UNLV Center for Democratic Culture
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The Social Health of Nevada

Leading Indicators and Quality of Life in the Silver State

Crime, Delinquency, and Justice in Nevada

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Introduction

In the last 50 years, many American scholars and politicians have given much attention to crime and the justice system. While existing scholarly literature includes many studies focused on different regions and cities, there is limited empirical analysis of crime trends in Nevada. An exception is the Social Health of Nevada report issued by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Center for Democratic Culture (CDC) (Shalin, 2006, 2012, 2018).

This study will update the 2018 study, provide an overview of violent and property crimes, explore emerging crimes in Nevada, offer possible explanations for the existing patterns, emphasize the importance of sustained attention to crime issues for policymakers at all levels of government, list available community resources, and highlight the need for conducting systematic research in this area.

Overview

According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.), violent crimes in Nevada peaked in 2018 with a total of 17,159 offenses and declined steadily through 2021. There was a slight increase in 2022, then it gradually dropped to 12,529 offenses in 2025. At the same time, property crimes fluctuated. In 2017,

Highlights

- Aggravated assault under violent crime and larceny-theft under property crime consistently represented the largest category of crime type in their respective categories in Nevada throughout 2017-2025.
- Violent crime clearance in Nevada rose 19 percentage points over the study period, while property crime clearance climbed 5 points.
- Nevada is ranked 3rd in the nation for both reported cybercrime and financial losses in 2025.
- The COVID-19 pandemic altered crime opportunities rather than reducing crime uniformly across all crime types.

How to Cite this Report

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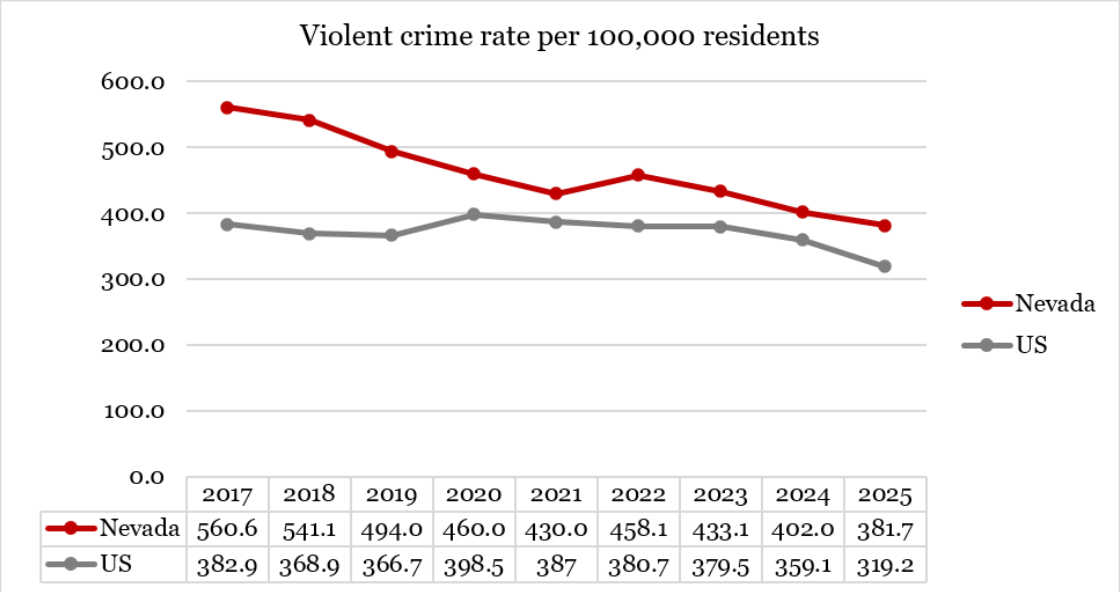
Nevada experienced 78,663 property crime offenses; there was a gradual decline in the following years before a sharp pandemic-era dip in 2020. Property crimes in Nevada then jumped again, peaking in 2023 at 81,959 offenses before declining to 66,309 by 2025.

Across the 2017-2025 period, Nevada's overall crime patterns mirror national crime trends (Regional comparison displayed in Appendix B, Figure a). Both Nevada and the U.S. experienced a general decline in total violent offenses over the period despite temporary increases between 2018 and 2022 (Figure 1). Moreover, overall property offenses declined over the years in both Nevada and nationally despite temporary increases during the post-pandemic period (Figure 2).

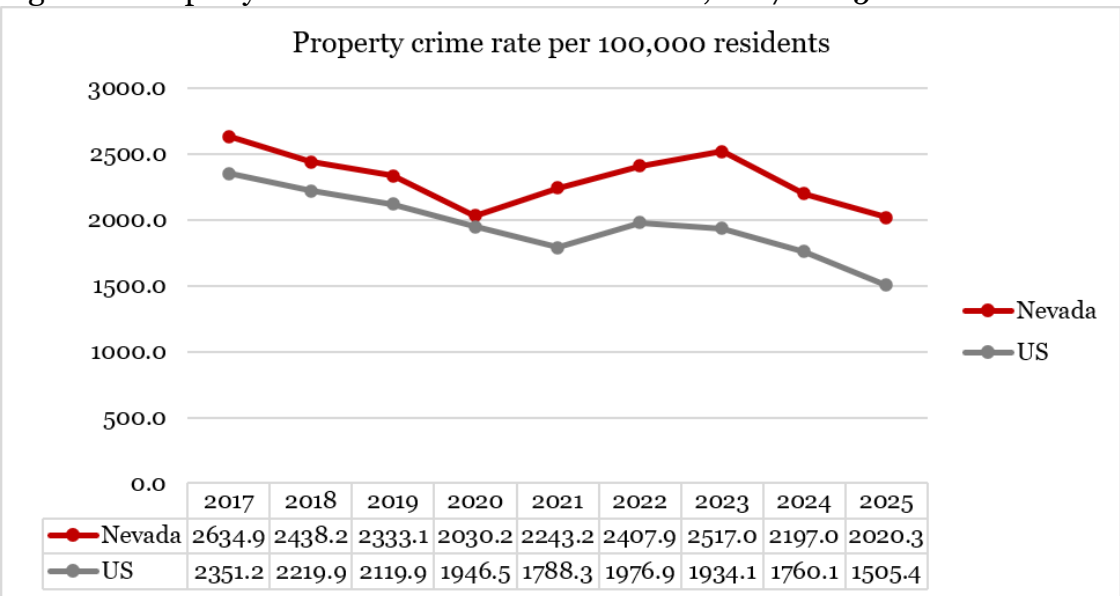
Figure 1: Violent crime rates in Nevada and U.S., 2017-2025



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nevada	560.6	541.1	494.0	460.0	430.0	458.1	433.1	402.0	381.7
US	382.9	368.9	366.7	398.5	387	380.7	379.5	359.1	319.2

Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Figure 2: Property crime rates in Nevada and U.S., 2017-2025



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nevada	2634.9	2438.2	2333.1	2030.2	2243.2	2407.9	2517.0	2197.0	2020.3
US	2351.2	2219.9	2119.9	1946.5	1788.3	1976.9	1934.1	1760.1	1505.4

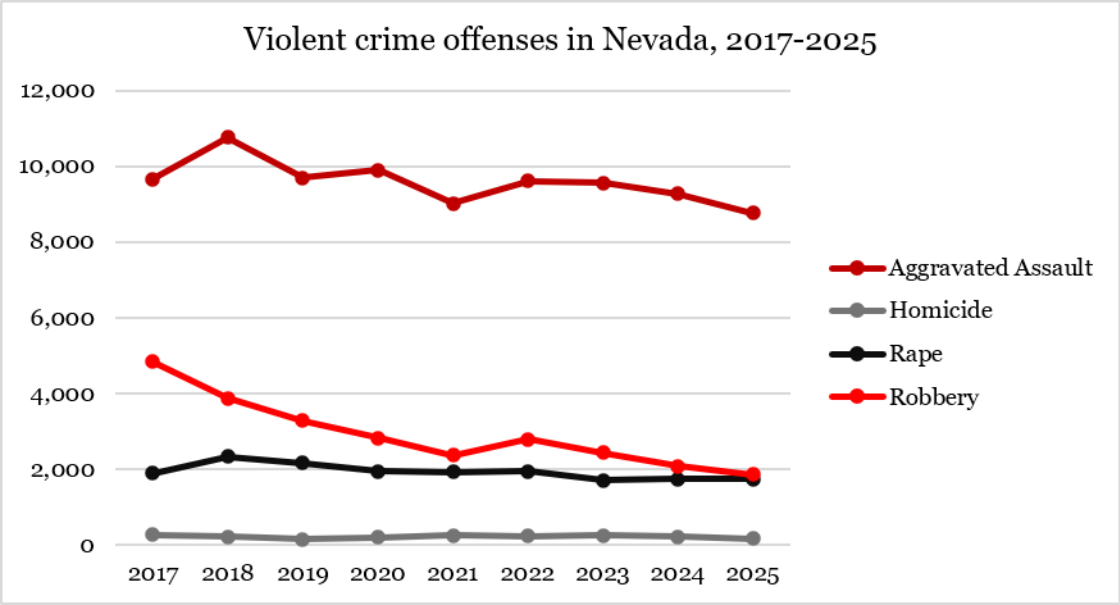
Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Violent Crimes

The violent crime category consists of four types of violent crime: aggravated assault, homicide, rape, and robbery (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). The data used in the following section were gathered from the FBI Crime Data Explorer, unless otherwise indicated. The data were collected after the 2025 update and reflect what was reported at that time.

As discussed above, the rates in Nevada and the nation for violent crimes have both increased and decreased over the past 50 years, whereas the total offenses for violent crimes have shown a steady decline since 2023 (Figure 3; Appendix B Figure b1).

Figure 3: Violent crime counts in Nevada



Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Following the overall trend, the composition of violent crime in Nevada changed between 2017 and 2025 (Table 1). Aggravated assault consistently represented the largest category of violent crime throughout the study period. Although the number of aggravated assault offenses rose from 9,658 in 2017 to a peak of 10,758 in 2018 before gradually declining to 8,770 in 2025, they accounted for a larger proportion of all violent crimes, increasing from 57.99% in 2017 to 70% in 2025. This indicates that aggravated assaults became an increasingly dominant crime type under violent crimes over time. In contrast, robbery experienced the largest decline in violent offenses from 4841 in 2017 to 1,858 in 2025, and its share of total violent crime decreased from 29.07% in 2017 to 14.83% in 2025. Rape offenses showed moderate fluctuations throughout the study period, increasing from 1,890 in 2017 to 2,328 in 2018 before declining to 1,741 in 2025. Despite these fluctuations, rape consistently accounted for approximately 11% to 14% of all violent crime offenses. Homicide remained the least common violent offense, peaked in 2017 with 266 reported cases, dipped during the pandemic era, and jumped up after that before declining in recent years to 160 cases by 2025, representing roughly 1% to 2% of all violent crimes in Nevada.

