Supplemental Information on Geofence Warrants in the United States

In the United States, a search warrant is required to compel Google to disclose data stored in a user’s Location History. Since the start of 2018, we have seen a rise in the number of search warrants in the United States that order Google to identify users, based on their Location History information, who may have been in a given area within a certain timeframe. These so-called “geofence” warrants are one subcategory of the total search warrant requests we share in our User Data Requests Transparency Report.

As with all search warrants and data requests, we work to protect the privacy of our users while supporting the necessary work of law enforcement. We carefully review each request to make sure it satisfies applicable laws, and notify users when their identifying information is disclosed in response to a geofence warrant, unless expressly prohibited by law or a court order.

We’re including the following supplement to our standard Transparency Report to bring transparency to these warrants (recently constituting more than 25% of all warrants we receive in the United States) and the jurisdictions that have submitted the most requests from 2018 to 2020. While we received some requests as early as 2016, the following information shows the growth of such requests starting in 2018.
Total Geofence Warrants by Jurisdiction 2018 through 2020

State Jurisdictions 95.6%
Federal Jurisdictions 4.4%

State Jurisdiction Geofence Warrants 2018 to 2020

Download supplemental data as a CSV.