



Crime and Safety Impact Report



Executive Summary

American cities across the country have been plagued by crime since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in practically every category. From homicides, assaults, robberies, carjackings, shoplifting and more, Americans have been faced with, in many places, record-breaking crime rates.

While places like New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago draw the overwhelming majority of media coverage when it comes to crime reporting, Americans living in less populous cities, who are also suffering from high crime rates, are forgotten. The Our America Crime and Safety Impact Report seeks to shine a light on five cities that are often ignored by the national press in an effort to encourage policies that can reduce crime and help Americans pursue their dreams:

- **Atlanta, GA**
- **Pittsburgh, PA**
- **Tucson, AZ**
- **Henderson, NV**
- **Milwaukee, WI**

When cities are ravaged by crime, it makes the American dream more difficult to achieve. It is nearly impossible for families to find joy in their lives if their loved ones are taken away by homicide. It is harder for a family to climb the economic ladder when their house is robbed, or their car is stolen, or they're forced to pay for a ridesharing service to go to work every day because they're afraid to walk down a certain street. To make matters worse, minority communities are statistically the most affected by crime, and rising crime rates disproportionately affect people of color.

When stores suffer from astronomical organized shoplifting rates, many are forced to shutter, leaving some people without a place in their neighborhood to buy food, clothing, or medicine. If shoppers are lucky, the afflicted stores will only raise their prices to make up for retail shrink, as many grocery stores operate on very thin profit margins.

Safer streets lead to brighter futures.

Point blank, safer streets lead to brighter futures. By shining a light on these cities, Our America hopes to raise awareness about crime rates in places that don't get the attention they deserve. Our America will offer real world solutions that can help bring down crime rates to help Americans thrive and achieve the American Dream.



Crime Spikes In Mid-Sized Cities

(GA, PA, AZ, NV, & WI)

Atlanta, GA

- In 2022, homicide investigations in Atlanta [increased](#) for the third consecutive year after initially increasing by approximately 60% from 2019 to 2020.
 - o Atlanta had 158 [homicides](#) in 2021 and 157 in 2020, compared with 99 in 2019.
- Burglary, shoplifting, and motor vehicle [thefts](#) increased in Atlanta from 2021 to 2022.
- In the first 18 weeks of 2021, statistics [showed](#) homicides up 57 percent, rapes up 55 percent, aggravated assaults up 36 percent and auto thefts up 31 percent compared with the same period in 2020.
- FBI crime statistics show an overall [spike](#) in both violent crime and property crime reports in Atlanta from 2020 to 2021.

In 2022, Homicide Investigations In Atlanta Increased For The Third Consecutive Year After Initially Increasing By Approximately 60% From 2019 To 2020.

"Atlanta police investigated 7% more homicides in 2022 than in 2021. Burglaries, shoplifting and car thefts also increased in the city. ... For the third consecutive year, homicide investigations have increased in the city. Atlanta police investigated 170 homicides in 2022. That rate has slowed down, however, since it increased by approximately 60% from 2019 to 2020." ("Atlanta Homicides Increased For Third Consecutive Year In 2022, Data Shows," [FOX 5 Atlanta](#), 1/6/23)



7%

more homicides in 2022 than in 2021

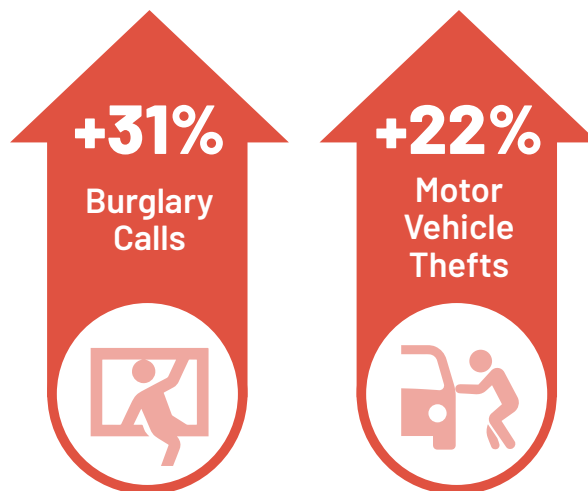


Burglaries, shoplifting and car thefts also **increased** in the city

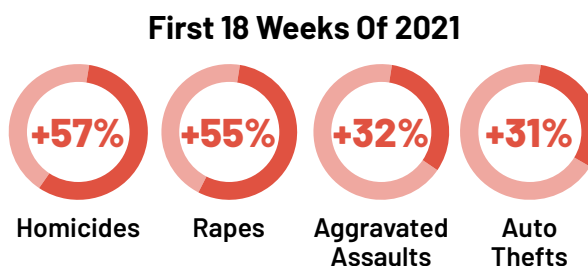
- **Atlanta Had 158 Homicides In 2021 And 157 In 2020, Compared With 99 In 2019.** “Violent crime has risen in large cities across the nation, with several setting new records for murders in recent years. Philadelphia, Portland, Ore., Louisville, Ky., and Albuquerque, N.M., had their deadliest years on record in 2021. Atlanta had 158 homicides in 2021 and 157 in 2020, compared with 99 in 2019, according to the Atlanta Police Department.” (Cameron McWhirter, “In Atlanta’s Buckhead Neighborhood, Rising Crime Fuels Move To Secede,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/20/22)

Burglary, Shoplifting, And Motor Vehicle Thefts

Increased In Atlanta From 2021 To 2022. “Instances of burglary and shoplifting increased in Atlanta compared to the previous year. Motor vehicle thefts increased 5% overall. More glaring than the city-wide trend though, was the 31% increase in burglary calls and 22% spike in motor vehicle thefts reported in Zone 6, which is located in East Atlanta.” (“Atlanta Homicides Increased For Third Consecutive Year In 2022, Data Shows,” [FOX 5 Atlanta](#), 1/6/23)

