



City of **Akron, Ohio**
Chief of Police

2024 Search Survey Results



City of **Akron, Ohio**
Chief of Police

**Community Survey
Results**

Methodology – Community Survey Responses

This report summarizes the results of the Community Input Survey conducted as part of the City of Akron Chief of Police recruitment and selection process. The survey was customized to allow respondents the ability to provide input related to the Chief of Police search and the Department as a whole. Additionally, participants answered questions related to the qualities, qualifications, and skills they believed are essential for the next Chief of Police to possess.

The Community Input Survey was distributed by the City and published online through Survey Monkey as well as through paper survey. The survey was available between December 15, 2023 and March 18, 2024, with 1,541 responses collected. The survey was available in English (1,539 responses), Spanish (2 responses), Arabic (0 responses), and Nepali (0 responses). For the purposes of this report, all responses have been translated and combined. All paper copies received were manually entered online by Ralph Andersen & Associates.

The summary that follows analyzes the results obtained from the Community Input Survey, including demographics of survey participants, top survey results in key categories, and an overview of comments collected from the participants. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in Appendix A.

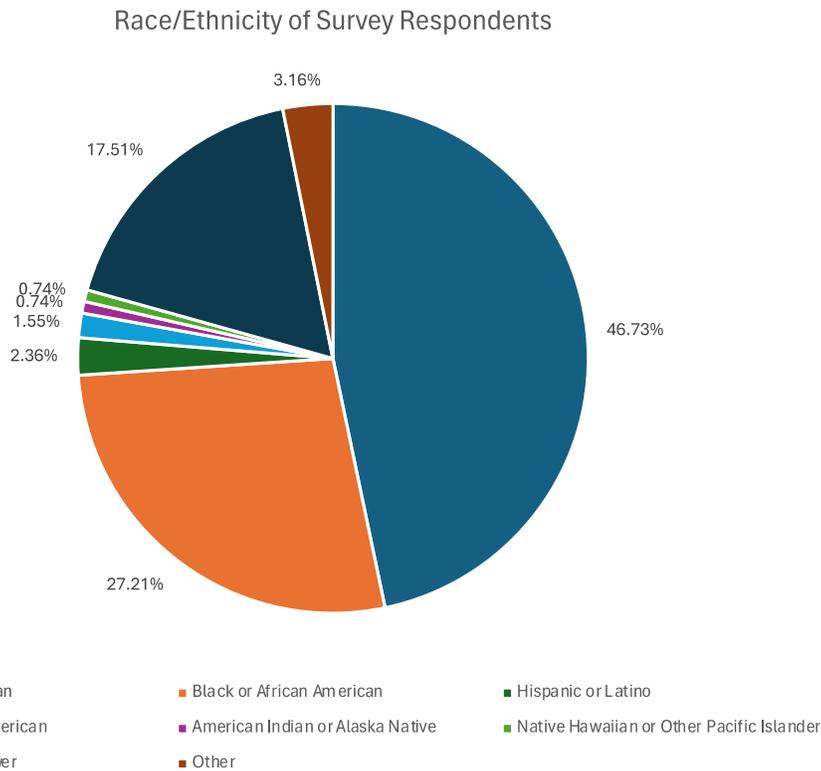
Concerns Related to the Survey Results

Upon reviewing the responses to the open-ended questions, it became apparent that a majority of responses were following the same pattern. The responses appear to be scripted, but in each respondent's own words. Ralph Andersen & Associates is unable to account for the similarity in responses, and the IP addresses are generally unique for most responses and survey participants were restricted from taking a survey multiple times on the same device. Survey participants could utilize the same IP address on different devices in the same household and/or workplace. It appears some survey responders received some instruction on how to complete the survey.

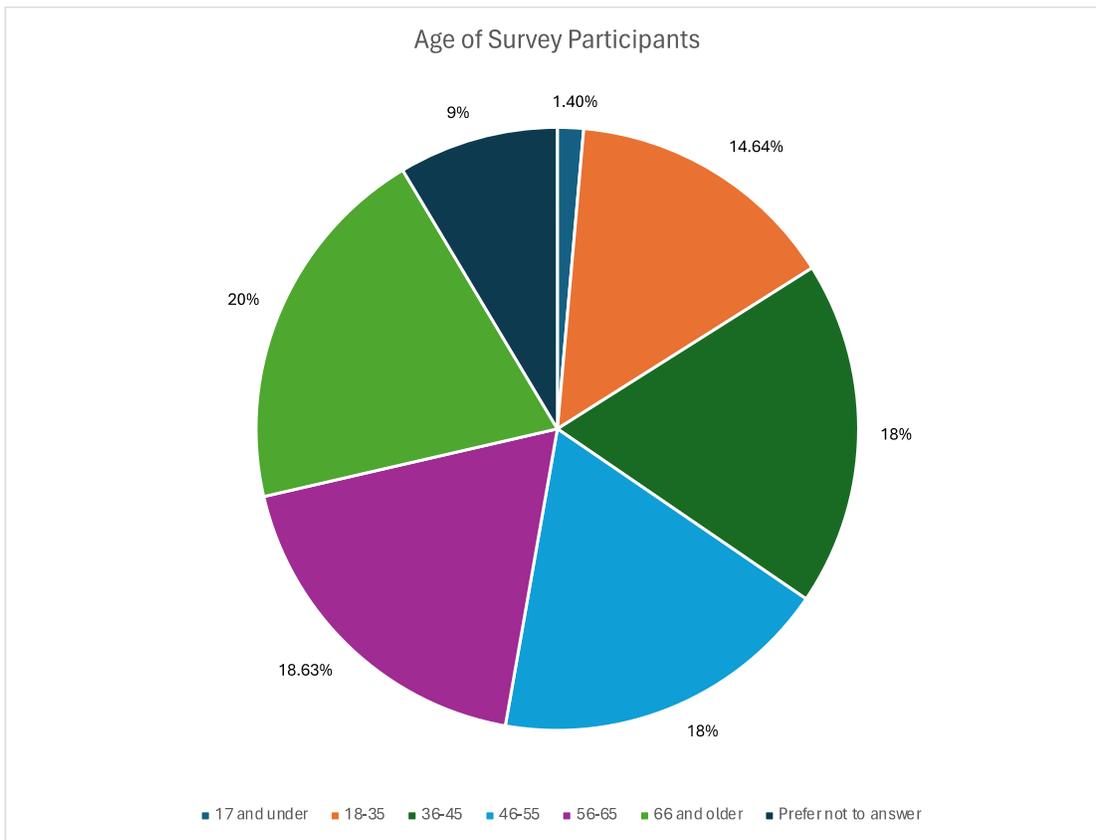
Demographics of Survey Participants

A total of **1,541** individuals participated in the Community Input Survey. Most of the respondents live in the City of Akron (81.33%), and the majority (63.77%) are employed within the City.

The racial demographic breakdown of respondents who participated, and opted to share this data, in the survey is as follows:



The age demographic breakdown of respondents who participated, and opted to share this data, in the survey is as follows:



Zip code data for Participants (as entered by participants)

Participants were asked to provide their Zip Code; this section was optional and not all participants participated.

Zip Code	Number of Participants
44313	211
44320	107
44312	97
44301	97
44303	97
44305	87
44314	74
44310	73

44306	64
44333	55
44302	52
44307	47
44319	40
44308	40
44311	31
44325	21
44223	20
44321	18
44309	14
44685	12
44203	11
44240	6
44224	5
44304	5
44266	4
44281	4
44236	4
4430	4
44691	3
44646	3
44624	3
44278	3
44652	3
44221	3
44056	3

44671	2
44641	2
44216	2
44720	2
44292	2
44144	2
44684	2
44004	2
44635	2
44055	2
44031	2
44690	2
44670	2
44272	2
44683	2
44708	2
44066	2
44620	2
44260	2
44693	2
44351	2
44070	2
44606	2
44011	2
44282	1
44650	1
44631	1

4442	1
44677	1
44017	1
Nun yo beeswax.	1
12345	1
44256	1
44065	1
44668	1
14001	1
44141	1
44052	1
44291	1
44021	1
44626	1
44024	1
44633	1
44067	1
44647	1
34952	1
44653	1
44015	1
44263	1
43147	1
44681	1
44045	1
44047	1
44030	1

44286	1
44026	1
443111	1
44014	1
44215	1
44230	1
44628	1
44231	1
44632	1
44330	1
44255	1
44331	1
44124	1
44027	1
44648	1
44077	1
44262	1
44366	1
44667	1
44412	1
44669	1
44440	1
44264	1
44505	1
44678	1
44515	1
44131	1

44585	1
44273	1
44107	1
44061	1
44607	1
44697	1
44616	1
44718	1
44617	1
85086	1
44618	1
N/A	1
44250	1
Ward 8	1
44622	1
44253	1
Grand Total	1442

Recap of the Survey Results

A summary of the Community Input Survey is provided below. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in Appendix A and summarized below.

