

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Statistical Analysis Center Publication

Our mission is to continuously address, improve, sustain and enhance public safety in the State of Arizona through the coordination, cohesiveness, and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System



2015 Arizona Gang Threat Assessment

December

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ARIZONA CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION



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Executive Summary

In 2016, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission's Statistical Analysis Center surveyed law enforcement agencies across Arizona on the topic of gangs and gang activity occurring in their jurisdictions in 2015. The survey used for the *Arizona Gang Threat Assessment* was based on the *National Youth Gang Survey*, as well as the *National Gang Threat Assessment* conducted by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations, in partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation; National Drug Intelligence Center; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. The survey was designed to seek information from local law enforcement about the gangs in their jurisdictions and their level of activity. This report provides statewide results from the 2015 Gang Threat Assessment and compares it to similar data collected from 2008 to 2014, when available, to illustrate changes over time.

Findings

- Gang activity was reported in 41 of the 59 jurisdictions (69.5 percent) that responded to the survey in 2015.
- While some agencies experienced significant increases in gang activity over the past 6 months, 12 months, and 5 years (12.1 percent, 3.0 percent and 12.1 percent of agencies, respectively), the majority of agencies experienced no change, or only slight increases over the aforementioned time periods.
- Slightly more than half (54.5 percent) of responding agencies with a gang presence reported the existence of hybrid gangs, rising from 51.2 percent in 2014.
- Graffiti/tagging was reported as having the highest level of gang involvement (30.3 percent), followed by weapons possession and burglary (21.2 percent and 19.4 percent, respectively).
- Of respondents that reported a gang presence, 66.7 percent reported the use of social media by gangs for member recruitment/coordination and/or promotion/intimidation, an increase of 11.2 percent from 2014.
- Half of agencies reported a high level of involvement in marijuana sales by gangs in their jurisdictions, followed by methamphetamine sales (39.4 percent) and drug trafficking (37.5 percent).

Introduction

In 2016, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission’s (ACJC) Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) surveyed law enforcement officers in Arizona regarding their perceptions and experience with gangs, gang members, and gang activity in their jurisdictions during 2015. This report examines and summarizes the results from the survey in compliance with the mandate of Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §41-2416, that requires ACJC to conduct an annual survey that measures the prevalence of gang activity in Arizona when monies are specifically appropriated for that purpose. As in past years, no funds were specifically appropriated for this assessment; however, because effectively addressing gangs and gang activity presents a significant challenge to Arizona’s law enforcement agencies and criminal justice system, ACJC continues to collect and share information on gangs and gang activity using alternative resources.

Research Methods

Since 1990, ACJC has administered a gang survey to law enforcement agencies in Arizona. In the summer of 2007, the *Arizona Gang Survey* was replaced with the *Arizona Gang Threat Assessment*, after feedback from the Arizona law enforcement community requesting a more in-depth analysis of current threats posed by gangs¹. The *Arizona Gang Threat Assessment* includes components modeled after the *National Gang Threat Assessment and National Youth Gang Survey*. The national assessment is a project of the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations in partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the National Drug Intelligence Center; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives. The first national assessment was conducted in 2005, with surveys sent out to hundreds of gang investigators across the United States.

The current *Arizona Gang Threat Assessment* survey was distributed to 112 law enforcement agencies throughout Arizona asking them a series of questions about gangs and gang activity in their jurisdictions. The survey was designed to gather information on membership, gang activity, emerging trends, and response strategies to better understand the threat gangs pose to public safety. Of the 112 surveys distributed, 59² law enforcement agencies participated in the survey, resulting in a 52.7 percent overall response rate. This is a slight increase from 2014, and considerably lower than previous administrations.

Table 1: Number of Law Enforcement Agencies Responding to Arizona Gang Threat Assessment Survey, 2008-2015

	2008		2010 ³		2011		2013		2014		2015	
	Number	Percent Returned	Number	Percent Returned	Number	Percent Returned	Number	Percent Returned	Number	Percent Returned	Number	Percent Returned
Sent a Survey	113		113		111		109		112		112	
Returned a Survey	99	87.6%	78	69.0%	63	56.8%	64	58.7%	58	51.8%	59	52.7%

¹ ARS §13-105.8 and ARS §13-105.9 establish a criteria for objectively identifying criminal street gangs and gang members: 10. "Criminal street gang" means an ongoing formal or informal association of persons in which members or associates individually or collectively engage in the commission, attempted commission, facilitation or solicitation of any felony act and that has at least one individual who is a criminal street gang member. 11. "Criminal street gang member" means an individual to whom at least two of the following seven criteria that indicate criminal street gang membership apply: a) self-proclamation, b) witness testimony or official statement, c) written or electronic correspondence, d) paraphernalia or photographs, e) tattoos, f) clothing or colors, g) any other indicia of street gang membership.

² A total of 60 survey entries were recorded; one survey entry contained no identifying information, and was excluded from further analyses. All data tables reflect valid percentages.

³ 2010 data was previously included in the 2010 report as 2009 data.

