



Research Brief

Chicago residents view crime as a significant problem, but do not see the National Guard as the solution

The latest ChicagoSpeaks survey from NORC at the University of Chicago finds most Chicagoans are concerned about crime in the city and large majorities oppose the federal use of the military and National Guard for policing.

Many Chicagoans view crime as a serious issue both in their neighborhoods and across the city, with 42% identifying it as a major problem locally and 70% expressing the same concern citywide. Compared with the national public, Chicago residents are more likely to perceive crime in their communities as a pressing issue. Clear racial divides emerge in these views: Black residents and Hispanic residents consistently report higher levels of concern than white residents, particularly regarding crime in their own neighborhoods and elsewhere.

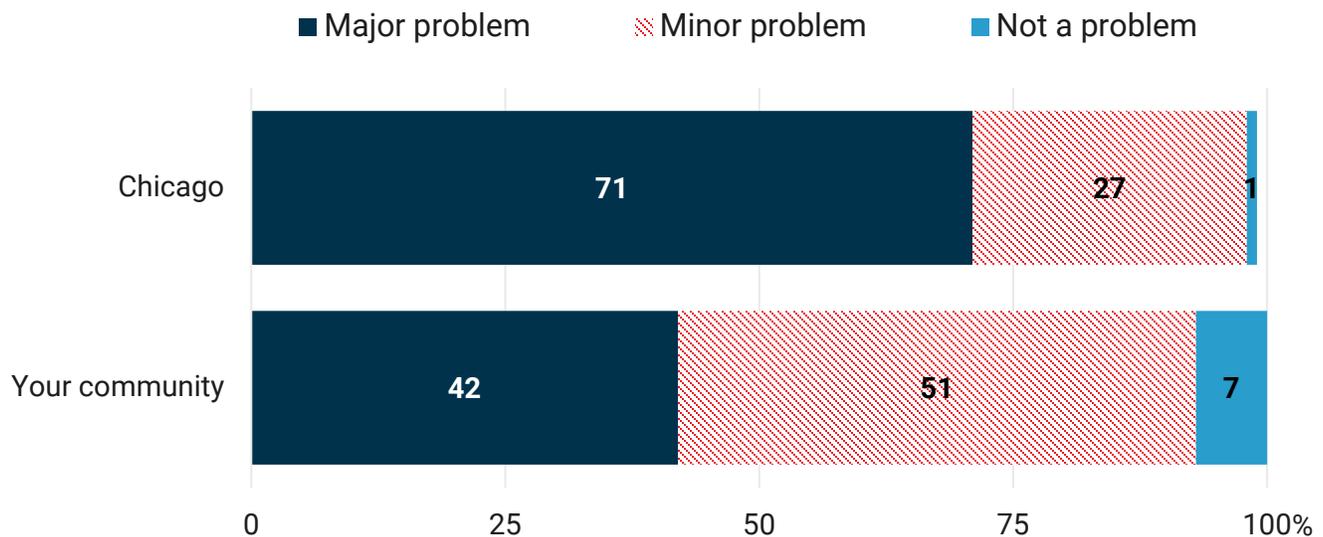
Attitudes toward the federal government's use of the military or National Guard for policing also vary widely. Most Chicagoans oppose such measures, especially when it comes to controlling local police departments or assisting with deportations. Compared with the national public, Chicagoans are less supportive of federal intervention in local policing. However, views are sharply split along partisan lines—Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to support these actions. Additionally, concern about crime correlates with greater support for federal policing measures: those who see crime as a major problem in their community are more likely to approve of using the National Guard or military to assist police or deportation efforts.

Nearly all Chicagoans view crime as a problem in Chicago.

An overwhelming majority of Chicagoans believe crime is at least a minor problem both in their local communities and across the city. Specifically, 42% consider crime in their own neighborhoods a major issue, while 51% view it as a minor problem. When asked about crime citywide, perceptions are even more severe—71% of residents say crime in Chicago is a major problem. Only 1% of Chicagoans believe crime is not a problem at all in the city.

