

# **Town of Webster NY**

***EST. 1840***



## **Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative**

**Dennis Kohlmeier, Chief of Police, March 2021**

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## Foreword

This report is a collaboration of work that took place across the transition of the office of Chief of Police. As such, it reflects the operational practices and vision of the organization and not one specific person. Care was taken to evaluate each element of the report from an organizational perspective and incorporate the input of members across all ranks. As the incoming Chief of Police, I have identified some follow-on steps to build upon the work generated in this report. We, as a community, will build upon its foundation with additional policies and a culture of community collaboration.

*Dennis J. Kohlmeier*

Dennis Kohlmeier,  
Chief of Police

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As mandated by Executive Order 203, the following is the Town of Webster Police Department's reform and reinvention plan. Based upon consultation with community members and a review of their reported needs and requirements, this plan outlines the assessment that is required to understand our agency needs, highlights change already made and proposes a plan to further our fair and consistent engagement with our community. This plan is tailored to meet the specific needs of the Webster community with specific focus on building relationships thorough the community based upon trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency. In developing this plan, we gave attention to eliminating any racial or cultural disparities in the delivery of our policing services.

The recommendations included in this Reform and Reinvention Plan are built upon evidence-based strategies outlined in the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Guidance Document. In developing our Reform and Reinvention guidelines, we focused on issues such as transparency, accountability, training, community engagement, recruitment and candidate qualifications and police policies and procedures.

## **I. Agency Overview**

In 1929, the Webster Police Department was first established as a Village Police Department. The Police Department was expanded to additionally cover the Town of Webster in 1962. Today, the Webster Police Department is a full-time, full-service police agency providing police services to over 45,000 town and village residents. We are staffed with 34 full time sworn police officers, including one chief of police, two lieutenants, seven sergeants, three investigators and twenty-one patrol officers. We also employ four civilian police clerks. Our yearly cost to taxpayers is approximately \$6.3 million. Annually, Webster Police Officers process approximately 39,000 calls for service.

<b>Calls for Service</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Total calls for service</b>	<b>38,335</b>	<b>39,907</b>
<b>Assault</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>
Harassment	234	224
<b>Burglary</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>59</b>
Criminal Mischief	133	132
<b>Family Trouble</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>1,023</b>
Larceny	441	456
<b>Rape</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
Suspicious Call	1,486	1,576
<b>Stolen Vehicle</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>56</b>
Check the Welfare	592	606
<b>Fight</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>52</b>
Robbery	5	7
<b>Medical</b>	<b>2,935</b>	<b>2,367</b>
Alarms	1,670	1,276
<b>Assists</b>	<b>2,349</b>	<b>2,342</b>
Missing Persons	133	94
<b>Motor Vehicle Accidents</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>886</b>
Special Attentions Checks	10,648	11,423
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	<b>5,855</b>	<b>4,320</b>
<i>*Does not depict all calls for service</i>		

Webster is one of the fastest growing communities in Monroe County. Additionally, Webster was previously named the "Number One Sports Town in New York" by Sports Illustrated. Therefore, Webster attracts several large-scale sporting events, festivals, social gatherings and other visitors and tourists. We have hundreds of acres of park land and several trail systems, all of which are protected from future development. We border the southern shore of Lake Ontario and the eastern shore of Irondequoit Bay. Webster has a high-quality school district and is an excellent place to raise a family, recreate, work, and own a business. The slogan "Where life is worth living" is displayed on signs welcoming people to Webster. That is really on our signs and we know it to be true.

The Webster Police Department is commanded by the Chief of Police, who reports directly to the elected Town Board. The Town Board, consisting of the Town Supervisor and four Council members, has direct oversight over the Webster Police Department. The Chief provides Town Board members with frequent updates on all issues and initiatives relating to police department business. The Chief is also responsible for ensuring that the Webster Police Department abides by and maintains all policy and procedure standards as set forth by the New York State Accreditation Program, as well as ensuring all members abide by all applicable Best Practices identified by the International Association of the Chiefs of Police (IACP). Currently, The Webster Police Department has over 150 policies and procedures providing specific guidance and mandates to be followed by our members in the normal course of their business.

We also look to our mission statement for general guidance and motivation.

*"The primary mission of for employees of the Webster Police Department is to serve the community of Webster and its people. We are called upon to enforce laws and ordinances passed by the representatives of these same people. The Department is committed to service and to taking positive steps to maintain our high standards in response to the community we serve. The principal goals of the Webster Police Department include; the protection of life and property, resolution of conflict, the creation and maintenance of a feeling of security in the community, identification, apprehension and prosecution of offenders and the preservation of peace."*

The Chief of Police is committed to community policing, fair and impartial enforcement of the law, performing duties in an unbiased manner to promote objectivity and equitable treatment of all people regardless of race, skin color or tone, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender expression, religion, religious practices, age, disability, or sexual orientation. All members of the Webster Police Department are expected to do the same.

The Webster Police Department actively identify annual goals and objectives for strategic planning purposes. Progress toward achieving our annual goals and objectives is tracked and adjustments are made on an as needed basis.

The Webster Police Department has always enjoyed a strong relationship with the community. We attribute this to our ongoing commitment to community engagement, which is part of our Department's culture and is an expectation clearly communicated to

all members. We also pride ourselves on the collaborative relationships we have built over the years with other law enforcement agencies, businesses, non-profits, faith-based groups, community-based groups, and other civic organizations. We enjoy being a part of the greater Webster Community and continue to look for opportunities to strengthen our relationships throughout the community.

## **II. Employing Smart and Effective Policing Standards and Strategies**

### **A. Strategies of Concern**

Executive Order 203, identifies 10 strategies of concern that agencies should evaluate or prohibit in order to foster a culture of trust with the community. Each strategy of concern will be individually addressed to show our current relevant policy, practice, and compliance. Please note that the Webster Police Department has been compliant with each category with reference to best practices and evidence-based strategies.

As part of a yearly review of all agency directives and policies, revisions are made whenever necessitated due to changes in legal requirements, case law, updates to best practices as identified through academic research, as a part of the accreditation process and / or as identified by evaluating community needs. Agency directives and policies regularly undergo internal and legal reviews whenever necessary to ensure adherence to mandated standards.

#### **1. Broken Window/Stop and Frisk**

The Webster Police Department does not promote the “Broken Window” theory as a patrol tactic. Additionally, we train our officers to recognize and apply the DeBour standard to citizen interactions. Our General Order on Unbiased Policing will also guide our members on how to treat citizens.

#### Unbiased Policing – General Order 372

The Webster Police Department has a strict policy in place prohibiting racial profiling and implicit bias. Implicit bias awareness has also been incorporated into annual enhanced in-service training, attendance at which is mandatory for all sworn members. Our training and awareness efforts will continue with annual instruction about cultural sensitivity and being empathic toward those we serve in the community.

## **2. Discriminatory or biased based stops, searches and arrests**

### Unbiased Policing – General Order 372

The Webster Police Department has a strict policy in place prohibiting racial profiling and implicit bias. Implicit bias awareness has also been incorporated into annual enhanced in-service training, attendance at which is mandatory for all sworn members. Our training and awareness efforts will continue with annual instruction about cultural sensitivity and being empathic toward those we serve in the community.

## **3. Chokeholds**

### Use of Force Policies – General Order 335

Our policy regarding Use of Force complies with the New York State recommended guidelines issued by NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services. Additionally, our use of force policy has been reviewed and accepted as part of our accreditation procedures. Our policy specifically prohibits choke holds. An administrative review is mandated for all instances involving the use of force. This process is initiated with the shift supervisor. Then, a trained and certified defensive tactics instructor evaluates the totality of the circumstances surrounding the use of force. The Bureau Commander and the Chief of Police conduct a final review of the use of force to ensure compliance with all NYS laws, WPD policies and procedures. Our Use of Force Policy is posted on our web page and is accessible by the public at any time. Our policy was last updated on November 2, 2020.

## **4. Use of Force for punitive or retaliatory reasons**

### Use of Force Policies – General Order 335

Our policy regarding Use of Force complies with the New York State recommended guidelines issued by NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services. Additionally, our use of force policy has been reviewed and accepted as part of our accreditation procedures. Our policy mandates a duty to intervene when excessive force is used by another member. An administrative review is mandated for all instances involving the use of force. This process is initiated with the shift supervisor. Then, a trained and certified defensive tactics instructor evaluates the totality of the circumstances surrounding the use of force. The Bureau Commander and the Chief of Police conduct a final review of the use of force to ensure compliance with all NYS laws, WPD policies and procedures. Our Use of Force Policy is posted on our web page and is accessible by the public at any time. Our policy was last updated on November 2, 2020.

## **5. Pretextual Stops**

In order to assure our community that pretextual stops are conducted fairly and judiciously, we implemented General Order 372-Unbiased Policing

The Webster Police Department has a strict policy in place prohibiting racial profiling and implicit bias. Implicit bias awareness has also been incorporated into annual enhanced in-service training, attendance at which is mandatory for all sworn members. Our training and awareness efforts will continue with annual instruction about cultural sensitivity and being empathic toward those we serve in the community.

## **6. Informal Quotas for summonses, tickets or arrests**

### Development and Performance Assessment- General Order 270

Our goal is to obtain an objective evaluation of our patrol officers' activity. In order to assess the performance of members of the organization, it is important to consider their self-initiated activity without imposing formal or informal quotas. In order to accomplish this, the Officer Appraisal Manual addresses self-initiated activity as follows:

Comparing each officer's work performance to that of his/her peers assigned to the same platoon will assist with determining an appropriate rating for the individual officer's work effort under the self-initiated activity sub-categories. Prior to assigning a performance rating for an individual officer's self-initiated activity in these three sub-categories, supervisors will determine the shift mean for traffic stops, traffic citations, and parking citations. The shift mean shall be determined by:

- Reviewing the total number of traffic stops and traffic and parking citations issued by each officer assigned to the platoon
- Disregard the officers with the highest and lowest data for each of these activities
- Obtain the average for the remaining officers
- Deduct 50% from that mean to obtain a baseline goal for the category

The baseline performance goal for each activity will provide a reasonable basis for supervisors to determine the appropriate rating for self-initiated activity in those categories. An officer's activity which falls below the reduced mean will receive a less-than-acceptable rating for that category unless the rating supervisor can demonstrate and document extenuating circumstances that would tend to mitigate a less-than-acceptable rating (ex: assignment to non-patrol functions).

## **7. Shooting at moving vehicles and high-speed pursuits**

### Use of Deadly Physical Force/Firearms Discharge Report- General Order 340

General Order 340 specifically addresses this strategy of concern by limiting the authorization of shooting at a moving vehicle. The policy states: “Discharge of a firearm from or at a moving vehicle is prohibited unless the member reasonably believes that the occupant(s) of the vehicle are using or are about to use deadly physical force against the member or another person. Therefore, shooting at a fleeing vehicle or a vehicle that is going away from the member, and is no longer a threat, is prohibited.”

### Routine, Emergency, and Pursuit Driving- General Order 530

The Webster Police Department has limited its policy on vehicle pursuits to investigations that qualify with the following criteria: Commits or attempts to commit the following crimes: Murder/Manslaughter, Forcible Rape/Sodomy, Robbery, Kidnapping/Unlawful Imprisonment, Felony Assault, Burglary in progress or immediate flight there from, Arson, Felony Criminal Possession or Use of a Weapon or Menacing with a Firearm, Class “A” felony drug offense, leaving the scene of a personal injury motor vehicle accident or exigent circumstances which are defined as: An exigent circumstance involves an incident where the apprehension of a fleeing suspect, while not falling in a listed crime category, is of an equally serious nature and the apprehension of the suspect outweighs the risks associated with the pursuit. A supervisor/command officer must clearly document the exigent circumstance that lead to permission to pursue.

## **8. Use of SWAT teams and no-knock warrants**

The Webster Police Department does not have a SWAT team or tactical team. We rely on the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office for this special service.

## **9. Less-lethal instruments: tasers/pepper spray**

### Use of Physical Force- General Order 335

The policy reform guideline recommends that officers receive additional training in the use of less-lethal weapons. General Order 335 outlines the use of less-lethal instruments. Our policy regarding Use of Force complies with the New York State recommended guidelines issued by NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services. Additionally, our use of force policy has been reviewed and accepted as part of our accreditation procedures. Members are required to complete training annually on each less-lethal device that they are authorized to use.

## **10. Facial recognition tech**

The Webster Police Department does not employ facial recognition technology.

## **B. Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities and Build Trust**

### **Monroe County Forensic Intervention Team Initiative (FIT)**

FIT is affiliated with the Monroe County Office of Mental Health, which collaborates with the eleven law enforcement agencies in Monroe County. FIT employs Mental Health clinicians directly with law enforcement officers, with the goal of assisting people in crisis by ensuring access to appropriate services, optimize outcomes through on-scene assessments and referrals. The mission of FIT is to provide effective and compassionate crisis intervention for people living with mental illnesses when those folks encounter law enforcement officers. With an emphasis on de-escalation techniques, FIT clinicians and their law enforcement partners attempt to find the least restrictive level of care that still meets the individual's needs and ensures their safety. Compelled hospitalizations are utilized when appropriate and necessary. However, the goal is to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and minimize arrest and incarceration rates. This collaborative model partners law enforcement officers and mental health clinicians to develop valuable working relationships with the common goal of providing the best options for people living with mental illnesses in our community.

