

# **A COMMUNITY VOICE**



## **INTERIM REPORT**

**A Survey of Ferguson Stakeholders  
and  
A Vision of Community Policing**

## Highlights

The Ferguson Collaborative (formerly the DOJ Working Group) undertook our survey of Ferguson residents and stakeholders from a desire to raise up the voice of those directly affected by policing. It is from those voices, we believe, that the most effective solutions will be found.

Our results were striking in five areas. We found:

- **A Strong Desire for Change**  
84% of respondents wanted the Ferguson Police disbanded, rebuilt or reformed.
- **A Strong Desire to Maintain an Independent Ferguson PD**  
78% of respondents wanted to keep policing of Ferguson separate from the county or other cities.
- **Significant Racial Disparities in Experiences with the Ferguson PD**  
Black people experiences tend toward the negative while White people' are more likely to characterize their interactions with police as "good" or "excellent." White people are 6 times more likely than Black people to rate their experience "excellent."
- **A Strong Desire for Elected Agencies to Represent Community Voices**  
When asked what form citizen input should take, respondents consistently and overwhelmingly wanted elected rather than appointed bodies to represent them.
- **A Strong Desire for Reforms that Stop Crime, Involve the Community in Solutions and End Racial Profiling**  
When it comes to specific reforms, our respondents want quick police responses, community engagement, and training that will address racial disparities.

The release of our Interim Report details just what our community has to say about policing. With these results in mind, and feedback from our community forum, we plan in the final version of this report to add a vision of what policing should be.<sup>1</sup> We hope the survey and that vision can serve as guideposts for the Department of Justice as it implements the community mandate for change.

## What is this project?

The Ferguson Collaborative is a group made of several organizations,<sup>2</sup> Ferguson residents and community stakeholders. We came together to address the lack of input from the community's most vulnerable citizens in the DOJ process. As social justice organizers and concerned citizens we saw the need to ensure that all voices of the community, especially stakeholders, were being heard. Our mission was to act as a liaison between the citizens and stakeholders of

Ferguson and the DOJ. We began this project by discussing the most important issues that we felt the community needed to speak on. It was important to us to hear from citizens on their interactions with the police, what should be done with the Ferguson Police Department, what community input with the police should include and their top priorities for the department.

We also looked at some of the most successful models of consent decrees around the country and met with a lawyer hired by Cincinnati citizens to negotiate for them with the DOJ. We took examples from the Department of Justice decrees we studied, as well as things we heard on the street and developed a survey. The survey itself is contained in Appendix 1. The survey was dispersed via internet, flyers and door knocking. We also took advantage of the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in Ferguson. We were able to gather almost 400 surveys<sup>3</sup> and solicited help from a data analyst to understand the results. Detailed demographic data is contained in Appendix 2. Our next step is to hold a town hall meeting Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3-5 p.m. at Wellspring Church (33 S Florissant Rd, 63135) to share the survey results and to further amplify the community's authentic voice concerning how it wants to police itself.

## Why this project?

Despite the report released by the Department of Justice in March that identified the disproportionate and brutal policing of Black people in Ferguson, the city of Ferguson continues to abuse and undermine its Black residents. The Department of Justice and the City of Ferguson are working on an agreement regarding the next steps for the police department responsible for the killing of Michael Brown, Jr. in August of 2014. We believe this negotiation should be three-sided, with community members, especially those most affected by the problem, being the other voice at the table.

During our time on this project the DOJ has been willing to listen to many voices and attended some town hall events, but told us that they do not actively conduct community events to solicit opinions. While they have talked extensively with grassroots organizations, we believe that a crucial element of community input has been missing.

At the same time, the City of Ferguson has failed to collect meaningful input from the community and take action. Townhalls have not addressed the desires of the community, and have not had sufficient outreach efforts, resulting in minimal representation of black working class residents--the majority of the city's population. City officials have held no community dialogues to discuss citizens' experiences with police, or what citizens would like in their policing. They have not conducted any surveys of citizens on what is or isn't working in policing. They have failed to provide an adequate vehicle for citizens to engage in dialogue with members of City Council, City government and the police force on policing issues.

