

CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

A Census and Administrative Examination



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COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

MICHIGAN STATE
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The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the authors nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

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About the Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services

Although consolidating and sharing public safety services has received much attention in recent years, such efforts are not new. Moreover, despite the many communities that have in one way or another consolidated or shared these services, the process of doing so has not become any easier. In fact, to say that changing the structural delivery of public safety services is difficult or challenging is an understatement. At the core of contemplating these transitions, regardless of the form, is the need for open, honest, and constructive dialog among all stakeholders. Key to this dialog is evidence derived from independent research, analysis, and evaluation.

To help provide such independent information, the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), established the Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services (PCASS) to help consolidating police agencies and those considering consolidating increase efficiency, enhance quality of

service, and bolster community policing. Together, they also developed resources such as publications, videos, and the PCASS website to assist communities exploring options for delivering public safety services. These resources do not advocate any particular form of service delivery but rather provide information to help communities determine for themselves what best meets their needs, circumstances, and desires.

The PCASS provides a wealth of information and research on structural alternatives for the delivery of police services, including the nature, options, implementation, efficiency, and effectiveness of all forms of consolidation and shared services. PCASS resources allow local decision makers to review what has been done elsewhere and gauge what model would be best for their community.

For more information on the PCASS and to access its resources, please visit <http://policeconsolidation.msu.edu/>.

The image shows a screenshot of the PCASS website. At the top, it features the Michigan State University logo and the title "Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services" alongside the PCASS logo. Below the title is a navigation bar with links for "RESOURCES", "PCASS PUBLICATIONS", "ABOUT US", "CONTACT", "MULTIMEDIA", and "ENDORSEMENTS". The main content area displays a photograph of a booth at a conference, with a large "S" logo and text that reads "Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services (PoPCaSS)". Below the photo is a caption: "PCASS booth at Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP) conference".

Below the photo are three sections:

- PCASS Publications**: Lists "Police Staffing Allocation and Managing Workload Demand: A Critical Assessment of Existing Practices" and "Strategies for Police Recruitment: A Review of Trends, Contemporary Issues, and Existing Approaches".
- Welcome to the Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services**: A heading for the program's introduction.
- PCASS News Highlights**: Lists "PCASS articles released 'Strategies for Police Recruitment: A Review of Trends, Contemporary Issues, and Existing Approaches' and 'Contracting for Law Enforcement Services: Lessons from Research and Practice'".

At the bottom of the page, there is a line of text: "The program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services (PCASS) at Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice provides a single-point resource on structural options".

Introduction

While most U.S. communities provide fire and police services through separate agencies, others, often for reasons of efficiency or cost effectiveness, operate a single consolidated public safety agency. As state and local government resources steadily dwindle and communities continue their struggles with the stiff economic challenges such as those posed by the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, efficiency and cost effectiveness have become even more important reasons to consolidate fire and police services.

Consolidated public safety agencies have existed in the United States for more than a century. Previous discourse has largely focused on the extent of consolidation and its potential costs and benefits. Possibly because of the lack of any census or comprehensive survey of such organizations, little research has systematically examined the administrative features of consolidated agencies.

This document provides the necessary first step in systematic research on consolidated public safety departments, their administrative attributes, and their specific forms of consolidation. It reviews efforts to create and the results of the first census of public safety departments. It then uses these results to describe the administrative features of these departments.

We begin with a detailed overview on public safety consolidation. We then discuss our approach for enumerating characteristics of these departments. We provide a broad overview of their geographic and community characteristics, as well as their age and the time it took communities to transition into consolidated services. We also review services and structure, workload attributes, management and workload issues, and how these agencies address community policing issues. We conclude with a discussion of some overarching issues.

Because each public safety department consolidating police and fire services into a single agency is unique in its approach, we do not compare consolidated departments to police agencies and fire agencies per se. Rather, we identify ways in which they may compare with one another, as well as cite common characteristics they may share.¹ This report's singular purpose is to illustrate the nature and variation of consolidated agencies; we do not assess or evaluate their implementation or effectiveness. A companion report (Wilson, Weiss, and Grammich 2016; see also Wilson, Weiss, and Grammich 2015), featuring in-depth case studies of public safety agencies that have either consolidated or deconsolidated, explores in more depth how agencies consolidate police and fire services, how they respond to calls, advantages and disadvantages in the model, and issues that may lead agencies to deconsolidate. We strongly urge readers interested in understanding the reasons why communities consolidate (or deconsolidate) their police and fire agencies, as well as what effect consolidation had on both their police and fire services, to consult the companion report.

1. In content and style, we seek to make this report similar to those based on the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) program and published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

What is Public Safety Consolidation?

Police agencies have engaged in many forms of consolidation. These may include mergers of agencies to cover wider areas or functional consolidation in which two or more agencies combine functional units (e.g., communications).

A form of local merger, public safety consolidation integrates police, fire, and, in many instances, emergency medical services (EMS) into a single department. (In rare instances, just the police and EMS are integrated.) Several forms of public safety consolidation exist. While not all departments fall neatly within a specific category, most tend to fall on a continuum ranging from nominal to partial to full (More 1970; Lynch and Lord 1979; Wilson and Grammich 2012). As figure 1 indicates, nominally consolidated departments usually do not have integrated police and fire services nor do they have cross trained public safety personnel. In such departments, a public safety director oversees separate police and fire divisions within a single department. These departments may maintain shared facilities, training, or dispatch resources between police and fire divisions.

Partial consolidation typically involves a limited integration of police and fire services. These departments have a limited number of public safety officers (PSO) trained as both police officers and fire personnel working alongside separate police and fire personnel in the same department. In these agencies, the cross trained public safety officers perform police functions until required to respond to a fire call.

