Citations take significantly less time to process than do arrests (85.8 minutes vs. 1.43 hours). The use of citation in lieu of arrest is a longstanding tool in American law enforcement, with nearly 87% of agencies engaged in the practice; over 80% of those for 10 years or more.

**Potential Benefits:**

**Reduced Jail Overflowing and Criminal Justice System Costs.** Use of citation in lieu of arrest may provide cost savings to the criminal justice system as a whole, given that fewer people will undergo booking, necessitate judicial decisions about pretrial release, spend time in pretrial detention, or require screening for pretrial services.

**Less Burden on Non-Violent, Low-Level Offenders.** Citation is less invasive of individual liberty and avoids many of the hardships associated with arrest and detention, including financial burdens, damage to reputation, and inability to work. Research suggests that diversion tends to reduce re-offense, particularly in the case of young and first-time offenders.

**Key Findings:**

**Citation in Lieu of Arrest Has Been Widely Embraced as a Law Enforcement Tool.** The use of citation in lieu of arrest is a widespread and longstanding tool in American law enforcement, with nearly 87% of agencies engaged in the practice; over 80% of those for 10 years or more.

**Law Enforcement Views on Citation in Lieu of Arrest are Overwhelmingly Positive.** Nearly two-thirds of law enforcement officials have a positive view of citation. Very few respondents (fewer than 2%) indicated a negative view of the practice.

**Citation Offers Potential Time Savings and Increased Law Enforcement Efficiency.** Citations take significantly less time to process than do arrests (85.8 minutes vs. 1.43 hours), saving just over an hour per incident.

**Comparison of Average Times Custodial Arrest vs. Citation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Incarceration</th>
<th>Average Time for Officer to Process</th>
<th>Average Time for Officer to Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Custodial Arrest</td>
<td>1.43 hours (HOURS)</td>
<td>85.8 minutes (MINUTES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>0.4 hours (HOURS)</td>
<td>24.2 minutes (MINUTES)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Concerns & Challenges:**

**Higher Failure to Appear Rates.** There is a concern that FTA rates are higher in citation cases. Any expected cost or time saving benefits might be defeated, since FTAs create additional work for courts and law enforcement agencies.

**Lack of Access to Information Necessary to Inform Citation Decision.** Officers in the field need accurate and easily accessible data in order to make an informed decision to cite and ensure their own and the public’s safety. Without the right data, determining eligibility for citation is less ideal.

**Incomplete Criminal Histories.** Because actual booking does not occur in the citation process, in many cases, fingerprints and other identifying information are not captured, and no criminal history record entry for the offense occurs. This could lead to multiple incidents of citing and releasing the same person for the same offense.

**Data Collection and Standardization.** Few agencies are tracking and analyzing citation data, making it challenging for researchers to study and compare information across jurisdictions and data systems.

**References**

1. [Buddin, supra note 4; “Police Analysis of the Citation System in Essex County, N.Y.” supra at 4:10, at 7.](http://www.cpsp.umn.edu/staff/steven-grady-research/)

2. [Mark Pivello, Unintended Consequences of Cite-and-Release Policies, supra at 2015-10.](http://www.shield-it.com/)


4. [IACP Citation in Lieu of Arrest Report (2016), p. 24, available at http://www.iacpolice.org/Portals/1/IACP%20Citation%20Final%20Report%202016.pdf](http://www.iacpolice.org/Portals/1/IACP%20Citation%20Final%20Report%202016.pdf)


6. [Researchers have noted success in reducing FTA rates when the time between the offense and the initial court appearance is shortened.”](http://www.shield-it.com/)

**Further Research Is Needed to Assess the Validity of Concerns Surrounding the Increased Use of Citation and How Best to Alleviate Any Challenges.** Academics and law enforcement professionals have raised concerns about the increased use of citation, and many unanswered questions remain about its impact on law enforcement efficiency, public safety, and individual case outcomes.

**Does Your Agency Monitor, Track, Study, or Evaluate the Use of Citations Issued in Lieu of Arrest?**

- **Yes:** 19.8% (165 respondents)
- **No:** 80.2% (604 respondents)
INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

With community-police relations in the spotlight and key policy groups recommending the increased use of citation, now is an important moment to study the use and impact of citation policy, to measure its effectiveness in maximizing public safety and minimizing recidivism, to weigh the costs and benefits of citation usage against those of custodial arrest, and to examine officer safety issues before recommending changes in citation procedures or increase in citation use. In short, we need to know if and when citation in lieu of arrest works best and how best to implement citation policies to achieve these outcomes.

The IACP, with support from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, undertook a three-pronged assessment (literature review, nationwide survey, and focus groups) to study how police departments approach the use of citation in lieu of arrest, with a goal to provide the law enforcement community and other criminal justice stakeholders with a reference point for information about citation practices across America.

CONCLUSION

Citation in lieu of arrest potentially offers numerous benefits for law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and those cited. Yet the impact of the practice has not been significantly studied. The IACP’s three-pronged assessment of citation in lieu of arrest—has provided a baseline of information and generated numerous questions that provide a path forward for researchers, illuminating the need for more evidence gathering to support effective policies for the criminal justice system, officers, and citizens.

See IACP for Full Report www.theiacp.org/citation