Top Priorities for the City of Akron Police Department to Focus On:

Survey respondents were asked to rank what priorities they thought the Akron Police Department should focus on; the results indicated that “crime prevention & reduction” was the most critical priority. The second most selected priority was “sufficient staffing levels,” and the third was “crime solving/investigations.”

Survey respondents were provided an opportunity to identify other areas of priority. Common themes identified included:

- Neighborhood safety is a primary area of concern for individuals; respondents would like to have more police presence by having additional patrols and increasing staffing.
- Accountability was raised a number of times; participants would like to ensure officers are held responsible for their actions.
- Overall, people believe that police are doing well and that the media is misrepresenting facts.
- Several survey participants indicated that they are concerned about racism and mistreatment of minorities in the community. Participants would like the City to increase diversity within the Department.
- Respondents would like the Department to create trust with the community through communication and transparency. Participants indicated that following the Jayland Walker shooting, the relationship between the Department and some within the community was damaged. Community members would like the Department to prioritize community feedback and dialogue with the community.
- While some participants indicated their view that police should not act as social workers, they should be tough on crime only; several participants noted that the Department should partner with outside agencies for non-traditional calls for service, such as mental health calls.

As previously stated, there were several patterns of responses that stuck out as repetitive and potentially collaborated on. Several common responses were repeated; including:

- **Participants feel the police are doing a good job and the issue is with the media and politicians for portraying the officers in a negative light.**
 - “Yes, I believe that the police department has been well run. Recently, I feel they have been unjustly challenged by projected negative views from the media and politicians. In my opinion, we ought to demonstrate greater understanding and support for our police, who continuously lead efforts in maintaining peace and order in society.”
 - “I believe our police force is doing commendable work, despite facing harsh criticism from media and politicians in recent years. These situations highlight the importance for us, as a society, to offer more support to them. Their work is crucial for our safety and they should be acknowledged and respected for that.”
 - “I believe the police are doing their work well and they need our understanding and support. It saddens me to see them criticized heavily in the media and by

politicians. Instead of tearing them down, we ought to boost their morale by supporting and appreciating their dedication and commitment to our safety. They require greater, strong backing from not only the government but society at large for maintaining law, peace, and order.”

- **Participants noted that they feel the police are doing a good job but they feel unsafe in their neighborhoods and would like more patrol and the police to be harsher on crime.**
 - “The police are doing okay but I really believe there can be improvements, specifically in my neighborhood which feels quite dangerous. What I'd love to see is them getting tougher on crime and showing more presence so that everyone can feel much safer. It's really important.”
 - “I believe the police are doing their work well, but I feel safer if they could be a bit tougher on crime. The neighborhood I live in feels dangerous at times, so adding a bit more enforcement would help immensely. More patrolling might help deter a lot of the illegal activities. This added security could render my neighborhood safer.”
 - “The police officers in our town are doing great work, but I personally think there is room for a stricter approach towards crime. It'd be good if the law enforcement was a bit tougher on wrongdoing. Our neighborhood feels quite unsafe because of escalating criminal activities could definitely use more police presence. Increased enforcement would go a long way in improving security and making everyone feel safer.”
- **Participants indicated that they feel the police are doing well and their concern lies with the Justice System.**
 - “I believe the police are performing well in their duties to protect and serve. However, my concern lies with the judicial system. There's a trend of light sentences for criminals which, in my opinion, is somewhat undermining police work. I think more emphasis needs to be placed on stricter penalties and punishment so that justice is served appropriately.”
 - “I believe the police are performing rather well in their duty overall. However, I feel there's a vital issue with the judiciary system where I perceive that criminals aren't getting the justice they deserve. In my opinion, it seems like judges are too lenient in their sentences which makes police work less effective. It would be better if there were stricter punishments for wrongdoers to ensure the safety of the community.”
 - “I believe our police department is doing a remarkable job in maintaining law and order. They are consistently putting efforts to keep our city safe, and their dedication is worthy of appreciation. However, it seems to me that judges in our courts might not be giving severe enough punishments to criminals. This might urge them to repeat their wrongdoings. Higher-level enforcement should collaborate with courts to ensure fair and firmer justice for the sake of community harmony.”

What, if anything, would you like to change in how the Police Department interacts with your community?

The majority of responses related to Department interactions with the community focused on approachability, compassion, and equality between officers and the community. Respondents felt that relationships could be improved through a decrease in militant appearance with officers, positive daily interactions, and open communication. Several respondents felt the Department was satisfactory and professional, while others felt the Department needed to participate in the community more and combat a perception of racism.

Participants indicated that the Department should focus more on traffic violations and increasing patrol to help the community feel safer. Interacting with the community more, aside from calls for service, would help to eliminate the “us vs. them” mentality that many participants alluded to.

There was an additional pattern of comments among participants, again suggesting there was some kind of collaboration.

- **Participants are impressed with the job officers are doing and believe they should be present at more community events. To achieve more officer availability, participants believe the City should hire additional officers.**
 - “I’m really impressed with the police doing a solid job. For improvement, I’d love for our police to have more folks on the team. This way, the officers could go to local events and spend more time getting to understand our community better. Building stronger ties with residents should be a priority. Now that would be great!”
 - “I think our police are already doing well with what they have. However, they could do even better if there were more cops available. This would allow them to go to neighborhood events and spend more time building positive connections with everyone. Knowing our local police officers better will create an even friendlier and safer community for us all.”
 - “Yes, I think the police are doing well in their duties. I personally feel safer and more secure because of their work. I’d love to see even more involvement from our law enforcement in social activities. Attending local events would help strengthen relationships with citizens, an important step in fostering better trust and cooperation. I appreciate all the hard work they do and hope to see them around town even more.”
- **Participants felt that the officers are doing a good job and the community should respect their efforts more.**
 - “I believe the police do a good job at their work. Their commitment to maintaining safety and peace is applaudable. We as civilians should offer more respect and cooperation to police officers because they are our guardians, keeping us safe day and night. Spreading respect towards them will encourage a better relationship and trust between the community and the police.”
 - “I believe the police are doing a commendable job in maintaining safety and law on the streets. It’s a tough job being on the front lines everyday and they handle it well. However, I think more needs to be done in reinforcing respect toward our police officers. They work hard to protect us and deserve our gratitude and appreciation.”
 - “I think the police force is doing alright. They got a hard job and are likely doing the best they can. I wish folks would try to be more respectful toward them. Sometimes, it’s not about what they’re doing wrong, but how we’re reacting to them. Let’s try to give them a chance just like anyone else in a tough job.”

What, if anything, do you feel the Department does well in their interactions with your community?

The trends found in the community responses demonstrate that the community participants of the survey would like the police to act more professionally and compassionately and demonstrate less hostility in their interactions with the community. While some indicated that they don't interact with the police, others specified that the interactions they've had with police have been largely positive. While participants called attention to what they perceived as a high rate of crime in the area, participants indicated that the police were doing a good job and could benefit from support from the community, Department leadership, and the City Administration. Participants also noted the positive interactions between police and school-aged children.

