</u>	<u># of Requests</u>	<u>%</u>	<u># of Users Responding To Survey</u>	<u>%</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	65	14.9	56	20.2
City Police & Sheriff	72	16.7	47	17.0
State/Fed Law Enforcement	21	4.9	13	4.7
District Attys & Courts	29	6.6	21	7.5
Attorney General	30	6.9	7	2.5
Probation Departments	47	10.9	34	12.3
Legislature & Governor	34	7.9	30	10.8
State Corrections	34	7.9	19	6.9
Colleges	26	5.9	13	4.7
Private Firms	31	7.5	15	5.4
Press	8	1.9	4	1.4
Citizen	<u>33</u>	<u>7.8</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>6.5</u>
TOTAL	430	100.0%	277	100.0%

- . Personal characteristics of persons receiving the death penalty.
- . Number of indictments/convictions for illegal wiretapping.
- . Criminal histories of senior citizens (55 years and older).
- . The number of child molesting prosecutions and convictions in California.
- . Number of violent acts committed in California public schools.
- . The workload of juvenile judges by county.
- . The number of felony defendants on parole at time of a conviction for a new offense.
- . The types of sentences imposed in Los Angeles County for:
  - a. All marijuana convictions
  - b. Possession of marijuana
  - c. First offense possession convictions
  - d. Convictions for possession of marijuana plants and peyote
- . Characteristics of felony defendants charged with bookmaking.
- . Superior court dispositions for arson defendants.
- . Characteristics of "Hells Angels".
- . Recidivism rates among offenders released from state prisons.
- . Number of change of venue requests in California.

In spite of the wide range of the information requested, it was possible for BCS to answer all but 35 of the 277 requests in the sample. Based on this sample, there was enough detail in the CDS data bases to answer 88% of the inquiries.

FORM OF SPECIAL REQUESTS

The users want answers to specific questions and as Table 3 shows, they also want the information supplied in a definite form.

TABLE 3  
FORM OF SPECIAL REQUESTS

<u>Form</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Did not specify	83	31.1
Computer Printouts	63	23.6
Charts, Graphs, Tables	28	10.5
Summary Totals	39	14.6
Projections	20	7.5
Multiple Forms	14	5.2
Written Analysis	12	4.5
Duplication of Cards or Tapes	<u>8</u>	<u>3.0</u>
TOTAL	267*	100.0%

\*10 Users did not respond

Nineteen percent of the users asked for data in a specific form. The State Legislature, criminal justice planning agencies, and courts accounted for most of the requests which did not specify the form of the response. Over 50% of the probation departments and colleges wanted either computer printouts or copies of cards or tapes. State correctional agencies always specified the form of the data they wanted and asked for either computer printouts or typed tables 75%



of the time. Only 12 or 4.5% of the respondents in the sample requested written analysis.

#### SIZE OF AGENCY

One-hundred-seventy-four of the 277 users in the survey reported the number of personnel in their agency. As Table 4 shows, every size agency has been assisted through information supplied from CDS, but about 1/3 of the requests came from agencies with more than 126 employees.

TABLE 4  
NUMBER OF REQUESTS BY AGENCY SIZE

<u>Agency Size</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 10	33	19.0
11-50	58	33.3
51-75	9	5.1
76-125	18	10.4
126-300	27	15.5
Over 300	<u>29</u>	<u>16.7</u>
TOTAL	174*	100.0%

\*106 Users did not indicate

#### USERS' ASSESSMENT OF CDS OUTPUT

One of the basic questions the user was asked was whether the Bureau interpreted his request correctly. If BCS misunderstood the initial request, it could significantly influence the users' overall

assessment of the service. Although BCS has established a strict control procedure for handling special requests, there is always a risk that some questions will be misinterpreted.

Table 5 shows the responses to the question *"From the response BCS made to your request, did it appear that the Bureau understood the nature of your request or problem"*. The special requests handled in 1974 and 1975 were separated as a way of checking improvement on this point in the event that more errors were being made at the outset of the program.

TABLE 5  
BCS'S INTERPRETATION OF USERS' REQUESTS

		<u>Question Correctly Interpreted</u>	<u>Partly Correct</u>	<u>Incorrectly</u>
1974	# Requests	154	21	0
	%	88.1%	11.9%	0.0%
1975	# Requests	90	11	1
	%	88.3%	10.7%	1.0%
TOTAL #		244	32	1
%		88.0%	11.6%	0.4%

Eighty-eight percent of the requests were interpreted correctly. In only one case was the question asked misunderstood completely and there was no difference between 1974 and 1975. The controls the Bureau established to clarify the users' questions have worked well from the start of the program.

