WADEPS

WASHINGTON STATE DATA EXCHANGE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

Empowering law enforcement, policymakers, researchers, and the public with reliable and actionable information on police interactions and the use of force.
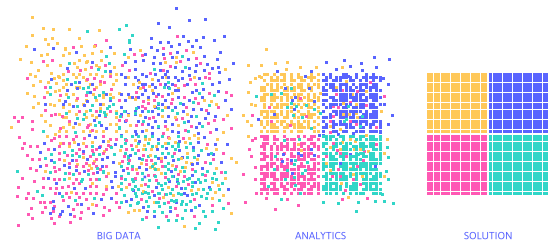
JUNE 2024

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WADEPS

■ Executive Introduction

Currently in development, the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety (WADEPS) is an online platform authorized by the Office of the Attorney General to serve as the central hub for collecting, analyzing, and sharing state-wide law enforcement interaction data with agencies and the public. (Appendix 8)

WADEPS is committed to transparency, serving the public good, and empowering law enforcement agencies, researchers, policymakers, and the public with reliable and actionable information on police interactions and the use of force.

Over the course of our first year of work, significant progress was made in shaping the direction and priorities of the initiative and in the development of innovative tools to help law enforcement agencies meet statewide use-of-force reporting and public accessibility requirements as mandated by SB 5259. (Appendix 9)

BIG DATA   ANALYTICS   SOLUTION

WADEPS has laid a strong foundation for modernizing complex public safety data practices and finding common ground among disparate data policies state-wide.

Highlights of the first year include:

▶ Establishing robust data governance practices, including developing a use-of-force data dictionary and establishing expert advisory groups.

▶ Researching and adding contextual public safety data to provide actionable insights for law enforcement agencies and communities.

▶ Building agency outreach efforts grounded in listening to, and learning from, the diverse experiences of law enforcement executives, supervisors, trainers, and individual officers.

▶ Drafting a secure, cloud-based repository and infrastructure.

▶ Working toward automation with public safety software vendors to reduce the operational burden on agencies.

▶ Hosting public engagement opportunities to hear from community partners and civic organizations.

▶ Finalizing contract with world-class technology vendor AWS.

▶ Designing public-facing educational materials to enable data discovery and expand statistical literacy for all Washingtonians.

▶ Training for all personnel in mindfulness-based anti-racism (MBAR) concepts.

▶ Completing required project deliverables within the specified performance period.

Also significant among our achievements this year is the strength of our partnerships. We are proud to be working alongside law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders from across the state to build trust, foster collaboration, and drive innovation in public safety data practices.

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety

■ Legislative Mandate

Senate Bill 5259, signed by the governor in 2021 and codified as RCW 10.118, is the primary legislative authority governing the collection and public disclosure of use-of-force data from law enforcement agencies in the state of Washington.

Key provisions

▶ Data Collection: agencies are required to collect and report use-of-force data, including the location of incidents where an officer used force. (Appendix 1)

▶ Agency Reporting: agencies must report use-of-force data to the AGO-approved data management platform monthly.

▶ Data Validation: the approved data management platform operator must provide data validation to ensure accuracy and completeness.

▶ Public Disclosure: the approved data management operator must make collected data publicly available in a user-friendly online format to enable citizens to access and analyze the information.

Per the legislation, an RFP was issued by the Office of the Attorney General (AGO) in November 2022 to "contract with an institution of higher education to implement the statewide use of force data program." A proposal led by Washington State University in partnership with Seattle University was accepted and the contract was signed on August 15, 2023

AGO Oversight

Prior to the start of the contract, the AGO convened a use-of-force advisory board to provide guidance in establishing the data collection and reporting process. Comprised of representatives from law enforcement, community organizations, criminal justice researchers, and advocacy groups, the board reviewed and provided feedback on a standardized electronic reporting form and the data validation process.