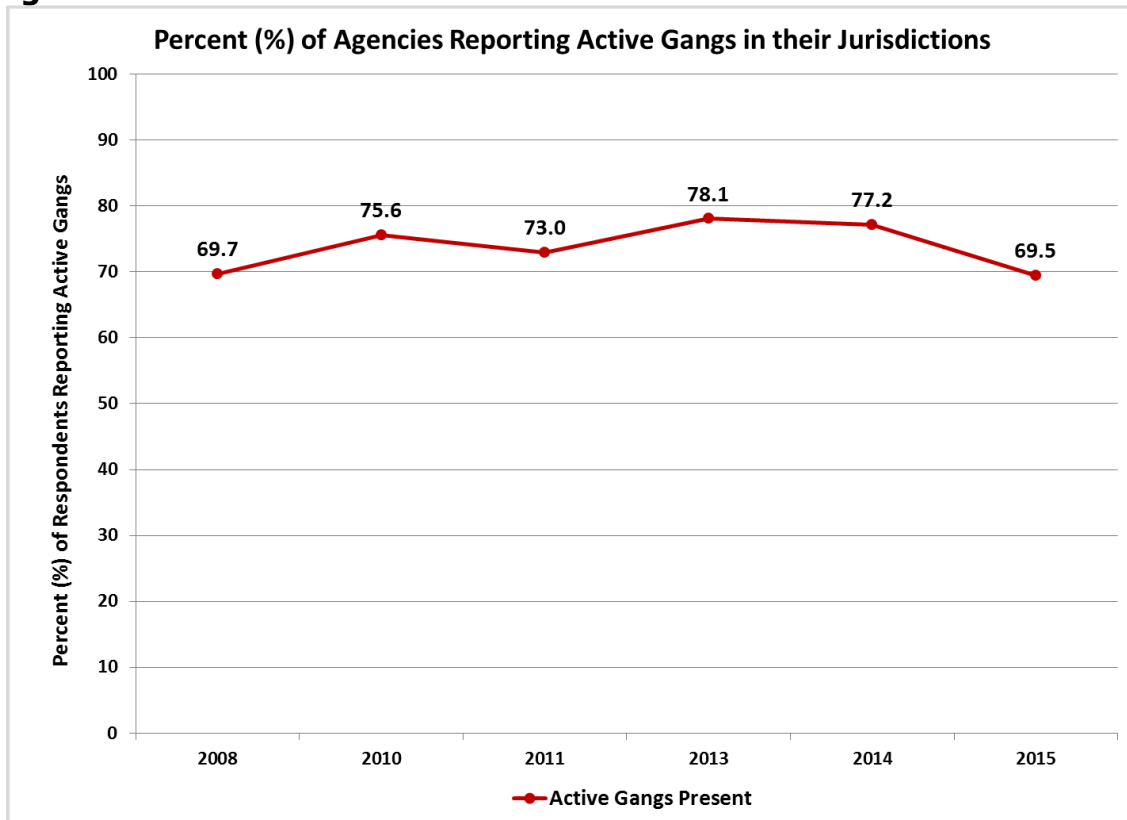
Gangs in Arizona

Total Gang Membership

Of the 59 agencies that responded to our request for information on gangs and gang activity in their jurisdictions in 2015, 69.5 percent (41 agencies) reported the presence of gangs, a slight decrease from 2014 (See Table 2). Responses from agencies on the number of active gangs and gang members varied greatly, ranging from under ten, to several thousand. Many responses were broad estimates (e.g. several hundred), and not conducive to exact calculations. Given the transient nature of gangs and extensive network structures that span multiple geographies and settings (e.g. prison gangs), quantifying the exact number of members can be challenging. While some individuals can be identified using statute and jurisdiction-specific classifications, the way in which “gang” and “gang member” are defined may vary. Other, less visible core members may not be detectable via traditional efforts or criteria, an issue complicated by the fluctuations in gang structure and composition⁴.

	2008		2010		2011		2013		2014		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	69	69.7%	59	75.6%	46	73.0%	50	78.1%	44	77.2%	41	69.5%
No	30	30.3%	19	24.4%	17	27.0%	14	21.9%	13	22.8%	18	30.5%

Figure 1



⁴ Decker, van Gemert & Pyrooz, 2009; Maxson, 1998; Thornberry et al., 1993.

Tools to Identify Street Gangs and Gang Members

The majority of responding agencies (78.0 percent) use the criteria outlined by ARS 13-105.8 and 13-105.9 (see Footnote 1) to identify street gangs and members, followed by police intelligence and association with known members (68.3 percent and 58.5 percent, respectively; see Table 3). Outside of the options provided in the survey, agencies indicated that other tools such as calls for service, face-to-face interactions (i.e., interviews and street dealings), intelligence-related approaches and proactive patrols were also useful approaches. Of the additional tools mentioned by respondents in narrative responses, the use of social media was among the most utilized approaches for the detection of gangs and their associated members.

Table 3: Tools Used to Identify Street Gangs and Gang Members (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)		
	# of Agencies	% of Agencies
Using the Criteria in ARS 13-105.8 and 13-105.9	32	78.0
Police Intelligence	28	68.3
Association with Known Members	24	58.5
Informants	17	41.5
Historical Records	16	39.0
Other	12	29.3

*not mutually exclusive; will not sum to 100%

In an effort to further explore the importance of certain defining characteristics of gangs, respondents were asked to rank a list of attributes from least to most important (see Table 4). Among those listed, co-offending is the most prominent, followed by having a designated territory, having a name, and a peer network that spends time together.

Table 4: Definitional Characteristics of a Gang* (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)	
Definitional Characteristics	Average Rank**
Commits Crime Together	4.1
Claims Turf or Territory	3.6
Has a Name	3.5
Hangs Out Together	3.5
Has a Leader or Leaders	3.4
Displays Colors/Symbols	3.0

*adapted from the NYGS

**1=least important, 6=most important

Level of Gang Activity Over Time

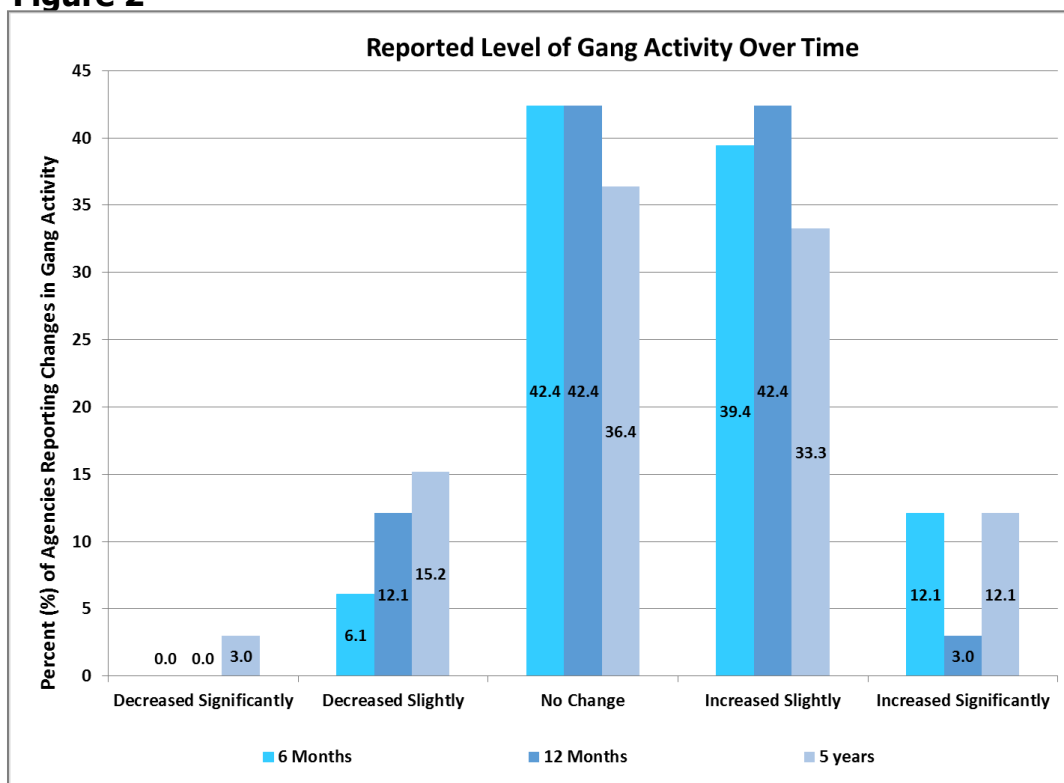
Agencies that reported the presence of gangs or gang members were asked a question regarding whether or not gangs were expanding their scope of activities, as well as being asked about the extent of gang activity occurring within their jurisdictions. When asked whether their respective gangs were broadening their scope of activities, 33.3 percent of respondents said yes (see Table 5), whereas 66.7

