

Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics

State Data Brief

October 2009. CACS 2009-01-05EN

Criminal Victimization in Nevada, 2008

By Timothy C. Hart, Ph.D.,
Morgan McGaha,
and Courtney LaHaie¹

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 risen over the past several years. 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 over 20% between 2003 and 2007 and its property crime rate (i.e., burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) increased nearly 12% during the same time (FBI, 2004; 2008).

Although UCR data provide insight into Nevada's crime problem, they provide only part of the crime picture. Among the most important limitation is that UCR data contain information on only 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 the crime problem experienced by Nevada residents, in 2008, the Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics (CACS) conducted the state's first survey of crime victims.

This State Data Brief contains findings from the 2008 CACS victimization survey, presenting information on the nature and extent of victimization experienced by Nevada residents in 2008 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.

Highlights

- About three-in-ten survey respondents in Nevada indicated that they were victimized at some time during the 12 months prior to their interview.
- Results suggest that an estimated 1.85 million victimizations occurred during the 12 months prior to the CACS survey.
- Nearly two out of every five incidents identified during the CACS survey involved a violent crime.
- The percentage of Nevada men that indicated they were crime victims was statistically similar to the percentage of Nevada women (28.9% versus 31.5%).
- For all crime types considered, more Hispanics (38.7%) reported being victimized than their White, non-Hispanic (29.8%) or Black, non-Hispanic (28.1%) counterparts.
- Nearly half of all crimes identified during the CACS survey 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.

¹Researchers used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice (2008-BJ-CX-K025).

Victimization of Nevada Residents

Percentage of residents victimized

Of the 4,127 Nevadans who participated in the CACS victimization survey, about three-in-ten indicated they were victimized at some time during the 12 months prior to their interview (Table 1). An estimated 23% were a victim of a violent crime, including 9% of respondents who indicated that they were assaulted, 6% who indicated that they were robbed, and about 1% who indicated that they were raped or sexually assaulted.

One-fourth 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 6% of respondents were burglary victims and about one-in-ten said that their vehicle was stolen.

Table 1. Percent of respondents who reported being victimized during the past 12 months, by type of crime, 2008

| Type of crime | Percent victimized |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| All Crimes | 30.5% |
| Violent Crimes | 22.6% |
| Rape/Sexual assault | 0.6 |
| Robbery | 6.4 |
| Assault | 8.8 |
| Aggravated | 4.6 |
| Simple | 5.8 |
| Property Crimes | 25.0% |
| Burglary | 5.7 |
| Larceny | 17.8 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 8.9 |

n=4,127.

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 1.85 million victimizations occurred during the 12 months prior to the CACS survey (Table 2).

Nearly two out of every five incidents identified by the survey involved a violent crime. This translates into an estimated rate of about 271 violent incidents for every 1,000 person living in the state. This rate is more than 14 times the national rate identified by the

Table 2. Estimated number and rate of victimizations experienced by Nevadans, by type of crime, 2008.

| Type of crime | Number of victimizations | Victimization rate per 1,000 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| All Crimes | 1,853,040 | 712.7 |
| Violent Crimes | 705,190 | 271.2 |
| Rape/Sexual assault | 23,660 | 9.1 |
| Robbery | 269,640 | 103.7 |
| Assault | 411,890 | 158.4 |
| Aggravated | 199,040 | 76.6 |
| Simple | 212,850 | 81.9 |
| Property Crimes | 1,147,840 | 441.5 |
| Burglary | 190,980 | 73.5 |
| Larceny | 660,270 | 257.0 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 288,570 | 111.0 |

Note: Both the estimated number of violent and property victimizations rates are based on a state population of 2,600,167.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Table 3). The 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 705,190 incidents of violent crime. While most of the violence involved assaults (158 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 3. Estimated number and rate of victimizations experienced nationally, by type of crime, 2008.