Table 1: Violent crime offenses in Nevada

Violent crime	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aggravated Assault	9,658	10,758	9,689	9,895	9,012	9,607	9,558	9,266	8,770
Homicide	266	204	144	185	243	225	235	209	160
Rape	1,890	2,328	2,152	1,943	1,921	1,938	1,706	1,740	1,741
Robbery	4,841	3,869	3,283	2,817	2,362	2,781	2,421	2,079	1,858
Total	16,655	17,159	15,268	14,840	13,538	14,551	13,920	13,294	12,529

Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Notably, clearance rates for violent crime in Nevada improved substantially between 2017 and 2025, with the overall clearance percentage rising from 39.27% to 58.27%, marking an impressive 19% increase over the period (Table 2; Appendix B Figures b2 and b3). This improvement was documented across offense types, although uneven in magnitude. Aggravated assault clearance rose from 48.42% to 67.58%, while robbery clearance nearly doubled, from 26.05% to 48.76%. Homicide clearance climbed from 78.95% to a high of 85% in 2025, despite a dip to 69.14% in 2021. Rape clearance, as an exception to this pattern, fluctuated within a narrow range without a sustained upward trend. This persistent gap is consistent with national-level challenges in sexual assault case clearance (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2025). In general, despite the uneven improvement across all violent offenses, the broad improvement indicates that law enforcement agencies in Nevada had become increasingly effective at resolving violent crimes over this period.

Table 2: Clearance percentage of violent crimes in Nevada

Violent crime	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aggravated Assault	48.42	47.32	54.85	55.86	59.61	60.27	66.77	65.35	67.58
Homicide	78.95	74.02	81.94	79.46	69.14	79.11	79.15	82.78	85.00
Rape	20.85	19.12	27.70	30.16	23.89	19.92	22.27	22.82	19.07
Robbery	26.05	29.18	34.12	37.27	41.79	40.17	44.94	44.01	48.76
Total	39.27	39.72	46.82	49.26	51.60	51.34	57.73	56.72	58.27

Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

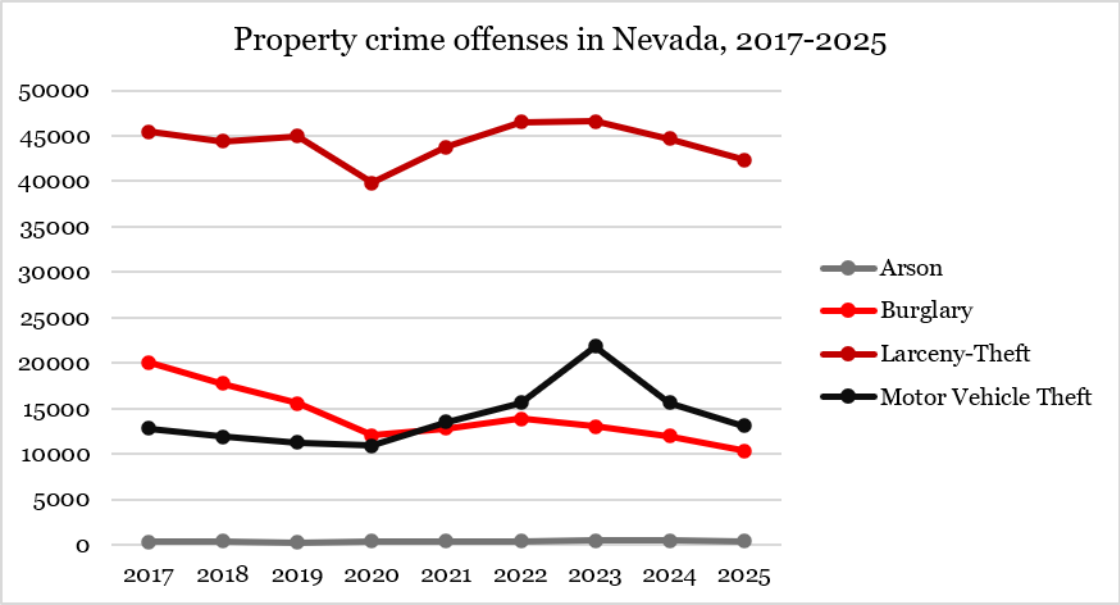
Property Crimes

A similar shift occurred with property crimes such as arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor- vehicle theft, although the trends varied by offense type. Figure 4 and Table 3 present the property crime offense counts in Nevada during the study period (national data displayed in Appendix B Figure c1).

Larceny-theft consistently accounted for the largest number of property crimes in Nevada throughout the study period. Although larceny-theft offenses peaked in 2023, dipped in 2020 with 39,852 reported offenses, then jumped again only to decline subsequently, they still remained the dominant property crime category. In contrast, burglary fell by nearly

half, decreasing from 20,049 in 2017 to 10,379 in 2025, with a slight jump after the Pandemic before declining in recent years, while its proportion of total property crime fell from 25.49% to 15.65%. Motor vehicle theft offenses fluctuated, steadily decreasing from 12,812 in 2017 to 10,919 in 2020, then jumping to 21,848 in 2023, the peak, before declining to 13,103 in 2025. Finally, arson consistently represented the smallest property crime category, accounting for fewer than 1% of all property offenses each year from 2017-2025, with the annual offense count remaining below 500 throughout the study period.

Figure 4: Property crime offenses in Nevada



Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Table 3: Property crime offenses in Nevada

Property crime	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Arson	370	378	292	444	419	439	483	495	435
Burglary	20,049	17,788	15,577	12,066	12,844	13,909	13,044	11,965	10,379
Larceny-Theft	45,432	44,408	44,989	39,852	43,799	46,487	46,584	44,681	42,392
Motor Vehicle Theft	12,812	11,936	11,253	10,919	13,557	15,642	21,848	15,615	13,103
Total	78,663	74,510	72,111	63,281	70,619	76,477	81,959	72,756	66,309

Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Property crime clearance rates in Nevada also improved during the study period, though it's more modestly than violent crime (Table 4; Appendix B Figures c2 and c3). The total property crime clearance rate rose from 11.93% in 2017 to 17.33% in 2025, a roughly 5% increase, compared with violent crime's 19% gain. Arson was the most consistently cleared offense, rising from 25.68% to 43.45%, and remaining well above the other categories throughout the study period. Burglary and larceny-theft saw smaller but steady gains, while motor vehicle theft came last, ranging from 6% to 10%, which is consistent with the difficulty of recovery and attributing stolen vehicles without direct evidence.

Altogether, this indicates that the composition of property crime has shifted over time, with burglary becoming less common, motor vehicle theft offenses temporarily increasing during the post-pandemic years, and larceny theft continuing to dominate Nevada's property crime profile despite an overall decline in offense counts. Notably, this compositional shift has occurred along with a gradual improvement in clearance rates for every property crime category, suggesting Nevada law enforcement has maintained, and in some categories strengthened, its effectiveness in investigation as the underlying property crime patterns have changed.

Table 4: Clearance percentage of property crimes in Nevada

Property crime	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Arson	25.68	23.54	27.40	33.33	39.86	44.19	39.13	44.44	43.45
Burglary	11.35	12.69	16.32	16.59	14.66	16.63	19.80	19.30	21.25
Larceny-Theft	13.74	14.96	14.67	14.71	11.37	11.45	12.24	16.28	18.84
Motor Vehicle Theft	6.01	7.07	6.78	10.21	8.76	8.75	7.74	8.04	8.48
Total	11.93	13.20	13.85	14.42	11.64	12.03	12.40	15.20	17.33

Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Trends in Nevada Counties

County-level data from the Nevada Crime Statistics (2026) reveal a general decline in both violent and property crime rates across the state between 2017 and 2025, though the trajectories of the two index crime types differed in shape and timing (Table 5; Table 6).

Among Nevada counties, Clark County, which accounts for the vast majority of the state's population, closely tracked the statewide violent crime trend, as it is the primary driver of the state figure given its population size. Clark's property crime rate, however, consistently ran above the state average throughout the series, peaking at 28.83 per 1,000 in 2023, and mirrored the same pandemic dip, rebound, and subsequent decline observed statewide. This pattern positions Clark County as both the numerically dominant and analytically distinct case within the state, as the urban density and event-driven population flows plausibly amplified the crime dynamics that shape the statewide trend.

Rural and low-population counties presented a markedly different picture. Counties such as Eureka, Lander, Storey, and Pershing showed substantial year-to-year variations in both crime measures. For example, Eureka's violent crime rate rose from 1.47 in 2019 to 8.56 in 2025, while Storey's rate fluctuated between 1.67 and 11.01 across the same window. Given that these counties have populations in the hundreds to low thousands, such swings largely reflect the instability of rate calculations built on small case counts rather than substantive shifts in underlying crime patterns.

Several counties, including Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Pershing, also have data missing in multiple years. These gaps should be treated as data limitations rather than as zero-crime periods. By contrast, counties such as Douglas, Mineral, and Churchill maintained consistently low violent crime rates across most of the period, suggesting comparatively stable low-violence profiles, though this observation is subject to the same small-population caveat.