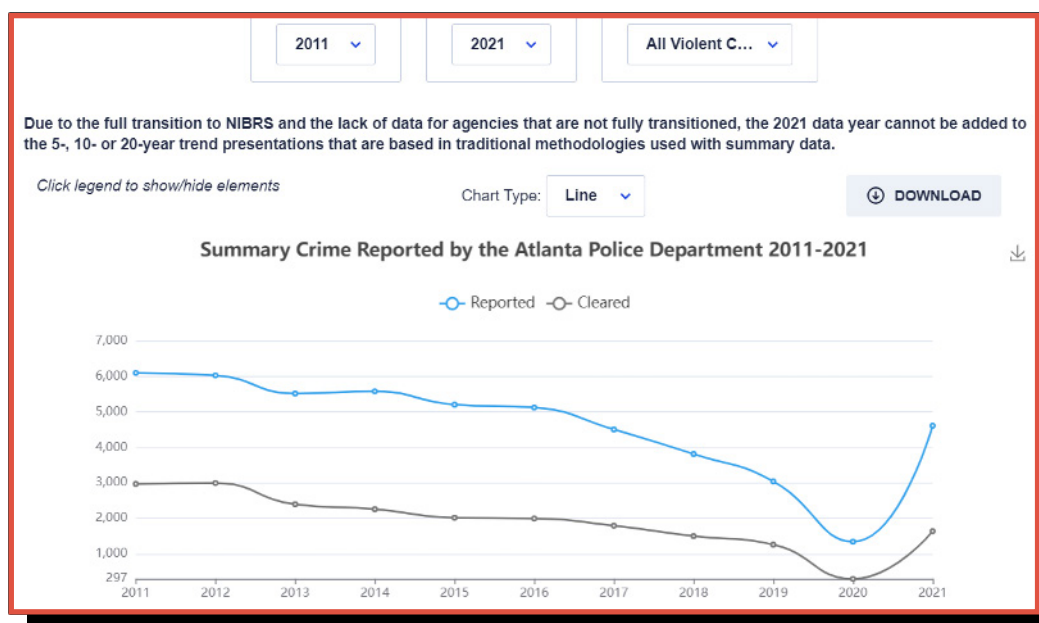


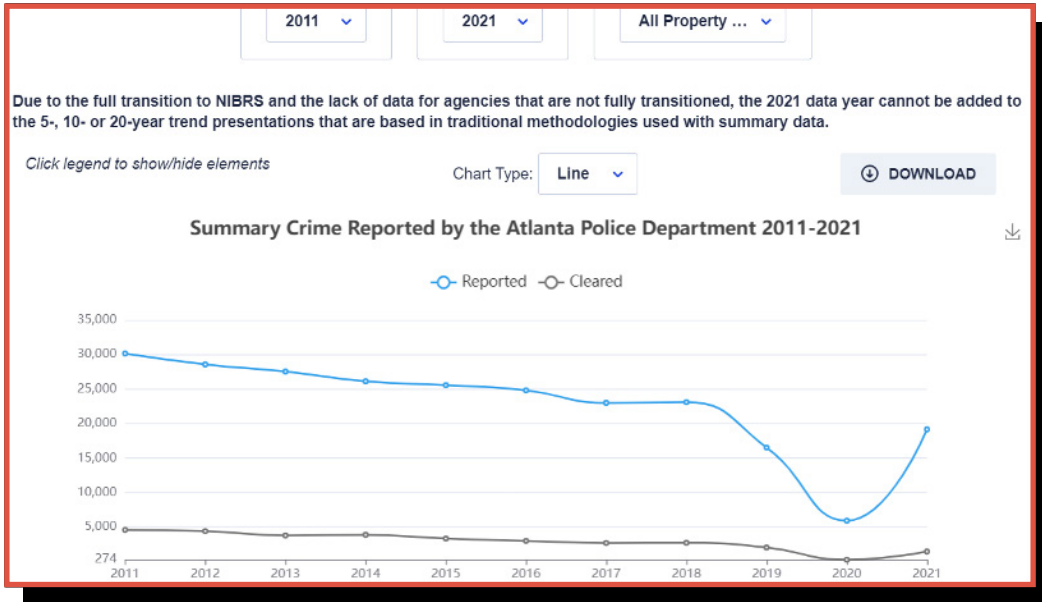
In The First 18 Weeks Of 2021, Statistics Showed Homicides Up 57 Percent, Rapes Up 55 Percent, Aggravated Assaults Up 36 Percent And Auto Thefts Up 31 Percent Compared With The Same Period In 2020. “In Atlanta, crime has continued raging into 2021. In the first 18 weeks of the year, police statistics show homicides up 57 percent, rapes up 55 percent, aggravated assaults up 36 percent and auto thefts up 31 percent compared with the same period last year.” (Richard Fausset, “Covid Crime Wave’ Weighed Heavily On Atlanta Mayor,” [The New York Times](#), 5/7/21)



FBI Crime Statistics Show An Overall Spike In Both Violent Crime And Property Crime Reports In Atlanta From 2020 To 2021.

(“Crime Data Explorer,” [FBI](#), Accessed 9/25/23)





Aggravated Assault Reports Increased From 970 To 3,465.

