

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/911-call-processing-system-review-of-policing-literature>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Police spend an inordinate amount of time responding to 911 calls for service. While most of these calls are unrelated to crimes in progress, police often respond with the tool that is most familiar and expedient to them: enforcement. This exhausts police resources and exposes countless people to avoidable criminal justice system contacts.

There is a pressing need for data-informed strategies to identify 911 calls that present a true public safety emergency and require an immediate police response, while responding to other calls in ways that do not tax limited policing resources and promote better outcomes for the people involved and the communities where they reside. This report summarizes the current state of 911 research, discusses the problems and potential of current 911 data collection practices, and recommends steps that law enforcement and emergency communications professionals can take to conserve resources and help ensure that the right response reaches the right caller at the right time.

As the United States continues to evaluate the role of police in communities, a better understanding of how 911 intersects with policing will be crucial to developing a criminal justice system that is smaller, smarter, and more equitable.

Because they are the first point of contact for callers, 911 call-takers have a unique opportunity not only to provide the resources callers ask for, but the ones they actually need.

There are no multicounty studies analyzing 911 calls from intake to outcome to develop training or systems that would establish not only how well police are doing their job, but also whether police response is necessary at all.

Analysis of 911 calls for service data provides a huge and largely untapped opportunity for researchers and practitioners to inform and transform policing policy and practice including developing alternatives to police emergency response.

RESOURCE SITE

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