The board also established the data elements governed by the use-of-force legislation and outlined best-practices for data collection and public accessibility. (Appendix 2A)

The advisory board's recommendations balance transparency and accountability while taking into account the potential impact on law enforcement agencies' operations and relationships with their communities.

Considering opportunities
One of our first-quarter milestones was to review the data elements the AGO advisory board identified for potential enhancements. Working with the WADEPS data governance group (see page 5), we incorporated input from agency and community focus groups and lessons learned from similar data systems across the country to develop an enhanced set of use-of-force data elements which maintained alignment with the advisory board recommendations. (Appendix 2B and 2C)

Per the contract, the enhanced version was submitted to the AGO for review. The AGO determined the RCW authorization to enhance the system is unclear. While it is unlikely the legislature expected data collection to remain static based on the knowledge and practices of 2021, WADEPS will not change the data elements without legislative authorization. (Appendix 3)

WADEPS will implement the original advisory board-recommended data elements (including minor AGO-approved administrative changes), ensuring compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

As the policing discipline evolves and data analytics tools advance, WADEPS will look for opportunities to enhance the use-of-force data platform.

Primary Components

Data Governance

In the modern digital landscape, maintaining perspective and agility is critical. The WADEPS Data Governance Committee (DGC) includes regional and national experts in data analytics, criminal justice operations and research, public policy, and law. Their charge is to advocate for the data—its accuracy, integrity, efficiency, expandability, completeness, useability, accessibility, accountability, and security. (Appendix 4)

The DGC is comprised of two divisions: a subject-matter expert (SME) group and a combined community and law enforcement group. Both groups meet biannually and members are kept up-to-date on WADEPS progress, challenges, and milestones as needed.

To date, the DGC role has necessarily been limited to development and refinement of the WADEPS data dictionary, however, as the project moves into active data collection, the committee's focus will pivot toward data presentation, interpretation, and quality concerns.

The group's initial charge was threefold:

- ▶ Provide feedback on the data elements set by the AGO advisory board;
- ▶ Identify contextual data that will add valuable understanding to the basic use-of-force data— for example, computer-aided dispatch information from 911 calls and data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System; and
- ▶ Facilitate the production of a draft data dictionary (an explanation of each data element and its parameters).

Data discussions

The group considered many questions gathered from law enforcement focus groups (see page 10) regarding the types of data that will be collected along with many suggestions for important data elements such as officer attempts to de-escalate.

The SME group also discussed the idea of a standardization period for the data dictionary and how to balance the need to make changes over time against the burden on agencies and officers. The group is working on a policy for managing proposed enhancements to the data collection and rules governing the approval or denial of requests.

Results

The group affirmed most of the data elements recommended by the AGO advisory board and identified a few for possible modification or enhancement. Two such areas included data related to subject and/or officer injuries and subject actions.

Group members support future enhancements and legislation that would add data associated with assaults on officers, prosecutorial decision-making, and use-of-force incidents in correctional settings to the WADEPS data collection.

A draft data dictionary incorporating input from the SME group was completed in December 2023. Refinement continued in early 2024, and the completed data dictionary was transmitted to the AGO in early April 2024. (Appendix 2A)

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety

Data Collection

Our research-based approach has been approved by the Washington State University (WSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) and meets stringent standards for maintaining privacy within collected data.

Process

Incident data can be entered into the WADEPS data cloud manually using WADEPS forms, via the WADEPS smartphone app, and/or automatically through a vendor-managed solution. The goal is to automate as much of the data collection process as possible to minimize duplication of agency processes already in place.

Per RCW 10.118 and the program requirements:

▶ Officers must report the use of force using their agency protocols within 24 hours of the incident.
▶ Agencies must upload all use-of-force incident data to WADEPS monthly.
▶ WADEPS must conduct data verification and make new data available monthly.

A secure, cloud-based data lake serves as the foundation for the dashboard. This centralized repository is the storehouse for all raw, unprocessed data from all sources. Using a single source for all of the public safety data enables streamlined access for dashboard visualization and analysis.