Full consolidation generally involves a complete integration of police services with fire services. In this model, public safety officers are cross trained in and perform both police and fire services. In fully

Figure 1. Characteristics of public safety departments by level of consolidation

Full	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full integration of police and fire services ▪ Cross trained public safety officers ▪ Consolidated management and command
Partial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partial integration of police and fire services ▪ Cross trained public safety officers exist alongside separate functional personnel ▪ Consolidation occurs within administrative ranks
Nominal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Police and fire services are not integrated ▪ Consolidation generally limited to the chief executive

consolidated departments, a small number of public safety officers who are ready to respond with the larger fire apparatus remain in the fire station. Other officers are on patrol and perform normal police and fire prevention duties as needed. These agencies consolidate the management and command of both police and fire services into a single entity.

Prior research has described the different types of public safety consolidation; however, there have been no attempts to systematically classify agencies by type nor has there been an examination of the prevalence of different consolidation categories and features. The lack of systematic research also means that all forms of consolidation may not yet have been identified.

Identifying public safety departments

To gather systematic data on consolidated public safety departments, we sought to identify every such department in the United States. Unfortunately, no reliable list of public safety departments existed when we began this effort. We therefore undertook a two-phase process to compile a listing of public safety departments.

First, we broadly gathered and solicited as much information as possible about agencies that might be consolidated public safety departments. The process included the following:

- Creating and marketing nationwide a form posted on the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice website asking individuals to notify us of any such departments they knew, whether their own or another
- Reviewing past lists of public safety and law enforcement agencies (e.g., from the National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, and related Internet sites)
- Conducting extensive outreach to practitioners and experts, including those from public safety departments and professional associations
- Reviewing the practitioner and academic literature
- Conducting Internet searches of department, media, association, and other websites

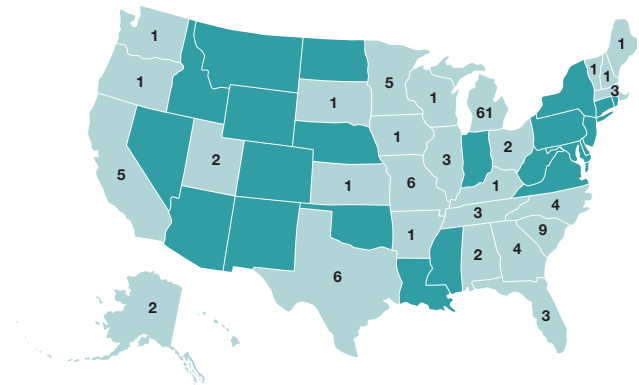
Second, we sought to confirm that each department identified in phase one actually consolidated public safety at least nominally. There is much confusion about public safety consolidation, and department names may not provide a clear indication of the service delivery model. For instance, not all agencies referred to as a “department of public safety” are consolidated, and some consolidated departments are still referred to as a “police department.” We confirmed whether each department was consolidated by gathering information directly from it. In most instances, we did this from the department website. Those we could not confirm from the

Internet, we contacted by e-mail or phone. We ultimately identified 131 consolidated public safety departments nationwide. (For the complete list, see the appendix.)

Geographic and community characteristics

Of the 131 public safety agencies we identified, nearly half (61, or 47 percent) were in Michigan. Other states with at least five consolidated public safety departments are South Carolina (9), Missouri (6), California (5), and Minnesota (5). Figure 2 shows the distribution of consolidated public safety departments by state. The 23 shaded states are those in which we could not find any such departments.

Figure 2. Consolidated public safety departments by state

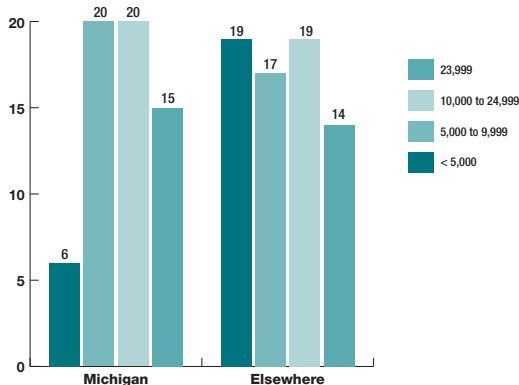


Of the 131 public safety agencies shown on this map, we chose not to consider that at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, the headquarters of the Arkansas National Guard, in our analyses because it serves a government installation rather than a community.

These data allow only loose speculation on the reasons for the concentration of public safety departments in Michigan. Nevertheless, because Michigan public safety agencies differ in some aspects from other public safety agencies, we offer some comparisons between Michigan agencies and those elsewhere. This allows us to illustrate common characteristics of such agencies where they are most prevalent as well as their more diverse features elsewhere.

Nationwide, public safety departments serve communities ranging in population from just over 150 residents to more than 200,000. Nearly half of the public safety departments we found are in communities with fewer than 10,000 residents. The median population of all public safety communities is 10,412. Public safety consolidation communities in Michigan, where the model is most entrenched, have a median population of 10,601; communities we surveyed outside of Michigan have a median population of 9,274 (figure 3).

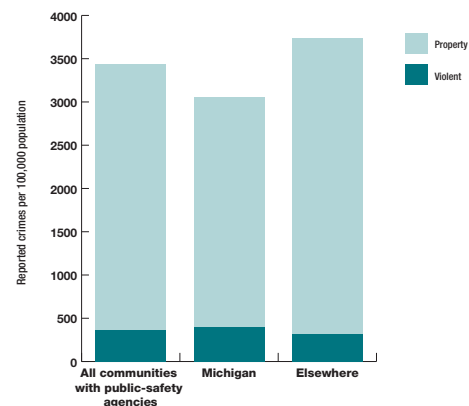
Figure 3. Consolidated public safety agencies by population in Michigan and elsewhere



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015

Public safety agencies must also address varying levels of crime. In Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Part I Crime statistics for 2013, crime rates in public safety communities ranged from less than 200 to more than 10,000 per 100,000 residents. Across all such communities, 2013 UCR statistics cite 3,437 crimes per 100,000 residents²—slightly above the national rate of 3,099 (perhaps not surprising given that most public safety jurisdictions are not rural). Michigan public safety communities have lower total crime rates but higher violent crime rates than public safety jurisdictions elsewhere (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Crime rates per 100,000 population in municipalities with a consolidated public safety agency



Source: Population figures from U.S. Census Bureau 2015; crime statistics from FBI 2014.

