

RESEARCH IN BRIEF

Criminal Victimization in Nevada, 2011

By Timothy C. Hart, Ph.D. and Jonathan Culver¹

Recent population estimates rank the state of Nevada the 35th most populous state in the country. Along with a rapidly growing population, Nevada's crime rate has seen a dramatic change. For example, according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program data, Nevada's violent crime rate (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) increased nearly 10% between 2005 and 2010 while its property crime rate (i.e., burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) decreased about 35% during the same time (FBI, 2012).

Although UCR data provide insight into Nevada's crime problem, they paint only part of the crime picture. One of the most important limitations of UCR data is that they only contain information on those crimes known to police. Since estimates produced from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) suggest that only about half of all violent crime that is committed is reported to police (Hart & Rennison, 2003), UCR figures likely underestimate the extent of crime in Nevada. In an attempt to provide an additional perspective on crime experienced by Nevada residents in 2011, the Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics (CACS) conducted the state's second survey of crime victims.

This State Data Brief contains findings from the 2011 CACS victimization survey, presenting information on the nature and extent of crime experienced by Nevada residents in 2011 and the level at which victimizations were reported to police. Victim demographics are also provided in the context of various crime types and state-level comparisons are made to national estimates. Limitations to the survey are also discussed.

Victimization of Nevada Residents

Percentage of residents victimized

Of the 2,935 Nevadans who participated in the CACS

HIGHLIGHTS

- An estimated one-in-four Nevadans were criminally victimized in 2011.
- Eighteen percent of survey respondents were identified as victims of larceny-theft, whereas less than 1% of respondents were identified as victims of rape or sexual assault.
- Three-in-eight victimizations identified by the CACS survey involved a violent crime.
- Results suggest that an estimated 1.8 million victimizations occurred during the 12 months prior to the CACS survey.
- With the exception of rape and sexual assault, in 2011, Nevada men were victimized at statistically similar rates as Nevada women.
- A significantly higher percentage of Hispanic respondents (12%) reported having their vehicle stolen in 2011 than any other race/ethnicity of victim.
- According to results from the CACS survey, most crimes identified by respondents were not reported to police.
- Among all types of crimes identified in the CACS survey, burglary was the most likely crime to be reported to police and rape or sexual assault was the least likely to be reported.

victimization survey, about one-in-four indicated they were victimized at some time during the 12 months prior to their interview (Table 1). An estimated 22% were a victim of a violent crime, including 8% of respondents who indicated that they were assaulted, 7% who indicated that they were robbed, and about

1% who indicated that they were raped or sexually assaulted.

Twenty-two percent of survey respondents said that during the past 12 months they experienced a property crime, with most being a victim of a larceny-theft (18%). An estimated 5% of respondents were burglary victims and about 6% said that their vehicle was stolen.

Table 1. Estimated percent of Nevadans victimized during the past 12 months, by type of crime.

Type of crime	Percent victimized
All Crimes	26.6%
Violent Crimes	22.1%
Rape/Sexual assault	0.8
Robbery	6.5
Assault	8.4
Aggravated	5.0
Simple	5.3
Property Crimes	21.9%
Burglary	5.3
Larceny	18.2
Motor vehicle theft	5.7

Weighted n=2,935.

Victimization rates among Nevada residents

In addition to identifying crime victims among the survey respondents, information on the frequency with which victimization occurred was estimated for the overall state population. Results suggest that an estimated 1.8 million victimizations occurred during the 12 months prior to the CACS survey (Table 2).

Nearly one out of every five incidents identified by the survey involved a violent crime. This translates into an estimated rate of about 254 violent incidents for every 1,000 person living in the state. This rate is nearly 17 times the national rate identified by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Table 3). Apparent difference between the rates produced by the CACS survey and the NCVS are likely do to differences between the survey methodologies (see Methodology section).

Nevada residents experienced an estimated 694 thousand incidents of violent crime. While most of the violence involved assaults (146 per 1,000 residents), the majority of assaults were incidents where a weapon was not present or the victim was not seriously injured (i.e., a simple assault).

