



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Crime & Accountability Trends in Washington

December 5, 2023 | Marshall Clement, Deputy Director



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps state leaders improve safety and justice.



Washington Criminal Justice Data Snapshot

December 2023



Community and Behavioral Health

Crime in the Community

Victimization

Law Enforcement

Institutional Corrections

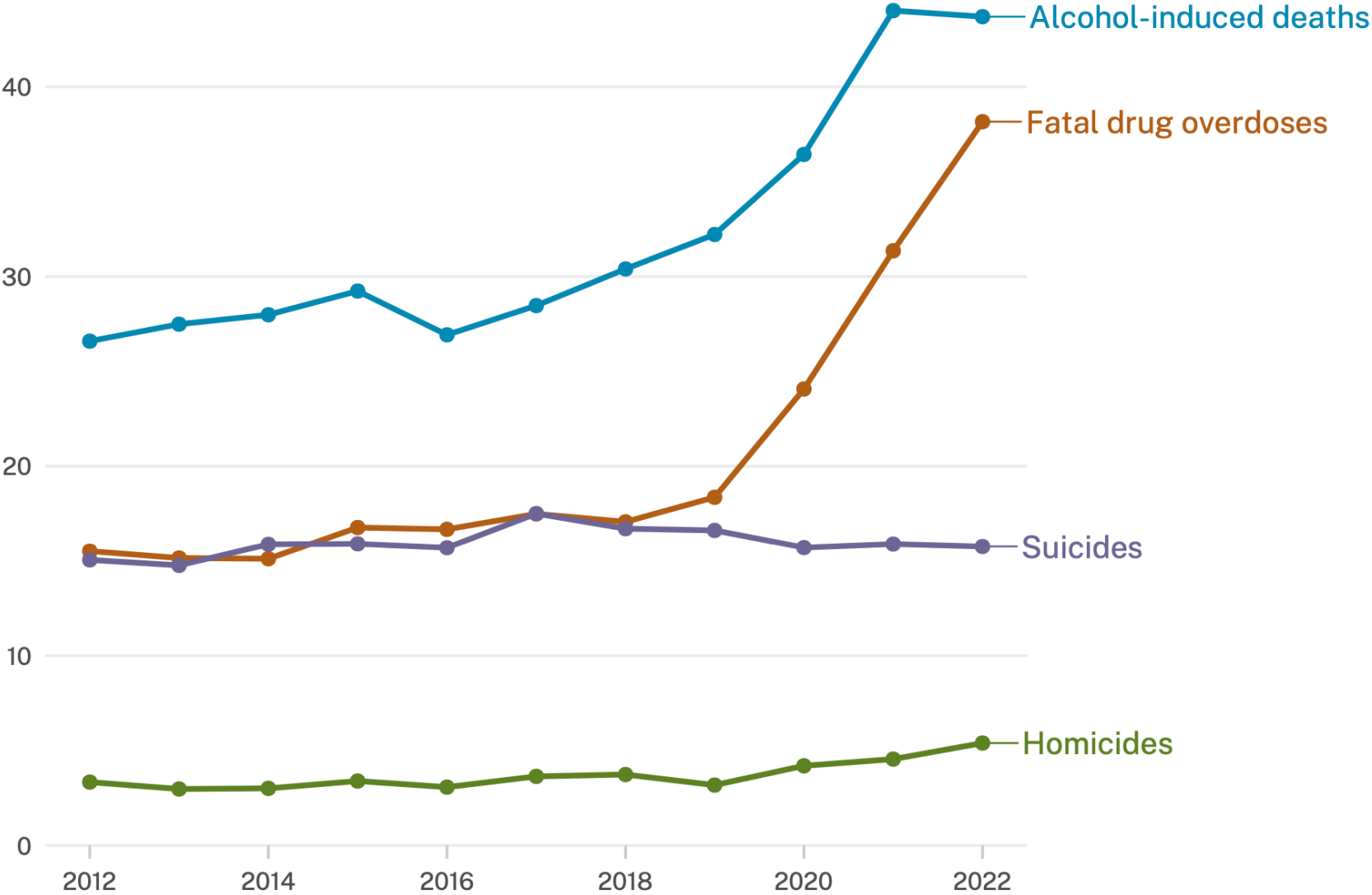
Community Corrections

Reentry and Recidivism

Racial Disparities

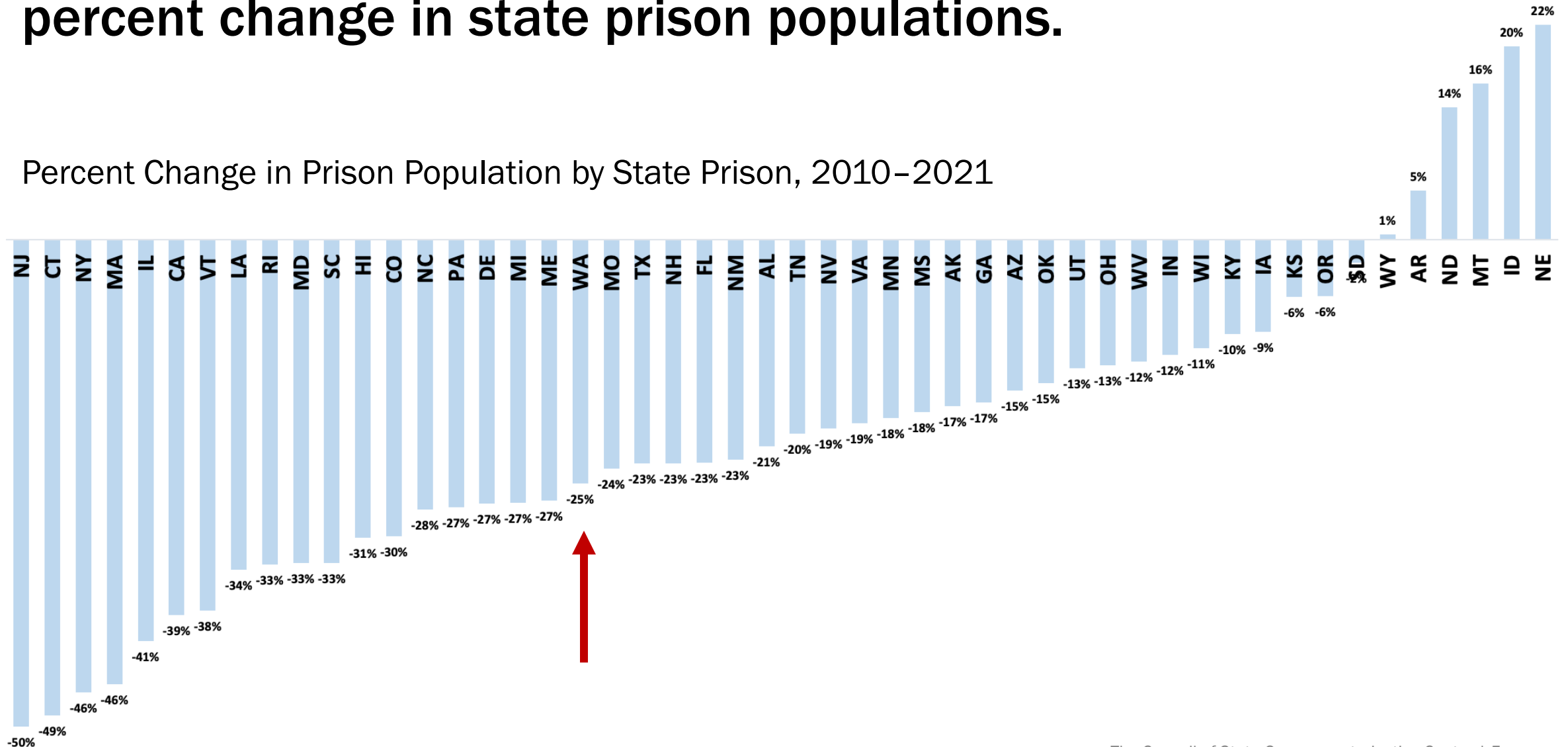
Figure 1. Cause of death

Rate per 100k residents, Washington



From 2010 to 2021, there was significant variation in the percent change in state prison populations.

