MEMORANDUM

To: Chairs of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety
              Chairs of Senate Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety
              Chairs of Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

From: Erik A. Hooks, Secretary, DPS
              Glenn M. McNeill, Jr., Commander, State Highway Patrol

Subject: Annual Gang Report

Date: March 1, 2018

Pursuant to General Statute § 20-196.5, "The State Highway Patrol, in conjunction with the State Bureau of Investigation and the Governor's Crime Commission, shall develop recommendations concerning the establishment of priorities and needed improvements with respect to gang prevention and shall report those recommendations to the chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety and to the chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety on or before March 1 of each year. (2015-241, s. 16B.3(a).)"

MAILING ADDRESS:
4212 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4212
www.ncdps.gov

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OFFICE LOCATION:
3010 Hammond Business Place
Raleigh, NC 27603
Telephone: (919) 733-3388

North Carolina Department of Public Safety

North Carolina State Highway Patrol
North Carolina GangNET

Gangs in North Carolina

An Analysis and Update of NCSHP GangNet Data

January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017

March, 2018

North Carolina State Highway Patrol

Colonel Glenn M. McNeill

North Carolina GangNet Staff
Capt. Tyrone A. Ross
Sergeant Gregory D. Steffens
Jon-Paul Guarino

March, 2018

Forward:

The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) administered gang surveys and conducted gang research of law enforcement agencies beginning in 1998. The GCC has since produced several reports on gangs and gang membership trends. Session Law 2008-187 Section 7 stated that the Governor's Crime Commission was to submit an annual update to the General Assembly on the statewide levels of gangs, gang membership and gang associates in the North Carolina.

GangNET is a law enforcement database, specific to the individual gang members, which originated in the Durham County Sheriff's Office and was funded through Governor's Crime Commission grants. By 2004, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department joined Durham to provide service to the western counties in North Carolina. Since 2009, NC GangNET has been the source of gang data used in statewide reports to the General Assembly. In 2012, the Governor's Crime Commission consolidated the system into a single central database to allow for more uniform quality control and training.

In 2013, the research unit of the GCC, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Analysis Center, was eliminated and all gang related information is now collected by the NC State Highway Patrol, NCSHP GangNET Project. In 2014, the management of NC GangNET moved to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol to be managed by a certified law enforcement agency. The transition has allowed for a rapid expansion of the project on all fronts. The capabilities of this project have expanded exponentially by utilizing the NCSHP Field Liaison Officer (FLO) program.

A GangNet trained Trooper serving as the FLO coordinator from each troop, A-I, instantly fills the void left by smaller agencies who may not have the manpower to participate. The FLO GangNET certification training includes utilization of the system, proper vetting of information being entered into the system and the training of future participants. This will include both the remaining staff at the North Carolina State Highway Patrol and law enforcement officers from agencies within their respective troop jurisdictions.

GangNET is a means for law enforcement officers and agencies to share non- discoverable and non-evidentiary information on validated gang members and affiliates at no cost. This information is protected by federal regulations that govern the uses of law enforcement intelligence data. Many other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies also use the GangNET software which facilitates the potential for cross jurisdictional and interstate sharing of information on gang members.

This report will provide analysis of the 2017 Gang data, as well as, law enforcement agencies use of the system. A Gang Fact Sheet offering gang data only, will be provided as Appendix 1 in this report. The intention is to allow the GangNET staff to provide these Fact Sheets once a year, or upon request.

Method of Data Collection:

GangNET is a web based database housed on a secure server and managed by the North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET staff. This team trains law enforcement personnel statewide to certify users in the laws and protocols of gang member entry into the system. Only certified users may enter or view the information contained in the database. There are multiple user levels ranging from view only, entry and full system administrative rights, which are those of the NCSHP GangNET staff. Data for this report and future Fact Sheets are derived exclusively from the NCSHP GangNET data.

2017 Goals:

One of the major goals for 2017 was to ensure that all data was accurate and up to date in compliance with 28 CFR 23 standards. This was evident by the number of reported gang members who remained active in the system. Users witnessed a dramatic increase in reported membership however this is most likely due to increase in system use and the outpacing of entries versus subject purges. In addition to GangNet certification classes that added 479 new users in 2017, NCSHP GangNet staff conducted gang awareness training for 491 citizens at various forums to include gang conferences and community requests.

