Assessing Languages Used by Crime Victims to Enhance Victim Services

Brockton Police Department and Curry College

Between July 18, 2020-April 12, 2021, the Victim Assistance Program recorded 609 cases, of which 63.4% were considered domestic violence cases.

Based on the survey responses of 56 Brockton Police Officers:

- 15% are fluent in a language other than English.
- 85% encounter non-fluent English speakers or Deaf or hard-of-hearing residents.

Language Access Recommendations from Patrol Officers & Victim Officer Liaison:

- Translate written materials.
- Increase availability of on-call interpretation and services to communicate with Deaf or hard-of-hearing residents.
- Offer foreign language and ASL classes and incentives to learn a second language.
- Document procedures for interacting with victims, available communication services, and community agencies with language interpretation services.

Implications for Policy & Practice:

- Use in-person, certified interpreters, with telephonic interpretation as backup.
- Recruit new employees who speak the targeted language; test and incentivize language proficiency.
- Train officers on interacting with individuals who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing and partner with local organizations.

Sources:
- Based on the Brockton Police Department Final Report.
- All mini-grant materials funded by the IACP-JRSA partnership are available here: https://www.jrsa.org/projects/levantta.html
- 1. U.S. Census and American Community Survey.