



**NCCD** | National Council on  
Crime & Delinquency

## Girls and Gangs: Improving Understanding and Responsiveness

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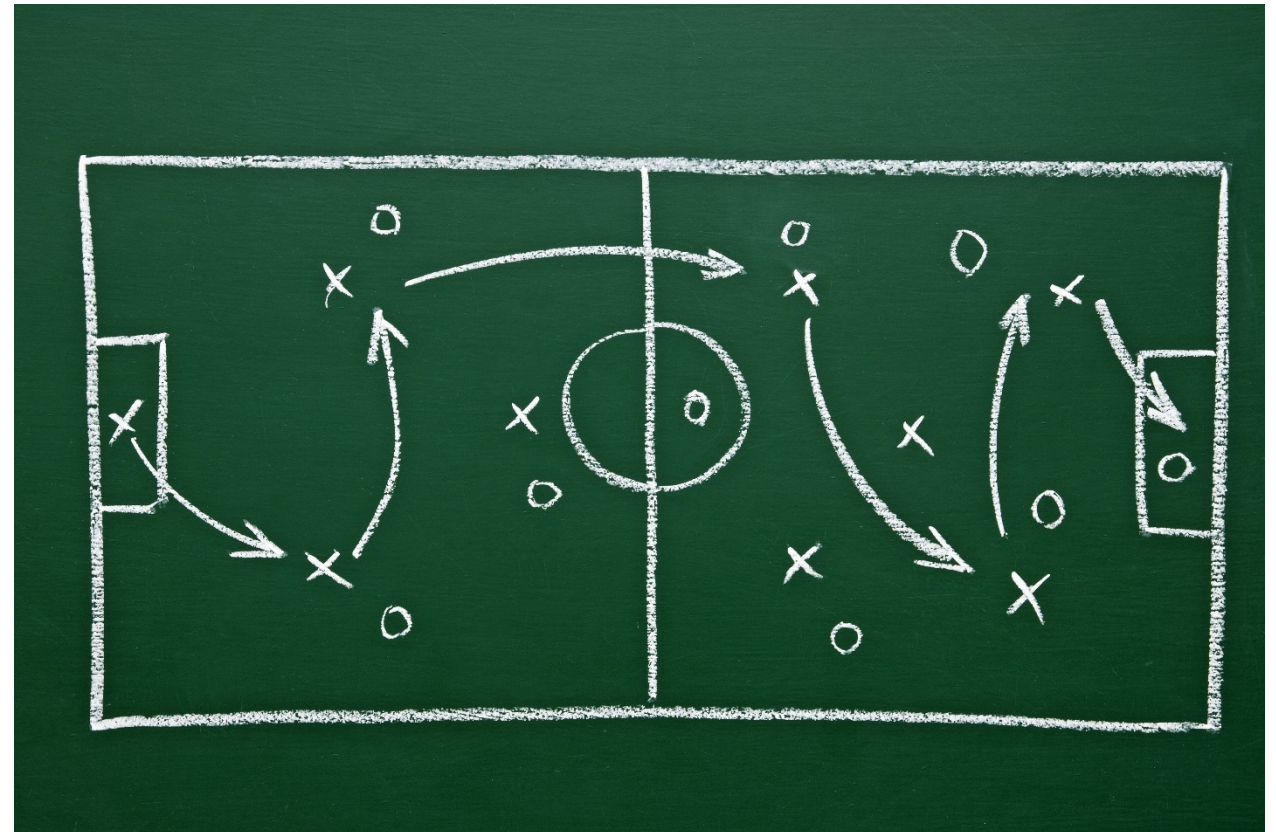
# Today's Agenda



