12-2019

2015 Urban Research Awards

College of Public Affairs and Community Service, University of Nebraska at Omaha

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

2015 URBAN RESEARCH AWARDS

University of Nebraska Omaha

About the College of Public Affairs and Community Service

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The College has become a national leader among similar colleges, with nine programs ranked in the top 25 in the nation. Our faculty ranks are among the finest in their disciplines. Faculty, staff, and students are integral to the community and state because of our applied research, service learning, and community partnerships. We take our duty seriously to help address social needs and craft solutions to local, state, and national problems. For more information, visit our website: cpacs.unomaha.edu

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Overview

Assessing Methamphetamine Use among Refugee Youth in Omaha

The goal of the study is to assess if Karen youth are overrepresented among meth users in Omaha as described by the practices of their home country or if they are simply assimilating to American culture.

Examining Nebraska's Local Finance Picture

In an era of resource scarcity and greater scrutiny of public finance, this report offers one of first overviews of municipal revenues, expenditures, debt and reserves. The intent of the report is not to advocate policy or to even study policy decisions, rather it seeks to provide a context for budgeting and policy discussions.

Exploring Food Policy Networks

Interview key stakeholders in the Omaha food policy network in order to gain an understanding of the specific characteristics of food policy networks and apply the lessons learned to the more general body of knowledge on policy networks.

Juvenile Reentry Mentoring Program

Prior research has demonstrated that mentoring may have promising outcomes for youth engaged in, or thought to be at risk for, delinquent behavior. The Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program specifically outlines funding activities designed to reduce delinquent behavior. Mentoring specifically falls under "services that will positively impact juveniles and families in the juvenile justice system." This report is a first glance at the use of mentoring programs funded through Community-based Aid (CBA) in Nebraska and how these programs impact future law violations.

Program Evaluation Capacity-Building Training

The STEPs' Program Evaluation Capacity-Building Program arose from previous research we conducted in the Omaha community with small nonprofit organizations. To meet the needs of the smaller nonprofits, STEPs utilized Urban Research Grant funding to offer one set of three free program evaluation training sessions. The Urban Research Grant allowed us to offer free consulting from a STEPs staff member to six of these organizations.

Public Perceptions of Urban Infrastructure

A survey was conducted to gauge beliefs about the overall environmental quality of Omaha (including its overhead infrastructure) and the visual salience of transmission and distribution lines (i.e. How often and accurately do individuals notice them). The survey was measuring participants' feelings about what actions should be taken with regard to transmission and distribution lines and acceptance of a hypothetical grid expansion.

Runaway Dynamics in Douglas County

The Runaway Research Project survey design was finalized in January 2016, administered in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Probation; data analysis, structured interview protocols established to conduct interviews. The team submitted an abstract (as part of a juvenile justice panel) to the American Society of Criminology with respect to their project. This report examines first-time and repeat runaway behavior in Douglas county.

Sentencing Unsuccessful Drug Participants

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha has cultivated a collaborative relationship with the Douglas County Adult Drug Court, resulting in several successful program evaluations. The authors will use the results from this study to apply for further grants to assess other urban located drug courts (locally, regionally, and nationally) to compare with the current research results.

Social Media for Emergency Management (SMEM): Promoting Inter-organizational Collaboration

This study explores the use of social media platforms as a means to establish and maintain intergovernmental collaboration for emergency management related agencies.

Viral Videos of Police Use of Force: Exploring Police Officer Responses

Recordings of police interacting with citizens have been making news, sparking protests and calls for reform in many parts of the United States. This study examined police officer perspectives concerning citizens capturing video during police-citizen encounters as well as several related concerns such as the use of body cameras on duty.

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University of Nebraska Omaha

Assessing Methamphetamine Use among Refugee Youth in Omaha

SPRING 2017

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Assessing Methamphetamine Use among Refugee Youth in Omaha

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Spring 2017

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

ABSTRACT

Representatives from social service agencies in Omaha have reported an alarming increase in the use of methamphetamine (meth) among Karen adolescents in Omaha. To determine the state of meth use among Karen youth in Omaha, 2 focus groups of youth, ranging in age from 12-17, were organized. Findings suggest, like most youth, the Karen children were reluctant to disclose their own use of drugs, but they did see the use of meth and other drugs in their schools as a problem. No juveniles in these groups spoke of the use of meth in refugee camps, but rather they were introduced to this drug in Omaha schools. More importantly, most children talked about the use of "yaba" or marijuana as the most common drug of choice among other students they know. It appears drug use among the Karen youth is acquired during the "Americanization" of these children in Omaha schools. The goal of the study is to assess if Karen youth are overrepresented among meth users in Omaha as described by the practices of their home country or if they are simply assimilating to American culture.

Assessing Methamphetamine Use among Refugee Youth in Omaha

Lisa L. Sample, Ph.D.
Karen Rolf, Ph.D.
Brooke Cooley, MS

This study was funded by a CPACS Urban Research Grant

Methamphetamine

- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (2012) methamphetamine is a highly addictive substance that produces an intense sense of pleasure and energy.

- Short-term effects on the individual include: aggression, memory impairment, dental issues, weight loss and malnutrition, heart damage, psychotic behavior, and greater susceptibility to chronic infections such as hepatitis and HIV. Chronic long-term effects lead to structural changes in the areas of the brain that are responsible for emotional functioning and cognitive reasoning (Rawson et al., 2007).

Methamphetamine Use

- Overall, the number of youth using meth in the U.S. has declined significantly since 1999 (Johnston et al., 2009).
- Specific to Nebraska: the rate of meth use among middle school and high school students has remained relatively constant over time, with 1.1% of all students surveyed in 2012 and 2014 reporting that they have tried methamphetamines (Radatz, Vandenberg, and Sample, 2015).

The Karen


Karen State, Myanmar
China
India
Bangladesh
MYANMAR
Vietnam
Laos
Karen State
Yangon
Bay of Bengal
Thailand
Cambodia

The Karen

- Burmese refugees are a heterogeneous group of Karen, Karenni, Chin, and Kachin ethnic groups and Burmese Muslims persecuted for their religious beliefs.

- Omaha is home to an estimated 7,000 refugees from Burma, with at least 75% of those being Karen refugees.

Methamphetamine Use in Burma & Neighboring Regions

- It is estimated that over half of the world's 15-16 million methamphetamine users reside in Southeast and East Asia (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007).

- The Thai-Burmese border is a unique location for the trafficking of meth. Thailand has become one of the largest consumers of methamphetamine pills, also known as *ya ba* ("crazy drug"), in the world, with youth consisting of the majority of users.

Meth Use among Karen Youth in Omaha

- The Prevention of the Expansion of Meth Use in Refugee Youth (PEMRY) group was organized in May, 2014 to address the issue of meth use among refugee youth after adolescents in the Juvenile Justice system began to test positive for meth in January, 2014.

- However, little is known about the extent of use among Karen youth in Omaha or the United States.

The Current Study

Research Questions:

- How knowledgeable are Karen youth about meth?
- What are youth estimates of the prevalence of meth use in the Karen Community?
  a) In Omaha
  b) In refugee camps
- For Karen youth who know what meth is, what are their attributions about why people use meth?
- From where do you think Karen youth get their methamphetamines?

Sample & Data Collection

- A snowball sample was employed with families who participate in the *Ready in Five Program.*

- Focus groups were utilized in order to interview Karen Youth. (N=6) (N=5)

Findings: How Knowledgeable are Karen youth about Meth?

- The Karen youth know meth is a drug and it is addictive. They said they heard stories of people when they do it they have short tempers, often get into fights, have hallucinations, and have a sense of invincibility.

Findings: What are youth estimates of the prevalence of meth use in the Karen Community?

- Among the two focus groups there was a consensus that most Karen youth begin trying drugs in middle school but it is mostly high school students who use. Mixed comments about the prevalence of meth use among Karen youth.
- "I don't think so. I think they do less (compared to U.S. youth). Yeah, cuz they don't really know much about drugs they just do I think mostly weed."

Findings: For Karen youth who know what meth is what are their attributions about why people use meth?

- Participants stated they thought others used drugs to fit in.
- “They might think it’s cool to use drugs.”
- “If they see other people do it they will start doing it just to be cool and like stuff like that.”
- One participant said maybe they felt pressure from others to do it.

Findings: From where do you think Karen youth get their methamphetamines?

- Overwhelming consensus was they learned about meth and other drugs from school. Almost all the participants went to different high schools and middle schools but all agreed that they hear about drugs in school.
- “I never heard of those (different types of drugs) until I came to the U.S. Yeah and we learn from school and stuff.”
- (In schools) “They talk about drugs, like all drugs, but a lot about weed.”

Findings: From where do you think Karen youth get their methamphetamines?

- Previously we believed *ya ba* was referred to as meth by the Karen, but they call marijuana *ya ba* which is still a common name in the United States for the Karen community.
- In addition, in the first focus group, participants stated they called meth “Gla” (no English translation).

Conclusion

- No juveniles spoke of the use of meth in refugee camps.
- They were introduced to drugs in the Omaha school system.
- Karen youth did see meth use and other drugs in their school as a problem.
- Most youth talked about the use of *ya ba (marijuana)* as the most common drug of choice among students they know.

Future Research

- We wish to expand our previous study to include focus groups of Karen adults, so we can ask them about meth and other drug use in the camps and after arrival in the U.S.

- We would like to interview other individuals including school social workers, other stakeholders, and personnel since they may not view this as an issue, or see this differently.

Thank you!

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GRACE ABBOTT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

Examining Nebraska's Local Finance Picture

OCTOBER 2016

University of Nebraska Omaha

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Examining Nebraska's Local Finance Picture

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October 2016

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

University of Nebraska Omaha

SUMMARY

I proposed three primary research goals for this project:

1. Descriptive information on expenditure and revenue patterns for local governments in Nebraska;

2. Quantitative analysis of county fiscal behavior;

3. Quantitative analysis of single-purpose district fiscal behavior.

To date, the most important of this endeavor is complete: the data collection and data entry. We input more than 8,000 financial records – that were in PDF format – into a database that was combined with economic and demographic data from the Center for Public Affairs Research. One of the outputs from this project is nearly complete – analysis of county fiscal behavior. I anticipate submitting a paper for publication with Dr. Carol Ebdon and Ph.D. student Sungho Park by the end of May. The descriptive analysis of local expenditure and revenue patterns will be completed by the end of June 2016 and the single-purpose analysis should be complete by October 2016. In addition, Jerry Deichert and I submitted a proposal to the ECS conference in fall 2016 and I was asked by Deichert to serve on a panel for Center for Public Affairs Research's annual Data Users Conference.

Public Budgeting & Finance

Local Property Tax Limits in Nebraska: Within-State Variations in Effects

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Keywords:	Tax and expenditure limitations, Local government, Counties

Local Property Tax Limits in Nebraska: Within-State Variations in Effects

Abstract

Tax and expenditure limitations (TELs) have been widely imposed on state and local governments. A substantial amount of research has been conducted on the effects of TELs, however, most have assumed that a TEL is equally binding on every local government in the state. This may not be the case; the degree to which a TEL constrains a jurisdiction is dependent on its position and context at the time of the TEL implementation, and, further, the responses of these governments might then be expected to be different over time. This study uses data for counties and special purpose districts in Nebraska, where property tax limits became effective in FY1999; we consider a variety of intended and unintended consequences over the 15 years under the limit. Our findings show the fiscal responses to and effects of the limits and how they vary between county governments that were more versus less restricted.

Key words: tax and expenditure limitations, local government, counties

INTRODUCTION

Tax and expenditure limits (TELs) on local governments in the U.S. became increasingly popular following the adoption of California's Proposition 13 in the late 1970s (Mullins and Wallin 2004). Where 29 states imposed local TELs in 1969, they were in existence in 46 states by 2000 (Amiel, Deller and Stallmann 2009). TELs are designed to control the size, growth, and/or fiscal structures of sub-state units. This effort is partially due to the strong anti-tax movement (Eribes and Hall 1981; Rubin 1998; Deller, Stallmann and Amiel 2012), proponents of which have argued that governments have become larger than the desired level (Shadbegian 1998) or failed to manage resources efficiently (Ladd and Wildon 1982; Lowery and Sigelman 1981). Whatever their justification, TELs have become "very much a part of local government fiscal reality" (Brown 2000, 29). States continue to amend limitations to affect their restrictiveness (Springer et al. 2009; Shadbegian 1998).

There is a developing literature on local TELs, but it has limitations. Above all, similar types of limits (e.g., property tax rates) will not necessarily have similar effects across states due to differences in the specific rules. Cross-state studies typically use dummy variables to control for whether a limit is 'potentially binding' depending on the type of limit (e.g., Shadbegian 1998; Sun 2014), or an index that attempts to capture the combinations of various types of limits used in each state (e.g., Amiel, Deller and Stallmann 2009). These approaches miss the wide variation in the TEL rules that could potentially be important. For example, one state may have a property tax rate limit that is very low and includes all property taxes (e.g., Oregon in the 1990s), while another state may have a tax rate restriction that is much higher and excludes taxation for some purposes such as debt service (e.g., Nevada since the 1990s). The former TEL is likely to be more restrictive in practice than the latter.

In addition, there may be significant intra-state variation given that limits do not affect all local governments in a state in the same way. The literature has primarily used aggregated state-wide data (e.g., Hoene 2004), so within-state variations are largely unexplored. Responses to a TEL may vary depending on the specific context in which local governments operate (Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014; Ross, Farrell and Kate Yang 2015) – for example, the tax or expenditure level at the time the limit was imposed. Studies of individual states are therefore useful to further our understanding of TELs design and effects. This study addresses the case of local TELs in Nebraska.

The Nebraska state legislature adopted property tax rate limits for local governments in 1996, effective in 1998-99. The limits have now been in effect for over 15 years, and provide a good opportunity to explore the within-state effects of a particular type of TEL. We focus on counties because the county-level rules are somewhat unique. The property tax rate cap did not bind all jurisdictions equally because some counties had tax rates significantly higher than the rate limit when it was adopted, while others were comfortably below the limit. In addition, a portion of the county taxing authority may be designated each year for special districts in the county, or may be retained for use by the county. It is expected that the budgetary response of each county to the limits varies depending on its property tax rate position prior to the TEL implementation – i.e., rate at or above the rate limit vs. below the limit. Moreover, the 'competition' between counties and special districts for taxing authority might affect counties' reactions to TELs. To test this, we analyze budget data from all 93 counties in Nebraska over the post-TEL period from 2001 to 2013.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section reviews the literature on TELs. This is followed by a description of the Nebraska limits. The method and findings sections are then presented. The final section discusses the implications and our conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON LOCAL TELS

Conceptually, local TELs encompass a broad range of budgetary constraints (Mullins 2004). There are seven basic types of local TELs, including: overall property tax rate limits, specific property tax rate limits, property tax levy limits, limits on assessment increase, general revenue limits, general expenditure limits and full disclosure rules that promote transparency when taxes are increased (Amiel, Deller and Stallmann 2009; Mullins and Joyce 1996; Mullins and Wallin 2004; Joyce and Mullins 1991). Limits on local property tax rates and levies are common (Shadbegian 1998), but other forms are also used in many states (Mullins and Joyce 1996). Local TELs have been designed to control the growth of governments, to restrict unresponsive fiscal behavior, and, in doing so, to make decentralized local governments more accountable (ACIR 1995). Whether TELs have brought intended (or unintended) consequences in practice is an important issue.

Studies have consistently found that local TELs are associated with a reduction in property tax base (i.e., property valuation; Connolly and Bell 2014), tax rate (Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014) and tax levy (Connolly and Bell 2014; Dye and McGuire 1997; Shadbegian 1998; Sun 2014). That is, local TELs appear to control local governments' reliance on property taxes (Hoene 2004; O'Sullivan, Sexton and Sheffrin 1995). To counteract TELs, governments have been found to diversify revenue sources, including other tax revenues (Hoene 2004; Plummer and Pavur 2009), intergovernmental aid (Kioko and Martell 2012), and charges and fees (Hoene 2004; Sun 2014).

Studies of the impacts of local TELs on overall fiscal outcomes such as total revenues and expenditures or fiscal condition have found mixed results. Some studies maintain that the level of total revenues and expenditures has been lowered by the imposition of local TELs (Chapman and Gorina 2012; Dye and McGuire 1997; Shadbegian 1998) while others show evidence of an opposite effect (Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014; Clair 2012; Sun 2014). The former group tends to focus on the reduction of revenues from major sources and the limited ability of local entities to diversify revenue structures. In contrast, the latter group insists that local governments can circumvent budget constraints by seeking other compensatory sources and by using overrides (Figlio and O'Sullivan 2001; Johnston and Duncombe 1998). Maher and Deller (2012) attempt to link local TELs with fiscal health. They find that TELs are likely to result in better pension funding, a higher level of slack and a reduction in debt, so they may play a role as an effective management tool.

Unintended consequences have been found with local TELs, especially related to service levels and quality. In a survey of managers in Oregon, 40 percent of respondents reported service level reductions in the three years following the Ballot Measure 5 property tax rate limit (O'Toole and Stipak 1998). Similarly, Downes and Figlio (1999) and Figlio and O'Sullivan (2001) voiced concern over the negative impacts of budgetary limitations on police, fire and education service provision and performance.

Despite the contributions of previous studies, there are gaps in the literature. In particular, among local government types, counties have received little scholarly attention (except for Maher, Deller and Amiel 2011; Mullins 2004; Ross, Farrell and Kate Yang 2015). Given the fact that counties generally have fewer options and flexibility for diversifying revenue sources than cities (Cigler 1996), budgetary constraints may be more severe and may generate different responses. Second, although there are over 30,000 special districts in the U.S., the effects of limitations on these entities have not been thoroughly examined (except for McCabe 2000; Carr 2006). Many special districts were originally created to circumvent tax and debt limitations (Foster 1997). If the primary intention of local TELs is to reduce the size of government, then attention should be paid to these jurisdictions as well as their relationship with other entities such as counties.

Third, many studies have disregarded the wide variation in scope of local TELs both across and within states (e.g., Shadbegian 1998; 1999; Amie, Deller and Stallmann 2009). Limits on general revenue or expenditure increases, property tax levy limits, and property tax rate limits coupled with a cap on assessment increase are generally considered to have greater restrictive potential (ACIR 1995), but the devil is in the details. For example, allowable property tax levy growth may be tied to inflation or may be a specific percentage increase. Some states (e.g., New Jersey) have restricted the annual growth rate of the property tax levy for counties, whereas other states (e.g., Rhodes Island) have had such limits only at the municipal level (Mullins and Wallin 2004). Exclusions to the limits as well as methods to exceed them also vary; for example, debt is excluded from some property tax rate limits, and some states require voter approval to override limits. Some studies have used dichotomous (Shadbegian 1998; 1999) or ordinal measures (Amie, Deller and Stallmann 2009) to capture heterogeneity. These approaches, however, fail to address important differences.

Finally, studies have typically assumed that a TEL is equally binding on every similar type of local government in a state (e.g., Clair 2012; Sun 2014). In practice, though, differences in budgetary, political or administrative contexts may result in differing levels of constraints. Mullins (2004) for instance notes that "the effect across local jurisdictions is not uniform. Some governments may be constrained more than others, resulting in a relative reduction in the ability to meet the needs of populations in more constrained settings" (118). His empirical examination found that the fiscal effects of TELs on local revenues and expenditures are 'asymmetric' depending on the affluence of local governments. Our contention is that single-state studies are needed to look more closely at entities actually bound by local TELs and how they respond to the limits, given that "no two TELs are alike" (Deller et al. 2013,7) in terms of the design, structure, and scope of each state's local TEL.

PROPERTY TAX LIMITS IN NEBRASKA

The Nebraska State Legislature passed the property tax limit, LB 1114, in 1996. The legislation was effective with the 1998-1999 fiscal year, giving local governments time to prepare. The limit is on property tax rates, but does not apply to bonded debt, lease-purchase contracts signed prior to July 1, 1998, or judgments. Seven types of jurisdictions have a specific maximum property tax rate: counties, cities, school districts, community colleges, natural resource districts, educational service units, and sanitary improvement districts.

The limits on counties are a form of overall limit in that they also include other types of special districts that do not have specific limits, such as fire, ambulance, library, and road improvement districts. For those special purpose districts, county boards have the power to authorize their levy requests. Counties have a limit of \$0.45, with an additional \$0.05 allowed for inter-local agreements. Of that \$0.45 (or \$0.50), up to \$0.15 may be used for the special districts, setting up a potential competition between county functions and special districts for this portion of the tax. The special districts also have the option of obtaining voter approval for their own tax rate rather than seeking part of the county rate. Similar to other states, a majority of voters may authorize overrides of the limits. Voting may occur pursuant to either a 2/3 vote of the governing body, a petition signed by 5 percent of registered voters, or a town hall meeting. The approved 'excess levy' is restricted to five years.

Tax rate limits are generally not considered to be highly restrictive unless accompanied by assessment increase limits, because a government could conceivably adjust assessments to maintain the same tax levy even with lower rates (ACIR 1995). Nebraska has not limited assessment increases. The state, however, requires all property to be assessed at 92-100 percent of full market value, with the exception of farm land that is assessed at 80 percent of value. Assessment for all jurisdictions within the county is done by an independently elected assessor, with the exception of a few small counties where the state conducts assessed valuations. The state reviews assessment files, and mandates across the board assessment changes if assessments are not within the required range (which occurred in the largest county in 2016). The counties therefore, have limited ability to adjust assessment at will, and other jurisdictions have no control over assessed values. The Nebraska limits, then, may be potentially binding even though unaccompanied by assessment increase limits.[1]

For an initial understanding of the tax rate limit impact, we first look at descriptive county data from FY1997 – 2013, which covers the period both before and after the implementation of the limit. There are 93 counties, and as of 2013, 1,056 out of 1,774 special districts levied property taxes under the authorization of county boards. We separate the counties into two groups based on whether they were 'above/at' or 'below' a tax rate of $0.44 in FY

[1] Local governments in Nebraska are also subject to a revenue growth limit. LB 989, adopted in 1998, allows jurisdictions to increase revenues by no more than 2.5 percent per year (2.5-4.5 percent for school districts). Capital improvements, debt, jointly financed services, natural disaster repairs, and judgments are excluded from the limit. The limit can be exceeded by up to 1 percent with approval of 75 percent of the governing body, and carryover of all unused authority is allowed. In practice, many jurisdictions annually vote to exceed the authority, to build up unused margin in case it is needed in the future.

1997.[2] Our presumption here is that those counties that were above or at the limit at the beginning were more constrained than counties below the limit. Forty-two, or 45 percent of the counties, had tax rates that were higher than $0.44. The remaining 51 counties (55 percent) were below $0.44 at that time and so were the least constrained by the limit.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 first presents the county property tax trends. In both groups, the tax rates dropped sharply between 1997 and 2001, inched upwards until 2009, and then decreased again by 2013. Both groups are below the mean rates prior to implementation of the limits. In that sense, we might say that the tax limits worked in reducing the tax rate. Tax rates alone, though, do not tell the whole story. Taxpayers care about their actual tax bill, which is also dependent on assessed valuation. Property tax levies decreased slightly between 1997 and 2001, but then began to increase. The growth in the counties that started out below the tax limit was greater (54 percent) over this period, but the mean levies for those above/at the limit also grew by 40 percent. Counties were able to reduce the tax rate while increasing overall tax revenue because of growth in property valuation. Aside from the urban areas around Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska is heavily agricultural, and this period has been strong for farming which resulted in increasing

[2] Property tax rates here only include the restricted portion of the property tax (i.e., property tax rates for debt payment are excluded). We used a rate of $0.44 as our criteria in separating counties for two reasons: 1) the distribution of sample counties in terms of property tax rates has two peaks around $0.50 and $0.33 but draws a trough around $0.44 in FY1997, so the selection criteria appears to make a relatively clear distinction between higher (i.e., more constrained) and lower (i.e., less constrained) tax rate groups; 2) we checked the change of county property tax rates for three prior-TEL years (i.e., fiscal years 1996-98), and found that the $0.44 point minimizes the variation of group composition (over 85 percent of counties maintain their membership of tax rate group for three years). Thus, a rate of $0.44 provides us with a relatively stable separation of tax rate groups. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the ranges for the counties above and below the limit are fairly broad. which may mask subtleties. For example, a county at $0.60 would likely have had substantially more difficulty reducing their tax rate under the new limit than one at $0.46. However, this at least gives some indication of the variations across counties in responses to the limits.

land values. Both groups were fortunate to have experienced valuation growth during this period, which mitigated the effects of property tax rate limits.

The literature has been mixed on the extent to which tax limits have reduced spending. Surprisingly, the Nebraska counties that were above or at the limit initially have experienced greater growth in mean real expenditures over this period (87 percent) than counties below the limit (76 percent). Average spending, though, was almost three times greater in the counties below the limit in both FY1997 and 2013. It appears that both groups had spending increases after the TEL implementation that exceeded the growth in property tax levies. This raises questions about the relationship between property taxes, as a major source of county revenues, and expenditures. The counties above/at the limit had a higher level of reliance on general property tax revenues (38 percent) in 1997, compared to 33 percent for counties below the limit. A sizable drop in this ratio occurred by 2001 (over 14 percentage points for the counties above/at the limit), before a gradual increase. By 2013, both groups have less reliance on property tax than they did in the year before the TEL implementation, but the counties below the limit experienced a relatively larger decrease in reliance.

Some studies have found that intergovernmental aid and debt increase following implementation of local TELs, at least in the short-run. Between 2001-2013, intergovernmental aid did increase: counties above or at the limit had an increase of 49 percent and counties below the limit by 24 percent. Since the growth of spending in both groups of counties were greater, intergovernmental aid as a share of spending actually decreased by about 12 percent in counties above/at the limit, and 5 percent in counties below the limit. Some property tax purposes are excluded from the limit, including debt payments. Therefore, counties may have had incentives to increase debt to fund capital projects rather than using pay-go methods. Debt did increase substantially between 2001-2013 in counties below the limit (144 percent), but those above/at the limit also had an increase of 126 percent. As a share of spending, debt increased by four percentage points in counties above/at the limit, from three percent to seven percent, while counties below the limit increased from about seven percent to 20 percent. There is evidence that the tax limits may have had an effect on outstanding debt, although it is surprising that the results are also seen so clearly in counties that were initially below the tax limit.

Three points are worthy of notice. First, the adoption of the Nebraska limit had the immediate (or short-term) constraining effect on county property tax. In particular, the sharp decline in property tax as a share of total expenditure between FY1997 and 2001 shows the decreased reliance on property tax. Second, county governments have tended to by-pass the tax rate limit in the long-run; steady increases in total expenditures for both groups do not provide support for the notion that the limit has binding effects on budget size. Last, property valuation growth, intergovernmental aid, and increasing debt have been commonly used for budgetary circumvention at the county level. Specific responses might be different across counties, however, given that longitudinal changes in revenue trends vary according to the property tax rate position of each county at the beginning of TEL implementation.

These observations allow us to develop a testable hypothesis: *ceteris paribus*, counties in the two tax rate groups are likely to find it differentially hard to cope with the limit in managing financial resources, implementing fiscal strategies which are not uniform. Divergences in county reactions to the TEL might be due to the political benefits (or costs) of revenue raising strategies, which vary depending on county circumstances. Revenue raising is an activity which incurs certain political costs because, for instance, it could result in the loss of votes for politicians (Bartle, Kriz and Morozov 2011; Hettich and Winer 1984). Put another way, a government decides to raise revenues, use budgetary gimmicks or look for additional revenue sources when their potential benefits – i.e., benefits from maintaining spending levels – are sufficient enough to exceed the expected political costs of revenue raising.

TELs, particularly from the fiscal illusion perspective, might play a role in increasing the perceived benefits of revenue raising strategies and, in doing so, lower government's political costs in a relative sense. This is because the major intention of TELs is to constrain the salient source of revenues so that local governments might be required to seek alternatives to meet service demands (Hoene 2004; Sun 2014). Further, the perceived benefits (or costs) of revenue raising could be relatively higher (or lower) for governments suffering from more constrained revenue sources (Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014; Mullins 2004). In Nebraska, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that counties above/at the limit are likely to be more motivated by the political benefits (or costs) of revenue raising, which is perceived as higher (or lower) than counties below the limit. If this is the case, we expect to find significant differences in post-TEL fiscal behavior between the two groups of counties.

In addition, given the unique feature of the Nebraska TEL in which counties can 'give up' part of their tax rate limit to special districts within the county,[3] we presume that the property tax portion for special districts is also a significant factor that affects county government's calculation of political benefit (or cost) of revenue raising. We expect, then, that all else equal, the property tax share of special districts within a county not only has some direct impacts but also generates interactive effects with the county's initial property tax rate position on its fiscal responses to the limit. We also present descriptive trends of special districts in Table

[3] The special districts considered here exclude those that have individual taxing authority (e.g., natural resource districts, educational service units, and sanitary and improvement districts that are created primarily in the Omaha area for developments outside city limits that are expected to eventually be annexed).

1, which are somewhat surprising. The number of special districts levying property tax decreased for both groups, more so for counties below the rate limit. The tax rate decreased substantially for both groups, while the levy increased for both, although much more for those in counties below the limit. Property tax reliance overall decreased, again to a much greater extent in counties below the limit.

METHODOLOGY

The aggregate descriptive trends are interesting but do not control for differences between districts or for interaction effects. We now turn to an empirical analysis to examine whether the initial property tax rate position of counties affected their post-TEL responses, taking the potential mediating effect of the property tax share of special districts into consideration. Our equation for fixed effects estimation is as follows:

$$F_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot R_i + \beta_2 \cdot SD_{it} + \beta_3 \cdot (R_i \cdot SD_{it}) + C_{it} + \gamma_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (1)$$

where F_{it} means fiscal responses for county government i in t year. Fiscal responses are explained as a function of the property tax rate position of county i in the base year (FY 1997) (R_i), the property tax rate portion for special districts within county i in year t (SD_{it}), an interaction between these two tax rate variables ($R_i \cdot SD_{it}$) and a vector for control variables (C_{it}). Fixed effects for county (γ_i) and year (δ_t) are included in the model for two-way fixed effects estimation.[4] ε_{it} indicates an error term.

[4] The results of the Hausman test showed that fixed-effects models are relevant for our panel data (χ^2= 26.61 – 552.82; p<0.001). It should also be noted that there were no significant differences between the results of fixed- and

We focus on four dependent variables of fiscal response to TELs: property tax, intergovernmental aid, total operating expenditures and outstanding debt. Counties tend to rely heavily on property taxes and intergovernmental aid as major revenue sources and spend most of their budget for general operating purposes; further, the level of debt outstanding is up to 70 percent of total general revenues on average (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2012). To capture fiscal behavior in terms of the growth as well as size of budget (see also Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014; Plummer and Pavur 2009), we employ both per capita ($) and annual growth (percent) measures.[5] Based on data availability, the timeframe is FY2001 to 2013 (data are from the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts).[6] The per capita variables are transformed into a natural logarithm due to skewness (see Stipak 1991; DeSantis and Renner 1994).

Our first key independent variable is the initial property tax rate position of each county, measured as a dummy variable: counties above/at a property tax rate of $0.44 in FY1997 are coded 1 (42 counties), otherwise 0 (51 counties). This variable separates counties more severely constrained by the implementation of the tax rate limit from others relatively less restricted. We anticipated that counties above/at the limit would have a lower annual growth rate than counties below the limit after the TEL implementation. We also expected that counties above/at the limit would have more incentive to diversify revenues (e.g., intergovernmental aid and debt issuance), so would have higher levels and growth rates than counties below the limit. The effects on spending would depend on the degree to which counties were able to raise alternative revenues,

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random-effects estimation. In addition to unit-fixed effects, fixed-effects for year were used to control for unobserved time-specific variations.

[5] Counties can have $0 debt outstanding, which prevents a calculation of annual growth. To avoid potential biases from the omission of samples with no outstanding debt, we substituted $1 for $0 outstanding debt per capita (total 674 cases) before computing the annual growth variable.

[6] Using a timeframe which covers only the post-TEL period is one of our research limitations. The records retention policy in Nebraska requires organizations to keep only relatively recent data, so we were unable to construct a dataset which includes sufficient years prior to the TEL implementation.

but we would generally expect counties above/at the limit to have more constraints on spending than those below the limit.

The next independent variable is the property tax rate of special districts in the county. We expected this special district tax share to be negatively associated with the county property tax variables, but positively associated with the other revenue source variables. We had no clear expectation for the expenditure models based on mixed findings in previous studies. The final key independent variable is an interaction term between the county tax rate and the special district tax rate. Counties above/at the tax limit were more constrained and so might be expected to be less willing to share their property tax rate with special districts, so we expected that this variable would have a negative sign in the property tax models but a positive sign in the other revenue models. Again, the expectation related to expenditures is unclear. Following the recommendation from previous studies (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006; Jaccard and Turrisi 2003; Yu 2000), we mean-center the special district tax rate variable across models to avoid potential multicollinearity.

We use nine control variables that are generally used in previous studies to explain local government fiscal behavior. The first three capture variations in county revenue bases: property assessed valuation, employment rate and urban-rural classification. Property assessed valuation is directly related to property tax revenue and can affect other fiscal behavior (Brueckner 1983; Inman 1989; Santiago, Galster and Tatian 2001). The employment rate is also frequently used to reflect economic condition (Bjedov, Lapointe and Madies 2014; Hou 2003). These two variables are expected to have a positive sign in the property tax and expenditure models and have a negative sign in the other models. Property assessed valuation is transformed into a natural logarithm in order to correct for skewness.

The third control variable distinguishes between urban and rural areas. Local governments in urban areas tend to rely more on non-property tax sources (Orazem and Trostle 1972). Moreover, local governments experiencing a higher level of urbanization are likely to have more spending-prone behavior than rural governments (MacManus and Pammer 1990). To capture this feature, we employ the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) urban-rural classification scheme (1: noncore – 4: medium metro), developed by Ingram and Franco (2014). This variable is expected to be negatively associated with the property tax variables and positively related with other dependent variables.

The next five control variables capture demographic characteristics: population density, race (county non-white population as a percentage of total population), personal income per capita, youth population rate (population under 19 as a percentage of total population) and elderly population rate (population over 65 as a percentage of total population). The race variable is transformed into a natural logarithm in all models due to its distributional skewness. These variables are related to public service demand (Alm and Evers 1991; Coate and Knight 2011; Hou 2003; Wolf and Amirkhanyan 2010). Our expectation was that these variables would have a positive relationship with the dependent variables.

The final control variable is per capita intergovernmental aid. This variable is included in all models except for the intergovernmental models to capture the fiscal structure of the counties. The well-known notion of the flypaper effect is the underlying reason for the control of intergovernmental aid (Bae and Feiock 2004; Deller and Maher 2005): public expenditures at the local level are more elastic in terms of intergovernmental grants than median income. This variable was expected to be positively associated with operating expenditures and negatively related to the other dependent variables.

Table 2 below summarizes the variables, measures and data sources.

[Table 2 about here]

FINDINGS

Our descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3 below. In terms of the dependent variables, Nebraska counties tend to have a wide variation in budgetary outcomes. The average of the logarithm of property tax levy per capita is -0.9454, which corresponds with $457.66. Its annual growth has a mean of 10.20 percent and is distributed from minimum -32.03 percent to maximum 42.08 percent. The level of intergovernmental aid also varies, with a mean of -0.5634 ($912.28) and 6.81 percent in per capita and annual growth terms, respectively. After the TEL implementation, the average outstanding debt per capita variable is 2.34 ($229.10) and its annual growth is 9.27 percent. Meanwhile, county governments spend $1,416.71 per capita (natural logarithm is 7.01) on average for general purposes, with an annual growth rate of 7.85 percent. The mean county property tax rate is 0.45, and counties on average share only $0.05 of the total allowable $0.15 tax rate with special districts. The mean of $0.02 for the interaction term indicates that counties above/at the limit are likely to share a lower level of property tax rates with special districts than counties below the limit.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 4 below presents the estimation results of the two-way fixed effects models.[7] All models are statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level (F=2.65 – 938.68; p<0.001) and they explain approximately 12-98 percent of the variation in county budgets. We ran interactive and non-interactive models separately, but only the results of the interactive models are reported; the results of the models without the interaction term were similar to the models shown here.

[Table 4 about here]

Model 1-1 and 1-2 show the results of the property tax revenue models. Unexpectedly, the property tax rate group coefficients have a positive and significant association with both per capita and annual growth. In spite of the TEL imposition, counties above/at the limit tend to have a higher level of property tax per capita and annual growth rate than counties below the limit during this timeframe. As seen in Figure 1, counties above/at the limit had a higher level of property tax revenue per capita prior to the tax limit adoption; even though these counties were more constrained by the limit in the short-run, they were able to retain a higher amount after implementation, and it has grown at a faster rate. This may mean that the design of the Nebraska tax rate limit is ineffective. Our results support the argument that tax rate limits, without well-designed supplemental mechanisms (e.g., assessment limits) have limited effect on providing property tax relief.

[7] The results of the Modified Wald test indicated that we need to control for heteroskedasticity (χ^2= 1522.99 – 1.4e+06, p<0.001), so we ran all regression models with robust standard errors. VIFs across all models ranged from 1.01 to 4.67 (less than 10); we did not find any evidence of multicollinearity problems.

[Figure 1 about here]

The results of Models 2 to 4 show that the tax rate group coefficient, as expected, is positively and significantly related to the level of per capita intergovernmental aid, outstanding debt and operating expenditures. These results denote that counties above/at the limit have maintained their budget size larger than counties below the limit since the enactment of the rate limit, and that higher reliance on external aid and debt has been used by those counties as key fiscal strategies. The tax rate group variable has a negative relationship with the annual growth variables in these models, although it is only statistically significant in the intergovernmental aid growth model. With a higher base level, counties above/at the limit may find it harder to increase their annual percentage growth, compared to their counterparts.

The special district tax rate coefficients are generally not statistically significant. That is, the property tax rate share of special districts *per se* does not affect county fiscal behavior. However, when the special district tax rate variable is interacted with the county tax rate group variable, it becomes significant in the per capita intergovernmental aid, outstanding debt and operating expenditures models. In Figure 2 below, the linear prediction graph for these models shows how the interaction of the two variables generates different results. As the average of special districts tax rates goes up, counties above/at the limit tend to have a higher level of per capita intergovernmental aid and outstanding debt, while counties below the limit decrease aid and debt as the special district tax rates increase. The situation is reversed for spending: counties above/at the limit are likely to have lower spending as the special district tax rate increases, while counties below the limit tend to have higher spending as the special district tax rate increases. Overall, the level of property tax share of special districts plays a role as another tax constraint, particularly for counties above/at the limit. Hence, the role of single-purpose districts could be considered an important contextual factor which generates differences in counties' responses to state-imposed limits, at least in Nebraska.

[Figure 2 about here]

The results for the control variables partially correspond to our expectations. The property valuation coefficient is positive in all models except the per capita debt model, but is only significant in three cases. The urban-rural scheme coefficient is negative and significant in four models, and positive and significant in the outstanding debt per capita model. With regard to demographic factors, the population density variable generally has a negative sign across the models. The remaining coefficient have mixed signs across the models and are generally not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

Nebraska's property tax limits have been in place for about 17 years, which allows us to observe the effects on counties over a sizable time period. In this study, we focused on addressing two particular themes: 1) Has the Nebraska TEL, which is represented as tax rate limits, brought unique results to local fiscal practices? Other single-state studies have focused on California (Hoene 2004), Colorado (Clair 2012), Indiana (Ross, Farrell and Kate Yang 2015), Kansas (Springer et al. 2009), Oregon (Thompson and Green 2004), Texas (Plummer and Pavur 2009), and Wisconsin (Maher, Deller and Amiel 2011). We attempted to contribute to our understanding on local TELs by investigating the Nebraska case. 2) Although many studies have assumed that TELs are equally binding within a state, we aimed to demonstrate that the effects of local TELs can vary depending on specific contexts, such as how close to the tax rate limit a county was prior to implementation.

To achieve our research objectives, county trends in revenues, spending, and debt were analyzed, taking into consideration counties' initial property tax rate positions and their sharing of tax rates with special districts. Descriptive analysis shows that apparently, the tax rate limit did have a constraining effect on the tax rate for all counties, and controlled county reliance on property tax at least in the short-run and in terms of the tax portion of total spending. The models also suggest that county fiscal behavior was somewhat mitigated by the county's proximity to the rate limit. As expected, those at or near the limit incurred more debt than those counties below the limit. Surprisingly, those same counties at/near the limit spent more and grew levies at rates higher than those below the rate cap. Some of this appears to be due to an increase in intergovernmental aid, which pays for a large share of county spending.

During this period, county officials were also fortunate to be able to capture high valuation base growth so that, regardless of their position relative to the TEL, tax levies grew faster than inflation. This has resulted in frustration from taxpayers, particularly the farmers whose land has fueled much of the valuation growth in this period. History has taught us that agricultural land values are cyclical, and there are signs that the boom in this area is slowing down. This may eventually result in much more stringent constraints on property tax revenues, since many counties cannot simply increase tax rates if valuations slow or decrease.[8] The role of single-purpose districts was also a focus of this study. We found that the reliance of special districts on county board approval for use of a portion of the county taxing authority raises the

[8] See, for example, the Nebraska Governor's recent plan toward property tax relief - http://www.governing.com /topics/finance/tns-nebraska-ricketts-state-address.html

possibility of competition. There is slight evidence to support an effect here; the property tax rate share of special districts, coupled with counties' initial property tax rate positions, has manipulated fiscal responses of counties to the tax rate limit.

There are limitations to this study. First and foremost, we used somewhat arbitrary cut-off points for the groupings of the counties. The results might differ if we used more or different groupings. Second, due to the lack of fiscal data, we were able to study only the post-TEL period in our empirical models. Third, in order to better understand the perceptions of local officials about how the tax limits have affected them, and how they have responded, it would be useful to conduct interviews or use case studies of selected counties and special districts. Finally, this study focused on two types of local governments. The limits also affected other jurisdictions, such as municipalities and school districts. The school district limitations are closely linked with state aid to school districts, which is a continual source of debate in the state legislature so would be a particularly fruitful area for research.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the literature is several ways. First, this is one of only a handful of studies where counties and, in effect, special purpose districts are the unit of analysis. Second, the examination focuses on within-state TEL effects. Third, this analysis of a particular type of TEL, a property tax rate limit, is informative because it demonstrates the implications of a limit on a tax that has two moving parts – the levy and property valuation – which may or may not constrain the levy or spending if property value growth outpaces the rate limit. Fourth, our research complements previous studies by demonstrating that at least during the period of study spending was not constrained by the TEL and that intergovernmental aid helped offset some levy constraints. These findings add to the debate in the existing literature on the extent to which TELs affect expenditures (Dye and

McGuire 1997; Shadbegian 1998; Chapman and Gorina 2012; Clair 2012; Blom-Hansen, Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2014; Sun 2014).

For policy-makers, the research highlights the need to identify the primary objective(s) of the limitation. Is the aim to limit levy growth, and/or to "control" spending? If using a rate limit, does valuation growth also need to constrained? If the rate limit is coupled with valuation growth restrictions, distortions in property valuations versus market value may lead to issues as is currently being played out in states such as California. And what are the potential unintended consequences of limits? For example, in this case, Nebraska counties could constrain special districts through their levy authority, as well as the possibility of increasing debt levels to avoid restrictions. Not to sound too cliché but this study underscores the sentiment that "the devil is in the details" when it comes to examining the effects of TELs on fiscal outcomes. The effects are also period-sensitive. Strong valuation growth mitigated the effects of tax rate caps. If valuation slows, the outcomes of the analysis could be quite different.

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TABLE 1

Descriptive Trends of County and Special Districts Budgets

		1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	Change FY97 (01)– 13
Property tax rate (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	0.3508	0.2831	0.3157	0.3208	0.3071	-0.0437 (-12.46%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	0.4814	0.3728	0.4035	0.4116	0.3889	-0.0925 (-19.21%)
Property tax levy ($1,000)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	3,937.96	3,562.23	4,585.74	5,367.14	6,053.20	2,115.24 (53.71%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	1,292.47	1,086.61	1,270.34	1,493.19	1,812.20	519.73 (40.21%)
Property Assessed Valuation ($100,000)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	12,564.65	14,385.49	16,189.03	18,948.47	22,540.15	9,975.50 (79.39%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	2,733.30	2,986.21	3,242.52	3,667.57	4,728.75	1,995.45 (73.01%)
Total expenditures ($1,000)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	13,267.35	17,111.80	19,704.20	23,301.70	23,384.70	10,117.35 (76.26%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	4,062.80	5,128.81	5,749.02	6,526.20	7,608.98	3,546.18 (87.28%)
Property tax / Total expenditures (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	33.31	23.07	25.90	25.38	27.31	-6.00 (-18.01%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	37.89	23.67	25.67	26.42	28.94	-8.95 (-23.62)
Aid ($1,000)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	-	8,933.32	9,852.30	12,314.47	11,074.88	2,141.56 (23.97%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	-	2,310.99	2,858.15	3,115.90	3,434.41	1,123.42 (48.61%)
Aid / Total expenditures (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	-	39.56	41.54	44.56	37.68	-1.88 (-4.75%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	-	40.47	41.25	40.05	35.57	-4.90 (-12.11%)
Outstanding debt ($1,000)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	-	2,262.15	3,352.22	4,267.90	5,523.52	3,261.37 (144.17%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	-	285.69	352.82	740.20	646.41	360.72 (126.26)
Outstanding debt / Total expenditures (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	-	6.87	8.87	13.50	20.41	13.54 (197.09%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	-	2.97	3.76	10.16	7.42	4.45 (149.83%)
Number of SPDs levied property tax	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	15.75	15.14	15.10	15.29	14.88	-0.87 (-5.52%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	7.33	7.26	7.12	7.12	7.10	-0.23 (-3.14%)
SPDs property tax rate (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	0.0683	0.0585	0.0583	0.0551	0.0496	-0.0187 (-27.40%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	0.0548	0.0504	0.0451	0.0457	0.0403	-0.0145 (-26.46%)
SPDs property tax levy ($)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	55,378.16	60,630.68	74,913.05	84,510.79	90,226.56	34,848.40 (62.93%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	23,617.10	23,602.42	23,692.18	25,835.04	31,992.04	8,374.94 (35.46%)
SPDs property tax / Total expenditures (%)	Counties below limit (<$0.44)	50.67	43.17	41.97	41.76	43.65	-7.02 (-13.85%)
	Counties above/at limit (≥$0.44)	40.74	38.44	38.56	36.87	40.35	-0.39 (-0.96%)

Source: County and Special Districts Budget Database, Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts

Note 1: All budget information is inflation adjusted using CPI

Note 2: Kimball and Dodge counties were excluded from the expenditure data due to unreliable information for FY1997

TABLE 2

Summary of Variables, Measures and Data

	Variable	Measure	Data
Dependent variable	Property tax	Ln (property tax levy per capita)	Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts
		Annual percentage change of property tax levy per capita	
	Intergovernmental aid	Ln (intergovernmental aid per capita)	
		Annual percentage change of intergovernmental aid per capita	
	Outstanding debt	Ln (outstanding debt per capita)	
		Annual % change of outstanding debt per capita	
	Expenditures	Ln (operating expenditures per capita)	
		Annual % change of operating expenditures per capita	
Explanatory variable	Property tax rate group	1 for counties with tax rate ≥ $0.44 in FY97, otherwise 0	
	Special district tax rates	Mean of special districts property tax rates within a county	
	Interaction term	Property tax rate group*Special district tax rate	
	Property valuation	Ln (county assessed property valuation)	
	Urban-rural index	1: noncore, 2: micropolitan, 3: small metro, 4: medium metro	NCHS
	Employment rate	County employed population / total labor force	BLS
	Population density	County population (100 persons) /area in square miles	NE Databook
	Race	Ln (county non-white population / total population)	SEER data
	Personal income	County personal income per capita	
	Youth population	County population aged under 19 / total population	
	Elderly population	County population aged over 65 / total population	

TABLE 3

Descriptive Statistics

Variable and measure (unit)	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
Property tax levy per capita (Ln)	-0.9454	0.5686	-2.4297	0.5892
Annual change of property tax levy per capita (percent)	10.0202	7.8643	-32.0316	42.0752
Intergovernmental aid per capita (Ln)	-0.5634	0.8163	-2.0831	1.8198
Annual change of intergovernmental aid per capita (percent)	6.8101	22.8724	-73.6065	91.8493
Outstanding debt per capita (Ln)	2.3415	2.8046	0	8.1898
Annual change of outstanding debt per capita (percent)	9.2742	127.0733	-99.9296	2,044.625[1]
Operating expenditures per capita (Ln)	7.0082	0.6739	5.5764	9.0595
Annual change of operating expenditures per capita (percent)	7.8544	0.1031	-62.3120	79.5561
Property tax rate group (dummy)	0.4516	0.4979	0	1
Special district tax rates ($)	0.0511	0.0336	0.0027	0.1950
Interaction term ($)	0.0204	0.0279	0	0.1675
County assessed property valuation (Ln)	13.4581	1.0865	11.1627	17.6905
Urban-rural index (ordinal)	1.4855	0.8651	1	4
Employment rate (percent)	96.4572	0.9289	89.4937	98.3607
Population density (100 persons per mile^2)	0.4102	1.7016	0.0059	16.3573
Race (Ln)	-4.1768	0.9922	-6.8480	-0.5020
Personal income ($1,000)	41.5873	14.6261	14.4979	108.0591
Youth population (percent)	26.8587	2.8337	18.5771	40.2319
Elderly population (percent)	19.1536	4.1107	6.8996	31.3571

Note 1: All fiscal and income variables are inflation adjusted using CPI
Note 2: All outliers are excluded in analyzing descriptive statistics

[1] Some counties had a relatively higher level of annual growth in outstanding debt. For example, Valley county's per capita outstanding debt grew from $216.02 to $4,632.76 in one year (2,045%) after voter approval of a $21.3 million bond issuance for a new hospital in 2008 (Kunz, 2010).

TABLE 4

Two-way Fixed Effects Estimation Results

Variable	Model 1-1: Ln (property tax levy per capita)	Model 1-2: percentage change of property tax levy per capita	Model 2-1: Ln (IG aid per capita)	Model 2-2: percentage change of IG aid per capita	Model 3-1: Ln (outstanding debt per capita)	Model 3-2: percentage change of outstanding debt per capita	Model 4-1: Ln (operating expenditures per capita)	Model 4-2: percentage change of operating expenditures per capita
	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)	B (Robust S.E.)
Tax rate group	0.6111*** (0.2088)	0.1401** (0.0702)	1.9106*** (0.2038)	-0.4987** (0.2409)	3.4432** (1.6864)	-0.2979 (1.1269)	0.7291*** (0.1466)	-0.0770 (0.0895)
SPDs tax rate (mean-centered)	-1.0257 (0.6479)	-0.1967 (0.6740)	-2.5763(*) (1.4454)	0.7751 (2.5795)	-33.2292(***) (11.1059)	-10.0957 (17.1038)	1.2756 (0.8507)	0.1288 (1.1208)
Interaction term	0.6152 (0.7269)	-0.3604 (0.7576)	3.8797** (1.7058)	-0.3975 (2.6880)	38.4600*** (13.5568)	-2.9913 (19.7874)	-1.6784* (0.9456)	-0.6158 (1.1508)
Ln (property valuation)	0.1206 (0.1157)	0.0600*** (0.0208)	0.1582* (0.0899)	0.0094 (0.0814)	-0.6135 (0.4341)	0.3791 (0.3690)	0.1401*** (0.0421)	0.0467 (0.0288)
Urban/rural scheme	-0.1951*** (0.0361)	0.0068 (0.0165)	-0.1502** (0.0638)	-0.5334*** (0.1013)	1.7742** (0.8683)	-0.1181 (0.2339)	-0.2477*** (0.0930)	-0.0190 (0.0358)
Employment rate	0.0040 (0.0069)	-0.0138* (0.0074)	0.0417** (0.0185)	0.0039 (0.0282)	0.1029 (0.1429)	0.3261 (0.2109)	-0.0012 (0.0106)	-0.0059 (0.0100)
Population density	-0.1203*** (0.0223)	-0.0519*** (0.0142)	-0.2727*** (0.0489)	0.0038 (0.0816)	-0.6191** (0.2549)	-0.2778 (0.2295)	-0.1106*** (0.0342)	-0.0466 (0.0398)
Ln (non-white population rate)	0.0258 (0.0160)	0.0152 (0.0161)	-0.0022 (0.0349)	-0.0071 (0.0519)	0.6131* (0.3203)	0.0056 (0.2252)	-0.0655** (0.0262)	-0.0409* (0.0236)
personal income	-0.0001 (0.0006)	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0001 (0.0015)	-0.0020 (0.0019)	-0.0215* (0.0120)	-0.0110 (0.0107)	0.0025*** (0.0007)	-0.0005 (0.0008)
County -19 population rate	-0.6253 (0.4672)	-0.0905 (0.4652)	-2.5969** (1.1690)	0.2968 (1.6792)	-5.1863 (8.2874)	-2.2670 (8.3944)	-0.4153 (0.6318)	0.3557 (0.5344)
County +65 population rate	0.2350 (0.4176)	-0.2115 (0.3716)	-3.0383*** (1.1617)	-0.3568 (1.4077)	-14.1356** (6.2072)	6.1579 (6.3749)	-0.8617 (0.6124)	-0.0260 (0.4656)
Ln (IG aid per capita)	0.0029 (0.0118)	-0.0073 (0.0117)	-	-	0.2046 (0.2473)	-0.0477 (0.3449)	0.3414*** (0.0309)	0.0749*** (0.0180)
Constant	-3.4465* (1.8665)	0.6881 (0.8295)	-6.4950*** (2.4065)	0.6004 (3.2140)	4.4546 (15.8972)	-37.2116 (22.8952)	4.9517*** (1.3231)	-0.0533 (1.0706)
Model	N=1,209 F=640.23*** R^2=0.9797	N=1,116 F=4.35*** R^2=0.2496	N=1,209 F=311.01*** R^2=0.9284	N=1,116 F=4.70*** R^2=0.5105	N=1,209 F=287.13*** R^2=0.6385	N=1,072 F=2.29*** R^2=0.8215	N=1,209 F=936.68*** R^2=0.9714	N=1,116 F=3.42*** R^2=0.6790

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01; two-tailed tests

Note 1: Although not shown, fixed effects for county and year were included in all models

Note 2: A dummy for outliers in terms of the dependent variables is included in each model; in the annual outstanding debt change model, however, outliers (44 observations) are excluded because they cause a very high level of standard errors

Note 3: All fiscal and income variables are inflation adjusted using CPI

FIGURE 1

Property Tax Levy Per Capita by Group and Year

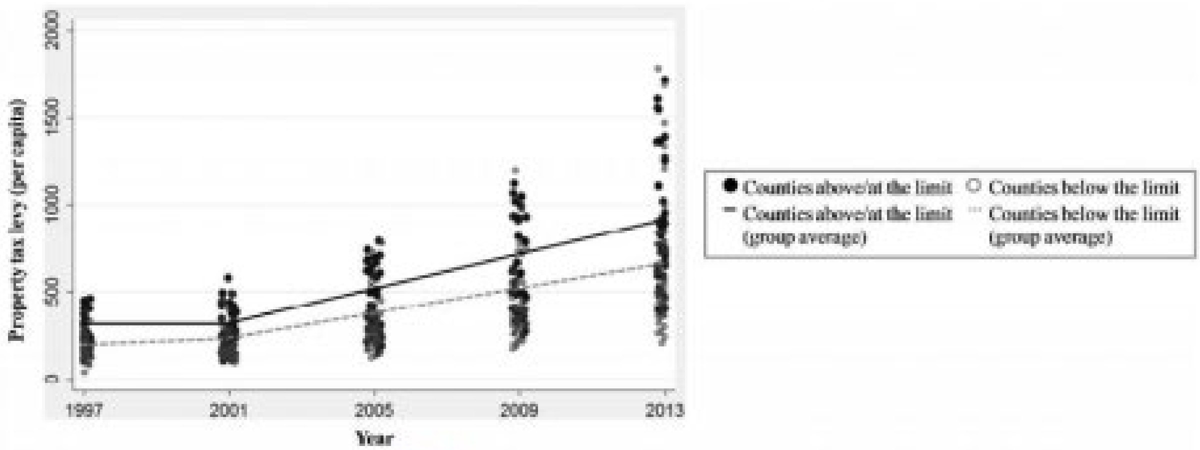
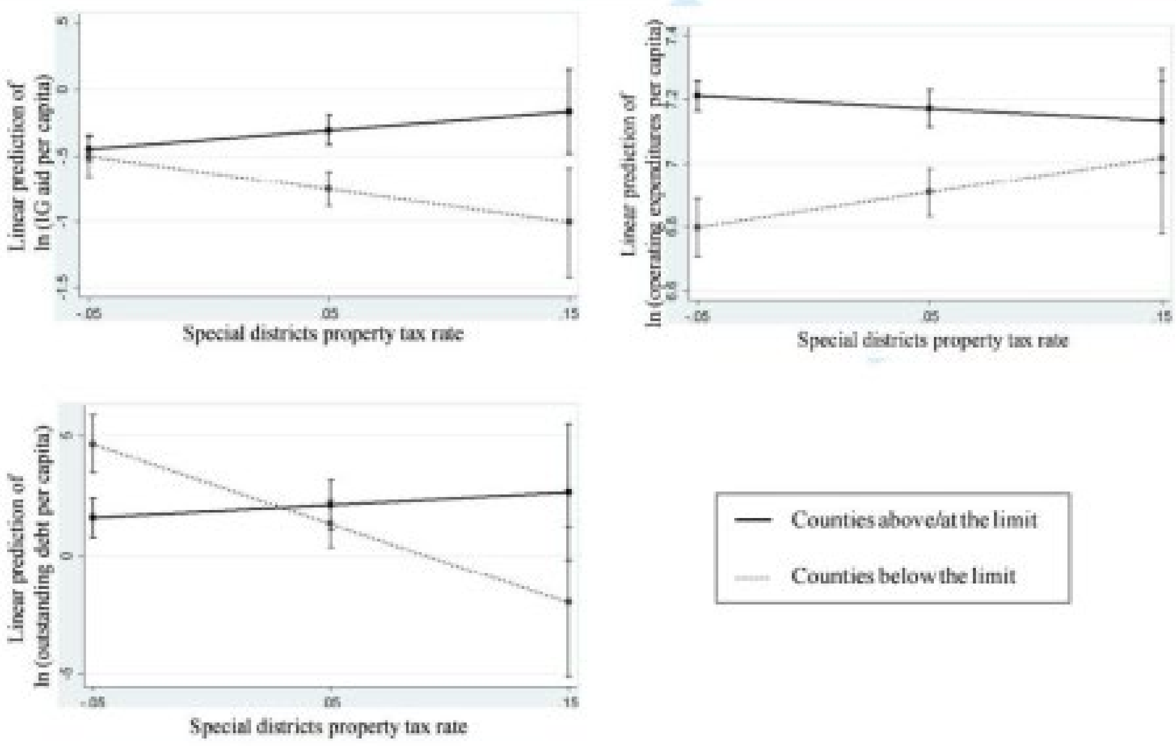


FIGURE 2

Linear Predictions



Examining Nebraska's Municipal Finance Picture:

Trends in Revenues, Expenditures, Debt and Reserves From 2001-2015

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Executive Summary

There are currently 528 municipalities in Nebraska and they range in population from one resident in Monowi to over 446,000 in Omaha. In an era of resource scarcity and greater scrutiny of public finance, this report offers one of first overviews of municipal revenues, expenditures, debt and reserves.

The intent of the report is not to advocate policy or to even study policy decisions, rather it seeks to provide a context for budgeting and policy discussions.

Key Findings:

- There is a great deal of variation in revenues and expenditures based on the location of a municipality: Nebraska's 24 metropolitan municipalities exhibit very different fiscal patterns than other types of municipalities;
- Given the focus on property taxes in Nebraska, it is interesting to note that only 11 percent of own-source revenues come from the property tax;
- 83 percent of municipal own-source revenues come largely from fees and charges (utilities, in particular);
- In general, Nebraska municipalities had healthy reserves in 2015, equal to 47 percent of total revenues

Introduction

The Nebraska State and Local Finance Lab was established in 2015 with the support of the University of Nebraska-Omaha's College of Public Affairs and Community Service, and the Center for Public Affairs Research. The purpose of the Lab is to help stakeholders (citizens, elected officials and government staff) better understand state and local finance in Nebraska. It also serves as a resource for applied and academic research on state and local fiscal policy.

This is the first of the reports produced by the NE State and Local Finance Lab and it focuses on describing fiscal trends in the NE municipalities from FY 2001 to FY 2015.

Approach to Studying NE Municipalities

In this report, Nebraska municipalities fall into four categories for analytical purposes: Big three metro areas, other metro areas, non-metro regional centers and non-metro areas. *The Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions* defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are used to identify metro and non-metro areas at the county level (see Appendix 1). Municipalities are then classified into the groups according to their geographical affiliation to counties.

- As of 2015, 24 municipalities are in the big 3 metro areas;
- 85 municipalities are located in the other metro areas;
- non-metro regional centers involve 77 municipalities and;
- the remaining 342 municipalities are identified in the non-metro areas.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Attributes

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of NE municipalities as of 2014 are presented below; all statistics are the average of municipalities in each category. Municipalities in the big three metro areas are relatively strong in terms of demographic and socioeconomic conditions than municipalities in any other areas.

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

Area		Population	% of aging population	% of white population	% of population with bachelor or higher degree	Property valuation ($1,000)	Unemploy-ment rate (%)	Household median income ($)
All municipalities	2000	2,492.7	19.9	96.4	12.7	90,537.7	3.5	31,953.2
	2009	2,661.9	19.4	95.2	15.6	137,589.8	4.1	40,308.8
	2014	2,724.6	20.4	95.0	16.3	149,571.5	4.6	44,140.3
Big three metro areas	2000	28,588.7	10.7	94.5	22.0	1,247,308.3	2.1	47.453.2
	2009	33,433.3	10.4	94.0	28.3	2,019,440.8	4.5	57,248.5
	2014	34,142.0	12.7	93.8	26.7	2,158,760.5	3.7	60,052.9
Other metro areas	2000	1,482.0	15.5	97.3	11.5	46,194.2	2.8	36,368.3
	2009	1,526.7	15.7	96.6	15.1	70,046.9	4.1	46,931.3
	2014	1,614.6	16.8	96.4	17.0	77,905.6	5.2	50,027.0
Regional centers	2000	3,023.9	17.4	94.7	12.4	91,349.8	4.0	33,109.5
	2009	3,101.2	15.5	93.7	15.5	136,077.7	4.4	42,202.6
	2014	3,167.4	17.0	94.5	16.1	151,515.9	5.1	46,254.0
non-metro areas	2000	727.0	22.1	96.7	12.3	17,245.3	3.6	29,477.0
	2009	697.3	21.9	95.3	14.8	23,325.7	4.0	37,066.7
	2014	707.8	22.6	94.9	15.4	26,668.5	4.5	41,102.4

Source: Census 2000; American Community Survey Data 2009 & 2014;

Fiscal Categories

The availability of fiscal data for Nebraska municipalities comes from the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts. Nebraska communities are required to annually submit uniform budget information to the Auditor of Public Accounts. These data are not audited, other than by the State, and are reported on a cash-basis, rather than modified accrual basis required by the Government Accounting Standards Board.[1]

The following categories (all in per capita terms), considered important in the public budgeting/finance literature illuminating government fiscal structure, are used to paint Nebraska's local finance picture at the municipal level:

- Revenues
  - ✓ Total revenues
  - ✓ Local revenues: property taxes, sales taxes, motor vehicle taxes, in-lieu of tax payments and others
  - ✓ Federal receipts
  - ✓ State receipts
- Expenditures by type
  - ✓ Total expenditures
  - ✓ Operating expenditures
  - ✓ Capital expenditures
  - ✓ Debt service expenditures
  - ✓ Other expenditures
- Expenditures by object
  - ✓ General government expenditures
  - ✓ Public safety expenditures
  - ✓ Public works expenditures
  - ✓ Health and social service expenditures
  - ✓ Culture and recreation expenditures
  - ✓ Community development expenditures
  - ✓ Miscellaneous expenditures
- Debt
  - ✓ Total outstanding debt
  - ✓ Debt principal
  - ✓ Debt interest
- Liquidity
  - ✓ Cash reserves

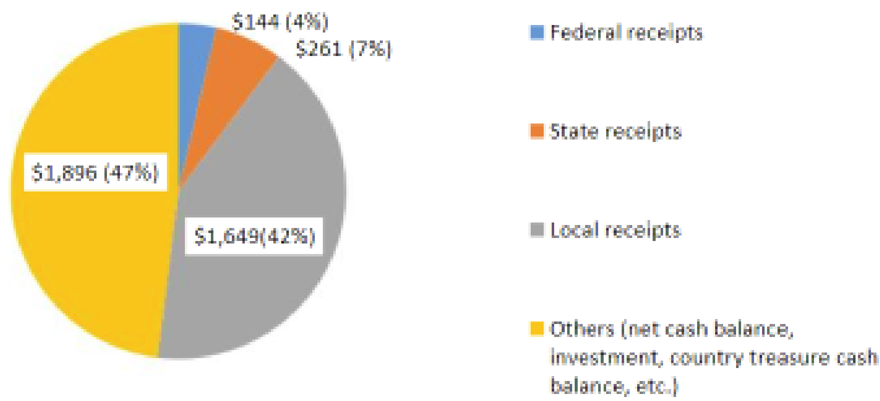
[1] Many of the communities in Nebraska are relatively small and do not produce audited annual financial reports. In order include all NE municipalities, we opted to study these budget reports. In doing so, we realize that there is somewhat greater potential for reporting error.

