



# CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT 2024 TRAFFIC STOPS DATA REPORT

APRIL 2025



## INTRODUCTION

Since at least 2015, the Chicago Police Department (CPD or the Department) has employed a strategy of making large numbers of traffic stops for minor traffic offenses as pretexts to initiate contact with drivers and fish for evidence of criminal activity.<sup>1</sup> Because there are hundreds of small ways a driver can violate the traffic code, police officers have countless opportunities to stop almost any driver for a traffic offense. Data shows that police routinely use this discretion to target drivers or communities of color as Black and Latine drivers are often disproportionately stopped, searched, and arrested. Further, the strategy takes time away from addressing more pressing public safety needs like 911 calls or dangerous driving behavior.<sup>2</sup>

In Chicago, Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition have raised alarms about this wasteful and discriminatory practice in part by publishing yearly reports analyzing CPD's traffic stop data.<sup>3</sup> Year after year, data and testimony have shown that this strategy focused on pretextual traffic stops is not an effective way to keep our roads or our communities safe. Instead, it contributes to overpolicing of Black and Latine communities and drivers and wastes valuable public safety resources. Last year, Chicago resident Dexter Reed was tragically killed during a traffic stop that was allegedly made for a seatbelt violation.<sup>4</sup> The fallout from what many considered a textbook pretextual traffic stop only added to the already heightened urgency around addressing this practice.

This data report updates our previous analyses with newly obtained 2024 traffic stop data. It finds that while last year saw important changes in traffic stops in Chicago, CPD's reliance on pretextual stops continues.<sup>5</sup>

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Our analysis shows that while CPD's traffic stop numbers decreased citywide in 2024, CPD continued the same strategy that focuses on minor stops and disproportionately targets Black and Latine drivers. The 2024 results show:

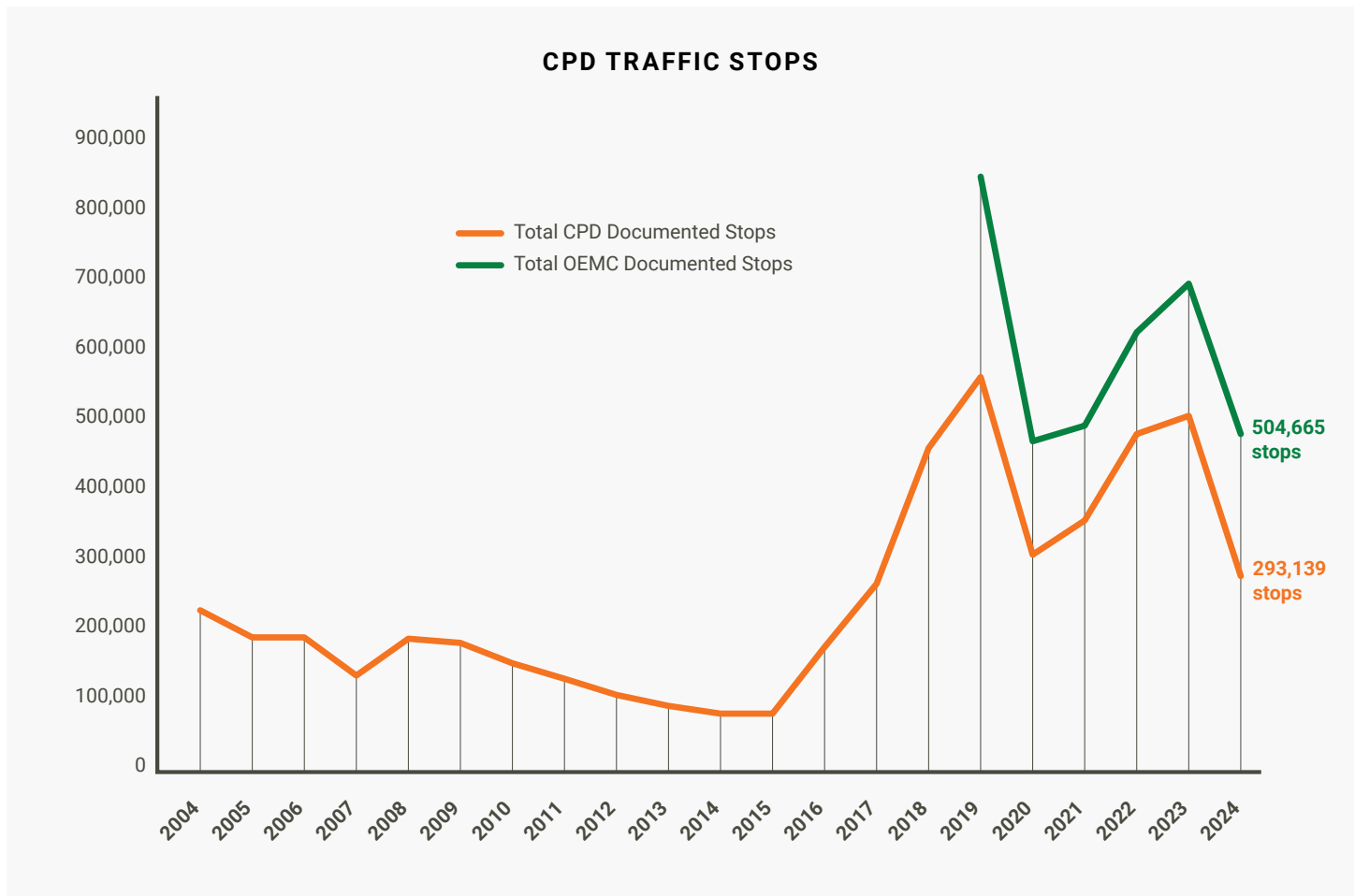
- Citywide CPD's traffic stop numbers decreased, but tens of thousands of traffic stops are unaccounted for in CPD's traffic stops data.
- Despite the decrease, CPD still continues to focus its strategy on minor offenses like registration or light violations, which typically do not present road safety risks.
- Black and Latine drivers are disproportionately stopped, and their neighborhoods have some of the highest concentrations of stops in the city.
- Only a small percentage of stops resulted in citation, arrest, or recovery of guns or drugs.

