



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

NAVIGATING YOUTH CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

3 FACTS TO KNOW, 3 STEPS TO TAKE

July 22, 2024

Josh Weber



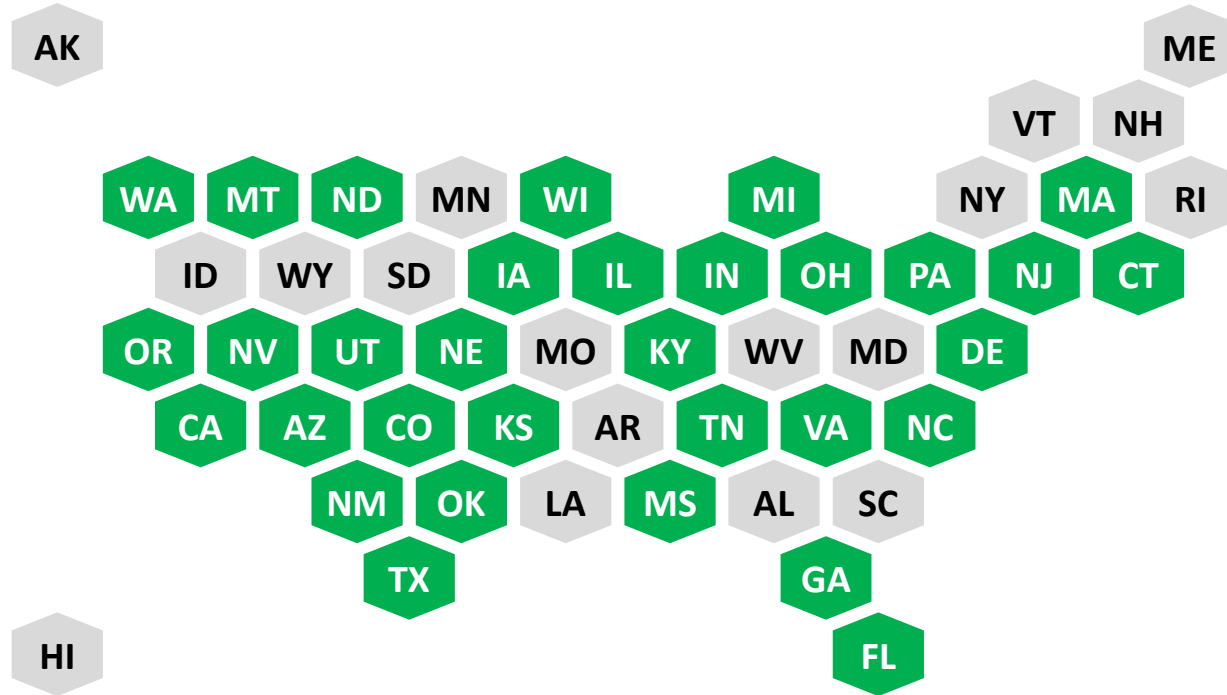
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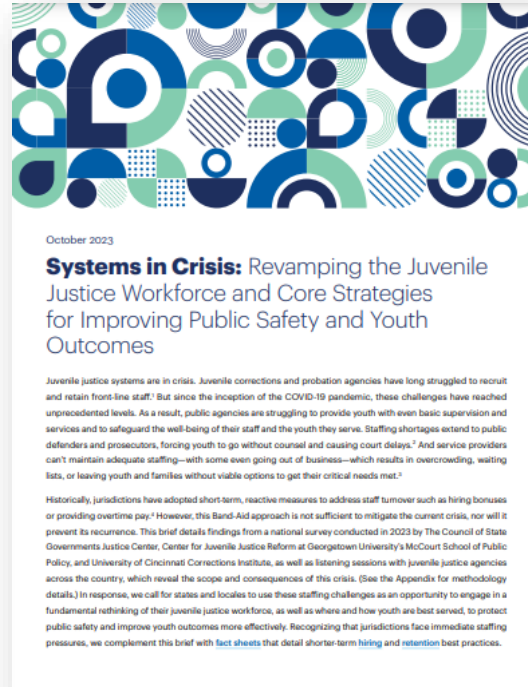
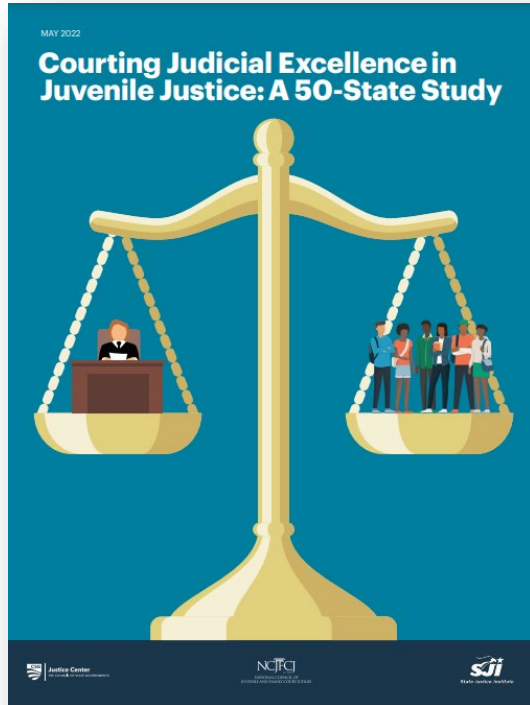
We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government, with policy and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities.



We've worked with an array of states and counties to facilitate improvements to their youth justice system.



Our work also responds to emerging issues and challenges in the field with research, best practices, and innovations.





Rise in concerns about youth crime/violence and political polarization not seen since mid-90s.

NEWS & POLITICS

Politics of fear: Are youth really to blame for the carjacking spike?

Cops say masked teens with a thirst for violence and joyrides are terrorizing the city. An examination of arrests reveals a narrative built on shoddy data and anecdotal evidence.

Opinion

Opinion: To fix our juvenile justice system, we need accountability for offenders

Juvenile Crime Surges, Reversing Long Decline. 'It's Just Kids Killing Kids.'

Violence among children has soared across the country since 2020. One consequence: a mounting toll of young victims.

Lawmakers looking to hold parents accountable for their children's crimes

Governor wants juvenile justice bills to focus on accountability

'You can't keep letting them get away with it': Addressing juvenile crime



**Navigating youth crime, violence, and
behavioral health: What does the data say?**

3 Facts to Know

#1. Adolescents are increasingly struggling with a host of challenges that can impact their well-being, and ultimately, their risk to themselves or others.

Public systems and providers are struggling to address these needs.

Adolescents have been experiencing rising mental health challenges and trauma, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Over 42% of H.S. students, including 56% of girls, reported that they “felt sad or hopeless,” compared to 26 percent in 2009.



The proportion of H.S students who “seriously considered attempting suicide” has risen steadily from 13.8% in 2009 to 22.2%.



55% reported experiencing emotional abuse by a parent/adult in the home and 12% reported physical abuse.



20% “ever saw someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood, including almost 30% of Black students.

Public agencies are facing unprecedented staff hiring and retention challenges, undermining their ability to help address youth's needs.



More than 85% cite moderate/severe challenges in hiring and retaining staff.



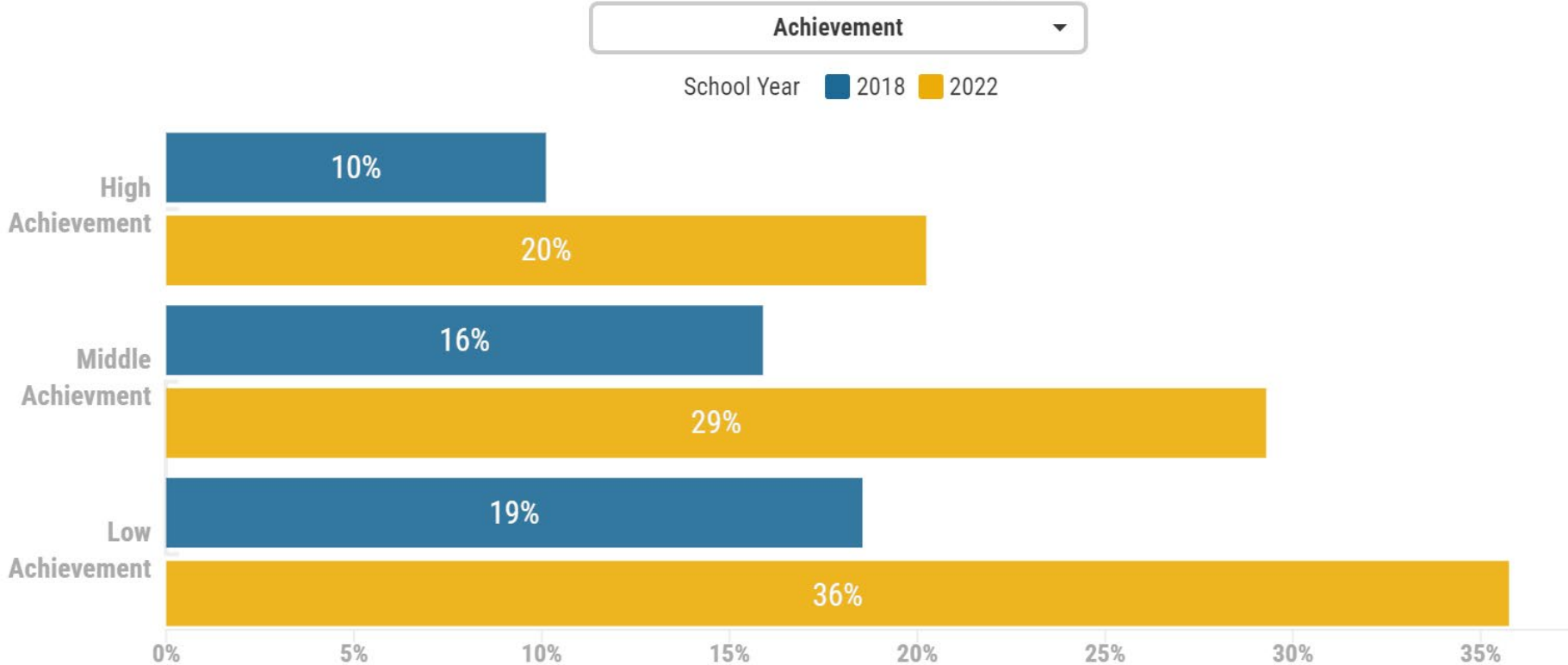
55% reported these challenges are more severe than anytime in the past 5 or 10 years.



