



Gang Activity, 2021–2024

Highlights

- The highest rate of incidents involving gang activity was in 2021 with a rate of 7.1 incidents per 100,000 inhabitants.
- Aggravated assault was the most reported (39.4%) offense in gang-related incidents.
- Weapons were used in 80.4% of gang-related incidents.
- Ages 13 to 16 years old were the most reported age group for victims and offenders.
- 67.1% of offenders were known to the victim in some manner.

Introduction

The Department of Justice (DOJ) defines *gangs* as “associations of three or more individuals who adopt a group identity in order to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation. The association’s primary purpose is to engage in criminal activity and the use of violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives and enhance or preserve the association’s power, reputation, or economic resources.”¹

This report focuses on the analysis of victims, offenders, and offenses of incidents that are associated with gang violence, which are reported by law enforcement agencies through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) of the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The addition of gang-related data elements in NIBRS was a result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1993. It is important to note, the UCR Program does not collect data related to gang affiliation or the citizenship status of offenders or victims.

How NIBRS Captures Gang Information

Similar to the DOJ definition and for NIBRS reporting purposes, a *gang* is defined as “an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct.”

Gang activity can be reported through two NIBRS data elements. Data element 12 provides the type of criminal activity/gang information. Gang activity is captured as *juvenile gang* (e.g., street gangs whose membership is predominantly under 18 years of age) or *other gang* (groups whose membership is predominantly 18 years of age or older) through data element 12. Gang activity can be reported for data element 12 when the offense is reported as murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, kidnapping/abduction, rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, criminal sexual contact, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, or intimidation.

¹ For more information about violent gangs from the DOJ, visit <https://www.justice.gov/criminal/criminal-vcrs/about-violent-gangs>.

Data element 31 provides the circumstances for aggravated assault and homicide offenses. This data element captures the circumstances of *gangland* (i.e., organized crime involvement) and *juvenile gang*.² This report focuses on incidents where gang information or aggravated assault/homicide circumstances were reported with a gang-related code for at least one offense within the incident.

Participation and Reporting

Participation in the UCR Program is voluntary for state, county, city, territorial, university/college, and tribal law enforcement agencies (unless mandated by the state). However, reporting is mandated for federal law enforcement agencies. A total of 4,775 agencies reported gang activity from 2021 to 2024, resulting in a yearly average of nearly 2,500 agencies that submitted gang-related incidents. An average of 19.0% of participating NIBRS agencies submitted at least one gang-related incident. The majority of city agencies with populations of 1,000,000 or more have submitted gang-related incidents to NIBRS since 2021.³

Table 1

| Participation and Gang Activity Reporting, by Year, 2021-2024 | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
| NIBRS Participating Agencies | 11,794 | 13,293 | 14,039 | 14,601 |
| NIBRS Population | 215,058,917 | 256,187,698 | 278,449,430 | 296,527,998 |
| Agencies Reporting Gang Violence | 2,263 | 2,498 | 2,735 | 2,694 |
| Population Covered by Agencies Reporting Gang Violence | 149,075,843 | 162,955,382 | 178,174,336 | 185,108,914 |