These findings show that while mounting public pressure may have contributed to a decrease last year, more action is needed to truly address the harm and waste of CPD's pretextual stops practice.

## CPD TRAFFIC STOPS DECREASED IN 2024

According to CPD's internal traffic stop data, traffic stop numbers declined by 45% last year, from 537,313 stops in 2023 to 293,139 in 2024.

While this level is the lowest the city has seen since 2017, on average CPD still made over 800 traffic stops each day last year. This number is still higher than any recorded year prior to 2017, leaving ample room to continue the downward trend.



## DESPITE THE DECREASE, AT LEAST 169,000 STOPS REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR

While the decrease in traffic stops is promising, the degree of that promise hinges on whether CPD's reported traffic stop numbers are accurate. Increased scrutiny over CPD's traffic stops in recent years has revealed<sup>6</sup> undercounts of stops, searches, and contraband recoveries in CPD's internal data systems and the Department's submissions to the annual Illinois Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study (ITPSS).<sup>7</sup>

To understand whether CPD's 2024 traffic stop data is similarly inconsistent, we cross-referenced it with Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) traffic stop records.<sup>8</sup> Officers are required to radio in every traffic stop to OEMC, and OEMC then keeps a record of each traffic stop in its own dataset separate from CPD's internal data.

**OEMC's 2024 data showed 504,665 unique traffic stop events—211,526 more stops than CPD's data.** Recent years have seen similarly sized gaps between CPD and OEMC reported traffic stops, with discrepancies ranging from around 150,000-300,000 each year since 2019.

A small part of the discrepancy might be explained by how OEMC defines traffic stops. OEMC appears to record all stops involving a vehicle as “traffic stops”—including both investigatory vehicle stops, made for a criminal violation, and traffic stops, made for a traffic violation. Investigatory vehicle stops would not necessarily be recorded in CPD's internal traffic stop dataset, because the basis is a suspected criminal violation, not a traffic violation. But in 2024, CPD only reported 42,320 investigatory stops involving a vehicle.<sup>9</sup> **Thus, even if every investigatory vehicle stop is represented in the OEMC data and excluded from the CPD traffic stops data, there were still 169,206 traffic stops unaccounted for in CPD data.**

A yearly discrepancy of 150,000–300,000 between traffic stops recorded by OEMC and traffic stops reported by CPD is concerning. It raises serious doubts about CPD's ability to competently and accurately report on its own activity and about CPD leadership's ability to manage officer and police district data collection and reporting. Without a full view into CPD's traffic stops practices, the public is left wondering what occurs during unrecorded stops and whether CPD's claims about internal traffic stop reforms are credible.

However, even with the potential discrepancy, traffic stops do appear to have decreased from 2023 to 2024. The 504,665 OEMC stops from 2024 would still be a slight decrease from the 537,313 that CPD's internal data showed in 2023 and a significant decrease from the 734,361 that OEMC recorded in 2023.

### Mounting Community Pressure to Address Traffic Stops

From 2023-2024, Chicago saw growing concern over CPD's traffic stops from stakeholders across the city. The Free2Move Coalition focused advocacy for traffic stops policy change toward the Community Commission for Public Safety & Accountability (CCPSA) and gathered over 2,400 signatures demanding a CCPSA hearing on the issue.<sup>10</sup> The CCPSA announced traffic stops as a priority for oversight and reform,<sup>11</sup> and CCPSA District Councilors, elected to advocate for the public safety needs of their police district constituents, called on the CCPSA to take steps to address the practice. In 2023, the CCPSA also nominated Larry Snelling as CPD Superintendent, a candidate who indicated disagreement with prior CPD administrations' heavy focus on pretextual stops. The Free2Move Coalition also brought the issue to Chicago City Council, leading a hearing on CPD's traffic stops practice with the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee.<sup>12</sup> In 2023 the ACLU of Illinois also initiated a lawsuit against CPD for their discriminatory traffic stops practices,<sup>13</sup> and after Dexter Reed was killed in a pretextual traffic stop in March 2024, the Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul added pressure on CPD to change.<sup>14</sup> Finally, media continued to draw attention to the serious issues with CPD's practices.<sup>15</sup> Viewed together, these factors generated a clear mandate for CPD to change its traffic stops practice.