Most Chicagoans view crime as a problem in both their community and the city at large.

Percent of Chicagoans



Question: How much of a problem do you think crime is in each of the following?

Source: ChicagoSpeaks Poll conducted September 16-29, 2025 with 1,361 adult Chicago residents.



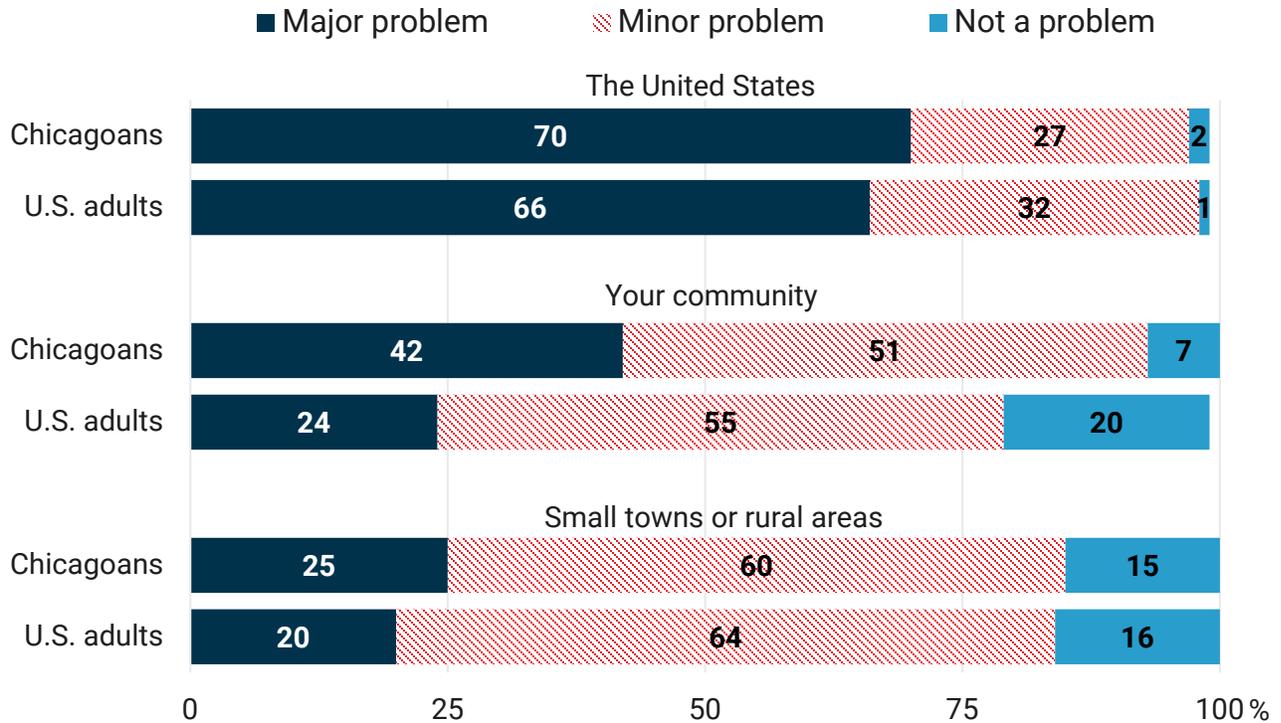
This question was posed in a national survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in August 2025 [<https://apnorc.org/projects/most-say-crime-is-a-major-problem-in-americas-cities-but-few-support-a-federal-takeover-of-police-departments>]. Chicagoans and U.S. adults overall have similar views about crime nationally. About 7 in 10 think it's a major problem for the country and another 3 in 10 think it is a minor problem. They also have similar views of crime in small towns.

However, Chicagoans are more concerned about crime in their communities compared with U.S. adults generally. Nationally, 20% of the public think crime is not a problem in their community compared with just 7% of Chicagoans.

Roughly 8 in 10 Americans consider crime a major problem in large cities across the country. This is slightly higher than the share of Chicagoans who think crime is a major problem for Chicago (71%) or in other large cities (70%).