Overview of Nebraska Municipal Budgets

Municipal Revenues

Average total per capita municipal revenues (as of 2015): $3,950

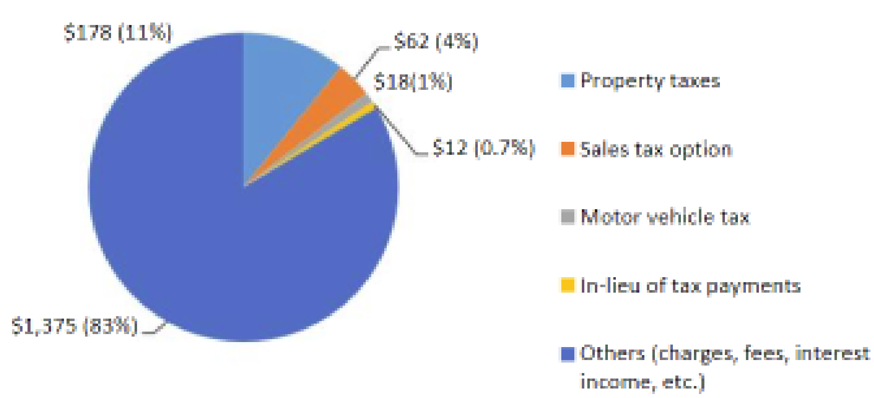
- 7 percent of municipal revenue comes from the State
- 4 percent of local revenue comes from the federal government
- *89 percent of revenue is local source and consists of reserves, taxes, fees and charges*



Municipal Own-Source Revenues

Average total per capita local receipts (as of 2015): $1,649

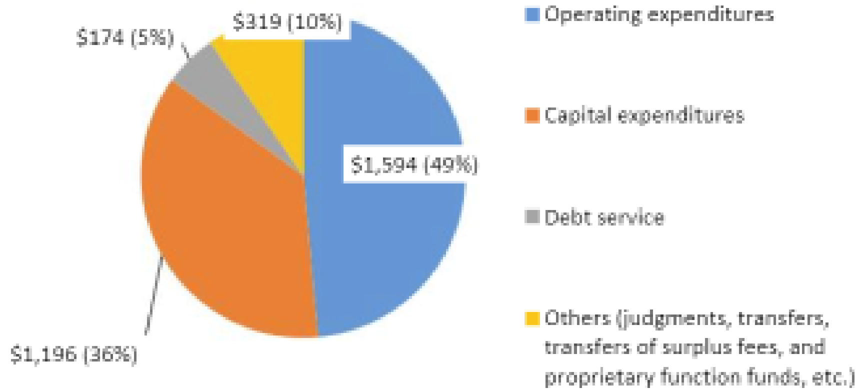
- *11 percent of local revenues are generated from the property tax*
- 5.7 percent of local revenues are from the sales tax, motor vehicle tax and in-lieu of tax payments
- 83 percent of local revenues include charges, fees and interest income



Municipal Expenditures

Average total per capita municipal expenditures by type (as of 2015): $3,284

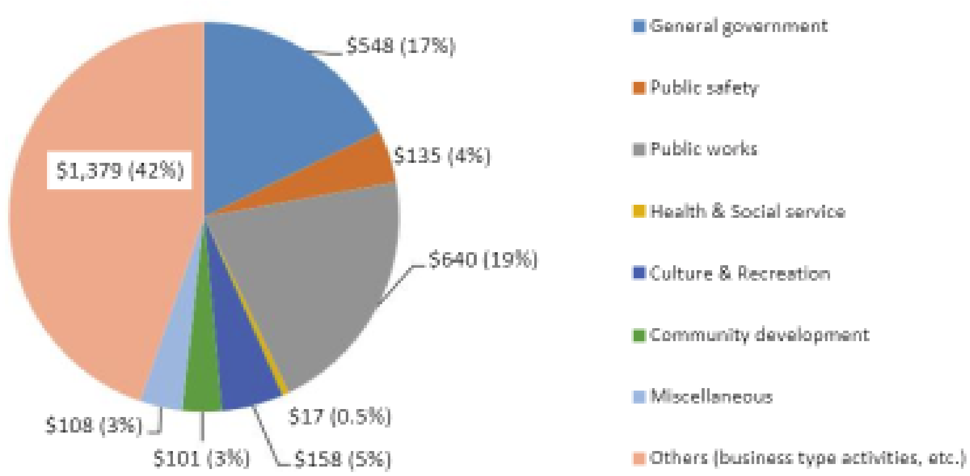
- Operating expenditures account for half (49 percent) of municipal expenditures
- Capital expenditures account for 36 percent of expenditures
- Debt service accounts for 5 percent of municipal expenditures



Expenditures by Object

Average total per capita municipal expenditures by objective (as of 2015): $3,284

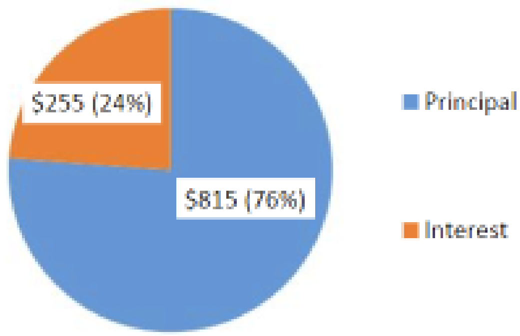
- The operation of business-type activities (nursing, water and sewer, waste, electric, etc.) accounts for 42 percent of operating expenditures
- Public works (roads, for instance) accounts for 19 percent of expenditures
- General government management is the third largest expenditure (17 percent)



Municipal Debt

Average total per capita outstanding debt (as of 2015): $1,070

- 24 percent of debt-related expenditures are in the form of interest



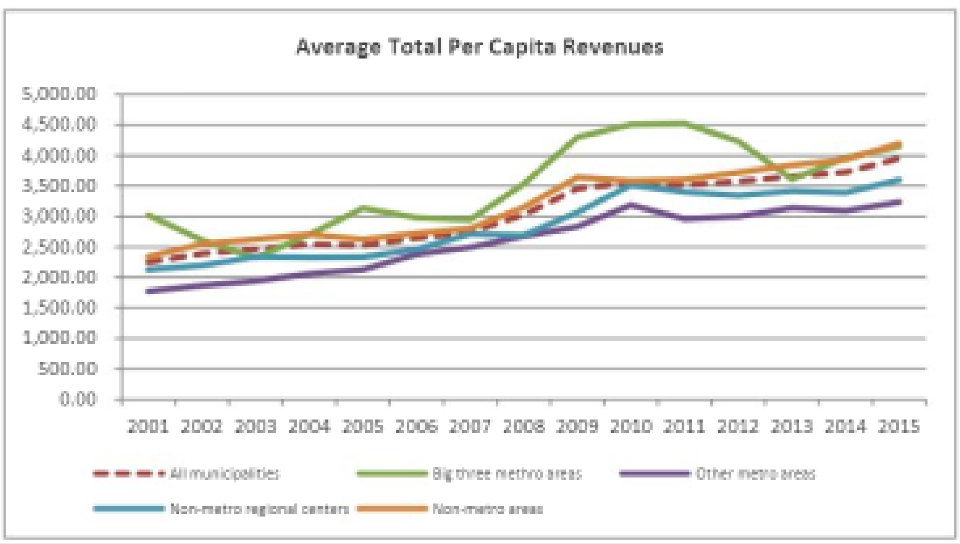
Summary of Trends Over Time

Revenues

Total per capita revenues

Nebraska's municipalities collected an average of $2,246 per person in 2001 and total per capita revenues grew annually to $3,950 in 2015; 75 percent during the period, or 5 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

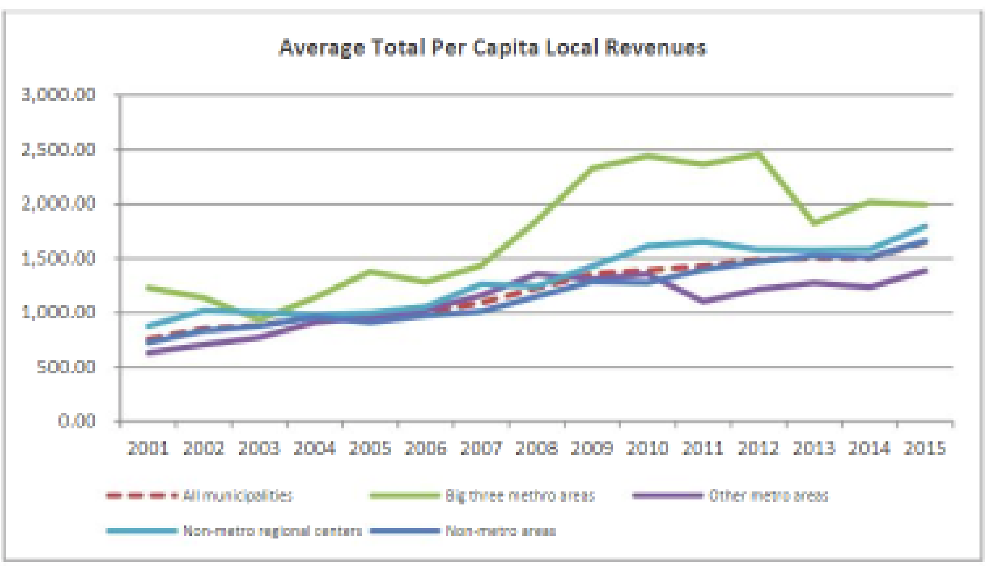
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a rather remarkable pattern in per capita revenues during the period of study. From 2001 to 2011, per capita revenues grew from $3,018 to $4,524 and since dropped to $3,611 in 2013 before increasing to $4,148 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced steady revenue growth during the period: from $1,771 in 2001 to $3,236 in 2015;
- The revenue pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to cities in the other metropolitan areas: $2,128 per capita in 2001 to $3,601 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita revenues tracked the statewide pattern - $2,333 (2001) to $4,193 (2015)



Total per capita local revenues

On average, total per capita local revenues for Nebraska's municipalities was $756 in 2001 while it was $1,649 in 2015; total per capita local revenues grew during the period at a rate of 118 percent, or 8 percent annually. A difference between the areas exists:

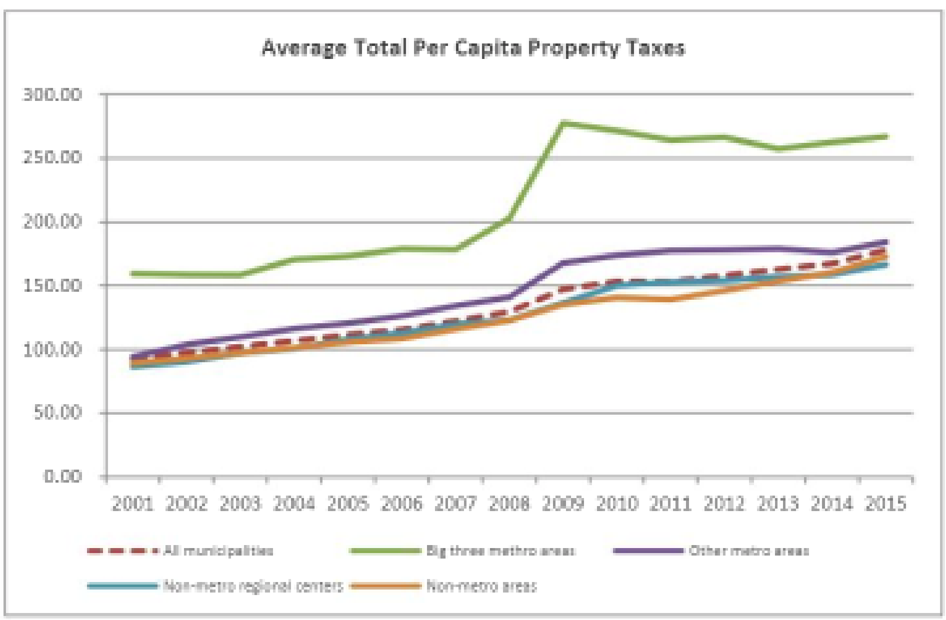
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a conspicuous pattern in per capita local revenues during the period of study. From 2001 to 2012, per capita local revenues surged upward from $1,227 to $2,460 and then was in decline in 2013, with a mean of $1,882. Local revenues elevated again to $1,992 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced a steady growth in per capita local revenues from 2001 ($629) to 2010 ($1,352). Average per capita local revenues sharply declined in 2011 ($1,100), but increased again to $1,387 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan regional centers municipal per capita local revenues tracked the statewide pattern: $875 (2001) to $1,793 (2015);
- The local revenue pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan areas were similar to those for municipalities in nonmetropolitan regional centers: $726 per capita in 2001 to $1,657 in 2015



Total per capita property taxes

Municipalities in Nebraska collected an average of $93 total per capita property taxes in 2001 and it grew annually to $178 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita property taxes during the period was 92 percent, with an annual rate of 7 percent. The fiscal trend varies by metropolitan status:

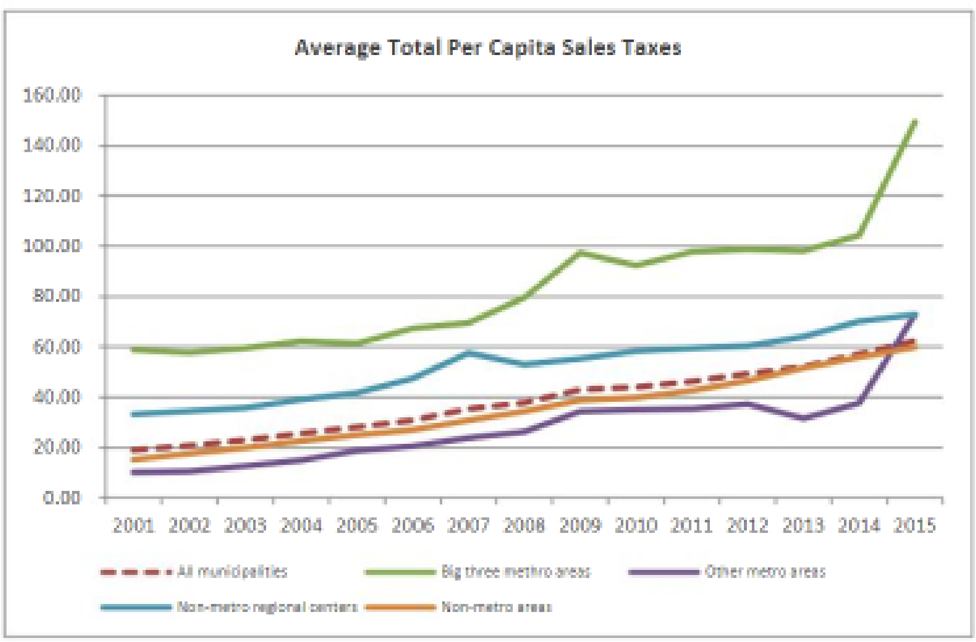
- The marked pattern of total per capita property taxes for municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas is observed. From 2001 to 2009, per capita property taxes grew from $159 to $278. Conversely, average per capita property taxes were on a downward path from 2010 ($272) to 2015($267);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced steady property tax growth during the period: from $94 in 2001 to $184 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent growth in per capita property taxes during the period: from $87 in 2001 to $167 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita property taxes tracked the statewide pattern: from $89 in 2001 to $173 in 2015



Total per capita sales taxes

Nebraska's municipalities collected an average of $19 per person in 2001 and total per capita sales taxes grew annually to $62 in 2015; 228 percent during the period, or 16 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

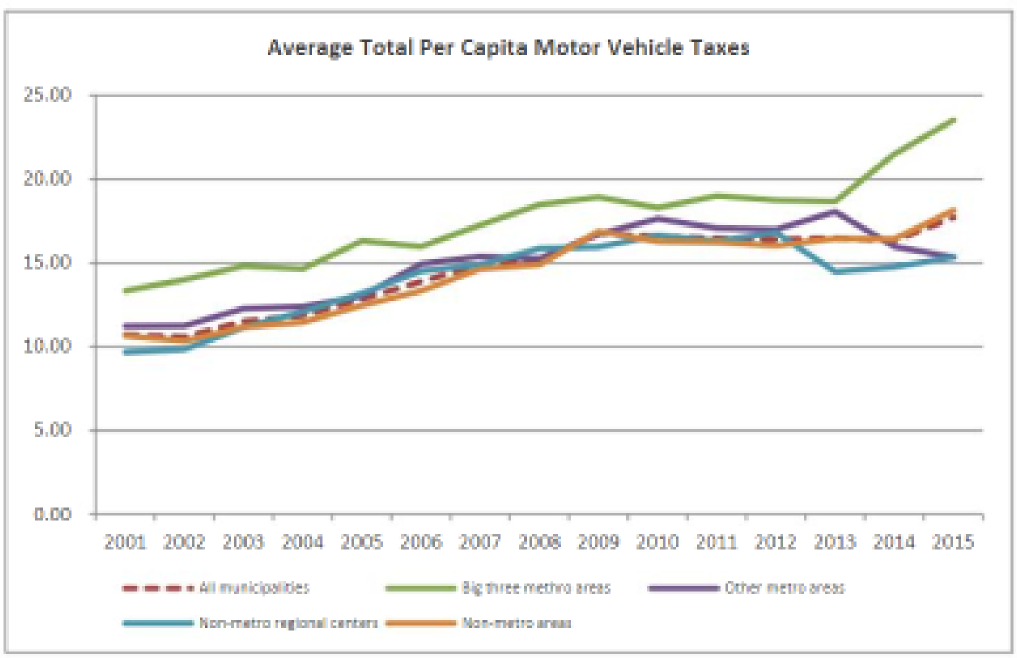
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a somewhat distinct pattern in per capita sales tax collections during the period of study. From 2001 to 2014, per capita sales taxes steadily grew from $59 to $104. A sharp increase in per capita sales taxes occurred in 2015, with a mean of $149;
- The sales tax pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas were similar to municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: A constant growth from 2001 ($10) to 2012 ($37) and it was followed by a sharp increase from to $73 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant sales tax growth during the period: from $33 in 2001 to $73 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita sales taxes tracked the statewide pattern; up from $15 (2001) to $60 (2015)



Total per capita motor vehicle taxes

On average, total per capita motor vehicle tax collections for Nebraska's municipalities was $11 in 2001 and grew modestly to $18 in 2015. There is variation in these collections by area:

- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a relatively conspicuous pattern in per capita motor vehicle taxes. From 2001 to 2012, per capita motor vehicle taxes surged steadily upward from $13 to $19 and then sharply elevated to $24 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced a steady growth in per capita motor vehicle taxes from 2001 ($11) to 2013 ($18). Average per capita motor vehicle tax collections declined in 2014 ($16) and 2015 ($15);
- The motor vehicle tax pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for municipalities in the other metro areas: up from $10 in 2001 to $15 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita motor vehicle taxes tracked the statewide pattern: $11 (2001) to $18 (2015)

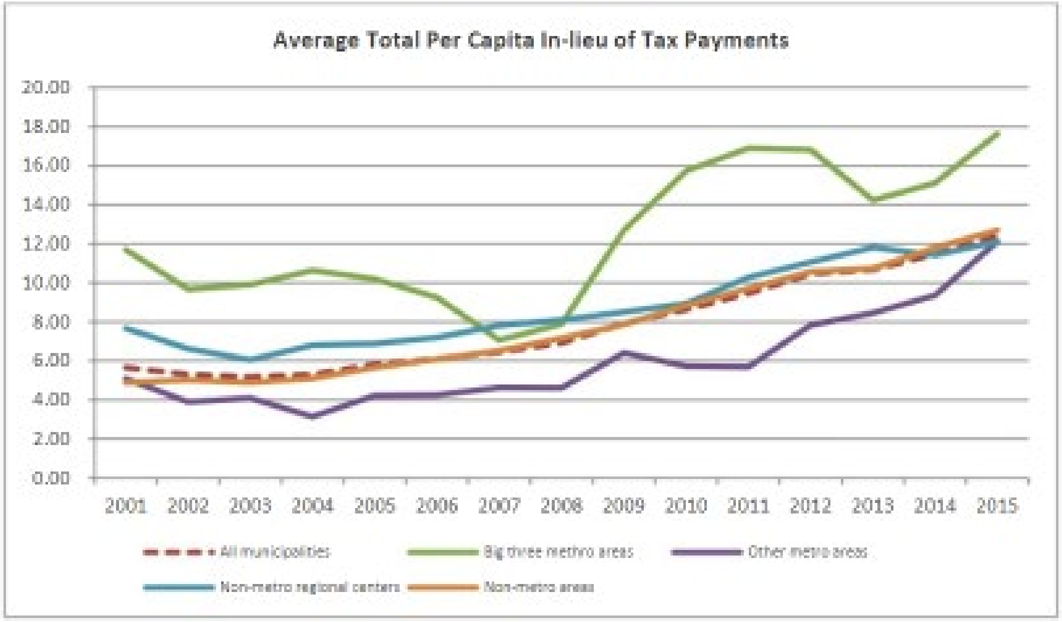


Total per capita in-lieu of tax payments

While not a sizable source of revenues, Nebraska municipalities generally receive some payments in lieu of property taxes. Sources of these payments may be the State (e.g., the acquisition of land for wildlife management purposes), power and/or irrigation districts, hospitals and/or housing development authorities[2]. In 2001, municipalities received an average of $6 total per capita in-lieu of tax payments and average payments grew annually to $12 in 2015. The trend in in-lieu of tax payments varies by metropolitan status:

- The pattern of total per capita in-lieu of tax payments for municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas has been inconsistent during the period. From 2001 to 2007, per capita in-lieu of tax payments dropped from $12 to $7. However, average per capita in-lieu of tax payments was on the upward path from 2008 ($8) to 2015($18);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced steady per capita in-lieu of tax payments from $5 in 2001 to $12 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent growth in per capita in-lieu of tax payments during the period: from $8 in 2001 to $12 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita in-lieu of tax payments tracked the statewide pattern: from $5 in 2001 to $13 in 2015

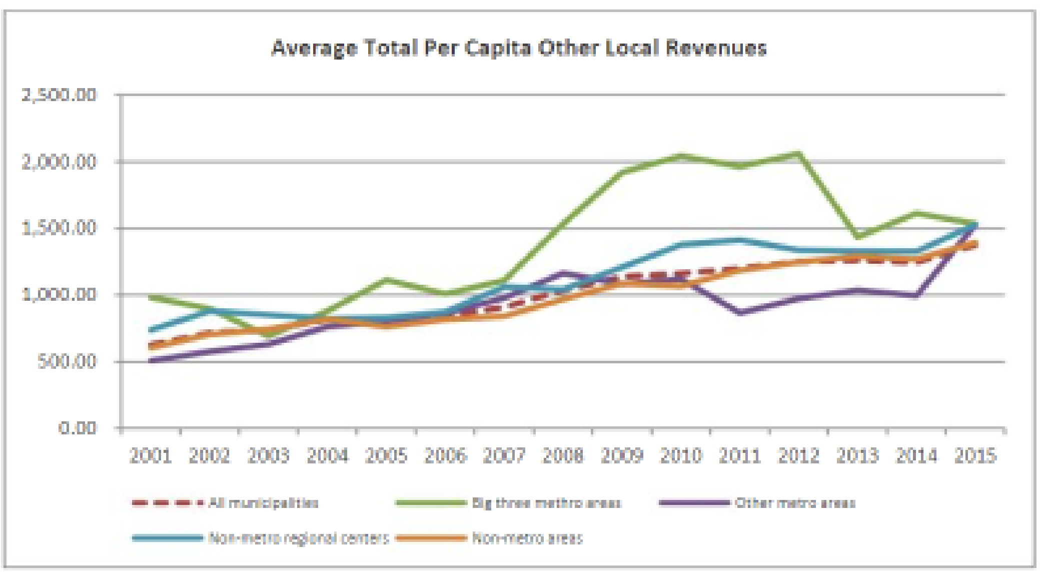
[2] Source: http://www.revenue.nebraska.gov/PAD/legal/regs/41-In_Lieu_of_Tax.html


Average Total Per Capita In-lieu of Tax Payments
20.00
18.00
16.00
14.00
12.00
10.00
8.00
6.00
4.00
2.00
0.00
2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015
All municipalities
Big three methro areas
Other metro areas
Non-metro regional centers
Non-metro areas

Total per capita other local revenues

Nebraska's municipalities collected, on average, $628 per person in 2001 in other local revenues (primarily, user charges and fees) and the amount grew annually to $1,375 in 2015; 119 percent during the period, or 9 percent annually. Similar to other revenue patterns, there are important differences between the groups:

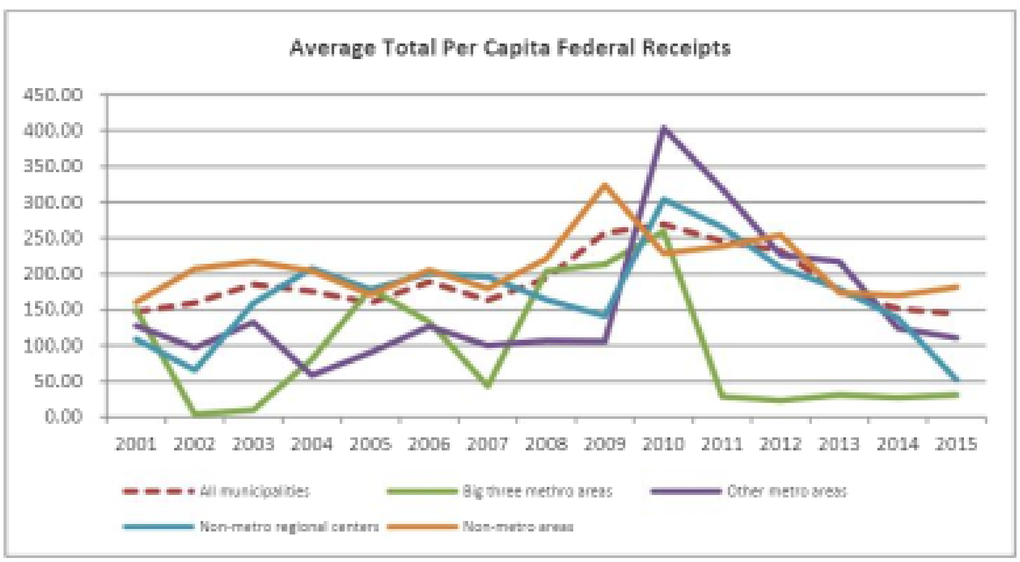
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a somewhat distinct pattern in per capita other local revenues during the period of study. From 2001 to 2012, per capita other local revenues steadily grew from $983 to $2,059 and then decreased to $1,534 in 2015;
- The other metro areas, municipalities experienced revenue patterns different from municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: A constant growth from 2001 ($509) to 2015 ($1,527) with slight shortfalls from 2011 ($865) to 2014 ($996);
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant other local revenue growth during the period: from $739 in 2001 to $1,527 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita other local revenues tracked the statewide pattern: $606 (2001) to $1,393 (2015)



Total per capita federal receipts

Some Nebraska municipalities also receive direct payments from the federal government. On average, total per capita federal receipts for Nebraska's municipalities was $147 in 2001 and $144 in 2015; total per capita federal receipts decreased during the period at a rate of 2 percent, or 0.1 percent annually. A difference between the areas exists:

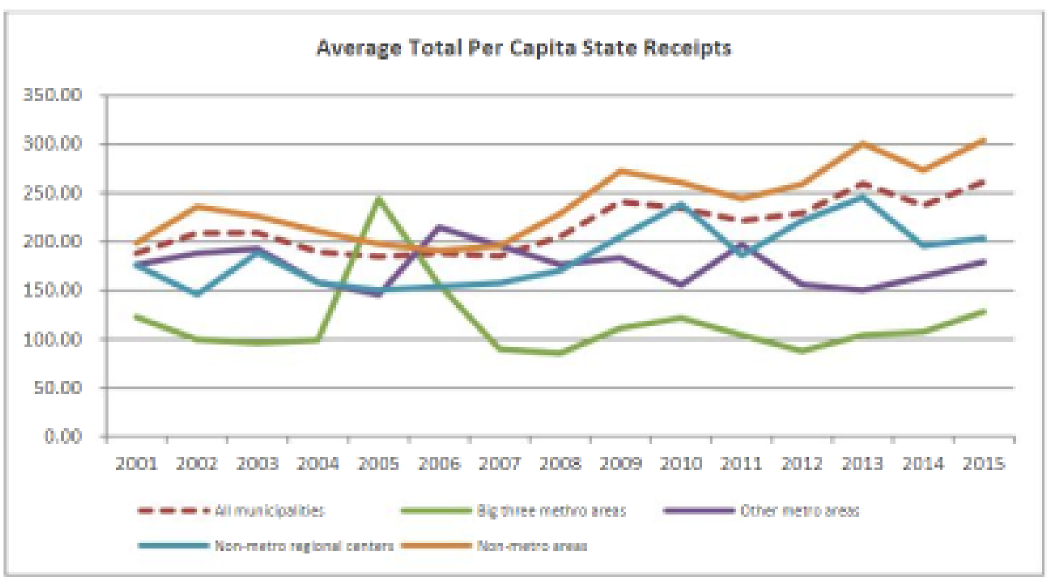
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a fluctuating pattern in per capita federal receipts. From 2001 to 2010, per capita federal receipts surged upward from $147 to $269 and then sharply declined to $144 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced remarkable variations in per capita federal receipts: the trend was relatively steady from 2001 ($127) to 2008 ($107), but fluctuated as shown in 2009 ($106), 2010 ($403) and 2015 ($111);
- The federal receipt pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for municipalities in the other metro areas: $109 in 2001, $304 in 2010 and $52 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita federal receipts tracked the statewide pattern: $160 (2001) to $181 (2015)



Total per capita state receipts

Municipalities in Nebraska can receive several types of state aid including, highway funds, MIRF, motor vehicle and/or equalization payments. An average of $188 in per capita state receipts was received in 2001 and aid grew annually to $261 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita state receipts during the period was 39 percent, with an annual rate of 3 percent. The trend in state receipts varies by metropolitan status:

- The marked pattern of total per capita state receipts for municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas is observed. Average per capita state receipts was relatively constant from 2001 ($123) to 2015 ($129). However, municipalities experienced a higher level of state receipts in 2005 ($244) and 2006 ($156);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced somewhat steady state receipts from $176 in 2001 to $179 in 2015;
- Despite some fluctuations, municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have experienced a consistent growth in state receipts during the period: from $176 in 2001 to $203 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita state receipts tracked the statewide pattern: from $199 in 2001 to $304 in 2015

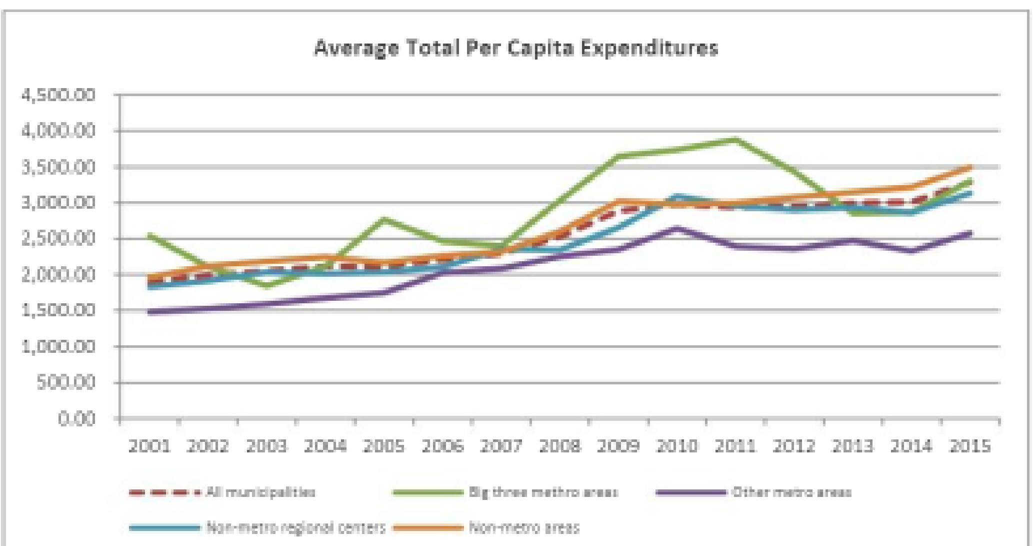


Expenditures by Type

Total per capita expenditures

Nebraska's municipalities spent an average of $1,894 per person in 2001 and total per capita expenditures grew annually to $3,284 in 2015; 73 percent during the period, or 5 percent annually. There is also variation in expenditure patterns by group:

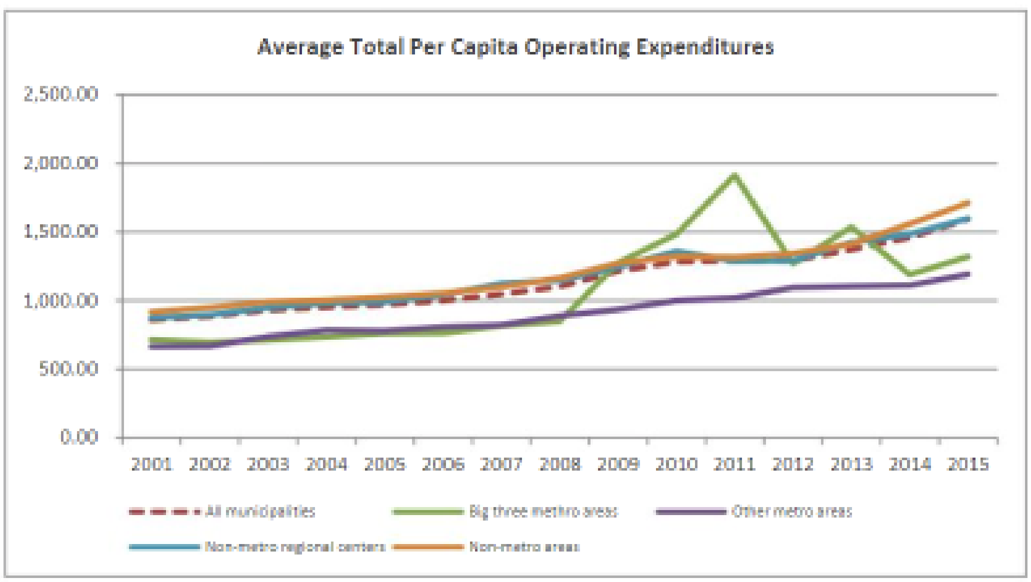
- From 2001 to 2011, per capita expenditures in the big three metropolitan areas steadily grew from $2,540 to $3,880 with some fluctuations ($1,845 in 2003, $2,764 in 2005 and $2,396 in 2007 for instance), and then decreased to $3,301 in 2015;
- The expenditure pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas were different from municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: constant growth from 2001 ($1,481) to 2015 ($2,574) with slight drops from 2011 ($2,393) to 2014 ($2,327);
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced consistent expenditure growth during the period: from $1,833 in 2001 to $3,133 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $1,963 (2001) to $3,493 (2015)



Total per capita operating expenditures

Just focusing on operating expenditures (setting aside capital expenditures and debt), average total per capita expenditures for Nebraska's municipalities was $860 in 2001 and grew to $1,594 in 2015; total per capita operating expenditures increased during the period at a rate of 285 percent, or 6 percent annually. By grouping we find:

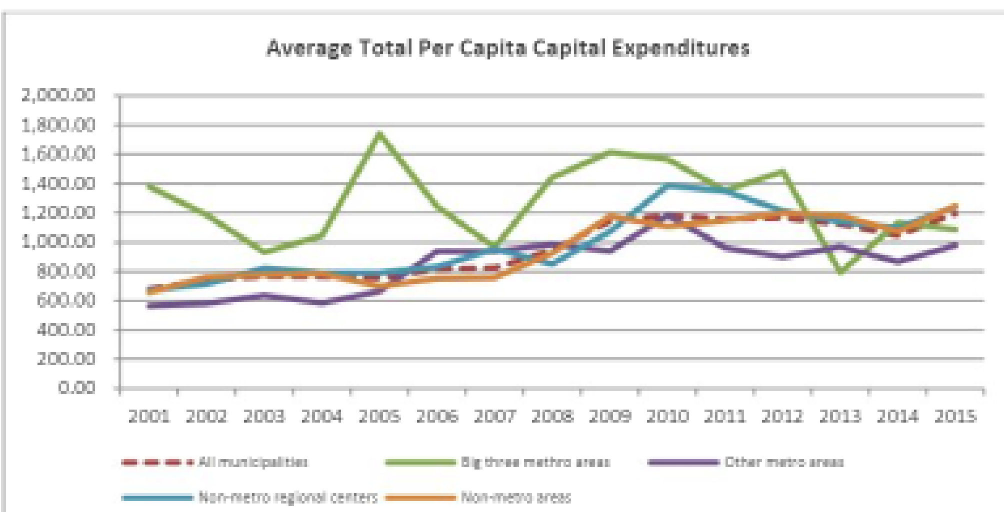
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a fluctuating pattern in per capita operating expenditures. From 2001 to 2011, per capita operating expenditures surged upward from $713 to $1,914 and then declined to $1,319 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced consistent growth in per capita operating expenditures: from $666 in 2001 to $1,191 in 2015;
- The operating expenditure pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for municipalities in the other metro areas: $874 in 2001 and $1,598 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita operating expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $916 (2001) to $1,713 (2015)



Total per capita capital expenditures

Capital expenditures accounted for slightly over one-third (36 percent) of total municipal expenditures in 2015. Over the 15-year period, these expenses, on average, grew from $679 per capita in 2001 to $1,196 in 2015; 76 percent during the period, or 5 percent annually. By group, per capita capital expenditures grew at slightly different rates:

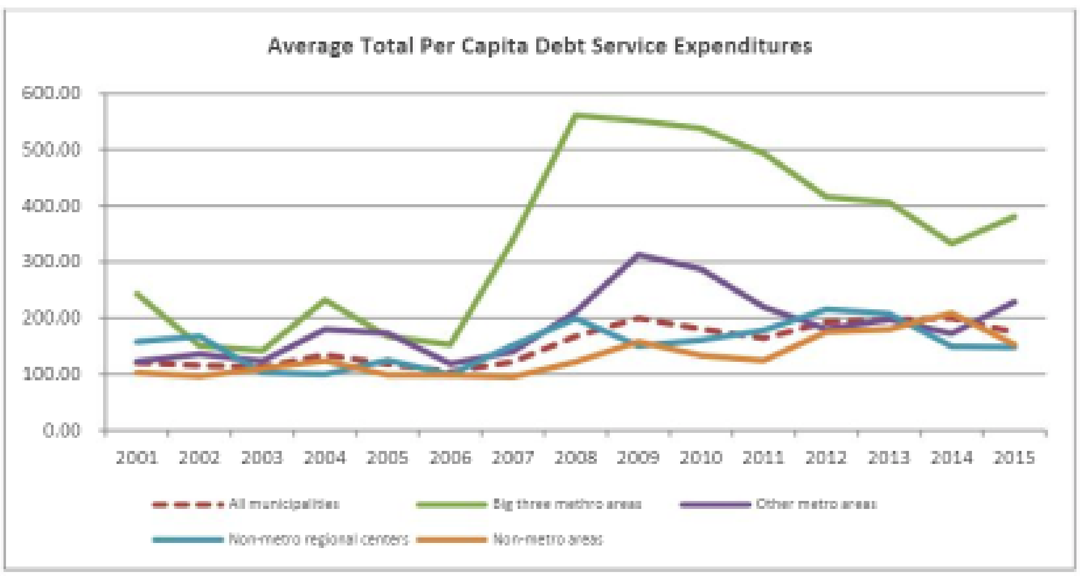
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a conspicuous pattern in per capita capital expenditures during the period of study. Fluctuations appeared from 2001 to 2009: $1,379 in 2001, $930 in 2003, $1,740 in 2005 and then $966 in 2007. Since 2009, per capita capital expenditures declined until 2015, with a mean of $1,088;
- Capital expenditures for municipalities in the other metro areas were different from municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas:constant growth from 2001 ($564) to 2010 ($1,184) and a downturn to $978 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant capital expenditure growth from 2001 ($670) to 2010 ($1,387) and then encountered a decline in capital expenditures to $1,241 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita capital expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $658 (2001) to $1,248 (2015)



Total per capita debt service expenditures

In 2015, debt service accounted for five percent of municipal expenditures. Municipalities in Nebraska averaged $120 in total per capita debt service expenditures in 2001 and those payments grew annually to $174 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita debt service expenditures during the period was 45 percent, with an annual rate of 3 percent. The trend in debt service expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

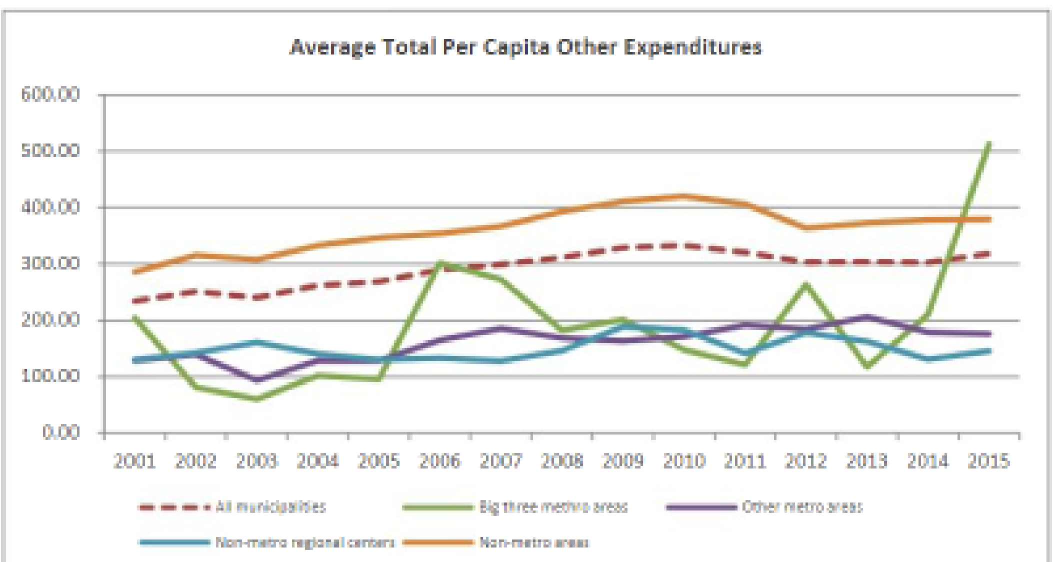
- Average per capita debt service expenditures for municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas was relatively constant from 2001 ($243) to 2006 ($153). However, municipalities had a higher level of debt service expenditures from 2007 ($339) and 2015 ($380);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced a small-scale growth in debt service expenditures during the period of study: $123 in 2001 to $229 in 2015, with a sharp increase in 2009 ($313);
- Despite some fluctuations, municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have experienced a consistency in debt service expenditures during the period: from $158 in 2001 to $148 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita debt service expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $103 in 2001 to $153 in 2015



Total per capita other expenditures

An average of total per capita other expenditures (judgments, transfers, transfers of surplus fees, and proprietary function funds, etc.) for Nebraska's municipalities was $234 in 2001 while it was $319 in 2015; total per capita other expenditures increased during the period at a rate of 36 percent, or 3 percent annually. A difference between the areas exists:

- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a fluctuating pattern in per capita other expenditures: $204 in 2001, $ 96 in 2005 and $302 in 2006 and $118 in 2013. Recently, per capita other expenditures surged upward to $513 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced a consistent growth in per capita other expenditures: from $129 in 2001 to $176 in 2015;
- The other expenditure pattern for municipalities in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for municipalities in the other metro areas: $130 in 2001 and $145 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita other expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $286 (2001) to $379 (2015)



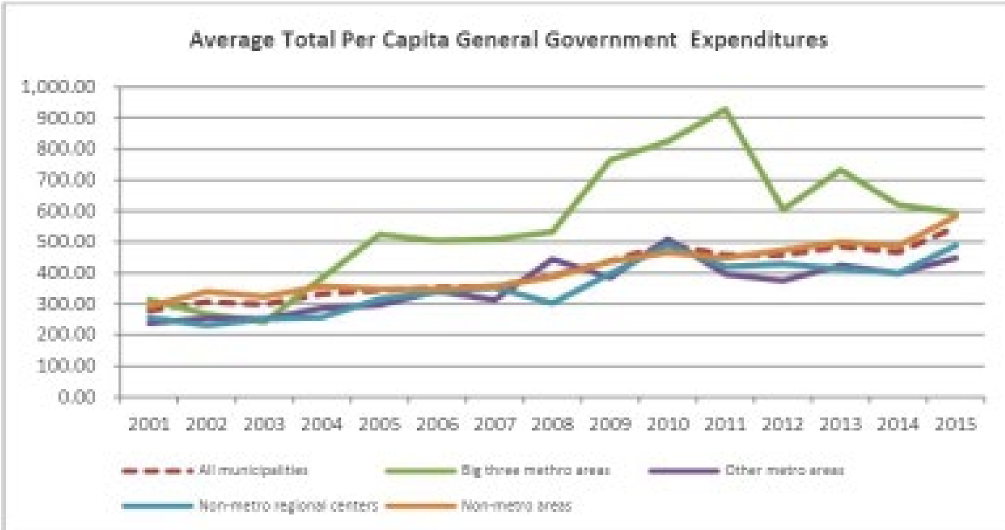
Expenditures by Object

Another way of looking at municipal expenditures is by object – a classification of expenditures by services provided. The available expenditure categories are: general government, public safety, public works, health and social services, culture and recreation and community development.

Total per capita general government expenditures

Municipalities in Nebraska spent an average of $279 per capita on general government in 2001 and these expenditures grew annually to $548 in 2015; the growth rate in total per capita general government expenditures during the period was 96 percent, with an annual rate of 7 percent. The trend in general government expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

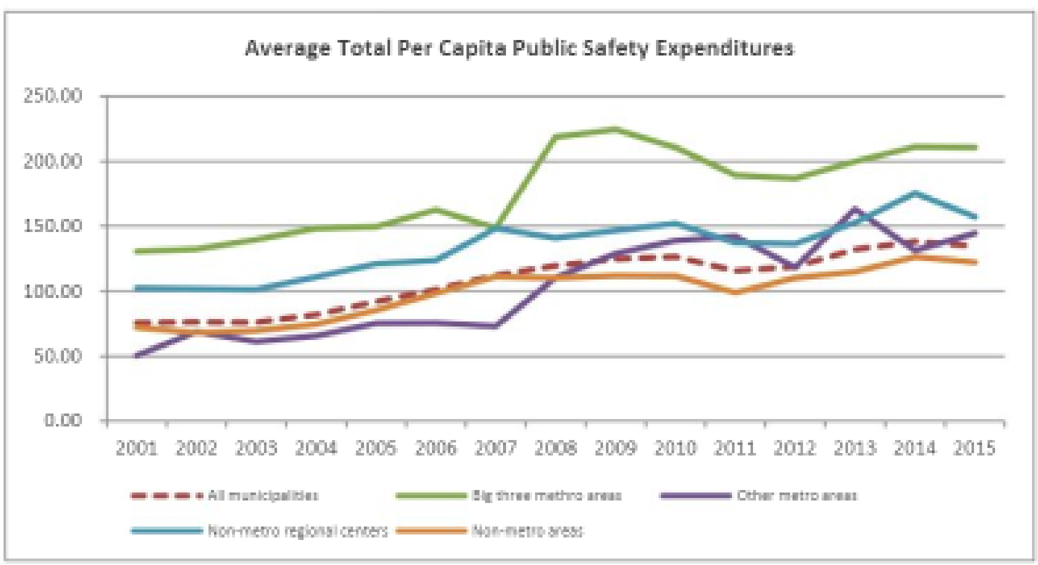
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas experienced average per capita general government expenditures growth from 2001 ($313) to 2011 ($927). However, there has been a decline from 2012 ($605) to 2015 ($594);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced a somewhat steady growth in general government expenditures from $238 in 2001 to $448 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent growth in general government expenditures during the period: from $257 in 2001 to $489 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita general government expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $292 in 2001 to $583 in 2015


Average Total Per Capita General Government Expenditures
1,000.00
900.00
800.00
700.00
600.00
500.00
400.00
300.00
200.00
100.00
0.00
2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015
All municipalities
Big three methro areas
Other metro areas
Non-metro regional centers
Non-metro areas

Total per capita public safety expenditures

Nebraska's municipalities expended an average of $76 per capita in 2001 and total per capita public safety expenditures grew annually to $135 in 2015; 78 percent during the period, or 6 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

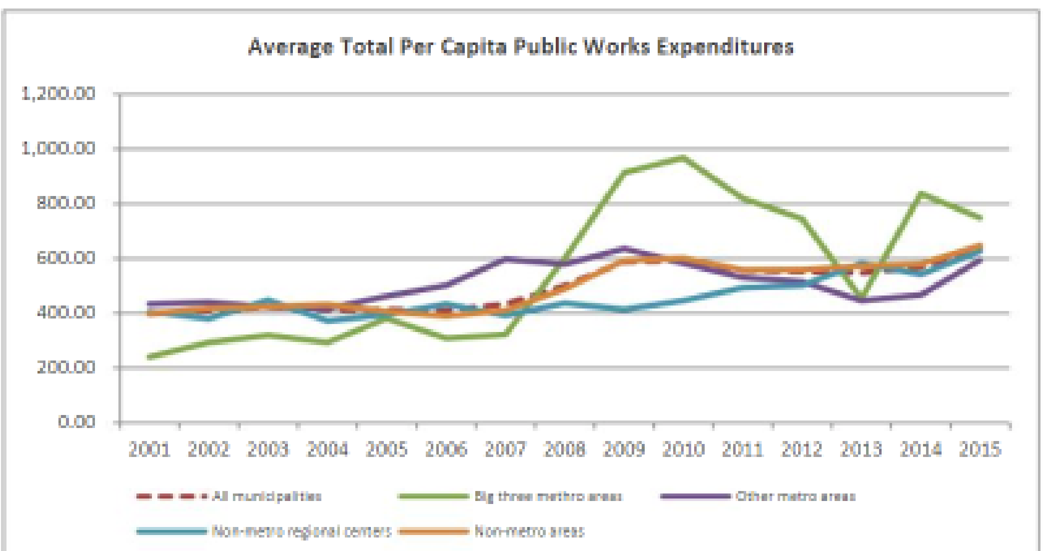
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a general pattern of growth in per capita public safety expenditures during the period of study. A steady growth from 2001 ($131) to 2007 ($149), followed by a sharp increase in 2008 ($219). A relatively constant level of per capita public safety expenditures recorded until 2015, with a mean of $210;
- The public safety expenditure pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas was different from municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: constant growth from 2001 ($50) to 2015 ($145);
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced a constant public safety expenditure growth from 2001 ($102) to 2015 ($157);
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita public safety expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $72 (2001) to $122 (2015)



Total per capita public works expenditures

Average total per capita public works expenditures for Nebraska's municipalities was $398 in 2001 while it was $640 in 2015; total per capita operating expenditures increased during the period at a rate of 61 percent, or 4 percent annually. A difference between the areas exists:

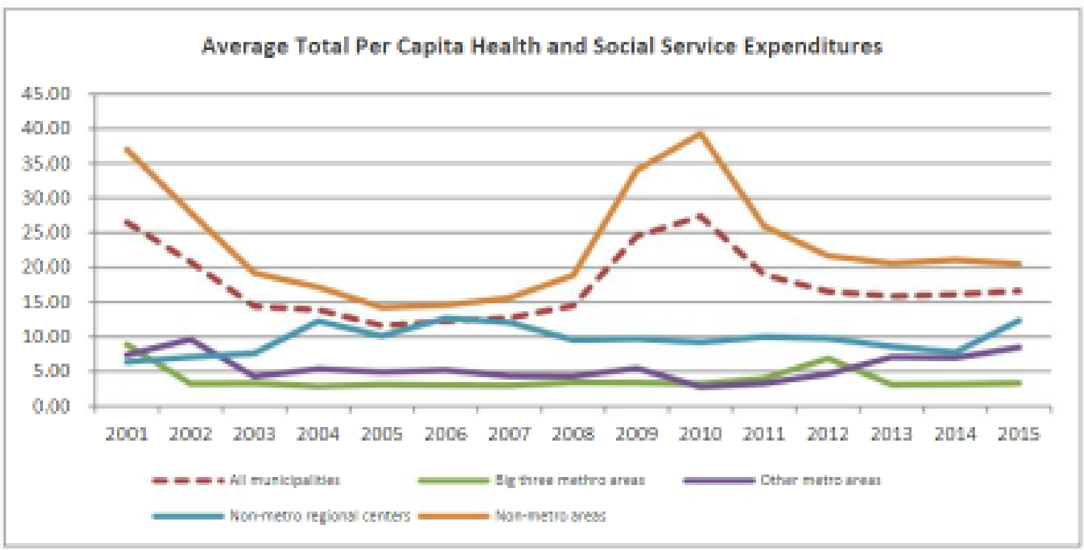
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a relatively constant pattern of per capita public works expenditures from 2001 ($240) to 2007 ($323). However, municipalities had a higher level of per capita public works expenditures from 2008 ($600) to 2015 ($748), with a deep decline in 2013 ($454);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced a somewhat consistent pattern in per capita public works expenditures: from $433 in 2001 to $594 in 2015;
- Municipal public works expenditures in the nonmetropolitan regional centers have consistently grown: $405 in 2001 and $626 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita public works expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $399 (2001) to $647 (2015)



Total per capita health and social service expenditures

Municipalities in Nebraska spent an average of $26 total per capita on health and social service in 2001 and it declined annually to $17 in 2015; the decreasing rate of total per capita state receipts during the period was 37 percent, with an annual rate of 3 percent. The trend in general government expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

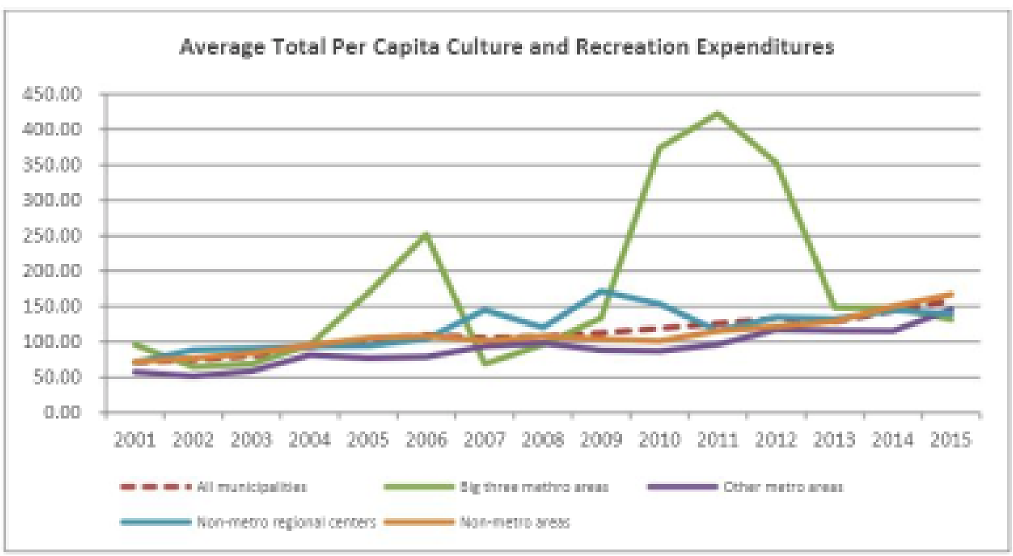
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a relatively low and constant level of per capita health and social service expenditures from 2001 ($9) to 2015 ($3);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced a similar pattern in per capita health and social service expenditures with municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: from $7 in 2001 to $8 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent pattern in per capita health and social service expenditures during the period: from $6 in 2001 to $12 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita health and social service expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $37 in 2001 to $20 in 2015, with a sharp increase in 2010 ($39)



Total per capita culture and recreation expenditures

Nebraska's municipalities expended an average of $71 per capita in 2001 and total per capita culture and recreation expenditures grew annually to $158 in 2015; 124 percent during the period, or 9 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

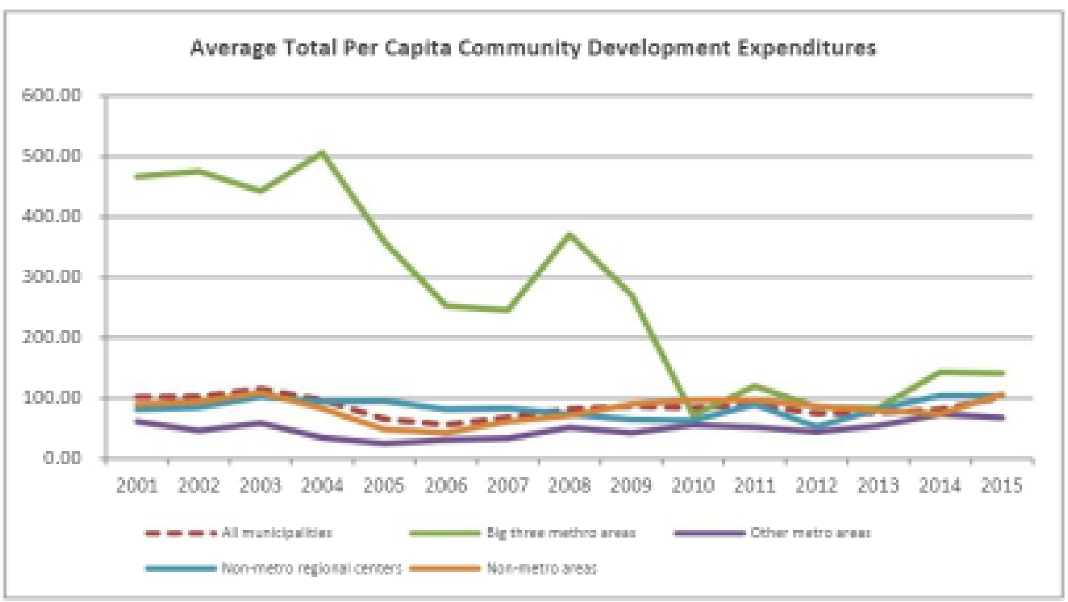
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced significant variation in per capita culture and recreation expenditures during the period of study. A steady growth from 2001 ($96) to 2006 ($251), followed by a sharp decrease in 2007 ($69). The same pattern is observed from 2008 ($96) to 2015 ($131);
- The culture and recreation expenditure pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas were different from municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: A constant growth from 2001 ($57) to 2015 ($146);
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced a constant culture and recreation expenditure growth from 2001 ($71) to 2015 ($140);
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita culture and recreation expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $72 (2001) to $167 (2015)



Total per capita community development expenditures

On average, total per capita community development expenditures for Nebraska's municipalities was $102 in 2001 and it was similar in 2015, with a mean of $101. Difference patterns are identified according to the metro areas:

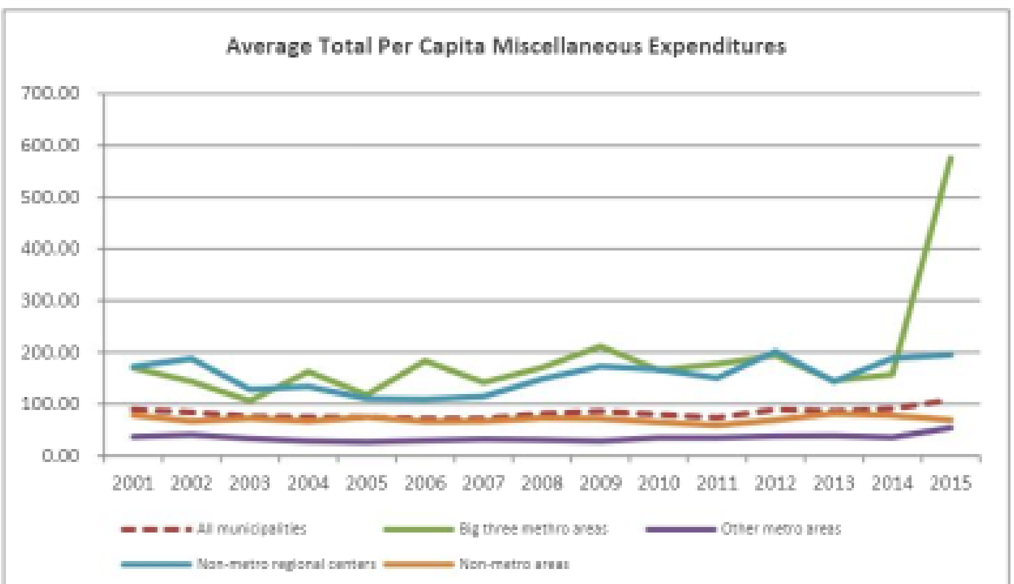
- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a conspicuous pattern of per capita community development expenditures: from $466 to $71 in 2010. Municipalities had a relatively constant level of community development expenditures from 2011 ($120) to 2015 ($141);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas experienced a somewhat consistent pattern in per capita community development expenditures: from $62 in 2001 to $68 in 2015;
- Municipal community development expenditures in the nonmetropolitan regional centers have been stable: from $82 in 2001 to $104 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita community development expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $90 (2001) to $106 (2015)



Total per capita miscellaneous expenditures

Municipalities in Nebraska spent an average of $90 total per capita miscellaneous expenditures in 2001 and it was somewhat stable until 2015 ($108). The trend in total per capita miscellaneous expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a relatively constant level of per capita miscellaneous expenditures from 2001 ($170) to 2014 ($156). A sharp growth recently occurred in 2015 ($575);
- Municipalities in the other metro areas have experienced a consistent pattern in per capita miscellaneous expenditures: from $37 in 2001 to $54 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent pattern in per capita miscellaneous expenditures during the period of study: from $172 in 2001 to $195 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita miscellaneous expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $78 in 2001 to $69 in 2015



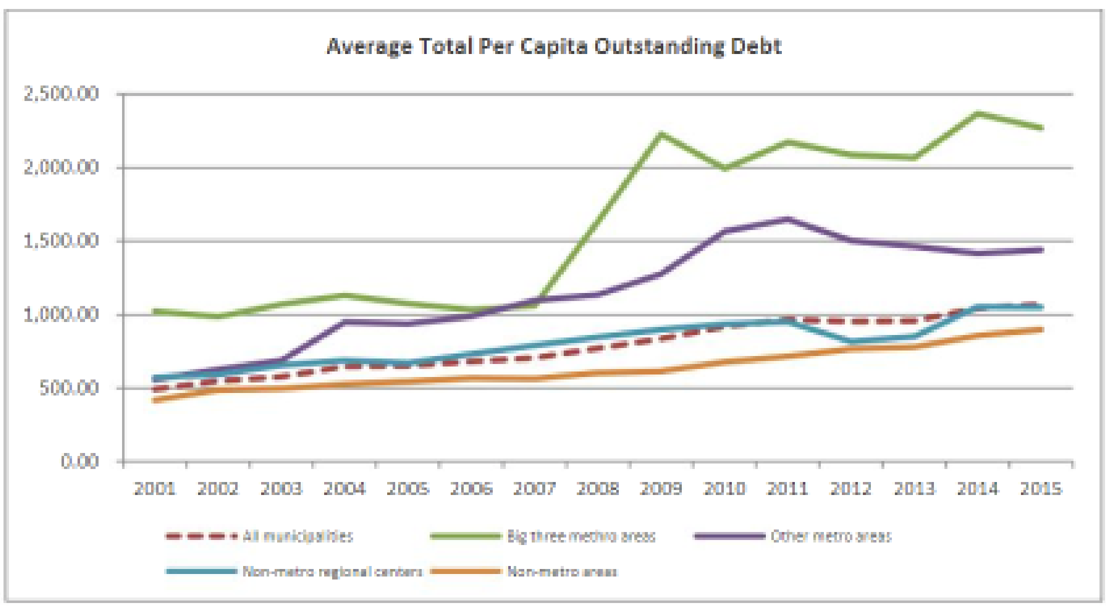
Debt

Total per capita outstanding debt

Outstanding debt consists of both the capital and the interest on the associated debt.

In 2001, Nebraska's municipalities had an average of $491 per capita in total per capita outstanding debt and it grew annually to $1,070 in 2015; 118 percent during the period, or 8 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a consistent level of per capita outstanding debt from 2001 ($1,021) to 2007 ($1,059), followed by a sharp increase in 2008 ($1,632). A constant pattern is observed again from 2009 ($2,228) to 2015 ($2,269);
- The outstanding debt pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas were similar with municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: from $557 in 2001 to $1,438 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced a constant per capita outstanding debt growth from 2001 ($572) to 2015 ($1,049);
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita outstanding debt tracked the statewide pattern: $418 (2001) to $899 (2015)



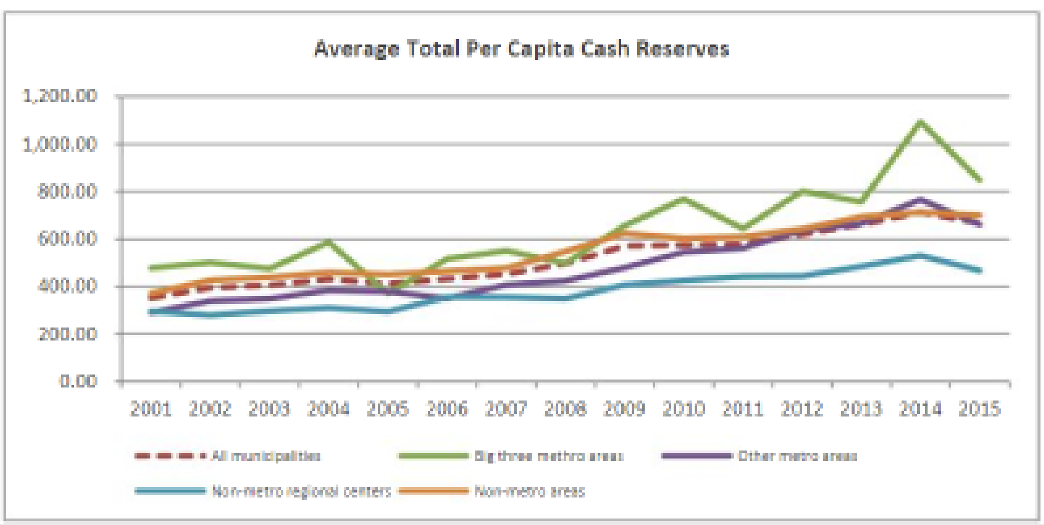
Liquidity

Liquidity refers to reserves municipalities have available for "rainy days", meaning funds to help with revenue shortfalls, unexpected expenditures and/or to fill gaps in revenue flows so communities do not need to short-term borrow.

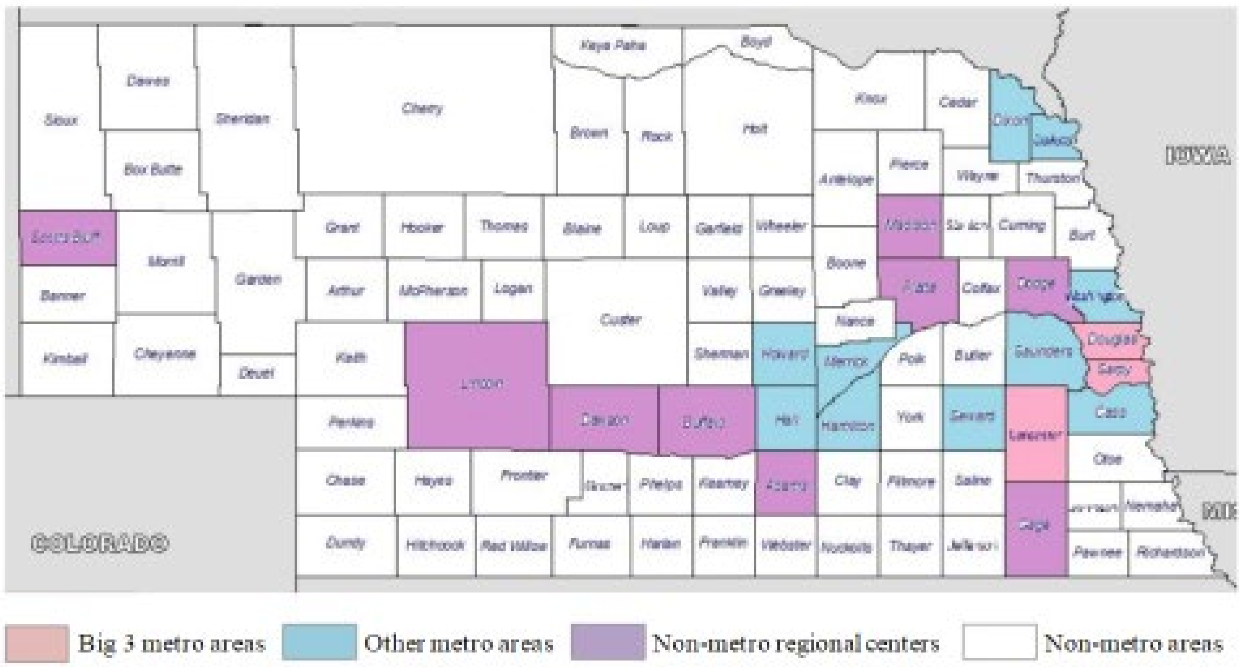
Total per capita cash reserves

Nebraska's municipalities possessed an average of $352 per capita in 2001 and total per capita cash reserves grew annually to $667 in 2015; 90 percent during the period, or 6 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

- Municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a consistent growth in per capita cash reserves from 2001 ($478) to 2014 ($1,093). A sudden decline was observed in 2015 ($847);
- The cash reserve pattern for municipalities in the other metro areas were similar with municipalities in the big three metropolitan areas: from $290 in 2001 to $661 in 2015;
- Municipalities in the non-metro regional centers experienced a constant per capita cash reserves growth from 2001 ($295) to 2015 ($467);
- Nonmetropolitan municipal per capita cash reserves tracked the statewide pattern: $370 (2001) to $700 (2015)



Appendix 1. Nebraska Counties Classified by Metropolitan Status



Sources: Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Examining Nebraska's County Finance Picture:

Trends in Revenues, Expenditures, Debt and Reserves from 2001-2015

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Executive Summary

There are currently 93 counties in Nebraska and they range in population from 426 residents in McPherson to over 531,000 in Douglas. In an era of resource scarcity and greater scrutiny of public finance, this report offers one of first overviews of county revenues, expenditures, debt and reserves.

The intent of the report is not to advocate policy or to even study policy decisions, rather it seeks to provide a context for budgeting and policy discussions.

Key Findings:

- There is a great deal of variation in revenues and expenditures based on the location of a county: Nebraska's counties exhibit very different fiscal patterns depending on their metropolitan status;
- Given the focus on property taxes in Nebraska, 42 percent of county own-source revenues come from the property tax;
- 55 percent of county own-source revenues come largely from fees and charges (utilities, in particular);
- Over 60 percent of total spending are operating expenditures. This is followed by capital spending, which accounts for 20 percent of total county expenditures;
- Counties' reliance on debt has increased particularly after the Great Recession. However, the pattern varies across metro areas;
- Seemingly, Nebraska counties had a lower level of cash reserves in 2015, equal to 9 percent of total revenues

Introduction

The Nebraska State and Local Finance Lab was established in 2015 with the support of the University of Nebraska-Omaha's College of Public Affairs and Community Service, and the Center for Public Affairs Research. The purpose of the Lab is to help stakeholders (citizens, elected officials and government staff) better understand state and local finance in Nebraska. It also serves as a resource for applied and academic research on state and local fiscal policy.

This is the second report produced by the NE State and Local Finance Lab and it focuses on describing fiscal trends in the NE counties from FY 2001 to FY 2015. For interested stakeholders (municipalities, counties and single-purpose districts), we can also customize reports for individual communities.

Approach to Studying NE Counties

In this report, we group Nebraska counties into four categories for analytical purposes: Big three metro areas, other metro areas, non-metro regional centers and non-metro areas. *The Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions* defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are used to identify metro and non-metro areas at the county level (see Appendix 1).

- As of 2015, 3 counties are categorized as the big 3 metro areas;
- 10 counties are classified as the other metro areas;
- non-metro regional centers involve 9 counties and;
- the remaining 71 counties are designated as the non-metro areas.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Attributes

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of NE counties as of 2014 are presented below; all statistics are the average of counties in each category. The table offers several valuable takeaways:

- The aged population in non-metro areas is nearly double that in the big 3 metro areas (in 2014, 21 percent compared to 10.6 percent);

- Statewide and in each of the four county classifications, unemployment rates have grown between 2000 and 2014;
- Statewide property value grew 109 percent from 2000 to 2014, by county classification, growth rates were:
  - 790 percent in big 3 metro areas;
  - 120 percent in the other metro areas;
  - 104 percent in the regional centers and;
  - 151 percent in the rural area.

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

Area		Population	% of aging population	% of white population	% of population with bachelor or higher degree	Property valuation ($1,000)	Unemploy-ment rate (%)	Household median income ($)
All counties	2000	18,400.7	18.6	95.6	16.6	950,027.9	1.9	33,006.7
	2009	19,055.1	19.0	95.0	18.8	1,500,938.5	3.4	41,873.0
	2014	19,952.9	19.7	95.0	20.3	1,981,491.7	3.9	48,138.0
Big three metro areas	2000	278,823.7	9.3	86.7	31.1	12,916,850.4	2.5	46,173.0
	2009	306,237.0	9.7	86.5	34.9	21,486,667.2	5.2	55,171.0
	2014	330,246.0	10.6	85.3	36.5	23,117,446.9	5.9	58,493.7
Other metro areas	2000	18,374.0	14.8	95.0	17.1	993,123.3	2.2	39,764.7
	2009	18,753.0	15.0	94.3	19.4	1,502,340.7	4.3	50,745.2
	2014	19,361.3	16.2	93.8	21.1	2,185,694.5	4.6	55,784.6
Regional centers	2000	28,967.3	15.9	93.3	18.6	1,516,447.3	2.1	35,106.7
	2009	33,317.9	15.5	92.0	19.8	2,278,656.2	4.5	43,524.3
	2014	33,567.3	16.0	93.5	21.4	3,091,505.1	5.0	49,747.3
non-metro areas	2000	6,061.2	19.9	96.4	15.7	366,518.1	1.8	31,232.3
	2009	5,155.2	20.4	95.8	17.9	557,689.7	3.0	39,852.2
	2014	5,199.4	21.0	95.8	19.3	918,956.3	3.5	46,419.4

Source: Census 2000; American Community Survey Data 2009 & 2014;

Fiscal Categories

The fiscal data for Nebraska counties comes from the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts. Nebraska communities are required to annually submit uniform budget information to the Auditor of Public Accounts. These data are not audited, other than by the State, and are reported on a cash-basis, rather than modified accrual basis required by the Government Accounting Standards Board.[1]

The following categories (all in per capita terms), considered important in the public budgeting/finance literature illuminating government fiscal structure, are used to paint Nebraska's local finance picture at the county level:

- Revenues
  - ✓ Total revenues
  - ✓ Local revenues: property taxes, sales taxes, motor vehicle taxes, in-lieu of tax payments and others
  - ✓ Federal receipts
  - ✓ State receipts
- Expenditures by type
  - ✓ Total expenditures
  - ✓ Operating expenditures
  - ✓ Capital expenditures
  - ✓ Debt service expenditures
  - ✓ Other expenditures
- Expenditures by object
  - ✓ General government expenditures
  - ✓ Public safety expenditures
  - ✓ Public works expenditures
  - ✓ Health and social service expenditures
  - ✓ Culture and recreation expenditures
  - ✓ Community development expenditures
  - ✓ Miscellaneous expenditures
- Debt
  - ✓ Total outstanding debt
  - ✓ Debt principal
  - ✓ Debt interest
- Liquidity
  - ✓ Cash reserves

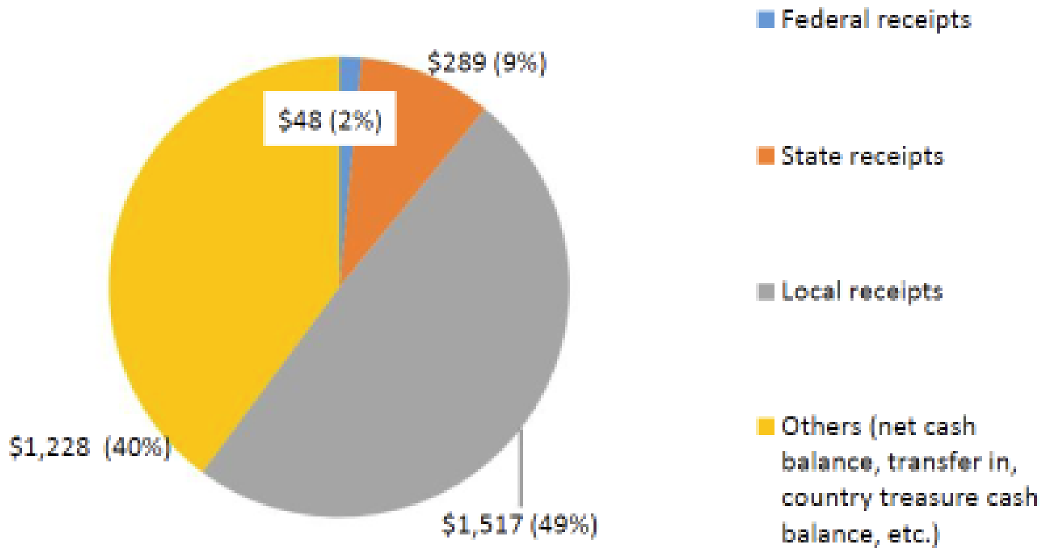
[1] Many of the communities in Nebraska are relatively small and do not produce audited annual financial reports. In order include all NE counties, we opted to study these budget reports. In doing so, we realize that there is somewhat greater potential for reporting error.