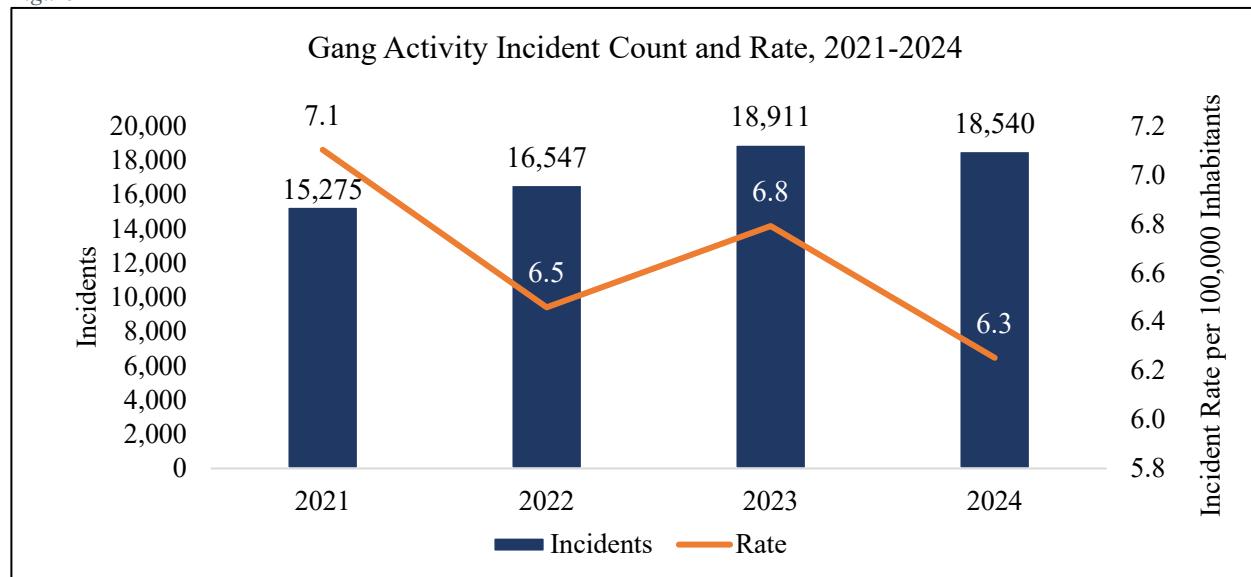
² The data was analyzed prior to the 2025.0 NIBRS Technical Specification release. As such, this report utilizes the specifications for data element 12 under the 2023.0 NIBRS Technical Specification. For more about UCR definitions and data elements, see the [NIBRS User Manual](#).

³ The following city agencies with populations of 1,000,000 or more did not submit gang-related incidents due to not transitioning to NIBRS in the years noted; 2021: Los Angeles, San Jose, and Phoenix; 2022: Los Angeles and Phoenix; 2023: Los Angeles and Phoenix; 2024: Phoenix. In 2023, New York agencies transitioned to NIBRS and sent updated information for incidents that had been previously submitted. Therefore, New York's data is included in this report.

Incidents

Incidents involving gang activity made up less than 1% of all reported incidents from 2021 to 2024. From 2021 to 2024, there were 69,273 incidents involving gang activity. The highest rate of gang activity incidents was in 2021 with a rate of 7.1 incidents per 100,000 inhabitants.⁴

Figure 1



Offenses

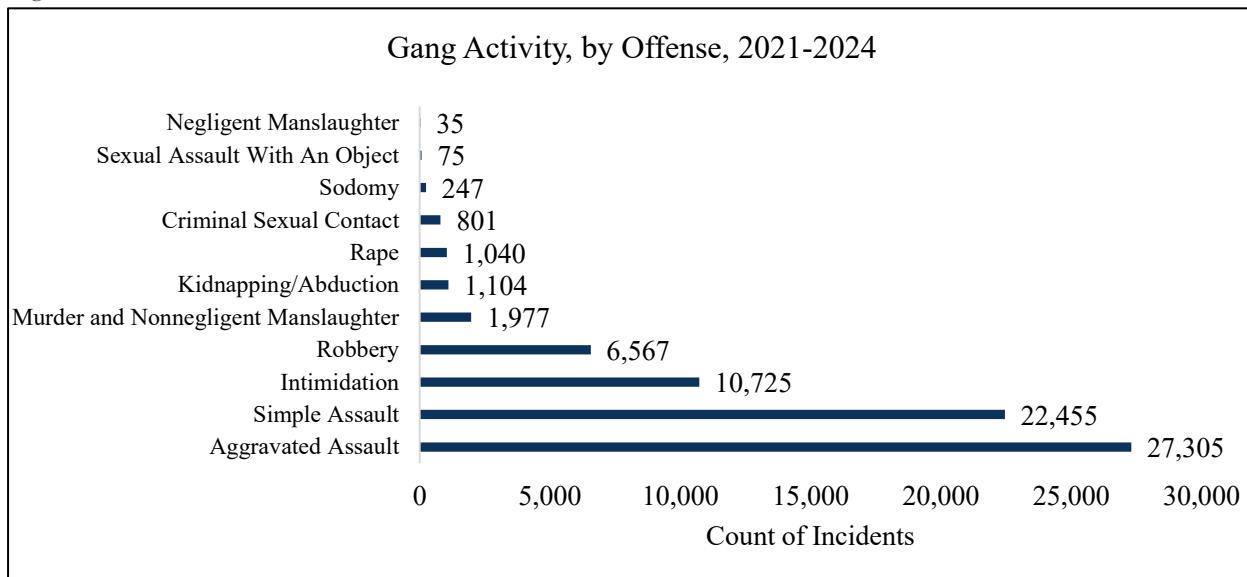
From 2021 to 2024, there were over 100,000 reported offenses involved in about 70,000 gang-related incidents. More than half (53.7%) of gang-related incidents involved the offenses of murder, aggravated assault, rape, and/or robbery.⁵ Aggravated assault was the most reported (39.4%) offense in gang-related incidents.⁶

⁴ The rate is based on the yearly population covered by NIBRS agencies because gang data elements are not captured through the Summary Reporting System.