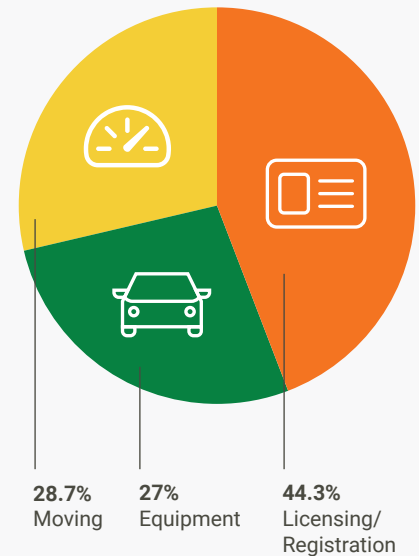
## CPD TRAFFIC STOPS CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENSES

CPD's traffic stops in 2024 focused predominantly on licensing and registration offenses, including violations like expired registration plates or tags. **In 2024, licensing and registration stops comprised 44.3% of traffic stops citywide, nearly identical to 2023.**

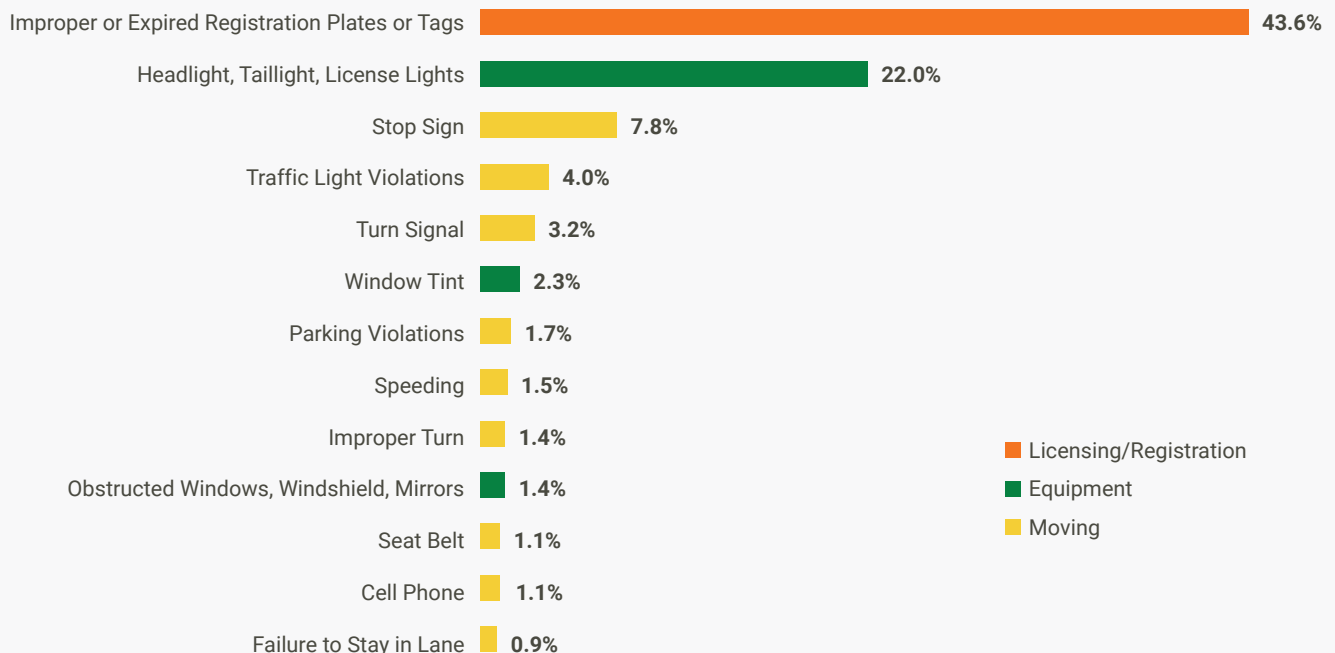
Moving and equipment offenses comprised roughly equal shares of the remainder of stops, with each being just over a quarter of all traffic stops. If CPD was truly committed to shifting away from pretextual stops and toward traffic safety dangers, we would expect moving offenses—the types of violations most likely to be more dangerous driving behavior—to make up a greater share of the Department's stops.<sup>16</sup> That is not what this data shows.

When looking at the specific offenses that led to a stop, **just two categories comprised over 65% of all stops—improper or expired registration plates or tag stops and stops for headlight, taillight, and license plate light offenses.** With only a 2% decrease since 2023, this figure is largely unchanged and still represents nearly two-thirds of all stops. These offenses generally do not present serious road safety dangers in need of immediate law enforcement response. **Speeding, which can be dangerous driving behavior, constituted just 1.5% of all stops; while low, it is an increase from the 0.7% speeding stops in 2023.**