The Webster Police Department employs the use of the FIT principles at each mental health call and relies upon this highly effective resource on a constant basis. In 2020, the WPD utilized the FIT services and formally initiated 816 referrals, compared to 129 referrals in 2019.

## **C. Community Engagement**

### **Community Policing:**

The Webster Police Department is committed to the tenants of community policing, as noted in our mission statement. **Please see Appendix A for a list of our community policing activities.**

### **Rochester Area Threat Assessment Committee**

We recognize that, at times, people in crisis have either slipped thought the cracks or who do not get the services they need due to gaps in communication or management. Unfortunately, some of these people go on to commit violent crimes. To address issues with organizational communication and potential service gaps, Webster PD participates in the ROCTAC forum to solicit and offer feedback pertaining to identified individuals thought to pose threat risk to the community.

The ROCTAC initiative examines restorative, preventative and person-centered intervention strategies when targeted violence, mental health issues or public safety are concerns. The overall goal of ROCTAC is to ensure public safety. The committee is a multi-disciplinary team, meeting bi-weekly, to discuss cases and intervention strategies for folks in our community needing extra or urgent attention. Webster PD consults with ROCTAC and has presented cases to ROCTAC for feedback.

### **Gates to Recovery**

The Webster Police Department partners with the Town of Webster, Town of Penfield and Gates to Recovery, an addiction support program offering treatment, placement, family support, recovery resources and Narcan training and certification. The Town of Webster also offers a drop-in center for fast access to addiction recovery treatment.

### **Webster Council of Churches**

The Webster Police Department meets monthly with the Webster Council of Churches to discuss important issues in our community.

### **School Resource Officer (SRO) Program**

The Webster Police Department and the Webster Central School District maintain an Inter-Municipal Agreement to assign uniformed SROs in school buildings. This program aims to reduce the incidents of school violence, reduce criminal offenses committed by juveniles and young adults, establish rapport between our SROs and the student population and between the SROs and school staff. Our SROs are not involved in school disciplinary proceedings that do not involve violations of law.

## IV. Recruiting and Supporting Excellent Personnel

### A. Recruiting a Diverse Workforce

Hiring police officers is accomplished in one of two ways, new hires who have never been police officers, and certified police officers who are transfers to our agency. Traditionally, we have used a mixed approach of both techniques in order to bring in outside experience as well as developing new hires.

1. New hires- Citizens who are interested in becoming police officers are required to do so through the NYS Civil Service Law. This is accomplished through the Monroe County Civil Service Commission and a process administered by the Monroe County Department of Human Resources. The Webster Police Department is limited in its ability to recruit and process new hires as we are not in control of any portion of this process. We are limited to selecting either a county-wide candidate list or a town residential list of candidates. Historically we have chosen the residential list to give preference to local candidates. Candidates must either be Monroe County residents or Town of Webster residents depending on the list we select.
2. Transfer officers- Transfer officers are also processed through the NYS civil service process. However, in this scenario, we can recruit from any agency in NYS that has appointed the officer from a valid civil service list and who as completed their probationary period. Out of state officers are not candidates for transfer in NYS.

The diversity of the force in comparison to the diversity of the community is dependent on whether the comparison is made to the jurisdiction or regional demographics.

### B. Training and Continuing Education

Training is an important part of any professional development. In the case of law enforcement, it is broken into two parts, the initial police academy certification and in-service training for continuing education. The Town of Webster participates in the Monroe County Public Safety Training Facility (PSTF) program for all our academy training and certification of new hires. We also utilize the PSTF for a large portion of the in-service training that occurs. This facility allows for certified curriculums from NYS to be taught and provided regional continuity for training programs to ensure best practices. There is also in-house training done by our NYS certified law enforcement instructors.

### **C. De-Escalation Training**

All members of the Webster Police Department are provided with annual training in de-escalation and effective communication techniques. We currently have eight members who are certified as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) members. CIT certification is a 40-hour curriculum providing students with a foundational understanding of mental illnesses, and treatment strategies for mental illness. Additionally, the CIT curriculum presents strategies for effective communication with people in crisis and those with an acute emotional disturbance. The course includes classroom instruction, experiential exercises to increase awareness about what life is like with a diagnosed mental illness, scenario-based exercises, feedback from people in the community dealing with mental illnesses and exposure to community resources available to assist mentally ill people and their families.

We recently made a commitment to have every sworn WPD member CIT certified as soon as possible. In early 2021, the Monroe County Law Enforcement Council (LEC), composed of all ten Police Chiefs and the Sheriff, jointly announced their commitment to the Crisis Intervention Team training, as well. Based upon these commitments, every officer/deputy in Monroe County will be CIT certified as soon as possible based upon training availability.

We are fortunate to have two DCJS certified Mental Health Instructors in-house at the Webster Police Department. Our Mental Health Instructors teach NYS approved curriculum during in-service training blocks. Our instructors also lecture at the police recruit academy, including classroom instruction, participating in scenario-based learning, evaluation, and grading of recruit's performance in final scenarios. Additionally, these instructors' partner with local mental health providers/experts on many cases involving persistently mentally ill people living within our jurisdiction.

The Webster PD defensive tactics curriculum, taught annually, incorporates the use of de-escalation techniques prior to physical force or less lethal techniques, whenever possible.

### **D. Officer Wellness**

The health and well-being of our officers is of a top priority at the Webster Police Department. Resources for self-care, counseling, and intervention programs are available to our officers starting in the recruit academy and extending thorough out their entire career. The Employee

Assistance Program (EAP), providing confidential support to employees for a variety of personal and professional challenges, is also available to our members. We understand that officers may be most comfortable talking to one another. Therefore, we partnered with the New York State EAP Program to establish our own in-house peer-to-peer counseling program. Two Webster Police members are specially trained to recognize stress symptoms in fellow officers before that stress becomes unmanageable.

In conjunction with the above strategies, the Webster Police Department also mandates professional mental health counseling as part of the officer involved shooting policy. This service has also been used in special circumstances for incidents that are recognized to be emotionally taxing for our officers.

#### **V. Community Engagement and Community Input Opportunities:**

As mandated by Executive Order 203, the Webster Police Department invited public comments, concerns, expectations, and critiques, which will be used to develop more effective community policing initiatives. Our efforts to engage the community for input thus far is outlined below.

##### **A. M.C. Alliance for Transformation of Community & Police Committee**

In June of 2020, the Webster Police Department joined the Monroe County Alliance for Transformation of Community & Police Committee (“The Alliance”), which is composed of faith-based members, community members and Command Staff from all eleven law enforcement agencies in Monroe County. In part, the mission for this committee is, “piercing the hearts of the police force and civilians by transforming traditional law enforcement to intentional community policing.” The Alliance also had a specific vision, “For Monroe County to be the champions of intentional community policing through its trusting and impactful community / police relationships, understanding and safety, and fair and just practices toward all people and communities.” The Alliance set specific short, mid, and long-term goals with a 1–2-year implementation schedule relating to specific to community policing initiatives. The Webster Police Department eagerly attended several community forums to gather feedback about the best ways for us to transform our Department.

As a demonstration of our commitment to the goals and mission of the Alliance, the Chief of Police took an active role on the Foundation of Police Redesign Law Enforcement subcommittee. Participation in the Alliance has facilitated many face-to-face interactions with community representatives and faith-based representatives from the greater Rochester area. Through those interactions, we have discussed current policing practices and progressive community policing recommendations. The Webster Police Department continues our active

membership with the Alliance, which will be on-going beyond the submission of this report.

## **B. Community Satisfaction Survey**

In November 2020, we published a Community Satisfaction Survey on the Town Website and on our Facebook page to solicit community feedback. The survey allowed us to obtain anonymous critiques relating to Webster Police Department's overall policing strategies, professionalism, accessibility, visibility, perception of safety, responsiveness to concerns, perceived threats to public safety, preferred community engagement initiatives, our objectivity and whether survey takers felt our officers acted in a non-discriminatory manner. The results of our survey were overwhelmingly positive. Of the people who felt *safe* or *very safe* in the homes or businesses at night, 92% indicated a favorable combined safety rating for our Police Department.

When surveyed about their most valued characteristics of the Webster Police Department, **Quick Response Times** was rated the highest at 20%. Our **Officers' Professional Approach** was ranked next at 19%. **Community Engagement** was the next most often selected answer, receiving 17% of the responses, followed closely by **High Visibility** at 16%, **Fair and Impartial Policing** at 15%, and **Treatment of Victims** at 13%. Lastly, when asked whether the **Webster Police Department provides its services in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner**, 79% either agreed or strongly agreed, with 11% taking no position on the question at all (neither agreed nor disagreed). The results of this survey were reviewed and are incorporated into this plan. **See Appendix B for survey content.**

The survey results did not reveal any obvious problems relating to Webster Police Department's delivery of services in need of immediate attention. When asked where survey participants want to see the Webster Police Department in 5 years, 32% of respondents indicated their desire to have the Department remain the same.

The greatest perceived public safety risk in town was indicated as criminal activity (robbery, home invasion, etc.) followed by protestors / BLM/ Riots.

Survey results indicated that community members want the Webster Police Department to increase involvement in community outreach programs. Youth interactions was the next most requested community engagement program, specifically focused on forming partnerships with schools to encourage young people to have more frequent positive interactions with police officers.

In conjunction with the community survey, the Webster Police Department participated in numerous public forums seeking answers to the following questions:

A. In a perfect world, what would "community policing" look like?

B. What does “defunding the police” mean to you?

Relating to question A, the answers given were categorized and prioritized in order of importance. The results showed the following, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important to attendees at these forums.

1. Law enforcement (especially the Chiefs) should engage with the community through more positive interactions.
2. Residency requirement to live in the community being served.
3. Community policing should consist of more diversity in the police workforce.
4. A consistent treatment of public by all police agencies in Monroe County.
5. Community & Police should be involved in solving problems together.
6. Restorative practices should be utilized in lieu of arrest when warranted.
7. Police should handle/focus on “crime” related subjects only.

Additionally, we gathered important recommendations for implementing ideal community policing tactics:

1. Police should be provided adequate diversity training/education.
2. Mental Health Services | Counseling services (Social Workers) should partner with the police.
3. The Police should form partnerships with community groups/trust building.
4. Police should focus resources on law enforcement vs. non-law enforcement issues.
5. More investment in police refresher training on communication and de-escalation.
6. Establishment of a police accountability board or process.
7. Support the School Resource Officer Program.

Relating to question B, the answers given were categorized and prioritized in order of importance. The results showed the following, with 1 being the most important and 2 being the least important to attendees at these forums.

1. Re-allocate funding toward restorative/social services.

2. Do not defund – Increase resources to law enforcement for special services, training, youth services, mental health services, SRO's, etc.

Taking all feedback into consideration, the Webster Police Department's Police Reform and Reinvention Plan incorporated these suggestions as part of our overall departmental strategic planning.

## **VI. Proposed Reform or Reinventive Practices Going Forward**

The Webster Police Department is actively looking for new opportunities to evolve as part of our commitment to understanding community needs and providing community-centered police services. We have been seeking community feedback for the last five years. In that time, we have utilized surveys, played active roles in police /community interaction committees, attended public forums at Town Board Meetings and attended open forums specific to police concerns. Taking all the feedback into consideration and being committed to the process of our reform-reinvention plan, we have developed recommendations and goals, which are outlined below. These goals and recommendations were developed to promote diversity, inclusion, equity, fair and impartial justice for everyone having interactions with a member of the Webster Police Department. We welcome progressive and innovative ideas to demonstrate our transparency, effectiveness, and professionalism.

### **Identified focus areas:**

#### ***1. Use of Intelligence-Led policing strategies.***

The Webster Police Department will continue to pursue crime reduction and prevention strategies as identified by evidence-based research. We will utilize strategies that are proven to be effective, non-discriminatory and can be applied in an unbiased manner. This will include analysis of trends and criminal activity using available in-house analytical resources and external resources such as the Monroe Crime Analysis Center.

#### **2. Diversification of Workforce**

A diversified workforce is essential to an organization. Currently the Webster Police Department has 34 sworn officers, 4 of whom are women and 2 who are Hispanic. As described in the Recruiting A Diverse Workforce section, NYS Civil Service rules dictate the pool of applicants and requirements for hiring police officers. Our commitment is to continue to advocate for change with the civil service system and to continue to recruit diverse applicants for our agency.

### ***3. Enhancement of Community Policing Efforts.***

Survey results suggested a need for more community outreach. Therefore, we are seeking to expand our community service reach throughout the area. The Webster Police Department believes in the importance of partnerships with our residents and business owners. It is through these partnerships that issues are identified, and problems are solved to everyone's benefit. One of our top priorities is to reestablish our Community Services Unit to run programs such as citizen police academies, senior citizen police academies, teen police academies, neighborhood watch groups, community events and establishing a Chamber of Commerce liaison.

