

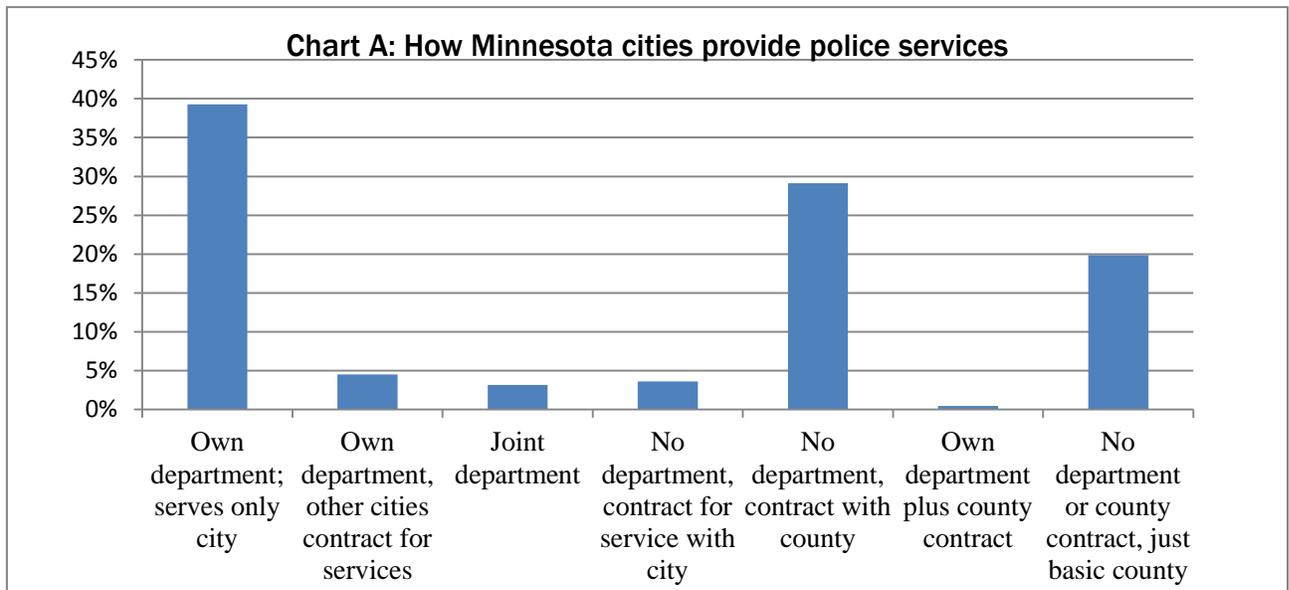


**2012 Fiscal Conditions Survey
Provision of Police Services Across Minnesota**

In the last few years, the annual fiscal conditions survey has posed questions related to a topic or topics garnering a lot of attention in the media and at the Legislature. Previous surveys have featured questions on fund balances; ability to secure financing through issuing bonds; mandates; and unintended consequences of budget-balancing actions. For 2012, the survey included questions related to police service. Specifically, city officials answered questions about how their city provides police services.

How cities provide police services

Nearly all of the city officials who completed the four main questions that have made up the fiscal conditions survey since it began in 2003 answered this question: Please indicate which of the following statements describes how police services are provided in your city. That statement was followed with a list of different service delivery methods, complete with examples to make each option as clear as possible. Chart A below shows how the 443 responses break out:



Almost 40 percent of responding cities have their own police department and that department serves only their community. Roughly a third of cities have no police department of their own but do contract with their county sheriff for law enforcement services. We did not ask for specifics related to county contracts such as cost of the contract and what services are included. One in five

cities has neither their own department nor a contract with their county sheriff for protection. Instead, these cities rely on whatever baseline services the county provides to communities within county boundaries.

City size plays an important role in determining how a city provides police services. Looking at cities with populations above and below 2,500, you notice some key differences, as Chart B shows. As a group, large cities (those over 2,500 in population) are much more likely to have their own police department that serves only their community. About two-thirds of these large cities provide police services in this way. Roughly 20 percent of these large cities do not have a department and instead maintain a contract with their county sheriff. Only 1 percent of cities over 2,500 in population do not maintain a city police department, instead relying on basic county services.

By contrast, roughly one out of every three cities under 2,500 in population opts to rely on the services the county provides and does not have a department or a county contract. Another third do not have their own department but do contract with the sheriff. In total, therefore, more than 60 percent of the responding cities under 2,500 in population do not have their own department. Only 25 percent of cities under 2,500 in population do operate a city police department.

