Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct the 2019 Census of Jails

In August, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) plans to conduct the 2019 Census of Jails (COJ), the only national effort devoted to enumerating all jails in the United States and the population they supervise.

The collection enables BJS, jail administrators, legislators, researchers, and jail planners to track changes to the number of jails and their capacities, as well as in the demographics and supervision status of the jail population and the prevalence of crowding.

Following past practice, in years when the COJ is fielded, BJS suspends collection of the Annual Survey of Jails. As with the last COJ, RTI International will conduct this data collection for BJS.

The 2019 COJ will collect data on facility characteristics and programs, such as facility functions and consent decree status, and for producing estimates on jail populations, including:

- One-day custody counts by sex;
- Adult/juvenile counts;
- Conviction status;
- Severity of offense (felony or misdemeanor);
- Counts of non-U.S. citizens;
- Holds for state and federal authorities;
- Average daily population; and
- Counts of jail admissions and releases.

New items include counts of non-U.S. citizens by conviction status, counts of probation and parole violators, and questions on opioid use screening practices, prevalence of inmate opioid disorder, and opioid disorder treatment and services provided by the jail to inmates.

While prior COJs have included items on drug-screening policies, accurate and timely national statistics are not currently available on the prevalence of opioid-use disorders and treatment programs in jails.

On behalf of BJS, we appreciate your time and continued support of BJS data collections. For any questions, please contact Todd Minton at Todd.Minton@ojp.usdoj.gov or (202) 305-9630.