

Race to Equity Final Evaluation Report

December 2020

Prepared for:

Minneapolis Foundation

Prepared by:



Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research

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About Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER)

HACER's mission is to provide the Minnesota Latino community the ability to create and control information about itself in order to affect critical institutional decision-making and public policy. General support for HACER has been provided by Minnesota-based philanthropic organizations and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

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Suggested reference to this report is: De La Rosa Mateo, C., Mendez, L., Moore, M., & Gutierrez, R. (2020). *Race to Equity Evaluation Report*. St. Paul, MN: HACER

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Project Background and Methods

Police and the Latine community

Throughout history we have heard about racial profiling and discrimination by law enforcement officers against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).¹ The Latine community does not escape this situation when they report arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force, and deportations.²³

In May 2020, George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis Police Officer. This tragedy unleashed a series of protest events and brought to center stage the urgency to review all matters related to acts of discrimination by the police in Minnesota, the United States, and throughout the world.⁴

HACER works closely with the Latine community in Minnesota and Midwest and we understand the urgency of dialogue between the police and the community that will improve the relationship between the two. The *Race to Equity* program was created to facilitate conversations with the Latine community to ultimately address systemic racial inequities in police departments and reform the criminal justice system in the long term.

About the *Race to Equity* Workshops

The *Race to Equity* program consisted of four workshops which aimed to bring leaders and members of the Latine community together to have important discussions about the role of the Minneapolis Police Department in our communities and the future of the department. The goals of the workshops were to:

- ✓ Engage Latine leaders and community members in solution-oriented dialogue aimed at reducing profound and persistent criminal justice system inequities
- ✓ Prevent further violence
- ✓ Address systemic inequities and reform the criminal justice system
- ✓ Help individuals and communities affected by this horrific tragedy heal
- ✓ Inform and empower Latine community members to take part in initiatives related to reforming the Minneapolis Police Department

Speakers from the City of Minneapolis and from local media organizations were invited to share information and resources with workshop participants about systemic racism; resources available for

¹ Racial Profiling: Past, Present, and Future? (2020).

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/criminal_justice/publications/criminal-justice-magazine/2020/winter/racial-profiling-past-present-and-future/

² Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race–ethnicity, and sex. (2019).

https://www.pnas.org/content/116/34/16793?source=post_page-----1a2ce329f8e0-----

³ How ICE Uses Local Criminal Justice Systems to Funnel People Into the Detention and Deportation System. (2014).

<https://www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-enforcement/localjusticeandice/>

⁴ Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History. (2020).

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>

people in the Latine community, including those that are undocumented; and the role the media plays in fueling public opinion around racism and law enforcement. Following are overviews of the topics discussed by presenters during the workshops:

Workshop 1: Experiences interacting with the police

During the first workshop, HACER's program and outreach coordinator, Luisana Mendez, facilitated a conversation with participants on their experiences interacting with the police, both voluntarily and involuntarily. Workshop attendees shared their personal experiences with police and offered suggestions for changes that would prevent some of the negative experiences from occurring again.

Workshop 2: Systemic Racism and the role of the media in fueling public opinion

During this workshop, HACER's Executive Director, Rodolfo Gutierrez gave some background information on the meaning of systemic racism and the history of racism in America. Alberto Monserrate from NewPublica also presented and discussed the role the media plays in perpetuating or stalling racist viewpoints. He shared some important background information; for example a large percentage of Latinos get their information from TV, newspapers, and radio in Spanish. The ones that get it online primarily use Facebook and YouTube according to focus group data. Small percentages of police live in the community that they oversee. Therefore, their perception of BIPOC communities is in part dependent on what they see in the media. Media does not always give a positive image of communities of color. This can create tension between communities because some social media sites post divisive information.

