

FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALLS FOR 2008 NYGS

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

You are assisting the National Gang Center (NGC) in surveying 2,548 law enforcement agencies across the United States to obtain information about youth gangs. We are collecting data for calendar year (January–December) 2008, which is why the current survey is referred to as the 2008 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS). You will be calling those agencies that have not yet responded to our mailing.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL GANG CENTER/SURVEY?

The NGC is a cooperative effort with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and performs a number of tasks (see brochure). The primary research-oriented task is the annual survey. Since 1996, we have been collecting annual survey data from law enforcement agencies pertaining to the presence OR absence of gang activity in their jurisdictions and, if present, the characteristics of such. As the only ongoing nationwide assessment of gang activity, the NYGS information is important because it provides a timely portrait of our nation's gang problem. Response rates in previous years have ranged from 70 to 92 percent.

The 2008 NYGS sample (n=2,548) comprises the following:

- a) 623 agencies in cities with populations above 50,000 (larger cities)
- b) 739 agencies in suburban counties (suburban counties)
- c) 694 randomly selected agencies in cities with populations between 2,500 and 50,000 (smaller cities)
- d) 492 randomly selected agencies in rural counties (rural counties)

Notice that all larger cities and suburban counties with police or sheriffs' departments in the United States are included in the 2008 NYGS. It is especially important to get responses from these agencies because they are most likely to have gang problems. A nonresponse from any one of them will leave an incomplete profile of gang activity across the United States. As the follow-up phone call period progresses, you will notice a more focused attempt to contact these agencies.

For smaller cities and rural counties, we randomly selected a sample to make our efforts more efficient. It is most important to get responses from these agencies because statistically, their departments represent many others that are not contacted.

Over 13 NGC survey years, there have been two survey samples. From 1996 to 2001, we surveyed 3,018 agencies from the same four area types listed above. For the 2002 survey, we updated our sample based on new information from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These 2,548 agencies have been surveyed ever since and will continue to be surveyed over the upcoming years.

Because of the structure of the NYGS sample—it comprises all larger cities and suburban counties plus a random sample of smaller cities and rural counties—some of the agencies in the current sample were also surveyed from 1996 to 2001. These “continuing” agencies comprise 63 percent of the current sample. In other words, for most agencies, this will be their 13th survey year, and for the remainder (37 percent), this will be their 7th survey year.

The 2008 NYGS contains a contact information page and 28 questions over four pages.