Table 2. Estimated number and rate of victimizations experienced by Nevadans, by type of crime, 2011.

Type of crime	Number of victimizations	Crime rate per 1,000
All Crimes	1,793,008	657.7
Violent Crimes	693,902	254.1
Rape/Sexual assault	21,514	7.9
Robbery	273,476	100.4
Assault	398,912	146.5
Aggravated	203,650	74.8
Simple	195,044	71.6
Property Crimes	1,099,106	403.6
Burglary	192,811	70.8
Larceny	711,686	261.3
Motor vehicle theft	194,609	71.5

Note: Estimated number of victimizations is a weighted total. The crime rate is based on a state population of 2,700,551.

Table 3. Estimated number and rate of victimizations experienced nationally, by type of crime, 2010.

Type of crime	Number of victimizations	Crime rate per 1,000
All Crimes	18,725,710	NA
Violent Crimes	3,817,380	14.9
Rape/Sexual assault	188,380	0.7
Robbery	480,750	1.9
Assault	3,148,250	12.3
Aggravated	725,180	2.8
Simple	2,423,060	9.5
Property Crimes	14,769,990	120.2
Burglary	2,923,430	23.8
Larceny	11,239,560	91.5
Motor vehicle theft	606,990	4.9

Note: The victimization rate for violent crimes is based on a population age 12 or older of 255,961,940. The total number of households used to determining the victimization rate for property crimes was 122,885,160. An overall victimization rate is not applicable (NA) due to the different bases or denominator used to compute the violent and property victimization rates.

Source: Truman, J. L. (2011). Criminal Victimization, 2010 (NCJ #235508) USGPO, Washington: DC.

Based on survey results, approximately 404 in every 1,000 Nevada residents were a victim of a property crime at some time during the past 12 months. This figure is about 3 times higher than the national figure identified by the NCVS. The majority of these incidents involved larcenies (261 per 1,000 residents), followed by motor vehicle thefts (71 per 1,000 residents), and burglaries (71 per 1,000 residents).

In addition to overall estimates of victimization experienced by Nevadans, the CACS survey collected information on victim demographics and presents this information by specific crime type below in Table 4.

Demographics

Gender

Findings from the current study suggest that for all crimes considered except rape or sexual assault, the percentage of male respondents who reported being crime victims is statistically similar to the percentage of female respondents who reported being victimized. A significantly larger percentage of women (1.2%) than men (0.3%) were reportedly victims of rape or sexual assault.

Similar to the percentage of respondents surveyed that indicated they were victimized, estimates of victimization rates among Nevada residents do

not vary by gender. For example, in 2001, Nevada men were victims of violent crimes at statistically similar rates as Nevada women (243 per 1,000 male residents versus 263 per 1,000 female residents, respectively). Likewise, the rate at which Nevada men were victims of property crime (405 per 1,000 male residents) is not different from the rate at which Nevada women experienced property crime (403 per 1,000 female residents).

Unlike percentages, victimization rates take into consideration the number of incidents that a victim experiences and not just whether an individual was victimized. For more information on the differences between the percentage of respondents victimized and victimization rates, see the Methodology section.

Race and Hispanic origin

Findings from the 2011 CACS victimization survey show that for all crimes considered, a slightly greater percentage of Hispanic respondents of any race (33.3%) were victimized compared to the percentage of Black, non-Hispanic (24.4%) respondents; but at similar levels as White, non-Hispanic respondents (25.6%) and respondents of “other” non-Hispanic races (28.4%) (Table 5)

Although the percentage of overall violence does not vary by race and Hispanic origin, some differences are observed when particular crime types are

Table 4. Percent of respondents reportedly victimized and victimization rates, by gender, 2011.

