

2010 Juvenile Crimes and Offenses in Virginia

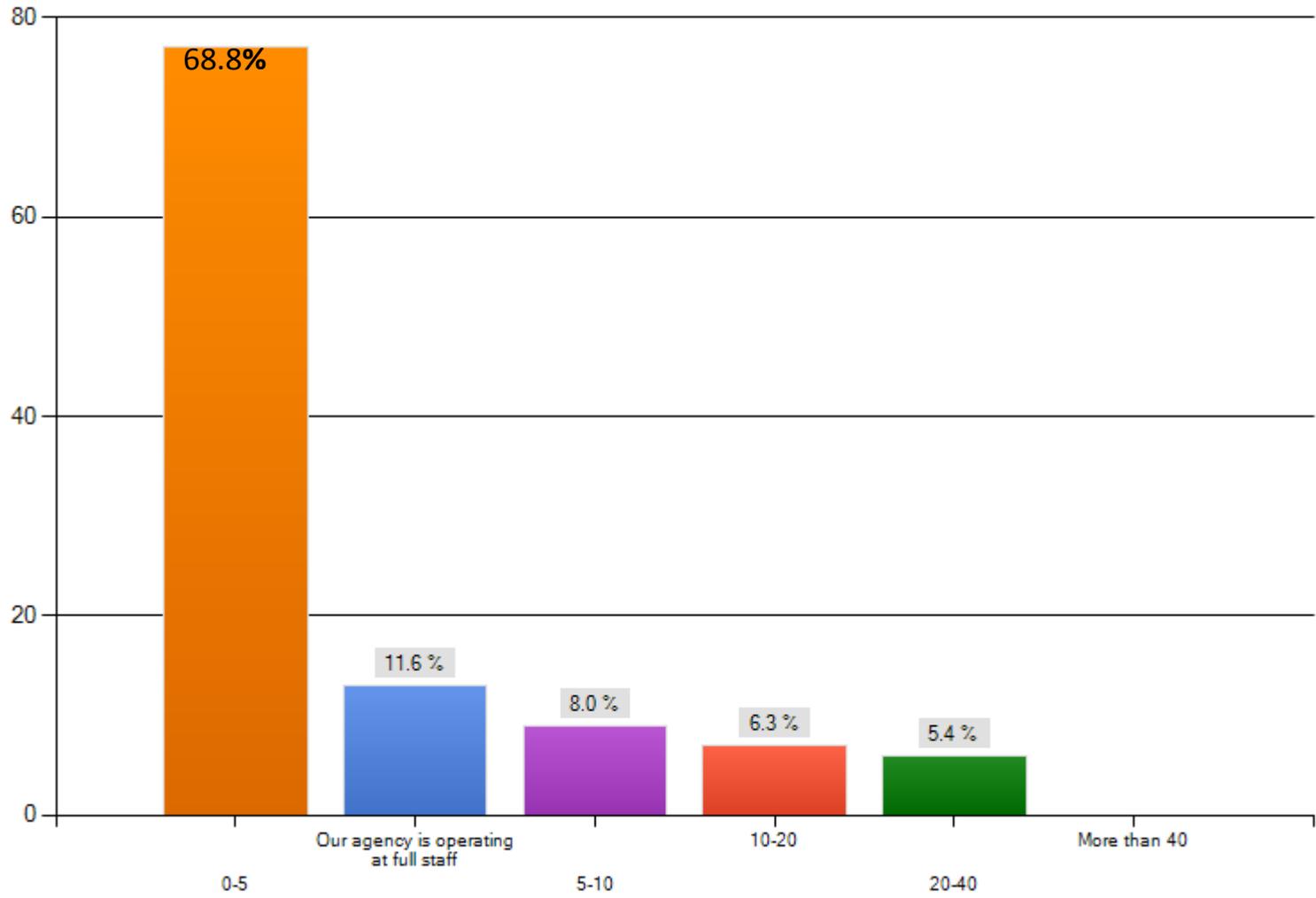
A Law Enforcement Perspective

Prepared by the Virginia Association
of Chiefs of Police, October 20, 2010

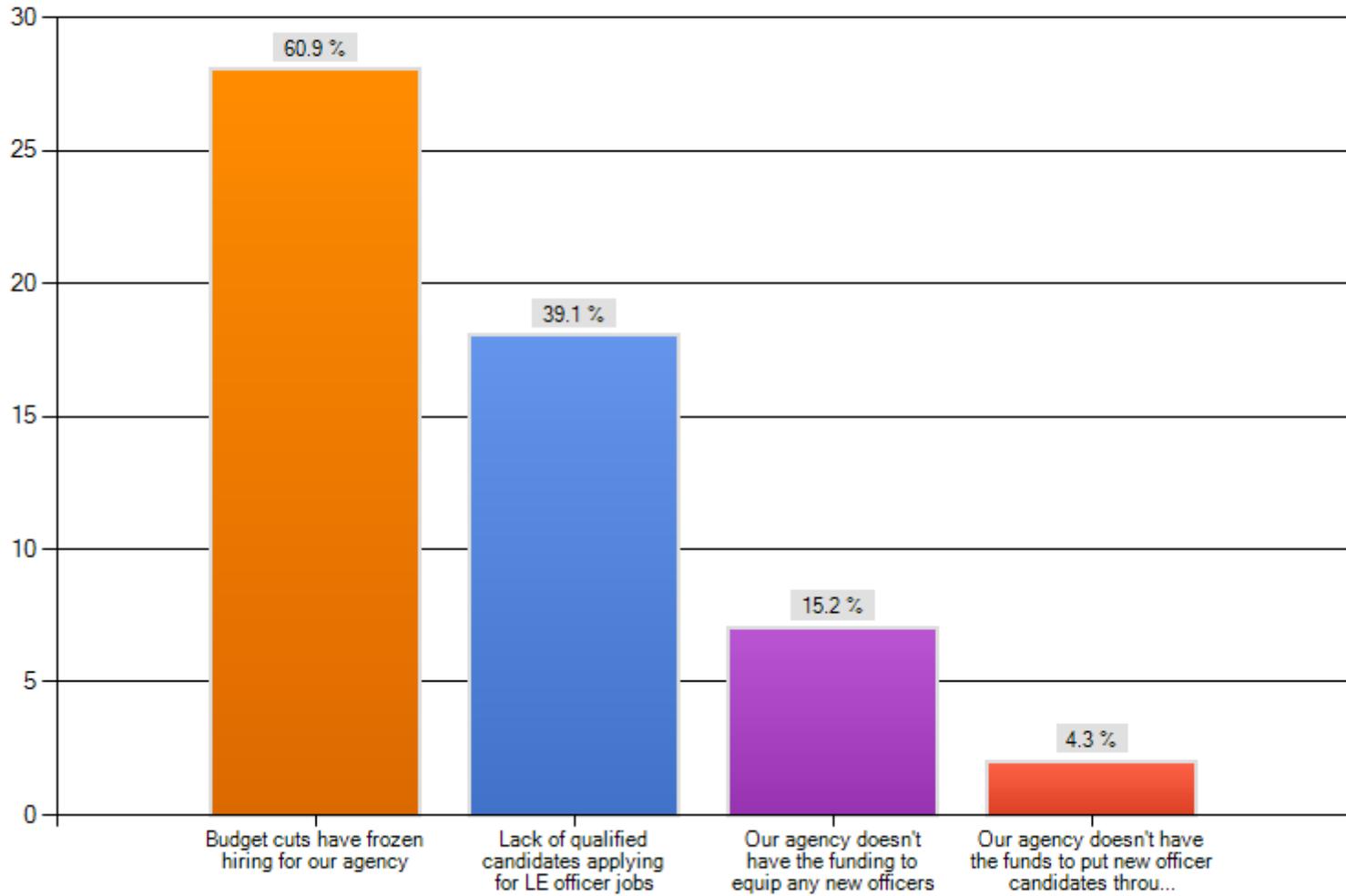
Data Collection

- Survey conducted during week of October 11, 2010
- Survey results collected from 113 Virginia law enforcement agencies

STAFFING: How many UNFILLED sworn officer positions do you have?



If you have UNFILLED officer positions, what factors are affecting your ability to fill those positions?



