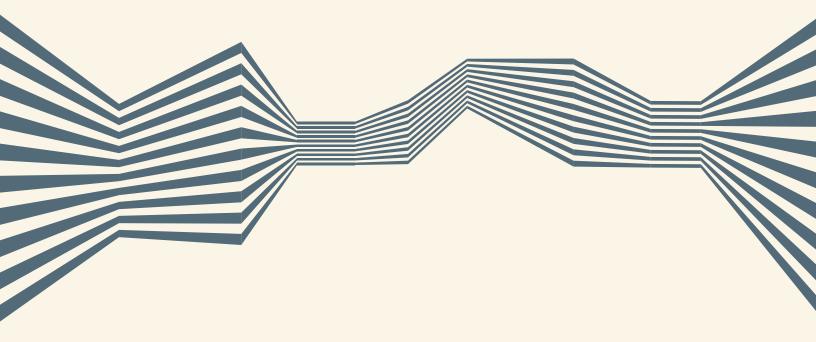
Perceptions of Police Activities



Results from the Policing in America Survey by Race and Ethnicity in Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas





DATA FOUNDATION

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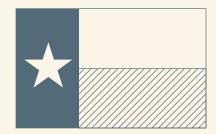


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Executive Summary

The Policing in America Project — launched by the Data Foundation, data.world, Microsoft, SpotCrime, Forward Cities, and NORC in 2020 — was created to gather information about perspectives on police activities in the United States and calibrate new insights with existing open data. The first phase of the project was to conduct the Policing in America Survey. This paper summarizes the results of the representative household survey and key findings, including perspectives and experiences of survey respondents and examines observed similarities and differences by race and ethnicity.

In February and March 2021, residents in portions of two large metropolitan areas in the United States were surveyed about public perceptions and experiences with the police: Cook County, Illinois, in the Chicago metropolitan area and Dallas County, Texas, in the Dallas metropolitan area. While the two geographies included in the Policing in America Survey are unique in their demographic composition, history, culture, economic circumstances, and police activities, the majority of findings were similar in both counties while the magnitude of between group differences varied on some measures. Key findings include:

- Black and Hispanic residents were less likely than white residents **to feel safe in their neighborhood**.
- White residents were more likely to be **satisfied with the police activity** in their neighborhood, compared to Black & Hispanic residents.
- Black and Hispanic residents were more likely **to witness police misconduct** than white residents.
- Black and Hispanic residents were more likely than white residents **to expect police to use force** during the majority of arrests.
- No differences by race and ethnicity in residents' intentions for using 911.
- General agreement on the leading activities police should prioritize, while. Black
 residents were more likely than white residents to prioritize police walking around the
 neighborhood and talking to neighborhood members about their concerns.

Results from the Policing in America Survey provide local leaders in Chicago and Dallas relevant perspectives about perceptions from their communities on a range of issues associated with public satisfaction and expectations for police activity. The findings from these two counties may not be generalizable to the country as a whole, yet offer insights and lessons relevant for federal and local policymakers, police administrators, and the American public. The following seven recommendations are based on the first phase of the Policing in America Project:

- 1. Local governments should establish clear performance indicators for policing based on community satisfaction and perception.
- 2. Local government policymakers and police departments should develop "learning agendas" to establish cycles of continuous evaluation and improvement.

- 3. Local governments should allocate resources for relevant survey-based data collection about perceptions, experiences, and attitudes.
- 4. The U.S. Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics should provide support to local governments in collecting perception and attitudinal data at the local level.
- 5. The U.S. Department of Justice should include research activities related to improving services that over time enrich attitudes and perceptions as part of the departmental learning agenda and annual evaluation plan.
- 6. The U.S. Department of Justice's Chief Data Officer, Evaluation Officer, and Statistical Official should convene a forum with local government policymakers and police departments to identify additional strategies for enhanced data collection, management, and use.
- 7. Congress should appropriate funding to support state and local data about attitudes and perceptions, and resources for program evaluation of policing activities.

The benefits of establishing an improved national capability for collecting relevant data to understand and monitor perceptions about local policing holds potential benefits for the American people. Collectively our country's policymakers at the national and local levels have an obligation to ensure relevant information is collected and used for good decision-making. Implementing these recommendations would be a productive step for evidence-based practice and policymaking related to policing activities.

A second report for the Policing in America Project in 2021 will explore the relationship between the variables presented here and incorporate additional data sources for an extended analysis.

Introduction

In the United States, police activity and interactions with communities is currently a significant topic of concern. In recent years, public approval for law enforcement activities has declined while awareness of and concerns about systemic inequalities in policing have risen. Local, state, and federal legislation on police reform is at the forefront of the political landscape. An objective understanding of how experiences with police and expectations vary across different populations within and between geographic jurisdictions is relevant to increase public awareness about those experiences and produce data-informed solutions.

The Policing in America Project is a multi-pronged, open data effort to systematically improve the visibility of evidence about how the American people view the criminal justice system and police forces. The project seeks to demonstrate the value of building data capabilities to enable a more robust understanding of the relationship between perceptions of law enforcement agencies and the conditions in select cities, including differences in perceptions by sub-populations.

The first phase of the project involved conducting the Policing in America Survey, a population-based survey of residents' perceptions. This report provides a descriptive summary of the

experiences with and perspectives of police activity within two counties: Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas. In addition to describing these data for selected geographies this report includes estimates for respondents by race and ethnicity.

In a second phase of the Policing in America Project, data will be connected to public data sources about policing in order to provide a more comprehensive view of residents' experiences. The second phase will dive deeper into relationships between variables using more complex research methods. Open data resources will be made publicly available through data.world to allow researchers and analysts to conduct their own analyses using the data, including for examination of additional research questions.

Policing in America Survey Design and Site Selection

Project partners assembled an expert team of advisors to inform all aspects of the project, including survey design and site selection. Advisors included individuals with expertise in criminal justice, policing, community engagement, and survey design.

In consultation with the project advisors, the research team developed a questionnaire to expand on previous research while addressing timely topics of interest.³ The survey questionnaire included 35 questions addressing:⁴

- Perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization
- Satisfaction with police activity in neighborhood
- Experiences with police in the last year
- Witnessed police misconduct in neighborhood in the last 6 months
- Intentions for 911 utilization
- Expectations and perceptions of police
- Perceptions of priority activities for police

Project advisors and the research team also considered multiple jurisdictions for initial data collection from the Policing in America Survey. Ultimately, two county-level jurisdictions were selected based on the inclusion of an urban area, substantial population size, and the racial and ethnic diversity of the population. Selected counties included populations of over 500,000 individuals in each of the three groups of interest: white non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, and Hispanic. Each of the selected jurisdictions also publicly reported some information relevant to the second phase of the Policing in America Project.

