OVERCOME BARRIERS. BUILD TRUST.

THE POWER OF POLICING RESEARCH

Law enforcement personnel play a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the people they serve. However, the policing environment is complex and continues to evolve. RTI International understands the climate in which law enforcement officers operate and the unique problems they face. Through applied research, evaluation, technical assistance, and novel analytic tools, we partner with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to understand and solve 21st-century policing challenges.

RTI INTERNATIONAL

Independent, Research-Based Perspectives

Informed policing requires independent, research-based perspectives. For the past decade, our Policing Research Program has provided scientifically grounded, data-driven information to law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and government policymakers.

Our Team

The Policing Research Program consists of criminologists, statisticians, data scientists, and analysts—including researchers who have direct law enforcement experience as officers or crime analysts.

Our deep capabilities in disciplines adjacent to policing work—such as forensic science, public health, and social policy—can help you develop more effective policing policies and practices.

Diverse Capabilities and Data-Driven Services

Understanding a problem is the first step in developing an effective solution and making an informed decision. Through research and data analysis, we can help you understand pressing policing issues. We provide a range of capabilities and services, including the following:

Data collection and analysis

Web applications and development

Strategy and training program evaluation

Training and technical assistance

Forensic science

Instrument and analytic tool development

Data science and geospatial analytics

Making an Impact

Every day, law enforcement officials make an impact on the communities that they serve—enforcing the law, preventing crime, and doing much more. We partner with these officials to help them have a positive impact by using existing data in innovative ways and gathering new data to inform decisions.

Here are a few ways we're helping to make communities safer for police and community members alike:

Investigating racial disparities in police-community interactions. RTI is working with local jurisdictions to analyze patterns of racial disparities in traffic stops and their outcomes, including search and seizure. We also developed RTI-STAR in response to calls for proven methodologies that help police agencies determine if a pattern of racial disproportionality existed in their traffic stops. Use this free, web-based tool to analyze traffic-stop data; see if race is a factor in a department's stops; and increase transparency with government officials, community leaders, and the public.

Eliminating the sexual assault kit backlog. To eradicate sexual assault kit backlogs and to prevent future delays, we provide agencies—like the Bureau of Justice Assistance—and departments across the country with technical assistance, training resources, and research support. Through the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Training and Technical Assistance project funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, we provide grantees with victim-centered training on sexual violence and sustainable practices for processing forensic evidence and investigating sexual assault.

This work provides law enforcement personnel, medical and forensic professionals, victim advocates, and prosecutors with a better capacity to address sexual assault and respond meaningfully to sexual assault victims.

Leveraging public safety operations data to inform resourcing decisions. To help agencies understand and make informed decisions about operational and strategic issues, we developed a web-based application called CFS Analytics™. CFS Analytics processes and visualizes operational data, including 911 call-for-service data, incident report information, and incident outcomes. This tool helps to assess and justify how resources are used given the constantly changing demands for public safety assets.

Developing evidence for how best to mitigate stress of police officers. To better understand how stressful situations affect officers and their decisions, we are working with volunteer police officers from the Durham Police Department (North Carolina) to monitor their levels of emotional and physical stress through personal wearable devices. These devices measure heart rate, skin temperature, and more.

These data offer extremely useful information, ultimately helping to inform training and policies aimed at keeping police officers and communities safe.

Addressing crime and the response to crime through incident-based crime reporting. Working with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, we are collaborating with state and local agencies to increase the number of departments participating in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). NIBRS provides a more detailed picture of crime and how it impacts the United States. As more agencies turn to incident-based reporting, we can identify and address important and emerging issues related to crime and safety on national, state, and local levels.

Identifying data-driven approaches for policing operations and strategies. Innovative evaluations help guide public policy in the use and application of policing strategies and technologies. Recent research funded by the National Institute of Justice includes developing strategies to prevent near-repeat residential burglary, evaluating the effectiveness of gunshot detection technology, and optimizing the deployment of public surveillance systems. Through this work, we empower agencies to leverage data to help them understand and inform policing operations.

Helping law enforcement address challenges around drugs and mental health. RTI is actively involved in researching the effectiveness of harm reduction strategies, including the administration of naloxone by officers and other first responders. To provide a clear picture of drug use and trafficking to law enforcement officials across the country, we also work closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration to manage the National Forensic Laboratory Information System.

Collecting national survey data on departmental and officer operations. RTI has extensive experience in survey data collection. Under the Law Enforcement Core Statistics program, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, RTI is surveying law enforcement agencies in the country to produce national estimates on police use of force, use of body-worn cameras, and policy and equipment deployment. This information facilitates national and local discussions about optimizing police operations and provides necessary benchmarks for organizations.

Learn how our research can help you achieve your mission of promoting safety and justice.

www.rti.org/policing

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