percent said no or were unsure. With the exception of 2013, there has been a steady decrease in the number of jurisdictions reporting the expansion of activities since 2008 (48.4 percent cumulative decrease). With an increase in technology-based communications, in addition to the blurred delineations of hybrid gangs (see p. 13 for definition), it is possible that law enforcement are unable to link activities to specific gangs.

	2008	2010	2011	2013	2014	2015
Yes	64.5%	50.0%	48.8%	52.0%	34.1%	33.3%
No	29.0%	46.4%	51.2%	42.0%	41.5%	39.4%
Unsure/Don't Know	6.5%	3.6%	-	-	24.4%	27.3%

When presented with the opportunity to elaborate on their responses about the scope of gang activities, respondents cited changes in crime type and seriousness. Specifically, some jurisdictions indicated that gangs are now more violent and financially-focused, placing historical/turf differences aside for the sake of forming hybrid gangs in order to achieve common goals. This mobility and the utilization of technology, have resulted in more innovative practices by gangs and gang members that may be keeping their activities out of the purview of many law enforcement agencies. Despite the increasingly creative approaches by many gangs, several jurisdictions have witnessed less organized crimes, with lower-level offenses (e.g. non-violent crime) taking precedence. Specifically, respondents reported frequently seeing more property crimes and drug offenses from the gangs and gang members in their jurisdictions.

Figure 2



Of the participating law enforcement agencies with a gang presence, 12.1 percent reported that the level of gang activity in their jurisdiction had increased significantly in the six-month period prior to the survey (see Figure 2). In addition, 42.4 percent of responding agencies reported that gang activity increased slightly over the preceding 12 months, with 42.4 percent of agencies reporting no change

over the last six months, and 6.1 percent reporting slight decreases over the same time period. Such results indicate that while gang activity is increasing in some jurisdictions, the majority have not witnessed any rapid, significant increases or decreases.

Gang Migration

Respondents were asked about gang migration in their jurisdictions during 2015. Gang Migration is defined as the movement of gang-involved individuals from one jurisdiction to the next⁵. Responses were almost evenly split, with 51.5 percent citing the occurrence of migration, followed by 48.5 percent who did not experience migration in their respective areas. When asked to rank factors commonly thought to influence gang migration (1=least important, 8=most important, see Table 6), 36.4% of agencies felt that drug market opportunities were the most influential factor, followed by migration in an effort to avoid law enforcement efforts (21.2 percent). Narrative responses outline the presence of gang members ranging from those originating in other Arizona cities, in addition to those only typically seen in the Midwest.

While it is important to understand fluctuations in criminal activity in order to develop strategies to combat external influences, it is also imperative that internal and community factors be examined to understand the potential causes for such patterns⁶. In addition, the proliferation of media and access to technology may increase the exposure to gang culture among youth, in turn leading to the diffusion and adoption of gang names, norms, and symbols in new jurisdictions⁷. Research indicates that most gang problems originate in their respective communities, and entire gangs rarely migrate; individuals tend to relocate to be with family and friends⁸.

Table 6: Factors Influencing Gang Member Migration (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)	
	% of Agencies*
Drug Market Opportunities	36.4
Avoid Law Enforcement Crackdowns/Injunctions	21.2
Educational Opportunities	15.2
Move with Family	9.1
Other Illegal Ventures	9.1
Member Recruitment	6.1
Get Away from Gang Life	3.0
Employment Opportunities	-

*Percentage of agencies that rated the factor at the highest value possible (8)

Gang Involvement in Crimes and Drugs

Agencies were asked to rate the level of gang involvement in 18 specific crimes in their jurisdictions by selecting one of five choices for each type of offense: high, moderate, low, none and unknown. This question, as well as the response options, is intended to provide consistent measurements over time of gang involvement in a set of violent and property crimes, including many from past reports, as

⁵ National Youth Gang Survey Analysis, 2012.

⁶ Klein & Maxson, 2006.

⁷ Maxson, 1998; Starbuck, Howell & Lindquist, 2001.

⁸ Howell, 2007.

well as additional offenses identified by respondents. It is hoped that such an examination will allow agencies to understand emerging threats, reflect on past enforcement efforts and develop strategic plans for the distribution of resources.

The crime type with the largest percentage of agencies reporting a high level of gang involvement was graffiti/tagging (30.3 percent; see Table 7), followed by weapons possession (21.2 percent). Burglary rounded out the top three crimes, with 19.4 percent of respondents reporting a high level of gang involvement, up 10.9 percent from 2014. Additional narrative responses indicate a high level involvement in financially-motivated crimes, consistent with the above-mentioned reports of high participation. Increases in both graffiti/tagging and burglary may be attributed to the emergence of smaller, less organized hybrid gangs that are prominent in a number of reporting jurisdictions. According to survey responses, these loosely-formed groups are focused on lower-level offenses, rather than more elaborate crimes that require a high level of organization. While graffiti has long been a constant in the gang landscape, it is possible that the increase in lower-level offenses may be related to increased time spent in the community.

