

# MAKING CONNECTIONS CROSS-SITE SURVEY

## **SOCIAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**The Making Connections Cross-Site Survey** provides a wealth of information on changing conditions in low-income communities. The survey has entailed interviews with large samples of families in Making Connections neighborhoods in all 10 sites at two points in time: first in 2002 or 2003 (depending on the site), and second in 2005 or 2006. A third wave was then conducted in the selected neighborhoods in 5 of the 10 sites in 2008 or 2009 (Denver, Des Moines, Indianapolis, San Antonio, and White Center).

**These fact sheets** focus on the 2008/09 survey and significant changes between it and earlier waves in the 5 sites. They provide selected data on social and neighborhood conditions in Making Connections neighborhoods and discuss how the relevant indicators have changed over time. We expect that data on these basic indicators will inform understanding of many other branches of research using the survey data. The topics covered are:

1. Social networks
2. Civic participation
3. Community mobilization
4. Overall neighborhood conditions and safety
5. Neighborhood disorder/incivility

In almost all sections, we note statistically significant changes in indicators between the first survey (2002/03) and the third (2008/09). In the first part of the first section (Table 1.1) however, we note changes between the second survey (2005/06) and the third, because key questions related to respondents getting and giving non-financial help were not asked in the first survey.

**Note:** The Making Connections initiative was intended to foster community-wide results in tough neighborhoods over the long-term, particularly in regards to improving young children's health and their success in school, and in increasing families' earnings, income, and asset levels. However, in the individual sites, the Making Connections strategies have not been operational for long enough or achieved sufficient saturation for there to be a reasonable expectation that such community-wide changes will already be evident. The longitudinal survey data on the Making Connections sites provide useful information on the dynamics occurring in the target neighborhoods. However, the absence of systematic improvements in key indicators to date should not be viewed as a reflection on the efficacy of the Making Connections model for community change.

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## SOCIAL NETWORKS

Indicators pertaining to the strength of neighborhood social networks are presented in two groups: (1) those related to receiving help from, and giving help to, family and friends, and (2) those that indicate the strength of other social linkages

Table 1.1  
**Indicators Related to Receiving and Giving Help to/from Friends an/or Family Families with Children, 2008/09**

	Non-financial help friends/family		Financial help friends/family		Any kind of help	
	Gets	Gives	Gets	Gives	Gets	Gives
Total	56	76	26	40	62	80
<i>By Site</i>						
Denver	53	80	28	42	59	83
Des Moines	63	81	30	43	66	86
Indianapolis	60	82	33	48	68	85
San Antonio	46	62	25	30	55	68
White Center	61	79	17	<b>39</b>	63	82
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>						
NH white	64	80	33	39	70	83
NH black, US born	66	84	39	46	72	86
Hispanic, US born	53	68	33	33	63	75
Hispanic, foreign born	44	75	6	41	46	79
NH Asian, foreign born	42	70	10	37	45	70
US born	61	77	35	39	69	81
Foreign born	46	75	8	42	48	78

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2005/06: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase.

NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed.

- **Substantial numbers of Making Connections families with children both receive and give help from or to family or friends. Whether the help is financial or not, they are more likely to give it than receive it.**
  - Across sites in 2008/09, 76% of families give non-financial help to family or friends, but only 56% get such help (help like baby-sitting, rides, lending small appliances)
  - A smaller share (26%) get financial help from family or friends, whereas 40% provide financial help.
  
  - The share receiving non-financial help from family or friends ranged from 46% in San Antonio to 60-61% in Providence and White Center.
  - The share receiving financial help from family/friends ranges from 17% in White Center to 33% in Indianapolis..
  - In all categories of getting or giving help, San Antonio shares ranked lowest of all sites. Indianapolis was generally highest.
  
  - Overall, in most categories, families with U.S. born respondents are more likely to give and get help than those with foreign born respondents. For example, 61% of the U.S. born, compared to 46% of the foreign born, say they receive non-financial help.
  - Among individual race/ethnicity/nativity groups, foreign born Asians most often rank lowest in the degree to which they receive or give help, followed by foreign born Hispanics. One exception is that U.S. born Hispanics rank lowest with respect to giving non-financial help.
  - At the other end of the scale, U.S. born blacks rank highest in all of these categories.
  