Overview of Nebraska County Budgets

County Revenues

Average total per capita county revenues (as of 2015): $3,082

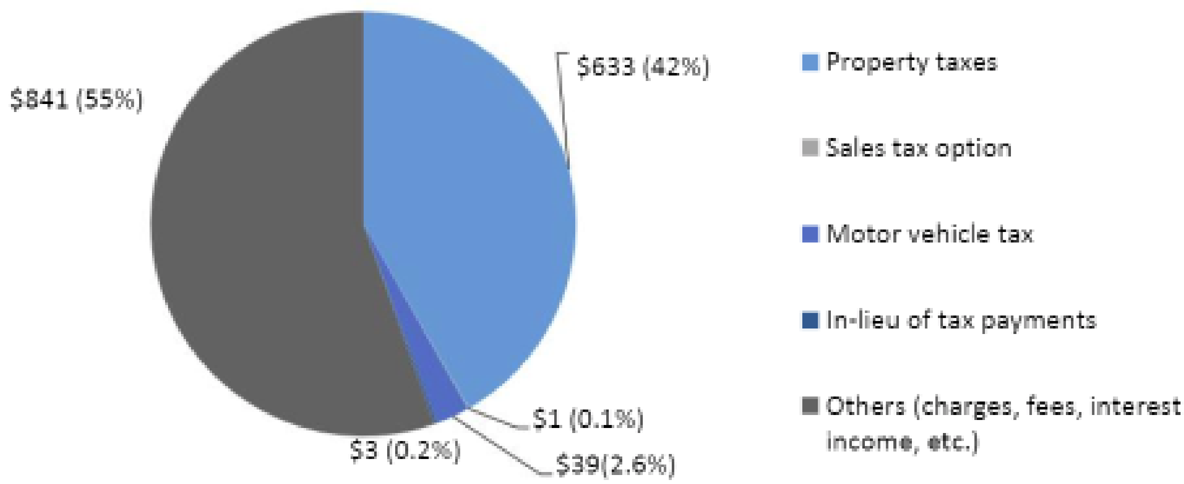
- 9 percent of county revenue comes from the State
- 2 percent of local revenue comes from the federal government
- *89 percent of revenue is local source and consists of reserves, taxes, fees and charges*



County Own-Source Revenues

Average total per capita local receipts (as of 2015): $1,517

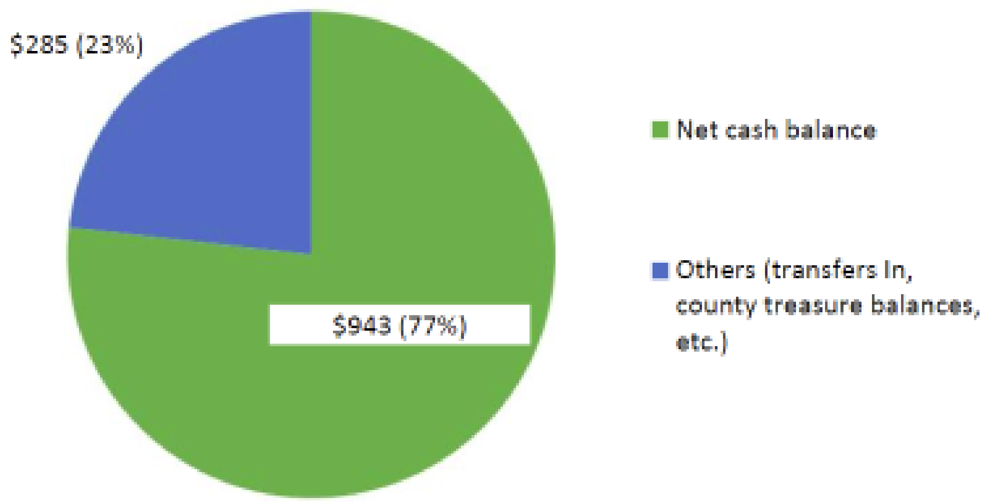
- *42 percent of local revenues are generated from the property tax*
- 3 percent of local revenues are from the sales tax, motor vehicle tax and in-lieu of tax payments
- 55 percent of local revenues include charges, fees and interest income



County Other Revenues

Average total per capita other revenues (as of 2015): $1,228

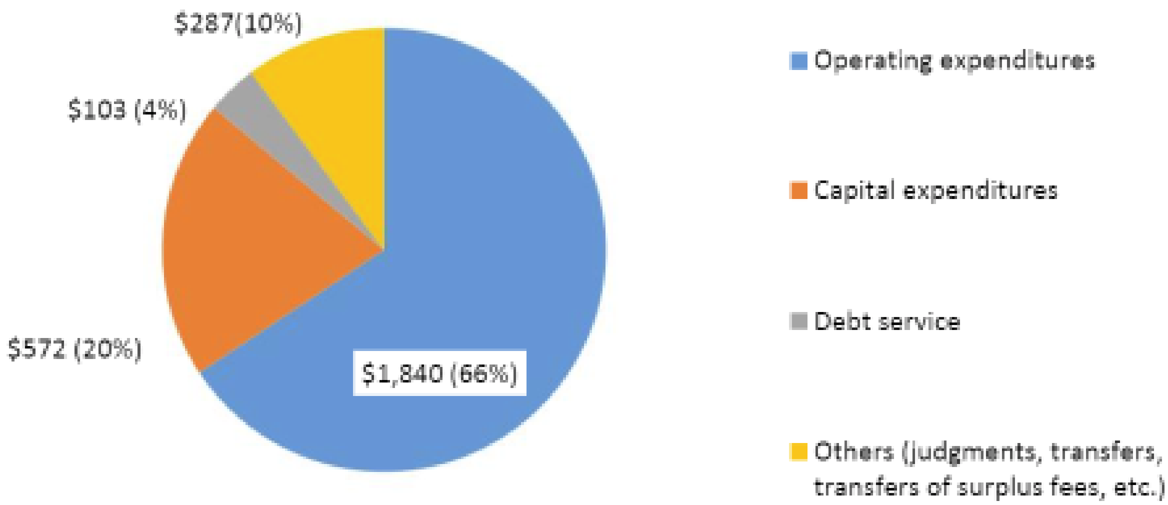
- 77 percent of other revenues are balance forward/cash reserves from the preceding year
- 23 percent of other revenues include transfers in and county treasure balance



County Expenditures

Average total per capita county expenditures by type (as of 2015): $2,802

- Operating expenditures account for 66 percent of county expenditures
- Capital expenditures account for 20 percent of expenditures
- Debt service accounts for 4 percent of county expenditures



Expenditures by Object

Average total per capita county expenditures by objective (as of 2015): $2,802

- Public works (roads, for instance) accounts for 28 percent of expenditures
- The operation of business-type activities (nursing, hospital, water and sewer, waste, electric, etc.) accounts for 21 percent of operating expenditures
- General government management is the third largest expenditure (18 percent)
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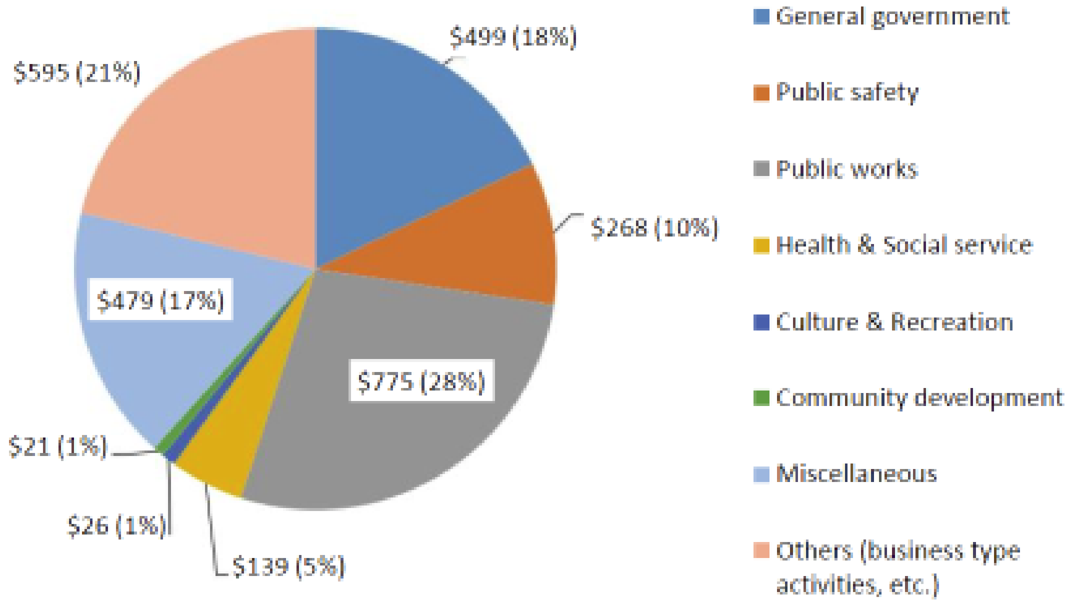
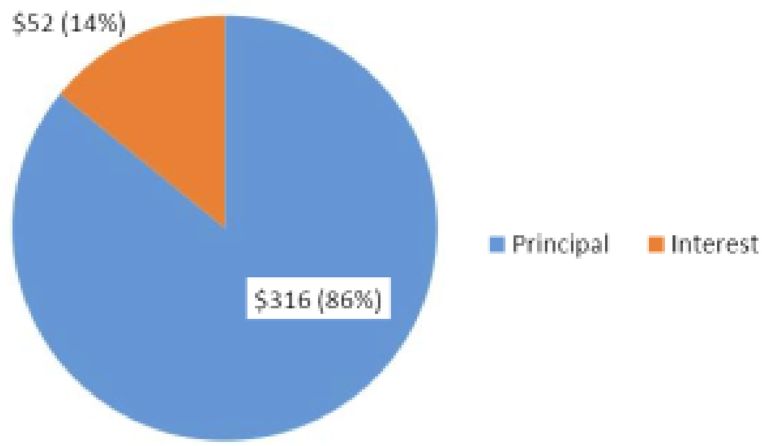


County Debt

Average total per capita outstanding debt (as of 2015): $368

- 14 percent of debt-related expenditures are in the form of interest



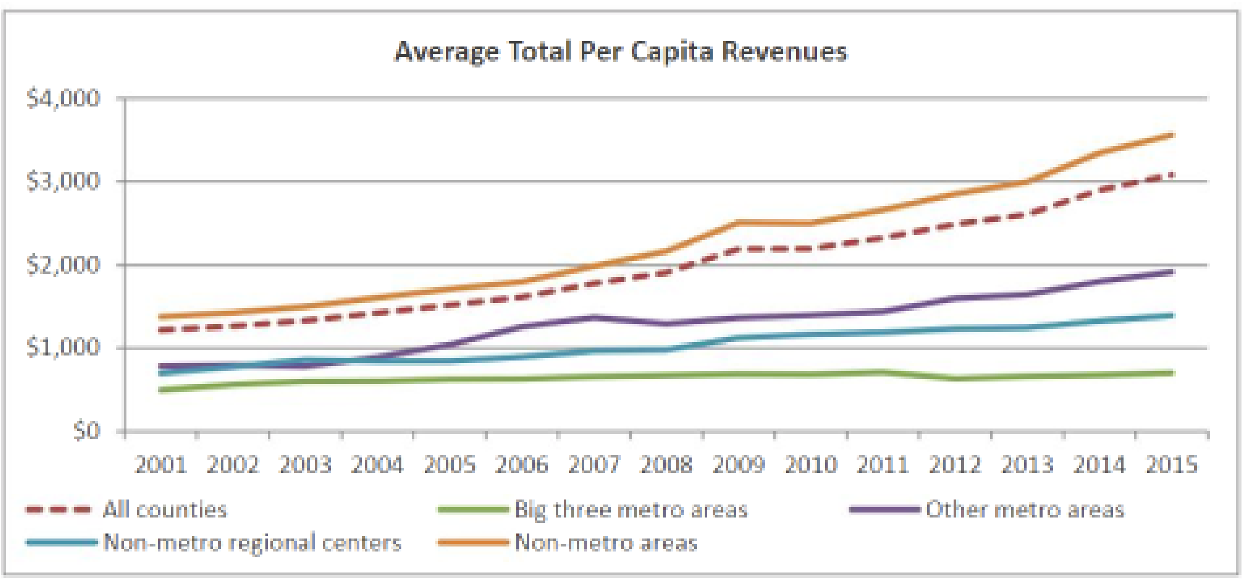
Summary of Trends Over Time

Revenues

Total per capita revenues

Average total per capita revenues for Nebraska's counties in 2001 was $1,218 and it grew annually to $3,082 in 2015; 153 percent during the period, or 11 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

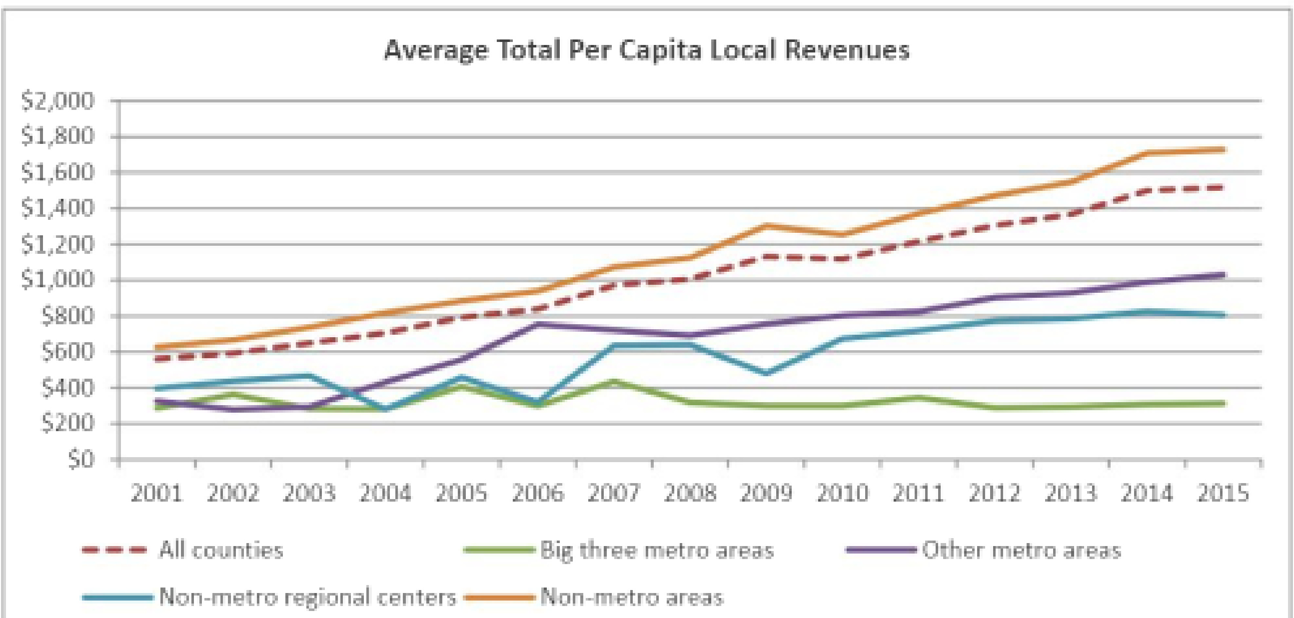
- Big three metropolitan counties have experienced a somewhat steady pattern in per capita revenues during the period of study. From 2001 to 2011, per capita revenues grew from $495 to $710 and since dropped to $632 in 2012 before increasing to $703 in 2015;
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced steady revenue growth during the period: from $783 in 2001 to $1,914 in 2015;
- The revenue pattern for counties in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was similar to counties in the other metropolitan areas: up from $698 per capita in 2001 to $1,392 in 2015;
- Per capita revenues for nonmetropolitan counties tracked the statewide pattern - $1,376 (2001) to $3,562 (2015)



Total per capita local revenues

In 2001, Nebraska counties collected an average of $561 per capita in local revenues and it rose annually to $1,517 in 2015; during the period, total per capita local revenues grew at a rate of 170 percent (12 percent annually). The fiscal trend varies by metropolitan status:

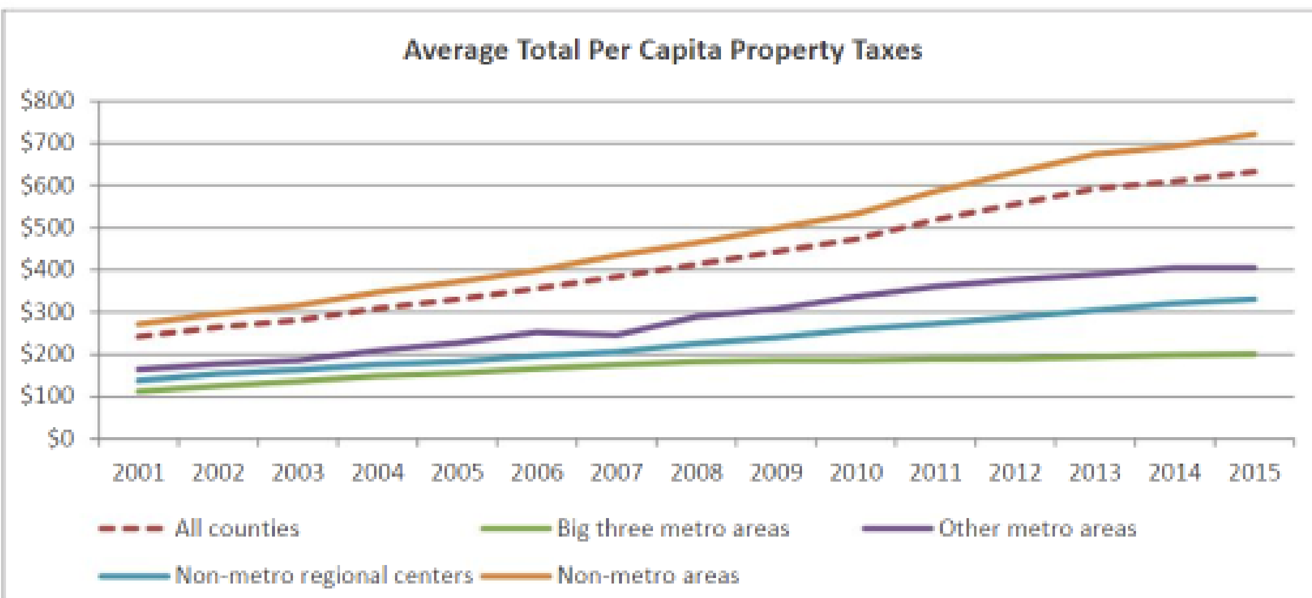
- The rather constant pattern of total per capita local revenues for counties in the big three metropolitan areas is observed. From 2001 to 2015, per capita local revenues decreased from $287 to $314;
- Other metro counties have experienced growth in per capita local revenues during the period: from $326 in 2001 to $1,030 in 2015. Particularly, there was rapid growth from 2003 ($294) to 2006 ($753);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced consistent growth in per capita local revenues during the period: from $396 in 2001 to $806 in 2015. A fluctuating pattern appeared during the years from 2003 ($467) to 2009 ($480);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita local revenues tracked the statewide pattern: from $626 in 2001 to $1,727 in 2015



Total per capita property taxes

On average, total per capita property taxes for Nebraska counties was $242 in 2001 and it grew annually to $633 in 2015; total per capita property taxes grew during the period at a rate of 162 percent, or 12 percent annually. Trends in property taxes by county type:

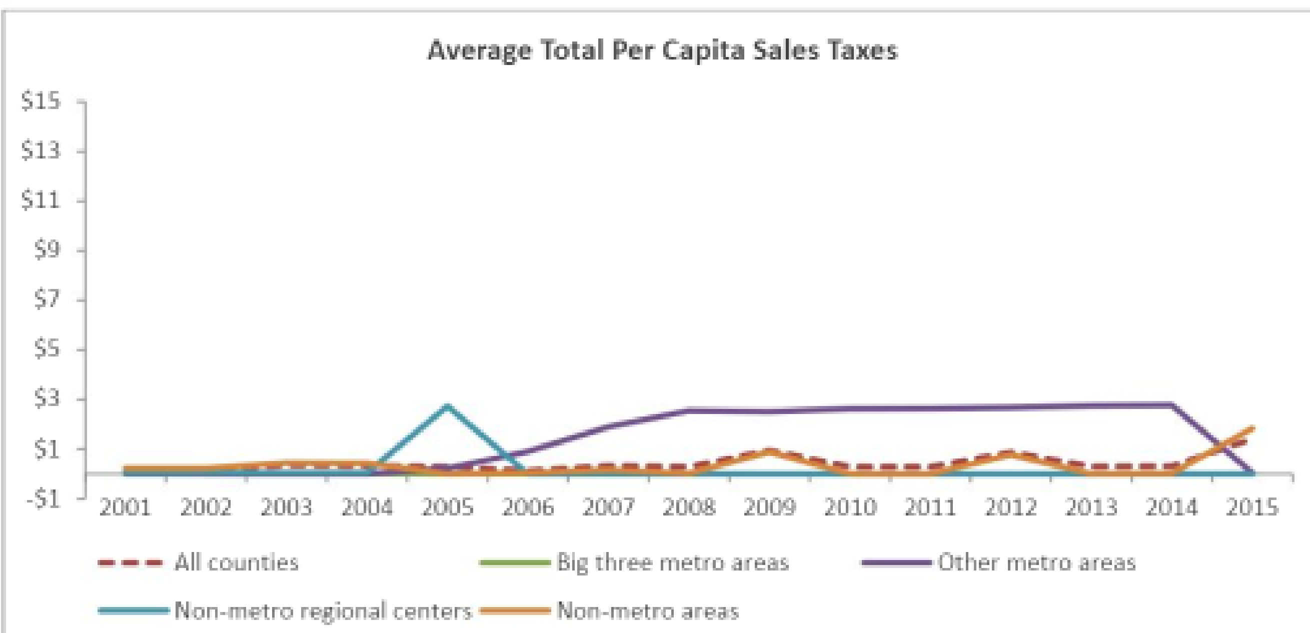
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas experienced modest growth from 2001 to 2008 ($112 per capita to $182 per capita) and since, per capita property taxes have been relatively flat ($200 per capita in 2015);
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced growth in per capita property taxes from 2001 ($164) to 2015 ($405);
- The property tax pattern for counties in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was similar to those for counties in the other metro areas: $137 per capita in 2001 to $331 in 2015;
- Total per capita property taxes for nonmetropolitan counties experienced the largest increase: up from $272 (2001) to $722 (2015)



Total per capita sales taxes

Nebraska's counties collected an average of $0.2 per person in 2001 and total per capita sales taxes grew modestly to $1.4 in 2015.

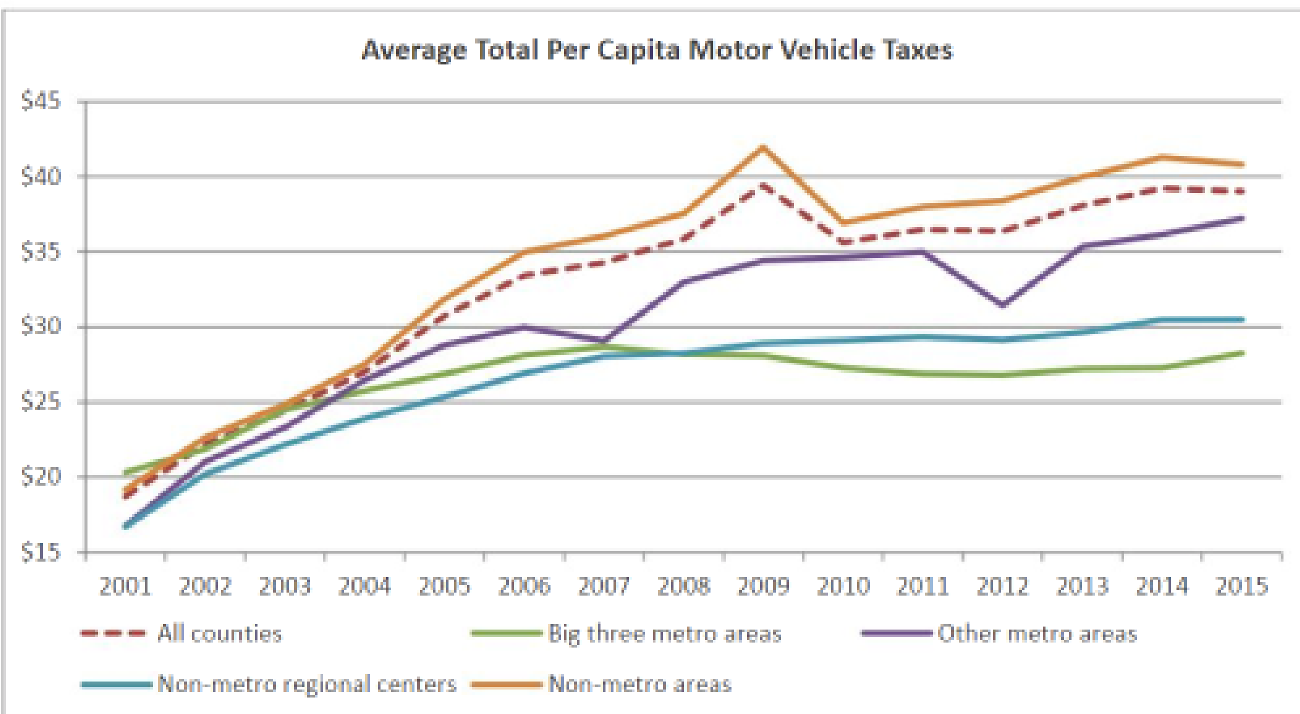
- Big three metropolitan counties have generally collected no sales taxes during the period of study; $0.18 was collected in 2001 whereas per capita sales taxes have been recorded as $0 from 2002 to 2015;
- The sales tax pattern for counties in the other metro areas were different from counties in the big three metropolitan areas: rapid growth from 2001 ($0) to 2008 ($2.54) and it was followed by a constant pattern from 2009 ($2.51) to 2014 ($2.77). 2015 is the year that witness a sharp decline in per capita sales taxes ($0.05);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have not much relied on sales taxes in general, except for the years from 2001 ($0.04) to 2005 ($2.73);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita sales taxes tracked the statewide pattern: from $0.22 (2001) to $1.83 (2015)



Total per capita motor vehicle taxes

On average, total per capita motor vehicle tax collections for Nebraska's counties were $19 in 2001 and grew to $39 in 2015; 108 percent during the period, or 8 percent annually. There is variation in these collections by area:

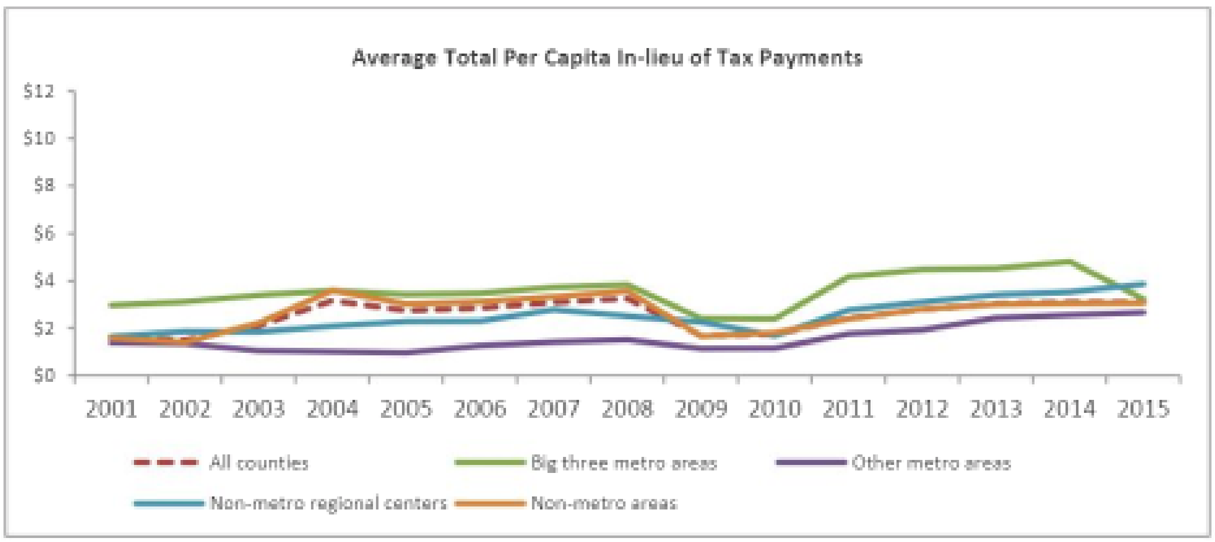
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a relatively conspicuous pattern in per capita motor vehicle tax collections. From 2001 to 2007, per capita motor vehicle taxes rose from $20 to $29 and then modestly declined to $28 in 2015;
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced relatively steady growth in per capita motor vehicle taxes from 2001 ($17) to 2015 ($37);
- The motor vehicle tax pattern for nonmetropolitan regional center counties were similar to those for counties in the Big 3 metro areas: up from $17 in 2001 to $30 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan counties experienced the greatest growth in per capita motor vehicle taxes tracked the statewide pattern: $19 (2001) to $41 (2015).



Total per capita in-lieu of tax payments

While not a sizable source of revenues, Nebraska counties generally receive some payments in lieu of property taxes. Sources of these payments may be the State (e.g., the acquisition of land for wildlife management purposes), power and/or irrigation districts, hospitals and/or housing development authorities.[2] In 2001, counties received an average of $2 total per capita in-lieu of tax payments and average payments grew to $3 in 2015. The trend in in-lieu of tax payments varies moderately by metropolitan status:

- The pattern of total per capita in-lieu of tax payments for big three metropolitan counties has somewhat varied during the period. From 2001 to 2008, per capita in-lieu of tax payments increased from $3 to $4. Since 2008, these revenues have been less stable ($3 per capita in 2015);
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced a modest level of growth in per capita in-lieu of tax payments from $1 in 2001 to $3 in 2015;
- Non-metro regional center counties have also experienced a slight increase in per capita in-lieu of tax payments during the period: from $2 in 2001 to $4 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita in-lieu of tax payments tracked the statewide pattern: up from $2 in 2001 to $3 in 2015

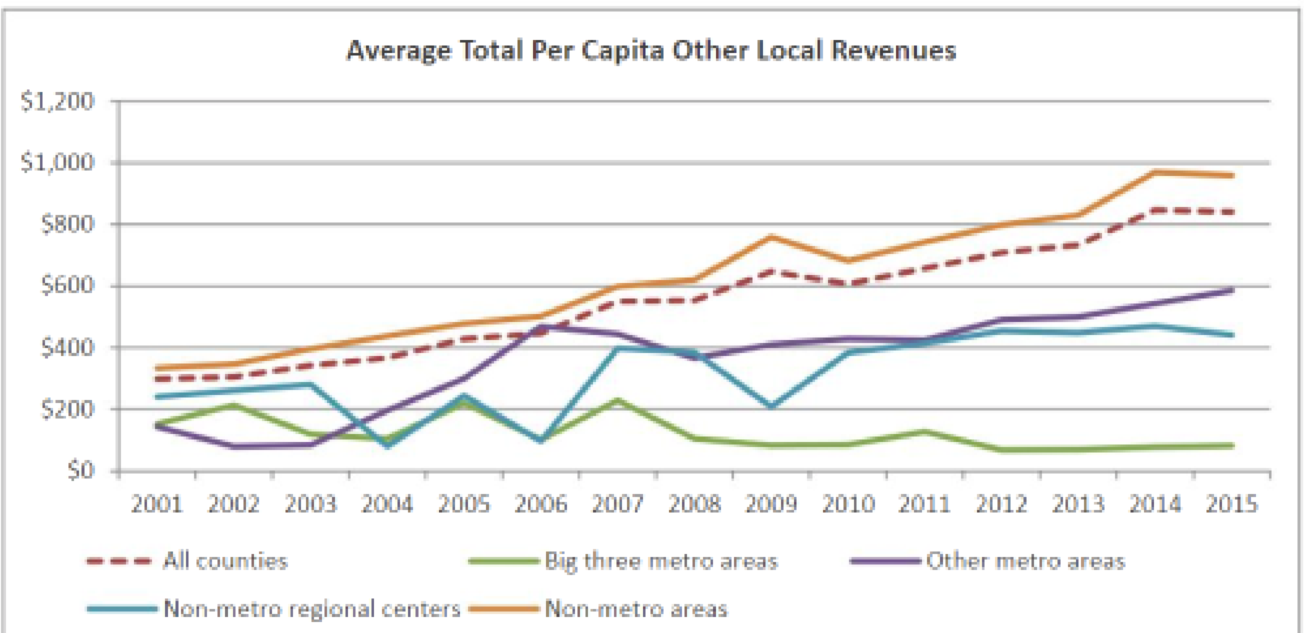


[2] Source: http://www.revenue.nebraska.gov/PAD/legal/regs/41-In_Lieu_of_Tax.html

Total per capita other local revenues

Nebraska's counties collected, on average, $299 per person in 2001 in other local revenues (primarily, user charges and fees) and the amount grew consistently to $840 in 2015; 181 percent during the period, or at an annual rate of 13 percent. Similar to other revenue patterns, there are important differences between the groups:

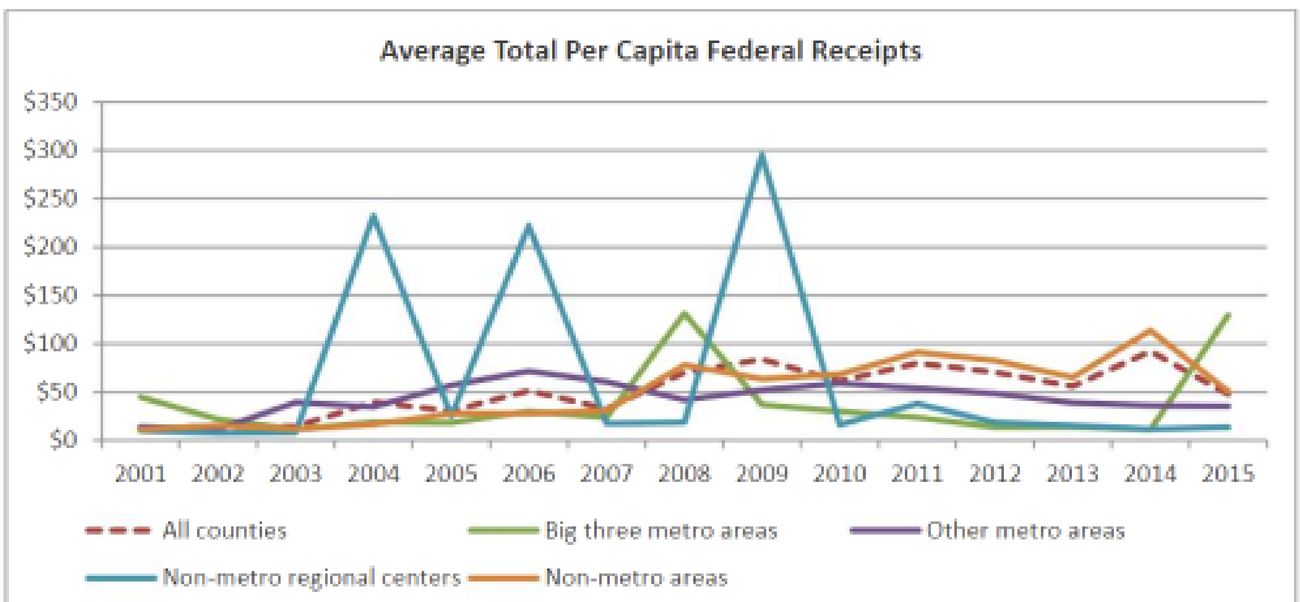
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a somewhat distinct pattern in per capita other local revenues during the period of study. From 2001 to 2007, an average of per capita other local revenues see-sawed up and down from $152 to $229 and then declined to $83 in 2015;
- For the other metro areas, counties experienced revenue growth from 2003 to 2006 ($84 to $469), since then revenues have been relatively flat ($585 in 2015);
- Other local revenues for counties in the non-metro regional centers fluctuated from 2001 to 2010 and has since been stable ($240 in 2001 to $440 in 2015);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita other local revenues grew steadily from 2001-2014, then changed little from 2014 to 2015 ($334 in 2001 and $959 in 2015).



Total per capita federal receipts

Over 80 percent of Nebraska counties receive direct payments from the federal government (including payments from highway safety, crime commission, land use, child support and/or natural disaster). On average, total per capita federal receipts for Nebraska counties was $12 in 2001 and $48 in 2015; total per capita federal receipts increased during the period at a rate of 290 percent, or 21 percent annually. Sizeable differences exist between the areas:

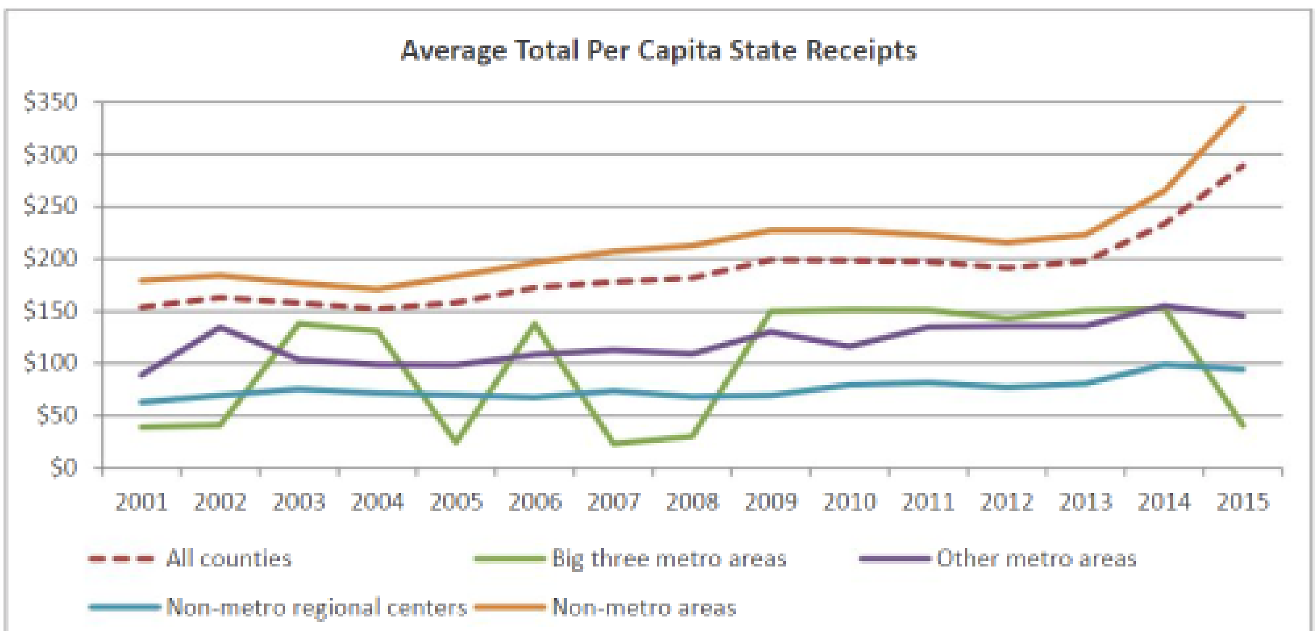
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a rather consistent pattern in per capita federal receipts: from $45 in 2001 to $129 in 2015. The only exceptions are 2008 ($131) and 2015 ($129);
- Other metro counties also experienced a constant pattern in per capita federal receipts: from $14 (2001) to $35 (2015);
- The federal receipt pattern for counties in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was remarkable: generally constant from 2001 ($10) to 2015 ($13); but, it spiked in 2004 ($233), 2006 ($222) and 2009 ($296);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita federal receipts tracked the statewide pattern: $11 (2001) to $50 (2015)



Total per capita state receipts

Counties in Nebraska can receive several types of state aid including, homestead exemption, government subdivision aid, prorate motor vehicle, property tax credit and/or insurance tax allocation. An average of $154 in per capita state receipts was received in 2001 and aid grew annually to $289 in 2015; 88 percent during the period, with an annual rate of 6 percent. The trend in state receipts varies by metropolitan status:

- An inconsistent pattern in total per capita state receipts for counties in the big three metropolitan areas is observed. Per capita state receipts changed little from 2001 ($39) to 2015 ($41), however, sharp increases occurred in some years such as 2003 ($138), 2006 ($138) and 2009 ($150);
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced steady state receipts from $89 in 2001 to $145 in 2015;
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a consistent pattern in state receipts during the period: from $63 in 2001 to $94 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan counties experienced the greatest growth in per capita state aid during the period (from $179 in 2001 to $345 in 2015).

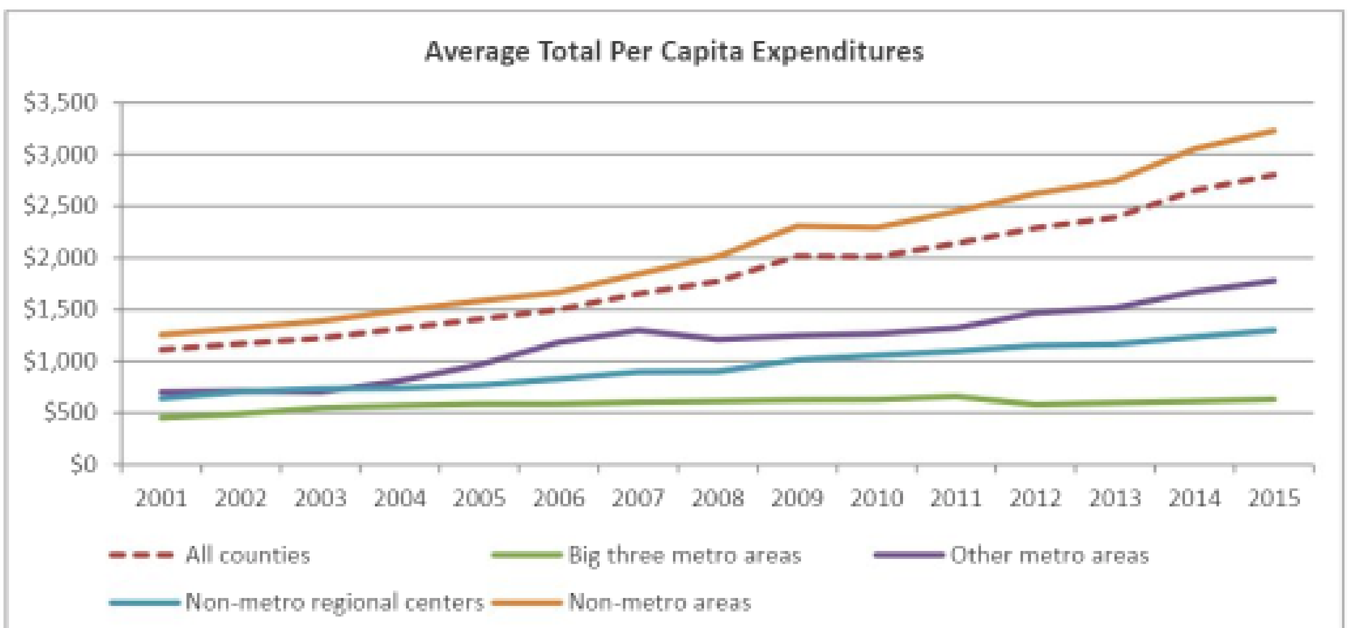


Expenditures by Type

Total per capita expenditures

Counties in Nebraska spent an average of $1,111 per person in 2001 and total per capita expenditures grew annually to $2,802 in 2015; 152 percent during the period, or 11 percent annually. There is also variation in expenditure patterns by metro status:

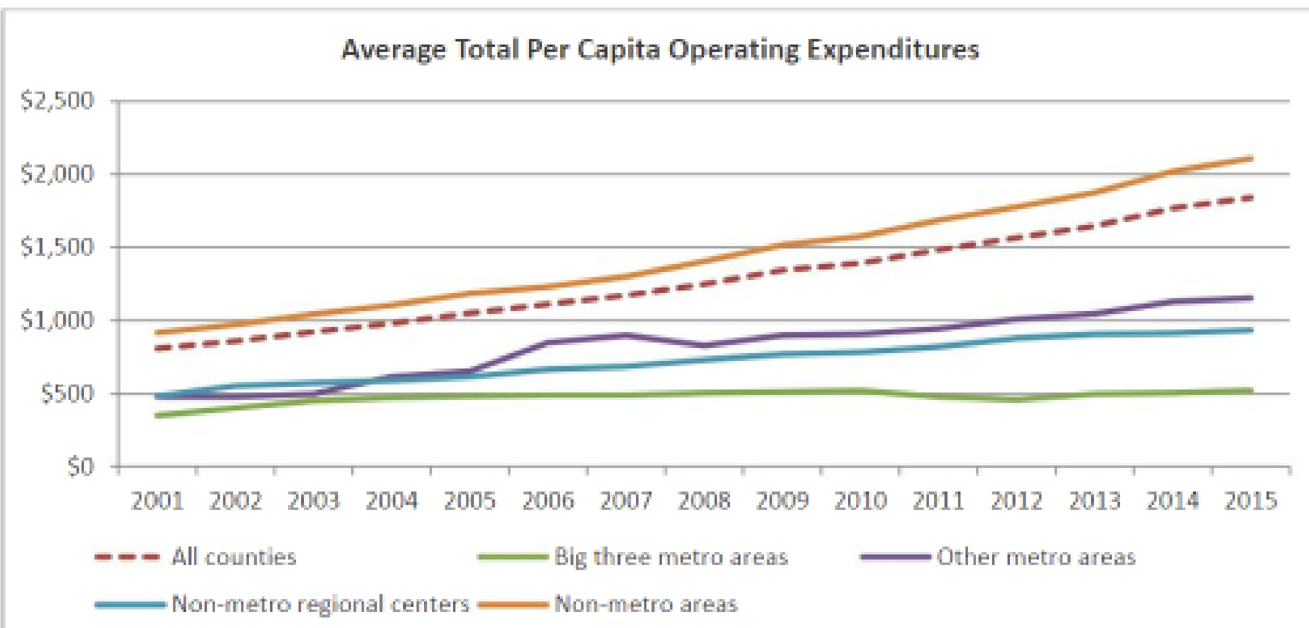
- Per capita county expenditures in the big three metropolitan areas have been relatively constant – up from $453 in 2001 to $631 in 2015; in 2012, big three metropolitan counties experienced a modest decrease in per capita expenditures ($580);
- A somewhat different expenditure pattern is observed for counties in the other metro areas: constant growth from 2001 ($701) to 2015 ($1,779) with a slight dip from 2007 ($1,300) to 2008 ($ 1,209);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers experienced consistent per capita expenditure growth during the period – up from $640 in 2001 to $1,299 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita expenditures grew from $1,257 (2001) to $3,229 (2015)



Total per capita operating expenditures

On average, total per capita operating expenditures (setting aside capital expenditures and debt) for Nebraska's counties was $809 in 2001 and grew to $1,840 in 2015; it increased during the period at a rate of 128 percent, or 9 percent annually. By grouping we find:

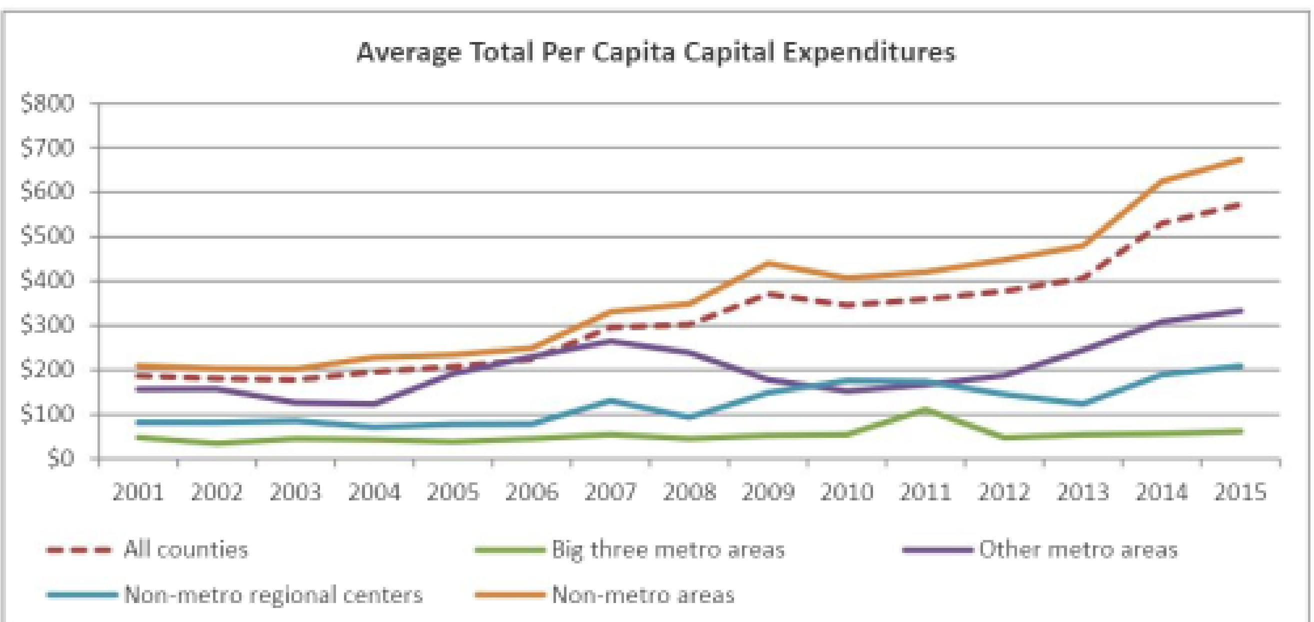
- Per capita operating expenditures for the big three metropolitan counties have remained at a relatively constant level: from $349 (2001) to $520 (2015);
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced consistent growth in per capita operating expenditures: from $478 in 2001 to $1,153 in 2015;
- The operating expenditure pattern for counties in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for counties in the other metro areas: $483 in 2001 and $933 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan counties per capita operating expenditures tracked the statewide pattern so consistently grew from $916 (2001) to $2,109 (2015).



Total per capita capital expenditures

Capital expenditures accounted for about a quarter (20 percent) of total county expenditures in 2015. Over the 15-year period, average capita capital expenditures grew from $186 in 2001 to $572 in 2015; 207 percent during the period, or 15 percent annually. By group, per capita capital expenditures grew at different rates:

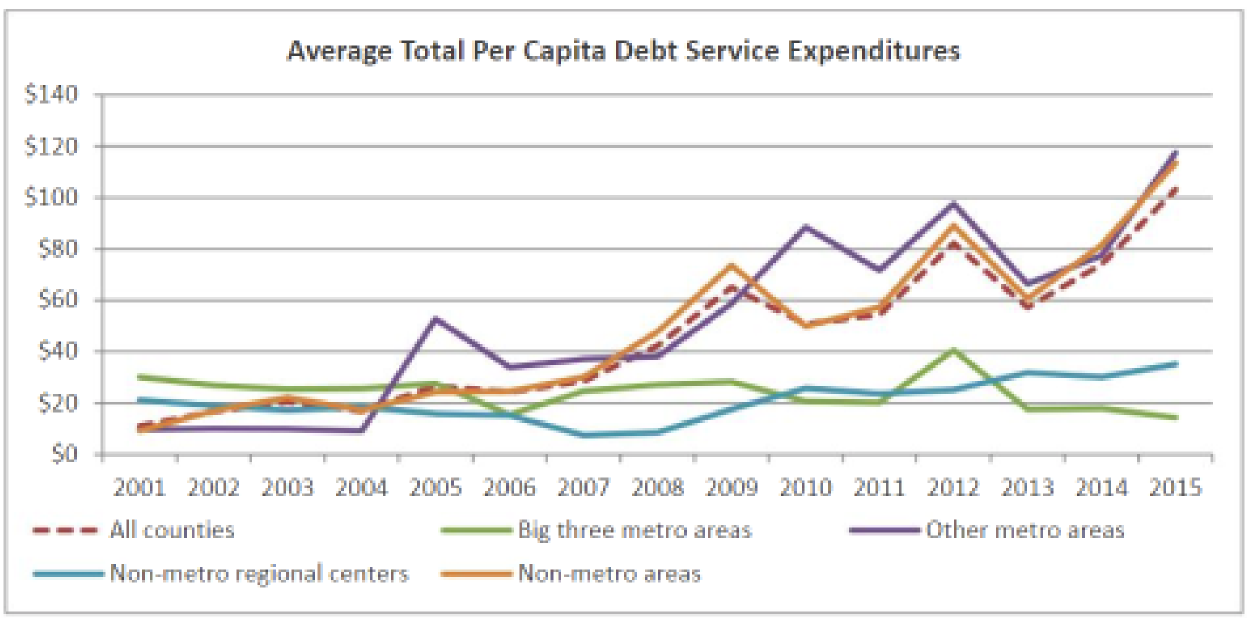
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a consistent pattern in per capita capital expenditures during the period of study: from $48 in 2001 to $62 in 2015. A fluctuation appeared in 2011 ($111);
- Capital expenditures for counties in the other metro areas grew from 2001 ($156) to 2015 ($333) with some variation from 2005 ($191) to 2009 ($178);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant capital expenditure growth from 2001 ($82) to 2015 ($209), these expenditures grew most rapidly during the Great Recession (2008-11), then decreased in 2012 and 2013 before growing the last two years;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita capital expenditures had strong growth from $210 (2001) to $674 (2015)



Total per capita debt service expenditures

Debt service generally accounted for four percent of county expenditures. As of 2001, Nebraska's counties averaged $11 in total per capita debt service expenditures and those payments grew annually to $103 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita debt service expenditures during the period was 835 percent, with an annual rate of 60 percent. The trend in debt service expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

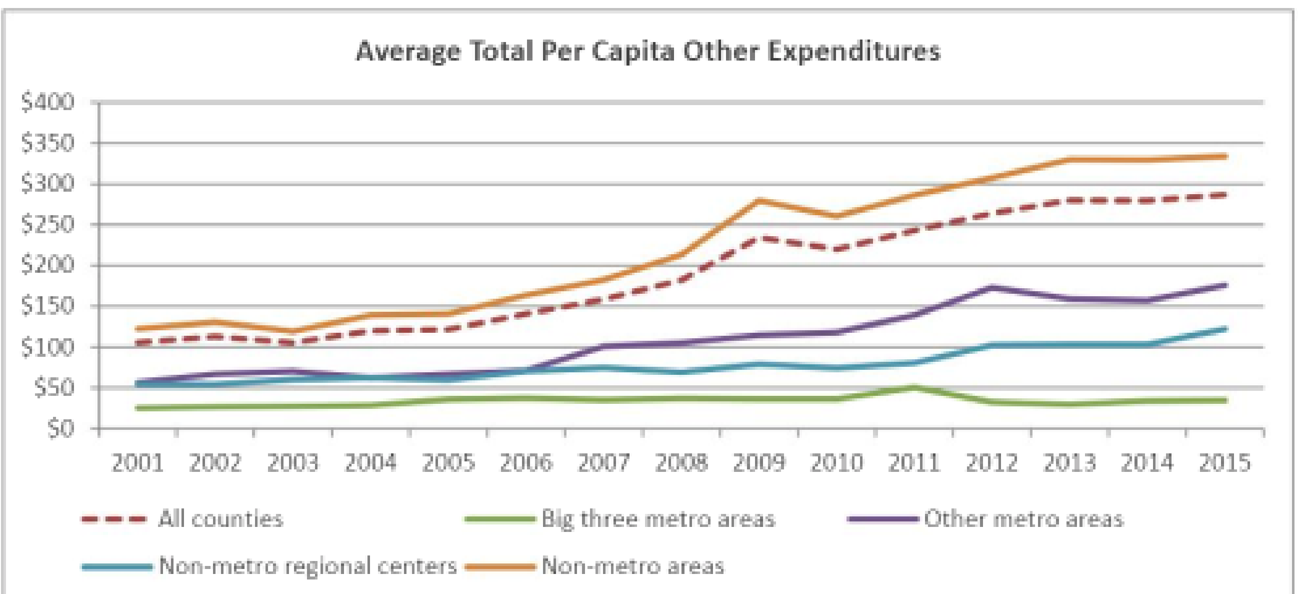
- Average per capita debt service expenditures for the big three metro counties decreased from 2001 ($30) to 2006 ($14) and has since been stable. The exception is 2012, with a mean of $41;
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced steady growth in debt service expenditures during the period: from $10 in 2001 to $117 in 2015
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have experienced debt service expenditures most similar to the big three metro areas – decline from 2001 ($21) to 2007 ($7) and then a reverse trend to $35 in 2015;
- Similar to the case of other metro counties, nonmetropolitan county per capita debt service expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $9 in 2001 to $113 in 2015.



Total per capita other expenditures

Average total per capita other expenditures (judgments, transfers, transfers of surplus fees, etc.) for Nebraska's counties was $105 in 2001 and $287 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita other expenditures was 36 percent during the period (3 percent annually). A difference between the metro areas exists:

- Big three metropolitan counties have experienced stability in per capita other expenditures: from $25 in 2001 to $35 in 2015;
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced consistent growth in per capita other expenditures: from $57 in 2001 to $176 in 2015;
- The other expenditure pattern for counties in the nonmetropolitan regional centers were similar to those for counties in the other metro areas, but shows relatively slower growth: $54 in 2001 and $122 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita other expenditures outpaced other Nebraska counties: up from $122 (2001) to $334 (2015)



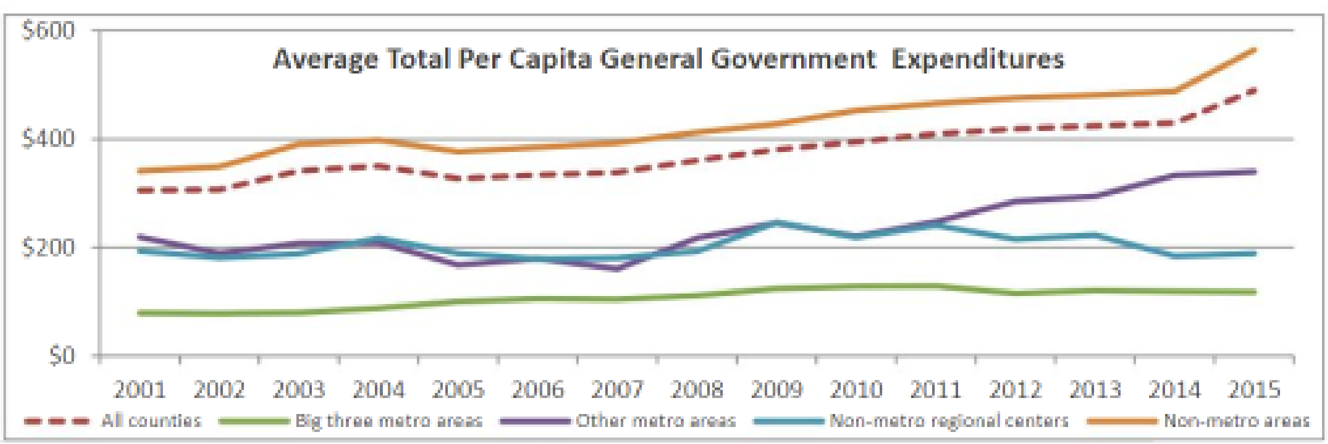
Expenditures by Object

Another way of looking at county expenditures is by object – a classification of expenditures by services provided. The available expenditure categories are: general government, public safety, public works, health and social services, culture and recreation and community development.

Total per capita general government expenditures

Counties in Nebraska spent an average of $305 per capita for general government purposes (e.g., personal services, supplies and materials) in 2001 and these expenditures grew annually to $490 in 2015; the growth rate in total per capita general government expenditures during the period was 60 percent, or at an annual rate of 4 percent. The trend in general government expenditures varied by group:

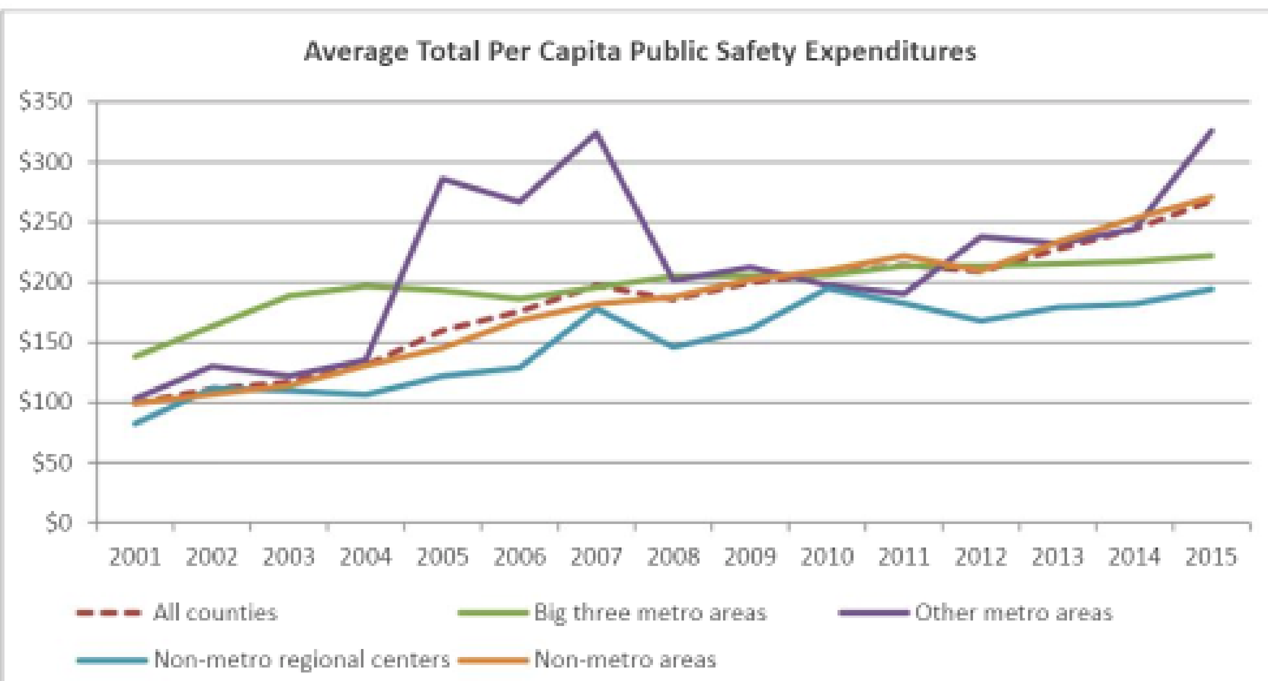
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have had rather constant per capita general government expenditures from 2001 ($79) to 2015 ($118). There was a slight decline from 2011 ($129) to 2012 ($116);
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced a somewhat steady growth in general government expenditures from $219 in 2001 to $340 in 2015;
- While there has been fluctuation in general government expenditures for non-metro regional center counties, the overall pattern changed little during the period ($194 in 2001 to $189 in 2015);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita general government expenditures grew from $341 in 2001 to $565 in 2015



Total per capita public safety expenditures

Nebraska's counties spent an average of $99 per capita in 2001 on per capita public safety expenditures and the amount grew annually to $268 in 2015; 170 percent during the period, or 12 percent annually.

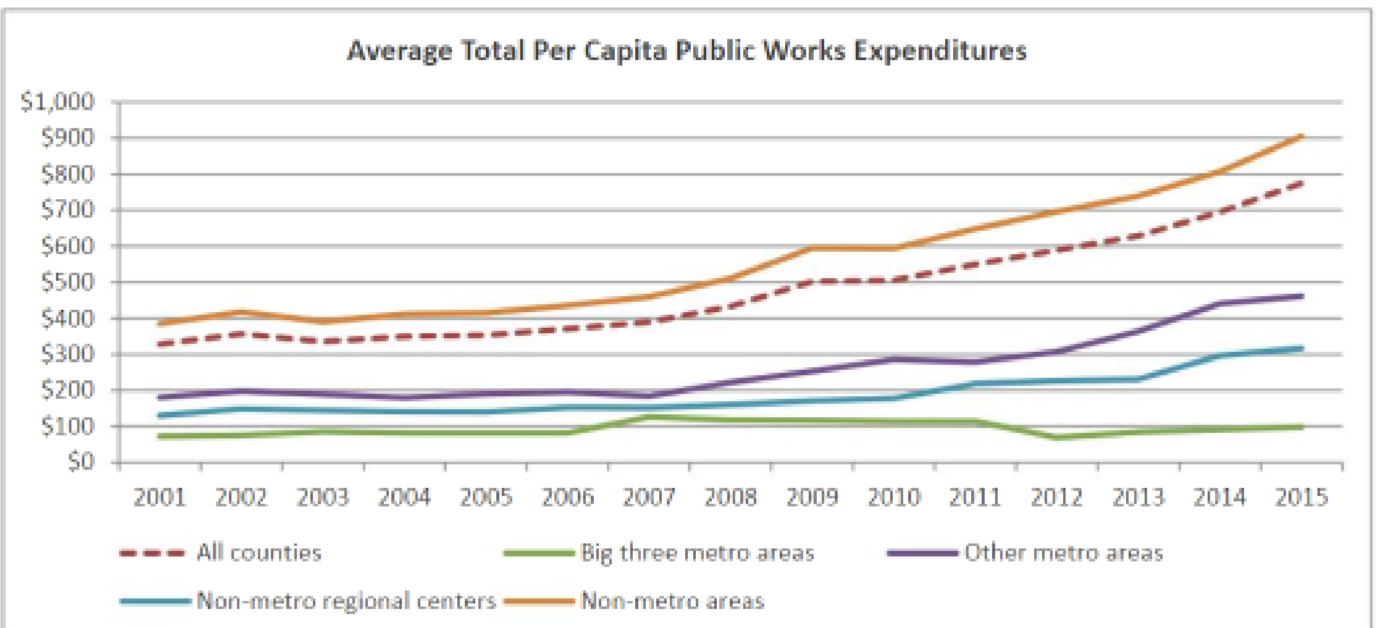
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a generally stable pattern in per capita public safety expenditures during the period of study: up from $138 (2001) to $222 (2015);
- Public safety expenditures for counties in the other metro areas grew from 2001 ($50) to 2015 ($145) and was marked by a jump in 2005 ($286), 2006 ($267) and 2007 ($324);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers experienced a constant public safety expenditure growth from 2001 ($83) to 2015 ($194);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita public safety expenditures were stable: up from $99 in 2001 to $271 in 2015



Total per capita public works expenditures

On average, total per capita public works expenditures for Nebraska's counties was $329 and $775 in 2001 and 2015, respectively; total per capita operating expenditures increased during the period at a rate of 136 percent, or 10 percent annually. A difference between the areas is as follows:

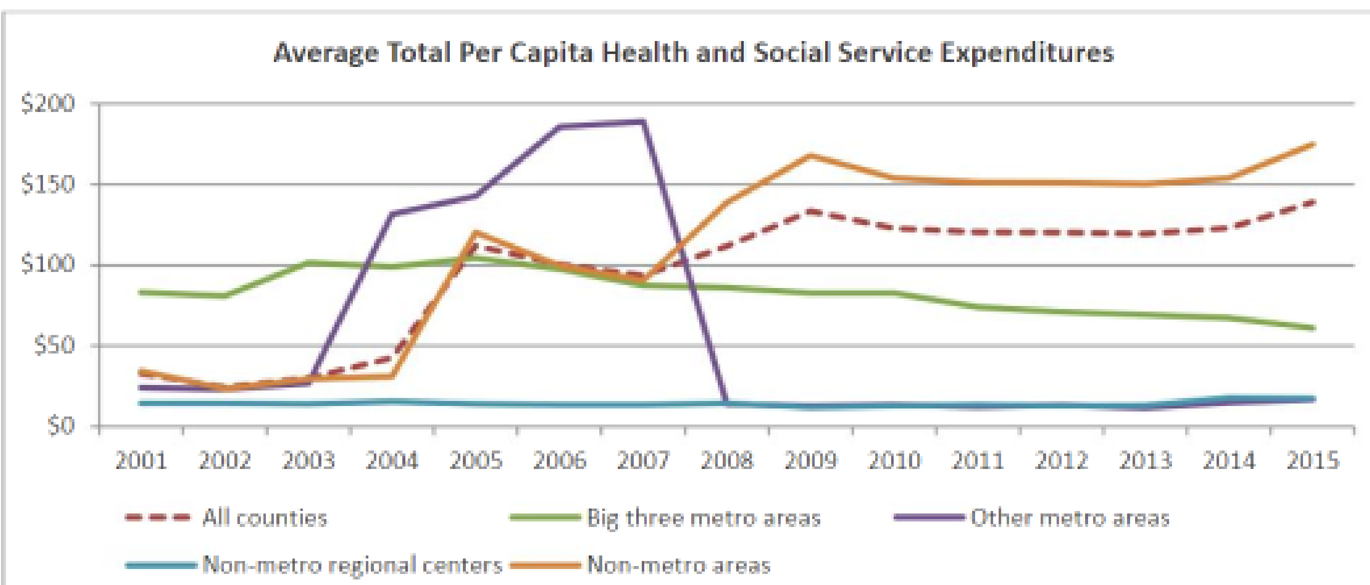
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced little change in per capita public works expenditures from 2001 ($73) to 2015 ($98);
- Counties in the other metro areas experienced stable growth in per capita public works expenditures from 2001 to 2007, then expenditures grew more rapidly to $462 in 2015;
- County public works expenditures in the nonmetropolitan regional centers have consistently grown from $131 in 2001 to $317 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita public works expenditures more than doubled during this period: $385 (2001) to $905 (2015).



Total per capita health and social service expenditures

Nebraska's county expenditures on health and human services grew dramatically from 2001 ($33 per person) to 2015 ($139 per person); the growth rate of total per capita state receipts during the period was 322 percent, with an annual rate of 23 percent. The trend in health and social service expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

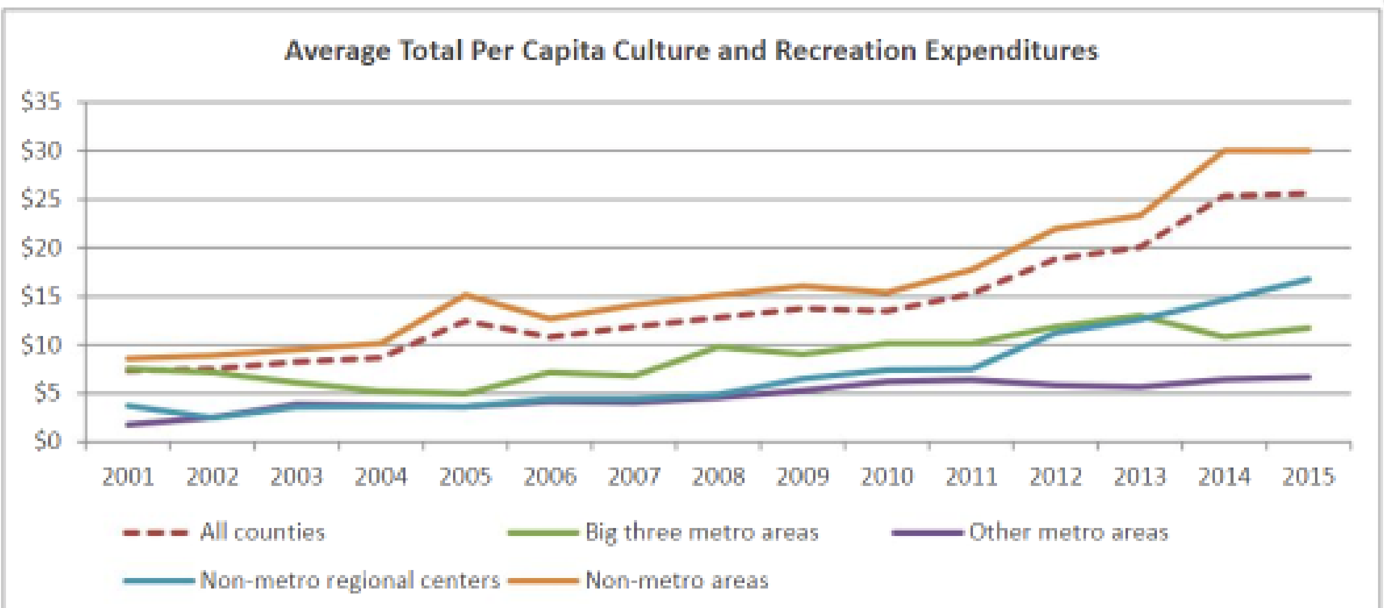
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced growth in per capita health and social service expenditures during the first three years of the study ($83 in 2001 and $101 in 2003), but witnessed the decreasing pattern of per capita health and social service expenditures from 2004 ($98) to 2015 ($61);
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced a conspicuous pattern in per capita health and social service expenditures: a consistency in general from $24 in 2001 to $17 in 2015, but remarkable increases from 2004 ($131) to 2007 ($189) ;
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a very constant pattern in per capita health and social service expenditures during the period: from $15 in 2001 to $18 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita health and social service expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $34 in 2001 to $175 in 2015, with sharp growth from 2004 ($31) to 2009 ($167)



Total per capita culture and recreation expenditures

Nebraska's counties spent an average of $7 per capita in 2001 on culture and recreation expenditures and $26 in 2015; an increase of 248 percent during the period, or 18 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

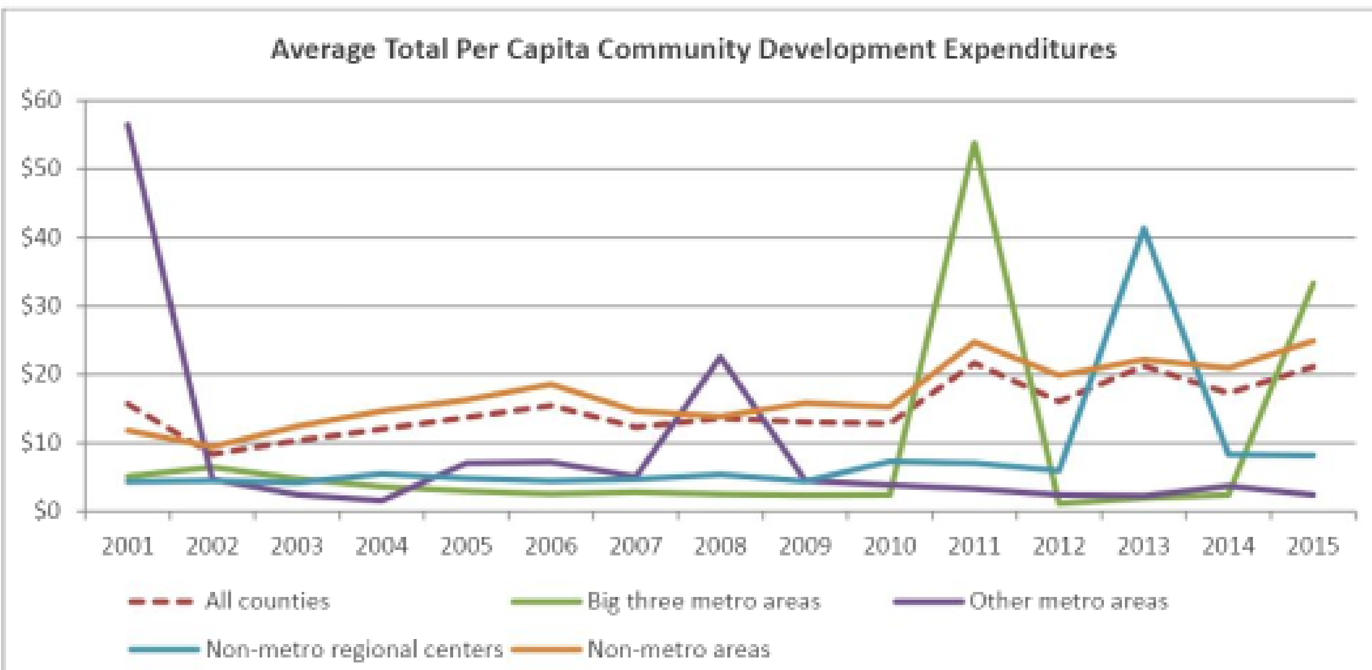
- Except for some earlier years (e.g., $8 in 2001), per capita culture and recreation expenditures in the big three metropolitan counties grew from $5 in 2004 to $12 in 2015;
- The culture and recreation expenditure pattern for counties in the other metro areas was different compared to counties in the big three metropolitan areas – consistent growth from 2001 ($2) to 2015 ($7);
- Non-metro regional center counties have also experienced growth in culture and recreation expenditures from 2001 ($4) to 2015 ($17);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita culture and recreation expenditures grew at the fastest rate – from $9 (2001) to $30 (2015).



Total per capita community development expenditures

Average community development expenditures for Nebraska's counties was $16 per capita in 2001 and grew modestly to $21 per capita in 2015; up 35 percent during the period, or 2 percent annually. Difference patterns are identified according to the metro areas:

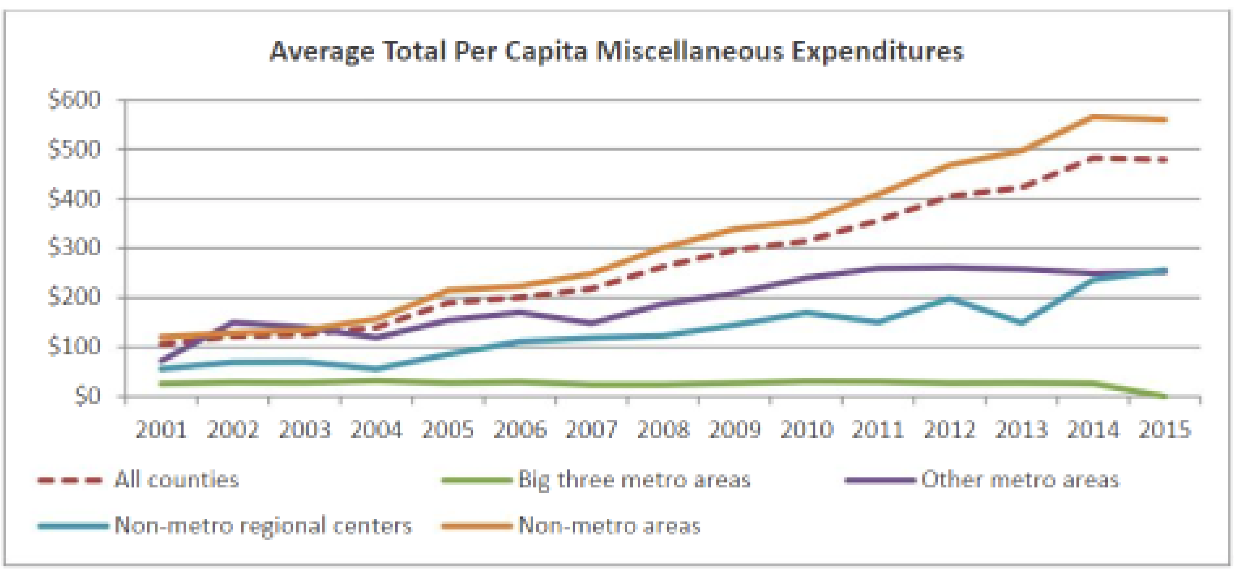
- Counties in the big three metropolitan experienced two years of significant growth – 2011 and 2015 – in community development expenditures ($54 and $33, respectively);
- Counties in the other metro areas also had spikes in but the years were different compared to the big three metro counties – 2001 ($56) and 2008 ($23);
- Counties in nonmetropolitan regional centers had stable per capita community development expenditures from 2001 ($4) to 2015 ($8), with 2003 being the exception ($41);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita community development expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: $12 (2001) to $25 (2015).



