

2020 Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems – An Overview of Findings

Dennis DeBacco

Justice Information Services Specialist
SEARCH Law and Policy Program

Seattle, Washington

January 24, 2023



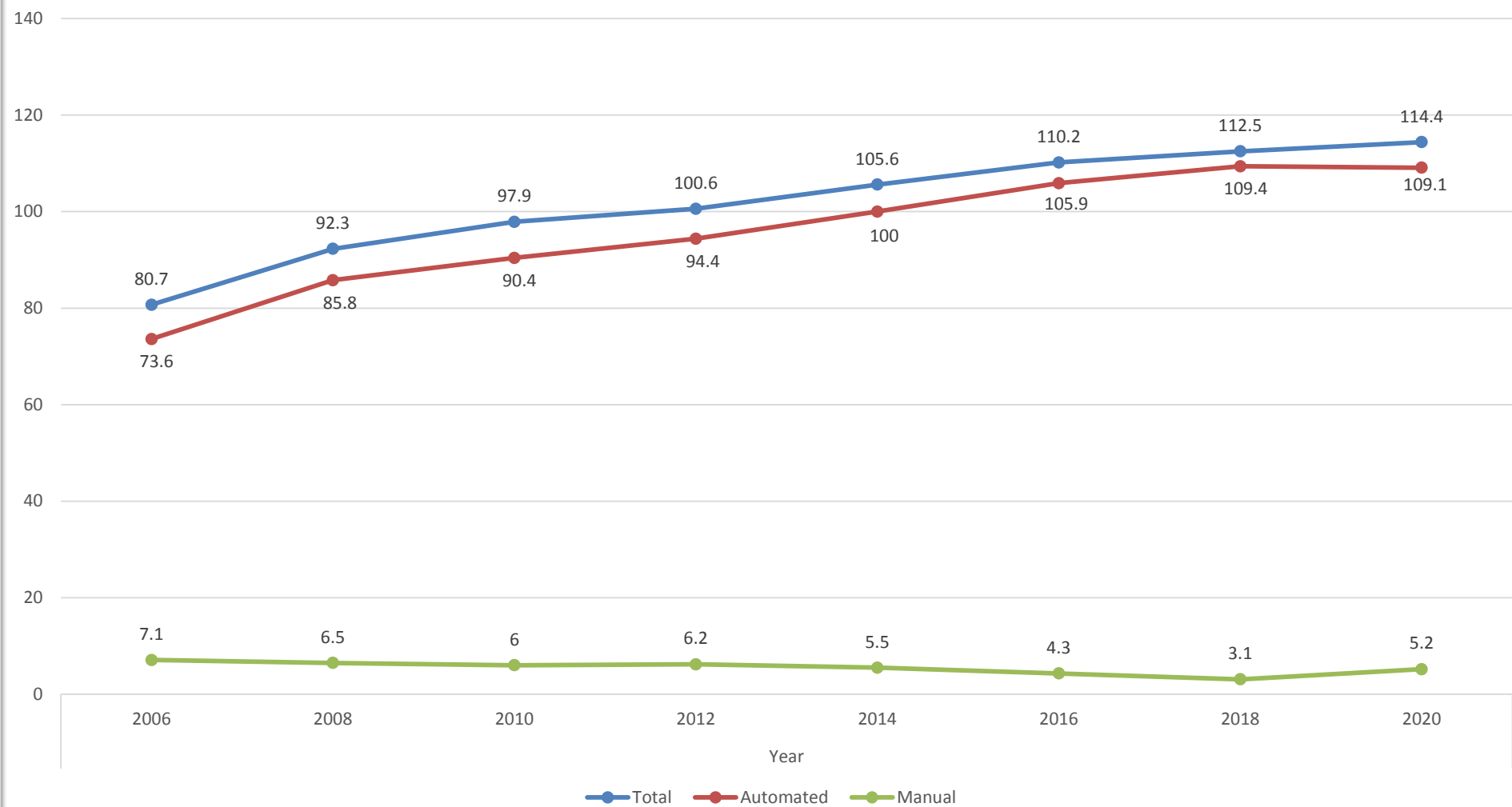
search.org

Background

- **16th survey conducted by SEARCH for BJS, since 1989**
 - Published December 2022
- **Data was collected May-July 2021 for calendar year ending December 2020**
- **Responses were received from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam**
- **The report consists of a front-end summary of information collected and some 40 data tables**
 - <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/list/research>
 - <https://www.search.org/resources/surveys/>