USERS' OVERALL RATING OF BCS'S RESPONSE

The data in Table 6 shows how users rated the usefulness of the

TABLE 6  
USERS' OVERALL RATING OF BCS'S RESPONSE

Users	<u>Entirely Satisfactory</u>		<u>Met Greatest Part of Need</u>		<u>Limited Help</u>		<u>Data Not Available</u>		<u>Not at All Useful</u>		<u>Total # of Requests</u>	
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	25	45.5%	20	36.4%	10	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	55	20.2%
City Police & Sheriff	16	34.0%	17	36.2%	13	27.7%	1	2.1%	0	0.0%	47	17.0%
State/Fed Law Enforcement	6	46.2%	4	30.8%	2	15.4%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%	13	4.7%
District Attys & Courts	10	48.0%	7	33.0%	4	19.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	7.5%
Attorney General	3	42.9%	2	28.6%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	2.5%
Probation Departments	12	36.4%	10	30.3%	9	27.3%	2	6.1%	0	0.0%	33	12.3%
Legislature & Governor	4	13.8%	21	72.4%	3	10.3%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%	29	10.8%
State Corrections	3	16.6%	4	22.2%	11	61.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	6.9%
Colleges	4	30.8%	7	53.8%	2	15.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13	4.7%
Private Firms	6	35.3%	3	17.6%	7	41.2%	1	5.8%	0	0.0%	17	5.4%
Press	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.4%
Citizen	8	53.3%	1	6.7%	6	40.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	6.5%
TOTAL	98	36.0%	98	36.0%	70	25.7%	6	2.2%	0	0.0%	272*	100.0%

\*5 Users did not respond to question

information supplied from the Comprehensive Data System.

*One-hundred-ninety-six or 72% of the users in the sample indicated that the information furnished from CDS was entirely satisfactory or served the greatest part of their need. Criminal justice planning agencies, courts, and colleges rated the value of the service slightly higher than other types of users. The information was not as helpful to state correctional agencies and non-governmental users.*

The following statements are representative of some of the voluntary comments the users made about the Bureau and their services:

I believe BCS is doing a great job. They are accurate, cooperative, and a pleasure to contact.

BCS has been exceedingly helpful, ready to try to fulfill any reasonable request and willing to do even more than at first requested. We are a university research institute and the BCS people have tried to help us with specific research interests.

BCS has been a tremendous help to this agency. They have been virtually our sole source of objective data. They have been helpful, cooperative, and supportive.

I have always received excellent cooperation from DOJ and BCS whenever needs arise or problems occur.

I think BCS does a fine job considering their limited staff and resources.

BCS support of our study was excellent. They gave us a very good presentation of what they had available. They understood our request and provided as much data as they had which filled our needs. Some of it was even delivered in person by their representatives.

My request was followed through quickly and completely.

I wanted some information on a one-time basis. I requested and received. I was satisfied. I am not a routine user of crime statistics and hence, have no need for additional data.

California's Bureau of Criminal Statistics has greatly assisted the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department numerous times in the past. It is to be hoped that their able assistance will continue in the future.

I was very pleased with services provided by BCS. It was excellent.

The California Jurisdictional Crime Trends are outstanding.

The information I requested was related to a very specific need. Hence, my answers to the above questions were predicated on my needs and not my agency's (Attorney General's Office), although the questions referred to "agency needs." I would note that I appreciated the speed at which BCS responded to my request.

The trend that BCS is taking to provide information which is meaningful is to be commended. Our department is in need of these types of reports now and and requests more specific information or sample reports regarding our jurisdiction.

The request referred to in your cover letter is information published in a regular report from BCS. At that time, we had not received the 1974 report and knowing that the data was available made a special request to answer questions posed by the directors. Our overall relationship with BCS has been harmonious in as much as our data and theirs are interrelated.

I feel BCS did an outstanding job in assisting our agency. They were willing to devote the time needed to do the job right.

Our experience with BCS over the past three years has been excellent. No other state can match the data available in accuracy or depth. BCS is a thoroughly competent professional organization.