Total per capita miscellaneous expenditures

In 2001, Nebraska's counties expended an average of $106 per capita in miscellaneous expenditures that include unemployment compensation liabilities, capital/equipment acquisitions of governmental buildings or facilities, and/or disbursements having no specified function, and expenditures grew to $479 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita miscellaneous expenditures during the period was 354 percent, with an annual rate of 25 percent. The trend in total per capita miscellaneous expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas maintained a constant level of per capita miscellaneous expenditures from 2001 ($25) to 2014 ($26). The data shows that the big three metropolitan counties had no miscellaneous expenditures in 2015;
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced consistent growth in per capita miscellaneous expenditures: from $72 in 2001 to $252 in 2015;
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced an increasing trend in per capita miscellaneous expenditures during the period of study: from $56 in 2001 to $256 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita miscellaneous expenditures tracked the statewide pattern: from $120 in 2001 to $560 in 2015.

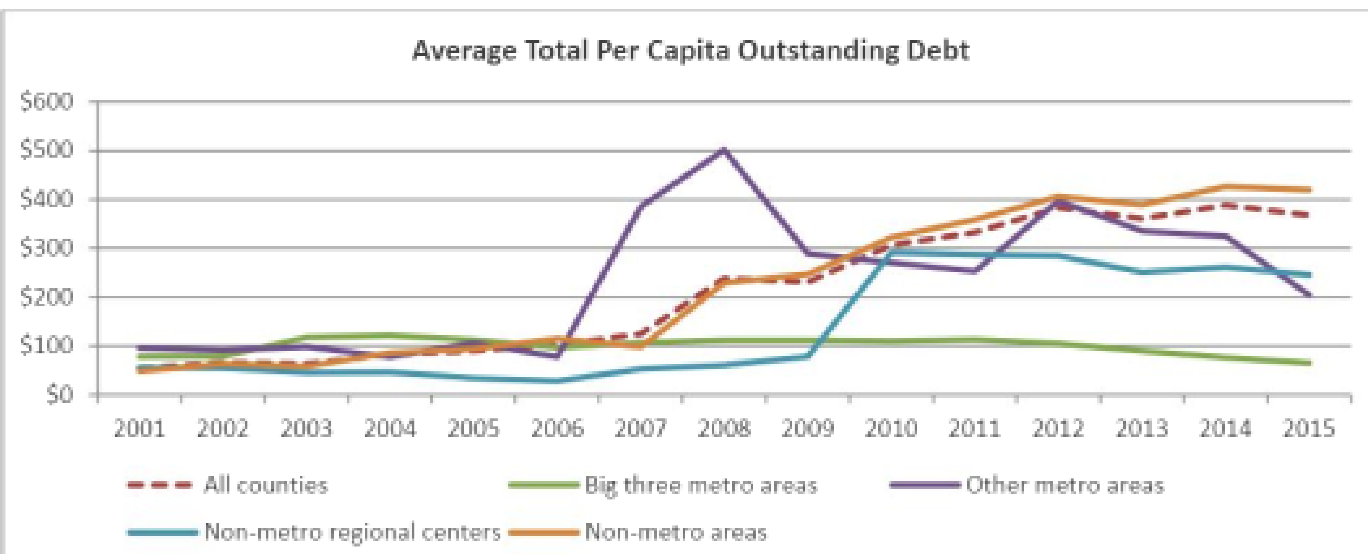


Debt

Total per capita outstanding debt

Outstanding debt – including capital and interest on the associated debt – for Nebraska's counties was, on average, $55 per capita in 2001 and it grew annually to $368 in 2015; 570 percent during the period, or 41 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

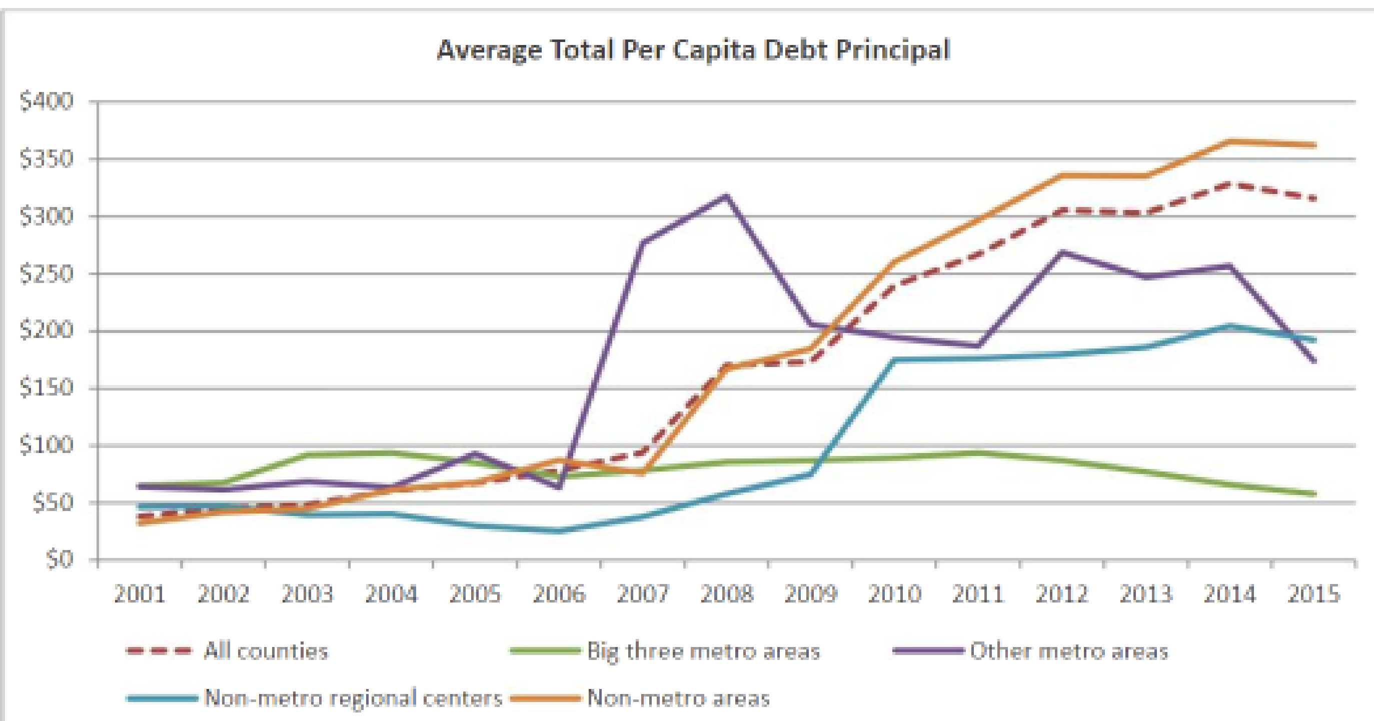
- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a relatively consistent level of per capita outstanding debt during the period of the study: from 2001 ($78) to 2007 ($65);
- The outstanding debt pattern for counties in the other metro areas is interesting: there was a consistency from 2001 ($96) to 2006 ($78) but surged upward to $204 in 2015 with some fluctuation (e.g., $502 in 2008);
- Counties in the non-metro regional centers experienced two different trends over time: a relatively low level of per capita outstanding debt from 2001 ($56) to 2009 ($78) and a higher level of per capita outstanding debt during the period from 2010 ($292) to 2015 ($246);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita outstanding debt grew from $48 (2001) to $149 (2015)



Total per capita debt principal

Per capita debt principal for Nebraska's counties was $38 in 2001 and it grew annually to $316 in 2015; total per capita debt principal increased during the period at a rate of 726 percent, or 52 percent annually. Different patterns are identified according to the metro areas:

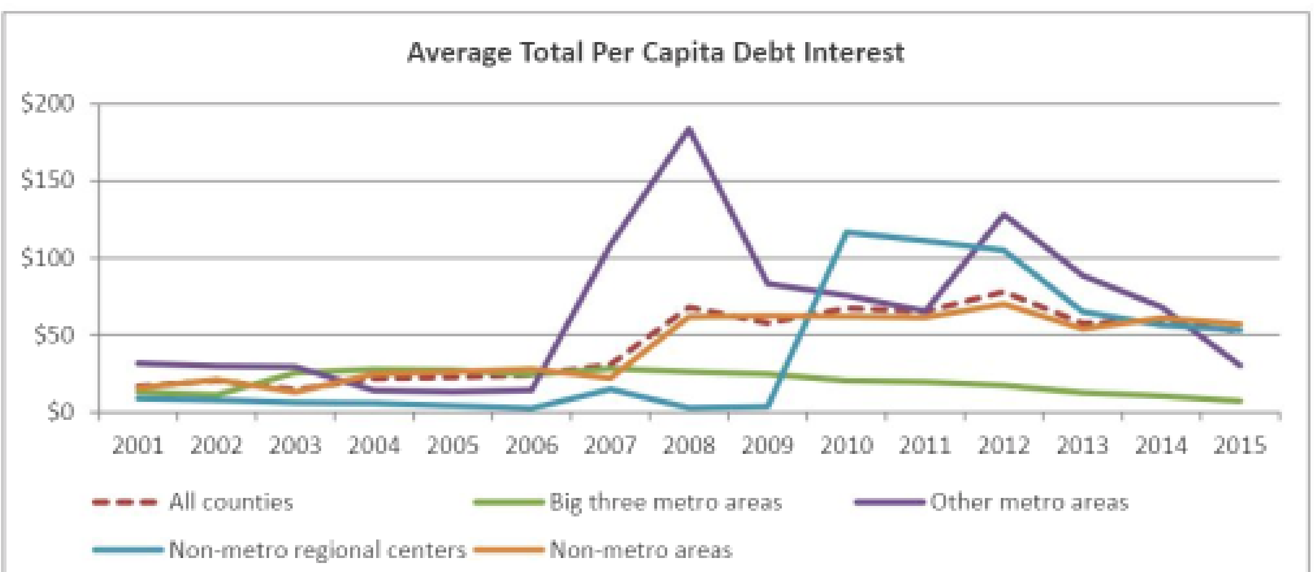
- Per capita debt principal in the big three metropolitan counties was $67 in 2001 and $58 in 2015;
- With some fluctuations, counties in the other metro areas experienced growth in per capita debt principal: from $64 in 2001 to $174 in 2015. There was a remarkable increase in 2007 ($277) compared to 2006 ($63);
- County debt principal in the nonmetropolitan regional centers have increased: from $47 in 2001 to $192 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita debt principal tracked the statewide pattern: $32 (2001) to $362 (2015)



Total per capita debt interest

In 2001, Nebraska counties paid, on average, $17 per capita in debt interest and it increased annually to $52 in 2015; the growth rate of total per capita debt interest during the period was 213 percent, or at an annual rate of 15 percent. The trend in per capita debt interest varies by metropolitan status:

- Counties in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a modest decrease during this 15-year period. Overall, per capita debt interest has declined from $13 in 2001 to $7 in 2015;
- Counties in the other metro areas have experienced a cyclical pattern in per capita debt interest. From 2001 ($32) to 2006 ($14), counties had a rather constant level of debt interest; it dramatically increased in 2007 ($109) and 2008 ($184) then consistently decreased to $30 in 2015;
- Non-metro regional center counties have a similar trend in per capita debt interest compared to counties in the other metro areas ($9 in 2001 and $53 in 2015), but they experienced a rapid increase in debt interest in 2010 ($117);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita debt interest grew from $16 in 2001 to $57 in 2015



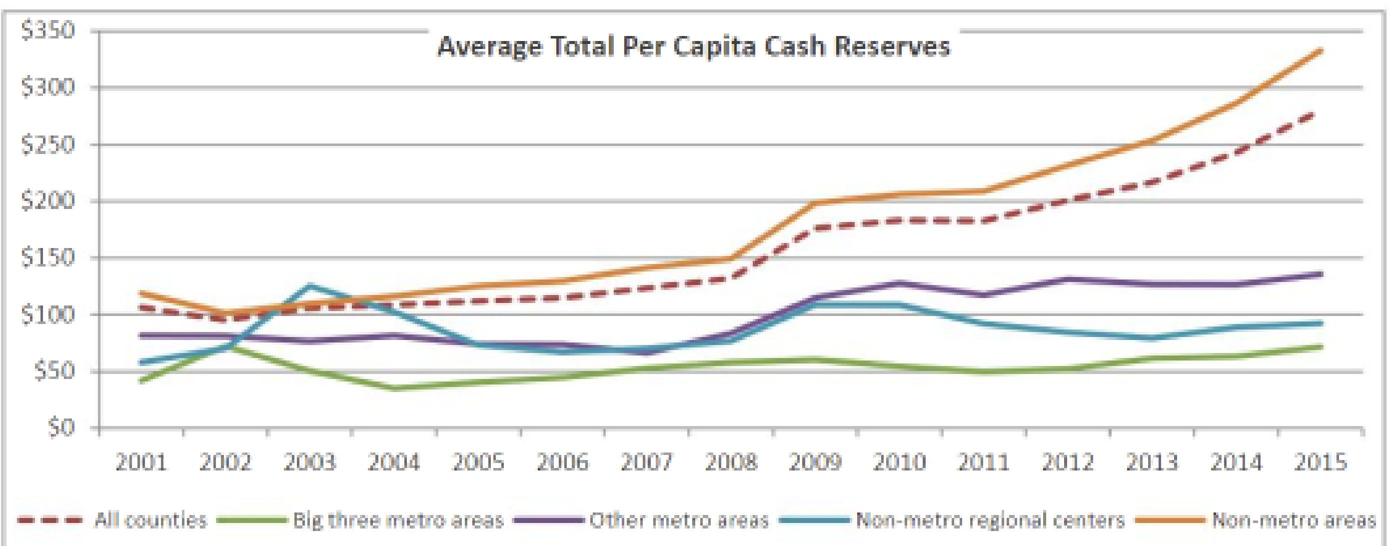
Liquidity

Liquidity refers to reserves counties have available for "rainy days," meaning funds to help with revenue shortfalls, unexpected expenditures and/or to fill gaps in revenue flows so communities do not need to short-term borrow.

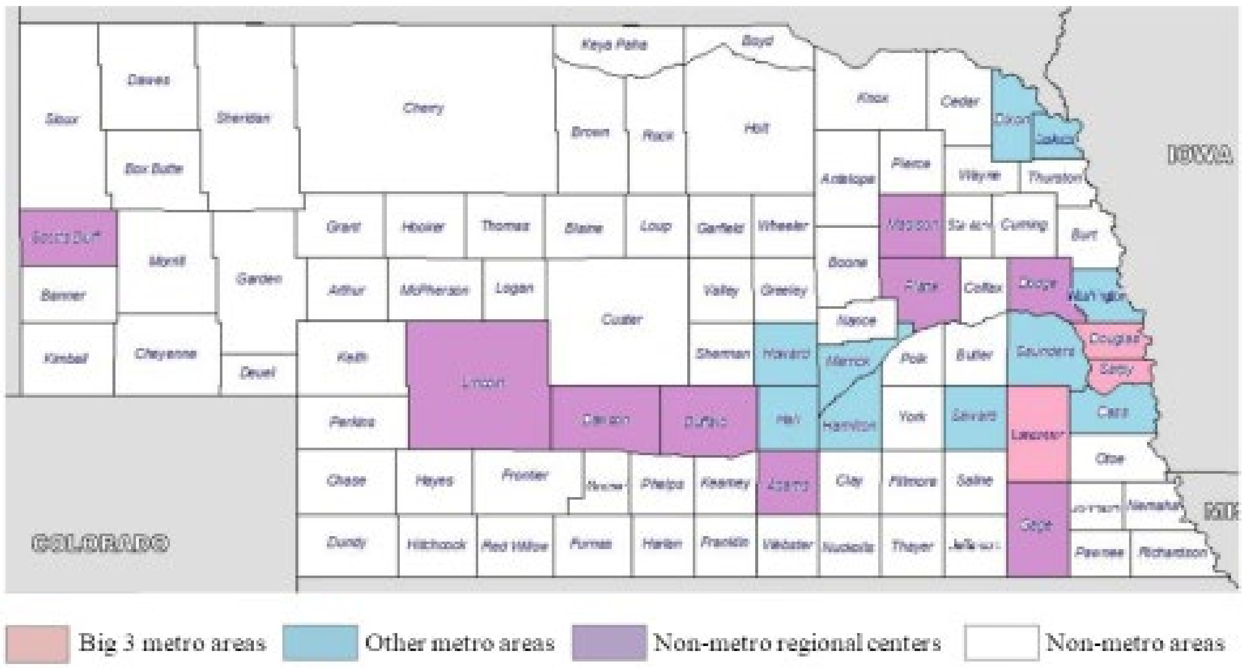
Total per capita cash reserves

Nebraska's counties possessed an average of $106 per capita in 2001 and total per capita cash reserves grew annually to $280 in 2015; 162 percent during the period, or 12 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

- Per capita cash reserves for counties in the big three metropolitan areas have been stable over time – $42 in 2001 to $71 in 2015;
- Per capita cash reserves for counties in the other metro areas was relatively constant during the period: from $89 in 2001 to $136 in 2015;
- Compared to the statewide pattern, counties in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant per capita cash reserves from 2001 ($58) to 2015 ($93) though there were some variations ($125 in 2003 and $109 in 2009);
- Nonmetropolitan county per capita cash reserves grew substantially during the period: $119 (2001) to $333 (2015)



Appendix 1. Nebraska Counties Classified by Metropolitan Status



Sources: Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Examining Nebraska's Special Purpose Districts (SPDs) Finance Picture: Trends in Revenues, Expenditures, Debt and Reserves from 2001-2015

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Executive Summary

There are currently 1,542 special purpose districts (SPDs) in Nebraska and they vary widely by type: agricultural society, airport authority, historical society, fire district, cemetery district, township, etc. In an era of resource scarcity and greater scrutiny of public finance, this report offers one of first overviews of SPDs revenues, expenditures, debt and reserves.

The intent of the report is not to advocate policy or to even study policy decisions, rather it seeks to provide a context for budgeting and policy discussions.

Key Findings:

- There is a great deal of variation in revenues and expenditures based on the location of a district. Nebraska's SPDs exhibit very different fiscal patterns depending on their metropolitan status. SPDs in the big three metropolitan area tend to have a larger size of budgets relative to districts in non-metro counties;
- Given the focus on property taxes in Nebraska, 39 percent of SPD own-source revenues come from the property tax. The remaining portion of SPD own-source revenues come largely from charges, fees and other incomes (e.g., rental and investment);
- Over 60 percent of total spending are operating expenditures. This is followed by capital spending, which accounts for 25 percent of total SPD expenditures;
- SPDs' reliance on debt has increased over time. However, the pattern varies across metro areas;
- Seemingly, Nebraska SPDs had a stable level of cash reserves in 2015, equal to 18 percent of total revenues

Introduction

The Nebraska State and Local Finance Lab was established in 2015 with the support of the University of Nebraska-Omaha's College of Public Affairs and Community Service, and the Center for Public Affairs Research. The purpose of the Lab is to help stakeholders (citizens, elected officials and government staff) better understand state and local finance in Nebraska. It also serves as a resource for applied and academic research on state and local fiscal policy.

This is the third of the reports produced by the NE State and Local Finance Lab and it focuses on describing fiscal trends in the Nebraska SPDs from FY 2001 to FY 2015.

Approach to Studying NE SPDs

In this report, Nebraska SPDs fall into four categories for analytical purposes: Big three metro areas, other metro areas, non-metro regional centers and non-metro areas. *The Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions* defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are used to identify metro and non-metro areas at the county level (see Appendix 1). SPDs are then classified into the groups according to their geographical affiliation to counties.

- As of 2015, 307 SPDs are in the big 3 metro areas;
- 175 districts are located in the other metro areas;
- non-metro regional centers involve 272 SPDs and;
- the remaining 788 SPDs are identified in the non-metro areas.

Socio-Economic Attribute

Due to the lack of data, demographic and socio-economic information on NE SPDs are not available. The only exception is property assessed valuation; the average of property valuation for SPDs in each category is presented below. SPDs in the big three metro areas are relatively strong in terms of valuation than SPDs in any other areas.

Property valuation ($1,000)

Area		All counties	Big three metro areas	Other metro areas	Regional centers	non-metro areas
Year	2001	348,057	946,993	366,665	381,617	120,240
	2006	429,975	977,181	474,943	506,168	147,704
	2011	587,043	1,310,784	630,969	711,815	218,685
	2015	829,098	1,674,720	939,510	1,059,989	377,117

Source: Basic Budget Query 2001-2015, the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts

Fiscal Categories

The availability of fiscal data for Nebraska SPDs comes from the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA). Nebraska communities are required to annually submit uniform budget information to the Auditor of Public Accounts. These data are not audited, other than by the State, and are reported on a cash-basis, rather than modified accrual basis required by the Government Accounting Standards Board.[1]

The following categories, considered important in the public budgeting/finance literature illuminating government fiscal structure, are used to paint Nebraska's local finance picture at the special district level:

- Revenues
  - ✓ Total revenues
  - ✓ Local revenues: property taxes, nameplate capacity taxes, in-lieu of tax and others
  - ✓ Federal receipts
  - ✓ State receipts
- Expenditures by type
  - ✓ Total expenditures
  - ✓ Operating expenditures
  - ✓ Capital expenditures
  - ✓ Debt service expenditures
  - ✓ Other expenditures
- Debt
  - ✓ Total outstanding debt
  - ✓ Debt principal
  - ✓ Debt interest

[1] Many of the communities in Nebraska are relatively small and do not produce audited annual financial reports. In order include all NE SPDs, we opted to study these budget reports. In doing so, we realize that there is somewhat greater potential for reporting error.

- Liquidity
  - ✓ Cash reserves

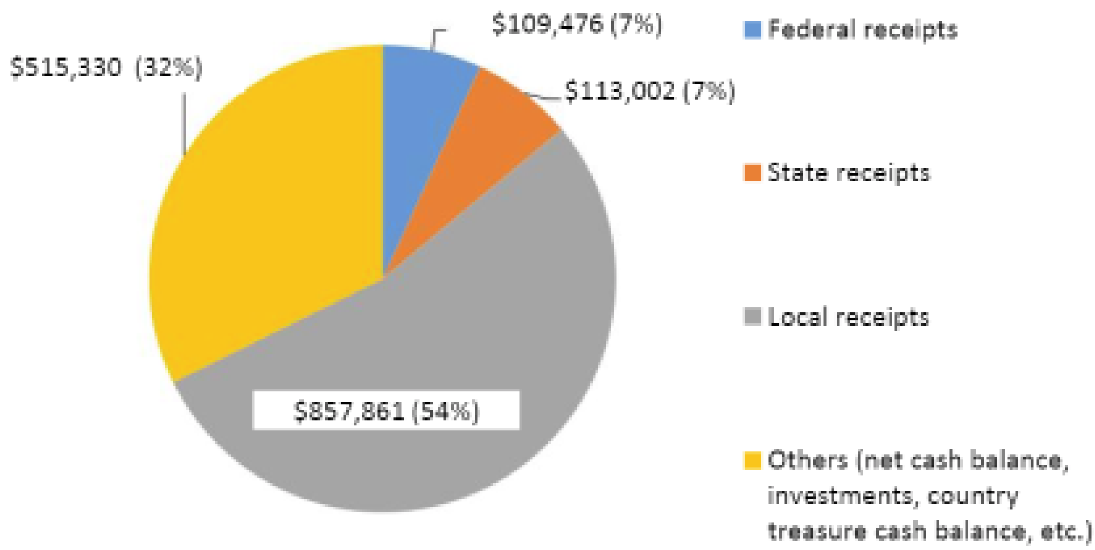
It has to be noted that due to the lack of population data, no budget information for SPDs in this report is in per capita terms. Further, a small number of SPDs are excluded in our analysis because of some reporting errors the APA data involve.

Overview of Nebraska SPD Budgets

SPD Revenues

Average total per capita SPD revenues (as of 2015): $ 1,595,669

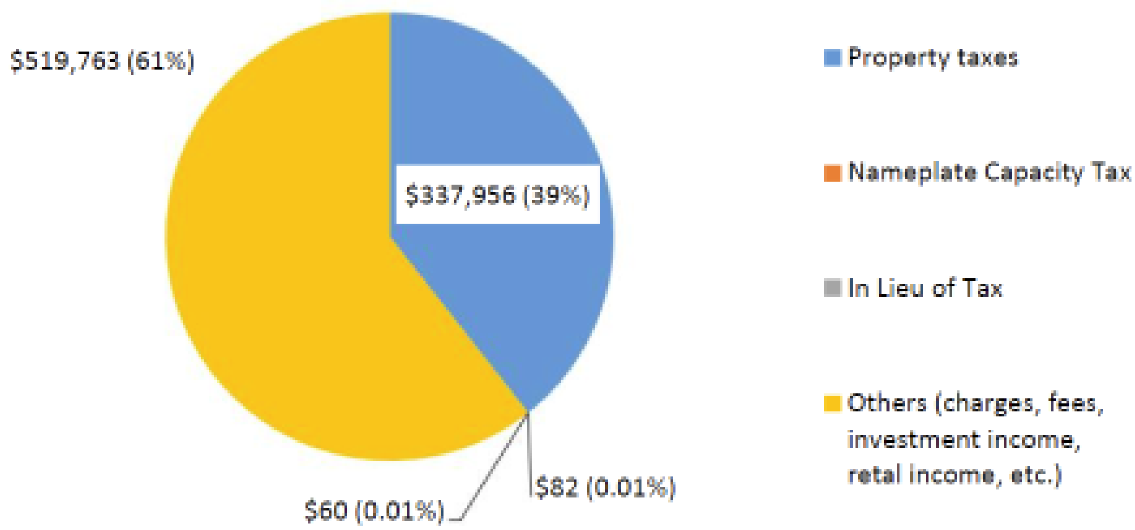
- 7 percent of SPD revenues comes from the State
- Federal receipts also comprise 7 percent of SPD revenues
- *86 percent of revenues are local source and consists of reserves, taxes, fees and charges*



SPD Own-Source Revenues

Average total per capita own-source SPD revenues (as of 2015): $857,861

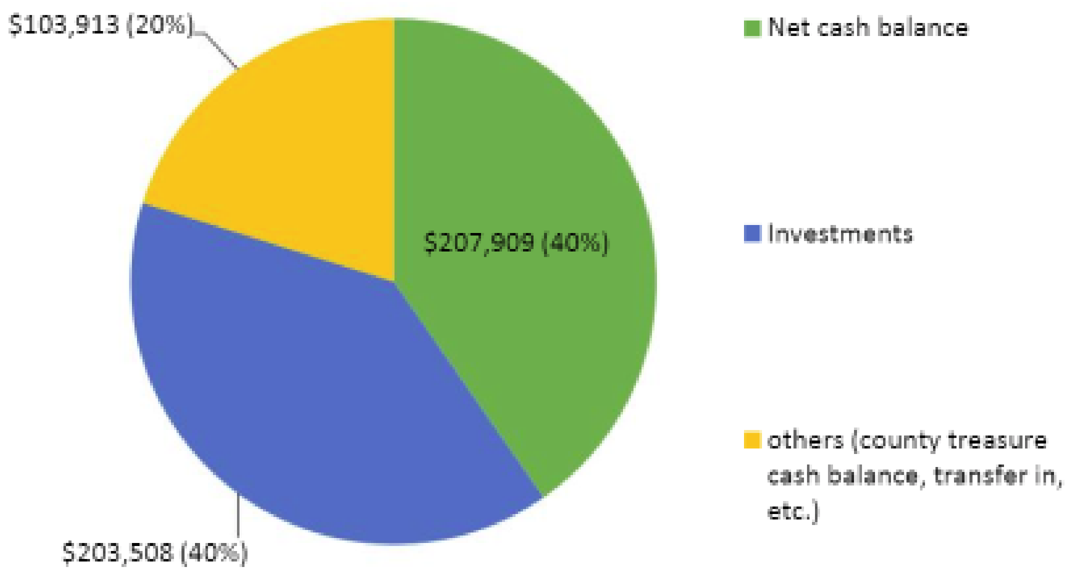
- *39 percent of SPD revenues are generated from the property tax*
- 0.02 percent of SPD revenues are from the nameplate capacity tax and In-lieu of tax
- Over 60 percent of SPD revenues include charges, fees, investment income, rental income, etc.



SPD Other Revenues

Average total per capita other revenues (as of 2015): $515,330

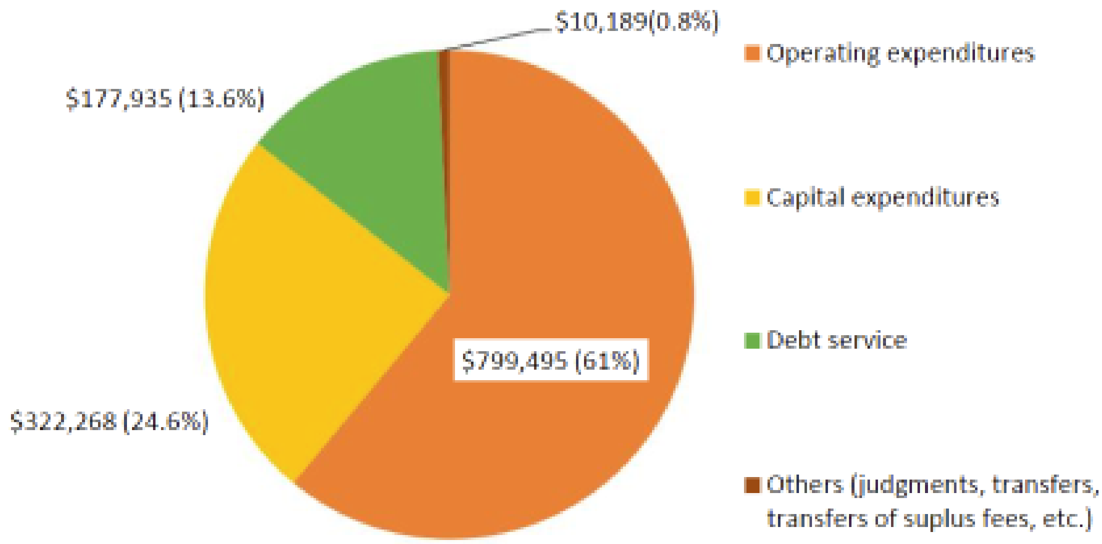
- 40 percent of other revenues are balance forward/cash reserves from the preceding year
- 40 percent of other revenues come from investments
- 20 percent of other revenues include county treasure balance and transfers in



SPD Expenditures

Average total per capita SPD expenditures (as of 2015): $1,309,887

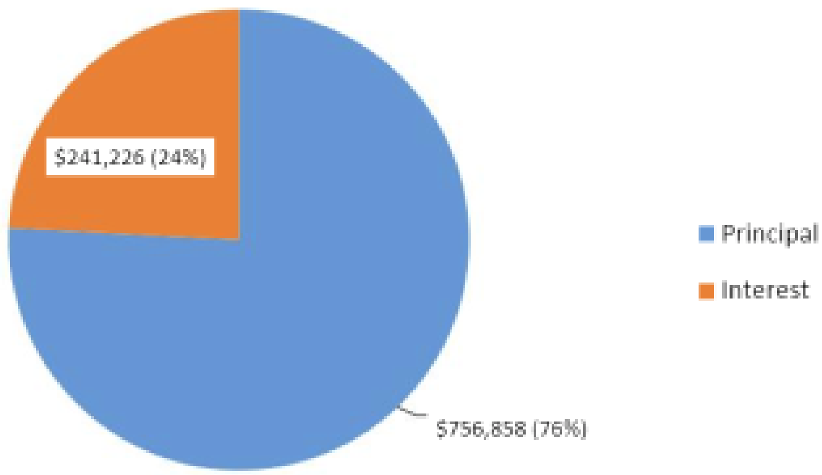
- Operating expenditures account for over 60 percent of SPD expenditures
- Capital expenditures account for 25 percent of expenditures
- Debt service accounts for 14 percent of SPD expenditures



SPD Debt

Average total per capita outstanding debt (as of 2015): $998,084

- 24 percent of debt-related expenditures are in the form of interest



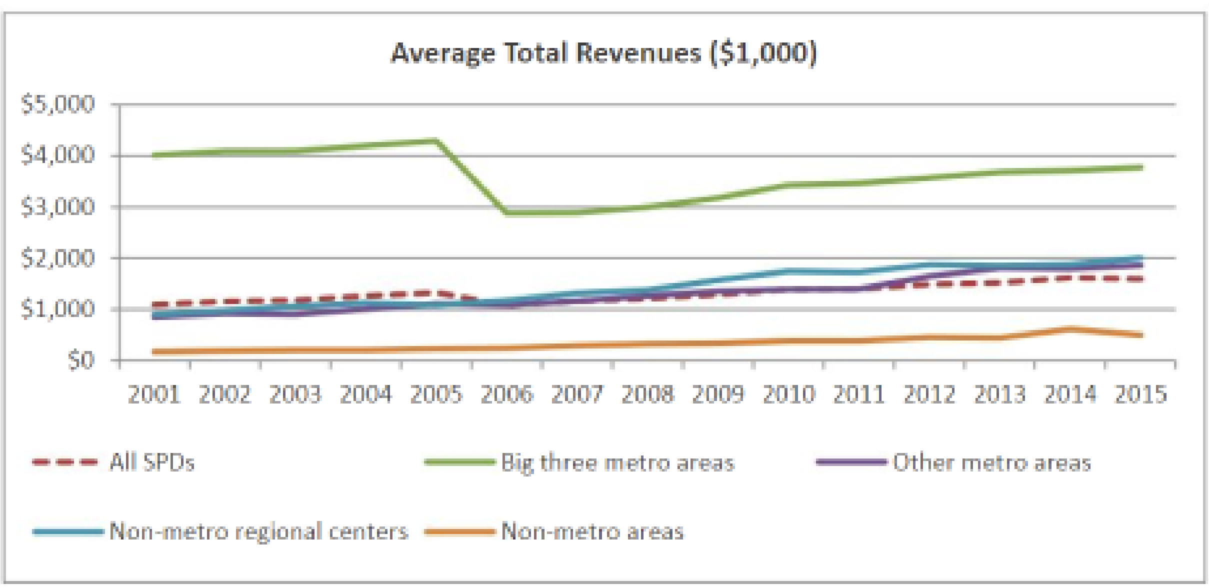
Summary of Trends Over Time

Revenues

Total revenues

Nebraska's SPDs collected an average of $1,095,191 in 2001 and total revenues grew annually to $1,595,669 in 2015; 45 percent during the period, or 3 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

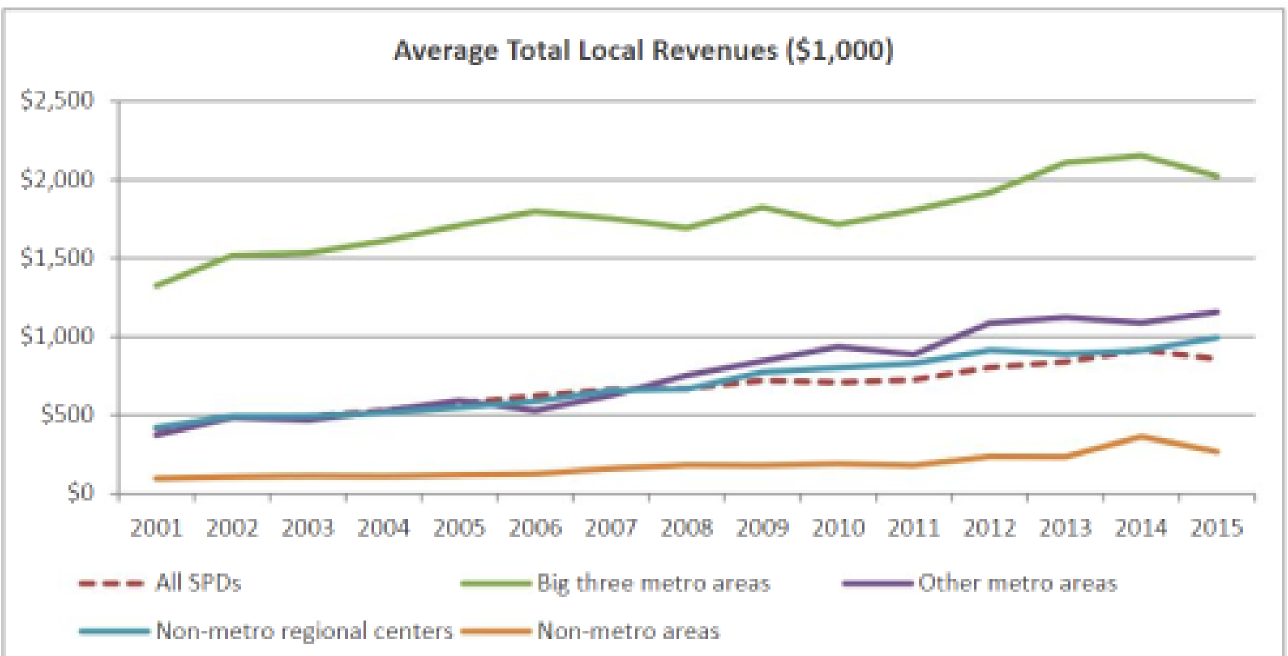
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a rather remarkable pattern in total revenues during the period of study. Total revenues were relatively stable from 2001 ($4,014,611) to 2005 ($4,293,434). After a sharp decline in 2006 ($2,881,078), total revenues grew to $3,774,925 in 2015;
- SPDs in the other metro areas tracked the statewide pattern: up from $855,689 in 2001 to $1,863,469 in 2015;
- The revenue pattern for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was similar to districts in the other metropolitan areas: up from $904,765 in 2001 to $2,003,493 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD revenues consistently grew from $176,547 (2001) to $500,256 (2015)



Total local revenues

On average, total local revenues for SPDs in Nebraska was $413,837 in 2001 while it was $857,861 in 2015; total local revenues grew during the period at a rate of 107 percent, or 8 percent annually. The fiscal trend varies by metropolitan status:

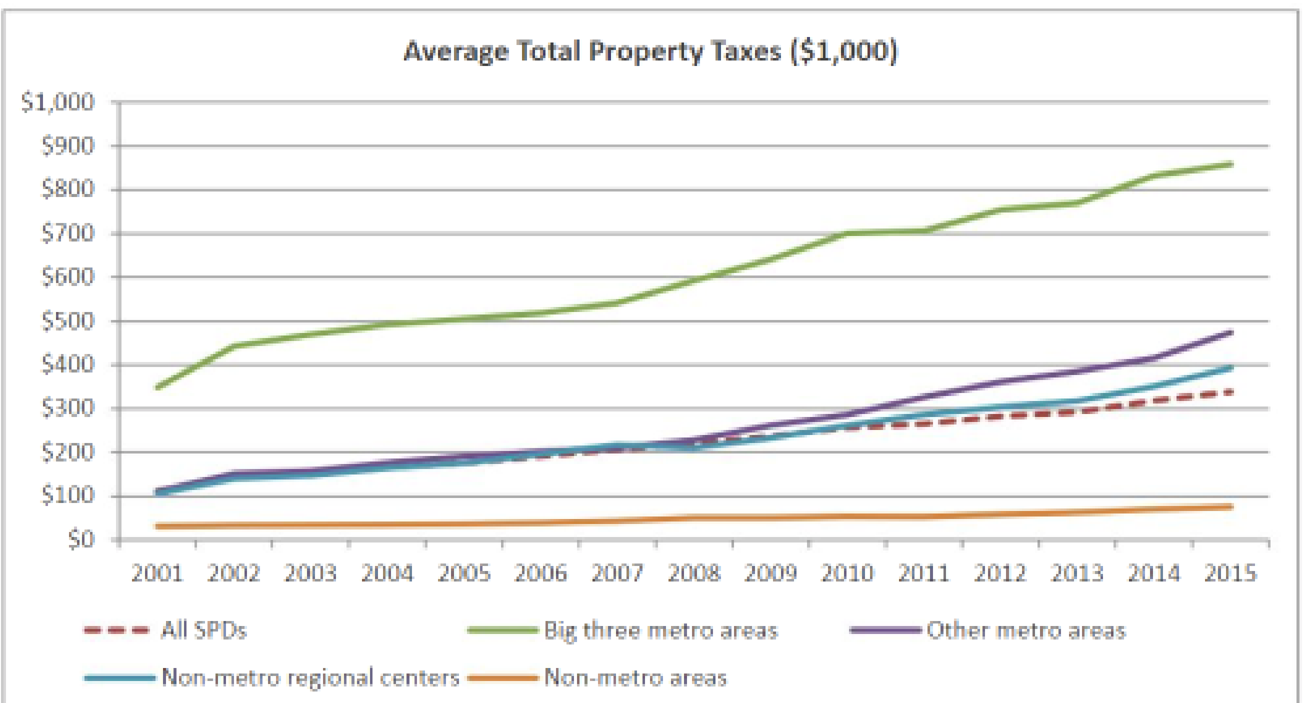
- Despite some fluctuations, growth in local revenues for SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas grew from $1,324,629 in 2001 to $2,023,468 in 2015;
- SPDs in the other metro areas have experienced a similar pattern in local revenues: up from $372,584 in 2001 to $1,155,798 in 2015. There were slight revenue shortfalls in 2006 ($528,100) and 2011 ($885,494);
- Nonmetropolitan regional centers SPD local revenues tracked the statewide pattern: up from $421,371 (2001) to $993,895 (2015);
- Local revenues for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan areas have had a relatively stable pattern, but also grew consistently: from $96,675 in 2001 to $266,211 in 2015



Total property taxes

Nebraska's SPDs collected an average of $112,065 total property taxes in 2001 and it grew annually to $337,956 in 2015; the growth rate of total property taxes during the period was 202 percent, with an annual rate of 14 percent. A difference between the areas exists:

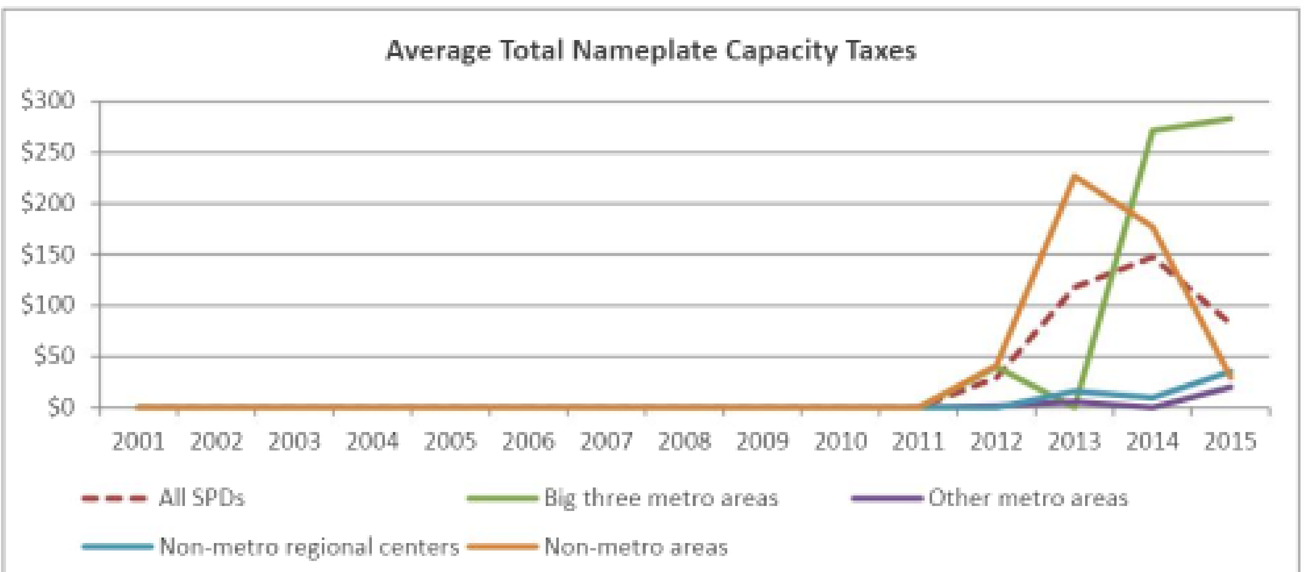
- A rapid increase in total property taxes for SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas is observed. From 2001 to 2015, property taxes grew from $348,240 to $858,379;
- SPDs in the other metro areas have also experienced steady property tax growth during the period: from $110,281 in 2001 to $473,867 in 2015;
- Property taxes for SPDs in the non-metro regional centers tracked the statewide pattern in general: up from $105,331 in 2001 to $392,625 in 2015. There was a slight decline in 2008 ($210,297);
- Compared to SPDs in other areas, the property tax pattern of nonmetropolitan SPDs was relatively stable: from $30,923 in 2001 to $75,277 in 2015



Total nameplate capacity taxes

Nebraska's SPDs began to collect nameplate capacity taxes in 2012 ($29) and it grew annually to $82 in 2015; 178 percent for four years, or 13 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

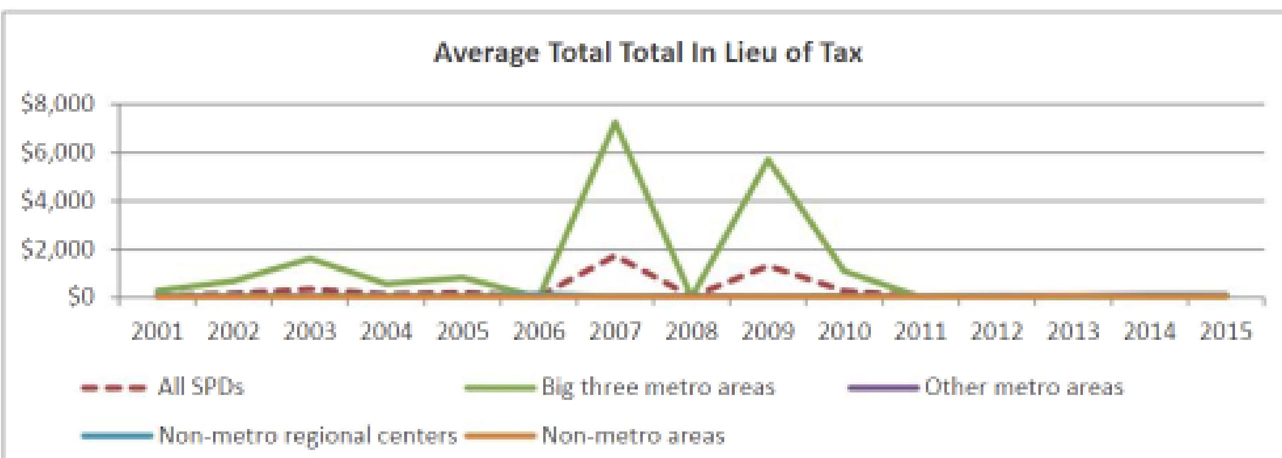
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced rapid increase in nameplate capacity tax collections during the period of study. From 2012 to 2015, nameplate capacity taxes grew from $40 to $283. A sharp increase in nameplate capacity taxes particularly occurred in 2014, with a mean of $272;
- The nameplate capacity tax pattern for SPDs in the other metro areas was relatively stable: from $2 in 2012 to $20 in 2015;
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a constant nameplate capacity tax pattern during the period: from $16 in 2012 to $35 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD nameplate capacity taxes tracked the statewide pattern: rapid growth from 2012 ($41) to 2013 ($227) before sharp declines in 2014 ($177) and 2015 ($30)



Total in lieu of taxes

While not a sizable source of revenues, Nebraska SPDs generally receive some payments in lieu of property taxes. Sources of these payments may be the State (e.g., the acquisition of land for wildlife management purposes), hospitals and/or housing development agencies[2]. On average, total in lieu of tax collections for Nebraska's SPDs was $86 in 2001 and decreased modestly to $60 in 2015. The decreasing rate of in lieu of taxes during the period was 30 percent with an annual rate of 2 percent. There is variation in these collections by area:

- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas experienced a conspicuous pattern in in lieu of taxes. During the period, in lieu of taxes declined from $276 in 2001 to $9 in 2015. However, some fluctuations are identified: $1,613 in 2003, $ 7,256 in 2007 and $5,696 in 2009;
- SPDs in the other metro areas experienced a steady pattern in in lieu of taxes from 2001 ($33) to 2015 ($107);
- Although there were some fluctuations, the in lieu of tax trend for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was similar to those for SPDs in the other metro areas: up from $84 in 2001 to $95 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD in lieu of taxes also tracked the pattern of nonmetropolitan SPDs: $31 (2001) to $58 (2015)

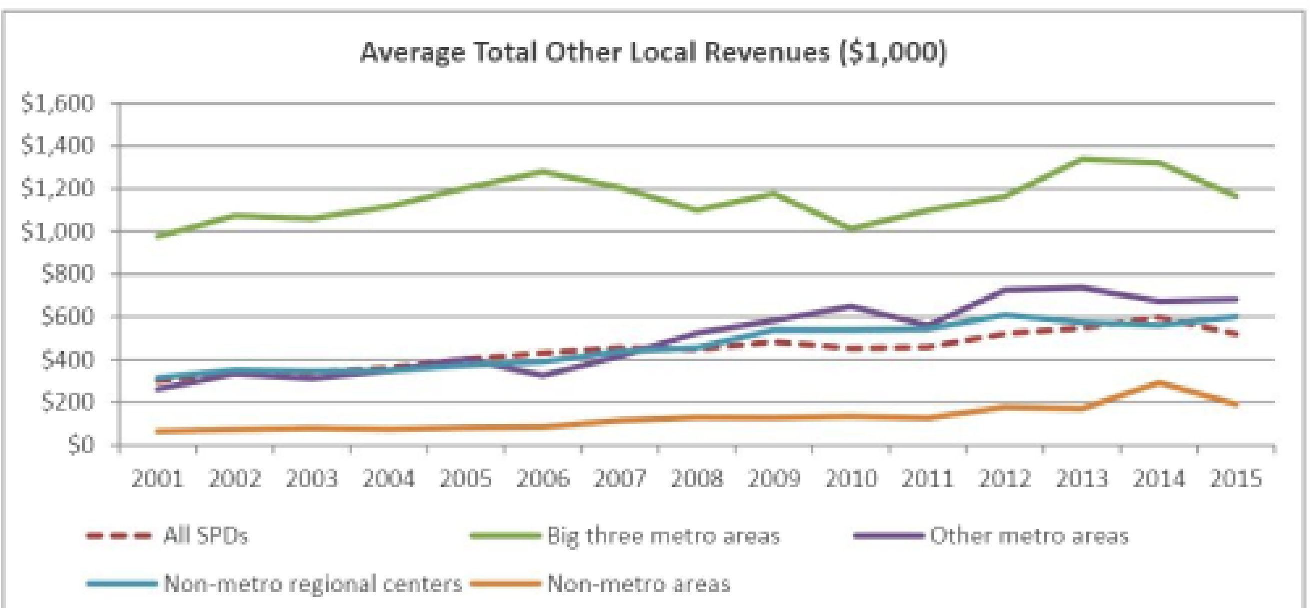


[2] Source: http://www.revenue.nebraska.gov/PAD/legal/regs/41-In_Lieu_of_Tax.html

Total other local revenues

Nebraska's SPDs collected, on average, $301,686 in 2001 in other local revenues (primarily, user charges, fees, and rental/investment income) and the amount grew annually to $519,763 in 2015; 72 percent during the period, or 5 percent annually. Similar to other revenue patterns, there are important differences between the groups:

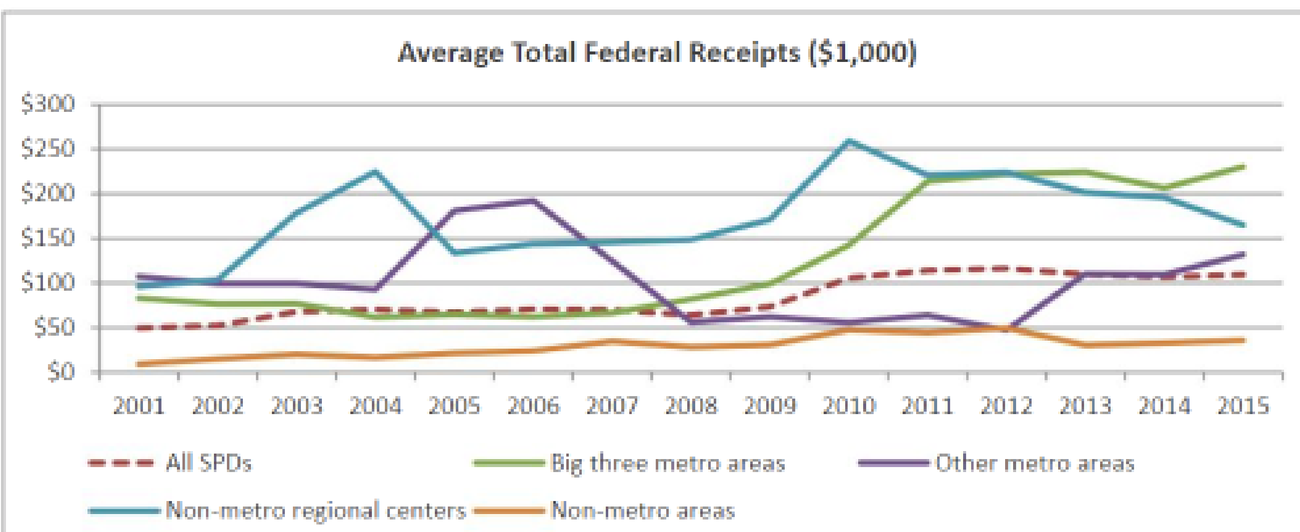
- Despite some fluctuations, SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have had a somewhat consistent level of other local revenues during the period of study: $976,113 in 2001 and $1,164,796 in 2015;
- In the other metro areas, SPDs experienced other local revenue patterns different from SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas: constant growth from 2001 ($262,269) to 2015 ($681,804) with slight shortfalls in 2006 ($326,116) and 2011 ($559,501);
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers tracked the statewide pattern: modest growth in other local revenue from $315,957 in 2001 to $601,139 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD other local revenues were relatively even: $65,721 (2001) to $190,846 (2015)



Total federal receipts

Some Nebraska SPDs receive direct payments from the federal government. On average, total federal receipts for Nebraska's SPDs was $49,484 in 2001 and $109,476 in 2015; total federal receipts grew during the period at a rate of 121 percent, or 9 percent annually. A difference between the areas exists:

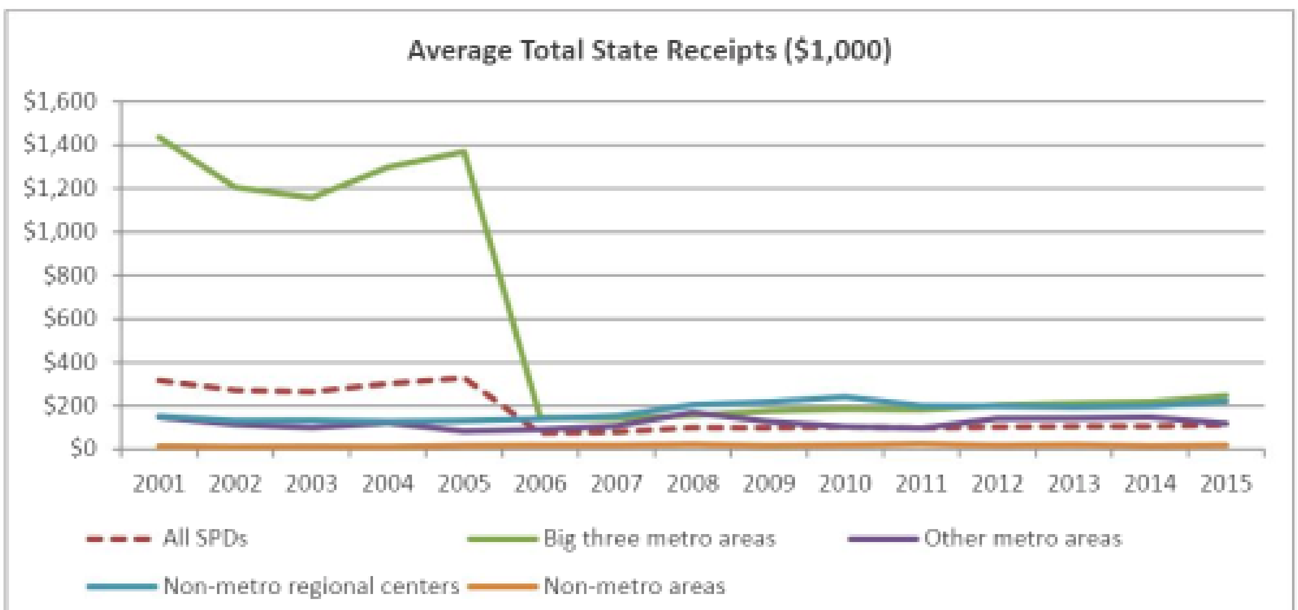
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a relatively constant increase in federal receipts. From 2001 to 2015, federal receipts surged upward from $82,892 to $230,366. A sharp growth federal receipts occurred in 2011 ($214,001);
- SPDs in the other metro areas experienced remarkable variations in federal receipts: the decreasing trend existed from 2001 ($107,141) to 2012 ($47,033) with some fluctuations in 2005 ($180,876) and 2006 ($192,270). It was followed by growth since 2013 ($109,941) to 2015 ($131,771);
- The federal receipt pattern for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was somewhat similar to those for SPDs in the big three metro areas: $96,057 in 2001 and $164,728 in 2015. Some fluctuations are observed in 2004 ($224,595) and 2010 ($259,186);
- Nonmetropolitan SPD federal receipts have had a constant pattern: $8,919 (2001) to $35,607 (2015)



Total state receipts

SPDs in Nebraska can receive several types of state aid including, motor vehicle pro-rate, state aid to core services, grants for technology infrastructure. An average of $316,685 in state receipts was received in 2001 and aid declined annually to $113,002 in 2015; the decreasing rate of total state receipts during the period was 64 percent, with an annual rate of 5 percent. The trend in state receipts varies by metropolitan status:

- The marked pattern of total state receipts for SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas is identified. On average, state receipts were relatively constant from 2007 ($141,441) to 2015 ($247,150). Prior to this, SPDs experienced a sharp decline in state receipts from $1,435,433 in 2001 to 2006 ($146,518);
- SPDs in the other metro areas have experienced somewhat steady state receipts from $147,240 in 2001 to $119,235 in 2015;
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a constant pattern in state receipts during the period: from $151,797 in 2001 to $220,599 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD state receipts were stable: from $13,480 in 2001 to $18,931 in 2015

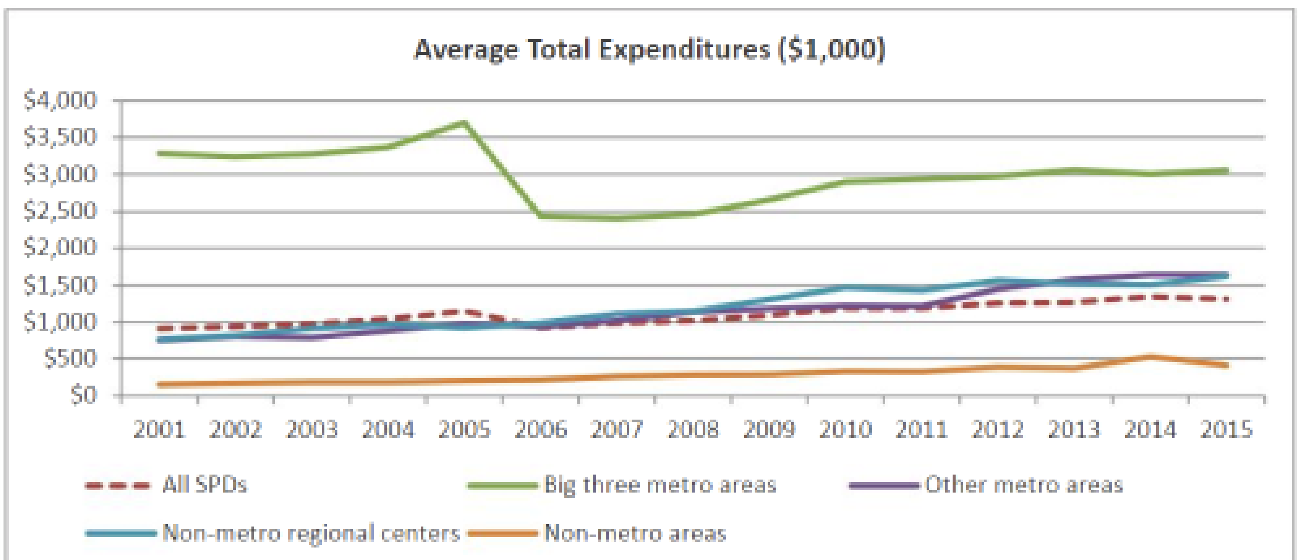


Expenditures by Type

Total expenditures

Nebraska's SPDs spent an average of $911,704 in 2001 and total expenditures grew annually to $1,309,887 in 2015; 44 percent during the period, or 3 percent annually. There is also variation in expenditure patterns across metropolitan areas:

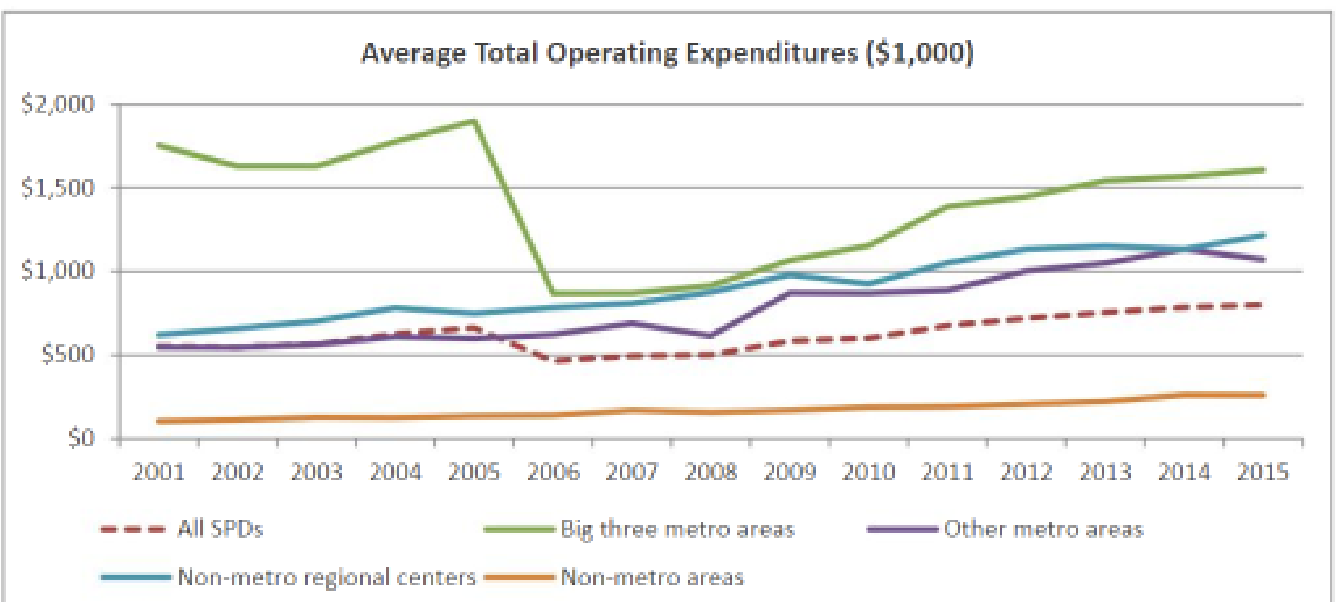
- Total expenditures in the big three metropolitan areas grew modestly from 2001 ($3,285,161) to 2005 ($3,702,308). In 2006, SPDs experienced a rapid decline in total expenditures, with a mean of $2,435,948. Then the trend surged upward again to $3,056,366 in 2015;
- The expenditure pattern for SPDs in the other metro areas was different from SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas: constant growth from 2001 ($751,146) to 2015 ($1,639,741) with a slight drop in 2011 ($1,215,085);
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers experienced the expenditure pattern similar with the state-wide trend: up from $764,741 in 2001 to $1,623,614 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD total expenditures were relatively constant: $154,733 (2001) to $410,877 (2015)



Total operating expenditures

Average total operating expenditures for Nebraska's SPDs (expenditures for capital improvement and debt are excluded) was $552,719 in 2001 and grew to $799,495 in 2015; total operating expenditures increased during the period at a rate of 45 percent, or 3 percent annually. By grouping we find:

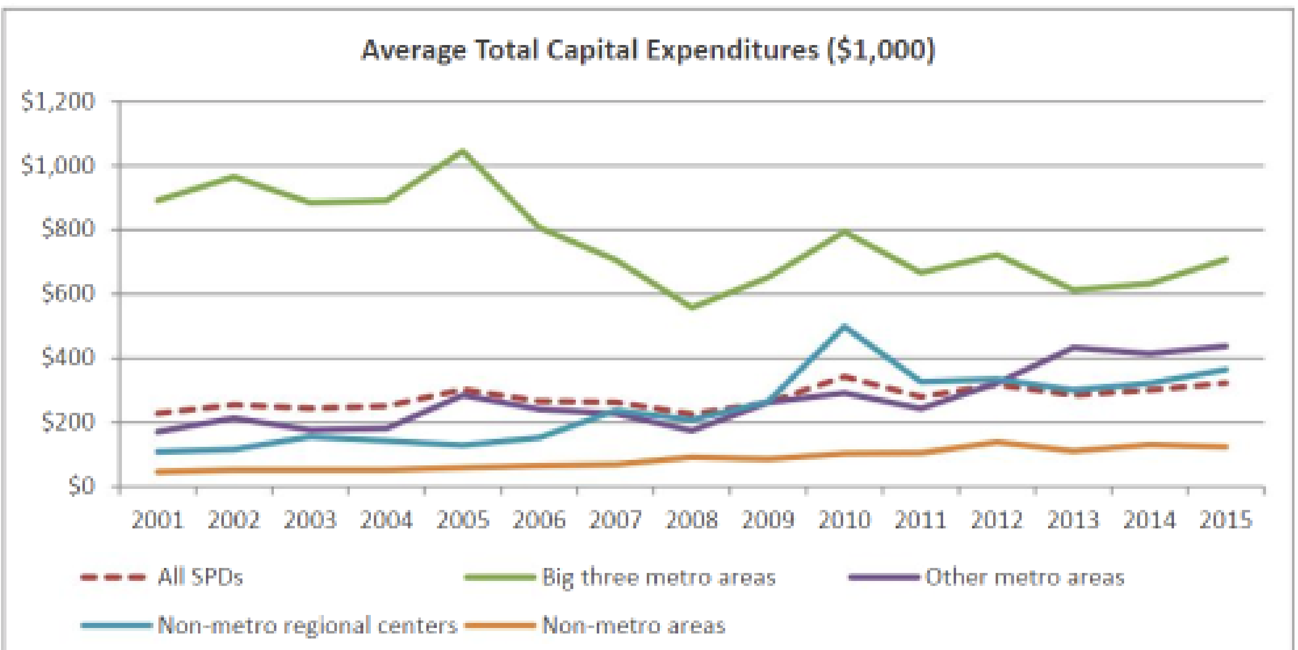
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced a fluctuating pattern in operating expenditures: growth from 2001 ($1,754,592) to 2005 ($1,899,321), a large-scale drop in 2006 ($869,363), and a constant increase again from 2007 ($869,883) to 2015 ($1,607,886);
- SPDs in the other metro areas experienced constant growth in operating expenditures: from $547,080 in 2001 to $1,072,227 in 2015;
- The operating expenditure pattern for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was similar to those for SPDs in the other metro areas: $620,499 in 2001 and $1,215,567 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD operating expenditures had a relatively stable trend: $103,486 (2001) to $261,580 (2015)



Total capital expenditures

Capital expenditures accounted for about one-fourth (25 percent) of total SPD expenditures in 2015. During the period of study, these expenses, on average, grew from $227,538 in 2001 to $322,268 in 2015; 42 percent during the period, or 3 percent annually. By group, there are large variations in SPD capital expenditures:

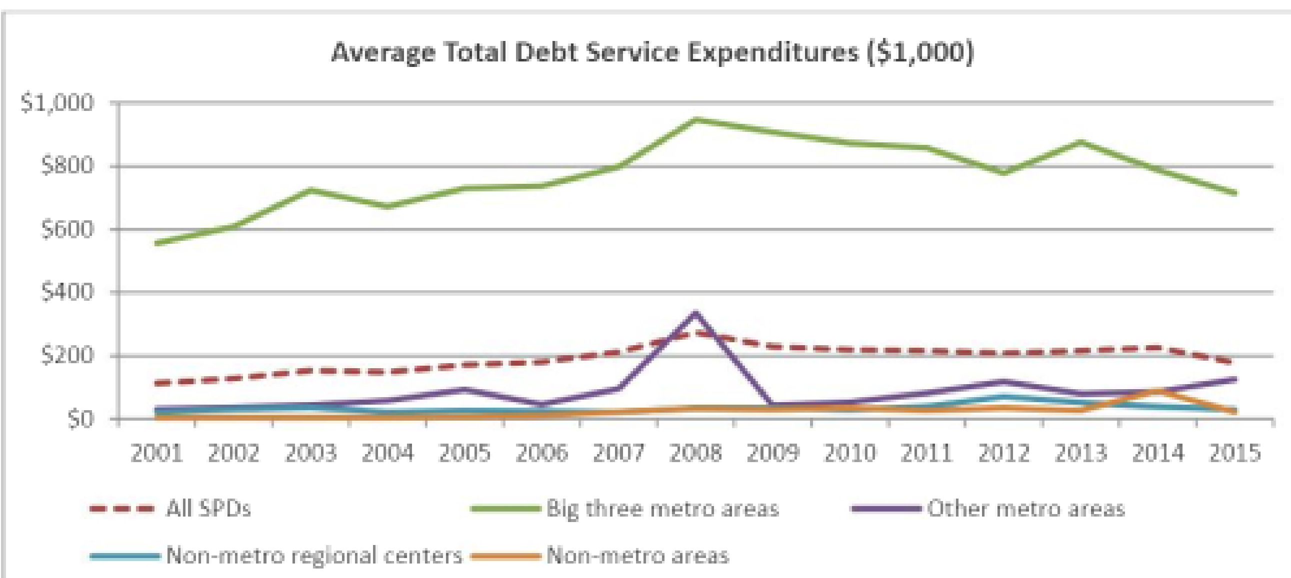
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced fluctuations in capital expenditures over the last 15 years. Generally, capital expenditures have declined from $891,577 in 2001 to $708,404 in 2015. Particularly from 2006 ($807,119) to 2008 ($557,533), there were sharp shortfalls in capital expenditures;
- The capital expenditure pattern of SPDs in the other metro areas was largely different from those of SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas: constant growth from 2001 ($170,620) to 2015 ($437,358);
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers tracked the state-wide pattern: growth from 2001 ($108,385) to 2015 ($364,357);
- Nonmetropolitan SPD capital expenditures annually grew but were relatively even: $45,541 (2001) to $123,652 (2015)



Total debt service expenditures

As of 2015, Nebraska SPDs spent about 14 percent of their budgets for debt service purposes. SPDs in Nebraska averaged $112,580 in total debt service expenditures in 2001 and those payments grew annually to $177,935 in 2015; the growth rate of total debt service expenditures during the period was 58 percent, with an annual rate of 4 percent. The trend in debt service expenditures varies by metropolitan status:

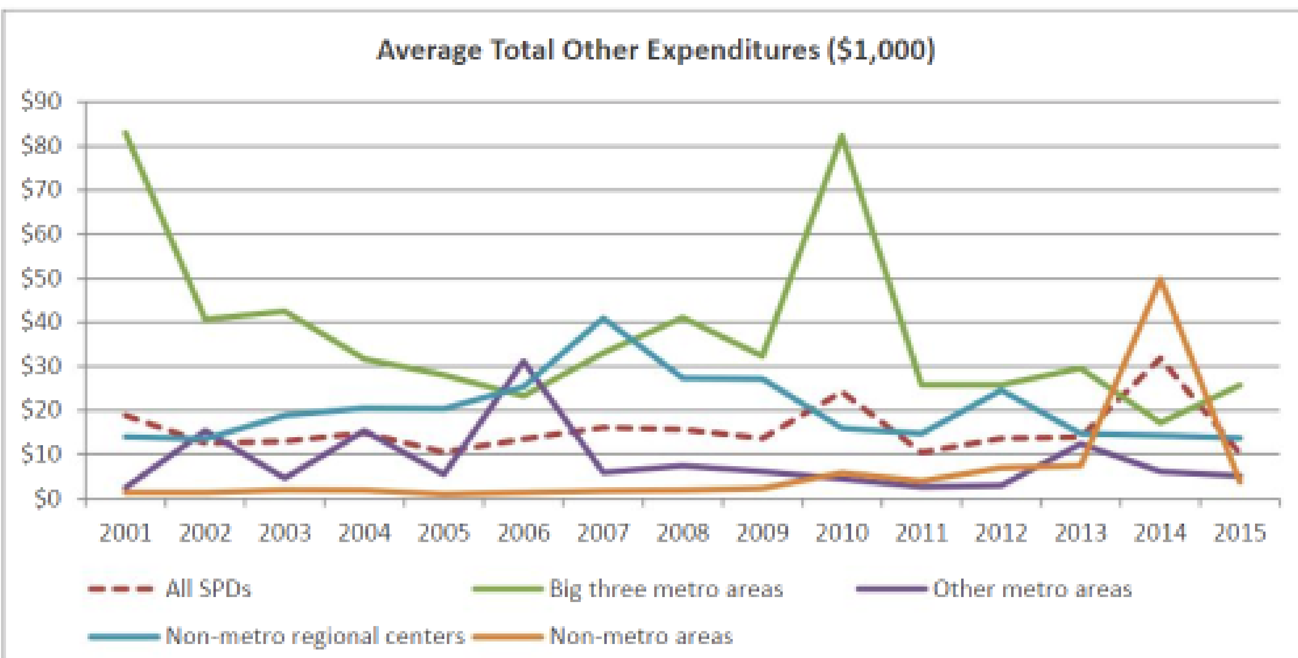
- Average debt service expenditures for SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas fluctuated: from 2001 ($556,003) to 2008 ($947,002), debt service expenditures increased, however, the trend in debt service expenditures reversed from 2009 ($907,934) and 2015 ($714,359);
- SPDs in the other metro areas have experienced modest growth in debt service expenditures during the period of study: $31,001 in 2001 to $125,064 in 2015, with a sharp increase in 2008 ($335,172);
- The debt service expenditure pattern for SPDs in the non-metro regional centers have had a consistency during the period: from $21,819 in 2001 to $30,002 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD debt service expenditures grew from $4,375 in 2001 to $21,905 in 2015



Total other expenditures

An average of total other expenditures (judgments, transfers, transfers of surplus fees, etc.) for Nebraska's SPDs was $18,868 in 2001 while it was $10,189 in 2015; total other expenditures decreased during the period at a rate of 46 percent, or 3 percent annually. A difference between the areas is found:

- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced fluctuation in other expenditures: for instance, $82,990 in 2001, $23,236 in 2006 and $82,402 in 2010. Recently, other expenditures declined to $25,718 in 2015;
- SPDs in the other metro areas experienced a stable pattern in other expenditures from 2007 ($5,880) to 2015 ($5,092);
- The other expenditure pattern for SPDs in the nonmetropolitan regional centers was somewhat similar to the state-wide trend: $14,038 in 2001 and $13,688 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD other expenditures were relatively stable overtime (from $1,330 in 2001 to $3,973 in 2011), but there have been some changes in recent years (e.g., $49,839 in 2014)

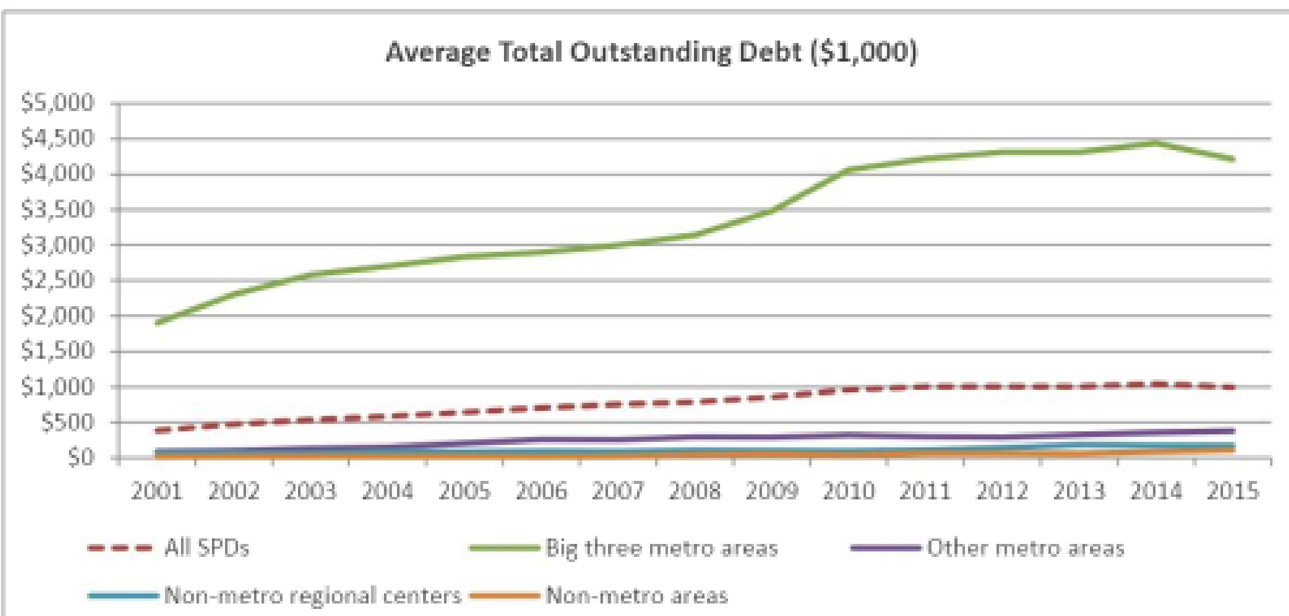


Debt

Total outstanding debt

Outstanding debt consists of both principal and the interest on the associated debt. In 2001, Nebraska's SPDs had an average of $383,659 in total outstanding debt and it grew annually to $998,084 in 2015; 160 percent during the period, or 11 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

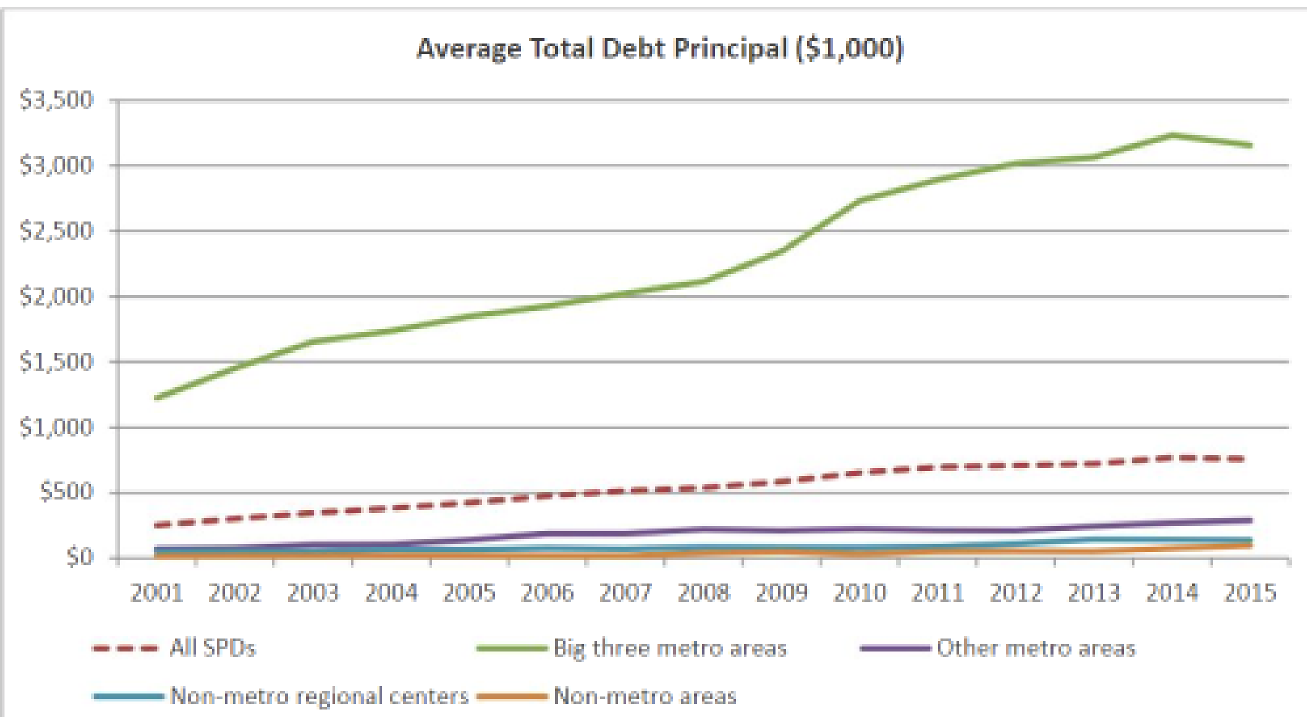
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas experienced relatively rapid growth in outstanding debt from 2001 ($1,901,843) to 2014 ($4,435,993). Recently, there was a drop in outstanding debt ($4,213,671 in 2015);
- The outstanding debt pattern for SPDs in the other metro areas rose gradually from $90,647 in 2001 to $378,850 in 2015;
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced a constant increase in outstanding debt from 2001 ($71,042) to 2015 ($172,676);
- Nonmetropolitan SPD outstanding debt also grew annually, but at a slower rate: from $16,802 (2001) to $108,741 (2015)



Total debt principal

On average, total debt principal for Nebraska's SPDs was $250,264 in 2001 and it grew annually to $756,858 in 2015; total principal on debt increased during the period at a rate of 202 percent, or 14 percent annually. Different patterns are observed according to the metro areas:

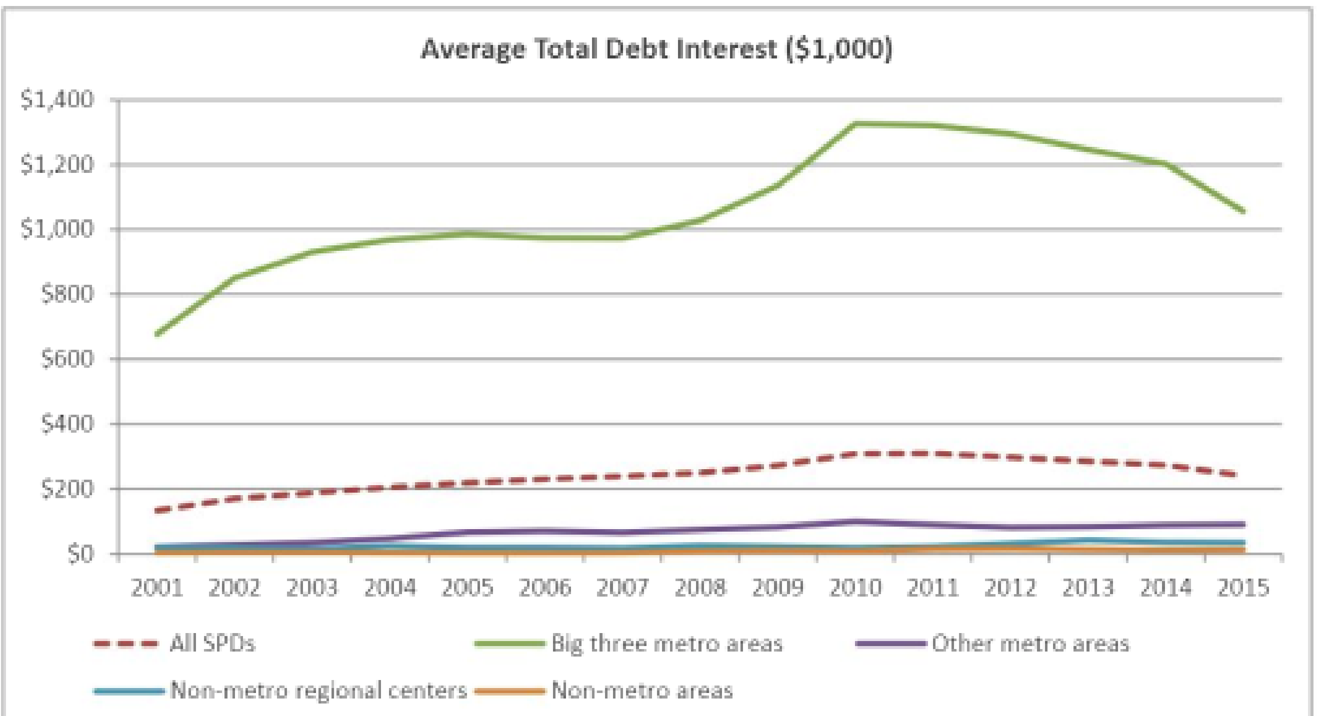
- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas have experienced steady growth in debt principal from 2001 ($1,224,178) to 2015 ($3,157,266). It increased at a relatively fast rate compared to SPDs in other metro areas;
- SPDs in the other metro areas also experienced consistent growth in debt principal: from $69,843 in 2001 to $288,202 in 2015;
- SPD debt principal in the nonmetropolitan regional centers have increased annually: from $50,831 in 2001 to $138,128 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPD per capita debt principal grew at the slowest rate: from $12,907 (2001) to $95,302 (2015)



Total debt interest

In 2001, Nebraska SPDs paid, on average, $133,395 in debt interest and it increased annually to $241,226 in 2015; the growth rate of total debt interest during the period was 81 percent, with an annual rate of 6 percent. The trend in debt interest varies by metropolitan status:

- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas experienced growth from 2001 ($677,664) to 2010 ($1,326,582) when the trend in debt interest reversed in 2011 ($1,321,688) and SPD debt interest payments declined to $1,056,406 in 2015;
- Despite some small-scale fluctuations, SPDs in the other metro areas have experienced consistent growth in debt interest: from $20,804 in 2001 to $90,648 in 2015;
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers have also experienced growth in debt interest from $20,211 in 2001 to $34,548 in 2015;
- Nonmetropolitan SPDs' debt interest payments were somewhat stable compared to SPDs in other areas: from $3,896 in 2001 to $13,439 in 2015



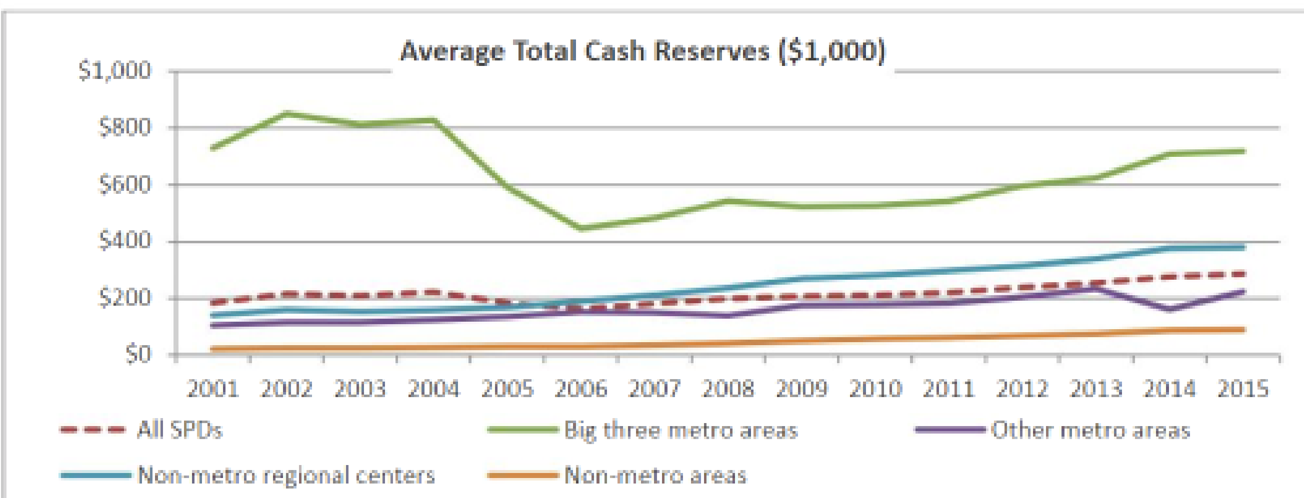
Liquidity

Liquidity refers to reserves SPDs have available for "rainy days", meaning funds to help with revenue shortfalls, unexpected expenditures and/or to fill gaps in revenue flows so communities do not need to short-term borrow.

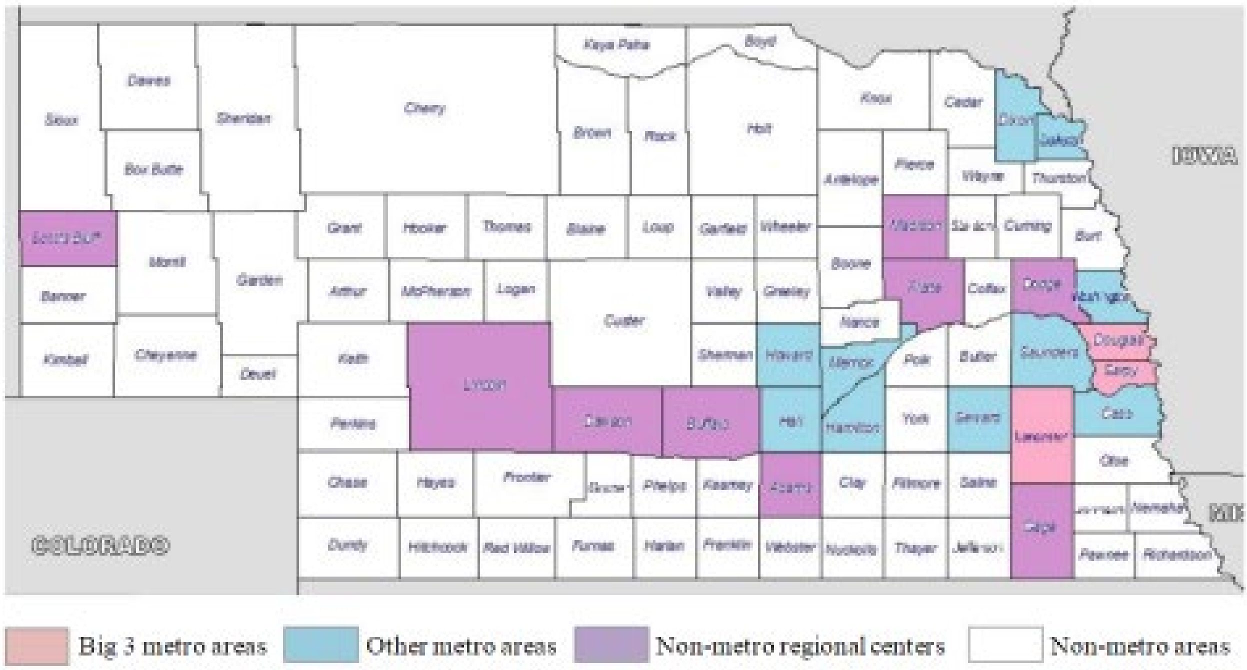
Total cash reserves

Nebraska's SPDs possessed an average of $183,487 in 2001 and total cash reserves grew annually to $285,782 in 2015; 56 percent during the period, or 4 percent annually. There is also a difference between the groups:

- SPDs in the big three metropolitan areas experienced decline in cash reserves from 2001 ($729,449) to 2006 ($445,130). This trend changed in 2007 ($482,996). SPD cash reserves then grew to $718,558 in 2015;
- The cash reserve pattern for SPDs in the other metro areas tracked the state-wide pattern: up from $104,543 in 2001 to $223,728 in 2015. There was a sudden drop in 2014 ($160,369);
- SPDs in the non-metro regional centers experienced constant cash reserves growth from 2001 ($140,024) to 2015 ($379,879);
- Nonmetropolitan SPD cash reserves were relatively even but grew annually: $21,814 (2001) to $89,379 (2015)



Appendix 1. Nebraska Counties Classified by Metropolitan Status



Sources: Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

Juvenile Reentry Mentoring Program

FALL 2018

University of Nebraska Omaha

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The College has become a national leader among similar colleges, with nine programs ranked in the top 25 in the nation. Our faculty ranks are among the finest in their disciplines. Faculty, staff, and students are integral to the community and state because of our applied research, service learning, and community partnerships. We take our duty seriously to help address social needs and craft solutions to local, state, and national problems. For more information, visit our website: cpacs.unomaha.edu

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Juvenile Reentry Mentoring Program

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Fall 2018

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University of Nebraska Omaha

EVIDENCE-BASED NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA MENTORING PROGRAMS
2015 to 2018

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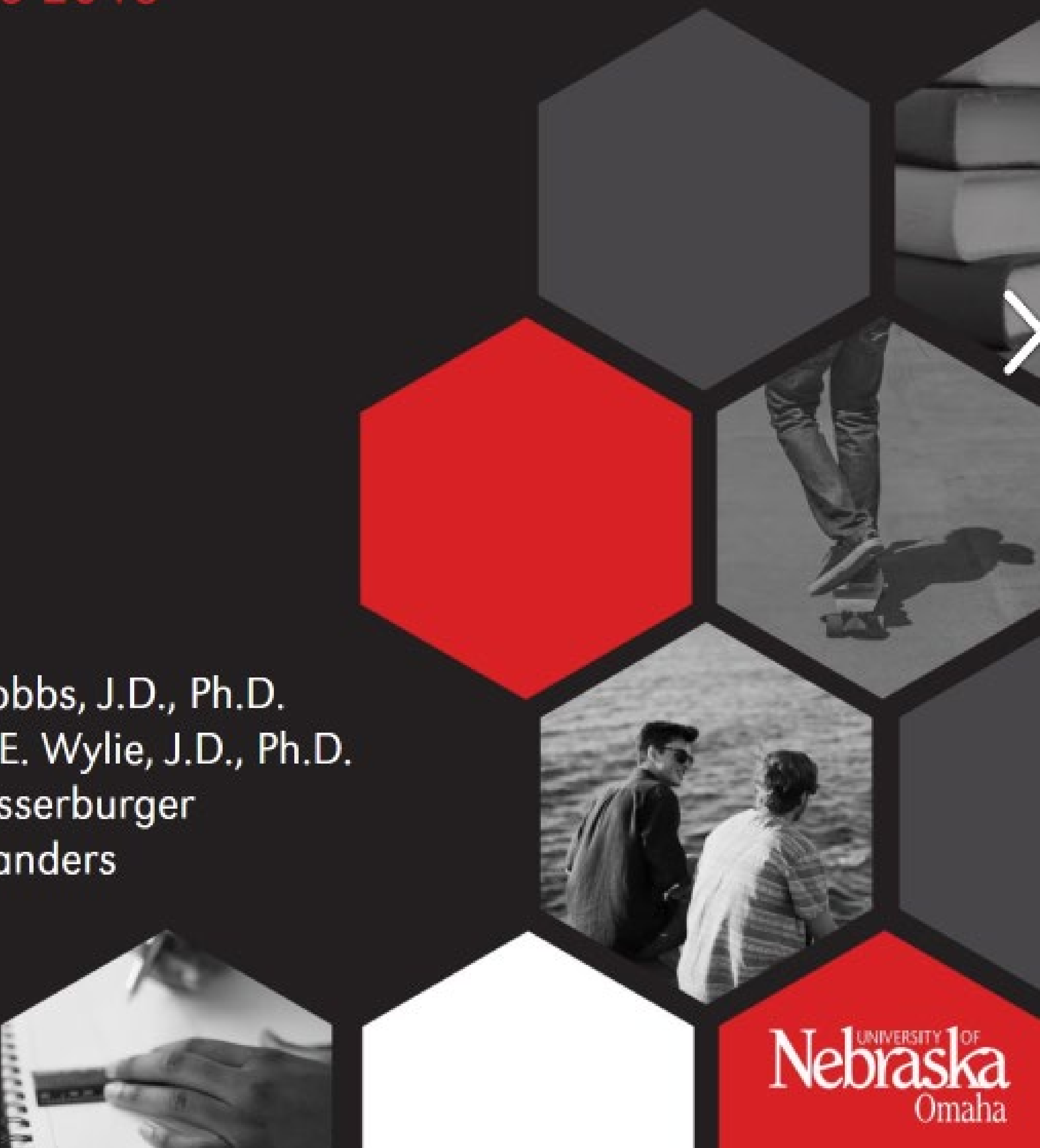

University of Nebraska Omaha

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This project is supported by Contract No. CC-18-643 awarded by the Nebraska Crime Commission and points of view or opinions contained in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Nebraska Crime Commission or the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program.

Executive Summary

Prior research has demonstrated that mentoring may have promising outcomes for youth engaged in, or thought to be at risk for, delinquent behavior. The Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program specifically outlines funding activities designed to reduce delinquent behavior. Mentoring specifically falls under "services that will positively impact juveniles and families in the juvenile justice system." There are four different mentoring models funded, at least partially, by the Nebraska Community-based Aid fund: community-based, school-based, justice-based and Youth Initiated Mentoring™.

This report is a first glance at the use of mentoring programs funded through Community-based Aid (CBA) in Nebraska and how these programs impact future law violations.

From July 1, 2015 through March 2018, a total of eleven mentoring programs were funded through CBA funds. A total of 866 cases were referred to a mentoring program, with roughly 714 participating. Approximately 430 (60.2%) were matched to a mentor during this time. Roughly 75% of the time, youth are identified and referred to a CBA mentoring program by their school or through the county diversion program.

Different patterns emerged for the different mentoring models. Community-based and school-based programs had more referrals for females than males, whereas justice-based and YIM™ had a higher percentage of referrals for males than females. Youth mentored through community-based mentoring programs were significantly younger than justice-involved youth. Referrals for Black/African Americans and Native Americans were over-represented as compared to the population of African American youth and Native American in Nebraska; whereas referrals for White youth were under-represented as compared to the population of White youth in Nebraska.

Overall, mentoring appears to be operating as the Nebraska legislature intended, at this first examination – as a means to slow entry into the juvenile justice system. Less than 10% of youth (27 youth) committed a law violation following discharge from the program, while 16 youth (5.7%) had a law violation during the time they were participating in a mentoring program. While initial results are promising, a comparison group would be a more definitive way to determine whether it is the impact of the mentoring program or some other attribute.

The length of time that a youth is matched to a mentor is critical for a successful mentoring program. Our results demonstrate that match length significantly predicted whether a youth had a law violation following discharge from the program. As a result, programs must pay attention to factors that lead to longer matches. Gender matching did not appear to impact match length, however there were relatively few cross-gender cases to compare. While the age of the mentor does not impact the length of the match, the age of the mentee does. Our results also indicate that matches where mentee and mentor race/ethnicity match have statistically longer match lengths than cross-race/ethnicity matches.

Introduction

Mentoring programs and organizations have drawn substantial interest from individuals who are interested in evidence-based approaches that deter youth from the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Mentoring is often assumed to promote positive outcomes that disrupt the pathway to the juvenile justice system. Mentoring is a growing type of intervention, with over 5000 mentoring programs and organizations in the United States offering mentoring services (MENTOR/ National Mentoring Partnership, 2006).

Researchers have found promising outcomes for youth engaged in, or thought to be at risk for, delinquent behavior, school failure, aggression, or other antisocial behavior (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002, DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). At-risk has been defined as "the presence of individual or ecological characteristics that increase the probability of delinquency in later adolescence or adulthood" (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, & Bass, 2008, p.4). For instance, a recent meta-analysis on how mentoring impacts youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, examined 46 studies and found positive effects of mentoring on behaviors associated with involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system, including delinquency, aggression, drug use, and academic performance (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove, & Nichols, 2014).

In addition to impacting a young person's entry or reentry into the juvenile and criminal justice system (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove, and Nichols 2014), mentoring may operate by impacting other behaviors that place the youth at risk. Research has noted that mentored youth can experience positive changes in behavior, social interactions, emotion regulation, and academic outcomes (DuBois et al, 2011; Keating et al, 2002).

There are number of things that may contribute to a successful mentoring relationship. For instance, greater interaction with a mentor is associated with stronger feelings of closeness with the mentor (Jekielek et al, 2002), and longer matches are associated with greater satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). Furthermore, the duration of the match can impact the youth significantly. Previous research has found that youth matched with a mentor for at least a year report a greater amount of improvements than youth that have terminated their match earlier (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

This report is a first glance at the use of mentoring programs funded through Community-based Aid (CBA) in Nebraska and how these program types impact future law violations, but it is our hope to eventually measure other outcomes that mentor's may influence, including the quality of match relationships, how the mentoring relationship may impact prosocial behavior, community engagement, academic performance, hopefulness and future goal orientation, and feelings and perceptions of support from adults.

Nebraska's Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program

Recognizing that unnecessary formal involvement in the juvenile justice system may be contrary to the best interests and well-being of juveniles, the state of Nebraska established a fund entitled the Nebraska's Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program (CBA) Fund, to support local programs and services for juveniles (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02). The purpose of the Community-based Aid Fund is to assist counties with developing intervention and prevention activities "designed to serve juveniles and deter involvement in the formal juvenile justice system" (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(b)). This fund encourages the provision of appropriate preventive, diversionary, alternatives for juveniles, as well as better coordination of the juvenile services system. The statue specifically outlines funding particular activities, including truancy prevention and intervention programs. Specifically, lawmakers intended the CBA funding to be utilized for:

> "programs for local planning and service coordination; screening, assessment, and evaluation; diversion; alternatives to detention; family support services; treatment services; truancy prevention and intervention programs; pilot projects approved by the commission; payment of transportation costs to and from placements, evaluations, or services; personnel when the personnel are aligned with evidence-based treatment principles, programs, or practices; contracting with other state agencies or private organizations that provide evidence based treatment or programs' preexisting programs that are aligned with evidence-based practices or best practices; and other services that will positively impact juveniles and families in the juvenile justice system." (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(b)).

Reporting Data in JCMS

Programs funded through CBA, including mentoring programs, are statutorily required to report data to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.02(4a)). This requirement is fulfilled when programs enter youth information into the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS).

The JCMS is a secure, web-based tool that allows programs to meet their reporting requirements, while measuring whether the program is meeting the goals they set out to achieve. More importantly, as a statewide system, programs are held to a uniform standard of reporting and utilize common definitions. An over-arching aim of the JCMS is for programs to utilize consistent definitions for key data elements.

Mentoring Program Types

To this end, the programs funded through community-based aid should be utilizing the following definitions:

Mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development. Currently, CBA-funded programs consist of 4 mentoring models, and each enters data according to their model:

- Community Mentoring: is a mentoring model where a positive adult is engaged in the youth's life by spending time in the community together. The match is based on interests, hobbies, and compatibility in order to spend time together to share fun activities they both enjoy. The goal of this mentoring model is to reduce drug and alcohol use and antisocial behavior through establishing a supportive friendship and providing guidance.
- Juvenile Justice Based Mentoring: is a mentoring model where youth with some involvement in the juvenile justice system (ranging from diversion to YRTC) are matched with an adult who will demonstrate prosocial attitudes and behaviors while helping the youth navigate the juvenile justice system. The goal of this mentoring model is to prevent the youth from further involvement with the justice system.
- School-based Mentoring: is a mentoring model where youth meet with their mentor on school premises. The goal of school-based programs is to improve youth attendance, grades, and attitudes towards school so that the youth is more likely to graduate.
- Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM)™: is a mentoring model where the youth identifies individuals that he or she already views as a natural support or mentor. A formal program then helps ensure that the match is safe and supportive for the youth. YIM™ models also help develop natural mentors for more sustainable matches. The goal of YIM™ is to help youth identify and sustain healthy support systems.

Youth Referred to Community-based Aid Mentoring Programs

Under statute, programs were required to enter youth referred to their program beginning in July 1, 2015. The present data was extracted on March 12, 2018; as such, this report includes any youth referred or served between these dates. Some cases had referral dates as early as 2010 ($n = 6$), 2011 ($n = 4$), 2012 ($n = 11$), 2013 ($n = 19$), 2014 ($n = 23$), but appeared to have participated in a CBA-funded mentoring program during the reporting timeframe.

To be inclusive, youth with a referral date prior to July 1, 2015 but who had no discharge date ($n = 428$) or youth with neither enrollment date nor discharge date ($n = 41$) were included in this report because it was assumed they participated in a mentoring program during the timeframe of interest.

Under the Evidence-based Nebraska project, programs are classified by both the goals they have for youth and the setting they work in. Table 1 illustrates the programs available in counties funding mentoring. Over the three fiscal years, there were 11 total mentoring programs funded with CBA funds and 10 programs entered cases into JCMS from 7 counties. There was a total of 866 cases entered into the JCMS.

The Appendix contains maps of counties that have mentoring programs funded through CBA by each of the fiscal years that data collection was required by statute.

Table 1. Number and Percent of Mentoring Cases by County/ Program

Program/County	Years Funded	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total Number of Cases	Percent of Sample
Buffalo County -Friends Program	3	229	–	–	–	229	26.4%
Clay County -Big Brothers Big Sisters	3	86	–	–	–	86	9.9%
Douglas County -Community Coaching	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
-Midlands Mentoring	3	–	–	–	356	356	41.1%
-MAYS	1	–	5	–	–	5	0.6%
-Owens	1	–	27	–	–	27	3.1%
Lancaster County -Heartland BBBS	1	10	–	–	–	10	1.2%
Lincoln County -Community Connections	3	96	–	–	–	96	11.1%
-Teammates	1	–	–	11	–	11	1.3%
Madison County -Stanton HS Teammates	2	–	–	19	–	19	2.2%

Seward County -Centennial Teammates	3	–	–	27	–	27	3.1%
Total		**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**	**100.0%**

Referral Source

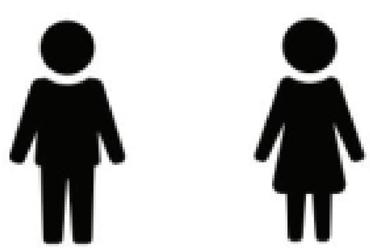
Table 2 displays the entities that refer youth to mentoring programs. Youth referred to CBA mentoring programs are most often identified and referred by their school (*n* = 355; 41.0%), followed by the county juvenile diversion programs (*n* = 310; 35.8%). For the school-based programs, most referrals came from the school, however it is not clear if all referrals came from the school because of the high percentage of missing data. The justice-based mentoring program received referrals exclusively from diversion, whereas YIM ™ received referrals from both diversion and probation. Community-based mentoring programs received referrals mostly from the school, but also referrals from diversion, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and parents/guardians.

Table 2. Referral Sources for Mentoring Programs					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
School	325 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)	30 (52.6%)	0 (0.0%)	355 (41.0%)
Diversion Program	4 (1.0%)	32 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	274 (77.0%)	310 (35.8%)
Probation	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	47 (13.2%)	47 (5.4%)
DHHS	4 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.5%)
Parent/ guardian	8 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (1.2%)
Other	11 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (1.5%)
Missing	69 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (40.4%)	35 (9.8%)	127 (14.6%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Note. DHHS = Department of Health and Human Services

Gender of Youth Referred

Of the 866 cases referred to a mentoring program, 45.7% (*n* = 396) were male and 53.6% (*n* = 465) were female. Data were unspecified or missing in 5 cases. Overall, community-based and school-based programs had more referrals for females than males, whereas justice-based and YIM™ had a higher percentage of referrals from males than females (Table 3).



n = 396 *n* = 465

Table 3. Gender					
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Female	228 (54.2%)	14 (43.8%)	38 (66.7%)	185 (52.3%)	465 (53.8%)
Male	193 (45.8%)	18 (56.3%)	19 (33.3%)	166 (46.6%)	396 (45.7%)
Unspecified	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (0.8%)	5 (0.6%)
Total	421	32	57	356	866

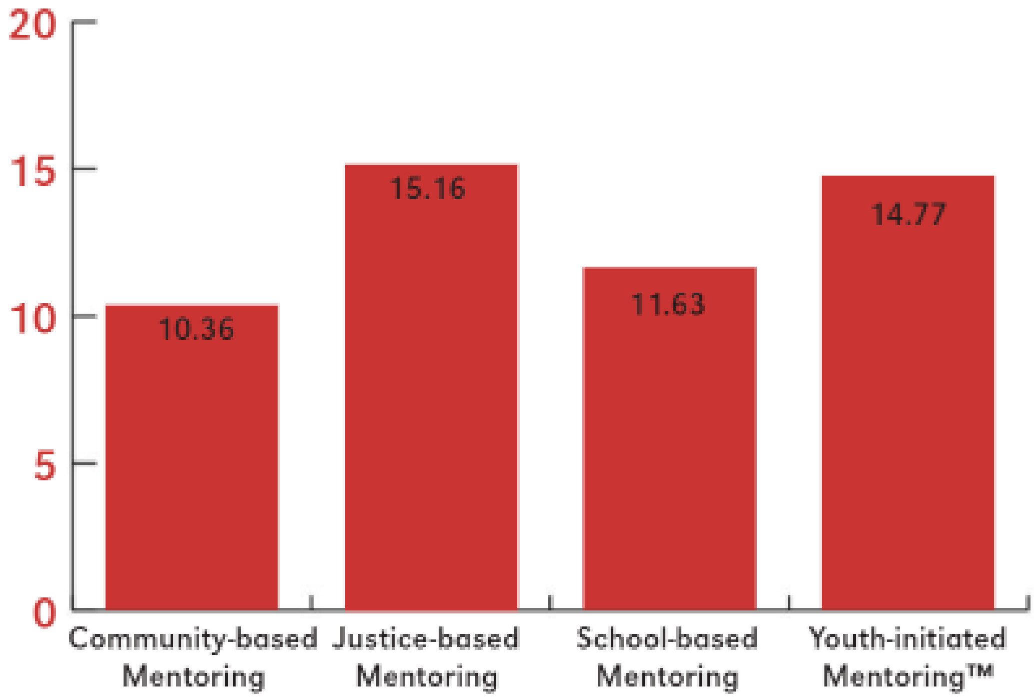
Age of Youth Referred

Table 4 displays the frequency of referred cases by the age of the youth upon intake. The age of the youth ranged from 5 to 18, with a mean age of 12.44 (SD = 3.49). Approximately one-third of the youths referred were between ages 15 and 17 (n = 327; 37.7%).

Table 4. Age of Youth Referred		
Age	Frequency	Percent
5	11	1.2%
6	30	3.5%
7	53	6.1%
8	62	7.2%
9	63	7.3%
10	42	4.8%
11	82	9.5%
12	55	6.4%
13	48	5.5%
14	77	8.9%
15	118	13.6%
16	111	12.8%
17	86	9.9%
18	10	1.2%
Not specified	18	2.1%
Total	866	100.0%

The mean age at intake/enrollment significantly differed based upon the type of mentoring program $F(3, 845) = 175.92$, $p < .001$. Specifically, community-based mentoring had the lowest mean age, followed by school-based mentoring. Both justice-based and Youth Initiated Mentoring™ had older youth, however these two program types did not significantly differ from each other (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Mean Age of Youth Served



Race/Ethnicity of Youth Referred

Most youth referred to a mentoring program were White (*n* = 457; 52.8%), followed by Black/African American (*n* = 169; 19.5%) and Hispanic (*n* = 119; 13.8%). Fewer youth were American Indian/Alaska Native (*n* = 21; 2.4%), Asian (*n* = 7; 0.8%), an "other race" (*n* = 7; 0.8%), and multiple races (*n* = 41; 4.7%). Race and Ethnicity was not specified for 5.2% of the cases (*n* = 45).

When we compared the race of youth referred to a mentoring program to the racial and ethnic composition of Nebraska youth of the same age (10 to 19), data indicated that Black and Native American youth were over-represented, that is, they were involved in CBA mentoring programs at a higher rate than would be expected by the population of youth of that race/ethnicity in Nebraska. White youth appear to be involved in mentoring programs are under-represented as compared to the population of White youth in Nebraska (Table 5).

Table 5. Race and Ethnicity of Youth						
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total	Nebraska*
White	303 (72.1%)	6 (18.8%)	53 (93.0%)	95 (26.7%)	457 (52.8%)	72.3%
Hispanic	63 (15.0%)	9 (28.1%)	2 (3.5%)	45 (12.6%)	119 (13.8%)	15.2%
Black/ African American	11 (2.6%)	16 (50.0%)	1 (1.8%)	141 (39.6%)	169 (19.5%)	5.6%
American Indian, Alaska Native	9 (2.1%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (3.1%)	21 (2.4%)	1.1%
Asian	4 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.8%)	7 (0.8%)	2.5%
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0.1%
Multiple Races	13 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	27 (7.6%)	41 (4.7%)	3.2%
Other Race	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.7%)	7 (0.8%)	–
Unspecified	17(3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	28 (7.9%)	45 (5.1%)	–
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**	

* U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2016), racial and ethnic composition of Nebraska youth (10 to 19).

Evidence-based Mentoring: Matching Youth Risk Level to Intervention

Often youth referred to a mentoring program are those that are at risk in one or more domains of their lives. Evidence-based decision making seeks to identify the underlying need, or risk areas, and propose an intervention to match that need (Lipsey, Conly, Chapman, & Bilchick, 2017). Research has indicated that matching youth to supervision or services based on risk and needs can result in a reduction in future law violations (Lipsey et al., 2017; Vieira, Skilling, and Peterson-Badali, 2009).

If using an evidence-based approach, the mentoring model employed should address at least some of the risk factors, or needs, that the youth presents. For instance, a community-based model may be an excellent resource for youth who reside in higher risk households who may need additional supportive adults; whereas a school-based mentoring model may be best suited to address academic related issues.

To this end, the Juvenile Justice Institute requested that programs enter data into JCMS to examine level of risk of the youth served, and to examine whether programs are serving their intended population.

Living Situation and Parental Involvement Risk Factors

A young person's living situation may be one risk factor for delinquency. Mentors can fill a need in households where parents are not able to be as involved with their child. In 2016, approximately 28.3% of Nebraska youth were living with a single parent (Voices for Children, 2017).

In this sample of youth referred to mentoring programs, more than one third (36.3%) of the youth resided in single parent homes; 4.6% of youth resided with a guardian and less than 0.5% were wards of the State of Nebraska (Table 6). Although there is a substantial amount of data missing (38%), so we do not have a complete picture of living situation for the youth being served, it does appear that programs are appropriately referring youth with a need for a supportive adult.

One gap in services, however, appears to be with state wards. In Nebraska, there were approximate 7,214 youth who were state wards in 2016 (15.2% per 1,000 children; Voices for Children, 2017). In CBA-funded mentoring programs, however, there were few youths who were state wards referred for mentoring services. Because these young people are likely the ones needing a supportive adult the most, programs should consider how to include more of these youths in their programs.

Table 6. Youth's Primary Living Situation at Intake

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Guardian	24 (7.9%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (8.7%)	8 (5.2%)	40 (4.6%)
Single Parent	169 (55.4%)	23 (71.9%)	20 (35.1%)	102 (28.7%)	314 (36.3%)
Both Parents	107 (25.4%)	4 (12.5%)	22 (38.6%)	44 (12.5%)	177 (20.4%)
State Ward	4 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.7%)
Lives on own	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)
Missing	116 (27.6%)	1 (3.1%)	11 (19.3%)	202 (56.7%)	330 (38.1%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

We also measured parental support during the program from the perspectives of the program staff as another needs/risk factor that could be addressed by a mentoring program. Although lack of parental involvement could be an indication of poor parenting, it could also be due to circumstances outside the parent's control. For example, parents who are working two jobs to make ends meet may not be able to be as active with their children as they would like.

Furthermore, parental involvement serves a purpose while in the program because research indicates that if a parent does not support the mentoring relationship, it can undermine the growth of the mentoring relationship (MENTOR, 2015).

Again, more than half of the cases were marked as "unknown" or left blank on level of parental involvement during the program (Table 7). Although programs may be reluctant to assign a value to parental involvement, programs often have valuable insight on how active parents are with their child. It may also be that parental involvement during the program is not something that would be known until the youth has participated in the program for some time. As such, we encourage programs to enter this information at discharge, once they have gotten to know the families more.

Table 7. Parental Level of Involvement					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
None	4 (1.0%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	6 (0.7%)
Active	52 (12.4%)	10 (31.3%)	2 (3.5%)	86 (24.2%)	150 (17.3%)
Minimally Active	114 (27.1%)	17 (53.1%)	6 (10.5%)	21 (5.9%)	158 (18.2%)
Inactive	15 (3.6%)	1 (3.1%)	9 (15.8%)	2 (0.6%)	27 (3.1%)
Unknown	82 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	185 (52.0%)	267 (30.8%)
Missing	154 (36.6%)	3 (9.4%)	40 (70.2%)	61 (17.1%)	258 (29.8%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Risk Factors for Delinquency

In meta-analyses examining juvenile justice program effectiveness, the youth characteristics that were most predictive of future law violations was each youth's risk for delinquency (Lipsey et al., 2010; Lipsey & Howell, 2012). According to this research, interventions applied to high risk youth demonstrated larger recidivism reductions than those applied to lower risk youth (Lipsey & Howell, 2012). Higher risk youth has been defined using three proxy variables: prior legal violations, aggressive behavior, and high-risk environment.

According to the Evidence-based Nebraska common definitions, prior legal violations are defined as any petition filed and adjudication that occurred before participation in the program; a history of aggressive behavior is defined as the youth's actions or behaviors reported as hostile or violent towards others or things; and high-risk environment is defined as something about the youth's surroundings that expose them to danger (e.g., residing in a high crime neighborhood, domestic violence in the home, or family members with gang affiliation).

Table 8a. Prior Legal Violations					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
Yes	0 (0.0%)	19 (59.4%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (3.7%)	32 (3.7%)
No	191 (45.4%)	12 (37.5%)	14 (24.6%)	15 (4.2%)	232 (26.8%)
Unknown	81 (19.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	290 (81.5%)	371 (42.8%)
Missing	149 (35.4%)	1 (3.1%)	43 (75.4%)	38 (10.7%)	231 (26.7%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Table 8b. Aggressive Behavior					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
Yes	23 (5.5%)	12 (37.5%)	1 (1.8%)	5 (1.4%)	41 (4.7%)
No	54 (12.8%)	19 (59.4%)	13 (22.8%)	15 (4.2%)	101 (11.7%)
Unknown	195 (46.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	298 (83.7%)	493 (56.9%)
Missing	149 (35.4%)	1 (3.1%)	43 (75.4%)	38 (10.7%)	231 (26.7%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Table 8c. High Risk Environment					
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Yes	142 (33.7%)	8 (25.0%)	1 (1.8%)	10 (2.8%)	161 (18.6%)
No	46 (10.9%)	23 (71.9%)	12 (21.1%)	26 (7.3%)	107 (12.4%)
Unknown	83 (19.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	283 (79.5%)	367 (42.4%)
Missing	150 (35.6%)	1 (3.1%)	43 (75.4%)	37 10.4%)	231 (26.7%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Unfortunately, programs did not have (unknown) or did not enter this information (missing) in at least 70% of the cases or more (Table 8a to 8c). Although we do not know whether programs are failing to enter the information or are failing to gather background information for the youth referred to the mentoring program, the missing data could indicate that programs are not addressing the risk or needs of the youth being served. If we had more complete risk variables, we would be able to more clearly define who is being served in programs and explain program outcomes, including what types of interventions work for what kinds of youth.

Although mentoring programs may think that mentors should be "blind" to these risk factors so they are not "biased" in how they work with a young person, these risk factors are important to be aware of because it may impact who a youth is matched with and where the mentor takes the youth in the community. According to the Elements of Effective Mentoring, "program staff should provide background information about everyone who will be involved in the mentoring relationship" (MENTOR, 2015, p. 57). Knowing this information can present an opportunity for the mentor to work with the youth on developing prosocial attitudes and activities surrounding these areas.

School and Academic Risk Factors

School attachment and academic performance may also be indicators of risk. Schools were the primary referral source to mentoring programs, making up 41% of the referrals (Table 2 above). Across all mentoring types, most of the youth in mentoring programs (92.0%), were enrolled in an educational institution at the time they entered the mentoring program (Table 9).

Table 9. Enrollment Status of Youth					
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Enrolled	407 (96.7%)	31 (96.9)	46 (80.7%)	313 (87.9%)	797 (92.0%)
Expelled	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.1%)	4 (0.5%)
High School Grad/ GED	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.3%)
Dropped out	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (1.4%)	5 (0.6%)
Alternative School	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)
Missing	14 (3.3%)	1 (3.1%)	8 (14.0%)	33 (9.3 %)	56 (6.5%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

We examined risk factors associated with educational attainment: attendance problems, level of attachment to school, and GPA, to determine if school-based mentoring programs were more likely to be used when youth presented with educational risk factors. These same variables are collected at discharge to evaluate whether the programs are having an effect on academic outcomes.

As noted above, a school-based mentoring model might have the most impact on youth that feel disconnected from their school and are struggling to attend school and maintain passing grades. Although the other mentoring types may not have academic success as a primary outcome, improving academic outcomes may result from the mentorship relationship.

Tables 10a to 10c display the three education-related variables as measured at intake. For the 57 youth in a school-based mentoring program, over 75% of the cases did not have these variables completed. This makes it difficult to know if youth are being referred to school-based programs related to their academic attendance, and whether the program assists a youth in improving on these factors.

Table 10a. Frequency of Attending School at Intake

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Frequently	8 (1.9%)	25 (78.1%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.7%)	39 (4.5%)
Sometimes	27 (6.4%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (7.0%)	4 (1.1%)	39 (4.5%)
Rarely	25 (5.9%)	2 (6.3%)	10 (17.5%)	4 (1.1%)	41 (4.7%)
Never	2 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.2%)
Unknown	209 (49.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	305 (85.7%)	514 (59.4%)
Missing	150 (35.6%)	1 (3.1%)	43 (75.4%)	37 (10.4%)	231 (26.7%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Table 10b. Youth's GPA at Intake

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Mostly B's	2 (0.5%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (7.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (0.9%)
Mostly C's	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)	6 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (1.0%)
Mostly D's	0 (0.0%)	6 (18.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (0.8%)
Mostly F's	0 (0.0%)	18 (56.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (2.1%)
Unknown	267 (63.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	319 (89.6%)	586 (67.7%)
Missing	152 (36.1%)	3 (9.4%)	46 (80.7%)	37 (10.4%)	238 (27.5%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Table 10c. Youth's Attachment to School at Intake

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Medium Attachment	23 (5.5%)	7 (21.9%)	9 (15.8%)	7 (2.0%)	46 (5.3%)
Low Attachment	29 (6.9%)	22 (6.8%)	3 (5.3%)	7 (2.0%)	61 (7.0%)
Unknown	216 (51.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	297 (83.4%)	513 (59.2%)
Missing	153 (36.3%)	3 (9.4%)	45 (78.9%)	45 (12.6%)	246 (28.4%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

Overall, the disconnect between youth's risk factors (especially missing data) and the type of mentoring program, indicate that mentoring programs may be accepting referrals for youth, based upon criteria other than risk.

Youth Enrolled in a Mentoring Program

At times, a youth might be referred to a program, but refuse to enroll or participate in the program. Table 11 presents the number of youth who enrolled in the program and those that refused the services. In this sample, the YIM™ was the only program that indicated parent/youth refusal. One reason for this may be that YIM™ received referrals from court, probation, or diversion and the families are not interested in participating; where as other programs only received referrals from youth/families who have already expressed an interest in having a mentor. Another reason may be that programs are not entering all youth referred to the program, as recommended, and are instead only entering the youth served.

Table 11. Youth Enrolled After Being Referred to Program

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Enrolled in Program	421 (100.0%)	32 (100.0%)	57 (100.0%)	204 (57.3%)	714 (82.4%)
Youth/Parent Refused Services	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	152 (42.7%)	152 (17.6%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**356**	**866**

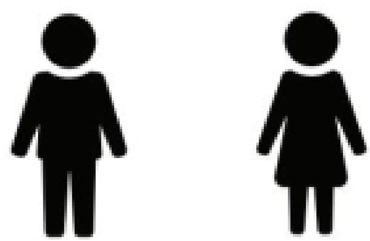
Profile of Mentors

Although there were 714 youth enrolled in a mentoring program, only 60.2% (430 youth) were matched with a mentor. A total of 448 mentors' profiles were entered into the JCMS during this time. The total number of mentor profiles entered is greater than the number of mentor-mentee matches because some cases were matched with more than one mentor.

To describe the profile of mentors in CBA-funded mentoring programs, we removed any duplicate mentors (i.e., when one mentor had two mentees we only included that mentor once) and removed any mentors listed as "Project Impact", which is an alternative activity used by one program while youth are on a waiting list. If a youth had more than one mentor, we included each mentor. As such, there was a total of 393 mentors, which consisted of traditional mentors and community coaches.

Mentor Gender

Of the 393 mentors, 63.9% ($n = 251$) were female and 32.6% ($n = 128$) were male. Data for mentor gender were missing for 14 cases (Table 12).



$n = 128$ $n = 251$

Table 12. Mentor Gender					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
Female	190 (66.2%)	4 (4.44%)	18 (64.3%)	39 (56.5%)	251 (63.9%)
Male	89 (31.0%)	5 (55.6%)	10 (35.7%)	24 (34.8%)	128 (32.6%)
Missing	8 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (8.7%)	14 (3.6%)
Total	**287**	**9**	**28**	**69**	**393**

Mentor Age

Some age groups may serve as better mentors than other age groups. For instance, some research has shown that college-aged students were more likely to prematurely close than matches with older mentors (Grossman et al., 2012); whereas others have found that college-aged students were successful when working with youth re-entering the community from a juvenile facility (Jarjoura, 2005). Table 13 displays the frequency of cases by the age of the mentors. The age of the mentors ranged from 12 to 82, with a mean age of 29.65 ($SD = 41.43$).

Table 13. Mentor Age					
	Community	**Justice-based**	**School-based**	**YIM™**	**Total**
19 and younger	137 (47.7%)	2 (22.2%)	15 (53.6%)	22 (31.9%)	176 (44.8%)
20 to 35	113(39.4%)	4 (44.4%)	3(10.7%)	22 (31.9%)	142 (36.1%)
36 to 50	14 (4.9%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (7.1%)	18 (26.1%)	36 (9.2%)
51 to 65	17 (5.9%)	1 (11.1%)	4(14.3%)	6 (8.7%)	28 (7.1%)
66 and older	6 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (1.4%)	11 (2.8%)
Total	**287**	**9**	**28**	**69**	**393**

Mentor Motivation and Background

People may mentor for a variety of reasons; however previous research indicates that when mentors are motivated by professional development, the mentorship matches tend to last longer than those who mentor for other, less self-fulfilling reasons (Tolan et al., 2014). Moreover, there has been evidence to suggest that matches in which the youth initiates the match by identifying their own mentor can impact the length of the mentoring relationship (MENTOR, 2015). As such, programs were asked to indicate the primary motivation of the mentor. In this sample, most of mentors reported being mentors to gain personal experience (Table 14).

Table 14. Mentor Motivation					
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Fulfill a civic duty	30 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (39.3%)	1 (1.4%)	42 (10.7%)
Professional development	2 (0.7%)	9 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (2.8%)
Gain personal experience	222 (77.4%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (42.9%)	2 (2.9%)	236 (60.1%)
Asked by Mentee	3 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	52 (75.4%)	55 (14.0%)
Missing	30 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (17.9%)	14 (20.3%)	49 (12.5%)
Total	287	9	28	69	393

Programs were also asked to indicate if the mentors had experience or education in a helping role or profession. This is any role that nurtures growth or where the mentor focused on another person's well-being. Most mentors had a background in a helping role/profession, and fewer mentors indicated no background in a helping role/profession. In 67 cases (17.0%), the data were missing.

Table 15. Mentor Background					
	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
No	67 (23.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (11.6%)	81 (20.6%)
Yes	184 (64.1%)	7 (77.8%)	16 (57.1%)	38 (55.1%)	245 (62.3%)
Missing	36 (12.5%)	2 (22.2%)	6 (21.4%)	23 (33.3%)	67 (17.0%)
Total	**287**	**9**	**28**	**69**	**393**

Mentee-Mentor Matches in CBA-funded Mentoring Programs

Next, we examined the mentee-mentor matches. Although there were 866 youth referred to a mentoring program, approximately 714 youths enrolled in the program (i.e., for 152 cases, the youth/parent refused the services). Based on the number who enrolled, and were thus eligible for a mentor, 430 youths were matched to a mentor (61.2%).

It should be noted that some youth were matched to the same mentor (i.e., a mentor could have been assigned multiple youth). For analysis on each of the matches, we retained the duplicate mentors to examine each match relationship as the unit of analysis. The following analysis, therefore, is based on the 430 mentor-mentee matches. Note that the number of matches may exceed the total number of cases because a youth may have more than one match to a mentor.

Table 16. Number and Percent of Mentee-Mentor Matches

Program	Number of Matches	Total Number of Enrolled Cases	Percent Matched Youth
Friends Program	235	229	100.0%
Big Brothers Big Sisters	12	86	14.0%
Midlands Mentoring	71	204	34.8%
Metro Areas Youth Services (MAYS)	5	5	100.0%
Owens Educational Services	27	27	100.0%
Heartland BBBS	3	10	30.0%
Community Connections	49	96	51.0%
Teammates (Lincoln Co.)	0	11	0.0%
Stanton HS Teammates	12	19	63.2%
Centennial Teammates	16	27	59.3%
Total	**430**	**714**	**61.2%**

It appears that roughly 284 youth were not matched to a mentor during the timeframe that we examined. It may be that programs did not enter the mentor information. Reasons a mentor may not have been entered, even if a youth had been matched, may be due to earlier iterations of data collection that did not request mentor information (i.e., spreadsheets that programs completed with youth information prior to the creation of the JCMS online screen for mentoring).

Other reasons, however, are that some programs have waiting lists. Some programs have indicated that while a youth is on the waiting list, the programs have others have agency-based activities, where youth can participate in group mentoring while waiting to be matched (i.e., Project Impact). We are currently making changes to the JCMS to include data collection on waiting lists, including whether a youth was on a waiting list and the length of time the youth is on the waiting list. This will assist in better understanding needs in a community for mentors, the impact of waiting lists, and the effect of process variables on outcomes.

Matched by Gender

Matching mentors and mentees based on similarities such as race/ethnicity, gender, and mutual interests is often recommended (Pryce, Kelly, & Guidone, 2014).

Most of the mentorship matches were matched with the same gender (*n* = 357, 83.0%)—especially so for female mentees (Table 17). When the gender of the mentor and mentee did not match, most of the time it was that male mentees were matched with female mentors (*n* = 51, 27.7%). Less often were male mentors matched with female mentees (*n* = 8, 3.4%). Because most programs indicate a preference for matching based on gender, this likely indicates there is a need for additional male mentors to mentor the male youth.

Table 17. Comparison of Mentor and Mentee Gender

	Mentor's Gender		
Mentee's Gender	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Female	224 (96.6%)	8 (3.4%)	232 (100.0%)
Male	51 (27.7%)	133 (72.3%)	184 (100.0%)
Total	**275 (66.1%)**	**141 (33.9%)**	**416 (100.0%)**

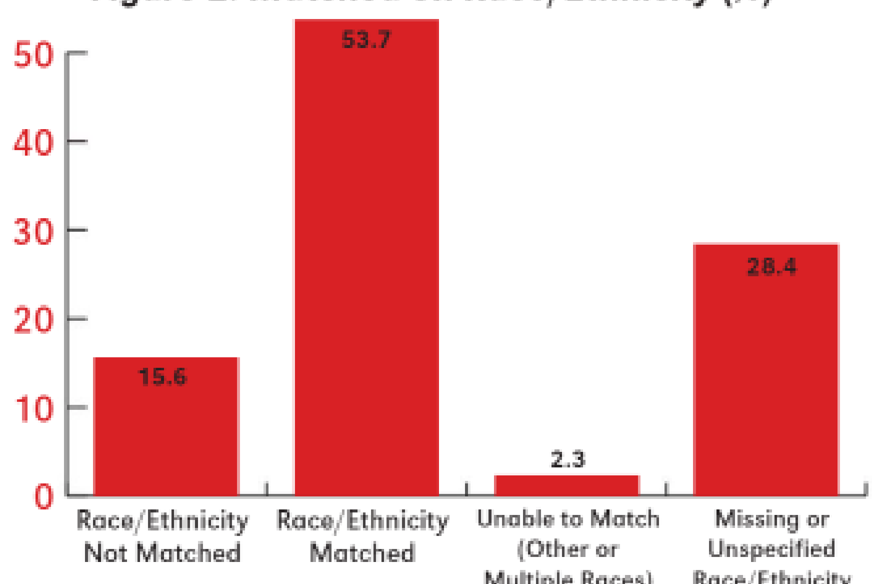
Note. In 14 cases the mentor's gender was not available, so the sample size for this comparison is 416 mentor-mentee matches.

Matched by Race/Ethnicity

Although matching based on race has been recommended (Pryce, et al., 2014), research comparing cross-race or same-race matches have not found few differences in the quality of the mentoring relationship or outcomes, between cross-race and same-race matches (Morrow & Styles, 1995; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002).

A little more than half of the matches were matched with the same race/ethnicity (n = 231, 53.7%). Approximately 15.0% (*n* = 67) were not matched and for 2.3% (*n* = 10), we were not able to accurately assess match because either the youth or the mentor identified as an "other" race or "multiple races". In almost one-third of the cases, either the race/ethnicity was missing for the youth or the mentor and as a result, we could not determine if the race/ethnicity was a match (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Matched on Race/Ethnicity (%)



In an attempt to assess where there may be gaps in race/ethnicity for matching based on race/ethnicity, we compared the race/ethnicity of mentees and mentors. As Table 18 displays, most mentors were White, followed by Black/African American and Hispanic. Fewer mentors were American Indian/Alaska Native Asian, other race, or multiple races. In a number of cases, Race and Ethnicity were not specified or missing (n = 132; 29.2%). When comparing the mentors to the youth served in mentoring programs, we see fewer mentors of color than the youth being served.

Table 18. Comparison of Mentor and Mentee Race and Ethnicity

	Youth Mentored		Mentor Race	
Race/Ethnicity	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
White	457	52.8%	260	58.0%
Hispanic	119	13.8%	18	4.0%
Black/African American	169	19.5%	33	7.4%
American Indian, Alaska Native	21	2.4%	2	0.4%
Asian	7	0.8%	1	0.2%
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Multiple Races	41	4.7%	3	0.7%
Other Race	7	.8%	71	15.8%
Missing	45	5.2%	60	13.5%
Total	**866**	**100.0%**	**448**	**100%**

Mentoring Outcomes

Research has demonstrated that is not the mere presence of a mentor that impacts outcomes, but that the match must be of a meaningful duration. As stated by Higley and colleagues (2014), "Foreshortened matches can be worse than ineffective; matches lasting less than 6 months can harm a child, leading to feelings of abandonment and negative outcomes (pg.1).

Other researchers have noted within a sample of delinquency cases that a "one-year match history was statistically significant predictor of fewer total arrests" (DuBois, Herrera, and Rivera 2018). Length of match may also affect academic and educational issues, "At the end of the year, youth in intact relationships showed significant academic improvement, while youth in matches that terminated prematurely showed no impact" (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz & Rhodes 2012, pg. 43).

Given the fact that many mentoring programs have waiting lists, programs should determine the youth that fit their program model and collect information about risk and need at intake. Failure to do so may lead to matches ending early (defined as less than 1 year), or it may hinder the mentor from working on meaningful activities with the youth.

Discharge by Program

Table 19 displays the closure reason for each youth by type of mentoring program. Programs closing the case was the most common discharge reason with 17.4% of cases ($n = 124$); while 13.0% of cases closed successfully ($n = 93$). One pattern with discharge reasons is that the programs serving youth with law violations, the justice-based program and YIM™ program have higher rates of being closed by the program than the other program types.

Programs with high rates of "other" discharges should review their cases to make sure they indicated a discharge reason if a youth was discharged. Perhaps one explanation is that the case management system did not have an appropriate discharge reason (prior to the new discharge reasons being added).

Table 19. Discharge Reasons by Type of Mentoring Program

	Community	Justice-based	School-based	YIM™	Total
Closed Successfully	69 (16.4%)	11 (34.4%)	3 (5.3%)	10 (4.9%)	93 (13.0%)
Closed by Mentee	4 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (8.3%)	21 (2.9%)
Closed by Mentor	8 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (2.9%)	14 (2.0%)
Closed by Program	36 (8.6%)	20 (62.5%)	2 (3.5%)	66 (32.4%)	124 (17.4%)
Other	12 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (4.2%)	27 (3.8%)
Missing or Open Case	292 (69.4%)	1 (3.1%)	52 (91.2%)	90 (44.1%)	435 (50.2%)
Total	**421**	**32**	**57**	**204**	**714 (100.0%)**

Note. This excludes the youth who were referred but did not participate, with a discharge code "youth/ parent refused"

Length of Match

Of the 430 matches, 35 of these matches had neither a starting nor ending date of the match relationship. A total of 395 cases had a starting date, but only 98 cases had an ending date to the match, which indicates that the match was still be active as of March 2018 (or the program did not enter the ending date, if the mentoring relationship had closed).

We calculated the average length of the match on the 98 cases had an individual mentor and included both a start date and end date. The average length of time a youth was matched to their mentor was just under one year, at 329.5 days (*SD* = 410.4). However, two cases appear to be outliers, as the matches appear to have started in February and March 2010. If those cases were not included in the analysis, then the average time a youth was matched to a mentor drops to 285.5 days (*SD* = 273.9).

Next, we included average length of match by program for the 98 cases for which it could be calculated (Table 20).

Table 20. Mean Average Length of Match (ALOM)

	Mentoring Type	Number of Cases	Mean ALOM	*SD*
Friends Program	Community-based	35	388.49	274.96
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Community-based	0	–	–
Community Coaching	Community-based	0	–	–
Midlands Mentoring	YIM	22	290.18	194.56
MAYS	Justice-based	5	51.80	30.71
Owens	Justice-based	22	60.18	26.46
Heartland BBBS	Community-based	0	–	–
Community Connections	Community-based	13	622.46	602.54
Teammates (Lincoln Co.)	School-based	0	–	–
Stanton HS Teammates	School-based	0	–	–
Centennial Teammates	School-based	1	2,642.00	–
Total		**98**	**305.73**	**337.55**

Note. Only those programs with ALOM were included in this table. SD cannot be calculated for programs with a single case.

Pre- and Post-Academic Measures

As described earlier, one of our goals was to collect pre-and-post data on academic-related variables: frequency missing school, GPA, and school attachment. Unfortunately, there was substantial missing data for the pre-measures (see Tables 10a to 10c); similarly, there was even more missing data for post-measures (approximately 80% across all three measures). As such, we did not examine the pre-an-post measures, but we hope that programs will see the value in pre-post measures to assess program impact (MENTOR, 2015).

Delinquency Outcomes

Under Nebraska law, the JJI is charged with evaluating whether programs funded through Community-based Juvenile Services Aid are effective. Per Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-2404.01, one measure of an effective program is how well it prevents youth “from entering the juvenile justice system.” A second, statutorily required measure, is how well the program rehabilitates the juvenile offender. The Nebraska legislature clearly intended that programs funded through CBA demonstrate the impact they have on youth. Over the past two years, the Nebraska Crime Commission has worked closely with JJI and agencies running juvenile programs to determine how best to measure and evaluate programs receiving funds.

Methodology

To determine whether a youth committed any type of law violation while in a mentoring program, we examined court filings using Nebraska's JUSTICE system. JUSTICE allows online access to the Nebraska State Trial Court case information. We requested a data extract from JUSTICE to include all juvenile and adult misdemeanor and felony cases between January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017, including cases that were sealed. To match youth from Mentoring programs to JUSTICE data, we used Link Plus software to match the youth based on first name, last name, and date of birth.

JJI did not include status offenses when examining whether the youth had a law violation during or after participating in a mentoring program. Subsequent law violations were coded as follows:

> traffic violations (e.g., negligent/reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident); (2) drug or alcohol related (e.g., minor in possession, possession of marijuana or other controlled substances, tobacco); (3) property crimes (e.g., theft, shoplifting, trespass, burglary, vandalism/graffiti); (4) crimes against person (e.g., robbery, assault sex crimes); (5) weapons related; (6) procedural/administrative (e.g., false reporting, refusing to comply with officer, fleeing arrest); (7) uncontrollable/disorderly (e.g., disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct); (8) unclear/unspecific.

Although there were 866 youth, because two youth had been referred twice (i.e., the first case had been closed), we only examined future law violations for each youth based on their first referral to the program. As such, the total sample that we examined future law violations was 864. Of this group, 434 cases (50.2%) were open cases/missing a discharge code and in another 151 cases, the youth/parent refused to participate in the program.

Overall, 16 youth (5.7%) had a law violation during the time they were in the program and 27 (9.7%) had a law violation following discharge from the program (two youth had a law violation both in the program and following discharge from the program). Table 21 displays the number of youth and frequency of each type of law violation after discharge from the program. Most of the law violations including property offenses, such as shoplifting, trespassing, or receiving stolen property. The next most common offense type was crimes against a person, including robbery and assault.

Table 21. Law Violations After Discharge from the Program

	Frequency	Percent
Traffic Violation	1	3.7%
Drug or alcohol-related	2	7.4%
Property crime	12	44.4%
Crime against person	6	22.2%
Weapon-related	2	7.4%
Procedural/Administrative	1	3.7%
Disorderly	2	7.4%
Unclear/unspecific	1	3.7%
Total	**27**	**100.0%**

Next, Table 22 displays the percent of youth with future law violations following discharge and the mean number of days to the law violation by program. If only one case had a discharge date, then the mean number of days could not be calculated.

Table 22. Number of Youth with Law Violations and Mean Days to Law Violation						
	Mentoring Type	**Number of Closed Cases**	**Number of Youth -New Law Violations**	**Law Violation (%)**	**Mean Days to Recidivism**	***SD***
Friends Program	Community-based	38	1	2.6%	–	–
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Community-based	38	1	2.6%	–	–
Midlands Mentoring	YIM	114	14	12.3%	163.64	40.88
MAYS	Justice-based	4	3	75.0%	22.00	27.07
Owens	Justice-based	27	6	22.2%	210.67	152.82
Heartland BBBS	Community-based	0	–	–	–	–
Community Connections	Community-based	53	2	3.8%	495.00	391.74
Teammates (Lincoln Co.)	School-based	0	–	–	–	–
Stanton HS Teammates	School-based	1	0	0.0%	–	–
Centennial Teammates	School-based	4	0	0.0%	–	–

Then, we examined law violations following discharged by discharge type – this time also including the youth who did not participate in the mentoring program (i.e., those who refused). Table 23 includes the number of cases closed and the number of youth who had law violations following discharge.

Although these differences are not significant, possibly because of the small sample of youth with law violations, there are some patterns. Youth whose cases were successfully closed or closed by the mentor have the lowest rates of law violations, whereas cases that were closed by the program, the mentee, or where the youth/parent refused had the highest rates of law violations. Of course, we cannot conclude whether it is the program that contributed to successful outcomes, or whether there are characteristics of the you that contribute both to successful closure and future law violations. Future research with a larger sample of youth who have completed the mentoring programs can statistically control for the risk-related variables outlined earlier in this report to possibly isolate the effects of the youth, the match, or something about the program itself.

Table 23. Law Violation by Discharge Reason

	Number of Cases Closed	Number of Youth with Law Violation
Closed Successfully	93	6 (6.5%)
Closed by Mentee	21	3 (14.3%)
Closed by Mentor	14	1 (7.1%)
Closed by Program	124	17 (13.7%)
Other	27	0 (0.0%)
Youth/parent Refused	151	17 (11.3%)
Missing Discharge Reason	7	2 (28.6%)
Total	**437**	**46**

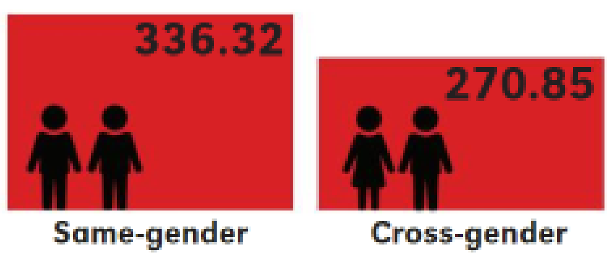
Match Variables on Length of Match

Gender

We tested whether matching based on gender has an impact on the length of the match using a One-Way ANOVA to compare the cross-gender matches to the same-gender matches on average length of match with the 90 cases for which we had average length of match and gender information for the mentee and mentor.

Although the same-gender matches had a higher average length of match, there was not statistical difference between each group $F(1,88) = 0.26$, $p = .61$. With the small number of cross-gender matched cases ($n = 17$), however, results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 3. Average Length of Match by Gender Matching (in days)

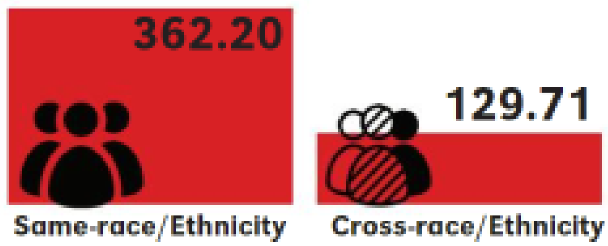


Race/Ethnicity

Next, we tested whether matching based on race/ethnicity had an impact on the match using a One-Way ANOVA to compare the cross-race/ethnicity matches to the same-race/ethnicity matches on average length of match with the 63 cases for which we had average length of match and race/ethnicity information for the mentee and mentor.

The results revealed a significant difference $F(1,62) = 5.26$, $p < .05$, such that same-race/ethnicity matches had longer match lengths than cross-race/ethnicity matches.

Figure 4. Average Length of Match by Race/Ethnicity Matching (in days)



Age of Mentee & Mentor

We investigated whether age of the mentor and age of the mentee impacted average length of the match using Pearson's correlation. Overall, the mentor's age did not significantly predict the match length $r(77) = .09$, $p = .43$. The mentee's age, however, did significantly predict the match length, such that younger youth were more likely to have a longer length of match $r(94) = -.40$, $p < .001$.

Match Variables on Law Violations

With the 279 youth who were matched and whose case was closed, we examined match-related variables on future law violations.