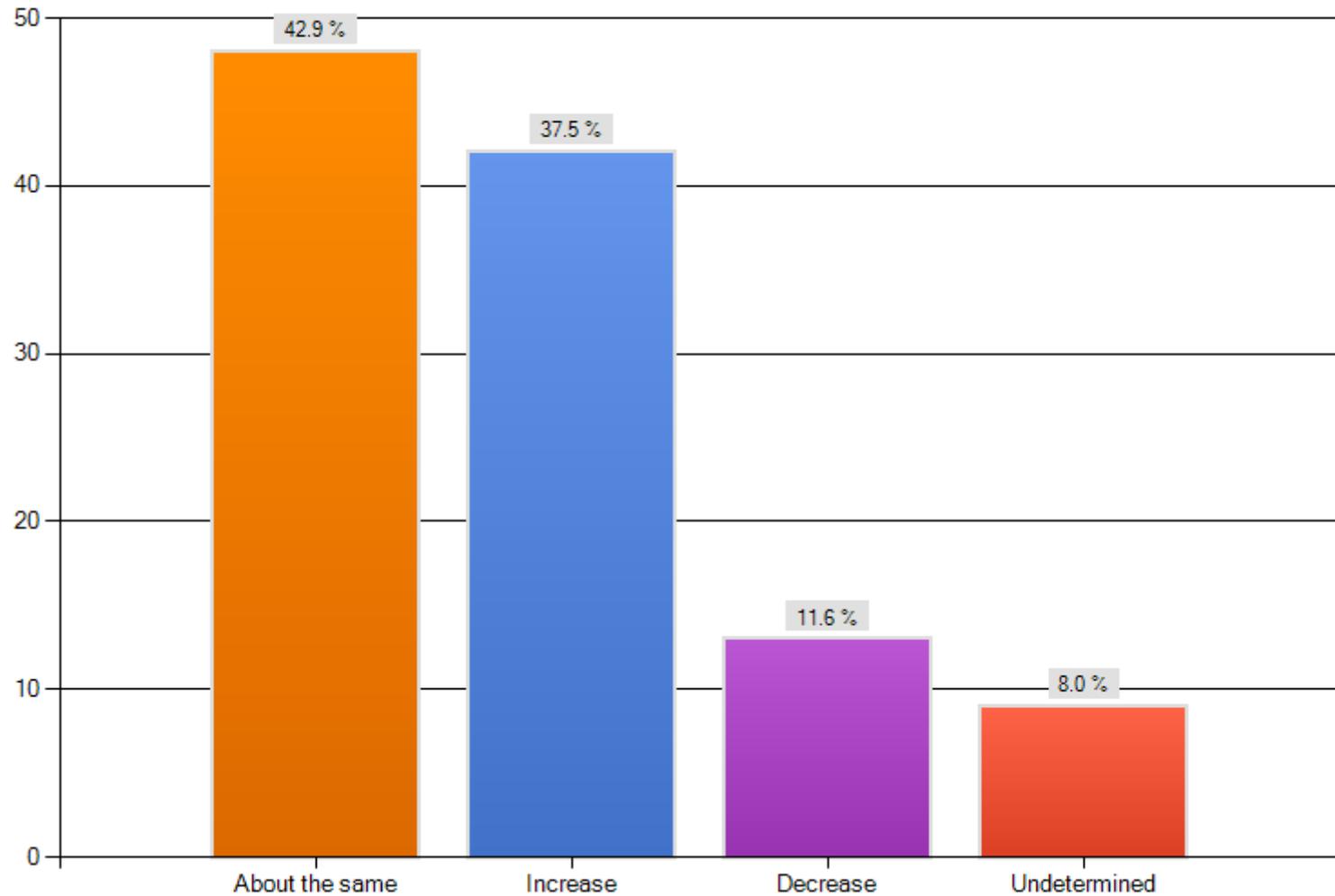
Other Factors Affecting Police Hiring

- Waiting on Council to decide if they should fill open positions
- In most cases there is a 90 day freeze on hiring
- Funding reductions from state have reduced ability to fill open positions
- We are frequently losing officers to State, Federal, and overseas contract services. These are usually higher paying jobs with fewer demands
- Local budget cuts
- We are actively recruiting for 17 vacancies. The remaining positions are frozen.
- Past budget freeze has put us behind in hiring

