



094146

# REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

## Development Of A Nationwide Criminal Data Exchange System — Need To Determine Cost And Improve Reporting

B-171019

Department of Justice

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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094146

JAN. 16. 1973



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-171019

To the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This is our report entitled "Development of a Nationwide Criminal Data Exchange System--Need to Determine Cost and Improve Reporting." Federal participation in this program is administered by the Department of Justice.

We made our review pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

Copies of the report are being sent to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and to the Attorney General.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James B. Stacks".

Comptroller General  
of the United States

187  
105

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### ABBREVIATIONS

FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GAO	General Accounting Office
LEAA	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
NCIC	National Crime Information Center
SEARCH	System for Electronic Analysis and Retrieval of Criminal Histories

*COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS*

DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONWIDE  
CRIMINAL DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM--  
NEED TO DETERMINE COST AND  
IMPROVE REPORTING  
Department of Justice B-171019

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

A fully operating computerized criminal history exchange system will enable law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions to determine, in seconds, whether an individual has a criminal record. If he has, the system will provide information on the nature and number of arrests, the related charges, their disposition by the courts, and any time spent in prison.

This will be accomplished through a nationwide computerized system linking criminal justice agencies with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and with each other.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), Department of Justice, awarded grants totaling about \$4 million for developing a prototype of such a system and to enable 20 States to participate when it became operational. Substantial additional funds will be required by Federal, State, and local governments before the system can become fully operational in all 50 States.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) made this review to find out how the system's development was progressing and how much a fully operational system would cost.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A 2-year project demonstrated that it is practicable to exchange criminal history data between the States by a computerized system. The FBI is operating a limited criminal history exchange system. (See pp. 3 to 6.)

Statements by LEAA and State officials indicate that a fully operational exchange system could cost at least \$100 million. But the cost to develop a fully operational system has not been determined. (See p. 7.) Therefore Federal, State, and local governments cannot determine whether they will be able, or willing, to meet the financial requirements of developing and operating the system.

Law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions are not reporting all arrest and disposition data to the State agencies which enter such data into the system. Until they do, system users have no assurance that the data they receive is complete or accurate. (See p. 9.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before authorizing substantial additional expenditures, the Attorney General should require that:

--Either the FBI or LEAA determine the total cost of developing and operating the criminal history exchange system so that the participants can decide whether they are able, or willing, to meet the system's financial requirements.

--The FBI and LEAA implement a program for improving the reporting of arrests and dispositions by law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions to the State agencies which enter such data into the national system.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The Department of Justice agreed with GAO's recommendations and said that it was taking action to accomplish their objectives. (See app. I.)

These actions should provide cost data and should improve the report-

ing of arrest and disposition data; however, they do not go far enough to insure reliable cost estimates or complete and current reporting.

Cost data will be collected only as part of a comprehensive data systems program which does not require that each State participate or that specific cost estimates be developed for determining criminal history exchange costs. Because LEAA requires mandatory reporting only by those States participating in the comprehensive data systems program, a State not participating could develop a criminal history exchange system without accomplishing mandatory reporting.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

The report is submitted to the Congress because Federal funds will be used for further development of the criminal history exchange system.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In examining Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), Department of Justice, grants for criminal justice information systems, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed the prototype System for Electronic Analysis and Retrieval of Criminal Histories (Project SEARCH). Project SEARCH was largely an experiment in the interstate exchange of criminal histories of offenders; it was funded under title I, part C, of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3701).

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM

As of June 30, 1972, LEAA had awarded about \$4 million to Project SEARCH for developing a prototype criminal history exchange system and to enable 20 States to participate when the system became operational. Substantial additional funds will be required by Federal, State, and local governments before the system can become fully operational in all 50 States.

Project SEARCH began in July 1969 as a 14-month project to (1) establish and demonstrate the feasibility of a computerized system for the interstate exchange of criminal histories and (2) design and demonstrate a computerized statistics system. At the time our fieldwork was completed, 15 States were participating in the criminal history exchange project.<sup>1</sup>

The criminal history exchange system, as envisioned by Project SEARCH, was to enable criminal justice agencies-- law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions--to obtain, in seconds, information on offenders. The criminal justice agency would obtain information by making

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<sup>1</sup>Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington. (After our fieldwork was completed, Arkansas, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Utah also joined the project.)

an inquiry on a "user terminal." The inquiry would be transmitted through the State computer to a central computer index. The central index, to be maintained by a designated agency and containing a brief index of all persons in the system, would then electronically tell the inquiring agency whether a criminal record existed for the individual in question and, if so, from what State detailed information could be obtained. Without such a system, it would take days or weeks to obtain this data, if it could be obtained at all.