- **Aggravated Assault Reports Increased From 970 To 3,465.**

("Crime Data Explorer," FBI, Accessed 9/26/23)

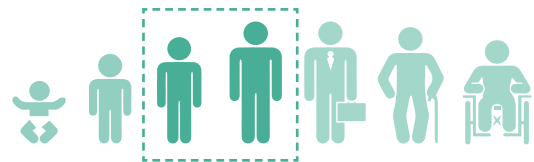


Pittsburgh, PA

- In 2022, Pittsburgh reached 71 homicides, its highest number in a [decade](#).
- According to the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), from 2021 to 2022, Pittsburgh saw an [increase](#) in homicides, rapes, and robberies.
 - o As of mid-2023, the MCCA also [reports](#) a year-over-year increase in rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults in Pittsburgh.
- From 2020 to 2021, Pittsburgh saw a 46% [rise](#) in shootings that left people injured and a similar percentage jump in homicides.
- In December 2022, downtown Pittsburgh business owners [complained](#) to the mayor’s office about the amount of “shootings, fights, panhandling, and open drug dealing” as well as “aggressive panhandling, fights, unruly youths, and loitering.”

In 2022, Pittsburgh Reached 71 Homicides, Its Highest Number In A Decade.

“This year, Pittsburgh has seen a record-breaking number of homicides. On Monday, Pittsburgh police responded to the Family Dollar on Brighton Road for a deadly shooting, which marked 71 homicides in the city with two days left in 2022. It is the highest it’s been in a decade. Eight years ago, according to crime data online, there were 70 homicides within the city. And between 2010 and Thursday, there have been 700. According to the most up-to-date data from police, 60 percent of offenders involved in homicides this year are between 15 and 24 years old. More than 50 percent of victims are within that same age group.” (Erika Stanish, “Pittsburgh Reports 71 Homicides In 2022, The Highest Total In A Decade,” [CBS News](#), 12/29/22)



60% of offenders
involved in homicides this
year are between
15 and **24** years old.

According To The Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), From 2021 To 2022, Pittsburgh Saw An Increase In Homicides, Rapes, And Robberies.

(*MCCA Violent Crime Report Comparing Year End 2022 And 2021,” [Major Cities Chiefs Association](#), 2023)

VIOLENT CRIME SURVEY - AGENCY TOTALS								
Year End Comparison ¹ - January 1 to December 31, 2022, and 2021								
United States (cont.) ²	Homicide		Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Pittsburgh PA Police	71	53	49	46	494	471	968	1,036



- **As Of Mid-2023, The MCCA Also Reports A Year-Over-Year Increase In Rapes, Robberies, And Aggravated Assaults In Pittsburgh.** (“MCCA Violent Crime Report Comparing Midyear 2023 And 2022,” [Major Cities Chiefs Association](#), 2023)

VIOLENT CRIME SURVEY - AGENCY TOTALS								
Midyear Comparison ¹ - January 1 to June 30 ,2023, and 2022								
United States (cont.) ²	Homicide		Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Pittsburgh PA Police	26	37	39	19	237	227	416	406

From 2020 To 2021, Pittsburgh Saw A 46% Rise In Shootings That Left People Injured And A Similar Percentage Jump In Homicides. “While much of the nation has experienced a dramatic increase in murders and other violent crimes, Pittsburgh has seen a 46% rise in shootings that left people injured and a similar percentage jump in homicides over the same time last year. Perhaps the most alarming statistic to neighborhood activists is the number of young people dying from bullets: nearly one-third of the city’s 41 homicide victims were teens.” (Ashley Murray, Joel Jacobs, “Pittsburgh Confronts Wave Of Gun Violence; More Teens Killed,” [AP News](#), 9/25/21)

Pittsburgh’s Rate Of Solving Homicides Tumbled From 2019 To 2022. “In a collaboration with CBS News, KDKA Investigates examines crime often going without punishment in our country. Barely half of murder cases in the United States get solved. The national homicide clearance rate is at an all-time low, according to FBI data. ... During that same time period, the Greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area maintained clearance rates better than the national average, but the decline was much steeper. In 1995, the region posted a clearance rate of 82.8%; but by 2019, that had fallen to 61.5%. In just the past three years, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police’s record of solving homicides has fallen closer in line with national levels – from 75.4% in 2018 to 55.6% last year and just 22% so far this year.” (Andy Sheehan, “KDKA Investigates ‘Crime Without Punishment’: Pittsburgh Homicide Clearance Rates Tumbling As National Rate Hits All-Time Low,” [CBS News](#), 6/29/22)

Barely half of murder case in the United States get solved.

In December 2022, Downtown Pittsburgh Business Owners Complained To The Mayor’s Office About The Amount Of “Shootings, Fights, Panhandling, And Open Drug Dealing” As Well As “Aggressive Panhandling, Fights, Unruly Youths, And Loitering.” “Downtown is a bit on edge these days. Frustration over shootings, fights, panhandling, and open drug dealing boiled over during a recent meeting between Downtown business owners and merchants and top officials within Mayor Ed Gainey’s administration. Some worried about losing commercial or residential tenants if the situation doesn’t change or how they can cajole workers back to the office given anxiety about safety. Another fretted about losing businesses or restaurants. ... But many of those who attended the meeting – and others who didn’t – insisted that city leadership isn’t doing enough, particularly to address issues like aggressive panhandling, fights, unruly youths, and loitering that don’t show up in crime stats.” (Mark Belko, “Safety Concerns Shake Downtown Pittsburgh As Businesses Fear Crime-Related Issues Are Threatening The City’s Core,” [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#), 12/18/22)

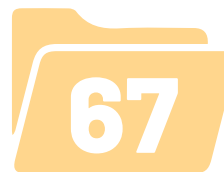
Tucson, AZ

- In 2021, Tucson [shattered](#) its previous yearly homicide record after continuing a spike that began in 2020.
- Tucson's [homicide](#) numbers in 2022 were up 12 from the city's five-year average.
- Nonfatal gun-related [crimes](#) in Tucson increased 19% from 2021 to 2022, to 870.
- In February 2023, the *Arizona Daily Star* [reported](#) that "gun violence, drug misuse and homelessness are on the rise, and Tucson has seen a significant increase in traffic fatalities."
- Pima County reportedly faced a spike in domestic violence [deaths](#) in 2022.

