



THE STANFORD  
**OPEN POLICING**  
PROJECT



Cheryl Phillips  
Stanford Open Policing Project/Big Local News

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# Requesting and collecting the data



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**Marrying academic research  
Journalistic use and public access**

**250 million**

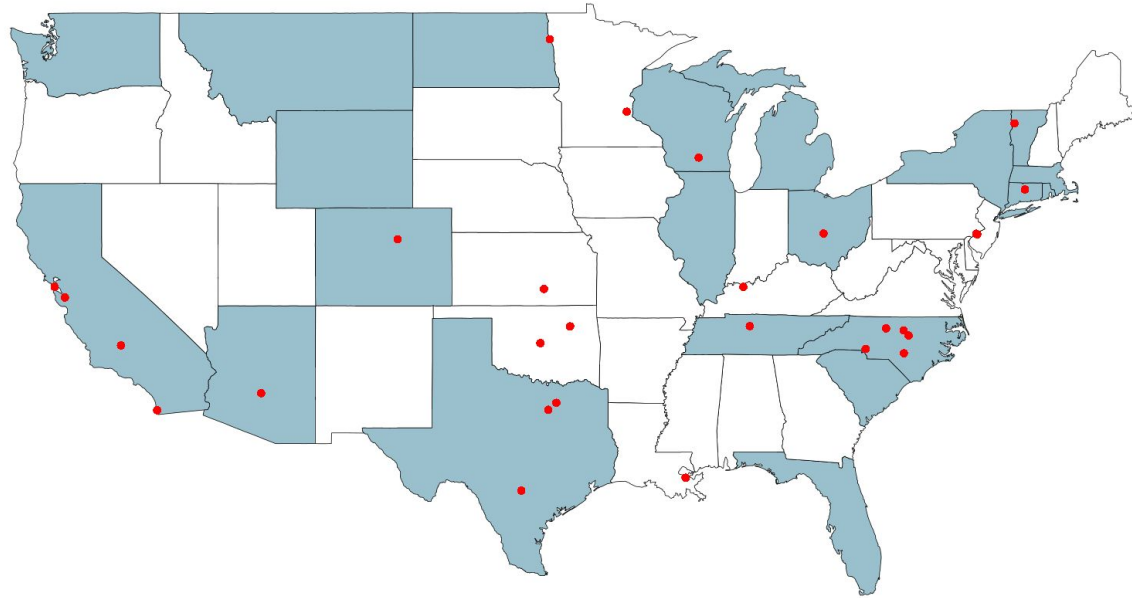
33 states / 57 cities

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# Academic research

100 million traffic stops



## **Stops**

Evidence of bias  
against black drivers  
at the stop decision

Black drivers are  
stopped more often  
than white drivers,  
relative to their share  
of the driving-age  
population.

## **Stops**

But there's a problem.

The driving-age population of an area doesn't mean that accurately represents the drivers on the streets.

