



# Promising Practices for Improved Record Reporting

Many states faced challenges in creating state estimates for the NIAA records report over the three years of data collection. Often, these challenges in estimating were direct results of structural or reporting problems of actual NICS records. This brief presents a strategy that at least one state has implemented to address that problem.

**Estimation Problem**  
Criminal history record data has shown that a significant percentage of arrests involving a felony, domestic violence, and/or drug use charge are missing associated case disposition information.

**Reporting Problem**  
Dispositions fail to be entered into the ACCH because of errors in the disposition reporting

**Strategy**  
Utilize Record Briefs to inform county criminal justice agencies on the completeness of records for arrests made from January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2010.

## County Record Briefs Focused on the Completeness of Criminal History Records for NICS Disqualifying Data

### About this strategy

One of the recommendations from the AZ NICS Task Force to improve the completeness of criminal history records was to provide record data on arrests with missing case disposition to each county. The AZ Statistical Analysis Center created the Record Brief providing data on arrests with missing dispositions for NICS disqualifying offenses. The data allows counties to compare their statistics to the state metrics. The Record Brief has provided a statistical foundation to begin discussions during technical assistance /disposition training visits and serves as a starting benchmark for counties to focus efforts on completion of records.

- **Who it may work for:** Any state looking to improve and have complete data collection.
- **Costs:** Staff time to collect and enter data over a period of time
- **Timeframe for implementing:** Immediately after data entry
- **Lead agency:** Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC)

### Why this strategy makes a difference

The Record Brief highlights the magnitude of the problem of missing criminal history record information in a county and can be used as a baseline against which to measure the impact of efforts to improve the quality of criminal history record information.

## Who's Doing It? Arizona

Arizona received a \$740,000 NARIP grant specifically allocated by ACJC to improve the completeness of disqualifying criminal history data accessed by NICS.

### For more information:

Arizona  
Pat Nelson  
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission  
602-364-1152  
[Pnelson@azcjc.gov](mailto:Pnelson@azcjc.gov)

### Bureau of Justice Statistics

Devon Adams  
202-307-0765  
[Devon.Adams@usdoj.gov](mailto:Devon.Adams@usdoj.gov)  
[www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov)  
More on NICS [here](#)



SEARCH  
The National Consortium for  
Justice Information and Statistics

**NATIONAL INSTANT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM (NICS)  
COMPLETENESS OF ARIZONA COMPUTERIZED CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS  
(For Arrest Dates January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2010)  
SAMPLE COUNTY RECORD BRIEF**

**Description of NICS**

Established in 1998, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) provides firearms licensees across the country access to background check information on individuals who would like to purchase a firearm or explosive. The NICS system is available to many states, a number of U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia for verification or disqualification of firearms and explosives purchasers.

To support the development and administration of a robust national background check system, the Bureau of Justice Statistics administers the NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP) to improve the quality of information accessible to the NICS system. The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) has received approximately \$740,000 in grant funds available through NARIP to improve the quality of Arizona records that feed NICS.

**Goal of Improving Criminal History Records in NICS Categories**

The sole intent of NARIP funds awarded by the ACJC to local criminal justice agencies is to improve the quality and completeness of criminal history record information specifically identified through The Gun Control Act as disqualifying categories for the purchase of firearms or explosives. The NICS Task Force in Arizona has identified the following criminal history records data as disqualifiers available through Arizona Computerized Criminal History (ACCH) records system:

- ❖ Felony offense convictions;
- ❖ Domestic violence-related convictions;
- ❖ Arrests and/or convictions relating to drug use;
- ❖ Convictions resulting from “Guilty but Insane” verdicts.

Criminal history record data has shown that a significant percentage of arrests involving a felony, domestic violence, and/or drug use charge are missing associated case disposition information in the ACCH. In addition, a number of arrest records fail to be entered into the ACCH because of errors in the disposition reporting form. NARIP funds have been specifically allocated by ACJC to improve the completeness of disqualifying criminal history data accessed by NICS.

**ACCH Data Description**

The following data has been compiled using ACCH record information, provided to ACJC from the Arizona Department of Public Safety in January 2012, on arrests made from January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2010. All law enforcement agencies in Arizona are mandated by A.R.S. §41-1750 to submit fingerprints and arrest information for all felony, misdemeanor domestic violence, misdemeanor driving under the influence, and misdemeanor sexual offenses to the ACCH. Despite the fact that misdemeanor drug offenses are not included in the statute requirement, many agencies across the state report these arrest charges to the ACCH. Nonetheless, it remains unclear what percentage of arrests involving a misdemeanor drug offense are reported to the ACCH.

