# Section 5 – Community Perceptions Data

This section discusses the perceptions and experiences of people who live and work in Tacoma. A combination of strategies, including focus groups and online surveys were used to gather feedback from community residents, community leaders, youth-serving agency personnel, educators and gang-involved individuals. This report section will cover the perceptions of community residents, leaders, and youth-serving agency personnel. Because of the amount of information collected. this section of the report is divided topically:

- Community resident surveys – Pages 97
- Community leader surveys – Pages 109
- Agency personnel surveys – Pages 117
- Public safety personnel surveys – Pages 125
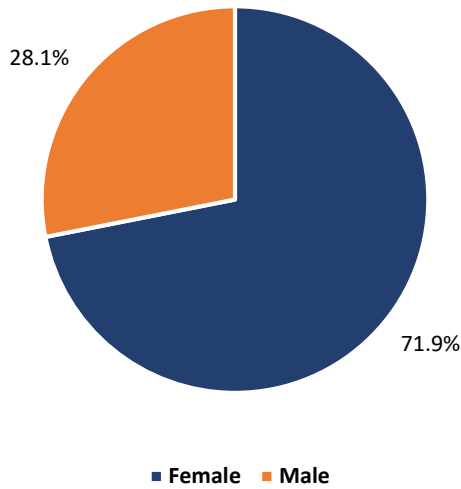- Comparative analysis – Pages 131

COMMUNITY RESIDENT SURVEYS

An online survey of community residents was conducted from August 2018 – November 2019, and 673 individuals responded to the survey. Responses from individuals who indicated that they do not reside in Tacoma (53) were excluded from this analysis.
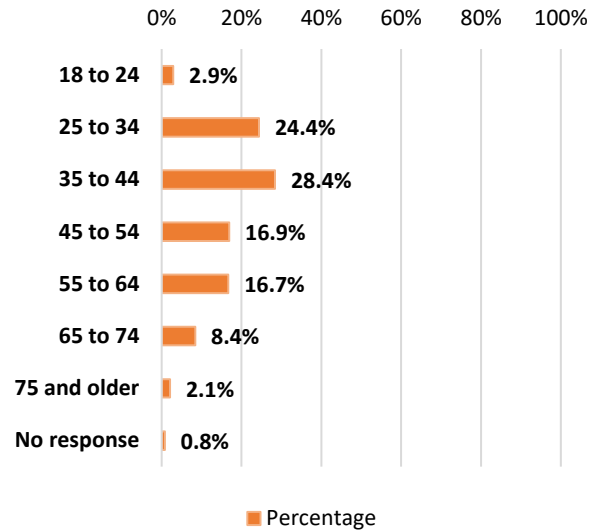
Survey respondents were not a representative sample of Tacoma residents. Most community resident survey respondents are white/Caucasian (78.9%), female (71.9%) and between the ages of 25 to 44 (52.8%). Demographics of resident respondents are shown below.

Table 5.1 Race/ethnicity of survey respondents
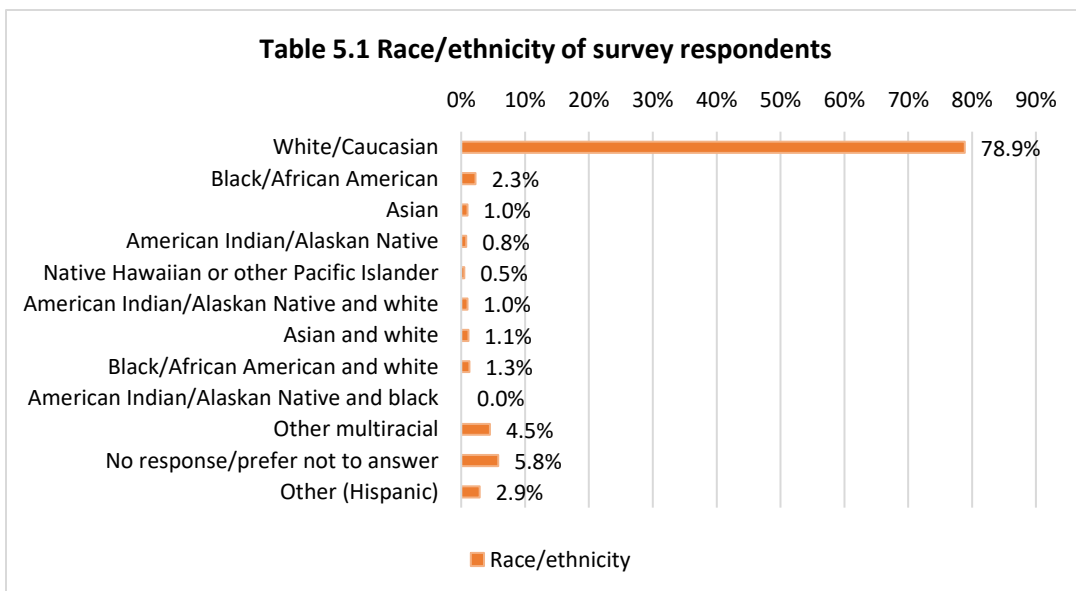
Object 5.1 Gender of community residents survey respondents

28.1%

71.9%

- Female
- Male

Object 5.2 Age of community resident survey respondents

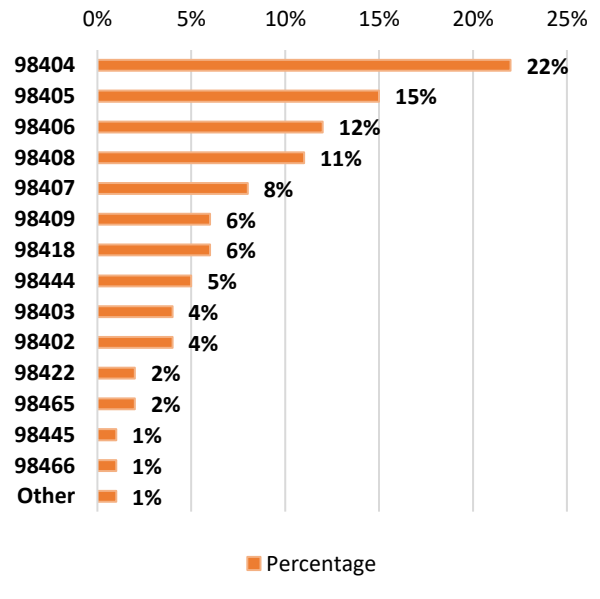| Age	Percentage
18 to 24	2.9%
25 to 34	24.4%
35 to 44	28.4%
45 to 54	16.9%
55 to 64	16.7%
65 to 74	8.4%
75 and older	2.1%
No response	0.8%

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 75 years of age. One-third (33.6%) were between the ages of 45 and 64. Fairly low response rates were obtained from individuals 18 to 24 years of age.

While Zip code boundaries do not match precisely with Tacoma neighborhood boundaries, they are close:

- One in five respondents (22%) live in Zip code 98404 (East Side neighborhood)
- 23% live in South End neighborhood (Zip codes 98418, 98444, 98445, and 98408).
- 26% live in West End or North End (Zip codes 98403, 98406, 98407, and 98465).
- Of respondents live in North End (Zip code 98403,
- 15% reside in Central neighborhood (Zip code 98405).
- 7% of respondents reside in South Tacoma (Zip codes 98406 and 98466).
- 4% of respondents reside in New Tacoma (Zip codes 98402 and 98421).
- 2% of respondents reside in North East (Zip 98422)

Object 5.3 Community resident survey respondents by ZIP code

| ZIP code	Percentage
98404	22%
98405	15%
98406	12%
98408	11%
98407	8%
98409	6%
98418	6%
98444	5%
98403	4%
98402	4%
98422	2%
98465	2%
98445	1%
98466	1%
Other	1%

Fairly good coverage of survey dissemination was achieved, although responses from New Tacoma and North East neighborhoods were somewhat limited.

This is likely due to the method of dissemination of the survey, which was provided to neighborhood councils; Safe Streets Tacoma; the Ministerial Alliance; and other local civic, governmental and non-profit organizations. Some organizations were more proactive in disseminating the survey to their constituency groups than others.

Many survey respondents are married (55%) and have children (61.7%).

Object 5.4 Community resident survey respondents, by location

Community resident survey respondents, by location
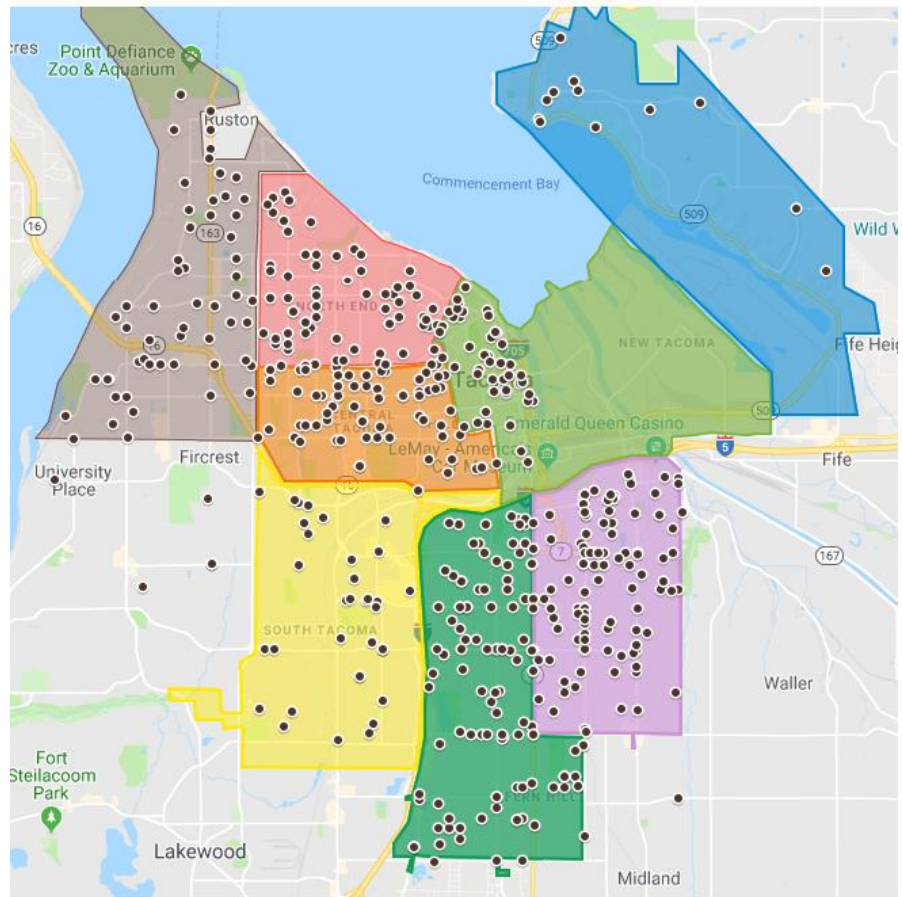
Object 5.5 Community resident survey respondents by marital status

- 26.5%
- 55.0%
- 8.1%
- 2.6%
- 4.8%
- 3.0%

■ Single ■ Married ■ Divorced
■ Widowed ■ Common law ■ Other
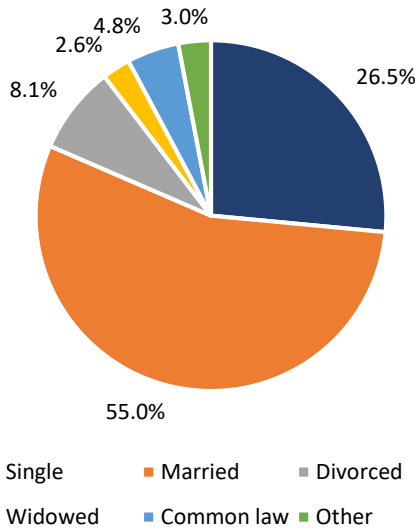
Object 5.6 Community resident survey respondent by number of children

	Percentage
None	36.5%
One child	18.7%
Two children	26.0%
Three children	10.7%
Four children	3.8%
Five children	1.7%
Six children	0.5%
Seven children	0.3%
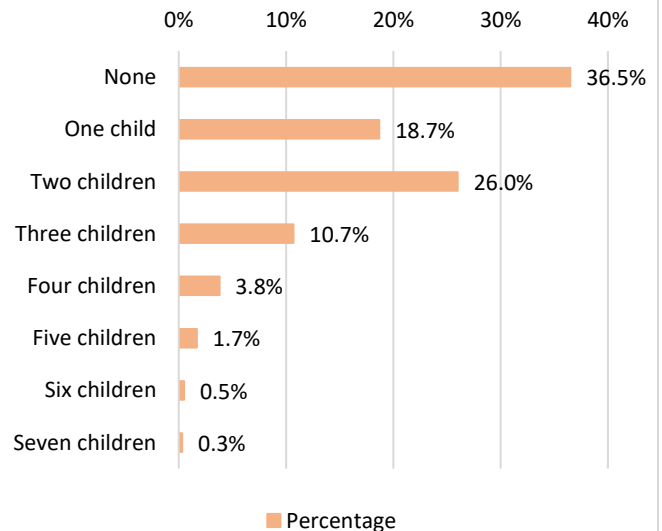
Neighborhood safety

Community residents were asked several questions about neighborhood safety. Most residents report that they feel safe or very safe in their neighborhood. However, a little more than one fourth of residents (27%) reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe.

Object 5.7 Residents' perceptions of safety in their neighborhood

How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?
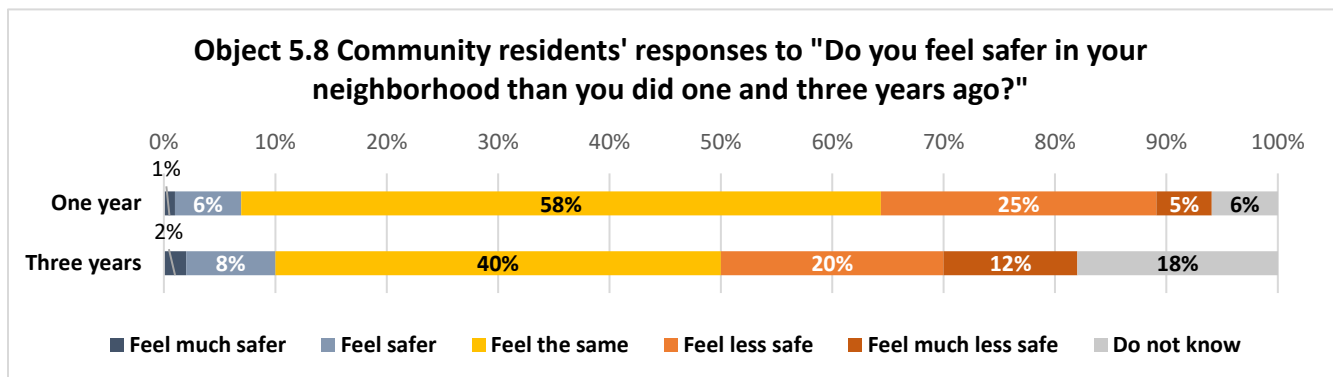| Very safe	Safe	Not Safe	Very unsafe	Do not know
10%	61%	22%	5%	1%
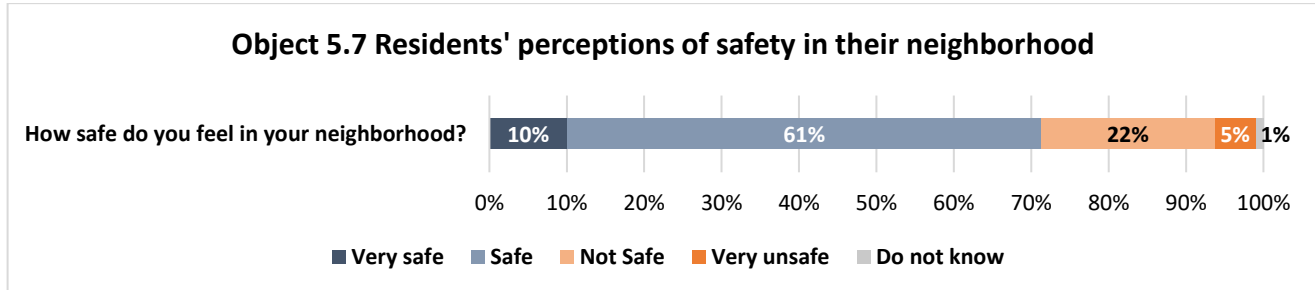
Residents were asked if their feelings of safety in their neighborhood have increased and decreased over the past one year and three years. The most common response to these questions is that residents feel the same in their neighborhood. However, 30% of residents feel less safe or much less safe in their neighborhood than they did one year ago, and 32% of residents feel less safe or much less safe than they did three years ago.

Object 5.8 Community residents' responses to "Do you feel safer in your neighborhood than you did one and three years ago?"