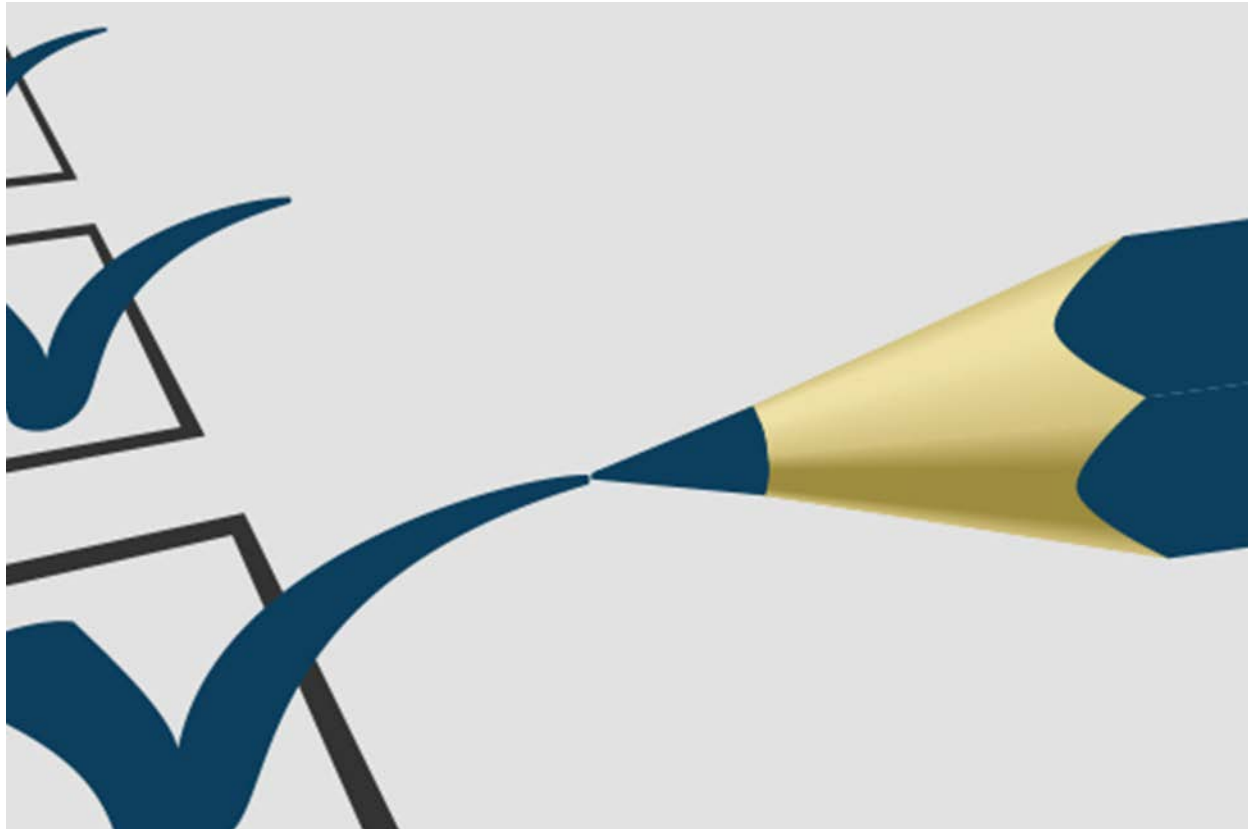
- Introductions
- Study Overview
- Methodology
- Key Findings
- Recommendations
- Q&A

