

# Section 4 – Perceptions of Gang-involved Individuals

## OVERVIEW

A total of 31 interviews were conducted with individuals ranging in age from 15 to 55 who are associated with 9 different gangs in Tacoma. Individuals were selected for these interviews by personnel from Comprehensive Life Resources RAIN Gang Intervention Program in Tacoma and the Washington Department of Corrections – Community Corrections – Gang unit in Pierce County. Four interview participants stated that they are not and have never been involved with gangs; those interviews are filtered from the responses reported in this section. All interviews (27) reported in this section are from individuals who stated that they are current or former gang members or associates.

**Gang affiliations of interview participants:**  
 Hilltop Crip Gang  
 Gangster Disciples  
 Native Gangster Bloods  
 Young N Thuggin  
 Knoccoutz  
 East Side Piru  
 Sureños  
 Little Valley Locos

A total of 21 interviews were conducted in the Comprehensive Life Resources offices. Ten interviews were conducted in the community or via phone with individuals who are current or former clients of Community Corrections Gang Supervision unit. Interviews with individuals ages 15-17 were conducted with the consent of a parent/guardian. All interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each and were conducted either face to face or by phone in a one-to-one setting.

Care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of respondents in the interview setting. Reporting of responses is guided by the desire to maintain that confidentiality. For that reason, data will be reported in an aggregate form to ensure that responses by individual respondents are not identifiable.

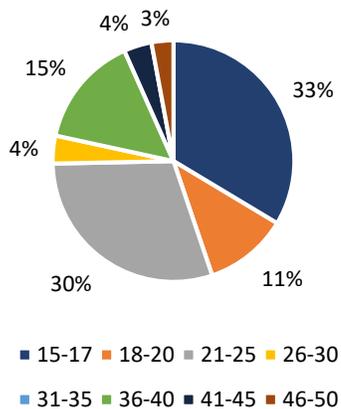
<b>Demographic factors</b>	<b>% interviewed</b>	<b>Demographic factors</b>	<b>% interviewed</b>
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age</b>	
Male	92.6%	15-17	33.3%
Female	7.4%	18-20	11.1%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		21-25	29.6%
Black/African American	75.8%	26-30	3.7%
Black/African American and White/Caucasian	6.1%	31-35	
Other (Hispanic/Latino)	9.1%	36-40	14.8%
White/Caucasian	9.1%	41-45	3.7%
Total: 27		46-50	2.9%

The information in this section is primarily anecdotal, self-report data based on the experiences and perceptions of the individuals that were interviewed. Individuals interviewed for this report are considerably younger on average than the individuals identified as gang members and associates by Tacoma Police Department.

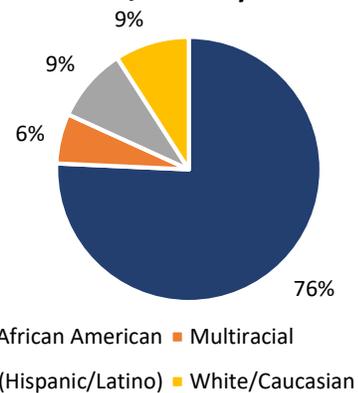
## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALS

- The average age of interview participants was 23.6 years of age.
- The youngest participant was 15 and the oldest was 41.
- 74% of interview participants were between the ages of 15 and 25.
- Three-fourths (76%) of the interview participants are Black/African American
- One in ten (9%) are white/Caucasian
- One in ten (9%) are Hispanic/Latino
- 6% are multiracial

**Object 4.1 Interview participants by age**

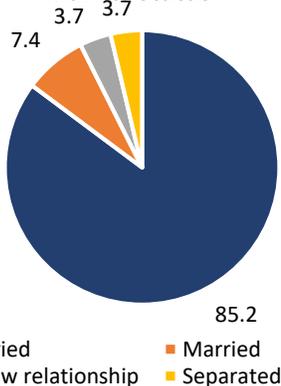


**Object 4.2 Interview participants by race/ethnicity**

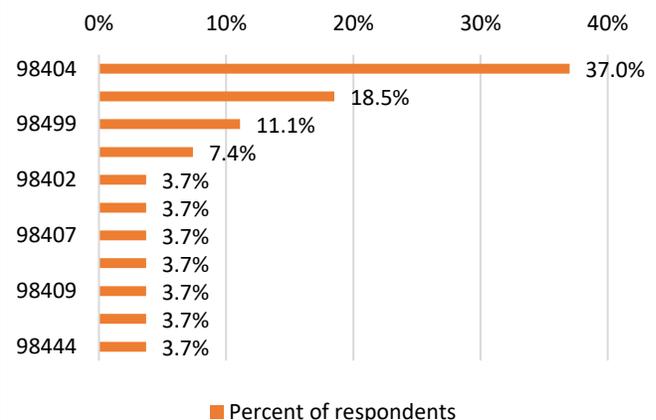


- 85% of interview participants have never been married
- 15% are married, separated, or in a common law relationship
- Over one-half (55.5%) of interview participants live in Zip code 98404 and 98405
- Participants reside in 11 different Zip codes

**Object 4.3 Interview participants by marital status**



**Object 4.4 Interview participants by Zip code**



Over half (51.9%) of interview participants have biological children. The average number of children reported was 1.92. The average number of biological children reported to be living with the interview participants was 1.18.

### GANG INVOLVEMENT AND EXPERIENCES

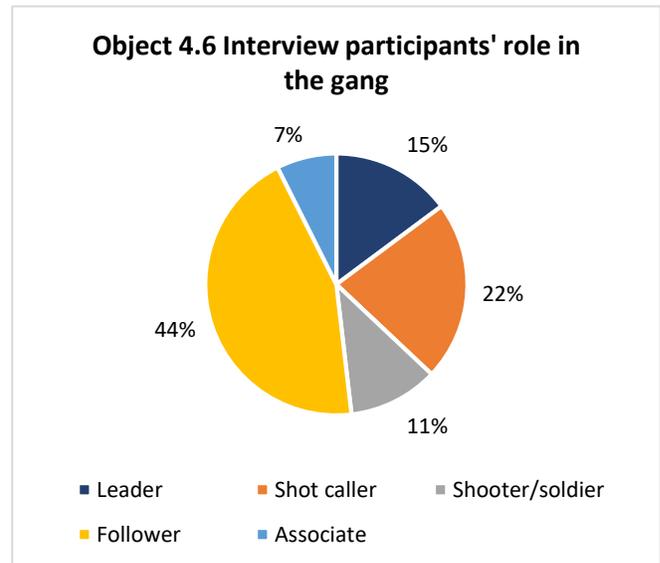
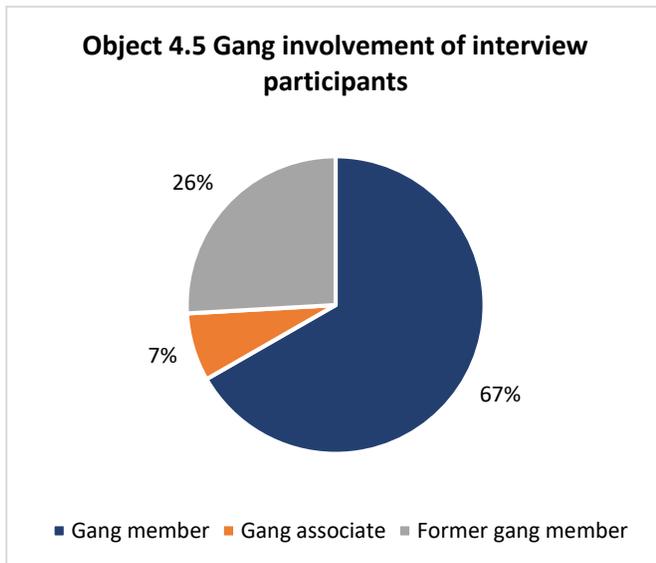
Two-thirds (66.7%) of the individuals who participated in these interviews identified themselves as current gang members. One fourth (25.9%) reported that they are former gang members.

#### Role in the gang (n=27)

Two-thirds of participants (66.7%) reported that their role in the gang is follower. One fourth of participants (25.9%) reported that they are former gang members.

**Table 4.2 Interview participants' gang involvement**

	Number	Percent
Current gang member	18	66.7%
Current gang associate	2	7.4%
Former gang member	7	25.9%
Gang Rank		
Leader	4	14.8%
Shot caller	6	22.2%
Shooter/soldier	3	11.1%
Follower	12	44.4%
Associate	2	7.4%
Total	27	

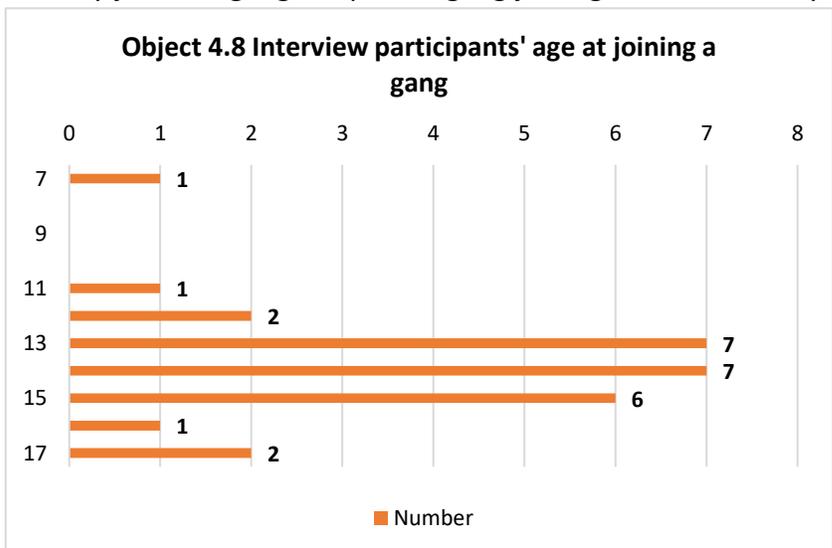


#### Age of gang joining (n=27)

Participants were asked the age at which they joined a gang. Reported gang joining most commonly began at 12 and was peak between ages 13 and 15.

