

Community Policing Self Assessment Tool (CP-SAT)

Part B. Statistical Methods

Part B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods:

The CP-SAT effort will require the employment of only descriptive statistical methods.

B.1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

For the “long form” and FY09 CHRP grantees, the CP-SAT is a purely voluntary effort, so COPS will not be determining sampling methods. We do, however, provide some guidance on sampling in the corresponding Users’ Guide.

There are five groups of individuals who are intended to complete the survey within each participating agency: Officers, Supervisors, Command Staff, Civilian Staff, and Community Partners (specific individuals with whom the agency has a recognized partnership, not the general public). The Guide introduces the concept of sampling and provides general methodological information on concepts such as stratified random sampling and sample size for consideration by larger agencies. The guidance that will be provided to the FY11 CHP grantees, whose participation will be a grant requirement, will introduce the concept of sampling and provide general methodological information on concepts such as stratified random sampling and sample size, and the COPS Office will provide assistance on sampling and response rate requirements.

B2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Agencies that participate in the CP-SAT will either contact the COPS Office via email or phone to express interest (if they are in the FY09 hiring grant population) or will be contacted by a COPS Office contractor to begin the CP-SAT process (if they are in the FY11 hiring grant population).

The CP-SAT will be administered in an online format using Vovici EFM Community Web-based survey software. Vovici’s survey hosting environment has been designed with security as a foremost consideration, with features such as 128 bit SSL encryption and redundant firewalls. Participant email addresses will be uploaded into the Vovici Community secure Web site and each respondent will be sent a link to the survey via their email address. Although the survey administrators can identify a participant’s survey status (e.g., not started, started, completed), there are no individual identifiers in the data and there is no way to link an individual’s data to their email address. If the respondent does not have an email account, participants can be directed to a URL address via alternate means (e.g., via agency memo with URL address, access to a common computer lab with the site loaded onto each computer). All data exported from the Vovici Community secure Web site will be kept in a secured folder.

Emails to participants will include the following statement prominently displayed notifying them of the confidential nature of their surveys:

“Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. There are no individual identifiers in the data that the law enforcement agency will receive, and the agency will not be able to link an individual’s data to their email address. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each question honestly.”

If the respondent does not have an email account, participants can be directed to a URL address via alternate means (e.g., via agency memo with URL address, access to a common computer lab with the site loaded onto each computer). The confidentiality statement will also appear at the beginning of the alternative survey. All data exported from the Vovici Community secure Web site will be kept in a secured folder.

ICF International and the contractor will prepare a Microsoft Excel report of summary data for each agency that participates in the CP-SAT. The report will use bar charts, pie charts, and tables to report the average percentage of agency staff who selected each answer choice on a group of similar questions (e.g., general problem solving). The report will be individualized for each agency, so that the report only describes that agency’s data. The individualized Microsoft Excel report will be provided to the Chief of Police or Sheriff and it is up to him or her to determine whom he/she makes the data available.

At the conclusion of the data collection covered by this request, ICF and the contractor will make agency-level data available to the government with identifying information removed from the data set (also see description in Section A.10 above). This data could be useful in identifying areas of need of community policing assistance and resources, and for conducting large-scale research on the state of community policing implementation across different community policing dimensions.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Issues of Non-Response

COPS will not be directly involved in the collection of data. However, we will provide tips for increasing response rate within an agency. These tips include:

- Chief should stress the importance of the self-assessment process and participation in completing the forms.
- Gain support and “buy in” from each of the groups—officers, supervisors, and command staff—as well as police union leadership or other organized labor bodies. Support from these individuals and groups should be sought at the outset of the project.
- Training/orientation for agency personnel who will be asked to complete the assessment tool form will enhance the overall response rate and reduce the problem of incomplete forms being submitted.
- Respondents should be notified in advance that the assessment tool form will be distributed and that they will be given adequate time to complete the form.

- Respondents should be assured that their responses will be handled in a confidential manner.
- Respondents should be given reminders to complete the assessment tool forms. If necessary, provide new copies of the form instrument each time.
- Offer to provide the respondents a summary report of the results of the self-assessment process.
- Convey how the results will be used to make positive changes, as well as to promote the work being done by the agency and its staff.

B4. Tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken

To date, the researchers have conducted six pilot tests of the content of the survey and usability of the format in law enforcement agencies across the country. Based on responses and the analysis of findings, improvements were made to both the content and the online format.

B5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and organization/persons collecting and analyzing the data.

Rebecca R. Harris Mulvaney, Ph.D.
Manager
Applied Organizational Research
ICF International
(703) 934-3582