In 2021, Tucson Shattered Its Previous Yearly Homicide Record After Continuing A Spike That Began In 2020. "2021 was a record-breaking year for homicides in Tucson, resulting in a tough year for the community as well as those directly affected. According to the Tucson Police Department, the city had 93 homicides last year. The former record was set in 2008 with 79 homicides. In 2020, Tucson recorded 68 homicides, and 2019 had 49 homicides." (Jamie Donnelly, "After A Record-Breaking Year Of Homicides, Tucson Police Combat Gun Violence," [Arizona Daily Star](#), 1/9/22)

2021 was a record-breaking year for homicides in Tucson, resulting in a tough year for the community.

Tucson's Homicide Numbers In 2022 Were Up 12 From The City's Five-Year Average. "In Tucson, there were 67 homicide cases – some that included multiple fatalities – equating to a total of 75 victims in 2022. Homicides in the city decreased by nine from the year before, but were up 12 from TPD's five-year average." (Jamie Donnelly, "After A Record-Breaking Year Of Homicides, Tucson Police Combat Gun Violence," [Arizona Daily Star](#), 1/9/22)



homicide cases some that included multiple fatalities – equating to a total of 75 victims in 2022

Nonfatal Gun-Related Crimes In Tucson Increased 19% From 2021 To 2022, To 870. "But nonfatal gun-related crimes increased 19% from 2021 to 2022, to 870." (Jamie Donnelly, "After A Record-Breaking Year Of Homicides, Tucson Police Combat Gun Violence," [Arizona Daily Star](#), 1/9/22)



Nonfatal gun-related crimes **increased 19%** from 2021 to 2022.

In February 2023, The Arizona Daily Star Reported That “Gun Violence, Drug Misuse And Homelessness Are On The Rise, And Tucson Has Seen A Significant Increase In Traffic Fatalities.”

“When Chad Kasmar became Tucson police chief at the end of 2021, he said his department was contending with complicated community issues including an uptick in homicides and increasing overdose deaths, as well as a dwindling police force. A year later, the landscape is similar and perhaps even more complicated. Gun violence, drug misuse and homelessness are on the rise, and Tucson has seen a significant increase in traffic fatalities – an area Kasmar said he intended to prioritize after taking over as chief.”

(Arizona Daily Star, 1/9/22)

Pima County Reportedly Faced A Spike In Domestic Violence Deaths In 2022.

“A criminal justice breakdown in Pima County has led to an alarming spike in domestic violence deaths. They’re killings that some leaders say could have been prevented. The issue centers on collaboration or the lack of it. The wheels of justice has many components: law enforcement, victim services, defense attorneys, prosecuting attorneys, and the courts. They all have to work together to ensure violent felons committing crimes are not released and free to kill. And if any component is not functioning well: It can slow or stop a crucial process that’s needed to keep the public safe, especially in the case of domestic violence.”

(Valerie Cavazos, “Free To Kill: Criminal Justice “Breakdown” As Domestic Violence Deaths Rise,” KOLD News 13, 10/21/22)

Note: FBI crime data for Tucson is not available past 2020.

Gun violence, drug misuse and homelessness are on the rise, and Tucson has seen a significant increase in traffic fatalities.



Pima County has led to an **alarming spike** in domestic violence deaths.

Henderson, NV

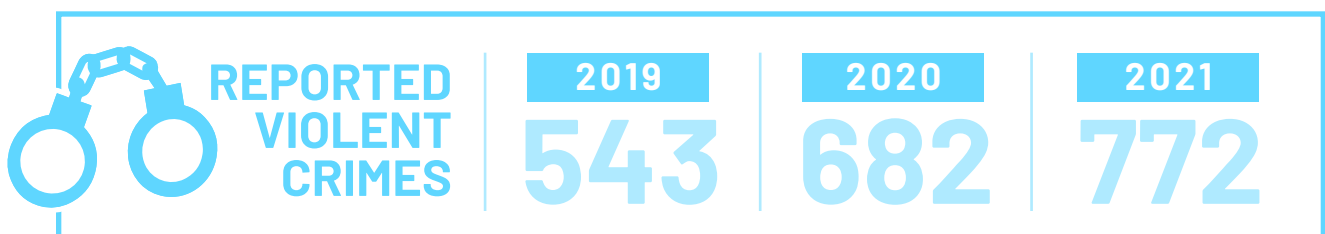
- FBI crime statistics show a significant [increase](#) in violent crime reports in Henderson from 2019 to 2021.
 - In 2021, homicides reached the highest number in at least 10 years and aggravated assaults nearly [doubled](#).
- The number of robberies in Henderson [soared](#) by 91 percent during the first seven months of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021.
 - The increase was [reportedly](#) so large that the FBI contacted the city to verify it.
- Motor vehicle theft reports in Henderson [increased](#) from 2020 to 2021.

FBI Crime Statistics Show A Significant Increase In Violent Crime Reports In Henderson From 2019 To 2021.

(“Crime Data Explorer,” [FBI](#), Accessed 9/26/23)



- **In 2021, Homicides Reached The Highest Number In At Least 10 Years And Aggravated Assaults Nearly Doubled.** “Those are not the only crime statistics that should concern city residents. In 2019, there were 543 reported violent crimes in Henderson. In 2020, that spiked to 682 and then hit 772 in 2021. That was the highest number in at least 10 years. Aggravated assaults nearly doubled, going from 268 in 2019 to 517 in 2021. That’s from the FBI’s Crime Data Explorer, which includes information supplied by the city of Henderson.” (Victor Joeks, “VICTOR JOECKS: Henderson Hides Crime Surge From Residents,” [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), 10/15/22)



The Number Of Robberies In Henderson Soared By 91 Percent During The First Seven Months Of 2022 Compared To The Same Period In 2021.

