

# TechBeat

September 2019

by JTIC

## **Table Of Contents**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>About TechBeat</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Webinar Focuses on Reducing Traffic Fatalities</b>          | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line Offers Two-Way Anonymity</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Capital Punishment, 2017: Selected Findings</b>             | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Tribal Crime Data-Collection Activities, 2019</b>           | <b>14</b> |

## About TechBeat



TechBeat is the monthly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System. Our goal is to keep you up to date on technologies for the public safety community and research efforts in government and private industry.

### **Subscriptions:**

TechBeat is free. To subscribe, go to [www.justnet.org](http://www.justnet.org) and click on subscribe. If you have questions, call (800) 248-2742, fax (301) 240-6730 or email [asknlectc@justnet.org](mailto:asknlectc@justnet.org).

### **Federal Program Manager:**

Dr. Mark Greene, (202) 307-3384, [mark.greene2@usdoj.gov](mailto:mark.greene2@usdoj.gov)

### **Staff:**

Managing Editors, Lance Miller and Ron Pierce; Editor, Michele Coppola; Lead Writer, Becky Lewis; Graphic Designers and Multimedia, Amy Salsbury, Pei Miller, Yan Yan and Christian Baker.

### **The NLECTC System**

The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a component of the National Institute of Justice's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System, serves as an information resource for technology and equipment related to law enforcement, corrections and courts and as a primary point of contact for administration of a voluntary equipment standards and testing program for public safety equipment.



JTIC is part of the NLECTC System, which includes the Justice Innovation Center for Small, Rural, Tribal, and Border Criminal Justice Agencies, which focuses on the unique law enforcement challenges faced by those types of agencies; the National Criminal Justice Technology Research, Test and Evaluation Center, which provides technology-related research and testing and operational evaluations of technologies; and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, which supports technology research, development, testing and evaluation efforts in forensic science. In addition, a Priority Criminal Justice Needs Initiative exists to assess and prioritize technology needs across the criminal justice community.



The Justice Technology Information Center, a component of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System, is supported by Cooperative Agreement #2014-IJ-CX-K404 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Analyses of test results do not represent product

approval or endorsement by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice or Leidos Innovations Corporation. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for



Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

### **[WWW.JUSTNET.ORG](http://WWW.JUSTNET.ORG)**

**JUSTNET News.** Includes article abstracts on law enforcement, corrections and forensics technologies that have appeared in major newspapers, magazines and periodicals and on national and international wire services and websites.

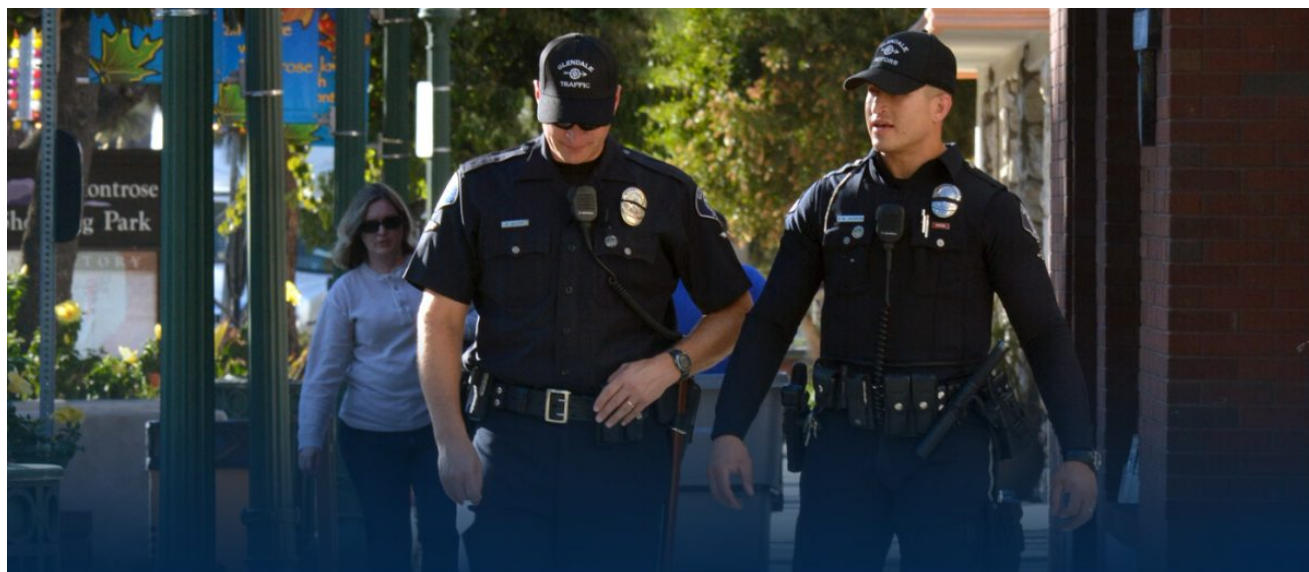
**Testing Results.** Up-to-date listing of public safety equipment evaluated through NIJ's testing program. Includes ballistic- and stab-resistant armor, patrol vehicles and tires, and more.