### ***4. Foster an atmosphere of openness and transparency.***

Openness and transparency are an important part of justice. We are committed to improving this concept within our organization and have identified several ways to improve:

- In 2021, we will be purchasing body worn cameras (BWC) for every officer assigned to road patrol duties. BWCs will allow the community to see how officers operate in the field and the types of situations our officers respond to every day.
- We are also revising our officer complaint process to allow for on-line complaint submission.
- We will prepare and publish annual reports about officer complaints to include information relating to the type of complaint, disposition of the complainant and certain demographic information.

### ***5. Emphasis placed on the role of Police as Guardian.***

The Webster Police Department will focus efforts to reinforce guardian mindset as oppose to the warrior mindset, to ensure emphasis remains on service mindedness. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, police encounters with people over the age of 12 result in a use of force about .02% of the time. There is a time and place for the warrior mentality. When force is authorized or necessary to stop a threat to life, for example. The warrior mentality is appropriate and necessary. For the remaining 98.8% of interactions, however, the officer should rely on their guardian mindset, while being mindful that the warrior mindset may be necessary at any time should the situation deteriorate into an officer safety risk or a threat to life becomes apparent. We recognize the need to foster the guardian mentality in our members. The Guardian mindset encourages professional conduct, respectful treatment of all community members and a tempered, rational approach to problem solving. The Webster Police Department will continue to develop guardian-based policies, practices,

training opportunities and an organizational culture dedicated to promoting the guardian approach to providing police services.

**6. *Training priorities emphasizing human dignity and mutual respect.***

We will prioritize effective communication, the importance of de-escalation, rapport and empathy, and compassionate mental health interventions in all future training sessions. The Webster Police Department will reallocate training budgets to emphasize these training priorities.

**7. *An emphasis on Peelian Principles.***

The Webster Police Department will prioritize delivering police services in a fair and impartial manner and aligned with the Peelian Principles, which define an ethical police force:

- The police officer's ability to perform his or her duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behavior, and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect.
- In order to secure and maintain public respect, police must secure the public's willing cooperation to voluntarily abide by the law. The police must, themselves, respect and abide by the law.
- The degree of public cooperation decreases, proportionately, as the amount of physical force increases, even when that physical force is justified and used to achieve police objectives.
- The police seek and preserve public favor, not by catering to public opinion, but by always demonstrating totally impartial service to the law. Police service must follow established policy and administered without regard to an officer's personal feelings about the justice or injustice of an individual law. Police Officers gain public respect by readily offering individual service and friendship to all members of society without regard to any individual characteristic or standing in society, by the willing exercise of courtesy and friendly good humor, and by freely offering individual sacrifice to protect and preserve life.

## **Identified Next Steps:**

### **1. Stakeholder Committee**

In order to continue the work already completed in this process we will be convening a committee of stakeholders to discuss policing in the Town of Webster and collaborate on the issues being presented in this initiative. It is recognized that the community is an essential part of the process and input thus far has been limited by nature of the COVID pandemic and transition in leadership. We will be including as many people as practical in this committee. Participation may have to be limited to one representative per stakeholder group depending on community response and available facilities to accommodate the working group. In order to bring in different perspectives to this process we are soliciting for representatives for stakeholder groups:

- WPD
- Town Board
- District Attorney's Office
- Public Defenders Office
- Member of the police union
- Faith-based community groups
- Local education officials and educators
- Residents who have been incarcerated
- LGBTQIA+ leaders and advocates
- Local Health Department & healthcare advocates
- Mental health professionals
- Business leaders
- Transportation and transit officials
- Legal and academic experts
- Residents who have had interactions with the police
- Local neighborhood, homeless and housing advocates

To meet this important requirement, we will be opening solicitation to this committee effective immediately through 3/11. Selection of stakeholders will be completed by 3/18 and a meeting schedule will be developed to meet biweekly starting the week of 4/1.

### **2. Community Meeting**

After the stakeholder working group identifies recommended actions, these ideas will be presented to our community for feedback. It is anticipated that this important step in the process is anticipated to occur 8 weeks or so after the working group is convened.

### **3. Presentation of the recommendations**

The Town Board will be presented with the results of the committee's work and community feedback. Our Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan may be modified at that time. Chief Kohlmeier and the Town Board will collaborate on needed modifications to the plan.

## VI. Conclusion and Ratification by Municipality

This plan has been prepared to demonstrate the Webster Police Department's commitment to police reform and reinvention. The findings reported here are based upon feedback from the community, vetted evidence-based policing initiatives and the prevailing best practices. The Webster Police Department has a tradition of successfully utilizing community policing strategies. However, our goal is to enhance our historic successes by incorporating more community feedback, utilizing innovative and open-minded policing strategies, and increasing our community outreach footprint. We have tremendous personal and professional investments in this community. We want to provide the highest quality, most helpful, unbiased, fair, and compassionate police service to the people who live in or visit Webster, New York. Accomplishing these goals requires that our officers be held to very high standards and we are ready for the challenge.

The Webster Police Department is proud to provide this Reform and Reinvention Plan to the Webster Town Board for its review, discussion, debate, public dissemination, and feedback before submitting the report to New York State for final approval.

## APPENDIX A

Below is a list of community outreach events that we have organized or participated in over the past five years.

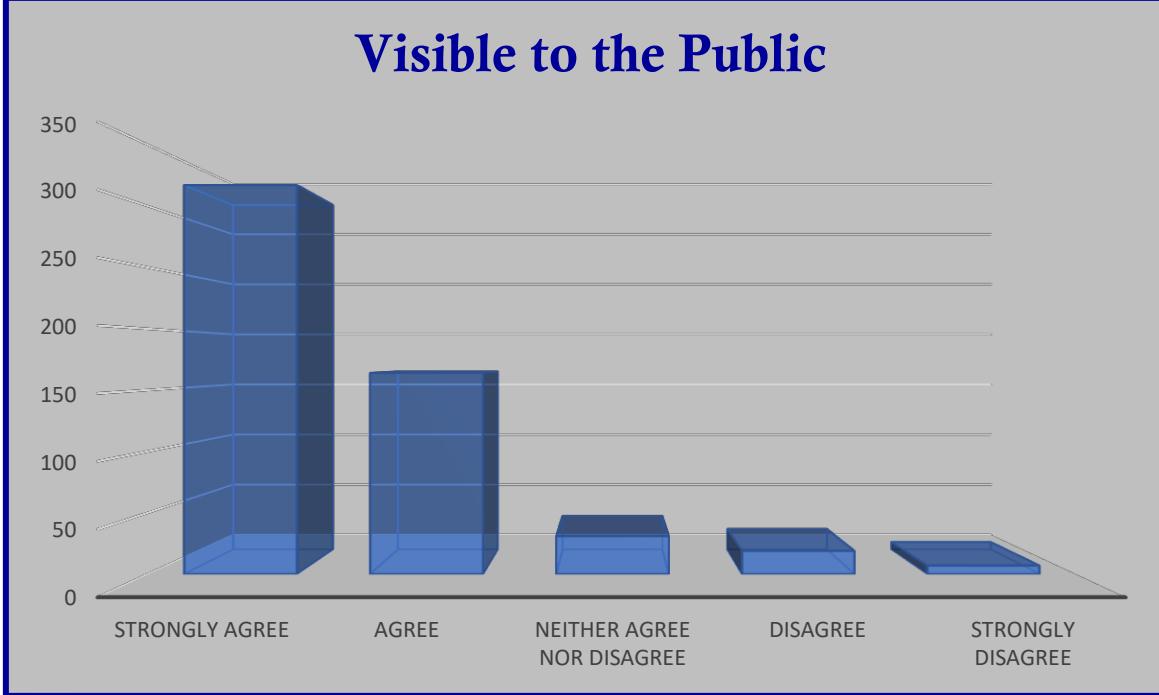
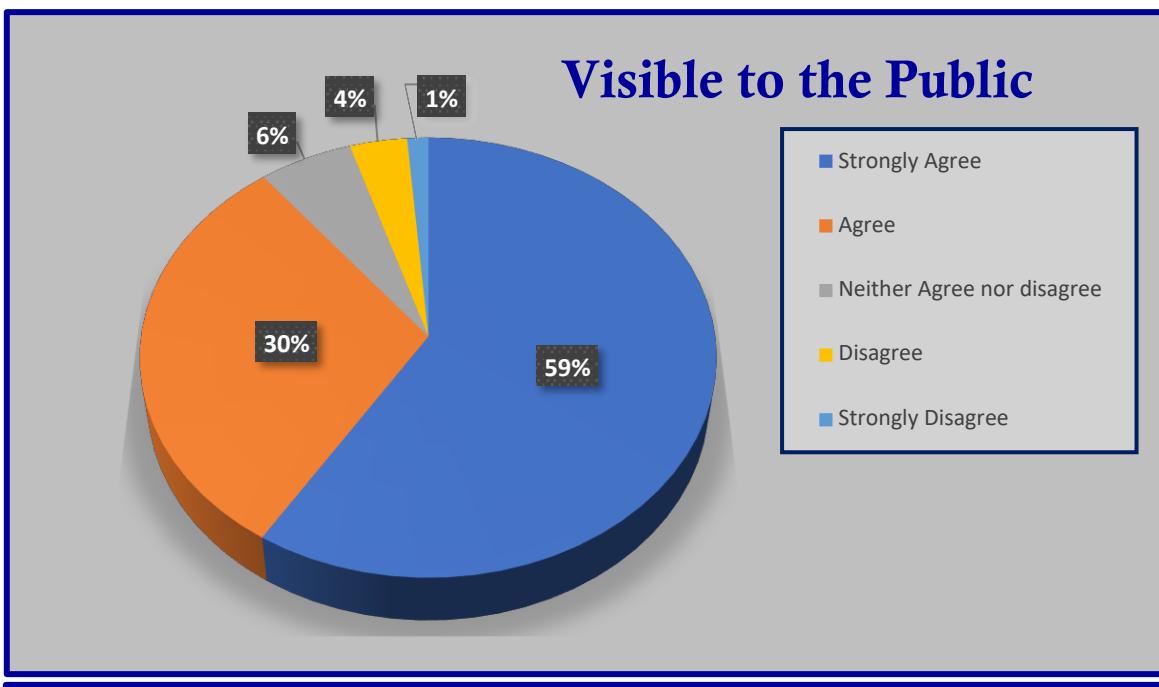
- Community bicycle safety rodeo.
- Community Easter egg hunt for youth.
- The annual Halloween Parade for youth community event.
- School and Scout tours at the Police Station.
- Webster Police open house and tours.
- Webster Police internship program.
- Fatal Vision demonstration provided by SRO's for high school students on the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse and use while driving.
- Cops on Top Program (community events to promote the Special Olympics).
- Winter blanket drive.
- Numerous Festivals involving an ongoing effort to walk and engage with the public.
- Bicycle Patrol.
- Annual Bocce tournament with seniors.
- Security checks/survey for area homeowners.
- Mask and food giveaways to the community.
- Daily directed foot patrol of business district and neighborhoods (mandated per shift).
- Car Seat fitting program for all residents.
- Pharmaceutical Drug Drop off program.
- School District walk-thru & Active Shooter Preparedness.
- Career Talks at Schools.
- Faith-Based Security Assistance Preparedness Program.
- Active Shooter for Businesses.
- Reading to Elementary Children.
- Ride-a-Long Program for Citizens, Youth and Clergy.
- Attendance at Sporting Events for Webster Schools.
- Community Surveys.
- Chemical Prevention Advisory Council Committee Member and active participant.
- Crime Stoppers Appearances on TV media – Channel 13 quarterly.
- Social Media Coordinator for Facebook and Instagram.
- Media outreach.
- Sex Offender Notification.
- Willow domestic violence purple box campaign.
- Autism awareness day.
- Opioid epidemic and teen vaping forums.
- Beards for bucks.
- Annual golf tournament fundraiser.
- Special Olympics torch run.
- Day of caring (Webster Comfort Care Home).
- Annual fruit basket delivery to local nursing home.
- WPD Explorer Program.
- Community parades and carnival.
- Pumpkins on Parade, Halloween event at Community Center.

