

POLIHIRE®



Chief Of Police
FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

MARCH 2021

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Introduction & Methodology

Introduction and Purpose

POLIHIRE was contracted to lead the search process for Fairfax County, Virginia's next Police Chief. This community survey is one component of a multi-faceted effort to engage the community in the search process and obtain feedback about what the community wants in and from their next Police Chief. Insights from the survey will inform the Chief of Police selection process. This report summarizes the qualitative and quantitative survey results.

Survey Development and Distribution

The survey was developed using the SurveyMonkey® platform. The survey was distributed, in English, Korean and Spanish, via Fairfax County's website, Nextdoor, social media and email with the intention of reaching as many residents of Fairfax County as possible. All Fairfax County residents were invited to participate in this survey. The survey was open for response collection from November 15, 2020 until

February 21, 2021. The survey consisted of seven questions, with one question being voluntary and one question being qualitative in nature. Participants were given the option to voluntarily submit their racial/ethnic background. That information was used to cross-tabulate and compare subgroups by race/ethnicity to see how responses vary between these groups.

A total of 3,834 responses were received. Responses were received from 45 zip codes in Fairfax County totaling 3,537 responses. The other 297 responses came from zip codes outside of Fairfax County. The ten Fairfax County zip codes with the largest number of responses are:

- 22003 with 236 responses
- 20120 with 165 responses
- 20191 with 163 responses
- 22152 with 152 responses
- 22033 with 142 responses
- 20171 and 22015 with 137 responses
- 22032 with 130 responses
- 22153 with 119 responses
- 20151 with 108 responses

Survey Respondent Breakdown by Race

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
White (4)		68.31%	2,173
African American/Black (1)		14.37%	457
Other (please specify) (7)		8.80%	280
Hispanic/LatinX (2)		8.58%	273
Asian (5)		7.80%	248
American Indian or Alaska Native (3)		2.26%	72
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (6)		1.10%	35
Total Respondents: 3,181			

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 7.00	Median 4.00	Mean 3.77	Standard Deviation 1.50

Key Insights

In total, there were 3,834 responses to the survey with 3,537 responses from 45 Fairfax County zip codes. The number of responses from *five of the 45 zip codes* that garnered responses (22003, 20120, 20191, 22152, and 22033) *comprised approximately 25% of the survey's total responses*. *Police-community relations, innovation and integrity* are top-of-mind for residents of Fairfax County and a common thread connecting what they see as the most important public-safety issue to their ideas about what type of background the next Police Chief should have:

- *Trust and engagement* between police and the community was the most pressing public safety issue, followed closely by burglaries and theft and more personal connections with police officers serving in neighborhoods, which significantly outweighed concerns over vandalism and improved police response times.
- *Developing and implementing practical and innovative solutions* was the #1-ranked type of experience respondents believe the new Police Chief should bring to the job. A commitment to the highest professional and ethical standards, accountability for the actions of the department, a demonstrated concern for the community, and the ability to embrace a diverse workforce and community round out the top leadership qualities described by respondents.

Regarding *response representation among the various racial/ethnic backgrounds* – compared to their shares of the population in the county (according to data obtained from Fairfax County's website – *Overview: Demographics Characteristics*):

- Asian and Hispanic respondents were significantly underrepresented in the survey (7.8% vs. 19% and 8.5% vs. 16.2%, respectively).
- Black respondents were somewhat overrepresented in the survey (14.4% vs. 9.4%).

- White respondents were significantly overrepresented in the survey (68.3% vs. 51.24%).
- White respondents had a response of 8.6 times the response rate of Asian respondents despite having only 2.7 times more residents in Fairfax County.

This survey was designed and distributed to produce a representative sample of Fairfax County. In terms of geographical and ethnic representation, however, the final respondent pool was not a perfect reflection of the county. Still, the size and diversity of the sample are significant enough to give weight and importance to the results.