  - There was only one statistically significant change in these relationships in the three years since the 2005/06 survey: a decrease in the share giving financial help in White Center (from 46% to 39%).

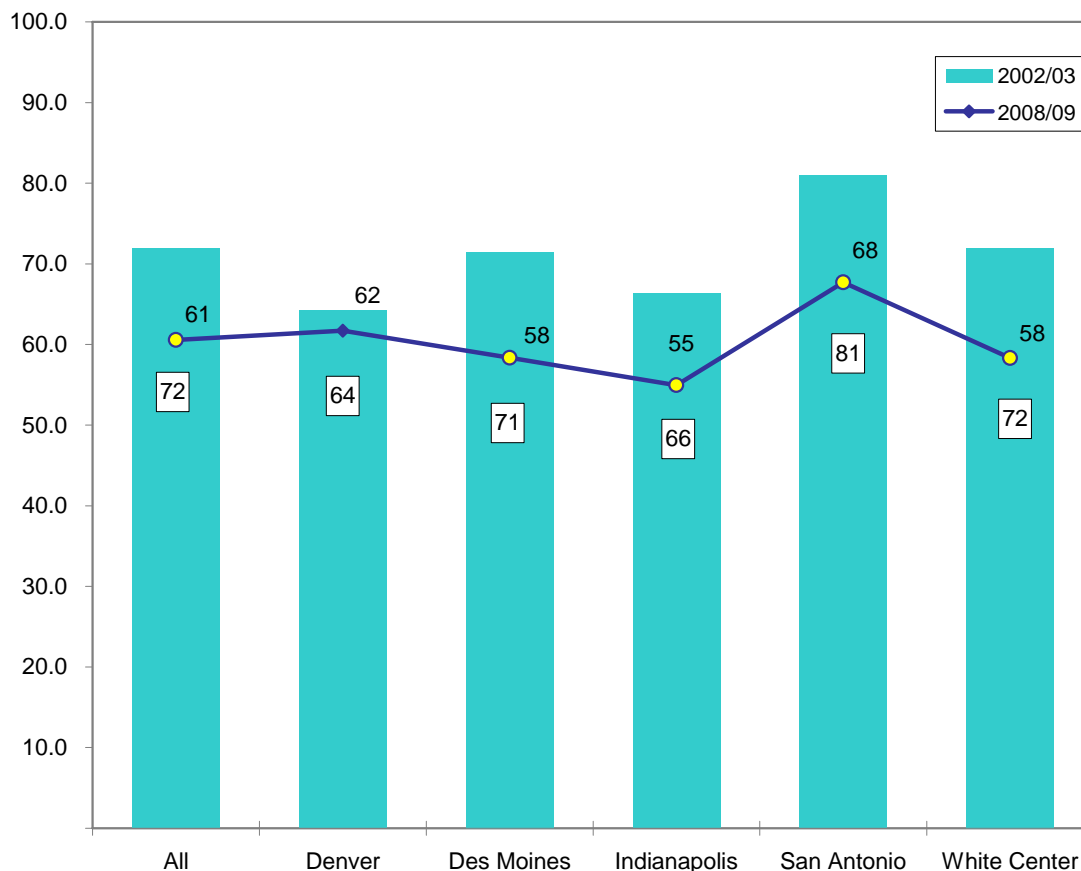
Table 1.2  
**Other Indicators of Social Linkage, Families with Children, 2008/09**

	Attend religious services	Knows most kids friends	Learned of job fm. friends/fam.
Total	<b>61</b>	68	50
<i>By Site</i>			
Denver	62	67	49
Des Moines	<b>58</b>	<b>71</b>	46
Indianapolis	<b>55</b>	78	54
San Antonio	<b>68</b>	67	55
White Center	<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>	46
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>			
NH white	<b>37</b>	85	47
NH black, US born	<b>70</b>	73	46
Hispanic, US born	<b>65</b>	69	52
Hispanic, foreign born	<b>71</b>	52	<b>57</b>
NH Asian, foreign born	77	37	44
US born	<b>55</b>	76	48
Foreign born	<b>72</b>	52	54