The first selected jurisdiction was Cook County, Illinois, which includes a portion of the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area. The total estimated population of Cook County in 2019 was 5.2 million. White residents made up 42.3%; Black residents made up 23.4% and Hispanic or Latino residents made up 25.3% (**Table 1**). Differences in educational attainment are notable by race and ethnicity. For example, 94.8% of white residents have completed high school compared to 87.3% of Black residents and 68.6% of Hispanic residents. Among Cook County residents, 25.0%

Black residents and 16.8% of Hispanic residents live below the poverty line, compared to 7.5% white residents. The violent crime rate in Cook County is 620 per 100,000 residents. There is a higher homicide rate among Black residents (42 per 100,000) compared to white (2 per 100,000) and Hispanic residents (8 per 100,000).⁵

The second selected jurisdiction was Dallas County, Texas, which is part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Statistical Area. The total estimated population for Dallas County was 22.6 million in 2019. White residents made up 29.1%; Black or African American residents made up 22.6% and Hispanic or Latino residents made up 40.2% (**Table 1**). Among county residents, 20.1% Black residents and 19.2% of Hispanic residents were living below the poverty line, compared to 7.6% white residents. Differences in educational attainment are notable by race and ethnicity. For example, 94.9% of white residents completed high school compared to 89.6% of Black residents and 59.3% of Hispanic residents. The violent crime rate in Dallas County is 480 per 100,000 residents. There is a higher homicide rate among Black residents (20 per 100,000) compared to white (4 per 100,000) and Hispanic residents (6 per 100,000).

Table 1.Cook County, Illinois and Dallas County, Texas — Population Characteristics

	Cook County, Illinois				Dallas County, Texas			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Population size	5,198,275	2,198,122	1,217,416	1,314,796	2,606,868	759,485	588,903	1,047,434
% race and ethnicity	-	42.3%	23.4%	25.3%	_	29.1%	22.6%	40.2%
- White	42.3%	100%	0%	0%	29.1%	100%	0%	0%
- Black	23.1%	0%	100%	1.4%	22.6%	0%	100%	0.8%
- Hispanic	25.3%	0%	1.5%	100%	40.2%	0%	1.5%	100%
Education								
- High School or higher	87.1%	94.8%	87.3%	68.6%	79.3%	94.9%	89.6%	59.3%
- Bachelor's or higher	38.8%	52.6%	22.6%	15.6%	31.5%	50.4%	23.3%	10.8%
Median Earnings	\$39,194	\$52,515	\$30,528	\$29,169	\$33,470	\$51,667	\$31,608	\$26,709
Poverty rate	14.4%	7.5%	25.0%	16.8%	15.4%	7.6%	20.1%	19.2%
Homeownership	55.9%	68.0%	39.8%	50.3%	50.0%	62.2%	34.3%	48.4%
Homicide rate*	13	2	42	8	8	4	20	6
Firearm fatality rate*	15	5	44	8	13	16	22	7

*per 100,000 (2015-2019)

American Community Survey 5-year data estimates (2019), County Health Rankings 2015-2019

Survey Methods

The Data Foundation contracted with NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct the Policing in America Survey. The survey combined interviews from two probability-based sample frames: an address-based sampling (ABS) frame and AmeriSpeak, NORC's existing probability-based panel that is designed to be representative of the U.S. household population.

The ABS sampling frame is based on the U.S. Postal Service delivery-sequence file (DSF), which covers 97% of the U.S. household population. ABS sample records were mailed a postcard inviting them to complete the survey either online using a unique PIN or via telephone by calling a toll-free number. There was no within household selection for households with multiple adults, any one adult in the household could respond. The ABS sample design for the Policing in America Survey intentionally included an oversample of non-Hispanic Black adults in each location. The survey also included a subset of respondents from NORC's existing AmeriSpeak panel with a known, non-zero probability of selection. For the AmeriSpeak sample used in the Policing in America Survey, all Cook County non-Hispanic Black panelists were invited to increase the oversample (n=277); in Dallas County, all panelists were invited (n=264) given the smaller population in the county.

Data were collected using a multi-mode approach that allowed responding residents to complete the interview via web or with an NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Respondents were also offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey.

The target population for the survey was all adults age 18 and older living in Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas. Interviews in Cook County were conducted between February 13–23, 2021, and in Dallas County interviews were conducted between February 13–March 3, 2021. In Cook County, the study completion rate for the ABS sample was 1.9% and the study completion rate for the AmeriSpeak sample was 20.6%. The margin of sampling error for all respondents was 4.8% and the margin of sampling error for non-Hispanic Black respondents was 5.8%. In Dallas County, the study completion rate for the ABS sample was 1.6% and the study completion rate for the AmeriSpeak sample was 31.8%. The margin of sampling error for all respondents was 5.9% and the margin of sampling error for non-Hispanic Black respondents was 8.2%.

The AmeriSpeak sample respondents were combined with the ABS sample respondents to generate survey estimates. The number of participants included in the sample was 1,150 for Cook County and 860 for Dallas County. Combined survey weights were created that reflect the probabilities of selection and correct for differences between the responding sample and known population totals, based on the 2019 American Community Survey, for Cook County and Dallas County adults along demographic dimensions (age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education).

Analytic Strategy

In addition to traditional cross-tabulations and comparisons for the collected survey responses, for each of the topics covered in the Policing in America Survey the research team reviewed the appropriateness of aggregating multiple items in scales measuring unique constructs. Using scales, rather than single item scores, merges similar experiences within the same underlying topic and increases the validity of measurement. Not all of the survey items within topics covered lend themselves to be collapsed into construct-specific scales. Based on theory and validation from inter-item reliability (Cronbach's α), the research team created four scales for both samples presented in the analysis:

- Satisfaction with police community relationship ($\alpha \ge 0.9$), 4 items⁸
- Negative perception of experience with police ($\alpha \ge 0.9$), 4 items⁹
- Witness to police misconduct ($\alpha \ge 0.9$), 4 items¹⁰
- Perceptions of police ($\alpha \ge 0.9$), 3 items¹¹

To understand variation in the experiences of individuals within counties, the research team examined differences by race between three groups: non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic populations. For scale scores, the research team used linear regression to examine variation between groups. For categorical items, the research team used a chi squared test to compare differences between the three groups. When a statistically significant ($P \le 0.05$) difference was detected between the three groups, the research team then assessed the differences between each group via pairwise comparison. Between group differences (pairwise comparisons) are reported when they are statistically significant ($P \le 0.05$). In this report, key findings are presented in the text along with visualizations when significant differences between groups were detected in scale scores and for primary indicators within topics.

