



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Valentine Police Department

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CHIEF DANA MILLER #681 SERVING SINCE JUNE 2006

Defensive Tactics and Taser Instructor

I really believe in the old expression that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. It also makes you tired. 2023 has been a challenging year for the Valentine Police Department. With 2 officer vacancies continuing to go unfilled and Officer Jasmine Hoefs out on injury leave, the Department has been a department of 3 officers and 1 support staff. The insurmountable task of providing law enforcement services on a 24/7 basis seemed impossible. At times, assistance was required from the Cherry County Sheriff's Office and Nebraska State



Patrol to handle increased call volumes or incidents where more than 3 officers were needed. At other times, we had to prioritize calls based on the nature of the call. Out of necessity, city ordinance violations became a lower priority than property crimes or crimes of violence. Often this tactic was unpopular but was necessary to effectively maintain the peace and safety of our community. As Francis of Assisi said, we "start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you're doing the impossible." LT. Jamon Slama, Officer Brandon Ormesher and Administrative Assistant Bobbi Johnson should be commended for their efforts in maintaining department services and enforcement response despite critically low staffing levels.

Valentine is not alone in our quest to hire qualified people for police officer positions. A tightening labor market, heightened frustration with the policing profession, concerns about safety and wellbeing, along with the constraints of schedules that include nights, holidays and weekends, potential candidates are shying away from the profession altogether. Normal recruiting strategies are not working for the department. We've tried multiple advertising strategies to include attending job fairs and advertise nationally through online platforms. Minimal success has resulted from these strategies. However, those applicants who have emerged have failed to meet state and agency standards for employment. The search continues.

The National Night Out and CSI: Valentine, which have historically been organized by the department, were cancelled this year due to staffing levels. Despite the staffing challenges, some great community

events took place this year. Valentine Police Department was able to host the popular Scare in the Square, Coffee with a Cop and Women's Self Defense class. In addition, staff were able to be in the schools instructing in the Driver's Education and Careers Classes. In each of these events, numerous collaborative efforts between community members, businesses and first responders made them successful.

K9 handler Officer Brandon Ormesher and his sidekick K9 Baker were able to obtain their state narcotic detection certification status this year. The duo had previously received their national certification. Throughout the year, K9 Baker was successful in his alerts to smaller amounts of illegal narcotics. However, in December, the duo, along with Officer Jasmine Hoefs, were able to deploy K9 Baker on a vehicle. Following the investigation, the officers were able to seize illegal narcotics and a large amount of cash. It's likely that this seizure disrupted plans for the distribution of methamphetamine within our community. Our hope is to be able to increase our proactive patrols and use of K9 Baker in the coming years.

At times it's been disheartening to think that the staffing crisis will continue indefinitely. We are encouraged to believe that the "next generation of police officers" is just around the corner wanting to make a difference in our community. Until then, rest assured, the department's dedicated men and women will continue to provide law enforcement services to our community with honor and integrity to the best of our abilities!



LT JAMON SLAMA #682 SERVING SINCE JANUARY 2004

Firearms Instructor

Below is a list of training that officers within the department have attended in the 2023 calendar year. All officers are required to attend 32 hours of training hours per year. Valentine Police Department has exceeded this requirement.

Chief Miller, Lt Slama, and Officer Ormesher completed in-service or specialized training on the following topics:

- Law Enforcement Anti-Bias Training
- Defibrillator Training/SIMNE Scenario Training
- Annual Legal Update
- Defensive Tactics
- TASER Operator Recertification
- Firearms Training includes Annual Certification with Semi-Automatic Handgun & Patrol Rifle
- Red Dot Pistol Optic Orientation and Qualification
- Tactical Medicine
- Building Search Scenario Training
- De-escalation Techniques