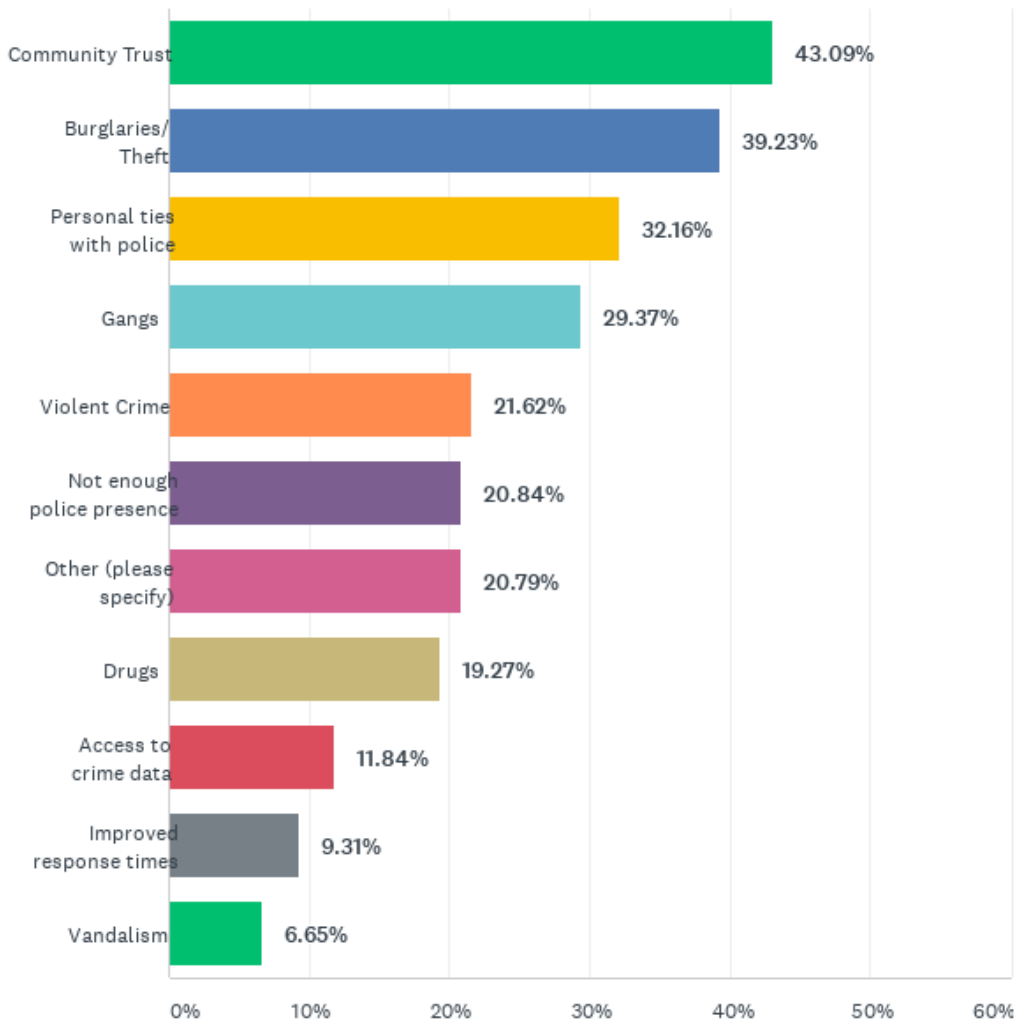


Survey Responses

Most Important Public Safety Issues

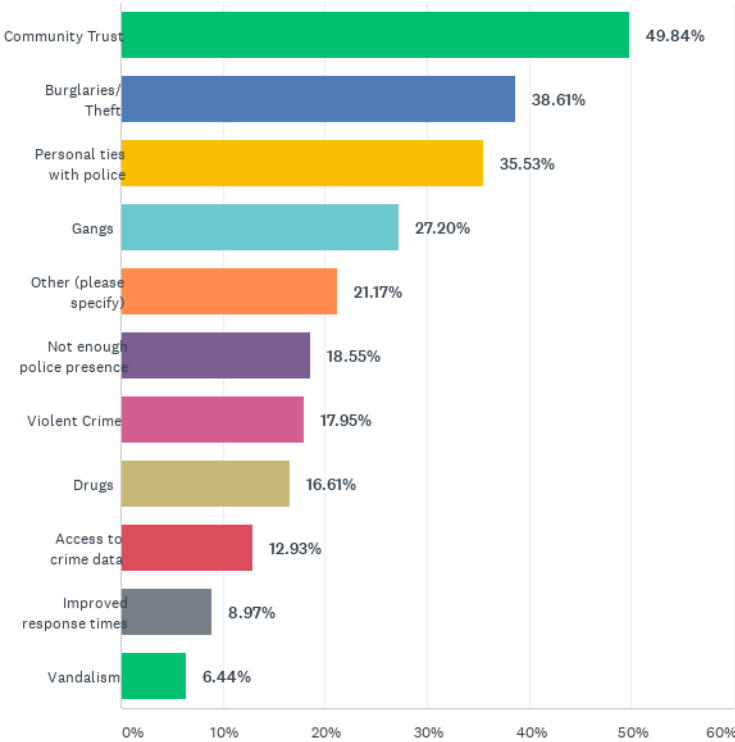
The top three issues selected were:

- 1) **Trust/Engagement with the community:** selected by 1,652 respondents (43.09%)
- 2) **Burglaries / theft (to include car break-ins):** selected by 1,504 respondents (39.23%)
- 3) **More personal connections with police officers serving my neighborhood:** selected by 1,233 respondents (32.16%)

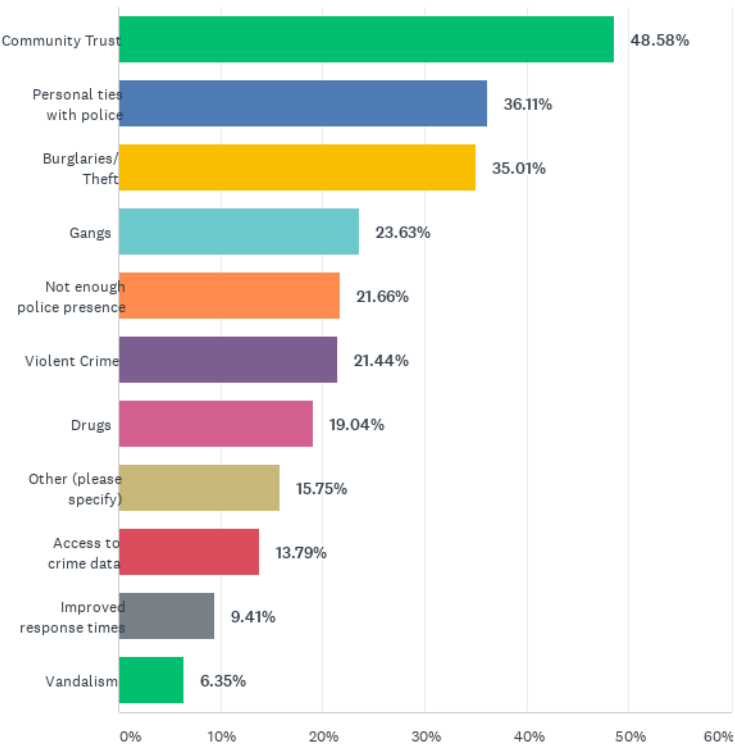


Responses, broken out by racial/ethnic group, are on the next few pages:

Responses from participants who identified as White (2,173)

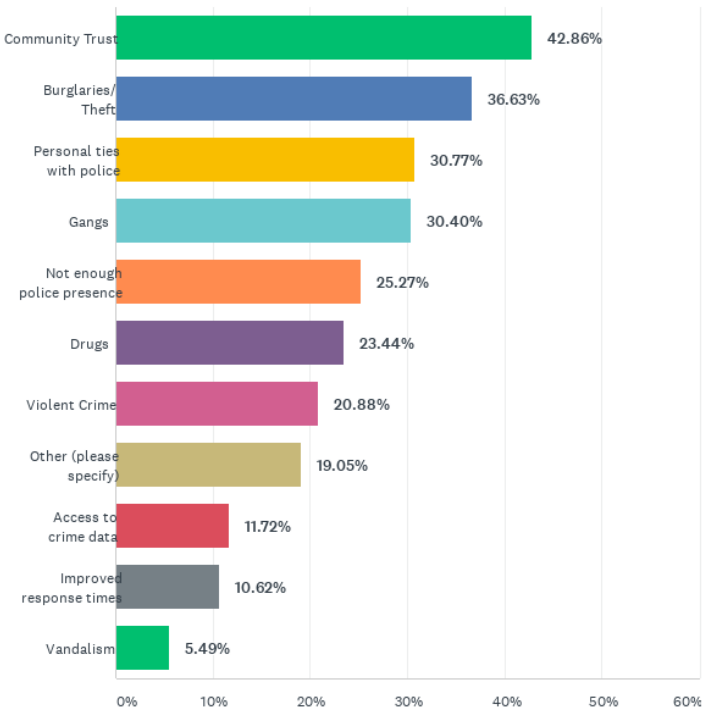


Responses from participants who identified as African American/Black (457)