Percent Change in Prison Population by State Prison, 2010–2021

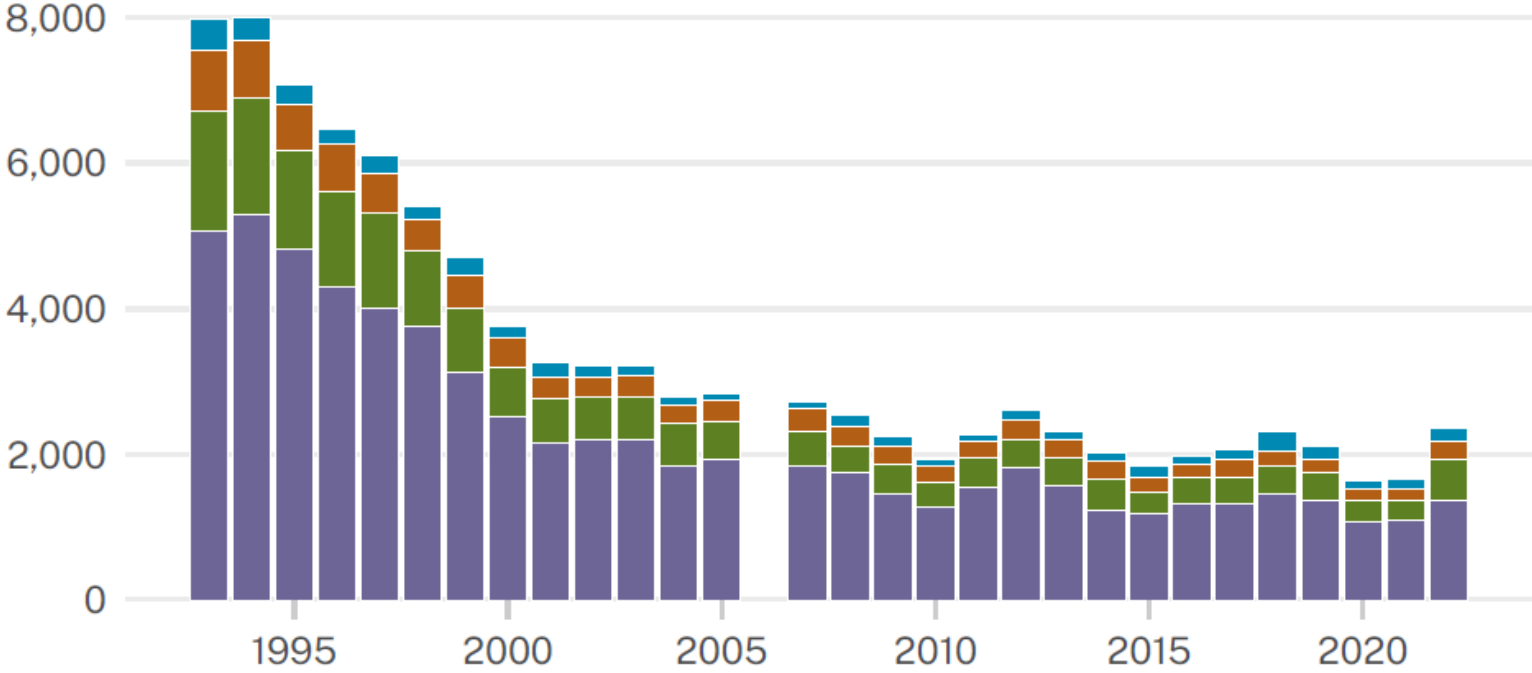


The rate of violent victimizations in 2022 was 70 percent lower than in 1993.

Violent victimizations

Rate per 100k residents, United States

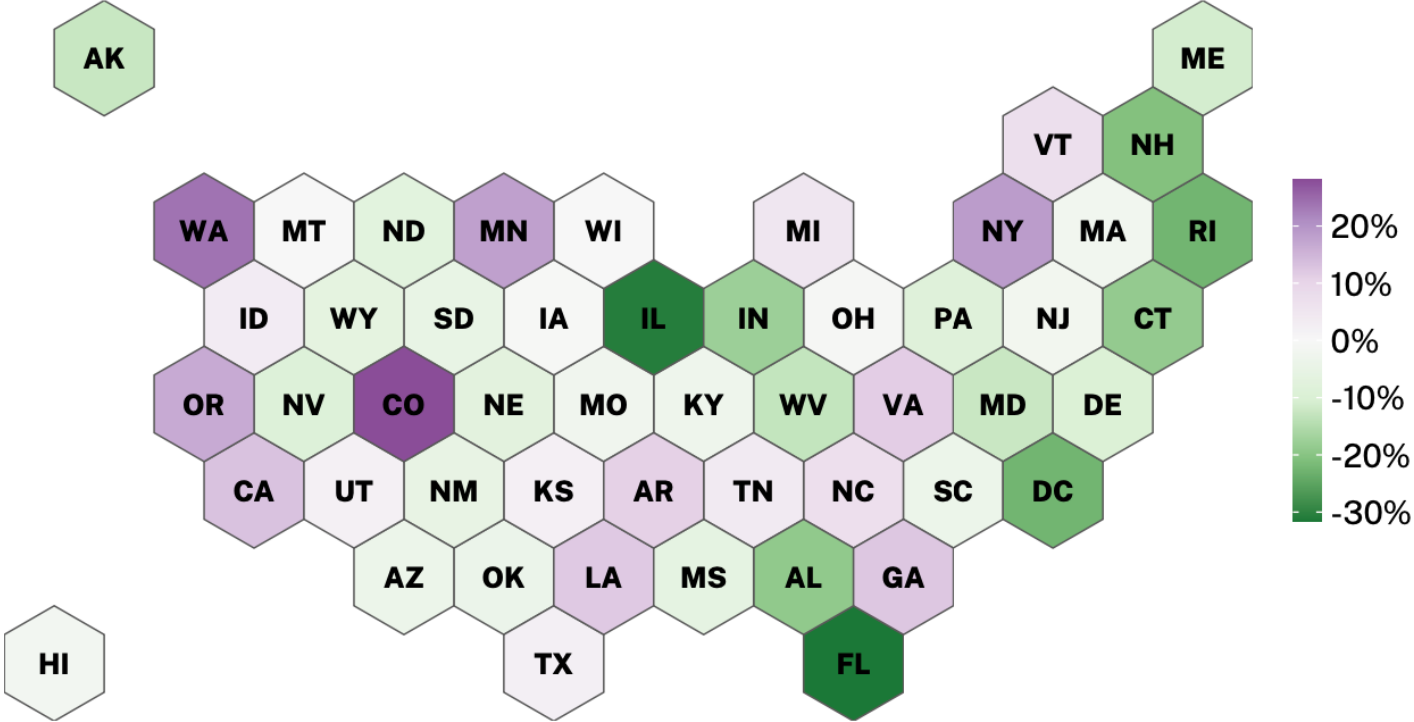
Simple assault Aggravated assault Robbery Rape



