# 2020 TRAFFIC STOPS IN NEBRASKA

A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE
ON DATA SUBMITTED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

**APRIL 1, 2021** 

Prepared by:

# The State of Nebraska's **Statistical Analysis Center**



#### **NEBRASKA CRIME COMMISSION**

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#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2.	INTRODUCTION	4-5
3.	HISTORY	6-7
4.	RACIAL PROFILING COMMITTEE	8-11
5.	DATA COLLECTION	12-14
6.	DATA PROPORTIONALITY	15
7.	DATA REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS	16-17
8.	POPULATION COMPARISON	18
9.	DISPARITY INDEX A) STATEWIDE DISPARITY INDEX B) NSP vs NON-NSP DISPARITY INDEX COMPARISON C) OMAHA PD & LINCOLN PD DISPARITY INDEX	19-21 19 20 21
10.	TRAFFIC STOP DATA  A) TRAFFIC STOP DATA TREND  B) REASON FOR TRAFFIC STOP  C) DISPOSITIONS  D) SEARCHES	22-25 22 23 24 25
11.	ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL PROFILING	26
12.	COUNTY SPECIFIC DATA  A) DOUGLAS COUNTY  B) LANCASTER COUNTY  C) SARPY COUNTY  D) HALL COUNTY  E) BUFFALO COUNTY	27-42 28-30 31-33 34-36 37-39 40-42

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors only and do not represent the Department of Justice nor the Nebraska Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

During 2020, there were 282,696 traffic stops reported to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NCC) from 197 law enforcement agencies, a 23% reduction from the previous year's report. For the total stops reported in 2020, 58.1% were from Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) in combination with agencies from Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy Counties. Overall, 27.2% of statewide stops were made by NSP, while Omaha Police Department (OPD) made 8.8% of statewide traffic stops and Lincoln Police Department (LPD) made 10.5%.

Both population sizes and traffic stops were most concentrated in large counties, for which US Census estimates were obtained to create comparison populations. However, these census figures only provide one way of estimating the potential group of people that could be stopped by law enforcement, which can be particularly problematic for areas with high volumes of commuters and/or Interstate traffic. Nonetheless, local populations were used to estimate racial distributions for all potential drivers within a specified area and compared to racial distributions for all traffic stops reported within the same area.

For 2020, the NCC received a total of five reports from three agencies of the public making allegations of racial profiling. All agencies involved conducted internal investigations. In four of the allegations, the officer was exonerated, while the other instance had insufficient evidence.

The reported data do not provide enough information to determine motivation or cause for any apparent disproportionality. Although this level of data does not allow definite conclusions in those areas, it does serve as a basis for constructive discussion between police and citizens regarding ways to reduce racial bias and/or perceptions of racial bias.

Interested parties want to know if the data can determine whether the driver's race and/or ethnicity had an impact on the decision by law enforcement to make the stop. Unfortunately, this is not an easy question to answer.

The Traffic Stop Data section of this report includes several basic comparisons of data that are commonly used or asked about. It also includes an overview of stop processing.

The earliest versions of this report included traffic stop activity reported by the NSP's Carrier Enforcement Division. The NSP Carrier Enforcement Division involves stops at Weigh Stations, commercial stops (for documentation or weighing) and similar activity.

Detailed numbers by agency, as well as county-wide statistics, are available at <a href="https://ncc.nebraska.gov/traffic-stops-nebraska">https://ncc.nebraska.gov/traffic-stops-nebraska</a>



#### INTRODUCTION

The Systems and Research Division of the NCC is responsible for reporting annually to the Legislature and Governor on issues related to traffic stops made by law enforcement agencies. We are charged with collecting both summary data, along with allegations of racial profiling -- and analyze trends, and racial disparity throughout the traffic stop process.

The purpose of this report is to provide Nebraska's history on the topic, examine important factors of the data collection process, and to evaluate trends and disparity throughout the traffic stop interaction.

The criminal justice system is predicated on the notion of equality. The issues of fairness and any perception of unequal treatment are often at the forefront of our society but particularly as they relate to justice. Great attention is drawn to issues and reports of possible inequality in the criminal justice system. These issues can be very difficult to identify, as well as verify, and are critical for the public as well as for law enforcement. Traffic stops are one of the most common types of contact for the public. Perceptions derived from these contacts and the need for openness on the reasons for stops are paramount.

Potential profiling relating to traffic stops made by law enforcement has received broad attention in most states and localities. The Nebraska Legislature passed LB593 in 2001 to respond to possible issues relating to the way that traffic stops are made. The act specifically prohibited racial profiling and required law enforcement to implement policies prohibiting discriminatory practices as well as requiring the collection of prescribed data; further details will be examined in the 'history' section of this report.

The Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC) is one component used to address concerns. NLETC educates, trains, and evaluates law enforcement officers, as well as regulates statewide training academies and mandated programs to ensure all meet state certification requirements established by the NCC. Issues regarding racial profiling have been incorporated into the basic training all law enforcement officers attend for certification. Since the law took effect in 2001, and even prior to this law, students at the NLETC are taught that all traffic stops must be based on a legal justification and cannot be based solely upon the person's (or driver's) race or ethnic makeup. Any stop based solely upon the person's race or ethnicity would be unconstitutional. NLETC students compile racial profiling report forms with each simulated traffic stop conducted while in the training academy.

Proactive use of these data can assist in an agency's monitoring and adherence to legislation. They can provide opportunities for outreach with the community as well as examine processes and procedures. We strongly encourage agencies to examine their data and look at what is happening within their jurisdiction.



#### **INTRODUCTION (2)**

Since data are only collected and reported in summary format, there is no way to track individual instances or produce a detailed analysis. Therefore, disparities outlined in this report cannot prove bias or instances of racial profiling, but can help identify agencies or locations that could possibly benefit from more advanced analysis. A detailed review of officers, locations, populations or other criteria are essential when trying to understand a localized situation. Despite this limitation of summary data, the information presented in this report does provide a good snapshot of traffic stops.

The breakdown of types of stops and related data by race has stayed relatively consistent throughout the reported years, with certain variations showing in searches and the dispositions of stops. The statewide breakdown of traffic stops by race parallels the census adult population breakdown as well as the general known licensed driving population. In and of itself this does not mean that there is no racial profiling. It can be said that, on the statewide aggregate, there are not apparent disproportionalities. However, this does not mean that there are not disparities. There are other variances that show up when looking at particular local populations or jurisdictions. Since minority populations vary greatly across Nebraska it significantly affects the contact law enforcement would have with them.

There are currently three methods used to issue warnings/citations. These are hand written, electronic but manually populated, and electronic auto-populating using a driver's license barcode. When warnings/citations are auto populated, race is provided via Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) data. For Nebraska licenses issued between June 2017 and December 2017 race was inadvertently excluded in the barcode. The DMV's accident lead to the discovery that the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) has been reporting auto-populated race counts since 2011. Neb. Rev. Stat. 20-504 (3)(b) states -- The characteristics of race or ethnicity of the person stopped. The identification of such characteristics shall be based on the observation and perception of the law enforcement officer responsible for reporting the motor vehicle stop and the information shall not be required to be provided by the person stopped.

In the Fall of 2018, the Crime Commission advised the NSP to correct their data collection methods. The Crime Commission has also advised eighteen other law enforcement agencies to correct their data collection methods, as the NSP also administers an electronic citation solution at the local level. The NSP has informed the Crime Commission that their data collection software includes an option for the officer to override the auto-populated DMV data. The Crime Commission is unable to decipher the utilization of overrides, but introduced the possibility for confirmation bias in the data collection process.

The NSP has since requested an opinion from the Office of the Attorney General. An opinion dated 02/07/2019 states, that the current practices by the NSP regarding the auto population of the TraCS system with race information are in compliance with Neb. Rev. Stat 20-504(3)(b). However, 20-504(3)(b) seems to be somewhat outdated since new technology is now available.

The consequence of the advancement in technology for the electronic citation has caused data to be reported in two distinct methods – ultimately causing concern regarding the reliability of the data being reported. This report combines both methods into an aggregate summary of data submitted to the NCC.



#### **HISTORY**

In 2001, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB593 to respond to possible issues relating to the way that traffic stops are made. The act specifically prohibited racial profiling and required law enforcement agencies to implement policies prohibiting discriminatory practices as well as requiring the collection of prescribed data. Additionally, it required law enforcement agencies to report to the NCC all allegations of racial profiling received and the disposition of such allegations. Below are additional initiatives implemented:

- 1) Acknowledged the danger and impropriety of any practice that involves disparate treatment based on a person's skin color, apparent nationality or ethnicity.
- 2) Defined racial profiling as the detaining of an individual or conducting a motor vehicle stop based upon disparate treatment of an individual.
- 3) Required the collection of certain information relative to traffic stops, in that law enforcement agencies are required to collect, record, maintain and report the information below to the NCC.
  - A) The number of motor vehicle stops.
  - B) The race or ethnicity of the people stopped.
  - C) The nature of an alleged law violation that resulted in the motor vehicle stop.
- D) Whether warnings or citations were issued, arrests made, or searches conducted as a result of the stops.

Additionally the bill required all law enforcement agencies to provide to the commission a copy of each allegation of racial profiling received and written notification of the review and disposition of such allegations. The bill prohibited revealing the identity of either the officer or the complainant. Any allegations of racial profiling are handled through standard policies with the law enforcement agency.

To collect the data required in a consistent and cost effective manner the NCC convened a workgroup involving Nebraska State Patrol (NSP), Nebraska Sheriffs Association, Police Officers Association of Nebraska, Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska, and numerous local agencies including the Lincoln Police Department (PD) and the Omaha PD. This group reviewed possible data reporting formats to try to guarantee the most feasible, cost effective, and achievable method of reporting while meeting the mandates outlined above.



