



Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 2020 – Statistical Tables

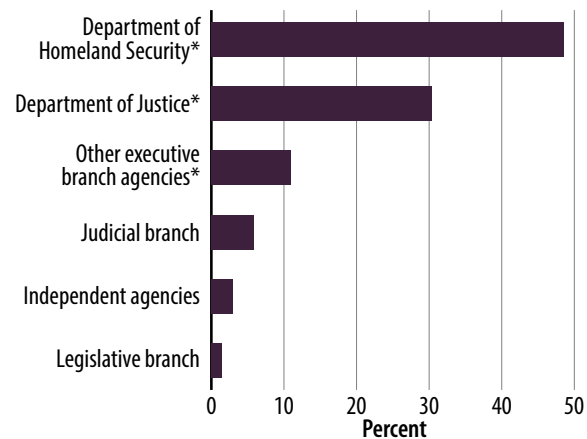
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In fiscal year (FY) 2020, federal law enforcement agencies in the United States employed almost 137,000 full-time federal law enforcement officers who were authorized to make arrests, carry firearms, or both.¹ About half (49%) of these officers worked for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and almost a third (30%) worked for the Department of Justice (DOJ) (**figure 1**).

Findings in this report are from the 2020 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers (CFLEO), which the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) has conducted periodically since 1993. The 2020 CFLEO collected data on 94 agencies, including 44 Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs), which provide oversight of federal agencies and their activities. The census excluded the U.S. Armed Forces, officers stationed overseas, and agencies with confidentiality restrictions, such as the Federal Air Marshal Service.

¹The fiscal year covers the period from October 1 to September 30.

FIGURE 1
Distribution of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by Government Branch or Department, FY 2020



Note: See appendix table 1 for counts and percentages.
*Includes Offices of Inspectors General that oversee executive branch departments.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

Highlights

In fiscal year 2020—

- Ninety agencies employed 136,815 full-time federal law enforcement officers, 3,742 (2.7%) of whom were employed by Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs).
- The Department of Homeland Security and its OIG employed almost half (49% or 66,410) of all federal law enforcement officers across the country.
- Criminal investigation was the primary function for more than two-thirds (68%) of federal law enforcement officers.
- About 15% of federal law enforcement officers and 13% of supervisory law enforcement personnel were female.
- About 61% of federal law enforcement officers were white, 21% were Hispanic, and 10% were black.
- Federal law enforcement agencies had 11,557 hires and 7,487 separations of federal law enforcement officers.

List of tables

TABLE 1. Full-time federal law enforcement officers in agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General, by agency, FY 2016 and FY 2020

TABLE 2. Full-time federal law enforcement officers in Offices of Inspectors General, FY 2016 and FY 2020

TABLE 3. Full-time federal law enforcement officers in agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General employing 50 or more officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020

TABLE 4. Full-time federal law enforcement officers in Offices of Inspectors General employing 50 or more officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020

TABLE 5. Hires and separations at federal law enforcement agencies, by size of agency, FY 2020

TABLE 6. Percent of federal law enforcement agencies using targeted hiring practices and military service exemptions for education, by size of agency, FY 2020

TABLE 7. Percent of federal law enforcement agencies with selected screening techniques for new officer hires, by size of agency, FY 2020

TABLE 8. Percent of federal law enforcement agencies authorizing weapons, by duty status, type of weapon, and size of agency, FY 2020

TABLE 9. Percent of federal law enforcement agencies authorizing selected equipment and techniques, by size of agency, FY 2020

List of figures

FIGURE 1. Distribution of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by Government Branch or Department, FY 2020

FIGURE 2. Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by primary function, FY 2020

FIGURE 3. Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2016 and FY 2020

FIGURE 4. Percent of supervisory law enforcement personnel in federal law enforcement agencies, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020

List of appendix tables

APPENDIX TABLE 1. Counts and percentages for figure 1: Distribution of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by Government Branch or Department, FY 2020

APPENDIX TABLE 2. Counts and percentages for figure 2: Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by primary function, FY 2020

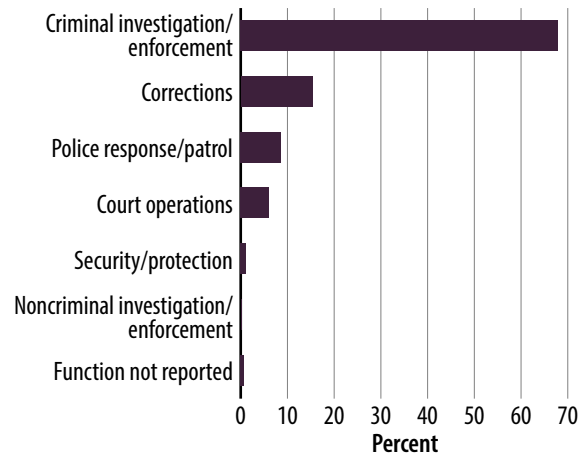
APPENDIX TABLE 3. Percentages for figure 3: Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2016 and FY 2020