2024 TRAFFIC STOP TYPES



SUBSET OF 2024 TRAFFIC STOP OFFENSES



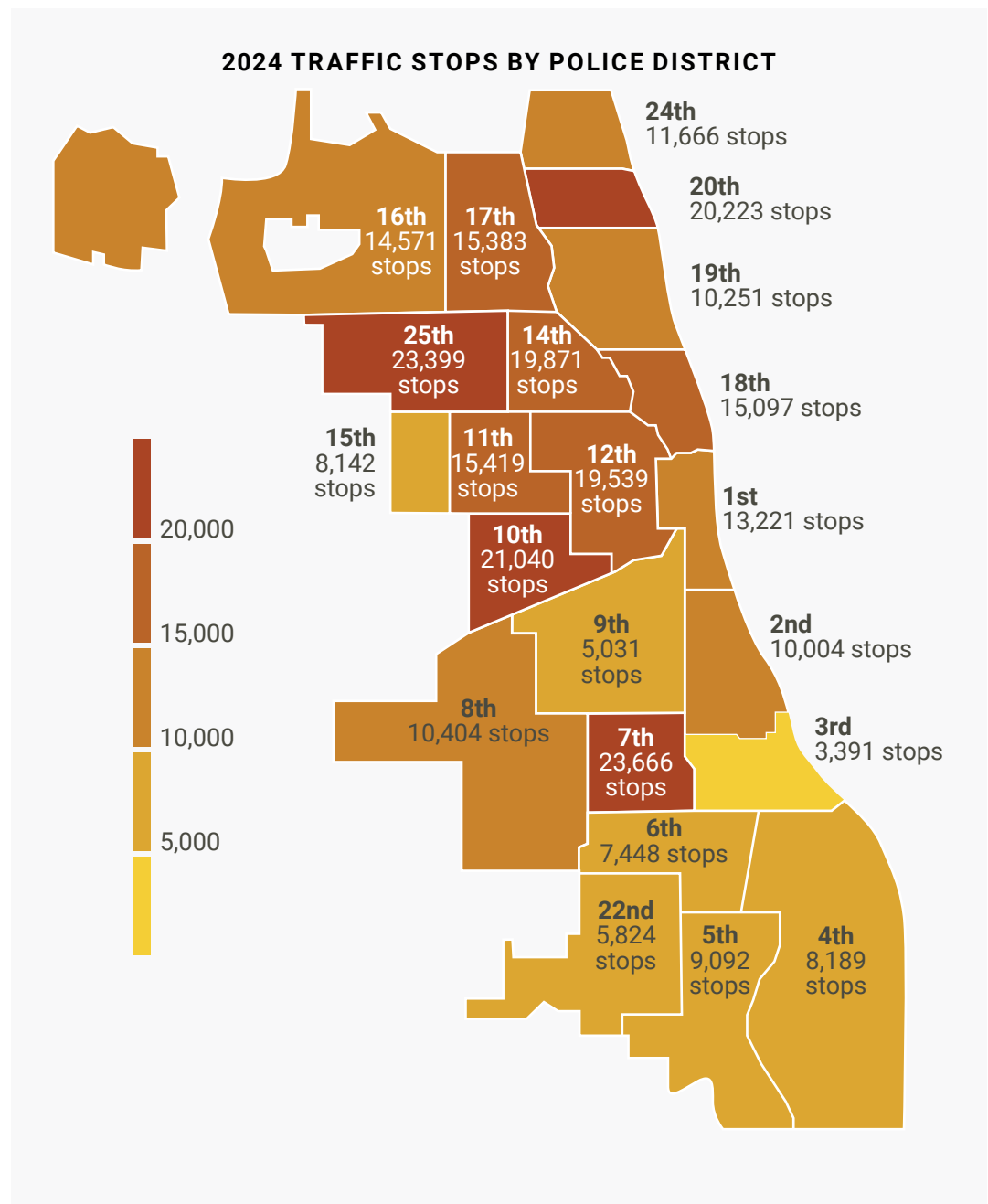
## TRAFFIC STOPS CONTINUE TO BE CONCENTRATED IN BLACK AND LATINE COMMUNITIES

As traffic stops decreased citywide, they also dispersed across districts. In 2023, 20% of CPD's traffic stops were concentrated in West Side Districts 10 and 11. In 2024, stop concentrations continued in District 10 but dispersed into other districts on the West and South sides.

District 7, home to Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, had the highest number of traffic stops citywide with 23,666 stops. District 7 is the least populated police district in Chicago, with less than 2% of the city's residents living there,<sup>17</sup> and yet it has the highest share of stops citywide—over 8% of all stops. District 7 is over 96% Black and Latine.<sup>18</sup>

District 7 was followed by West Side District 25, home to the Austin, Belmont Cragin, Montclare, and Hermosa neighborhoods, which had 23,399 stops and represented another 8% of the city's stops. Third was District 10, home to North and South Lawndale, which had 21,040 stops. District 25 is over 80% Black or Latine and District 10 is 92% Black or Latine.<sup>19</sup>

Citywide every police district saw a decrease in stops from 2023 to 2024, although the degree of decrease varied significantly across districts. At the highest end was District 3, which saw a 77% decrease in stops from 2023 to 2024. This was followed by District 11, which saw a 73% decrease in stops and was the police district where Dexter Reed was killed. The district that showed the smallest change from the prior year was District 25, with only a 5% decrease in stops. If this citywide decrease in traffic stops is a result of informal direction from Superintendent Snelling, the unevenness across districts raises doubts about the ability for that informal strategy to result in meaningful or lasting change for all Chicago neighborhoods.



