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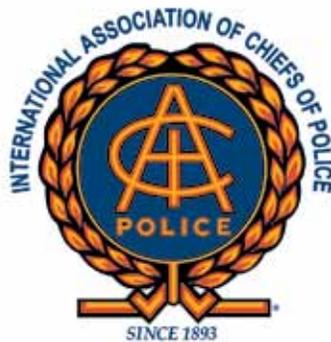
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## Law Enforcement Research Priorities for 2010 and Beyond





**The International Association of Chiefs of Police**

# Law Enforcement Research Priorities for 2010 and Beyond

*Results of the IACP Membership Survey  
and Focus Group 2009 - 2010*

*In Collaboration With*



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## Acknowledgments

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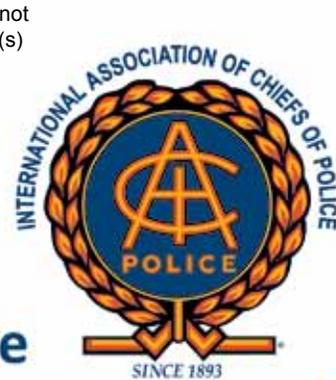
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# The International Association of Chiefs of Police

## Law Enforcement Research Priorities for 2010 and Beyond

*Results of the IACP Membership Survey and Focus Group 2009-2010*

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# I. Executive Summary

In late 2009, the RAC and the IACP Research Center, with funding support from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), conducted a second national survey of law enforcement leaders. The survey asked these leaders about the types of research they find most useful, their current and past participation in research endeavors, and their law enforcement research priorities. This 2009 survey was designed to build on previous survey findings that shaped the earlier National Law Enforcement Research Agenda (NLERA).

This report describes the 2009 survey methodology, provides a summary of findings, outlines views of the focus group assembled by the IACP in February 2010 to discuss the survey results, and offers twelve strategies that law enforcement leaders, researchers, the IACP and other professional organizations and funders can employ to improve the quality, quantity, and usability of law enforcement research in areas prioritized by the NLERA. The following are selected highlights from survey and focus group findings:

Although there is a high level of interest in research among law enforcement leaders surveyed by the IACP, particularly on topics relevant to their current work, the majority say that research only occasionally influences their decision-making. The sources of research findings most frequently utilized by survey respondents are professional law enforcement organizations, conferences, and training events.

Nearly half of respondents to the IACP survey indicated that they or their agency had collaborated with a college or university to answer a research question, and three-quarters said they would at least consider participating in a research project if asked by a reputable university. However, just five percent of respondents indicated that their agencies had sought funding for research; large and mid-size agencies were much more likely to have initiated funding requests. Respondents cited lack of resources as the biggest barrier to their agencies' initiation of and participation in research projects. Survey findings revealed that respondents with graduate degrees are more likely than those with bachelor's, associate's, or high school degrees to be strongly interested in, influenced by and willing to participate in law enforcement-related research.

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<sup>1</sup> Sherman, Lawrence W. 1998. *Evidence-Based Policing*. Ideas in American Policing Series. Washington, DC: Police Foundation. Available online at <http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/Sherman.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lum, Cynthia. 2009. *Translating Police Research into Practice*. Ideas in American Policing Series, Washington, DC: Police Foundation. Available online at [http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/Ideas\\_Lum.pdf](http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/Ideas_Lum.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix, George Mason Univ., Fairfax VA <http://gunston.gmu.edu/cebcp/Matrix.html>

Although it has been more than ten years since Lawrence Sherman advocated that law enforcement practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best<sup>1</sup>, research findings have not yet been widely or systematically incorporated into law enforcement policies and practices.<sup>2</sup> This is due in part to the fact that relatively few scientifically rigorous evaluation research studies of policing have been completed, and the findings of these studies have only recently begun to be summarized in ways that make them more accessible and useful to both researchers and law enforcement practitioners.<sup>3</sup> It is also attributable to law enforcement agencies' traditional preference for experience-driven over research-based practice.

Further, while the call for scientifically rigorous evaluation is certainly valid, many of the issues raised by respondents to this survey (and previous RAC surveys) do not lend themselves to experimental design and thus, make the research and evaluation design process more difficult. Other less rigorous, but valid, research designs can and should be utilized to support and improve policing practices along with more rigorous scientific studies.

To make police practice more evidence-based will require not only conducting more high-quality research but also encouraging and facilitating police application of research results. This report presents twelve action recommendations directed to law enforcement agencies, professional organizations, researchers and funders. These recommendations are based on the 2009 survey findings, and 2010 survey focus group suggestions.

## II. Background and Goals

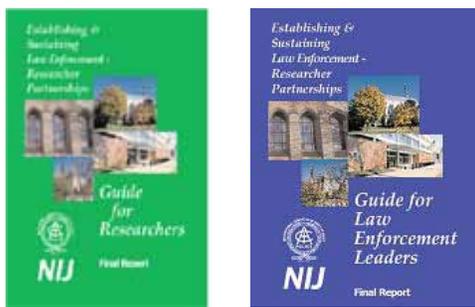
In 2003 the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in collaboration with the Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADPCCJ), and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), hosted a roundtable discussion on improving partnerships between law enforcement leaders and university-based researchers. As a result of recommendations from this roundtable, IACP established its national Research Advisory Committee (RAC) comprised of law enforcement practitioners and researchers who work together to help establish and sustain effective research partnerships among law enforcement organizations and the research community.

