

Trends in Illinois crime: 1995-1999

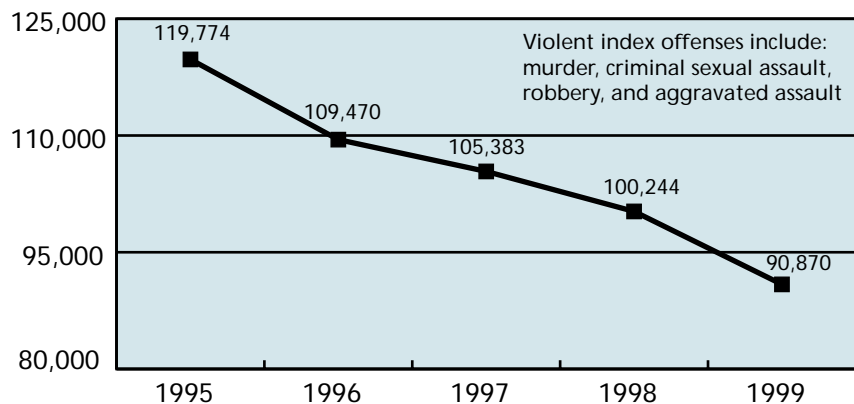
By Robert Bauer

Crime reported to law enforcement agencies continued to decline for the fifth consecutive year in Illinois. Total index offenses decreased nearly 15 percent between 1995 and 1999, from 659,080 offenses to 560,536 offenses. A decline in the number of violent offenses accounted for much of this drop. Violent offenses decreased 24 percent, while the number of property offenses decreased 13 percent (Figures 1 and 2).

Between 1995 and 1999, the number of violent index offenses reported to the police decreased across all Illinois regions. The rural counties experienced the largest regional decrease in the number of violent offenses, dropping 28.7 percent. Despite this decrease, the percentage of murders accounted for by the rural counties remained relatively unchanged (less than 5 percent). During the same period, violent crime decreased 24.9 percent in Cook County (down 36.5 percent in *suburban* Cook County), followed by the urban counties (22.8 percent) and the collar counties (13 percent).

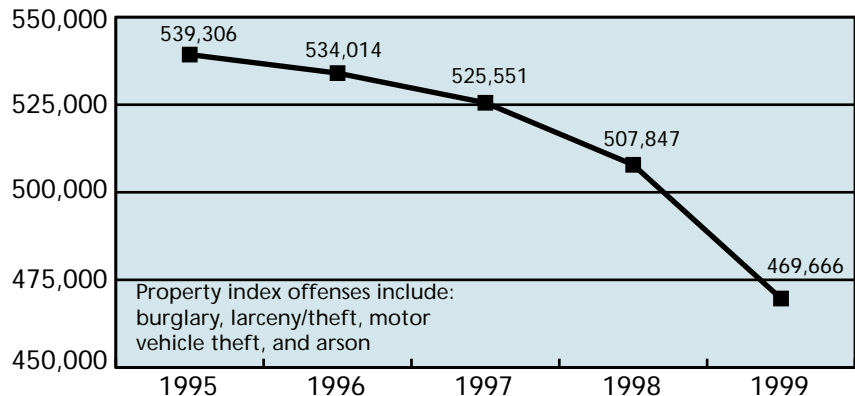
According to the FBI, serious crime in the United States has declined for the eighth consecutive year. Violent crime declined 20.5 percent nationally between 1995 and 1999.

Figure 1
Violent index offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Figure 2
Property index offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Highlights

In Illinois, between 1995 and 1999:

- In Illinois, the number of violent offenses declined 24.1 percent, compared to a 20.5 percent decline nationally.
- Murders declined by 23.6 percent.
- Criminal sexual assaults fell 16.2 percent.
- Aggravated assaults, the most frequently reported violent offense, declined 20.6 percent.
- Robberies saw the greatest decrease among index crimes, falling 32 percent.
- The number of property offenses declined by 12.9 percent.

- The number of burglaries declined 19.4 percent.

Reported crime and rates decline

Index crimes include violent and property offenses. Violent offenses are murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. Property offenses are burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

While Illinois' population continues to increase (2 percent between 1995 and 1999), the violent offense rate declined from 1,008 offenses for every 100,000 persons in 1995, to 749 offenses for every 100,000 persons in 1999 (Table 1).¹

Based on 1999 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, Illinois is the fifth most populous state in the nation. California, Texas, New York and Florida are the four states with populations greater than Illinois. Table 2 shows the 1995-1999 violent index offense rates for the ten most populated states. Based on estimated violent crime rate, Illinois had the second highest rate throughout the five-year period,² while Florida had the highest violent crime rate.

