

Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force
Logistics Subcommittee
Census of State and Local Police

Recommendation

It is recommended that all state and municipal law enforcement agencies post annually on its website census data for all full-, part- and per diem employees to include:

- Total number of sworn and civilian employees;
- Total number of employees at each sworn rank (e.g., patrol officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, deputy or assistant chief, chief, etc.);
- Breakdown of number of years of service in five-year increments (e.g., total number of probationary employees, total number of employees with less than 5 years of service, total with 5 to less than 10 years, total with 10 to less than 15 years, etc.);
- Breakdown of sworn and civilian employees by race and ethnicity, gender, and age group (e.g., <20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, etc.); and
- Total number of sworn and civilian employees who are residents of the municipality (yes or no).

Rationale

Consistent with the goals of the task force to increase transparency and accountability among state and municipal law enforcement agencies to help build the public's trust and legitimacy in policing, it is important to allow citizens and communities to know who is policing them. A straightforward way to accomplish this is to provide basic descriptive data about sworn and civilian employees of law enforcement agencies throughout the state. No information should be made public that could be used to identify individual employees. All data should be collected and presented in the aggregate.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics, within the United States Department of Justice, collects census data on police departments throughout the country. These data are used to track trends in staffing and who is entering the policing profession. These data have proven useful in analyzing population and crime trends.

The Final Report on the President Task Force on 21st Century Policing (May 2015) recommended state and local police earn the trust of citizens and honor their commitment to safety and security. One of the recommendations to accomplish this is to make public all relevant policies and procedures, records, and open data to let the community know what police departments have done and will be doing. Sharing census data on the police will allow communities to better understand how the police represent in terms of demographic and other descriptors.