



Research Bulletin

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Decade of trends shows continual decrease in Illinois crime

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An accurate understanding of state and national crime trends is key to helping law enforcement officials develop and implement effective criminal justice strategies. In recognition of this, the Authority analyzes patterns and trends in criminal activity using the best data available.

Crime reported to Illinois law enforcement agencies dropped for the 11th consecutive year in 2004.

This *Research Bulletin* focuses on statistics revealing a continuing downward trend in Illinois crime. A description of data used in this report also is provided.

Illinois highlights: 1995 to 2004

Crime reported to Illinois law enforcement agencies dropped for the 11th consecutive year in 2004.

Total Index offenses decreased 26 percent between 1995 and 2004, from 659,325 to 484,825. A decrease in the number of violent offenses accounted for much of the drop, with a 41 percent dip, while the number of property offenses were down 23 percent (Figures 1 and 2).

The number of Violent Index offenses reported to the police decreased across all Illinois regions between 1995 and 2004. Cook County experienced the largest regional drop in violent offenses at 48 percent. While the percentage of Cook County Violent Index offenses accounted for by murders remained relatively unchanged during the period studied, murder in Chicago decreased 46 percent, from 824 to 448. Violent crime decreased 28 percent in rural counties, 24 percent in collar counties, and 21 percent in urban counties.

Also in Illinois between 1995 and 2004:

- The number of violent offenses dropped 41 percent, compared to a 33 percent decline nationally.



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
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About the data

Uniform Crime Reporting program

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program is a nationwide, cooperative statistical effort of nearly 16,000 city, county, and state law enforcement agencies. These agencies report police-level data on crime that is brought to their attention to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting section. In 1972, Illinois instituted mandatory UCR reporting on a statewide basis. Since then, every law enforcement agency in the state has been required to report crime data monthly to the Illinois State Police (ISP). ISP creates and maintains computer files of Illinois UCR data.

After reviewing the Index crime information received from local agencies, ISP submits the data to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Section for use in compiling national crime statistics. The FBI combines it with data reported by the other states to publish *Crime in the United States* each year.

Crime Index

The Crime Index consists of eight crime categories that, when taken together, provide some indication of how much serious crime has occurred in a jurisdiction, region, or state. Violent Index crime includes murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. Property Index crime includes burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. In most research, violent crime is analyzed separately from property crime.

Crime rates

Raw crime figures are useful for many purposes, such as for looking at the number of offenses in a single jurisdiction. However, raw numbers are not standardized against the population at risk. They do not reveal whether a higher amount of crime in one jurisdiction compared with another is a function of the greater number of people who live there. Crime rates do provide this type of information and are usually calculated as a rate per 100,000 population. The denominator for calculating a crime rate is the *population at risk*. In the case of this report, statewide population figures were used.

- Murders declined by 37 percent.
- Sexual assault fell 20 percent.

Sexual assault fell 20 percent between 1995 and 2004.

- The greatest decrease among Index crimes was seen in robbery and aggravated assault, the most frequently reported violent offense, at 42 percent each.
- The number of property offenses dropped by 23 percent.
- The number of burglaries fell 29 percent.
- Theft, the most frequently reported property offense, declined 20 percent.
- Motor vehicle theft experienced the greatest decrease among Property Index offenses, at 35 percent.
- The number of arsons dropped 31 percent.

National trends

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois remained the fifth most populous state in the nation in 2004. While Illinois' population increased 7 percent between 1995 and 2004, the violent offense rate decreased annually from 1,008 offenses for every 100,000 people in 1995, to 558 offenses for every 100,000 people in 2004 (Table 1).¹