⁵ Since 2013, the revised UCR definition of *rape* is “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” The definition includes, rape, sexual assault with an object, and sodomy offenses. Attempts or assaults to commit rape are also included in the statistics presented here; however, statutory rape and incest are excluded.

⁶ The sum of incidents for each offense will be greater than the total number of incidents as an incident can have multiple offenses.

Figure 2



The occurrence of gang activity or a gang-related circumstance is only required for specific offenses. Aside from those offenses, additional offenses may be reported in the same incident. From 2021 to 2024, law enforcement reported nearly 14,000 other offenses in incidents with the specified offenses involving gang activities or gang-related circumstances. Among those other offenses, the most common (67.9%) offenses reported were weapon law violations and destruction/damage/vandalism.

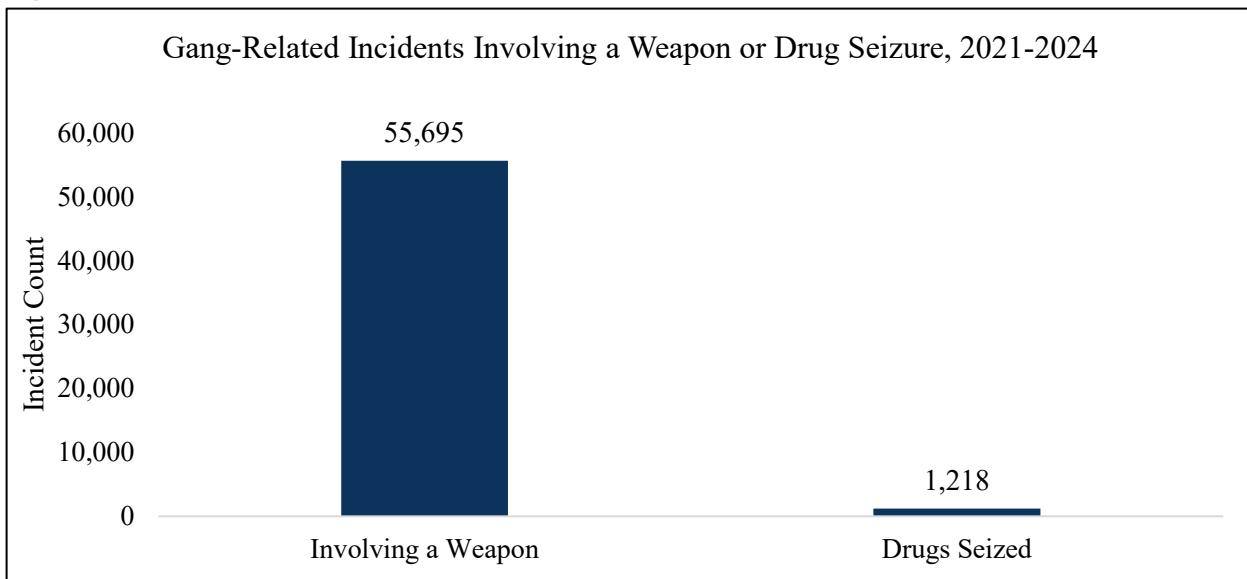
Table 2

| Additional Offenses Associated with Gang Activity, by Offense, 2021-2024 | |
|--|----------------|
| Offense | Incident Count |
| Weapon Law Violations | 4,675 |
| Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property | 4,602 |
| Drug/Narcotic Violations | 1,232 |
| Burglary/Breaking & Entering | 667 |
| All Other Larceny | 613 |

Weapons and Drugs

From 2021 to 2024, 80.4% of gang-related incidents involved a weapon and 1.8% involved the seizure of drugs.