Less than 10% of respondents felt their state had a plan to address staffing challenges.

Schools have traditionally been a key outlet for identifying and supporting youth with special needs, but absenteeism has surged.

Chronic Absenteeism by District Type: 2018–2022



Service providers are also experiencing a staffing crisis, exposing and deepening the limited service capacity in most locales.

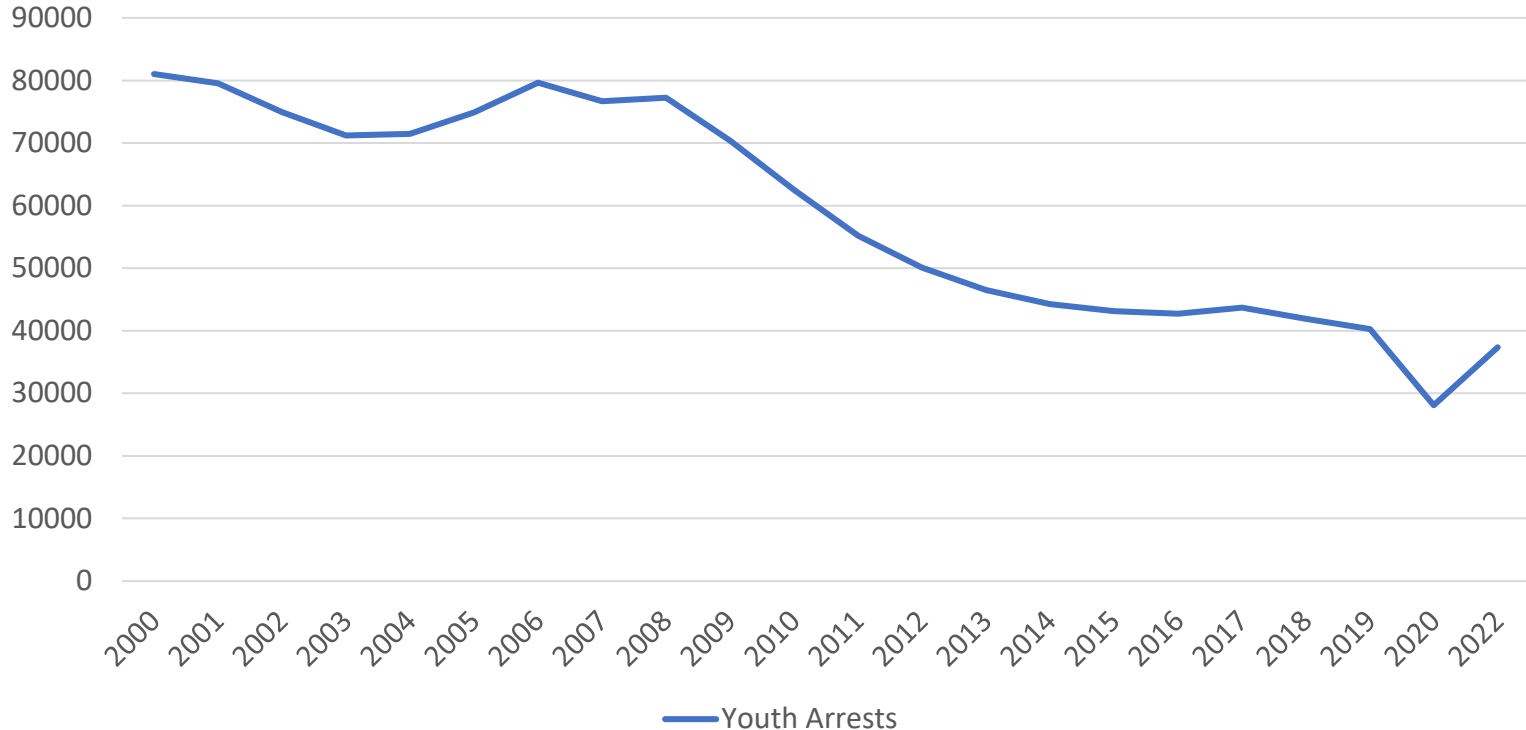
More than 85% of agencies reported severe/moderate staffing challenges with service providers.

More than 80% reported staffing challenges have a moderate/severe impact on service availability.

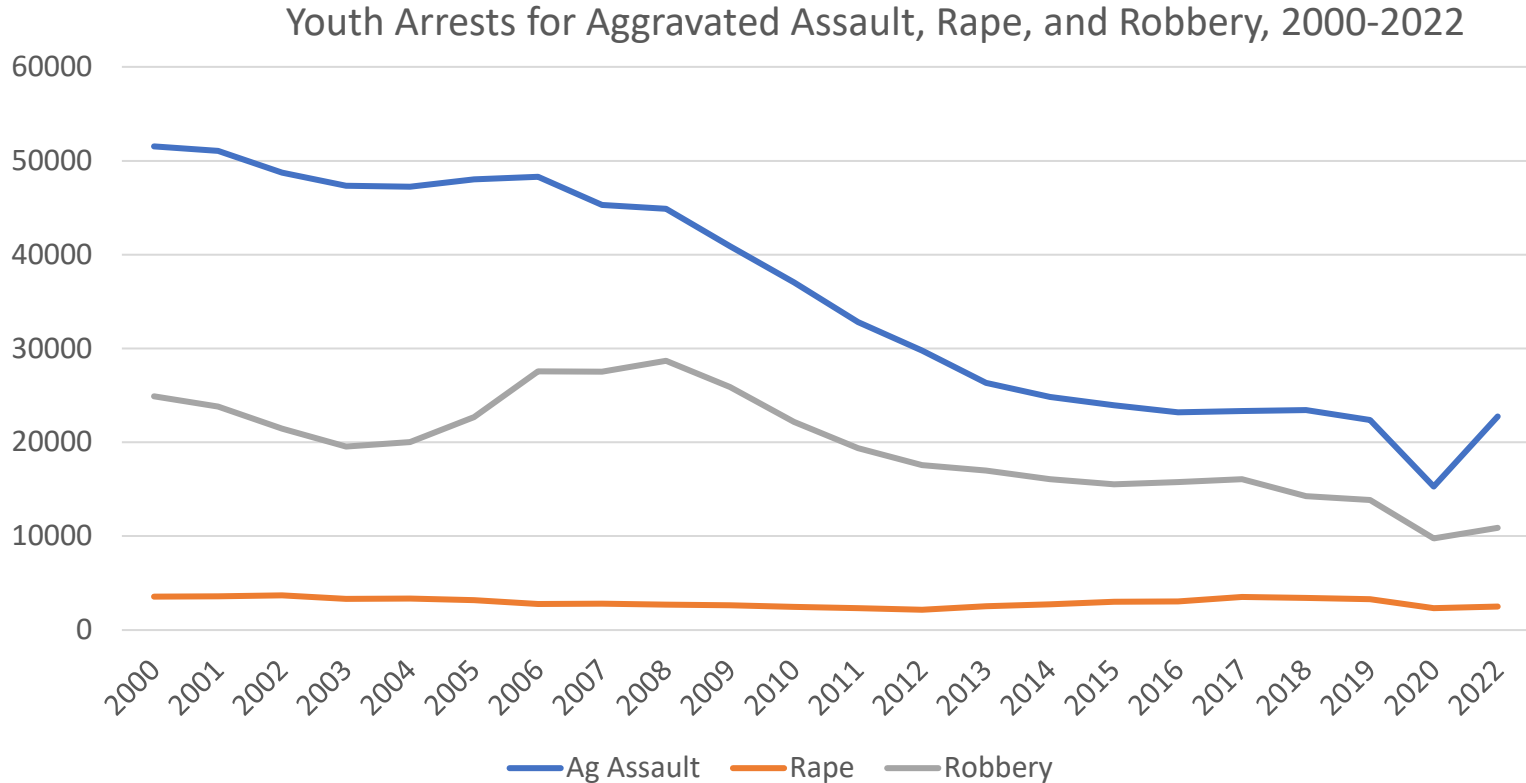
#2. Youth arrests for violent offenses overall remain historically low. However, post-pandemic, youth arrests for homicide and weapons surged.