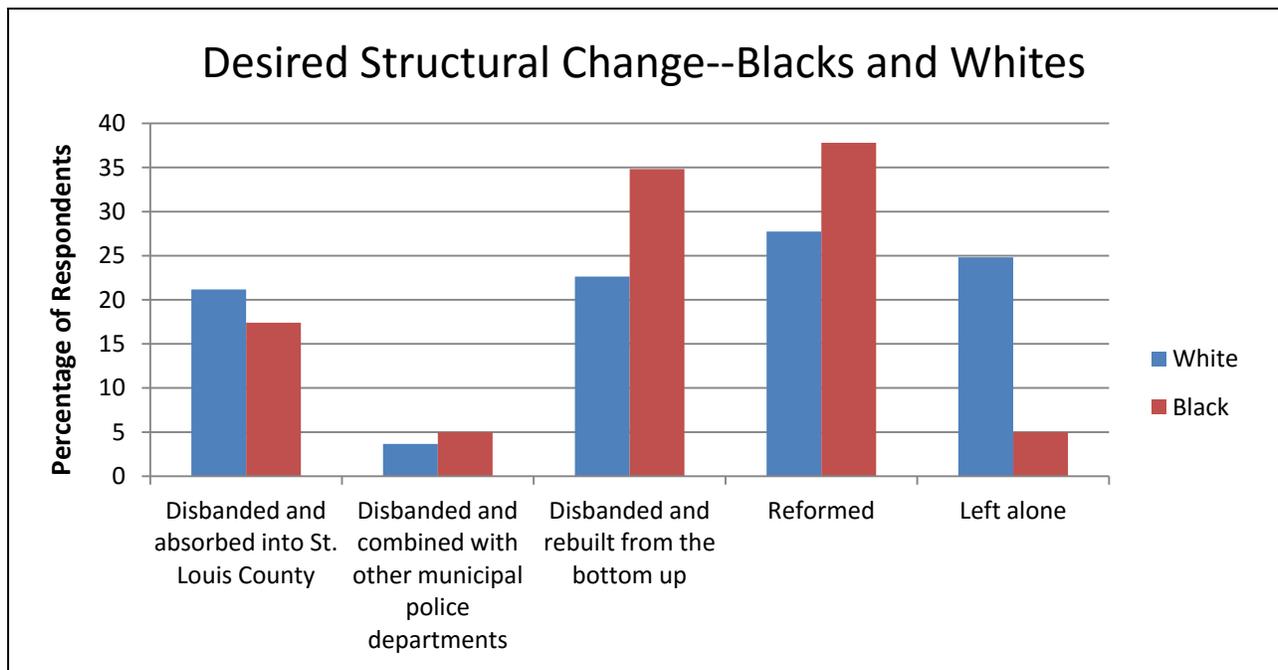
The officials of the City of Ferguson alone cannot imagine nor create a solution to the problem of racist policing. Ferguson and its varying departments and employees are the drivers of the crisis we find ourselves in; they made their stance clear when they stood idly by while the police

continued to abuse citizens and while the City government used the police force to generate revenue off the backs of our black citizens. This is clearly documented in the DOJ's Ferguson report. Nor can the DOJ be most effective by imposing, from outside, a template of "best practices" that will not be overseen by a community that has felt engaged with the process from early on. Black working class people are integral to ensuring that this consent decree is operational, community-based, and solution-oriented. Neglecting to engage those most affected by the city's racist profit-oriented policing, the same population that will be most affected by the decisions established in the agreement, will only result in futile reforms that don't comprehensively resolve the issue at hand.