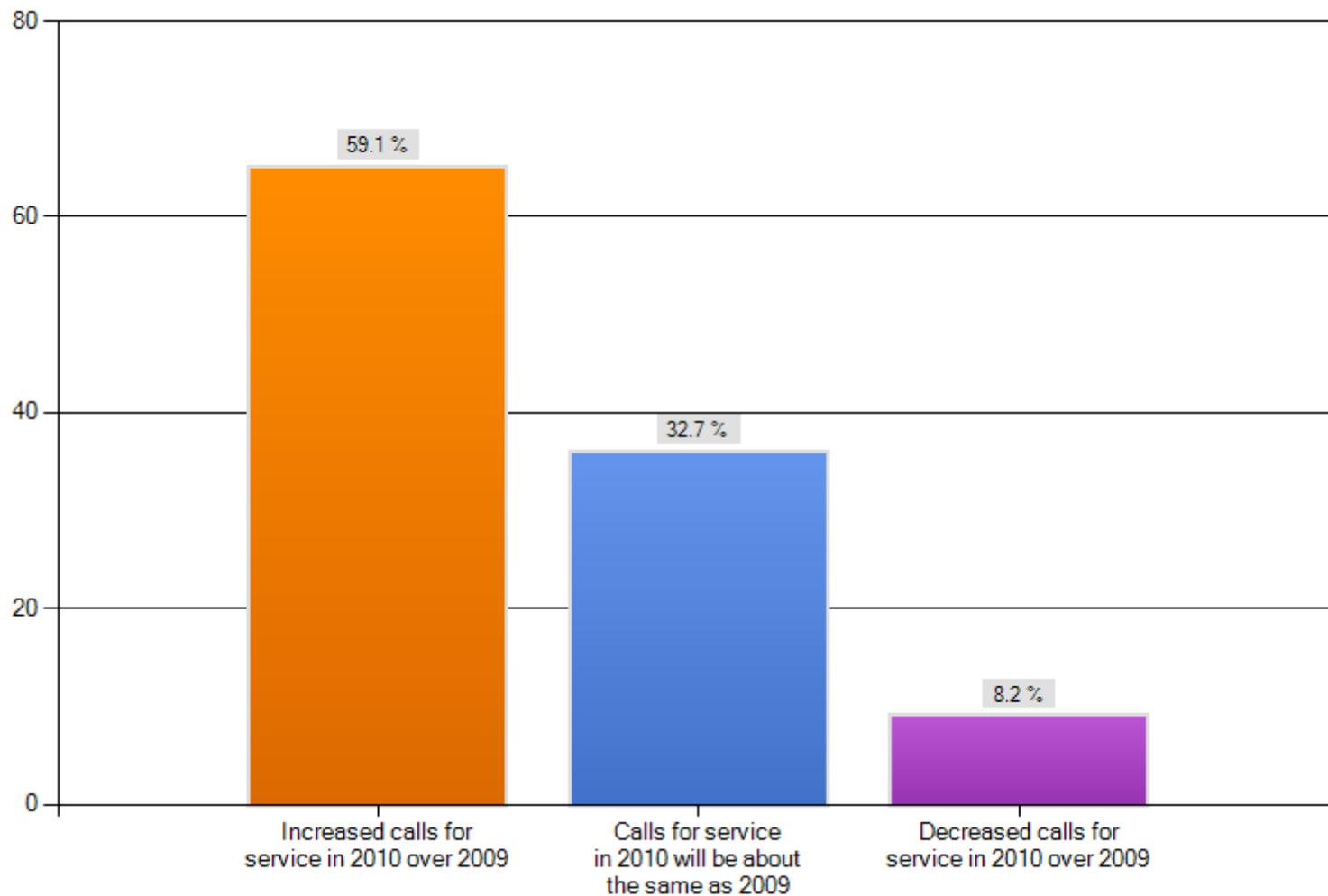
Other Factors Affecting Police Hiring

- Budget cuts from the state leave three positions unfunded
- Attrition from police academy; must wait for next academy to fill
- Budget issues delay hiring
- 2 additional sworn positions are deployed (military) and cannot be filled
- Low retention and retirement
- Lack of certified field training officers
- Turnover due to low pay and no raises
- Other regional agencies pay more with better benefits