The results for each of the topic areas, including scale scores and findings that were not statistically significant, are presented in the supplemental data tables in Appendix A (Cook County, IL) and Appendix B (Dallas County, TX).

Results

Cook County, IL Results from the Policing in America Survey

Perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization

In Cook County, 60.9% of residents feel safe during the daytime compared to 37.7% at nighttime. Significantly more white residents feel safer during the daytime (82.7%) than Black residents (34.6%) and Hispanic residents (40.3%, Exhibit 1). Similar variation was evident for the measure of nighttime safety. Hispanic residents were more likely to report someone in their home was a

victim of a crime in the last year than white residents. Among those reporting victimization, white residents were significantly less likely to be a victim of a crime that involved a weapon or violence compared to Black residents (28.0% vs. 65.6%, $P \le .01$) and Hispanic residents (vs. 69.7% $P \le .05$). 12

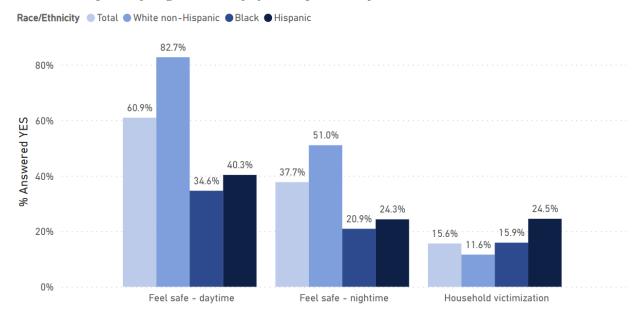


Exhibit 1. Perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: Feel safe "to a great extent" and "a lot"/ "not at all" and "a little" and "somewhat"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A.

Satisfaction with police activity in neighborhood

When asked about the police presence in their neighborhood, 43.2% of residents believed there was the right amount of police presence and 35.5% believed there was too little. Compared to white residents, Black and Hispanic residents were more likely to report too few police officers in their neighborhoods: white 26.4% vs. Black 46.0% ($P \le .001$), and vs. Hispanic 48.6% ($P \le .05$).

Based on the four-item scale measuring satisfaction with the police's involvement in their neighborhood, significant differences based on the race and ethnicity of the individual were identified. White residents were also more likely than Black and Hispanic residents to report *complete satisfaction*, defined as a positive response on all four of the items: white 21.4% vs. Black 13.2% ($P \le .001$), and vs. Hispanic 8.6% ($P \le .001$).

White residents were more likely to be satisfied on each individual item compared to Black residents, and more likely than Hispanic residents to report satisfaction on one of the four items (**Exhibit 2**). The most notable differences were specific to satisfaction in how well the police develop relationships with community members (white 44.1%, Black 26.0%) and satisfaction with police collaboration with their community (white 40.1%, Black 23.0%).¹³

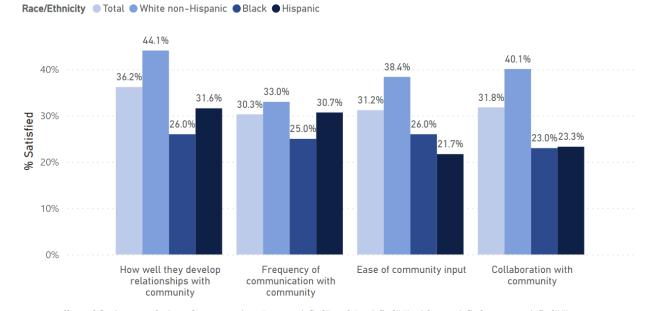


Exhibit 2. Satisfaction with police involvement in their community

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "very satisfied" and "satisfied"/"neither satisfied nor unsatisfied"/"very unsatisfied" and "unsatisfied"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A.

Experiences with police in the last 12 months

Residents were asked to report the number of interactions they had with police in the last year including "all types of interactions, including traffic issues, emergency 911 calls, non-emergency calls, public events, etc." Less than half of Cook County residents (39.9%) reported zero contacts with police in the last year, 42.1% reported one or two contacts, and 18.0% reported three or more contacts. The frequency of contacts among these categories did not vary by the race and ethnicity of the individual.

Among those with one or more contacts, 58.4% reported calling 911, 43.8% were stopped or arrested in a non-traffic related incident, 29.1% reported contact during a traffic stop or accident, and 41.2% reported a casual interaction in which they were not subject to investigation (e.g., asked for directions, spoke with an officer at a public event). The types of contacts reported did not vary by the race and ethnicity of the individual.

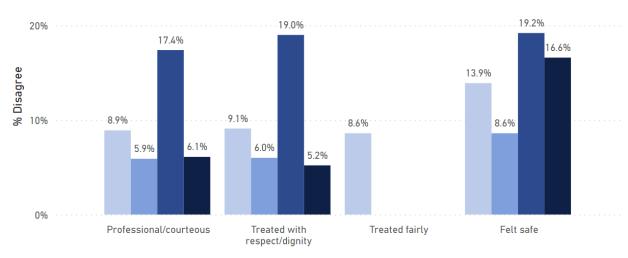
Based on the four-item scale that assessed negative experiences during the interaction, there were significant differences by the race and ethnicity of the individual. Overall, white residents were more likely to report positive interactions on *all* items than both Black residents (76.6% vs. 50.4%, $P \le .001$) and Hispanic residents (56.6%, $P \le .05$). Black residents were more likely than white residents to report *at least one* type of negative experience (35.2% vs. 13.9%, $P \le .001$).

Differences between groups on all four survey items within this scale were statistically significant with a single exception **(Exhibit 3**). There were no statistically significant differences on the item "I was treated fairly" based on the race and ethnicity of the individuals with 8.6% of residents

disagreeing with this question; however, the differences were on the margins of statistical significance (P=.07).¹⁴

Exhibit 3. Negative experiences during police contact





Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "strongly agree" and "agree"/"neither agree nor disagree"/"strongly disagree "and "disagree"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Witnessed police misconduct in neighborhood in the last 6 months

Based on the four-item scale that assessed residents' experiences witnessing police misconduct in their neighborhoods within the last 6 months, significant differences by the race and ethnicity of the individual were identified. Significantly fewer white residents reported witnessing any misconduct compared to Black and Hispanic residents. Across all four items, only 26.7% of white respondents had witnessed any misconduct; by comparison, 72.9% of Black respondents and 49.3% Hispanic respondents had witnessed one or more types of the misconduct listed in the survey ($P \le .001$).