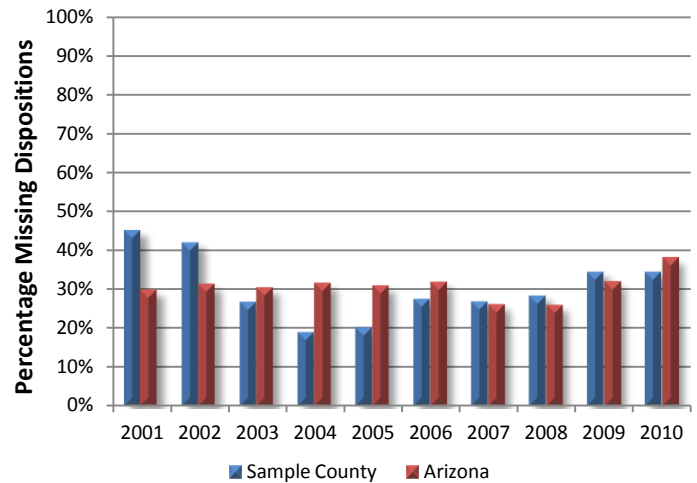
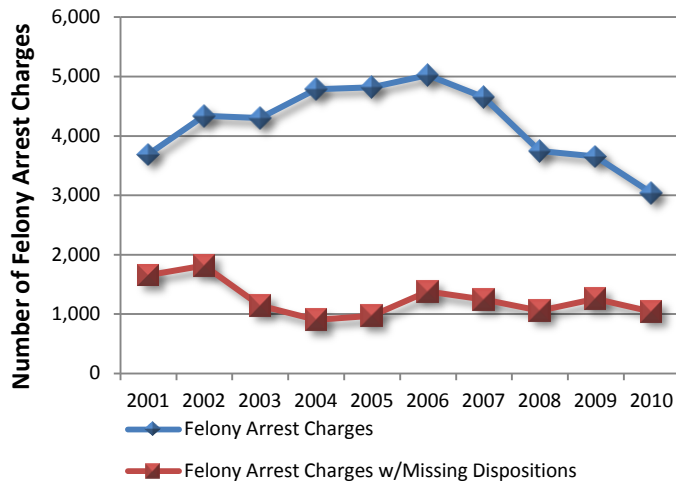
These data are intended to inform conversations at the local, county, and state level about the quality of Arizona’s criminal history records. Because law enforcement, prosecutors, and the courts have a shared responsibility for submitting criminal history record information, these data do not focus on any single criminal justice agency. Instead, these data are intended to highlight the magnitude of the problem of missing criminal history record information in a county and can be used as a baseline against which to measure the impact of efforts to improve the quality of criminal history record information.

**NATIONAL INSTANT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM (NICS)  
COMPLETENESS OF ARIZONA COMPUTERIZED CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS**

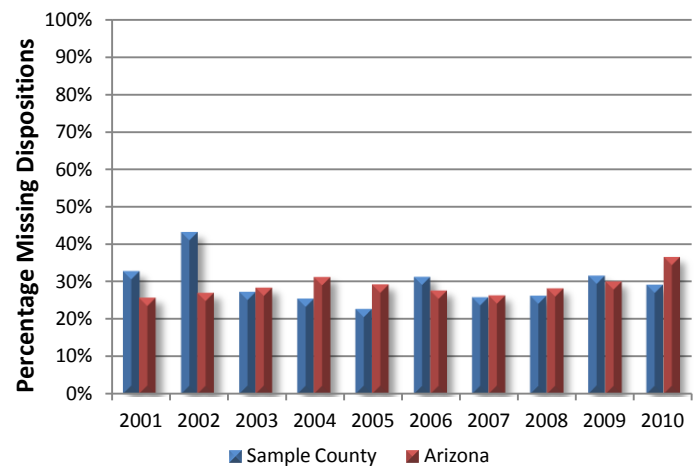
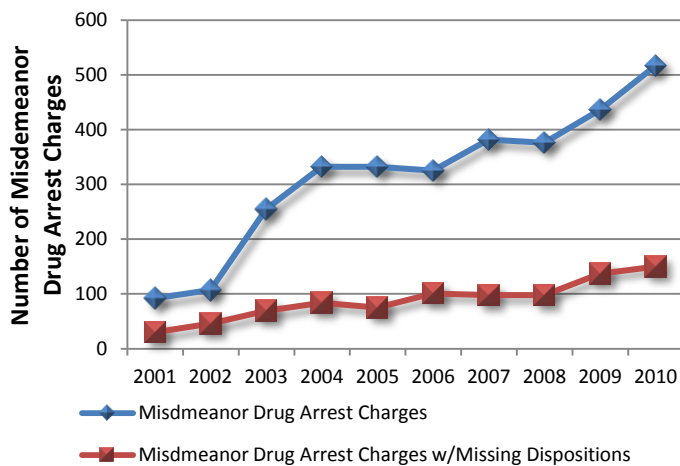
**(For Arrest Dates January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2010)**