There was a pattern of potentially scripted responses. A sampling of responses is provided below:

- **Police do a good job and need support from the City Council and Mayor. The police should focus on quality-of-life issues (such as traffic enforcement), and by enforcing laws would make the community safer. Hiring additional police would solve this.**
 - “The police are doing a solid job in ensuring our safety. I believe that they need the backing of our community, city council, and mayor, so they can perform better. There are essential quality-of-life issues that need attention, and I feel that the police should be taking a stronger stand on enforcing traffic and criminal laws. That way, they'll maintain order more efficiently and bolster communal harmony.”
 - “The police are doing a solid job in our community. Their role needs to be backed more by community members, the city council, and the mayor for a better affect. Small issues that influence our daily lives like traffic laws and light offenses need slightly more attention. Overall, with society's support, police could improve the quality of life tremendously by enforcing laws more.”
 - “I believe the police are performing well and deserve community support, including that of the city council and the mayor. I think it's crucial that the law enforcement focus more on addressing quality-of-life issues in addition to enforcing traffic and criminal laws. This will create a safer and more peaceful atmosphere for everyone in the community.”
- **The Police do a good job, and the body camera footage demonstrates that they act professionally, deal with a lot of violence, and their efforts keep the community safe.**
 - “I think our police team is doing quite well. I've seen body camera videos of them working, and I can say they handle public situations effectively. Sure, it saddens me that we have so many violent incidents around here, but our officers genuinely put out their best efforts to keep us safe. I appreciate and support their hard work.”
 - “From my viewpoint, the police do a fine job when dealing with folks in the community. I've seen it with my own eyes through body cam videos showing how they handle tricky situations well. But boundaries are sometimes pushed, often not their fault, because there are a lot of bad guys stirring trouble in our towns. If it weren't for these criminals, we'd likely have less drama to worry about.”
 - “The police where I live are really doing an awesome job! I've watched videos from their bodycams and can see how skilled they are in handling people in various situations. If only we had a fewer number of violent folks causing trouble in our community, their jobs would be a easier. It leaves me worried and hoping that things will become safer soon.”
- **The Police do a good job and always act professionally; there is a small group that paints the Police in a negative light. This is not a fair or accurate representation of the Department.**
 - “The police in our community do a fine job. They carry out their work very professionally and responsibly. Some people might try to paint a bad picture of them, but it appears unfairly represented to me. These officers are definitely not evil or bad, rather they're trying their best for our safety.”
 - “The police in my community do a commendable job. They show high levels of professionalism in their work. Sometimes, people make them look bad, which I reckon isn't fair. I believe they are here to maintain order and peace, not endanger

us. They require more generosity of interpretation and moral support from grassroots-level citizens in order to perform their duties effectively.”

- “I believe our police do a great job of handling situations professionally in our community. There’s still a small part of our community that wrongly paints them in a bad light, but I think that’s unfair. From what I have seen, they handle their duties responsibly and take our safety very seriously.”

Generally, participants felt that while there is always room to improve, by interacting more with the public and demonstrating more compassion, a majority felt that the Department was moving in a positive direction. Several survey respondents however did note that their interactions with police were negative and felt mistreated.

What, if anything, would you like to see the City and Police Department do differently to help you feel safe?

A primary area of concern among participants was crime reduction and equality in policing. Survey respondents indicated that increasing visibility and patrolling neighborhoods would help them feel safer in their communities. Participants revealed they would ask the Department to treat all members of the community equally and would like the City to hire more minority officers to reflect and represent the diverse communities in Akron. Being tougher on crime and interacting more positively with the youth population were also seen as areas of improvement for the Department and City to ensure the feeling of safety. Respondents would like to see more community meetings and involvement; increasing transparency and open communication between the community and police leadership. Quicker response times and limiting the use of excessive force were also deemed areas that the Department could improve upon to help the community feel safer.

Again, there was a pattern of collaboration in a majority of responses:

- **Police are doing a good job; by protecting the streets by decreasing crime rates and enforcing traffic rules people will feel safer.**
 - “I believe our police are performing well but there’s always room for improvement. It’d be great to see them get stricter on crime management and traffic rules. More vigilance can make our streets safer and easier to use, which helps everyone feel even more secure. It’s reassuring to know the police would have a tighter grip protecting us from crime and chaotic traffic.”
 - “I think the police are doing a good job overall. However, I would feel safer if they were stricter with stopping crime and enforcing traffic rules. This would discourage wrongdoings and make our city more orderly and secure.”
 - “I’m happy with how the police are doing their job. However, I feel that things could improve if there is more strictness in tackling crime and enforcing traffic rules. Stronger steps in those areas can help us feel even safer in our ever-busy lives.”
- **Police are doing a good job. The Department should be more fully staffed; more officers means a better and quicker response. By increasing the staff size the citizens will feel safer and more secure.**
 - “I feel that our police department is doing a good job to make our city safe. To improve on this, I would like the city to ensure that the police department is always fully staffed. This way, they can quickly respond to safety concerns and continue doing good work in our community.”
 - “I feel that the police are doing a solid job keeping the city safe. One thing I’d like to see is the police department at full capacity. This means hiring enough officers and making sure they are spread out across the city. That way, there is always an officer nearby if their help is needed. It will keep us all feeling secure and our city will be safer.”
 - “I think our police are doing a great job at keeping us safe. I believe that the best way to improve our safety even more is to ensure our police department is fully

staffed. This would mean there are always enough officers to respond to any situation quickly and efficiently. A full squad of dedicated officers is crucial in maintaining this sense of strong support and security in our community.”

- **Police are performing their duties well and should have better support from the City Administration. If the APD felt more supported, they would feel more empowered and would create a safer community.**
 - “I feel safe when the police can do their job properly. I think that they need stronger support from politicians who should publicly back them up. With that, they will feel more confident to enforce laws strictly. If our city can do all this, it’ll help me and others feel safer.”
 - “I think our police are doing a good job. But they could do more if our politicians supported them better. The police need strong support to enforce laws more strongly. Stronger enforcement can improve our city’s safety and they need our help to do that.”
 - “I think our police are doing a great job actually. But to feel safer, I’d love to see politicians stand behind our officers more. If they feel validated, they can better enforce our laws. Currently, I feel the police could be a bit stricter with law enforcement. That could help stop crime before it happens.”

As you may know, the City of Akron is currently searching for a new Chief of Police. In your own words, what would you say should be the first priority for the next Akron Chief of Police?

Survey participants indicated that the first priority of the next Chief of Police should be building community trust and engagement. Participants signified that community outreach, transparency, and accessibility were critical for the next Chief. Following the Jayland Walker shooting, several participants indicated that community trust in the Department was damaged; the next Chief is going to need to work to rebuild that trust through accountability and communication. The next Chief should make sure fair and equitable policing is a priority and be transparent in policing. Many participants indicated a mistrust of the police over what they view as differences in policing minority communities. The next Chief of Police should focus on making staffing levels a priority as well.

Additionally, this question also demonstrated a pattern of responses that appeared to be written in collaboration with a group:

- **The next Chief should focus on stepping up enforcement; more patrol officers make people feel safer. The police are doing a good job, and more officers could help their progress. The Next Chief should increase staffing levels.**
 - “The next police chief should prioritize boosting law enforcement. More presence of officers on the streets will help people feel more secure. We need to see and feel that action is being taken constantly to keep peace and safety in our community. The police team is doing commendable work and this will bring even more improvement.”
 - “The next chief of police first needs to focus on getting the department staffed fully. We really need as many cops as we can because this helps them to do their jobs better. More police officers mean a safer city for everyone. The police are doing a good job right now, but having more of them could make things even better.”
 - “The next chief of police should prioritize filling all the staff roles within the department. This way, they will manage to have enough people needed to ensure our security consistently. They’re doing an outstanding job right now, and with full staff, they will perform even more effectively.”

- **The next Chief should prioritize boosting the morale of the officers. If officers are happier and feel more supported, they will do well in their roles and increase community safety.**
 - “The next chief of police needs to concentrate on boosting the spirit among the police officers. They're doing a wonderful job now and improving their morale could certainly lead to even better results. Good morale means happy officers and that could mean happier communities as well.”
 - “The next chief of police should focus primarily on boosting officer morale. A happy police force leads to better performance. We must ensure our officers feel valued and appreciated so they can effectively carry out their duties with a positive attitude. This, in turn, lets them serve our community to the best of their ability. Overall, I believe our police are doing a good job. But stronger morale will lead to even better outcomes.”
 - “The next police chief should prioritize boosting officer morale. Happy officers perform better, leading to an effective and approachable police force. I believe the police are already doing well but higher morale will definitely help improve service quality.”

