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OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
STATE OF OHIO
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NCJRS
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ACQUISITIONS

OCJS RESEARCH REQUESTS AND RESPONSES:
AN ANALYSIS

One of the two critical research functions of the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) is responding to criminal justice-related research requests. There is a wide variety of people and institutions in Ohio who need both data and analysis relating to crime and criminal justice. These include regular government agencies, elected officials, private/non-profit organizations, businesses, colleges and universities, news media and private citizens. Along with numerous out-of-state sources, Ohioans in these areas are coming to rely on OCJS in the provision of research. It is the intention of this brief report to document and analyze that trend.

In 1981 the OCJS Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) received and responded to three-hundred-and-eight (308) criminal justice research requests from research users in Ohio, twenty one other states, five federal agencies, several national organizations and two foreign countries. SAC is in a unique position to provide this service. It is the only criminal justice research unit in Ohio whose mandate includes a statewide scope and all aspects of the criminal justice system (i.e., police, courts, corrections, juvenile justice and crime prevention). Hence, even when information requests cannot be satisfied by using SAC data bases, the SAC staff is still in a position to make an accurate referral.

It needs to be noted that this report analyzes only those information requests which:

1. were initiated by the requestor, and
2. required and received a formal follow-up response from SAC.

These definitional considerations are important in ensuring that the research requests are a true reflection of criminal justice data needs in Ohio and SAC's ability to respond to them. Therefore, requests were logged only if actually initiated by the requestor (i.e., none of SAC's several thousand proactive data mailings to decision-makers was included), and only if they required a substantial response from SAC staff (eg., crime statistics conveyed by phone were not usually logged as formal requests, nor were referrals).

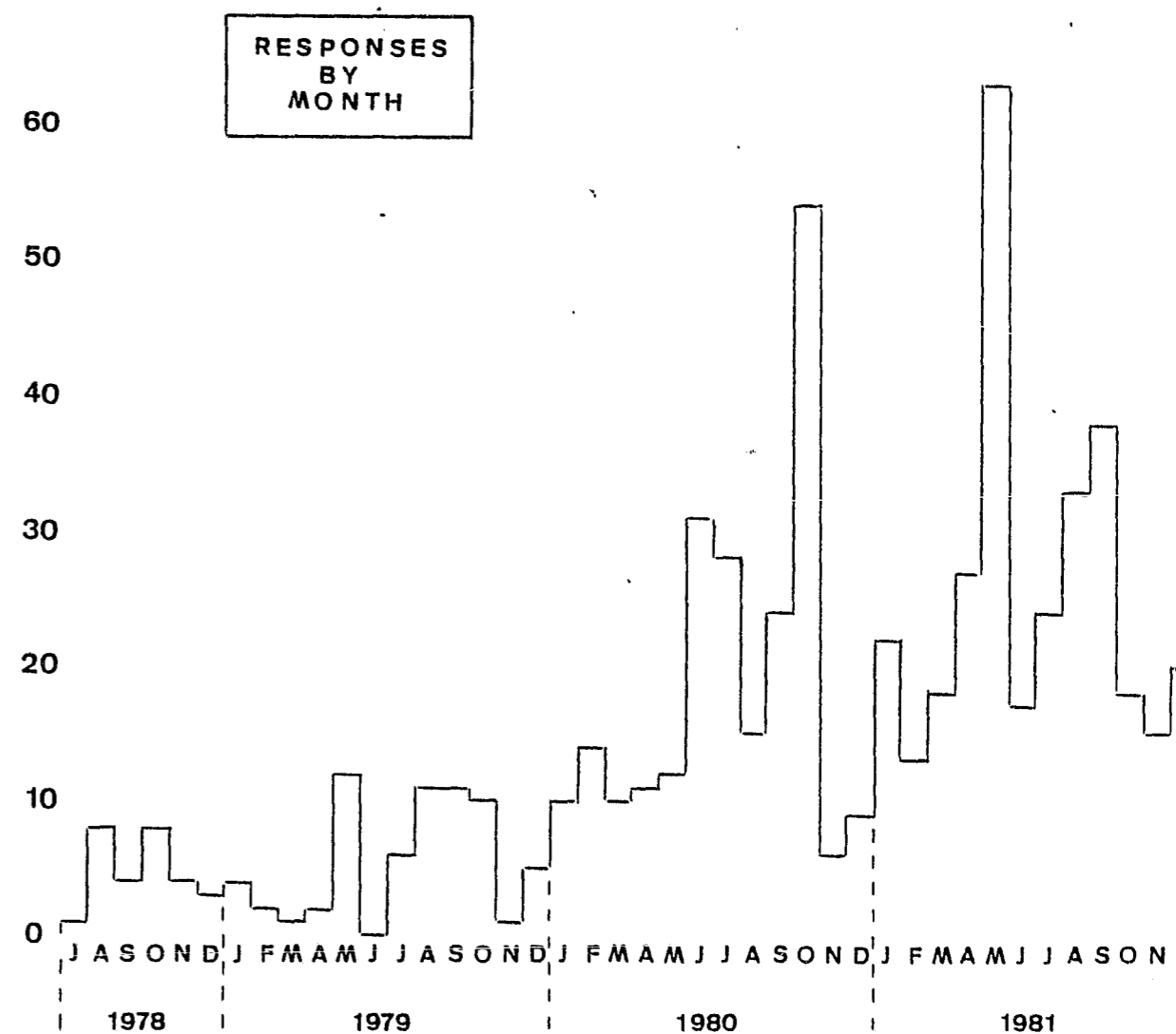
Because SAC is more concerned with Ohio's criminal justice statistics than with its own operational figures, the data presented herein lacks the rigid certainty of, for example, OCJS Citizen Attitudes Survey data. Categories for the requests were created arbitrarily and, in some instances, could not adequately encompass complex requests which overlapped into several areas. This resulted in some subjective judgments in the compilation of this report. Nevertheless, even an admittedly arbitrary analysis of these figures reveals that SAC research requests are increasing rather dramatically as the unit's service capabilities become better known, and that an increasingly higher number and percentage of criminal justice decision-makers in Ohio are availing themselves of that service.

