MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairs of House Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety
                  Chairs of Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety
                  Chairs of Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Frank L. Perry, Secretary
                  Gregory K. Baker, Commissioner

SUBJECT: Annual Gang Report

DATE: March 17, 2015

Pursuant of General Statute 143B-110 (b), The Governor's Crime Commission shall review the level of gang activity throughout the State and assess the progress and accomplishments of the State, and of local governments, in preventing the proliferation of gangs and addressing the needs of juveniles who have been identified as being associated with gang activity.

NC GangNet was administratively transferred from Governor's Crime Commission to the NC State Highway Patrol in 2014, to allow this program to be managed by a certified law enforcement agency. This transfer has led to rapid development and expansion of the functionality of this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information and for your support of the safety of North Carolina. If there are any questions regarding this report, please contact the NC DPS Governmental Affairs office at 919-733-2126.

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North Carolina Department of Public Safety

North Carolina State Highway Patrol
North Carolina GangNET Project

Gangs In North Carolina

An Analysis and Update of NCSHP GangNET Data

March, 2015

North Carolina State Highway Patrol

Colonel William J. Grey

March, 2015

Forward:

The 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 submit an annual update to the General Assembly on the statewide levels of gangs, gang membership and gang associates in the North Carolina

North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNet (NCSHP 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 the 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. By utilizing the NCSHP Field Liaison Officer (FLO) program the capabilities of the project has expanded exponentially. Having a trooper trained 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 how to utilize the system, properly vet the information being entered into the system and train 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.

NCSHP GangNET is a means for law enforcement officers and agencies to share non discoverable and non-evidentiary information on validated gang members and affiliates. 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 data to offer a historical overview. An NCSHP Gang Fact Sheet offering gang data only, will be provided as Appendix 1 in this report. The intention is to allow the NCSHP GangNET project staff to provide these Fact Sheets once a year or upon request.

Method of Data Collection:

NCSHP GangNET is a web based database house on a secure server and managed by the North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET Project team. 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 up to full system administrative rights which are those of the NCSHP GangNET Project team. Data for this report and future Fact Sheets are derived exclusively from the NCSHP GangNET data.
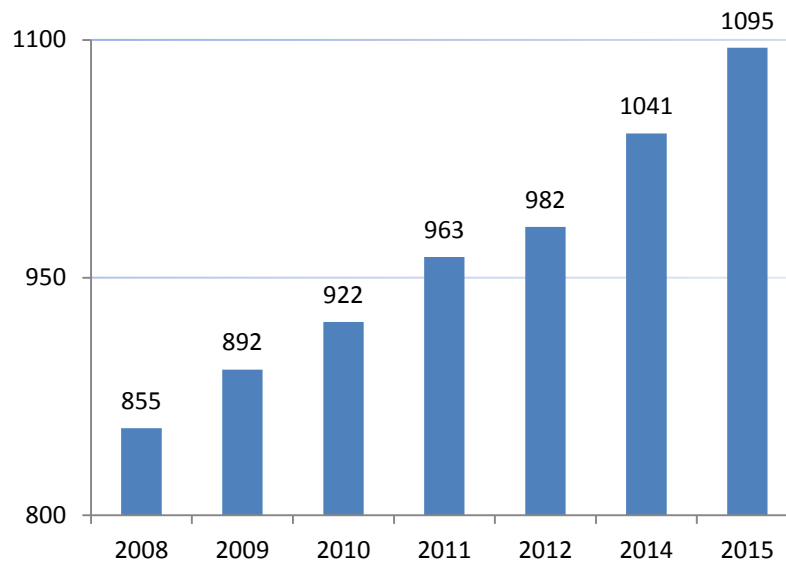
NCSHP GangNET data helps to produce a snapshot of gang activity in the state. One of the major goals for the project in 2014 was to create an environment of 100 percent participation and continue to facilitate training in an effort to bring new agencies on board. This goal was accomplished in December of 2014 upon completion of certification training for 1,394 troopers across the state with a minimum of one representative from each of the 100 counties. In addition to GangNet certification classes NCSHP GangNet staff conducted gang awareness training for 1,507 citizens at various forums to include gang conferences and community requests. The success of the project continues in 2015 as well. GangNet staff have already completed training for 11 law enforcement agencies and conducted gang awareness training for 60 citizens in eastern North Carolina. There are also an additional 9 agencies in queue to receive their training which will create approximately 225 new certified user accounts by June, 2015.