Figure 3



Personal weapons (hands, fist, feet, arms, teeth, etc.) were the most reported weapon in incidents involving gang activity. Aside from the category of *other*, the top three weapon types reported in these incidents were personal weapons (41.2%), firearm (39.3%), and knife/cutting instrument (7.0%).

Marijuana was the most seized drug (47.6%) in the gang-related incidents where drug seizure was reported.

Amphetamines (20.9%) and cocaine (15.2%) were the next most-seized drugs.⁷

Table 4

| Incidents of Drugs Seized, by Drug Type, 2021-2024 | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Drug Type | Incident Count | Drug Type | Incident Count |
| Marijuana | 580 | Other Narcotics | 110 |
| Amphetamines | 255 | Heroin | 59 |
| Cocaine | 185 | Hallucinogens | 34 |
| Other Drugs | 147 | Over Three Types | 23 |
| Unknown | 118 | | |

Table 3

| Incidents Involving Weapons, by Weapon Type, 2021-2024 | |
|--|----------------|
| Weapon Type | Incident Count |
| Personal Weapons | 22,925 |
| Firearm | 21,905 |
| Other | 4,311 |
| Knife/Cutting Instrument | 3,903 |
| Unknown | 2,465 |
| Blunt Object | 1,791 |
| Motor Vehicle | 612 |
| Asphyxiation | 311 |
| Drugs/Narcotics/Sleeping Pills | 54 |
| Fire/Incendiary Device | 40 |
| Poison | 21 |
| Explosives | 19 |

⁷ Drug types are aggregated from the NIBRS drug type codes to include the following categories: marijuana includes hashish; cocaine includes crack cocaine; hallucinogens include PCP, LSD, and other hallucinogens; other drugs include other drugs, other stimulants, other depressants, and barbiturates; and other narcotics includes other narcotics, opium and morphine.

Victims

From 2021 to 2024 there were nearly 100,000 victims involved in about 70,000 gang-related incidents.⁸ When race was reported, the majority of victims were White (55.6%). By sex, the majority of victims were male (59.6%).