## RACIAL DISPARITIES PERSIST IN TRAFFIC STOPS, SEARCHES, ARRESTS, AND USES OF FORCE

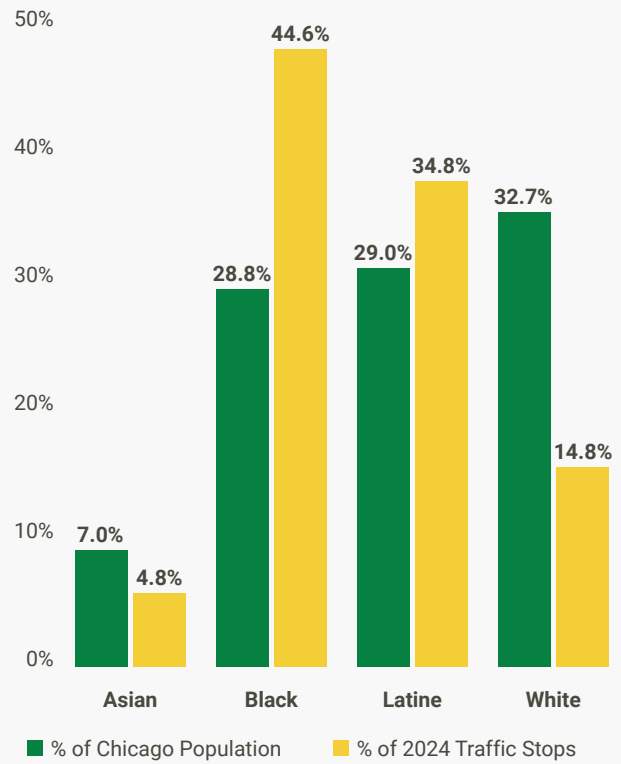
Black and Latine drivers were each overrepresented in the stopped population compared to their share of Chicago's residents. **While Black individuals comprise 28.8% of Chicago's population, they were 44.6% of those stopped.** That is a decrease from the 51.2% they represented in 2023 but still a substantial disparity. Latine drivers were also overrepresented, comprising 29% of Chicago's population and 34.8% of those stopped, a 4% increase from 2023. White drivers continue to be under stopped compared to their population. White drivers were only 14.8% of those stopped despite being 32.7% of Chicago's population.

When it came to searches and arrests, Black drivers were overrepresented compared to their share of stopped drivers. **Black drivers were 66.4% of those searched and 56.3% of those arrested despite being 44.6% of those stopped.**

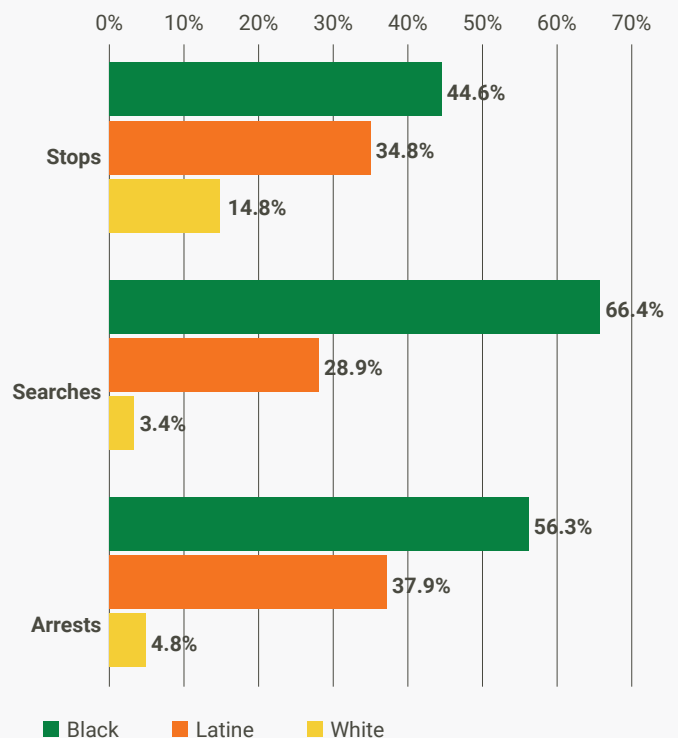
Disparities persisted when focusing on consent searches. An officer who lacks legally required suspicion to search a vehicle can still ask a driver for their consent to do so. Data shows that the discretion to ask for consent is applied in racially disparate ways. **In 2024, stopped Black drivers were 5.8 times as likely as stopped white drivers to be asked for consent to search. Stopped Latine drivers were nearly 4 times as likely to be asked for consent to be searched.**

More severe outcomes can also come from a traffic stop, and there too Black and Latine Chicagoans were disproportionately impacted. In 2024, CPD reportedly used force 787 times during traffic stops, the highest the city has seen in recent years.<sup>20</sup> Data shows CPD's traffic stop uses of force are significantly concentrated in Black and Brown communities, with nearly 85% from 2018-2024 occurring in majority Black and Latine communities.<sup>21</sup>