APPENDIX TABLE 4. Percentages for figure 4: Percent of supervisory law enforcement personnel in federal law enforcement agencies, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020

Employment and functions

- About half (49%) of federal law enforcement officers worked for DHS in FY 2020. (See figure 1.) Almost a third (30%) worked for DOJ.
- The majority (90%) of federal law enforcement officers worked for agencies in the executive branch of government.
- The most common primary function of officers was criminal investigation or enforcement (68%), followed by corrections (15%) and police response or patrol (9%) (**figure 2**).
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP) employed more federal law enforcement officers than any other agency (46,993) in FY 2020, accounting for more than a third (34%) of all federal law enforcement officers employed, including OIGs and agencies other than OIGs (**table 1**).
- Among executive departments, the Department of the Interior had the largest percentage decrease (down 18%) in the number of officers from FY 2016 to FY 2020.

FIGURE 2
Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by primary function, FY 2020



Note: For the 10 agencies whose total officer counts were determined from other sources, and the one agency that did not report officer functions for 2020, BJS allocated officers to categories based on the proportions of how these agencies responded to the 2016 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers. See appendix table 2 for counts and percentages. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

TABLE 1**Full-time federal law enforcement officers in agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General, by agency, FY 2016 and FY 2020**

Department/agency	Full-time officers, 2016	Full-time officers, 2020	Change	Percent change
Total	130,698	133,073	2,375	1.8%
Department of Homeland Security	62,380	66,215	3,835	6.1%
Customs and Border Protection	43,949	46,993	3,044	6.9
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	12,400	12,989	589	4.8
Secret Service ^a	4,998	5,210	212	4.2
Federal Protective Service ^a	1,007	944	-63	-6.3
Transportation Security Administration (investigations only) ^b	~	53	~	~
Office of the Chief Security Officer ^c	26	26	0	--
Department of Justice	43,621	41,465	-2,156	-4.9%
Federal Bureau of Prisons	19,093	17,110	-1,983	-10.4
Federal Bureau of Investigation	13,799	13,575	-224	-1.6
Drug Enforcement Administration	4,181	4,380	199	4.8
U.S. Marshals Service	3,849	3,747	-102	-2.7
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	2,699	2,653	-46	-1.7
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts				
Probation and Pretrial Services	5,841	7,786	1,945	33.3%
Department of Veterans Affairs				
Office of Security and Law Enforcement	3,839	3,923	84	2.2%
Department of the Interior	3,696	3,019	-677	-18.3%
National Park Service Rangers	1,822	1,346	-476	-26.1
Park Police	568	523	-45	-7.9
Fish and Wildlife Service ^d	619	470	-149	-24.1
Bureau of Indian Affairs	368	343	-25	-6.8
Bureau of Land Management	253	259	6	2.4
Bureau of Reclamation ^e	66	78	12	18.2
Department of the Treasury	2,685	2,502	-183	-6.8%
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division	2,198	2,030	-168	-7.6
U.S. Mint Police	292	285	-7	-2.4
Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police ^a	195	187	-8	-4.1
U.S. Capitol Police	1,773	1,879	106	6.0%
U.S. Postal Service				
U.S. Postal Inspection Service ^a	1,891	1,300	-591	-31.3%
Department of State				
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	1,215	1,238	23	1.9%
Department of Defense				
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	777	774	-3	-0.4%
Smithsonian Institution				
Office of Protective Services ^a	620	598	-22	-3.5%
Department of Agriculture				
Forest Service, Law Enforcement and Investigations	514	523	9	1.8%
Amtrak				
Amtrak Police Department	427	397	-30	-7.0%

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TABLE 1 (continued)**Full-time federal law enforcement officers in agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General, by agency, FY 2016 and FY 2020**

Department/agency	Full-time officers, 2016	Full-time officers, 2020	Change	Percent change
Department of Energy	302	346	44	14.6%
National Nuclear Security Administration, Office of Secure Transportation	302	319	17	5.6
Office of Special Operations ^b	~	27	~	~
Department of Health and Human Services	308	313	5	1.6%
Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations	231	236	5	2.2
National Institutes of Health, Division of Police	77	77	0	0.0
Department of Commerce	272	278	6	2.2%
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Law Enforcement	126	130	4	3.2
Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement	108	113	5	4.6
Office of Security	38	35	-3	--
Environmental Protection Agency				
Criminal Investigation Division	214	160	-54	-25.2%
Supreme Court of the United States				
Supreme Court of the United States Police Department ^c	156	159	3	1.9%
Tennessee Valley Authority				
Tennessee Valley Authority Police	53	70	17	32.1%
National Aeronautics and Space Administration				
Office of Protective Services	51	62	11	21.6%
Government Publishing Office				
Uniformed Police Branch	48	46	-2	--
Department of Labor				
Division of Protective Operations	15	17	2	--
Department of Transportation				
Office of Odometer Fraud Investigation ^b	~	3	~	~

~Not applicable.

