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City of **Akron, Ohio**

Chief of Police

Community Input Survey



COMMUNITY

SURVEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE

TOP 3

QUALITIES, QUALIFICATIONS, AND SKILLS FOR
NEW CHIEF OF POLICE



TOP 3 DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES



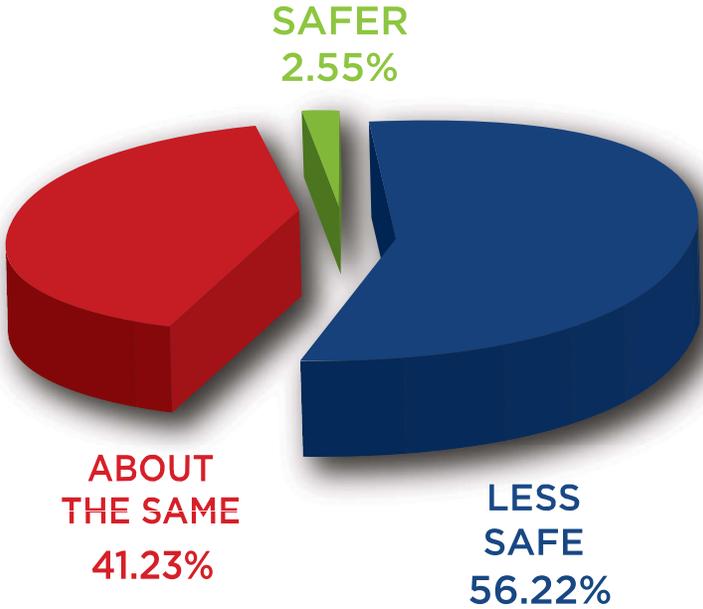
OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH CITY OF AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT



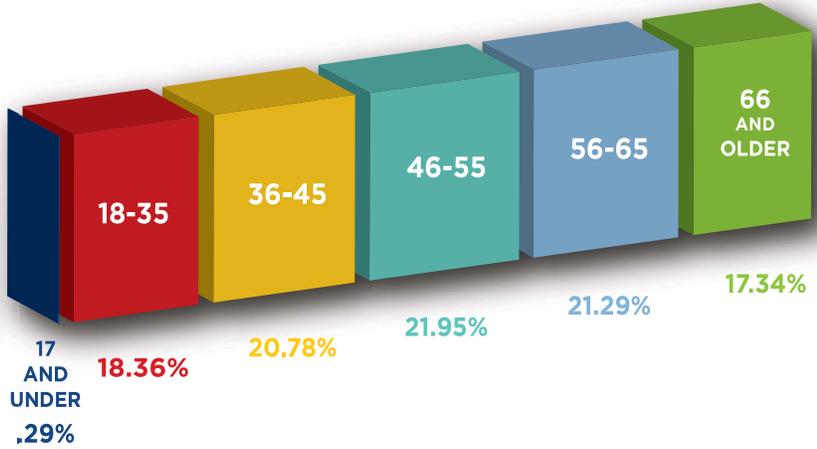
COMMUNITY

SURVEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE

COMPARATIVE SAFETY OF AKRON TO A YEAR AGO

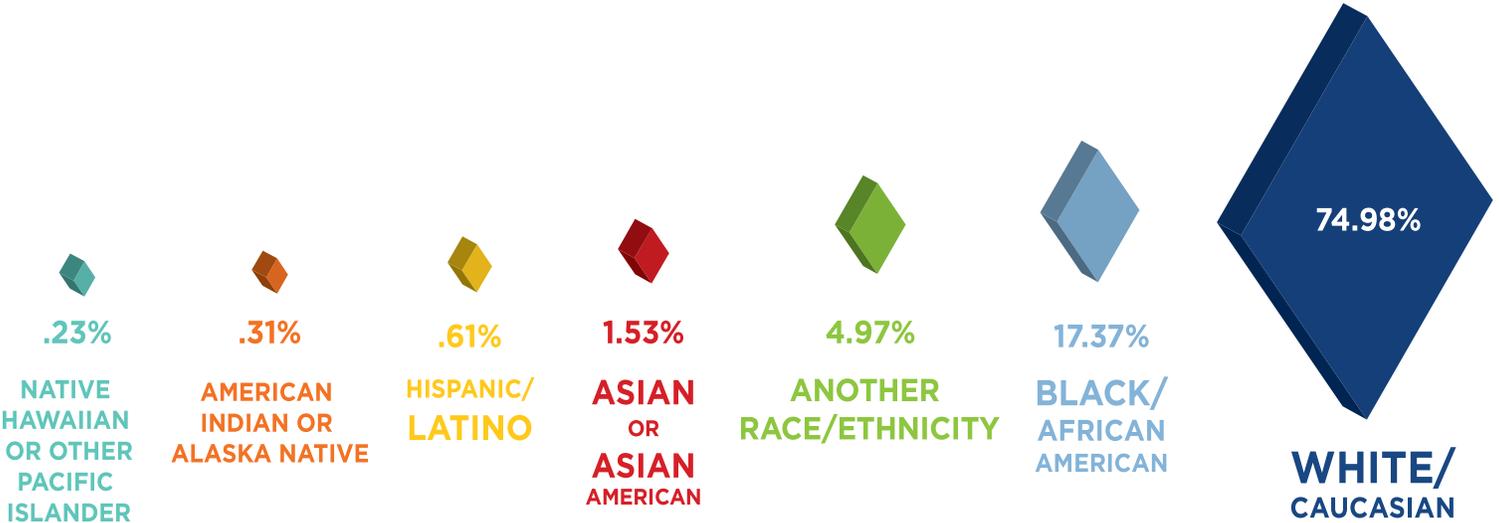


AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



AKRON RESIDENTS	YES	84.26%
	NO	15.74%
WORK IN AKRON	YES	64.35%
	NO	35.65%

ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS



METHODOLOGY – COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

This report summarizes the results of the Community Input Survey conducted as part of the City of Akron Chief of Police recruitment and selection process. The survey was customized to allow respondents the ability to provide input related to the Chief of Police search and the Department as a whole. Additionally, participants answered questions related to the qualities, qualifications, and skills they believed are essential for the next Chief of Police to possess.

The Community Input Survey was distributed by the City and published through Survey Monkey. The survey was available between March 9, 2021 and April 23, 2021, with 1,427 responses collected.

The summary that follows analyzes the results obtained from the Community Input Survey, including demographics of survey participants, top survey results in key categories, and an overview of comments collected from the participants. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in the Appendix.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

A total of **1,427** individuals participated in the Community Input Survey. Most of the respondents live in the City of Akron (84.26%), and the majority (64.35%) are employed in the City.

THE RACIAL DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 74.98% White or Caucasian
- 17.37% Black or African American
- 4.97% Another race
- 1.53% Asian or Asian American
- 0.61% Hispanic or Latino
- 0.31% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 0.23 % Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

THE AGE DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY IS AS FOLLOWS:

- Age 17 and under – 0.29%
- Age 18-35 – 18.36%
- Age 36-45 – 20.78%
- Age 46-55 – 21.95%
- Age 56-65 – 21.29%
- Age 66 and older – 17.34%

RECAP OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

A summary of the Community Input Survey is provided below. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in the Appendix and summarized below.

TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR THE CITY OF AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT TO FOCUS ON:

Survey respondents were asked to rank what priorities they thought the Akron Police Department should focus on; the results indicated that “reducing police use of force” was the most critical priority. The second most selected priority was “reducing racial disparities,” and the third was “community-oriented policing.”

Survey respondents were provided an opportunity to identify other areas of priority. Common themes identified included:

- Continuous community involvement; officers should engage with the community on patrol. There is a perception that officers are unfriendly and abrasive; several people commented that officers mostly remain in their patrol cars. Respondents felt officers were unnecessarily militarized.
- De-escalation and mental health training for officers.
- Gun violence and violent crime are major themes throughout the survey; the Department and the new Chief need to focus on gun-related crimes.
- Respondents felt response time needs to be improved, and officers need to respond appropriately during traffic stops, mental health calls, etc.
- The Department and City should develop programs to foster and repair relationships with the community by attending community events, social media, town hall events, etc.
- Hire additional officers and mental health experts to patrol and respond to calls for service appropriately.
- Several respondents would like the City and Department to focus on diversity when making new hires.
- Respondents would like to see the City and Department support officers.

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE IN HOW THE POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERACTS WITH YOUR COMMUNITY?

The majority of responses related to Department interactions with the community focused on compassion and equality in dealings between officers and the community. Respondents felt that relationships could be improved through a decrease in militant appearance with officers, positive daily interactions, and open communication. Several respondents felt the Department was satisfactory and professional, while others felt the Department needs to participate in the community more and combat a perception of racism.