Chicagoans are more concerned about crime in their communities than the national public.

Percent of adults



Question: How much of a problem do you think crime is in each of the following?

Source: ChicagoSpeaks Poll conducted September 16-29, 2025 with 1,361 adult Chicago residents and AP-NORC Poll conducted August 21-25, 2025 with 1,182 adults nationwide.

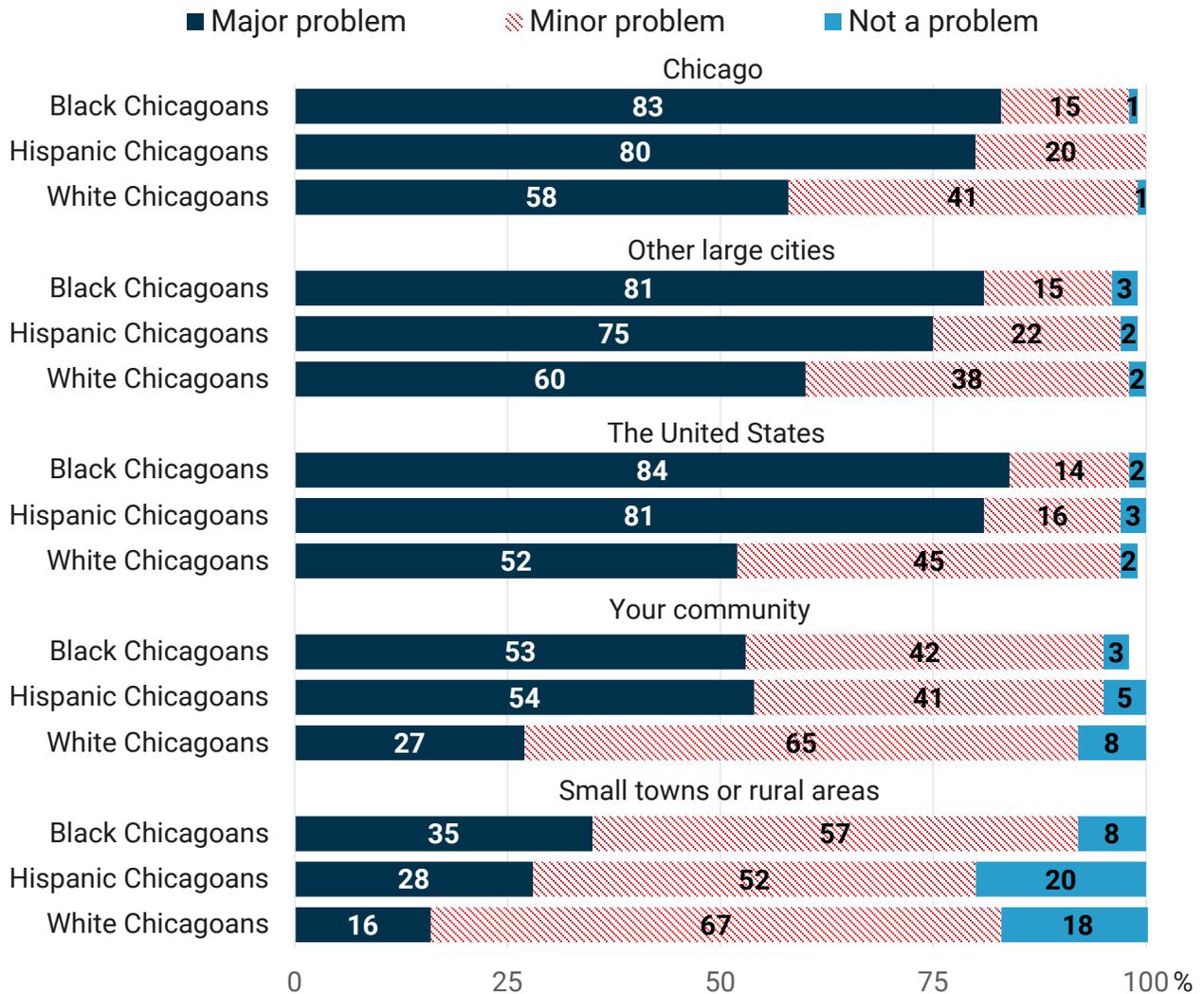


Black Chicagoans and Hispanic Chicagoans are more likely to view crime as a major problem than white Chicagoans.