2. In addition to Camp Robinson, this excludes Oak Point, Texas, where the public safety department has not provided Uniform Crime Report statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the past decade.

Half of the communities with consolidated public safety agencies have populations that are at least 85 percent non-Hispanic single-race White, compared to 64 percent for the nation in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2015). Nevertheless, nearly one in seven of these communities are “majority-minority” (i.e., populations that are less than 50 percent non-Hispanic White.)

Communities with consolidated public safety agencies also exhibit diversity in other socioeconomic characteristics. Across all public safety communities, the proportion of residents at least 25 years of age having at least a bachelor’s degree ranges from less than 5 to 85 percent, with the median community having a level of 28 percent, compared to 29 percent nationwide.³

3. Per capita income in Michigan public safety communities is \$26,536, while that in other public safety communities is \$29,932. Across all Michigan public safety communities, the proportion of residents at least 25 years of age with at least a bachelor’s degree ranges from 5 percent to 80 percent; across other public safety communities, it ranges from 6 percent to 85 percent.

Surveying Agency Characteristics

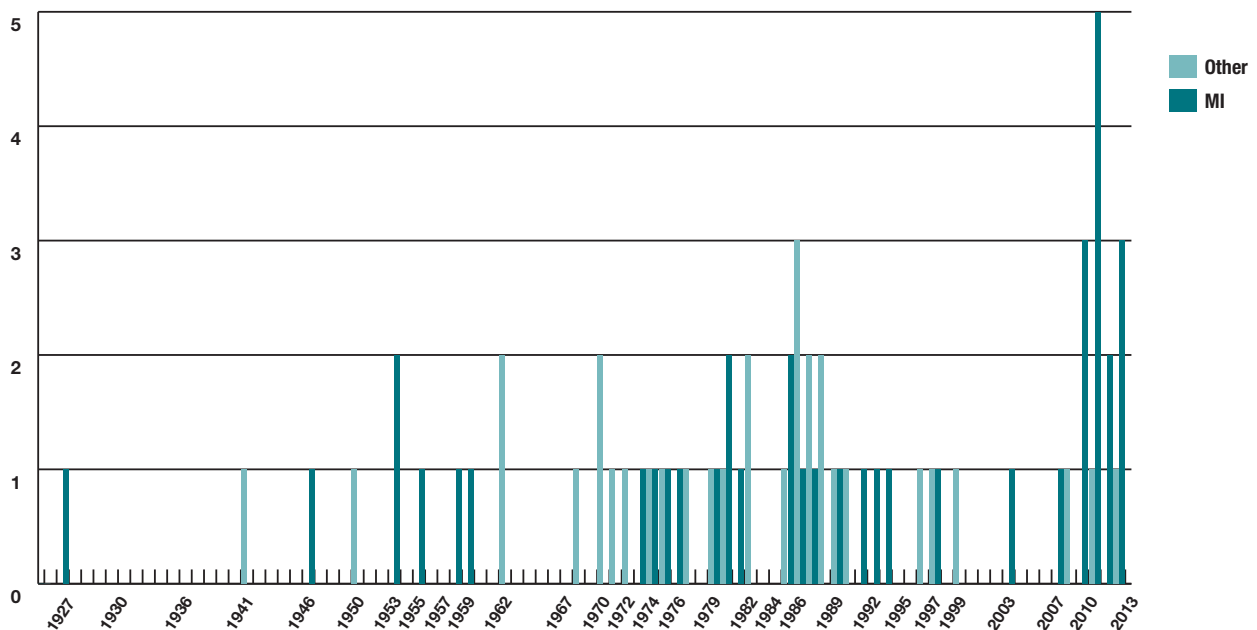
To assess agency characteristics, we developed, with the Michigan State University Office of Survey Research, a survey regarding major administrative features of the departments, using standard mail survey protocols (Dillman 1978; Dillman 1991). We fielded the survey from October 2013 to May 2014 to all the public safety departments we identified. Of the 131 eligible agencies, 76 completed surveys, a response rate of 58 percent. (Not all agencies answered every question; in each section, we give the number of responses to the relevant portions of the survey.)

Age and transition

While the public safety model is new for some, it is far from new for others. The youngest departments in our survey were established in 2013, while the oldest was established in 1927 (see figure 5).

Most of the 71 departments that responded to this question were created in the past 30 years, and nearly one in four were created since the beginning of 2008. New consolidations have been particularly prevalent in Michigan in recent years. Of the 17 agencies that reported consolidating since 2008, 14 are in Michigan. The survey also asked respondents how long their community considered the public safety model before implementing it. Altogether, 42 agencies reported both the year of their creation and how long they considered consolidation before implementing it. Not surprisingly, while all agencies established since 1991 were able to report how long their communities considered consolidation before implementing it, only 18 of the 45 established before 1991 were able to do so.

