

# A Focus on the Criminal History Record, Part I: Criminal History Records Review

**David Roberts**

Executive Director  
SEARCH

**Becki Goggins**

Director, Law and Policy  
SEARCH

**2024 SEARCH Membership Group Meeting**

January 23, 2024

New Orleans, Louisiana



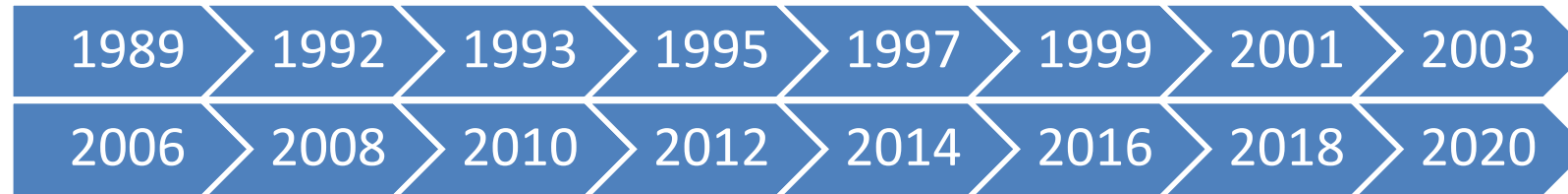
**SEARCH**

search.org

# Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems (SSCHIS)

- Administered since 1989 -

<https://www.search.org/resources/surveys/>

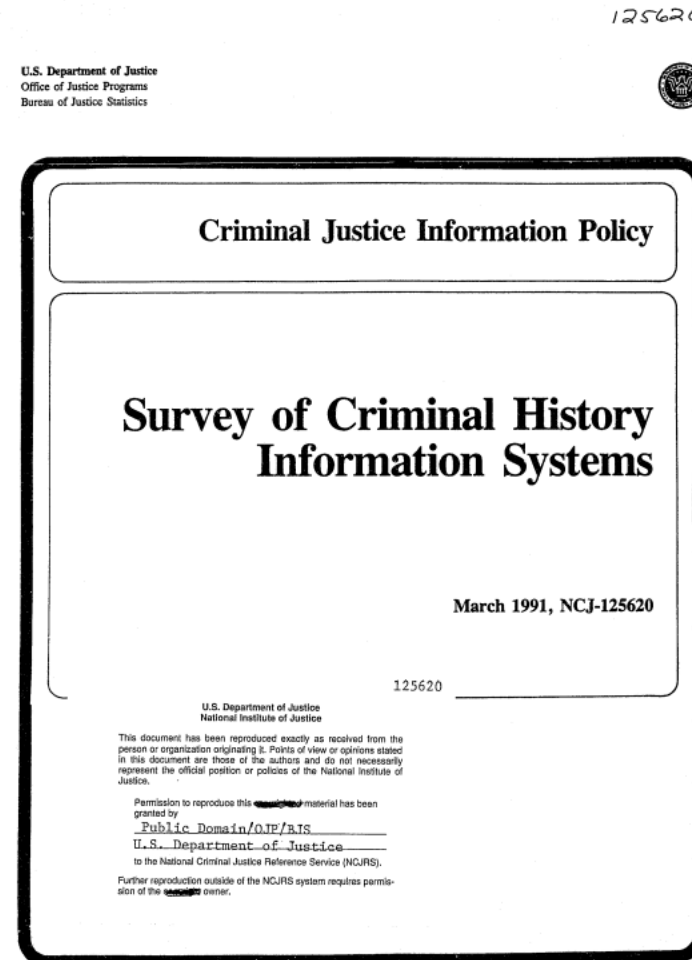


- **2022 Survey**

- Original due date – August 15, 2023
- Revised due date – January 26, 2024
- Publication early to mid-year 2024

# Perennial Survey Topics

- **Volume of subjects**
- **Volume of transactions**
  - Criminal fingerprints processed\*
  - Civil fingerprints processed\*
- **Disposition reporting rates**
- **Timeliness of reporting**
- **Interstate Identification Index (III) participation**



\*Added in 2006

# SSCHIS – New and Special Topics

- Records reported by corrections (1989-2004)
- Percent of state-supported Ill records and fees charged by repositories (2006-present)
- Warrants in state and NCIC files (2012-present)
- Plans to replace criminal justice information systems and repository staffing levels (2018)
- Arrest cycle v. charge matching to calculate disposition reporting rates (2018-present)
- Performance metrics and dashboards (2020)
- Deceased persons (2020)
- Sealed and expunged records (2020-present)
- Abbreviated survey (2022 and 2026)

# SSCHIS

- **Target audiences**
  - Public
  - Policymakers
    - Federal
    - State
    - Local
  - Press
  - Researchers
  - Grantors
  - Grantees
- **Potential for improved analytics**

National Criminal History Improvement Technical Assistance Program  
Cooperative Agreement No. 2019-RU-BX-K001

