



# Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was established by the President and Congress through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, Public Law 93–415, as amended. Located within the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP's goal is to provide national leadership in addressing the issues of juvenile delinquency and improving juvenile justice.

OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. These initiatives are carried out by seven components within OJJDP, described below.

**Research and Program Development Division** develops knowledge on national trends in juvenile delinquency; supports a program for data collection and information sharing that incorporates elements of statistical and systems development; identifies how delinquency develops and the best methods for its prevention, intervention, and treatment; and analyzes practices and trends in the juvenile justice system.

**Training and Technical Assistance Division** provides juvenile justice training and technical assistance to Federal, State, and local governments; law enforcement, judiciary, and corrections personnel; and private agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

**Special Emphasis Division** provides discretionary funds to public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to replicate tested approaches to delinquency prevention, treatment, and control in such pertinent areas as chronic juvenile offenders, community-based sanctions, and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

**State Relations and Assistance Division** supports collaborative efforts by States to carry out the mandates of the JJDP Act by providing formula grant funds to States; furnishing technical assistance to States, local governments, and private agencies; and monitoring State compliance with the JJDP Act.

**Information Dissemination Unit** produces and distributes information resources on juvenile justice research, training, and programs and coordinates the Office's program planning and competitive award activities. Information that meets the needs of juvenile justice professionals and policymakers is provided through print and online publications, videotapes, CD-ROM's, electronic listservs, and the Office's Web site. As part of the program planning and award process, IDU develops priorities, publishes solicitations and application kits for funding opportunities, and facilitates the peer review process for discretionary funding awards.

**Concentration of Federal Efforts Program** promotes interagency cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies with responsibilities in the area of juvenile justice. The program primarily carries out this responsibility through the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an independent body within the executive branch that was established by Congress through the JJDP Act.

**Missing and Exploited Children's Program** seeks to promote effective policies and procedures for addressing the problem of missing and exploited children. Established by the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984, the program provides funds for a variety of activities to support and coordinate a network of resources such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; training and technical assistance to a network of 47 State clearinghouses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement personnel, and attorneys; and research and demonstration programs.

The mission of OJJDP is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent juvenile victimization and respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. This is accomplished through developing and implementing prevention programs and a juvenile justice system that protects the public safety, holds juvenile offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services based on the needs of each individual juvenile.

# 1997 National Youth Gang Survey

## **Summary**

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National Youth Gang Center

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Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

Responses to the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey were submitted voluntarily by law enforcement agencies throughout the country. Readers are cautioned against basing judgments on the nature or extent of the gang problem in a particular locality solely on the data presented here. Because of differing methodology, definitions, and sampling techniques, caution is also urged in making direct comparisons between these data and data obtained in other surveys.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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# Foreword

The spread of youth gangs across America has led to increased public concern in recent years. In 1995, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention launched a series of annual surveys to facilitate analysis of changes and trends in the nature of youth gangs and their activities.

The largest and most comprehensive national gang survey to date, the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey, conducted by the National Youth Gang Center, contacted nearly 5,000 law enforcement agencies across the country. To allow for both comparative and trend analysis, the 1997 survey used the same sample as the 1996 survey.

Survey results indicate that the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs decreased from the previous year, from 53 percent in 1996 to 51 percent in 1997. Some 816,000 gang members were active in some 30,500 youth gangs in 1997, a modest decrease from the previous year's figures of 846,000 and 31,000, respectively. Despite these declines, however, there are still serious problems to be addressed. For example, every city with a population of 250,000 or greater reported the presence of youth gangs. In addition, the number of gang members increased in small cities and rural counties, as youth gangs continued to spread beyond the confines of the Nation's major cities.

These statistics are disturbing, but they are also critical to understanding the dimensions of the gang problem and ultimately resolving it. I hope that the findings of the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey will inform your efforts to combat youth gangs.

**Shay Bilchik**

*Administrator*

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



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# Executive Summary

The recent proliferation of youth gangs throughout the United States and the growth of youth gang violence have heightened the awareness of the youth gang problem among public policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and social scientists. To measure the extent of this problem, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, conducts an annual survey of law enforcement agencies. The 1997 National Youth Gang Survey, administered by the National Youth Gang Center, is the third such annual survey and offers a wealth of information about youth gangs. Nearly 5,000 law enforcement agencies were surveyed, making it the largest and most comprehensive national gang survey to date. In addition, the 1997 survey used the same sample as the 1996 survey, permitting both comparative and trend analysis.

The 1997 survey included questions regarding the number of youth gangs and gang members, the degree of involvement of youth gangs in drug sales and distribution, youth gang migration, the level of crime in which youth gang members were involved, law enforcement responses to youth gangs, and the state of the youth gang problem in the respondent's jurisdiction. A youth gang was defined as "a group of youths or young adults in (the respondent's) jurisdiction that (the respondent) or other responsible persons in (the respondent's) agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a 'gang.'"

The 1997 National Youth Gang Survey was sent to two groups: a statistically representative sample of 3,018 law enforcement agencies and a comparative sample of 1,951 law enforcement agencies that were surveyed in the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey but not selected for the representative sample. The response rate was 92 percent for the representative sample and 81 percent for the comparative sample. Information and analyses included in this Summary are limited to the survey responses for the statistically representative sample, because the data are more comprehensive and allow for a more complete nationwide perspective.

The statistically representative sample was composed of jurisdictions in four area types: all large cities with populations greater than 25,000; a random sample of small cities with populations between 2,500 and 25,000; all suburban counties; and a random sample of rural counties. Surveys were sent to the appropriate local law enforcement agency within each jurisdiction in the representative sample.

Based on the results of the survey, the percentage of jurisdictions with active youth gangs decreased slightly from 53 percent in 1996 to 51 percent in 1997. The greatest decrease appeared in large cities, especially those with populations ranging from 25,000 to 49,999. Despite these decreases, the Nation's largest cities continued to experience gang activity. In both 1996 and 1997, 100 percent

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of respondents in cities with populations of 250,000 or more reported active youth gangs in their jurisdictions.

The estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in 1997 was 4,712, down slightly from 4,824 in 1996. The number of youth gangs and gang members also decreased: An estimated 30,500 youth gangs and 816,000 gang members were active in 1997, compared with 31,000 youth gangs and 846,000 gang members in 1996. Although the prevalence of youth gangs and gang members declined overall from 1996 to 1997, the number of gang members rose in small cities and rural counties.

Despite the decreases in the number of gangs and gang members, 45 percent of respondents indicated that the gang problem in their jurisdictions in 1997 was staying about the same, while 35 percent indicated it was getting worse and 20 percent said that it was getting better. In contrast, 49 percent of respondents to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey believed that their problem was getting worse, 41 percent that it was staying about the same, and 10 percent that it was getting better.

Youth gang members were estimated to be involved in 3,340 homicides in 1997, almost two-thirds of which took place in large cities. Youth gang involvement in other types of criminal activity remained high in 1997. Respondents reported a high degree of gang member involvement, most often for aggravated assault and larceny/theft (28 percent), followed by motor vehicle theft (27 percent), burglary (26 percent), and robbery (13 percent). However, for all of the above crimes, the estimated degree of involvement in criminal activity by youth gang members was less in 1997 than in 1996. These apparent decreases are consistent with the national downturn in both adult and juvenile violent crime arrests from 1994 to 1997, as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Youth gang involvement in drug sales and distribution has become a growing public concern in recent years. Results of the survey indicated that in 1997, youth gangs played a key role in the sale and distribution of drugs. Respondents estimated that 42 percent of the youth gangs in the country were involved in the street sale of drugs and 33 percent were involved in drug distribution for the purpose of generating profits for the gang. The street sale of drugs by youth gangs in 1997 was especially high in large cities and suburban counties. Nationwide, youth gangs were involved in an estimated 33 percent of crack cocaine sales, 32 percent of marijuana sales, 16 percent of powder cocaine sales, 12 percent of methamphetamine sales, and 9 percent of heroin sales. These data may indicate increased youth gang involvement in drug activities since the 1996 survey.

In contrast to the slight decrease in gang activity, reported gang migration increased from 1996 to 1997. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they experienced some gang migration into their jurisdictions during 1997, up from 84 percent in 1996. In addition, an estimated 23 percent of youth gang members in the United States were migrants in 1997, compared with 21 percent

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in 1996. The vast majority (70 percent) of respondents who experienced some gang migration cited social factors (e.g., to move with families, to find legitimate job opportunities, to join relatives, or to join friends) as reasons why youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions.

In response to the proliferation of gangs throughout the country, most law enforcement agencies (66 percent) have established specialized response units. More specifically, 35 percent reported having a youth/street gang unit or officer(s), 18 percent reported having a gang prevention unit or officer(s), and 29 percent reported having a unit that combined both types of units.



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## Introduction

The 1997 National Youth Gang Survey is the third annual gang survey conducted by the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC), which was created in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Institute for Intergovernmental Research. The primary purpose of the survey is to assess the extent of the youth gang problem in communities throughout the United States.

The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was the first annual survey of youth gangs conducted by NYGC. Although the 1995 survey was the most extensive national gang survey up to that time and provided valuable baseline data, it was not entirely representative of the Nation as a whole. Therefore, the sample for the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey was constructed to be statistically representative and to present a more complete national picture of youth gang activity. The 1997 National Youth Gang Survey used the same sample that was used for the 1996 survey, permitting comparative and trend analysis.

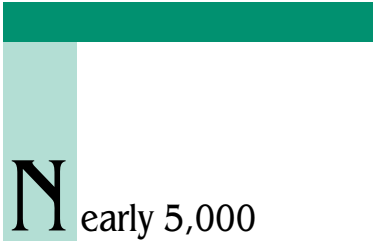
The 1996 and 1997 surveys were sent to two sample groups:

- 3,018 law enforcement agencies that constituted a statistically representative sample (hereinafter referred to as the “representative sample”).
- 1,951 additional law enforcement agencies that were surveyed in 1995 but were not included in the representative sample (hereinafter referred to as the “comparative sample”).

Agencies in the representative sample were asked questions regarding the extent of the gang problem in their jurisdictions, including the number of gangs and gang members. In addition, agencies were asked to comment on gang drug sales and distribution, gang migration, the level of crime committed by gang members, the types of response units created to address gang problems, and the perception of gang crime in their jurisdictions (the survey form is presented as appendix A). This sample included four subsets or area types: large cities (populations of more than 25,000), small cities (populations between 2,500 and 25,000), suburban counties,<sup>1</sup> and rural counties.<sup>2</sup>

The agencies included in the comparative sample received an abbreviated questionnaire that asked only about the presence of gangs in 1997 and the number of gangs and gang members (the survey form is presented as appendix B). This sample is not representative and, therefore, is not used for making inferences about agencies that were not surveyed; it is used only to make comparisons with the 1995 survey.

Nearly 5,000 agencies were surveyed in 1997. However, this Summary focuses solely on the 3,018 survey recipients included in the statistically representative sample, because the survey instrument was more comprehensive than that used with the comparative sample and the representative sample allows for extrapolation of the data.



**N**early 5,000 agencies were surveyed in 1997.

Including areas with large populations in the survey allowed for comparative analysis with samples from previous surveys.

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## Methodology

### Survey sample

The representative sample for the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey included 3,018 police and sheriff's departments in four divisions grouped by area type:

- All police departments serving cities with populations of more than 25,000 (large cities).
- A randomly selected sample of police departments serving cities with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 (small cities).
- All suburban county police and sheriff's departments (suburban counties).
- A randomly selected sample of rural county police and sheriff's departments (rural counties).

The universe of large cities (1,216) and suburban counties (662) was included in the survey sample for two reasons. First, the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey revealed that gang activity in the United States is most often reported in jurisdictions with large populations. Second, previous research on gangs focused mostly on large population areas. Therefore, including areas with large populations in the survey allowed for comparative analysis with samples from previous surveys.

The random samples of small cities and rural counties were selected using a formula developed by Cochran (1977, see appendix C). Implementation of the sampling method produced the following sample sizes: 397 jurisdictions from a total of 8,740 cities with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 identified by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and 743 rural counties from a total of 2,356 included in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Crime in the United States, 1994: Uniform Crime Reports* (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1995).

The comparative sample of 1,951 police and sheriff's departments was composed of jurisdictions that were surveyed in 1995 but were not included in the 1996 representative sample. These jurisdictions were surveyed to allow for comparative and trend analysis but will not be surveyed after 1998.

Survey instructions specifically asked that sheriff's departments report only for their "unincorporated service area and any contracted jurisdictions" to avoid reporting for cities and towns within their county that were already in the survey sample. To identify instances of duplicate reporting, survey recipients were also asked whether their responses included other jurisdictions and, if so, to identify those jurisdictions. Whenever it was determined that an agency might have responded inappropriately or had included other jurisdictions in its responses, NYGC contacted the respondent and clarified the responses.

All jurisdictions included in the sample were cross-referenced with a Bureau of the Census database to determine accurate and current populations. Each jurisdiction was assigned a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Code assigned by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Each FIPS Code is unique and is linked to the most recent Bureau of the Census population estimates. The

1997 survey used population estimates for 1994 because they were the most current estimates available at the time the sample was developed.

Each city and town was assigned a FIPS Code that corresponded to the entire population of that area.<sup>3</sup> Counties were assigned populations for their unincorporated areas. FIPS Code language refers to the unincorporated area of a county as the “balance of” the county and excludes the populations of incorporated cities and towns within the county. A few counties do not have a “balance of” population because there are no cities or towns within the jurisdiction. In such cases, the jurisdiction was assigned the population of the entire county.

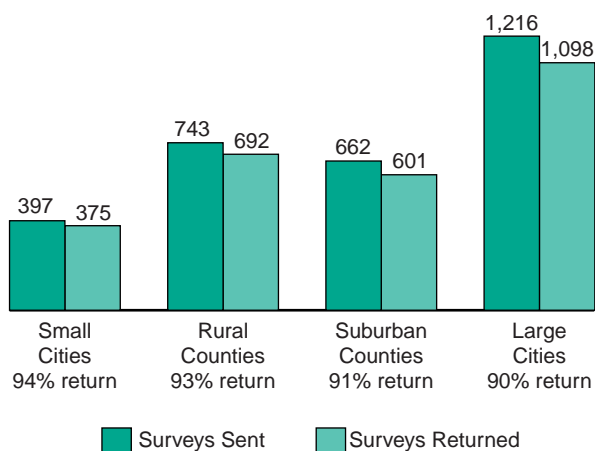
## Response rate

In July 1998, surveys were mailed to agencies in both the representative and comparative samples. Surveys were addressed to the respondent from the previous year or to the chief of police or the sheriff. Within the first few months, the response rate was approximately 50 percent, with surveys being received either through surface mail or fax (a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and toll-free fax number were provided to each survey recipient). After followup calls were conducted, the response rate increased to 92 percent for the representative sample and 81 percent for the comparative sample. Response rates varied by area type for the representative sample, but not significantly (see figure 1).

In a few cases, respondents failed to answer one or more survey questions. In these instances, the agency was excluded from the analysis of the question or questions. Evaluation of the number of agencies that answered different questions revealed that respondents were less likely to answer if they were asked to indicate a percentage or raw number. In contrast, respondents were more likely to answer questions that asked them to select from a list. There did not appear to be any other survey design or methodological problems that contributed to the likelihood that a respondent would or would not answer a question.

The 1997 survey used population estimates for 1994 because they were the most current estimates available at the time the sample was developed.

**Figure 1: Number of Respondents in 1997, by Area Type\***



\*This figure and all following figures and tables are based on the representative sample.

**E**xtrapolation for nonrespondents in large cities and suburban counties was necessary to produce the most accurate nationwide estimate.

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## Extrapolation/Estimation

To provide the most accurate nationwide perspective of the extent of the gang problem, it was necessary to estimate:

- The number of jurisdictions reporting gangs.
- The number of gangs.
- The number of gang members.
- The number of homicides.

To estimate the number of jurisdictions reporting gangs in each area type, the percentage of agencies reporting gangs was multiplied by the total number of jurisdictions included in the group from which the sample was derived.

Estimating the number of gangs and gang members for small cities and rural counties was a slightly more complex task. For these samples, the following steps were completed:

1. Calculate the mean for agencies responding either “yes” or “no” to the question regarding the number of gangs and gang members.
2. Multiply the total number of jurisdictions from which the sample was derived by the percentage of agencies responding either “yes” or “no” to the question regarding the number of gangs and gang members.
3. Multiply the product of step 2 by the mean calculated in step 1.

Extrapolation for nonrespondents in large cities and suburban counties was necessary to produce the most accurate nationwide estimate. Without extrapolation, the extent of gang activity in these areas would have been systematically underestimated.

To estimate the number of gangs and gang members for large cities and suburban counties, the average or mean number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction was calculated. These estimates were controlled for population by stratification of respondent agencies into population groups of 50,000 and by calculation of a mean for each population group. To acquire the most accurate mean, the survey designers selected 40 as the minimum number of agencies in each population group from which a mean could be derived. Setting the minimum at 40 allowed the inclusion of a large number and wide range of agencies in each population group. Population groups that did not include 40 or more agencies were expanded equally on the high and low ends in increments of 25,000 until 40 or more agencies were included. After the expansion, a mean was calculated and matched with each nonresponding agency within the corresponding population group (see appendix D).

As with estimating the numbers of gangs and gang members, estimating the number of homicides required extrapolation for both random samples and for nonrespondents in large cities and suburban counties. The survey asked respondents to report the number of homicides in their jurisdiction based on both member-based and motive-based definitions of gang crime. Member-based gang crime was defined as “crime in which a gang member(s) is either the

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perpetrator or the victim, regardless of the motive,” and motive-based gang crime was defined as “crime committed by a gang member(s) in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang.” Respondents were first asked to report the number of member-based homicides. The next question asked the respondent to report the number of motive-based homicides that were a subset of the member-based number.

The response rate to the question concerning type of homicide varied among respondents. Only 68 percent of respondents who reported gangs reported both types of homicides; 89 percent reported member-based homicides, and 70 percent reported motive-based homicides.


