

# ANNUAL CADET SURVEY 2024



**SUMMARY REPORT**  
May 2024

**BREAKING NEWS**



# **Brig Gen Regena Aye selected as next National Commander & CEO**





## Overview

### Goal

- Make sense about the Cadet Program's current status
- Learn how to become more effective in the cadet mission

### Key Topics

- Overall satisfaction
- Participation & interests
- Reviews: Uniforms, TLC
- CPP & relations with parents or guardians

### Q&A

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#### Lead presenter



**Curt LaFond**  
Director of  
Cadet Programs

#### Introducing our new data scientist!



**Katie Thurson**  
Program Manager  
Youth Protection



# Methodology

## Overview

## Respondents

### **Guiding Principles:**

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation  
The Program Evaluation Standards, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

**Evaluation Approach:** Customer satisfaction & Developmental Evaluation  
“DE supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments.” (Michael Quinn Patton)

### **Invited Participants:**

- Cadets aged 13 and above
- Parents
- CP Officers & Commanders

**Collection Method:** Exclusively online, with invitations via email

**Evaluation Period:** 11 - 31 March 2024

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# Methodology

## Overview

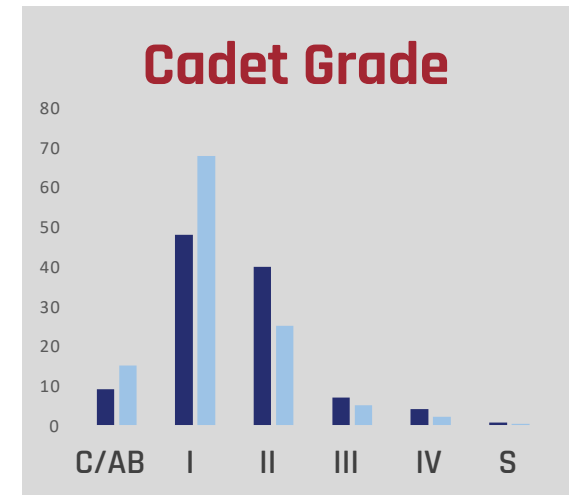
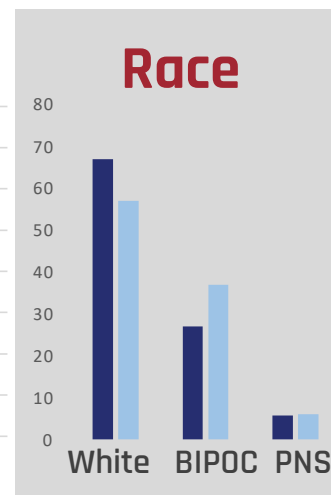
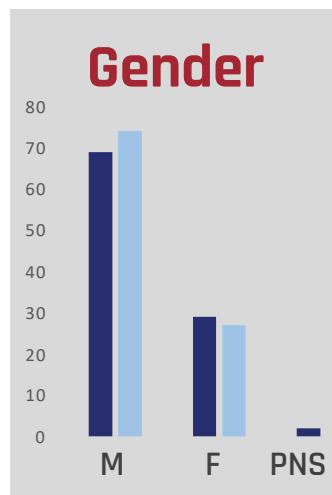
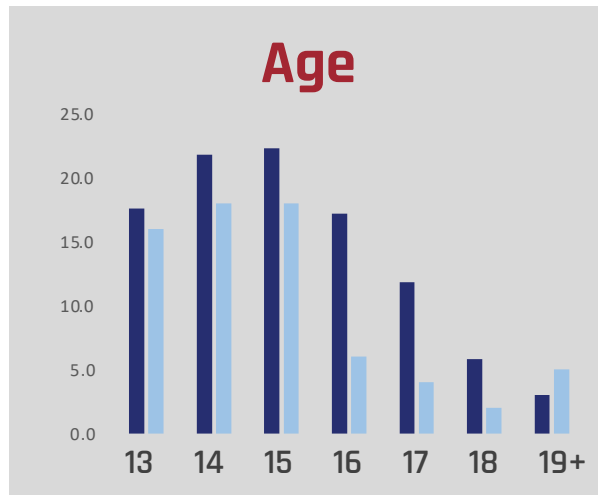
## Respondents

In all charts below, Respondents are presented in **dark blue**, Cadet Corps in **light blue**

Note that due to federal regulations, all survey respondents were age 13 or older, so 2900 or 10% of the Cadet Corps was excluded, thereby skewing the sample toward older and higher-ranking cadets.

## Survey Populations

	Invited	Responded	Chg%
<b>Cadets</b>	25,929	4,229	+ 42%
<b>Parents</b>	25,906	2,607	+ 42%
<b>Adult Leaders</b>	9,255	1,215	+ 44%



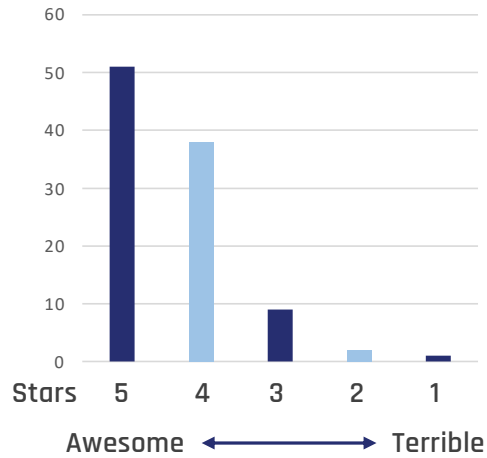


# Overall Ratings

## Cadets



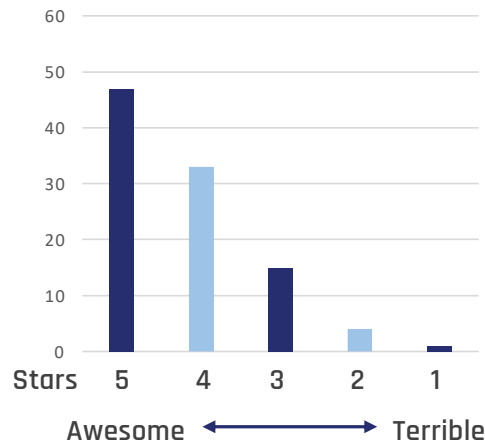
**4.34** 4.36 last year  
out of 5



## Parents



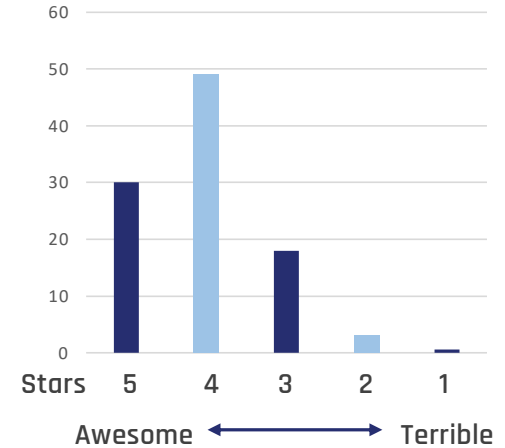
**4.21** 4.21 last year  
out of 5



## Leaders



**4.04** 3.92 last year  
out of 5

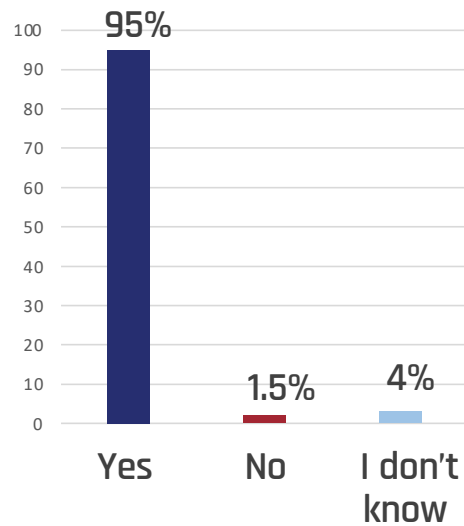


## Overall Ratings

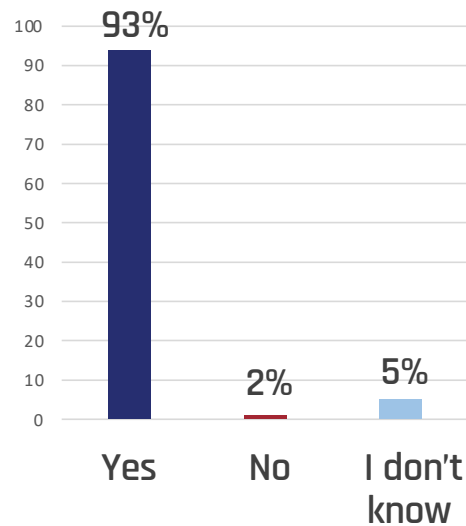


Would you recommend CAP to a young person who seemed interested in becoming a cadet?