**Calendar of Events.** Lists upcoming meetings, seminars and training.

**Social Media.** Access our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube feeds for the latest news and updates.

**Tech Topics.** Browse for information on law enforcement, corrections and courts technologies.

**You**  <http://www.youtube.com/JUSTNETorg>



# Webinar Focuses on Reducing Traffic Fatalities

## Webinar Focuses on Reducing Traffic Fatalities

“Are you the new trooper in town?” the waitress asked one of her customers. “We know one of you lives here now, because people see him everywhere.”

Neither the trooper she asked nor any other Iowa state trooper had moved to that small town. However, community members thinking one had means that the state’s emphasis on community “touches” to reduce traffic crashes and fatalities is working.

The Iowa program, along with another initiative sponsored by the Metro Nashville Police Department, was featured in Reducing Traffic Fatalities in Urban and Rural Areas: Notes from NIJ’s LEADS Program, a webinar held August 1 cosponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Justice Clearinghouse. Featured speakers Capt. Ken Clary of the Iowa State Patrol and Sgt. James Williams of Metro Nashville, both NIJ LEADS scholars, explained the origins of their projects, their impacts to date and their plans for the future.

“It’s a different way of thinking about traffic,” Clary says. “It’s not the citations we write, but

the crashes we prevent, that measure our success.”

In a 10-year period ending in 2017, the United States saw 37,000 deaths result from traffic accidents, compared to 16,000 from murder, so “reducing traffic deaths may not be the sexiest statistic, but law enforcement can make its largest impact trying to reduce those,” he says. Iowa’s program set out to do that by changing driver behavior, because 94 percent of traffic accidents result from human behavior such as not wearing seat belts, driving while impaired, looking at devices and speeding.

Because 70 percent of traffic accidents occur on rural roads, Clary developed a program focused on determining traffic accident hot spots throughout the state:

two towns and one rural roadway in each county. Throughout 2018, 16 state troopers made several “touches” every day in these hot spots areas, establishing a frequent law enforcement presence where formerly there was none.

Clary explains that due to staff shortages, the Iowa State Patrol had mainly focused its traffic enforcement efforts on highways and interstates, but 70 percent of all accidents take place on rural roads, usually within a couple of miles of town limits.



“We are social beings, we get together, we drink to excess, and we take a calculated risk that we will not see law enforcement. The accidents don’t happen in the towns, where the speed limits are low and there are no curves,” Clary says. “Rather, as soon as they get out of town where they speed up and have to navigate curves, accidents start to happen at a high rate.”

He could have asked his troopers to go into the towns and make highly visible traffic stops on the town square. Instead, he asked them go into bars and talk to patrons about not drinking and driving, or visit with farmers having their morning coffee at the local convenience store to talk about the importance of wearing seat belts. Swinging through the towns and making frequent stops generates ongoing conversations among the residents and creates perceptions like the incident with the waitress mentioned above: “I told them to go where they’re not expected, when they’re not expected,” he says

The group of 16 troopers did this as their sole responsibility throughout 2018, and made almost 10,000 “touches.” In 2019, a group of 78 troopers is spending one hour per shift focused on this task, and made a similar number in the first quarter alone. The George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy will help with data analysis so that the Iowa State Patrol can study the impact of the program.