- 7 was the youngest age reported for joining a gang
- 17 was the oldest age reported for joining a gang
- 13.7 was the average age reported for joining a gang
- The most common ages to join a gang were 13 and 14.

Gang joining was analyzed by age of members involved to see if



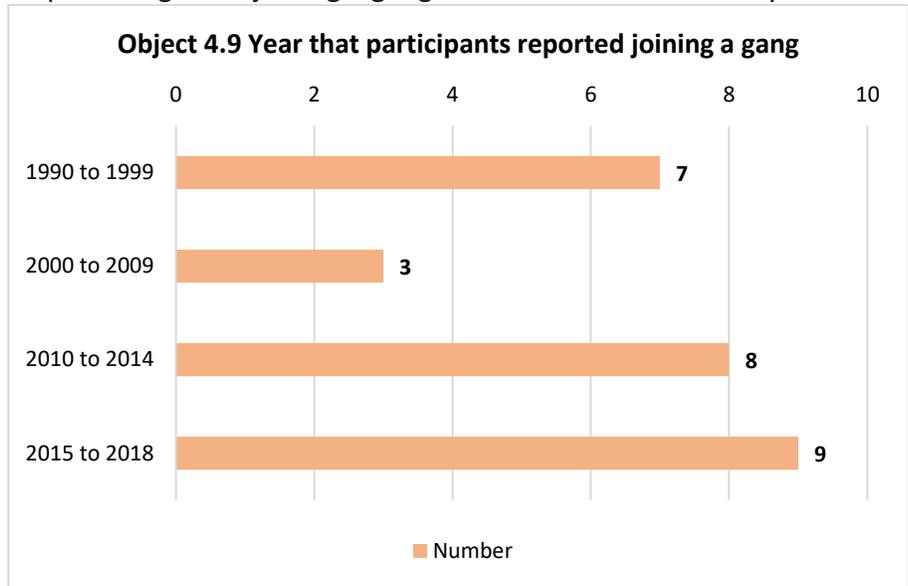
conclusions could be drawn about whether the age of gang joining has changed over time. Because

there were only 27 interviews, responses were grouped by age to ensure enough responses across ages.

Current age	Average age at joining
15 to 20	13.5
21 to 30	14.2
31 to 45	13.5

One finding from the data is that respondents on average reported joining a gang between the ages of 12 and 15, with the greatest number reporting joining at age 13 and 14. While this was not a statistically representative sample of gang-involved individuals in Tacoma, if such a sample exists, it does suggest that these have been pivotal ages for joining a gang in Tacoma for at least 30 years.

This data also suggests that prevention programs should focus on youth ages 10-13, and intervention activities should be focused on individuals ages 13 and up.

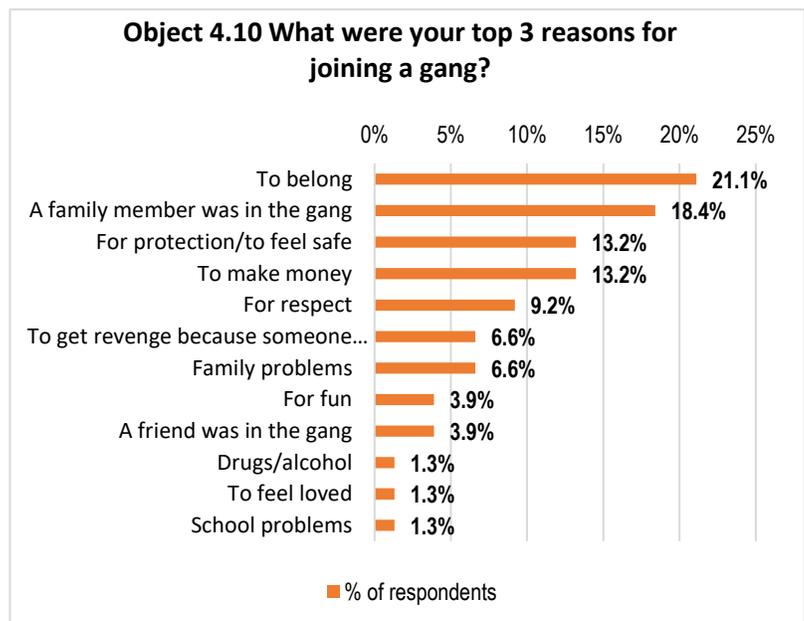


Data on gang joining was also analyzed by calendar year of gang joining. Almost two thirds of participants (63%) reported joining a gang between 2010 and 2018, and

over half of those individuals joined a gang between 2015 and 2018. This is unremarkable given that two-thirds of the individuals interviewed were between the ages of 15 and 25. However, it does suggest that there is a continuing flow of young members into local gangs, and that gang-involved individuals in this age group may not have been identified as gang members in police intelligence files.

### Reasons for joining a gang (n=27)

Interview participants were asked to provide their top three reasons for joining a gang. Participants were given the options of choosing up to three answers or could provide a custom response. Research suggests that the decision to join a gang is a complex one that is driven by many different factors, and the interrelationship between perceived positives that can pull young people into gangs, and negative experiences and barriers that can push



youth into gangs (National Gang Center, n.d.). Participants provided 2.81 answers, on average.

The top three answers included:

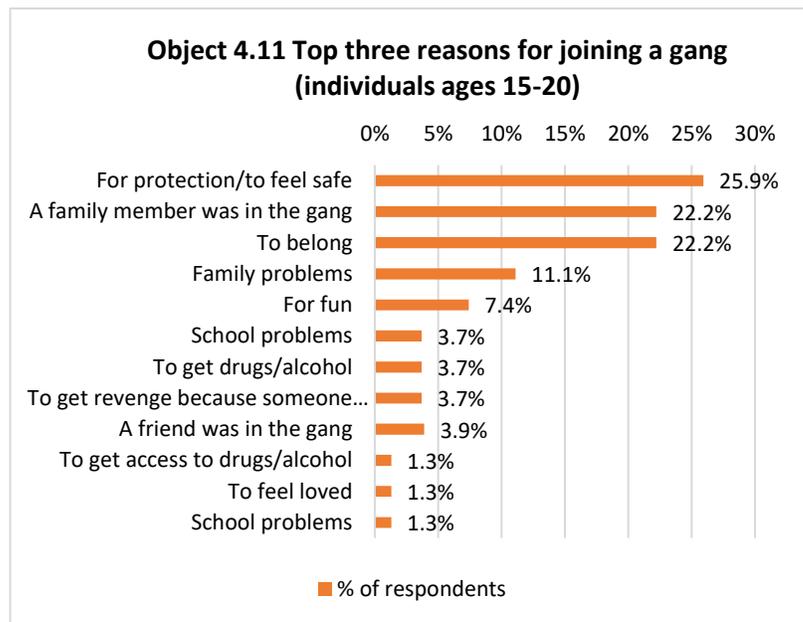
- To belong/acceptance (21.1%)
- A family member was in the gang (18.4%)
- For protection/to feel safe (13.2%)
- To make money (13.2%)

### Top 3 reasons for joining a gang

1	2	3
To belong/for acceptance	A family member was in the gang	For protection/to feel safe
		To make money

To determine the reasons for youth who have joined gangs the most recently, the answers for young people ages 15-20 were analyzed separately. This analysis found some variance with the answers provided by all respondents. The top three answers for interview participants ages 15-20 were:

- For protection/to feel safe (25.9%)
- A family member was in the gang (22.2%)
- To belong/acceptance (22.2%)



The youngest participants were particularly likely to report that they joined a gang for emotional reasons, such as a desire to feel safe, family ties, or to belong/for acceptance.