The RAC's goals include identifying and reporting on exemplary research partnerships and preparing, disseminating, and periodically updating a law enforcement research agenda. The RAC supports law enforcement agencies interested in participating in research and provides input and advice to NIJ and other federal agencies.

The RAC also works with the IACP to design education and training on research topics for professional meetings and has published several resources for law enforcement agencies and researchers with the support of NIJ:

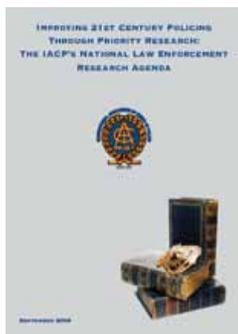
## Establishing & Sustaining Law Enforcement – Researcher Partnerships, 2007

This two-volume set includes a *Guide for Researchers* and a *Guide for Law Enforcement Leaders* that describe, for each target audience, how effective research partnerships can be developed and sustained.



## National Law Enforcement Research Agenda (NLERA), 2008

Based on a survey of 1,000 IACP members and outreach to other national law enforcement organizations, the RAC developed a prioritized listing of law enforcement research topics that are currently of greatest interest to the law enforcement community. The eight topic areas identified were: leadership, management and administration, training and education, technology, partner systems, response to crime and victimization, emergency preparedness, and emerging issues. The NLERA also provides principles and guidelines identified by the RAC as essential to successful research outcomes. The NLERA was developed to encourage police-researcher partnerships to conduct research on high-priority topics and make actionable results available to the law enforcement community in user-friendly formats.



## III. Survey Methods and Findings

In late 2009, the RAC and the IACP Research Center, with funding support from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), conducted a second national survey of law enforcement leaders. The survey asked these leaders about the types of research they find most useful, their current and past participation in research endeavors, and their law enforcement research priorities. This 2009 survey was designed to build on previous survey findings that shaped the earlier National Law Enforcement Research Agenda (NLERA).

The *Research Perspectives and Priorities of Law Enforcement Leaders Survey* was developed and pretested by IACP. The survey format included both fixed response and open-ended questions focused on four areas of interest: personal and agency backgrounds, agency research capacities and experience, perspectives on research, and possible future research topics.

Responses to the survey were solicited through numerous IACP outlets: the IACP website, Twitter and Facebook, IACP information newsletter, the Smaller Agency newsletter, the State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP) Division, the State and Provincial Police Division, and various IACP committee and section contact lists. Although survey respondents were not required to be IACP members, only those who were first and second in command of a sworn law enforcement agencies were eligible to participate. The response period was November through December of 2009. During this two-month timeframe, a total of 731 responses were received.

### Sample Size

The IACP has confidence that the survey sample of 731 self-selected respondents is reflective of IACP membership, especially those with interest in research issues and priorities. Past research endeavors from the IACP reflect similar sample populations. For example, the 2007 RAC survey in collaboration with Hollander Cohen & McBride (HCM) Marketing Research utilized a representative sample of 1,000 to develop the National Law Enforcement Research Agenda. The most recent *Police Chief Magazine* annual reader interest survey was mailed out to 1,000 readers with 570 responses received. Lastly, a 2010 Booz Allen survey in support of the IACP Strategic Plan development produced useful results with 500 respondents contributing. This current RAC survey of 731 respondents represents law enforcement officials from a wide array of types and sizes of agencies including smaller, mid-sized, and major departments.

## Findings and Analysis

This section describes the backgrounds of respondents, summarizes their experience with and perspectives on law enforcement research, and looks at the impact of agency size, proximity to colleges/universities, and leaders' education level on reported involvement and interest in research.

### Respondent and Agency Characteristics

The profile characteristics of respondents and their agencies are similar to those of law enforcement leadership nationally. As noted below, most are male (94%), a substantial majority (78%) have more than 20 years of law enforcement experience, and one-third have worked in law enforcement more than 30 years. A significant majority (71%) have earned bachelor's or graduate degrees. Most respondents (83%) work for jurisdictions with populations under 50,000, and 75% lead law enforcement agencies with 50 or fewer sworn personnel (median number was 24). A substantial majority of respondents (86%) are employed by city, county, borough, town, or township police departments.

### Survey Respondent Characteristics

- Gender: Male (94%); Female (6%)
- Law Enforcement Experience: Range of 3 to 52 years
- Education: 70% hold bachelor's degrees or higher
- Median Number Sworn in Department: 24
- Department Demographics: Majority from urban or suburban municipal police departments; Jurisdictional population range of 265 to entire U.S. population (Median: 12,500)

The table below shows the highest education level of respondents within each agency size category. Surveyed leaders of major law enforcement agencies are much more likely than those of small and mid-size agencies to have graduate degrees, and nearly all major agency leaders have bachelor's or graduate degrees, in comparison to 87% of mid-size agency leaders and 67% of small agency leaders.