| Type of crime | Number of victimizations | Victimization rate per 1,000 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| All Crimes | 21,312,400 | NA |
| Violent Crimes | 4,856,510 | 19.3 |
| Rape/Sexual assault | 203,830 | 0.8 |
| Robbery | 551,830 | 2.2 |
| Assault | 4,100,850 | 16.3 |
| Aggravated | 839,940 | 3.3 |
| Simple | 3,260,920 | 12.9 |
| Property Crimes | 16,319,180 | 134.7 |
| Burglary | 3,188,620 | 26.3 |
| Larceny | 12,335,400 | 101.8 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 795,160 | 6.6 |

Note: The victimization rate for violent crimes is based on a population age 12 or older of 252,242,520. The total number of households used to determining the victimization rate for property crimes was 121,141,060. 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: Rand, M. R. (2009). *Criminal Victimization, 2008* (NCJ #227777), USGPO, Washington: DC.

Based on survey results, approximately 442 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 (257 per 1,000 residents), followed by motor vehicle thefts (111 per 1,000 residents), and burglaries (74 per 1,000 residents).

In addition to overall estimates of victimization experienced by Nevadans, the CACS survey collected information on respondent 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, the percentage of Nevada men that are crime victims is statistically similar to the percentage of Nevada women (28.9% versus 31.5%). However, when specific types of crimes are examined, differences emerge. For example, a somewhat larger percentage of women (0.8%) than men (0.3%) were reportedly victims of rape or sexual assault. A greater percentage of women (7.2%) than men (5.0%) were robbery victims. When an assault occurred that involves a severe injury or the use of a weapon (i.e., an aggravated assault), a larger percentage involved men (5.9%) than women (3.9%).

Results of the current study suggest that the percentage of Nevada men and Nevada women who experienced property crimes in general and specific types of property crimes such as burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft is statistically similar.

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.

When viewed in terms of rates of victimization instead of the percentage of respondents victimized, one notable pattern is revealed. Namely, while the percentage of property crimes experienced by men (23.4%) is statistically similar to that of women (26.0%), the rate of property victimization is slightly higher among women (461 per 1,000 residents.) than men (410 per 1,000 residents). This is due to property crime victims who are women reporting a somewhat greater number of incidents than their male counterparts.

There are no significant differences in the rate of victimization of Nevada residents, based on gender, for any of the other type of crimes examined.

Race and Hispanic origin

Findings from the 2008 CACS victimization survey show that for all crimes considered, Hispanics of any race were victimized at a significantly higher percentage (38.7%) than their White, non-Hispanic (29.8%) or Black, non-Hispanic (28.1%) counterparts.

Although the percentage of overall violence does not vary by race and Hispanic origin, some differences are observed when particular crime types are considered. For example, a greater percentage of Hispanics (10.2%) than White, non-Hispanics (5.9%) reported being robbed. Similarly, more Hispanics (8.3%) than White, non-Hispanics (4.0%) were victims of an aggravated assault.

Table 4. Percent of respondents reportedly victimized and victimization rates, by gender, 2008.

| 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 | 1,570 | 28.9% | 21.7% | 0.3% | 5.0% | 5.9% | 5.6% | 23.4% | 5.4% | 16.5% | 8.4% | |
| Female | 2,557 | 31.5% | 23.4% | 0.8% | 7.2% | 3.9% | 5.9% | 26.0% | 5.8% | 18.7% | 9.3% | |
| Victimization rate | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 1,324,346 | 675.7 | 265.8 | 4.6 | 79.2 | 97.3 | 84.7 | 409.9 | 64.8 | 246.7 | 98.5 | |
| Female | 1,275,821 | 735.4 | 274.5 | 11.9 | 118.7 | 63.8 | 80.1 | 460.8 | 78.8 | 263.4 | 118.7 | |

Victimization rates are per 1,000 population.

Nevada demographic population estimates were obtained from the *American Community Survey, 2008*.