Protocols and Privacy

In 2023, WADEPS specifically addressed concerns around privacy and data transparency and how to balance the need for accessible public safety data with the importance of protecting the individual privacy of both community members and officers.

Our research-based protocols, approved by the WSU IRB, maintain confidentiality of personally identifiable information when incident data is displayed on the public dashboards or included in data downloads: officer names, badge numbers, and criminal justice training numbers, and the unique identifier for the incident are anonymized and the physical address of the incident is hidden.
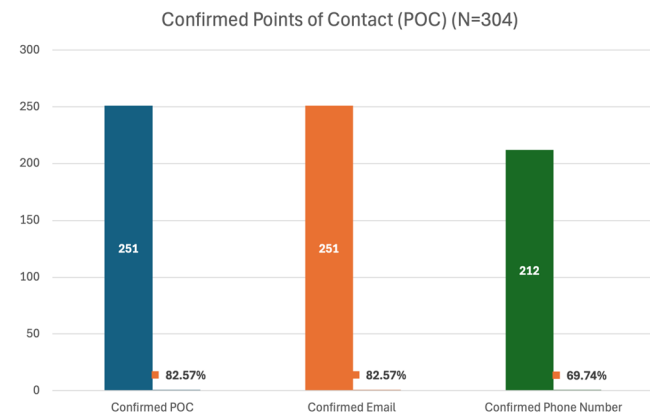
A public records request for original (raw) data initiated a legal and administrative process review of the Public Records Act for guidance on mitigating the inherent conflict and potential litigation concerns.

Although the review process created an unexpected delay, it was a critical and necessary step. Our commitment to privacy is instrumental in building trust among law enforcement agencies and the public.

Technology Inventory

A noteworthy initial obstacle in developing the data collection process was the lack of a comprehensive inventory of the technologies and infrastructures used by law enforcement agencies in Washington state. Without a thorough understanding of the resources used by agencies to ingest data, WADEPS would not be able to create an efficient and useful state-wide platform.

The WADEPS Technology Inventory Survey was distributed to verified points of contact within police agencies to ascertain their technological status, the number of personnel, and agency training preferences. (Appendix 5)

Confirmed Points of Contact (POC) (N=304)

	Confirmed POC	Confirmed Email	Confirmed Phone Number
Value	251	251	212
Percent	82.57%	82.57%	69.74%

General trends in the returned survey data indicate a large amount of vendor diversity across several categories and that agencies often utilized the same vendor for many years.

Automation

Automation plays an essential role in any modern dynamic data system. Not only does it simplify overall management by automating the ingestion, processing, and integration of data, it also:

- ▶ Reduces manual errors
- ▶ Increases data accuracy
- ▶ Improves speed and efficiency of analysis
- ▶ All of which enhances decision-making capabilities for law enforcement agencies, policy makers, and community stakeholders.

Law enforcement agencies will be able to submit use-of-force data manually to WADEPS should they choose to do so. However, automating as much of the data collection process as possible will greatly reduce the burden on officers and administrators, and add value and timely access for online users of the WADEPS platform.

Collaboration is Key

Most Washington law enforcement agencies use a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system that collects data and distributes information from and about calls for service (i.e., 9-1-1 calls).

In collaboration with multiple software vendors, WADEPS is developing methods for selecting required use-of-force data elements included in CAD data and automatically transmitting that data to the WADEPS cloud-based data warehouse environment.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD)

Software to triage emergency calls, allocate resources, and track incidents in real time.

WADEPS is working closely with law enforcement agencies and vendors to develop and implement robust data quality control measures, including data validation, normalization, and standardization processes to ensure accuracy and data integrity. Additionally, we are creating a comprehensive data governance framework that outlines roles, responsibilities, and policies for managing and maintaining the accuracy and integrity of data exchanged through WADEPS.