## Respondent Level of Education by Agency Size

Education Level	Agency Size*		
	Small (83%)	Mid-Size (13%)	Major (4%)
High school (3%)	3%	-	-
Associate's/some college (27%)	30%	13%	10%
Bachelor's (36%)	35%	47%	35%
Graduate degree (35%)	32%	40%	62%
Totals	100%	100%	100%
*Major agencies serve jurisdictions with 500,000 or more population; mid-size 50,000 to 499,999; and small under 50,000 population			

While graduate degree education levels are certainly not required to succeed as a law enforcement leader, those with a graduate degrees have likely participated in and learned to critique criminal justice research, and are thus more likely to be open to partnering with colleges and universities to conduct law enforcement research. This hypothesis is supported by the survey findings summarized below.

## Perspectives on Law Enforcement Research

In response to an open-ended question asking survey participants their general perceptions of law enforcement-related research (75% wrote a response), several stated that they find evidence-based practices to be particularly helpful in improving strategies and tactics (e.g., around use of tasers) and in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of policies. Many indicated that they believe evidence-based decisions should shape the future directions of their agencies and the law enforcement field as a whole. Respondents identified lack of resources as the biggest obstacles to their participation in research, which they see as both costly and time-consuming. Some questioned the relevance of academic or university-driven law enforcement research to the practical issues they face, and others suggested that much current research is not relevant to the smaller agencies that the majority of them lead.

There is a high level of interest in new research studies relevant to law enforcement and the criminal justice system, with three-quarters of respondents indicating that they are often or always interested in learning about these studies. Leaders with graduate degrees are more likely to be often (38%) or always (47%) interested in new research (total 85%) in comparison to those with bachelor's or associate's degrees (72%) and those who are

high school graduates (61%). Less than three percent of all respondents said they are never or rarely interested in learning about new research.

Not surprisingly, nearly all (93%) of respondents indicate that they are more likely to read research studies that are relevant to their current work. Other factors that affect the decisions of most respondents to read research studies or articles are:

- Relevance to future work (77% indicated this influences their choice to read studies)
- Contains interesting subject matter (74%)
- Describes successful or innovative criminal justice or law enforcement programs (63%)
- Is written in plain versus academic language (63%)
- Includes interviews with law enforcement professionals (55%)

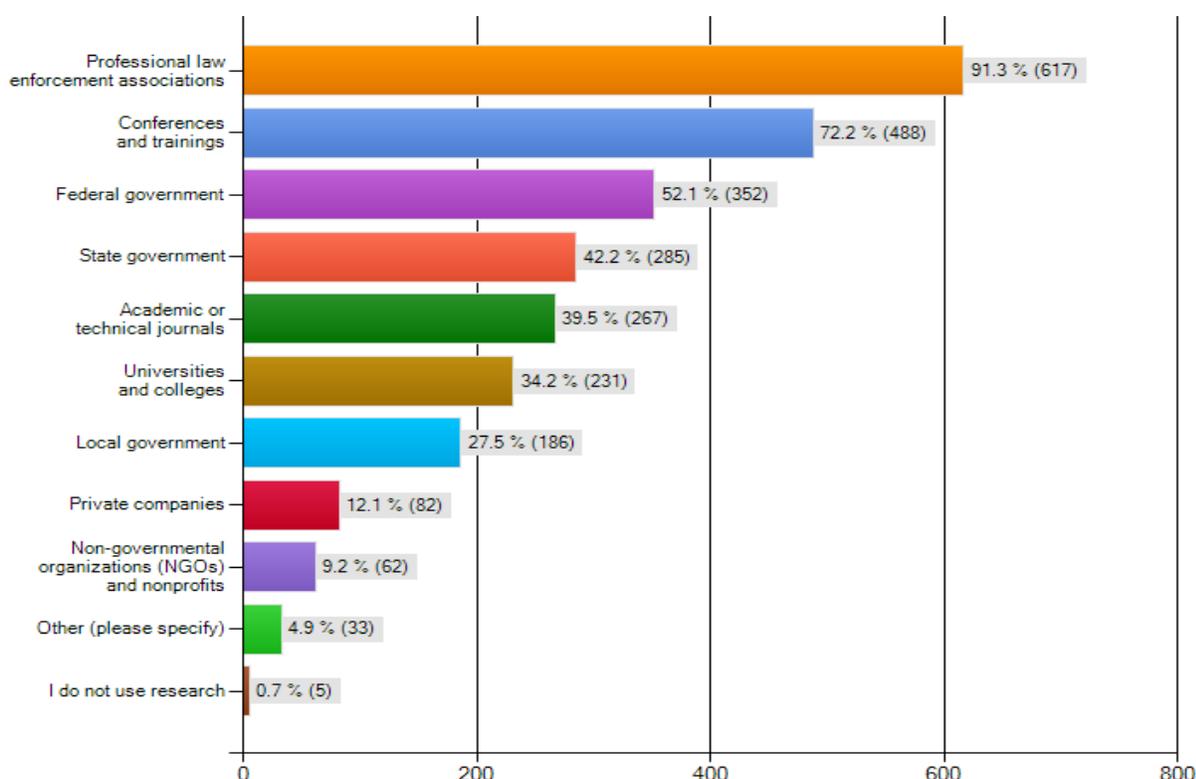
Factors that are somewhat less important (checked by 35 to 42% of respondents) are the study’s length, whether it includes quantitative data or interviews with subject matter experts, uses appropriate research methodology, or was conducted by a professional law enforcement association. Whether the study was conducted by federal or state government or in a nearby law enforcement agency were study characteristics important to less than one-quarter of respondents. When asked to rate how useful qualitative and quantitative information are, respondents rated the importance of these two types of results as equally useful. Below is a table reflecting respondents’ answers to the question on research topics that law enforcement is most concerned with:

