

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

The Quality of Criminal History Records in Arizona Fact Sheet



Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

June 2008

Background

As mandated by Arizona Revised Statute §41-1750, Arizona criminal justice agencies are required to submit arrest and case disposition information for all felony, sexual, domestic violence, and DUI offenses to the central state repository, also called the Arizona Computerized Criminal History (ACCH). The criminal arrest and disposition information creates a criminal history record within the ACCH linking an offender to the specific offense. In turn, this information is shared with local, state, and federal agencies as well as authorized private institutions for running background checks, investigating criminal cases, and issuing firearms permits.

The Records Quality Index

The Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission utilized the Records Quality Index (RQI), developed by Structured Decisions Corporation (SDC), for an assessment of the quality of Arizona's criminal history records. The index is calculated by accounting for the timeliness, completeness, and accessibility of the criminal history records; the higher the RQI, the greater the records quality. Table 1 shows the Records Quality Index by county in 2003. The RQI numbers range from 87 for Navajo County to 400 for Yuma County records.

Timeliness and Completeness

The timeliness of county records is displayed in Table 2, with a lower timeliness being the objective. Santa Cruz County's records has the lowest timeliness from arrest to disposition date requiring only 120 days on average. Table 3 shows the completeness percentage of all criminal history records in 2003. Graham County had the highest percentage of complete records—the percentage of arrests in 2001 with associated dispositions by 2003—with 86.2 percent complete.

Table 1. County Records Quality Index Scores, RQI
2003

County	RQI	County	RQI
Apache	282	Mohave	300
Cochise	175	Navajo	87
Coconino	183	Pima	276
Gila	210	Pinal	328
Graham	377	Santa Cruz	387
Greenlee	243	Yavapai	332
La Paz	355	Yuma	400
Maricopa	236	State of Arizona	236

Table 2. County Timeliness Measures, P₁
2003

County	P ₁	County	P ₁
Apache	157	Mohave	132
Cochise	190	Navajo	261
Coconino	188	Pima	157
Gila	195	Pinal	124
Graham	132	Santa Cruz	120
Greenlee	165	Yavapai	130
La Paz	127	Yuma	121
Maricopa	170	State of Arizona	170

Table 3. County Completeness Measures, P₂
2003

County	P ₂ (%)	County	P ₂ (%)
Apache	76.6	Mohave	68.5
Cochise	57.5	Navajo	39.3
Coconino	59.5	Pima	75.0
Gila	71.0	Pinal	70.4
Graham	86.2	Santa Cruz	80.4
Greenlee	69.5	Yavapai	74.7
La Paz	78.0	Yuma	83.8
Maricopa	69.5	State of Arizona	69.3

Adjusted Records Quality Index

In addition to the traditional RQI, an adjusted RQI score was created by the SAC to capture the time between case disposition rendering to the ACCH and disposition entry or final modification in the ACCH. The original RQI measure, developed by SDC, does not take this additional time into account since several states do not record any data on a disposition's entry date into the state's respective central state repository.

Because the adjusted RQI is accounting for the additional time frame, it is reasonable to expect the timeliness measure to increase and the completeness measure to decrease. Thus, the adjusted RQI is likely to be lower than the traditional RQI score for each county and the entire state. As can be seen in Table 4, both the counties and the state have a much lower adjusted RQI score when compared to the RQI scores. In this case, Graham has the highest adjusted RQI score of 247 in 2003.

Table 4. County Adjusted RQI Scores
2003

County	RQI	County	RQI
Apache	154	Mohave	203
Cochise	120	Navajo	69
Coconino	146	Pima	146
Gila	150	Pinal	215
Graham	247	Santa Cruz	246
Greenlee	147	Yavapai	218
La Paz	196	Yuma	233
Maricopa	169	State of Arizona	160

Additional Timeliness Measures

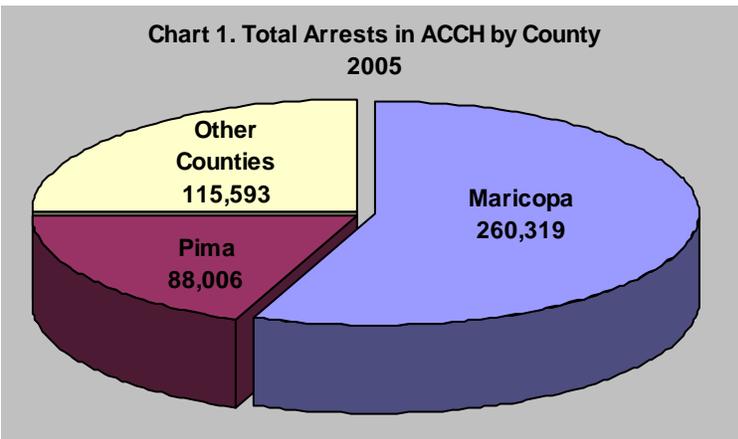
Separate from the RQI calculations, additional timeliness measures were calculated based on records entry into the ACCH. The first measure is the mean number of days from the date of arrest to the date the arrest information was entered into the ACCH. Upon entry into the ACCH, the arrest information initiates the criminal history record process and becomes available through background checks conducted by the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

In Table 5, the mean number of days from arrest date to arrest entry into ACCH ranges from 6.4 days for Yavapai County to 69.5 days for La Paz County. The state average number of days to enter an arrest into the ACCH in 2005 was 17.4 days.