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2002/03: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase. NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed

- **Other indicators also show that Making Connections families with children (on average) have significant social linkages. In 2008/09, 61% attended religious services, 68% said they knew most of their kids friends, and 50% learned about their job from friends or family.**
  - Across sites, the percent that attend religious services ranged from a low of 55% in Indianapolis to a high of 68% in San Antonio.
  - Across groups, foreign born blacks had the highest share attending religious services (96%) while whites had by far the lowest (37%).
  - Overall, the foreign born had a much higher rate of participation in religious services (72%) than the U.S. born (55%)

**Figure 1.2 - Percent of Families with Children That Attend Religious Services**



*Note: A light-colored dot indicates that there was a statistically significant change between 2002/03 and 2008/09.*

- Since the 2002/03 survey, however, there had been sizeable statistically significant declines in the shares attending religious services in almost all categories: the overall average dropped from 72% to 61%; the drop was from 68% to 55% for the U.S. born, and from 84% to 72% for the foreign born, on average.
- The share saying they know most of their kids friends ranged from a low of 61% (White Center) to a high of 78% (Indianapolis).
- Group averages ranged from 37% for foreign born Asians all the way up to 85% for whites.
- There had been two significant changes in these relationships since 2002/03, both declines (from 79% to 71% in Des Moines and from 74% to 61% in White Center).

- For the final indicator in this group: the percent that learned about their job from friends or family, San Antonio came out on top (55%) and Des Moines and White Center were the lowest (46%).
- The foreign born were generally likely to have higher scores on this indicator than the US born (averages of 54% versus 48%). The highest individual group score was 57% for foreign born Hispanics. The lowest was for foreign born Asians (44%) but two much larger groups were next lowest: US born blacks and whites at 46% and 47% respectively.
- There was only one statistically significant change in these relationships since the 1001-03 survey: a drop from 74% to 57% for foreign born Hispanics.

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## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- In the 2008/09 survey, 27% of respondents in families with children said they had volunteered in community activities over the past 12 months. Considerably smaller shares said they had spoken to a political official about an issue (12%) or served as an officer or on a committee (10%).

Table 2.1  
Indicators of Civic Participation and Leadership  
Families with Children, 2008/09

	Volun- teered commun. activities	Spoken to political official	Served as officer or on committee
Total	27	<b>12</b>	10
<i>By Site</i>			
Denver	37	18	13
Des Moines	28	<b>9</b>	14
Indianapolis	23	15	9
San Antonio	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	6
White Center	31	13	<b>10</b>
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>			
NH white	31	18	9
NH black, US born	28	13	14
Hispanic, US born	26	<b>11</b>	8
Hispanic, foreign born	18	7	9
NH Asian, foreign born	<u><b>46</b></u>	12	12
US born	28	<b>13</b>	10
Foreign born	24	8	10

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2002/03: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase. NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed



- The percent volunteering ranged from a low of 18% (San Antonio) to a high over twice that level, 37% in Denver.
- Among groups, the US born were somewhat more likely to volunteers than the foreign born (28% versus 24%). Of the individual groups, foreign born Asians had the highest rate of volunteering (46%) ad foreign born Hispanics the lowest (18%).
- There were significant changes in this indicator since the first survey in two categories: a drop from 28% to 18% in San Antonio, and the increase from 21% to 46% for foreign born Asians.
  
- The percent who had spoken to a political official on an issue ranged from 7% (San Antonio) and 9% (Des Moines) up to 15% (Indianapolis) and 18% (Denver)
- At 18%, whites had by far the highest likelihood of having spoken to a political official. The likelihood was only 7% for foreign born Hispanics. Overall, the US born were much more likely to have met this standard than the foreign born (13% versus 8 percent).
- Since the first survey, there was a significant overall decline in the likelihood of speaking to a political official: from 16% to 12% (from 18% to 13% for the US born overall). Individual sites and groups that saw significant declines in this indicator were Denver, Des Moines, San Antonio, and US born Hispanics.
  