## **Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems, 2020**

December 2022

Prepared for  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Bureau of Justice Statistics  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Alexis R. Piquero, PhD  
Director

Prepared by  
Becki R. Goggins  
Dennis A. DeBacco

SEARCH Group, Incorporated  
1900 Point West Way  
Suite 161  
Sacramento, CA 95815



# Understanding Criminal History Measures

Table 1. Overview of state criminal history record systems, December 31, 2020

State	Number of subjects (individual offenders) in state criminal history file			Percent of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded			State performs either cycle matching or charge matching to calculate the percentage of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded
	Total	Automated	Manual	Arrests in the entire database with final dispositions	Arrests entered within past 5 years	Felony charges with final dispositions	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,376,500</b>	<b>109,149,100</b>	<b>5,227,400</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	
Alabama	1,878,300	1,675,100	203,200	37	20	45	Cycle matching
Alaska	281,400	271,300	10,100	90	92	90	Charge matching
American Samoa	nr						
Arizona	2,063,400	1,924,500	138,900	52	a 65	61	Charge matching
Arkansas	843,500	843,500	0	56	40	39	Cycle matching
California	11,905,200	10,933,900	971,300	42	b 55	64	Cycle matching
Colorado	1,907,600	1,907,600	0	26	49	46	Cycle matching
Connecticut	633,500	439,700	193,800	na	c na	na	Charge matching
Delaware	339,500	339,500	0	93	91	81	Cycle matching
District of Columbia	698,800	698,800	0	60	88	71	d Cycle matching
Florida	7,267,100	7,267,100	0	56	56	68	e Charge matching
Georgia	4,516,000	4,516,000	0	84	f 62	f 76	Charge matching
Guam	1,200	1,200	0	na	na	100	Cycle matching
Hawaii	620,400	620,400	0	96	86	97	Charge matching
Idaho	456,400	456,400	0	52	19	42	Cycle matching
Illinois	7,814,200	7,251,800	562,400	72	52	65	Cycle matching
Indiana	1,946,200	1,946,200	0	57	59	63	Cycle matching
Iowa	817,700	812,700	5,000	98	84	99	Cycle matching
Kansas	1,681,500	1,266,800	414,700	55	38	59	Cycle matching
Kentucky	1,626,000	1,626,000	0	43	16	51	Cycle matching
Louisiana	2,545,400	1,936,700	608,700	27	23	36	Charge matching

# Understanding Criminal History Measures

Table 1. Overview of state criminal history record systems, December 31, 2020

State	Number of subjects (individual offenders) in state criminal history file			Percent of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded			State performs either cycle matching or charge matching to calculate the percentage of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded
	Total	Automated	Manual	Arrests in the entire database with final dispositions	Arrests entered within past 5 years	Felony charges with final dispositions	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,376,500</b>	<b>109,149,100</b>	<b>5,227,400</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	
Alabama	1,878,300	1,675,100	203,200	37	20	45	Cycle matching
Alaska	281,400	271,300	10,100	90	92	90	Charge matching
American Samoa	nr						
Arizona	2,063,400	1,924,500	138,900	52	a 65	61	Charge matching
Arkansas	843,500	843,500	0	56	40	39	Cycle matching
California	11,905,200	10,933,900	971,300	42	b 55	64	Cycle matching
Colorado	1,907,600	1,907,600	0	26	49	46	Cycle matching
Connecticut	633,500	439,700	193,800	na	c na	na	Charge matching
Delaware	339,500	339,500	0	93	91	81	Cycle matching
District of Columbia	698,800	698,800	0	60	88	71	d Cycle matching
Florida	7,267,100	7,267,100	0	56	56	68	e Charge matching
Georgia	4,516,000	4,516,000	0	84	f 62	f 76	Charge matching
Guam	1,200	1,200	0	na	na	100	Cycle matching
Hawaii	620,400	620,400	0	96	86	97	Charge matching
Idaho	456,400	456,400	0	52	19	42	Cycle matching
Illinois	7,814,200	7,251,800	562,400	72	52	65	Cycle matching
Indiana	1,946,200	1,946,200	0	57	59	63	Cycle matching
Iowa	817,700	812,700	5,000	98	84	99	Cycle matching
Kansas	1,681,500	1,266,800	414,700	55	38	59	Cycle matching
Kentucky	1,626,000	1,626,000	0	43	16	51	Cycle matching
Louisiana	2,545,400	1,936,700	608,700	27	23	36	Charge matching