### USERS' PROBLEMS WITH CDS INFORMATION

Only 93 of the 277 respondents (34%) indicated any problems with the data BCS supplied. The main concern among those users who expressed a problem with the data was related to either the completeness or timeliness of the information. Over 75% of the users who had complaints about the data not being current enough were probation departments, legislative staff, or non-governmental users. Half of the 22 complaints about incomplete data came from state correctional agencies and criminal justice planning units.

TABLE 7  
USERS' MAIN PROBLEM  
WITH CDS INFORMATION

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Data did not answer question	14	15.1
Response time	6	6.5
Data not current	34	36.5
Incomplete data	22	23.6
Form and organization of analysis not useful	5	5.4
More interpretation needed	<u>12</u>	<u>12.9</u>
TOTAL	93	100.0%

The problems of (1) response time, (2) the form of analysis, and (3) more interpretation relate more to the preparation and pre-

sentation of the information than to the adequacy of the data.

These comments give a further indication about the problems the users had with the data BCS furnished:

Initially I asked BCS if they had data by county for arrests and convictions of persons 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 years of age by race and sex for the year 1970. BCS replied that they collected such data. I planned to use the data in conjunction with U. S. Bureau of Census data for an analysis of the relationship of economic and social characteristics to delinquency. The data was for 1972, and divided into 18+ and less than 18. It was not suitable for my study.

I frequently need information, data, etc. from BCS. Their response is usually very quick or very slow. About half the time, the response is really excellent. Occasionally, the promised information is never sent. To be fair, I usually need information on short notice and it may not have been processed and in available form.

BCS has been very cooperative in filling requests of this organization. However, certain items of information which we would find useful are not collected at all.

BCS is constantly attempting to improve services. While there may be data elements unavailable, I am most satisfied with the manner in which my requests are handled.

BCS has been very cooperative. We hope to develop our own computer capability within the next five years. The main problem has been lag in turnaround time.

As a newcomer to BCS's services, I would appreciate a key with our printouts so I could more easily reconcile discrepancies between our categories and BCS's, particularly a breakdown of whatever comprises any miscellaneous or combined grouping. We also need to separate 601's and 602's and much BCS reporting lumps minor 602's with 601's in delinquent tendencies.

BCS had been most cooperative in replying to our special requests for updated information. Again, however, they should be adequately staffed so we can receive information routinely on a timely basis. Decisions on funding projects, allocating funds to counties, etc. should not be based on one or two year old infor-

mation. It also reduces the credibility of our agency when we make conclusions based on statistics which are no longer applicable.

BCS did an excellent job for us. Only one minor problem was incomplete documentation of parameters of tape sent but a simple phone call cleared that up. Our experience in other jurisdictions indicate that BCS is exemplary.

Terms used in tables should be more precisely defined. Definition of major, minor, and prison are past sentences.

Data from BCS is available many months after the fact. By the time we receive it, the usefulness is low. There needs to be a great effort to produce a faster turnaround time.

#### SPECIAL REQUESTS REQUIRING INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

In sponsoring the Comprehensive Data System, LEAA stressed the importance of developing a strong analytical capability within each system. The Bureau was interested, therefore, in finding out how many requests involved interpretative analysis and how the users rated the thoroughness and extent of the analysis when it was provided.

TABLE 8  
USERS' RATINGS OF REQUESTS  
REQUIRING INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Sufficient Interpretation	27	81.8
More detail than needed, but useful	2	6.1
Not enough interpretation	<u>4</u>	<u>12.2</u>
TOTAL	33	100.0%



Only 33 or 12% of the respondents asked BCS to interpret the data they requested. Local law enforcement agencies made 17 of the 33 requests for interpretative analysis. State law enforcement and state correctional agencies accounted for most of the others.

As Table 8 shows, the few users who asked for interpretative analysis were entirely satisfied with the results. Twenty-nine of the 33 respondents who requested interpretative or analytical work said it was entirely adequate.

#### HOW SPECIAL REQUESTS ARE USED

The Comprehensive Data System was supported by LEAA on the premise of their being the most feasible approach to supplying all units of the criminal justice system with the information needed to help them plan, manage, or operate more effectively. As one measure of this objective, the users of CDS were asked about the end use of the special requests within their agencies. Table 9 distributes the responses over seven "use categories."

These findings indicate that CDS is being used by criminal justice agencies for purposes that are consistent with the fundamental objectives of the entire program. The main use of CDS, so far, is to help management operate, support other localized research, and to assist agencies concerned with long-range planning.