There were two major improvements to NCSHP GangNET since the project was taken on by the Highway Patrol in 2014. The first was a system wide audit of GangNET conducted to identify all subjects with expired records. Once the audit was complete each agency with expired records was contacted and provided a list of subjects to be purged. This afforded them the opportunity to update the subject in an effort to preserve the data vs. losing it permanently. Once each agency determined which subjects were in fact still active they then provided a list of gang members they wished to be purged. NCSHP GangNET staff then manually purged all expired records from the system. The second was the decision to activate the auto purge function of GangNET. Since all subject records were up to date this will ensure that all future data is accurate and complies with federal regulation 28 CFR part 23 which governs all criminal intelligence data bases. It states any subject in a criminal intelligence data base must be purged after 5 years in inactivity.
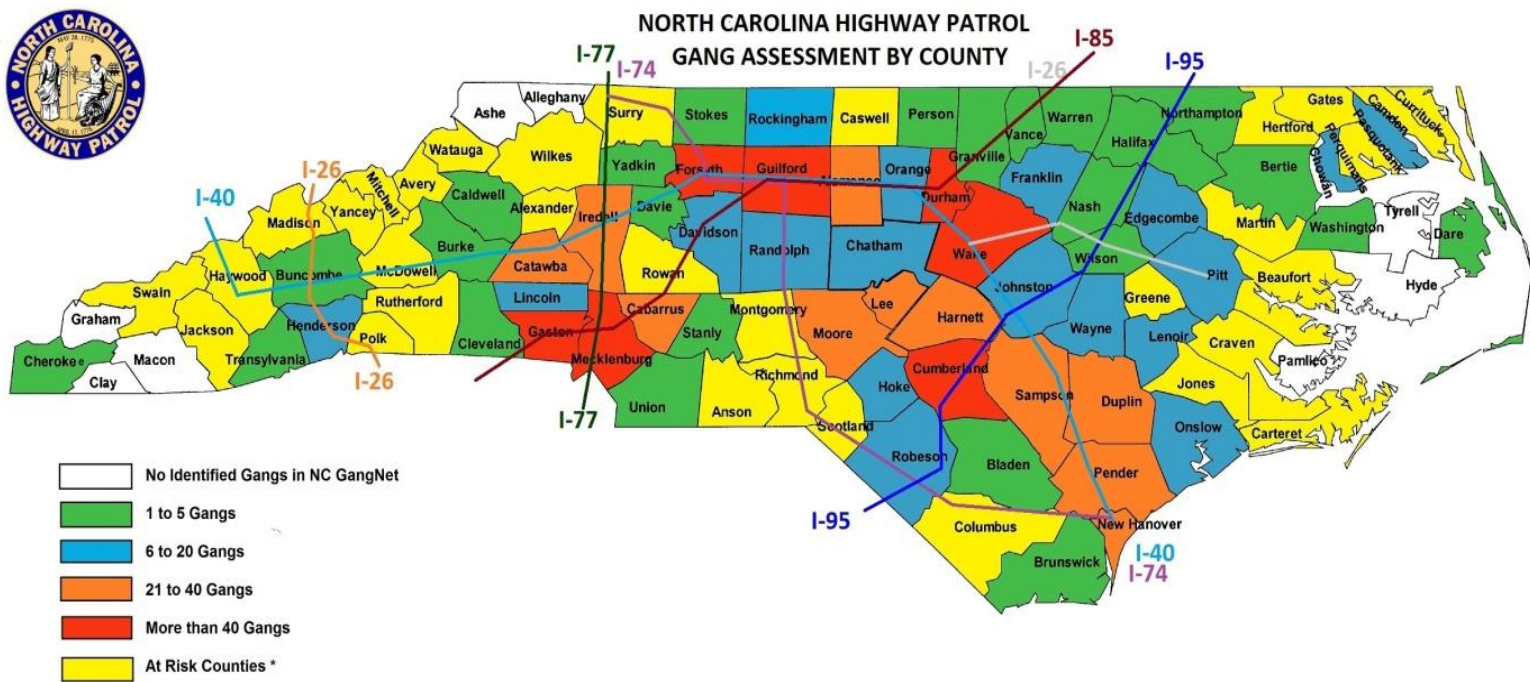
Gangs:

Information retrieved from 2015 NCSHP GangNET data on February 10, 2015 reveals 1,095 gangs reported in 100 counties across the state.

Figure 1
Gangs in NC
Feb 2015 Data

While the data appears to indicate a continual growth in the number of gangs in North Carolina, the greater likelihood is that with more agencies being trained and entering data into the system, NCSHP GangNET is reflecting the numbers that are associated with the new system participants. While it is likely a combination of both, some growth in gang membership in existing participant jurisdictions along with the newly added agencies, the data does not offer statically significant inference that there is any large trend in gang membership. The NCSHP GangNET system's strength is in the number of agencies participating. There are currently 382 law enforcement agencies participating in the system.

Figure 2

NORTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY PATROL
GANG ASSESSMENT BY COUNTY

Legend:
- No Identified Gangs in NC GangNet
- 1 to 5 Gangs
- 6 to 20 Gangs
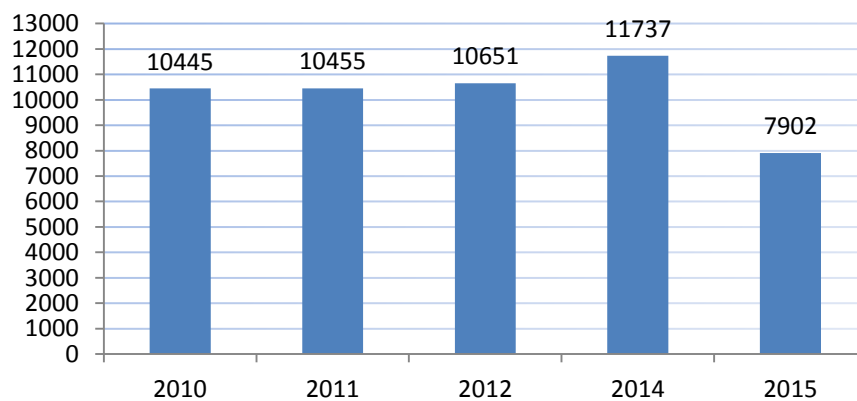- 21 to 40 Gangs
- More than 40 Gangs
- At Risk Counties *

* At Risk Counties are those counties with no identified gangs, but are adjacent to counties with identified gangs, on an interstate corridor, or that have a significant metropolitan population.

There were no changes to the gang assessment map since the reported data still fell within the key parameters established in 2014.

Some data inconsistencies exist due to errors in entry such as a single name with multiple birthdates and 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 the NCSHP GangNET system is 7,902 as shown in Figure 3. Data indicates 7,750 male and 152 female gang members. There are an additional 1,561 non-validated suspected gang members or affiliates in the system. Total suspected gang activity, as reflected in NCSHP GangNET, is 9,463.

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, these data are the product of programming code applied to the data to produce counts. The spike in 2014 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 system wide purge by NCSHP GangNET staff.

Figure 3
Gang Involvement

Note: 2015 data indicates the North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET Project's effort to purge all expired records from the system and not a true decrease in gang activity.

