



An Analysis of Crime Rates in West Virginia, 2015- 2019

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Introduction

The crime rate in the United States has been a top priority area of public concern over the past few decades. In a 2020 Pew Research Center survey, 59% of respondents said that violent crime was “very important to their vote in the 2020 presidential election” (Important Issues in the 2020 Election, 2020). In 20 out of 24 yearly Gallup surveys conducted since 1993, at least 60% of US adults said they thought that crime had gone up from the year before. Gallup’s 2020 annual crime poll reveals that 78% of US adults believe that crime rates had gone up in the nation. (Gramlich, 2020). However, this public perception of an increased crime rate is not seen in the number of reported crimes in the US. The two primary sources of nationwide crime data in the United States, the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ National Victimization Survey (NCVS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations’ Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, provide a partial but complimentary picture of crime rates in the nation. While the NCVS measures all crimes (reported and not reported to the police) using a self-reported nationwide survey, the UCR program measures only crimes reported to the police. According to NCVS, after a peak in 1993 at 79.8 victimizations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older, the overall rate of violent crimes has been declining, with only 21 victimizations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older reported in 2019. This change represents a 74% decline during the past 27 years. The UCR program shows that the nation’s violent crime index rates fell about 49% to 379.4 per 100,000 persons between 2003 and 2019. Similar declining trends were reported for the nation’s property crime rate and property victimizations by NCVS and UCR, respectively, during the same period.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 also had a significant impact on crimes in the US. Examining crime data from 34 major US cities, researchers found that homicides, aggravated assaults, and gun assaults rose during the pandemic. Seemingly connected to the pandemic-imposed restrictions, they found that while property and drug crime rates declined, motor vehicle theft increased during this period (Rosenfeld, Abt, & Lopez, 2021). Confirming Rosenfeld et al. (2021) findings, another report examined crime rates for the 25 largest US between 2015 and 2020; while the general trend has been a declining rate for most types of crimes, crime rates further declined in the months following the initial lockdowns (Abrams, 2020). Residential burglaries and drug crime rates also dropped while commercial burglaries and car thefts rose at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. However, the declining trend in the overall crime rates hides the rise in some violent crimes, including homicides and shootings.

Tracking and reporting crime data continues to be a priority of policymakers in the United States. As a result, the Federal Bureau of Investigation created the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to improve the overall quality and quantity of crime data collected by law enforcement. This reporting system provides researchers and policymakers with a detailed nationwide crime database, having better analytic flexibility to formulate policies and decision-making. At the recommendation of the FBI’s law enforcement partners, NIBRS will be replacing

the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS) as the only method for reporting data starting January 1, 2021.

West Virginia was one of the first few states in the nation to adopt the incident-based reporting method and fully report all its crime data to the FBI in an incident-based format. The state has a data repository, the West Virginia Incident-Based Reporting System (WVIBRS), maintained by the WV State Police's Uniform Crime Reporting section. WVIBRS stores crime data from all counties and police departments in the state and whose data is available for regular onward transmission to the FBI. This report examines the trends in violent and property crime rates in West Virginia using data from WVIBRS. In addition, we will compare West Virginia's crime rates with the US national rate and those of her five bordering states, including Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia¹.

According to the FBI, despite a spike in violent crime rates in the US from 2014 to 2016, violent crime rates have gone down every year since 2016. From 2016 to 2019, violent crime rates went from 397.5 per 100,000 to 379.4 per 100,000. Nationwide, property crime rates have decreased as well. From 2014 to 2019, U.S. property crime rates declined every year from 2,574.1 per 100,000 to 2,109.9 per 100,000. West Virginia's violent and property crime rates are lower than the national average. From 2014 to 2016, West Virginia's violent crime rates increased by 14.6%, bringing the state closer to the national average. However, from 2016 to 2018, violent crime rates dropped by 17.3% and then rose 5.6% in 2019, bringing WV back to nearly the same violent crime rate as it had been in 2014. West Virginia's property crime rates have decreased nearly every year since 2014 except for a slight increase in 2019. From 2014 to 2019, overall property crimes reported decreased in WV by 18%.

The city of Huntington in West Virginia reported a decrease in all categories of violent and property crimes in the first half of 2020. While violent crimes declined by 17%, property crimes were down 30% in the first six months of 2020 compared to the prior year. Huntington city police attribute this decrease to new strategies implemented in the past few years to combat crime, including the Violent Crime Initiative, Community Policing, etc. (Hessler, 2020). In Charleston, WV, crime rates have also been on the decline since 2014. Between 2014 and 2019, the number of rape, robbery, malicious wounding, burglary B&E, larceny, B&E auto, and motor vehicle theft were considerably down. The number of murders, however, was relatively unchanged, with seven murders reported in 2014 and eight murders in 2020. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak led to a decline in crime, it also led to the rise in domestic violence calls and shootings in Charleston (Casillas, 2020).

¹ For valid comparisons, any discussion of West Virginia's crime rate versus national rates or rates of other states, we use rates reported by the FBI in Crime in the US reports. For all discussions of crime rates for WV and counties in West Virginia, we use rates calculated from data in WVIBRS.

In addition to the decline in the overall crime rate, the Charleston Police Department also reported a 35% decline in drug overdoses between 2017 and 2020. Several proactive programs have been created to help those affected by the drug epidemic that has struck the state particularly hard; these include HELP4WV and Prevention First WV, which provide resources for those struggling with addiction. As studies have shown that crime is associated with drug abuse, most experts agree that if we could eliminate drug abuse, there would be a reduction in property crimes like robberies, burglaries, and some violent crimes (Boles & Miotto, 2003).

A previous study by the WV Statistical Analysis Center found that in 2004, WV's violent crime index was less than half of the violent crime index in the nation (Turley & Haas, 2006). The difference has shrunk between then and now. This current study will further examine violent and property crime rates in West Virginia, her bordering states, and the United States between 2015 and 2019. We seek to explore the trends and patterns of crimes in WV, her counties and determine how crime patterns differ with adjacent states and the nation.

Section 1: A Comparison of Violent and Property Crimes in the United States and West Virginia

Figure 1 shows the distribution of violent crime index offenses in the United States and West Virginia in 2019. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, there are four offenses that make up the violent crime index, which are Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter, Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault. In 2019, a total of 1,245,410 violent crime index offenses were reported to law enforcement in the United States, including 5,674 offenses committed in West Virginia. Compared to 2018, the number of violent crimes reported in 2019 in the United States fell by 0.6%. For both West Virginia and the United States, the most common violent offense reported was aggravated assault. About 68% of all violent crime index offenses reported in the United States in 2019 were aggravated assault offenses, while West Virginia had a higher proportion at 78.67%. This makes aggravated assault the most frequently reported of the four violent crimes. Meanwhile, robbery offenses accounted for a smaller proportion of violent crimes in West Virginia (at 6.66%) compared to the US (at 22.26%).

West Virginia held closer to the national proportion for the other offenses in the violent crime index category, including rape and murder. Rape offenses made up 13.3% of all violent crimes in WV and 11.6% in the nation. For both the US and WV, murder and nonnegligent manslaughter offenses occurred most infrequently and constituted about 2% of all violent crimes reported in 2019.