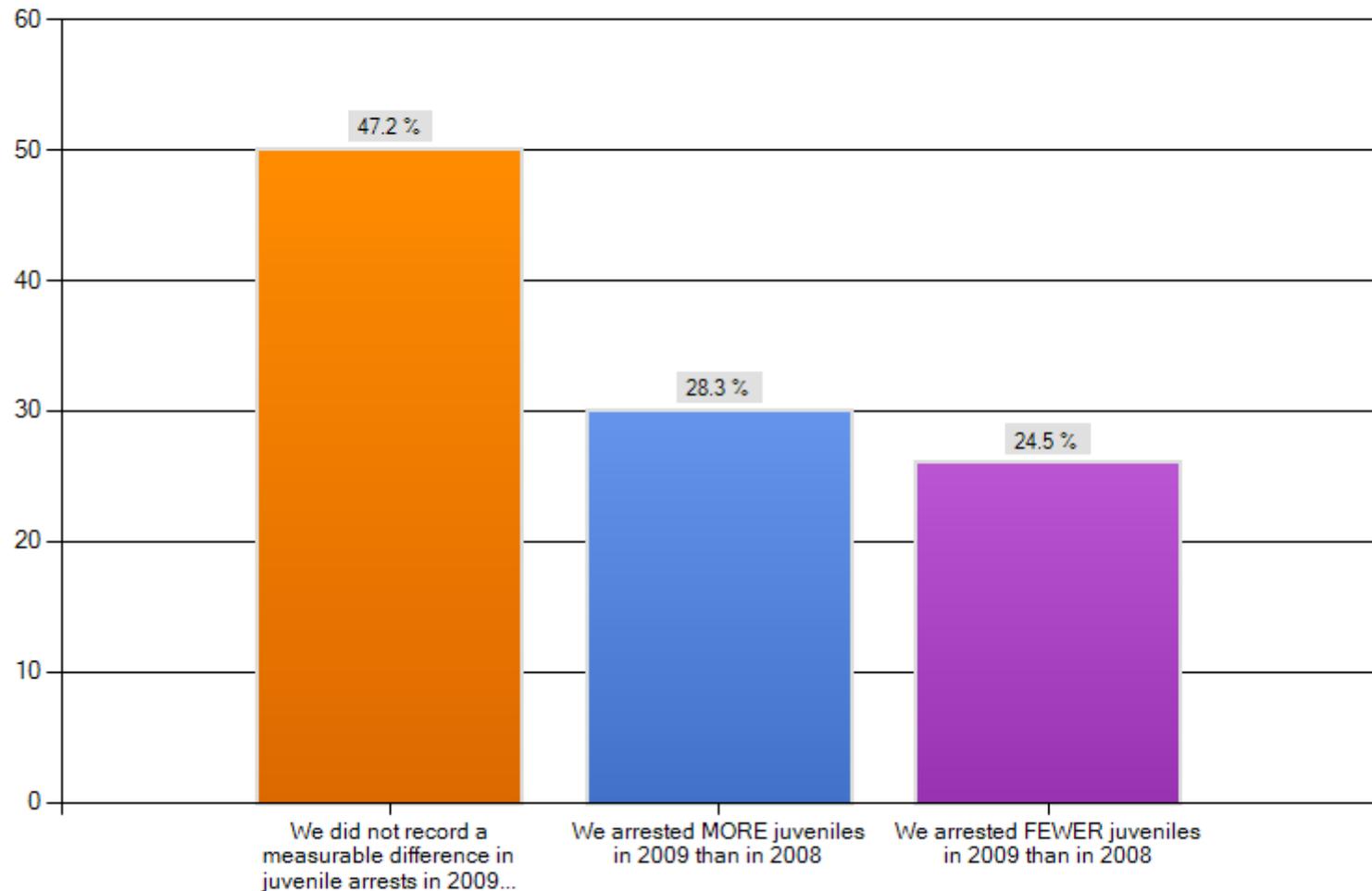
Economic stress often impacts community crime trends. Has your department experienced an overall increase or decrease in crime rates so far in 2010 when compared to 2009?