The estimated number of homicides in each area type during 1997 was determined by multiplying the average number of homicides per jurisdiction by the estimated number of jurisdictions reporting gangs in 1997. The estimate was calculated separately for each type of homicide. In other words, the average number of member-based homicides was calculated using the responses of all those who responded to the question concerning member-based homicides, regardless of whether they responded to the question on motive-based homicides. The same process was used to calculate the average number of motive-based homicides.

In several instances throughout the following analyses, the small number of observations made calculating reliable estimates and averages difficult. Therefore, summary data were not included for categories in which there were fewer than 20 observations, unless otherwise noted.

## Weighting percentages

In a number of instances, survey questions asked respondents to estimate the percentage of gangs or gang members who were involved in a particular activity or who met certain criteria. Specifically, this pertains to the questions regarding drug sales and distribution and gang migration. An important limitation to interpreting these types of responses is that these percentages do not reflect differences in the number and size of the gangs across the reporting jurisdictions. To account for this important factor, the percentages were weighted by the total number of gangs or gang members (whichever was appropriate) reported in each jurisdiction. Only the responses of agencies that reported both numbers of gangs and gang members were used in this weighting procedure. This requirement decreased the number of agencies included in the analysis but increased the reliability of the translation of percentages into actual numbers of gangs or gang members.

Although weighting is necessary when reporting aggregate estimates of gangs or gang members, it is also important to be able to make comparisons about gang activity across jurisdictions using the variables discussed above (area type, geographic region, and population). Therefore, the remainder of the analyses were conducted by comparing averages for each jurisdiction, regardless of the size of the gangs in each jurisdiction. This procedure allowed differences across jurisdictions to be observed without being skewed by jurisdictions with a disproportionate number of gangs or gang members. When appropriate, tables are included in the following analysis to illustrate the differences between weighted and unweighted averages.



**T**he response rate to the question concerning type of homicide varied among respondents.

**L**aw enforcement agencies continue to be the best available and most widely used source of information for national gang surveys.

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## Statistical significance

Statistical significance was determined by conducting *chi*-square and one-way analysis of variance tests. *Chi*-square is often used when evaluating the level of statistical significance attained in a cross-tabulation. One-way analysis of variance determines the differences between means of a dependent variable by one factor, or independent variable. The average for a particular category of a variable is compared with the overall average for the variable to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the averages. Patterns in the differences between averages can determine the nature of the relationship between variables. To be considered statistically significant, the relationship must have a level of significance of at least 0.05. That is, if a relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the probability that the relationship occurred by chance is less than 5 percent.

## Data limitations

Law enforcement agencies continue to be the best available and most widely used source of information for national gang surveys and other forms of criminal justice research. Criminal justice agencies usually are centrally organized and capable of developing systems for routine recordkeeping and reporting (Curry, 1995; Maxson, Klein, and Cunningham, 1993). However, law enforcement data have some important limitations. First, many agencies do not collect data in a standardized manner. Databases, automated or otherwise, are becoming more widespread, but are more commonly used for gathering intelligence than for recording crime. In addition, the accuracy of responses to surveys of law enforcement agencies often varies across jurisdictions, because responses are generally based on estimates. For this survey, instructions specifically asked the respondent to base responses on records or personal knowledge. To determine the extent to which personal knowledge or estimates were used, the survey asked respondents to identify the source of their responses. The majority of respondents (53 percent) said they used both official records and estimates, while 44 percent indicated that they reported only estimates. Only 2 percent of respondents indicated that their responses were derived solely from official records.

Second, responses to survey questions likely were influenced by the respondents' perceptions of gangs in their jurisdiction. Each year, the survey is directed to the previous year's respondent or, if the agency has not responded to earlier surveys, to the chief of police or sheriff. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ensure that the same respondent or even the most appropriate official receives and responds to the survey. As a result, a number of different perceptions and opinions may be reflected in the responses of some jurisdictions. Political considerations also may affect responses, and a gang problem may be either denied or exaggerated (Curry, 1995).

Definitions continue to pose problems for practitioners and researchers evaluating gang activity on a national level. Little agreement has been reached on what constitutes a gang, gang member, or gang incident, despite efforts to gain a consensus (Spergel and Bobrowski, 1989). In light of these problems, the current survey did not seek to define gang terms narrowly. The survey defined a youth gang as "a group of youths or young adults in (the respondent's) jurisdiction that (the respondent)

or other responsible persons in (the respondent's) agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a 'gang.'" Respondents were asked to exclude motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, and exclusively adult gangs. Respondents were also provided with two definitions of gang crime in order to gain some consistency in the reporting of homicides (see appendix A).

## Survey Results

### Prevalence of youth gangs

Fifty-one percent of survey respondents indicated that they had active youth gangs in their jurisdictions in 1997. Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs, by area type. Almost three-quarters of large cities (72 percent) reported active youth gangs in 1997, followed by 56 percent of suburban counties, 33 percent of small cities, and 24 percent of rural counties (see appendix E for a list of all jurisdictions reporting gangs in 1997, by area type). The relationship between agencies reporting active youth gangs in 1997 and area type was found to be statistically significant.

The percentage of respondents reporting active youth gangs decreased by 2 percent between 1996 and 1997. Table 1 shows the percentages for both years, by area type. The largest decrease was in large cities. Small cities, suburban counties, and rural counties had smaller decreases.

**Table 1: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Area Type\***

Area Type	Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
Large city	74%	72%
Small city	34	33
Suburban county	57	56
Rural county	25	24
Overall	53	51

\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

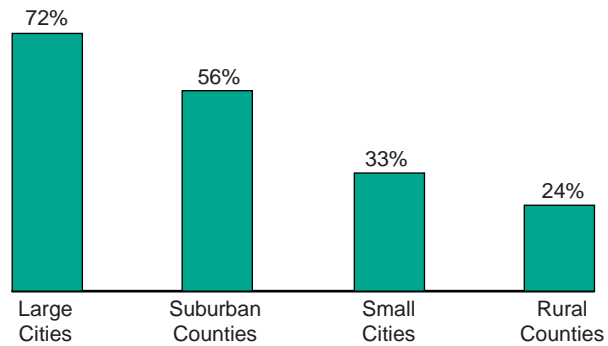
Gang activity also varied significantly by region of the country (see figure 3). The West, which has historically experienced significant gang problems, reported the highest level of gang activity (74 percent) in 1997. The percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in the three other regions was as follows: 52 percent in the Midwest, 49 percent in the South, and 31 percent in the Northeast. These differences in gang activity by region were found to be statistically significant.

Each geographic region can be further divided into smaller increments called divisions (see appendix F). Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in 1997, by division. As expected, divisions in the

**F**ifty-one percent of survey respondents indicated that they had active youth gangs in their jurisdictions in 1997.

The only increase between 1996 and 1997 in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs was in the East South Central division.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Area Type**



West had the highest percentage of agencies reporting active youth gangs, especially in the Pacific division (80 percent) which includes Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. The Middle Atlantic division in the Northeast had the lowest percentage (26 percent) of agencies reporting active youth gangs. These differences were found to be statistically significant.

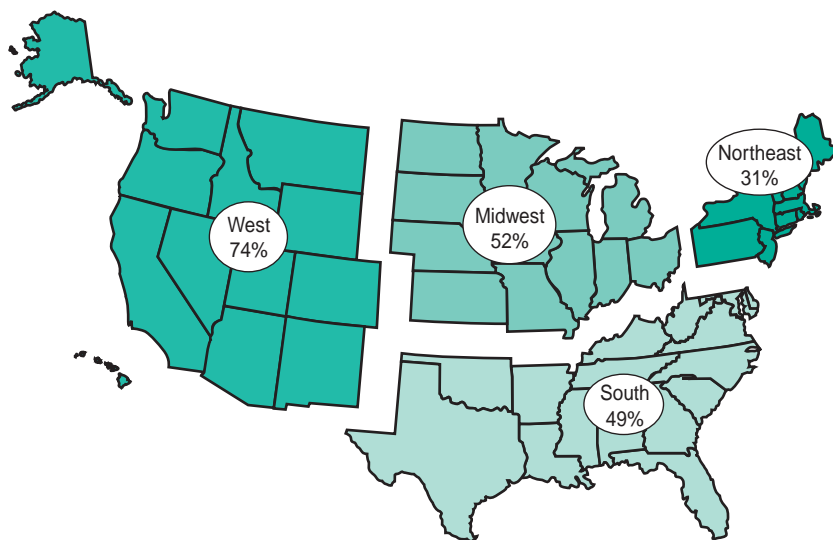
Tables 2 and 3 compare the percentages of jurisdictions that reported active youth gangs in 1996 and 1997. Regionally, the largest decrease in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs was in the Northeast. Moreover, a larger decrease was found in the New England division of the Northeast region. The only increase between 1996 and 1997 in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs was in the East South Central division. States included in this division are Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

**Table 2: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Region\***

Area Type	Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
Midwest	54%	52%
Northeast	35	31
South	50	49
West	75	74
Overall	53	51

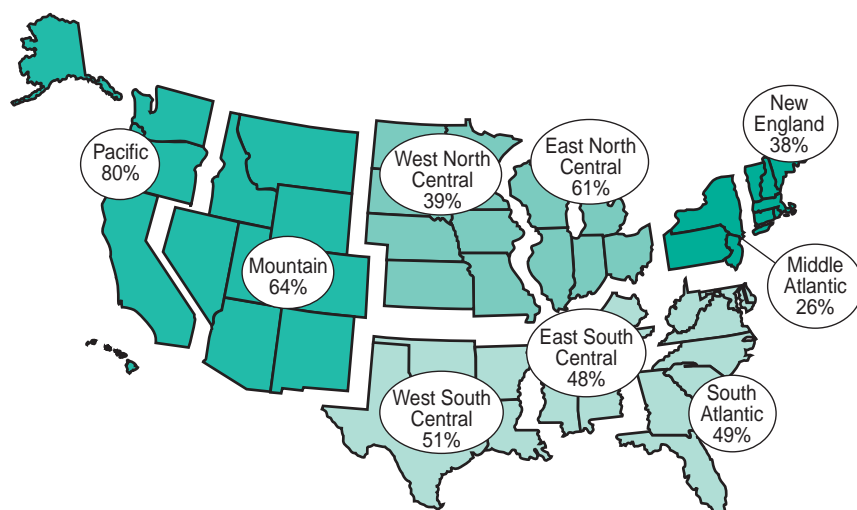
\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Region**



The larger the population, the more likely the presence of gangs.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Division**



Tables 4–7 show a direct variation between the presence of active youth gangs in 1997 and population, that is, the larger the population, the more likely the presence of gangs. This relationship was found to be statistically significant for all area types except small cities (the relationship between the presence of active youth gangs and population in small cities is statistically significant at the 0.09 level). The tables also compare the percentages of jurisdictions that reported active youth gangs in 1996 and 1997.

The largest decrease in jurisdictions reporting gangs was for the 250,000 or more population range.

**Table 3: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Division\***

Division, by Region	Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
<b>Midwest</b>		
East North Central	63%	61%
West North Central	42	39
<b>Northeast</b>		
New England	44	38
Middle Atlantic	29	26
<b>South</b>		
South Atlantic	53	49
East South Central	43	48
West South Central	52	51
<b>West</b>		
Mountain	64	64
Pacific	82	80
<b>Overall</b>	53	51

\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 4: Percentage of Large Cities Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size\***

Population Size	Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
<b>250,000 or more</b>	100%	100%
<b>100,000–249,999</b>	91	92
<b>50,000–99,999</b>	80	81
<b>25,000–49,999</b>	64	59
<b>Overall</b>	74	72

\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

As table 4 shows, there was no variation in the 250,000 or more population range. In both 1996 and 1997, 100 percent of respondents in this population range reported active youth gangs in their jurisdictions. As table 6 shows, among suburban counties, the largest decrease in jurisdictions reporting gangs was for the 250,000 or more population range. However, there was a noticeable increase for suburban counties reporting gangs in the 1–9,999 population range.

Prior to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey, the highest recorded number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs was 282, in 1994 (Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996). However, most previous surveys were limited in size and scope and did not include counties. Results of the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey

indicated that there were 2,007 cities and counties with active youth gangs in the United States in 1995. This 1995 survey sample was much larger than that of previous efforts and included more than 4,000 law enforcement agencies.

**Table 5: Percentage of Small Cities Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size\***

Population Size	Small Cities Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
10,000–24,999	43%	41%
2,500–9,999	30	30
Overall	34	33

\*Only statistically significant at the 0.09 level.

**Table 6: Percentage of Suburban Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size\***

Population Size	Suburban Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
250,000 or more	90%	80%
100,000–249,999	74	76
50,000–99,999	66	67
25,000–49,999	46	47
10,000–24,999	45	41
1–9,999	31	42
Overall	57	56

\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 7: Percentage of Rural Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size\***

Population Size	Rural Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs	
	1996	1997
250,000 or more	—**	—**
100,000–249,999	—**	—**
50,000–99,999	41%	38%
25,000–49,999	39	38
10,000–24,999	32	29
1–9,999	19	18
Overall	25	24

\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\*Fewer than 20 agencies responded to this question; a reliable estimate could not be reached.

**T**here were 2,007 cities and counties with active youth gangs in the United States in 1995.

**A** statistically representative sample was used for the 1996 and 1997 surveys.

## Number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs

Despite the comprehensiveness of the 1995 survey sample, it was not statistically representative; thus, the data could not be extrapolated for jurisdictions that either did not respond to the survey or were not included in the sample. Therefore, a statistically representative sample was used for the 1996 and 1997 surveys. As a result, the estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in 1996 and 1997 was higher than in 1995.

In 1997, an estimated 4,712 cities and counties in the United States experienced gang activity, down slightly from 4,824 in 1996. Table 8 shows the reported and estimated numbers of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in 1996 and 1997, by area type. Table 9 highlights the percentage of difference between the estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in 1996 and in 1997, by area type. Rural counties had the largest decrease (6.7 percent) in the estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs from 1996 to 1997, followed by large cities (3.2 percent), suburban counties (2.1 percent), and small cities (1.2 percent). Appendixes G and H show the number and percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in 1997, by population size and region and by area type and region, respectively.

**Table 8: Reported and Estimated Number of Jurisdictions With Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	Number of Jurisdictions With Active Youth Gangs			
	1996		1997	
	Reported	Estimated	Reported	Estimated
Large city	785	899	786	870
Small city	113	2,948	125	2,913
Suburban county	329	379	337	371
Rural county	158	598	164	558
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>4,824</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>4,712</b>

**Note:** Response rates were higher for the 1997 survey; therefore, the reported number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in 1997 versus the estimated number does not increase proportionally compared with the 1996 survey.

**Table 9: Estimated Number of Jurisdictions With Active Youth Gangs in 1996 and 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	Jurisdictions With Active Youth Gangs		
	1996	1997	Percent Change
Large city	899	870	-3.2%
Small city	2,948	2,913	-1.2
Suburban county	379	371	-2.1
Rural county	598	558	-6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,824</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>-2.3</b>

## Number of youth gangs and gang members

Before the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was conducted, the highest estimates of gang activity ranged from 8,600 to 9,000 gangs and 375,000 to 400,000 gang members (Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Klein, 1995). As noted above, however, most previous surveys were limited in size and scope. The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey indicated that there were approximately 23,000 youth gangs and 665,000 gang members active in the United States in 1995. The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey indicated that there were approximately 31,000 youth gangs and 846,000 gang members in 1996.

Results of the 1997 survey revealed that there were an estimated 30,533 youth gangs and 815,896 gang members active in the United States in 1997. Table 10 shows the reported and extrapolated number of youth gangs and gang members in 1997, by area type, and table 11 shows the percent change of the estimated 1996 and 1997 figures. Overall, there was a 0.9-percent decrease in the estimated number of youth gangs and a 3.6-percent decrease in the estimated number of gang members. More specifically, the estimated number of youth gangs decreased in suburban counties (23.2 percent) and rural counties (4.1 percent). Decreases in the estimated number of youth gang members were evident in suburban counties (6.1 percent) and large cities (5.7 percent).

**R**esults of the 1997 survey revealed that there were an estimated 30,533 youth gangs and 815,896 gang members active in the United States in 1997.

**Table 10: Reported and Estimated Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members in 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	Reported Number		Estimated Number	
	Gangs	Gang Members	Gangs	Gang Members
Large city	11,908	455,140	12,831	483,829
Small city	416	4,191	9,704	97,701
Suburban county	5,389	188,541	6,110	208,785
Rural county	554	7,513	1,888	25,581
Total	18,267	655,385	30,533	815,896

**Table 11: Estimated Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members in 1996 and 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	1996		1997		Percent Change	
	Gangs	Gang Members	Gangs	Gang Members	Gangs	Gang Members
Large city	12,841	513,243	12,831	483,829	nil	-5.7%
Small city	8,053	92,448	9,704	97,701	20.5%	5.7
Suburban county	7,956	222,267	6,110	208,785	-23.2	-6.1
Rural county	1,968	18,470	1,888	25,581	-4.1	38.5
Total	30,818	846,428	30,533	815,896	-0.9	-3.6

**D**espite the decreases in estimated numbers of youth gangs and gang members, there were substantial increases in certain area types.

Despite the decreases in estimated numbers of youth gangs and gang members, there were substantial increases in certain area types. Small cities had a 20.5-percent increase in the estimated number of youth gangs. Additionally, the estimated number of youth gang members increased by 38.5 percent in rural counties and 5.7 percent in small cities.

Further examination of the increases in youth gangs and gang members revealed two primary causes for the changes. First, despite reductions from 1996 to 1997 in the estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs, the average number of youth gangs and gang members increased in the lowest population groups (see table 12). Second, the percentage of agencies reporting an estimate of the number of youth gangs and gang members increased from 1996 to 1997, producing a slightly higher estimate of the number of gangs and gang members in 1997. Because the survey methodology is designed to produce the most conservative estimates, respondents who answer “do not know” to these questions are excluded from the extrapolations. As a result, any increase or decrease in the number of respondents who answer “do not know” to survey questions that ask for a raw number may lead to a slight change in estimates. To mitigate this effect, it may be necessary to modify the methodology for future surveys.

Table 12 illustrates the average number of youth gangs and gang members per jurisdiction for 1996 and 1997, by population size. For cities and counties with populations of 1–9,999, there was considerable growth (percentage-wise) between the relatively low numbers of gangs and gang members reported in 1996, and the low numbers, compared with other population ranges, reported in 1997. Most of the other population ranges showed decreases.