Workshop 3: Resources for Latine, immigrant, and refugee communities in Minneapolis

During this workshop, Michelle Rivero from the City of Minneapolis Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) shared different information and resources that are beneficial for immigrant and refugee communities in Minneapolis to know about. She discussed the different resources available, such as civil rights and legal services for immigrants. She also discussed the different ordinances like the sanctuary ordinance that prevents city personnel and police officers from asking about immigration status. Another ordinance confirms that police departments cannot help U.S Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) find people. She gave advice on what to do if a police officer does not follow this ordinance.

Workshop 4: Conversation with Minneapolis Police Department's Chief Medaria Arradondo

During the last workshop, the Chief of the Minneapolis Police Department, Medaria Arradondo participated in a conversation with HACER's Executive Director, Rodolfo Gutierrez, to give the Latine community an opportunity to learn about the status of the Minneapolis Police Department, what changes they are planning, what changes they have made as a consequence of COVID-19, and to openly ask the Chief questions about the police department. The Zoom discussion was posted on Facebook live. The conversation was conducted in English, with interpretation to Spanish offered in the Zoom chat. The moderated conversation included questions about:

- the Chief Arradondo himself to get to know him on a more personal level;
- the structure of the Minneapolis Police Department;

- how the police department has changed following the protests in Minneapolis after the murder of George Floyd;
- existing and future initiatives to improve the police department;
- how the community and the police department can work together to minimize deportation of undocumented immigrants by ICE;
- what the Minneapolis Police Department is doing to rebuild trust with the Minneapolis community; and
- what other services and programs the police department offers the community.

Program implementation

Outreach

To recruit participants to the *Race to Equity* workshops, HACER promoted the workshops through email, social media, and through partnerships with other Latine-serving organizations in the Twin Cities.

Limitations

HACER recognizes that some people's work schedules and family obligations can prevent them from engaging in our workshops. HACER tried to reduce some barriers by providing the workshops in the evening, when most people are done working for the day, and in Spanish to attract Latines that primarily speak Spanish. It is also important to acknowledge that this topic is difficult and uncomfortable for many and that some people may not want to engage as a result and therefore may have impacted our reach.

Virtual sessions

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Race to Equity workshops had to be conducted virtually through Zoom. The first three sessions were introduced on Facebook live as another way of promoting the program to our followers and to reach a larger audience. The entirety of the last session was streamed on Facebook Live.

Evaluation methods

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to evaluate this program.

- **Registration form:** Participants were asked to complete a registration form to participate in the workshops so that HACER could collect some demographic data and to have a baseline idea of perceptions of systemic racism and police interactions among participants
- **Pre and post survey:** A pre survey was sent to participants before the workshops and a post survey with the same set of questions was sent after the workshops. The purpose of these surveys was to understand what impact, if any, the *Race to Equity* on participants trust of police officers and understandings of systemic racism.
- **Workshop highlights:** During each workshop, HACER took notes from the conversation and pulled out themes from the conversation, as well as suggestions from workshop attendees on what changes they would like to see in the police department and the community to better support their needs and rebuild trust between the community and police officers.
- **Public opinion survey:** An anonymous, public survey was shared through HACER social channels and partners with the purpose of getting some information on public opinion and experiences

on experiences with the police among the Latine community. The questions in the survey were adapted from a study conducted in 2004 by the Vera Institute of Justice through funding from the U.S. Department of Justice.⁵

⁵ Public Opinions of the Police: The Influence of Friends, Family, and the News Media. 2004.
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/205619.pdf>



Evaluation Findings

About the participants

A total of 27 participants registered in the Race to Equity workshops. About half of those that registered to attend were from neighborhoods with a higher population of Latines, and the rest were from different neighborhoods around the Twin Cities.

Most of those that registered had had some contact with the police in the past and a little over half were aware of the services offered by the police. About half of those that registered reported feeling safe in their neighborhood. Of the 27 registered, 10 (37%) attended at least one of the four sessions offered.

Workshop highlights and themes

Personal voluntary contact with the police

Examples among participants in which they voluntarily sought out the police included a time when one participant brought her kids to an open house hosted by police and firefighters. At this event, she shared that the police were playing basketball with her kids. Another instance included when the participant had to call the police in a situation in which someone was threatening people with a gun. In this case, the participant was questioned by the police as a witness.