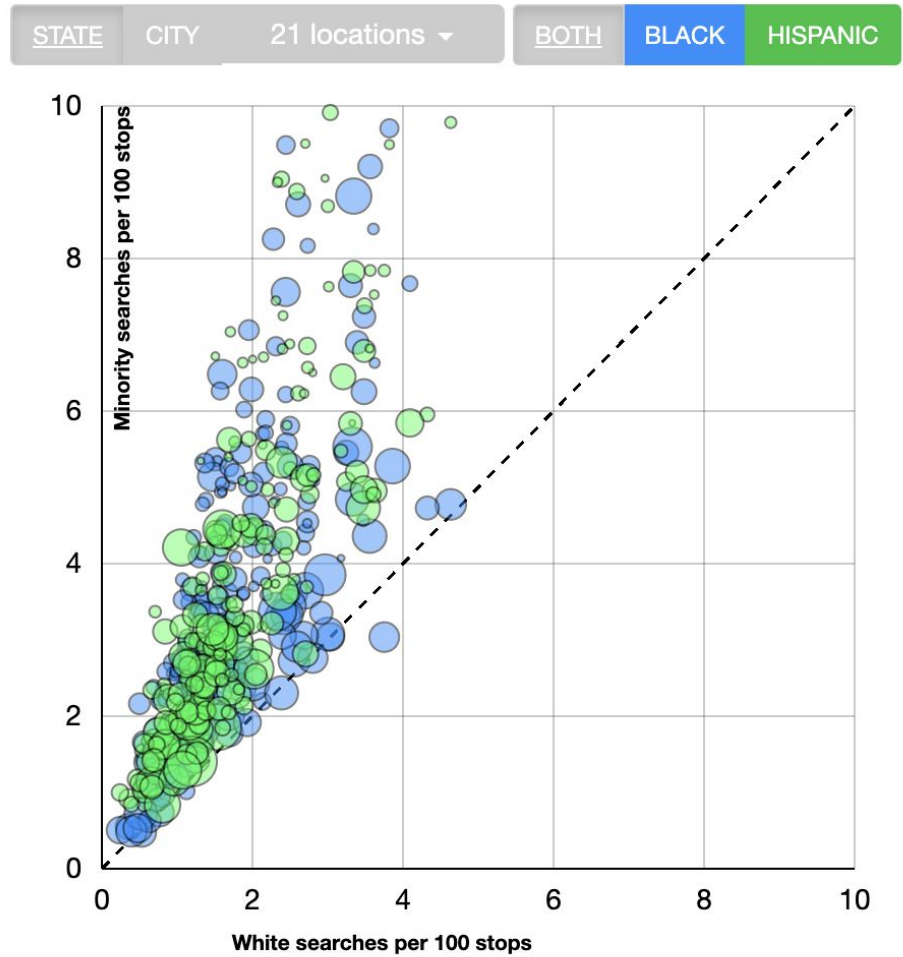
# Other ways to test for disparate impact, bias and discrimination

- Searches
- The result or outcome of the search (hit rate)
- Threshold test
- Veil of Darkness test

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Are officers searching minority drivers on the basis of less evidence than whites?



## Searches

Black and Hispanic drivers are searched on the basis of less evidence

Black and Hispanic drivers are searched considerably more often than white drivers but found with contraband less often.

# The outcome test [Becker, 1957, 1992]

Compares the search success rate (hit rate) across race groups.

*Lower* hit rate for minorities suggests discrimination.

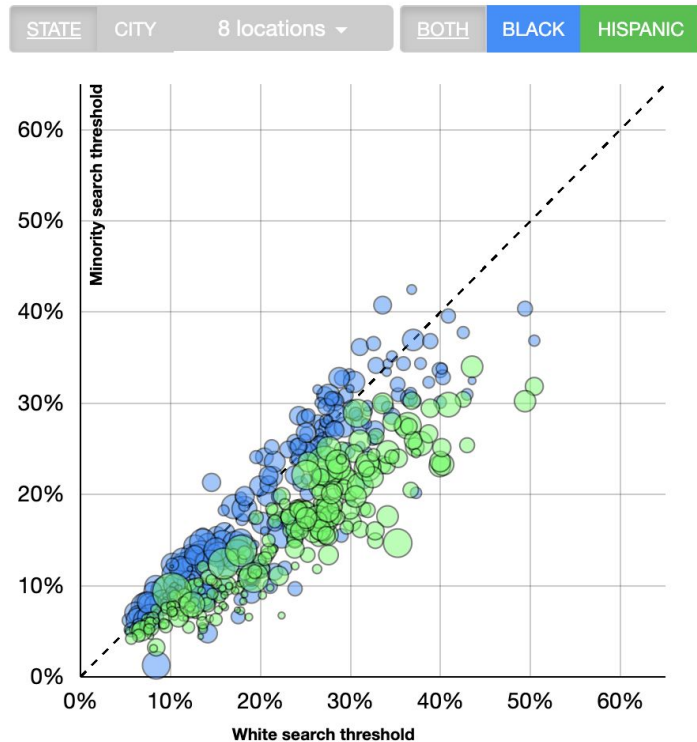
# The outcome test

The outcome test can be misleading: can suggest discrimination when there is none, and vice versa.

