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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute Announces the Enhancement and Expansion of the National Police Funding Database

Today, the Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) re-launched its National Police Funding Database (NPFDB), expanding its geographic and grants coverage and enhancing its search and share features. The NPFDB is an innovative tool initially developed by TMI in December 2019. It allows users to easily access information about federal grant money and resources distributed to police departments in cities and counties across the country. The NPFDB is a critical resource because the provision of billions of dollars in federal funding and the transfer of military grade equipment to local police departments can be used in inappropriate and discriminatory ways that are harmful to communities and people of color. The NPFDB can be accessed here.

“As we continue to suffer the effects of racially discriminatory policing practices, including over-policing in Black and Latino communities, the National Police Funding Database provides critical insight into the amount of federal funds given to specific jurisdictions and police departments,” said TMI Director Janell Byrd-Chichester. “This transparency into police funding provides individuals and activists with easy access to information about the specific federal funding their local police department has received and enables them to monitor departmental use of the funds, to advocate for good policing practices, and to pursue legal redress when federal funding is used in support of discrimination.”

“Taxpayers contribute to federal funding, and it is essential for those taxpayers to know what is being done with their contributions. The National Police Funding Database provides this vital access, which has become particularly critical in light of wanton abuses of power and discriminatory conduct by law enforcement that receives federal funding,” said LDF Manager of the Justice and Public Safety Project Puneet Cheema. “It is pivotal for transparent data to be provided to communities in order to hold law enforcement accountable as needed – particularly in light of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race, color, or national origin discrimination in any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.”

The redesigned NPFDB now displays all of a given locality's data in one place and has new features and new data sources, including:

- More than a hundred new jurisdictions.
- The ability to track grant programs from a variety of federal departments and agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and others.

- New dashboard features that display the number of police officers per 1000 residents in a given location — and allow users to see how their city or county compares to the national average and to that of similarly-sized cities.
- The ability to track military equipment transfers to local law enforcement offices.

Not only does the NPPFD track grants from a number of federal agencies that fund law enforcement, it also provides racial and ethnic demographic information for every included city and county. These data are offered alongside a summary of settlement awards jurisdictions have paid to resolve police misconduct lawsuits. The database is user-friendly, easily navigable, and accessible to the public to ensure that users can fully leverage transparency to bring about accountability.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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