

Perceived Impediments Documented

Local law enforcement agencies attending the regional focus group meetings (2000) identified the following as impediments to NIBRS implementation within local agencies. Please note, these impediments represent the collective and largely unedited observations of 70 large local law enforcement agencies participating in the regional meetings, and they are organized in broad categories developed by SEARCH staff.

A. Data Elements, Collection and Reporting Standards

1. Officer resistance to NIBRS data collection
2. Perception that NIBRS requires significant time on the part of officers to complete reports
3. Complicated edit checks and data quality
4. Difficult for some agencies to tie incidents to arrests
5. Complexity of analyzing IBR data
6. Data inconsistencies in VICAP and NIBRS

B. Law Enforcement Information Technology

7. Can't do NIBRS in a paper-based environment
8. The cost to modernize law enforcement information systems required to implement NIBRS
9. Inefficient police operations and procedures currently in place that hinder NIBRS reporting
10. Poor design of NIBRS software and clumsy data collection screens in some vendors' systems

C. Program Benefits and Objectives

11. What are the benefits for me (local law enforcement)?
12. What are the benefits of NIBRS over Summary UCR? Why are they different?
13. No clear mission statement and objectives for NIBRS
14. No clear return on investment for local agencies in going to NIBRS
15. NIBRS is expensive to implement, while analysis is not necessarily following implementation in a timely basis to justify the costs of the initial system
16. Perception that national data collection is primarily for the benefit of academic users and researchers
17. Perception that NIBRS is a statistical program for politicians in Washington DC
18. Results of national research often has negative impacts for agencies in question
19. Lack of research on impact of agencies that have moved to NIBRS
20. Where are the success stories?

D. Education, Training and Leadership

21. Some departments are not even aware of NIBRS
22. Insufficient state leadership and lack of coordination between local and state agencies
23. Chiefs don't really understand the difficulty and implications of NIBRS, which can lead to bitter and unexpected implementation experiences
24. NIBRS information is not targeted to the right people within the department
25. Lack of positive education showing NIBRS success stories and uses of NIBRS data
26. Staff and technical turnover at local, state and Federal levels, requiring constant and continual reeducation and training
27. Lack of education for groups other than local law enforcement agencies, including legislators, public and press

E. Funding and Politics

28. Perceived increase in crime rates in jurisdictions implementing NIBRS, particularly by police chiefs/sheriffs
29. Belief by top executives and larger agencies that NIBRS is NOT here to stay
30. Lack of peer pressure among the larger agencies who set the stage for progressive comparisons between agencies
31. No mandate to implement NIBRS, which might increase the urgency level to do so
32. State and federal funding is not tied to NIBRS, unlike Summary UCR, which is also a voluntary reporting program
33. Concern about the level of detail with IBR data, since more analysis is possible with NIBRS and therefore departments might come under a microscope
34. Lack of staffing and resources for State UCR programs who are usually overwhelmed with existing work, leaving little time for NIBRS awareness and data analysis