--Percent change not calculated on counts smaller than 50.

^aBJS obtained counts from sources other than the 2020 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers (CFLEO). See *Methodology*.

^bNot included in the 2016 CFLEO.

^cDid not respond to the 2020 CFLEO. Counts for 2020 were obtained by adjusting the 2016 count by 1.9% (the overall increase for federal agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General employing law enforcement officers).

^dFor the 2016 CFLEO, the Fish and Wildlife Service submitted one response. For the 2020 CFLEO, two separate agencies provided responses: the National Wildlife Refuge System Refuge Law Enforcement (254 officers) and the Office of Law Enforcement (216 officers).

^eThe 2016 count for the Bureau of Reclamation was adjusted from what was reported in *Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 2016 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 251922, BJS, October 2019) using FedScope data.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

- OIGs employed 3,742 federal law enforcement officers in FY 2020, or about 3% of all officers (**table 2**). The number of officers employed by OIGs decreased 4.1% from FY 2016 to FY 2020.
- The U.S. Postal Service's OIG employed more officers (474) than any other OIG. The Department of Health and Human Services' OIG employed more officers (468) than any OIG overseeing an executive branch department.
- The U.S. Postal Service's OIG had a decrease of 48 officers from FY 2016 to FY 2020, the largest decrease in officers during that period.
- The number of officers working for the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program decreased 48% from FY 2016 to FY 2020, from 62 to 32 officers.

TABLE 2
Full-time federal law enforcement officers in Offices of Inspectors General, by agency, FY 2016 and FY 2020

Office	2016	2020	Change	Percent change
Total	3,900	3,742	-158	-4.1%
Executive department	2,213	2,161	-52	-2.3%
Department of Health and Human Services ^a	458	468	10	2.2
Department of Defense	359	375	16	4.5
Department of Homeland Security	193	195	2	1.0
Department of Veteran Affairs	171	188	17	9.9
Department of Housing and Urban Development ^a	202	161	-41	-20.3
Department of Agriculture	149	151	2	1.3
Department of Labor	146	131	-15	-10.3
Department of Justice	130	117	-13	-10.0
Department of Transportation	102	94	-8	-7.8
Department of Energy	64	68	4	6.3
Department of the Interior	70	64	-6	-8.6
Department of Education	80	60	-20	-25.0
Department of State	41	38	-3	--
Department of the Treasury	36	26	-10	--
Department of Commerce	12	25	13	--
Other Offices	1,687	1,581	-106	-6.3%
U.S. Postal Service	522	474	-48	-9.2
Social Security Administration	272	260	-12	-4.4
Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration	278	257	-21	-7.6
General Services Administration	74	67	-7	-9.5
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	51	60	9	17.6
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	62	54	-8	-12.9
Small Business Administration	38	51	13	--
Federal Housing Finance Agency	47	39	-8	--
Environmental Protection Agency	47	37	-10	--
Agency for International Development	36	37	1	--
Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program	62	32	-30	--
Amtrak	31	30	-1	--
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	25	28	3	--
Office of Personnel Management	34	27	-7	--
Tennessee Valley Authority	19	19	0	--
Railroad Retirement Board	16	19	3	--
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction	22	17	-5	--
Securities and Exchange Commission	13	14	1	--
Nuclear Regulatory Commission ^b	~	13	~	~

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TABLE 2 (continued)**Full-time federal law enforcement officers in Offices of Inspectors General, FY 2016 and FY 2020**

Office	2016	2020	Change	Percent change
National Science Foundation	7	9	2	--
Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps)	6	6	0	--
National Archives ^a	6	6	0	--
Peace Corps	5	5	0	--
Government Publishing Office ^b	~	5	~	~
Export-Import Bank of the United States	6	4	-2	--
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	5	3	-2	--
Smithsonian Institution	3	3	0	--
Architect of the Capitol ^b	~	3	~	~
Library of Congress	0	2	2	~

Note: Percent change not calculated due to small counts in many rows.

~Not applicable.

-- Percent change not calculated on counts smaller than 50.

^aBJS obtained counts from sources other than the 2020 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers (CFLEO). See *Methodology*.

