

The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:

Document Title: Opening the Black Box of NIBIN: A Descriptive Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Use of NIBIN and Its Effects on Criminal Investigations, Final Report

Author(s): William King, William Wells, Charles Katz, Edward Maguire, James Frank

Document No.: 243875

Date Received: October 2013

Award Number: 2010-DN-BX-0001

This report has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. To provide better customer service, NCJRS has made this Federally-funded grant report available electronically.

Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

single point of contact (SPOC) survey to be completed by the crime lab director. This SPOC survey asked questions not addressed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Census of Publicly Funded Crime Laboratories such as issues of lab processes, opinions about NIBIN, and various measures of organizational structure. Each lab also received one of two surveys that were instructed to be routed to the lab's firearms section. NIBIN sites received a NIBIN firearms survey which asked questions specific to the operation of NIBIN, such as inputs, throughputs, and outputs, and specific processes, policies, and practices. Non-NIBIN labs received a firearms survey which asked about the processes and practices used by the firearms section but did not ask about NIBIN.¹³ In total, 459 crime labs received survey instruments. These included 233 labs using NIBIN (NIBIN partner sites) and 218 non-NIBIN crime labs. Surveys were administered between January and September 2012 including four waves of mailings intended to maximize response rates.

Surveying the population of publicly-funded crime laboratories in the United States and its territories is challenging for a variety of reasons. Multiple sources were used to compile a mailing list of all eligible crime laboratories and their addresses. First, BJS provided a list of 409 crime laboratories. This list was used to identify the population of crime laboratories for the most recent BJS Census of Publicly Funded Crime Laboratories (U.S. Department of Justice [U.S. DOJ], BJS, 2009). Second, ATF's National Directory of NIBIN Users (U.S. DOJ, ATF, 2010) was reviewed, which identified 233 NIBIN sites. Third, intensive Google searches identified crime laboratories not present in the BJS Census or the ATF NIBIN Users Directory. This three-

¹³ While all NIBIN sites (n=233) were identified, a list of labs with firearms sections that were not NIBIN sites could not be found. Thus, every non-NIBIN lab (n=218) was sent a firearms survey. The population of non-NIBIN labs with a firearms section is unknown, so an accurate response rate for the non-NIBIN firearms surveys cannot be calculated. It is most likely that labs without firearms sections simply discarded the survey since respondents were instructed to route the survey to their firearms sections. Seventeen completed non-NIBIN firearms surveys were received.