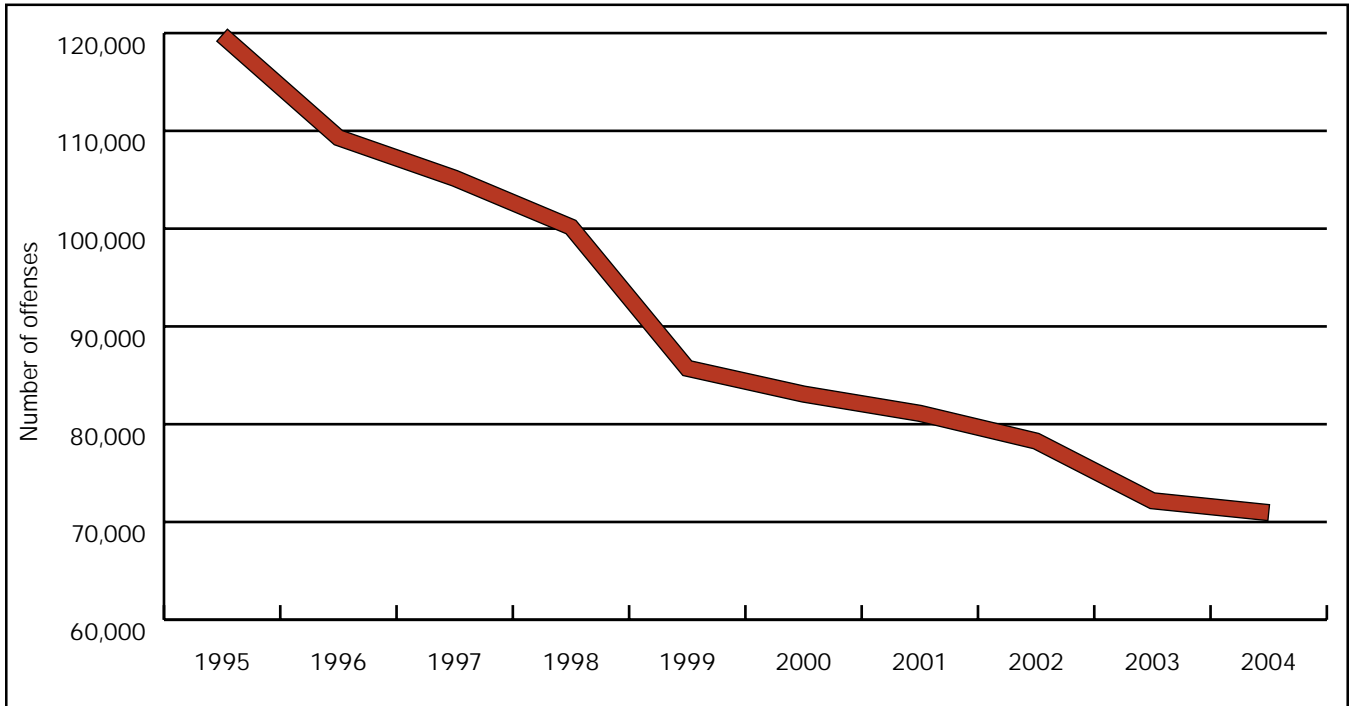
The largest drop in the Violent Index offense rate was reported in New York (52 percent), followed by Illinois (46 percent), California (43 percent), New Jersey (40 percent), and Florida (36 percent).

Based on estimated violent crime rates among the 10 most populated states in the country, the Illinois average was second only to Florida between 1994 and 2002.² In 2003, the Illinois violent crime rate dropped to third behind those of California and Florida.

Nationally, the violent offense rate decreased 33 percent between 1994 and 2003.

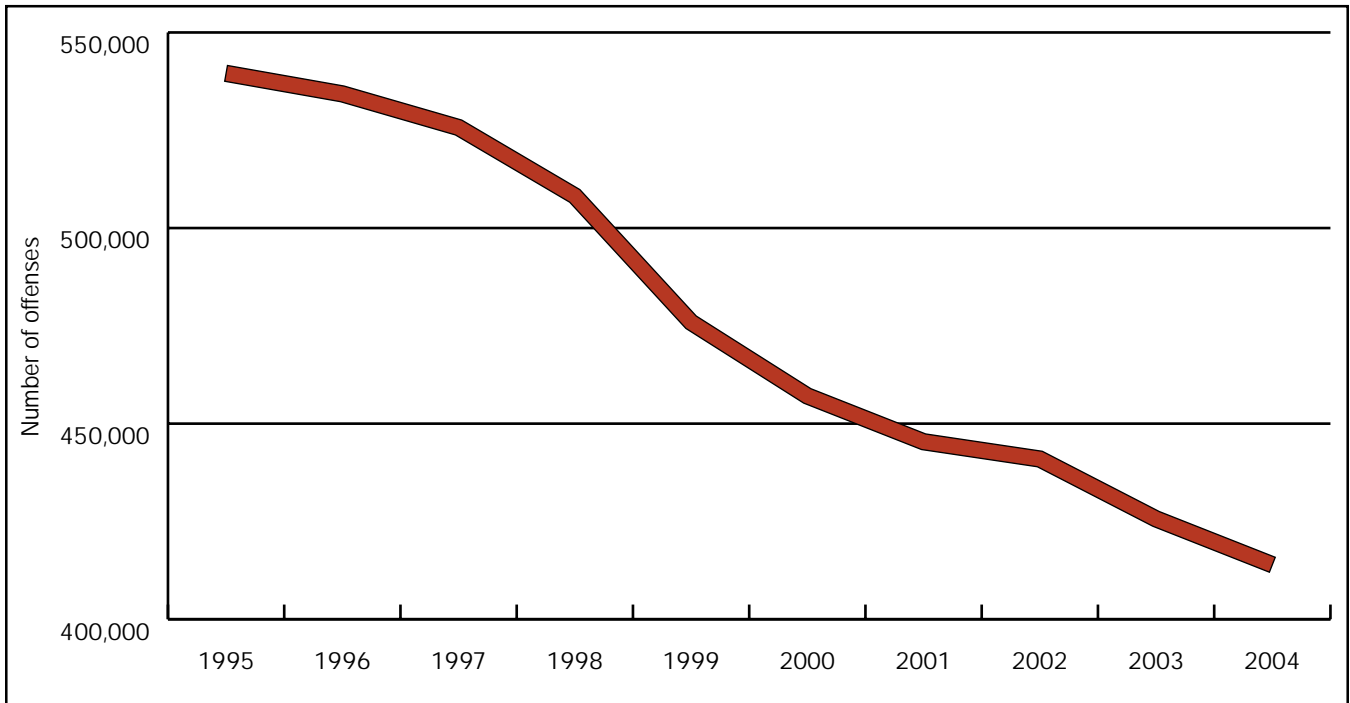
Property offense rates also continued to decrease nationally between 1994 and 2003. New York experienced the greatest decrease in property offense rates during that period at 45 percent. The rates also decreased 40 percent in New Jersey, followed by Florida