One-hundred-eight of the 277 special requests were used for reports to management. Most of the 108 requests came from criminal justice planning agencies, law enforcement, or state correctional agencies. There was no pattern to the requests made for research and departmental reference. All users made some special requests

TABLE 9  
USE OF CDS OUTPUT

<u>Use Categories</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Budget Preparation	8	2.9
Annual Reports	8	2.9
Reports to Management	108	39.0
Grant Application	8	2.9
Research & Department Reference	89	32.1
Speech & Articles	10	3.6
Long-Range Planning	<u>46</u>	<u>16.6</u>
TOTAL	277	100.0%

for this purpose.

Fourteen of the 16 requests that were used for budget preparation or annual reports came from either law enforcement or probation departments. The remaining two came from local criminal justice planning agencies. Fifty percent of the 46 requests used for long-range planning came from criminal justice planning agencies. The balance of the requests were scattered over the entire sample.

Two-thirds of the special requests were used for reference or for departmental purposes which do not involve republishing the information. Only 89 (32%) of the users in the sample republished the

data BCS supplied in some other form. Private firms, colleges, and criminal justice planning agencies usually republished the statistics BCS supplied.

Eighty percent of the CDS users go to BCS as the first source of their information. Only 20% of the agencies attempted to get their information from any other source. Those who did, first tried local departmental sources, local planning agencies, or BCS's regular publications. Only one question was asked about sources of information the agencies used other than BCS, but it can be inferred from the users' comments that the Bureau is regarded as the most common source of criminal justice information.

#### USERS' INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

The Comprehensive Data System has the capability of providing users with a wide range of statistics about the incidents and characteristics of crime, the events that initiate and terminate criminal justice processes, and the operation of the agencies. Within this overall capability, there are many alternatives and options available with respect to the type of statistics and output that can be produced.

To plan for the demands that will be placed on CDS in the future, the Bureau needed to know how organizations expect to use the system and how they want output assembled. Users were asked to rank, in order of their importance, the kinds of requests they expected to make of the Bureau in the future. Tables 10 and 11 show what the users reported as their primary and secondary future informational need.

*Generally, the primary need of all agencies is for basic crime and arrest information in the form of general statistics, trends and*

TABLE 10  
 USERS' PRIMARY INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

Users	Gen. Crime Stats.	Projections & Trends	Cost & Workload	Crime Specific Info.	Lower Court	Sup. Court	Adult Prob.	Juv. Prob.	Prob. Subsidy	Drug Diversion	Tech. Assist.	Other	# of Requests
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	55.3	31.8	0	11.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.7	56
City Police & Sheriff	55.3	25.5	2.1	4.3	0	6.4	2.1	0	0	0	2.1	2.1	47
State/Fed Law Enforcement	40.0	5.0	5.0	45.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.0	0	12
District Attys & Courts	36.8	6.3	2.8	21.5	0	26.4	0	0	0	6.3	0	0	17
Attorney General	57.1	14.3	0	14.3	0	0	0	14.3	0	0	0	0	7
Probation Departments	39.4	9.1	3.0	3.0	0	0	18.2	27.3	0	0	0	0	33
Legislature & Governor	62.1	6.9	0	24.1	0	0	0	34.4	0	0	0	0	29
State Corrections	45.9	0	0	25.0	0	0	0	4.1	0	0	25.0	0	16
Colleges	27.3	18.2	18.2	18.2	0	0	0	9.1	0	0	0	9.1	11
Private Firms	36.1	5.7	0	29.2	0	15.3	0	4.2	0	5.7	4.1	0	17
Press	75.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25.0	0	0	4
Citizen	53.8	6	7.7	15.4	0	7.7	0	15.4	0	0	0	0	13
TOTAL #	129	41	7	38	0	12	6	17	0	3	5	4	262*
%	49.2	15.6	2.7	14.5	0	4.6	2.3	6.5	0	1.2	1.9	1.6	

\*15 Users did not respond to question

TABLE 11  
USERS' SECONDARY INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

