ASSESSING OUR COMMUNITY’S YOUTH GANG PROBLEM
2014

Utilizing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Comprehensive Gang Model

Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems
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Executive Summary

The Jackson County Gang Task Force wishes to thank those individuals, agencies, community members, parents, business leaders, school personnel, and students for their participation in the completion of this first ever county wide assessment project with nearly 4,500 completed surveys and interviews.

For the purposes of this research a gang is defined as a group of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which, in turn, creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Moreover, a gang member is defined as an individual who admits membership in a gang or who maintains ongoing relationships with known gang members. This definition further includes those who have been documented by law enforcement officers for reasonable suspicion of gang affiliation or activity and those arrested in the company of identified gang members for offenses that are consistent with gang activity.

Law enforcement intelligence, through the Medford Police Department, has identified 16 active gangs in Jackson County totaling 346 known gang members including both adult and juveniles. 60% are Hispanic, 30% are White and 10% are African American. 80 percent are male while only 20 percent are female. 95 percent are between the ages of 13-25. Nortenos and Surenos comprise 80 percent of the gang members in Jackson County. Gangs are currently most active in Medford and White City.

The assessment concludes that there is a genuine concern about gang activity in Jackson County. Those adults surveyed and interviewed expressed alarm about gangs, their activity and concerned for their businesses and communities. One major concern was an increase in vandalism, graffiti and tagging, which are associated with gang activity. Further, community members, business owners, parents and school personnel are worried about an influx of illicit drugs, drug-dealing and violence associated with those activities impacting the community. Community members voiced concern about fear for safety within the community, an assertion echoed by the parents in the focus groups. Students seemed less worried about gangs, and were by and large unaware or unconcerned about a gang presence in the schools; however, most stated they could identify gang members by tattoos, clothing and signs.

Community leaders, business owners, community members, parents and school personnel all asserted that they felt gang activity in Jackson County was caused by gangs moving into the area from other places. Most also felt that gang membership was a family affair, with children getting recruited because of older siblings, parents, or other relatives. Finally, many respondents felt that children often need to feel a sense of belonging, and this makes them easier targets for gang recruitment.

While some acknowledged the anti-gang programs M.A.D.G.E. and G.R.E.A.T. are working to curb gang activity in Jackson County, there is an opinion that more must be done. A recurrent theme in data is providing more youth mentorship and school programs as a means to keep kids out of gangs. A concern for the economy and bleak job prospects also brought forth talk about providing more jobs and job training to help reverse the “culture of poverty” which also seems to surround gang membership. Overwhelmingly, adult respondents felt that increased parental
involvement would help keep children out of gangs and curb gang activity in the area. Many cited a lack of afterschool programming and sport clubs as contributing to juvenile delinquency and gang membership, they argued that more afterschool programs and sports would give children something to do and a sense of belonging that might otherwise be channeled into gang activity.

The Jackson County Gang Task Force recognizes the difference between perception and the actual cases reported. Comparing the numbers of gang related and non-gang related crime, it appears that the gang related crime plays a small role in the overall statistics. This being due to most gang crime being against rival gangs, and it often going unreported. The most reported gang crime is graffiti because it usually affects non-gang members. Additionally, over the last four years (2009-2012) there has been three willful murder convictions in Jackson County and one of these was a gang related juvenile.

In summary, on-going efforts will most likely be focused in three different ways: prevention, intervention and suppression of gang activity.
Acknowledgments

The Jackson County Gang Task Force, acting as the Steering Committee for this project, wishes to thank those individuals, agencies, community members, parents, business leaders, school personnel, and students for their participation in the completion of this first ever county wide assessment project.

The Gang Task Force consists of individuals from Adult Community Corrections, the District Attorney’s Office, Southern Oregon University, the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department, the Rogue Valley Family YMCA, Mediation Works, the Boys & Girls Club, the Medford Police Department, Jackson County Juvenile Department, the Oregon Youth Authority, Eagle Point School District, Jackson County Commission on Children and Families, Attorney’s, the Medford School District, KTVL Channel 10, Community Members, Circuit Court Judge, Students, Clergy, Medford Chamber of Commerce, Business Leaders, Hearts with a Mission, Rogue Valley Youth for Christ, Kids Unlimited, Southern Oregon ESD, and the Ashland Police Department.

This project could not have been completed if it were not for the collaborated efforts between the individuals and agencies that were willing to step forward and provided the staff time and resources to gather and analyze the needed data. In particular, the Gang Task Force would like to thank the Assessment Team Leaders of Brad Russell, YMCA; Matt Sweeney, Youth for Christ; Joe Ferguson, Jackson County Juvenile Department; Mark Patterson, Medford Police Department; Chris Burgess, Intern; Dan Murphy, Commission on Children and Families; and Drs. Lee Ayers and Alison Burke, Southern Oregon University. Each of these Team Leaders was responsible for the collection of specific data areas within the assessment. Team Leaders then built a team to assist them in setting up meetings, community and parent forums, on-line student surveys, and then begin analyzing the data to pull it into the final assessment report.

Additionally, appreciation goes to KTVL Channel 10 News as the media partner on this project, who continued to provide updates not only on the progress of the assessment but the gang issues within our community through their Rogue Gangs series.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for the Comprehensive Gang Model – A Guide to Assessment Your Community’s Youth Gang Problem that was used in this project. This model was a tremendous help in determining how to set up the leadership of the project, seeking a research partner, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data and writing the final report, all with no additional staffing or resources.
Project Background

In October of 2008, Oregon's southern region juvenile departments were awarded a Gang Intervention Services grant from the Oregon Youth Authority. These recipient juvenile departments included Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lane counties. Through this grant a community education and mobilization effort regarding youth gangs was held in Medford on October 16 & 17, 2008. This event brought nationally recognized trainers who have developed effective community mobilization strategies for both prevention and interventions of gangs in the community to the Rogue Valley.

Gang related issues in the southern region are growing and require our communities to work together and successfully intervene before gang problems outgrow our resource's capacity to respond. Gangs attract high risk youth who are vulnerable to recruitment; youth are lured into “belonging” to a group which engages in serious delinquent behavior. High risk youth from ethnic minority communities are also at risk for recruitment. One possible explanation is the attraction of belonging to a group with perceived power; this stems from a sense of relative powerlessness for ethnic youth experiencing cultural estrangement in the predominantly Caucasian culture of Oregon. Additionally, Jackson County’s proximity to the California border creates easy access to communities from gangs located in that state.