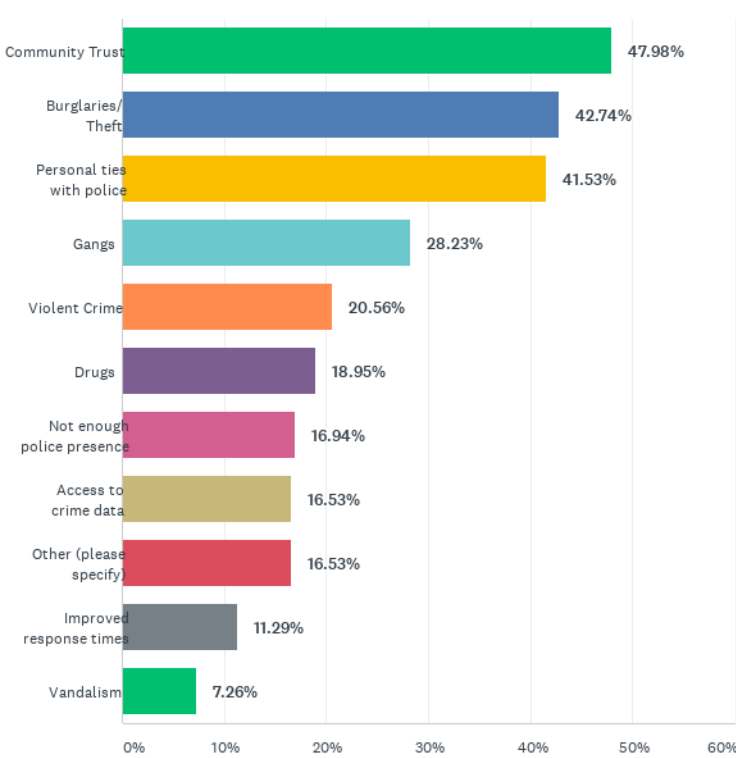


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Responses from participants who identified as Hispanic/LatinX (273)

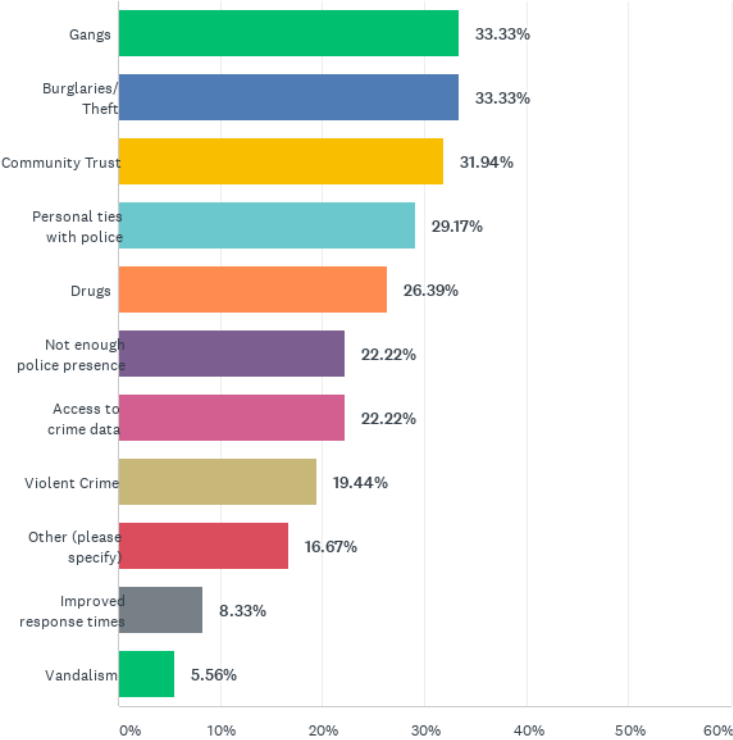


Responses from participants who identified as Asian (248)

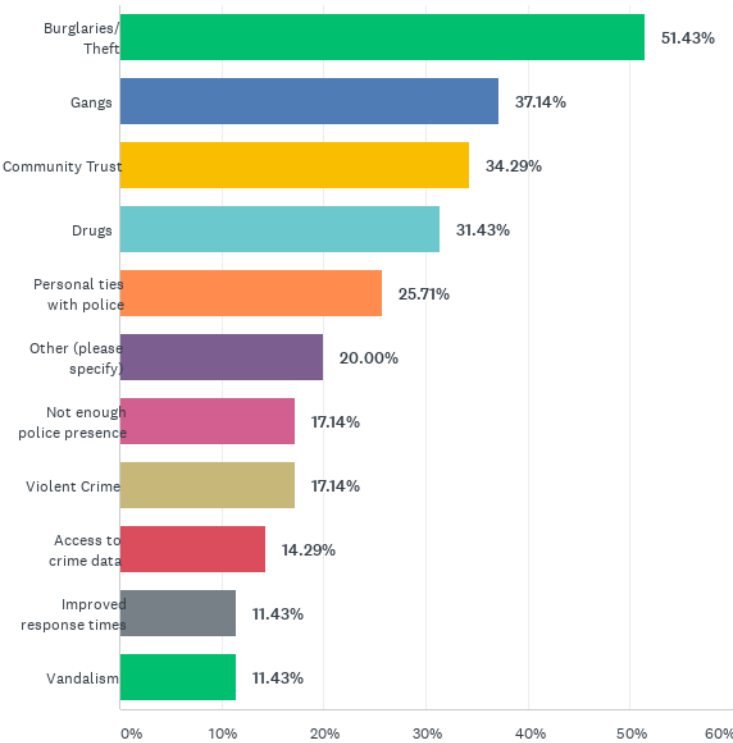


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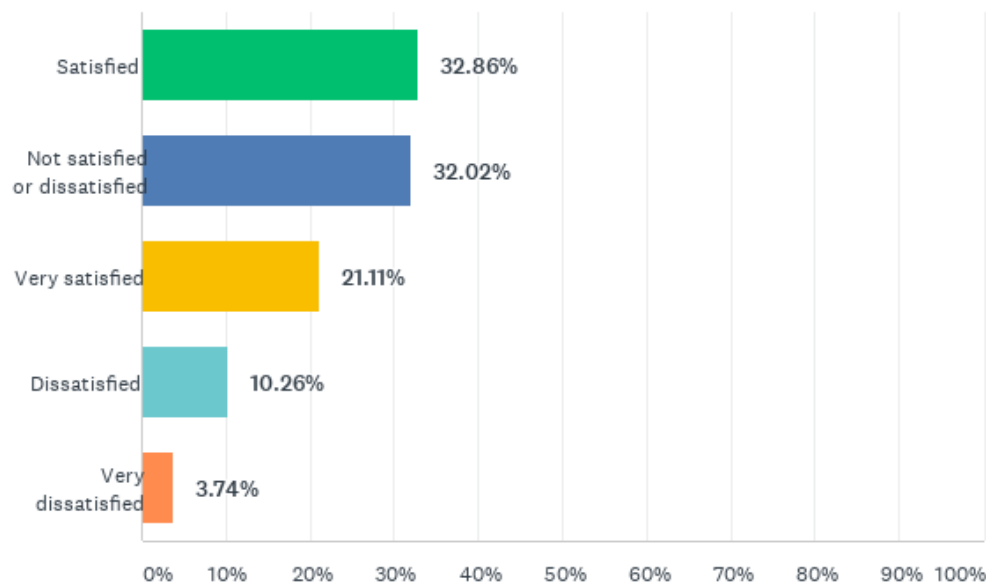
Responses from participants who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (72)



Responses from participants who identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (35)