Black Chicagoans and Hispanic Chicagoans express greater concern about crime across all geographic levels compared with white residents. Roughly 8 in 10 Black adults and Hispanic adults view crime as a major problem in Chicago, other large cities, and the United States overall, with about half saying the same about crime in their own neighborhoods. In contrast, white Chicagoans are less likely to perceive crime as a major issue. Six in 10 say it’s a major problem in Chicago and other large cities, half say the same about the United States overall, and only 1 in 4 view crime as a major problem in their own community. These differences by race and ethnicity persist even when controlling for people’s political party identification.

Black and Hispanic Chicagoans are more likely than white Chicagoans to view crime as a major problem.

Percent of Chicagoans



Question: How much of a problem do you think crime is in each of the following?

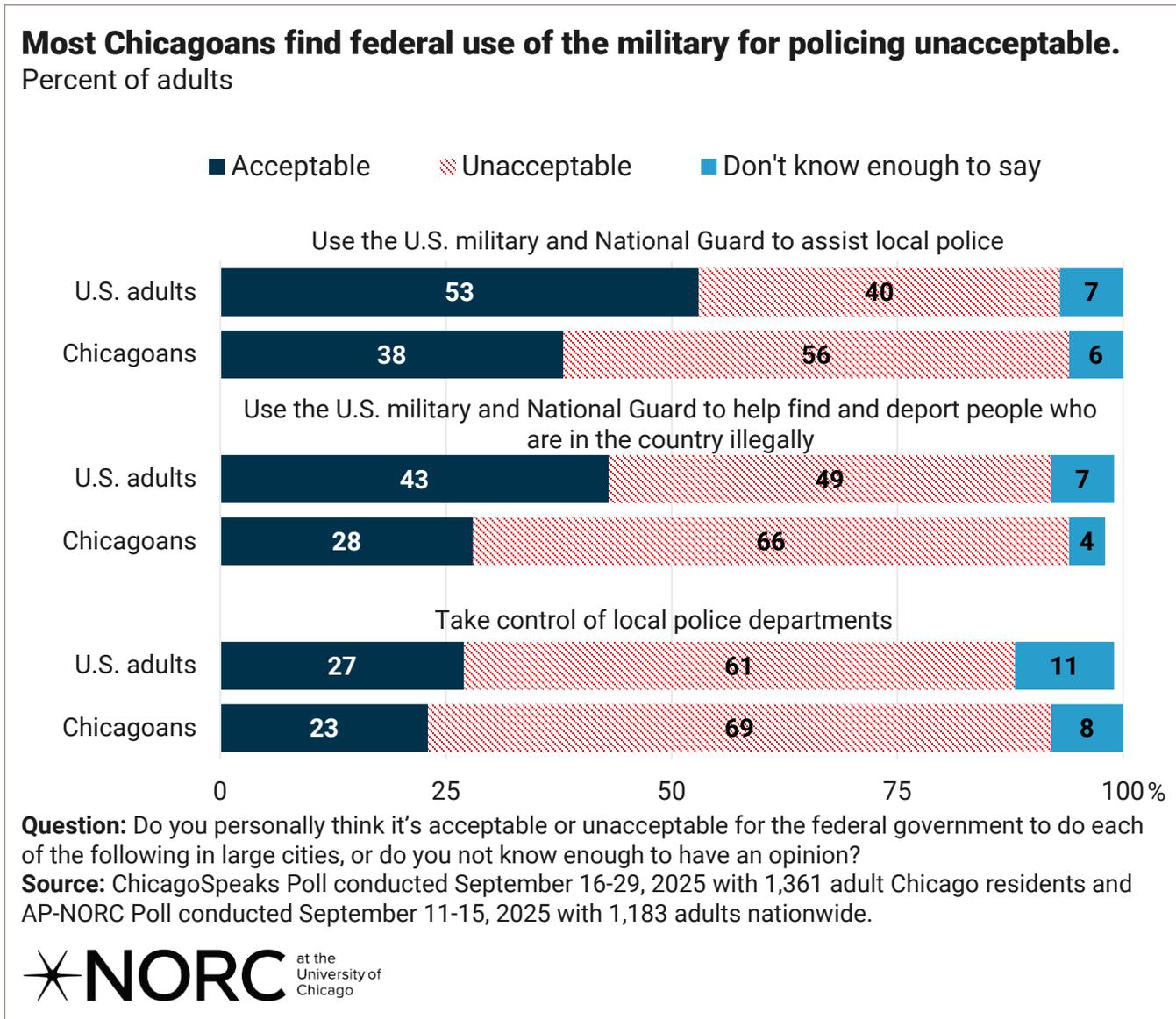
Source: ChicagoSpeaks Poll conducted September 16-29, 2025 with 1,361 adult Chicago residents.



