

# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

# EMPOWERING VICTIMS



## Section 6. STATISTICAL OVERVIEWS

### Crime and Victimization in the United States

When considering crime and victimization statistics, we can only analyze or report on crimes that are measured or counted in some way. The United States has long-standing national data collections for serious violent crimes, such as homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, as well as property crimes such as burglary. Crime in the United States has declined measurably for decades. Between 1993 and 2012, the violent crime rate declined 67.3 percent from 79.8 to 26.1 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older. During that same time period, the total property crime rate declined 55.7 percent from 351.8 to 155.8 per 1,000 households. Although the decrease in crime has been steady and remarkably consistent, criminologists have reached no widely held conclusions about the reasons for these patterns.

There are however some general patterns. Males disproportionately commit criminal offenses, particularly violent crime (see "[Homicide](#)"), and certain crimes are predominately committed by men against women (see "[Stalking](#)," "[Intimate Partner Violence](#)," and "[Sexual Violence](#)"). Young people (age 16–24) experience the most crime both in terms of victimization and offending as compared to other age groups (see "[Child, Youth, and Teen Victimization](#)").

Our national crime statistics provide an important resource for our understanding about crime and victimization, but these statistics do not cover all crimes

#### CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

##### CRIME TRENDS

##### ASSAULT

##### BURGLARY, ROBBERY, AND THEFT

##### CHILD, YOUTH, AND TEEN VICTIMIZATION

##### CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

##### DNA — *NEW!*

##### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (DUI) — *NEW!*

##### ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIME

##### ELDER VICTIMIZATION

##### HATE AND BIAS CRIME

##### HOMICIDE

##### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

##### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

##### MASS CASUALTY SHOOTINGS

##### SCHOOL AND CAMPUS CRIME

##### SEXUAL VIOLENCE

##### STALKING

##### URBAN AND RURAL CRIME

##### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

or all victims. While the scope of crimes included in national collection efforts continues to grow, gaps in our knowledge still exist, particularly for emerging crimes, including elder victimization, human trafficking, financial crimes (especially Internet-based frauds), stalking, and mass casualty crimes. An additional issue concerns our

understanding of the broader effects of crime, especially measuring the direct and indirect harm to victims caused by crime and identifying the impact of exposure to violence, particularly for children. The limitations in our knowledge of these areas should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of these crimes or the harm experienced by these victims but rather should signal the need for continued work by researchers.

## Uniform Crime Report

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR), launched in 1929, collects information reported to law enforcement agencies on the following crimes: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Law enforcement agencies also report arrest data for 21 additional crime categories (e.g., forgery and counterfeiting, drug abuse violations, disorderly conduct, vagrancy). Each year, the FBI issues a report on the main UCR findings, titled *Crime in the United States*, as well as several other reports (e.g., *Hate Crimes 2012* and *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2012*).<sup>1</sup> The UCR presents crime counts for the entire nation, as well as for regions, states, counties, cities, towns, tribal law enforcement, and colleges and universities. Its primary purpose is to provide reliable criminal justice statistics for law enforcement administration and management.<sup>2</sup>

## National Crime Victimization Survey

The methodology for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which began in 1973, differs from that of the UCR. The NCVS is based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of U.S. households and is conducted by U.S. Census Bureau personnel at six-month

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE STATISTICS IN THIS OVERVIEW

The information presented in the following statistical overviews reflects the findings in the reports and other sources cited for each topic. The data are based on the best available information as of August 2014. Since then, updated data have become available. The latest Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) study, *Criminal Victimization, 2012*, is available online at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov). The latest FBI statistics, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, and additional statistical tables are available online at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov). The information included in the Resource Guide relies primarily on reports published by BJS and the FBI, as well as statistics calculated using online data tools available from both BJS and the FBI. These data tools are freely available and can be accessed online at [www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nvat](http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nvat) (for the NCVS data tool) and [www.bjs.gov/ucrdata](http://www.bjs.gov/ucrdata) (for the UCR data tool). These tools are user-friendly resources that permit interested readers to generate additional statistical tables that suit their particular interests.

Each statistical overview includes both text and graphics. Graphics are included in this year's Resource Guide to provide a visual representation of the data. Please note that, on the charts and graphs that accompany the statistics, the percentages do not always add up to 100 because the numbers have been rounded.

intervals for three years. All household members age 12 and older are interviewed. The NCVS collects information on the frequency and nature of the crimes of rape, sexual assault, personal robbery, aggravated and simple assault, household burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft; it does not, however, measure homicide or commercial crimes. It gathers information on crimes both reported and not reported to the police, estimates the proportion of each crime reported to law enforcement, and describes the reasons victims gave for reporting or not reporting. The NCVS also includes questions about victims' experiences with the criminal justice system, possible substance abuse by offenders, and how victims sought to protect themselves.

The NCVS collects periodic age and demographic information about both victims and offenders (e.g., age, sex, race, ethnicity, marital status, income, and educational level, as well as offenders' relationships to their victims), and includes information about the crimes (time and

<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Uniform Crime Reports," (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2013), accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr>.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The Nation's Two Crime Measures," *Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2009), accessed September 2, 2014, <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/ucrdata/twom8/easures.cfm>.

place of occurrence, use of weapons, nature of injury, and economic impact).<sup>3</sup> The NCVS also publishes supplements on specific crime issues such as stalking or school crime.

## Differences between the UCR and NCVS

Although the categories of crime covered by the UCR and NCVS overlap, their methodologies differ, and the studies serve different purposes. The UCR covers all victims of reported crime (including non-persons such as businesses as well as persons of all ages), but the NCVS gathers data on crimes against people age 12 and older. The UCR covers homicide, arson, and commercial crimes, which the NCVS does not measure. The studies use somewhat different definitions of some crimes, and they report crime using different bases, e.g., per capita—crimes per 100,000 persons (UCR) versus crimes per 1,000 households (NCVS). The UCR measures crimes actually reported to law enforcement nationwide, and the NCVS addresses crimes not reported to law enforcement. ★



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3 Ibid.