#### HISTORY (2)

Data collection of this magnitude can be problematic in many ways. Law enforcement agencies have taken various approaches to provide complete and useful data to the NCC. Even for agencies that are automated the task of additional data collection by officers adds a level of complexity and additional workload that is significant. For those law enforcement agencies that are not automated it means an increase in the paperwork for officers. Some law enforcement agencies have attempted to extract the data from their records systems but modifications were typically needed and often some manual work was still required. Since data have to be reported even if no action is taken, most automated systems were not equipped to report all of the required data. Even though law enforcement agencies were required to report only limited summary information, doing so increased costs and workloads.

In 2004, LB1162 amended the definition of a motor vehicle stop to exclude the stop of a motor truck, tractor-trailers or semitrailer at the state weighing stations. This amendment allowed for the exclusion of the NSP's Carrier Enforcement Division. LB1162 also created the Racial Profiling Advisory Committee (RPAC). The RPAC is chaired by the Executive Director of the NCC and includes representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police, the Nebraska County Sheriffs Association, the Police Officers Association of Nebraska, the American Civil Liberties Union, the NSP, the AFL-CIO, and the Police Chiefs Association of Nebraska.

In April of 2006, LB 1113 amended the required reporting to be extended until 01/01/2010. Since the amendment was passed several months into 2006, it must be noted that several law enforcement agencies did not collect traffic stop data for first quarter of 2006. Additionally, some law enforcement agencies may not have been collecting data for a short period in April.



#### RACIAL PROFILING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Racial Profiling Advisory Committee (RPAC) is to advise the Executive Director of the NCC relative to the reporting legislation. Shortly after the passage of LB1162 the RPAC met several times, and currently meets semi-annually.

In addition to the initial meetings, several members participated in a conference conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum in conjunction with the US Department of Justice. This conference brought together national researchers as well as state, local and federal practitioners and experts to discuss the collection and analysis of traffic stop data. The RPAC spent considerable time and effort discussing Nebraska's approach to this effort as well as the findings included in the conference and related publications.

The RPAC was contacted in 2006 to review and offer suggestions to discussion points and earlier reports. The following bullet points were identified as being relevant to Nebraska at the state and local levels of organization in addressing issues related to racial profiling.

- 1) Racial profiling is a serious allegation and issue that must be dealt with at an agency and individual level. Professional law enforcement is concerned about the issue and interaction with the public. Individuals may racially profile (as opposed to an agency) and need to be dealt with in a professional matter that meets agency policy and responsibility as well as public expectations and rights.
- 2) The collection of mandated summary data does not allow for the detailed analysis necessary to establish bias. The aggregate analysis and observations included in the report point to areas that would necessitate closer examination at the agency level. Such detailed examination is outside the scope of the NCC's mandate and resources.
- 3) For a complete analysis within Nebraska there would need to be much more detailed and mandated methods of data collection, as well as additional resources available to conduct such an in-depth analysis. Detailed stop-level data, as opposed to summary data, are necessary to provide a baseline for examining traffic stops. The costs associated with such detailed methods of data collection, as well as its operational impact on law enforcement agencies, are quite significant. There would also be a substantial impact on the NCC to collect, store, and analyze more detailed data.
- 4) Detailed analysis at the agency level is best to determine bias. The onus and responsibility for this type of analysis should rest with the law enforcement agency. A law enforcement agency and community must cooperate in the examination of data and potential bias.
- 5) A law enforcement agency examination of disparity to determine potential bias or racial profiling should include factors such as local demographics, agency policy, and individual officer behavior.
- 6) There is no absolute guideline that defines profiling or bias, and in particular, it is not merely a statistical or numerical observation. There are many factors that must be included.



#### **RACIAL PROFILING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2)**

The RPAC met again in early 2007 and reviewed reporting and the data that are collected. It reviewed the volume of reporting, analyses, and potential for increasing the automated collection of these data. The following recommendations were made:

- 1) The type and detail of reporting should stay consistent with what has been in place since the passage of the legislation. This will allow for a consistent data set over time, making it easier for law enforcement agencies to maintain.
- 2) There should be an effort to retrain law enforcement agencies on the reporting requirement to attempt to increase reporting. This may be useful in law enforcement agencies that have a significant turnover or have made changes in their procedures or automation.
- 3) Reporting requirements should be incorporated into the NLETC curriculum for newly-elected Sheriffs, basic students, and those officers attending mandated supervisory and management courses.

The RPAC discussion topics from 2008 and 2009 mirrored much of the earlier discussions as well as suggestions on data and how it should be presented:

- 1) There are many populations that are or can be used in the discussion of enforcement and its proportionality. These include not just general census numbers but also things such as high-risk populations, licensed drivers, and criminal justice populations (jail admissions, warrants, arrestees).
- 2) Populations need to be compared locally. Law enforcement agency activity is best looked at in the context of the local or subpopulation demographics.
- 3) Standard comparisons can assist law enforcement agencies as well as the public and decision makers in looking at traffic stop data.
- 4) Training and clarification of meaning for data collection should continue to be done with law enforcement agencies to target the best data available.

In 2010 and 2011 the RPAC continued discussions on the presentation of the data and how to assist law enforcement agencies and the public to understand the context and data collected. Discussion topics included:

- 1) Looking at local populations can help agencies understand the potential basis for drivers who may be stopped.
- 2) Comparisons to other criminal justice-related populations can provide context for those involved with law enforcement.
- 3) Law enforcement agencies and their administrators can often provide information on activities or factors which have affected enforcement, including traffic stops.



## **RACIAL PROFILING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (3)**

In 2012 the RPAC continued to examine reporting by law enforcement agencies. This included how to best engage law enforcement agencies and guarantee completeness. Discussion topics included:

- 1) Emphasis for law enforcement agencies to make use of the data. It is incumbent upon law enforcement agencies to combine the reported data along with any initial analysis the NCC provides -- and explore the details of their communities, stops, and procedures.
- 2) Law enforcement agencies need to be sure they report and understand search criteria. This will continue to be addressed with training opportunities and highlight examples such as probable-cause searches and searches incident to arrest.
- 3) While law enforcement agencies and the NCC are limited by race definitions from National Crime Information Center, the RPAC foresees questions and concerns for other ethnicities such as 'Arab'.
- 4) Agency costs for collecting and reporting of data are a concern of the committee. Technology solutions are not cheap and not very feasible for all agencies.

In 2013 the RPAC discussed how to approach data collection as well as how to best analyze and convey agency-specific issues. The discussion topics included:

- 1) Utilizing rates as opposed to percentages as a reporting metric. This was included in the 2013 report.
- 2) Implementation of online data entry for law enforcement agencies, which makes it easier to conduct data-validation processes. The requirement for online submission of data collection methodology was implemented in 2013.
- 3) Automation of online data collection for racial profiling allegations was made available in 2013. The NCC can now monitor the instances of racial profiling allegations throughout the year, instead of receiving the data annually.
- 4) The production of a model policy regarding racial profiling, per statutory changes, was reviewed by the RPAC. There were concerns expressed over the ability for clear language that mirrors statute and could be used by law enforcement agencies.

In 2014 the RPAC discussed how to approach data collection. The discussion topics included:

- 1) The utilization of DMV demographics. The discussion continued regarding the differences between census figures and DMV numbers, and if county figures can be used.
- 2) Non-compliance with Racial Profiling Policy Submissions. The discussion continued on how to get agencies into compliance. A model policy was developed and approved to be used as an example.



### **RACIAL PROFILING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (4)**

In 2015 the NCC implemented new reporting methods for reporting purposes, which were shared with the RPAC. Other discussion topics included:

- 1) The difference between personal bias and racial prejudice. The discussion continued regarding problems law enforcement encounter such as poverty and the cost of recruitment and selection of future officers.
- 2) Partnering with University of Nebraska-Omaha to gather raw data from select law enforcement agencies for additional analysis.

In 2016 the RPAC discussed anonymous complaints. However, due to concerns regarding the sharing of personal information, investigating such complaints would prove difficult. Other discussion topics included:

1) Chairperson Fisher indicated that implicit bias training has been made available for all law enforcement agencies.

In 2017 the RPAC requested receipt of the Traffic Stops Report prior to its annual publication date, which has been fulfilled by the NCC.



#### DATA COLLECTION

Standardized forms are provided to all law enforcement agencies in Nebraska. Summary data are reported to the NCC quarterly. Data fields include race of all drivers stopped, reason for stops, disposition of stops, and whether searches were conducted.

Since agencies began submitting data, the NCC's Statistical Analysis Center has been working with law enforcement agencies to improve reporting and address data inconsistencies. Such a significant effort requires review of processes and workflow once it begins. In general, law enforcement agencies have made a concerted effort to fulfill the requirements. Some agencies have gone a step further and undertaken their own studies. These studies are typically more comprehensive, allowing for more detailed analyses of racial profiling specific to their agency. Such internal efforts examine the law enforcement agency's data to better understand and detect the nature of disparities.

Neb. Rev. Stat. 20-504 (3)(b) states the characteristics being reported shall be based on the observation and perception of the law enforcement officer responsible for reporting the motor vehicle stop. The FBI maintains data standards for most law enforcement data collection. To be consistent with these standards and other reporting programs, race categories for this project were based on FBI-defined categories: White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and other. However, to address ethnicity concerns outlined in the originating legislation, a category for Hispanic was included. While Hispanic is not a race as described by the U.S. Census Bureau, it is included this way for ease of reporting. There are many other categories that could potentially be of interest regarding ethnicity or national origin but the current system does not address those.

In 2020 there were 186 law enforcement agencies that fully participated in the data collection process. Eleven local law enforcement agencies partially participated - i.e., did not submit all four quarters, while two agencies did not submit any data.

The next page shows a map indicating the reporting status in 2020 for all 93 counties in Nebraska: REPORTING COMPLETE - all law enforcement agencies in the county reported all four quarters. NOTHING REPORTED - no agency in the county reported any data. INCOMPLETE LOCAL REPORTING - at least one agency in the county did not report all quarters. INCOMPLETE REPORTING - the sheriff's office in the county did not submit all four quarters.