# Overview of the Study

- Key goals
- Guided by advisory board
- Funding for project



# Methodology



- Key stakeholder interviews
- Cross-sectional interviews with female youth

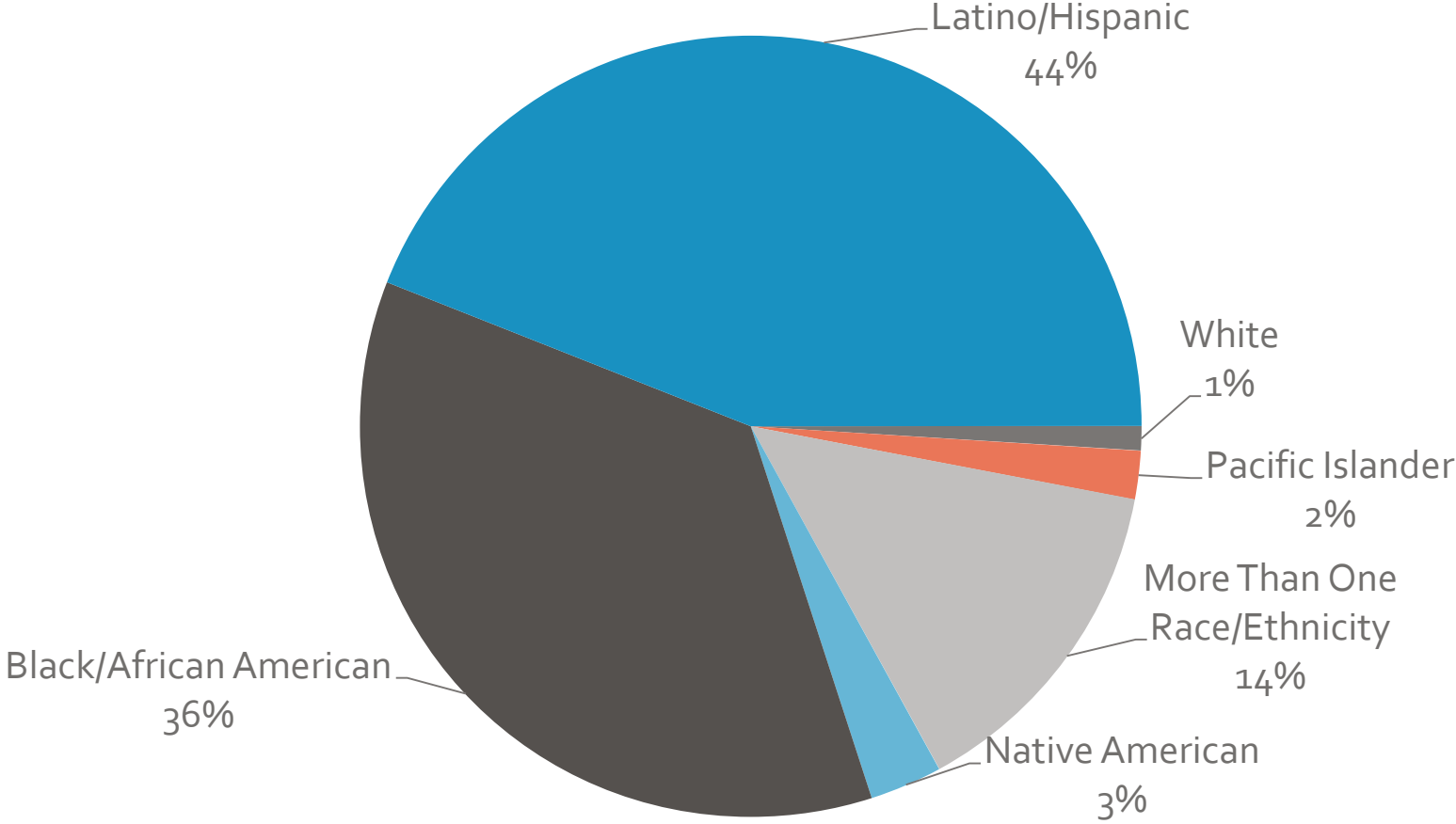
# Profile of Girls



- About half (48%) of interview participants were ages 17 to 19.
- Most (81%) had previously worked or were working at the time of the interview.
- Nearly half (40%) were pregnant or already a parent.