**Table 12: Average Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members per Jurisdiction in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size\***

Population Size	1996		1997	
	Gangs per Jurisdiction	Gang Members per Jurisdiction	Gangs per Jurisdiction	Gang Members per Jurisdiction
250,000 or more	80 (n=90)	5,894 (n=68)	85 (n=88)	5,120 (n=77)
100,000–249,999	32 (n=167)	1,016 (n=141)	22 (n=179)	764 (n=159)
50,000–99,999	10 (n=304)	352 (n=221)	9 (n=333)	289 (n=286)
25,000–49,999	6 (n=414)	134 (n=302)	6 (n=406)	128 (n=332)
10,000–24,999	4 (n=143)	84 (n=91)	5 (n=144)	85 (n=99)
1–9,999	3 (n=132)	37 (n=85)	4 (n=149)	55 (n=113)
Overall average	15 (n=1,250)	741 (n=908)	14 (n=1,299)	615 (n=1,066)

**Notes:** n=the number of observations in a particular category. As population size increases, the average number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction increases for both 1996 and 1997. The overall average takes into account all jurisdictions, regardless of population size. The particular averages take into account the population size of the jurisdiction and the number of jurisdictions for a particular population size. The overall average is not an average of particular averages.

\*The variation in the average number of youth gangs and gang members is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Although gang activity in 1996 and 1997 was widespread, a large portion of the youth gangs and gang members reported by survey respondents was concentrated in Chicago, IL, and Los Angeles (city and county), CA. These three localities have a long history of gang problems, and together they accounted for 4 percent of all youth gangs and 24 percent of all youth gang members estimated to be active in 1997. Without these three localities, the average numbers of youth gangs and gang members in populations of 250,000 or more were reduced to 74 and 2,702, respectively.

## Youth gangs and crime

Gangs have typically been associated with criminal acts since the first reports of their activities were made (Thrasher, 1927; see also Sante, 1991). Observers of gangs generally agree that, while not all gang members participate in criminal acts, involvement in such activity distinguishes gangs from other groups (Curry and Decker, 1998). The 1997 survey asked respondents to report the number of member-based and motive-based homicides involving gang members (see page 48). In addition, respondents were asked to estimate the degree of gang member involvement in other criminal offenses (i.e., aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and larceny/theft).

### Homicides

An estimated 3,340 member-based gang homicides were committed in the United States in 1997, of which 1,880 (56 percent) were motive based (see table 13). Large cities accounted for almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the total estimated number of member-based homicides and nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of the motive-based homicides. Considering that the national homicide total was 18,210 in 1997 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1998), youth gangs were involved in 18 percent of homicides nationwide.

**Table 13: Reported and Estimated Number of Homicides Involving Youth Gang Members in 1997, by Area Type and Homicide Type**

Area Type	Reported Number of Homicides		Estimated Number of Homicides	
	Member-Based	Motive-Based	Member-Based	Motive-Based
Large city	1,734	890	2,123	1,357
Small city	17	4	408	146
Suburban county	416	132	553	226
Rural county	69	30	257	151
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>3,341</b>	<b>1,880</b>

Most respondents indicated that they did not have any member- or motive-based gang homicides in their jurisdictions in 1997, and only 3 percent reported having

An estimated 3,340 member-based gang homicides were committed in the United States in 1997.

**I**t is difficult to recognize any trends in youth gang homicides.

more than 10 member-based gang homicides (see table 14). No small cities or rural counties reported having more than 10 member- or motive-based gang homicides in their jurisdiction. Not surprisingly, large cities accounted for the highest percentage of jurisdictions with more than 10 gang homicides. Differences in the number of homicides in each area type were found to be statistically significant for both member- and motive-based homicides.

**Table 14: Number and Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Homicides Involving Youth Gang Members in 1997 Within Specific Ranges, by Homicide Type and Area Type\***

Type and Number of Homicides	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
<b>Member-Based</b>					
11 or more homicides	37 (3%)	31 (4%)	0 (0%)	6 (2%)	0 (0%)
1–10 homicides	335 (27%)	220 (31%)	10 (8%)	77 (28%)	28 (19%)
0 homicides	891 (71%)	461 (65%)	112 (92%)	197 (70%)	121 (81%)
<b>Motive-Based*</b>					
11 or more homicides	19 (2%)	17 (3%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
1–10 homicides	184 (19%)	128 (22%)	3 (3%)	35 (16%)	18 (16%)
0 homicides	781 (79%)	424 (75%)	83 (97%)	181 (83%)	93 (84%)

**Note:** The percentages within each area type may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\* Differences in the percentages of homicide ranges are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 15 reveals that the number of youth gang homicides reported by survey respondents varied directly with population. Generally, the percentage of respondents that reported more than 10 youth gang homicides decreased as population decreased. In the highest population range (250,000 or more), 81 percent of the respondents reported at least one member-based homicide. In contrast, only 21 percent of respondents in the lowest population range (1–9,999) reported at least one member-based homicide. The variation in the percentage of respondents reporting homicides by population size was found to be statistically significant for both member- and motive-based homicides.

As a result of differences in questions regarding homicide in the 1996 and 1997 surveys, reliable comparisons of the years could not be made. Therefore, it is difficult to recognize any trends in youth gang homicides. The current national trend for homicides among juveniles and young adults has been declining steadily since 1993. However, the rates of youth homicide remain considerably higher than those of the mid-1980's (Fox and Zawitz, 1999; Snyder, 1998).

In an effort to detect trends in youth gang homicides, the homicide questions used for the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey were also used for the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey, which was distributed to respondents in March 1999. Data from the 1998 survey will allow both comparative and trend analyses of 1997 and 1998.

## Degree of criminal activity

In addition to reporting the number of gang homicides, survey recipients were asked to indicate the degree to which gang members were involved in the following offenses in their respective jurisdictions: aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and larceny/theft. These crimes were selected because they are commonly associated with gang activity and cover most serious and violent crime offense categories.

**Table 15: Number and Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Homicides Involving Youth Gang Members in 1997, by Population Size and Homicide Type\***

Number of Homicides, by Population Size	Type of Homicide	
	Member-Based	Motive-Based
<b>250,000 or more</b>		
11 or more homicides	22 (31%)	12 (18%)
1–10 homicides	36 (50%)	33 (49%)
0 homicides	14 (19%)	23 (34%)
<b>100,000–249,999</b>		
11 or more homicides	11 (7%)	4 (3%)
1–10 homicides	83 (52%)	41 (30%)
0 homicides	65 (41%)	91 (67%)
<b>1–99,999</b>		
11 or more homicides	4 (0%)	3 (0%)
1–10 homicides	216 (21%)	110 (14%)
0 homicides	812 (79%)	667 (86%)

**Note:** The percentages within each population category may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\* The variation in the percentage for the homicide ranges in each population parameter is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for both types of homicide.

Table 16 displays the degree of gang member involvement in the above offenses, by area type. Overall, agencies most often reported a high degree of involvement for aggravated assault (28 percent) and larceny/theft (28 percent), followed by motor vehicle theft (27 percent), burglary (26 percent), and robbery (13 percent). A large percentage of agencies in large cities and suburban counties reported a high degree of involvement in aggravated assault and motor vehicle theft. The percentage of agencies reporting a high degree of gang member involvement in robbery was generally small for all area types, especially in small cities (4 percent). In rural counties, the percentage of respondents reporting a high degree of gang member involvement in burglary (41 percent) was substantially larger than the overall average (26 percent). At least one-quarter of respondents in each type of jurisdiction indicated that gang members were involved in a high degree of larceny/theft. The differences in the degree of gang member involvement by area type are statistically significant for all crimes except larceny/theft.

Overall, agencies most often reported a high degree of involvement for aggravated assault and larceny/theft, followed by motor vehicle theft, burglary, and robbery.

The estimated degree of involvement in criminal activity by youth gang members was less in 1997 than in 1996 for all crimes included in the survey.

**Table 16: Degree of Gang Member Criminal Activity in 1997, by Type of Offense and Area Type\***

Degree of Offending, by Type of Offense	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
<b>Aggravated assault</b>					
High	382 (28%)	256 (33%)	14 (11%)	88 (27%)	24 (15%)
Medium	520 (38%)	295 (38%)	39 (31%)	122 (38%)	64 (41%)
Low	428 (31%)	202 (26%)	64 (51%)	100 (31%)	62 (40%)
Not involved	44 (3%)	16 (2%)	8 (6%)	13 (4%)	7 (5%)
<b>Robbery</b>					
High	174 (13%)	116 (15%)	5 (4%)	35 (11%)	18 (12%)
Medium	400 (29%)	266 (35%)	16 (13%)	91 (28%)	27 (18%)
Low	615 (45%)	324 (42%)	59 (48%)	160 (50%)	72 (48%)
Not involved	177 (13%)	62 (8%)	44 (36%)	37 (12%)	34 (23%)
<b>Burglary</b>					
High	358 (26%)	175 (23%)	28 (22%)	91 (28%)	64 (41%)
Medium	538 (39%)	306 (40%)	52 (42%)	126 (39%)	54 (34%)
Low	430 (31%)	261 (34%)	38 (30%)	97 (30%)	34 (22%)
Not involved	47 (3%)	25 (3%)	7 (6%)	10 (3%)	5 (3%)
<b>Motor vehicle theft</b>					
High	372 (27%)	251 (33%)	16 (13%)	81 (25%)	24 (16%)
Medium	449 (33%)	256 (34%)	31 (25%)	115 (35%)	47 (30%)
Low	454 (33%)	223 (29%)	54 (43%)	111 (34%)	66 (43%)
Not involved	92 (7%)	32 (4%)	24 (19%)	18 (6%)	18 (12%)
<b>Larceny/Theft</b>					
High	379 (28%)	218 (28%)	38 (31%)	80 (25%)	43 (27%)
Medium	609 (44%)	356 (46%)	46 (37%)	141 (44%)	66 (42%)
Low	349 (25%)	180 (24%)	35 (28%)	92 (28%)	42 (27%)
Not involved	35 (3%)	12 (2%)	5 (4%)	11 (3%)	7 (4%)

**Note:** The percentages within each offense category may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\* The differences in the percentages of gang member involvement by area type are statistically significant at the 0.05 level for all types of offenses except larceny/theft.

The estimated degree of involvement in criminal activity by youth gang members was less in 1997 than in 1996 for all crimes included in the survey (see table 17). The decreases in the percentage of respondents who reported a high degree of gang member involvement in criminal activity from 1996 to 1997 were as follows: larceny/theft, 10 percent; aggravated assault, 5 percent; burglary, 4 percent; motor vehicle theft, 3 percent; and robbery, 2 percent. These reported decreases are consistent with the national downturn in juvenile violent crime arrests from 1994 to 1997, as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1998; Snyder, 1998).

Criminal activity varied considerably by region (see table 18). Jurisdictions in the West reported the largest percentage of a high degree of gang member involvement in aggravated assault, robbery, and motor vehicle theft. The proportion of

agencies reporting a high degree of gang member involvement in burglary was largest in the South (35 percent) and smallest in the Northeast (7 percent). Youth gang members were involved in larceny/theft to a high degree in all regions, with estimates ranging from 23 percent in the Northeast to 30 percent in the South. The differences in the degree of gang member involvement by region are statistically significant for all crimes except larceny/theft. In addition, regional trends in 1997 were fairly consistent with those evident in 1996.

**Table 17: Degree of Gang Member Criminal Activity in 1996 and 1997, by Type of Offense**

Degree of Offending, by Type of Offense	Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Member Involvement	
	1996	1997
<b>Aggravated assault</b>		
High	33%	28%
Medium	39	38
Low	26	31
Not involved	3	3
<b>Robbery</b>		
High	15	13
Medium	31	29
Low	43	45
Not involved	11	13
<b>Burglary</b>		
High	30	26
Medium	42	39
Low	26	31
Not involved	3	3
<b>Motor vehicle theft</b>		
High	30	27
Medium	32	33
Low	33	33
Not involved	5	7
<b>Larceny/Theft</b>		
High	38	28
Medium	45	44
Low	16	25
Not involved	2	3

**Note:** The percentages within each offense category may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

**Y**outh gang members were involved in larceny/theft to a high degree in all regions.

The degree of gang member involvement in aggravated assault, robbery, and motor vehicle theft increased as population increased.

**Table 18: Degree of Gang Member Criminal Activity in 1997, by Type of Offense and Region\***

Degree of Offending, by Type of Offense	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
<b>Aggravated assault</b>					
High	382 (28%)	87 (21%)	38 (27%)	132 (27%)	125 (37%)
Medium	520 (38%)	154 (38%)	51 (37%)	191 (39%)	124 (37%)
Low	428 (31%)	158 (39%)	38 (27%)	146 (30%)	86 (25%)
Not involved	44 (3%)	11 (3%)	12 (9%)	16 (3%)	5 (2%)
<b>Robbery</b>					
High	174 (13%)	42 (10%)	14 (10%)	68 (14%)	50 (15%)
Medium	400 (29%)	98 (24%)	54 (39%)	150 (31%)	98 (29%)
Low	615 (45%)	189 (46%)	51 (36%)	209 (44%)	166 (49%)
Not involved	177 (13%)	78 (19%)	21 (15%)	54 (11%)	24 (7%)
<b>Burglary</b>					
High	358 (26%)	84 (20%)	10 (7%)	168 (35%)	96 (28%)
Medium	538 (39%)	159 (39%)	52 (37%)	192 (40%)	135 (40%)
Low	430 (31%)	153 (37%)	65 (46%)	110 (23%)	102 (30%)
Not involved	47 (3%)	15 (4%)	13 (9%)	14 (3%)	5 (2%)
<b>Motor vehicle theft</b>					
High	372 (27%)	84 (21%)	27 (20%)	142 (30%)	119 (35%)
Medium	449 (33%)	135 (33%)	42 (30%)	158 (33%)	114 (33%)
Low	454 (33%)	149 (37%)	53 (38%)	152 (32%)	100 (29%)
Not involved	92 (7%)	38 (9%)	16 (12%)	30 (6%)	8 (2%)
<b>Larceny/Theft</b>					
High	379 (28%)	109 (27%)	31 (23%)	145 (30%)	94 (28%)
Medium	609 (44%)	178 (43%)	59 (43%)	213 (44%)	159 (47%)
Low	349 (25%)	112 (27%)	42 (31%)	114 (24%)	81 (24%)
Not involved	35 (3%)	12 (3%)	5 (4%)	14 (3%)	4 (1%)

**Note:** The percentages within each offense category may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\* The differences in the percentages of gang member involvement by region are statistically significant at the 0.05 level for all types of offense except larceny/theft.

The degree of criminal activity also varied in direct proportion to population size for most crimes (see table 19). The degree of gang member involvement in aggravated assault, robbery, and motor vehicle theft increased as population increased. This variation was found to be statistically significant. Neither burglary nor larceny/theft was significantly affected by population.

**Table 19: Degree of Gang Member Criminal Activity in 1997,  
by Type of Offense and Population Size\***

Degree of, Offending by Type of Offense	Population Size						
	All Population Sizes	1–9,999	10,000– 24,999	25,000– 49,999	50,000– 99,999	100,000– 249,999	250,000 or more
<b>Aggravated assault</b>							
High	382 (28%)	24 (15%)	19 (12%)	105 (24%)	105 (31%)	76 (42%)	53 (59%)
Medium	520 (38%)	54 (33%)	59 (37%)	154 (36%)	148 (43%)	76 (42%)	29 (32%)
Low	428 (31%)	77 (47%)	74 (47%)	160 (37%)	83 (24%)	26 (14%)	8 (9%)
Not involved	44 (3%)	10 (6%)	7 (4%)	15 (4%)	8 (2%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)
<b>Robbery</b>							
High	174 (13%)	12 (8%)	10 (6%)	40 (9%)	45 (13%)	38 (21%)	29 (32%)
Medium	400 (29%)	24 (15%)	29 (19%)	128 (30%)	111 (32%)	77 (42%)	31 (34%)
Low	615 (45%)	69 (43%)	83 (53%)	212 (49%)	162 (47%)	60 (33%)	29 (32%)
Not involved	177 (13%)	56 (35%)	35 (22%)	53 (12%)	25 (7%)	7 (4%)	1 (1%)
<b>Burglary</b>							
High	358 (26%)	52 (32%)	42 (26%)	104 (24%)	93 (27%)	49 (27%)	18 (20%)
Medium	538 (39%)	60 (37%)	65 (40%)	168 (39%)	121 (35%)	80 (44%)	44 (49%)
Low	430 (31%)	46 (28%)	45 (28%)	147 (34%)	117 (34%)	49 (27%)	26 (29%)
Not involved	47 (3%)	6 (4%)	9 (6%)	14 (3%)	12 (4%)	5 (3%)	1 (1%)
<b>Motor vehicle theft</b>							
High	372 (27%)	27 (17%)	19 (12%)	105 (25%)	101 (29%)	80 (44%)	40 (45%)
Medium	449 (33%)	41 (25%)	54 (34%)	134 (31%)	118 (34%)	64 (35%)	38 (43%)
Low	454 (33%)	67 (41%)	70 (44%)	166 (39%)	110 (32%)	31 (17%)	10 (11%)
Not involved	92 (7%)	29 (18%)	16 (10%)	23 (5%)	15 (4%)	8 (4%)	1 (1%)
<b>Larceny/Theft</b>							
High	379 (28%)	47 (29%)	31 (20%)	120 (28%)	101 (29%)	55 (30%)	25 (28%)
Medium	609 (44%)	65 (39%)	73 (46%)	191 (44%)	155 (45%)	83 (46%)	42 (47%)
Low	349 (25%)	42 (26%)	50 (31%)	111 (26%)	86 (25%)	40 (22%)	20 (23%)
Not involved	35 (3%)	11 (7%)	5 (3%)	10 (2%)	4 (1%)	3 (2%)	2 (2%)

**Note:** The percentages within each offense category may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

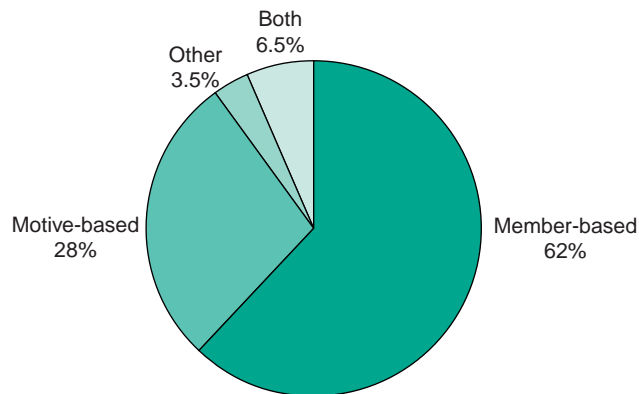
\* The differences in the percentages of gang member involvement by population size are statistically significant at the 0.05 level for aggravated assault, robbery, and motor vehicle theft.