## Findings

### ➤ A Strong Desire for Change

The survey shows across race lines that stakeholders want a major overhaul of the Ferguson Police Department. When asked whether structural changes were needed, a full 84% responded that the department needs to be reformed, rebuilt from scratch, or disbanded. Only 16% feel the Department should be left alone. Contrary to many suggestions for reform, however, few respondents want to see the Ferguson PD consolidated with surrounding municipal police. Answers to the question of structural reform do vary somewhat along racial and gender lines, with Black people and women<sup>4</sup> tending to favor more sweeping changes:



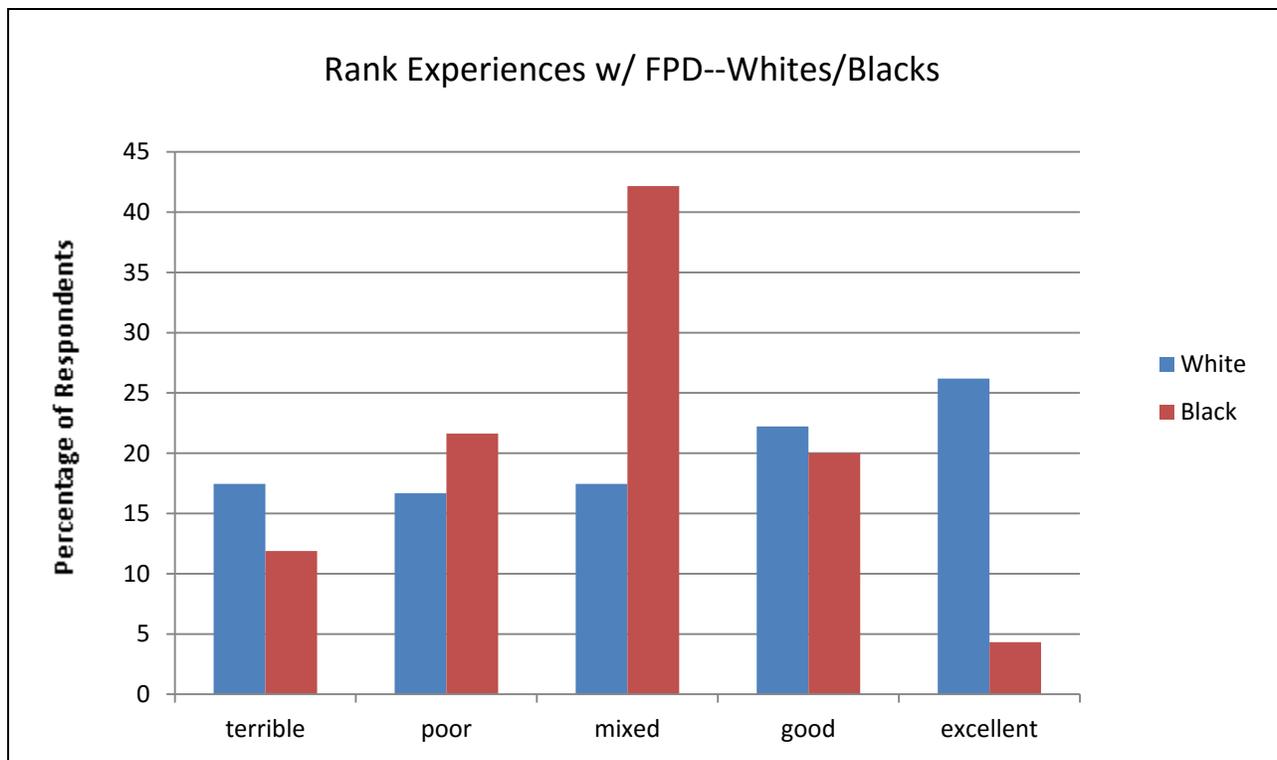
However, racial disparities are huge when it comes to those who are satisfied with the Ferguson PD. White people are 5 times more likely than Black people to say that the Department should be “left alone.”