# The threshold test

Statistical test to estimate the minimum level of suspicion that officers require to search drivers of different race groups.

*Lower search thresholds for minorities suggest discrimination.*



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# The threshold test

## A new statistical test for discrimination

The test lets us infer the standard of evidence officers apply when deciding whom to search.

A lower search threshold for one group relative to another indicates discrimination.

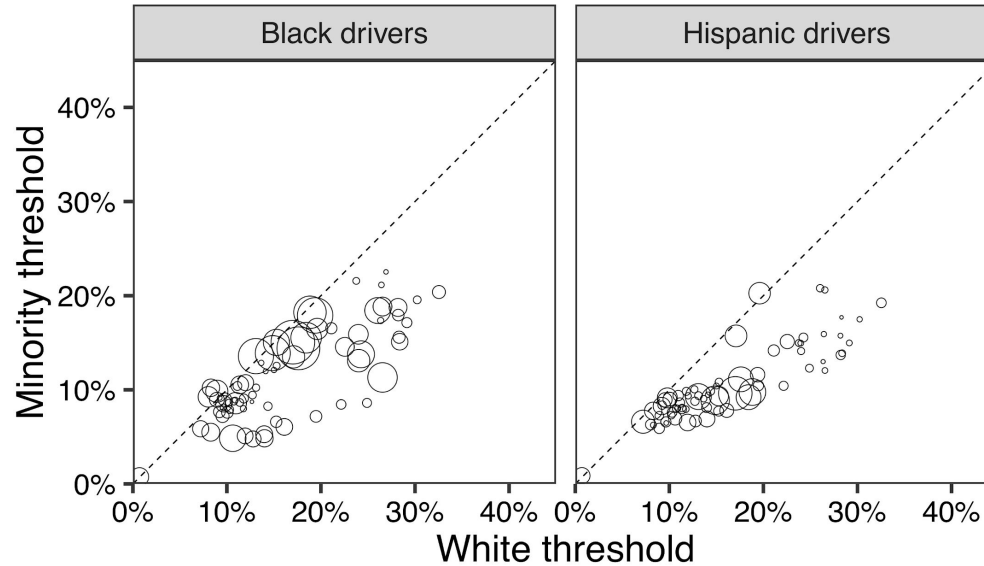
The test is based on both the search rate and the search *success rate*.

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# The threshold test

Evidence that black and Hispanic drivers are searched on the basis of less evidence than whites



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# The “veil of darkness” test

Grogger and Ridgeway, 2006

It’s harder to infer the race of a driver at night, when a “veil of darkness” masks one’s race.

If black drivers comprise a smaller fraction of those stopped at night than those stopped during the day, it suggests officers may be discriminating against black drivers.

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# The “veil of darkness” test

Grogger and Ridgeway, 2006

But driving patterns might also change by time of day.

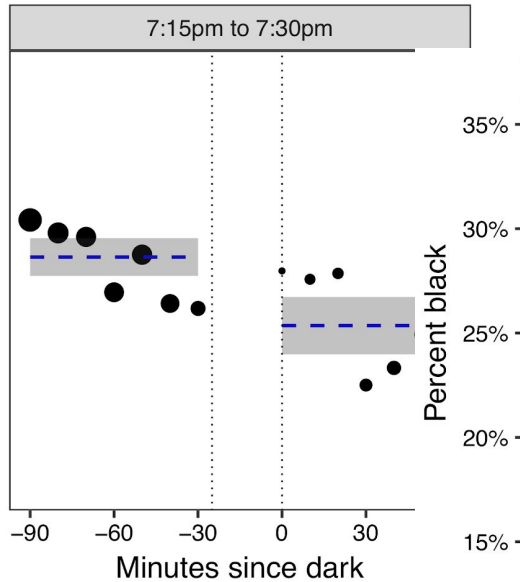
To account for this possibility, one can use the fact that the sun sets at different times throughout the year.