**Table 7: Level of Gang Involvement in Crime
(Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity), 2008-2015**

	Year	High	Moderate	Low	None	Unknown
Graffiti/Tagging	2008	51.5%	29.4%	13.2%	2.9%	2.9%
	2010	57.1%	28.6%	8.9%	-	5.4%
	2011	53.3%	24.4%	13.3%	4.4%	4.4%
	2013	17.0%	57.4%	12.8%	2.1%	10.6%
	2014*	24.4%	26.8%	31.7%	9.8%	7.3%
	2015	30.3%	39.4%	24.2%	3.0%	3.0%
Felonious Assault	2008	25.4%	29.9%	20.9%	10.4%	13.4%
	2010	17.5%	35.1%	28.1%	10.5%	8.8%
	2011	24.4%	31.1%	31.1%	6.7%	6.7%
	2013	14.3%	32.7%	30.6%	12.2%	10.2%
	2014*	15.0%	25.0%	30.0%	17.5%	12.5%
	2015	6.3%	43.8%	34.4%	12.5%	3.1%
Burglary	2008	11.8%	38.2%	27.9%	8.8%	13.2%
	2010	22.4%	41.4%	19.0%	6.9%	10.3%
	2011	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	4.4%	6.7%
	2013	26.5%	30.6%	14.3%	8.2%	20.4%
	2014*	17.5%	37.5%	22.5%	7.5%	15.0%
	2015	19.4%	41.9%	25.8%	9.7%	3.2%
Intimidation/Extortion	2008	10.3%	38.2%	25.0%	8.8%	17.6%
	2010	15.5%	31.0%	31.0%	6.9%	15.5%
	2011	13.3%	37.8%	24.4%	4.4%	20.0%
	2013	14.3%	34.7%	26.5%	8.2%	16.3%
	2014	10.0%	32.5%	32.5%	7.5%	17.5%
	2015	15.6%	34.4%	34.4%	9.4%	6.3%
Robbery	2008	14.7%	16.2%	42.6%	16.2%	10.3%
	2010	12.1%	29.3%	25.9%	20.7%	12.1%
	2011	9.1%	27.3%	36.4%	11.4%	15.9%
	2013	14.6%	22.9%	33.3%	10.4%	18.8%
	2014*	15.0%	20.0%	37.5%	10.0%	17.5%
	2015	12.9%	32.3%	32.3%	16.1%	6.5%
Firearms Trafficking	2008	5.9%	14.7%	30.9%	20.6%	27.9%
	2010	5.3%	22.8%	24.6%	26.3%	21.1%
	2011	8.9%	26.7%	28.9%	13.3%	22.2%
	2013	4.1%	18.4%	30.6%	14.3%	32.7%
	2014	2.5%	20.0%	27.5%	20.0%	30.0%
	2015	6.3%	25.0%	43.8%	15.6%	9.4%

Murder	2008	6.0%	13.4%	28.4%	32.8%	19.4%
	2010	3.6%	14.3%	28.6%	44.6%	8.9%
	2011	6.7%	13.3%	28.9%	44.4%	6.7%
	2013	-	12.2%	30.6%	32.7%	24.5%
	2014	5.1%	12.8%	30.8%	30.8%	20.5%
	2015	-	9.4%	40.6%	40.6%	9.4%
Human Trafficking	2008	-	19.4%	16.4%	28.4%	35.8%
	2010	8.8%	17.5%	14.0%	31.6%	28.1%
	2011	4.4%	15.6%	15.6%	33.3%	31.1%
	2013	8.3%	8.3%	14.6%	29.2%	39.6%
	2014	10.0%	7.5%	30.0%	15.0%	37.5%
	2015	6.3%	18.8%	18.8%	25.0%	31.3%
Prostitution	2008	2.9%	2.9%	7.4%	50.0%	36.8%
	2010	1.8%	5.3%	14.0%	40.4%	38.6%
	2011	4.4%	6.7%	20.0%	37.8%	31.1%
	2013	-	2.0%	22.4%	34.7%	40.8%
	2014	7.5%	12.5%	17.5%	25.0%	37.5%
	2015	6.3%	3.1%	37.5%	25.0%	28.1%
Auto Theft	2008	6.0%	28.4%	32.8%	17.9%	14.9%
	2010	12.1%	39.7%	20.7%	19.0%	8.6%
	2011	4.4%	28.9%	46.7%	15.6%	4.4%
	2013	6.4%	27.7%	38.3%	8.5%	19.1%
	2014	9.8%	24.4%	29.3%	17.1%	19.5%
	2015	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	21.9%	3.1%
Identity Theft	2008	7.4%	11.8%	23.5%	23.5%	33.8%
	2010	12.3%	22.8%	21.1%	21.1%	22.8%
	2011	4.4%	26.7%	28.9%	22.2%	17.8%
	2013	6.3%	25.0%	14.6%	14.6%	39.6%
	2014	10.3%	15.4%	25.6%	23.1%	25.6%
	2015	-	25.0%	34.4%	21.9%	18.8%
Kidnapping	2008	1.5%	4.4%	17.6%	48.5%	27.9%
	2010	3.5%	1.8%	31.6%	42.1%	21.1%
	2011	2.2%	8.9%	31.1%	33.3%	24.4%
	2013	-	8.2%	28.6%	42.9%	20.4%
	2014	2.5%	2.5%	27.5%	40.0%	27.5%
	2015	-	-	34.4%	50.0%	15.6%
Arson	2008	-	-	17.9%	50.7%	31.3%
	2010	3.4%	5.2%	19.0%	46.6%	25.9%
	2011	2.2%	6.7%	26.7%	40.0%	24.4%
	2013	-	4.1%	14.3%	42.9%	38.8%
	2014	-	2.5%	30.0%	40.0%	27.5%
	2015	-	3.1%	18.8%	50.0%	28.1%
Sexual Assault/Rape	2008	-	11.8%	20.6%	36.8%	30.9%
	2010	1.8%	5.3%	31.6%	36.8%	24.6%
	2011	2.2%	4.4%	46.7%	26.7%	20.0%
	2013	-	2.0%	26.5%	38.8%	32.7%
	2014	-	2.5%	32.5%	30.0%	35.0%
	2015	-	3.1%	37.5%	37.5%	21.9%
Additions						
Home Invasion	2014	7.5%	25.0%	27.5%	17.5%	22.5%
	2015	12.5%	18.8%	34.4%	25.0%	9.4%
Drive by Shootings	2014	7.5%	12.5%	30.0%	37.5%	12.5%
	2015	3.2%	22.6%	35.5%	29.0%	9.7%
Weapons Possession	2014	27.5%	22.5%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%
	2015	21.2%	45.5%	21.2%	6.1%	6.1%
White Collar Offenses	2014	2.5%	10.0%	27.5%	20.0%	40.0%
	2015	-	3.2%	32.3%	25.8%	38.7%

*See Appendix A for details

Agencies were also asked to indicate the level of gang involvement in the distribution of drugs (see Table 8). Of those who responded, 50.0 percent reported that gangs were highly involved in marijuana sales, followed by 39.4 percent reporting a high level of involvement in methamphetamine sales, and 37.5 percent in drug trafficking. A high level of heroin sales was reported by 27.3 percent of agencies, a slight decrease from 2014. Similarly, pharmaceutical sales experienced a decrease from 2014, with 12.5 percent of agencies reporting a high level of gang involvement, down from 20.5 percent in 2014. Other drug distribution offenses, specifically powdered cocaine, MDMA and synthetics were not reported by any responding agencies as having a high level of involvement among gangs.