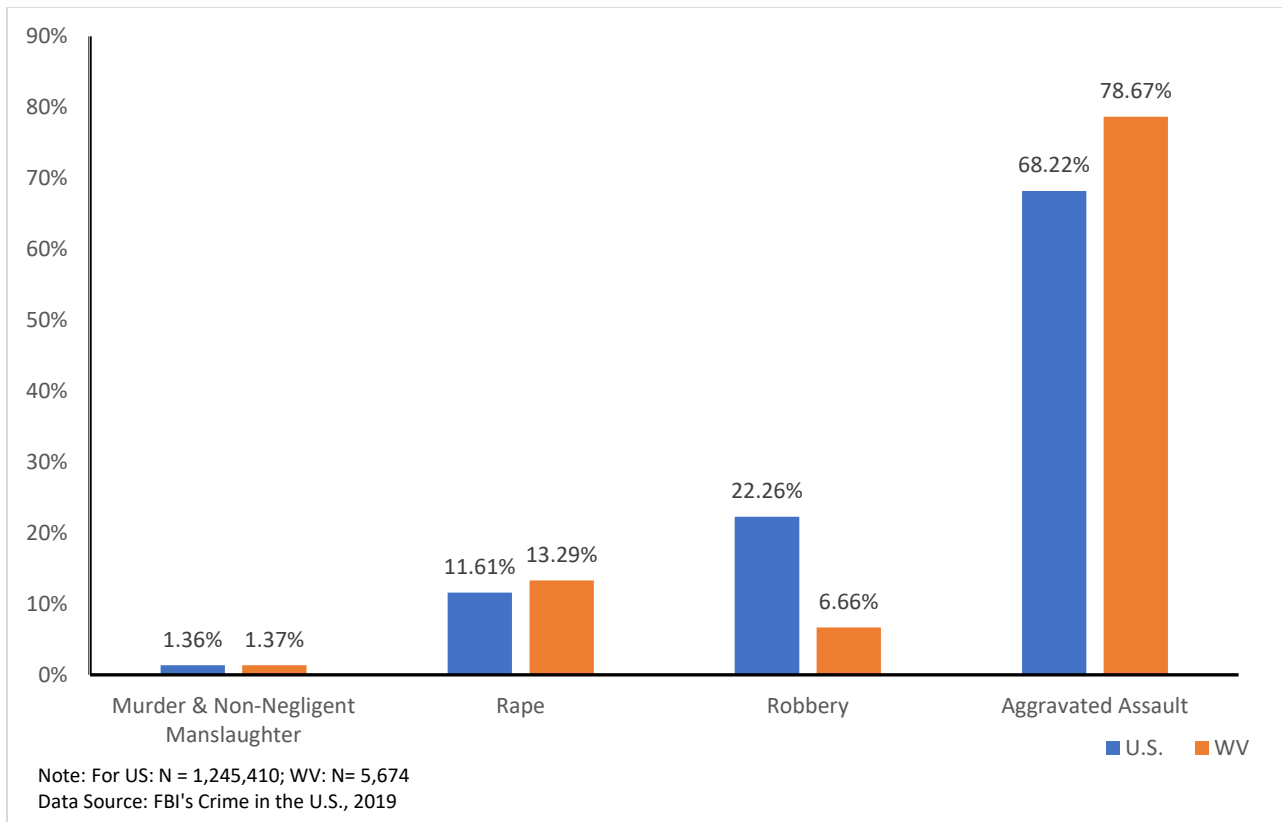


Figure 1: Violent crime index offenses in the United States and West Virginia, 2019

The FBI reported 6,925,677 property crime index offenses in the United States in 2019, out of which 28,376 were committed in West Virginia. According to the UCR program, property crime index offenses include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Although data on arson is also reported, it is not included in the property crime index totals. As a result, the distribution of the state's property crimes adhered closer to the national proportion of property index offenses, as seen in Figure 2.

About 16% of the nation's property index crimes were burglary, while roughly 21% of WV's property index crimes were burglary. Larceny was the most common property crime in both the United States and West Virginia; 73% and 71% of all property crimes reported in the US and WV were larceny offenses. Motor vehicle theft was far less common; motor vehicle theft in WV was lower than the national proportion at 8.52%.

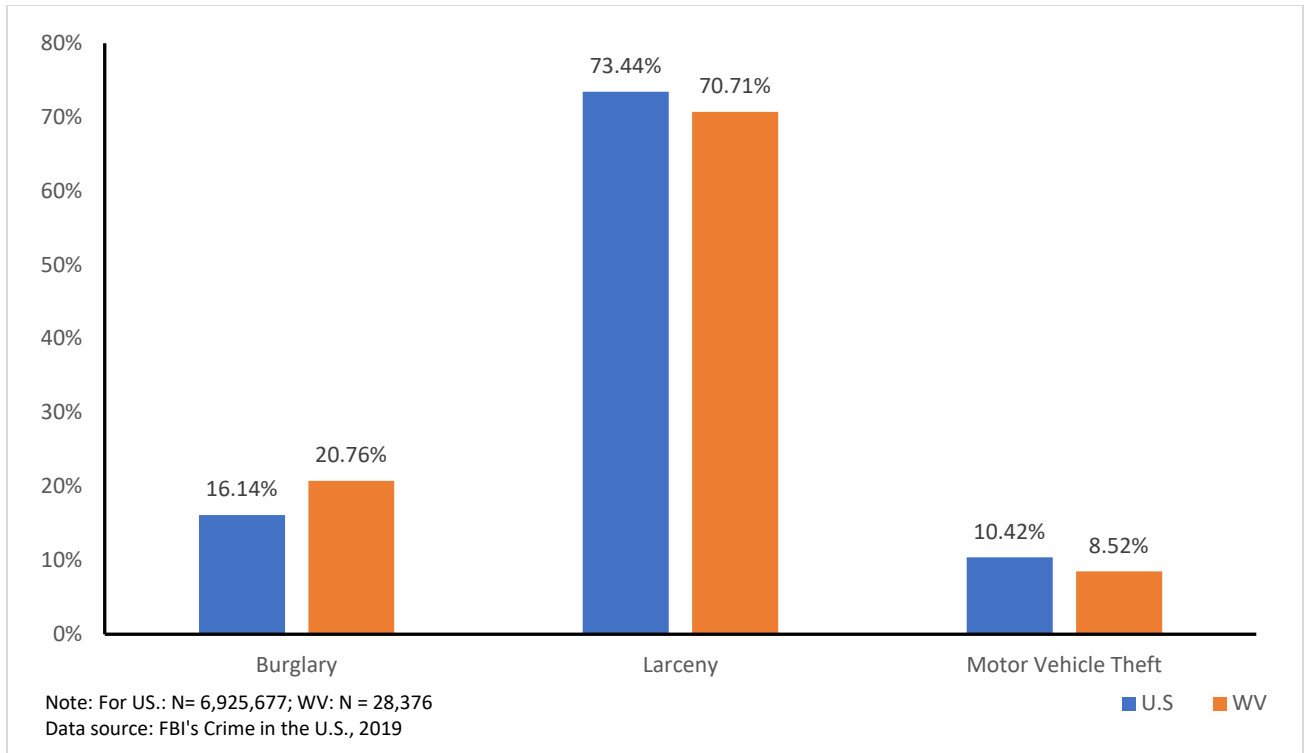


Figure 2: Property Crime Index offenses in the United States and West Virginia, 2019

Figure 3 shows the trends in violent crime rates for the United States and West Virginia between 2015 and 2019. From 2015 and 2019, the violent crime rate in the United States was relatively steady, rising slightly, then falling, and returning close to its 2015 levels by the end of 2019. However, the trend in violent crime rates was more pronounced for West Virginia, with a sharp decline in violent crime rate between 2017 and 2018 and rising again in 2019 to an annual level of 316.6 violent crimes per 100,000 residents.