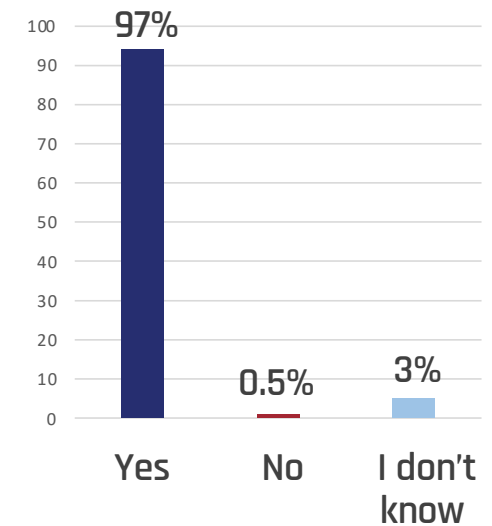
### Cadets



### Parents



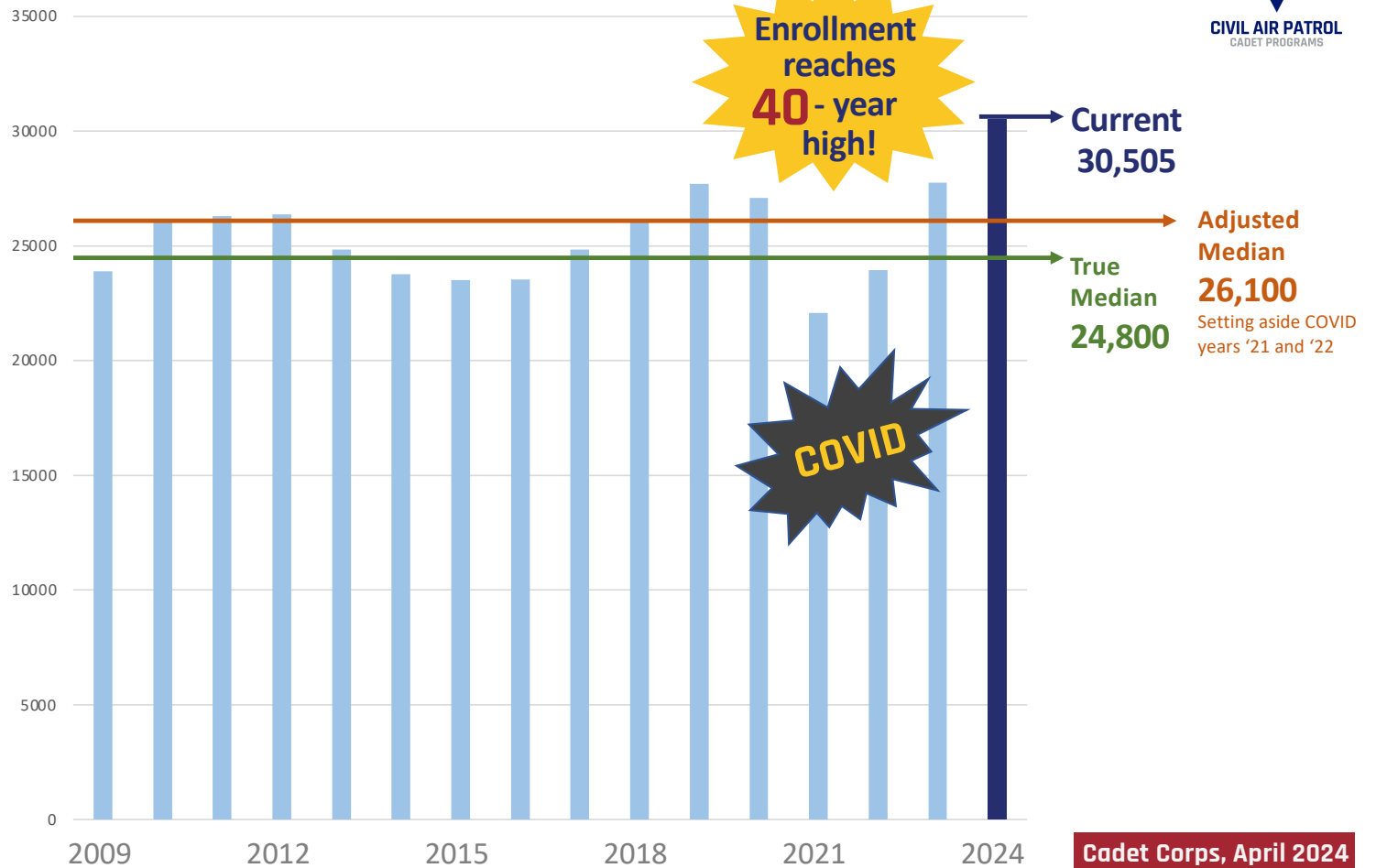
### Leaders





# Demographics

- Enrollment
- Longevity
- Race
- School
- Disability
- Economics







## Demographics

Enrollment

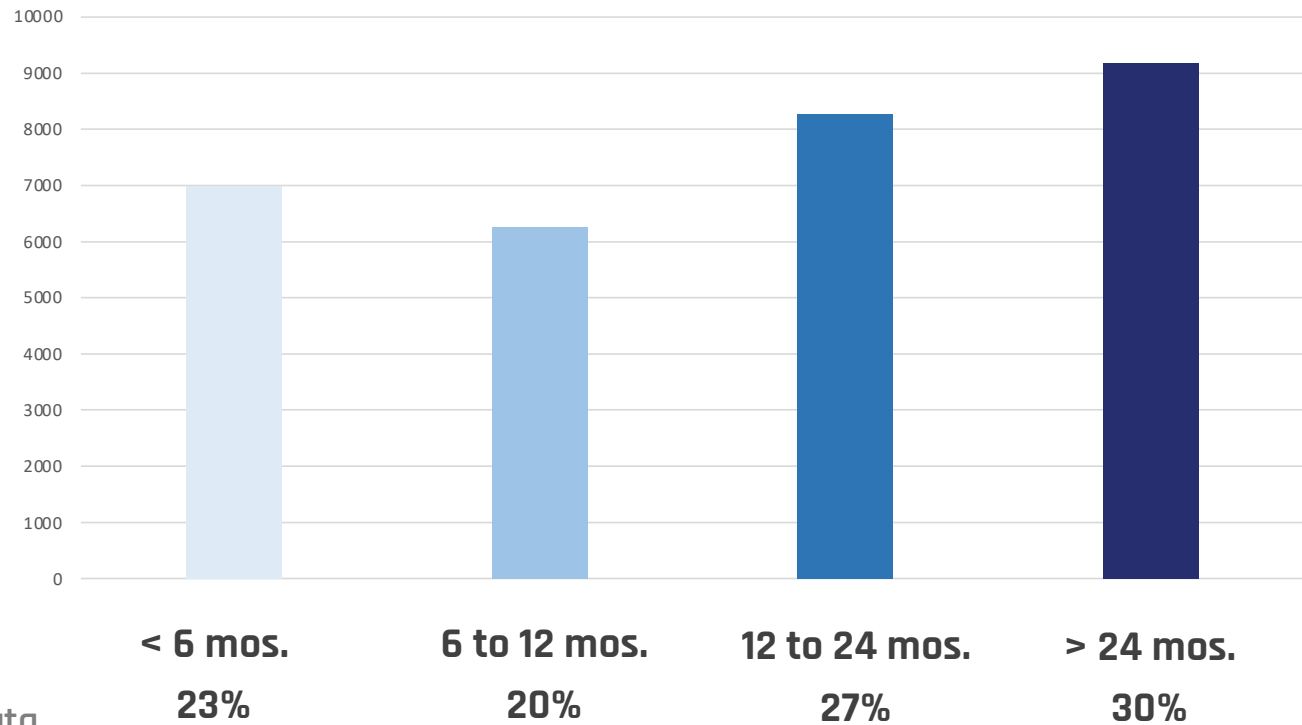
Longevity

Race

School

Disability

Economics



Compared with last year's data, cadets in their second year and beyond grew from 51% to 57%.