➤ **A Strong Desire to Maintain an Independent Ferguson PD**

It is important to note, however, that the same graph shows a full 78% want to maintain an independent police department in Ferguson, with only 22% wanting to see it absorbed into St. Louis County or another municipal police force. And among residents of Ferguson, the desire to keep their own police department rises to 86%<sup>5</sup>. Still, 72% of that group want a rebuilt or reformed department, indicating a strong desire for change even among residents.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the differences in attitude between residents and non-residents seems to be largely a difference among White people (possibly white Ferguson residents vs. non-resident white activists);<sup>7</sup> black non-residents show some tendency to want more major reforms, but in general Black people have similar attitudes regardless of residency.<sup>8</sup>

➤ **Significant Racial Disparities in Experiences with the Ferguson PD**

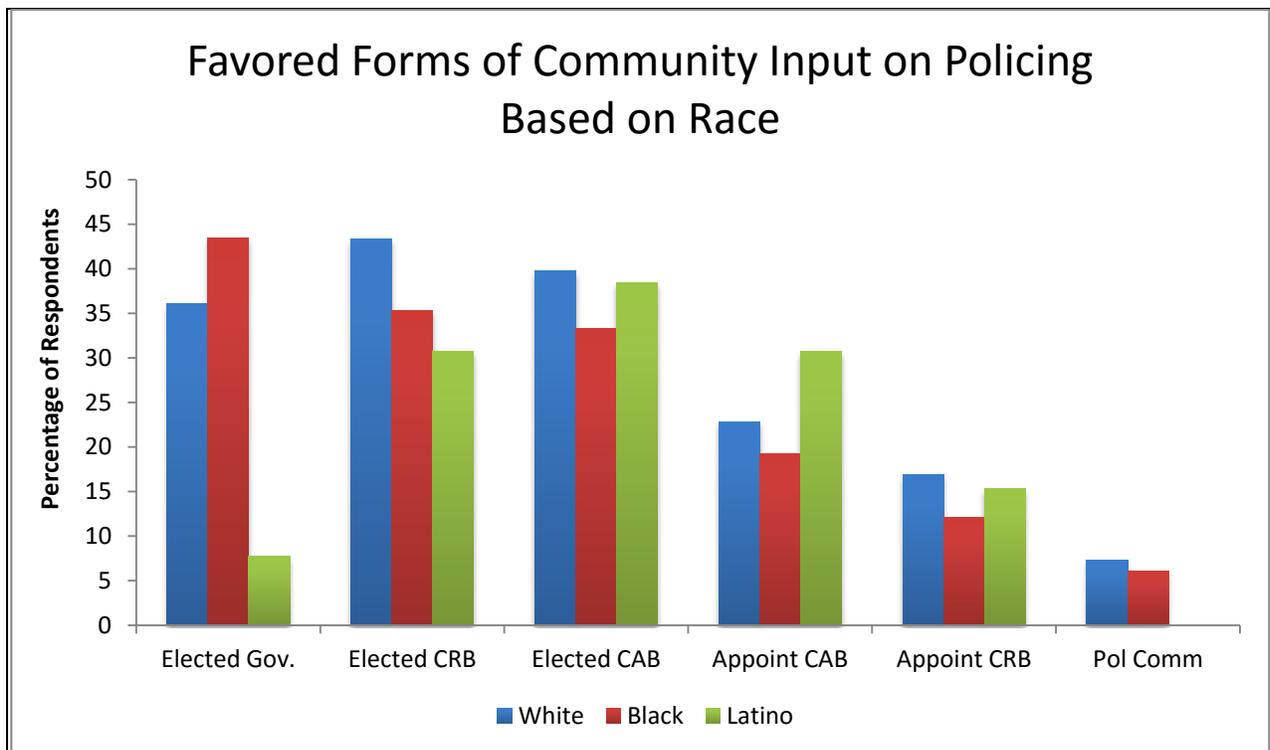
Not surprisingly, Black people also respond more often that their experiences with the Ferguson PD were “terrible,” “poor” or “mixed.” White response tends more toward “good” or “excellent”:



White people are 6 times as likely to rate their experience “excellent.” And it is also true that experience is the major predictor of desires regarding structural change; those with worse experiences are more desirous of disbanding or majorly rebuilding the Department.<sup>9</sup>

