



STATISTICAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK GUIDE

A STRATEGIC GUIDE FOR STATE AND LOCAL CORRECTIONAL DATA LEADERS

IDEA ANALYTICS -DTAC Series

© VERSION 2, UPDATED OCTOBER 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
SECTION 1: FEDERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	6
1.1 BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS (BJS) DATA COLLECTIONS	6
1.2 PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) REPORTING	8
1.3 DEATH IN CUSTODY REPORTING ACT (DICRA)	8
1.4 FIRST STEP ACT REPORTING (FEDERAL REFERENCE)	9
SECTION 2: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS REPORTING	10
2.1 DAILY/MONTHLY POPULATION COUNTS	10
2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES	10
2.3 ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES	11
2.4 SENTENCE AND TIME SERVED ANALYSIS	11
SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING	12
3.1 SECURITY AND SAFETY METRICS	12
3.2 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY METRICS	12
3.3 RECIDIVISM MEASUREMENT	12
SECTION 4: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REPORTING	14
4.1 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	14
4.2 VOCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS	14
4.3 TREATMENT PROGRAMS	14
4.4 MEDICAL SERVICES	15
SECTION 5: SPECIALIZED REPORTING TOPICS	16
5.1 USE OF FORCE REPORTING	16
5.2 REENTRY AND TRANSITION REPORTING	16
5.3 SPECIAL POPULATION TRACKING	17
SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE	18
6.1 DATA INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS	18
6.2 DATA COLLECTION BEST PRACTICES	18
6.3 REPORTING FREQUENCY RECOMMENDATIONS	19
6.4 CROSS-AGENCY DATA SHARING	19
6.5 STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS	20

SECTION 7: SELF-ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

21

7.1 FEDERAL COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

22

7.2 STATE REPORTING CHECKLIST

23

CONCLUSION

24

APPENDIX A: STATE REPORTING RESOURCES

25

APPENDIX B: FEDERAL REPORTING RESOURCES

26

Suggested Citation

Herbert, J. (2025). *Statistical Reporting Framework Guide: A Strategic Guide for State and Local Correctional Data Leaders*. Version 2. IDEA Analytics, Phoenix, AZ. ISBN: 979-8-9936123-4-8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State correctional agencies face increasing demands for comprehensive, accurate, and timely statistical reporting. Federal mandates, legislative oversight requirements, operational decision-making needs, and public transparency expectations all converge to create complex reporting obligations for leadership and their teams.

This guide provides a strategic framework for leadership, analysts, and technical staff in roles managing data governance, reporting, and research (e.g., CIO, CTO, CDO, Research Directors). This guide is designed to evaluate, develop, and enhance your agency's statistical reporting capabilities for baseline statistics (e.g., administrative and operations data) and special interest topics (e.g., recidivism, mental health, use of force). Sections within this guide address mandatory federal reporting requirements, operational reporting needs, specialized topic areas, and implementation considerations.

Purpose of this Guide

This document is designed to help correctional leaders and data staff accomplish three primary objectives:

1. **Assess Need:** Determine whether specific reports are required for your agency based on federal mandates, state legislation, or operational necessity
2. **Evaluate Quality:** Benchmark existing reports against established standards and best practices from peer agencies
3. **Identify Improvements:** Recognize opportunities to enhance reporting through methodology refinement, expanded metrics, or improved data integration

The guide organizes reporting requirements into logical categories, provides context on federal compliance obligations, and offers practical implementation guidance drawn from leading state practices.

SECTION 1: FEDERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Federal reporting requirements represent the highest priority for correctional leadership. Compliance with these mandates is typically tied to federal funding, accreditation, and legal obligations. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) maintains over 30 corrections-related data collections, most of which are annual collections of administrative data from correctional administrators.

1.1 BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS (BJS) DATA COLLECTIONS

The BJS serves as the primary federal statistical agency for criminal justice data. State correctional agencies are expected to participate in multiple BJS data collection programs.