The ability to automate the process ensures WADEPS is aligned with industry best practices and standards and provides an equitable resource for policing organizations to reduce the burden of manual processes, regardless of their size.

SPILLMANAXON
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES
SMARTFORCE
IAPRO/BLUETEAM

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety

Data Automation Review Group

WADEPS is working with the state's largest law enforcement agencies, all of which have well-established, high-functioning automated data collection systems in place, to identify opportunities for process improvement, develop and implement efficient workflows for system updates, and ensure the system is safe and secure.

Configuring and securing the data exchange between agencies, their vendor-managed solutions, and WADEPS will require resources, most notably around personnel time.

Working with the automation group and their vendors, the goal is to develop turnkey solutions that can be used with other agencies using the same vendor-provided solutions therefore effectively managing costs while maintaining the quality and reliability of the data exchanged through WADEPS.

Open-source infrastructure

The WADEPS data platform is being designed using an open-source infrastructure that provides a secure foundation for storing and processing data from each vendor-managed solution and helps integrate automation between vendors and the WADEPS platform.

This private-public partnership approach fosters a collaborative environment where all parties can share knowledge, expertise, and resources to drive innovation and improve the secure exchange of public safety data.

Open source

Software computer programs and systems created using standards and protocols that enhance interoperability among different systems and applications.

Data Contextualization

A key feature of the WADEPS dashboard will be its contextual analysis capability.

By collecting, analyzing, and coding agency policies (e.g., use-of-force), public-facing information, and agency and community characteristics, WADEPS can go beyond the concept of comparing "apples to apples" and identify nuances between agencies—similar to comparing red delicious apples to granny smith apples, or macintosh to cosmic crisp.
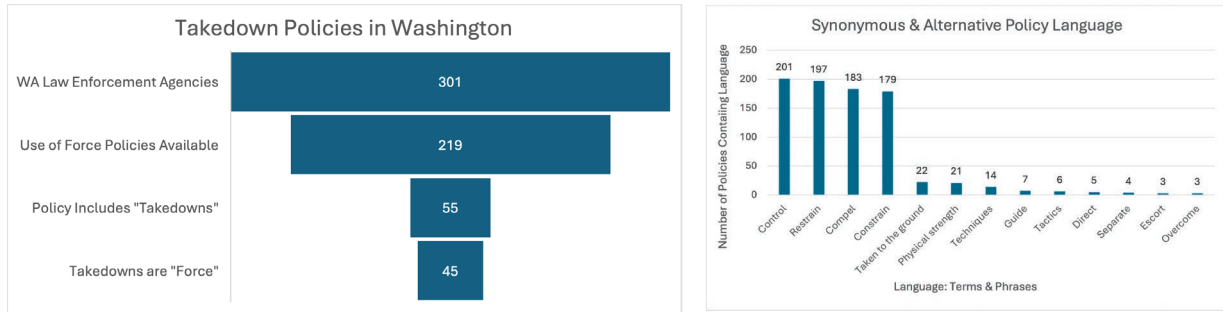
Examples of contextual data:

- ▶ The frequency and duration of police interactions
- ▶ Published annual reports
- ▶ Published use-of-force data
- ▶ Number of sworn officers
- ▶ Number of professional staff