## Gang crime definitions

To clarify the definitional issues surrounding gang crime, respondents were asked to indicate whether their agency most frequently uses a member-based, motive-based, or other definition. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that they use the member-based definition, 28 percent said they use the motive-based definition, and 10 percent reportedly use another definition (see figure 5). Further, 6.5 percent indicated that they use both member-based and motive-based definitions and 3.5 percent reportedly use another definition.

**F**orty-two percent of the youth gangs in the United States were estimated to be involved in the street sale of drugs.

**Figure 5: Definition of Gang Crime Used by Respondents**



## Youth gangs and drugs

Youth gang involvement in drugs has been a major public concern since the crack cocaine epidemic began in the mid-1980's (Klein, 1995). Several issues have been debated and researched, including the extent of gang member involvement in drug sales (Decker and Van Winkle, 1994); the interrelationship of youth gangs, drugs, and crime (Howell and Decker, 1999); the geographical location of most gang drug distribution (Maxson, 1995); the race/ethnicity of gang members involved in drug sales (Esbensen and Winfree, 1998); and the ability of youth gangs to manage drug trafficking operations (Moore, 1990).

Until now, national law enforcement data have not been available for the involvement of gangs in drug sales, the types of drugs sold by youth gang members, and the extent to which gangs control or manage drug distribution. The results of the 1997 survey, reported below, provide new information on these important issues.

### Drug sales

In an effort to distinguish between gangs that traffic in drugs as a function of the gang and gangs with members who sell drugs for their own personal benefit, survey recipients were asked to identify the percentage of youth gangs in their jurisdictions that engaged in the street sale of drugs for the purpose of generating profits for the gang. Street sale was defined as "the sale of drugs in small quantities that have already been prepared for consumption." After responses were weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction, 42 percent of the youth gangs in the United States were estimated to be involved in the street sale of drugs for the purpose of generating profits for the gang (see table 20). Large cities had the highest percentage of youth gangs involved in drug sales (49 percent), followed by suburban counties (43 percent), rural counties (35 percent), and small cities (31 percent).

Table 20 compares the weighted and unweighted averages of the percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs, by area type. Unlike weighted averages, unweighted averages do not account for the number of gangs in each

jurisdiction, but they do allow for the comparison of averages across jurisdictions. Using unweighted averages, the average proportion of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs ranged from 42 percent in suburban counties to 26 percent in small cities. Weighted averages were higher than unweighted averages, because jurisdictions with a high number of youth gangs generally reported a higher average percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs than did jurisdictions with a relatively low number of youth gangs. The other analyses for street sales of drugs presented below use only unweighted averages so that trends across jurisdictions are more readily apparent.

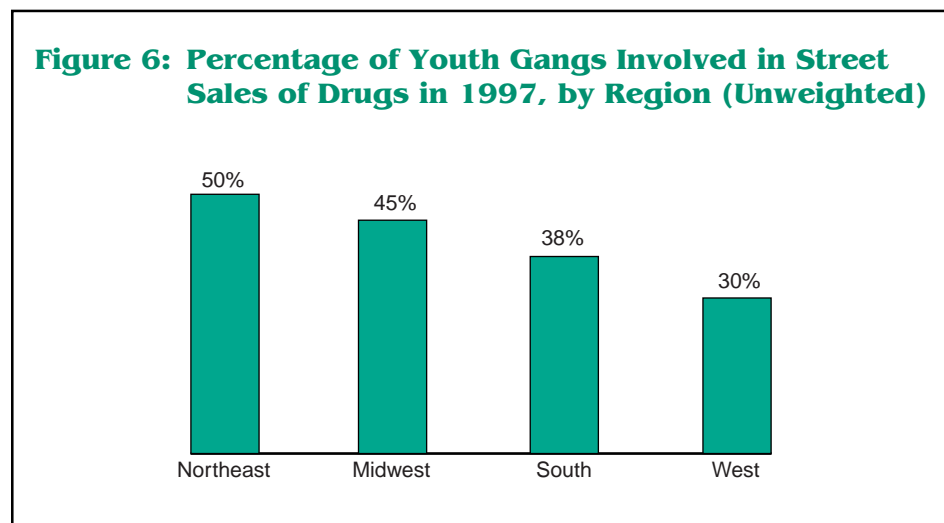
**Table 20: Number and Percentage of Youth Gangs Involved in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	Youth Gangs Involved in Street Sales	
	Weighted Average	Unweighted Average*
Large city	458 (49%)	472 (41%)
Small city	56 (31%)	58 (26%)
Suburban county	167 (43%)	174 (42%)
Rural county	71 (35%)	77 (34%)
Total/Average	752 (42%)	781 (39%)

**Notes:** Weighted averages account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction; unweighted averages do not. Generally, as area type becomes more urbanized, the percentage of gangs involved in street sales of drugs increases. However, rural counties report a higher percentage of gangs involved in street sales than do small cities.

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs for each region of the country. The Northeast had the highest percentage (50 percent) of youth gangs involved in street sales, followed by 45 percent for the Midwest, 38 percent for the South, and 30 percent for the West. The differences in street sales by region were found to be statistically significant.

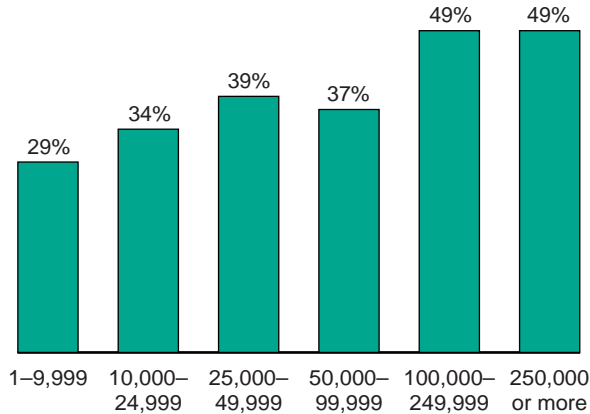


The Northeast had the highest percentage of youth gangs involved in street sales, followed by the Midwest, the South, and the West.

The responses indicated that more than half of the youth gangs in the country were involved in street sales of drugs at the low level.

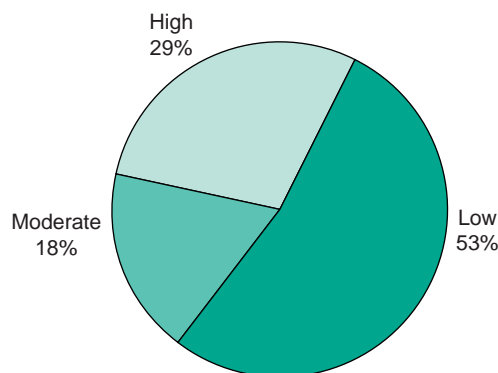
The percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs also varied substantially by population (see figure 7). The two highest population ranges had the largest percentages (49 percent) of youth gangs involved in street sales, while the lowest population range had the smallest percentage (29 percent). These variations were found to be statistically significant.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Youth Gangs Involved in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997, by Population Size (Unweighted)**



Caution should be used when interpreting the data for drug sales presented above because many respondents to the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey included “drug gangs” in their youth gang definition (Howell and Gleason, in press). For the analysis of the 1997 survey data, responses were divided into three levels of street drug sales activity: low (0–33 percent), moderate (34–66 percent), and high (67–100 percent). On average, the responses indicated that more than half (53 percent) of the youth gangs in the country were involved in street sales of drugs at the low level, 29 percent at the high level, and 18 percent at the moderate level (see figure 8). Variations in the level of involvement in street sales in terms of

**Figure 8: Level\* of Youth Gang Involvement in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997**



\* “High”=67–100%; “Moderate”=34–66 percent; “Low”=0–33 percent.

area types, regions, and population ranges generally paralleled the average percentages presented above (see appendixes I, J, and K). These variations are statistically significant for region and population, but not for area type.

## Drug distribution

Respondents were asked to identify the percentage of youth gangs in their jurisdictions that were involved in drug distribution for the purpose of generating profits for the gang. Drug distribution was defined as “the purchase or transfer of large quantities of drugs which are divided into smaller quantities to be sold on the street.” After the responses were weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction, 33 percent of the youth gangs in the United States were estimated to be involved in drug distribution for this purpose (see table 21). The percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution was highest in large cities (39 percent), followed by rural counties (31 percent), small cities (27 percent), and suburban counties (26 percent).

Like the data on street sales of drugs, the data on drug distribution were analyzed using both weighted and unweighted averages (see table 21). Unweighted averages were lower than weighted averages for all area types except suburban counties. As with the data on street sales of drugs, these variations most likely occurred because jurisdictions with a high number of youth gangs generally reported a higher average percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution than did jurisdictions with a relatively low number of youth gangs.

**Table 21: Number and Percentage of Youth Gangs Involved in Drug Distribution in 1997, by Area Type**

Area Type	Youth Gangs Involved in Drug Distribution	
	Weighted Average	Unweighted Average
Large city	424 (39%)	435 (31%)
Small city	51 (27%)	53 (25%)
Suburban county	153 (26%)	158 (29%)
Rural county	71 (31%)	75 (29%)
Total/Average	699 (33%)	721 (30%)

**Notes:** The relationship between drug distribution and area type was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Weighted averages account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction; unweighted averages do not. Generally, as an area type becomes more urbanized, the percentage of gangs involved in drug distribution increases. However, rural counties report a higher percentage of gangs involved in drug distribution than do small cities.

Figure 9 illustrates the average percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution, by region. Averages ranged from 35 percent in the Midwest to 21 percent in the West. The variation between regions was found to be statistically significant.

The average percentages of youth gangs involved in drug distribution, by population size, are displayed in figure 10. The averages for the two highest population categories (250,000 or more and 100,000–249,000) were significantly

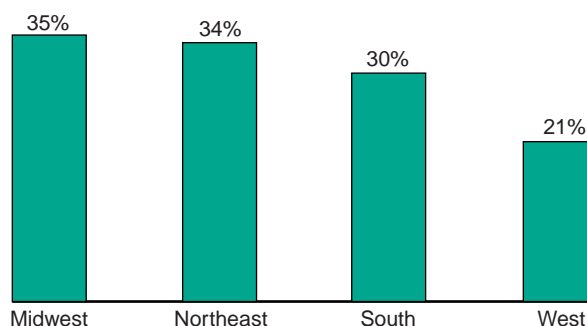
The percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution was highest in large cities, followed by rural counties, small cities, and suburban counties.

**M**ost respondents indicated that the youth gangs in their jurisdictions were involved in a low level of drug distribution.

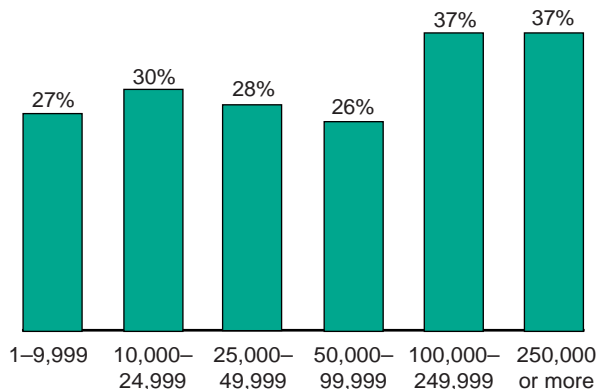
higher than the overall average. The averages for populations of less than 100,000 did not differ significantly from the overall average.

Responses to the drug distribution question were divided into three levels (low, moderate, and high) in order to determine the extent of youth gang involvement in drug distribution (figure 11). Most respondents (68 percent) indicated that the youth gangs in their jurisdictions were involved in a low level of drug distribution; 21 percent of respondents reported involvement at the high level, and 11 percent reported involvement at the moderate level.

**Figure 9: Average Percentage of Youth Gangs Involved in Drug Distribution in 1997, by Region (Unweighted)**



**Figure 10: Average Percentage of Youth Gangs Involved in Drug Distribution in 1997, by Population Size (Unweighted)**

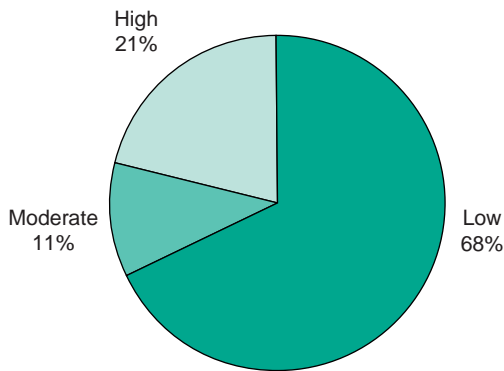


### Drug types

Previous national youth gang surveys have not examined the types of drugs distributed and sold by youth gang members. As noted earlier, youth gang members have often been associated with crack cocaine trafficking, but the extent of

their involvement has not been determined. Evidence suggests that in addition to crack cocaine trafficking, youth gang members have been involved in distributing and selling many other types of drugs (Spergel, 1995).

**Figure 11: Level\* of Youth Gang Involvement in Drug Distribution in 1997**



\* "High"=67–100%; "Moderate"=34–66 percent; "Low"=0–33 percent.

The percentage of street sales of crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine conducted by youth gang members varied substantially by region.

To determine the extent to which youth gang members were involved in the selling of certain types of drugs in 1997, respondents were asked to identify the percentage of street sales conducted by youth gang members in their jurisdictions for the following drugs: powder cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, and "other." As table 22 reveals, the average percentages of street sales involving youth gang members were highest for crack cocaine (33 percent) and marijuana (32 percent). Additionally, youth gang members were thought to be involved in an estimated 16 percent of powder cocaine sales, 12 percent of methamphetamine sales, and 9 percent of heroin sales.

When area type was considered, the percentage of street sales conducted by youth gang members varied somewhat for crack cocaine and heroin. The percentage of crack cocaine and heroin sales conducted by youth gang members was higher in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. These differences were found to be statistically significant. Variation between area types for sales of powder cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine was low and not statistically significant.

The percentage of street sales of crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine conducted by youth gang members varied substantially by region (see table 23). Crack cocaine sales involving youth gang members were most prevalent in the Midwest (38 percent), heroin sales were most prevalent in the Northeast (15 percent), and methamphetamine sales were most prevalent in the West (21 percent). The variation between regions for crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine was found to be statistically significant. There was very little variation between regions for powder cocaine and marijuana.

**Y**outh gang involvement in sales of all types of drugs (except marijuana) was substantially larger in jurisdictions with populations of 100,000 or more.

**Table 22: Number and Percentage of Street Sales of Drugs Conducted by Youth Gang Members in 1997, by Drug Type and Area Type\***

Drug Type	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
Powder cocaine	601 (16%)	361 (16%)	42 (12%)	124 (15%)	74 (15%)
Crack cocaine	692 (33%)	411 (35%)	47 (28%)	152 (33%)	82 (26%)
Marijuana	743 (32%)	428 (32%)	62 (35%)	162 (32%)	91 (29%)
Heroin	542 (9%)	326 (10%)	40 (2%)	110 (11%)	66 (4%)
Methamphetamine	586 (12%)	331 (10%)	50 (11%)	127 (15%)	78 (11%)

**Notes:** Respondents were asked to check all that apply; therefore, percentages do not equal 100 percent. Generally, as areas become more urbanized, the percentage of street sales of crack cocaine and heroin conducted by youth gang members increases. Larger cities and suburban counties have higher percentages of street sales of crack cocaine and heroin conducted by youth gang members than do small cities and rural areas.

\* The variation between area types for sales of crack cocaine and heroin is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 23: Number and Percentage of Street Sales of Drugs Conducted by Youth Gang Members in 1997, by Drug Type and Region**

Drug Type	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Powder cocaine	601 (16%)	189 (19%)	64 (18%)	218 (14%)	130 (14%)
Crack cocaine*	692 (33%)	215 (38%)	68 (27%)	261 (34%)	148 (26%)
Marijuana	743 (32%)	230 (35%)	76 (31%)	272 (32%)	165 (29%)
Heroin*	542 (9%)	153 (8%)	59 (15%)	201 (5%)	129 (12%)
Methamphetamine*	586 (12%)	160 (10%)	52 (4%)	210 (7%)	164 (21%)

**Notes:** The percentage of youth gang members involved in street sales of crack cocaine was above average in the Midwest and below average in the Northeast and West. In contrast, the percentage of youth gang members involved in street sales of heroin was above average in the Northeast and West, and below average in the South.

\* The variation between regions for sales of crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The level of youth gang involvement in drug sales varied with population size for all drug types except marijuana, although the relationship was not always linear (see table 24). The average percentage of street sales conducted by youth gang members for powder and crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine increased from the lowest population range (1–9,999) to the highest population range (250,000 or more), but not all population ranges between the highest and the lowest were consistent with that trend. The most substantial difference between average percentages was apparent for heroin: percentages ranged from 2 percent in the 1–9,999 population range to 24 percent in the 250,000 or more population range. Youth gang involvement in sales of all types of drugs (except marijuana) was substantially larger in jurisdictions with populations of 100,000 or more than in smaller jurisdictions.