NATIONAL PRISONER STATISTICS (NPS) PROGRAM

Requirement Level: Mandatory participation expected

Frequency: Semi-annual (year-end and mid-year counts)

Description: Produces national and state-level data on the number of prisoners in state and federal prison facilities. Aggregate data collected includes race and sex of incarcerated persons, incarcerated persons held in private facilities and local jails, system capacity, noncitizens, and persons aged 17 or younger.

Key Data Elements:

- Total jurisdiction and custody population counts
- Admissions and releases during reporting period
- Demographics: sex, race, and ethnicity
- Facility capacity measures (design, operational, rated)
- Private facility and local jail populations

NATIONAL CORRECTIONS REPORTING PROGRAM (NCRP)

Requirement Level: Strongly encouraged; at least 47 states participate (as of 2025)

Frequency: Annual

Description: Collects offender-level administrative data on prison admissions and releases, year-end custody populations, and parole entries and discharges. This is the most comprehensive individual-level data collection for state corrections.

Key Data Elements:

- Offender characteristics: ID, date of birth, race, sex, education, veteran status
- Sentence characteristics: county of conviction, offenses, sentence length
- Date and type of admission to prison

- Date and type of release
- Time served and prior jail or prison time

CENSUS OF STATE AND FEDERAL ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Requirement Level: Mandatory participation

Frequency: Every 5-7 years

Description: Collects facility-level data on operations and conditions of confinement from approximately 1,670 state and federal adult correctional facilities.

Key Data Elements:

- Facility capacity and crowding levels
- Safety and security measures
- Staff workload and employment data
- Programming and work assignments
- Special housing units and court orders

ANNUAL PROBATION SURVEY AND ANNUAL PAROLE SURVEY

Requirement Level: Mandatory for community supervision agencies

Frequency: Annual

Description: Collects administrative data on offenders under community supervision. These surveys provide national and state-level data on probation and parole populations.

1.2 PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) REPORTING

Requirement Level: Mandatory under federal law (P.L. 108-79)

Frequency: Annual with ongoing incident tracking

PREA, enacted in 2003, requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics to carry out a comprehensive statistical review and analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape for each calendar year. States must maintain zero-tolerance policies and submit to regular audits.

Key Requirements:

- Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV) participation - administrative data on allegations and substantiated incidents
- National Inmate Survey participation (when selected)
- Facilities must be audited once every three-year audit cycle
- One-third of each facility type must be audited annually
- Annual Governor's certification or assurance submission

Data Elements to Track:

- Allegations received by type (incarcerated person-on-incarcerated person, staff-on-incarcerated person)
- Investigation outcomes (substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded)
- Staff discipline actions and criminal referrals
- Training completion rates

1.3 DEATH IN CUSTODY REPORTING ACT (DICRA)

Requirement Level: Mandatory under federal law (P.L. 113-242)

Frequency: Quarterly

The reauthorized DICRA (2014) requires reporting of deaths in custody to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). State departments of corrections must report quarterly to centralized state agencies, who compile and submit to BJA.

Required Data Elements:

- Individual-level data on each death
- Year and date of death
- Cause of death
- Decedent demographics (age, race/ethnicity, sex)
- Facility and population mortality rates

1.4 FIRST STEP ACT REPORTING (FEDERAL REFERENCE)

Applicability: Primarily federal; provides model for state best practices

While the First Step Act of 2018 applies primarily to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, it establishes reporting frameworks that state agencies may adopt as best practices, particularly for risk and needs assessment systems and rehabilitative programming.

Key Elements States May Consider:

- Risk and needs assessment tool implementation and validation reporting
- Evidence-based program participation tracking
- Earned time credit accumulation and application
- Recidivism outcome tracking by program participation
- Facility-level statistics on assaults, rule violations, accreditation

SECTION 2: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS REPORTING

Accurate population and demographic reporting forms the foundation of all correctional statistical work. These reports support capacity planning, budget justification, policy analysis, and compliance with federal data collections.