	Feel much safer	Feel safer	Feel the same	Feel less safe	Feel much less safe	Do not know
One year	1%	6%	58%	25%	5%	6%
Three years	2%	8%	40%	20%	12%	18%

It is of interest that the City of Tacoma conducted a community survey in January 2018. One finding from that survey is that white residents in Tacoma feel significantly safer than do black residents:

> *The majority of Tacoma's residents feel safe in Tacoma (85%), with 54% feeling somewhat safe and 31% feeling very safe. Black residents are more than twice as likely to feel "not very safe" in Tacoma (29%), compared to 10% of white residents and 4% of Hispanic residents. In total, 27% of residents or members of their households were victims of a crime within the past 12 months, of which 23% did not report the crime. Most commonly, people do not report crimes because they see it as a waste of time or that nothing would be done* (City of Tacoma, 2018).
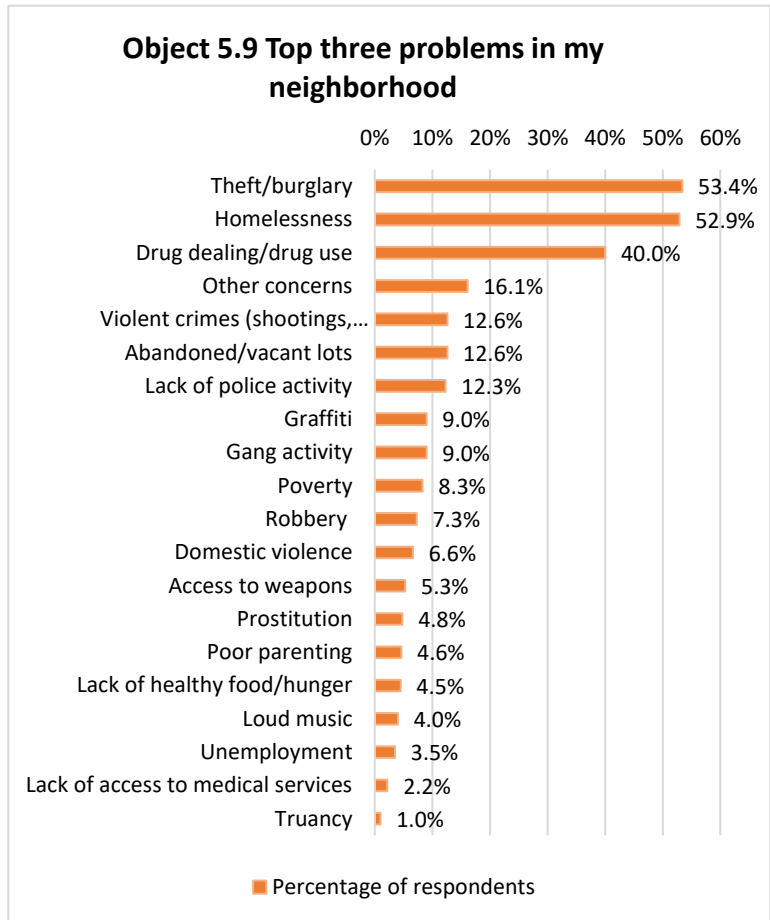
Residents were asked to identify the top three problems in their neighborhood. They were limited to three answers and provided with a list of possible answers covering a wide range of social issues and criminal conduct. They could also write in custom responses.

The top three responses were:

- Theft/burglary (53.4%)
- Homelessness (52.9%)
- Drug dealing/drug use (40%)

Small but significant percentages of respondents identified gangs/violent crime as top issues in their neighborhood:

- Violent crimes (shootings, murder) (12.6%)
- Gang activity (9%)

Object 5.9 Top three problems in my neighborhood

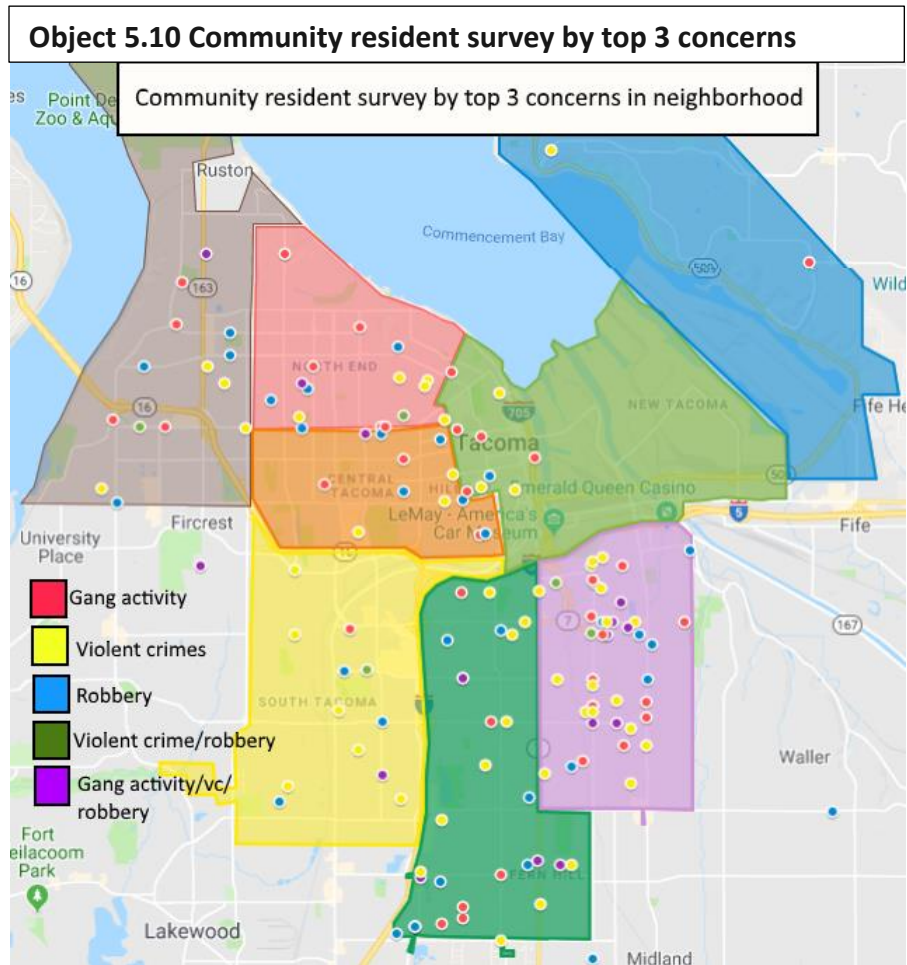| Category	Percentage
Theft/burglary	53.4%
Homelessness	52.9%
Drug dealing/drug use	40.0%
Other concerns	16.1%
Violent crimes (shootings,…	12.6%
Abandoned/vacant lots	12.6%
Lack of police activity	12.3%
Graffiti	9.0%
Gang activity	9.0%
Poverty	8.3%
Robbery	7.3%
Domestic violence	6.6%
Access to weapons	5.3%
Prostitution	4.8%
Poor parenting	4.6%
Lack of healthy food/hunger	4.5%
Loud music	4.0%
Unemployment	3.5%
Lack of access to medical services	2.2%
Truancy	1.0%

Percentage of respondents
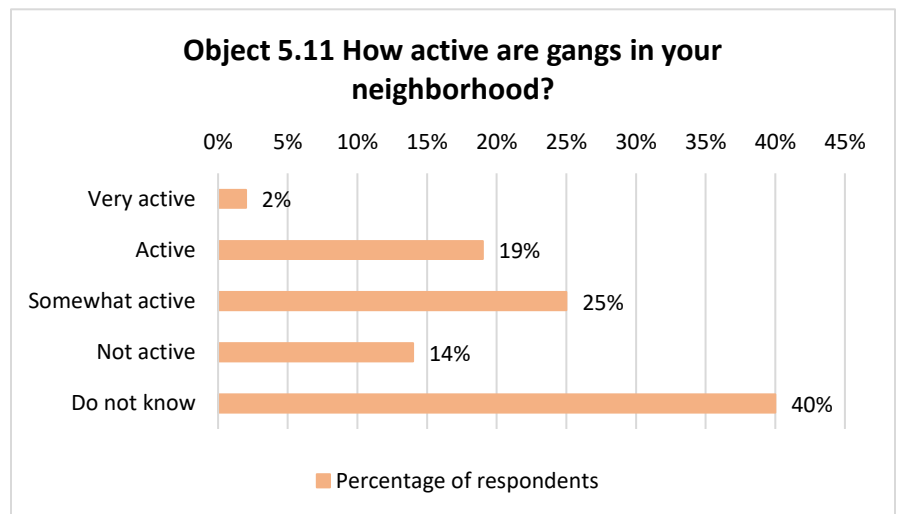
Other custom responses provided by residents include:
- Frequent gunfire in the neighborhood
- Sex offenders
- Kidnapping
- Halfway house
- People with mental health concerns that wander around in my neighborhood
- Abandoned vehicles and illegal dumping
- Prowlers in alleys.

To determine if concerns about gang activity, violent crimes and robberies are clustered in specific neighborhoods, the locations of community survey respondents with these concerns were mapped.
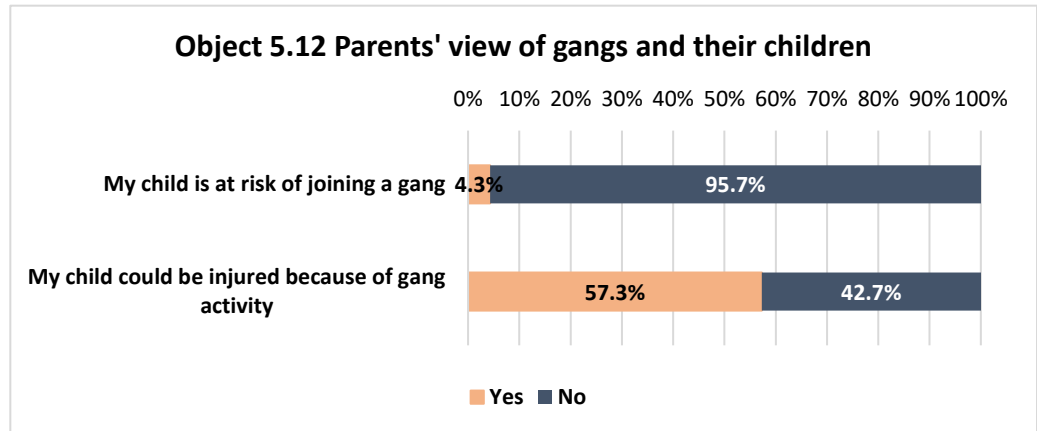
For the most part, residents with concerns about these issues in their neighborhood are dispersed throughout the community and located in every neighborhood. This mirrors the distribution of violent crimes such as robberies, aggravated assaults, and homicides. The greatest number of residents expressing concerns about gang activity are in the East Side. There is also some clustering of residents with concerns about gangs/violent crimes/robberies in the southern portion of the South End. Another small cluster of respondents with concerns about violent crimes/robberies found on the border of Central/New Tacoma.

Object 5.10 Community resident survey by top 3 concerns

Community resident survey by top 3 concerns in neighborhood

- Gang activity
- Violent crimes
- Robbery
- Violent crime/robbery
- Gang activity/vc/ robbery

Respondents were asked to rate the level of gang activity in their neighborhood. The most common response to this question (40%) is do not know. One in five respondents (21%) reported that gangs are active or very active in their neighborhood. One in four respondents (25%) reported that gangs are somewhat active. Only 14% of respondents reported that gangs are not active in their neighborhood.

Object 5.11 How active are gangs in your neighborhood?

Level	Percentage
Very active	2%
Active	19%
Somewhat active	25%
Not active	14%
Do not know	40%

■ Percentage of respondents

57% of parents reported that they believe their child could be injured by gang activity.

Object 5.12 Parents' view of gangs and their children

	0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
My child is at risk of joining a gang	4.3% / 95.7%
My child could be injured because of gang activity	57.3% / 42.7%

■ Yes ■ No

Residents were also asked whether gang activity in their neighborhood has increased or decreased over the past year. One in five respondents (19%) reported that gang activity has increased in their neighborhood in the past year.

Object 5.13 Responses to "Has the level of gang activity in your neighborhood increased or decreased over the past year?"

19%	27%	2%	11%	40%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

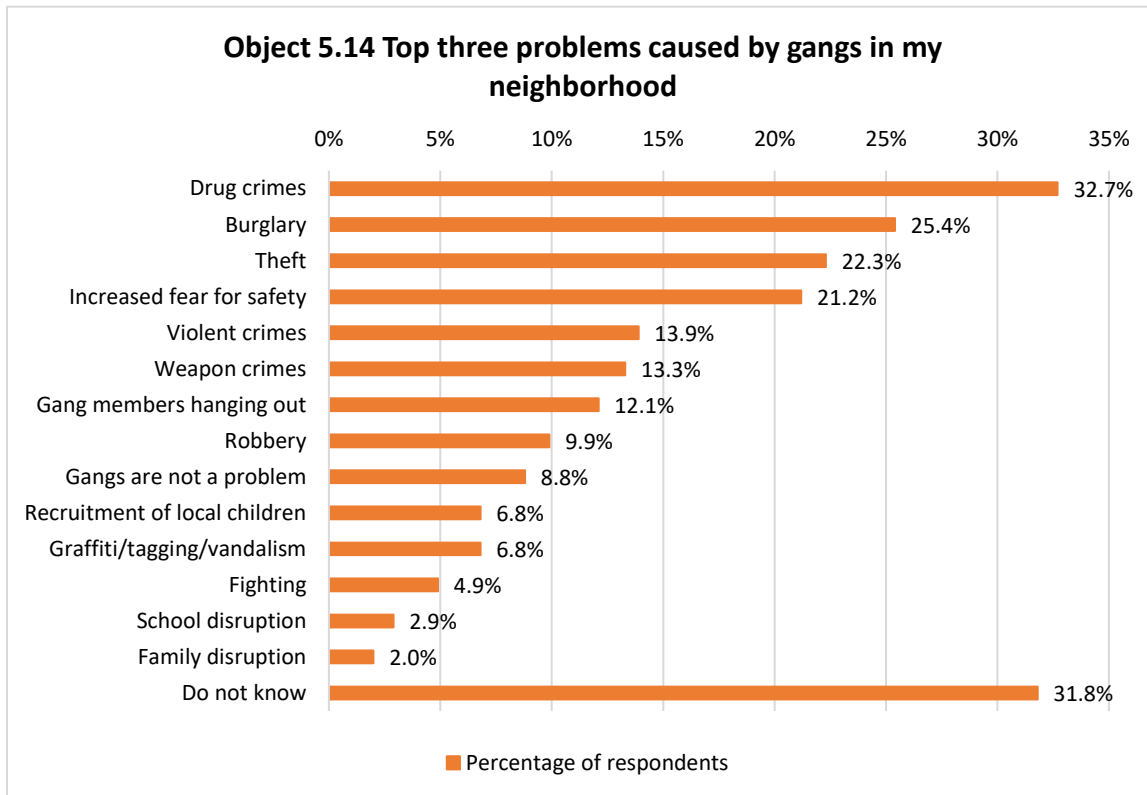■ Increased ■ Stayed the Same ■ Decreased ■ No gang activity ■ Do not know
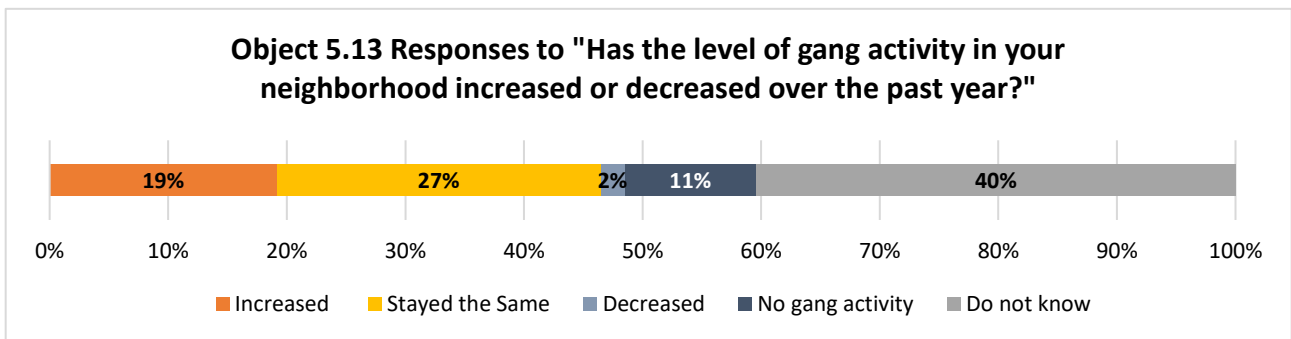
The most common response to this question (40%) is "do not know." A little less than half of respondents (46%) reported that gang activity has increased or stayed about the same. A very small percentage of residents (2%) reported that gang activity has decreased, and one in ten (11%) reported that there is no gang activity in their neighborhood.