BJS National Crime Victimization Survey

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

Figure 9. Percent change in violent crime, 2019 to 2022

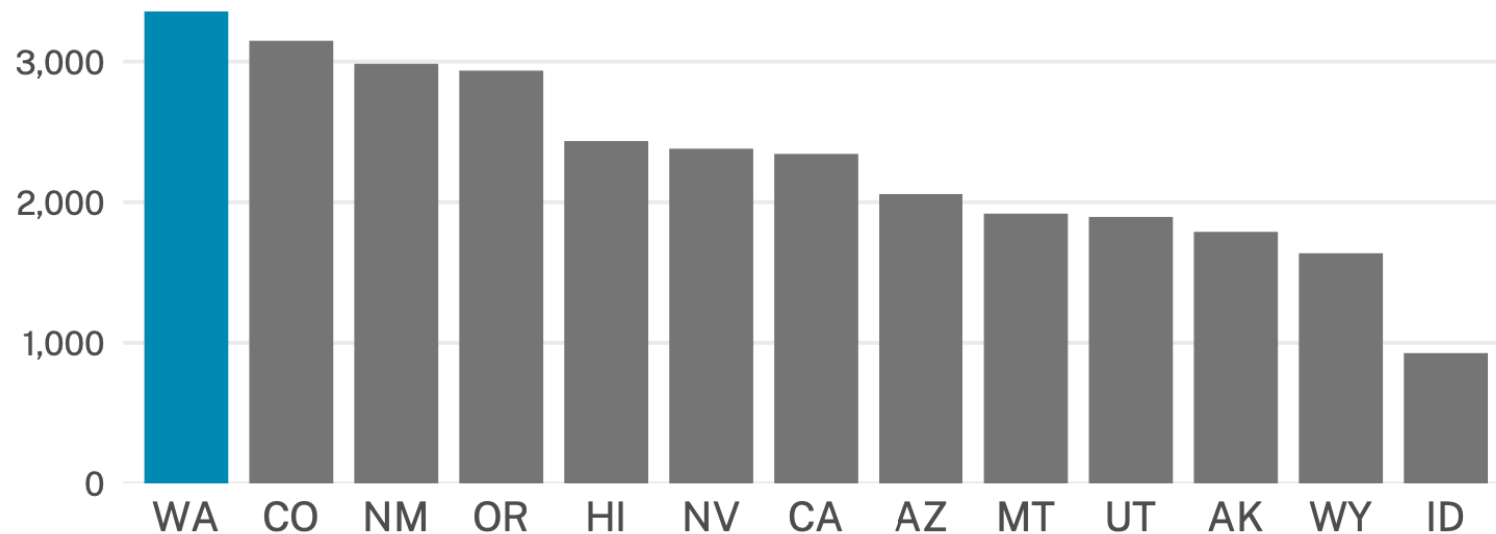


FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

There were 261,323 property index crime incidents reported to police in Washington in 2022.

Washington had the highest property crime rate in the region and the 2nd-highest property crime rate in the country.

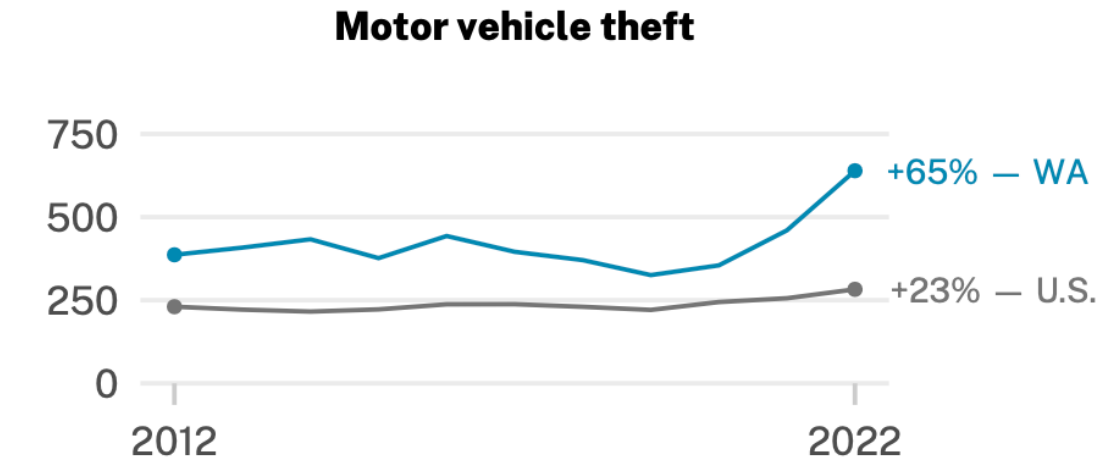
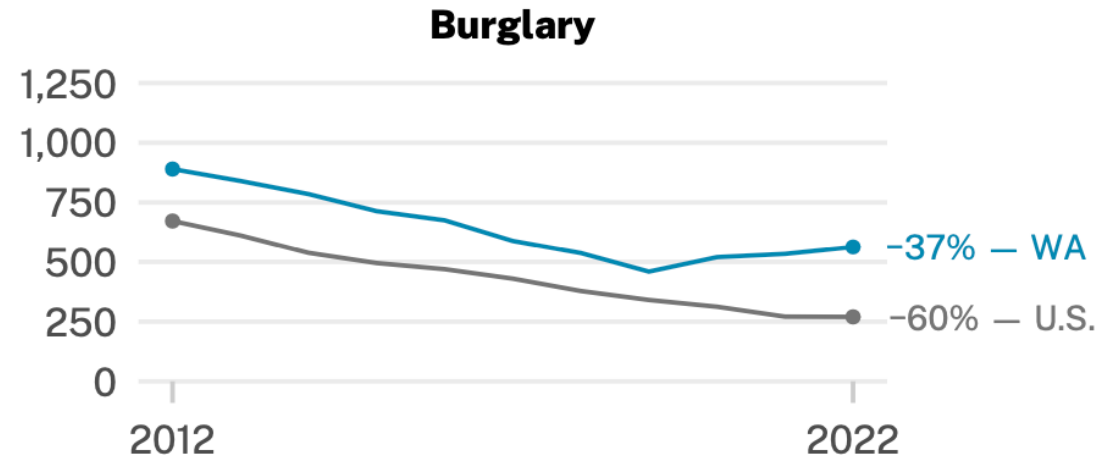
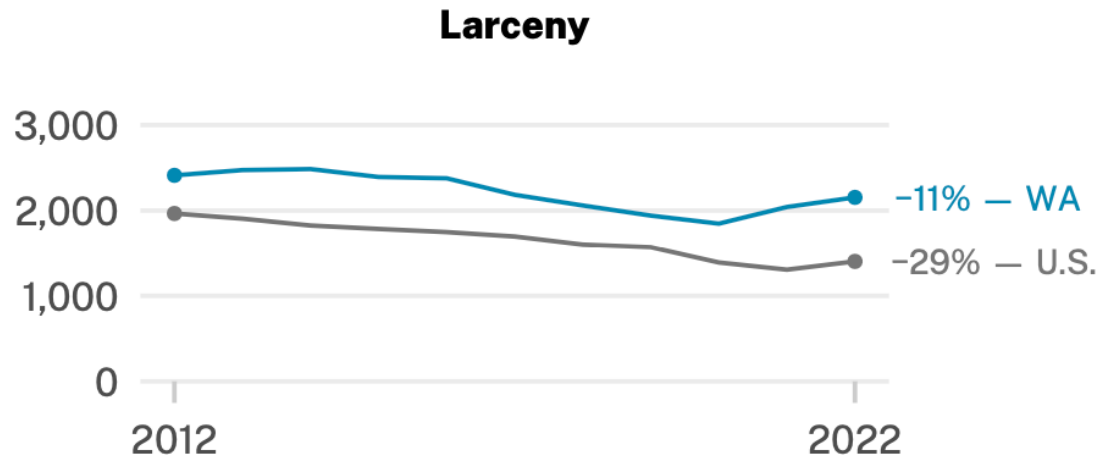
Figure 11. Property index crime reported to police
Rate per 100k residents, Western Region, 2022



FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

Figure 14. Property index crime reported to police by offense

Rate per 100k residents

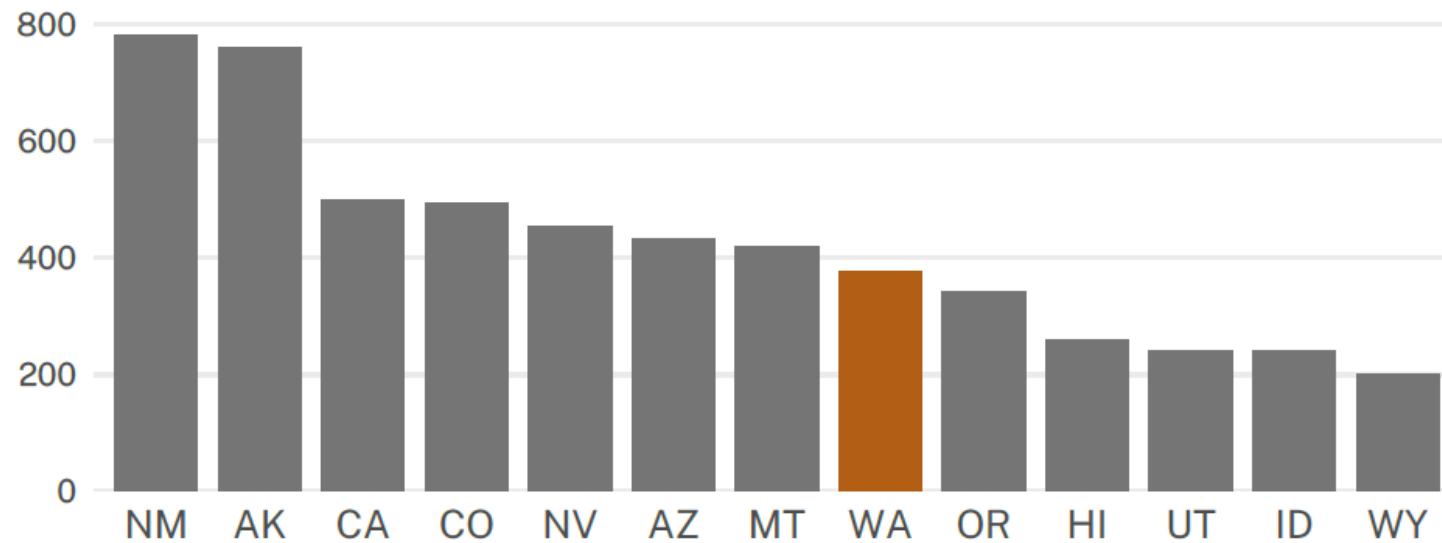


There were 29,247 violent index crime incidents reported to police in Washington in 2022.

Washington had the 6th-lowest violent crime rate in the region and the 24th-highest violent crime rate in the country.

Figure 12. Violent index crime reported to police

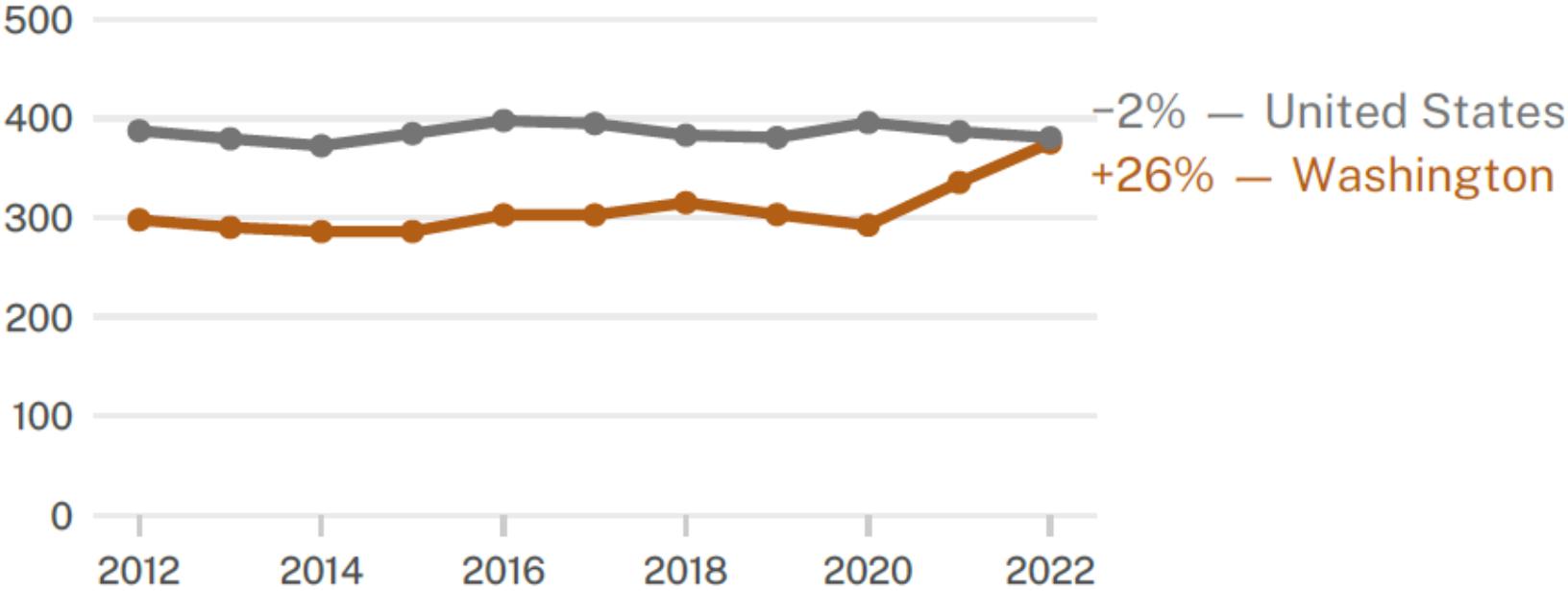
Rate per 100k residents, Western Region, 2022



FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

Violent crime in Washington has increased 26 percent since 2012.