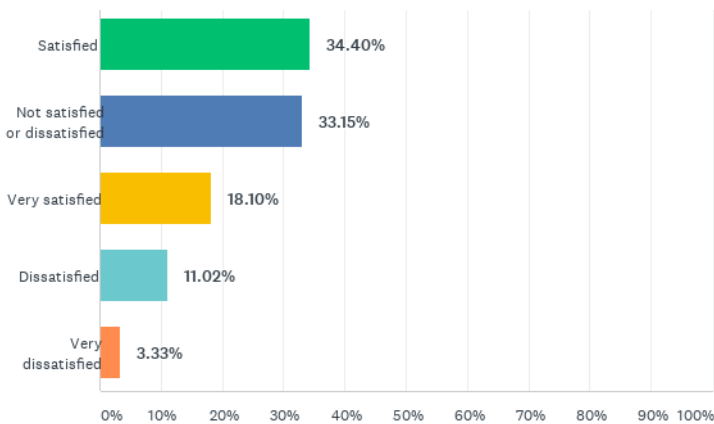
Satisfaction with Police-Community Relationship



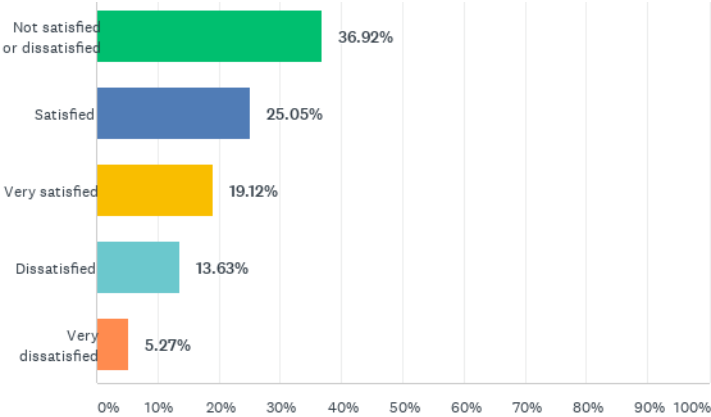
53.97% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied, 32.02% respondents indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 14% of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Responses, broken out by racial/ethnic group, are below and on the next few pages:

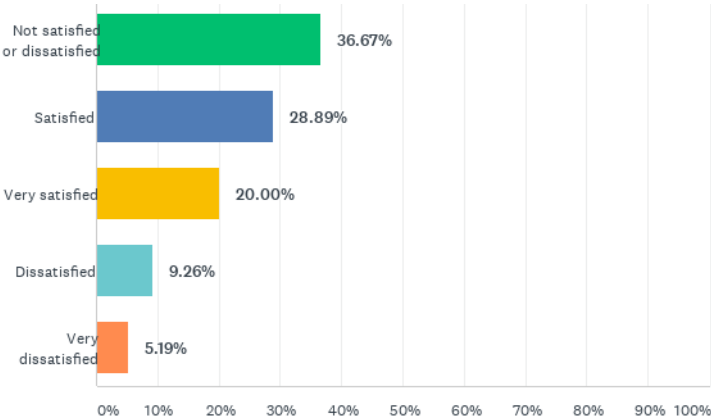
Responses from participants who identified as White (2,160)



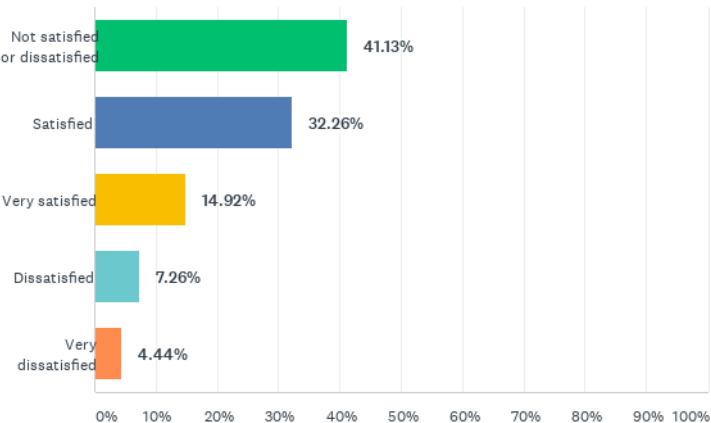
Responses from participants who identified as African American/Black (455)



Responses from participants who identified as Hispanic/LatinX (270)

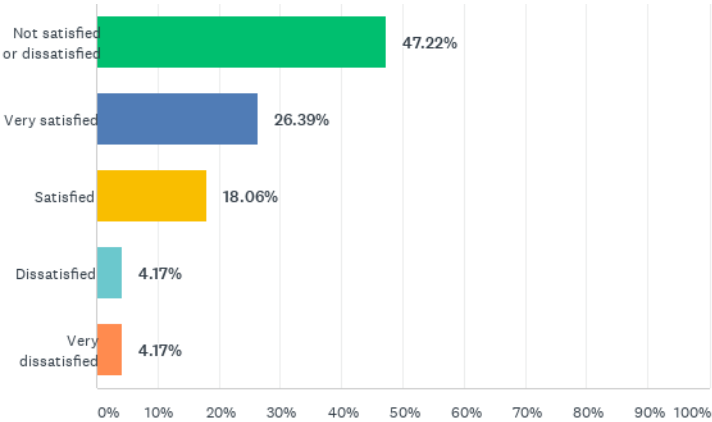


Responses from participants who identified as Asian (248)

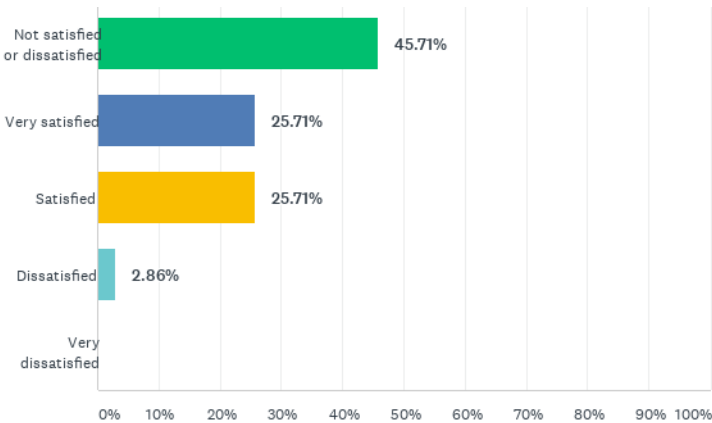


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Responses from participants who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (72)