And what would you say should be the second priority for the next Akron Chief of Police?

Participants indicated in their written responses that hiring more officers, increasing training, and enforcing accountability should be high priorities for the next Chief of Police. Several respondents also indicated that mental health and sensitivity training should be a priority for the next Chief. Crime reduction and drug enforcement were also noted as areas for the Chief to make a priority.

Just as in previous sections of the comments, there was a pattern of apparent collaboration on responses:

- **The next Chief should focus on sharing the work the Department does with the community. People should be aware of the good job the officers are doing. By publicly demonstrating positive work, it strengthens relationships with the community and rebuilds trust.**
 - “The next police chief should focus on demonstrating the positive work our officers are doing. There's lots of great things happening and it's important for the community to see and understand this. It can really help increase understanding and trust between the cops and our town.”
 - “The next chief of police should think about doing more to let folks in our community see just how hard our police officers work. There is a lot of good being done and people should know about it. It can improve the relationship between police and those they serve.”
 - “The next police chief should put a spotlight on the positive work that the police are doing. The police in our local community put in a lot of effort but most people don't hear about these good deeds. The chief needs to work on better communication so everyone knows how hard our police force is working to oversee safety and happiness.”
- **The next Chief should strengthen relationships with the community. Establishing and rebuilding relationships will have a positive impact on the community and the police; therefore, increasing safety.**
 - “The next chief of police should concentrate mainly on bolstering relationships within the community. It's integral because good police-community interaction can lead to mutual trust and cooperation, making our neighborhood safer. I believe our current police force is doing well, but there's always an opportunity for improvement such as this.”

- “The next chief of police should really focus on strengthening the bond with the community. Police are doing well but there's always room to grow. Getting to know neighborhood folks and understanding their concerns can make a big difference. The way I see it, a closer relationship between the police and the public is a win-win situation for everyone involved.”
- “I believe the next chief of police needs to center their efforts on creating more causal connections between the police and members of the community. In order to foster better trust and co-operation, it's important that policemen and women are seen as helpful neighbors, not foes. I have observed that steps taken in this direction generate a more peaceful atmosphere. I see the police force making great attempts in their work currently, and I hope their commitment to public service continues in this new era.”

Qualities, qualifications, and skills of the new Akron Chief of Police

Participants were asked to select three qualities, qualifications, and/or skills that the next Chief of Police for the City of Akron should possess. The results show that “integrity”, “strong leader for officers”, and “problem solver” were the top three most selected options.

Survey participants were given an opportunity to offer additional comments regarding the qualities, qualifications, and skills of the next Chief. Respondents indicated several areas of experience and qualities that the next Chief of Police should have; among those areas included a track record of being tough on crime, remaining apolitical, and the ability to be visible in the community. Participants believe the next Chief should have a record of accountability and be a reformer. Respondents indicated that the next Chief should have a track record of the ability to have hard conversations and make changes that are necessary for the betterment of the community and the Department.

A pattern of an apparent collaboration of responses was found in the comment section:

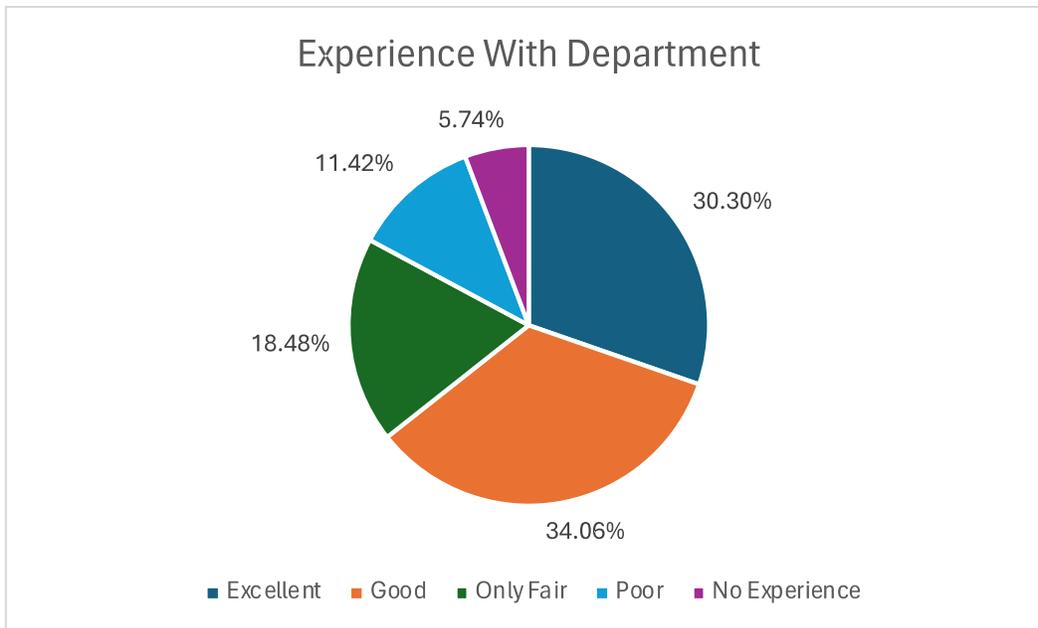
- **Hire from within. The next Chief should know the community and understand the needs already; hiring from within will help maintain the good work the police are already doing.**
 - “Yes, our next chief of police should be someone from within our own community. Somebody who knows our community, who has worked here, and understands our needs. They will be more aware of the problems we face and can provide the best solutions. Current police are doing a great job and this will ensure continuity and community trust.”
 - “I believe our next police chief should come from inside the department. It's important to have someone already aware of the unique challenges and situations our community faces. The department has been running smoothly under present guidance, proof that the police force is doing a decent job. A replacement from within would further assure the continuity of good work and an easy transition.”
 - “I definitely believe the police are performing very well. Therefore, it would be best to find our next police chief from within our current team. Since team members already understand how we work, this will keep things running smoothly and continue our good performance. Overall, promoting from within the department protects stability.”
- **Outside Chiefs hired for the Akron Chief of Police position haven't done well, according to survey respondents. Participants would like a hire from within the Department; someone who already knows the community.**
 - “I believe our police do great work. It's important for our new police chief to understand our community's needs deeply. Past chiefs from other towns didn't meet our expectations. So, I think the new chief should come from within the

department because they would already be familiar with our setting. This might bring the best outcomes for us.”

- “Yes, I think it's going well with the police. But I've noticed that the chiefs we had from other places did not do that well. So for the new chief, maybe we should go with one of our current ones.”
- “I believe the police are doing good work. However, prior chiefs who were from other places weren't successful. It would be better if the new chief of police was someone from our own police department. This avoids taking in someone who is unfamiliar with our unique local challenges. Let's promote someone who knows our city and is already serving it.”
- “I definitely think our police are doing a top-notch job. I have concerns about previous chiefs, coming from different towns and maybe not getting our unique needs. I strongly believe our new chief should be someone from within our own ranks who understands our area's challenges and advantages better than anyone else.”

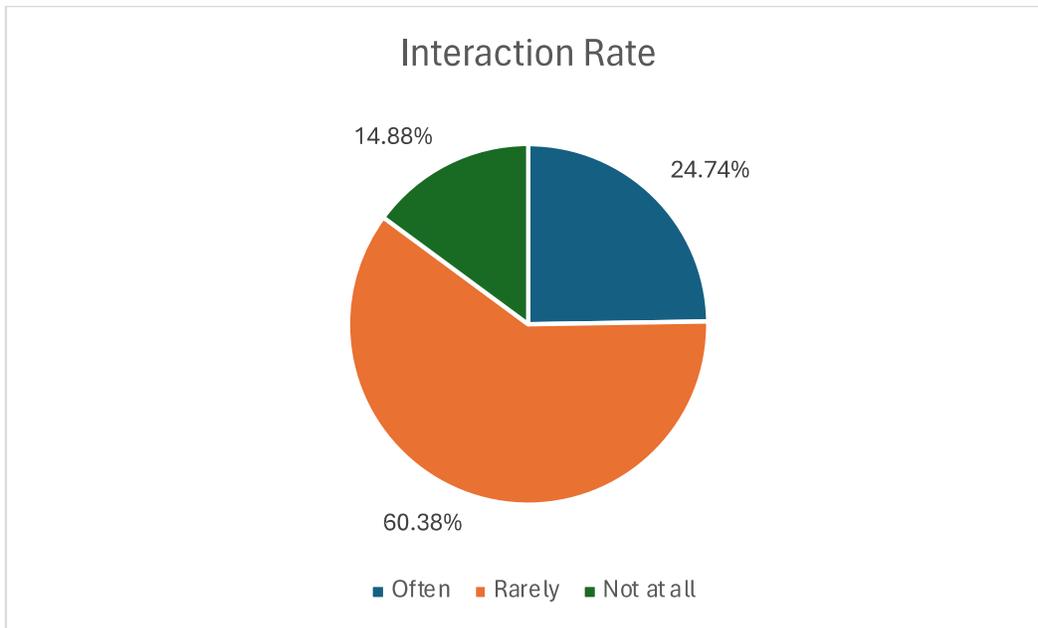
How would you rate your overall experience with the City of Akron Police Department?