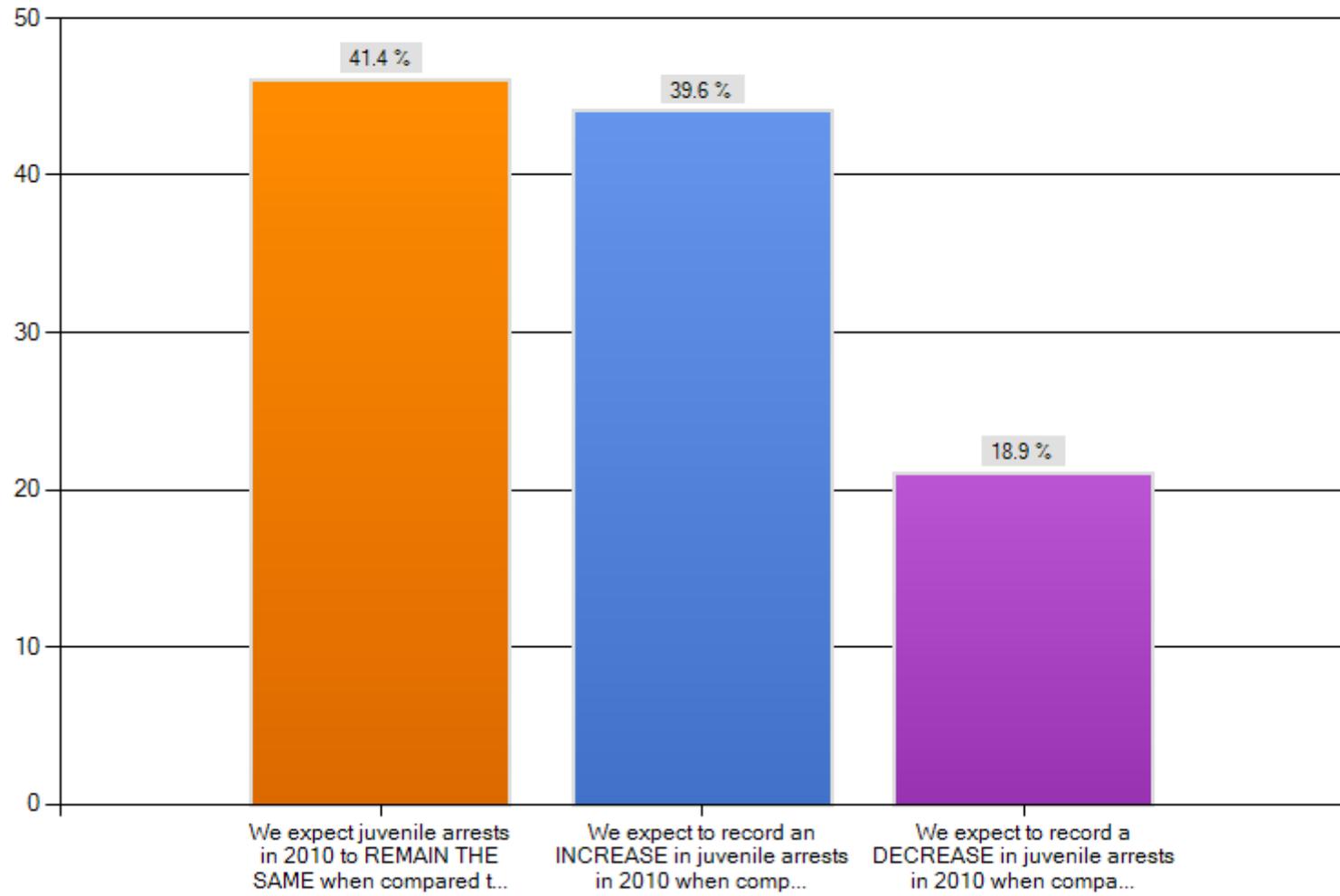
Comparing calls for service in 2009 with those received so far in 2010, would you estimate that calls for service in 2010 will be greater, fewer or the same as 2009?



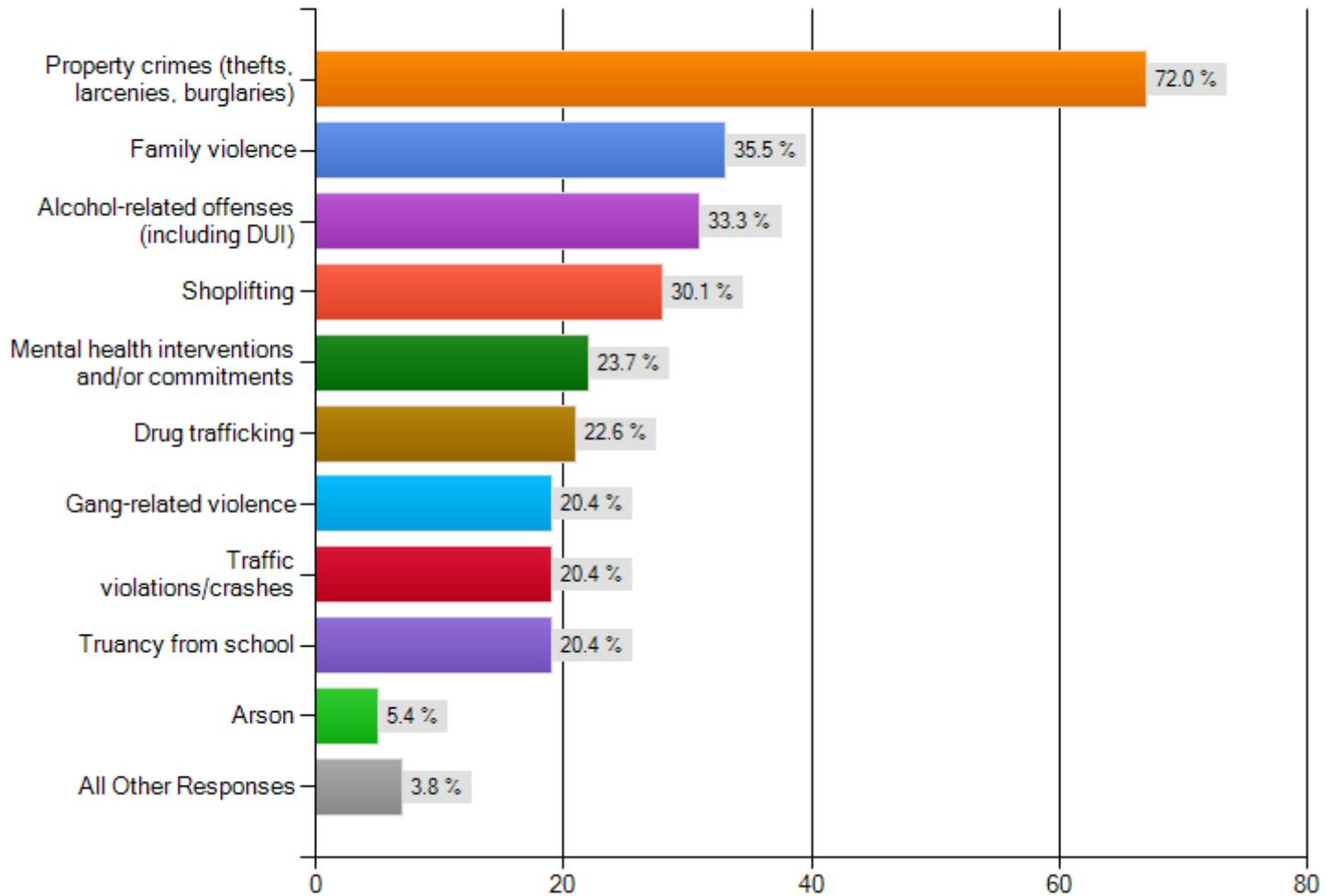
According to the FBI's report of preliminary national statistics for 2009, arrests of JUVENILES for all offenses decreased 8.9 percent in 2009 when compared with the 2008 number. From 2008 to 2009, did your agency report an increase or decrease in juvenile arrests?