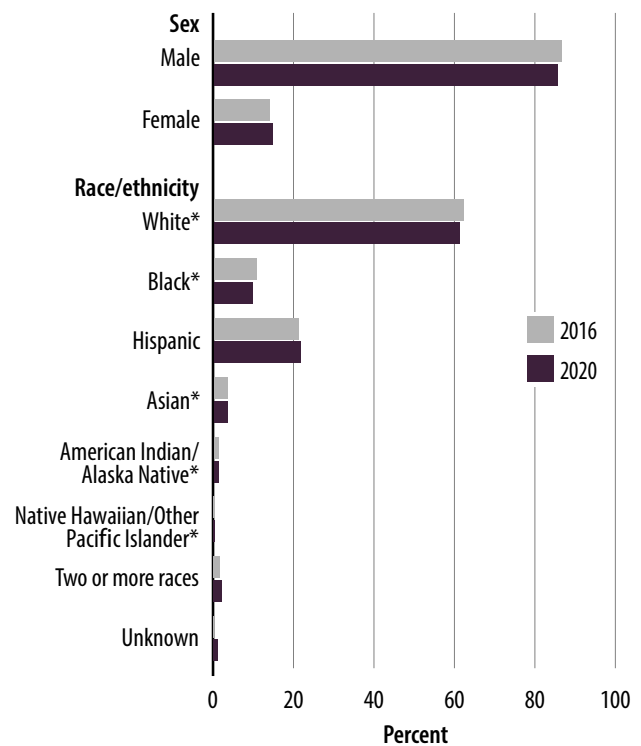
^bNot included in the 2016 CFLEO.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

Officer characteristics

- About 15% of federal law enforcement officers were female in FY 2020, up from 14% in FY 2016 (**figure 3**).
- In FY 2020, about 61% of federal law enforcement officers were white, 10% were black, 21% were Hispanic, 3% were Asian, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A little more than 2% of officers identified as being two or more races.
- More than a quarter (26%) of federal law enforcement officers at the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation Division were female in FY 2020, the greatest percentage of female officers among federal law enforcement agencies other than OIGs (**table 3**).
- CBP, the largest employer of federal law enforcement officers, reported that 51% of its officers were white, 38% were Hispanic, 6% were black, and 4% were Asian.

FIGURE 3
Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2016 and FY 2020



Note: See appendix table 3 for percentages. Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

TABLE 3**Full-time federal law enforcement officers in agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General employing 50 or more officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020**

Agency	Officers	Sex		Race/ethnicity							
		Male	Female	White*	Black*	Hispanic	Asian*	American Indian/ Alaska Native*	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander*	Two or more races	Unknown
Customs and Border Protection	46,993	86.8%	13.2%	50.8%	5.6%	37.9%	4.1%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
Federal Bureau of Prisons	17,110	84.4	15.6	60.0	21.5	7.2	1.2	1.0	0.4	8.8	0.0
Federal Bureau of Investigation	13,575	78.9	21.1	80.7	5.0	7.8	3.8	0.3	0.2	1.8	0.4
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	12,989	86.8	13.2	61.8	7.2	24.9	4.5	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.1
Drug Enforcement Administration	4,380	87.9	12.1	76.8	8.5	10.5	3.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0
Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Security and Law Enforcement	3,923	92.1	7.9	62.6	21.9	10.7	2.1	1.4	0.6	0.0	0.7
U.S. Marshals Service	3,747	90.6	9.4	73.7	9.4	12.1	2.3	0.9	0.3	1.4	0.0
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	2,653	84.6	15.4	78.4	8.2	3.5	2.6	0.3	0.0	6.8	0.0
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division	2,030	74.2	25.8	50.7	7.2	5.9	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	35.7
U.S. Capitol Police	1,879	82.1	17.9	59.1	29.1	7.8	3.1	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.0
National Park Service Rangers	1,346	83.3	16.7	85.2	1.9	5.5	2.2	2.2	0.4	0.5	2.0
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	1,238	87.8	12.2	76.5	6.2	8.4	5.7	0.3	0.2	2.5	0.1
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	774	89.7	10.3	53.2	34.2	2.8	2.1	0.1	0.0	7.5	0.0
Forest Service, Law Enforcement and Investigations	523	89.1	10.9	78.0	5.7	7.6	1.3	6.7	0.2	0.0	0.4
Bureau of Indian Affairs	343	88.3	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.2	0.0	0.0	12.8
National Nuclear Security Administration, Office of Secure Transportation	319	100	0.0	81.5	5.0	9.7	2.2	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
U.S. Mint Police	285	89.1	10.9	65.6	14.0	13.7	5.3	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.0
Bureau of Land Management	259	92.3	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
National Wildlife Refuge System, Refuge Law Enforcement	254	91.7	8.3	83.1	2.0	8.3	1.6	4.3	0.4	0.4	0.0
Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement	216	86.0	14.0	84.1	3.3	7.9	1.9	2.3	0.5	0.0	0.0
Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigation Division	160	80.6	19.4	80.6	6.9	5.6	3.8	1.9	0.6	0.6	0.0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Law Enforcement	130	93.1	6.9	83.1	1.5	3.8	6.2	3.1	1.5	0.8	0.0
Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement	113	85.7	14.3	79.0	2.5	5.9	8.4	1.7	0.0	2.5	0.0
Bureau of Reclamation	78	98.7	1.3	57.7	7.7	11.5	3.8	2.6	2.6	14.1	0.0
National Institutes of Health, Division of Police	77	85.7	14.3	44.2	41.6	10.4	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.3	0.0
Tennessee Valley Authority Police	70	87.1	12.9	94.3	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Protective Services	62	88.7	11.3	80.6	9.7	3.2	4.8	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Transportation Security Administration (investigations only)	53	86.8	13.2	67.9	15.1	9.4	5.7	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0