The Metro Nashville Police Department also initiated a program to reduce traffic fatalities, starting in 2017 and expanding efforts in 2018. Three major interstates meet in downtown Nashville, and in all, the department is responsible for 2,200 miles of public right of way. Officers spend an average of 100 minutes per accident on response and reconstruction.

Metro Nashville first identified hot spots by looking at the roadways leading up to high-incident intersections. The Tennessee Department of Safety helped with analysis on contributing factors, determining that the majority of accidents resulted from following too closely, and the department selected the area around the intersection of Murfreesboro Pike and Dell Parkway for its pilot site.

“Anyone who takes crash reports knows that following too closely usually stems from something else, such as looking at their phones or being distracted for another reason. It doesn’t necessarily mean they were tailgating,” Williams says.

Metro Nashville decided to take a Highly Visible Enforcement (HVE) approach to try to encourage voluntary compliance and a change in behaviors. The department began by making frequent and highly visible stops during a two-hour period, two days a week, just before and during the evening rush hour.

“We gave them very specific instructions to focus on driving too closely, distracted driving, speeding and improper lane changes,” Williams says. “The goal was to be in the right place and the right time to stop the right offenders.”

Initial results were generally encouraging, although the department learned that the original plan of one week of enforcement per month resulted in accident rates initially dropping, then increasing by the third week, indicating a need for a three-, rather than a four-week enforcement period. The program then expanded to a trial run that included seven total hot spots, and during the initial trial run of the expanded program, the project led to an overall 22-percent reduction in crashes.

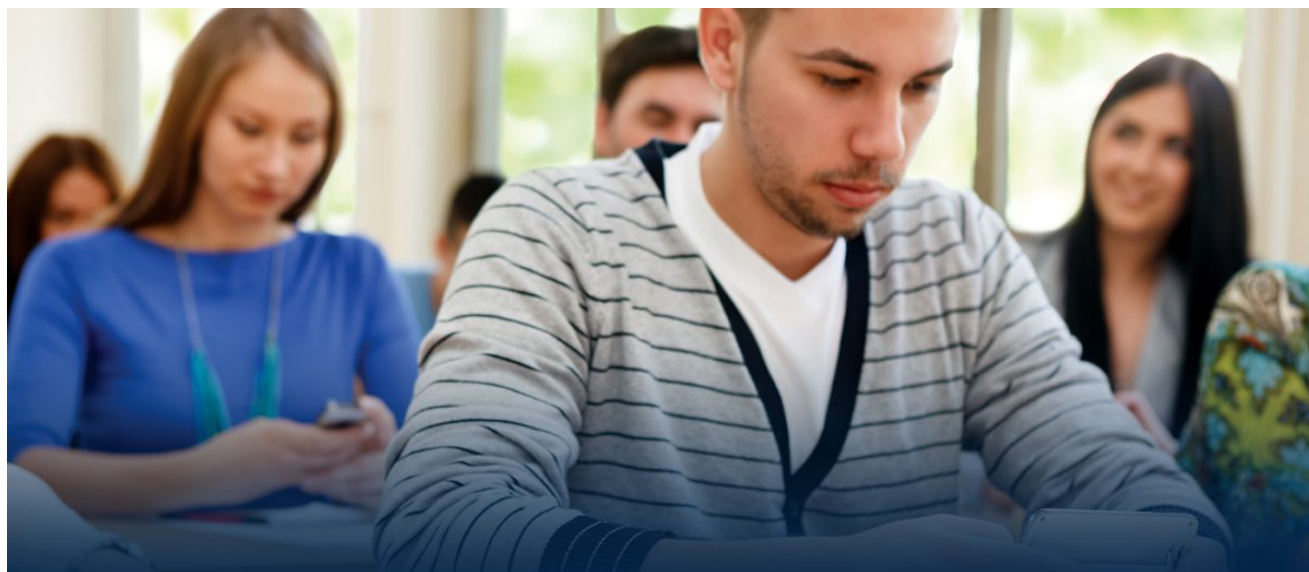
“We now hope to institutionalize it and make it something we do continuously instead of just now and then,” Williams says. “We also want to improve our internal data analysis. We were lucky to have the state help us get started, but we need to do it on our own in the future.”