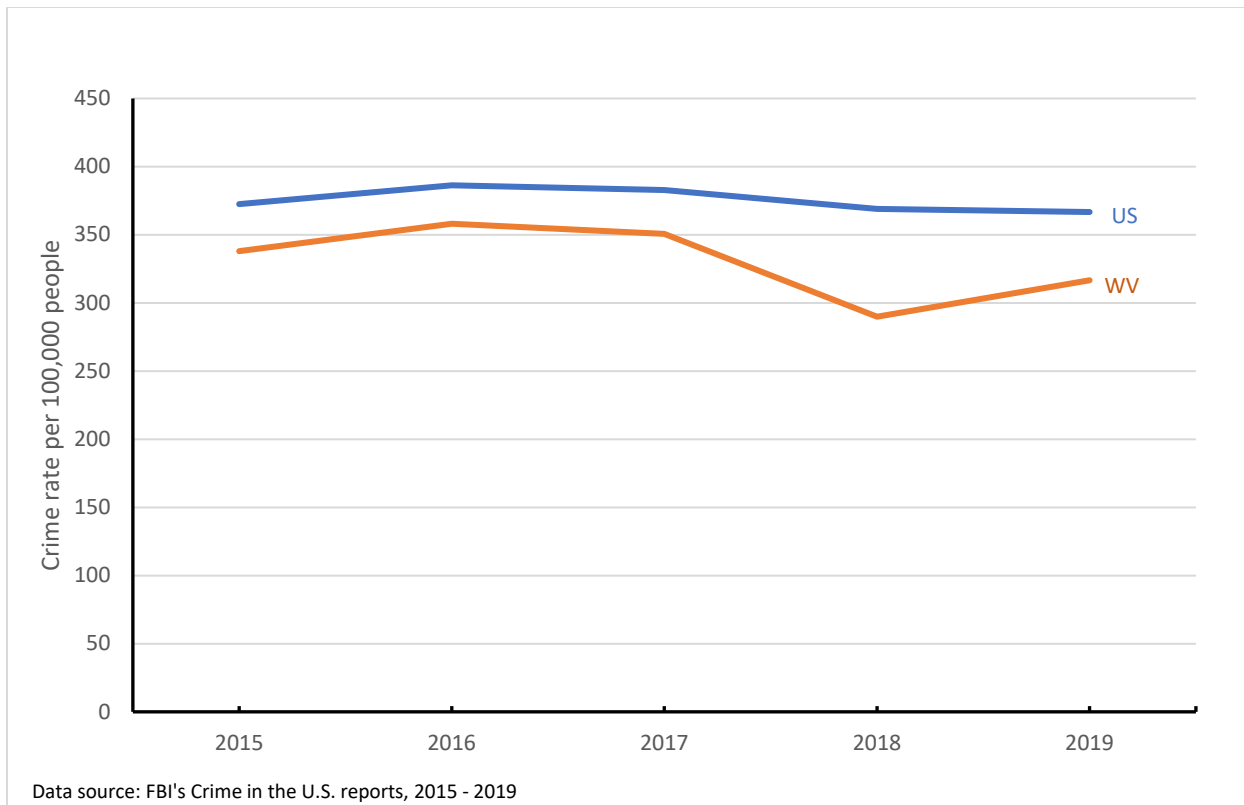


Figure 3: Violent Crime Index rates per 100,000 population, United States and West Virginia, 2015 – 2019

The nation's violent crime rates remained at steady levels between 2015 and 2019. From 2015 to 2016, the U.S. violent crime index rates rose 4% (from 372.6 to 386.3 violent crimes per 100,000 persons) and fell 5% between 2016 and 2019 (from 386.3 to 366.7 violent crimes per 100,000 persons). Overall, the U.S. violent crime rate declined by 1.6% between 2015 and 2019.

West Virginia's violent crime rate patterned similarly to that of the US and remained consistently below the national average over the five years. In WV, the violent crime rate rose 6% from 2015 to 2016 (from 337.9 to 358.1 violent crimes per 100,000 persons) and fell 19% from 2016 to 2018 (from 358.1 to 289.9 violent crimes per 100,000 persons) and rose again, by 9% from 2018 to 2019 (from 289.9 to 316.6 violent crimes per 100,000 persons). The decline between 2016 and 2018 appears to be explained by a large decrease in robbery and rape offenses during that period. Overall, WV's violent crime rate declined by 6.3% between 2015 and 2019.

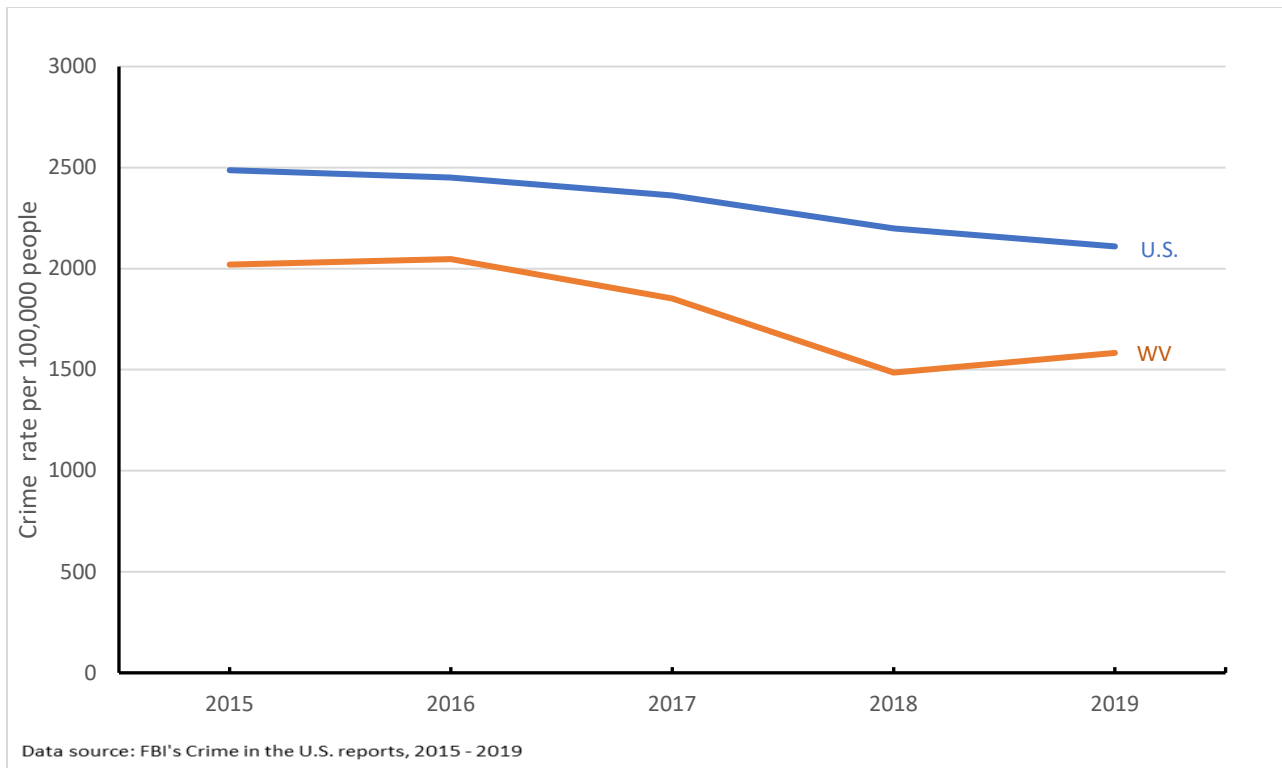


Figure 4: Property Crime Index rates per 100,000 population, United States and West Virginia, 2015 - 2019

Figure 4 shows the US and WV property crimes index over the five years between 2015 and 2019. Property crime index offenses decreased in both WV and the nation, falling by 21.61% and 15.16%, respectively, between 2015 and 2019. This decrease has followed the longer trend of falling property crime rates that began in the early 1990s.

The US saw decreases in property crime index offenses reported every year between 2015 and 2019. From 2015 to 2016, the property crime index fell 1.46% (from 2,487 to 2,450.7 property crimes per 100,000 persons). In 2017, it fell again by 3.61% (from 2,450.7 to 2,362.2 property crimes per 100,000 persons). Its largest decrease was in 2018, where property crimes fell 6.89% (from 2,362.2 to 2,199.5 property crimes per 100,000 persons). The index rate decreased again in 2019 by 4.07%, with 2,109.9 out of 100,000 residents reporting a property offense. In West Virginia, from 2015 to 2016, the property crime rate rose slightly by 1.35% (from 2,020 to 2,047.2 property crimes per 100,000 persons) and fell by 29% from 2016 to 2018 (from 2,047.2 to 1,485.6 property crimes per 100,000 persons) and rose again by 6.6% in 2019 with 1,583.4 out of 100,000 residents reporting a property offense.

Section 2: Distribution of Violent Crime Index Offenses in West Virginia

Violent crime rates in West Virginia fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, with the most significant decrease in offenses reported in 2019. In 2015, a total of 5,754 violent offenses were reported by law enforcement agencies in West Virginia. Between 2015 and 2016, the number of violent offenses decreased by 11.1%, bringing the level of violent index offenses to 5,117. The number of violent offenses increased by 7.2% in 2017 and by 5.9% in 2018. However, in 2019, these violent offenses decreased by 15.9% to 4,973.