Respondents with children were asked if they believe that their children are at risk of joining a gang. Most parents who responded to this question (95.7%) did not feel that their children are at risk for this behavior, but a small percentage of parents (4.3%) reported that their child/children is/are at risk of joining a gang. In contrast, over half of parents (57.3%) believe that their child could be injured by gang activity in Tacoma.

Community residents were asked to identify the top three problems caused by gangs in their neighborhood. One third of respondents (32.7%) reported that drug crimes are one of the top three problems in their neighborhood. Other top concerns were burglary (25.4%), theft (22.3%), and increased fear for safety (21.2%). Almost one-third of respondents (31.8%) reported that they do not know what problems are caused by gangs in their neighborhood. One in ten respondents (8.8%) reported that gangs are not a problem in their neighborhood.

Object 5.14 Top three problems caused by gangs in my neighborhood

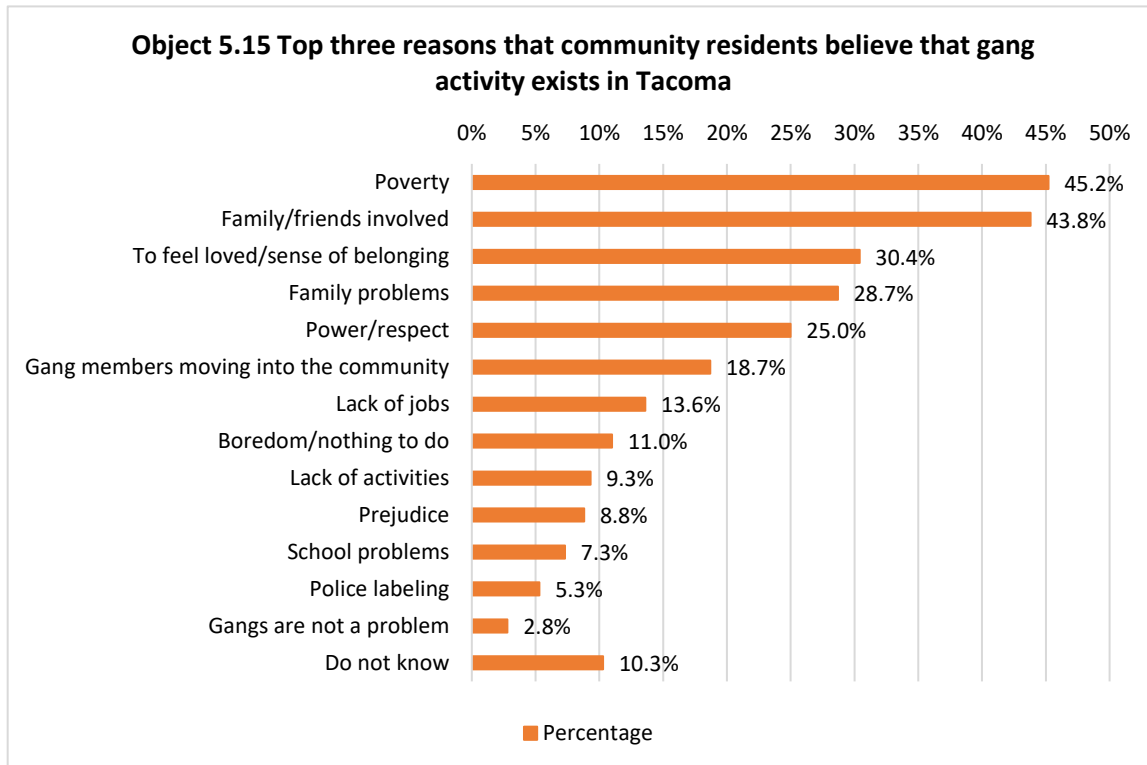| Problem	Percentage of respondents
Drug crimes	32.7%
Burglary	25.4%
Theft	22.3%
Increased fear for safety	21.2%
Violent crimes	13.9%
Weapon crimes	13.3%
Gang members hanging out	12.1%
Robbery	9.9%
Gangs are not a problem	8.8%
Recruitment of local children	6.8%
Graffiti/tagging/vandalism	6.8%
Fighting	4.9%
School disruption	2.9%
Family disruption	2.0%
Do not know	31.8%

Other custom responses to this question include:
- Prostitution
- Hear gunshots frequently, cannot assume it is gang activity
- Organized systematic home watching & robberies
- I hear ppl fighting near the local gas station often, but unsure if it is gang related
- Vehicle break-in
- Reckless driving
- Drive-by shootings multiple times a week at night.
- Hear gunshots often, don't know where they come from, but we can hear them.
- I don't know if there is gang activity in my neighborhood. I do know there is racial profiling going on in my neighborhood, according to the 'NextDoor' online message board.
- We have had gun battles between rival gangs in our neighborhood. Multiple in the last year.
- I don't believe we have traditional "gangs" per se in our neighborhood, but we do have a TON of mail/property theft, trespassing, and sketchy characters wandering about. The police do NOT show up when called either and this emboldens the thieves!

- People perceived as potential gang members cruising/looking for what I assume are specific people, often shining a spot light in people's faces to identity them.
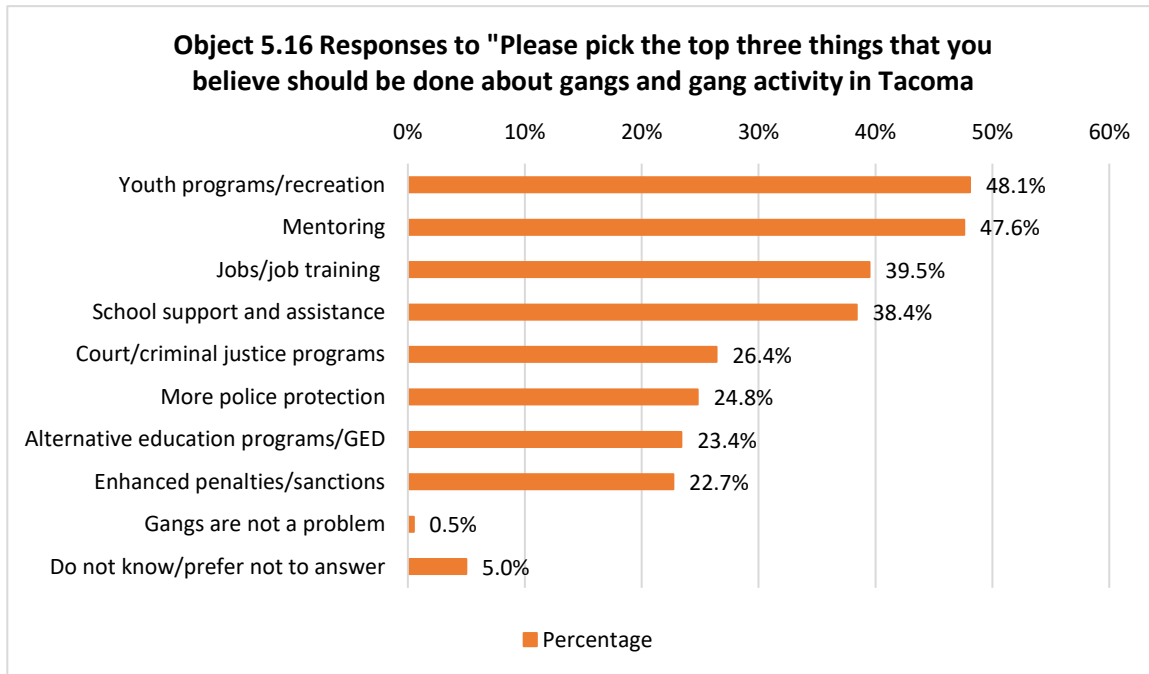- I see what appears to be copycat behavior

Respondents were also asked to identify the top three reasons that they believe gang activity exists in Tacoma. The top three responses included poverty (45.2%), family/friends involved in gangs (43.8%), and to feel loved/sense of belonging (30.4%).

Object 5.15 Top three reasons that community residents believe that gang activity exists in Tacoma

Reason	Percentage
Poverty	45.2%
Family/friends involved	43.8%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	30.4%
Family problems	28.7%
Power/respect	25.0%
Gang members moving into the community	18.7%
Lack of jobs	13.6%
Boredom/nothing to do	11.0%
Lack of activities	9.3%
Prejudice	8.8%
School problems	7.3%
Police labeling	5.3%
Gangs are not a problem	2.8%
Do not know	10.3%

Other responses include:
- Lack of enough police enforcement activity
- Gentrification/class structure in Tacoma
- Lack of representation in institutional structure in Tacoma, lack of embedded services in the community
- Lack of consequences
- Failure of the educational system.
- Affluent communities guard youth program access from poor/marginalized youth
- Increase in demand for illegal drugs draws suppliers. increased drug profits empower gangs selling them.
- Lack of institutional access and mentors to start small businesses, own property, access traditional financial instruments, readily respond to crises, become civically engaged or have power to make change in institutions that affect what happens on the streets
- Access to realistic means of maintaining one's dignity and self-respect.
- Lack of good community involvement and family structure in the poor areas of Tacoma

Community residents were asked to select the top three things that they believe should be done about gangs in Tacoma. They could choose from a list of items or could write in a custom response. The top three responses to this question by community residents are youth programs/recreation (48.1%), mentoring programs (47.6%), and jobs/job training (39.5%).

Object 5.16 Responses to "Please pick the top three things that you believe should be done about gangs and gang activity in Tacoma

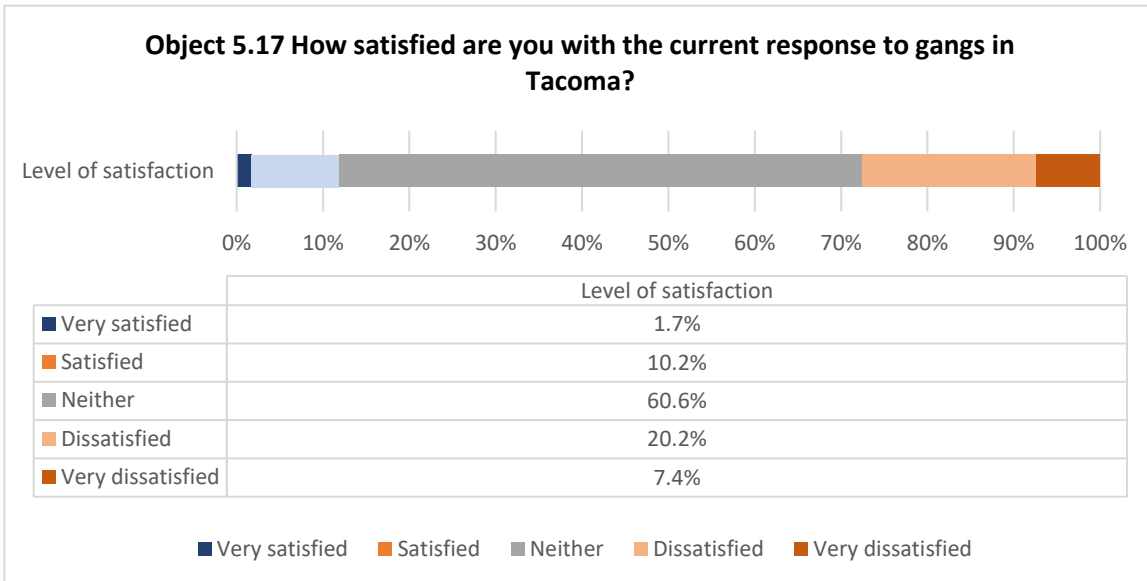| Category	Percentage
Youth programs/recreation	48.1%
Mentoring	47.6%
Jobs/job training	39.5%
School support and assistance	38.4%
Court/criminal justice programs	26.4%
More police protection	24.8%
Alternative education programs/GED	23.4%
Enhanced penalties/sanctions	22.7%
Gangs are not a problem	0.5%
Do not know/prefer not to answer	5.0%

Other custom responses include:
- All these things need to be done. Kids literally can walk into Walgreens, steal something, and walk out with no consequence. Along with being held accountable, these kids need to be taught how to be leaders in their lives.
- With weak family support, these kids need to feel empowered in other ways.

- Vote out elected officials that do not act in the best interest of Tacoma residents
- Young adults and their parents need living wage jobs, free healthcare, access to public transit, and permanent affordable housing
- Create a sense of belonging
- Youth needing to fulfill community service requirements, can be offered a path forward through community partnerships. The "Tacoma Greenhouse Project" formerly "Friends and Servants" is a model we can look to.
- We already know what causes gangs/criminality -- hopelessness, disenfranchisement, the inability to perceive a certain course as beneficial to one's self. The issues are systemic. Address that and you'll make actual change in the lives of the populations who are suffering the most -- before they give up and form their own societies, or "gangs", as you call them.
- Early intervention resources must be flexible enough to meet kids needs when they occur. Affordable housing is a huge issue, esp. for single parents. We need to do whatever we can do to keep families with children STABLE.
- Youth mental health counseling
- Throwing money at programs won't help
- Restorative Justice instead of jail. Once in jail, no other choices for most young men.
- Community conversations and connections

- Engagement of youth before they join gangs
- Stop putting it all on the schools. We can educate them to the best of our ability, but once they leave us, we are sending them into an economy that doesn't need them. It's not hard to imagine why selling meth or heroin for a couple of hours a day is preferable to working at the local fast food chain.
- A 10-year guaranteed livable minimum income for all Tacomans would greatly reduce these issues. Money is the antidote to poverty. Poverty is man-made, oppressive, and destroys human potential.
- Stop allowing offenders out on bail
- Enhanced/Gang Focused (read: Increased Budget) law enforcement.
- Direct financial support to at-risk families
- Create legitimacy and allow communities to turn into social clubs/community programs like capoiera clubs, steel drum bands, and other social and economic groups with histories rooted in criminal activity and violence and secrecy.

Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the current response to gangs. Over half (60.6%) reported that they are neither satisfied or dissatisfied.   About one in ten respondents (11.9%) reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the current response. About one fourth of respondents (27.6%) reported that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current response.

Object 5.17 How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?

Level of satisfaction	
■ Very satisfied	1.7%
■ Satisfied	10.2%
■ Neither	60.6%
■ Dissatisfied	20.2%
■ Very dissatisfied	7.4%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied
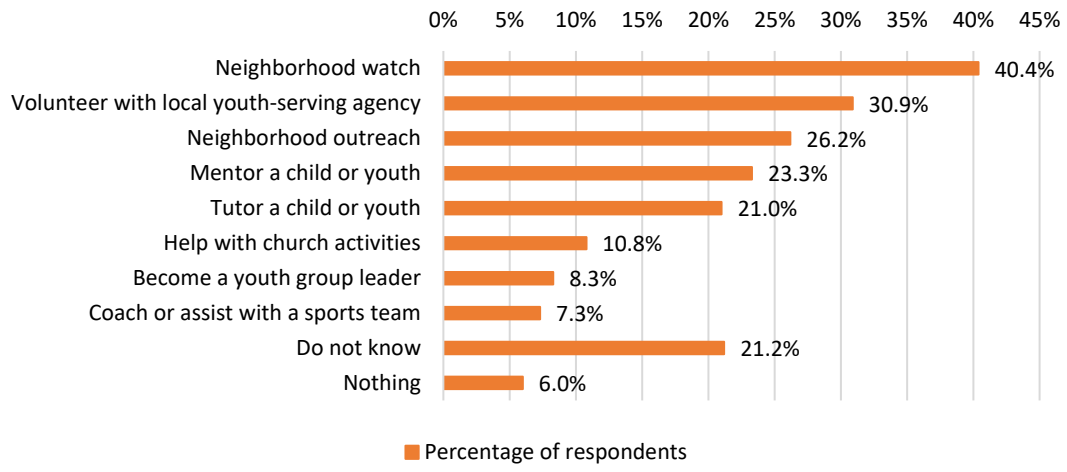
Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Responses are summarized below:

- Law enforcement has their hands tied
- We don't know what is being done to curb gang activity. It would be nice to know
- I have not seen any response to gangs by the City of Tacoma
- Police will not come to our neighborhood
- Any city that actively supports illegal immigration cannot be working against gangs
- Gang violence has decreased over the years, but the city still has a long way to go to solve the problem
- Gangs continue to be a big problem in my neighborhood
- I wish there was more active enforcement of gang activity in the southside and east side. We see regular criminal activity such as people casing homes, people stealing mail off porches, drug dealers in front of our local elementary school, and prostitutes on our street, with no police response
- A lot of homeless individuals are also involved in gangs and they seem to be everywhere lately
- We do not see gangs in our area
- The bureaucracy isn't made up of people who understand homelessness, being criminalized, being disenfranchised, and watching your parents struggle to deal with these things. The city imagines gangs to be an illness, but it is only a symptom.
- We have an active drug house in our neighborhood. Why did police wait to respond until someone was shot there?
- We need to address systemic racism in Tacoma
- I live on the East Side, I feel and see a good police response to gang activities
- Too much emphasis by the city on development in the core, not enough on improving quality of life in neighborhoods
- It feels like gang activity is on the rise again, and we do not have enough police officers to patrol and control gang issues effectively
- Police department has shifted from community-oriented policing to code enforcement policing and creating revenue for the city by writing tickets
- Although gang violence has decreased in recent years, the systemic poverty has yet to be addressed as the root of the problem.