THE RESEARCH DEMAND

The 308 SAC research requests in 1981 represented almost half of the total received by the unit since its inception in July of 1978. This continues an escalating trend begun in 1980 when, in the wake of several SAC research publications, requests nearly quadrupled over the previous year (from 65 to 224). The 1981 figure marks a 25% increase over the previous high water mark of 1980.

Figure 1 illustrates the direction of and reasons for SAC's growth in the area of research requests. For two years prior to the Spring of 1980 the number of requests grew only modestly, with no single month seeing as many as fifteen requests. A plurality of the requests which were received came through the OCJS staff or other contacts directly related to the grant functions of the agency.

Figure 1

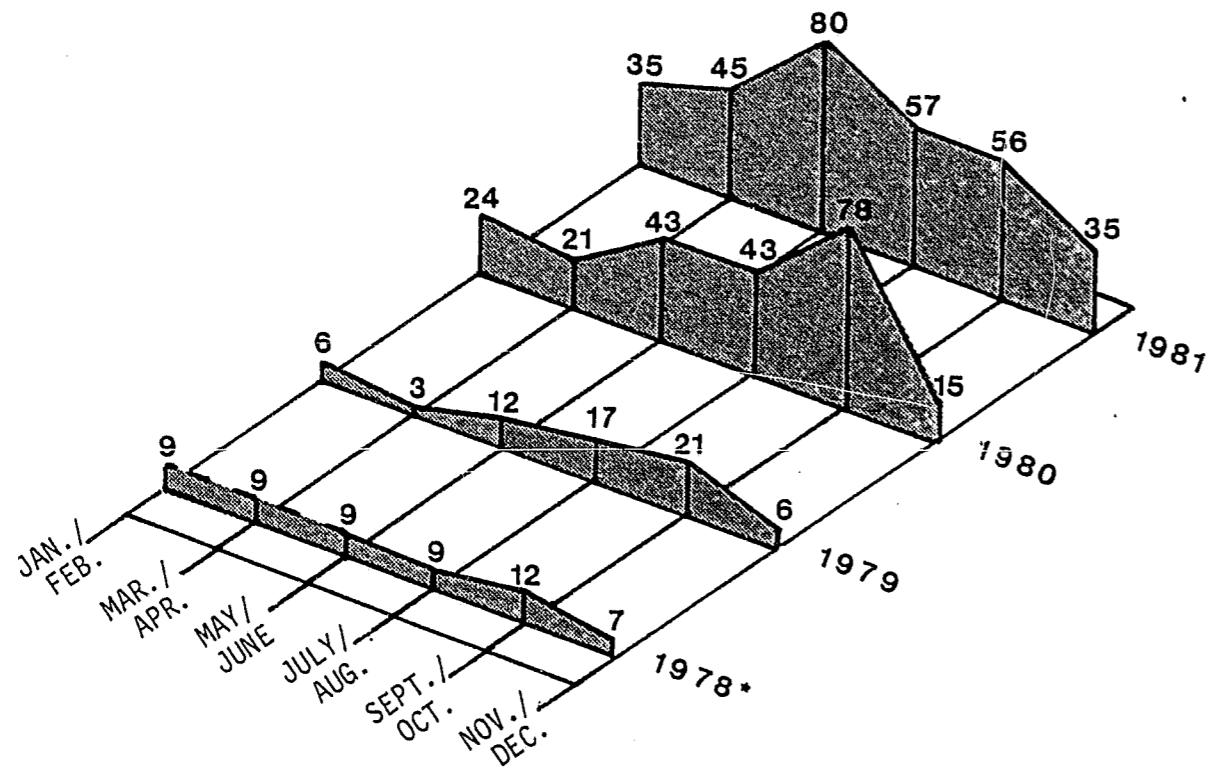