### Perceptions of gang life (n=27)

Understanding the positive attractions that may draw youth and young adults toward gangs can help communities identify the appeal of gangs to local youths. To measure participants' perceptions of the positives and negatives of gang life, they were asked to respond to a series of statements about gang life:

- Being in my gang makes me feel important
- Members of my gang provide support and loyalty to each other
- I enjoy being a member of my gang.
- My gang is like a family to me
- Being in a gang is a good way to make money

### Top 3 reasons for joining a gang (ages 15 to 20)

1	2	3
For protection/to feel safe	A family member was in the gang	To belong/for acceptance

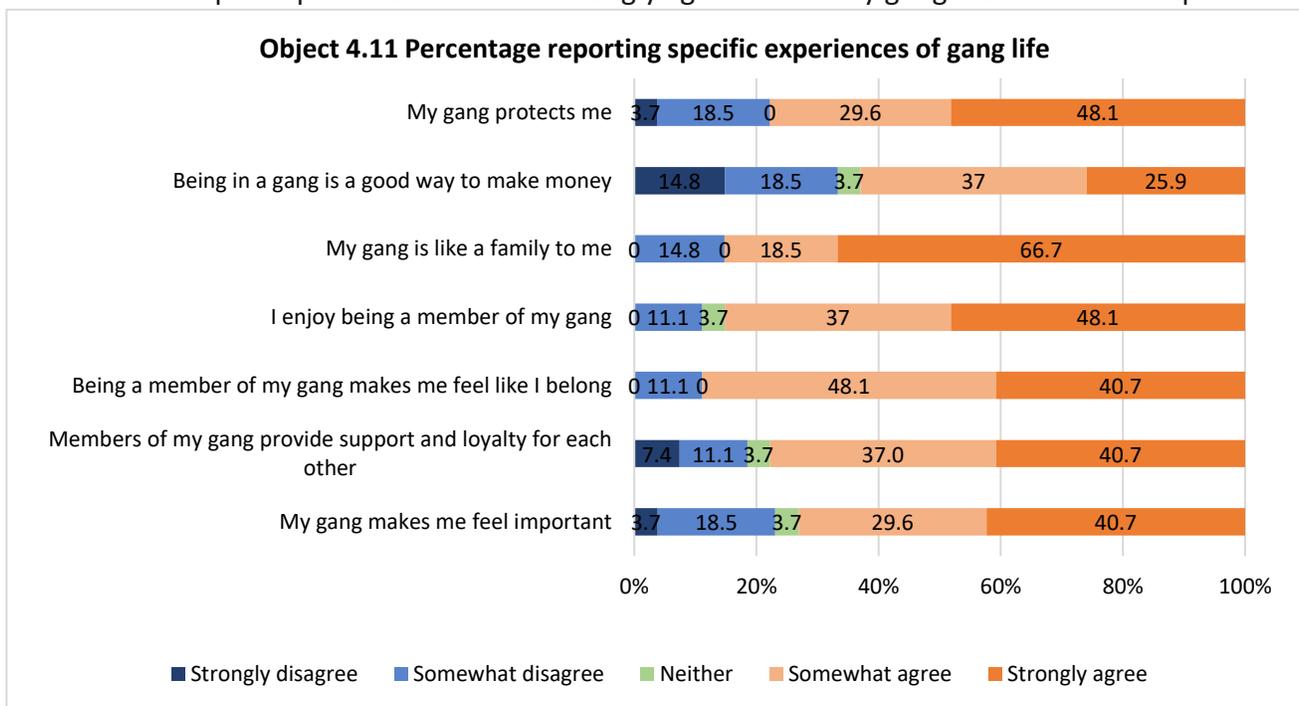
- Being a member of a gang makes me feel like I belong
- My gang protects me

Possible responses included:

- Strongly agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly disagree

Overall, the responses of participants in these interviews suggest that the gang provides a significant source of emotional support and enjoyment to gang-involved individuals.

- 85.2% of participants either somewhat or strongly agreed that “My gang is like a family to me”
- 85.1% of participants either somewhat or strongly agreed that “I enjoy being a member of my gang”
- 88.8% of participants either somewhat or strongly agreed that “Being a member of my gang makes me feel like I belong”
- 77.7% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that “Members of my gang provide support and loyalty for each other”
- 70.3% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that “My gang makes me feel important”



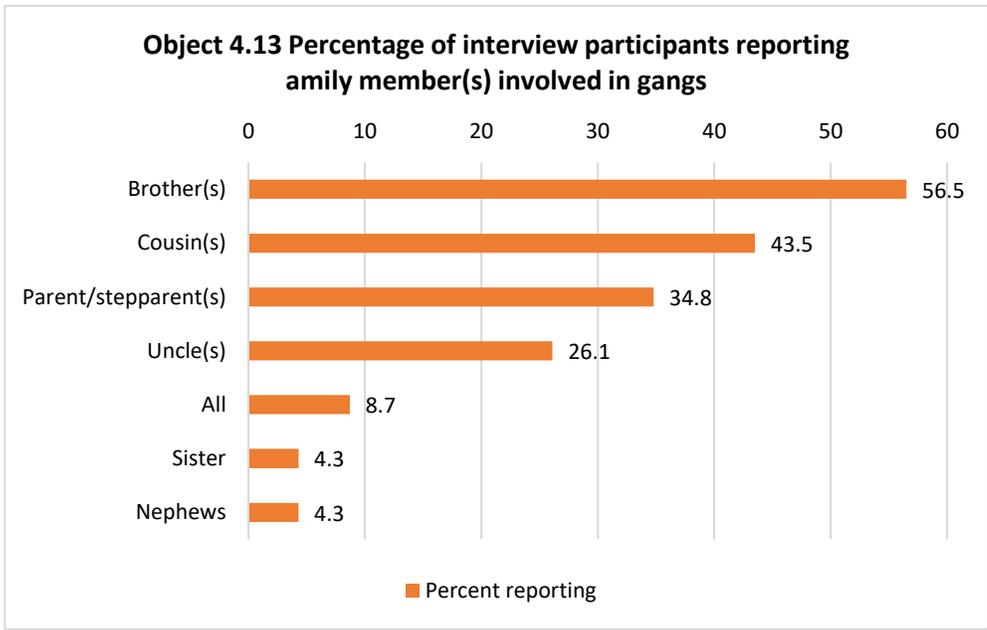
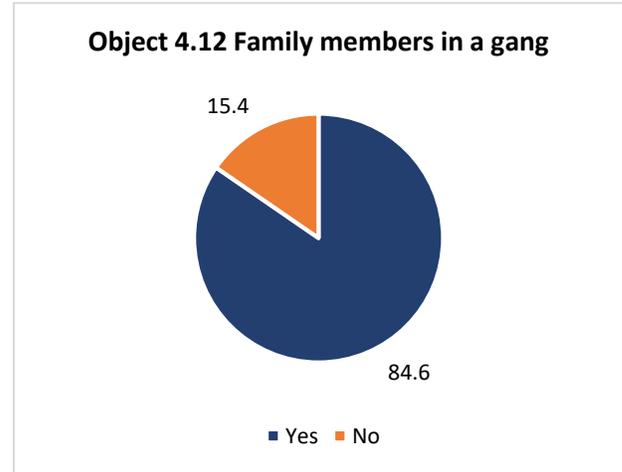
- 77.7% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that “My gang protects me”

While most participants (62.9%) expressed that they somewhat or strongly agree that being in a gang is a good way to make money, this is a lower rate of agreement than the responses to other statements. The strongest agreement by participants was expressed to statements regarding the family aspect of gang life, and the role of the gang in providing protection/safety. These are significant roles in a young person’s life that for the gang members who were interviewed for this report are played by the gang.

### Family gang involvement (n=26)

Most of the individuals (84.6%) who participated in these interviews reported that they have family members involved in gangs. A total of 22 individuals reported having family members involved in gangs, and most reported multiple family members involved in a gang. Two individuals reported that their entire family is involved in a gang.

The most common family members reported by participants are brother(s), cousin(s), parent/stepparent(s), and uncle(s). It is significant that such a large percentage of respondents have family members in gangs, including more than one-third who have a parent, step-parent or all family members involved in a gang. This suggests that at least some gangs in Tacoma are multigenerational.



**38.5% of all interview participants reported having a parent, stepparent or all family members involved in a gang.**

While 84.6% of participants reporting having one or more family members involved in a gang, less than one in five (18.5%) participants listed having a family member in a gang as one of the reasons that they joined a gang.