The majority of the Chicagoans view the use of the National Guard for policing as unacceptable.

Most Chicagoans consider the federal use of the military and National Guard for policing purposes—including assisting local law enforcement or targeting undocumented individuals—as unacceptable. A majority also find the federal takeover of local police unacceptable.

Chicagoans are less likely than the national public to view federal use of the military and National Guard as acceptable to assist local police or to find and deport individuals without legal status. In both Chicago and nationally, the majority of the public views the take over of local police departments by the federal government as unacceptable.



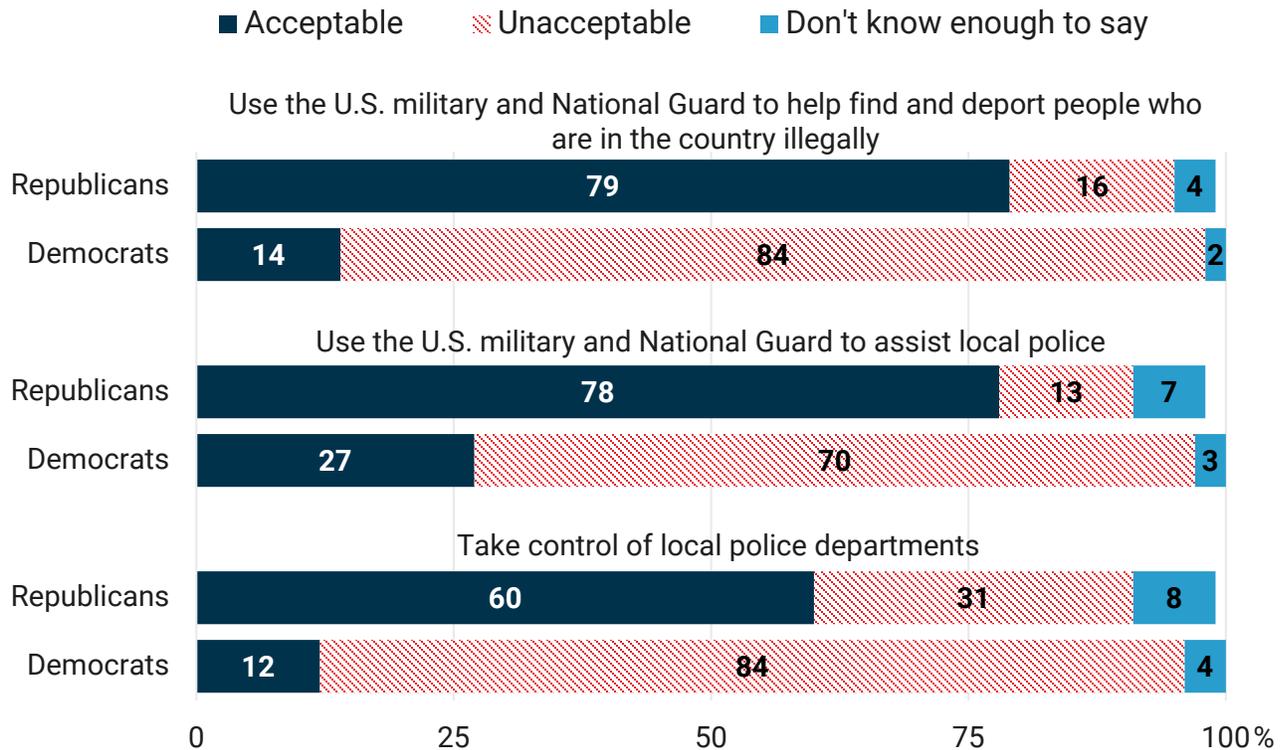
There are stark partisan divides among Chicagoans regarding the federal use of the National Guard for policing.