However, June of 1980 saw SAC's first research publication and, not coincidentally, an immediate doubling of the research requests. Since that time SAC monthly requests--spurred by twelve ensuing publications--have failed to reach the fifteen figure only three times in nineteen months. Lest there be any remaining doubt about the effectiveness of publications as a means of highlighting OCJS research services, the radical peaks reached during the Spring and Fall of both 1980 and 1981 corresponded closely with periods of intense report activity (see "Other SAC Publications," pg. 21).

Figure 2 displays the growth trends from a bi-monthly perspective.

Figure 2

RESEARCH REQUESTS AND RESPONSES:
YEAR-BY-YEAR GROWTH



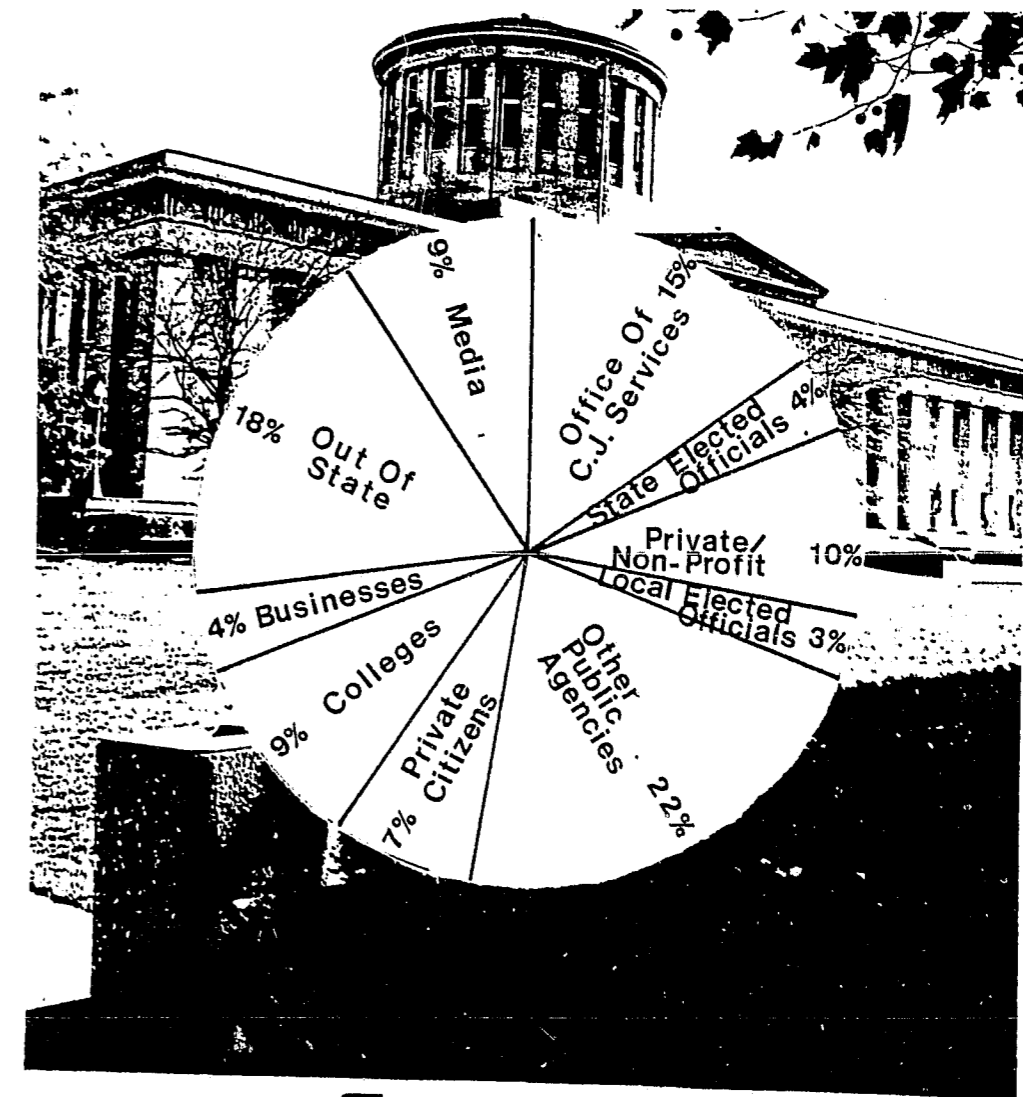
* Figures for first six months of 1978 are hypothetical only and based on average bi-monthly calculation for July-December (actual data).

