

Report on Community-Oriented Policing in Sonoma County Survey Data*

*Prepared by Dr. Emily K. Asencio, Sonoma State University September 2025

Purpose and Scope

This report presents survey findings from a broader research initiative focused on understanding perceptions of community-oriented policing (COP) in Sonoma County. The original design of the study sought to compare perspectives between two key populations: community residents and deputies of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SCSO). By doing so, the project aimed to explore whether these groups shared common understandings, experiences, and expectations regarding community-oriented policing practices.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of participation from the Sheriff's Office during the survey phase, a direct comparison of perspectives is not currently possible. As a result, this report focuses exclusively on the data collected from 603 Sonoma County residents who participated in this voluntary survey. While the limitations in the sample size both from the Sheriff's office and the community limit the scope of the analysis, the data nonetheless provides important insights into how residents who participated perceive and experience policing in their communities.

Background and Project Framework

This work was guided by a series of Strategic Learning Questions, which served as the foundation for a series of focus groups that guided the survey design. The Strategic Learning Questions were informed by feedback from the Community Advisory Council (CAC), community stakeholders, and SCSO leadership, and were intended to ensure that the resulting data would be relevant, actionable, and reflective of community needs.

The survey instrument was developed over the course of several months after conducting focus groups with community members, SCSO Sergeants, Deputies, and Field Training Officers, and underwent review to ensure ethical compliance, linguistic accessibility, and cultural relevance. Outreach was conducted in English and Spanish, and targeted efforts were made to engage historically underrepresented groups, including undocumented

residents, non-English speakers, and younger community members.¹ Despite these efforts, representation gaps persist, especially among Spanish-speaking and undocumented populations.

Community Survey Findings

Interpretation of Community Definitions of COP

The open-ended responses about community-oriented policing (COP) reflect a diverse range of views—some supportive, others skeptical—about what COP should mean in practice. Many participants described it as a model rooted in *service, collaboration, and relationship-building* between deputies and the communities they serve. Frequently used words like *serve, together, people, and oversight* suggest a vision of policing that emphasizes responsiveness, transparency, and accountability to the public.

At the same time, a number of respondents rejected the idea that community members should have an active role in shaping or overseeing policing. These individuals tended to emphasize law enforcement as a technical or authority-driven role and expressed concerns that public involvement might interfere with deputies “doing their jobs.” This tension highlights an ongoing divide between more traditional conceptions of policing and evolving community-centered expectations.

These differences mirror long-standing discussions in the academic literature, where COP is widely acknowledged to be a fluid, contested, and locally defined concept. Scholars note that COP is not a singular model, but rather a set of principles that must be negotiated within the unique social, political, and cultural context of each community. It is shaped not just by theory or policy, but by relationships, histories, and local priorities.

With this in mind, the research team began the current project by conducting a series of focus groups with Sonoma County residents, SCSO personnel, and other stakeholders. These conversations revealed shared values and concerns, and the working definition of community-oriented policing used in this study emerged from that process. By grounding the research in local voices and consensus, the study aimed to measure COP in a way that resonated with the lived experiences and expectations of Sonoma County residents.

The range of definitions collected in the survey reaffirms the importance of this localized approach. They show that while many residents support or align with a collaborative vision of policing, others are unfamiliar with or resistant to it. This variation underscores the need for continued community dialogue, clarity in communication, and intentional engagement

¹ Support for developing Strategic Learning Questions, recruitment of study participants, and Spanish language translation was provided by the Redwood Consulting Collective.

as Sonoma County considers how to implement and sustain community-oriented policing in a way that builds trust and reflects community values.

How Participants Defined Community-Oriented Policing

Participants offered a range of definitions for community-oriented policing, reflecting both support and skepticism toward its meaning and implementation.

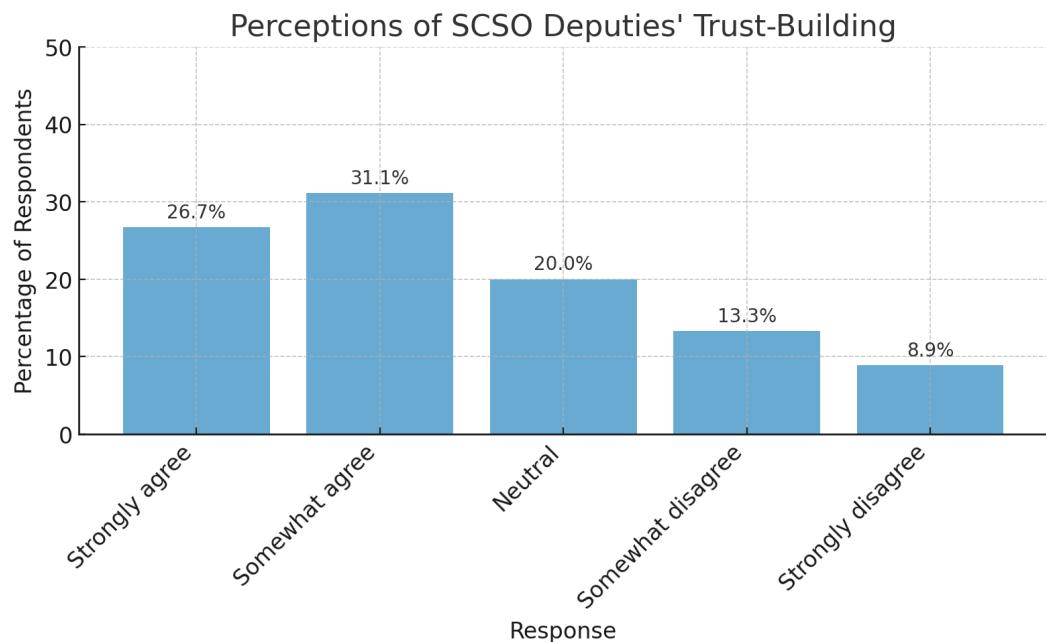
Common themes included:

- **Public service and collaboration:** Many respondents emphasized that deputies should "serve the community," work "together with citizens," and be accountable to public needs—not just enforce laws.
- **Law enforcement roles:** Several participants framed COP in traditional terms, emphasizing that law enforcement's job is to "enforce the laws" and "keep people safe," with some expressing concern that community collaboration might interfere with that role.
- **Oversight and trust:** Some responses highlighted the need for "oversight" and emphasized that policing should be "done with transparency and respect." A few noted that community members should feel they "can trust" deputies.
- **Skepticism and rejection:** A notable portion of respondents questioned or rejected the concept altogether, with several stating simply "no" or "don't interfere with their jobs." These responses suggest resistance to the idea that the community should play a role in shaping or overseeing policing.

Perceptions of Trust-Building by SCSO

When asked whether building trust with community members should be part of a deputy's daily responsibilities, most respondents agreed in principle. However, actual experiences with trust-building were mixed. Respondents frequently noted that while deputies occasionally participated in town halls or community events, these efforts were inconsistent and often perceived as symbolic rather than substantive. Many felt that deputies were more visible in enforcement contexts than in community-building settings.

Barriers to trust included concerns about racial profiling, excessive use of force, not speaking the native language of community members, and lack of follow-up after community engagement efforts. These findings underscore the importance of consistent and meaningful interactions between deputies and community members in non-enforcement settings.

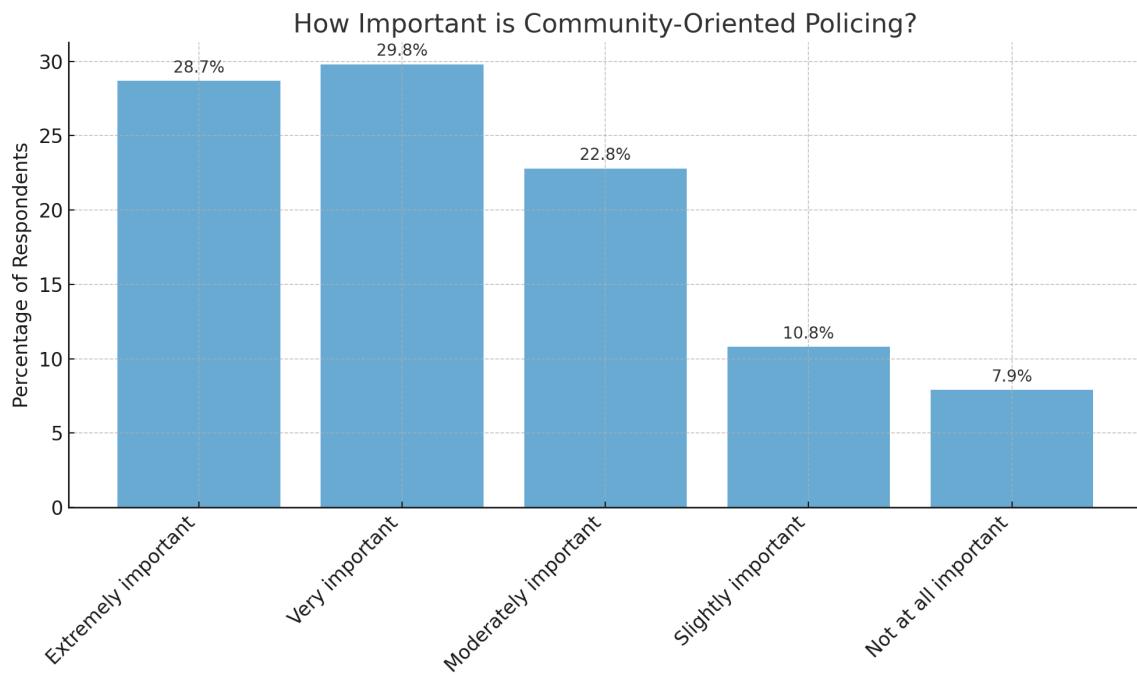


This chart reflects community sentiment about whether trust-building is perceived as part of the SCSO's daily responsibilities.

Importance of Community-Oriented Policing

Respondents expressed broad support for community-oriented policing. Approximately 29% rated it as *extremely important*, and another 30% rated it as *very important*. Another 23% selected *moderately important*, while fewer than 19% considered it *slightly* or *not at all important*.

These results suggest a strong consensus among participants that community-oriented policing is a priority for public safety in Sonoma County.

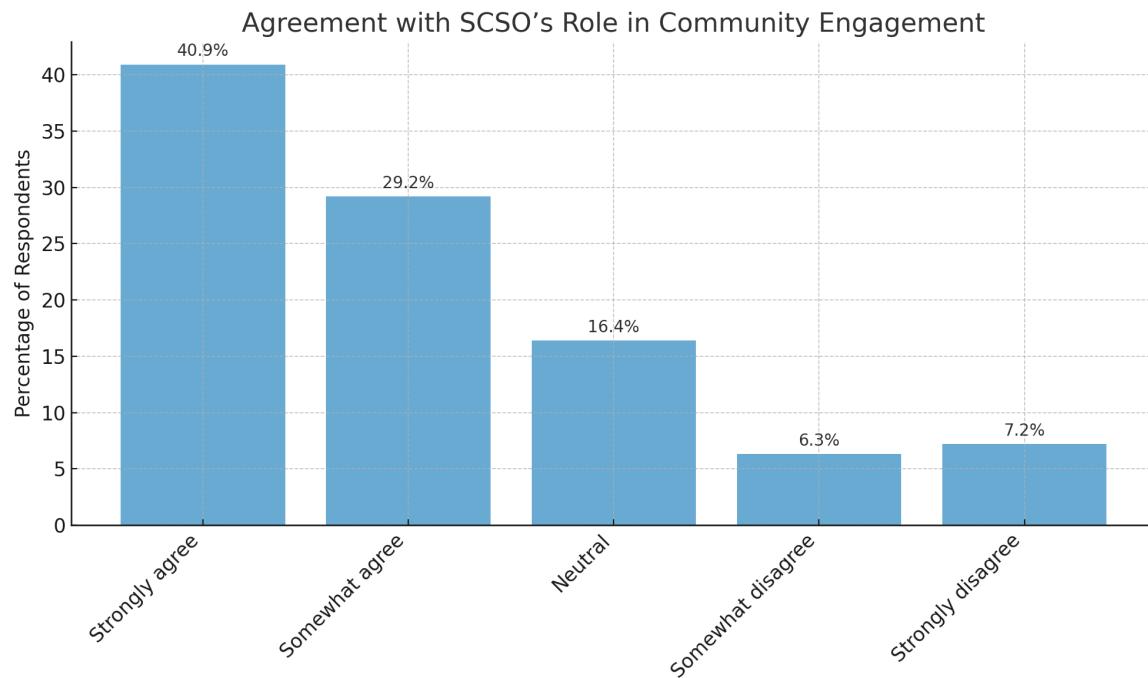


This chart displays respondents' views on the importance of community-oriented policing. Percentages reflect the distribution of perceived importance.

SCSO's Role in Community Engagement

The following items reflect respondents' agreement with statements about how SCSO engages with the community. While these responses suggest perceptions of behavior, they are based on participant agreement and may reflect either personal experience or broader impressions. They do not necessarily indicate direct observation.

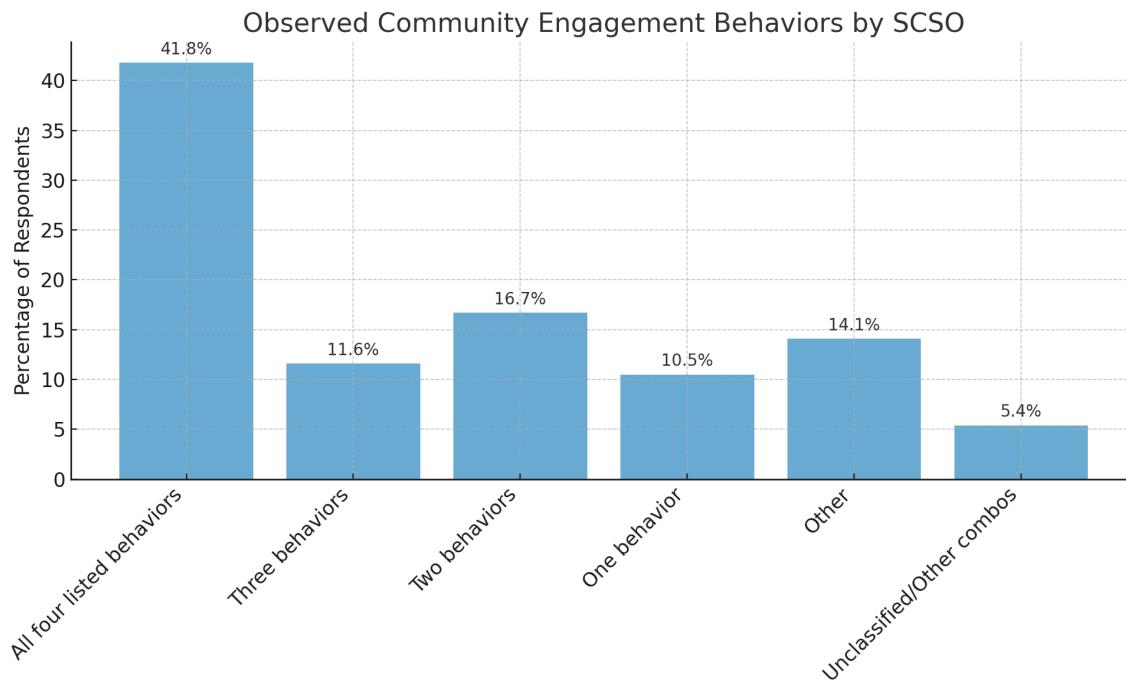
A majority of respondents agreed that SCSO plays a meaningful role in community engagement. About 41% *strongly agreed*, and 30% *somewhat agreed*. Meanwhile, 17% were *neutral*, and roughly 14% disagreed to some degree. While the overall tone is favorable, the presence of neutral and disagreeing responses points to some skepticism or variability in experience among respondents.



This chart shows how strongly respondents agree or disagree that SCSO plays a meaningful role in engaging with the community.

Observed Community Engagement Behaviors by SCSO

When asked which engagement behaviors they observed from deputies (e.g., speaking calmly, listening actively, using names, neutral body language), 42% selected all four behaviors. Another 12% chose three behaviors, and about 17% chose two. Smaller groups selected only one behavior or “Other,” and many responses combined behaviors in unique ways. These results indicate that some respondents have observed positive engagement efforts by SCSO, though many also reported not seeing the full range of interpersonal behaviors, suggesting room for more consistent application.



This chart summarizes how many respondents reported observing combinations of key engagement behaviors by SCSO deputies.

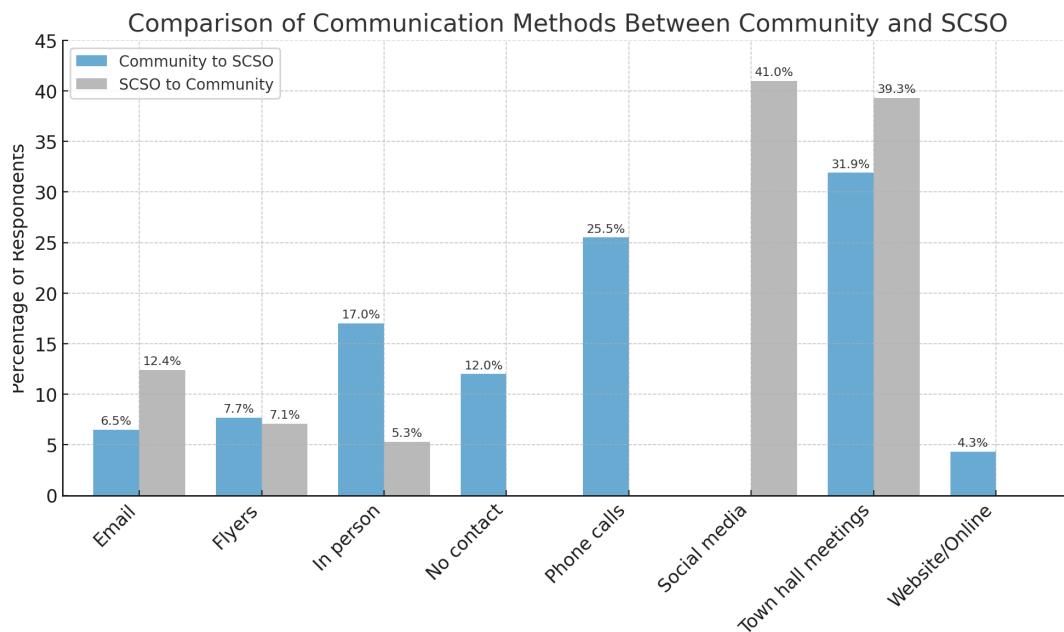
Methods of Community Communication with SCSO

Respondents identified several primary ways they had communicated with SCSO, including town hall meetings, phone calls, and in-person visits. However, a substantial number reported having never contacted the Sheriff's Office directly. This pattern suggests a potential disconnect or discomfort with initiating communication, possibly due to fear, distrust, or perceived inaccessibility of SCSO.

Moreover, informal channels of communication often took precedence over formal mechanisms. Some respondents indicated that they relied on neighbors, community leaders, or social media platforms to share concerns or learn about law enforcement activities, highlighting the need for more structured and responsive communication systems.

When asked how they believed SCSO communicates with the public, most respondents pointed to social media and town hall meetings. While these platforms may reach some community segments, their effectiveness appears to be limited. Respondents expressed concern that these methods do not adequately engage non-English speakers, working-class families, or individuals without reliable internet access.

These findings suggest that SCSO's communication strategies may need to be diversified and localized to ensure broad community reach. Efforts such as door-to-door outreach, community liaisons, or multilingual neighborhood forums could improve communication equity.