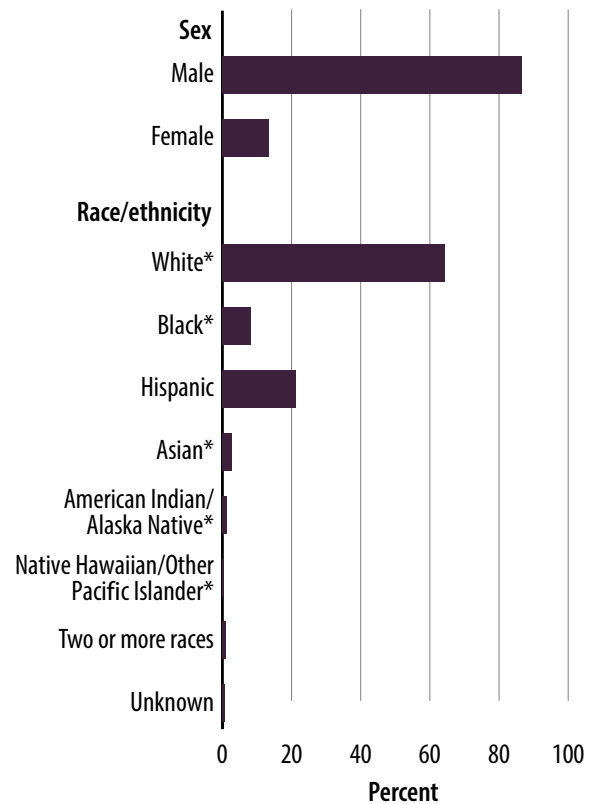
Note: Excludes agencies that did not provide counts of officers by sex or race or ethnicity: Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Probation and Pretrial Services (7,786 officers); Secret Service (5,210); U.S. Postal Service, Postal Inspection Service (1,300); Federal Protective Service (944); Smithsonian Institution, Office of Protective Services (598); Park Police (523); Amtrak Police Department (397); Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations (236); and Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police (187).

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

- In OIGs that employed 50 or more officers, the percentage of their officers who were female ranged from 11% to 31% in FY 2020 (table 4).
- About 87% of supervisory law enforcement personnel in federal law enforcement agencies were male (figure 4).
- About 64% of supervisory law enforcement personnel were white, 21% were Hispanic, 8% were black, 3% were Asian, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

FIGURE 4
Percent of supervisory law enforcement personnel in federal law enforcement agencies, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020



Note: See appendix table 4 for percentages. Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

TABLE 4**Full-time federal law enforcement officers in Offices of Inspectors General employing 50 or more officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020**

