

In the last two decades, the nation's local police departments have grown in size, and officers are increasingly diverse, female, educated, and specialized. An estimated 605,000 full-time employees worked at more than 12,000 local police departments as of January 1, 2013—a 35% increase since 1987. Of those, about 477,000 were sworn officers with general arrest powers, and 128,000 were nonsworn employees. In addition, about a third of local police departments said they used unpaid reserve or auxiliary officers. Nationwide, there were more than 29,000 unpaid officers in 2013.

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Diversity among police officers has increased in the last two decades. In 2013, 27% of police officers were members of racial or ethnic minority groups, compared to 15% in 1987. About 130,000 minority local police officers were employed in 2013, an increase of about 78,000 since 1987. Hispanics or Latinos accounted for 60% of the increase since 2007. An estimated 12% of officers were Hispanic or Latino in 2013, which was more than double the estimated 5% in 1987. In 2013, 12% of local police officers were black, which was up from about 9% in 1987. In addition, 3% of local police officers were Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaska Native in 2013, which was about 4 times higher than in 1987.

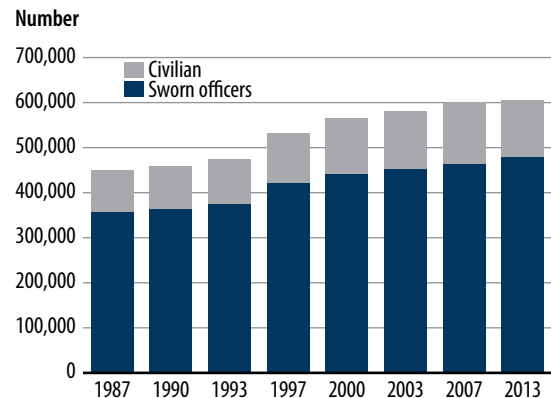
The number and percentage of full-time sworn female officers has also increased since 1987. In 2013, about 1 in 8 local police officers were female. About 58,000 females were employed as local police officers in 2013, compared to about 27,000 in 1987—an increase from an estimated 5% to 12% of officers. In addition, nearly 10% of first-line supervisors in local police departments were female in 2013, and an estimated 3% of local police chiefs were female at that time.

Policies and Practices

Departments serving larger populations were most likely to require a degree, though more departments of all sizes have increased education requirements for new recruits. In 2013, 32% of local police departments required new officers to have a degree or some college coursework, which was about twice as high as in 1993. An estimated 23% of local police officers worked for a department that required entry-level officers to have a 2-year college degree in 2013, up from 7% in 2003.

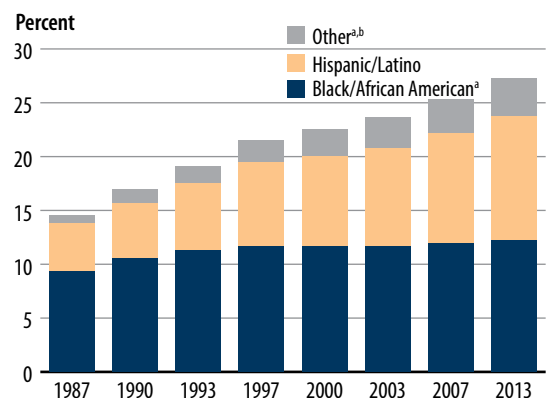
Many larger departments have become more specialized and community-oriented in recent years. In 2013, a majority of departments serving 25,000 or more residents maintained problem-solving partnerships or agreements with local organizations. Most departments with 100 or more officers had full-time specialized units to address child abuse, juvenile crime, gangs, and domestic violence.

Full-time employees in local police departments, 1987–2013



Note: Figure includes all years for which data were collected. See appendix table 10 in the report for standard errors.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Survey, 1987–2013.

Minority representation among full-time sworn personnel in local police departments, 1987–2013



Note: Figure includes all years for which data were collected. See appendix table 18 in the report for standard errors.
^aExcludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.
^bIncludes Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islanders; American Indian or Alaska Natives; and persons identifying two or more races.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Survey, 1987–2013.

The full report, related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