Personal involuntary contact with the police

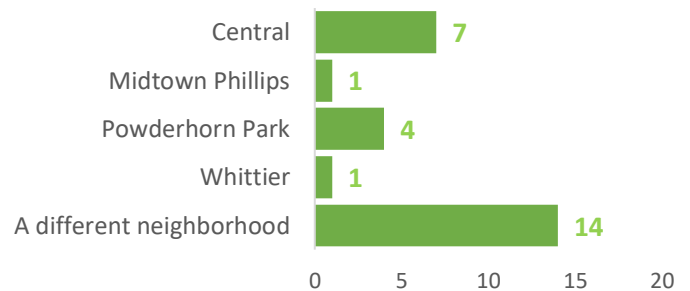
Police offering assistance

One participant shared that she had an involuntary interaction with the police once when she was stuck in the snow. The police officer saw her and helped push her push the car out of the snow. The participant explained that she was scared to accept the assistance because she did not have her license on her.

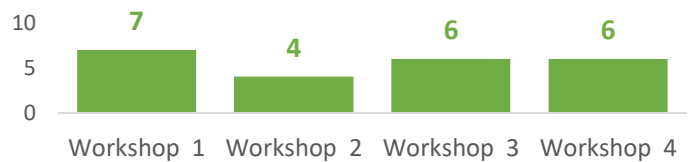
Police citations and use of force

Examples among participants regarding involuntary interactions with the police included a time when a participant and her friends were stopped and questioned by the police even though they were not

Neighborhood represented by those registered (N=24)



Workshop attendance (N=10)



Workshop 4: Conversation with Chief Medaria Arradondo on Facebook Live



244 engagements

586 views

1,269 people reached

doing anything wrong. The participant explained that the police officer thought the group was part of a gang and asked them if they had tattoos and whether they had passports. The officer asked to take photos of the participant and her friends, and they said no because they were minors (at the time). The police took photos anyway and arrested one of her friends. Even though they were citizens, the officer threatened them with deportation. This participant has also been stopped by police when they thought she was not from the neighborhood and thought the car she was driving was not hers.

One participant shared that a friend of hers' husband was shot and killed by police.

One participant shared that her sister has had several fines because the sister does not have a driver's license. The sister was told that her license plate was flagged as the owner not having a license, which made the participant feel unsure. The participant has had friends that were deported just for driving without a license and not committing any other crime. Another participant's husband has been stopped by the police many times for not having a driver's license. He has paid several thousand dollars in fines but has not been arrested. He is one of the primary breadwinners of the home so this affects the entire family. In addition, this affects their children who feel afraid that their dad is going to be taken away from them.

Role of the media

Participants shared that they stay informed about current events through social media (including live streaming of events), radio, social networks, and the newspaper.

Presenter Alberto Monserrate shared some possible solutions for the role the media plays in fueling public opinion on racism and the police. He noted that trust within the community is important and law enforcement collaborating with ICE hurts that trust. He suggested that collaborating with organizations that fight against issues of racism would

Solutions from Latine community

- ★ Reform the police system to change how it operates
- ★ Reform the prison system
- ★ Defunding police and reinvesting in rehabilitative programs
- ★ Diversity training for police officers
- ★ Community-led initiatives in partnership with police department
- ★ Police living in the communities they monitor to build relationships with community
- ★ Work with county jails to minimize deportations
- ★ Provide interpreters at county jails so that language is not a barrier to communicating
- ★ Early intervention programs for children with behavioral issues so they can reach their full potential and understand the rules of the community
- ★ Collaboration with organizations fighting against racism to help build trust in the community
- ★ More local news sources offering information in Spanish so that Spanish speakers receive news more tailored to their community
- ★ City of Minneapolis being more proactive about sharing the information and resources available with the Latine community
- ★ Develop a committee within the City of Minneapolis that is dedicated to communications in the Latine community

help create and strengthen some of this trust. He also noted that journalists need to commit to getting to know communities of color and receive training on diversity and anti-racism. The systems need drastic changes, not just minor reforms.