Users	Gen. Crime Stats.	Projections & Trends	Cost & Workload	Crime Specific Info.	Lower Court	Sup. Court	Adult Prob.	Juv. Prob.	Prob. Subsidy	Drug Diversion	Tech. Assist.	Other	# of Requests
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	30.3	41.7	3.9	10.9	7.7	1.7	0	1.9	0	0	1.9	0	55
City Police & Sheriff	21.3	40.4	10.6	10.6	6.4	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	2.1	47
State/Fed Law Enforcement	5.0	45.0	5.0	10.0	0	5.0	0	5.0	0	25.0	0	0	12
District Attys & Courts	9.1	15.3	0	11.8	27.8	0	15.3	20.8	0	0	0	0	9
Attorney General	0	57.1	14.3	0	0	14.3	0	0	0	14.3	0	0	7
Probation Departments	9.4	18.8	3.1	18.8	3.1	3.1	9.4	18.8	15.6	0	0	0	32
Legislature & Governor	10.7	42.9	0	32.1	0	3.6	0	0	0	3.6	3.6	3.6	28
State Corrections	0	45.9	20.9	0	12.5	0	4.1	16.7	0	0	0	0	16
Colleges	20.0	10.0	0	50.0	10.0	10.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Private Firms	11.1	38.9	5.7	0	16.7	16.7	0	0	0	5.6	5.6	0	14
Press	25.0	50.0	0	25.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Citizen	23.1	23.1	0	7.7	0	0	15.4	23.1	0	0	7.7	0	13
TOTAL #	44	91	14	38	14	9	9	17	5	4	8	2	255*
%	17.3	35.7	5.5	14.9	5.5	3.5	3.5	6.7	2.0	1.6	3.1	0.8	

\*22 Users did not give second need

*projections, or specific crime data.* The courts, probation departments, and the legislature expressed the need for superior court prosecutions and juvenile probation caseload information.

The users' *secondary* informational needs shifted slightly, but 68% of the users still ranked *general crime statistics, trends, and crime specific data as the most important.* Lower court dispositions and probation subsidy was not listed by anyone as a primary data need but was mentioned as a secondary need by 7% of the users.

Less than 4% of the users expressed interest in the Technical Assistance component of the Comprehensive Data System. To this point, the Technical Assistance component has concentrated on helping other CDS components with problems related to implementing OBTS and converting UCR reporting to federal standards so many users may not be aware of its services to local agencies.

*Cost, workload information, and technical assistance was a prominent third level need. As a long-range need, nearly 1/3 of the users wanted cost and workload data with the State Legislature, criminal justice planning agencies, and state correctional agencies expressing the greatest interest.*

#### USERS' OPINION ABOUT THE ROLE OF BCS IN PROCESSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION

One of the primary functions LEAA envisioned for the SAC component of CDS was the task of interpreting and analyzing statistical data that was collected within the overall system. As stated in the LEAA guidelines "The Statistical Analysis Center should not have either data collection or data processing as its principal function."

In a speech to the International Symposium on Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Systems in 1972, Mr. George Hall of LEAA stated that "The data center as we envision it in this program has a primary function of analyzing and interpreting statistical data. It could also do other things but that is the principal function."

Table 12 shows what the users in this survey thought the role of BCS should be in developing information systems.

*Half of the 277 users feel that the Bureau should just supply basic crime and arrest statistics which the user would analyze and interpret.* This response is quite consistent with the response to Question 3 in the survey which showed that only 33 or 12% of the users asked for an interpretative analysis of data BCS supplied. This response is also consistent with what the users reported as their primary and secondary data needs in Tables 10 and 11.

Secondly, the user wants BCS to answer specific questions. Users had much less interest in generalized data of the type which the Bureau typically includes in their publications.

#### USERS' PREFERENCE FOR ASSEMBLING INFORMATION

CDS has the capability of assembling data for any type of jurisdiction or geographical area. One of the reasons users ask for information through the special request program is because they can get data assembled according to specific individual needs. In general publications, it is difficult to know what jurisdictional separations are most useful. This is also true for the reporting periods.