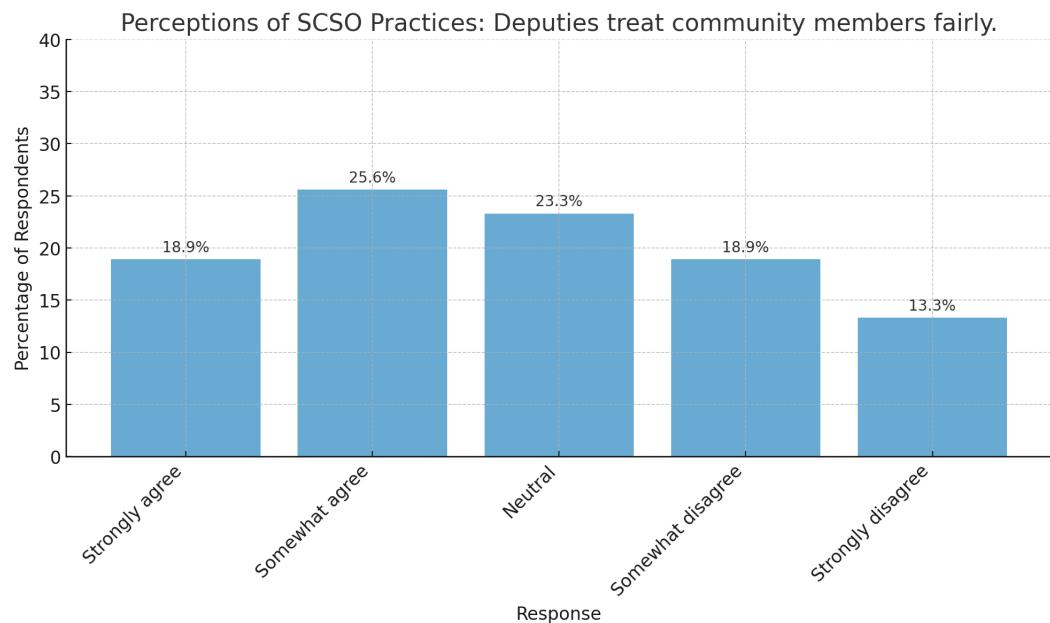
This chart compares how community members report communicating with SCSO and how they perceive SCSO communicates with the community. Percentages are based on response frequencies for each method within its respective category.

Perceptions on Specific Policing Practices

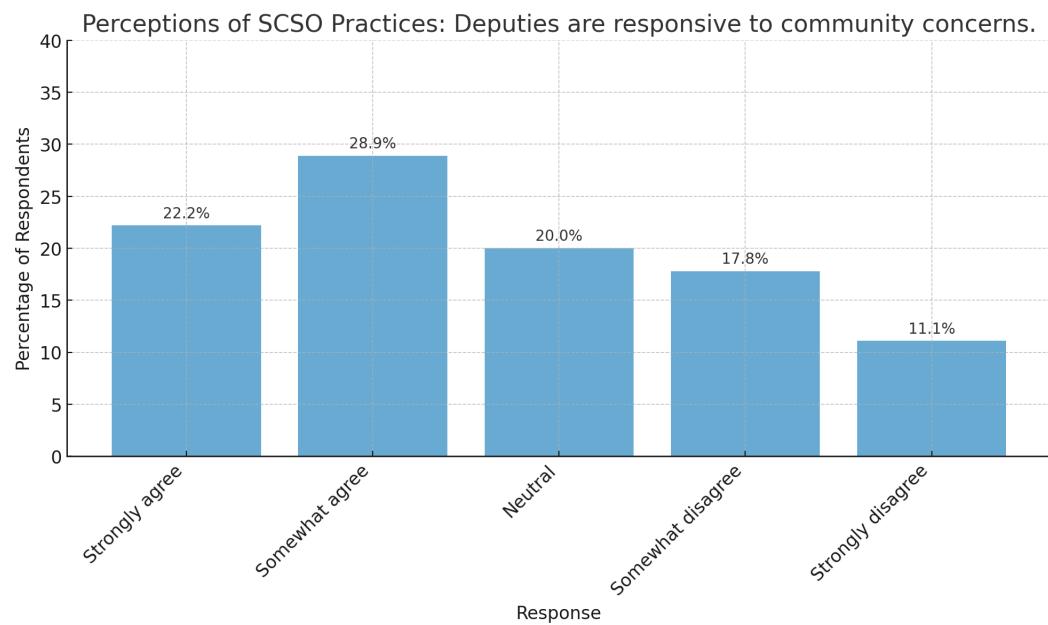
Responses to a set of items regarding perceptions of SCSO practices revealed variation across key dimensions, including fairness, transparency, community presence, and responsiveness. While some aspects of SCSO's approach were viewed positively—particularly their efforts to listen and communicate—other areas received more neutral or critical assessments. For instance, responses varied widely regarding how fairly and consistently deputies engage with different communities.

Some community members shared positive, individualized experiences with deputies, especially in non-enforcement interactions. However, these accounts were often described as isolated rather than indicative of widespread or consistent practice. The data suggest that although community oriented policing principles may be present in some places or among some deputies, their visibility and impact are diminished by uneven implementation.

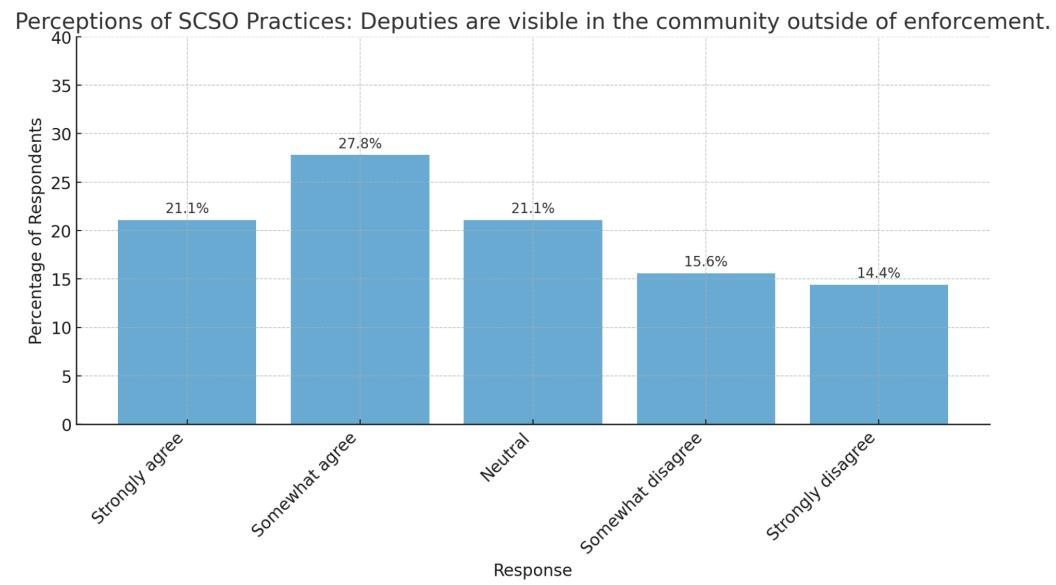
Respondents expressed a strong desire to see deputies more regularly involved in everyday community life, beyond enforcement settings. Suggestions included greater participation in school programs, attendance at cultural and neighborhood events, and more informal, relational interactions. Culturally competent communication, equity in treatment, and proactive—not reactive—engagement were also cited as crucial components of a more trusted and effective public safety presence.



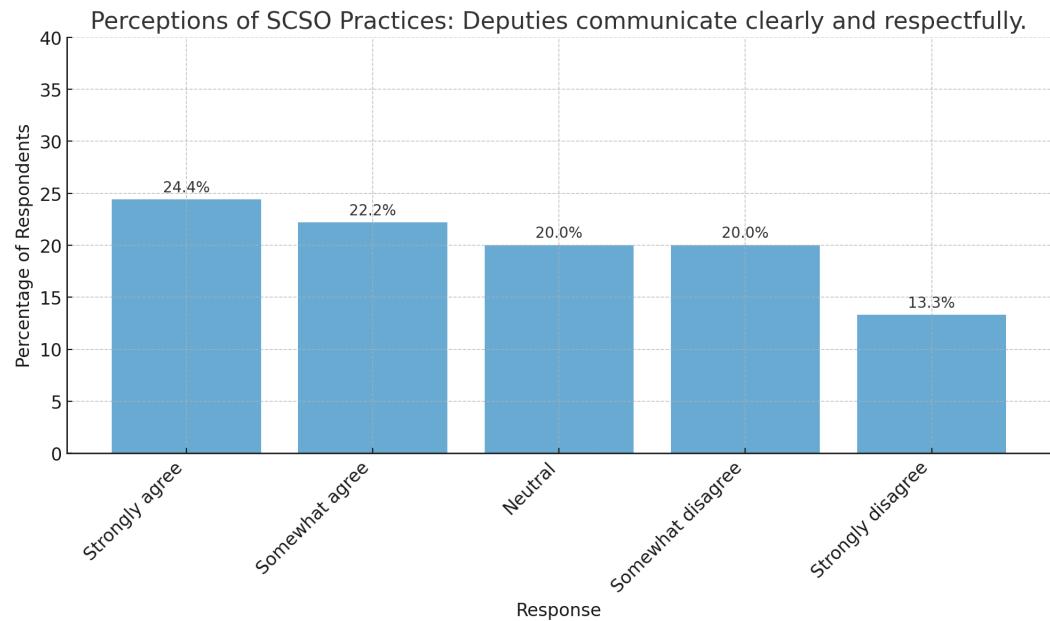
This chart reflects community perceptions regarding: 'Deputies treat community members fairly.'
Percentages represent the proportion of responses to each agreement level.



This chart reflects community perceptions regarding: 'Deputies are responsive to community concerns.'
Percentages represent the proportion of responses to each agreement level.



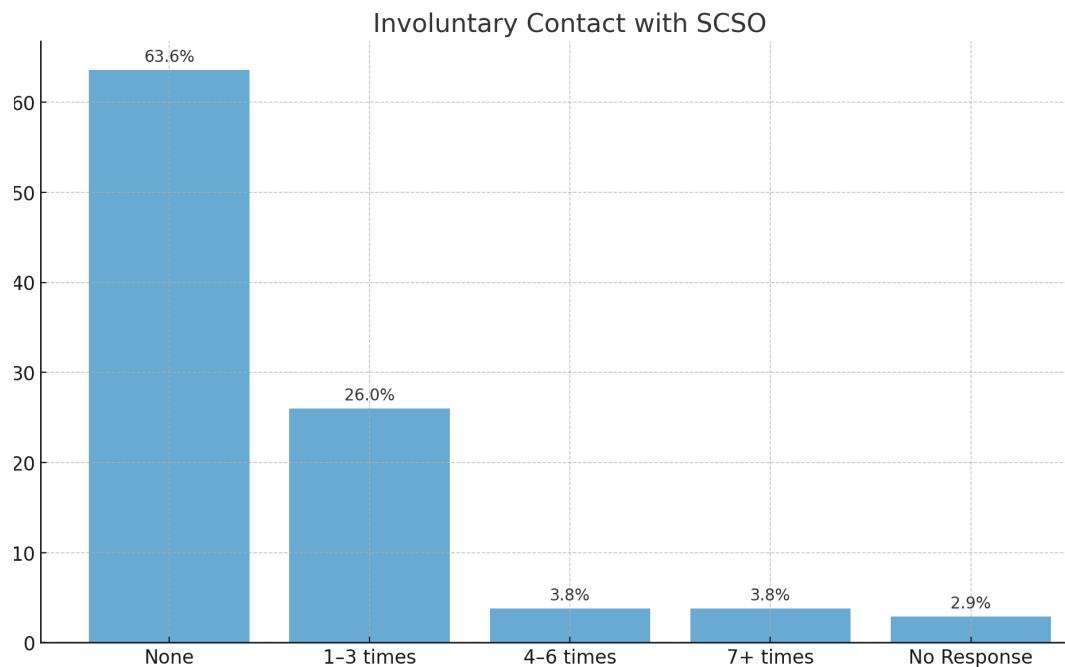
This chart reflects community perceptions regarding: 'Deputies are visible in the community outside of enforcement.'
Percentages represent the proportion of responses to each agreement level.



This chart reflects community perceptions regarding: 'Deputies communicate clearly and respectfully.'
Percentages represent the proportion of responses to each agreement level.

Involuntary Contact with SCSO

64% of respondents reported having no involuntary contact with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, 26% reported 1-3 such contacts, and under 8% reported more frequent involuntary encounters. This reflects a sample with relatively low exposure to enforcement.



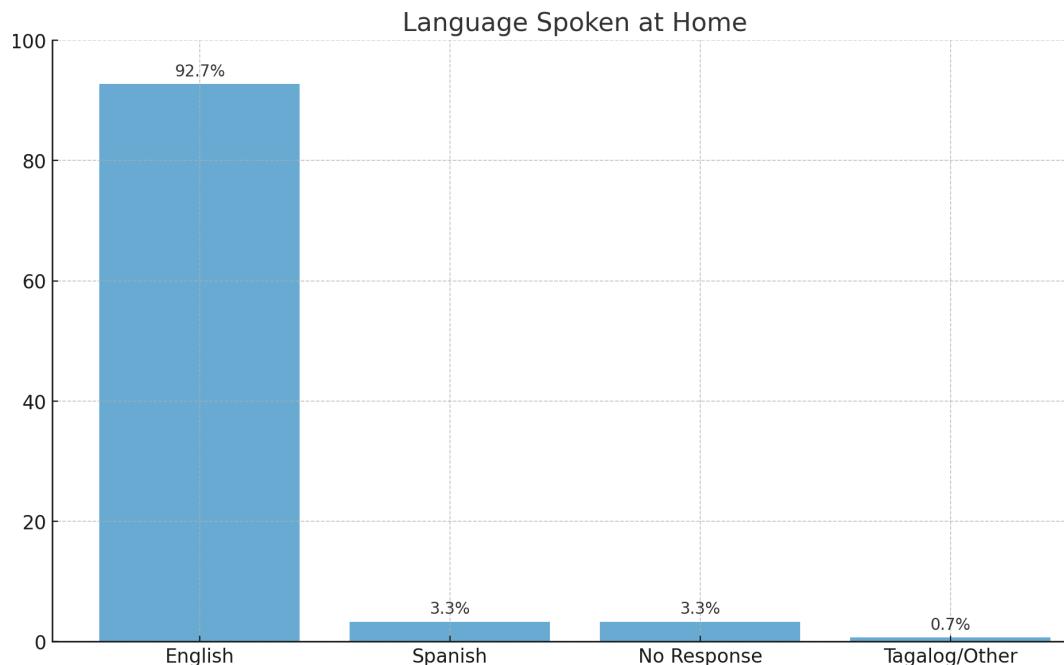
This chart reflects the distribution of responses to the demographic item: 'Involuntary Contact with SCSO'.
Percentages represent each category's share of total responses for that item.

Demographic Characteristics and Representativeness

An analysis of the respondent pool revealed the following trends:

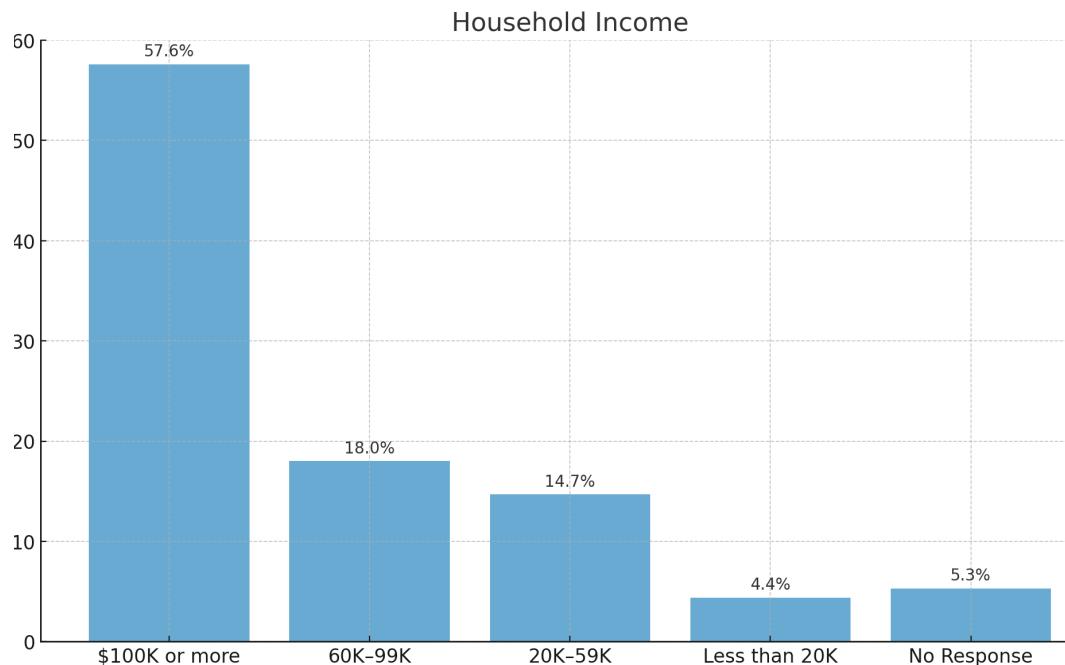
Language

93% of respondents reported speaking English at home, compared to approximately 73% of the Sonoma County population. Spanish speakers made up just 3% of the sample, despite accounting for over 21% of county households.



Income

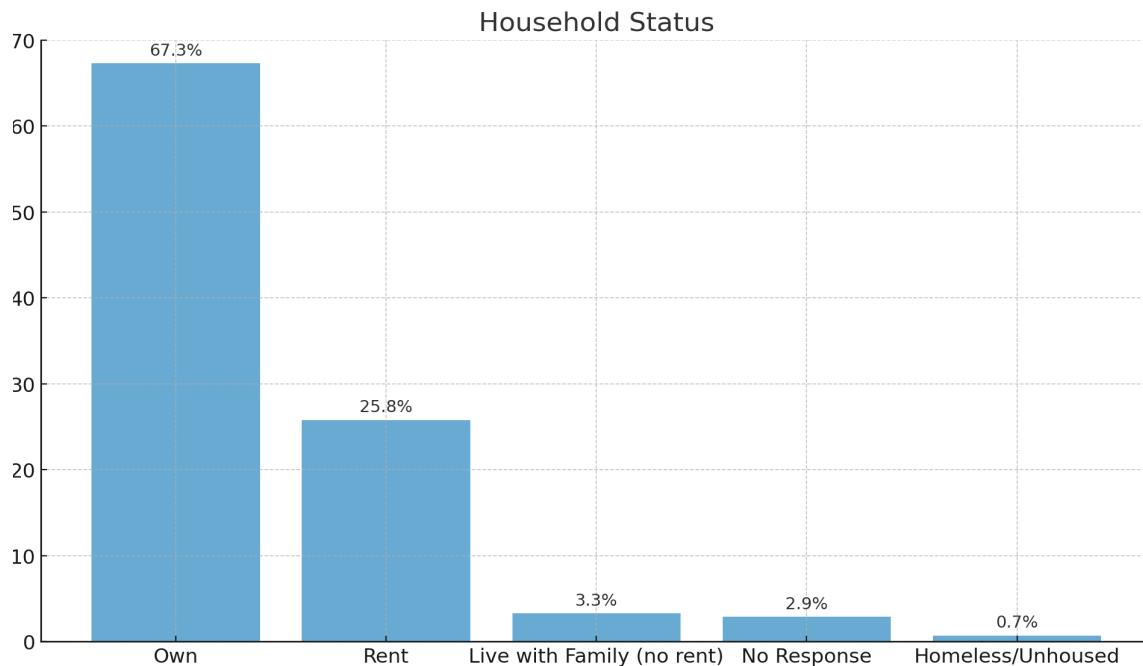
58% of respondents reported annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more, while only 4% reported income below \$20,000.



This chart reflects the distribution of responses to the demographic item: 'Household Income'.
Percentages represent each category's share of total responses for that item.

Household Status

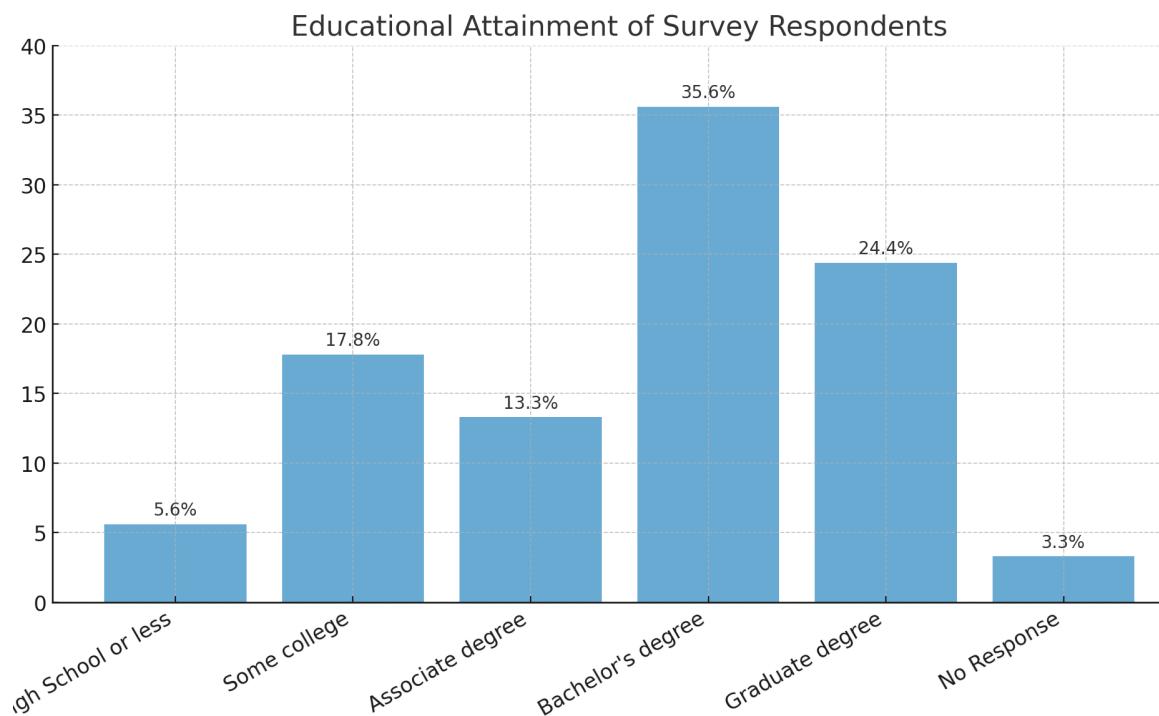
67% of respondents indicated they own their home, 26% rent, and less than 1% reported living in a homeless shelter or being unhoused. According to recent county estimates, approximately 60% of households in Sonoma County are owner-occupied, suggesting this sample slightly overrepresents homeowners.