## Identified Research Themes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding/Finance/Budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology/Tools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing: Recruitment/Retention/Schedules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Safety</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Relations and Community Oriented Policing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs/Alcohol</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victimization &amp; Vulnerable Populations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future of Law Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic Safety/Enforcement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentencing, Prisons, &amp; Recidivism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of Police Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-Scale Emergency Response</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policing Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency Communications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juvenile Issues</li> </ul>	

The chart below shows preferred sources of law enforcement research. The sources that survey respondents are most likely to consult when looking for research information relevant to their law enforcement agencies are professional law enforcement associations (91%) and conferences and trainings (72%). Over half of respondents also look to the federal government for relevant research. Somewhat smaller proportions of respondents consult state government sources (42%), or academic and technical journals (40%) and colleges and universities (34%). Local governments, private companies, and nonprofits are seen as research information sources by only a small number of survey respondents.

### Where do You Typically Look for Information on Research Relevant to You or Your Agency?



A majority (61%) of survey respondents indicated that law enforcement-related research *occasionally* influences the decisions they make, and another 30% say that research *often or always* influences their decisions. One-third of those surveyed responded to an open-ended question asking them to describe a time when a research study positively influenced an administrative or operational decision they made. Other respondents indicated most research is not applicable to their agencies. They noted that the most helpful studies focused on uses of equipment and technology.

A larger percentage of leaders of major and mid-size law enforcement agencies said that research *often* influences their decisions (40%) in comparison to leaders of small agencies (28%). Forty percent of leaders with graduate degrees report that research always or often influences their decision-making, in comparison to 28% of those with associate's or bachelor's degrees and 17% of those who are high school graduates.

Three-quarters of those completing the survey responded to the question "Assume that the best research team in the world reports to you and cost is of no concern. This team will collect and analyze data that will provide answers to the law enforcement-related questions about which you are most concerned. What would you like the team to explore?" Respondents indicated that they are most interested in research that explores staffing challenges such as:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Scheduling
- Funding concerns
- Administrative issues

## Participation in Law Enforcement Research

Survey respondents answered questions about the ways their agencies have participated in law enforcement research, either with in-house staff or in partnership with colleges and universities. Their answers are summarized below. Factors affecting agencies' participation in research are also discussed.

## Law Enforcement Agency Research Staff and Activities

Just six percent of respondents indicated that their agencies have a researcher or research unit/division/team on staff. Insufficient staffing was cited most frequently by respondents as the reason their agencies do not have researchers on staff (78%), and insufficient funding was cited as another reason by 65%.

The majority (62%) of agencies with research staff members have two or fewer employees dedicated to this function. Among agencies with a research staff, research areas they have most frequently studied are training and education (62%), technology (56%), emergency preparedness (54%), and emerging issues (51%).

Overall, only 5% of respondents indicated that their agencies have sought funding to conduct research. A much larger proportion of respondents from major law enforcement agencies (31%) stated that their agencies had sought research funding.

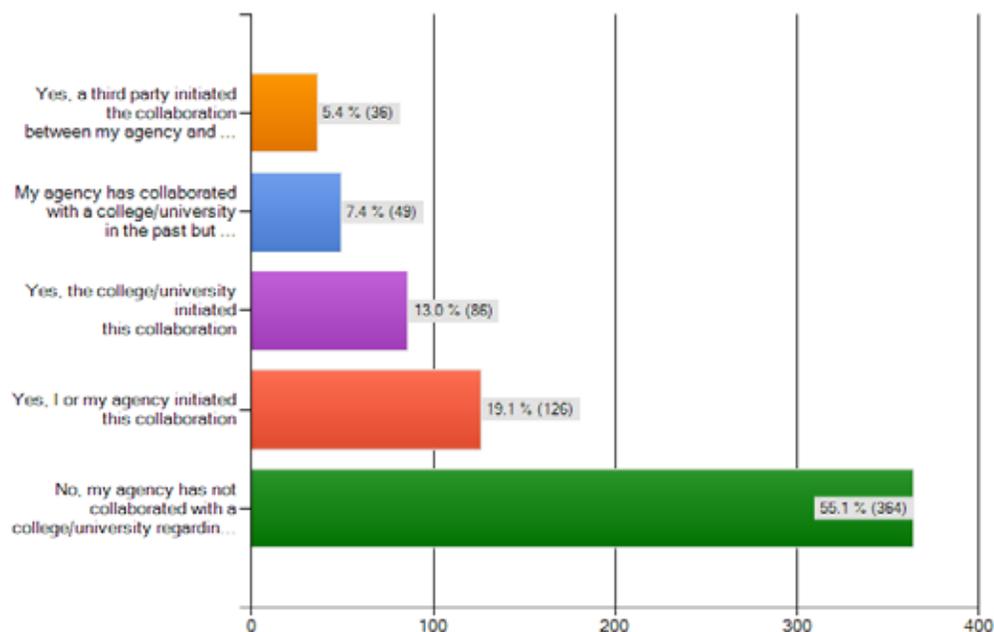
The largest proportion (72%) of respondents from fund-seeking agencies reported looking to federal sources, and one-third reported their agencies had sought state government funding for research. Very few indicated that their agencies had sought funding from other sources such as foundations, private businesses, non-profit organizations, or local governments. Half of the agencies that had obtained funding received it during the past year, and the majority of those got under \$100,000 to conduct or participate in one to two research projects.

