



# Understanding Subgroups in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Samuel Peterson, PhD  
Dionne Barnes-Proby, DPA  
Kathryn Bouskill, PhD  
James Anderson, JD

September 17, 2019



Justice Policy Program

# RAND Corporation

## Mission and Values

**Mission:** To help improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis

**Core Values:** Quality and objectivity

# We have a track record of conducting research on high profile policy topics



- Transgender Troops and Sexual Orientation
- Police-community Relations in Cincinnati

# RAND Justice Policy in L.A. County



- Police Workforce Planning and Recruiting
- Impact of Prop 47 on County Departments
- Reentry (e.g., Jail in Reach)

# The current study is guided by the following goals

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of deputy subgroups, as well as the broader social and organizational climate and culture
- Understand experiences and perceptions of community members
- Review relevant organizational policies and practices
- Summarize findings and develop recommendations

# **This research requires openness and the ability to explore a variety of different perspectives and sources of information**

- Independent, objective, balanced
- Exploratory descriptive research
- Multi-disciplinary research team

# There is a need for people to describe their own experiences, and deputy subgroups cannot be understood in isolation

- What subgroups exist and what is their purpose?
- How are subgroups viewed inside the department?
- How, if at all, should they be managed? What relevant policies or practices are relevant?
- What experiences and perspectives exist in the community and how might any concerns be addressed?

# Research Activities

- Semi-structured interviews with LASD
- Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with community members
- Survey of LASD personnel
- Document, policy, and literature review



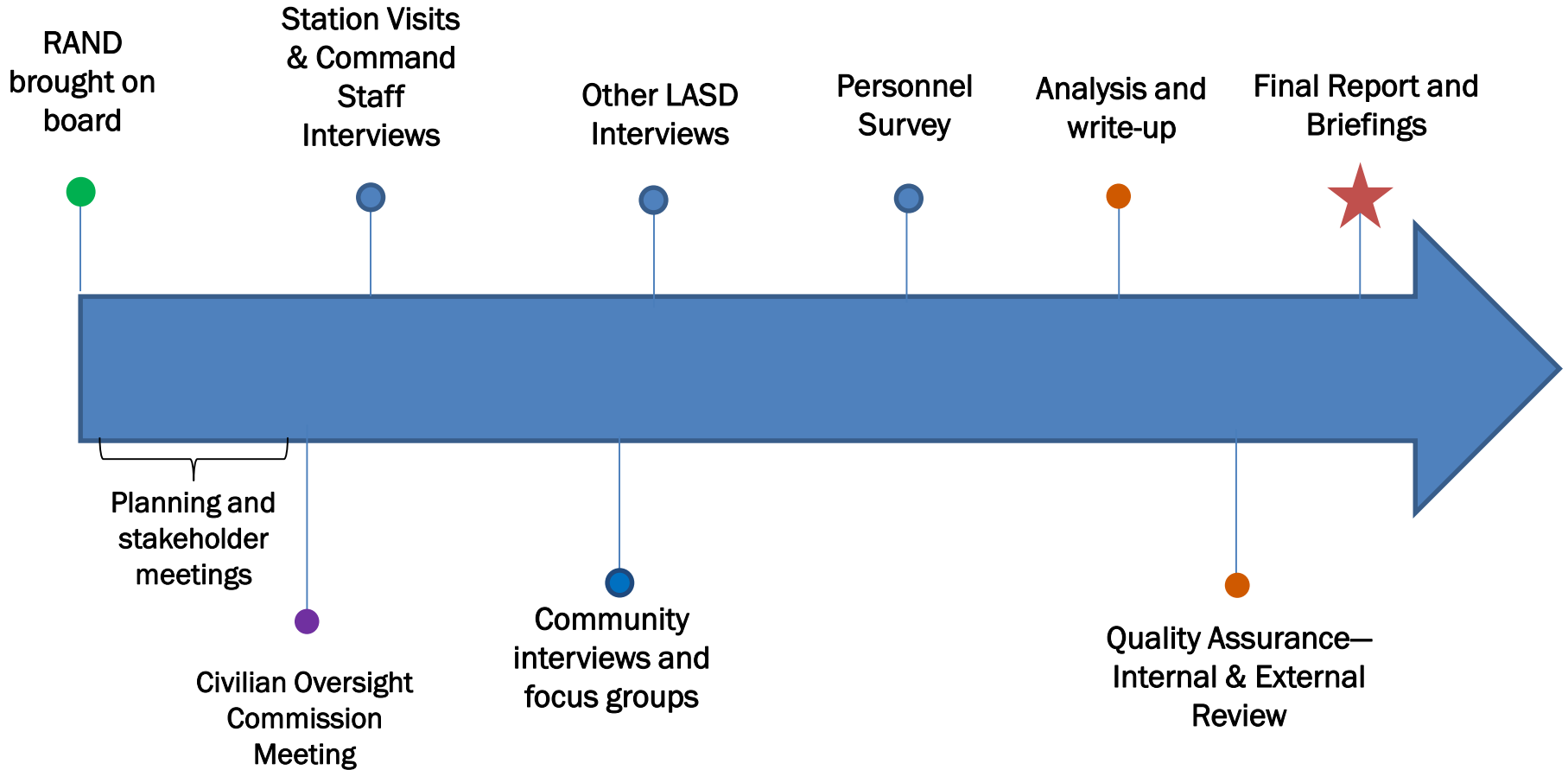
# Confidentiality is critical

- Purpose is not to attribute blame or identify individuals
- Participation is voluntary and confidential
  - We will not identify who has participated in the research
  - We will avoid recording names and specific information (e.g., descriptions of tattoos)
  - We will remove other information from notes
  - All findings reported in the aggregate
- We have safeguards in place to protect confidentiality

# What are our next steps?

- LASD
  - Station visits to explain the study in person
  - Begin interviews with command staff
  - Interviews with middle management and line staff
  - Survey
  - Review policies, practices, manuals
- Community facing
  - Referrals to community members from a variety of sources to reflect diverse perspectives
  - Communication channels through website, phone, email, and Facebook page
  - Begin interviews with community members

# Project Plan



# Thank you



Justice Policy Program

[RAND\\_LASD\\_Study@rand.org](mailto:RAND_LASD_Study@rand.org)