Rate per 100k residents

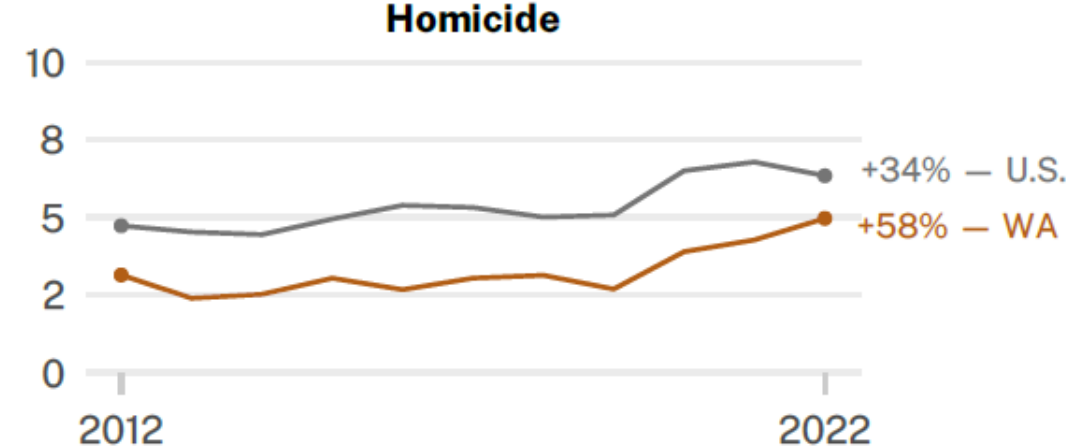
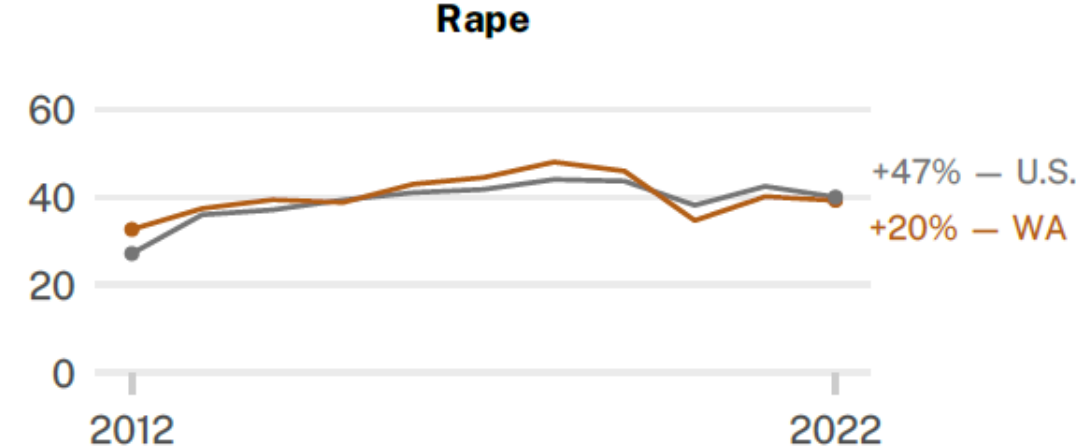
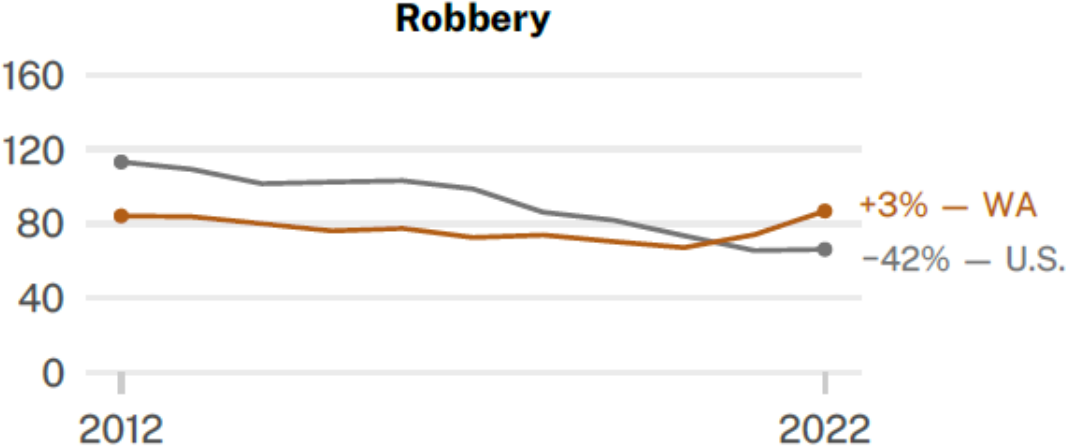
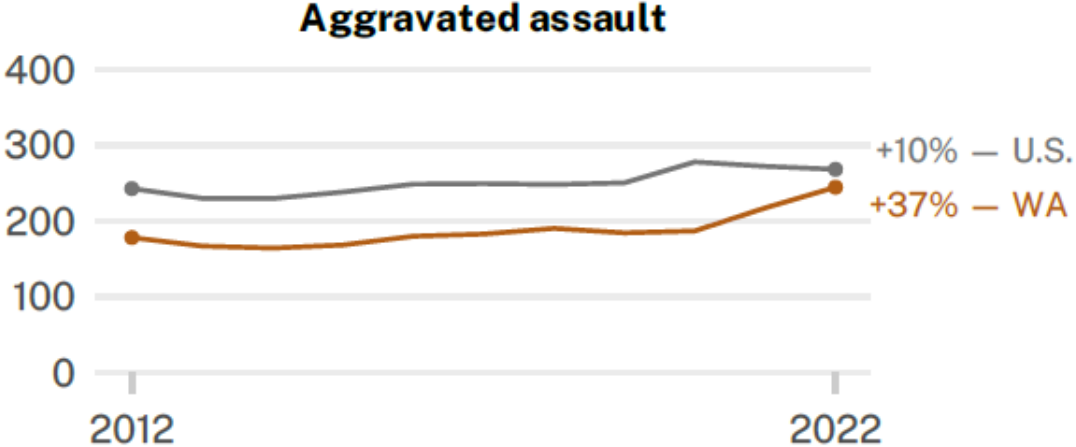


FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

“Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed November 10, 2023 <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

Since 2012, all types of violent crime have risen.

Rate per 100k residents



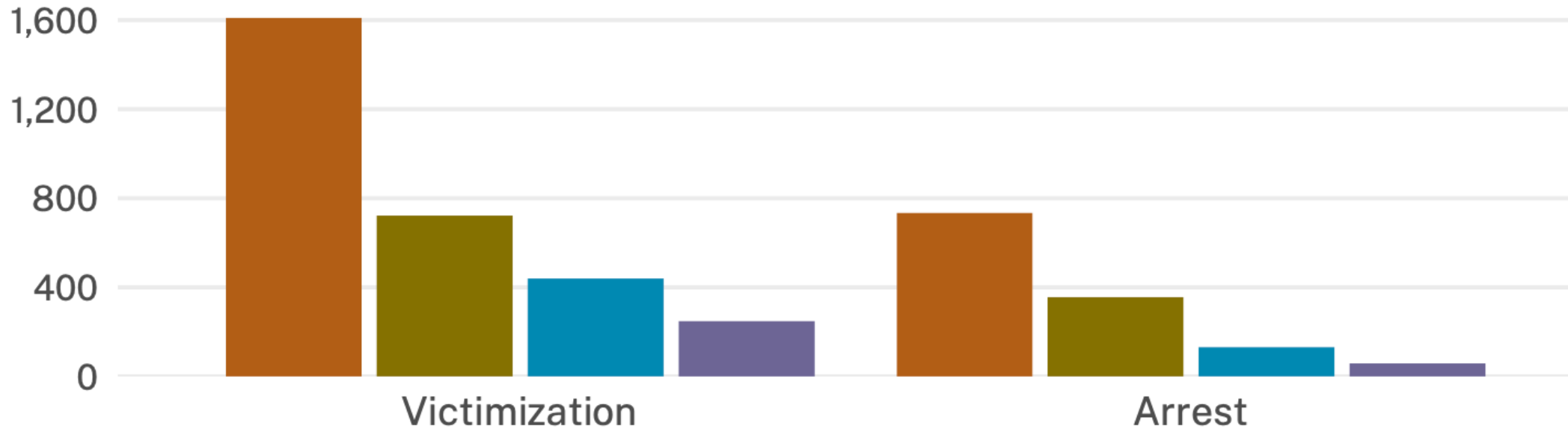
FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

Large disparities exist in violent crime victimization and arrest rates by race in Washington State.