WHO REQUESTS RESEARCH?

The pattern as well as the volume of SAC research requests has changed dramatically since 1978-79. Nineteen-eighty-one produced a rather even distribution among the ten SAC user groups, with none of the groups monopolizing more than 22% ("Other Public Agencies") of the total. In contrast, the top two requestors in 1979 ("OCJS Staff" and "Other Public Agencies") accounted for 72% of all requests for the year.

Figure 3

Sources of Requests
1981

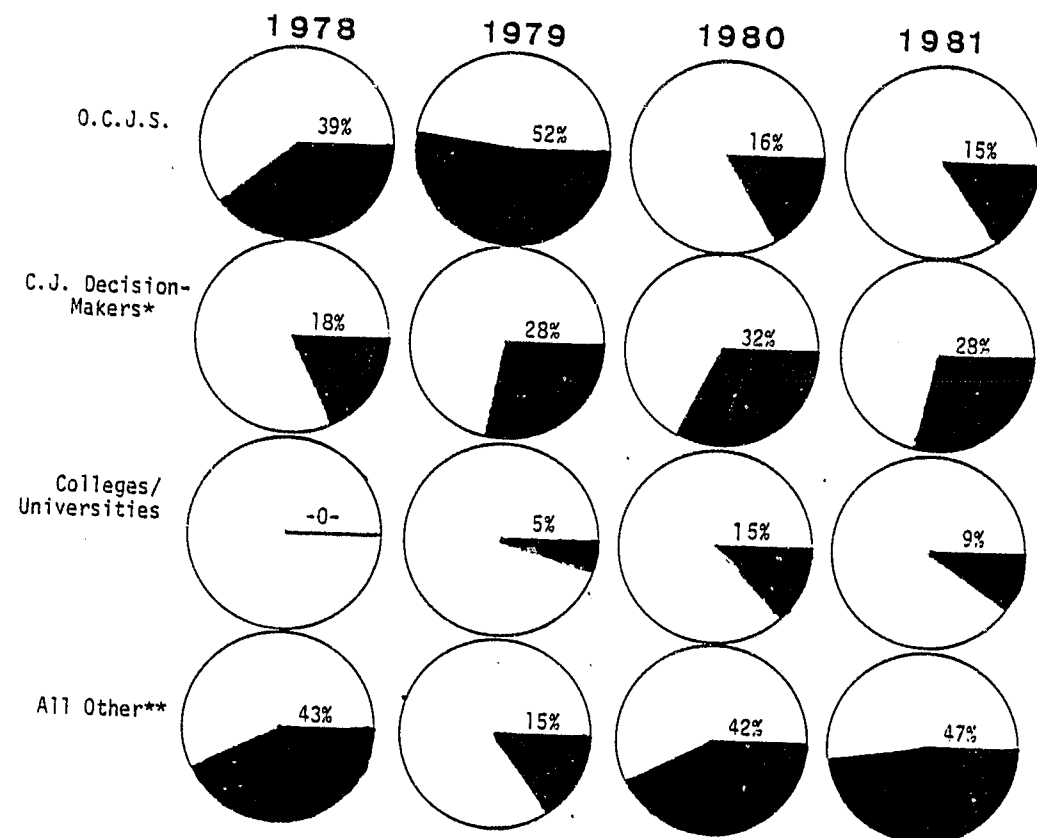


Total = 308

Figure 4

PATTERNS OF CHANGE
AMONG RESEARCH REQUESTORS

1978 - 1981



* Includes "State Elected Officials," "Local Elected Officials" and "Other Public Agencies"