- ▶ Employment capacity
- ▶ Employment demographics
- ▶ Use of body-worn cameras
- ▶ Use of specialized officers/units
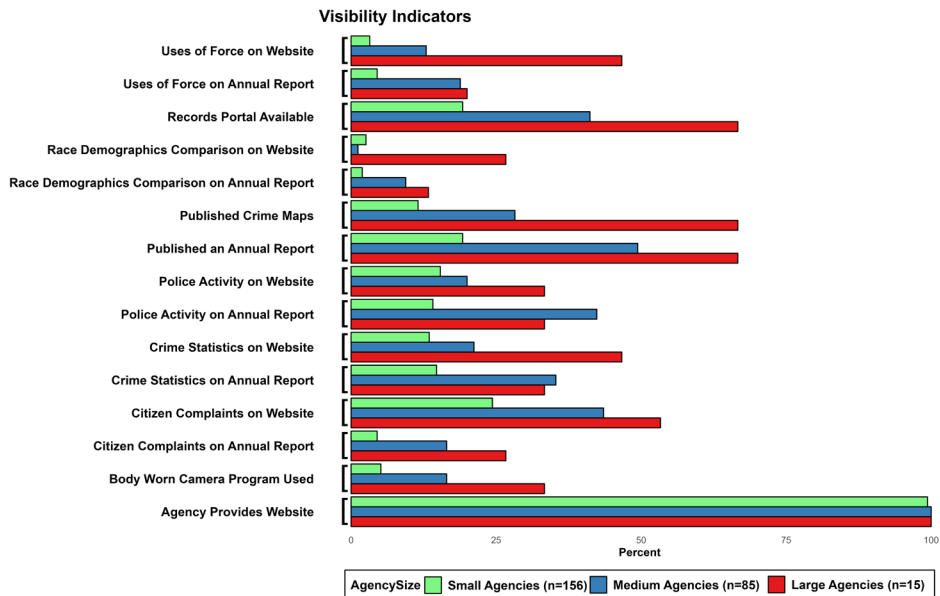- ▶ Record storage and access

Takedowns

An example of how contextualization adds value to the WADEPS platform is our ad hoc review of how Washington law enforcement agencies view, define, and authorize the use of tactics intended to take an uncooperative person to the ground. Again, beyond comparing "apples to apples," coding the language of a policy enables us to correlate the influence of subtle differences with incident data.

Takedown Policies in Washington

WA Law Enforcement Agencies	301
Use of Force Policies Available	219
Policy Includes "Takedowns"	55
Takedowns are "Force"	45

Synonymous & Alternative Policy Language

Number of Policies Containing Language

Language: Terms & Phrases	Value
Control	201
Restrain	197
Compel	183
Constrain	179
Taken to the ground	22
Physical strength	21
Techniques	14
Guide	7
Tactics	6
Direct	5
Separate	4
Escort	3
Overcome	3

Agency Visibility Index

A unique feature being developed for the WADEPS platform is the Agency Visibility Index (AVI). The index will provide added context for the data dashboard as well as a benchmark for the amount and type of public-facing information offered by individual agencies.

In addition to the technology survey and a review of agency websites, a separate survey tool was used to gather data from agencies about various types of published reports, including crime statistics, traffic stops, vehicle pursuits and collisions, citizen complaints, demographic comparisons, and recruitment data. (Appendix 6)

Visibility Indicators

Uses of Force on Website
Uses of Force on Annual Report
Records Portal Available
Race Demographics Comparison on Website
Race Demographics Comparison on Annual Report
Published Crime Maps
Published an Annual Report
Police Activity on Website
Police Activity on Annual Report
Crime Statistics on Website
Crime Statistics on Annual Report
Citizen Complaints on Website
Citizen Complaints on Annual Report
Body Worn Camera Program Used
Agency Provides Website

Percent

AgencySize — Small Agencies (n=156) — Medium Agencies (n=85) — Large Agencies (n=15)

Dashboards

As each component and building block progresses, its connection to the public-facing WADEPS dashboard has remained top of mind.

WADEPS has secured world-class technology partner Amazon Web Services (AWS) to build our intelligent and integrative data dashboard environment. Project design discussions are underway and production work will begin in earnest in early FY25.

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety

Engaging with Stakeholders

Listening and learning from stakeholders are two core tenants for the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety program.

Focus groups, presentations, surveys, and one-on-one meetings with a wide range of stakeholders have revealed valuable insights and contributed to program refinements that will better serve our stakeholders' public safety data needs. (Appendix 7)

For instance:

▶ Law enforcement executives highlighted the importance of providing actionable insights and tools to support evidence-based decision-making for operations.

