

DESCRIPTION

Crime and high rates of incarceration impose tremendous costs on society, with lasting negative effects on individuals, families and communities.¹ Rates of crime in the U.S. have been falling steadily, but still constitute a serious economic and social challenge. At the same time, the incarceration rate in the U.S. is so high that policymakers question whether, for nonviolent criminals, the social costs of incarceration exceed the social benefits.¹ Public spending on fighting crime—including the costs of incarceration, policing, and judicial and legal services—as well as private spending by households and businesses is substantial. There are also tremendous costs to the victims of crime, such as medical costs, lost earnings, and an overall loss in quality of life. Crime also stymies economic growth. Crime can induce citizens to migrate; economists estimate that each nonfatal violent crime reduces a city's population by approximately one person, and each homicide reduces a city's population by seventy persons.¹ Elevated rates of crime and incarceration directly work against long-term prosperity and economic growth, marginalizing individuals, devastating affected communities and perpetuating inequality.¹ Exposure to crime can cause feelings of being unsafe, mental distress and reduced quality of life, along with the possible physical effects of being a direct victim.²

HOW WE ARE DOING

Crime rates in Ramsey County have been dropping for years and are near historic lows. In 2017, there was a serious crime rate of 3,414 offenses per 100,000 residents, while in 2000 the rate was 5,267 per 100,000 population. There were 20,790 serious crime offenses in Ramsey County during 2017.³ When asked about how feelings of being safe from crime within communities, 36.1 percent of Ramsey County residents reported feeling “very safe” and 14.7 percent responded with “somewhat unsafe” or “not at all safe” in 2014.⁴

DISPARITIES

Low-income individuals are more likely than higher-income individuals to be victims of crime. Most criminal offenders are younger than age 30. Disadvantaged youth engage in riskier criminal behavior.¹ In the U.S. there is nearly a 70 percent chance that an African-American man without a high school diploma will be imprisoned by his mid-30s.¹ In 2017, Minnesotans of color were nearly three times more likely to be charged with a serious crime than their white peers.³

RISK FACTORS

Criminal behavior starts mainly during early adolescence and is overwhelmingly an adolescent/early adult phenomenon.⁵ Traditional criminological theories are concerned with biological factors, developmental experiences and/or social forces that create the criminal offender.⁶ The occurrence of crime is understood largely as an expression of the offender's acquired deviance, which may be a function of events that occurred many years beforehand.⁶ A more recent view is that crime is concentrated around “crime opportunities” and other environmental features that facilitate criminal activity and that given the right circumstances, most people are capable of illegal conduct. Crime occurs when residents feel isolated and anonymous and believe that they have no stake in their neighborhood.⁶

Information to note

- Serious crime includes homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson and human trafficking.
- There were 20,790 instances of serious crime in 2017 in Ramsey County, most occurring in Roseville, followed by Maplewood and St. Paul.
- Ramsey County has the highest serious crime rate in Minnesota.

¹ Kearney S, Harris B, Jácome E, Parker L. Ten economic facts about crime and incarceration in the United States. Brookings Institute. 2014. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ten-economic-facts-about-crime-and-incarceration-in-the-united-states/>. Published May 1, 2014. Accessed July 2018.

² Crime and Violence. Healthy People 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/crime-and-violence>. Accessed July 2018.

³ Criminal Justice Data Reporting. Minnesota Department of Public Safety. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>. Accessed July 2018.

⁴ Metro SHAPE Adult Health Survey 2014. Ramsey County Data Book. https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Open%20Government/Public%20Health%20Data/ramsey_county_metro_SHAPE_2014_survey.pdf. Accessed July 2018.

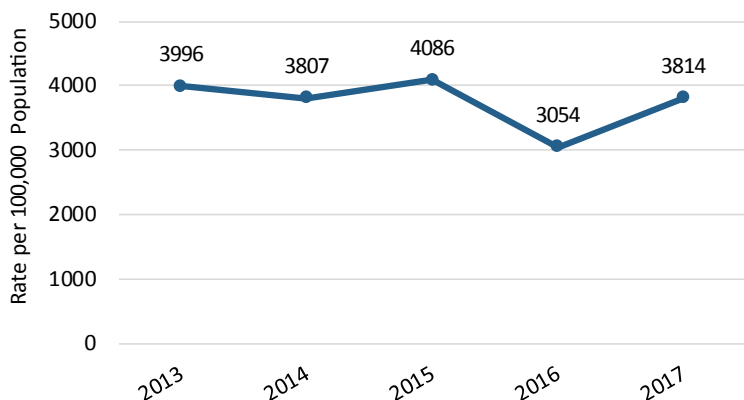
⁵ Thornbury P. ed. *Advances in Criminological Theory: Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers; 2017.

