



DEFINITION OF TERMS

Fatal Encounter by Federal Law Enforcement Officer

was defined as an encounter that involved an officer working in agency of the United States government, typically an agency with "U.S." in its title (e.g., U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation).

Fatal Encounter by State Law Enforcement Officer

was defined as an encounter that involved an officer working for a state law enforcement agency. These agency titles contained the word "state", that name of the state, or both (e.g., Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Illinois State Police).

Fatal Encounter by Local Law Enforcement Officer

was defined as an encounter that involved an officer working for a city or county police agency. Titles of these agencies usually contained the name of the city or county (e.g., Wilmington Police Department, New Castle County Sheriff's Office).

FATAL ENCOUNTERS BY FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

In the United States, law enforcement operates on federal, state, and local levels, each with distinct but complementary roles (Conser, Paynich, & Gingerich, 2011). Federal agents, working under the executive branch in agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), focus on national security, federal crime investigation, and terrorism, paralleling state and local law enforcement in crime investigation and judicial processes (Bumgarner, Crawford, & Burns, 2023; Grenzow, 2024).

State law enforcement duties vary but generally include traffic regulation, criminal investigations, and public safety, with roles divided among various entities such as highway patrols and specialized departments like the California Bureau of Investigation (Hanson & Markovic, 2024; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2018). Additionally, they oversee state prison law enforcement. Local law enforcement officers, crucial at the municipal, county, tribal, or regional levels, handle a wide range of responsibilities from patrolling and traffic management to emergency response and crime investigation, often being the first contact in emergencies through 911 calls (Hanson & Markovic, 2024; Walker & Katz, 2017). Each level plays a vital role in maintaining safety and order, with specialization ensuring effective coverage of all aspects of law enforcement.

Figure 1 provides an in-depth analysis of fatalities caused by law enforcement agencies in the United States, encompassing federal, state, and local levels, during the decade from 2013 to 2023. This period saw an estimated 18,834 fatalities. Local law enforcement officers were responsible for the majority of these deaths, accounting for 86.7%, while state and federal officers were responsible for 10.5% and 2.8% respectively. The figure highlights that Texas recorded the highest number of incidents involving federal officers, whereas California, Texas, Michigan, and Pennsylvania were most affected by state law enforcement fatalities. Additionally, California, Texas, and Florida experienced the highest incidence of fatalities involving local law enforcement agencies.





Table 3.

Compared to White individuals, American Indian individuals had significantly higher odds of fatal encounters with federal law enforcement officers (OR = 2.69, 95% CI [1.15, 6.27]), Black individuals had

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