➤ **A Strong Desire for Elected Agencies to Represent Community Voices**

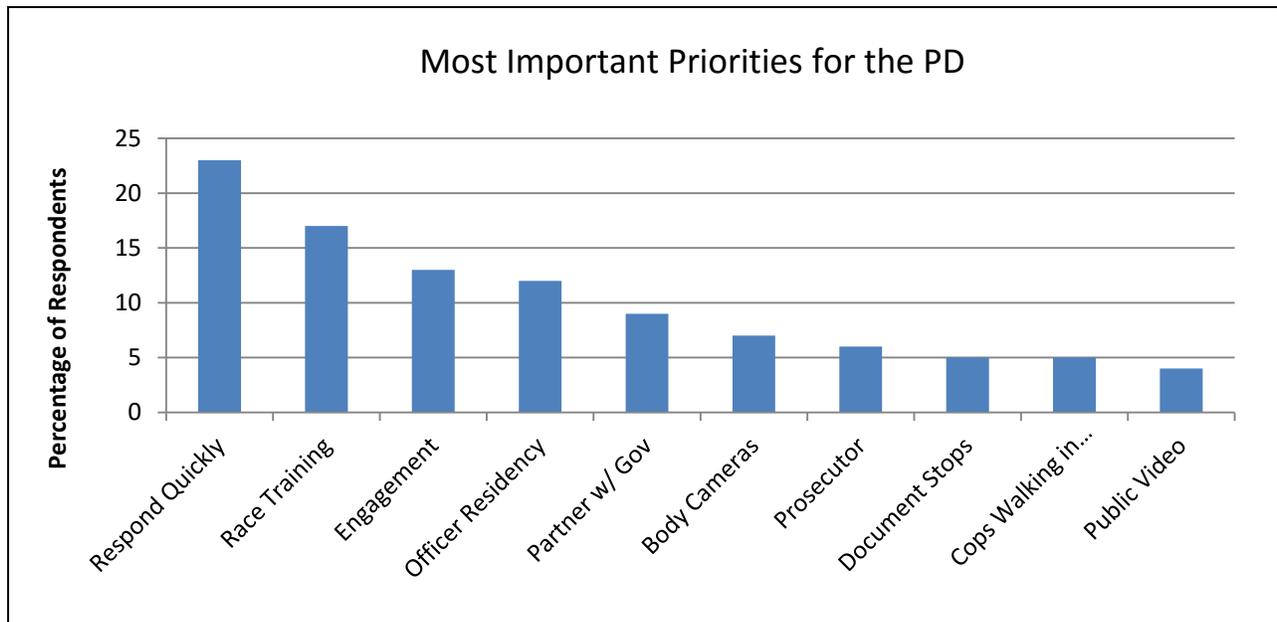
When asked what types of institutional civilian input are most desirable, respondents choose overwhelmingly that they want elected rather than appointed representation. This is true whether they choose to have a citizen body that governs the police, a civilian review board that recommends discipline and policy, or a citizen advisory board that maintains open dialogue with department officials. The desire to have a direct hand in electing members crosses racial lines for Black people and White people; only Hispanics<sup>10</sup> bucked that trend with their stronger votes for an appointed citizen advisory board:



Non-residents respond somewhat more favorably to the idea of an elected governing body or elected civilian review board, while residents vote slightly more for an advisory board or for appointed members on other bodies. Still, the trends are consistent regardless of residency in favor of more democratically representative bodies.<sup>11</sup>

➤ **A Strong Desire for Reforms that Stop Crime, Involve the Community in Solutions and End Racial Profiling**

Our last question deals with specific reforms, listing ten possibilities. Here they are, ranked according to the number of times each was ranked number 1:



Residency does not make much difference in these rankings, with those living both in and outside Ferguson choosing the same top 3.<sup>12</sup>

Black people also pick the same top 3, though they also elevate “Cops Walking in the Community” into a tie for second place. White people on the other hand include “Police Partnerships with other Government Agencies” and “Documentation of Stops” along with “Community Engagement” in their top picks.<sup>13</sup>

The differences are revealing. Black people’ interest in quick responses might be the result of higher crime rates. Higher crime may also result in their desire to see cops walking the beat in their neighborhoods. Black people want an end to profiling (“Race training”) but want practical solutions to immediate issues. White people, on the other hand, seem to be putting more faith in governmental institutions (“Partnerships with Government Agencies”) and in governmental studies (“Documentation of Stops”).