**Table 8: Gang Involvement in the Distribution of Drugs
(Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity), 2008-2015**

		High	Moderate	Low	None	Unknown
Drugs – Street Sales	2008	20.6%	44.1%	19.1%	2.9%	13.2%
	2010	29.3%	36.2%	27.6%	-	6.9%
	2011	28.9%	37.8%	26.7%	2.2%	4.4%
	2013	30.6%	30.6%	22.4%	2.0%	14.3%
	2014	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	7.5%	12.5%
	2015	30.3%	51.5%	6.1%	3.0%	9.11%
Drugs – Wholesale	2008	10.6%	16.7%	30.3%	12.1%	30.3%
	2010	5.2%	29.3%	31.0%	8.6%	25.9%
	2011	11.4%	31.8%	25.0%	13.6%	18.2%
	2013	8.2%	28.6%	26.5%	12.2%	24.5%
	2014	5.3%	21.1%	36.8%	13.2%	23.7%
	2015	15.6%	34.4%	15.6%	12.5%	21.9%
Drugs – Manufacture	2008	4.4%	5.9%	22.1%	33.8%	33.8%
	2010	-	10.5%	36.8%	21.1%	31.6%
	2011	-	15.9%	34.1%	27.3%	22.7%
	2013	2.1%	10.6%	27.7%	29.8%	29.8%
	2014	5.1%	2.6%	33.3%	23.1%	35.9%
	2015	3.2%	-	45.2%	25.8%	25.8%
Marijuana Grows	2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2010	-	5.2%	41.4%	20.7%	32.8%
	2011	2.2%	13.3%	37.8%	22.2%	24.4%
	2013	-	10.4%	33.3%	27.1%	29.2%
	2014	2.5%	7.5%	30.0%	32.5%	27.5%
	2015	3.1%	18.8%	31.3%	31.3%	15.6%
Marijuana – Sales	2008	41.2%	26.5%	13.2%	4.4%	14.7%
	2010	44.8%	29.3%	15.5%	3.4%	6.9%
	2011	45.5%	27.3%	13.6%	2.3%	11.4%
	2013	38.8%	32.7%	14.3%	2.0%	12.2%
	2014	50.0%	27.5%	5.0%	10.0%	7.5%
	2015	50.0%	34.4%	3.1%	-	12.5%
Methamphetamine – Sales	2008	23.5%	35.3%	17.6%	5.9%	17.6%
	2010	31.6%	36.8%	14.0%	8.8%	8.8%
	2011	26.7%	31.1%	22.2%	6.7%	13.3%
	2013	34.7%	28.6%	16.3%	4.1%	16.3%
	2014	37.5%	30.0%	17.5%	7.5%	7.5%
	2015	39.4%	45.5%	3.0%	3.0%	9.1%
Crack Cocaine – Sales	2008	13.2%	11.8%	25.0%	23.5%	26.5%
	2010	10.3%	12.1%	29.3%	32.8%	15.5%
	2011	11.1%	15.6%	33.3%	13.3%	26.7%
	2013	2.1%	12.5%	35.4%	20.8%	29.2%
	2014	5.1%	12.8%	30.8%	33.3%	17.9%
	2015	9.1%	6.1%	36.4%	30.3%	18.2%

Heroin – Sales	2008	5.8%	15.9%	39.1%	11.6%	27.5%
	2010	10.3%	29.3%	24.1%	19.0%	17.2%
	2011	20.0%	17.8%	28.9%	11.1%	22.2%
	2013	8.2%	38.8%	28.6%	4.1%	20.4%
	2014	28.2%	23.1%	28.2%	7.7%	12.8%
	2015	27.3%	39.4%	18.2%	6.1%	9.1%
Pharmaceuticals – Sales	2008	6.0%	13.4%	19.4%	22.4%	38.8%
	2010	6.9%	24.1%	32.8%	10.3%	25.9%
	2011	8.9%	24.4%	35.6%	11.1%	20.0%
	2013	14.9%	21.3%	29.8%	6.4%	27.7%
	2014	20.5%	17.9%	28.2%	12.8%	20.5%
	2015	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	9.4%	15.6%
Powdered Cocaine – Sales	2008	5.9%	19.1%	36.8%	14.7%	23.5%
	2010	6.9%	13.8%	43.1%	20.7%	15.5%
	2011	2.3%	22.7%	40.9%	6.8%	27.3%
	2013	4.2%	20.8%	41.7%	8.3%	25.0%
	2014	7.7%	10.3%	30.8%	28.2%	23.1%
	2015	-	15.6%	46.9%	21.9%	15.6%
MDMA (Ecstasy) and analogs – Sales	2008	1.4%	13.0%	20.3%	24.6%	40.6%
	2010	-	17.2%	27.6%	29.3%	25.9%
	2011	4.5%	6.8%	43.2%	15.9%	29.5%
	2013	2.1%	14.6%	37.5%	10.4%	35.4%
	2014	5.1%	2.6%	41.0%	17.9%	33.3%
	2015	-	12.5%	40.6%	18.8%	28.1%
Additions						
Synthetics	2014	5.1%	12.8%	35.9%	10.3%	35.9%
	2015	-	18.8%	25.0%	28.1%	28.1%
Drug Trafficking	2014	28.2%	25.6%	23.1%	10.3%	12.8%
	2015	37.5%	28.1%	18.8%	6.3%	9.4%

Factors Influencing Gang Violence

In an effort to mirror national assessments, agencies were asked to select the factors they identify as influencing gang violence in their communities (see Table 9). Drug-related factors were deemed most influential (selected by 63.4 percent of agencies), followed by intergang conflict (39.0 percent), returning from confinement, and relationships with drug cartels and/or other larger criminal networks (36.6 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively). Respondents did not consider gang member migration from outside the U.S. to be a major influence (7.3 percent). When asked to elaborate on other possible factors, respondents cited domestic and substance-related issues, a history of conflict between members, as well as relying on violence as a means to gain status and/or establish credibility.