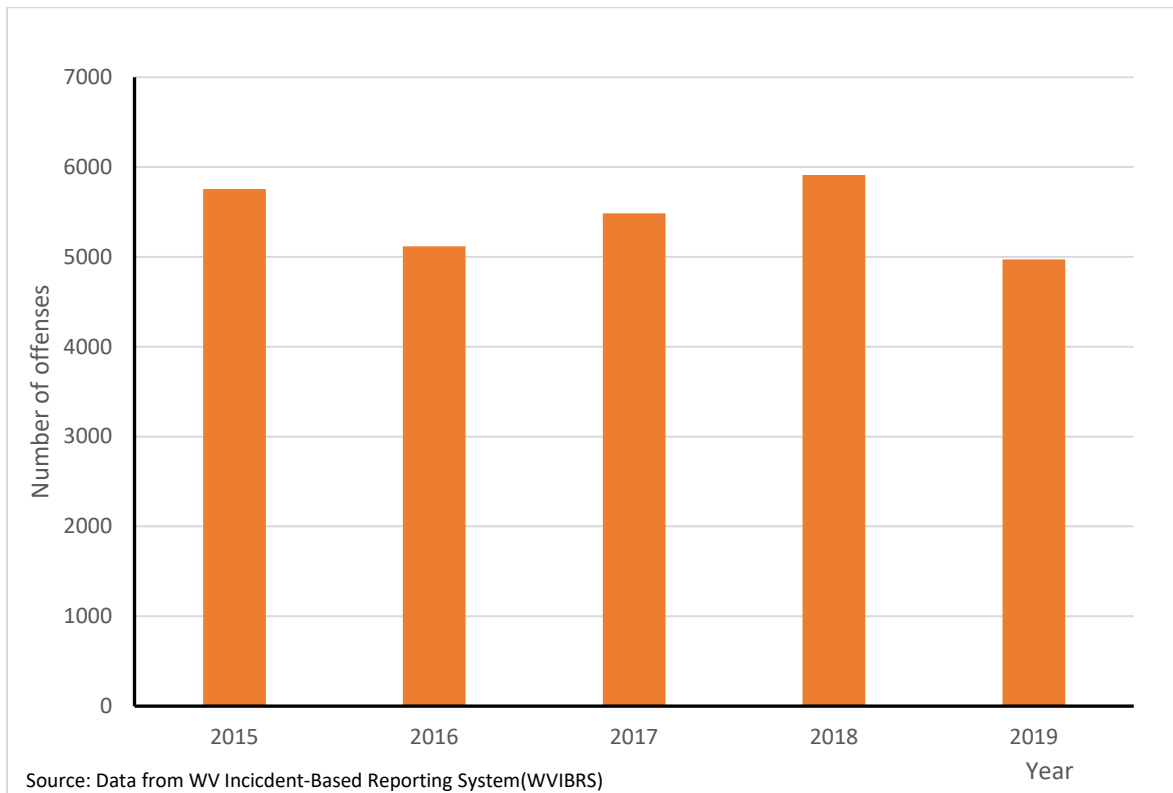


Figure 5: Total violent offenses in West Virginia, 2015 - 2019

We highlight the changes in the rates of individual crimes that make up the violent index offenses. The number of rape offenses reported in West Virginia has hovered around an annual rate of 709 offenses per year for the last five years. The number of rape offenses reported fell between 2015 and 2016 at a rate of 18%. Rape offenses increased (by 37.9%) to 819 in 2017 and decreased by 24.4% in 2018. In 2019, 785 rape offenses were reported.

Aggravated assault was the most reported violent crime in the five years. The number of aggravated assault offenses reported fell by 14.58% in 2016. This decrease was followed by an increase in 2017 and 2018 by 8.33% and 20.14%, respectively. In 2019, the number of aggravated

assaults fell in 2019 by 24.84%. Thus, the up and downtrend in rape and aggravated assault offenses appear to have followed a similar pattern in the last five years.

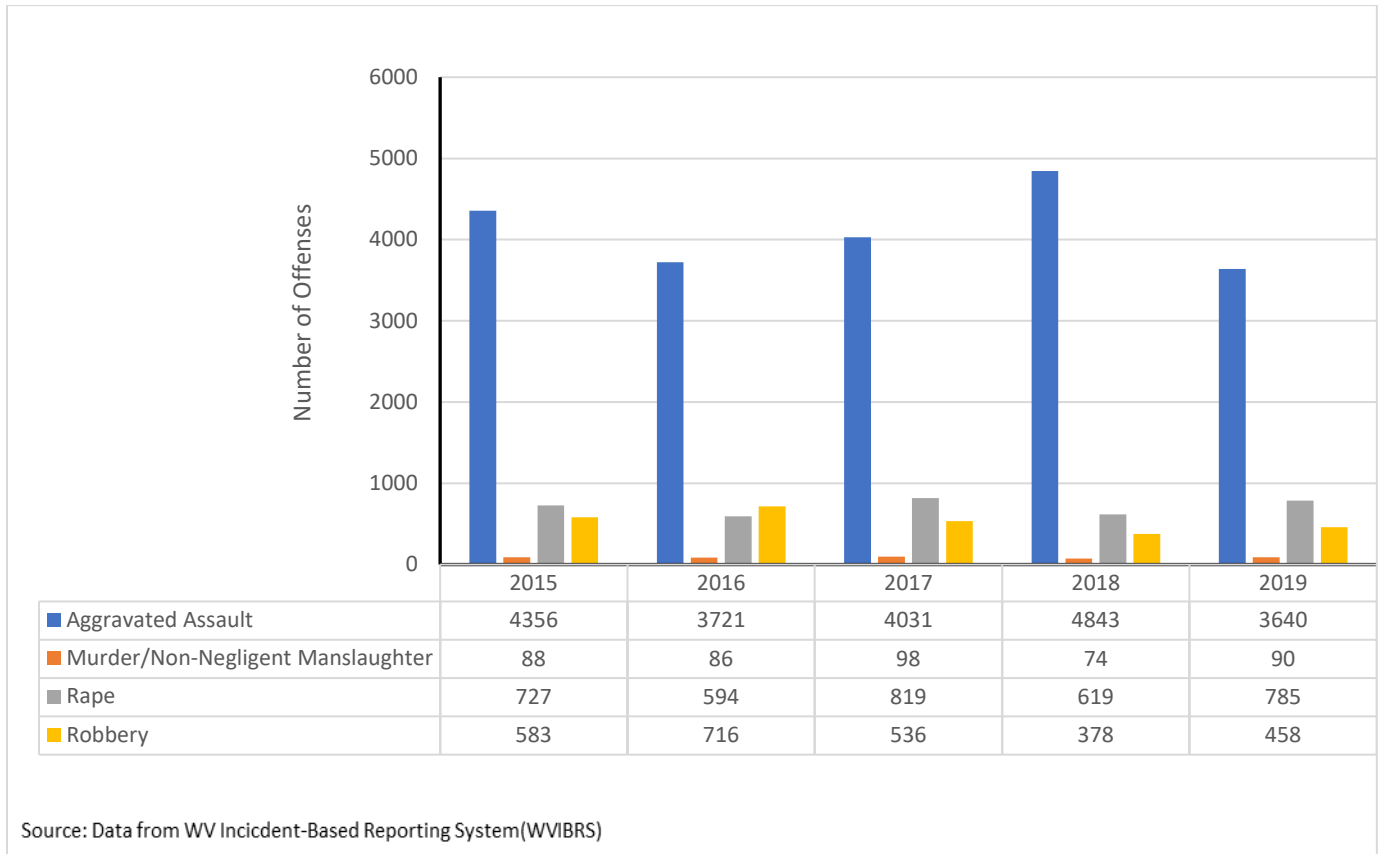


Figure 6: Categories of violent index offenses in West Virginia, 2015 - 2019

Murder is the most serious offense of all violent index crime offenses, even though it accounted for less than 2% of all violent crimes reported between 2015 and 2019. The average number of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter offenses reported in the five years was 87, with the highest number reported in 2017 at 98 murder offenses. The number of murder offenses declined slightly by 2% from 2015 to 2016. It rose by 14% in 2017 and dropped again by 24% in 2018. Finally, it increased by 22%, with 90 murder offenses reported in 2019.

The year-to-year change in the number of robberies reported was mixed between 2015 and 2019. The number of robbery offenses reported increased by 23% between 2015 and 2016. This was followed by a decline of 25% in 2017 and a further decline of 30% in 2018. In 2019, the number of robbery offenses increased by 21% with 458 robberies reported.