Overall, arrests for youth violence declined 54% from 2000-2022, and in 2022, were historically low vs. anytime other than during the pandemic.

Total Youth Arrests for Violent Index Offenses, 2000-2022



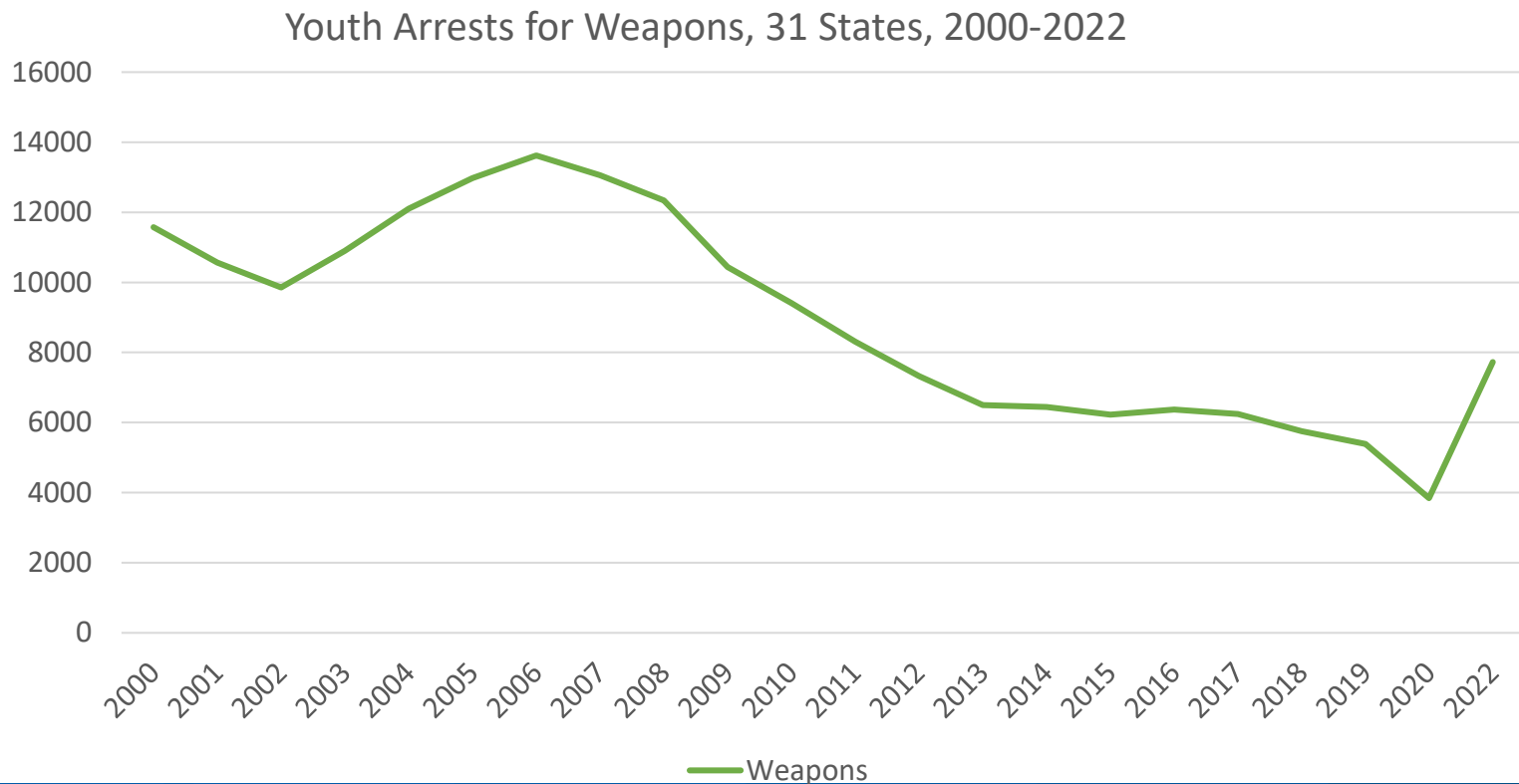
In 2022, youth arrests for aggravated assault, rape, and robbery remained historically low.



Youth arrests for homicides have generally been increasing for a decade and surged in 2022.

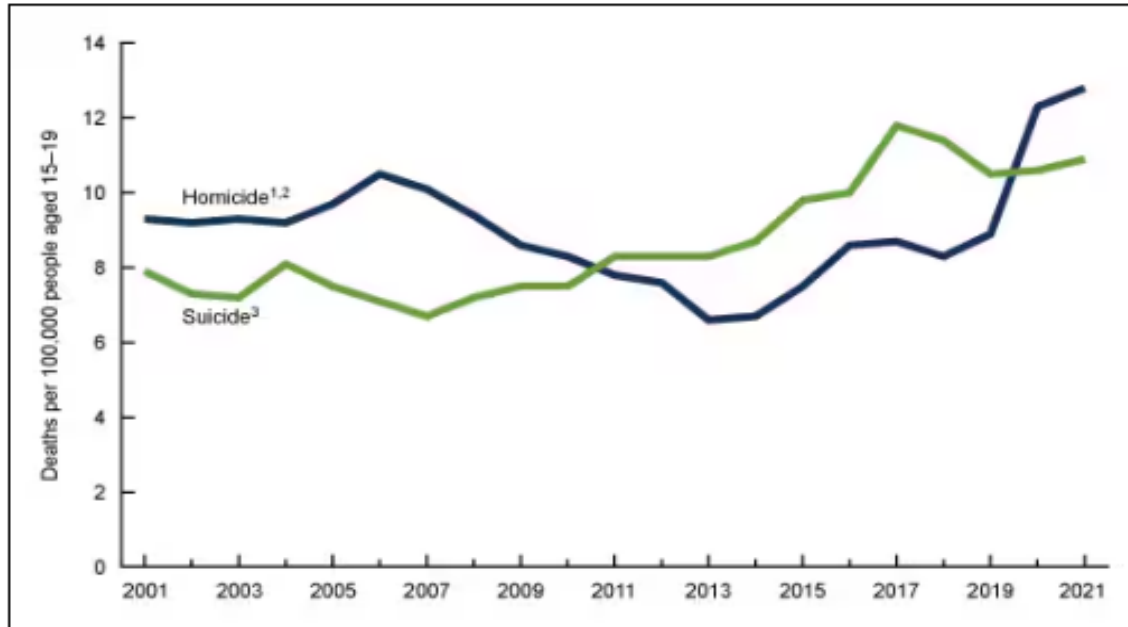


Arrests for weapons offenses have been consistently declining, but spiked in 2022 to levels not seen for a decade.



Homicide and suicide are now leading causes of death among children and young adults.

Figure 3. Suicide and homicide death rates among people aged 15–19: United States, 2001–2021



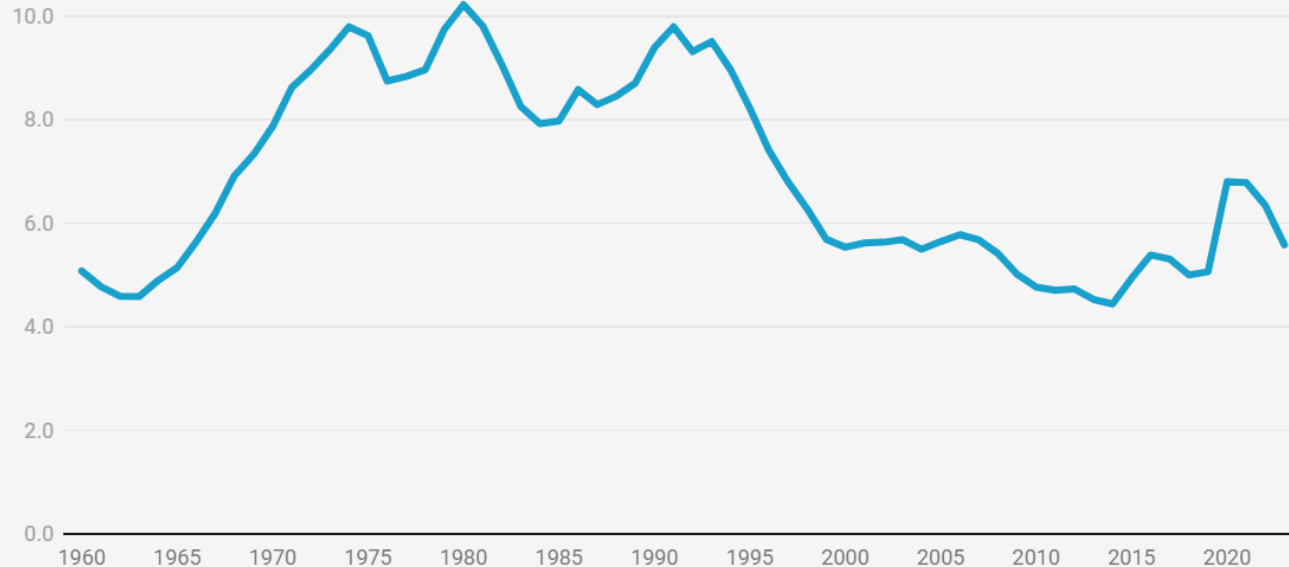
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024

In 2022, the rate of firearm deaths among Black youth was 6 times higher than White youth

In 2022, in half of all cases in which a young person under 18 committed a violent crime, the victim was also under 18.