This chart reflects the distribution of responses to the demographic item: 'Household Status'.
Percentages represent each category's share of total responses for that item.

Educational Attainment

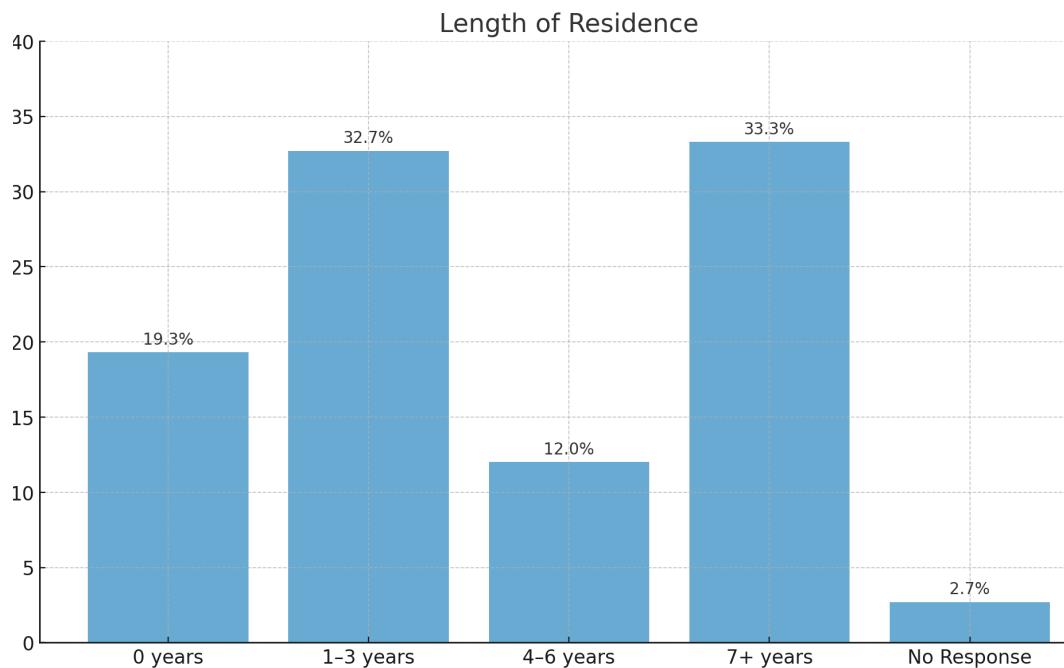
36% of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree, 24% held a graduate degree, 18% had completed some college, 13% held an associate degree, and 6% had a high school diploma or less. According to recent U.S. Census estimates, approximately 38% of adults in Sonoma County hold a bachelor's degree or higher, suggesting this sample slightly overrepresents individuals with advanced education.



This chart reflects the self-reported education levels of survey respondents.
Percentages are based on the total number of responses to the education item.

Length of Residence in Sonoma County

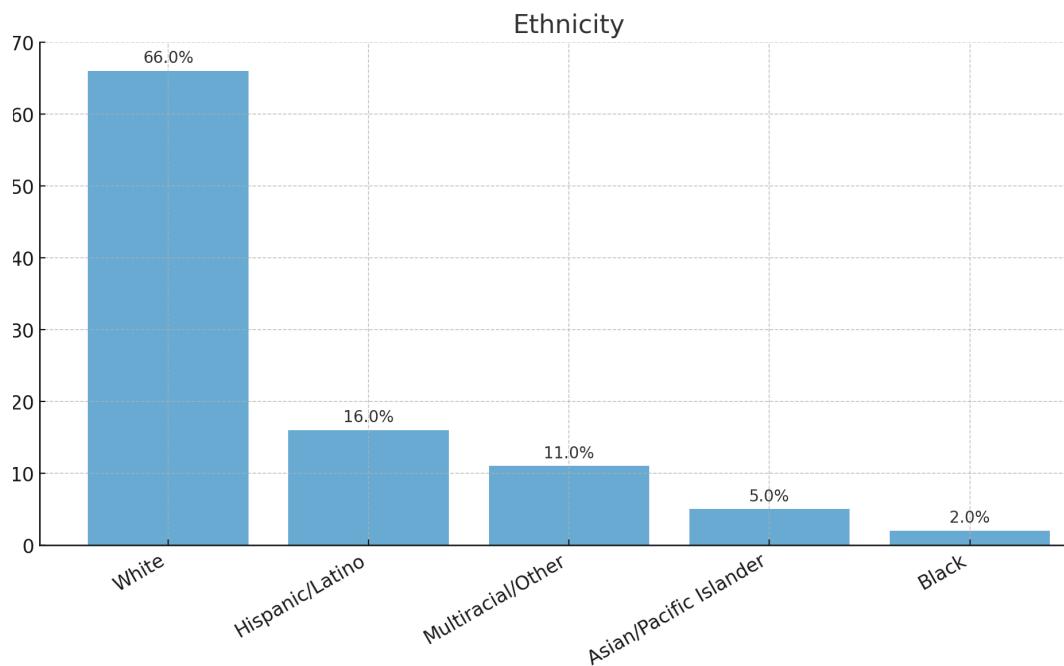
Approximately one-third of respondents have lived in the county for over 7 years, while another third reported living there for 1–3 years. About 19% reported living in the county less than a year, which may include recent movers, students, or those with non-permanent ties to the area.



This chart reflects the distribution of responses to the demographic item: 'Length of Residence'.
Percentages represent each category's share of total responses for that item.

Ethnicity

Among respondents who provided demographic data, approximately 66% identified as White, 16% as Hispanic or Latino, 5% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 2% as Black or African American, and 11% as multiracial or other. According to the U.S. Census, Sonoma County is approximately 58% White (non-Hispanic), 29.4% Hispanic or Latino, 4.5% Asian, 2% Black, and 5% multiracial or other. These figures suggest that White residents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latino and other communities of color were underrepresented in the survey sample.



This chart reflects the distribution of responses to the demographic item: 'Ethnicity'.
Percentages represent each category's share of total responses for that item.

These discrepancies indicate that the sample likely skews toward more socioeconomically advantaged, stably housed, higher educated, English-speaking, and white residents. This underrepresentation of lower-income, Spanish-speaking, undocumented, and BIPOC community members should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Qualitative Insights

Open ended questions on the survey provided a rich source of qualitative data that contextualizes the quantitative findings.

Community Collaboration Examples:

Respondents mentioned school visits, toy drives, parades, and community fairs as examples of positive engagement. These events were generally well-received and contributed to a more favorable view of law enforcement. However, several respondents stated they had never witnessed meaningful collaboration, pointing to either geographic disparities or inconsistency in outreach.

Historical Issues:

Many respondents referenced the 2013 shooting of Andy Lopez as a defining moment that damaged trust in law enforcement. Other comments highlighted systemic concerns, such as perceived racial bias, over-policing in communities of color, and lack of transparency during critical incidents. This historical context shapes ongoing perceptions of legitimacy and accountability.

Additional Reflections:

Themes in this section included calls for greater transparency, improved deputy training in cultural competence, and more frequent non-enforcement engagement. Some respondents praised individual deputies or programs, while others expressed skepticism about whether COP efforts were genuine or performative.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study is the absence of substantial participation from the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SCSO), which prevents a direct comparison between community and deputy perspectives on community-oriented policing. As a result, this report reflects only the views of community respondents.

In addition, the sample skews toward more socioeconomically advantaged, English-speaking, long-term residents. Despite extensive and culturally informed outreach efforts, participation from undocumented residents and monolingual Spanish speakers remained limited—likely due to ongoing structural inequities, fear of immigration enforcement, and political conditions that inhibit trust. These representational gaps limit the generalizability of the findings and underscore the need for continued, targeted engagement in future phases of the research.

To protect participant confidentiality and encourage open responses—particularly to questions involving perceptions of law enforcement—the survey was collected anonymously. As a result, there was no way to identify or follow up with individual respondents, nor to verify unique participation beyond the settings embedded in the survey platform. However, a safeguard was implemented to detect and eliminate duplicate submissions. Additionally, participants were asked to report their residential zip code to help confirm Sonoma County residency. Responses that did not include a Sonoma County zip code or that were flagged as duplicates were removed from the final analysis.

These design choices reflect a careful balance between protecting participant anonymity and maintaining data integrity, though they also limit the ability to assess response patterns across different respondent characteristics.

Conclusion

This report offers a snapshot into how surveyed Sonoma County residents perceive community-oriented policing as practiced by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Respondents broadly agreed that trust-building should be part of deputies' daily responsibilities and emphasized a desire for more visible, proactive, and non-enforcement-based engagement.

The data also reveal inconsistencies in how key principles of community-oriented policing—such as fairness, responsiveness, and presence—are experienced across the sample. Communication emerged as an area of concern, with notable variation in how residents report reaching out to SCSO and how they perceive communication from the department. Many respondents noted relying on informal methods or having no engagement at all.

While these findings offer useful insight, the report also reflects limitations in representation. The survey sample overrepresents more affluent, stably housed, English-speaking, and white residents, and underrepresents voices from undocumented, Spanish-speaking, and lower-income communities. These underrepresented groups may face unique barriers—such as language access, digital exclusion, and mistrust in institutions—that were not fully captured in this phase of the study.

Despite its limitations, this report provides valuable direction for future outreach, engagement, and reform efforts. It offers a foundation for continued dialogue among community members, SCSO leadership, oversight bodies, and research partners. Moving forward, a shared commitment to equity, transparency, and collaboration will be essential in developing a more inclusive and trusted model of public safety in Sonoma County.

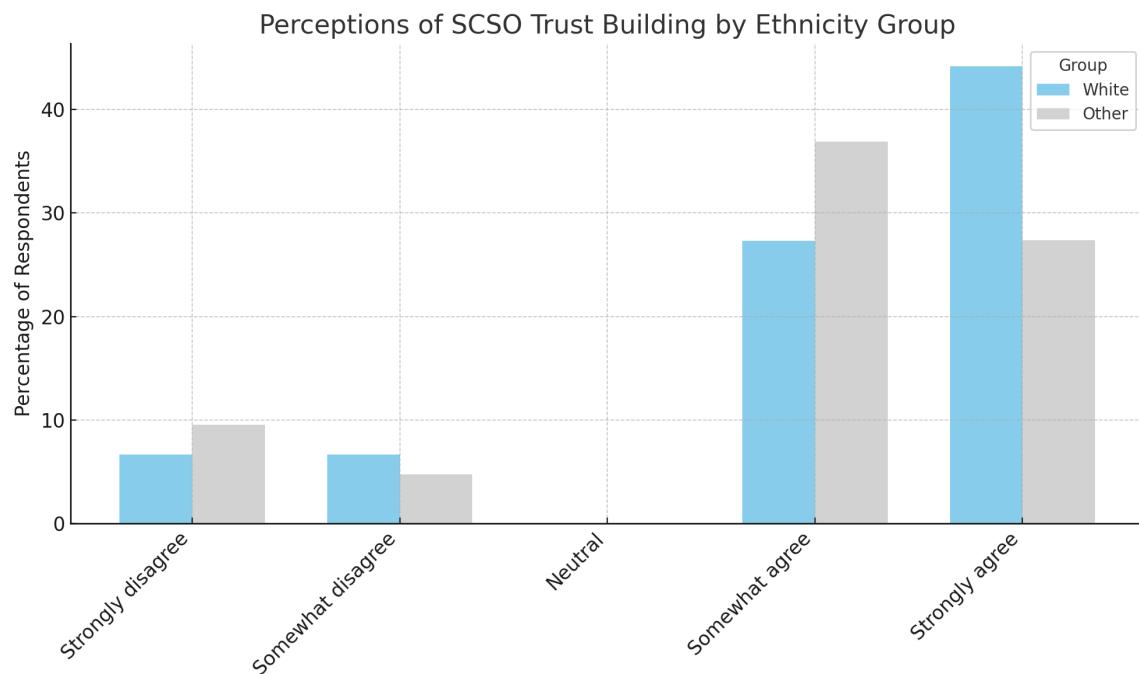
Appendices

The following appendices present breakdowns of survey results by ethnicity, language, and geographic region (zip code groupings). These supplemental analyses are intended to provide additional insight into how perceptions and experiences with SCSO may vary across communities. However, it is important to note that these subgroup findings should be interpreted with caution. The sample included relatively small numbers of respondents from many communities of color, non-English speakers, and certain areas of the county. As a result, the analyses do not allow for statistically valid comparisons or generalizations.

Appendix A: Supplemental Analysis by Ethnicity and Language

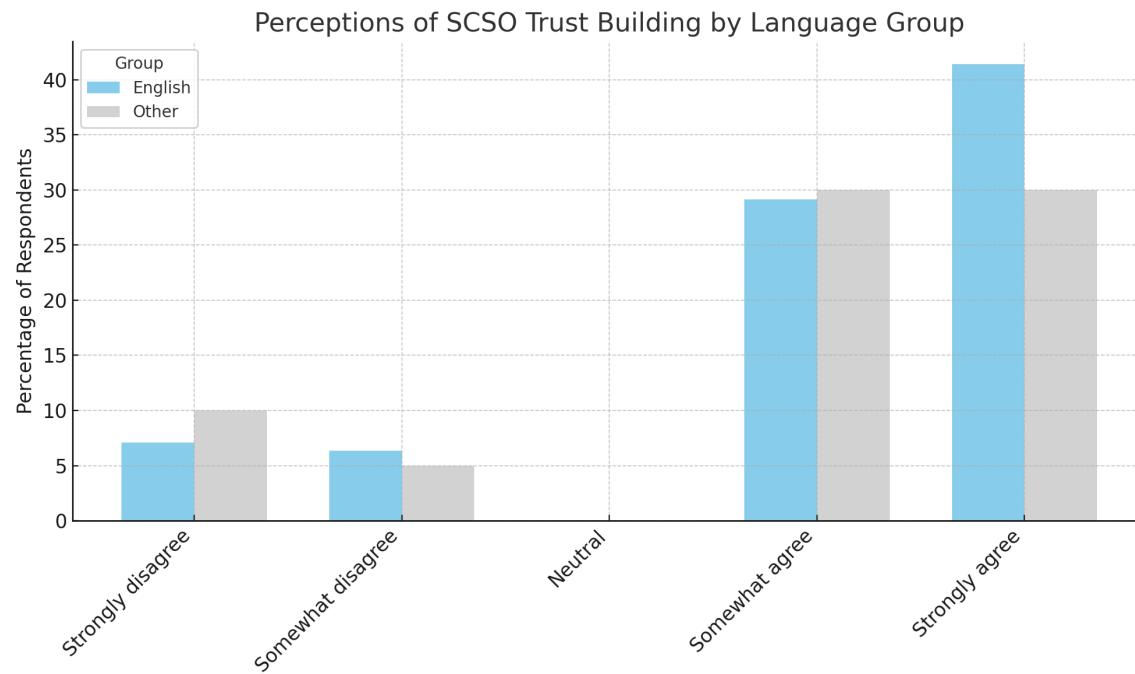
This section provides visual breakdowns of community responses based on simplified demographic groupings. Given the sample composition—predominantly English-speaking and White-identifying—these charts should not be used to draw broad conclusions about underrepresented communities. However, they offer insight into general trends from the survey participants that can inform future research and engagement strategies.

Perceptions of SCSO Trust-Building



This chart compares how White respondents and respondents from other racial and ethnic groups perceive SCSO deputies' trust-building efforts, based on agreement with the statement: *"Deputies communicate clearly and respectfully with the public."* White respondents were more likely to express agreement, with higher percentages selecting *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*. Respondents from other racial and ethnic backgrounds showed a more even distribution across the response categories, including higher rates of *neutral* and *disagree* responses.

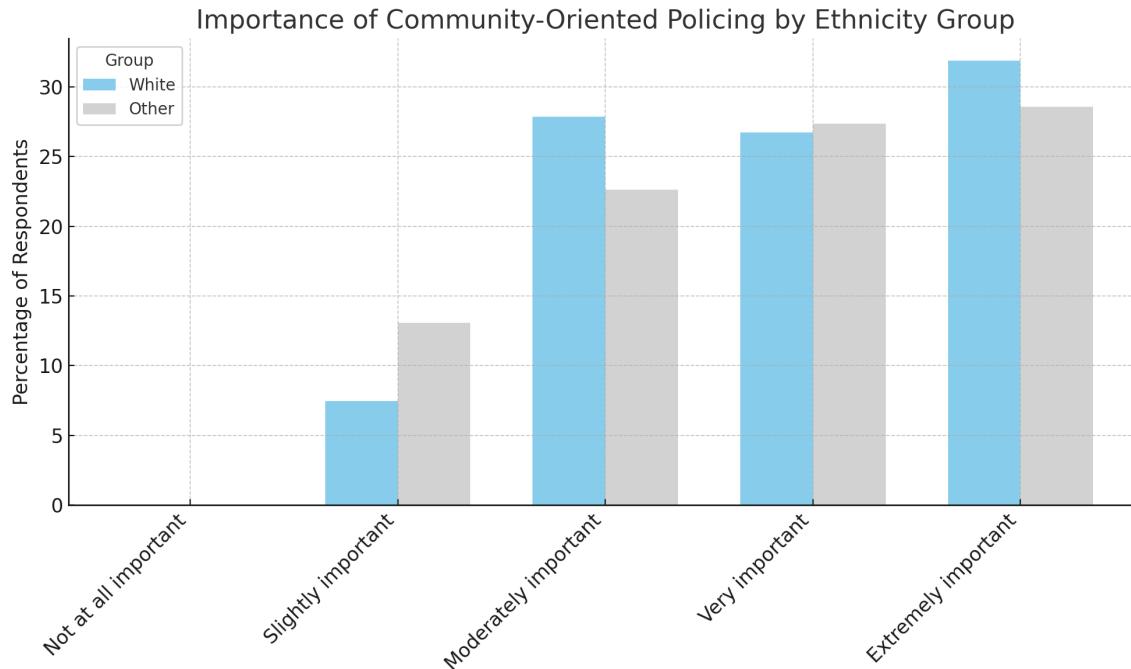
These results suggest that trust-building through clear and respectful communication may be experienced differently across racial and ethnic lines. The disparities may reflect prior experiences with deputies, broader trust in law enforcement, or perceptions of cultural competency in communication.



This chart compares responses from English-speaking participants and those who speak other languages at home. English speakers were more likely to agree that deputies communicate clearly and respectfully, with the majority selecting *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*. Non-English-speaking respondents were more likely to choose *neutral* or *somewhat disagree*, and fewer selected the most favorable response categories.

