

2007 Statewide Gang Survey Results



**Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Office of Statewide Intelligence
Gerald M. Bailey, Commissioner**



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Florida Department of Law Enforcement

**Honorable Charlie Crist, Governor
Honorable Bill McCollum, Attorney General
Honorable Alex Sink, Chief Financial Officer
Honorable Charles Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture**

**Gerald M. Bailey
Commissioner
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
www.fdle.state.fl.us**

The *2007 Statewide Gang Survey Results* is published to provide information concerning criminal street gang activities to the criminal justice community.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Office of Statewide Intelligence
P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489

PH: (850) 410-7060
FAX: (850) 410-7069

OSIIntel@fdle.state.fl.us

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Introduction

Florida, along with the rest of the nation, is seeing the re-emergence of criminal street gang activities. The existence of criminal street gangs in Florida is no new phenomenon. The landscape of Florida crime problems brought on by criminal street gangs has ebbed and flowed over time. The criminal street gang issue in the new century demands renewed vigilance. Law enforcement has responded by increasing efforts aimed at the identification and documentation of criminal street gangs, gang members, and gang activities. These efforts have enhanced our ability to dismantle and prosecute these criminal groups.

Despite these efforts, the apparent increase in gang activity may be impacting Florida's violent crime rate. Although Florida's violent crime rate increased only .5% in 2006, the increase represented a 13% increase in the number of robberies and 28% spike in the number of homicides reported in 2006. More importantly, the number represents an additional 248 people who were victims of the most heinous violent crime (881 homicides in 2005; 1,129 in 2006). Homicide crime rates were particularly high in large metropolitan areas in the Northeastern, Central and Southern regions of Florida. Violent crime involving firearms was up 13% statewide, and a firearm was used in 740 homicides, equaling 65% of the total homicides reported in Florida in 2006. The increase in gun crime, homicide and robberies, has reversed a decade long declining trend, and is one indicator of an increased level of violence throughout the state.

To assess the current state of Florida's gang problem and gang related crime, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement engaged in collecting information for a comprehensive "State of Florida Gang Assessment." The 2007 Florida Statewide Gang Assessment will be the first *statewide* gang assessment published since 1995. As criminal street gang issues appear to be impacting nearly every jurisdiction in Florida, especially in the past 18 months to two years, the assessment will serve two purposes; to give an indication of what the "State of the State" is *currently* with respect to criminal street gangs and provide a baseline to which future assessments may be compared.

This document presents the survey results that are the foundation for the law enforcement sensitive assessment which has yet to be published. This document represents the culmination of information collected from surveys delivered to four different criminal justice disciplines in an effort to obtain a comprehensive overview of the criminal street gang issue in Florida. The four survey components are Law Enforcement, School Resource Officers, Corrections (including Department of Juvenile Justice) and Prosecutors. The goal of the survey was to receive relevant responses which will contribute to an understanding of the scope of the criminal street gang issue in Florida and equip law enforcement, prosecutors, and corrections, with the necessary tools to stay on top of this emerging crime problem.

Executive Summary

The 2007 Statewide Gang Survey was conceived with optimal coverage of the entire criminal justice community within Florida. With that goal in mind, four component surveys were constructed to be delivered to the four major criminal justice disciplines having a stake in the problem of criminal street gangs and the associated crime attributable to them. These four components were delivered to local law enforcement agencies; and as a subset of local law enforcement, to school resource officers: corrections – including juvenile justice: and prosecutors. Throughout the survey, questions pertaining to the identity of individual gangs were included. Specific criminal street gang names, however, are excluded from this version as to not further enhance the notoriety of individual gangs and to not compromise on-going criminal investigations. Criminal street gang names will be shared with the responding agencies within the disciplines included in this survey.

Survey response rates for each component varied. Additionally, survey participants provided responses to individual questions at differing levels. The average response rate of sheriff's offices (45.5%) and police and/or public safety departments (25.6%) responding to the gang survey was 32.75%. The response rate for both Department of Corrections (DOC) and for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) was 100%. Prosecutors of the 20 judicial circuits responded at 35%, as did the Statewide Prosecutor's Office. With respect to the law enforcement and school resource officer components, the geographical origins of the respondents were very well balanced with representation from both rural and urban areas, from varying economic demographics, and from areas in which criminal street gang activity has been previously identified and those areas which have not yet identified criminal street gang activity.

The presence of criminal street gangs was reported by a majority of law enforcement, school resource officer and corrections component respondents. Relative to the prosecutor component, a majority of respondents reported that local law enforcement in their service area had identified criminal street gang-related activity. Over half of prosecutor respondents indicated local law enforcement had brought cases forward relative to gang-related crime occurring within their service area. A majority of law enforcement respondents identified by name 10 or fewer gangs in their jurisdictions. Ten percent identified more than 21 gangs by name; these were primarily in jurisdictions with high urban populations. Law enforcement respondents identified an approximate 721 total of gangs. School resource officers identified an approximate total of 212 gangs represented in the school setting. Many of these gangs overlapped gangs named in the law enforcement component responses. The majority of corrections component respondents reported seven to 15 active gangs; this included adult corrections, juvenile detentions and county jail operations. The Department of Corrections identified 413 gangs and the Department of Juvenile Justice identified 156 total gangs within their facilities.

Over the past six to 12 months, over half of law enforcement respondents and 20% of school resource officers reported increases in gang activity. Corrections generally characterized their activity levels as stable, neither increasing nor decreasing, during the same time period. Respondents were asked to rate several types of crime in which gangs were believed to be engaged during 2006. Criminal mischief and drug distribution

were the two types of criminal activity rated as “high.” Law enforcement respondents were somewhat divided in their response regarding the role of drug distribution to support gang activity. Nearly half of law enforcement respondents indicated that 25% or less of the identified gangs in their area were engaged in drug activity as the gang’s primary source of profit. However, nearly half of law enforcement respondents also reported that 50% or more of the gangs in their areas were engaged in drug activities as their primary source of profit. Drug distribution/sales continue to be a widely reported criminal activity perpetrated by gangs and gang members in addition to criminal mischief, burglary, robbery, and aggravated assault/battery. School resource officers indicated the primary gang activities at their schools were mostly graffiti and aggravated assault.

The average age of gang members in the corrections setting (not including DJJ) were generally dispersed over an older spectrum than those reported by the law enforcement respondents. Based upon the aggregate survey responses, the majority of documented gang members are between 15 and 21 years old. With respect to the race/ethnicity demographic, the averaged responses of each component varied somewhat based on the discipline of the survey respondent. For example the race/ethnicity of gang members in an adult corrections setting differed from those gang members in a juvenile detention setting.

Nearly two-thirds of law enforcement respondents and one-third of school resource officer respondents reported inter-gang conflicts. Alliances reported by law enforcement indicated a new trend whereby gangs traditionally considered enemies, formed at least temporary alliances to achieve certain goals. This may support the inferences that west coast to east coast migration and second and third generation gangs have diluted some of the traditional hostility previously exhibited. However, local gangs were more often reported as being of the “most” consequence. Usually if the gang was named the most significant problem, it was also named as the most actively recruiting and the most violent. Although the “big” names are sometimes more organized, the “local” names cause the greatest problems from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Respondents reported that gang members used both traditional (weapons, cell phone) and non-traditional (Internet) tools to facilitate gang activity. “Frequent” or “sometimes” use of firearms in criminal street gang activity was reported by over half of law enforcement respondents.” Firearms on school campuses were not widely reported. Knives were the most commonly confiscated weapon on school grounds. Blades and knives were the favored weapon of criminal street gang members in corrections (adult) facilities. The use of technology by gang members to communicate was reported by approximately two-thirds of law enforcement and about one-third of school resource officer respondents; one-quarter of corrections respondents identified some use of technology to communicate within the corrections setting. Outside of the corrections responses, the social networking websites (e.g. MySpace.com, YouTube.com) were commonly cited as a relatively new trend.

Agencies were surveyed regarding their practices and policies for identifying and documenting gangs and gang members. The “Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act of 1996” (Florida Statute 874) outlines the criteria for defining a criminal street gang, gang members, gang associates and a pattern of criminal street gang activity. A large majority of law enforcement respondents and school resource officer respondents indicated that the definitions in Chapter 874 were the guidelines utilized to define gang

members, gang associates, and/or criminal street gang-related incidents. Slightly less than half of corrections component respondents indicated utilizing 874 definitions. It is important to point out however, that in the corrections setting (including juvenile detention) broader interpretation of the 874 criteria are sometimes required in order to maintain order and safety both for the inmate population and for the officers charged with their safety. The term "security threat group" which can include gang members, is often utilized in a corrections setting.

The utilization of intelligence and case management-type databases to share gang information across jurisdictions and between agencies were also queried within the law enforcement and school resource officer components. Florida has a gang intelligence database, InSite, which can be utilized by criminal justice agencies with access to a secure portal, the Criminal Justice Network (CJNet). Over one-third of law enforcement and school resource officer respondents indicated they currently utilize the statewide gang database (InSite). A majority of corrections respondents reported the utilization of an internal electronic database for the purposes of data storage relative to monitoring gang member/associates and or gang related activities within their facilities.

All four criminal justice disciplines were queried about current gang enforcement and suppression activities. Over half of the prosecutor respondents reported filing less than five cases in 2006 related to criminal street gang activities; while 40% reported filing more than 50 cases in 2006. A majority of the prosecutor respondents indicated that firearms were "frequently" a factor in the prosecution of criminal street gang activity. Nearly one-third of these respondents reported having a specialized prosecution unit to handle gang-related cases. An overwhelming majority reported participation in a formal task force or collaborative law enforcement effort focusing on criminal street gang problems as a major concern.

One-third of corrections respondents and just over half of law enforcement respondents indicated increasing levels of enforcement relative to criminal street gang activities. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported gang-related prosecutions have increased over the past two years; while one-third reported stable numbers during that period. Forty percent of respondents characterized prosecutions of gang-related violent crime as "moderately increasing," another 40% reported "significant increases" in gang-related violent crime prosecutions.

Respondents from each of the disciplines were asked to identify anti-gang strategies that were successful. Responses included law enforcement and community awareness of the gang problem; open communication both inter-agency and intra-agency; proactive enforcement; zero tolerance; multi-agency task forces with an emphasis on gang issues; and the pursuit of federal prosecutions.

This document is the culmination of information collected from surveys from diverse yet interconnected disciplines within the criminal justice community. The apparent increases in violent crime in the past 18 months to two years may to some extent be attributable to the gang problem. However, this survey cannot unequivocally lead to that conclusion. Until such time as gang crime can be measured with some degree of accuracy, we cannot fully know the impact of criminal street gang activities on the rate of violent crime. Therefore, survey instruments measuring the perceptions of criminal justice professionals are an important component to understanding the gang and violent crime nexus.

The survey demonstrates that the gang problem is pervasive and undeniable. Furthermore, the criminal justice community is in agreement that the criminal street gang issue is a crime problem in need of a comprehensive solution. The commonalities apparent in the survey responses indicate that a collaborative, coordinated statewide gang strategy can and should be developed. Such a strategy should contain elements that are flexible enough to deal with regional differences as well as the rapidly changing trends of gang crime that vary greatly from one locality to another.