**Table 24: Number and Percentage of Street Sales of Drugs Conducted by Youth Gang Members in 1997, by Drug Type and Population Size\***

Drug Type	All Population Sizes	Population Size					
		1–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–249,999	250,000 or more
Powder cocaine	601 (16%)	62 (13%)	70 (14%)	197 (17%)	151 (12%)	87 (18%)	34 (25%)
Crack cocaine	692 (33%)	75 (28%)	75 (29%)	225 (33%)	173 (29%)	100 (39%)	44 (48%)
Marijuana	743 (32%)	95 (34%)	82 (31%)	240 (33%)	183 (29%)	102 (34%)	41 (35%)
Heroin	542 (9%)	58 (2%)	61 (7%)	176 (7%)	137 (8%)	78 (12%)	32 (24%)
Methamphetamine	586 (12%)	74 (14%)	69 (14%)	185 (10%)	146 (8%)	82 (14%)	30 (19%)

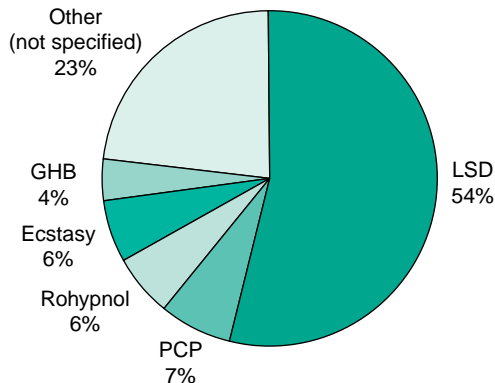
\* The variation between population ranges is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for sales of all drugs except marijuana.

Respondents were also asked to identify any other drugs sold by youth gang members that were not included in the list provided on the survey. Only 106 agencies identified a drug or drugs that were sold by youth gang members in their jurisdictions and were not on the survey. Figure 12 provides a delineation of the other drugs most frequently reported by survey respondents. D-Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) or “acid” accounted for the majority (54 percent) of other drugs identified by respondents, followed by phencyclidine (PCP, 7 percent), Rohypnol (6 percent), Ecstasy (6 percent), and gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB, 4 percent).

## Youth gang migration

The proliferation of gangs in the United States has heightened the interest in gang migration in recent years. Migration has often been mentioned as a factor contributing to the spread of gangs in State legislative task force reports, government-sponsored conference presentations, and law enforcement reports at the local,

**Figure 12: “Other” Types of Drugs Sold by Youth Gang Members in 1997**



**Note:** GHB, gamma-hydroxybutyrate; PCP, phencyclidine; LSD, D-lysergic acid diethylamide.

**E**ighty-nine percent of respondents with active youth gangs reported that they experienced some gang migration in 1997.

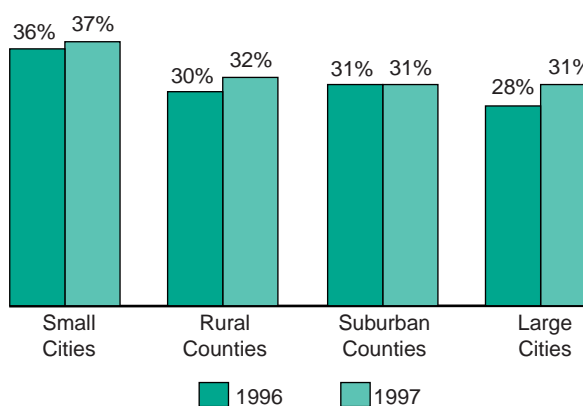
State, and Federal levels (Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996). The conclusions of many of these reports, however, have been at odds with those of empirically based studies (Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Maxson, 1998). A recent study of more than 1,100 cities concluded that migrant gang members have had less of an effect on the proliferation of gangs throughout the country than previously believed (Maxson, Woods, and Klein, 1996; Maxson, 1998).

In order to measure the extent of gang migration on gang proliferation, the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey included several questions on the subject. Gang migration was described in the survey as “temporary visits for social or criminal purposes as well as longer stays, including permanent moves for any reason.” Results of the survey indicated that 84 percent of respondents experienced some gang migration into their jurisdictions in 1996. In addition, it was estimated that 21 percent of the youth gang members in these jurisdictions were migrants.<sup>4</sup>

The 1997 survey also included questions regarding gang migration so that the data could be compared with the 1996 survey results. Respondents were asked to identify the proportion of youth gang members in their jurisdictions who were migrants. Eighty-nine percent of respondents with active youth gangs reported that they experienced some gang migration in 1997, compared with 84 percent in 1996. After weighting the percentages to account for the number of youth gang members in each jurisdiction, it was estimated that 23 percent of all youth gang members in the United States had migrated from some other jurisdiction to the one in which they currently reside. This figure reveals that the number of gang migrants increased slightly (2 percent) between 1996 and 1997.

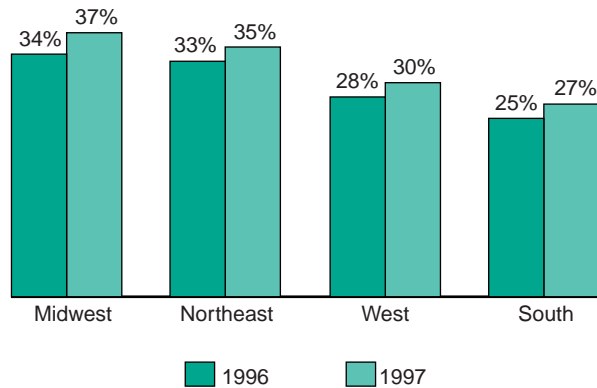
To evaluate trends across area types, regions, and population categories, unweighted percentages of gang migrants were also evaluated. Figure 13 illustrates the unweighted average percentage of gang migrants, by area type. The average percentage of gang migrants in 1997 was highest (37 percent) in small cities, which is consistent with data reported in the 1996 survey. The average percentage for the remainder of the area types varied somewhat but revealed no clear trends. These variations were not found to be statistically significant.

**Figure 13: Percentage of Migrant Youth Gang Members in 1996 and 1997, by Area Type (Unweighted)**



Regionally, there was a similar trend in 1996 and 1997 regarding the average percentage of gang migrants. The prevalence of gang migrants was highest in the Midwest and lowest in the South in both years (see figure 14). The variation between regions in 1996 and 1997 is statistically significant.

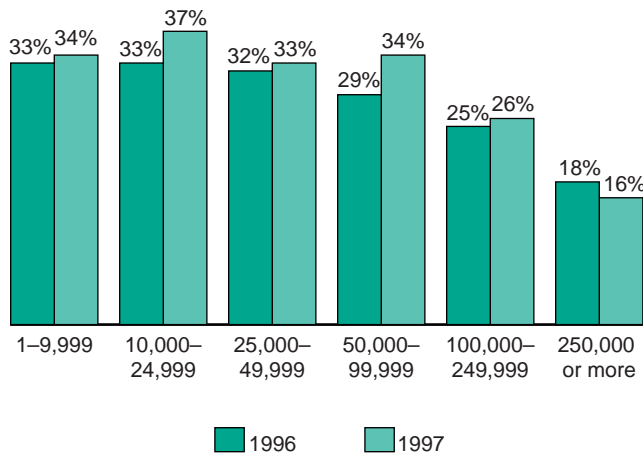
**Figure 14: Percentage of Migrant Youth Gang Members in 1996 and 1997, by Region (Unweighted)**



The prevalence of gang migrants was highest in the Midwest and lowest in the South.

Population appeared to have some impact on the average percentage of gang migrants. In 1996 and 1997, the average percentages were fairly static for population ranges below 100,000 but began to decrease steadily in the two population ranges above 100,000 (see figure 15). There was also a slight increase in the average percentage of gang migrants from 1996 to 1997 for all population ranges, except the 250,000 or more range. The variation between population ranges is statistically significant in both 1996 and 1997.

**Figure 15: Percentage of Migrant Youth Gang Members in 1996 and 1997, by Population Size (Unweighted)**



The vast majority of respondents cited social factors as the reason why youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions.

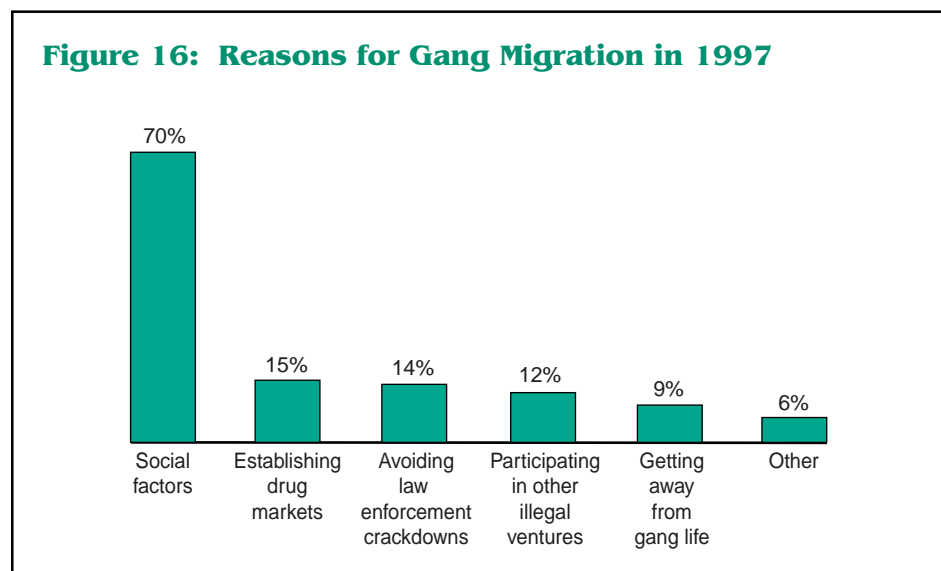
Respondents were also given a list of possible reasons for gang migration and asked to identify those that explained most of the migration to their jurisdictions. The following reasons were included in the list:

- Social factors (e.g., moving with families, finding legitimate job opportunities, or joining relatives or friends).
- Establishing drug market opportunities.
- Participating in other illegal ventures.
- Avoiding law enforcement crackdowns.
- Getting away from the gang life.
- Other reasons.

Although respondents were asked to select the single reason that explained “most” of their gang migration, a substantial percentage checked more than one reason. Due to the frequency of this occurrence, respondents who checked multiple reasons for gang migration were not excluded from the analysis.

The vast majority (70 percent) of respondents cited social factors as the reason why youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions (see figure 16). Establishing drug markets was the second most cited reason (15 percent), followed by avoiding law enforcement crackdowns (14 percent), participating in illegal ventures other than those related to drugs (12 percent), getting away from the gang life (9 percent), and other reasons (6 percent). Only 54 respondents indicated a reason for the gang migration in their jurisdictions other than those provided in the survey. Reasons that fell into this category varied widely, but most of them qualified as social factors.

**Figure 16: Reasons for Gang Migration in 1997**



Reasons for gang migration varied somewhat by area type (see appendix L) and population (see appendix M), but no clear trends were apparent. Furthermore, the variations between area types and population categories were not found to be statistically significant for any of the reasons for gang migration provided on the survey.

Regionally, there was slightly more variation for two of the reasons for migration: establishing drug markets and avoiding law enforcement crackdowns (see table 25). The percentage of respondents who indicated that youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions to establish drug markets ranged from 22 percent in the Midwest to 11 percent in the West. The Northeast had the highest percentage (22 percent) of respondents who reported that youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions to avoid law enforcement crackdowns, and the South had the lowest percentage (11 percent). These variations were found to be statistically significant.

**Table 25: Reasons for Gang Migration in 1997, by Region\***

Reason for Gang Migration	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
<b>Social factors</b>	<b>853 (70%)</b>	<b>246 (65%)</b>	<b>76 (66%)</b>	<b>295 (71%)</b>	<b>236 (74%)</b>
Establishing drug markets	190 (15%)	84 (22%)	18 (16%)	52 (13%)	36 (11%)
Participating in other illegal ventures	146 (12%)	57 (15%)	14 (12%)	39 (9%)	36 (11%)
Avoiding law enforcement crackdowns	166 (14%)	49 (13%)	25 (22%)	46 (11%)	46 (14%)
Getting away from gang life	116 (9%)	34 (9%)	6 (5%)	36 (9%)	40 (12%)
Other reasons	74 (6%)	19 (5%)	8 (7%)	23 (6%)	24 (7%)

\* The variation between regions is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for establishing drug markets and avoiding law enforcement crackdowns.

## Law enforcement responses

In response to the recent proliferation of gangs throughout the country, law enforcement agencies have modified their structures and resources to address the gang problem. Many agencies have created specialized units to focus specifically on gangs and the crimes they commit. Results of the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey indicated that 64 percent of police departments and 50 percent of sheriff's departments had some type of specialized unit to address the gang problem.

A question concerning the creation of specialized response units was also included in the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey. Respondents who reported active youth gangs in their jurisdictions were asked if their agencies had a youth/street gang unit or officer(s), a gang prevention unit or officer(s), or one unit that combined both types of units.<sup>5</sup> The majority<sup>6</sup> (66 percent) of respondents indicated that they had some type of specialized unit to address the gang problem (see table 26). Respondents were asked to check all choices that applied; therefore, percentages may not total 100 percent. Thirty-five percent reported having a youth/street gang unit or officer(s), 18 percent said they had a gang prevention unit or officer(s), and 29 percent indicated that they had a unit that combined both of the above types of units. Large cities were the most likely (77 percent) to have a specialized response unit, and rural counties were the least likely (34 percent). The variation between area types is statistically significant for all types of response units.

Many agencies have created specialized units to focus specifically on gangs and the crimes they commit.

Compared with the other regions, agencies in the West were more likely to have each type of response unit.

**Table 26: Types of Specialized Response Units for Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Area Type\***

Type of Specialized Response Unit	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
Youth/street gang unit or officer(s)	490 (35%)	344 (44%)	29 (23%)	99 (30%)	18 (11%)
Gang prevention unit or officer(s)	247 (18%)	158 (20%)	16 (13%)	56 (17%)	17 (10%)
One unit that combines both of the above types	403 (29%)	257 (33%)	33 (27%)	89 (27%)	24 (15%)
None	479 (34%)	181 (23%)	57 (46%)	134 (41%)	107 (66%)

**Note:** Respondents were asked to check all that apply; therefore, percentages do not equal 100 percent.

\* The variation between types is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for all types of response units.

Table 27 reveals the types of specialized response units, by region. The vast majority (83 percent)<sup>7</sup> of respondents in the West reported having some type of response unit. Furthermore, compared with the other regions, agencies in the West were more likely to have each type of response unit listed on the survey. The variation between regions is statistically significant for all types of response units except gang prevention units or officers.

**Table 27: Types of Specialized Response Units for Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Region\***

Type of Specialized Response Unit	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Youth/street gang unit or officer(s)	490 (35%)	133 (32%)	56 (40%)	152 (30%)	149 (44%)
Gang prevention unit or officer(s)	247 (18%)	72 (17%)	22 (16%)	78 (16%)	75 (22%)
One unit that combines both of the above types	403 (29%)	109 (26%)	36 (26%)	127 (26%)	131 (38%)
None	479 (34%)	163 (39%)	54 (38%)	203 (41%)	59 (17%)

**Notes:** Respondents were asked to check all that apply; therefore, percentages do not equal 100 percent.

Youth street gang units or officers are more common in the West and Northeast and less common in the Midwest and South. Units that combine both youth street gang units or officers and gang prevention units or officers are most common in the West.

\* The variation between regions is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for all types of response units except gang prevention units or officers.

The existence of a specialized response unit also varied directly with population size (see table 28). With few exceptions, the percentage of respondents who reported the existence of a response unit within their agency increased as population

size increased. In the highest population range (250,000 or more), 90 percent of respondents said they had some type of specialized response unit, compared with only 38 percent in the lowest population range (1–9,999).<sup>8</sup> The variation between population categories was found to be statistically significant for each type of specialized response unit.

**Table 28: Types of Specialized Response Units for Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Population Size\***

Type of Specialized Response Unit	Population Size						
	All Population Sizes	1–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–249,999	250,000 or more
Youth/street gang unit or officer(s)	490 (35%)	32 (19%)	22 (14%)	152 (35%)	123 (35%)	104 (56%)	57 (61%)
Gang prevention unit or officer(s)	247 (18%)	15 (9%)	18 (11%)	84 (19%)	71 (20%)	27 (15%)	32 (34%)
One unit that combines both of the above types	403 (29%)	27 (16%)	39 (24%)	128 (29%)	117 (34%)	58 (31%)	34 (37%)
None	479 (34%)	103 (62%)	89 (55%)	156 (36%)	93 (27%)	29 (16%)	9 (10%)

**Notes:** Respondents were asked to check all that apply; therefore, percentages do not equal 100 percent. Youth street gang units or officers and/or gang prevention units or officers are generally more common in larger population categories.

\* The variation between population categories is statistically significant at the 0.05 level for each type of response unit.

## Perception of the youth gang problem

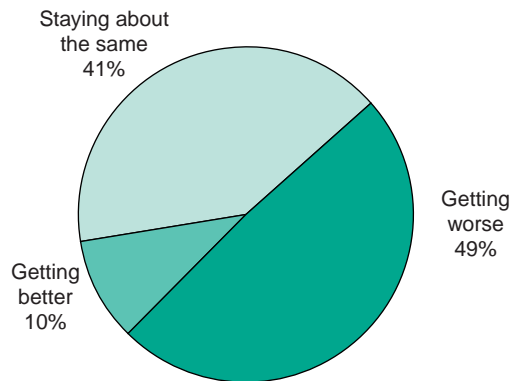
Perceptions of gangs, and crime in general, are affected by a number of different factors including, but not limited to, media accounts, crime trends and rates, and, of course, empirical studies. Law enforcement perceptions, in particular, are influenced by the number of criminal incidents and the heinousness of crimes committed by gang members. Therefore, law enforcement perceptions are likely to reflect the level of criminal activity involving gang members in their jurisdictions.

The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey asked respondents about the severity of the youth gang problem in their jurisdictions. Most respondents (49 percent) believed that the problem was getting worse, 41 percent believed that the problem was staying about the same, and only 10 percent believed it was getting better (see figure 17).

In contrast, 45 percent of respondents to the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey believed that the youth gang problem was staying about the same, and 35 percent felt it was worsening, despite the slight decrease in gang activity reported from 1996 to 1997 (see figure 18). Nevertheless, 20 percent of respondents in the 1997 survey indicated that the problem was getting better, which is twice the percentage of respondents who felt the problem was getting better in 1995.<sup>9</sup>

The percentage of respondents who felt the youth gang problem was getting worse was highest in suburban and rural counties and lowest in small cities.