In order to further explore the gang phenomenon in Jackson County, the term gang must be clearly defined. For the purposes of this research a gang is defined as a group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which, in turn, creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Moreover, a gang member is defined as an individual who admits membership in a gang, who resides in or frequents areas of known gang activity, who affects their style of dress, use of hand signals, symbols or tattoos, or who maintains ongoing relationships with known gang members. This definition further includes those who have been documented by law enforcement officers for reasonable suspicion of gang affiliation or activity and those arrested in the company of identified gang members for offenses that are consistent with gang activity.
Jackson County Demographics (2010 Census)

Jackson County covers 2,784 square miles and has a population of 203,206 people, which is the sixth most populated county in the state. Medford is the largest city with a population of 77,485 (37%). Unincorporated areas are the second largest populated area at 61,935 (29%). Remaining population by city within the county assist of: 21,460 Ashland (10%); 17,205 Central Point (8%); 8,855 Eagle Point (4%); 6,670 Talent (3%); 4,910 Phoenix (2%); 2,890 Shady Cove (1%); 2,700 Jacksonville (1%); 2,110 Rogue River (1%); 1,080 Gold Hill (<1%); and 445 Butte Falls (<1%). Jackson County has seen a 5 percent increase in population over the last five years.

There are a total of 90,937 housing units in Jackson County, 83,076 of these are occupied. 52,045 housing units are owner-occupied, consisting of 125,100 individuals. 74,614 individuals are in rent-occupied housing units, consisting of 31,031 housing units. There are 23,853 households with individuals under the age of 18.

Median income of Jackson county residents was $44,142, but the area has experienced double digit unemployment rates for the last four years (see figure 1) and an estimated 14 percent of Jackson county residents live in poverty.

FIGURE 1: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN JACKSON COUNTY

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
The median age for Jackson County residents is 42.1 years. Median ages for females are 43.5 years (104,204) and males are 40.8 years (99,002). Jackson County has 21.8% of its population under the age of 18 (44,312). Remaining population by age consists of: 20-24 years of age, 12,176; 25-34 years of age, 23,470; 35-49 years of age, 36,778; 50-64 years of age, 45,370; 65 years of age and over, 35,834.

Jackson County education attainment for the population of 25 years and over totals 140,378. 8% (12,297) have a graduate or professional degree; 14% (20,953) have a bachelor's degree; 10% (10,502) have an Associate's degree; 29% (40,960) have some college, but no degree; 28% (39,892) graduated high school (includes equivalency); 7% (11,095) 9th to 12th grade have no diploma; 3% (4,679) are less than 9th grade.

The largest racial/ethnic group in Jackson County is Caucasian (180,172), who make up 83.7 percent of the population, followed by Hispanics (21,745) at 10.7 percent, those who identify as two or more races make up (5,242) 2.6 percent, the remaining (6,717) 3 percent is comprised of African Americans (<1 percent), Asians (1 percent), Native Americans and Alaskan Natives (1 percent) and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (<1 percent).

The Census Bureau data estimates there were 18,985 people of Hispanic origin in 2009, comprising 9.4 percent of the total population in Jackson County. This number marks an increase of 2.7 percent in population since 2000. It is interesting to note that the populations of those who identify as African American, Native American or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander have not markedly fluctuated since the 2000 Census data. Figure 2 illustrates the population by race estimates for Jackson County based upon 2010 census data.
Figure 2: Percent of Population by Race in Jackson County

![Pie chart showing the percentage of the population by race.]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Sources:

Oregon Demographics
http://www.oregon-demographics.com/jackson-county-demographics

U.S. Census Bureau

Portland State University, Population Research Center
http://www.pdx.edu/prc/home

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv
Gangs and the Community

Community Business Owners and Leaders Perceptions

Business owners and community leaders were surveyed to determine how area businesses perceived gangs and gang activity as a threat to the community. 112 business owners were surveyed for this part of the gang activity assessment (n=112); 63 percent of respondents identified as female and 37 percent identified as male. Figure 3 illustrates where the respondents’ businesses are located; this is important to note because gang activity can be more concentrated in some areas than in others. Business owners operating businesses in areas with more gang activity will have a different perspective than those in areas of low gang activity.

Over half of the respondents answered they owned a business in Medford, while Phoenix-Talent businesses comprised nearly 37 percent, Ashland businesses included almost 17 percent of the businesses surveyed. The remaining businesses were located in Central Point, Eagle Point and White City.

Those surveyed overwhelmingly perceived that gangs were a problem in their communities, 68 percent answered yes to this query; whereas only 10 percent answered no and 22 percent did not know whether gangs were a problem.

When asked why they believed gang activity occurred in their communities, nearly 69 percent felt it was due to gangs moving in from other areas. Just over 53 percent believed gang activity was caused by family members or friends who coerced youth to join gangs, and nearly 45 percent of respondents felt that youth join gangs in order to feel a sense of belonging which leads to heightened gang activity within the community. Finally, 37 percent of participants felt that poverty was a contributing factor to gang activity.
Figure 4 illustrates the top five perceptions of community leaders regarding gang activity in their communities.

Community and business leaders were asked what could and should be done to reduce gang activities in Jackson County. Almost three quarters of participants stated that they felt mentoring would help reduce the likelihood of youth gang activity; nearly 61 percent thought that more parental involvement would help and just over half stated providing jobs and job training would help curb gangs activity as youth earn money in a legitimate way. One respondent recommended “gang outreach” programs, while another suggested “come down strong on adult gang leaders, give kids love and lots of alternatives”.

When asked if they were satisfied with the current response to gang activity by law enforcement, social service agencies and schools, 44 percent admitted they did not know how satisfied they were. However, 38 percent were not satisfied that law enforcement, social service agencies and schools were doing enough, while 18 percent said they were satisfied with the overall response. Over half of the participants, 53 percent, had never had any personal experience with a known gang member, though 38 percent had. The remaining 9 percent were unsure if they had ever had contact with a gang member personally. Those who indicated that they had personal contact with a known gang member were asked to elaborate; some said their business had been tagged, others stated they had been involved with confrontations “during criminal activities” at their businesses. One business owner, fearing for their safety wrote they have witnessed: “fights with pipes and scary stuff between gang members in front of my store...tagging on the buildings...gang members are always in number[s]”.
Business owners were queried as to what they could do to improve the community’s response to gang activities. This was an open ended question, and elicited some thoughtful responses from participants. Many wrote about community involvement in addressing gang activity, others advocated for watchfulness and reporting, and still others echoed their previous responses by maintaining that outreach, counselling, afterschool activities and mentoring would help. Following are quotes from the community leaders and business owner’s interview:

"Community involvement and awareness of the scope of developing gang related issues and working with local government."