Cadet Corps, April 2024



## Demographics

Enrollment

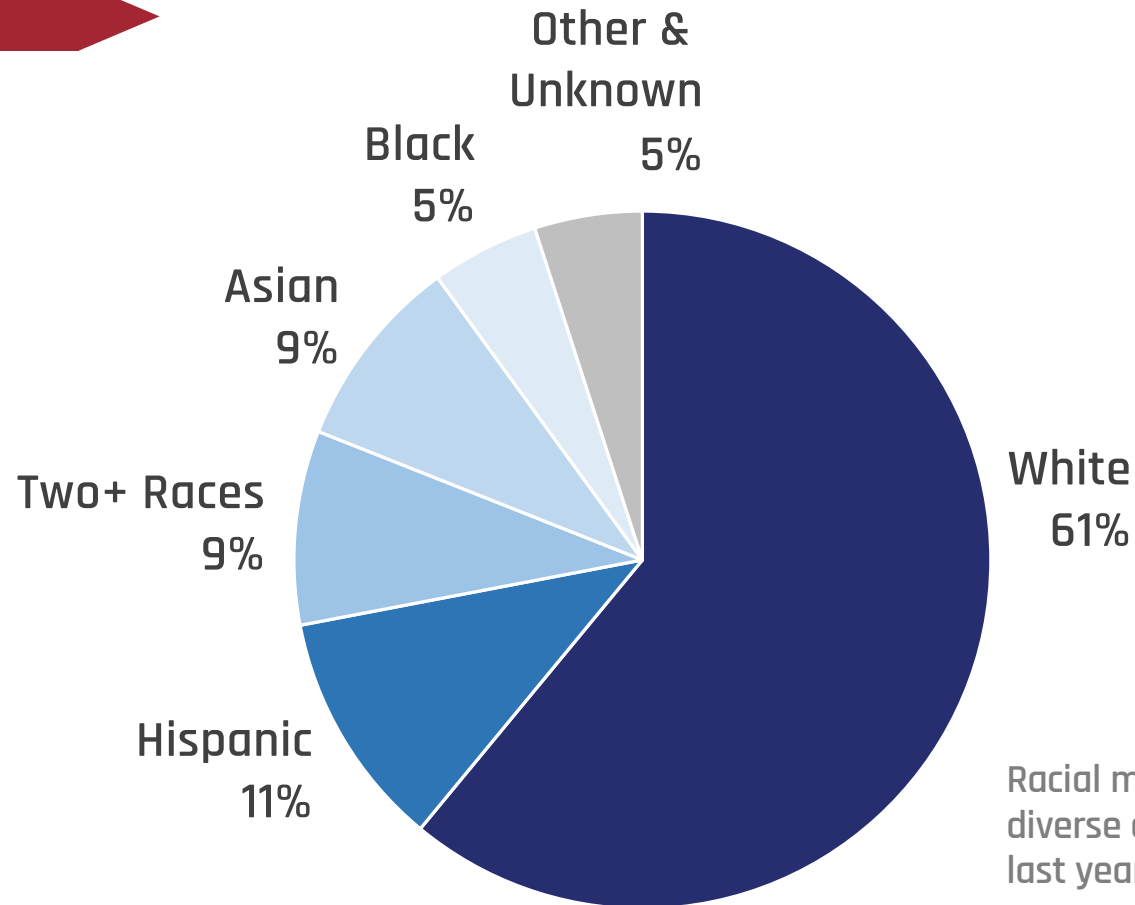
Longevity

**Race**

School

Disability

Economics



Racial mix slightly more diverse compared with last year when Whites were 64%.

Cadet Corps, April 2024



## Demographics

Enrollment

Longevity

Race

**School**

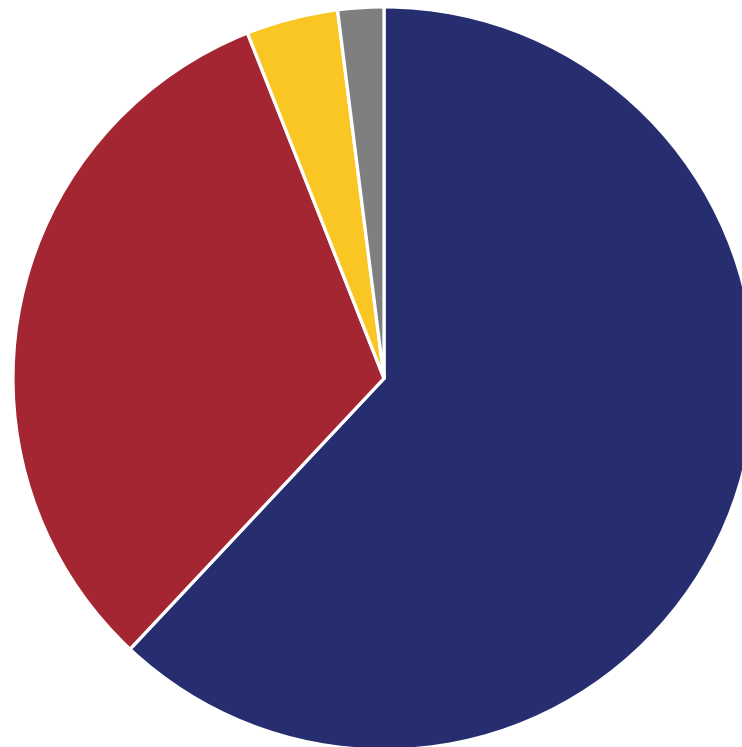
Disability

Economics

Homeschool  
MS / HS  
**32%**

College  
**4%**

Not Enrolled  
**2%**



Public or  
Private  
MS / HS  
**62%**

Responses are nearly identical to last year's.



## Demographics

Enrollment

Longevity

Race

School

**Disability**

Economics

**6%** of responding cadets identify as having a disability

Most common disabilities:

1. Attention Deficit
2. Learning Disability (unspecified)
3. Autism
4. Health-Related

Last year, 10% of cadet respondents identified as having a disability

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## Demographics

Enrollment

Longevity

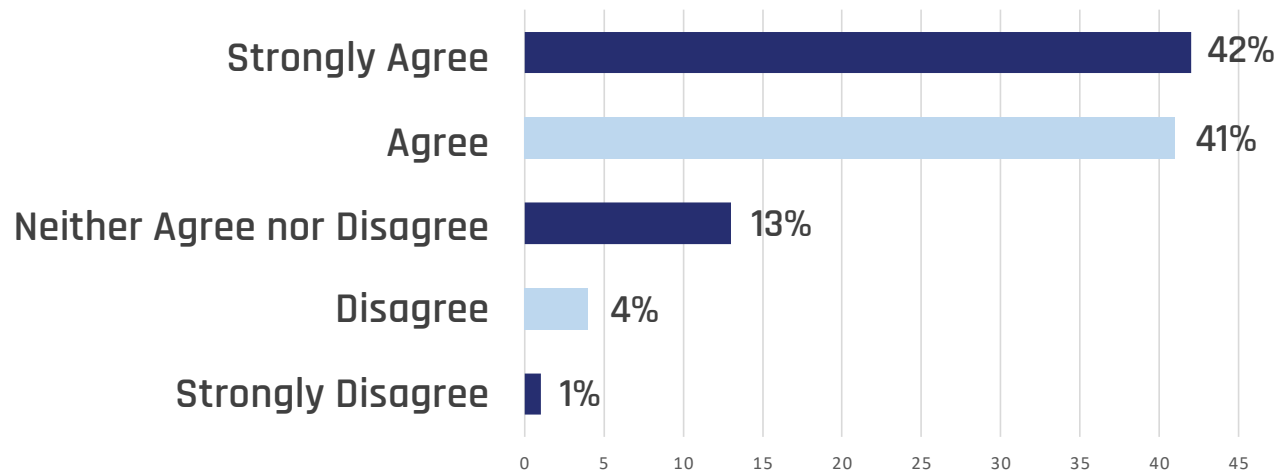
Race

School

Disability

Economics

### “CAP is affordable for our family” (Parents)



**16%** of families report they receive Free or Reduced Lunch, SNAP, or other benefits for low-income families

Affordability is slightly less compared with last year.