There was an ongoing outreach to the law enforcement community throughout the State of North Carolina to better inform them of the benefits of actively participating in GangNet. They are educated as to how the database can benefit their law enforcement efforts. As LE agencies are trained for use of GangNet, it generally spurs interest by the surrounding agencies often generating a ripple effect of interest which ultimately results in training and inclusion into the access of the database.
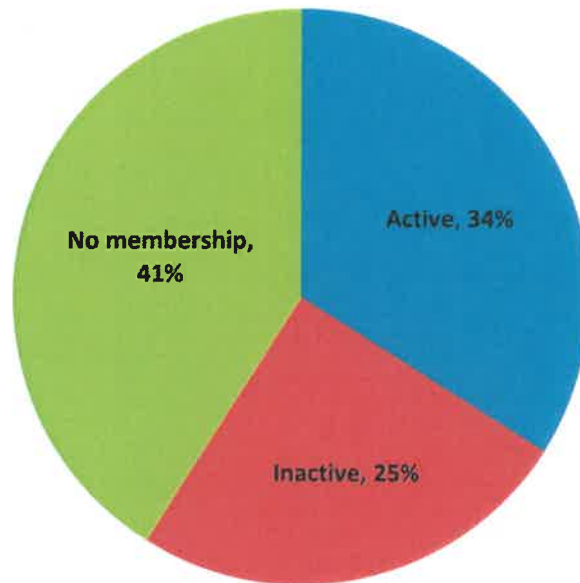
Many LE Agencies are facing manpower and budgetary issues that make it difficult to allocate the personnel and time necessary to make the entries into the database. The NCSHP and its administrators have informed these agencies that they would be willing to assist with initial entries into GangNet for their agency or department once the information has been validated, and is in compliance with 28 CFR, part 23.

Gangs:

Information retrieved from GangNET data on December 2017 reveals 1,231 gangs reported across the state. 300 of these gangs are considered active as explained below.
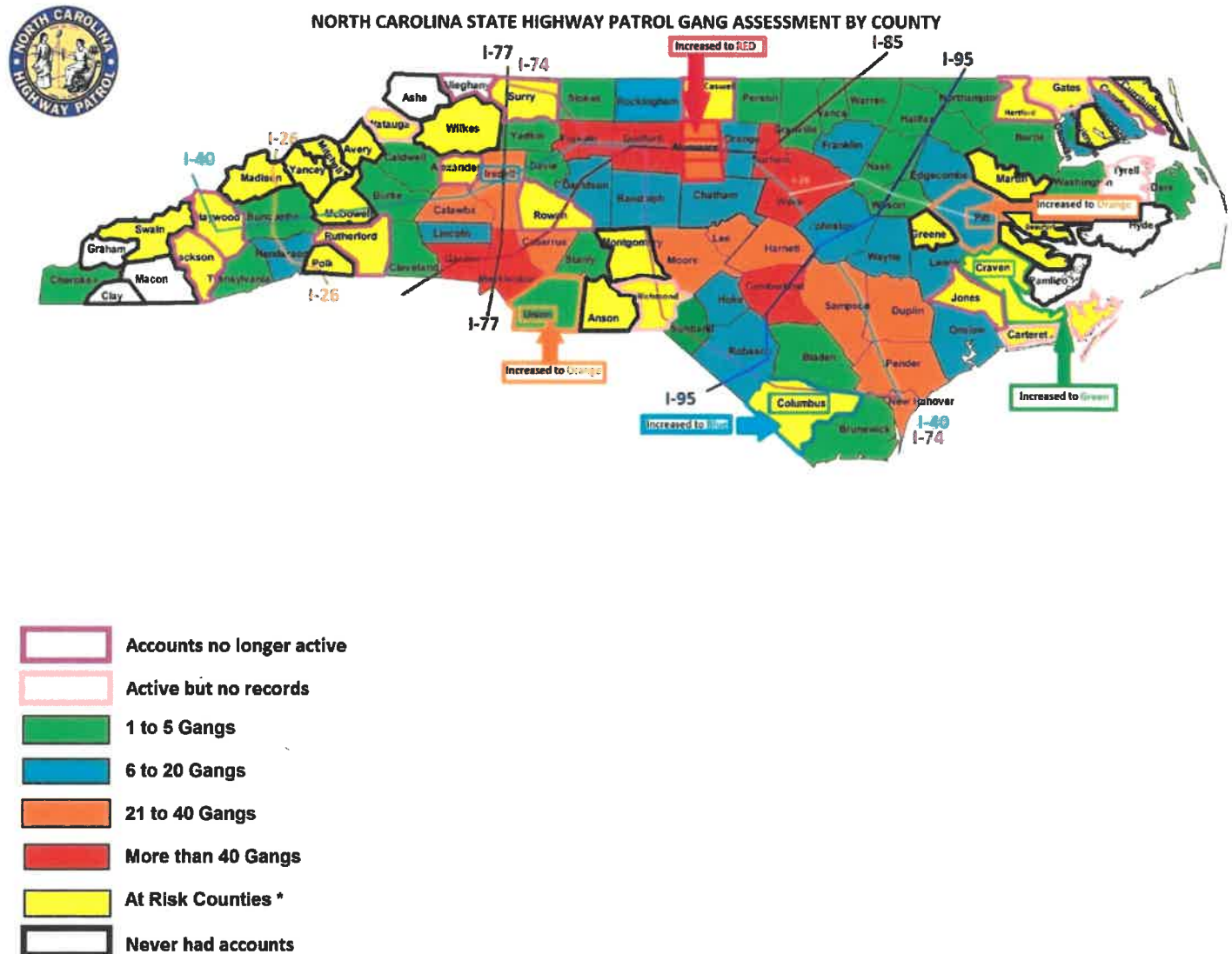
Figure 1