Office of Inspector General	Officers	Sex		Race/ethnicity							
		Male	Female	White*	Black*	Hispanic	Asian*	American Indian/ Alaska Native*	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander*	Two or more races	Unknown
U.S. Postal Service	474	74.7%	25.3%	69.6%	12.2%	12.2%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Department of Defense	375	76.5	23.5	72.8	7.2	4.5	6.9	0.3	0.3	8.0	0.0
Social Security Administration	260	73.5	26.5	67.7	10.8	15.0	4.2	1.5	0.4	0.0	0.4
Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration	257	80.9	19.1	76.3	10.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	0.0	8.6	0.0
Department of Homeland Security	195	83.6	16.4	69.2	7.7	16.4	4.6	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Department of Veterans Affairs	188	89.4	10.6	83.0	7.4	4.8	3.7	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0
Department of Agriculture	151	68.9	31.1	71.5	17.2	6.0	4.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Department of Justice	117	81.2	18.8	78.6	10.3	6.0	3.4	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
Department of Transportation	94	72.3	27.7	71.3	13.8	3.2	4.3	0.0	0.0	6.4	1.1
Department of Energy	68	77.9	22.1	79.4	8.8	10.3	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General Services Administration	67	74.6	25.4	76.1	10.4	1.5	6.0	1.5	0.0	4.5	0.0
Department of the Interior	64	85.7	14.3	76.6	7.8	6.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.0
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	60	80.0	20.0	76.7	8.3	3.3	3.3	0.0	5.0	3.3	0.0
Department of Education	60	76.7	23.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	54	81.5	18.5	90.7	3.7	1.9	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Small Business Administration	51	68.6	31.4	70.6	13.7	7.8	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: Excludes offices that did not provide counts of officers by sex or race or ethnicity: Department of Health and Human Services (468 officers), Department of Housing and Urban Development (161), and Department of Labor (131). The Special Inspector General for Pandemic Relief did not attain law enforcement authority until 2021.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

Hiring and screening

- Federal law enforcement agencies had 11,557 hires and 7,487 separations of federal law enforcement officers in FY 2020, for a net increase of 4,070 (**table 5**).
- The 13 agencies that each employed more than 1,000 officers and reported hires and separations accounted for more than 90% of all hires (10,757) and separations (6,788) (not shown in table).
- DHS had 4,443 hires and 2,839 separations for a net increase of 1,604 officers. DOJ had 4,693 hires and 2,823 separations, for a net increase of 1,870 officers (not shown in tables).
- Almost two-thirds (65%) of federal law enforcement agencies targeted applicants with prior law enforcement experience for special recruitment efforts in FY 2020 (**table 6**). More than half (56%) of agencies targeted military veterans for recruitment.
- About half of federal law enforcement agencies targeted racial or ethnic minorities (49%), females (49%), and 4-year college graduates (48%) for recruitment.
- Less than a third (29%) of agencies considered military service as an exemption to education requirements in hiring.

TABLE 5
Hires and separations at federal law enforcement agencies, by size of agency, FY 2020

Size of agency	Hires	Separations	Change
Total	11,557	7,487	4,070
More than 250 officers	11,177	7,195	3,982
51–250 officers	292	209	83
50 or fewer officers	88	83	5

Note: Ten agencies reported no hires, and eight reported no separations. Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

TABLE 6
Percent of federal law enforcement agencies using targeted hiring practices and military service exemptions for education, by size of agency, FY 2020

Size of agency	Targeted recruitment of—						Considered military service as exemption to education requirements
	4-year college graduates	Military veterans	Multilingual persons	Persons with law enforcement experience	Racial/ethnic minorities	Females	
Total	47.8%	56.3%	33.8%	64.8%	49.3%	48.5%	29.3%
More than 250 officers	66.7	75.0	50.0	58.3	66.7	70.8	37.5
51–250 officers	31.8	59.1	36.4	63.6	54.5	50.0	21.7
50 or fewer officers	43.5	36.0	13.6	72.0	23.8	22.7	28.6

Note: Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts. Agencies were asked whether they conducted outreach for each of the groups listed in the table. Agencies could select yes for more than one recruitment effort. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

- In FY 2020, all agencies employing more than 250 federal law enforcement officers conducted background investigations and criminal history checks on new hires (**table 7**). Almost all (96%) of these agencies also conducted credit history checks, compared to three-quarters (75%) of agencies employing 50 or fewer federal law enforcement officers.
- About a third (31%) of agencies conducted social media checks on new hires. Agencies employing 50 or fewer officers (40%) were more likely than agencies employing 250 or more officers (17%) to conduct social media checks on new hires.
- Most agencies required drug tests (92%), medical exams (92%), and vision tests (86%) for new hires.

TABLE 7
Percent of federal law enforcement agencies with selected screening techniques for new officer hires, by size of agency, FY 2020

Screening technique	Total	Size of agency		
		More than 250 officers	51–250 officers	50 or fewer officers
Background check				
Background investigation	98.6%	100%	100%	96.2%
Credit history check	87.3	96.0	90.9	75.0
Criminal history check	94.4	100	95.5	88.0
Driving record check	66.7	84.0	59.1	56.0
Social media check	31.4	16.7	38.1	40.0
Personal attributes				
Cognitive ability assessment	55.6%	72.0%	57.1%	38.5%
Interpersonal skills assessment	47.2	52.0	47.6	42.3
Personality/psychological inventory	26.4	48.0	19.0	11.5
Polygraph exam	12.5	24.0	9.5	3.8
Psychological interview	20.5	36.0	18.2	7.7
Physical attributes				
Drug test	91.8%	96.0%	95.5%	84.6%
Medical exam	91.8	100	90.9	84.6
Physical agility/fitness test	38.4	72.0	27.3	15.4
Vision test	86.3	96.0	90.9	73.1