Survey Analysis Overview

Four survey components were developed in order to obtain specific data from various criminal justice disciplines. The survey was developed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement but many of the questions were compiled from other national survey instruments. Each of the survey components was vetted by subject matter experts to include the Florida Gang Investigators Association. Survey components were disseminated to law enforcement, school resource officers, corrections and prosecutors based on the mission(s) of the specific criminal justice entity. Sheriff's offices for example, were provided with a law enforcement component, a corrections component, and a school resource officer component. Police and public safety departments were provided with the law enforcement component and the school resource officer component. In this fashion, the corrections component was made available to sheriff's offices for potential use at the county jail level, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. The survey components were distributed to all identified entities by compact disk and were made available through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's secure Office of Statewide Intelligence website. In addition, the survey was disseminated by both the Florida Association of School Resource Officers (FASRO) and the Florida Gang Investigator's Association (FGIA).

For the purposes of the law enforcement component of the survey, the law enforcement specific component was disseminated to 366 law enforcement agencies within Florida. Sixty-six (66) were sent to the Sheriff's of 66 counties within Florida. Miami-Dade County was included within the 300 surveys that were disseminated to the Chiefs of police and public safety departments throughout the state. Several surveys were inadvertently sent to departments whose mission did not include enforcement that would normally encounter criminal street gang activities on a widespread basis (e.g. airport authority police, etc.). As a result, a majority of those agencies were removed from the potential pool of relevant law enforcement responses thereby reducing the relevant pool to 355 if all law enforcement agencies had responded.

Of the 355 potentially relevant law enforcement responses, 101 law enforcement component surveys were returned. Sheriff's offices constituted 30 responses to the "law enforcement" survey and 71 "law enforcement" survey responses were received from Police/Public Safety Departments. The overall rate of response to the *law enforcement component* was 28.5%.

One hundred and six law enforcement entities provided responses to at least one survey component. In the case of five law enforcement entities, no law enforcement component was submitted, however, one of the other components was submitted instead (i.e. sheriff's office responded to SRO component without responding to the law enforcement component).

For the purposes of the school resource component of the statewide gang survey, the school resource officer (SRO) specific component was provided to the same 366 local law enforcement agencies within Florida as was reported in the analysis of the law enforcement survey. Twenty-two (21.9%) percent of local law enforcement agencies (105) responding to at least one of the survey components also responded to the school resource officer survey. One hundred and twenty-seven SRO survey responses were

received from 23 jurisdictions that filled out at least one school resource officer component of the survey.

The original intent was for school resource officers to respond to the survey relative to the school for which they had responsibility. After evaluation of the responses, some officers indicated responsibility for more than one school; and in some cases, a unit supervisor completed one survey for all of the schools within their jurisdiction. Additionally, accurate data was not available regarding the total number of potential respondents or the number of agencies with active SRO programs; contributing to the inability to arrive at a definite response rate.

The Department of Corrections responded with 54 corrections surveys corresponding to the 54 major correctional institutions under state supervision. With respect to the Department of Juvenile Justice, responses were received from the 26 Regional Juvenile Detention Centers. This represented a 100% response rate for both the Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Nine sheriff's offices responded with the corrections component relative to their county jail operations. This constituted a 13.6% response rate for county jails. A total of 58 counties statewide were represented by DOC major institutions, DJJ regional juvenile detention facilities, and county jails. In total, 89 corrections component surveys were returned for inclusion in the 2007 Statewide Gang Survey Results.

The prosecutions component was disseminated to the State Attorney for each of Florida's twenty judicial circuits and to the Office of the Statewide Prosecution. The Statewide Prosecutor's Office responded and seven of the 20 recipients (33.3%) of the prosecutor component of the survey responded.

Limitations

Despite an effort to obtain valid and reliable data, limitations are unavoidable. In an attempt to minimize problems, questions in the survey instrument were primarily derived from those used in prior studies of similar nature.

Human error is a factor when conducting survey research. A small percentage of survey question responses had multiple answers selected. Attempts were made to seek clarification from the respondents when possible. Where clarification was not available, the most logical answer was selected; sometimes based on the responses to related questions. Some respondents answered questions that conflicted; answering *No* to whether or not they identified criminal street gang-related activity occurring within their jurisdiction but in a later question listing the names of identified gangs, showing that they had indeed identified gang activity. In cases like this, the results were evaluated and altered to reflect the most logical outcome.

Interpretation of individual questions by each respondent was completely subjective, potentially affecting the resultant outcome when the intended meaning of a question was misunderstood. The survey itself was also subjective and reflected the perceived gang activity, issues and problems being based on the respondents' level of knowledge. Gang problems may therefore exist in a respondent's jurisdiction without the knowledge

of law enforcement, corrections personnel, school resource officers, and/or prosecutors. This situation would result in a deficit of information to evaluate.

Perceptions of the gang problem vary across jurisdictions, which is a continuing problem. Respondents were asked to make estimates on relative percentages and specific numbers throughout the survey and are not necessarily based on official data of the organization. In an attempt to achieve a more accurate total of specific gangs in Florida, some gang names provided by various agencies (usually within the same immediate geographic region) were combined after attempts at clarification or further evaluation. For example, MLK was combined with Makin' Life Krazie. This was done in an effort to minimize error in reporting one gang more than once.

The survey consisted of four components; law enforcement, corrections, school resource officer, and prosecutor. Given that each part was disseminated to differing entities, the response rates varied by area. "An unwritten norm for a reliable survey response rate is approximately 35% - 40%."¹ A survey sample was not used for this study, so a smaller response rate is deemed reliable. In addition, larger municipalities in Florida participated, which further increases the reliability of the survey.² Furthermore, the information contained within these survey results relative to statistical percentages is provided with the caveat that "respondent" means that the question was answered. In many cases, although a survey was received from a jurisdiction, particular questions were left blank.

Differences among the respondents in experience and training could affect survey and assessment results. Various sources of gang knowledge were surveyed, including law enforcement, corrections, school resource officers, and prosecutors. Other well-informed sources, however, such as community groups and social service organizations, were not included and may have increased understanding of the gang issue.

The definition of a "gang" and a "gang member" per Florida Statute 874 was provided in the survey; however, some vocabulary throughout the survey could be subject to interpretation, such as *most violent gang*; *most actively recruiting gang*; or *biggest problem*. A lack of standardized definitions among respondents is an important limitation to the survey and should be considered when drawing conclusions about the findings in these survey results. Intelligence products are useful in providing important information regarding knowledge of gang activity, but certain collection efforts, such as surveys, provide a rough calculation of the type, amount, and geographic distribution of gang-related activity.

¹ Dr. David Carter, Personal Interview, Michigan State University, September 7, 2007

² *ibid*

Law Enforcement Survey Analysis

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Law Enforcement Survey Analysis

Community and Agency Demographics

Of the responding agencies, the majority (66.3%) characterized their population density as 100,000 or less. Six (5.9) percent of respondents characterized their population density as more than one million (see Table 1). The most common type of agency that responded to the law enforcement survey was city police departments (52.3%), and this was expected given that 300 surveys were distributed to Chiefs of Police and public safety, versus the 66 sent to sheriff's offices (see Table 2).

Table 1 – Population of Law Enforcement Respondent Jurisdictions

Population	PD	% PD	SO	% SO	Grand Total	% Total
0 to 100,000	58	81.7%	9	30.0%	67	66.3%
100,001 to 250,000	5	7.0%	7	23.3%	12	11.9%
250,001 to 500,000	7	9.9%	5	16.7%	12	11.9%
500,001 to 1,000,000	0	0.0%	4	13.3%	4	4.0%
> 1,000,000	1	1.4%	5	16.7%	6	5.9%
Grand Total	71	100.0%	30	100.0%	101	100.0%

Table 2 – Respondent Agency Type

Agency Type	Responses	Percentage
County Police Department	6	5.9%
County Sheriff's Department	27	26.7%
City Police Department	53	52.3%
Town Police Department	13	12.9%
College or University Police Department	0	0.0%
State Law Enforcement Agency	0	0.0%
Airport Police Department	1	1.0%
School Police Department	1	1.0%



Including all the law enforcement respondents, 26.0% reported 101 to 300 sworn officers in their agency. The majority (79.0%) of agencies had 300 or less sworn officers (see Table 3).³

Table 3 – Percentage of Sworn Members per Agency

Sworn Members	% Respondents
< 10	10.0%
11-25	20.0%
26-50	10.0%
51-100	13.0%
101-300	26.0%
301-500	8.0%
501-700	2.0%
701-900	1.0%
> 900	10.0%

Criminal Street Gang Presence

As expected, there were responses received from agencies reporting no identifiable criminal street gang activity in their jurisdictions. Responses that indicated no gang activity were as essential in assessing criminal street gang trends statewide as were responses affirming the activities of criminal street gangs. There is a likelihood, however, that many jurisdictions failed to respond to the survey because of the perception that if no criminal street gang activity existed there was no need to respond. This, of course, contributed to a less than precise analysis.

When the presence or absence of criminal street gang activity was reported within their jurisdiction, 71.3% of respondents (101) answered affirmatively, with 28.7% answering in the negative. The realization by law enforcement that particular criminal activity is the work of a criminal street gang does not always correspond with the actual beginning of that gang’s activities.



³ Statistics related to the number of sworn officers were calculated from a total of 101 responses.

Of those responding (77), 31.2% indicated the first recognition of a gang problem in their jurisdiction between 2001 and the present, thereby revealing that the majority of law enforcement respondents (68.9%) recognized the presence of criminal street gangs in Florida over a decade ago (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Range of Years in Which Gang Presence was First Identified

Gang Presence Identified	% Respondents
Before 1990	24.7%
1990-1995	27.3%
1996-2000	16.9%
2001-Present	31.2%

Agencies were asked to identify criminal street gangs within their jurisdictions by name. Four agencies indicated the presence of criminal street gangs, but did not further identify gangs by name. The majority (73.6%) of agencies that identified gangs by name reported 10 or fewer in their jurisdiction (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Percentage of Total Active Gangs Identified

Number of Active Gangs	# of Agencies	% Respondents
1 to 5	25	36.8%
6 to 10	25	36.8%
11 to 15	10	14.7%
16 to 20	1	1.5%
21 to 25	2	3.0%
More than 25	5	7.4%

Based on the information provided by each jurisdiction, the highest numbers of identified gangs were attributed to counties with pockets of high urban populations and one county with an extremely proactive approach to identifying gangs and gang members within their population. The data associated with this statistic should not be interpreted as the jurisdictions with the highest levels of criminal street gang crime. Various factors, such as more aggressive identification and documentation of gangs and/or gang members, could be the cause.