Section 3: Distribution of Property Crime Index Offenses in West Virginia

West Virginia saw steady decreases in property crime index offenses every year from 2015 to 2019. This trend matches the progression seen on a national level, where property crimes have fallen every year. This includes declines in larceny/theft offenses, arson, and burglary/breaking and entering offenses. The one exception was motor vehicle thefts, which saw an overall increase in the number of offenses reported.

Larceny/theft offenses were the most common property crime index offense, with a total of 19,712 reported in 2019. This represents an overall decrease of 12.35% from the 22,489 property crimes reported in 2015. In addition, larceny/theft offense was the largest predictor of property crime trends.

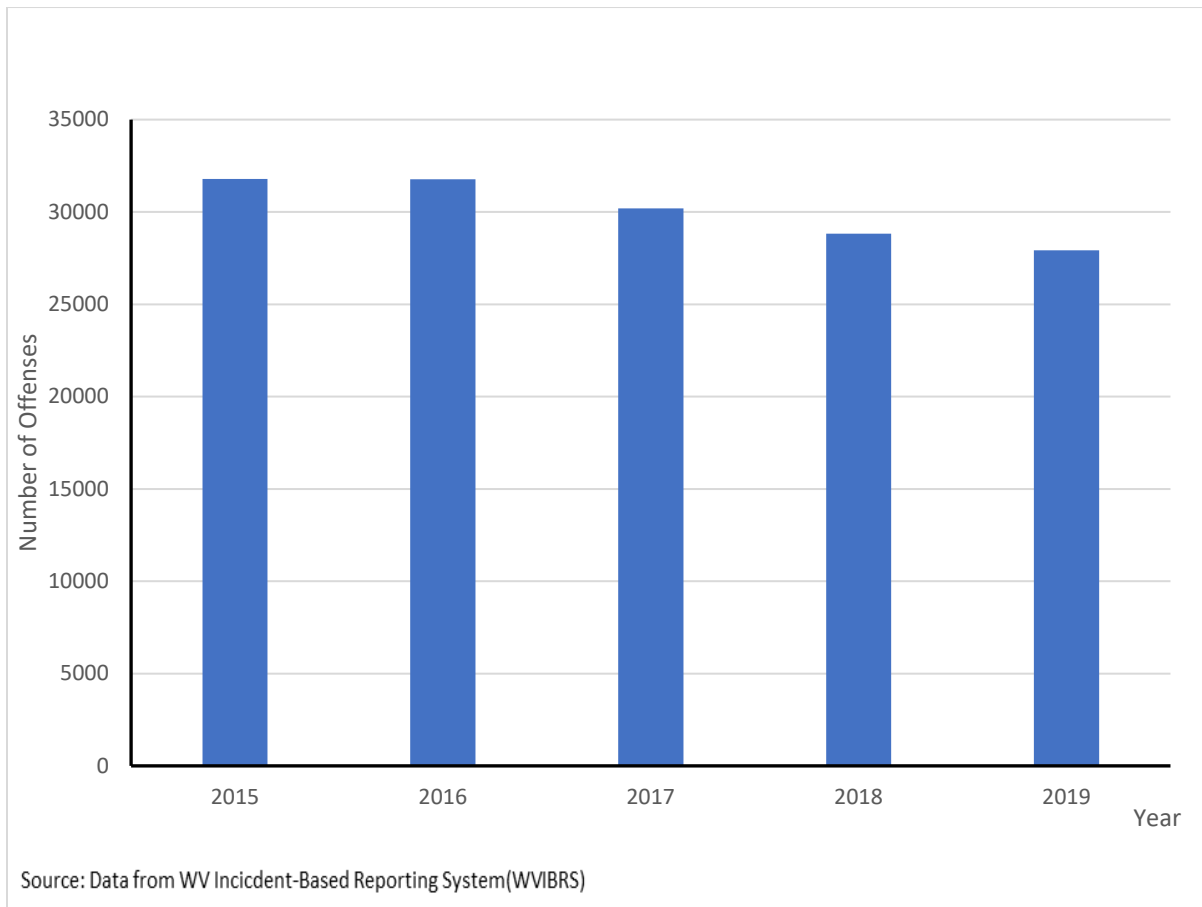


Figure 7: Total Property offenses in West Virginia, 2015 – 2019

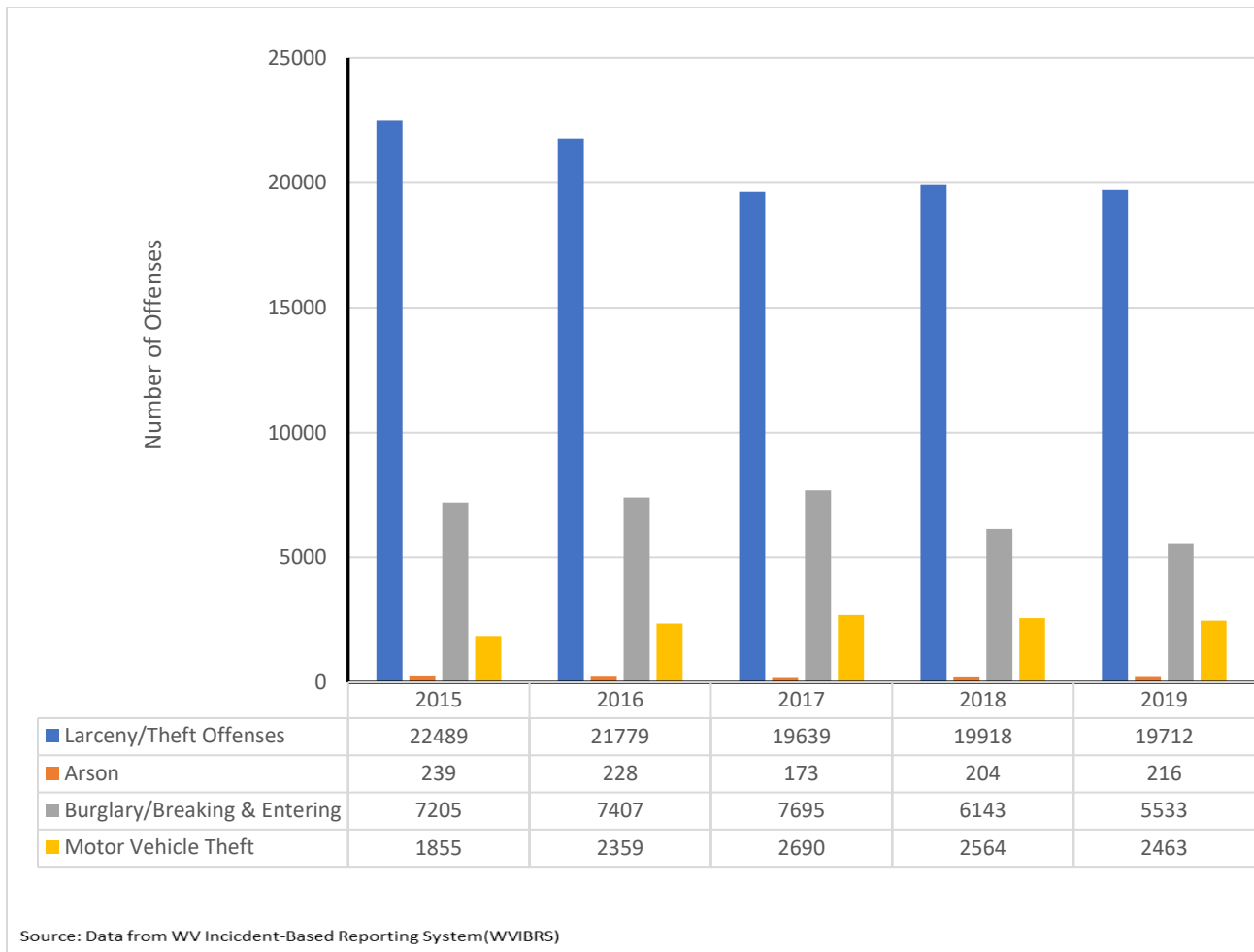


Figure 8: Categories of property index offenses in West Virginia, 2015 - 2019

Arson was the least common property crime index offense, with 239 offenses reported in 2015 and 228 reported in 2016. The number of offenses reported fell sharply in 2017 to 173 and then grew to 204 in 2018. The number of arson offenses then rose again to 216 in 2019. The number of burglary/breaking and entering offenses reported increased slightly in 2016 and 2017, by 2.80% and 3.89%, respectively. The number of burglary/breaking and entering offenses then fell significantly, dropping 20.17% in 2018 and 9.93% in 2019.

