Utah Gang Task Force – Gang Assessment

Ben Peterson, Ph.D.
Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice

Background & Introduction

One of the major goals in the strategic plan of the Utah Gang Task Force was to assess the extent of the gang problem in Utah. To that end, an assessment plan was carried out that addressed limitations in any one source of gang data by looking at the gang issue from three different perspectives:

1. Objective data sources that collect individual offender behavioral data and/or system case processing data. This includes large tracking databases and data repositories operated by corrections, the courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, and schools. Problems with each source will be discussed.
2. Youth self-reports of gang affiliation from statewide surveys of students in middle schools and high schools. This also allowed comparison of gang membership to other types of antisocial activities and background risk/protective factors that are assessed in the Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) survey.
3. Surveys of professionals working in schools, community supervision, correctional facilities, law enforcement, courts, and community organizations, as well as the general public, about their perceptions of gangs in their areas and communities, and the problems they may be causing. This includes two new surveys that were conducted, one on the above-mentioned professionals and one on a statewide representative sample of Utah residents.

In carrying out this assessment, it became necessary to not only gather as much information related to gangs as possible from the various sources at our disposal, but also to provide a critique of the limitations of the available data and recommendations as to what might be done to improve data in the future. **In order to get a clear picture of the gang problem in the state, we must be confident in the data that we are using to make the assessment.**

It is important to note that, while each perspective has its flaws, looking at the problem from multiple perspectives allows us to find areas of agreement that strengthen our confidence in that information beyond what we would have if it came from only one source or perspective. Consistent with this focus on areas of potential agreement, we decided early on in the process that it would be beneficial to narrow the focus to several specific questions:

1. What areas of the state (i.e., counties, districts, regions) are experiencing the most serious problems with gangs and gang crime, and what other areas might have emerging gang issues that need to be addressed?
2. What types of crime and other activities are gang members generally committing in the state, and what impact do gangs have on communities?

The bulk of this report focuses on these questions, though there is other associated information reported depending on the source. The final section will summarize the data presented, make connections between the common themes that were found, and provide some recommendations for future data collection and assessments.

Executive Summary

- This assessment report gathered information from a variety of sources, including large criminal justice agency databases (Corrections, Courts, Utah Prosecution Council, Public Safety), a school incident database, and surveys of youth, professionals, and the general public, in the attempt to quantify the gang problem in Utah and answer questions about some key issues related to the gang problem (i.e., what types of activities are gangs and gang members engaging in, how are gangs impacting our communities, and what parts of the state are affected most).

Findings from Objective Data Sources

- In two separate data pulls from O-Track (Department of Corrections), 17.1% and 18.7% of prisoners were identified as being affiliated with an organized gang. Roughly three times as many male prisoners than female prisoners are documented gang members, and documented gang members tend to be disproportionately Hispanic (i.e., much higher percentage of gang population than prison population as a whole). A high and disproportionate number of gang inmates come from Salt Lake and Weber counties (based on court of conviction).
- Almost one-quarter (22.2%) of documented incidents in the prison are gang-related, with the most common being related to assaults/threats (27.7%) and drug/alcohol/contraband (25.8%).
- While gang-relevant data from CORIS (district and justice courts) was generally of poor quality, 24.1% of charges flagged as gang-related were assaults, followed by thefts (15.0%), burglaries (12.8%), and robberies (9.5%). Gang data in CARE (juvenile courts) was not considered reliable.
- Law enforcement officials across the state are currently pursuing a new statewide gang intelligence database that should improve the quality of and access to gang-related data. In the meantime, data were examined from several interagency task forces (Salt Lake Area Gang Project, Ogden/Weber Gang Task Force, and Washington County Task Force). In all cases, documented gang members tended to be disproportionately Hispanic. A high percentage of gang-related crimes recorded by law enforcement were assaults (23.7% simple and aggravated in Salt Lake, 19.6% aggravated in Ogden/Weber).
- Gang-related incidents in schools are being recorded (though not in a systematic manner) in districts throughout the state, based on data compiled by the State Office of Education. The most common incident types involved disorderly conduct, simple assault/battery, and threats/intimidation, while incidents involving drugs were rarely marked as gang-related.
- Other databases that provided limited or no reliable information relevant to gang issues were PIMS (Utah Prosecution Council), criminal history (UCCH) and incident-based reporting (NIBRS) databases run through the Department of Public Safety, and O-Track data for community supervision (Adult Probation & Parole).
- Almost all of the objective data sources examined require improvements in the process of entering data in fields relevant to gang issues to ensure accurate and complete data that is useful to policy makers in general and decision makers within the agencies and departments.

Findings from Youth Self-Reports (Statewide SHARP Surveys)

- 4-5% of youth in middle and high schools across the state (grades 6-12) report having some current or prior involvement in a gang over the five biennial survey assessments. Self-reported involvement appears to peak in the 8th grade.
- Gang involvement percentages were at their lowest overall in the most recent 2011 assessment, including all grade levels with the exception of 12th grade.

- Youth in most parts of the state report some level of gang involvement on these surveys, including more rural areas outside of the Wasatch Front.
- Social-Behavioral (i.e., early initiation of antisocial behavior and/or drug use, hanging out with antisocial peers) and Cognitive-Attitudinal (i.e., low self-esteem/depression, favorable attitudes toward antisocial behavior) factors tended to be most predictive of gang involvement and interest in joining a gang. Males and minority youth were also more likely to be gang-involved.
- Gang involved youth (and those interested in joining a gang to a lesser extent) had significantly higher antisocial outcome scores than youth not involved or not interested.
- Youth may join gangs for various psychosocial (i.e., status, belonging, security) and tangible (i.e., money/stuff) reasons, and this may be helpful to prevention and intervention efforts. Youth interested in joining a gang rated all reasons assessed higher than other youth (including those with gang involvement), especially concerns such as status, security, and excitement. Gang-involved youth who rated status and money/stuff concerns high engaged in a higher level of antisocial behavior, while those who rated belonging and security concerns high had somewhat lower levels of antisocial outcomes.

Findings from Surveys Assessing Perceptions of Professionals and the General Public

- The Utah Gang Task Force developed a survey to target professionals who work with youth and adults who may be involved in gangs in several different categories of professions in 2009.
- Not surprisingly, the vast majority (81.8%) of these professionals reported that they know of, or believe there is, a gang presence in their community. Respondents acknowledging a gang presence rated the overall impact of gangs on crime and other problems in their area at a moderate level (5.5 on a scale of 0-10).
- Ratings of gang presence and impact were significantly related to concerns about violent crime, drug crime, graffiti, and sexual violence in the community, and a large percentage of those reporting a gang presence across professional areas believed that gangs were at least partially responsible for property offenses (especially graffiti, vandalism, and burglary), violent offenses (especially assaults and threats/intimidation), and drug possession and distribution.
- Professional respondents from locations all over the state reported a gang presence and/or problems in the communities where they work.
- Survey data also answered some important questions within each specific professional context targeted: schools, community supervision (probation, parole, case management, etc.), correctional facilities, law enforcement, courts (judges, prosecutors), and community organizations.
- CCJJ also included several similar questions regarding gang perceptions on their 2010 Utah Crime Survey, administered to a statewide representative sample of Utah residents.
- Overall, 49.5% of public respondents indicated that they know of, or believe there is, a gang presence in their community. Those acknowledging a gang presence rated the overall impact of gangs on crime and other problems in their area at a moderate level (5.8 on a scale of 0-10).
- Respondents from Weber and Salt Lake counties, along with urban/metro areas in general, tended to rate the impact of gangs on their communities the highest. Washington and Cache counties were also relatively high in terms of perceived gang presence.
- Drug possession (96.8%) and drug sales (96.6%) were the most cited activities that respondents believed gangs are at least partially responsible for in their community, followed closely by vandalism (95.3%), graffiti (94.5%), and assaults (89.0%). All of the assessed criminal activities were cited by at least two-thirds of respondents who indicated a gang presence.

- Victims of crime in the previous year were significantly more likely to report a gang presence in their community (61.1%) than non-victims (42.1%), with variations by type of victimization. Also, 13.2% of property crime victims and 11.0% of person crime victims perceived at least one of their victimizations in the previous year to be at the hands of a gang member.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- This comprehensive gang assessment yielded some valuable information about the gang problem in Utah, while also raising important issues and areas of improvement, especially in relation to the objective data sources that allow the tracking of gang-relevant information.
- In terms of substantive information about the gang problem, the assessment provided a clearer picture of which areas of the state officials and policy makers should be most concerned about, including areas that may be "under the radar" where gang problems may be emerging (see Table 12 on p.49 for a breakdown of regional ratings across data sources). This information can help policy makers direct resources to areas most in need of prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts.
- The data available and collected also show that gangs are engaging in a variety of disruptive activities in our communities, schools, and prisons – most notably violent offenses such as assaults and intimidation, property offenses such as graffiti, vandalism, and burglary, and drug possession and distribution (though less evidence is available about these latter activities in schools). Efforts to combat these disruptive activities should include all possible contexts, including the schools, community organizations and leaders, probation/parole officers and administrators, and correctional officers and administrators, in addition to law enforcement.
- Other important actionable findings include the data from the SHARPS surveys pointing to the background factors most predictive of gang involvement and interest, as well as the reasons why youth join gangs. Other data from the prison, AP&P, and law enforcement corroborated the disproportionate nature of male and Hispanic involvement in gangs. This information can be used by prevention and intervention programs to target at-risk individuals.
- But, some of these conclusions are qualified by concerns that arose about the quality of the data available, especially the objective data sources discussed in the first section. There are serious concerns about the consistency and reliability of the gang-relevant data in many of these sources. It is clear that work needs to be done, and establishing common definitions of gang terms and training key individuals who enter such data will go a long way toward facilitating process improvements.
- The information in this report should be used alongside that provided in the companion report on gang research and best practices to target areas and individuals most in need with resources and programs that have been proven to work in reducing gang membership and related crime.
- It is also recommended that individuals involved in the Gang Task Force monitor ongoing improvements to data sources that track gang-relevant information and conduct a follow-up assessment within five years to see if more reliable information can be obtained at that time. This follow-up should also include additional survey data from subsequent Crime in Utah (public) and SHARPS (youth) surveys, as well as other sources that might become available.

Objective Data Sources: Description, Limitations, & Recommendations

The first step in the assessment plan was to find objective (i.e., behavioral, case-based, independently verified) data on gangs, gang members, and gang-related offenses from all available sources. The major sources of potential information in the state are the large data repositories and tracking databases operated by such entities as the Department of Corrections, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Department of Public Safety, and the Utah Prosecution Council. Additionally, we contacted several local law enforcement agencies and inter-agency task forces to obtain any data that they collect and maintain. Finally, we worked with the State Office of Education to obtain and analyze data related to incidents occurring in Utah schools that may be gang-related.

As will become evident in this section, much of the following will be a description of the existing data sources as well as their strengths and limitations, including the impact human factors such as failure to utilize available databases have upon the validity of the data. Unfortunately, having an option to enter a piece of data does not mean that the data is consistently entered within and across departments and agencies, leaving us in many cases with inaccurate and unreliable data on whether offenders are members of a gang and whether cases or incidents are gang-related. Some cases stem from a lack of training and/or a lack of an accepted, standardized definition across agencies as to what a gang member or gang-related crime is, while in other cases there have been recent changes to improve the database that need additional time for the improvements to be seen. These issues will be discussed further at the end of the section, along with some recommendations for future improvements to the data needs of law enforcement, corrections, the courts, prosecutors, schools, and researchers with regard to the gang issue in Utah.

Department of Corrections Data: O-Track[1]

The Utah Department of Corrections (DOC) uses the O-Track database to track the history, activities, and any changes in status of offenders within the prison and those involved with Adult Probation and Parole (AP&P). O-Track is an individual offender-level database, with information being updated after any status changes occur that are tied to a specific offender number assigned at the time of initial processing into the DOC system. The Law Enforcement Bureau of the DOC is responsible for investigating gang ("security threat group", or STG) affiliation of offenders and verifying it in the offender gang tables of O-Track. While others (i.e., AP&P officers, corrections officers) may submit gang information about a particular offender to O-Track, it must be validated with a verification marker in the gang table by the Law Enforcement Bureau before it can be listed as an official part of the offender's record. The gang table "flags" the offender as a gang member and identifies the name and type of gang to which they belong.

Prisoner Data

Prison gang data is generally considered to be the most reliable, as investigators have more time to document offenders with respect to gang affiliation, and the information is very important for determining where the offender will be housed within the prison. On average, the gang population within the state prison system has been around 15-20% of the overall population over the past 10 years. In a data pull at the end of 2010, we found the total percentage to be 17.1% (18.0% of males,

[1] Based in part on information provided by Cliff Butter and Pete Walters, Department of Corrections

6.6% of females), and in a recent follow-up pull in August 2011 the total percentage was 18.7% (19.9% of males, 6.4% of females). **It should be noted that some offenders choose to join gangs after they enter the prison for protection, so these percentages are likely higher than the number of offenders who were gang members when they committed the offense that led to their prison sentence.** Documented gang members in the prison tend to be disproportionately Hispanic, making up 40.1% of the gang population compared to 19.4% of the overall prison population in the August 2011 data pull (by contrast, White offenders account for 66.1% of the overall prison population but only 37.0% of the documented gang population).

Along with the overall percentage of gang members, investigators also document the specific gang that offenders claim membership in. Table 1 below breaks down the previous snapshot of gang membership at the end of 2010 by type of gang. In this case, many specific smaller gangs fall under the umbrella of a larger gang organization, to which they claim memberships (i.e., Crips, Bloods, Nortenos, Surenos, etc.). There are also many local gangs that are not linked to these higher-order categories – most of these fall under the category "Others" in Table 1. As the table shows, the largest categories of gang found within the prison system besides the Other category (26.3%) are Surenos (21.2%), White Supremacist (17.0%), and Crips (15.1%). 150 different specific gangs fell within these categories.

Table 1. Documented gang members in the Utah Department of Corrections (DOC) prison system by gang type (data pulled from O-Track on November 18, 2010).

Gang Type	Total	%	Male	Female	Gangs
OTHERS	305	26.3%	295	10	40
SURENOS	246	21.2%	238	8	28
WHITE SUPREMACIST	197	17.0%	189	8	15
CRIPS	175	15.1%	170	5	32
NORTENOS	104	9.0%	99	5	13
BLOODS	73	6.3%	71	2	13
FOLK NATION	37	3.2%	36	1	3
PEOPLE NATION	10	0.9%	10	0	3
NO TYPE SPECIFIED	10	0.9%	10	0	2
OMP-OUTLAW MOTORCYCL	2	0.2%	2	0	1
	1159		1120	39	150

In an effort to extrapolate regional gang activity across Utah, offenders were also examined with respect to the court in which they were originally convicted. Table 2 shows the breakdown of gang offenders by the county of conviction. Not surprisingly, almost three quarters of the gang offenders were convicted in either Salt Lake (51.7%) or Weber (22.7%) counties. Davis (6.3%) and Utah (5.8%) were the only other counties to contribute more than 5% of the gang inmates. These four counties are also the most populous in the state, **though Salt Lake and Weber both contribute disproportionately more to the prison gang population than the overall state population**.

Table 2. Documented gang members in the Utah Department of Corrections (DOC) prison system by county of the court of conviction for the offense that led to incarceration (data pulled from O-Track on December 6, 2010).

County	Gang Inmates	%Gang Total	%State*
Salt Lake	604	51.7%	37.3%
Weber	265	22.7%	8.4%
Davis	74	6.3%	11.1%
Utah	68	5.8%	18.7%
Washington	30	2.6%	5.0%
Cache	25	2.1%	4.1%
Tooele	18	1.5%	2.1%
Iron	14	1.2%	1.7%
Box Elder	8	0.7%	1.8%
Sanpete	8	0.7%	1.0%
Beaver	7	0.6%	0.2%
Duchesne	7	0.6%	0.7%
Uintah	6	0.5%	1.2%
San Juan	5	0.4%	0.5%
Wasatch	5	0.4%	0.9%
Millard	4	0.3%	0.5%
Carbon	3	0.3%	0.8%
Emery	3	0.3%	0.4%
Juab	3	0.3%	0.4%
Kane	3	0.3%	0.3%
Summit	3	0.3%	1.3%
Garfield	2	0.2%	0.2%
Grand	1	0.1%	0.3%
Morgan	1	0.1%	0.3%
Sevier	1	0.1%	0.8%
Wayne	1	0.1%	0.1%
Daggett	0	-	0.0%
Piute	0	-	0.1%
Rich	0	-	0.1%
	1169		

* Based on 2010 US Census

Incidents that occur in the prison are also recorded in O-Track, and there is a field that allows investigators to "flag" these incidents if they are gang-related. Examining this data can help to demonstrate the negative impact, or disruption level, that gangs may cause within the prison, **though it is important to note that there are some concerns with this data**. One issue that was expressed by investigators is that inmates will sometimes present with injuries (i.e., slip/trip/fall), and there is suspicion that it is from a gang-related fight – though the inmate does not want to report it. Keeping such concerns in mind, Table 3 presents prison incidents that occurred between 2007-2009, categorized by type and whether they were identified as gang-related. Overall, just under a quarter of the incidents (22.2%) during this time period were flagged as gang-related. The categories of incidents

that had the highest percentage of gang-related flags included Assaults/Threats (27.7%), Drug/Alcohol/Contraband (25.8%), and Property (23.2%).

Table 3. Gang-related prison incidents by type of incident (incidents recorded in O-Track, 2007-2009).

	Gang	Overall	%Gang
Assaults/Threats	**166**	**599**	**27.7%**
AS (Assault)	120	363	33.1%
ASP (Assault Officer)	9	32	28.1%
TH (Threat)	37	204	18.1%
Drug/Alcohol/Contraband	**251**	**972**	**25.8%**
AC (Alcohol)	28	57	49.1%
CB (Contraband)	144	570	25.3%
DR (Drugs)	38	143	26.6%
DT (Drug Test)	41	202	20.3%
Property	**76**	**327**	**23.2%**
PR (Property)	63	268	23.5%
TL (Theft/Larceny)	8	39	20.5%
VA (Vandalism)	5	20	25.0%
Sexual	**24**	**109**	**22.0%**
SO (Sex Offenses)	17	62	27.4%
SX (Sex Assault)	7	47	14.9%
Disorderly Conduct/Disobedience	**230**	**1054**	**21.8%**
DC (Disorderly Conduct)	131	648	20.2%
DO (Direct Order)	32	143	22.4%
MA (Mail)	8	45	17.8%
OB (Out of Bounds)	37	152	24.3%
TE (Telephone)	14	30	46.7%
VI (Visiting)	4	10	40.0%
VR (Violate Rule)	4	21	19.0%
ES (Escape)	0	5	0.0%
Search (SE)	16	43	37.2%
Request Assistance (RA)	77	251	30.7%
Weapons (WE)	22	94	23.4%
Injury (IN)*	148	826	17.9%
Overall Incidents	**1304**	**5876**	**22.2%**

AP&P Supervision Data

Gang membership data for offenders under supervision with AP&P has been historically unreliable. The main reason for this is the size of the population (especially probation), which makes it difficult for investigators to accurately document gang affiliation for each offender. AP&P has recently begun a process to move to a new data table design (like the tables being used within the prison), and they have indicated that the process of identifying and loading gang data into the new gang tables is still in its early stages. For the parole population, the data should be more accurate because they are coming from the prison system, and this should increase as parolees continue to be discharged and replaced

by newer parolees who were in prison under the newer gang processing. For the probation population, there is still quite a bit of work to be done in updating the gang data. While agents were previously allowed to enter gang data for their probationers on their own, under the new data table design and process investigators in the DOC's Law Enforcement Bureau have sole authority to verify gang status (as they do within the prison). **On the one hand, this centralization of the process should help to eventually improve the accuracy of the probation gang affiliation data; on the other hand, it has slowed down the data entry process.** Because of this, it may take some time for the probation data to rise to the level of the prison data in terms of its accuracy.

Table 4 shows the breakdown of identified gang members by type of supervision. The 11.1% (12.1% of males, 4.5% of females) gang-affiliated percentage of parolees is closer to the 15-20% typically found in the prison population, though still lower. In contrast, **it is clear that the probation numbers (1.6%) are much lower than what might be expected, and that substantial amount of work remains to be done to get an accurate picture of gang affiliation in the probation population**. As with the prison data, documented gang members under AP&P supervision also tend to be disproportionately Hispanic, making up 42.5% of the gang population compared to 12.5% of the overall AP&P supervision population in the August 2011 data pull (by contrast, White offenders account for 72.3% of the overall AP&P supervision population but only 33.7% of the documented gang population).