** Includes "Private Non-Profit Groups," "Private Citizens," "Businesses," "Out of State" and "News Media"

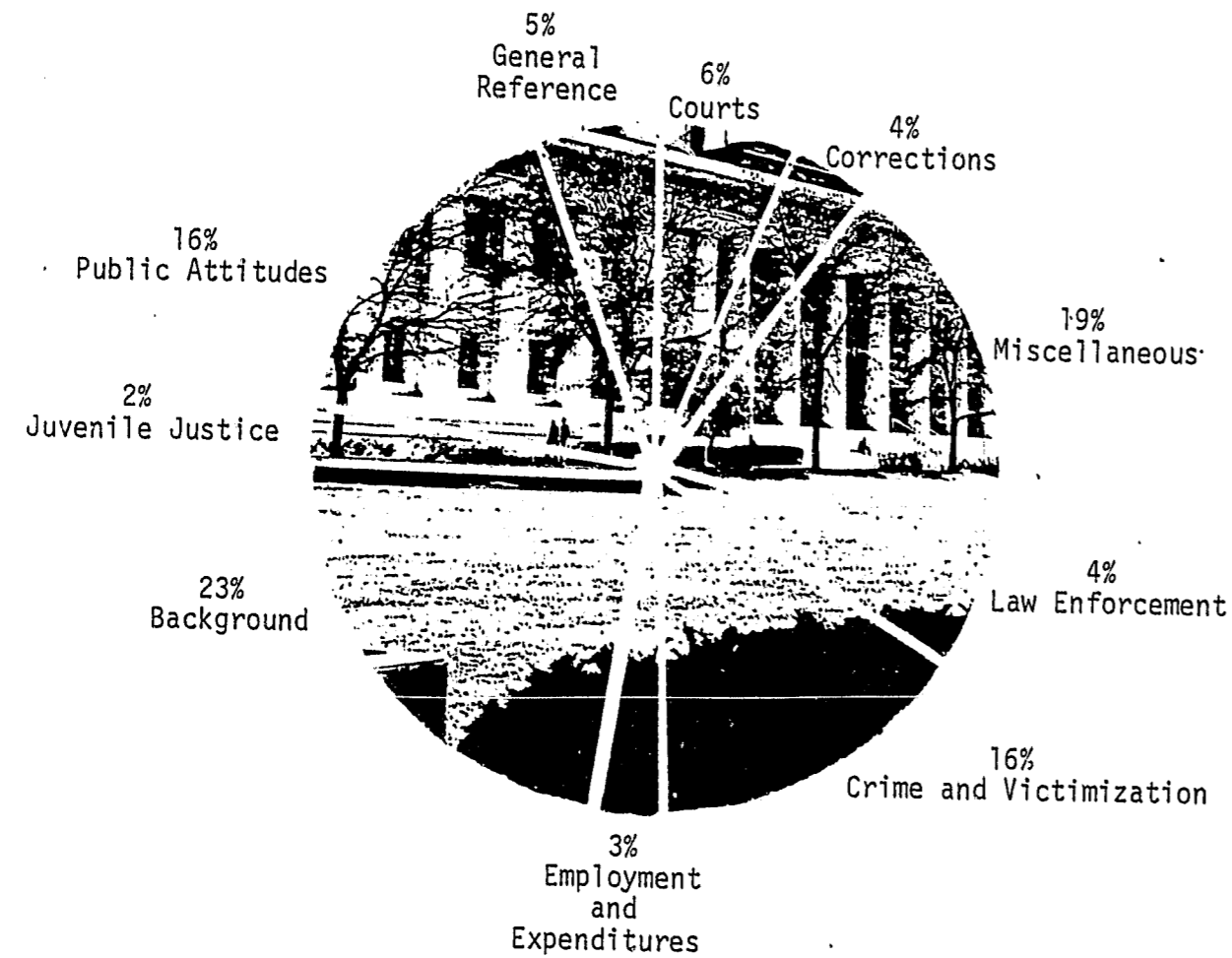
The directional change has also been significant for another reason. The guiding principle of SAC's effort has been to get criminal justice research information into the hands of the key decision-makers who administer the various parts of the Criminal Justice System in Ohio. In the early years few of these people even knew of SAC's existence. However, the 87 requests from these key decision-makers in 1981 constituted a five-fold increase over the 1979 figure. By way of comparison, requests from OCJS staff increased at a rate only one-tenth of that during the same period.

While not identified as "key decision-makers," persons associated with Ohio colleges and universities are an important and rapidly growing source of OCJS research requests. For the past two years SAC has worked closely with the Ohio Higher Education Council, composed of all colleges and universities with a program in Criminal Justice, and this has facilitated the expanding academic interest in SAC research. The first eighteen months of SAC's existence saw only three such research requests, but that number grew to twenty (20) in 1980 and twenty-nine (29) in 1981. The interest has also resulted in several invitations for SAC staff to make classroom presentations on individual campuses.

Concerning other types of requestors, media interest is tied closely to the publication of reports and usually is oriented more toward the electronic than print media. "Businesses" are frequently consultants, and "Private Non-Profit Groups" are most often those with some involvement in the criminal justice system (eg., advocacy groups, shelters, etc.).