Active/Inactive/Historical Gangs in NC
Dec 2017 Data

It is important to note that although GangNet purges subjects after 5 years of inactivity, it does not purge gangs. The idea is that gang membership can fluctuate widely depending on the criminal climate of any given jurisdiction. Leadership can be imprisoned or killed, which can result in subjects consolidating or fleeing to other groups. Because of this, the Highway Patrol maintains records on the total number of gangs entered in the system.

An active gang is one whose membership is greater than 3 or more subjects represented in the above graph, in blue at 34%. Any gang whose membership drops below 3 but still has active members is reclassified as inactive, which is represented in red at 25%. The remaining number of gangs entered into the system that no longer has any active membership is indicated in green at 41%. By maintaining a record of every gang entered in GangNet the system allows for users to locate and populate those gangs, should new members emerge. It also allows for a reclassification back to an active status.

Figure 2

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HIGHWAY PATROL GANG ASSESSMENT BY COUNTY

Legend:

- Accounts no longer active
- Active but no records
- 1 to 5 Gangs
- 6 to 20 Gangs
- 21 to 40 Gangs
- More than 40 Gangs
- At Risk Counties *
- Never had accounts

*At Risk Counties are those counties with no identified gangs, but are adjacent to counties with identified gangs, on an interstate corridor, or have a significant metropolitan population.
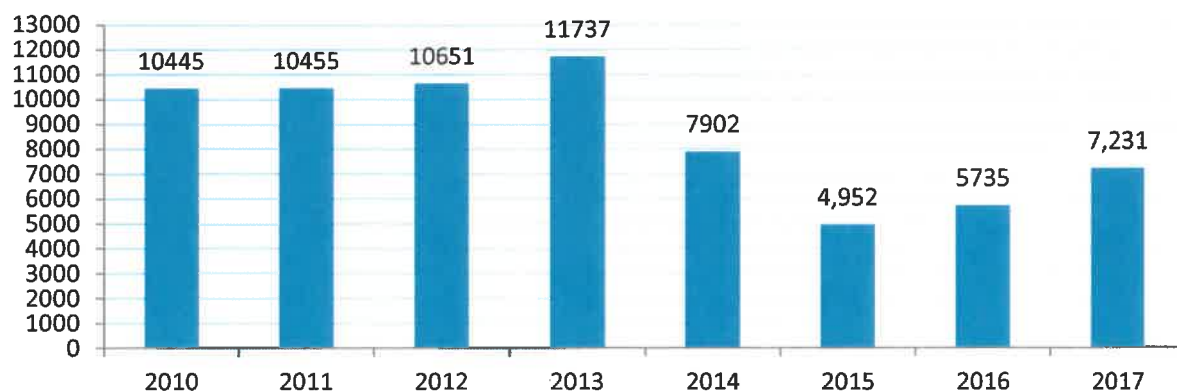
Gangs are fluid and subject purges occur automatically; therefore, this map should be considered a snapshot of current activity at the time of collection and is subject to change.