Survey respondents were asked to select one option for how they would rank their overall experience with the Department; the results showed:

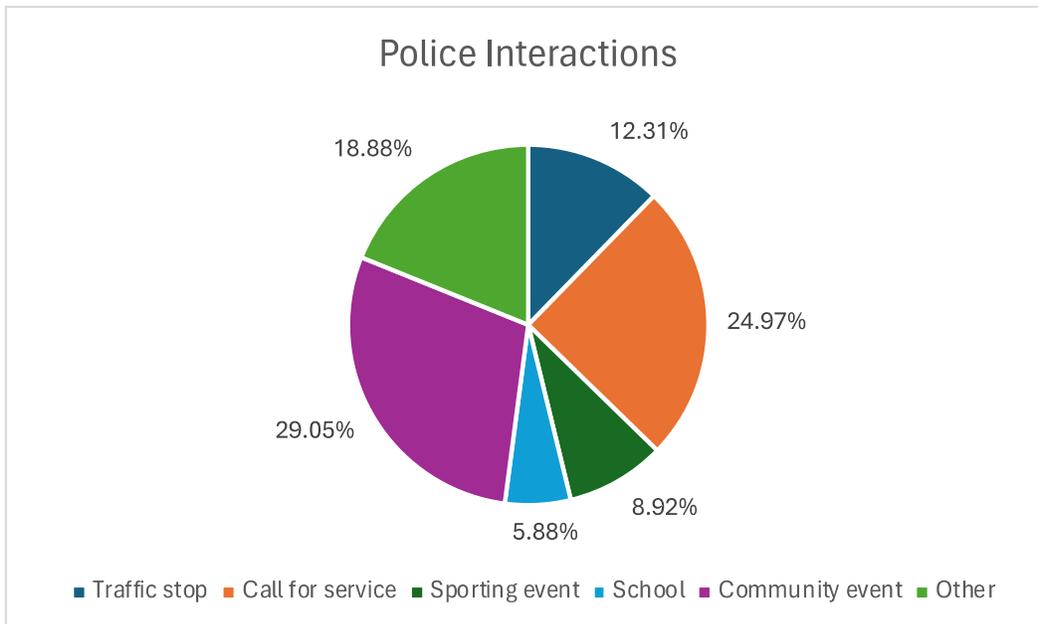


How often do you interact with the Police?

Survey respondents were asked to select one option for how often they interact with the Police; the results showed:

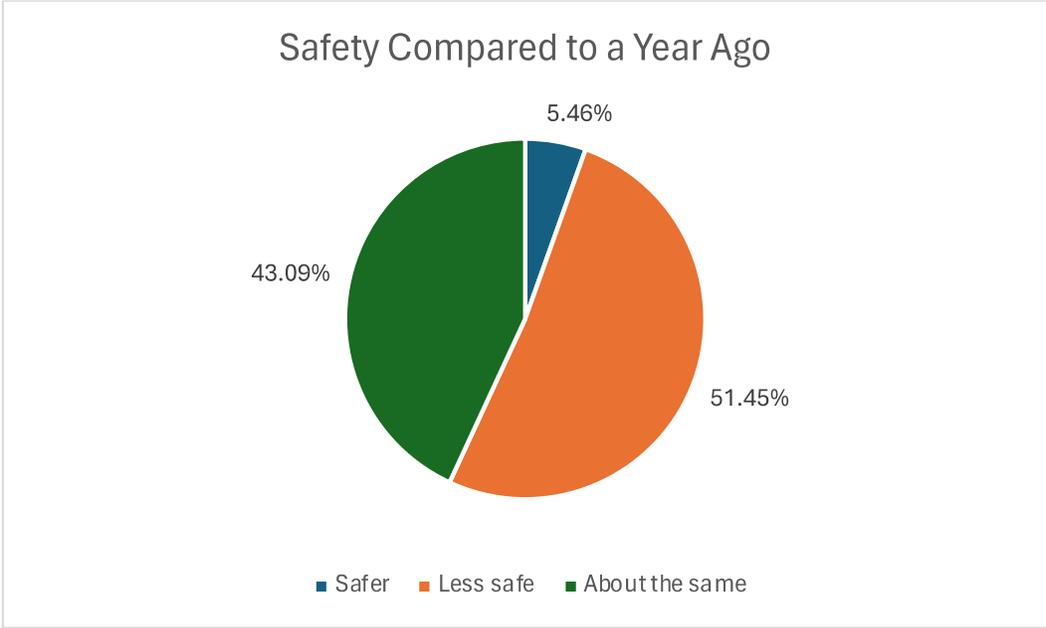


Where have you interacted with the Police?



Compared to a year ago, do you feel that the City of Akron is safer, less safe, or about the same?

Survey respondents were asked to select one option for how they would rank their feeling of safety in Akron compared to one year ago; the results showed:



Is there anything else you can think of that the City should consider when selecting the next Chief of Police?

A major trend in responses showed that the respondents would like the City to select a candidate that can improve relationships with the community, specifically relationships with minority community members. Respondents indicated that they would like to have more positive interactions with the Department, rather than only during circumstances when they might be called for disturbances. Participants call on the City to select a candidate who is committed to positive changes and will hold the Department accountable. Survey participants would like the City to select someone that has a track record of community engagement and is local to the community. While some participants request that the City not hire based on race and/or sex, some participants do want a Chief that is considered a minority and ask the City to bring forward a diverse pool of applicants to better reflect the diversity of the community.

Below is a selection of comments that are in the majority, and again appear to be collaborated on:

- **Police are doing a good job; police need to respond to crime more swiftly and strictly. The new Chief should boost the intensity of the Police Department to make the community safer.**
 - “Yes, while I think our police are doing a good job overall, our city still faces a lot of dangers. We need a tough police chief who will push our officers to crack down even more for safety. It’s not enough just to maintain - we need to step it up. A firm hand could really make our city a lot safer.”
 - “Yes, they should think about choosing someone who will strongly inspire our police to respond more eagerly in fighting against crime. This person should make sure our officers are not afraid to act bravely in such a dangerous city. Keeping us safe should be their top job. The new chief should be someone who will boost the intensity of our police force’s actions.”