Table 9: Factors Influencing Gang Violence (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)	
	% of Agencies*
Drug-Related Factors	63.4
Intergang Conflict	39.0
Return from Confinement	36.6
Relationship with Drug Cartels/Other Larger Criminal Networks	34.1
Gang Member Migration (from inside of US)	31.7
Intra-gang Conflict	17.1
Emergence of New Gangs	12.2
Gang Member Migration (from outside of US)	7.3

*not mutually exclusive; will not sum to 100%

Level of Activity by Gang

Responding agencies were asked to rate the level of activity of 20 specific gangs in their jurisdictions⁹. The gangs were chosen for inclusion in the Arizona assessment because they correspond to the gangs listed in the *National Gang Threat Assessment*, allowing for a state-to-nation comparison over time. It is important to note, however, that certain gangs have a stronger presence in other areas of the country, therefore this list will continue to be reviewed and modified to include gangs that are prevalent on a national scale, as well as those identified by Arizona law enforcement in past surveys as consistently having a local presence. Communities have unique structural factors that may influence the proliferation of certain gangs, and in turn, may differ from other parts of the country. While national data is essential for understanding where Arizona falls relative to other locales, in-state intelligence is vital to a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape in Arizona.

When agencies were asked to rate the level of activity by each gang, 15 gangs listed were identified by one or more agencies as having high levels of activity in their jurisdiction (see Table 10). Among those gangs reported as having a high level of activity, La Eme was reported by 21.9 percent of agencies, followed by Hells Angels OMG¹⁰ (15.6 percent) and Mongols OMG (12.5 percent). In addition to the gangs provided, several respondents reported the presence of jurisdiction-specific street gangs, those who define themselves as “gangsters” but have no major affiliation, as well as other OMGs (i.e. Loners OMG and Loose Cannons OMG).

**Table 10: Level of Activity by Gang
(Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity) 2008-2015**

	Year	High	Moderate	Low	Not Applicable	Unknown
Hispanic Sureños (SUR 13)	2008	17.6%	35.3%	22.1%	14.7%	10.3%
	2010	24.6%	33.3%	24.6%	12.3%	5.3%
	2011	31.1%	17.8%	31.1%	17.8%	2.2%
	2013	16.7%	18.8%	33.3%	27.1%	4.2%
	2014	15.0%	25.0%	32.5%	15.0%	12.5%
	2015	6.3%	25.0%	34.4%	28.1%	6.3%
Bloods (all sets)	2008	18.8%	14.5%	26.1%	40.6%	-
	2010	14.0%	14.0%	33.3%	26.3%	12.3%
	2011	22.2%	20.0%	28.9%	20.0%	8.9%
	2013	8.3%	14.6%	39.6%	33.3%	4.2%
	2014	17.5%	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	7.5%
	2015	12.5%	21.9%	25.0%	34.4%	6.3%
Mexican Mafia/La Eme	2008	7.2%	20.3%	40.6%	18.8%	13.0%
	2010	12.3%	15.8%	38.6%	21.1%	12.3%
	2011	22.2%	17.8%	26.7%	24.4%	8.9%
	2013	12.8%	25.5%	36.2%	19.1%	6.4%
	2014	20.0%	30.0%	22.5%	15.0%	12.5%
	2015	21.9%	18.8%	34.4%	21.9%	3.1%
Crips (all sets)	2008	17.9%	20.9%	25.4%	32.8%	3.0%
	2010	15.8%	19.3%	26.3%	28.1%	10.5%
	2011	17.8%	26.7%	31.1%	20.0%	4.4%
	2013	8.2%	14.3%	36.7%	32.7%	8.2%
	2014	15.0%	17.5%	32.5%	30.0%	5.0%
	2015	6.3%	34.4%	31.3%	18.8%	9.4%

⁹ Gangs not listed on the most recent survey have been omitted from this list. Please consult past reports for previous gangs listed.