Some data inconsistencies exist due to errors in entry, such as a single name with multiple birthdates, and the absence of race or gender information. These errors account for some of the data being inconsistent with total gang members. The total number of validated gang members currently in GangNET is 7,231 as shown in Figure 3. Data indicates that there are 7,058 male and 170 female gang members. There are an additional 1,064 non-validated, suspected gang members or affiliates in the system. Total suspected gang activity, as reflected in NCSHP GangNET, is 8,295.

Attempting to compare the number of gang members in previous reports with this year's reported levels of gang membership is problematic. As the previous version of GangNET gained popularity, a great number of gang investigators sought to have their information on gang members entered into the system to share and view information from other jurisdictions. This meant that the system was rapidly populated. As a result, each year a number of validated gang members from past years are purged from the system as new gang members are being entered.
There has been no tracking of the volume of validated gang members expunged due to five years of inactivity in the system; thus it is difficult to determine how large the rise in validated gang membership is in any given year.

Figure 3, depicts the number of validated gang members since 2010. A large disparity shows in the number of validated gang members in the system over several years. Since GangNET was not developed to generate aggregate reports on numbers of gangs or gang members, this data is the product of programming code applied to the data to produce counts. The spike in 2013 was likely due to programming language that included both validated gang members and suspected gang members in the gang member category, while the decline in 2015 was due to the automated system wide purge of GangNET.

Figure 3
Gang Involvement

Note: 2017 data indicates an increase in membership, however this is most likely due to the increase is system use verses a true increase in activity. The number of subjects entered may also be outpacing system purges. The largest decrease occurred in 2014 when the NCSHP took control of the

system and manually purged all records that did not comply with 28CFR part 23, requiring a purge after 5 years of inactivity.

Juvenile Gang membership:

In the past, jurisdictions were reluctant to enter juvenile gang members and information on individuals 15 years of age and younger. The ability to determine the level of juvenile involvement in gangs relies on data entered in the North Carolina Juvenile Online Information Network (NC-JOIN) or external information from gang investigators, gang prevention and intervention program staff. This report has little ability to provide a clear picture of juvenile gang involvement.

Since the system is governed by 28 CFR part 23 and is a "right to know and need to know" database, GangNET would serve as an effective tool for information on gang involved juveniles. This deficit should be overcome since all new certified users have been trained on the method for entering subjects less than 16 years of age.