To access an archived version of the webinar, visit [here](#). Membership in the Justice Clearinghouse is required. Established in 2014 through a partnership between NIJ and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) Program develops the research capacity of mid-career law enforcement personnel who are committed to advancing and integrating science into law enforcement policies and practice. To accomplish this, merit-based scholarships are competitively awarded to mid-rank officers from agencies of any size and executives from small agencies who have effectively infused research into policy development within their agencies. For more information, visit [here](#).

*Article photo: sirtravelalot/Shutterstock.com*

*Main photo: Dan Holm/Shutterstock.com*





## **Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line Offers Two-Way Anonymity**

### **Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line Offers Two-Way Anonymity**

Some weeks the calls seem to focus on bullying. During prom and homecoming seasons, more calls may come in about drinking and drugs. After a school shooting elsewhere in the country, there might be more about planned attacks. Whatever the topic, staff at the Maryland Center for School Safety take all tips to its new Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line seriously, moving them through a process that ensures they will receive swift attention from the appropriate administrator or law enforcement agency.

Launched on Oct. 3, 2018, in response to a directive from Gov. Larry Hogan following the shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida and Great Mills High School in Maryland, the Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line can be accessed by students, parents, school staff and the community through a phone number (1-833-MD-B-SAFE), the Internet (<https://safeschoolsmd.org>) and a free mobile app (Safe Schools MD [iOS](#) / [Android](#)). Public schools in all 24 Maryland counties have signed on to the tip line, and Maryland Center for School Safety staff are working to engage the state's private schools as well.

“It’s easier for school systems to sign-up with the statewide tip line than establish one of their own, and it saves them money over having their own tip line,” says Emily Allen Lucht, the center’s communications and media specialist. “It also helps make connections if a student lives in one county but knows about something happening in another county.”

Using the state tip line also guarantees quicker access to a wider array of services, and it saves the school systems money since they don’t have to contract with vendors to provide services such as IT and tip monitoring. Trained tip takers staff the state’s line, reaching out to designated law enforcement or administrative contacts in each area.

School Safety Analyst Sandra Caldwell notes that in a number of cases, students have reported concerns about friends who were battling depression or other emotional issues, and thanks to the tips, those students received the mental health services they needed. Other tips have enabled authorities to stop planned fights before they happen, and possibly to avert school shootings as well.



Lucht recalls a mother who came to the Maryland Center for School Safety exhibit at a conference to say her child was being bullied. Lucht showed her how to submit a tip and then tracked its progress from behind the scenes to ensure that the child has a safety plan in place for the 2019-2020 school year.

“If it’s a planned attack, the tip takers alert 911 and get things rolling right away. On tips that aren’t as urgent, they work with the school system,” Caldwell says.



Although that particular conference proved especially memorable, Lucht and Caldwell have put in plenty of time visiting similar conferences and conducting other outreach efforts to let schools know about the tip line. They have also made marketing materials available on the center’s website. Center staff is also working this summer to train safety partners in the state’s new

## Maryland Model School Resource Officer/School Security Employee Training Course.

“We didn’t go into this blindly; rather, we worked with our center advisory board and most importantly, with students and teachers to find the best way to reach out,” Lucht says. “We wanted to be sure we could connect with all students, not just those who have devices, and make sure we had well-rounded strategies because what works in an urban area might not work in a rural one. We’ve had students step up and offer feedback, and some of their creativity is mind blowing.”

An important feature built-in to the system is the ability for two-way anonymous communication. Each tip is associated with a log-in ID number, rather than a telephone number or a person’s name, and if the submitter wants to follow up or add more information, they use the log-in number to maintain anonymity.