“There’s a big difference between the claims Henderson officials make about public safety and what their statistics show. The Review-Journal recently obtained an email from Henderson’s Crime Analysis Unit. It revealed that the number of robberies soared by 91 percent during the first seven months of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. The incidents went from 78 to 149.” (Victor Joeks, “VICTOR JOECKS: Henderson Hides Crime Surge From Residents,” [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), 10/15/22)

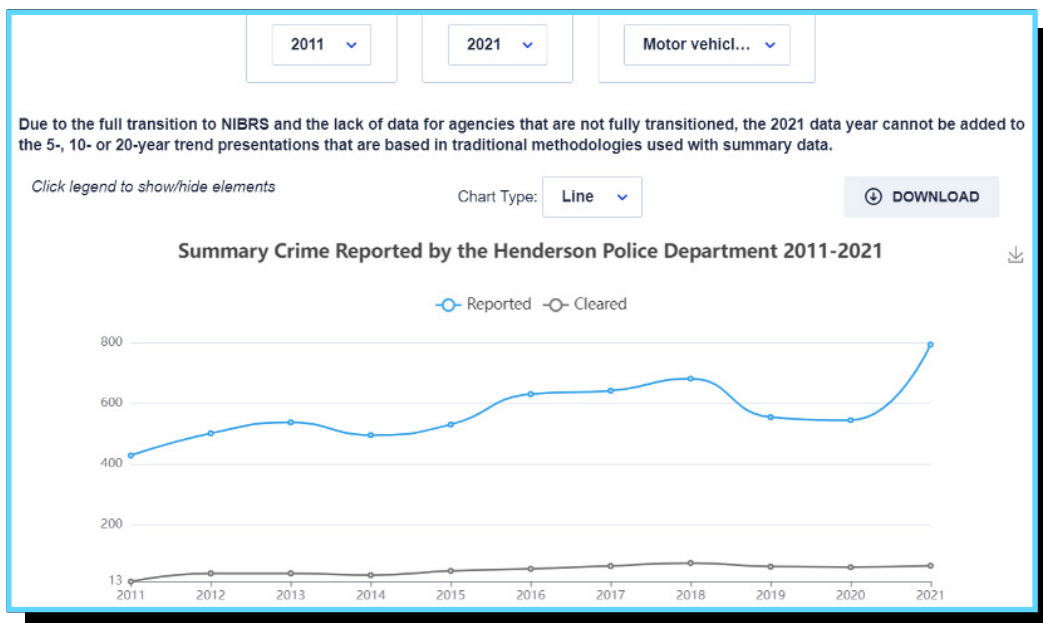
- **The Increase Was Reportedly So Large That The FBI Contacted The City To Verify It.** “The analysis is a result from the significant increase in reported robberies in 2022 compared to the same period in 2021,” Albert Mesa, a crime and intelligence supervisor, wrote. ‘Our increase was so significant the FBI contacted the Records Sections to verify that our reporting was accurate – unfortunately, it was accurate. ‘Key findings were increases in all area commands, increases in escalated shoplifts and strong-arm robberies.’” (Victor Joeks, “VICTOR JOECKS: Henderson Hides Crime Surge From Residents,” [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), 10/15/22)



Robberies soared by 91% during the first seven months of 2022

“Our increase was so significant the FBI contacted the Records Sections to verify that our reporting was accurate – unfortunately, it was accurate.”

Motor Vehicle Theft Reports In Henderson Increased From 2020 To 2021. (“Crime Data Explorer,” [FBI](#), Accessed 9/26/23)



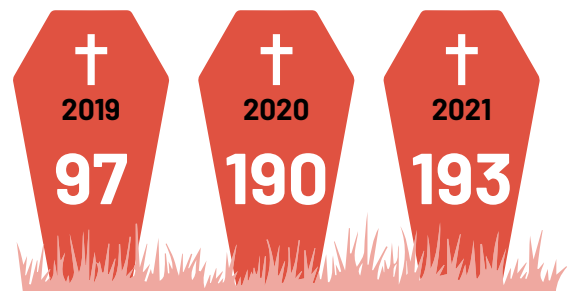
Milwaukee, WI

- In November 2022, Milwaukee’s homicide rate reached a [record](#) high for the third year in a row.
- From 2020 to 2022, car [thefts](#) increased by 111% in Milwaukee.
- From 2019 to 2022, overall crime in Milwaukee [increased](#) by 22.6%, with violent crime up 15.6% and property crime up 26%.
 - o This included [spikes](#) in non-fatal shootings, aggravated assaults, auto thefts, and larceny.
- In the first half of 2023, nonfatal [shootings](#) in Milwaukee occurred at about twice the rate of 2019.
- [Carjackings](#) in Milwaukee increased by 40% in the first quarter of 2023 compared with the same time in 2022.
- According to the MCCA, rapes and robberies in Milwaukee [increased](#) year-over-year in the first half of 2023.

In November 2022, Milwaukee’s Homicide Rate Reached A Record High For The Third Year In A Row.

For the third year in a row, Milwaukee’s homicide record has been broken. As of Nov. 20, 2022 police data show 194 people have been killed. These are not just numbers, but names, 194 of them. Through this deadly 2022, FOX6 News has brought you their stories. ... Homicides spiked during the coronavirus pandemic and haven’t come back down. In 2019, there were 97. In 2020, there were 190. In 2021, there were 193. The mayor and police chief again asked for the public’s help, saying they can’t do it alone.” (Jason Calvi, “Milwaukee Sees Record Homicides, 3rd Year In A Row,” [FOX6 News Milwaukee](#), 11/21/22)

Homicides spiked during the coronavirus pandemic



Milwaukee ranked number one in motor vehicle theft.