Table 4. Documented gang members under AP&P supervision by sex and type of supervision (data pulled from O-Track on August 8, 2011).

	Male			Female			Overall		
	Gang	**Total**	**%Gang**	**Gang**	**Total**	**%Gang**	**Gang**	**Total**	**%Gang**
Parole	317	2616	**12.1%**	17	382	**4.5%**	334	2998	**11.1%**
Probation	173	8898	**1.9%**	13	2903	**0.4%**	186	11801	**1.6%**
Felony	133	6850	**1.9%**	10	2282	**0.4%**	143	9132	**1.6%**
Class A	40	2048	**2.0%**	3	621	**0.5%**	43	2669	**1.6%**

Adult Court Data: CORIS[2]

The Court Records Information Systems (CORIS) is the Administrative Office of the Court's (AOC) case management system and data repository. The CORIS program is used in all district courts and most justice courts in Utah. It records case-level data, unlike O-Track and the Criminal History database (UCCH), which record individual offender-level data. The main identifier is a case number, which can be associated with multiple charges. Each charge is labeled with the criminal statute offense code that was violated. Most data are entered directly by the court clerks, though data in many justice courts are transmitted electronically from the law enforcement agencies.

For gang data in CORIS, two avenues were explored. First, a statute exists for a "group enhancement" that can be used by prosecutors in gang-related cases (76-3-203.1 – "offenses committed in concert with two or more individuals"). A November 2010 query of all cases using the "group enhancement" statute for any associated charges from 1999-2010 returned **only 45 cases** during this time period (49 instances of 76-3-203.1, with 102 accompanying charges). **This is a very low number, and is a cause for concern about the accuracy of this data.** Anecdotally, prosecutors in some of the larger districts relate

[2] Based in part on information provided by George Braden, Administrative Office of the Courts

that it is possible to have this many cases filed in a month. Salt Lake District and Ogden District courts only have record of 1 case each during this 10+ year period – the same as much smaller district courts like Vernal, Duchesne, and Fillmore, and less than Beaver (7), Kanab (4), and Cedar City (3). Alternatively, Provo District court recorded the most cases involving 76-3-203.1 at 26 (more than half of those recorded). **It is difficult to have any confidence in this data, and any differences shown could just as likely reflect a higher likelihood of this information being recorded in the database than any real difference in cases that have been filed. This is because the system relies on the clerk to enter the group enhancement charge in addition to the main charge, based on the filing from the prosecutor, and this is not consistently done.** For example, if the prosecutor files an aggravated assault charge with the penalty enhanced due to the group enhancement, this information may not be captured in CORIS unless the clerk reads the charge carefully to find the group enhancement. A separate analysis of the accompanying charges found the most frequently occurring types of offenses to be assaults (25.6%) and drug-related (15.7%).

Second, the CORIS database also includes a "gang attribute" field for a given charge that can be checked if the charge is gang-related. **It is not clear, however, how a given charge is being determined as gang-related, what definitions are being used, if any, and whether this process is consistent across districts. There are also similar concerns about the consistent and reliable use of this data field itself. This is once again a cause for concern about the accuracy of any gang-related data produced from this source.** A December 2010 query of the database over the same time period (1999-2010) found a total of 315 cases and 634 charges with the gang attribute field marked affirmatively. This provides more information than the previous search for group enhancement cases, though it is still quite low for this long of a time period. Provo District court (and District 4 as a whole) recorded the most cases and gang-related charges during this time period, though this once again could be a function more of better recording of the data than a real difference in processing of such cases. Figure 1 shows the annual trend in gang-related charges recorded using the CORIS gang-attribute field, with the overall number compared to the numbers for the three largest district courts (Salt Lake, Provo, and Ogden). As this figure demonstrates, the number of charges recorded has increased overall in recent years, though this is made up mostly by an increase from Provo District court. **While Salt Lake District court recorded 52 gang-related charges in 2001, it has recorded a total of 1 charge with an affirmative gang attribute field in the past six years.** Alternatively, Provo District court only recorded a total of 4 charges with an affirmative gang attribute in the first six years of the period analyzed (all in 2000), but the charges recorded steadily increase to 114 in 2009 and 98 in 2010 (each year with more than the total for Salt Lake and Ogden across the time period). A separate analysis of the charges with an affirmative gang attribute field found the most frequently occurring types of offenses to be assaults (24.1%), thefts (15.0%), burglaries (12.8%), and robberies (9.5%). 83.6% of the gang-related charges were felonies.

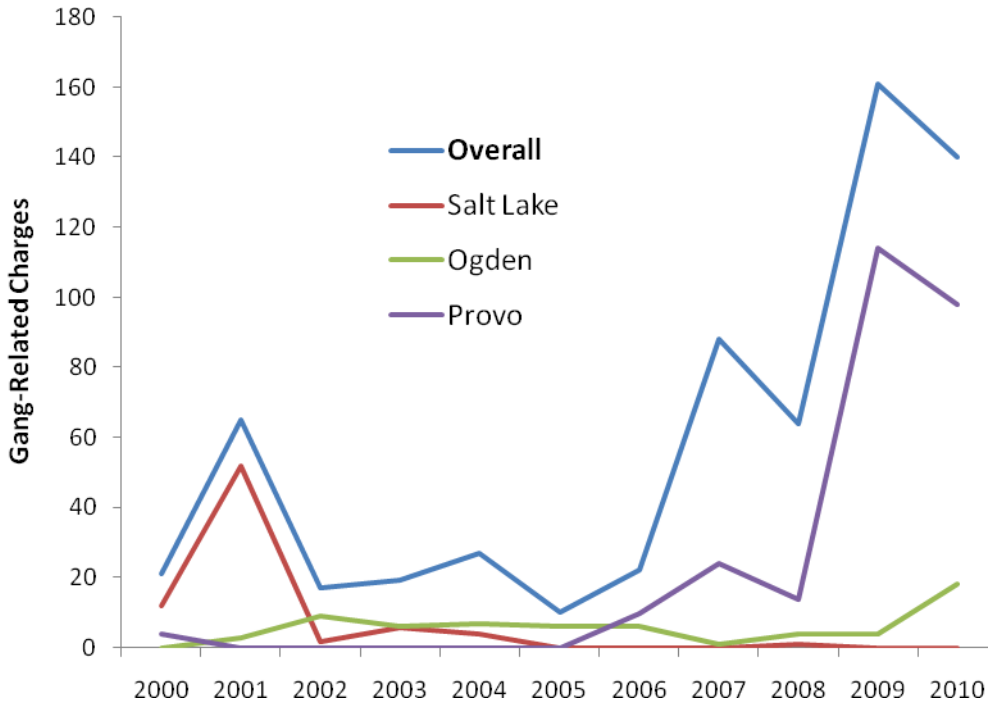

Figure 1. Number of gang-related charges recorded in CORIS (gang attribute field affirmative) by year overall, and for Salt Lake, Ogden, and Provo district courts (data pulled on December 2, 2010).

Juvenile Court Data: CARE[3]

The Courts and Agencies Records Exchange (CARE) database includes juvenile court records and intake and supervision probation records statewide. It is also run through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Currently, a field exists in the CARE database to show whether a crime was gang-related. This field is also a "flag" that can be checked at the incident level (individual offense level). **Currently, this flag is rarely used in the CARE database, and any data using this flag is not considered reliable.** Feedback from staff members suggests that this is due to variety of factors, including the lack of a standardized statewide definition of what constitutes a "gang-related" crime. Questions have been raised concerning whether a crime should be included if the victim is a gang member, if the perpetrator is a gang member, or if any individual involved is a gang member. Issues related to what defines a person as a gang member and what safeties are in place to ensure juveniles are not inappropriately classified have also been raised. In addition, **any legal or ethical issues would need to be addressed before a statewide definition could be adopted for use in the CARE database**. In the case of this database with sensitive juvenile information, it is likely best that the Court determine its own criteria for what will be considered a gang crime and to ensure that the standard is applied when cases are entered.

[3] Based in part on information provided by Raechel Lizon, Administrative Office of the Courts

Arrest Data: Criminal History System (UCCH) & Incident-Based Reporting (NIBRS)[4]

The Utah Criminal History System (UCCH) is a statewide repository of arrest and disposition data, and serves to assist law enforcement with vital information about the criminal history and potential warrants issued on individuals they may have in custody, as well as employers and others who request background checks of individuals. UCCH is operated by the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) within the Utah Department of Public Safety. Like O-Track, UCCH is also an individual-level database, and records demographic information, arrests, dispositions, and other data based on an individual's state identification number (SID). **The UCCH "rap" sheets do not currently provide any information to indicate whether a crime was gang-related or not, and there is no background or history information to indicate whether a given offender is (or has ever been) a member of a criminal gang.**

The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) is an updated method of collecting crime data within the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. In an incident based reporting (IBR) system, computer technology is used to collect more detailed and comprehensive information about the crimes that occur. Much of the information in the database comes out of the reports that are filed by law enforcement agencies when a criminal incident occurs (i.e., police reports). Because IBR collects details about the offenses, victims, offenders, property, and arrests involved in each crime incident, it is possible to analyze various aspects of the crime which is occurring in the state. The Utah Incident Based Reporting System was implemented in 1991, and is also operated through BCI in the Utah Department of Public Safety. The IBR database relies on the reporting of local law enforcement agencies to the statewide repository, and historically around 75% of agencies in the state have provided data to BCI. Thus, the database does not provide complete coverage of the state.

Until recently, Utah's IBR system included a gang field that allowed law enforcement agencies to "flag" incidents they believed to be gang-related. Unfortunately, the field was optional and the gang data that BCI gathered was spotty, inconsistent, and not very reliable. This conclusion was confirmed by a CCJJ analysis of the use of the gang field in NIBRS for a group of serious offenses (i.e., kidnapping, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, intimidation, forcible rape and sexual assault, and murder and manslaughter) that were submitted between 2000 and 2008. This analysis found that **only 12.3% of the incidents during this time period had the gang field marked (whether yes or no)**, with some larger agencies such as Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Ogden, Weber County, Taylorsville, Roy, Logan, and Clearfield not marking it for any incidents during the period (and most others below 40%). **Gang-related percentages for the offenses analyzed during this period will not be reported, as they have been deemed unreliable. BCI has since decided to discontinue the gathering of this data.**

Prosecutor Data: PIMS[5]

The Prosecution Information Management System (PIMS) is the database used by prosecuting agencies across the state of Utah to facilitate the filing of criminal charges and document the progress and disposition of those cases. The program has been in use since 2008 and it is frequently updated and refined. Historically, PIMS has not provided an accurate method for gathering information on gang

[4] Based in part on information provided by Mary Ann Curtis and Adrienne Sowards, Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI), and BCI's annual *Crime in Utah* reports

[5] Based in part on information provided by Ronald Weight, Utah Prosecution Council

related cases. The most recent version of PIMS (3.2.0.x), however, includes a checkbox for various enhancements or charge modifiers, one of which is a checkbox for the group enhancement (commonly associated with gang cases), and a gang designation. These additions would allow the program to provide specific data related to these types of cases. **While this version of PIMS is available and in use in some areas around the state, it is not yet in use in all areas of the state, and so is not yet capable of providing any meaningful data.** Once all areas begin to use the latest version of the database, this should become a much more valuable resource for gang data, assuming there is adequate training on the new features for those that enter data into the system so that they are consistently and reliably used.

Local Agency/Task Force Data[6]

Local law enforcement agency and inter-agency task force data on gangs is also quite difficult to obtain and summarize in a format that is consistent across agencies and groups. **This again arises out of the problem of not necessarily having a standardized definition of who is a gang member or what is a gang crime across jurisdictions.** Data from some of the task forces in the larger metropolitan areas with greater degrees of gang issues, however, can be considered to be of satisfactory reliability for some of the purposes of this report. For example, the largest inter-agency task force, the Salt Lake Area Gang Project, produces annual reports documenting the number of gangs and gang members identified, race/ethnicity information on identified gang members, the number and type of gang-related crimes, and other data about the activities of the group.

In their latest report summarizing the 2010 calendar year, the group had identified 2225 individual gang members in the area. 48.2% of these gang members were Hispanic, 34.5% White, 5.4% Black, 5.2% Pacific Islander, 3.5% Asian, 1.5% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1.7% Other. Additionally, identified gang members are mostly male (91.1%). In the past five years, the number of identified gang members has remained relatively stable at just over 2000 (low of 2213 in 2008, high of 2433 in 2006). Data on gang-related crimes over the past 9 years of reports by the Salt Lake Area Gang Project was also analyzed to determine the most common types of gang-related crimes. Graffiti was by far the most common gang-related crime, making up 87.4% of the gang-related offenses reported over this period. Of the remaining 12.6% of crimes that were non-graffiti, the most common at 29.7% were categorized as violent offenses (23.7% were assaultive crimes – 14.6% simple, 9.1% aggravated). An additional 24.7% were classified as public peace crimes, 15.4% non-graffiti property crimes (i.e., burglary, theft, vandalism, motor vehicle theft), and 8.2% drug/alcohol-related offenses.

Other, more limited data was also obtained from the Ogden/Weber County Gang Task Force and the Washington County Sheriff's Office/Washington County Task Force. According to the Ogden/Weber Task Force, 1831 individual gang members were identified in 2009, the latest year available at the time of inquiry. Race/ethnicity information about the identified gang members was available for 2008, when 1950 gang members were identified by the task force – 64.3% were Hispanic, 27.4% White, 5.3% Black, 1.1% Asian, 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1.4% Other. The Ogden/Weber Task Force also reported that 19.6% of gang-related crimes in 2008 and 19.3% in 2009 were aggravated assaults. In

[6] Based in part on information provided by Marilynn Felkner, Salt Lake Area Gang Project; Vernon Hairston, Ogden/Weber County Metro Gang Task Force; Detective Situli Tafili, Washington County Sheriff's Office; and annual reports to CCJJ for task force grant funding

Washington County, the Sheriff's Office reported 370 documented gang members, while the Task Force reported 604 individual gang members or associates. Of the 370 documented by the Sheriff's Office, 55.1% were Hispanic, 33.2% White, 6.2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.2% Black, 0.5% Pacific Islander, and 2.7% Other.

USOE School Incident Report Database[7]

When disciplinary incidents occur in schools, administrators and staff fill out a report detailing the incident. These reports must be compiled annually at the end of the school year and filed with the Utah State Office of Education (USOE). On the report forms, there is an option to mark whether or not the incident was gang-related. For this section, we analyzed this gang-related incident data reported to the USOE for school years ending 2006-2010 (5 years), looking at the types of incidents most likely to get flagged as gang-related and comparing the districts that have reported gang-related incidents. **It should be strongly noted that there has not to date been a formal standard policy on when to flag incidents as gang-related, and the option has not been used in a systematic manner across districts.**

Overall, based on data reported, gang-related incidents indicated by use of the gang "flag" in the incident database are relatively rare as a percentage of overall reported incidents across the state. The gang flag accounts for consistently less than 3% of overall incidents reported. **The three most prevalent specific incident types to be reported as gang-related during this time period are disorderly conduct, simple assault/battery, and threat/intimidation.** All of the specific incident types for each year were then categorized into six different broader categories of violations: Property (i.e., vandalism, larceny/theft), Person/Violent (i.e., assaults, bullying, threats/intimidation), Sex (i.e., rape, sexual assault, forcible sexual abuse), Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco, Weapons (i.e., knife, handgun), and "Other" (disorderly conduct, loitering/trespassing, truancy, incidents not classified). Figure 2 combines the five years together to show the overall number and percentage of gang-related incidents that fell into each of the six categories (there were no significant differences from year to year). Besides the "Other" category (49.1%, the majority of which was disorderly conduct), the Person/Violent category was the most prevalent category within the gang-related offenses (37.9% over the five years). The least prevalent categories for the gang-related offenses were Sex (0.9%) and Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco (1.7%).

The data were also compiled by school district. Of the 41 school districts in Utah, 22 (53.7%) used the gang field to report at least one gang incident over the five-year period. There is a great deal of variability, though gang-related incidents are being recorded in schools in many different areas around the state, including outside of the Wasatch Front counties. **There are, however, inconsistencies in the reporting of this data at the district level. It is difficult to determine if missing data in a given year means that no gang-related incidents occurred, or if they simply were not reported.** For example, Salt Lake City School District has no data for 2006, 2007, or 2008, but then 35 incidents in 2009.

[7] Based in part on information provided by Verne Larsen, Utah State Office of Education

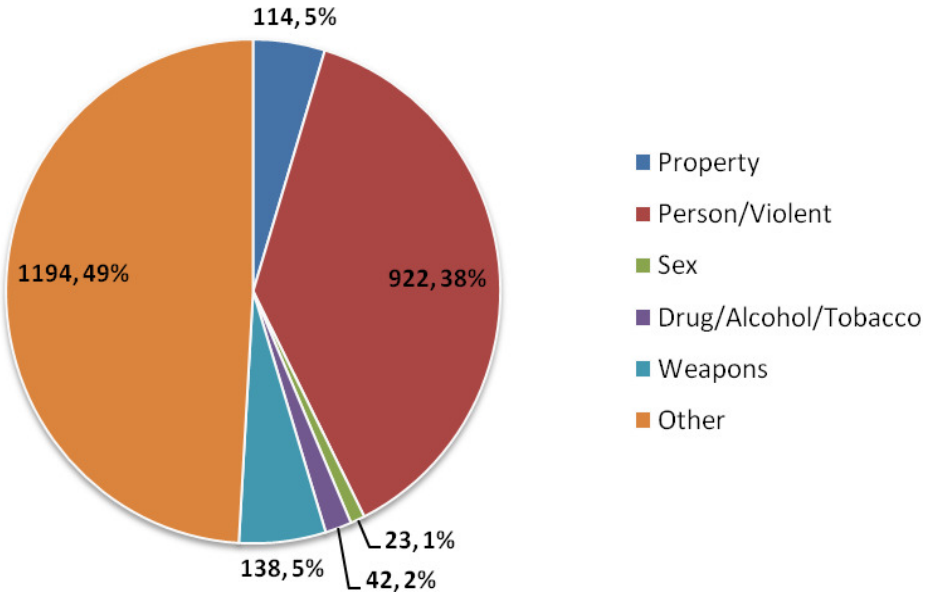

Figure 2. Classification by category of all gang-related incidents reported by Utah schools between 2006-2010 (the given school year ended in the date specified). "Other" includes disorderly conduct, loitering/trespassing, truancy, and incidents not classified.

Summary, Limitations, & Recommendations

As discussed in the subsections above, there is a large amount of objective data being collected in relation to gangs across the state. Unfortunately, in most cases, there are also a large number of questions about this data. Apart from the O-Track prison data and some of the data collected by large inter-agency gang task forces, it is hard to be confident in much of the data being collected from the sources discussed. While some recent changes have been made in several of the databases that might lead to better data in the future (i.e., O-Track AP&P data, PIMS), the main culprit in the lack of confidence surrounding this data is the reality that many of the fields available for tracking gang members and gang-related crimes are not being utilized, and/or are not being recorded consistently within and across departments, agencies, and districts when they are utilized.

This lack of consistency and reliability in the data being collected across the state can be explained in large part by two related factors: 1) a lack of a standardized statewide definition of what a "gang member" and a "gang-related crime" are, and 2) a lack of training that would allow all individuals who enter such data into these databases to consistently and accurately keep track of such information. The best data tends to come from sources where the "experts" screen and verify the data that is entered, though it is hard to imagine a situation where such a model would be possible across agencies and databases. There are other issues, especially with data pertaining to juveniles (see description within the subsection for the CARE database above), but if standardized definitions can be determined that are then passed on in training to others who are the gatekeepers of this data, then we might see some progress in the quality of the data.

Apart from the changes already discussed (either recently implemented or on the horizon) that may improve data in both O-Track (especially the AP&P data) and PIMS, there is another development in

law enforcement data that has the potential to improve information about gangs and gang crime. Law enforcement officials across the state are working on bringing a statewide Gang Database to Utah.[8] Agencies hope that a statewide law enforcement database where information is submitted on a consistent basis (and based on a common definition of a gang member) will help to solve some of the problems that have been discussed in relation to the currently available data. Ideally, law enforcement gang investigators throughout the state will be trained on the criteria for entry into the database and then responsible for vetting the information submitted by other officers before the data is accepted (similar to the DOC process within the prison). This database will mainly be a tool for law enforcement, providing a way to share intelligence on known gang members and allowing for law enforcement administrators to better direct the activities of their staff towards prevention, intervention, and suppression (using features such as a mapping function to show areas where activities are most needed). It should also assist in the prosecution of known gang members by being able to track their gang memberships and who they associate with (especially when applying state or federal enhancements). It is unclear at this time how this information might be available to researchers for tracking gang activity and producing future public reports such as this one. But, it has potential to assist research and is worth following these efforts as they develop in the near future.