Juvenile Gang membership:

In the past, jurisdictions were reluctant to enter juvenile gang members 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 anecdotal 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 NCSHP 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

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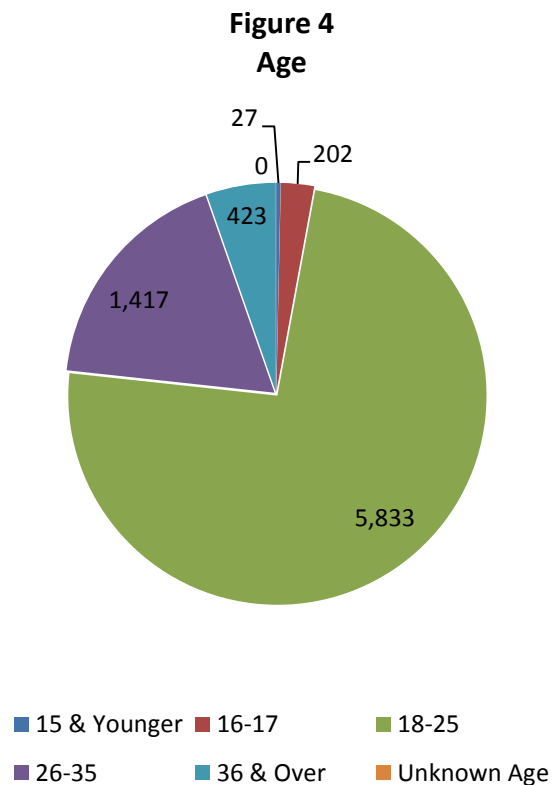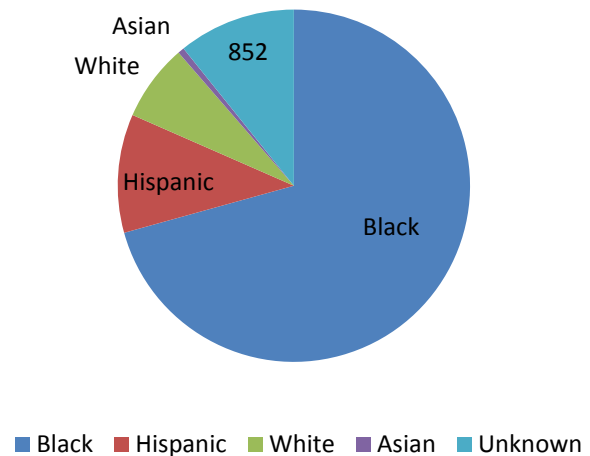- 26-35
- 36 & Over
- Unknown Age

Figure 4 illustrates that the age group of 18 to 25 year olds make up 73 percent of the validated gang members in the system. That same age grouping made up 66 percent of the validated gang members in the May 2014 NCSHP report. The age group of 26 to 35 years has fallen from 52 percent in the May 2014 report to 17 percent in this year's data. This data was again affected by the system wide purge with the largest portion of purged members in this age band. Additionally there has been a small increase in juvenile entries due to new training standards. We further expect the juvenile entries to rise with continued training from the NCSHP GangNet staff.

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 5,586 Black gang members, 860 Hispanic gang members, 558 White gang members, 46 Asian gang members and 852 whose race and/or ethnicity are unknown. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

This disproportionate representation may be due to socioeconomic variables unique to these communities. The data emphasizes the need for gang prevention, intervention and suppression programs targeted to the needs of these at-risk populations.

Figure 5
Race/Ethnicity

Legend: Black Hispanic White Asian Unknown

Additional Gang Intelligence:

The NCSHP GangNET Project has now added the capability for broader use for law enforcement officers certified in its use. A bridge to the GangNET data of the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (W/B HIDTA), a specialized law enforcement task force, allows two-way sharing of gang member intelligence information between North Carolina and Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. The states of South Carolina, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, and Florida are currently on this system and the necessary agreements and database bridges will be developed to allow greater sharing capabilities. Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are also utilizing the HIDTA connection. The ultimate goal would be to have all jurisdictions gang intelligence systems tied in with one another. With the mobility of gang members across county and state boundaries, the intelligence information must be equally mobile to provide for community and officer safety. Currently, NCSHP GangNET is able to view an additional 18,186 gang member's information via the Washing/Baltimore HIDTA connection.

Another connection is through the Criminal Justice Law Enforcement Automated Data Services (CJ Leads) web-based application.   CJ Leads is an offender based application developed to meet two objectives, to provide a comprehensive view of an offender's North Carolina criminal information and to allow users to develop a watch list of persons of interest. CJ Leads provides

a hyperlink to NCSHP GangNET so certified GangNET officers can rapidly check to determine if the suspect has any documented gang activity.