[ 7 p.m. is dark in the winter but light in the summer. ]

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# The “veil of darkness” test [ in Texas ]

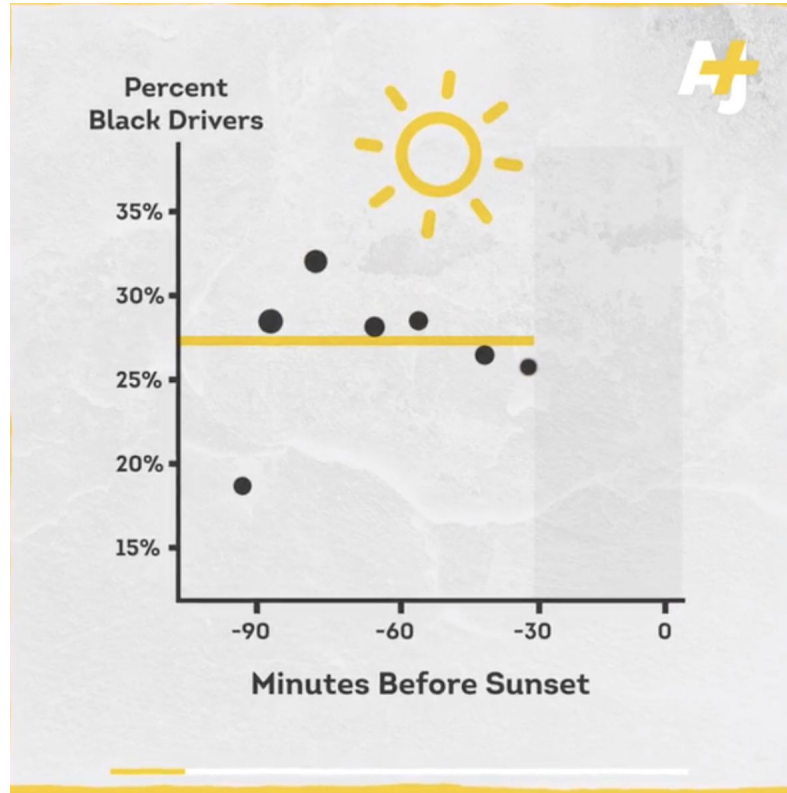


In aggregate, across our dataset, we see the share of stopped drivers who are black is smaller after dusk than before sunset. This pattern is suggestive of racial profiling. It is also easier to explain to readers.

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# Going from data to stories



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# Making the data accessible

Since initial release in 2017: trained nearly 200 journalists

Followed with ongoing support for journalists as they analyze data, both locally and nationally.

Working with Big Local News, an effort that collects, processes and shares governmental data that are hard to obtain and difficult to analyze; partnering with local and national newsrooms.

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## Inside 100 million police traffic stops: New evidence of racial bias

Stanford researchers found that black and Latino drivers were stopped more often than white drivers, based on less evidence of wrongdoing.



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The  
Economist

## Black drivers in America face discrimination by the police

*An analysis of nearly 100m traffic stops suggests that many officers treat “driving while black” as a crime*

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The Economist

Black drivers in America face discrimination by the police

**HUFFPOST**

# Study Finds Racial Bias In Police Traffic Stops And Searches

*Officers treat*

Black drivers were about 20 percent more likely than whites to be pulled over, according to an analysis of nearly 100 million cases.

## Inside 100 million police traffic stops: New evidence of racial bias

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## Study Finds Racial Bias In Police And Searches

Black drivers were about 20 percent more likely than whites to be pulled over, according to an analysis of nearly 100 million cases.



## Researchers studied nearly 100 million traffic stops and found black motorists are more likely to be pulled over



By [AJ Willingham](#), CNN

Updated 12:54 PM ET, Thu March 21, 2019



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**THE CHATTANOOGAN.COM**  
CHATTANOOGA'S SOURCE FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

## Resolution On Banning Racial Profiling And The Excessive Use Of Force

Sunday, July 21, 2019

**HUFFPOST**

## Study Finds Racial Bias In Police And Searches

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**CNN**

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**Los Angeles Times**

### Analysis: LAPD searches blacks and Latinos more often

Los Angeles police officers search blacks and Latinos far more often than whites during ... The Times analysis found that across the city, 24% of black drivers and ... test” in collaboration with the Stanford Open Policing Project.