- “I believe the police are working well, but our city is still too dangerous. The next chief should encourage police to act more boldly. Everyone would feel safer if the police focused on controlling crime more strictly. They’re doing a good job now, but we need a bolder plan for tackling criminal activity to maintain our peace and safety.”
- **Participants want the City to look within the Department to hire the next Chief of Police.**
 - “Yes, I believe our local police are doing a great job. Like any team, mutual respect and familiarity with the individuals in leading roles is essential for the team to succeed. Therefore, it makes sense to promote our next chief of police from within the department itself. Choosing someone already familiar with our city will foster collaboration and unity, which are critical for our public safety.”
 - “I believe the police department is working very well. It’s important to keep our city’s progress going by picking a new chief from inside the department itself. This way, they already know our city and care about keeping it safe. So, can we promote from within, please? This could keep things running smoothly and improve on whatever we need to.”
- **Many respondents are generally satisfied with the Department and believe the Mayor and City leadership are overly critical – the next Chief needs to have support from City leaders.**
 - “I believe the police are doing a great job, in spite of all the negativity from the mayor. From my viewpoint, it is crucial that our city pick a chief who is able to foster support and communication between city officials and the police. Let’s choose someone ready to confront this challenge, someone who will address this lack of support from our mayor’s office.”
 - “As a citizen, I strongly feel satisfaction with the current police department’s performance. They’re putting their best foot forward to serve us. Yet, our mayor seems to frequently have critical comments about our police force, which seems unwarranted based on their demonstrated commitment to public safety. It’s essential for our next police chief to have solid backing from the city’s leaders, including the Mayor. For maximum efficacy, our police need that consistent support and less negativity from the front office. Their duty is hard as it is. A positive working environment”
 - “I believe the police have been doing an effective job despite the negativity from the mayor. Personally, I think the mayor’s comments discourage our law enforcement, and instead of picking faults, he should focus more on backing our police. This support from city leadership is crucial when choosing the next police chief. Strong backing promotes positivity, enhancing the department’s performance.”
 - “I believe the police are performing their duties commendably. However, I often sense a negative vibe from our mayor towards the police officers. I think our next police chief should work hard to blaze a trail for their interactions with the city leadership. Strong support from the mayor will go a long way towards keeping our town safe and happy. It’s crucial for our leaders to acknowledge the good work being done by our police force, instead of focusing solely on potential lapses. Everyone’s goal is a safer city after all.”



City of **Akron, Ohio**
Chief of Police

**Department Survey
Results**

Methodology – Department Survey Responses

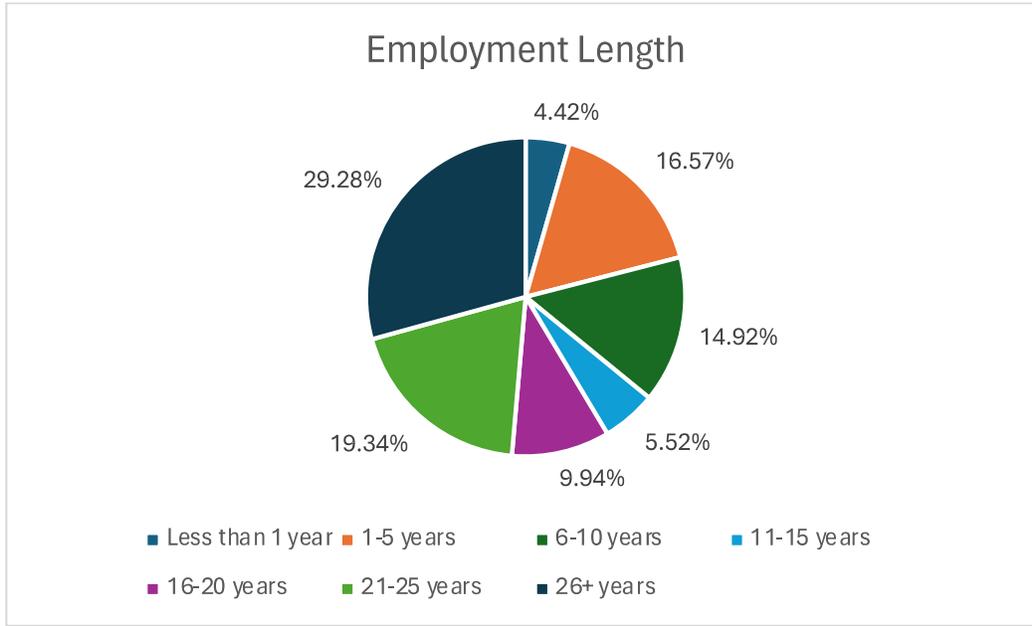
This section of the report summarizes the results of the Department Survey conducted as part of the City of Akron Chief of Police recruitment process. Internal Department participants answered questions related to the priorities, qualities, qualifications, and skills they believe are essential for the next Akron Police Department Chief of Police to possess. Participants were given the opportunity to answer questions and provide feedback directly related to the Department as a whole. The City and Ralph Andersen & Associates sought to provide the respondents with some flexibility in completing the survey; thus, most questions allowed for written comments following the selection portion.

The Department Input Survey was published through Survey Monkey and distributed by the City as well as made available as a paper survey. The survey was available between December 15, 2023 and March 18, 2024, with 182 responses collected. All paper copies received were manually entered online by Ralph Andersen & Associates.

What follows are results obtained from the survey, including years worked for the Akron Police Department, top results in key survey categories, and a summary of comments collected from the participants. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in Appendix B.

Introduction to Participants

A total of **181** individuals participated in the Department Input Survey. Participants were asked to select how long they have worked for the Department. The breakdown is as follows (1 participant declined to answer):

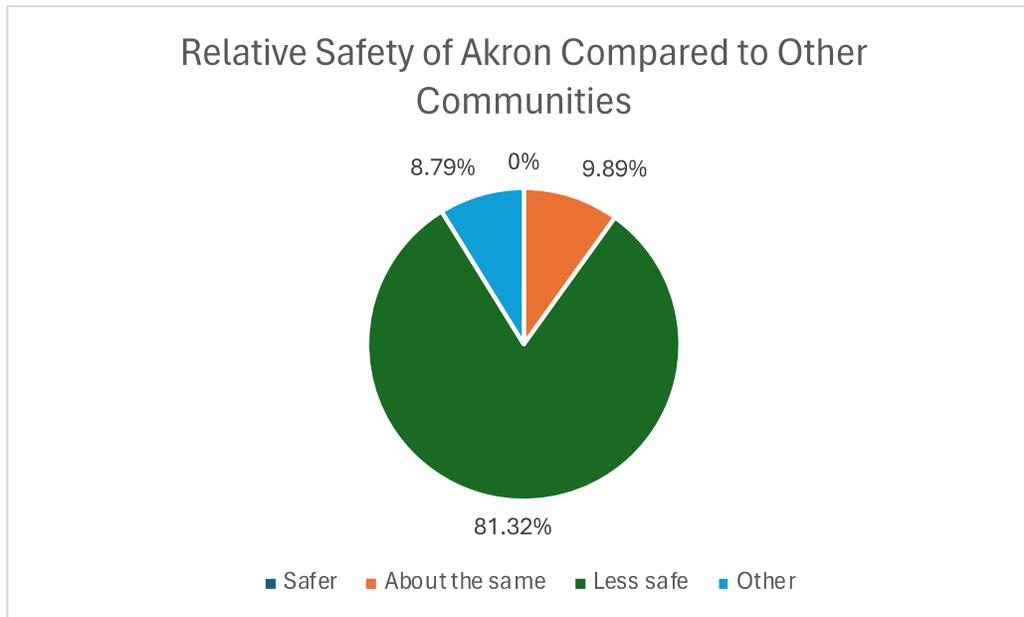


Recap of the Survey Results

A summary of the Department Input Survey is provided below. A complete copy of the comments received is provided in Appendix B.

Safety of the City of Akron

Participants were asked to provide their opinion on the safety of Akron as compared to nearby communities. The results of the participants are as follows:



The majority of the participants who responded “other” indicated in their comments that the community was less safe when compared to other surrounding communities. Several respondents commented that the safety of the City varied on the area of the city.

What are you most proud of as a member of the Akron Police Department?