Residents were asked to identify ways that they would be willing to get involved to prevent gang issues in Tacoma. The top response was to participate in neighborhood watch (44.4%), volunteer with a local agency that works with youth (30.9%), and conduct neighborhood outreach (26.2%). One in five respondents (21.2%) reported that they do not know what they could do. One in five respondents (6%) stated that they were willing to do nothing.

Object 5.18 What are you willing to do to help with gangs and gang activity in your community?

Category	Percentage of respondents
Neighborhood watch	40.4%
Volunteer with local youth-serving agency	30.9%
Neighborhood outreach	26.2%
Mentor a child or youth	23.3%
Tutor a child or youth	21.0%
Help with church activities	10.8%
Become a youth group leader	8.3%
Coach or assist with a sports team	7.3%
Do not know	21.2%
Nothing	6.0%

■ Percentage of respondents

COMMUNITY LEADER SURVEYS

Agency directors, government policymakers, elected officials and neighborhood leaders were surveyed to identify their perceptions and ideas about the ways in which their organization and Tacoma can/should respond to local gang issues. A total of 38 individuals from 23 organizations participated in the community leader surveys. Surveys were anonymous, but representatives from the following organizations/agencies participated:

- Tacoma Arts Live
- Community Health Care/Hilltop Dental Clinic
- Safe Streets Campaign
- Veteran's Drug Court
- Asia Pacific Cultural Center
- VT Radio Universal
- Catholic Community Services
- Girl Scouts of Western Washington

- KBTC-TV
- Community Health Care
- Parent Advisory Council
- Pierce County Juvenile Court
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Puget Sound
- Tacoma Housing Authority
- Department of Assigned Counsel (public defender)
- Shared Housing Services

- Communities in Schools
- Degrees of Change
- Tacoma Community House
- Hilltop Artists' Collective
- Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
- Comprehensive Life Resources
- City of Tacoma

Most survey respondents (74%) reported that their organization/agency works citywide. About one-fourth of respondents (26%) work in specific neighborhoods:

- South Tacoma
- Hill Top
- East Tacoma

- Hilltop/Central/North End, other
- West End

- East Tacoma
- East Side and South Tacoma
- South and East Tacoma

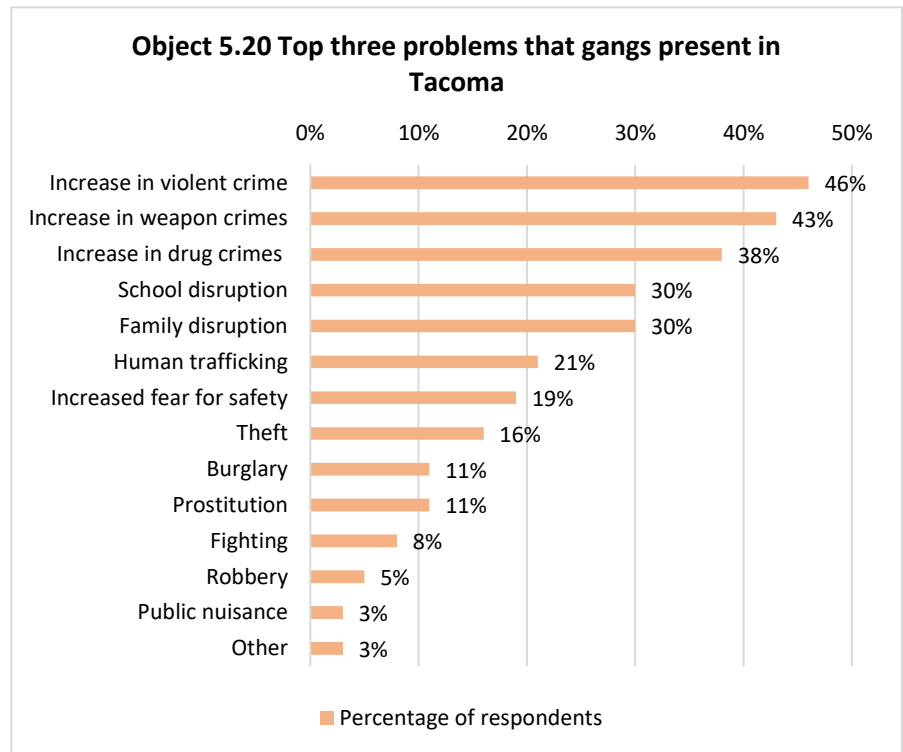Community leaders were asked if they believe that gangs are a problem in Tacoma.

Most respondents (87%) reported that they believe that gangs are a problem in Tacoma. A small percentage (3%) reported that they do not believe Tacoma gangs are a problem in Tacoma, and 11% reported that they do not know.

Object 5.19 Responses to: "Do you believe gangs are a problem in Tacoma?"

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

87%
3%
11%
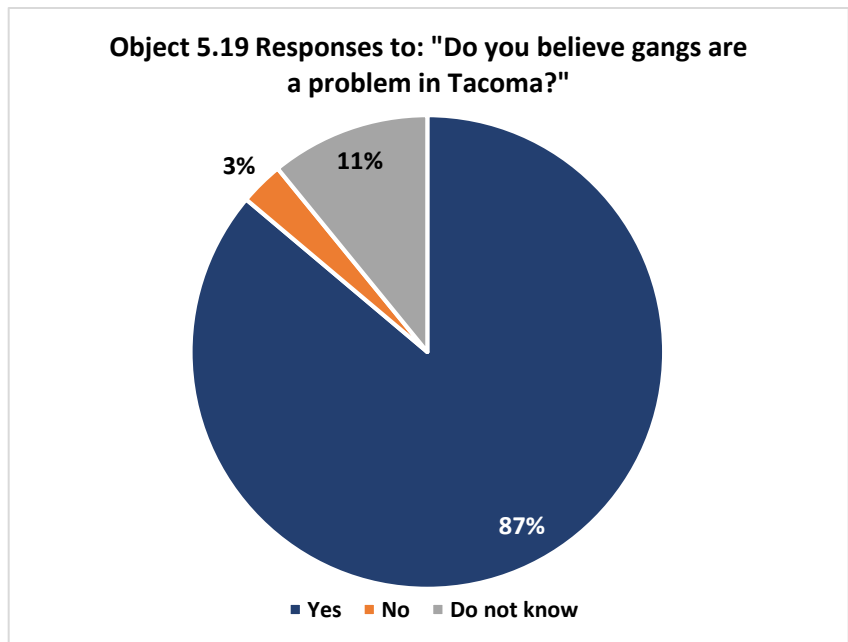
Question: Please pick the top three problems, if any, that gangs present in Tacoma

Respondents were provided with a list of possible choices and were limited to three choices. They could also write in a custom answer. No single response garnered a majority of responses, but the top responses were:

- Increase in violent crime (46%)
- Increase in weapon crimes (43%)
- Increase in drug crimes (38%)
- School disruption (30%)
- Family disruption (30%)

Object 5.20 Top three problems that gangs present in Tacoma

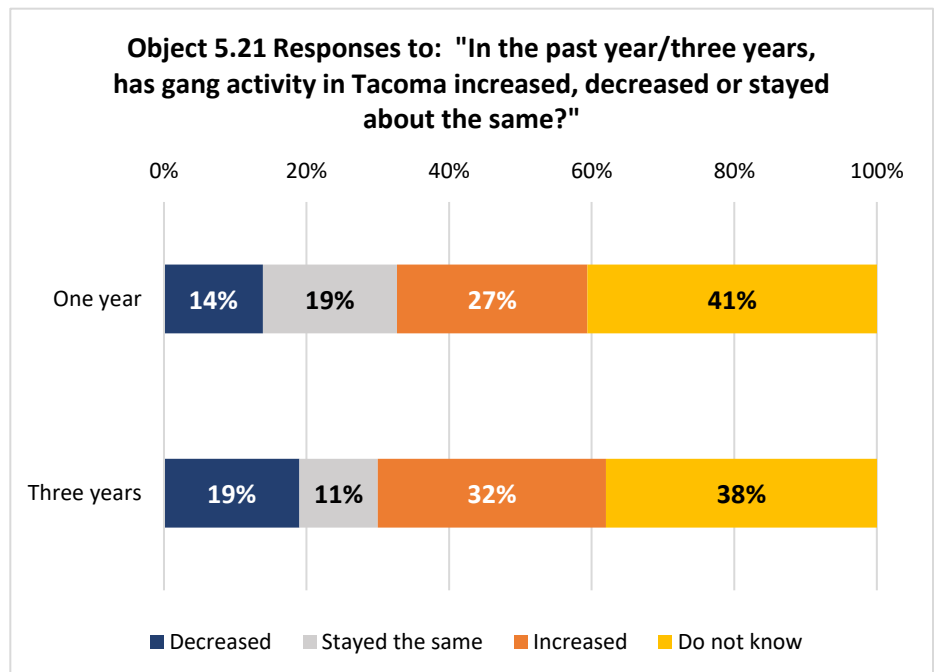| Problem	Percentage
Increase in violent crime	46%
Increase in weapon crimes	43%
Increase in drug crimes	38%
School disruption	30%
Family disruption	30%
Human trafficking	21%
Increased fear for safety	19%
Theft	16%
Burglary	11%
Prostitution	11%
Fighting	8%
Robbery	5%
Public nuisance	3%
Other	3%

Percentage of respondents

One other response was recorded:

- Top 3 is impossible and inauthentic to the issue at hand. None of these things are acceptable and they all exist in our city. There were 2 gang-related deaths near my home in the past 30 days, and my car was robbed. Would I rank the deaths over the robbery of my car? Yes, but neither create safe, livable neighborhoods.

Question: In the past year, has gang activity in Tacoma increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

The most common response to this question (41%) was "Do not know." A little less than one third of respondents (27%) reported that gang activity has increased in the past year, 19% reported that the level of gang activity has stayed the same, and 14% reported that gang activity has decreased. A slightly

Object 5.21 Responses to: "In the past year/three years, has gang activity in Tacoma increased, decreased or stayed about the same?"

	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Do not know
One year	14%	19%	27%	41%
Three years	19%	11%	32%	38%

larger percentage of respondents (32%) reported that gang activity has increased in the past three years, and a larger percentage also reported that gang activity has decreased (19%).

Question: Do you think gang violence is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in Tacoma compared to three years ago?

The top response (40% of respondents) was that gang violence is increasing compared to three years ago. Almost one third of respondents (32%) reported that they do not know whether gang violence is increasing or decreasing.

Object 5.22 Responses to: "Do you think gang violence is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in Tacoma same compared to three years ago?

Decreasing	Staying the same	Increasing	Do not know
15%	12%	40%	32%
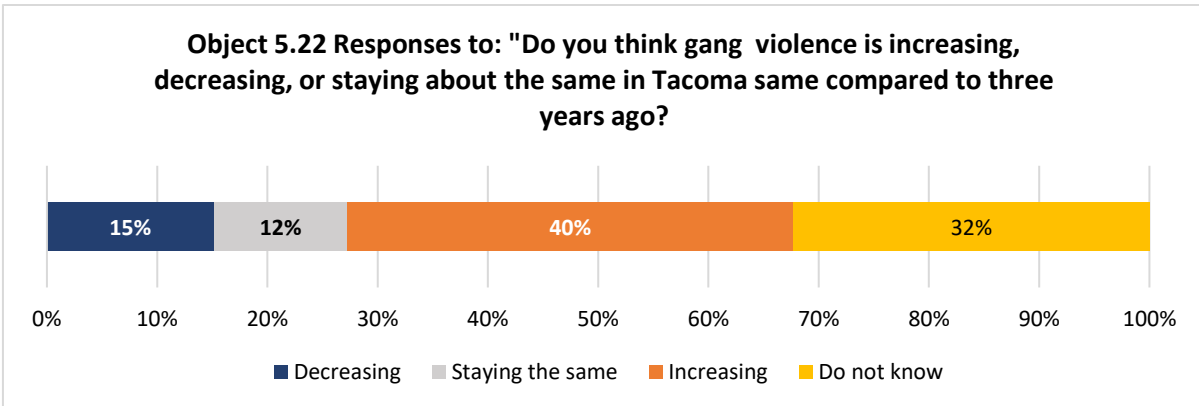
Question: Have you had any personal interaction with any/a gang member(s) from Tacoma?

Over half of respondents (58%) reported personal interactions with gang involved individuals. One third (29%) reported no interactions with gang-involved individuals, and 12% of respondents reported that they do not know.

Object 5.23 Responses to: "Have you had any personal interaction with any/a gang members from Tacoma?
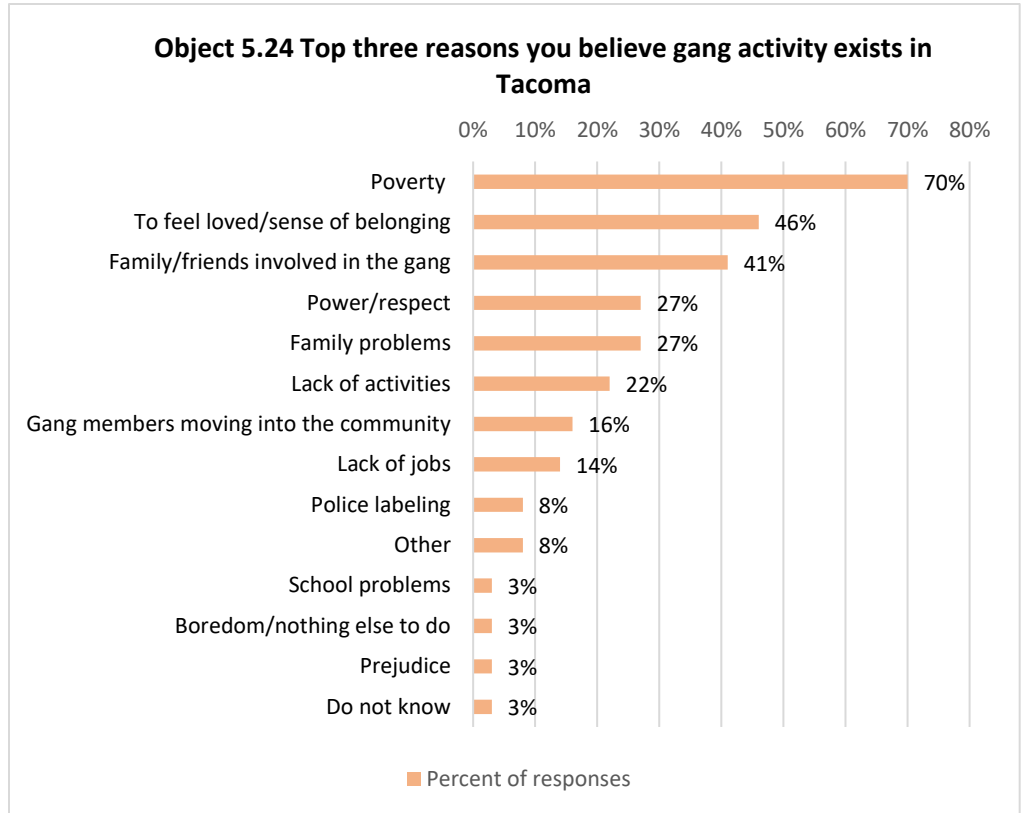
- Yes: 59%
- No: 29%
- Do not know: 12%
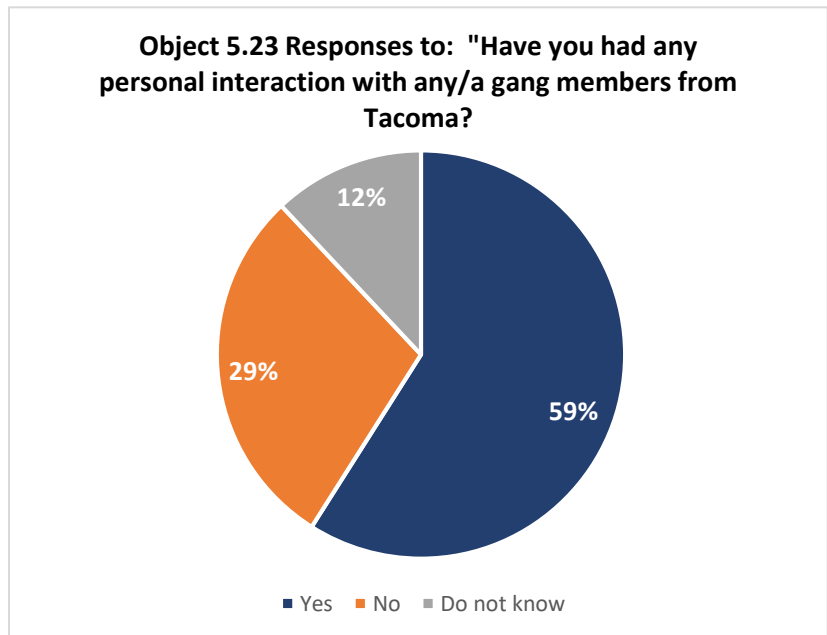
Question: Please pick the top three reasons that you believe gang activity exists in Tacoma

Respondents were given a list of possible reasons and were limited to 3 responses. They could also write in a custom answer. Almost three-fourths of respondents (70%) identified poverty as one of the top three reasons that gang activity exists in Tacoma.