▶ Community organizations emphasized usability and the need for clear and concise reporting on crime trends and patterns.

Law Enforcement

Our guiding philosophy is to be multiplicative, not duplicative, of agency policies and practices. In order to do so, pursuing multiple avenues of engagement is necessary.

Similar to the lack of a comprehensive technology inventory, there does not appear to be a state-wide resource for law enforcement agency contact information. To date, WADEPS has confirmed points of contact for 82% of 302 known law enforcement agencies operating within Washington state. This cohort includes local, state, and tribal police agencies, airport and university police agencies, sheriffs' departments, as well as multiple state agencies with general law enforcement authority, such as the Department of Natural Resources. (Appendix 5)

Outreach
Beyond focus groups and surveys, we have begun working with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) to distribute information and updates about the RCW legislation, the WADEPS platform, and progress toward implementation.

Training for Agencies and Officers

WADEPS is committed to providing professional-standard online training materials for line officers and agency administrators.
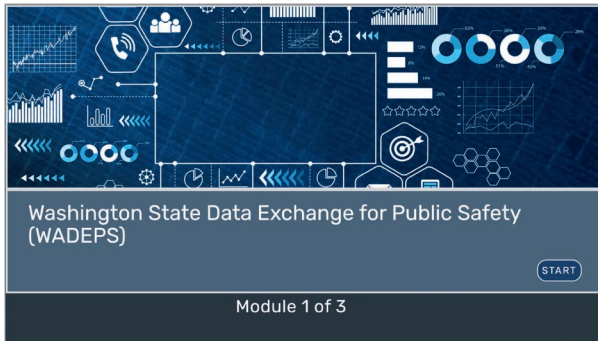
With guidance from experts at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) and ACADIS, an industry leader in public safety training software, WADEPS is building a comprehensive training program for law enforcement personnel using curricular and educational best practices.

Module 1: Legislative Requirements

Module 2: WADEPS Data Collection

Module 3: WADEPS Data Entry

All three interactive modules will employ scenario-based, real-world situations to complement the text-based information, interactive slides to keep trainees actively engaged, knowledge checks to ensure information is being retained, and anonymous surveys to enable training participants to provide immediate feedback.

Modules 1 and 2A are currently being tested and refined by WADEPS staff. Module 3 will be built out when the WADEPS system is available for simulation.

Beta Testing
Preparation has begun for beta testing of the training modules. This summer, more than two dozen individuals across 14 agencies will review documentation and complete the training modules. WADEPS will use their input to identify areas for improvement, opportunities to tailor the curriculum to agency practices, and gather feedback on how best to present complex data in a clear and actionable way.

Their knowledge of and first-hand experience with use-of-force data will help improve WADEPS formatting and functionality.

Washington Citizens
Community focus groups held during the development stage have provided valuable feedback on citizen expectations, police protocols, and, repeatedly, the WADEPS platform's importance in creating trust and transparency.

> **"Any time we can bring community together with police is important."**
>
> —*Community participant*

A sentiment shared by several participants expressed how vital the dashboard will be for rebuilding trust between police agencies and communities, particularly those that are disenfranchised. The concept was described as an essential step to "pulling people back in the community" and "breaking down barriers."

Research and Graduate Education
The WADEPS program is an innovative, collaborative endeavor managed by Washington State University, a highly productive R-1 institution with a strong legacy of excellence and leadership in the field of criminal justice and a commitment to educating the leaders of the future.

Through mentored roles within the WADEPS team, eight graduate students in applied statistics and criminal justice and criminology are currently contributing to the program's success and gaining valuable hands-on experience. Additional opportunities, including undergraduate internships in multiple disciplines, are planned for FY25 and beyond.

In the future, the data collected and the analyses enabled by the WADEPS dashboard will support a wide range of research projects and the creation of new knowledge and understanding.