Length of Match

We examined the effect that match length had on future law violations. Using a logistic regression, which measures whether variables significantly predict a binary outcome (law violation or no law violation), the results revealed that match length significantly predicted whether a youth had a law violation following discharge from the program $X^2(7) = 23.85$, $p < .001$, Cox & Snell $R^2 = .08$, Wald = 17.80, $p < .05$.

We also tested whether match length predicted days to the law violation using a Pearson's correlation, however, there was not a statistically significant relationship $r(79) = -.04$, $p = .92$. As such, it appears that the length of the relationship predicts whether a youth will have a future law violation, but not necessarily how quickly that youth will have a law violation.

Limitations

A number of patterns are emerging from the data collected on CBA mentoring programs. Some of these differences are not significant because of the small sample of youth with law violations. As the dataset continue to be added to, JJI will be able to perform more in-depth analysis of cases. Incomplete reporting for youth in each program resulted in an inability to fully evaluate the programs. Missing or inaccurate data may be due to several reasons: different personnel reporting in JCMS, staff turnover, lack of understanding of how data should be entered, or an inability to gather data from other agencies. To mitigate these issues, the Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI) conducted in-person trainings with each mentoring program and offered to assist programs enter their data.

Conclusion

Because the CBA funds are intended for delinquency prevention, the focus of this report is entry in the juvenile justice system. However, other characteristics contribute to system involvement. For example, researchers have demonstrated that youth matched to an adult mentor show significant improvements in behavioral and psycho-social outcomes (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverhorn, and Valentine 2011; Meyerson 2013). In the future, JJI plans to utilize tools that measure behavioral and psycho-social pre and post, and to examine whether improvements in these areas lead to lower rates of subsequent system involvement. Furthermore, we hope to examine the quality of match relationships, how the mentoring relationship may impact prosocial behavior, community engagement, academic performance, hopefulness and future goal orientation, and feelings and perceptions of support from adults.

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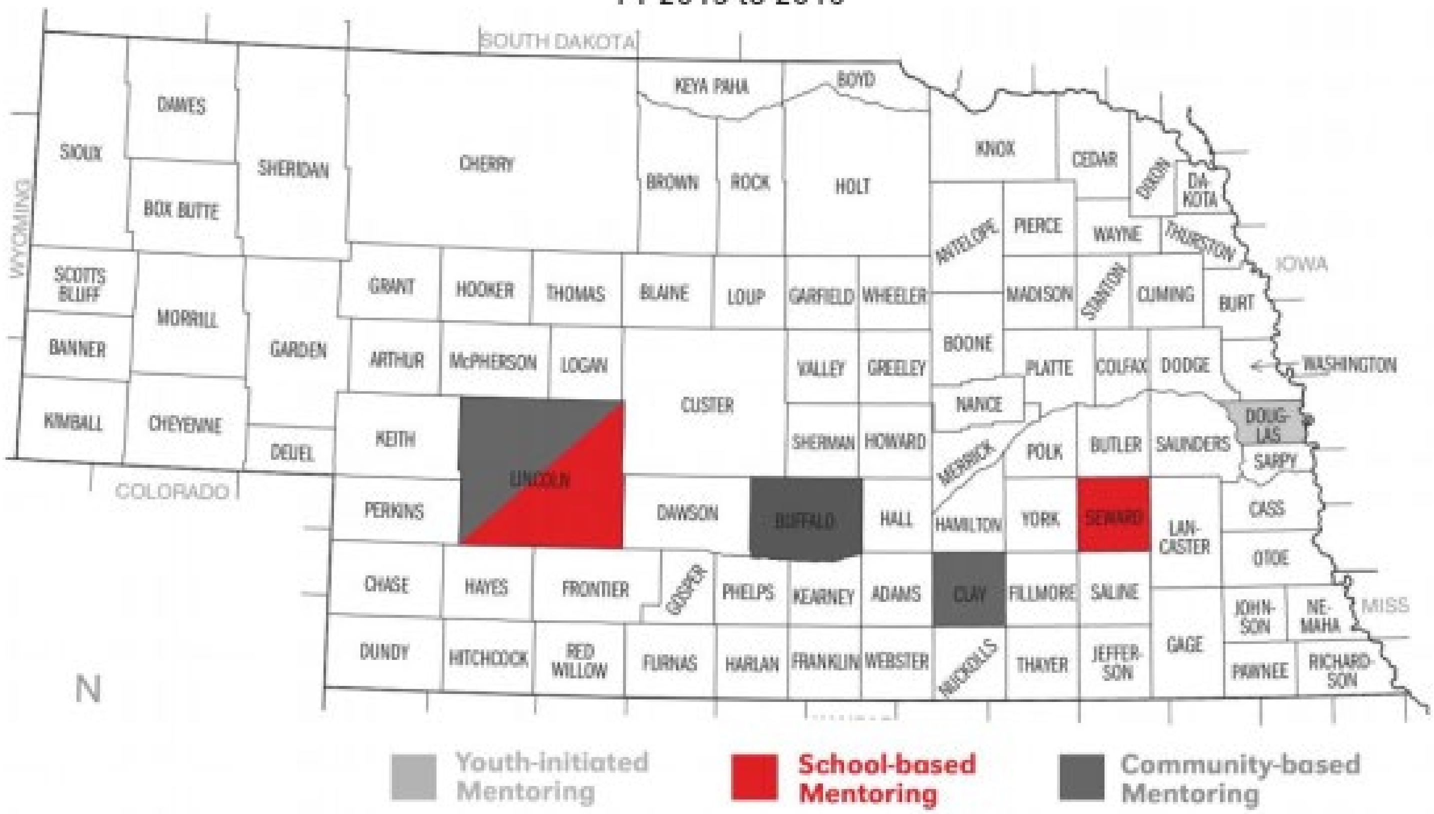
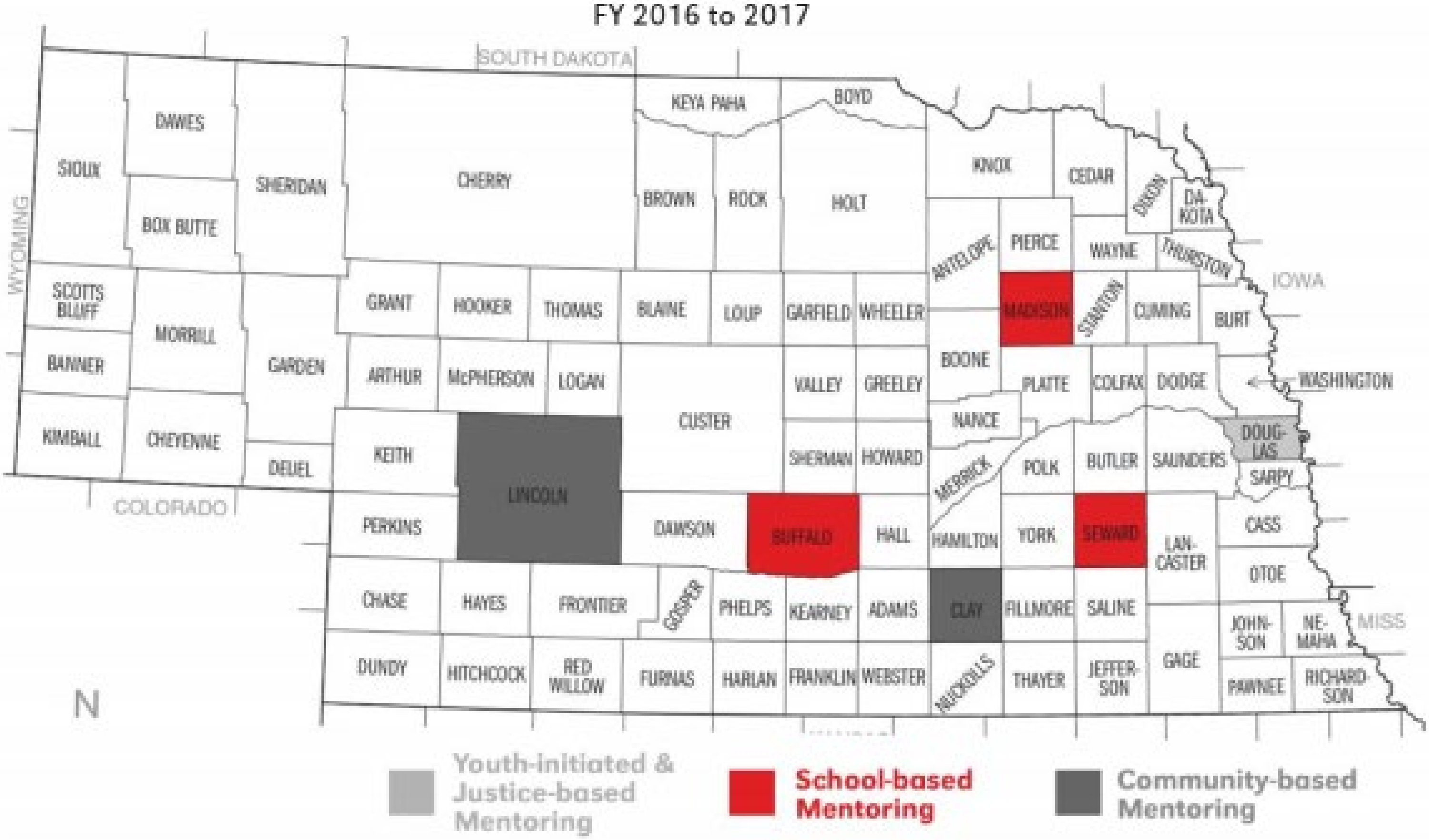
Appendix

Maps of Counties that have Mentoring Programs funded through CBA by Fiscal Year

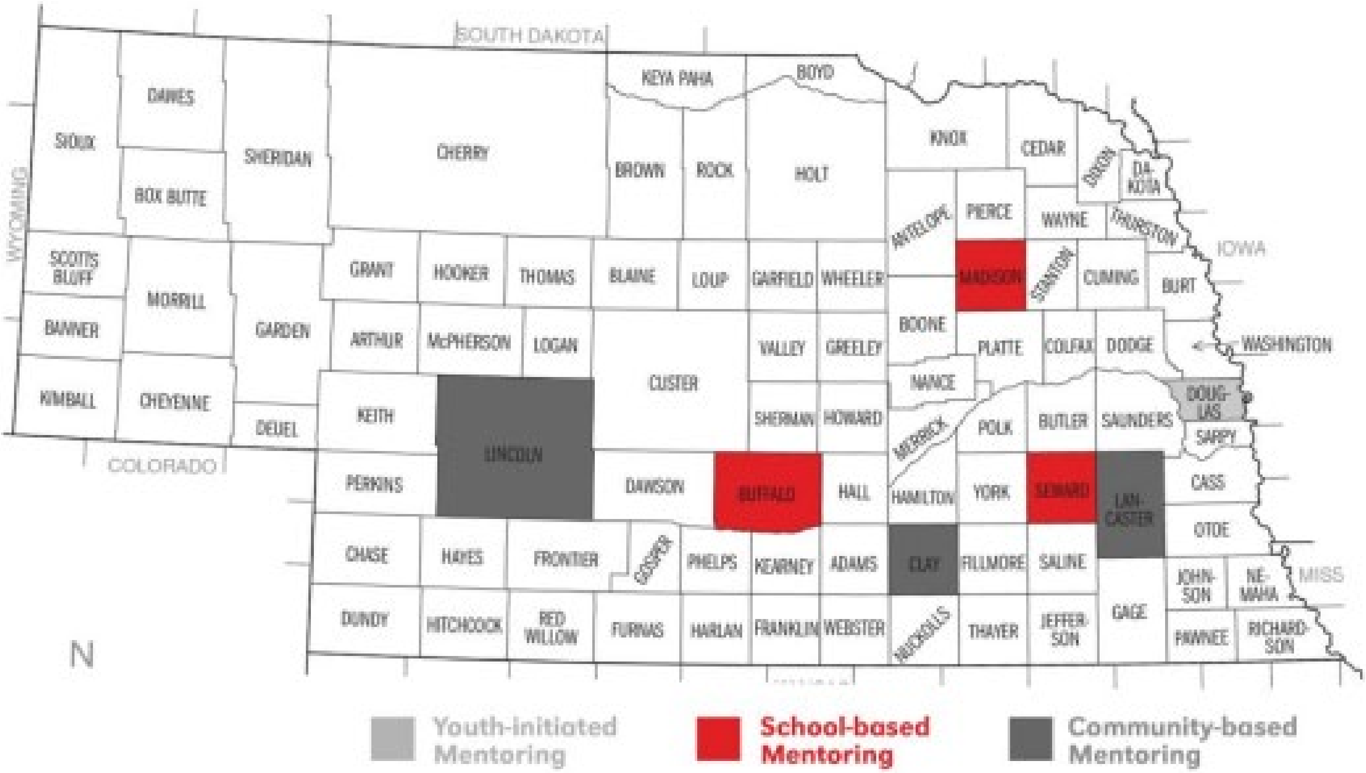
FY 2015 to 2016



FY 2016 to 2017



FY 2017 to 2018



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UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

STEPs' Program Evaluation Capacity-Building Program

SEPTEMBER 2016

University of Nebraska Omaha

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STEPs' Program Evaluation Capacity-Building Program

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SUMMARY

The STEPs' Program Evaluation Capacity-Building Program arose from previous research we conducted in the Omaha community with small nonprofit organizations. To meet the needs of the smaller nonprofits, STEPs utilized Urban Research Grant funding to offer one set of three free program evaluation training sessions. Combined with a previous set in late 2015, 47 individuals from 36 organizations attended the two cohorts of program evaluation training sessions. Organizations who had a staff member attend all three training sessions were then invited to apply for individual consultations to assist with program evaluation needs. The Urban Research Grant allowed us to offer free consulting from a STEPs staff member to six of these organizations.

PROGRAM EVALUATION TRAINING SESSIONS

Attendees of the training sessions were invited to fill out evaluations following each session. Evaluations from the first and second cohort showed that 100% of attendees either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" the training was helpful, the content was organized and easy to follow, and they would be able to apply the knowledge they learned. For both cohorts, the great majority of attendees "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that adequate time was provided for discussion and/or questions, while a very small number of respondents expressed a desire for increased discussion time.

Based on evaluations, the content delivered during the program evaluation capacity- building trainings was received enthusiastically, deemed as very relevant, and highly appreciated by the attendees. The following comment was received on one of the evaluations at the end of the first cohort:

"I appreciate all of you for giving us this opportunity, this has been an experience that I cherish and will enjoy putting all my new found skills to use. I pray God cover all of you and give an extra measure of love, grace, favor, and mercy through the holiday season and as you move into 2016. Thank you..."

In the commentary from the evaluations, attendees expressed feelings of deep gratitude for providing additional assistance to community organizations with limited resources, allotting time to focus on program evaluation efforts, and offering follow-up services to hold the organizations accountable and provide more individualized help.

CONSULTING SERVICES

Organizations who completed all three sessions of the program evaluation capacity-building trainings were eligible to apply for individual consulting with STEPs staff members. Each consultation consisted of up to five two-hour meetings with a focus on the program evaluation efforts of the organization's choice.

We received evaluation forms from five of the six organizations that participated in the consulting services. Responses were overwhelmingly positive, and showed that 100% of those who completed the evaluations strongly agreed that 1) they were satisfied with the results of the consultation and felt they had benefited; 2) they would recommend STEPs to other nonprofits for evaluation needs; and 3) their consultant was knowledgeable, responsive, organized, listened well, and communicated effectively. (From our perspective, consulting with the sixth organization also went very well.) In the commentary, most recipients of consulting services talked about how they were able to better implement program evaluation with the help of more tailored assistance from their consultant, how they had increased their knowledge of program evaluation, and how they had implemented a plan and had clear and definitive next steps to continue the work independently. In follow-up commentary from one of the recipients of consulting services, the organization reported benefiting from receiving consulting services in several ways. Three months following their last consult appointment, the organization reported a 41% increase in response rate for their client satisfaction surveys. In addition, the consulting service assisted with improving therapeutic processes by streamlining client case documentation, and finding an appropriate and validated outcome measurement tool. All changes were enthusiastically embraced by staff including a staff member who is typically resistant to change.

We provided follow-up options for those organizations who were not eligible or felt they were not ready to apply for consulting services. We gave everyone who attended the training sessions an application for a service-learning partnership in a graduate-level program evaluation course. We also gave everyone the ability to participate in a program evaluation capacity-building group that would meet on a monthly basis to network and resource together, as well as to serve as a reminder to devote time and effort to program evaluation.

IMPACT

Previous research and firsthand experience from participants in the program evaluation capacity-building program have shown that program evaluation efforts are not only necessary to make informed decisions about programming, but they are also often required to report to funders. Much of the funding that nonprofits receive is contingent upon being able to show that an organization is providing the services it promises to and is meeting its stated outcomes. As evidenced by the stated need and apparent demand for free program evaluation assistance, this is an area where nonprofits tend to struggle due to resource constraints, staff knowledge and/or ability, and very limited time to devote to evaluation efforts. Findings from the evaluations show that the program participants were thrilled to receive basic evaluation training at no charge to their organization.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Proposals to present on this program evaluation capacity-building effort with small nonprofits have been accepted and presentations will be made to the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association in October, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as the Engagement Scholarship Consortium in October, 2016 in Omaha, Nebraska.

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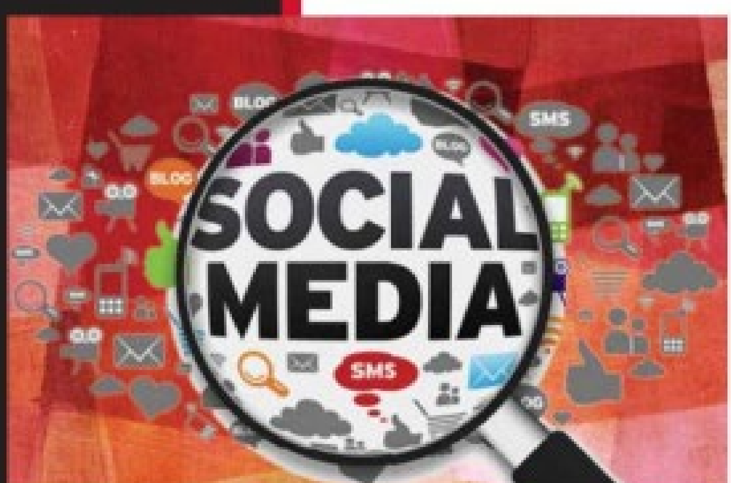
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
GRACE ABBOTT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

University of Nebraska Omaha

Social Media for Emergency Management (SMEM):

Promoting Cross-sector Collaboration



SPRING 2017

University of Nebraska Omaha

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Promoting Collaboration on Social Media

PI: DeeDee Bennett
Assistant Professor, School of Public Administration,
Emergency Services Program, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Co-PI: Yu-Che Chen
Associate Professor, Director of the Global Digital
Governance Lab, School of Public Administration
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Co-PI: Jooho Lee
Assistant Professor, Associate Director of the Global Digital
Governance Lab, School of Public Administration
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Co-PI: Joe Mancuso
Instructor, Coordinator of the Fire Service
Management Program, School of Public Administration
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Emily Newman
Graduate Assistant, School of Public Administration
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Spring 2017

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

University of Nebraska Omaha

QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

This study focuses on the intergovernmental use of social media to promote (or impede) cooperation and collaboration. Social media platforms are often used by several emergency management-related agencies (public, private, and non-profit sector) prior to, during, and after disasters. Most studies have explored the use of social media during disasters by one agency or the interaction between an emergency management-related agency and the public. However, very little research has been done to determine the use across agencies as a means to facilitate cooperation and collaboration. One important activity of emergency managers is leverage assistance from other agencies by promoting cooperation and collaboration.
Their efforts to encourage trust, build consensus, facilitate communication, and strengthen necessary relationships are invaluable prior to and during active emergencies. Social media, now an established medium for communication has been known to build consensus (or dissension), boost trust (or mistrust) and strengthen (or destroy) relationships.

RESEARCH PROGRESS

Social Media Data

We analyzed social media data from state and local public emergency management-related agencies with partnership agreements on social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter. We noticed that most activity occurred on Twitter and that at least one organization did not have a Facebook page. We have decided to proceed with the analysis focusing on the data from Twitter. To limit our location to the Omaha area we narrowed our examination to include one agency from each level of government: Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 7, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Douglas County Emergency Management Agency, and the Omaha Police Department. We examined their use of Twitter for connecting to other government agencies, as well as to each other. This snapshot identifies the organizations that form connections over Twitter and the types of public information discussed among emergency management and related agencies.

Interviews

Our one interview led us to information about a social media coalition among emergency management agencies in the FEMA Region 7 area. We anticipate including this data into our analysis.

STUDENTS

To date, we hired one student, who was recently accepted to the School of Public Administration's Ph.D. program.

DISSEMINATION

We had one presentation accepted for the Natural Hurricane Conference in March 2016, however, we had to decline the acceptance because it conflicted with other conferences due to their late notification. We had one poster accepted to the Natural Hazards Workshop in July 2016, which requires a presenter to attend the workshop for continued acceptance. This particular workshop is headed by the editors of the Natural Hazards Review (NHR) one of the leading journals in the field. By presenting a poster, we can leverage proximity to discuss the potential for a journal article in the NHR. Similarly, the IRCD is lead by the editors of the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters (IJMED), again we hope to discuss the potential for a journal article in IJMED. See poster on next page.

NATIONAL STUDY POTENTIAL

Finally, the Natural Hazards Workshop is often attended by current and former program managers of the National Science Foundation, responsible for grants related to the field. Attendance at this particular conference is strategic to potentially assist with identification of larger grants.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

Intergovernmental Connections on Social Media: Snap shot of emergency management agencies

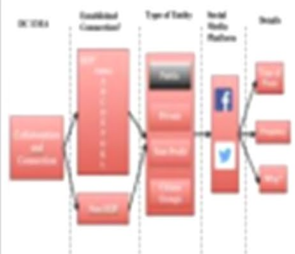
DeeDee Bennett, Yu-Che Chen, Jooho Lee, Joe Mancuso, and Emily Newman
School of Public Administration, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182

PROBLEM

RESEARCH QUESTION

SCOPE

METHOD



	Facebook	Twitter	Total
OPD	N/A	2,463	2,463
DCEMA	32	32	64
NEMA	N/A	1,144	1,144
FEMA Region VII	136	94* (out of 206)	342
Sarpy County EMA	N/A	243	243
Total	168	4,088	4,256

NEXT STEPS

FUNDING

REFERENCES

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Organization connectedness

Type of post

CONTACTS

DeeDee Bennett
Assistant Professor

Yu-Che Chen
Associate Professor

Jooho Lee
Associate Professor

Joe Mancuso
Instructor

Emily Newman
Ph.D. Student

Nebraska Omaha

PROMOTING COLLABORATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Presenter and PI: DeeDee Bennett

Co-PIs: Yu-Che Chen, Jooho Lee, Joe Mancuso
Graduate Student : Emily Newman

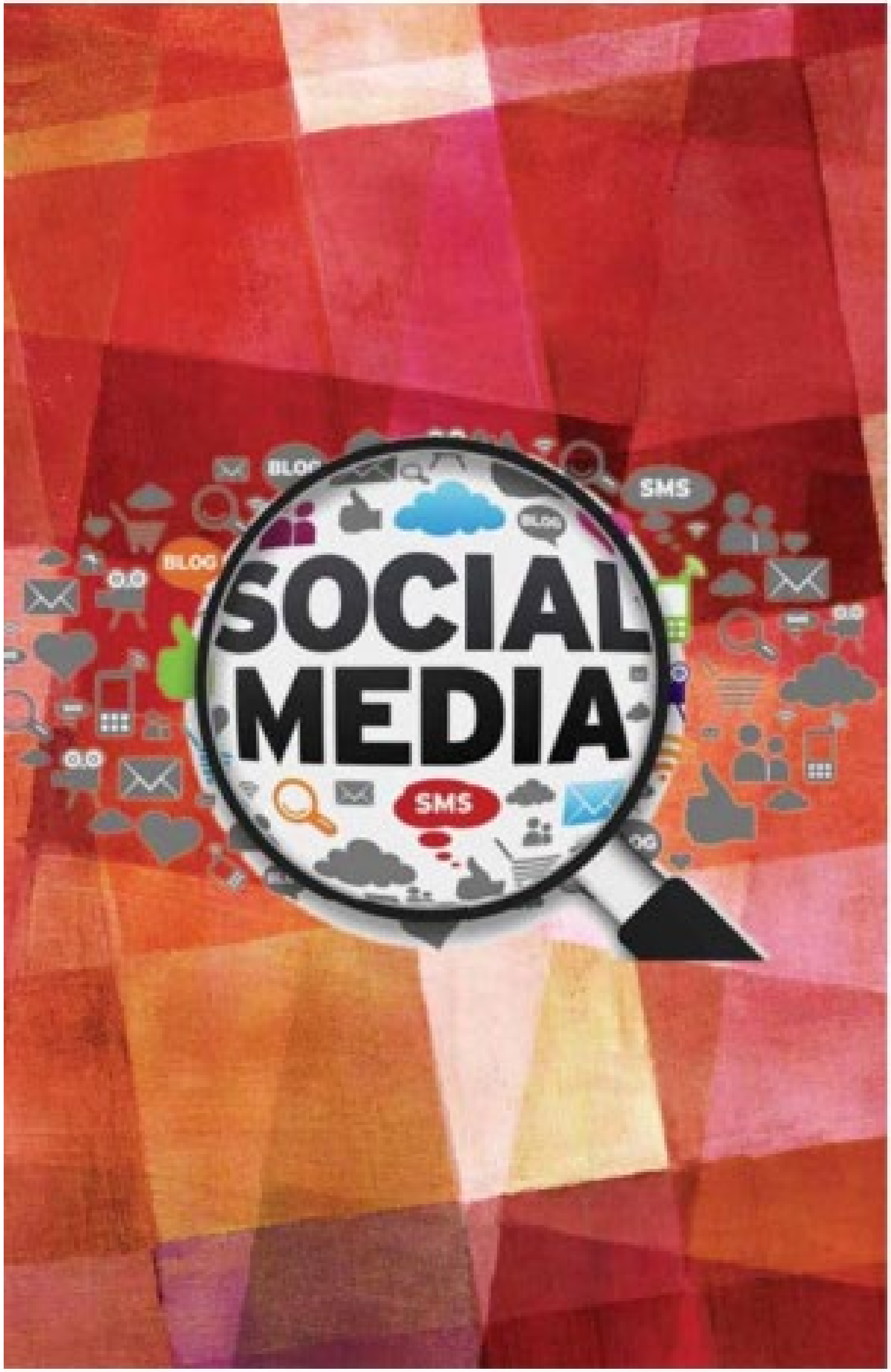
AGENCY COLLABORATION IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

This study explores the use of social media platforms as a means to establish and maintain intergovernmental collaboration for emergency management related agencies.

Collaboration Importance:

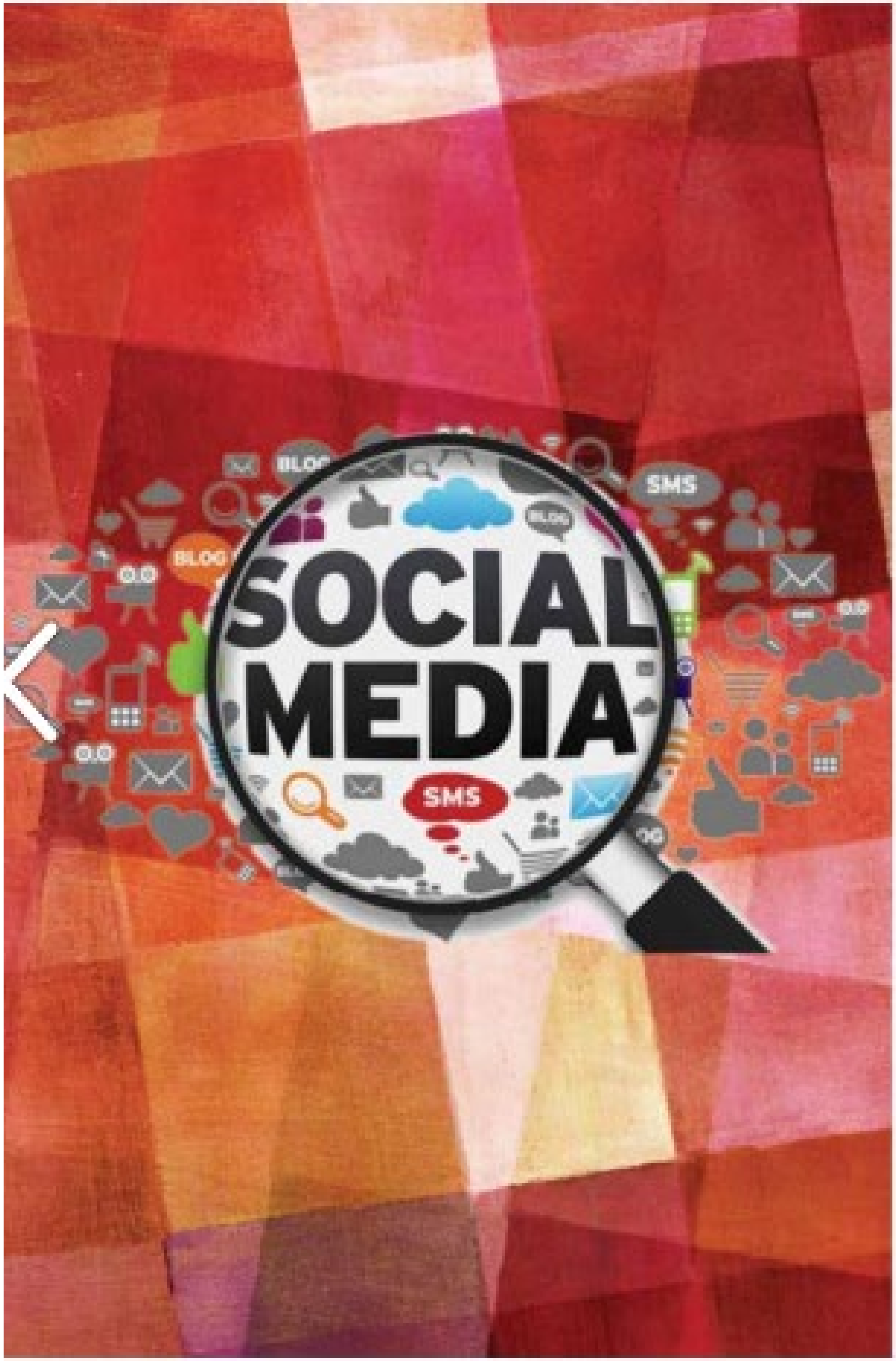
- Intergovernmental
- Intra governmental
- Cross sector

(Waugh and Streib, 2006; Hu, Knox, and Kapucu, 2014; Hu & Kapucu, 2016)



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Disaster Management
  - Before
  - During
  - After
- Efforts include
  - organizing volunteers,
  - locating loved ones,
  - warning the public, and
  - disseminating preparedness information

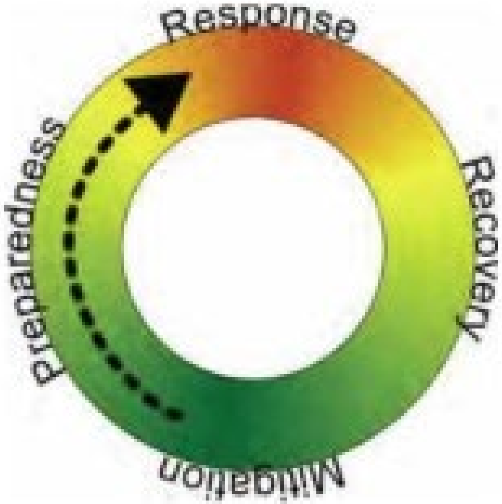


SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In this study, the term 'social media' is limited to online socially connected platforms that require users

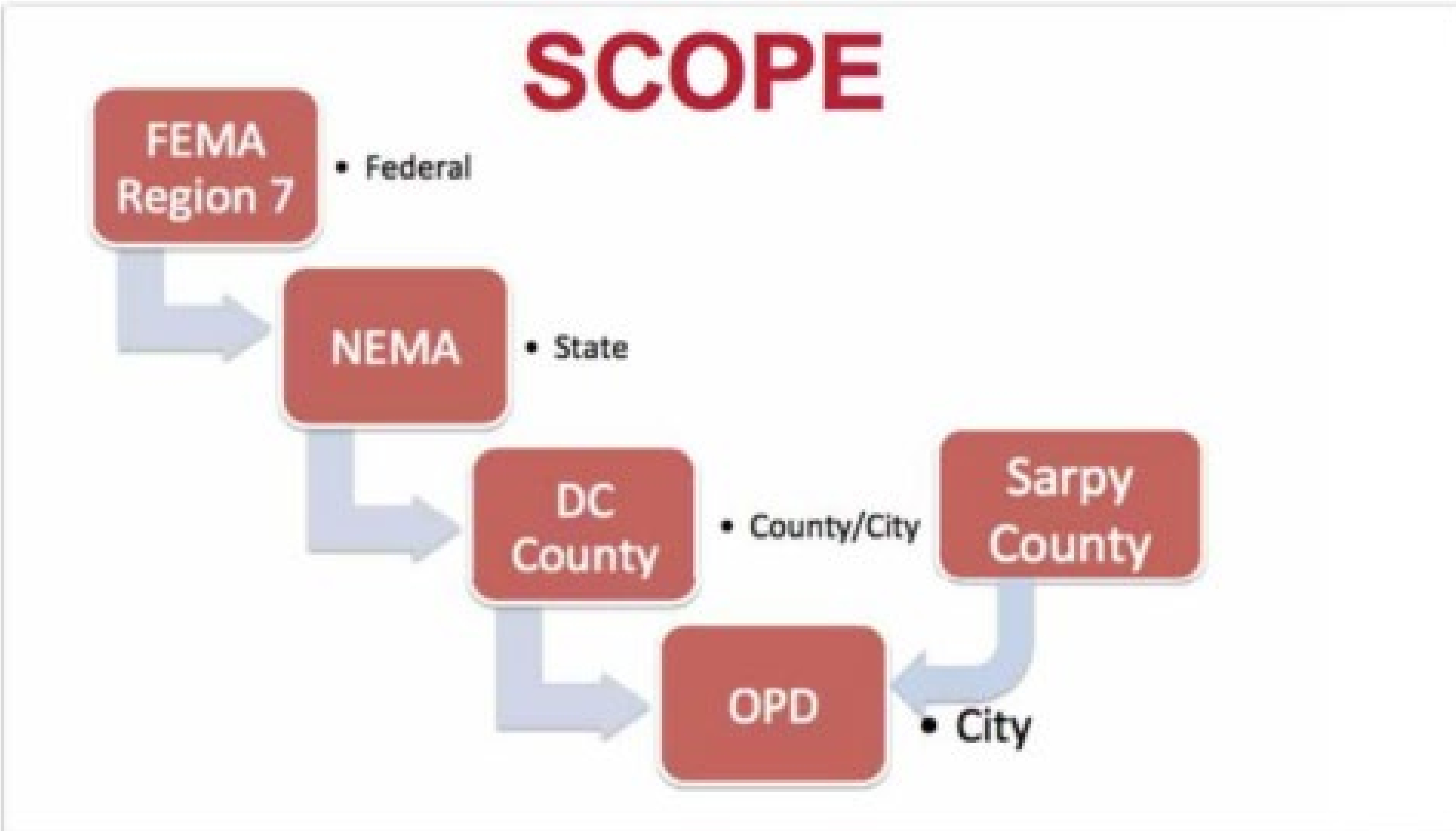
- to connect to others via postings,
- followings,
- videos and/or
- trending topics.

This limitation is an adaptation of Boyd and Ellison's (2008) definition of online social network sites and has been used in other studies on social media (Bennett, 2014).



"HOW ARE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED FOR INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION BY VARIOUS PUBLIC SECTOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES?"

VERY NARROW SCOPE



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

	Facebook	Twitter	Totals
OPD (city)	N/A	2,463	2,463
DCEMA (county)	32	32	64
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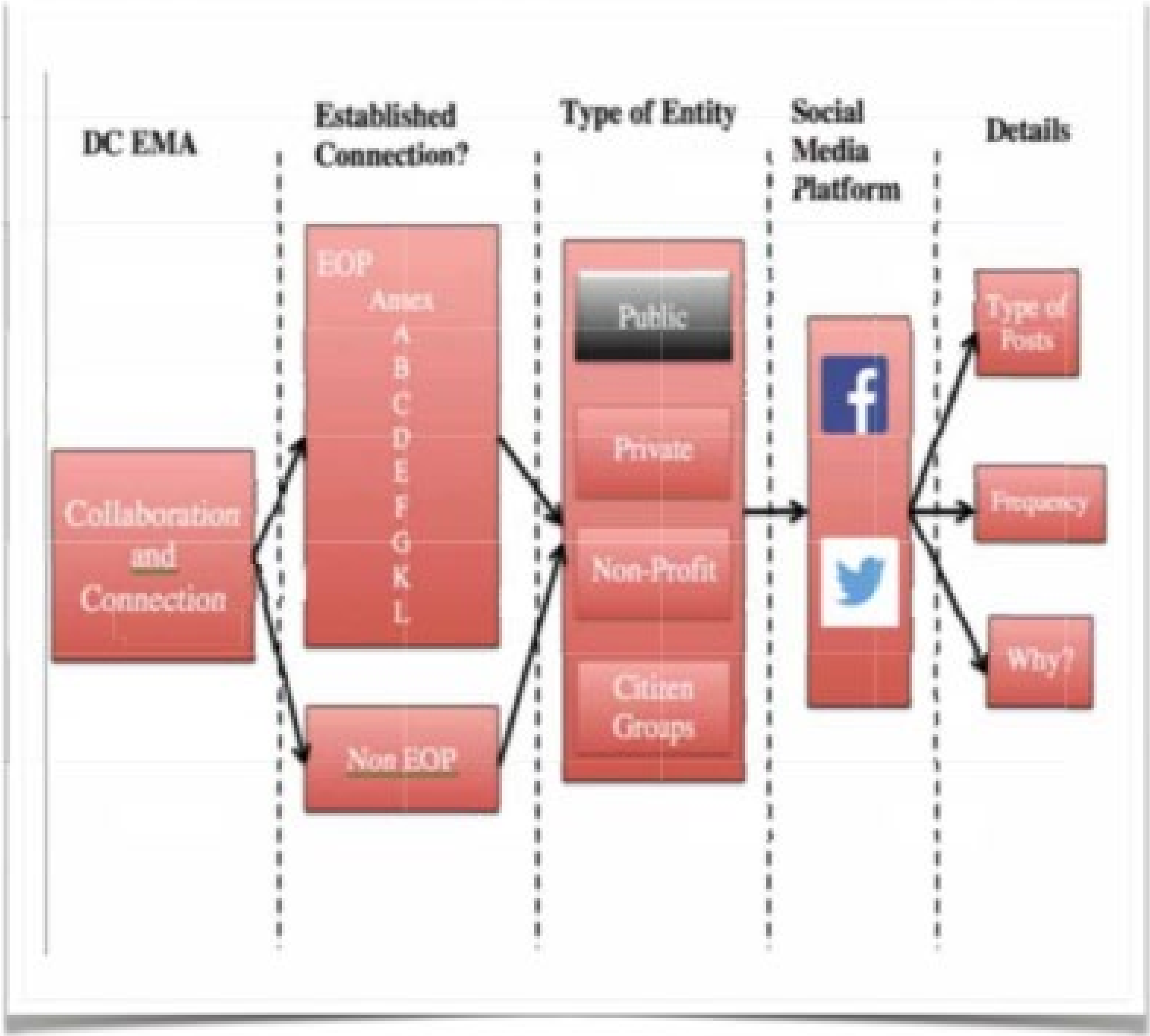
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



TWITTER FOCUS: SPRADLEY'S APPROACH

- Space: Select Government Twitter Pages
- Objects:
  - Tweets retweeted by agency from another governments posts
  - Tweets initiated by agency with another governments handle
- Act: Posting or retweeting messages on Twitter page
- Actors: DCEMA, Sarpy EMA, NEMA, FEMA Region 7 tweets
- Activities: Disseminating preparedness information, warnings, weather, lessons learned from other disasters
- Event: Day-to-day activities 2015
- Time: Observations year of 2015
- Goal:Observe evidence of inter organizational collaboration for one year among Omaha area (and beyond) dedicated emergency management entities.

TWITTER FOCUS: SPRADLEY'S APPROACH

- Space: Select Government Twitter Pages
- Objects:
  - Tweets retweeted by agency from another governments posts
  - Tweets initiated by agency with another governments handle

CONTENT CODING

The social media content was explored using a modified version of Spradley's observational research and analyzed on Nvivo11 software (Spradley, 1980, Bennett, 2014).

	Organizations/Gov't Agencies		Twitter
Federal	FEMA R7		RT/handle
State	NEMA		RT/ handle
County	DCEMA	Sarpy	RT/handle
City	Omaha - DC EOP		RT/ handle/ follows

CONTENT CODING

The social media content was explored using a modified version of Spradley's observational research and analyzed on Nvivo11 software (Spradley, 1980, Bennett, 2014).

Topics	Subtopics				
Prepare	Public Education	Weather information	Siren testing	Amber Alerts	Road/ Accident
Response	Warning	Crime Reports			
Recovery	Debris	Assistance			
Disaster	9/11	Hurricane Katrina	Hurricane Sandy	San Bernadino	Wayne Tornado
Other	Officer related	Animal Related	Holiday	Other Language	

FINDINGS 1: CONNECTION IN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

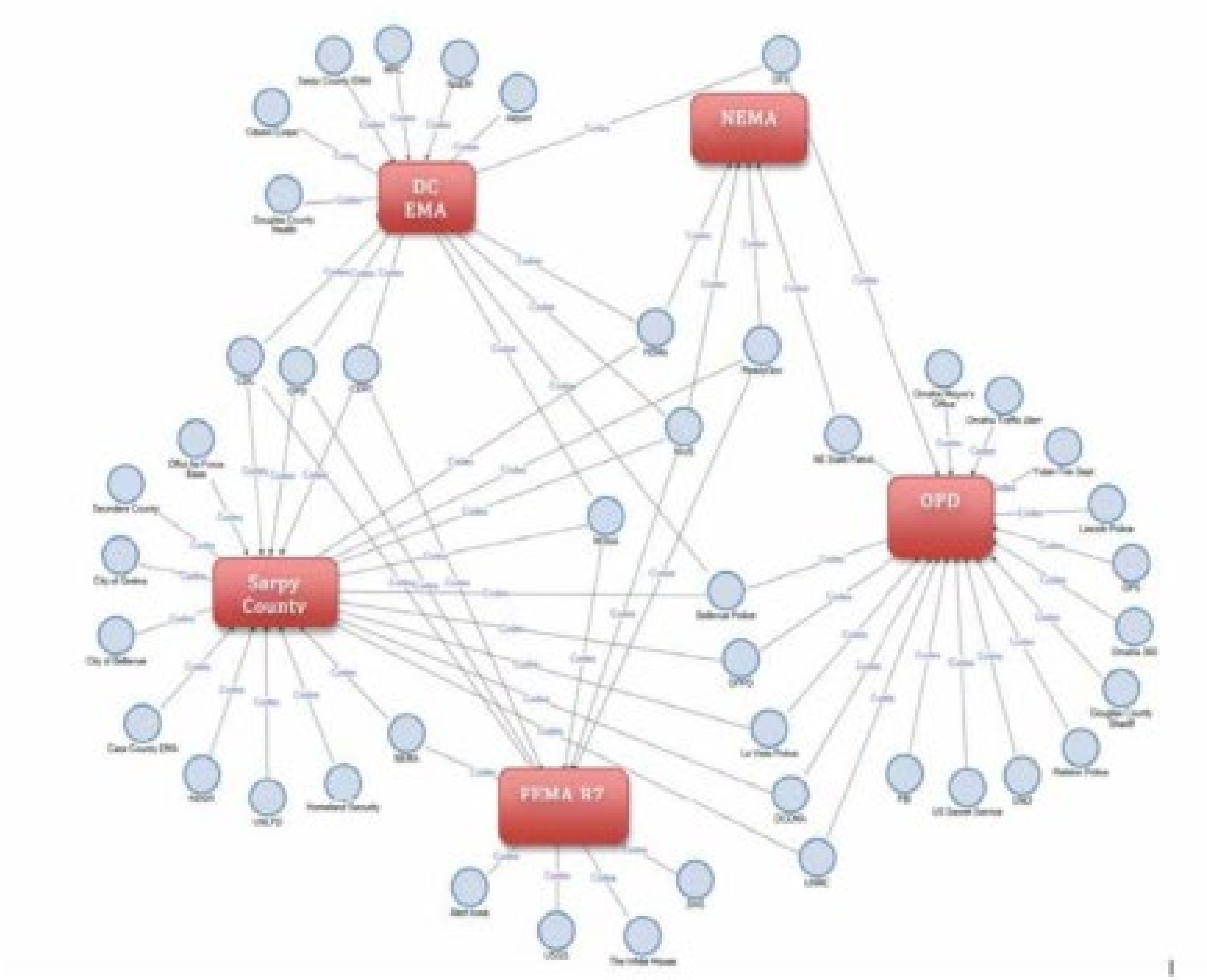
Douglas County Emergency Management Agency (DCEMA)

Connections made in Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and on Twitter

Level of Governance	Location of identified connection			N
	Only In EOP	On Twitter / In EOP	Only On Twitter	
Federal level	0	3	10	13
State level	0	6	5	11
County level	9	4	18	31
Local Level (city, municipality)	0	11	18	29
Other	0	6	17	23
N	9	30	68	107

FINDINGS 2: GOVERNMENTAL CONNECTIONS ON TWITTER

Shared Twitter Connections by Agency

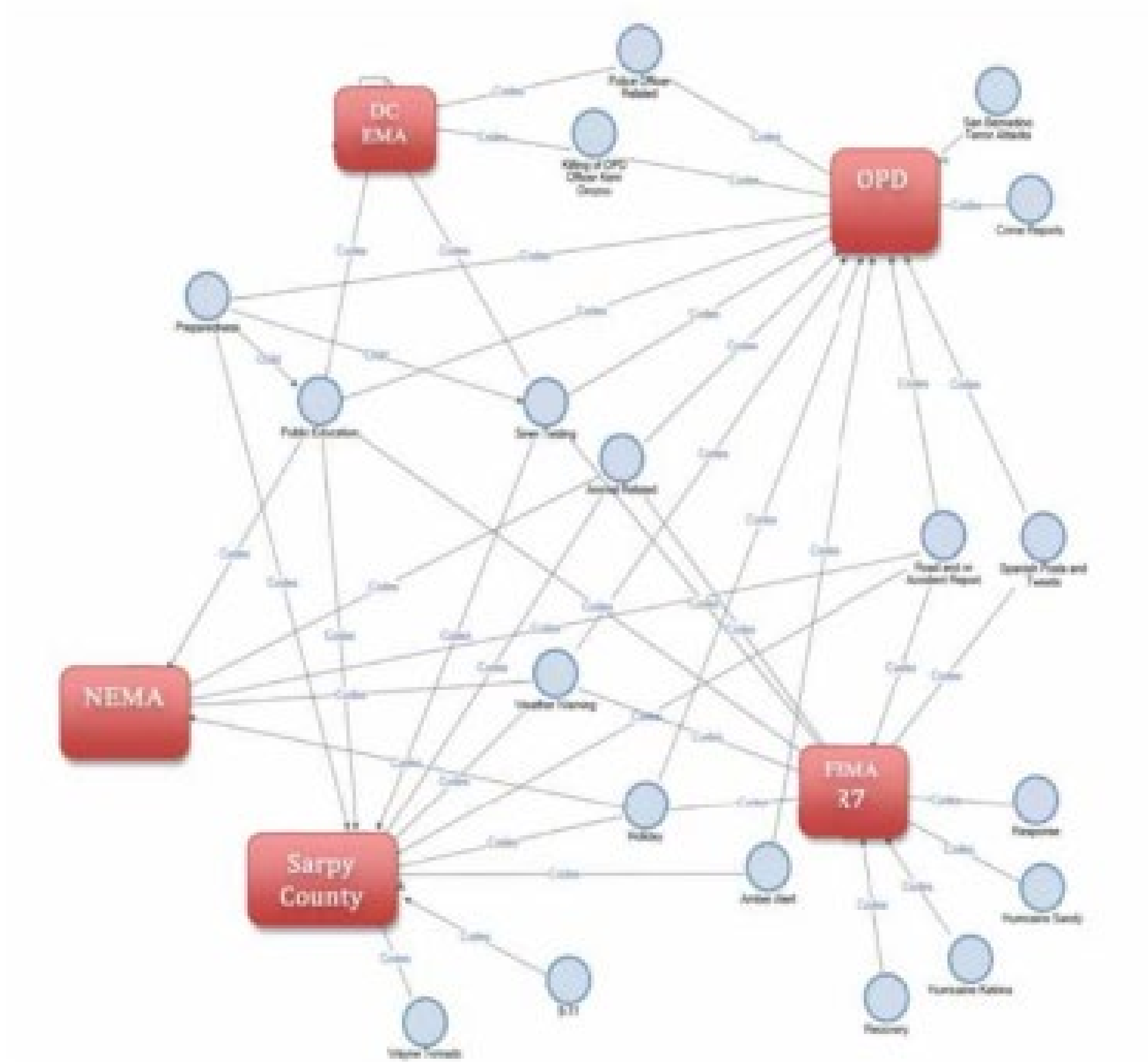


FINDINGS 2: GOVERNMENTAL CONNECTIONS ON TWITTER

Shared Twitter Connections by Agency

FINDINGS 3: TOPIC OF POSTS

Twitter Connections by Topic



FINDINGS 3: TOPIC OF POSTS

DISCUSSION

- Connection in Emergency Operations Plan
  - More agencies are connected to on Twitter than in the EOP alone
  - The informal connections found in this study on Twitter can encourage other agencies to seek out new relationships starting with their online links.
  - This can be accomplished with clear, thorough social media strategies.
- Governmental Connections on Twitter
  - The level of governance for an agency may influence the number of and types of emergency management related agencies connected.
  - Findings show that the state-level and federal-level agencies have the least amount of connections.
  - It is important to note that the frequency (and savviness) of use will also influence the number and type of agencies connected.
- Topic of Posts
  - Majority of the connected tweets were related to disaster preparedness information.
  - The surprising factors were that unrelated emergency messages were shared – seemingly in an effort to maintain citizen followers (e.g. animal and holiday related posts).
  - Another surprise were the Tweets sent in Spanish. These tweets were only disseminated at the FEMA regional level and the local first responder level.

FUTURE TWEAKS

- Frequencies
  - It is important to note that the frequency (and SM savviness) of use will also influence the number and type of agencies connected.
- Expand Collaboration Focus
  - Expand the scope of the study to include all intergovernmental connections during an active incident
  - Finally to expand to included cross-sector connections with private sector, non-profits, and community groups.
- Social Media Strategies
  - Assist emergency management practitioners in developing strategies that incorporate methods to connect with other agencies on Twitter. [Other research studies have shown that this particular topic is often neglected when EMAs have a working social media strategy]
  - The findings of this study, along with others, will assist in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of policies that do not restrict the use of social media to 'online loudspeakers.'

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- Thank you to the reviewers
- Thank you to my co-PIs
- Thank you to Graduate Assistant, Emily Newman
- Thank YOU for listening.

"

Take time to be kind and to say 'thank you.'

-Zig Ziglar

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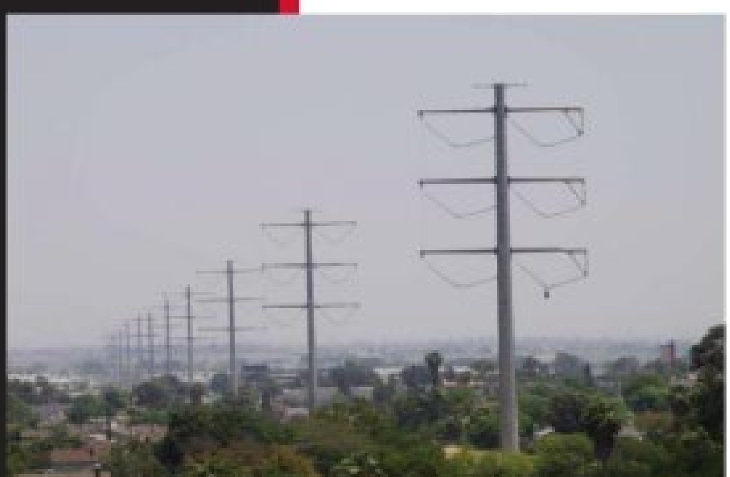
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

University of Nebraska Omaha

Public Perceptions of Urban Infrastructure

Addressing "Wire Blight" to "Go Green"



SUMMER 2016

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Public Perceptions of Urban Infrasturcture:

Addressing “Wire Blight” to “Go Green”

Daniel Wuebben
Assistant Professor, Goodrich Scholarship Program
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Summer 2016

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean’s Office.

University of Nebraska Omaha

ARTICLE

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S221462961730169X

VIDEO

https://vimeo.com/176371484

Public Perceptions of Urban Infrastructure

Addressing "wire blight" to "go green"

Daniel Wuebben, Assistant Professor, Goodrich Scholarship Program

Sustainability requires (more) wires

-ASCE, "Infrastructure Report Card," D+ for Energy

-Dept. of Energy: $900 billion to overhaul infrastructure by 2030

-New lines to address vulnerabilities to unpredictable weather and cyberattacks

-Superconductive materials can lower transmission losses and connect regions

-A large-scale network of super high-voltage renewable transmission lines could reduce carbon emissions by 80% from 1990 levels.[ii]

Public Opposition

-Resistance is rooted in concerns about health, property values, safety, costs, accountability, process, and aesthetics

-“NIBMYism” is real, but label is often applied without distinction

-Pylons are symbols of governmental control, cooperate interest, industrial pollution, and the possibility of sudden social collapse.

-Widespread opposition- Auxiliary information about renewable grid development can lessen public resistance, but 34% will “definitely not accept [a new transmission line] without opposition.”[iii]

Professor Morse's Great Historical Picture.

YANKEE DOODLE expressed himself much pleased with the unity of design displayed in this great national historical work of art.

Electrifcation, the "Greatest Engineering Achievement" of 20th Century, looks like blight

Power Over People, Louise B. Young, 1973

Power-Line: The First Battle in America's Energy War, Barry Casper and Paul Wellstone, 1981

The Great Power-Line Cover-Up, Paul Broduer, 1993

The Grid: The Fraying Wires Between Americans and Our Energy Future, Gretchen Bakke, 2016

O.H.M.S. (1980)
https://youtu.be/8rNqBJ9pNU0

“From Wire Evil to Power Line Poetics: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Renewable Transmission”

https://vimeo.com/176371484

Arboretum, 1980s to Today

Goals of Qualtrics Survey

1) Gauge beliefs about the overall environmental quality of Omaha (including its overhead infrastructure) and the visual salience of transmission and distribution lines (i.e. How often and accurately do individuals notice them)

2) Measure participants' feelings about what actions should be taken with regard to transmission and distribution lines and acceptance of a hypothetical grid expansion.

3) Gather general observations about the utility and identify individuals willing to give formal follow up interviews.

On a scale of 0-10, rate quality of where you live based upon

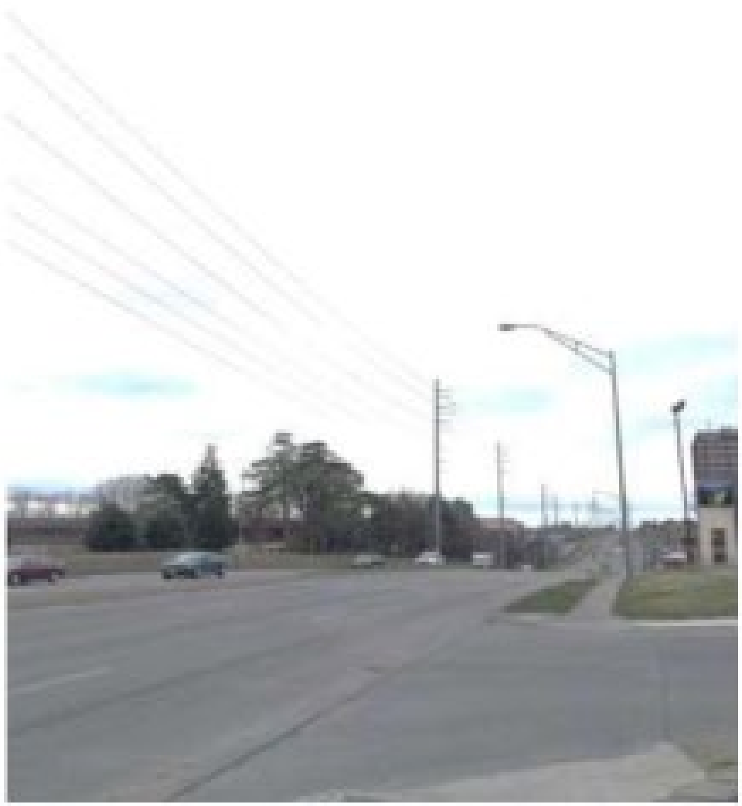
	Mea n
Architecture	6.06
Noise from industry, construction, or traffic	6.18
Access to parks, trails, or green space	6.69
Air quality	6.95
Maintenance of roads and sidewalks	5.48
Landscape	6.46

In general, which of the following four reactions should your neighbors adopt in response to overhead transmission and distribution lines?

Answer	%
We should tolerate the existing and any new overhead lines as they are necessary for maintaining electricity, phone, and Internet service.	37%
We should embrace the existing and any new overhead lines as they are symbolic of our society's ability to reliably transmit electricity and keep us all connected	5%
We should try our best to ignore the existing and any new lines and not to complain about them	13%
We should come together to remove or bury the existing and any new overhead lines as they are dangerous eyesores that can do damage to our property values, health, and aesthetic environment	45%

How do you feel about the location of power lines with regard to your daily activities?

Answer	%
They are an eyesore	40.51%
They are health hazards	15.19%
They don't bother me	**50.63%**
They are too close to where I live	17.72%
I hate them	12.66%
I worry about them falling on me	10.13%



Hypothetical expansion

Please imagine that your local government announced a large program of local infrastructure investments, contributing to the enhancement of the power grid in the whole of the United States. As part of this program, during the next year, a high-voltage power line with standard pylons would be built in your neighborhood. This power lines (including poles and/or towers) would be up to 198-feet high, and be built at a distance of at least 800 feet from your home. How do you think YOU would react to the announcement of this power infrastructure program?

Answer	Omaha	EU
Definitely not accept without opposition	32%	34%
Probably not accept without opposition	43%	
Probably accept without opposition	23%	
Definitely accept without opposition	2%	


Chino Hills, California. 198-foot 500kv line. In 2014, utility was force to bury it underground

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA OMAHA
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
GOODRICH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

University of Nebraska Omaha

Runaway Dynamics in Douglas County:

Examining First-time and Repeat Runaway Behavior

FEBRUARY 2017

University of Nebraska Omaha

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Runaway Dynamics in Douglas County:

Examining First-time and Repeat Runaway Behavior

Calli M. Cain, Doctoral Candidate
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Johanna Peterson, M.A.
Nebraska Center for Justice Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha

February 2017

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

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Nebraska Center for Justice Research
University of Nebraska, Omaha

This project was initially funded by an Urban Research Grant from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service at the University of Nebraska, Omaha.

CPACS Urban Research Grant Presentation
Feb. 15th 2017 CPACS Commons

Background

Why?

- Juvenile justice reform in Douglas County
- Need for more information on runaway youth

Background

What?

- **Surveys**
  - Revision and implementation
  - Occurrence, prevalence and risk factors
  - One-time vs. repeat runaways
- **Interviews**
  - Handling runaway youth

Interviews

- Intake Office of Juvenile Probation – Heather Briggs & 4 intake officers
- Director of DC Office of Juvenile Probation – Mary Visek
- DC Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) – Shelly Hug
- Douglas County Sherriff's Office – Deputy Brad Woodward
- OPD detective with Project Harmony – Sergeant Lance Worley
- OPD captain of South East precinct – Capt. Kathy Belcastro
- Youth Emergency Services shelter coordinator (Lori Lines) and outreach coordinator (Shawn Miller)
- H.O.M.E. Program director – Renee Iwan

Prior presentations

- Douglas County JDAI Collaborative (8/4/16)
- Nebraska Youth Alternatives to Detention Meeting (10/18/16)
- Nebraska Statewide JDAI Meeting (11/8/16)
- American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting (11/16/16)

Definitions

- Differences between "runaway" and "homeless" youth definitions (Kim, 2014; OJDDP, 2006)
  - **Runaway:** Youth who have left home without permission
  - **Homeless:** Youth who have been kicked out of their home, abandoned, are doubled up, living in uninhabitable conditions, have no other safe alternative living arrangement

Prevalence

- 6 – 7% of kids run away from home/their placement annually (Sanchez et al., 2006; SAMHSA, 2004; Tyler & Bersani, 2008)
  - High prevalence of running behavior from youth in out-of-home care (Attar-Schwartz, 2013; Moskowitz et al., 2013)
- Reasons for running: argument with parent/family, abuse (current or prior), kicked out, boredom (Edinburgh et al., 2012; Greene, 1995)
- High rates of school problems, depression, physical/sexual abuse, drug/alcohol problems, and problems with peers/parents (Johnson et al., 2005; Thompson & Pillai, 2006; Tyler et al., 2008)
- Most return to their parents/guardians and are gone < 1week (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlack, 2002; Melburn et al., 2007)

Why it matters?

- Being on the run may exacerbate problems that led the youth to run away in the first place (Chen et al., 2007)
- Increases likelihood of engaging in high-risk behavior and being exploited or victimized by others (Kipke et al., 1997; Wagner et al., 2001)
- Running away once decreases the likelihood that a youth will graduate from high school by 10% *(Aratani & Cooper, 2015)*
  - Running multiple times decreases it by 18%
- Runaways may get entangled in the JJS (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2011)
- Few studies have examined differences between first-time and repeat runaways (Stefanidis et al., 1992; Thompson & Pollio, 2006)
  - Repeat runners tend to experience persistent and more severe problems that often stem from poor family relations

Research Questions

1. What are the demographic profiles of all runaways in Douglas County (DC)?
   – Are there group differences in demographic profiles between first-time and repeat runaways?

2. What are youths' experiences with running away (and are there group differences)?

3. What is the prevalence of risk-factors for runaways (and are there group differences)?

4. What are youth booked for and what are their intake decisions (and are there group differences)?

Data

- Received surveys from DC juvenile probation intake office
- All youth presented to intake office completed the survey
- Intake staff interviewed youth to fill out survey (whenever possible- running against clock on youth/some opt out)
- N = 417 surveys completed from January 1 – July 30, 2016
  - ↘ N = 309 (74%) surveys indicated the respondent had current/past running behavior
    - ↘ N = 250 youth with run behavior (59 kids in there twice)
- Limitation = external validity (i.e. not all runaways taken to intake)

Table 1. Demographic profiles of runaways

	All (n=250)
Male	159 (64%)
Race/ethnicity	
African American	115 (46%)
White (non-Hispanic)	66 (26%)
Hispanic	59 (24%)
Other race/ethnicity	23 (9%)
State Ward (currently)	40 (16%)
Home Placement Type	
Biological parents	149 (60%)
Non-relatives/foster/adopted	27 (11%)
Relatives	25 (10%)
Group home	29 (12%)
Shelter	13 (5%)
Other	7 (3%)
Age (mean=16)	
11-13	18 (6%)
14	27 (11%)
15	39 (16%)
16	63 (25%)
17	84 (34%)
18	19 (8%)

Table 2. Demographic comparisons of first-time vs. repeat runaways

	First-time (n=70)	Repeat (n=180)
Male	76%	59%**
Race/ethnicity		
African American	41%	48%
White (non-Hispanic)	20%	26%
Hispanic	31%	21%*
Other race/ethnicity	7%	8%
State Ward (currently)	16%	16%
Home Placement Type		
Biological parents	63%	58%
Non-relatives/foster/adopted	11%	11%
Relatives	11%	9%
Group home	6%	14%*
Shelter	6%	5%
Other	3%	3%
Age		
11-13	7%	7%
14	7%	12%
15	14%	16%
16	21%	27%
17	39%	32%
18	11%	6%

X^2 ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 3. Area of residence

	Total (n=250)
North O (68104, 68110, 68111)	104 (42%)
South O (68107, 68108, 68117)	35 (14%)
Millard, Ralston, West O, Boys Town (68130, 68135, 68136, 68137, 68144, 68022, 68114, 68116, 68154, 68127, 68010)	50 (20%)
Northwest O (68122, 68134, 68164)	19 (8%)
Central O (68102, 68106, 68105, 68131, 68132)	23 (9%)
Out of county (Bellevue, Lincoln, Columbus, Council Bluffs, MO, CO, TX)	16 (6%)

Note: There were no significant differences in intake decision based on youths' area of residence

Table 4. Description of run variables

	First-time (n=70)	Repeat (n=180)
# of times run away		
1	70 (100%)	--
2	--	48 (27%)
3 to 4	--	53 (29%)
5 to 8	--	42 (23%)
More than 8	--	37 (21%)
Time gone when ran		
Less than 1 day	13 (19%)	20 (11%)†
1 to 2 days	28 (40%)	39 (21%)**
3 to 4 days	7 (10%)	28 (16%)
5 to 7 days	5 (7%)	20 (11%)
More than 1 week	17 (24%)	73 (41%)*
Leave Douglas County		
Yes	9 (13%)	42 (23%)**
Missing/refused	23 (33%)	1 (.6%)
Stayed with:		
Immediate family	2 (3%)	9 (5%)
Extended family	3 (3%)	23 (13%) *
Youth friends	30 (43%)	125 (70%) **
Adult friends	13 (19%)	50 (28%)
Significant other	3 (4%)	16 (9%)
Other (e.g., on own)	11 (16%)	26 (14%)

X^2 ** p < .01; * p < .05, † p < .10

Table 5. Description of run variables (continued)

	First-time (n=70)	Repeat (n=180)
Have contact w/ anyone when gone		
Yes	38 (54%)	162 (90%)†
No	7 (10%)	12 (7%)
Missing/refused to answer	25 (36%)	6 (3%)**
If yes- who?		
Parents	12 (17%)	71 (61%)**
Siblings	4 (6%)	11 (6%)
Extended family	4 (6%)	34 (19%)**
Friends	35 (50%)	137 (76%)**

X^2 ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$

Table 6. Comparisons of risk factors for first-time vs. repeat runaways

	First-time (n=70)	Repeat (n=180)
Risk factors (co-occurring issues)		
Past sexual abuse	3 (4%)	14 (8%)
Past physical abuse	7 (10%)	24 (13%)
Home/family change (death, divorce)	13 (19%)	45 (25%)
Conflict (fighting) at home	16 (23%)	71 (39%)**
Drug/alcohol use	31 (44%)	103 (57%)*
Depression/suicidal thoughts	6 (9%)	41 (23%)**
Diagnosed mental/emotional issue	12 (17%)	44 (24%)
Truancy	22 (31%)	84 (47%)*
Suspension/expulsion from school	28 (40%)	100 (56%)*
Warrants/trouble with law	31 (44%)	100 (56%)†
Need someone to talk to/trust	32 (46%)	80 (44%)

X^2 ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$

Table 7. Comparisons of booking reason and intake decision for first-time vs. repeat runaways

Nebraska Omaha

	First-time (n=70)	Repeat (n=180)†	All (n=250)
Reason for booking			
Unlawful absence (UA)	38 (54%)	122 (51%)	160 (52%)
New law violation	20 (29%)	70 (29%)	90 (29%)
Failure to appear (FTA)	5 (7%)	23 (10%)	28 (9%)
New law violation & UA	4 (7%)	18 (8%)	22 (7%)
New law violation & FTA	1 (1%)	3 (1%)	4 (1%)
UA & FTA	2 (3%)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)
Intake decision			
Detain, Secure	31 (44%)	120 (50%)	151 (49%)
Detain, Staff-Secure	5 (7%)	30 (13%)	35 (11%)
Release with Restrictions	12 (17%)	58 (24%)	70 (23%)
Release without Restrictions	22 (31%)	31 (13%)**	53 (17%)
Number of incidents	70	239	309

X^2 ** p < .01; * p < .05.

†59 youth in the repeat group were surveyed >1 time (if they were taken to intake office >1 over study period)

Table 8. Crosstabulation of intake decision and reason at intake (row % shown)

University of Nebraska Omaha

	Detain, Secure (n= 151)	Detain, Staff-Secure (n= 35)	Release w/ Restrictions (n= 70)	Release No Restrictions (n= 53)	Total (n= 309)
Unlawful absence	47%	**18%**	23%	13%	52%
New law	14%	2%	27%	22%	29%
Failure to appear	29%	11%	29%	**32%**	9%
New law & UA	**91%**	4.5%	--	4.5%	7%
New law & FTA	25%	25%	25%	25%	1%
UA & FTA	60%	--	20%	20%	2%
Total (n= 309)	49%	11%	23%	17%	

$X^2 = 39.96$, df=15 , $p<.001$

Conclusions – prevalence

- 74% of youth taken to DC probation intake report having run before
- 60% of youth who run are living with biological parents
- Majority are from North Omaha (42%)
  - but there were no significant differences in intake decision based on youths' area of residence
- 40% of runaways return home within 2 days
  - **BUT** 36% report being away from home over 1 week
- Most youth have contact with someone when running (80%)
- Peers are CRITICAL
  - 62% reported staying with friends
  - 69% report having contact with friends when on the run

Conclusions – youth issues

- Most youth do NOT report running for safety or abuse concerns (6.5% report running because of ***current*** physical abuse)
- HOWEVER- youth have several other co-occurring issues
  - 54% currently using **drugs/alcohol**
  - 52% report **warrants/trouble with the law** (current or past)
  - 45% report currently **needing someone to talk to/trust**
  - 42% have current **truancy** issues
  - 18% report current **suspension/expulsion** from school (51% anytime)
  - 35% report **conflict/fighting at home** that lead them to runaway
  - 19% report current **depression and/or suicidal thoughts**

Conclusions – group differences

- Demographic profiles of first-time and repeat runaways somewhat similar
  - Males, African Americans & Hispanics over-represented
  - Majority run from home with their biological parents (only 11% run from home w/ nonrelatives)
  - Mean age for both is 16 years old
- However, there are some differences between groups:
  - Significantly more girls in repeat group (41% vs. 24%)
  - Hispanics overrepresented more in first-time group (31% vs. 21%)
  - Significantly more repeat runaways come from a group home (14% vs. 6%)
- Repeat runaways report significantly more conflict at home, depression, drug/alcohol use, problems at school, and trouble with the law
- Policies need to be responsive to the unique needs of this population—particularly how the JJS responds

Relevant Policy

LB675 (2016) attempted to make changes in NE statutes to ensure that kids are detained in secure lockup facilities in only 2 instances:

1. when **risk to public safety** or **risk to self** is "seriously threatened"
2. when there is a **risk of flight** from the jurisdiction (i.e., to ensure presence in court)

- Detention **not** to be used just to punish or to scare kids straight
- This bill was very contentious and raised a lot of debate about the actual definition of detain and serious threat to safety
- LB675 died on the floor

LB8 (2017)- deals only with youth already on probation

- attempts to bring in **graduated responses to negative behaviors** of youth on probation in conjunction with supervision and treatment

Policy/Practical Implications

- Policies need to be responsive to the unique needs of this population — particularly how the JJS responds
  - **Timely and direct interventions** for runaways is important to protect them from the risks of being on the run (Walsh & Donaldson, 2010)
  - **Make youth aware of local services -** few appear to know of, and access, support services on their own (Pergamit & Ernst, 2010)
- **Address the family/parental needs** through comprehensive methods that involve both youth and their families (IFP)
- **Reduce detainment** of runaway youth (e.g., JDAI, OYS)
  - This exacerbates problems that led youth to run in the first place and has several collateral consequences (e.g., increases their likelihood of recidivism & ending up in the adult corrections system, decreases youths' odds of graduating H.S., increases justice-system costs)

Future directions

- GRACA funding for summer 2017
- Finish entering surveys from Aug. - Dec. and analyze data to look at all the RQs addressed here
- Technical report for the DC Office of Juvenile Probation
- Present findings at the Academy of Criminal Justice Science (ACJS) annual meeting in Feb. 2018
- Present findings at the UNO Student Research and Creative Activity Fair in March 2018 (GRACA requirement)
- Submit at least two scholarly manuscripts for publication

Thank you!
Questions?

Special thanks to the Juvenile Probation **Intake Officers**—who helped fill out these surveys- making this information accessible. And thanks to **Heather Briggs** and **Shelly Hug** for answering many questions throughout the data collection process.

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UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

Sentencing Unsuccessful Drug Court Participants:

Examining Court Focal Concerns of a Special Population

APRIL 2016

University of Nebraska Omaha

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The College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) was created in 1973 to ensure that the university was responsive to the critical social needs of our community and state. The College was given the mission not only to provide educational programs of the highest caliber to prepare students for leadership in public service, but also to reach out to the community to help solve public problems.

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Part of the mission of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) is to conduct research, especially as it relates to concerns of our local and statewide constituencies. CPACS has always had an urban mission, and one way that mission is served is to perform applied research relevant to urban society in general, and the Omaha metropolitan area and other Nebraska urban communities in particular. Beginning in 2014, the CPACS Dean provided funding for projects with high relevance to current urban issues, with the potential to apply the findings to practice in Nebraska, Iowa and beyond.