The system was to have been demonstrated during July and August 1970; however, to gain more experience and to give States which had recently joined the project a chance to participate, the demonstration period was continued until June 30, 1971.

The system adopted by the SEARCH project group and tested during the demonstration period used detailed criminal history records maintained and controlled by the individual participating States and certain identification and summary data maintained in a central index accessible by all States. When an inquiry was received, the central index (temporarily maintained by Michigan) responded with (1) personal descriptors and identifying numbers, (2) an abbreviated criminal profile, and (3) the name of the State holding the full criminal record. The inquiring agency then had direct access through its State computer and the central index to the desired file in the State holding the record. The information in this file was then electronically transmitted to the inquiring agency through the central index and the inquiring agency's State computer.

#### OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has maintained, since 1967, computerized national files on wanted persons and certain stolen articles. The NCIC network consists of 102 law enforcement control terminals, which make information in the files available to all 50 States within seconds.

In 1967 NCIC recognized that a computerized criminal history file would be a logical part of a nationwide criminal

justice information system. NCIC's stated goal was to provide a national index of criminal justice information and communication lines linking NCIC and the national index with a central State computer in each State. However, NCIC initially emphasized developing and implementing a system that would provide information only on wanted persons and certain stolen articles. After the SEARCH project group demonstrated the feasibility of a criminal history exchange system, the Attorney General in December 1970 authorized the FBI to manage the exchange system. In November 1971 the FBI began operating, through NCIC, a limited version of this system.

Since the FBI assumed management responsibility, LEAA has continued to assist States to participate in the system. Under NCIC, the system has also been changed, at least temporarily, from a system of State maintained and controlled files linked by a central index to a system in which the NCIC central index maintains all information provided by the States. According to an NCIC official, this change was necessary because the present NCIC communication lines could not handle the requirements of transmitting detailed criminal histories from one State to another.

NCIC, under its criminal history exchange system, maintains a central index containing more detailed information than would have been contained in the central index under the system adopted by the SEARCH project group. Except as noted below, NCIC will maintain all criminal history information and answer all inquiries directly.

NCIC maintains detailed history records of all Federal, multi-State, and single-State offenders whose records have been placed in the system. According to FBI officials, when the system is fully developed, NCIC will maintain detailed history records of multi-State and Federal offenders but only a summary record of single-State offenders.

The summary records will contain personal identification and descriptive data for an arrested individual; the number of times arrested and the number of charges and convictions for each type of offense; and the last arrest, court, and custody status. The detailed criminal history records will include (1) personal identification and descriptive data,



(2) complete information on each arrest, the charges for each arrest, and the disposition of each charge, (3) complete information on each count entered in court, the disposition of each count, and any appeal, and (4) information on the custody status of an individual and any change in that status, such as parole.

Under NCIC's system, all record entries, clearances, and modifications, other than for Federal offenders, are to be made through the States; hence the States will control all input to the system, other than for Federal offenders. Each entry must be supported by a criminal fingerprint card processed by the State making the entry. Processing involves an analysis of the card to come up with a 20-character fingerprint profile of the offender. Therefore a State will not be able to enter criminal records into the system until it has an identification unit capable of processing such cards.

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

Our review was made at Project SEARCH headquarters in California and at FBI and LEAA headquarters in Washington, D.C. We reviewed documentation developed by the Project SEARCH group, LEAA, and the FBI on developing the criminal history exchange system. We also interviewed officials of LEAA, the FBI, Project SEARCH, and several States.

After work to develop the system began, additional tasks were assigned to the Project SEARCH group. These included determining the feasibility of transmitting fingerprint images and other information by communications satellite, enhancing the development of automatic fingerprint comparison, analyzing the requirements of State identification bureaus, initiating the development of a standardized crime-reporting system, and developing a prototype system for the interstate exchange of organized crime intelligence information. Our review concentrated on the project's major task--developing a computerized criminal history exchange system.