Other top responses include:

- To feel loved/sense of belonging (46%)
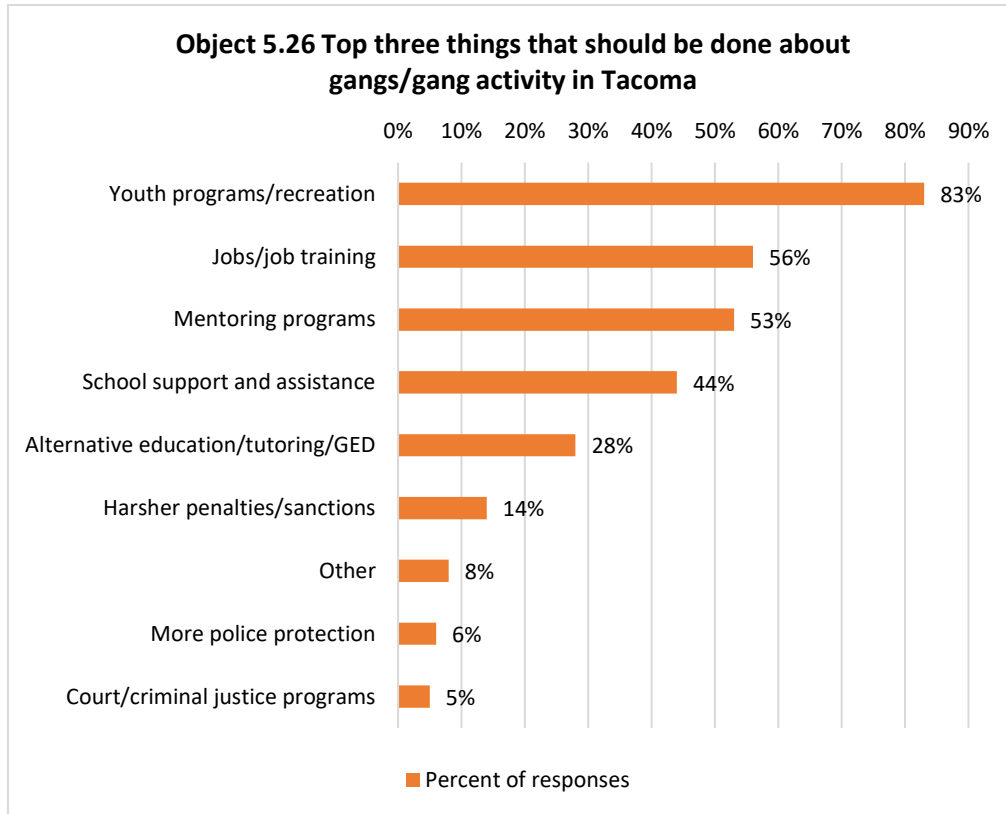- Family/friends involved in the gang (41%)

Object 5.24 Top three reasons you believe gang activity exists in Tacoma

Reason	Percent
Poverty	70%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	46%
Family/friends involved in the gang	41%
Power/respect	27%
Family problems	27%
Lack of activities	22%
Gang members moving into the community	16%
Lack of jobs	14%
Police labeling	8%
Other	8%
School problems	3%
Boredom/nothing else to do	3%
Prejudice	3%
Do not know	3%

■ Percent of responses

Question: How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?

Most respondents reported that they are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the current response to gangs. Equal numbers of respondents (24%) report satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current response. One in six respondents (15%) report that they are very dissatisfied with the current response.

Object 5.25 Responses to: "How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?"

Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
24%	52%	9%	15%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied
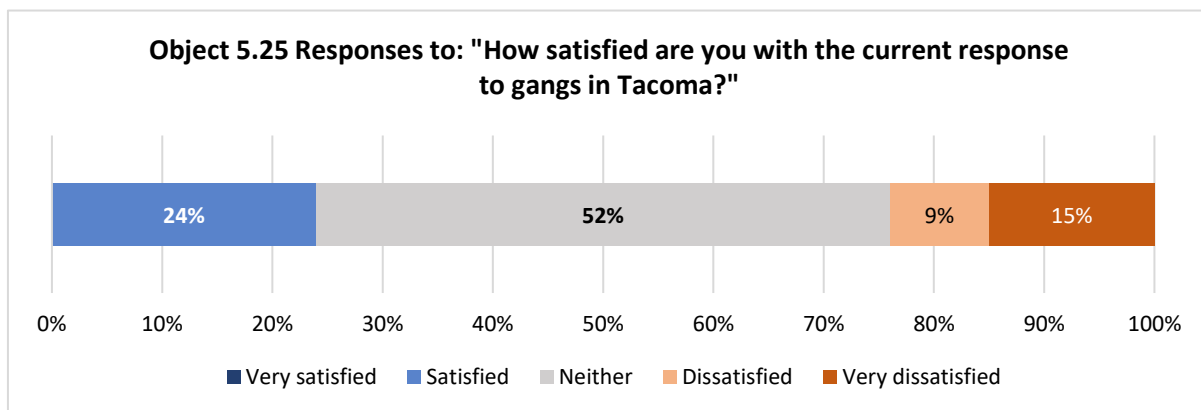
Question: Please pick the top three things you should be done about gangs/gang activity in Tacoma

Respondents were given a list of possible activities and were limited to selecting three. They could also write in a custom answer. More than 80% of respondents identified youth programs/recreation as one of the top three things that should be done about gangs in Tacoma. Over half of respondents identified jobs/job training programs (56%) and mentoring programs (53%).

Object 5.26 Top three things that should be done about gangs/gang activity in Tacoma

Category	Percent
Youth programs/recreation	83%
Jobs/job training	56%
Mentoring programs	53%
School support and assistance	44%
Alternative education/tutoring/GED	28%
Harsher penalties/sanctions	14%
Other	8%
More police protection	6%
Court/criminal justice programs	5%

Percent of responses

Questions: What do you believe is currently being done in the community to assist local gang issues?

This was an open-ended question and respondents could provide their own answers. These answers include:

Table 5.1

Positive responses	Neutral/negative responses
• The new community center in east Tacoma is a great thing to keep kids away from gang activity • I believe a lot is being done in the schools to discourage kids from getting into the gang life • Pictures of individuals being posted on Facebook for identification • Early intervention in the juvenile court	• Nothing, no one wants to talk about it • Not sure, but it seems that most attention to the gang issue comes from the police • Not enough due to funding issues • The police and city are trying to work together, but don't have all the answers • I have not heard any information about the current response • Police targeting

• More positive alternatives for out of school activities • I think the city of Tacoma is paying attention to the needs and responses • Thoughtful police response • Moderate support for community interventions • Mentoring, case management, youth programming • Outreach in detention and schools • Many things: direct intervention by the task force, improved schools, mentoring, judicial intervention programs • Safe Streets • Project Peace	• Not much, you need to pay attention to what is happening in the community • Police monitoring and some outreach to youth is about it • Not enough. We need to get in the homes to determine what these kids need, not all kids that are subject to gang exposure need the same services • While I know there are efforts being made to address gang activities and gang violence, I have not heard or read about what is being done, so I am unable to respond fully to this question

While many community leaders seemed informed about at least one or two activities, a significant proportion also were either unaware of current activities or expressed that they were insufficient and/or limited.

Question: What can your program/agency/organization do better or differently to assist with local gang issues?

This question was also open-ended, and respondents could provide one or several answers. 24 respondents provided an answer to this question. These include:

- Offer more out of school time programs, including mentoring programs, for high school students
- Assist with organizing educational meetings, educate students on signs to look for when a friend has changed their behavior or is about to move out of the area. Keep students involved in positive activities with a sense of belonging.
- Have a job fair or something like help people get jobs to be stable and stop having to do illegal things
- Support the local police dept in anything they need our help with
- Call 911 - Do not turn a blind eye to domestic violence, and talk to neighbors about suspicious behavior
- Better outreach with more funding
- Partner with other youth serving agencies to better serve youth and families. Develop a unified vision for our community based on Positive Youth Development.
- We can provide mentoring to more young people if we had more financial support to do that!
- Expand out of school programming for youth - provide specific social and emotional skill development and connecting youth with mentors and role models.
- Hopefully the data from the survey can give an idea on where the needs/gaps are so that we can figure out how to support.

- We are currently working with young people to better their lives and keep them out of trouble.
- House more needy families with youth   - house more homeless or near homeless youth and young adults without families. We will do that with our new Arlington Drive Youth Campus.
- Jobs, Culturally relevant programming, Opportunities
- Outreach, substance use disorder and mental health treatment and therapy. Coaching, support and work with them in their community.
- Pass more information to parents for prevention and safety
- Mentorship
- Build community capacity to help address issues. Give parents the tools, create opportunities for parents and youth to create positive support networks and social connections. You also need to support organizations that represent the communities they work in.
- Not sure, that is why we are waiting for this fact-based assessment to be completed.
- We can assist in analyzing trends, assessing research and convening and facilitating discussions. We can offer a systems perspective on how you introduce and sustain meaningful change.
- Help get youth/ young adults connected to services that can connect them with mentors, and programs to keep them busy that they have an interest in.
- Increase access to mentoring programs
- Our agency works with housing youth and young adults, 16 -24, who are experiencing homelessness. We would like to have more educational opportunities to learn about what role we can play in addressing the gang issue in the community.
- My agency provides programming in social emotional skill building using the arts. This programming is currently held at schools, afterschool, but it could be expanded to serve during summer and at more sites throughout Tacoma.

AGENCY PERSONNEL SURVEYS

A total of 38 child and youth-serving agency personnel were surveyed for this report from the following agencies:

- RAIN Program (Comprehensive Life Resources)
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Pierce County Juvenile Court

- Consejo Counseling Service
- Peace Community Center
- Asia Pacific Cultural Center

- Hilltop Artists' Collective
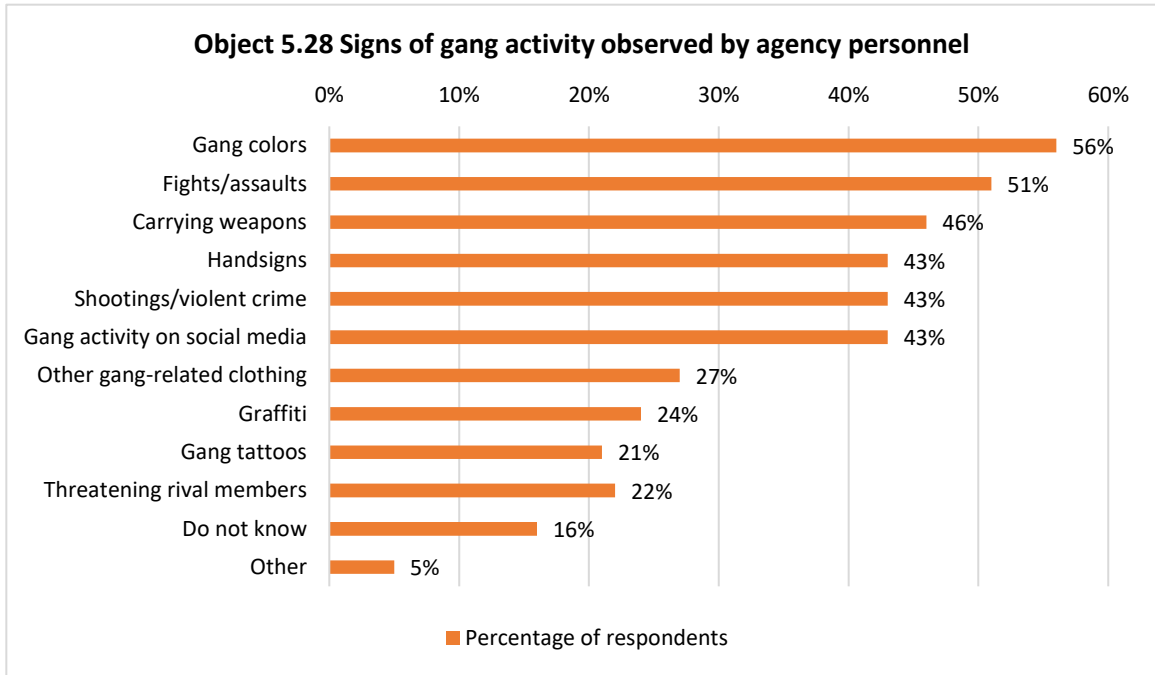- A Step Ahead in Pierce County
- Girl Scouts of Western WA

Question: Do you believe gang activity is increasing, decreasing or staying about the same level among the individuals that you serve compared to three years ago?

A little more than a third (34%) of respondents reported that they believe that gang activity is increasing among the individuals that they serve. About one in five (21%) reported that gang activity is staying at the same level, and one in six (16%) reported that it is decreasing. A little less than one third (29%) reported that they do not know the status of gang activity among the individuals that they serve.

Object 5.27 Is gang activity increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same among the individuals you serve compared to 3 years ago?

	Percent of respondents
Increasing	34%
Staying about the same	21%
Decreasing	16%
Do not know	29%
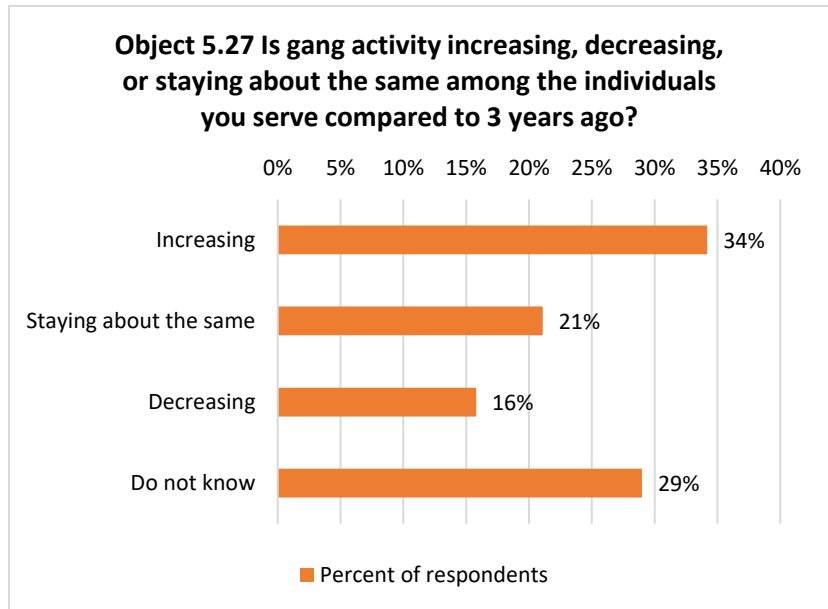
Question: What signs of gang activity do you see in the individuals that you serve?

Over half of respondents (56%) reported that individuals they serve wear gang colors. Slightly more than half (51%) reported involvement in fights/assaults and a little less than half (46%) reported that individuals they serve carry weapons. Hand signs (43%), gang activity on social media (43%), and involvement in shootings and other serious crimes (43%) were also common responses.