**SAMPLE COUNTY RECORD BRIEF**

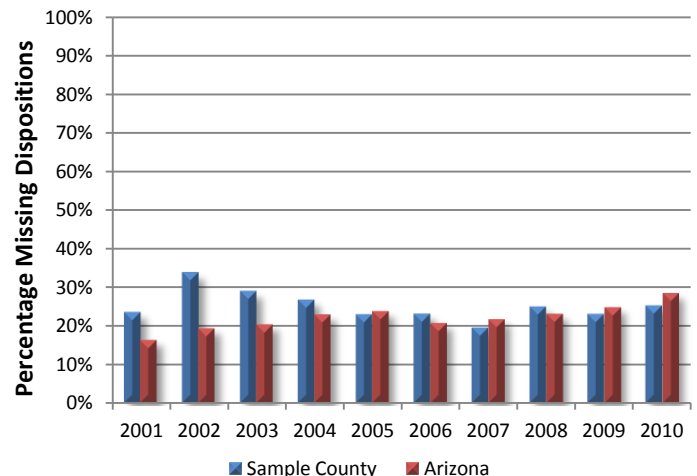
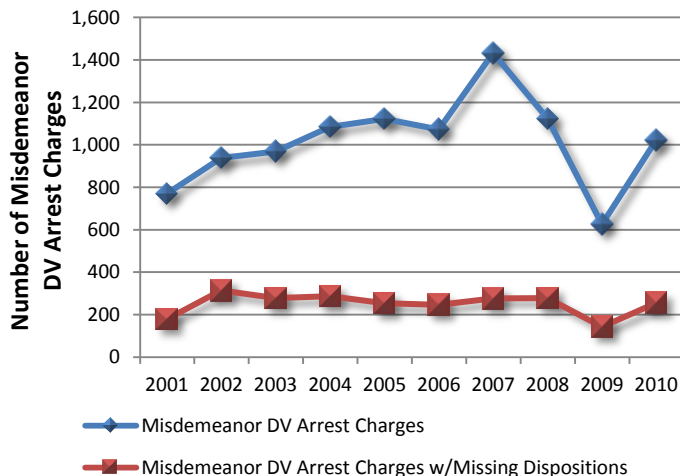
**Category 1: Felony Convictions**



**Category 2: Misdemeanor Drug Arrests  
(i.e., ARS § 13-3402, 13-3403, 13-3405, 13-3406, 13-3407, 13-3408, 13-3411, and 28-1381A3)**



**Category 3: Misdemeanor Domestic Violence  
(i.e., misdemeanor arrest charges with a DV flag attached)**



**NATIONAL INSTANT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM (NICS)  
COMPLETENESS OF ARIZONA COMPUTERIZED CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS**

**(For Arrest Dates January 1, 2001 – December 31, 2010)**

**SAMPLE COUNTY RECORD BRIEF**

**Category 1: Felony Convictions**

**Total Felony Arrest Charges in Sample County**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Number of felony arrest charges</b>	3,685	4,335	4,298	4,783	4,819	5,022	4,652	3,746	3,655	3,039	42,034
<b>Number of felony arrest charges w/missing dispositions</b>	1,655	1,814	1,144	902	969	1,378	1,243	1,058	1,254	1,042	12,459

**Percentage of Felony Arrest Charges w/Missing Dispositions**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Sample County</b>	44.9%	41.8%	26.6%	18.9%	20.1%	27.4%	26.7%	28.2%	34.3%	34.3%	29.6%
<b>Arizona</b>	29.6%	31.1%	30.2%	31.3%	30.7%	31.6%	25.9%	25.7%	31.7%	37.8%	30.5%

**Category 2: Misdemeanor Drug Arrests**

**(i.e., ARS § 13-3402, 13-3403, 13-3405, 13-3406, 13-3407, 13-3408, 13-3411, 28-1381A3)**

**Total Misdemeanor Drug Arrest Charges in Sample County**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Number of misdemeanor drug arrest charges</b>	92	107	255	332	332	325	382	376	436	517	3,154
<b>Number of misdemeanor drug arrest charges w/missing dispositions</b>	30	46	69	84	75	101	98	98	137	150	888

**Percentage of Misdemeanor Drug Arrest Charges w/Missing Dispositions**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Sample County</b>	32.6%	43.0%	27.1%	25.3%	22.6%	31.1%	25.7%	26.1%	31.4%	29.0%	28.2%
<b>Arizona</b>	25.6%	26.9%	28.2%	31.1%	29.1%	27.5%	26.2%	28.1%	29.9%	36.4%	29.4%

**Category 3: Misdemeanor domestic violence**

**(i.e., misdemeanor arrest charges with a DV flag attached)**

**Total Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Arrest Charges in Sample County**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Number of misdemeanor DV arrest charges</b>	769	938	968	1,085	1,122	1,072	1,433	1,124	626	1,023	10,160
<b>Number of misdemeanor DV arrest charges w/missing dispositions</b>	179	314	278	288	255	246	277	278	143	256	2,514

**Percentage of Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Arrest Charges w/Missing Dispositions**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Sample County</b>	23.3%	33.5%	28.7%	26.5%	22.7%	22.9%	19.3%	24.7%	22.8%	25.0%	24.7%
<b>Arizona</b>	16.2%	19.2%	20.2%	22.7%	23.6%	20.5%	21.5%	22.9%	24.6%	28.2%	22.2%