Figure 5. Departments (n=71) by year established



The results we received indicate that communities may be implementing public safety consolidation more rapidly over time. Among communities consolidating public safety agencies since 1995, about three in four deliberated for no more than one year; among those consolidating in earlier years, about three in four considered it for at least two years (see table 1).⁴

We also asked agencies whether they conducted any studies about public safety consolidation before implementing it. Here, too, results varied by year implemented. Nearly half the 73 respondents to this question, including two-thirds of those founded before 1991, did not know if their communities had conducted any studies. Perhaps not surprisingly, such studies (when they were conducted) added to implementation time for responding communities reporting both that they undertook a study and

how long they considered consolidation before implementation (table 2). The year in which consolidation was implemented made virtually no difference regarding whether a study was conducted.

Table 1. Length of time communities considered public safety consolidation before implementation (n=42)

Year of implementation	"Less than" or "about" one year	"About two years" or "three or more years"	Total number of communities
Before 1995	6	15	21
Since 1995	15	6	21
Total number of communities	21	21	42

Table 2. Length of time to implement consolidation by whether community conducted pre-implementation study (n=33)

Study before implementation?	"Less than" or "about" one year	"About two years" or "three or more years"	Total number of communities
Yes	7	15	22
No	8	3	11
Total number of communities	15	18	33

4. There may also be some censoring of data here, in which we are not able to discern the outcome of recent lengthy considerations to launch a public-safety agency. For example, an agency consolidating in 2014 (after we collected our data) after consideration of more than three years would not appear in our table. As a result, the table may make it appear that agencies recently consolidating have, on average, had shorter periods of consideration than they actually did.

We asked agencies what type of studies they conducted before consolidating. Twenty-five respondents reported studies by

- external consultant (nine communities);
- external association (three communities);
- local government (12 communities);
- internal police agency (13 communities);
- internal fire agency (12 communities);
- informal consultation with other public safety departments (14 communities).

Fifteen of these 25 communities conducted more than one type of study; nearly all that had an internal police study also had an internal fire study.

Services and structure

Consolidated departments typically provide, as noted, both police and fire services. Most provide EMS as well. Nearly half of those indicating the types of service they provide offer basic life support (BLS) or advanced life support (ALS) services. About one-third of the agencies we surveyed did not offer BLS or ALS but did serve as medical first responders in their communities. More than one-fourth of responding agencies also provided medical transport services in their communities.

The 75 public safety departments that responded to this question report the following capabilities:

- Police, ALS, and medical transport services (1)
- Police and fire services (11, including 2 that also provide medical transport)
- Police, fire, and medical first response services (26)
- Police, fire, and BLS (16, including 2 that also provide medical transport)
- Police, fire, and ALS (21, including 16 that also provide medical transport)

Table 3 classifies public safety departments by level of consolidation and cross training. Public safety departments vary considerably in organizational structure, approach to command integration, and level of cross training. The largest proportion (43 percent) are fully consolidated, while 13 percent are purely nominal without consolidated command. The others fall on a continuum between these extremes.

Table 3. Agencies by type of consolidation (n=76)

Type of consolidation	N	Percent
Pure nominal (single director but separate divisions and no cross training)	10	13
Separate police/fire divisions without consolidated leadership but with some cross training	15	20
Separate police/fire divisions and consolidated command with no cross training	2	3
Separate police/fire divisions and consolidated command with some cross training	2	3
Separate police/fire divisions and consolidated command with all cross trained	2	3
Combined police/fire divisions without consolidated command with all cross trained	3	4
Combined police/fire divisions with consolidated command and with no cross training	1	1
Combined police/fire divisions with consolidated command and with some cross training	8	11
Full consolidation (combined police/fire divisions, consolidated command, all cross trained)	33	43
Total responding	76	100

Table 4. Distribution of types of calls for service, crime, and structure fires, 2012

Call type	Agencies reporting	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
Police	72	700	271,748	20,306	10,781
Fire	71	26	4,786	795	306
Emergency medical	69	0	26,972	1,343	413
Nonconfined structure fires	71	0	192	25	12

Workload attributes

Public safety departments respond to a wide variety of calls. Table 4 shows the minimum, maximum, mean, and median numbers of calls by type (police, fire, emergency medical, and structure fire) that agencies answered in 2012. Police calls were most common; the median number was nearly 11,000. No other type of call had a median greater than 1,000. While some agencies reported zero or one for certain call types, others reported hundreds or even thousands of each type of call.

Table 5 illustrates one particular aspect of how public safety agencies handle their workload: the number of fire stations they staff. Most agencies report staffing one station, though one agency staffs 15.

Table 5. Fire stations staffed at end of year 2012

Number of staffed stations	Reporting agencies	Percent
0	2	3
1	47	62
2	9	12
3	10	13
4	5	7
5 or more	3	4
Total	76	100

Table 6. Personnel delivering emergency medical services (n=74)*

Service provided by agency	EMS unit	Police or fire	Other public	Private	Total responding
ALS	11	10	0	1	22
No ALS but BLS*	3	11	1	0	15
No BLS but medical first response	1	19	4	2	26
Police and fire services only	2	1	5	3	11
Total	17	41	10	6	74

*While we show only one type of personnel delivering emergency medical services, agencies may use more than one type to do so. For example, an agency that provides emergency medical services both through an EMS unit and through police or fire personnel was coded as an EMS unit.

For a nonconfined structure fire,⁵ responding public safety departments (n=74) indicate they dispatch, on average, three fire apparatus (ranging from one to nine) and 11 sworn staff—eight with the apparatus (ranging from zero to 31) and three law enforcement officers reassigned from other duties (ranging from zero to 20). Just more than half of agencies responding to this question (37 of 71) claim to meet National Fire Protection Agency Standard 1710 (National Fire Protection Agency 2010) concerning the organization and deployment capabilities of career fire departments.⁶

Table 6 on page 10 provides information on how the agencies deliver EMS. Police or fire personnel typically provide emergency medical services in agencies providing medical first response or basic life support. Specialized EMS units provide emergency medical services in half the agencies providing advanced life support services. Put another way, agencies with more advanced medical services tend to have more specialized units provide them.