TYPES OF REQUESTS

Types of Requests 1981



"Background" requests, that is those addressing more than one theme or involving more than one data base, constitute nearly one out of every four research requests received by SAC (see "Definitions/Notes" pg. 11). The same category has also demonstrated significant growth since 1978 when it accounted for only seven percent of all requests. The dominance of this category appropriately reflects SAC's mandate to provide statewide criminal justice data and analysis for all components of the criminal justice system.

Another important category concerned data relating to public attitudes toward crime and criminal justice. While only two such requests were received for the eighteen months preceding January of 1980, the figure jumped to 68 in 1980 and 51 in 1981. This rapid increase in demand can be directly attributed to the extensive citizen attitude surveys which OCJS has been involved in since the Spring of 1980. Two other large categories, "Miscellaneous" and "Crime/Victimization Data" have remained relatively stable since 1978.

The most dramatic decrease took place in the area of "Juvenile Justice." In 1978 SAC's fourteen Juvenile Justice requests constituted half of all requests, but the seven requests received in 1981 accounted for only two percent (2%) of the total.

While several of the Juvenile requests are hidden in the "Miscellaneous," "General Reference," and "Background" categories, the overall downward trend is understandable in light of the termination of LEAA funds. *

* Specific SAC studies have served to stimulate other areas of LEAA funding such as Law Enforcement, Crime Prevention and Systems. To date, no such studies have been done exclusively aimed at Juvenile Justice.

SAC RESEARCH REQUESTS AND RESPONSES:
DEFINITIONS/NOTES

I. Sources of Requests

A. Office of Criminal Justice Services Staff

Does not include other offices in the Department of Economic and Community Development or the Division of Crime Prevention, both of which are categorized as "Other Public Agencies." Generally, Regional Planning Unit requests will also be reflected under "Other Public Agencies."

B. Elected State Officials

Includes all General Assembly Legislators as well as statewide at-large offices (eg. Attorney General, Auditor, Supreme Court Justice, etc.). Does not include Legislative Services Commission, Legislative Reference Bureau or other public offices which only generally serve some of these officials (see "Other Public Agencies"); does include requests from direct staff (eg., aides, administrative assistants, etc.).

C. Private Non-Profit Groups

Includes agencies or coalitions which are not primarily funded by a segment of government. Also includes statewide associations (eg., Buckeye State Sheriffs Association, Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police), even if these are comprised of government representatives.

D. Local Elected Officials

Includes only those serving local governments (i.e., counties, cities, townships, and villages) in Ohio. Does not include state legislators.

E. Other Public Agencies

Includes all public agencies not covered under A-D above.

F. Private Citizens

Generally self-explanatory, but may also include Criminal Justice System participants not adequately covered under the other Source categories (eg., private attorneys). Also includes students of high school age or younger.

G. Colleges and Universities

Limited to the State of Ohio; also includes requests from the Higher Education Council. Scope covers administrators, professors and students.

H. Businesses

Generally self-explanatory; includes consultants.

I. Out of State Requests

This category crosscuts all of the others, with the occasional exception of "News Media." Any request from outside of the State of Ohio will be included here. This rigid discrimination is needed so as to more clearly identify Ohio requests.

J. News Media

Includes all electronic and print media; additionally, national news stories will be included here, although such occurrences are very rare.

II. Types of Requests

A. Courts

Self-explanatory; includes SAC Prosecutor's Profile report

B. Law Enforcement

Self-explanatory; includes SAC reports relating to 1979 survey as well as Task Analysis study; also includes specific requests for law enforcement agency listings.

C. Corrections

Self-explanatory;

D. Juvenile Justice (J.J.)

Data only; the many in-house requests for data-processing are categorized under "Miscellaneous", as are requests for J.J. Agency address labels.

E. General Reference

These are limited to the passing along of existing documents or materials, excepting SAC publications. It also may include lists or inventories not specifically mentioned under other categories (does not include the SAC Directory).

NOTE: In cases in which SAC refers the requestor to another person or agency, that communication is not logged as a research request. The log includes only those cases in which a substantive response is made.

F. Miscellaneous

This category covers several types of requests, including:

1. single SAC documents not covered under the other generic categories;
2. requests not covered under any of the other type categories (eg., data processing, graphics, population projections, etc.);
3. requests which can be classified as single-theme and single source.

G. Background Information

The main distinction between this category and "Miscellaneous" is that it involves the provision of more than one type of informational material. This almost always requires some kind of synthesis by the SAC staff. Any complex request is also included herein (eg., classroom presentations, broad assignments such as complete county demographic profiles or profiles of the marijuana problem in Ohio). Jail capacity requests are included herein.