- The share having served as an officer or on a committee ranged from only 6% in San Antonio up to 14% in Des Moines.
- US born blacks had by far the highest score on this indicator (14%). Whites and Hispanics were in the 8-9% range.
- There was only one significant change in this indicators since the 2002/03 survey: a drop from 16% to 10% in White Center.

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## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

- Whereas the preceding section looked at civic participation overall, this one focuses on the share respondents that undertake of such activities within their own neighborhood. It finds substantial variation by type of activity, site, and group.

Table 3.1  
**In-Neighborhood Participation, Families with Children,  
2008/09** (% of families who took these actions in their  
own neighborhood)

	Attend religious services	Volun- teered commun. activities	Served as officer or on committee
Total	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	6
<i>By Site</i>			
Denver	31	25	9
Des Moines	19	21	8
Indianapolis	19	18	5
San Antonio	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	4
White Center	<b>21</b>	23	<b>4</b>
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>			
NH white	<b>12</b>	22	5
NH black, US born	25	23	8
Hispanic, US born	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	5
Hispanic, foreign born	<b>38</b>	17	7
NH Asian, foreign born	29	<b>36</b>	7
US born	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	6
Foreign born	<b>34</b>	19	7

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2002/03: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase. NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed

- On average across sites in 2002/06, 25% attended religious services in their neighborhood and 20% volunteered in community activities in their neighborhood, but only 6% had served as an officer or on a committee in their neighborhood.
- San Antonio came out on top in the share attending religious services in their own neighborhood (36%), followed by Denver (31%). The remaining sites had much lower rates (19%-21% range).
- The groups that came out highest on this indicator were foreign born Hispanics (38%) and US born Hispanics (30%). Those of other ethnicities had much lower scores, ranging down to 12% for whites.
- Not only did overall participation in religious services decline since the first survey (as discussed earlier), there was also a significant overall decline in the share who went to services in their own neighborhoods (from 34% to 25%). There were also significant individual declines in this measure: from 50% to 36% for San Antonio; from 29% to 21% for White Center; from 21% to 12% for whites; from 43% to 30% for US born Hispanics, and from 52% to 38% for foreign born Hispanics.
- Across sites, the percent of those who had volunteered in their neighborhoods ranged from 14% in San Antonio to 25% in Denver.
- Across groups, this indicator ranged from 17% for foreign born Hispanics to 36% for foreign born Asians.
- There had also been a significant decline in the percent of who had volunteered in their neighborhoods since the first survey (from 24% to 20%). Other significant declines included: from 24% to 14% in San Antonio; from 26% to 20% for all US born; and from 26% to 18% for US born Hispanics. However there had been an increase for foreign born Asians (from 17% to 36%).
- The share of those who had served as an officer or on a committee in their neighborhood ranged from 4% in White Center and San Antonio up to 9% in Denver.
- Across groups, values for this indicator ranged from 5% for whites and US born Hispanics up to 8% for US born blacks.
- There was only one significant change in this indicator since 2002/03: a decline from 9% to 4% in White Center.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS AND SAFETY

- Across sites, a clear majority of respondents (72%) said their neighborhood was a good place to raise children in 2008/09, but they were evenly split on whether they thought their neighborhood was “likely to get better” in the future. (There were few significant change in these measures between surveys)