**Figure 17: Perceptions of the Youth Gang Problem in 1995**



**Figure 18: Perceptions of the Youth Gang Problem in 1997**

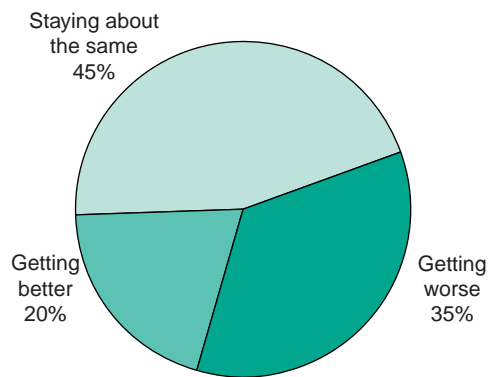


Table 29 illustrates the perceptions of the youth gang problem in 1997, by area type. The percentage of respondents who felt the youth gang problem was getting worse was highest in suburban and rural counties (43 percent) and lowest in small cities (25 percent). The variation between area types was found to be statistically significant.

Perceptions of the youth gang problem also varied between regions (see table 30). Most respondents (42 percent) in the South indicated that the problem was getting worse in their jurisdictions, and only 17 percent felt it was getting better. The Northeast had the highest percentage (24 percent) of respondents who felt the problem was getting better. These variations were found to be statistically significant.

Population size did not have a significant effect on perceptions of the youth gang problem (see table 31). Perceptions generally varied between population categories in a nonlinear fashion, and no clear trends were apparent. The relationship between perceptions of the youth gang problem and population size is not statistically significant.

**Table 29: Perceptions of the Youth Gang Problem in 1997, by Area Type\***

Perception of the Youth Gang Problem	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
Getting worse	482 (35%)	240 (31%)	31 (25%)	141 (43%)	70 (43%)
Getting better	279 (20%)	188 (24%)	25 (20%)	46 (14%)	20 (12%)
Staying about the same	627 (45%)	345 (45%)	69 (55%)	141 (43%)	72 (44%)

**Note:** The percentage of rural and suburban counties that reported their gang problem was “getting worse” was significantly greater than the overall average of jurisdictions that reported their gang problem was “getting worse.”

\* The variation between area types is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 30: Perceptions of the Youth Gang Problem in 1997, by Region\***

Perception of the Youth Gang Problem	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Getting worse	482 (35%)	117 (28%)	48 (35%)	207 (42%)	110 (32%)
Getting better	279 (20%)	87 (21%)	33 (24%)	82 (17%)	77 (22%)
Staying about the same	627 (45%)	210 (51%)	58 (42%)	203 (41%)	156 (45%)

**Note:** Jurisdictions in the South were more likely than the average to report their gang problem was “getting worse,” and jurisdictions in the Midwest were less likely than average to report their gang problem was “getting worse.”

\* The variation between regions is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 31: Perceptions of the Youth Gang Problem in 1997, by Population Size**

Perception of the Youth Gang Problem	Population Size						
	All Population Sizes	1–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–249,999	250,000 or more
Getting worse	482 (35%)	64 (38%)	52 (32%)	151 (35%)	116 (33%)	65 (36%)	34 (38%)
Getting better	279 (20%)	22 (13%)	34 (21%)	85 (19%)	78 (22%)	38 (21%)	22 (24%)
Staying about the same	627 (45%)	81 (49%)	79 (48%)	200 (46%)	153 (44%)	80 (44%)	34 (38%)

**Notes:** The relationship between the perception of the youth gang problem and population was not statistically significant. The lack of variation or distinct pattern in the overall percentage for population categories makes it difficult to determine whether the gang problem is getting worse, getting better, or staying the same.

**A**n estimated 4,712 cities and counties, more than half of all respondents, reported active youth gangs in 1997.

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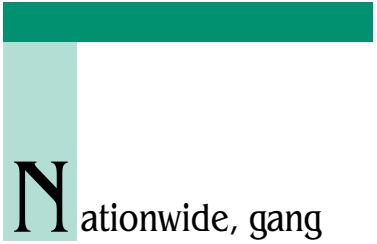
## Summary and Conclusions

The 1997 National Youth Gang Survey was the third annual survey administered by the National Youth Gang Center. Almost 5,000 law enforcement agencies throughout the United States were surveyed, representing the largest national gang survey to date. The majority of survey recipients were part of a statistically representative sample that allowed the data to be extrapolated for the Nation as a whole. The 1997 survey used the same sample as the 1996 survey, allowing both comparative and trend analysis. The data collected from these surveys provide valuable information about the extent of the youth gang problem in the United States.

The findings of the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey are summarized below:

- An estimated 4,712 cities and counties, more than half (51 percent) of all respondents, reported active youth gangs in 1997. This represents a small decrease from 1996, when an estimated 4,824 cities and counties, 53 percent of all respondents, reported active youth gangs. Moreover, small decreases between 1996 and 1997 in the percentage of respondents reporting gangs were found for each area type. Although all of these decreases were small, large cities showed the largest decrease. Large cities continued to have the highest percentage (72 percent) of jurisdictions with active youth gangs, followed by suburban counties (56 percent), small cities (33 percent), and rural counties (24 percent).
- The prevalence of gangs varied considerably by region. The percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs ranged from 74 percent in the West to 31 percent in the Northeast.
- Population also greatly affected the prevalence of active youth gangs in 1997. For all area types, the percentage of jurisdictions with active youth gangs increased as population increased.
- The estimated number of youth gangs and gang members also decreased between 1996 and 1997. In 1997, an estimated 30,500 youth gangs and 815,896 gang members were active in the United States, compared with an estimated 31,818 youth gangs and 846,428 gang members in 1996. Despite these decreases in the overall number of youth gangs and gang members, the estimated number of youth gangs in small cities increased substantially (20.5 percent) between 1996 and 1997. In addition, the estimated number of youth gang members increased by 38.5 percent in rural counties and 5.7 percent in small cities.
- The average number of youth gangs and gang members per jurisdiction increased as population increased in both 1996 and 1997. For cities and counties with populations of 1–9,999, there was considerable growth (percentage-wise) between the relatively low numbers of gangs and gang members reported in 1996 and the low numbers, compared with other population ranges, reported in 1997 (please refer back to table 12 in the text). However, the growth of the gang problem in these less populated areas is cause for concern and deserves further attention. Most population ranges, however, showed a decrease.

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- An estimated 3,341 member-based youth gang homicides were committed in the United States in 1997, of which 1,880 were motive-based. Large cities accounted for almost two-thirds of the total estimated number of member-based homicides and nearly three-quarters of the motive-based homicides.
  - The crimes respondents most frequently reported as having a high degree of gang member involvement were aggravated assault and larceny/theft (28 percent), followed by motor vehicle theft (27 percent), burglary (26 percent), and robbery (13 percent). However, gang member involvement in all of the above crimes decreased between 1996 and 1997 .
  - Approximately 42 percent of the youth gangs in the United States were involved in the street sale of drugs for the purpose of generating profits for the gang. The average percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs was higher in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. Regionally, the average percentages ranged from 50 percent in the Northeast to 30 percent in the West. The percentage of youth gangs involved in the street sale of drugs also varied directly with population.
  - Approximately 33 percent of youth gangs in the country were estimated to be involved in drug distribution for the purpose of generating profits for the gang. The average percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution was highest in large cities (31 percent), followed by suburban counties (29 percent), rural counties (29 percent), and small cities (25 percent). Additionally, youth gangs involved in drug distribution were most prevalent in the Midwest (35 percent) and least prevalent in the West (21 percent). Population size had little effect on the percentage of youth gangs involved in drug distribution.
  - Respondents estimated that, nationwide, youth gang members were responsible for 33 percent of crack cocaine sales, 32 percent of marijuana sales, 16 percent of powder cocaine sales, 12 percent of methamphetamine sales, and 9 percent of heroin sales. The average percentages of crack cocaine and heroin sales varied significantly between area types and were highest in large cities and suburban counties. Additionally, sales of crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine by youth gang members varied significantly by region. Crack cocaine sales were most prevalent in the Midwest (38 percent), heroin sales were most prevalent in the Northeast (15 percent), and methamphetamine sales were most prevalent in the West (21 percent).
  - Nationwide, gang migration increased between 1996 and 1997. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they experienced some gang migration into their jurisdictions during 1997, up from 84 percent in 1996. In addition, approximately 23 percent of youth gang members in the country were estimated to be migrants in 1997, up from 21 percent in 1996. In both years, the average percentage of youth gang migrants was highest in small cities and jurisdictions in the Midwest.
  - The vast majority (70 percent) of respondents cited social factors as reasons why youth gang members migrated to their jurisdictions. Establishing drug markets was the second most cited reason (15 percent), followed by avoiding law enforcement crackdowns (14 percent), participating in illegal ventures other than those related to drugs (12 percent), getting away from the gang life (9 percent), and other reasons (6 percent).



**N**ationwide, gang migration increased between 1996 and 1997.

**D**espite the slight decrease in gang activity between 1996 and 1997, most respondents felt that the gang problem in their jurisdictions in 1997 was staying about the same.

- Approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated that their agencies had some type of specialized response unit to address their gang problem. Thirty-five percent reported having a youth/street gang unit or officer(s), 18 percent said they had a gang prevention unit or officer(s), and 29 percent indicated they had a unit that combined both types of response. Large cities and jurisdictions in the West were the most likely to have a specialized response unit. In addition, the prevalence of specialized response units increased as population increased.
- Despite the slight decrease in gang activity between 1996 and 1997, most respondents (45 percent) felt that the gang problem in their jurisdictions in 1997 was staying about the same, 35 percent indicated it was getting worse, and 20 percent felt it was getting better. In contrast, 49 percent of respondents to the 1995 survey believed that their problem was getting worse, 41 percent said it was staying about the same, and 10 percent reported it was getting better. Most suburban and rural county respondents (43 percent) to the 1997 survey felt their youth gang problem was getting worse. Regionally, respondents in the South believed their gang problem worsened in 1997.

The National Youth Gang Center will continue to analyze these data, and subsequent surveys will gather additional information in areas that require further examination. Other researchers also will have access to the NYGC database for analysis.

## Endnotes

1. The terms “large cities” and “small cities” were assigned to the two groups of cities used in the sample for ease of reference. However, most cities in the “large cities” group have populations under 100,000 and may not be considered large cities by most observers.
2. A list of cities and their populations was obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. A list of agencies whose jurisdictions are considered suburban counties and rural counties was obtained from *Crime in the United States, 1994: Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1995, pp. 167–189.
3. For its own purposes, the Bureau of the Census sometimes divides cities and towns into segments. However, for the purposes of this survey, the entire population of each city and town was used.
4. This figure was weighted for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.
5. Respondents were asked to check all that apply; therefore, the average percentages for this question do not equal 100 percent.
6. Percentages in parentheses were calculated by subtracting the percentage of agencies reporting “none” (see table 26) from 100 percent.
7. These percentages were calculated by subtracting the percentage of agencies reporting “none” (see table 27) from 100 percent.

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8. These percentages were calculated by subtracting the percentage of agencies reporting “none” (see table 28) from 100 percent.
  9. The reader is reminded that the 1995 and 1997 samples were composed of different respondents; therefore, caution should be used when drawing conclusions about comparisons of data from the 2 years.

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# Appendix A: 1997 National Youth Gang Survey Form for the Representative Sample

Your agency has been selected to furnish information for the **1997** National Youth Gang Survey. Your answers statistically represent those of hundreds of other law enforcement agencies that will not be surveyed—so your response is very important. **Please return the survey by August 31, 1998.**

Please return the completed survey form by fax or by mail to:

**National Youth Gang Center**  
**Institute for Intergovernmental Research**  
**Post Office Box 12729**  
**Tallahassee, FL 32317-2729**  
**Telephone Number: 800-446-0912**  
**Fax Number: 888-323-7305** (*This is a toll-free fax number.*)

## Survey Instructions

1. Please report data for **Calendar Year 1997** (January 1 through December 31).
2. For the purpose of this survey, a “youth gang” is defined as: *a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a “gang.”* **Do not** include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs. Please base your responses on your records, your personal knowledge, and/or consultations with other agency personnel who are familiar with youth gangs.
3. Police departments should report only for their city/town.
4. Sheriff’s departments should report **only for their unincorporated service area and any contracted jurisdictions.**

## Agency Information

1. Name of Jurisdiction Served (City, Town, or County): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Law Enforcement Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Agency Mailing Address:  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of Person Completing Survey:  
First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Title/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Telephone Number, With Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_
7. Fax Number, With Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_

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8a. Is your agency part of a Multijurisdictional Gang Task Force?

Yes  No

8b. If so, do the responses to this survey include the other jurisdictions in the Task Force?

Yes  No

8c. If your responses **do** include other jurisdictions, please list the names of other law enforcement agencies in the Multijurisdictional Gang Task Force:

### Survey Questions

1. During **1997**, were any youth gangs active in the city, town, or county served by your agency?

Yes  No  Do not know

**IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO QUESTION 1, PLEASE CONTINUE.**

**IF YOU ANSWERED “NO” or “DO NOT KNOW” TO QUESTION 1, THAT COMPLETES THE SURVEY. PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BY MAIL OR FAX.**

2. How many youth *gangs* (as defined in the survey instructions) were active in your jurisdiction during **1997**?

**Number of active youth gangs:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the total number of active youth **gang members** in your jurisdiction during **1997**?

**Number of active youth gang members:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Questions 4–6 ask about the sale and distribution of drugs in your jurisdiction. For the purpose of this survey, “street sales” refers to the sale of drugs in small quantities that have already been prepared for consumption. Drug “distribution” refers to the purchase or transfer of large quantities of drugs which are divided into small quantities to be sold on the street.*

4. In your jurisdiction in **1997**, what percent of the **street sales** of each of the following drugs were made by youth gang members?

**Powder Cocaine:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Crack Cocaine:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marijuana:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Heroin:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Methamphetamine:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_% **Do not know** \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What percent of youth gangs in your jurisdiction are involved in the **street sales** of drugs for the purpose of generating profits for the gang?

\_\_\_\_% **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_

6. What percent of youth gangs in your jurisdiction are involved in the **distribution** of drugs for the purpose of generating profits for the gang?

\_\_\_\_% **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_

*In question 7, you are asked to comment on “migration” by youth gang members. “Migration” includes temporary visits for social or criminal purposes as well as longer stays, including permanent moves for any reason. By definition, gang migrants have already joined gangs in their former jurisdiction prior to their arrival in a new jurisdiction.*

7a. What proportion of the gang members in your jurisdiction are estimated to be migrants?

\_\_\_\_% **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_

7b. Which one of the following reasons explains **most** of the migration you have had into your jurisdiction? (*Check only one of the following.*)

- Social (e.g., move with families, to find legitimate job opportunities, to join relatives, or to join friends)**
- To establish drug market opportunities**
- To participate in other illegal ventures**
- To avoid law enforcement crackdowns**
- To get away from the gang life**
- Other reasons (Please identify)** \_\_\_\_\_

*Questions 8–10 ask about crimes committed by youth gang members. For the purpose of this survey, gang crime is defined as:*

*Member-Based—A crime in which a gang member(s) is either the perpetrator or the victim, regardless of the motive; or*

*Motive-Based—A crime committed by a gang member(s) in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang.*

8. Which of these gang crime definitions does your agency most frequently use?

- Member-Based**
- Motive-Based**
- Other (Please define):** \_\_\_\_\_

9. How many **member-based** homicides involving youth gang members do you estimate occurred in your jurisdiction in **1997**?

**Number of member-based homicides:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

10. Out of the number of member-based homicides you indicated in **Question 9**, how many motive-based homicides involving youth gang members do you estimate occurred in your jurisdiction in **1997**?

**Number of motive-based homicides:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please estimate the degree to which youth gang members engaged in the following offenses in your jurisdiction in **1997**. (*Please circle your response.*)

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Degree</b>			
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	High	Medium	Low	Not involved
<b>Robbery</b>	High	Medium	Low	Not involved
<b>Burglary</b>	High	Medium	Low	Not involved
<b>Motor Vehicle Theft</b>	High	Medium	Low	Not involved
<b>Larceny/Theft</b>	High	Medium	Low	Not involved

12. Does your agency have the following? (Check all that apply)

- Youth/Street Gang Unit or officer(s)**
- Gang Prevention Unit or officer(s)**
- One unit that combines both of the above types**
- None**
- Do not know**

13. In your opinion, are your youth gang problems:

- Getting worse?**
- Getting better?**
- Staying about the same?**
- Do not know**

14. Which of the following best describes how your answers to this survey were derived?

- Official records** (i.e., automated databases, crime/arrest reports)
- Estimates** (i.e., past experience, personal knowledge)
- Both**

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# Appendix B: Abbreviated 1997 National Youth Gang Survey Form for the Comparative Sample

## Survey Instructions

In the 1995 and 1996 National Youth Gang Surveys, your agency furnished information that contributed to a better understanding of the scope of youth gang problems in the United States. We ask you to update the data for **1997** by answering the questions on page 2.

1. Please report data for **Calendar Year 1997** (January 1 through December 31).
2. For the purpose of this survey, a “youth gang” is defined as: *a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a “gang.”* **Do not** include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs. Please base your responses on your records, your personal knowledge, and/or consultations with other agency personnel who are familiar with youth gangs.
3. Police departments should report only for their city/town.
4. Sheriff’s departments should report *only for their unincorporated service area and any contracted jurisdictions.*

Please return the completed survey form by fax or by mail to:

National Youth Gang Center  
Institute for Intergovernmental Research  
Post Office Box 12729  
Tallahassee, FL 32317-2729  
Telephone Number: 800-446-0912  
**Fax Number: 888-323-7305** (*This is a toll-free fax number.*)

## Agency Information

1. Name of Jurisdiction Served (City, Town, or County): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Law Enforcement Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Agency Mailing Address:  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of Person Completing Survey:  
First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Title/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Telephone Number, With Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
7. Fax Number, With Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Survey Questions

1. During **1997**, were any youth gangs active in the city, town, or county served by your agency?

Yes  No

2. In your jurisdiction in **1997**, on the basis of records or your best estimate, what was the number of:

**Active Youth Gangs?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Gang Members?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do not know:** \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE

---

## Appendix C: Random Sample Selection Methodology

Two random samples were constructed for the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey: (1) cities and towns with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 (small cities) and (2) rural counties. These samples were also used for the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey.