Figure 4

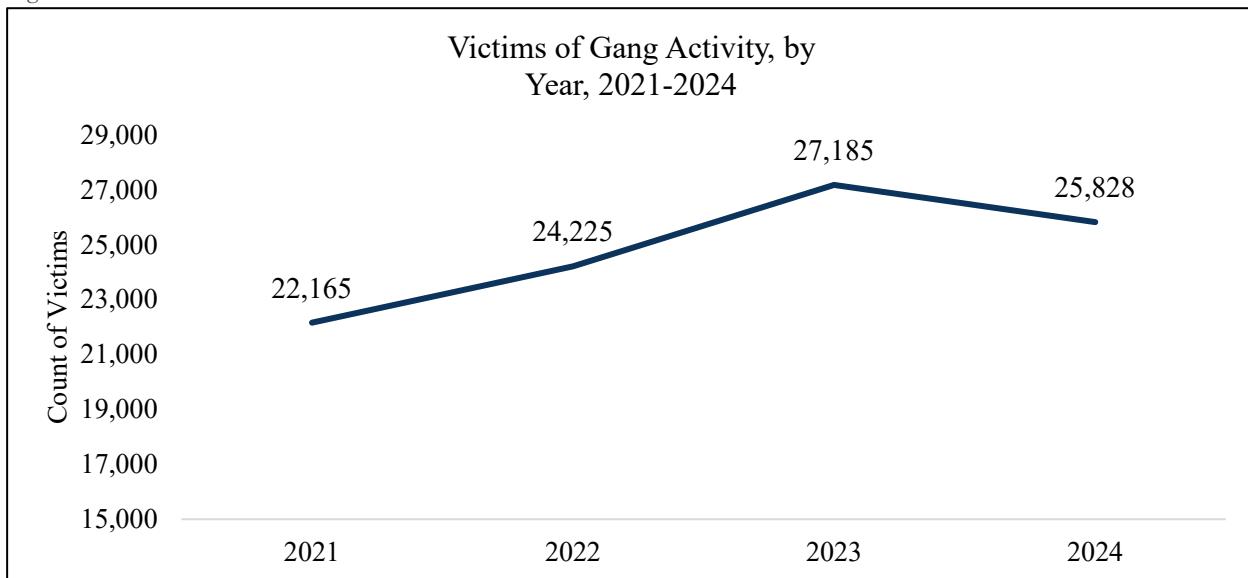


Figure 5

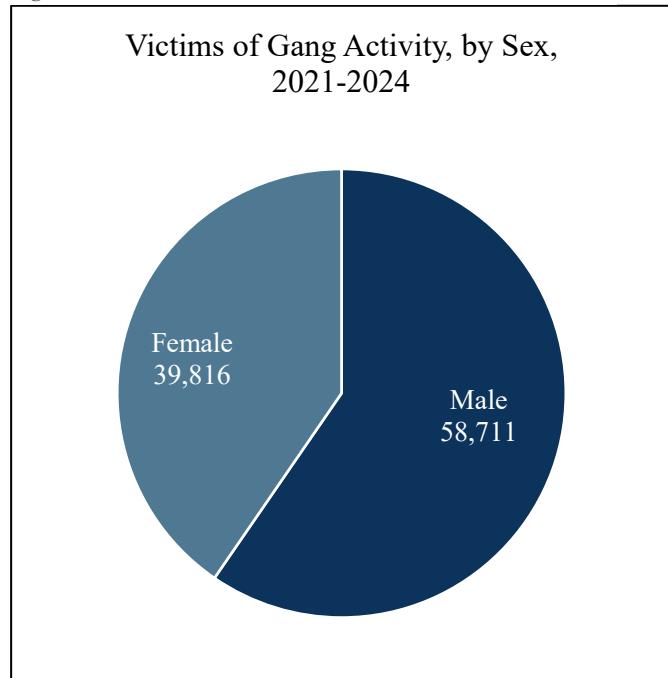
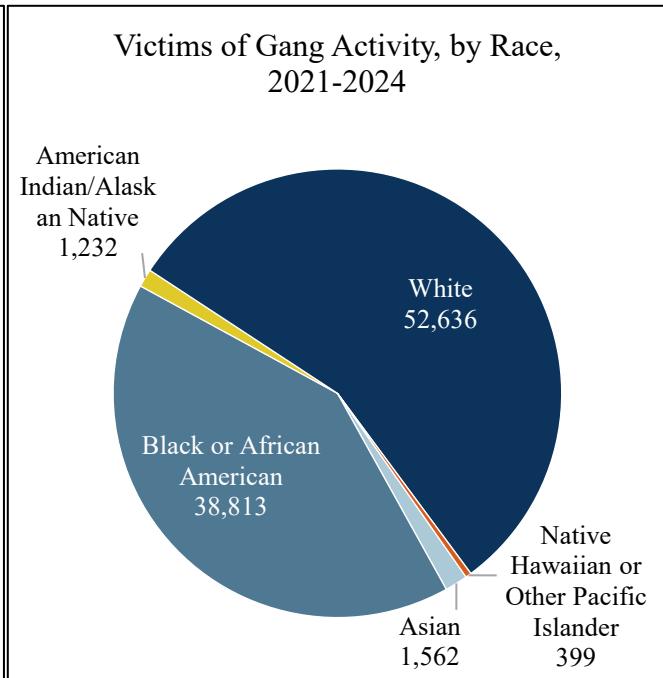