## Collaboration with Colleges and Universities

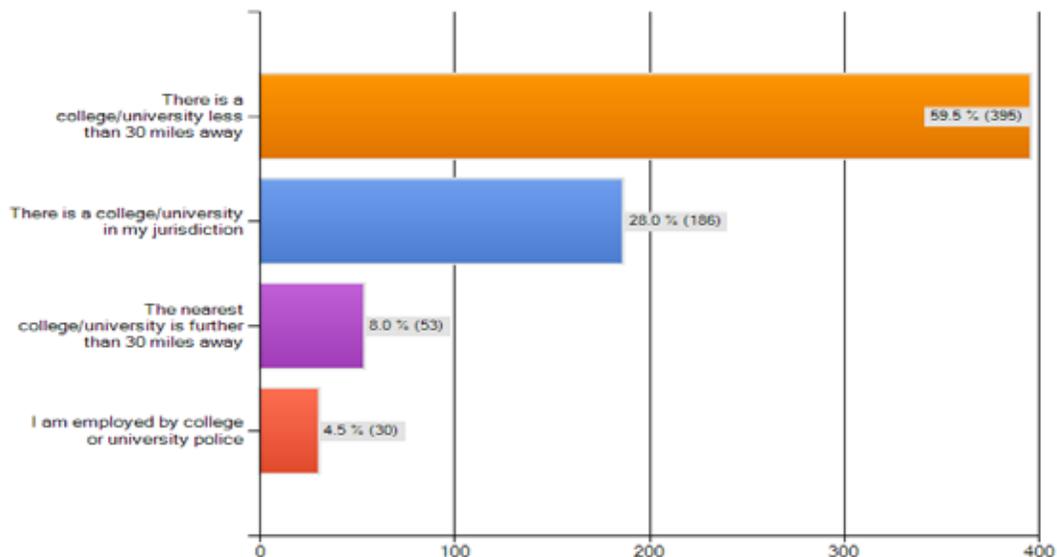
A majority (64%) of respondents indicated that there is a college or university within 30 miles of their agency. Twenty eight percent said that there is a college or university in their jurisdiction. However, 55% of all respondents indicated that neither they nor members of their agency have ever worked collaboratively with a college or university to answer a research question, as shown by the charts that follow. Proximity to a college does not seem to make collaboration more likely, since an even larger proportion (60%) of those whose agencies are within 30 miles of a college or university say their agency has never partnered with these institutions on a research project.

## Practitioner/ Researcher Partnerships

Have you or a member of your agency ever worked collaboratively with a college or university to answer a research question?



How far is the nearest college or university from you?



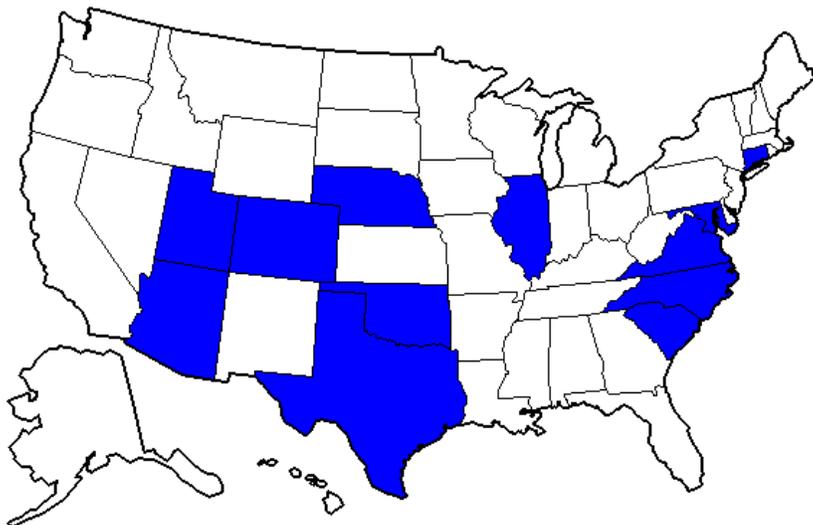
A majority of all respondents (55%) are unsure whether the nearest college or university has an academic program or department that may support their agency's research needs, and 70% of respondents who are unaware of nearby colleges' research capacities say their agencies have never collaborated with a university on research projects. In contrast, 64% of respondents who know about the research capabilities of nearby colleges/universities say that their agencies have worked collaboratively with academic research partners.