Contrary to overall property crime trends, West Virginia saw increased motor vehicle thefts from 2015 to 2019. The most significant increase in motor vehicle thefts was in 2016, with an additional 27.17% vehicles reported stolen from the prior year. The number of motor vehicle theft offenses reported grew again in 2017 by 14.03% before falling 4.68% in 2018. This decline continued in 2019, with a decrease of 3.94% of motor vehicles reported stolen.

Section 4: A Comparative Analysis of Crime Rates in West Virginia, Neighboring States, and the United States

Through its UCR program, the FBI publishes an annual report on crime statistics for all the states in the US. We analyze trends in violent and property index crime for West Virginia, the United States, and a cohort of adjacent bordering states. The five states that border West Virginia are Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

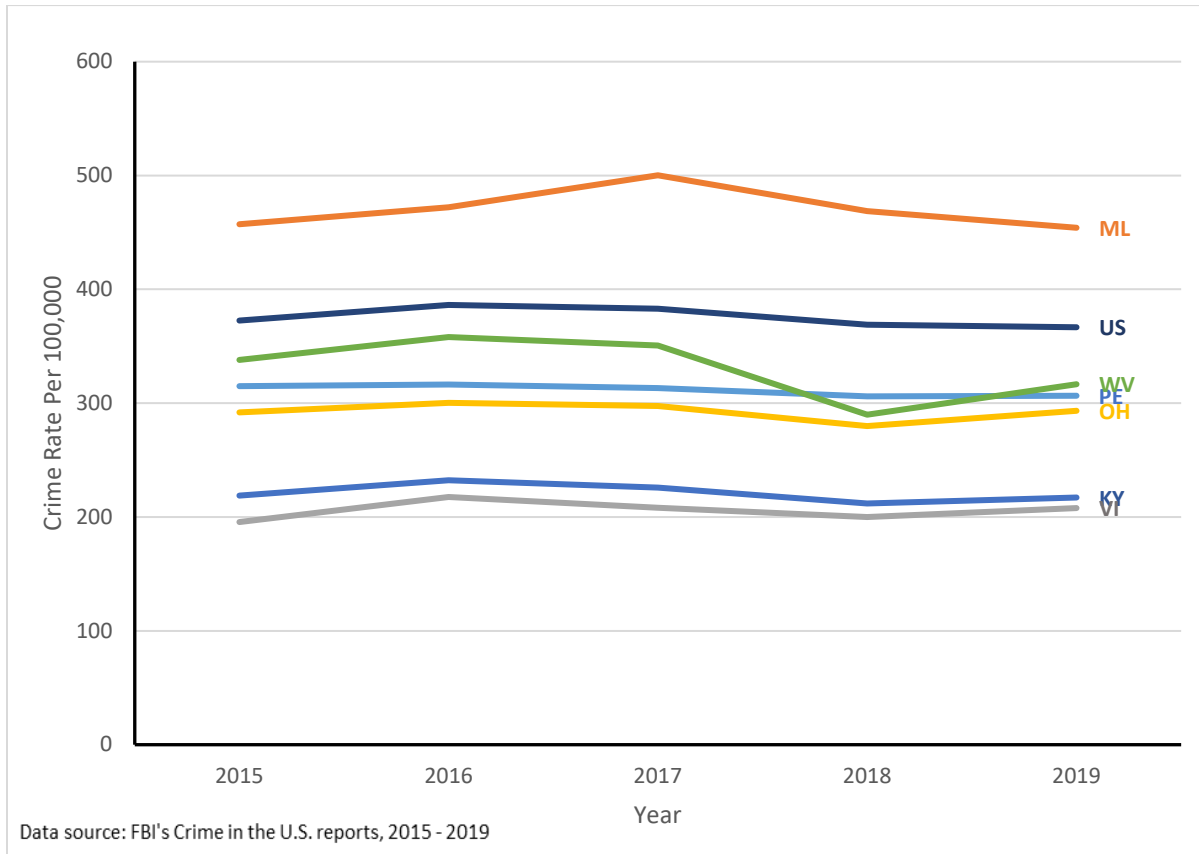


Figure 9: Violent Crime Index rates per 100,000 population, US, West Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, 2015 - 2019

Apart from Maryland, the violent crime index for West Virginia and its other adjacent states was below the national average over the five years. Virginia had the lowest violent crime, with Kentucky trailing very closely with values in the low 200s per 100,000 residents. Maryland's violent crime rate was significantly higher than the rest of the adjoining states, and it varied in values between 450 – 500 crimes per 100,000 residents. Between 2015 to 2017, West Virginia's violent crime rate was fifth highest in the group, only lower than that of the US and Maryland. In 2018, the violent crime rate fell below 300 per 100,000 residents, staying below Pennsylvania's rate but rose again in 2019, returning to its fifth position in the group.

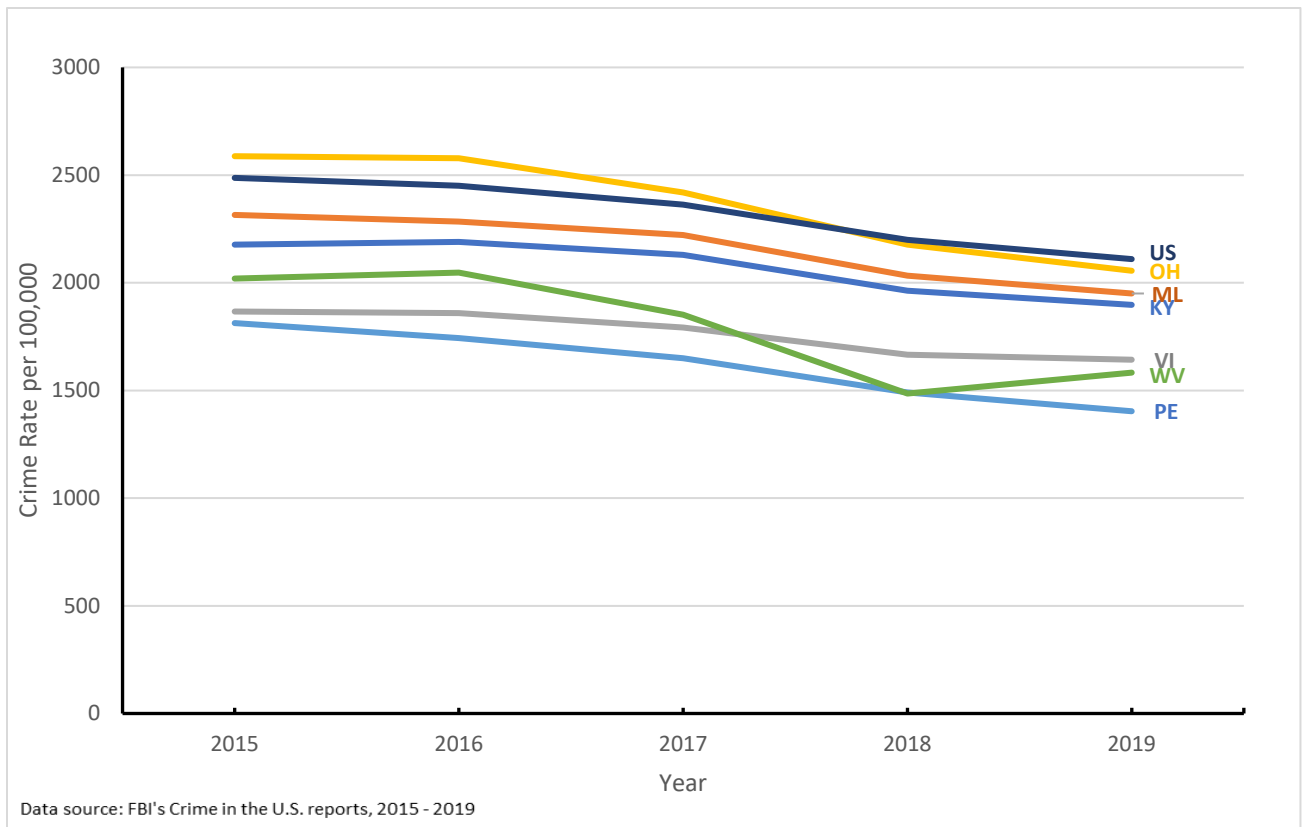


Figure 10: Property Crime Index rates per 100,000 population, US, West Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, 2015 - 2019

As seen in Figure 10, the general trend of property crime index for WV, its adjoining states, and the nation declined between 2015 and 2018. Unlike all its border states and the country, WV's property crime index rose in 2019. While Ohio reported the highest property crime index of the group between 2015 and 2017, the property crime rate fell slightly below that of the US between 2018 and 2019. Over the five years, WV's property crime index was consistently below that of the US, Ohio, Maryland, and Kentucky. It showed a sharp decline between 2016 and 2018, falling below Virginia's rate by 2018, representing a 27% decrease within the three years. Finally, it rose again in 2019 by 6.6% to an annual level of 1,583.4. Pennsylvania had the lowest property crime rate during the five years and reported the most significant decrease with 22.58% fewer property crimes in 2019 than there were in 2015.