Initial data from 2023/2024 (youth and adult combined) shows substantial declines in violence.

US Murder Rate Per 100k (2023 Rate Estimated)



[Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Jeff Asher Crime Blog taken from FBI Quarterly Uniform Crime Report data, 2024

#3. The juvenile justice system should focus limited resources on youth who have committed, or are at high risk of committing, serious and violent offenses.

Yet, most youth who involved in the system have committed offenses that don't involve physical harm to another person

Diversion is a more effective public safety strategy than system involvement for most youth.

Youth formally processed by the juvenile justice system experience far worse outcomes in the 5 years post-arrest than their matched peers that were diverted:

More likely to be re-arrested and incarcerated	More engaged in violence	More peers involved in delinquency	Lower school attainment and graduation rates	Less skills to manage their emotions	Lower perception of opportunity
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The number of youth arrested, referred to court, detained and incarcerated declined significantly from 2000-2022.

~70% ↓

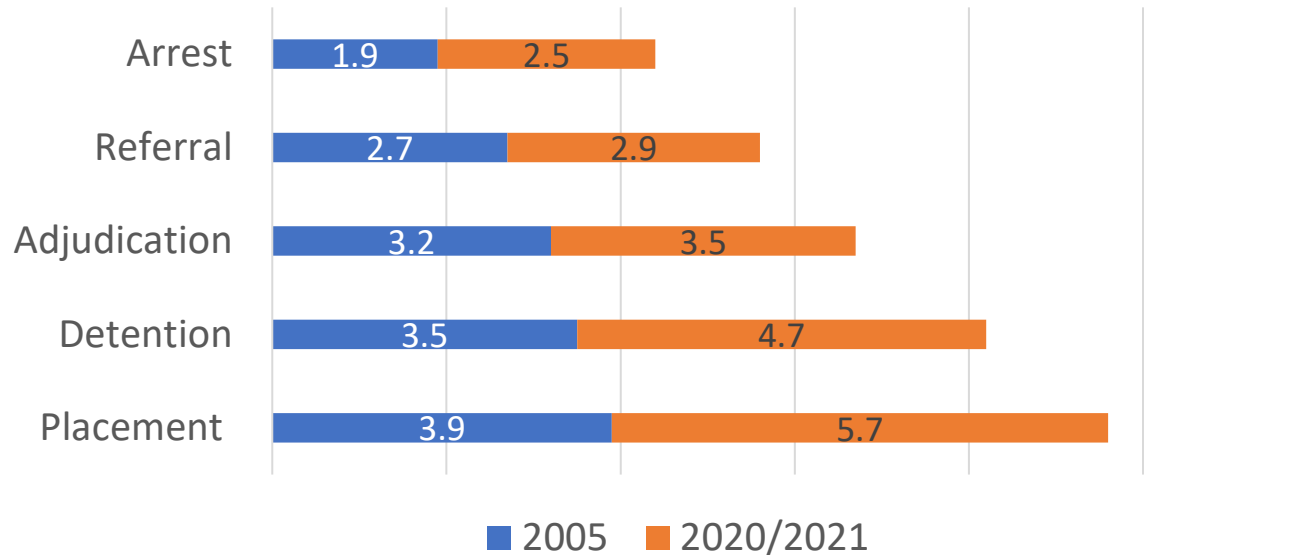
Most youth involved at every point in the juvenile justice system have committed non-person offenses as their most serious offense.

Proportion of All Youth at Each Decision Point whose Most Serious Offense was a Non-Person Delinquent Offense in 2021/2022

Arrest 70%	Court Referrals 63%	Court Petitions 62%	Adjudication 63%	Probation 62%	Detention 56%	Placement 62%
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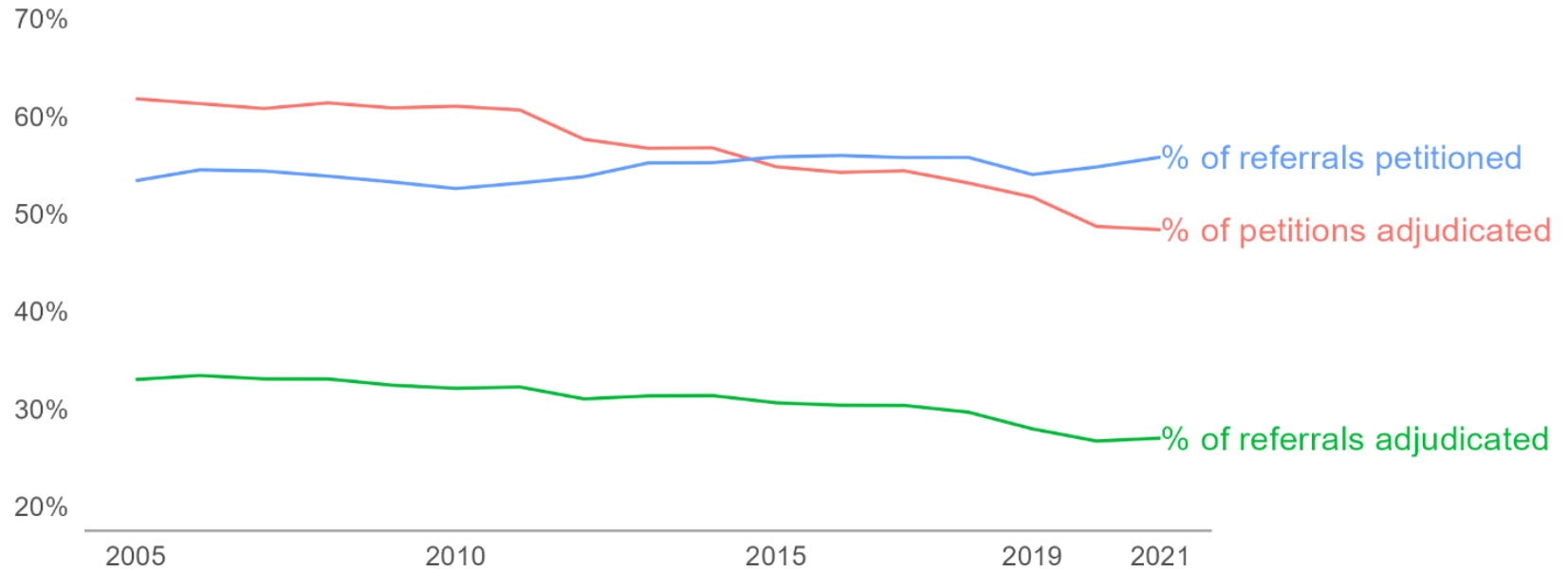
Racial disparities in system involvement have worsened for Black (and American Indian) youth at every decision point.

Juvenile Justice Relative Rate Index for Black Youth,
2005 vs. 2020/2021



Less than 30% of youth referred to court are adjudicated, raising questions about the benefits and efficiency of formal system processing.

Court referral petition and adjudication rates for delinquent offenses



Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics



**Navigating youth crime, violence, and
behavioral health: What does the data say?**

3 Steps to Take

#1. Develop a statewide adolescent services and violence prevention strategy to address and mitigate the root causes of youth's behaviors.

What might a statewide adolescent prevention services strategy look like in practice?

Statewide Family Resource/Assessment Centers

Mobile Crisis and Alternative Responders

Respite and Shelter

Family Navigators

Restorative Practices

Multisystem Teaming

CBT/Family Therapy

Mental health/SU Programs

Violence Interrupters

Credible Messengers

#2. Focus law enforcement and juvenile justice systems' limited resources on the small number of youth who pose a public safety risk and on proven recidivism-reduction strategies

Juvenile justice systems should focus limited resources on higher risk youth and remain committed to evidence-based approaches.

- ✓ Scale diversion and deflection efforts and rethink the footprint of courts.
- ✓ Limit use of out of home placement and develop intensive, evidence-based, community-based alternatives for higher risk youth.
- ✓ Repurpose community supervision to focus on youth services, support structures, and skill building.
- ✓ Invest in quality assurance and data collection, analysis, and use.