"Help [the] community find a way to have place for kids to go to - to belong - to be constructive"

"Be informed, be involved and support those on the front line - educators and law enforcement"

"Having a community that is willing to stand together rather than living just for one’s self of just for one’s own family. This means being willing to donate time and resources to others. Mentoring programs and activities, better education opportunities, confidence and hope for a brighter future are great tools to help prevent a child from joining a gang. Not sure what to do to help someone already in a gang who doesn’t want out, or what to do for those who do want out."

"Put pressure on government to increase funding for gang task force and after school activities."

"Help people see that gang members are human beings too, struggling to get their needs met. In their minds, their gangs are often the only family they’ve known. As humans, we fear what we don’t understand."

"By continuing to be part of the community conversation, and by putting aside my judgments and prejudices."

"We can all help by first honestly looking at the underlying issues that lead to gang activity and developing community programs that address those issues. Unfortunately, the lack of resources do not exist to deal with the problem. I believe that we need to mentor parents and their children when the children are very young. For many it may be a lost cause when the children are already members of a gang. The community leaders need to find a way to reprioritize the issues regarding our community to deal with this problem in a comprehensive way. If we don’t there will just be more tragic deaths and we will have to keep building more jails and prison cells."

Community Members Perceptions

Members of the community were surveyed to determine how gang activity is perceived by the public. Furthermore, the Gang Task Force was interested in how community members feel gangs impact the community. The resident survey consisted of fifty community members (n=50), which were split by gender into 21 male respondents and 29 female respondents. Caucasians and Hispanic/Latinos were evenly split in the sample, with approximately 50 percent of each category reporting.

75 percent of respondents reported feeling less safe in their community than they did 2 years prior. Various reasons were given as to why they perceived their community to be less safe, answers varied but a few given were: “[The David] Grubbs murder”, “Too many transients” and “Lived in a rural community little crime 2 years ago, more so now”. Regardless, 78 percent answered that they did not feel that their child was at risk of being in a gang. Figure 5 illustrates the top five concerns that respondents had about their community.

Community members were also asked what the top three perceptions gangs present in the community. 58 percent of community members felt that gangs brought an increase in drug crimes, 48 percent asserted that gang activity brings an increased fear for safety into the community, and 34 percent felt that an increase in weapon crimes is a problem that gang activity brings with it. Furthermore, 60 percent of respondents felt that gang activity is caused by gangs moving into the area from other places. 50 percent of those surveyed felt that increased gang activity is due to family problems while 46 percent felt that membership in gangs is due to youth having friends or family involved in gang activity. Community members were also asked, what, if anything they would be willing to do to help decrease gang activity in their neighborhoods.
Figure 6 illustrates what activities community members would be willing to engage in to help their communities.

**Figure 6: Activities Community Members Are Willing to Engage in to Decrease Gang Activity, by Percentage**

Within the ‘Other’ categories, community members wrote in ideas which included: “Engage parents and community @ school”, “Raise awareness of gang problem”, and “Community awareness education.”

When asked how satisfied they were with the current response to gang activity, community members appeared to be satisfied. Some asserted that “M.A.D.G.E. & G.R.E.A.T. are excellent programs”, while others conceded “Great efforts are being made by many agencies, but funding it (sic) a problem”. Still others were less than satisfied with the current response: “Not satisfied, we need to work together to train them and teach them to do better things in their neighborhoods”. Some community members were unaware of gang activity in their neighborhoods.

Community members were also questioned about what actions their communities are engaging in as a response to gang activity. Many participants cited police programs, YMCA programming, and the Eagle Point Youth Taskforce, but emphasized a need for more programs targeting gang activity; “work in progress but need more community participation”. Others mentioned repairing items broken by vandalism and cleaning up graffiti. A few members of the community stated that they felt nothing was being done in their community to combat gang activity.
Current Gang-Involved Youth

An effort was made to interview gang-involved youth in the Rogue Valley to determine their demographic profiles and the types of criminal activity they engage in as gang members. However, after numerous attempts to gather information or gang affiliation, it was discovered that rarely did gang-involved youth want to discuss their gang activity. Personal interviews were conducted with four gang members by a neutral party in a neutral setting. These face-to-face interviews were conducted using a standard interview consent form and the participants remained anonymous. It is important to note that with such a small sample of gang member interviews, larger conclusions about gang demographics and activities are severely limited. However, the information gained through these few interviews does supply the task force with an important glimpse into the lives of gang-involved youth in Jackson County, even if larger generalizations cannot be made.

The mean age for the gang members interviewed for this study was 16.25 years and all were male; this is consistent with the Medford Police Department’s finding that the majority of gang members are younger males. This is also consistent with the findings of the National Gang Center, whose surveys found that in smaller metropolitan areas and rural areas; on average over half of gang members are juveniles under the age of 18. All the gang members interviewed reported a Hispanic/Latino ethnic background and all stated the language used primarily in the home was Spanish. According to the National Gang Center, 46.2 percent of gangs in 2011 were Hispanic or Latino, and the Medford Police Department data on gang membership supports this to a certain extent.

All gang members reported having family members in a gang, with two respondents stating that they had cousins in a gang, two respondents stating that their fathers were members of a gang and one individual asserting that their mother was part of a gang. All four interviewees reported being unemployed and 3 of the 4 were currently in school. 3 of the 4 youths reported feeling like they had a teacher or other person they could talk to about their problems, most did not feel lonely or ostracized by peers or teachers at their schools. Two of the four had dropped out of school with one reporting he dropped out “cuz (sic) I wanted to sell drugs”, and the other citing drugs and friends as the reason for dropping out. All four gang members stated they had been suspended from school while attending, primarily for fighting, but one interviewee reported having been suspended for carrying a knife on school property. Likewise three of the four reported being expelled from school; one for lack of progress, one for fighting and one for selling drugs.

Interviewees were asked how often they had witnessed gang activities on school grounds and both reported that these incidents occurred at schools in Jackson County; only two of the four participants answered this series of questions. Both participants reported seeing gang members selling drugs on more than 16 occasions; additionally both stated that fights between members of different gangs occurred, gang members carried a gun to school on 1 to 3 occasions, but carried a knife to school between 3 to more than 16 times. Despite this, no incidences of a gang member
pulling or firing a gun at school was reported. Pulling a knife at school was reported to have occurred between 1 to 9 times with only someone being stabbed 1 to 3 times (as reported by only one participant). Rates of gang intimidation were higher, with interviewees stating that this occurred between 10 to more than 16 times. Gang recruitment on school grounds, however, was reportedly much rarer with respondents reporting its occurrence between 1 to 9 times.