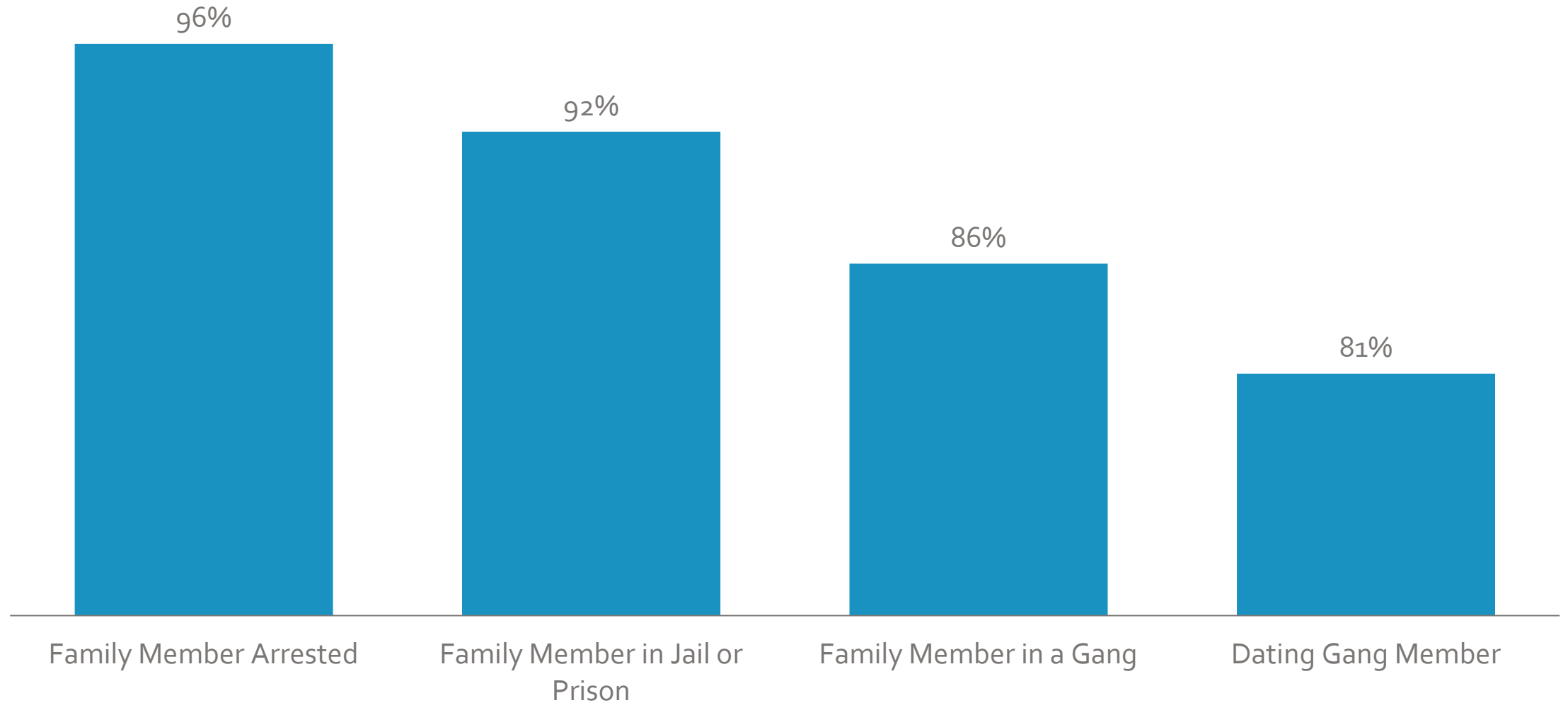
# Profile of Girls (continued)