In the visualization below (**Exhibit 4**), we illustrate variation in witnessing each of the types of misconduct "often or always" by race of the respondent and racial composition of their neighborhood of residence. The largest difference between groups was on the item "stopping people too often in the neighborhood without sufficient cause." White residents reported witnessing this item 2.3% often/always and 17.9% sometimes/rarely which was much lower that reported by both Black residents (27.5% often/always and 36.4% sometimes/rarely, $P \le .001$) and Hispanic residents (12.1% often/always and 29.8% sometimes/rarely $P \le .01$). ¹⁵

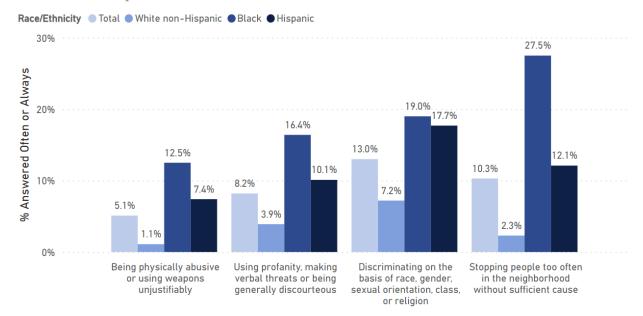


Exhibit 4. Witnessed police misconduct

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "often" and "always"/"sometimes" and "rarely"/"never"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A.

Likelihood of using 911

Cook County residents reported the likelihood of using 911 in three instances. Overall, 73.7% said they would call 911 if they saw a person they believed needed help with a mental health crisis. If they heard the sound of a gunshot, 75.1% would call 911. Only 27.7% would call 911 if they were being disturbed by loud music after 11 PM. Variation in the race and ethnicity of the individual and neighborhood racial composition were not associated with differences in the likelihood of 911 utilization in each instance. Overall, 7.2% percent would not call 911 in any of these situations; there were no differences between groups on likelihood of not calling for all three instances. ¹⁶

Expectations and perceptions of police

Overall, 46.1% of Cook County residents believed that police used force during arrests at least half the time. Significant differences in expectations on use of force were observed by both the race and ethnicity of the individual. Black and Hispanic residents were significantly more likely to expect the use of force *most of the time* or *every time* during an arrest than were white residents (Black 50.4%, Hispanic 35.1% vs. white 15.1%, both $P \le .001$).

A three-item scale was used to measure resident perceptions of police legitimacy. The race and ethnicity of the individual was associated with differences on the scale score. Overall, Black residents were less likely to report positive perceptions of police legitimacy on all items of the scale compared to both white residents (22.5% vs. 41.4%, $P \le .001$) and Hispanic residents (45.9%, $P \le .001$). The likelihood of reporting critical perceptions (i.e., disagreeing with *at least one* item) was similar between groups (P = 0.10).

Differences between groups on survey items within this scale were statistically significant on two of three items while the third was on the margins of statistical significance (p=0.06). We illustrate differences between groups on the expectations of force in the visualization below (**Exhibit 5**).¹⁷

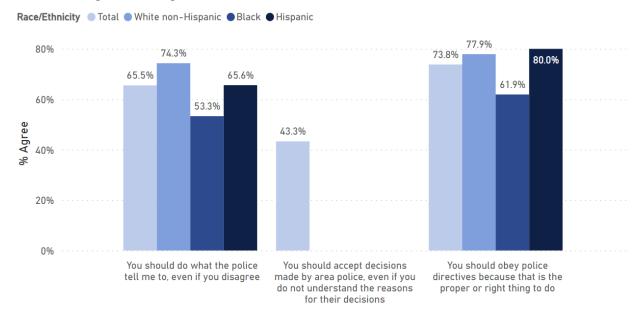


Exhibit 5. Perceptions about police

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "strongly agree" and "agree"/"neither agree nor disagree"/"strongly disagree "and "disagree"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Perceptions on what activities police should prioritize

Among this list of seven activities, all groups agreed investigation of violent crime was among the highest priorities with 74.0% of residents including it in their top three. The second most commonly prioritized activity was responding to 911 calls (64.5%). The third most commonly prioritized activity was targeting illegal firearms (40.7%) followed closely by "walking around the neighborhood and talking to neighborhood members about their concerns" (39.0%).

In **Exhibit 6**, we present data on the top 3 overall and for each group. Two additional priorities (not shown) were not in the top three overall or for any group: "enforcing traffic laws" and "enforcement of nuisance crimes, such as noise violations."¹⁸

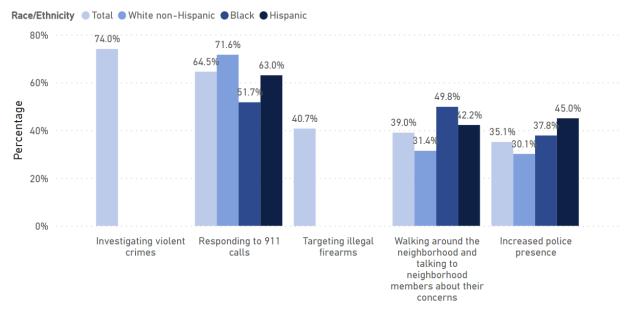


Exhibit 6. Perceptions on what activities police should prioritize (Percent who included each activity in the top 3 priorities)

Percentage shown is those who ranked the item a top 3 priority. Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Dallas County, TX Results from the Policing in America Survey

Perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization

In Dallas, 60.5% of residents feel safe during the daytime compared to 36.2% at nighttime. Significantly more white residents feel safer at daytime (80.1%) than Black (52.0%) and Hispanic residents (49.2%, **Exhibit 7**). Similar variation was evident for the measure of nighttime safety. Both Black (13.7%) and Hispanic residents (22.1%) were more likely to report someone in their household was a victim of a crime in the last year than white residents (9.3%). Differences in the likelihood violence or a weapon used in the victimization were not statistically significant (P=0.13).

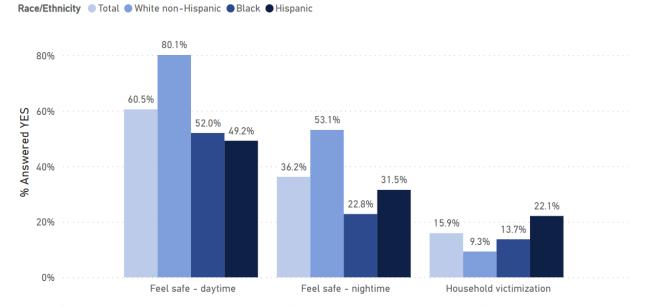


Exhibit 7. Perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: Feel safe "to a great extent" and "a lot"/ "not at all" and "a little" and "somewhat"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A.