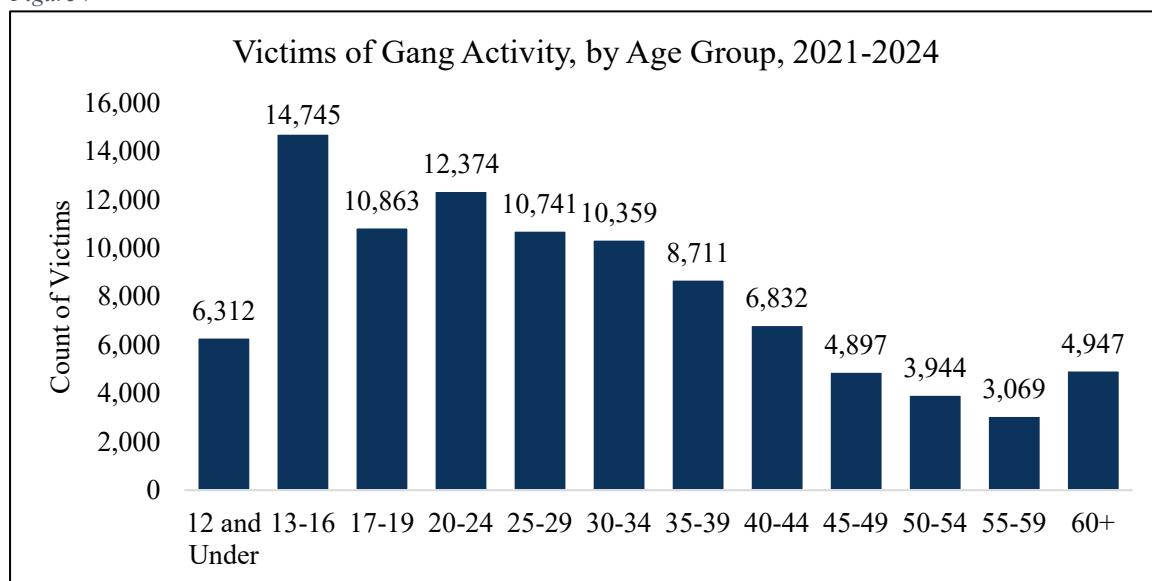
Figure 6



⁸ Victim race data is for known race. Victim race was reported as *unknown* for 4,761 victims. Victim sex is for known sex. Victim sex was reported as *unknown* for 876 victims.

From 2021 to 2024, victims aged 13 to 16 years were the most-reported victim age group.⁹ Over a quarter (25.8%) of victims were juveniles under the age of 18, and more than half (56.3%) of the victims were under the age of 30.

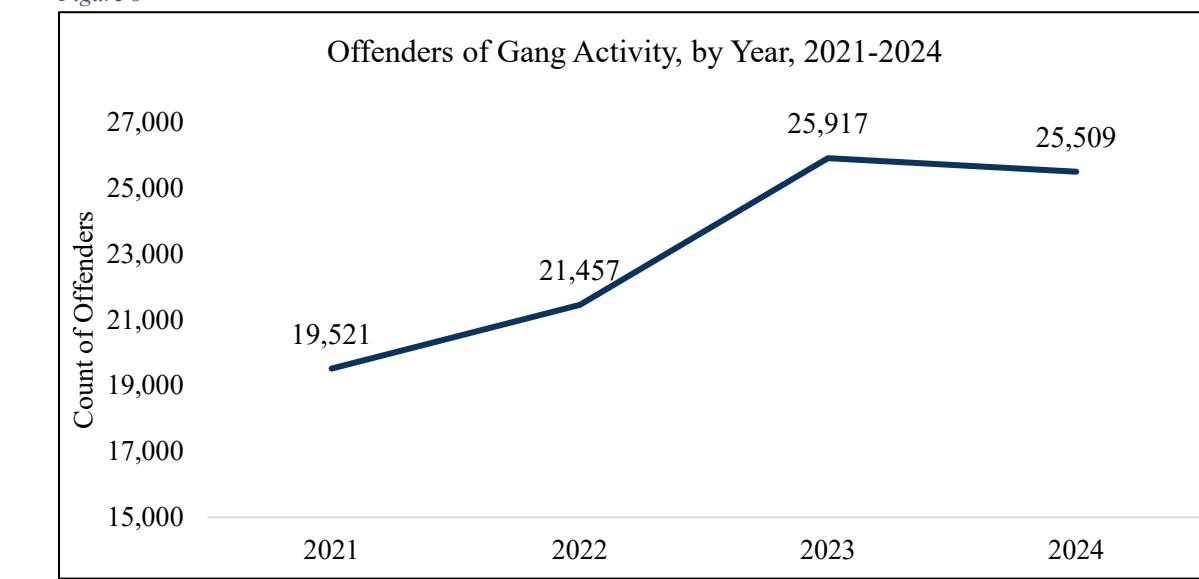
Figure 7



Offenders

There were 92,404 known offenders of gang-related incidents from 2021 to 2024. Most offenders were male (85.2%), and the most common offender race was White (49.1%).¹⁰ There were 11,484 incidents where information about the offenders were reported as *unknown*.¹¹ As such, there were at least 103,888 offenders involved in gang-related incidents from 2021 to 2024.

Figure 8



⁹ Victim age is of known victim age. The ages of 1,609 of victims were reported as *unknown*.

¹⁰ Offender sex and race are for known offenders. The sex of 5,585 offenders were reported as *unknown*, and the races of 10,499 offenders were reported as *unknown*.

¹¹ The offender(s) is reported as *unknown* when no information regarding any offender is known. As such, the exact number of offenders for the offense is also unknown.