Object 5.28 Signs of gang activity observed by agency personnel

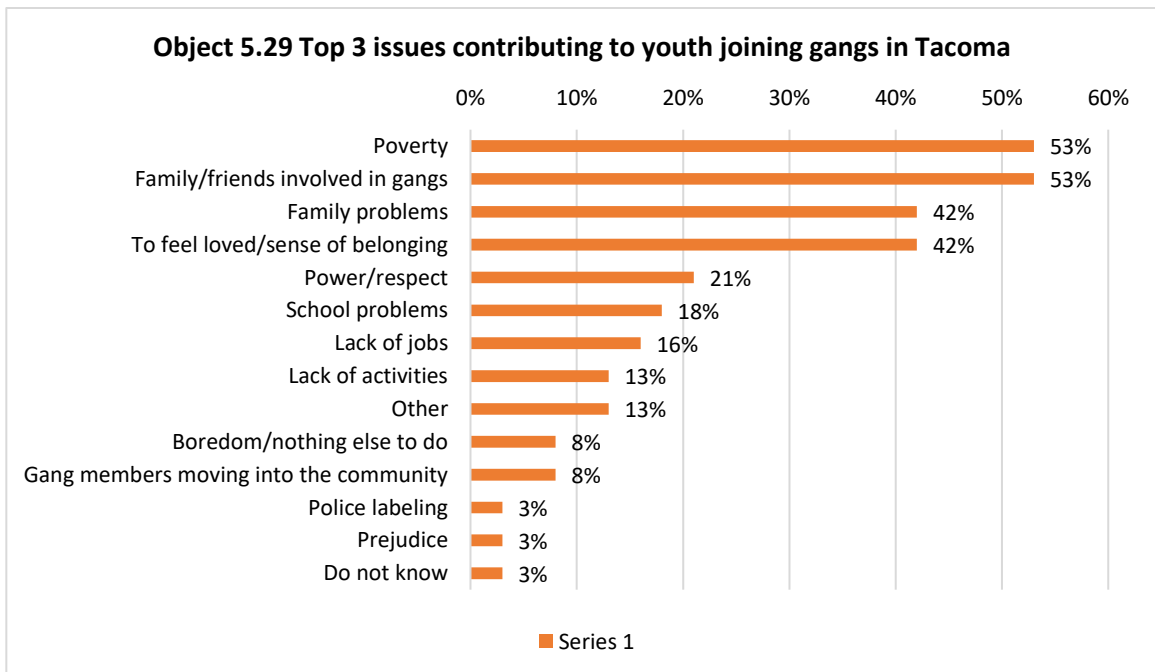| Sign	Percentage
Gang colors	56%
Fights/assaults	51%
Carrying weapons	46%
Handsigns	43%
Shootings/violent crime	43%
Gang activity on social media	43%
Other gang-related clothing	27%
Graffiti	24%
Gang tattoos	21%
Threatening rival members	22%
Do not know	16%
Other	5%

■ Percentage of respondents

Respondents were given the option of writing in their own responses for this question. Write-in responses include:

- Language
- Biological parents with children in care report gang involvement

Question: In your opinion, what are the top three issues in Tacoma that contribute to youth joining gangs in Tacoma?

Respondents were limited to three answers and were provided with a list of possible risk factors for gang involvement and could also write in their own answers.

Object 5.29 Top 3 issues contributing to youth joining gangs in Tacoma

Issue	Percentage
Poverty	53%
Family/friends involved in gangs	53%
Family problems	42%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	42%
Power/respect	21%
School problems	18%
Lack of jobs	16%
Lack of activities	13%
Other	13%
Boredom/nothing else to do	8%
Gang members moving into the community	8%
Police labeling	3%
Prejudice	3%
Do not know	3%

■ Series 1

More than half of respondents (53%) identified poverty and family/friends involved in gangs as issues that contribute to youth joining gangs in Tacoma. Family problems and to feel loved/sense of belonging were also identified by a significant percentage of respondents (42%).

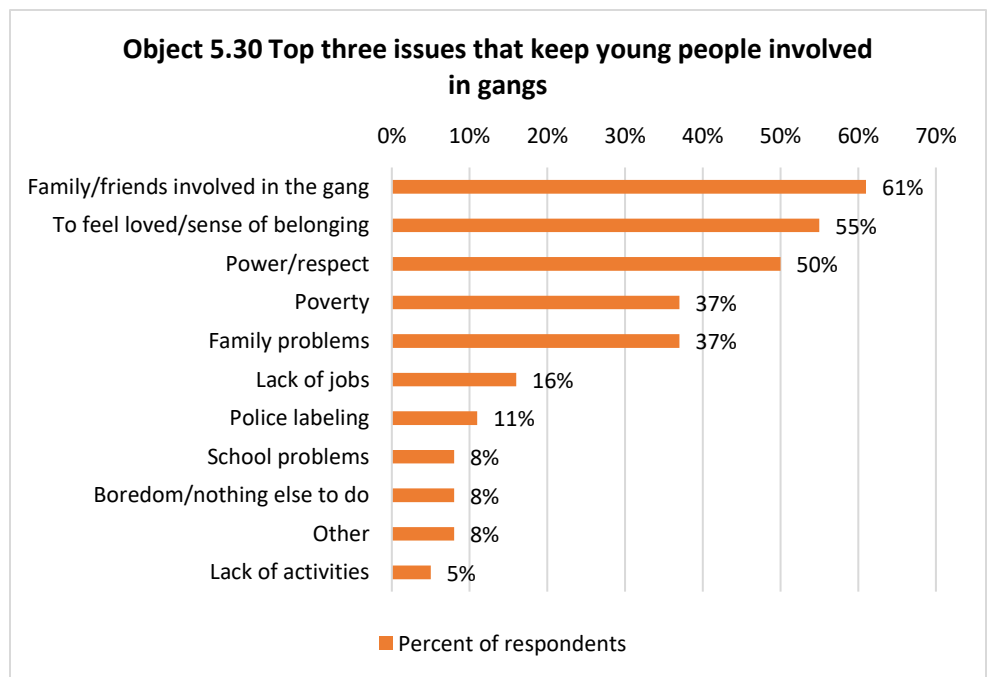Other answers provided by respondents include:
- Fast money
- Lack of transportation to and awareness of activities in the local community
- Addiction
- Protection

Question: In your opinion, what are the top three issues that keep young people in Tacoma involved in gangs?

Respondents were limited to three answers and were provided with a list of possible answers. They could also write in their own responses. The top choice by respondents (61%) was family/friends involved in the gang. About half (55%) selected "to feel loved/sense of belonging" and "power/respect" (50%). Other top responses included poverty (37%) and family problems (37%).
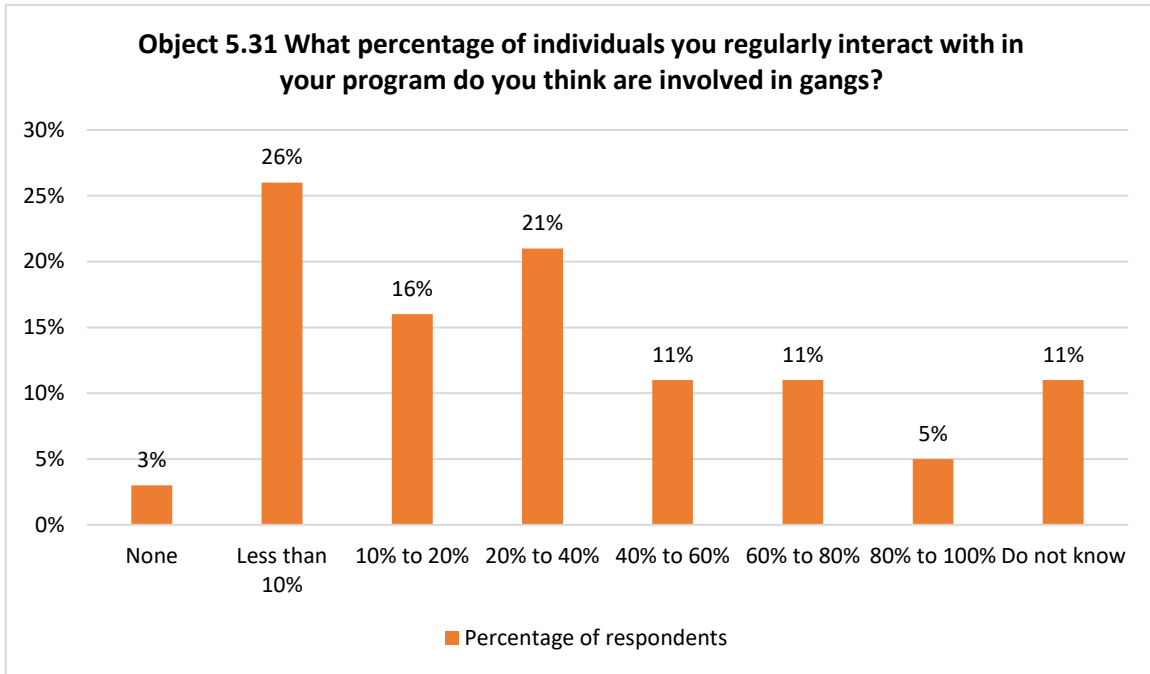
Other answers provided by respondents included:
- Fast money
- Drugs
- Once you are involved in gangs, you cannot get out.

Object 5.30 Top three issues that keep young people involved in gangs

Issue	Percent of respondents
Family/friends involved in the gang	61%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	55%
Power/respect	50%
Poverty	37%
Family problems	37%
Lack of jobs	16%
Police labeling	11%
School problems	8%
Boredom/nothing else to do	8%
Other	8%
Lack of activities	5%

Question: Of the individuals you regularly interact with in your program/agency, what percentage do you think are involved in gangs?

A little less than half of respondents (45%) reported that they believe that 20% or fewer of the individuals they regularly interact with are involved in gangs. One fifth of respondents (21%) reported that they believe that 20% to 40% of individuals they regularly interact with are involved in gangs.
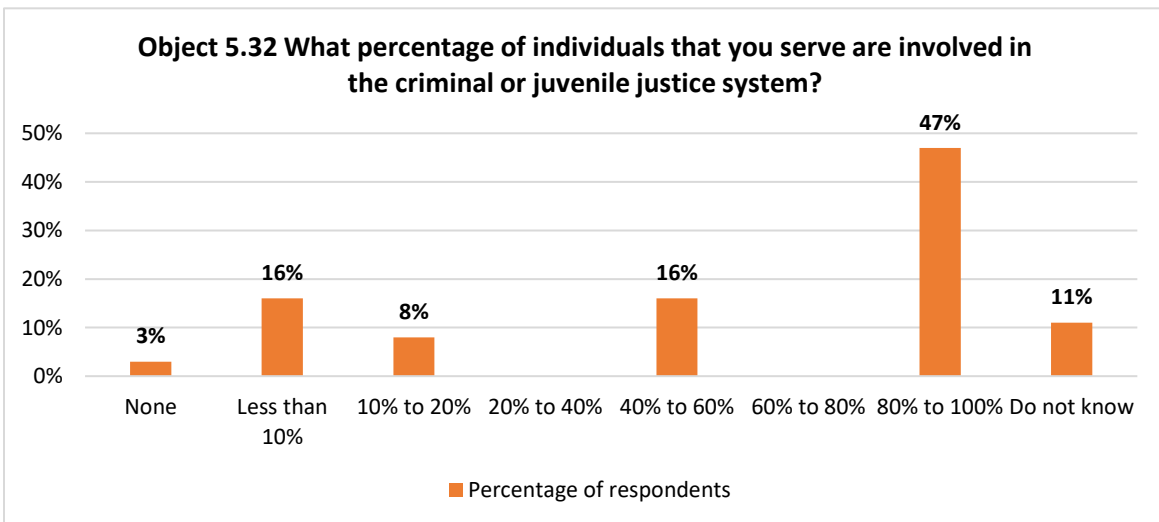
About one tenth of respondents (11%) reported that they believe 40% to 60% of the individuals they regularly interact with in their program are involved in gangs. About one in six (16%) reported that they believe that the majority (60% to 100%) of individuals they serve are involved in gangs.

Object 5.31 What percentage of individuals you regularly interact with in your program do you think are involved in gangs?

Category	Percentage of respondents
None	3%
Less than 10%	26%
10% to 20%	16%
20% to 40%	21%
40% to 60%	11%
60% to 80%	11%
80% to 100%	5%
Do not know	11%

This suggests that while a small percentage of gang-involved individuals participate in available programming, a much smaller percentage of survey respondents work primarily with this population.

Question: What percentage of individuals that you serve are involved in the criminal or juvenile justice system?

Almost half of respondents (47%) reported that almost all (80% to 100%) are involved in the juvenile or adult justice system. This is partially explained by the fact that about one-third of respondents to this survey work for Pierce County Juvenile Court. However, another 8 individuals also reported working primarily with individuals involved in the juvenile or adult justice systems. One in six

Object 5.32 What percentage of individuals that you serve are involved in the criminal or juvenile justice system?

Category	Percentage of respondents
None	3%
Less than 10%	16%
10% to 20%	8%
20% to 40%	
40% to 60%	16%
60% to 80%	
80% to 100%	47%
Do not know	11%

respondents reported that about half (between 40% and 60% of individuals that they serve) are involved in the justice system. About one-fourth of respondents (27%) reported that fewer than 20%

of individuals that they serve have court involvement. Another 11% reported that they do not know if individuals they serve are involved in the court.

Question: What risk factors have you observed in the youth/young adults that you interact with through your job?

Respondents to this question (N=38) reported a high level of involvement in high risk behaviors/exposure to risk factors among the youth that they serve. On average, respondents reported 11 risk factors observed in the youth/young adults that they interact with through their job.

The most common responses were:

- Drug use (84%)
- Exposure to violence at home (82%)
- School behavior problems (79%)
- Alcohol use (76%)
- Parent is absent, addicted to substances, or in other ways unable to help the youth (76%)
- Exposure to violence in the community (74%)

It is notable that three-fourths of respondents reported that they serve youth with exposure to these risk factors.

More than half of respondents also reported that youth/young adults they serve are exposed to violence at school (52%) or are involved in sexual trafficking/prostitution. Almost half of respondents (45%) reported that individuals that they work with are involved in violent crime.

Table 5.3 Responses to "what risk factors have you observed in the youth/young adults you work with?	
Risk Factor	**Percent reporting**
Drug use	84%
Exposure to violence at home	82%
School behavior problems	79%
Alcohol use	76%
Parent is absent, addicted to substances, or in other ways unable to help the youth	76%
Exposure to violence in the community	74%
School failure	71%
Incarcerated parent	71%
School drop-out	68%
Truancy	58%
Parents are too lenient	55%
Exposure to violence at school	53%
Unprotected sex or other risky sexual behavior	53%
Sexual trafficking or involvement in prostitution	53%
Involvement in property crime	50%
Involvement in violent crime	45%
Parents are too harsh/abusive	45%
Death of a parent	42%
Other	5%
Do not know	3%
Total respondents: 38	

Respondents could also write in answers to this question. Write-in responses include:
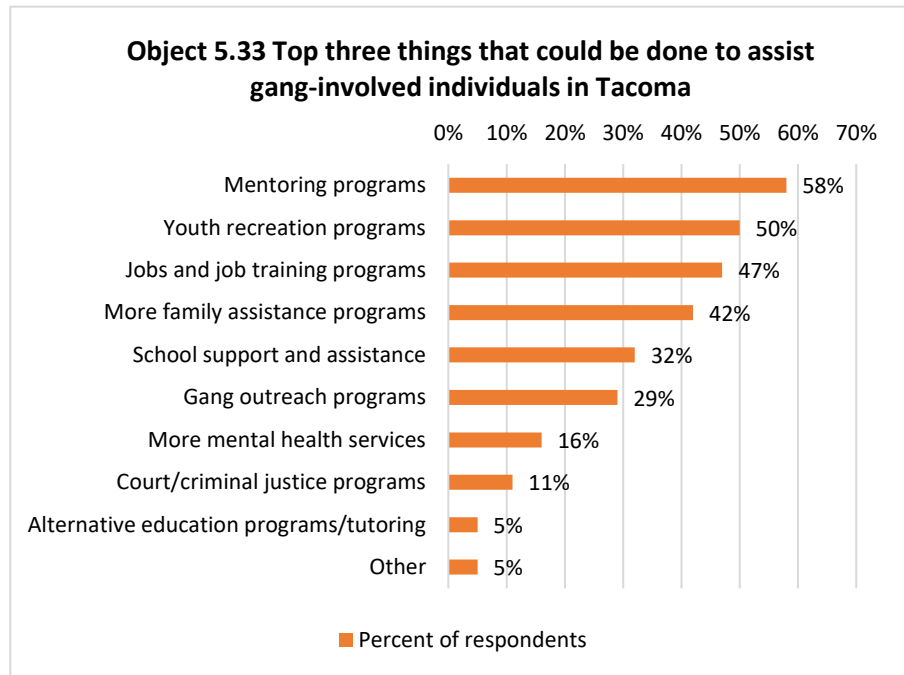- Lack of hope/purpose
- Sexual abuse

Question: Please pick the top three things that you think could be done to assist gang-involved individuals in Tacoma.

Survey respondents were limited to three answers and were provided with a list of possible responses. Respondents could also write-in their own answers.