As Tables 13 and 14 show, there is no clear consensus on either issue. The only generalization that can be made is that more users

TABLE 12  
USERS' OPINION ABOUT FUNCTION OF BCS

<u>Users</u>	<u>Supply Basic Statistics User Analyzes</u>	<u>Answer Specific Question For User</u>	<u>Publish General Crime &amp; Arrest Data</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	43.3	25.5	31.2
City Police & Sheriff	51.1	35.6	13.3
State/Fed Law Enforcement	40.0	60.0	0
District Attys & Courts	55.3	44.7	0
Attorney General	57.1	42.9	0
Probation Departments	42.4	36.4	21.2
Legislature & Governor	30.0	40.0	30.0
State Corrections	79.8	20.2	0
Colleges	69.2	30.8	0
Private Firms	59.3	40.7	0
Press	25.0	50.0	25.0
Citizen	<u>57.1</u>	<u>21.4</u>	<u>21.4</u>
TOTAL #	131*	93	44
%	48.9	34.7	16.4

\*9 Users did not respond



TABLE 13  
USERS' PREFERENCE FOR ASSEMBLING INFORMATION

<u>Users</u>	<u>County Wide</u>	<u>State Wide</u>	<u>Regional</u>	<u>By City</u>	<u>Comparisons by Jurisdiction</u>	<u>All Forms</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agency	10.3	26.9	10.3	12.5	1.9	38.1
City Police & Sheriff	12.7	0	10.8	17.4	13.0	45.6
State/Fed Law Enforcement	34.1	38.7	4.6	4.6	9.0	9.0
District Attys & Courts	20.8	14.5	0	2.8	8.3	53.5
Attorney General	16.7	16.7	16.7	0	0	50.0
Probation Departments	38.7	9.7	3.2	0	12.9	35.5
Legislature & Governor	6.7	66.7	0	3.3	6.7	16.7
State Corrections	50.0	12.5	0	16.6	16.6	4.2
Colleges	8.3	33.3	0	16.8	8.3	33.3
Private Firms	33.0	16.5	3.5	20.0	7.0	20.0
Press	25.0	0	25.0	0	0	50.0
Citizen	<u>16.7</u>	<u>25.0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16.7</u>	<u>8.3</u>	<u>33.3</u>
TOTAL #	42	50	15	25	24	85
%	20.7	19.9	6.0	10.0	9.6	33.8

TABLE 14  
USERS' PREFERENCE FOR REPORTING DATA

<u>Users</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>	<u>Semi- Annually</u>	<u>5 Year Trend</u>	<u>All Forms</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	36.2	11.0	4.2	5.0	0	2.5	41.2
City Police & Sheriff	6.4	10.6	6.4	10.6	8.5	6.4	51.1
State/Fed Law Enforcement	45.0	35.0	10.0	0	5.0	0	5.0
District Attys & Courts	12.5	41.7	0	6.3	12.5	0	27.1
Attorney General	57.1	0	0	0	0	0	42.9
Probation Departments	18.2	21.2	0	15.2	12.1	0	33.4
Legislature & Governor	71.4	14.3	0	7.1	3.6	0	3.6
State Corrections	20.9	20.9	8.3	0	12.5	0	37.4
Colleges	25.0	41.7	0	0	0	0	33.3
Private Firms	25.9	24.1	25.9	0	0	0	24.1
Press	0	0	33.3	0	0	0	66.6
Citizen	<u>7.1</u>	<u>21.4</u>	<u>21.4</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>28.6</u>
TOTAL #	66	45	18	17	13	5	87
%	26.3	17.9	7.2	6.8	5.2	2.0	34.6

want data assembled in all forms more than in any particular form. They also want the data reported for all time periods. *Generally, there is a tendency for agencies to want data reported by fiscal year and on a basis that roughly corresponds to the areas of their jurisdictional responsibilities.*

#### USERS' FAMILIARITY WITH BCS

Most users know that the Bureau is responsible for collecting and disseminating criminal justice statistics. Only 50% of the special request users say they are familiar enough with BCS to understand the type of information the Bureau is capable of supplying.

Even those agencies who use BCS data are not familiar with what BCS does. Eighty-five percent said if they knew more about BCS, they would use the Bureau more often or would have made their last request in more detail or would have asked for different information.

TABLE 15  
PERCENT OF USERS WHO UNDERSTAND TYPE  
OF INFORMATION BCS CAN SUPPLY

<u>Users</u>	<u>Understand</u>	<u>Do Not Understand</u>	<u>Partly Understand</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	68.9	31.1	0
City Police & Sheriff	40.4	55.3	4.3
State/Fed Law Enforcement	38.7	61.4	0
District Attys & Courts	61.5	33.9	4.6
Attorney General	66.7	33.3	0
Probation Departments	42.4	48.5	9.1
Legislature & Governor	26.7	73.3	0
State Corrections	50.0	50.0	0
Colleges	61.5	38.5	0
Private Firms	29.7	64.8	5.5
Press	75.0	25.0	0
Citizen	<u>33.3</u>	<u>66.7</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL #	133*	124	8
%	50.2	46.8	3.0