#3. Address gaps in public agency and service provider capacity and workforce

Strengthen Public Agency Staff Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

Short Term:

- ✓ Raise pay to competitive market rates and provide for annual, inflation-adjusted increases.
- ✓ Streamline hiring processes, including barriers to employing credible messengers.
- ✓ Create more micro promotional pathways, retention incentives, and wellness supports.

Long Term:

- ✓ Consider what are the staff skills, qualifications, experiences, and attitudes (and related pay) needed to work with complex adolescents and their families.
- ✓ Partner with colleges, universities, and workforce boards to create a workforce pipeline strategy including internships, apprenticeships, credentialing, and related incentives.

Expand Service Provider and Workforce Capacity

- ✓ Conduct community resource mapping with youth, families, providers, and community leaders and grassroots organizations.
- ✓ Evaluate whether current funding models incorporate the full costs of doing business and the challenges of working with higher risk adolescents, and adjust funding as needed
- ✓ Develop a cross-systems, statewide, collaborative strategy for creating a pipeline of people committed to working in this field
- ✓ Expand teleservices as well as repurpose and train public agency staff to deliver more direct services and skill building.

Resources and Technical Assistance Opportunity for States

Recently Released Tools and Insights for Improving Youth Justice and Outcomes

[Navigating Concerns on Youth Crime, Violence, and Behavioral Health:](#)

[What Does the Data Say?](#)

The CSG Justice Center analyzed the most recent behavioral health, arrest, and juvenile justice system data available so that policymakers can use this data to improve public safety and youth outcomes.

[Support or Court: How States Respond to Youth Who Commit Status Offenses and Children](#)

[Who Break the Law](#)

We examined how states currently treat youth who commit status offenses and young children who don't have the developmental capacity to fully understand the crimes they are committing. We share takeaways from a 50 state scan and propose a call to action.

[From First Offense to Future Arrests: The Impact of Probation on Youth](#)

A new study shows that young people assigned to probation after their first offense are more likely to be rearrested in the future, particularly for technical violations, than their peers diverted away from probation.



Supporting States Through 1-Day Improving Outcomes for Youth Site Visits

Share information on national research, data trends, and research-based innovations/best practices in youth justice and adolescent service delivery.

Identify shared perceptions of system strengths, gaps, and opportunities to improve public safety and youth outcomes through listening sessions.

Share takeaways with state leaders and identify priorities and next steps for short- and long-term policy, practice, and resource allocation improvement





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Adult Violent Crime and Accountability Trends

Midwest Legislative Conference Annual Meeting

**July 22, 2024 | Madeleine Dardeau, Deputy
Program Director**

The public is concerned about crime and distrustful of the justice system.

78%

of people think there is **more crime across the United States** than in previous years.

40%

of people are “very dissatisfied” with **policies to control or reduce crime.**

17%

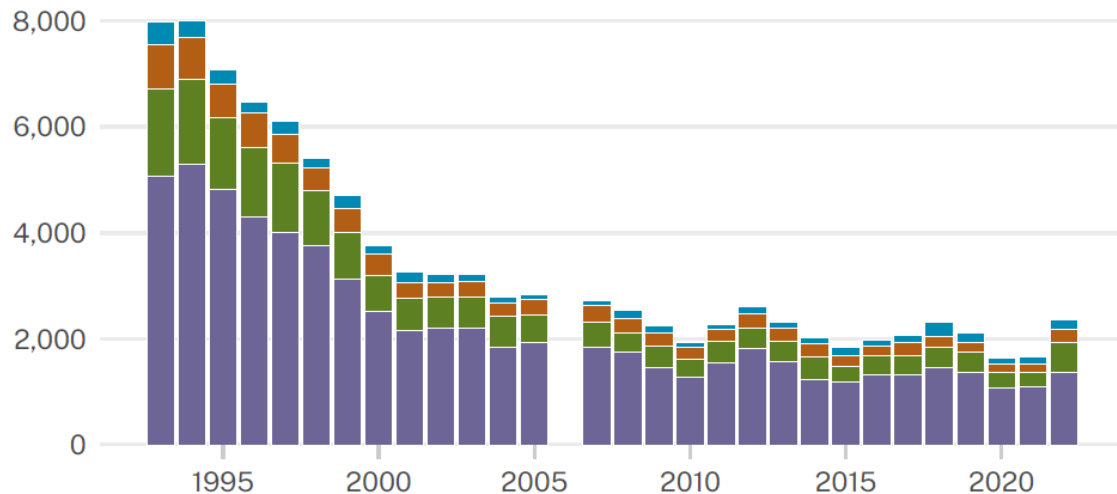
of people have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of **trust in the justice system.**

The rate of violent victimizations in 2022 was 70 percent lower than in 1993.

Violent victimizations

Rate per 100k residents, United States

■ Simple assault ■ Aggravated assault ■ Robbery ■ Rape

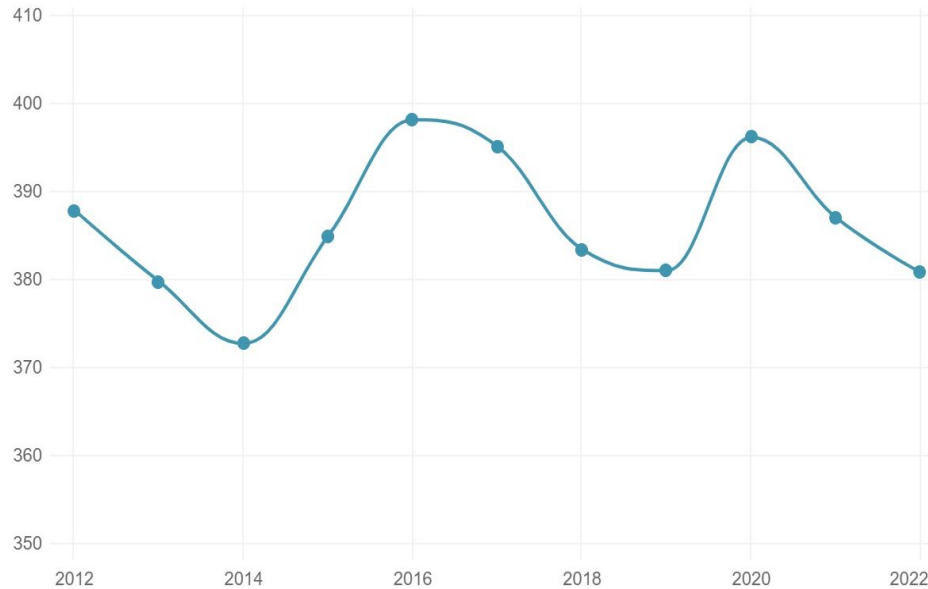


BJS National Crime Victimization Survey

Nationally, the violent crime rate spiked in 2020 but has since declined to pre-pandemic levels.

Violent crime in the United States

Crime reported to police per 100,000 residents

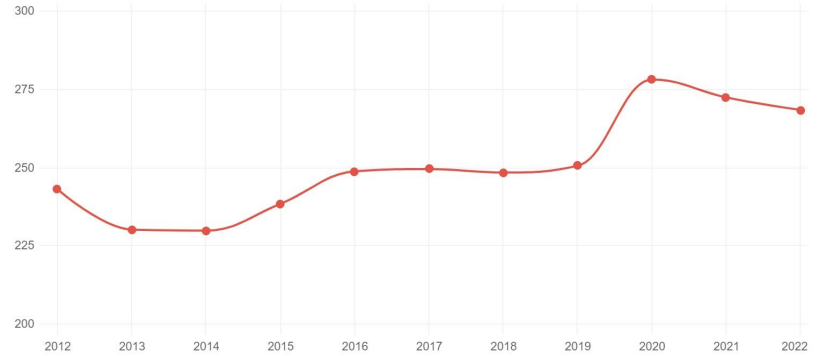


The national violent crime rate includes homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and rape.

The increase in violent crime rates in 2020 was driven by a sharp rise in aggravated assault followed by homicide.