Overall, 6.5% of Nebraska's active agencies did not report all four quarters in 2020 to the NCC. However, these non-reporting agencies typically represent sparsely populated areas. Specifically, 98.2% of the statewide population was covered by the 93.5% of agencies that provided complete reporting. The next page identifies those law enforcement agencies that did not meet reporting requirements.

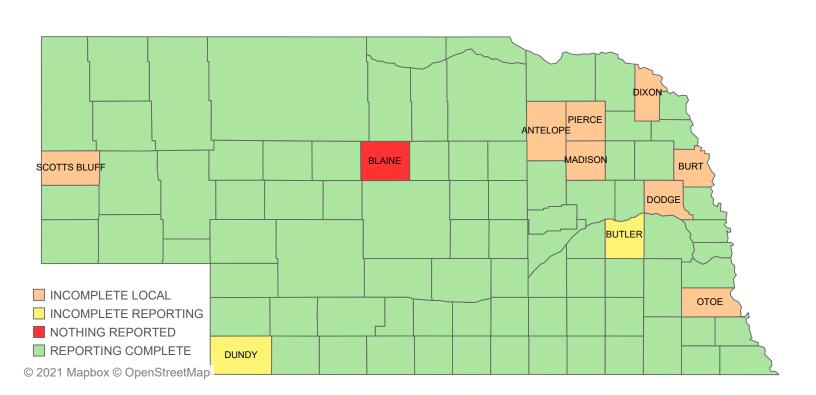


#### DATA COLLECTION MAP

- 1) Neligh PD covering less than 1500 inhabitants did not submit all four quarters. (Partial)
- 2) Blaine County SO covering less than 500 inhabitants, did not submit any data.
- 3) Lyons PD covering less than 800 inhabitants, did not submit all four quarters. (Partial)
- 4) Butler County SO covering nearly 8,000 inhabitants, did not submit all four quarters. (Partial)
- 5) Ponca PD covering less than 1,000 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 6) Dodge PD covering less than 9,500 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 7) Dundy County SO covering less than 1,700 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)

- 8) Madison PD covering less than 2,400 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 9) Newman Grove PD covering less than 700 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 10) Nebraska City PD covering less than 7,300 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 11) Plainview PD covering less than 1,200 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 12) Osmond PD covering less than 800 inhabitants, did not report all four quarters. (Partial)
- 13) Minatare PD covering less than 800 inhabitants, did not submit any data.

Agency-specific results are available at: https://ncc.nebraska.gov/traffic-stops-nebraska





#### DATA COLLECTION COVERAGE

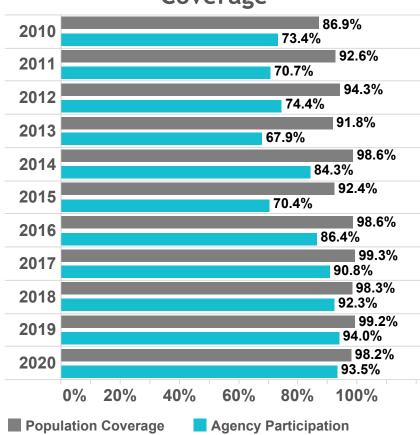
Since 2010, statewide data collection efforts have improved, both in terms of population coverage and agency participation, however a ceiling effect has likely limited recent improvement efforts the last few years.

Population coverage reflects the percentage of Nebraska's statewide population covered by those agencies that have reported their traffic stops data across all four quarters. Population values for these calculations were obtained from the US Census Bureau.

Agency participation reflects the percentage of agencies that submitted all four quarters of traffic stops data, based on the number of agencies active during that year.

For example in 2010, 73.4% of Nebraska's active law enforcement agencies reported all four quaters of traffic stops data to the NCC, which represented 86.9% of the statewide population. In 2020, these figures increased to 93.5% of all active agencies, of which collectively cover 98.2% of the statewide population.

# Agency Participation & Population Coverage

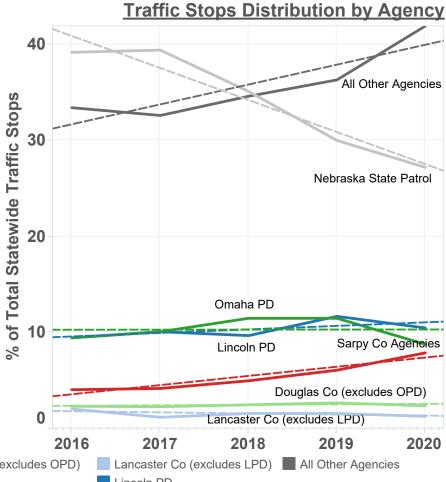


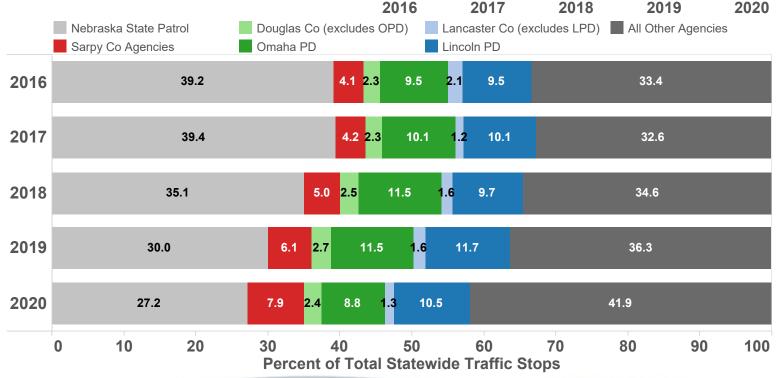


#### DATA PROPORTIONALITY

NSP accounts for the largest portion of the traffic stops made by a single agency in the State of Nebraska during 2020. Collectively, NSP in combination with three counties (Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy) accounted for nearly 60% of all traffic stops.

By understanding the proportion of stops by agency, one must realize the complex nature of identifying areas of concern. A majority of the NSP traffic stops occur on the Interstate system, for which no population metric is available that can effectively estimate the demographic make-up of individuals traveling on the Interstate system. Without a clear quantitative method to identify this population, it would be illogical to make conclusions regarding any disparity of this specific population.







#### DATA REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS

This report reflects summary data submitted to the NCC from the previous five reporting years, 2016 to 2020. The NCC has published traffic stops data since 2002, however for years prior to 2005, NSP weigh station stops were also included. For clarity and comparative purposes, data from 2002-2015 are not included in this report, but can be found at <a href="https://ncc.nebraska.gov/traffic-stops-nebraska">https://ncc.nebraska.gov/traffic-stops-nebraska</a>

Data tables throughout this report include several basic comparisons regarding the race of the driver, the reason for the stop, the primary disposition (or outcome of the stop), and whether or not searches were conducted.

The data provided in this report have inherent limitations. The data collected are in summary format, so due to this limitation, there are no feasible processes to either identify individual cases or provide advanced analysis. For instance, while we can report how many searches were conducted regarding Hispanic drivers, we cannot report how many of these stops started with a traffic violation as the reason for the stop nor can we determine what the outcome of the stop actually was.

There is not a standardized process for analyzing traffic stop data. Many state and national studies have been conducted that attempt to discern instances of racial profiling. This is problematic in two basic ways: (a) the nature of data collection and (b) the need to conclude motivation, conscious or unconscious, of law enforcement officers. The basic premise in any analysis is the attempt to discover instances that display disproportional activity across races. Analysis of traffic stop data can look at whether or not the drivers stopped reflect the general racial breakdown in a society or analysis can focus on how different races or groups were handled once the stop is made. Both are important to society and the management of a law enforcement agency.

To assess the effect race and/or ethnicity may have on decision-making, any study must exclude or control for factors other than race and/or ethnicity that might legitimately explain the stopping decision. For example, most jurisdictions disproportionally stop males. Does this indicate gender bias? Most would not jump to that conclusion because they can think of several factors other than bias that could explain the disproportionate stopping of male drivers. One possibility is that men drive more than women (a quantity factor). Another possibility is men violate traffic laws more often than women (a quality factor). A third possibility is that more males drive in areas where police stopping activity tends to occur (the location factor). We do not know if these possibilities are true, but we must consider these other alternative explanations as causal.



#### **DATA REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS (2)**

Unfortunately, we do not have the detailed traffic stop data that would allow a comprehensive research design to rule out such other possibilities, which prohibits us from drawing definitive conclusions. Therefore, we cannot definitively say whether racial bias in traffic stops exists or not, we can only point to seeming disproportionality. In other words, it is not difficult to measure whether there is disparity between racial/ethnic groups in stops made by police; the difficulty comes in identifying *causes* of the disparity and whether or not it is racially biased.

The initial search data has never been seen, on the statewide aggregate, as having extreme disproportionality. There are variances in the proportionality of races once the stop has been made and action is taken. This is done within the limitations of the data itself. Observations are included with the data tables pointing out instances where there appears to be some instance of disproportionality within a category. The reason for this difference likely has many causes but the available data cannot adequately identify or explain those causes.

It must be noted that disparities within this report are just that, disparities. Disparities alone do not prove bias or instances of racial profiling. By identifying disparity, law enforcement agencies can and should make reasonable efforts to better understand the disparities within their data. It is recommended that law enforcement agencies and other interested parties examine disparity at the agency and local level to better understand possible reasons for the disproportionality. Agency-specific results are available at the NCC website (<a href="http://www.ncc.ne.gov">http://www.ncc.ne.gov</a>).