These two systems are providing officers with information that is useful to determine gang affiliation and activities of individuals from other jurisdictions which allows officers to make informed judgments when interacting with the subject.

Summary:

With the NCSHP GangNET Project finding a permanent home within the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the training schedule has become more robust than in previous years. In 2014, Field Liaison Officers (FLOs) from every Troop have been trained and certified in the use of the GangNET system. This will allow Troopers to assist smaller law enforcement agencies in entering their gang intelligence data into the system. With this assistance, GangNET coverage in all 100 counties of North Carolina has become a reality. The number of trained and certified users and agencies is growing. It is conceivable that the vast majority of known gang members within the state could soon have information about their activities housed in NC GangNET. This will be assisted by the creation of a new gang validation form (HP-325) which is utilized by the patrol. It is also distributed to every trainee for use in their departments as well. Since the form mirrors the validation criteria in GangNET it gives agencies a head start in creating policies for its utilization.

Demographic data, such as those offered in this report, are important in providing a picture of where and at whom to direct funding if and when it becomes available. It would be wise to continue efforts to deter and prevent young people under age 18 from joining gangs. The most efficient method of accomplishing this would be to provide gang prevention programs in schools, identify the youth who are most at-risk for joining gangs and focus more intensive prevention programs toward them. More programs aimed at intervention and suppression should be directed at the current gang members that are age 18 and over. Innovative programs and the evidence-based programs should be implemented. Continued suppression via standard law enforcement and prosecutorial use of existing laws to intervene and suppress criminal activities are also advised.

As was noted in the 2014 report, additional efforts should concentrate on using the data provided to focus additional efforts on the communities most affected by gang involvement. In North Carolina, data continues to indicate that a gang member is most likely to be a black male under the age of 30 who resides in a more populous county in close proximity to a major highway. There are some pockets of Asian gang membership in the Charlotte area; it would be logical to develop programs that focus on the multiple ethnic populations with substantial localized gang activity. There are a significant number of Hispanic gang members across the state. The most difficult problem confronting the development of programs for this population is that the term 'Hispanic' represents a large, culturally diverse group. The single largest area of concern would be to identify the causes of the disproportionate involvement of young black

men in gangs. Understanding the complexities that have created this social phenomenon would likely provide the information necessary to develop meaningful programs for this community. Through our analysis via GangNET data and by maintaining an ongoing relationship with both law enforcement and civilian partners we hope to assist in identifying those areas most at risk for gang activity. This will allow local governments to utilize existing resources or apply for appropriate funding to fill the identified gaps in service.

 APPENDIX:

The North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET Project 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
The North Carolina State Highway Patrol GangNET Project

Participation in NCSHP GangNET

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	06/2016	12/2016
NC Agencies	230	254	382				
WB HIDTA[1]	NA	114	124				
NC Certified Users	NA	4,982	6490				
NC Counties	59	66	100				
Interstate [2]	NA	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 and Addresses

	2013 *	05/2014	12/2014	06/2015	12/2015	06/2016	12/2016
Gangs	982	1,041	1095				
Gang Members	10,651	11,737	7902				
Gang Associates	2,681	3,229	1561				
Gang Monikers[1]	NA	10,765	5657				
Vehicles[2]	NA	2,252	1504				
Phone Numbers[2]	NA	17,604	11,356				
Addresses[2]	NA	26,337	16,855				
WB HIDTA[3]	NA	19,256	18,186				

[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	06/2016	12/2016
15 and younger[1]	79	17	27				
Ages 16 and 17[2]	337	263	202				
Ages 18 to 25	6,681	6,317	5833				
Ages 26 to 35	3,048	4,111	1417				
36 and older	522	796	423				
Unknown	NA	93	0				

[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	06/2016	12/2016
Black	7,471	9,596	5,586				
White	831	1,594	558				
Asian	121	167	46				
Hispanic	2,113	3,562	860				
Other	131	47	852				

*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	06/2016	12/2016
Male	10,164	11,338	7750				
Female	490	388	152				

*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.