## CHAPTER 2

### NEED FOR COST INFORMATION

#### AND IMPROVED INPUT TO SYSTEM

The cost to develop and operate the criminal history exchange system has not been determined and problems related to the system's operational effectiveness have not been resolved. No one has determined what a fully operational system will cost. Therefore the participants cannot determine whether they will be able, or willing, to meet the financial requirements of developing and operating the system. Although the reporting of arrest and disposition data within the States is known to be incomplete, neither LEAA nor the FBI has insured that all information entered into the system is complete. About half the States do not have laws requiring that arrests and dispositions be reported to central State identification units.

Without an accurate forecast of all system costs and a plan for insuring the completeness of reporting, the Federal Government is entering into an open-end commitment; it has no assurance that the participants will be able to meet the financial requirements of the system or that the system will provide complete and accurate criminal history information.

#### NEED FOR ESTIMATE OF TOTAL COST

As of June 30, 1972, LEAA had awarded to Project SEARCH grants totaling about \$4 million for developing a prototype criminal history exchange system and to enable 20 States to participate when the system became operational. For fiscal year 1972, the FBI budgeted \$1.3 million and LEAA budgeted \$3 million for expanding the system during 1972.

Despite the substantial Federal funds already committed to this system and a greater funding commitment expected in the future, LEAA and NCIC officials told us that neither agency had estimated the total cost of a fully operational system. According to statements by LEAA and State officials, a fully operational system could cost at least \$100 million.

To participate, each State will need the necessary hardware, software, personnel, and intrastate communication lines,

as well as the ability to convert arrest and disposition data to the standardized NCIC format and to identify fingerprints and maintain fingerprint cards for offenders whose records will be included. The States, assisted by LEAA, will pay these costs. Law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions within each State will also incur costs to obtain and maintain user terminals for querying the system. About 6,500 user terminals are on the NCIC network and have access to NCIC data. NCIC estimates that about 45,000 user terminals will be added to the system when it is fully operational. Although LEAA and NCIC have already spent several million dollars on developing and operating the system, only four States had entered records in the system as of September 1972.

An NCIC official told us that most of NCIC's future costs will be incurred in upgrading communication lines that link NCIC with the States in the system. Accordingly, NCIC has started a study to determine these costs.

LEAA expects to provide funds to enable the States to participate in the system through block and discretionary grants. LEAA block grants, awarded under title I, part C, of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, are allocated among the States according to their respective populations. The individual States decide how much of their block grants to use for a given purpose, such as the criminal history exchange system. Under the act LEAA also awards discretionary grants in response to specific State applications.

In May 1972 LEAA allocated about \$12 million of fiscal year 1972 discretionary grant funds to initiate a comprehensive data systems program intended to finance the development of criminal justice statistics programs in the States. To receive funding under the comprehensive data systems program, a State must submit a plan for implementing a five-part program. One of these parts is the establishment of a criminal information system that will track offenders passing through the criminal justice system and also provide criminal history exchange capability. Each State will decide whether to participate in the comprehensive data systems program.

According to an LEAA official, because the FBI manages the criminal history exchange system, it, in conjunction with

the States, should make any analysis of the total cost of developing and operating the system.

In a paper delivered at a national symposium on criminal justice information systems, the Commissioner of Florida's Department of Law Enforcement said that he was:

\*\*\* not sure that we are in a position to justify the cost involved to implement a criminal history exchange system on an operational basis \*\*\*.

\*\*\* we must determine the value of criminal history information in relation to the cost \*\*\*."

He acknowledged the limitations in performing a meaningful in-depth cost-benefit analysis but recommended that LEAA develop a "white paper" to serve as the first phase of such an analysis.

A cost-benefit analysis, an LEAA official told us, would be inappropriate because of the many intangible benefits to be derived from the system. We believe, however, that sound financial management of a project of this magnitude requires at least an estimate of the costs of the project. Otherwise neither the sponsoring Federal agencies nor the Congress can determine whether they will be able or willing to meet the financial requirements of the system. Further, the intent of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, is that State and local governments will assume project costs after a reasonable period of Federal assistance. For this reason it is vital that State and local governments have the information necessary to determine whether they can finance the development and continued operation of the system.

#### NEED FOR IMPROVED REPORTING OF ARREST AND DISPOSITION DATA

A criminal history exchange system is valuable because it provides criminal justice agencies--law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions--with complete, accurate, and timely information on all offenders. Under the NCIC system, criminal justice agencies must report arrests and dispositions within each State to the State's central identification unit which maintains and controls State criminal

records and supplies the data for the national files. According to the Department, only 24 States had laws requiring that criminal justice agencies report arrests and dispositions to a central identification unit.