From 2020 To 2022, Car Thefts Increased By 111% In Milwaukee. “Of property crimes, motor vehicle theft has continued to climb across the board. Milwaukee ranked number one in motor vehicle theft, according to the report. This is not surprising, as Milwaukee Police Department data showed that the crime spiked during the pandemic. From 2020 to 2022, car thefts increased 111% in Milwaukee, according to the data.”

(Rachel Ryan, “Milwaukee Ranks Third For Violent Crimes Nationwide,” [Spectrum News](#), 5/16/23)



From 2019 To 2022, Overall Crime In Milwaukee Increased By 22.6%, With Violent Crime Up 15.6% And Property Crime Up 26%. “Milwaukee is significantly less safe than it was a short time ago. First, overall reported crime is down from 2021 levels. Part I offenses, the most serious crimes, fell from just over 34,000 to roughly 29,000 – a nearly 15% decline. But that is misleading because 2022’s lower levels are relative to 2021’s abnormally high incidence of crime. In other words, you might lose elevation descending a mountaintop, but you had to climb to get to that altitude. In fact, compared to 2019, overall crime in Milwaukee is up 22.6%, with violent crime up 15.6% and property crime up 26% from three years ago.” (Sean Kennedy, “Latest Crime Figures Show A Milwaukee In Trouble,” [Badger Institute](#), 3/23/23)

Milwaukee is significantly less safe than it was a short time ago.



Overall crime in Milwaukee increased by 22.6%

- **This Included Spikes In Non-Fatal Shootings, Aggravated Assaults, Auto Thefts, And Larceny.** (Sean Kennedy, “Latest Crime Figures Show A Milwaukee In Trouble,” [Badger Institute](#), 3/23/23)

Even accounting for last year’s drop, some serious crime categories have spiked since 2019:

- Homicides have more than doubled (up 121%) and were higher in 2022 than in 2021.
- Non-fatal shootings jumped from 444 to 877 (up 98%) and were higher than 2021 totals.
- Aggravated assaults (inclusive of shootings) rose 24%.
- Auto thefts increased 132%.¹
- Larceny-thefts rose 9%.

In The First Half Of 2023, Nonfatal Shootings In Milwaukee Occurred At About Twice The Rate Of 2019. “The discrepancy between the two has puzzled and frustrated officials in Milwaukee. And despite those reductions, Milwaukee’s six-month homicide count (72) is still three-quarters of the total homicides the city saw in all of 2019 (98). Nonfatal shootings are still happening at virtually twice the rate of 2019.” (Elliot Hughes, “No-body’s Celebrating’: Milwaukee Has Reductions In Serious Violent Crimes Halfway Through 2023 But Police Aren’t Satisfied,” [Milwaukee Journal.Sentinel](#), 7/20/23)

Carjackings In Milwaukee Increased By 40% In The First Quarter Of 2023 Compared With The Same Time In 2022. “Carjackings in Milwaukee are up 40% in the first quarter of 2023 compared with the same time in 2022. ... It’s a growing problem. Milwaukee carjackings are up 57% when compared with the same time in 2021. In the first quarter of that year, police reported 69 carjackings. In the first quarter of 2022, it was 77, and in the first quarter of 2023, 108.” (Jason Calvi, “Milwaukee Carjackings Up 40%, Bipartisan Bill Toughens Penalties,” [FOX6 News Milwaukee](#), 4/19/23)

According To The MCCA, Rapes And Robberies In Milwaukee Increased Year-Over-Year In The First Half Of 2023. (“MCCA Violent Crime Report Comparing Midyear 2023 And 2022,” [Major Cities Chiefs Association](#), 2023)

United States (cont.) ²	Homicide		Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Pittsburgh PA Police	72	105	244	234	889	859	3,419	3,561



Solutions

In order to bring crime rates down, state and local politicians need to lead the charge by getting tough on crime. Here are three policies that state and local officials can pursue to do just that.

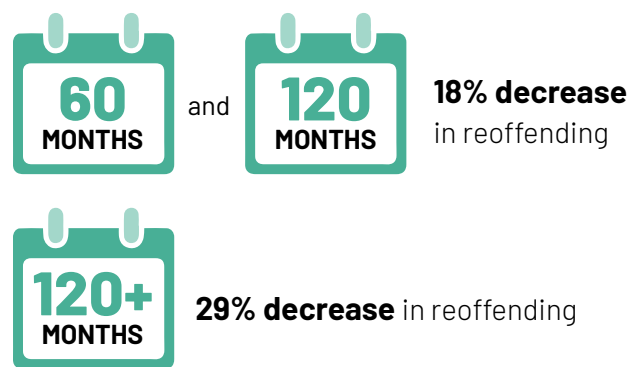
Strengthen penalties for repeat and violent criminals

District attorneys across the country refuse to prosecute “low level” offenses. These practices created a revolving door exploited by career criminals. By strengthening sentencing guidelines for repeat offenders, judges can maintain discretion for first-time criminals while serial criminals remain in custody.

Incarcerating repeat violent offenders can immediately protect Americans. For those imprisoned¹ for serious federal crimes, sentences between 60 and 120 months are associated with a 18% decrease in reoffending, while sentences of more than 120 months lead to a 29% decline.

Stronger sentencing has the power to deter repeat violent offenders. After California passed a “three strikes” law enhancing sentencing for criminals’ third offenses, felony arrests for people with two strikes declined² by 20%.




Crime isn’t fair, but justice should be.



Crime isn't fair, but justice should be.



