



Police Employees

Definition

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines law enforcement officers as individuals who ordinarily carry a firearm and a badge, have full arrest powers, and are paid from governmental funds allocated specifically for sworn law enforcement representatives.

User's note

Because of law enforcement's varied service requirements and functions, as well as the distinct demographic traits and characteristics of each jurisdiction, readers should use caution when drawing comparisons between agencies' staffing levels based on police employment data from the UCR Program. In addition, the data presented here reflect existing staffing levels and should not be interpreted as preferred officer strengths recommended by the FBI. Lastly, it should be noted that the totals given for sworn officers for any particular agency reflect not only the patrol officers on the street, but also the officers assigned to various other duties such as those in administrative and investigative positions and those assigned to special teams.

Data collection

Each year, law enforcement agencies across the United States report to the UCR Program the total number of sworn law enforcement officers and civilians in their agencies as of October 31.

Civilian employees include full-time agency personnel such as clerks, radio dispatchers, meter attendants, stenographers, jailers, correctional officers, and mechanics.

Summary overview

- A total of 13,377 city and county law enforcement agencies provided data on the number of full-time law enforcement employees (sworn officers and civilian personnel) on staff in 2020. (See Table 70.)
- Nationwide, the rate of sworn officers was 2.4 per 1,000 inhabitants. The rate of full-time law enforcement employees (civilian and sworn) per 1,000 inhabitants was 3.4. (Based on Table 74.)
- In 2020, the highest rate of officers to individuals among the city population groups was an average of 4.3 officers per 1,000 inhabitants in cities with fewer than 10,000 residents. (See Table 71.)
- County agencies reported an average of 2.7 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. (See Table 71.)
- Sworn officers accounted for 69.3 percent of all law enforcement personnel in the United States in 2020. (Based on Table 74.)