Beyond its current limitations, there are several points that can be taken away from the data that was analyzed from these sources that are available. One is that there appear to be a large percentage of gang members in Salt Lake and Weber counties (see the analysis of the court of conviction of offenders in prison), even when taking into account that these are two of the largest counties in the state (percentage of gang members in prison are higher than their proportion of the state population). Second, even while discounting the reliability of much of the data examined, gang activities appear to be occurring to varying degrees in many parts of the state, even beyond the larger areas that are known and are currently receiving resources to fight it. Finally, it appears that gangs are engaging in a relatively high percentage of violent crimes (especially assaults) and disruptive activities (i.e., disorderly conduct, etc.) in our communities, schools, and prisons. We will track these themes through the next two sections as well, and summarize them in greater length at the end of the report.

[8] Information about the statewide Gang Database provided by Deputy Chief Terry Fritz, Salt Lake City Police.

Youth Self-Report Data: Description, Limitations, & Recommendations

A second step in the assessment plan was to look at data from surveys that ask youth directly about their experiences with gangs and related issues (i.e., antisocial behavior). While there are obvious problems with self-report data in general, including the fact that youth may misrepresent their true experiences, this is also a very valuable perspective to any gang assessment. Additionally, the survey data to be described is from a comprehensive statewide survey with a large number of respondents over multiple years, which alleviates some concerns about error due to lying or misrepresentation in self-reports. Such a large statewide sample also allows tracking of the problem in some areas of the state where there is not otherwise a large amount of data.

SHARP Survey of Middle/High School Students

The Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey is conducted every other year on a large representative sample of youth in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12, and data is available from 2003 through the most recent assessment in the spring of 2011 (five total datasets). Its main purpose is to assess risk and protective factors for substance abuse and antisocial behavior[9]. Along with the other risk and protective factors (community, family, school, cognitive-attitudinal, social-behavioral), there is a question that asks youth if they have ever been involved in a gang, or if they have interest in joining a gang. In the most recent 2011 assessment, several new questions were added to assess the main reasons why youth decide to join gangs (i.e., the tangible and psychological functions that a gang identity serves for the youth), to help better inform prevention and intervention programs. Answers to these questions, as well as how they relate to various demographic factors, other risk/protective factors, and antisocial outcomes, are discussed in this section.

Trends in Reported Gang Involvement

Roughly 4-5% of youth across grade levels report involvement in a gang either at present or sometime in the past, and this percentage is down to its lowest point (4.0%) in the latest survey conducted in early 2011 (down from 4.9% in 2007). Based on all five SHARPS datasets, gang involvement appears to peak in Grade 8 (see Figure 3 for these trends). Over the five assessments, the average involvement in Grade 8 is 5.5% (high of 5.9% in 2007), followed by Grade 10 at 5.0%. While gang involvement appears to fall off in Grade 12, this could be influenced by increased school dropout rates by gang members. Additionally, gang involvement has increased over the five assessment periods within Grade 12.

Table 5 also shows the trends by region compared to the statewide percentages over the past three survey assessments. As this survey is conducted for the Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), the analysis is broken down by local substance abuse authority regions (which do not correspond to single counties in some cases – see the notes below Table 5 for the breakdown of multi-county regions). While there is much variability, youth appear to be involved in gangs in most parts of the state. As with the overall trends, self-reported gang involvement is down in many regions in the latest 2011 assessment. Data in Table 5 are sorted by overall self-report rates in 2011.

[9] The survey is funded by the Utah Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). See the reports at http://www.dsamh.utah.gov/sharp.htm for more information. Data were collected and provided by Bach Harrison, LLC.

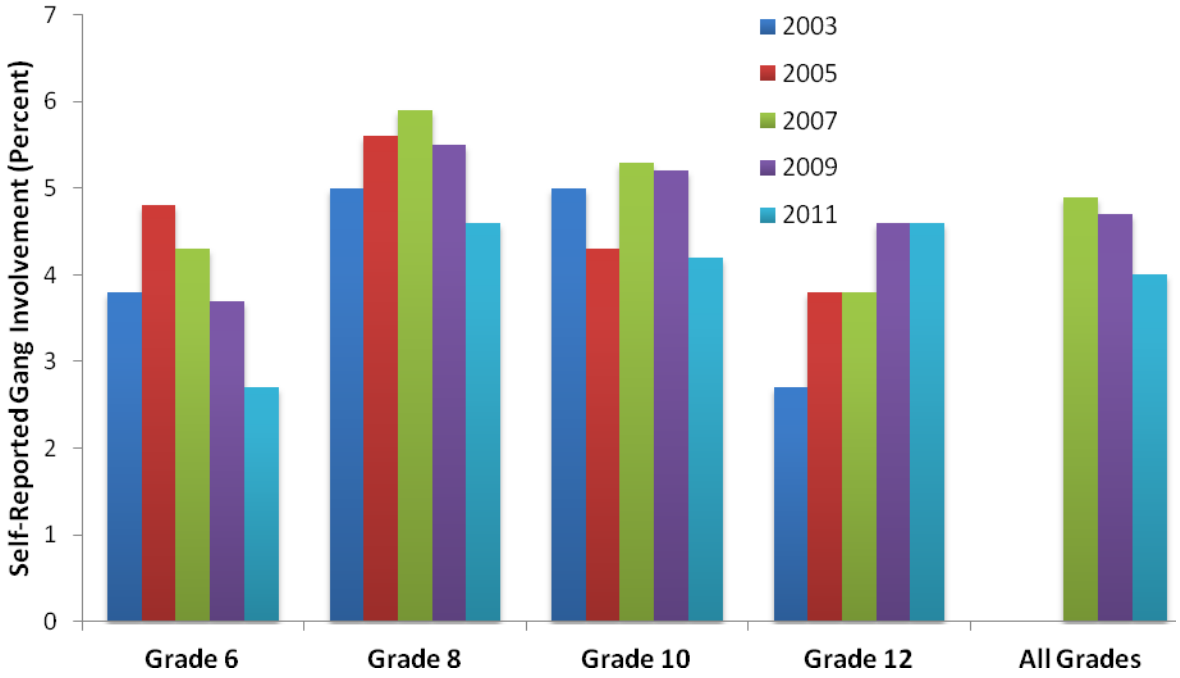

Figure 3. Statewide trends in student self-reported gang involvement by grade level (from Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] surveys, 2003-2011).

Factors Related to Gang Involvement and Interest in Joining a Gang (2009 & 2011 Surveys)

In addition to the basic trend and regional analysis from the historical datasets above, further analysis was performed on the 2009 and 2011 datasets to explore the demographic and risk/protective factors most likely to predict gang involvement and interest in joining a gang. To do this, two binary outcome variables were created based on responses to the question about gang involvement. "**Gang Involved**" was defined as it was above, with affirmative answers ("yes, currently"; "yes, in the past"; or "yes, but I'd like to get out") coded as 1 and negative answers ("no, never" and "no, but I'm interested in joining") coded as 0. "**Gang Interest**" was defined using only the youth who answered with one of the negative options, with "no, but I'm interested in joining" coded as 1 and "no, never" coded as 0.

Using each of these outcome variables, logistic regression models were constructed that included demographic variables (age, sex, minority status) and risk/protective factors (community, family, school, cognitive-attitudinal, and social-behavioral) as predictors to see which factors were most related to gang involvement and interest. As all of these factors are highly related to one another, this full model allows a test of which factors are better at predicting these outcomes (when controlling for the common variance they share with each other).

Separate analyses were conducted on the risk/protective factor categories, as well as the individual factor scales that make up these five categories. In each assessment year, the SHARP survey contains two different versions (A & B) that allow the assessment of questions common to both versions as well as to expand the number of questions that are assessed in total without making the survey too long. Thus, some of the questions that assess a particular risk/protective factor may not be in both versions.

Table 5. Student self-reported gang involvement (percentages) by region, grade, and survey year (from Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] surveys, 2007-2011). Data are sorted on 2011 percentages for all grades (highest to lowest).

	Grade 6			Grade 8			Grade 10			Grade 12			All Grades		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
Statewide	**4.3**	**3.7**	**2.7**	**5.9**	**5.5**	**4.6**	**5.3**	**5.2**	**4.2**	**3.8**	**4.6**	**4.6**	**4.9**	**4.7**	**4.0**
Tooele County	5.6	5.2	4.7	7.1	8.3	6.9	7.2	6.0	5.8	5.9	6.0	8.2	6.4	6.4	6.3
Four Corners District*	8.6	8.3	2.4	8.5	6.3	7.4	7.0	3.8	4.9	3.4	4.0	5.5	6.8	5.6	5.0
Salt Lake County	5.1	4.0	3.2	5.7	5.8	6.0	5.7	5.2	5.5	5.4	4.7	4.6	5.5	5.0	4.8
Central Utah*	4.5	6.3	3.8	3.8	6.7	4.0	4.8	5.0	4.0	4.7	3.8	5.8	4.4	5.4	4.3
Weber-Morgan Counties	3.1	3.3	2.4	9.4	7.0	3.9	6.4	6.2	3.7	2.8	6.0	6.1	5.3	5.6	4.0
Southwest District*	5.4	5.7	3.9	7.9	4.5	2.5	4.9	4.6	4.2	2.3	5.0	4.7	5.2	5.0	3.8
San Juan County	7.6	5.1	1.8	3.8	6.2	2.6	13.5	4.3	2.3	-	-	7.4	6.2	3.9	3.7
Wasatch County	2.4	4.4	1.8	5.1	4.2	2.5	7.9	5.0	4.2	7.8	7.8	5.9	5.8	5.3	3.5
Bear River District*	4.2	3.2	3.1	5.4	4.1	3.7	4.0	5.4	4.0	1.3	4.0	2.6	3.7	4.2	3.4
Davis County	3.7	2.6	2.3	6.2	4.9	4.9	6.5	7.6	2.0	4.1	4.8	4.1	5.1	4.9	3.3
Northeastern District*	4.9	5.8	3.7	5.9	3.9	4.4	3.8	7.8	3.1	3.9	2.9	1.9	4.6	5.2	3.3
Utah County	3.3	2.3	1.4	4.4	5.0	3.3	3.6	2.8	3.8	2.3	4.2	4.5	3.4	3.6	3.2
Summit County	0.6	1.6	1.6	3.2	4.2	3.0	1.5	1.8	2.8	1.7	2.0	3.0	1.7	2.4	2.6

* Bear River District = Box Elder, Cache, & Rich Counties; Central Utah = Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, & Wayne Counties; Four Corners District = Carbon, Emery, & Grand Counties; Northeastern District = Dagget, Duchesne, & Uintah Counties; Southwest District = Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, & Washington Counties

The individual risk/protective factors by category are as follows:

1. **Community** Factor Category
    a. Low Neighborhood Attachment (Form A only)
    b. Laws/Norms Favorable to Drug Use and Other Antisocial Behavior (A & B)
    c. Perceived Availability of Drugs in Community (A only)
    d. Perceived Availability of Handguns in Community (A only)
    e. Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (A only)
2. **Family** Factor Category
    a. Poor Family Management (A & B)
    b. Family Conflict (A only)
    c. Family History of Antisocial Behavior (A only)
    d. Parental Attitudes Favorable to Drug Use (A & B)
    e. Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behavior (A & B)
    f. Family Attachment (B only)
    g. Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (B only)
    h. Family Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (B only)
3. **School** Factor Category
    a. Academic Failure (A & B)
    b. Low Commitment to School (A & B)
    c. School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (A & B)
    d. School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (A & B)
4. **Cognitive-Attitudinal** Factor Category
    a. Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior (A & B)
    b. Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use (A & B)
    c. Perceived Risks of Drug Use (A only)
    d. Perceived Rewards for Antisocial Involvement (A only)
    e. Low Self-Esteem/Depressive Symptoms (A & B)
    f. Belief in Moral Order/Right vs. Wrong (A & B)
    g. Perceived Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (A & B)
5. **Social-Behavioral** Factor Category
    a. Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior (A & B)
    b. Early Initiation of Drug Use (A & B)
    c. Interaction With Antisocial Peers (A & B)
    d. Rebelliousness (A only)
    e. Friends Use of Drugs (A & B)
    f. Intentions to Use Drugs (B only)
    g. Prosocial Involvement (A & B)
    h. Interaction With Prosocial Peers (A only)

Table 6 displays the individual factors that were most predictive of gang involvement for the entire sample (there were no substantial differences in the models by grade level), while Table 7 displays the individual factors that were most predictive of gang interest. Only factors that showed a significant effect on the outcome variables in at least one of the four versions over the two years of assessment appear in these tables (sorted by overall average effects in the last two columns). Apart from the magnitude of the effect, the tables provide Odds Ratios (OR), which tell us the likelihood (or odds) that

as a given predictive factor increases in value (or, in the case of certain demographics, the category changes from female to male or non-minority to minority), it will either increase or decrease the chance of being classified into the outcome category. Thus, **scores above 1 increase the chances, while scores below 1 decrease them**. For example, if a given protective factor has an Odds Ratio of .75, it means that high scores decrease the likelihood of the outcome (i.e., gang involvement) by a factor of .75. On the other hand if a given risk factor has an Odds Ratio of 2, it means that high scores are twice as likely to be categorized as gang involved.

Most of the risk/protective indices were associated with gang involvement on their own (univariate analyses). When all of the factors are included in the regression models (multivariate analyses), however, the most effective predictors of gang involvement tended to be individual Cognitive-Attitudinal and Social-Behavior factors. For example, **high scorers on factors involving early initiation of antisocial behavior and drug use, as well as interaction with antisocial peers (all Social-Behavioral factors), were more than 1.3 times more likely to be involved in a gang (at present or in the past)**. The Cognitive-Attitudinal factors most related to gang involvement were low self-esteem/depression and attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior, while a perceived availability of handguns in the youth's neighborhood (a Community factor) was also influential. **For gang interest, Cognitive-Attitudinal factors such as low self-esteem/depression and attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior were most influential, with high scorers on these two factors (who were not yet involved in a gang) being one and a half times more likely to report interest**. In terms of demographics, **male and minority youth were most at risk** (especially for gang involvement), even when controlling for the potential differences in risk/protective factors. Age was not as influential of a predictor for either outcome, though these effects suggested that younger youth tended to be more at risk.

Tables 8a and 8b present a similar analysis on the two outcomes using the five overall composite categories, which combine the given factors within each category together. This provides more evidence of which factor categories are most influential in gang involvement and interest. Table 8a shows that the Social-Behavioral factors are most influential to gang involvement, while Table 8b shows that the Cognitive-Attitudinal factors are most influential to interest in joining a gang for those who have not yet become involved. In other words, **those who score highest on the Social-Behavioral composite are <u>two and a half times more likely</u> to report gang involvement (current or past)**, and **those not yet involved in a gang who score highest on the Cognitive-Attitudinal composite are <u>almost three times more likely</u> to report having interest in joining a gang**. Again, the former finding could be as much related to the possibility that these factors increase ***after*** youth join a gang as is the idea that involvement in such activities led to gang involvement – either way, these factors help to differentiate gang-involved youth from the rest of the middle/high school student population.

Overall, these results appear to provide support for cognitive-behavioral prevention and intervention efforts, though all other outside factors (community, family, school) are also important determinants of gang involvement and interest on their own and should be taken into consideration as well.

Table 6. Demographic, risk, and protective factors that best predict likelihood of **gang involvement** (from Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] surveys, 2009 & 2011), sorted by average effect over the two assessment years.

	2009				2011					
	Form A		Form B		Form A		Form B		Average	
Significant Demographic and Risk/Protective Factors	**Effect***	**OR***	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**
Minority	83.05	2.21	102.32	2.53	63.30	1.94	64.47	1.90	**78.29**	**2.15**
Male	28.30	1.67	29.09	1.70	37.09	1.76	49.16	1.85	**35.91**	**1.75**
Age	10.78	0.83	6.35	0.87	7.44	0.87	*2.99*	*0.92*	**6.89**	**0.87**
Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior (Social-Behavioral)	58.66	1.34	71.19	1.42	108.49	1.38	151.01	1.43	**97.34**	**1.39**
Early Initiation of Drug Use (Social-Behavioral)	49.30	1.39	40.02	1.38	47.61	1.31	46.42	1.30	**45.84**	**1.35**
Interaction with Antisocial Peers (Social-Behavioral)	55.35	1.41	55.14	1.43	27.96	1.19	40.82	1.23	**44.82**	**1.32**
Low Self-Esteem/Depressive Symptoms (Cognitive)	39.79	1.32	35.46	1.33	30.82	1.28	45.02	1.32	**37.77**	**1.31**
Perceived Availability of Handguns (Community)	18.52	1.21	-	-	18.85	1.19	-	-	**18.69**	**1.20**
Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior (Cognitive)	14.82	1.27	13.78	1.27	16.03	1.22	20.95	1.25	**16.40**	**1.25**
Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behavior (Family)	5.04	1.11	*0.01*	*1.00*	10.40	1.14	15.17	1.17	**7.66**	**1.11**
Belief in Moral Order/Right vs. Wrong (Cognitive)	3.60	0.89	19.09	0.75	*1.32*	*0.94*	*3.21*	*0.91*	**6.81**	**0.87**
Academic Failure (School)	7.75	1.13	8.94	1.15	4.30	1.09	4.91	1.09	**6.48**	**1.12**
Parental Attitudes Favorable to Drug Use (Family)	8.41	0.87	*0.46*	*1.03*	5.74	0.92	4.97	0.93	**4.90**	**0.94**
Poor Family Management (Family)	7.74	1.15	5.10	1.14	*0.04*	*1.01*	*0.39*	*1.03*	**3.32**	**1.08**
Family History of Antisocial Behavior (Family)	*0.19*	*1.02*	-	-	5.95	1.11	-	-	**3.07**	**1.07**
Intentions to Use Drugs (Social-Behavioral)	-	-	*0.03*	*1.01*	-	-	5.95	1.11	**2.99**	**1.06**
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (Family)	-	-	*1.25*	*0.93*	-	-	3.88	0.89	**2.57**	**0.91**
Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use (Cognitive)	*0.03*	*0.99*	4.64	0.87	*1.75*	*0.94*	3.49	0.92	**2.48**	**0.93**
Friends Use of Drugs (Social-Behavioral)	5.38	0.87	*2.64*	*0.91*	*0.69*	*0.96*	*0.70*	*0.96*	**2.35**	**0.93**
Number of Respondents (N)	16,357		15,179		20,978		21,897			
Percent of Variance in Gang Involvement Explained	34.4%		32.7%		31.3%		31.5%			

Note: Factors in red significantly increased the chance of gang involvement, while those in green significantly decreased the chance of gang involvement. The 8 bolded and highlighted factors had the greatest impact on gang involvement, in terms of average effect size over the two years and survey versions.

*"Effect" is the Wald statistic, a measure of the overall effect a given predictor variable has on the outcome; "OR" is the Odds Ratio, which shows the impact any increase in the value of the predictor variable will have on the likelihood of the outcome occurring.

Table 7. Demographic, risk, and protective factors that best predict likelihood of **interest in joining a gang** (from Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] surveys, 2009 & 2011), sorted by average effect over the two assessment years.

