

Executive summary

Trends and Issues 2008 was developed to provide an overview of the extent and nature of crime and crime victimization over the past decade in Illinois. This is the sixth *Trends and Issues* published by ICJIA. The first was released in 1987 and the last in 1997.

While the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of criminal justice activities and the response and impact of the criminal justice system. In addition, these data are readily available and consistently defined through existing statewide data collection mechanisms. Some data presented in this report may have been analyzed differently than in previous years and caution must be taken when comparing numbers presented with previous reports.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement agencies in Illinois operate at municipal, county, state, and federal levels. While officers at every level are charged with enforcing the law, citizens also expect police to prevent and control crime. Besides the apprehension of criminals, police work often encompasses conflict resolution, maintenance of neighborhood order, problem solving, and coordination among other governmental and community agencies. Rapid technology advancements made over the past decade have created additional challenges to officer training and information management. Finally, the past decade has witnessed unprecedented large-scale threats to public safety that law enforcement must be prepared to handle. At its core, law enforcement has three objectives – to detect and investigate crime, and arrest suspects.

The following facts summarize the findings of the Law Enforcement Section, based primarily on crime statistics from the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting Program (I-UCR):

- Statewide, more than six million index offenses were reported to police during the 11-year period 1995 through 2005. This amounts to a 15 percent reduction in total reported offenses from the previous 11-year period, 1984 through 1994.
- Illinois experienced a continual downward trend in the number of reported index offenses (violent and property) between 1995 and 2005, a trend that occurred nationwide. Index offenses known to police dropped 28 percent during that period.
- Statewide between 1995 and 2005, violent index offenses accounted for 16 percent of the total offenses reported to police, and property index offenses accounted for 84 percent of the total reported index offenses.

- Statewide between 1995 and 2005, aggravated assaults accounted for the majority of reported violent index offenses (60 percent), while theft accounted for the majority of reported property index offenses (69 percent).
- In Chicago, violent index offense rates (per 100,000 persons) dropped 50 percent between 1995 and 2005. This dramatic reduction was greater than for the rest of the state, which experienced a 29 percent decrease. Statewide, violent index offenses declined 43 percent.
- Robbery index offense rates in rural counties was the only index offense category to increase from 1995 to 2005. As a geographic region, rural counties experienced a 10 percent increase in index robbery offenses reported to police, while the rest of the state experienced a 31 percent decrease.
- All regions of Illinois experienced a similar 30 percent decline in property index offenses reported to police between 1995 and 2005.
- Statewide, more than 1.3 million index arrests (violent and property) were made during the 11-year period. This was a 9 percent decrease in total volume of index arrests between 1984 and 1994.
- A steady decrease was seen in the number of total index (violent and property) arrests in Illinois, in line with the decrease in total index offenses. A 33 percent decrease in index arrests was seen statewide while a 24 percent decline reported nationally.
- Violent index arrests decreased 24 percent statewide. Chicago and the rest of the state experienced similar decreases in violent arrest rates over the 11-year period.
- Statewide, violent index arrests accounted for 23 percent of total index arrests, while property index arrests accounted for 77 percent. As seen, in violent and property index offenses, the majority of violent and property index arrests were for aggravated assault and theft, respectively.
- About 1.1 million arrests for drug crimes were reported statewide between 1995 and 2005. This is twice the volume of arrests seen during the previous 11-year period, 1984 through 1994.
- Unlike other types of arrests reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), arrests for drug crimes generally increased between 1995 and 2005. Statewide, drug arrests increased by 23 percent.
- While the smallest increase in the drug arrest rate was in Chicago (9 percent), the rest of the state experienced a 46 percent increase. As a whole, rural counties exhibited a 103 percent increase in drug arrest rates during the 11-year period.

Some of this increase in drug arrests reflects the activity of the more than 20 specialized drug task forces operating in Illinois.

- Arrests for controlled substances accounted for 48 percent of all drug arrests in Illinois between 1995 and 2005, while arrests for cannabis accounted for 39 percent and hypodermic needle and paraphernalia arrests accounted for the remaining 13 percent.
- A substantial increase was seen statewide in cannabis arrest rates per 100,000 persons from 1995 to 2005 (65 percent). In 1995, the arrest rates for cannabis were half that for controlled substances. However, by 2005 cannabis arrest rates surpassed those for controlled substances.
- The 11 multijurisdictional narcotics task forces and nine metropolitan enforcement groups operating around the state seized 10 times as many grams of cannabis and controlled substances in 2006 compared to 2005, three times as much crack cocaine, and 7 percent more heroin.
- Statewide motor vehicle theft index offense rates, as measured per 100,000 registered vehicles, decreased 44 percent from 1995 to 2005. Collar counties in which specialized motor vehicle task forces operate experienced a 53 percent decrease in motor vehicle index theft rates, while urban counties served by motor vehicle task forces experienced a 31 percent decrease.
- According to a needs assessment survey of police chiefs conducted by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority in 2005, theft cases were rated as the top major contributor to officers caseloads, followed by domestic violence cases and cases involving juvenile offenders.
- A majority of police chiefs surveyed said increasing the monitoring of offenders and using more severe punishments would be the best way to reduce illegal drug activity and violent crime. More than three-fourths of respondents also stated that having more youth prevention programs would help reduce these problems.