2.1 DAILY/MONTHLY POPULATION COUNTS

Purpose: Track real-time and periodic population changes to support operational decisions, capacity management, and trend analysis.

Standard Elements:

- Total population by custody level (minimum, medium, maximum, close)
- Population by facility type (prison, state jail, transitional centers)
- Population by legal status (sentenced, unsentenced, hold status)
- Average daily population (ADP) calculations
- Capacity utilization percentages

Best Practice Example: The Texas Department of Criminal Justice produces comprehensive quarterly population reports tracking over 600,000 cases under supervision, including both incarcerated and community supervision populations.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Purpose: Characterize the incarcerated population to inform programming, policy analysis, and federal reporting requirements.

Standard Elements:

- Gender distribution
- Age distribution and average age
- Race and ethnicity
- Citizenship status (for federal reporting)
- Veteran status and education level at admission

2.3 ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES

Purpose: Track movement in and out of the correctional system to understand flow patterns, forecast populations, and measure system throughput.

Standard Elements:

- New commitments from court
- Parole/probation revocations (technical vs. new offense)
- Returns from escape/warrant status
- Releases by type (discharge, parole, mandatory supervision)
- Deaths, transfers, and other departures

Analysis Dimensions: By county/jurisdiction of conviction, by offense category, by demographic characteristics, by sentence length

2.4 SENTENCE AND TIME SERVED ANALYSIS

Purpose: Analyze sentencing patterns and actual time served to inform policy discussions, population projections, and equity analyses.

Standard Elements:

- Sentence length distributions by offense type
- Actual time served compared to sentence length
- Good time/earned time credit application
- Life sentence population tracking
- Parole eligibility and projected release dates

SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING

Performance measurement is critical to improving government operations and providing accountability to the public and legislators. Corrections agencies should establish metrics across three major activity goals: security, humane treatment of prisoners, and post-release success.

3.1 SECURITY AND SAFETY METRICS

Purpose: Measure the agency's effectiveness in maintaining secure facilities and protecting staff, incarcerated persons, and the public.

Key Metrics:

- Escape frequency and rates
- Assault rates (incarcerated person-on-incarcerated person, incarcerated person-on-staff)
- Major disturbance incidents
- Contraband interdiction rates
- Use of force incidents by type
- Disciplinary infraction rates

3.2 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY METRICS

Purpose: Assess resource utilization and operational effectiveness to support budget justification and process improvement.

Key Metrics:

- Per capita cost of incarceration
- Staff-to-incarcerated person ratios
- Vacancy rates by position type
- Staff turnover rates
- Overtime utilization and capacity utilization rates

3.3 RECIDIVISM MEASUREMENT

Recidivism is the most used definition of correctional success. However, a single statewide rate is too imprecise for meaningful conclusions. Analytical leadership and staff should develop a portfolio of recidivism measures.

Recommended Measurement Framework:

1. **Multiple Definitions:** Track rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration separately
2. **Multiple Time Frames:** Report 1-year, 2-year, 3-year, and longer follow-up periods

3. **Disaggregation:** Break down by offense type, demographic characteristics, release type, and program participation
4. **Risk Adjustment:** Account for changes in the released population's risk profile over time
5. **Progression Measures:** Track time to failure and offense severity changes

Best Practice Example: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections reports on rearrest and reincarceration rates broken down by sentencing offense, geographic location, demographic attributes, prior criminal history, and release type. They also study recidivism-related issues such as crime specialization.

SECTION 4: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REPORTING

Tracking program participation and outcomes is essential for demonstrating rehabilitative mission fulfillment and making evidence-based resource allocation decisions.

4.1 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Context: Research shows that incarcerated persons who participate in correctional education programs have 43% lower odds of recidivating than those who do not. For every dollar spent on prison education, four to five dollars may be saved on three-year reincarceration costs.