## APPENDIX B- Survey Results

### **Do you feel the Webster Police Department is visible to the public?**

#### **Results:**

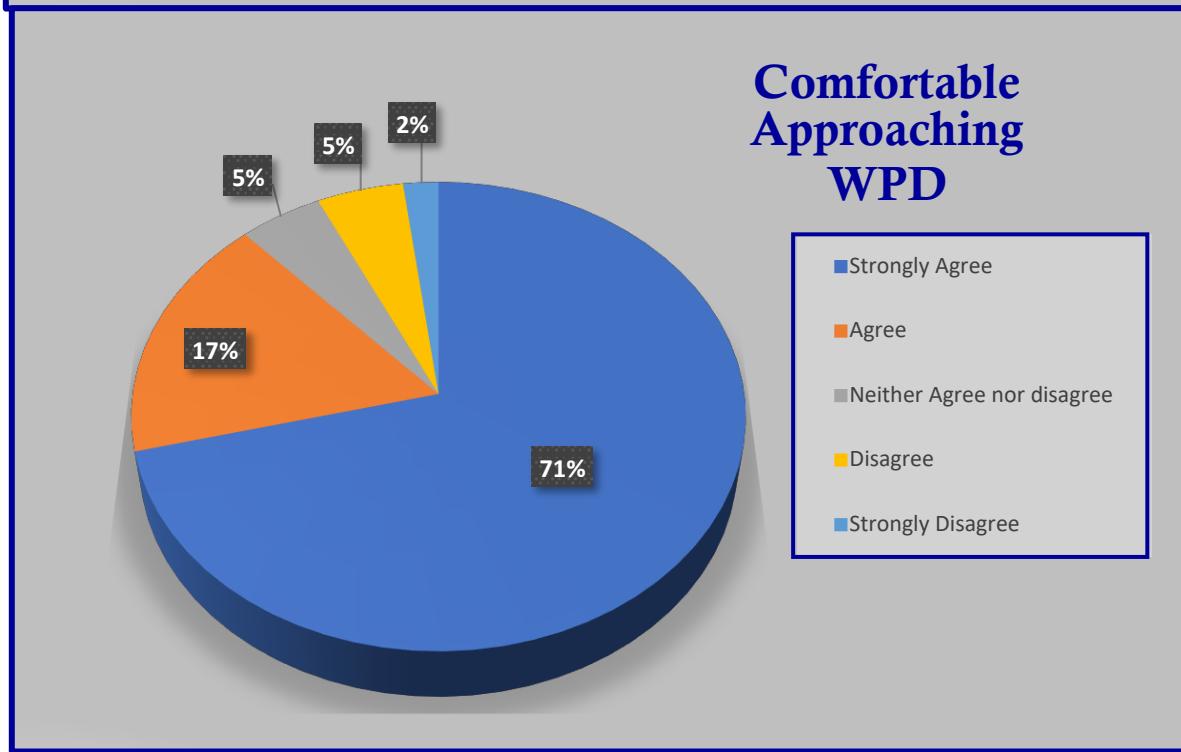
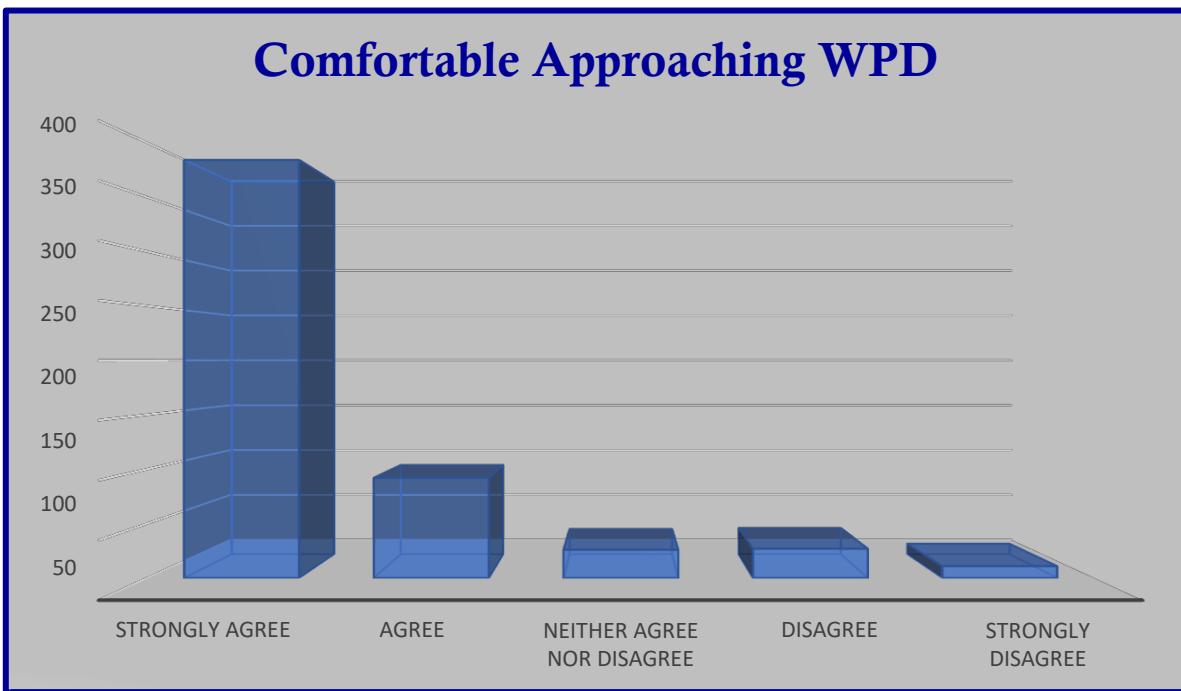
Strongly Agree	317
Agree	164
Neither Agree nor disagree	31
Disagree	19
Strongly Disagree	7



**Do you feel comfortable approaching members of the Webster Police Department for any and all related police and community services?**

**Results:**

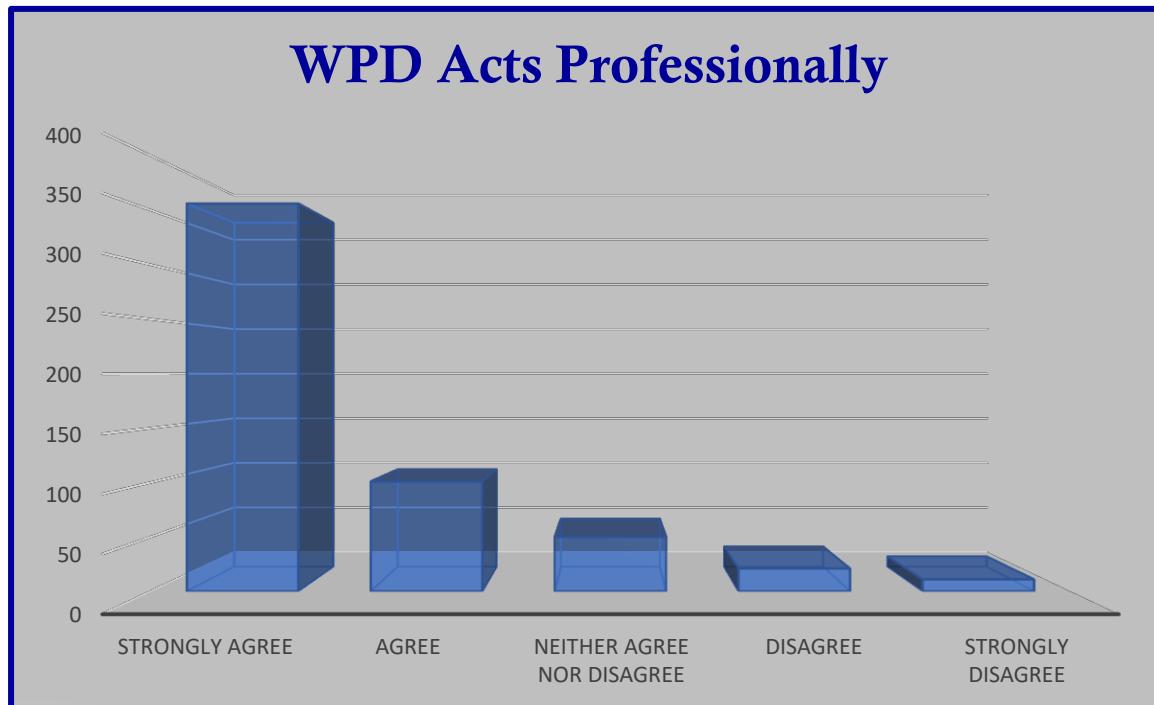
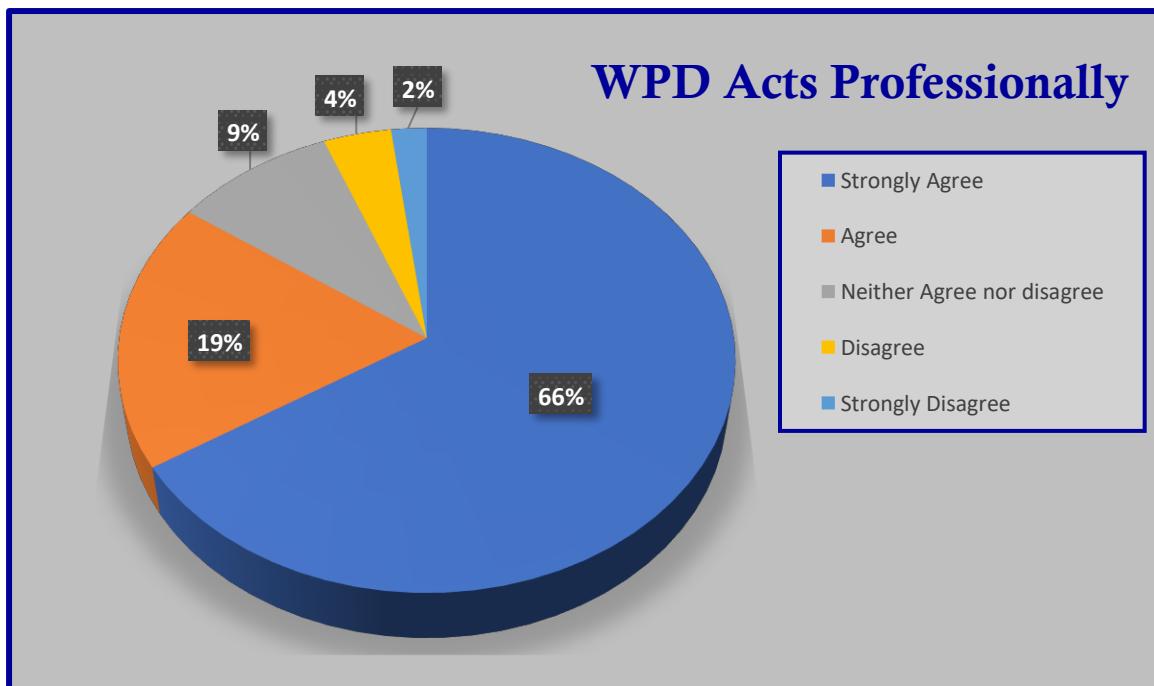
Strongly Agree	384
Agree	92
Neither Agree nor disagree	26
Disagree	27
Strongly Disagree	11



