



Office of Justice Programs  
Summary



# Urban Delinquency

## and Substance Abuse

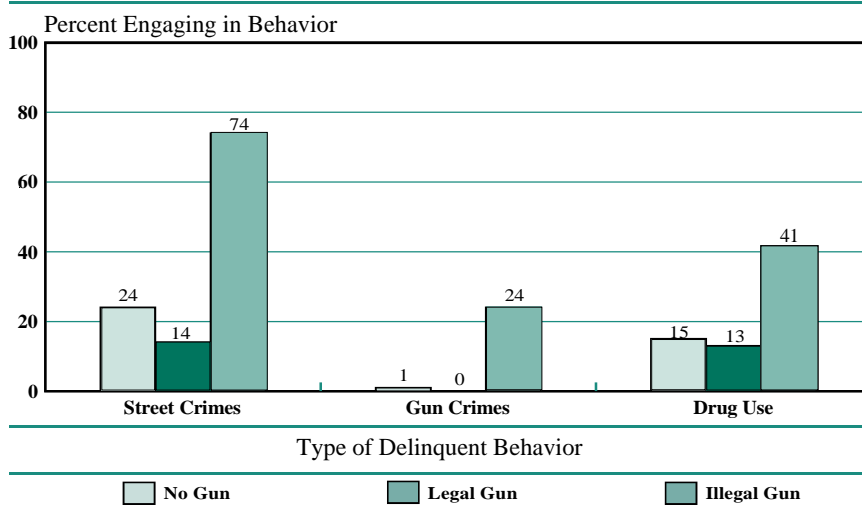
### Initial Findings

### Research Summary

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By the ninth and tenth grades, more boys own illegal guns than own legal guns.

**Figure 13: Relationship Between Type of Gun Owned and Percent Committing Street, Gun, and Drug Crimes**



Note: Rochester data only.

## Gun ownership and delinquency

Adolescent ownership and use of firearms is a growing concern, and results from the Rochester study suggest the concern is well founded.

By the ninth and tenth grades, more boys own illegal guns (7 percent) than own legal guns (3 percent). Of the boys who own illegal guns, about half of the whites and African-Americans and nearly 90 percent of the Hispanics carry them on a regular basis.

Figure 13 shows a very strong relationship between owning illegal guns and delinquency and drug use. Seventy-four percent of the illegal gunowners commit street crimes, 24 percent commit gun crimes, and 41 percent use drugs. Boys who own legal firearms, however, have much lower rates of delinquency and drug use and are even slightly less delinquent than nonowners of guns.

The socialization into gun ownership is also vastly different for legal and illegal gunowners. Those who own legal guns have fathers who own guns for sport and hunting. On the other hand, those who own illegal guns have friends who own illegal guns and are far more likely to be gang members. For legal gunowners, socialization appears to take place in the family; for illegal gunowners, it appears to take place “on the street.”

## Youth employment and delinquency

American society often views employment as a solution to social problems such as delinquency and drug use. Belief is widespread that work or employment programs protect us against delinquency and gangs. Unfortunately, the faith placed in youth employment is not generally supported by empirical findings