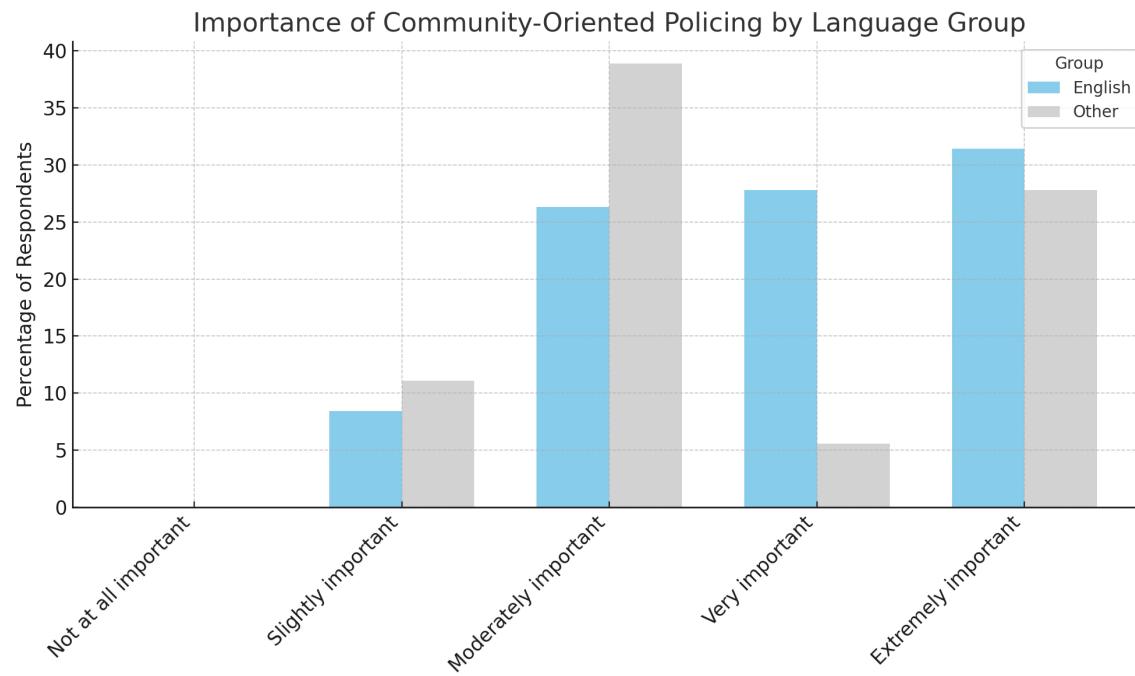
These differences highlight the importance of language access and culturally responsive communication. Trust-building efforts may not be equally effective for residents who face language barriers or who are less familiar with law enforcement communication styles.

Importance of Community-Oriented Policing



This chart compares how White respondents and respondents from other racial and ethnic backgrounds rated the importance of community-oriented policing. White respondents were more likely to rate community-oriented policing as *extremely important*, with the majority of responses falling in the *very important* and *extremely important* categories. Other racial and ethnic groups also rated community-oriented policing as highly important overall but showed a slightly broader distribution across the scale, including more responses in the *moderately important* and *slightly important* categories.

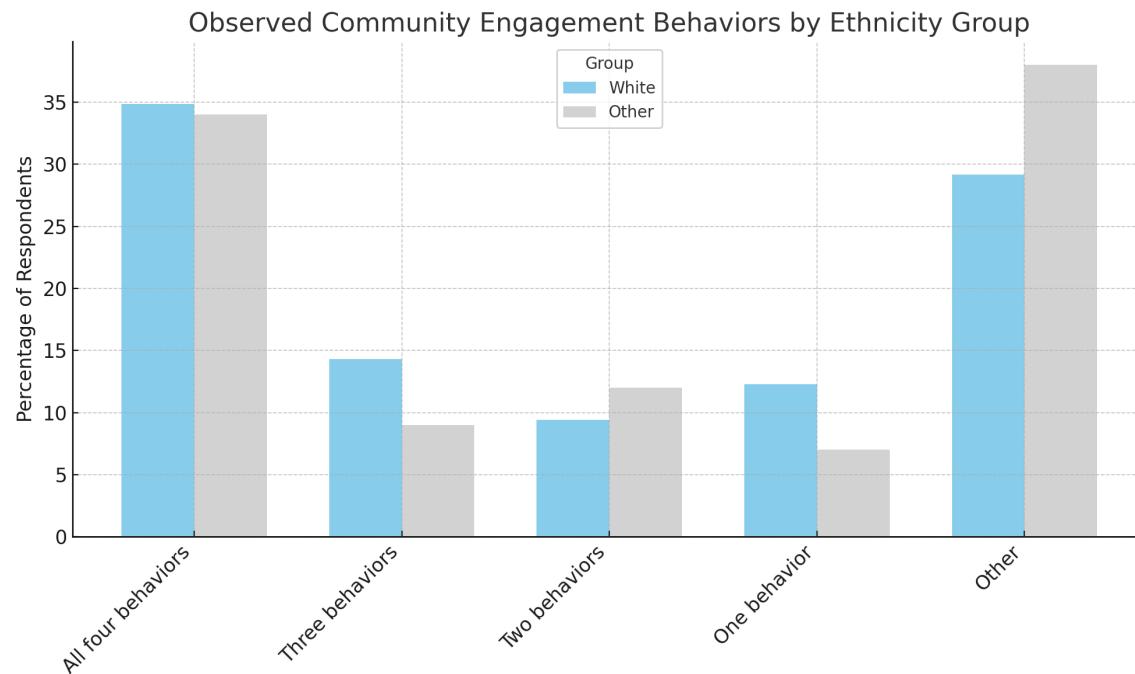
These results indicate broad support for community-oriented policing across racial and ethnic groups, though the strength of that support varies slightly, potentially reflecting differences in prior experiences or perceived relevance of these practices in daily interactions with law enforcement.



This chart shows how respondents who speak English and those who speak other languages at home rated the importance of community-oriented policing. English-speaking respondents overwhelmingly rated community-oriented policing as *very* or *extremely important*, with a high concentration in the most favorable categories. Non-English-speaking respondents also demonstrated strong support for these practices, though their responses were more distributed, with slightly fewer selecting the highest importance levels and more choosing *moderate* or *slight importance*.

While support for community-oriented policing is evident across language groups, these differences may suggest that non-English-speaking residents have had fewer positive experiences with or less exposure to these practices — or may interpret the concept differently based on cultural context or communication access.

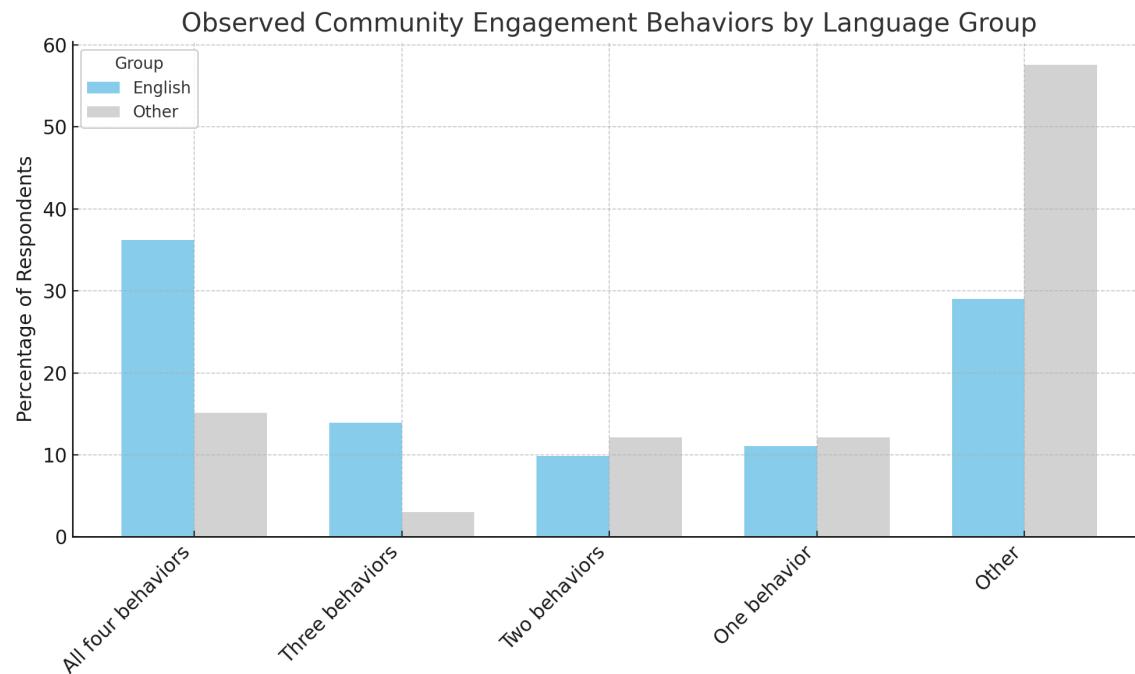
Observed Community Engagement by Ethnicity



This chart compares how White respondents and respondents from other racial and ethnic backgrounds characterized the community engagement behaviors they observed from SCSO deputies—such as *speaking calmly, listening actively, using neutral body language, and using people's names*. White respondents were slightly more likely to report observing three or four engagement behaviors during their interactions with deputies. Respondents from other racial and ethnic groups had a more mixed distribution of responses, with a larger share selecting "Other" or reporting only one or two behaviors.

These results suggest that community engagement practices may not be experienced consistently across racial lines. The lower visibility of key engagement behaviors among non-White respondents could reflect either disparities in how deputies engage or differences in how those behaviors are perceived and interpreted.

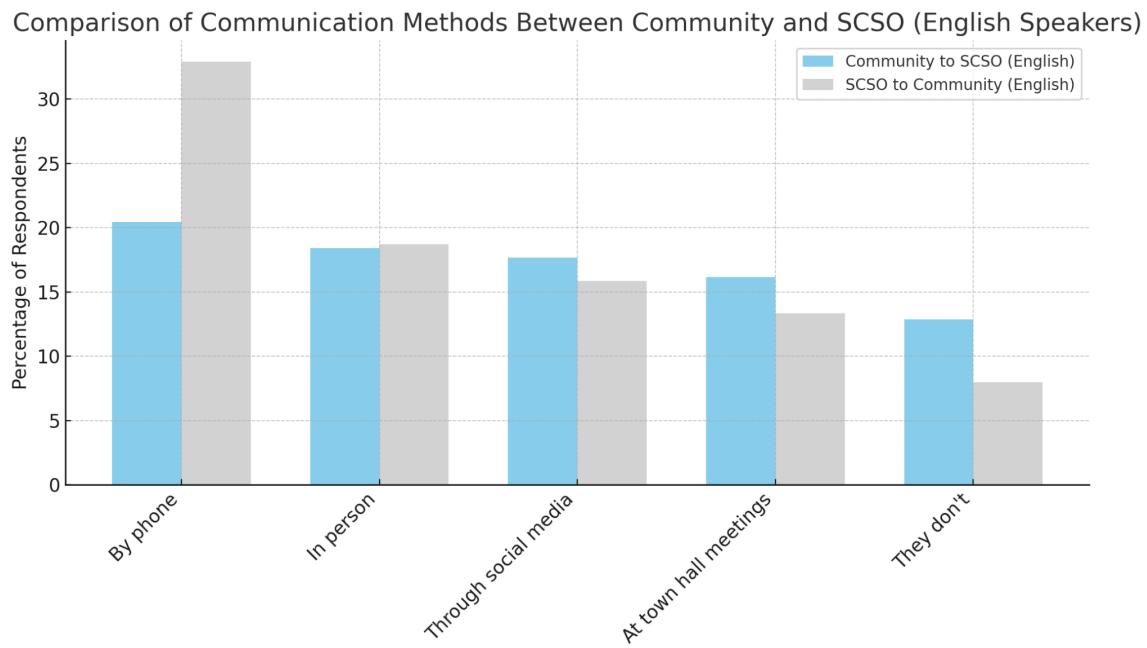
Observed Community Engagement by Language



This chart shows how English-speaking and non-English-speaking respondents assessed the engagement behaviors demonstrated by deputies. English speakers were more likely to report observing all four behaviors, with the majority selecting three or more. Non-English speakers were more likely to choose “Other” or report seeing fewer engagement behaviors overall.

This disparity points to potential language and accessibility barriers that may limit non-English-speaking residents' ability to recognize or benefit from engagement efforts. It also highlights the importance of culturally and linguistically tailored approaches to community interaction and trust-building.

Communication Methods – English Speakers

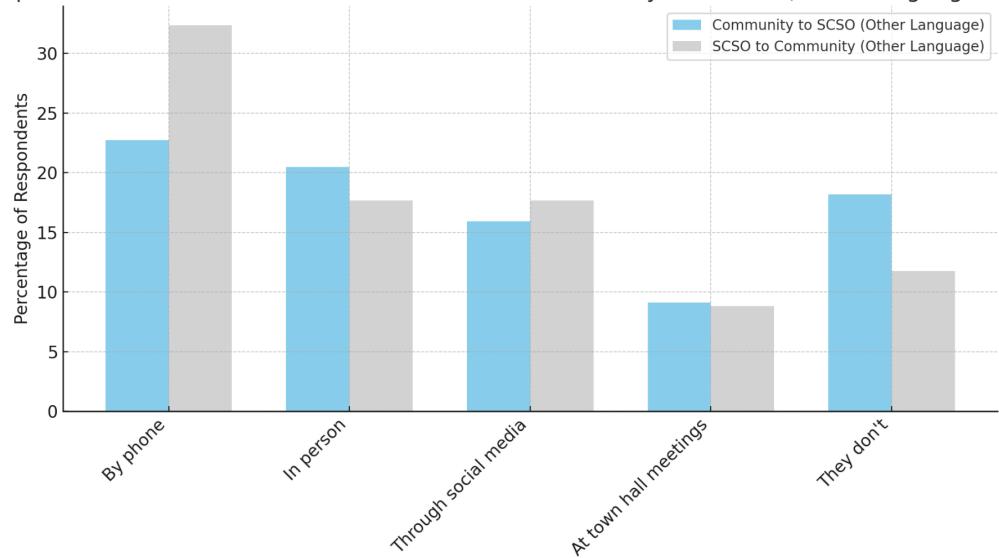


Among English-speaking respondents, the most commonly reported way to contact SCSO was by phone (20.4%), followed by in-person visits (18.4%), social media (17.7%), and town hall meetings (16.2%). In contrast, when asked how they believe SCSO communicates with the community, English speakers most frequently identified social media (32.9%), followed by town halls (18.7%), in-person interactions (15.9%), and email (13.4%).

This comparison reveals that English-speaking community members tend to rely on direct or informal methods of outreach (e.g., phone, in person), while perceiving SCSO as favoring broad, one-way communication platforms like social media or email. The gap suggests opportunities for more two-way, personalized engagement.

Communication Methods – Non-English Speakers

Comparison of Communication Methods Between Community and SCSO (Other Language Speakers)



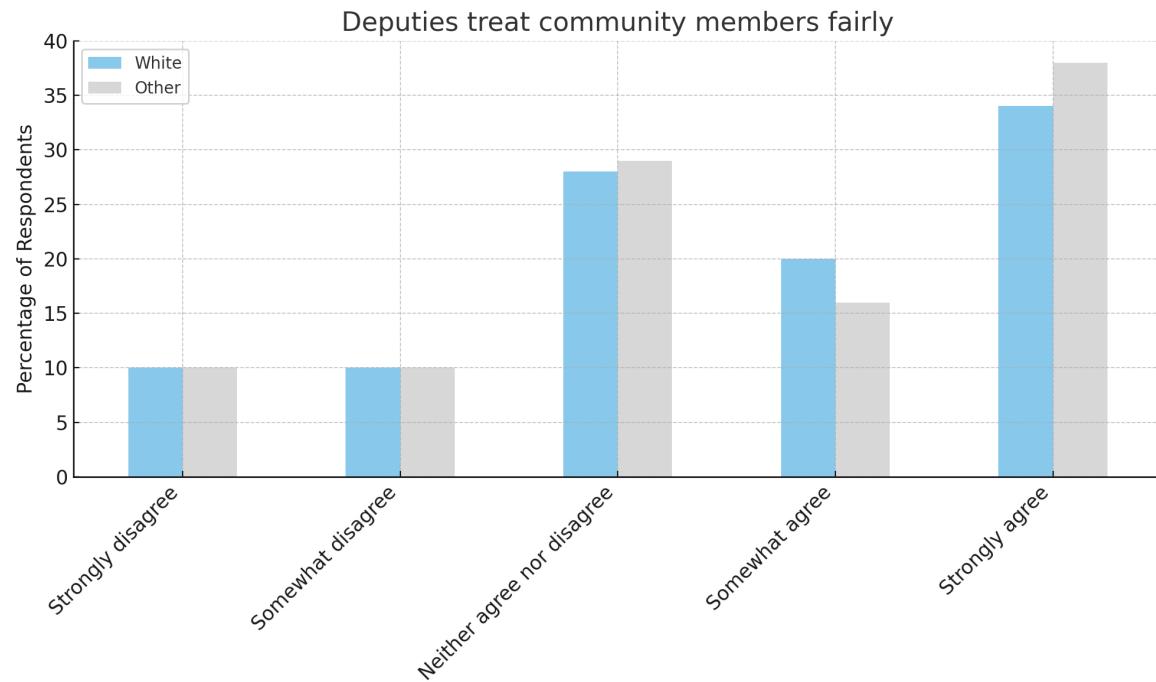
Respondents who primarily speak a language other than English were slightly more likely to report contacting SCSO by phone (22.7%) or in person (20.5%) but were also more likely to report no contact at all (18.2%). They were less likely to cite town halls or social media as contact methods. When asked how they believe SCSO communicates with the public, non-English speakers also identified social media as the top method (32.4%), followed by town halls (17.6%), in-person communication (17.6%), and email (8.8%).

These findings suggest potential communication barriers or disconnects. Non-English-speaking residents may have fewer touchpoints with SCSO and may be less engaged via institutional channels. The higher rate of "no contact" reported by this group highlights the need for multilingual, culturally responsive outreach strategies.

This chart shows how English-speaking respondents compare to speakers of other languages in their views on 'visibility of SCSO outside enforcement.' Again, because the sample is overwhelmingly English-speaking, the data are best viewed as a general trend rather than a reliable reflection of multilingual community perspectives.

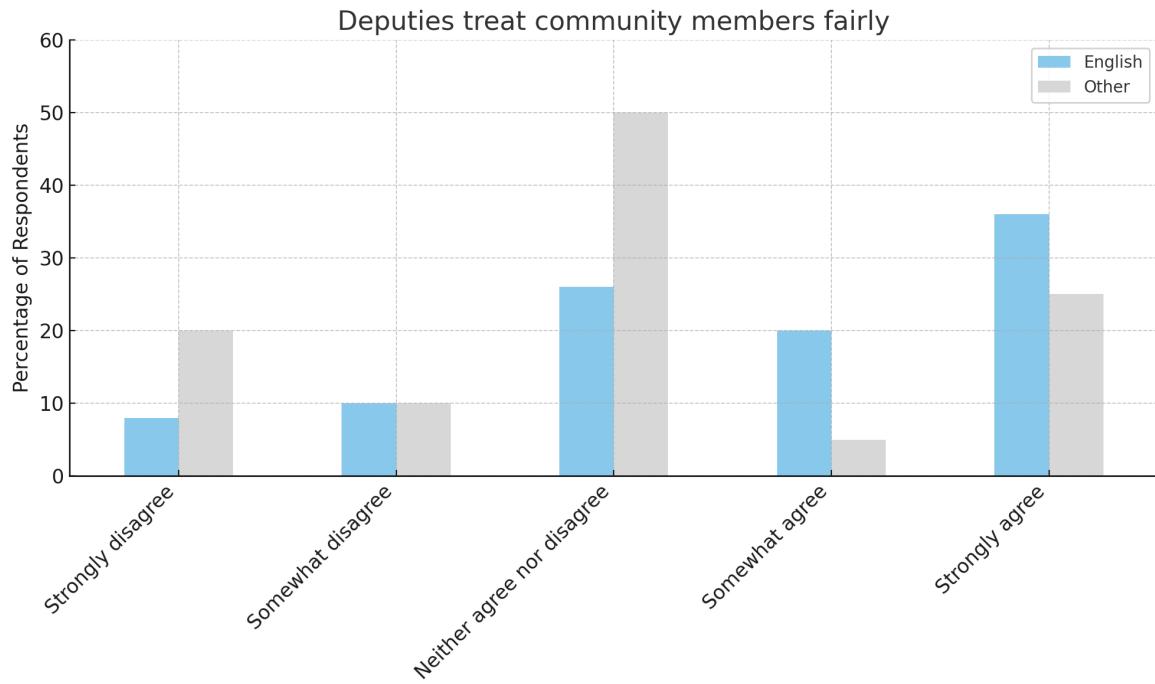
Perceptions on Specific Policing Practices

Deputies treat community members fairly



White respondents were more likely to agree that deputies treat community members fairly, with a larger proportion selecting *strongly agree* or *somewhat agree*. Respondents in the “Other” category were more evenly distributed across response options and showed slightly higher rates of neutrality and disagreement.