Figure 9

Offenders of Gang Activity, by Sex, 2021-2024

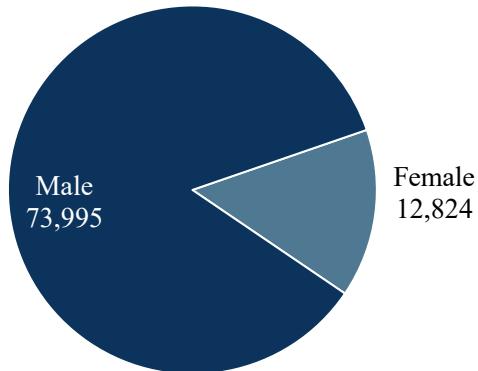
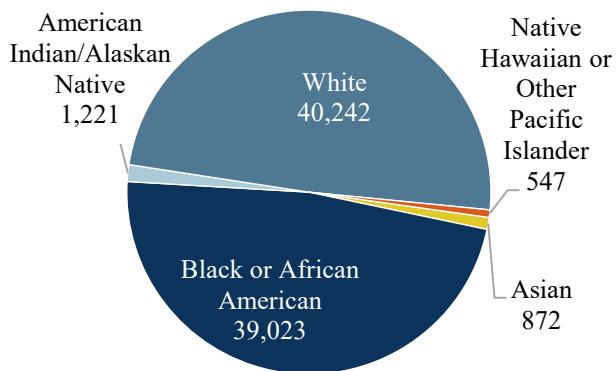


Figure 10

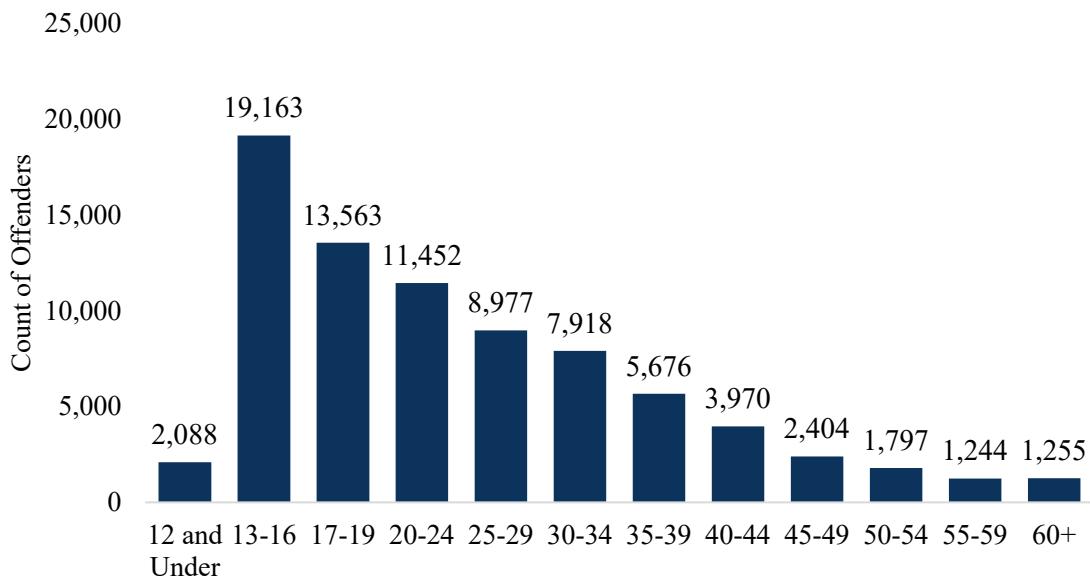
Offenders of Gang Activity, by Race, 2021-2024



From 2021-2024, offenders aged 13 to 16 years were the most reported offender age group than any other group. Over one-third (33.8%) of offenders were juveniles under the age of 18, and more than half (58.2%) were under the age of 25.¹²

Figure 11

Offenders of Gang Activity, by Age Group, 2021-2024



¹² Offender age is for known offenders. For 13,079 offenders, the age was reported as *unknown*.