Top responses included:
- Mentoring programs (58%)
- Youth recreation (50%)
- Jobs and job training programs (47%)
- Family assistance programs (42%)

Object 5.33 Top three things that could be done to assist gang-involved individuals in Tacoma

	Percent of respondents
Mentoring programs	58%
Youth recreation programs	50%
Jobs and job training programs	47%
More family assistance programs	42%
School support and assistance	32%
Gang outreach programs	29%
More mental health services	16%
Court/criminal justice programs	11%
Alternative education programs/tutoring	5%
Other	5%

Other write-in responses included:
- Free youth programming
- Relevant, effective treatment programs

Question: How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) reported that they are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with Tacoma's current response to gangs. One in six (17%) reported that they are satisfied with the current response, and the same percentage (17%) reported that they are dissatisfied with the current response. No respondents reported that they are very satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Object 5.34 Level of satisfaction with the current response to gangs

Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied
17%	67%	17%
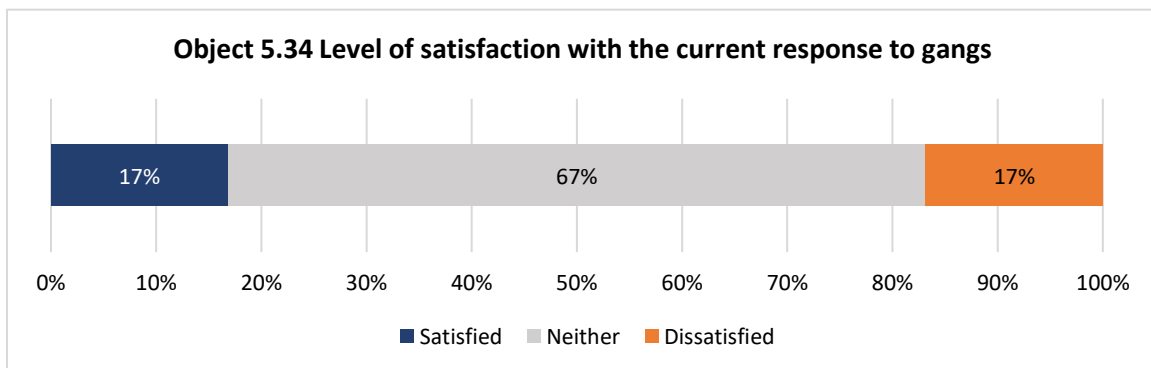
Question: What do you think could be done differently or better to improve Tacoma's current response to gangs?

This survey question was open-ended and asked respondents to write in their own answers.

Responses included:

- Involve more youth at the table who would like to leave the gang life so that they can provide a clear vision of what is needed
- Utilize ex-gang members with years of lived experience to do gang outreach
- Stop gentrification from pushing families out of communities by initiating policies for affordable rent
- Get the community more involved through positive interactions
- Decrease school suspensions and increase support for students in the schools
- More after-school programming and activities to keep youth involved and having fun
- Prevent youth from joining gang by offering services and support at an earlier age
- Offer more community involvement opportunities to youth and provide educational and personal growth opportunities to enable them to make better life choices and coping skills
- Provide a forum/support group where youth can be heard
- Increase mentorship programming
- Encourage gang members to turn in weapons without consequences
- Police department needs to stay tough with gang members and work with the community to identify issues of concern in neighborhoods
- Focus on mentors and increased collaboration with law enforcement
- More time/energy/money/resources should be allocated to the Pathways program through the Juvenile Court to allow personnel to go deeper with youth to work on prevention and rehabilitation.
- I would like us to do a better job of predicting which youth are most at-risk to join a gang so that we can provide family support and services to the youth to prevent involvement
- More prosocial outlets for youth
- More free recreation activities for youth
- Better relations between schools and agencies in Tacoma
- Gang outreach needs to better connect and communicate with juvenile probation
- More early intervention, once a youth is involved it is too late
- The courts and law enforcement need to work more closely to keep weapons out of the hands of children and youth
- More easily accessible education for program personnel that interact with gang-involved youth. We are coming from different backgrounds and may not have the same knowledge on the subject, which makes it difficult to recognize and respond appropriately when we work with a gang-involved youth
- More punishment for gang-involved individuals who commit crimes
- Tacoma would benefit for more services for gang-involved individuals
- Programs need to get away from "tough on offender" approaches and be more accessible to high risk youth

PUBLIC SAFETY SURVEY

Nineteen public safety professionals participated in a voluntary online survey. This survey was conducted to supplement the current data available on gangs from Tacoma Police Department. Responses were completely anonymous, and the survey was disseminated via the Pierce County Gang Task Force. Survey respondents are employed by:

- Tacoma Police Department
- Pierce County Sheriff's Office
- Washington Department of Corrections

Respondents work in a wide variety of roles within local law enforcement agencies in Tacoma.

Question: Do you believe gang activity is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in Tacoma compared to three years ago?

Most respondents (79%) reported that they believe gang activity in Tacoma has increased over the past three years. One in six respondents (16%) reported that they believe that gang activity has stayed about the same. A small percentage (5%) reported that they believe that gang activity has decreased.

Question: Do you believe gang activity is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in Tacoma compared to three years ago?

Object 5.35 Responses to: "Do you think gang activity in Tacoma is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same over the past one year and three years"
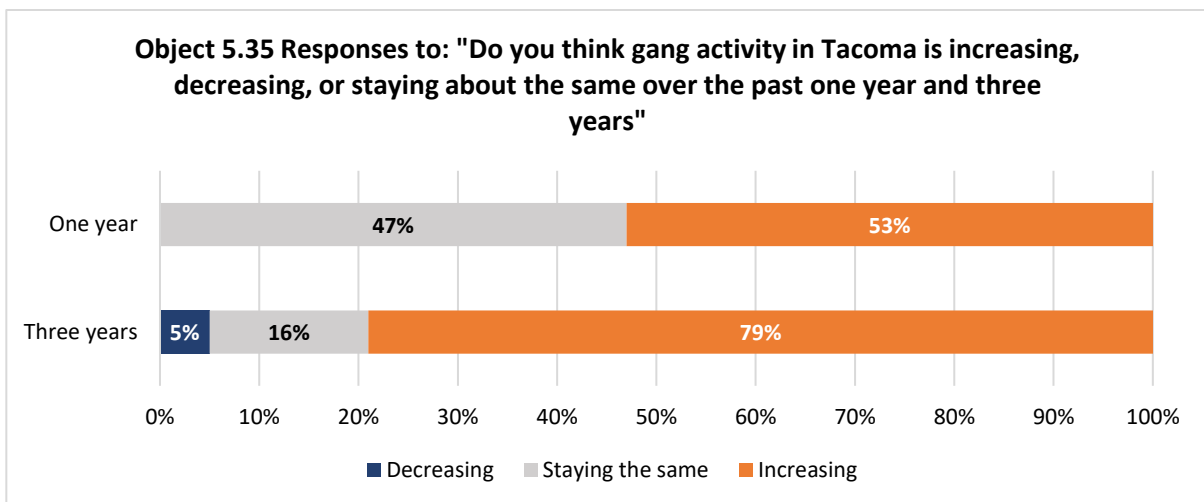
Most respondents (79%) reported that they believe that gang violence in Tacoma has increased over the past three years. One in five (21%) reported that they believe gang violence in Tacoma is staying about the same. No respondents reported that gang violence has decreased.

Object 5.36 Responses to: "Do you think gang violence is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in Tacoma same compared to three years ago?"

21%	79%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Decreasing   ■ Staying the same   ■ Increasing
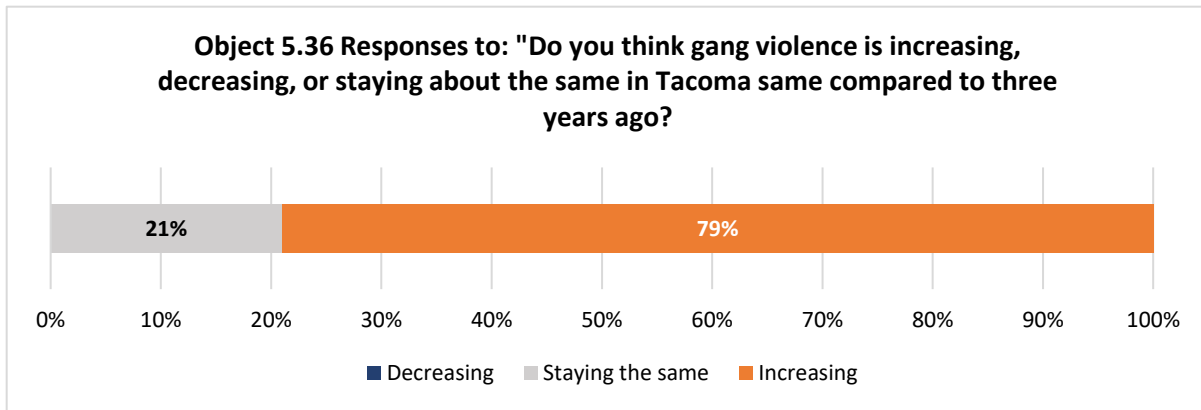
QUESTION: WHAT SIGNS OF GANG ACTIVITY DO YOU SEE IN TACOMA?
Respondents were provided with a list of possible gang activities and were asked to mark all that applied.

All respondents (100%) reported gang involvement in fights/assaults, and almost all (95%) reported gang involvement in shootings and other violent crimes.
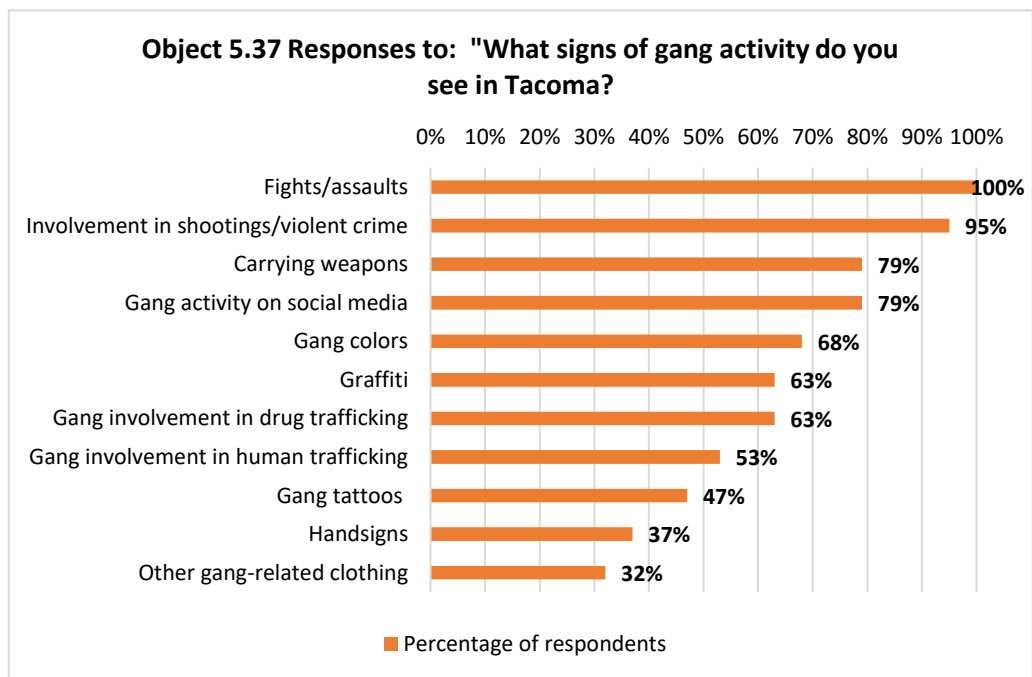
Most reported involvement by gangs in carrying weapons (79%) and engaging in gang activity on social media (79%). Two-thirds of respondents reported gang involvement in drug trafficking (63%) and more than half (53%) reported gang involvement in human trafficking activities in Tacoma.

Object 5.37 Responses to: "What signs of gang activity do you see in Tacoma?"

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Fights/assaults	100%
Involvement in shootings/violent crime	95%
Carrying weapons	79%
Gang activity on social media	79%
Gang colors	68%
Graffiti	63%
Gang involvement in drug trafficking	63%
Gang involvement in human trafficking	53%
Gang tattoos	47%
Handsigns	37%
Other gang-related clothing	32%

■ Percentage of respondents

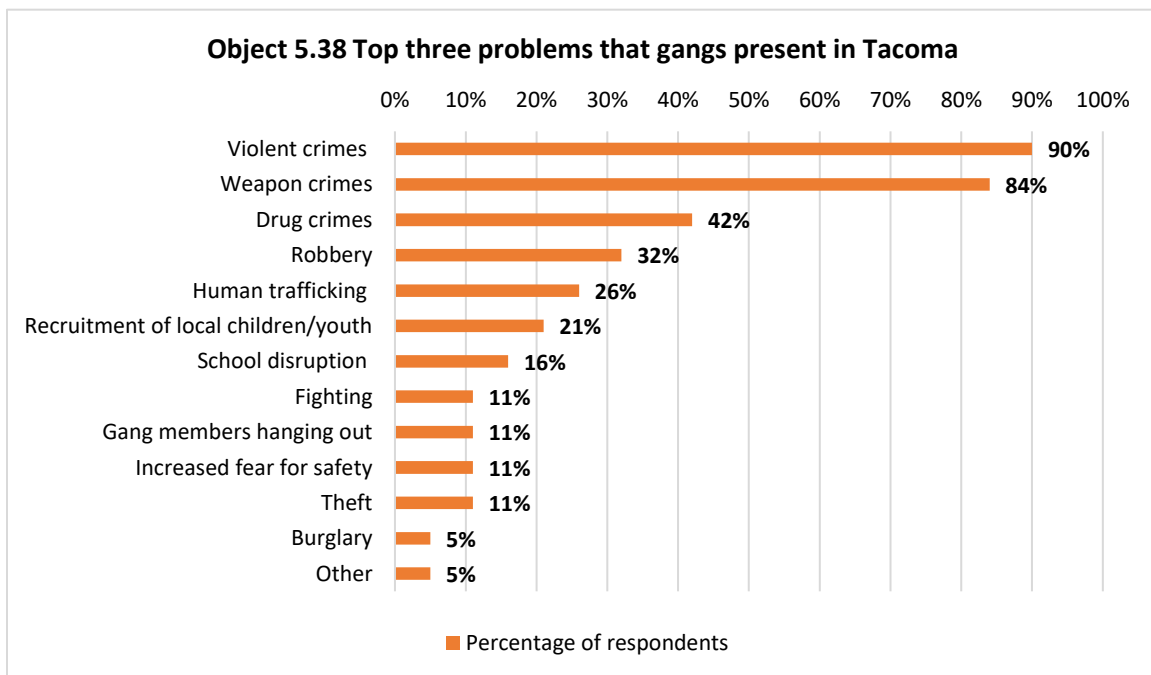**Question: Which gangs are most active in Tacoma?**

Respondents listed 18 different street gangs as the most active gangs in Tacoma, along with several outlaw motorcycle gangs:

- Hill Top Crips
- Knoccoutz Crips
- Gangster Disciples
- Carnales Sureños
- Playboy Sureños
- 18th Street

- East Side Piru
- Tillicum Park Gangsters
- 72nd Gangster Disciples
- South Side Psycho
- South Side Criminal
- Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)

- Lakewood Hustler Crips
- Family Mobs Everything
- Sureños
- East Side Bloods
- Eastside Lokotes
- Native Gangster Crip

- Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, including Bandidos, Sin City Disciples, Wheels of Soul, Outsiders, Gypsy Jokers, Diplomatz, and Dahuru

Gangs that were mentioned most frequently include Hilltop Crips, Knoccoutz, Gangster Disciples, Lakewood Hustler Crips, Tillicum Park Gangsters, Sureños, and East Side Piru.

Question: Please pick the top three problems that you believe gangs present in Tacoma

Respondents were provided with a list of possible options and were limited in selecting three answers. They could also choose to write in their own custom response to this question.

Object 5.38 Top three problems that gangs present in Tacoma

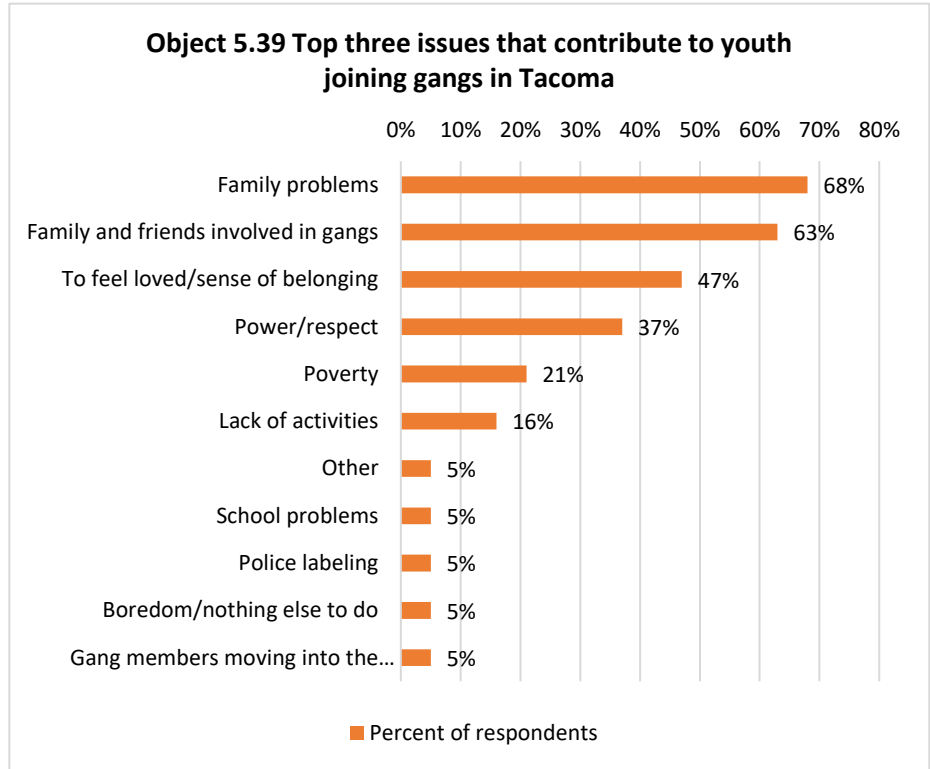| Problem	Percentage of respondents
Violent crimes	90%
Weapon crimes	84%
Drug crimes	42%
Robbery	32%
Human trafficking	26%
Recruitment of local children/youth	21%
School disruption	16%
Fighting	11%
Gang members hanging out	11%
Increased fear for safety	11%
Theft	11%
Burglary	5%
Other	5%

The most common responses included violent crimes (90% of respondents) and weapon crimes (84%). There seems to be strong consensus among the respondents about gang involvement in these crimes as respondents were twice as likely to select these options compared to any other choice. Other answers provided by respondents include crimes related to the growth of the marijuana business in Washington, including gang members working at or owning marijuana shops, burglarizing them, and violent crimes.