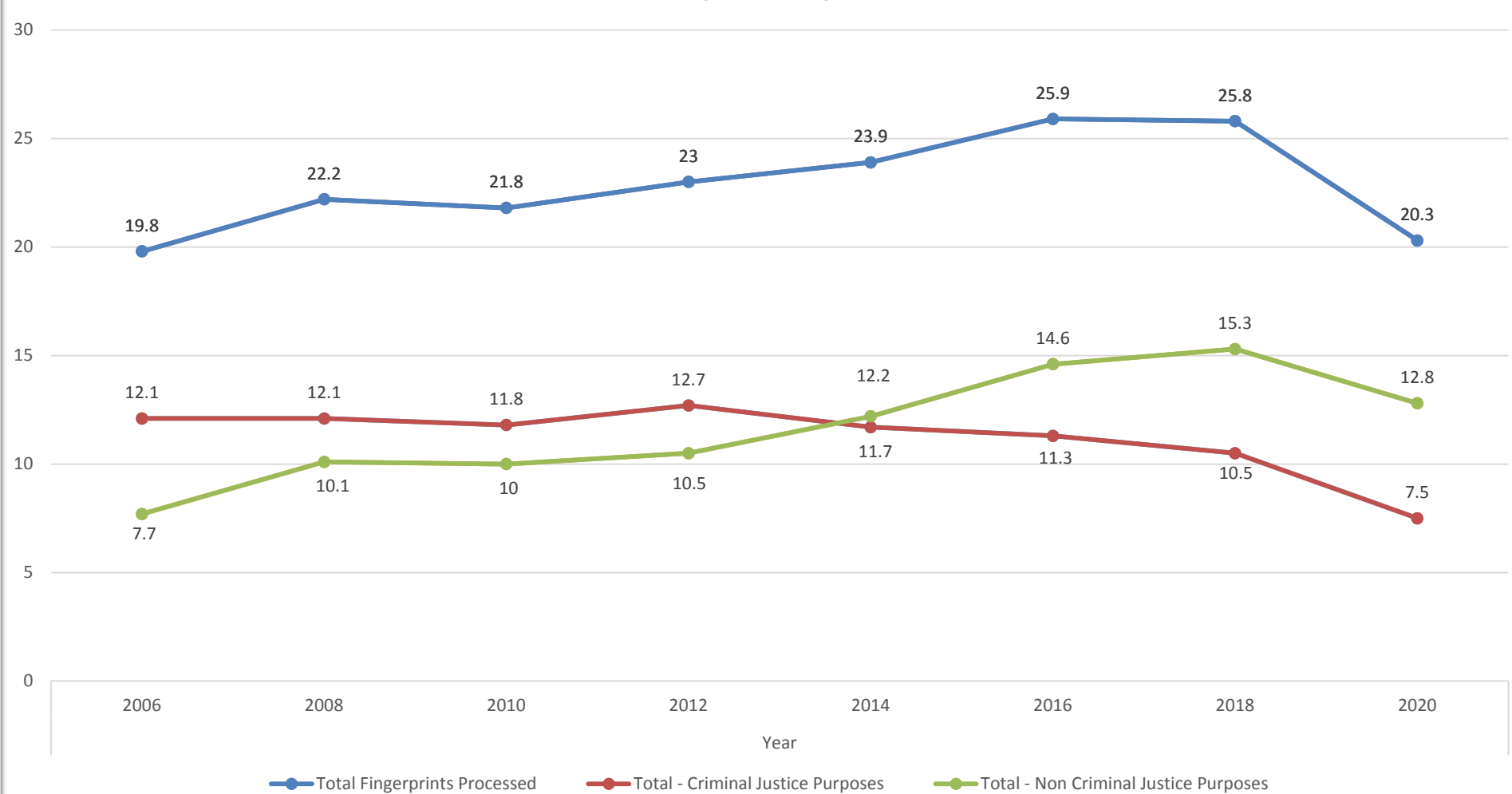
Number of Subjects in State CCH Files

Number of Subjects in State Criminal History Files
(Millions)



Noncriminal Justice Queries Continues to Expand

Volume of Fingerprints Process for Criminal Justice and Noncriminal Justice Purposes (Millions)



Backlogs

- **Arrest Fingerprint Cards**
 - **10 states** reported **6,500** arrest fingerprint records in backlog representing a significant *decrease* from 2018 where **7 states** reported a backlog of over **828,000** records.
- **Dispositions**
 - **26 states** reported **7 million** disposition records in backlog representing a significant *increase* over 2018 where **24 states** reported having over **2 million** dispositions in backlog.