Satisfaction with police activity in neighborhood

When asked about the police presence in their neighborhood, 43.4% of residents believed there was the right amount of police presence and 38.2% believed there was too little. Resident perceptions of the extent of police presence in their neighborhood did not vary by the race and ethnicity of the individual.

Based on the four-item scale measuring satisfaction with the police's involvement in their neighborhood, significant differences based on the race and ethnicity of the individual were identified. White residents were also more likely than Black residents to report *complete satisfaction*, defined as a positive response on all four of the items: white 25.7% vs. Black 9.2% ($P \le .05$).

White residents were more likely than Black residents to report satisfaction on three of the items, and more likely than Hispanic residents to report satisfaction on two of the four items (**Exhibit 9**). The most notable differences were specific to satisfaction in how well the police develop relationships with community members (white 42.8%, Black 19.2%, and Hispanic 28.7%) and satisfaction with police collaboration with their community (white 44.0%, Black 26.2%, and Hispanic 27.5%).²⁰

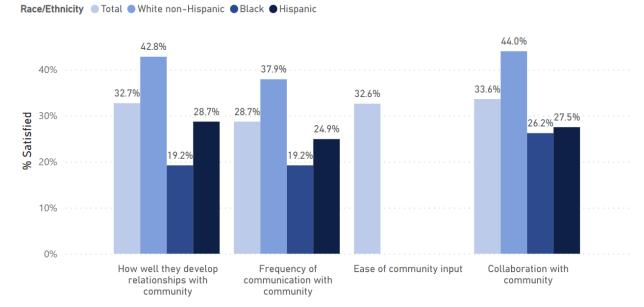


Exhibit 8. Satisfaction with police involvement in their community

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "very satisfied" and "satisfied"/"neither satisfied nor unsatisfied"/"very unsatisfied" and "unsatisfied"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix B; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Experiences with police in the 12 months

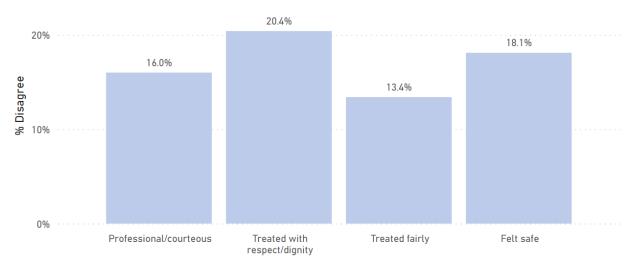
Residents were asked to report the number of interactions they had with police in the last year including "all types of interactions, including traffic issues, emergency 911 calls, non-emergency calls, public events, etc." Half of Dallas County residents (50.0%) reported zero contacts with police in the last year, 31.8% reported one or two contacts, and 18.2% reported three or more contacts. The frequency of contacts among these categories did not vary by the race and ethnicity of the individual.

Among those with one or more contacts, 51.0% reported calling 911, 39.2% were stopped or arrested in a non-traffic related incident, 38.8% reported contact during a traffic stop or accident, and 33.6% reported a casual interaction in which they were not subject to investigation (e.g., asked for directions, spoke with an officer at a public event). The types of contacts reported did not vary by the race and ethnicity of the individual with one exception. Hispanic residents were significantly more likely than white and Black residents to have interacted with police during a traffic stop or accident (white 29.1%, Black 33.2%, vs. Hispanic 52.9% *P*<.05).

Based on the four-item scale that assessed negative experiences during the interaction, there were statistically significant differences between Black and white residents. However, no between group differences for scale items were observed (**Exhibit 9**). There were also no differences in the likelihood of reporting *at least one* type of negative experience (P=.18).²¹

Exhibit 9. Negative experiences during police contact





Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "strongly agree" and "agree"/"neither agree nor disagree"/"strongly disagree "and "disagree"; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Witnessed police misconduct in neighborhood in the last 6 months

Based on the four-item scale that assessed residents' experiences witnessing police misconduct in their neighborhoods within the last six months, significant differences by both the race and ethnicity of the individual were identified. Significantly fewer white residents reported witnessing any misconduct compared to Black and Hispanic residents. Across all four items, only 22.9% of white respondents had witnessed misconduct; by comparison, 64.6% of Black respondents and 65.6% Hispanic respondents had witnessed one or more types of the misconduct listed in the survey (P<.001).

In the visualization below, we illustrate variation in witnessing each of the types of misconduct "often or always" by race and ethnicity (**Exhibit 10**). The largest difference between groups was on the item "stopping people too often in the neighborhood without sufficient cause." White residents reported witnessing this item 3.4% often/always and 13.8% sometimes/rarely which was much lower that reported by both Black residents (22.1% often/always and 29.2% sometimes/rarely, $P \le .001$) and Hispanic residents (8.1% often/always and 35.5% sometimes/rarely $P \le .01$).²²

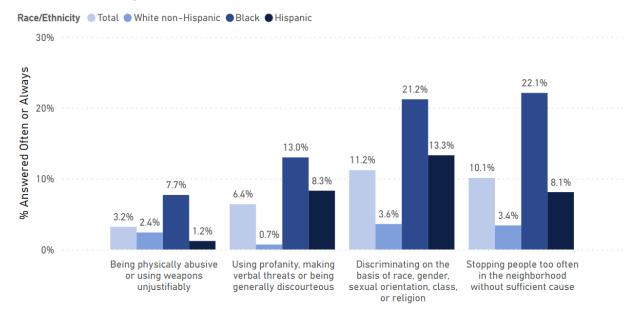


Exhibit 10. Witnessed police misconduct

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "often" and "always"/"sometimes" and "rarely"/"never"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix B.

Likelihood of using 911

Dallas County residents reported the likelihood of using 911 in three instances. Overall, 76.6% said they would call 911 if they saw a person they believed needed help with a mental health crisis. If they heard the sound of a gunshot, 59.0% would call 911. Only 31.5% would call 911 if they were being disturbed by loud music after 11PM. Variation in the race and ethnicity of the individual were not associated with differences in the likelihood of 911 utilization in each instance. Overall, 8.6% percent would *not* call 911 in any of these situations; there were no differences between groups on likelihood of not calling for all three instances. ²³

Expectations and perceptions of police

Overall, 52.1% of Dallas County residents believed that police used force during arrests at least half the time. Significant differences in expectations by the race and ethnicity of the individual were identified. Black and Hispanic residents were significantly more likely to expect the use of force *most of the time* or *every time* during an arrest than were white residents (Black 44.4%, Hispanic 39.7%, white 8.4%, $P \le .001$).