Question: In your opinion, what are the top three issues that contribute to youth joining gangs in Tacoma?

Respondents were provided with a list of possible options and were limited to three choices. They could also provide an answer in their own words. The top reasons selected by respondents all focused on family issues and emotional support provided by gangs.
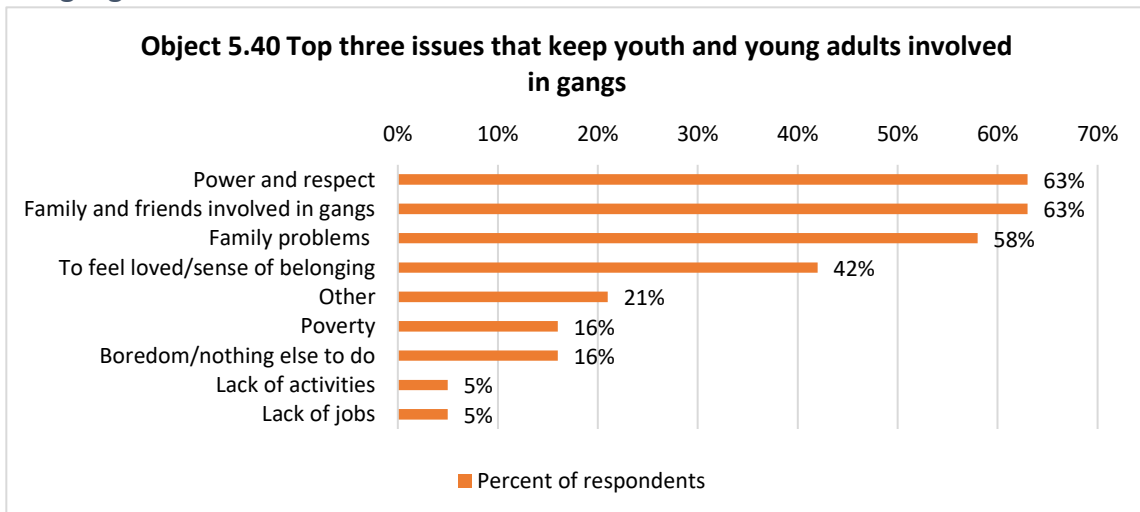
More than two thirds of respondents (68%) identified family problems as one of the top issues contributing to youth joining gangs. A similar percentage (63%) reported that family/friends involved in the gangs are one of the top three issues contributing to youth joining gangs. To feel loved/sense of belonging was selected by almost half of respondents (47%).

Object 5.39 Top three issues that contribute to youth joining gangs in Tacoma

Issue	Percent
Family problems	68%
Family and friends involved in gangs	63%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	47%
Power/respect	37%
Poverty	21%
Lack of activities	16%
Other	5%
School problems	5%
Police labeling	5%
Boredom/nothing else to do	5%
Gang members moving into the…	5%

Percent of respondents

Other responses included:

- Lack of family structure at home
- Poor parenting practices
- Lack of parent involvement/absent parents
- Lack of positive and successful male role models
- Multigenerational gang families

Question: In your opinion, what are the top three issues that keep youth and young adults involved in gangs in Tacoma?

Object 5.40 Top three issues that keep youth and young adults involved in gangs

Issue	Percent
Power and respect	63%
Family and friends involved in gangs	63%
Family problems	58%
To feel loved/sense of belonging	42%
Other	21%
Poverty	16%
Boredom/nothing else to do	16%
Lack of activities	5%
Lack of jobs	5%

Percent of respondents

The top responses were power/respect (63%) and family and friends involved in gangs (63%). Family problems were identified by 58% of respondents.

Question: What risk factors/at-risk behaviors have you observed in the youth/young adults that you interact with through your job?
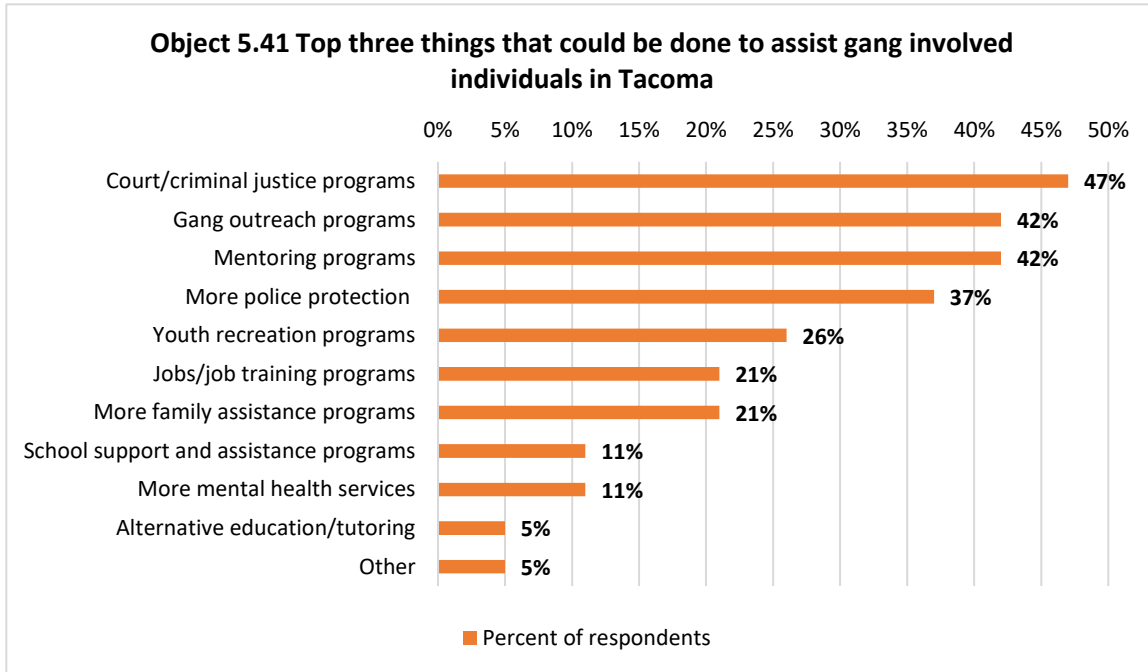
The most common responses were:

- Drug use (84%)
- Parent is absent, addicted to substances or in other ways unable to help the youth (84%)
- School behavior problems (74%)
- Alcohol use (68%)
- Exposure to violence at home (63%)
- Exposure to violence in the community (58%)
- Involvement in violent crime (58%)

The top responses of public safety professionals were quite like those of youth serving professionals. Public safety professionals identified an average of 9 risk factors that youth/young adults are exposed to in Tacoma

Table 5.4 Responses to "what risk factors have you observed in the youth/young adults you work with?"	
Risk Factor	**Percent reporting**
Drug use	84%
Parent is absent, addicted to substances, or in other ways unable to help the youth	84%
School behavior problems	74%
Alcohol use	68%
Exposure to violence at home	63%
Exposure to violence in the community	58%
Involvement in violent crime	58%
Parents are too lenient	58%
Truancy	53%
Incarcerated parent	53%
School drop-out	47%
Involvement in property crime	47%
School failure	42%
Exposure to violence at school	26%
Unprotected sex or other risky sexual behavior	26%
Death of a parent	11%
Parents are too harsh/abusive	5%
Total respondents: 19	

Question: Please pick the top three things that you think could be done to assist gang-involved individuals in Tacoma

Survey respondents were limited to three or fewer responses to this question and could choose from a list of possible options or write in a custom response.

Object 5.41 Top three things that could be done to assist gang involved individuals in Tacoma

| Category	Percent
Court/criminal justice programs	47%
Gang outreach programs	42%
Mentoring programs	42%
More police protection	37%
Youth recreation programs	26%
Jobs/job training programs	21%
More family assistance programs	21%
School support and assistance programs	11%
More mental health services	11%
Alternative education/tutoring	5%
Other	5%

■ Percent of respondents

Top responses included:

- Court and criminal justice programs (47%)
- Gang outreach programs (42%)
- Mentoring programs (42%)
- More police protection (37%)

Question: How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?

Most respondents (64%) expressed dissatisfaction with the current response to gangs, and over half (53%) reported that they are very unsatisfied with the current response to gangs. One quarter of

Object 5.42 Responses to: "How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs in Tacoma?"

Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
11%	26%	11%	53%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied
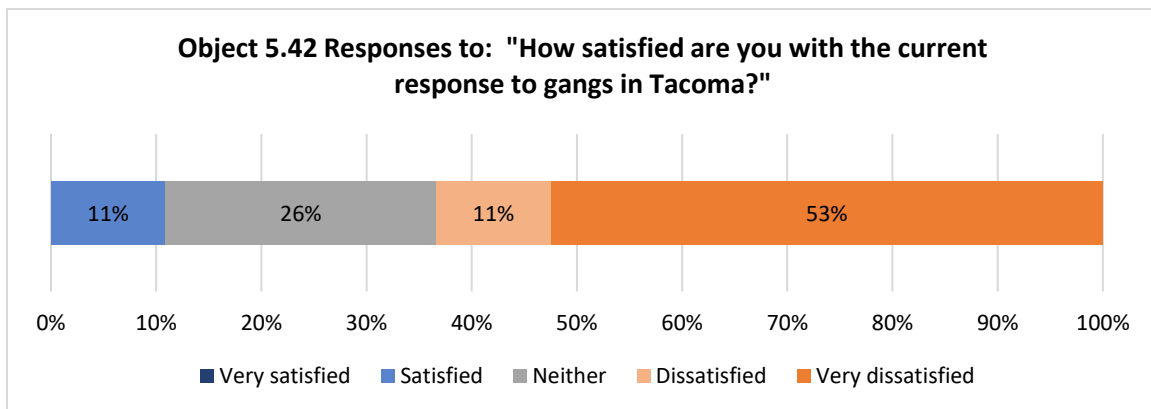
respondents (26%) were neither satisfied or dissatisfied. About one in ten respondents (11%) were satisfied with the current response.

Question: what do you think could be done differently or better to improve the current response to gangs in Tacoma?

This survey question was open-ended. Many respondents focused on the role of Tacoma Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit, as well as the role of the court system and intervention services.

- Tacoma Police Department's "Gang Unit" should aggressively and proactively collect intelligence on and investigate/enforce laws against criminal gang members.
- Start by increasing the deterrent to gang activity (more arrests), and then offer alternatives, especially for first-time offenders, such as court ordered job training, successful male mentors, attending church, victim panels, celebrate recovery, etc.
- Give Tacoma Police Department more staffing and resources to deal with gangs
- Assign more officers to the gang unit
- More proactive gang enforcement activities
- Allow police officers to do their job, including proactive efforts to reduce gang crime
- Collect and share information on gang members and more actively pursue criminal investigations on gang crimes
- The Tacoma Police Department Gang Unit was reduced and now consists of two officers and one sergeant, who have been assigned to Special Investigations Division (SID) for nearly two years. They are no longer in uniform, in patrol cars, contacting gang members, or responding to gang-related calls. There are very few (2-3) officers in the Tacoma Police Department who are formally trained in gang-related culture and activities, and they are on patrol, making the largest impact. The department needs a robust gang/violent crime unit with 6 to 8 proactive patrol officers who focus on various activities connected to gangs: burglaries (for weapons), controlled substances, firearms, human trafficking, promoting prostitution, etc.
- Establish a multiagency proactive gang task force that specifically targets the substantial gang problem in Tacoma
- More collaboration between law enforcement and other agencies, and a more structured system for prevention, intervention, and justice-involved individuals.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Several questions were structured for comparison across survey respondent groups.

Question: Top three reasons for gang activity in Tacoma

Respondent groups who were asked about this question include community residents, community leaders, agency personnel, public safety personnel and gang-involved individuals.

Table 5.5 Top three reasons for gang activity in Tacoma				
	Community Residents	Community Leaders	Agency Personnel	Public Safety Personnel	Gang involved individuals
1	Poverty (45.2%)	Poverty (70%)	Poverty (53%)	Family problems (68%)	Lack of activities (51.2%)
2	Family/friends in gang (43.8%)	Feel loved/sense of belonging (46%)	Family/friends in gang (53%)	Family/friends in the gang (63%)	Family problems (40.7%)
3	Feel loved/sense of belonging (30.4%)	Family/friends = in gang (41%)	Family problems (42%)	Feel loved/sense of belonging (47%)	Family/friends in gang (40.7%)
					Feel loved/sense of belonging (40.7%)

Gang-involved individuals were asked about their personal reasons for joining a gang. The top three responses were:

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

While most other groups of respondents identified poverty as a primary reason for gang involvement, this reason was not reported by gang-involved individuals, who focused more on lack of activities and social/emotional/family reasons for joining a gang. When gang-involved individuals were asked about their personal reasons for joining a gang, emotional/family reasons were the top ranked reasons, and "to make money" was the third-ranked choice. It should be noted that gang involved individuals also reported exceptionally high levels of trauma exposure related to personal victimization and family abuse/neglect.

Question: Top three things that should be done about gangs

This question was asked of community residents, leaders, agency personnel, public safety personnel, and gang-involved individuals. Mentoring was selected by four of five groups, as was youth programs/recreation. Jobs/job training programs were also selected by four of five groups.

Table 5.6 Top three things that should be done about gangs

	Community Residents	Community Leaders	Agency Personnel	Public safety personnel	Gang involved individuals
1	Youth programs/recreation (48.1%)	Youth programs/recreation (83%)	Mentoring (58%)	Court/criminal justice programs (47%)	Youth programs/recreation (52.4%)
2	Mentoring (47.6%)	Jobs/job training (56%)	Youth programs/recreation (50%)	Gang outreach programs (42%)	Jobs/opportunity (14.3%)
3	Jobs/job training (39.5%)	Mentoring (53%)	Jobs/job training (47%)	Mentoring (42%)	Educational programs (9.5%

Gang involved individuals were also asked what should be done to prevent younger youth from joining gangs. The top response was mentoring programs, followed by family programs and youth programs/activities/recreation. Gang involved individuals were also asked what might make them think about leaving the gang and what types of support would help with the transition out of gangs.

Table 5.7 Interview with gang involved individuals	
	What would make you think about leaving the gang?	What support would help you leave the gang life?
1	Family responsibilities (51.9%)	Get a job (61.8%)
2	Get a job (37%)	Relocate (14.7%)
3	Become a parent (22%)	Support (14.7%)

While employment was listed as the top support that would help individuals leave the gang, two of the top three reasons that individuals would think about leaving the gang were related to family, including family responsibilities (51.9%) and becoming a parent (22%). About one-third of gang-involved individuals reported that getting a job would make them think about leaving the gang.

Question: How satisfied are you with the current response to gangs?
Community residents, community leaders, agency personnel and public safety personnel were all asked this question. Public safety personnel were the most likely to report dissatisfaction (64%) with the current response. About one fourth of community residents (28%) and community leaders (17%) are dissatisfied with the current response.

Table 5.8 Level of satisfaction with current response				
Level of satisfaction	Community Residents	Community Leaders	Agency Personnel	Public safety personnel
Very satisfied	2%	0	0	0
Satisfied	10%	24%	17%	11%
Neither	61%	52%	67%	26%
Dissatisfied	20%	9%	17%	11%
Very dissatisfied	7%	15%	0	53%

The most common response for community residents (61%), community leaders (52%) and agency personnel (67%) is that they are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the current response to gangs. When community residents were asked about their reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the most common reason was that they do not know what is currently being done in Tacoma to respond to gangs. Public safety personnel were the most likely to express that they are dissatisfied (11%) or very dissatisfied (53%).

Object 5.43 Level of satisfaction with the current response to gangs by respondent groups