The courts

Under the U.S. constitution, courts resolve disputes, interpret the law, and apply sanctions to lawbreakers. In this capacity, courts are the final arbiters of the rules by which society is governed. The court system as a whole deals with a wide range of matters, from small claims disputes to violent crimes. Illinois courts also have post-trial duties, including community supervision of offenders on probation.

- In 2005, felonies and misdemeanors accounted for 11 percent of all filings in Illinois courts (criminal, civil, traffic, family, and other).

- In 2005, felony filings increased in urban and collar counties by about 34 percent and in rural counties by 40 percent. In Cook County felony filings decreased 22 percent, while misdemeanor filings decreased 20 percent statewide.
- Between 1995 and 2005, the number of offenders convicted of a felony and sentenced in Illinois increased 5 percent, from 59,889 to 63,069.
- Between 1995 and 2005, the number of active adult probation cases in Illinois increased 23 percent, from 74,349 to 91,186.
- In 2005, felony offenders accounted for 65 percent of Illinois' active adult probation caseload, 92 percent of the Cook County caseload, 57 percent of urban county caseloads, 58 percent of collar county caseloads, and 46 percent of rural county caseloads.

Corrections

The criminal justice system provides for the operation of correctional institutions at the federal, state, and local levels. The federal government operates penitentiaries and one jail in Illinois, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) is responsible for state correctional centers, and county jails and municipal lockups function at the local level.

The following summarizes adult corrections data:

- Incarcerated populations at the local level (county jail), state level (IDOC prisons), and federal level (federal penitentiaries) increased in size between state fiscal years 1995 and 2005.
- County jails, especially in rural counties, have increased in bookings, the booking rate, and average daily population. However, unlike Cook and collar county jails, rural counties generally do not have a jail population that is above capacity.
- The federal prison population has increased at 21 times the rate of the U.S. population increase.
- IDOC admissions have increased in almost every year between 1995 and 2005, with the technical violation and recidivism rates at all-time highs in later years.
- IDOC admissions and exits for drug offenses are the most common, with more than 40 percent of all new court admissions stemming from drug offenses. Methamphetamine-related drug offenses in particular showed a sharp increase between 1998 and 2002.
- Sex offense admissions have more than doubled since 1995, but violent sex offense admissions have actually decreased. As a proportion of all sex offense

admissions, nonviolent sex offense admissions increased at a rate of more than nine times between 1995 and 2004.

- The IDOC population increased from 37,658 inmates in 1995 to 44,669 inmates by June 30, 2005, though the prison population size has been fairly stable since 1999.
- IDOC facilities are overpopulated at approximately over 10,000 inmates above capacity.
- Inmates sentenced to IDOC facilities are disproportionately black; about four times as many inmates are black as compared to their proportion in the general population.
- The commutation of all death sentences to life in prison emptied death row in 2003. Defendants can still be sentenced to death, but executions will not be carried out as long as the moratorium is in effect.

Juvenile justice system

The juvenile justice system in Illinois operates as 102 county-level systems, with some oversight by state agencies for specific responsibilities including probation, detention, and corrections. Each county's juvenile justice system is comprised of a network of various local and state entities that deal with minors under age 17 who commit delinquent acts. Each agency has different responsibilities within the juvenile justice system, and comes into contact with youth at different stages in the justice process.

- A 17 percent increase was seen in the juvenile arrest rate between 2000 and 2004.
- Illinois had a 33 percent decrease in the rate of juvenile delinquency petitions and a decrease of 3 percent of the rate of juvenile court adjudications from 1995 to 2005.
- The rate of juvenile detention admissions decreased by 40 percent from 1995 to 2005.
- A 12 percent drop in of the rate of juvenile probation caseloads was seen from between 1995 and 2005.
- There was a 7 percent increase in the rate of juvenile incarceration admissions, but a 45 percent decrease in court commitments to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, which includes commitments for mental health and drug evaluation prior to adjudication, from FY99 to FY04.

- Black youth in Illinois were four times more likely than white youth to be arrested and incarcerated in 2004 and four times more likely than white youth to be detained in 2005.

Crime victims

Crime victimization has touched many people in Illinois. Several sources of crime victimization data are available. Victim services are provided throughout the state by both governmental and non-governmental entities.

- The statewide rate of domestic offenses in 2005 was 903 per 100,000 people.
- The statewide rate of crimes against children in 2005 was 309 per 100,000 juveniles.
- The statewide rate of reported crimes against school personnel was 25 per 100,000 people.
- The statewide rate of reported child abuse and neglect in 2005 was 3,454 per 100,000 juveniles.
- The statewide rate of verified child abuse and neglect in 2005 was 852 per 100,000 juveniles.
- The statewide rate of reported incidents of elder abuse in 2005 was 437 per 100,000 adults 60 years old and older.
- ICJIA conducted a statewide needs assessment survey in which, victim service providers surveyed about the needs of the criminal justice system indicated they would like to see greater victim involvement in decision-making processes and greater enforcement of victims' rights.