## Demographics



### Interpretation

- (1) We're continuing to make positive progress on race and gender diversity, up from 80/20 splits a decade ago.
- (2) The cadet corps is younger than historical averages.
  - Age or maturity will impact local activities, encampments.
  - Age or maturity may affect the types of misconduct we see.
  - The biggest drop is at age 16, which is consistent with the research literature and reports from other youth-serving organizations.
- (3) The cadet corps is a bit lower-ranking than historical averages (32% Wright Brothers vs. a pre-COVID high of 42%). Most of that change is attributable to the huge recruiting gains that pushed enrollment to a 40-year high.

**Questions or comments about demographics?**



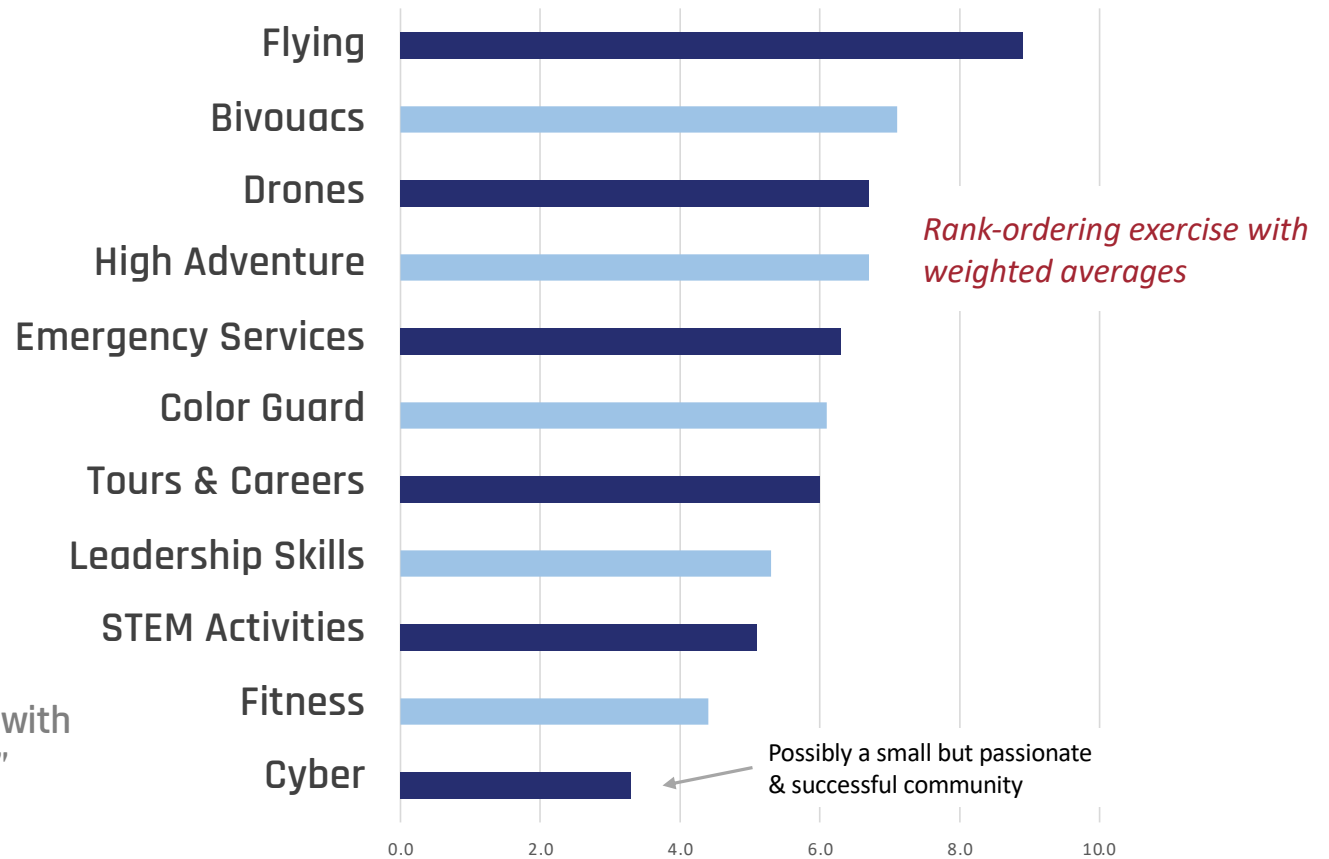
# Participation

Interests

Past Year

Future Desire

Exit Reasons



Responses were nearly identical with last year's. Only "High Adventure" and "ES" swapped rankings.



## Participation

Interests

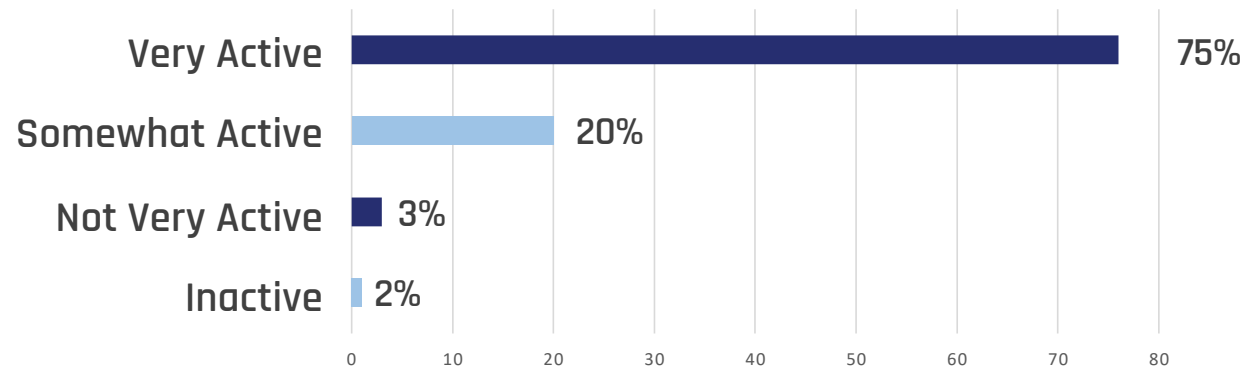
Past Year

Future Desire

Exit Reasons

### "How active were you in 2023?"

Cadets with >6 months membership



Responses were nearly identical to last year's.





## Participation

### Interests

### Past Year

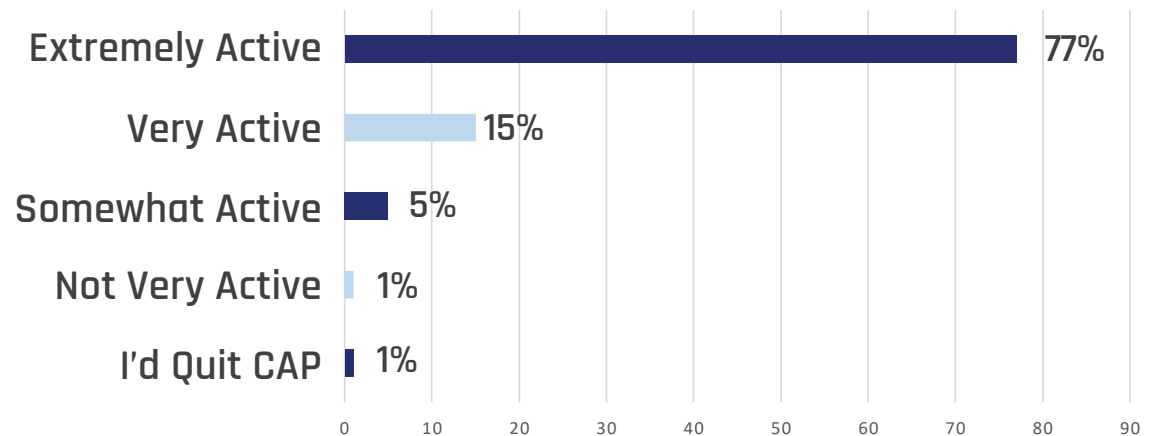
### Future Desire

### Exit Reasons

As with last year, 92% of cadets say they hope to be “very active” or “extremely active” in the coming year.

For those who argue that improving retention ought to be our focus, realize that only a tiny fraction of cadets want to leave CAP.