Table 5: Violent crime rate per 1,000 population in Nevada Counties

County	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Carson City	3.47	3.63	3.32	3.8	3.95	3.39	2.83	3.8	3.66
Churchill	2.02	2.08	1.48	1.92	1.44	1.63	1.24	1.39	1.31
Clark	6.05	6.14	5.33	4.92	4.32	4.71	4.45	4.3	3.81
Douglas	1.34	1.34	1.27	1.09	1.34	1.48	1.13	1.31	1.34
Elko	3.19	4.28	3.14	4.34	3.57	3.17	3.49	3.4	2.78
Esmerelda	0	1.17	7.21	0	-	-	-	0	-
Eureka	3.13	2.56	10.97	1.47	4.89	2.93	8.06	5.38	8.56
Humboldt	3.3	2.14	2.02	3.31	4.41	3.81	4.42	4.3	4.13
Lander	8.57	9.36	11.17	9.05	4.06	7.02	3.82	3.82	3.4
Lincoln	0.99	2.5	1.35	0.19	-	-	-	0	-
Lyon	2.48	3.02	3.28	2.64	2.75	2.8	3.08	2.57	2.8
Mineral	0	0.45	0.89	0.89	0.23	1.8	1.11	0.22	2.26
Nye	1.4	1.41	2.57	3.57	3.64	3.64	2.61	3.11	2.38
Pershing	5.94	7.28	4.8	7.7	0.62	0.46	0.79	0.63	-
Storey	8.33	11.01	7.68	8.66	4.55	4.07	1.67	4.54	-
Washoe	5.37	5.04	4.54	4.74	4.99	5.23	4.96	4.77	4.63
White Pine	1.86	2.95	0.74	2.72	3.45	4.41	1.91	2.54	1.96

Data source: Nevada Crime Statistics https://nevadacrimestats.nv.gov/

Table 6: Property crime rate per 1,000 population in Nevada Counties

County	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Carson City	16.11	13.66	12.16	11.22	11.71	10.67	9	11.27	7.95
Churchill	20.06	15.82	17.62	13.11	12.08	9.85	9.75	11.72	8.78
Clark	27.67	26.79	25.74	21.04	23.51	26.48	28.83	23.4	22.11
Douglas	15.95	12.47	10.95	10.91	11.49	9.11	7.44	11.31	6.08
Elko	18.94	13.58	15.17	17.13	18.46	14.17	10.9	17.62	6.81
Esmerelda	6.28	12.82	8.41	1.13	-	-	-	0	-
Eureka	13.05	25.61	13.46	5.39	15.15	20.53	23.12	16.67	22.46
Humboldt	13.37	16.06	16.65	16.6	20.92	22.23	15.88	20.42	10.68
Lander	17.83	17.84	10.45	16.65	14.59	19.21	14.59	13.72	11.98
Lincoln	11.13	5.97	5.59	6.94	-	-	-	0	0.19
Lyon	11.13	10.69	9.43	9.26	9.77	8.83	6.57	9.12	5.89
Mineral	7.24	6.82	11.37	6.45	2.71	9.02	7.35	2.67	2.49
Nye	18.49	17.59	17.08	14.78	16.09	18.34	14.61	13.77	10.21
Pershing	15.84	10.22	12.01	7.41	0.15	2.01	2.83	0.16	-
Storey	22.78	21.77	18.34	20.7	18.21	13.9	9.33	18.17	-
Washoe	25.93	20.42	19.23	20.59	23.93	22.22	21.87	22.86	20.23
White Pine	8.58	12.42	2.55	8.57	3.55	5.28	6.19	2.62	4.09

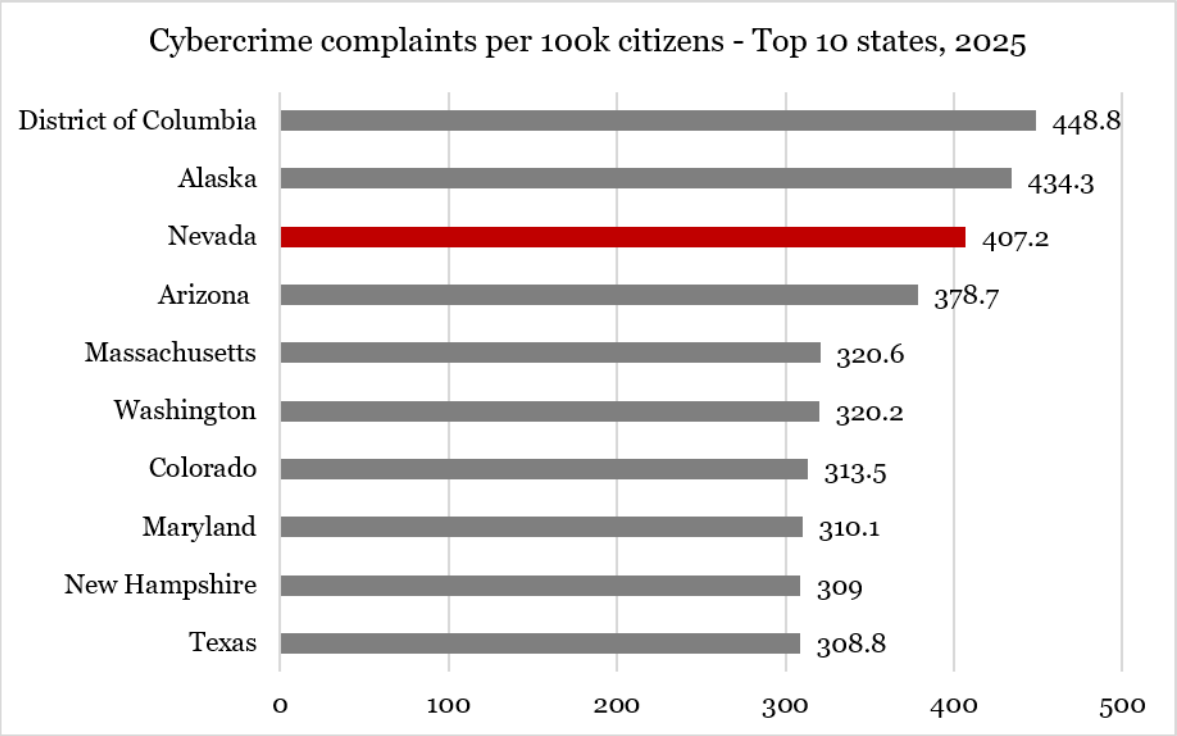
Data source: Nevada Crime Statistics https://nevadacrimestats.nv.gov/

Taken together, the data support three broad conclusions. First, both violent and property crime in Nevada have declined over the study period, with the property crime rates showing a clear pandemic-related disruption that violent crime does not mirror as strongly. Second, Clark County's outsized population share both drives and diverges from the statewide pattern, running above average specifically in property crime. Third, rural county-level rates should be interpreted with caution, as small population denominators can produce variability that may be mistaken for meaningful trend change, and limited data availability in several counties constrains the completeness of the rural picture.

Cybercrime

Cybercrimes have skyrocketed in recent years in the U.S., with both the number of complaints and the financial losses reported to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) rising substantially (Appendix B Figures d1 and d2). The total number of cybercrime complaints increased from 301,580 in 2017 to more than 1 million in 2025, and total losses increased from 1.4 billion in 2017 to 20.8 billion in 2025. Cyber-enabled offenses are becoming increasingly costly for victims, even as complaint numbers fluctuate (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2025).

Figure 5: Top 10 states in cybercrime complaints per 100k citizens, 2025

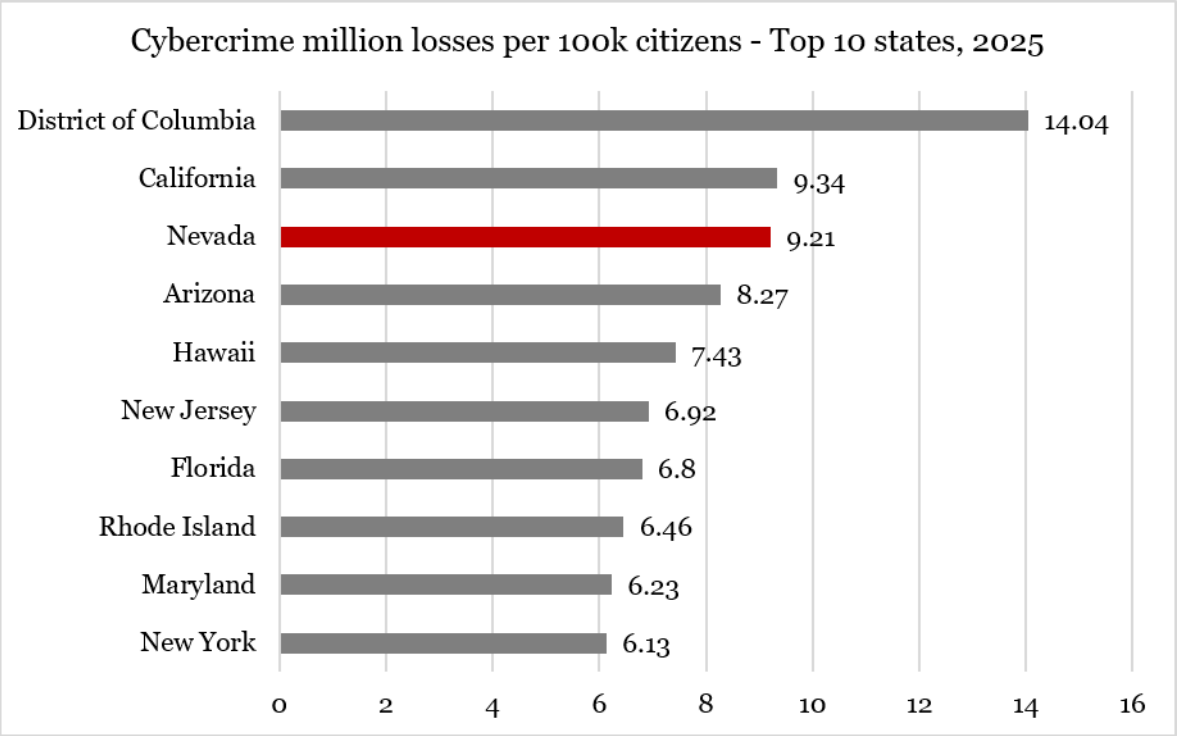


Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2025). Internet Crime Report. Internet Crime Complaint Center. https://www.ic3.gov/AnnualReport/Reports

Nevada has consistently ranked among the top three states in the U.S. for reported cybercrime and financial losses in recent years (Figure 5; Figure 6). In 2025, Nevada ranked 3rd in complaint rates at 407.2 per 100,000 residents and more than $9.2 million in reported losses per 100,000 residents (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2025). This suggests that Nevada continues to experience high levels of cybercrime and financial

harm compared to most other states, emphasizing the growing importance of cybercrime as a safety concern.

Figure 6: Top 10 states in Internet crime million losses per 100k citizens, 2025



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2025). Internet Crime Report. Internet Crime Complaint Center. https://www.ic3.gov/AnnualReport/Reports

Two major cyberattacks in Nevada have drawn national attention: the 2023 attacks on MGM and Caesars Entertainment. Both cases are particularly important because they targeted the largest integrated resort companies on the Las Vegas Strip, highlighting vulnerabilities in the hospitality industry that increasingly depends on digital technologies (Bischoff et al., 2026). As the largest metropolitan city in Nevada, recognized for its hospitality, tourism, casino, and gaming industries, Las Vegas is not simply about gambling but about integrated resorts that combine hotels, casinos, restaurants, shopping, entertainment, convention spaces, and more. These resorts rely heavily on technologies such as online reservations, mobile apps, digital room keys, and cashless transactions to enhance customer experience (Bischoff et al., 2026; Adams et al., 2025). While these digitized technologies improve efficiency and personalization, they also create multiple entry points for cybercriminals, as integrated resorts store large volumes of sensitive customer information and rely on interconnected digital systems (Bischoff et al., 2026). As a result, the hospitality industry has become an increasingly attractive target for cybercrime, especially in Las Vegas.

