STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

BUREAU OF JUSTICE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Wisconsin Department of Justice
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Statistical Analysis Center
WIBRS Agency Certification Process

Background

This document outlines a simple 6-step process for Wisconsin law enforcement agencies to certify for Incident-Based Reporting in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. These steps are: letter of interest, pre-testing, data submission, data validation, error corrections, and certification.

Official certification in Wisconsin allows law enforcement agencies to electronically submit data through the Wisconsin Incident-Based Reporting System (WIBRS). WIBRS in turn provides that data to the FBI in support of the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

These policies are used to certify the quality of data submitted to the state, to the benefit of both reporting agencies and the state. Once official certification is reached, agencies must maintain their high level of data quality in order to remain certified. Agencies that change software vendors are required to go through a recertification process with the new software.

Certification Process

1. **Letter of Interest:** Agency submits a "Request to Test for WIBR Certification," signed by the agency chief or sheriff. This form indicates the agency's interest, understanding of the testing and certification process, and willingness to transition from Summary-Based Reporting (SBR) to Incident-Based Reporting (IBR). If the agency meets minimum requirements, they will be contacted by the DOJ Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to initiate Step 2, Pre-testing.

2. **Pre-Testing:** The SAC works with the agency to determine records management system (RMS) compatibility and statute table accuracy. Some pre-testing elements may be skipped at the discretion of DOJ if an agency is using the same software and servers as other agencies in their county that are already WIBRS certified.

   a. **RMS Compatibility:** The agency must demonstrate that their records management system (RMS) includes an IBR module that can generate WIBRS files. To do this, the agency may be required to submit the following code tables: location types, weapon types, hate/bias indicator, property description, drug type, aggravated assault/homicide circumstances, injury type, relationship type, officer assignment, and officer activity. If errors are found in these code tables, the agency must correct the inaccuracies and resubmit the tables before moving to Step 3.

   b. **Statute Table Accuracy**: The agency must use the SAC's state statue table and may be requested to submit local municipal statutes mapped to the appropriate IBR codes. The SAC will review the accuracy of the mapping and work with the agency to correct any errors before proceeding to Step 3.

3. **Test Data Submission:** Agencies must submit at least three months of IBR data. Agencies will be instructed how to upload test files, and will be given usernames and passwords to upload files to a secure state website. IBR files must be submitted by the 15th of the following month. For example, January's IBR file must be submitted by February 15.

4. **Data Validation:** The SAC conducts data quality checks.

    a. **Automated Testing:** DOJ runs each data file through a series of automated validation checks. This process examines the records for data errors and inconsistencies within the WIBRS/NIBRS program. An error report is produced and will be provided to the agency within 5 business days of the submission. This report lists the errors and error rate (the number of rejected reports over the number of reports sent). Certified agencies are required to maintain an error rate of less than 3%. In addition, there may be other extraneous issues that could delay the acceptance of a file. In these instances, the SAC will assess the significance of the problem and determine on a case-by-case basis whether or not to accept the submission.

    b. **Final Data Quality Checks:** Additional data quality checks are conducted after the agency has submitted three or more months of IBR data.

        i. The SAC conducts a comparison of three months' IBR data to comparable period SBR data from previous year (e.g. Jan.-Mar. 2013 IBR versus Jan.-Mar. 2012 SBR). Values compared include totals and monthly averages for: offenses, arrests, and juvenile arrests.

        ii. The SAC also conducts data reasonableness checks. Data elements reviewed include but are not limited to:

            1. Import log errors generated in processing the agency's IBR test files: To be certified, agencies must be able to submit reports with few errors, and show that they can successfully resolve the errors they receive.

            2. The ratio of aggravated assault offenses to simple assault offenses: Too high or too low a ratio here may indicate offense misclassification. Typically, agencies report aggravated assaults as between 10 and 20 percent of total assaults.

            3. The percentage of incidents with Incident Hour of 00 (midnight): An unusually high percentage may indicate the 00 value is being used as a default or unknown value rather than to indicate midnight.

            4. The percentage of incidents with Report Date Indicator value "R": "R" indicates the incident date is unknown or outside the time window. An unusually high percentage may indicate a problem.

            5. The percentage of juveniles arrested who were reported as 17 years old: Although 17 year olds are classified as adults for Wisconsin statute purposes, they must be reported as juveniles in uniform crime reporting.

            6. The percentage of offenses with victim age, sex, or race unknown.

5. **Error Corrections:** The SAC works with the agency to resolve important reporting issues. The agency may be asked to resubmit particular month(s) of data to show their ability to correct reporting errors.

6. **Certification:** When satisfied with the quality of data received, the SAC certifies the testing agency for IBR reporting. Typically, this happens after receiving three consecutive submissions with an error rate less than 3 percent.

   a. The SAC sends an official certification letter to the testing agency and changes the agency's status to certified.

   b. IBR data from the agency for the current year is processed into the production server.

   c. The SAC deletes out any summary-based data for months covered by incident-based reporting submissions to prevent double reporting of offenses and arrests.

   d. After certification, future submissions from the agency will be processed into the SAC's production server rather than the test server, and will be reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Expectations for Certified Agencies

DOJ must receive monthly data submissions from the agency by the 15th of the following month. That submission should contain all incidents and updates for the prior month. All incidents that were rejected in the prior month should also be included with the current submission. Incidents that do not pass the validation checks and generate errors will not be included in the final database until they are corrected.

Excessive amounts of data entry errors will precipitate communication from DOJ asking about the nature of the problem. Habitual data entry problems may lead to a loss of certification. Failure to correct and resubmit rejected incidents or failure to make timely WIBRS submissions will result in loss of certification status.

Agencies that change software vendors are required to go through a recertification process with the new software. This will require submitting three months of previously un-submitted data with an error rate of less than 3%.

Getting Help

Sometimes an agency may encounter an error in the IBR data that cannot be resolved. You may have a data entry error that the system will not allow you to correct, or a logical error that you are unable to find.

You will need to be able to determine what is causing an error in order to obtain assistance in resolving the problem. If the system is not allowing corrections to an entry error, the agency should contact the software vendor. The vendor should be willing to work with you to resolve software issues.

If there is a software problem but the vendor disagrees, contact DOJ for a final determination about the nature of the error. DOJ will determine how to solve a particular problem and send copies to the agency.

All IBR problems can be avoided more easily than they can be solved. Taking ample time preparing, coding, and reporting your IBR data will be the best use of limited resources. The following numbers can be used when you have problems with your IBR submissions.

(608) 266-7185 Technical Support

(608) 266-0936 General Assistance

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REQUEST TO TEST FOR WIBR CERTIFICATION

_____   _____

Department Name   **Request Date**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please enter the name and contact information for the agency person(s) who will be handling and submitting incident-based reporting (IBR) test submissions.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

DATA SYSTEM INFORMATION

1. Who is your current Records Management System (RMS) provider? _____

2. Is your RMS compatible with WIBRS specifications?   Yes   No

3. Does your department currently share a server with another department?   Yes   No

4. When is the earliest you could submit an IBR file? _____

AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understand the procedures to obtain IBR certification in Wisconsin. Please inform me when we may begin submitting IBR test data to the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

_____
Name of Current Chief/Sheriff (Type or print)

_____
Signature of Chief/Sheriff

_____
Date Signed

Please send this request to:
Wisconsin Department of Justice
BJIA-SAC
17 West Main Street
PO Box 2718
Madison WI 53703-3220
or
Fax: (608) 266-6676