Sentencing Unsuccessful Drug Court Participants:

Examining Court Focal Concerns of a Special Population

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April 2016

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

SUMMARY

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha has cultivated a collaborative relationship with the Douglas County Adult Drug Court, resulting in several successful program evaluations. The findings of this research have been published in the peer-review journal, ***The Drug Court Review*** (Gibbs, B.R. and W. Wakefield (2014). *The efficacy of enhanced alcohol use monitoring: An examination of the effects of EtG/EtS screening.* ***Drug Court Review, 9(1), 1–22.***), and presented at national conferences for the American Society of Criminology (November 20, 2015: Wash. DC) and the American Academy of Criminal Justice (April 1, 2016: Denver). As part of our continuous research evaluation of the Douglas County Adult Drug Court, we are building on a data foundation in place and extending it to include aspects which will, indeed, make the potential outcomes applicable on not only a local level, but also to a wider community network of drug courts. We will focus on final sentencing dispositions of those who were unsuccessful in the program during the research period (2008-2013). Many of these participants were likely to have either been supervised by probation services or served a period of incarceration. This information will be important to consider and control for when evaluating any post participation criminal offending.

- We updated our present DCADC data set by adding participant information (all information that was previously gathered) from those who participated in the program from 2011-13 to the present.
- We have been granted permission from the Douglas County Adult Drug Court for access to updated criminal record checks on the more than 800 offenders who participated in the drug court program from 2008-2013. In addition, we have been given remote access to the PSCMIS system as previously provided. Lastly, during a limited period, we have been given access to program files physically located at the DCADC for clients who participated from 2011-13 to the present.
- We are mining the information located in the criminal history record of those offenders who participated in the DCADC from 2008-2013.

The authors will use the results from this study to apply for further grants to assess other urban located drug courts (locally, regionally, and nationally) to compare with the current research results.

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UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

Exploring Food Policy Networks:

A Case Study of Omaha, Nebraska

OCTOBER 2016

University of Nebraska Omaha

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Exploring Food Policy Networks:

A Case Study of Omaha, Nebraska

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October 2016

Funding for this research was provided by a 2015 Urban Research Award from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.

University of Nebraska Omaha

OVERVIEW

- Overview of the issues and importance of this work
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion

THE ISSUES

- Agricultural policy traditionally has been set at the federal level.
- Increasing attention on local and regional food systems has led to new demands for policymaking at the state and local levels.
- Few academics have researched these emerging food policy issues and governance challenges.

PURPOSE

To present the results of interviews with key stakeholders in the Omaha food policy network in order to gain an understanding of the specific characteristics of food policy networks and apply the lessons learned to the more general body of knowledge on policy networks.

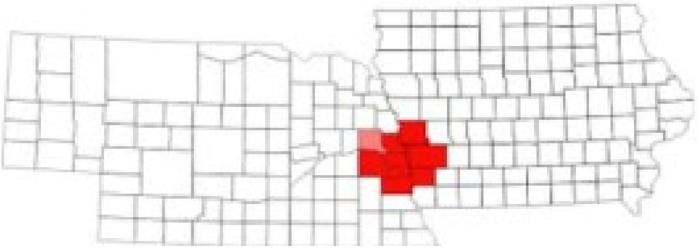
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

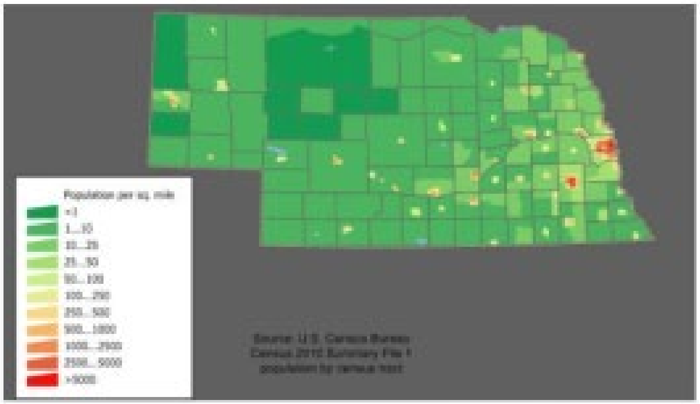
- Who are the key stakeholders influencing policy around local food in Omaha and what are their visions for a sustainable and healthy food system?
- How do these various actors interact with one another?
- What are the broader implications of this research for the study of food policy networks and policy networks more generally?

RELEVANT LITERATURE

- Agranoff and McGuire (2001):
  - Activation
  - Framing
  - Mobilizing
  - Synthesizing
- Contributing to knowledge of network formation and food systems development

OMAHA, NEBRASKA





METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative Approach
- Interviews
  - Interviewees
  - Analysis of Interviews
- Inventory

Demographics	
Male	23
Female	17

Sector	# Interviewed
Nonprofit	16
Government (career)	11
Government (elected)	3
Higher Ed/Research	5
Private	9
Food Producer/Aggregator	4
* some individuals have multiple affiliations	

NETWORK-FOCUSED FINDINGS

STRENGTHS OF OMAHA FPN

Agricultural heritage

"The agricultural heritage in Nebraska. Not that many people are that far away from the farm that they can understand. They've got family that worked on them or grew up on them. They understand that it takes a lot of work and that should be important to us." (Participant 34)

"I think we need to tap into that. The seed sower is our emblem, we have a rich agricultural heritage and tradition. A majority of the people that you talk to come from a family of farmers. We need to remember that heritage and embrace it. We need to redefine it. That can be one of our strongest tools in moving forward." (Participant 28)

Natural resources

"Biggest strength is natural resource. In Omaha, the spread out nature means that there are these vacant lots and that's a plus to us, a plus to growing. And then also the soil being that old prairie soil." (Participant 25)

Growing awareness of local food

"I would say especially from the consumer perspective, I see a lot more growth and awareness and engagement on that regard." (Participant 36)

Strong restaurant and growing retail investment in local food

"We have an incredible about of restaurants that are farm to table. Our grocery stores carrying local farms." (Participant 7)

"The fact that the retailers will give preferential treatment to local growers. They will highlight that. The Russ's and Super Saver's they even have pictures up of like the corn grower, Daniels, in their produce department. They want people to make that connection." (Participant 12)

Partnership/collaboration highly valued

"The strength, I think our network is really strong actually in Nebraska. And there's a real, I think, I'm observing, a real willingness to work together. There's sort of a demand for that collaboration. And if you don't do that I feel like there is a push back to you as an organization or group that doesn't." (Participant 20)

Passionate people

"I think the strengths are you have people who are excited and passionate about doing the work. You do have individuals who are willing to get in and engage. You do have individuals who are willing to do the dirty, foundational, structural work that needs to be done in order to make this work." (Participant 19)

WEAKNESSES OF OMAHA FPN

Nebraska doesn't grow food

"Large-scale agriculture system and a large-scale agriculture that's not producing food. And I've talked about this with a lot of different people, our landscape here in Nebraska is very well suited for huge-scale agriculture because it's very wide-open and you can drive a tractor for a hundred miles." (Participant 13)

"Obviously being such an ag-focused region it should be very natural and I think it is for us to have food conversations. And the irony of the way that we're using our land to produce food that's not consumed by humans and shipped all over the world." (Participant 20)

Farm to Institution limited, chicken & egg of scalability

"Institutionally we're way behind. Like significantly, way behind. When you look at school systems on the coast, specifically to the west coast, and even hospitals and things of that nature, they have amazing food programs in place." (Participant 18)

Policies as barriers

- Food safety regulations
- Zoning issues
- Complexity of navigating red tape

Lack of Coordination, Duplication & Need for Steering/Small # of People

"A lot of different groups are working on this and somewhat duplicating each other's efforts." (Participant 12)

"But I'd say it's too loose to call it a system. I think what you have is a lot of players doing different things and playing important roles, but it's not like a system in the sense that, oh, it's seamless and we're making this work together and this is, you know, how we're all working together, and this is what our niche is versus someone else's. A lot of independent people." (Participant 16)

"But again, you'll have fifty people that are covering the same ground and the differences between them are very little. So then they're chasing the same money." (Participant 24)

"The flip side of that though is that there is a very small group with very limited resources and we haven't expanded that group very successfully." (Participant 33)

WHO WILL LEAD?

"Well I think when you think about the Metro Omaha Food Policy Council, my first thought is that the birth, so to speak, of that food policy council, and I think it happened many times." (Participant 30)

"It's unfortunate that that has ebbed and flowed to a point where it is now that it's sort of in this regrouping stage." (Participant 36)

Organization Name	Focus	Timeline
Community Garden Network	Community Gardens	2009-present
Metro Omaha Food Policy Council	Omaha Metro; food policy	2011-present
Growing Food Connections	Steering committee to determine strategic vision for Omaha	2015-2017
MAPA's Local Food Coordinating Council	Heartland 2050; 8 county focus	2016-present
Community Garden Task Force	Growing community gardens statewide	2015-2016
Statewide Food Policy Council	Not funded (on hold)	2015-present
FPCs in neighboring communities	Many FPCs in Iowa; FPC in Lincoln (2014-present)	varies

NEED FOR EDUCATION

Target Audience

- General Public
- Children/Youth
  - Clear pathways throughout education system
- Policymakers

Education Focus

- General/Awareness
- Skills-based

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL - DESIRED TRAITS

Inclusivity

↕

Good representation across the food system

Serves as a network hub

Represent the "doers" – chefs/farmers/ businesses

"People can talk all they want about food access and food availability, but if they don't have the people that are actually growing the produce, if they aren't the nucleus of this discussion, then all this discussion around it is effortless." (Participant 22)

"It's really hard for individual local food producers to have the time to be able to, you know, they're so obviously out of time and overstretched with their resources anyway. When they go to meetings nobody is paying them to be there. That's just time away from their operations, time away from everything else. But that perspective needs to certainly be there in terms of how...because if it doesn't work for the producers it usually doesn't work for anyone else usually either." (Participant 27)

Prevent duplication and target grants/resources

Paid/dedicated staff & appropriate infrastructure

Government/political involvement

Actively addressing public policy (P vs. P)

Task-goal oriented

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL - ROLES FOR ACTORS

Visionary/strategic

Research support

Identify needs of persons doing the work

Facilitator or convener

Government follows rather than leads?

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL - TRAITS OF LEAD AGENCY

Knows the community and has a good network

Strong facilitation skills

Neutral/no personal agenda

"You get some folks who are very vocal. It has to be this way. But understanding that urban agriculture is so big. It's so varied. The needs of the people are so different. You have to have someone who can move between all the different segments, understand them, and then make sure that the needs of all the organizations are being addressed." (Participant 19)

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Viral Videos of Police Use of Force

Exploring Police Officer Responses

DECEMBER 2019

University of Nebraska Omaha

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The College has become a national leader among similar colleges, with nine programs ranked in the top 25 in the nation. Our faculty ranks are among the finest in their disciplines. Faculty, staff, and students are integral to the community and state because of our applied research, service learning, and community partnerships. We take our duty seriously to help address social needs and craft solutions to local, state, and national problems. For more information, visit our website: cpacs.unomaha.edu

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Viral Videos of Police Use of Force

Exploring Police Officer Responses

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University of Nebraska Omaha

Viral Videos of Police Use of Force: Exploring Police Officer Responses

College of Public Affairs and Community Service
Urban Research Grant Report*

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Executive Summary

Recordings of police interacting with citizens have been making news, sparking protests and calls for reform in many parts of the United States. This study examined police officer perspectives concerning citizens capturing video during police-citizen encounters as well as several related concerns such as the use of body cameras on duty.

Methodology

- The data collection consisted of eleven meetings/focus groups with 29 different participating officers and sergeants using a survey and a focus group method.
- Comparison of study participants to the police department as a whole suggests that participants are older, more educated, and not representatives of all shifts. Specifically, more officers from second and third shifts participated.
- Our sample of officers and sergeants does appear to represent the gender, race, and ethnicity distribution of the police department.
- The focus groups and interviews resulted in 9011 separate "contributions" by speakers in nearly 24 hours of recorded conversation. These recordings were manually transcribed into 1,257,959 characters of text.
- Each focus group transcript was then subject to review for accuracy. The text was coded by speaker, by question/content area as well as by substantive nature of response and analyzed by topic area.

How often are police recorded by citizens?

- Given how ubiquitous cameras are, it might be expected that officers are constantly recorded. Our survey results suggest that officers are recorded about once a week.
- At the same time, officers told us in focus groups that they assume they are always being filmed and act accordingly.

Who films the police?

- Our results suggest citizens filming officers fit into one of three roles: bystanders (the largest category), attached observers, or suspects/drivers.
- Officers didn't notice differences by gender or race but did mention that filming seemed more common among younger people.
- Officers also described people who were intoxicated, people who identified as sovereign citizens, and people who had frequent (sometimes negative) relationships with the police as likely to film encounters.

When do citizens film police?

- Focus group discussions pointed to relationships between neighborhood, situation, and characteristics of those who film.
- For example, downtown locations with bars tended to have more intoxicated individuals in public, more fights, and more bystanders who would film fights and police interventions.
- Citizens were also likely to film during traffic stops (either as stopped drivers or passengers).
- Officers also indicated other factors were related to filming, specifically: lights and siren use, multiple officers being on scene, yelling by officers or citizens, an accident or police tape.

Body-Worn Camera Use by Police

- Officers explained that body-worn cameras can provide protection for officers against frivolous complaints by citizens, additional information about crime scenes, about encounters with citizens, and can be used to assist report writing and preparation for court. On a related note, several officers expressed concerns about the expectations that prosecutors and jurors had about the availability of video.
- Officers had some concerns about body-worn cameras, including the potential for camera footage to be used as part of a "fishing expedition" to look for policy errors or officer misconduct to punish officers, concerns about the costs related to cameras and related equipment and how this might impact the ability of the department to hire more officers, the time needed to use and maintain equipment, concerns about the limitations of technology, and whether technical concerns might be interpreted as officer misconduct.

Training related to Citizens Filming

- While officers did not identify any specific training related to citizens filming, most officers emphasized departmental messages about the rights citizens had to film and the need for officers not to interfere or to confiscate cameras.
- Few officers identified training needs that were specific to being filmed by citizens, but some officers suggested training that may overlap with other training topics, like officer safety.

Viral Video Effect—Do Officers Change their Behavior Because of Cameras?

- On the one hand, officers repeatedly emphasized that it did not concern them that they were being filmed by citizens.
- Officers emphasized the good relationship between the local police and community in discussing the influence of viral videos.
- Officers noted that viral video had changed citizen behaviors in some cases, or that citizens had referred to viral videos in encounters.
- Officers expected that police officers in other communities, particularly those with high profile viral video incidents would reduce the number of proactive encounters to reduce their risk of being included in a viral video incident.
- One concern officers shared specific to viral videos was the possibility of an officer following police department policy in an encounter and still be identified in a viral video, being judged by the media and the community and losing their ability to work in law enforcement as a result.

Future Research

- This study examined the experiences of a relatively small number of officers. A more comprehensive study could use the current research to build a survey instrument to examine the experience of being filmed by citizens with a larger sample.
- Officers report that bystanders and other individuals who might be filming are not always salient to them during many police-citizen encounters. As expected, officers tend to be more focused on the immediate interaction with citizens. A series of observations or ride-alongs would allow for an examination of how many citizens really are filming.
- An observational study could also allow for a second set of focus groups with citizens who are filming the police to examine their perspectives, motives, prior experiences with the police, as well as their expectations about the utility of filming, and if those recordings are distributed.
- Several officers indicated that they searched for video on YouTube, WorldStar, and social media platforms. Future research could examine what sorts of videos are uploaded to these services and what kinds of police-citizen encounters are captured.

Introduction

Over the last several years, viral videos of police use of force have led to protests and investigations across the country, and concerns about the impact on police officers in the form of the "Ferguson" effect (Dewan, 2017). One concern raised in the media about these videos is that viral videos may change officer behavior. Officers who fear being filmed during a use of force incident or other potential viral video may reduce their effort, potentially leading to an increase in crime[1] (Kaste, 2015). Another is that viral videos may affect the legitimacy of police. Citizens who see videos of police officers using force against citizens, particularly if the video suggests that force was inappropriate or excessive, may question not just the work of the involved officers, but change their future behavior during police citizen interactions. On a broad scale, if citizen distrust of police grows, and the relationship between the police and the community suffers, then the ability to gain information from the public, which is essential for police work, also suffers.

At the time this study was developed, there were no existing examinations of officer perspectives of viral videos, the Ferguson effect, or the effect of viral videos on police-citizen encounters. This study sought to fill that gap and use exploratory methods to build a foundation for future quantitative work. In part because the existing literature on officer perspectives in this area is sparse and because the study touches on areas outside of traditional criminal justice research, specifically related to images and interpretation of images, this report introduction strays from traditional practices of reviewing the existing literature. Instead, the introduction briefly touches on a few issues relevant to understanding the study and the resulting findings.

1. Recent data from New York City suggests that dramatically reducing police-initiated stops did not result in an expected spike in crime (Sexton, 2018).

The overview begins with a discussion of viral videos of police-citizen encounters, beginning with the Rodney King beating and continuing to the impact of viral videos shared in social media. More recent concerns about the "Ferguson" effect are detailed. A short examination of the fundamentals of the research literature addressing the analysis and understanding of images, particularly moving images follows. The introduction ends with a discussion of the current study, including research questions.

<u>Viral videos of police-citizen encounters</u>

The first viral video of police behavior is likely the Rodney King video. While this particular video pre-dates the social media "viral video" under consideration here, the video itself is important in several respects. First, it was captured by a bystander. Second, the police were unaware of the video at the time. Third, the video captured police use of force against an African American suspect. Fourth, the effects of the video and how officers were treated in response to the video had profound impacts on the community in the short- and long-term, including riots that "left more than 50 dead, thousands hurt, and more than $1 billion in property damage" (Schuppe, 2016). George Holliday filmed the video on March 3, 1991 and provided a look at police violence that many people watching in their homes had not seen before (Schuppe, 2016).

More recently, the impact of viral videos has spread to cities across the country. More than 88 cities experienced protests related to police videos in 2016 (Lee, Mykhyalyshyn, Omri, and Signhvi, 2016), including in the study city. In addition to protests, the videos have led to calls for reform, threatened police legitimacy, and revealed officer misconduct. As David Harris, a law professor, explained to NBC News, "there's a bystander taking video of what went on—and without that video, the incident would have really been passed up by the public. No one would have known about it, or challenged what the police said about it" (Schuppe, 2016).

Importantly, videos can also be shared, communicated to others who can act.

Citizen use of smart phones to record the police is important for two reasons. First, most smartphones and modern cellular phones that are not labeled as "smart" phones have the capability to capture video. Second, the video can easily be uploaded or shared to social media and reach a large audience quickly. Recent research by the Pew Research Center about smartphones indicates that "67% of smartphone owners use their phone to *share pictures, videos, or commentary about events happening in their community,* with 35% doing so frequently" (Smith & Page, 2015: 24). The researchers found that younger adults were more likely to share than older adults.

Since news media also use social media to share and find new stories, a single video uploaded once can be amplified by many individuals and organizations. These videos have impacts far beyond the original jurisdiction and police agency, as they are seen by police officers and citizens across the country. A viral video in particular is one that many people see, often remember, and the events within those videos becomes a short-hand for talking about the police, about their behavior toward citizens, and the response of the larger community and criminal justice system to those behaviors. The video and events captured within become a narrative that police and citizens alike refer to in order to understand police and the criminal justice system. Perhaps the most influential viral policing moment in recent years concerns the events in August, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri, even though the police-citizen encounter was not captured on video.

Ferguson Effect

One formulation of the "Ferguson Effect" identifies the effect of viral videos and related criticisms and scrutiny of police after the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri as causing a reduction in proactive police work, which in turn would lead to increased crime (Lantigua-Williams, 2016). Essentially, police officers are perceiving proactive encounters as potentially risky because they can result in negative, or potentially violent encounters with citizens or other behavior that would lead to negative attention/media coverage and community response. In order to avoid that scrutiny, officers are deciding not to intervene to protect themselves and that the proactive work officers do not do leads to increases in crime. One reason this study was designed was to address whether or not officers were making these choices in their own work and whether viral videos had changed encounters with citizens in other ways. It is also important to note that the Ferguson Effect, or de-policing, refers to police-initiated interactions and is not a wholesale refusal to engage in law enforcement work. A tendency for all or most officers to engage in "de-policing" or a reduction in their efforts would clearly be cause for concern. However, this is not the only potential outcome. It may be that some officers may be more likely than others to decide that reducing their proactive interactions with citizens[2] or their behavior in certain situations.

Another way to think about the Ferguson effect is to recognize that the viral videos likely also alter citizen behavior. Instead of calling the police for help, citizens who see viral videos and lose confidence in the police, or learn to fear police-citizen encounters, may not call the police or provide assistance to the police (Lantigua-Williams, 2016). As with police officer responses, a Ferguson Effect at the citizen level would not necessarily mean a full-stop on calls for service, and some communities may be more impacted than others (Lantigua-Williams, 2016). A Ferguson Effect focused on citizen responses might also be found in the responses to police-

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2. In our work reported here, most examples of officers reducing their effort focused on "going the extra mile" or approaching citizens proactively when officers feel there might be cause for concern/reason to believe a citizen is suspicious.

citizen encounters or how citizens interact with the police, in terms of filming the police more because of a lack of trust. In this way, what might be interpreted as a change in police behavior might actually be a change in citizen behavior. In other words, citizens who have concerns about police behavior may be less likely to reach out to police for help. If citizens are hesitant to reach out to police for help or to provide information, crime may increase as a result.

While our focus in this study is understanding officer perspectives, most of our conversations also address the use, meaning, and interpretation of images. The next section outlines some fundamental concepts used in the study of images, particularly those related to officer observations discussed in the findings of this report.

Research literature on images

While a full examination of the literature on the interpretation of images, particularly video, is beyond the scope of this report, there are several concepts that are helpful in considering the role of images in policing, both in terms of body-worn cameras as well as citizen-made videos of police-citizen interactions. A good starting point is consideration of how we understand images and interpret them. It is often assumed that seeing is a mechanical process, relying mostly on the structures in our eyes to recognize and understand the reality in front of us. However, the interpretation of images and what we see, or rather notice, around us is far more complex (Elkins, 1996). What we attend to in images and in our daily life is a small percentage of what our eyes "see" in front of us. For example, human beings in conversations tend to pay attention to the face of the person who is talking while ignoring other stimuli in the environment. Well-directed films also imitate a human gaze, with a close up of a person's face during an emotional exchange. We would find it odd if the director instead focused on the speaker's shoes or ears. Even if the speaker's ears or shoes were available to be seen, most people would not consider them to be salient.

This leads to our second observation about images and that is to note that we learn how to interpret them. In other words, images themselves are not self-contained packets of meaning for viewers to consume, what we see and what we understand about images come in part from the context of those images (Becker, 1995). We might understand a picture of a person crying as sad or potentially overwhelmed with joy, if that person is at a wedding. Images, then, are important for what we see, and what we don't see in terms of context. It is also important to understand images as choices.

As Mulvey (1975) persuasively argues, who holds the camera matters and that the ability to shape what others see is a form of power. The choices that are made in capturing an image give us one (often limited) perspective about what we can see and what is shown to be important. These choices necessarily limit what we can know from an image. For example, an issue officers raised repeatedly had to do with the timing of citizen decisions to film police-citizen encounters. Officers argued that citizens often omitted early attempts to de-escalate situations, only recording parts of situations that might mislead the viewer to think officers may have begun their encounters using force instead of seeing earlier attempts to resolve the situation peacefully. Another relevant illustration here is the decision by citizens to film, that this decision in itself expresses a citizen's view that capturing an image in a situation may be an advantage or a challenge to the police narrative about a situation.

A last, and related, observation about images concerns the ability of images to hold multiple meanings or interpretations—referred to as polysemy. Perhaps the most famous of these is the rabbit/duck picture below.[3] This means, among other things, that it is probably unreasonable to

3. This image also illustrates the mental processing required to understand and make sense of what we see.

expect that multiple individuals will view one image and draw the same conclusions or that there is only one conclusion to draw from an image. Because understanding images is a learned behavior, and because individuals have different experiences, we could expect two individuals to look at the same image but potentially draw different conclusions or find different aspects of images to be relevant.

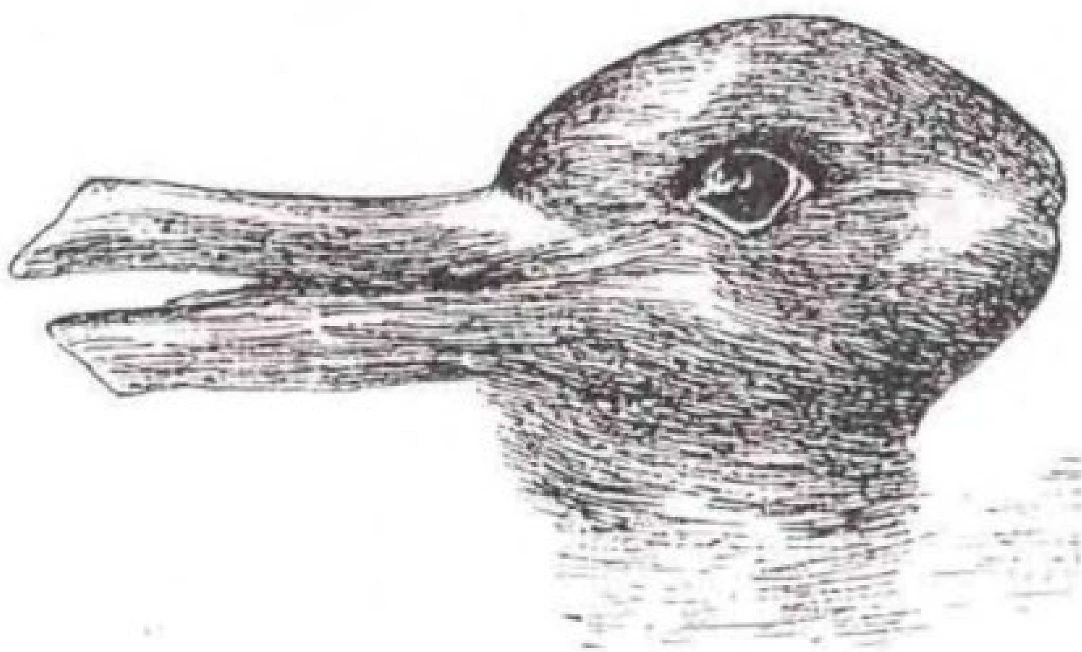


Figure 1: Duck/Rabbit from https://www.illusionsindex.org/i/duck-rabbit

These concepts help us discuss and understand the issues raised by officers in terms of being captured on video. Officers repeatedly addressed issues of context in discussing their concerns about video as well as how an individual's motivations might serve as a "context" for understanding a video of a police-citizen encounter. In addition, the qualitative approach used in analyzing the focus groups collected in this study focuses on understanding the concepts related to being filmed and their connections. Having a language related to images helps describe officer perspectives more clearly in later sections.

Officer Perspectives and Research Questions

Some solutions to the perceived lack of legitimacy in police agencies have focused on addressing concerns raised in viral videos by essentially increasing the number of videos of police officer behavior by the introduction of body-worn cameras. The expectation seems to be that an increase in the surveillance of officer behavior will deter those who might behave inappropriately as well as provide accountability for officers who do.

Less work has addressed the way officers think about being filmed while working or asking officers about their own experiences being filmed by citizens. This study fills the gap with a mixed methods approach to understanding filmed police-citizen encounters from the perspective of officers. This study is the first to look specifically at officer perspectives on being filmed by citizens and the impact that filming has on police-citizen encounters as well as officer decision-making. In addition to asking officers how often they are filmed by citizens, usually by smartphone, while on duty, the research team also asked officers questions about these encounters, the use of body-worn cameras by police officers, concerns officers have about the use of video generally, training provided as well as the viral video effect. Specifically, our research questions address:

1. How often are police officers filmed by citizens?

2. What are officer perceptions of being filmed by citizens? In other words, what are their thoughts and concerns about being filmed? What is a typical situation? How does being filmed by citizens affect police-citizen interactions?

3. What do officers think about body-worn cameras?

4. What training do officers receive about citizens filming interactions? What training might

be needed?

5. What do officers think about the “viral video” effect?

Because there were no existing studies directly addressing the research questions listed above at the time of the study, the survey (Appendix A) and focus group questions are exploratory. Particularly in the focus group setting, the research team structured discussions around the questions provided in the Appendix B and at the same time, followed up on observations and thoughts provided by officers to get additional detail, to better understand the ideas discussed, and asked questions that seemed relevant. The following section discusses the methods used to recruit officers and sergeants for the study as well as the protocols we followed to collect and later analyze the data.

This section describes the study methodologies used to collect and analyze data as well as relevant information about the study site and sample. The research presented here is exploratory and the research team attempted to recruit as widely as possible. The data was collected in a midwestern city of about 270,000 residents. At the time of the study, the police department studied employed 260 sworn officers and 51 sergeants. The study location had not implemented widespread use of body worn cameras by officers. However, some officers reported in focus groups that traffic units had body-worn cameras and some participants reported that they had personally purchased their own camera equipment for use on duty. Officers have cruiser camera systems and in our focus groups officers reported widespread use of audio recording of police-citizen encounters.

Description of recruitment practices

In order to recruit officers to participate in the study, a graduate student presented information about the study at roll call. This required being present at the police department at many different hours to reach as many officers as possible. This recruitment technique has the added advantage of having the research team in the same room as potential subjects to answer questions. However, not all officers were present in the room as the department also has audio only roll call broadcasts to some officers at stations other than the downtown headquarters.

Officers and sergeants who were interested in participating let their supervisor know and the police department handled logistics and scheduling. The research team was provided with only the numbers of participants and the time of the focus group. No identifying information was provided to or collected by the research team. The focus groups took place over a period of three weeks in September, 2016.

Confidentiality of officers

The research team protected the identity of participating officers in a number of ways. Officers were asked to select a pseudonym in focus group discussions, which were audio-taped. Officers were referred to by their pseudonyms in discussions. These pseudonyms were used in the transcripts produced from the focus group meeting recordings and in this report. In a few instances officers used their actual names in discussions—these names were changed in the transcripts. When officers were asked for their consent to participate in the study, no signatures or paperwork was collected—officers were asked to provide consent by raising their hands or verbally providing consent. No officer who attended a focus group meeting declined to provide consent.

Data Collection

The data collection consisted of eleven meetings/focus groups with 29 different participating officers and sergeants. There were eight different focus group meetings and three meetings where only one officer attended and those meetings consisted of the focus group questions being delivered as individual interview questions. Our focus groups were conducted as early as 5:30AM and late in the evening to match shift change schedules of officers.

These focus groups and interviews meetings were used to collect survey information about participants and how often they have been filmed by citizens. The focus groups and interviews resulted in 9,011 separate "contributions" by speakers in nearly 24 hours of recorded conversation. These recordings were manually transcribed into 1,257,959 characters of text. The conversations were recorded verbatim, including each "um" and capturing some non-verbal communication as well. For example, if a number of officers were nodding their heads to indicate agreement with a statement, the research team made efforts to add this information to the recording. Each focus group transcript was then reviewed statement by statement for accuracy, which involved listening to the recording and making sure the transcript accurately captured the conversation. Further information about the extensive coding process which followed is provided in later sections of the report.

Representativeness of Respondents

Our partner police department provided aggregate information about officers we used to evaluate the representativeness of our sample. As a qualitative research approach, focus group methods are not necessarily representative, however, it is helpful to get a sense of who the participants are in considering the feedback gathered. In other words, the idea is not necessarily to collect information that generalizes to other police agencies or even to claim that the conversations in the focus groups represent the views of all officers in the agency. At the same time, information about participants can be helpful in the interpretation of the resulting themes and issues identified.

Table 1 provides a comparison between the participants in the focus groups and the sworn officers employed at the time of the focus group study. The table examines the age distribution, gender distribution, race, ethnicity, and education level of officers. Again, while the research team goal was to obtain participation from a representative group of officers, given our small numbers, such representation is a challenge. Our interest here is to examine whether our sample officers are *significantly different from officers employed by the department* in terms of these variables. We used simple statistical tests to evaluate whether the characteristics of study participants were similar to the characteristics of police officers employed by the police department.

Table 1: Comparison of Participants to Sworn Officers in Department

	Department		Study Participants	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age				
21-25	29	9.4	1	3.4
26-30	57	18.4	6	20.7
31-35	57	18.4	8	27.6
36-40	48	15.5	6	20.7
41-45	54	17.5	2	6.9
45-50	40	12.9	6	20.7
50+	24	7.8	0	0.0
Male	265	85.8	26	89.7
Female	44	14.2	3	10.3
Race				
White/Caucasian	291	94.2	28	96.6
African-American	4	1.3	1	3.4
Native American	2	0.06	0	0.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	1.3	0	0.0
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	8	2.6	1	3.6
Non-Hispanic	301	97.4	27	96.4
Education				
High School	88	28.5	1	3.6
Some College	0	0.0	5*	17.9
Two-Year Degree	22	7.1	2	7.1
Four-Year Degree	194	62.8	16	57.1
Master's Degree	5	1.6	4	14.3

*Some participants reported having some college education. However, the department does not have records of officers with this level of educational attainment.

The data presented in Table 1 were analyzed using a difference of proportions test (Blalock, 1979) variables for interpretation purposes. If, for instance, we were unable to recruit any male officers to participate, we would want to take that into consideration in our discussion of results. These tests suggest that participants are older, more educated and not representative of all shift schedules, specifically more officers from second and third shifts (not all data shown). Our sample does appear to represent gender, race and ethnicity distribution in the police department. In other words, there was not a statistically significant difference between our sample and the police department in terms of these variables. In evaluating the officer perceptions in the findings section, it is important to keep the sample characteristics in mind. Specifically, that our officer perceptions are more heavily weighted toward the perceptions of older, more educated, and likely more experienced officers.

Description of Instruments & Data Collection Methodology

Officers who participated in the study arrived[4] at the police department classroom either before or after their shift for the day[5]. This allowed us to draw participants from different shifts which increased participation, reduced the strain on the department and reduced the number of focus groups that we organized. Participants were greeted, asked to select a pseudonym for their name tag and made aware of the food available for the focus group. It is important to note that officers are required to wear name tags identifying them when in contact with the public. We did not note the names of participants in any research materials or use those names in focus group discussions. In the rare circumstances where officers referred to each other by their actual names as opposed to their pseudonyms, we substituted the pseudonyms in the transcripts for analysis.

[4]The police department handled arrangements for officer/sergeant sign up and reserved the rooms. As researchers, we knew only the number of expected participants, but not the names of participants.
5. Officers were provided overtime pay for participation in the study.

We reviewed the informed consent document (Appendix C) and obtained consent by asking officers to raise their hands if they agreed to participate in the study. No officers or sergeants who came to the meetings refused to complete or participate. We also explained that we were using a digital recorder to capture the discussion.

Survey Questions

Once we obtained consent from participants and answered any questions, we moved to the surveys. Officers were asked to complete a brief survey (Appendix A lists the survey questions) on a computer in the classroom. We used Google Forms to create the survey and collect the data. Participating officers were asked a series of questions about their experiences being filmed by citizens in the last month. This time frame was used to provide a more meaningful frame than broader questions about "ever" being filmed by citizens. It also provides a way to compare across officers with varying lengths of service. Slightly more than 75 percent of officers reported being filmed by citizens in the last month. It is important to note that these are situations in which officers are *aware of being filmed*. It may also be the case that citizens filmed these officers without their knowledge or that officers were captured on private security video. When asked about the experience of other officers, 86.2 percent of officers reported knowing about another officer who had been filmed in the last month. This suggests, as we expected, that being filmed by citizens is something officers discuss with each other. This means the experiences of one officer being filmed may affect the perceptions of other officers as well. This component of the data collection generally took about five minutes. When the survey was finished, officers usually prepared a plate of food prior to the focus group discussion.

Focus Group Questions

The focus group questions were based on three sets of questions: engagement questions, exploration questions and exit questions (see Appendix B for questions). Our approach in collecting data was to focus on *collecting experiences* and not *evaluating experiences*. Officers rarely contradicted each other directly, although some did remark at times that their experiences were different from other participants (this was particularly true for female officers). The engagement questions asked officers to described the most recent experience they had being filmed by citizens. We asked officers to tell us about that experience (e.g., the type of call, what happened, where it was, etc.). The engagement questions allowed each officer to participate and to hear the experiences of other officers. We then asked officers to think about being filmed by citizens more generally, and asked a series of questions about being filmed by citizens: what types of calls, who films them, what do citizens say about motives, officer concerns, how cameras have affected their interactions with citizens. It is important to note that we also supplemented this set of questions with additional follow up questions as discussions developed. For example, officers remarked that younger people tended to film them. We asked follow up questions to get a sense of what specific ages (e.g., usually 18-30). In addition, we asked questions about body-worn cameras and training associated with being filmed by citizens. The next question addressed the "viral video" effect, sometimes called the Ferguson effect, which describes a situation where crime rate increases because police officers have decided not to engage with citizens because of concerns related to being filmed and resulting community or police department reaction. The last set of questions asked officers and sergeants to consider if there were issues or concerns related to the topics we discussed that were overlooked. This was also a time during the focus group when officers asked questions about the study, offered suggestions for future work, and made other observations about policing.

Most focus group sessions took the entire two-hour time frame for the discussion. In some meetings, we went over the time frame as officers were able to stay. All focus groups were recorded and transcribed. One focus group recording was interrupted for about fifteen to twenty minutes. The research team kept notes about major themes and new ideas offered in each session and information for follow up study in addition to recordings. The notes for this recording do not reveal any new themes compared to the other focus groups.

Our analysis started with a regular review of our notes of each session as well as follow up research as needed. For example, in one focus group, a participant referred to a citizen videotaping an arrest and saying they were going to put it on Worldstar HipHop[6] a video platform featuring music videos that also allows users to submit video, much like YouTube. At times officers referred to well-known local cases to make a point in the discussion. The research team searched for, read, and archived news stories about these cases to enable better understanding of discussions. This was particularly helpful early in the process, as cases were often mentioned by multiple groups. This reinforces the idea that higher profile cases are powerful in shaping officer opinion, a notion discussed later in the report. Many officers referred to Officer Darren Wilson shooting Michael Brown in our focus groups, although the situation varied significantly from the research questions in that no viral video of the shooting in this case exists. The situation, the media coverage, the reaction of the police department, the reaction of the community and the effects on Officer Wilson's career were mentioned several times.

The second stage of our analysis was transcribing and checking the extensive transcripts of

[6] The web address for Worldstar (http://www.worldstarhiphop.com) says: Worldstar HipHop is home to everything entertainment & hip hop. The #1 urban outlet responsible for breaking the latest urban news!)

our focus groups. During our sessions we collected 23 hours, 49 minutes and 30 seconds of discussion. These discussions were transcribed in 1,257,960 characters, approximately 628,980 words into about 1600 pages of text. After transcription, each text was reviewed and corrected as needed. After the transcriptions were created and double-checked, each one was read into MAXQDA software for coding and analysis. Initial coding included adding variables for speakers (and associated variables for each speaker) as well as broadly coding each of the 9,011 separate speaker contributions into the topic areas represented in the focus group questionnaire. Then, each questionnaire section was reviewed and coded again to capture the variety of responses. For some repeated contributions, auto-coding functions in MAXQDA were used.

In order to capture the communications in focus groups comprehensively, however, auto-coding functions are inadequate. The meaning of speakers is not easily sorted into a limited number of keywords. For example, an officer discussing a violent encounter with a citizen might use any of the following words: fight, resisting, hit, slap, punch, kick, stab, shoot, fire, point (if referring to a gun), brandish, etc. The codes used in capturing officer responses were created by first reviewing the relevant segments, capturing themes related to the responses, then analyzing those themes for related ideas and creating a coding structure. Then the segments were reviewed again and coded as needed to capture additional relevant details.

Figure 1 indicates the structure of the coding for one question asking officers about their concerns about being filmed by citizens. As the figure shows, there were 271 responses by officers focused on the issue of concerns about being filmed. These concerns cluster into six areas: situational concerns, media concerns, being "the next viral video," concerns specific to being filmed, concerns about citizen behavior during or after being filmed, and departmental concerns. The figure also indicates the concerns mentioned most frequently focus on officer

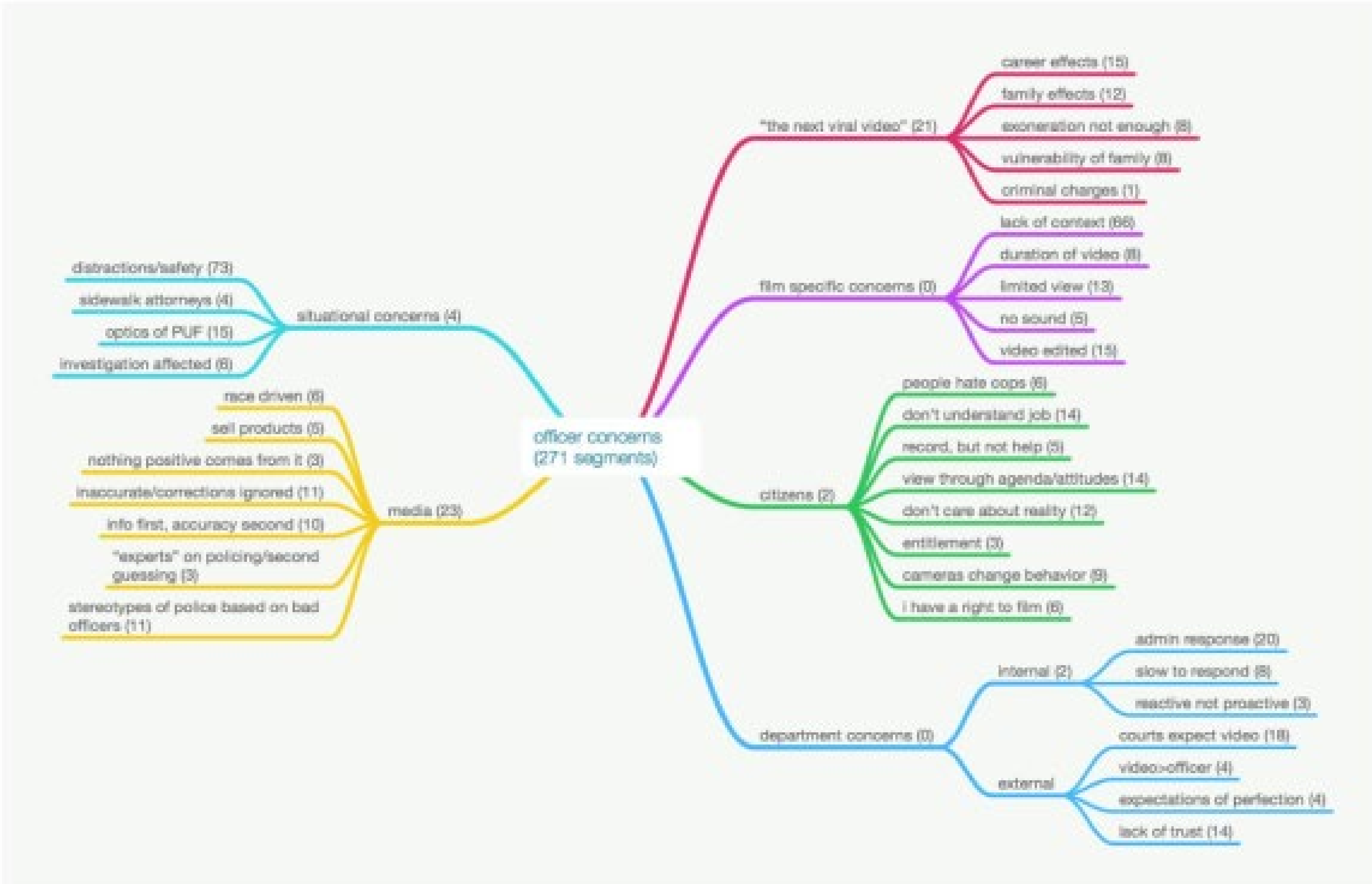


Figure 1: Officer Concerns about Being Filmed by Citizens

safety, the lack of context in videos, as well as how the video will be interpreted by police administrators. More detail about this figure is provided in the findings section. The figure is presented here to illustrate for the complexity of the responses to even simple questions and the work involved in coding and describing officer responses in a systematic way.

The very rich qualitative data give us a good sense of what officers think and provide ample opportunities for officers to explain their ideas in detail. However, this methodology does not allow quick analysis in the same way survey methodology does. The process of reviewing, analyzing, coding and summarizing qualitative data is a time-consuming process.

For the purposes of this report, the major questions asked in the focus group questions were coded and analyzed. It is important to note that this analysis overlooks some of the data collected. In other words, officers told us many things not specifically limited to the focus group questions because we asked follow-up questions about related issues or concerns or asked for clarification. At times officers provided specifics about departmental services or resources to provide context for their responses (e.g., many officers expressed concerns about "another password/another system" to access as part of their work in discussing the use of body-mounted cameras, for instance). In other words, the research reported here represents the major themes and questions we asked during the focus group but does not represent the entirety of the rich data collected. The next section presents the results of the survey data collection and the focus group questions.

Findings

This section of the report is divided into two parts that correspond with our multi-method approach. First, the results of the survey about officer experiences being filmed by citizens are described. These results address our first research question below. Second, the results of the focus group analysis are presented by research question, addressing officer perceptions of being filmed with a focus on their concerns about these situations. We also describe officer perspectives on body-worn cameras and training related to being filmed by citizens. The last question addresses a concept sometimes called "the viral video effect" or the "Ferguson effect" which suggests video might change officer behavior and affect crime rates.

The analysis of the focus group contributions is more complex and requires more interpretation work and explanation. As noted in the methodology section, officers and sergeants may make the same point or reference the same idea using very different words or examples. This means summarizing what is said is more difficult than counting the use of specific words or looking for whether officers agree/disagree with particular statements. The task of analyzing the focus group results is to examine common themes and explore the ideas officers shared. Some officers raised concerns or steered the conversation in different directions (e.g., discussing the influence of officer and citizen race in media evaluations of the salience of officer-involved shootings) while other groups of officers raised different concerns. A limitation of the focus group method, then, is that while the same general questions are asked of all groups, the responses to those questions and the related follow-up questions can differ across groups. In addition, not all members of the focus group contribute their views on each question, even after prompting from the research team.

This study evaluated the following research questions.

1. How often are police officers filmed by citizens?

2. What are officer perceptions of being filmed by citizens? In other words, what are their thoughts and concerns about being filmed? What is a typical situation? How does being filmed by citizens affect police-citizen interactions?

3. What do officers think about body-worn cameras? What do officers see as the benefits and costs of their use?

4. What training do officers receive about citizens filming interactions? What training might be needed?

5. What do officers think about the "viral video" effect? In other words, do concerns about being filmed alter officer behavior, and potentially crime rates?

Survey Results

As noted in the methods section earlier, some of the survey questions ask about age, work shift, race and ethnicity and other individual level variables. The answers to those survey questions and the implications of the results are addressed in the methodology section of this report and Table 1 presents the statistical results and analyses comparing the characteristics of the respondent officers and sergeants to the characteristics of the sworn officers in the department. This section addresses the officer responses about their experiences being filmed by citizens, or research question 1 above. The survey asked officers three questions about their experiences: whether or not the officer had personally been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter in the last month, whether or not the officer knows of another officer in the department who has been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter in the last month, and the number of times officers reported being filmed in the last month. The last question proved to be a challenge as officers did not always provide a single number—officers often provided ranges as an estimate. As later focus group results make clear, officers report being filmed by people who are involved in a police-citizen encounter, by people who are attached to a person involved a police-citizen encounter, *and* bystanders who are not involved, but able to view the police-citizen encounter from a distance. As we discuss later, this last group of citizens is less salient to officers. In other words, because they are not involved in the police-citizen encounter and are not the immediate concern of the officers, many officers explained that they may not be aware of recordings being made of their actions *at the time the recording is made* but some officers report looking for these recordings online either for the documentation of a criminal case or because they are interested in determining whether those recordings exist.

This is an important finding in itself—specifically that officer perceptions about being filmed are in part based on incomplete information about whether or not they are being filmed in the first place. As discussed later in the focus group results, some officers report expecting that they are filmed in every encounter and so our question might have asked them for information they don't think to "collect." In other words, if officers expect they are always filmed, being filmed isn't salient because it is expected to be a common event. At the same time, the data we collected in the survey contradicts this assumption that officers are *always being filmed* or at least, that officers are always *aware* of being filmed.

In addition to the statistical results, what follows are officer descriptions of being filmed.[7]

Anybody that has a phone seems to film anymore. (Mark)

7. For clarity purposes, crosstalk and short statements indicating listening/understanding like, "uh huh" or "okay" are edited out. Otherwise, officer statements appear verbatim. Names provided are pseudonyms. Officer statements are presented in brackets to make it easier to recognize different conversations/contributions.

I think it's primarily when you're involved in the public. I guess it doesn't happen in houses, but in the public, I mean pretty much all the time. (Ian)

Anybody involved with alcohol. (Bill)

...we performed a high risk traffic stop on a car, and there was a number of people but at the time I didn't know at all, but after the fact, there were several videos and photographs that were shared through social media and through YouTube. (Joe)

Table 2 presents the results of the survey questions concerning officer experiences being filmed by citizens. The table shows that majority of officers have been filmed by citizens in the last month, but not all (75.9 percent reported being filmed). If being filmed by citizens were likely in all circumstances for all officers equally, we would expect that all or nearly all officers would report being filmed. When asked about whether they were aware of another officer in the department being filmed by a citizen in the last month, most officers indicated yes (86.2 percent). While most officers did report either being filmed or knowing about another officer being filmed by a citizen, it is important to note that not all officers did (and later focus group responses suggest filming behavior may vary by neighborhood or circumstance).

In addition, we summarized how often officers reported being filmed in the last month. On average, officers reported being filmed about 5 times a month. While less than five percent of officers reported being filmed 10 or more times a month or provided a range of numbers (e.g.,

<u>Table 2: Officer Experiences Being Filmed by Citizens</u>

	N	Percent
Have you been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter in the last month?		
Yes	22	75.9
No	7	24.1
Do you know of another officer in your department who has been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter during the last month?		
Yes	25	86.2
No	4	13.8
Average number of times officer filmed in last month	5 or fewer*	

*Some officers provided ranges with high and low estimates—the majority, (about 90% of officers reported five or fewer instances per month); two officers estimated 10 or more

reported far 10-15), most officers fewer instances. In fact, 86.2 percent of officers reported being filmed 5 or fewer times per month.

Taken together, the results of the survey are a bit surprising in that officer responses suggest police officers are not filmed as much as the research team expected, or indeed, *as often as the officers themselves suggested in the focus group discussion*. As noted earlier, because officers may not be engaged with the citizen who is filming (e.g., the citizen filming is a bystander at a distance from the interaction, or someone inside a building), officers may not be aware of all of the circumstances in which they are being filmed. If nothing else, our findings suggest officers are aware of being filmed by citizens and that situation is routine but not a daily occurrence for most officers. Clearly, a small number of officers experience this situation more frequently or on nearly a daily basis at work, however, most do not.[8]

8. Another indicator that filming is uncommon is evident in examples officers provided of the last time or a recent example of being filmed. Many officers referred to situations that had occurred months earlier. While this may reflect officers selecting interesting or memorable situations as opposed to everyday situations, it does suggest filming is not an everyday occurrence.

Focus Group Results

As noted in the methodology section of this report, focus group data and analyses do not result in easily summarized findings, compared to survey methodology. In other words, in the survey section of the data collection, each officer was asked exactly the same questions and given the same set of response options. Summarizing these results involves tabulating the most common response. In the focus group analysis, the end product is a better understanding not just of the ideas and concepts that are important to understanding officers being filmed by citizens, but looking for connections between those ideas. As noted in the discussion of Figure 1, officer concerns are not merely a list of concerns, but a set of ideas that more or less cluster into different types of concerns (e.g., concerns related to the filming situation itself, concerns about media use of any recording gathered, concerns about the nature and limitations of film evidence, etc.).

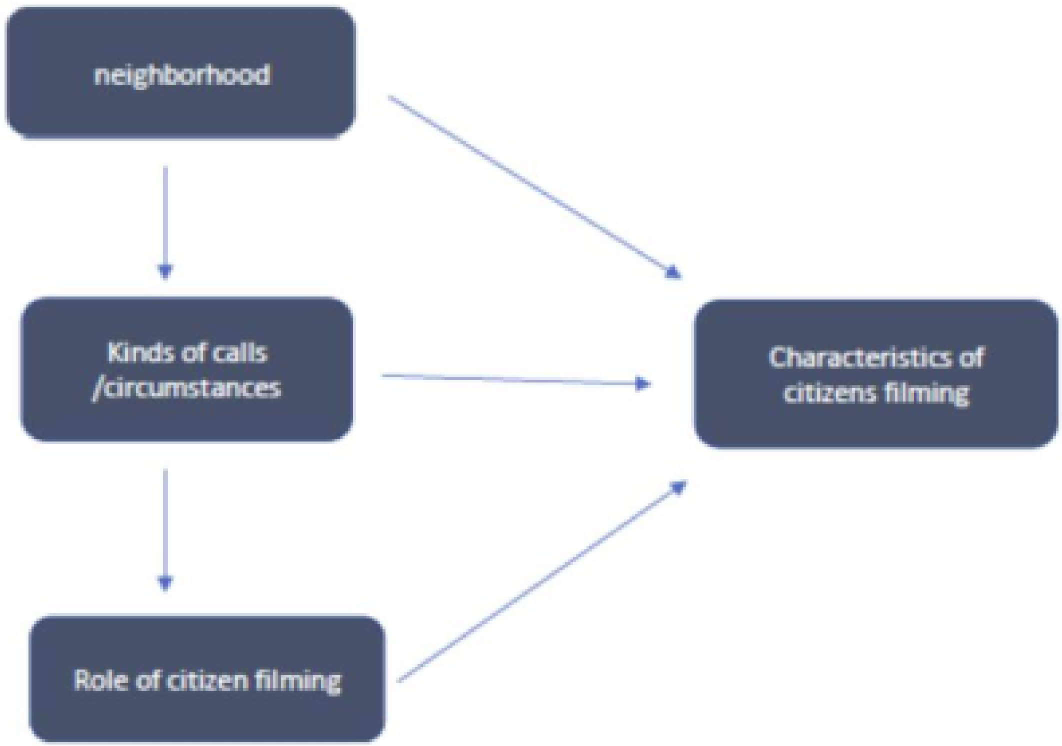
The real work in analyzing focus group and narrative data in this study has focused on identifying and understanding the concepts officers shared and making meaningful connections between these ideas. In other words, the analysis was focused on looking for themes and patterns in responses to understand the concepts officers were describing in addition to capturing officer thoughts and examples and explanations. The analysis attempts to take into account not just what officers said but at times, how common those sentiments were. In addition to describing the concepts officers used in discussing being filmed by citizens and looking for relationships between the concepts, this report also includes relevant examples of officer contributions to illustrate the ideas and connections between ideas. Quotes from officers will use the officer's selected pseudonym for identification purposes.

Filming Situations and Factors Related to Filming

The first set of research questions addresses the experiences officers have being filmed by citizens as well as officer concerns about these situations. We also asked officers if being filmed changes their behavior or the behavior of citizens. To better understand who films officers as well as understand the situations where filming is more likely, we asked officers to give examples and asked officers if they thought they were more likely to be filmed by particular types of citizens. In the focus group questioning, we asked officers to think about age and sex as potential characteristics and some officers offered other characteristics. We asked about a typical situation where they had been filmed in the past and what sorts of police behavior attract citizen attention and filming. Based on officer responses, it appears the answers to these questions are not independent from each other. In other words, officers told us that in part, whether or not they were filmed seemed to depend on what neighborhood they were in, what sort of call they were responding to, and these factors were then related to the role of the person filming the officer as well as the characteristics of citizens who were filming. Figure 2 contains a graphic depicting the relationships several officers described in examples. One of our findings relates specifically to the roles of citizens who film officers.

Most officers told us that there were filmed by either bystanders (50 contributions in focus groups address this topic), attached observers (25 contributions), or individuals suspected in criminal behavior (53 contributions). One officer reported being filmed while taking a report from a property theft victim—the other officers expressed surprise at this and the officer explained both that victims don't often film and that it appeared the citizen may have had mental health concerns.

Figure 2: Officer Descriptions of Being Filmed by Citizens



Citizen Roles

While officers did not use these specific terms to describe citizens, the pattern of officer responses sort into three main roles. Bystanders were often individuals who were in the area at the time of the police-citizen encounter but were not involved in that encounter and were often at a distance. Officers reported that bystanders would take out their phones to record but do little else (e.g., stand silently, not explain their motivation in filming).

> *...yeah, and, all of the sudden now, even though they may be not even directly related to the incident. (Hellcat)*

It's mainly, what I've seen is bystanders, it's usually not the person getting arrested. (Chris)

I think anytime you have a congregation of officers at whatever reason, um you'll see people not so much interacting but they'll be across the street with their phones out. (Brad)

I was in an accident, and people were walking by and recording us and the accident scene. (Bob)

Almost always bystanders. (Bob)

Almost always, I would agree. (Timmy)

Attached observers were people who were somehow related to or friends with a person involved in the police citizen encounter, usually the citizen involved in a police-citizen interaction as a suspect or as a driver in a car being pulled over by the police. An attached observer could be a passenger who filmed the traffic stop, a relative filming an arrest, or at times, a citizen "looking out for" someone being taken into custody. Attached observers are more likely to engage in behaviors beyond merely filming with a smart phone. At times attached observers indicated that they were filming for the suspect's protection or they thought the police were doing something they should not be doing. These two groups made up the majority of the situations officers described to us in examples and in our focus group discussions.

> *it could be family members, it's somebody who's at least associated with the person (Hellcat)*

> *You know, whereas these young college students, that think that every contact with LPD or with any police officer is worthy of CNN, I think they're much more apt to just bring out the phone and maybe after they've had five friends arrested for MIP, they think oh well, whatever, it's just a pair of handcuffs, it's not that cool. So it's kind of novelty, maybe. To some extent. (Sam)*

> *Research Team: What about other people with the person you are interested in talking to? Or potentially arresting?*
>
> *JT: Oh sure, that's like the person's backup*
>
> *Bill: The family's gonna get you out of whatever problem you created by videotaping whatever*

> *There's never just one person recording either, I mean it's the bystanders, or this guy's got friends, or if this girl's got friends. Their friends will be recording. (Timmy)*

The last group of citizens who record officer behavior are people directly involved in the police encounter as suspects or as drivers stopped by police. Officers told us this behavior was less common, as individuals interacting with the police are understandably focused on that interaction. At the same time, two subgroups of citizens were identified as being more likely to film during a police-citizen encounter: individuals who identify as sovereign citizens as well as individuals who have had repeated, often negative, contacts with the police.

> *That spurred a thought that there is two types of it seems like there are two types of people that record though and I don't think it's I don't think it's normally the person who is getting arrested to begin with or that is the subject of that initial um, stop or contact. It seems like we pretty much have their attention and maybe on traffic stops if they are alone you know that and then we leave go back and then have time to think and then get their phone out. (Spencer)*

> *The same people who complain that they're being picked on, even though they are the ones being called on and/or drawing attentions to themselves. They're you know cause yes, there are certain people who are—um, paid more attention to—and not just because we're bored and we want to pay attention to them. They you know, you know, um basically have a big neon sign above their head saying "I'm in the middle of something stupid. You know, come talk to me."And those people are the same ones that call in complaints because they're being harassed, you know, they're gonna they will film or try to. (Hoss)*

> *And, typically or at least from my experience, when the person being contacted is the one filming, um, they're usually very vocal in letting you know that they're filming you and why they're filming you, um, and it's typically that you can't do this, and it's usually not very friendly words coming out. (R)*

> *Um, your "frequent fliers," the people that I know their first, their middle, and their last name and their birthday. Um, because I've talked with them so many times um chances are since I've talked with you that many times, you probably have done some stuff that you probably shouldn't have. (Ian)*

Based on the officer accounts, citizens who film tend to fit into three different roles in police citizen encounters: bystanders, who are not directly involved and are the most common; attached observers, who are not necessarily involved in the encounter, but have some relationship or concern for the individual who is directly interacting with the police; and suspects or drivers who are directly interacting with the police because of suspected criminal behavior or traffic violation. Only one person who was identified as a crime victim was described filming a police encounter and officers listening expressed surprise at this. It is not clear if victims rarely film or if this is related to the generally positive police-citizen relations in the study site.

Bar Break as an Example of the Role of Neighborhoods

One way to illustrate the patterns we found linking neighborhood, type of police-citizen encounter, and citizen filming behavior is to specifically examine one of the more common examples of officers being filmed by citizens—what officers called "bar break." On the weekend, drinking is common in the downtown area[9] (location). The bars downtown draw large crowds of young people and many college students that disperse at the close of the bars (characteristics of individuals filming). This is a time and place where many people are out on the street, so there are many people who might fulfill the "bystander" role in the event of any police-citizen interaction. The people who are downtown tend to be younger and tend to be intoxicated. The large crowds and drinking behavior (and fights which are common and are often filmed) draw a larger officer presence (also a common situation in which citizens choose to film). The noise of bar break also tends to attract camera attention. In these situations, bystanders appear to be filming, according to officers, to "catch" officers engaged in wrongdoing or to protect individuals involved in police encounters or to capture video to upload to social media (or, potentially, both). Officers also noted that many individuals having police contact at bar

[9] For residents of the study city, this is common knowledge. Downtown drinking and bar break were very frequently mentioned in the focus group discussions.

break would claim to be either law students, criminal justice students, or related to lawyers. In some ways, the claim to legal knowledge here is similar to the use of a camera in a police interaction, as it appears to be an attempt to "level the playing field" or to challenge officer behaviors.

Typically when someone's getting arrested, or there's any type of use of force involved, the cameras or the phones come out immediately. Those are the ones that you see downtown most often is you get the college kids downtown, get some alcohol involved, and couple guys square off or something, officers intervene, and next thing you know, they're using force and people are screaming "police brutality" and they're filming anything and everything. So, we had one not too long ago downtown where that happened. And the officer actually Tased the guy after they broke up a fight and people were screaming stuff about the incident. (Brian)

Depending on what you're responding to, a downtown fight is gonna get a big response because they know there's lots of people, lots of alcohol, things can turn very quickly. If you're going to, 17th and G for two people fighting, fifteen officers aren't going because it's two people. There may be 4 or 5 that show up, because they work that area and they're close, and they're in service, but it's a different feel than a huge crowd after game day where there's a fight at 14th and L. You're gonna get a much bigger response because of the potential of what could happen. (Mark)

And that is a good point, I've I've had them say that um they'll if it's somebody who doesn't know the person who you're engaged with, they will yell at that person, like, "Don't worry I'm recording this! Like if they do something wrong, I've got it on video." Um, and so, again they're just waiting to catch a cop doing something that they're not supposed to. Uh, but unfortunately again, what most people don't understand I guess the rules of engagement or you know, um, and most of them again haven't watched the whole thing play out. They they didn't hear you say, "Turn around, put your hands behind your back, you're under arrest." Um, they haven't seen that. Um and so now all of the sudden you've got your hands on this guy's arm and you're getting ready to control him and it's like holy crap, this guy wasn't doing anything. Downtown especially you would get I don't know—what—I'd say at least 75% of the time uh people like, "he didn't do anything wrong." And whether they were outright lying just to help whoever it was, and a lot of its us versus them, like uh citizens versus cops like we don't want to see this guy get in trouble, so, even though I just saw him punch the other guy I'm just gonna tell the cops that he didn't say, didn't do anything. But, uh, most of the time, you get somebody saying, "He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't, he was just standing *there." Um, and so, um whether they are lying or whether they just showed up, again their perception's off because they've been drinking, um now they think they're doing what's right because here's this lowly citizen who is innocent of doing any wrongdoing and now it's just the bully cops that are picking on him. And so, by God, we're gonna do what's right by the citizen and get this whole contact on video. (Jack)*

Yeah, I agree. When I worked downtown that was the most I've seen pull their camera, cell phone videos, whatever cameras out, um, the only other times I can remember is if we're just making arrest and people don't agree with it, and they weren't even violent arrests, they were just, the suspect was completely cooperative but the family wasn't having it and they pulled out their cell phones and started filming us, so. (Sam)

In my experience the majority of them are, it comes back to the right before that they always press—preface it with, oh I have rights. This is against my rights. And then they start videotaping, so they're implying that I'm breaking their rights and I'm going against the law. And that's when I see them videotaping. Cell phones coming out. (Doogie)

The only like concern that I would every have with somebody filming is when they get when they're it's one thing if you're standing off on the sidewalk and recording it but if you're going to come and instigate people while you're filming it um. And I see that a lot is um, at least on the videos that I watch. Um, and I've seen uh it happen downtown here to some officers where the filmers are instigating the person being filmed, like, Uh, it's okay, I got you, this is all on film! Like it's uh it's okay to act out because I'm filming you and the police can't do any, like we're going to get the police in trouble type of thing, um, which is not how it goes, but it's it becomes a safety concern I think for police officers when they're becoming part of the problem instead of just being a neutral bystander that is just filming if you're coming up and instigating somebody to keep continue their poor behavior or if you're coming up and distracting us from a problem that we need to address, and now we're distracted because this guy won't stay back or he's getting right in our faces with the camera, it's something that we have to address and then they think we're violating their rights or don't want to be filmed or...(Jeff)

I think where I've experienced that associate or close friend filming has been in the larger crowd setting that I described downtown at the bars, or sometimes at, maybe a loud house party or maybe a vehicle stop where there are several associates with the person being contacted, um, and it almost seems like in the group setting that that person wants to be, I don't know, acknowledged by their friend, that I'll be your spokesperson, I'm taking care of you when you when this is happening, that kind of a thing (R)

I as soon as I flipped him over and he split his lip, he said, "You just broke my jaw!" and um, so then, I don't think that the recording started until well after that, but and I think that the recording was mostly because people were like, this is funny, because the guy is still like, doing the "Go Big Red!" chant and everything and blood is like going everywhere and like spraying out of his mouth um. But there was somebody there that had their phone out and they were like, "don't worry, I got this whole thing on video" and I was actually looking on YouTube and Google for months after that because I was I was thinking this out of you know I don't know if this is going to come back negatively on me or not but I could see this getting a ton of views on YouTube just because (Spencer)

These examples illustrate the connections between a neighborhood and factors related to filming. The downtown neighborhood includes many bars and a state university campus. Because this neighborhood is home to many bars and (particularly young) patrons of bars, it is a place that has not just drinking behavior, but groups of bystanders to film the drinking behavior and fighting that can result.The police predictably respond to these situations and citizens are arrested or fighting with officers which also draws citizen attention and filming. Typical residential neighborhoods may have crime, but they don't appear to have the collection of elements found downtown: regular drinking behavior, large crowds of younger people (who tend to film more), behaviors and situations that draw attention and filming behavior (drinking, related crime and violence and at times large police responses).

Traffic Stops as an Example of the Role of Situations

Another common scenario described by officers is being filmed during a traffic stop. Traffic stops are less tied to neighborhood factors than bar break, as traffic stops can happen throughout the city. Traffic stops, according to officers, often involve filming by either the passenger (an attached observer) or, if alone, the driver. These situations don't have many of the other precursors to filming described by officers (heavy police presence, lights or sirens or other noise/yelling). In these situations, filming isn't triggered by the sense that something is about to happen as much as a potential precaution or sometimes an attempt to level the power differential between officers and citizens. Officers in our focus groups indicated that citizens in these situations sometimes silently filmed or held up their phones while others told officers, "I'm filming you/this."

> *Um, the last time that I recall, I believe it was the summer a couple months ago, um, we performed a high risk traffic stop on a car, and there was a number of people but at the time I didn't know at all, but after the fact, there were several videos and photographs that were shared through social media and through YouTube. (Joe)*

> *Um on traffic stops, a lot of times, they get pulled over, they're in a car or somebody who's driving, they'll start recording. Um, the lights, uh you know major incidents, um, and maybe it's not even our involvement, maybe it's fire or something like that (Andy)*

> *Sam: On that note, the sovereign citizen crowd that kind of thinks that laws don't apply to them. Um, they may be another group, like in my limited contacts with them, they're quick to pull their phone because they think even a traffic stop is a violation of their rights. (Sam)*

Hellcat: Oh. Um, it was a traffic stop, it was probably about actually, beginning of August, I wanna say right around in there, um, traffic stop, two people in the car, um, standard violation of speed, and uh, then registration issue. Um, pretty typical stop, no, bad precursors, no, nothing made the hair go up on the back of my neck or anything, um, walk up uh, male driver, male passenger, male passenger has their phone out. And it's just up like this. Now, could be that they were on it, could be that they were um, texting at one point in time, but it seemed odd. And it stayed there. And it stayed there, it stayed like this. He sat in the passenger seat like this. The back of the phone. So, I assumed that probably, probably being recorded and that's okay. I have no issue with it. Went through my standard spiel, I'm officer so and so, I pulled you over because of this, I need to see your driver's license and registration and proof of insurance, and there was very little um talking by the person holding the the phone, um, the driver said well what if, do I have to give you that? Well yeah, you kind of do.

You know? Sorry. You kind of do. It's kind of the law. And he goes, okay. And they were probably, late teens, I wouldn't quite say early 20s yet, maybe bordering 20, 21, college age. And uh, doesn't—not that it matters, mixed race of people. Doesn't matter who, but, different ethnicities for both the driver and the passenger.

Um, driver was slightly argumentative, nothing that even meets some of the other arguments that I've been faced with. Um, but pretty much so complied with everything I asked, um, it didn't bother me, I didn't acknowledge that I was being recorded, didn't care. Um, the contact itself was very benign, um, even if it was a little you know, I mean, he was a little argumentative on various different things, he said that, things like that, he said that, you're just, you're just picking on me. No, I'm not picking on you, I'm picking on the way you drive.

I was driving past a vehicle, like, head on, so I was I had to flip around them to conduct a traffic stop because they had a headlight out. And when I approached the vehicle, um, it was a female in the driver's seat and a male in the passenger's seat. The male and the female both had bizarre behavior and um, by that I mean, they looked very nervous so everybody looks different when they look nervous but he was not making eye contact and usually the passenger will look over at the police officer out the window. So he was just looking this way and I was very polite, I was probably even, too, I come off as too friendly sometimes, but um, so, I was just Hi, how are you guys, what is going on this evening and just nothing. Just kinda stone cold, they don't want to be there right now. So I'm like okay, is she suspended, do they have warrants, what's going on? So, uh, because of their behavior, it kinda made me a little bit concerned and so I called another officer over there so, I had the other officer talk to the passenger and see if he would give us his information so I could run him, make sure he didn't have a warrant, well, when I got back up there, um, she started recording me, she's like, You can't pull him out of the vehicle just because he's the passenger and um, she's like, I know police officers, they don't allow this! You just did this because he's black and I said, no, that's not how it goes, it was your behavior, but she cut me off every opportunity, I tried to explain it and so, usually people pull their video cameras out when the contact isn't going so well and up until that point I had been trying to make it go well. (Scout)

Most recently, um, it was a traffic stop. The officer pulled over a vehicle I believe it was a failed to signal or traffic stop or failed to signal a turn. When they contacted the vehicle, they saw a baggie of marijuana in the center console of the vehicle since they searched the vehicle. Well, the officer, regardless asked, hey would it be alright if I searched your vehicle? Nope, you can't search it, no you can't do anything. Well, you have probable cause to search the vehicle, so he pulled them out the car and said hey, I'm not going to cuff you, I'm going to search your vehicle. They want to speak to a supervisor; they're upset; they're arguing, yelling, well, a passenger in the vehicle is recording the contact saying, illegal search of my car, you're doing this wrong, I want to speak to a supervisor, yada yada yada. Hence, I got called over. So I show up and I have to explain to them about three different times the reason why we can search the vehicle and why it was a legal stop and they're just generally being argumentative, confrontational, believing their right in what they're believing, but you kinda have to give them the realization of here's the reason why, slow your kinda slow things down, kinda walk them through the process. Even then they didn't agree, I'm like well, if you disagree maybe you can always contact a lawyer, show them the recording, what I've told ya and we agreed to disagree on it, but it was generally the last contact I had. (Jon Snow)

Timmy: I mean, when on a traffic stop I've had a few that are a little more voice inflection confrontational. When they are recording me when –hey I'm Officer Timmy, and uh, I uh – almost jacked that one up, didn't I? I stopped you for not stopping at that (inaudible), or whatever. And then all of the sudden, all the sudden they start yelling at you. I'm recording! Okay, well sir, you did violate that, and you know, if I can get your—you don't have any right! And they'll start yelling, trying to provoke me into—when you're being yelled at, to me I get yelled at all the time, I don't care—but um, that's a provoking thing to a lot of people. Getting yelled at is not what anybody wants to have done to them, so, I've had a lot of—I wouldn't say a lot—I've had several incidents where I was being recorded on a traffic stop where people are yelling at me for pulling them over for whatever reason. Um, whether it's to antagonize me or get me to change my mind or whatever it is. Um, or the reason is

Bill: I think it's increased the public's belief that impropriety is occurring. You know, that—I would say that if you surveyed people 20 years ago, how much police interaction do you think is inappropriate versus today? I think the number would be a lot lot higher. So I think all the videos have said, well, now they're looking for impropriety at every contact.

Traffic stops are important for understanding citizen filming of police. These situations include face-to-face interactions with citizens in a way many situations with bystanders do not. Citizens are close enough to have conversations with officers (and indeed, traffic stops include verbal interactions). At the same time, officers report that they are not always told whether or why a citizen might be filming the traffic stop. Filming appears to be a non-verbal type of confrontation that does not require, but may include, citizens directly engaging or communicating that they do not approve of officer behavior or register their concerns. These situations are less likely to have bystanders, depending on the neighborhood of the stop. These situations are more likely to be filmed by drivers themselves or by attached observers in the car at the time of the stop.