Nearly one-third of respondents with graduate degrees state that their agencies have initiated collaborations with a college or university, possibly due to their familiarity with these institutions' goals in research. This is in comparison to 13% of respondents with bachelor's or associate's degrees collaborating with colleges or universities. Conversely, 82% of respondents with high school diplomas indicate their agencies have never collaborated with a college or university on law enforcement research compared to 59% of respondents with bachelor's or associate's degrees and 45% of those with graduate degrees. This finding can and should drive future IACP efforts to increase participation among police leaders with less exposure higher level academics.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) indicated that if a local university with a good research reputation asked their agency to participate in a research study, they would consider it based on the relevance of the study topic to their work. Another 28% said that they would be very supportive of their agency participating and sharing data. This openness to participation in research projects of mutual interest is even greater among respondents from major agencies (61% would consider it and 30% would be very supportive, a total of 91%). This is likely related both to the level of education of respondents from major agencies (62% have graduate degrees) and the proportionately greater staffing resources available in larger agencies. In addition, since 62% of respondents from major agencies have collaborated with university researchers in the past, they are more likely to have had successful experiences in research partnerships.

## IV. Focus Group Observations

In February 2010, the IACP convened a focus group of law enforcement leaders from 14 diverse agencies and jurisdictions to review and react to the survey findings. Participants' agencies employ from 15 to over 13,000 sworn officers and are located in 12 different states, as noted in the map below.



States Represented by Focus Group Participants

### Resource Issues Impeding Research Participation

The focus group began with an overview presentation of the survey findings presented in Section II of this report. Participants generally agreed with the findings, and saw the findings as accurately reflecting how law enforcement leaders and researchers work together and what they have accomplished. They also agreed that the real and perceived barriers to law enforcement/researcher partnerships are ongoing a need to be addressed more fully.

Next, focus group participants discussed the issues and concerns their agencies are currently facing that affect their capacity to participate in or utilize the results of law enforcement research. In this era of tight public budgets and declining revenues, some participants are grappling with officer layoffs and all likely face the need to reduce levels of law enforcement services to their communities. Further, if layoffs or furloughs are required, research staff are often early targets to reduce budgets. These leaders also noted it is increasingly challenging to implement any evidence-based initiatives in technology and service delivery that require additional funding.

Focus group participants indicated that many of their agencies continue to have difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified officers. Agencies with both reduced workforces and high turnover rates naturally find it challenging to participate in law enforcement research. Participants also noted that generational gaps between leadership and younger officers can challenge management as they try to implement policy and program innovations and related research efforts.

Emerging public safety issues are also capturing the attention of law enforcement leaders. There are many complex public policy and service delivery issues related to illegal immigration, terrorism, preparing for emergencies and natural disasters, and information and intelligence sharing among agencies. In this context, law enforcement leaders may choose to prioritize addressing these issues aggressively over investing in research that many perceive to be lengthy, and not always achieving results that can enhance their public safety mission.

## Improving Collaboration between Law Enforcement Agencies and Researchers

Focus group participants acknowledged that there remains a feeling of mistrust of academic researchers by some law enforcement leaders and agency personnel. Much of this can be traced to differences in research priorities and communications styles. Academic researchers may contribute to the perception that their research is not useful by choosing research topics that are not --for example-- replicable or particularly relevant to the law enforcement agencies priorities. This is particularly true for smaller law enforcement agencies that employ the majority of the nation's police officers. For example, more researchers have focused on strategies to reduce homicide and gun violence in major cities than on approaches to many other crime problems faced by departments of various sizes and types. Many researchers also do not translate the results of their work into formats and language that are accessible and useful to law enforcement audiences. Researchers by requirement seek to publish their findings in academic journals. Thus their findings while potentially of interest and value to law enforcement, rarely appear in law enforcement publications, for example, *Police Chief* magazine.

On the law enforcement side of the perception issue, focus group participants noted that law enforcement agencies tend to be reactive rather than proactive, and to focus on administrative or managerial issues rather than policy or strategic initiatives that are the subject of much of law enforcement-related research. Law enforcement leaders have too often gotten caught up in the details of technology or responses to calls for service rather than focusing on designing research or evaluation models to measure the impact of their work.

## Community Expectations

According to focus group participants, law enforcement leaders speak to the media more often about their budget and resource concerns rather than about what law enforcement is doing to reduce crime and address other pressing community concerns. They also noted that agencies that devote resources to performance measurement are better able to communicate their progress toward public safety goals to their staff, the media and the public. Unfortunately, data collection and evaluation efforts are viewed as “luxuries” and are usually among the first areas to be cut when agency budgets are reduced. Focus group participants urged law enforcement leaders to balance maintaining crucial crime response and prevention services with investing in meaningful performance monitoring and measurement. When resources are scarce, it is even more essential to examine the cost-effectiveness of law enforcement programs and services to determine what can be done to improve outcomes without “incurring significant additional cost.”