2024 TRAFFIC STOPS BY RACE



2024 TRAFFIC STOPS, SEARCHES, AND ARRESTS BY RACE

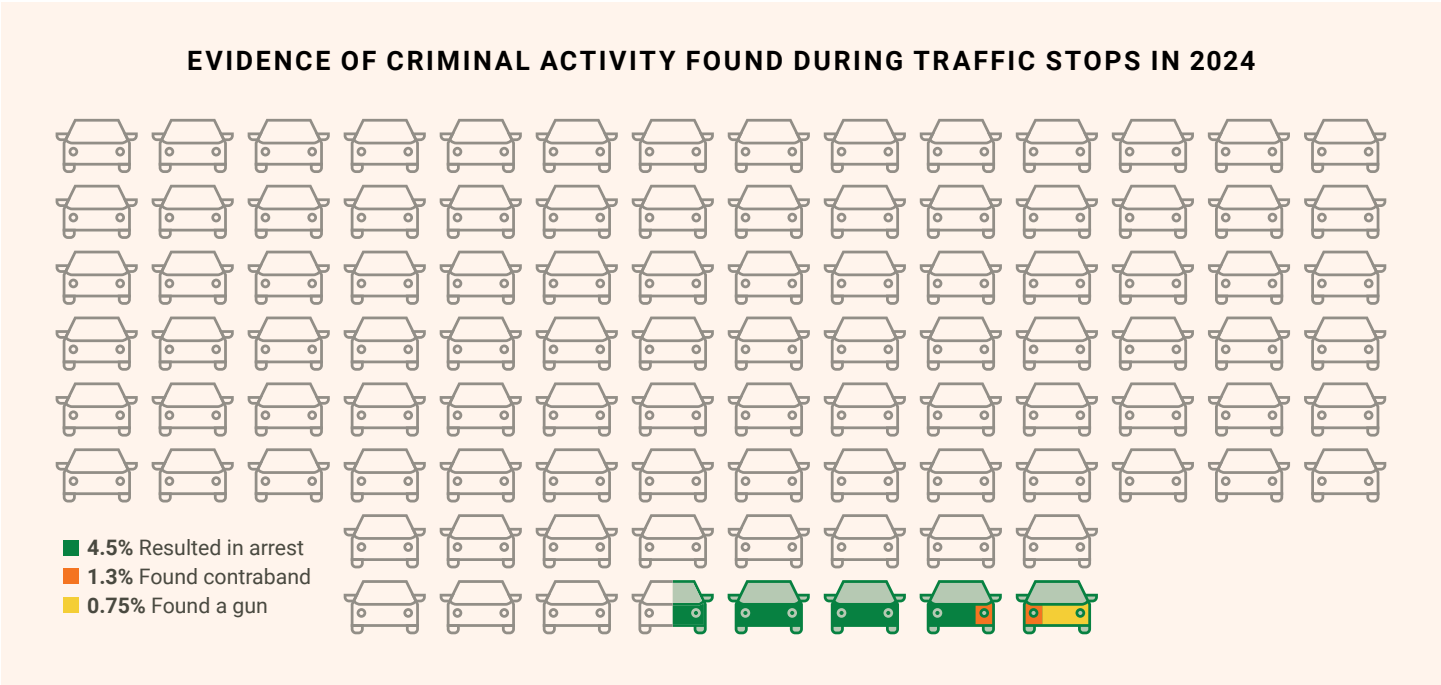
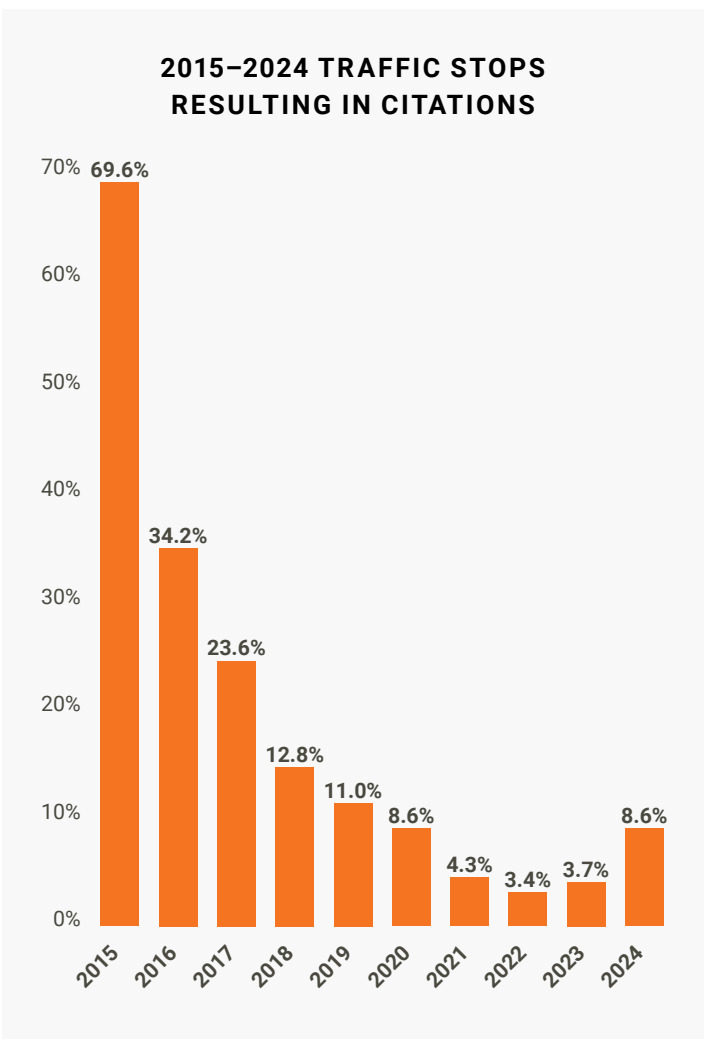


# CITATION, ARREST, AND CONTRABAND RECOVERY RATES REMAIN LOW

In 2024, the share of traffic stops that resulted in the driver receiving a citation increased, from 3.7% in 2023 to 8.6% in 2024. Yet, this 8.6% citation rate is small compared to rates seen in prior years when CPD’s focus was more on dangerous driving and less on minor offenses. The 8.6% is also small compared to other large cities like New York City, which had an 81% citation rate in 2024,<sup>22</sup> and Houston, which had a 39% citation rate in 2023.<sup>23</sup> A low citation rate may indicate that CPD’s traffic stops are not responding to dangerous driving behavior and instead are pretextual.