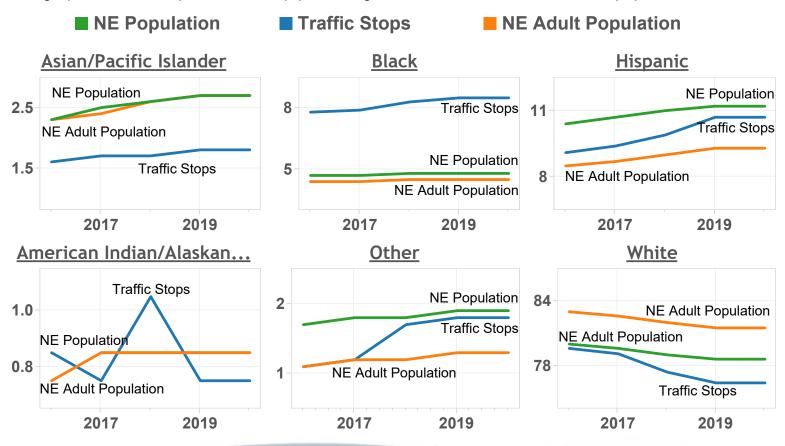
#### POPULATION COMPARISON

Studies focusing on traffic stop reporting often compare data to racial distributions within a particular community or state. Some studies compare traffic stop data to the racial distribution of licensed drivers, at-risk drivers, or even to the racial distribution of drivers actually observed by people stationed in the field. Each of these demographic comparisons has strengths and weaknesses, but there is no universally accepted method for analyzing at-risk populations compared to a reference group. Some studies draw conclusions that theoretically cannot be made given deficiencies in the available data.

Several factors need to be condsidered when comparing traffic stop data to a population. General populations are often compared to traffic stop percentages, and used as the sole indicator of racial profiling, which may result in spurious findings. However, initial results from such comparisons may identify other factors needing to be analyzed in order to validate the initial findings.

All population data are from the American Communities Survey by the US Census Bureau. Since the adult population more closely resembles the driving population than the total population, primary tables and counts are based on Nebraska's adult population, when available. Due to inconsistent race categories across data sets, some groups haf to be combined in order to align with traffic stop categories. For city/county-level reporting, however, city/county overall populations were used since race-by-age tables are not available at these localized levels.

The graphs below compare traffic stop percentages to adult and overall statewide populations.

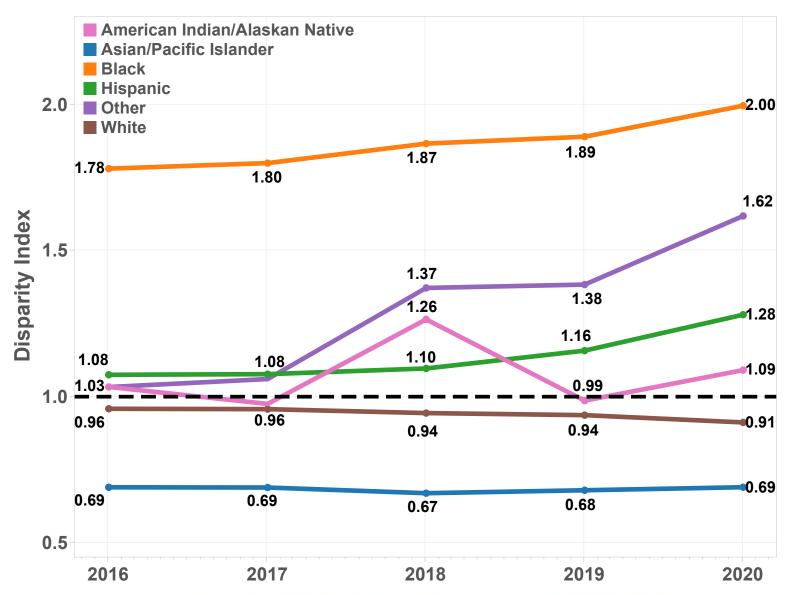




#### **DISPARITY INDEX**

Over the past five years, our state's population has changed in size and in demographics. Nebraska's adult population estimates were obtained from the US Census Bureau's American Communities Survey, which should provide a more accurate comparison for traffic stop data than Nebraska's total population.

When comparing adult population percentages to traffic stop percentages, we are able to produce a disparity index, seen below. To interpret this index, values greater than one indicate overrepresentation, whereas values less than one indicate underrepresentation. For each race, a disparity index is calculated by dividing the proportion of traffic stops by the proportion of the population. As outlined in the Data Reporting Considerations section, there is no single explanation for any of the disparities calculated in this report.





#### **DISPARITY INDEX (NSP vs. NON-NSP)**

The two adjacent line graphs compare disparies for all NSP and non-NSP traffic stops. Overall, NSP accounted for 27.2% of the total traffic stops reported to NCC for 2020.

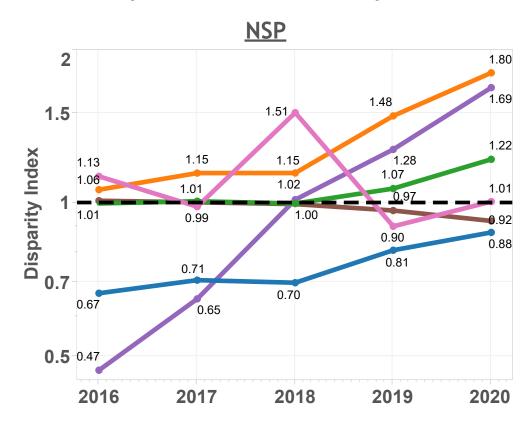
Disparity indices were based on Nebraska's adult population, as reported on the previous two pages. For each race and year, a disparity index was calculated by dividing race A's proportion of traffic stops by race A's proportion in the adult population.

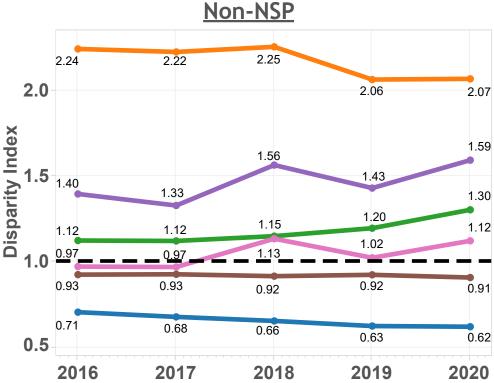
When interpreting each race's disparity index, values that are:

- > 1.0 overrepresentation
- ~ 1.0 no disparity
- < 1.0 underrepresentation



- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic
- Other
- White







#### **DISPARITY INDEX (OMAHA PD & LINCOLN PD)**

The two adjacent line graphs compare disparities for OPD and LPD traffic stops.

To interpret the disparity index, a value greater than one indicates an overrepresentation, whereas a value less than one indicates an underrepresentation. The disparity index is calculated for each race by dividing the proportion of stops by the proportion of population.

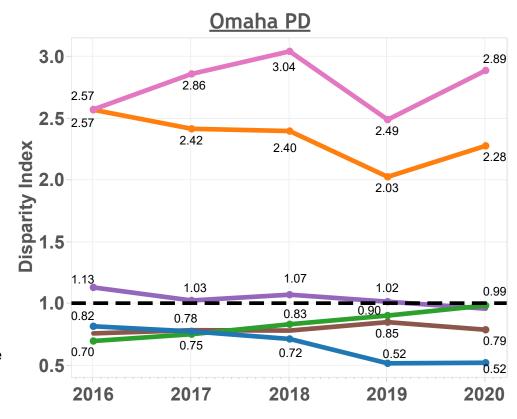
These two Police Departments collectively account for about twenty percent of traffic stops reported each year. Each agency's disparity calculations use city-wide population figures, not the adult population.

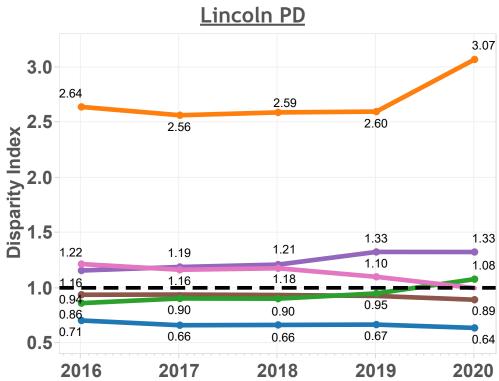


Asian/Pacific Islander

Black





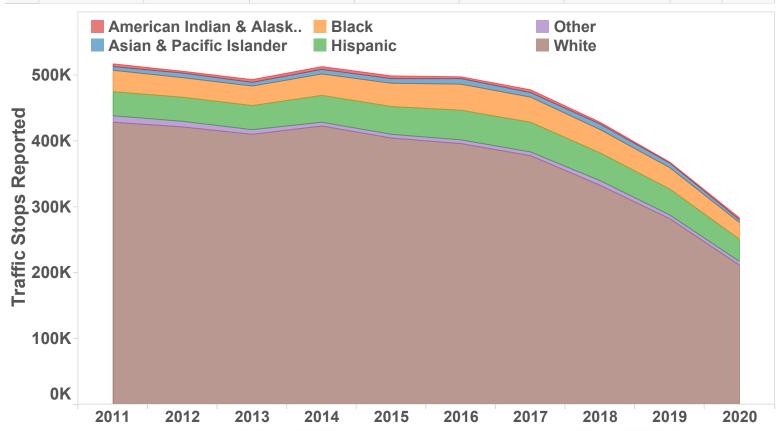




#### TRAFFIC STOP DATA

The following table and area chart provide some perspective regarding the amount of traffic stops reported to the NCC over the previous 10 years. Whites make up the majority of traffic stops, albeit gradually decreasing across this 10-year span from 82.8% in 2011 to 74.4% in 2020. Conversely, minor growth has been observed in traffic stop percentages (population growth simulates traffic stop growth) for Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and Hispanic populations.