**Do you feel Webster Police Officers act professionally when carrying out their duties?**

**Results:**

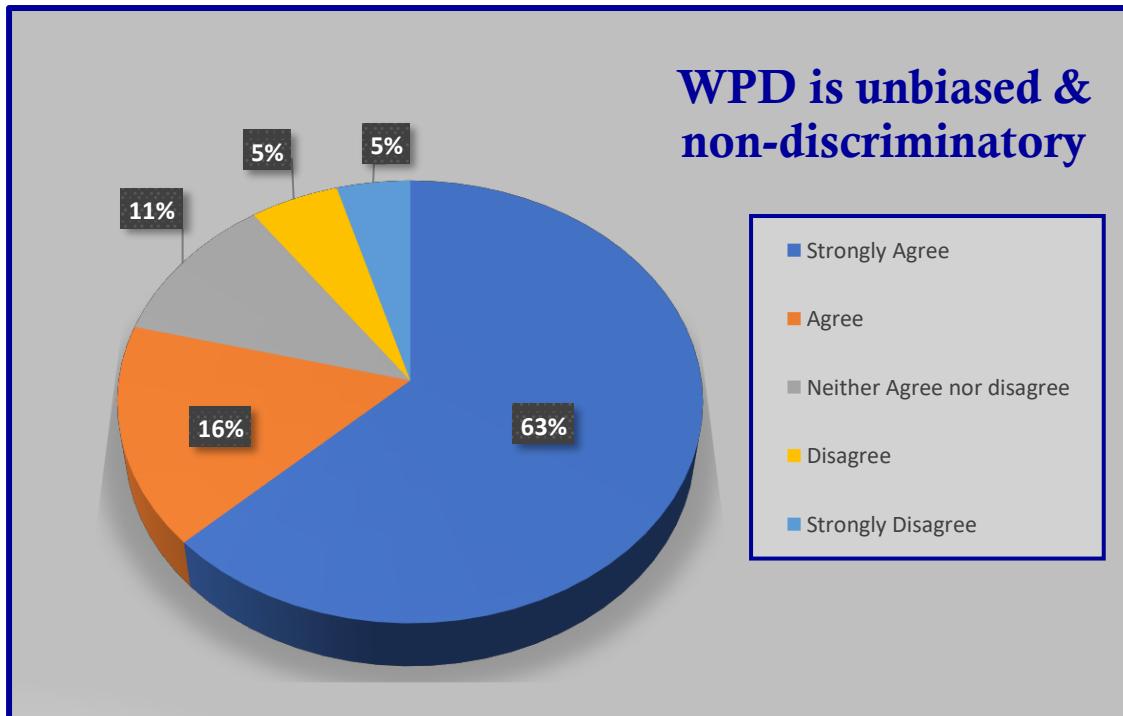
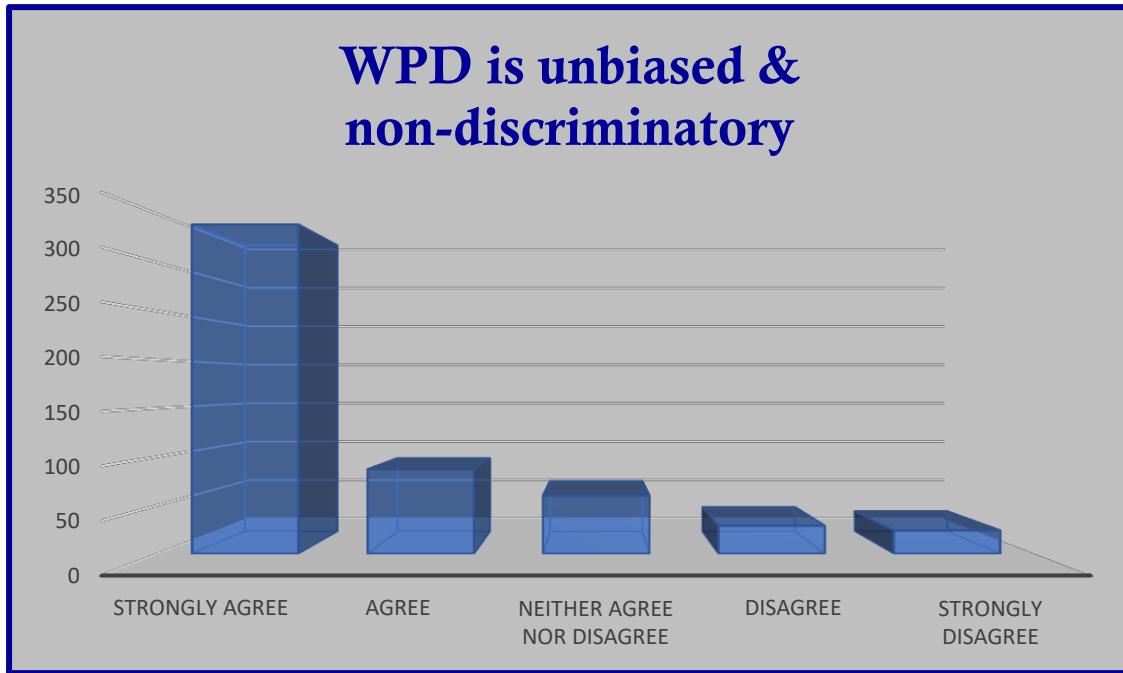
Strongly Agree	356
Agree	101
Neither Agree nor disagree	50
Disagree	21
Strongly Disagree	11



**Do you feel the Webster Police Department conducts its services in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner?**

**Results:**

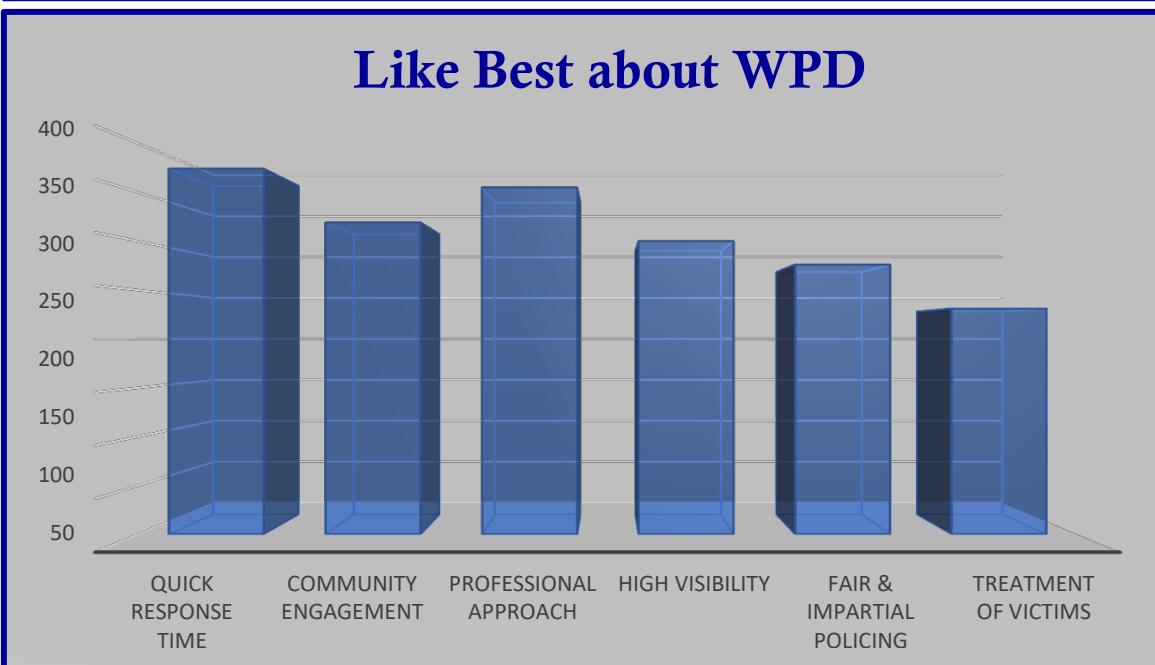
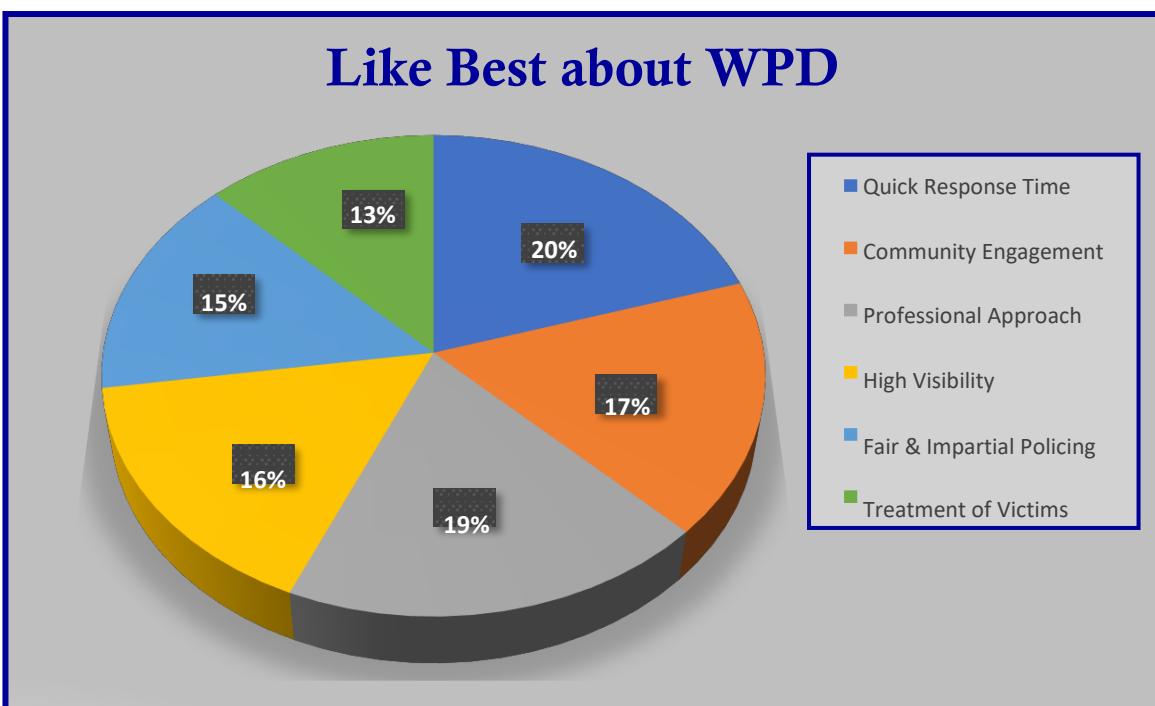
Strongly Agree	339
Agree	87
Neither Agree nor disagree	60
Disagree	29
Strongly Disagree	24



## What do you like best about the Webster Police Department?

### Results:

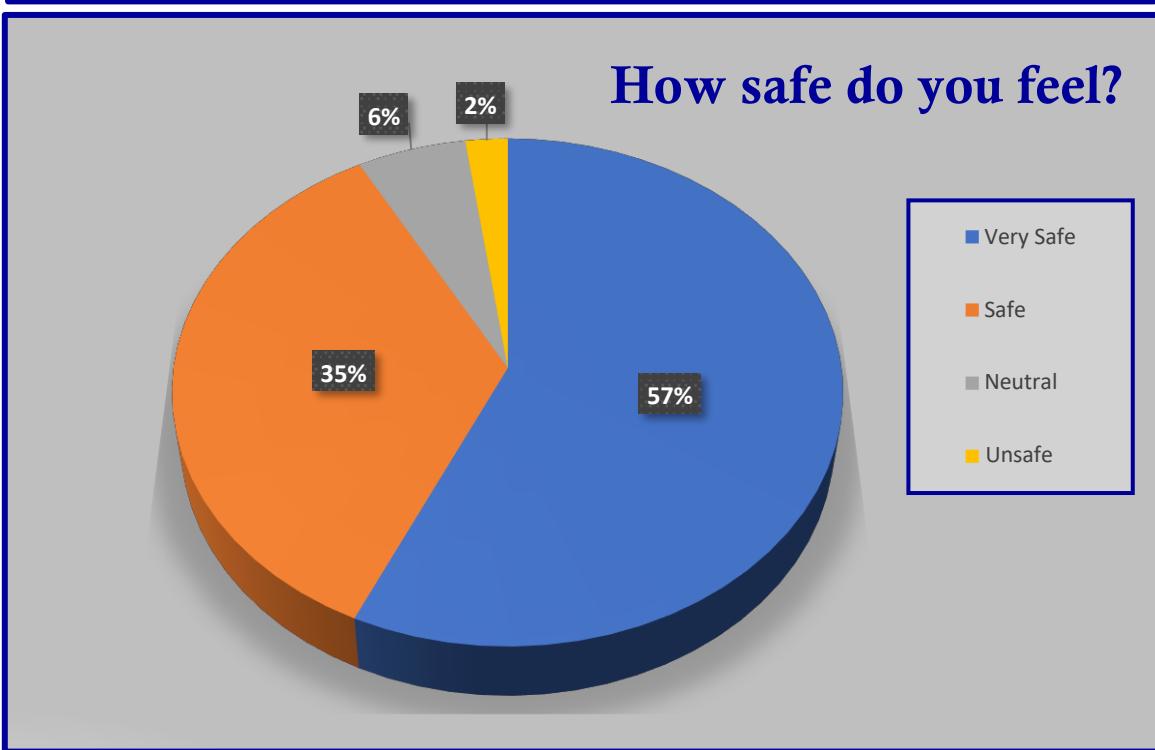
Quick Response Time	374
Community Engagement	319
Professional Approach	355
High Visibility	300
Fair & Impartial Policing	276
Treatment of Victims	231