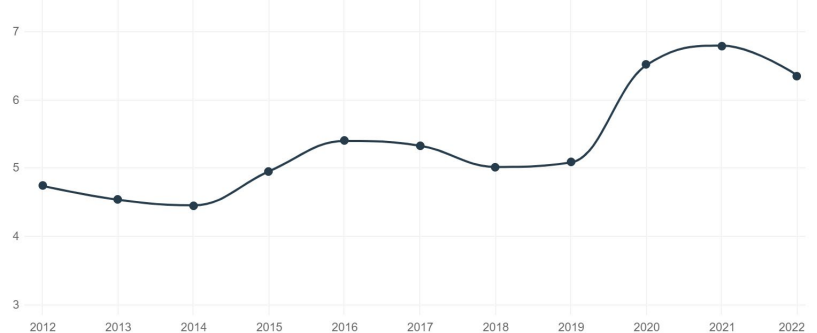
Aggravated assault in the United States

Crime reported to police per 100,000 residents



Homicide in the United States

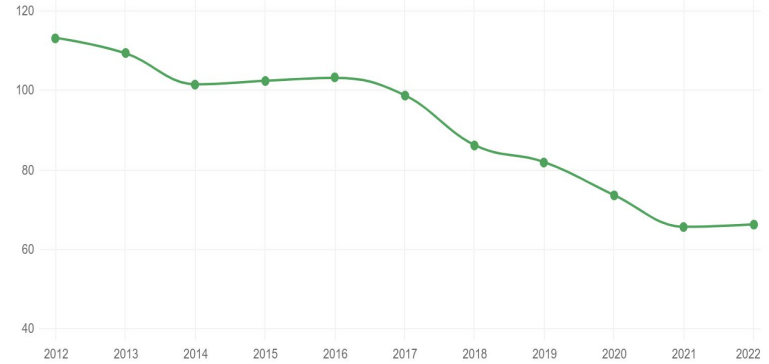
Crime reported to police per 100,000 residents



Robbery rates continued to decline through 2021 before slightly increasing in 2022.

Robbery in the United States

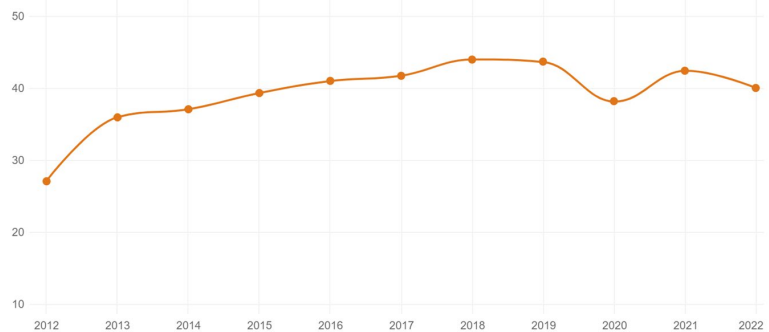
Crime reported to police per 100,000 residents



Rape rates increased in 2021 before declining in 2022.

Rape in the United States

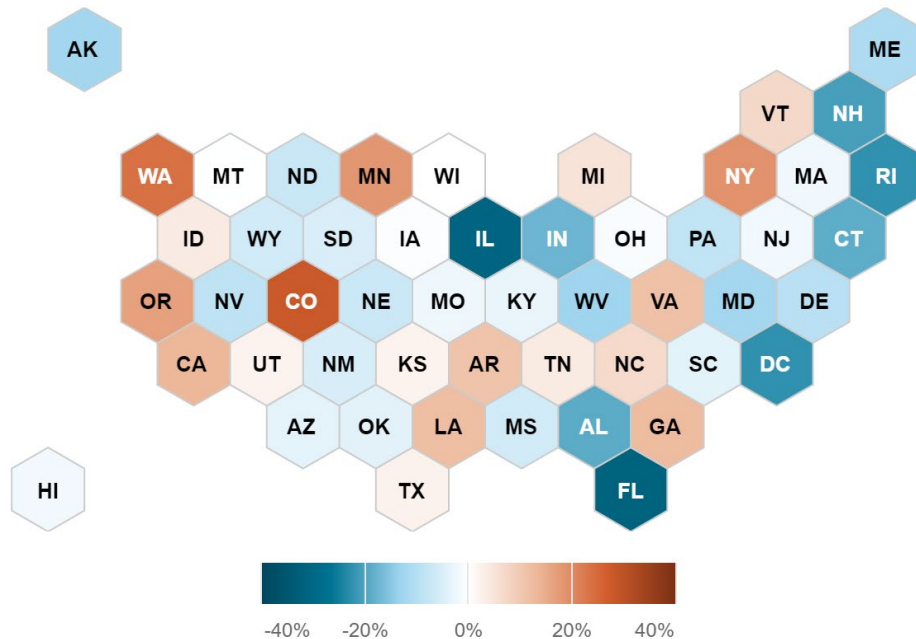
Crime reported to police per 100,000 residents



Between 2019 and 2022, violent crime fell in 32 states (plus DC) and rose in 18 states.

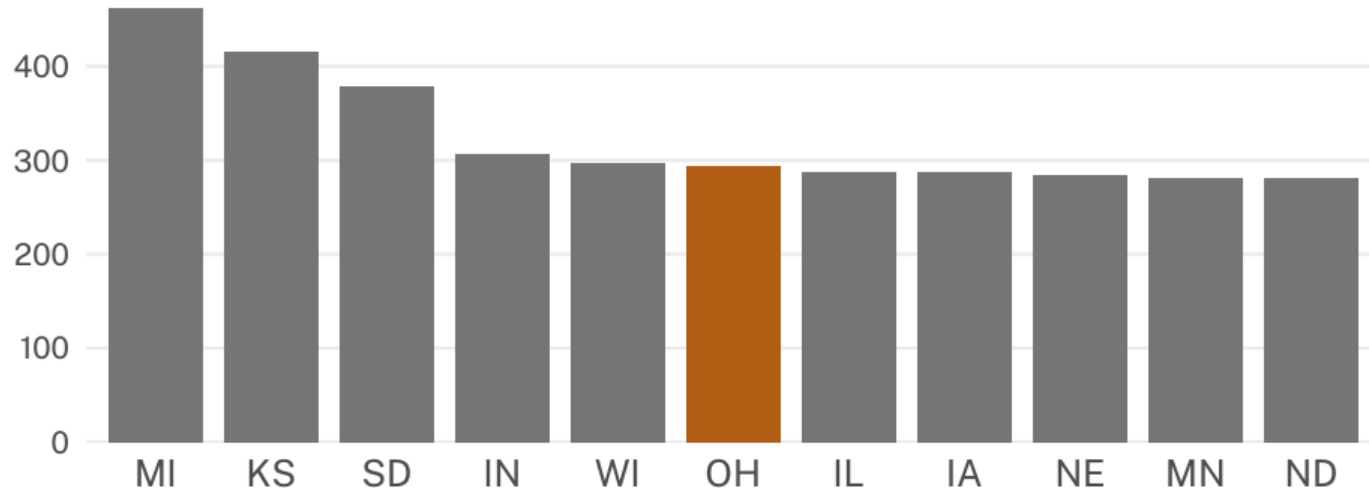
Change in violent crime 2019–2022

Percent change in crime reported to police per 100,000 residents



In the midwestern region, Michigan had the highest rate of violent crime reported to law enforcement in 2022.

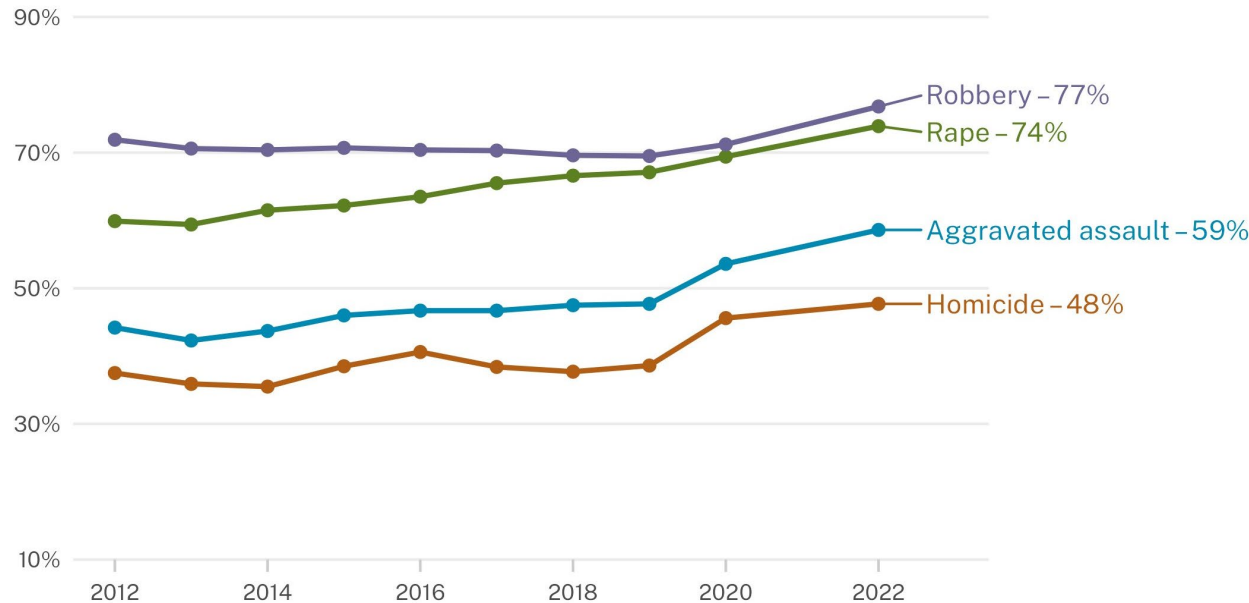
Violent index crime reported to police
Rate per 100k residents, midwestern region, 2022



In 2022, over 63 percent of violent crimes reported to police went unsolved in the United States.