Race/Ethnicity

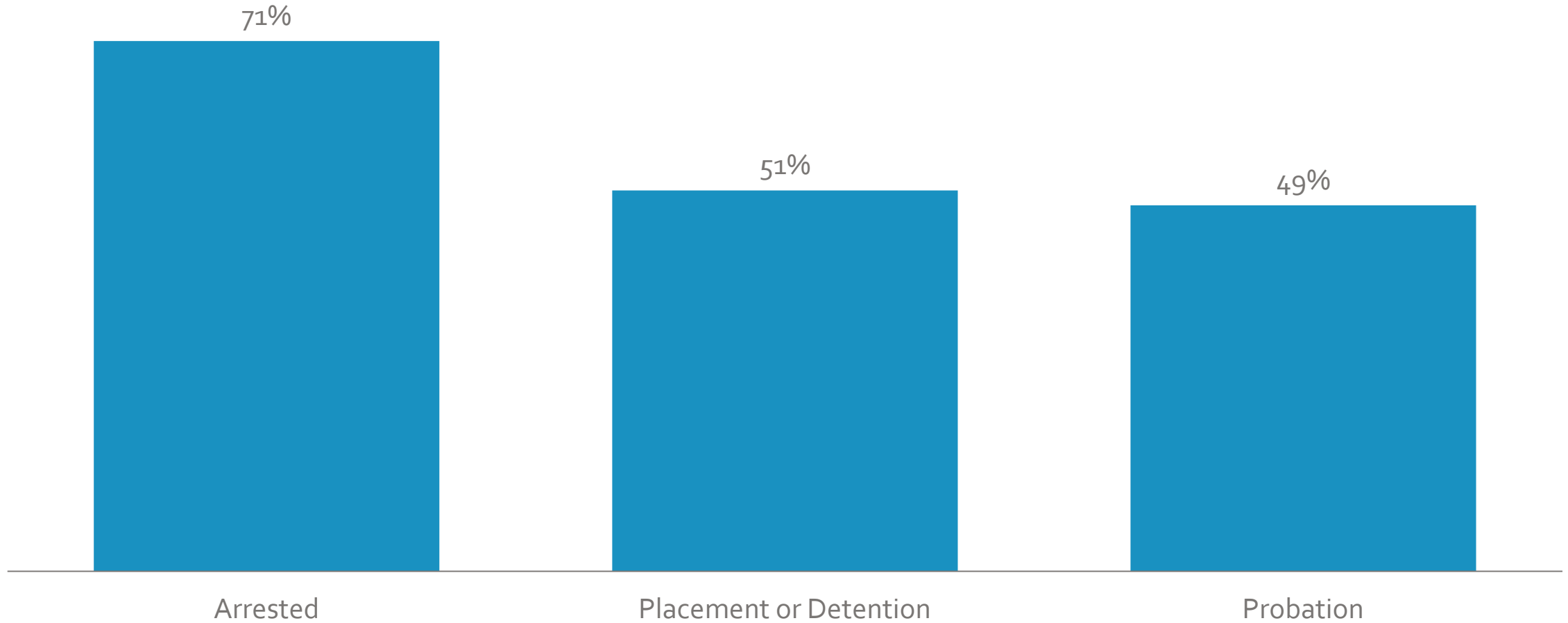


- White
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- More Than One Race/Ethnicity
- Latino/Hispanic