	2009				2011					
	Form A		Form B		Form A		Form B		Average	
Significant Demographic and Risk/Protective Factors	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**
Male	*1.06*	*1.19*	*0.05*	*0.97*	14.90	1.88	16.87	1.90	**8.22**	**1.49**
Minority	12.91	1.77	7.24	1.54	5.86	1.44	4.59	1.37	**7.65**	**1.53**
Age	*0.22*	*0.96*	5.97	0.79	*3.36*	*0.84*	*2.16*	*0.88*	**2.93**	**0.87**
Low Self-Esteem/Depressive Symptoms (Cognitive)	19.99	1.42	3.35	1.16	28.17	1.52	60.80	1.80	**28.08**	**1.48**
Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior (Cognitive)	9.55	1.38	28.76	1.76	12.76	1.37	21.67	1.48	**18.19**	**1.50**
Intentions to Use Drugs (Social-Behavioral)	-	-	16.82	1.46	-	-	8.89	1.26	**12.86**	**1.36**
Belief in Moral Order/Right vs. Wrong (Cognitive)	7.07	0.74	20.51	0.61	4.90	0.81	8.13	0.77	**10.15**	**0.73**
Interaction with Antisocial Peers (Social-Behavioral)	9.81	1.31	11.60	1.33	5.22	1.15	10.08	1.20	**9.18**	**1.25**
Rebelliousness (Social-Behavioral)	11.61	1.35	-	-	5.67	1.20	-	-	**8.64**	**1.28**
Perceived Rewards for Antisocial Involvement (Cognitive)	11.37	1.26	-	-	5.21	1.15	-	-	**8.29**	**1.21**
Low Commitment to School (School)	*1.61*	*1.13*	*1.78*	*1.14*	8.37	1.30	11.34	1.34	**5.78**	**1.23**
Early Initiation of Drug Use (Social-Behavioral)	*0.87*	*1.09*	*2.62*	*0.86*	7.87	1.22	6.73	1.20	**4.52**	**1.09**
Friends Use of Drugs (Social-Behavioral)	7.72	0.74	*1.88*	*0.87*	*0.55*	*0.94*	*2.40*	*0.88*	**3.14**	**0.86**
Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behavior (Family)	*1.03*	*1.08*	*1.42*	*1.09*	3.99	1.15	5.86	1.17	**3.08**	**1.12**
Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior (Social-Behavioral)	7.58	1.22	*2.03*	*1.11*	*0.40*	*1.04*	*0.95*	*1.06*	**2.74**	**1.11**
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (School)	*0.80*	*0.92*	4.26	0.82	*1.76*	*0.89*	*1.97*	*0.88*	**2.20**	**0.88**
Poor Family Management (Family)	*1.67*	*1.13*	*1.51*	*1.13*	*0.57*	*1.06*	4.56	1.20	**2.08**	**1.13**
Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use (Cognitive)	*0.31*	*1.05*	*0.32*	*0.95*	*1.52*	*0.91*	5.23	0.83	**1.85**	**0.94**
Number of Respondents (N)	15,554		14,483		20,139		21,007			
Percent of Variance in Gang Interest Explained	24.0%		22.7%		23.2%		23.8%			

Note: Factors in red significantly increased the chance of gang interest, while those in green significantly decreased the chance of gang interest, for those who were not already gang-involved. The 8 bolded and highlighted factors had the greatest impact on gang involvement, in terms of average effect size over the two years and survey versions.

*"Effect" is the Wald statistic, a measure of the overall effect a given predictor variable has on the outcome; "OR" is the Odds Ratio, which shows the impact any increase in the value of the predictor variable will have on the likelihood of the outcome occurring.

Table 8. Risk and protective factor categories that best predict likelihood of a) gang involvement and b) interest in joining a gang (from Student Health and Risk Prevention [SHARP] surveys, 2009 & 2011), sorted by average effect over the two assessment years.

a) Gang Involvement (Current or Past)

	2009				2011					
	Form A		Form B		Form A		Form B		Average	
Risk/Protective Factor Categories	**Effect***	**OR***	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**
Social-Behavioral	175.92	3.22	194.51	2.80	252.69	1.99	347.99	1.92	**242.78**	**2.48**
Cognitive	37.31	1.77	41.45	1.80	10.35	1.19	36.61	1.36	**31.43**	**1.53**
Family	*2.75*	*1.14*	7.19	1.24	15.55	1.20	10.07	1.16	**8.89**	**1.19**
Community	7.39	1.26	*0.08*	*0.99*	18.08	1.25	*0.64*	*1.03*	**6.55**	**1.13**
School	5.58	1.17	*0.78*	*0.94*	*0.19*	*1.02*	4.06	1.09	**2.65**	**1.06**
Percent of Variance in Gang Involvement Explained	30.3%		28.7%		27.4%		27.5%			

b) Gang Interest (Students Not Involved in a Gang Currently or In Past)

	2009				2011					
	Form A		Form B		Form A		Form B		Average	
Risk/Protective Factor Categories	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**	**Effect**	**OR**
Cognitive	50.56	3.26	72.61	3.60	42.82	1.85	75.12	2.13	**60.28**	**2.71**
Social-Behavioral	9.27	1.64	*2.57*	*1.23*	4.74	1.19	12.08	1.26	**7.17**	**1.33**
School	4.10	1.28	*0.01*	*1.01*	10.91	1.29	11.61	1.30	**6.66**	**1.22**
Family	*0.71*	*1.12*	*1.33*	*1.16*	5.36	1.20	*0.01*	*1.01*	1.85	1.12
Community	*0.86*	*1.16*	*0.00*	*1.00*	*2.97*	*1.18*	*0.78*	*1.07*	1.15	1.10
Percent of Variance in Gang Interest Explained	19.5%		17.1%		18.6%		18.8%			

Note: Composites were created by combining the individual factors listed on Page 18 available for each form (adding risk factor scores and subtracting protective factor scores, then dividing by the total number of category factors) – thus, the composite category represents accumulated risk.

*"Effect" is the Wald statistic, a measure of the overall effect a given predictor variable has on the outcome; "OR" is the Odds Ratio, which shows the impact any increase in the value of the predictor variable will have on the likelihood of the outcome occurring.

Gang Involvement, Interest in Joining a Gang, and Antisocial Outcomes (2009 Survey)

Both gang involvement and interest in joining a gang were related to antisocial outcomes (i.e., violence, drug use, arrest, suspension, etc. in previous year) in the 2009 dataset, compared to those youth who are not involved and not interested. As Figure 4 shows, involved and interested youth do not differ in Grade 6, but then the involved youth have higher antisocial scores in the other three grade levels (though interested youth remain significantly higher than other youth). Of course, it is possible that continued involvement in antisocial activities by interested youth may eventually lead to joining a gang (in addition to gang involvement promoting antisocial activity). Additionally, using the risk/protective factor categories from the previous section (see Table 8) along with gang involvement in regression analyses predicting antisocial outcomes, only the Social-Behavioral category (average effect [β] = .42) was a stronger predictor than simple gang involvement (average effect [β] = .16).

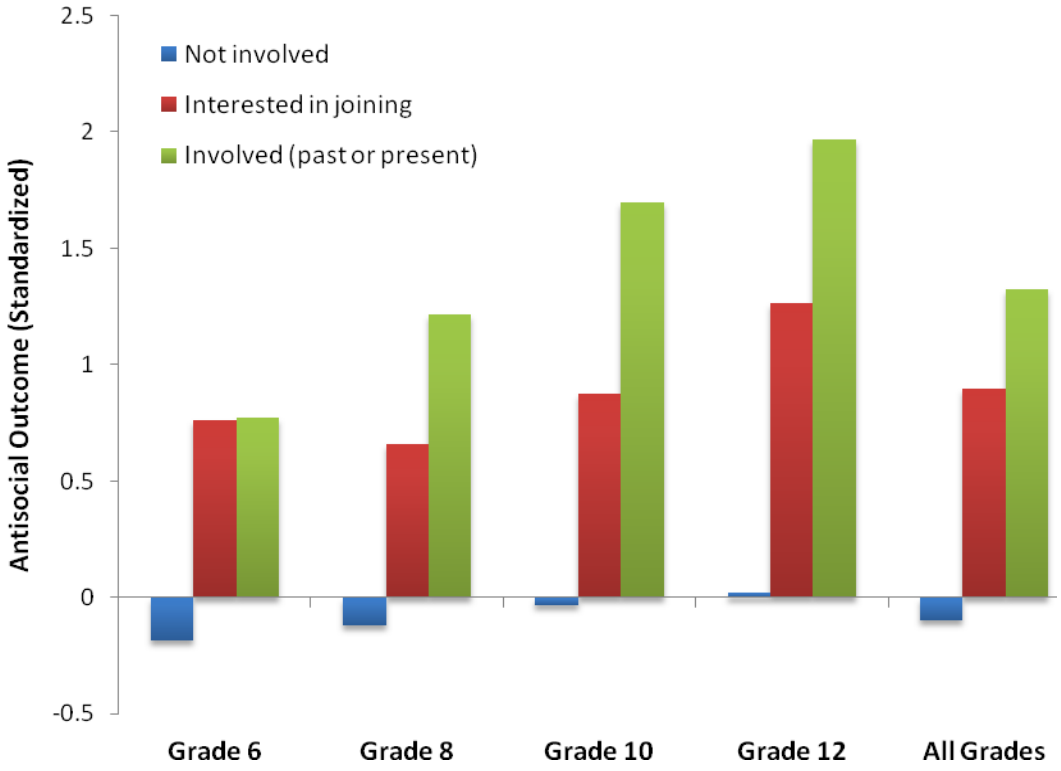

Figure 4. Antisocial outcome score (standardized) by grade level and level of gang involvement. Responses are from the 2009 SHARP Survey.

Attributed Reasons for Gang Involvement (2011 Survey)

In the 2011 survey, several new questions were added to assess the main reasons why youth decide to join gangs (i.e., the tangible and psychological functions that a gang identity serves for the youth). Research on groups has shown that the reasons why people join and identify with certain groups often influence their behavior while in the group. In the case of gangs, the functions that the gang serves for the youth could be an important influence on the extent of antisocial behavior they engage in. Also, knowing the psychological reasons why kids join gangs can help assist prevention and intervention programs in targeting their efforts.

The following six reasons/functions for joining gangs were assessed (following the question, "Why do you think kids join gangs? Please rate how important you think the following reasons are for kids to join gangs."):

1. **Belonging**: to feel like they belong to a group, accepted by others
2. **Security**: for protection and to feel safe, so they won't get bullied
3. **Certainty**: to feel sure about themselves and others, give their lives meaning
4. **Status**: for respect, to feel like somebody important, better than other kids
5. **Excitement**: to do exciting things, have fun and thrills
6. **Money/Stuff**: to make money, to get stuff they wouldn't be able to get on their own

Overall, **belonging** (Mean = 2.50/4, 55.9% rating "quite important" or "very important") and **status** (Mean = 2.43/4, 56.2%) were rated the highest by students, though there were important differences based on one's current level of gang involvement (see Table 9 and Figure 5). **All reasons/functions assessed were rated significantly higher by those students who stated they were not currently in a gang, but were interested in potentially joining ("Gang Interest")**. In turn, with the exception of belonging, all other reasons/functions were rated lower by the general student population that was not currently involved or interested in joining a gang. In most cases, current/former gang members' ratings fell in between non-gang affiliated students with and without interest in joining.

Within the "Gang Interest" group of students, **excitement**, **status**, and **security** appear to be factors that may be particularly driving their potential interest in joining a gang, along with belonging. Figure 6 also shows the ratings of this group by grade level. The importance of these reasons/functions generally increase as this group gets older (especially for belonging and status), though excitement and money/stuff concerns tend to drop off for 12th graders.

Within the "Gang Involved" group of students (those currently or formerly in a gang), **status** is the highest rated reason/function, though all are rated relatively high with the exception of certainty. In addition, analyses were performed within this gang-involved group to test which reasons/functions were most predictive of antisocial outcomes (i.e., violence, drug use, arrest, suspension, etc. in previous year) relative to the other reasons. **Money/stuff and status concerns were most predictive of increased antisocial behavior in this group** (the effect for status became stronger when money/stuff was dropped from the analysis). **Belonging and security concerns, on the other hand, were negatively related to antisocial outcomes.** Youth joining gangs for these reasons are not necessarily engaging in antisocial behavior to the degree of those who join for money and status.

Table 9. Ratings on each category in response to the question "Why do you think kids join gangs?" by level of gang involvement. Responses are from the 2011 SHARP Survey.

	No Involvement/Interest		Gang Interest		Gang Involved	
Reasons/Functions*	**%**	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**
Belonging	55.8%	2.50	63.2%	2.83	56.3%	2.59
Security	48.2%	2.30	**64.9%**	**2.82**	59.0%	2.62
Certainty	43.1%	2.11	54.2%	2.60	47.4%	2.33
Status	55.9%	2.42	**65.2%**	**2.83**	**61.0%**	**2.63**
Excitement	45.6%	2.16	**68.6%**	**2.93**	58.5%	2.63
Money/Stuff	49.9%	2.26	63.8%	2.81	60.1%	2.62

Note: Percentages reflect the number of respondents rating each reason/function as "quite important" (3/4) or "very important" (4/4). Mean ratings are based on a scale from 0 ("not at all important") to 4 ("very important").

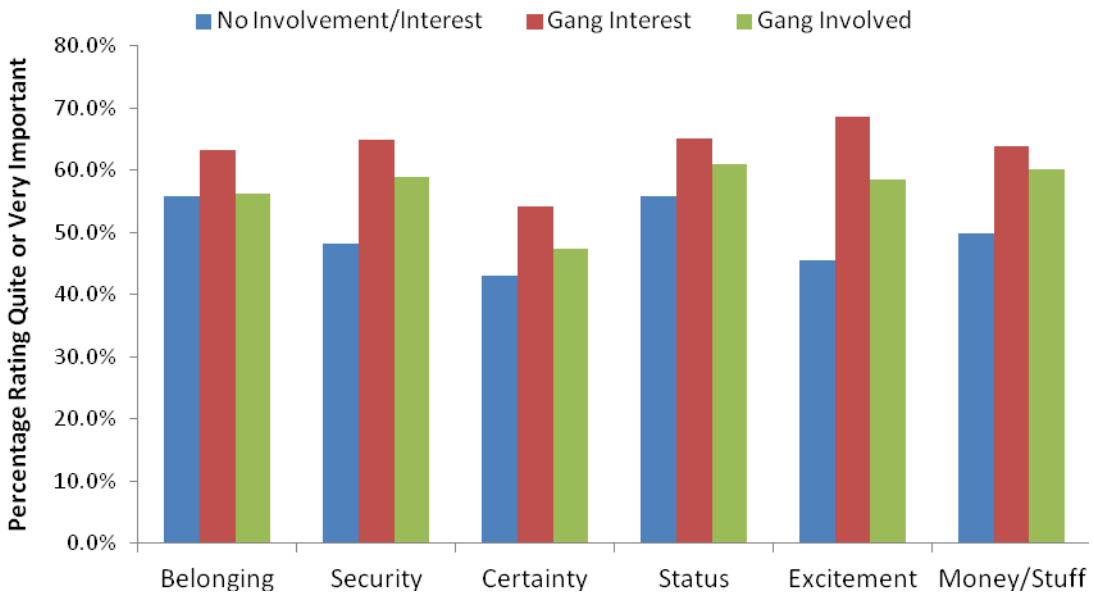

Figure 5. Percentage of **overall students** rating each category either "quite important" or "very important" in response to the question "Why do you think kids join gangs?", by level of gang involvement. Responses are from the 2011 SHARP Survey.

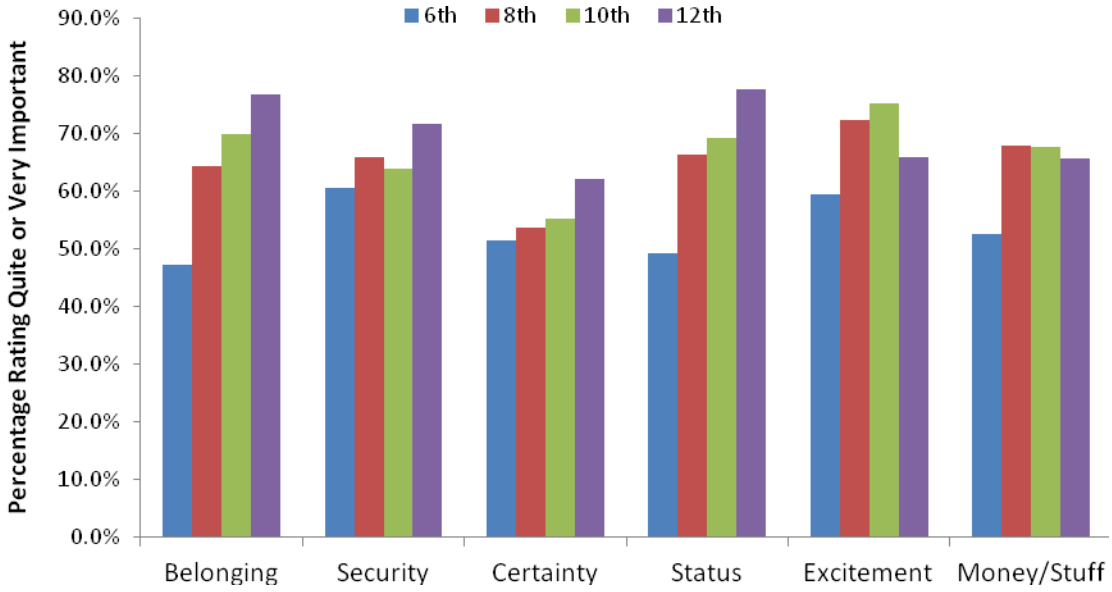

Figure 6. Percentage of students **who expressed interest in joining a gang** that rate each category either "quite important" or "very important" in response to the question "Why do you think kids join gangs?", by grade level. Responses are from the 2011 SHARP Survey.

Summary, Limitations, & Recommendations

The self-report data from the SHARP surveys provide a unique perspective on the gang problem in Utah, as the reports come directly from youth in middle and high schools who may have experience in a gang or who may be thinking about joining. While there are some issues with relying solely on self-report for a comprehensive assessment, this adds an important piece to the other data in this report

and allows us to answer some questions that the objective data (which is obviously not without its own flaws) cannot address.

One of the important questions involves the reach of the gang problem throughout the state. While the objective data hints at the problem slipping into areas of the state outside the Wasatch Front counties, the data are rather limited in scope. The SHARP surveys are conducted statewide and are able to target an acceptable sample of youth even in the rural counties and regions. As Table 5 demonstrates, this again shows that there is some level of gang presence in most parts of the state.

These surveys also show that while we have a gang problem in Utah, it is still rather limited in school-age youth. With some variability by county and region, only about 4-5% of youth state that they have had some level of involvement with a gang, either in the past or at present (with the numbers being much lower for present involvement). Of course, other age groups outside of the school years (i.e. 18-24 and above) likely add to the absolute number of gang members, though the number of youth in these surveys with previous (not current) involvement in gangs provides evidence to the theory that some youth "age out" of gang involvement. This data also shows us that involvement tends to peak in the 8th grade.

Another important piece that these surveys allowed for was the analysis of factors that predict gang involvement and interest in joining gangs, as well as an assessment of potential reasons for joining. These analyses showed rather clearly that Social-Behavioral (i.e., early initiation of antisocial behavior and/or drug use, interaction with antisocial peers) and Cognitive-Attitudinal (i.e., attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior, low self-esteem/depression) factors were most related to gang involvement and interest when controlling for demographic factors and other risk factors, with Social-Behavioral factors most predictive of gang involvement and Cognitive-Attitudinal factors most predictive of gang interest (for those not already involved). Males and minority youth also showed an increased likelihood of both involvement and interest. In terms of potential reasons for joining gangs, status and belonging were rated highest by youth overall, though these two psychological functions of gangs were differentially predictive of antisocial outcomes (status concerns were related to increased antisocial behavior, while belonging concerns were related to decreased antisocial behavior, relative to other reasons). In addition to these two reasons, security, money/stuff, and excitement were reasons that were rated higher for youth with gang involvement and those interested in joining. All of the assessed reasons for joining a gang were rated higher for youth with interest in joining a gang than what youth with no involvement or interest would predict, with gang involved youth falling in between.

This latter information can be especially useful to prevention and intervention efforts. It not only provides a profile of background factors that likely put a youth most at risk for joining a gang, but also begins to show some of the psychological (belonging, security, status, etc.) and tangible (money/stuff) reasons why youth may decide to join gangs. In the end, gangs are groups, and research shows that group identities can serve important functions for people. If prevention/intervention efforts are able to target youth most at risk (i.e., acting out early, hanging out with the wrong crowd, self-esteem issues, favorable attitudes toward antisocial behavior), provide established cognitive-behavioral prevention and intervention programs, and redirect them toward other avenues (i.e., other groups, work) that would serve similar functions to what they are looking for in a gang, then more progress can be made in decreasing the number of gang members and associated problems in our schools and on our streets.

Professional and Public Perception Data: Description, Limitations, & Recommendations

The third and final step of our assessment plan was to collect additional survey data about ***perceptions*** of the gang problem in Utah from two different groups of people: 1) professionals in various areas who work with youth and adults who may be involved in gangs, and 2) a representative sample of Utah residents. This section presents each in turn, and discusses how the data from each converge.