Oct 8, 2019



### And searches

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## Inside 100 million police traffic stops: New evidence of racial bias

Stanford researchers found that black and Latino drivers were stopped more often than white drivers, based on less evidence of wrongdoing.

Researchers studied nearly 100 million

 Los Angeles Times



 The Spokesman-Review

## Report: Washington State Patrol singles out Native American ...

That was the last time the WSP conducted a substantive analysis of the race and ... The traffic-stop data was obtained by Stanford researchers through a ... and researchers through the university's Open Policing Project.

3 weeks ago

Aztec: Searches of Native Americans, 2009-2015



NEWS

## Inside 100 million evidence of racial

Stanford researchers found that black drivers, based on less evidence of v



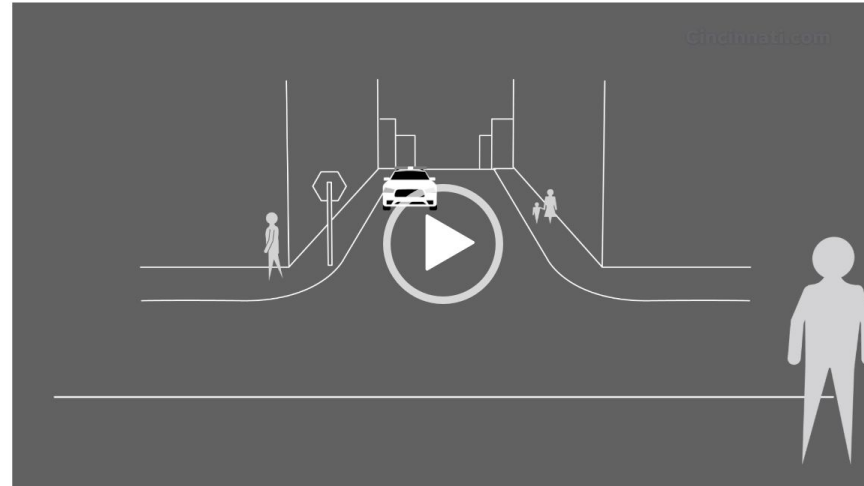
# Investigation: Blacks, black neighborhoods most likely to be traffic stop targets in Ohio's 3 biggest cities

By Max Londberg and Lucia Walinchus | December 18, 2019

Investigation: Blacks, black neighborhoods most likely to be traffic stop targets in Ohio's 3 biggest cities

By Max Londberg and Lucia Walinchus

Video by Michael Nyerges



Reporters from the nonprofit newsroom Eye on Ohio, The Cincinnati Enquirer and researchers from Stanford University's Big Local News program examined police stops to assess how the three largest communities in Ohio use public safety

Los Angeles

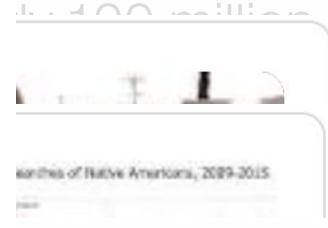
The Spokesman

WLS-TV

## CPD's 'stop black pedestrians

"Stop and frisk also allowed to the Stanford O

Oct 24, 2019



# And from stories to impact

Los Angeles Times

## LAPD will drastically cut back on pulling over random vehicles over racial bias concerns



Community groups in front of LAPD headquarters demanding that the department reform its vehicle stop practices (disproportionately impact blacks and Latinos). (A) Seth/Los Angeles Times

By CINDY CHANG, BEN POSTON | OCT. 11, 2019 | 7 AM

In a major shift prompted by a [Times investigation](#), the Los Angeles Police Department's elite Metropolitan Division will drastically cut back on pulling over random vehicles, a cornerstone of the city's crime-fighting strategy that has under fire for its disproportionate impact on black and Latino drivers.