5. As defined by the National Fire Incident Reporting System, nonconfined structure fires are those incidents typically associated with larger, more serious fires that progress beyond control and often result in substantial loss or casualties (as opposed to confined structure fires, which do not spread beyond the container of origin, such as a cooking pan fire put out on a stove).

6. More specifically, Standard 1710 lists requirements for “effective and efficient organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by career fire departments to protect citizens and the occupational safety and health of fire department employees.” Its provisions “cover functions and objectives of fire department emergency service delivery, response capabilities, and resources, including staffing levels, response times, and levels of service.” For further information, see National Fire Protection Agency (2010).

Table 7. Actual sworn personnel by employment status at end of 2012

	Full-time	Part-time	On-call
Agencies responding	74	73	71
Mean	53	1	15
Median	32	0	9
Minimum	5	0	0
Maximum	953	15	81

Staffing size, allocation, and deployment

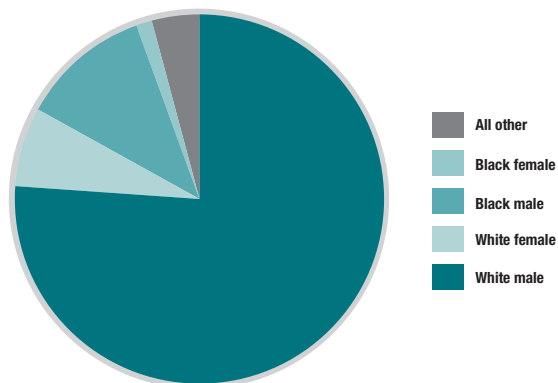
Table 7 provides staffing characteristics of public safety departments. Responding departments varied in size from as few as five full-time personnel to as many as 953, with the median having 32. Most did not use part-time personnel, though one agency used as many as 15. Most did use on-call personnel, typically around 10. About 60 percent had a collective bargaining agreement covering sworn staff.

White men constitute the largest share of staff in responding public safety departments, accounting for at least 90 percent of sworn personnel in more than one-third of responding departments (n=70) and a majority of staff in all but one. Nevertheless, across all responding departments, other groups constitute nearly one-fourth of all staff (see figure 6). Women are among full-time sworn personnel in more than four of five departments, African Americans in nearly half, and other racial and ethnic groups (Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander) in a little more than half.

Training

About half the responding departments cross train all their full-time personnel, and most report cross training at least some. Nevertheless, many report having at least some police or fire personnel who are not cross trained. Larger departments in our survey are somewhat less likely to have cross trained personnel. The largest agency, for example, has no cross trained personnel, although another large department has nearly 200 cross trained personnel.

Figure 6. Public safety department personnel by race and Hispanic origin (in 70 responding departments)



Among those with at least some cross trained personnel, more report cross training police personnel as fire/EMS personnel than report cross training fire/EMS personnel as police personnel (see table 8). All but two of these departments implemented cross training when consolidating their police and fire agencies. Among the 61 agencies that report cross training personnel, only five make it optional.

Table 8. Degree of cross training (n=74)*

Degree of cross training	N	Percent
No police officers cross trained as fire/EMS	12	16
No fire/EMS personnel cross trained as police	17	23
Some police cross trained as fire/EMS	19	26
Some fire/EMS personnel cross trained as police	9	12
All personnel cross trained	41	55

* Agencies may report in more than one category.

Table 9. Agencies by number of sworn personnel and highest level of cross training (n=73)

Highest cross training capability trained	6-30 personnel trained (n=34)	≥ 31 personnel trained (n=39)	Total
None (i.e., no cross training)	2	9	11
Police/fire	8	10	18
Medical first response	10	9	19
EMS basic	4	6	10
EMS intermediate	3	0	3
Paramedic	7	5	12

Table 10. Agencies using internal or academy training structures by discipline (police or fire)*

Type of academy	Police	Fire
Internal only	4	15
External only	65	45
Both internal and external	6	16

* Agencies could report using more than one strategy.

Smaller agencies are more likely to provide more specialized cross training (see table 9 on page 12). Among agencies with six to 30 sworn personnel, for example, 24 of 34 provide more specialized training than police/fire cross training, and only two provide no cross training. Among larger agencies with at least 30 sworn personnel, 20 of 39 provide more specialized cross training, and nine provide no cross training. Nevertheless, one agency with 54 sworn personnel reported all were trained as paramedics, and another with 195 sworn personnel reported 185 were trained to provide EMS basic services.

Public safety departments are far more likely to provide initial training through an external rather than internal academy, but some use both. External academy training is more common for police work than fire work (see table 10).

Cross training can make many demands on officers' time. Public safety departments manage these demands in a number of ways. Sixty agencies reported how they manage staffing for training:

- 52 report integrating training into shifts.
- 23 train officers when off duty.

- 28 schedule off-duty officers to backfill shifts during training.
- 14 short-staff shifts during training.
- 18 use other means such as overtime or part-time staff.

Management structure and staffing

Most public safety departments in our survey have relatively flat structures, perhaps because of their relatively small size. While all but one have a director or chief (with one reporting no director or chief but a top leader who is below a director or chief but above a captain), only about half have captains or equivalent. Some even lack sergeants (though many of these have officers whose rank is below sergeant but above officer). The number of departments (n=75) with specific ranks include the following:

- Public safety director/chief: 74
- Positions below public safety director/chief but above captain: 35
- Captain or equivalent: 37
- Lieutenant or equivalent: 56
- Sergeant, first line supervisor or equivalent: 65

Public safety agencies typically use civilian as well as volunteer or auxiliary personnel. Seventy-one of the 76 responding agencies reported having at least some nonsworn personnel perform dispatch, clerical, or other nonmedical duties; 20 of these agencies also had civilian personnel perform medical duties. Fifty-one of the 76 agencies have volunteer, auxiliary, or reserve personnel:

- 23 of these have such personnel only for fire.
- 7 have them only for police.
- 16 have them for police or fire (but not cross trained).
- 5 have cross trained auxiliary personnel.