Section 5: Crime Trends in West Virginia Counties

5-yr Average Violent Crime Index per 1,000 population by county

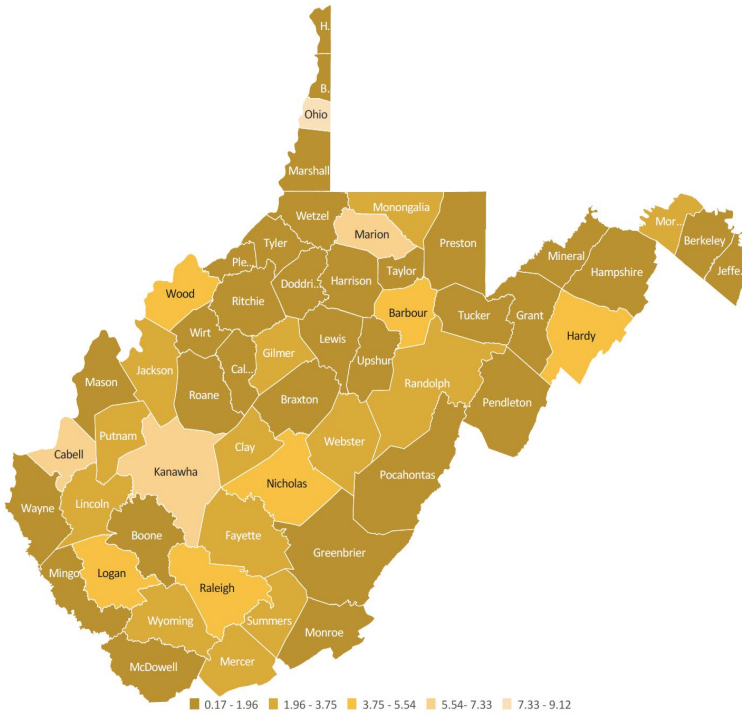


Figure 11

We show the 5-yr average total violent crime index (per 1,000 population) for 2015 – 2019 (see Figure 11). Five-year averages were used because some smaller counties report no violent crimes, and taking the average smoothens the variability in rates for them. The average violent crime index ranged from 0.17 violent crimes per 1,000 population to a high of 9.12 violent crimes per 1,000 population. Cabell, Kanawha, Marion, and Ohio counties had the highest violent crime index rate. Taylor county reported the lowest violent crime index. Broke, Greenbrier, Mason, Monroe, Pendleton, Pleasants, Ritchie, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, and Upshur counties reported an average index of less than one violent crime per 1,000 residents.

5-yr Average Property Crime Index per 1,000 population by county

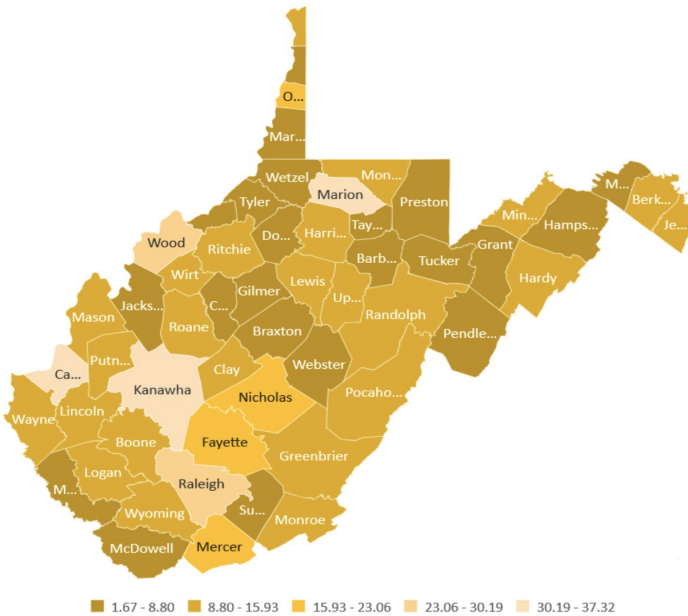


Figure 12

5-year average property index ranged from 1.67 property crimes per 1,000 population to 37.32 property crimes per 1,000 population. During the five years, Cabell and Kanawha counties accounted for about 40% of all reported property crime index in the state. Taylor and Tyler counties reported an average index rate of less than two property crimes per 1,000 residents.

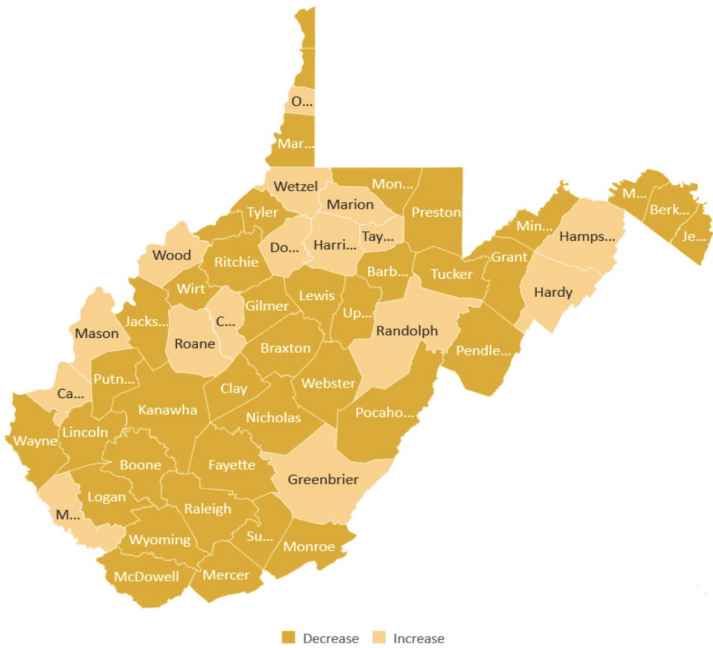
5-yr change in Violent Crime Index from 2015 through 2019 by county



The change in the violent crime index is shown in Figure 13. About 64% (or thirty-five counties) of the counties in West Virginia experienced a decrease in violent crime index from 2015 to 2019. Taylor county reported no change in its 2015 rate and 2019.

Figure 13

5-yr change in Property Crime Index from 2015 through 2019 by county



The change in the property crime index is shown in Figure 14. Thirty-nine of the fifty-five counties in West Virginia experienced a decline in property index rates between 2015 and 2019.