CINCINNATI

## Cincinnati Councilmember Introduces Motion to Study Racial Disparity in Traffic Stops in Response to Eye on Ohio/Enquirer Story

By Eye on Ohio Staff | December 27, 2019

On Friday, Cincinnati City Councilmember Jeff Pastor introduced a motion to examine the department's practices, including the Ohio Center for Investigative Journalism.

INDIAN COUNTRY

## STATE WILL STUDY BIAS IN SEARCHES BY WASHINGTON STATE TROOPERS

JASON BUCH March 16, 2020



RECOMMEND



TWEET



EMAIL



PRINT



MORE

WITH CROSSCUT, INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY, WENATCHEE WORLD

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# Explore the data, tutorials and code

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://openpolicing.stanford.edu>. The page features a navigation menu with links for DATA, TUTORIALS, FINDINGS, PUBLICATIONS, NEWS, and EXPLORE. The main content area displays a map of the United States where each state is represented by a box containing its two-letter abbreviation. The boxes are colored in shades of blue and grey. To the right of the map, the text reads "THE STANFORD OPEN POLICING PROJECT" followed by a paragraph: "On a typical day in the United States, police officers make more than 50,000 traffic stops. Our team is gathering, analyzing, and releasing records from millions of traffic stops by law enforcement agencies across the country. Our goal is to help researchers, journalists, and policymakers investigate and improve interactions between police and the public." Below this text is a button labeled "VIEW DATA".

DATA TUTORIALS FINDINGS PUBLICATIONS NEWS EXPLORE

AK ME

VT NH

WA ID MT ND MN MI NY MA RI

OR UT WY SD IA WI IN OH PA NJ CT

CA NV CO NE MO IL KY WV VA MD DE

AZ NM KS AR TN NC SC DC

OK LA MS AL GA

HI TX FL

## THE STANFORD OPEN POLICING PROJECT

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[VIEW DATA](#)

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# Tips for how to write about policing efforts

- Don't assume discrimination when you see differences in stops. Do more digging first.
  - Check for disparities
  - Check for disparate **impact**
  - Examine whether bias could be at play - **Veil of Darkness** test
  - And investigate whether that bias is an indicator of discrimination
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# Expanding beyond police stops

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# More journalism organizations are sharing data along with stories.

In 2019, USA TODAY led a national effort to publish disciplinary records for police officers. George Floyd's death has renewed calls for transparency

**John Kelly, and Mark Nichols, USA TODAY**

Updated 6:48 a.m. PDT June 11, 2020

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Updated 6:48 a.m. PDT June 11, 2020




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# Big Local News data-sharing reduces siloed efforts



 [My Projects](#)

 [My Groups](#)

 [Open Projects](#)

 [Data Archive](#)

Allows for private projects shared with specific uses

Open projects available to anyone on the platform

Plus, archiving with the Stanford Digital Repository for permanence

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# Resources for finding data and documents

## 911 and 311 calls

Even tracking the volume of calls can mean a story.

### Depressed police activity since June unrest

Following the unrest around Floyd's death, service calls taken by the Minneapolis Police Department slid drastically and remained lower than usual all summer long.