An August 1969 to July 1970 LEAA survey showed that many arrests and their dispositions were not reported by criminal justice agencies to their State identification units, as shown below:

<u>Transaction</u>	Number of States by percent of completeness of arrest and disposition reporting to State identification units (note a)		
	<u>More than 90 percent</u>	<u>65 to 90 percent</u>	<u>Less than 65 percent</u>
Arrests	11	20	18
Dispositions	7	11	31

<sup>a</sup>One State did not provide information on arrests; another State did not provide information on dispositions.

Only four States had achieved more than 90-percent reporting for both arrests and dispositions which means that, in each of these four States, over 90 percent of the arrests and over 90 percent of the dispositions were reported to a State identification unit. Of the 15 States participating in Project SEARCH at the time our fieldwork was completed, only five had more than 90-percent arrest reporting and only four had more than 90-percent disposition reporting. According to our July and August 1971 survey of the 15 States participating in Project SEARCH, although some improvements had been made, reporting was still incomplete.

Until such reporting is improved, the exchange system cannot be fully effective. System users must be certain that they are aware of all of an offender's prior arrests and their dispositions. Otherwise, the users may face time-consuming investigations to determine whether all prior arrests have been reported and the outcome of arrests reported.

An LEAA official agreed that the system would not be fully effective if reporting was incomplete. He told us, however, that the system should be put into operation and

that arrest and disposition reporting problems could be worked out later. He said that the Project SEARCH group had developed a model State act which, if adopted by individual State legislatures, would improve reporting in those States.

An NCIC official made essentially the same comments. He said that, when the criminal history exchange system was in full operation, NCIC would be able to provide participating States with periodic lists showing reported arrests for which disposition data was missing. These lists would make the States aware of deficiencies in disposition reporting and would encourage improvements.

To put a system into operation without first insuring that the information it will process is complete will result in a system that maintains and provides incomplete data to system users. The value of the system to law enforcement or court officials will be diminished if they cannot rely on the completeness of the record they are using. When decisions are being made to set bail, impose sentence, or grant parole, the offender's record should present an accurate and complete history of arrests and dispositions.

The model State legislation formulated by the Project SEARCH group is a step in the right direction. The model act, however, deals primarily with security and privacy. Although it may enhance State efficiency in maintaining offender records, it does not specifically address the problem of arrest and disposition reporting.

Our survey and that of LEAA show that the States are well aware of their reporting problems. An NCIC list would aid the States in improving the completeness of records, but it is no solution because it will not insure that the file is accurate or complete at all times and will have no effect on preventing the dissemination of information on an arrest for which a disposition has not been obtained. The failure to restrict dissemination of data on an arrest for which a disposition has not been obtained is a serious system deficiency because it permits dissemination of arrest information without showing whether a person was convicted or found innocent. According to the Department, NCIC did not have procedures to remove an arrest entry which was not followed by a related disposition entry. The Department recognized that restricting the dissemination of such data may be required by future legislation or other mandate but said that NCIC had no definite plans along this line.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The computerized criminal history exchange system may provide intangible benefits which would make a cost-benefit analysis difficult. We believe, however, that sound financial management of a project of this magnitude requires at least an estimate of total project costs. Otherwise the participants cannot determine whether they will be able or willing to meet the financial requirements of developing and operating the system.

The incompleteness of arrest and disposition reporting is also a system deficiency. Until all criminal justice agencies are providing the required data on arrests and their dispositions, system users will have no assurance that the criminal history data they receive is complete or accurate.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

We recommend that, before authorizing any substantial additional expenditures for the system, the Attorney General require that:

- Either the FBI or LEAA determine the total cost of developing and operating the criminal history exchange system so that the participants can decide whether they are able, or willing, to meet the system's financial requirements.
- The FBI and LEAA implement a program for improving the reporting of arrests and dispositions by law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions to State agencies which enter such data into the national system.

### AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO EVALUATION

The Department of Justice agreed with GAO's recommendations and said that it was taking action to accomplish their objectives. (See app. I.) According to the Department:

- LEAA has started a program which requires each State to submit a comprehensive data system plan to LEAA as a prerequisite to LEAA funding of data systems under the program. The States are required to estimate in the plan the total cost of their criminal history systems plus the required incremental cost to be supported by the Federal Government.
- LEAA, under its comprehensive data system program, will not fund data systems in States which do not require mandatory reporting when the States' systems become operational.
- The FBI is continuing to encourage prompt and complete reporting of arrest and disposition data by law enforcement agencies.
- The Attorney General, on July 18, 1972, proposed legislation that would place the burden upon the agencies submitting criminal record information to insure accurate, complete, and current information. Present law does not require the States or other governmental entities to report arrest and disposition data.