Gender	Respondents/ Population	All crimes	Violent crimes	Rape/ sexual assault	Robbery	Assault		Property crimes	Burglary	Theft	
						Aggra- vated	Simple			Larceny	Motor vehicle
Percent victimized											
Male	1,214	26.1%	21.8%	0.3%	5.8%	5.7%	4.9%	21.3%	5.3%	18.3%	5.8%
Female	1,721	27.0%	22.3%	1.2%	6.9%	4.5%	5.6%	22.3%	5.4%	18.2%	5.7%
Victimization rate											
Male	1,365,498	648.5	243.4	3.4	85.2	88.3	66.6	405.1	77.3	257.6	70.2
Female	1,339,144	665.2	262.7	11.1	111.2	65.2	75.2	402.6	66.2	264.0	72.4

Victimization rates are per 1,000 population.

Nevada demographic population estimates were obtained from the *American Community Survey, 2011*.

Table 5. Percent of respondents reportedly victimized and victimization rates, by race and Hispanic origin 2011.

Race and Hispanic origin	Respondents/ Population	All crimes	Volent crimes	Rape/ sexual assault	Robbery	Assault		Property crimes	Theft		
						Aggra- vated	Simple		Burglary	Larceny	Motor vehicle
Percent victimized											
White, non-Hispanic	2,000	25.6%	21.0%	0.6%	6.6%	4.4%	4.8%	21.1%	5.0%	22.4%	4.8%
Black, non-Hispanic	238	24.4%	19.7%	0.5%	4.1%	2.3%	4.9%	21.4%	7.0%	20.6%	5.4%
Other, non-Hispanic	237	28.4%	25.4%	0.9%	6.8%	9.4%	7.1%	23.2%	5.2%	24.4%	4.5%
Hispanic, any race	387	33.3%	27.4%	2.1%	6.9%	6.4%	6.3%	26.8%	6.3%	27.2%	12.0%
Victimization rate											
White, non-Hispanic	1,461,491	605.5	238.4	5.5	104.1	66.0	62.9	367.1	66.2	242.7	58.1
Black, non-Hispanic	210,656	611.2	184.1	4.3	60.0	42.8	77.1	427.1	94.2	255.8	77.1
Other, non-Hispanic	312,427	827.6	401.0	12.9	129.4	172.6	86.1	426.6	73.2	297.5	55.9
Hispanic, any race	720,068	899.5	297.5	21.1	96.8	82.1	97.5	602.0	89.4	354.9	157.6

Victimization rates are per 1,000 population.

Nevada demographic population estimates were obtained from the *American Community Survey, 2011*.

considered. For example, a greater percentage of respondents of “other” non-Hispanic races were victims of aggravated assault (9.4%) at significantly higher levels than Black, non-Hispanic respondents (2.3%) and at somewhat higher levels than White, non-Hispanic respondents (4.4%).

When all property crimes are considered together, Hispanic respondents of any race experienced victimizations at a higher percentage than White, non-Hispanic respondents (26.8% versus 21.1%, respectively). This difference is driven primarily by differences in the percentage of respondents reportedly being a victim of motor vehicle theft. Specifically, a significantly greater percentage of Hispanic respondents (12.0%) than any other race/ethnicity of victim reported having their vehicle stolen in 2011.

Findings based on victimization rates are similar to what was observed when the percentage of respondents victimized was considered. For example, the rate of criminal victimization experienced by Hispanics (900 per 1,000 Hispanic residents) in 2011 was higher than the rate among White, non-Hispanics (606 per 1,000 White, non-Hispanic residents) or Black, non-Hispanics (611 per 1,000 Black, non-Hispanic residents); but was statistically similar to the rate of victimization among other non-Hispanics (828 per 1,000 other, non-Hispanic residents).

When only violent crimes are considered, in 2011, the rate of Black, non-Hispanic victimization (184 per

1,000 Black, non-Hispanic residents) was significantly lower than the rate experienced by Hispanics of any race (298 per 1,000 Hispanic residents) and at a somewhat lower rate experienced by White, non-Hispanics in Nevada (238 per 1,000 White, non-Hispanic residents).