The percentage of violent crimes going unsolved each year has increased in the past decade.

National unsolved rate of violent crime by offense, 2012–2022



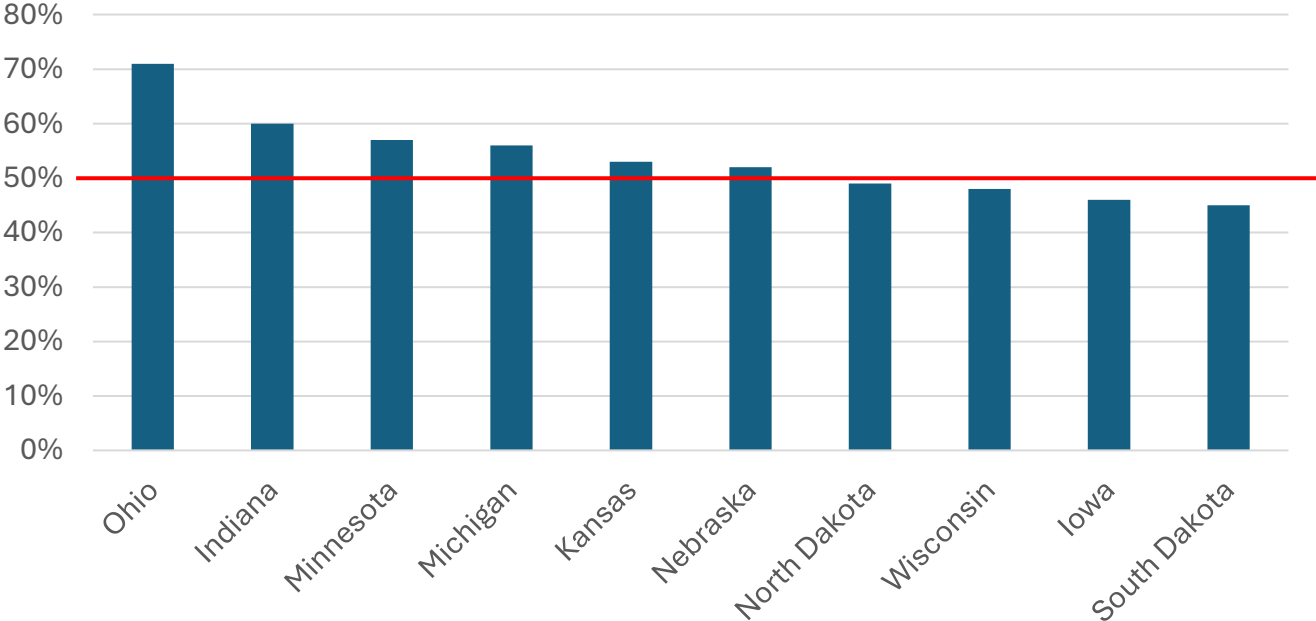
Change rate unsolved by offense, 2012–2022:

- +10% Homicide
- +14% Aggravated Assault
- +14% Rape
- +5% Robbery

FBI Crime in the United States, Table 25

In the midwestern region, more than half of all violent crime went unsolved in 6 states in 2022.

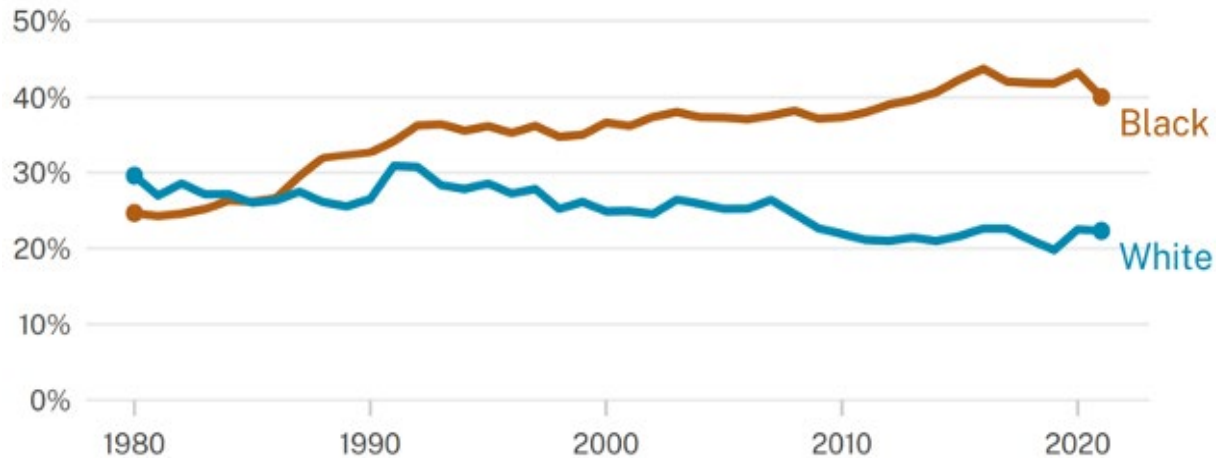
Percentage of unsolved violent crime by state, midwestern region, 2022



Illinois not included due to underreporting of clearance rates.

Clearance rates also indicate an important racial disparity in who is most likely to receive justice when harmed.

National percentage of unsolved homicides by race of victim



Murder Accountability Project

Homicides of Black victims are **about twice as likely to go unsolved** as homicides of White victims.

There are a variety of factors that influence agency solve rates.

Crime trends and characteristics

Technology

Staffing and caseload ratios

Public trust

Staffing and case prioritization

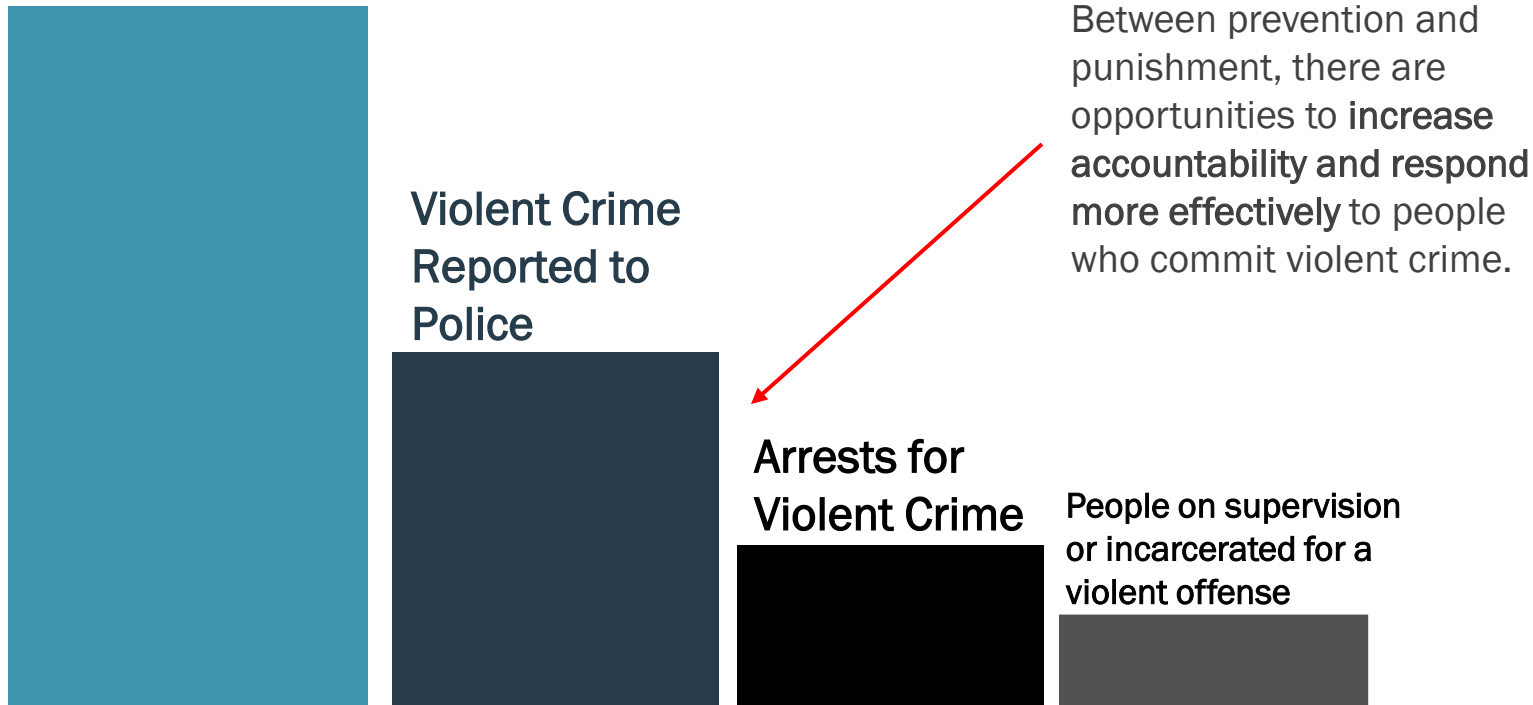
Relationships with prosecution

Investigatory best practices

As concerns about crime **rise** and public trust **declines**, policymakers need a comprehensive plan to advance safety and justice that is grounded in their state's data and context.