# Understanding Criminal History Measures

Table 1. Overview of state criminal history record systems, December 31, 2020

State	Number of subjects (individual offenders) in state criminal history file			Percent of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded			State performs either cycle matching or charge matching to calculate the percentage of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded
	Total	Automated	Manual	Arrests in the entire database with final dispositions	Arrests entered within past 5 years	Felony charges with final dispositions	Cycle or Charge Matching
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,376,500</b>	<b>109,149,100</b>	<b>5,227,400</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	
Alabama	1,878,300	1,675,100	203,200	37	20	45	Cycle matching
Alaska	281,400	271,300	10,100	90	92	90	Charge matching
American Samoa	nr						
Arizona	2,063,400	1,924,500	138,900	52	a 65	61	Charge matching
Arkansas	843,500	843,500	0	56	40	39	Cycle matching
California	11,905,200	10,933,900	971,300	42	b 55	64	Cycle matching
Colorado	1,907,600	1,907,600	0	26	49	46	Cycle matching
Connecticut	633,500	439,700	193,800	na	c na	na	Charge matching
Delaware	339,500	339,500	0	93	91	81	Cycle matching
District of Columbia	698,800	698,800	0	60	88	71	d Cycle matching
Florida	7,267,100	7,267,100	0	56	56	68	e Charge matching
Georgia	4,516,000	4,516,000	0	84	f 62	f 76	Charge matching
Guam	1,200	1,200	0	na	na	100	Cycle matching
Hawaii	620,400	620,400	0	96	86	97	Charge matching
Idaho	456,400	456,400	0	52	19	42	Cycle matching
Illinois	7,814,200	7,251,800	562,400	72	52	65	Cycle matching
Indiana	1,946,200	1,946,200	0	57	59	63	Cycle matching
Iowa	817,700	812,700	5,000	98	84	99	Cycle matching
Kansas	1,681,500	1,266,800	414,700	55	38	59	Cycle matching
Kentucky	1,626,000	1,626,000	0	43	16	51	Cycle matching
Louisiana	2,545,400	1,936,700	608,700	27	23	36	Charge matching



# Percentage of All Arrests with Final Dispositions

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

# Understanding Criminal History Measures

Table 1. Overview of state criminal history record systems, December 31, 2020

State	Number of subjects (individual offenders) in state criminal history file			Percent of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded			State performs either cycle matching or charge matching to calculate the percentage of arrests in database that have final case dispositions recorded
	Total	Automated	Manual	Arrests in the entire database with final dispositions	Arrests entered within past 5 years	Felony charges with final dispositions	Cycle or Charge Matching
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,376,500</b>	<b>109,149,100</b>	<b>5,227,400</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	
Alabama	1,878,300	1,675,100	203,200	37	20	45	Cycle matching
Alaska	281,400	271,300	10,100	90	92	90	Charge matching
American Samoa	nr						
Arizona	2,063,400	1,924,500	138,900	52	a 65	61	Charge matching
Arkansas	843,500	843,500	0	56	40	39	Cycle matching
California	11,905,200	10,933,900	971,300	42	b 55	64	Cycle matching
Colorado	1,907,600	1,907,600	0	26	49	46	Cycle matching
Connecticut	633,500	439,700	193,800	na	c na	na	Charge matching
Delaware	339,500	339,500	0	93	91	81	Cycle matching
District of Columbia	698,800	698,800	0	60	88	71	d Cycle matching
Florida	7,267,100	7,267,100	0	56	56	68	e Charge matching
Georgia	4,516,000	4,516,000	0	84	f 62	f 76	Charge matching
Guam	1,200	1,200	0	na	na	100	Cycle matching
Hawaii	620,400	620,400	0	96	86	97	Charge matching
Idaho	456,400	456,400	0	52	19	42	Cycle matching
Illinois	7,814,200	7,251,800	562,400	72	52	65	Cycle matching
Indiana	1,946,200	1,946,200	0	57	59	63	Cycle matching
Iowa	817,700	812,700	5,000	98	84	99	Cycle matching
Kansas	1,681,500	1,266,800	414,700	55	38	59	Cycle matching
Kentucky	1,626,000	1,626,000	0	43	16	51	Cycle matching
Louisiana	2,545,400	1,936,700	608,700	27	23	36	Charge matching

# Percentage of All Arrests with Final Dispositions

State	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	5 Survey Average %
MT	47	48	54	65	60	55
NV	45	49	57	61	61	55
ID	49	50	51	60	52	52
IN	47	46	50	56	57	51
DC		43		24	60	42
KY	40	38	42	42	43	41
AL	34		36	36	37	36
NM		24	25	25	58	33
LA	█	21	20	26	27	24
CO		19	21	26	26	23
MA	99		11	18	22	17
MS	13	14	14	13	16	14
<b>Average</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>49</b>

# Issues in Measuring CCH Data Quality

## Consider the age of the underlying record:

- We're calculating disposition reporting rates based on the *entire universe* of criminal history records within a state.
- Very old records—those from 1930 or before through 2000 – that are lacking dispositions will probably *always* lack a disposition and we should differentiate in calculating disposition reporting rates for inactive records.
- *If a state has an overall disposition reporting rate of 20% in 2018, even if they began reporting 100% of dispositions in 2019, their overall disposition reporting rate would only increase to about 28% after 5 years.*
- Very new records — those pertaining to arrests from the last 12-24 months — are probably still in the adjudication process and should be separately accounted.
- *In Michigan, e.g., disposition reporting rates were 40% for 2023, 64% for 2022, 75% for 2021, and 80+% for 2020. So, the five-year rate is artificially depressed given operational processing times.*
- Continue to look at the entire universe of records but differentiate the age of record cohorts to assess improvements and measure the impact of specific data quality improvement strategies.
- *Begin developing 5-year and 10-year cohorts of records that are aged to the point that they've largely completed the adjudication process and yet are not so old that they are no longer active.*