Table 5. Percent of respondents reportedly victimized and victimization rates, by race and Hispanic origin, 2008.

| Race and Hispanic origin | Respondents/ Population | All crimes | Violent crimes | Rape/ sexual assault | Robbery | Assault | | Property crimes | | Theft | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|--------------|--------|-----------------|---------|---------------|-------|--|
| | | | | | | Aggra- vated | Simple | Burglary | Larceny | Motor vehicle | | |
| Percent victimized | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 3,149 | 29.8% | 22.4% | 0.5% | 5.9% | 4.0% | 5.4% | 24.6% | 5.4% | 17.9% | 8.8% | |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 292 | 28.1% | 20.6% | 1.1% | 5.4% | 5.4% | 6.4% | 21.3% | 4.3% | 15.6% | 7.2% | |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 275 | 32.9% | 24.2% | 0.0% | 8.6% | 7.6% | 8.5% | 27.2% | 8.1% | 17.6% | 9.0% | |
| Hispanic, any race | 335 | 38.7% | 27.2% | 1.3% | 10.2% | 8.3% | 6.8% | 30.4% | 7.0% | 20.3% | 12.2% | |
| Victimization rate | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 1,481,654 | 680.6 | 243.3 | 7.6 | 96.7 | 63.1 | 75.9 | 437.4 | 70.3 | 258.8 | 108.3 | |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 185,274 | 633.3 | 285.9 | 17.9 | 85.8 | 92.9 | 89.4 | 347.4 | 42.9 | 187.9 | 116.6 | |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 264,707 | 917.3 | 403.7 | 0.0 | 137.6 | 125.0 | 141.2 | 513.6 | 124.4 | 284.8 | 104.4 | |
| Hispanic, any race | 668,532 | 961.4 | 422.8 | 21.8 | 148.1 | 160.9 | 92.0 | 538.6 | 87.7 | 298.5 | 152.4 | |

"Other" race category includes Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Inuit.

n=4,127, but detail may not add to total due to nonresponse.

Victimization rates are per 1,000 population.

Nevada demographic population estimates were obtained from the *American Community Survey, 2008*.

When all property crimes are considered together, Hispanics experienced victimizations at a slightly higher percentage than their White, non-Hispanic or Black, non-Hispanic counterparts (30.4% versus 24.6% and 21.3%, respectively). The percentage of victimization by race and Hispanic origin is statistically similar for each particular type of property crime.

Similar to what was identified when the percentage of victimizations were considered, in terms of victimization rates, the rate of criminal victimization experienced by Hispanics (961 per 1,000 residents) is greater than that which was experienced by White, non-Hispanics (681 per 1,000 residents) or Black, non-Hispanics (633 per 1,000 residents).

When only violent crimes are considered, Hispanics (423 per 1,000 residents) were victimized at rates higher than White, non-Hispanics (243 per 1,000 residents) and Black, non-Hispanics (286 per 1,000 residents). Similarly, "Other", non-Hispanics (404 per 1,000 residents) were victims of violence at rates higher than White, non-Hispanics (243 per 1,000 residents) and slightly higher than Black, non-Hispanics (286 per 1,000 residents).

Among particular types of violence, Hispanics experienced robbery at somewhat higher rates than White, non-Hispanics (148 per 1,000 residents versus 97 per 1,000 residents). Both Hispanics (161 per 1,000 residents) and "Other", non-Hispanics (125 per

1,000 residents) were victims of aggravated assaults at rates that are significantly higher than White, non-Hispanics (63 per 1,000 residents).

Hispanics (539 per 1,000 residents) were victims of property crimes at rates higher than Black, non-Hispanics (347 per 1,000 residents) and slightly higher than White, non-Hispanics (437 per 1,000 residents).

"Other", non-Hispanics experienced burglary (124 per 1,000 residents) at rates that nearly three times that of Black, non-Hispanics (43 per 1,000 residents) and more than White, non-Hispanics (70 per 1,000 residents).

Black, non-Hispanics were larceny victims (188 per 1,000 residents) less often than White, non-Hispanics (259 per 1,000 residents) or Hispanics of any race (299 per 1,000 residents).

The rate of motor vehicle theft is statistically similar across all race and Hispanic origin categories.

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 CACS survey, nearly half of all crimes identified by respondents were not reported to police. Fewer violent crimes (43.9%) than property crimes (50.6%) were reported to police (Table 6). These figures are comparable to national figures reported by Hart and Rennison (2003) using NCVS data.