The greatest difference in rankings is between stakeholders (those who live, work, worship, shop or own a business in Ferguson) and those who have little to no interaction with the city. Stakeholders, which represent the vast majority of respondents, choose the same top 3 as the

survey as a whole. Non-stakeholders overlapped with those rankings by choosing “Community Engagement” as #1 and “Race Training” as #2. But they also choose “Independent Prosecutor” as a tie for #2 and “Documentation of Stops” as #3.<sup>14</sup>

Gender<sup>15</sup> and Age<sup>16</sup> make only slight differences in rankings and no other listed reforms make it into anyone’s Top 3 list.

# Appendix 1

## Ferguson Stakeholder Survey

Deadline July 5

THIS SURVEY IS NOT OFFICIALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice and the City of Ferguson are working on an agreement, but what does the community want? More beat cops? What kind of training? What forms of community input?

This survey is one way for you to have your voice heard. It was created by the ad hoc DOJ Working Group (a collaboration of local groups and individuals) and will be compiled by a committee of Ferguson stakeholders. It will be used to develop a statement to the Department of Justice as it advocates for reform.

We are reaching out to all stakeholders and hope you will help spread the word.

You can fill this out online at <http://bit.ly/dojsurvey>, return it to the business where you picked it up, or mail to: Stakeholder Survey, c/o ONE Ferguson, PO Box 35065, Ferguson, MO 63135

Do you \_\_\_\_\_ live in Ferguson? \_\_\_\_\_ work in Ferguson? \_\_\_\_\_ shop in Ferguson?  
\_\_\_\_\_ own a business in Ferguson? \_\_\_\_\_ worship in Ferguson?

Ferguson Ward \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Race or Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Economic status(Check One) \_\_\_\_\_ Working Class \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Class \_\_\_\_\_ Upper Class

1. How would you rank your experiences with the Ferguson Police Department:

- a) Terrible
- b) Poor
- c) Mixed
- d) Good
- e) Excellent

Would you care to describe your experience:

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2. Do you think the Ferguson Police Department should be:
  - a) Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County
  - b) Disbanded and combined with other municipal police departments
  - c) Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up
  - d) Reformed
  - e) Left alone
  
3. Do you think community input into policing should include (circle one or more):
  - a) An elected governing body that runs the department including setting policy, hiring the police chief and determining the budget
  - b) An Police Commission appointed by the city manager that runs the department
  - c) An elected Civilian Review Board that recommends discipline and policy
  - d) An appointed Civilian Review Board that recommends discipline and policy
  - e) An elected Citizens Advisory Board that maintains open dialogue with department officials
  - f) An appointed Citizens Advisory Board that maintains open dialogue with department officials
  
4. What are your top priorities in a police department? Please rank the following statements in order of priority from 1-10. Rank the most important item with the number 1 and the least important item with the number 10.

I want a police department that:

- \_\_\_ Responds more quickly to calls for service
- \_\_\_ Partners with other government and civic groups to solve community problems
- \_\_\_ Has more officers walking a beat
- \_\_\_ Engages more closely with community members
- \_\_\_ Undertakes training in racial bias and social work skills
- \_\_\_ Is required to document investigative pedestrian stops, all uses of force
- \_\_\_ Brings in an independent prosecutor in cases of officer-involved shooting
- \_\_\_ Requires body cameras that are turned on for police/citizen interactions and leaves the data open to the public
- \_\_\_ Requires that police release to the public any video of police use of force
- \_\_\_ Requires that officers live in the community

Additional comments:

If you have questions or want to be further involved: [dojworkinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:dojworkinggroup@gmail.com)

## Appendix 2

### Demographics of Survey Respondents

#### Survey Breakdown

Total (answered at least one question): 395

##### **Race:**

	Freq.	Percent
White	138	36.51
Black	201	53.17
Latino	17	4.5
Asian	2	0.53
Not any of the four categories	20	5.29
Total	378	100