	America	n India	Asian &	Pacific	Bla	ack	Hisp	anic	Otl	her	Wh	nite	Grand	l Total
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
2011	3,908	0.8%	6,407	1.2%	31,096	6.0%	36,888	7.1%	10,545	2.0%	427,237	82.8%	516,081	100.0%
2012	3,525	0.7%	6,512	1.3%	29,819	5.9%	36,223	7.2%	9,430	1.9%	419,972	83.1%	505,481	100.0%
2013	3,663	0.7%	6,522	1.3%	28,629	5.8%	36,271	7.4%	7,584	1.5%	409,465	83.2%	492,134	100.0%
2014	3,886	0.8%	7,891	1.5%	32,249	6.3%	41,142	8.0%	5,241	1.0%	421,800	82.3%	512,209	100.0%
2015	3,731	0.7%	7,420	1.5%	35,095	7.0%	42,846	8.6%	5,302	1.1%	403,472	81.0%	497,866	100.0%
2016	3,832	0.8%	7,996	1.6%	38,525	7.8%	45,424	9.1%	5,706	1.1%	395,404	79.6%	496,887	100.0%
2017	3,489	0.7%	8,025	1.7%	37,483	7.9%	44,794	9.4%	5,917	1.2%	377,001	79.1%	476,709	100.0%
2018	4,085	1.0%	7,349	1.7%	35,606	8.3%	42,489	9.9%	7,198	1.7%	331,522	77.4%	428,249	100.0%
2019	2,752	0.7%	6,692	1.8%	31,315	8.5%	39,405	10.7%	6,581	1.8%	281,033	76.4%	367,778	100.0%
2020	2,339	0.8%	5,222	1.8%	25,421	9.0%	33,502	11.9%	5,916	2.1%	210,296	74.4%	282,696	100.0%





#### **REASON FOR TRAFFIC STOP**

The adjacent table displays percentages for each reason statewide traffic stops were made for either traffic code violations, criminal code violations, or other/unkown reasons. The bar graphs below breakdown the reason-for-stop percentages in terms of race.

The reason for traffic stop variable indicates the <u>primary</u> reason a traffic stop was initiated by a law enforcement officer. However, a single traffic stop may have more than one reason.

	Traffic	Code	Criminal	Code	Other/Unk	nown	Grand	Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2011	496,177	96.1%	4,850	0.9%	15,054	2.9%	516,081	100.0%
2012	451,853	89.4%	40,087	7.9%	13,541	2.7%	505,481	100.0%
2013	438,647	89.1%	38,622	7.8%	14,865	3.0%	492,134	100.0%
2014	455,502	88.9%	41,626	8.1%	15,081	2.9%	512,209	100.0%
2015	441,944	88.8%	41,151	8.3%	14,771	3.0%	497,866	100.0%
2016	445,264	89.6%	36,400	7.3%	15,223	3.1%	496,887	100.0%
2017	431,406	90.5%	33,010	6.9%	12,293	2.6%	476,709	100.0%
2018	387,287	90.4%	29,054	6.8%	11,908	2.8%	428,249	100.0%
2019	329,714	89.7%	27,645	7.5%	10,419	2.8%	367,778	100.0%
2020	254,912	90.2%	16,384	5.8%	11,400	4.0%	282,696	100.0%



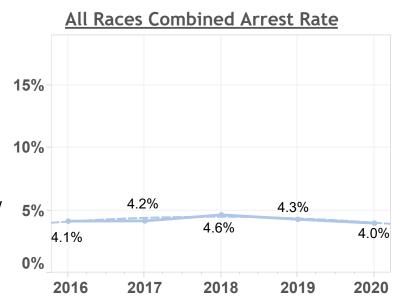


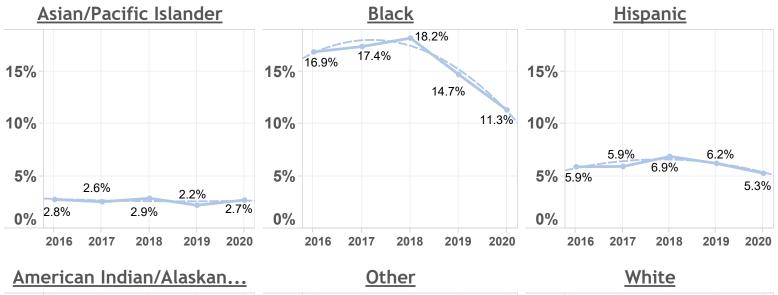
#### DISPOSITION OF TRAFFIC STOP

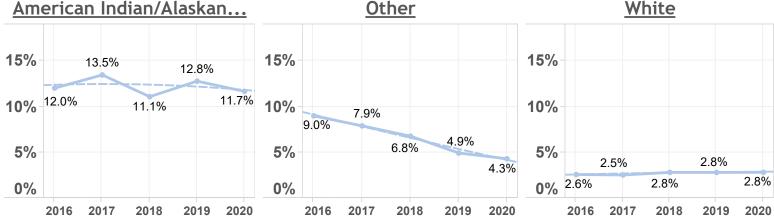
Disposition of Traffic Stop reports the <u>primary</u> outcome of the stop, for which there are a variety of potential outcomes.

A custodial arrest is not done when only a traffic violation is involved. Therefore, a traffic stop could involve things such as a DUI arrest, a lack of identification, an outstanding warrant (discovered in a general license check), or some other criminal activity in the car, even if done by the occupants. However, the data are not detailed enough to know what specific violation caused a custodial arrest.

The following graphs depict the percentage of traffic stops resulting in an arrest.







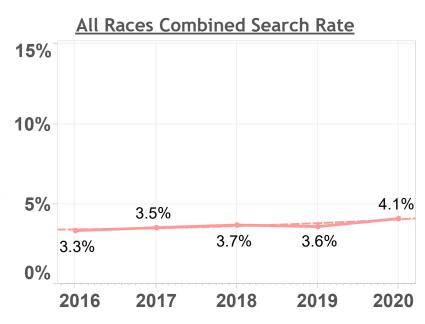


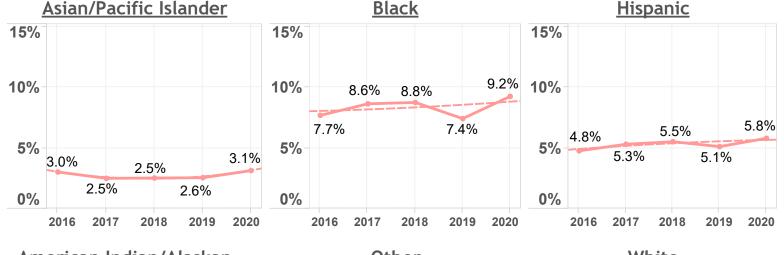
#### SEARCH PERCENTAGE

Broken down by race over the past 5 years, the following figures show the percentage of traffic stops in which a search was conducted. For example in 2020, 9.2% of all statewide traffic stops involving Black drivers included a search.

Search counts do not include inventory arrests nor searches that are done incident to arrest. Instead they reflect searches conducted as part of the officer's processing of the traffic stop.

The following trend lines allow the reader to compare each race to each other, the overall (top-right), and over time.









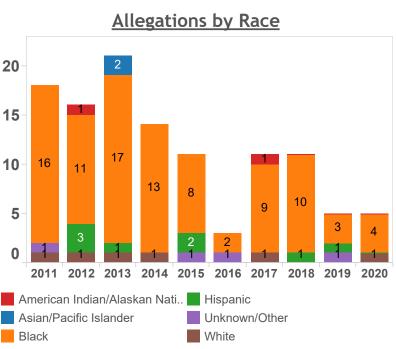
#### **ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL PROFILING**

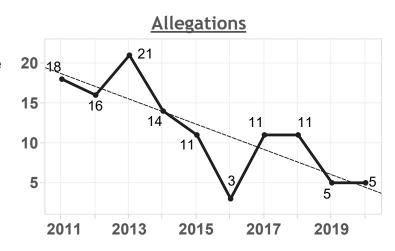
An allegation of racial profiling can originate in various ways. Sometimes a driver will make an accusation at the scene of the stop. Other times the driver, or even passenger, might contact the agency after the stop to make a complaint. Allegations can also originate from non-traffic interactions with law enforcement officers.

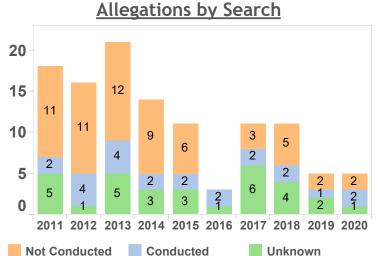
These allegations are handled formally within each agency and standardized reports are submitted to the NCC in compliance with LB593. During 2020, five allegations were received from three agencies, at least two of which involved a search.

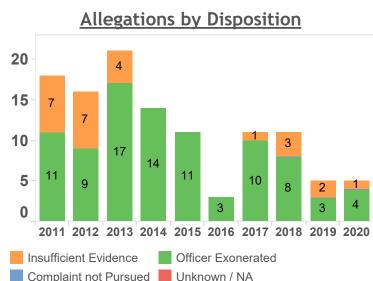
Since 2002, no agency has reported an allegation of racial profiling to be valid; agencies have stated that officers followed policy or that stops were appropriate under the circumstances.

There have also been cases in which the agency was unable to disseminate specific information concerning the disposition of allegations because of policy and the current Labor Agreement.











#### **COUNTY SPECIFIC DETAILS**

The remainder of this report focuses on Nebraska's five most populous counties and the most populous city within each of these counties, broken down by race. County-level data reflect stops reported by all law enforcement agencies within the county. City-level data reflect reports only from the local city police department.

As stated previously, census figures only estimate the resident population and do not account for commuters or Interstate traffic. Nonetheless, local populations provide one measure often used to facilitate discussion regarding the possibility of racial profiling, despite considerable variation throughout the state.