Suppose that during 2024 you could be active as you wanted in CAP and nothing stood in your way. How active would you choose to be in CAP? (Cadets)





# Participation

Interests

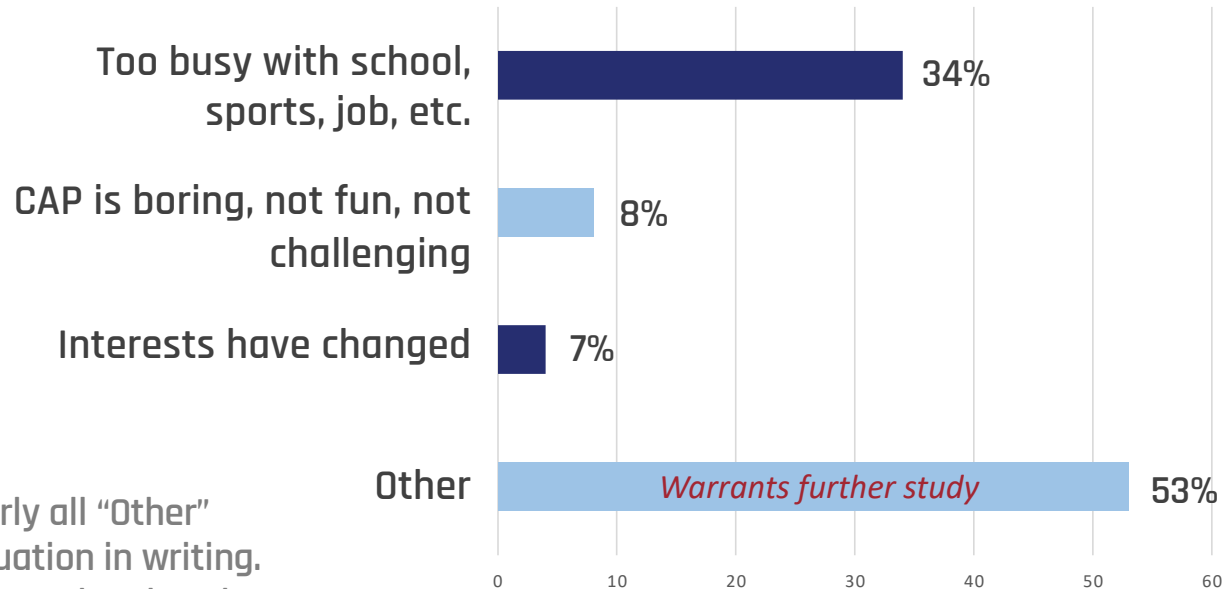
Past Year

Future Desire

Exit Reasons

For low-participation / inactive cadets n=199

## What's their biggest reason for being inactive?



Similar results as last year. Nearly all “Other” respondents explained their situation in writing. Those replies were generally proportional to the Busy, Boring, and Interests Changed responses.

## Participation



### Interpretation

- (1) Flying remains the #1 interest for cadets.
  - Goal of flying within 90 days remains vital.
  - Drones are emerging as a popular AE interest
  
- (2) Cadets want to be extremely active in CAP.  
(Weekly meetings, 1 Saturday per month, summer camps)
  
- (3) When cadets exit CAP, it's most often due to busy schedules, not dissatisfaction with the program.

Questions or comments about **participation?**

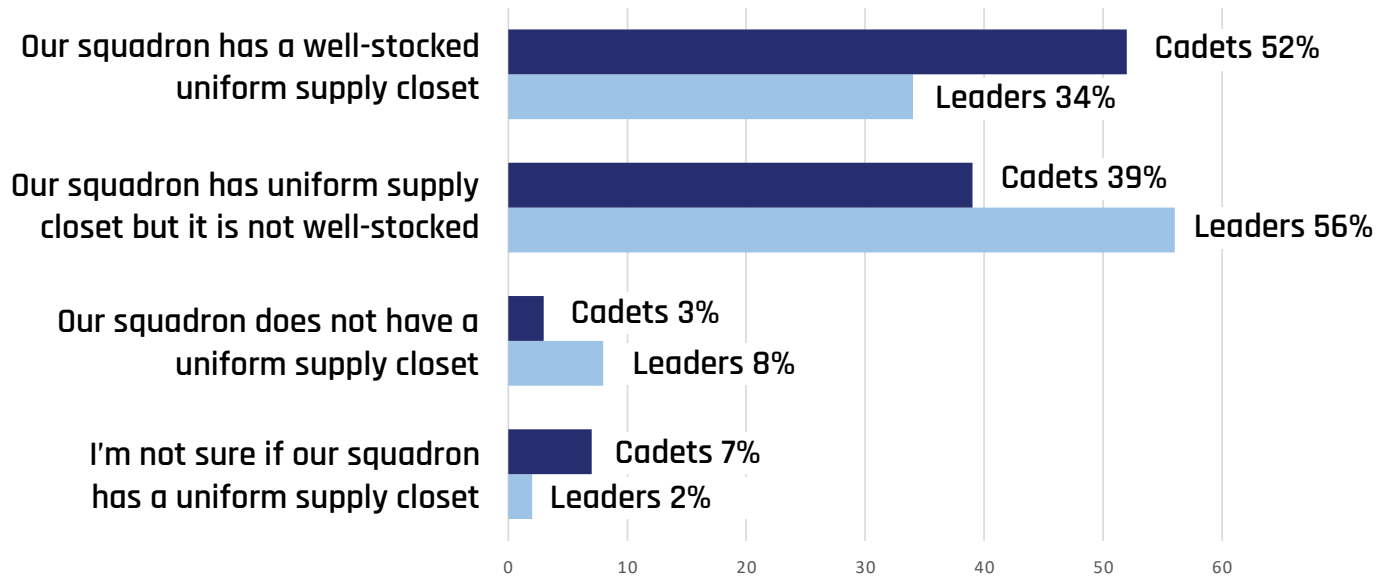
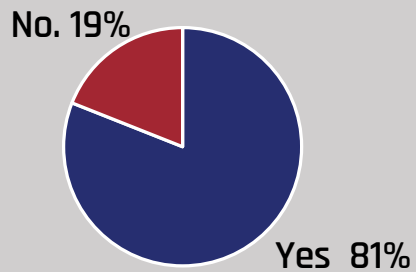
# Program Reviews

## Uniforms

### Adult Training

### Availability of free uniforms via local supplies

Cadets, did you receive any free uniform articles from a local supply closet?





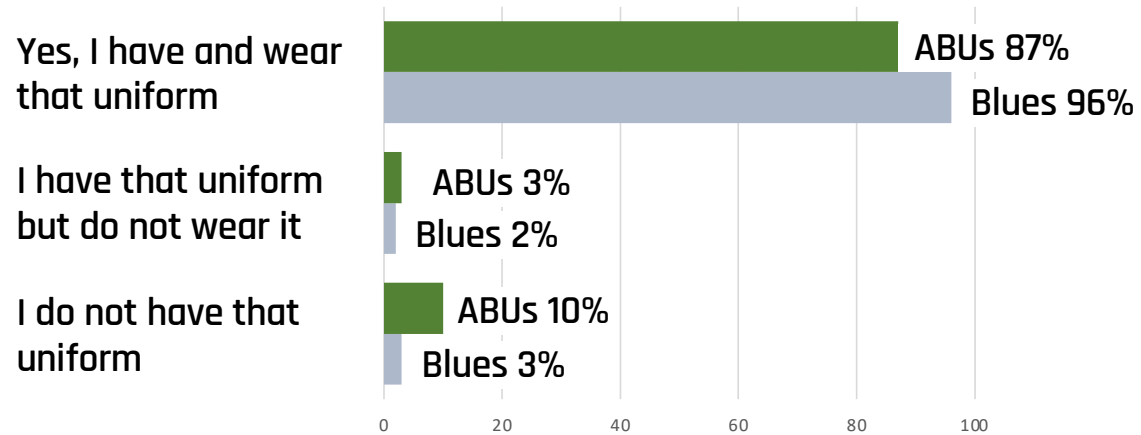
# Program Reviews

## Uniforms

### Adult Training

Do you have and wear the ABUs?  
Do you have and wear Blues?