The cyberattack on MGM illustrates how social engineering, rather than direct technical hacking, can compromise even large integrated resort companies. Social engineering involves manipulating individuals into revealing confidential information or granting unauthorized access to computer systems (Bischoff et al., 2026). In the case of MGM, a

"vishing" attack was used: information of an MGM employee was gathered from LinkedIn, and the attacker then called the company's IT help desk while impersonating that employee to gain access to MGM's internal network. Around the same time, Caesars Entertainment experienced a ransomware attack that also originated through social engineering, where the attackers compromised an external IT support vendor and gained unauthorized access to Caesars' systems (Bischoff et al., 2026; Adams et al., 2025). These two incidents demonstrate that the interconnected data and business relationships that define Nevada's gaming and hospitality sector also create a distinct point of vulnerability.

To address the challenges posed by cybercrime, the FBI Cyber Division was formed in 2002 and currently aims to reduce cyber threats by anticipating attacks, working closely with investigative partners, and imposing consequences on cyber offenders (*FBI Las Vegas Cyber Program*, n.d.). Earlier in 2026, the Nevada Attorney General announced that Nevada officially joined the FBI-led Las Vegas Cyber Task Force (Nevada Attorney General Aaron D. Ford, 2026). Additionally, contributing to Nevada's technological evolution, UNLV established the Nevada Institute of Cybersecurity (NIC) in March, 2026. UNLV offers both bachelor's and master's degrees in cybersecurity, with hands-on training to combat the growing number of cyber threats in Nevada.

The Social Contexts of Crime and Delinquency in Nevada

The crime trends documented in this study cannot be fully understood through crime statistics alone. Nevada's crime patterns are shaped by a distinctive set of social and economic conditions. In this section, we will examine these social factors as the underlying context that helps explain the observed trends in Nevada.

Population Growth, Demographic Change, and Housing Pressure

Nevada has been among the fastest-growing states in the U.S. for the past two decades, seeing a nearly 5.7% growth from 2020 to 2025 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). This growth has been concentrated disproportionately in the Las Vegas metropolitan area, with a 6.2% growth during the same period (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Because Clark County accounts for the majority of the state's population, this growth trajectory functions as a de facto driver of Nevada's crime statistics.

Critically, Nevada's population growth has been driven largely by in-migration. An influx of new residents places strain on relationships within established neighborhoods, and a substantial body of urban crime research links population surges to a decline in what researchers call collective efficacy, the capacity of a community to maintain informal social control through mutual trust and shared willingness to intervene on one another's behalf (Sampson, 2011). Where residential turnover is high, informal social control in the community decreases, and subsequently the community faces difficulties sustaining organized efforts to maintain neighborhood order, supervise local youth, or participate in crime-prevention efforts. Nevada's comparatively high rates of property crime and juvenile delinquency may be understood in part through this lens.

Statewide, this growth has been geographically lopsided. While Clark County has absorbed the overwhelming share of the state's new residents, many of Nevada's rural counties have remained small and demographically stable. This rural-urban divide is

further responsible for the divergent statistics we observed in the previous sections, where large urban counties produce interpretable trends while small rural counties produce highly fluctuating crime rates.

Additionally, both Las Vegas and Reno have experienced substantial increases in housing costs in recent years, which were driven in part by the influx of new residents and economic investment. Housing stability and homelessness are well-established correlates of certain forms of crime and victimization in the criminological literature (Sampson, 2011; Shaw & McKay, 1942). Rising housing costs may also compound instability as affordability pressure can displace residents and weaken collective efficacy.

Taken together, Nevada's demographic profile forms a foundation for understanding not only who is affected by crime in Nevada, but who bears its costs most directly.

Tourism- and Event-Driven Economy

Nevada's economy, Clark County's in particular, is built around tourism, gaming, and large-scale public events. Las Vegas draws tens of millions of visitors annually and hosts major recurring events, such as the Super Bowl, concerts, conventions, and Formula 1. Such an economic landscape produces high-volume surges of population density well beyond residential figures would suggest.

This tourism-driven density brings large transient visitor populations, along with elevated risk for certain property and opportunistic crimes. Las Vegas's 24-hour business structure further departs from the more predictable day-night rhythms that shape crime patterns in most American cities, complicating both crime prevention efforts and law enforcement resource planning. At the same time, this same visitor density creates a competing set of demands on public resources that must simultaneously serve a large, fluctuating visitor population and a rapidly growing resident population, which strains the government's capacity to serve either group adequately.

Beyond the Las Vegas Valley, Reno and Washoe County have experienced a distinct economic dynamic in recent years as investment in the industrial and technology sectors has grown in the region. While the underlying mechanism differs from Clark County's visitor economy, the social effect is similar: a concentrated, economically driven influx of new residents into a metropolitan area that was not originally built to absorb such rapid growth.

Catastrophic Events and Public Safety Vulnerability

Nevada's unique economy creates not only everyday crime opportunities but also acute vulnerability to mass-casualty events. The October 1, 2017, mass shooting at the Route 91 Harvest Festival remains the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. Unlike the yearly trends examined above, this event stands outside the normal statistical range of county-level data. Yet, events like this are a reminder that the same density of visitors, open event spaces, and high-profile venues that define Nevada's tourism economy also create a distinct and serious category of risk.

COVID-19 as Social Disruption

Noticeably, our study period covers the COVID-19 pandemic. Some may argue that crimes and victimization were deeply affected by the Pandemic. Yet the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and crime is more complicated than a single narrative of decline or increase can capture. Violent and property crime appear to have moved in different directions during the period, and debates about the consistency and causes of these shifts remain.

Nevada's data are broadly consistent with the national pattern, in which lockdown orders altered the underlying landscape of crime opportunities rather than uniformly suppressing crime. Property and street-level offenses that depend heavily on public activity appear to have declined as public activity was restricted. Violent crime, by contrast, moved in the opposite direction. Several studies point to a national increase in certain offenses, such as homicide, during the pandemic years (Meyer et al., 2022). This increase has been attributed to the disruptions caused by stay-at-home orders (Boman & Gallupe, 2020; Meyer et al., 2022), strain on the criminal justice system (Jackson et al., 2021), and the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd in 2020 (Meyer et al., 2022). As such, lockdowns reshaped criminal opportunity rather than uniformly reduced criminal activity.

A second channel is the Pandemic's direct effect on law enforcement capacity itself, which involved direct reductions in staffing and resources. In April 2020, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) eliminated 112 part-time positions, citing the Pandemic's severe economic impact on Southern Nevada (AP News, 2020). Continued budget pressure led the department to disband its Mounted Patrol Unit (AP News, 2020). These cuts spanned patrol support, forensics, records, and specialized units, suggesting the broad impact on law enforcement resources. As such, the pandemic-era decline in crime should be read in part against the backdrop of reduced law enforcement capacity.

A further caution concerns data aggregation. Research on national data revealed that changes in crime rates during the pandemic period were largely driven by a small portion of large cities, suggesting a possible overstatement of a uniform "COVID crime wave" (Thomas et al., 2026). This is a useful frame for understanding Nevada's own county-level heterogeneity. Specifically, Clark County's trajectory may function much like the large city cases in this literature due to its population weight, while the variations in Nevada's smaller counties are better explained by factors rather than any distinct pandemic effect. Nevada's smaller counties, such as Eureka, Lander, Storey, and Pershing, show extreme year-to-year fluctuations, with limited data in multiple years. Both issues may be due to the small population and low-count reporting thresholds rather than different underlying crime dynamics. As such, understanding Nevada's pandemic-era trend also requires a close examination that reads the statistics of Clark County, the rural counties, and the statewide average in their distinct contexts.

Finally, Nevada's most recent trajectory suggests a post-pandemic trend beyond the national baseline. The 2024 data showed that the drop in violent crime in Nevada beat the national trend compared to 2023 (4.51% decrease in Nevada vs 3.9% decrease nationally), and homicide figures were among the lowest recorded since 2019, with a clearance rate of 82.78% (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.; Nevada Crime Statistics,

2026). This trend further continued into 2025, with a roughly 23% drop in homicides compared to the same period in 2024 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). As the primary driving force in shaping Nevada's crime statistics, Clark County accounts for most of the decrease in violent crimes (5.42% decrease in 2024 and 6.88% decrease in 2025) (Nevada Crime Statistics, 2026). This emerging trend suggests that Nevada's recovery from the Pandemic has not merely tracked the national baseline but exceeded it, making Nevada a useful case for examining how local urban and tourism-driven dynamics interact with a broader national recovery.

Criminal Justice in Nevada

A number of sentencing options are available for individuals convicted of a crime in Nevada, including placement in a correctional facility and community supervision. According to the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC, 2026), the state has 6 out of 9 correctional facilities open, 6 out of 10 conservation camps open, and 2 transitional housing centers. From 2017 to 2023, Nevada's inmate population decreased from 1,489,189 to 1,254,224 (Mueller & Kluckow, 2023). The imprisonment rate relative to the overall population decreased from 451 per 100,000 residents in 2017 to 327 per 100,000 residents in 2023, which was lower than the U.S. imprisonment rate of 460 in 2023 (Mueller & Kluckow, 2023).

Nevada is a state with capital punishment, with 46 death sentences in 2025. In 2025, nearly half (50.10%) of all inmates serving time in the state were violent offenders, followed by 17.10% sex offenders, 12.20% property offenders, and 6.90% drug offenders (NDOC, 2026). In addition to housing offenders in secure facilities, the Nevada correctional authorities place offenders under community supervision. As of 31 December 2024, Nevada had a total of 22,600 adult offenders on community supervision, which is at a rate of 886 per 100,000 adult residents (Kaeble, 2026). This rate is about half that of the U.S., which had 1,372 per 100,000 residents in the same year. Among those on community supervision in Nevada, 17,210 were on probation, and 5,440 were on parole. The probation rate in Nevada was 674 per 100,000 residents, compared to the national rate of 1,142 per 100,000 residents (Kaeble, 2026). Nevada's parole rate per 100,000 was 213, which is slightly lower than the U.S. rate of 250. Across all measures, Nevada's community supervision rates remained substantially below the national average in 2024.

Moving further, we should not expect that simply incarcerating or putting criminal offenders under supervision will reduce their tendency to recidivate. To change criminal behaviors, we need to take other practical steps. While the state offers a number of treatment services for its offender population, including substance abuse, educational and vocational, mental health, and reentry-specific programs, locally grounded, community-based programs may also play a vital role in serving the criminal justice system-involved population.