Monserrate mentioned that there is a disproportionate amount of BIPOC in jails. He shared that it is important to stop criminalizing and imprisoning youth, and that it is important to be aware of fake news and inaccurate information. He shared an example and noted that many people think immigrants commit crimes, but in reality, immigrants participate in crime at lower rates than non-immigrants. Monserrate and presenter Michelle Rivero both noted that there is an ordinance in Minneapolis that prevents police officers from asking civilians about their immigration status. Monserrate explained that if a police officer is not following the ordinance, it is important to get their badge number and send a complaint to the police department. He also explained that it is important for the community to know that if a person is arrested, fingerprints are taken at the country jail, and ICE has access to this data (this is outside of the Minneapolis Police Department's jurisdiction). Civil rights offices, such as the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) where Rivero works, are a good place to get information on ordinances and information regarding civil rights situations. The city is also studying ways to transform public safety.

Solutions and ideas from workshop presenters

- ★ Stop criminalizing and imprisoning youth
- ★ Be aware of fake news and inaccurate information
- ★ If a police officer is not following the sanctuary ordinance and is asking about immigration status, get their badge number and file a complaint to the Minneapolis Police Department
- ★ Humanization of BIPOC is important. Getting to know families within the community, and attending community events will help with this understanding of all cultural communities.
- ★ Police officers patrolling by foot instead of inside their vehicle would immerse the officers into the community instead

Questions from community

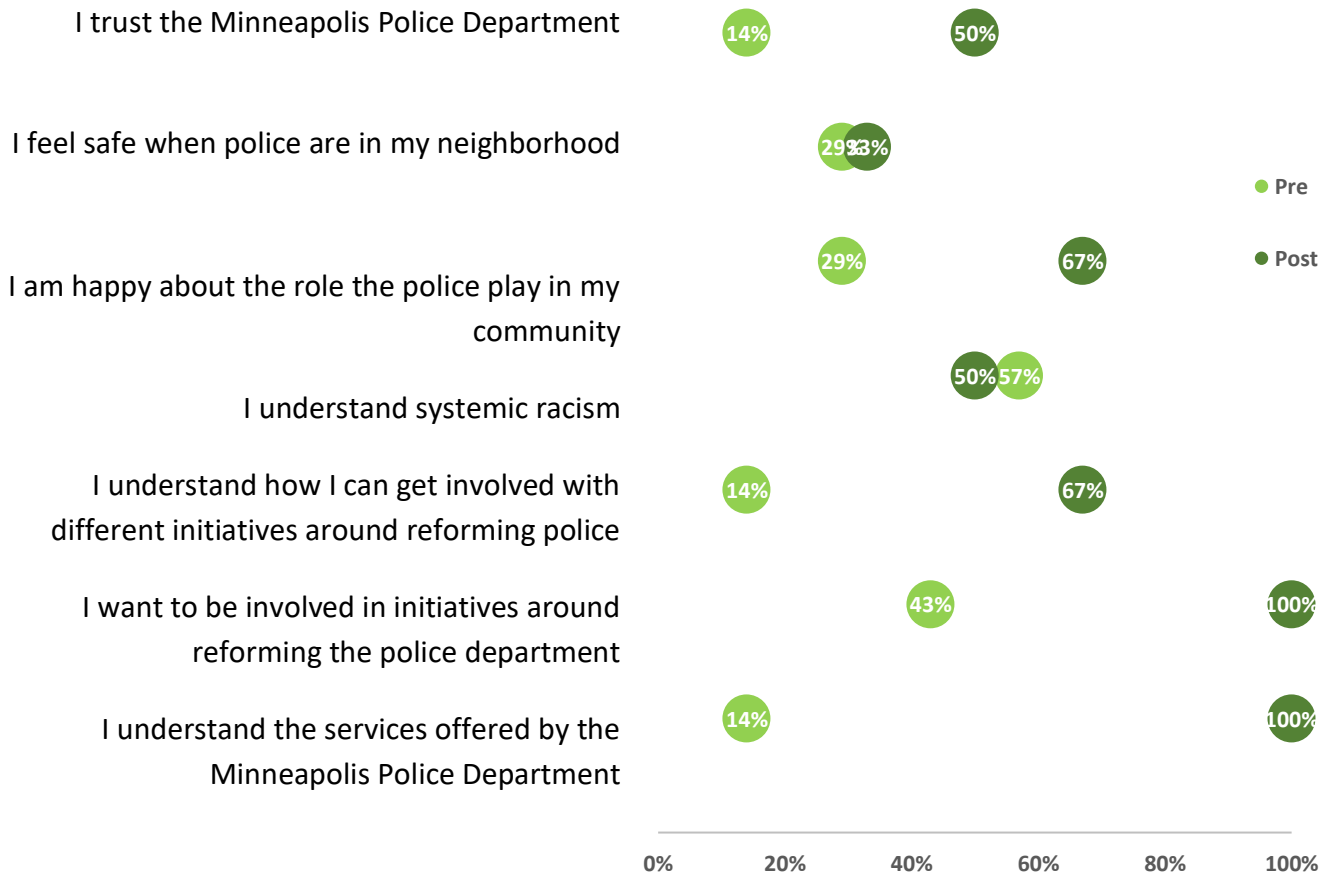
During the conversation with Chief Arradondo, community members on the Zoom call and on Facebook live were invited to ask questions. Some of the questions asked were:

1. The police department used to have programs specifically for youth. Will those programs be coming back?
2. How can our community report a crime? Where should we go or who should we call?
3. Can you shed some light into what actions the Minneapolis Police Department is taking or will be taking to hold police officers accountable for misconduct?
4. What is the budget right now for the police department?
5. How many police will leave the department this year?
6. How will future cohorts of police officers be trained?
7. How is the Minneapolis Police Department collaborating with the St. Paul Police Department?
8. How can we as a community help our police department so that the restructuring of the department is successful and we are all working together?
9. How can the community be involved in changes within the police force?

Pre and post survey

Of the 27 that registered for the workshops, 7 completed the pre-survey and 4 completed the post-survey. Overall, those that completed the post survey reported higher agreement with the statements about policy, safety, and systemic racism compared to those that completed the pre-survey. Due to the small sample size in each group and the fact that those that completed the pre and post survey were not necessarily the same people, we cannot say that this change is representative of all of those that registered or even those that attended at least one workshop.

Overall agreement with select statements from Pre (n=7) to Post (n=4)

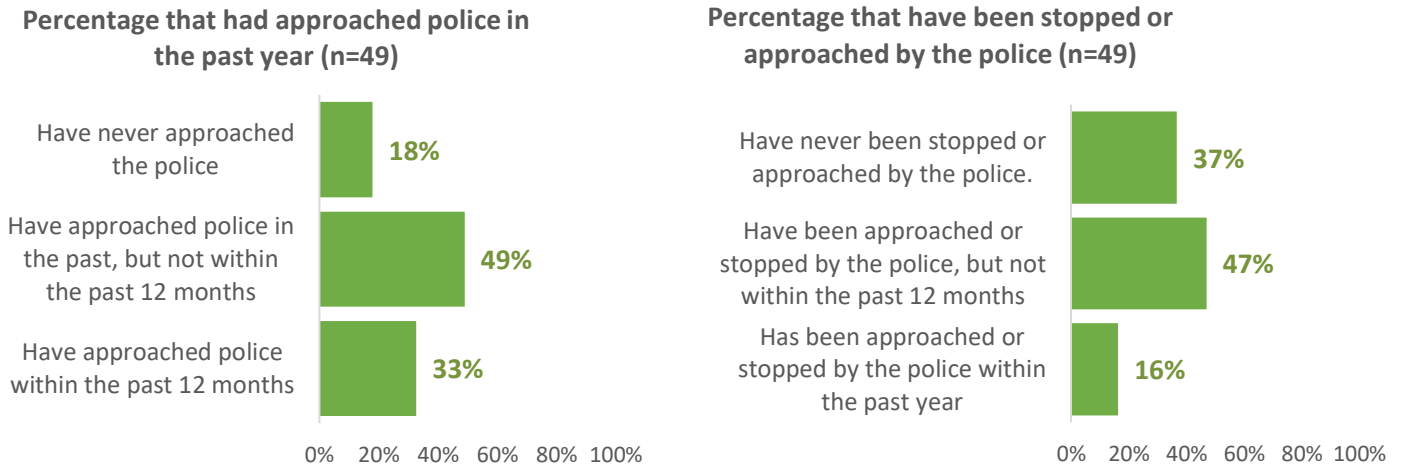


Public opinion survey

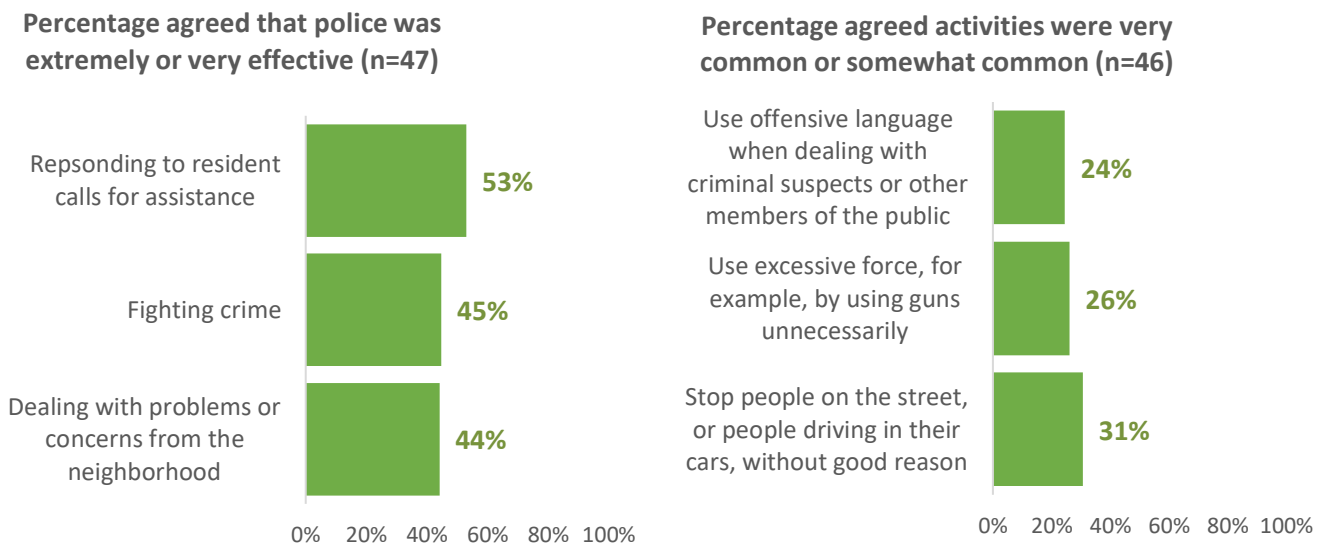
HACER conducted a public survey to understand the experiences of the Latine community in the Twin Cities with the police. A total of 51 people responded to the survey. All of the respondents identified as Latine/Hispanic. The majority identified as female (81%, n= 38). The majority of respondents had a high school diploma/GED or higher (87%, n=47), the average age of respondents was 41.7 years of age, and the average number of years living in the U.S. was 21 years (n=47).

Interaction with the police

The majority of the respondents had interacted with the police at least once, but not necessarily within the past 12 months.