Among particular types of violence, Hispanics experienced rape or sexual assault at somewhat higher rates than White, non-Hispanics (21 per 1,000 Hispanic residents versus 5 per 1,000 White, non-Hispanic residents, respectively). And the robbery rate among Black, non-Hispanics (60 per 1,000 Black, non-Hispanic residents) was somewhat higher than the rate among White, non-Hispanics (104 per 1,000 White, non-Hispanic residents) and other, non-Hispanics (97 per 1,000 “Other”, non-Hispanic residents).

In 2011, the property crime victimization rate among Hispanics (602 per 1,000 Hispanic residents) was significantly higher than all other race/ethnic groups. This difference is due primarily to motor vehicle theft rate experienced by Hispanics, which was significantly higher than all other race/ethnic groups. Finally, the CACS obtained information from survey participants who were self-identified crime victims regarding whether they reported the incident(s) to police. This information is presented in the next section below on Table 6.

Reporting crime to the police

Victimization surveys can help us better understand the nature and extent of crime by providing insight

into those incidents that are not reported to police. According to results from the 2011 CACS survey, most crimes identified by respondents were not reported to police (Table 6).

Although violent crimes and property crimes were reported to police at statistically similar levels, some differences by specific crime types were observed. For example, victims indicated that they were more

Table 6. Percent of victimizations during the past 12 months that were reported to police, by type of crime, 2011

Type of crime	Total victimizations	Percent reported
All Crimes	1,317	42.7 %
Violent Crimes	487	42.7 %
Rape/Sexual assault	22	27.3
Robbery	181	39.8
Assault	284	45.8
Aggravated	133	40.6
Simple	151	50.3
Property Crimes	830	42.8 %
Burglary	152	55.9
Larceny	517	37.5
Motor vehicle theft	161	47.2

likely to report a simple assault to the police than a robbery (50.3% versus 39.8%, respectively).

When only property crime is considered, a burglary was significantly more likely to be reported to police (55.9%) than a larceny (37.5%); and somewhat more likely to be reported to police than a motor vehicle theft (47.2%).

Although the CACS survey provides useful information about the nature and extent of criminal victimization experienced by Nevada residents, the research is not without its limitations. The final section of this data brief describes the methodology used to produce the findings described above, as well as to describe some of the aspects of this research that must be viewed with caution.

Methodology

The primary source of information contained in this report includes data collected from the Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics' 2011 Criminal Victimization Survey of Nevada Residents, a telephone survey conducted by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Cannon Survey Center. The

survey was conducted between November 29, 2011 and February 26, 2012. Calls were made on various days of the week, including weekends between 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Interviews lasted between 7-10 minutes. A total of 3,114 interviews were completed from a sample of 23,640 numbers; and after cleaning and removing non-residents, a total of 3,114 records were used in the current analysis.

Random-digit-dialing techniques were used to select respondent households with information developed using the most current telephone exchange data available. This procedure allowed the inclusion of unlisted numbers and any newly listed numbers that were not included in the most recently published telephone directories. The interviewers made up to seven (7) attempts on each number.

Disposition codes defined by the American Association of Public Opinion Researchers (AAPOR) were used to code all numbers and to determine the Response Rate 4 (RR4) and the Cooperation Rate 4 (CR4). Response Rate 4 represents the number of complete and partial interviews, divided by the number of interviews (complete or partial), plus the number of non-interviews (refusal + break-off + noncontacts + others), plus all cases of unknown eligibility, and an estimate of what proportion of the cases of unknown eligibility ($RR4 = \frac{R + P}{(R + P) + (R + NC + O) + e(UH + UO)}$).