¹⁰ OMG = Outlaw Motorcycle Gang

Skinheads	2008	4.3%	14.5%	33.3%	43.5%	4.3%
	2010	5.3%	14.0%	42.1%	28.1%	10.5%
	2011	8.9%	8.9%	37.8%	28.9%	15.6%
	2013	6.1%	10.2%	42.9%	32.7%	8.2%
	2014	2.5%	17.5%	40.0%	30.0%	10.0%
	2015	3.1%	18.8%	28.1%	37.5%	12.5%
Hispanic Norteños (14)	2008	1.5%	4.4%	35.3%	48.5%	10.3%
	2010	3.5%	8.8%	40.4%	38.6%	8.8%
	2011	6.7%	11.1%	40.0%	35.6%	6.7%
	2013	4.1%	4.1%	34.7%	46.9%	10.2%
	2014	7.5%	2.5%	35.0%	37.5%	17.5%
	2015	3.1%	9.4%	31.3%	46.9%	9.4%
Neighborhood – based Drug Trafficking Groups/Crews	2008	13.0%	18.8%	24.6%	37.7%	5.8%
	2010	8.6%	29.3%	22.4%	32.8%	6.9%
	2011	4.4%	24.4%	26.7%	24.4%	20.0%
	2013	6.1%	30.6%	26.5%	24.5%	12.2%
	2014	12.5%	30.0%	17.5%	22.5%	17.5%
	2015	12.5%	18.8%	28.1%	25.0%	15.6%
Aryan Brotherhood	2008	7.4%	8.8%	39.7%	39.7%	4.4%
	2010	5.3%	15.8%	45.6%	22.8%	10.5%
	2011	4.4%	13.3%	46.7%	26.7%	8.9%
	2013	2.0%	20.4%	38.8%	30.6%	8.2%
	2014	-	22.5%	30.0%	35.0%	12.5%
	2015	3.1%	15.6%	34.4%	37.5%	9.4%
Hells Angels OMG	2008	4.3%	17.4%	42.0%	34.8%	1.4%
	2010	5.3%	28.1%	29.8%	29.8%	7.0%
	2011	2.2%	24.4%	37.8%	24.4%	11.1%
	2013	14.6%	16.7%	35.4%	25.0%	8.3%
	2014	5.0%	35.0%	32.5%	22.5%	5.0%
	2015	15.6%	21.9%	28.1%	31.3%	3.1%
Gangster Disciples	2008	-	2.9%	22.1%	73.5%	1.5%
	2010	1.8%	1.8%	21.1%	64.9%	10.5%
	2011	-	8.9%	22.2%	57.8%	11.1%
	2013	-	-	27.1%	62.5%	10.4%
	2014	-	5.0%	20.0%	57.5%	17.5%
	2015	-	3.1%	12.5%	84.4%	-
Border Brothers	2008	-	4.5%	19.4%	62.7%	13.4%
	2010	-	3.6%	28.6%	57.1%	10.7%
	2011	-	4.4%	26.7%	60.0%	8.9%
	2013	-	2.1%	25.5%	55.3%	17.0%
	2014	-	2.5%	15.0%	57.5%	25.0%
	2015	-	-	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%
18 th Street Gang	2008	-	4.3%	21.7%	65.2%	8.7%
	2010	-	1.8%	28.1%	59.6%	10.5%
	2011	-	-	27.3%	61.4%	11.4%
	2013	-	2.1%	19.1%	63.8%	14.9%
	2014	2.5%	2.5%	17.5%	57.5%	20.0%
	2015	-	9.4%	12.5%	68.8%	9.4%
Latin Kings	2008	-	1.5%	30.9%	64.7%	2.9%
	2010	-	1.8%	31.6%	54.4%	12.3%
	2011	-	2.3%	40.9%	47.7%	9.1%
	2013	-	-	27.1%	64.6%	8.3%
	2014	-	5.0%	20.0%	55.0%	20.0%
	2015	-	-	12.5%	84.4%	3.1%
Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)	2008	-	6.0%	40.3%	47.8%	6.0%
	2010	-	5.3%	42.1%	40.4%	12.3%
	2011	-	-	50.0%	38.6%	11.4%
	2013	2.1%	2.1%	33.3%	47.9%	14.6%
	2014	-	5.0%	22.5%	52.5%	20.0%
	2015	-	-	28.1%	62.5%	9.4%

Additions						
Mongols OMG	2014	-	7.5%	27.5%	52.5%	12.5%
	2015	12.5%	6.3%	34.4%	37.5%	9.4%
Vagos OMG	2014	2.5%	5.0%	10.0%	60.0%	22.5%
	2015	3.1%	9.4%	9.4%	62.5%	15.6%
Brown Pride (all sets)	2014	7.5%	12.5%	40.0%	22.5%	17.5%
	2015	3.2%	3.2%	45.2%	41.9%	6.5%
Drug Cartels	2014	22.5%	10.0%	17.5%	22.5%	27.5%
	2015	15.6%	31.3%	25.0%	18.8%	9.4%
Party Crews	2014	7.7%	2.6%	28.2%	35.9%	25.6%
	2015	6.5%	9.7%	22.6%	51.6%	9.7%
Juggalos	2014	7.5%	15.0%	35.0%	32.5%	10.0%
	2015	3.1%	18.8%	34.4%	34.4%	9.4%
Black Gangster Disciples	2015	-	3.1%	15.6%	81.3%	-

Hybrid Gangs

Hybrid gangs have been defined a number of ways over time, ranging from those characterized by individuals of different racial/ethnic groups, those who associate with multiple gangs and have unclear symbols and traditions, to those consisting of different affiliations who have merged together for the purpose of accomplishing shared goals. These gangs may defy traditional typologies, characterized by more diverse attributes and behaviors¹¹. More than half of respondents (54.5 percent) reported the presence of hybrid gangs, followed by 21.2 percent with no presence and 24.2 percent who were unsure, or didn't know. The increase in the percentage of agencies unsure of a hybrid gang presence may be a direct result of the diversity characterized by these groups, in that they may be more difficult to identify, and/or lack the distinguishable characteristics of commonly known gangs¹². According to narrative responses, in many cases smaller, local groups are affiliating with larger outlaw motorcycle groups and prison gangs, in addition to forming alliances with other local gangs for financial reasons. As one participant stated, it's "all about the money"; it seems that in many jurisdictions, financial gain outweighs historical differences.

Social Media Use by Gangs

One of the more prevalent trends among gangs in Arizona is their presence on, and use of, social media. These platforms afford a degree of mobility and anonymity, allowing gangs and their respective members to communicate without the risk of detection or apprehension. Of respondents who reported a gang presence, 66.7 percent indicated that gangs in their jurisdiction use social media (see Table 11), followed by 24.2 percent who were unsure about the level of social media use, and 9.1 percent who indicated no social media use. Subsequently, agencies were asked to report on the use of several common social media platforms by gangs in their jurisdictions. Among agencies reporting a gang presence, more than half of respondents (58.5 percent) reported the use of Facebook, followed by YouTube, Twitter, and Snapchat (31.7 percent, 29.3 percent, and 29.3 percent, respectively) by gangs or gang members in their jurisdiction.

¹¹ Starbuck, D., J.C. Howell, & D.J. Lindquist. 2001.

¹² Starbuck, D., J.C. Howell, & D.J. Lindquist. 2001.

Table 11: Social Media Usage by Gangs/Gang Members (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)	
	% of agencies*
Facebook	58.5
YouTube	31.7
Twitter	29.3
Snapchat	29.3
Instagram	24.4
MySpace	9.8
Tumblr	7.3
Vine	4.9
Reddit	2.4
Not Applicable	22.0

*not mutually exclusive; will not sum to 100%

Law Enforcement Intervention and Suppression Strategies

Respondents were provided with a list of strategies that have been identified as methods to address gangs, and were then asked to select those used by their agency. Among those listed, Targeted Patrols was identified by the largest percentage of agencies (56.1 percent; see Table 12), followed by participation in a multi-agency gang task force (48.8 percent), and having a dedicated gang unit/officer (43.9 percent). Civil gang injunctions and participation in a multi-agency re-entry initiative were among the least identified (both 2.4 percent), with no agencies reporting the use of targeted firearm initiatives and gang-member call-ins as strategies.

