

**MINNESOTA
RACIAL PROFILING STUDY**

ALL JURISDICTIONS REPORT

Summary of Findings

**Council on Crime and Justice
Institute on Race and Poverty**

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A basic pattern emerges from our analysis of traffic stop data collected by the sixty-five law enforcement jurisdictions that voluntarily participated in this racial profiling study:

Law enforcement officers stopped Black, Latino, and American Indian drivers at greater rates than White drivers, searched Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians at greater rates than White drivers, and found contraband as a result of searches of Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians at lower rates than in searches of White drivers. Conversely, law enforcement officers stopped and searched White drivers at lower rates than drivers of color and found contraband in searches of White drivers at a greater rate than in searches of drivers of color.

These disparities are particularly large for Blacks and Latinos. If officers in the participating jurisdiction had stopped drivers of all racial/ethnic groups at the same rate, approximately 18,800 fewer Blacks, 5,800 fewer Latinos and approximately 22,500 more Whites would have been stopped in the sixty-five jurisdictions in 2002. If officers in the participating had subjected stopped drivers of all racial/ethnic groups to discretionary searches at the same rate, 2,114 fewer Blacks, 428 fewer Latinos and 2,645 more Whites would have been searched.

This pattern existed in nearly every participating jurisdiction. Whites were stopped at a greater than expected rate in only 8 of the 60 jurisdictions having enough stops to determine statistical significance. On the other hand, Blacks were over-stopped in every jurisdiction but one and Latinos were over-stopped in all but 5 of the 43 jurisdictions in which statistical significance could be determined. Similarly, in all but 2 of the 37 jurisdictions in which there were discretionary searches of Blacks and Whites, Blacks were subjected to searches at a higher rate than Whites. Latinos were subjected to these searches at a higher rate than Whites in all of the jurisdictions in which there were discretionary searches of Latinos.

These disparities in discretionary search rates are particularly troubling given the rates at which contraband was found as a result of these searches, i.e. the hit rates. Overall, 24% of discretionary searches of Whites produced contraband compared to only 11% of searched Blacks and 9% of searches of Latinos. In the 37 jurisdictions where discretionary searches of both Blacks and Whites occurred, the hit rate was higher for Whites in 30 of the jurisdictions. In 31 of the 44 jurisdictions where there were discretionary searches of both Whites and Latinos the hit rate was higher for Whites.

The greatest relative differences between actual and expected stops and searches for Blacks are found in suburban cities and central cities other than Minneapolis. In the suburban cities of Fridley, New Hope, Plymouth, Sauk Rapids, and Savage combined, Blacks were stopped about 310% more often than expected. Once stopped, officers subjected Blacks to discretionary searches at a rate 108% greater than expected even though only 11% of Blacks were found in possession of contraband compared to 18% of Whites searched. In absolute terms, approximately 1,800 fewer Blacks would have been stopped in these suburban cities if Blacks had been stopped at the same rate as other drivers. If Blacks stopped in these cities had been subjected to discretionary searches at the same rate as other drivers, 108 fewer Blacks would have been searched.

In the central cities of Moorhead, Saint Cloud, and Rochester combined, Blacks were stopped 239% more often than expected and searched 68% more often than expected. 21% of searches of Blacks in these jurisdictions produced contraband compared to 30% of searches of Whites. In absolute terms this equates to about 1,600 more stops than expected and 29 more searches than expected.

The greatest stop and search disparities for Latinos are also found in the suburban cities. The combined stop rate for Latinos in these jurisdictions was 170% greater than expected and the combined search rate was 190% greater than expected. Only 9% of searches of Latinos produced contraband compared to 18% of searches of Whites. In absolute terms, officers in these jurisdictions stopped 640 more Latinos than they would have if Latinos had been stopped at the same rate as all drivers. If Latinos stopped in these cities had been subjected to discretionary searches at the same rate as other drivers, 80 fewer Latinos would have been searched.

The largest absolute differences between actual and expected stops and searches for Blacks and Latinos were found in Minneapolis, the largest jurisdiction participating in this study with the highest number of traffic stops. In Minneapolis, Blacks were stopped 152% more often than expected and once stopped, subjected to discretionary searches 52% more often than expected. 11% of searches of Blacks produced contraband compared to 13% of searches of Whites. If Minneapolis officers had stopped Blacks at the same rate as other drivers approximately 12,804 fewer Blacks would have been stopped in Minneapolis in 2002. If Blacks stopped in Minneapolis had been subjected to discretionary searches at the same rate as all stopped drivers, 1,053 fewer Blacks would have been searched.

Minneapolis officers stopped Latinos 63% more often than expected and once stopped, subjected Latinos to discretionary searches 15% more often than expected. If Minneapolis officers had stopped Latinos at the same rate as all drivers approximately 2,200 fewer Latinos would have been stopped in Minneapolis in 2002. Only 5% of searches of Latinos produced contraband. If Latinos stopped in Minneapolis had been subjected to discretionary searches at the same rate as other drivers, 82 fewer Latinos would have been searched.

These patterns suggest a strong likelihood that racial/ethnic bias plays a role in traffic stop policies and practices in Minnesota. The same is true for the searches that result from these stops. Taken together, these patterns warrant serious examination. It is fair to conclude that the problems that they suggest are not isolated to a handful of jurisdictions or present only in those jurisdictions that chose to participate in this study.

Although there is more variation in results for American Indian drivers across jurisdictions, data for this group also raise concerns of bias. Across all jurisdictions, American Indians were stopped at a slightly greater rate than Whites (9.2% compared to 8.3%). Once stopped, American Indians were subjected to discretionary searches over three times as often as Whites (9.6% compared to 3.1%) even though contraband was found at a lower rate in discretionary searches of American Indians (19.7%) than of Whites (23.5%).

As is more fully discussed in the full report, there are limitations to our estimates of the driving population, used to calculate the number of “expected” stops for each racial/ethnic group, that should be considered when interpreting these results. The estimate of the driving population used here was the driving age population of the jurisdiction. Thus, it includes people who are old enough to drive but do not do so. Nor does it account for differences in driving habits or vehicle condition across households. The estimate includes only residents of the jurisdiction whereas the actual driving population in a jurisdiction includes non-residents, and as a result, so does the stopped population. Because search and hit rates are determined using only the data recorded by law enforcement officers, they are not subject to the same limitations.