Cadets only



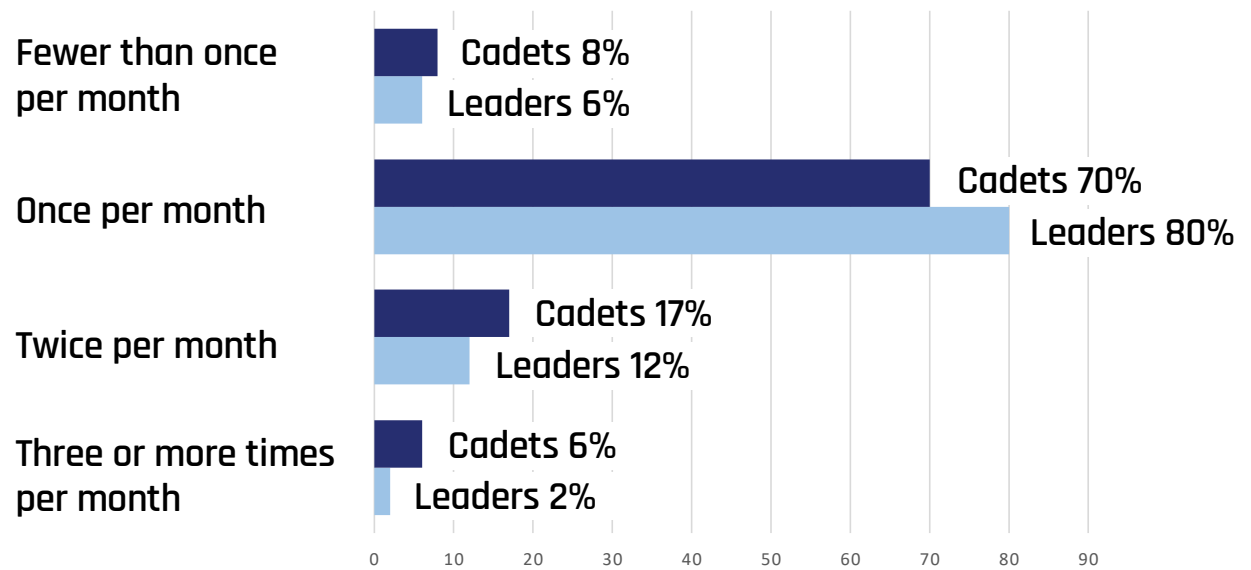


## Program Reviews

### Uniforms

### Adult Training

How often do **cadets** wear the Blues uniform?



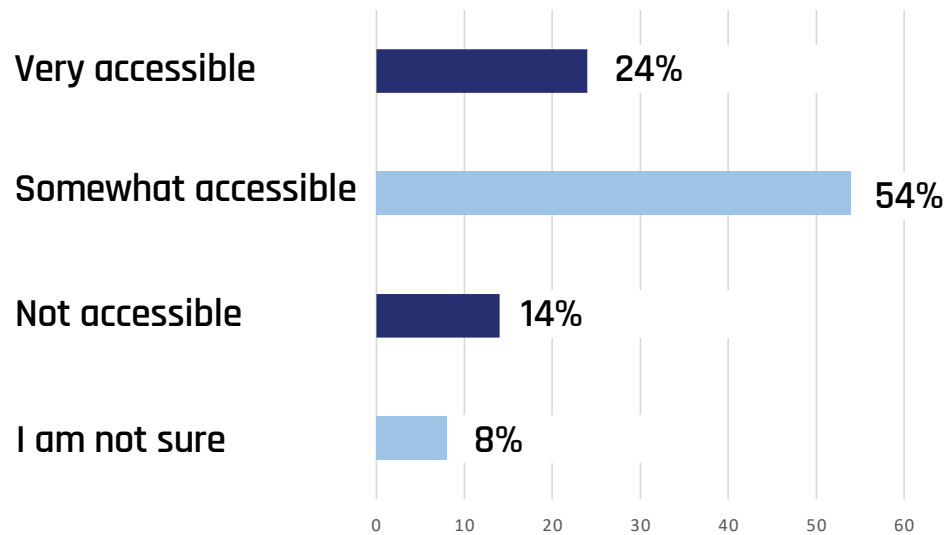
## Program Reviews

### Uniforms

### Adult Training

How accessible do you feel the Training Leaders of Cadets course (TLC) is for you based on factors such as your schedule and location?

Leaders only



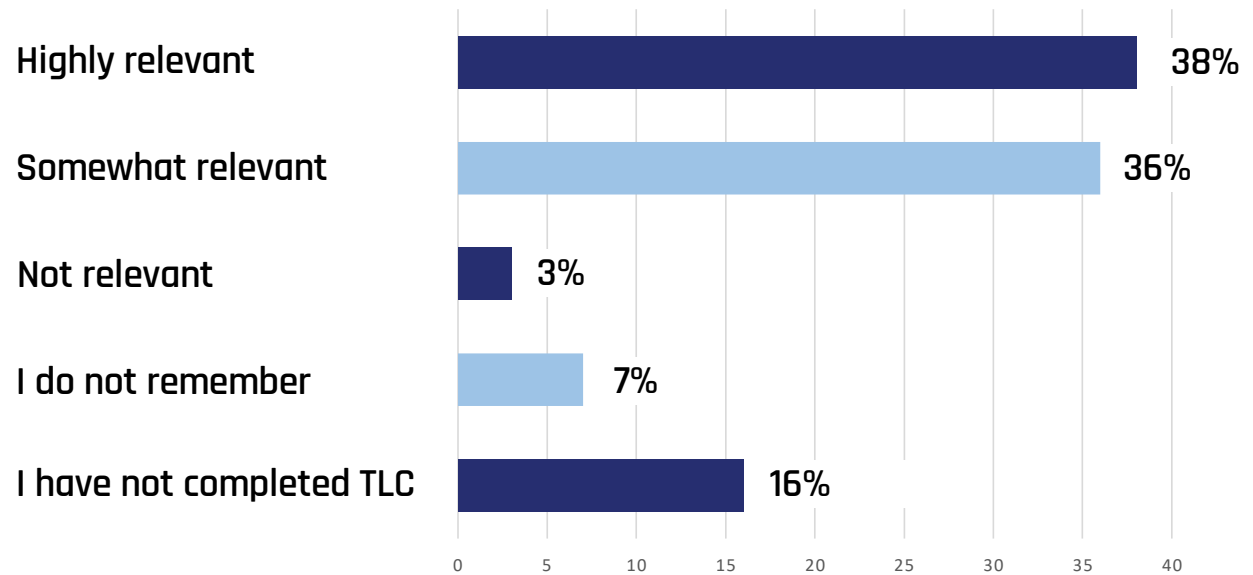


# Program Reviews

## Uniforms Adult Training

How relevant do you perceive the TLC course content to be in relation to you and your duty position?

Leaders only







## Program Reviews

### Interpretations

- (1) ABUs are more difficult to obtain than Blues.
  - (2) The vast majority of cadets wear Blues only once per month or less.
  - (3) We ought to invite a discussion about potentially changing our uniform policy:
    - Switch cadets to OCPs so that the likelihood of their obtaining used garments increases.
    - Make OCPs the cadets' "default" uniform.
    - Remove a financial burden by not expecting new cadets to obtain Blues until Phase II.
- (1) TLC is generally successful, but we are on the right track in our efforts to increase access by making the courses available virtually and to continue adjusting the curriculum to ensure it is practical and interactive.