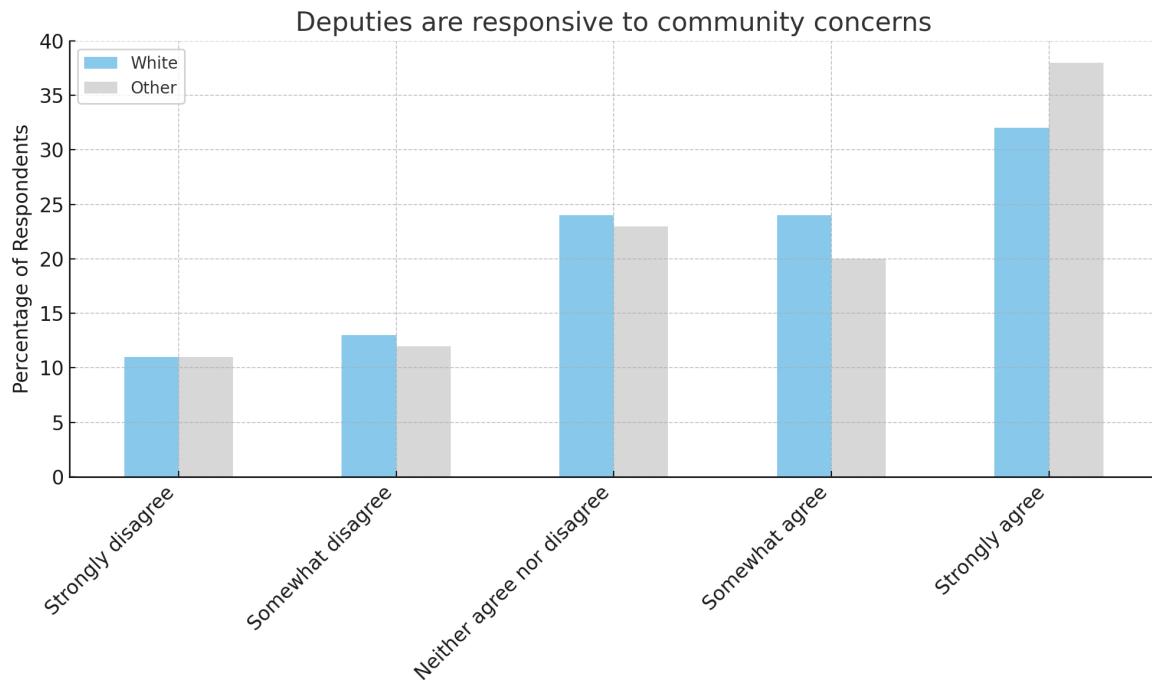
These differences may reflect varying levels of trust, personal experience, or systemic disparities in how different communities experience law enforcement.



English speakers expressed greater agreement that deputies are fair, with the majority selecting *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*. Respondents who speak other languages were more likely to select *neutral* or *disagree*, indicating less certainty or confidence in how fairly deputies behave.

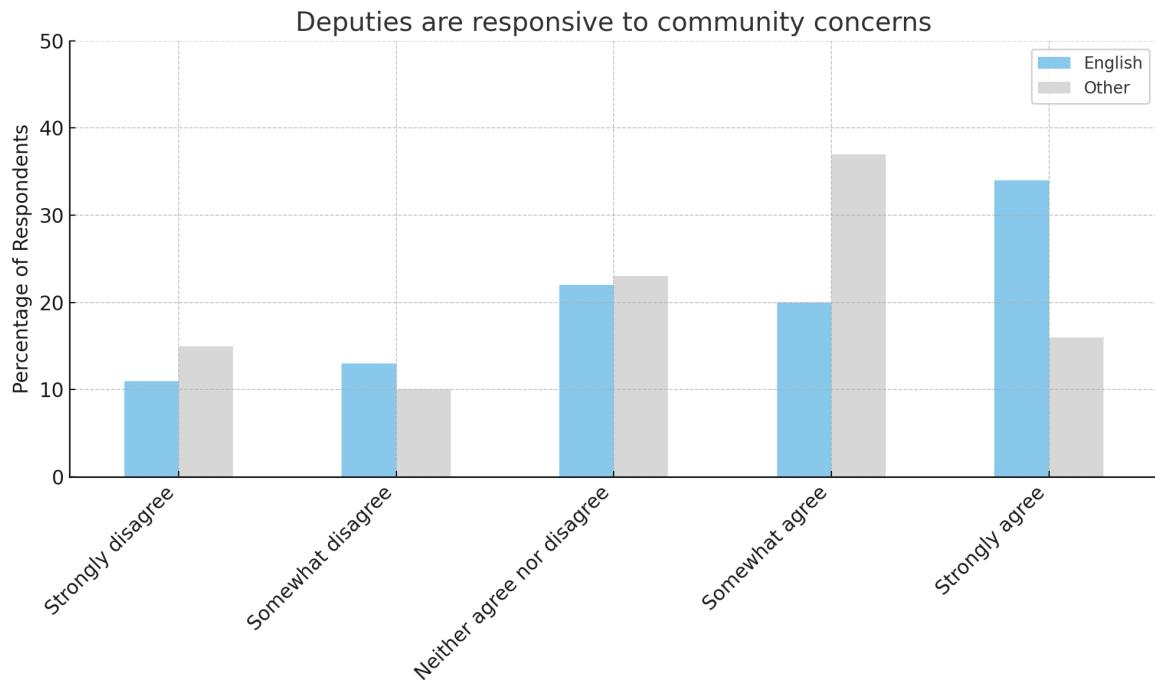
These findings suggest that language barriers or cultural differences may influence how residents perceive and evaluate fairness in policing practices.

Deputies are responsive to community concerns



White respondents more frequently agreed that deputies are responsive to concerns raised by the community, while respondents in the “Other” category were more likely to express neutrality or disagreement.

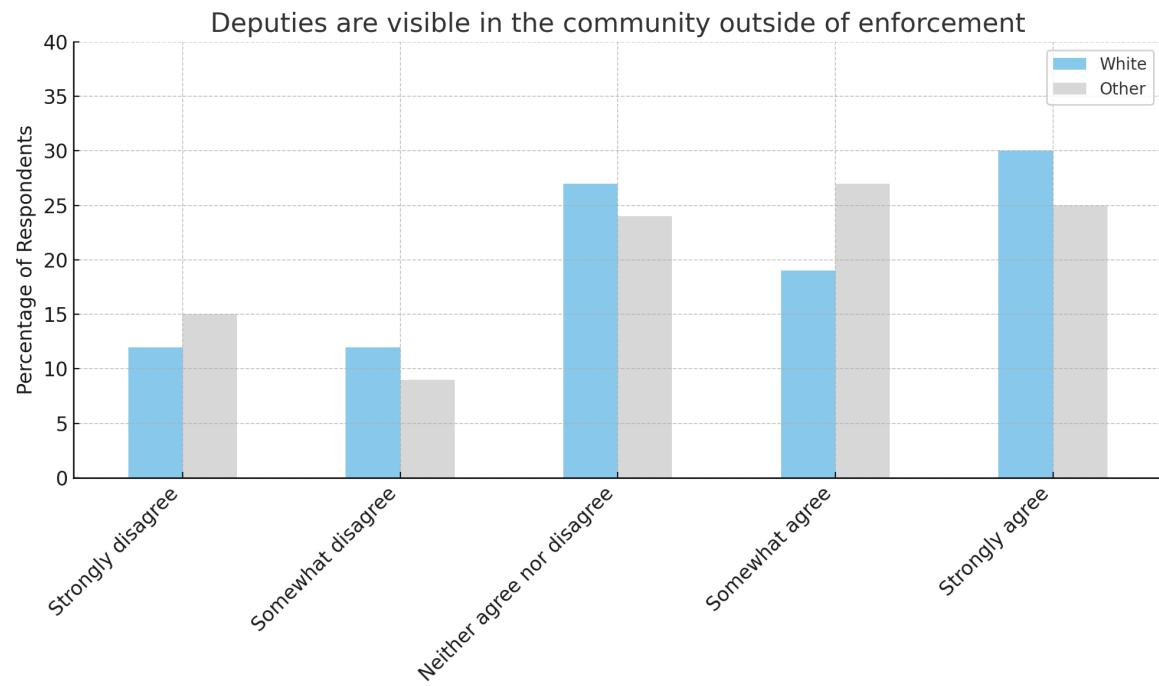
This suggests that perceived responsiveness may not be experienced equally across racial groups and could signal gaps in outreach or follow-through in certain communities.



English speakers were significantly more likely to agree that deputies respond to community input. For non-English speakers, responses were more dispersed, with higher rates of neutrality and disagreement.

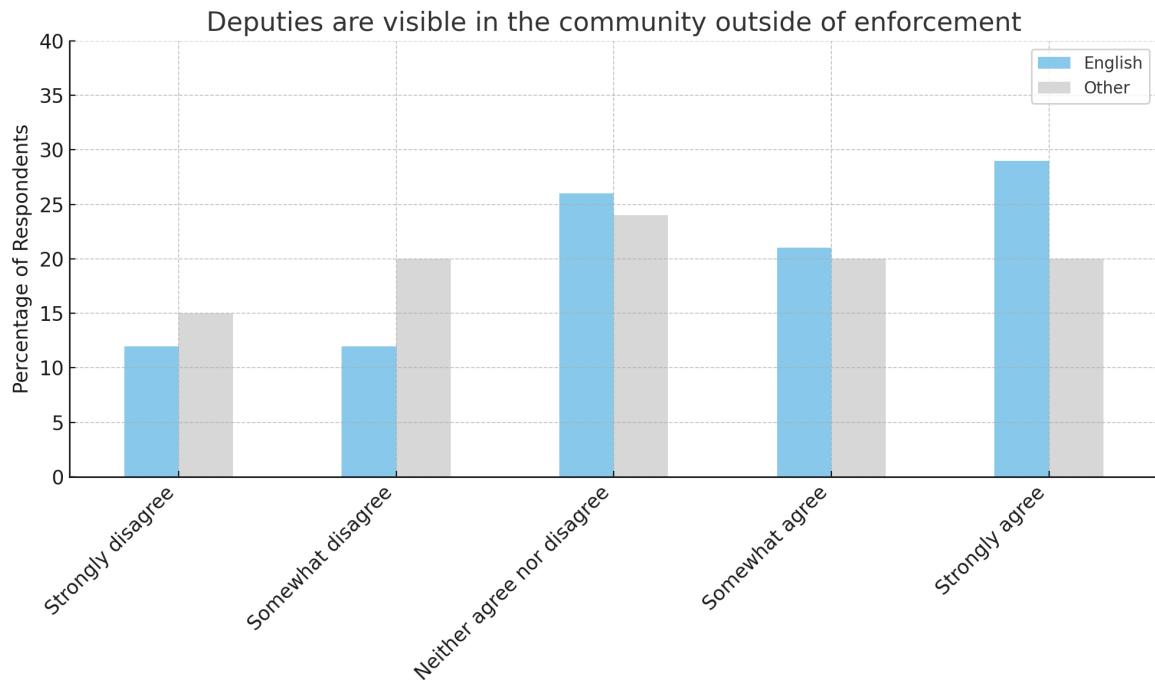
This pattern may reflect communication access issues, language gaps, or lower visibility of response efforts in non-English-speaking communities.

Deputies are visible in the community outside of enforcement



While overall agreement on deputy visibility was moderate across all groups, White respondents were again more likely to select positive responses. Respondents in the “Other” category were more likely to be neutral or disagree.

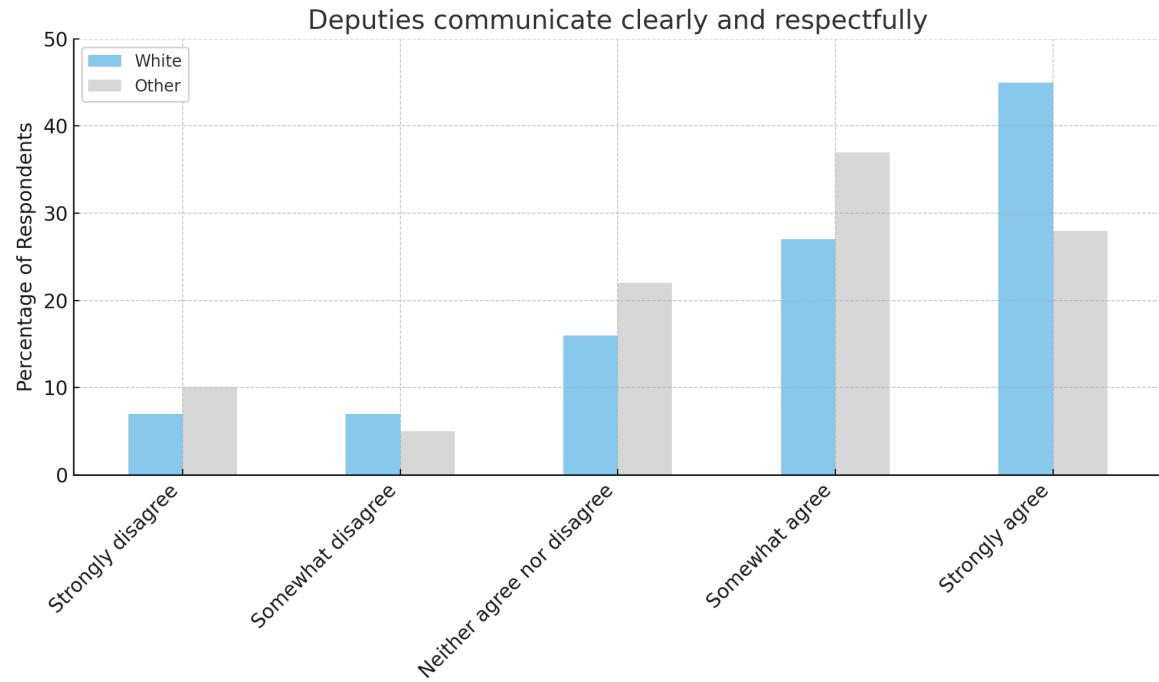
These differences may be due to geographic patterns in enforcement presence or perceptions shaped by prior interactions.



English speakers expressed greater agreement regarding deputy visibility in non-enforcement settings. Non-English speakers were more likely to disagree or respond neutrally.

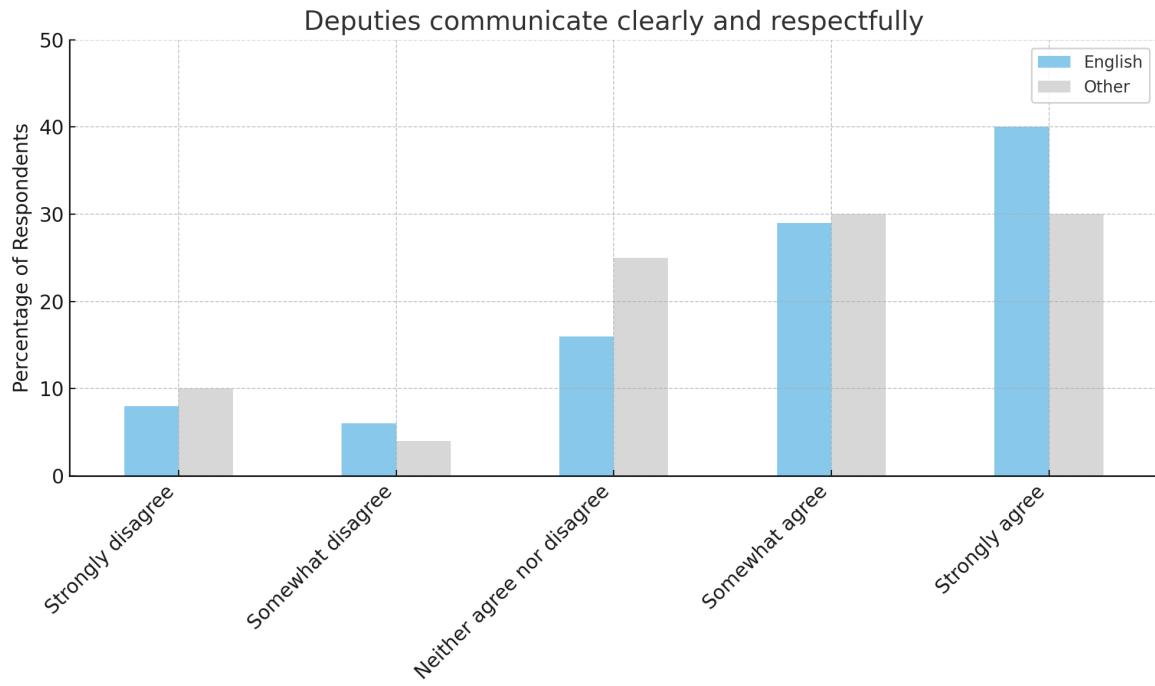
These findings suggest that non-English-speaking residents may be less exposed to informal or community-based law enforcement interactions.

Deputies communicate clearly and respectfully



White respondents showed stronger agreement that deputies communicate in a clear and respectful manner. The responses from other racial and ethnic groups were more evenly distributed across the scale, with a noticeable increase in neutral and negative perceptions.

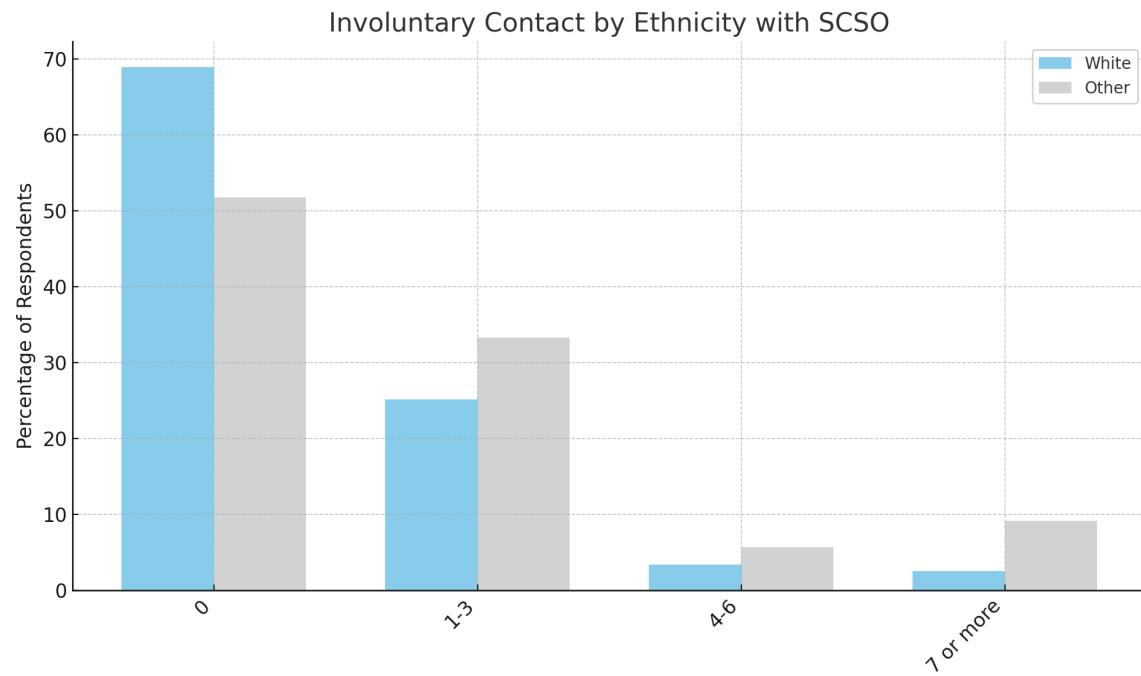
This suggests that communication style or tone may not be perceived uniformly and highlights the need for consistent, culturally competent interaction across all communities.



English-speaking respondents were more likely to report that deputies communicate respectfully and clearly. Non-English-speaking participants showed a wider spread of responses, with a lower rate of strong agreement.