Demographic Characteristics of Criminal Street Gangs

Survey recipients were asked to provide approximate population percentages relative to the ages and race/ethnicity of gang members identified in their jurisdictions and the average was calculated. For the agencies responding (68), an average 38.4% of gang members were between 15 and 17 years-of-age (see Table 6). For all responding agencies, the most common race/ethnicity of a gang member was African-American (37.6%), followed by Hispanic (32.6%) (see Table 7). The most commonly described race/ethnicity for those agencies that answered "Other" was Haitian. In at least one response, Haitians were included in the African-American category and noted as such. Also described in the "Other" category were Mexican, Honduran, El Salvadoran, mixed race gangs, Bosnian, Middle Eastern, and Jamaican.

Table 6 – Average Age Range of Gang Members

Age Range	Average Percentage
Under 15	12.8%
Between 15 - 17	38.4%
Between 18 - 21	26.9%
Between 22 - 24	12.8%
Over 24	8.4%

Table 7 – Average Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members

Race/Ethnicity	Average Percent
White/Caucasian	23.2%
African-American	37.6%
Hispanic	32.6%
Asian	1.8%
Other	6.2%

With this survey, the subject of female involvement in criminal street gangs was explored. Eighty-one respondents indicated that, for the most part, female involvement in gangs has increased (34.1%). A significant percentage (25.6%) stated that they did not know the status of female involvement in gangs, however, a small percentage (2.4%) reported that it had decreased (see Table 8).

Table 8 – Female Involvement in Gang Activity

Female Involvement	% Respondents
Increased	34.1%
Decreased	2.4%
Remained the Same	25.6%
No Female Involvement	12.2%
Do Not Know	25.6%

Seventy-three respondents estimated the percentage of females involved in criminal street gangs in 2006 was, for the most part, 5% or less (75.7%). Clearly most respondents reported low numbers of females involved in criminal street gangs, since greater than 97.3% of respondents characterized female gang members at levels under 15% of all gang members (see Table 9). Respondents were also asked how many exclusively female gangs were present in their jurisdiction. Out of 92 agencies reporting female gang presence, 13% reported gangs comprised exclusively of female gang members in their jurisdiction.

Table 9 – Percentage of Female Gang Members

% Female Gang Members	% Respondents
0 - 5%	75.7%
6% - 15%	21.6%
16% - 25%	1.4%
26% - 50%	1.4%
> 50%	0.0%

Criminal Street Gang Activity

The criminal activities of street gangs vary widely from graffiti and criminal mischief to home invasion robbery and murder. The 2007 Florida Gang Survey solicited responses relative to many topics, including: crime types, inter-gang conflicts, the use of firearms, alliances and splintering, organized crime involvement, and communications.

Of the 79% of jurisdictions responding on the general status of gang activity, 53.2% reported that the problem was “getting worse,” 43% reported the problem had “stayed about the same,” and 3.8% reported that the gang problem in their jurisdiction was “getting better.”

Eighty-one respondents provided further details on changes in the gang problem over the past six months and 12 months, during 2006. In the past 12 months, the majority of agencies observed a slight increase (39.5%) or no change (32.1%) in gang activity. Similar patterns were noted in the last six months, with the majority of respondents stating that gang activity had either not changed (39.5%) or increased slightly (27.2%). Few responded that a decrease, whether slight or significant, had occurred (see Table 10).

Table 10 – Changes in Activity at Intervals, 2006⁴

Past 6 months	% Response	Past 12 months	% Response
Increased Significantly	24.7%	Increased Significantly	22.2%
Increased Slightly	27.2%	Increased Slightly	39.5%
No Change	39.5%	No Change	32.1%
Decreased Slightly	6.2%	Decreased Slightly	5.0%
Decreased Significantly	2.5%	Decreased Significantly	1.2%

Gangs and Drugs

It is commonly reported that criminal street gangs are widely involved in illegal drug activities as a major source of income. In an attempt to determine the levels at which gangs engaged in illegal drug activities, law enforcement was surveyed on how many of the known gangs in their jurisdictions derived their primary profits from drug activity.



Forty-five (45.2%) percent of respondents reported that more than half of all the identified gangs in their jurisdiction were engaged in drug distribution and/or trafficking as a primary source of profit (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Percentage of Gangs with Drugs as Primary Profit

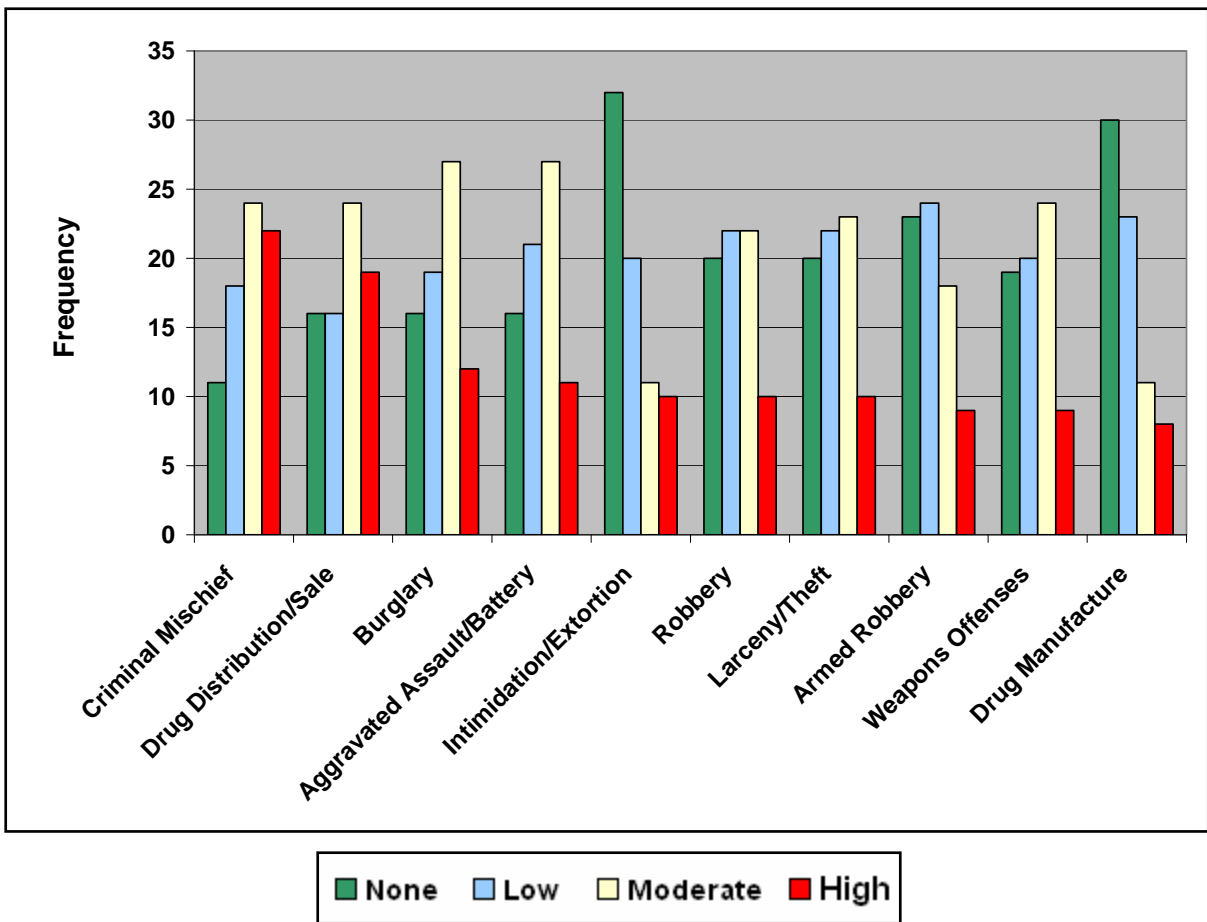
% of Total Gangs	Percentage of Respondents
0% - 25%	46.6%
26% - 50%	8.2%
51% - 75%	20.5%
> 75%	24.7%

⁴ The survey was disseminated in March 2007, therefore, *Prior 6 Months* = August 2006 – February 2007 and *Prior 12 Months* = February 2006 – February 2007.

Gangs and Crime

Respondents were asked to rate several other types of crime in which criminal street gangs were believed to be engaged in during 2006. Levels of activity for each crime type included High (75% - 100%), Moderate (26% - 74%), Low (1% - 25%), and None. The two crime types most frequently rated as “high” were criminal mischief and drug distribution. Other criminal activity rated in the “high” category, but at lower frequencies, were burglary, aggravated assault/battery, robbery, larceny/theft and intimidation/extortion. The reporting of gang-related criminal activities at “moderate” and “low” levels were reported with more frequency. The three most frequently reported as “none” were arson, human trafficking, and kidnapping (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Top Ten Offenses with the Highest Occurrence



Gang Relationships

Inter-gang conflicts were reported by 64.1% of respondents and 35.9% indicated no identifiable inter-gang conflicts in their jurisdictions. Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported the development of alliances among and between street gangs. The most surprising aspect of these alliances, however, was that in many cases, the alliances involved gangs which were traditionally enemies. Alliances such as these suggest that the traditional hostility between gangs is not universal as gang migration and the “next generation” of gangs develops. The alliances also demonstrate the possibility that in some cases the “identity” of the gang itself is secondary to the goals (e.g. territorial, financial, power or influence) of the street gang, at least for the short term. Some of the alliances described by respondents represented the absorption of smaller local street gangs into larger and perhaps more organized entities.

Respondents also indicated occurrences of splintering or the division of some gangs into separate sets/cliques. Thirty-nine percent of 81 respondents observed these divisions among criminal street gangs in their jurisdiction. The most commonly cited reason for breaking off was power struggles, followed by increasing territories, increasing memberships, age differences, and lack of leadership (incarceration/deportation).

Gang Crime & Technology

With regard to the use of technology in the furtherance of criminal street gang activities, 63.1% of respondents indicated affirmatively, while 10.7% percent responded that gangs were not utilizing technology, and 26.2% indicated that it was unknown to what degree criminal street gangs are utilizing technology in the furtherance of their criminal activities. Among the respondents reporting the use of technology by gang members, use of the social networking websites was the most commonly reported. By far, *MySpace.com* was most often referenced, although *hi5.com*, *Niggaspace.com*, *Youtube.com* and *cpixel.com* were also mentioned. These websites, and others like them, are being used by criminal street gangs for the purpose of recruiting and the sharing of information. Two-way radios, scanners, and cell phones with “direct-connect,” text messaging communications, cameras, and video recorders, were all mentioned as technology tools utilized by street gangs in the furtherance of their criminal activities. Other computer applications such as instant messaging, and software applications to create fraudulent identifications were also mentioned.

Gang Communications

Codes and ciphers are often utilized by criminal street gang members to covertly communicate with one another. Fifty percent of respondents reported that at least some of the gangs in their jurisdictions were utilizing codes and ciphers and 50% indicated no known use of this type of communication.

Gangs and Organized Crime

On a national level, criminal street gangs are sometimes identified as being affiliated with a particular organized crime group (e.g. Mexican Mafia). Very few jurisdictions responded to the survey question regarding criminal street gang involvement with organized crime entities. For the few who reported any connection, the most commonly referred to was Mexican organized crime, however, these numbers were not statistically significant enough to render any conclusions.