New for 2020

- **Removing CCH records upon receiving a “death notification” from an authorized source, or upon a subject reaching a predetermined age**
 - **11 states** remove a decedents record from file upon receiving a death certificate from an authorized source. 2,013 records were removed in 2020
 - **West Virginia** adds a deceased notation to the record and keeps it on file
 - **41 states** do not remove a deceased person’s record from state repository files
 - **13 states** require fingerprints of the decedent

New for 2020 (cont.)

- **16 states** purge records when the subject of the record reaches a certain age.
 - 2,323 age-qualified records were removed in 2020
- **10 states** purge records at age 100 or above
- **The District of Columbia and 3 states (Arizona, North Dakota, and Oregon)** purge records when the subject reaches age 80 or above
- **The District of Columbia and 3 states (Michigan, Ohio, and Oregon)** check for new entries to a subject's record before deciding whether to keep the record on file, regardless of the subject's age

New for 2020 (cont.)

- **Record sealing and expungement practices**
 - **46 states, the District of Columbia and Guam . . .**
Have statutes and/or policies that define procedures for sealing and/or expunging records
 - **5 states (Alaska, Georgia, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah)**
have them for sealing records only
 - **13 states and Guam** have them for expunging records only
 - **28 states and the District of Columbia** have them for both sealing and expunging criminal history records

New for 2020 (cont.)

- **21 states** . . . Make sealed records available for research, while **17** states and the **District of Columbia** do not make sealed records available for research purposes.
- In 2020, **2.8 million** sealing requests and over **298,000** expungement requests were received by state repositories

New for 2020 (cont.)

- **Use of CCH record metrics and performance reporting tools (e.g., dashboards, reports, etc.)**
 - **31 states** - Report having them while **21 states** do not. The types of reports vary between agencies
 - **29 states** - Send reports of missing arrests and/or dispositions to contributing agencies
 - **20** send to law enforcement
 - **12** to prosecutors
 - **17** to courts
 - **17 states** - Make data quality metrics available to show missing arrests and dispositions, number of records submitted and rejected, etc.
 - **14** make the metrics available to law enforcement
 - **6** to prosecutors
 - **10** to courts

CCH Metrics – Survey Follow-up

- **SEARCH will be following up with 31 states based on 2021 survey responses**
- **Telephone interviews**
- **Request of states**
 - Standard and ad hoc reports related to CCH information quality – e.g., missing data and agencies that fail to report
 - Samples of reports and reporting tools
- **Please let us know if you have CCH analytic dashboards you are willing to share**

Low Disposition Reporting

Percentage of All Arrests in State CCH Databases Having Final Dispositions

State	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	5 Survey Average
AL	34		36	36	37	36
CO		19	21	26	26	23
DC		43		24	60	42
ID	49	50	51	60	52	52
IN	47	46	50	56	57	51
KY	40	38	42	42	43	41
LA		21	20	26	27	24
MA			11	18	22	17
MS	13	14	14	13	16	14
MT	47	48	54	65	60	55
NM		24	25	25	58	33
NV	45	49	57	61	61	55
OK	39	39	60	66	72	55
Average	39	36	37	40	45	38

High Disposition Reporting

Percentage of All Arrests in State CCH Databases Having Final Dispositions

State	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	5 Survey Average %
AK		91	91	91	90	91
CT	97	68	97	97		90
HI	94	95	96	96	96	95
IA	96	92	91	98	98	95
MD	97	98	97	96	94	96
ME	81	82	82	82	84	82
MI	85	84	79	81	81	82
NC	85	85	83	84	82	84
ND		87	90	91	91	90
NJ	84	88	91	91	94	90
NY	89	90	91	91	94	91
TX	82	77	84	85	82	82
VT	92	93	94	93	93	93
VA	87	88	88	89	89	88
WA	95	96	85	87	88	90
Average	90	88	89	90	90	89

NCHIP Technical Assistance Outreach – Survey Follow-up

- **10 states with lowest disposition reporting rates**
 - Site visits to document challenges
 - Technical assistance from SEARCH and National Center for State Courts
- **10 states with highest disposition reporting rates**
 - Outreach to identify strategies for success
 - White paper series highlighting promising practices

New for 2022

- **Abbreviated survey**
- **Continue time series**
 - Number of arrests in state criminal history files
 - Percent missing final dispositions
- **New topic**
 - Number of arrests missing final dispositions
 - Cite and release estimates
 - Statewide citation files
 - Rejected dispositions (i.e., missing arrests)
 - Non-fingerprint-based records (where applicable)
- **2022 Surveys will be distributed soon**

Questions

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?