The Bureau of Justice Statistics

• The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is one of 13 principal statistical agencies housed in the U.S. government. Each of these 13 agencies has statistical activities as their core mission.
  – 11 of these agencies are located within cabinet-level departments (BJS is in the U.S. Department of Justice) and 2 are independent.
  – Also, 3 subcomponents of federal agencies have statistical work as their principal mission.

• BJS’s mission is to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. BJS also provides financial and technical support to state, local, and tribal governments to improve both their statistical capabilities and the quality and utility of their criminal history records.
BJS Divisions

Planning, Policy, and Operations Division
- Publications and Dissemination Unit
- Technology and Data Management Unit
- Planning, Management, and Budget Unit
- Criminal Justice Data Improvement Programs Unit

Statistical Operations Division
- Victimization Statistics
- Law Enforcement Statistics
- Law Enforcement Incident-Based Statistics
- Prosecution and Judicial Statistics
- Corrections Statistics
- Recidivism Statistics
- Institutional Research and Special Projects
Primary data collection is the *National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)* and its supplemental surveys (financial fraud, identity theft, police-public contact, school crime, and stalking)

- Household survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects information on nonfatal violent and property crimes, reported and not reported to police, against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households

- NCVS data produce national rates and levels of violent (rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) and property victimization (burglary/trespassing, motor vehicle theft, and other types of household theft)
Victim Services Statistical Research Program (VSSRP) builds knowledge about victim services by collecting and analyzing national data from victims and the diverse entities that serve victims in all states

- National Census of Victim Service Providers
- National Survey of Victim Service Providers
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<tr>
<th>Coordinate and meet with internal and external federal colleagues re: NCVS data collections</th>
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<td>Participate in federal interagency working groups</td>
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<td>Draft Information Collection Requests (ICR) for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review</td>
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<td>Develop statistical reports – draft table shells, write syntax code, conduct data analysis, write text</td>
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<td>Answer data requests and questions from the public, stakeholders, researchers, internal and external federal colleagues</td>
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<td>Review data files and codebooks before archiving at National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) for public use</td>
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What are the job opportunities for statisticians/data scientists/analysts at BJS?

• 60% of BJS staff are statisticians (or supervisory statisticians) analyzing data on victimization, law enforcement, corrections, prosecution and courts, recidivism, and tribal activities.

• Job announcements for BJS statisticians may specify a particular statistical unit or may be general which gives BJS leadership the discretion based on needs of the agency and interest/skills of the candidate.
What are the range of skills statisticians/data scientists/analysts need to succeed at BJS?

• Communicate (writing and speaking) to technical and non-technical audiences
• Project management – collaborate and work with internal and external federal colleagues, contractors, etc.
• Research methods, survey methodology, sampling, weighting, statistics
• Statistical software (SPSS, Stata, R, SAS)
• Knowledge (or willingness to learn) about the criminal justice system
What is the career path for statisticians/data scientists/analysts at BJS?

- Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees
- Concentrations in sociology, criminology, political science, public policy, public health, and statistics
- Some statisticians have spent their entire career at BJS and others have moved from other government agencies, government contractors, or private companies
- BJS statisticians may have an interest in criminal justice, may have an interest in statistics, or both
Is your agency currently hiring statisticians/data scientists/analysts?

- Check [USAJOBS](https://www.usajobs.gov) for open announcements

- Sign up for [JUSTSTATS](https://www.juststats.gov) to get BJS news and learn about open positions
What advice would you give to students based on your experience?

• Use USAJOBS as a resource to research jobs that sound interesting, understand knowledge and skills requirements, go to the agency website and look at their work
• U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website for position classification standards (1500 – mathematics and statistics group)
• Get experience in survey methodology, developing survey instruments, analyzing data, writing articles and technical reports
• Look for internships, job shadowing, talk with statisticians at agencies of interest
• Go to conferences, present research, network
• Learn statistical software programs (SPSS, R, SAS, Stata)
• Continue to build your resume (or CV) and keep it up to date
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