



# Pilot Analysis of Mental Health Resource Use and Rural Officer Wellbeing in Nebraska



Ashley Bruha, Dr. Trisha Rhodes

School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

## Introduction

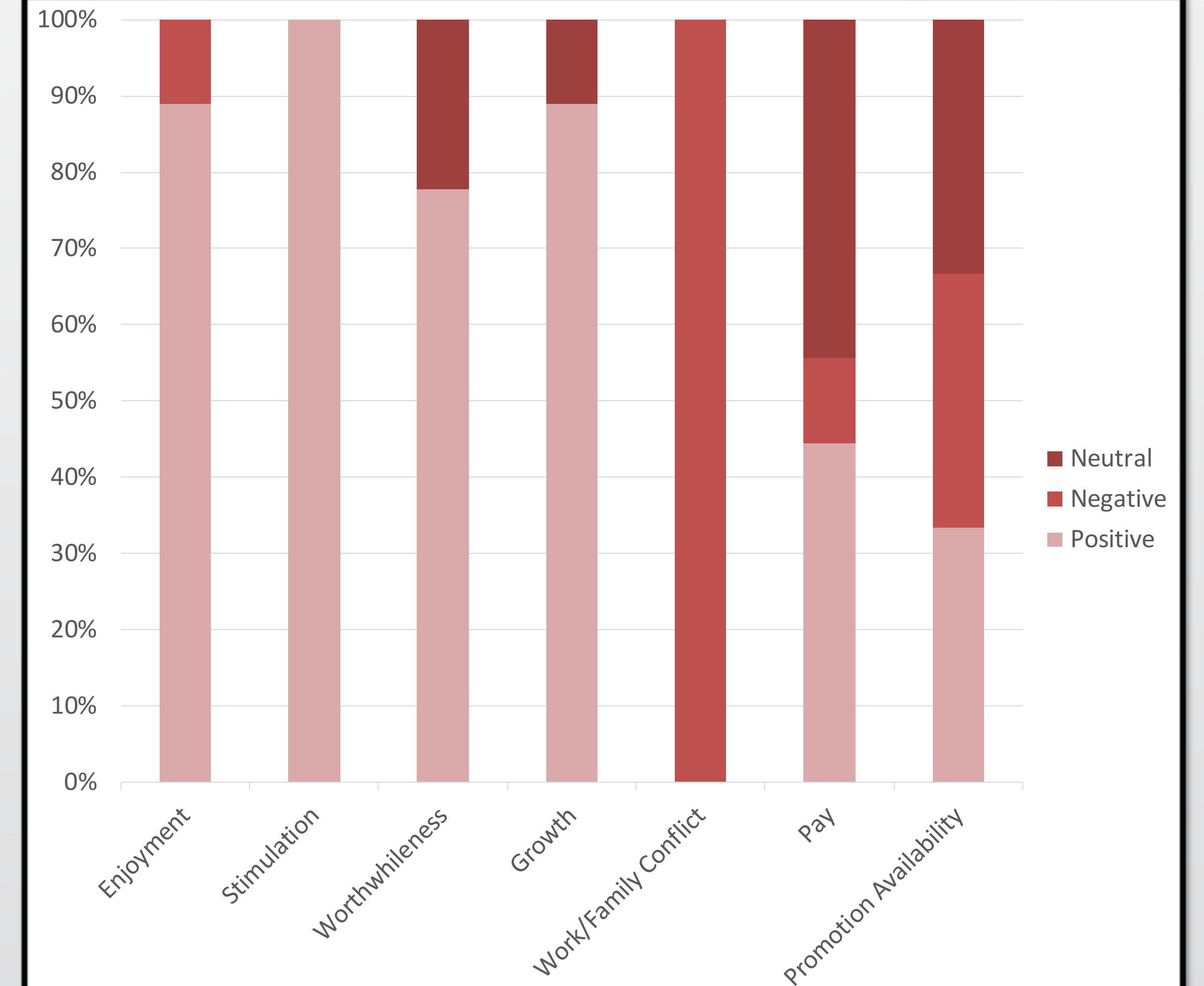
- Police officers have higher rates of burnout and a 54% higher suicide rate as compared to the general population (Violanti et al., 2021)
- Average police suicide rate is 18.10/100,000
  - Yet, the smallest departments (50 or fewer officers) have a suicide rate of 43.78/100,000 (Violanti et al, 2012)
- Rural is defined as any municipality with a population of 5,000 or fewer residents according to the 2020 survey (USDA, 2024)
- Rural agencies hire fewer officers, which translates to small sample sizes and difficulty generalizing findings and causes them to be overlooked in research on police mental health (Johnson & Rhodes, 2008)
- Existing research skews toward urban agencies and is likely unrepresentative of officers' experiences across the United States (Johnson & Rhodes, 2008)
  - Despite gaps in research, many police agencies in the U.S. are rural (Weisheit et al., 2006)
  - Officers with lower wellbeing, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and suicidality are unlikely to meet performance standards or stay in the field