Within the community, all four participants reported that gang members selling drugs was a common occurrence, as were fights between members of rival gangs. They reported that often a gang member carried a gun while in the community, though the reported rate of a gun being pulled and/or fired was much lower. Most respondents reported that no one had been shot by a gang member in their presence. Likewise, knives were reportedly carried often by gang members, and pulled to threaten another individual on numerous occasions. Participants reported that on average they had seen someone stabbed 1 to 3 times. In the community setting, gang members reported that gang intimidation occurred very frequently, and that they had seen active gang member recruiting between 4 to 16 times. Figure 7 illustrates, on average, how the gang members interviewed view the seriousness of gang related crime.

Half of the interviewees stated that they joined their gang because of power, respect and because they had family members or friends who were already involved. Three of the four participants asserted that most of their friends were also members of a gang. Most interviewees knew 16 or
more adults who used drugs and/or alcohol and who have sold drugs. Additionally, three of the four gang members interviewed knew at least one adult who had committed a crime that could lead to arrest.

A series of questions were asked in the interviews as to how easily gang members thought they could procure weapons and drugs. Figure 8 illustrates how easily gang members thought they could obtain weapons and drugs, on average. From this table, the gang members interviewed did not seem to believe that attaining weapons or drugs would be very difficult.

**FIGURE 8: THE PERCEIVED EASE OF ATTAINABILITY OF WEAPONS AND DRUGS BY GANG MEMBERS**

![Figure 8: The perceived ease of attainability of weapons and drugs by gang members](Image)

Most gang members agreed that being part of a gang made them feel important on a personal level; they further agreed that being in a gang made them feel useful, and that they belonged to something important. They all felt that being gang members afforded them more respect from others, and they enjoyed being part of their gang and consider them like family. Most conceded that being part of the gang was a good way to make money. However, two of the four interviewees stated that they wished they could get out of the gang, though only one asserted that while he felt somewhat afraid for his own safety, he felt more afraid for the safety of his family members.

Source:
http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis
Schools and Gangs

Student Data

Perceived Gang Activity in Jackson County Schools

Data collected from and about students, including school level data, were an important part of the assessment. This data was useful in the identification of how area school children perceive gang activity and gangs within the community. School-level data and information from school staff and parents was vital to rounding out the perceived picture of gang activity in Jackson County.

A sampling of students in 7-8 and 9-10 grades was conducted in all the school districts of Jackson County, with the exception of the Ashland, Prospect and Butte Falls School Districts who elected not to participate in the assessment due to a perceived lack of gang activity in their communities. The student survey was completed within a normal one-classroom setting, using the online survey platform Survey Monkey, which insured the anonymity of the questionnaire. Additionally, a passive consent letter to the parents or guardians was employed.

The task force sought to answer questions about students, student involvement in gang activities, risk and protective factors, and school staff perceptions. The task force was interested in learning if students and staff can pinpoint the characteristics of students involved in gangs, what issues contribute to student gang involvement and who is at risk for gang recruitment and involvement. Furthermore, the surveys and interviews sought to explore student and teacher perceptions of gang activity at their schools, in their neighborhoods and in the larger community.

In total, the survey was given to 4,134 (n=4,134) students in Jackson county. The gender split of the surveys was approximately 50/50 male and female; the average age of respondents was between 13 and 15. Only 8 percent of the students reported being 12 years of age or younger; likewise 17 percent of students were 16 years of age or older.

When asked whether any of the students at their school belonged to gangs, 5 percent of students answered that there were students at their school who belonged to a gang, over a quarter of respondents said there were no students in gangs at their school and nearly 70 percent of participants answered they did not know if there were gang members going to school with them. Similarly, only 13 percent of students reported gang members ‘hanging around’ their school who were not students there, and 64 percent did not know or were not aware of gang members who were not students frequenting their school. This trend continued when students were asked if gangs had brought guns into their schools in the last six months. 65 percent answered that they did not know, whereas 32 percent answered no and only 4 percent of students answered yes. Phoenix High School, Eagle Point High School and North Medford High School each had the
highest percentage of ‘yes’ answers to this question with each school having 10 percent of students surveyed answering yes.

Students were asked how they identified gang members in their schools; almost 60 percent stated that they identified gang members by their clothing, 44 percent said they had seen the students in question with other known gang members, 43 percent reported that violence was how they knew there were gangs in their school and nearly 42 percent reported that graffiti tipped them off to gang presence. The task force was interested in knowing what activities gangs were involved in around area schools, the student survey inquired what activities gangs engaged in, Figure 9 illustrates by percentage what the student perception of gang activities around their schools was.

![Figure 9: Student Perception of Gang Activity in School by Percent](image)

It is interesting to note that the following schools had the highest percentages in the categories listed above:

- Fighting: Hedrick Middle School: 62.5 percent
- Protection: Hanby Middle School: 67.4 percent
- Theft: Central Medford High School: 71.4 percent
- Robbery: Rogue River High School: 69.2 percent
- Helping the Community: Hanby Middle School: 39.5 percent
- Stealing Cars: Rogue River High School 61.5 percent
- Selling Marijuana: Central Medford High School and Rogue River High School: 100 percent
- Property Crimes and Selling Other Drugs: Rogue River High School: 76.9 percent

Remarkably, 70 percent of the students surveyed answered that they did not know if gangs have been involved in the sale of drugs at their school. Of the remaining 30 percent of respondents, 15 percent reported gangs being involved in the sale of drugs and their schools and 15 percent
reported gangs not being involved in drug sales. Talent Middle School had the highest percentage of ‘yes’ answers to this question with just over a quarter of the students surveyed reporting that gangs had been involved in the sale of drugs at that school.

**School Disciplinary Action by Type and Percentage**

To assist with the analysis of perception for gang type behavior by students it was felt it would be important to provide actual data on disciplinary action occurring in schools. The information in figures 10 and 11 provide documentation by school district (middle and high school) on the number of disruptive, physical assaults, property crimes and substance abuse on school grounds. This also provides the percentage of school disciplinary action by type.