One notable re-entry initiative in Nevada is Hope for Prisoners, a local nonprofit organization and community-based voluntary program in Clark County that serves more than 250 formerly incarcerated individuals each year. Hope for Prisoners was founded by an ex-prisoner in 2010 and is a unique re-entry program in Nevada (Troshynski et al., 2016). Clients identified some key strengths of Hope for Prisoners. They valued the sense

of community and support from staff with lived experiences as well as access to services such as Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT). Participants also emphasized the program's supportive case management and opportunities for education and job training in a safe, nonjudgmental environment (Troshynski et al., 2016). Ultimately, the work of organizations like Hope for Prisoners illustrates that improving outcomes for justice-involved individuals requires a collective effort between formal criminal justice institutions and community organizations that support people long after their involvement with the system has ended.

Juvenile Justice

The juvenile justice system in Nevada serves youth between the ages of 8 and 18. Since 2004, the state has emphasized alternatives to detention for juveniles where possible, with an overarching focus on community protection, youth accountability, and competency development. Nevada's juvenile justice programs are overseen by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) within the Department of Health and Human Services, and are administered at both the county and state levels (Research Division, 2021).

Youth found responsible for delinquent behavior may be supervised in several ways, including community-based probation, similar to that of their adult counterparts. In Clark County, for example, youth probation is administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS), a public agency whose responsibilities extend beyond the traditional juvenile court functions of probation and detention to include intervention programs, counseling, and family support. DJJS is organized into five divisions: Administration, Health Care Services, Detention, Probation, and Spring Mountain Youth Camp (SMYC). Health care services provide counseling and treatment; detention temporarily houses youth awaiting court hearings; probation handles intake, diversion, and supervision through the DJJS campus and community-based programs; and SMYC is a secure correctional facility that houses male youth adjudicated for serious and repeat offenses (Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services, 2025). As of 2025, 3,492 youth were under probation supervision in Clark County (Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services, 2026).

Since 2017, trends in juvenile arrests and referrals in Nevada largely mirror the broader crime patterns discussed earlier in this study, with a pronounced pandemic-era decline followed by a partial, uneven rebound (Table 7) (Annual Report on Various Aspects of the Juvenile Justice System, 2022; 2025). The juvenile arrest rate fell from 13.03 per 1,000 youth in 2017 to 6.19 per 1,000 youth in 2021, marking a decline of more than 50 percent. Then, the arrest rate rose to 6.50 in 2000 and 7.85 in 2023. Referrals to the juvenile justice system followed a similar pattern, falling from 31.02 per 1,000 youth in 2017 to 13.98 per 1,000 youth in 2021, then rising to 21.32 per 1,000 youth by 2023. In both cases, 2021 marks the low point of our observation period, with the following two years showing a return toward pre-pandemic levels.

Table 7: Arrest and referral rate per 1,000 youth in Nevada

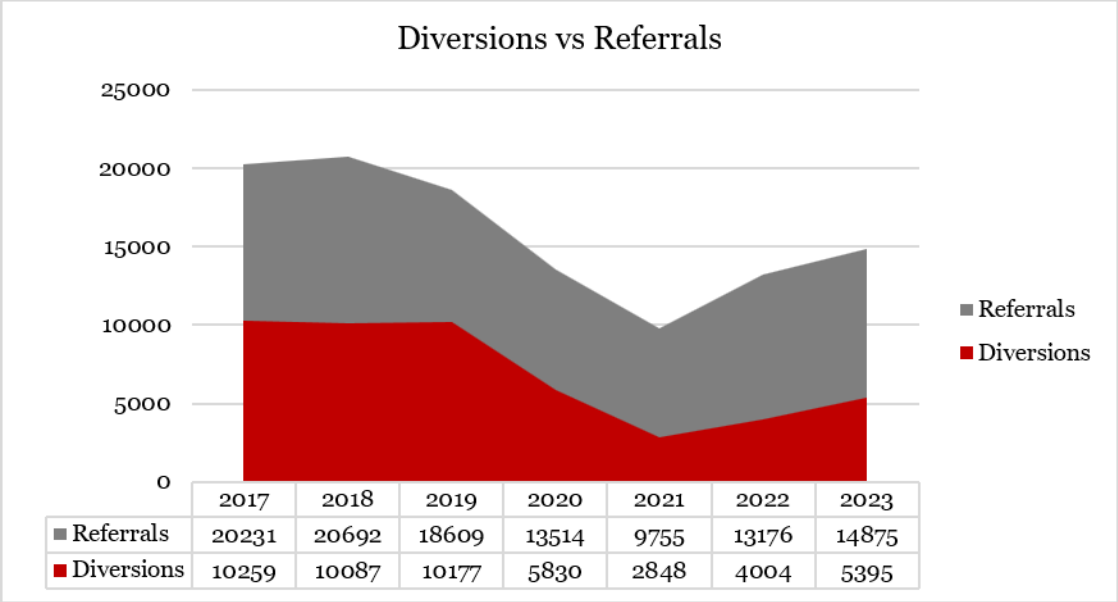
Processing type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023

Arrest rate	13.03	12.09	12.43	8.82	6.19	6.5	7.85
Referral rate	31.02	28.85	27.82	19.25	13.98	18.89	21.32

Source: NV DCFS Annual Reports on Various Aspects of the Juvenile Justice System.

This pattern is overall consistent with the disruption-and-rebound pattern discussed in this study. That is, the pandemic-related restrictions resulted in reduced school attendance, altered patterns in youth lives, and declines in law enforcement contact, thereby suppressing both arrest and referral activities through 2021. As school and community activities resumed, both rates gradually returned to more typical patterns of youth-system contact. Notably, however, both measures in 2022-2023 remain well below 2017-2019 levels, suggesting either a genuine and lasting reduction in justice system involvement among youth, or a shift in how juvenile delinquency is being processed in Nevada.

Figure 7: Juvenile diversion and referral counts in Nevada



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Referrals	20231	20692	18609	13514	9755	13176	14875
Diversions	10259	10087	10177	5830	2848	4004	5395

Source: NV DCFS Annual Reports on Various Aspects of the Juvenile Justice System.

Figure 7 shows the diversion rate as a percentage of referrals. It measures the proportion of youth entering the system who are diverted rather than undergo a formal process. In 2017, diversion accounted for just over half of all referrals (50.7%) and remained in a similar range through 2019 (54.7%). But it then fell sharply to 29.2% in 2021 before partially rebounding to 30.4% in 2022 and 36.3% in 2023. This pattern is somewhat counterintuitive: while the referral rate was at its lowest during the study period, the youth who entered the system were diverted at a lower rate. While the available data are not sufficient to pinpoint the exact cause, there are two possible explanations. One possibility is that the pandemic effect, if any, on law enforcement and referral practices in Nevada did not translate directly into more lenient or informal handling of juvenile cases; instead, formal processing became relatively more common during this period. Alternatively, combined with the decline in referrals, the decline in diversion's share of referrals may reflect that youth cases have been handled further upstream, such as

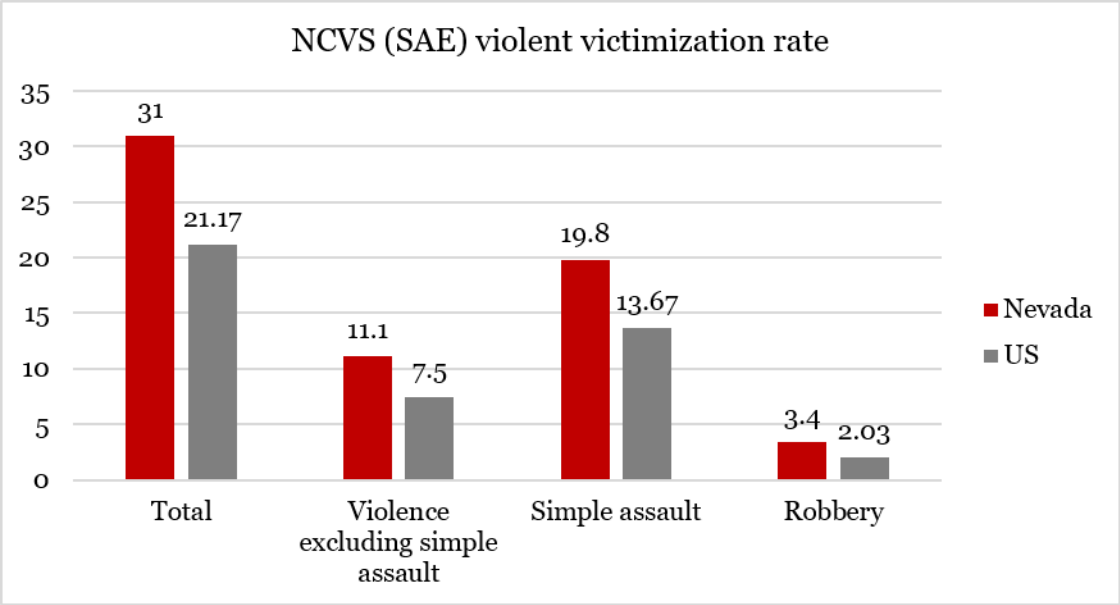
schools, families, or law enforcement discretion at the point of initial contact, before the juvenile system was formally engaged.

Victimization

Crime statistics capture offenses known to law enforcement, but the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) offers a complementary view by depicting victimization experienced by residents, whether or not police were informed. As Nevada is not among the 22 states with direct NCVS state-level sampling (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.), the estimates presented in this section rely on the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Small Area Estimation (SAE), which models state-level rates using NCVS and FBI data through 2018 (Fay, 2021).

During the period of 2016-2018, Nevada's violent crime victimization rate was 31 per 1,000 residents, which is roughly 46 percent higher than a national rate of 21.17. This gap was consistent across offense subcategories, including violence excluding simple assault, simple assault, and robbery (Figure 8).