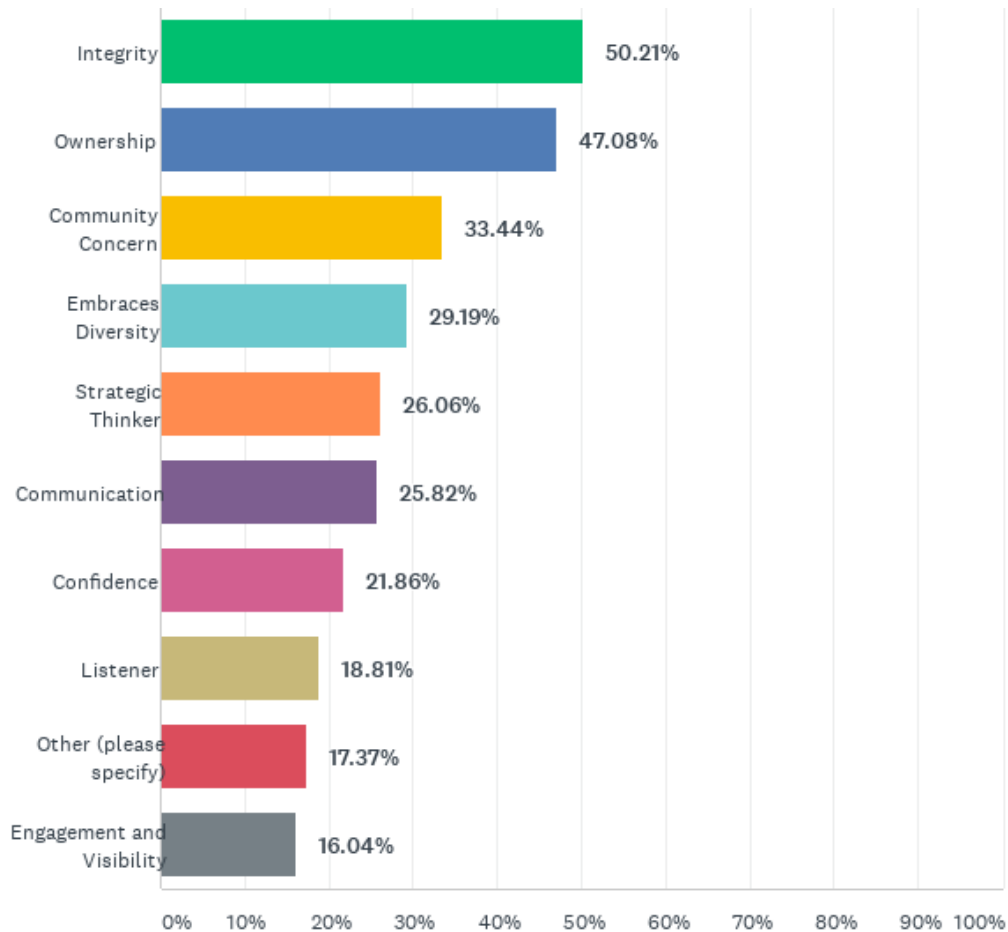
Responses from participants who identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (35)



Desired Leadership Qualities of New Police Chief

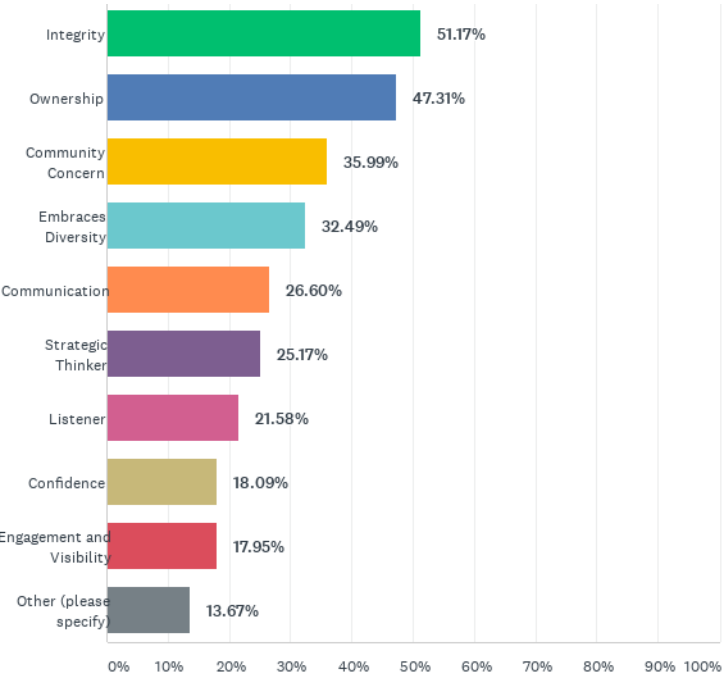
The top three leadership qualities selected were:

- 1) **Integrity** – holds self to the highest standard of professionalism and ethics: selected by 1,925 respondents (50.21%)
- 2) **Ownership** – accepts accountability for the department and its actions: selected by 1,805 respondents (47.08%)
- 3) **Community Concern** – demonstrates a sincere concern for residents, visitors, and businesses: selected by 1,282 respondents (33.44%)

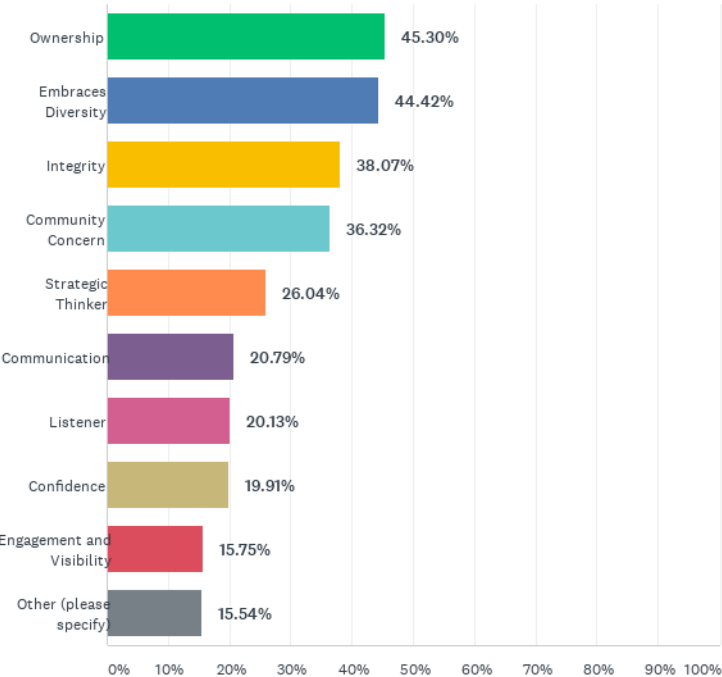


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Responses from participants who identified as White (2,173)