No one personnel type appears to dominate staffing (see table 11). In a typical 24-hour cycle, more than half the agencies have multifunction public safety officers available, but nearly half have non-cross trained police or fire officers available. Some also have police-based or fire-based public safety officers available.

Public safety agencies typically use officers on patrol to respond to calls for service. Of 75 responding agencies, 74 said they had officers on patrol available to respond to calls for service in a typical 24-hour cycle. Of these 74, 50 also had officers available in

station to respond to calls, and 20 had officers on other assignment available to respond to calls. One noted officers available only on other assignment to respond to calls.

Table 11. Minimum sworn officers available for service calls in 24-hour cycle

Type of officer	Number of agencies reporting type of officer available	Median minimum number of type of officer available in 24-hour cycle
Police (non-cross trained)	34	8
Fire (non-cross trained)	37	5
Multifunctional PSOs (e.g., rotating assignments includes both police and fire duties)	43	6
Police-based PSOs	11	5
Fire-based PSOs	0	6

Table 12. Shift type by type of sworn personnel*

Type of duty to which agencies assign officers	Fixed shift	Rotating shift	Fixed and rotating shifts	Total
Police duty	18	8	8	34
Fire/EMS duty	30	5	5	40
Multifunction public safety duty	21	8	13	42
Police-based public safety duty	13	4	2	19
Fire-based public safety duty	7	1	2	10

* Agencies may report assigning officers to more than one type of duty.

To bolster their capacity, 72 of 75 responding departments noted they participate in mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments. Types of agreements used include those for fire services with municipal fire departments (68 agencies); law enforcement services with a municipal police department (54 agencies); law enforcement services with a county sheriff (40 agencies); emergency medical services with a local or state agency (30 agencies); and law enforcement services with a state agency (21 agencies). Agencies typically have multiple mutual aid agreements; 50 responding agencies, for example, have mutual agreements for both fire and police services.

Shift attributes

Public safety departments deploy their sworn staff according to a number of shift types and lengths, but some are more common than others. For all types of sworn staff, a fixed schedule is more frequently used

than either a rotating or fixed-and-rotating schedule (see table 12 on page 14). Sworn staff solely devoted to fire/emergency medical service are more likely to have a 24-hour shift, whereas those devoted to the police function or who serve as multifunction personnel are more likely to have a 12-hour shift (see table 13).

Budget

Among 70 agencies reporting budget information, total operating budgets for 2012 ranged from a little more than \$500,000 to nearly \$82 million, with a median budget of nearly \$4.1 million. Personnel budgets excluding overtime ranged from less than \$200,000 to more than \$62 million and from 5 percent of the budget to more than 90 percent with a median level of 64 percent. Overtime expenses for those agencies reporting them ranged from \$5,000 to \$3.2 million, or levels that reflected 1 to 38 percent of the non-overtime personnel budget, with a median level of 5 percent.

Table 13. Number of agencies assigning shift lengths by type of sworn personnel*

Type of duty to which agencies assign officers	Agencies assigning 8-hour shifts	Agencies assigning 9-hour shifts	Agencies assigning 10-hour shifts	Agencies assigning 11-hour shifts	Agencies assigning 12-hour shifts	Agencies assigning 24-hour shifts	Agencies assigning multiple shift lengths	Total
Police duty	9	0	2	1	21	0	4	37
Fire/EMS duty	3	1	0	0	12	23	5	44
Multifunction public safety duty	6	0	0	0	19	7	9	41
Police-based public safety duty	5	0	2	1	11	0	1	20
Fire-based public safety duty	1	0	0	0	3	8	0	12

* Agencies may report assigning officers to more than one type of duty.

Table 14. Per-capita public safety agency expenditures, 2012*

	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
All	69	356

Location	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
Michigan	37	288
Elsewhere	32	404

Estimated population, 2013	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
< 5,000	12	605
5,000 to 9,999	15	454
10,000 to 24,999	23	403
25,000+	19	323

Annual crimes per 100,000 population	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
< 1,500	14	396
1,500 to 2,999	23	339
3,000 to 4,999	18	335
5,000+	14	394

Years since consolidation	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
< 10	14	311
10–25	13	294
26–50	22	375
51+	11	458

Time spent considering consolidation before implementation	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
Less than one year	8	386
About one year	11	329
About two years	9	349
Three or more years	11	373

Services agency officers	Number of agencies reporting budget figures	Expenditures (\$) per resident of jurisdiction
Police and fire only	10	337
Police, fire, and medical first response	25	267
Police, fire, and BLS	16	357
Police, fire, and ALS	17	368

* Not all agencies reported in each category.

These agencies combined spent an average of \$356 per resident in 2012. By comparison, we note that all U.S. local governments combined spent an average of \$403 per U.S. resident for police and fire protection in 2012 (Barnett et al. 2014). Agencies with higher per capita expenditures tend to be those outside Michigan, with smaller populations, and with longer histories (see table 14 on page 16).

There are smaller differences in per capita expenditures among agencies by crime rate, time spent considering consolidation before implementation, and type of services offered.