Professional Perceptions: 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact

A survey was developed to assess perceptions of the presence and number of gangs and gang members in Utah, their impact on crime and other problems, and more specific questions relating to training, tracking, collaboration, procedures, etc[10]. The survey was distributed widely across the state through e-mail, targeting professionals working in the following areas: Law Enforcement; Correctional Facilities; Probation, Parole, and Case Management; Judges; Prosecutors; Schools; and Community Organizations and Leaders. Respondents completed the survey online.

832 individuals responded to the survey, and 702 of the respondents completed it (84.4% completion rate). See Table 9 for responses by county and judicial district, and Table 10 by area of involvement. There was at least one respondent from each of Utah's 29 counties. The counties with the highest response were Salt Lake (39.2%), Davis (10.2%), Weber (9.4%), Utah (8.3%), and Washington (8.2%). 67.1% of responses came from Wasatch Front counties (Salt Lake, Davis, Weber, and Utah). The areas with the greatest number of respondents were Schools (44.8%) and Probation, Parole, and Case Management (20.1%). Several important questions were common to all areas of involvement and these were analyzed for all respondents, while other questions were more specific to each area.

Overall, **81.8% of respondents reported that they know of, or believe there is, a gang presence in their community**, based on experience in their area of involvement. 24.5% stated that they believe there are 7 or more gangs present in their community. **Of course, it is possible that those professionals that work in cities and counties with gang problems were more likely to respond to the survey.** Respondents acknowledging a gang presence rated the overall impact of gangs on crime and other problems in their area at 5.5 (on a scale from 0-10) on average. Additionally, 53.6% of respondents overall felt that problems related to gangs in their area are getting worse (compared to 40.5% who felt they are staying the same and 6.0% getting better).

These percentages and ratings varied considerably by county and judicial district (Table 10), and area of involvement (Table 11). Each area of involvement will be discussed more in depth in sections to follow, along with additional specific questions targeted to each area, but professionals working in the schools appeared to be the least likely to report a gang presence (74.2%), and prosecutors (95.1%) and probation/parole/case management professionals (93.9%) were the most likely. Table 10 highlights in red those counties and districts that had over 70% of respondents reporting a gang presence and/or were higher than the overall average on the other important common indicators. **While gang problems have been identified and task forces set up in larger counties such as Salt Lake, Weber, Utah, Davis, and Washington, this survey points to some other counties that may have emerging gang problems, such as Tooele, Iron, Cache, San Juan, Box Elder, Sanpete, Uintah, and Duchesne.**

[10] The survey was adapted from similar surveys conducted in Florida (http://www.fdle.state.fl.us), North Carolina (http://www.nccrimecontrol.org/Index2.cfm?a=000003,000011,000642), and other states.

Table 10. Responses and important common data by county and judicial district (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

District/County	N	%Total	Gang Presence	7+ Gangs	Impact	Getting Worse
DISTRICT 1	**55**	6.6%	**84.6%**	**2.4%**	**4.33**	**50.0%**
Box Elder	30	3.6%	80.0%	0.0%	4.05	50.0%
Cache	23	2.8%	100.0%	5.3%	4.67	50.0%
Rich	2	0.2%	0.0%	-	-	-
DISTRICT 2	**166**	20.0%	**84.0%**	**21.0%**	**5.58**	**50.4%**
Davis	85	10.2%	73.5%	14.0%	4.58	44.2%
Morgan	3	0.4%	33.3%	*(0.0%)*	*(1.00)*	*(0.0%)*
Weber	78	9.4%	97.4%	27.3%	6.44	56.1%
DISTRICT 3	**352**	42.3%	**85.2%**	**37.3%**	**6.11**	**56.2%**
Salt Lake	326	39.2%	85.1%	39.3%	6.16	56.1%
Summit	4	0.5%	75.0%	0.0%	4.33	66.7%
Tooele	22	2.6%	89.5%	17.6%	5.81	56.3%
DISTRICT 4	**80**	9.6%	**85.3%**	**19.6%**	**5.49**	**72.7%**
Juab	3	0.4%	33.3%	*(0.0%)*	*(5.00)*	*(100.0%)*
Millard	3	0.4%	33.3%	*(0.0%)*	*(4.00)*	*(100.0%)*
Utah	69	8.3%	92.2%	22.0%	5.78	76.0%
Wasatch	5	0.6%	60.0%	0.0%	1.33	0.0%
DISTRICT 5	**83**	10.0%	**82.9%**	**8.6%**	**4.80**	**48.2%**
Beaver	1	0.1%	*(100.0%)*	*(0.0%)*	*(1.00)*	*(100.0%)*
Iron	14	1.7%	66.7%	0.0%	5.29	57.1%
Washington	68	8.2%	85.7%	10.2%	4.81	45.8%
DISTRICT 6	**37**	4.4%	**62.2%**	**15.0%**	**2.70**	**15.0%**
Garfield	3	0.4%	66.7%	*(0.0%)*	*(3.00)*	*(0.0%)*
Kane	5	0.6%	20.0%	*(0.0%)*	*(0.00)*	*(0.0%)*
Piute	1	0.1%	*(0.0%)*	-	-	-
Sanpete	14	1.7%	85.7%	30.0%	2.70	10.0%
Sevier	13	1.6%	61.5%	0.0%	3.00	25.0%
Wayne	1	0.1%	*(0.0%)*	-	-	-
DISTRICT 7	**35**	4.2%	**51.4%**	**18.8%**	**5.31**	**62.5%**
Carbon	14	1.7%	50.0%	0.0%	2.40	40.0%
Emery	3	0.4%	0.0%	-	-	-
Grand	6	0.7%	66.7%	33.3%	4.50	50.0%
San Juan	12	1.4%	58.3%	28.6%	7.86	85.7%
DISTRICT 8	**24**	2.9%	**73.9%**	**0.0%**	**4.38**	**37.5%**
Daggett	1	0.1%	*(0.0%)*	-	-	-
Duchesne	7	0.8%	71.4%	0.0%	4.20	80.0%
Uintah	16	1.9%	80.0%	0.0%	4.00	18.2%
OVERALL TOTAL	**832**	**100.0%**	**81.8%**	**24.5%**	**5.50**	**53.6%**

Note: The number of respondents (N) may differ by question from the total reported above, due to some incomplete surveys
Numbers in italics and parentheses indicate the given category only had one response to the question

Table 11. Responses and important common data by area of involvement (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Involvement Category	N	%Total	Gang Presence	7+ Gangs	Impact	Getting Worse
Law Enforcement	58	7.0%	82.5%	35.5%	5.22	58.5%
Correctional Facility*	74	8.9%	83.1%	37.8%	4.92	40.0%
Probation/Parole/CM*	167	20.1%	93.9%	22.5%	5.86	70.4%
Judge*	38	4.6%	78.4%	29.2%	5.58	54.2%
Prosecutor	45	5.4%	95.1%	60.0%	7.07	79.3%
School*	373	44.8%	74.2%	12.4%	5.91	42.1%
Community	77	9.3%	84.7%	51.2%	7.11	60.0%
OVERALL TOTAL	**832**	**100.0%**	**81.8%**	**24.5%**	**5.50**	**53.6%**

Note: The number of respondents (N) may differ by question from the total reported above, due to some incomplete surveys

*Facility: 71% Juvenile, 29% Adult; Probation/Parole: 62.7% Juvenile, 32.4% Adult, 4.9% Both; Judge: 56.3% District Court, 43.8% Juvenile Court; School: 26% Elementary, 35.6% Middle, 29.3% High

Knowledge or belief that there is a gang presence in the community had a significant impact on general crime perceptions (Table 12). Violent crime, sexual violence, drug crime, and graffiti were all perceived to be significantly more of a problem by individuals who acknowledged the presence of gangs in their area. Gang impact ratings were also significantly correlated with general crime perceptions (*r*'s = .41-.54), signifying that higher perceived impact of gangs corresponded to more perceived problems with violent crime, sexual violence, drug crime, and graffiti.

Table 12. General crime perceptions by gang presence, and relationship with gang impact (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

	Crime Perceptions - "How much of a problem is…"				
	Violent Crime	**Sexual Violence**	**Drug Crime**	**Graffiti**	N
No Gang Presence*	1.51	1.83	3.61	2.38	142
Gang Presence	**4.12**	**4.00**	**6.49**	**5.25**	634
Impact-Crime Correlation	*r* = .54	*r* = .41	*r* = .44	*r* = .49	564

Note: Crime perceptions were rated on the same scale (0-10) as gang impact

All mean differences within crime categories and correlations are significant ($p < .01$)

* Includes "Not Sure"

Of those respondents acknowledging a gang presence, 81.3% indicated that individuals in their agency/department/school have attended some kind of training on recognizing and intervening with gang members. Additionally, 72.6% indicated that they collaborate with other agencies, schools, and/or groups in addressing gang issues. Finally, **84.3% of respondents indicated they felt it was very important that Utah actively address its gang problem from a broad, statewide perspective, and 67.9% were aware that a statewide Gang Task Force had been initiated**.

Schools

One of the main groups targeted in this project was school administrators and other staff who have knowledge of gangs and gang problems (as well as general disciplinary problems) in their schools. A large sample of school administrators (principals, assistant principals), teachers, guidance counselors,

school social workers, school resource officers (SROs), and other staff at schools in every school district across the state were contacted to participate in the survey.

Responses were received from 373 individuals, by far the largest group in this survey (44.8% of the overall sample). 51.1% of the respondents were female and 91.1% were White/Caucasian, and 63.5% worked in one of the Wasatch Front counties. The sample was divided between respondents working in elementary (28.7%), middle (38.9%), and high (32.3%) schools. Responses were received from school administrators (63.2%), counselors (14.1%), teachers (12.6%), SROs (2.1%), and other staff (8.1%). Most responses came from staff at public schools. Responses from higher level administrators (i.e., superintendents) reporting on district-wide perceptions were not included in the analysis.

74.2% of the school sample stated that they know of (or believe there is) a gang presence in and around their school. Acknowledged gang presence differed according to school level and location, with middle (78.6%) and high (83.3%) school respondents more likely to acknowledge a gang presence than those in elementary schools (59.1%). Wasatch Front respondents were more likely to have gangs in their schools, though this difference was mostly isolated to the elementary school level (69.2% vs. 35.7%). Figure 7 displays these differences by level and region.

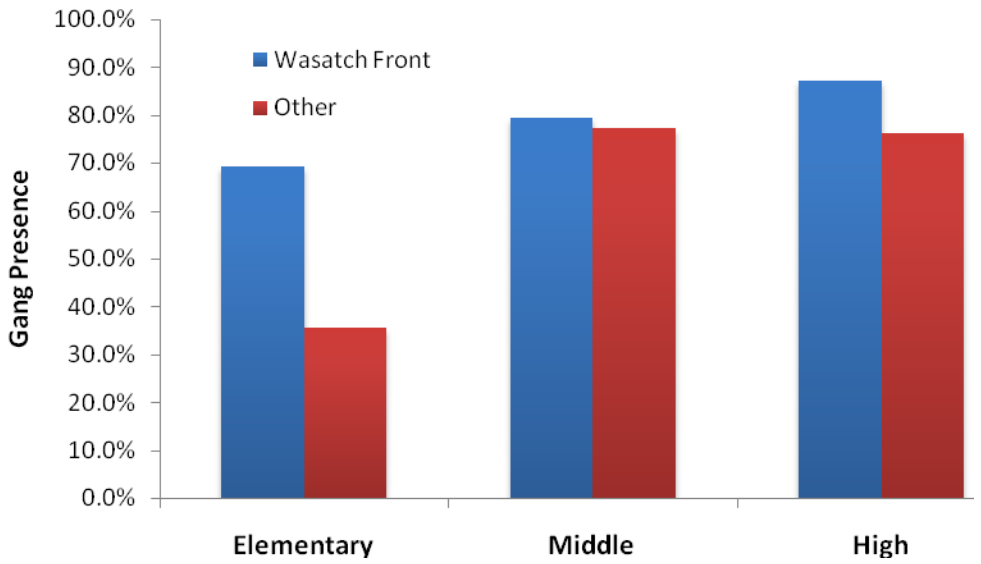

Figure 7. Reported presence of gangs by school level and region of the state (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Of those reporting a gang presence, most respondents estimated that there were between 1-3 gangs active in their schools regardless of level. 21.0% of high school respondents, however, estimated that there were 7 or more gangs active in their schools. This percentage was higher along the Wasatch Front (28.4%) than in other regions (3.8%).

72.7% of respondents stated that there were conflicts between gangs in and around their schools. This was much less likely in elementary schools (37.7%) than in middle (85.4%) and high (79.8%). 58.6% of respondents said that students at their schools had to pass through neighborhoods with gang activity on their way to school; 47% stated that gang members not attending their school had been observed at or near the school (i.e., for recruiting, intimidation), and this was highest in middle schools (54.7%).

Overall, school respondents rated the overall impact of gangs on the school environment at 5.9 (out of 10). Impact ratings varied significantly by location, but not by school level. Wasatch Front respondents (6.25) gave higher impact ratings than those working at schools in other locations (5.23). The modal response for estimating the percentage of overall problems at school that gangs are responsible for was 1-10%, while the median response was 11-20%.

Middle school respondents (85.1%) were most likely to report that there have been gang-related incidents in their schools, followed by high school (74.7%) and elementary school (46.0%). Additionally, respondents working at middle schools on the Wasatch Front (94.4%) were more likely those at middle schools in other areas (72.5%) to cite gang-related incidents occurring at their schools (see Figure 8 below).

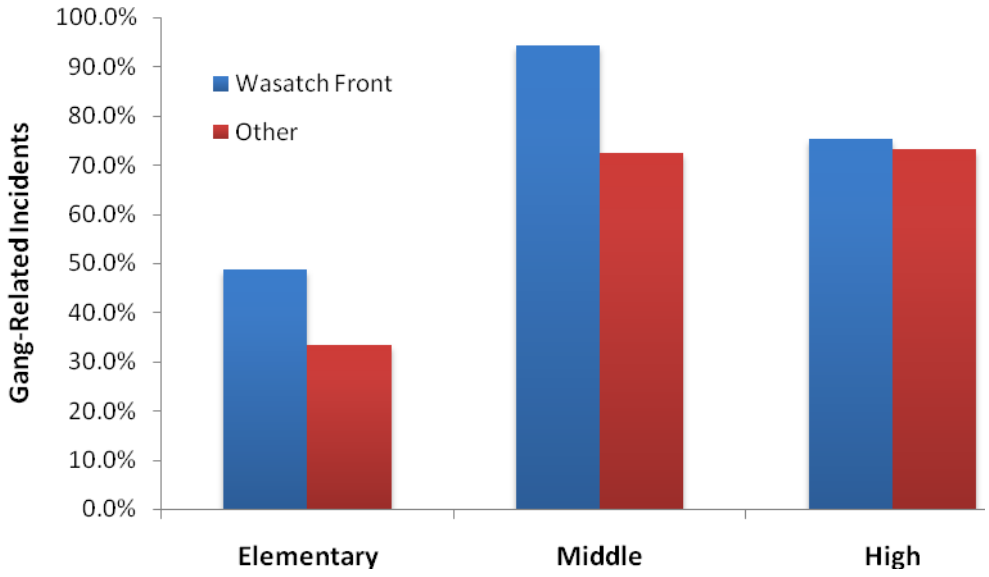

Figure 8. Percent of respondents reporting the occurrence of gang-related incidents in their school by school level and location, out of those reporting a gang presence (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Respondents were also asked about various types of problems in and around their school, and whether or not gangs have committed these behaviors in the previous year. Figure 9 shows the percentage of respondents by grade level who stated that gang members committed such activities. **The most prevalent problems that gangs are involved in overall are graffiti (77.5%), threats and intimidation (69.6%), bullying (66.1%), and physical confrontations and "staredowns" (61.2%).** The least prevalent is sexual assaults (5.3%). Respondents also rated various locations on the school grounds as to how frequently gang activities tend to occur there (1 = most frequent, 10 = least frequent). The most likely location for gang activities in high schools was parking lots (3.51), followed by restrooms (4.91). In middle schools, restrooms (3.89) were the most likely, followed by parking lots (4.24). In elementary schools, the most likely location was the playground (4.54).

72.1% of respondents reported that staff at their school have attended training on recognizing and intervening with gang members (50.9% elementary, 81.8% middle, 74.4% high school). Only 32.3% stated that their school has a formal policy for identifying and documenting gang members and their activities (12.2% elementary, 39.1% middle, 36.6% high school), while 22.0% stated that their school

provides special programs to parents in relation to gangs, violence and/or other types of delinquency. Finally, 69.5% report collaboration with other agencies, schools, and/or groups in addressing gang issues (49.0% elementary, 78.3% middle, 72.0% high school).

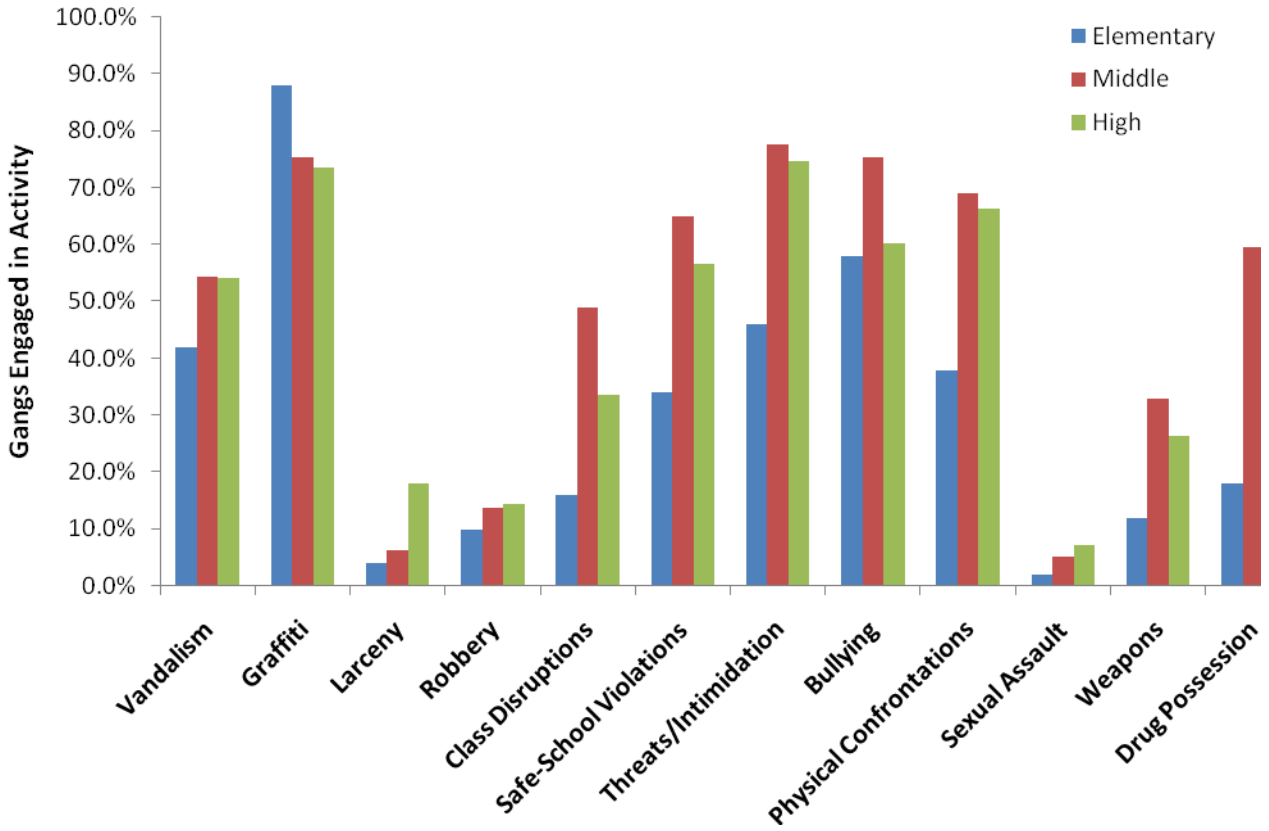

Figure 9. Percentage of respondents reporting that gangs engage in various problematic activities in and around their schools by school level, out of those reporting a gang presence (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Community Supervision (Parole, Probation, Case Management, etc.)

167 individuals working in probation, parole, case management, and other closely related areas responded to our survey (20.1% of the overall sample). 71.0% of respondents were male, and 69.5% of respondents work in Wasatch Front counties (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah). 60.6% of respondents work with juveniles exclusively, 33.9% with adults exclusively, and 5.5% with both juveniles and adults. Results are reported separately below for those working with juveniles and adults.