Metrics to Track:

- Enrollment by program type (literacy, GED, postsecondary)
- Completion rates and credentials earned
- Educational gain measurements (TABE scores)
- Wait list and access metrics
- Post-release educational continuation

4.2 VOCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Metrics to Track:

- Vocational program enrollment and completion
- Industry certifications obtained
- Prison industry participation rates
- Work assignment hours and earnings
- Post-release employment rates (where data available)

4.3 TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Substance Abuse Treatment:

- Assessed need vs. treatment received
- Program completion rates by treatment type
- Therapeutic community participation
- Medication-assisted treatment access

Mental Health Services:

- Mental health screening and classification
- Caseload sizes by mental health level
- Crisis intervention utilization
- Psychiatric services access

4.4 MEDICAL SERVICES

Metrics to Track:

- Chronic disease prevalence and management
- Sick call volume and response times
- Emergency medical transports
- Specialty care referrals and wait times
- Pregnancy and maternal health data
- Infectious disease screening and management

SECTION 5: SPECIALIZED REPORTING TOPICS

5.1 USE OF FORCE REPORTING

Use of force reporting is critical for legal compliance, risk management, training assessment, and public accountability. The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, making accurate documentation essential.

Required Documentation Elements:

- Incident date, time, and location
- Type of force used (continuum level)
- Reason for force application
- Involved staff and incarcerated persons
- Injuries sustained and medical treatment
- Video documentation status
- Administrative review outcomes

Reporting Best Practices:

- Standardized reporting forms across all facilities
- Multi-level administrative review process
- Centralized database for trend analysis
- Regular reporting to agency leadership
- Independent oversight review (where applicable)

5.2 REENTRY AND TRANSITION REPORTING

States must look beyond recidivism to measure re-entry success. Tracking broader outcome categories requires coordination among corrections, education, healthcare, housing, and workforce systems.

Recommended Outcome Categories:

1. **Employment and Financial Stability:** Post-release employment rates, wage levels, and job retention
2. **Housing Security:** Housing placement at release, stability over time
3. **Health and Well-being:** Healthcare enrollment, treatment continuity
4. **Social Reintegration:** Family reunification, community connections
5. **Supervision Compliance:** Technical violation rates, successful discharge rates

5.3 SPECIAL POPULATION TRACKING

These categories vary by state and/or legislative requirement. These may be filters, or selected variables, for all other individual-level reporting v. stand-alone reporting. For example, there is often a need-to-know sentencing and programming information for persons 55+, veterans, or with mental health diagnoses. Rather than creating a separate report or stagnant chart, these categories may be specific views or filters on interactive reports.

Populations Requiring Specialized Reporting:

- Aging incarcerated persons (55+ years)
- Incarcerated persons with serious mental illness
- Sex offenders
- Pregnant and postpartum women
- Veterans
- Non-citizens/immigration holds
- Death row populations
- Protective custody populations

SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

6.1 DATA INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

For all reports in prior sections to be possible, these requirements *must be true for data governance* practices within an agency/department.

Foundational Elements:

- **Unique Identifiers:** Each individual should have a unique identifier that allows data linkage across systems (even when different systems are used, e.g., sentencing data v. medical records)
- **Standardized Definitions:** Establish consistent definitions for key terms (admission types, release types, offense categories)
- **Data Validation:** Implement quality checks and validation rules at data entry points, additional validation at data governance level with audit reports to responsible business entity
- **Historical Records:** Maintain longitudinal records for trend analysis and recidivism tracking

6.2 DATA COLLECTION BEST PRACTICES

Key Principles:

1. **Collect at the Source:** Capture data at the point of origin (intake, classification, program completion)
2. **Minimize Manual Entry:** Automate data flows between systems where possible
3. **Document Processes:** Maintain data dictionaries and collection procedures
4. **Train Staff:** Ensure front-line staff understand data entry requirements and importance
5. **Audit Regularly:** Conduct periodic data quality reviews