Looking at cities with populations above and below 500 that responded to the survey (there are 360 Minnesota cities with fewer than 500 residents, according to 2010 census data) shows an even more stark divide. Fully 86 percent of cities under 500 in population do not have their own department. Only 40 percent of these maintain a contract with the county sheriff for law enforcement services. About 56 percent of cities over 500 in population have their own police department. Only 3 percent of cities over 500 in population rely on basic county services with no contract and no department of their own.

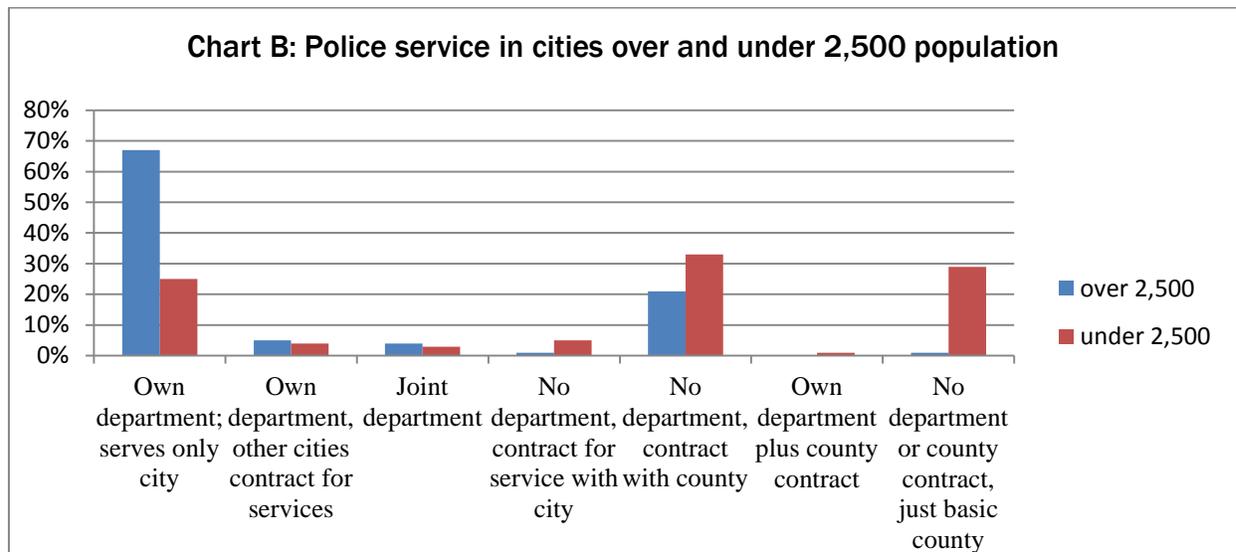
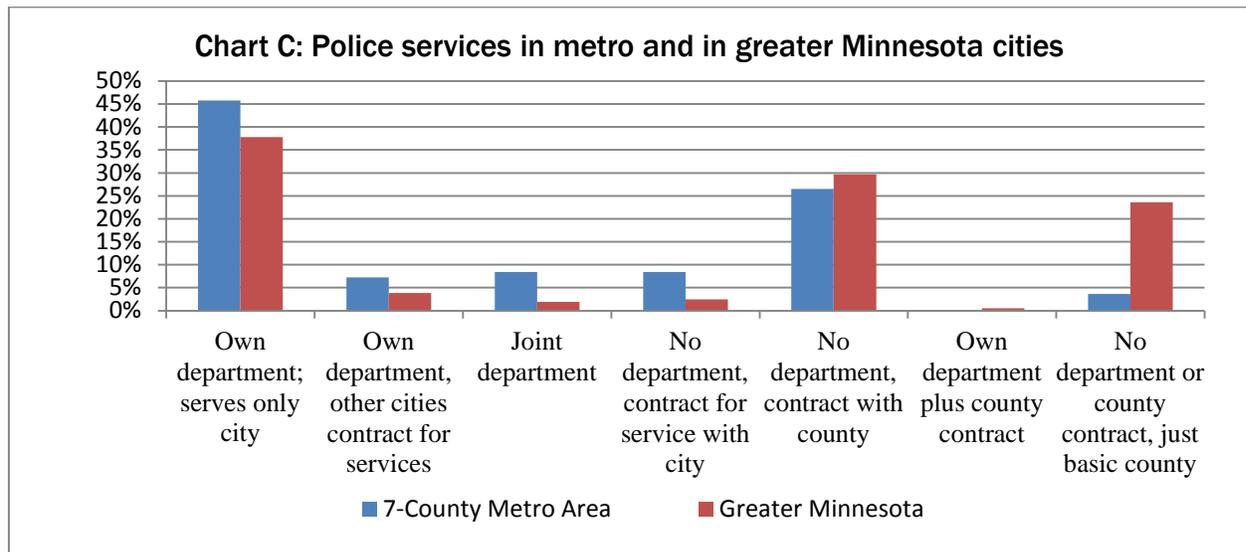


Chart C shows the pattern of police service division by geographical location—whether a city is in the seven-county metro area or in Greater Minnesota. Nearly half of the metro cities responding to the survey (46 percent) report having their own police department serving only their city. In outstate Minnesota, that figure is slightly lower at 38 percent.