A three-item scale was used to measure resident perceptions of police legitimacy. A small, but statistically significant difference between white and Black residents was identified. Overall, Black residents were less likely to report positive perceptions of police legitimacy <u>on all items</u> of the scale compared to white residents (25.0% vs. 49.5%, $P \le .001$). The likelihood of reporting critical perceptions of police (i.e., disagreeing with *at least one* item) was 30.8%; between group differences were on the margins of statistical significance (P = 0.06).

Differences between groups on survey items within this scale were not statistically significant with a single exception (**Exhibit 11**). Black residents were less likely than white residents to agree with the statement "You should accept decisions made by area police, even if you do not understand the reasons for their decision." Less than a third of Black residents (31.2%) agreed with the statement; by comparison over half (54.6%) of white residents agreed (P<.01).²⁴

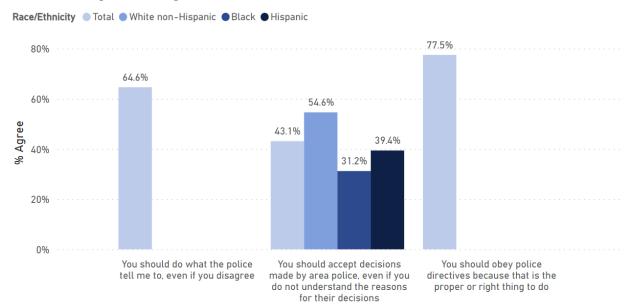


Exhibit 11. Perceptions about police

Answers collapsed for item analysis and presentation: "strongly agree" and "agree"/"neither agree nor disagree"/"strongly disagree "and "disagree"; Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix B; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Perceptions on what activities police should prioritize

Among this list of seven activities, all groups agreed investigation of violent crime was among the highest priorities with 74.1% of residents including it in their top three. The second most commonly prioritized activity across groups was responding to 911 calls (overall, 60.5%), however, the proportion of residents agreeing this was a top three priority differed by race and ethnicity. White residents (76.7%) were most likely to rank this activity in the top three, followed by Black residents (56.2%) and Hispanic residents (46.7%). The third most commonly prioritized activity was increased police presence (overall, 37.0%) with no differences between groups in the percent indicating the prioritization of this activity. A similar but notably different activity, "walking around the neighborhood and talking to neighborhood members about their concerns" was the third most commonly prioritized activity among Black residents (47.9%) and was a close fourth for Hispanic residents (38.5%); significantly fewer white (24.4%) residents ranked this activity as one the top three priorities. In Exhibit 12, we present data on the top 3 overall and for each group. Two priorities were not in the top three overall or for any group - "enforcing traffic laws" and "enforcement of nuisance crimes, such as noise violations." ²⁵

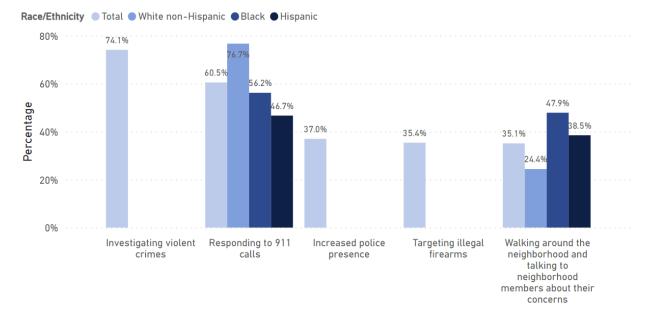


Exhibit 12. Perceptions on what activities police should prioritize

Percentage shown is those who ranked the item a top 3 priority. Pairwise comparisons are presented in Appendix A; Only the "total" value is shown when there was no statistically significant difference between three groups.

Discussion and Synthesis of Survey Results

Through the Policing in America Survey, important differences in results across groups by race and ethnicity within both Dallas County, Texas, and Cook County, Illinois. Consistent with national-level statistics, white residents in both counties were generally more satisfied with police activity than either Black and Hispanic residents on average. In fact, the majority of white residents in both counties reported satisfaction with policing on at least one of the satisfaction questions in the survey. In both local jurisdictions, however, satisfaction was far from perfect and suggests continued room for improvements in addressing satisfaction across-the-board with county residents.

Some expected differences also did not materialize. In contrast to perceptions about a lack of willingness to use 911 services among racial and ethnic minority groups, no statistical difference between groups in willingness to use 911 or actual uses of 911 were identified in either county included in this survey. While this may still be the case in other jurisdictions, the lack of evidence about 911 use suggests efforts in these communities to educate residents about emergency services are productive.

Neighborhood safety was a greater concern for Black and Hispanic residents than for white residents, consistent in both surveyed counties. Black and Hispanic residents were more likely than white residents to want police to prioritize increasing activity in their neighborhood through either a general increase in police presence or through an active effort to walk around the neighborhood and speak with residents about their concerns. Perhaps not surprisingly, in both counties, residents who perceived too few police officers in their neighborhood were also more

dissatisfied with police activities. While the Policing in America Survey did not explicitly ask about community trust in the local police, responses to the question about police presence are suggestive about trust in the local policing activities and may vary according to other factors, including more localized conditions. The request for greater policing presence by some residents is notable given the ongoing national dialogue about trust in the police, including among Black residents.²⁷

Evidence-based community policing practices gained prominence in recent decades, including in Chicago. Further development of relationships between police and communities, especially racial and ethnic minority communities, is strongly supported by the general public. Yet in both Dallas County and Cook County, Black residents reported lower satisfaction with how well police develop community relationships, the frequency of communication, and collaboration with the community. This suggests opportunities to provide additional community outreach and support to subgroups within the community as an aspect of future community policing engagements in both jurisdictions. In addition, local responses to activities that police *should* prioritize offer easily-identifiable strategies for police departments to hone communications and messaging to local residents about how the police deploy existing resources, personnel, and time. These priority lists included in the survey may even identify enhanced strategies for educating non-Hispanic white residents about the variety of activities police departments support, including community-based policing efforts and the benefits for the community.