Figure 4 Age

Unknown Age, 40

15 & Younger, 26

16-17, 152

18-25, 2,973

26-35, 3,172

36 & Over, 730

- ■ 15 & Younger ■ 16-17 ■ 18-25
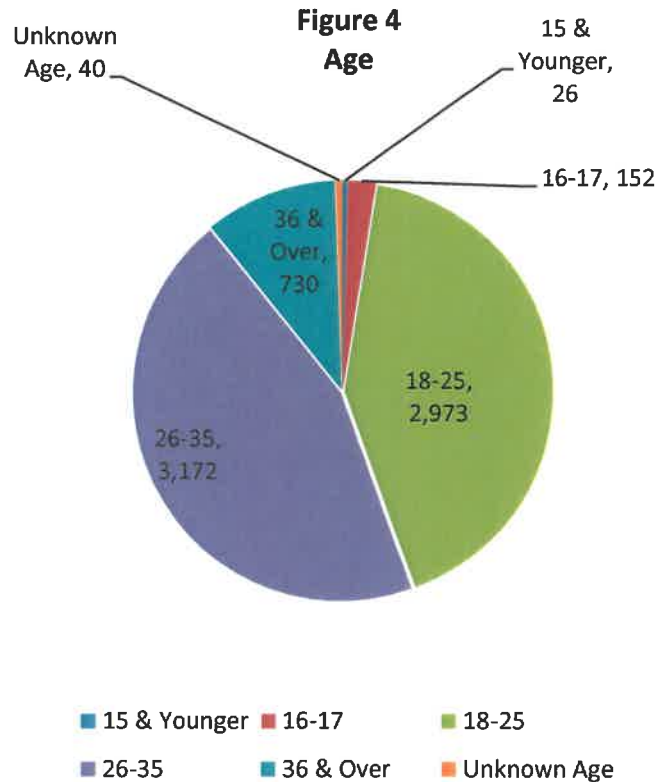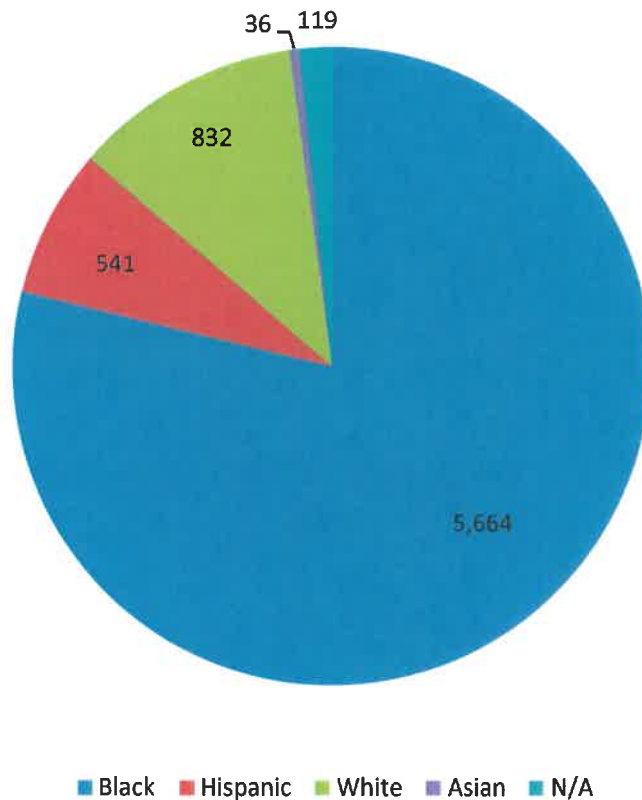- ■ 26-35 ■ 36 & Over ■ Unknown Age

Figure 4 illustrates that the age group of 18 to 25 year olds make up 41 percent of the validated gang members in the system. That same age grouping made up 55 percent of the validated gang members in the February 2016 report. The age group of 26 to 35 years has increased from 33 percent in the February 2016 report to 44 percent in this year's data. This indicates that the reported gang data shows a trend towards the population getting older and better established. The large increase in the 36 and over category from 294 in 2016 to 730 in 2017 is most likely due to an increase of Outlaw Motorcycle Gang investigations whose membership tends to be older than average street gangs.

However, it is too early to determine what long term effects are occurring in North Carolina, since the numbers have varied so greatly from one year to the next. Furthermore, we continue to expect the juvenile entries to rise due to continued training from the NCSHP GangNet staff, and the state's efforts to raise the age. The only issue this will create for GangNet is that those subjects who are re-classified as "juvenile" will have their subject photo's removed from the record to remain complaint with current regulations.