Additionally, participants indicated that they would like the Department to focus on de-escalation when called into service; many felt additional training is needed to achieve this.

Full comments are available in the Appendix.

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE CITY AND POLICE DEPARTMENT DO DIFFERENTLY TO HELP YOU FEEL SAFE

The trends found in the community responses were similar to the previous question in that a large majority of respondents wanted an increased value placed on community relationships and de-escalation techniques used by officers. Participants would like the Department to focus more on visibility, communication, and respect. Several respondents reported a concern for interactions between minorities and officers. Suggestions included:

- An increased focus on combating gun violence/gun-related crimes.
- Improving response times.
- Reducing the use of tactical gear for officers as there is a perception that officers rely heavily on equipment and guns.
- Holding officers accountable.
- Utilizing social workers and mental health experts on non-violent calls for service.
- Reinstate community watch programs and partner with communities.
- Develop and repair relationships with women, minority, and LGBTQ+ communities.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY SHOULD BE THE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT CITY OF AKRON CHIEF OF POLICE?

A primary area of concern among participants was gun violence, gun control, and violent crime reduction.

Other priorities included:

- De-escalation and mental health training for officers.
- Building community relationships and engaging positively with the community.
- Leading by example and hold officers accountable.
- Recruitment of more officers, including recruiting more minority officers.
- Bias training with officers.
- Remaining apolitical.

Additional comments focused on the attitudes of officers, supporting officers, and demilitarization of the force.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT CHIEF OF POLICE?

The following is a summary of prominent concepts provided by the community as areas of focus or general suggestions for the next Chief of Police:

- Lead both the Department and community by example. The Chief should be a strong leader, compassionate, and a good listener.
- The next Chief should have the strength to make difficult decisions and rise above politics.
- Create positive community and Department interaction.
- Treat all members of the community fairly and equally, regardless of ethnicity. The Chief should be committed to diversity in the Department; several participants indicated they would like a Chief that meets the current moment.
- De-escalate and demilitarize. There is concern among participants that the Department/officers act with hostility or a lack of compassion to the community, specifically minority communities.
- Engage with the community and social programs, including mental health agencies.

- Provide resources to officers to better serve the community.
- Reduce violent crime and gun crimes; the crime rate, especially gun crimes, is a huge concern among survey participants.
- The new Chief should work to restore trust with APD.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES, QUALIFICATIONS, OR SKILLS THAT A NEW CITY OF AKRON CHIEF OF POLICE SHOULD HAVE?

Respondents were asked to select/rank three qualities or qualifications out of a predetermined list that are the most important to them personally to see in the next Chief of Police. The results found that “integrity,” “strong leader for officers,” and “strength to make unpopular decisions” were the responses with the highest rankings.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH THE CITY OF AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT?

Survey respondents were asked to select one option for how they would rank their overall experience with the Department; the results showed:

- Excellent – 25.16%
- Good – 42.52%
- Only fair – 18.21%
- Poor – 6.52%
- No experience – 8.36%

COMPARED TO A YEAR AGO, DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CITY OF AKRON IS SAFER, LESS SAFE, OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Survey respondents were asked to select one option for how they would rank their feeling of safety in Akron compared to one year ago; the results showed:

- Safer – 2.55%
- Less safe – 56.22%
- About the same – 41.23%

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF THAT THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING THE NEXT CHIEF OF POLICE?

A major trend in responses showed that the respondents would like the City to select a candidate that can improve relationships with the community, specifically relationships with minority community members. Several respondents shared their belief that the next Chief should be someone that will live in the community once they are hired and demonstrate a strong commitment to Akron. Respondents indicated that they would like to have more positive interaction with the Department, rather than only during circumstances when they might be called for disturbances.

The following is a summary of prominent concepts provided by the community as suggestions for the City to consider when selecting the next Chief of Police:

- The City and Department should continuously communicate with the public.

- Focus on violent crimes, select a candidate with a strong track record of combatting crime and gun crimes.
- The City should select a Chief that can engage with the conversation of the past year regarding racial justice and engage with the community.
- Mixed responses regarding the ethnicity of the next Chief – some respondents want the candidate’s ethnicity to be a factor in the City’s decision, and some prefer that the City not consider ethnicity.
- Hire a candidate from Akron or the State of Ohio; hire someone with large city policing experience.
- Select a candidate that will support police and be apolitical.
- The candidate should have a track record of developing de-escalation and mental health training for officers.