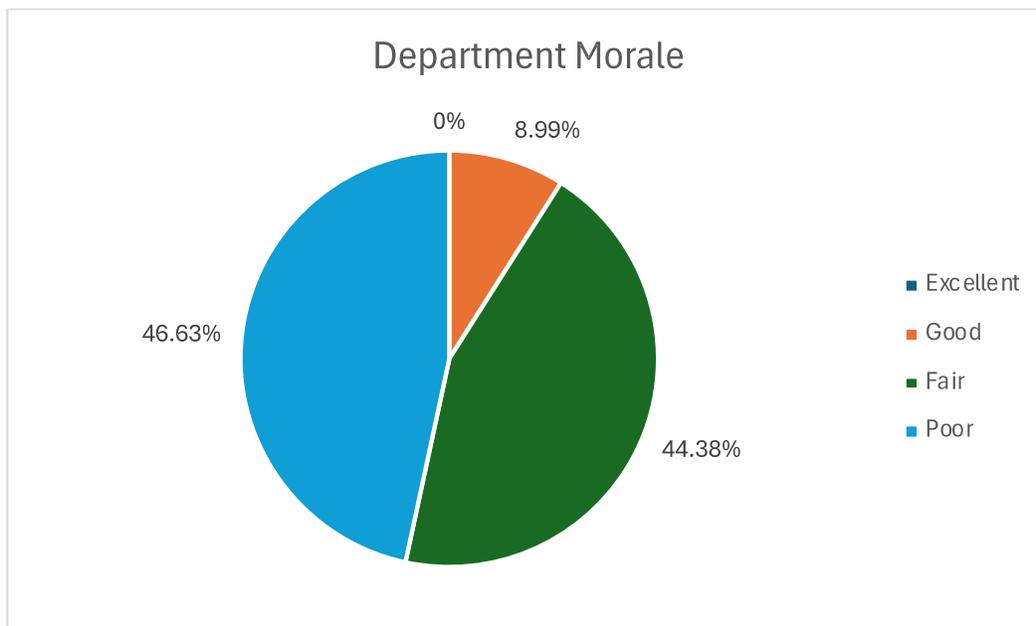
Respondents were asked an open-ended question to provide feedback on what makes them most proud as a member of the Department. Responses ranged from training to interactions with the community. Assisting the community in moments of need ranked high for a large group of participants. The feeling of assisting the community, sometimes in the face of danger, was a source of pride for survey participants. The most common response was that the members of the Department are most proud of other officers and civilian staff that they work with every day. The family-like relationships between employees and the level of professionalism demonstrated by their peers were the most common areas of pride. Department members called out teamwork with other officers while under constant pressure as a source of pride.

Most survey participants indicated that they were proud of the Department and their relationships with the community and other officers and staff, as well as the professionalism and reputation of the Department. However, some respondents indicated that they were frustrated by outside politics dictating Department operations. Others felt embarrassed by the Department and Department policies, while a few indicated they were only proud of a paycheck.

Some comments related to areas of pride include:

- “The commitment and dedication of our officers and their willingness to lay down their lives for the Akron community. In light of the criticism and backlash from recent events, our officers remained steadfast and professional in carrying out their duties.”
- “Working in the city that I was raised in and being able to help those who aren't able to help themselves.”
- “APD has grown to become the department that other PD's model themselves after. We have consistently implemented processes and tools (BWC's, IVS, CIT program etc.) prior to it becoming mainstream for law enforcement. Our Training Bureau is one of the best in the state. Despite the loud anti-police crowd, we have a lot of community support that we have earned through years of excellent service.”
- “That the officers are people that are willing to put their lives on the line every day they come to work.”
- “The people I have been able to work with and call my coworkers. I am proud of the calls I have handled, the traffic stops I have made, the impact I have tried to make, and the opportunities I have been given within the department.”

How would you rate the morale of the Department?



According to survey participants, morale is poor based on a few factors (0% indicated morale was “excellent” while a majority [46.63%] indicated it was “poor”). Outside politics is bringing the general morale of the Department to a low level. Survey participants feel a lack of support from the City leadership and others view the Citizens’ Police Oversight Board negatively, feeling that the Board does not understand police work. Department members point to people leaving the Department for more money and less perceived danger in different communities. According to many, retention is a problem and the sense of feeling overworked and underpaid is bringing morale down.

Survey participants stated that they felt a lack of support from the previous Chief and many feel that there is an anti-police rhetoric over the past years. Following the Jayland Walker shooting, Department members didn’t feel support from leadership, including City and Police leadership.

What steps would you like to see the Department undertake to improve morale?

To improve morale, participants primarily pointed to increasing pay and hiring additional staff to alleviate the workload for officers who feel underpaid and overworked. Department members who participated in the survey feel that the Department lacks support from the Mayor and City Council; additional public support would boost morale. Not feeling supported is a common theme among survey respondents; some link the hiring of the next Chief to this feeling. Many participants feel if a Chief is not hired from within the Department it demonstrates a distrust of current Department members and a sense that current members are unable to rise to the occasion. According to some participants, if an internal Chief is not selected it will make officers feel that there is no ability to advance in their careers.

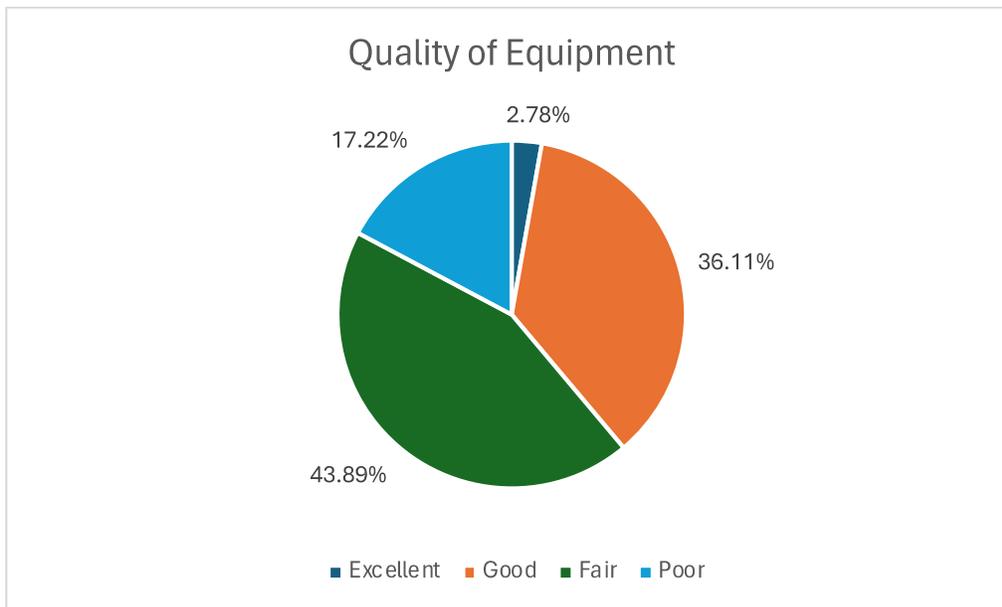
Survey participants voiced their displeasure with the formation of the Citizens' Police Oversight Board; a few believe it is politically motivated and would like it to be disassembled. Officers feel unsupported and sometimes disparaged. Participants suggested an increased social media presence to show the community the positives of the Department would promote community support.

A selection of comments include:

- “We 100% need to hire a Chief from within the department. It has been a disaster the two times we have hired a Chief from outside. We need someone who knows and understands our community challenges as well as someone with the knowledge to develop a plan for the police to have a positive impact on the issues.”
- “Pay increase and if we're going to have a review board, maybe have one that understands contract law and established precedents.”
- “Pay and work environment. Fire has built multiple new fire stations with state of the art equipment. Why are we dragging our feet on a new building? Or why do we have to use outside agency ranges. A department our size should have its own range. We also should be compensated better with pay. Our officers do a tremendous amount of work and do not feel financially valued.”
- “I would like to see the department be led by a chief that supports his/her officers and leads by example.”
- “We need an administration that stands behind its Police Department and its Officers. Wages are not on par with other departments.”

Level of training and quality of equipment

Participants were asked to provide input on the level of training and quality of the equipment provided:



When given the opportunity to provide additional comments, respondents noted that the training staff does a good job with the resources/time given but there are not enough training opportunities. Many participants noted that a new training facility is needed, including a firing range, track, and a new police building. Participants felt the training meets State standards but doesn't go beyond what is necessary.

Regarding the quality of equipment, participants indicated that the police cruisers are an area of concern. Participants feel the cruisers are outdated, with high mileage, and poor upkeep. Participants would like the City to invest in better equipment, noting that some officers buy their own instead of using standard issue equipment (i.e. vests). Some participants indicated that they feel the equipment is adequate and gets the job done. There is a strong dislike of new report writing software and many feel the building is in need of an upgrade.

Top priorities of the Akron Police Department

Survey participants were asked to select three priorities that they believed should be important areas for the Department to focus on. The top selection among respondents was that “sufficient staffing levels” should be the Department’s highest priority. Followed by “crime prevention & reduction” and “enforcing lawful & orderly conduct”.