Figure 5

Race/Ethnicity

Pie chart showing: 36, 119, 832, 541, 5,664

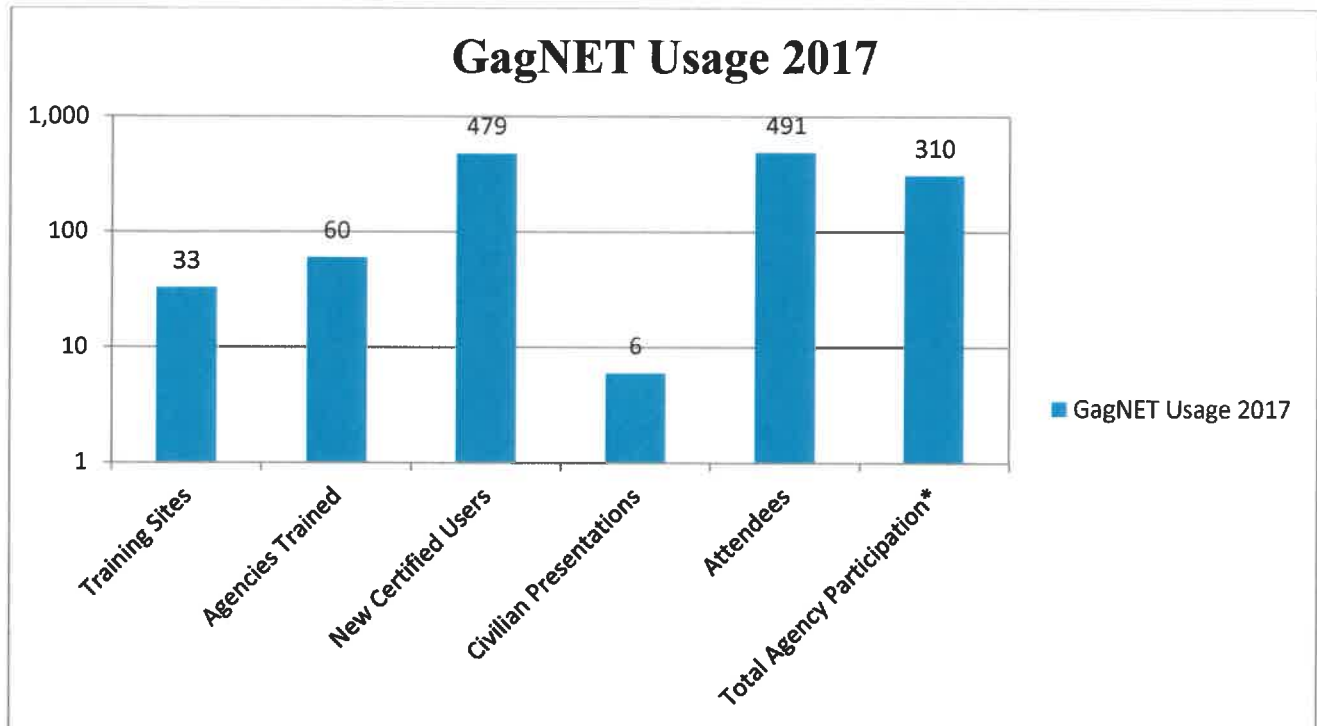■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Asian ■ N/A

Gang Member Race and Ethnicity:

The demographic breakdown of race and ethnicity provides some interesting data. There continues to be a disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic involvement as validated gang members. There are 5,664 Black gang members, 541 Hispanic gang members, 832 White gang members, 36 Asian gang members and 119 whose race and/or ethnicity are unknown. This is illustrated in Figure 5, above.

This disproportionate representation continues and may be the result of socioeconomic variables unique to these communities. The proportions still remain consistent in comparison to previous reports. The data emphasizes the need for gang prevention, intervention and suppression programs targeted to the needs of these at-risk populations.

Additional System Information:

GagNET Usage 2017

In 2017, GangNet saw a significant amount of law enforcement personnel from across the state requesting training. Community presentations were significant as well, since they provide citizens with the information necessary to combat activity in their communities. These presentations consist of basic gang awareness along with information on establishing intervention, prevention and diversion programs to augment law enforcement efforts.

There currently exits 467 Law Enforcement agencies within the State of North Carolina which include 19 State, 100 County, 283 Local, and 56 College – University and 34 Hospital or other. 320 local agencies have less than 25 officers with County Sheriffs at 19. It is also important to note that 113 agencies have less than 8 sworn personnel. We have found that agency size correlates to its ability or willingness to participate in GangNet for a variety of economic or political reasons.