\*12 Users did not respond

TABLE 16  
EFFECT OF MORE USER FAMILIARITY WITH BCS

<u>Users</u>	<u>Make More Requests</u>	<u>Asked For Different Information In Last Request</u>	<u>Get More BCS Publications</u>
State/Local Criminal Justice Planning Agencies	77.8	7.4	14.8
City Police & Sheriff	83.3	4.8	11.9
State/Fed Law Enforcement	58.4	5.6	36.1
District Attys & Courts	70.8	0	29.2
Attorney General	100.0	0	0
Probation Departments	79.0	7.7	11.5
Legislature & Governor	66.4	29.2	4.4
State Corrections	90.8	4.6	4.6
Colleges	70.0	0	30.0
Private Firms	65.5	25.0	9.7
Press	66.7	0	33.3
Citizen	<u>63.6</u>	<u>18.2</u>	<u>18.2</u>
TOTAL #	161	23	30
%	75.3	10.7	14.0

### FAMILIARITY WITH BCS PUBLICATIONS

Forty percent of the users surveyed could not identify any of the Bureau's publications other than "Crime and Delinquency." Fifty-three percent of the respondents also rated "Crime and Delinquency" as the most valuable publication followed by the "Adult and Juvenile Reference Tables" (28%). Agencies like corrections and the Legislature were much more familiar with the publications. Thirty-five percent of the users said they either were not familiar with any of the publications or did not receive any of them.

The following comments are representative of what the users said about their familiarity with BCS and what the Bureau should do to explain the services available through CDS.

We have attempted and failed to get reports routinely published by the Bureau. We only occasionally and by accident discover that the Bureau has made a study or has published a report of great interest to us. The Bureau should have a consistent set of routine reports made readily available to users, and publish a list of reports it produces and which should be available upon request. For example, what is the series "Special Project Series"? What reports are published, which available? How would one ever know that the Bureau published a study "Homicides in California 1970-71" unless one accidentally sees a copy or some person refers to it.

More information should be available about all data and reports that could be made available from BCS. I don't know what is there often times. Also, most reports and statistics are too general for evaluation and planning needs at the local and regional level. BCS should have an on going survey assessment of users so that they direct their data collection and analysis more usefully.

The most useful publication to us is the edition of "Crime and Delinquency" which includes data by county and local jurisdiction.

It would seem a small booklet would be helpful which explained data elements that are retrievable, time constraints on currency of data and in production, also some indicators as to what information must be included in a request for data, when BCS staff are available to assist and what data is possible.

More information is needed on BCS. What is available? What does it cost?

A listing of available data and publications would be helpful.

BCS should publish a guide of what services are available.

As part of the same agency as BCS, I work closely on an individual basis with BCS. Often I request a special study from them. Much of my contact with them is in the form of specialized, non-published reports. I consider this aspect of BCS to be its most worthwhile function.

BCS provides an invaluable service to criminal justice planners, evaluators, and researchers. There is no other institution anywhere in the country which is as comprehensive, competent, and reliable. Moreover, the BCS staff are most helpful, informative, and cooperative in responding to special requests. The Bureau deserves strong budgetary support from the State of California. We requested data for a three year period. The last six months of data were too recent to have been processed and validated by BCS. An event-based offender-specific tracking system should be implemented on a priority basis. There would be high user demand.

BCS has been very helpful to us in our planning efforts. I think that they could be more useful. I sometimes get the impression that BCS does not reveal certain information that they compile on a routine basis to prospective users. I would like to see the BCS expand its operation. I feel that as a statewide agency they can and do lend uniformity to the reporting of criminal data. I think that they could perform a very important role in the planning process (budgeting, resource allocation, evaluation of programs).

Public expenditure figures, (state, federal, and local costs) would be helpful.

Our organization will be utilizing data to a much greater extent in the future for planning and budgeting purposes. BCS reports will be invaluable to us in utilizing all data available, particularly in comparisons with other agencies.

# COSTS, PERSONNEL, AND TIME REQUIRED To ANSWER SPECIAL REQUESTS

A procedure referred to as Project Management and Control (PMC) has been devised by BCS that enables the Director of the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to monitor the status of any special request handled through CDS.