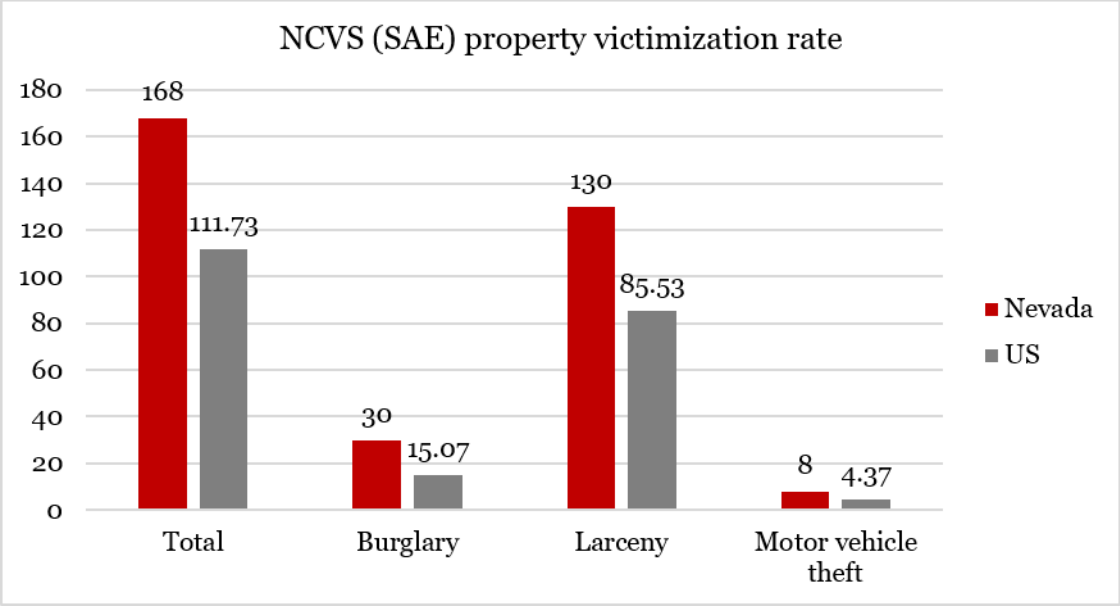
Figure 8: Violent victimization rate in Nevada and U.S.



Source: NCVS Small Area Estimation, 2016-2018

Property victimization followed a similar pattern. Nevada's total property crime rate was 168 per 1,000 residents compared to 111.73 nationally, which is about 50 percent higher. This gap was the widest for burglary (30 in Nevada vs 15.07 nationally) and motor vehicle theft (8 in Nevada vs 4.37 nationally), with a smaller gap for larceny (130 in Nevada vs 85.53 nationally) (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Property victimization rate in Nevada and U.S.



Source: NCVS Small Area Estimation, 2016-2018

These figures indicate that Nevada residents faced elevated victimization risk relative to the national population across nearly every major offense category for both violent and property crime.

Recommendations for Future Research and Policy

The findings presented in this study point toward several priorities for future research and policy attention in Nevada.

First, Nevada should pursue a renewed state-level victimization survey. Nevada's most recent detailed state-level victimization data was collected by the UNLV Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics (CACS; now the Center for Crime and Justice, CCJP) in 2008 and 2011 (Hart et al., 2009; Hart & Culver, 2012). This survey has not been repeated afterward, leaving the NCVS SAE data as the only available substitute. Given that the infrastructure and expertise to design and administer such a survey already exist, a renewed state victimization survey should be strongly considered.

Second, Nevada should continue investing and expanding its juvenile justice efforts. The decline in diversion's share of referrals observed during the Pandemic has only partially recovered in the years after. Nevada's juvenile justice reforms under NRS Chapter 62B have demonstrated positive results and should be sustained and expanded. Continued investment is particularly important given the documented group disparities in juvenile justice outcomes in the state, and expanded diversion efforts should be paired with attention to close these gaps.

Third, cybercrime warrants sustained research and regulatory attention in the years ahead. The MGM and Caesars incidents discussed earlier illustrate that social engineering already poses a serious threat to the state's core industries. The emergence of AI-facilitated and AI-enabled criminal methods now compounds such a threat. Regulatory

efforts, such as the Nevada Gaming Commission's 2022 cybersecurity risk assessment requirements, have been tightened and updated (Regulation 5.260: Cybersecurity (Amended), 2026), reflecting the evolving nature of the threat. Continued, periodic regulatory review of this kind will be essential as AI-enabled methods continue to develop.

Finally, Nevada's continued demographic change calls for sustained investment in community stability. As discussed earlier, population growth can be linked to reduced collective efficacy and may help explain the state's elevated rates of property crime and juvenile delinquency. Unlike the other priorities discussed above, this requires a broader policy consideration. Continued investment in affordable housing, community development, and programs that support resident integration may offer meaningful, if indirect, crime-prevention value alongside more traditional law enforcement approaches.

Conclusion

Crime trends and the criminal justice response in Nevada cannot be understood in isolation from the social conditions that produce them. Nevada's rapid population growth and tourism-driven economy do not simply coexist with its crime patterns. Rather, the social conditions shape crimes, from everyday property crime to the state's unique exposure to large-scale events and cybersecurity challenges. The recommendations discussed above reflect this understanding. That is, sustained, locally grounded research and policy attention remain necessary as the Silver State continues to change.

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Appendix A: Community Resources

Crime and Justice Data Sources

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Crime Data Explorer (CDE)
Website Address: https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)
Website Address: https://bjs.ojp.gov/

Nevada Crime Statistics
Website Address: https://nevadacrimestats.nv.gov/

UNLV Center for Crime and Justice Policy (CCJP)
Website Address: https://www.unlv.edu/ccjp

Victim Support and Victimization

Nevada 211
Website Address: https://www.nevada211.org/victims-crime/
Tel: 211 or 1-866-535-5654; Text Zip Code to 898211

Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) Victim Service Unit (VSU)
Website Address: https://www.doc.nv.gov/victim-services/

Nevada Victims of Crime Program (VOCP)
Website Address: https://www.voc.nv.gov/
Tel: 1-702-486-2740; Email: VOCP@dcfs.nv.gov

Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Website Address: https://www.ncedsv.org/
Tel: 1-775-828-1115; Fax: 1-775-828-9911

Nevada State Criminal Justice Agencies

Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC)
Website Address: https://www.doc.nv.gov/

Nevada Department of Public Safety
Website Address: https://nhp.nv.gov/Divisions/Public_Safety_Divisions/

Juvenile Justice Agencies

Nevada Juvenile Justice Services
Website Address: https://www.dcfs.nv.gov/Programs/JJS/

Nevada Legislature Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission (NRS 62B.600)
Website Address:
https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Interim2025/Committee/2125/Overview

Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS)
Website Address:
https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/juvenile_justice_services/

Clark County Department of Family Services
Website Address: https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/residents/family_services/

Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation (NCJJI)
Website Address: http://ncjji.ncjj.org/

Law Enforcement and Public Safety Agencies

Nevada State Police
Website Address: https://www.dps.nv.gov/

Office of Criminal Justice Assistance
Website Address: https://ocj.nv.gov/

Cybersecurity

Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)
Website Address: https://www.ic3.gov/

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Website Address: https://www.cisa.gov/
Tel: 1-844-Say-CISA; Email: contact@cisa.dhs.gov

Nevada Office of Cyber Defense Coordination
Website Address: https://www.dps.nv.gov/divisions/cyber-defense-coordination/
Email: ocdc@ocdc.nv.gov

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) Cyber Investigative Group
Website Address: https://www.lvmpd.com/about/bureaus/cyber-investigative-group
Email: cig@lvmpd.com

Re-entry and Rehabilitation Programs

Nevada Department of Corrections Statewide Re-entry Programs
Website: https://www.doc.nv.gov/offender-info/re-entry-program/

Law Enforcement Intervention for Mental Health and Addiction (LIMA) Program
Website: https://lvmpdfoundation.org/programs/lima/

Hope for Prisoners
Website Address: https://hopeforprisoners.org/our-story/

Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality
Website Address: https://www.renoinitiative.org/
Email: info@renoinitiative.org

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada
Website Address: https://ccsnn.org/

Community Stability and General Social Services

National Alliance to End Homelessness
Website Address: https://endhomelessness.org/

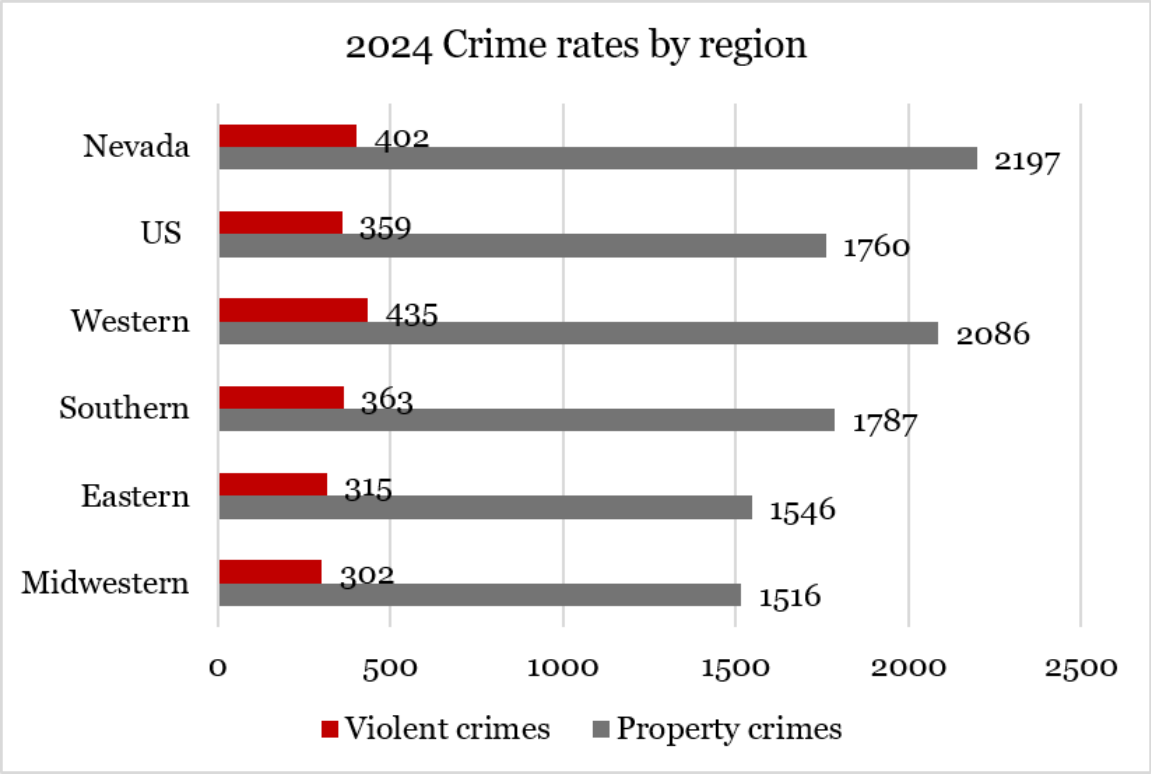
Help of Southern Nevada
Website Address: https://www.helpsonv.org/

Clark County Social Services
Website Address: https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/residents/assistance_programs/

Washoe County Human Services Agency
Website Address: https://www.washoecounty.gov/hsa/