Note: Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

Weapons and equipment

- About 60% of agencies authorized shotguns or manual rifles for officers while on duty in FY 2020 (table 8). Fifty percent authorized semiautomatic rifles and 20% authorized fully automatic rifles for officers while on duty.
- More than 80% of agencies authorized officers to carry handguns off duty. Less than 10% of agencies authorized shotguns or manual rifles (9%), semiautomatic rifles (7%), or fully automatic rifles (3%) while officers were off duty.
- Most federal law enforcement agencies reported allowing officers to use open hand techniques (97%), takedown techniques (97%), and closed hand techniques (96%) (table 9).
- More than half (57%) of federal law enforcement agencies authorized oleoresin capsicum spray (OC spray or pepper spray), while about a quarter (24%) authorized chemical agent projectiles.
- More than half (58%) of agencies employing more than 250 federal law enforcement officers authorized chemical agent projectiles (such as tear gas), compared to 18% of agencies employing 51 to 250 officers and no agencies employing 50 or fewer officers.
- About a quarter (24%) of federal law enforcement agencies authorized carotid holds, and a fifth (20%) authorized neck restraints.

TABLE 8
Percent of federal law enforcement agencies authorizing weapons, by duty status, type of weapon, and size of agency, FY 2020

Size of agency	On duty				Off duty			
	Handgun	Shotgun/ manual rifle	Semiautomatic rifle (e.g., AR-15)	Fully automatic rifle (e.g., M-16)	Handgun	Shotgun/ manual rifle	Semiautomatic rifle (e.g., AR-15)	Fully automatic rifle (e.g., M-16)
Total	100%	60.0%	50.0%	20.0%	82.7%	9.3%	6.7%	2.7%
More than 250 officers	100	79.2	83.3	41.7	70.8	25.0	16.7	8.3
51–250 officers	100	68.2	54.5	4.5	87.0	4.3	4.3	0.0
50 or fewer officers	100	37.9	17.9	13.8	89.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

TABLE 9
Percent of federal law enforcement agencies authorizing selected equipment and techniques, by size of agency, FY 2020

Selected equipment/technique	Total	Size of agency		
		More than 250 officers	51–250 officers	50 or fewer officers
Chemicals				
Chemical agent projectiles	24.3%	58.3%	18.2%	0.0%
OC spray	56.8	91.7	59.1	25.0
Manual techniques				
Carotid holds	24.0%	33.3%	17.4%	21.4%
Closed hand techniques	95.9	91.7	100	96.4
Open hand techniques	97.3	95.8	100	96.4
Takedown techniques	97.3	100	100	92.9
Physical force instruments				
Batons	94.7%	100%	100%	86.2%
Blunt force projectiles	20.3	45.8	9.1	7.1
Conducted energy devices	17.6	45.8	4.5	3.6
Restraints				
Neck restraints	20.3%	29.2%	17.4%	14.8%
Leg restraints	37.8	66.7	36.4	14.3

Note: Agencies were asked whether this equipment or these techniques were “never authorized,” “authorized under limited circumstances,” or “always authorized.” Percentages reflect agencies who answered “authorized under limited circumstances” or “always authorized.” Excludes agencies for which BJS used sources other than the Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers to obtain officer counts.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

Methodology

The 2020 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers (CFLEO) included agencies that employed full-time officers with federal arrest authority, authorization to carry firearms while on duty, or both. The CFLEO excluded officers in the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force) and federal officers stationed in foreign countries. Due to security and classified information restrictions, agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency and the Transportation Security Administration's Federal Air Marshal Service were also excluded. For the same reasons, the CFLEO did not collect information on the number of officers for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Mount Weather Police Department.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) determined agency eligibility for the 2020 CFLEO using information from the 2016 CFLEO and the Federal Deaths in Custody Reporting Program. Of the 98 agencies BJS contacted for the 2020 CFLEO, four were ineligible because they employed no personnel with federal law enforcement authority. BJS provided eligible agencies an electronic form via email that contained questions about staffing and policies for FY 2020. Of the 94 eligible agencies, 79 responded (including one agency for which another agency provided information), for an overall response rate of 84%.

For 11 of the 15 nonresponders, BJS used other sources of information to identify the number of officers employed by these agencies. BJS obtained officer counts from the FedScope website for five agencies:²

- Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General
- Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Inspector General
- Smithsonian Institution, Office of Protective Services
- Secret Service.