**Over half of all interview participants have a sibling involved in a gang.**

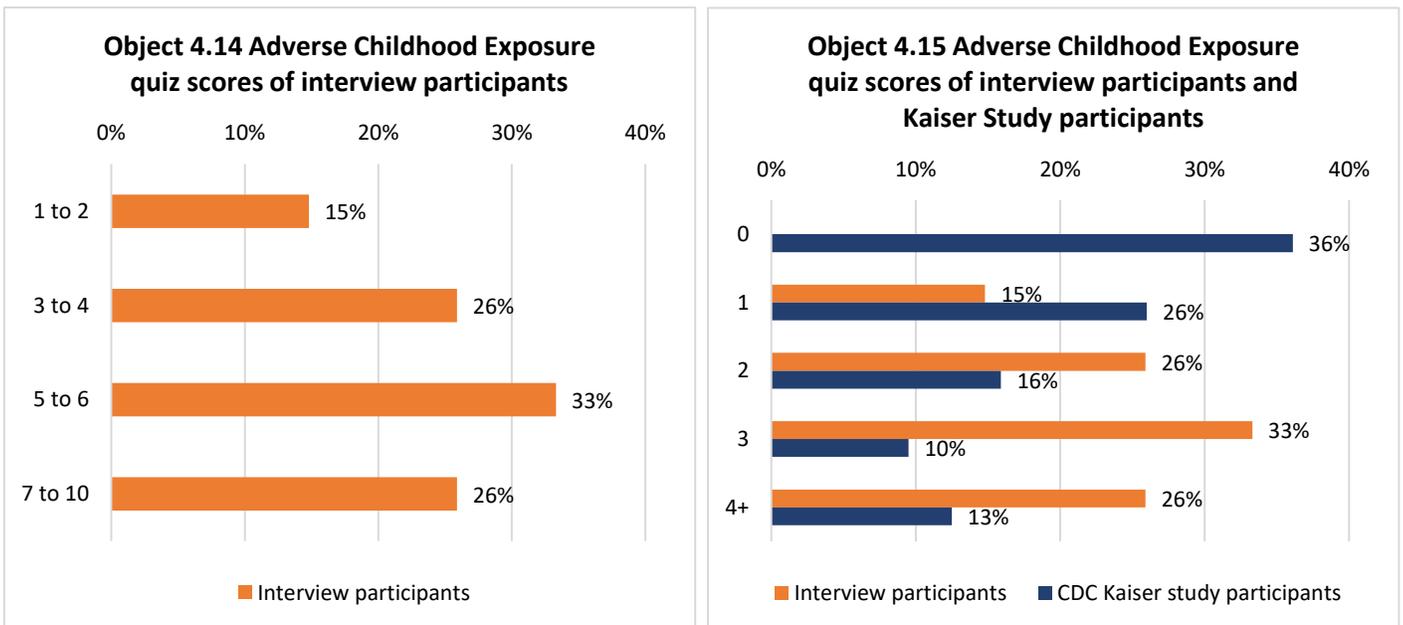
### Trauma exposure

To measure interview participants trauma exposure, questions from the Adverse Childhood Experiences quiz were incorporated into the interview. The Adverse Childhood Experiences quiz is comprised of ten questions (see Appendix C) which measure exposure to adverse experiences in the areas of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction prior to the age of 18. The CDC Kaiser ACE Study found “a graded dose response between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes across the

life course” (Centers for Disease Control, 2016). Higher ACE scores are directly correlated with a wide range of health and behavioral/mental health issues. For instance, an ACE score of 7 increased the odds that an individual would attempt suicide by 31 times compared to a person with an ACE score of zero (Dube et. al, 2001). While ACE scores have not been studied in relation to gang joining, studies using the ACE instrument have found that ACE exposure is correlated to higher rates of smoking, drug use, heavy alcohol use, poor educational and employment outcomes, incarceration and involvement in violence as both a perpetrator and victim (Baglivio, et. al., 2015). Interview participants reported high levels of adverse childhood experiences:

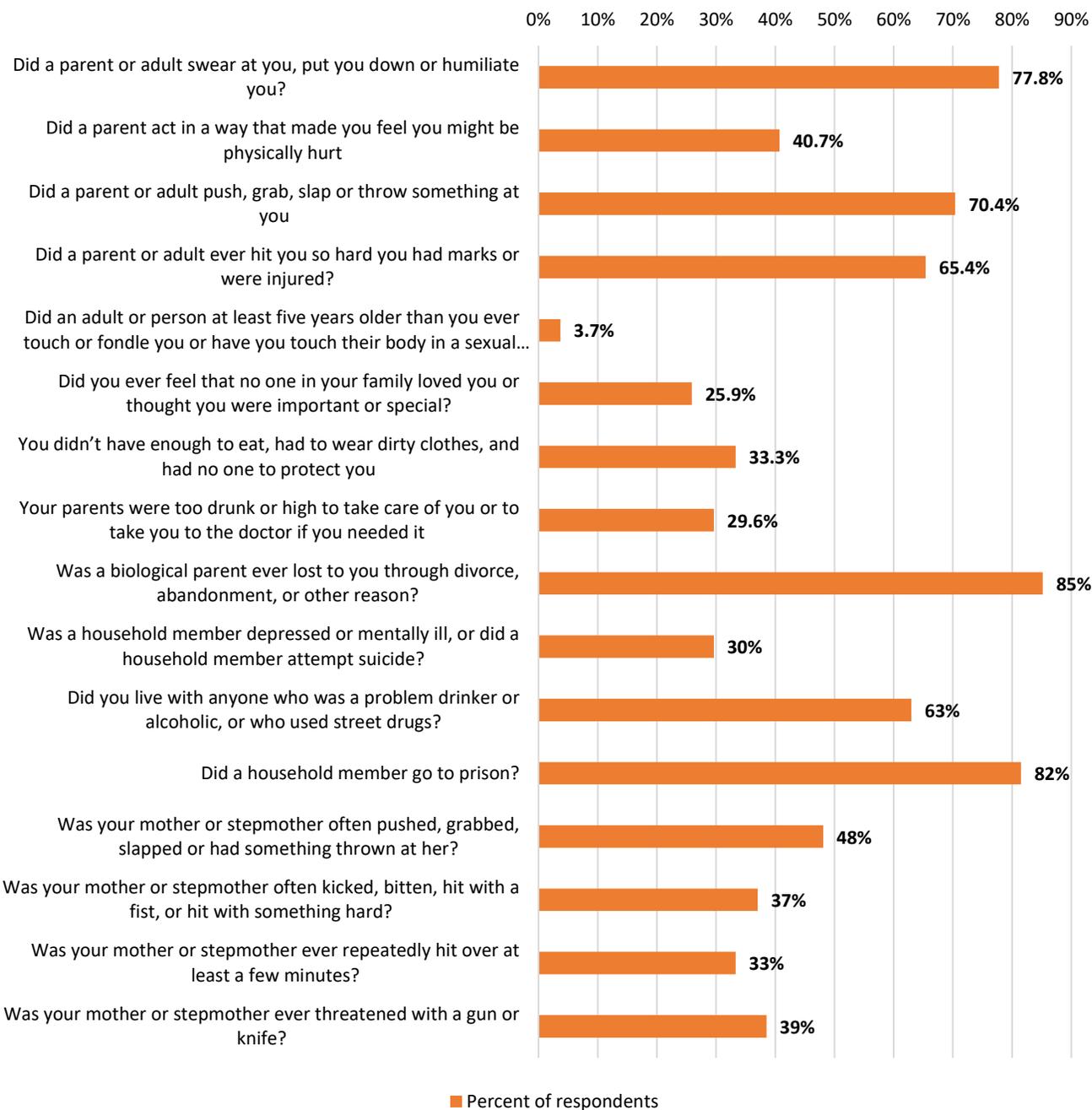
- One-third (33.3% reported exposure to five or six adverse childhood experiences
- One-fourth (25.9%) reported exposure to 7 to 10 adverse childhood experiences

For perspective, participants’ ACE scores were compared with the prevalence of ACE exposure among the CDC-Kaiser ACE study sample group. While less than one fourth (22%) of the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study sample group reported an ACE score of 3 or above, 85.1% of interview participants reported an ACE score of three or above. The charts below show the Distribution of ACE scores across the interview participants in comparison to the CDC-Kaiser ACE sample group.



Interview participants were most likely to report verbal/emotional/physical abuse occurring before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Most participants (85.2%) reported losing a biological parent through death/divorce abandonment and 81.5% of participants reported that a family member had been incarcerated. Over one-third of participants reported witnessing some form of domestic violence against their mother/stepmother. Sexual abuse was the least reported adverse childhood experience (3.7%).

**Object 4.16 Percentage of interview participants by specific adverse childhood experiences**



The high level of exposure to adverse childhood experiences by interview participants suggests that gang-involved individuals in Tacoma may be highly at-risk for long-term behavioral, mental health and other health risks. Research also suggests that individuals experiencing behavior problems related to ACE exposure are more prone to school suspension/expulsion, drop-out, and difficulties maintaining employment. These conclusions are supported by data in the following section.

### SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS

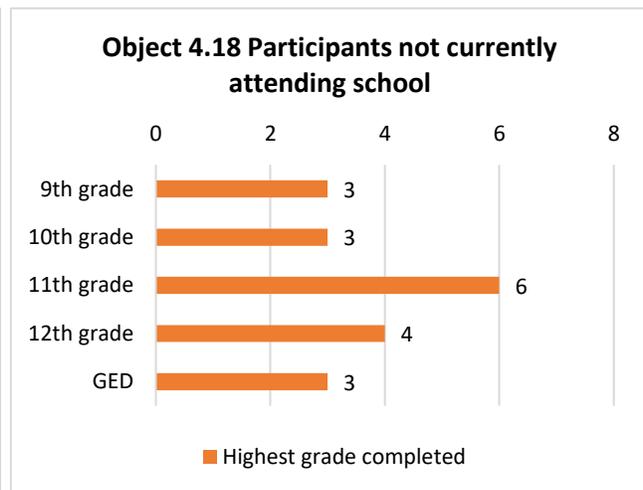
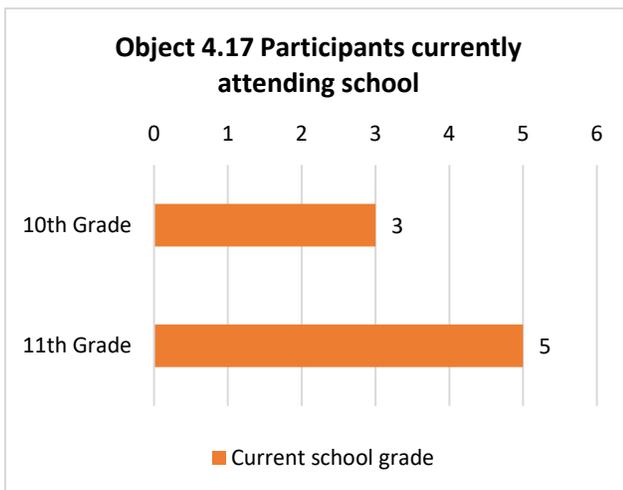
School plays a major role in the lives of young people and in their long-term economic prospects. A little less than one third of interview participants (29.6%) reported that they are currently attending school. All the participants who are currently in school are either in the 10th grade (37.5%) or 11th grade (62.5%).