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**Figure 11: 2011-2012 School Disciplinary Action by Type and Percentage**

Source: Oregon Department of Education – Education Data Explorer
http://www.ode.state.or.us/apps/Navigation/Navigation.Web/#/PAGR
School Resource Officers and the G.R.E.A.T. Program

Students were asked about the impact of school resource officers (SROs) in their schools. Currently, SRO’s are only at the Medford School District, Eagle Point High School and Phoenix-Talent High School. The purpose of these law enforcement officers is to promote safety and a positive learning environment. Nearly half of the students surveyed (46 percent) were not sure if their school had an SRO on campus, 38 percent knew of an officer on campus and 16 percent believed that there was no SRO at their school, which would be consistent with the majority of schools surveyed not having a SRO. Further, when students were asked about the functions of an SRO on campus, more than half asserted that they weren’t sure of the SRO’s purpose. Figure 12 illustrates, by percentage, what student’s perception of the SRO’s function is on campus.

![Figure 12: What do you think is the main job of an School Resource Officer?](image)

The Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program is designed to act as a gang and violence prevention program. G.R.E.A.T. utilizes school-based learning and law enforcement officer instructed curricula within the classroom to help prevent delinquency and gang membership among students. The program’s target audience is elementary school children, and the G.R.E.A.T. program is designed to help children resist delinquent behavior and gang recruitment techniques which often begin in middle school.

Currently, only the Medford School District has officers providing the G.R.E.A.T. Program. Students were asked whether they had participated in the G.R.E.A.T. program, and how useful they found it. Figures 13 shows that over three quarters of the students in local school districts have not participated in the program.
The 12 percent of students that had gone through the G.R.E.A.T. program were asked how useful they felt that the program was for them in understanding gang behavior and recruitment techniques, as well as avoiding delinquent behavior. Figure 14 illustrates that there was a fairly even split between students that found the program to be very useful to somewhat useful and students who found the program to be not very useful to not at all useful.
Perceived Gang Activity in Students’ Neighborhoods

Almost half of the students surveyed for the assessment reported that they did not believe that there were gangs in their neighborhood. Additionally, 37 percent stated they did not know if there were gangs in their neighborhood and 17 percent acknowledged that gangs had a presence where they lived. 60 percent of students reported that they did not know if gangs from other neighborhoods ‘hang out’ in their neighborhoods, nearly a quarter answered ‘no’ to this question while 17 percent answered that gangs from other neighborhoods ‘hung out’ in theirs. Similarly, 65 percent did not know if gangs were involved in the sale of drugs in their neighborhoods, whereas 19 percent knew gang activity involving drug sales occurred. Nearly 70 percent were unaware of gangs selling guns in their neighborhoods, and only 12 percent were aware of gun sales occurring.

Student Involvement in Gangs

The taskforce was interested in whether students were participating in gangs and gang activity. Of the 6 percent of students that answered ‘yes’ to the question, “Have you ever belonged to a gang?” nearly half (47 percent) were still members at the time the survey was taken. It is interesting to note the small discrepancies between the students’ perceptions of gang activity in their schools and neighborhoods and that of the gang members. For example, while over 60 percent of students perceived gangs to be responsible for the distribution of marijuana in their schools and neighborhoods, only about half of the disclosed gang members admitted that their gangs sold marijuana. Similarly, while only 15 percent of students believed gangs to be helpful within the community, 36 percent of gang members believed that that was one of the functions of the gang. While these differences are neither significant in size, nor a surprising finding, they do illuminate how adolescents perceive the young gang member.

While this portion of the data only looks at 6 percent of the total sample, those 248 students who identified as current or former gang members allowed the task force a glimpse into the reasons youth may choose to join a gang and engage in gang activity. While gang members overwhelmingly (66 percent) sought to provide protection as a gang, only 38 percent of them joined for the purpose of protection. Moreover, 62 percent of gang members reported joining a gang for fun. Figure 15 illustrates why predominant reasons behind why gang members in Jackson County joined a gang. “For Fun” was the most popular answer, followed by “Respect” (50 percent of respondents) and “Money” (47.1 percent) as the third most popular reason a student joined a gang.
Students who self-reported their membership in a gang were asked what types of activities their gang was involved in. Figure 16 illustrates the top seven responses to this question by percent of. Interestingly, nearly 67 percent of gang members asserted that their gang provides protection. However, 60 percent reported that they destroy property, while 55 percent said that their gang steals.
School Personnel Perceptions of Gang Activity

The experience and perceptions of school personnel can supplement a community’s understanding of its local gang problem as school staff members and administrators have contact with a wide variety of students daily.

School personnel were provided a self-administered anonymous questionnaire to provide insight into the nature and prevalence of perceived gang activity in and around the school. Those that completed the questionnaire include teachers, administrators, school resource officers; school health services personnel, counselors, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers. Respondents numbered 229 (n=229) and were asked a series of open-ended questions about their perceptions surrounding gangs and gang activities in their schools. Figure 17 examines whether school personnel believe that gangs are a problem at their school. It is interesting to note that over half of the respondents believe that gangs are not currently a problem, though nearly a quarter believe that they are.

Similarly, school personnel were asked what kinds of problems gangs present in or around the school. Major themes that emerged from this question included: graffiti/tagging, fights, intimidation and bullying of other students by gang members, posturing, vandalism, drugs and insubordination. School personnel expressed concern for how gang activity affects learning and the other non-gang affiliated students.

“They [gang members] intimidate other students, create a climate of hostility, bring drugs on campus, are disrespectful to teachers and other staff, [and] skip classes which creates more work for the teacher.”

“I’ve seen intimidation and no regard for authority, especially in front of peers.”

“...we have had problems with harassment towards someone perceived of (sic) being part of a different gang, fights, graffiti, drawings, etc.”
Teachers and school personnel stated gang activities occur most frequently outside of school, or between classes and during the lunch period. They suggest that this activity is most common during times when students are not directly supervised and state that very little overt gang activity occurs in the classroom. However, many staff did note the presence of gang signs on binders and book covers, and one teacher stated his classroom had been tagged this year.

When asked what issues school personnel and teachers thought contributed to gang activity, a majority of respondents stated that poverty, peer pressure to join gangs, a need to feel a sense of belonging, racism, lack of positive role models, absentee parental figures and a limited amount of activities for youth were major contributors to gang activity. Teachers and staff articulated what they thought the root problems of gang activity in the Rogue Valley were:

"...need to fit in, lack of positive role models, lack of positive community building projects, bleak future prospects in terms of employment and respect."

"Lack of alternative activities (sports, after school clubs), lack of supervision, poverty."

"Desire to belong to something/someone, develop feelings of self-worth, [gang membership] provides a purpose/meaning to their life, develop an identity, [but] provide a false sense of direction."