## Future Directions

Focus group participants expressed hope that despite resource scarcity and communications issues, law enforcement agencies and academic researchers can continue to find common ground and work together to do research that will have a positive impact on the future of law enforcement. Participants’ suggestions have been synthesized with survey results and both sets of information are incorporated in the action recommendations that follow.

## IV. Action Recommendations

The recommendations that follow stem from IACP staff findings over the entire course of the NIJ/RAC partnership, including results from all prior surveys, focus groups, and other RAC initiatives. Observations and guidance offered by RAC members in reaction to focus group and survey results also influenced these recommendations. The more recent 2009 survey and 2010 focus group also has a substantial influence on their recommendations.

### **To Facilitate Law Enforcement Use of Research Findings:**

*1. The IACP should take the lead in developing a central clearinghouse of all law enforcement research and make it accessible to law enforcement agencies and researchers across the country.*

Law enforcement leaders have long relied on the IACP for information about relevant research, and so it is well-positioned to create and maintain a repository of research studies and findings that is accessible and useful to agencies across the country. This internet-based clearinghouse should include not only original research documents but also summaries tailored to practitioners needs, and it should be searchable by topic or key words. The IACP's RAC should work with other justice system researchers to develop a categorization system that allows law enforcement users to discern the validity and applicability of studies that are included in the clearinghouse database.

The currently existing research clearinghouses, the National Criminal Justice Resource Center (NCJRS) as a positive example, have done a great deal to collate and make available justice research, but two facts remain: 1) when they need research, law enforcement agencies do not typically reach out to NCJRS but rather to local law enforcement colleagues or to the IACP, and 2) to be quickly accessible to law enforcement, research must be presented in ways that clarify usefulness across a spectrum of sizes and types of law enforcement agencies. Such delivery mechanisms are not currently available in existing resources.

*2. Researchers should partner with law enforcement agencies and professional organizations to develop research agendas focused on maximizing positive law enforcement outcomes within agency budget and resource constraints.*

Since law enforcement agencies are likely to face tight budgets for the foreseeable future, research should focus on developing the most cost effective strategies to achieve public safety goals. Implementing evidence-based practices often can be accomplished through reallocating existing resources, and may even produce long-run cost savings. Researchers can take a huge step in strengthening their relationship with law enforcement by engaging law enforcement leaders in discussions about research priorities and then selecting topics from that list.

***3. Researchers should work with the IACP and other professional organizations to ensure that their research results are communicated accurately, clearly, and concisely to law enforcement audiences.***

Law enforcement researchers who would like their work to influence law enforcement policies, practices, and decision-making must communicate in plain language via channels that law enforcement leaders routinely consult for research findings. While the IACP fully understands the need for academically based researchers to publish results in academic journals, it is equally important that research findings be translated into summary articles that highlight findings and their impact on policy, providing immediate takeaways for law enforcement readers. Summary articles in publications like IACP's *Police Chief*, will help translate key findings for practitioners and ensure that research outcomes will be put to practical use within police agencies. To this end, the IACP resource advisory committee has launched a "Research in Brief" column that will appear regularly in *Police Chief* magazine starting in the fall of 2010.

Beyond IACP resources, there are a number of law enforcement professional organizations that serve as trusted sources of information for their constituents and also serve as good examples of relevant practitioner outlets for research findings, for example publications and websites of the NSA, PERF, and the Police Foundation. Work on this recommendation could also be done in collaboration with major research associations, for example the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) and the American Society of Criminologists (ASC). These research based organizations could lend significant support to the 'translation' concept, promoting the value of research for both researchers and practitioners.

***4. Law enforcement leaders, with the assistance of the IACP, should ensure that their sworn and civilian staff members have the skills necessary to access, understand, and apply relevant research results to improve their agencies' outcomes.***

The IACP should step up its efforts to provide training for law enforcement agency leaders and staff not only about research findings but also how they can best be applied to improve law enforcement agency performance and public safety outcomes. The RAC should design training opportunities for law enforcement leaders who are interested in becoming critical consumers of research, allowing them to discern whether newly published findings are based on valid methods, reliable data and solid reasoning. To ensure that agencies unable to send staff to training events can access various research training opportunities, the IACP should make maximal use of blogging, podcasting, vodcasting, screencasting and other distance learning methods and tools. In summary, while not all law enforcement agencies have sufficient resources to conduct their own research, any and all agencies can utilize emerging research to improve the quality of their organizations.

**To Encourage Law Enforcement Participation in Research:**

***5. To enable law enforcement agencies to find compatible academic research partners, the IACP should develop and maintain a catalogue of colleges and universities with law enforcement research capabilities.***

This internet-based catalogue would contain information about colleges and universities, their areas of research focus, and their past experiences partnering with law enforcement agencies to conduct research. Organizing the catalogue by location will help law enforcement agencies identify colleges and universities closest to them that are a good match with their research interests. The IACP should establish a way for law enforcement agencies to provide feedback about their experiences partnering with listed colleges and universities, and periodically integrate this feedback into the catalogue.