# Justice and Gang Involvement of Families Members



# Justice and Gang Involvement of Girls



# Why do girls join gangs?

- Gang-involved family members
- Neighborhood/ environment
- Gang-involved peers



# Why do girls join gangs?

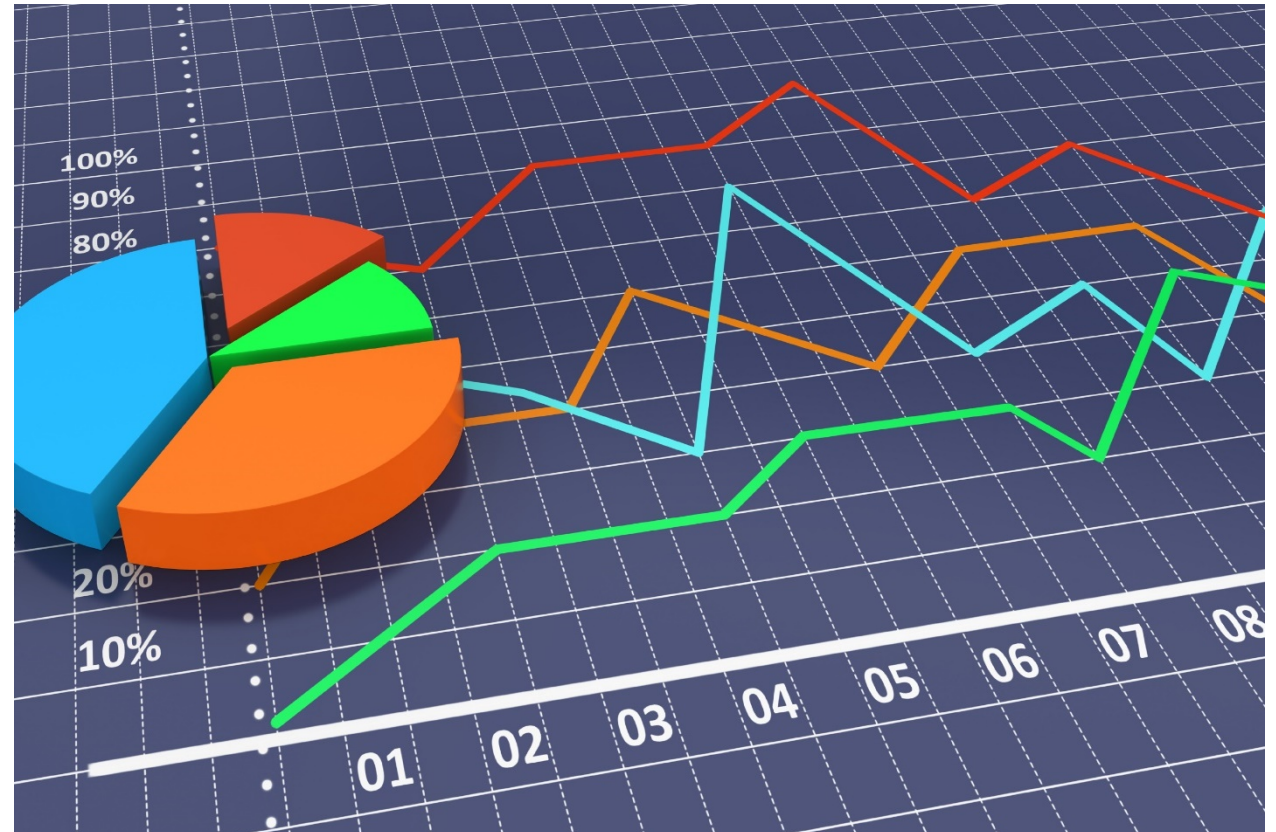


- Belonging and acceptance
- Family conflict/ lack of supervision
- Dating a gang member

# Gang Activities

Percentages of girls interviewed who were asked, forced, or volunteered to:

- Commit a violent act: 72%
- Deal drugs: 66%
- Hide a gun: 61%



# Girls' Victimization and Substance Use

Percentages of girls interviewed who:

- Witnessed violence in the gang: 85%
- Were the victim of a violent act as part of the gang (excluding being jumped or sexed into the gang): 48%
- Have used drugs of some sort: 94%

# Girls' Roles in Gangs

Supportive Role

Fighter Role

Leadership Role



# Why do girls desist from gang activity?



- Pregnancy/parenting
- Maturing out/desire for a better lifestyle
- Incarceration