Another key finding from the Policing in America Survey was a substantial difference in the likelihood of witnessing perceived police misconduct between residents in both jurisdictions by race and ethnicity. Despite a lack of difference in the frequency of personal contact with police, Black and Hispanic residents were much more likely than white residents to witness all aspects of misconduct measured. The majority of white non-Hispanic residents did not witness *any* of the survey items about misconduct in either surveyed county. A perception with a similar magnitude in difference was the expectation that police use force in the majority of arrests. Additionally, among those with police contact, Black residents were more likely than white residents to report negative experiences with police on the survey. These experiences may be associated with perceptions about police satisfaction and residents' expectations regarding the frequency with which police use force during arrests.

Implications, Recommendations, and Next Steps

In sum, across both jurisdictions included in the Policing in America Survey, some common perceptions and beliefs about the differing experiences of non-Hispanic white, Black, and Hispanic residents with police were validated. But the survey results also reveal a much more complicated and nuanced landscape for understanding perceptions of policing activities. If

policymakers, local community leaders, and police are collectively interested in improving resident experiences and interactions, intentional efforts are needed to shift baseline trends for the entire community, with particular focus on those Black and Hispanic residents who may be disproportionately affected based on history, police activity, perceptions, satisfaction, or multiple other factors. Notably, this analysis presented statistics by race and ethnicity. Stratifying data further by gender, age, and race and ethnicity would likely provide policymakers and community leaders with still yet more information to target community policing, outreach, and other constructive dialogues.

The major differences identified in Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas, further suggest that variations in experiences are both possible and likely in other jurisdictions around the country. While these two counties should not be extrapolated or generalized to other municipalities, the likely disproportionalities in perceptions suggests an opportunity for the evidence-building community, police, and local elected officials to identify strategies for supporting new, robust data collection that can align with existing data capabilities and performance reporting police departments may regularly conduct.

Because the Policing in America Project is designed to focus on how the country can develop improved data assets to address important, timely, and relevant topics for policing, this report and presentation of survey results does not include recommendations about how specifically Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas, should improve policing activities or engagement. Local officials and policymakers are encouraged to review the results and determine an appropriate use of the evidence provided from the Policing in America Survey.

The Policing in America Survey demonstrates the value of collecting perception and experience information at the local level. The survey, based on consultation with expert advisors, identified multiple, high-priority questions that can be asked by police departments across the country with consideration about how different groups would respond:

- To what extent are our local residents satisfied with the level of community policing and responsiveness? What strategies can be adopted to improve satisfaction?
- Do residents feel safe in their neighborhoods?
- What do residents perceive the police should be spending resources on, and how does that compare to actual resource allocations?
- To what extent do residents observe perceived or actual misconduct from officers and how does that affect perceptions of policing and local law enforcement?

Answers to these questions obtained through low-cost random-sample surveys can provide the basis for both identifying problems and also developing real, meaningful solutions in policy or practice at the local, state, and national level that promote trust and safety for entire communities, including those who may be disproportionately affected today. Seven recommendations are included to suggest how federal, state, and local authorities can work with

the evidence-building community to ensure our country has needed information and evidence to improve safety for the American people.

- Recommendation #1: Local governments should establish clear performance indicators for policing based on community satisfaction and perception. Based on initial data collection at the local level about perceptions from the Policing in America Survey, this type of survey instrument and approach offers the potential to provide policymakers clear, relevant insights about the public's experiences with policing. Once baseline data are collected and identified, local governments can use random selection survey-based data collection approaches to implement low-cost performance monitoring systems. Local entities may choose to partner with universities or trusted partners in communities to both uphold pledges of confidentiality in survey responses and also deploy sound research methods. Policymakers at the local level can then establish benchmarks to improve satisfaction and perception over time, aligned with policy strategies and community policing efforts aimed at improving these metrics.
- Recommendation #2: Local government policymakers and police departments should develop "learning agendas" to establish cycles of continuous evaluation and improvement. Policymakers and police departments should identify core questions about practices and communities where better information could improve or strengthen decision-making capabilities. Collating such information into a transparent, publicly-available plan called a learned agenda is one approach to outlining a multi-year strategic plan for research and evaluation activities aimed at continuous improvement. While some questions identified may extend beyond survey-based data collection to other research approaches or impact evaluations, identifying the questions relevant to the public's perceptions and experience with policing is a starting point to plan a coherent research framework that can align the research community's expertise with policymaking needs, all while incorporating community and stakeholder feedback. The Policing in America Survey may provide a useful instrument to begin such discussions, or local officials may determine additional questions or approaches are preferable.
- Recommendation #3: Local governments should allocate resources for relevant survey-based data collection about perceptions, experiences, and attitudes. Building evidence to support decision-making needs and uses is admittedly not zero cost, however, such approaches also need not crowd out funding for police operations. The bipartisan U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking concluded that good data management and evaluation activities are essential for effective program management. Applied to all levels of government and topical policy domains, it is incumbent on policymakers to ensure high-quality data are being collected to address important, timely matters, while also generating the insights that are relevant for future decisions before the decisions need to be made. In other words, local policymakers should allocate resources to ensure data are collected about perceptions, experiences, and attitudes.

Local officials should also plan for maximizing the credibility and independence of such efforts, which may involve partnerships with research or academic institutions.

- Recommendation #4: The U.S. Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics should provide support to local governments in collecting perception and attitudinal data at the local level. As local governments and police departments undertake new data collection activities to understand perceptions, satisfaction, and attitudes at the local level, experts in federal agencies can support high-quality data collection and analysis through technical assistance. The Bureau of Justice Statistics at the U.S. Department of Justice, for example, is one of the existing federal statistical agencies with considerable experience in designing surveys related to the criminal justice system, collecting data through household surveys, protecting confidential records, and conducting statistical analysis of survey results that can inform performance monitoring. This expertise should not only be made available to local governments in expanding their evidence-building capacity, but perhaps should be explicitly identified as a future role of agencies in the federal statistical system to support intergovernmental data collection and analysis when there are also clear benefits for federal agencies from enhanced local data collection.
- e Recommendation #5: The U.S. Department of Justice should include research activities related to improving services that over time enrich attitudes and perceptions as part of the departmental learning agenda and annual evaluation plan. In addition to local-level learning agendas, the Department of Justice is formulating its own multi-year learning agenda and annual evaluation plans as required by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act). In accordance with that law, the Justice Department should ensure that questions about attitudes and perceptions relevant for federal policymaking are included explicitly in the learning agenda. The Justice Department should also be clear to intentionally articulate relevant group-level analysis and stratification of characteristics across the population that may be relevant for understanding different perspectives and experiences across communities. In accordance with the Evidence Act, the Justice Department should also ensure effective stakeholder communication and feedback on its learning agenda (see also Recommendation #6).
- Recommendation #6: The U.S. Department of Justice's Chief Data Officer, Evaluation Officer, and Statistical Official should convene a forum with local government policymakers and police departments to identify additional strategies for enhanced data collection, management, and use. The evidence-building community in the federal government should continue to provide resources, expertise, and coordination to local officials also seeking to understand community perceptions and to take evidence-based practices for improving overall effectiveness of policing activities. One productive opportunity to both encourage dialogue but to also build a community of practice for the evidence-building community interested in policing is for the Chief Data Officer, Evaluation Officer, and Statistical Official at the Justice Department to convene local

officials in a forum. A coordinated, well-organized, and honest forum would likely identify topics and issues relevant for the Justice Department's learning agenda (Recommendation #5) as well as local level plans (Recommendation #2).