Traffic stops are often described as an important source of finding criminal activity, guns, or drugs. Yet, 2024 data shows yet again that traffic stops produce low rates of arrests or contraband recovery when compared to the volume of stops made.<sup>24</sup>

In 2024, just 4.5% of traffic stops resulted in an arrest for any offense. **Only 1.3% (3,917) of traffic stops resulted in the recovery of any contraband at all, including guns, other weapons, drugs, or drug paraphernalia.** Only 0.75% (2,201) resulted in the recovery of a gun and 0.6% (1,753) resulted in recovery of narcotics.





## CONCLUSION

While significant questions remain about data discrepancies stemming from CPD's deficient data collection and reporting, a decrease in Chicago's traffic stops is a welcome change. Fewer stops mean less harassment of Black and Latine drivers and a greater opportunity to use public safety resources in ways that actually keep our roads and communities safer. But this data report shows that while the strategy has lessened in magnitude, the underlying approach has continued, with the majority of CPD's traffic stops being made for registration or equipment offenses and targeted at Black and Latine drivers and communities. CPD's underlying strategy of focusing enforcement on minor traffic violations without a clear benefit to public or traffic safety is ongoing. The data does not convey a rejection of the false idea that pretextual traffic stops keep us safer; it is merely a ratcheting down.

The continued use of pretextual stops means tens of thousands of drivers, disproportionately Black and Latine drivers, are being subjected to unnecessary police interaction, and our city's public safety resources continue to be wasted. To respond to these issues in a way that is impactful and durable, Chicago must put an end to CPD's pretextual traffic stops practice.

Jurisdictions around the country like Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Virginia, Oregon, Connecticut, and more have all taken steps to limit police's ability to perform pretextual traffic stops. Early lessons from these jurisdictions have shown evidence of fewer unnecessary police interactions, lessened racial disparities, improved traffic safety, and increased contraband recovery resulting from a more focused police strategy.<sup>25</sup>

In order for Chicago to truly address the harm and waste of this strategy and ensure this year's reduction in traffic stops continues beyond 2024, CPD must formally end its pretextual traffic stops practice. To read more about the possibilities for and benefits of formally ending pretextual stops in Chicago through a CPD policy, visit the Free2Move Coalition's website [www.free2movechi.org](http://www.free2movechi.org).

<sup>1</sup> For our analysis of traffic stops from 2004-2023, see our reports: Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition, *A New Vehicle for “Stop and Frisk”: The Scope, Impact, and Inequities of Traffic Stops in Chicago* (Mar. 2023) <https://impactforequity.org/report/a-new-vehicle-for-stop-and-frisk-the-scope-impact-and-inequities-of-traffic-stops-in-chicago/>; Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition, *A New Vehicle for “Stop and Frisk”: Update* (May 2023) <https://impactforequity.org/report/traffic-stops-report-update/>; Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition, *Chicago 2023 Traffic Stops Data Report* (Apr. 2024) <https://impactforequity.org/report/2023-traffic-stops-data-report/>.

<sup>2</sup> See Pascal Sabino, *911 Calls On South, West Sides Ignored While ‘Rapid Response’ Cops Make Traffic Stops Instead*, BLOCK CLUB CHICAGO (Feb. 15, 2024) <https://blockclubchicago.org/2024/02/15/911-calls-on-south-west-sides-ignored-while-rapid-response-cops-make-traffic-stops-instead/>; Mike Dolan Fliss, Frank Baumgartner, and Paul Delamater, et al., “RePrioritizing Traffic Stops to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crash Outcomes and Racial Disparities,” *Injury Epidemiology* 7, no. 3 (2020) (finding that deprioritizing minor equipment and administrative infractions and prioritizing dangerous driving infractions led to decrease in traffic crashes).

<sup>3</sup> See *supra*, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Matt Masterson and Heather Cherone, *4 Chicago Police Officers Fired at Dexter Reed 96 Times in 41 Seconds After He Shot Officer in Arm: COPA*, WTTW (Apr. 9, 2024) <https://news.wttw.com/2024/04/09/4-chicago-police-officers-fired-dexter-reed-96-times-41-seconds-after-he-shot-officer-arm>.

<sup>5</sup> The traffic stops data in this report was obtained through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the Chicago Police Department. Data on the number, type, and location of stops, driver race, searches, and citation rate came from a dataset of 2024 traffic stops recorded by CPD to ultimately be reported to the Illinois Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Study (ITPSS). The ITPSS requires CPD to collect and annually report data to the state on all traffic stops made for a traffic code violation. Data on traffic stop arrests and contraband recovery comes from a dataset of 2024 traffic stop arrests, comprised of all 2024 adult arrests that have at least one FBI Code ‘TRF’ or DUI charge or are associated with an arrest that includes one of those charges. This data shows the arrestee’s race and offenses charged as well as whether there were drugs, a firearm, or other contraband inventoried as a result of the arrest.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Pascal Sabino, *Chicago police made nearly 200,000 secret traffic stops last year*, INJUSTICE WATCH (Aug. 21, 2024); Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition, *A New Vehicle for Stop and Frisk: Update*, p. 5 (May 2023) <https://impactforequity.org/report/traffic-stops-report-update/>; Pascal Sabino, *Chicago Police Are Arresting Thousands More Black Drivers After Traffic Stops Than They Report*, BLOCK CLUB CHI. (Aug. 3, 2022) <https://blockclubchicago.org/2022/08/03/chicago-police-are-arresting-thousands-more-black-drivers-after-traffic-stops-than-they-report/>.