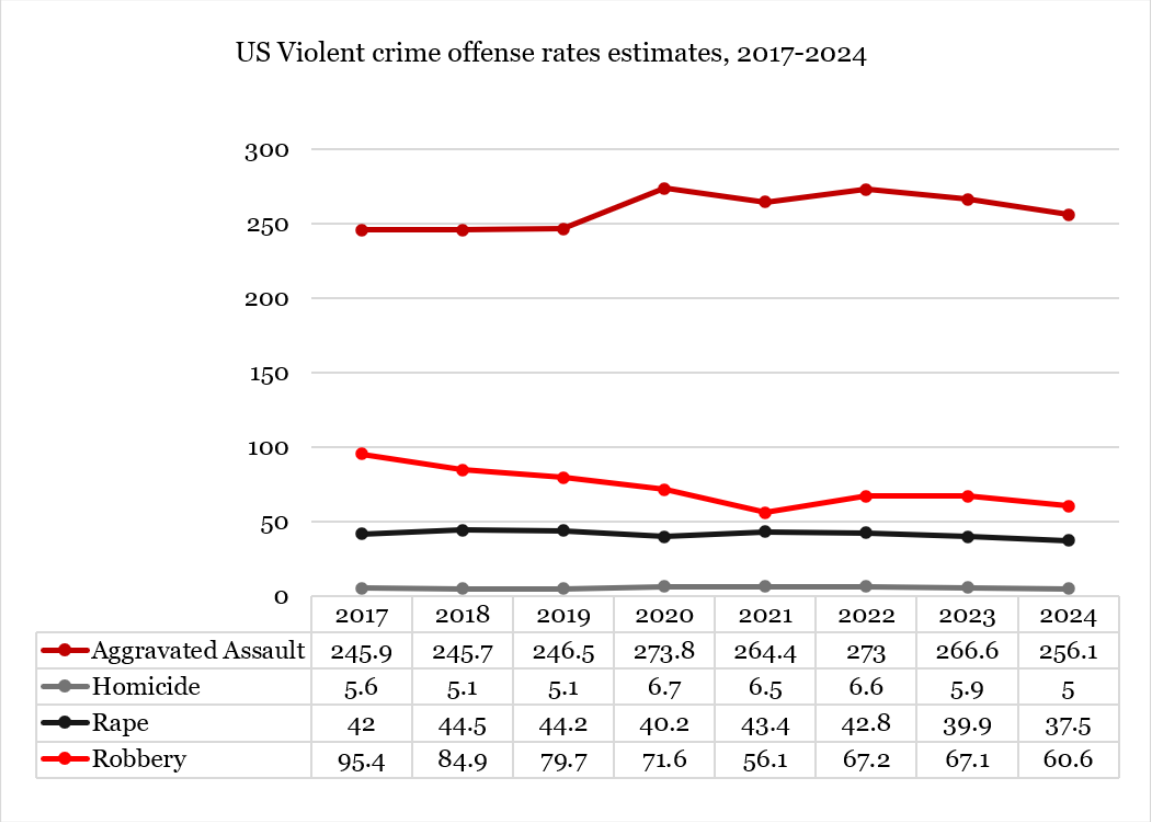
Appendix B: Additional Figures

Figure a: 2024 Crime rates comparison by region.



Data sources: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

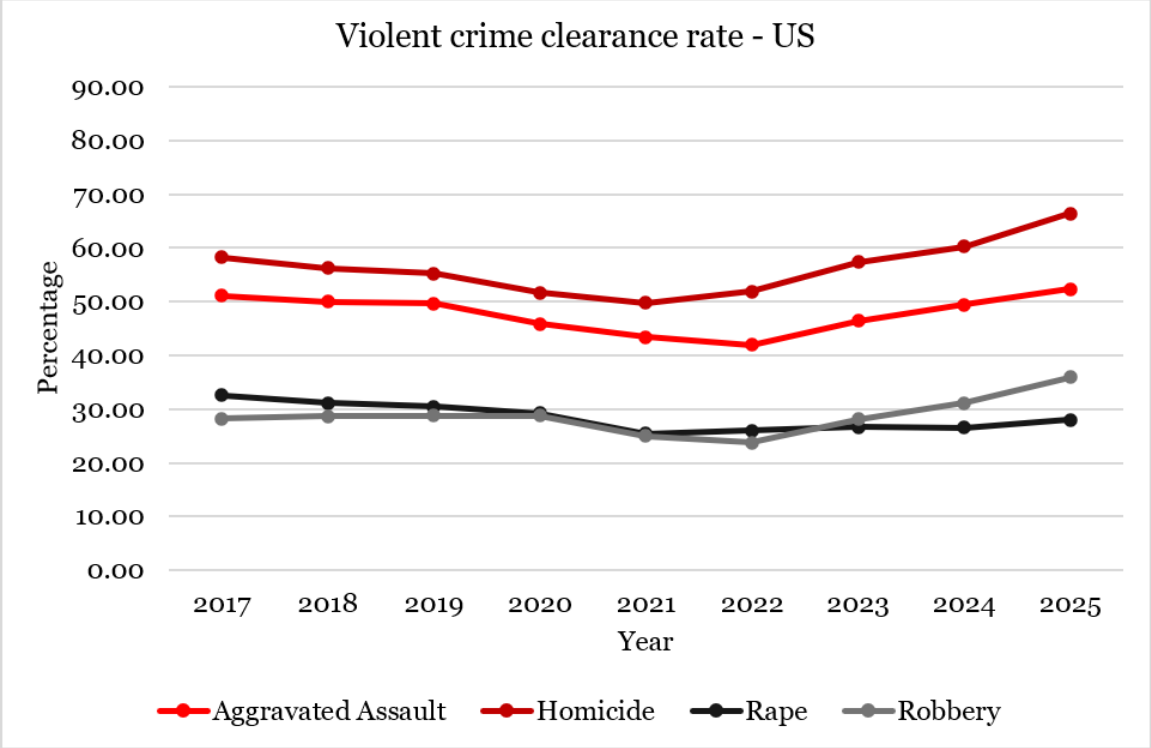
Figure b1: U.S. Violent crime rates



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Aggravated Assault	245.9	245.7	246.5	273.8	264.4	273	266.6	256.1
Homicide	5.6	5.1	5.1	6.7	6.5	6.6	5.9	5
Rape	42	44.5	44.2	40.2	43.4	42.8	39.9	37.5
Robbery	95.4	84.9	79.7	71.6	56.1	67.2	67.1	60.6

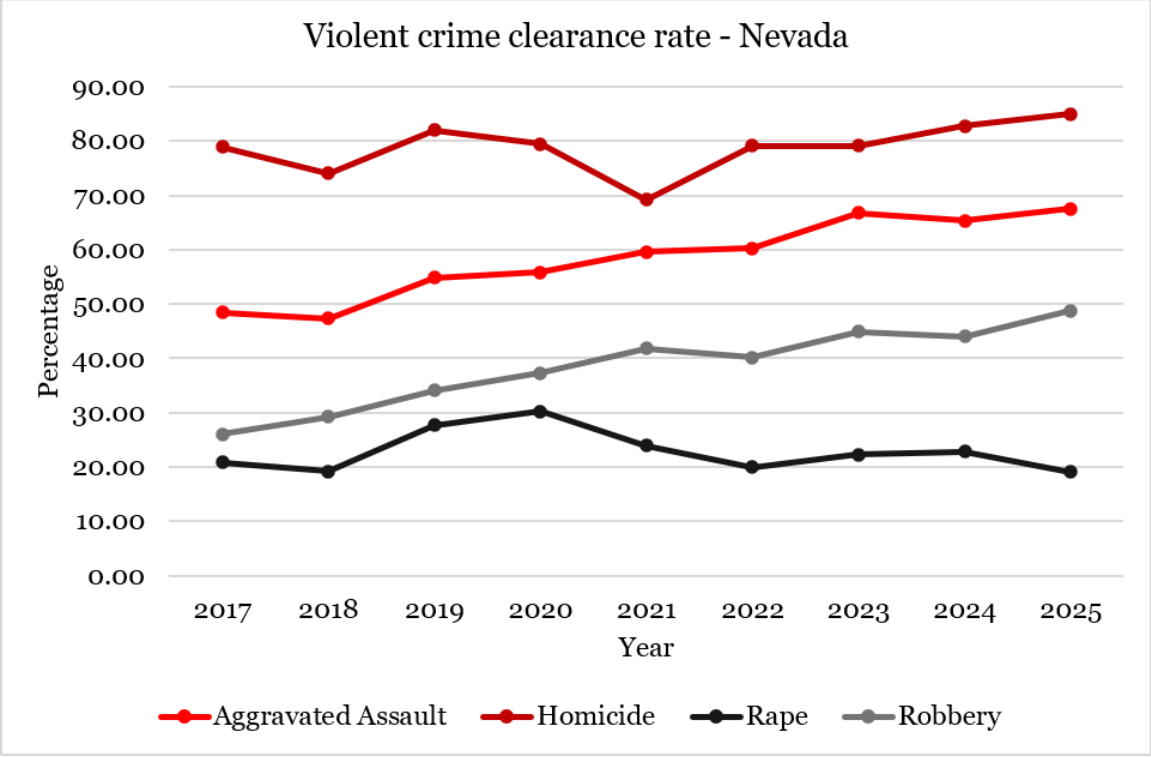
Data source: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. (2025). UCR Summary of Reported Crimes in the Nation. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Figure b2: U.S. Violent crime clearance rates



