



FACT SHEET

CRIME REPORTING BY IMMIGRANTS

Presented June 16, 2012 at National Sheriffs Association Conference

Government Statistics

Bureau of Justice Statistics annual Criminal Victimization Study (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=96>)

- Only about 50% of all crimes are ever reported to police.
- Overall reporting rates have remained unchanged/steady over the last decade.
- No significant differences in crime reporting rates by males across ethnic groups.
- Hispanic females slightly more likely than whites and blacks to report violent crime; less likely to report property crime. Consistent with academic research finding Hispanic females to be more trusting of police, generally.
- No data on immigrants or non-citizens as a group.

Local Law Enforcement Agency Studies

- Prince William County, Virginia – after implementing mandatory screening program and 287(g) researchers found no significant change in calls for service among Hispanics, even with increase in deportation referrals from local police. (University of Virginia & PERF, 2009)
- Collier County, Florida – no difference in calls for service between immigrant and native enclaves after 287(g) implemented and removals initiated by local officers increased (see Vaughan & Edwards, The 287(g) Program, CIS).
- No substantiated cases of crime victims removed after reporting a crime (unless victim was also a criminal)

Academic Research

- Studies on attitudes and trust among immigrants – impossible to generalize because of differences according to nationality. Central Americans may be less trusting. Others maintain that the most important factor is socio-economic status and feelings of empowerment within the community. (Davis & Henderson 2003 study of New York and Menjivar & Bejarano 2004 study of Phoenix).
- Survey: Why Immigrants May Not Report Crime? (Davis, Erez & Avitable, 2001)
 1. Language barrier (47%)
 2. Cultural differences (different perception of what is a crime) (22%)
 3. Don't understand U.S. criminal justice system (15%)
 4. Fear of authorities (based on home country experience) or Deportation (10%)
 5. Fear of retaliation (3%)
 6. Belief that authorities will do nothing (3%).
- Drug selling is the least reported crime, not domestic violence (Davis & Henderson).

How to Address

- Emphasize that victims and witness are not targets of ICE
- Hire officers who speak the languages used in the community
- Facilitate crime reporting, even anonymous, through tip lines, texting, sub-stations staffed by non-uniform personnel; educate on how to report crimes
- Local crime watch groups
- Outreach to a variety of community leaders. Educate on expectations for behavior (driving, insurance, etc.)
- Public forums
- Experience over time
- U visas

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