# Issues in Measuring CCH Data Quality

## **Differentiate arrests that will never have a formal final disposition.**

- Often persons are arrested on a warrant from another jurisdiction. That arrest is reported to the State Criminal History Repository but there will never be a final disposition associated with that arrest—the person is often turned over to the agency that has the warrant.
- The arrest, however, is recorded in the CCH is an open arrest because a final disposition was never reported.
- Differentiate these non-dispositional arrests so that they are excluded from the denominator in calculating disposition reporting rates.

## **Look at dispositions that are reported to the repository missing a predicate arrest.**

- Analysis of both **open arrests** as well as **orphaned dispositions** can have a big impact on disposition reporting practices.
- Missing ATN/SID or other offense and cycle matching capabilities can signify substantial data quality problems and render poor disposition rates.
- Growing practice of issuing a *Citation in Lieu of Arrest*.

# CCH Metrics – Identifying Measures that Matter

Develop universal measures and methods of assessing CCH data quality.

SEARCH is partnering with states to build consensus on universal measures of data quality and methods to compute those measures.

- a. Disruptions in reporting – By monitoring the number of records reported by the key stakeholders in the justice enterprise (i.e., law enforcement, prosecutors and courts) repository staff can detect variances in reporting volumes and correct the cause of the disruption.
- b. Time from arrest to disposition – State CCH repositories encourage agencies to report dispositions as soon as possible so they are available for both criminal justice and non-criminal justice purposes.
- c. Open arrests – Arrests that lack a final disposition are a major concern for state criminal history repositories because they are key factors in determining an individual's eligibility to purchase a firearm, as well as determining their suitability for certain employment, licensing and volunteer positions.
- d. Open dispositions – Dispositions that cannot be matched to underlying arrests are also a concern to repositories.

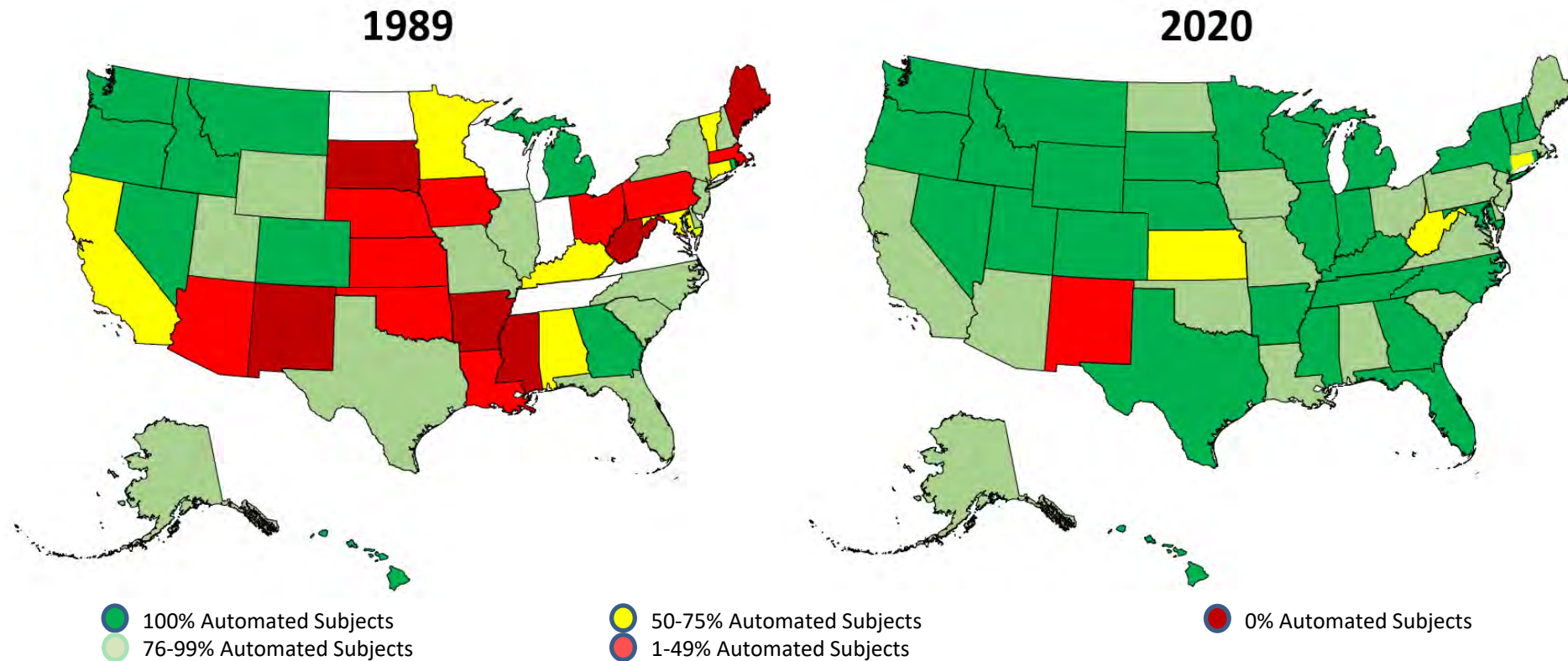
# CCH Metrics – Identifying Measures that Matter

Develop functional specifications for a CCH Data Quality Dashboards.