There are vast differences in minority populations by city and county throughout the state. These differences obviously affect daily occurrences for any racial groups in all kinds of activities, including traffic stops. The varying distributions of minority populations across Nebraska significantly affect the contact law enforcement has with these groups. In 2018 for instance, the Black population varied significantly across three levels of analysis within the State of Nebraska: 12.1% in Omaha, 11.0% in Douglas County, and 4.5% across the statewide adult population.

There are obvious differences in the stops made in different counties relative to race. There are considerations other than the resident population, particularly given travelers and Interstate traffic, in addition to possible officer activity.

Once a traffic stop has been made, there are a variety of actions that can be taken. Research often looks at the handling and disposition of the stop for disparity, which can possibly reflect differences in processing by race. However, it must be noted that multiple factors do exist, and partitioning the effect each factor has cannot be done using the current data collection methods.

Each breakout page includes the traffic stop counts by race so one can compare to the population table -- along with search counts and percentages. Bar charts include percentages referring to proportions for an activity. For instance, one can see what percentage of stops involve a search to give the viewer perspective. Population sizes of minority groups change across years and localities, which have direct effects on disparity calculations, particularly at the county or city level of analysis.

PLEASE NOTE: At the time of writing this report, 2020 Census figures were not yet available. Therefore, 2019 population estimates from last year were used again for the current 2020 reporting year.



#### **DOUGLAS COUNTY TRAFFIC STOPS**

The following two pages present traffic stop data from law enforcement agencies in Douglas County.

Collectively, Douglas County agencies reported 31,861 traffic stops in 2020, a decrease of 39% from the previous year. In particular, the majority (78%) of Douglas County's 2020 traffic stops were made by Omaha PD.

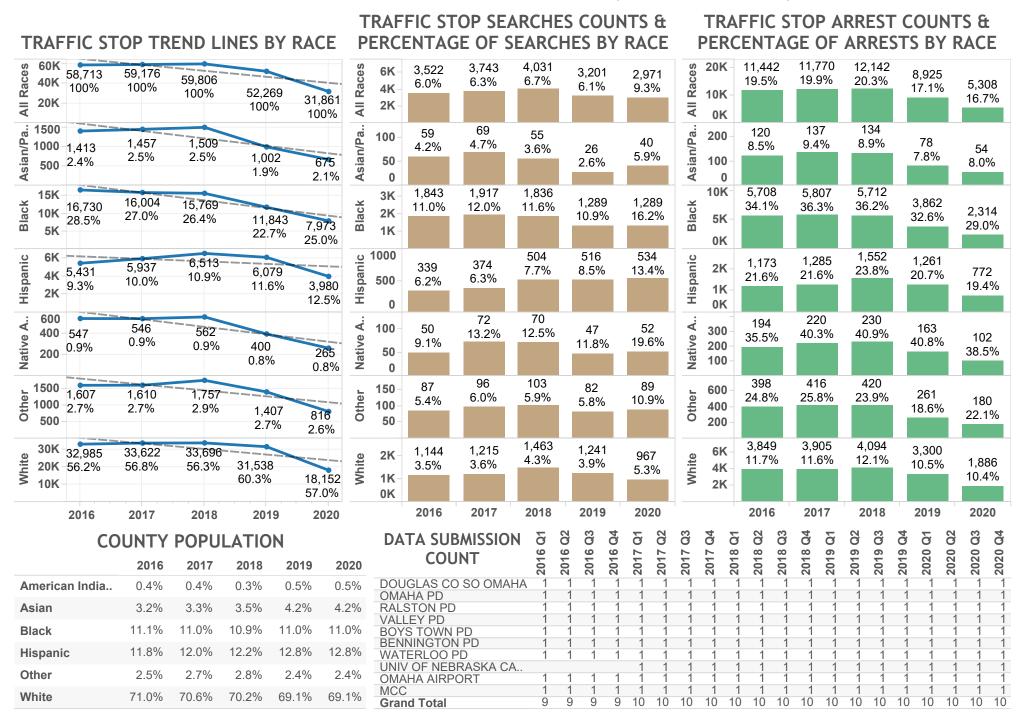
Compared to the county population, the racial groups overrepresented by Douglas County's traffic stops data are (in decreasing order of disparity):

- Black drivers (2.3)
- American Indian/Alaskan Native drivers (1.6)
- Other drivers (1.1)

On average (across all races), searches were conducted in 9.3% of all 2020 traffic stops from Douglas County agencies. With respect to race, search percentages were observed to be higher than average for:

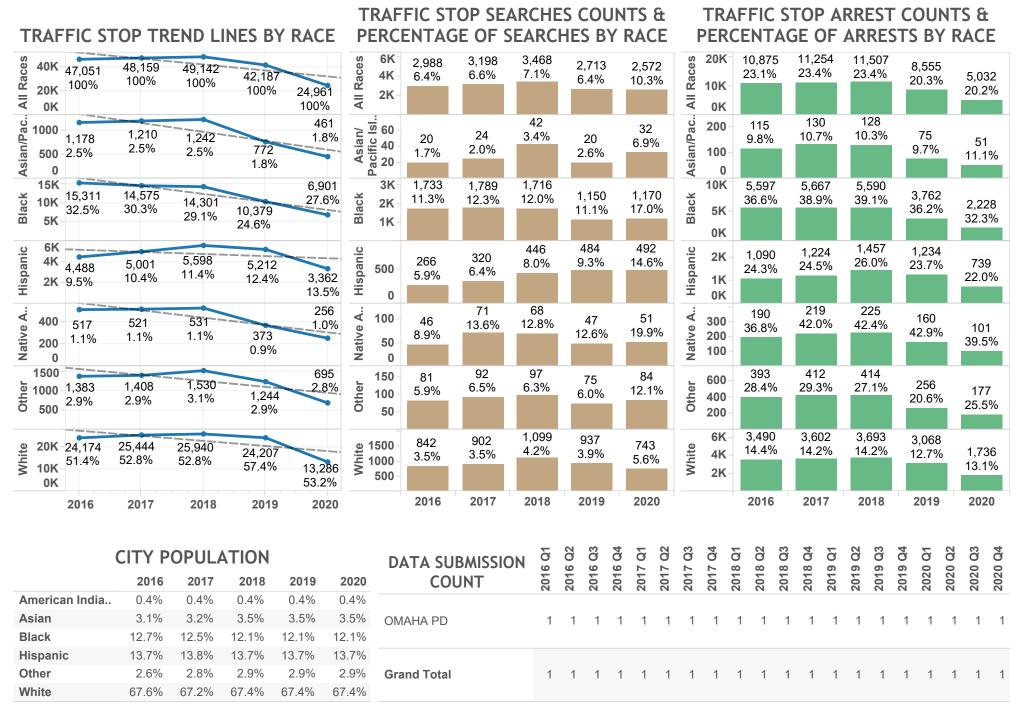
- Native American/Alaska Native drivers (19.6%)
- Black drivers (16.2%)
- Hispanoc drivers (13.4%)
- Other drivers (10.9%)

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (DOUGLAS CO)



Produced by the Nebraska Crime Commission

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (OMAHA PD)





#### LANCASTER COUNTY TRAFFIC STOPS

The following two pages present traffic stop data from law enforcement agencies in Lancaster County.

Collectively, Lancaster County agencies reported 33,286 traffic stops in 2020, a decrease of 32% from the previous year. In particular, the majority (89%) of Lancaster County's 2020 traffic stops were made by Lincoln PD.

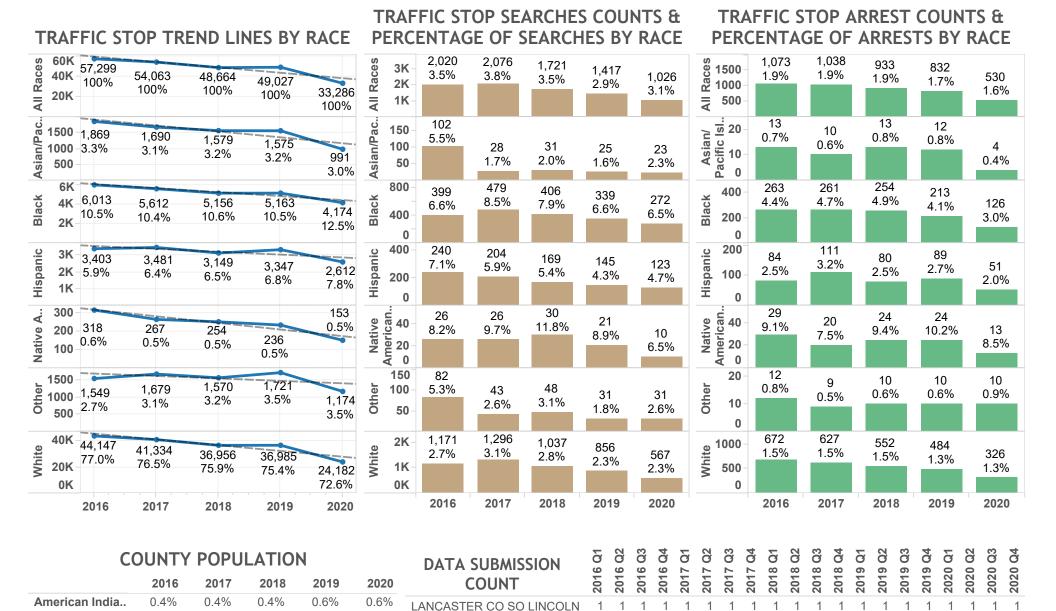
Compared to the county population, the racial groups overrepresented by Lancaster County's traffic stops data are:

- Black drivers (3.1)
- Other drivers (1.3)
- Hispanic drivers (1.1)

On average (across all races), searches were conducted in 3.1% of all 2020 traffic stops from Lancaster County agencies. With respect to race, search percentages were observed to be higher than average for:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native drivers (6.5%)
- Black drivers (6.5%)
- Hispanic drivers (4.3%)

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (LANCASTER CO)