Each special request is assigned a job control number at the time the request is received and turned over to the analyst or component responsible for completing the request. Clerical hours and technical staff time, data base used, and response time are recorded as part of the PMC system. It was from these control records that the data on cost, personnel, etc. were collected.

As Table 17 shows, the time it takes to answer a special request has remained about the same since 1974.

TABLE 17  
TIME REQUIRED TO SERVICE SPECIAL REQUESTS

	<u>Less Than 3 Days</u>	<u>3 to 9 Days</u>	<u>10 Days to Month</u>	<u>Over 1 Month</u>
1974	18.4	39.0	31.0	11.6
1975	<u>13.6</u>	<u>33.0</u>	<u>36.9</u>	<u>16.5</u>
TOTAL #	46 16.0	102 36.0	92 34.0	37 13.0



**CONTINUED**

**1 OF 2**

Fifty percent of the requests are being answered within nine days. Only 37 (13%) of the 277 requests in the sample required more than a month to answer.

The requests which came from the Attorney General's Office, colleges, the Legislature, and the courts accounted for most of the requests over one month. These four users accounted for 36 of the 37 requests that fell into the over one month category.

#### PERSONNEL TIME ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIAL REQUESTS

On the average, it takes 4.5 hours of clerical time and 5.5 hours of technical time to answer a special request. The time is charged at the rate of \$4.00 per hour for clerks and \$9.00 per hour for technical staff. At these rates, the personnel cost of the average request is \$67.50. Table 18 shows that a few requests accounted for a disproportionate amount of the total cost.

TABLE 18  
CLERICAL AND TECHNICAL HOURS

<u>Time in Hours</u>	<u>Clerical</u>		<u>Technical</u>	
Less 1 Hour	137	53.7%	105	39.3%
1-3 Hours	63	24.7%	86	32.2%
3-6 Hours	22	8.6%	38	14.2%
6-20 Hours	26	10.2%	26	9.1%
20-60 Hours	7	2.8%	12	4.4%
TOTAL	255*		267**	

\*No data on 22 requests

\*\*No data on 10 requests

Forty to fifty percent of the requests required less than one hour of clerical or technical time. The cost of a special request in these cases probably came to about \$10.00-\$13.00. Only 13% of the requests took more than six hours each of clerical or technical time. This suggests that the majority of requests can be filled with, basically, machine prepared output.

A considerable amount of the previous special request activity can be expected to continue as an ongoing part of BCS's workload. *Thirty-four percent of the users said they expected to make the same request again on an annual basis.* Forty-three percent did not know, at the time of the survey, whether they would make the same request again. When the amount of current and projected use is related to the fact that 75% of the users said they would make more requests as they know more about the Comprehensive Data System, it appears that there will be considerably greater demand for the special request service.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2129 HACIENDA WAY, SUITE A, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825, (916) 488-4757

RESEARCH

Ms. Schooler, Statistician  
San Francisco Probation Department  
375 Woodside Avenue  
San Francisco, CA

Dear Ms. Schooler,

On 1/2/75 the Bureau of Criminal Statistics answered a request you made for some information concerning:

the number of initial delinquent referrals by area for the  
the city and county of San Francisco.

The special request you made is typical of many the Bureau receives from local criminal justice agencies, the Legislature and research organizations. The requests cover a wide variety of subjects which are answered from a number of different information sources.

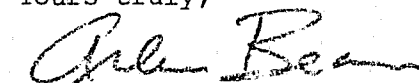
Supplying contributing agencies and other users with special analysis and information is a growing part of the Bureau's workload. In order to both evaluate and improve its services, the Bureau needs a better understanding of how some of its data is being used and how satisfied you are with it.

Our firm has been hired to survey a sample of outside agencies who have made special requests for information in recent months. Your answers to these questions can be of great assistance to the Bureau in revising some of its publications and organizing its large computerized data bases in ways that will be more responsive to user needs.

We are aware of how inconvenient one more questionnaire can seem to the staff of a busy department, but in view of the fact that the survey had to cover so many agencies, a mailed questionnaire was the only practical solution.

We realize that some of the persons to whom this questionnaire is addressed may no longer be available to answer the questions. In those cases, we would appreciate your forwarding the questionnaire to someone else with knowledge of how your organization has used BCS. If you have any further questions concerning the questionnaire, please contact me at (916) 488-4757. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours truly,



Arlen Bean

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**END**