Chicagoans, like the U.S. public overall, are sharply divided along partisan lines when it comes to the federal government's use of the military or National Guard for policing. Republican residents are significantly more likely to view these actions as acceptable, while Democrats tend to find them unacceptable. Specifically, 8 in 10 of Republican Chicagoans support the use of the National Guard to aid in deportation efforts or assist local police, compared with just 14% and 27% of Democrats,

respectively. Similarly, 60% of Republicans find federal control of local police departments acceptable, whereas only 12% of Democrats share that view.

Chicagoans are deeply divided along party lines on the federal use of the military and National Guard for policing.

Percent of Chicagoans



Question: Do you personally think it's acceptable or unacceptable for the federal government to do each of the following in large cities, or do you not know enough to have an opinion?

Source: ChicagoSpeaks Poll conducted September 16-29, 2025 with 1,361 adult Chicago residents.



Chicagoans who are concerned about crime in their community are more likely to accept use of the military for policing.

Chicagoans who think crime is a major problem in their community are more likely to view federal use of the National Guard or military for policing as acceptable. Half of those who view crime as a major problem in their community think the use of the National Guard to assist local police is acceptable compared with 29% of those who think crime is a minor problem.

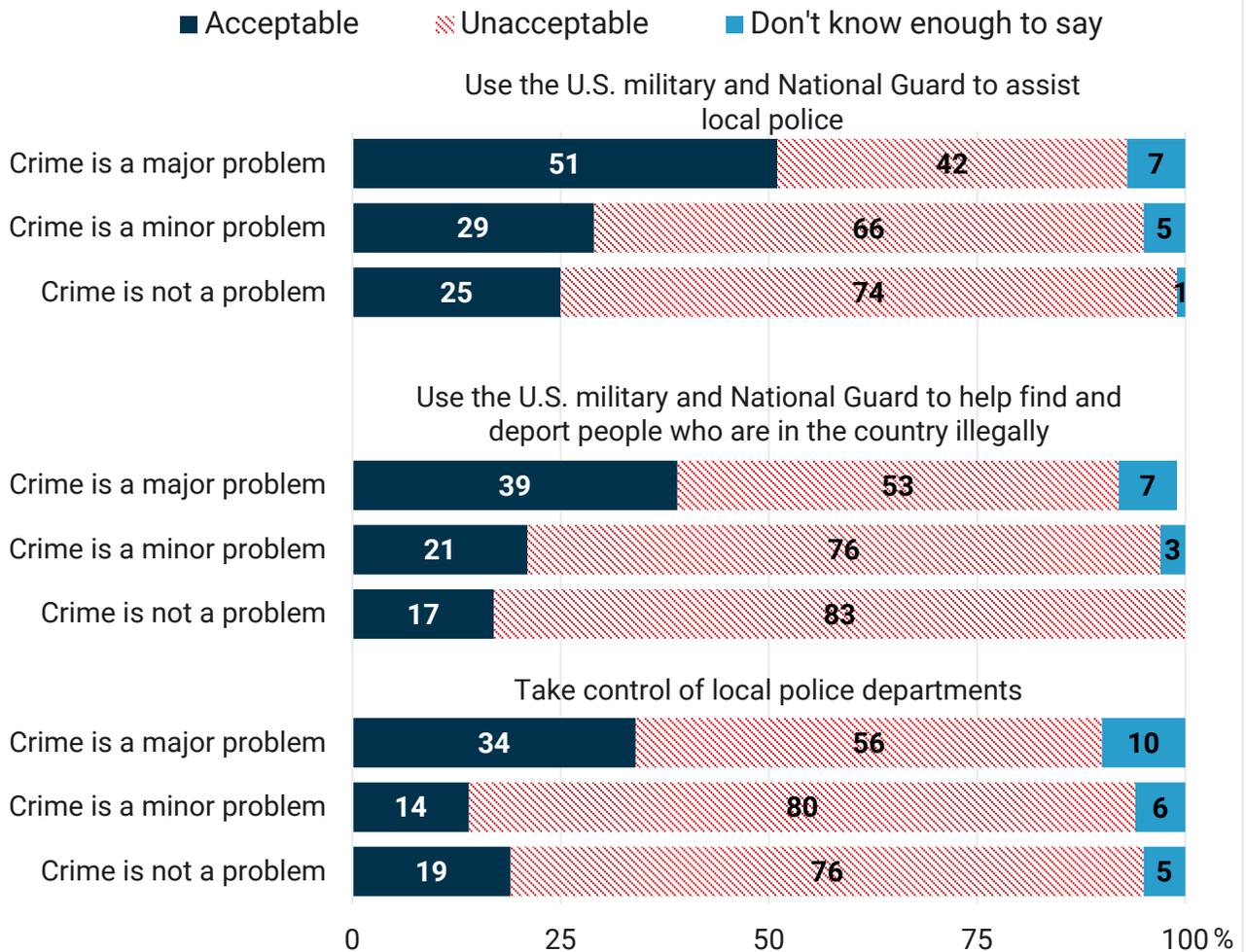
While there is less support for the federal government taking control of local police departments, there is still a divide in opinion based on Chicagoans' perception of crime in their community. Thirty-four

percent of Chicagoans who say crime is a major problem in their community find it acceptable compared with 14% of those who think crime is a minor problem.

Similarly, 4 in 10 of Chicagoans who view crime as a major problem in their community approve using the U.S. military to find and deport people living in the country illegally, compared with 2 in 10 of those who think crime is a minor problem.

Chicagoans who view crime as a major issue are more accepting of federal use of the military and National Guard for policing.