• Recommendation #7: Congress should appropriate funding to support state and local data about attitudes and perceptions, and resources for program evaluation of policing activities. While local governments should be expected to allocate resources to support evidence-building activities, Congress and federal agencies should also be expected to align grant funding mechanisms to support collection of data about attitudes, perceptions and satisfaction at the local level. Part of the additional resources could, for example, bolster common data standards and elements for reporting to better understand landscapes at the state and national levels. In addition, resources should be allocated to support additional program evaluation of local policing activities.

The benefits of establishing an improved national capability for collecting relevant data to understand and monitor perceptions about local policing holds potential benefits for the American people. As the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking concluded in its unanimous findings: the country needs a "future in which rigorous evidence is created efficiently, as a routine part of government operations, and used to construct effective public policy."³² Improved data collection along the lines of what was conducted for the Policing in America Survey will substantially improve insights and knowledge about how and where to target future improvements.

Alignment with existing administrative records and open data published by police departments and federal, state, and local agencies is also an important aspect of knowledge about policing perceptions and activities. For example, efforts to calibrate and validate whether perceptions are merited based on particular characteristics like crime rates, level of service, funding, or other factors can be determined by aligning insights about perceptions on policing with other data assets. The second phase of the Policing in America Project aims to provide further context and analysis using collected survey data and by combining that information with other datasets from Cook County, Illinois, and Dallas County, Texas.

Notably, while the research team identified many similarities between the two counties, neighborhood-level differences in the distribution of race and ethnicity, sociodemographic characteristics, and violence may contribute to differences in residents' experiences and perceptions of police activity. The within-county relationship between individuals' satisfaction with police activity and neighborhood characteristics, including sociodemographic characteristics, violent crime rates, arrests rates, and fatal police encounters, will be assessed in the second phase of the Policing in America Project. During this phase to be published later in 2021, evidence will be incorporated from public data sources including local police departments to further inform local perceptions of policing.

The American people, policymakers, and police officers all deserve high-quality, reliable information about how police activities align with expectations for a government that reasonably and equitably serves its citizens and residents. By collecting data about perceptions and aligning that information with real activities and behaviors, police departments around the country can support and continue to adopt increasingly evidence-based practices that adequately and responsibly provide for community safety for all residents in the population.

Endnotes

¹ D. Desilver, M. Lipka, and D. Fahmy. "10 Things we know about race and policing in the U.S." Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, June 3, 2020. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/03/10-things-we-know-about-race-and-policing-in-the-u-s/; Pew Research Center. "Majority of the Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct." Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, July 9, 2020. Available at:

 $\underline{https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/07/09/majority-of-public-favors-giving-civilians-the-power-to-sue-police-officers-for-misconduct/.}$

- ² L. Saad. "Black Americans Want Police to Retain Local Presence." Washington D.C.: Gallup, August 5, 2020. Available at: https://news.gallup.com/poll/316571/black-americans-police-retain-local-presence.aspx.
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<u>Law Enforcement</u>; and Community Oriented Policing Services, United States Department of Justice (COPS/USDOJ). "Community Survey on Public Safety and Law Enforcement." Washington D.C.: COPS/USDOJ, 2014. Available at: https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0743

- ⁴ Questionnaire is provided as an online Appendix at https://www.datafoundation.org/policing-in-america.
- ⁵ County Health Rankings 2015-2019.
- ⁶ County Health Rankings 2015-2019.
- ⁷ NORC. AmeriSpeak Panel Design. Washington, D.C.: NORC, 2019. Available at: https://amerispeak.norc.org/about-amerispeak/Pages/Panel-Design.aspx.
- ⁸ Survey questions 13, 14, 15, and 16.
- ⁹ Survey questions 25a, 25b, 25c, and 25d.
- ¹⁰ Survey questions 27a, 27b, 27c, and 27d.
- ¹¹ Survey questions 19, 20, and 21.
- ¹² For detailed results on perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 1.
- ¹³ For detailed results on satisfaction with police activity in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 2.
- ¹⁴ For detailed results on experiences with police in the last 12 months in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 3.
- 15 For detailed results on witnessing police misconduct in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 4.
- $^{\rm 16}$ For detailed results on likelihood using 911 in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 5.
- 17 For detailed results on expectations and perceptions of police in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 6.
- ¹⁸ For detailed results on perceptions on what activities police should prioritize in Cook County, see Appendix A Table 7.

- ¹⁹ For detailed results on perceptions of neighborhood safety and experiences of victimization in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 1
- ²⁰ For detailed results on satisfaction with police activity in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 2.
- ²¹ For detailed results on experiences with police in the last 12 months in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 3.
- ²² For detailed results on witnessing police misconduct in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 4.
- 23 For detailed results on likelihood using 911 in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 5.
- ²⁴ For detailed results on expectations and perceptions of police in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 6.
- ²⁵ For detailed results on perceptions on what activities police should prioritize in Dallas County, see Appendix B Table 7.
- ²⁶ Pew Research Center. "Majority of the Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct." Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, July 9, 2020. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/07/09/majority-of-public-favors-giving-civilians-the-power-to-sue-police-officers-for-misconduct/.
- ²⁷ "Yahoo News Race and Justice Poll." Yahoo News, May 31, 2020. Gallup Panel, June 23-July 6, 2020. Available at: https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/s23agrrx47/20200531 yahoo race and justice crosstabs.pdf
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- https://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Making%20Federal%20Agencies%20Evidence%20Based.pdf
- ³¹ U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (CEP). The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking: Final Report of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2017.
- ³² CEP, 2017.

Appendices

Appendix A. Detailed Results Tables - Cook County, Illinois

→ https://www.datafoundation.org/s/AppendixA CookCounty.pdf

Appendix B. Detailed Results Tables - Dallas County, Texas

→ https://www.datafoundation.org/s/AppendixB DallasCounty.pdf

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