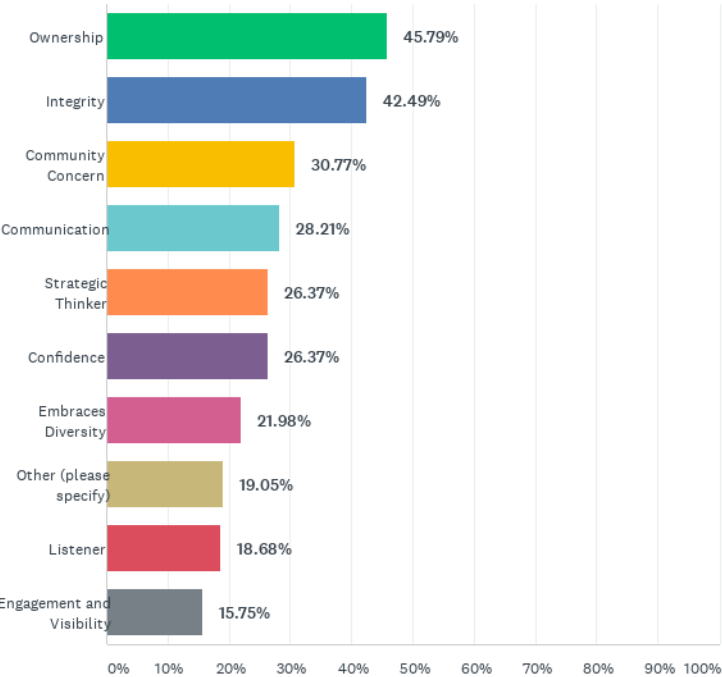


Responses from participants who identified as African American/Black (457)

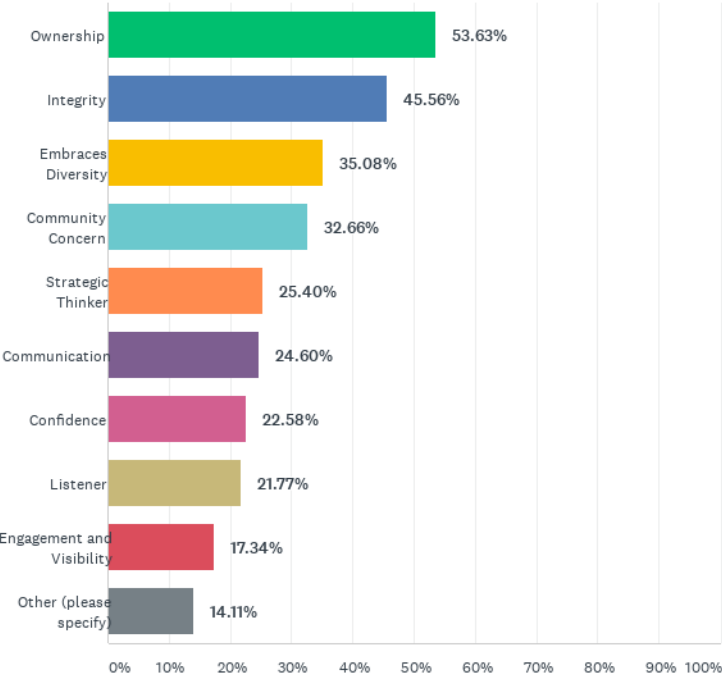


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Responses from participants who identified as Hispanic/LatinX (273)

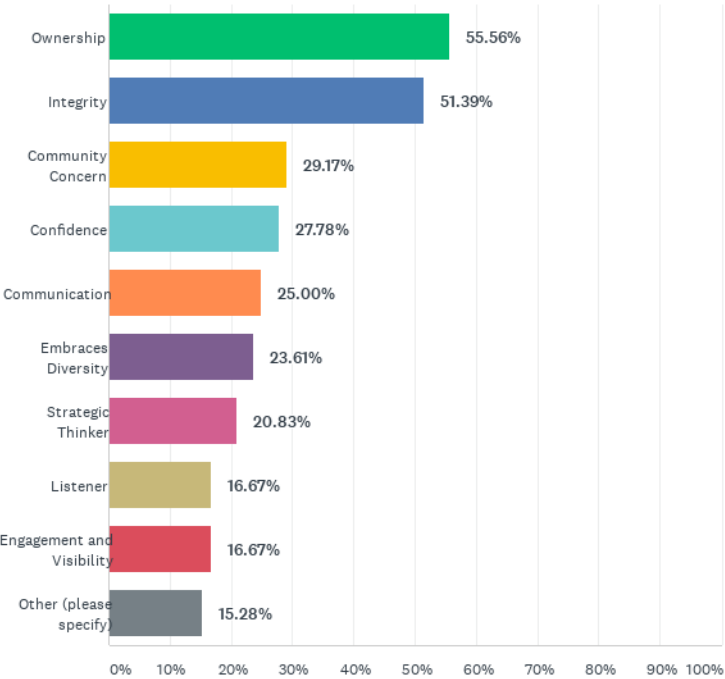


Responses from participants who identified as Asian (248)

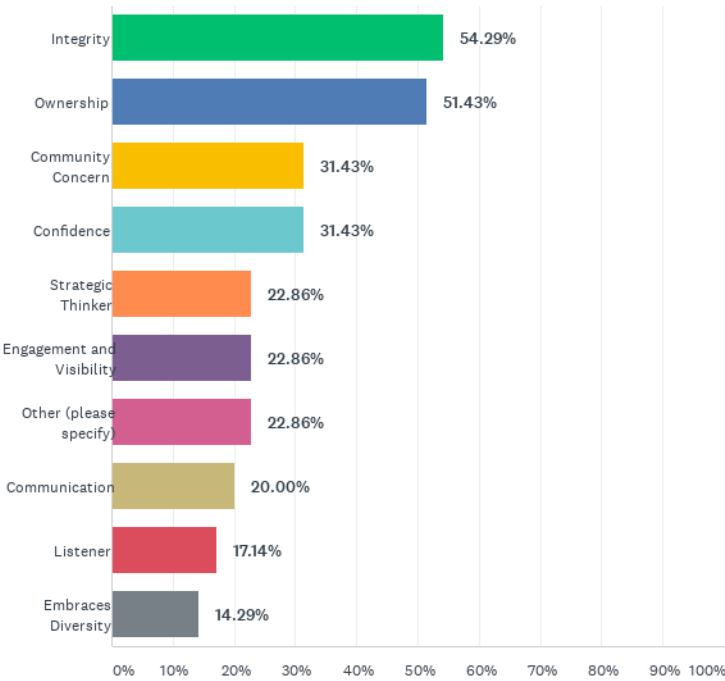


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Responses from participants who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (72)