The total number of arrests entered into the ACCH in 2005 by county is described in Chart 1. Maricopa County law enforcement agencies accounted for more than 50 percent of the total number of arrests while Pima County agencies were the second largest contributor with 88,006 arrests entered.

A second timeliness measure looks at the average number of days from case disposition to disposition entry into the ACCH, thus completing the records process. In 2005, the mean number of days ranged from 107.9 days in Yuma County to 474.5 days in Pima County. The state mean for 2005 was 270.7 days (Table 6).

County	Days	County	Days
Apache	51.1	Mohave	7.4
Cochise	15.9	Navajo	13.0
Coconino	29.5	Pima	26.2
Gila	14.9	Pinal	19.4
Graham	53.7	Santa Cruz	35.4
Greenlee	26.7	Yavapai	6.4
La Paz	69.5	Yuma	7.6
Maricopa	14.9	State of Arizona	17.4

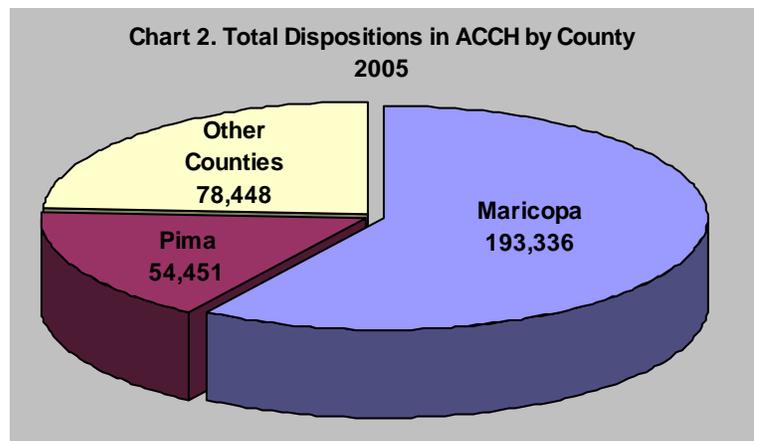


County	Days	County	Days
Apache	291.1	Mohave	270.1
Cochise	197.5	Navajo	371.6
Coconino	226.7	Pima	474.5
Gila	161.2	Pinal	269.1
Graham	177.3	Santa Cruz	174.3
Greenlee	255.7	Yavapai	301.5
La Paz	364.3	Yuma	107.9
Maricopa	221.1	State of Arizona	270.7

Chart 2 displays the total number of dispositions entered into the ACCH by county in 2005. Once again, Maricopa County agencies were responsible for more than 50 percent of the total dispositions entered into ACCH. Pima County agencies, not surprisingly, were again responsible for the second highest number of dispositions, submitting a total of 54,451 dispositions in 2005. The remaining 13 counties in Arizona accounted for 78,448 of the dispositions entered into the ACCH.

Electronic vs. Paper Disposition Submission

Another important criminal history records measure is the percentage of all dispositions submitted electronically to the central state repository. Table 7 describes the percentage of all dispositions submitted in 2005 that were submitted electronically by each county. Yuma County submitted 71.5 percent of its dispositions electronically, followed by Coconino County at 62.9 percent. The remaining counties submitted less than 50 percent of their 2005 dispositions electronically.



County	%	County	%
Apache	0.6	Mohave	0.0
Cochise	33.7	Navajo	0.8
Coconino	62.9	Pima	1.2
Gila	26.8	Pinal	0.0
Graham	45.5	Santa Cruz	23.8
Greenlee	0.0	Yavapai	1.0
La Paz	0.0	Yuma	71.5
Maricopa	11.5	State of Arizona	13.2

This fact sheet was prepared by:
 Matt Bileski, Research Analyst
 Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
 1110 West Washington, Suite 230
 Phoenix, AZ 85007
 (P) 602.364.1374
 (F) 602.364.1175

Conclusion

The timeliness and completeness of criminal history record information is critical to informed decision making affecting the safety and security of the citizens of our state and law enforcement personnel. Although improvements in the quality of Arizona's criminal history records are still needed, Arizona and its counties displayed marked improvement in records quality leading up to 2003.