Factors Related to Filming the Police: Situations

It is not surprising that when officers were asked to describe situations in which citizens reach for their cameras that many of these situations are not the everyday citizen experience with the police but something more likely to be seen in a film or on television. Citizens seem to infer from these factors that something unusual was likely to happen, or already happening. When asked about what situations seem more likely to be filmed, officers mentioned these factors the most: situations with a lot of citizens (28 mentions), fights (22 mentions), arrests (12 mentions), or noticeable police encounters either because of sirens (1 mention), cruiser lights (13 mentions), officers or citizens yelling or making noise (20 mentions) or larger numbers of officers in one location (20 mentions) or perimeters/yellow tape (5 mentions).

If it's just a person, an officer and a person contact, one-to-one or similar, um, it doesn't seem to be as entertaining or as interesting. But when there are 6 police cars in one block or something, then, I think people tend to think there's something worth capturing. (Joe)

I mean a bank robbery is a serious felony, um, and there'll be an officer showing up, you can have a fight with two or three people and it isn't a serious felony and you're gonna have 7 or 8 cops showing up. Just depends on who's close and where it's happening at, so I think it *doesn't matter on the seriousness of the crime, it's just the number of officers responding, lights, and sirens and whoever hears about it shows up. (Mark)*

Hellcat: Um, I think, and it isn't just me, I've been with groups of officers, I think whenever there is a um large disturbance, you're going to see people pull out their phones

CK: like a party, or?

Hellcat: a party, or even fight, um argument uh between large parties of of of neighbors, sometimes, we have you know, multiply families living in one residence, and multiple families living in another, and you can see some rather large stuff boil out of that.

At the same time, many officers said they simply assume they are always being recorded, whether they are aware of it or not. Officers specifically said that especially in situations where they are in public or involved in a confrontation with a citizen, it might not be possible to be aware of all potential citizens on scene or those who might be filming from inside a building or nearby.

This is back to the question you asked, I guess I I always assume that I'm being filmed, if I'm out, especially at the scenes I get called to generally there's news people there recording me anyway. So, um, I don't know I guess, and then we record ourselves, with like he mentioned um, cruiser cameras and we're usually mic'd up to have microphones so it's always um, it's not something that you're constantly like, I'm on video or I'm being recorded but it's just in the back of my mind, I guess (Jeff)

The situations in which citizens decide to film the police mirror situations you might see involving police on television or in film. These are not the typical calls for service but situations with many citizens or officers present, situations that involve arrests or violence, that draw attention with lights or sirens, yellow tape or yelling. Citizens appear to take these cues that something dramatic or interesting is happening. These are situations that might also attract more bystander attention from citizens in the area and even in residential neighborhoods where citizens might leave their homes to become bystanders.

Factors Related to Filming the Police: Who Films the Police

Focus group discussions of who films the police took place in two forms. To begin our discussions with officers, we asked each officer to describe the last time they remembered being filmed while working. The examples officers used here were coded to capture citizen characteristics and officers were specifically asked if they had noticed any characteristics of individuals who filmed them, for example, did men film more often than women? Most officers who answered had not noticed whether men or women had filmed them more often. The most common response was that there was no difference. Five officers said they were more likely to be filmed by men and four officers said they were more likely to be filmed by women.

> *I could think about it. But, I would say it's about the same (R)*

> *Uh huh. I don't think so I. I can think of men and women that have recorded me and and it just seems like especially downtown it's like everybody has their phone out. I mean, everybody has it out. It doesn't matter if they are male or female. (Spencer)*

There was a much broader consensus among officers concerning age. Officers overwhelming said that individuals who filmed were more likely to be younger, and when asked for specifics, officers said 30 or younger, or described individuals who filmed as "the social media generation" and argued that younger people were more likely to document their interactions with others with photos or videos.

but um, the social media generation, I think that's part of it (Sam)

I would say there's not a lot of old people (Olivia)

I think through—just to throw an age out there, I'd say 30 and under, I would say is your majority. I would say maybe mid-30s (Brad)

Bill: between the ages of 18 and 30.

Timmy: Yeah, I agree. I was gonna say 20s. Anywhere in the 20s, so

JT: Yeah

Timmy: Generally, the more over 30 group is usually grown out of their silly stage—not all of 'em, but, but then you're under the 20 age. You're generally aren't out in scenarios that are gonna—they sometimes are, not generally speaking.

Officers also volunteered that people who are intoxicated are more likely to film. Individuals who had more police contacts or more negative experience with police were also identified as being more likely to film officer interactions.

I would say most of the time it's arrests—a lot of the—or the contacts downtown, it seems like there's all—more alcohol involved and it's more likely when that's the case (Mark)

I would say that the most often that I've been filmed, like, um, these are not the typical people that my partner and I deal with, but college females, um when their girlfriends are getting arrested cause they're drunk on a [football] Saturday or something, immediately those cell phones are out, and those are like the least controversial arrests (Sam)

Um, anyone who is intoxicated. (Ian)

The research team asked about racial/ethnic differences in filming. Most officers did not report noticing a difference in who filmed. Instead, some officers explained that it was the mix of the officer/citizen race that was more important. Specifically, that if a white officer was interacting with a black citizen, that the citizen (or others) may be more likely to film the interaction. Some examples provided by officers included African American citizens filming and others implied race was important.

Mark: we had a shooting, well last year, maybe a year and a half ago where it was all white, it was all marshals, and the person who shot was a white male, that got zero media attention whatsoever. None. Which surprised the heck out of me. But then on the flip side, uhm, if a white officer shoots somebody, there's going to be all kinds of media attention on that. Why did it happen and what was the background? And all this. But that that shooting got no attention, and that guy was killed. So the media propagates a lot of the things that take place and they can hype up a lot of things that—

Brian: they also don't report a lot of the statistics. And I know we had an officer who sent out a bunch of statistics on a study I can't remember where it was out of, um, but it shows that officer involved shootings there's—we shoot and unfortunately we kill a lot of white people. Way more than minorities. But that doesn't ever seem to enter into the discussion, ever, when that happens.

Race relations is what we should be talking about, because they go hand in hand with videos I think. But people are so fearful to talk about race relations and what we as a White officer thinks about when we encounter a Black male, or what that Black male feels when he sees a white officer. We, nobody every wants to talk about that, and it's like, that's what we should be talking about. Even with our minority officers on the department, what is it you see when White cops are contacting minorities? Do you see a difference? But everybody is so scared to talk about that for fear of being labeled a racist, but those feelings are out there and those feelings go hand-in-hand with the cameras and why people are filming a lot of times. Is a lot of minorities feel that white officers are prejudiced, we're racist, and we're doing things only because they're black. But we don't ever really seem to want to touch on that subject because it's so sensitive and people feel they have to be so politically correct about it. (Mark)

Um, somebody—we had a guy, that ran from us, had a warrant, so we had a perimeter set up. I mean those happen all the time but this is more specific than that, but um, and, someone made a traffic stop within our perimeter of a car we thought might have been involved. So I went up to that car and the person that was pulled over was an African American, and a group of African American men were walking down the sidewalk the other direction and saw it, and so they stopped and were video-taping, and it—there were a lot of cops on this traffic stop because we had this perimeter set up so there were like 400 cops in the area. And so it was really quick, and a whole bunch of cops showed up, so then they were yelling things about "this is what it's like to be black in America" and "look how many cops are here" they're obviously—you know—something like that. (Olivia)

Officers reported that many different types of people filmed the police. Overall, while all citizens were seen as potentially filming the police, the typical citizen officers described as filming police-citizen encounters was young (under 30), more likely to be someone who had experienced negative police contacts in the past, more likely to be intoxicated, and while officers did not indicate race was a factor, some noticed that in situations in which the officer was white and citizens were minority group members, involved citizens and bystanders might be more likely to film.

Citizen Motivations Vary by Role

According to police officers, most people who film police-citizen interactions are bystanders. Officers also indicated that bystanders do not always disclose their motivations for filming or are too far away from officers for conversations about motivations to take place. Sometimes citizens appear to film because they see other people filming. Seeing someone else capture the encounter appears to be a cue that encourages filming by others. This type of situation, however, requires multiple bystanders and our research suggests that police calls with multiple bystanders are more common in some neighborhoods than others. This situation is particularly common downtown on weekends, where multiple bars are located as discussed in an earlier section.

Bill: Recording is contagious

Timmy: Once one comes up

Bill: Once one comes up, everybody is like, "oh yeah!"

Timmy: My last one was probably about a month or two now, um, it was a bar fight that I just responded to and everybody and their brother was filming and getting in the way. Um, most of them anymore seem to back up when you tell them, but they're all recording, so. Probably ten or 15 recording when you're at a bar.

In addition to bystanders who may not interact with police, officers report that citizen roles are sometimes unclear in interactions. A person on the sidewalk near a police-citizen encounter may be a bystander or a friend or family member—someone we refer to here as an attached observer. Officers report that citizens appear to film to protect others based on what citizens say during the filming situation. Some examples below illustrate how citizens who know each other (attached observers) and bystanders will film police-citizen interactions to provide protection or potential evidence for the involved citizen, acting in a way that is consistent with an attached observer. Traffic stops were commonly mentioned as situations in which a passenger (and sometimes the driver) would film the encounter.

> *People um, people will say something like, "it's alright, I got it all on video!" or something like that. It's hard to tell, and, that's not always the person a person that knows them beforehand. I've heard I've heard people say, afterwards or after someone says something like that, you know, "well, how do I get ahold of you?" or something like that you know what I mean, so it's not always, um well you know it's not always that person but even people that say, "it's okay, I got it on video" you know, even that can even be the random the random bystander um that's that just happens to be recording and then they um will offer it to a suspect and you know I always a lot of times there has literally been nothing that has happened you know like someone's just complied and we've handcuffed them. (Spencer)*

> *It can be used as an intimidation factor, too. They're trying to intimidate us sometimes into doing something maybe different than what they want us to do. Um, and a lot of times, too, they're getting the camera out after the fact, they're just catching a small portion of what happened, they didn't get the whole thing. And that's probably I would say more the source of frustration sometimes for officers is they would much rather have, I think, the whole thing filmed, I would. (Brian)*

> *Sometimes it just depends, I mean there are people where you could be contacting them just to let them know that their that the family member or somebody is now deceased, and they record the entire contact. Cause they're distrusting the police or whatever reason. I think that's the most prevalent situation, you know, where it's more adversarial, um, but I have a unique position where I get a lot of information from the public, a lot of feedback, and there are a lot of things that are being recorded that I don't think people necessarily even know but a lot of times it's it's a matter of wanting to create some kind of record, whether there's some underlying intention to allege something later down the road, or, I'm not really sure (Joe)*

Well I don't know if it's that they're trying to protect themselves. I don't know if I would say protect themselves—I think maybe that's why they are doing it, I don't know what they are trying to protect themselves from. I don't know what they've been in my experience, I don't know what the police have done to wrong them [here]. I have no idea. Um, but, they're holding the cameras out still like they've been wronged or that the [local] Police Department is way out of control (Timmy)

It is beyond the scope of the research questions addressed here, however, the research team followed up on the issue of citizens having different viewpoints on what officers could do than officers. In other words, we asked about where citizens would learn/acquire opinions about what officers were allowed to do and not allowed to do and the potential role of the media in creating unreasonable expectations for officers more generally. The results of these discussions are being prepared into a research article and will be shared upon acceptance for publication.

Some citizens might film for the protection of themselves or others, however, officers suspected citizens were filming to capture events/post online, particularly if they were bystanders. Most officers reported that when bystanders filmed, they held up their phones and said nothing—meaning, in other words, that the officers were inferring the motivation of the citizens. There were few examples of citizens directly stating that they were going to film officers or police-citizen encounters in order to upload that video to YouTube or other social media sites.[10]

You can tell when that crowds there, they follow em, they follower certain entertainment groups. And you can hear them scream the WorldStar in the video. (Bill)

I think that they have different motives. If it's somebody who's filming a fight downtown, they

10. Social media sites were mentioned over 100 times in our focus group discussions.

probably want or sometimes I see them on YouTube later, so I am guessing the motive is to post it on YouTube or post it on a personal Facebook page and get a lot of hits (Scout)

The two comments I get pretty frequently are either a) they're gonna post it, like you know those websites out there that have specifically people fighting, so, they're gonna post it or I've again, had the racial thing, have people flat out say, "I'm recording this cause I'm gonna get it on camera when you shoot this use whatever term you want." You know, that's, and this isn't the it's rarely the subject we're dealing with, it's always a bystander if you will but I've had people flat out say that I'm doing this almost as a warning, like I'm gonna, I'm videotaping so you can't do this. You know, you can't do anything out of line. (Carl)

I think if there's force used, some type of force or fight. For whatever reason, the public thinks that's something they should record, and everything gets posted now, whether it's YouTube, Facebook, I was there and this is what I saw. And I think that instant access to information people are more likely to just want to post that. Even if it has nothing—it's just, hey, I was there, you know (Brian)

Our discussions suggest that the role that citizens play in a police-citizen encounter is linked to their likely motive in filming in a police-citizen encounter. Some citizens who are suspects or drivers who have been pulled over are filming the interaction for their own "protection" or to document what they perceive to be a violation of their rights, or to try to "level the playing field" in an encounter where they have less power. Citizens who are attached observers might film for similar reasons. Bystanders motivations are more difficult to discern, as few have conversations with officers, although as the examples above suggests, sometimes citizens express their motivations to capture police-citizen encounters in order to post the video on social media.

Officer Concerns about Being Filmed by Citizens

Officers reported a large number of concerns about being filmed by citizens *while at the* *same time* often remarking that they didn't care if citizens filmed them while they were working. This may seem inconsistent, however, officer concerns about being filmed appeared to be less about whether their behavior was filmed than the potential for that behavior to be *misunderstood*, as will be addressed in some detail later in this chapter. In capturing officer concerns, our focus in coding was to record the many different types of concerns as well as grouping them logically to compare across some of the themes in the discussions we had. Figure 1 graphically depicts the coding of 271 separate officer comments/concerns discussed in the focus groups. The figure branches out into areas of concern, some of which officers more or less generically addressed as concerns—the best example of this involves references to "the media" and officer comments that the media was biased or unhelpful or unfair as well as more specific concerns about how the media handled situations in which officers were filmed by citizens. While about 23 comments generally addressed the media, another 10 segments addressed the idea that the news media tries to be first as opposed to accurate in reporting. Officers also objected to the portrayal of officers in viral videos as somehow suggesting that the problematic officers were representative of all officers or that the representations of officers engaged in violence or corruption in one community might harm officers working in other communities or set back the larger cause of policing. Some officers argued that media coverage of officer behavior seemed racially driven, offering as evidence an officer-involved shooting in Lincoln and media inquiries following the news of the shooting. Officers argued that the racial make-up of the officers was more important than other characteristics of the shooting.

> *Yeah, in my experience, filling in for duty command, often times the media they'll ask in a situation, the race of the people involved, the race of the officer. (Joe)*

One thing I, uh, just what, something he said kind of brought up an idea of when that guy got shot by the Capitol, back in like May I think? Um, the I was like one of the first ones on scene there when we were tending to his injuries and there was photographs of us you know citizens taking a bunch of photographs, they were in the paper, within minutes, um and one of the first things I heard after that was, like the national news like CNN leaving messages at dispatch, and they were asking, what's the race of the shooting officer? What's the race of the person that got shot? And that was within, within an hour of the shooting. Um, those kinds of messages were being, and I was like oh my gosh, you know, and luckily you can't—I mean that's about as clean of a shooting as you could hope for, you know, guy wanted for weapon related charge and he's running carrying a gun through crowded streets of people, I mean, he's clearly a danger to the public and and the race of anybody doesn't matter in that situation. But, um, but I think our department handled that very well um and so I think that maybe it added to our credibility with the media, like, you know, yes it was a black person shot by a white officer, but it was a justified shooting, uh you know, he didn't even, he wasn't fatally wounded so it wasn't an overuse of force. He was shot until he wasn't a threat. And then you have pictures of probably four or five of us like, actively tending to his injuries. You know within seconds of it happening, um so I think that's just another example of you might, some officers might be fearful of like recording or massive media attention and all that, but I think in that situation it may have played in our favor and it may have given us kind of a boost as far as you know separating us from like the Ferguson departments or whatever, look they have a track record here of of acting properly and doing well. (Sam)[lightly edited]

Officers had several concerns related to situations in which citizens film officer behavior. Some specifically referred the potentially misleading presentation of police use of force techniques, with officers arguing that some techniques essentially look worse on camera than they feel to citizens.

Jack: And again, we're reactive, it's up to the person, if they want to put their hands behind their back and let us cuff them up then that's how it goes. But if they wanna fight, then that's how it's gonna go. Uh, and we're gonna win. Um

Michael: We have to win. That's really what it comes down to.

Jack: Yeah. Uh, cause we don't know, we're not out there to kill people but we don't know what this guy's gonna do. Um and, that's—we might get to it in an upcoming question—but that's the worst thing about us being videotaped is it's never gonna look pretty. Um, a boxing match or an MMA fight never looks like a ballet, and neither will our confrontations with *citizens. They're never gonna look pretty.*

Officers also made the argument in some cases that filming situations might be harmful to ongoing investigations or, when uploaded to social media, might alert family members to the identity of individuals involved in fatal accidents before the police could make official notifications.

> *Um, in the same vein, just like I said with the maybe not such like a big media type of attraction but even the small things like my example with the guy who recorded my conversation with him over, it was a homicide investigation and some of the, and we like, especially in investigations like that um little details that get out to others can taint an investigation so the the police departments hold things close to, investigative details close to their vests because of, like I said, we don't want false confessions from people or um, anything else so, so it's har--I guess like I said, I asked him just to keep it to himself, um, which I think he did, but I guess that's a concern as well on like major investigations, now if it's a drunken bar fight downtown and an officer has to use some force and that gets filmed, that's not going to really taint that investigation terribly but other, like bigger things that citizens capture, could, so. Yeah. That's and that's something we deal, uh, as with criminal investigations or we work the crime scene and then the very next step is* ***or sometimes all we're doing is to notify the next of kin and it's so hard to beat social media. I'd say, eighty percent of the time, they already, the family already knows by the time an officer gets to their door to tell them, because it goes through social media.*** *Maybe not the vid-like a video or anything but word or news gets through social media immediately, it spreads so. And families can get upset about it, so. Why didn't you tell me first? We did tell you, we are officially telling you first but (Jeff) [minor edits]*

The most common situational concerns involved citizens who were filming distracting officers or being a concern because they were too close to an officer. Citizens who are filming at times seem to be more focused on the camera/video being captured than on the effect of their actions on officers. One example officers gave of this had to do with a shooting situation captured on film by a citizen who was clearly in the line of fire but did not appear to realize it at the time.

I think it's completely true and there's evidence um recent news from the shooting in San Diego, did you guys follow that at all? Where the police shoot a guy that was taking a shooting stance with an object, didn't actually have a gun. And the still shot that the police released was from cell phone video from a witness. And if you look at it, look where that woman—look where she's standing. If that suspect had a gun, she's in the line of fire from the suspect. She would have gotten shot. So maybe she would have been standing there without a cell phone, but she—I think she wanted to make sure she got it but she's in the line of fire. You're gonna get shot. So, I think it's a disconnect, yeah. (Bill)

Other concerns about situational factors related to other citizens becoming involved in police-citizen encounters by loudly giving (often incorrect) legal advice to citizens who were interacting with the police—officers at times referred to individuals who would give legal advice, tell citizens that officers either could not do something, or that the citizen did not have to listen to the officer as "sidewalk attorneys" or similar terms.

You can attribute it to the the typical sidewalk attorney that you know is telling the uninvolved party that you don't have to stop for them when we're in the midst of investigation and this guy is walking off and it essentially emboldens the guy to continue walking instead of listening to what we're telling them to do. When we're well within our right to force them to stop because we're in the midst of this investigation. So, I, like he said, I don't think necessarily think per se the camera is the instigator, it may embolden people more, but it's getting the voice involved of the guy behind the camera I mean, it's probably a two-fold problem to be honest with you because the same thing happens even when a a camera isn't there and an uninvolved party is playing the the sidewalk attorney saying, I know exactly what you can and can't do and you don't have to listen to 'em, just keep walking (Steve, lightly edited)

Officers expressed concerns about potentially being in the next viral video to make the rounds on social media. While officers said they don't often think about being in the next viral video while making choices in police-citizen interactions, some interactions in particular bring the possibility of being in the next viral video to mind.

> *I almost had to shoot a 12-year-old black male, in a park—in a park, and the only thing that I was thinking of, when I had my—when I was drawing out on him, was "oh my God, this is going to be all over the news. This is going to be so viral." (Doogie)*

Officers also worried about the career ramifications of being an officer in a viral video. This fear extends not just to inappropriate behavior, but *situations in which officers feel they have done everything correctly or as their training indicates*. Some officers mentioned the problems of media attention and political involvement ending not only their employment at one agency, but ending their careers as law enforcement officers permanently. This was an important factor, officers said, *whether or not the officer had acted appropriately*. In essence, officers were making the argument that they could make decisions consistent with department policy and the law and still lose their jobs and never work in law enforcement again.

One example officers turned to repeatedly involved Darren Wilson shooting Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. While this shooting was not captured on video, this situation was referred to by officers 29 times in our discussions. One of the examples below is longer than our usual example but shows the discussion of how career consequences also flow into family concerns and illustrates officer thinking about situations where videos go viral, specifically that whether their actions conform to policy or not, the outcome for officers may include the end of a career and uprooting their families, as well as threats. These concerns are developed further in the next section.

> *Having to move, change your name. I mean seriously, you look at like, well take Ferguson for example, that guy isn't gonna work in this country. You know, his if you have something, if*

you're involved in a situation that's blown so big nationally, even if you are exonerated or found to be not in the wrong, if if you're vilified in the media i.e. by the general populace, how can you, you can't do your job, you can't live, I mean, you can't have a family, that those are huge concerns. And that's a reality. Because it repeatedly happens when people are thrust in that limelight. (Carl)

CK: Well I mean, what about the consequences of being the in the video with a million hits. Like what,

Hellcat: your career is done

Doogie: you're ruined

Hellcat: your career is done.

Doogie: if you did everything right

Hellcat: if you did everything right, it shouldn't be that way but still

Doogie: if you did something wrong, you should be worried about that video being out but even if, and it doesn't—the way the United States is now, if you, if you're out there, it doesn't—there's enough people that believe all, everything that's been transcribed into that that they don't care I mean, there's been officers

Hellcat: you're convicted in the court of public opinion

Doogie: There's been officers that have been, you know, found not guilty of the charges, and and they're still people going after them. There's, you're gonna have to live a life that is going to be really rough for quite a while. And that's unfortunate for doing the right thing.

Hellcat: I mean Missouri is a perfect example for that.

CK: So they're—the consequences to your career and would you be able to stay here? In Lincoln do you think

Doogie: yeah I think, I don't, I don't personally if it happened I think you'd have to move away.

Hellcat: I don't know, because you can't put yourself—until you're in that situation I don't know how you could say. What am I gonna do?

Sam: yeah. It all depends on if you've done bad things, done badly in the video.

Sam: Or if you've done good you know.

Hellcat: As we said though, videos can be taken out of context even the best action

Officers were also concerned about the effect of being in a viral video on their family members as well as how vulnerable family members might be to someone seeking to harm them. Officers noted that the location of their homes is visible in county property search engines, although they noted this information is not available in the nearest large city. Officers felt this easy access to finding their homes, and by implication their family members, put them at risk not just in the situation of a viral video but also if a suspect followed through on a threat to hurt the officer or a family member. Officers said these types of threats and comments are not unusual.

However, one person records what I say in an open and honest way, it's on YouTube and my family's threatened, my kids might be in danger at school, um, I might be targeted as being racist or whatever. And not that I am or not that I'm not—I mean it's just the point is, if you want an open and honest conversation, I felt like I really was kind of hung out to dry there. That if one person in that room recorded anything I said it could twisted in any way, and then the fallout of that is now I'm all over media, my name is all over media, they can find out where I live, where my kids go to school, where—and it was a very hot time, so, what is the fall out of this? And I felt so unprotected and I felt more unprotected by my own management more than anything. But, um, that was where you say—what are the repercussions of it? Well repercussions are you get me in a bad moment, and then my career is over or people want to hurt me or people, there's all kinds of crazies out there that can take one little clip and turn that to be that we're these really awful people when we're not. And if they got the full picture of what it was, and that's what I kind of said in that meeting, too, is you can't when I wear this uniform, I am not a person anymore. I'm a police officer. And while I still have a heart and all these things, I can't represent anything. (Olivia)

Um, we we've had officers threatened by defendants who have been put in jail, I mean they've had their lives threatened, and their families threatened, and all we wanted was our names *taken off of the county assessor's site. All they have to do is look up our name on the country assessor's site and they have our home address. (Bill)*

For me, I just talked to my wife actually about a month ago um, for me it's a retaliation, uh, is my major concern. For me, for myself, I'm not concerned about it um, that's not a, like I told my wife is I'm a big boy I can take care of myself but it's my wife and my kids and they didn't sign up for that. Um, so that's my concern, especially now, where it is as easy as looking an assessor's website to find where you live, you know. I know the officer's first and last name, ((motions like using a computer)), well, this is where he lives at and that's concerning, but besides that, I don't really have much personal concern for retaliation. (Jon Snow)

It should be noted, and it is striking, that while most officers were concerned about being included in a viral video, only one officer voiced concerns about criminal charges stemming from said involvement.

Officer concerns about being filmed by citizens also tapped into an array of concerns related to the nature of video, particularly video captured by citizens. The most commonly voiced concerns specifically focused on issues of context. Officers were concerned that video taken by citizens (and even video taken by officer-mounted or cruiser-mounted equipment) may not "tell the whole story" or provide an accurate depiction of events. Officers noted that these videos often lacked information about events prior to cameras being activated, particularly in the case of citizen-initiated videos. Officers noted that while a citizen may decide to capture an officer involved in a physical confrontation with a citizen, the video of this altercation would not usually include the efforts made to de-escalate the situation, attacks by citizens on officers, threats made by citizens, or other relevant information that an officer involved in the situation would be considering in making his/her choices

Um, and a lot of times, too, they're getting the camera out after the fact, they're just catching a small portion of what happened, they didn't get the whole thing. And that's probably I would say more the source of frustration sometimes for officers is they would much rather have, I think, the whole thing filmed, I would. I don't have a problem getting filmed. I'm doing my job. But when it gets to the point where you're taking them to the ground, and then they're yelling police brutality, and somebody shows that little clip—they have no idea what happened and proceeded that, what created that contact where we would have to put hands on somebody. (Brian)

Officers noted that even if a longer, more complete video depiction was available, many citizens only want to see the physical altercations or fights, and would likely not watch the entire video.

Steve: and so then they spin it this one way, when if you look at the whole video, and getting everybody all riled up, because you spun it this way, but if you look at the whole video, that's not the case at all. And if you look at any of our encounters, especially the physical encounters, not necessarily just shootings or anything, if you looked at it from the last five seconds, from when the officer had to engage the suspect and physically place them into custody, it's probably not going to look good. It probably won't. But if you put it into the context of everything that occurred, and especially the thought process of what we're trained in our reports we are trained to put what we were thinking at the time, how we were feeling, then it makes complete sense. But you know, we're not, by policy we're allowed to quickly take somebody into custody, you know, we're not going to be pulling our gun out for somebody whose trying to slap us, but, it gives us the ability to take somebody into custody quickly for not only our safety, but also their safety as well so they can't escalate it any further. But, again, when you're only seeing five seconds of a five minute encounter, I mean, it's probably going to look bad.

CK: Do you think that if the five minute video was available that people would watch it?

Steve: Probably not.

Jeff: I don't, yeah, I don't think uh I think some would that really want to that some but I think most people are after that five seconds,

Steve: Yep.

Jeff: That's what they want to see

Steve: Yep

Jeff: And if the five minute video was available, they'll get to they'll just

> *Steve: Yep*
>
> *Jeff: Fast forward to it, um for some, I think maybe that, I don't know. I think for a majority, they just, they want that five to they want the action, you know and um, but I think I think it would I guess I would like it be available so*

Officers blamed the media, as well, for editing or showing very short, unrepresentative video clips that might make officer behaviors look worse than they are (particularly if the entire situation was included) in the original video.

> *Michael: Absolutely. Like I said, I mean, they don't capture everything. They don't capture beginning of the fight, or they the angle is wrong and they they don't see the weapon that we see and the video shows, 'Hey, they just executed this guy." Um*

> *Jack: Or what's being said, you know.*

Because some video doesn't have good sound and without knowing what is said by officers and citizens, the behaviors and actions captured on film might be misleading

> *Sometimes they're spinning it in their own mind, the way they—they didn't get the whole snippet, they just got, sorry, the whole scenario, they got a little snippet, and they saw the police had to fight with this guy. So, that's brutality, but what they don't know is that they told the guy he's under arrest and he said, "I'm gonna kick both your asses," and all the sudden the fight's on. (Brian)*

Officers also had concerns related to citizens. Some of these concerns were related to citizen behavior while filming police-citizen encounters and other concerns relate to the later reception of viral videos of police-citizen encounters. A few officers (5 mentions) noted that while citizens will film them during a fight or struggle with a citizen, very few will help an officer who needs it under those circumstances. Some (9 mentions) indicated that they believed that having cameras present changed citizen behavior, usually noting that individuals would act up for the cameras, which officers explained usually involved not following officer directions.

> *Brad: and you're sitting there filming 'em, and you fail to render aid. I think that should be a law violation.*
>
> *Olivia: I do. I think that those videos come out and they show all those people sitting there videotaping instead of*
>
> *Brad: yup, assisting*
>
> *Olivia: Helping. Cause how many videos—like that should be the bad part, like look at all those people not helping those cops. Maybe the cops wouldn't have had to use as much force if you had helped*

Related observations also stressed a sense of entitlement or specifically a sense that the ability to film is a right—officers perceived citizen understanding of this to mean that officers could not ask citizens to move, usually move back away from a police-citizen encounter because this could prevent filming. Officer descriptions of citizens seemed to suggest that citizens felt officers could not do anything to make filming more inconvenient for citizens.

> *And you can order them to the end of the day to get back, "I have the right to be here. I can be here." And they don't understand that I have I can give you a lawful order that you need to stand back because as they get closer, they are interfering with my job to take this guy into custody, and so they are actually committing a crime, and uh the greatest thing that I've said to people is, they're like, "Well I, I can be here." "No you can't sir, you're failing to comply." And I said, "You're interfering with our uh our ability to make this arrest." And you can't tell me what to do. "Well I appreciate you recording this because you are now recording yourself committing a crime and I do appreciate that, so, um make sure you bring that to court with ya." (Jack)*

In terms of the reception of the viral videos, while a couple of officers noted that while watching viral videos of police officers using force against citizens, they themselves had judged the officer's behavior—even though study participants admitted they "knew better" than to think the video contained all the relevant information or showed a complete narrative. Some officers noted that citizen perceptions of viral videos were biased against the police.

Mark: But we all cringe when we see something, even if I don't see the whole thing, where an officer shoots somebody and you're like, "oh my God, you've got to be kidding me. Why did he do that?" And you're making up your mind before you even know what happened. Because I remember seeing White officer shoot a black male while his girlfriend was filming in the car, and I was like "holy shit. Why did he shoot that guy?" And I'm thinking it right away, and I'm like, that's bad for all officers, because I don't want to see that happen. Because we get bunched together

Brian: Again, we didn't see what happened before that.

Mark: We're police officers, and we're doing the same thing.

This bias in viral videos could take several forms, either that citizens hated police (6 mentions) and would see the information through that lens, or through the lens of an agenda or set of attitudes about police (14 mentions) or that citizens didn't care about the reality of the situation (14 mentions), they wanted to believe what they saw when videos depicted officers engaged in what appeared to be inappropriate violence against citizens.

Joe: But, there's some people that have their mind made up, and I think that's kind of the human affect. I think it's true

Brian: or they have an agenda

Downtown especially you would get I don't know—what—I'd say at least 75% of the time uh *people like, "he didn't do anything wrong." And whether they were outright lying just to help whoever it was, and a lot of it's us versus them, like uh citizens versus cops like we don't want to see this guy get in trouble, so, even though I just saw him punch the other guy I'm just gonna tell the cops that he didn't say, didn't do anything. But, uh, most of the time, you get somebody saying, "He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't, he was just standing there." Um, and so, um whether they are lying or whether they just showed up, again their perception's off because they've been drinking, um now they think they're doing what's right because here's this lowly citizen who is innocent of doing any wrongdoing and now it's just the bully cops that are picking on him. And so, by God, we're gonna do what's right by the citizen and get this whole contact on video. (Jack)*

While officers reported that they had concerns about viral videos from sources outside the police department, some officers explained that the most important factor in determining how worried officers might be about viral videos was related to the internal processing of viral video concerns. Specifically, officers had concerns about how the police department had handled videos in the past and there was a sense that videos had been used essentially as a weapon to punish officers by command staff. Officers were quick to point out that this sense that videos would be used to punish officers (phrases like "fishing expedition" or "Big Brother" were used to describe a process of reviewing old officer video to look for policy violations that could be written up to punish officers who were disliked or had displeased command staff) was something from the past.

Hoss: Well and to actually, you know, some of the reluctance for filming and recording was um

Ken: they would use it against us

Hoss: arbitrary punishment. You know, if you wanted to come after somebody, you would start reviewing all of their cruiser video or you know, start reviewing—going back and just nitpicking a single person

Ken: Yeah

DS: Are you saying from the administration?

Ken: Yes

Hoss: yeah.

Hoss: I'm not making that up

Ken: And it has certainly happened in the past

Hoss: It's not just a generalization, it's, you know, it's happened.

Ken: ((laughs))

Hoss: if you want to, we could name half a dozen officers each that we know it happened to.

Andy: We're gonna back 6 months and find out where you told somebody to not just be quiet but "shut the fuck up" and now we're gonna bust you for that. And then bring it all the way back up and find out everything that you did. And every T and how you didn't cross any reports and then it becomes a witch-hunt

Hoss: It's not a fear with the new, with our new boss.

Officers said they felt this practice was not happening now, that officers had the support of the new chief. Other officers referred to seeing these same behaviors in other police departments they had worked at earlier in their careers. Officers essentially said that viral videos will affect them to the extent that it is made to affect them by the police agency. If officers feel that they have the support of the police department, then there is less concern. Officers also indicated that they were sometimes concerned that video was out in media outlets or on social media and that the department was not always "on top of" or quick to respond to videos. Some officers said even if an investigation was necessary before the police department could specifically address the officer's actions in a video, it would help them to have the department respond quickly to videos before the video had circulated widely or made its way to media distribution.

Andy: That type of response to um managing um not only the narrative but managing actively *managing perceptions um and the perspectives of the citizens in your city. I just don't think we as a department have ever had that mindset. We're progressive in a lot of different ways but in terms of information flow and again sort of managing the perspective of our citizens, I just don't think we've done a very good job of that.*

Olivia: And look, I'm just gonna ask this really quick, cause, would you say that—I think that for me that has caused more of an issue like you guys say um does it change our behavior? The management's answer is what changes our behavior. Not the public's perception. Because we know that the public doesn't live our life and doesn't know what we do. But when our management, other cops, their response I think changes our behavior more than what the public's perception is.

Officers also had concerns about the use of video not specifically within the police department but more in the context of their work as law enforcement officers. The main concern was that courts seemed to be expecting video as evidence. Officers explained that at times there were situations in which the quality of existing video (which officers do not control) put cases at risk, even with officer testimony.

I've had charging decisions change because of the quality of video. (Bill)

Um charging prosecutor did um, we get the video and it was a really crappy video because the video system's old and grainy and um, cause you can see the outline of the figure but you couldn't positively identify the defendant, despite the fact that he was caught outside the store with the merchandise, and blah blah blah. The prosecutor was like, "well, the video is just horrible, I just dunno if I can use it." I don't care—then don't use it. That fact alone was enough for the prosecutor to not to want to prosecute it because the video was horrible (Bill)

Traffic stops are big. I had a DUI on private property that I worked one time and they were throwing a fit that there wasn't video because of the way the vehicle was parked in the stall, I couldn't get my vehicle turned to get video. And I didn't, there was no really great way to get it. (JT)

Officers interpreted the demand for video as a lack of trust. Some asked why officer testimony was not sufficient and video was needed, or claimed that video was seen as more reliable than officer testimony.

> *The trust needs to come back to us. Otherwise, I mean, you might as well just get rid of us. Because, if we can't go in and testify without video, there's no point in us doing this. (Michael)*

> *Well it's happening in this agency, it's almost like they don't take your word for it if you don't have video and there could have been. (Bill)*

As officers noted, while they have access to cruiser video, most officers do not have body-mounted cameras. Yet the perceived demand for video remains. The expectation of documentation in a video is so strong that lacking video evidence appears to cast suspicion on officers. Some officers suggested that the lack of trust mentioned earlier in situations without video goes deeper to suggestions/assumptions of officer misconduct if video is not available.

> *There's camera's in so many places now, that if we didn't record this event, then we must have done something wrong or were lying about it (Bob)*

> *I mean you have to turn them on, they're not automatic, and you gotta hot scene, and you're running up there and you're doing whatever. You don't have that second, or you don't think about that second to click your camera on. So then well, "now you didn't turn your camera on because you were gonna hide something." Or you did something before. (Andy)*

Officers also expressed concern that video might raise expectations for officer behavior.

> *and the thing that sucks with especially now, recently, especially in the last year or so, is our profession is so scrutinized and they think that we always need to be you know, uh, church-going baby-hugging uh people, and that's just not how it is. (Brad)*

Body-Worn Cameras

We asked officers two general questions about body-mounted cameras. As noted earlier in the report, most officers did not have body-mounted cameras at the time of the study. Officers did have the ability to capture video using cruiser cameras and most officers also used audio recording as part of their work. We asked officers what they saw as the benefits or reasons for the use of body-mounted cameras as well as the costs or potential disadvantages of the use of the cameras. Table 3 below describes the most commonly mentioned benefits and costs mentioned in the focus group.

Table 3: Officer Perceptions of Body-Worn Cameras

Benefits of Body-Worn Cameras	
Video can exonerate officers when complaints are filed	30
Video is useful for court/as evidence	31
Could encourage officers to stay in check	7
Could "weed out" bad cops	3
Video could be used for officer supervision/counseling/training	12
Body-Worn Camera Concerns	
Turning cameras on/off*	37**
Another system to use/adds more time on technology	17
Video has to be off for officer privacy, report writing, venting	26
Concerns about citizen/witness/victim privacy	17
Cost of equipment/storage of video	18
Complaints about arbitrary video-related punishment in the past	15
Changes citizen behavior/cooperation with police	12
Cameras will capture policy violations by officers	12
Monday morning quarterbacking of video	9

*technical concerns, hot calls, policy, blamed for technical concerns

**in some instances the number of mentions exceeds the number of officers because we are evaluating how often the issue was mentioned, not the number of officers who mentioned a particular issue

Body-Worn Camera Benefits

Cameras were seen as having several benefits. We had 114 coded segments about the benefits of body-mounted cameras. Officers were very interested in cameras. It seemed on the whole that officers wanted cameras *for their own protection* against what they considered to be frivolous complaints.

> *the audio though I think is critical because like you said, sometimes people it's not a physical interaction that happens, that people complain about, sometimes it's not what the officer did, sometimes it's not what the officer said, and how the officer made the person feel—the audio can lend a lot of credence to what realistically transpired, the tone of the officer, the nature of the interaction that took place.(Joe)*

> *Um, well, fortunately I was able to exonerate him from a complaint a couple of weeks ago, because he had his body camera on. Um, and it was awesome, uh cause everything the guy said was right there on video clearly not going down, um and it was in the hallway of a of an apartment complex so you know, he wouldn't have had to say anything but um, cause, they didn't step into his residence. But, so that was—it was awesome. Um, and it made my job so much easier, um, to get it on paper and show it upstairs and be like, "yeah, he didn't do anything wrong." (Jack)*

> *But like if something like that came up, um, I would, that would be my biggest thing it for, or my biggest reason to really want one of those cameras, is to be able to say, no it's on the camera, like, you know, I might have said a sarcastic comment. But I was not rude, I didn't call anyone a name, I didn't, I'm not dropping racial slurs or, you know, stuff like that. Cause that, just the protection aspect, is probably the biggest thing. (Sam)*

Officers wanted the ability to use camera footage in court as part of testifying.

it's great for interviews. Like you can see the interview going on and those kind of things, I think is great. Video evidence for court. For those things. Um, or maybe how somebody's acting prior to a fight. (Olivia)

Um, I have recorded or I've uh reviewed some of the video that I've shot and and just from my cruiser camera and my lapel mic, um—so I can get exact quotes in my reports. (Ian)

Cameras also had the benefit of providing real-time evaluations of officers that could be used to improve policing. Officers thought having cameras could encourage good behavior by officers (at the same time, officers also said they usually acted as though they were being recorded *whether or not they were being recorded*).

I personally think that it, it again, it keeps you in check. It keeps you, it keeps you from saying that one sarcastic comment that you just wanna get out. And instead you just shut your mouth, and so I think it's good. (Jack)

Personal accountability is the key right there. I think a lot of your, a lot of your backlash for not wearing the cameras is people who don't want to be held accountable. Um you know, um, yes, yes you can get yourself in trouble if you do something stupid, yes, there's no way to excuse your way out of it anymore. Um, or just ignore it, pretend like it didn't happen. (Hoss)

Having video footage of officer behavior was also seen by a few as a tool that could be used to identify and remove officers who were not behaving professionally.

Um, the benefit, I mean, if there are some cops, if there's recordings of the entire shift, I guess one benefit would be, if there are cops, and I don't think this is unheard of especially in major um big cities that there's a cop that's out of line or does something that he or she should not, then hopefully one benefit is that it weeds out those kind of officers. (Joe)

Video footage could also be reviewed by supervisors and officers to improve individual officer performance as well as potentially inform training.

> *I think to review it and learn from other people's mistakes or the things that they did well. This is good, I mean that's what we do already, um, with any number of videos that are online. You talk about officer safety and this person did that wrong or those tactics are good. So I think we already do that, not maybe so much with body camera footage because there's not a lot out there. (Bob)*

> *I've I've had, I was a field training officer and so I would go out and take my recruit out and we would practice them running me through standardized field sobriety test then I would let them, I'd have them watch themselves do it. And, it's a learning experience for them and it's a learning experience if you had something go wrong on a traffic stop, luckily I haven't had anything that that has gone awfully wrong, um but you can you can go back and review it and say, "I I I made this approach wrong," or um, "I reached in the car" or or whatever whatever it might be. It's it's not just an evidentiary tool, it's a it's a training tool that you can go back and uh review for, to critique yourself. (Ian)*

Body-Worn Camera Concerns

Officers also had apparently considered and evaluated the potential costs of body-mounted cameras. We had 176 coded segments about camera concerns. One concern raised about video more generally applies here and that is that video cannot provide a full view of a situation, even if it provides the officer's perspective. Cameras can capture a part of a situation and at times, that part is potentially misleading. One officer illustrated this idea:

> *What the video provides. Um, because it is a narrow focus of the situation, and sometimes it's not gonna be the entire picture. Which is why I would like to pull up drones that deploy every time a police contact happens, the audio component I think is gonna be incredibly invaluable, but I think much like the Taser, there's gonna be an unrealistic expectation that now the body-worn cameras will tell the entire story. The reality is that it will tell because of where it's positioned, depending on where the officers hands are, there's a number of training videos where people are just dancing, the subject is being beaten to hell by the police officer, turn around and they're just standing in close proximity, standing around for 30 seconds. Um so, the only, like I said, the only concern that I have is the notion that it will, that the confidence*

that it will be 100% accurate and tells the entire story. Realistically they don't, the audio though I think is critical because like you said, sometimes people it's not a physical interaction that happens, that people complain about, sometimes it's not what the officer did, sometimes it's not what the officer said, and how the officer made the person feel—the audio can lend a lot of credence to what realistically transpired, the tone of the officer, the nature of the interaction that took place. (Joe)

Most of these concerns centered on the specific use of the camera and the policies regarding when, and if, the camera could be turned off while the officer was on duty. Officers in this department use a wide array of technology in doing their work and argued that cameras, like any other technology, may malfunction or not work at times. Officers were concerned about suspicions being raised when technical issues arise and potentially being blamed for technical problems.

Well, I've seen I've seen some of the policies I don't know if they are just examples or other agencies or other agencies are using this kind of this kind of policy but basically some of them are, if you get a call for service, you gotta turn the camera on right away, no matter where you are and you have to have it on the whole time, you have to get there, tell peop--everyone that is there that you're recording, so that if you contact ten different people, you're telling someone you're recording ten different times, um, it just seems all so robotic, like, it's not the way that we do business, you know that we're going there it's not going to lend itself well, to hopefully being able to communicate well with these people and then and get the information that we need and the right information and the correct information. (Spencer)

Right, and not only that but technology has its limits. Okay? And and technology fails at the most inopportune times. Um, we were talking about the MACH programs on our computer system, mine uh only works about two-thirds of the time. Um, the rest of the time, I get error messages when I try to sign in and it's not working, and okay, can the department come back and say, well you didn't have your MACH system on. Well that's because it's not working. I emailed the tech guy. I had nothing but problems with my MDT. Technology sometimes fails, and so are the body cams. And so it's not always going to be well you just didn't want to turn it on because you had something to hide. No but you know, the last 7 fights that I've been have taken its toll on it, and it's not working right anymore (Ken)

> *It has a history of malfunctioning, we might not have any control of that. But I, you know as well as I do, if something malfunctions, the first thing they're gonna look at is, what did you do to cover this up? I personally do not want to be part of trying to explain why this thing that I have virtually no control over—malfunctioned. Batteries go out, I mean our radio batteries, we have subs get out of property—they don't work. (Michael)*

> *well that leads back to the frustration, you know I said before why why are you second guessing us so much? Just because we didn't video tape it, or the person, the officer didn't turn his camera on right away, or the camera wasn't at the right angle, or whatever. Automatically you're lying. I mean it was never like that before, you know. You actually had some integrity with the public and and still, in [study city], we're still sitting very good, and our response (Andy)*

> *They're all separate systems. They're all separate log ins. They're all separate, none of them are linked together whatsoever, so it's a separate log in, a separate system a separate procedure to check in to make sure that they work and it's just it's a pain in the butt, to get everything going (Jon Snow)*

Another issue centered around privacy concerns. Specifically, officers were concerned about their privacy while on the job. Officers generally agreed that recording police/citizen interactions was important for their own protection from complaints but raised issues related to recording conversations between officers in patrol cars, on scene, and even in police buildings or while writing reports.

> *1: There's report room talk that I don't want*
>
> *Jon Snow: ((laughs)) Exactly*

DS: That's something that's come up is just like, sometimes we just need to vent in the middle of our shifts

DS: With other people I'm working with and I don't want that recorded, you know? It's just, it's just they don't want anything that would never say to a citizen that they might say to another cop to be recorded. (Crosstalk edited out)

Yeah I think so, because and again, you need that downtime, you need to vent, you need to walk away from you know, uh a bad situation and you need vent to your coworkers to to get to get stress out so you can go take the next call. (Jack)

And you talk a certain way in the car or a certain way to the cops that you don't do out in the public, but if the public had access to everything we say. And I'm not saying there aren't racist and other stuff going on, because we are human, but I'm just saying, even I—I'll get certain calls and I'm like, "MotherFUCK I'm tired of going back to this place. This stupid bastard!" Well, that comes out, oh jeez, he's disrespecting this guy. Officers provided an example of one of these private officer interactions that made the news and was, in their estimation, both misinterpreted by the courts and the public and costly in terms of the view of the police in the community. (Michael)

CK: We've also heard about like recording when you're back here doing report writing and it probably wouldn't be a good idea.

Mark: that'd be a horrible idea

Joe: I mean if you want to just eliminate the human component, then, you can do that

Brian: You'd have a lot of burnout

Joe: cause you wouldn't be able to be human. You wouldn't be able to vent period.

Officers made the argument that being recorded constantly would be inappropriate and invade their privacy while using the restroom or answering a personal call at work. Interactions with other officers, they explained, which are not available for public consumption might be inappropriate. Officers explained that these conversations were a coping mechanism and a way to deal with the often difficult circumstances they encountered in their work. These conversations relieved stress and built relationships and, they argued, are likely part of most professions. One situation in particular was raised as an example of how the interactions of officers (apart from citizens) might be misinterpreted and cause problems both in the criminal justice process as well as cost the department in terms of its perception by the public.

Doogie: look how costly that um video was that Narcs took personally to their case. Do any of you guys remember that? The big—you guys remember that? that video that came out in court. One of the narcs officers took on his cell phones. Look how badly that turned out. That had nothing to do with their case at all. They'd served a warrant and when they cracked into a safe, they found, I think it was just a ton of drugs and everything that they'd been hoping

Sam: quarter of a million dollars, I think

Doogie: yeah, and then they started cheering and one of em was saying some lyrics to a, to a song, and

Sam: it was from a TV show. It was a quote from a TV show.

Doogie: yeah, and they're chanting it, and it got brought up in court. And it did not go well. It ruined it pretty much ruined that whole case. Just done.

CK: The officer behavior after?

Doogie: yeah. Well it was, it was his behavior during the search warrant. There was nobody, there was absolutely nobody but the—LFR was there because they were cutting the safe open, and then there was just the police there to assist.

Chris: it was basically a, a personal cell phone

Doogie: a personal cell phone, yeah

Chris: so he took the video of him on his phone.

Doogie: cause he wanted to see

Chris: of them opening the safe and celebrating, there's no suspects there, just only officers, but somehow it got discovered during trial. And, I don't think it was ever tagged in as evidence

Doogie: it wasn't, and they brought it up

CK: How did they get it then?

Doogie: word of mouth

Hellcat: discovery

CK: But if it's not tagged in then how did they?

Sam: I think somebody tagged it in

Doogie: no, nobody tagged it in, they had to tag it in later

Hellcat: I think if it exists, they can still do it

Doogie: they were asking if there was any other video and somebody had it, somebody was being honest and said, yes there is another video

CK: So it was probably in a report, just mentioned

Doogie: nope, it was never. It was never mentioned, I think he just, the defense attorney was asking an open-ended question, are there any other videos? Well somebody wasn't gonna lie, and they said yeah there's another video. And it was just the officers, had nothing I mean for the most part it pertained nothing to the case, cause

CK: Can I ask you what the quote is?

Doogie: What's that?

CK: Can I ask you what the quote was from the TV show.

Doogie: What was the quote? I can't

Hellcat: Fuck your couch.

Chris: Fuck your couch.

Sam: it's from a, Dave Chappelle. He has like a guest or something over and he gets his couch dirty, and he's like dude don't mess up my couch. Fuck your couch. ((laughs))

CK: so and like that, and probably out of context they they were like, what what is going on?

Doogie: yeah and they just brought it up stating that this was completely unprofessional, and that it was, but it wasn't in the public eye. It wasn't in any, it didn't break, it didn't deter from the investigation at all. It was just them being happy, celebrating

CK: well and that's that's another one of those things, in what profession would you find that people don't act differently when they're just amongst themselves?

Doogie: exactly. And so that, that was an instance where video just, I mean it absolutely destroyed that court, that case in court. Cause the media ran with it, I mean media was playing it on (Note: some cross-talk edited out for clarity)

This relatively involved example[11] and discussion is included to illustrate how officers think about and talk about the effects of filming as well as the issue of officer behavior while on the job *but not in the presence of citizens*. In this case, from the officers' perspective, they lost a case based on a video that was unrelated to the case. The important part of the video was that it made the officers involved look unprofessional. At the same time, it appears that officers expect to be able to act differently when they are with each other and not with citizens. Some of this can be a coping mechanism (some officers referred to frustrations of repeated returning to the same addresses to handle calls being misinterpreted as bias, for instance) or the use of language that would be seen as inappropriate. The seeming celebration at finding money in the safe (and the resulting use of language that might shock or confuse citizens unfamiliar with the reference to a television show) might appear as though officers were happy to find evidence of a crime or

11. This situation refers to a case that happened in 2014. The family involved sued the Lincoln/Lancaster County Narcotics Task Force in 2016 after a 2015 tort claim against the city and county was denied a year earlier (Pilger, 2016).

celebrating a crime or suggesting bias against the citizens being charged.

Some officers expressed concerns about the privacy of citizens who might be captured on body-camera footage as witnesses or victims. Other officers dismissed these concerns, even though they had expressed a need for their own privacy at work.

CK: Well and, um, what about talking to victims?

Joe: The, that's an interesting balance between documenting police contacts and not doing something that upsets somebody, for personal or privacy reasons, whether that's the interior of their home um

Brian: They may be embarrassed by what's on there

Joe: yeah

Brian: if it plays in court

So, the ACLU you know, raising Cain about videos, well we want privacy, we want you to videotape everything but we want the privacy. They can't decide on, well, when. I mean when is it a privacy issue, when is it not a privacy issue? Cause if you're inviting us over, no one invites the cop over to tell us how great a day they are having, there's something bad going on. And when that bad thing is going on, that means our lives are in danger, and everybody else that is there. Somebody is calling us to fix their problem. So, we want the camera there for protection to show what happened and what's going on, and sorry if I video tape you in your house, or they say, well it's made public knowledge and your camera is showing my big screen tv and all this stuff, now somebody's gonna come over and burglarize my house. Because your footage on the news, in me in my house showed everybody what I have inside my living room. Okay, well, you can "what if?' all day long. (Andy)

I'm sorry, but our body cam being released in court, that stalker's already got your layout of your house, cause if they're a good stalker they've tried to look. I mean, you know what I mean? And I don't mean that to sound cruel, but it's like, I'm not gonna not video, get good evidence, to put someone away because you're feelings are hurt because i—you know what I mean? It's like

Brad: and really honestly

Olivia: trying to protect you.

Brad: what are the odds of that happening? And maybe, it might be less than 1 percent

Olivia: yeah

Brad: and and and and then, all the other situations, I show up, you say, I want you to turn that camera off, I turn it off and then at that point, all of the sudden a breaks out because they start wanting to kick my ass. And I can't turn on, or get it turned back on, but all of the sudden, the only thing you see is me kicking their ass. Well what happened between the 10 minutes that you showed up between that and what happened between that. No, bullshit. You want it on, you wanna see that policy we carry, we have to wear it, it's gonna be on the whole time.

CK: The whole time you're interacting with those citizens though? Not the whole time you're on shift?

Olivia: No, I don't think you could do it the whole time you're on shift

Brad: I don't think

Some officers noted that systems recording and storing video evidence are expensive and this expense may prevent the department from hiring more officers. A few officers, particularly officers who had experience working with confidential informants said that videos can alter citizen behavior in ways that may impede investigations. Citizens who otherwise might provide information if their identity is concealed may be more hesitant if an officer is recording them.

There are a cluster of related concerns about the use of body-mounted cameras that center on the use of that information by the department. Officers noted that in the past, they were either aware of, or party to, situations in which the administration of the police agency or supervisory personnel had used recordings in a way that officers found inappropriate. Specifically, officers said that if an officer fell out of favor with a supervisor that the officer could expect that the supervisor would go back and review old recordings "looking for" mistakes the officer made that could be used to write the officer up.

Related to this, officers worried that the individuals reviewing the video maybe department personnel who were high-ranking but had not worked on the streets in many years. Officers were worried that command staff might second guess their work without an appreciation for the stresses and sometimes split-second decision-making which characterizes answering calls, but not administrative work. Officers also cautioned that filming officers means that officers will be recorded making policy mistakes.

> *people people thought the in car cameras were gonna you know, and yeah, me included, gotten in trouble because you did something and the camera caught it. You know, um, I did something wrong, I did something wrong, I didn't try to hide it, it is what it is. I think, but I think the vast majority of video is gonna help you more than hurt you. (Brad)*

> *I think another huge uh negative would be the Monday quarterbacking would get even worse. Um, it's it's real easy to sit there in the safety of a chair behind a desk watching a video when you're life isn't in danger or your uh you're not getting assaulted and watch something and be like, "well you should have done it this way." "well no shit I should of. But that guy should have just put his hands behind his back, too." Um, and, I mean when your adrenaline is is dumping and and I you know, you're in fear of your life or your safety, um you know it's it's kind of a free for all, um it's they teach us PPCT and the proper way to take people down, and in the mix of it you go to street brawling unless you're really into martial arts, in which case you probably go to martial arts and not what's the approved tactic (Jack)*

> *The demand for perfection is gonna go up. Like, now if we're not monitored, we may be able to fudge here or there, just remain within the lines of the law, of course, but we can do police work a thousand different ways, now if the expectation is gonna be, you're gonna do it this way and this way only when you have a video to prove that, people are gonna be getting in trouble. (Carl)*

Overall, officers seemed very accepting of the use of body-mounted cameras. They clearly saw multiple benefits for officers, for the criminal justice system, and for citizens. At the same time, officers raised important logistical and policy concerns related to how cameras would be used, concerns about privacy, and concerns about how the department would use the captured video.

Training

When asked specifically about training related to being filmed by citizens, most officers remarked that the department did not offer specific training about the topic. Upon reflection, some officers noted that the department had been clear about conveying information about citizens filming officers in other ways, specifically through department communications in email form. Many officers remarked that the department explained that citizens are allowed to film officers. Our discussions with officers suggested that there was no confusion related to this issue.

Our discussion also addressed any training needs. Most officers did not identify specific training needs. Some suggested that if training was needed, it could be provided via video training updates as opposed to in-service trainings. Some officers noted that there were potentially opportunities for training related to citizens filming, specifically related to obtaining video evidence from citizens and to managing citizens who were filming and potentially getting too close to a police-citizen encounter. Other officers noted that while some of the existing training addresses officer safety in a way that could be applied to citizens filming and potentially situations in which citizens get too close to obtain better quality video

Some officers suggested that training efforts would be better aimed at citizens, to communicate to citizens that they were required to listen to officers and follow orders from officers who ask them to move back while filming.

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the real training needs to go, and this is gonna be stupid because it's never gonna happen—

but we need to train the public to comply with what we're telling them. There have been many instances where community activists have gone through these simulated shooting stuff, and they're shooting people that we would never shoot. And they're like, "That guy should have listened to me." Well, no shit! But we have to wait until something virtually happens to us, and they're coming out of those trainings saying, "Yeah, I understand now what you guys are going through." And it's kind of resetting, setting their mindset in a different way. I don't know how you're gonna train us to deal with crowds. (Michael)

The discussion of obtaining video evidence requires more explanation. In the focus groups, it became clear that some officers had held specialized investigative positions in their past employment or currently and this seemed to inform their understanding of how to obtain video evidence. Other officers appeared to have less experience with this process and wanted guidance about how to obtain video and under what circumstances video evidence might be needed. Other officers said obtaining video was either simple or routine. These officers tended to have more experience or were more comfortable talking with citizens about video. Other officers noted that there are different methods for obtaining video from citizens and appeared to be able to convince citizens to provide video in a number of different ways.

Some officers mentioned a specific scenario in which officers obtained a phone from a citizen and were told to give it back. For some officers, this created confusion about standards for collection of video evidence. Most officers seemed comfortable handling video evidence and situations where citizens might be capturing police-citizen interactions on video.

The Ferguson Effect

One major concern addressed in the focus group relates to the notion of the viral video or Ferguson effect (sometimes also referred to in the research literature as "de-policing"). More specifically, this notion describes a situation where officer behavior changes in anticipation of potential involvement in a viral video. The idea is based on the idea that viral videos and the resulting reaction to these videos by police agencies and communities will act as a deterrent to officers engaging in proactive police encounters. The reduction in proactive police activity then contributes to a rise in the crime rate.

The Ferguson effect—the suggested relationships between officers being filmed, officer behavior changes, and crime—are based on a number of assumptions. Officers are assumed to view proactive encounters as risky professionally. In other words, this view of policing appears to also assume that officers regularly engage in behavior that, if filmed, would be objectionable to either the police department they work for or the larger community. It is also assumed that proactive police encounters (really, the only encounters that are "elective" encounters for officers) will reduce crime. It could also be argued that de-policing may be found in officers putting forth less aggressive effort in reactive, or citizen-initiated encounters as well. However, since citizen-initiated encounters are likely to be calls for service, officers would still be dispatched to respond—it is expected that their effort might be reduced to reduce risk to the officer.

In our focus group discussion, we asked officers about the viral video effect using the following question: What are your thoughts about the "viral video effect," the idea that crime rates may be increasing because of police officers have changed their behavior in response to being filmed by citizens? In discussion, we sometimes clarified, if asked, that this viral video effect might be referred to by other names, mentioned above, and that our interest was in that sequence of effects. In other words, as an officer, do you think officers change their behavior because of the possibility of being filmed by citizens?

Our discussions of videos of police-citizen encounters were wide-ranging and complex, and frankly, sometimes heated. Officers clearly considered how video would impact their work, their careers, how video would be handled in the context of the police department, how the media and social media use video, and how communities react to video.

Our discussion of the viral video effect was also complicated by way officers thought about the topic. On the one hand, officers repeatedly noted that in the study community, the police and community have a good relationship overall. Officers also repeatedly noted that they felt supported by the current police administration. At the same time, officers noted that videos from *other communities* and other police agencies might affect the way citizens here in the study community view their work or anticipate their interactions with local police. Officers also made reference to *other police officers*, in other agencies as likely candidates for the viral video effect. Specifically, officers mentioned officers at agencies that had experienced high profile incidents of alleged officer misconduct followed by charges or heighted media exposure related to the incident. Officers had examples from departments all over the country, detailing what officers were alleged to have done, as well as how their departments responded to incidents. Most officers were aware of recent incidents and it became clear that while officers complained about the media and sharing of videos online, they were also consumers of those videos. In some cases, officers found themselves judging the behavior of other officers *knowing* they had incomplete information and with a full awareness of their own concerns about not wanting to be judged without proper context or with a limited video representation of events.

Survey Results

The survey results presented here give us a sense of how often police officers notice that they are being filmed by citizens. On average, police officers involved in the study told us that they were filmed about five times a month. Since officers also told us that they have a tendency to assume that they are always potentially being filmed by citizens, this finding seems to contradict the experience of officers in the field. At the same time, this finding may reflect officer's understanding that they may not always be aware of who is filming them and officer experience finding videos after the fact on social media. In fact, one example described by officers involved a situation in which officers were unaware they were filmed until the video was being circulated on Facebook. At the very least, this finding suggests that more work on prevalance of filming is needed.

Focus Group Questions

Our focus group data suggests a number of findings related to officer perspectives on being filmed by citizens, who films the police, the situations that include filming, the benefits of body-worn cameras, the concerns officers have about body-worn cameras and being filmed by citizens, the training officers receive about citizens filming, and what officers think about the viral video effect or Ferguson effect.

Officers told us that there were patterns in who films them. First, they noticed that citizens seem to fit one of three roles: bystanders (the group most likely to film), attached observers who had some relationship to an individual or individuals interacting with the police, and the individuals who are interacting with the police either as a potential suspect or a stopped driver.

Individuals who filmed the police tended to be younger, intoxicated, or have a history of negative experiences with the police. Officers did not notice differences by race or gender in filming behavior.

The motivations of individuals filming seemed to vary based on their role in the situation. For example, bystanders seemed to capture police-citizen interactions that had characteristics of being a spectacle: many officers present, sirens, lights, or other indicators that something interesting was going to happen. Bystanders seemed to be trying to capture these unusual events, potentially to share on social media. Attached observers were motivated less by spectacle and more by the current police-citizen interaction of a friend, family member, or in some cases another person on the sidewalk. The motivation for filming in these situations appeared to be for the perceived protection of the individual who was interacting with the police. Many traffic stops also appeared to share this motivation of "protection" or having their own video account of events as they transpired. Citizens directly interacting with the police during a traffic stop or during an arrest situation were less likely to film, although officers did report it on occasion. Only one account of a victim filming police was shared during the focus groups and the victim in question was described as unusual. This may be related to the generally good relationship the police agency has with the community and it would be interesting to know if this behavior is rare overall or if it is related to community context or perceptions of police by citizens.

Several situations seemed to be related to citizens deciding to film the police. Many of these are expected: situations with lights and sirens or other noises like yelling, multiple officers being on scene, or an accident. Citizens were more likely to film during traffic stops or when a fight occurs. Some neighborhoods seemed to produce conditions that were favorable to filming, specifically downtown areas where bars are located. At "bar break" these neighborhoods include young people who are intoxicated and large numbers of bystanders to the fights that predictably occur. Traffic stops were repeatedly mentioned as examples of situations in which officers recalled being filmed either by a passenger or driver. Some neighborhoods appeared to have fewer filming situations—either because attached observers decided not the film or because there were no bystanders to film. Officers noted that without lights, sirens, or other noise to attract citizen attention, neighbors might not be aware of police presence or the "opportunity" to film.

Body-worn camera use was generally supported by officers. The main benefit of body-worn cameras was identified as the use of camera footage to dispute or disprove frivolous complaints against officers. Officers also reported that their own use of audio recordings of citizen encounters had convinced many that video recordings would also be beneficial in writing reports and preparation for court testimony. Officers also noted that many prosecutors or jurors expected video of events and body-worn cameras could provide that footage in instances where cameras installed in cruisers were inadequate or where security video was unavailable.

In addition recognizing the benefits of body-worn cameras, officers expressed a number of concerns related to the use of body-worn cameras, specifically related to their day-to-day use. Officers correctly noted that camera systems, storage and retrieval of video, and repairs/replacement of equipment would be costly. These costs, officers explained, might limit the numbers of officers who could be hired or prevent implementation of other technology, or needed upkeep of other equipment. Some officers referred to agencies that had implemented body-worn cameras and then decided the costs were prohibitive. Officers were concerned, too, that technological failures might be interpreted instead as failures of officer judgment or as officer misconduct. Officers wondered what policies would be used to determine when cameras were turned on and when they were turned off. One concern officers noted had to do with the use of camera footage to punish officers. Specifically, officers recounted experiences in the past where supervisors had used a review of cruiser camera footage to "look for" policy violations by officers in order to write them up. These targeted reviews, officers said, were not a result of a policy as much as a dislike of certain officers who were selected for a review in order to find mistakes. To be clear, officers did not think this was a current practice, but that this had happened in other agencies and under a prior chief. While officers noted that any consistent recording might uncover mistakes, the issue was less about avoiding accountability for mistakes than a concern about the fairness of targeted reviews that appeared motivated by animosity toward individual officers instead of a general policy to improve and monitor police work in general.

Officers reported that they had received no specific training related to being filmed by citizens. It is important to recall that our focus group officers tended to be older than the average officer in the department, so few of the participating officers had recently attended academy training. Officers unanimously told us, however, that they had clearly received the message that citizen filming of police was legal and that they understood taking a camera away from a citizen who was filming police-citizen interactions was inappropriate. Some officers, particularly those with less investigative experience, were more likely to have questions about who to obtain video evidence from citizens and when such evidence was necessary. Most officers did not have these questions and recounted experiences working with citizens to collect video evidence.

Officers sent mixed messages about being filmed. On the one hand, the overwhelming majority of officers reported that being filmed by citizens did not bother or concern them. At the same time, the discussion of these situations revealed a number of related concerns. The research team came to understand that what officers mean here is complex and situational. Having a camera pointed at them while they are working does not seem to concern officers except in limited situations they see as potentially "viral" encounters and these encounters are not limited to those that are being filmed. These situations also concern officers for other reasons. One example, noted earlier, details a situation in which an officer said he "almost had to shoot a 12 year old black male, in a park—in a park, and the only think that I was thinking of, when I had my—when I was drawing out on him, was "oh my God, this is going to be all over the news. This is going to be so viral." The officer wasn't referring here to a video as much as the shooting of a young black male and the news coverage that would be expected to follow. Another officer explained that he had arrested a man who was injured and yelling during his arrest. The officer looked for video of the incident online afterward. These two examples both have the potential for or actual use of force against a citizen. These situations are more likely to get media attention and officers noted that when a police officer shoots a citizen, they "hear" that news media call the police agency asking for the race of the citizen and the involved officer(s). If the citizen is white, officers note, there is little if any concern about the incident. While race was not directly raised often in the discussions, the racial make up of the police-citizen interaction seemed to be noted as an important lens for media interest in a case. Officers seemed to use this lens as well in their encounters and whether they were seen as potentially "viral" encounters.

For the most part, officers reported that being filmed didn't change their behavior, or did so in limited ways. Officers might rethink their language or tone of voice in an interaction with a citizen, but not change whether or not they interacted with citizens at all. Some officers explained that they could see how officers in other police agencies, particularly those agencies that had fired or charged officers, might choose to reduce "going the extra mile" to reduce risk to themselves. Officers said at the time of the focus groups they felt well-supported by their current chief and were not concerned about more or less being "hung out to dry" if a video came to light. Officers repeatedly noted that other officers, in other agencies, had been punished or fired *even when they followed the law and applicable departmental policies* and this seemed to concern them the most. Officers worried that their careers and their livelihood might be lost in situations in which they did, as some put it, "all the right things." Officers saw these situations as potentially created by the media or the community and out of the control of the police department in some cases.

Future Research

There are a number of different ways that future research could build on and extend the work reported here. First, the research could be repeated in a larger department or a department that does not have the strong relationship with its community to see if the context of the community alters the findings reported here. Officers told us the reaction of the police department to viral videos was more important than the reactions of the community in their evaluation of whether a video might a harm them professionally. Because the police and the community have a good relationship, there may be fewer organizations and groups that might mobilize in response to a viral video. A police department that has more community concerns may also face more community activism in general and be more responsive to those concerns in an effort to rebuild legitimacy and trust.

The focus groups reported here allowed for a deeper discussion of officer perspectives and concerns but is limited in terms of generalizability. Future work could use this understanding to look at the prevalence in other jurisdictions or with larger samples of officers in the form of surveys as opposed to focus groups. These surveys would also allow greater comparisons across officer groups to explore differences in perspectives. The officers included here tended to be highly educated and some reported reviewing research about body-worn cameras. Officers with less education and with less interest in research may have different views about the use of cameras by police. A larger sample would also allow for a more comprehensive, more generalizable understanding of the concerns examined here.

This study focused on officer perspectives about being filmed by citizens but does not include the perspectives of citizens. Future work could both observe and identify individuals who film police by recruitment during ride-alongs. Researchers could follow up with an online survey or short interview to capture citizen motivations in filming police and address the future use of those films. If citizens plan to share videos on social media platforms as officers assume, it would be interesting to know what sorts of videos are uploaded and what percentage of videos that are created are shared with others or used as part of a complaint. An observational study could also systematically examine the characteristics of individuals who film, situations in which citizens film the police, and other factors related to filming.

Another approach would be to repeat much of the work here but with a group of citizens who have filmed the police (or a group who have filmed the police and uploaded the video to a social media platform). A focus group would allow for a deeper understanding of the motivations of citizens, their perspectives on filming the police and body-worn cameras, their prior experiences with the police, the function or utility of filming the police, and how recordings are distributed to others. Officers in focus groups said that some bystanders indicated their motivations or challenged officer behavior in some way during filming, but that other bystanders, and in some cases attached observers, did not offer an explanation for filming. In other words, a focus group with citizens who record would provide the opportunity to understand filming as nonverbal behavior.

Since videos of police-citizen interactions are uploaded to social media platforms, these videos themselves could be systematically examined as well. As part of this study, the research team collected a number of videos capturing police-citizen encounters. Our preliminary work suggested that in addition to individual videos that are uploaded, some users will combine videos from multiple jurisdictions together, often to make a point about police behavior. While individual videos often include information about where and when the video was made, the compilations of videos often include small sections of videos from multiple jurisdictions (sometimes multiple countries based on the police cars and uniforms) and multiple years. Examination of individual videos might allow more insight into the geographic distribution of filming and allow researchers to contact users who upload video for follow up surveys or interviews.

One last issue that is briefly mentioned in the report is that police often need to address citizen expectations about the use of investigative techniques, especially forensic technology, in answering calls for service. Citizens appear to obtain at least some of these expectations about officer approaches to investigation through television, documentaries, and movies about crime and investigations. It would be interesting to follow up with officers about how often this happens and what techniques officers use to educate citizens and explain what a typical investigation might look like. It would likewise be interesting to further probe how citizens develop their expectations about officer behavior, particularly since we noted here that officers report citizens challenging officer behavior as inappropriate without a full understanding of the law or police department procedures.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Appendix C: Informed Consent Document

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Viral Videos of Police Use of Force

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. We appreciate your time and input. Answers to the following questions will help us understand our findings. We want to compare characteristics of focus group participants to officers in the Lincoln Police Department to see how well these focus groups "represent" all officers who could have participated.

1. Age

- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 45-50
- 51-60

2. Sex

- Male
- Female

3. Race

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Asian
- Biracial
- Other

4. Ethnicity

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic

5. Education

- High school
- Some college
- Two YearDegree
- Four Year Degree
- Master's Degree
- Other:

6. Shift

- First
- Second
- Third

7. Team

- ◯ Northwest
- ◯ Northeast
- ◯ Southwest
- ◯ Southeast
- ◯ Center
- ◯ Other:

8. Have you been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter during the last month?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No (please skip to question #10)

9. Think back over the last month, how many times have you been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter?

Your answer

10. Do you know of another officer in your department who has been filmed by a citizen during a police encounter during the last month?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Submit

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Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Engagement Questions:

Let's start by going around the room to see how many of you have experienced being filmed by a citizen. And, if you could, please tell us how recently that experience was—in the last week, last month, etc.

Exploration Questions:

Think back to your own experiences being filmed by citizens.

- What types of situations (answering a call, stopping a citizen, traffic stop)?
- Who tends to film?
- What do citizens say about their motives in filming?
- How does being filmed affect your choices as an officer?
- What are your concerns as an officer in being filmed?
- How have smartphones/cameras affected your interactions with citizens?

What are your thoughts about wearing a body mounted camera as an officer?

- What do you see as the benefits?
- What do you see as the costs?

What sort of training do you have related to citizens filming?

- What sort of training would be helpful in handling these situations?

What are your thoughts about the "viral video effect," the idea that crime rates may be increasing because of police officers have changed their behavior in response to being filmed by citizens?

Exit Question: Is there anything we have missed in our discussion? Topics we should have addressed, but have not yet?

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