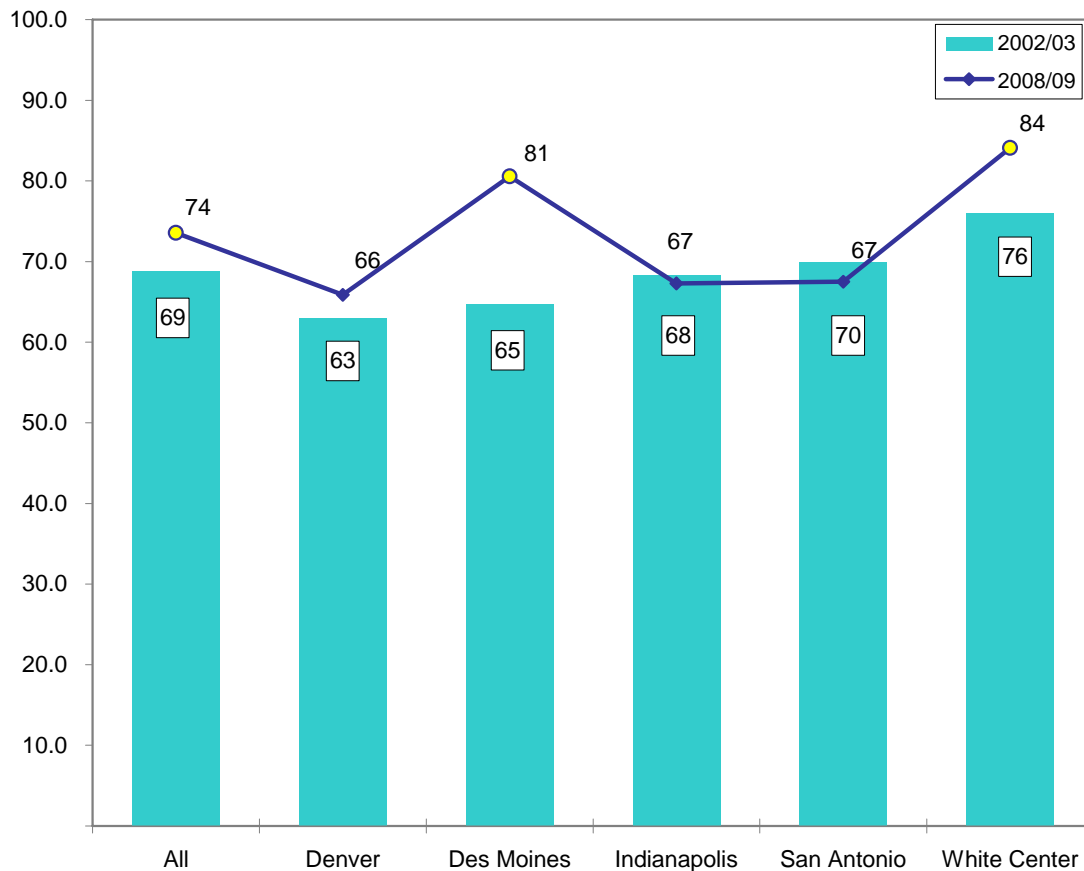
Table 4.1  
Overall Neighborhood Assessment & Perceptions of Safety,  
Families with Children, 2008-09

	N'hood good place raise children	N'hood likely get better	N'hood Safe place for kids	Feel safe at home at night
Total	72	48	<b><u>57</u></b>	<b><u>74</u></b>
<i>By Site</i>				
Denver	61	61	50	66
Des Moines	76	48	<b><u>65</u></b>	<b><u>81</u></b>
Indianapolis	64	45	55	67
San Antonio	71	35	52	67
White Center	83	56	61	<b><u>84</u></b>
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>				
NH white	67	38	52	67
NH black, US born	74	60	63	76
Hispanic, US born	72	39	<b><u>56</u></b>	73
Hispanic, foreign born	76	57	58	<b><u>78</u></b>
NH Asian, foreign born	83	59	64	77
US born	70	44	<b><u>56</u></b>	72
Foreign born	76	57	58	<b><u>78</u></b>

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2002/03: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase. NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed.

- The share saying their neighborhood was a good place to raise children ranged from 61% in Denver to 83% in White Center.
- Foreign born Asians had the highest share holding this view among groups (83%). Whites had the lowest (63%).
- There were no significant changes in these shares since the first survey.
- Denver residents were most optimistic about the future of their neighborhood with 61% saying it was likely to get better. San Antonio were the least optimistic, at 35%.
- The group with the highest score on this indicator was US born blacks (60%). US born Hispanics had the lowest (39%)
- For this measure too, there were no significant changes since the first survey.

**Figure 4.1 - Percent of Respondents in Families with Children That Feel Safe at Home at Night**



Note: A light-colored dot indicates that there was a statistically significant change between 2002/03 and 2008/09.