Based on arrests so far in 2010, do you expect to see an increase or a decrease in juvenile arrests in 2010 compared to 2009?



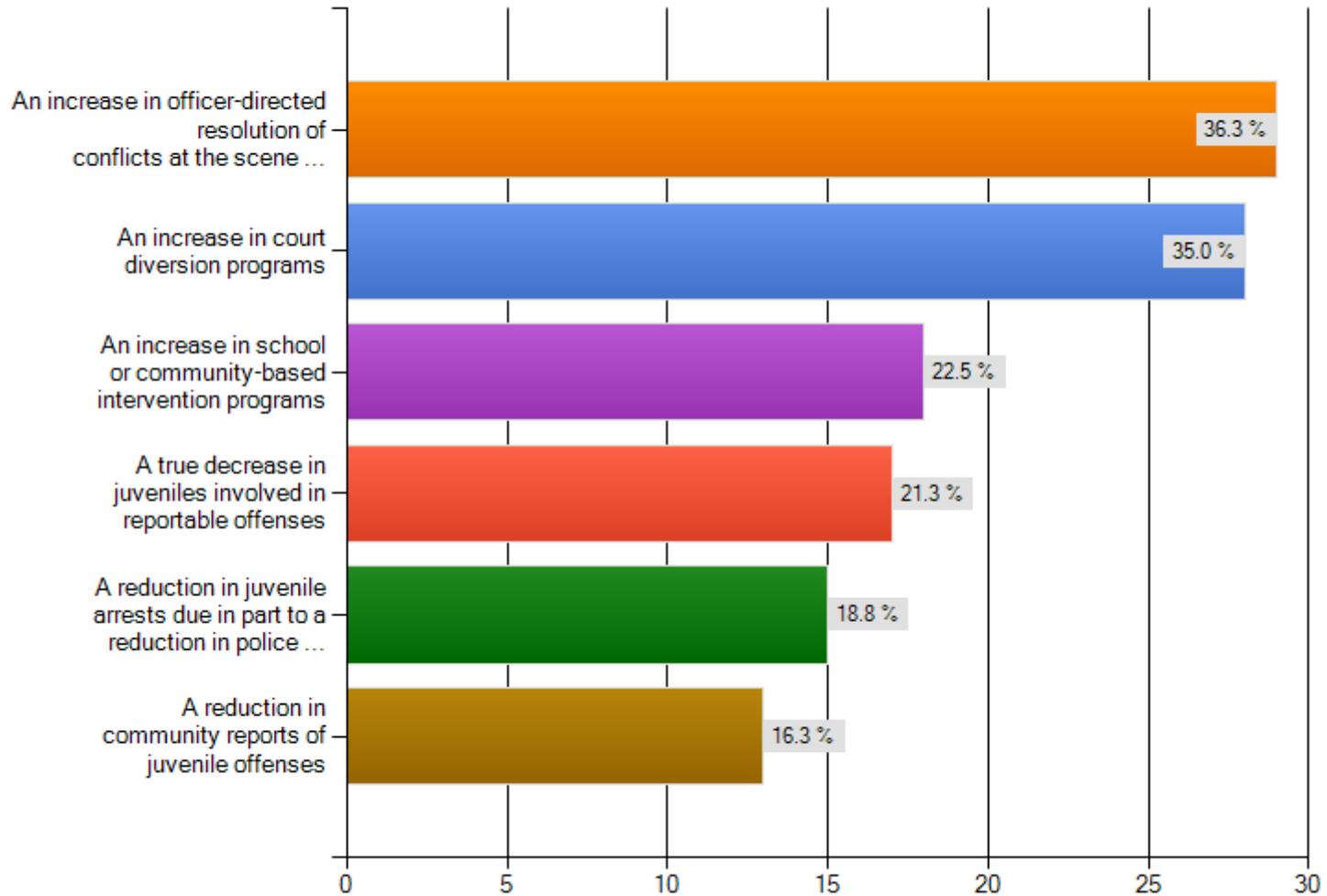
Please select the categories in which your agency is seeing an INCREASE in juvenile involvement in 2010.