98% of respondents working with juveniles indicated that they know or believe that there is a gang presence in the area where they predominantly work, and 87.5% of those indicated that they have known gang members on their current caseload. 87.3% of respondents working with adults indicated an overall gang presence, with 87.2% of those supervising known gang members. Respondents were also asked to estimate the percentage of their average supervised caseload that are known gang members. For those supervising juveniles, 50% estimated it was between 1-25% of their caseload, 28% estimated between 26-50%, 12.5% estimated between 51-75%, and 2.1% estimated between 76-100%. For those supervising adults, 85.1% estimated between 1-25%, 8.5% estimated between 26-50%, and 2.1% estimated between 51-75%.

61.7% of respondents supervising juveniles and 66.0% of those supervising adults indicated that they handle known gang members on their caseload differently than others. There was general agreement that gang members tend to be less successful under supervision relative to others in an officers' caseload. For juveniles, 20% of respondents indicated that gang members were much less successful and 56.8% believed they were somewhat less successful, compared to 16.8% who thought there was no difference, 5.3% somewhat more successful, and 1.1% much more successful. For adults, 42.6% of respondents indicated that gang members were much less successful and 40.4% believed they were somewhat less successful, compared to 10.6% who thought there was no difference, 4.3% somewhat more successful, and 2.1% much more successful. On average, respondents supervising juveniles rated the impact of gangs at 6.9 (0-10 scale), while those supervising adults had an average rating of 6.4.

Respondents were also asked to indicate what types of reported crimes on their caseload were committed by known gang members in the previous year (see Figure 10). **For those supervising juveniles, the most common crimes included drug possession (85.6%), assaults (75.3%), burglary (72.2%), graffiti (70.1%), weapon possession (62.9%), motor vehicle theft (57.7%), and vandalism (53.6%). For those supervising adults, the most common crimes included drug possession (79.2%), assaults (72.9%), drug trafficking (66.7%), burglary (56.3%), weapon possession (54.2%), threats and intimidation (54.2%), robbery (47.9%), and motor vehicle theft (45.8%).**

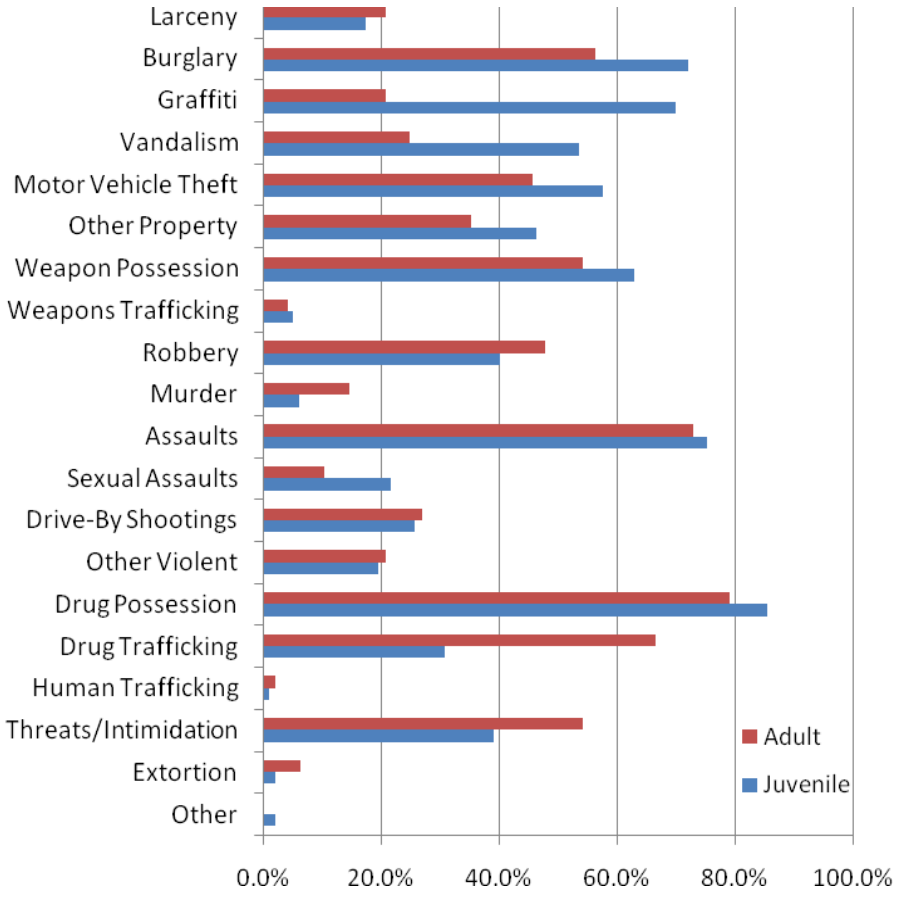

Figure 10. Percent of community supervision respondents indicating various types of crimes had been committed by gang members on their caseload in the previous year, out of those reporting a gang presence (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

95.8% of respondents supervising juveniles and 76.6% of those supervising adults indicated that officers in their office have attended training on recognizing and intervening with criminal gang members. 85.4% indicated that they collaborate with other agencies, schools, and groups in addressing gang issues (88.4% juvenile, 78.9% adult).

Correctional Facilities

74 individuals working in various types of correctional facilities also responded to the survey (8.9% of the overall sample). 64.9% were male, and 68.9% worked exclusively in facilities serving juveniles (18.9% non-secure juvenile residential program/work camp/observation and assessment, 35.1% short-term juvenile detention center, 9.5% long-term secure juvenile facility, 5.4% other) while the other 29.7% worked in adult facilities (10.8% halfway house, 8.1% county jail, 10.8% adult prison). As with the community supervision data, the results will be presented separately for each group.

87.2% of respondents working in juvenile facilities and 90.0% of those working in adult facilities indicated that they know of or believe there is a gang ("security threat group") presence in their facility. For those indicating a gang presence, 70.0% of adult facility respondents said that their facility currently has personnel assigned directly to security threat group matters, compared to only 12.8% of the juvenile facility respondents. It was not common (apart from the adult prison) to have known gang/security threat group members housed in a separate area from the rest of the facility population. A large percentage of each group (80.6% juvenile, 82.4% adult) reported that there are conflicts between gangs that occur within the facility. It was more likely in adult facilities (94.1%) to see evidence of gang/security threat group members attempting to communicate with fellow members outside the facility than in juvenile facilities (33.3%, with another 33.3% unsure). On average, respondents in juvenile facilities rated the impact of gangs in the facility at 5.5 (0-10 scale), and those working in adult facilities rated the impact somewhat higher at 6.9.

Respondents were also asked about certain criminal activities within the facility that gangs/security threat groups might be most likely to engage in. **In juvenile facilities, 48.7% indicated gang/security threat group members engage in assaults, 69.2% intimidation, and 12.8% smuggling or distribution of contraband. In adult facilities, 45.0% indicated they engage in assaults, 65.0% intimidation, and 50.0% smuggling or distribution of contraband** (see Figure 11). Respondents also rated various locations in the facility as to how frequently gang activities tend to occur there (1 = most frequent, 6 = least frequent). The most likely location for gang activities in juvenile facilities was the recreation yard (3.48), followed by both the cells and the dining hall (3.73), with showers the least likely place (5.57). Another commonly cited location in juvenile facilities was the classroom. In adult facilities, the most likely location for gang activities was the cells (1.77), followed closely by the recreation yard (2.23), with the dining hall (4.08) and showers (4.57) less likely.

A large percentage of respondents in both adult (90.0%) and juvenile (87.2%) facilities indicated that officers in their facility have attended training on recognizing and intervening with criminal gang/security threat group members. A somewhat larger percentage of adult facility respondents (75.0%) stated that they collaborate with other agencies, schools, and groups in addressing gang issues, compared to juvenile facility respondents (50.0%).

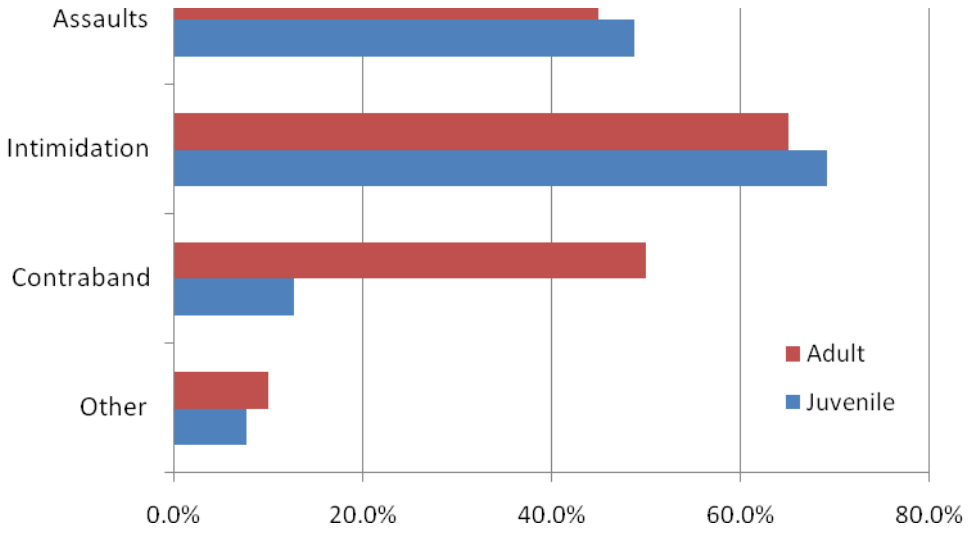

Figure 11. Percentage of respondents reporting that gang/security threat group members regularly engage in certain types of criminal activities within the facility where they work, by level (adult vs. juvenile) of facility, out of those reporting a gang presence in the facility (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Law Enforcement

58 law enforcement officers also responded to our survey (7.0% of the overall sample). This group was predominantly male (94.8%), and 63.8% of the respondents worked in agencies along the Wasatch Front. The largest percentage (56.9%) worked in a police department, followed by sheriff's departments (20.7%), and state law enforcement agencies (15.5%).

81.0% of law enforcement respondents indicated that they know of or believe that there is a gang presence in their jurisdiction, and those who work in agencies on the Wasatch Front (91.7%) were more likely to indicate a gang presence than those who work outside the Wasatch Front (66.7%). Of those indicating a gang presence, 42.6% stated that their agency has a dedicated unit assigned to monitor and police gang activity. On average, law enforcement officers rated the impact of gangs within their jurisdiction at 6.4 (scale of 0-10), with higher ratings for those working in agencies on the Wasatch Front (6.9 vs. 5.2). 62.5% of respondents stated that policing activities related to gangs had increased in their jurisdiction in the past five years (32.5% stayed the same, 5.0% decreased).

Law enforcement officers indicating a gang presence were also asked about the effect of several factors on the gang problem in their jurisdiction over the past five years. 57.1% of the respondents felt that their gang problems were at least somewhat affected by the return of gang members who had been released from prison (7.1% very much affected). A larger percentage (80.5%) felt that their gang problems had been negatively affected by an increase in undocumented immigrants in their jurisdiction (31.7% very much affected), while fewer (31.0%) felt that the problems were at least somewhat due to increasing refugee populations (4.8% very much affected).

As with the other areas, law enforcement officers were also asked about what types of crimes and other criminal activities that gang members commit in their jurisdictions. **The most commonly cited**

offenses that gang members engage in were graffiti (85.1%), vandalism (78.7%), drug possession (78.7%), assaults (74.5%), burglary (66.0%), weapons possession (61.7%), and larceny (59.6%). Figure 12 displays these percentages by region (Wasatch Front vs. non-Wasatch Front). Additionally, **53.8% stated that gang crimes in their jurisdiction at least sometimes involved the use of firearms**. Respondents also rated various locations in the communities of their jurisdictions as to how frequently gang activities tend to occur there (1 = most frequent, 10 = least frequent). The most likely location for gang activities to occur was in residences (3.58), followed by parks (4.27), parking lots (4.43), and schools (4.44). 72.5% of respondents reported that gang crimes had occurred within, or on the grounds of, schools in their jurisdiction.

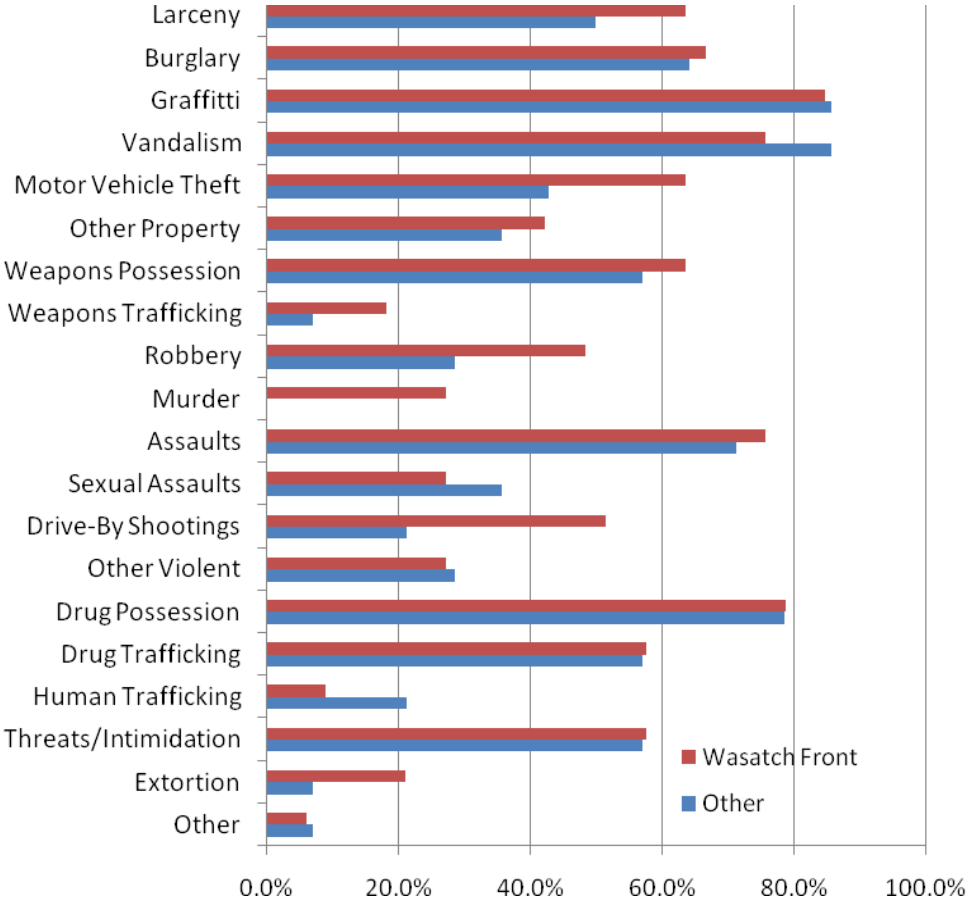

Figure 12. Percentage of law enforcement respondents reporting that gangs commit various types of crimes in their jurisdiction in the previous year, out of those reporting a gang presence (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Only 37.5% of respondents stated that their agency has a formal policy for identifying and documenting gang members and their activities, though this was more likely in Wasatch Front agencies (46.4% vs. 16.7% in non-Wasatch Front agencies). 52.5% said there was more of an informal practice for doing this (either in addition to or instead of the formal policy). In terms of documenting graffiti found within the jurisdiction, over three-quarters (77.5%) stated that there was either a formal policy or informal practice in their agency for doing this. 89.4% of those indicating a gang presence reported that officers in their agency have attended training on recognizing and intervening with criminal gang

members, while 90.0% stated that their agency collaborates with other agencies, schools, and groups in addressing gang issues.

Courts (Judges, Prosecutors)

45 prosecutors (5.4% of the overall sample) and 38 judges (4.6% of overall sample) responded to our survey. Both the prosecutors (72.7%) and the judges (71.1%) were generally male, and each group tended to work in districts along the Wasatch Front (82.2% of prosecutors, 63.2% of judges). Figure 13 below breaks down the court-related responses by state judicial district. The majority of the prosecutors worked in a city attorney (28.9%), county attorney (15.6%), or district attorney (44.4%) office, while several also worked for the Attorney General (4.4%) or as U.S. Attorneys (4.4%). Just over half of the judges (52.6%) worked in a District Court, while the rest (47.4%) worked in a Juvenile Court.

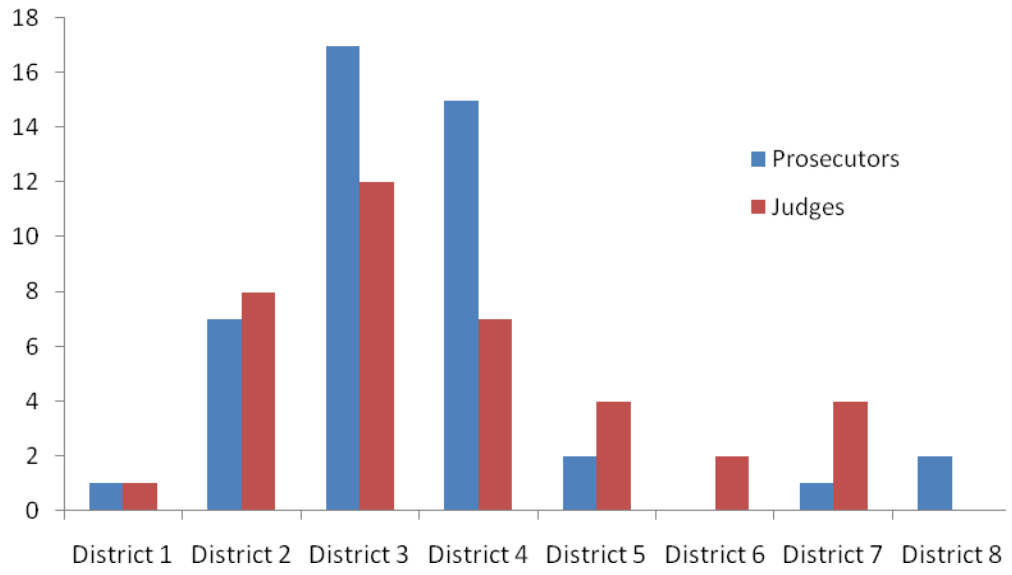

Figure 13. Court-related respondents by role (prosecutor or judge) and judicial district (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

95.1% of prosecutors indicated that they know of or believe there is a gang presence in their district based on cases their office is involved in, and 78.4% of judges indicated the same (82.4% Juvenile, 75.0% District). On average, prosecutors indicating a gang presence rated the impact of gangs within their district at 8.1 (scale of 0-10), while judges rated the impact at 6.6 (6.7 Juvenile, 6.5 District).

Respondents who indicated a gang presence were also asked some questions about the operations in their office and/or courtroom related to gang cases. Half of the prosecutors stated that their office had filed more than 50 cases related to gang activity in the previous year, while 42.9% of judges stated that they presided over more than 50 cases in the same time period (53.8% Juvenile, 33.3% District). 62.5% of prosecutors feel that the number of cases they handled in the previous year related to criminal gang activity had increased, and 40.9% of judges felt the number of cases had increased (54.5% Juvenile, 27.3% District) – the rest felt the number had stayed about the same. Over three-quarters (76.5%) of the prosecutors reported that their office had employed the "group enhancement" statute in gang-related cases, while 75.0% of judges also reported the statute had been employed in their courtroom (76.9% Juvenile, 73.3% District). Additionally, 61.8% of prosecutors state that this group enhancement

is sometimes used by their office outside of clear criminal street gang cases, and half of the judges state they see the same in their courtroom (61.5% Juvenile, 40.0% District) – see Figure 14. In general, 45.5% of prosecutors state that criminal street gang cases are handled differently than other cases in their office, while only 21.4% of judges state such cases are handled differently in their court (7.7% Juvenile, 33.3% District). 38.2% of the prosecutors indicated that that their office has a specialized prosecution unit to handle criminal street gang cases, and 70.0% indicated that their office uses the practice of "vertical prosecution" in prosecuting criminal street gang activity. Very few of the prosecutor's offices (5.9%) or courts (7.1%) have a system in place for differentiating motive in gang cases (i.e., perpetrated for own gain vs. in furtherance of gang).