DAILY MINNEAPOLIS POLICE CALLS

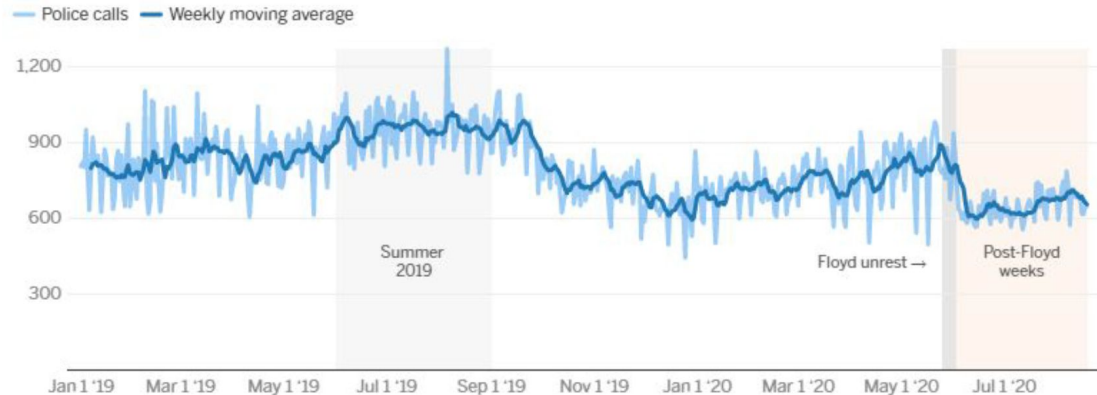


Chart: Jeff Hargarten, Star Tribune • Source: City of Minneapolis

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Source: presentation by Mary Jo Webster/Minneapolis Star-Tribune

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# Resources for finding data and documents

Court settlements available through public records requests

Police misconduct and Use of Force records

*Who are cops employing? [BJS survey data](#) of about 3,500 local law enforcement agencies*

That and plenty more at the [National Archive of Criminal Justice Data](#), plus experts for interviews.

Audits of police agencies ([Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#))

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# Resources for finding data and documents





NEWS

## Bakersfield Police Broke 31 People's Bones in Four Years. No Officer Has Been Disciplined for It

By Lisa Pickoff-White, KQED; Ross Ewald and Daniella Echeverria, Stanford University; Anne Daugherty, UC Berkeley, June 16, 2021

Subject: Out of the office	21:47:00	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks - 3	M	H	847	
	21:47:00	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 6 months				
	21:48:00	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 months - 1				
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 3 years				
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 5 years				
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5 - 10 years	...	...	...	...
		<input type="checkbox"/> More than 10				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Not mention				
	21:49:00	Did any o	M	H	924	1069
	21:49:00	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes				
	21:49:00	<input type="checkbox"/> No				
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Add incident  
 2 in their respective categories location you can find. Rev.  
 See the Incidents section

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1004	
1035	[REDACTED]
1026	[REDACTED] y
1042	y
994	y

**The Mercury News**

# One Bay Area city, 73 police dog bites, and the law that made them public

How the city of Richmond could be a test case in California's quest for police accountability



By **JULIA PRODIS SULEK** | jsulek@bayareanewsgroup.com and **HARRIET BLAIR ROWAN** | hrowan@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group  
 PUBLISHED: December 19, 2021 at 6:01 a.m. | UPDATED: January 10, 2022 at 6:17 p.m.



Richmond police officer lunge during training at the Richmond Police K-9 training facility in November. Richmond police have logged dog bites at a higher rate than their counterparts in the nation's largest cities, but police argue it's better to use dogs than guns. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

**R**ICHMOND — On the last Saturday of 2019, Richmond Police Officer Brandon Hodges sent his trusty police dog Gunnar under a porch to confront a 19-year-old man who had been...



# Reporting on red light cameras

In 2014, WTSP reported on how government officials and a contractor had made millions in fines by shortening yellow lights at intersections with red-light cameras. The investigation spurred a state investigation and a change in state law.





## Some suburbs take only seconds to review red light camera citations, analysis shows

Reporters found one suburban officer who reviewed and approved 41 tickets in 59 seconds. His boss, the chief, had more than 400 instances where he assessed and approved a citation in 2 seconds or less.



Chief Jimmy Lee, of the Fox Lake Police Department, discusses the review process for red light camera recordings and how the department determines which drivers get fined. (Chris Walker and Jermal R. Brinson / Chicago Tribune)

# License Plate Readers

## [Voice of San Diego:](#)

“SDPD audited its employees’ use of license plate reader data during roughly six week stretches [in the fall of 2016](#) and [the summer of 2017](#). During both periods, SDPD staff failed to enter a reason they were accessing the database nearly half of the time.

In 2016, SDPD users didn’t enter a reason for their search in 258 instances out of the 496 times they used the system, or about 51 percent of the time.

In 2017, SDPD staff didn’t enter a reason 238 times out of the 500 times they used the system, or about 47 percent of the time.”