Participants indicated that the Department should make retaining current officers a priority while also increasing the staffing levels. According to participants, the current Department members do not feel like a priority and the Department should work to help officers feel supported and respected through pay increases, communication, and officer mental health and wellness programs.

Several participants described feeling that the public narrative around police is inaccurate. It was suggested in the comments that the Department should focus on communicating with the public and sharing positive stories and work they do on social media. Respondents also indicated that prioritizing police education in schools would have a positive impact on community relationships.

A sample of comments include:

- “Another priority should be on sharing accurate information on what is happening on our streets, including the sharing of positive interactions and outstanding efforts of our police officers that are occurring each day. Another priority should be improving accountability with other community partners. This includes addressing the challenges we are facing in other parts of the criminal justice system - such as access to jail space, and with the appropriate prosecution and sentencing of criminals. A small percentage of the citizens create the bulk of our communities’ issues by being given opportunities to re-offend over-and-over. Other suggestions involve improving transparency on functionality (or lack thereof) of our community’s systems of education and mental health.”
- “Officer retention. Akron has become a training center for surrounding departments. Not sure what the answer is but it needs [to be] addressed.”
- “There was not any option to select for officer wellness. If our officers are not mentally, physically, and emotionally healthy, the service they deliver to the community will suffer. They are not robots but are expected to be perfect all the time. We need to give them the resources to succeed and live healthy lives. Police has a high rate of divorce, alcoholism, and suicide.”
- “Overall health and well-being of its employees. Lower stress, and anxiety, and show that they’re appreciated.”

Are there any areas you feel the Department does well in?

Survey participants were asked to describe the area(s) they feel the Department already does well in. Participants stated that while aspects of police work are executed well, it’s the officer care that needs improvement. Participants indicated that they would like to see more care for the health and wellness of officers.

Participants indicated that the organization acts professionally and has high training standards. Many noted that the Department does well with the accountability of officers and treats the community with dignity and respect. Participants noted that public interactions are conducted well, and the Department is transparent with the public. Department members who participated in the survey noted that investigations and crime prevention are done well in APD.

A selection of comments include:

- “All aspects of policing we are doing well in. The health and wellness of our patrol shifts needs to be seen as a priority. Shift differential needs to be paid and FTO pay for

senior/veteran officers to come and train on night shifts must be considered heavily. If this is not done the ones left able to or willing to train will not want to anymore.”

- “I believe we do well in training and that’s why I think we need to continue to make it a priority.”
- “The number of uses of force are minimal compared to the number of calls for service. Even the level of force is minimal in those instances that it is used.”
- “Investigating crimes, there’s a great group of people behind the scenes gathering information needed to help solve crimes.”
- “Training. Response time, especially to the higher priority calls.”
- “Personal interactions at community events, major crimes solve rate, training of new officers, overall professionalism at crime scenes- including things like rendering vital first aid, that go unreported/unnoticed.”
- “I feel our training bureau is one of the best in the state and does an outstanding job. Community relations also does a fantastic job.”

Are there any areas you feel the Department needs to improve in?

Survey participants were asked to describe any areas of improvement for the Department; the main theme related to officer support. Many participants indicated that they do not feel supported by the Department, City Leaders, or the community. Respondents suggested showing the community the good work they do to combat any public narratives of police malpractice. Department members who felt unsupported requested that the City offer more public support, not just private support. Participants also ask for more transparency with the public and within APD. Several participants request the Department improve upon holding command staff accountable just the same as patrol.

Respondents noted that communication and training should be improved and become more frequent. Several Department members noted that they are unhappy with current report software and ask that patrol staff be better equipped. There is concern with officer retention and many feel that improving officer pay would help stop the outflow of officers.

Participants noted areas of improvement as:

- “I don’t think we do enough to self-promote our department so people in the community know about the positive interactions and programs we have. We have relied on local media and social media to put out the positive things we do. Instead, they want to focus on the bad driving divisiveness.”
- “We can improve in our connection and collaboration with the community. This is due in part to low staffing, the expectation of our officers to be a do it all resource, and not giving our officers the unobligated time to engage with the community. Providing the time to engage will make it become an ingrained practice.”
- “We need more staffing, a better place to work, more positive storytelling and a great emphasis on retention.”
- “Patrol needs to be better staffed. We need better equipment that is more user-friendly. We need to have a Chief that brings institutional knowledge and the willingness to grow the agency based on past failures and successes.”

Priorities of the next Chief of Police

Survey respondents were asked to rank a list of priorities for the next Chief of Police.

The top three results are as follows:

1. Strategies to reduce violent crime
2. Crime prevention and reduction
3. Maintaining public order

When provided a space to offer additional comments, many respondents discussed the desire to have the next Chief focus on officers over external factors; to ensure that the position remains apolitical. Participants ask the next Chief to focus on addressing issues that are most important to the function of morale of the Department, including retention and staffing issues. Participants ask the next Chief to prioritize officer wellness by improving morale, mental health, and overall health.

Participants would like the next Chief to prioritize working with external agencies, including prosecutors and judges, to keep criminals in jails. Some survey respondents indicated their views that the justice system is too lenient on individuals and should be stricter in enforcing laws.

Participants ask the next Chief to prioritize supporting officers to the public and City leadership. Survey respondents suggested that the next Chief ask the City leadership to be more involved in understanding training, laws, and other issues officers face daily.

Survey respondents indicated that the next Chief should make communication with the public and the Department a priority. The next Chief should make transparency within the Department a priority and be willing to ask hard questions and make the uncomfortable changes necessary.

A sample of comments includes:

- “The next Chief needs to prioritize Officer Wellness. A police department that prioritizes wellness will be less likely to have citizen complaints, better able to de-escalate and will enjoy their job more. It will improve morale.”
- “The ability to work with prosecutors and judges, so that after an arrest is made, a subject gets prosecuted and punished according to the laws and standards we all expect.”
- “Priority one for the new Chief should be retention of experienced officers and figuring ways to boost morale. A well-staffed department with higher morale will only improve upon the things we’ve built here.”

Desired qualities, qualifications, and skills of the next Chief of Police

Survey respondents were asked to select three options from a list of skills, qualities, and qualifications they thought were most important in the next Chief of Police. The top three most selected are:

1. Strong leader for officers and civilian staff
2. Strength to make unpopular decisions
3. Quality communicator

Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the next Chief of Police? Is there anything else you can think of that the City should consider when selecting the next Chief of Police?

The overall message from the Department members who participated in this survey indicates that the next Chief of Police should come from within the Department. According to several participants, hiring from within the existing command sends a message of support for the Department; not hiring from within would send a message publicly that there does not exist good candidates within the Department and would be demoralizing. Participants indicated that they would ask the City leadership to have respect for current officers and hire a candidate that has the same level of respect.

Survey participants ask that the City select a Chief with a knowledge of the Akron community and the Department and demonstrate integrity in all of their interactions with all groups. Participants indicate that they would like a Chief who has officers' backs and supports them but will correct them and hold them accountable when needed. Several respondents indicated that they were displeased with the previous two Chiefs. Participants ask that the City hire a "law and order" Chief and someone who will remain apolitical.

A sample of respondents' thoughts are below:

- "The preference is to get someone from within. Please develop leadership that makes decisions based upon what the community actually needs rather than what will get them hired or re-elected. Bringing in outside Chiefs has not worked well previously and negatively impacts internal leadership striving for opportunities. The Chief's position, and the department as a whole, needs connected to the community but must have some autonomy from politics to operate effectively."
- "I believe the next Chief of Police for the City of Akron should be a strong person that is able to make unpopular decisions, shall back their officers, should be an effective communicator, should be transparent, should be honest, and last, but not least should encourage community oriented policing."
- "Whether from within the dept or if selected from outside, please take the officer surveys you receive strongly into account when making your choice. We all took our positions in the dept. and in city leadership positions like yourselves to serve the community. Look at the last several Police Chiefs and look at what qualities helped and hurt the dept and its citizens the most. Choose someone who can help us all achieve a better Akron."
- "I am very proud of the members of this department and I really do not want a police chief who will apologize for the great work that we do. Please select someone who will back our officers when they do their job."
- "Strong leadership skills, great communicator, up to date with modern police practices, stand up for his department, and treat everyone with respect no matter their rank, background, or ethnicity."