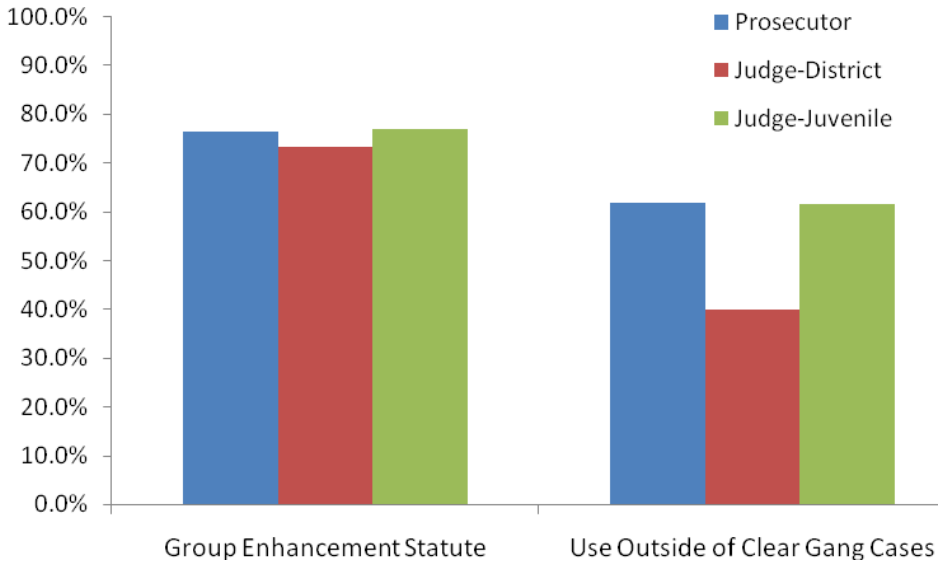

Figure 14. Use of the group enhancement statute in courts, according to prosecutors and judges (District and Juvenile Courts) responding to the survey (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Prosecutors and judges were also asked about the types of crimes committed by gang members in cases they have seen in the previous year. **Both groups tended to identify drug possession (64.1% prosecutors, 72.4% judges), assaults (64.1% prosecutors, 65.5% judges), weapons possession (64.1% prosecutors, 65.5% judges), and graffiti (56.4% prosecutors, 69.0% judges) as the most prevalent crimes that gang members were committing in the previous year.** Figure 15 on the next page displays all crimes presented and the percentages by group, with judges broken down according to whether they work in a District Court vs. Juvenile Court. Judges in the Juvenile Court appear to be more likely to see gang members involved in drug possession, intimidation, and most property crime cases. **87.5% of prosecutors and 65.2% of judges stated that firearms were at least sometimes a factor in the criminal activity of gang cases in the previous year, while 96.0% of prosecutors and 82.6% of judges stated that violence was at least sometimes a factor in the criminal activity of gang cases in the previous year.**

Prosecutors and judges were then asked about various problems they might encounter in relation to gang-related cases. The problems identified included obtaining witness cooperation, intimidation of victims and witnesses, lack of appropriate sanctions, lack of resources for witness protection, victim

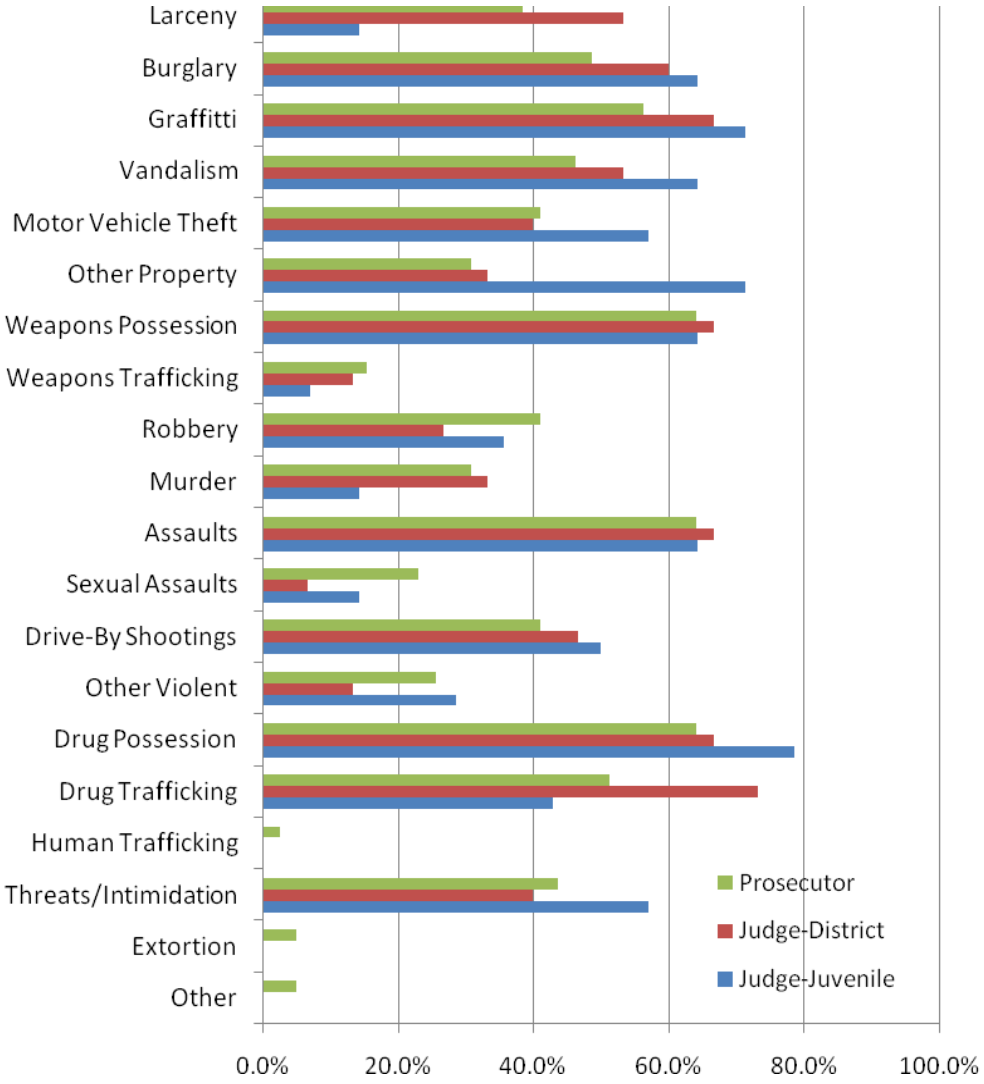

Figure 15. Percentage of prosecutor and judge (separated by District and Juvenile Court) respondents indicating that various types of crimes had been committed by gang members in their districts in the previous year, out of those reporting a gang presence in their district (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

and witness credibility, and inadequate preparation of crime reports by law enforcement. The most commonly cited problems (rated as a moderate or major problem) by prosecutors were obtaining witness cooperation (96.2%) and intimidation of victims and witnesses (92.3%). Judges were also most likely to cite intimidation as a problem in gang cases (52.2%).

82.4% of prosecutors indicating a gang presence reported that prosecutors in their office have attended training on recognizing and intervening with criminal gang members, while 72.4% stated that their office collaborates with other agencies, schools, and groups in addressing gang issues. Only 41.7% of judges stated that they collaborate with other agencies, school, and groups, though this was somewhat more likely for those working in the Juvenile Court (54.5% vs. 30.8% for District Court judges).

Community Organizations/Leaders

68 individuals working in community organizations and 9 community leaders not necessarily affiliated with formal organizations also responded to the survey (9.3% of the total sample). These respondents predominantly work along the Wasatch Front (87.0%), and 61.0% were female. Respondents worked for over twenty different community organizations, as well as hospitals, universities, and Department of Human Services-affiliated programs. Prominent programs with representatives responding to the survey included Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Utah, Boys & Girls Clubs, Grandfamilies, Colors of Success, LDS Family Services, NeighborWorks Salt Lake, Salt Lake Community Action Program, and the West Valley Community Center/Project 180.

75.9% of respondents represented organizations that have been in operation for more than ten years. Most serve both youth and adults, though 29.7% work in organizations that serve only youth and 24.1% work in organizations that serve only adults. Many of the organizations represented focus on the neighborhood (70.4%) and school (57.4%), and to a lesser extent the courts (38.9%) and church (11.1%). The target populations are most likely to be school-aged (64.8%), high risk (61.1%), court-involved (53.7%), and those with substance abuse problems (46.3%). Organizations represented served over 2400 individuals on average in the previous year.

84.7% of community-affiliated respondents indicated that they know of or believe there is a gang presence in their community. On average, these respondents rated the impact of gangs within their community at 8.1 (scale of 0-10), and 86.0% reported that there are conflicts between gangs in their community. Those who indicated a gang presence were also asked about what types of crimes were most likely to be committed by gang members in their community. **Similar to other areas, the most common types of crimes cited were graffiti (80.0%), vandalism (74.0%), burglary (70.0%), assaults (68.0%), drug possession (68.0%), weapons possession (66.0%), motor vehicle theft (66.0%), and robbery (62.0%).** Figure 16 displays the percentages for all crimes assessed.

Those who work in community organizations and also indicated a gang presence were also asked some questions about their work with gangs and gang members. Only 22.9% of respondents stated that their organization primarily focuses on gangs, gang members, and/or gang issues, and only 11.4% reported that their organization receives funding from the state for direct use in gang prevention, intervention, or education (31.4% were not sure). In working with gang members, most of the programs focus on prevention, intervention, and education – rather than exclusively focusing on one of these. 57.1% stated that the gang prevention, intervention, and/or education programs used by their organization are based on proven, evidence-based techniques (31.4% were not sure). 38.9% indicated that their organization provides special programs for parents in relation to gangs, violence, and/or other types of delinquency. Only 25.0% reported that their organization utilizes any mechanism for tracking gang members and other individuals who use their services, and only 30.6% reported that data are collected to manage, evaluate, and improve the prevention, intervention, and education programs in general.

In terms of other types of funding (beyond specific gang-related funding – i.e., general delinquency prevention, etc.), 37.1% reported that their organization receives funding from federal grants, 31.4% from state grants, 40.0% from local area grants, 51.4% from charitable contributions, and 28.6% from other sources. Only 8.6% of respondents felt that the current level of funding to their organization was adequate to provide the necessary services, with 45.7% feeling that it is not at all adequate and another 45.7% feeling that it is somewhat adequate, though more was needed.

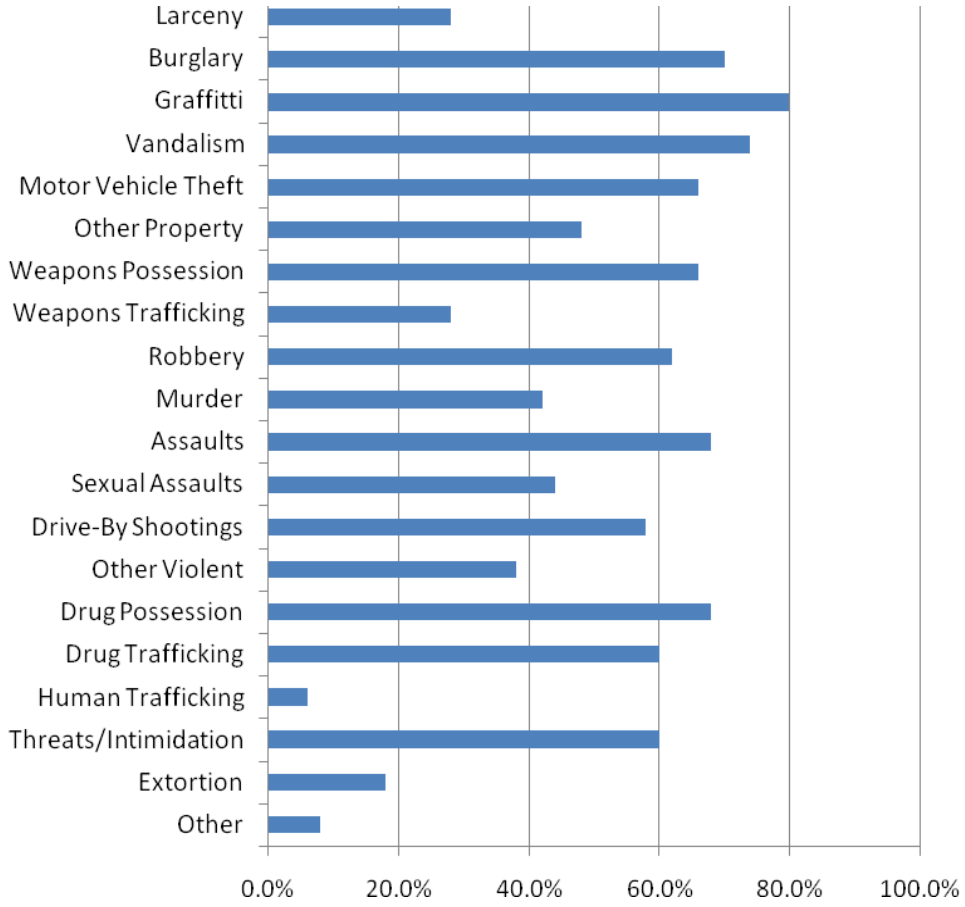

Figure 16. Percentage of community-affiliated respondents (those representing community programs and community leaders) indicating that various types of crimes had been committed by gang members in their community in the previous year, out of those reporting a gang presence in their community (from 2009 Survey on Gang Crime & Its Impact).

Public Perceptions: 2010 Utah Crime Survey[11]

In 2010, the Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice conducted its fifth Utah Crime Survey. The representative sample of 2,009 total survey respondents were from all 29 counties in the state (37.5% Salt Lake, 19.5% Utah, 10.8% Davis, 8.4% Weber, 4.8% Washington, 19.0% other), and were relatively balanced by sex, age, race/ethnicity, and other demographic categories. Like the previous two surveys, this survey employed randomly generated telephone calls to contact a sample of Utah residents. In addition to this, the current survey also expanded its methods to include a small sample of cell phone interviews (N = 174, or 8.7%) and a larger sample of online interviews (N = 974, or 48.5%). The remainder was interviewed from traditional landline telephones (N = 861, or 42.9%).

In addition to questions on crime victimization and perceptions of crime, the 2010 Crime Survey added a new module, along with several other questions, that addressed gangs and gang crime. Prior surveys

[11] This section is modified from a similar section in the full report on the 2010 Utah Crime Survey. Please see the report at www.justice.utah.gov/Research for more information on the methods and other data.

included two questions (i.e., gangs as a cause of crime, whether gangs are a problem in one's neighborhood), but the current survey increased the information obtained about perceptions of the gang problem in Utah substantially. The new module included several questions from the survey of professionals in the state described above, and allows comparison in a representative sample of the public. It assessed whether gangs are present in the respondent's community, and if so, the impact they have on the community, criminal activities they are at least partially responsible for, and past and future trends in problems associated with criminal gangs. Additionally, questions were added after property and person crimes in the victimization section to assess whether the respondent had any reason to believe the perpetrator was a member of a criminal gang.

Overall, 49.5% of respondents indicated that they know of or believe there is a gang presence in their community. Using a different question, 51.7% of respondents felt that gangs are at least sometimes a problem in their community (always, almost always, or sometimes). By comparison, the associated problems of illegal drugs (79.3%), graffiti/vandalism (63.6%), and violent crime (40.9%) were also seen as at least somewhat of a problem by a large percentage of respondents. These four community problems correlated highly, with gang problems showing a positive relationship with graffiti (r = .59), illegal drugs (r = .53), and violent crime (r = .59). In other words, these problems often tend to occur together in a community (as was seen in the previous survey).

Gang presence and impact were also examined according to where the respondents live. Table 13 shows the percentage of respondents reporting a gang presence in their community, average impact ratings, and frequency of associated gang, graffiti, drug, and violence problems by county and population density. **Respondents from Weber and Salt Lake counties, along with urban/metro areas in general, tended to rate the impact of gangs on their communities the highest, along with associated problems (with the exception of illegal drugs). Washington and Cache counties were also relatively high in terms of perceived gang presence.**

Table 13. Perceived presence of gangs and associated problems by location (county and density) (from 2010 Utah Crime Survey).

Counties	Gang Presence	Gang Impact*	Gang Problem#	Graffiti Problem#	Drug Problem#	Violence Problem#
Salt Lake	52.4%	6.33	58.0%	72.8%	77.0%	49.0%
Utah	48.1%	5.43	49.2%	61.6%	84.5%	36.8%
Davis	44.4%	4.96	40.5%	51.0%	66.6%	29.4%
Weber	60.3%	6.31	63.8%	65.0%	80.4%	46.7%
Washington	57.1%	5.84	48.4%	51.7%	83.0%	47.8%
Cache	56.3%	5.48	51.3%	48.8%	76.9%	21.9%
All Other	38.1%	5.31	41.8%	58.7%	85.5%	33.8%
Population Density						
Urban/Metro	53.9%	5.97	55.6%	66.2%	78.5%	43.9%
Lower Density Urban	42.9%	5.28	40.1%	58.5%	81.6%	31.0%
Rural	30.2%	5.35	38.8%	51.7%	82.6%	31.5%
Overall	**49.5%**	**5.84**	**51.7%**	**63.6%**	**79.3%**	**40.9%**

* Gang impact ratings were only assessed for respondents reporting a gang presence in their community (0-10 range)

Percent of respondents indicating that gangs, graffiti/vandalism, illegal drugs, and violent crime are at least sometimes a problem in their communities (always, almost always, or sometimes a problem)

Respondents who indicated a gang presence in their community were also asked which activities they believe gangs are at least partially responsible for in this community (see Figure 17). All of the listed activities were cited by at least two-thirds of the respondents. **Drug possession (96.8%) and drug sales (96.6%) were the most frequently cited activities, followed closely by vandalism (95.3%), graffiti (94.5%), and assaults (89.0%).**

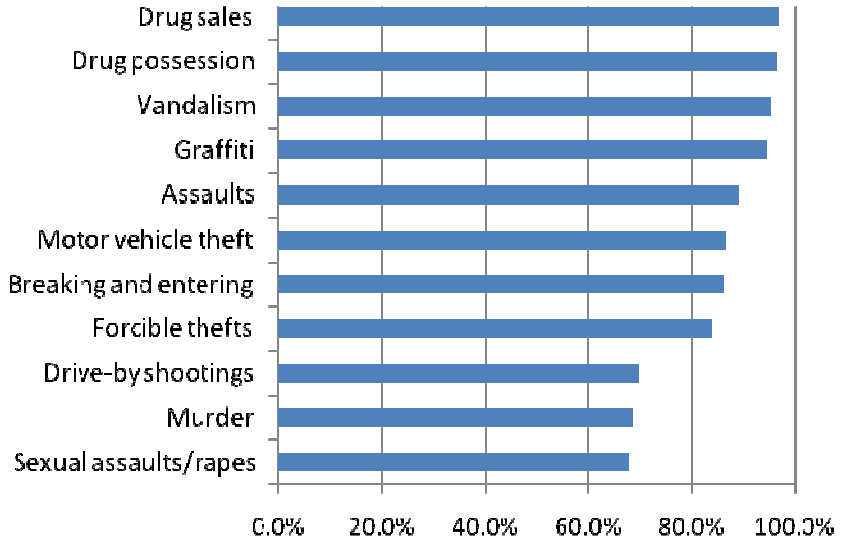

Figure 17. Perceptions of various criminal activities as associated with criminal gangs in the community (from 2010 Utah Crime Survey).

The same respondents were asked about changes in the past three years and expectations for the next three years in regard to gang problems. 31.4% felt that problems associated with criminal gangs in their community have been getting worse in the past three years, compared to 9.7% who felt the problems were getting better. More than half (58.9%) perceived that such problems have not changed during this time. Almost half (49.8%) expect the gang problems in their community to get worse over the next three years, while 13.2% expect them to get better and 37.0% expect no change.

For each of the traditional property and person crimes, respondents who were victimized were asked whether they had any reason to believe that the perpetrator was a member of a criminal gang. Table 13 shows the percentage who believed there was gang involvement for each crime and the general categories. **Overall, 13.2% of property crime victims and 11.0% of person crime victims perceived at least one of their victimizations to be at the hands of a gang member.** Specific crimes that had relatively high rates included motor vehicle theft (30.2%), vandalism (16.3%), and robbery (42.9%, though there were very few total cases of this crime).

Table 14 also shows gang presence perceptions by victims and non-victims of the various crimes assessed in the main part of the survey. **Overall, victims of crime in the previous year were significantly more likely to report a gang presence in their community (61.1%) than non-victims (42.1%).** Person crime victims were especially likely to report a gang presence (70.1%). Property crime victims were not as likely to report a gang presence (61.0%), though victims of motor vehicle theft (75.7%) and burglary (72.5%) reported higher likelihood than the other crimes in this category. Sex

Table 14. Perceived gang presence in the community by victimization, and perceived involvement in victimization (from 2010 Utah Crime Survey).