This online catalogue would be a logical component of the earlier discussed clearinghouse website for completed research—allowing departments to simultaneously access completed research and/or explore the potential to partner with academic researchers to address a new issue. Based on resource limitations, this catalogue effort would be unable to measure or evaluate specific research capacities at any listed research institution. The remaining work of determining what university will make the best partner must be left up to local law enforcement leadership.

***6. The IACP should work with its small agency members to develop practical approaches for increasing their participation in law enforcement research.***

Such approaches could include inviting representatives of small law enforcement agencies around the country to provide ideas for research topics relevant to their concerns and to suggest practical approaches to increase their involvement in research studies. The IACP could lead an effort to have small agencies, clustered geographically and/or by areas, to collaborate with researchers on applications of research funding. Work with smaller agencies over the past decade through IACP's Services, Support and Technical Assistance to Smaller Agencies project has documented clearly that the and quality of leadership in these smaller agencies is at the highest levels and should be tapped for research guidance.

***7. Police leaders should take the initiative to reach out to colleges, universities, and other research organizations to identify research topics of mutual interest and explore funding options.***

The IACP can facilitate researcher-practitioner collaborations and support law enforcement agencies that choose to reach out to criminal justice, political science, or sociology departments of nearby colleges and universities to explore potential research topics and funding sources. To establish contacts with local academic institutions, law enforcement leaders should tap agency staff who have the requisite skills and strong interest in working with researchers to build evidence-based practices. Not all exploratory discussions will result in successful partnerships, but the process of exploring partnership potential is an excellent first step.

***8. The IACP should redouble its efforts to facilitate the development of positive connections between researchers and law enforcement leaders.***

Researchers and law enforcement professionals can begin to establish mutually trusting relationships by identifying shared values and priorities and strengthen these connections through partnering on successful research ventures. The IACP is ideally positioned to provide opportunities for interaction and team-building through conferences and trainings that involve both researchers and law enforcement leaders and officers. Ideally these events would involve face-to-face interaction, but interactive technologies now make it possible to facilitate productive dialogue at a distance.

**To Enhance the Utility, Quality and Quantity of Law Enforcement Research:**

***9. Researchers and their law enforcement partners should define and pursue research agendas that will help fill gaps in knowledge about effective policies and practices.***

Both law enforcement officials and researchers who are focused on a successful partnership must work

collaboratively to ensure that topics being studied reflect the most important issues facing the law enforcement community. While researchers may be attracted to readily available datasets on lesser priority issues, it is much more important for the research partners to identify topics that will, when researched and analyzed, help improve a department's practices and procedures. Law enforcement agencies and their research partners must prioritize current gaps in knowledge as they select research topics. The *National Law Enforcement Research Agenda* of the RAC can help focus those local research initiatives. New research targets must have a likelihood of results that will influence operational policies and procedures, and enhance the way law enforcement goes about fighting crime and ensuring public safety.

***10. Law enforcement agencies must invest in developing and sustaining meaningful performance measurement systems to track their own progress toward goals and continuously build their own “practice-based evidence” of success.***

If law enforcement agencies do a good job of measuring their own performance by carefully defining measures of success and routinely collecting data to monitor their progress, they will be well-positioned to benefit from and participate in law enforcement research at a broader scale. Performance measurement can highlight law enforcement successes and point the way toward needed improvements across a number of dimensions, including reducing criminal victimization; reducing fear of crime; enhancing safety in public spaces; using financial resources fairly, efficiently, and effectively; using force and authority fairly, efficiently, and effectively; satisfying public expectations and achieving legitimacy with citizens.<sup>4</sup>

***11. The IACP should continue to update the NLERA to provide a roadmap for researchers and their law enforcement partners.***

Drawing on the collective wisdom of its member agencies and partners, the IACP, through its RAC, should regularly update the NLERA's listing of priority research topics/questions, and its principles of effective research. Although there are other national research agendas that recommend law enforcement research topics, the IACP is uniquely positioned to influence both academic researchers and law enforcement leaders in their choice of research topics. Future revisions of the NLERA could be expanded to include suggestions for research methods that are: 1) easiest to utilize in applied research studies in law enforcement

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4 Braga, Anthony A. and Weisburd, David L. Police Innovation and Crime Prevention: Lessons Learned from Police Research over the Past 20 Years. Paper presented at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Policing Research Workshop: Planning for the Future, Washington, DC, November 28-29, 2006.

agencies, and 2) most likely to yield results useful to law enforcement professionals.

***12. Federal, state, local and private funders must commit to providing resources necessary for researchers, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, to conduct studies on priority topics.***

Calls for increased federal funding for law enforcement research, while most appropriate, often fall on dear ears as Congress grapples with a daunting economic climate and various other funding priorities. It remains important for the IACP to carry this message to Congress and other funders that law enforcement research funding is vital to enhancing the cost-effectiveness of law enforcement policies and practices at the local, state and federal levels.

## IACP/NIJ RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOCUS GROUP MEETING RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN 2010 AND BEYOND

### THE JOYCE FOUNDATION

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