"Few real, positive role models that the kids-and their families-can relate to."

"...culture of poverty."

Finally, school personnel and teachers were asked whether they thought that gang activity was increasing within the schools. Figure 18 shows that a third of those surveyed felt that gang activity was decreasing, whereas only about a fifth felt that gang activity was increasing in the schools. Almost half of teachers and school staff felt that gang activity was staying about the same as in previous years.
When asked why they thought the way that they did, those who felt that gang activity was decreasing reported that they see less of an overt presence of gangs, such as symbols and tagging than they have in previous years. Others cited the presence of an SRO on campus has helped curb gang activity, as well as staff training on how to respond to gang activity and bullying.

"I think it is decreasing because MPD and JCSO [have been] proactive instead of reactive with gang members and gang issues. These agencies take a hard line and always have with the gang issue. Also, our administration, our SRO and our campus monitors at _____ have no tolerance for gang related behavior."

"Hopefully, zero tolerance has helped but maybe education and awareness about gang activity has helped. Also, law enforcement is cracking down as much as they are able."

Those who asserted that gang activity is on the rise believed this was so because of the number of gang signs and related clothing. Some stated they have seen a rise in the amount of graffiti and tagging, and others asserted that they have heard more students talking about gang related activity.

"...the amount of graffiti and gang related clothing increased."

"I do know there is tagging in the community so there is a possibility of resurgence here at school."

"Kids talking, vandalism, other gang activity in the neighborhood areas, you hear about and see tagging more."

Almost half of the school personnel and teachers surveyed said that they felt that gang activity has stayed about the same at their school. Many acknowledge that gang activity fluctuates and state that the beginning of the school year is generally worse for gang activity than the end. Some voiced concern about perceived increase in community gang activity spilling over into the school environment.

"Lack of student talking about gangs"

"We actively look for indicators and have deans deal with possible issues"

"It is more invisible now, but I believe that it is staying the same."

"Strong school policy reinforcement/ anti-bullying efforts/ Officer _____'s visible, friendly presence."

Parents' Perceptions of Gang Activity in the Community

The final piece of the Gang Task Force assessment of the area’s youth gang activity was to engage parents in focus groups in order to understand their perspective on gangs. Thirty-six parents took part in the focus groups (n=36) and were queried about the types of problems they perceived gangs to bring to the community, the roots of gang activity and what could be done to reduce the gang problem. Additionally, they were asked whether they thought that their own
children were at risk for recruitment who they thought is responsible for taking action in regards diminishing gang related activities.

Overwhelmingly, parents thought that gangs were a problem in their community (89 percent), 8 percent did not see gangs as a problem and 3 percent were unsure. Interestingly, nearly 60 percent of parents did not believe that their child or children was at risk for gang recruitment, approximately one quarter of the parents in the focus groups thought their child or children were at risk. When asked what kinds of problems gangs presented in the community, the most often mentioned was an increase in graffiti and vandalism. Figure 19 illustrates the top five concerns of the parents in the focus groups.

When asked why they felt the gang presence existed in their community 67 percent felt that it was due to gang members moving into the area from other locations. The same number also felt that having family and friends in gangs contributed greatly to community gang problems. Over half of parents felt that kids joined gangs because of family problems, and 42 percent felt that lack of activities and afterschool programs were contributors to gang activity. Furthermore, over a third of those in the focus groups felt that kids joined gangs in order to feel a sense of belonging or to feel loved and 33 percent felt that poverty was a major factor in predicting whether a youth joins a gang.

Parents felt that more parental involvement, jobs and job training and enhanced school programs would help curb gang recruitment and involvement by children in the community. Figure 20 illustrates the top six solutions to the gang problem put forth by the parents.
When asked who should take responsibility for keeping children out of gangs, parents overwhelmingly asserted that the parents of gang members should take more responsibility for keeping their children out of gangs and curtailing gang related behavior. Parents in the focus groups also thought that reducing gang activities was “everyone’s” responsibility, but also thought that the community and law enforcement should take responsibility.

“...[a] communitywide coalition involving many agencies.”

“Parents are primarily responsible and need to get involved early, help can [also] come from school officials, community”

“Parents need to know their kids’ friends and we need to know what our kids do when kids go out”

**Current Activities and Resources**

In an effort to not duplicate previous work that had been accomplished in the community of available resources, the gang task force decided to rely on the effort that was completed prior such as ACCESS in compiling available resources within our community and 211.

The ACCESS resource guide is available in addition to this assessment report at [Jackson County Community Resource Guide – ACCESS](#).
Gangs and Law Enforcement

Current Gang Activity in Jackson County

Law enforcement agencies are the best sources of information regarding the type and level of gang crime or gang incidents in the community, since all agencies collect information about the crimes occurring in their communities. Utilizing law enforcement records and intelligence files, this report defines which gangs are active in the area, the number of members in each gang, their racial identities, gender, and age. This data is used to define what crimes are being committed by gangs and how gang-related crime has changed over time. For the purpose of this research, the data has been divided into two separate sections: the first of these is the law enforcement gang data, which outlines gang characteristics and gang-related crime. The second source of data is information collected through survey interviews of gang members and gang-involved youth.

Law enforcement intelligence, through the Medford Police Department, has identified sixteen active gangs in Jackson County totaling 346 known gang members (includes both adult and juveniles). Racial composition of gang members are 60% Hispanic, 30% White and 10% African American. Males outnumber females in gang activity, law enforcement reports that 80 percent (329) known gang members are male while only 20 percent (24) are female. Gang membership and activity appear to be primarily undertaken by young people; 95 percent of known gang member in Jackson County are between the ages of 13-25. Figure 21 identifies the known gangs in the county and their membership numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gang</th>
<th>Membership Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sureños</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norteños</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juggalos</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloods</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crips</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagos</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazi Low Riders</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno Bulldogs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peckerwoods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy Jokers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinheads</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Mafia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS-13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Brothers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangster Disciples</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Norteños and Sureños comprise of 80 percent of the gang members in Jackson County. These gangs are active throughout the entire County. Gangs are currently most active in the Medford and White City geographic areas. Jackson County Juvenile Services and the Oregon Youth Authority currently have seventeen youth identified as gang members that have been referred and/or are under supervision.