Questions or comments about **uniforms or TLC?**

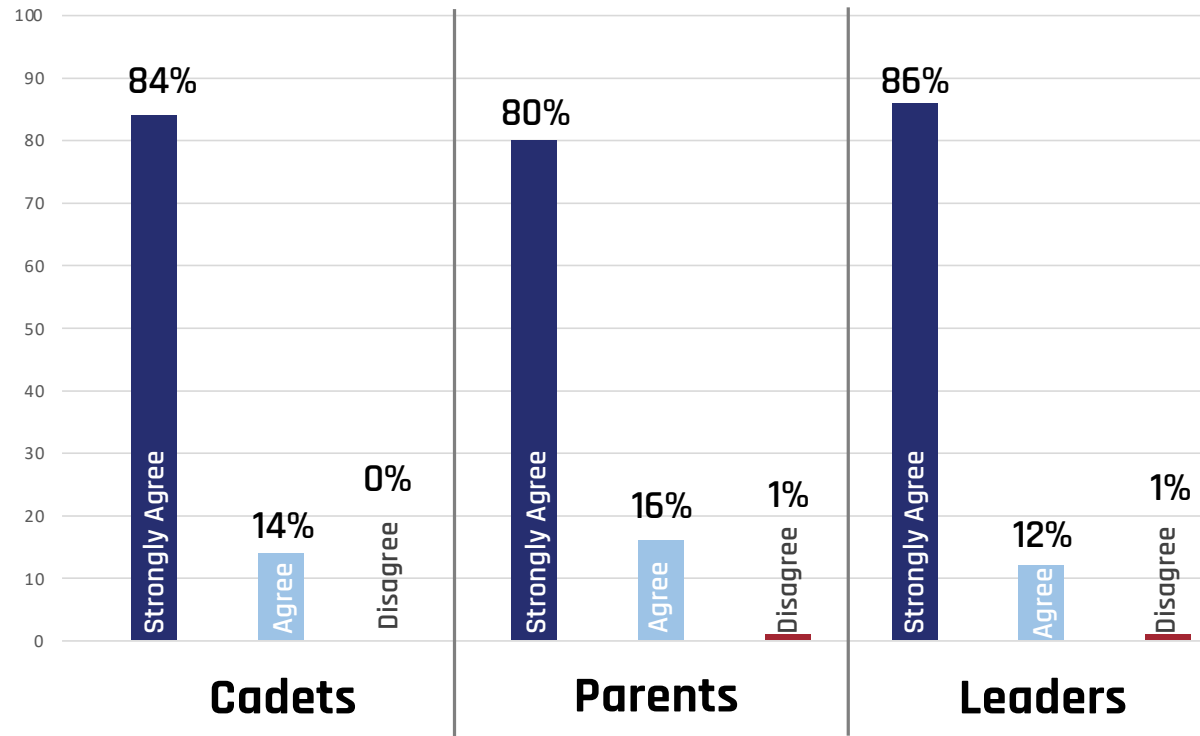


CIVIL AIR PATROL  
CADET PROGRAMS

## Cadet Protection

Two Deep  
Wingman  
Trusted Adult  
Commanders  
Parents

“At CAP activities, at least two adults are present.”

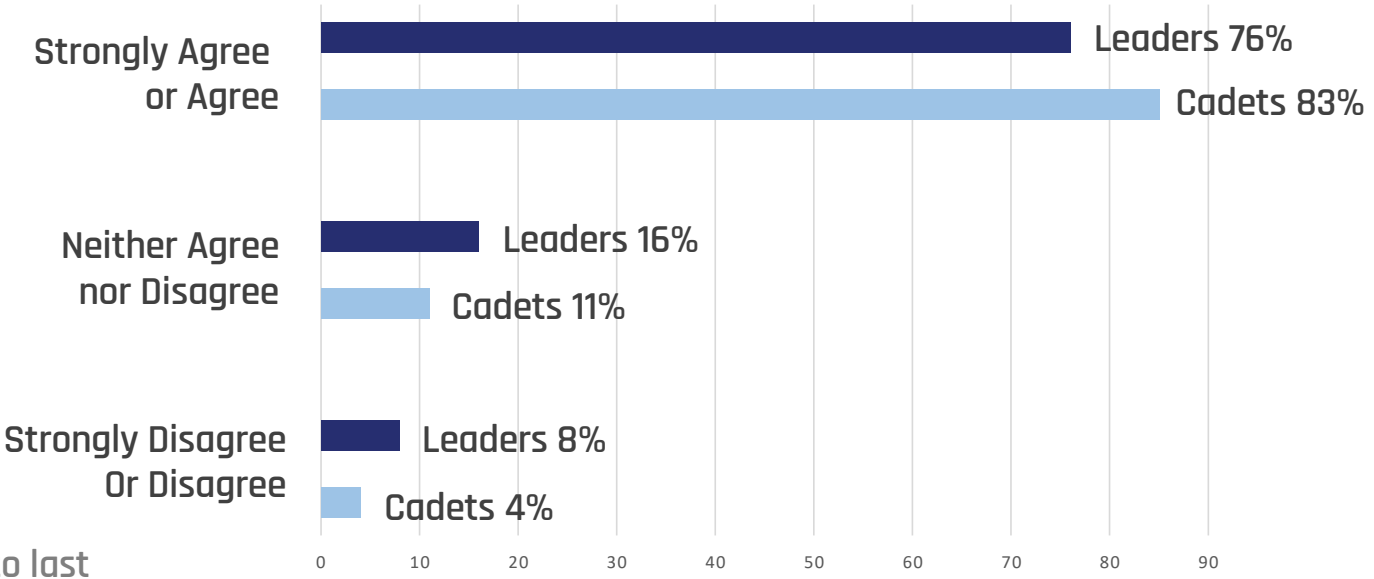




# Cadet Protection

Two Deep  
Wingman  
Trusted Adult  
Commanders  
Parents

“Cadets Use the ‘Wingman Concept’ at CAP activities.”



Responses are very similar to last year's, with a 4% uptick in leaders Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing.

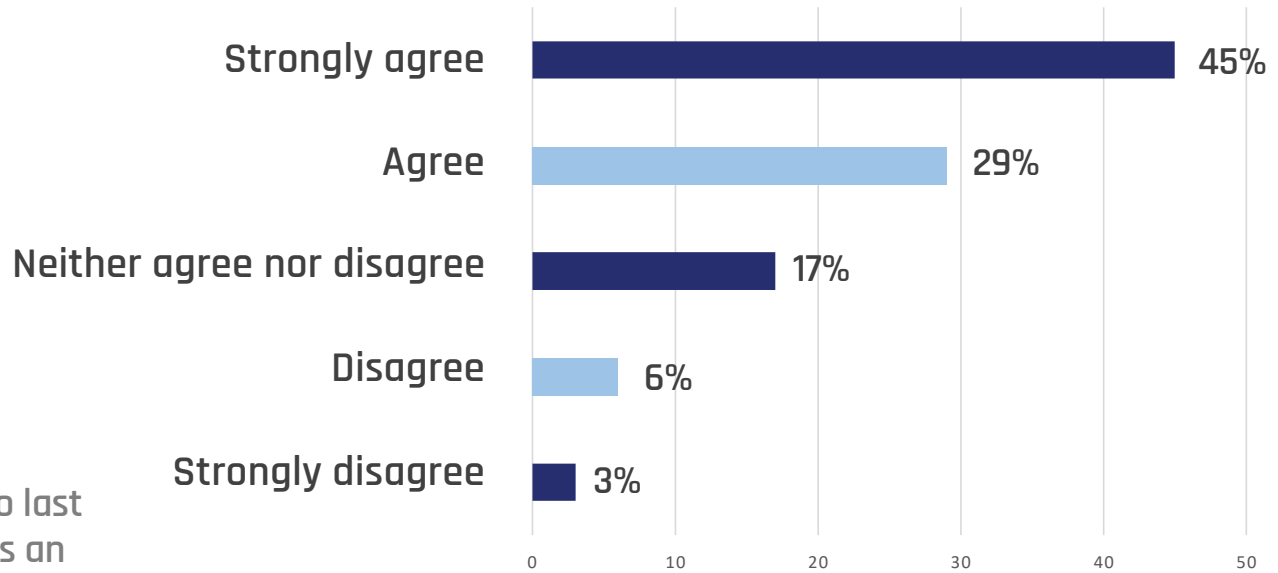




## Cadet Protection

- Two Deep
- Wingman
- Trusted Adult
- Commanders
- Parents

**"If I were facing a big problem in life, there's at least one caring, trusted SM I could turn to for help." (Cadets)**



Responses are very similar to last year's. The CP community has an opportunity to improve here.