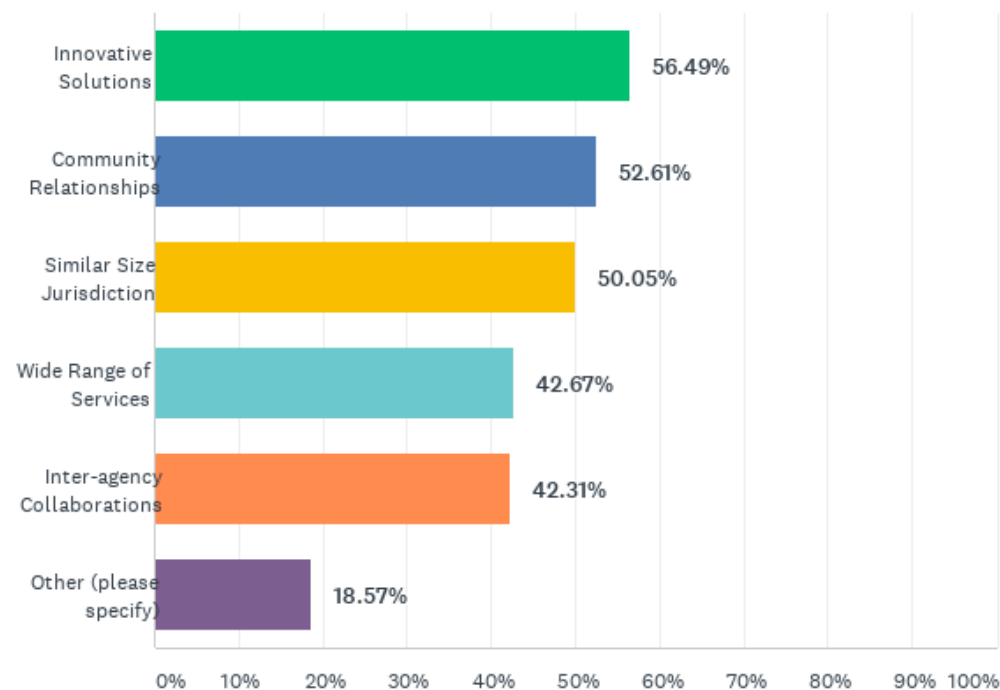
Responses from participants who identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (35)



Desired Professional Experience of New Police Chief

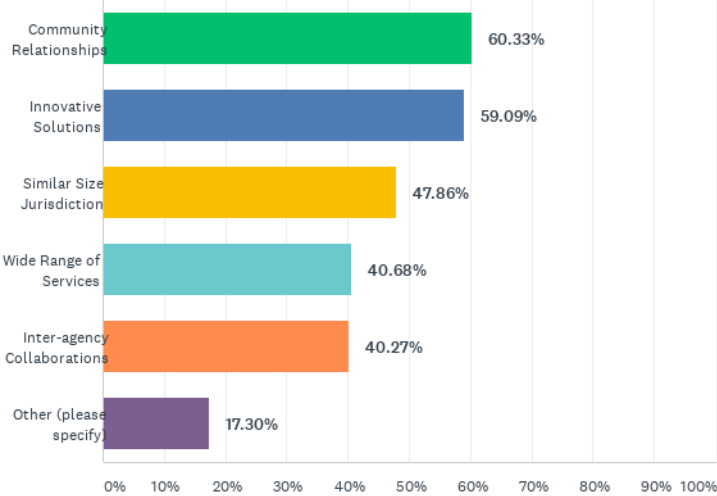
The top three types of experience identified were:

- 1) **Demonstrated ability to develop and implement practical and innovative solutions:** selected by 2,166 respondents (56.49%)
- 2) **Track record of building and maintaining community relationships:** selected by 2,017 respondents (52.61%)
- 3) **Police management (command) experience in a city or county similar in size:** selected by 1,919 respondents (50.05%)

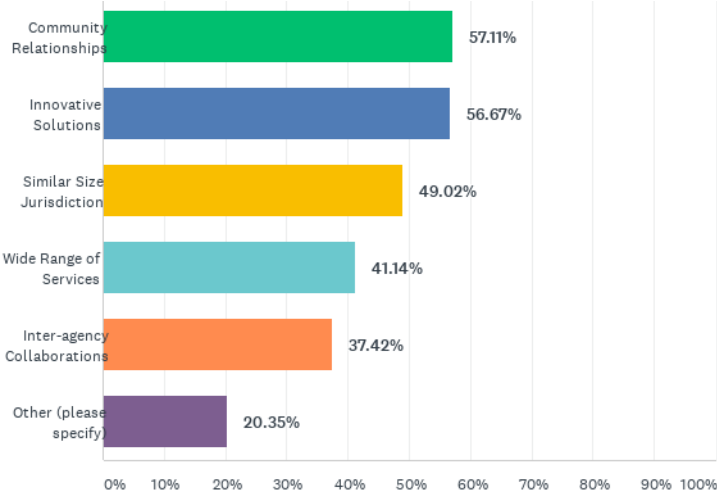


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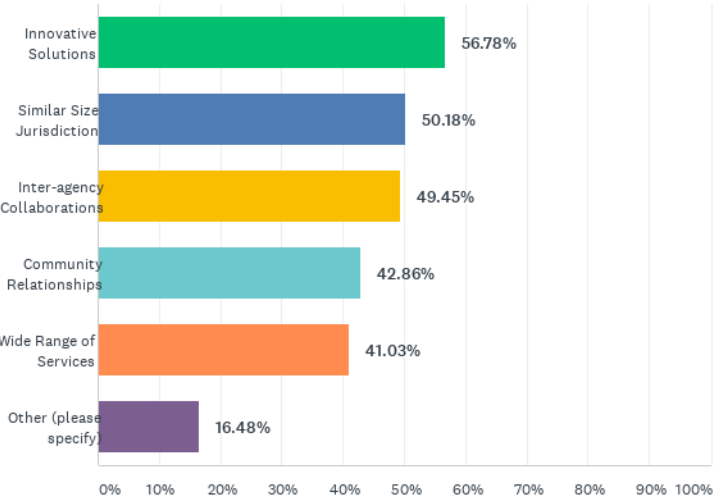
Responses from participants who identified as White (2,173)



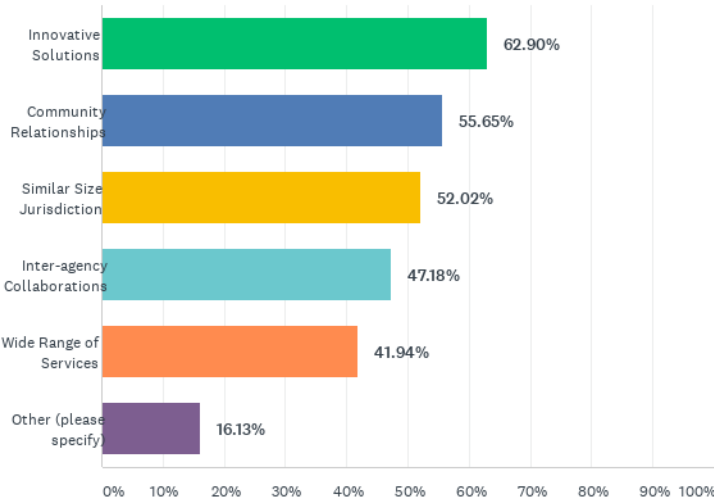
Responses from participants who identified as African American/Black (457)



Responses from participants who identified as Hispanic/LatinX (273)



