

# Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force Young Adult Listening Sessions Survey Summary Results December 23, 2020

## Introduction

The Connecticut Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force held four Listening Sessions in November 2020. The Task Force decided to hear from young adults because their perspectives were missing from the previous sessions. Four Listening Sessions were planned to hear from young adults between the ages of 18-25. The Task Force collaborated with three university partners: University of New Haven (UNH), University of Connecticut (UConn), and Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) to host the Listening Sessions. UNH hosted the first Listening Session on November 13, 2020. UConn hosted the next two Listening Sessions on November 17, 2020. CCSU hosted the fourth Listening Session on November 20, 2020.

After the passing of Public Act 20-1, one of the remaining charges of the Task Force is the ability of Task Force members to form recommendations on “any other police transparency and accountability issue that the Task Force deems appropriate.” The Task Force hosted Listening Sessions with the goal of gathering public input around recommendations they could suggest towards greater police transparency and accountability. Each participant was given three minutes to share their testimonies, followed by a brief Q&A from the Task Force panelists. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures, all of the Listening Sessions were conducted virtually on the Zoom platform. This report summarizes results from surveys sent to all who participated in the Listening Sessions.

## Method

The Evaluation, Research and Learning (ERL) team at Everyday Democracy designed the survey using Survey Monkey. The survey was designed to capture responses from testifiers, attendees who did not testify, and the Task Force panelists at each session. The Institute of Municipal and Regional Policy at CCSU and an Everyday Democracy consultant posted and emailed the survey link to participants during and after each Listening Session. ERL analyzed and reported on the survey results.

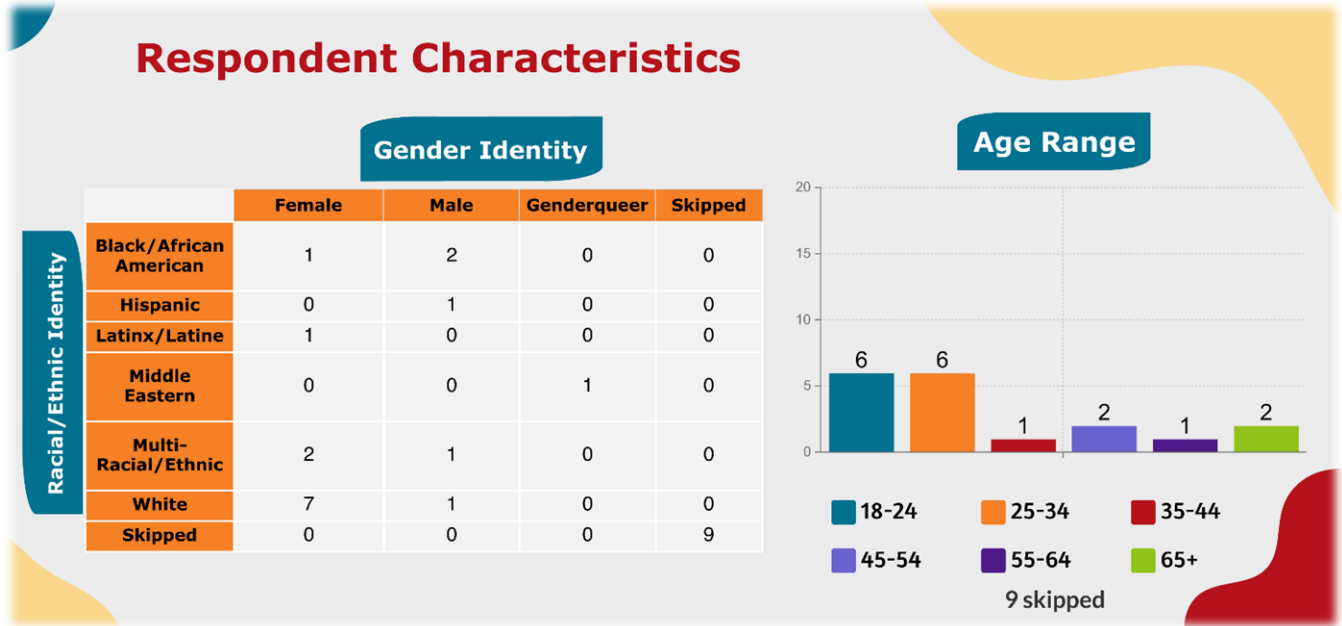
## Limitations

There are two limitations to the results presented in this summary:

- The data on the total number of participants in the Listening Sessions was not available. Consequently, ERL was unable to determine the actual survey response rate.
- ERL received a total of 26 survey responses, eight of the 26 respondents indicated they testified, 14, attended but did not testify and four participants who were panelists, submitted the survey. However, 31% of the surveys submitted were incomplete.