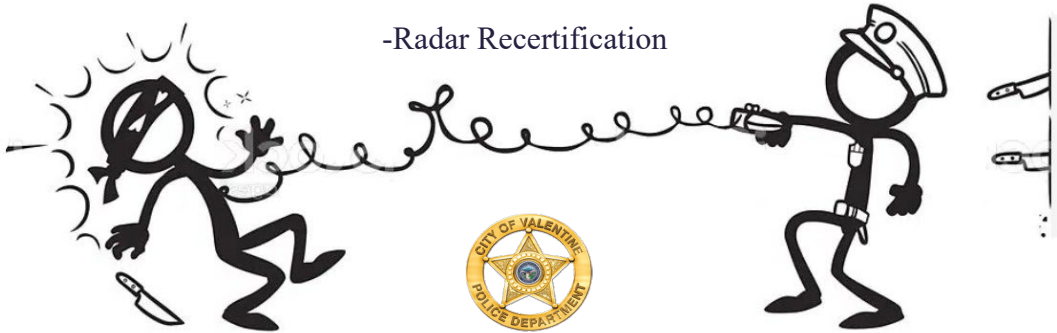
Chief Dana Miller

- LASO Recertification
- FTO for Jail and Corrections
- Mental Health and Resiliency
- BLS Life Support AED and CPR
- Skywarn Training Observer
- Doppler Radar
- Taser
- Team Building



Lieutenant Jamon Slama

- Plain View Search Doctrine
- Radar Recertification



Officer Brandon Ormesher

- Search and Seizure
- Plain View Search Doctrine
- Evading Honesty
- Duty to Intervene
- Drug Recognition Signs/Symptoms
- Hidden Compartment Detection
- K9 Narcotics Certification
- Crash and Investigations



Officer Jasmine Hoefs

- Opioid Crisis Response
- Autism Training for LE
- Shield of Resilience
- Suicide and Crisis Readiness
- Radar Recertification
- Pursue Evaluation
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- Bomb Threats in School
- Child Safety
- Addressing the Homeless Population
- Active Shooter Prevention



Staffing Shortages and Officer Recruitment:



I covered this topic during the 2022 Annual Report. Suffice to say, our staffing shortage has not yet been addressed during 2023. Though the department continues to advertise the vacant positions, and we have taken the further step of sending officers and staff to various job fairs throughout the state, we have been unable to fill our two vacant Police Officer positions as of this report.

Our staffing shortage is reflective of a nationwide trend in law enforcement. For a variety of reasons, far beyond our control, there is simply a lack of interest in pursuing a career in police work. Though the City of Valentine has taken reasonable measures to increase our recruiting appeal by officer retention and hiring bonuses, there hasn't been the expected interest in the officer positions. The State of Nebraska has made retention incentives available for officers at the 1,3 and 5 year marks as active law enforcement officers. Despite these efforts, there does not seem to be an end to this shortage in the immediate future.

OFFICER BRANDON ORMESHER #683 SERVING SINCE SEPTEMBER 2014

DRUG RECONITION EXPERT

In the early months of 2022, the Valentine Police Department initiated the procurement process for a drug detection K9, aiming to enhance the City of Valentine's law enforcement capabilities. With the support of generous donations and grants, a total of over \$30,000.00 was raised to facilitate the acquisition of the K9 and necessary equipment for the K9 patrol unit. Following extensive research, the decision was made to purchase a K9 from Blue Streak K9, located in Jonesboro, AR.

On October 23, 2022, I traveled to Arkansas and met with Blake Bristow, the trainer and owner of Blue Streak K9. After careful consideration, a black lab named Baker was selected for the VPD, as he met the specific needs of the department. K9 Baker underwent comprehensive training in five drug odors, tracking, and evidence recovery. During a week-long training session with the handler, I acquired essential training techniques and developed a strong bond with Baker.

Upon returning home, Baker demonstrated a swift readiness to perform his duties. During a community event, the "Trunk or Treat," Baker successfully alerted to a vehicle, leading to a subsequent traffic stop by Officer Hoefs. This stop resulted in the discovery of drugs within the vehicle, leading to several arrests. Throughout the remainder of 2022 and into January 2023, K9 Baker and I participated in training sessions with the Nebraska State Patrol K9 division, culminating in the receipt of our state certification from the Nebraska State Patrol K9 trainer and handler in early 2023.



In 2023, K9 Baker was actively requested to assist various agencies in conducting vehicle and school sniffs. Over the course of the year, K9 Baker participated in 59 deployments, with 47 of them yielding positive indications of narcotics in vehicles, leading to drug discoveries. The remaining 12 deployments did not yield indications of drug odors in the vehicles. K9 Baker played a crucial role in locating various drugs, with methamphetamine and marijuana being the most commonly found substances during traffic stops. Remarkably, K9 Baker completed all mandatory training hours, totaling 209.5 hours for the year, conducted at various locations around town.