The Department's actions, if effectively implemented, should provide cost data and should improve arrest and disposition reporting.

It is questionable, however, whether the comprehensive data systems plans will provide an estimate of the total funding that will be required to make the criminal history exchange system fully operational or whether the program will insure accurate, complete, and current reporting. A State may decide not to participate in the comprehensive data systems program and still participate in the criminal history exchange system. As of October 1972 only about half the States had submitted comprehensive data systems plans to LEAA. Although these plans contained cost estimates of State participation in the comprehensive data systems program, they did not contain cost analyses to show what costs would be required for the State to develop its State criminal history exchange system.



Although arrest and disposition reporting should improve as a result of LEAA and FBI actions, the comprehensive data systems program requires only that the States insure that mandatory reporting will be accomplished by the time the States' systems become operational. States therefore can avoid or postpone mandatory reporting by not participating in the comprehensive data systems program or by delaying participation.



Address Reply to the  
Division Indicated  
and Refer to Initials and Number

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

October 24, 1972

Mr. Max A. Neuwirth  
Associate Director  
General Government Division  
United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Neuwirth:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the draft report titled "Development of a Criminal History Exchange System--Need to Determine Cost and Improve Reporting."

We consider the recommendations of the report to be appropriate and well founded. However, both recommendations were overtaken by time, and action has been taken to accomplish the objectives which the report appropriately recommends.

With respect to the recommendation that we determine the total cost of the criminal history exchange system, the substance of the report is based primarily on the work accomplished in developing the Computerized Criminal History System under Project SEARCH (System for Electronic Analysis and Retrieval of Criminal Histories). Since the time the major portion of the work under Project SEARCH was conducted and reported on, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) has embarked upon the Comprehensive Data Systems (CDS) Program. This program, which contains five parts, incorporates the provision for funding the Computerized Criminal History System, or the Offender Based Transaction Statistics/Computerized Criminal History System (OBTS/CCH) as it is referred to in the CDS Program. In the CDS Program, LEAA is requiring each State to submit a CDS Plan. In this plan, the States are required to estimate their total cost plus the required incremental cost to be supported by the Federal government for each of the five segments. As a result, the 50 CDS Plans will, in the aggregate, provide an estimate of the total dollar amount that will be required for making the OBTS/CCH

## APPENDIX I

System operational throughout the United States. These intrastate systems will interface with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center/Computerized Criminal History (NCIC/CCH) System.

To assure that a State is in a position to meet its funding commitment, we are also asking the Governor, or at the very least the Director of the State Planning Agency, to be the person responsible for approval of the CDS Plan. This approval includes the acceptance of long-range funding by the State. Thus the Governor or his direct representative indicates his awareness of the commitment of the State for continuation of the program. This commitment includes funding not only for the OBTS/CCH System but also for the other four parts of the CDS Program.

With respect to determining the cost to make the criminal history exchange system operational, we consider it important to stress the fact that the exchange of criminal histories does not require the development of a separate "system" independent of other essential criminal justice functions as the report seems to infer. The FBI's computerized National Crime Information Center (NCIC), operational since 1967 in the exchange of information concerning wanted persons and stolen property with other law enforcement agencies, already provides a dedicated communications network extending to all 50 States, the District of Columbia and Canada. In addition, computerized systems servicing criminal justice agencies already exist today, funded in whole or in part by the States. These systems have been developed to handle, among other things, the exchange of criminal history data. There are 29 operational computerized State systems already tied directly to NCIC. These systems currently afford immediate NCIC access to approximately 6,000 local agencies having terminal devices in intrastate communications networks.

With respect to the second recommendation, which concerns the implementation of a program for improving the reporting of arrests and dispositions by law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional institutions, Title 28, United States Code, Section 534, contains no provisions mandating a State or other governmental entity to report arrest and disposition data. However, under date of July 18, 1972, the Attorney General forwarded to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, United States Congress, a legislative proposal to amend Title 28, Section 534, United States Code and provide for the dissemination and use of criminal history information and

for other purposes. An important provision of the proposed legislation is that it will place a burden upon the agencies submitting criminal record information to insure that the information is accurate, complete and current.