Produced by the Nebraska Crime Commission

**Asian** 

**Black** 

Other

White

Hispanic

4.1%

3.8%

6.4%

2.2%

83.1%

4.1%

3.8%

6.5%

2.5%

82.7%

4.3%

3.9%

6.7%

2.6%

82.1%

4.8%

4.0%

7.2%

2.6%

80.8%

4.8%

4.0%

7.2%

2.6%

80.8%

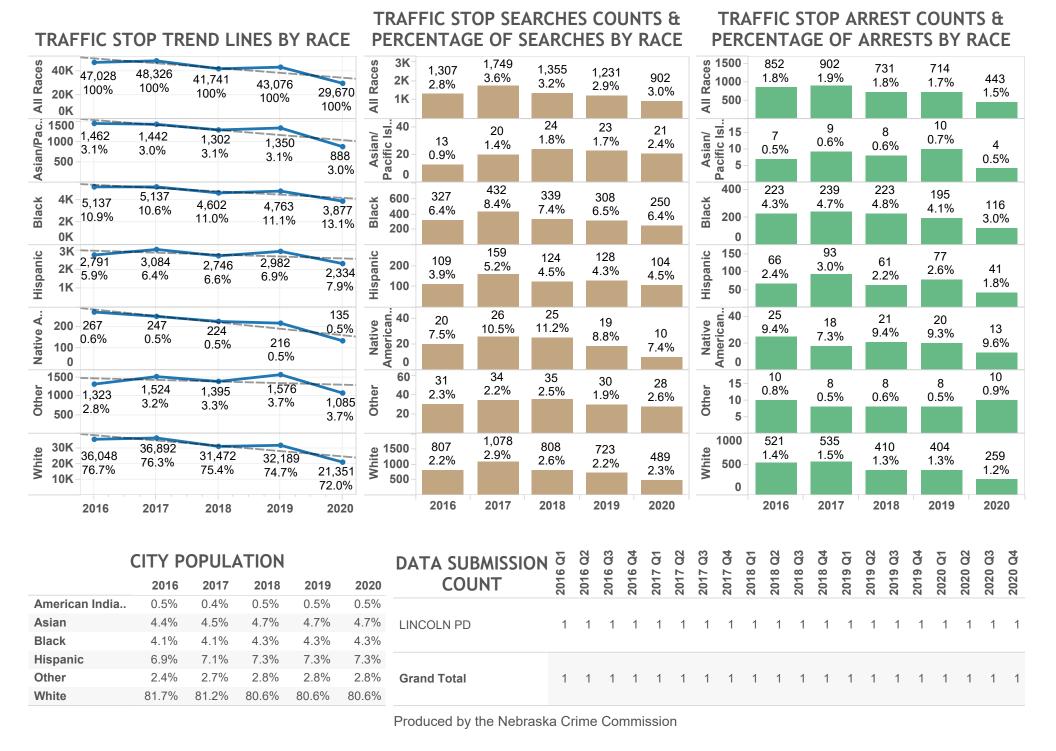
LINCOLN PD

**Grand Total** 

UNL

LINCOLN AIRPORT POLICE

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (LINCOLN PD)





#### SARPY COUNTY TRAFFIC STOPS

The following two pages present traffic stop data from law enforcement agencies in Sarpy County.

Collectively, Sarpy County agencies reported 22,203 traffic stops in 2020, a 3% decrease from the previous year. In particular, Bellevue PD accounted for the largest share (45%) of Sarpy County's 2020 traffic stops.

Compared to the county population, the racial groups overrepresented by Sarpy County's traffic stops data are:

- Black drivers (3.1)
- Hispanic drivers (1.4)

On average (across all races), searches were conducted in 2.6% of all 2020 traffic stops from Sarpy County agencies. With respect to race, search percentages were observed to be higher than average for:

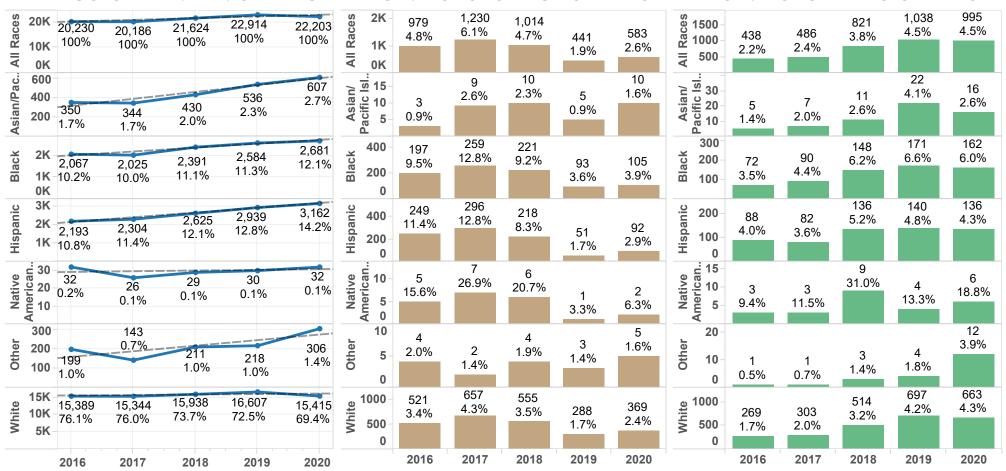
- Native American/Alaska Native drivers (6.3%)
- Black drivers (3.9%)
- Hispanic drivers (2.9%)

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (SARPY CO)



# TRAFFIC STOP SEARCHES COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF SEARCHES BY RACE

# TRAFFIC STOP ARREST COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF ARRESTS BY RACE

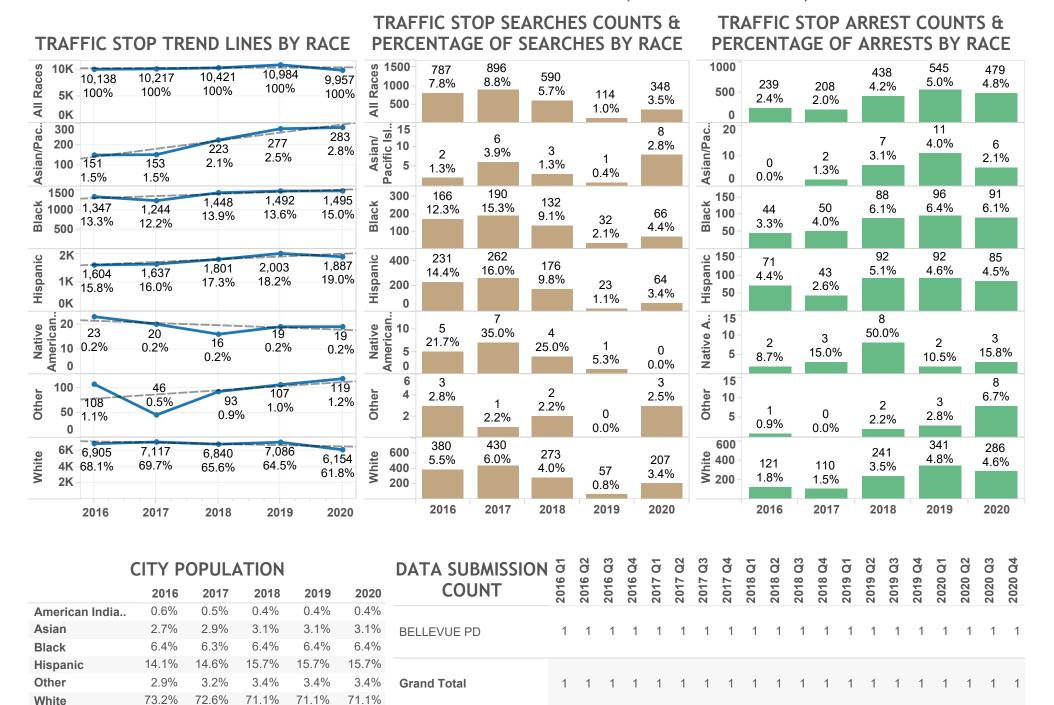


#### **COUNTY POPULATION**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
American India	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian	2.2%	2.4%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
Black	3.9%	3.7%	3.7%	3.9%	3.9%
Hispanic	8.1%	8.4%	8.7%	9.8%	9.8%
Other	2.7%	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%
White	82.6%	82.3%	81.8%	80.5%	80.5%

)	DATA SUBMISSION COUNT	2016 Q1	2016 Q2	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2017 Q4	2018 Q1	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q4	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4
0	SARPY CO SO PAPILLION	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	BELLEVUE PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
,	PAPILLION PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
,	LA VISTA PD OMAHA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
, D	Grand Total	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (BELLEVUE PD)





#### HALL COUNTY TRAFFIC STOPS

The following two pages present traffic stop data from law enforcement agencies in Hall County.

Collectively, Hall County agencies reported 5,813 traffic stops in 2020, a 32% decrease from the previous year. In particular, Grand Island PD accounted for most (66%) of Hall County's 2020 traffic stops.