Community policing

Community policing means different things to different departments, and translating the philosophy into practice can be very difficult. (For a full discussion of community policing and its varying meanings across communities, see Wilson 2006.) Table 15 lists several key activities associated with community policing. Of these, only two were implemented by more than half of the surveyed public safety departments: (1) maintaining a mission statement that includes community policing and (2) partnering with citizen groups and using their

Table 15. Community policing activities reported by responding agencies (n=69)

Community policing activity	N	Percent
Maintaining mission statement, including community policing component	56	81
Partnering with citizen groups and including feedback in development of neighborhood or community policing strategies	42	61
Upgrading technology to support analysis of community problems	33	48
Evaluating patrol officers on collaborative problem-solving projects	30	43
Giving patrol officers responsibility for specific geographic areas or beats	28	41
Surveying citizens on crime, fear of crime, or police satisfaction	23	33
Dedicating sworn personnel who were not part of community policing unit to community policing activities	21	30
Maintaining a community policing unit with full-time sworn personnel	19	28
Actively encouraging patrol officers to engage in SARA-type projects on beats	19	28
Conducting a citizen police academy	16	23
Maintaining or creating formal, written community policing plan	14	20

feedback in the development of neighborhood and community policing strategies. The attribute least frequently implemented was having a formal, written community policing plan (20 percent).

Among 52 responding agencies, only 10 reported that all their in-service sworn police personnel received at least eight hours of community policing training in FY 2012. An additional 13 reported that 3 to 85 percent of their in-service sworn personnel received at least eight hours of such training, but 29 reported that none did.

Among 36 agencies reporting on training for new officer recruits, 16 said all recruits received at least eight hours of community policing training, while the remaining 20 said none did. Public safety agencies requiring at least some police officers to undergo at least eight hours of training in community policing each year serve more populous, better educated, more diverse, and wealthier jurisdictions (see table 16).

Table 16. Characteristics of communities by community policing training requirements in FY 2012

Characteristics	Required some police officers to receive at least eight hours of training (n=23)	Did not require any police officers to receive at least eight hours of training (n=29)
Median population	12,727	10,205
Median percentage of population 25+ with at least a bachelor's degree	32.8	22.0
Median percentage of non-Hispanic single-race White population	80.0	88.3
Median per capita income	\$26,841	\$21,244

Conclusion

Relative to the number of all police and fire departments in the United States, the number of public safety departments is small but appears to be growing. With little known about such departments, it is important to learn more about them.

Though consolidated public safety departments have existed in the United States for at least a century, about one in four were created in the past decade. Half of these agencies are in Michigan, yet the communities they serve are broadly similar in socioeconomic characteristics and crime levels to other such communities in the United States.

Nearly all public safety agencies provide police and fire services, but many also provide medical first response, basic life support, advanced life support, and medical transport. About half the public safety agencies in our survey cross train all their personnel, but levels of training vary by agency. Public safety agencies have far more police than fire calls, but many still maintain multiple fire stations. Most public safety agencies report meeting National Fire Protection Agency Standard 1710 as it concerns the organization and deployment capabilities of career fire departments.

The size of public safety agencies varies widely, from less than a half-dozen personnel to nearly 1,000. Similarly, their budgets range from about a half-million dollars to more than \$80 million, with personnel budgets accounting for about two-thirds of overall budgets in the median agency.

Smaller agencies tend to provide higher levels of cross training. Nevertheless, while the largest agency does not cross train any of its personnel, one agency with nearly 200 officers reports that nearly all are trained to provide basic EMS, and another agency with more than 50 officers reports cross training all personnel.

Public safety departments have relatively flat structures, perhaps not surprising given their relatively small size. Their staffing varies widely: agencies may assign personnel to predominantly police duty, primarily fire and EMS duty, or primarily to multifunction public safety duty and do so in shifts ranging from eight to 24 hours.

Most public safety agencies undertake at least some community policing activities, though many do not require annual training in it. Public safety agencies that require at least some of their personnel to receive training in community policing tend to serve slightly more populous, affluent, and diverse communities.

This work, by reviewing the prevalence of public safety departments and their attributes, provides a benchmark for future analysis; information for agencies to consider in refining their practices and guidance for communities considering public safety alternatives. Communities have implemented public safety consolidation in a variety of ways. In documenting that variety, we hope that others can better determine how useful the model is for their own communities.

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Appendix: Public Safety Departments and Census 2010 Population, Alphabetical by State

AL	Daleville Department of Public Safety	5,295	MI	Albion Department of Public Safety	8,616
AL	Montgomery Department of Public Safety	205,764	MI	Alma Police Department	9,383
AK	St. Paul Department of Public Safety	479	MI	Auburn Hills Police Department	21,412
AK	Unalaska Department of Public Safety	4,376	MI	Battle Creek Police	52,347
AR	Camp Robinson Department of Public Safety.	n/a	MI	Bay City Department of Public Safety	34,932
CA	Ceres Department of Public Safety	45,417	MI	Benton Harbor Department of Public Safety	10,038
CA	Lindsay Department of Public Safety	11,768	MI	Berkley Department of Public Safety	14,970
CA	Rohnert Park Department of Public Safety	40,971	MI	Beverly Hills Department of Public Safety	10,267
CA	Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety.	140,081	MI	Big Rapids Department of Public Safety.	10,601
CA	Woodland Public Safety Department	55,468	MI	Blackman-Leoni Township Department of Public Safety	37,858
FL	Daytona Beach Shores Public Safety Department	4,247	MI	Bloomfield Hills Public Safety Department	3,869
FL	Indian River Shores Public Safety	3,901	MI	Canton Department of Public Safety	90,173
FL	Town of Jupiter Island Public Safety Department	817	MI	Center Line Public Safety Department	8,257
GA	Bainbridge Public Safety Department	12,697	MI	Coldwater Public Safety	10,945
GA	City of Social Circle Department of Public Safety.	4,262	MI	Dowagiac Police Department	5,879
GA	Grovetown Department of Public Safety	11,216	MI	East Grand Rapids Public Safety Department.	10,694
GA	Harlem Department of Public Safety	2,666	MI	Emmett Township Department of Public Safety	11,770
IL	Bolingbrook Department of Public Safety.	73,366	MI	Escanaba Department of Public Safety	12,616
IL	Rosemont Department of Public Safety.	4,202	MI	Essexville Public Safety Department.	3,478
IL	Village of Glencoe Department of Public Safety	8,723	MI	Farmington Public Safety Department	10,372
IA	Charles City Police Department	7,652	MI	Fraser Public Safety Department	14,480
KS	Augusta Department of Public Safety	9,274	MI	Gladstone Public Safety Department	4,973
KY	Prestonsburg Police Department	3,255	MI	Grand Haven Department of Public Safety	10,412
ME	Hampden Public Safety	7,257	MI	Greenville Department of Public Safety.	8,481
MA	Haverhill Police Department	60,879	MI	Grosse Pointe Department of Public Safety.	5,421
MA	Mendon Public Safety	5,839	MI	Grosse Pointe Farms Public Safety Department	9,479
MA	North Adams Department of Public Safety	13,708			