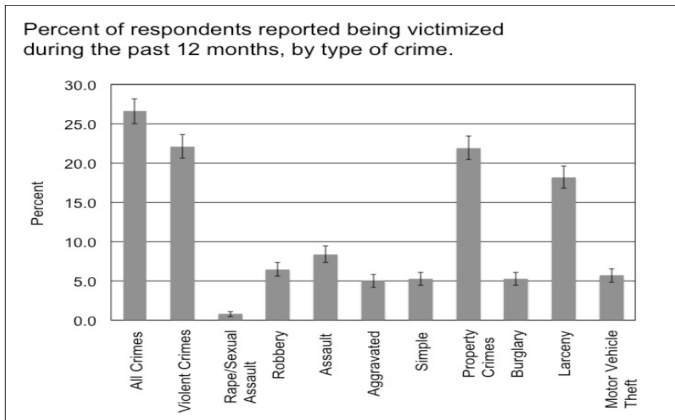
The response rate for the land lines was 46.9%; for wireless it was 33.6%. The combined response rate was 44.1%. The proportion of interviews that were collected from the wireless sampling frame was 16.6% of all completed interviews. The final sample size was 2,935. Of the calls eligible for completion, 28.8% (CR4) resulted in a completed interview.

Estimates for percentages and rates

In general, findings presented in this report are provided as either a percentage or a rate. Victimization percentages are determined by dividing the total weighted number of respondents who indicated they had been victimized for a particular crime type by the total number of respondents interviewed and multiplying that proportion by 100 (i.e., (victimized respondents/all respondents) x 100).

Unlike percentages, victimization rates take into consideration the weighted number of incidents that are associated with each victimization identified. In determining a victimization rate, the total weighted

number of victimization incidents are divided by the total population (or sub-population in the case of victimization rates calculated for gender or race and Hispanic origin) and then multiplying that proportion by a standard factor of 1,000. Again, while percentages and rates may appear similar, percentages do not take into consideration multiple victimizations associated with a single respondent who reports being victimized.



Standard error computations

Differences described as higher, lower, or different passed a statistical test of significance at $p < 0.05$ (i.e., a 95%-confidence level). Differences described as somewhat, slightly, or some indication passed statistical test of significance at $p < 0.10$ level (i.e., a 90%-confidence level). Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in this report.

For example, although the percentage of respondents who reported being a victim of robbery (6.5%) appears to be greater than those who reported being a victim of a simple assault (5.3%) (see Table 1), the two percentages are statistically similar. Figure 1 illustrates how confidence intervals around victimization estimates (at the 95%-confidence level) are used to identify significant differences.

Comparisons between National and state estimates

Some comparisons between National and state victimization estimates are made within this data brief. Although useful for contextualizing state victimization, some of the differences between the state estimates produced by the CACS survey and those produced by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) can be attributed to different survey methodologies.

For example, the NCVS methodology involves

interviewing members of sampled households age 12 or older seven times: once every six months for three years. Initial interviews are used to bound incidents in subsequent interviews. This technique is used to avoid a phenomenon in survey research known as telescoping (i.e., erroneously including event within a reference period). Conversely, the CACS survey interviewed respondents 18 or older one time and asked them to recall events that took place over a twelve-month period.

The inability to control against telescoping in the CACS survey along with the use of a longer recall period likely explain much of the differences between national victimization estimates produced by the NCVS and the state estimates produced by the CACS survey.

Series victimizations

Some situations described by survey respondents involve multiple victimizations. Consistent with NCVS protocol, incidents that involved more than 6 of the same type of crime were considered a single, ongoing, series victimization. For the purposes of calculating crime rates, series victimizations were considered one incident. For more information on series victimizations and how they are analyzed in the NCVS, see Dodge (1975).

Definitions

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Community Survey Software (v1.3) (2007) was used to develop the CACS victimization questionnaire. Crimes measured in during the CACS survey generally followed the definitions established by BJS, which are as follows:

Violent crime is defined as attempted or completed rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Rape is forced sexual intercourse, including both psychological coercion and physical force.

Sexual assault includes a wide range of victimizations, distinct from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include completed or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between the victim and offender.

Robbery is a completed or attempted theft directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without an injury.

Aggravated assault is a completed or attempted attack with a weapon, whether or not an injury occurred. It is also an attack without a weapon in which the victim is seriously injured.

