THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE
DEPARTMENT CITY REPORT

About This Report

The Center for Policing Equity (CPE) partnered with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) to examine policing practices and behavior from 2014 to 2018 as part of the National Justice Database (NJD) project. CPE examined the incidences of vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, and use of force in order to:

- Identify any racial disparities in police interactions with civilians
- Determine if disparities were caused by inequitable practices or other factors
- Identify any attitudinal dispositions by officers or within the department that may be risk factors for inequitable practices.

CPE analyzed data provided by SFPD to generate this report. Findings and recommendations are summarized below.

What Does It Mean If This Analysis Finds Evidence of Racial Disparities?

Disparities do not necessarily indicate that police officers have engaged in biased or discriminatory behavior. Disparities in rates of police contact and the outcomes of this contact mean that racial groups in San Francisco, California have different experiences of SFPD policing. This is important to measure, as these differences can represent pain points for communities. Factors outside of a department's control (e.g. poverty and crime rates) contribute to disparities. Measuring these factors can help infer what portion of the disparity is likely related to officer behavior and/or departmental policies and practices.

KEY FINDINGS

Results of the study did show racial disparities in SFPD interactions with community members during the study period. Key findings include:

- The per-capita stop rate of Black drivers was over 2.5 times higher than the per-capita stop rate for White drivers or Latinx drivers, and 4 times higher than for Asian drivers.

- Black residents were estimated to be nearly 19 times more likely to have force used on them compared to White residents in the same neighborhood, and Latinx residents were almost twice as likely as White residents. (controlling for neighborhood crime rate, poverty rate, and the share of the Black population).

- Use of force incidents were 1.2 times more likely to involve pointing a firearm when the community member was Black rather than White.

- Between 2016 and 2018, the overall count of use of force incidents and the racial disparity in per-capita risk of force declined.

CPE's hope is that SFPD can leverage the information to address racial disparities and improve police-community relations.

San Francisco Police Department is Committed To Enhancing Equity & Improving Community Trust

In 2017, SFPD joined CPE's National Justice Database (NJD), a national initiative for data collection and analysis of police behavior. As part of its participation in the NJD, SFPD shared data on its stops, searches, and use-of-force incidents.

COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY

- Since 1982, SFPD has been overseen by the Department of Police Accountability, a civilian oversight agency that investigates complaints against SFPD officers, conducts periodic audits, and makes policy recommendations regarding police practices.

- The department also has a Community Engagement Division where officers are assigned full-time to proactively engage with the community, including through relationship building events, participation in community events, and working with community leaders.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- SFPD offers a ten-week Community Police Academy program open to members of the community and designed to provide an overview of SFPD structure and activities.

- The department also collaborates with community members to support quality of life and public safety through Community Police Advisory Boards (CPABs) and obtains community input from Chief William Scott's Advisory Forums (started in 2017).

By participating in CPE's National Justice Database and other community initiatives, SFPD has shown itself to be a leader in its commitment to advancing equitable policing outcomes. SFPD initiated the partnership with CPE and has participated with courage and transparency, knowing that disparities would be found. CPE commends SFPD for their proactive, and ongoing participation in enhancing equity, and encourages SFPD to undertake additional steps to enhance their commitment to fair and equitable policing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CPE developed 7 recommendations to improve police and community relations, including:

1. **Adopt a unified policy on data collection.** CPE recommends SFPD adopt a single, comprehensive policy addressing collection of data on stops in compliance with the Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015 (RIPA).

2. **Expand the definition of reportable force.** CPE recommends SFPD expand the definition of reportable force in Department General Order 5.01 (Use of Force) to include all force used to overcome resistance, regardless of injury.

3. **Collect more detailed use of force information.** CPE recommends SFPD collect and share more detailed data on use of force incidents. In particular, we recommend that SFPD collect and analyze data in a tabular format to facilitate ease of statistical analysis.

4. **Utilize COPS Stop Data Guidebook.** CPE recommends SFPD implement the recommendations for RIPA compliance outlined in the COPS Stop Data Guidebook.

5. **Require supervisor review of stop records.** CPE recommends SFPD require officers to submit brief daily narratives to their supervisors about stops conducted.

6. **Update policy on drawing firearms.** CPE recommends that SFPD update Department General Order 5.01 (Use of Force) to clarify the circumstances in which an officer may draw a firearm. We recommend that SFPD align requirements for drawing a weapon with the existing higher standard for pointing a firearm, by amending GO 5.01 policy to add that officers may only draw their firearms if they reasonably believe that there is a substantial risk that the situation may escalate to the point where deadly force may be justified.

7. **Identify situational risk factors for discrimination.** CPE recommends SFPD train its officers and supervisors on the situational risk factors that can increase the likelihood of racially disparate behavior.

Additional Ways in Which SFPD Proactively Enhances Equity Within the Community Already

The San Francisco Police Department has described the following equity initiatives, above and beyond those evaluated by CPE as part of the NJD project:

- **Safe Place Program (LGBTQ Community):** The SFPD works with community organizations and businesses to designate Safe Places throughout the city by placing decals in their entrances. The safe places are of use for anyone that may be in an unsafe situation and in need of immediate police or emergency assistance. Participating locations will call 9-1-1 on the victim's behalf.

- **Restorative Justice Program:** Through this program SFPD attempts to break the cycle of gun violence in communities by working with 18-30 year-olds who may be susceptible to gun violence (as both a perpetrator and a victim).

- **Language Access Services:** SFPD provides an essential, ongoing service providing assistance and resources to members of the community in their native language.

SFPD also interacts with community youth in the Community Safety Initiative program and the Youth Career Academy.

Read the Full Report *For access to the full SFPD City Report please request it from the Chief's office.*

The Center for Policing Equity (CPE) is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and achieving policing equity. CPE addresses some of the nation's biggest social challenges through data and accountability. CPE works with police departments, communities, and political stakeholders to look for ways to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. CPE has worked with Google, the TED Conference, SXSW, The Atlantic, and more. CPE created the National Justice Database, the nation's first database tracking national statistics on police behavior, including stops and use of force, built on data collected and voluntarily contributed by police departments across the country.