**44.4% of all interview participants have dropped out of school.**

Over two-thirds of participants (70.4%) are not attending school at present. Of those:

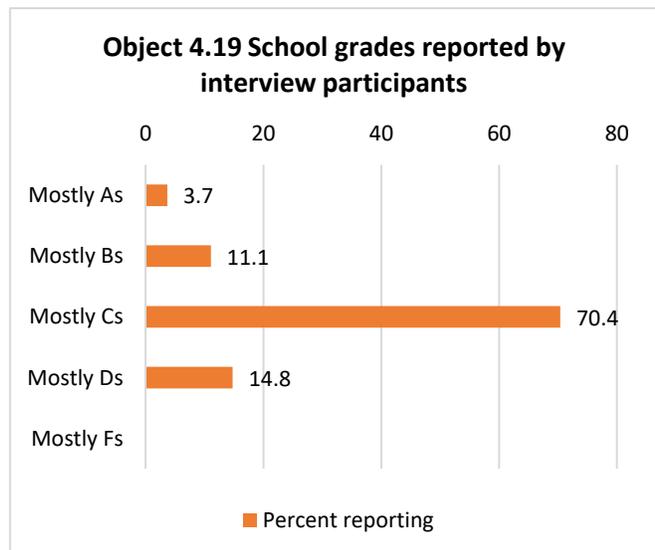
- 29.6% have graduated with a high school diploma or GED
- 60.4% reported that they have dropped out of school.

Participants were asked to describe their school grades. Most (85.2%) reported performing at an average or above average level. The most common response from participants (70.5%) was that their grades were mostly Cs. The data was analyzed to determine if the reported grades of individuals who



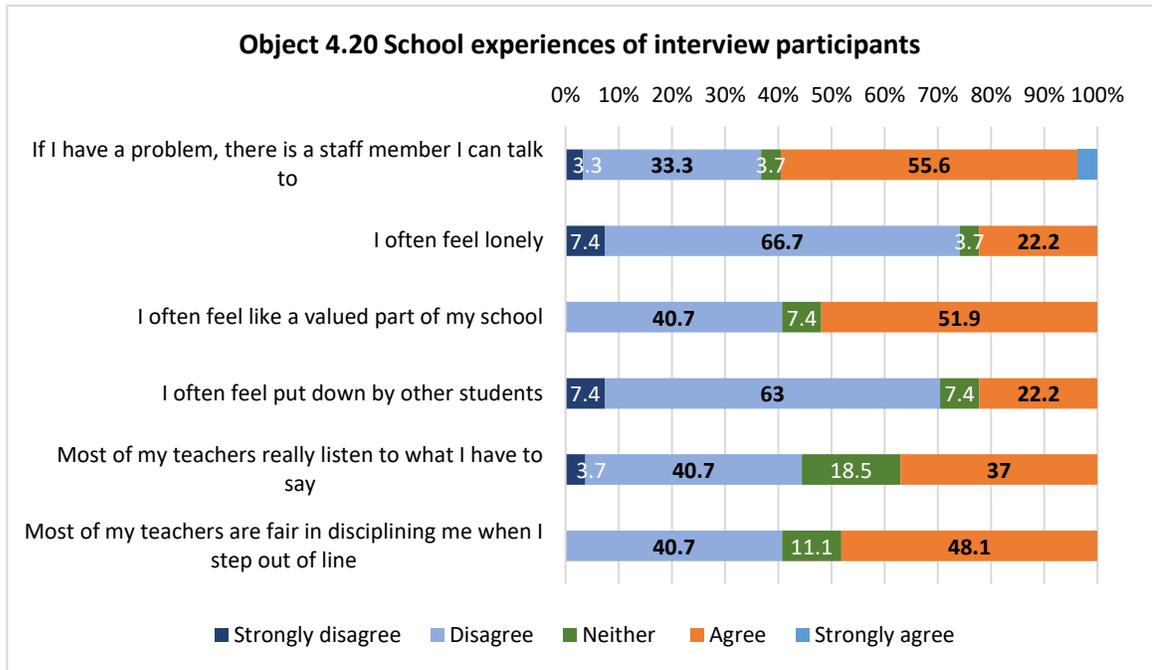
reported grades of individuals who are currently attending or completed school, but no substantive differences were observed.

dropped out of school were different from the



### School attachment and bonding

Several research studies have identified a correlation between a low level of school commitment/attachment (Klein and Maxson, 2010), a poor school climate/low level of connectedness to school (Howell, 2010), and gang involvement. A caring school climate has also been identified as a protective factor for all types of at-risk youth behavior (Search Institute, 2011). To assess the exposure



of interview participants to school-based risk and protective factors, participants were also asked about their social connection to and positive/negative experiences in the learning environment. Interview participants reported a mix of positive and negative experiences at school.

- 55.6% of participants agreed that if they have/had a problem, there is a staff member in their school that they can talk to
- 51.9% of participants agreed that they often feel like a valued part of their school
- 74.1% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that they often feel lonely
- 70.4% of participants disagreed that they often felt put down by other students
- 48.1% of participants agreed that teachers are fair in disciplining them

**44.4%** Do not feel that teachers really listen to them

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**40.7%** Do not feel like a valued part of their school

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**40.7%** Do not feel that teachers are fair in disciplining them

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**36.6%** Do not have a staff person they can talk to if they have a problem

However, significant percentages of participants reported low levels of attachment to school, a perception that they are not valued at school, and a lack of emotional support at school while they are/were attending:

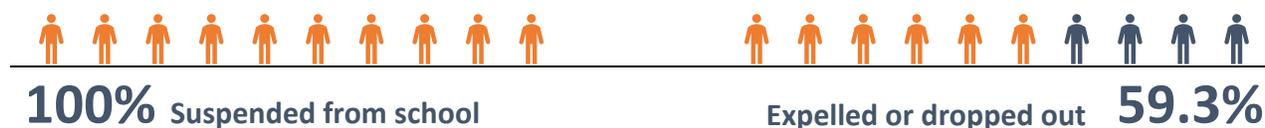
- 36.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is/was a staff member they can talk to if they have a problem
- 40.7% of participants did not agree that they feel/felt like a valued part of their school
- 44.4% of participants did not agree that teachers really listen(ed) to what they have to say
- 40.7% of participants did not agree that teachers are/were fair in disciplining them
- 22.2% of participants are/were often put down by other students
- 22.2% of participants often feel/felt lonely at school

These responses suggest that between 36.6% and 44.4% of interview participants have/had low school attachment and bonding, and lack/lacked exposure to the protective effects of a caring school climate.

### School suspension, expulsion and drop-out

Every interview participant (100%) reported being suspended from school. More than half (59.3%) reported being expelled from school, and the same percentage (59.3%) reported dropping out of school, although several later returned to high school or a GED program.

Many interview participants began experiencing school suspension in their early elementary years, and the percentage of participants experiencing suspensions increased progressively as they entered their late elementary school, middle and high school years, peaking in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The earliest year reported for school expulsions was 6<sup>th</sup> grades, and school expulsions peaked in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.



- 74.1% of interview participants were suspended in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and one-third (29.6%) were expelled.
- 55.6% of interview participants were suspended in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and 18.5% were expelled
- 51.9% of interview participants were suspended during 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 11.1% were expelled.

The most common reason participants reported for being suspended or expelled from school is fighting.

For suspended participants (n=27):

- 88.9% were suspended for fighting

For expelled participants (n=16):

- 68.8% were expelled for fighting

**Table 4.3 Reasons for school suspensions\* (n=27)**

Reason	Percent
Fighting	88.9%
Getting in trouble/disrespect	11.1%
Weapon	7.4%
Gang activity	7.4%
Marijuana	3.7%

\*Several participants reported multiple suspensions/reasons

- 18.8% were expelled for gang activity
- 12.5% were expelled for marijuana

Unfortunately, this interview did not explore the timeline of interview participants having school behavioral issues. So, it is impossible to know if these behavioral issues preceded or were caused by gang involvement. However, every interview participant reported being suspended at least once during their educational career suggesting a strong correlation between school behavioral issues and gang involvement in Tacoma.

Gang activity was one of the top reasons that individuals reported dropping out of school, along with a lack of desire to attend.

- One third (31.3%) left school because of their own gang involvement
- One third (31.3%) left school because they no longer wanted to attend
- One in five (18.8%) left school because they were suspended/expelled and did not return.