6.3 REPORTING FREQUENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Type	Frequency	Notes
Population Counts	Daily/Monthly	Operational planning
BJS NPS	Semi-Annual	Federal requirement
BJS NCRP	Annual	Federal requirement
PREA SSV	Annual	Federal requirement
DICRA Mortality	Quarterly	Federal requirement
Demographic Profiles	Quarterly/Annual	Internal and external use
Recidivism Studies	Annual	Multi-year cohorts
Program Participation	Monthly/Quarterly	Operational use
Use of Force	Monthly	Internal review
Staffing Analysis	Quarterly	Budget and operations

6.4 CROSS-AGENCY DATA SHARING

Comprehensive reporting often requires data from multiple agencies. Successful cross-system data sharing requires:

- Formal data sharing agreements with legal review
- Clear governance structures and data ownership definitions
- Matching algorithms using common identifiers (State ID, FBI number)
- Security protocols for sensitive data transmission
- Regular reconciliation processes

Key Partner Agencies: Courts (sentencing data), Law enforcement (arrest records), Parole/probation (supervision outcomes), Vital records (death data), Workforce agencies (employment data)

6.5 STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

Core Research Unit Functions:

- Federal reporting compliance coordination
- Population forecasting and analysis
- Recidivism studies
- Program evaluation
- Data quality management
- Legislative and external data requests
- Dashboard and visualization development

Skill Requirements: Statistical analysis (quantitative methods, software proficiency), Database management (SQL, data extraction), Corrections domain knowledge, Report writing and data visualization, Project management

SECTION 7: SELF-ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This self-assessment is designed for initial discovery phase for analytical teams that are concerned about reporting procedures (e.g., compliance, efficiency, direct needs). This should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Use the following framework to assess your agency's current reporting capabilities and identify areas for improvement.

Compliant?

Do we produce this report? Yes or no

If not, is it required or would it add value?

Data Quality

For each reporting area, consider the following questions:

1. **Is this a single report, produced by a single entity?** If yes, you may be higher in quality. If no – either because there are several reports or variations produced by different staff – then you may be lower in quality due to difference in analytical plans/methods.
2. **Is the report timely?** Can we produce it faster? What are the bottlenecks?
3. **Is the data accurate?** What validation processes exist? When was quality last audited?
4. **Is the report actionable?** Do stakeholders use it for decision-making?
5. **How does it compare to peers?** Are we tracking metrics that leading states track?
6. **Is production sustainable?** Is it automated or manual? What happens if key staff leave?

If you do not have clarity around specific, named reports produced by your unit/division at regular periods for this information, you have low data quality controls and outputs. The more variation in an organization, the higher likelihood of alternative analytical plans and methods, release of information without protocols, or lower confidence in decision making with data.

Improvements

High Priority (Immediate Action):

- Federal reporting requirements not currently being met
- Reports required by state legislation
- Data quality issues in existing mandatory reports

Medium Priority (Near-Term):

- Reports requested by agency leadership for decision-making
- Expansion of existing reports with additional breakdowns

- Automation of manual reporting processes

Lower Priority (Longer-Term):

- Advanced analytics and predictive modelling
- New cross-agency data sharing initiatives
- Public-facing data dashboards

7.1 FEDERAL COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Requirement	Compliant?	Data Quality	Improvement Ideas
NPS Program	Yes / No	H / M / L	
NCRP (all parts)	Yes / No	H / M / L	
Census of Facilities	Yes / No	H / M / L	
Probation Survey	Yes / No	H / M / L	
Parole Survey	Yes / No	H / M / L	
PREA SSV	Yes / No	H / M / L	
PREA Audits	Yes / No	H / M / L	
DICRA Reporting	Yes / No	H / M / L	

7.2 STATE REPORTING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to assess your agency's reporting capabilities across all major reporting areas covered in Sections 2-5. Rate each area on whether you produce the report, data quality (High/Medium/Low), and identify needed improvements.