Gangs and Guns

As Florida is experiencing a rise in violent crime, it is important to survey law enforcement on the use of firearms in gang-related crime. Survey respondents were asked to evaluate the frequency that firearms were an element in gang-related crime. Twenty-five percent of respondents reported firearms used “often,” which was the same percentage that firearms were used “very little” (see Table 12). Clearly, firearms use by criminal street gangs escalates the potential for serious violent acts during the commission of gang-related crime.

Table 12 – Firearms Involvement

Frequency Firearm Used	% Respondents
Often	25.0%
Sometimes	32.5%
Very little	23.8%
Not at all	18.8%



Gangs at School

The status of criminal street gang activity on school grounds is of significant importance to law enforcement, as Florida's schools are generally held up as "safe places." The law enforcement component of the survey addressed the question of whether gang activities on school grounds were occurring and whether they were increasing. A more in-depth discussion of criminal street gang activities on or near school campuses was detailed in the *School Resource Officer Component* of these results.



In general, 60% of law enforcement respondents reported that gang-related incidents were occurring on school grounds; 30% reported no gang activity on campuses, and 10% indicated a lack of knowledge with regard to the school campus. Forty-nine percent (48.8%) of respondents characterized gang activity on school grounds as increasing; 7.3% indicated decreasing numbers of events; 32.9% indicated gang activity was staying the same; and 11% responded that they did not know the trending direction (see Table 13).

Table 13 – Gang Activities on School Grounds

School Gang Problem	% Respondents
Increasing	48.8%
Decreasing	7.3%
About the same	32.9%
Do Not Know	11.0%

Gang Migration

The migration of illegal aliens has also been in the forefront of assessing the status of criminal street gang activity in Florida. Florida is a popular destination state for migration of both legal and illegal immigrants. Of the 91 respondents, 27.5% perceived the migration of *illegal* aliens as "very much" impacting the street gang problem in their jurisdiction. Similarly, 25.3% of agencies reported no impact and 24.2% did not know the impact *illegal* aliens had on the street gang problem (see Table 14).

Table 14 – Impact of Illegal Aliens

Effect of Illegal Aliens	% Respondents
Very much	27.5%
Somewhat	16.5%
Very little	6.6%
Not at all	25.3%
Do Not Know	24.2%

Gang Infiltration

Recent national reports have speculated on a variety of aspects of criminal street gangs and the nexus, if any, to the military and law enforcement. Additionally, there has been sketchy reporting that gang members and/or the associates of gang members (girlfriends, relatives, etc.) have attempted to infiltrate law enforcement recruit academies, law enforcement civilian jobs and the military. The problems this potential infiltration poses are varied. Gang members/associates involved in law enforcement stand to gain knowledge of law enforcement techniques, tactics and specific investigative information; which if divulged could jeopardize active investigations and pose potentially serious threats to the safety of the public and law enforcement officers. The law enforcement component survey posed several questions relative to any known law enforcement and/or military nexus.

Five (4.6%) percent of respondents reported that criminal street gang activity in their jurisdictions involved military personnel as perpetrators. Ninety-five (95.4%) percent responded in the negative. Ninety (89.5%) percent reported no indication that criminal street gang members in their jurisdictions are joining the military in the furtherance of criminal street gang activities; 10.5% reported that there *are* indications this tactic is occurring. A low 3.3% indicated that military personnel ending their military obligations are joining criminal street gangs. Results were similarly low (5.6%) with regard to gang members being observed utilizing military-style tactics in their criminal activities. Nearly six (5.7%) percent of respondents reported the seizure of military issue weapons, explosives, or other military paraphernalia (e.g. ballistic body armor). Although low, among the respondents reporting this type of seizure, the items seized included military firearms, assault weapons, body armor, ballistic vests, and military issued flack jackets.

With respect to law enforcement infiltration, 10% of respondents reported attempts by gang members and/or associates to participate in law enforcement recruit classes. A slightly higher 18.9% of respondents identified girlfriends and/or relatives seeking or securing employment at law enforcement/jail facilities. Although relatively low, these responses reinforce the need for thorough vetting by law enforcement and the military when recruiting and/or employing in a security sensitive environment.

Policing Criminal Street Gangs

The dedication of resources to the crime problem posed by criminal street gangs is an essential element of garnering some control over the spread of criminal street gangs. The law enforcement component survey addressed the issue of dedicated resources and specific enforcement strategies in dealing with criminal street gang activities. Sixty-two (62.1%) percent of respondents indicated that during 2006, their agency participated in either a formal multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional task force or other collaborative effort that focused on criminal street gang problems as a major element.

Seventy (69.9%) percent of respondents reflected participation in anti-gang enforcement efforts or specific programs aimed at reducing criminal street gang related crime; 30.1% indicated no such participation. With respect to sworn (officers) resources engaging in gang enforcement, 58.8% reported no *full-time* sworn resources assigned to gang related investigations. Just over 10% reported one sworn officer dedicated to gang investigations. Agencies responding to this question indicated from one to 20 sworn

officers dedicated to gang issues full time. The average number of sworn full-time officers assigned to criminal street gang investigations was two.

Agencies were also asked to indicate the number of sworn officers participating part-time in gang-related investigations.⁵ Here, the manpower resources varied more widely. The number of respondents reporting one or two *part-time* sworn was 25% and 22%, respectively. Other respondents declared from three to 35 sworn officers engaged in gang-related investigations part-time. In one particular case, all sworn officers (100) were engaged in the investigation of gang activities on a part-time basis. The average number of sworn part-time officers was 4.5 (see Table 15).⁶

Table 15 – Total and Percentage of Sworn Full Time and Part-Time Officers Responsible for Gang Enforcement

Sworn Full Time	Total	Percentage
0	40	58.8%
1	7	10.3%
2	5	7.4%
4	4	5.9%
5	1	1.5%
6	2	2.9%
7	3	4.4%
8	2	2.9%
10	1	1.5%
11	1	1.5%
14	1	1.5%
20	1	1.5%
Grand Total	68	100.0%
Average	2.1	

Sworn Part Time	Total	Percentage
0	11	16.4%
1	17	25.4%
2	15	22.4%
3	5	7.5%
4	1	1.5%
5	2	3.0%
6	2	3.0%
7	1	1.5%
9	2	3.0%
10	2	3.0%
12	1	1.5%
15	2	3.0%
16	2	3.0%
20	3	4.5%
35	1	1.5%
Grand Total	67	100.0%
Average	4.5	

⁵ NOTE: One third of the total law enforcement component survey respondents did not answer this question.

⁶ The agency that reported 100 part-time gang officers was removed when calculating the average in order to obtain a result that was more representative of the respondents as a whole.

Survey respondents were asked the overall status of policing activities relative to criminal street gang problems in the past two years. Fifty-one (51.2%) percent of respondents indicated policing activities with respect to gangs were *increasing*, while 44% indicated the level of policing *remained about the same* (see Table 16).

Table 16 – Level of Enforcement Activities

Policing Activities	Total	Percentage
Increased	42	51.2%
Decreased	4	4.8%
Remained the same	37	44.0%

Criminal Street Gang Classification and Database Information

Investigative resources and their proper application are essential in managing any investigation, including investigations into criminal street gang activities. Respondents indicated that 39.3% have been trained in the use of the InSite Database Gang Module; 60.7% indicated they had not received training in the use of the gang intelligence database.

Agencies were surveyed regarding their use of criteria other than the definitions set out in Florida Statute Chapter 874 (Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act); 89.2% of respondents indicated that the definitions in Chapter 874 were the guidelines utilized to define gang members, gang associates, and/or criminal street gang-related incidents.

The utilization of intelligence and case management-type databases were also queried within the law enforcement survey. Sixty percent of respondents reflected the use of internal databases for tracking gang members/associates; 39.7% indicated that there was no provision for electronic tracking within their agencies. In a related question, 37.8% indicated they were currently utilizing the statewide gang database, InSite; while 62.2% reported that they do not utilize the Gang Module in the InSite Database for tracking or sharing gang intelligence.



Specific Criminal Street Gangs

Survey respondents were asked about the membership of individual criminal street gangs in their jurisdictions. Forty-five jurisdictions reported individual gang or gangs with *20 or less members*; 35 jurisdictions reported individual gang or gangs with *21-50 members*; and 26 jurisdictions reported individual gang or gangs with *more than 50 members* (see Table 17).⁷

Table 17 – Gang Membership Levels

Gang Membership	# of Respondents
20 or Below	45
21 - 50	35
More than 50	26

The law enforcement survey posed questions regarding the specific gangs which were the cause of the most concern within individual jurisdictions. Respondents reported on which street gang was the “most serious problem,” which street gang was most actively recruiting and which street gang committed the most violent activity. Three gangs were consistently named. When identifying the origin of the described gangs, the majority described “local origins.” Although there were scattered references to the gang originating in other counties, states, or countries, the most prevalent response to gang origin was “local.” The remaining proportion of respondents primarily identified single “local” gangs in these categories (e.g. “24 Street”).

The migration of gangs and gang members from one area to another has been a point of discussion for decades. Knowledgeable gang specialists have identified the spread of the “gang culture” primarily through the movement of populations both within and outside of the country. The Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) phenomenon, although comprised primarily of individuals of Central American ethnicity, originated in Southern California. The gang culture migrated back to Central America after deportations in the United States resulted in MS-13 members re-establishing themselves in their home countries. Similarly, the Bloods and Crips spread out across the United States as a result of the transience of society between states.



⁷ NOTE: One or more gangs may be included in the number of gangs per jurisdiction.

The 2007 Florida Gang Survey posed questions regarding gang “migration” into and out of individual jurisdictions. Twenty (19.7%) percent of respondents indicated gang member migration into their jurisdictions; 50% indicated gang migration both into and out of their jurisdictions; and 30.3% reported no migration, meaning that gangs in their jurisdictions formed locally and remain local. Of the jurisdictions reporting migration, only 65 further described the impact of gang member migration (see Table 18).

Table 18 – Impact of Gang Migration

Impact of Member Migration	% of Respondents
Very Much	24.6%
Somewhat	35.4%
Very Little	10.8%
Not At All	13.8%
Do Not Know	15.4%

Therefore, seventy (69.7%) percent of the respondents indicated that gang migration occurs with respect to their jurisdiction. This is an example of how the statewide gang database, InSite, is an invaluable tool to the criminal justice community due to its ability to document the cross-jurisdictional nature of gangs.

In general, most jurisdictions reporting migration indicated in low percentages that the migration was specifically for the purpose of establishing or continuing gang affiliation. Relocation of family was a frequently cited reason for gang member migration. When reporting on migration, about half reported some migration from larger cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and Miami.