This data on school experiences of gang involved individuals suggests a progression of school behavioral issues that for many began in elementary school and increased in frequency and seriousness through middle and high school, combined with other factors that lead many youth and young adults to choose the streets over school. The high rate of school drop-out among the group that was interviewed is also probably at least one of the causes of low rates of employment among the individuals that were interviewed.

Interview participants who have attended school in the past year were asked about the frequency of gang activity in and around the school setting. A little less than half of interview participants had been in school within the past year. However, a high percentage of those who did respond to this question reported observing gang activity at school or on school grounds on a regular basis:

- 69.3% reported knowing about gang members selling drugs at school on a daily or weekly basis
- 69.2% reported knowing about gang intimidation at school on a daily or weekly basis
- 50% reported knowing about fights between members of different gangs at school on a daily or weekly basis
- 46.2% reported knowing about gang recruiting at school on a daily or weekly basis
- 46.2% reported knowing about gang initiations at school on a daily or weekly basis

**Table 4.4 Reasons for school expulsions\* (n=16)**

Reason	Percent
Fighting	68.8%
Gang activity	18.8%
Marijuana	12.5%
Assault on teacher	6.3%
Felony charge	6.3%
Weapon	6.3%
Fireworks	6.3%

\*Several participants reported multiple reasons for their expulsion

**Table 4.5 Reasons for school drop-out\* (n=16)**

Reason	Percent
Gang involvement	31.3%
Did not want to attend	31.3%
Suspended/expelled and did not return	18.8%
Financial need	6.3%
Incarcerated	6.3%
Missed too many credits	6.3%

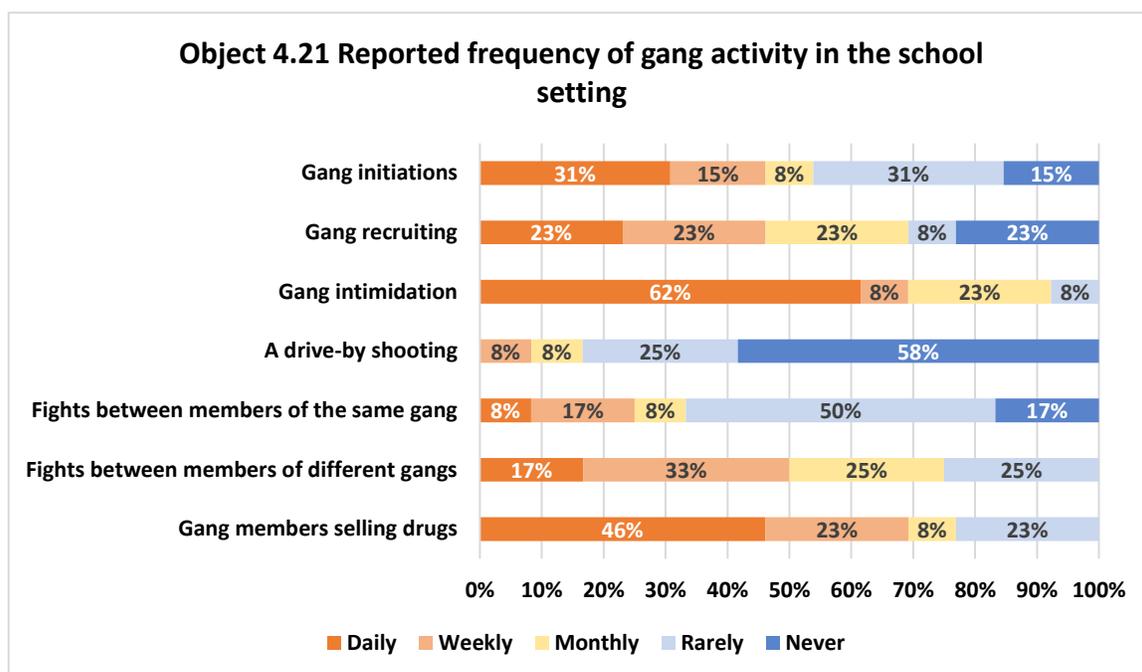
\*Several participants reported multiple reasons for dropping out of school

- 25% reported knowing about fights between members of the same gang on a daily or weekly basis.

**Table 4.6 Responses to question: “If you were in school during the past year, how often have you known about the following activities at your school or on school grounds?”**

Gang activity	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	Total responses
Gang members selling drugs	46.2%	23.1%	7.7%	23.1%	0.0%	13
Fights between members of different gangs	16.7%	33.3%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	12
Fights between members of the same gang	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	50.0%	16.7%	12
A drive-by shooting	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%	25.0%	58.3%	12
Gang intimidation	61.5%	7.7%	23.1%	7.7%	0.0%	13
Gang recruiting	23.1%	23.1%	23.1%	7.7%	23.1%	13
Gang initiations	30.8%	15.4%	7.7%	30.8%	15.4%	13

**Object 4.21 Reported frequency of gang activity in the school setting**



### Employment experiences

Three-fourths of the interview participants, ages 16 and older, (75%) have been employed at some point, but only 41.7% were employed at the time of the survey. Of those who were employed, 80% have full-time employment status, and 20% work part-time. Most individuals (80%) work as unskilled labor, in warehouses and in retail. One in five (20%) work in a skilled employment role (peer support specialist, auto body repair).

**Table 4.6 Employment status of interview participants, ages 16 and over**

	Ever employed	Currently employed
Yes	18 75%	10 41.7%
No	6 25%	14 58.3%

## Community experiences

To understand the community conditions that might be experienced by gang-involved individuals, respondents were asked a series of questions about their neighborhood and the larger community.

Interview participants were also asked if they believe that there is a gang problem in their neighborhood and in the city of Tacoma. Most (85.2%) of participants reported that there is a gang problem in their neighborhood. All (100%) reported that they believe there is a gang problem in the city of Tacoma.

First, respondents were asked if there are areas inside and outside of their neighborhood that they cannot go because of their gang ties. One in five (22.2%) reported that their movements inside their neighborhood are restricted due to their gang ties. Two thirds reported that there are areas of the community that they cannot go because of their gang ties.

**Table 4.7 Are there places you can't go inside/outside your neighborhood because of your gang ties?**

	Yes	No
Places you can't go inside your neighborhood?	22.2%	88.8%
Places you can't go outside of your neighborhood?	63%	37%
Total responses: 27		

Interview participants were also asked about the frequency of criminal and gang activity in their neighborhood.

- 100% of participants reported that gang members sell drugs in their neighborhood on a daily or weekly basis.
- 76% of participants reported that fights between members of different gangs occur in their neighborhood on a daily or weekly basis
- 74% of participants reported that gang intimidation occurs in their neighborhood on a daily or weekly basis
- 66% of participants reported that gang recruitment occurs in their neighborhood on a daily or weekly basis
- 63% of participants reported that gang initiations occur in their neighborhood on a daily to weekly basis
- 66% of participants reported that robbery occurs in their neighborhood on a daily to weekly basis
- 22% of participants reported that a person is shot in their neighborhood on a weekly basis
- 19% reported that a drive-by shooting occurs in their neighborhood on a weekly basis