Reporting Area	Produced?	Data Quality	Improvement Ideas
SECTION 2: Population & Demographics			
2.1 Daily/Monthly Population Counts	Yes / No	H / M / L	
2.2 Demographic Profiles	Yes / No	H / M / L	
2.3 Admissions and Releases	Yes / No	H / M / L	
2.4 Sentence and Time Served Analysis	Yes / No	H / M / L	
SECTION 3: Performance Management			
3.1 Security and Safety Metrics	Yes / No	H / M / L	
3.2 Operational Efficiency Metrics	Yes / No	H / M / L	
3.3 Recidivism Measurement	Yes / No	H / M / L	
SECTION 4: Programs & Services			
4.1 Educational Programs	Yes / No	H / M / L	
4.2 Vocational & Employment Programs	Yes / No	H / M / L	
4.3 Treatment Programs (SA & MH)	Yes / No	H / M / L	
4.4 Medical Services	Yes / No	H / M / L	
SECTION 5: Specialized Topics			
5.1 Use of Force Reporting	Yes / No	H / M / L	
5.2 Re-entry and Transition Reporting	Yes / No	H / M / L	
5.3 Special Population Tracking	Yes / No	H / M / L	

CONCLUSION

Statistical reporting in corrections has evolved from basic population counts to comprehensive performance management systems. Correctional agencies face the challenge of meeting mandatory federal requirements while also producing actionable information for agency leadership, legislators, and the public.

Success requires attention to three domains: compliance (meeting federal and state mandates), quality (ensuring accuracy and timeliness), and utility (producing information that drives decisions). By systematically assessing capabilities against the framework presented in this guide, your research and data divisions can identify gaps, prioritize improvements, and build reporting systems that serve all stakeholders.

Key takeaways include:

- Federal reporting requirements (BJS, PREA, DICRA) must be the foundation of any reporting program
- Recidivism should be measured using multiple definitions, time frames, and population breakdowns
- Program reporting should connect participation to outcomes
- Data infrastructure and quality are prerequisites for meaningful reporting
- Cross-agency data sharing expands analytical capabilities

This guide is intended as a starting point. Correctional agencies should adapt the frameworks presented here to their state's specific statutory requirements, data systems, and stakeholder needs.

APPENDIX A: STATE REPORTING RESOURCES

The following state correctional agencies maintain publicly available statistical reports that can serve as reference models:

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

- Annual Statistical Report - comprehensive demographic and population data
- Data Manual for Community Supervision and Corrections Departments

Illinois Department of Corrections

- Annual Reports with programmatic and operational detail
- Quarterly population data sets publicly available

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

- Outcome Evaluation Reports
- Prison Program participation and outcomes research

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

- Comprehensive recidivism reports with multiple metrics
- Analysis by multiple dimensions including geography and demographics

APPENDIX B: FEDERAL REPORTING RESOURCES

Bureau of Justice Statistics

- Website: bjs.ojp.gov
- Data collection forms and instructions
- Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT)

Bureau of Justice Assistance

- Website: bja.ojp.gov
- PREA audit resources and standards
- Death in Custody Reporting Program guidance
- National Training and Technical Assistance Center

National Institute of Corrections

- Website: nicic.gov
- Technical assistance resources
- Training and best practices

Council of State Governments Justice Center

- Website: csg.org
- 50-State Public Safety report resources
- Advancing Data in Corrections initiative

About IDEA Analytics

IDEA Analytics provides digital transformation consulting services to government agencies, with specialized expertise in criminal justice data systems, performance measurement, and organizational change management.

For questions regarding this guide or consulting services, please [contact us](#) or learn more at analyticsbyidea.com

2025 IDEA Analytics. All Rights Reserved.