⁶ Wortley R, Townsley M. eds. *Environmental Criminology and Crime Analysis*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge; 2017.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

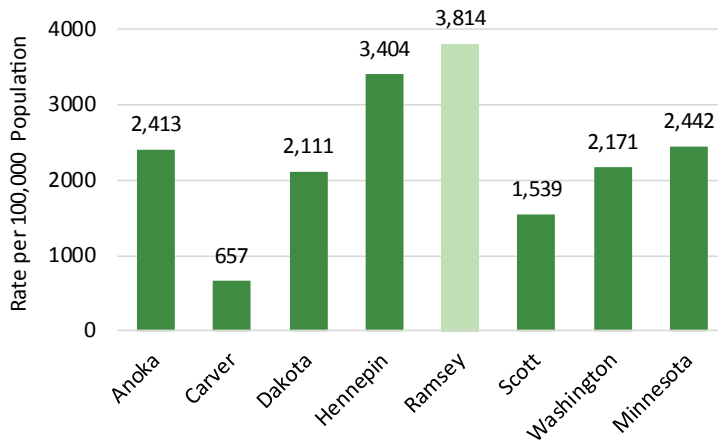
The Ramsey County Attorney’s Office partners with law enforcement, neighborhood non-profits and community leaders, and youth to improve justice in our community. Some of the initiatives that have undertaken to improve public safety and quality of life for our residents are: combatting sex trafficking; participation in the East Metro Crime Prevention Coalition, free gun lock distribution, a GPS Technology Initiative for domestic violence victims, a Safe Summer Initiative in neighborhoods, assistance to veterans in the criminal justice system, participation in the Community Task Force on Safe Schools, and improving prevention and responses to sexual violence victims through the Start by Believing campaign.

Serious Crime* Rate Over Time, Ramsey County



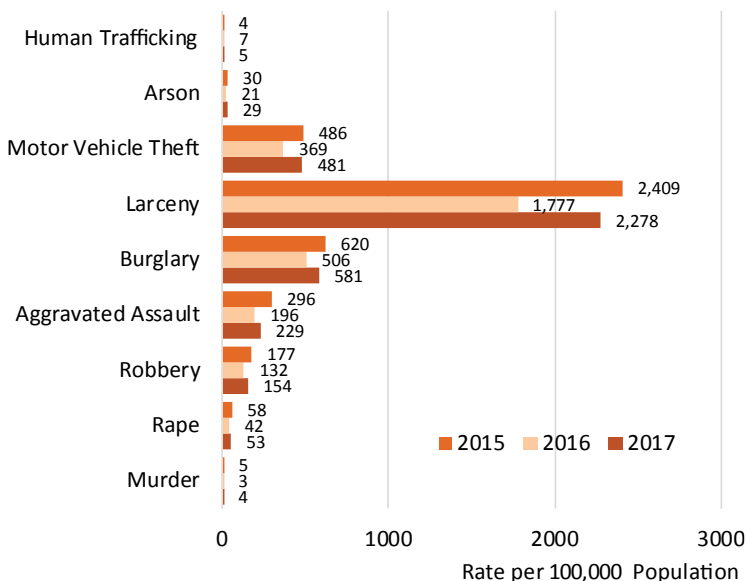
Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety.⁷

Serious Crime* Rate by Metro County, 2017



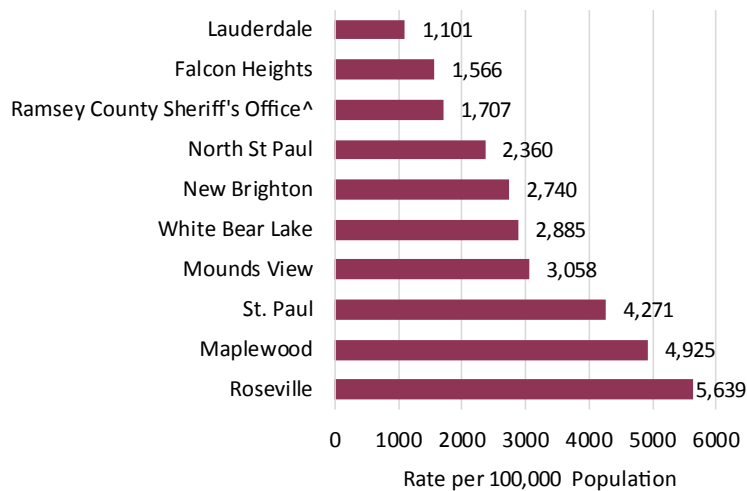
Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety.⁷

Serious Crime Rate by Type, Ramsey County



Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety.⁷

Serious Crime* Rate by City, Ramsey County, 2017



^ The Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services to Arden Hills, Little Canada, North Oaks, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights and White Bear Township. Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety.⁷

*Serious crime includes murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, human trafficking.

⁷ Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Criminal Justice Data Reporting. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>. Accessed July 2018.