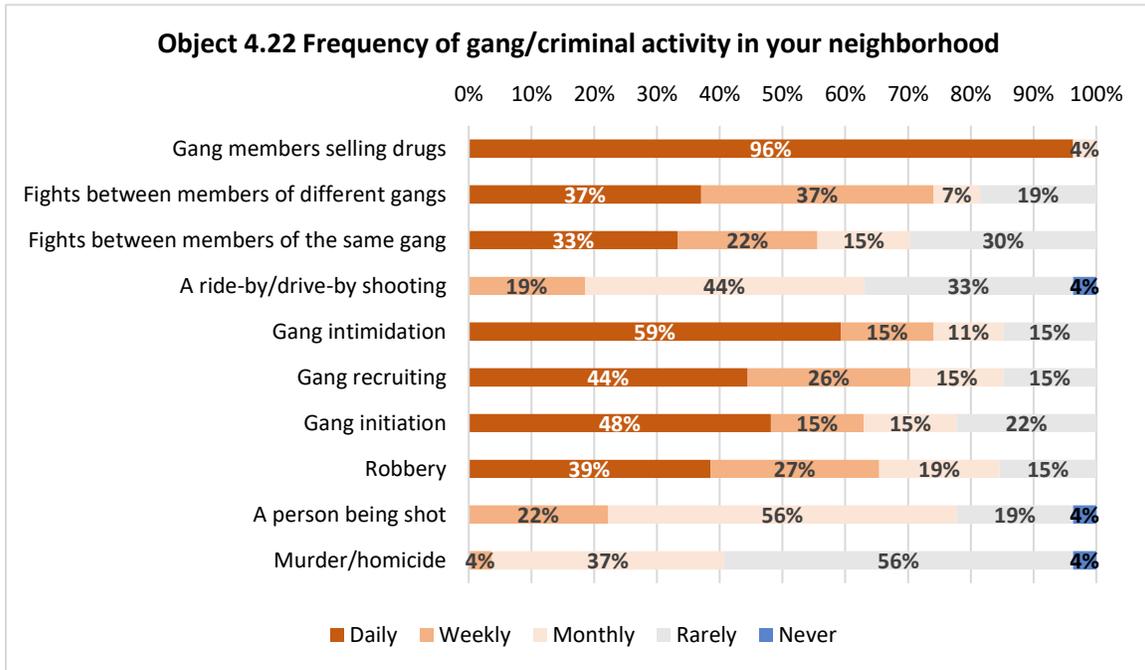
**85.2%**

**believe there is a gang problem in their neighborhood**

**100%**

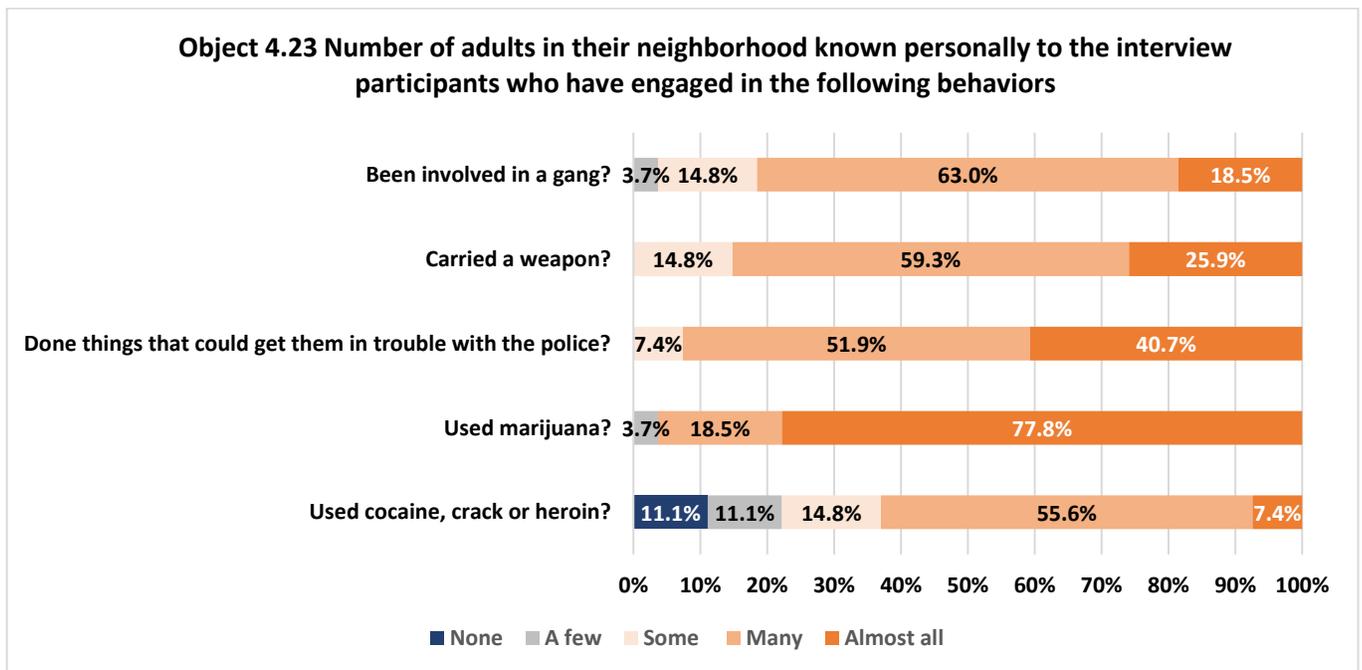
**believe there is a gang problem in Tacoma**

- 4% reported that homicide occurs in their neighborhood on a weekly basis



It is very difficult for human beings to accurately recollect the frequency of criminal events retroactively. However, these responses do indicate that many of the gang-involved individuals who were interviewed believe that criminal activity, including very serious and violent crimes, occur in their neighborhood on a regular basis.

Interview participants were also asked about the behavior of adults in their neighborhood. All reported high levels of adult involvement in drug use and crime.



- 81.5% of participants reported that many or almost all the adults they know in their neighborhood were involved in a gang in the past year
- 85.2% of participants reported that many or almost all adults they know in their neighborhood have carried a weapon in the past year
- 92.6% of participants reported that many or almost all adults they know in their neighborhood have done things that could get them in trouble with the police in the past year
- 63% of participants reported that many or almost all adults they know in their neighborhood have used cocaine, crack or heroin in the past year.

The gang-involved individuals who were interviewed also reported high levels of personal victimization in the past year:



The interview did not collect data on the lifetime rate of serious injuries, but many individuals noted that they had been shot or stabbed over their life course. One in five (18.5%) reported that they had been shot or stabbed in the past year.

### CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Interview participants were asked about their involvement with and knowledge of criminal and antisocial behavior to measure the scope of level and type of gang involvement in these activities locally.

#### Access and use of alcohol, drugs and weapons

Almost all individuals who were interviewed reported that it would be easy or very easy to obtain a variety of drugs and weapons.

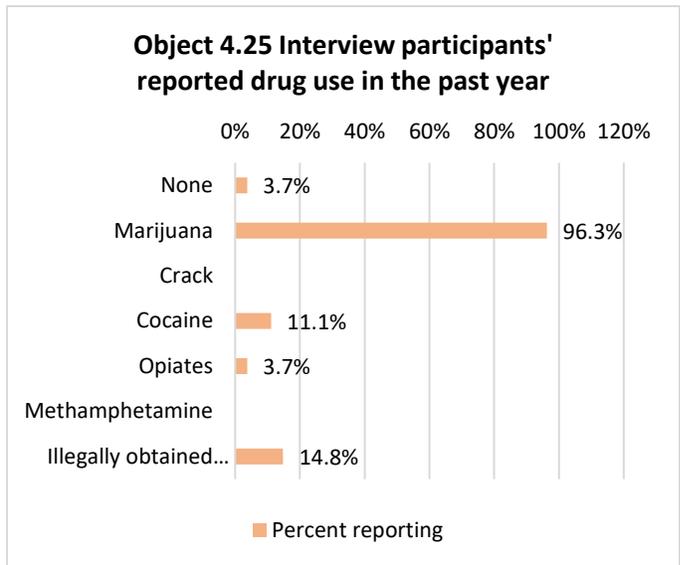
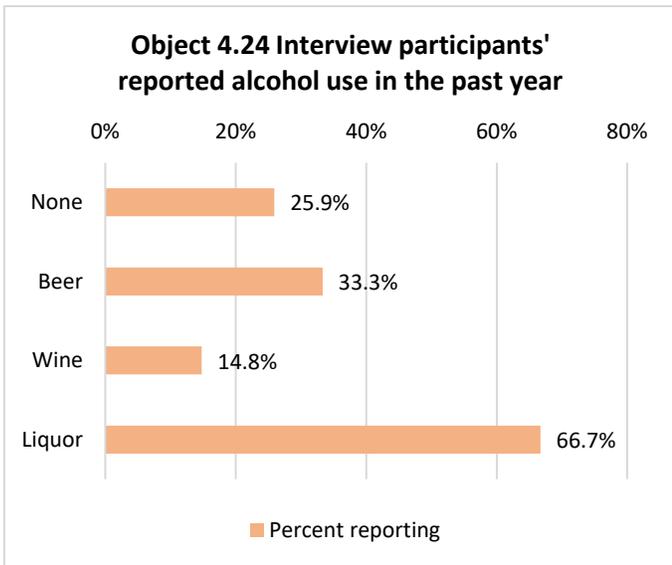
#### % of interview participants who reported that it would be easy or very easy to obtain:



Interview participants were also asked about drug and alcohol usage. Participants were more likely to report using marijuana than any type of alcohol usage, and marijuana use was also far more common than other types of drug use.

- One-fourth (25.9%) of interview participants reported they did not use alcohol in the past year

- Two-thirds (66.7%) reported drinking liquor in the past year
- 96.3% reported using marijuana in the past year
- No interview participants reported using crack or methamphetamine



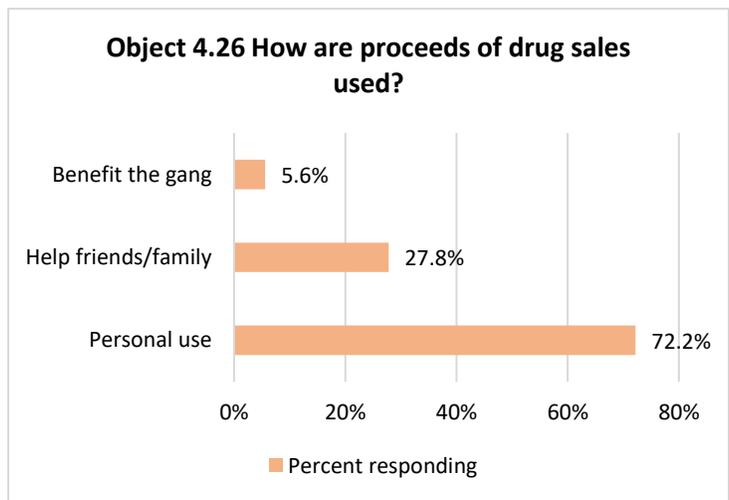
Most interview participants reported frequent use of drugs and/or alcohol, with 81.4% of respondents reporting that they use alcohol or drugs once a day or more.