1. Solve more violent crimes to increase accountability and deter future violence.

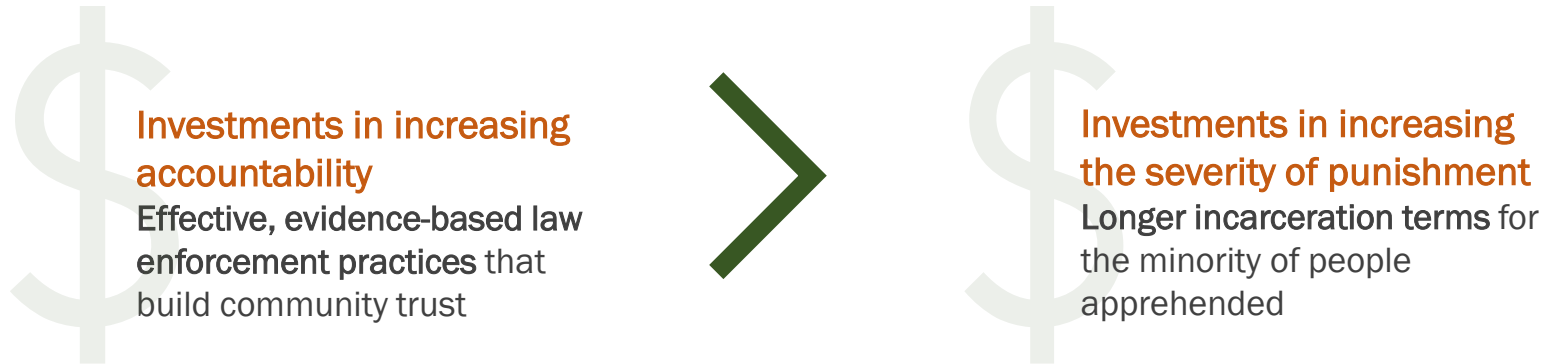
Violent Crime



1. Solve more violent crimes to increase accountability and deter future violence.

Research is clear that the certainty—not severity—of punishment is what deters crime.

For policymakers, this means that investing in increasing accountability can do more to reduce crime than investing in increasing punishment.



1. Solve more violent crimes to increase accountability and deter future violence.

With focus and resources, police are solving more violent crime.



Boston boosted its homicide solve rate **from 47 to 66 percent** after focusing on staff resources, training, use of best practices, and leadership and prioritization.



Denver created a special unit to solve nonfatal shootings, applying the same level of effort and resources as for solving homicides. Within 7 months, solve rates went **from 39 to 65 percent**.



Omaha's solve rate for homicide went **from 32 percent in 2010 to 100 percent in 2023** through a comprehensive, community-driven violence-reduction effort.

Anthony Braga, "Improving Police Clearance Rates of Shootings: A Review of the Evidence," Manhattan Institute, July 20, 2021, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/improving-police-clearance-rates-shootings-review-evidence>; Elise Schmelzer, "Denver police solved less than half of all nonfatal shootings last year. A new solution is showing promise," *The Denver Post*, November 13, 2020, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/11/13/nonfatal-shootings-denver/>; "Beyond Enforcement: Omaha's Story of Community Driven Violence Reduction," (PowerPoint presentation, Violent Crime Reduction Summit, Indianapolis, IN, December 11-13, 2023).

1. Solve more violent crimes to increase accountability and deter future violence.

How can states help local law enforcement solve more violent crime?

- **Analyze trends in agency solve rate data and provide targeted assistance** to localities with low solve rates.
- **Increase support for victims and witnesses** who experience violent crime to address trauma and support them in cooperating with investigations.
- **Expand law enforcement's capacity to focus on solving violent crime** by reducing detective caseloads with funding, supporting alternative response units, or establishing state “cold case” units.
- **Address backlogs and delays** at state crime labs that process evidence.
- **Provide grant funds** to support evidence-based approaches to increasing clearance rates including community-system partnerships.

2. Make data-driven investments in violence prevention and intervention.

Roughly *half* of violent crimes are never reported to law enforcement.

Violent Crime



Develop and fund a statewide crime prevention and intervention strategy.

Use data to focus evidence-based violence prevention and intervention efforts in communities most impacted by violent crime.

3. Commit to a statewide recidivism-reduction goal.

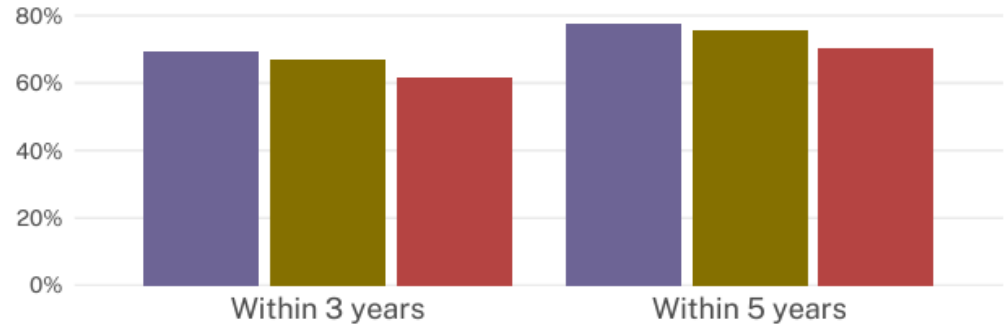
While national recidivism rates have declined, over half of people released from prison are convicted of a new offense within 5 years.

Incarceration.
Reentry.
Supervision.

Percentage of people released from prison who were arrested following release

United States

Release year ■ 2005 ■ 2008 ■ 2012



4. Address trauma to prevent trauma.

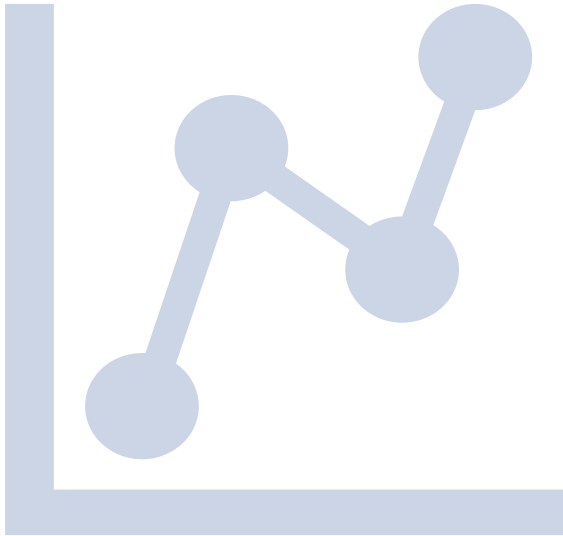
Trauma is a cycle that shapes patterns of offending and victimization.



Ensuring that victims and people who commit violence are connected to **relevant, trauma-informed support and resources** is critical to breaking the cycles of violence.

Building trust between communities and the justice system **requires the system to be responsive** to the needs of people who experience victimization.

Safety and justice deserve better data.



Collect data on crime, arrests, victimization, backlogs, and system responses.

Analyze data to identify local and regional challenges, racial disparities, and how recidivism is contributing to violent crime trends.

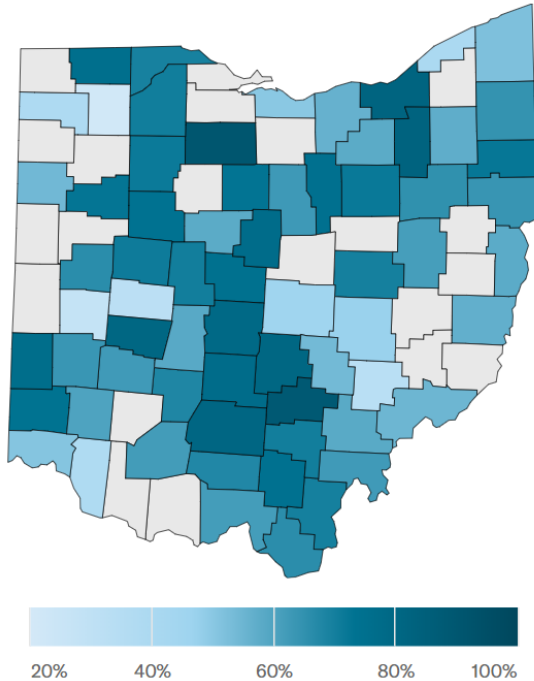
Report data in a way that is accessible to policymakers and the public.

Measure the impact of investments and policy changes to see what works.

Tools for States to Address Crime

 50-State Crime Data 5 Ways States Can Reduce Violent Crime

Unsolved Violent Crime Rate, 2022



Scan the QR code to access your state's data.





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