SEARCH is partnering with states to build consensus on data quality visualizations and dashboard features and functionality.

- a. Share CCH Data Quality Dashboard functional specifications with industry partners/solution providers to build into their CCH systems.
- b. Share CCH Data Quality Dashboard functional specifications with states who may want to build the solution in-house.
- c. Use functional specifications to build dashboards for states engaged in criminal history research efforts.

# States with Automated Criminal History (Arrest Fingerprint) Files

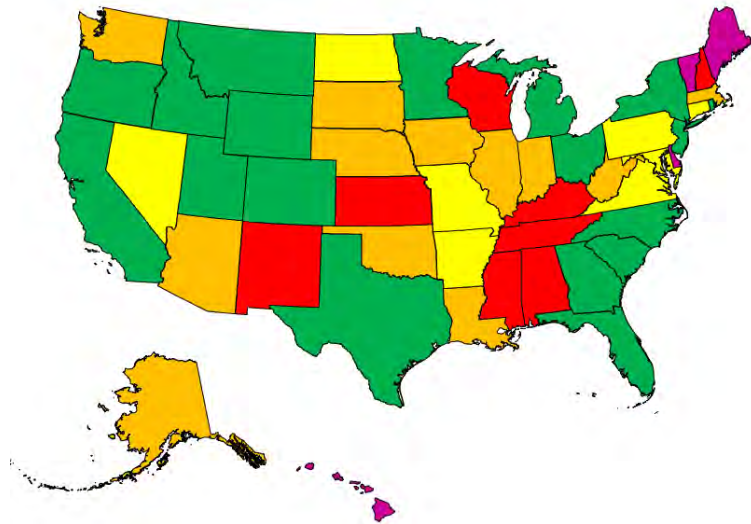




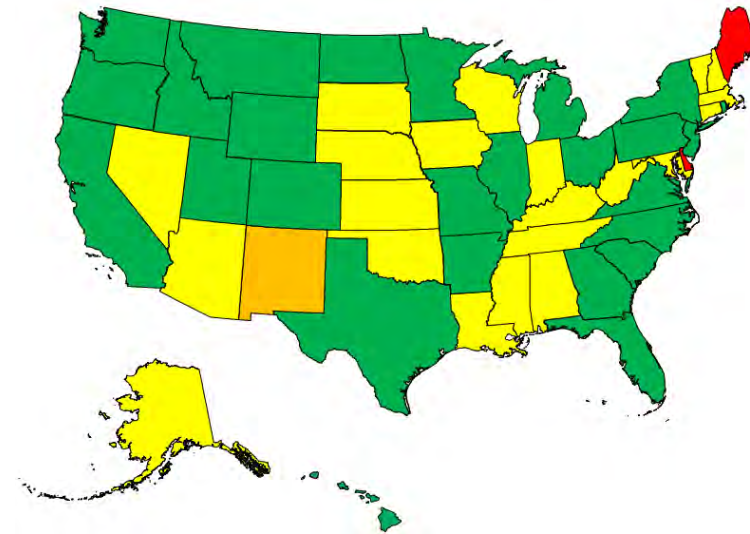


# Percent of Total III Records Supported by State

2016



2020



● 81-100% ● 61-80% ● 41-60% ● 21-40% ● 0-20%

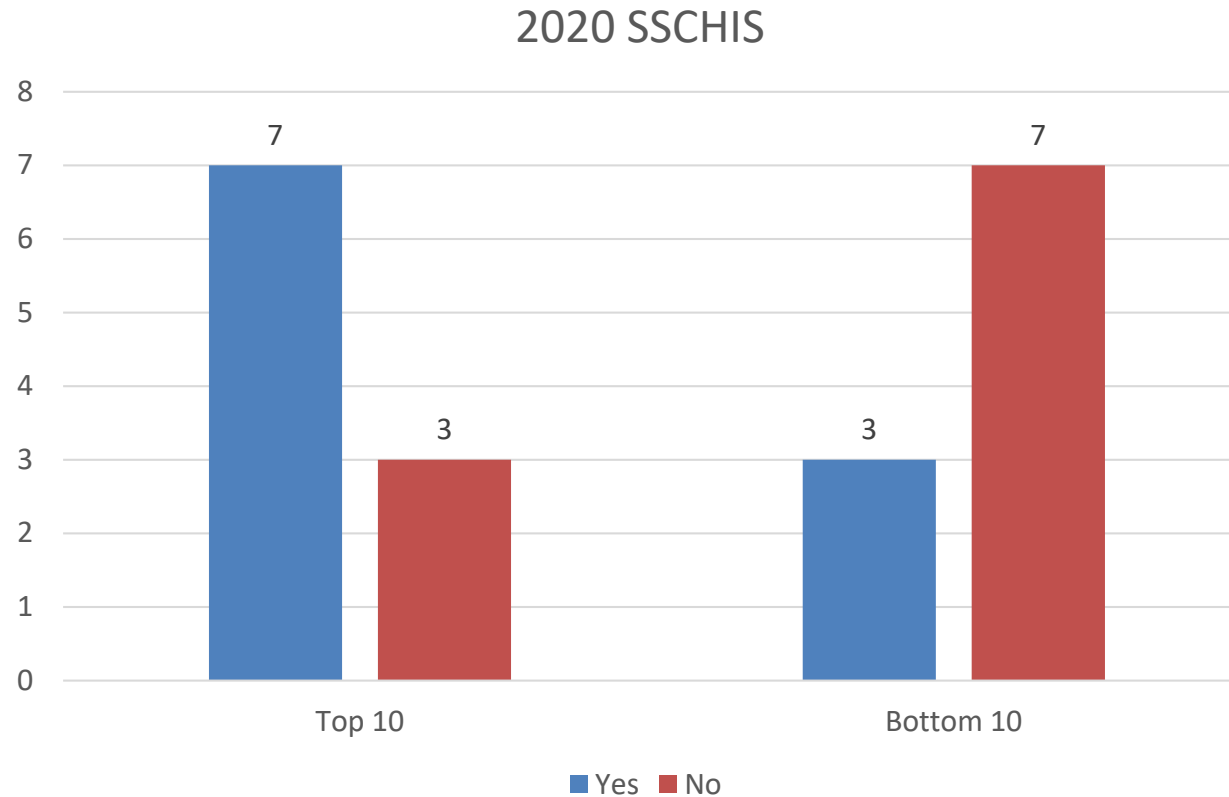
# Are there predictors of high disposition rates that we can learn from the SSCHIS?

- Factors that **did not** predict high disposition rates
  - Charge v. cycle matching
    - No real difference. Most states do cycle matching.
  - Number of performance monitoring measures
    - No real difference.
  - Sharing performance metrics with contributing agencies
    - No real difference.

# Are there predictors of high disposition rates that we can learn from the SSCHIS?

- Factors that **did** predict high disposition rates
  - Internal data quality audits