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety

■ Education for All

Access to the WADEPS dashboard, data definitions, statistical training, FAQs, and other resources will be through a unique, dedicated website. The URL "wadeps.org" has been secured for that purpose and initial discussions are underway with an external web developer.

The current website at hub.wsu.edu/wadeps provides high-level information about the project, key personnel, the data dictionary, focus group opportunities, reports, etc.

Stats are for everyone
Another advantage Washington State University brings to the WADEPS program is a unique educational resource known as CISER: the Center for Interdisciplinary Statistical Education and Research. Staffed by faculty experts in applied statistics, CISER specializes in the design of data-collection protocols and the statistical analysis of data resulting from research studies.

In addition to providing statistical education and customized analytical services once the WADEPS dashboard is live, CISER experts are currently developing text- and video-based tutorials that will be available on the WADEPS website for all users—individual citizens, law enforcement agencies, legislators, and researchers alike.

Equipping stakeholders with mathematical understanding and actionable tools will enhance everyone's understanding of police-related data and enable anyone to derive meaningful insights:

▶ Understand the significance of numbers in the data

▶ Learn how to use trends and measured outcomes

▶ Compare agency performance across time

▶ Compare and contrast agencies using contextualized data

▶ Build trust through transparency

In accordance with the WADEPS commitment to collaboration, any new statistical methods will be provided as open-source code for public use.

■ ■ ■

Public Records Requests

WADEPS is committed to maintaining a culture of transparency and accountability, and the public records request process is an integral part of that commitment. As of June 20, 2024, Washington State University has received an unprecedented 89 requests regarding the WADEPS project and associated WSU employees and processes.

The scope of these requests ranges from simple inquiries about specific data or communications between two people to highly detailed requests associated with the entirety of the WADEPS project and personnel. The results range from zero responsive records, as in the case of seeking access to invoices paid to emergency dispatch centers, to multiple requests for all program materials and communications that each encompass thousands of pages.

Examples of the requests include:

▶ All documents related to the WSU/SU proposal development at both the Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposals (RFP) stage.

▶ The source code, algorithmic descriptions, database schema designs, and data modeling documentation of WADEPS.

▶ Unredacted data associated with WADEPS law enforcement agency surveys, the technology inventory survey results, and all primary data collection efforts.

▶ Original and unredacted policing CAD data and use-of-force data containing personally identifiable information.

▶ Communications related to previous public records requests.

▶ Multiple requests for all documents, notes, reports, communications, emails, text messages, voice messages, calendars, agendas, meeting schedules, meeting invitations, databases, spreadsheets, surveys, financial records, budgets, invoices, and all other records associated with day-to-day work on the WADEPS project.

A complete list may be requested from the WSU Public Records Office.

WADEPS

■ Summary

Positive Impact for Washington

Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety (WADEPS) is committed to making public safety data accessible and meaningful through a research-based, holistic approach to data collection, analysis, and visualization.

We are poised to take the next steps toward realizing the full potential of WADEPS by starting data collection, transforming various disparate systems into an accessible and usable database, and sharing the results with the citizens of Washington.

We will continue to listen to the diverse voices of our stakeholders to refine our approach and drive innovation.

By making public safety data discoverable, accessible, and usable, we empower communities and officers alike to make informed decisions that drive positive change in Washington.

Trust

Transparency

Evidence-based policing

If you have questions or would like additional details, please email us at wa.deps@wsu.edu.

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■ Appendices

1. Required use-of-force data points (simplified)

2. A: Original data dictionary

   B: Proposed enhanced data dictionary

   C: Crosswalk identifying differences

3. RCW 10.118.30 (see sections 3 and 4)

4. Data governance committee

5. Agency points of contact

6. Data Brief for Agency Visibility Index

7. Focus groups and presentations

8. AG Press Release: Bill to create a statewide database of police use-of-force incidents passes Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support.

9. E2SSB 5259

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