Figure 1
Trends in Violent Index offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Figure 2
Trends in Property Index offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Table 1
Reported Index offenses and rates per 100,000 population*

Violent Index Crimes	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Change in rate
Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter	1,225 (10)	1,171 (10)	1,115 (9.28)	1,017 (8)	939 (8)	898 (7)	982 (7.85)	961 (8)	895 (7)	776 (6)	-41%
Criminal Sexual Assault	7,242 (61)	6,719 (56)	6,626 (55.16)	6,200 (51)	6,286 (52)	5,687 (46)	5,708 (46)	6,132 (49)	5,852 (46)	5,813 (46)	-25%
Robbery	39,193 (330)	35,311 (285)	33,431 (278.32)	30,229 (250)	26,398 (218)	25,672 (206)	24,965 (199)	25,350 (201)	23,813 (188)	22,561 (177)	-46%
Aggravated Assault	72,124 (607)	66,105 (553)	63,985 (533)	62,718 (520)	52,099 (430)	50,823 (409)	49,455 (395)	45,833 (364)	41,612 (329)	41,806 (329)	-46%
Total	119,784 (1,008)	109,306 (914)	105,157 (875)	100,164 (830)	85,722 (707)	83,080 (668)	81,110 (648)	78,276 (622)	72,172 (570)	70,956 (558)	-45%
Property Index Crimes	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Change in rate
Burglary	107,246 (902)	106,029 (887)	104,856 (873)	97,899 (811)	86,317 (712)	81,846 (658)	79,157 (632)	81,442 (648)	78,345 (619)	75,944 (597)	-34%
Larceny/Theft	366,465 (3,083)	366,549 (3,067)	360,290 (3,000)	352,395 (2,920)	329,244 (2,715)	321,612 (2,586)	314,080 (2,509)	311,305 (2,473)	302,386 (2,390)	294,750 (2,318)	-25%
Motor Vehicle Theft	62,296 (524)	57,885 (484)	56,905 (474)	54,528 (452)	57,115 (471)	50,681 (407)	49,160 (393)	45,219 (359)	42,069 (332)	40,780 (321)	-39%
Arson	3,534 (30)	3,838 (32)	3,652 (30)	3,389 (28)	3,244 (27)	2,948 (24)	2,976 (24)	2,989 (24)	2,849 (23)	2,455 (19)	-35%
Total	539,541 (4,540)	534,301 (4,470)	525,703 (4,377)	508,211 (4,211)	475,920 (3,924)	457,087 (3,675)	445,373 (3,558)	440,955 (3,503)	425,649 (3,364)	413,929 (3,256)	-28%

*Rates in parenthesis.

Source: ICJIA calculations based on ISP and U.S. Census Bureau data.

(37 percent), California (34 percent), Michigan (30 percent), Illinois (28 percent), Georgia (20 percent), Pennsylvania and Texas (11 percent each), and Ohio (8 percent).

Notes

1. According to the most recent estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois' population increased 7 percent between 1995 and 2004, from 11,884,935 to 12,713,634.
2. Illinois did not submit data in a format compatible to the FBI Uniform Crime Division standards for the years 1994-2003 (most recent years of available data). Consequently, the FBI estimated Illinois' Index crime rates. Therefore, the UCR data reported to the Illinois State Police were used, rather than FBI data.