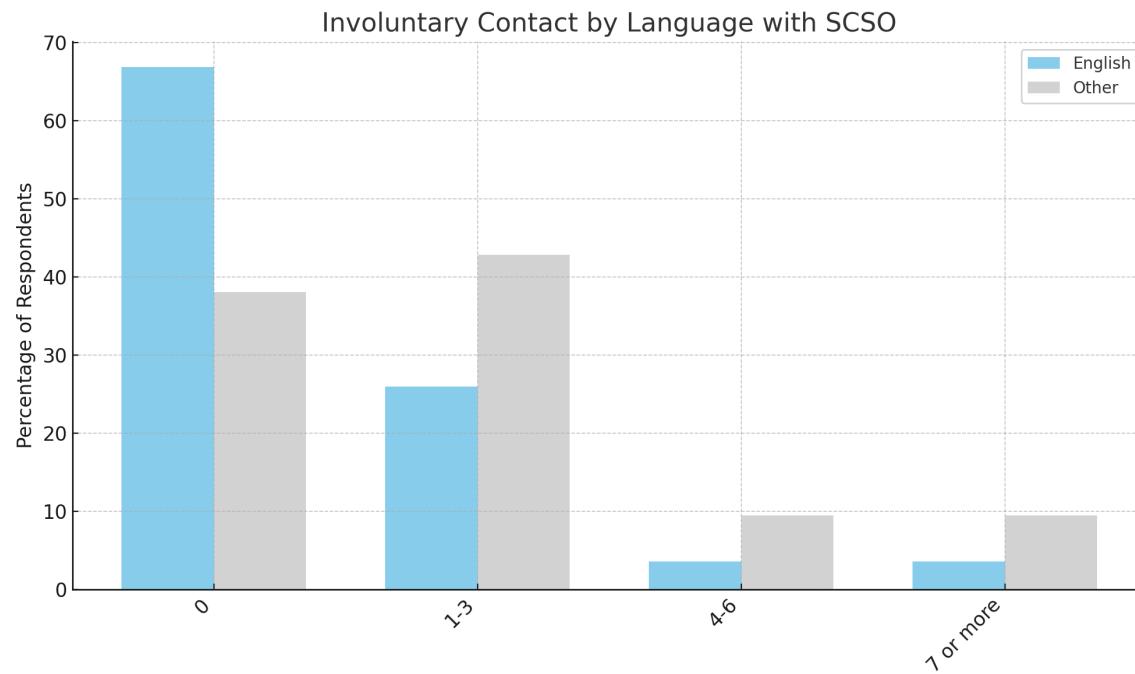
This highlights the importance of multilingual communication strategies and culturally responsive training to ensure clarity and mutual respect in all interactions.

Involuntary Contact with SCSO



Most White respondents reported having had no involuntary contact with SCSO. Respondents in the “Other” category were more likely to report having had one or more involuntary contacts, including a higher proportion reporting 4–6 or 7+ contacts.

These differences may point to disparities in how and how often different communities interact with law enforcement, and may help contextualize perceptions of trust and fairness presented elsewhere in the report.



English speakers were significantly more likely to report having had no involuntary contact with SCSO. In contrast, respondents who speak a language other than English were more likely to report multiple involuntary contacts, with a noticeable increase in the 4–6 and 7+ contact categories.

These findings suggest that non-English-speaking residents may have more frequent interactions with law enforcement in non-voluntary situations, which may affect their comfort level, trust, and perception of fairness when engaging with SCSO.

Appendix B: Supplemental Analysis by Region of Sonoma County

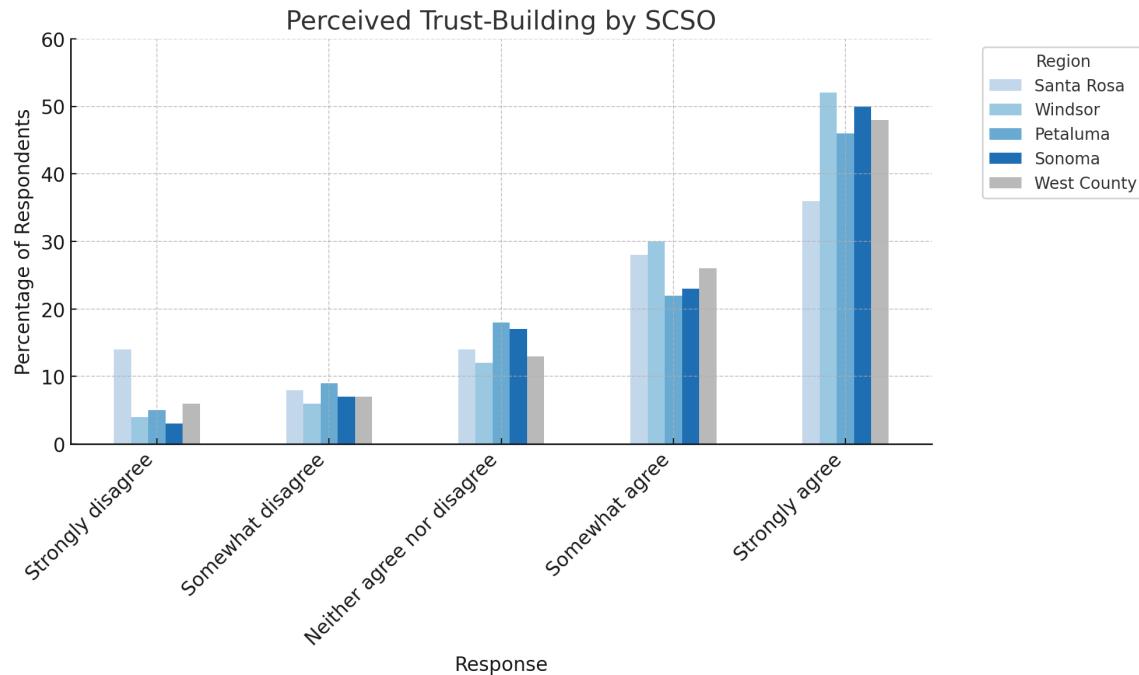
The following appendix presents a breakdown of survey responses by geographic region within Sonoma County. These regions were defined based on common postal and community boundaries to reflect distinct population centers across the county. Specifically, zip codes were grouped as follows:

- **Santa Rosa:** 95401, 95403, 95404, 95405, 95407, 95409
- **Windsor:** 95492
- **Petaluma:** 94952, 94954, 94975
- **Sonoma:** 95476, 95442
- **West County:** 95421, 95436, 95439, 95446, 95462, 95465, 95471, 95472, 95486

These regional groupings are intended to provide localized insights into how perceptions and experiences with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office may differ across areas. However, as with the ethnicity and language group breakdowns, these findings should be interpreted with caution. The number of survey responses varied across regions, and some areas—particularly smaller communities—may be underrepresented in the data.

These results are meant to inform future engagement strategies, not to serve as definitive comparisons between regions. Additional outreach and further data collection would be necessary to more fully understand regional variation in perceptions of public safety and law enforcement practices.

Perceived Trust-Building by SCSO

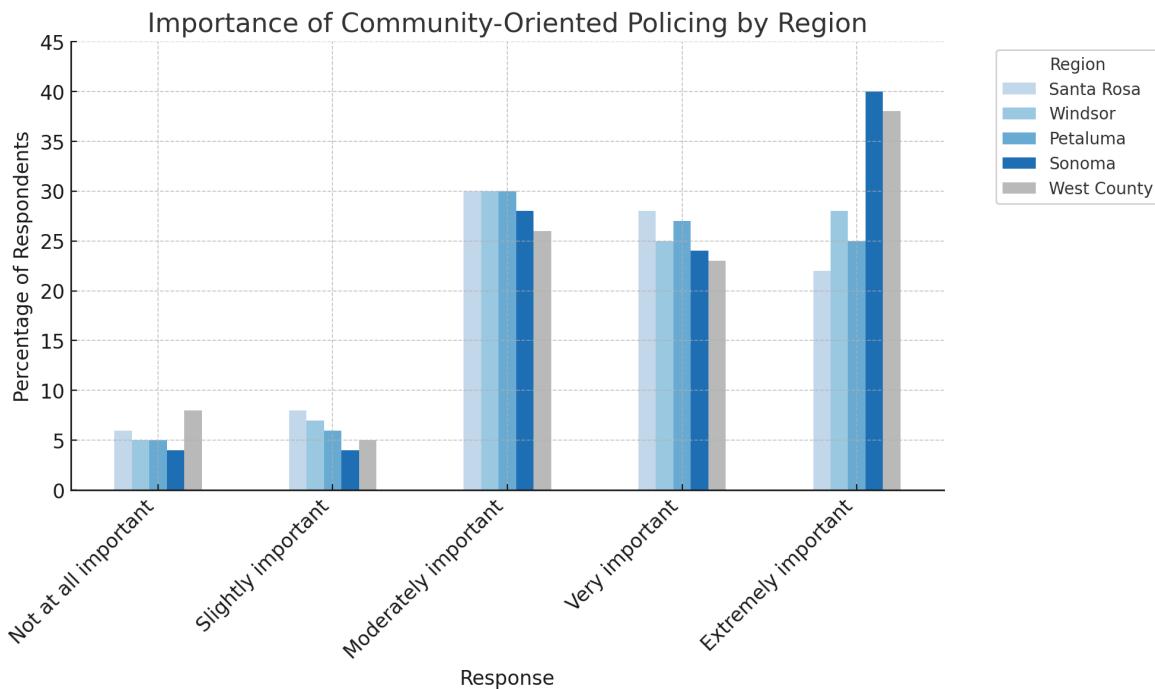


This chart displays perceptions of SCSO trust-building efforts by region, based on agreement level. Percentages reflect the distribution of responses within each region.

This chart compares how residents from different regions of Sonoma County perceive trust-building efforts by SCSO deputies, based on agreement with the statement *“Deputies communicate clearly and respectfully with the public.”* Santa Rosa, Sonoma, and Petaluma respondents were most likely to select *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*, indicating relatively positive perceptions of communication and trust-building. West County showed a more mixed response pattern, with higher rates of neutral or disagree responses. Windsor respondents were more likely than others to report *strong agreement*, though a portion of responses indicated uncertainty or skepticism.

These findings suggest that perceptions of respectful communication—and by extension, trust—vary across the county. While some areas report consistently positive interactions, others may benefit from more visible, community-centered engagement practices.

Importance of Community-Oriented Policing by Region

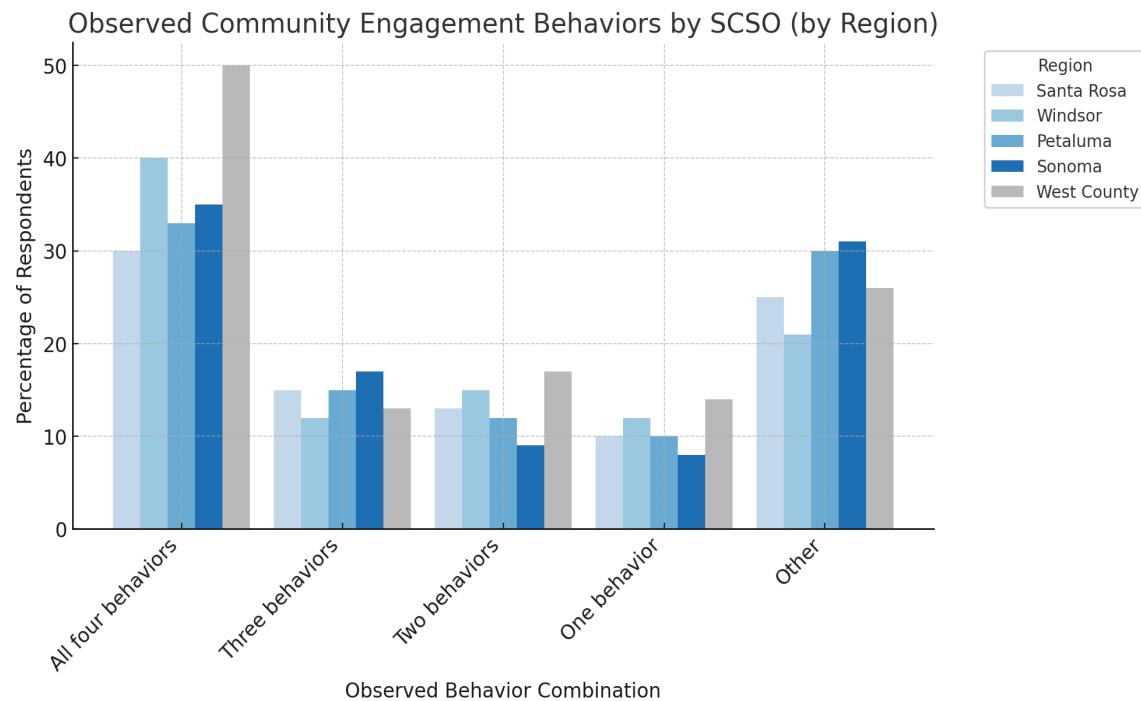


This chart displays the perceived importance of community-oriented policing by region. Percentages represent the distribution of responses within each response category.

This chart displays how residents from different Sonoma County regions rated the importance of community-oriented policing, based on the prompt: *“How important is it that deputies engage in community-oriented policing practices?”* Across all regions, the majority of respondents rated community-oriented policing as *very* or *extremely important*. Santa Rosa, Sonoma, and Petaluma had particularly high levels of *extreme importance* responses. West County showed a slightly higher proportion of *moderately important* and *neutral* responses compared to other regions. Windsor respondents mostly aligned with county-wide trends, though with a slightly wider spread of responses.

These patterns suggest broad support for community-oriented policing principles throughout Sonoma County, with slight regional variation in how strongly the approach is prioritized.

Observed Community Engagement Behaviors by SCSO (by Region)



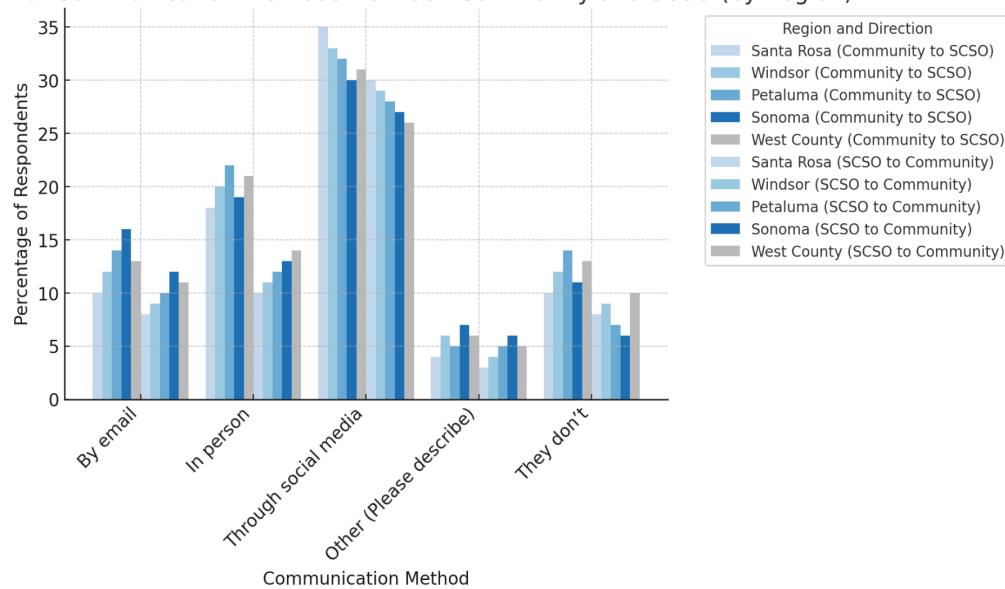
This chart shows how many respondents reported observing various combinations of engagement behaviors by SCSO deputies, disaggregated by region.

This chart shows how respondents from different regions described the number of engagement behaviors they observed from SCSO deputies, such as *speaking calmly, listening actively, using neutral body language, and using people's names*. Santa Rosa and Sonoma respondents were most likely to report observing all four engagement behaviors, with relatively few selecting "Other." Petaluma and West County had a more mixed distribution, with some respondents selecting one or two behaviors, and a larger share reporting "Other." Windsor showed the highest concentration in the "Three behaviors" and "All four behaviors" categories.

These differences suggest that residents' experiences with deputy engagement may vary by region, potentially reflecting differences in presence, style of interaction, or community familiarity with deputies.

Comparison of Communication Methods Between Community and SCSO (by Region)

Comparison of Communication Methods Between Community and SCSO (by Region)



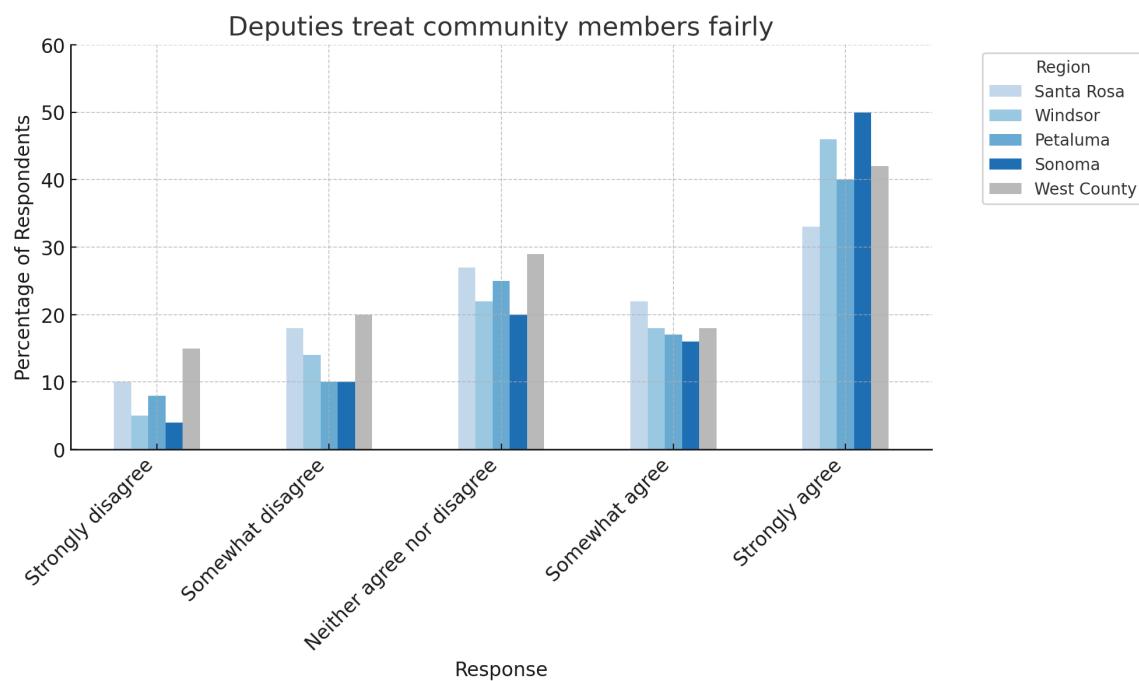
This chart shows communication methods between community members and SCSO, disaggregated by region and direction. Responses are grouped by communication channel and colored to match region-based charts.

This chart compares the most common communication methods residents report using to contact SCSO, alongside how they believe SCSO communicates with the public—broken down by region. Across all regions, phone and in-person contact were the most common ways residents reported reaching out to SCSO. Social media and town hall meetings followed in frequency, with some regional variation. Santa Rosa and Sonoma showed higher use of social media and town hall meetings for both directions of communication. In Petaluma and Windsor, residents were more likely to report contacting SCSO by phone or in person, while perceiving SCSO communication as occurring primarily through social

media and email. West County residents reported less frequent use of institutional channels like email or formal meetings, and a higher rate of “other” or less conventional responses.

These findings suggest that while SCSO uses consistent platforms (such as social media), community members rely on a broader range of methods depending on region. Gaps between how people prefer to communicate and how SCSO reaches out may affect trust and engagement—especially in areas where formal or digital channels are less accessible or preferred.

Perceptions of Fairness by Region

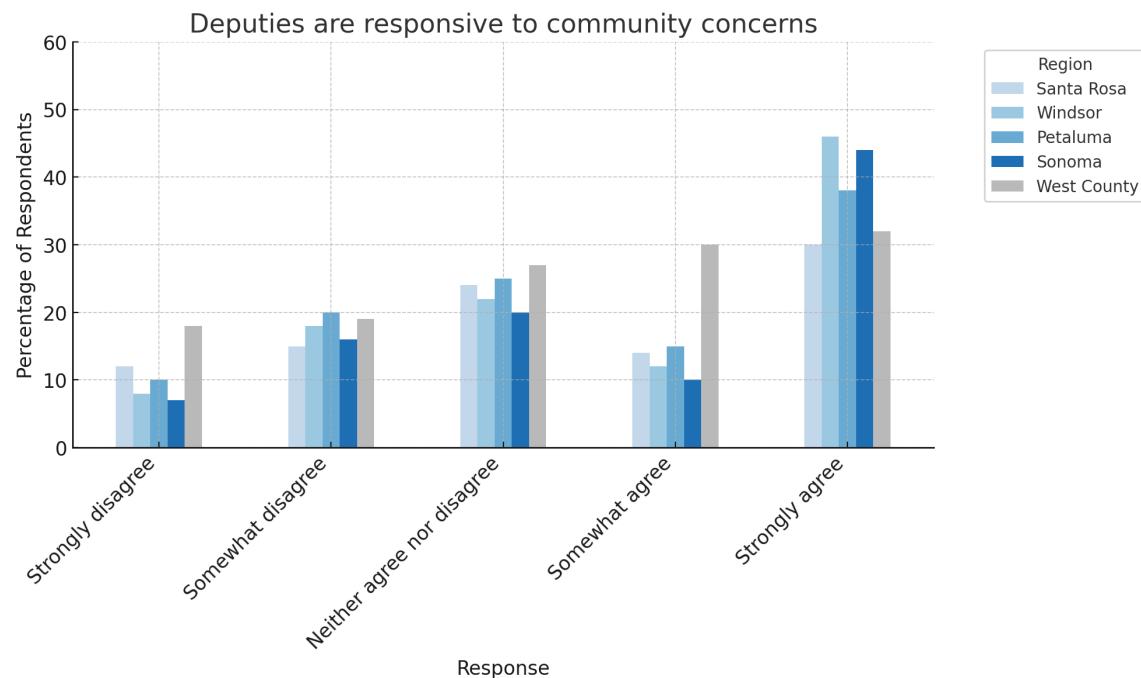


This chart displays perceptions of deputy fairness by region, based on agreement level. Percentages reflect the distribution of responses within each region.

