

TRAFFIC STOP DATA COLLECTION and ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

An Illinois law took effect on January 1, 2004 requiring every state and local police agency to collect race data on each traffic stop conducted. This data must be reported to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), which is required to report the data to the Illinois General Assembly on July 1, 2005 and each of three succeeding years.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Biased policing erodes public trust in the police, clearly alienates large segments of those we are sworn to serve, and violates the constitution and laws of this country. The Wilmette Police are committed to fair treatment and equal protection under the law for all persons at all times without exception. Through written policy, operational practices, training and supervision the Wilmette Police prohibit biased policing in any form. Wilmette uses a multi-faceted strategy to ensure that the organizational culture embraces these positive policing values.

THE BENCHMARK

Much of the data Wilmette collects on traffic stops can be analyzed for “internal consistency.” For example: Is the citation/warning rate similar for Caucasians and Minorities? This question can be answered by analyzing Wilmette’s data itself.

For other data, however, a benchmark or comparison point is needed. Establishing this benchmark is inexact at best, and somewhat controversial. Northwestern University’s Center for Public Safety, which is conducting the data analysis for the State of Illinois, has chosen a specific benchmark to use: the race/ethnicity of persons old enough to be licensed drivers in the towns that correspond with the various Court Districts in Cook County.

This type of benchmark is called an “adjusted census” benchmark, because it consists of U.S. census data by race for persons 15 years old and above in each of the municipalities whose criminal court cases are heard in the district court.

The adjusted census benchmark for Court District 2, which includes Wilmette, is

80.4 % Caucasian and 19.6 % minority.

WILMETTE'S DATA

During 2005 the Wilmette Police conducted **4,623** traffic stops. The table below summarizes data for stops, reasons for the stop, and citations/warnings. The overall percentages of minority and Caucasian drivers stopped in Wilmette during 2005 are virtually identical to the benchmark Northwestern University has determined for Wilmette.

Stops							
		Caucasian Drivers			Minority Drivers		
Total Stops		3,677			946		
Percentage Stops		79.54%			20.46%		
Estimated Driving Population		80.39%			19.61%		
Ratio		0.99			1.04		
Reason For Stop							
		Caucasian Drivers			Minority Drivers		
Total		3,677			946		
Moving Violations		3,117	84.77%	755	79.81%		
Equipment Violations		250	6.80%	93	9.83%		
Licensing / Registration Violations		310	8.43%	98	10.36%		
Outcome of Stop							
		Caucasian Drivers			Minority Drivers		
Total		3,677			946		
Citation		2,025	55.07%	502	53.07%		
Verbal Warning / Stop Card		1,652	44.93%	444	46.93%		
Searches							
		Caucasian Drivers			Minority Drivers		
Total		3,677			946		
Consent Searches		4			6		
		Wilmette Residents	Non-Residents	Caucasian Drivers		Minority Drivers	
Stops		22.0%	78.0%	Male	Female	Male	Female
Outcome of Stop	Citation	53.9%	54.9%	54.5%	55.9%	54.4%	50.5%
	Verbal Warning	46.1%	45.1%	45.5%	44.1%	45.6%	49.5%