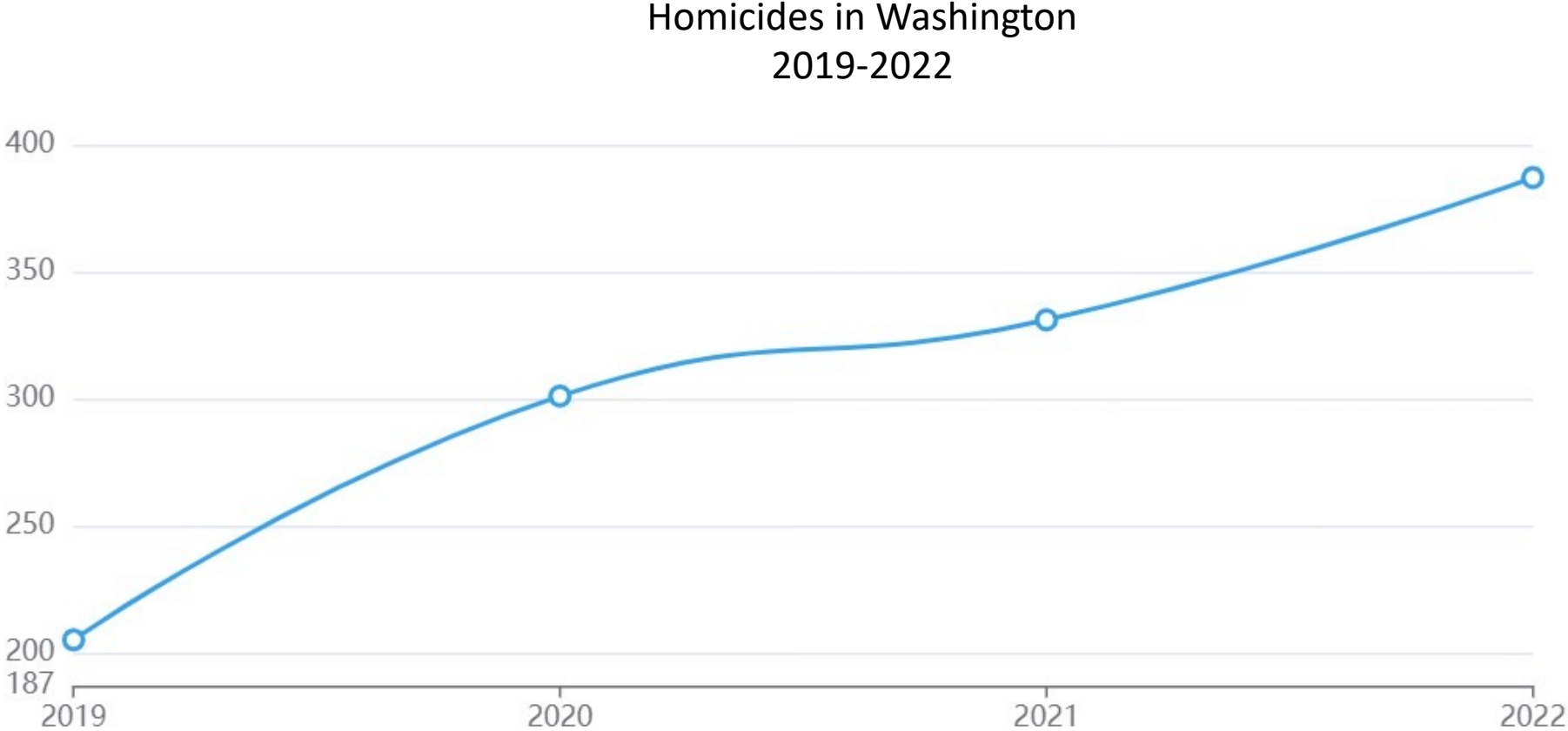
Figure 58. Victimization and arrests for violent crime by race

Rate per 100k residents, Washington, 2022

Black American Indian White Asian



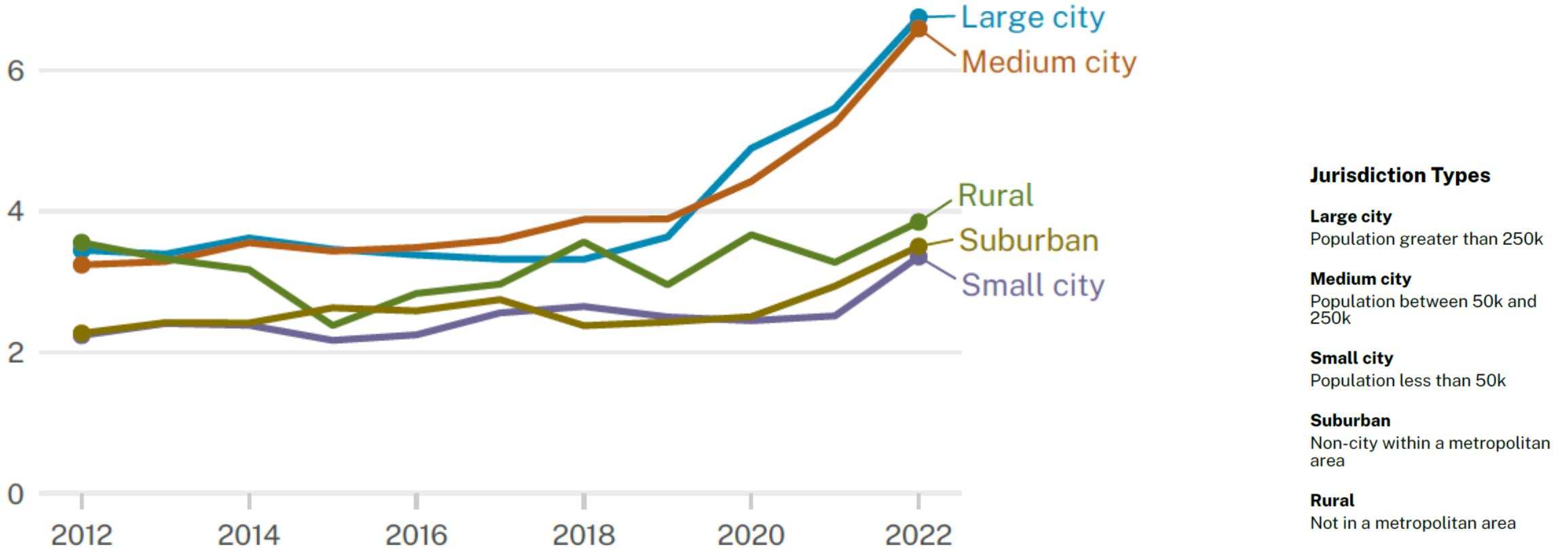
The total number of homicides in Washington increased 89% from 2019-2022.



“Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed November 27, 2023 <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

Between 2012 and 2022, the homicide rate in Washington has increased in all jurisdiction sizes.

Rate per 100k residents, 3-year moving average, Washington



FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

Washington law enforcement agencies with the highest homicide rates, 2022.

Agency	Number of homicides	Homicide rate per 100k
Benton County Sheriff's Office <i>Suburban</i>	8	19.2
Tacoma Police Department <i>Medium city</i>	41	18.7
Auburn Police Department <i>Medium city</i>	13	15.4
Everett Police Department <i>Medium city</i>	17	15.4
Yakima Police Department <i>Medium city</i>	12	12.5

FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program SRS

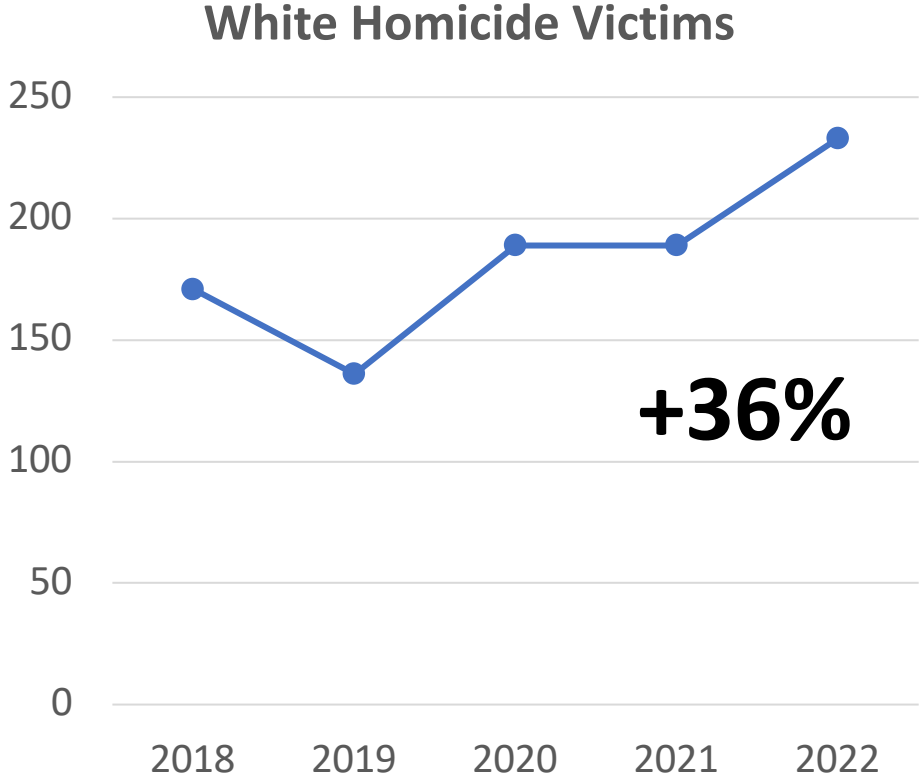
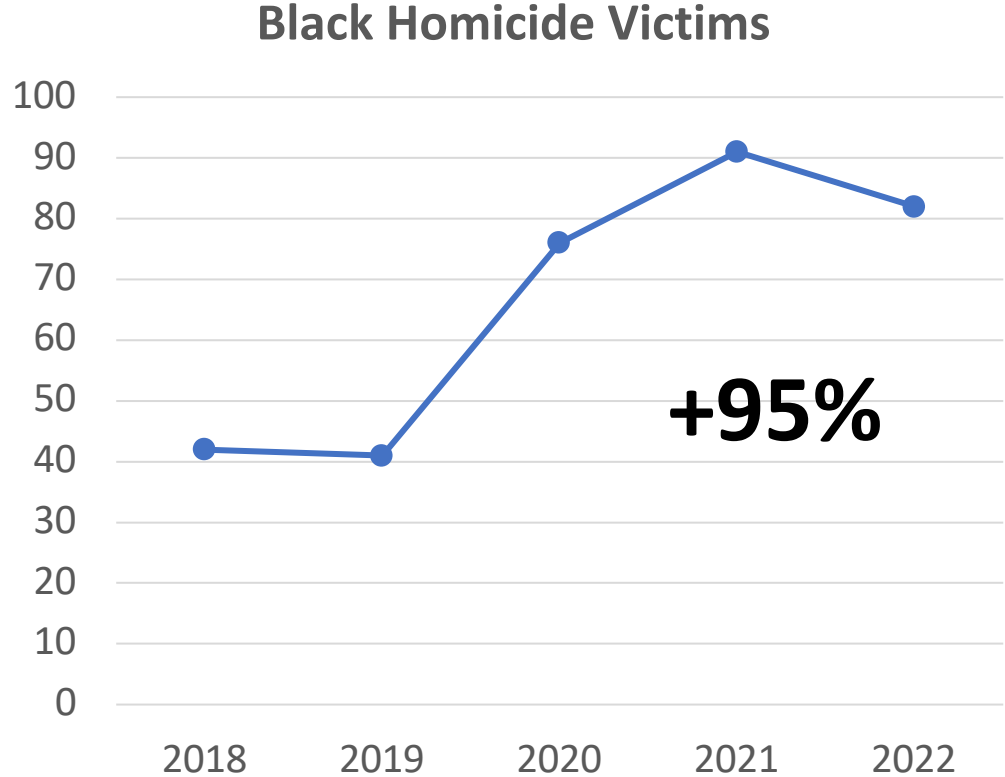
While the number of homicides increased, there was no real change in makeup of victims' ages.

	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-Older	Unknown
2018	5%	10%	27%	21%	13%	11%	7%	5%	1%
2019	6%	9%	21%	20%	16%	16%	4%	7%	<1%
2020	4%	10%	29%	24%	12%	9%	7%	5%	1%
2021	2%	10%	25%	24%	16%	11%	6%	3%	2%
2022	3%	10%	19%	28%	14%	11%	6%	8%	1%

About **half** of homicide victims are between **age 20-39** each year.

“Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed November 10, 2023 <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

The number of Black homicide victims in Washington doubled from 2018-2022 while the number of White homicide victims increased 36 percent.



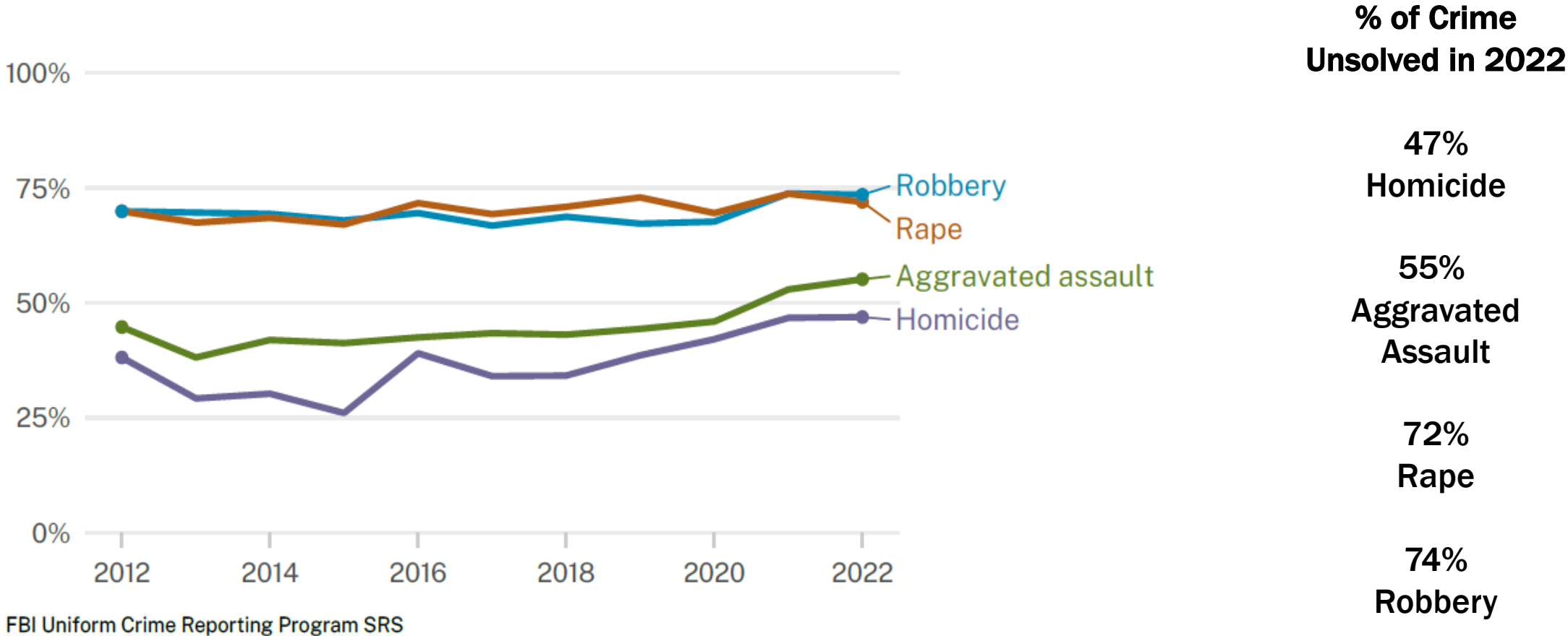
“Uniform Crime Reporting Program Summary Reporting System” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed November 10, 2023 <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

The number of unknown relationships between the victim and person who committed the offense increased.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Current or Former Partner	30	35	29	22	36
Family Member	32	28	40	35	38
Known Person	94	61	115	87	104
Stranger	29	23	31	40	33
Unknown Relationship	78	67	132	172	204

In 2022, 61 percent of violent crimes reported to police in Washington went unsolved.