Nationally, the violent offense rate decreased 23.3 percent between 1995 and 1999. In Illinois, the decrease was 25.7 percent. The largest decrease in the violent offense rate was reported in California (35.1 percent), followed by

Uniform Crime Reports and Crime Rates

UCR 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 the Illinois UCR data.

After reviewing the index crime data received from local agencies, the Illinois State Police submits this data to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Section for use in compiling national crime statistics. The FBI then uses this data, along with data reported by the other states, to publish *Crime in the United States* on an annual basis.

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. Each of the eight offenses is called an "index crime." There are four violent index crimes – murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault – and four property index crimes – 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. In other words, 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. A "crime rate" on the other hand, does provide this type of information. Crime rates 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.

$$\frac{\text{Number of offenses} \times 100,000}{\text{State population}} = \text{Offense rate per } 100,000 \text{ population}$$

Ohio (34.4 percent) and New Jersey (31.3 percent).

Property offense rates also continued to decrease between 1995 and 1999. California and New York experienced the greatest decreases in property offense rates between 1995 and 1999, 34.9 percent and 27.6 percent, respectively. Property offense rates also decreased 27 percent in New Jersey, 19.2 percent in Florida, 15.6 percent in Michigan, 14.7 percent in Illinois, 14.1 percent in Georgia, 11.1

percent in Texas, 8.5 percent in Pennsylvania and 6.1 percent in Ohio.

Notes:

1. According to the most recent estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois' population increased 2 percent between 1995 and 1999, from 11,884,935 to 12,128,370.

2. Illinois did not submit complete data to the FBI Uniform Crime

Division for the years 1995-1999. Consequently, the FBI estimated Illinois' index crime rates. Therefore, the UCR data reported to the Illinois State Police were used, rather than FBI data.

— Robert Bauer is a senior research analyst with the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

Table 1
Number and rate of reported index offenses in Illinois

Violent index crimes	Reported index offenses (rates per 100,000)					Percent change in the rate per 100,000
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	1,226 (10.32)	1,170 (9.79)	1,114 (9.27)	1,017 (8.43)	937 (7.73)	-25.1%
Criminal sexual assault	7,234 (60.87)	6,748 (56.45)	6,643 (55.31)	6,174 (51.15)	6,062 (49.98)	-17.9%
Robbery	39,195 (329.79)	35,312 (295.42)	33,434 (278.35)	30,229 (250.45)	26,644 (219.68)	-33.3%
Aggravated assault	72,119 (606.81)	66,240 (554.17)	64,192 (534.42)	62,824 (520.51)	57,227 (471.84)	-22.2%
TOTAL	119,774 (1,007.78)	109,470 (915.84)	105,383 (877.35)	100,244 (830.54)	90,870 (749.24)	-25.7%
Property index crimes						
Burglary	107,241 (902.33)	106,366 (889.87)	104,808 (872.56)	97,792 (810.22)	86,390 (712.30)	-21.1%
Larceny/theft	366,246 (3,081.60)	365,866 (3,060.87)	360,192 (2,998.72)	352,170 (2,917.78)	327,422 (2,699.64)	-12.4%
Motor vehicle theft	62,286 (524.08)	57,921 (484.57)	56,892 (473.65)	54,504 (451.57)	52,561 (433.37)	-17.3%
Arson	3,533 (29.73)	3,861 (32.30)	3,659 (30.46)	3,381 (28.01)	3,293 (27.15)	-8.7%
TOTAL	539,306 (4,537.73)	534,014 (4,467.61)	525,551 (4,375.40)	507,847 (4,207.59)	469,666 (3,872.46)	-14.7%

Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Table 2
Violent offense rates in the 10 most populated states

State	Estimated population	Violent index offense rate					Percent change 1995-1999
		1999	1995	1996	1997	1998	
California	(33,145,121)	966.0	862.7	798.3	703.7	627.2	-35.1%
Texas	(20,044,141)	663.9	644.4	602.5	564.6	560.3	-15.6%
New York	(18,196,601)	841.9	727.0	688.6	637.8	588.8	-30.1%
Florida	(15,111,244)	1,071.0	1,051.0	1,023.6	938.7	854.0	-20.3%
Illinois	(12,128,370)	1,007.8	915.8	877.3	830.5	749.2	-25.7%
Penn.	(11,994,016)	427.3	432.5	442.1	420.5	420.5	-1.6%
Ohio	(11,256,654)	482.5	428.7	435.4	362.5	316.4	-34.4%
Michigan	(9,863,775)	687.8	635.3	590	620.8	574.9	-16.4%
New Jersey	(8,143,412)	599.8	531.5	492.6	440.1	411.9	-31.3%
Georgia	(7,788,240)	657.1	638.7	606.6	572.7	533.9	-18.7%

Sources: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data, FBI's *Crime in the United States 1999*.

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