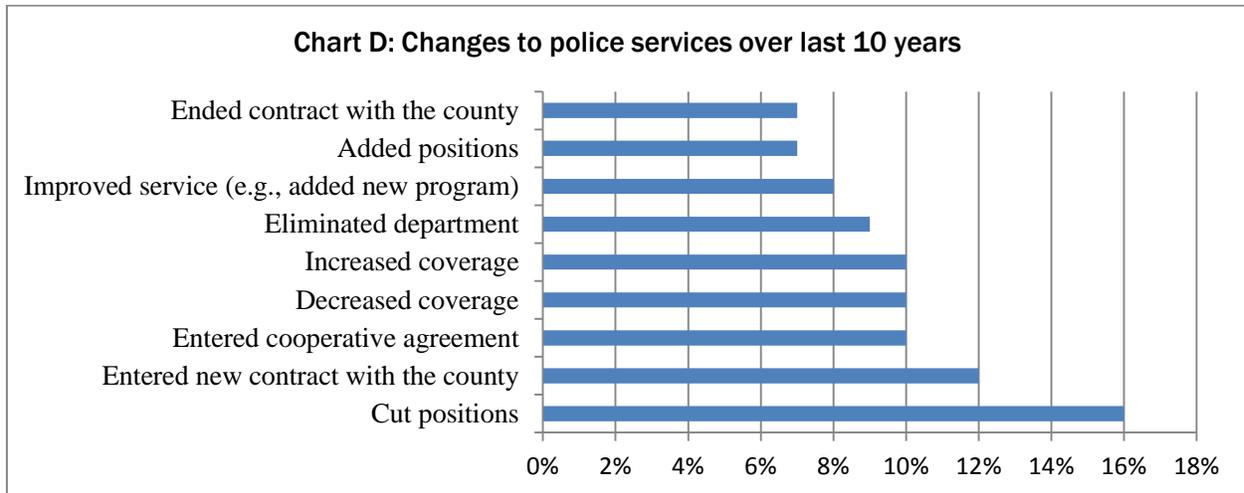
The more significant difference comes when looking at cities that don't have any department. Greater Minnesota cities are more likely to not have their own police department. A quarter of cities in outstate Minnesota gave this response. Only 4 percent of metro cities did so. Responses in the other categories of police provision were fairly similar between metro and greater Minnesota cities.



Past police service changes

The 2012 survey also asked city officials to indicate whether the way in which they provide police services has changed over the last 10 years. Sixty-seven percent (296) of the responding cities indicated that they have not made changes to the way service is provided over the last 10 years. A third (33 percent) of cities reported that police service provision in their communities has changed.

As shown in Chart D, 180 cities offered some comments on the nature of those changes. The most common change was a reduction in staff, including paid officer positions. Sixteen percent of the cities that reported making changes indicated that this had occurred in their communities. Twelve percent indicated that their city had entered into a new contract with their county for law enforcement services, and 10 percent described a new cooperative agreement for police services, often with at least one other city. Equal numbers mentioned decreasing and increasing service coverage within their cities. Eight percent of cities seeing change over the last 10 years commented that they had improved the service. Some of the improvements described included streamlining operations, adding new prevention programs, and using new technologies.



Future police service changes

Very few of the cities that responded to the police service questions indicated that they were considering future changes to the way that police service is provided. Only 18 percent are looking at making adjustments. Of the 81 cities looking to make possible changes, 20 of them are considering cutting back on service coverage. Ten cities mentioned cutting officer positions. A quarter of the cities are considering a new cooperative agreement with another local government, and 14 percent are looking at contracting with their county. A handful of cities mentioned changes like using new technologies and adding positions.

Conclusion

The topic of how cities provide police protection in their communities is one often visited by legislators and the media. This survey was one attempt at gaining some understanding of the different ways that cities deliver police services. Further research is needed to learn about the details of the contractual and cooperative arrangements that cities have in place. In particular, determining the population served and how the costs of police services are spread among different entities and taxpayers would be useful.