Other Categories of Increased Juvenile Crimes or Infractions

- Runaways
- Aggravated Assaults
- Increased awareness and concern about suicides
- Vandalism
- Disorderly conduct and public intoxication
- Increase in molestation that is causing mental health issues
- Curfew violations
- Weapons violations
- Threats of bodily harm.
- Family violence and gang-related data for 2009 and 2010 cannot be easily compared due to change in RMS.
- Unable to determine due to dramatic shift in police staffing

Based on your agency's experience, why do you think that the number of reported juvenile arrests is declining?



Other Reasons for Decline in Juvenile Arrests

- Arrests are increasing based on increase in juvenile population
- Crime in general is down
- We have seen an increase in juvenile arrests for 2010.
- We have not experienced a decrease in juvenile arrests
- Intake officer reluctant to write petitions
- Because the difficulty of navigating the court system officers are handling more conflicts without arrest
- There are fewer juveniles
- Officers avoid juvenile court by only charging only in the worst cases.
- Our arrests for 2010 will be greater than either 2009 or 2008

Other Reasons for Decline in Juvenile Arrests

- Unknown
- Officers feel the court doesn't do anything with them. They spend too much time trying to prosecute and the juveniles get nothing for their offenses.
- G.R.E.A.T. program has helped (to reduce gang involvement)
- Juvenile crime not declining for us
- Ineffective juvenile court system unwilling or unable to address the changing character of juvenile crime
- Fewer officers acting proactively (to arrest juveniles)
- Don't believe we will experience a decrease in juvenile crime in 2010
- Either not reported or unfounded cases of suspected property crime

Open Ended Survey Responses

- Although arrests have increased for juveniles, we have seen less juvenile involvement in incidents so far in 2010. We believe that is largely due to enforcement strategies.
- Our numbers of juvenile offenses are going up rapidly, and we are experiencing more and more every day. Reasons unknown other than economy and absolutely nothing else to do but crime-related activities.
- Over the past few years we have lost several positions for sworn officers. Along with regular turnover of people leaving, and gang activity, we are seeing the negative effects on our community

Open Ended Survey Responses

- We are seeing more gang activity even though it is not a large amount because we are a rural county, but it is spilling over from adjoining areas.
- More crimes against each other such as vandalism and assaults on each other
- A core group of juveniles commit multiple offenses. The total number of juveniles involved in reportable offenses has been reduced.
- Juveniles in rural areas are plagued with boredom. Additionally, due to the current economic crisis, there are much fewer employment opportunities and they are unable to pay for their "expenses."

Open Ended Survey Responses

- Most of what we have are underage drinking offenses
- Juvenile prosecutions are down in juvenile court because the cases are diverted and no court placement occurs
- We are in the process of implementing a new diversion program
- Juveniles are increasingly more violent and almost all have underlying drug or alcohol abuse
- We are on a pace to experience an overall increase in crime for the third straight year
- We see a trend in violent assaults and larcenies
- Most juveniles who do not have prior records are placed in diversion w/JDR Court

Summary

- Overall, Virginia law enforcement is not seeing a reduction in juvenile offenses, although the number of reported arrests may be lower in some areas
- The use of formal and informal diversion has increased, thus decreasing the number of reported juvenile arrests
- Crime data does not include juvenile traffic offenses or non-reportable offenses

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www.vachiefs.org