Gang Crime by Type

In order to determine the proportion of gang crime to overall crime in Jackson County, gang crime must be segregated from non-gang crime. For the purposes of this research, the number of overall offenses in Jackson County by type was collected in addition to offenses committed by
gangs. Data collected for Part 1 offenses, those defined by the FBI were used as guidelines (criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, arson). Additionally, other crimes thought to be locally gang related were included (simple assault, vandalism, weapons offenses, drug offenses, graffiti and stolen property related crimes). Criminal mischief was perpetrated the most by gangs during this time period, with a large spike of activity in 2011. Figures 22 and 23 illustrate the most prolific gang related crimes (adult and juvenile) in Jackson County from 2009 through 2012.

It is interesting to note that overall incidents of gang related crime increased in 2011, but decreased again in 2012.
As you compare the numbers of gang related and non-gang related crime it appears that the gang related crime plays a small role in the overall statistics (figures 22/23 and 24/25). Gang related Criminal Mischief crimes actually increase while overall non-gang related Criminal Mischief crimes decreased in 2011. The discrepancy coming from how most gang crime is against rival gangs and it goes unreported. The most often reported gang crime in Jackson County is graffiti because it usually affects no-gang members.

Additionally, over the last four years (2009-2012) there has been three willful murder convictions in Jackson County and one of these was a gang related juvenile.
Location of Gang Crimes

Majority of gang crimes are being committed within Medford and White City areas. However, an increase is being seen in the Phoenix and Talent areas.

These geographic areas have seen consistent gang activity over the last several years, but will change depending on where some of our local gang members reside or how they are spending the majority of their free time.

Most crimes committed by gang members are random in terms of the time of day but documentation is showing that majority are occurring on the weekends.

Victims of Gang Crime

When it comes to violent gang crime the victims are usually rival gang members. The ages of most of the victim's range between 13 to 25 years of age, consistent with the age span of local gang members.

Vast majority of gang crimes have been against other rival gang members and not the general public, with the exception of gang graffiti which affects all members of the community.

County Juvenile Services Criminal Referral Data

All criminal referrals received by the County Juvenile Services Department, by law enforcement, are entered into the statewide Juvenile Justice Information System.

Over the last six years the total number of criminal referrals have gradually decreased, and over the last three years the number of youth referred for crimes has also decreased.
As seen above both total referrals and youth have decreased considerably over the last twelve years in Jackson County.

Additionally, it is helpful to look at specific juvenile criminal referrals from law enforcement to get a clear picture of what trends are occurring.

**Juvenile Services Specific Criminal Referrals from Law Enforcement**

All person-to-person referrals to Juvenile Services, over the last four years, continue to decrease.
Assaults 34 percent reduction; Robbery 29 percent reduction; Harassment 34 percent reduction; Disorderly Conduct 45 percent reduction; Menacing 54 percent reduction; Sex Offenses 17 percent reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assaults</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Harassment</th>
<th>DOC</th>
<th>Menacing</th>
<th>Sex Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All property referrals to Juvenile Services, over the last four years, continue to decrease as well.
Thefts 17 percent reduction; Burglary 24 percent reduction; Criminal Mischief 34 percent reduction; Fire Setter 24 percent reduction; Unlawful Entry into Vehicle 63 percent reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theft</th>
<th>Burg</th>
<th>CM</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>UEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alcohol and Drug referrals to Juvenile Services, over the last four years, continue to decrease.
Felony Drug 41 percent reduction; Misdemeanor Drug 64 percent reduction; Violation Drug 53 percent reduction; Violation Alcohol 71 percent reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>F Drug</th>
<th>M Drug</th>
<th>V Drug</th>
<th>V Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Although data collected through the Juvenile Justice Information System does not categorize the difference between gang and non-gang criminal activity the comparison of certain criminal referrals to the County Juvenile Services Department is useful in looking at the community, parent, student, and business community perceptions of crimes being committed.

To assist with comparison of actual juvenile criminal referral data and references to individual city and/or schools by students and community members the following pages (37-44), provides specific types of criminal offense mentioned by students and community members as to their perception of crimes being committed by juveniles. However, in analyzing this data, it is only referred crimes to the County Juvenile Services Department and not actual crimes that may have been committed but not reported or these crimes having no suspect.
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, over the last year both public order and substance referrals has shown a slight increase, although both are lower than they were four years ago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Public Order</th>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Alcohol MIP</th>
<th>&lt; 1 oz Marji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions:
Refers to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS)
Person: ORS 163 - Assault, Menacing, Sex Offenses, etc.
Property: ORS 164 - Thefts, Burglary, Trespass, Arson, Criminal Mischief, Robbery, Graffiti, etc.
Public Order: ORS 167 - Disorderly Conduct, Harassment, Intimidation, Weapons, etc.
Substance: ORS 475 - Manufacturing, Possession, Delivery of Controlled Substances, etc.
Other: Resisting arrest, Identity Theft, Animal Abuse, Initiating a False Report, etc.
Alcohol/MIP: ORS 471.430 - Purchase or Possession of Alcohol
< 1 oz Marij: ORS 475.864 - Possession of Less Than One Ounce of Marijuana

Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years referrals continue to show a decreasing trend.

![97501 Zip Code Graph]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Public Order</th>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<th>&lt; 1 oz Marji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>

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Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, over the last year both Public Order and Other referrals has shown increases.

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Property: ORS 164 - Thefts, Burglary, Trespass, Arson, Criminal Mischief, Robbery, Graffiti, etc.
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< 1 oz Mariji: ORS 475.864 - Possession of Less Than One Ounce of Marijuana

Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, over the last year Person, Other, Substance and < 1 oz marijuana referrals has shown a very slight increase.

### Definitions:
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- Person: ORS 163 - Assault, menacing, sex offenses, etc.
- Property: ORS 164 - Thefts, Burglary, Trespass, Arson, Criminal Mischief, Robbery, Graffiti, etc.
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Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, over the last year Substance referrals have shown a very slight increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Public Order</th>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>MIP Alcohol</th>
<th>&lt; 1 oz Marji</th>
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<td>2009-2010</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Definitions:
Refers to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS)
Person: ORS 163 - Assault, menacing, sex offenses, etc.
Property: ORS 164 - Thefts, Burglary, Trespass, Arson, Criminal Mischief, Robbery, Graffiti, etc.
Public Order: ORS 167 - Disorderly Conduct, Harassment, Intimidation, Weapons, etc.
Substance: ORS 475 - Manufacturing, Possession, Delivery of Controlled Substances, etc.
Other: Resisting arrest, Identity Theft, Animal Abuse, Initiating a False Report, etc.
Alcohol/MIP: ORS 471.430 - Purchase or Possession of Alcohol
< 1 oz Marij: ORS 475.864 - Possession of Less Than One Ounce of Marijuana

Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, over the last year Other referrals have shown a slight increase.