In addition to supplying feedback into the development of the tip line, Maryland schools and counties participate in a weekly conference call with the center to brainstorm and share ideas. Lucht says: “Safety is not just a school by school situation anymore. At the end of the day, it’s a nationwide effort to try to create safer schools and safer communities.”

To find out more, visit [here](#).

*Article photo: John-james Gerber/Shutterstock.com, Joe Gough/Shutterstock.com*

*Main photo: Lucky Business/Shutterstock.com*



# Capital Punishment, 2017: Selected Findings

## Bureau of Justice Statistics

This report provides statistics from the Bureau of Justice Statistics annual data collection on capital punishment.

The report includes statistics on the number of prisoners executed each year from 1977 through 2017, the number and race of prisoners under sentence of death at year-end 2017 by state, and the average elapsed time from sentence to execution by year from 1977 through 2017.

## Findings include:

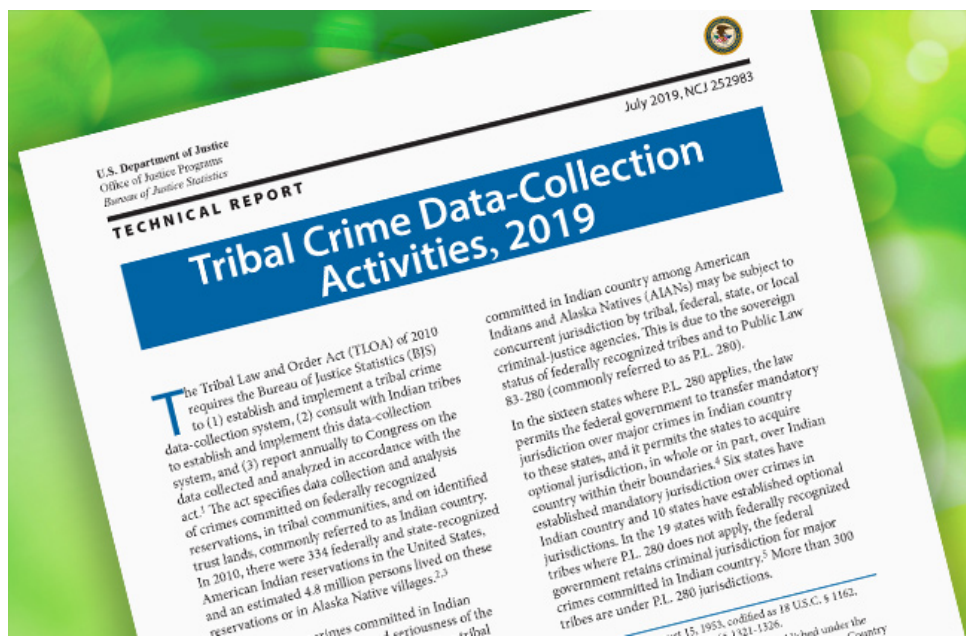
- At year-end 2017, 32 states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons held 2,703 prisoners under sentence of death, which was 94 (3%) less than at year-end 2016.
- In 2017, the number of prisoners held under sentence of death declined for the 17th consecutive year.

- Eighteen states held fewer prisoners under sentence of death at year-end 2017 than at year-end 2016, 3 states and the BOP held more prisoners, and 11 states held the same number.
- Three states accounted for 59% of the national decline in prisoners under sentence of death in 2017: Florida (down 33 prisoners), Delaware (down 12), and Texas (down 10).

Access the report at [here](#).

*Main photo: Bureau of Justice Statistics*





# Tribal Crime Data-Collection Activities, 2019

Bureau of Justice Statistics

This report describes activities by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to collect and improve data on crime and justice in Indian country, including data-collection programs and activities during 2018 and 2019, tribal participation in national records and information systems, and the most recent statistical findings on American Indians and Alaska Natives in the federal justice system.

This report meets the requirement of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (TLOA; P.L. 111-211, 124 Stat. 2258, § 251(b)) to report annually on BJS's activities to establish and enhance a tribal crime data-collection system.

Access the report at [here](#).

*Main photo: Bureau of Justice Statistics*