# Internal CCH Data Quality Audits

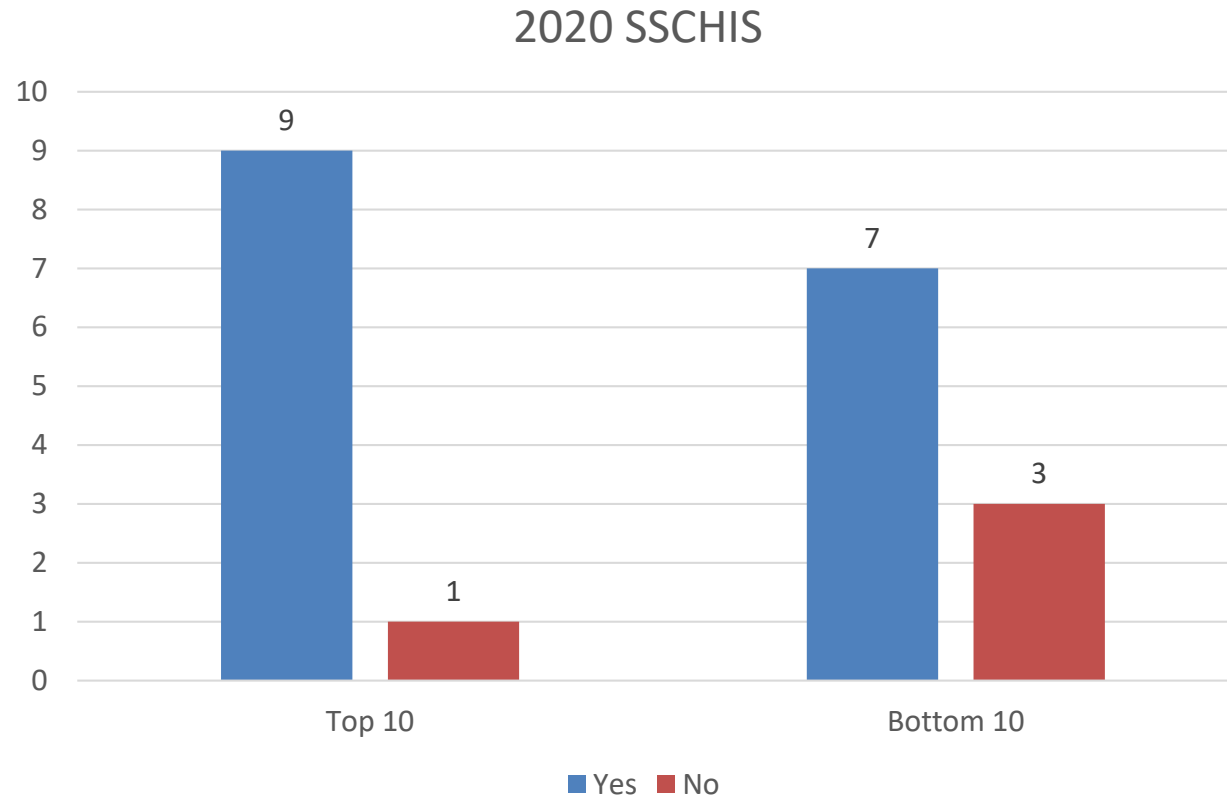


*Finding: 7 out of 10 high performers conducted internal data quality audits v. only 3 of 10 low performers.*

# Are there predictors of high disposition rates that we can learn from the SSCHIS?

- Factors that **did** predict high disposition rates
  - Internal data quality audits
  - Electronic disposition reporting by courts

# Electronic Disposition Reporting by Courts



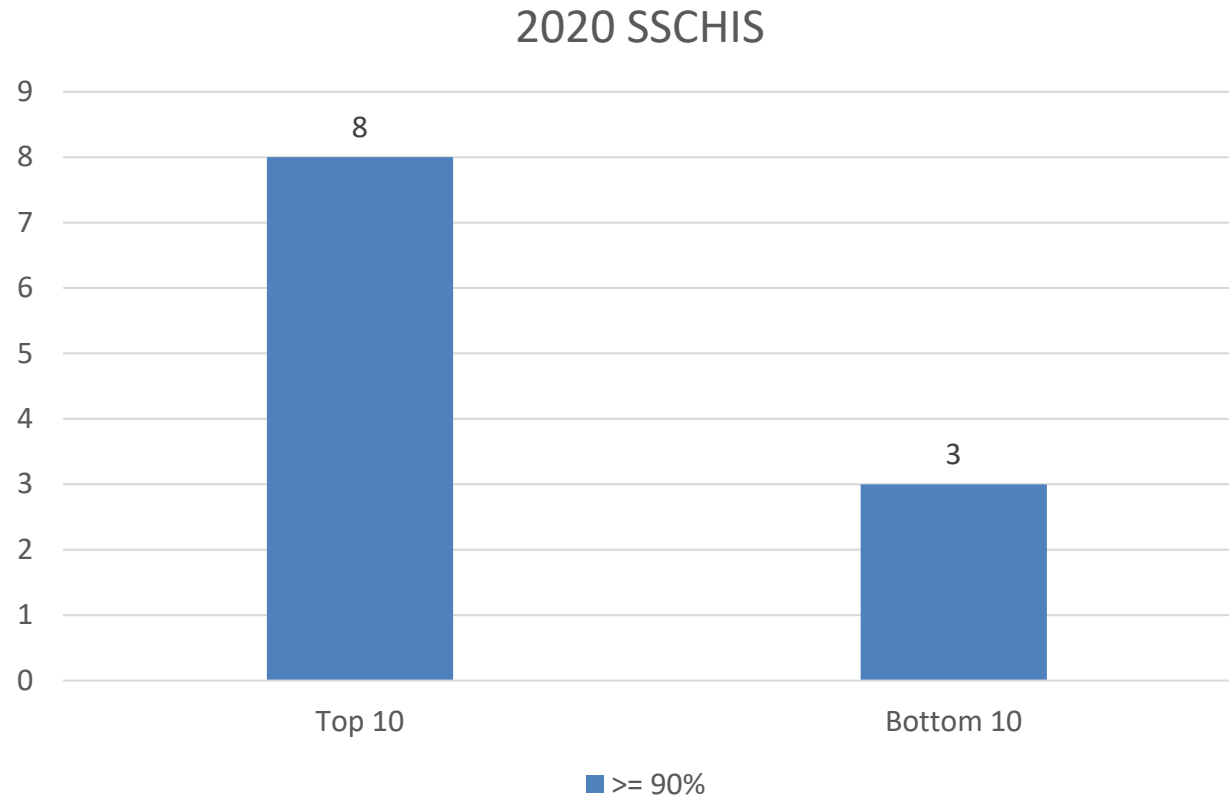
***Finding: 9 out of 10 high performers received electronic disposition data from the courts. Among the high performing states, 8 out of 10 received over 95% of court dispositions electronically. Only one low performing state (CO) had an electronic court disposition reporting rate over 95%.***

# Are there predictors of high disposition rates that we can learn from the SSCHIS?

- Factors that **did** predict high disposition rates
  - Internal data quality audits
  - Electronic disposition reporting by courts
  - Percent of dispositions that can be matched to arrests electronically