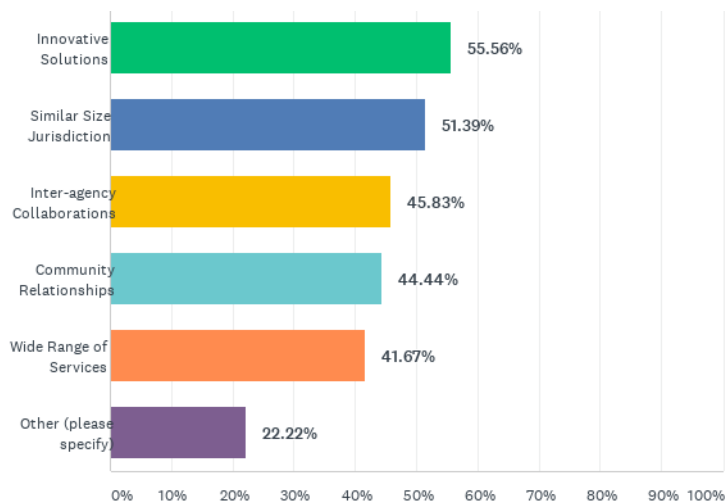
Responses from participants who identified as Asian (243)



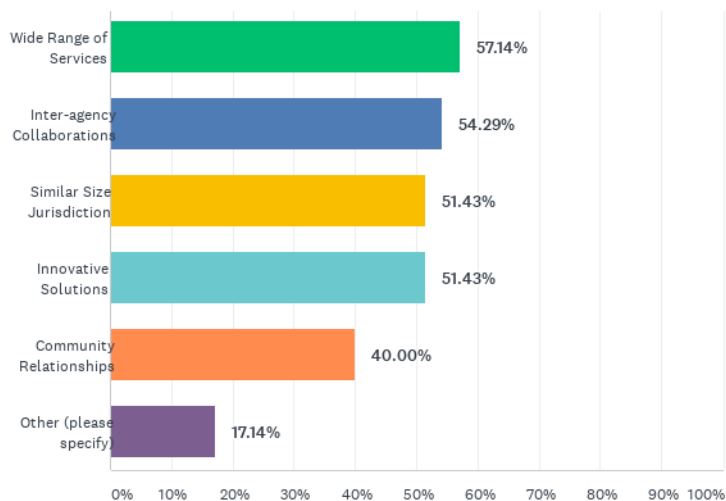
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Responses from participants who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (72)



Responses from participants who identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (35)



Advice from Constituents

What One Piece of Advice Would You Like to Give The Next Chief?

2,793 respondents provided qualitative feedback. A sample of the feedback includes:

Vulnerable communities: Understanding the complex social and individual realities of engaging certain groups/populations

■ ■ Fairfax County right now only serves a safe community to those in the higher income bracket. It is important that Police outreach not happen as a response but as a control in building strong relationships to especially violent gangs around Baileys Crossroads and provide Safe communities to those minorities. A greater focus on crimes against women including domestic violence. Fair and equitable justice to protect women....You must not hire anyone with a hint of misogyny or dominance when it comes to anyone other than themselves. If they have any experience in their background that is controversial in regards to inequity, they don't belong here. Positive community outreach will go along way in this community. ■ ■

■ ■ Encourage street officers to engage the public in a positive manner. ■ ■

■ ■ Take the time to implement community discussions within the first 100 days on the job. ■ ■

■ ■ Focus on Community Policing. Integration of mental health services and clinicians into police work. ■ ■

■ ■ Fairfax County has pockets of wealth and pockets of poverty. We must work hard to keep all of Fairfax County safe. All of us should trust that when we call the police for help, they will help and not make things worse. Training in de-escalation of mental health crises and drugs is critical. Officers must also have training to understand how to respond when people have intellectual disabilities. You can't get the truth by interrogating someone with autism without an advocate present – they've been taught to try to figure out what you want and tell you that. ■ ■



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Accountability: Holding members of the force to high standards and accountable when they don't meet them

■■ Be seen, be heard, be transparent. Don't be afraid of the media. Release as much information as possible as quickly as possible. Face up to mistakes. People understand mistakes, but not coverups. ■■

■■ Former Chief Roessler provided a much-needed step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done to effect substantive police reform desired by the majority of the Fairfax County residents. Among other things, the county needs a more diverse police force that better reflects our community, increased data transparency, robust civilian oversight, rethinking the role of armed police officers, increased accountability for substandard police conduct, and additional revisions to use of force and body-worn camera, and other policies. Our new police chief should reject the notion that Fairfax County must choose between safety and fair/equitable policing practices; such practices will actually increase trust in policing and will ultimately result in better public safety for all of us. If you demonstrate leadership and push hard for policing reforms to make the County more diverse, fair, and equitable, many of us across the County will have your back and help in any way we can. ■■

■■ There have been steps towards police reform, but the new chief should be a leader explicitly committed to continuing this reform, promoting diversity, transparency/accountability, and improved community relations. ■■



■■ I'm very thankful for the police. They are the leading edge of justice under the law. As such, I think we need to double down on efforts to diversify the police workforce, promote accountability, and engage the community. These efforts will help to build trust and build the belief that Fairfax County, VA is one of the best places to live for all of its residents. ■■

■■ Lead and live to protect all of Fairfax County's citizens like you would want someone to lead and protect the most valuable person(s) in your life. ■■

■■ Policing is hard work, but it will be easier and more effective if you increase trust and engagement with the community, so everyone feels protected by the police instead of threatened. E.g., body camera requirements, data transparency, and firing the few who are bad cops so they don't sully the reputation of the vast majority of good cops. Be open to revision of qualified immunity, which is currently pretty much equal to absolute immunity. ■■

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Advocacy: Supporting and defending officers in ways that build their morale

■■ Be independent. Don't permit our leftist Board of Supervisors to deter you from being the County's Chief Law Enforcement Officer. ■■

■■ Stand behind your officers. Push back against the Commonwealth attorney and board of supervisors when necessary. ■■

■■ Support the community... but support the officers as well...The department is only as effective as its officers who patrol the community daily. Improving morale among officers and establishing trust within the department should be paramount. A clearer vision for the department would lead to more effective policing. ■■

■■ Fairfax is a large county and "one size" does not fit all. Take care of your officers. Have their backs. This current police force does not feel the chief has their backs. ■■

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Anti-bias: Training officers and developing policies that address bias and lead to equitable policing

■ ■ Make anti-racism and diversity training for the police officers a priority. ■ ■

■ ■ The ability to think clearly about what the role(s) of the police should be and how the police relate to the community. To understand that the police force should not be first responders in cases of mental health issues and domestic abuse for example. Delegate responsibility, focus strengths in the department, and think outside of the box of what is possible when community resources work in a non-militant manner for the common good. Solicit and consider input from all residents. ■ ■

■ ■ We are here to help you. Please engage us in the education of the PD with the cultural diversity in policing in and near the Falls Church area – we represent 100 countries and speak about 50 languages. ■ ■

■ ■ Do everything possible to eliminate bias and racism among the officers. Overall, the people in the community are very supportive of them and want to believe they are honest and follow the law themselves. ■ ■

■ ■ Que escuche y elimine cualquier tipo de prejuicios al intervenir a alguien. ■ ■