H. Employment and Expenditures (E.E.)

Includes any information relating to criminal justice personnel levels or budgets, except those cases specifically covered by direct data from one of the other categories (eg.--law enforcement budget profiles, which are addressed by the 1979 SAC Law Enforcement survey). Given this exception, this category undercuts most of the others in cases which are otherwise ambiguous in terms of Type.

I. Public Attitudes

Includes all requests relating to SAC citizen attitude testing and/or National Crime Survey data (excluding victimization).

J. Crime/Victimization

Includes any requests relating to Uniform Crime Report data, state or national victimization data, or specific crime studies. Includes arrest data, but not sentencing data ("Courts").

APPENDIX
OCJS RESEARCH REQUESTS:
SOURCE AND TYPE
BY
MONTH
1978-1981

1978

	OCJS	State Elected Officials	Private Non-Profit Groups	Local Elected Officials	Other Public Agencies	Private Citizens	Colleges/Universities	Businesses	Out-of-State	News Media	"SOURCE" TOTAL
Jan.											
Feb.											
Mar.											
Apr.											
May											
June											
July	1										1
Aug.	4		2		1			1			8
Sept.	2	1								1	4
Oct.	3		1		2			1	1		8
Nov.	1				1			1			4
Dec.								3			3
TOTALS	11	1	3	0	4	0	0	1	6	2	28

1979

	OCJS	State Elected Officials	Private Non-Profit Groups	Local Elected Officials	Other Public Agencies	Private Citizens	Colleges/Universities	Businesses	Out-of-State	News Media	"SOURCE" TOTAL
Jan.		1	1	1						1	4
Feb.	1						1				2
Mar.	1										1
Apr.	2										2
May	8	1			2				1		12
June											
July	3	1			2						6
Aug.	8		1		1				1		11
Sept.	2		3		4	1			1		11
Oct.	7				1		2				10
Nov.	1										1
Dec.	1			1	3						5
TOTALS	34	3	5	2	13	1	3	0	4	0	65

1980

	OCJS	State Elected Officials	Private Non-Profit Groups	Local Elected Officials	Other Public Agencies	Private Citizens	Colleges/Universities	Businesses	Out-of-State	News Media	"SOURCE" TOTAL
Jan.	6				3		1				10
Feb.	7	1	2		1		1		2		14
Mar.	4		1		3			2			10
Apr.	4		1		1		1	1	3		11
May	3				5		1		3		12
June	3	1	4	1	8	1	1	1	8	4	31
July	1	5	4	2	3	4	2		1	6	28
Aug.	3	2	1		7				2		15
Sept.	2	1		4	10		4		3		24
Oct.	2	1	1		6		7		32	5	54
Nov.					3	2	1				6
Dec.	2		2		4		1				9
TOTALS	37	11	16	7	54	7	20	3	54	15	224

1981

	OCJS	State Elected Officials	Private Non-Profit Groups	Local Elected Officials	Other Public Agencies	Private Citizens	Colleges/Universities	Businesses	Out-of-State	News Media	"SOURCE" TOTAL
Jan.				3	11		2			2	22
Feb.	3	4			1	2	1		1	1	13
Mar.	3		3		2	3	2	3	1	1	18
Apr.	5	1	1		4	2	6	2	3	3	27
May	1	2	3	1	10	3	4	1	35	3	63
June	2				3		2		5	5	17
July	5		4		7			2	3	3	24
Aug.	3	1	7		7	2	2		2	9	33
Sept.	5	1	7	1	10	7	6	1			38
Oct.	5		2	1	5	1	1		3		18
Nov.	6		1	2	3	1	1		1		15
Dec.	6		3	1	4		2	3	1		20
TOTALS	46	11	31	9	67	21	29	12	55	27	308

1978

	Courts	Law Enforcement	Corrections	Juv. Jus.	General Reference	Misc.	Background Information	Employment and Expenditures	Public Attitudes	Crime & Victimization	TYPE TOTAL
Jan.											
Feb.											
Mar.											
Apr.											
May											
June											
July				1							1
Aug.				7				1			8
Sept.						2				2	4
Oct.				4		2		1		1	8
Nov.			1	2						1	4
Dec.	1						2				3
TOTALS	1	0	1	14	0	4	2	2	0	4	28

1979

	Courts	Law Enforcement	Corrections	Juv. Jus.	General Reference	Misc.	Background Information	Employment and Expenditures	Public Attitudes	Crime & Victimization	TYPE TOTAL
Jan.											
Feb.				1	1		2				4
Mar.											2
Apr.							1				1
May											2
June	1	2	2	2		4			1		12
July											
Aug.				2		1	1			2	6
Sept.			1	6	2		1	1			11
Oct.	1			7	1					2	11
Nov.				5		2	1			2	10
Dec.						1					1
TOTALS	2	2	7	26	4	9	6	1	2	6	65