Table 12: Intervention/Suppression Strategies (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)	
	% of Agencies*
Targeted Patrols	56.1
Participation in a Multi-agency Gang Task Force	48.8
Dedicated Gang Unit/Officer	43.9
Coordinated Probation Searches	31.7
Multi-agency Community-based Anti-gang Strategy	14.6
Curfew Ordinance	14.6
Civil Gang Injunction	2.4
Participation in a Multi-agency Reentry Initiative	2.4
Targeted Firearms Initiative	-
Gang Member Call-ins	-

*not mutually exclusive; will not sum to 100%

Information Sharing among Law Enforcement Agencies

With the presence of hybrid gangs and variation in gang-related activities, it is essential that Arizona law enforcement agencies have access to current, statewide gang data. To understand the mechanisms used

to share inter-departmental intelligence, the survey asked respondents to select information-sharing practices they participate in. When presented with the most common information-sharing practices (See Table 13), over half (61.0 percent) indicated that they utilize GangNet, followed by bulletins and gang meetings (both 46.3 percent). Half of participating agencies reported using an email list (50.0 percent), followed by inter-agency memos (45.5 percent). Newsletters and gang databases/directories were identified as information sharing practices less frequently than others (17.1 percent and 26.8 percent, respectively), but still utilized in some capacity.

In light of the fluid nature of the gang landscape, having the ability to access and disseminate accurate intelligence in a timely manner is vital to the success of law enforcement efforts. While many of the agencies feel that GangNet is comprehensive, easy to access, and contains important historical and affiliate information, others feel that it is underutilized, results in delays, and often has duplicate information. In addition, some agencies cited an inability to access the system or obtain log-in credentials, in turn limiting the type of gang intelligence that can be collected. Many respondents indicated that increased access, communication, data linking, and/or a more refined statewide database, may be more beneficial for gang units.

Table 13: Information Sharing with Other Agencies (Of the Jurisdictions Reporting Gang Activity)		
	# of Agencies	% of Agencies*
GangNet	25	61.0
Bulletins	19	46.3
Gang Meetings	19	46.3
Email List	17	41.5
Fusion Center	17	41.5
Inter-agency memos	14	34.1
Gang Databases/Directories	11	26.8
Newsletters	7	17.1

*not mutually exclusive; will not sum to 100%

Limitations

The goal of the Arizona Gang Threat Assessment is to provide a comprehensive overview of the gang landscape in Arizona, as told from the perspective of law enforcement. As it stands, this publication provides valuable insight into the depth and breadth of the issue of gangs in Arizona, as well as the suppression and intervention strategies used to combat gang activity in Arizona. Given the improvements to the survey instrument and report, the limitations still warrant discussion. As noted in Table 1, response rates have varied across administrations, dropping considerably since 2008 (a 39.8 percent cumulative decrease). Increased response rates may lead to more robust and representative trends, therefore future efforts to actively recruit new agencies and retain existing respondents will be made. By presenting results of the survey to a subset of agencies and creating a bulletin-style briefing for easy dissemination, it is hoped that these findings will reach a broader audience, and have increased utility among gang units. Although a number of gang detectives were consulted and solicited for feedback prior to the release of this report, focus groups will be conducted across the state prior to the next iteration to better understand diverse departmental needs.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the findings of this report, the nature of gangs is fluid, and requires frequent, comprehensive assessment¹³ in order to understand the scope of gang activity in Arizona. Responses to these issues should be jurisdiction-specific, understanding that a one-size-fits-all approach may not account for the intricacies that are unique to each gang, and the level of embeddedness among individuals¹⁴. Each locale is characterized by its own distinctive set of challenges, and in most cases, will require an extensive response that incorporates law enforcement and community resources.

Responses illustrate the ever-changing landscape of gangs, namely the emergence of hybrid groups, as well as variations in offense and drug activity levels. Many agencies characterize their respective gangs as being disorganized and focused on low-level offenses, whereas others report the presence of more sophisticated, organized gangs focused on financial gain rather than historical turf disputes. These attributes, coupled with reported geographic shifts, demonstrate the need for increased data sharing, refinement of existing databases, and the development of a new database that will allow all agencies, regardless of location and resource capacity, to access and utilize gang intelligence data. Further, while the majority of agencies continue to use ARS codes to identify both gangs and gang-related activity, variation in these terms still exists. Efforts should be made to standardize these definitions in alignment with nationally-recognized approaches, and state-specific trends. It is recommended that law enforcement stakeholders, researchers, and systems improvement experts collaborate on an approach to deliver accurate, timely, and up-to-date intelligence to those working to prevent and combat this issue.

While the responses to the survey were informative and insightful, it is crucial that we continue to tap into the vast experience of Arizona's law enforcement agencies, including those who did not respond to this survey. In order to paint a true picture of this landscape, all perspectives are important, and necessary. In addition, ACJC will collaborate with local university experts to discuss the development of a large-scale, robust survey instrument that will tap into other emerging gang-related trends, and will generate or incorporate precise data, as needed, which can be used for advanced analyses and network-based strategies¹⁵. This publication should be a useful tool in the arsenal of resources dedicated to gang issues, serving as a go-to resource for law enforcement working to diminish the gang problem in Arizona.

¹³ Decker, 2013.

¹⁴ Pyrooz, 2013.

¹⁵ Papachristos, Hureau & Braga, 2013.

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Appendix A

Survey Changes/Additions

Item Name	Table Number	Original Category	New Category	Survey Year
Graffiti/Tagging	7	Vandalism/Graffiti/Tagging	Graffiti/Tagging	2014
Felonious Assault	7	Felonious Assault	Felonious Assault (does not include drive-by shootings)	2014
Burglary	7	Burglary	Burglary (does not include home invasion)	2014
Robbery	7	Robbery	Robbery (does not include home invasion)	2014
Home Invasion	7	-	New Item	2014
Drive by Shootings	7	-	New Item	2014
Weapons Possession	7	-	New Item	2014
White Collar Offenses	7	Credit Card Fraud	White Collar Offenses	2014
Synthetics	8	-	New Item	2014
Drug Trafficking	8	-	New Item	2014
Mongols OMG	10	-	New Item	2014
Vagos OMG	10	-	New Item	2014
Brown Pride (all sets)	10	-	New Item	2014
Drug Cartels	10	-	New Item	2014
Party Crews	10	-	New Item	2014
Juggalos	10	-	New Item	2014
Black Gangster Disciples	10	-	Added Back to List	2015