This chart reflects regional differences in perceptions of whether deputies treat community members fairly. Santa Rosa and Sonoma respondents most frequently selected *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree*, indicating generally positive perceptions of fairness. Petaluma and Windsor responses were more moderate, with a balanced mix of agreement and neutrality. West County respondents showed a wider spread of opinions, with increased responses in the *neutral* and *disagree* categories.

These regional differences suggest that fairness in deputy behavior may be experienced unevenly across the county. Community-based interactions, neighborhood norms, or prior contact with deputies may shape how fairness is interpreted and evaluated.

Perceptions of Responsiveness by Region

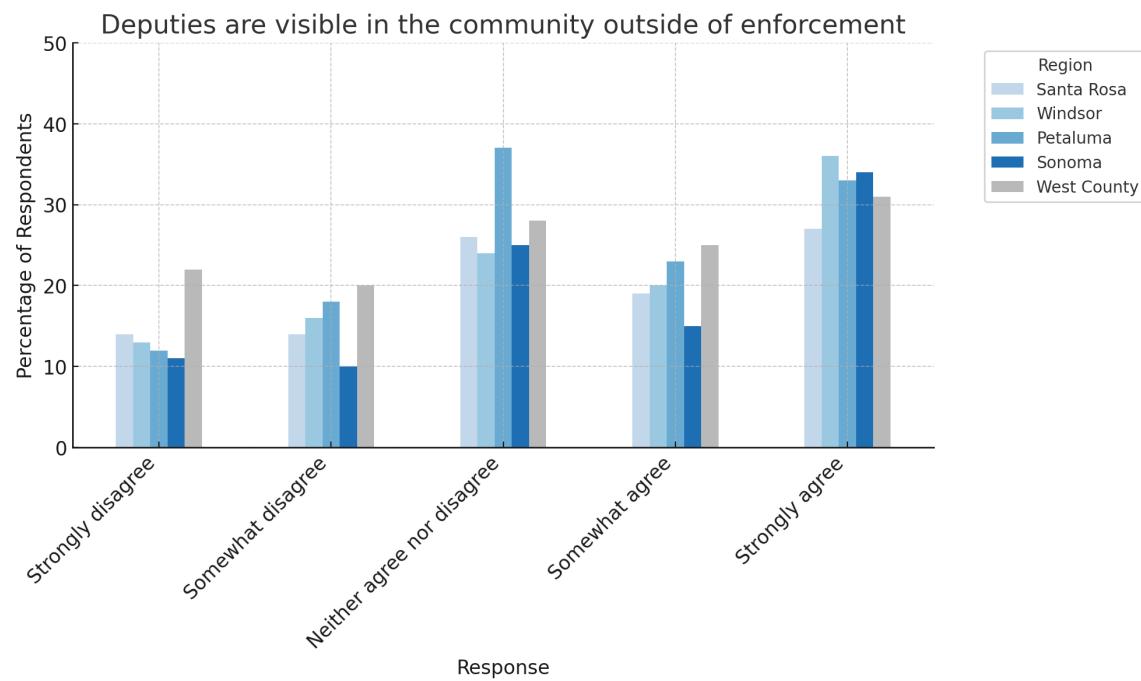


This chart displays perceptions of deputy responsiveness by region, based on agreement level. Percentages reflect the distribution of responses within each region.

This chart compares how residents from different regions perceive the responsiveness of SCSO deputies to community concerns. Santa Rosa and Sonoma respondents most commonly indicated agreement, particularly in the *somewhat agree* category. Windsor and Petaluma responses were more mixed, with moderate agreement and a noticeable share of *neutral* responses. West County showed a more even distribution, with fewer respondents strongly agreeing and a larger proportion selecting *neutral* or *somewhat disagree*.

These results suggest that perceptions of responsiveness may vary with local experience. In some areas, deputies may be more visible or accessible in responding to concerns, while in others, community members may feel less heard or uncertain about how SCSO follows up on issues raised.

Perceptions of Visibility by Region

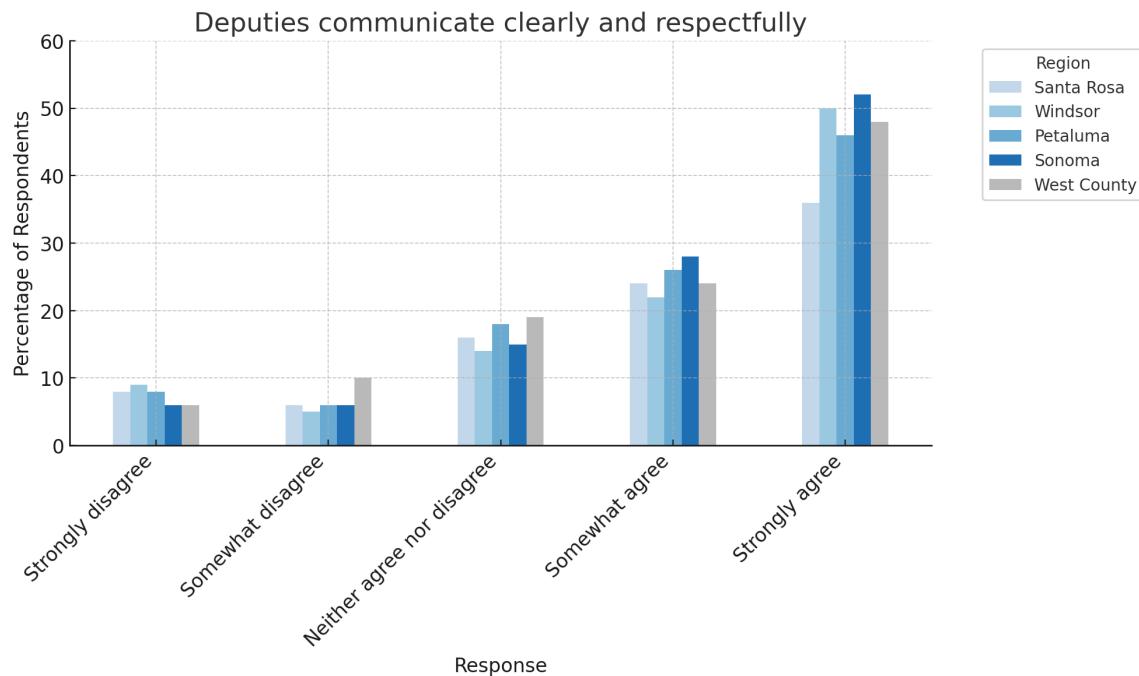


This chart displays perceptions of deputy visibility by region, based on agreement level.
Percentages reflect the distribution of responses within each region.

This chart compares how frequently residents across different Sonoma County regions observe deputies in the community outside of enforcement activities. Santa Rosa and Sonoma respondents were most likely to agree that deputies are visible outside of enforcement contexts. Windsor and Petaluma responses were more evenly distributed, with noticeable portions selecting *neutral* or *somewhat disagree*. West County showed a higher rate of *neutral* and *disagree* responses, indicating that residents may see deputies less frequently in community or informal settings.

These regional differences may reflect varying levels of proactive community engagement, patrol visibility, or the nature of SCSO's involvement in non-enforcement events. Visibility in daily, non-crisis contexts can be an important factor in building familiarity and trust.

Deputies Communicate Clearly and Respectfully (by Region)

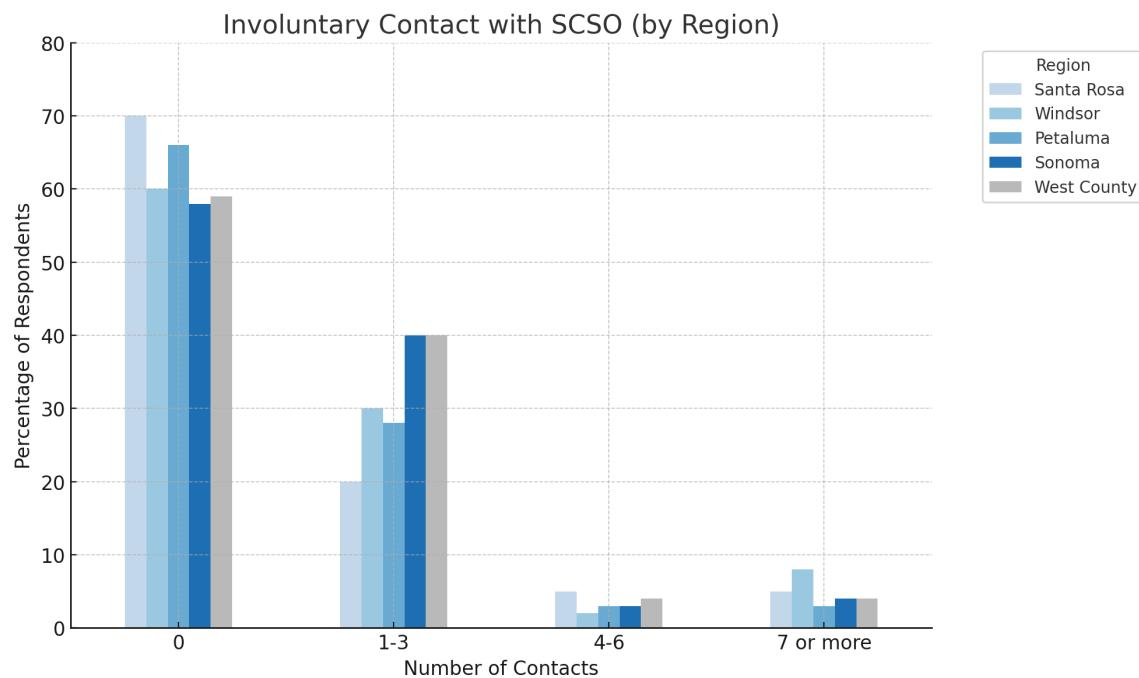


This chart displays perceptions of deputy communication by region, based on agreement level. Percentages reflect the distribution of responses within each region.

This chart illustrates regional differences in how clearly and respectfully residents perceive communication from SCSO deputies. Santa Rosa, Sonoma, and Petaluma respondents were more likely to agree that deputies communicate in a respectful and clear manner. Windsor and West County residents showed a more mixed response, with higher proportions selecting *neutral* or *somewhat disagree* compared to other areas. In all regions, responses were concentrated in the *somewhat agree* category, indicating room for improvement in building strong, consistent communication across communities.

These findings suggest that while communication is generally viewed positively, deputies may be perceived as more respectful and clear in some areas than others—highlighting the importance of regional consistency and tailored outreach.

Involuntary Contact with SCSO (by Region)



This chart displays the distribution of involuntary contacts with SCSO by region. Percentages reflect the share of responses in each category within each region.

This chart compares the frequency of involuntary contact with SCSO (such as being stopped or questioned without prior initiation) across different regions. Involuntary contact was most common in Santa Rosa, with higher proportions reporting 1–3 or 4–6 contacts. West County and Windsor also had moderate levels of reported contact, while Sonoma and Petaluma respondents were most likely to report *no involuntary contact* at all. In all regions, the majority of respondents reported low or no involuntary contact with SCSO, though a small number in each region reported frequent interactions (7+).

These data provide important context for interpreting regional variation in perceptions of fairness, communication, and engagement. Higher levels of involuntary contact may influence residents' trust and sense of safety.

Appendix C: SCSO Deputy Responses

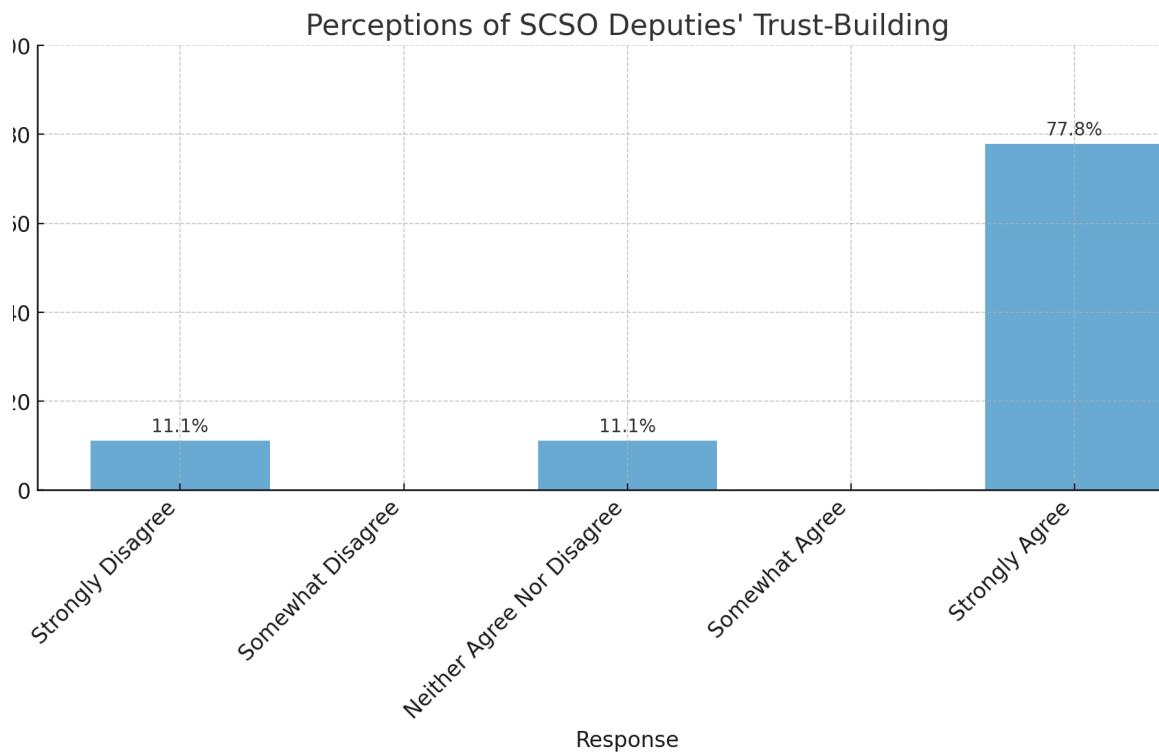
This appendix presents exploratory findings from a small sample of deputies who responded to the SCSO Community-Oriented Policing survey. Out of more than 200 sworn personnel at the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, only 10 deputies participated in this portion of the study.

As such, this sample is **not representative** of the broader deputy population at SCSO. The data shared here offer **preliminary insights only** and should not be interpreted as conclusive or generalizable. Rather, the charts and summaries that follow are intended to highlight possible trends and areas for further exploration.

Additional data collection would be necessary to validate these patterns and draw meaningful conclusions about deputy perspectives and practices across the agency.

Perceptions of SCSO Deputies' Trust-Building

When asked whether building trust with community members is part of their role in community-oriented policing, a large majority of deputy respondents (**77.8%**) selected “*Strongly agree*.” This indicates overwhelming consensus among deputies that trust-building is a central part of their work. A smaller portion of respondents selected “*Strongly disagree*” (**11.1%**) or “*Neither agree nor disagree*” (**11.1%**), suggesting that while agreement is strong, a few deputies either question or are uncertain about the relevance of trust-building in their role.



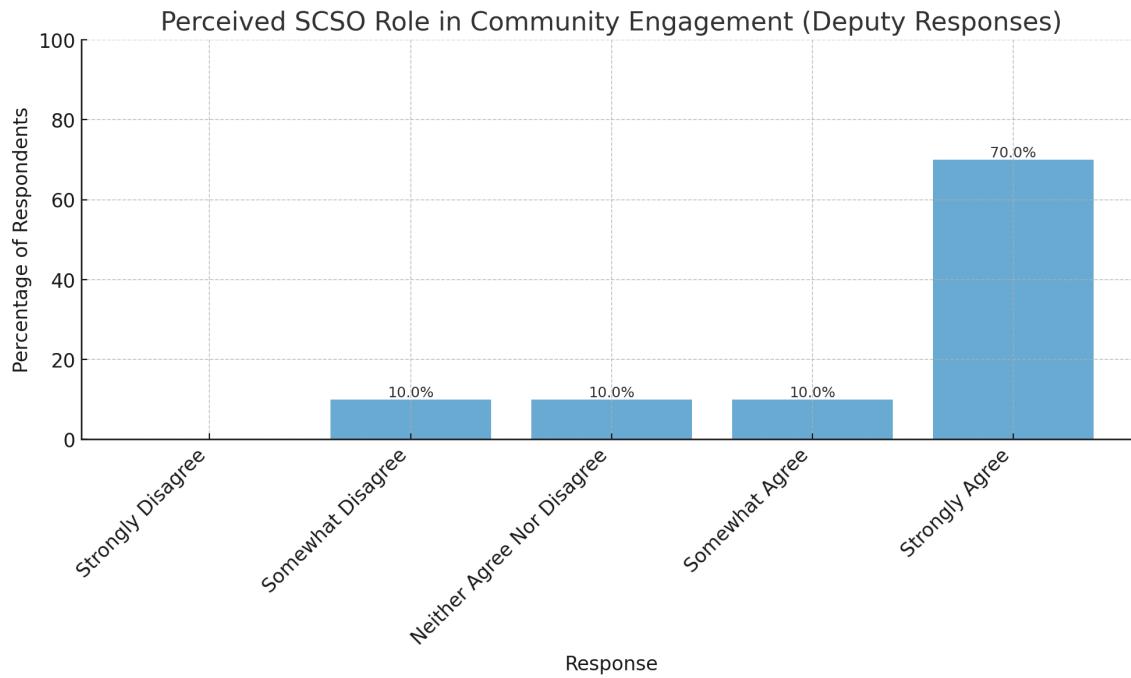
SCSO's Role in Community Engagement

Deputies were asked both whether they believe SCSO plays a meaningful role in community engagement and how many community engagement behaviors they have been trained to perform.

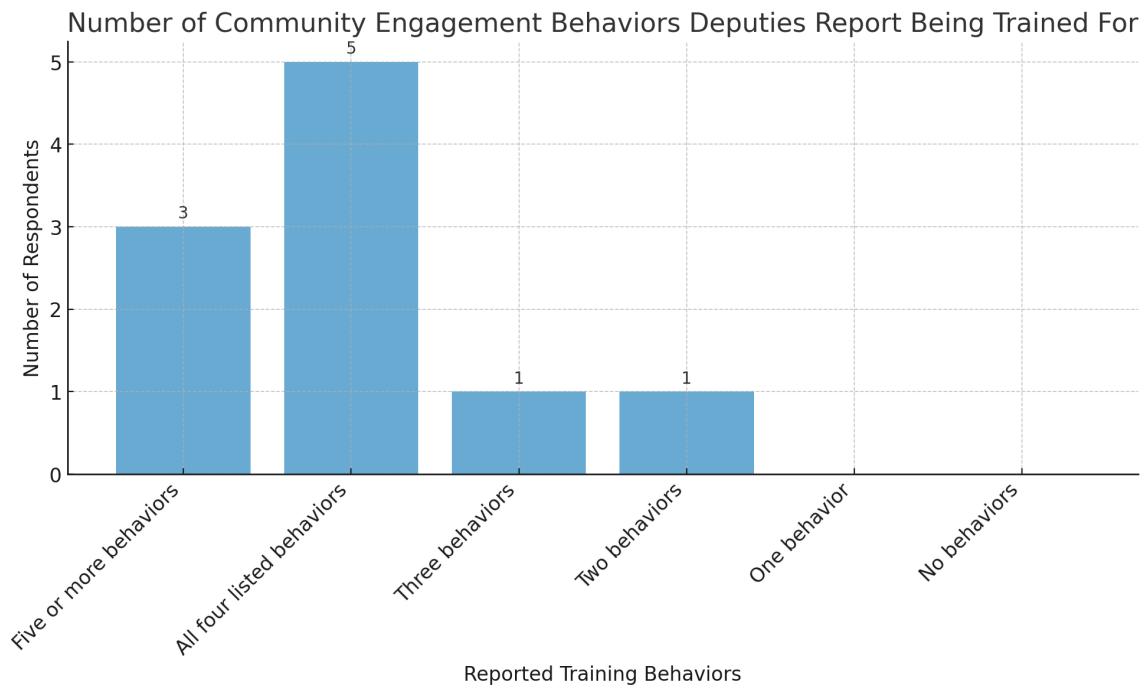
The majority of deputies *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that SCSO plays a meaningful role in community engagement. This indicates widespread support for the idea that community engagement is—or should be—a core component of the department's work.