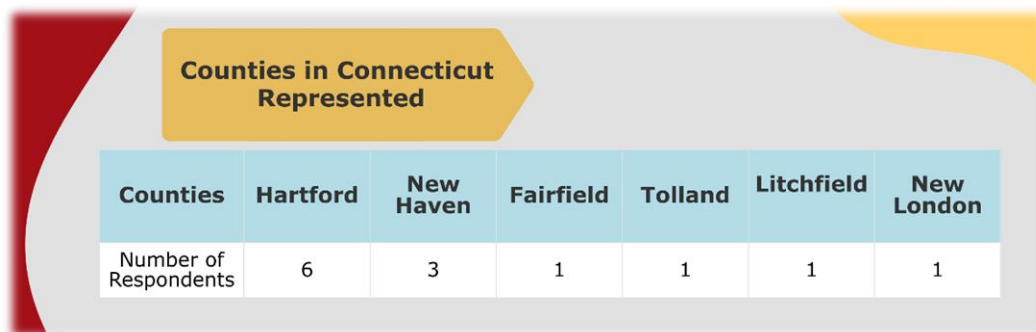
## Survey Results

Characteristics of Survey Respondents: The demographic data pictured in the infographic below shows that most respondents identified as white and there were more females than males represented. Most of the respondents were under the age of 34. Most respondents to this survey were affiliated with the University of New Haven. Please see the graph in **Appendix A** for more information about respondent’s university affiliation.



Nine respondents indicated that they were not affiliated with any organization. Three respondents represented an academic institution, two respondents represented service provider organizations and a student organization/club, and one respondent each represented an advocacy and healthcare organization. Eight respondents skipped this question.

The single county where the largest number of survey respondents reported that they reside was Hartford. Several people were residents of a variety of counties in Connecticut and a few were from out of state. Three respondents were from one of the following locations: Okatie, SC, Morganville, NJ, and Billerica, MA. The results in the table below show the counties in Connecticut that were represented. Ten respondents skipped this item.



### **Perceptions of the Listening Sessions Experience:**

All testifiers felt comfortable and heard. Respondents who testified rated their experience in the Listening Session in four areas using an agree/disagree Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' They also had a 'not sure' option. All respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with feeling comfortable sharing, feeling heard, and that Task Force members listened to their suggestions. Six respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their suggestions will be used by the Task Force to make improvements. One respondent indicated they were "not sure." Seven testifiers responded to this question and one skipped.

What was shared was heard. Respondents who attended but did not testify rated their experience in the Listening Session in three areas using an agree/disagree Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' They also had a 'not sure' option. Ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that what was shared was heard and that Task Force members were listening to suggestions made by the testifiers. One respondent each indicated they were "not sure" whether what was shared was heard or that the Task Force listened to the suggestions. Nine respondents agreed or strongly agreed that suggestions for improving police transparency and accountability will be used to make improvements. Two respondents indicated they were "not sure." Eleven attendees responded to this question and three skipped.

Motivation for participation in the Listening Sessions. People who testified: Five respondents indicated that sharing their story or "it felt important" motivated them. Two respondents mentioned that their professor or advisor encouraged them to testify. One respondent wanted to discuss "the continued fear with young Black men when interacting with police."

People who attended/did not testify: Four respondents indicated wanting to hear other perspectives from law enforcement, community members, and the Task Force.

Hearing from others was most helpful. This result was reported by most respondents. Some additional helpful aspects of the Listening Sessions identified were: interactions with the panelists, knowledge that was shared, and a conducive format for virtual listening sessions. Some comments were:

*"I feel that everyone who was interested in speaking was given the opportunity and that their ideas were well-received, respected and appropriately acknowledged. It was also helpful to see the support of each member in this discussion."*

*"Hearing from different people of varying backgrounds and ethnic and cultural identities was most impactful."*

*"Panelist commentary and questions was very helpful for me, and made me feel included and heard."*

*"The facts the students and volunteers brought to the table."*

Least helpful aspects of sessions varied. Some of the comments were:

*"Hear the same things w/ no real out of box thinking."*

*“The critical comments on delivery the task force gave back to the people who gave testimonies.”*

*“I would have wanted to see experts in the fields of juvenile justice or mental health.”*

Best outreach approach was university mailing lists. Respondents were asked to indicate how they heard about the Listening Sessions. Most respondents heard about the Listening Sessions through university mailing lists. Please see **Appendix B** for more information about how respondents heard about the event.

Listening Sessions “very good” overall. Respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of the event from a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = poor and 5 = excellent. The average was a 4.4 with eight skipped responses.