Figure 14

Table 1: Annual rates of violent and property crime in West Virginia's 55 counties, 2015 - 2019

Annual Violent Crime Index (per 1000 persons)					
WV Counties	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barbour	12.79	2.27	2.30	3.40	3.22
Berkeley	2.17	0.95	1.31	1.56	1.29
Boone	2.32	1.93	0.98	1.59	1.35
Braxton	2.57	1.26	1.27	1.14	0.64
Brooke	0.91	0.44	0.63	0.68	0.50
Cabell	0.56	6.15	10.78	6.83	4.39
Calhoun	1.74	2.17	0.41	0.69	0.28
Clay	2.03	1.25	2.99	1.16	2.70
Doddridge	2.18	1.52	0.82	1.17	0.24
Fayette	3.11	2.01	1.97	1.81	1.60
Gilmer	6.14	1.11	1.49	1.39	1.41
Grant	2.23	0.78	0.77	1.55	0.09
Greenbrier	0.67	0.59	0.94	0.63	1.27
Hampshire	0.99	0.51	1.15	1.41	2.42
Hancock	1.57	0.94	0.88	1.38	0.94
Hardy	3.69	3.76	4.19	3.27	7.04
Harrison	1.40	0.42	0.72	1.13	1.83
Jackson	1.75	3.01	3.87	3.87	3.04
Jefferson	1.28	1.27	0.96	1.46	1.01
Kanawha	5.91	5.38	4.78	6.12	5.67
Lewis	1.09	0.98	0.74	2.00	1.01
Lincoln	4.14	2.80	2.30	1.75	1.57
Logan	6.50	5.02	5.39	4.85	5.31
Marion	4.60	6.10	4.49	6.31	6.30
Marshall	1.43	0.81	0.78	0.77	1.28
Mason	1.02	0.63	0.61	0.55	0.69
McDowell	1.88	1.19	2.01	0.52	0.75
Mercer	3.52	3.97	3.71	3.61	3.45
Mineral	2.55	1.61	1.32	1.37	1.38
Mingo	2.37	1.82	1.20	2.26	1.54
Monongalia	3.17	2.44	3.69	3.34	2.58
Monroe	0.66	0.67	0.60	0.90	1.51
Morgan	2.12	2.55	1.81	2.58	3.35
Nicholas	5.13	3.03	2.35	5.19	6.12
Ohio	9.33	8.40	6.86	12.13	8.89
Pendleton	1.41	1.15	0.29	1.00	0.72
Pleasants	0.40	0.67	0.27	0.80	0.54
Pocahontas	1.17	1.52	1.77	2.74	1.46
Preston	2.60	1.48	1.66	0.98	0.81
Putnam	3.36	2.45	1.48	3.62	3.21
Raleigh	7.69	6.23	3.18	6.07	3.29
Randolph	2.36	3.34	3.46	2.57	3.28
Ritchie	0.50	0.40	0.51	0.72	0.73
Roane	2.02	1.13	1.07	1.22	1.46
Summers	3.27	2.39	3.18	6.07	3.29
Taylor	0.24	0.12	0.06	0.18	0.24
Tucker	1.69	0.85	0.57	0.86	0.29
Tyler	0.67	0.45	0.11	0.57	0.70
Upshur	1.01	0.53	0.81	0.94	0.79
Wayne	1.33	1.13	0.52	1.28	0.89
Webster	5.56	1.99	1.08	0.60	0.86
Wetzel	0.89	1.09	1.62	2.29	3.85
Wirt	1.90	1.39	0.17	1.72	1.72
Wood	2.36	3.45	7.91	6.07	3.23
Wyoming	5.64	3.54	1.32	3.27	4.76

Annual Property Crime Index (per 1000 persons)					
WV Counties	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barbour	6.42	9.37	9.45	6.25	4.87
Berkeley	23.76	19.34	2.92	12.98	7.60
Boone	17.25	18.24	12.83	12.21	12.72
Braxton	9.67	9.50	7.24	4.55	8.60
Brooke	7.33	5.82	7.24	4.55	8.60
Cabell	15.88	46.34	52.08	33.16	31.06
Calhoun	4.82	6.51	7.25	7.34	5.63
Clay	9.24	7.59	15.99	11.00	8.23
Doddridge	6.20	5.71	9.74	6.78	6.27
Fayette	20.71	18.52	17.77	14.35	14.53
Gilmer	7.34	7.62	8.46	5.44	5.37
Grant	3.52	3.10	4.56	6.79	0.86
Greenbrier	10.68	9.60	11.25	9.97	11.74
Hampshire	4.55	4.07	11.03	6.12	8.50
Hancock	13.28	9.10	6.57	8.12	7.53
Hardy	7.74	6.52	10.33	9.37	21.34
Harrison	9.22	5.65	9.68	11.39	22.21
Jackson	6.34	5.86	5.43	5.68	5.14
Jefferson	16.64	14.49	9.97	9.70	7.07
Kanawha	37.44	39.83	38.46	36.93	33.83
Lewis	11.50	9.39	9.21	9.30	11.44
Lincoln	12.45	12.98	18.30	12.34	9.60
Logan	12.63	9.53	8.17	6.50	7.84
Marion	22.67	24.65	29.29	29.03	55.61
Marshall	8.21	6.96	5.63	6.35	7.63
Mason	12.60	11.92	7.20	12.46	13.33
McDowell	7.09	4.75	4.14	3.81	3.36
Mercer	19.33	15.80	21.85	15.05	14.31
Mineral	14.15	9.50	11.24	9.68	9.97
Mingo	5.96	5.02	7.00	6.67	6.40
Monongalia	15.77	13.70	15.24	12.72	14.11
Monroe	9.43	8.16	12.18	10.69	8.59
Morgan	9.26	7.49	9.09	6.17	6.26
Nicholas	19.14	18.04	18.35	14.09	16.17
Ohio	17.41	19.38	16.74	19.35	19.15
Pendleton	7.46	2.72	10.33	5.87	7.46
Pleasants	2.80	2.94	2.82	2.66	1.34
Pocahontas	8.63	8.56	16.13	13.80	7.88
Preston	8.01	5.66	16.13	13.80	7.88
Putnam	12.40	10.89	11.66	11.88	9.74
Raleigh	37.42	29.70	23.54	30.56	19.86
Randolph	11.33	12.05	10.38	8.23	11.60
Ritchie	10.81	3.61	17.46	6.77	9.32
Roane	10.37	6.09	8.71	10.06	11.10
Summers	10.12	6.55	7.45	11.21	5.89
Taylor	0.59	1.18	1.01	1.01	4.55
Tucker	5.36	5.39	7.72	3.32	3.66
Tyler	3.57	1.45	0.00	1.49	2.21
Upshur	14.72	12.48	16.45	14.28	12.74
Wayne	17.76	13.82	7.09	5.56	8.40
Webster	7.41	4.79	11.50	8.34	6.29
Wetzel	5.89	6.26	7.97	5.77	5.97
Wirt	21.19	10.58	7.43	5.68	6.01
Wood	22.97	24.17	25.56	33.74	33.19
Wyoming	14.16	11.39	7.15	6.40	7.55

Data Collection and Methodology

Data used in this report comes from two sources: the annual Crime in the United States reports for 2015 through 2019 published by the FBI and the Incident-Based Reporting System (WVIBRS) data repository maintained by the West Virginia State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Section. We used crime data from Crime in the US² reports when discussing WV, US, and border states index crime. WV's violent and property crime index rates are calculated from WVIBRS using the FBI's unit of count methods. Specifically, the number of offenses for crimes against persons is determined by the number of victims, while the number of offenses for crimes against property is based on each distinct operation.

WVIBRS is a fluid data system that is updated with incident information by law enforcement agencies continuously. The data analyzed in this report represent offenses reported for each calendar year up to the date on which the data were extracted from WVIBRS. Data files for 2015 – 2019 were received in September 2020. For each year, population estimates for the state and localities were obtained from the US Census Bureau website. Crime Index for the state and county is calculated by dividing the number of reported offenses by the population estimate and multiplying by 100,000 (or 1,000).

Definitions

We give a summary of the definitions of violent and property offenses according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program³

Aggravated Assault - An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.).

Murder/Nonnegligent Manslaughter - The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

Robbery - The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

² Crime in the US reports for 2015 – 2019 can be found [here](#)

³ See NIBRS Offense Definitions: https://ucr.fbi.gov/nibrs/2019/resource-pages/nibrs_offense_definitions-2019.pdf

Rape - The carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

Arson - To unlawfully and intentionally damage, or attempt to damage, any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device.

Burglary/Breaking and Entering - The unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a felony or theft.

Larceny/Theft Offenses - —The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession, or constructive possession, of another person. These offenses include pocket-picking, purse-snatching, shoplifting, theft from building, theft from coin operated machine or device, theft from a motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle parts or accessories, and all other larcenies.

Motor Vehicle Theft - The theft of a motor vehicle.

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