

Other Data Sources and Opportunities for Measuring Law Enforcement Suicide

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Overview

Key characteristics for consideration

Breadth of data collections/sources relevant to this issue

Differences between the data sets

Potential for these data sources to improve measurement of law enforcement suicide

Considerations for Other Data Sets

- Organization/Funder
- Law Enforcement-Specific
- Occupational Codes/Categories Captured (and which types)
- Scope/Sample Size/Coverage
- Data Collection Mechanism/Process
- Year Data Collection Began
- Data Collection Cadence
- Measures Completed Suicides, Suicide Attempts, Predictors and/or Correlates

Sample of Relevant Data Collections

Data Collection Name	Organization / Funder	LE Specific?	Occupation Codes / Categories	Occupation Code / Category Type(s)	Scope / Sample Size / Coverage	Data Collection Mechanism/ Process	Year Data Collection Began	Data Collection Cadence	Measures Completed Suicides?	Measures Suicide Attempts?	Measures Correlates?	Other Notes or Considerations
Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection	FBI	Yes	Yes	Occupational category	All law enforcement agencies in the U.S.	Designated LE officials can submit data through the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP)	2022	Ongoing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reporting by agencies is voluntary
National Violent Death Reporting System	CDC	No	Yes	Based on U.S. Census Bureau's Industry and Occupation Codes	Entire U.S.	Relies on separate data collection in each state, district, or territory	2003 (for some states); all states starting in 2019	Ongoing	Yes	No	Yes	Has both public and restricted access databases. Restricted access database has case-level information for all variables provided
National Survey on Drug Use and Health	SAMHSA	No	In earlier years; no longer collecting	Responses coded to 1 of 14 industry sectors and to 1 of 14 occupational categories	70,000 people/year, all 50 states	Household surveys (face-to-face and web-based interviews)	1971 (started collecting data on suicidality in 2008)	Annually	No	Yes	Yes	Annual data provides national and state-level estimates on mental illness and suicidal thoughts & behaviors

Sample of Relevant Data Collections (Continued)

Data Collection Name	Organization / Funder	LE Specific?	Occupation Codes / Categories	Occupation Code / Category / Type(s)	Scope / Sample Size / Coverage	Data Collection Mechanism/ Process	Year Data Collection Began	Data Collection Cadence	Measures Completed Suicides?	Measures Suicide Attempts?	Measures Correlates?	Other Notes or Considerations
National Death Index	National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)	No	Yes	Indirect; includes death certificate # which may list occupation	All death records from 1979-latest for all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands	NDI pulls death record info at the request of researchers. It take 2-3 months for an application to be reviewed/approved	1979	Ongoing	Not directly	No	No	NCHS currently linking NCHS surveys with admin data from the NDI
National Occupational Mortality Surveillance	CDC - NIOSH	No	Yes	1990 or 2000 US Census Codes	All employed in a specified occupation or industry, ages 18-90	Data for NOMS come from death certificates issued by state vital records offices	1985	Specified years (1985-1998 or 1999, 2003-2004, 2007 - 2014)	Yes	No	No	Information for Funeral Directors: NOMS Funeral Directors NIOSH CDC
Blue H.E.L.P. Database	Blue H.E.L.P. (non-profit)	Yes	Yes	Branch (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, dispatcher), rank	For all LE officers, defined as govt employees who prevent, investigate, apprehend, or detain individuals suspected or convicted of criminal offenses	Data submitted by family, co-workers, friends through an online submission form that is regularly posted on social media and by LE agencies and supporters	2016 (has also collected information on officers dating back to 1979)	Ongoing	Yes	Form asks if the person who died by suicide had attempted previously	Yes	Once an officer is submitted via the online submission form, a member of the BLUE H.E.L.P. staff begins a verification process

Additional Data Sets Relevant to the Measurement of Suicide

Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (CDC)

National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NIH)

Other national data collection efforts

Data collected through investigator-led studies

Aspects of each of these can help us better measure and therefore address this issue



Thank you

- To learn more about RTI's work in policing and public safety, including issues of workforce & workplace stress and mental health, visit <https://www.rti.org/practice-area/policing>
- **Contact me at jrineer@rti.org**