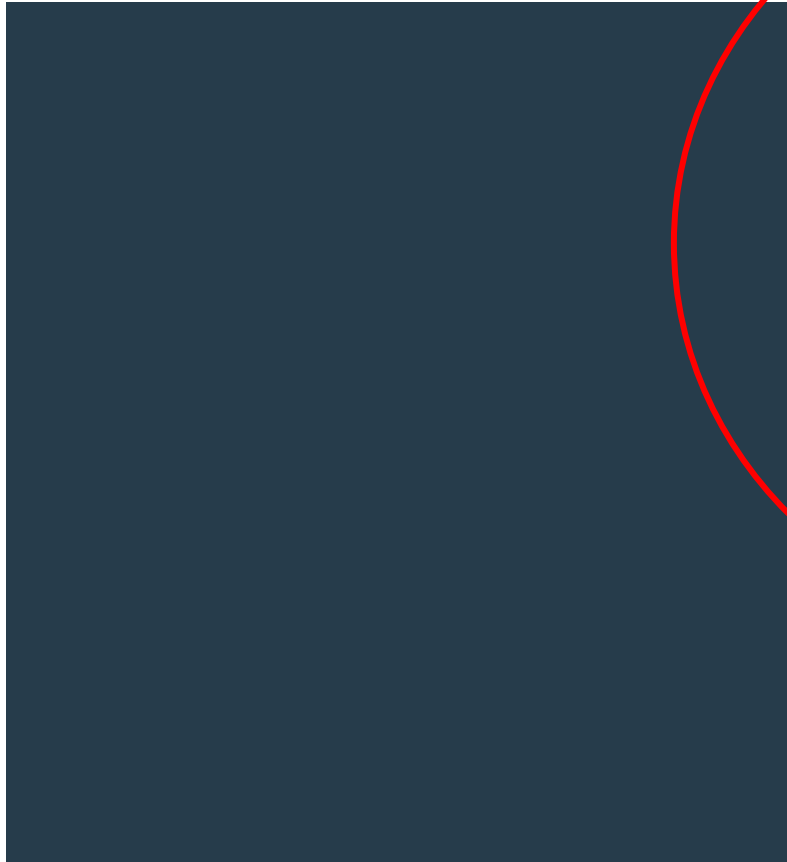
Violent crimes in Washington are more likely to be unsolved today than a decade ago.



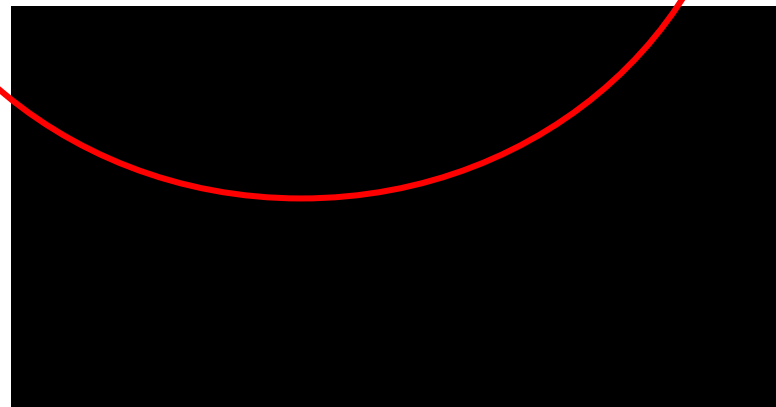
The Council of State Governments Justice Center *Washington Criminal Justice Snapshot*, 16, fig 25.

The biggest gap in our violent crime strategy

Violent Crime
Reported to Police



Arrests for Violent Crime



The biggest opportunity to
increase accountability
and respond more
effectively to people who
commit violent crime.

Failing to solve violent crimes leads to...

Less safety for victims and communities

More risk of retaliatory violence.

Less justice for victims and their families who have been harmed

Less deterrence from the criminal justice system as a whole

People committing violence feel emboldened & free to commit further violence

Less trust in the justice system's ability to protect & respond

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



Boston boosted its homicide clearance rate from 47 to 66% after improving:

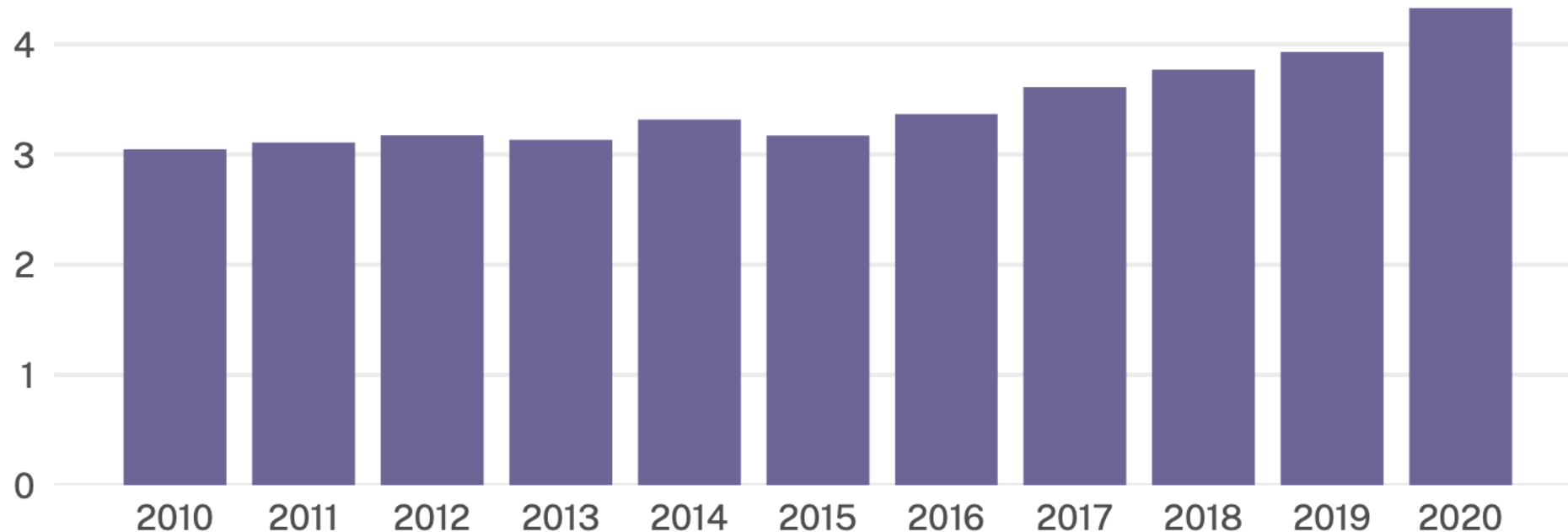
- Staff Resources
- Training
- Use of best practices
- Leadership & prioritization



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

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

Figure 36. Average length of stay (years) of people exiting prison
Washington, Prison terms for violent offenses



BJS National Corrections Reporting Program

States can help solve more violent crimes with targeted support and assistance.

Data & Expertise

- Identify localities with low solve rates
- Provide training and TA to help local agencies

Funding

- Support victims and witnesses of violent crime to address the trauma and help them cooperate with investigations

Capacity

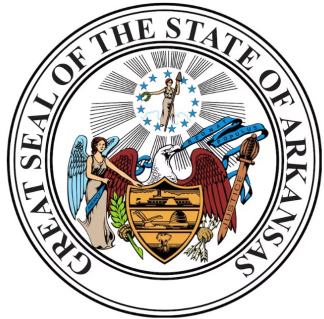
- Reduce backlogs and delays at state crime labs to processing evidence
- Reduce caseloads of detectives with funding and/or state “cold case” units

States like New York and Arkansas are supporting local law enforcement to solve crime.



2023

New York Governor Hochul launches a new initiative **to Help Police and Prosecutors in Five Jurisdictions Solve Non-Fatal Shootings and Prevent Retaliatory Gun Violence**



2023

Arkansas establishes the Violent Crime Clearance Grant Fund to provide law enforcement agencies with resources to solve more violent crime.



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