

# The Militarization of Law Enforcement in America: Use of Military Technology and Tactics by Local Level Police

## ACLU Launches Nationwide Investigation

By [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#)

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Militarization of Local Law Enforcement Erodes Civil Liberties, Encourages Overly Aggressive Policing

American Civil Liberties Union affiliates in 23 states today simultaneously filed more than 255 public records requests to determine the extent to which local police departments are using federally subsidized military technology and tactics that are traditionally used overseas.

“Equipping state and local law enforcement with military weapons and vehicles, military tactical training, and actual military assistance to conduct traditional law enforcement erodes civil liberties and encourages increasingly aggressive policing, particularly in poor neighborhoods and communities of color,” said Kara Dansky, senior counsel for the ACLU’s Center for Justice. “We’ve seen examples of this in several localities, but we don’t know the dimensions of the problem.”

The affiliates filed public records requests with local law enforcement agencies seeking information on the use of:

Special Weapons and Tactics teams, including:

- Number and purpose of deployments
- Types of weapons used during deployments
- Injuries sustained by civilians during deployments
- Training materials
- Funding sources.

Cutting edge weapons and technologies, including:

- GPS tracking devices
- Unmanned aerial vehicles, or “drones”
- Augmented detainee restraint, or “shock-cuffs”
- Military weaponry, equipment, and vehicles obtained from or funded by federal agencies such as the Departments of Defense and/or Homeland Security.

Affiliates filed a second request with state National Guards seeking information regarding:

- Cooperative agreements between local police departments and the National Guard counter-drug program.
- Incidents of National Guard contact with civilians.

“The American people deserve to know how much our local police are using military weapons and tactics for everyday policing,” said Allie Bohm, ACLU advocacy and policy strategist. “The militarization of local police is a threat to Americans’ right to live without fear of military-style intervention in their daily lives, and we need to make sure these resources and tactics are deployed only with rigorous oversight and strong legal protections.”

The affiliates which filed public records requests are: Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Once the information has been collected and analyzed, if needed, the ACLU will use the results to recommend changes in law and policy governing the use of military tactics and technology in local law enforcement.

URL <http://www.aclu.org/criminal-law-reform/aclu-launches-nationwide-investigation-police-use-military-technology-tactics>

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ACLU - [The Militarization of Policing in America](#)



American neighborhoods are increasingly being policed by cops armed with the weapons and tactics of war.

Federal funding in the billions of dollars has allowed state and local police departments to gain access to weapons and tactics created for overseas combat theaters – and yet very little is known about exactly how many police departments have military weapons and training, how militarized the police have become, and how extensively federal money is incentivizing this trend. It's time to understand the true scope of the militarization of policing in America and the impact it is having in our neighborhoods.

On March 6th, ACLU affiliates in 23 states filed over 255 public records requests with law enforcement agencies and National Guard offices to determine the extent to which federal funding and support has fueled the militarization of state and local police departments. Stay tuned as this project develops.[Technology & Tactics](#)

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