## **Conclusion**

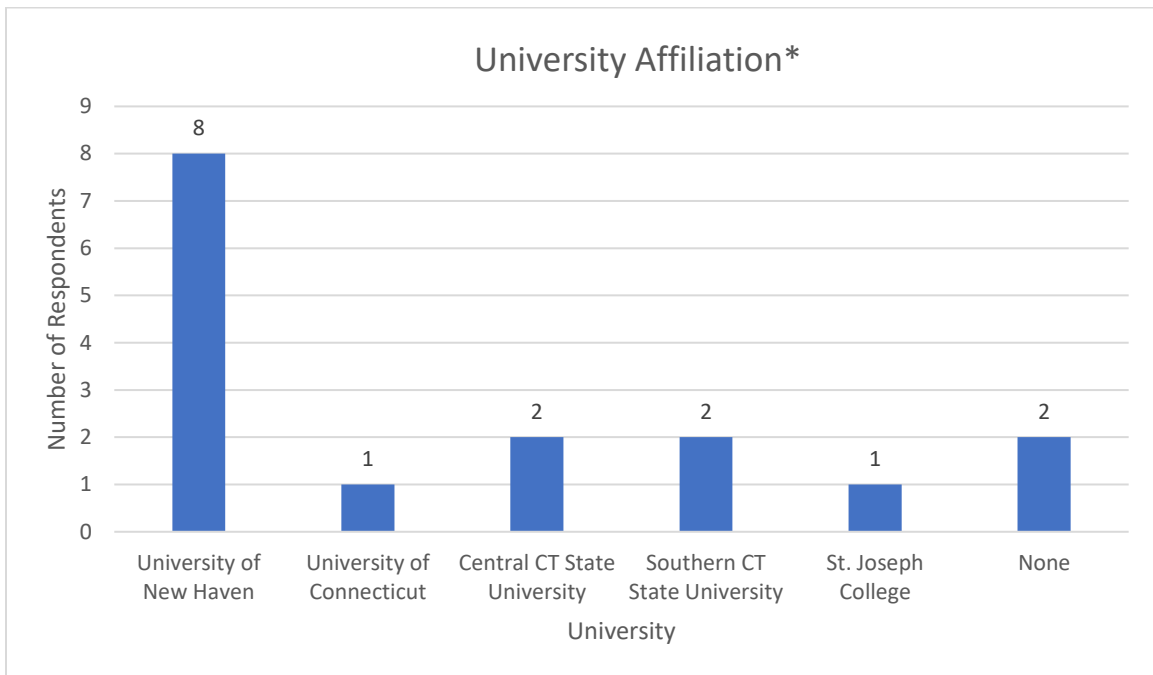
According to the survey data, the Listening Sessions were a meaningful way for young adults and the public to engage and share recommendations with the Task Force. This was evidenced by comments from respondents about their experience testifying or attending. For example, many people referenced the positive interaction between them and the Task Force members. In addition, many valued hearing from other perspectives.

While the Listening Sessions were, for the most part, a positive experience according to survey respondents, two areas of improvement did emerge. In moving forward with similar public engagement events, two areas to consider include:

- Assessing outreach practices and barriers to participation to ensure that more young adults, especially non-student young adults, are included and feel prepared to testify.
- Continuing to examine ways to enhance engagement between all groups at public events.

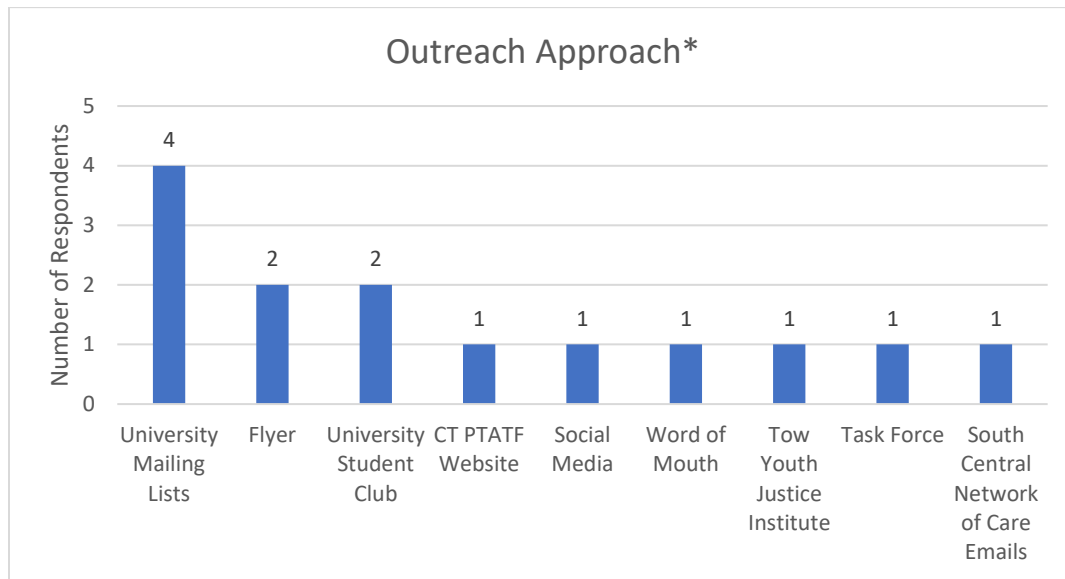
Overall, these survey results provide support for the efficacy of Listening Sessions as an initial step in engaging young adults. The sessions provided space for young adults to express their concerns and offer recommendations for change that will hopefully be used to help inform changes in law enforcement policies and practices. This is an important step towards improving police transparency and accountability.

## Appendix A



**\*8 Skipped**

## Appendix B



**\*15 Skipped**