TRENDS AND STATISTICS

In the United States, drug use is a major problem. The numbers can vary and be overwhelming at times. However, learning about different drug use statistics helps you gauge the problem's severity. It also allows you to connect better with those affected by substance abuse. The following statistics are from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH):

Illicit Drug Use in the Past Month

- In Nebraska, 11.83% of individuals reported using illicit drugs
- The percentage of people using illicit drugs in Nebraska was lower than the percentage in the United States as a whole.

Marijuana Use in the Past Year

- In Nebraska, 15.01% of people reported using marijuana
- The percentage of people using marijuana is higher in the United States than in Nebraska.

Cocaine Use in the Past Year

- Nebraska had a reported cocaine use rate of 1.5% among adults over 18.
- The percentage of people in Nebraska who used cocaine was lower than the national average for the United States.

Heroin Use in the Past Year

- In Nebraska, 0.31% of individuals reported using Heroin

Methamphetamine Use in the Past Year

- In 2021 in Nebraska, 1.21% reported using methamphetamine

Opioid Misuse in the Past Year

- 2.50% was the percentage of Nebraska's population that reported opioid misuse in the last month.
- 2.11% reported an Opioid Use Disorder in Nebraska.

Drug Use Disorder in the Past Year

- In Nebraska, 8.65% reported a drug use disorder
- 5.93% needed treatment but unable to get it.



Drug Use Statistics for Nebraska Younger than 18

For young people, illicit substance use can have long-term effects on their development and future prospects. Those who experiment with drugs at a young age are more likely to develop substance abuse and health problems.

Illicit Drug Use in the Past Month

- In Nebraska, the illicit drug use for those 12 to 18 was estimated to be 6.26%.
- 6.06% in Nebraska under 18 reported a drug use disorder.

Marijuana Use in the Past Year

- 8.69% of those under 18 used marijuana in Nebraska.

Cocaine Use in the Past Year

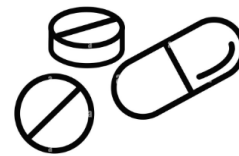
- In Nebraska, 0.09% of those 12-18 reported using Cocaine

Methamphetamine Use in the Past Year

- Meth usage of those under 18 wasn't as high in Nebraska, with 0.25% reporting meth usage.

Opioid Misuse in the Past Year

- 1.84% of those under 18 reported Opioid misuse.
- 0.89% reported opioid use disorder in Nebraska.



FENTANYL CRISIS: Does it affect Valentine?

Nationally, in 2023, the DEA seized more than 78.4 million fentanyl-laced fake pills and nearly 12,000 pounds of fentanyl powder. The 2023 seizures are equivalent to more than 388.8 million lethal doses of fentanyl. 2mg, the amount on the tip of this pencil, can be enough to kill an average American. Fentanyl is in Valentine and the surrounding communities!

Save Lives with Naloxone

Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. It attaches to opioid receptors. It then reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose.

How is Naloxone given?

Naloxone should be given to any person who shows signs of an opioid overdose or when an overdose is suspected. Naloxone can be given as a spray or it can be injected into the muscle, under the skin, or in the veins.

OFFICER JASMINE HOEFS #684 SERVING SINCE DECEMBER 2014

MILO & Anti-Bias/Implicit Bias Instructor,

Child Forensic Interviewer

Let's set the scene:

There I was on December 16th, 2022, in Valentine, Nebraska, amidst a significant snow event. A foot of snow blankets the ground, accompanied by continuous snowfall and strong winds. Fully clad in layers of winter gear, I managed to free my squad car from a drift after getting stuck. About then, dispatch calls, directing me to respond to a medical emergency. Shortly after getting on scene, I found myself facing my own unforeseen health crisis. Let's refer to this incident as my 'Jeremy Renner Accident'. As I was having an emanate feeling of doom, suddenly everything became brilliantly bright – fortunately daylight, not a lit tunnel. In a matter of moments, the on scene crew had me swiftly loaded into an ambulance bound for the hospital. The outcome of this ordeal included multiple fractures in my left arm, torn muscles from shoulder to fingers, a de-gloved arm from elbow to hand, and a split-open head from the left cheekbone to the crown.