## Results: Overall Wellbeing

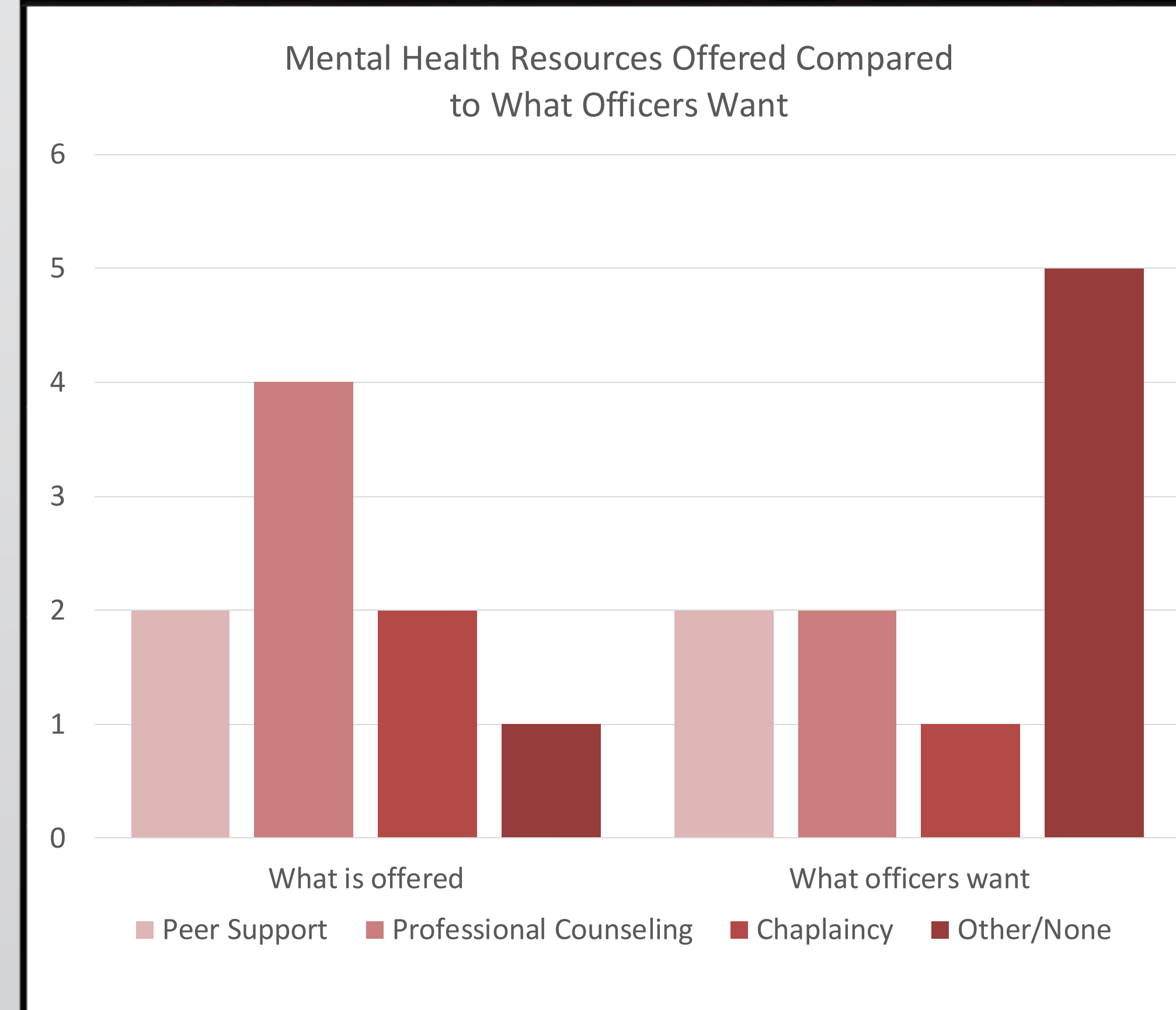
N=9*	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Anxiety	3.11	1.27	2	5
Depression	2.56	0.88	2	4
Trauma	2.00	0	2	2
PTSD	1.33	0.50	1	2
Suicidal Ideation	1.11	0.33	1	2
Sought Help	1.00	0	1	1
Peer Support Use	1.33	0.5	1	2
Physical Health	21.44	4.03	14	27

\*Response rate = 9.4%

## Results: Job Satisfaction



## Results: Resource Access



## Research Questions

1. What is the state of officer wellbeing among rural Nebraska police?
  - Wellbeing includes measures of both mental and physical states
2. What access do rural police officers have to mental health resources?
3. How satisfied are rural police officers with their job?

## Conclusions

- Among respondents, a high percentage of officers encountered traumatic events
  - None sought professional help
  - Despite this, respondents reported few PTSD symptoms and low suicidal ideation
- Rural agencies offered mental health resources, but offerings varied
  - Officers were fairly satisfied with what was offered
- Rural officers had high overall job satisfaction

## Methods

- An online survey was distributed to 21 rural police agencies in Nebraska
  - Four measurement categories
    1. Job Satisfaction and Workplace Culture
    2. Mental Health
    3. Physical Health
    4. Demographics

## Limitations & Future Work

- Limitations:
  - Current study limited to 21 police departments
  - Lack of diverse demographics
  - Low response rate
- Future Directions:
  - 144 total rural departments in Nebraska
  - Expand survey to urban departments to allow for comparisons across agencies of different sizes and locations



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