Opportunities for Reform

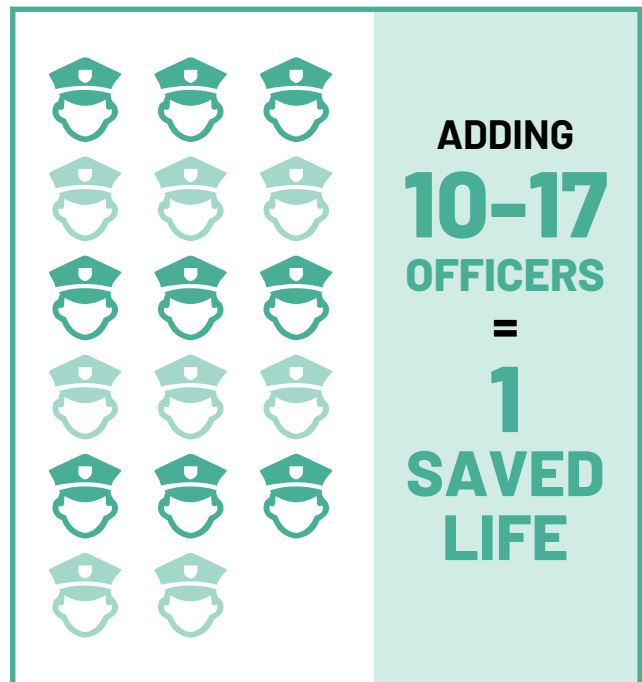
-  Repeal “do not prosecute” memos for crimes that lead to higher crime rates
-  Strengthen sentencing for violent offenders to reduce the rate of reoffending
-  Restore three-strikes laws for violent crimes to deter serial criminals

Increase police presence




Having more officers results in fewer crimes, so it’s troubling that police departments are hiring³ at a slower rate than the average of all U.S. jobs. Adding police officers will give departments the manpower they need to combat crime, especially in criminal “hot spots.”

Whenever officers leave their assigned beats⁴ for serious threats⁵ or traffic accidents, crime increases in unpatrolled areas. Research⁶ also shows that placing officers at crime “hot spots” reduces serious crime in those areas. In fact, adding 10-17 officers⁷ to a police department is enough to prevent one murder, while reducing other violent crimes.

As departments hire officers, they should prioritize candidates with degrees, since both new research⁸ and older studies⁹ show that college educated officers may perform better, as they are less likely to resort to verbal and physical force than those without degrees. Officers with degrees receive¹⁰ fewer complaints, which means cities pay fewer claims and defend themselves against fewer lawsuits – which saves communities money.



Opportunities for Reform

-  Increase the number of police officers to combat crime
-  Hire police officers with college degrees to reduce complaints against the departments
-  Offer tuition assistance and other college incentives to recruit new police officers

Increase officer pay

Police officers are some of America's greatest heroes, yet they are not paid like the critical, highly-trained professionals they are. On top of this, they are forced to work overtime which discourages good candidates, leads to officer fatigue and creates the risk of injury. Appropriately compensating officers as salaried professionals can improve policing by improving the quality of applicants, boosting performance and raising standards.

In 2021, most law enforcement officers earned¹¹ around \$66,020 per year, which is more than a third higher¹² than the national median of \$48,769 for all occupations. Yet, many officers earn poverty-level wages with some making a mere¹³ \$20,000 per year. That forces many to work overtime¹⁴ to make ends meet.

Over the last decade, police departments have seen a decline¹⁵ in applicants and an increase in officers quitting early. Increasing officer pay and professionalism will attract smarter, more capable applicants, especially as new generations prioritize¹⁶ flexible hours when looking for a job. A higher wage improves police performance by cutting down on officer fatigue which measurably¹⁷ increases the risk of officers getting hurt, puts public safety at risk and opens the door for expensive lawsuits resulting from avoidable accidents.

Over the last decade, police departments have seen a decline in applicants and an increase in officers quitting early.




One study¹⁸ found that officers who get paid more make more arrests while news reports¹⁹ indicate poorly-paid officers do not perform as well on the job. Research also indicates that poverty itself leads²⁰ to worse decision-making. Pay raises could also lead to more responsibility in a system of “robust, internal self-regulation” for police, according²¹ to the University of North Dakota Associate Professor of Law Steven R. Morrison.

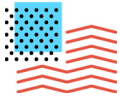


One study found that officers who get **paid more make more arrests**

Pay raises could also lead to more responsibility in a system of “robust internal self-regulation” for police.

Opportunities for Reform

-  Increase officer salaries to attract and retain talented candidates, which will improve performance
-  Eliminate hourly pay for officers to avoid officer fatigue, which leads to worse decision-making
-  Raise police standards along with pay