Surviving this brush with death seemed improbable, yet here I am, over a year later, sharing my story. The likelihood of losing my arm was significant, but it's still there with minimal loss of function to speak of. Quickly surpassing set milestones, my primary doctor tentatively set a "return to duty" goal one year post-accident. We achieved this almost a month ahead of schedule. While the healing journey persists, the milestones achieved are nothing short of amazing. People often ask how I have come so far referencing overcoming all the obstacles. My usual response involves some sarcastic humor, the truth is, it's a puzzle with many pieces. Without further ado, here are the little nuggets of wisdom I've learned along the way.

The Who (No, not the band)

From those on the scene, my medical team, coworkers, community, friends, and family—everyone in my life went above and beyond to help me not only stay alive and keep my arm but to heal physically, mentally, and emotionally. When I refer to "we," these are the people I'm talking about. Assistance with medical care visits, making meals, pet-sitting, and more, someone stepped up for every need. Even strangers sent cards with healing wishes. My husband stood by me at the hospital while caring for our children so I could have them close. My stepfather and aunt took time off to support my after-hospital care. They assisted in helping with the housework, childcare, driving me to/from appointments, and providing comfort during panic attacks. There's no way to fully acknowledge the positive impact these people had on the entire experience. The people we surround ourselves with play a huge role in our success.

The Mind

Mindset is critical for navigating through challenging times, especially in the beginning. While I won't claim to have aced this test, this experience has profoundly changed my perspective on life. Lying in bed, evaluating the aftermath of my incident, really makes one's mind go into overdrive. There were plenty of uncertainties about my future activities, from playing with my kids to pursuing hobbies. I faced doubts about my role in law enforcement. Worried that I wouldn't be able to return to work, and what my future would be if I couldn't was at the forefront of my mind. One of my biggest learning curves was having to rely on other people. I had always been fiercely independent and it was very humbling to have to ask for help. As with any physical injury, there is a healing process that one must endure. Most incidents involving trauma also have a mental recovery phase to work through. Both the physical and mental healing process has been huge part of my story. I've become an advocate for asking for help with both physical and mental healing from traumatic events. The old saying holds true: "Whether you think you can or you can't, you're probably right." Life isn't fair. Life isn't easy. Life owes us nothing. We can either be a victim to the circumstances or we can thrive in spite and because of them. The choice is entirely ours.



The Funny

While I empathize this was a major event not just for me but for others involved, I would be remiss to not acknowledge the role that humor played in my healing. From singing "Jasmine got ran over by a loader" in the emergency room to my stepdad bringing a "don't tread on me" sticker to the ICU, there was no "too soon" for those in the thick of it. Jokingly calling my arm "Sally" or counting my "9 lives" may raise eyebrows, but humor was part of the healing process. Laughter not only helps the body heal, it helps the mind heal by releasing those happy little hormones. Throughout my recovery, one of my friends would send me jokes and funny anecdotes, referring to them as my "prescription" because laughter is truly the best medicine.

Catastrophic, life-changing events and healing aren't one-size-fits-all; neither is healing. My sincere hope is that no one goes through what I experienced; or anything of the caliber. But should you ever find

yourself in a time in life which is less than sparkly, I can only hope that my hard learned lessons will make it easier for someone else. Most importantly, listen to yourself—mind, body, and soul will guide you to heal and thrive. And when you come out on the other side, the good things in life seem that much better. Enjoy this ride we call life. It's short, but it's worth it.

BOBBI JOHNSON #681s Serving Since April 2018

ADMINISTRATION/EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN

Public Relations (PR) efforts within law enforcement play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions, building trust, and maintaining transparency. In recent years, the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve has been under scrutiny, making effective PR strategies essential for fostering positive connections. Law enforcement agencies face unique challenges in their PR efforts due to the inherent tension between maintaining public safety and respecting individual rights. Negative incidents involving the police can quickly dissipate public trust. Thus, making it critical for agencies to proactively engage in public relations while allowing departments to continue maintaining credibility and fostering important community relationships.