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG)

Although Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG) technically fit into the definition of criminal street gangs, traditionally, OMG characteristics do differ somewhat from those of youthful criminal street gangs. Generally, membership is older. The motorcycle “club” is generally more structurally organized and steeped in ritual. The 2007 Law Enforcement Survey posed several questions regarding the presence and level of OMG activity within each jurisdiction. Sixty-one (61.4%) percent reported no known OMG activity within their jurisdiction. Thirty-nine (38.6%) percent of respondents identified OMG within their jurisdiction. The most common OMG criminal activities cited by those respondents included: drug offenses, intimidation/extortion, assault/battery, and prostitution.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated no significant violent crimes or violent threats associated with OMG within their jurisdictions in the past two years; 8.8% answered affirmatively to significant OMG violence, and 14.7% indicated no knowledge of specific OMG violence.

Law Enforcement Training and Recommendations

Finally, the 2007 Law Enforcement Survey posed several questions to law enforcement respondents regarding training needs, enforcement assistance, community and/or youth prevention and intervention programs. Seventy-seven percent (76.7%) indicated the need for awareness training. Forty-five percent indicated a need for enforcement assistance. Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated prevention programs would be helpful; and 68.4% indicated intervention programs would be beneficial.

Additionally, respondents were asked to identify effective strategies for gang investigation, intervention, or suppression in their jurisdictions. The common themes mentioned in these strategies included:

- Gang awareness
- Community involvement
- Open communication with school resource officers and teachers
- Graffiti eradication programs
- Intelligence gathering & dissemination
- Researching social networking websites (MySpace.com, etc.)
- Proactive enforcement
- Street level enforcement with zero tolerance
- Multi-agency task force concept; and Multi-Agency Gang Task Force (MAGTF)
- Pursuing federal prosecutions

School Resource Officer Survey Analysis

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School Resource Officer Survey Analysis

School Demographics

The school resource officer (SRO) programs around the state occur in various school settings. Ninety-five (94.5%) percent of respondents described their school(s) as public schools (see Table 1). Respondents also reported on the grade level (see Table 2) of their schools as primary/elementary, secondary/middle; high school and/or other (e.g. vocational-technical).

Table 1 – School type

School Description	% of Respondents
Charter School	0.8%
Magnet School	1.6%
Other School	3.1%
Public School	94.5%

Table 2 – Grade Level

School Description	% of Respondents
Primary/Elementary	11.1%
Secondary/Middle	47.6%
High School	35.7%
Other	5.6%

The student population reported by school resource officers varied widely, however; the majority of respondents (47.6%) reported their school population in excess of 1200 students (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Student Population

School Population	% of Respondents
<200	1.6%
201-400	1.6%
401-600	1.6%
601-800	10.5%
801-1,000	14.5%
1,001-1,200	22.6%
>1,200	47.6%

Criminal Street Gang Presence

Among the survey responses, some received from school resource officers reported no identifiable gang-related activity within their school(s). Responses that indicated no gang activity were as essential in assessing criminal street gang trends statewide as were responses affirming the activities of criminal street gangs in the school setting. There is a likelihood that some school resource officers did not respond to the survey because of the perception that if no criminal street gang activity existed, there was no need to respond. This contributes to less than precise survey results.

Seventy-four (74.2%) percent of respondents affirmed the presence of criminal street gang activity within the school setting, while 25.8% reported no identifiable criminal street gang activity (see *Table 4*).

The most widely reported time period during which respondents first noticed gang activity in their schools was 2001 to present (see *Table 5*) reported by 64.8% of respondents. Of note, however, is that 41.7% of all surveys (127) did not respond to this question. Date ranges associated with response choices were meant to assess the recognition of gang presence based on when the school was established.

Table 4 - Gang Activity Occurring within Schools

Gang Activity	% of Respondents
Yes	74.2%
No	25.8%

Table 5 – First Recognition

Gang Recognition	% of Respondents
1961 – 1980	4.1%
1981 – 2000	31.1%
2001 – Present	64.8%

Similar to the response rates relative to the presence of street gang activity in general, seventy-four (74.2%) of respondents identified gang-related incidents on school grounds during 2006 (see *Table 6*).

Table 6 – Gang-Related Incidents, 2006

Gang Incidents	% of Respondents
Yes	74.2%
No	25.8%

Forty-eight percent of respondents reported that students in their school(s) associated with or belonged to criminal street gangs (see Table 7).

Table 7 – Students Associating with Gangs

Gang Associate/Members Attending School	% of Respondents
Yes	48.0%
No	24.8%
Do Not Know	27.2%

Demographics Characteristics of Criminal Street Gangs

Survey recipients were asked to provide approximate population percentages relative to the ages of gang members within their school setting. For the responding agencies, an average 33.0% of gang members were between 14 and 15 years-of-age (see Table 8).

Table 8 – Percentages of Average Age

Age Range	Average Percent
Under 12	2.2%
Between 12 – 13	12.5%
Between 14 - 15	33.0%
Between 16 - 17	19.3%
18 or Over	4.0%

Respondents reported on race and/or ethnicity (see Table 9). The average percentage of gang members and/or associates within a certain ethnic description was calculated utilizing the same method above. The most widely reported race/ethnicity was Hispanic.

Table 9 – Percentage of Average Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Average Percent
White/Caucasian	16.6%
African-American	29.1%
Hispanic	37.4%
Asian	0.7%
Other	0.5%

Each respondent was asked to identify criminal street gangs identified as active within their schools by name. Two hundred and twelve (212) gangs were represented as active within their schools.

Criminal Street Gang Activity

Survey respondents reported on the status of gang activity within their schools. Sixty-seven (67.1%) percent indicated that overall gang activity within their school(s) was “staying about the same;” 12.7% indicated gang activity was “getting worse” (see Table 10).

Table 10 – Overall Gang Activity

Gang Activity At School	% of Respondents
Getting Worse	12.7%
Getting Better	20.2%
Staying about the same	67.1%

When reporting on criminal street gang activity within the school specifically during 2006, the majority of respondents (59.8%) indicated gang activity was “staying about the same” (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Gang Activity During 2006

Gang Activity At School	% of Respondents
Increased	20.7%
Decreased	19.5%
Staying about the same	59.8%

Changes in gang activity were reported for the prior six months and the prior 12 months. In the past 12 months, the majority of respondents observed “no change” (62%). Eleven (11.3%) reported significant increases; and nearly 10% reported slight increases. Decreases, both slight and significant were also noted by nearly 17% of respondents. The changes reported for the prior six months generally mirrored the reporting for the prior 12 months (see Table 12).

Table 12 – Changes in Activity at Intervals, 2006⁸

Past 6 months	% Response		Past 12 months	% Response
Increased Significantly	9.8%		Increased Significantly	11.3%
Increased Slightly	8.5%		Increased Slightly	9.9%
No Change	60.0%		No Change	62.0%
Decreased Slightly	12.2%		Decreased Slightly	9.9%
Decreased Significantly	9.8%		Decreased Significantly	7.0%

⁸ The survey was disseminated in March 2007, therefore, *Prior 6 Months* = August 2006 – February 2007 and *Prior 12 Months* = February 2006 – February 2007.

Survey recipients were asked to report on any emerging trends relative to criminal street gang activity occurring on school campuses. The three most frequently reported trends among respondents were graffiti and/or tagging, the displaying of colors and fighting.

Thirty-three (33.1%) percent of respondents reported the occurrence of gang conflicts on school grounds (see Table 13). Alliances between criminal street gangs are formed for a variety of reasons and may be on a temporary basis. Sometimes gangs become allied against a perceived threat from a rival gang or two or more gangs may become allied to achieve a particular goal such as expanding their territory or pooling resources. A large majority of survey respondents (89.3%) reported observing few gang alliances in the school setting (see Table 14).

Table 13 – Gang Conflicts

Gang Conflicts on Campus	% of Respondents
Yes	33.1%
No	66.9%

Table 14 – Gang Alliances

Gang Alliances on Campus	% of Respondents
Yes	10.7%
No	89.3%

One of the prime locations for recruiting youth into a gang is on or near school campuses. Fifteen (15.3%) percent of respondents reported the presence of gang members, who do not attend their school, recruiting at or near school campuses during the most recent school year (see Table 15). Sixteen (16.8%) percent of respondents reported the occurrence of gang activity on school buses (see Table 16).

Table 15 – Gang Recruiting

Recruiting at or near Campus 2006	% of Respondents
Yes	15.3%
No	84.7%

Table 16 – Gang Activity on School Buses

Gang Activity on School Bus	% of Respondents
Yes	16.8%
No	83.2%

Drug activity is one of the primary criminal activities in which criminal street gangs engage. Survey respondents reported on the percentage of all identified gangs active in the school setting that use drug distribution as their primary criminal activity. Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated five percent or less of gangs engage in drug activities as their primary criminal activity (see Table 17).

Table 17 – Drug Activity as Primary Criminal Activity in Schools

Drug Activity as Primary Criminal Activity in Schools	% of Respondents
0 – 5%	74.7%
6 – 10%	9.3%
11 – 15%	1.3%
16 – 20%	0.0%
21 – 25%	1.3%
> 25%	13.3%

Respondents also reported on the level (expressed as a percentage of all drug activity at school) of drug activity occurring in the school setting that was attributable to gang activity. Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that gang-related drug activity at school was minimal (5% or below). Twelve percent reported that over one-quarter of all drug activity at school was attributed to gang activity (see Table 18).

Table 18 – Drug Activity at School

% Drug Activity Gang-Related	% of Respondents
0 – 5%	71.1%
6 – 10%	8.4%
11 – 15%	1.2%
16 – 20%	3.6%
21 – 25%	3.6%
> 25%	12.0%

Survey respondents reported on gang-related weapons confiscated at school. Eighty-nine (88.6%) percent of respondents indicated that less than 25% of total weapons confiscations were related to gang activities at school (see Table 19). The most widely reported weapons confiscated were knives.

Table 19 – Percentage of Total Gang-Related Weapons Confiscated

% Weapons Confiscated Gang-Related	% of Respondents
<25%	88.6%
26 - 50%	8.9%
51 - 75%	1.3%
>75%	1.3%

The possession and/or use of firearms on school campuses are particularly worrisome. Respondents reported on the frequency in which firearms were used in assault crimes on campus (see Table 20). Eighty-four (84.3%) of respondents indicated firearms possession and/or use “not at all;” while 6.1% reported “very little.”

Table 20 – Firearms in Campus Assaults

Firearms in Campus Assaults	% of Respondents
Not at All	84.3%
Very Little	6.1%
Sometimes	0.9%
Often	0.0%
Do Not Know	8.7%

Knives or other weapons were reportedly used in assault crimes at similar levels (see Table 21).