##### **Residency:**

	Freq.	Percent
Non-Residents	200	50.63
Residents	195	49.37
Total	395	100

##### **Age:**

Mean age: 42.5

Age	Freq.	Percent
30 and under	90	23.44
31-50	183	47.66
51 and up	111	28.91

##### **Gender:**

	Freq.	Percent
Male	136	35.42
Female	245	63.8
Gender not Male or Female	3	0.78
Total	384	100

##### **Economic Status:**

	Freq.	Percent
Working Class	209	54.15
Middle Class	169	43.78
Upper Class	8	2.07
Total	386	100

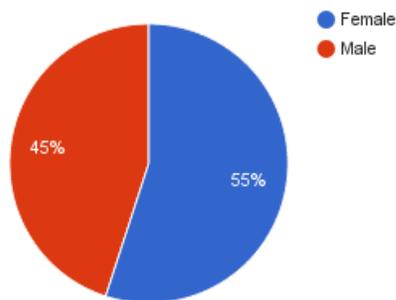
## Ferguson vs. Survey Demographics

Below are two comparisons of Ferguson demographics from the 2010 census and the survey demographics:

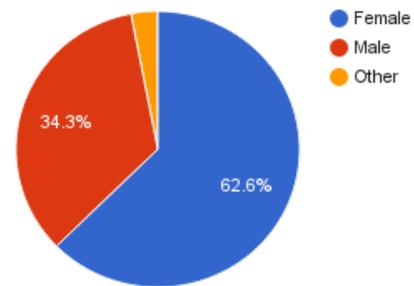
Regarding race, Blacks were somewhat underrepresented in the survey results, while whites and other minorities were somewhat over-represented in relation to the demographics of Ferguson. Also, there were slightly more females, and slightly fewer males who took the survey versus the demographics of Ferguson .

It is important to note for processing the information in the report that while the ratio of male to female is fairly evenly divided in Ferguson, Black citizens represent more than 2/3 of our community.

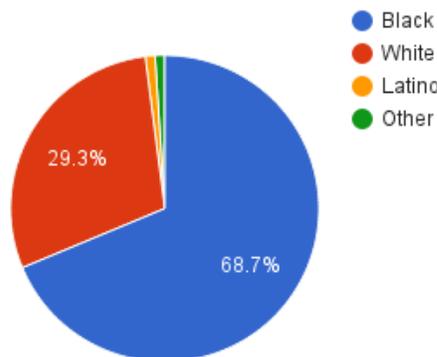
Ferguson Census Data by Gender



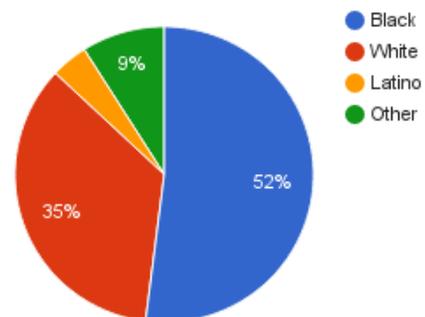
Survey Demographics by Gender



Ferguson Census Data by Race



Survey Demographic Data by Race



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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> For those who wish to help further in developing that vision, here are a few places to start:

Police Cameras for Ferguson [policecamerasforferguson.com](http://policecamerasforferguson.com),

The People's Consent Decree Decree (<http://getyrrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Ppls-Consent-w-LGBT-Cover-Sheet.pdf>)

Justice Dept. Consent Decrees (<http://www.justice.gov/crt/special-litigation-section-cases-and-matters0#policemunities>)?

Campaign Zero <http://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision>

Aligning Police Values With Those Of Our Nation

<https://improvingpolice.wordpress.com/2015/07/06/aligning-police-values-with-those-of-our-nation/>  
<http://obs-stl.org/index.php/news/item/quality-policing-initiative-2>

New Model of Policing Needed [http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/new-model-of-policing-needed/article\\_83e6937b-bd23-5918-ad8a-7852f4916349.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/new-model-of-policing-needed/article_83e6937b-bd23-5918-ad8a-7852f4916349.html)

Needed: Civilian Oversight Of County Police

[http://www.stlamerican.com/news/columnists/jamala/article\\_722fb62a-d332-11e4-998c-d3768858787c.html](http://www.stlamerican.com/news/columnists/jamala/article_722fb62a-d332-11e4-998c-d3768858787c.html)