Without the sanction of law, however, the FBI and LEAA are making every effort to improve the reporting of arrest and disposition data. LEAA's CDS Program requires participating States to develop a comprehensive system with mandatory reporting and rigid quality control standards. Additionally, detailed guidelines have been developed to assist States in the preparation of grant applications for the OBTS/CCH System. In essence, the guidelines provide that for a State to be funded, it must have legislation on the books which requires reporting of judicial and corrections dispositions into the OBTS/CCH System. If the State does not have the wherewithal to fulfill this requirement, in other words, legislation actually on the books, there must be a very high probability that such legislation or an executive order will be in effect by the time the systems development efforts are completed and the system becomes operational. If this is not the case, it is not LEAA's intent to fund either the CDS Program or the OBTS/CCH System. Furthermore, no State will be funded which does not assure the collection of data from every agency at each level of the criminal justice system.

The report suggests that no efforts have been made to increase participation by fingerprint contributors in the reporting of data. On the contrary, the FBI, through their Identification Division and Uniform Crime Reporting Statistical Program, has always urged the prompt and complete submission of such data. Letters dated as recently as June 2, 1971, July 22, 1971, and November 9, 1971, solicited the cooperation of all law enforcement agencies which submit fingerprint cards to the FBI to follow the submission of each arrest card with the reporting of a final disposition. The July 22, 1971 letter also forwarded a revised form for use by the contributors in reporting final dispositions. The November 9, 1971 letter furnished to contributing agencies a redesigned fingerprint card with instructions as to how to handle same so that the Computerized Criminal History Program could be more readily implemented. The instructions emphasized that all information on the revised fingerprint card was essential including the listing of final dispositions.

## APPENDIX I

In connection with the FBI's continuing efforts to encourage the reporting of arrest and disposition data, they have worked closely with and assisted in the passage of resolutions which were adopted in the past year by the National District Attorney's Association, the National Association of Attorneys General and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Each of these resolutions was aimed at stressing the need for prompt and complete reporting of arrest and disposition data. At a national meeting on August 2, 1972, of the International Association for Identification at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a resolution was passed encouraging support of enactment of State legislation to mandate the reporting of final disposition data applicable to each arrest to the central file at the State or national level to which the arrest fingerprint card was submitted. Some 24 States now have statutes which provide for the reporting of criminal identification information.

Also, in the numerous schools held for law enforcement personnel in the Washington, D. C. area and throughout the United States in which the FBI's Identification Division function is discussed, the administrators and officers in attendance are told of the absolute necessity for a prompt and complete reporting of all arrest and disposition data.

The body of the draft report contains two statements concerning the FBI's NCIC which are incorrect.

[See GAO note.]

The second inaccuracy [See GAO note.] wherein an NCIC official is quoted as stating if an arrest recorded in the (computerized) system is not followed by a related disposition entry within 9 months, the arrest entry will be removed. This is not a procedure utilized in the NCIC

GAO note: Material deleted referred to matters or page numbers in the draft report which have been revised.

Computerized Criminal History Program. There is a possibility that restricting the dissemination of such data may be required by future legislation or other mandate; however, no definite plans by NCIC along this line exist at this time.

We appreciate your providing us the opportunity to furnish comments on the draft report. As requested, one copy of the report is being returned with this response.

Sincerely,



L. M. Pellerzi  
Assistant Attorney General  
for Administration

Enclosure

APPENDIX II

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE  
 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSIBLE  
 FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ACTIVITIES  
 DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

	Tenure of office	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
ATTORNEY GENERAL:		
Richard G. Kleindienst	June 1972	Present
Richard G. Kleindienst (acting)	Mar. 1972	June 1972
John N. Mitchell	Jan. 1969	Feb. 1972
Ramsey Clark	Mar. 1967	Jan. 1969
Ramsey Clark (acting)	Oct. 1966	Mar. 1967
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION:		
L. Patrick Gray (acting)	May 1972	Present
J. Edgar Hoover	May 1924	May 1972
ADMINISTRATOR, LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION:		
Jerris Leonard	May 1971	Present
Vacant	June 1970	May 1971
Charles H. Rogovin	Mar. 1969	June 1970
Patrick V. Murphy (acting)	Oct. 1968	Mar. 1969

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