**Reported frequency of drug/alcohol use by interview participants**



**Criminal Involvement**

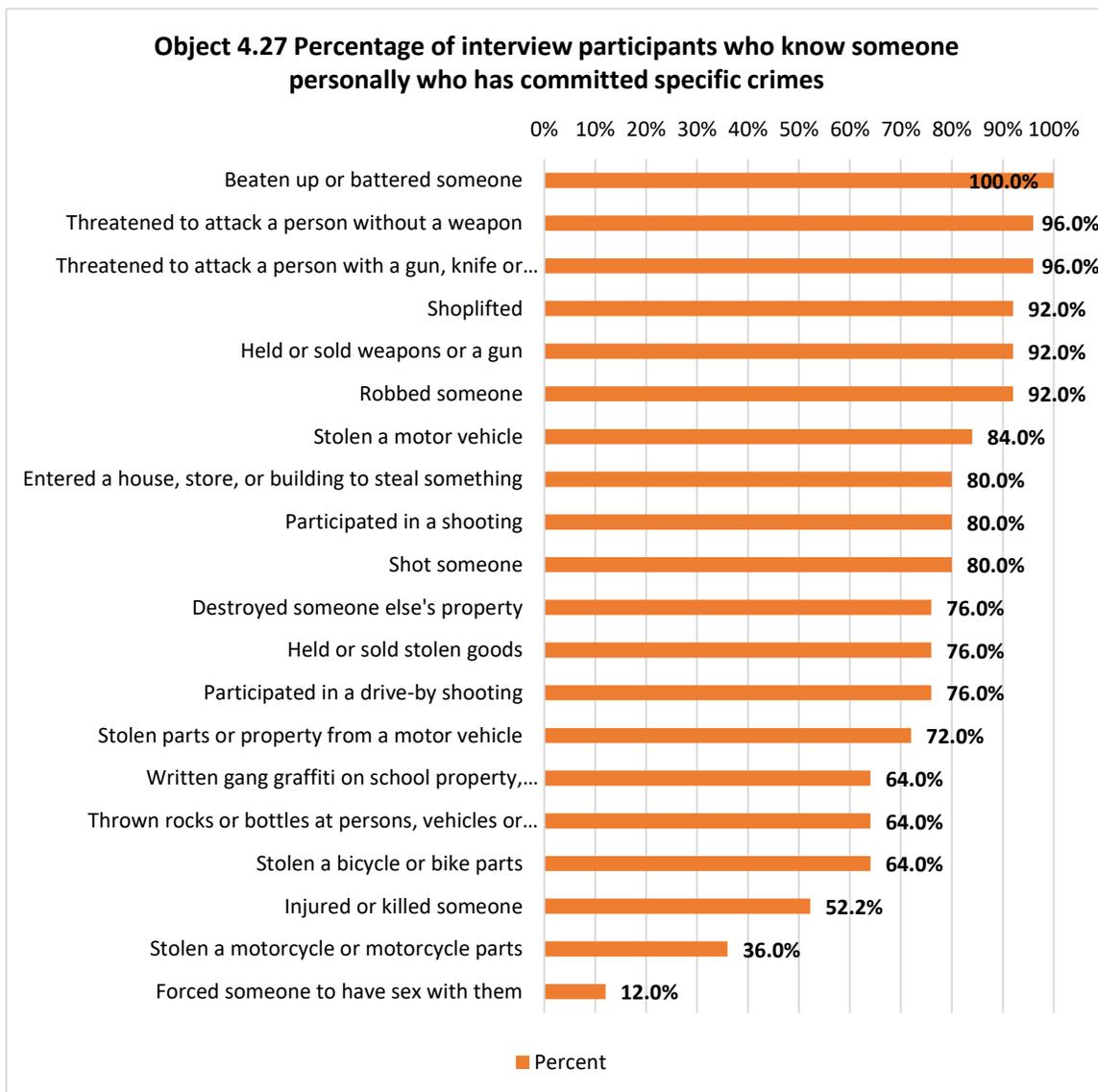
Interview participants were asked about criminal involvement in several different way. First, as described above, they were asked about their level of access to illicit items such as weapons and drugs. Second, interview participants were asked directly if they are involved in drug sales. Almost two-thirds of interview participants (65.4%) of reported that they sell drugs. Participants were not asked to specify the types of drugs that they sell, but they were asked how the proceeds from these drug sales are used. One-third of participants (33.3%) chose not to respond to this question. Most participants who did respond to this question reported that the proceeds of drug sales go toward their personal use (72.2%) or to help friends/family (27.8%). Only one participant reported that proceeds of drug sales go to benefit the gang.



Lastly, interview participants were asked about the criminal activity of their friends and associates. This question is designed to provide an inside look at the types of crimes in which local gang members may be involved. The responses to these questions indicate that a high percentage of the individuals who participated in these interviews associate personally with people who commit crimes, including serious and violent crimes. A total of 25 participants responded to this question.

- 100% of interview participants knew someone personally who had beaten up or battered someone.
- 96% knew someone who had threatened someone with a gun, knife or other weapon
- 92% knew someone who held/sold weapons or a gun
- 84% knew someone who had stolen a motor vehicle
- 80% knew someone who had participated in a shooting/shot someone
- 52% knew someone who had injured/killed someone

Respondents were least likely to state that they knew someone personally who had committed rape.

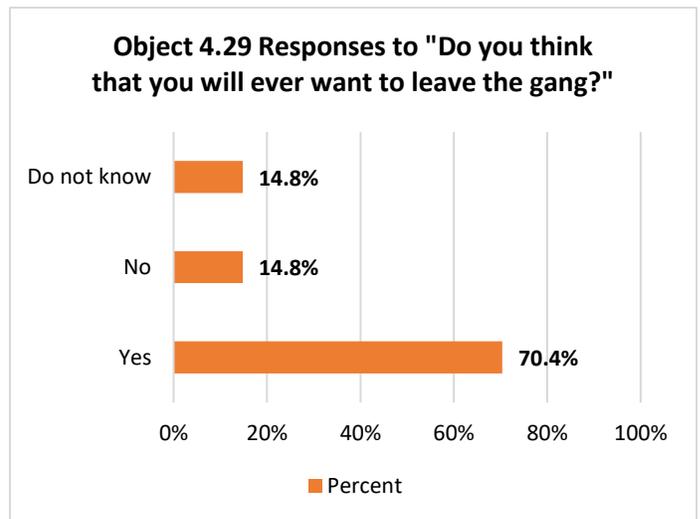
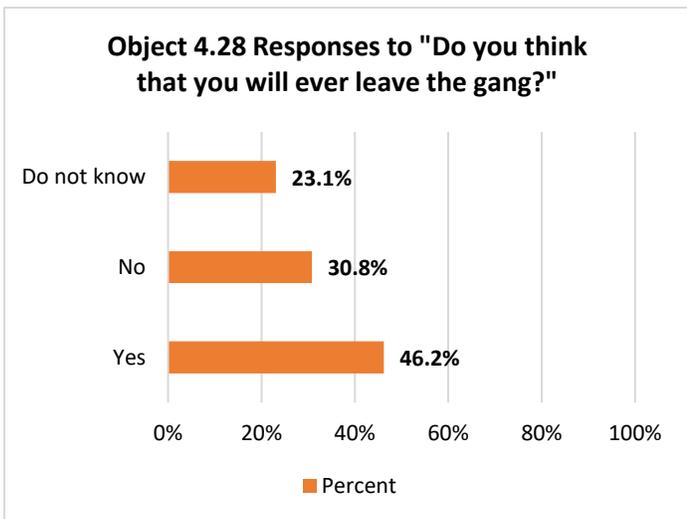


### Interactions with law enforcement

Participants were also asked about interactions with law enforcement over the past year. More than half (59.3%) of interview participants had interactions with law enforcement. Two-thirds of respondents (62.3%) felt they were not treated fairly during these interactions.

### SOLUTIONS TO GANG ISSUES

During interviews, participants were asked if they believe they will ever leave the gang, and if they will ever want to leave the gang. Participants were much more likely to respond that they are likely to want to leave the gang (70.4%) than to respond that they will leave the gang (46.2%).



Participants were asked what factors might make them think of leaving their gang. The top three responses include family responsibilities, getting a job, and becoming a parent. Participants were also asked what supports or services might help them leave the gang.

The top three responses were:

- A job (61.8%)
- Relocate (14.7%)
- Support (14.7%)

**Table 4.8 What might make you think of leaving your gang?**

Family responsibilities	51.9%
Get a job	37%
Become a parent	22.2%
Move out of the neighborhood	18.5%
Get married	18.5%
Get into a school or educational program	18.5%
Go to jail or prison	14.8%
Advice or pressure from a family member	7.4%
Death	7.4%
Decide the life isn't for me	7.4%

### What would help you leave the gang?



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Participants were also asked what they believe should be done about gangs in Tacoma. Responses included:

- More youth programs (52.4%)
- More jobs/opportunity (14.3%)
- Education programs/opportunities (9.5%)
- Youth activities (9.5%)
- Family activities (4.8%)
- Community centers (4.8%)
- Empower the youth (4.8%)

Participants also made recommendations of programs/strategies to keep younger youth out of gangs:

- Mentoring programs
- Family programs
- Youth groups/activities
- Youth sports programs
- Employment programs
- Give them something to live for