One of the primary goals of law enforcement PR is to create and maintain community engagement relations. Valentine PD is no different. We have invested significant time and resources in creating an image that highlights our commitment to community safety, professionalism, and adherence to ethical standards. This involves department success stories, community outreach programs, and initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to service beyond law enforcement duties.



Building trust is at the core of effective PR for the Valentine Police Department.

Transparency plays a pivotal role in achieving this trust. We have adopted transparent communication strategies by providing timely and accurate information to the public through KVSH, Midland News, and social media. This includes releasing information weekly about call types, type of crimes being committed locally and addressing concerns promptly. Social media platforms also assist in providing information to a broader audience in a timely manner.

Community engagement is another vital aspect of public relations efforts. Establishing positive relationships with the community enhances cooperation and encourages citizens to view the police as allies. Community policing initiatives, school events, and collaboration with local businesses aid in creating bonds between VPD and the public. This proactive approach helps eliminate stereotypes and encourages a sense of shared responsibility for public safety.

In recent years, the role of technology in law enforcement PR has expanded. Social media platforms provide agencies with a direct channel to communicate with the public, share updates, and humanize officers. Unfortunately, the misuse of technology, such as the spread of misinformation, inappropriate use, or political use can also harm the agency's reputation. Valentine Police Department strives to remain neutral on all public platforms. All public engagements must go through an approval channel before posts go live on any social media associated with the department.

In conclusion, the PR efforts of law enforcement are critical for maintaining public trust and positive community relations. Agencies must be able navigate the challenges of balancing public safety, embrace transparency, and actively engage with the communities they serve. While external PR strategies are essential, internal reforms and accountability are equally important for building lasting relationships. As law enforcement continues to evolve to social changes, effective PR will remain a cornerstone in shaping public perception of these departments.