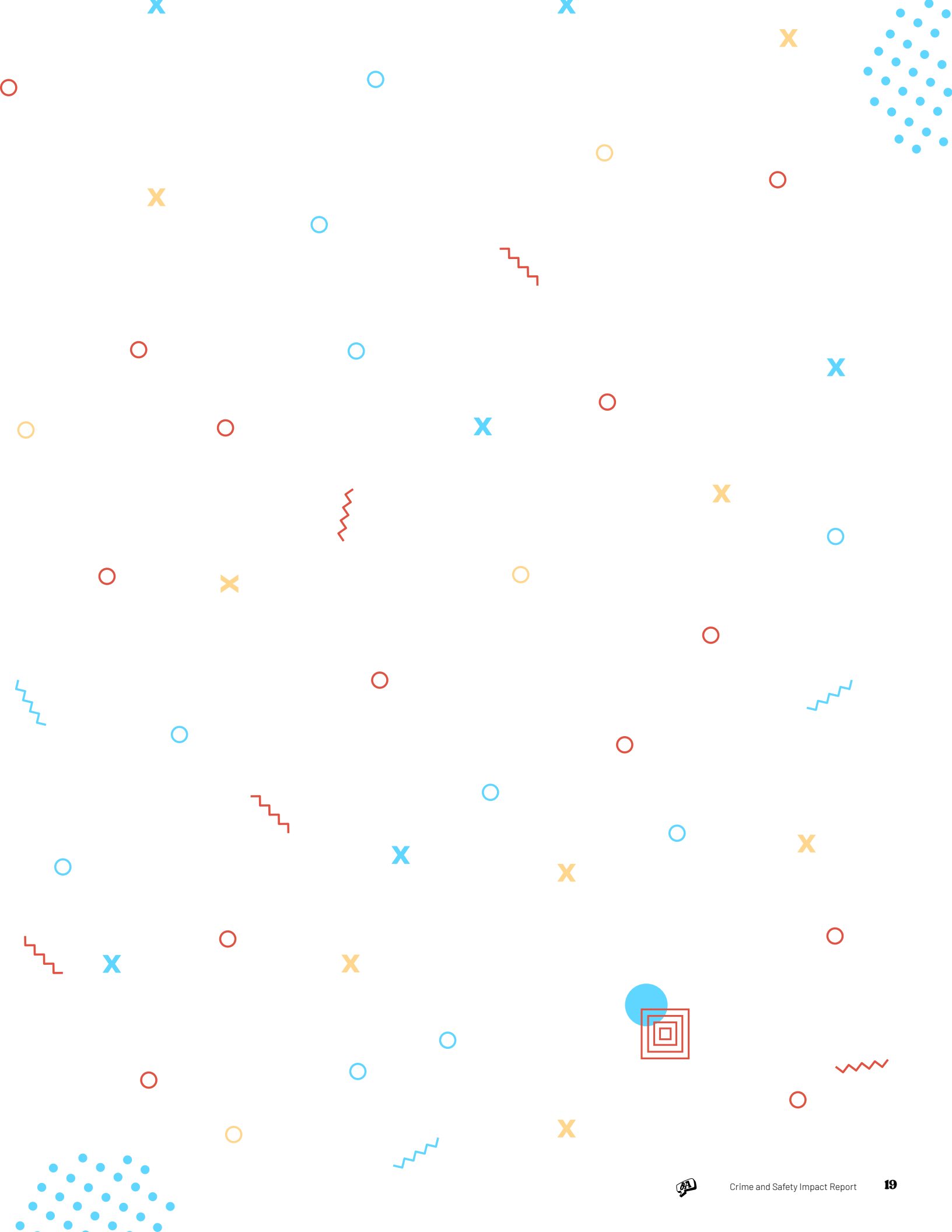


Endnotes



- 1 United States Sentencing Commission. (2022). Length of Incarceration and Recidivism. Retrieved from https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2022/20220621_Recidivism-SentLength.pdf
- 2 Helland, E., & Tabarrok, A. (2007). Does Three Strikes Deter? A Nonparametric Estimation. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 42(2), 309-330. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40057307>
- 3 Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). Police and Detectives. Occupational Outlook Handbook. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/police-and-detectives.htm>
- 4 Weisburd, S. (2021). Police Presence, Rapid Response Rates, and Crime Prevention. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. 103(2): 280-293. Retrieved from <https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article-abstract/103/2/280/97658/Police-Presence-Rapid-Response-Rates-and-Crime>
- 5 Draca, M., Machin, S., and Witt, R.. (2011). Panic on the Streets of London: Police, Crime, and the July 2005 Terror Attacks. *American Economic Review*, 101(5): 2157-81.
- 6 Braga, A. A., Hureau, D. M. & Papachristos, A. V. (2014) The Effects of Hot Spots Policing on Crime: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *Justice Quarterly*, 31:4, 633-663, DOI: 10.1080/07418825.2012.673632
- 7 Chalfin, A. et al. (2022). Police Force Size and Civilian Race." *American Economic Review: Insights*. 4 (2): 139-58.
- 8 Bassiouni, M. C., & Waltenburg, E. N. (2020). 5 reasons police officers should have college degrees. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/5-reasons-police-officers-should-have-college-degrees-140523>
- 9 Rydberg, J., & Terrill, W. (2010). The effect of higher education on police behavior. *Police Quarterly*. 13(4), 422-450 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098611109357325>
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Kelly, K., Lowery, W. & Rich, S. (2017) Fired Rehired. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/investigations/police-fired-rehired/?utm_source=pocket_saves
- 12 *The Conversation*. (2021). Defund the Police? Actually, Police Salaries Are Rising in Departments Across the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2021-06-29/police-salaries-are-rising-in-departments-across-the-us>
- 13 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes333051.htm#st>
- 14 Ibid
- 15 Reed, E. (2022). The Average Salary in New York City. *SmartAsset*. Retrieved from <https://smartasset.com/retirement/average-salary-in-nyc>
- 16 Shiftboard. (2023). Adapting to the Next Generation of Hourly Workers. Retrieved from https://mms.businesswire.com/media/20230405005161/en/1767479/5/Shiftboard%27s_State_of_the_Hourly_Worker_Research_2023_Infographic.jpg
- 17 Senjo, S. R. (2011) Dangerous fatigue conditions: a study of police work and law enforcement administration. *Police Practice and Research*. 12:3, 235-252, DOI: 10.1080/15614263.2010.497659
- 18 Mas, A. (2006). Pay, Reference Points, and Police Performance. National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w12202/w12202.pdf
- 19 NBC News. (2014). Police Pay Gap. Many of America's Finest Struggle on Poverty Wages. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/in-plain-sight/police-pay-gap-many-americas-finest-struggle-poverty-wages-n232701>
- 20 & Brennan, D. & WebMD Editorial Contributors. (2021). What is Scarcity Mentality? WebMD. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-is-scarcity-mentality>
- 21 Dennis, T. (2021). Pay Police officers more. *The University of North Dakota*. Retrieved from <https://blogs.und.edu/und-today/2020/10/pay-police-officers-more/>







JoinOurAmerica.org



[@JoinOurAmerica](https://www.instagram.com/JoinOurAmerica)