## How safe do you feel at your home or business at night?

### Results:

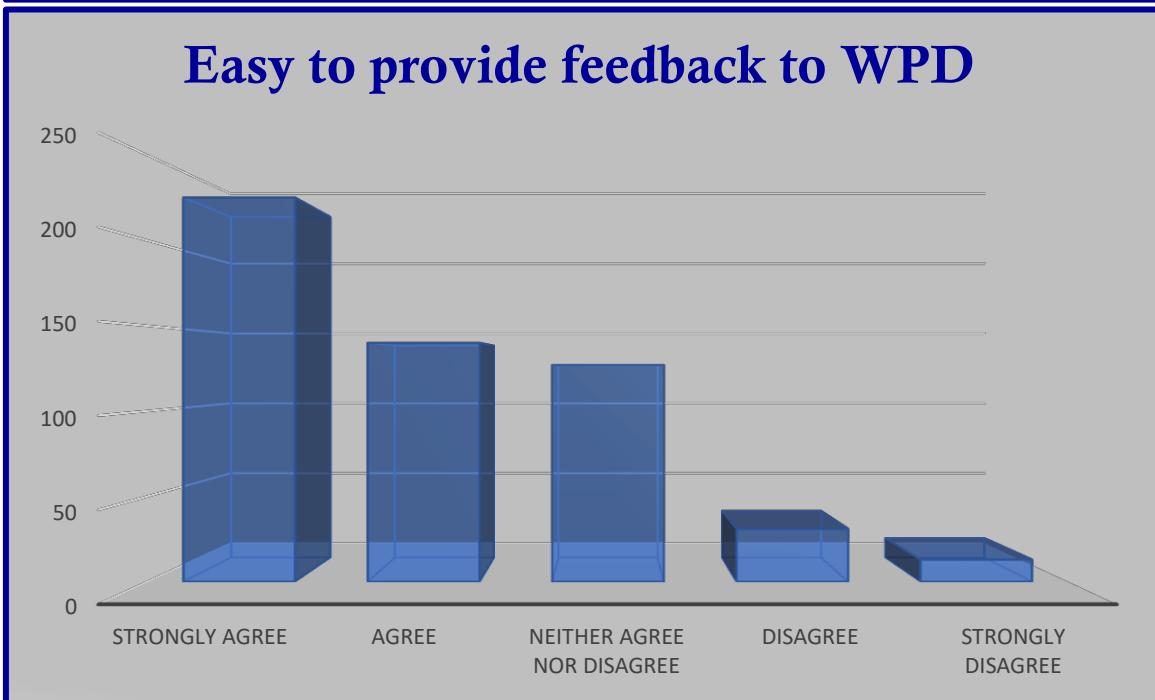
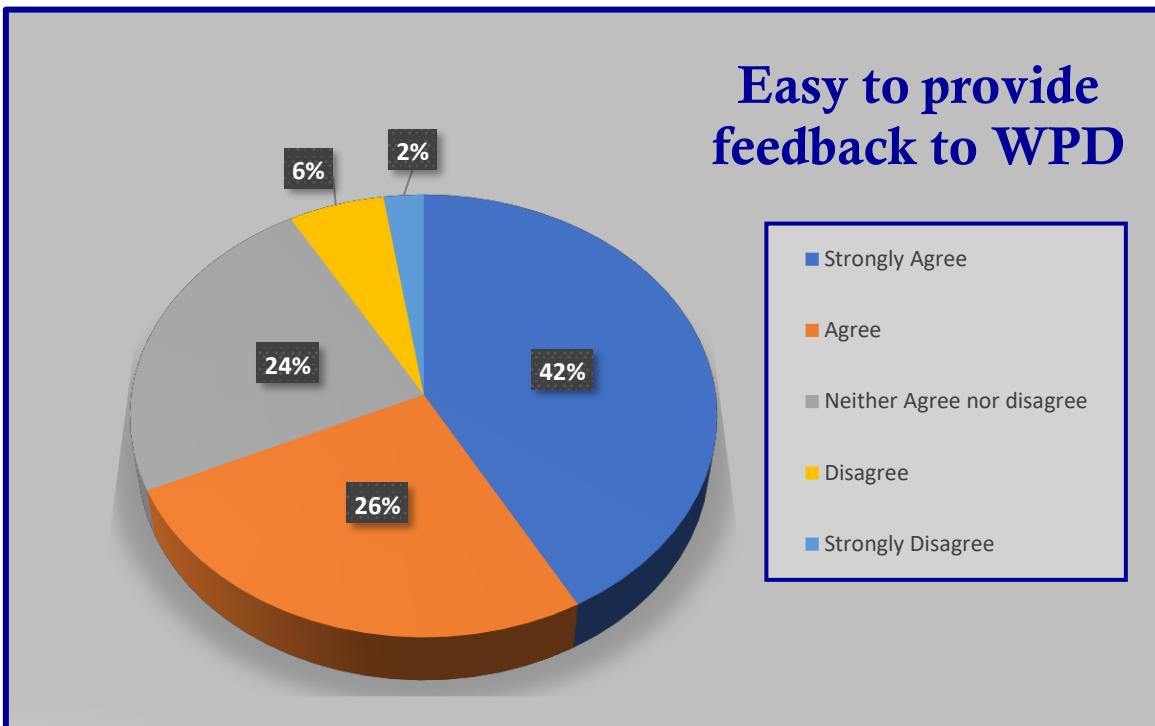
Very Safe	306
Safe	189
Neutral	31
Unsafe	12



**Do you feel the Webster Police Department make it easy for community members to provide input/feedback?**

**Results:**

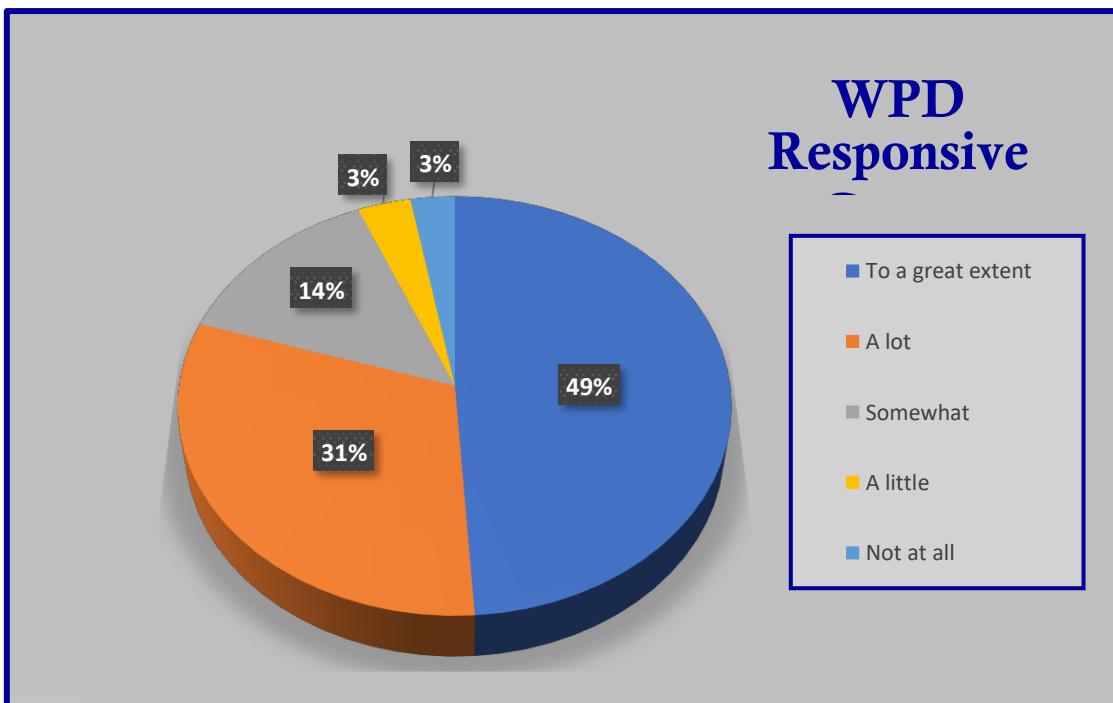
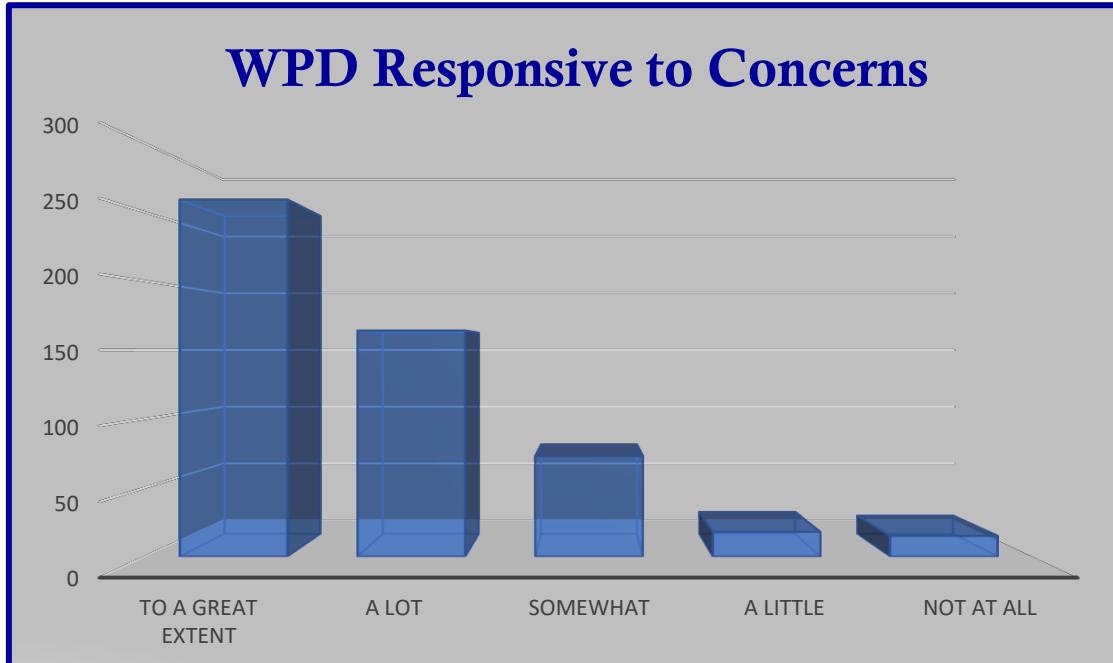
Strongly Agree	225
Agree	140
Neither Agree nor disagree	127
Disagree	31
Strongly Disagree	13



To what extent is the Webster Police Department responsive to the concerns of community members?

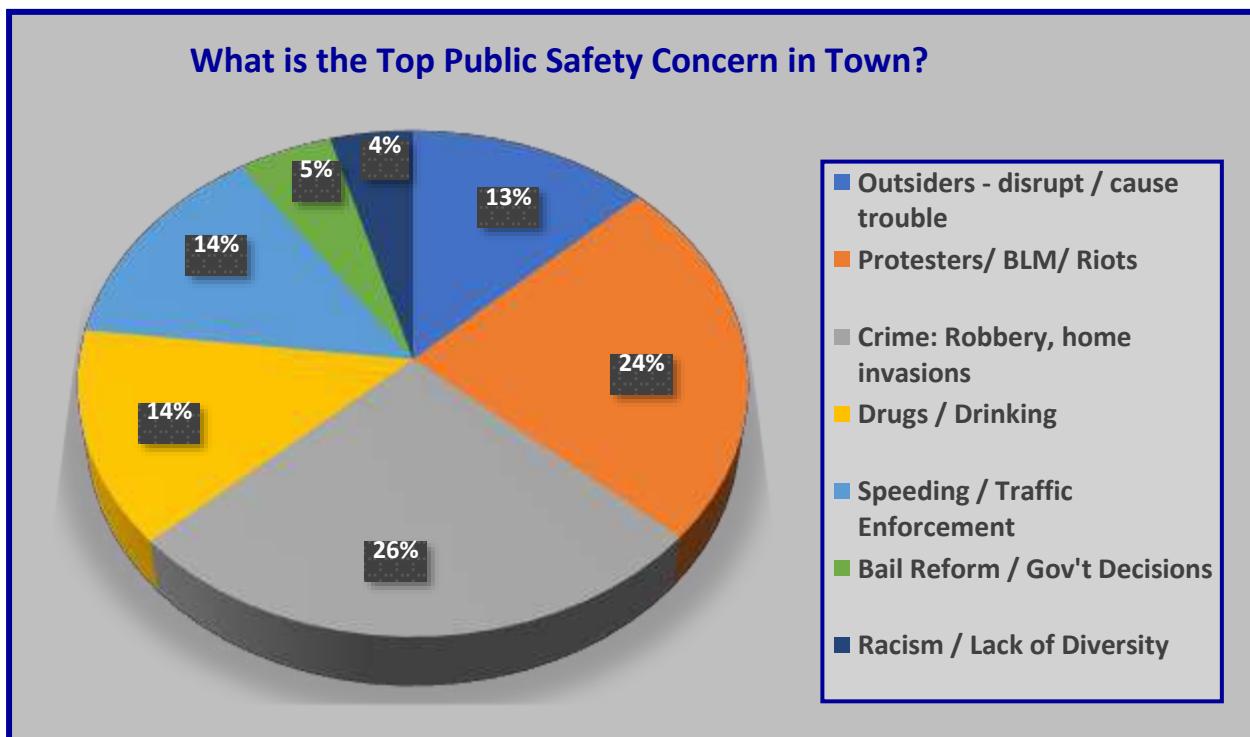
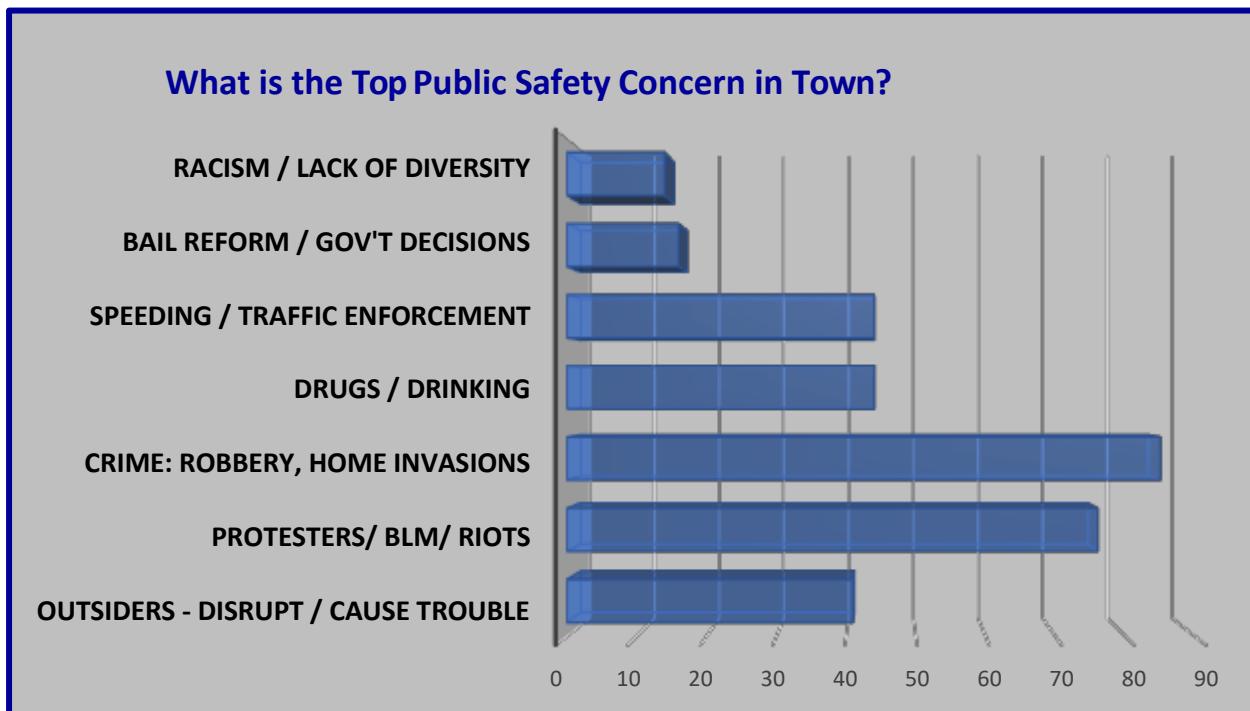
**Results:**