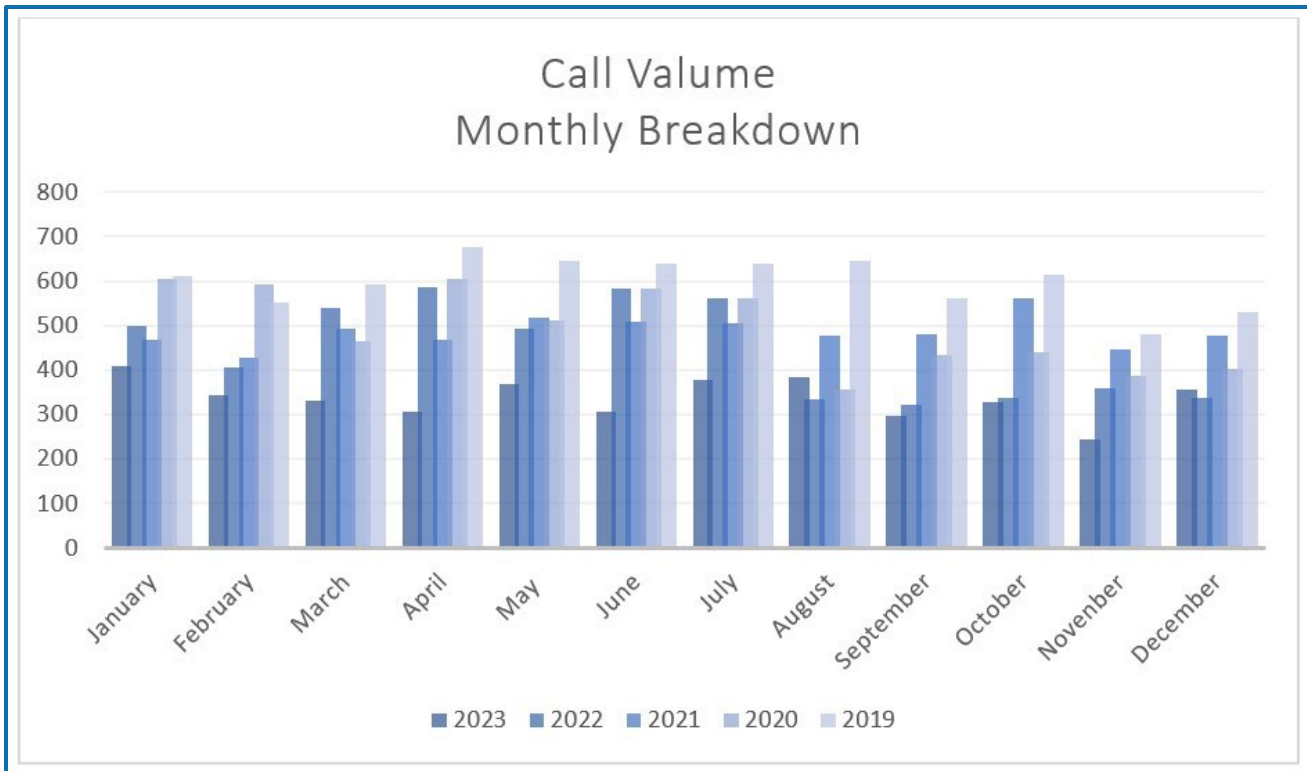


	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Calls for Service	4051	5062	5832	5946	7190
Incidents sent to the County Attorney	365	335	276	231	271
Incident to CA/Call volume Percentage	9%	6.60%	4.70%	3.90%	3.70%
Total number of Arrests	86	93	105	96	116
Total number of Officers	3	4	4.5	5.5	6
Average Arrests per Officer	28	23	23	17	19

Total call for service for 2023 was 4,051. The decline in call over the past 5 years can be directly related to the amount of officers that the department has hired. It is important to note that not every phone call that comes into the office is not logged as a call for service. Calls for service refer to the requests made to police departments by members of the public for assistance with various issues or emergencies. These requests can be made through phone calls, emails, social media, or other forms of communication and are generally responded to by police officers who are dispatched to the location of the call.

Calls for service are a critical part of policing, as they represent the primary way in which police departments engage with the public and provide services to the community. Police officers respond to a wide range of calls for service, including reports of crimes, emergencies, traffic accidents, and non-criminal incidents such as noise complaints or disputes between neighbors.

Call volume increases based on the holidays and seasons. January, May, July, August and December were all busy months for VPD this year. Summer months generally have a high call volume due to the tourism that increases Valentine’s population and the kids being out of school.



In 2023, officers made 86 arrest and issued 295 citations. The State of Nebraska keeps quarterly statistics on all stops made by law enforcement agencies. This allows for periodic reviews to “determine whether any peace officers of the law enforcement agency have a pattern of stopping members of minority groups for violations of vehicle laws in a number disproportionate to the population of minority groups residing or traveling within the jurisdiction...”

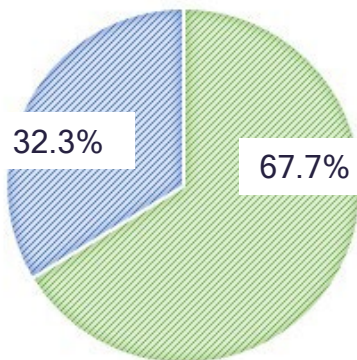
The arrest data pie charts show the type of charges that were sent to the county attorney upon each arrest. The category has been broken down into two categories, NIBERS Group A and NIBERS Group B. NIBERS are reported monthly to the FBI by all law

enforcement agencies. NIBRS provides much greater detail about crimes that are committed, the characteristics of offenders and victims, and the general circumstances of the crime. Group A includes more violent crimes such as arson, assaults, burglary, drug offenses, fraud, gambling, homicides, kidnapping, larceny, sex offences, and theft. Group B offenses include bad checks, curfew violations, disorderly conduct, drunkenness, family offenses (non-violent), liquor laws, runaways, peeping toms, trespass, and all other offenses. As you can see, they type of crimes that VPD handles have been almost identical for the last two years.

<u>Watching for Bias</u>	
Total Arrests- 86	Total Tickets Issued- 295
Female- 25	Female-110
Black- 1	Black- 1
Hispanic- 0	Hispanic- 0
American Indian- 22	American Indian- 49
Pacific Islander- 0	Pacific Islander- 1
White- 2	White- 49
Unknown- 0	Unknown- 10
Male- 61	Male- 185
Black- 4	Black- 6
Hispanic- 2	Hispanic- 5
American Indian-33	American Indian- 82
Pacific Islander- 0	Pacific Islander- 0
White-19	White- 77
Unknown-3	Unknown- 15

ARREST DATA 2023

■ Group A ■ Group B



ARREST DATA 2022

■ Group A ■ Group B