Percent of Chicagoans



Questions: Do you personally think it's acceptable or unacceptable for the federal government to do each of the following in large cities, or do you not know enough to have an opinion? and [In your community] How much of a problem do you think crime is in each of the following?

Source: ChicagoSpeaks Poll conducted September 16-29, 2025 with 1,361 adult Chicago residents.



Study Methodology

Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, ChicagoSpeaks® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the Chicago household population. NORC conducted the ChicagoSpeaks fall 2025 survey using two sample sources: (1) NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panelists who reside in Chicago and (2) NORC's ChicagoSpeaks Panelists.

AmeriSpeak and ChicagoSpeaks are probability-based panels. The final survey estimates were calibrated to account for these different sample sources. This research was done to support a scientifically rigorous, community-driven research resource for informing policymakers and the public with accurate information about the experiences and opinions of all Chicago residents.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 16 and 29, 2025 with Chicago residents aged 18 and older, the overall study target population. Overall, 1,361 Chicago residents completed the survey. AmeriSpeak panelists were invited through the password-protected AmeriSpeak Mobile App and received email reminders and SMS reminders. ChicagoSpeaks panelists received a combination of email and SMS communications. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference, using an online survey. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 24 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them or for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

A poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included Chicago region, age, sex, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. The sociodemographic characteristics are weighted to benchmarks from the American Community Survey 2023 1-year estimates.

For more information, email ChicagoSpeaks-BD@norc.org or visit [go.norc.org/ChicagoSpeaks](https://www.norc.org/ChicagoSpeaks).

<https://www.norc.org/research/projects/chicagospeaks.html>