Summary:

With the continued efforts of the GangNet staff to train law enforcement officers throughout the state and the networking capabilities of troopers, GangNet has achieved many goals. Training was conducted for 60 agencies spanning from the mountains to the outer banks. Agencies have also begun to conduct their own in-service training to certify staff in view only access to the system. This is by design of Highway Patrol training staff that utilize train the trainer classes to encourage agencies to conduct training within their own departments. This further expands the agencies capabilities by certifying larger number of users who may not have been able to attend standard offsite certification classes held by the NCSHP.

Tracking and suppressing gangs and their members, is but only one tool in dealing with the issue of gangs in North Carolina. Consistent and effective education, prevention, intervention and diversion programming must be created, supported and sustained. It is important to note that many successful gang prevention, and intervention programs have existed in many North Carolina communities over the past decade. However, many these programs are no longer in operation. There must be a united and statewide approach to effectively educating and intervening with the gangs and their members.

The following recommendations were made in collaboration with Michelle Guarino, North Carolina Gang Investigators Association Director of Program Development. These recommendations are designed to effectively address the growing gang issue in North Carolina, and provide much needed education, awareness and programming. The goals from 2016 were carried over to 2017 as well, since a vast majority of them have yet to be achieved. The same will hold true for 2018.

Recommendation 1 – Statewide Approach
  ➢ Identify a Gang Resource Coordinator (GRC) at the county or regional level, if needed, to engage in placement of individuals within effective intervention programs. The GRC will engage in a holistic approach to intervention advocating for social, natural and financial support for their designated community. The GRC program will be a North Carolina program with a Director and Regional Managers: Western, Eastern and Piedmont. A statewide approach will ensure consistency across systems and counties, as well as, accountability to a larger group for problem solving, advocacy and accountability.
  ➢ Implement a comprehensive intervention program at the neighborhood and/or community level, in each county or region, that emphasizes involvement of at risk and/or gang involved individuals and their families. This program should focus on individualized needs and/or interests including academic, mental health, therapeutic, vocational, artistic and recreational options.
  ➢ Establish a strategic planning and evaluation process for intervention programming in order to ensure effective programming, measurable outcomes, proper evaluation of goals and objectives. Ensure those communities that receive grant funding and create successful programs, will be sustained by their municipality, county or organization.
  ➢ Use existing successful programming templates to replicate in North Carolina communities, or as a starting point.

Recommendation 2 – Communities
> ➤ Provide training to community citizens, stakeholders, parents, etc. through Gang Free NC. Training must include Gang awareness, Identification, Psychology, Effective Communication and Prevention/Intervention Strategies.
> ➤ All North Carolina counties conduct a gang assessment for their community. An assessment should be completed initially and every 5 years afterwards.
> ➤ A community inventory should be completed to identify gaps and opportunities in each community. This assessment, combined with the gang assessment, gives a thorough and detailed look at the existing problem, level of the problem and means to intervene.

Recommendation 3 – Schools
> ➤ Provide gang awareness and intervention education to the employees of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, local school staff to include; teachers, counselors and administrators, as well as the school board for all North Carolina schools. Develop a train the trainer program in partnership with North Carolina Gang Investigators Association and Gang Free NC to be the conduit of information back to each of the school systems in North Carolina.
> ➤ Adopt and implement a state-wide school policy that addresses gang behaviors displayed within the school and the appropriate course of action thereafter, to ensure consistent prevention, intervention, diversion and suppression efforts within the North Carolina school system as a whole.
> ➤ Implement and support alternatives to high school education that will focus on technical skills and support and enhance current effective employment programs.

Recommendation 4 – Suppression
> ➤ The addition of a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney (SAUSA) in each prosecutorial district in which a need is present for the purpose of handling gang-related violent crime cases from infancy to resolution. Furthermore, the SAUSA would serve as a liaison to the U.S. Attorney's office for the purpose of federal prosecution.