- **An important shift evidenced by these data is significant improvement in perceptions of neighborhood safety since the first survey. The overall share saying they felt their neighborhood was a safe place to raise kids increased from 50% to 57%, and an even larger majority said they felt safe at home at night, increasing from 69% to 74%.**
  - The share saying they felt their neighborhood was a safe place for kids ranged from a low of 50% in Denver to a high of 65% in Des Moines.
  - Across groups, foreign born Asians had the highest score on this indicator (64%), followed closely by US born blacks (63%). Whites had the lowest (52%).
  - Statistically significant improvements in this indicator between surveys were registered for Des Moines (50% to 65%), US born Hispanics (48% to 56%), and the US born overall (49% to 56%).
  - White Center had the highest share saying they felt safe at home at night (84%). At the lower end, Denver, Indianapolis and San Antonio were all in the 66%-67% range.
  - Among groups, foreign born Hispanics had the highest score on this indicator at 78%. Whites were lowest at 67%.
  - Statistically significant improvements in this indicator between surveys were registered for Des Moines (65% to 81%), White Center (76% to 84%), foreign born Hispanics (66% to 78%), and the foreign born overall (69 to 78%).

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## NEIGHBORHOOD DISORDER/INCIVILITY

- Four tenths of MC survey respondents across sites in 2008/09 (43%) said that drug dealers were common in their neighborhoods; 32% said the same about vacant buildings, and 36% about graffiti on walls and buildings, but only 10% about racial incidents. Since the first survey there were statistically significant decreases overall in the indicators related to drug dealers and racial incidents, but an increase in that related to graffiti.

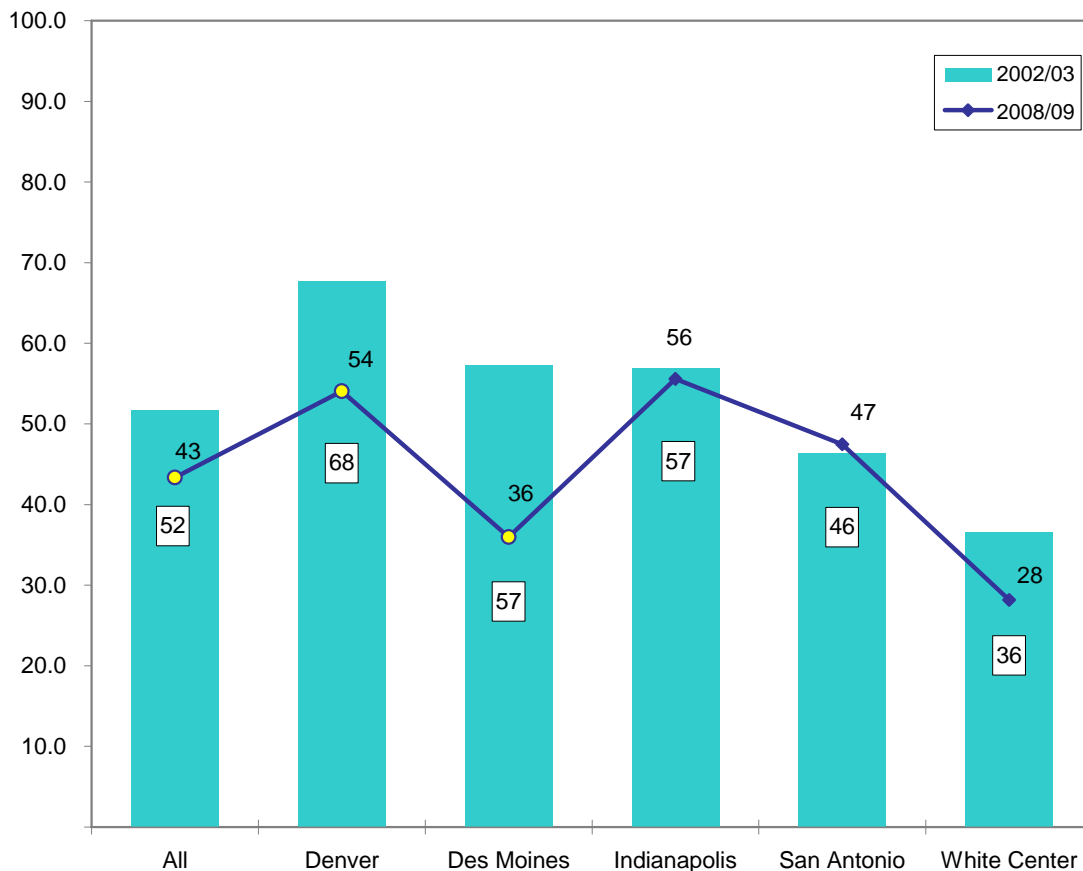
Table 5.1  
Indicators of Neighborhood Disorder/Incivility, Families with Children, 2008/09