However, when asked how many community engagement behaviors they had been trained to use (such as speaking calmly, listening actively, or demonstrating empathy), responses varied. While many deputies reported being trained in three or more behaviors, others indicated they had been trained in only one or two. A small number reported receiving no training at all.

This comparison reveals a gap between the belief in the importance of community engagement and the depth of training received to support it. While deputies appear to value engagement, additional or more consistent training may help align practice with expectation.



This chart shows deputy agreement with the statement: 'SCSO plays a meaningful role in community engagement.'
Percentages reflect the distribution of responses across the Likert scale.

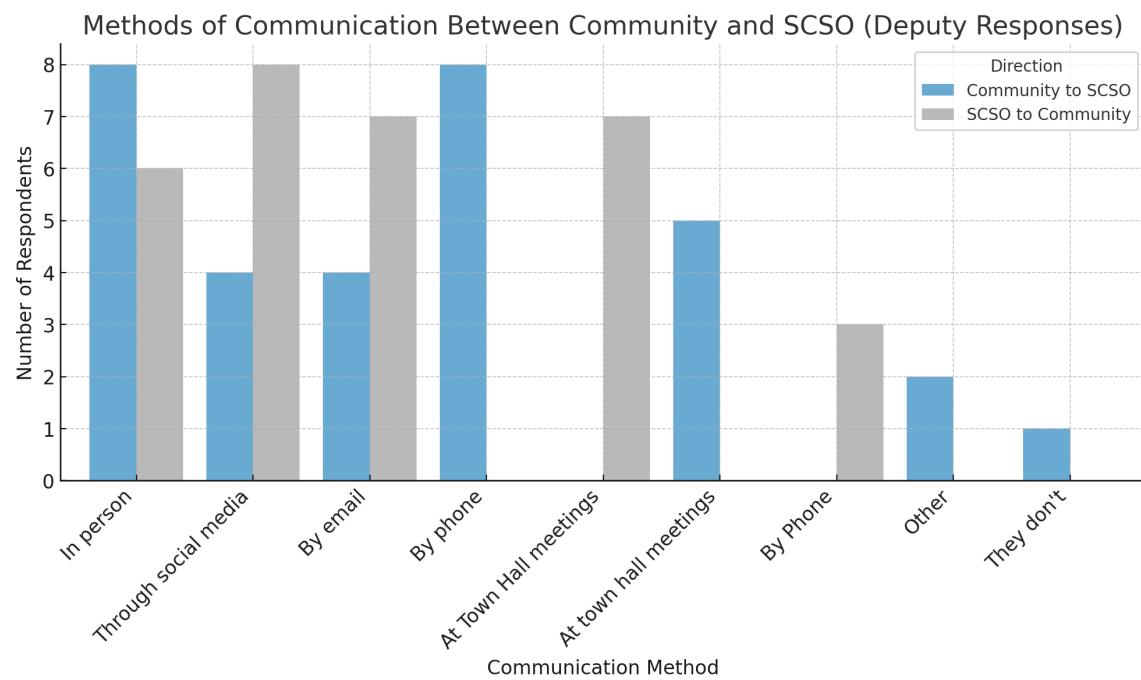


This chart shows how many community engagement behaviors deputies reported being trained for (e.g., speaking calmly, listening actively). Responses were counted based on the number of behaviors selected in response to the multi-select training item.

Methods of Community Communication with SCSO

Deputies were asked to identify the primary ways community members communicate with SCSO, as well as how they believe SCSO communicates with the community. Responses show notable overlap between the two perspectives. Deputies most frequently selected in-person communication, phone calls, and email as methods used by community members to contact the agency. Similarly, deputies identified email, in-person outreach, and social media as common methods used by SCSO to communicate outwardly.

The distribution of responses suggests that deputies perceive a mix of both formal and informal communication channels being used in both directions. However, some communication methods (e.g., flyers or website posts) were mentioned less frequently, indicating they may play a more limited role in current engagement efforts.



This chart compares deputies' perceptions of how the community communicates with SCSO and how SCSO communicates with the community. Each bar reflects the number of deputies selecting each method for the respective direction.

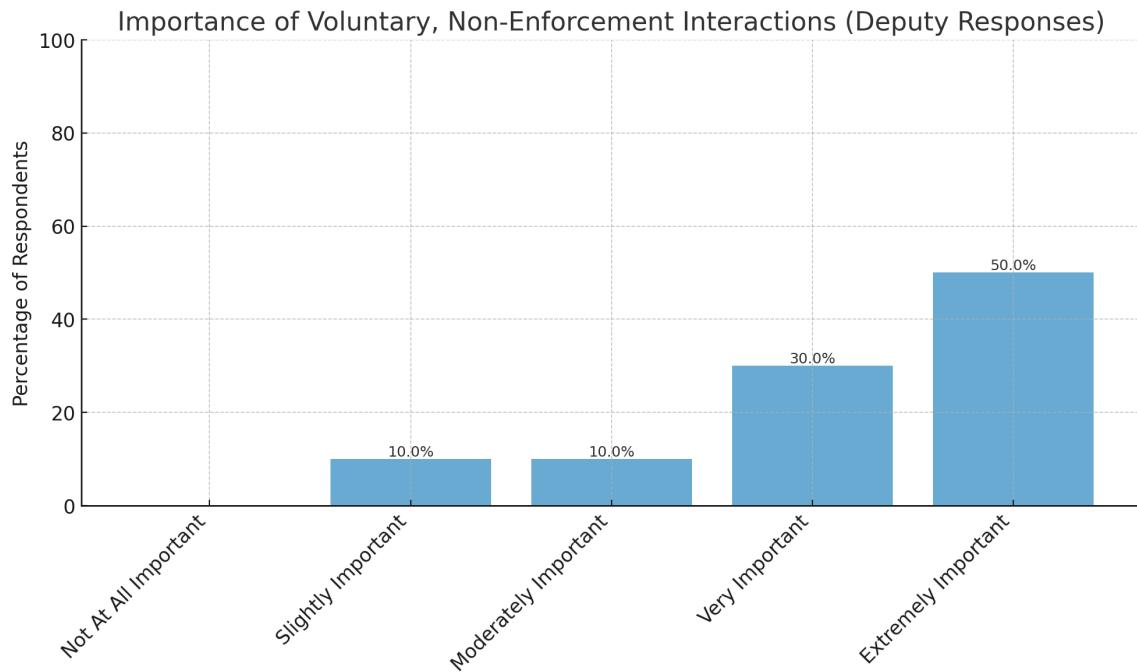
Perceived Importance and Perceived Implementation of SCSO Practices

SCSO Deputies were asked to reflect on the role of voluntary, non-enforcement interactions in community-oriented policing—such as participating in events, engaging in conversations not tied to enforcement, and building rapport through everyday presence.

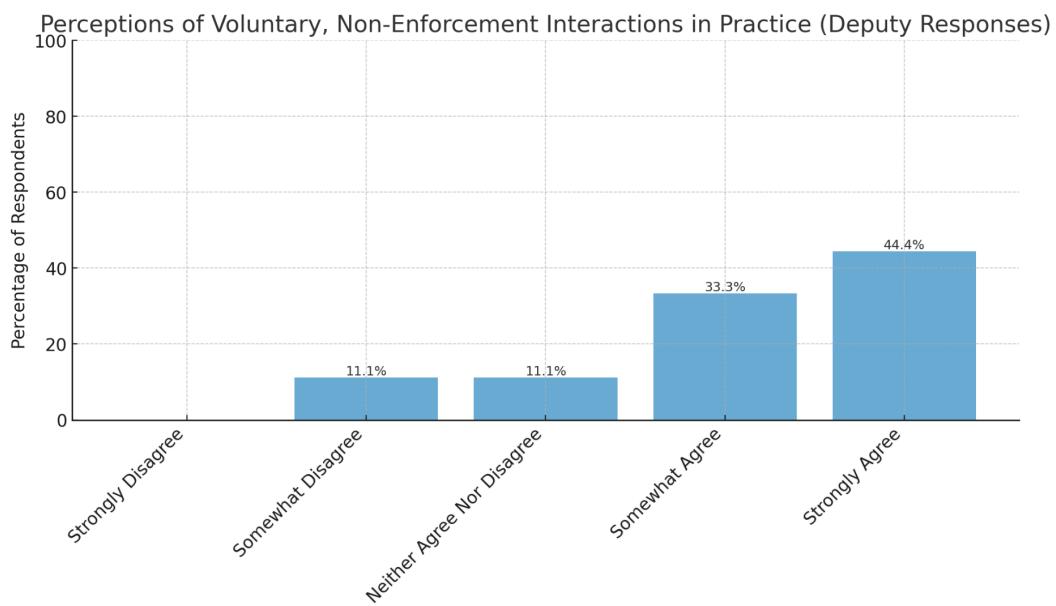
When asked how important these types of interactions are, nearly all deputies rated them as either *very important* or *extremely important*. This strong consensus suggests that deputies see relationship-building outside of enforcement as a meaningful and valuable part of their work. It reflects a commitment to community engagement that goes beyond enforcement actions alone.

However, when asked whether voluntary, non-enforcement interactions are currently part of how community-oriented policing is practiced at the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, responses were more mixed. While some deputies agreed that these interactions are present, others expressed neutrality or disagreement—suggesting they may be inconsistent, infrequent, or less embedded in day-to-day operations.

The contrast between these two responses highlights a gap between deputy support for non-enforcement engagement and its perceived implementation. This may reflect differences in assignment, opportunities for engagement, or organizational expectations. Addressing this gap could involve expanding structured opportunities for relationship-building, increasing visibility of engagement efforts, or providing more support and recognition for informal, proactive community interaction.



This chart shows deputy views on the importance of voluntary, non-enforcement interactions as a principle of community-oriented policing.
Percentages reflect the distribution of responses across the Likert scale.



This chart shows deputy agreement with the statement: 'Voluntary, non-enforcement interactions are currently part of how community-oriented policing is practiced at SCSO.'
Percentages reflect the distribution of responses across the Likert scale.

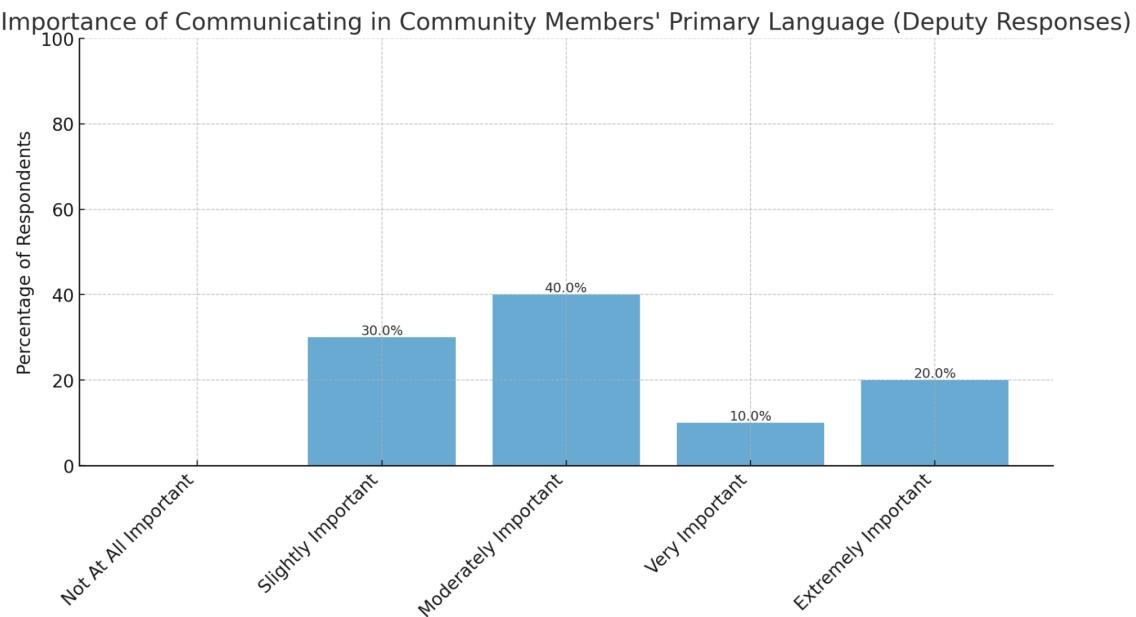
Language Inclusion: Deputy Perspectives on Importance and Practice

Deputies were asked to evaluate both the importance of communicating in community members' primary language and whether they believe this practice is currently part of how community-oriented policing is carried out at the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.

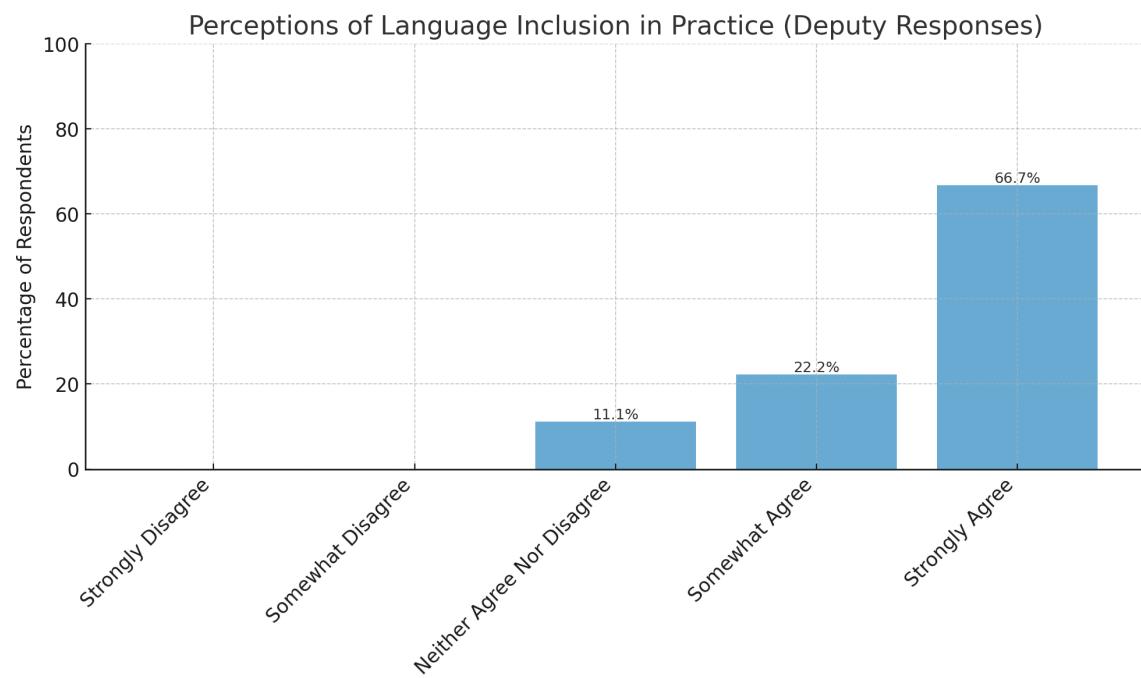
When asked about **importance**, deputies overwhelmingly agreed that language inclusion is a key principle. Most respondents rated it as *very important, extremely important, or moderately important, reflecting* a shared understanding that the ability to communicate effectively across language barriers is fundamental to building trust, equity, and mutual understanding in diverse communities.

In contrast, responses regarding **implementation** were more divided. While some deputies agreed that communicating in community members' primary language is currently part of SCSO's community-oriented policing practices, others expressed uncertainty or disagreement. This variation may suggest uneven application of this principle in the field, differences in available resources (e.g., interpreters or bilingual personnel), or ambiguity about expectations.

The comparison reveals a familiar pattern seen elsewhere in the data: deputies broadly support the idea of inclusive engagement, but may not see it consistently reflected in practice. This gap between values and implementation could inform future efforts to strengthen language access through training, staffing, or policy clarification.



This chart shows deputy views on the importance of communicating in community members' primary language as a principle of community-oriented policing. Percentages reflect the distribution of responses.



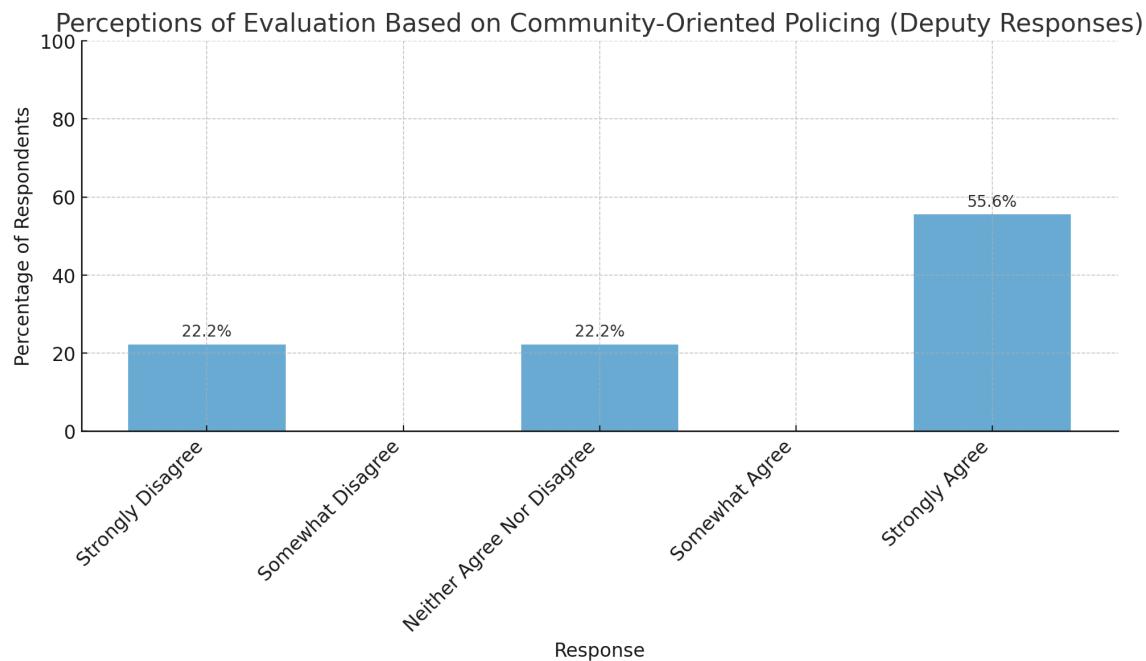
This chart shows deputy agreement with the statement: 'Deputies communicate in the community's primary language to ensure inclusion.' Percentages reflect the distribution of responses.

Deputy Perceptions of Evaluation Based on Community-Oriented Policing Efforts:

Deputies were asked whether they are currently evaluated based on their community-oriented policing efforts. Responses to this question were more mixed than many others in the survey. While some deputies agreed with the statement, indicating that they perceive community-oriented policing as a formal part of their performance evaluation, many others were unsure or disagreed.

The distribution of responses suggests a lack of clarity or consistency in how community-oriented policing is incorporated into performance assessment practices at SCSO. For some deputies, community engagement may feel like an informal or secondary aspect of their duties, rather than a clearly measured component of job performance.

This finding highlights an opportunity for the agency to improve alignment between stated organizational values and evaluation systems. If community-oriented policing is a departmental priority, ensuring that it is meaningfully integrated into performance review processes could reinforce its importance and support long-term culture change.



This chart shows deputy agreement with the statement: 'Deputies are evaluated based on their community-oriented policing efforts.'
Percentages reflect the distribution of responses across the Likert scale.

While the data in these appendices offer valuable perspectives, they do not reflect a comprehensive or proportionally representative view of all Sonoma County communities, or of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. The underrepresentation of some groups and uneven geographic participation highlight the need for continued outreach and engagement in future data collection efforts. Nonetheless, these findings underscore patterns that may inform future community engagement, training, and policy development aimed at building trust and equity in public safety across all regions and populations.