# Strengths of Gang-Involved Girls

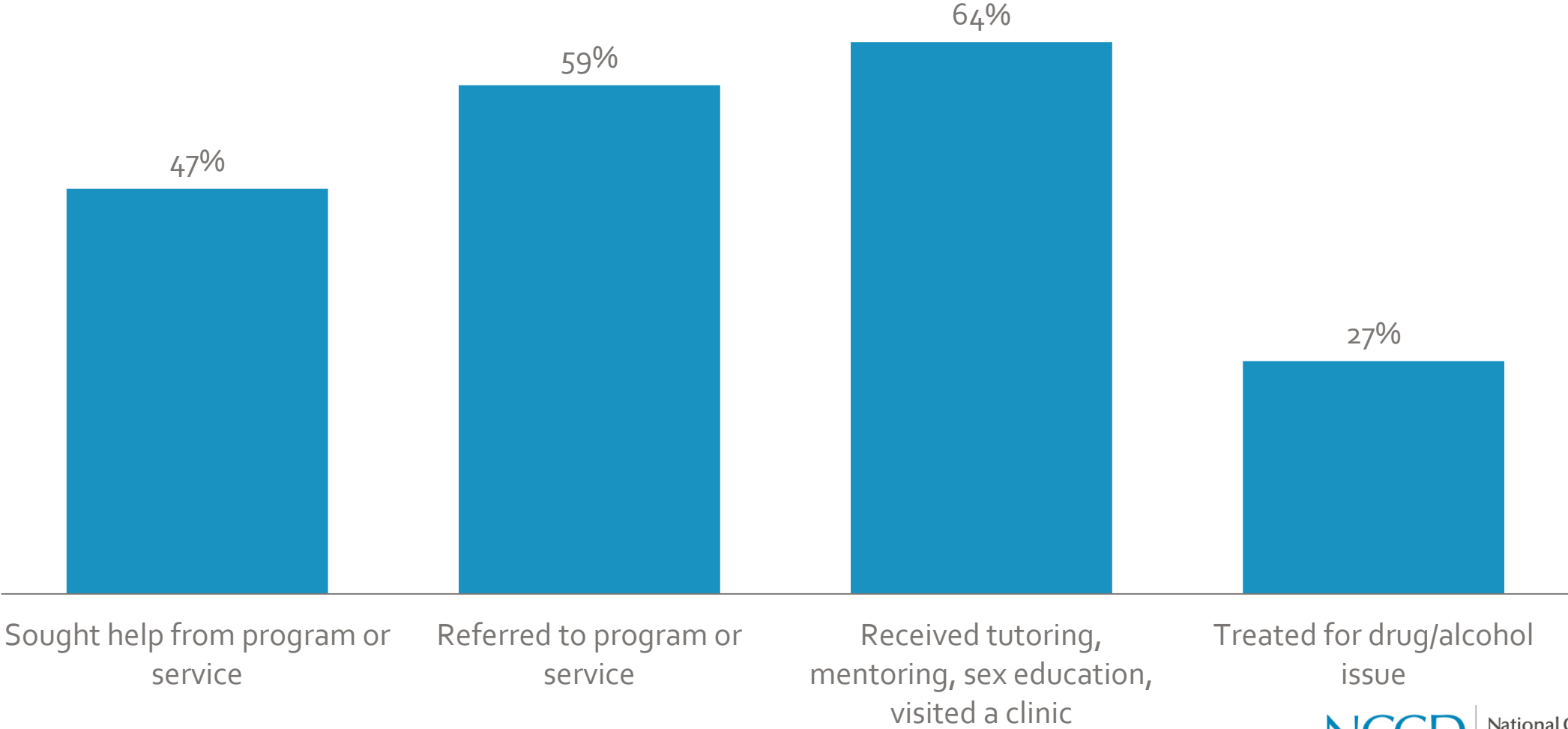
Strong/Resilient

Great Interpersonal Skills

Smart



# Role of Services and Service Providers



# Girls' Needs According to Girls



- “A place to stay”
- Emotional support/ behavioral health
- Basic financial assistance
- Educational support
- Job training and employment

# Girls' Needs According to Stakeholders

- Trained staff and consistent programming
- Client-centered relationships
- Coordinated prevention services
- Family/parenting support



# Girls' Needs According to Stakeholders (continued)



- Employment opportunities
- Mentorship
- Exposure to opportunities
- Services for women

# Recommendations

- Use intentional language.
- Place intersectionality at the forefront.
- Understand girls' embedded lives.
- Provide gender-responsive services for girls.
- Build on girls' strengths.



*Thank you!*

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