	Percent saying common in neighborhood			
	Drug dealers	Vacant buildings	Graffiti walls & buildings	Racial incidents
Total	<b>43</b>	32	<u><b>38</b></u>	<b>10</b>
<i>By Site</i>				
Denver	<b>54</b>	26	<u><b>60</b></u>	16
Des Moines	<b>36</b>	34	<u><b>32</b></u>	<b>9</b>
Indianapolis	56	<u><b>63</b></u>	28	14
San Antonio	47	29	52	7
White Center	28	14	21	<b>6</b>
<i>By Race/Ethnicity/Nativity</i>				
NH white	52	<u><b>47</b></u>	<u><b>43</b></u>	14
NH black, US born	46	35	23	8
Hispanic, US born	50	28	54	8
Hispanic, foreign born	<b>32</b>	24	<u><b>34</b></u>	<b>10</b>
NH Asian, foreign born	19	7	12	5
US born	<b>50</b>	<u><b>37</b></u>	<u><b>42</b></u>	<b>11</b>
Foreign born	<b>30</b>	21	<u><b>28</b></u>	<b>9</b>

Notes: Statistically significant changes since 2002/03: bold = decrease, bold and underline = increase. NH = non-Hispanic. Too few observations to support estimates for foreign born blacks, US born Asians & other groups not listed.

- The share saying that drug dealers were common ranged from only 28% in White Center to 56% in Indianapolis.
- Across groups, whites had the highest score on this indicator (52%) and foreign born Asians the lowest (19%)>
- Statistically significant improvements in this indicator between surveys were registered for Denver (68% to 54%), Des Moines (57% to 36%), foreign born Hispanics (44% to 32%), and both the US born and foreign born overall

**Figure 5.1 - Percent of Respondents in Families with Children That Say Drug-Dealers are Common**



*Note: A light-colored dot indicates that there was a statistically significant change between 2002/03 and 2008/09.*

- Indianapolis had by far the highest share saying vacant buildings were common (63%). White Center had the lowest (14%).



- Across groups, whites had the highest percent on this indicator (47%) while foreign born Asians had the lowest (7%).
- While the period between surveys generally saw improvements in other indicators discussed in this section, this one saw an increasing problem (in a few instances if not overall) – not surprising, given the effects of foreclosure crisis by 2008/09. Statistically significant increases in this indicator between surveys were registered for Indianapolis (39% to 63%), whites (35% to 47%), and the US born overall (33% to 37%).
  
- The perception that graffiti was common across sites ranged from 21% in White Center to 60% in Denver.
- US born Hispanics had the highest score on this indicator among groups (54%). US born blacks had the lowest (23%).
- In addition to the significant increase in this indicator overall since 2002/03, individual statistically significant increases were registered for Denver (48% to 60%), Des Moines (18% to 32%), whites (33% to 43%), foreign born Hispanics (26% to 34%) and both the US born and foreign born overall.
  
- Denver was the site with the highest share reporting that racial incidents were common (16%). White Center had the lowest (6%).
- Across groups, whites were most likely to say that racial incidents were common (14%) followed by foreign born Hispanics (10%). Foreign born Asians were least likely (5%).
- In addition to the significant decrease in this indicator overall since 2002/03, individual statistically significant decreases were registered for Des Moines (21% to 9%), White Center (17% to 6%), foreign born Hispanics (17% to 10%), all US born (15% to 11%) and all foreign born (16% to 9%).