MI	Grosse Pointe Park Department of Public Safety	11,553	MI	Springfield Public Safety Department	5,260
MI	Grosse Pointe Shores Department of Public Safety	3,008	MI	St. Joseph Department of Public Safety	8,365
MI	Grosse Pointe Woods Department of Public Safety	16,135	MI	Sturgis Public Safety	10,994
MI	Hillsdale Department of Public Safety	8,305	MI	Van Buren Township Public Safety Department	28,821
MI	Holland Department of Public Safety	33,051	MI	Walker Police Department	23,537
MI	Huntington Woods Department of Public Safety	6,238	MI	Wixom Police Department	13,498
MI	Ionia Public Safety	11,394	MI	Wyoming Public Safety Department	72,125
MI	Ironwood Public Safety Department	5,387	MI	Marshall Department of Public Safety	7,088
MI	Jackson Police Department	33,534	MN	Cottage Grove Public Safety Department	34,589
MI	Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety	74,262	MN	Mankato Public Safety	39,309
MI	Kingsford Public Safety Department	5,133	MN	Marshall Department of Public Safety	13,680
MI	Manistee Public Safety	6,226	MN	New Brighton Department of Public Safety	21,456
MI	Manistique Public Safety Department	3,097	MN	Woodbury Public Safety Department	61,961
MI	Monroe Police Department	20,733	MO	Charleston Public Safety	5,947
MI	Muskegon Public Safety	38,401	MO	Des Peres Public Safety Department	8,373
MI	Northville Township Public Safety	28,497	MO	Gladstone Department of Public Safety	25,410
MI	Novi Public Safety Administration	55,224	MO	Maryville Public Safety	11,972
MI	Oak Park Department of Public Safety	29,319	MO	Mexico Public Safety Department	11,543
MI	Owasso Public Safety Department	15,194	MO	Sikeston Department of Public Safety	16,318
MI	Petoskey Department of Public Safety	5,670	NH	Waterville Valley Department of Public Safety	247
MI	Plainwell Department of Public Safety	3,804	NC	Butner Public Safety	7,591
MI	Port Huron Public Safety	30,184	NC	Kinston Department of Public Safety	21,677
MI	Portage Department of Public Safety	46,292	NC	Morganton Department of Public Safety	16,918
MI	Raisin Township Department of Public Safety	7,559	NC	Village of Bald Head Island Public Safety	158
MI	Richfield Township Department of Public Safety	8,730	OH	Amberley Village Department of Public Safety	3,585
MI	River Rouge Police Department	7,903	OH	Oakwood Public Safety Department	9,202
MI	Rockford Police Department	5,719	OR	Grants Pass Department of Public Safety	34,533
			SC	Aiken Department of Public Safety	29,524

SC	Cayce Department of Public Safety	12,528	TX	Andrews Department of Public Safety	11,088
SC	Folly Beach Public Safety Department.	2,617	TX	Dalworthington Gardens Department of Public Safety	2,259
SC	North Augusta Department of Public Safety	21,348	TX	Heath Department of Public Safety	6,921
SC	North Myrtle Beach Department of Public Safety	13,752	TX	Highland Park Department of Public Safety.	8,564
SC	Orangeburg Department of Public Safety.	13,964	TX	Oak Point Department of Public Safety	2,786
SC	Town of Salley Department of Public Safety	398	TX	Woodway Public Safety Department	8,452
SC	Union Public Safety Department.	8,393	UT	Santa Clara-Ivins Public Safety Department.	12,756
SC	Winnsboro Department of Public Safety	3,550	UT	Orem Department of Public Safety	88,328
SD	Mitchell Department of Public Safety	15,254	VT	Hartford Department of Public Safety.	9,952
TN	Jonesborough Police Department	5,051	WA	Steilacoom Public Safety Department.	5,985
TN	Kingston Springs Police Department	2,756	WI	Ashwaubenon Department of Public Safety	16,963
TN	Norris Department of Public Safety	1,491			

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 127,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

This report is part of an ongoing series on police consolidation and shared services developed to help those organizations exploring options for sharing, consolidating, or regionalizing public safety services with other public sector entities. While most communities provide fire and police services through separate agencies, others, often for reasons of efficiency or cost effectiveness, now operate a single consolidated public safety agency. Though previous discussions focused on the potential costs and benefits of consolidated departments, there has been little research on the administrative features.

This census and administrative examination is a first step toward developing research on consolidated public safety departments, providing an overview of their administrative attributes and specific forms of consolidation. It also reviews geographic, community, and other characteristics, as well as services and structure, workload attributes, management and workload issues, and how these agencies address community policing issues. The report concludes with a discussion of some overarching issues.



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