Simple assault is an attack without a weapon resulting either in no injury, minor injury (such as bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, or swelling). Simple assaults also include attempted assaults without a weapon.

Property crime is defined as attempted or completed burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

Burglary is the unlawful or forcible entry or attempted entry of a residence. This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. The illegal entry may be by force, such as breaking a window or slashing a screen, or may be without force by entering through an unlocked door or an open window.

Larceny is the taking of property or cash without personal contact.

Motor vehicle theft includes the stealing or unauthorized taking of a motor vehicle, including attempted thefts.

END NOTES

i. The research was supported in part by Award 2011-BJ-CX-K006, Criminal Victimization in Nevada, A Survey of State Residents, from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

References

Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Victimization Survey Software (v1.3) (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cvs.htm>.

Dodge, R. W. (1975). Series Victimization: What is to be done? In R. G. Lehnen & W. G. Skogan, (eds.). *The National Crime Survey: Working Papers. Volume II: Methodological Studies*. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics: Government Printing Office. (NCJ 90307).

Federal Bureau of Investigation (2012). *Crime in the United States 2005-10*. Retrieved August 1, 2012 from <http://www.ucronlinedatatool.gov>.

Hart, T.C., & Rennison, C.M. (2003). *Reporting crime to the police, 1992-2000*. (NCJ-195710).

Washington, DC: USGPO.

Truman, J.L. (2011). *Criminal Victimization, 2010*. NCJ-2235508). Washington, DC: USGPO.

CENTER FOR CRIME AND JUSTICE POLICY
STATE DATA BRIEF SERIES

This report is part of the “Research in Brief” series produced by the Center for Crime and Justice Policy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The Center is housed in the Department of Criminal Justice, which is located in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs. Research in Briefs are modeled after the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ Special Reports and Bulletins.

The Briefs provide summaries of various criminal justice system practices in Nevada over time, and highlight differences between Nevada and other states. These reports cover all aspects of the criminal justice system, including trends in crime and arrests, police practices, prosecution, pretrial activities, adjudication, sentencing, and corrections. Although Research in Briefs typically focus on criminal justice issues within Nevada, these reports may focus on national issues as well.

Research in Briefs are designed to provide members of the general public, local officials, community organizations, and media outlets a concise and objective profile of current crime and criminal trends in Nevada and elsewhere. These briefs may serve as a foundation for informed discussions of future crime control policies and practices.

Previous Research in Briefs

A Comparison of Different On-Line Sampling Approaches for Generating National Samples

Aerial Drones, Domestic Surveillance, and Public Opinion of Adults in the United States

Arrest-Related Deaths in Nevada, 2009-2011

Arson Trends in Nevada, 1997-2006

Auto Theft in Nevada, 1994-2008

Burglary Trends in Nevada, 1990-2007

Capital Punishment in Nevada, 1977-2008

Clearance Rates in Nevada, 1998-2009

Communication Intercepts Authorized in Nevada, 1997-2008

Comparison of Different On-Line sampling Approaches for Generating National Samples

Criminal Victimization in Nevada, 2008 Criminal Victimization in Nevada, 2011

Deaths in Custody in Nevada, 2001-2006

Impact of Foreclosures on Neighborhood Crime in Nevada, 2006-2009

Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program in Nevada, 2005-2010

Nevada vs. U.S. Residents Attitudes Towards Surveillance Using Aerial Drones

Patterns in School Violence in Nevada

Public Attitudes about Aerial Drone Activities: Results of a National Survey

Rape and other Sex Offenses in Nevada, 1990-2007

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions or comments about the information contained in this report, data used to generate this report, or about other resources available related to this topic should be addressed to:

Terance D. Miethe, Ph.D.
Research in Brief Project Coordinator
Center for Analysis of Crime Statistics
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway - Box 5009
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5009

Phone: 702-895-0236

Fax: 702-895-0252

Email: miethe@unlv.nevada.edu

Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics

Department of Criminal Justice
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 S. Maryland Pkwy - Box 5009
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5009

POSTAGE REQUIRED