<sup>7</sup> CPD leadership has claimed this is due to misaligned CPD data systems and a years-long lag in converting the information recorded on physical traffic stop cards into the digital records management system. See *Hearing on Chicago Police Department Budget before the Committee on Budget and Government Operations*, Chicago City Council, timestamp 4:06:05 (2024) <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8925576/video/1029804827>.

<sup>8</sup> CPD is required to call in each traffic stop to OEMC, which assigns the traffic stop a unique event number. Separately, CPD records its own traffic stops data for the ITPSS. By comparing these two datasets, we can get a sense of whether there are any stops going undocumented in CPD’s own system or unreported to ITPSS.

<sup>9</sup> Chicago Police Department, *ISR Data 2024*, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/statistics-data/isr-data/> (last accessed Feb. 25, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Tonia Hill, *CCPSA tackles pre-textual traffic stops during South Side meeting*, THE TRIIBE (Aug. 28, 2024) <https://thetriibe.com/2024/08/ccpsa-tackles-pre-textual-traffic-stops-during-south-side-meeting/>.

<sup>11</sup> Community Commission for Public Safety & Accountability, *2024 Goals and Expectations for the Police Superintendent*, <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/ccpsa/GOALS/2024%20CPD%20Goals%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Fran Spielman, *A 3-point plan to curb excessive traffic stops of Black, Brown drivers*, CHI. SUN TIMES (Nov. 13, 2023, 5:06 PM) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/city-hall/2023/11/13/23959666/traffic-stops-discrimination-black-brown-motorists-targeted-aclu-chicago-police>.

<sup>13</sup> Heather Cherone, *Lawsuit: Chicago Police Targeted Black, Latino Chicagoans With Traffic Stops*, WTTW (June 30, 2023, 7:37 PM) <https://news.wttw.com/2023/06/30/lawsuit-chicago-police-targeted-black-latino-chicagoans-traffic-stops>.

<sup>14</sup> Heather Cherone, *Chicago Police Department Consent Decree Set to Expand to Include Traffic Stops After Fatal Shooting of Dexter Reed*, WTTW (May 21, 2024, 5:00 AM) <https://news.wttw.com/2024/05/21/chicago-police-department-consent-decree-set-expand-include-traffic-stops-after-fatal>.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Amy Qin, *CPD traffic stops are down this year, but critics say there are still too many*, WBEZ (Aug. 1, 2024) <https://www.wbez.org/communities/2024/08/01/cpd-traffic-stops-are-down-this-year-but-critics-say-there-are-still-too-many>; Tom Schuba, Andy Grimm, and Matthew Hendrickson, *Before gunfight with Dexter Reed, Chicago cops made 50 traffic stops in just 3 days*, CHI. SUN TIMES (Aug. 6, 2024, 8:35 PM) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/police-reform/dexter-reed-shooting/2024/08/06/gunfight-dexter-reed-chicago-police-officers-stopped-50-drivers-3-days>.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Sam Raim, *Police Are Stopping Fewer Drivers — and It’s Increasing Safety*, Vera Institute of Justice (Jan. 11, 2024) <https://www.vera.org/news/police-are-stopping-fewer-drivers-and-its-increasing-safety>; Mike Dolan Fliss, Frank Baumgartner, and Paul Delamater, et al., “RePrioritizing Traffic Stops to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crash Outcomes and Racial Disparities,” *Injury Epidemiology* 7, no. 3 (2020).

<sup>17</sup> City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, *Public Safety Dashboard, Investigatory Stop Reports: Census Demographics*, <https://igchicago.org/information-portal/data-dashboards/investigatory-stop-reports-with-census-demographics/> (last accessed Feb. 14, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

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<sup>20</sup> Kade Heather, Tom Schuba, Sophie Sherry, Jonathan Torres, and Wendy Wei, *Chicago cops have been making fewer traffic stops, but more are ending in violence*, CHI. SUN TIMES (Mar. 21, 2025, 5:30 AM) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/the-watchdogs/2025/03/21/chicago-police-department-dexter-reed-traffic-stops>.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> New York Police Department, Vehicle Reporting Data 2024, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/reports-analysis/vehicle-stop-reports.page> (last accessed Feb. 14, 2025).

<sup>23</sup> Houston Police Department, 2023 Annual Racial Profiling Report, [https://www.houstontx.gov/police/departments\\_reports/racial\\_profiling/2023\\_Annual\\_Racial\\_Profiling\\_022324.pdf](https://www.houstontx.gov/police/departments_reports/racial_profiling/2023_Annual_Racial_Profiling_022324.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> As described above, CPD has a history of underreporting in traffic stop data, including traffic stop numbers, searches, and contraband recovery. To produce this report, we used the highest number of reported contraband, taken from the CPD traffic stops arrest dataset provided to us in a FOIA response. While questions remain about whether CPD is fully recording and reporting all of its traffic stop data, every indication we have seen from the 2024 dataset and prior years makes clear that the rate of contraband recovery from traffic stops is exceptionally low.

<sup>25</sup> Impact for Equity and the Free2Move Coalition, *Reducing Racially Disparate Police Stops Around the Nation* (Dec. 2023) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63d2d655b90633181eddd9f3/t/6575dea5bd2f9403a1e2c020/1702223533743/Case+Studies+Doc.pdf>.



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