1980

	Courts	Law Enforcement	Corrections	Juv. Jus.	General Reference	Misc.	Background Information	Employment and Expenditures	Public Attitudes	Crime & Victimization	TYPE TOTAL
Jan.		2	1	3		1			3		10
Feb.		5	1	3	1		2		1	1	14
Mar.				1		2	5		1	1	10
Apr.	1			2		1	4			3	11
May	1		2	3			2	1		3	12
June		2		1		2			24	2	31
July		10	2	2			1		13		28
Aug.		1			1		3		10		15
Sept.	1	5	2	1		4	3	1	5	2	24
Oct.	7	11				1	5	18	11	1	54
Nov.		1	2							3	6
Dec.	1	1		5				1		1	9
TOTALS	11	38	10	21	2	11	25	21	68	17	224

1981

	Courts	Law Enforcement	Corrections	Juv. Jus.	General Reference	Misc.	Background Information	Employment and Expenditures	Public Attitudes	Crime & Victimization	TYPE TOTAL
Jan.	6	1	1			3	5	1	4	1	22
Feb.	2				4	4			2	1	13
Mar.	3	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	1	2	18
Apr.					2	7	5	2	2	9	27
May	2	9	1	1	1	13	7	2	5	22	63
June		1		1	3	1	5	1	3	2	17
July	1	1		2	1	5	7		4	3	24
Aug.	2		2	2		4	12	1	9	1	33
Sept.	1	1	2			8	17		6	3	38
Oct.			1			3	3	1	8	2	18
Nov.	1		1			4	2		4	3	15
Dec.	2	1	2		1	6	4		3	1	20
TOTALS	20	15	11	7	15	59	71	9	51	50	308

OTHER SAC PUBLICATIONS

April 1982 Fact and Fiction Concerning Crime and Criminal Justice in Ohio (1979-1982 data). A look at twenty-five popularly believed myths about crime and criminal justice in the State, accompanied by appropriate factual data.

July 1981 Ohio Citizen Attitudes: Concerning Crime and Criminal Justice (Report #2, 1980 data). The second in a series of reports concerning Ohioans' attitudes and opinions about contemporary issues affecting law enforcement, courts, corrections, juvenile justice, crime prevention, and criminal law.

June 1981 A Stability Profile of Ohio Law Enforcement Trainees: 1974-1979 (1981 records). A brief analysis of some 125 Ohio Law Enforcement Officers who completed mandated training between 1974 and 1979. The randomly selected group was analyzed in terms of turnover, advancement, and moves to other law enforcement agencies.

May 1981 A Directory of Ohio Criminal Justice Agencies (1981 data). An inventory of several thousand criminal justice (and related) agencies in Ohio, by type and county.

April 1981 Property Crime Victimization: The Ohio Experience (1978 data). A profile of property crime in Ohio highlighting the characteristics of victims, offenders, and the crimes themselves; based on results of the annual National Crime Survey victimization studies in Ohio.

March 1981 Profiles in Ohio Law Enforcement: Technical Assistance, Budgets, and Benefits (1979 data). The second report emanating from the 1979 SAC survey of 82 sheriff's departments and 182 police departments in Ohio; discusses technical assistance needs and capabilities among these agencies, as well as budgets and fringe benefits.

December 1980 The Need for Criminal Justice Research: OCJS Requests and Responses (1978-1980). An analysis of some 300 research requests received and responded to by the OCJS SAC Unit between 1978 and 1980, by type, request source and time of response.

September 1980 State of the States Report: Statistical Analysis Centers (Emphasis Ohio) (1980 data). An analysis of the criminal justice statistical analysis centers located in virtually every state and several territories.

September 1980 Survey of Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys: Report (1979 data). An operational overview of 46 county prosecutors' offices.

September 1980 In Support of Criminal Justice: Money and Manpower (1977 data). Analysis of employment and expenditures within Ohio's criminal justice system, by type of component (police, courts, corrections, etc.) and type of jurisdiction (county, city, township and state).

June 1980 Concerning Crime and Criminal Justice: Attitudes Among Ohio's Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (1979 data). Opinions and attitudes of 82 Ohio sheriffs and 182 chiefs of police, analyzed by jurisdictional size.

May 1980 Ohio Citizen Attitudes: A Survey of Public Opinion on Crime and Criminal Justice (1979 data). An analysis of public opinion and attitudes on a wide range of issues concerning law enforcement, courts, corrections, juvenile justice, crime prevention and other areas of crime and criminal justice.

END