# Percent of Dispositions Electronically Matched to Arrests

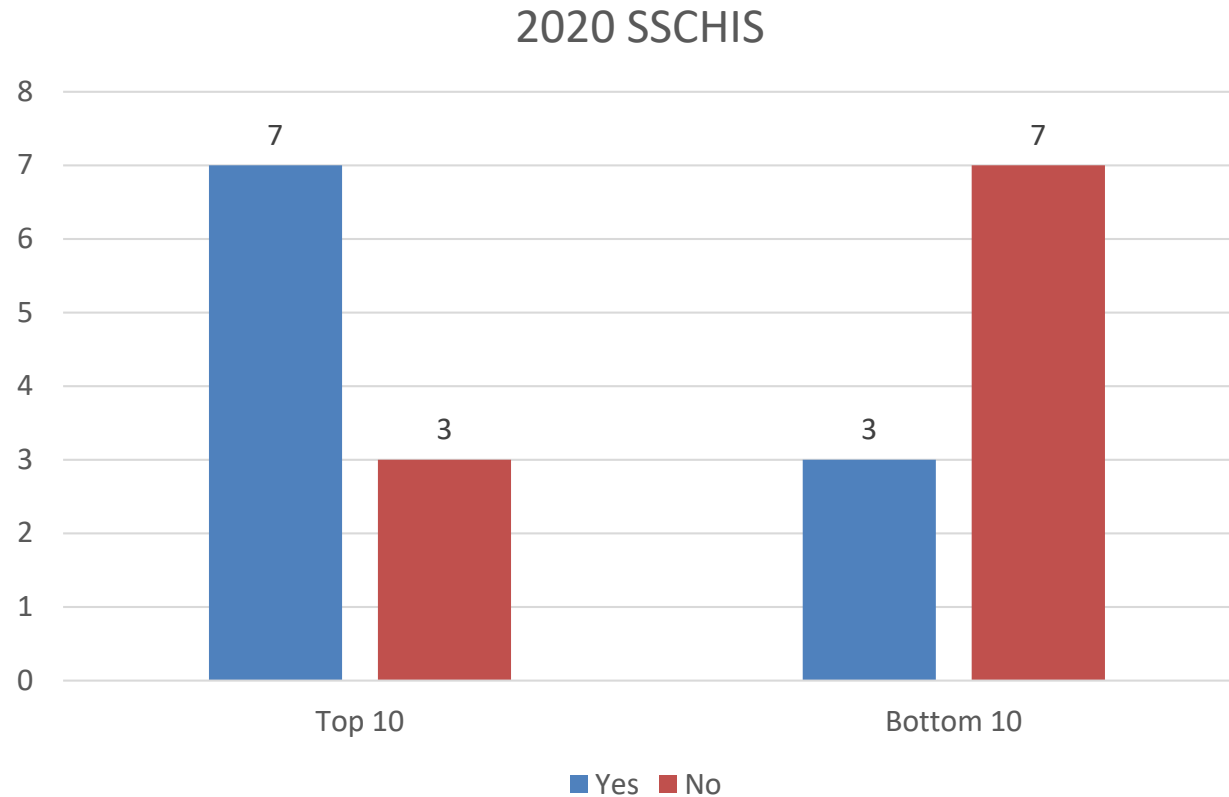


***Finding: 8 out of 10 high performers were able to electronically match at least 90% of dispositions to an arrest compared to only 3 out of 10 low performers.***

# Are there predictors of high disposition rates that we can learn from the SSCHIS?

- Factors that **did** predict high disposition rates
  - Internal data quality audits
  - Electronic disposition reporting by courts
  - Percent of dispositions that can be matched to arrests electronically
  - Receipt of dispositions from a centralized court case management system

# Centralized Court Case Management System



***Finding: 7 out of 10 high performers received electronic disposition data from the courts from a centralized case management system compared to only 3 out of 10 low performers.***

# Additional Research and Information

- **SEARCH is actively working with top and bottom performers to document promising practices for disposition reporting and partnering with the National Center for State Courts in conducting this research.**
- **SEARCH is working to create online tools to visualize and analyze findings from SEARCH/BJIS surveys and other research**
- **Re-establishing the SEARCH Criminal History Metrics Working Group**

# Potential Topics to Explore

- **Utility of maintaining very old (or very) new records in disposition rates**
- **Identification of duplicate arrests and/or warrant arrests lacking disposition information**
- **Structure of criminal history repositories**
  - Dedicated v. centralized information technology staff
  - Tenure of repository leadership (civilian v. sworn staff)
  - Staffing levels (data entry, validation, auditing, training, etc.)
- **Funding for state criminal history repositories**
- **Reporting agency capabilities should continue to be explored**
  - Prevalence of electronic reporting
  - Prevalence of centralized case/record management systems
  - Court unification

# Thank you!

**Dave Roberts**

**[djroberts@search.org](mailto:djroberts@search.org)**

**Becki Goggins**

**[becki@search.org](mailto:becki@search.org)**