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<tr>
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Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Over the last four years majority of referrals continue to show a decreasing trend. However, both Property and Alcohol referrals had shown dramatic increase in 2001-2012. Both have now seen a reduction in referrals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Property</th>
<th>Public Order</th>
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Source: Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
Justice System Programs

Agency Name: Medford Police Department

Program Name (if any): G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training)

Program Purpose: Gang Prevention and Anti Bullying

Service(s) Provided: There are two courses offered. One level focuses on Middle School aged kids that are in 6th and 7th grades. The Middle school program is 13 one hour sessions conducted once a week. The second level is focused on Elementary school aged kids in the 4th and 5th grades. The Elementary program is 6 one hour sessions conducted once a week.

Targeted Population: 4th grade through the 7th grades.

Eligibility Criteria: N/A

Program Capacity: Unlimited

Service Area: All Medford Elementary.

Does the program focus on gang-involved youth? No

If risk assessments are conducted, do they include gang membership? No

Funding Sources: Federal Government and the Medford Police Department

Agency Name: Medford Police Department

Program Name (if any): Graffiti Cleanup Program

Program Purpose: Clean up Graffiti in the Medford area

Service(s) Provided: Removal or cleanup of Graffiti around the Medford area utilizing youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Targeted Population: Youth involved in the juvenile justice system

Eligibility Criteria: N/A

Program Capacity: Unlimited

Service Area: Medford area

Does the program focus on gang-involved youth? Yes

If risk assessments are conducted, do they include gang membership? No

Funding Sources: Medford Police Department
Agency Name: Jackson County Community Justice – Juvenile Division

Program Name (if any): Gang Intervention Program

Program Purpose: Reduce Juvenile Delinquency

Service(s): The department has developed an accountability and restorative program to target youth involved in gang activity or behavior. Selected youth will participate in a 3-4 month accountability (gang group curriculum) and restorative work program (Graffiti removal).

Targeted Population: Male and Female youth 12-18 years of age

Eligibility Criteria: Youth under the jurisdiction of the department.

Program Capacity: 12; the intervention program will run 3-4 sessions a year.

Service Area: Jackson County, Oregon

Does the program focus on gang-involved youth? Yes

If risk assessments are conducted, do they include gang membership? No

Funding Sources: Grant and County General Fund
Conclusion

Based upon these data, there is concern about gang activity in Jackson County. Those adults surveyed and interviewed expressed alarm about gangs and activity and worried for their businesses and communities. One major concern was an increase in vandalism, graffiti and tagging activities, which are associated with increased gang activity. Further, community members, business owners, parents and school personnel are worried about an influx of illicit drugs, drug-dealing and violence associated with those activities impacting the community. Community members voiced concern about fear for safety within the community, an assertion echoed by the parents in the focus groups. Students seemed less worried about gangs, and were by and large unaware or unconcerned about a gang presence in the schools. Most students reported they had not witnessed overt gang activity on their campus or in their neighborhoods; however, most stated they could identify gang members by tattoos, clothing and signs.

Community leaders, business owners, community members, parents and school personnel all asserted that they felt gang activity in Jackson County was caused by gangs moving into the area from other places. Most also felt that gang membership was a family affair, with children getting recruited because of older siblings, parents, or other relatives. Finally, many respondents felt that children often need to feel a sense of belonging, and this makes them easier targets for gang recruitment.

While some acknowledged the anti-gang programs M.A.D.G.E. and G.R.E.A.T. are working to curb gang activity in Jackson County, there is an opinion that more must be done. A recurrent theme in data is providing more youth mentorship and school programs as a means to keep kids out of gangs. A concern for the economy and bleak job prospects also brought forth talk about providing more jobs, job skill and job training to help reverse the “culture of poverty” which also seems to surround gang membership. Overwhelmingly, adult respondents felt that increased parental involvement would help keep children out of gangs and curb gang activity in the area. Many cited a lack of afterschool programming and sport clubs as contributing to juvenile delinquency and gang membership, they argued that more afterschool programs and sports would give children something to do and a sense of belonging that might otherwise be channeled into gang activity.

While the perceptions of community leaders, business owners, community members, parents, students and school personnel may not reflect what the current criminal referrals to the County Juvenile Services Department are, one must be aware that referrals to the County Juvenile Services Department are only done when crimes are reported or there is a specific juvenile suspect(s). So, while actual criminal referrals, referred to the County Juvenile Services Department, continue to decrease it is wise to also look at the perception of those that participated in the survey to get a comprehensive look at where it is felt our youth gang activity is at currently.

The overall picture of gang activity in Jackson County, based upon this assessment shows a region of communities who are concerned about gang activity. They see evidence of gangs in their schools and communities and are looking to schools and law enforcement to help. While many parents felt that their children were not personally at risk for recruitment, the increased violence, property damage and drug culture that is associated with gang activity is of concern to them. Many community members, business owners and community leaders felt the same way. While children in the schools do not seem overly concerned about gangs, they acknowledge that the gang culture exists, and can point to evidence of it within their schools.
Limitations and further research

The purpose of gathering the data was to assess the gang problem in Jackson County. And while a good assessment of community, law enforcement, and school perspectives on gang activity in the area is included here there are limitations to this study.

One limitation, mentioned earlier was the size of the sample for the gang member interviews. While the four current gang members who were interviewed gave helpful and enlightening insight into the world of gang membership, four is hardly a representative sample of gang members in Jackson County. Further, the homogenous nature of their ethnic background gave the study a unique perspective about Latino gangs in the area, but leaves many questions as to how gangs of other ethnic backgrounds are structured. Further research should include a larger sample of gang members, more age diversity and gender diversity, if possible.

The survey given to students was an excellent tool for assessing how students perceived gang activity in their schools. However, based upon the nonsensical answers received to many of the open-ended questions, further research would want to talk to students in focus groups or interview situations in order to tease out how they actually feel about many of the issues surrounding gangs in their schools. A short, follow-up survey of what activities they engage in after school would also be helpful in implementation of policy regarding afterschool programs and sports clubs.

Parental focus groups yielded some great information about the concerns of parents in the community, however the focus groups were heavily focused on what parents thought about their communities in regards to their children and no questions were asked about their perceptions of gangs in their children’s schools. Further research should include parent concerns about gang activity in the schools their children attend.

Additionally, it would be interesting to engage in interviews with school SROs, since their perspective on gangs and gang membership within the schools may help round out the picture of gangs in Jackson County.