Table 21 – Weapons Other than Firearms Used in Campus Assaults

Weapons Other than Firearms Used in Campus Assaults	% of Respondents
Not at All	79.7%
Very Little	6.8%
Sometimes	2.5%
Often	1.7%
Do Not Know	9.3%

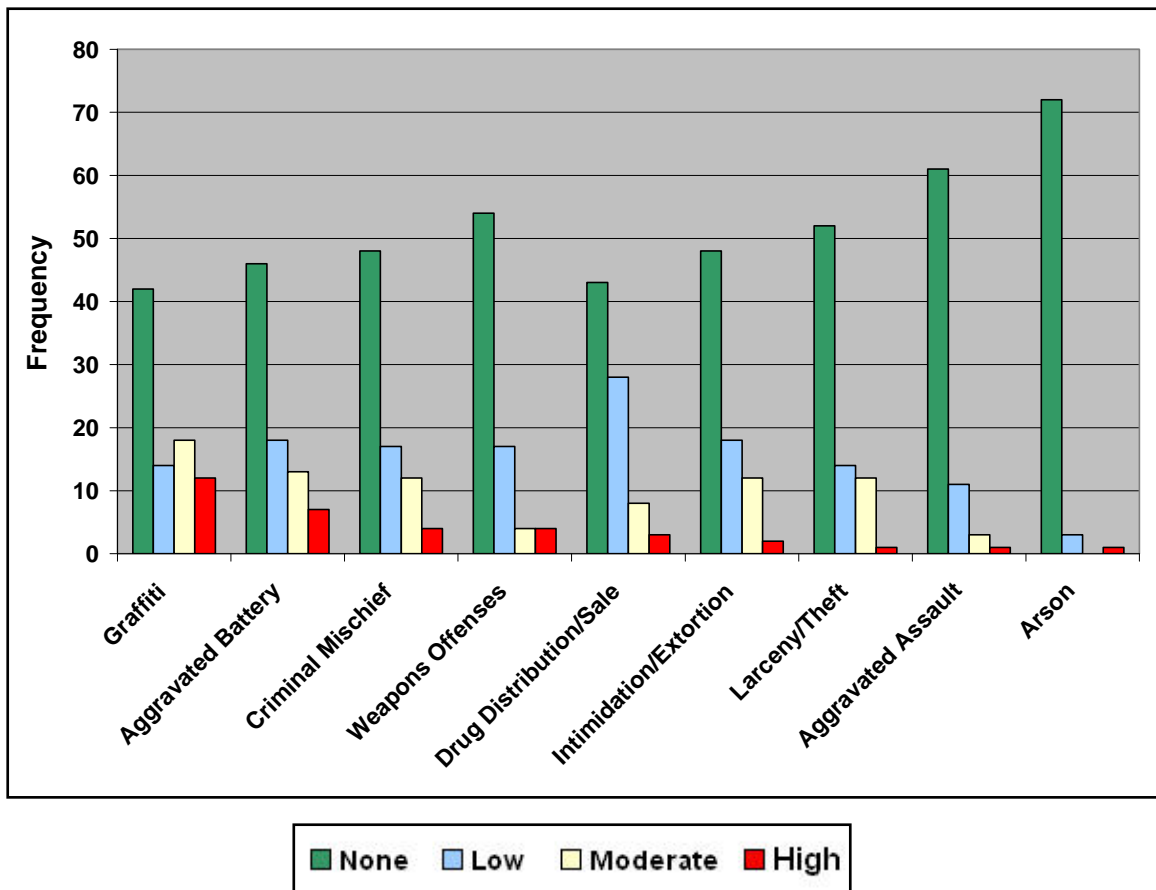
Young people are generally very savvy in their use of technology today. From cellular telephones to various computer applications and criminal street gangs are no different. The convenience of technological advances and their widespread use in legitimate contexts were bound to be incorporated into illicit activities as well. Survey respondents reported on the use of technology such as computers, Internet websites, email, cellular phones, and direct connect in the furtherance of gang-related activity. Approximately one-third (29.4%) of respondents identified this trend in the school setting (see Table 22).

Table 22 – Gang Activities Facilitated by Technology

Gang Activities and Technology	% of Respondents
Yes	29.4%
No	33.9%
Do Not Know	36.7%

Respondents were asked to rate several other types of crime in which criminal street gangs were believed to be engaged during 2006. Levels of activity for each crime type included High (75% - 100%), Moderate (26% - 74%), Low (1% - 25%), and None. The two crime types most frequently rated as “high” were graffiti and aggravated battery. Other criminal activity rated in the “high” category, but at lower frequencies was criminal mischief, weapons offenses, and drug distribution (see Figure 1). The reporting of gang-related criminal activities at “moderate” and “low” levels were reported with more frequency. The most frequently reported as “none” were sexual battery, arson, robbery and burglary.

Figure 1 – Top Nine Offenses with the Highest Occurrence



Policing Criminal Street Gang Activity at School

School Resource Officers reported on their agency's participation in anti-gang programs or specific criminal street gang enforcement efforts in their school(s); 65% percent of respondents indicated current participation in such programs (see Table 23).

Table 23 – Participation in Anti-Gang Programs/Enforcement

Anti-Gang Enforcement Programs	% of Respondents
Yes	65.0%
No	35.0%

Survey respondents also reported on the status of enforcement activities during 2006. Sixty-six (66.6%) percent of respondents indicated that gang-related enforcement activities in the school setting “stayed the same” (see Table 24).

Table 24 – Enforcement Activities

2006 Enforcement Activity at School	% of Respondents
Increased	28.6%
Decreased	5.1%
Staying about the same	66.3%

Seventy (70.7%) percent of respondents reported that their agency employs a formal policy with regard to sharing documentation of criminal street gang activities on school grounds with gang investigators (see Table 25).

Table 25 – Documentation Policy vs. Informal Practice

Documentation Activities Formal Policy vs. Informal Practice	% of Respondents
Formal Policy	70.7%
Informal Practice	18.1%
Neither	11.2%

Criminal Street Gang Classification and Database Information

Investigative resources and their proper application are essential in managing any crime problem, including those related to criminal street gang issues. Respondents were asked about their agency's use of any criteria *other than* the definitions set out in Florida Statute Chapter 874 (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention); 74.8% of respondents indicated that the definitions in Chapter 874 are the guidelines utilized in defining criminal street gang, gang member, gang associate, and/or criminal street gang related incident (see Table 26).

Table 26 – Use of “Other Than” F.S. Chapter 874

Definitions Other Than F.S. Chapter 874	% of Respondents
Yes	6.5%
No	74.8%
Don't Know	18.7%

Florida law allows for the documentation of juveniles as criminal street gang members as long as they meet the requirements of F.S. Chapter 874. Seventy (70.7%) percent of respondents indicated their agency employs a formal policy with regard to documentation of juveniles (see Table 27).

Table 27 – Documentation (Juveniles)

Documentation (Juveniles) Formal Policy vs. Informal Practice	% of Respondents
Formal Policy	70.7%
Informal Practice	18.1%
Neither	11.2%

The utilization of intelligence and case management-type databases were also queried within the school resource officer survey. Ninety-two (92.4%) percent of respondents reported utilizing some type of file or electronic database system to track individual criminal street gang members along with their criminal activity (see Table 28).

Table 28 – File or Database Tracking

Tracking Gang Activity	% of Respondents
Yes	92.4%
No	7.6%

School Resource Officers were asked about their contributions of criminal street gang related information or intelligence to the statewide gang database (InSite). Thirty-five (35.4%) percent of respondents reported making contributions to the statewide gang database (see Table 29).

Table 29 – Statewide Gang Database

Contributes to Statewide Gang Database	% of Respondents
Yes	35.4%
No	64.6%

Respondents indicated that 65.6% had been trained in the use of the InSite database Gang Module; 34.1% indicated they had not received training in the use of the gang intelligence database.

Gang Migration

The migration of gangs and gang members from one area to another has been a point of discussion for decades. Knowledgeable gang specialists have identified the spread of the “gang culture” primarily through the movement of populations both within and outside of the country. The issue of gang migration is also relevant in the school setting, for at least two reasons. The influx of families from around the country relocating to Florida makes gang migration relevant to the school setting.

In addition to the movement of families, as students move from one school to the next, there may suddenly be a gang presence when previously none existed. School resource officers reported on the migration of criminal street gang members within their school(s). The majority of respondents (76.7%) observed no gang migration occurring within their schools. Of those reporting migration occurring, 16.3% indicated migration both in and out of the school setting (see Table 30).

Table 30 – Gang Migration Direction

Gang/Gang Member Migration	% of Respondents
In	7.0%
Out	0.0%
Both In & Out	16.3%
No Migration	76.7%

Respondents reporting the occurrence of gang migration also reported on the effect of that migration in their school (see Table 31).

Table 31 – Effect of Gang Member Migration

Effect of Gang/Gang Member Migration	% of Respondents
Not at All	40.0%
Very Little	22.2%
Somewhat	15.5%
Very Much	11.1%
Do Not Know	11.1%

Training and Recommendations

Finally, the 2007 School Resource Officer Survey posed several questions to school resource officer respondents regarding training needs, enforcement assistance, and community and/or youth prevention and intervention programs. Seventy-eight (77.9%) percent indicated the need for awareness training. Twenty-five (25.2%) percent indicated a need for enforcement assistance. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated prevention and intervention programs would be beneficial.

Additionally, respondents were asked to identify effective strategies for investigations, intervention, or suppression in their jurisdictions. Common themes in these strategies included officer awareness training, proactive enforcement, and public awareness and education regarding gang recognition. Sixty-five of respondents reported that their School Resource Officer program instructs anti-gang and/or gang awareness curricula in their school.

Corrections Survey Analysis

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Corrections Component Analysis

Facility Demographics

Sixty-one (61.5%) percent of juvenile detention facilities reported officer staffing levels between 26 and 75. Fifty-seven (57.4%) percent of correctional institutions reported officer staffing levels between 126 and 325. The majority (44.4%) of nine county jails reported officer staffing levels between 126 and 325 (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Corrections Staffing

Staffing Level	Juvenile Detention	Corrections Institution	County Jail
<25	0.00%	0.00%	22.20%
26–75	61.50%	0.00%	22.20%
76–125	30.80%	7.40%	0.00%
126–325	3.80%	57.40%	44.40%
326–500	3.80%	22.20%	11.10%
>500	0.00%	12.90%	0.00%

Respondents reported inmate population generally fell into the less than 300 inmates category (primarily juvenile detention facilities) or the greater than 1500 (primarily corrections institutions). No juvenile detention facility reported a population greater than 300 (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Inmate Population

Inmate Population	% of Respondents
<300	33%
300–600	5%
601–900	8%
901–1,200	13%
1,201–1,500	16%
>1,500	25%



As one might expect, when asked what type of corrections facility the respondent represented, the majority indicated an adult inmate population (59.3%); while twenty-eight (27.9%) percent described a “youthful offender” population (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Facility Type

Facility Type	% Respondents
Adult	59.3%
Reception Center	3.5%
Youthful Offender	27.9%
Other	9.3%

Criminal Street Gang Presence

While the terms *criminal street gang* and *security threat group* are not synonymous, it is understood that in the correctional setting various groups exhibit similar characteristics of criminal street gangs. Throughout the Corrections component of this survey the term “criminal street gang” will be used interchangeably with security threat group.