<sup>2</sup> Organizations involved in the project are the ACLU of Missouri, the Don't Shoot Coalition, One Ferguson and the Organization for Black Struggle

<sup>3</sup> Some respondents did not answer all questions, answered questions in a manner that was unclear or not in line with the directions given. Those answers were removed from the survey results to maintain the accuracy of the poll. As a result, the number of respondents for any given question varies, from a high of 389 for Question 2 to a low of 221 for Question 4. Respondents who left the residency question blank were considered "non-residents," which resulted in a total number for that question equaling the total overall number of 395.

<sup>4</sup>

Desired Structural Change by Gender (%)	Male	Female
Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County	17.91	18.18
Disbanded and combined with other municipal police depts	2.99	4.96
Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up	25.37	31.82
Reformed	38.06	29.34
Left alone	15.67	15.7

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Desired Structural Change by Residency (%)	Don't Live	Live
Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County	26.53	9.33
Disbanded and combined with other municipal police depts	4.08	4.66
Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up	34.69	23.83
Reformed	26.02	37.82
Left alone	8.67	24.35

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

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Desired Structural Change--Whites by Residency (%)	Don't Live	Live
Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County	34.21	4.92
Disbanded and combined with other municipal police depts	3.95	3.28
Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up	32.89	9.84
Reformed	15.79	42.62
Left alone	13.16	39.34

8

Desired Structural Change--Blacks by Residency (%)	Don't Live	Live
Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County	22.22	12.75
Disbanded and combined with other municipal police depts	4.04	5.88
Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up	35.35	34.31
Reformed	34.34	41.18
Left alone	4.04	5.88

9

Desired Structural Change by Police Experience (%)	Terrible	Poor	Mixed	Good	Excellent
Disbanded and absorbed into St. Louis County	29.09	38.81	16.98	2.74	0
Disbanded and combined with other municipal police depts	7.27	2.99	4.72	2.74	1.67
Disbanded and rebuilt from the bottom up	56.36	40.3	34.91	9.59	0
Reformed	7.27	16.42	41.51	68.49	18.33
Left alone	0	1.49	1.89	16.44	80

<sup>10</sup> Hispanics make up only a small proportion of the Ferguson population and only 18 Hispanics were respondents in the survey. See Appendix 2.

11

Forms of Community Input by Residency (%)	Don't Live in Ferg.	Live in Ferg.
Elected Gov.	44	32
Elected CRB	45	30
Elected CAB	35	38
Appoint CAB	20	22
Appoint CRB	12	16
Pol Comm	4	10

12

Most Important Priorities by Residency		Doesn't Live	Live
Respond Quickly		1	1
Partner w/ Gov			
Cops Walking in Community			
Engagement		3	2
Race Training		2	3
Document Stops			
Prosecutor			
Body Cameras			
Public Video			
Officer Residency			

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Most Important Priorities by Race		Black	White
Respond Quickly		1	
Partner w/ Gov			2
Cops Walking in Community		2	
Engagement		3	1
Race Training		2	
Document Stops			3
Prosecutor			
Body Cameras			
Public Video			
Officer Residency			

Most Important Priorities-- Stakeholders		Stakeholders	Non Stake
Respond Quickly		1	
Partner w/ Gov			
Cops Walking in Community			
Engagement		3	1
Race Training		2	2
Document Stops			3
Prosecutor			2
Body Cameras			
Public Video			
Officer Residency			

Most Important Priorities by Gender		Male	Female
Respond Quickly		1	1
Partner w/ Gov		3	
Cops Walking in Community			
Engagement			2
Race Training		2	3
Document Stops			
Prosecutor			
Body Cameras			
Public Video			
Officer Residency			

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Most Important Priorities by Age		30 and under	31-50	50 and up
Respond Quickly		1	1	
Partner w/ Gov				3
Cops Walking in Community			2	
Engagement		3	3	2
Race Training		2		1
Document Stops				
Prosecutor				
Body Cameras				
Public Video				
Officer Residency				