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).
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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