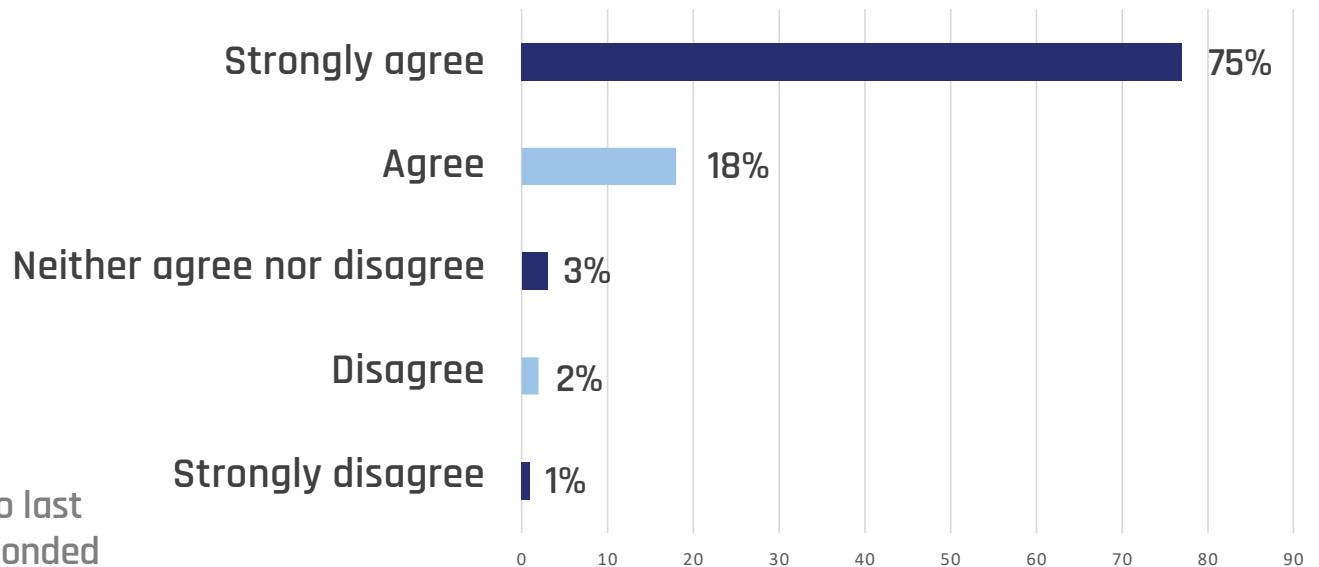


## Cadet Protection

Two Deep  
Wingman  
Trusted Adult  
Commanders  
Parents

Responses are very similar to last year's. Still, the 3% who responded negatively ought to give us pause.

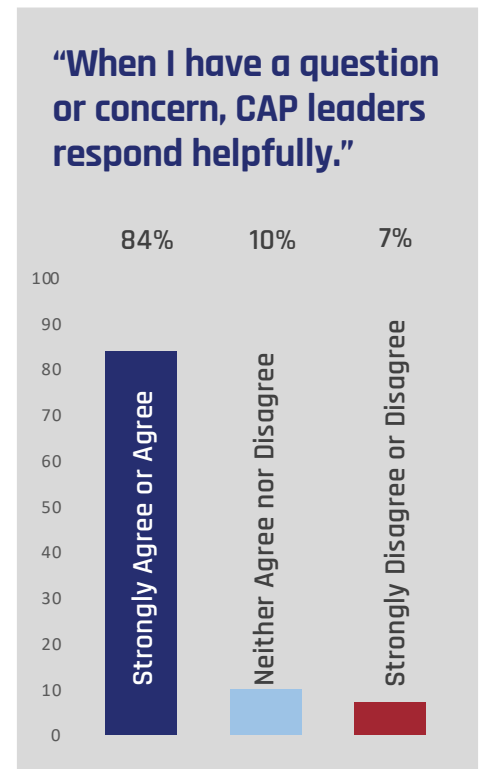
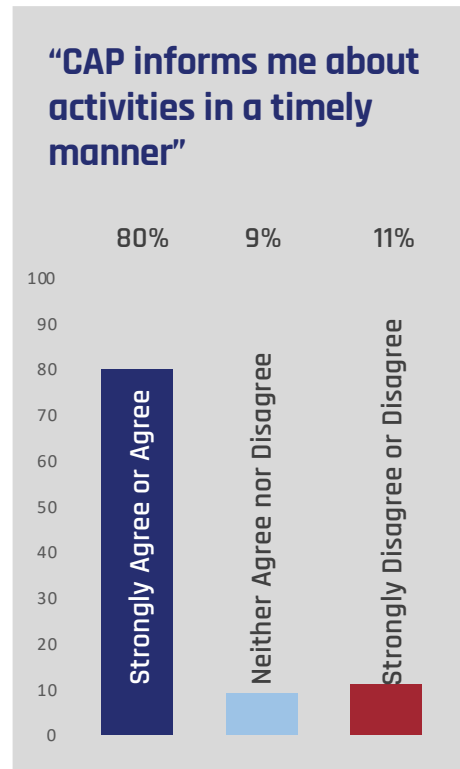
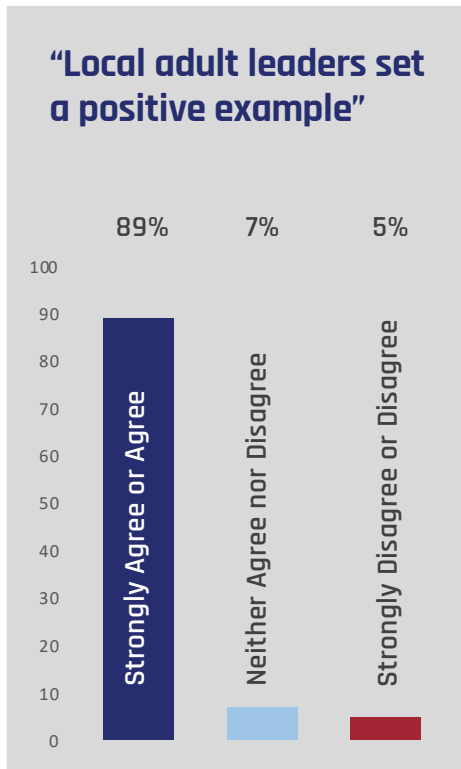
**“CAP leaders who are senior to me take the Cadet Protection Policy seriously.” (Leaders)**



# Cadet Protection

Two Deep  
Wingman  
Trusted Adult  
Commanders  
Parents

Responses are nearly identical with last year's.



# Cadet Protection



## Interpretation

- (1) Two-deep practices appear strong, with a small degree of variation.
- (2) Cadets report use of the Wingman system, less so with adults.  
We might see wingmen used more at major events, versus weekly meetings.
- (3) Trusted Adults: We have opportunities for improvement here.
  - (1) Welcome cadets by name at every activity.
  - (2) Look for opportunities to commend cadets for working hard.
  - (3) Frequently ask, "How's it going?"
  - (4) When frustrated, resist taking an adversarial stance.
- (4) Parent Communications: We have opportunities for improvement here.
  - (1) Proactive communication is essential for family support and participation.
  - (2) Good communication enhances cadet safety.
  - (3) Survey data further justifies the creation of a cadet smart phone app.

**Questions  
or comments  
about CPP?**

## Open-Ended Responses



### CADETS' TOP TOPICS

1. Uniforms
2. More flying time
3. Local situations

### LEADERS' TOP TOPICS

1. Gen Z seems uncommitted
2. Concerns about DEI efforts (both ways)
3. Exhausted by local situations
4. eServices

**Newcomers:** tough to adapt

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## So what?

*Similar to  
Last Year's  
Conclusions*



### **Major Changes** in the **Past Decade**

#### **Demographics**

Slow but ongoing success in diversity

#### **Affordability**

CadetInvest is making a difference

#### **Cadet Exit Reasons**

“Poor local leadership” has essentially disappeared

TLC, YDC, Volunteer U, governance redesign

“Too busy” is now leading cause for exit

### **Opportunities** for the **Near Future**

#### **Ripe for Reform?**

Uniform policy

#### **Ripe for Start-Up?**

Drone Racing

#### **Busy Youth Schedules**

Play / Pause / Play

Flexibility for weekends

#### **Adult Volunteer & Parent Experience**

Use “digital transformation” to make service easier

So what?

**Growth:**  
**At least it's a  
great problem  
to have!**



## Sustainability is a Challenge!

Cadet enrollment is at a 40-year high. With every new cadet, CAP incurs costs for textbooks, uniforms, encampment, flying, etc.

CadetInvest has removed huge financial barriers for many cadets. Those changes correlate with increases in enrollment.

### Some Future Options:

- Cut existing services, transfer funds to the priorities.
- Somehow increase the cadets' share of CAP's federal money and/or increase our donations.
- Tighten need-based services to reduce the number of eligible cadets.
- Adopt more cost-sharing practices. \$5 per O-Flight, \$25 per CEAP.  
(Complicates the accounting and introduces the "program income problem.")
- Other ideas?

**Coming Soon**



**How's my wing doing?**

Region or Wing-level slices (sanitized)

**What factors correlate with cadet satisfaction?**

Encampment, O-flights, economics, disability, etc.?

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# Questions & Comments

[cadets@capnhq.gov](mailto:cadets@capnhq.gov)