	Gang Presence	Gang-Involved?
Property Crime Victims	**61.0%**	**13.2%**
Motor Vehicle Theft	75.7%	30.2%
Auto Burglary	64.7%	13.7%
Vandalism	63.6%	16.3%
Burglary	72.5%	11.5%
Larceny	57.2%	6.8%
Person Crime Victims	**70.1%**	**11.0%**
Robbery	68.8%	42.9%
Combined Assault	67.4%	7.3%
Threat of Violence	72.5%	8.4%
Sex Crime Victims	**75.0%**	**-**
Rape	88.9%	-
Sexual Assault	69.2%	-
All Victims	**61.1%**	**-**
Non-Victims	**42.1%**	**-**

Note: Gang Presence indicates the respondent believes there is a gang presence in the community; Gang-Involved indicates the respondent had reason to believe the perpetrator was a gang member

crime victims were also more likely to report a gang presence (75.0%), though the total number of victims in the previous year is very low (N = 16).

Respondents who reported a gang presence in their community also tended to report a greater fear of crime than those not reporting a gang presence. A composite Fear of Crime scale was computed from a different module of questions answered as part of the survey, and **those in communities with a gang presence (*M* = 2.35, *SD* = 0.65) had significantly higher mean ratings across these Fear of Crime questions than those without a gang presence in their communities (*M* = 1.96, *SD* = 0.57)**. Additionally, those respondents in communities with a gang presence were significantly more likely to expect to be victimized in the next 12 months than those in communities with no gang presence (61.6% vs. 41.1%).

Summary, Limitations, & Recommendations

The data from these surveys of professionals and the general public provided another valuable element to the overall assessment of gang issues in the state. First of all, there was a great degree of convergence between the two surveys (and also with other data discussed in previous sections) in terms of the regions of the state where gang problems are perceived to be most prevalent, and also in terms of the criminal activities that respondents see or perceive gangs to be engaged in. Though the main population areas of the state along the Wasatch Front are known to have gang issues, there is also evidence that communities in other parts of the state are dealing with gang issues to varying degrees. Both surveys identified drug-related crimes, certain property-related crimes (graffiti, vandalism, burglary), and violent crimes (particularly assaults) as criminal activities that gang members

tend to engage in most. The survey of professionals also provided some insight into how some of these different areas of involvement (schools, community supervision, facilities, law enforcement, courts, and community organizations) are dealing with the gang problem in their communities, while the Utah Crime Survey sample provided some information not only about general perceptions but how the presence of gangs is related to crime victimization.

The limitations of data based on perceptions and recall of previous events are obvious. Mainly, such perceptions and recollections are susceptible to bias and error. While any one person's perceptions of the gang issues in their community may not fully represent the reality on the streets (or in the prisons or schools), larger samples of individuals tend to smooth out these problems and at least provide a picture of what people are thinking in a given community (and thoughts and attitudes are often an important contributor to behavior), as well as the problems that professionals in various areas are confronting. Once again, these limitations also become less significant as this is integrated with the other perspectives of this comprehensive assessment rather than standing alone as isolated bits of information about the state's gang problem.

It is recommended that the practice of including this gang module on the Utah Crime Survey be continued in future years (the survey is conducted roughly every three years), and that CCJJ consider future follow-up assessments of professionals in these important areas of involvement. It may be beneficial for the latter to shorten and streamline the survey instrument that was initially developed for the purpose of this current assessment, so as to potentially decrease the burden of participation and increase participation rates. Continuing both of these efforts will allow a tracking of these perceptions over time to identify any significant changes in regions experiencing problems or criminal activities that gangs are involved in (while also potentially identifying any improvements from prevention and intervention efforts).

Overall Summary, Conclusions, & Next Steps

The comprehensive assessment of gangs and gang activities described in this report yielded some valuable information, while also raising important questions and issues to be dealt with moving forward. As mentioned at the beginning, the main focus of the assessment (based on the amount of common information available across sources) was on the following two questions:

1. What areas of the state (i.e., counties, districts, regions) are experiencing the most serious problems with gangs and gang crime, and what other areas might have emerging gang issues that need to be addressed?
2. What types of crime and other activities are gang members generally committing in the state, and what impact do gangs have on communities?

The first part of this final section will summarize how these two questions were addressed through the data that was gathered. The other major theme that emerged from our analysis revolved around problems of data quality in many of the large agency databases with information related to gangs, including definitional issues and consistency in the process of data entry. This theme will also be discussed further here. Apart from these common questions and themes throughout the report, there were also other important findings that emerged from several of the data sources. For example, the SHARP surveys of middle and high school students were a rich data source that provided not only prevalence and regional data, but also insight into background factors that are related to gang involvement, reasons for joining a gang, and the relationship between gang involvement and antisocial behavior. This and other important findings will also be discussed below. Finally, we will make some broader conclusions and lay out several possible next steps that can be taken in the near future to address the problems that have been identified.

What areas of the state should we be most concerned about?

An important point to take away from the regional analyses of gangs and gang problems throughout the report is that most sources point to a gang presence in many parts of the state, though obviously in varying degrees from one county or metropolitan area to the next. While it is hard to rely on any one source of information to determine which places in the state to be most concerned about, in this summary we attempt to combine the regional data from all of the sources examined to get a better idea of which places appear to have the most established gang problems and which places may have a less recognized but growing gang presence.

Table 12 on the next page portrays this attempt at combining the information from seven different sources of information discussed previously in this report: offenders in prison based on county of conviction; District Court cases with an affirmative “gang attribute” identified on at least one of the associated charges; gang data obtained from local law enforcement agencies and interagency task forces; incidents in schools that are flagged by districts as “gang-related”; self-reports of middle and high school students on the statewide SHARP surveys; perceptions of professionals on our 2009 Survey of Gang Crime & Its Impact; and perceptions of the general public on the 2010 Utah Crime Survey. Data from each of these sources was carefully rated by county (see the rating scale at the bottom of Table 12) and summarized across available data for each county. Although there are limitations with this rating process, we believe it provides some valuable information on regional differences in the gang problem across the state.

Table 12. Summary ratings of gang problem by county based on data sources presented in this report. Counties are sorted by average rating across data sources.

County	Gang Inmates[1]	Gang Cases Filed[2]	LE Agency/ Task Force[3]	School Incidents[4]	SHARP Survey[5]	Survey - Professionals[6]	Survey - Public[7]	Average
Weber	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	**3.86**
Salt Lake	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	**3.57**
Tooele	3	3	3	1	4	4	4	**3.14**
Utah	2	4	2	3	2	4	3	**2.86**
Washington	3	2	3	-	3	3	3	**2.83**
Cache	3	3	-	2	2	3	3	**2.67**
Uintah	2	-	-	2	2	3	4	**2.60**
Davis	3	2	-	2	2	3	3	**2.50**
Box Elder	2	2	-	2	2	3	3	**2.33**
Grand	1	1	-	-	4	3	2	**2.20**
Juab	2	-	-	4	3	1	1	**2.20**
Iron	3	-	1	1	3	3	2	**2.17**
Wasatch	2	-	2	1	3	2	3	**2.17**
Carbon	1	-	1	-	4	2	2	**2.00**
Sanpete	2	-	1	-	3	2	2	**2.00**
Millard	2	2	1	1	3	1	3	**1.86**
San Juan	2	1	1	2	3	3	1	**1.86**
Emery	2	-	-	1	4	0	2	**1.80**
Morgan	1	1	-	-	3	1	3	**1.80**
Garfield	2	-	-	-	3	2	0	**1.75**
Summit	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	**1.71**
Sevier	1	-	1	1	3	2	2	**1.67**
Beaver	3	-	-	1	3	0	1	**1.60**
Kane	2	2	-	-	3	1	0	**1.60**
Duchesne	2	1	-	1	2	2	1	**1.50**
Wayne	1	-	1	-	3	0	0	**1.00**
Piute	0	-	1	-	3	0	0	**0.80**
Daggett	0	-	-	-	2	0	-	**0.67**
Rich	0	-	-	-	2	0	0	**0.50**

Note: Ratings were made on a scale from 0-4 for each data source where data were available ("-" signifies no data available). Each county was rated relative to other counties within that data source. The ratings were defined as follows: 0 = no evidence of gangs based on this data; 1 = evidence of gang presence, though minimal; 2 = evidence of gang presence, low to moderate; 3 = evidence of gang presence and potential problem, moderate to high; 4 = evidence of gang problem, high/very high relative to other counties.

[1] Based on data from O-Track on county of conviction of gang inmates (Table 2, p. 5), Department of Corrections.
[2] Based on District Court cases with at least one charge marked as "gang-related" in CORIS (see p.8 for description), 1999-2010, Administrative Office of the Courts.
[3] Based on data received from law enforcement agencies and/or gang/drug task forces, in some cases reported as requirement for Byrne/JAG funding (note that Central Utah Task Force data includes Millard, Sevier, Sanpete, Piute, and Wayne counties).
[4] Based on data received from the Utah State Office of Education on incidents by school district that were flagged as gang-related, 2006-2010 (see p.12). Note that not all districts record incidents as gang-related, so "-" could mean either none occurred or none reported.
[5] Based on data from statewide SHARP survey of middle and high school students, 2007-2011 (Table 5, p.17). Note that data are based on DSAMH regions, and some combine several counties (see note below Table 5). All counties within a region received the same rating.
[6] Based on data from the 2009 Survey of Gang Crime & Its Impact assessing perceptions of professionals (Table 10, p.28).
[7] Based on data from the 2010 Utah Crime Survey assessing perceptions of a random sample of the general public (Table 13, p.42 – table does not include data for all counties).

As Table 12 shows, there is a fairly clear grouping of counties based on their overall presence and/or problem with gangs at this time. The highest category in red (Weber, Salt Lake, and Tooele), with an average score greater than 3 (with 4 being the highest rating), appears to have pretty strong evidence of a current gang problem that is relatively high compared to other regions of the state. The clearly elevated nature of the problem in these three counties may justify increased support in the form of prevention, intervention, and suppression. The next category in orange could be seen as either places with established lower-level gang problems (Utah, Davis) or places outside the Wasatch Front where gang problems are emerging and/or growing (Washington, Cache, Uintah, and Box Elder). The counties in this category should also be prime targets of prevention and intervention in particular, as well as suppression in some of those with larger populations (Utah, Davis, Washington), to prevent further growth of the problem. One step below this is the category in yellow (Grand, Juab, Iron, Wasatch, Carbon, and Sanpete), which contains mostly smaller counties that showed evidence of issues beyond a mere presence (i.e., a rating over 2 in at least one category). These counties may be ones to keep an eye on in the coming years, as well as being the focus of some prevention and intervention efforts. The fourth and largest category in green contains counties that did not show consistent evidence beyond the fact that there is likely some gang presence within their borders (albeit minimal at this point in time). While these counties do not show clear presence of a problem, some areas may still be in need of targeted prevention and intervention efforts to ensure that more youth do not join gangs and/or form new gangs. The final category in blue contains four small counties (Wayne, Piute, Daggett, and Rich) that did not show any consistent evidence of a gang presence. In fact, the only affirmative ratings for any of the counties in this category came from their grouping within larger regions or task forces in two of the data sources (as well as one gang inmate from Wayne County).

It is important to note that this analysis is to be used as a general guideline to direct important efforts at prevention, intervention, and suppression. Grouping by county is the most useful way to present this information, though there is obviously recognition of the fact that the same situation will not necessarily be found in all parts of a given county. A county that falls on the higher end of the ratings may have areas completely free of gang problems, while a county that falls in the yellow or green categories may have an area experiencing more problems than the rest of the county. Either way, an important goal of this report was to identify areas with current and emerging gang problems, and we feel that this analysis is an important first step. We also need to rely on feedback from individuals within a given county to identify more targeted areas for various types of funding.

What types of criminal activities are gang members generally engaged in (and to what effect)?

Another goal of this assessment which the available data afforded was to get a better idea of what types of activities (criminal and otherwise) that gang members are engaging in that might be causing varying degrees of problems in our communities. The evidence is fairly clear from multiple sources that gangs and gang-affiliated individuals in Utah are engaging a significant amount of violent and disruptive activities in our neighborhoods, schools, and prisons, as well as drug-related offenses and property crimes. The most common activities cited include assaults, threats and intimidation (and bullying in schools), disorderly conduct of varying degrees, graffiti and vandalism, burglaries, and drug possession and distribution.

Apart from the particular activities that gangs are engaging in, it is clear from the surveys of professional and public perceptions that gangs are having a negative impact on communities where they are present, including in contexts such as schools and correctional facilities. Concerns about gang

presence were also related to concerns about violent crime, drug crime, graffiti, and sexual violence in the community. Also, individuals who were victims of crime in the previous year were significantly more likely to report a gang presence in their community (61.1% vs. 42.1%), and this was especially true for person crime victims (70.1%).

Summary of data limitations

A main theme of this report, especially in relation to the first section discussing objective data sources from criminal justice agencies in the state, may be that much of the current data available on gangs and gang-related crime in Utah is very limited at this time. The main issues that we find tend to be definitional and process-oriented. First, we lack a common definition of important terms relevant to gangs (gang, gang member, gang-related crime) even within a given area of the criminal justice system across the state. This also feeds into the other issue, as an established common definition of gang terms would allow more consistent data entry across different areas of the state within and between different parts of the criminal justice system. Consistency in the process of recording data is very important to our ability to trust the data and rely on it to draw important policy conclusions. At this time, there are several databases that have fields for entry of gang-related information that are not consistently used due to a lack of emphasis, training, and/or relevant definitions.

Based on the data and feedback that was received for this report, the O-Track database within the Department of Corrections is clearly the most reliable at this time in the information it provides about gang members in its system. They have a process in place where gang investigators screen information that is entered relevant to gang affiliation based on definitions used within this agency. The prison data are considered to be especially accurate, while the community (AP&P) data should be expected to improve in the coming years as the new process extends to this larger pool of offenders and investigators continue to screen and update the information on these offenders.

The law enforcement community in Utah is also working on forming a statewide gang intelligence database, the plans for which involve common definitions and an entry and screening process similar to that established by Corrections with O-Track. The PIMS database operated by the Utah Prosecution Council has also recently undergone an update that should improve the scope and quality of the data available from prosecutors related to gang cases. These new initiatives and updated processes should be monitored to see the extent to which more accurate information improves the work of those individuals who use these databases the most, as well as facilitates the ability to track gang trends in these areas over time.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which oversees the CORIS database for district and justice courts and the CARE database for juvenile courts, seems to be the agency that would most benefit from common definitions and an improvement in training and other aspects of the process of data entry relevant to gang offenders and gang-related crimes. At this time, each database has a field or fields that would provide gang-relevant information, though neither provides data that is reliable due to their spotty and inconsistent use. It is not evident that there is a plan to institute any changes at this time, as there appears to be with the other agencies discussed above. The Juvenile Court and its CARE database have some unique problems to confront due to the population they serve, and may need to develop their own definitions and process. Finally, the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) has recently taken over more control of the process of how incidents within the schools are reported to and by the districts. Once again, school officials lack a definition for what makes an incident gang-

related, and there is not much consistency across schools and districts in how the gang flag in their database is employed (if at all) as a result. USOE officials hope that this process will improve as more consistent standards are provided to the schools.

The bottom line in the issues and limitations with the data discussed above is that they decrease our confidence in the data available, and in our ability to conceptualize the problem and draw important policy conclusions. Without the inclusion of other survey-based data that was gathered for this report, it would have been very difficult to complete a worthwhile assessment of the gang problem in Utah.

Other important findings

The SHARPS surveys of middle and high school students in particular provided some other very important findings besides what they contributed to prevalence rates and regional distribution. The analyses of risk factors that best predict gang involvement and interest, while complex, provide useful information that programs and initiatives can used to target youth who might be at risk for gang involvement. These include Social-Behavioral (i.e., early initiation of antisocial behavior and/or drug use, interaction with antisocial peers) and Cognitive-Attitudinal (i.e., low self-esteem/depressive symptoms, attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior) factors that were the strongest predictors, as well as other Community, Family, and School factors. Additionally, new data on the most recent survey showed that youth may be joining (or thinking about joining) gangs for psychosocial reasons such as status, belonging, security, and excitement, as well as more tangible reasons like money.

In addition to the common findings already discussed previously, the survey of professionals also provided some important information about how the different areas of involvement (schools, community supervision, facilities, law enforcement, courts, and community organizations) are dealing with the gang problem in their communities. For example, community supervision professionals provided responses to questions about differential treatment of and performance by gang members on their caseloads, and judges and prosecutors provided information about the use of group enhancements in their cases as well as problems confronted in prosecuting or hearing gang-related cases. The general public sample in the Utah Crime Survey also provided some important information about not only general perceptions of gangs, but how the perceived presence of gangs is related to actual victimization in the previous year.

Conclusions

The conclusions based on the findings of this report can be grouped into two categories: 1) substantive conclusions about gangs and gang activity in Utah based on the objective databases, self-reports of youth, and perceptions of professionals and the public; and 2) conclusions about the quality of the data available and the need for improvements in the process of data entry and the definitions upon which recorded data are based.

First, the data from this report has helped to paint a better picture of the gang problem across the state and identify certain areas that may be in need of further assistance to not only fight current gang-related issues, but also to prevent youth and others from joining gangs. This assessment provides a quantitative evaluation of the gang problem by region of the state (see Table 12) to identify areas with serious gang problems and others with emerging problems that may be “under the radar” in comparison to high population areas along the Wasatch Front. It also provides an account of the

disruptive activities that gangs are most often engaging in, and how such activities are impacting our communities across the state. Finally, it provides demographic and background factors that might put individuals (especially youth) at risk for gang involvement, while also outlining potential reasons why people might join gangs. In doing this, it also provides perspectives from various groups and individuals involved with the problems in a variety of contexts, from self-reports by youth at varying levels of involvement in gangs to professionals working with youth and adults involved in gangs to the general public's perceptions of their communities, and finally to criminal justice processing data coming out of our courts, prisons, law enforcement agencies, etc. This is all potentially actionable information that can be used by agency decision makers and other policy makers in terms of **where** and **who** to direct resources at, including prevention, intervention, and suppression. The companion report on best practices can help to determine **how** to direct those resources (i.e., what types of programs).

Second, some of these substantive conclusions must obviously be qualified by important conclusions regarding problems and limitations in the quality of data available, especially from many of the objective data sources discussed in the first section of this report. It is vitally important to our ability to track the gang problem over time and across locations that criminal justice officials and policy makers in the state develop and follow a single definition of "gang", "gang member", and "gang crime" that can be used in conjunction with improvements in our data recording processes and inputting. This will be a rather difficult undertaking, and some groups have already attempted it with varying results. It may be that individual agencies (most notably the Juvenile Court and their CARE database) end up deciding upon definitions that work for their own use. This has already begun in the Department of Corrections with their O-Track database and trained gang investigators performing screening of data, and with discussions by law enforcement of a statewide gang intelligence database, though it is important that agencies coordinate their efforts to some extent. Either way, we have to ensure that the information that is being collected can be tied to something tangible that makes sense across agencies and across areas within a given agency. This will also involve a great deal of training for those responsible for handling (i.e., producing, entering, screening) this data once definitions are established.

Next Steps

We encourage agency decision makers and other policy makers to follow through with actionable information from this report, both in terms of its substantive conclusions (i.e., areas where gang problems are greatest and emerging, types of disruptive activities that gangs are engaging in, risk factors and reasons for gang involvement) and its conclusions about current data limitations (i.e., developing and implementing definitions of gang terms and improving the process of data recording and verification to increase reliability and confidence in the data). The information in this report should be used alongside that provided in the companion report on gang research and best practices to target areas and individuals most at-risk and in need with resources and programs that have been proven to work in reducing gang membership and related crime and community disruption. These efforts should include perspectives and input from not only law enforcement and other traditional criminal justice agencies, but also schools and the greater community.

While there is valuable information in this assessment, it is important to monitor improvements in the data sources that track gang-relevant information and, as confidence in this data increases and more quality data become available, conduct a follow-up assessment within five years. To be maximally useful, these assessments should be an ongoing process, along with evaluating any programs or initiatives that have been funded based on the recommendations of this report and its companion.

Please send any suggestions, feedback, and/or any other comments to benpeterson@utah.gov

Utah Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice
State Capitol Complex
Senate Building, Ste. 330
Salt Lake City, UT 84114
801.538.1031