Among specific types of violent crimes, victims were more likely to indicate a simple assault was reported to police than a robbery (50.9% versus 39.5%). When only property crime is considered, a burglary was significantly more likely to be reported to police (60.6%) than a larceny (45.2%); and somewhat more likely to be reported to police than a motor vehicle theft (54.8%).

Table 6. Percent of victimizations during the past 12 months that were reported to police, by type of crime, 2008

| Type of crime | Total victimizations | Percent reported |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| All Crimes | 2,026 | 48.2% |
| Violent Crimes | 709 | 43.9% |
| Rape/Sexual assault | 23 | 39.1 |
| Robbery | 263 | 39.5 |
| Assault | 423 | 46.8 |
| Aggravated | 189 | 41.8 |
| Simple | 234 | 50.9 |
| Property Crimes | 1,317 | 50.6% |
| Burglary | 231 | 60.6 |
| Larceny | 725 | 45.2 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 361 | 54.8 |

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' 2008 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 September 2, 2008 and March 10, 2009. Calls were made on various days of the week between 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Interviews lasted between 7-10 minutes. A total of 4,492 interviews were completed from a sample of 29,599 numbers; and after cleaning and removing non-residents, a total of 4,127 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 + non-contacts + others), plus all cases of unknown eligibility, and an estimate of what proportion of the cases of unknown eligibility (Response Rate 4: $RR4 = (I + P)/(I+P)+(R + NC + O) + e(UH + UO)$).

The survey response rate (RR4) was .290 or 29.0%; of the 7,209 calls eligible for completion, 62.3% (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 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 number of incidents that are associated with each victimization identified. In determining a victimization rate, the total 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 (6.4%) appears to be greater than those who reported being a victim of a simple assault (5.7%), 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

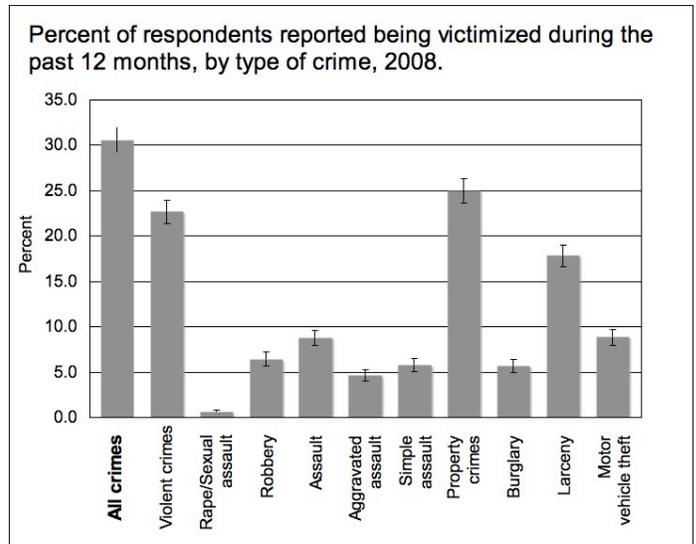


Figure 1

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, on-going, 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.

State Data Brief Project

As independent research projects, faculty and graduate students in UNLV's Department of Criminal Justice write research reports on major issues in criminal justice in Nevada. These "State Data Briefs" are statistical 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.

The data briefs are short in length, provide several graphs and charts of statewide and national patterns, and are written in an easily readable, non-technical style. They are designed to provide members of the general public, local officials, community organizations, and media outlets a concise and objective statistical profile of current criminal justice practices in Nevada that may serve as a foundation for informed discussions of future crime control policies and practices. CACS State Data Briefs are modeled after similar reports produced by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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 (2004). *Crime in the United States 2003*. Retrieved August 12, 2009 from http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/ucr/cius_03/xl/03tbl05.xls.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008). *Crime in the United States 2008*. Retrieved March 29, 2009, from http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/data/table_05.html.

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

Rand, M.R. (2009). *Criminal Victimization, 2008*. (NCJ-227777). Washington, DC: USGPO.

Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics
University of Nevada Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway - Box 5009
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5009

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 address to:

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

(B)702-895-0236
(F)702-895-0252