Victim-Offender Relationship

Of known victim-offender relationships for incidents involving gang activity, 67.1% of victims knew the offenders in some manner. Conversely, 30.1% of relationships described the offenders as strangers. Nearly 3.0% of relationships were specified as victims also being reported as offenders, indicating these victims and their related offenders were mutual combatants during the incident. Of the 56.9% of relationships categorized as known to the victim outside of a family connection, the most reported relationships were acquaintance (45.5%) and otherwise known (28.8%).¹³

Figure 12

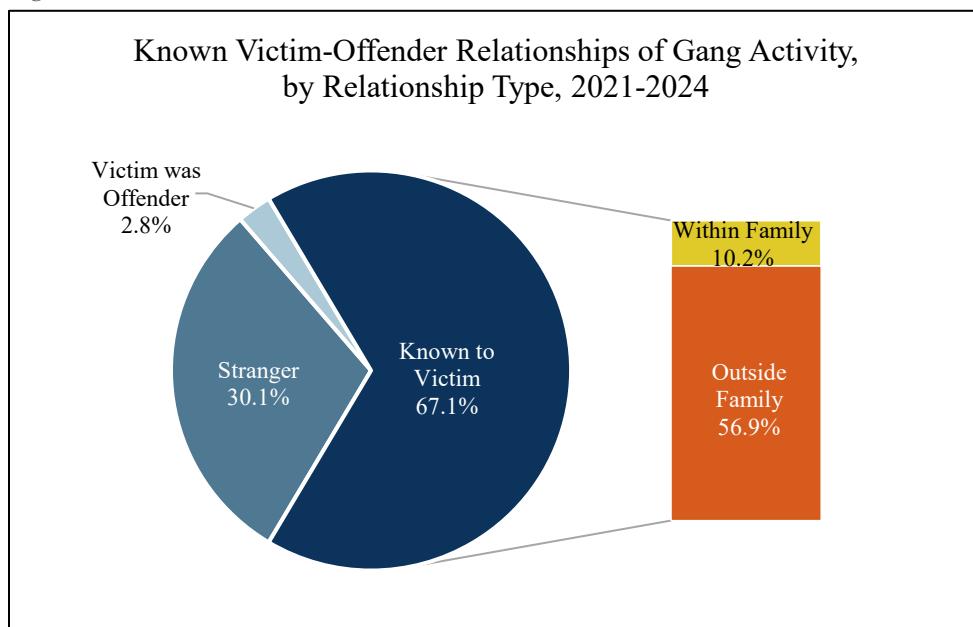


Table 5

| Victim-Offender Relationships of Gang Activity, Outside Family, by Relationship Type, 2021-2024 | |
|---|--------|
| Relationship | Count |
| Acquaintance | 25,213 |
| Otherwise Known | 15,945 |
| Boyfriend/ Girlfriend | 6,713 |
| Friend | 2,874 |
| Ex-Relationship | 2,011 |
| Neighbor | 1,337 |
| Ex-Spouse | 894 |
| Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend | 180 |
| Employee | 155 |
| Employer | 105 |
| Babysittee (the baby/child) | 31 |
| Cohabitant (non-intimate) | 1 |

¹³ Agencies reported 55,728 of victim-offender relationships as *unknown*.

Conclusion

Although the lowest number of reported incidents of gang activity from 2021 to 2024 occurred in 2021, that year had the highest rate per 100,000 inhabitants (7.1) of gang-related incidents. The lowest rate of gang activity per 100,000 inhabitants from 2021 to 2024 occurred in 2024 (6.3). More than 80.0% of gang-related incidents between 2021 and 2024 involved weapons. About 40% of those incidents involving weapons involved personal weapons or firearms.

Victims and offenders of gang activity were most reported in the age range of 13 to 16 years old. Over half of victims (56.3%) and offenders (69.5%) were under the age of 30 years old. Male was the most reported sex, and White was the most reported race of both victims and offenders of gang activity.

Aggravated assault was the most-reported (39.4%) offense in gang-related incidents. Of the offenses not considered to be gang related within NIBRS Data Elements 12 and 31, weapon law violations (34.2%) and destruction/damage/vandalism of property (33.7%) were most frequently reported in association with gang activity.

The FBI has established anti-gang initiatives dedicated to investigating, disrupting, and dismantling gangs. These anti-gang initiatives include the National Gang Intelligence Center, Violent Gang Safe Streets Task Forces, and the Transnational Anti-Gang Task Forces, to name a few.¹⁴ The reporting of gang activity through the FBI's UCR Program is vital in assisting the FBI's anti-gang initiatives in identifying gang activity across the country to aid in combating violent crime.

¹⁴ For more about the FBI's anti-gang initiatives, visit <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/gangs>.