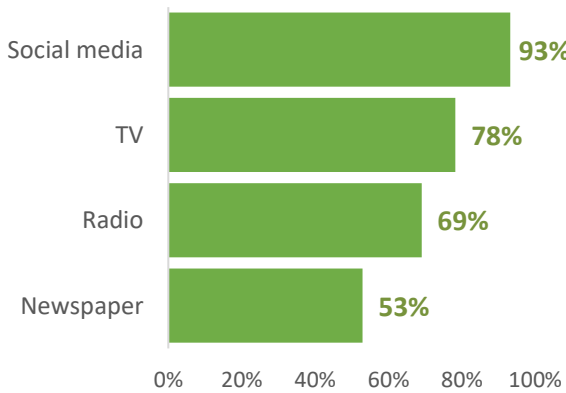
About half of the respondents reported that the police was “extremely effective” or “very effective” in responding to resident calls for assistance, fighting crime, or dealing with problems or concerns from the respondent’s neighborhood. Less than a third of respondents reported that it was very common or somewhat common for police officers in their neighborhood to use offensive language, use excessive force, or stop people on the street without good reason.



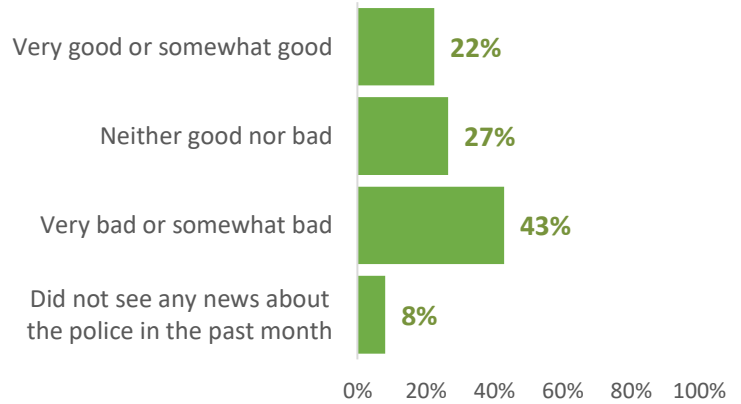
Police in the media

The majority of respondents reported getting their news from social media at least one out of the seven days of the week. A portion of respondents (22%), reported that the news they had seen over the previous month made the police look “very good” or “somewhat good”.

Sources of news at least one day a week (n=46)



Percent reported that over the past month, the news made the police look....(n=46)





Recommendations

The Latine population in Minnesota (and the U.S. broadly) face unique experiences and challenges when interacting with the police. Based on the conversations HACER facilitated during the *Race to Equity* workshops, we make the following recommendations:

- **Provide information and resources in Spanish.** Many resources are only available in English, which limits the access of information for individuals that primarily speak Spanish.
- **Improved data collection on race/ethnicity in police reports.** Of the public data available online on police reports, the Police Use of Force collects race/ethnicity, but does not record Hispanic Latine. This and the reports on Police Stops and Officer involved shootings have high percentage of “unknown” or “mixed race” for race ethnicity, which many Latine may fall under
- **Improved training on working with Latine community for police departments.** It is important that police and other law enforcement officers understand that the way people interact with police can vary around the world, so immigrants who have less experience interacting with the police in the United States may not be familiar with the norms around police interactions when they are approached or stopped by a police officer (maintain hands on wheel, don’t get out of car when stopped, etc.)
- **Prioritize and fund community-led police initiatives.** In addition, continue to engage the Latine community (in Spanish) to receive input on what changes to make to the police department and provide education to the community.
- **Have police officers living in the communities they are policing.** so that the officers and community can build healthy, trusting relationships, with the goal that still will minimize the inaccurate and dangerous perceptions each group has about the other.
- **Invest more in community-based and rehabilitative programs.** This is an opportunity to address the root causes of crimes in communities, such as poverty and substance use.

Reforming police departments and the overall criminal justice system will require collaboration from different divisions within government, community organizations, and community members. Programs like *Race to Equity* are just one way in which we can work to heal and rebuild trust between BIPOC communities to ultimately develop a more equitable criminal justice system.