

NDSC Criminal Justice Data Initiative: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN POLICE- INITIATED CONTACT

The [Neighborhood Data for Social Change](#) (NDSC) platform, a project of the [USC Price Center for Social Innovation](#), is a free, publicly available online resource for civic actors in Los Angeles County to learn about their neighborhoods. In the spring of 2019, the USC Price Center partnered with Microsoft and the [USC Safe Communities Institute](#) to launch the [NDSC Criminal Justice Data Initiative](#), a pilot project to collect, aggregate, and disseminate additional public safety indicators on the NDSC platform, including arrests, stops by police, and calls for service from community members. These indicators were chosen through a process of engaging law enforcement agencies, community residents, and local non-profits on their data needs and definitions of public safety through a series of convenings and listening sessions. A summary of racial disparities in police-initiated contact is shared below.

The Initiative began at the end of a decade that elevated the urgent need for reform across many parts of the criminal justice system. Although tensions between police and communities of color have existed for over century in the United States, the widespread availability of camera phones and movements like #BlackLivesMatter beginning in 2013 brought issues of violence and racial discrimination at the hands of law enforcement into the internet mainstream.

Research shows that Americans still have widely differing views on policing and the criminal justice system as a whole, particularly across racial/ethnic lines. A 2016 Pew survey found that 75% of White Americans think that police use the right amount of force in each situation and treat racial and ethnic groups equally. By comparison, just over a third of Black Americans thought the same.¹ This marked divide in understanding regarding policing and criminal justice could stem from a lack of available data and information. Police departments are not required by federal law to report data on their activities to the FBI or to the public, and in 2016, under 60% of police departments reported arrest data to the FBI. Additionally, the elimination of police reforms put in place by the Obama administration, including the use of consent decrees to bring federal oversight to troubled police departments, has eroded support from Black communities who feel agencies that practice racial profiling, use excessive force, and other forms of unconstitutional policing are free to do so without impunity.³

¹ Stepler, R. M. (2020, May 30). The Racial Confidence Gap in Police Performance. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/09/29/the-racial-confidence-gap-in-police-performance/>

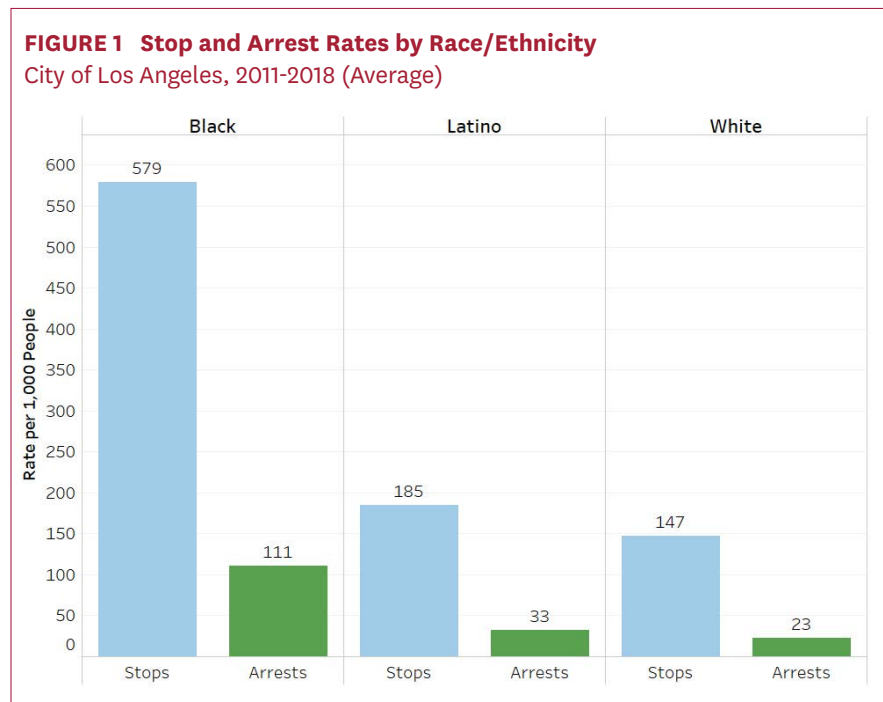
² Neusteter, R., & O'Toole, M. (2020, July 09). Vera Institute. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from <https://www.vera.org/publications/arrest-trends-every-three-seconds-landing/arrest-trends-every-three-seconds/overview>

³ Mcmanus, H. D., Cullen, F. T., Jonson, C. L., Burton, A. L., & Burton, V. S. (2019). Will Black Lives Matter to the Police? African Americans' Concerns about Trump's Presidency. *Victims & Offenders*, 14(8), 1040-1062. DOI:10.1080/15564886.2019.1671288

KEY FINDING: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN STOP AND ARREST RATES

People of color across all neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles — especially people who identify as Black — are stopped at higher rates by the police than other groups. Across the City, Black Angelenos are stopped and arrested three times as often as White and Latino Angelenos. Figure 1 shows stop and arrest rates by race/ethnicity, averaging data from years 2011 to 2018 and accounting for the relative size of each racial/ ethnic group.

These disparities exist across the nation. A 2018 report by the Vera Institute for Justice analyzed arrest trends from police departments around the U.S. and found that while Black people make up 12% of the U.S. population, they account for 28% of people arrested.



⁴ Neusteter, R., & O'Toole, M. (2020, July 09). Vera Institute. Retrieved July 10, 2020, from <https://www.vera.org/publications/arrest-trends-every-three-seconds-landing/arrest-trends-every-three-seconds/overview>