To a great extent	259
A lot	164
Somewhat	73
A little	18
Not at all	15



# What do you perceive as the greatest public safety threat or concern in our Town?

## Results:



# What types of community engagement initiatives would you like to see the department promote in the future?

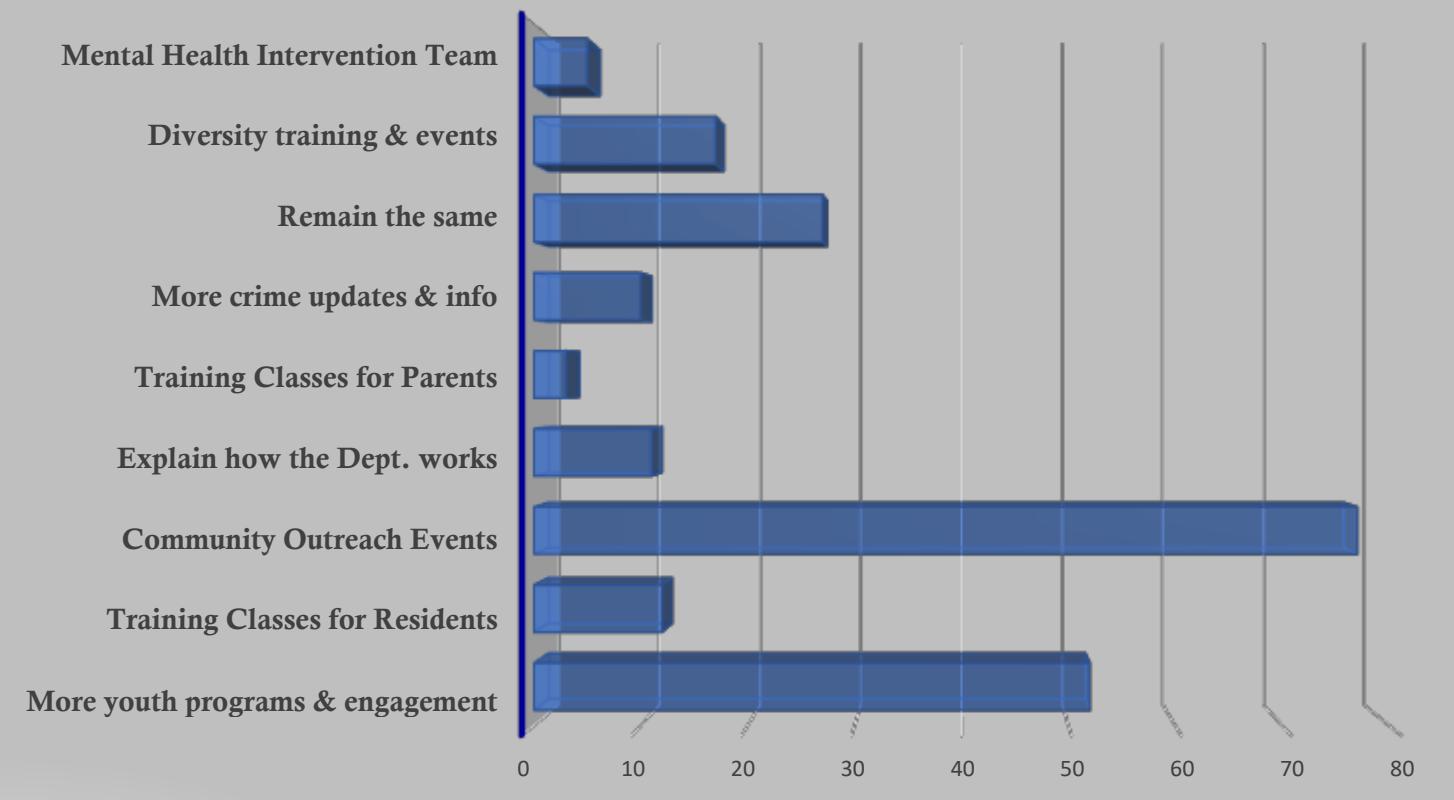
## Results:

- More youth programs & engagement:** DARE program, classes for teens, school events.
- Training Classes for Residents:** Know your rights, firearms training, Citizen Academy, neighborhood watch, personal & home safety talks.
- Community Outreach Events:** Open house, booth at events, visit neighborhoods, ride along.
- Explain how the Dept. works:** Ask an Officer, who do I call for \_?
- Training Classes for Parents:** How to identify drug use, teen crime prevention, social media.
- More crime updates & info:** Details beyond police blotter, neighborhood safety alerts, what is going on in town.

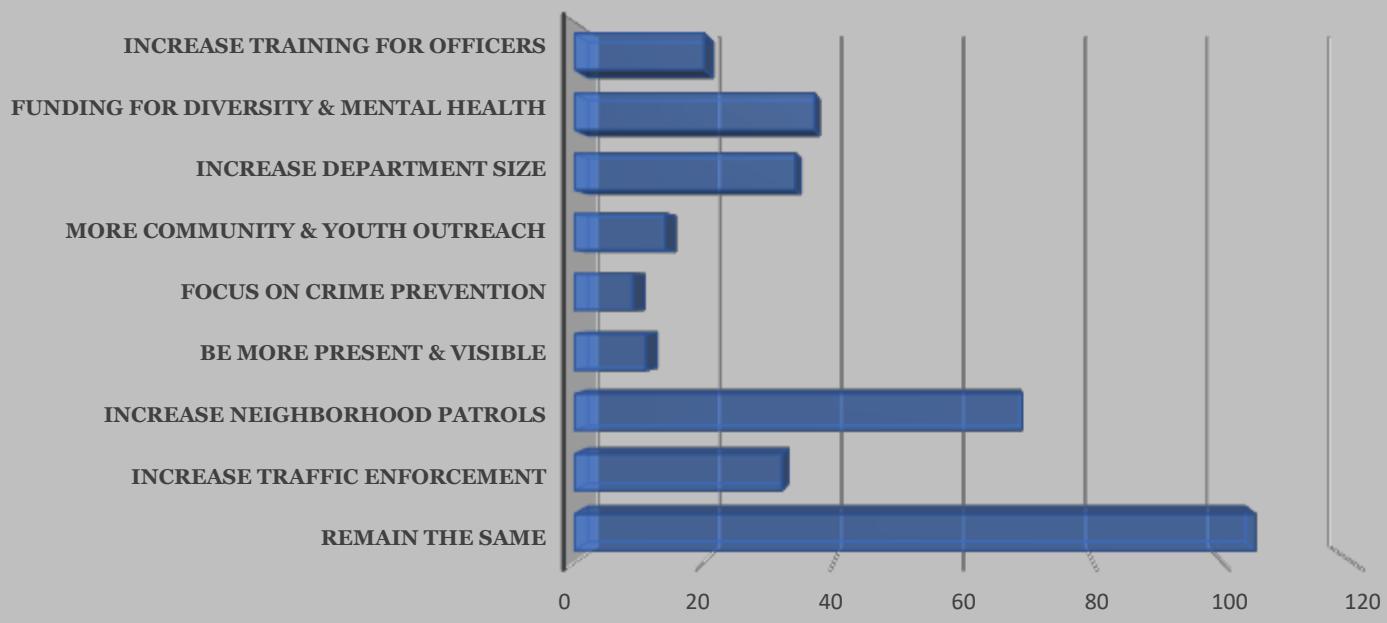
**Remain the same**

**Diversity training and events** Mental Health Intervention Team

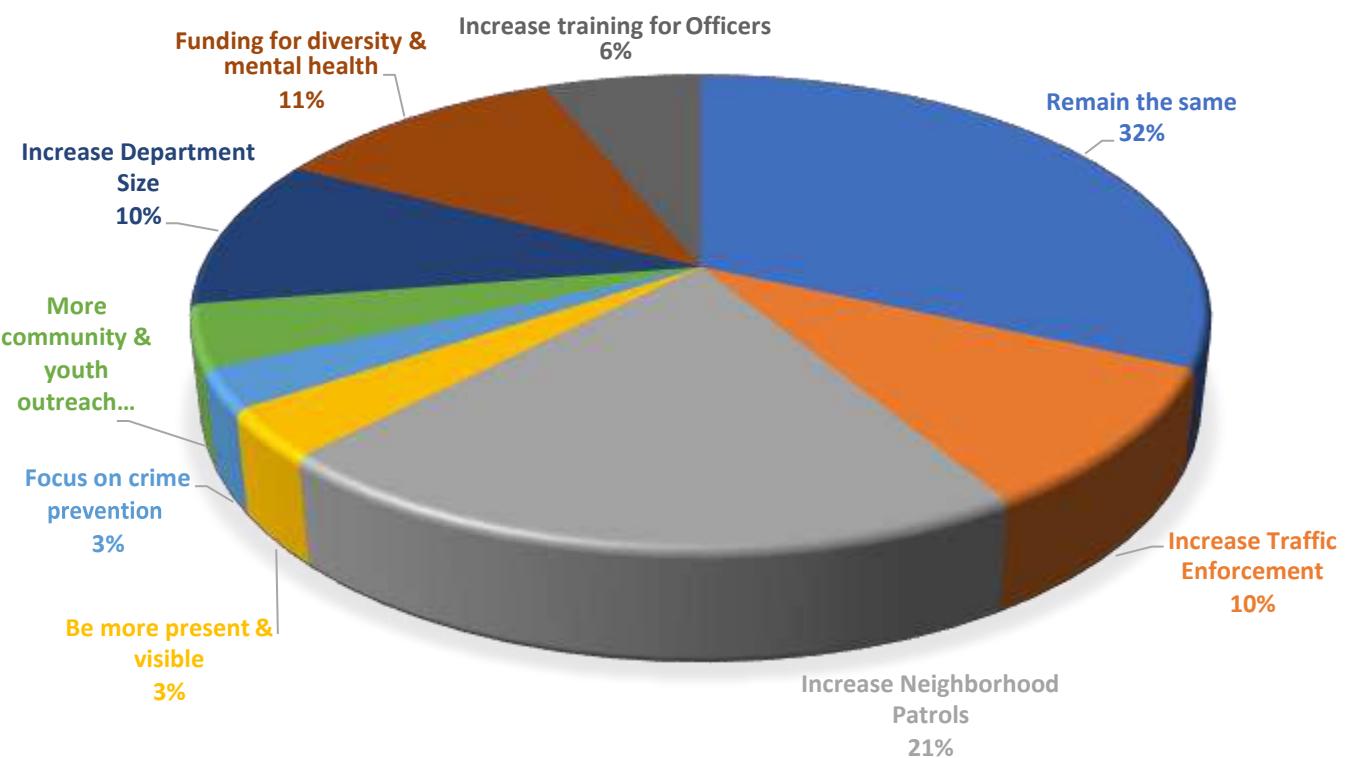
### Community Engagement Initiatives:



## Where would you like to see the WPD in 5 years?



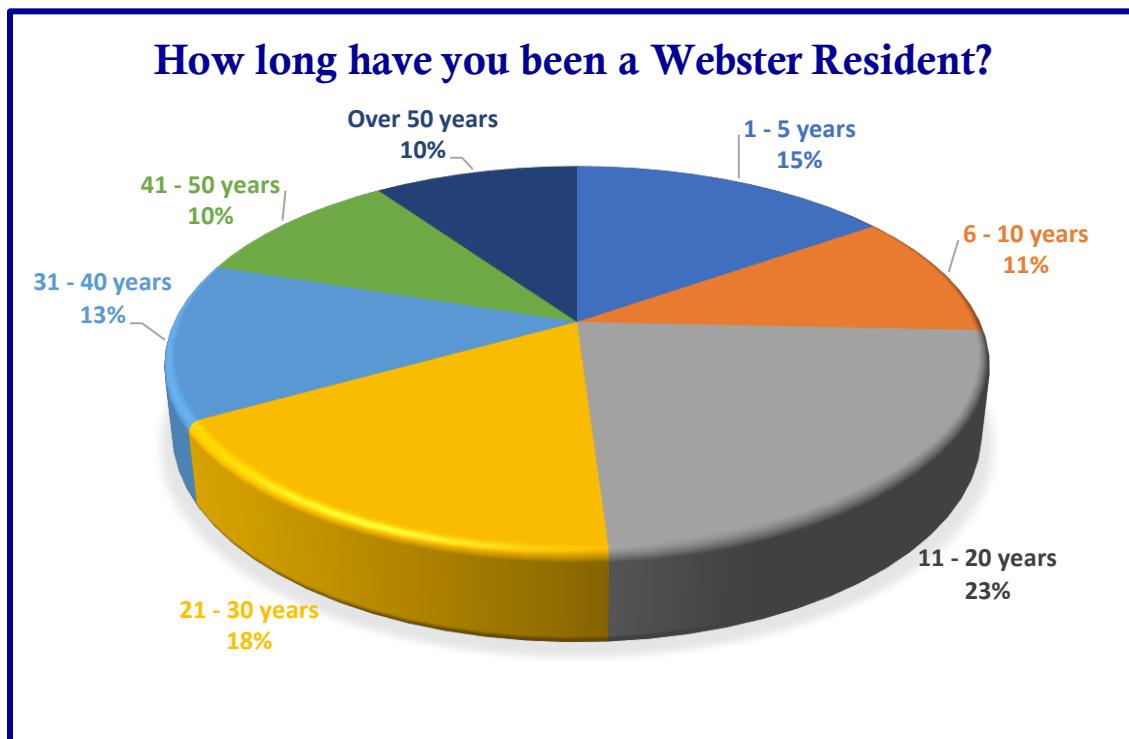
## WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE WPD IN 5 YEARS?



## How many years have you lived in the Webster community?

### Results:

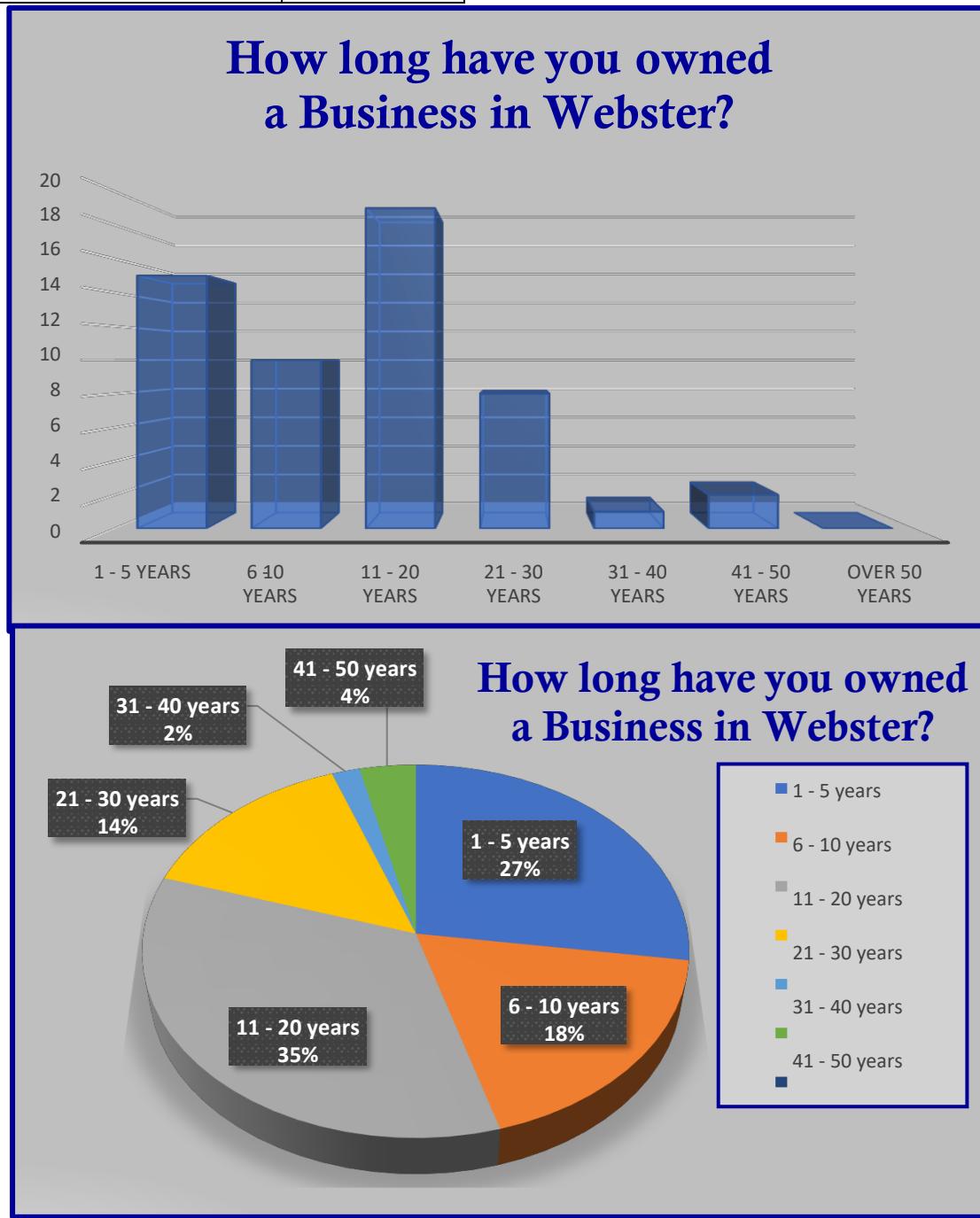
1 - 5 years	82
6 - 10 years	56
11 - 20 years	125
21 - 30 years	96
31 - 40 years	71
41 - 50 years	55
Over 50 years	52



## How many years have you owned a business in the Webster community?

### Results:

1 - 5 years	15
6 - 10 years	10
11 - 20 years	19
21 - 30 years	8
31 - 40 years	1
41 - 50 years	2
Over 50 years	0

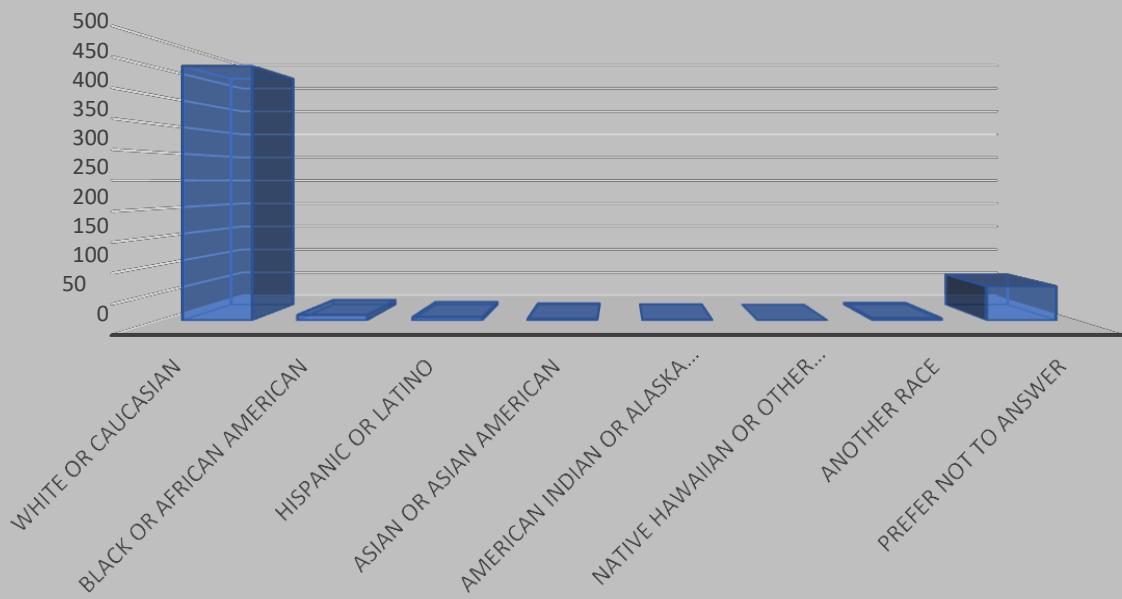


## How would you describe your race?

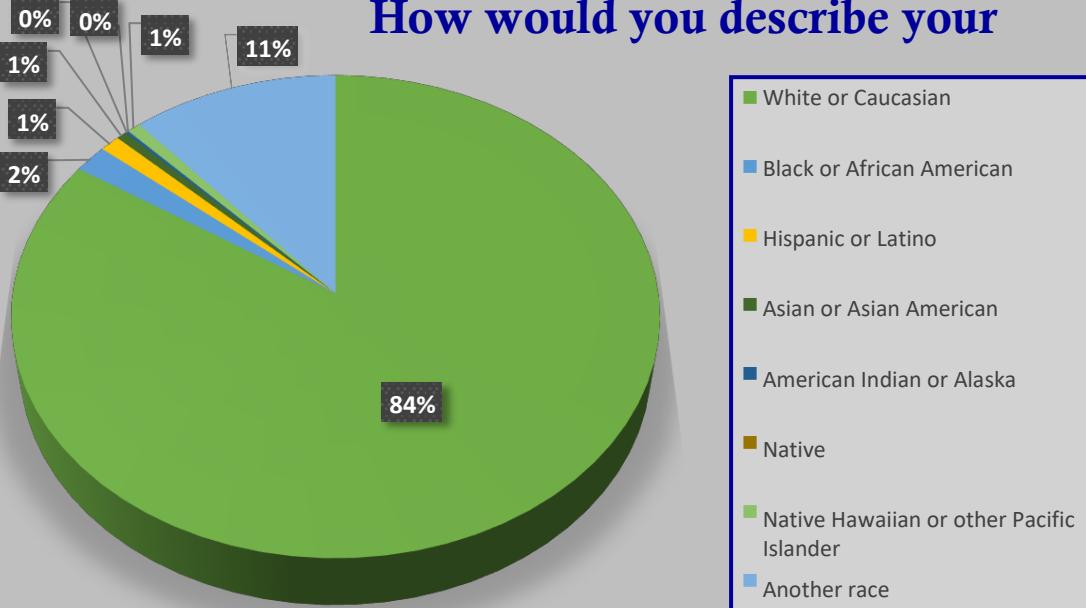
### Results:

White or Caucasian	454
Black or African American	10
Hispanic or Latino	6
Asian or Asian American	3
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0
Another race	4
Prefer not to answer	61

### How would you describe your race?



### How would you describe your

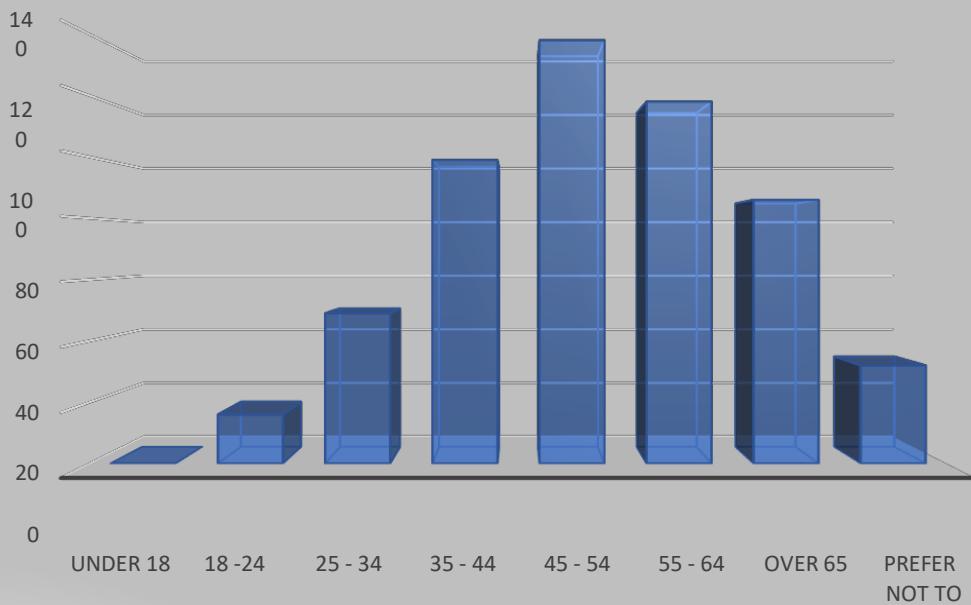


## What is your age?

### Results:

Under 18	0
18 - 24	16
25 - 34	49
35 - 44	99
45 - 54	138
55 - 64	118
Over 65	86
Prefer not to answer	32

### How do you identify your age?



### How do you identify your