Compared to the county population, the racial groups overrepresented by Hall County's traffic stops data are:

- Black drivers (1.6)
- Hispanic drivers (1.2)

On average (across all races), searches were conducted in 5.9% of all 2020 traffic stops from Hall County agencies. With respect to race, search percentages were observed to be higher than average for:

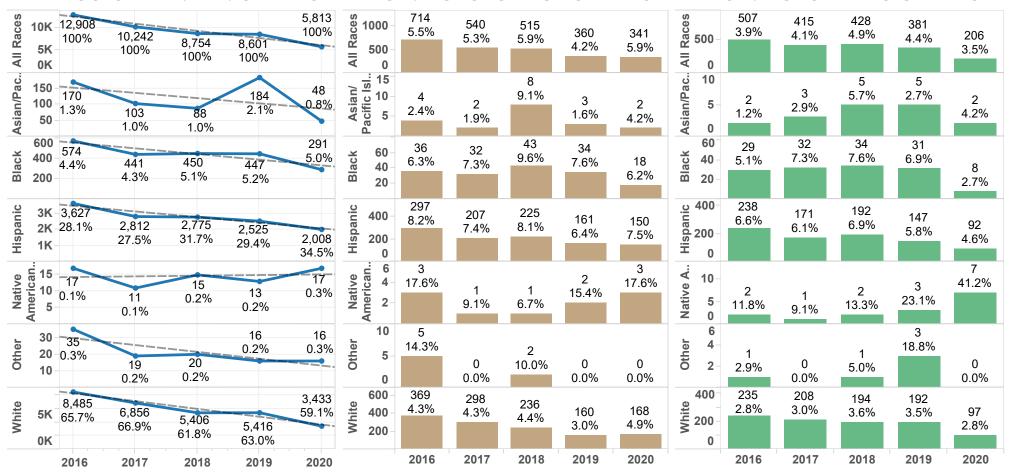
- Native American/Alaska Native drivers (17.6%)
- Hispanic drivers (7.5%)
- Black drivers (6.2%)

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (HALL CO)



# TRAFFIC STOP SEARCHES COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF SEARCHES BY RACE

# TRAFFIC STOP ARREST COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF ARRESTS BY RACE

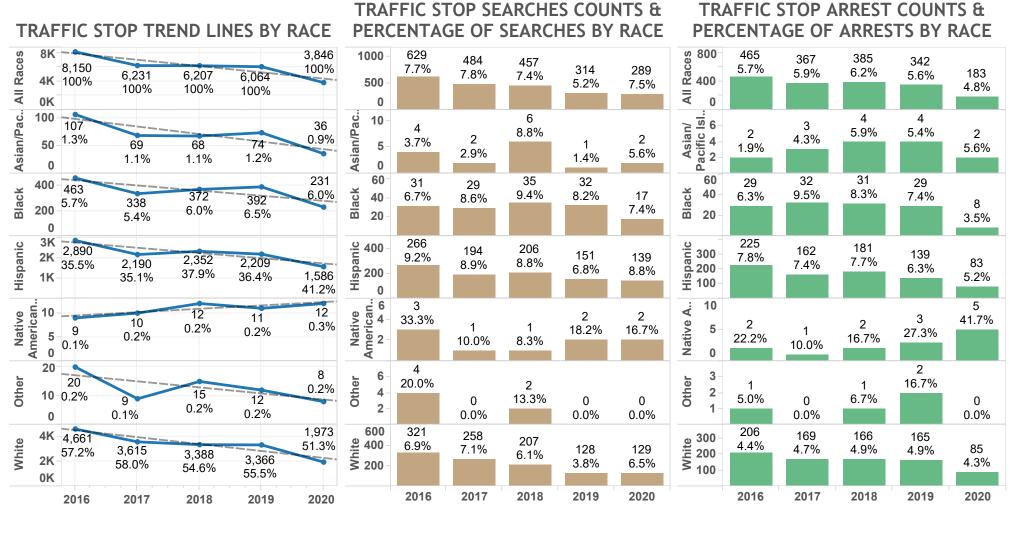


#### **COUNTY POPULATION**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
American India	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian	1.0%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%
Black	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	3.1%	3.1%
Hispanic	25.5%	26.1%	26.8%	28.5%	28.5%
Other	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%
White	69.8%	68.9%	68.0%	65.7%	65.7%

0	DATA SUBMISSION COUNT																			2020 Q3	
6	HALL CO SO GRAND ISLAND	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	GRAND ISLAND PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	Grand Total	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (GRAND ISLAND PD)



	CITY P	OPUL	ATION			DATA SUBMISSION	6 Q1	6 Q2	6 Q3	6 Q4	7 Q1	7 Q2	7 Q3	7 Q4	8 Q	8 Q2	8 Q3	8 Q4	9 Q	9 Q2	9 Q3	9 Q4	0 Q	0 Q2	0 Q3	0 Q4
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	COUNT	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	202	202	202	202
American India	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%																					
Asian	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	GRAND ISLAND PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Black	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%																					
Hispanic	29.0%	29.6%	30.2%	30.2%	30.2%																					
Other	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	Grand Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
White	65.8%	64.8%	64.0%	64.0%	64.0%																					



#### **BUFFALO COUNTY TRAFFIC STOPS**

The following two pages present traffic stop data from law enforcement agencies in Buffalo County.

Collectively, Buffalo County agencies reported 7,178 traffic stops in 2020, a 16% decrease from the previous year. In particular, Kearney PD accounted for most (62%) of Buffalo County's 2020 traffic stops.

Compared to the county population, the racial groups overrepresented by Buffalo County's traffic stops data are:

- Black drivers (3.4)
- Hispanic drivers (1.3)

On average (across all races), searches were conducted in 2.8% of all 2020 traffic stops from Buffalo County agencies. With respect to race, search percentages were observed to be higher than average for:

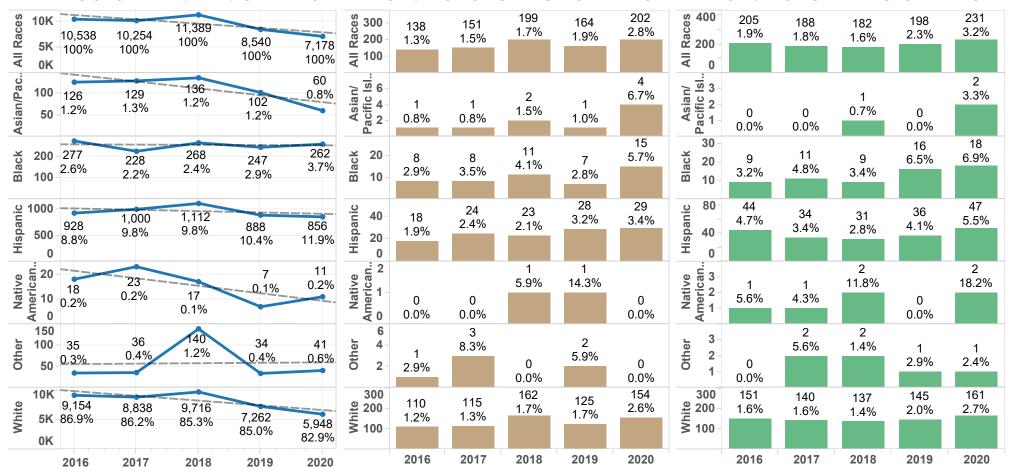
- Asian drivers (6.7%)
- Black drivers (5.7%)
- Hispanic drivers (3.4%)

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (BUFFALO CO)



# TRAFFIC STOP SEARCHES COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF SEARCHES BY RACE

# TRAFFIC STOP ARREST COUNTS & PERCENTAGE OF ARRESTS BY RACE



#### **COUNTY POPULATION**

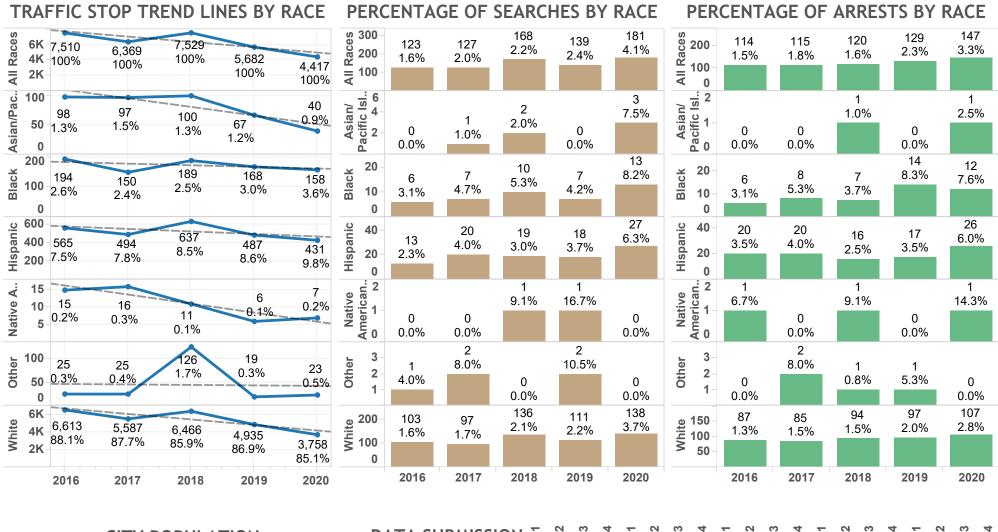
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
American India	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.7%	1.7%
Black	1.1%	0.8%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Hispanic	8.3%	8.4%	8.7%	9.2%	9.2%
Other	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%
White	87.9%	87.7%	87.4%	86.5%	86.5%

)	DATA SUBMISSION COUNT	2016 Q1	2016 Q2	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2017 Q4	2018 Q1	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q4	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4
Ď	BUFFALO CO SO KEARN	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ď	KEARNEY PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
, D	RAVENNA PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ď	SHELTON PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	UNK	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ó	Grand Total	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

#### TRAFFIC STOP REPORT DATA (KEARNEY PD)

TRAFFIC STOP SEARCHES COUNTS &

TRAFFIC STOP ARREST COUNTS &



	CITY P	OPUL	ATION			DATA SUBMISSION	6 Q1	6 Q2	6 Q3	6 Q4	7 Q1	7 Q2	7 Q3	7 Q4	8 Q1	8 Q2	8 Q3	8 Q4	9 Q1	9 Q2	9 Q3	9 Q4	0 Q1	0 Q2	0 Q3	0 Q4
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	COUNT	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	2020	202		202
American India	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%																					
Asian	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	KEARNEY PD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Black	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%																					
Hispanic	8.2%	7.8%	8.4%	8.4%	8.4%																					
Other	1.4%	1.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	Grand Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
White	87.1%	87.3%	86.9%	86.9%	86.9%																					