On previous surveys, the response rate for cities with populations of more than 150,000 has been as high as 91.3 percent. The response rate for cities with populations between 25,000 and 150,000 was estimated using a random sample of municipalities in that size range that were surveyed as part of the 1994 National Institute of Justice survey conducted by Curry et al. (1996). The response rate of those cities to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was estimated to be 74.5 percent. All of the above computations for the proposed sample size assumed a response rate of 75 percent.

The estimated required sample size  $n$  was derived using the formula:

$$n = \frac{t^2 NPQ}{(d^2 (N-1) + t^2 PQ)}$$

Where:

- $t$  is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area of  $\alpha$  at the tails.
- $N$  is the true population size.
- $P$  is the true proportion of the population with a specific characteristic.
- $Q$  is the true proportion of the population without a specific characteristic or  $(1-P)$ .
- $d$  is an acceptable error of size that can be incurred at probability  $\alpha$ .

This computing formula is derived from the formula provided by Cochran's *Sampling Techniques* (1977) for sample size  $n$  required for producing an error of size  $d$  at a specific probability  $\alpha$ . Cochran uses  $t$ , the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area of  $\alpha$  at the tails to produce the formula:

$$n = \frac{\frac{t^2 PQ}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{t^2 PQ}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

All the terms in the computing formula are presented in a form equivalent to those in Cochran's formula.

An error rate  $d$  was computed as 5 percent. The probability  $\alpha$  of an estimated error being greater than  $d$  used in the computations above is 0.05. All computations are based on an estimated true population of  $P=0.5$  and  $Q=0.5$  because this results in the most conservative and largest estimates for required samples for each stratum.

## Appendix D: Population Categories Used for Estimating the Average Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members, Based on Population of Nonrespondents

Population	Average Number of Gangs	Population	Average Number of Gang Members
<b>Large Cities</b>		<b>Large Cities</b>	
25,000–74,999	4.45	25,000–74,999	89.82
75,000–124,999	10.69	75,000–124,999	438.48
150,000–249,999	20.58	150,000–249,999	740.94
175,000–424,999	38.00	175,000–424,999	1341.71
225,000–474,999	57.67	225,000–474,999	2081.31
225,000–574,999	58.69	225,000–574,999	2141.32
275,000–824,999	70.89	275,000–824,999	2597.24
<b>Suburban Counties</b>		<b>Suburban Counties</b>	
0–49,999	3.02	0–49,999	47.87
50,000–99,999	6.53	50,000–99,999	273.79
100,000–149,999	14.62	100,000–149,999	397.80
125,000–224,999	25.10	125,000–224,999	628.49
150,000–299,999	29.45	125,000–324,999	753.67
150,000–399,999	32.66	150,000–399,999	933.76
175,000–474,999	32.43	150,000–499,999	874.72
175,000–574,999	30.25	150,000–599,999	856.50
175,000–674,999	33.69	150,000–699,999	956.24
200,000–749,999	28.25	150,000–799,999	956.2

## Appendix E: Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997

This list is not comprehensive. Jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in 1997 listed for large cities and suburban counties include only those that responded to the survey. Jurisdictions reporting for small cities and rural counties were part of a random sample and statistically represent many other jurisdictions that had active youth gangs in 1997 but are unnamed.

### Large Cities

#### Alabama

Anniston  
Auburn  
Bessemer  
Birmingham  
Decatur  
Dothan  
Florence  
Gadsden  
Huntsville  
Mobile  
Montgomery  
Phenix City  
Tuscaloosa

#### Alaska

Anchorage  
Fairbanks  
Juneau

#### Arizona

Bullhead City  
Chandler  
Flagstaff  
Gilbert  
Glendale  
Lake Havasu City  
Mesa  
Peoria  
Phoenix  
Prescott  
Scottsdale  
Sierra Vista  
Tempe  
Tucson  
Yuma

#### Arkansas

Conway  
Fort Smith

Hot Springs  
Jacksonville

Jonesboro  
Little Rock  
North Little Rock  
Pine Bluff  
Rogers  
Springdale

#### California

Alameda  
Alhambra  
Anaheim  
Antioch  
Arcadia  
Azusa  
Bakersfield  
Bell  
Bell Gardens  
Belmont  
Berkeley  
Brea  
Buena Park  
Burbank  
Burlingame  
Carlsbad  
Cathedral  
Ceres  
Chino  
Chula Vista  
Claremont  
Clovis  
Colton  
Corona  
Costa Mesa  
Covina  
Culver City  
Cypress  
Daly City  
Downey  
East Palo Alto  
El Cajon

El Centro  
El Monte  
Escondido  
Eureka  
Fontana  
Fountain Valley  
Fremont  
Fresno  
Garden Grove  
Gardena  
Gilroy  
Glendale  
Hemet  
Huntington Beach  
Huntington Park  
Inglewood  
Irvine  
La Habra  
Livermore  
Lodi  
Lompoc  
Long Beach  
Los Altos  
Los Angeles  
Madera  
Manhattan Beach  
Manteca  
Maywood  
Menlo Park  
Merced  
Milpitas  
Monrovia  
Montclair  
Monterey Park  
Morgan Hill  
Mountain View  
Napa  
National City  
Newark  
Newport Beach  
Oakland

Oceanside  
Ontario  
Orange  
Oxnard  
Palo Alto  
Paradise  
Pasadena  
Petaluma  
Pittsburg  
Placentia  
Pleasant Hill  
Pomona  
Porterville  
Redding  
Redlands  
Redondo Beach  
Redwood City  
Rialto  
Richmond  
Ridgecrest  
Riverside  
Rohnert Park  
Roseville  
Sacramento  
Salinas  
San Bernardino  
San Bruno  
San Diego  
San Francisco  
San Gabriel  
San Jose  
San Leandro  
San Mateo  
Santa Ana  
Santa Barbara  
Santa Clara  
Santa Cruz  
Santa Monica  
Santa Paula  
Santa Rosa  
Simi Valley

South Gate  
South San Francisco  
Stockton  
Suisun City  
Sunnyvale  
Torrance  
Tracy  
Tulare  
Turlock  
Tustin  
Union City  
Upland  
Vacaville  
Vallejo  
Ventura  
Visalia  
Watsonville  
West Covina  
Westminster  
Whittier  
Woodland  
Yuba City

### **Colorado**

Arvada  
Aurora  
Broomfield  
Colorado Springs  
Denver  
Englewood  
Fort Collins  
Grand Junction  
Greeley  
Lakewood  
Littleton  
Longmont  
Loveland  
Northglenn  
Pueblo  
Thornton  
Wheat Ridge

### **Connecticut**

Branford  
Bridgeport  
Bristol  
Danbury  
East Hartford  
Groton  
Hamden  
Hartford  
Meriden

Naugatuck  
New Britain  
New Haven  
Norwalk  
Shelton  
Stamford  
Stratford  
Wallingford  
Waterbury  
West Hartford  
West Haven

### **Delaware**

Dover  
Wilmington

### **Florida**

Altamonte Springs  
Boca Raton  
Boynton Beach  
Bradenton  
Cape Coral  
Coconut Creek  
Coral Springs  
Davie  
Daytona Beach  
Delray Beach  
Fort Lauderdale  
Fort Myers  
Hallandale  
Hialeah  
Hollywood  
Jacksonville  
Jupiter  
Kissimmee  
Lake Worth  
Lakeland  
Largo  
Lauderhill  
Margate  
Melbourne  
Miami  
Miami Beach  
Miramar  
North Lauderdale  
North Miami  
North Miami Beach  
Oakland Park  
Ocala  
Orlando  
Ormond Beach

Palm Bay  
Palm Beach Gardens  
Pensacola  
Pinellas Park  
Plantation  
Pompano Beach  
Riviera Beach  
Sanford  
Sarasota  
St. Petersburg  
Tallahassee  
Tampa  
Titusville  
West Palm Beach  
Winter Haven

### **Georgia**

Albany  
Atlanta  
Columbus  
Hinesville  
Lagrange  
Macon  
Marietta  
Rome  
Roswell  
Savannah  
Smyrna  
Valdosta  
Warner Robins

### **Idaho**

Boise  
Coeur d'Alene  
Nampa  
Pocatello

### **Illinois**

Addison  
Arlington Heights  
Aurora  
Bartlett  
Belleville  
Berwyn  
Bloomington  
Bolingbrook  
Buffalo Grove  
Carbondale  
Carol Stream  
Chicago  
Crystal Lake  
Danville

De Kalb  
Decatur  
Des Plaines  
Dolton  
East St. Louis  
Elgin  
Evanston  
Freeport  
Galesburg  
Glendale Heights  
Glenview  
Hanover Park  
Harvey  
Hoffman Estates  
Joliet  
Kankakee  
Lombard  
Maywood  
Moline  
Mount Prospect  
Naperville  
Niles  
Normal  
North Chicago  
Oak Lawn  
Oak Park  
Palatine  
Park Forest  
Park Ridge  
Pekin  
Peoria  
Quincy  
Rock Island  
Rockford  
Schaumburg  
Skokie  
Springfield  
St. Charles  
Streamwood  
Tinley Park  
Urbana  
Wheaton  
Woodridge

### **Indiana**

Anderson  
Bloomington  
Columbus  
East Chicago  
Elkhart  
Evansville  
Fort Wayne  
Gary

Goshen  
Greenwood  
Hammond  
Indianapolis  
Kokomo  
Lafayette  
Lawrence  
Marion  
Merrillville  
Michigan City  
Mishawaka  
Muncie  
New Albany  
Richmond  
South Bend  
Valparaiso

### **Iowa**

Burlington  
Cedar Rapids  
Clinton  
Council Bluffs  
Davenport  
Des Moines  
Dubuque  
Iowa City  
Mason City  
Urbandale  
Waterloo

### **Kansas**

Emporia  
Hutchinson  
Kansas City  
Lawrence  
Olathe  
Overland Park  
Salina  
Topeka  
Wichita

### **Kentucky**

Bowling Green  
Covington  
Frankfort  
Henderson  
Louisville  
Owensboro

### **Louisiana**

Alexandria  
Baton Rouge  
Bossier City

Houma  
Kenner  
Lafayette  
Monroe  
New Iberia  
New Orleans

### **Maine**

Lewiston  
Portland

### **Maryland**

Baltimore  
Frederick

### **Massachusetts**

Amherst  
Attleboro  
Billerica  
Boston  
Brookline  
Chelmsford  
Chicopee  
Dracut  
Everett  
Fall River  
Fitchburg  
Haverhill  
Lawrence  
Leominster  
Lowell  
Lynn

Malboro  
Malden  
Methuen  
New Bedford  
Northampton  
Pittsfield  
Revere  
Somerville  
Springfield  
Taunton  
Tewksbury  
Waltham  
Wellesley  
West Springfield  
Westfield  
Woburn  
Worcester

### **Michigan**

Allen Park  
Ann Arbor

Battle Creek  
Burton  
Canton  
Chesterfield  
Dearborn  
Dearborn Heights  
Detroit  
East Lansing  
Eastpointe  
Farmington Hills  
Flint  
Flint Township  
Grand Rapids  
Holland  
Jackson  
Kalamazoo  
Kentwood  
Lansing  
Muskegon  
Port Huron  
Portage  
Roseville  
Saginaw  
St. Clair Shores  
Shelby Township  
Southfield  
Southgate  
Sterling Heights  
Troy  
Warren  
Waterford

### **Minnesota**

Apple Valley  
Bloomington  
Brooklyn Center  
Brooklyn Park  
Burnsville  
Coon Rapids  
Cottage Grove  
Eagan  
Edina  
Lakeville  
Maplewood  
Minneapolis  
Moorhead  
Plymouth  
Richfield  
Rochester  
St. Cloud  
St. Paul  
St. Louis Park

Winona

### **Mississippi**

Biloxi  
Columbus  
Hattiesburg  
Pascagoula  
Tupelo  
Vicksburg

### **Missouri**

Cape Girardeau  
Gladstone  
Independence  
Kansas City  
St. Joseph  
St. Louis  
Springfield  
University City

### **Montana**

Billings  
Bozeman  
Great Falls  
Missoula

### **Nebraska**

Bellevue  
Grand Island  
Kearney  
Lincoln  
Omaha

### **Nevada**

Henderson  
Las Vegas  
North Las Vegas  
Reno  
Sparks

### **New Hampshire**

Derry

### **New Jersey**

Bayonne  
Belleville  
Brick  
East Orange  
Edison  
Fair Lawn  
Fort Lee  
Hamilton  
Howell  
Irvington

Jersey City  
Kearny  
Lakewood  
Linden  
Long Branch  
Manalapan  
Millville  
Montclair  
Neptune  
New Brunswick  
Newark  
North Bergen  
Orange  
Parsippany  
Paterson  
Perth Amboy  
Teaneck  
Trenton  
Union  
Union City  
West New York

#### **New Mexico**

Alamogordo  
Albuquerque  
Clovis  
Farmington  
Hobbs  
Las Cruces  
Rio Rancho  
Roswell  
Santa Fe

#### **New York**

Albany  
Buffalo  
Cicero  
Cortlandt Manor  
Freeport  
Hempstead  
Jamestown  
Long Beach  
New York  
Rochester  
Rockville Centre  
Schenectady  
Syracuse  
Troy  
Yonkers

#### **North Carolina**

Charlotte  
Durham

Fayetteville  
Gastonia  
Greensboro  
Greenville  
High Point  
Kinston  
Salisbury  
Wilmington  
Winston Salem

#### **North Dakota**

Bismarck  
Fargo  
Grand Forks

#### **Ohio**

Akron  
Barberton  
Bowling Green  
Canton  
Cincinnati  
Cleveland  
Cleveland Heights  
Columbus  
East Cleveland  
Elyria  
Fairborn  
Findlay  
Huber Heights  
Kent  
Lakewood  
Lorain  
Mansfield  
Marion  
Middletown  
Newark  
Reynoldsburg  
Springfield  
Stow  
Toledo  
Upper Arlington  
Westerville  
Youngstown

#### **Oklahoma**

Broken Arrow  
Edmond  
Enid  
Lawton  
Midwest City  
Moore  
Muskogee  
Norman

Oklahoma City  
Shawnee  
Stillwater  
Tulsa

#### **Oregon**

Albany  
Beaverton  
Eugene  
Hillsboro  
Keizer  
Medford  
Portland  
Salem  
Springfield

#### **Pennsylvania**

Allentown  
Bensalem  
Chester  
Erie  
Harrisburg  
Lower Paxton  
Philadelphia  
Scranton  
Upper Darby  
Wilkes-Barre

#### **Rhode Island**

Coventry  
Cranston  
East Providence  
North Providence  
Providence

#### **South Carolina**

Myrtle Beach  
Rock Hill  
Spartanburg

#### **South Dakota**

Aberdeen  
Rapid City  
Sioux Falls

#### **Tennessee**

Bartlett  
Chattanooga  
Clarksville  
Cleveland  
Columbia  
Cookeville  
Franklin  
Hendersonville

Johnson City  
Kingsport  
Knoxville  
Memphis  
Murfreesboro  
Nashville  
Oak Ridge

#### **Texas**

Abilene  
Allen  
Amarillo  
Arlington  
Austin  
Baytown  
Beaumont  
Bedford  
Bryan  
Carrollton  
College Station  
Conroe  
Copperas Cove  
Corpus Christi  
De Soto  
Del Rio  
Denton  
Duncanville  
Edinburg  
El Paso  
Euless  
Fort Worth  
Galveston  
Garland  
Grapevine  
Haltom City  
Harlingen  
Houston  
Huntsville  
Irving  
Killeen  
Kingsville  
La Porte  
Lake Jackson  
Laredo  
League City  
Lewisville  
Longview  
Lubbock  
Lufkin  
McAllen  
Mesquite  
Midland

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Nacogdoches  
New Braunfels  
North Richland Hills  
Odessa  
Pasadena  
Plano  
Port Arthur  
Richardson  
Round Rock  
Rowlett  
San Antonio  
San Marcos  
Sherman  
Sugar Land  
Temple  
Texarkana  
Texas City  
Waco

### **Utah**

Bountiful  
Layton  
Logan  
Murray  
St. George  
Salt Lake City  
Sandy  
West Jordan  
West Valley City

### **Virginia**

Alexandria  
Blacksburg  
Chesapeake  
Manassas  
Newport News  
Norfolk  
Portsmouth  
Virginia Beach

### **Washington**

Auburn  
Bellevue  
Bellingham  
Everett  
Kennewick  
Kirkland  
Puyallup  
Renton  
Seattle  
Spokane  
Tacoma

Vancouver  
Walla Walla  
Yakima

### **West Virginia**

Charleston  
Parkersburg

### **Wisconsin**

Appleton  
Beloit  
Brookfield  
Eau Claire  
Fond Du Lac  
Green Bay  
Janesville  
Kenosha  
La Crosse  
Madison  
Milwaukee  
New Berlin  
Oshkosh  
Racine  
Sheboygan  
Superior  
Waukesha  
Wausau  
West Allis  
West Bend

### **Wyoming**

Cheyenne  
Laramie

## **Small Cities**

### **Alabama**

Bridgeport  
Chickasaw  
Midfield  
Trussville

### **Arizona**

San Luis  
Show Low  
Somerton

### **Arkansas**

Hamburg

### **California**

Calipatria  
Dixon  
Farmersville

Firebaugh  
Half Moon Bay  
Huron  
Los Banos  
Needles  
Red Bluff

### **Connecticut**

Cromwell

### **Florida**

Alachua  
Edgewater  
Greenacres  
Lake City  
Madison  
Mount Dora  
Wildwood

### **Georgia**

Dawson  
Forest Park  
Pelham

### **Idaho**

Rexburg

### **Illinois**

Coal Valley  
Country Club Hills  
Crest Hill  
Edwardsville  
Gillespie  
Glen Carbon  
Knoxville  
Libertyville  
Madison  
Marseilles  
Morton Grove  
North Aurora  
Plainfield  
Prospect Heights  
Richton Park  
Riverside  
Sterling  
Wauconda  
Westmont  
Winfield  
Winthrop Harbor