As in the law enforcement component, responses were received from correctional entities reporting either identifiable criminal street gang activity or no identifiable criminal street gang activity within their facilities. Obviously, in a correctional setting, the actual activities of criminal street gang members is severely curtailed, however, the presence of such individuals must be closely monitored in order to maintain the requisite structure and order of a corrections environment. For the purposes of this portion of the survey results, “activity” included the mere presence of known gang members/associates.

Eighty-three (82.8%) percent of all corrections component respondents affirmed the presence of criminal street gang activity in their facilities, while seventeen percent (17.2%) reported no identifiable criminal street gang activity (see Table 4). Among the county jails reporting (9), 66.7% reported gang activity occurring within the jail; while 33% reported no identifiable gang activity.

Table 4 – Street Gang Presence

Criminal Street Gang Presence	% of Respondents
Yes	82.8%
No	17.2%

The time span during which respondents first noticed gang activity in their correctional facility was evenly distributed (see Table 5). Thirty-five (34.6%) percent of respondents reported first recognition of criminal street gang activity and/or presence within the facility between the years of 1996 and 2000; and 22.2% reported that recognition of gang activity between the years of 2001 and the present.

Table 5 – First Recognition

Gang Recognition	% of Respondents
Before 1990	19.8%
1990-1995	23.4%
1996-2000	34.6%
2001-present	22.2%

Respondents of the corrections component provided information relative to the number of street gangs active in their facilities. Of those that reported a gang presence, 42.4% reported the number of street gangs active within their facility was from 7 to 15; while 8.5% of respondents identified greater than 40 gangs within their facilities (see Table 6).⁹

Table 6 – Facility Gang Activity

Number of Present or Active Gangs	% of Respondents
1-3	18.6%
4-6	8.5%
7-15	42.4%
16-30	11.9%
31-40	10.2%
>40	8.5%

Each respondent was asked to identify criminal street gangs recognized within their facility by name. The county jail facility with the highest number of gang representation had 78. The reported inmate population of that jail was greater than 1500 inmates. The DOC major institution with the highest number of gangs represented had 61, with a similar inmate population of greater than 1500. The highest number of gangs within a juvenile detention facility was 12 in a facility with a juvenile inmate population of less than 300. A total of 1100 gangs were identified by those facilities responding to the corrections component.¹⁰

⁹ If one member of a gang was present in the facility, it was reported as one gang.

¹⁰ The total may include some duplicate gangs, but due to gang cliques with similar names, different gang affiliations, etc., it is not possible to identify true duplicates.

Respondents identified criminal street gang alliances both within and outside of the facility. Seventy (69.9%) percent could not identify alliances within their facilities, while 30.1% indicated that they were aware of alliances occurring. Conversely, 73.8% reported alliances with national criminal street gangs outside of the facility; while 26.2% reported no identifiable national alliances.

Demographic Characteristics of Criminal Street Gangs

Survey recipients were asked to provide approximate population percentages relative to the age and race/ethnicity of gang members identified within their facilities, and the averages were calculated. For the purposes of this analysis, corrections institutions and county jails were combined, while juvenile detention facilities were calculated separately. Of the corrections institutions and county jails responding, an average 31.3% of gang members were between 23 and 27 years-of-age (see Table 7). Race/ethnicity was proportionate (37.8%) for both white/Caucasian gang members and African-American gang members (see Table 8).

Table 7 - Percentage of Average Age of Respondents in Department of Corrections and County Jail Facilities

Age	Average Percent
Under 18	3.9%
18-22	22.3%
23-27	31.3%
28-32	20.4%
Over 32	25.0%

Table 8 - Percentage of Average Race/Ethnicity of Respondents in Department of Corrections and County Jail Facilities

Race/Ethnicity	Average Percent
White	37.8%
African-American	37.8%
Hispanic	21.4%
Asian	0.9%
Other	0.7%

Of the responding juvenile detention facilities, an average (91.1%) of gang members were under 18 years-of-age (see Table 9).¹¹ The average response to race/ethnicity indicated that 40.1% of gang members were African American; 24.9% Hispanic and 19.8% white/Caucasian (see Table 10).

Table 9 - Percentage of Average Age of Respondents in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities

Age	Average Percent
Under 18	91.1%
18-22	1.1%
23-27	0.0%
28-32	0.0%
Over 32	0.0%

Table 10 - Percentage of Average Race/Ethnicity of Respondents in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities

Race/Ethnicity	Average Percent
White	19.8%
African-American	40.1%
Hispanic	24.9%
Asian	1.0%
Other	3.3%

Criminal Street Gang Activity

Survey respondents reported on the status of gang activity within their facilities. Fifty-five (54.9%) percent indicated that gang activity within the facility was “staying about the same,” while 32.9% indicated gang activity was “getting worse” (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Gang Activity

Gang Problems within Facility	% of Respondents
Getting Worse	32.9%
Getting Better	12.2%
Staying about the same	54.9%

¹¹ A flaw in the survey tool prevented an accurate evaluation of the age demographic among juvenile population in detention. The survey tool inadequately provided for juvenile age ranges below 18 years-of-age.

Changes in gang activity were reported for the prior six months and the prior 12 months. In the past 12 months, the majority of facilities observed “no change” (39%) or a slight increase (34%) in gang activity. Similar patterns were noted in the last six months (see Table 12).

Table 12 – Changes in Activity at Intervals, 2006¹²

Past 6 months	% Response		Past 12 months	% Response
Increased Significantly	8.6%		Increased Significantly	10.0%
Increased Slightly	27.2%		Increased Slightly	33.7%
No Change	46.9%		No Change	38.8%
Decreased Slightly	13.6%		Decreased Slightly	15.0%
Decreased Significantly	3.7%		Decreased Significantly	2.5%

The level of all gang-related drug activity within correctional facilities was measured by the survey; 65.8% reported that up to one-quarter of the drug activity was attributable to gangs and/or gang member activity. In addition, sixteen (15.9%) percent reported that over half of drug activity was gang-related, and 8.5% reported over three-quarters of the drug activity was tied to gang activities (see Table 13).

Table 13 – Drug Activity

Percentage Drug Activity Gang Related	% of Respondents
0 – 25%	65.8%
26 – 50%	9.8%
51 – 75%	15.9%
>75%	8.5%

The most widely reported weapon used in assault crimes was identified as “knives/blades/shanks” (71%) (see Table 14).¹³

Table 14 – Weapons in Assault Crimes

Weapon Type	% of Respondents
Knives/Blades/Shanks	71.1%
Blunt Instruments	11.1%
Other	17.7%

¹² The survey was disseminated in March 2007, therefore, *Prior 6 Months* = August 2006 – February 2007 and *Prior 12 Months* = February 2006 – February 2007.

¹³ NOTE: Half of survey respondents did not answer this question.

Although the use of technology within the corrections setting is more difficult than on the street, 25.6% percent of respondents reported the use of technology by gang members within the facility; while 63.4% responded no use of technology. The use of codes and ciphers was reported by 67% of respondents. Seventy-nine (78.8%) percent reported the confiscation of codes and ciphers.

Policing Gang Activities in the Correctional Setting

Monitoring gang members in the correctional environment is essential to inhibiting the occurrence of gang activities. Inmates engaging in gang activity within the facility can be extremely dangerous to corrections officers due to the close environment and the ratio of inmates to officers. For these reasons, corrections and juvenile justice officers are extremely proactive in identifying and monitoring the activities of known or suspected security threat groups in their custody.

The identification of gangs within the corrections setting is also conducive to gang prevention and suppression programs; 56.6% of respondents reported participation in prevention or suppression programs at their facility. Ninety-four (94.2%) percent reported having personnel assigned to gang matters. In evaluating gang enforcement activities within corrections/detention facilities, 60.3% of respondents reported enforcement levels had “remained the same” over the past two years; 33.7% reported “increased” levels of gang enforcement (see Table 15).

Table 15 - Gang Enforcement Activity

Enforcement Activities	% of Respondents
Increased	33.7%
Decreased	6.0%
Remained the same	60.3%

Criminal Street Gang Classification and Database Information

Maintaining order, structure and discipline when dealing with the confinement of individuals may require the use of broader definitions when evaluating and monitoring potential criminal street gang members and/or associates within the correctional setting. Forty-one (41.2%) percent of corrections facilities surveyed indicated utilization of criteria other than Chapter 874 when defining a criminal street gang, gang member, gang associate, or gang-related incident. On the other hand, 48.2% of respondents indicated the use of criteria based only on F.S. 874.

Inmates or arrestees generally undergo a basic level of evaluation at the time of reception or booking. Sixty (59.5%) percent of respondents reported having a formal policy to determine an individual's gang member and/or gang associate status at the time of entry into the jail or corrections facility. Thirty-one (31.4%) percent utilized an informal practice when making this type of determination (see Table 16).

Table 16 – Formal Policy vs. Informal Practice

Determination of Gang Status at Booking/Reception	% of Respondents
Formal Policy	59.5%
Informal Practice	32.1%
None	8.3%

Among the nine county jails, the majority (42.9%) reported an informal practice in making this determination. Eighty-eight (88%) of respondents reported the utilization of an internal electronic database for the purposes of data storage relative to monitoring gang members/associates and/or gang activities within the facility. In addition, 58% of 81 respondents contributed criminal street gang information or intelligence to the statewide gang database (InSite) (see Table 17).

Table 17 – Statewide Gang Database

Contributions to Statewide Gang Database	% of Respondents
No	34
Yes	47

Training and Recommendations

The corrections component of the 2007 Florida Gang Survey inquired about training needs; awareness and enforcement training, and prevention and intervention programs. Eighty-four (83.5%) percent of respondents indicated the need for awareness training and forty-two (42.1%) percent indicated a need for training in enforcement issues. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated training needs in the area of prevention training and 53.3% indicated a need for intervention training (see Table 18).

Table 18 – Training Needs

Type of Training Need	Yes
Awareness Training	83.5%
Enforcement Training	42.1%
Prevention Training	54%
Intervention Training	53.3%

Prosecutor Survey Analysis

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Prosecutor Survey Analysis

Prosecutors were asked how best to describe their area served. Thirty-eight (37.5%) percent described their service area as having some larger cities, but mostly suburban (see Table 1). Half of respondents identified the population of their jurisdiction served as greater than one million (see Table 2).

Table 1 – Geographic Population Description

Area Served	Percentage
Mostly urban/metropolitan population	12.5%
Some larger cities but mostly suburban	37.5%
Mostly equal populations of rural/urban	25.0%
Mostly rural population	25.0%

Table 2 – Population Demographic

Population	% of Respondents
<30,000	0.0%
30,001-50,000	0.0%
50,001-100,000	0.0%
100,001-300,000	12.5%
300,001-500,000	25.0%
500,001-1,000,000	12.5%
>1,000,000	50.0%

Criminal Street Gang Activity

Prosecutors were asked if the jurisdictions they serve have encountered criminal street gang-related crime. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that gang-related crime had been identified by law enforcement in jurisdictions within their area of service (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Gang Crime

Gang Crime	% of Respondents
No	25.0%
Yes	75.0%
Do not know	0.0%

Sixty-three (62.5%) percent of respondents reported that local law enforcement in their service area have pursued prosecutions of gang-related crime. Sixty-seven (66.7%) percent identified the total cases filed by their office in 2006 (whether misdemeanor or felony) as less than five. Thirty-three percent reported that more than 50 cases were filed in 2006 (see Table 4).¹⁴ The average percentage filed as felony cases were 58.3%. The average percentage that were filed as misdemeanor cases were 10.8%.