²FedScope is a website maintained by the Office of Personnel Management that provides employment data for federal agencies. See <https://www.fedscope.opm.gov>.

For four agencies, BJS used publicly available information from the agencies' websites:

- Amtrak Police Department
- Department of Homeland Security, Federal Protective Service
- National Archives and Records Administration, Office of the Inspector General
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

For two agencies (Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Chief Security Officer and Supreme Court of the United States Police), BJS imputed the number of officers for FY 2020 by adding 1.9% to their responses for FY 2016. This imputation was based on the overall increase in the number of officers for federal agencies other than Offices of Inspectors General that employed law enforcement personnel. The number of officers from these agencies accounted for approximately 7% of the total number of federal officers enumerated by BJS in the 2020 CFLEO.

BJS asked agencies to provide the number of officers by job function using the following definitions:

Criminal investigation/enforcement—Includes investigators, detectives, and other personnel whose duties are primarily related to collection of evidence, interdiction and seizure of contraband, surveillance, execution of search warrants, analysis of information, arrest of suspects, development of cases for prosecutions, or any other investigation and enforcement duties pertaining to federal laws and regulations.

Police response/patrol—Includes police officers and other personnel whose duties are primarily related to preventive patrol, responding to complaints and reports of illegal activities, arresting law violators, traffic control, crowd control, handling of emergencies, or other traditional law enforcement responsibilities.

Noncriminal investigation/inspection—Includes investigators, inspectors, and other personnel whose duties primarily involve employment and personnel security investigations, civil investigations, inspections, or any other type of investigation or enforcement not considered to be criminal in nature.

Corrections/detention—Includes correctional officers, detention guards, and other personnel whose duties are primarily related to the custody, control, supervision, or transportation of pretrial detainees, prison inmates, or detained undocumented noncitizens.

Security/protection—Includes guards and other personnel whose duties are primarily related to providing security for federal buildings, courts, records, assets, or other property, or to providing personal protection for federal government officials, judges, prosecutors, jurors, foreign dignitaries, or any other designated persons.

Court operations—Includes probation officers and other personnel whose duties are primarily related to the supervision of federal offenders on probation, parole, or supervised release. Also includes officers who serve civil or criminal process, provide witness protection, courtroom security, or other activities related to the federal court system.

Other—Includes employees whose duties are primarily related to general support, administration, research and development, training, information systems, laboratory testing, domestic security intelligence, or any other function not included above.

APPENDIX TABLE 1
Counts and percentages for figure 1: Distribution of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by Government Branch or Department, FY 2020

Branch/department	Count	Percent
Total	136,815	100%
Department of Homeland Security*	66,410	48.5
Department of Justice*	41,582	30.4
Other executive branch agencies*	15,042	11.0
Judicial branch	7,945	5.8
Independent agencies	3,904	2.9
Legislative branch	1,932	1.4

*Includes Offices of Inspectors General that oversee executive branch departments.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

APPENDIX TABLE 3
Percentages for figure 3: Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by demographic characteristics, FY 2016 and FY 2020

Characteristic	2016	2020
Sex		
Male	86.3%	85.5%
Female	13.7	14.5
Race/ethnicity		
White*	62.1%	61.0%
Black*	10.5	9.6
Hispanic	20.9	21.5
Asian*	3.3	3.4
American Indian/Alaska Native*	1.0	1.0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*	0.3	0.3
Two or more races	1.6	2.0
Unknown	0.2	1.2

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal years 2016 and 2020.

APPENDIX TABLE 2
Counts and percentages for figure 2: Percent of full-time federal law enforcement officers, by primary function, FY 2020

Function	Count	Percent
Criminal investigation/enforcement	92,860	67.9%
Corrections	21,132	15.4
Police response/patrol	11,816	8.6
Court operations	8,292	6.1
Security/protection	1,539	1.1
Noncriminal investigation/enforcement	232	0.2
Not reported	944	0.7

Note: For the 10 agencies whose total officer counts were determined from other sources, and the one agency that did not report officer functions for 2020, BJS allocated officers to categories based on the proportions of how these agencies responded to the 2016 Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.

APPENDIX TABLE 4
Percentages for figure 4: Percent of supervisory law enforcement personnel in federal law enforcement agencies, by demographic characteristics, FY 2020

Characteristic	Percent
Sex	
Male	86.6%
Female	13.4
Race/ethnicity	
White*	64.4%
Black*	8.1
Hispanic	21.4
Asian*	2.8
American Indian/Alaska Native*	1.2
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*	0.3
Two or more races	1.0
Unknown	0.7

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic white persons and “black” refers to non-Hispanic black persons).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, fiscal year 2020.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Alexis R. Piquero is the director.

This report was written by Connor Brooks. Andrea M. Gardner verified the report.

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