### **Indiana**

Petersburg

### **Iowa**

Grinnell

### **Kansas**

Arkansas City  
Paola  
Roeland Park

### **Kentucky**

Franklin  
London

### **Louisiana**

Bunkie  
Haynesville

### **Maine**

Brunswick  
Fort Fairfield

### **Massachusetts**

Holden

### **Michigan**

Almont  
Marshall  
Menominee  
Monroe

### **Minnesota**

Lindstrom  
South St. Paul  
Waseca

### **Mississippi**

Booneville  
Nettleton  
Winona

### **Missouri**

Crystal City  
Festus  
North Kansas City  
Pevely

### **New Jersey**

Asbury Park  
Newton  
Tuckerton  
Wyckoff

### **New Mexico**

Deming  
Lovington

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**New York**

Malone  
Oxford  
Scotia  
South Nyack  
Spring Valley

**North Carolina**

Raeford

**Ohio**

Cardington  
Fostoria  
Kenton  
Mason  
Napoleon  
Piqua

**Oklahoma**

Fort Gibson  
Tecumseh

**Oregon**

Ontario  
Pendleton

**Pennsylvania**

Palmerton

**South Carolina**

Belton

**South Dakota**

Winner

**Tennessee**

Camden  
Clinton

**Texas**

Crockett  
Gladewater  
Los Fresnos  
Needville  
Richmond

**Utah**

Centerville  
Roosevelt  
Salt Lake City  
Spanish Fork  
Springville

**Virginia**

Waynesboro

**Washington**

Blaine  
Chelan  
Ferndale  
Lacey  
Mount Vernon  
Steilacoom

**Wisconsin**

Horicon  
Little Chute  
New Holstein  
Shawano

**Wyoming**

Rock Springs

**Suburban  
Counties****Alabama**

Autauga  
Baldwin  
Calhoun  
Colbert  
Jefferson  
Lawrence  
Limestone  
Madison  
Russell  
Shelby  
Tuscaloosa

**Arizona**

Maricopa  
Mohave  
Pinal  
Yuma

**Arkansas**

Benton  
Crittenden  
Lonoke  
Pulaski  
Sebastian  
Washington

**California**

Butte  
Contra Costa  
El Dorado  
Fresno  
Kern

Los Angeles

Madera  
Marin  
Merced  
Monterey  
Napa  
Orange  
Placer  
Sacramento  
San Diego  
San Joaquin  
San Luis Obispo  
San Mateo  
Santa Clara  
Santa Cruz  
Sonoma  
Stanislaus  
Sutter  
Tulare  
Ventura  
Yolo  
Yuba

**Colorado**

Arapahoe  
Douglas  
El Paso  
Jefferson  
Larimer  
Weld

**Florida**

Alachua  
Bay  
Brevard  
Broward  
Clay  
Collier  
Dade  
Escambia  
Flagler  
Hillsborough  
Lake  
Lee  
Leon  
Manatee  
Nassau  
Okaloosa  
Orange  
Osceola  
Pasco  
Pinellas  
Polk

St. Johns  
Santa Rosa  
Sarasota  
Seminole

**Georgia**

Cherokee  
Clayton  
Cobb  
Columbia  
De Kalb  
Douglas  
Fayette  
Gwinnett  
Henry  
Jones  
Madison  
Newton  
Paulding  
Rockdale  
Spalding  
Twiggs  
Walker  
Walton

**Idaho**

Ada  
Canyon

**Illinois**

Boone  
Cook  
De Kalb  
Grundy  
Kane  
Kankakee  
Kendall  
Macon  
McHenry  
McLean  
Menard  
Ogle  
Peoria  
Rock Island  
St. Clair  
Sangamon  
Tazewell  
Will  
Winnebago

**Indiana**

Allen  
Clark

Delaware  
Elkhart  
Lake  
Marion  
Porter  
St. Joseph  
Tippecanoe  
Warrick

### **Iowa**

Dallas  
Linn  
Polk  
Woodbury

### **Kansas**

Butler  
Harvey  
Johnson  
Sedgwick

### **Kentucky**

Bell  
Boone  
Bullitt  
Butler  
Campbell  
Christian  
Daviess  
Grant  
Oldham

### **Louisiana**

Ascension  
Bossier  
Caddo  
Calcasieu  
East Baton Rouge  
Jefferson  
Rapides  
St. Charles  
St. James  
St. Landry  
Webster

### **Maryland**

Baltimore  
Charles  
Frederick  
Harford  
Howard  
Montgomery  
Prince Georges

### **Michigan**

Berrien  
Eaton  
Ingham  
Kalamazoo  
Kent  
Lenawee  
Macomb  
Midland  
Monroe  
Muskegon  
Oakland  
Ottawa  
Van Buren  
Washtenaw  
Wayne

### **Minnesota**

Dakota  
Hennepin  
Olmsted  
Ramsey  
St. Louis

### **Mississippi**

Forrest  
Harrison  
Madison

### **Missouri**

Buchanan  
Clay  
Jackson  
Jefferson  
Lincoln  
St. Charles  
St. Louis

### **Montana**

Yellowstone

### **Nebraska**

Cass  
Dakota  
Douglas  
Sarpy

### **Nevada**

Washoe

### **New Jersey**

Camden  
Essex

Ocean  
Warren

### **New Mexico**

Dona Ana  
Sandoval

### **New York**

Broome  
Genesee  
Monroe  
Onondaga  
Schenectady  
Suffolk

### **North Carolina**

Brunswick  
Buncombe  
Burke  
Catawba  
Cumberland  
Durham  
Forsyth  
Gaston  
Guilford  
Johnston  
New Hanover  
Onslow  
Pitt  
Rowan  
Yadkin

### **North Dakota**

Cass  
Grand Forks

### **Ohio**

Allen  
Ashtabula  
Clermont  
Columbiana  
Franklin  
Greene  
Hamilton  
Jefferson  
Licking  
Lorain  
Mahoning  
Medina  
Miami  
Montgomery  
Portage  
Wood

Oklahoma  
Cleveland

### **Oklahoma**

Pottawatomie

### **Oregon**

Clackamas  
Columbia  
Lane  
Multnomah  
Washington

### **Pennsylvania**

Beaver  
Westmoreland

### **South Carolina**

Aiken  
Berkeley  
Cherokee  
Edgefield  
Greenville  
Lexington  
Spartanburg  
Sumter

### **South Dakota**

Minnehaha  
Pennington

### **Tennessee**

Knox  
Loudon  
Rutherford  
Sullivan

### **Texas**

Bastrop  
Bexar  
Brazoria  
Brazos  
Dallas  
Denton  
Ector  
El Paso  
Ellis  
Fort Bend  
Galveston  
Guadalupe  
Harris  
Hays  
Hidalgo  
Johnson

Lubbock  
Montgomery  
Nueces  
Orange  
Rockwall  
San Patricio  
Tarrant  
Tom Green  
Travis  
Victoria  
Webb  
Williamson

### **Utah**

Davis  
Salt Lake  
Utah  
Weber

### **Virginia**

Albemarle  
Arlington  
Bedford  
Chesterfield  
Fairfax  
Fauquier  
Gloucester  
Goochland  
Henrico  
Loudoun  
New Kent  
Prince William  
Spotsylvania

### **Washington**

Benton  
Clark  
Franklin  
King  
Kitsap  
Spokane  
Thurston  
Whatcom  
Yakima

### **West Virginia**

Brooke  
Cabell  
Wood

### **Wisconsin**

Brown  
Dane  
Eau Claire

Kenosha  
Marathon  
Milwaukee  
Ozaukee  
Pierce  
Washington  
Waukesha  
Winnebago

### **Wyoming**

Laramie

## **Rural Counties**

### **Alabama**

De Kalb  
Greene  
Marengo  
Sumter  
Talladega

### **Arizona**

Greenlee  
Yavapai

### **Arkansas**

Chicot  
Garland  
Ouachita  
Phillips  
Prairie  
St. Francis

### **California**

Colusa  
Humboldt  
Lake  
Tehama

### **Colorado**

Bent  
Costilla  
Custer  
Morgan  
Park  
Summit

### **Florida**

Bradford  
Highlands  
Monroe  
Putnam  
Sumter

Wakulla

### **Georgia**

Brooks  
Butts  
Clinch  
Coffee  
Crawford  
Forsyth  
Glynn  
Habersham  
Hancock  
Stephens  
Talbot  
Tift  
Union  
White  
Wilkinson

### **Idaho**

Jerome  
Kootenai  
Madison  
Teton

### **Illinois**

Moultrie  
Williamson

### **Indiana**

Bartholomew  
Grant  
Noble  
Orange  
Steuben  
Union  
Wabash

### **Iowa**

Emmet

### **Kansas**

Coffey  
Jackson  
Jefferson  
Riley  
Seward  
Stanton

### **Kentucky**

Marshall  
Owen

### **Louisiana**

Claiborne

East Carroll  
Washington

### **Maine**

Kennebec

### **Michigan**

Houghton  
Iosco  
Mackinac  
Newaygo  
Tuscola

### **Minnesota**

Carlton  
Chippewa  
Goodhue  
Itasca  
Meeker  
Waseca  
Watonwan  
Yellow Medicine

### **Mississippi**

Bolivar  
Copiah  
Hancock  
Kemper  
Pearl River  
Perry  
Scott  
Tippah  
Wayne

### **Missouri**

Cape Girardeau  
Dent  
Douglas  
Howell  
McDonald  
Mississippi  
Pike  
Pulaski  
St. Francois

### **Montana**

Hill

### **Nebraska**

Hamilton  
Thurston

### **Nevada**

Douglas

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**New Mexico**

Luna  
McKinley  
Torrance

**North Carolina**

Chowan  
Vance

**North Dakota**

Rolette

**Ohio**

Hancock  
Hardin  
Monroe  
Tuscarawas  
Wayne

**Oklahoma**

Craig

**Oregon**

Deschutes  
Josephine  
Umatilla

**South Carolina**

Abbeville  
Lancaster  
Newberry

**South Dakota**

Roberts  
Todd  
Tripp  
Ziebach

**Tennessee**

Cumberland  
Haywood  
Lauderdale  
Lincoln

Maury  
McNairy  
Roane  
Sequatchie  
Tipton  
Warren

**Texas**

Atascosa  
Calhoun  
Duval  
Fayette  
Foard  
Goliad  
Kerr  
Kleberg  
Lipscomb  
Medina  
Robertson  
Scurry

Upton  
Winkler  
Wise  
Zapata

**Virginia**

Lunenburg

**Washington**

Grant  
Okanogan  
Pacific

**Wisconsin**

Forest  
Iowa  
Menominee  
Portage  
Richland  
Sauk  
Vilas

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# Appendix F: U.S. Regions and Divisions Used for the 1997 National Youth Gang Survey

## Midwestern States

### East North Central

Illinois  
Indiana  
Michigan  
Ohio  
Wisconsin

### West North Central

Iowa  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
South Dakota

## Northeastern States

### New England

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island  
Vermont

### Middle Atlantic

New Jersey  
New York  
Pennsylvania

## Southern States

### South Atlantic

Delaware  
District of  
Columbia  
Florida  
Georgia  
Maryland  
North Carolina  
South Carolina  
Virginia  
West Virginia

### East South Central

Alabama  
Kentucky  
Mississippi  
Tennessee

### West South Central

Arkansas  
Louisiana  
Oklahoma  
Texas

## Western States

### Mountain

Arizona  
Colorado  
Idaho  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
Utah  
Wyoming

### Pacific

Alaska  
California  
Hawaii  
Oregon  
Washington

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Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. 1998. *Crime in the United States, 1997: Uniform Crime Reports*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

## Appendix G: Number and Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Population Size and Region\*

Population Size	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
250,000 or more	93 (90%)	19 (100%)	11 (65%)	36 (95%)	27 (96%)
100,000–249,999	189 (83%)	41 (89%)	18 (56%)	66 (79%)	64 (99%)
50,000–99,999	352 (75%)	97 (80%)	45 (49%)	114 (73%)	96 (95%)
25,000–49,999	445 (55%)	138 (64%)	56 (27%)	147 (60%)	104 (78%)
10,000–24,999	166 (36%)	62 (46%)	8 (17%)	71 (30%)	25 (58%)
1–9,999	167 (24%)	67 (24%)	6 (8%)	65 (27%)	29 (29%)
<b>Total/Percentage</b>	<b>1,412 (51%)</b>	<b>424 (52%)</b>	<b>144 (31%)</b>	<b>499 (49%)</b>	<b>345 (74%)</b>

**Notes:** As population increases, the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gangs increases. At the same time, there is significant variation by region in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gangs for each population category. Large increases in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs appear to be most associated with population increases in the West.

\* The multivariate relationship of region and population size on the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

## Appendix H: Number and Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1997, by Area Type and Region\*

Area Type	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Large city	786 (72%)	220 (76%)	117 (42%)	222 (81%)	227 (89%)
Small city	125 (33%)	48 (39%)	14 (13%)	34 (39%)	29 (54%)
Suburban county	337 (56%)	99 (61%)	12 (27%)	164 (50%)	62 (91%)
Rural county	164 (24%)	57 (24%)	1 (3%)	79 (25%)	27 (30%)
<b>Total/Percentage</b>	<b>1,412 (51%)</b>	<b>424 (52%)</b>	<b>144 (31%)</b>	<b>499 (49%)</b>	<b>345 (74%)</b>

**Note:** The increase in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gangs appears to be associated with large cities and suburban counties, particularly in the West.

\* The multivariate relationship of region and area type on the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

## Appendix I: Level of Youth Gang Involvement in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997, by Area Type\*

Level of Involvement	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
67–100% (high)	228 (29%)	144 (31%)	10 (17%)	54 (31%)	20 (26%)
34–66% (moderate)	138 (18%)	89 (19%)	9 (16%)	30 (17%)	10 (13%)
0–33% (low)	415 (53%)	239 (51%)	39 (67%)	90 (52%)	47 (61%)
Total/Percentage	781 (100%)	472 (101%)	58 (100%)	174 (100%)	77 (100%)

Note: The percentages within each level of involvement may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

\* The relationship between area type and level of involvement was not statistically significant.

## Appendix J: Level of Youth Gang Involvement in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997, by Region

Level of Involvement	Region				
	All Regions	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
67–100% (high)	228 (29%)	82 (36%)	32 (39%)	80 (29%)	34 (17%)
34–66% (moderate)	138 (18%)	44 (19%)	16 (20%)	40 (15%)	38 (19%)
0–33% (low)	415 (53%)	103 (45%)	34 (41%)	154 (56%)	124 (63%)
Total/Percentage	781 (100%)	229 (100%)	82 (100%)	274 (100%)	196 (99%)

Notes: The percentages within each level of involvement may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. The Midwest and Northeast have gangs with higher than average involvement in street sales of drugs, while the West has gangs with lower than average involvement. Gangs in the South have about average involvement in street sales of drugs.

## Appendix K: Level of Youth Gang Involvement in Street Sales of Drugs in 1997, by Population Size\*

Level of Involvement	Population Size						
	All Population Sizes	1–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–249,999	250,000 or more
67–100% (high)	228 (29%)	15 (19%)	19 (27%)	72 (29%)	61 (29%)	45 (38%)	16 (29%)
34–66% (moderate)	138 (18%)	11 (14%)	8 (11%)	45 (18%)	28 (13%)	25 (21%)	21 (38%)
0–33% (low)	415 (53%)	52 (67%)	44 (62%)	131 (53%)	121 (58%)	49 (41%)	18 (33%)
Total/Percentage	781 (100%)	78 (100%)	71 (100%)	248 (100%)	210 (100%)	119 (100%)	55 (100%)

**Notes:** The percentages within each level of involvement may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. As population increases through the 100,000–249,999 category, the percentage of youth gangs involved in street sales of drugs at a high level increases. Jurisdictions with populations of 1–9,999 are below average in the percentage of gangs involved in street sales of drugs at a high level, while the jurisdictions with populations of 100,000–249,999 are above average. The percentage of youth gangs in the 250,000 or more category involved in street sales of drugs is about average. Conversely, as the population of a jurisdiction increases, the percentage of gangs involved in street sales of drugs at a low level decreases. Thus, there is a general increase in the percentage of gangs involved in street drug sales at successively higher degrees as population increases.

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

## Appendix L: Reasons for Gang Migration in 1997, by Area Type

Reason for Migration	Area Type				
	All Areas	Large City	Small City	Suburban County	Rural County
Social factors	853 (70%)	486 (69%)	71 (71%)*	207 (72%)	89 (64%)*
Establishing drug markets	190 (15%)	119 (17%)	7 (7%)*	45 (16%)	19 (14%)
Participating in other illegal ventures	146 (12%)	81 (12%)	11 (11%)	33 (11%)	21 (15%)*
Avoiding law enforcement crackdowns	166 (14%)	88 (13%)	11 (11%)	39 (14%)	28 (20%)
Getting away from gang life	116 (9%)	75 (11%)	5 (5%)*	24 (8%)	12 (9%)*
Other reasons	74 (6%)	41 (6%)	8 (8%)	18 (6%)	7 (5%)

**Note:** Percentages do not equal 100 because respondents indicated multiple reasons.

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

## Appendix M: Reasons for Gang Migration in 1997, by Population Size

Level of Involvement	Population Size						
	All Population Sizes	1–9,999	10,000–24,999	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–249,999	250,000 or more
Social factors	853 (70%)	90 (67%)	85 (63%)	278 (71%)	213 (68%)	130 (75%)	57 (70%)
Establishing drug markets	190 (15%)	13 (10%)	21 (16%)	67 (17%)	43 (14%)	30 (17%)	16 (20%)
Participating in other illegal ventures	146 (12%)	21 (16%)	15 (11%)	48 (12%)	33 (11%)	21 (12%)	8 (10%)
Avoiding law enforcement crackdowns	166 (14%)	27 (20%)	19 (14%)	56 (14%)	33 (11%)	19 (11%)	12 (15%)
Getting away from gang life	116 (9%)	10 (7%)	13 (10%)	44 (11%)	31 (10%)	10 (6%)	8 (10%)
Other reasons	74 (6%)	6 (4%)	10 (7%)	24 (6%)	22 (7%)	6 (3%)	6 (7%)

**Notes:** There was no statistically significant variation for any of the reasons for gang migration. Percentages do not equal 100 because respondents indicated multiple reasons.

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