Table 4 – Cases Filed in 2006

2006 Cases	% of Respondents
<5	66.7%
>50	33.3%

Survey respondents reported on the status of gang activity within their service area. Fifty-seven percent of respondents thought the problems were staying the same and 42.9% reported the problems were getting worse (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Overall Gang Activity

Gang Problem	% of Respondents
Getting Better	0.0%
Getting Worse	57.1%
Staying about the same	42.9%

Fifty-seven (57.1%) percent of respondents reported an increase in the cases filed during 2006 that related to criminal street gang activity; while 28.6% indicated no increases in cases filed during 2006.

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of *total prosecutions* of criminal street gang activity in 2006 that were drug-related. Sixty percent of respondents reported that one-quarter or less of their prosecutions of gang activity were identified as drug-related; while 20% of respondents indicated that one-half to three-quarters of drug prosecutions were drug-related (see Table 6).

Table 6 – 2006 Drug-Related Street Gang Prosecutions

2006 Gang Prosecutions	% of Respondents
0% - 25%	60.0%
51% - 75%	20.0%
>75%	20.0%

¹⁴ NOTE: No respondents reported the number of cases filed in 2006 as falling between 5 and 50.

Survey respondents were also asked to estimate the percentage of drug prosecutions in 2006 that were related to criminal street gang activity. Sixty percent of respondents reported that gang activity accounted for one-quarter or less of their drug prosecutions; while 20% of respondents indicated between 51% and 75% of drug prosecutions were gang-related (see Table 7).

Table 7 – 2006 Gang-Related Drug Prosecutions

Drug Prosecutions	% of Respondents
0% - 25%	60.0%
26% - 50%	20.0%
51% - 75%	20.0%

Eighty-three percent of respondents reported that firearms were “frequently” a factor in the prosecution of criminal street gang activity within their service area. Seventeen (16.7%) percent indicated firearms were “never” a factor (see Table 8). When reporting on violence in general in these prosecutions, the responses were identical to the firearms responses.

Table 8 – Firearms a Factor in Prosecution of Criminal Street Gang Activity

Firearm	% of Respondents
Frequently	83.3%
Sometimes	0.0%
Not Very Often	0.0%
Never	16.7%

The reader is strongly cautioned that because of the low number of potential responses (21) and the proportion of actual respondents who proffered an answer, the statistical weight may be over-emphasized.



When gang members and/or associates are prosecuted, obtaining witness and/or victim cooperation in these prosecutions can be difficult. Fellow gang members and associates often intimidate, harm or kill witnesses. As with any prosecution the availability of witnesses (including victims) is paramount to a successful prosecution. Respondents were asked to rate the difficulty in obtaining victim and/or witness cooperation when prosecuting gang members. Fifty-seven percent of respondents rated witness cooperation a “major problem;” while 28.6% characterized a moderate problem (see Table 9).

Table 9 – Victim-Witness Cooperation

Victim – Witness Cooperation	% of Respondents
No problem	14.3%
Moderate problem	28.6%
Major problem	57.1%

Fifty-seven (57%) percent of respondents ranked, in order of significance, the following reasons victims and witnesses fail to cooperate in prosecutions of criminal street gang activities. The most common reason was “intimidation tactics” (see Table 10).

Table 10 – Reasons for Failure to Cooperate

Rank	Reason
1st	Intimidation Tactics
2nd	General Fear
3rd	Neighborhood Culture ("snitch")
4th	Loss of memory
5th	Killed

Prosecuting Criminal Street Gang Activity

Survey respondents reported on several aspects of prosecuting gang cases. Twenty-nine (28.6%) percent of respondents reported having a specialized prosecution unit to handle gang-related cases. Only 14.3% reported a mechanism for specifically tracking gang cases. And 87.5% of respondents reported participation in a formal multi-agency task force or collaborative effort with law enforcement focusing on criminal street gang problems as a major concern.

For 71.4% of respondents, prosecutions of criminal street gang activities over the past two years have increased; while 28.6% reported the level of those prosecutions remaining the same.

Fifty percent characterized their prosecutions of gang-related *violent crime* as increasing significantly, while 33.3% characterized these prosecutions as increasing moderately. Just over 16% of respondents characterized gang-related violent crime prosecutions as “remaining the same” (see Table 11).

Table 11 – Prosecutions of Gang-Related Violent Crime

Prosecutions Past 2 Years	% of Respondents
Increased Significantly	50.0%
Increased Moderately	33.3%
Remained Stable	16.7%

Forty-three (42.9%) percent of respondents indicated routine use of statutes relative to Continuing Criminal Enterprise (CCE) and Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations (RICO) to dismantle organized criminal street gang activities. Only 14.3% routinely utilized the penalty enhancements provided for in Florida Statutes, Chapter 874 (Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act); 28.6% reported its use “sometimes.” Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported utilizing the penalty enhancements known as 10-20-Life over the past three years when prosecuting firearm-related criminal street gang activity.

Survey recipients were asked what they viewed as the most significant problems in the successful prosecution of criminal street gang activity. The most commonly reported major problem was identified as obtaining cooperation of victims and witnesses, followed by a lack of appropriate sanctions for juvenile gang members who commit crimes. Victim and/or witness credibility was cited by some respondents as a moderate problem. The majority of respondents indicated that inadequate police preparation of crime reports was not a problem.

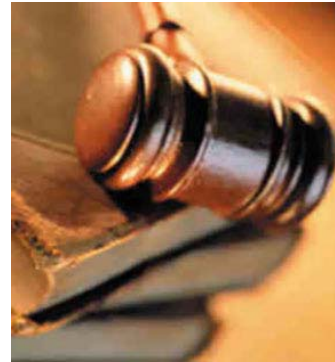
Sixty-seven (66.7%) percent of respondents indicated little or no effect on prosecutions of juveniles. Thirty-three percent (2) offered observations on why the “juvenile” status impacts prosecutions. The first respondent cited a lack of experience on the part of prosecutors in the juvenile division and a lack of appropriate consequences for juveniles committing crimes. The second respondent cited the need for a coordinated strategy between prosecutor, law enforcement, and juvenile probation authorities.

Depending on the severity of the crime, “juveniles” are sometimes transferred to adult court. The majority of survey respondents reported that in the prosecution of *serious* juvenile offenders for criminal street gang activities the juvenile is transferred to adult court.

Training and Recommendations

Prosecutions involving criminal street gang activity have many special considerations, especially relative to the age demographic; the prosecution of juveniles and the requirement to establish the gang “association” to pursue enhanced penalties being just two of those considerations. Survey respondents were asked about the training needs of their personnel. Sixty-three (62.5%) of respondents reported that “few” prosecutors within their office have received training specific to criminal street gang activity; while 25% indicated “some” have received gang training. Thirty-eight (37.5%) percent of respondents reported the most needed training was Gang Awareness Training. Another 50% reported the need for specialized gang prosecution training; while 12.5% indicated a need for both types of training.

In reporting on effective gang prosecution strategies, respondents identified intervention in schools by social services as a prevention strategy. They also endorsed aggressive prosecutions, participation in multi-agency task forces, and the utilization of grants for specialized training of law enforcement officers on gang identification. Funding for specialized prosecution units, including gang prosecution was also suggested as a recommendation.



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Appendix

Definitions

Excerpted from the “Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act” (FS Chapter 874)

“Criminal Street Gang” means a formal or informal ongoing organization, association, or group that has as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal or delinquent acts, and that consists of three or more persons who have a common name or common identifying signs, colors, or symbols and have two or more members who, individually or collectively, engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal street gang activity.

“Criminal Street Gang Member” is a person who is a member of a criminal street gang as defined in subsection (1) of Florida State Statute 874.03 and meets two or more of the following criteria under Florida Law:

- (a) Admits to criminal street gang membership.
- (b) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by a parent or guardian.
- (c) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by a documented reliable informant.
- (d) Resides in or frequents a particular criminal street gang’s area *and* adopts their style of dress, their use of hand signs, or their tattoos, and associates with known criminal street gang members. *(Emphasis added)*
- (e) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by an informant of previously untested reliability and such identification is corroborated by independent information.
- (f) Has been arrested more than once in the company of identified criminal street gang members for offenses which are consistent with usual criminal street gang activity.
- (g) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by physical evidence such as photographs or other documentation.
- (h) Has been stopped in the company of known criminal street gang members four or more times.

“Criminal Street Gang Associate” is a person who admits to criminal street gang association; or meets any single defining criterion for criminal street gang membership described in subsection (2) of Florida State Statute 874.03 (listed above).

A “Pattern of Criminal Street Gang Activity” means the commission or attempted commission of, solicitation or conspiracy to commit, 2 or more felonies or 3 or more misdemeanors, or 1 felony and 2 misdemeanor offenses, or the comparable number of delinquent acts or violations of law which would be felonies or misdemeanors if committed by an adult, on separate occasions within a 3 year period.

Department of Corrections Definitions:

“Security Threat Groups” are formal or informal ongoing groups, gangs, organizations or associations consisting of three or more members who have a common name or common identifying signs, colors, or symbols; a group whose members/associates engage in a pattern of gang activity or department rule violation.

“Certified Security Threat Group are inmate/offender groups, gangs, or organizations that are certified by the Threat Assessment Review Committee (TARC). Any group that presents a threat to the security and orderly operations of department facilities based on the group's activities, propensity for violence, documented acts, organizational structure, philosophy, and/or historical data from other jurisdictions or prison systems is designated as a certified STG.

Sources of Florida Gang Information

<http://www.fgia.com/index.htm> The Florida Gang Investigators Association (FGIA) provides a professional organization for all those within the criminal justice system, as well as the public that share a common goal of intervening, preventing and enforcing gang activity throughout Florida. This mission will be carried out through enhanced interagency intelligence exchange, legislative activism, citizen awareness, innovative anti-gang awareness operational tactics and by providing professional education and training.

National Sources of Gang Information

<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/> The National Gang Center (NGC) is a collaborative effort between the Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). This partnership recognizes that street gang activities transcend ages of the members and that we must consider strategies ranging from prevention through intervention, suppression, and aftercare to combat them. A balanced, comprehensive approach is needed, the nature of which depends upon the seriousness and scope of the gang problem in any community.

<http://www.iir.com/nygc/> National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) The purpose of the NYGC is to assist policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in their efforts to reduce youth gang involvement and crime by contributing information, resources, practical tools, and expertise towards the development and implementation of effective gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies.

<http://www.nagia.org/> National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA) The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations is a cooperative organization currently composed of representatives from 16 regional gang investigators associations representing over 15,000 gang investigators across the country, as well as federal agencies and other organizations involved in gang-related matters.