APPENDIX:

The North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET staff consists of database administrators that run data reports and audit the use of the system and purge records when necessary; and, trainers who teach the user certification classes. These staff, while understanding the information contained within NCSHP GangNET, are not trained in providing statewide social and policy analysis of the data. For this reason, the GangNET Fact Sheet on the following pages will be updated every six months to show the changes in the data and use of the NCSHP GangNET Project. For contextual purposes, it is suggested that any social or policy analysis of the NCSHP GangNET data rely heavily on this publication and the historical Gang and GangNET reports published by the Governor's Crime Commission.

FACT SHEET
North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET

Participation in NCSHP GangNET

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	12/2016	12/2017
NC Agencies	230	254	382	N/A	255	276	310
WB HIDTA[1]	NA	114	124	N/A	117	117	97
NC Certified Users	NA	4,982	6,490	N/A	2,845	3,200	3,507
NC Counties	59	66	100	N/A	100	100	100
Interstate [2]	NA	3	3	N/A	3	3	3

[1]Agencies sharing view-only information with NC GangNET via the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA.
[2]Interstate Compacts: NC GangNET is currently sharing two-way view-only access with Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC.
*For reference, the NC GangNET Project is providing information from the 2013 Governor's Crime Commission "Gangs In North Carolina" report. NA indicates data was not provided in the GCC report.

Gang, Members, Associates, Monikers, Vehicles, Phone Numbers & Addresses

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	12/2016	12/2017
Gangs	982	1,041	1095	N/A	1,128	1,143	1,231
Gang Members	10,651	11,737	7902	N/A	4,952	4,812	7,231
Gang Associates	2,681	3,229	1561	N/A	901	923	1,064
Gang Monikers[1]	NA	10,765	5657	N/A	3,503	3,319	3,120
Vehicles[2]	NA	2,252	1504	N/A	1,226	1,145	924
Phone Numbers[2]	NA	17,604	11,356	N/A	6,904	5,857	3,602
Addresses[2]	NA	26,337	16,855	N/A	13,974	13,177	11,805
WB HIDTA[3]	NA	19,256	18,186	N/A	15,383	11,634	7,373

[1]Monikers refers to nicknames or street names and not the legal names of gang members.
[2]Vehicles, Phone Numbers and Addresses that are associated with gang members. There can be multiple entries for each subject.
[3]Gang members shared with NC GangNET via the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA
*For reference, the NC GangNET Project is providing information from the 2013 Governor's Crime Commission "Gangs In North Carolina" report. NA indicates data was not provided in the GCC report.

Gang Member Age Groupings

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	12/2016	12/2017
15 and younger[1]	79	17	27	N/A	25	30	26
Ages 16 and 17[2]	337	263	202	N/A	162	153	152
Ages 18 to 25	6,681	6,317	5833	N/A	2,770	2,514	2,973
Ages 26 to 35	3,048	4,111	1417	N/A	1,661	1,764	3,172
36 and older	522	796	423	N/A	294	310	730
Unknown	NA	93	0	N/A	48	41	37

[1]North Carolina statute provides that individuals 15 years and younger are juveniles.
[2]While other states consider 16 and 17 year olds to be juveniles, this age grouping added with juveniles provides for comparison to other states.
*For reference, the NC GangNET Project is providing information from the 2013 Governor's Crime Commission "Gangs In North Carolina" report. NA indicates data was not provided in the GCC report.

Gang Member Race and Ethnicity

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	12/2016	12/2017
Black	7,471	9,596	5,586	N/A	3,823	3,755	5,664
White	831	1,594	558	N/A	381	365	832
Asian	121	167	46	N/A	36	36	36
Hispanic	2,113	3,562	860	N/A	679	621	541
Other	131	47	852	N/A	33	33	119

*For reference, the NC GangNET Project is providing information from the 2013 Governor's Crime Commission "Gangs In North Carolina" report. NA indicates data was not provided in the GCC report.

Gang Member Gender

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	12/2016	12/2017
Male	10,164	11,338	7750	N/A	4802	4,662	7,058
Female	490	388	152	N/A	150	157	170

*For reference, the NC GangNET Project is providing information from the 2013 Governor's Crime Commission "Gangs In North Carolina" report. NA indicates data was not provided in the GCC report.