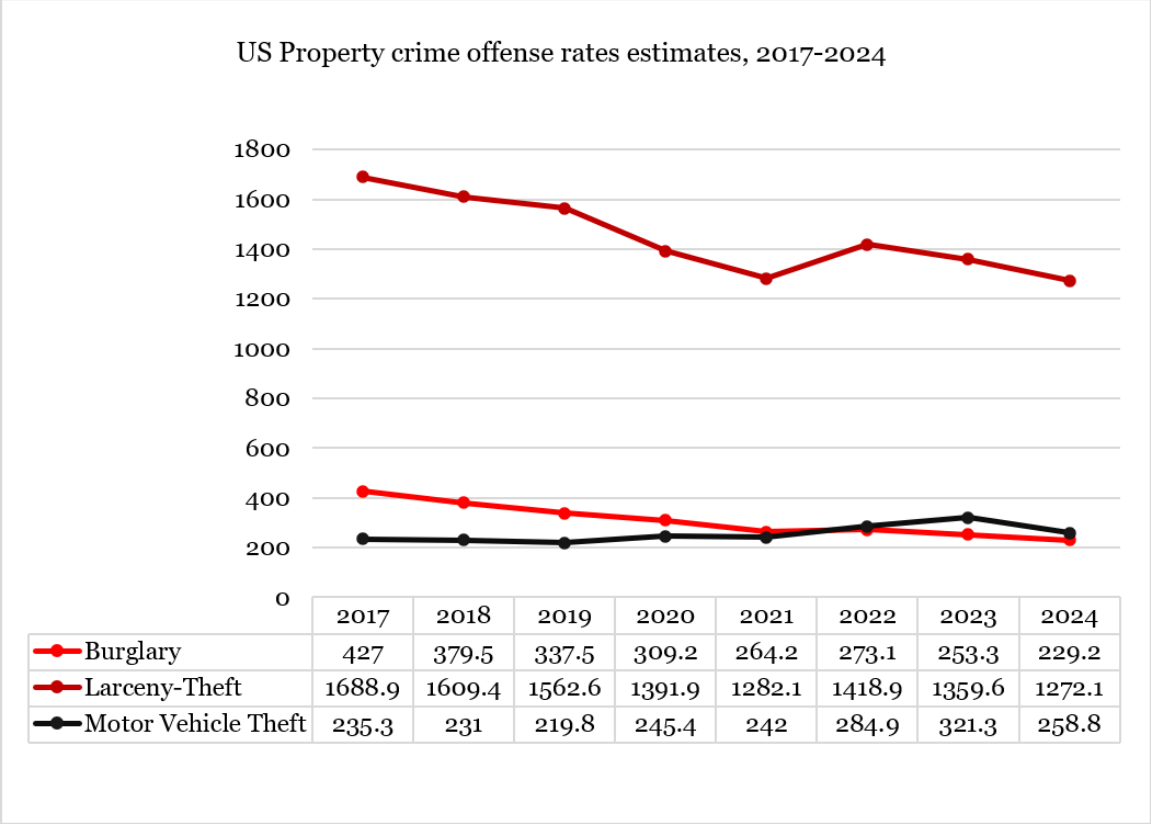
Data source: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Figure b3: Nevada Violent crime clearance rates



Data source: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

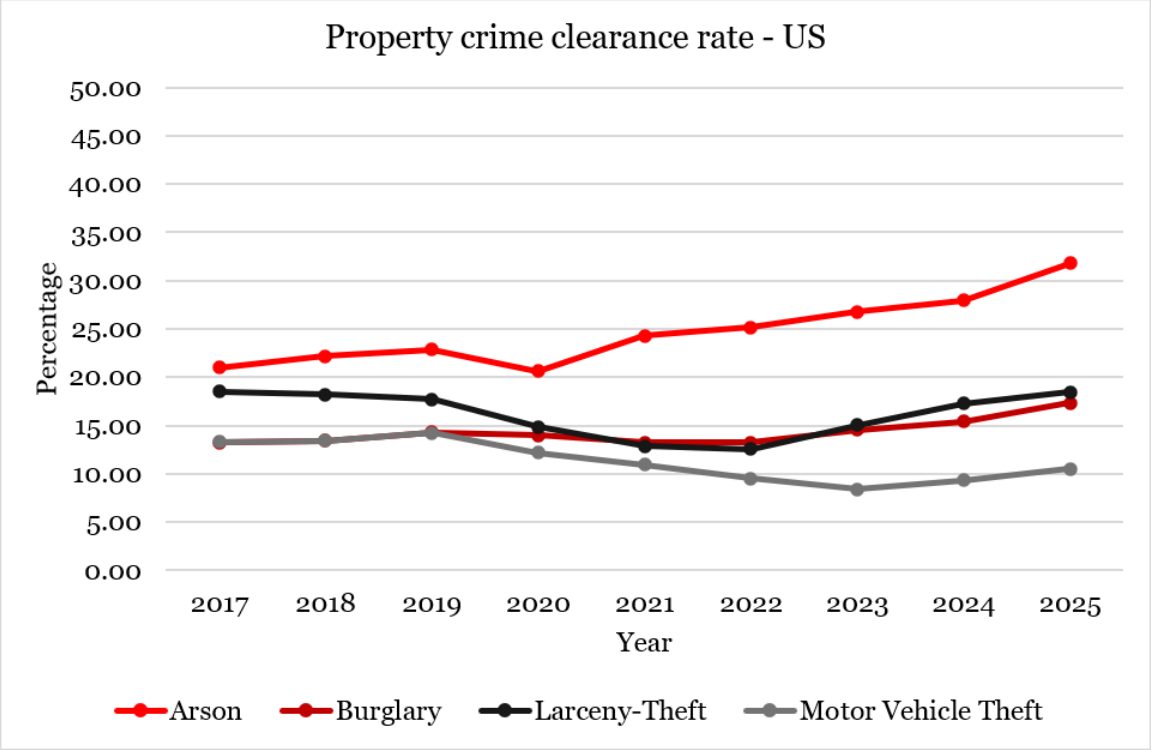
Figure c1: U.S. Property crime rates



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Burglary	427	379.5	337.5	309.2	264.2	273.1	253.3	229.2
Larceny-Theft	1688.9	1609.4	1562.6	1391.9	1282.1	1418.9	1359.6	1272.1
Motor Vehicle Theft	235.3	231	219.8	245.4	242	284.9	321.3	258.8

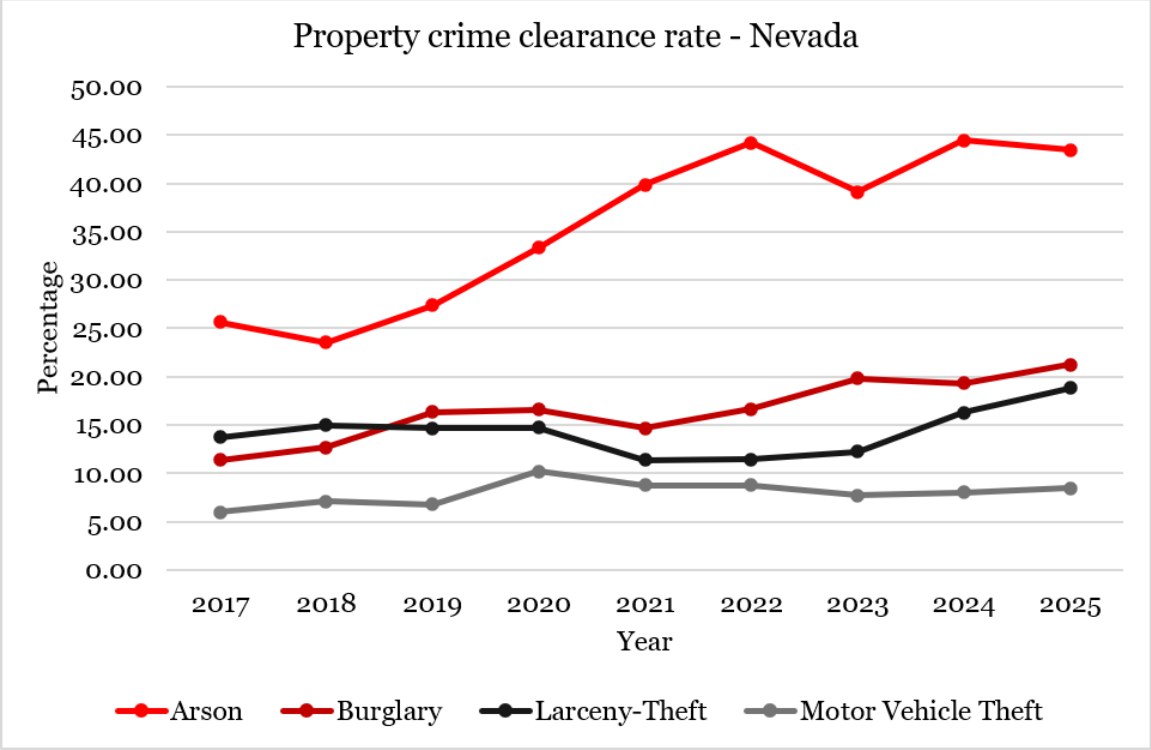
Data source: Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. (2025). UCR Summary of Reported Crimes in the Nation. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Figure c2: U.S. Property crime clearance rates



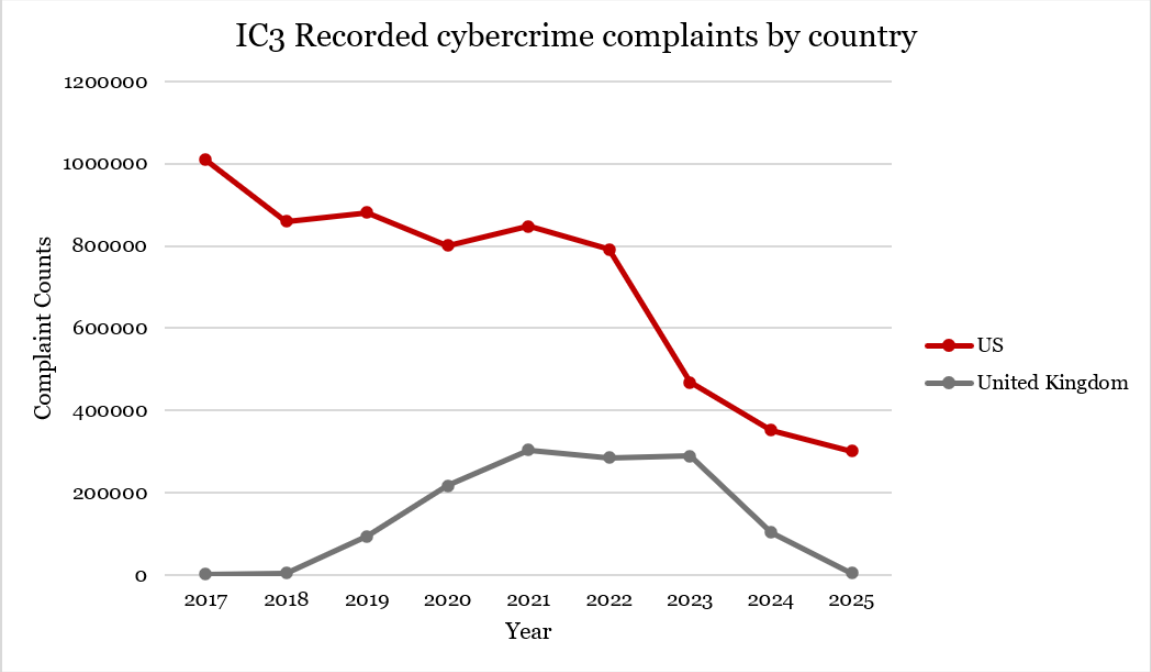
Data source: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Figure c3: Nevada Property crime clearance rates



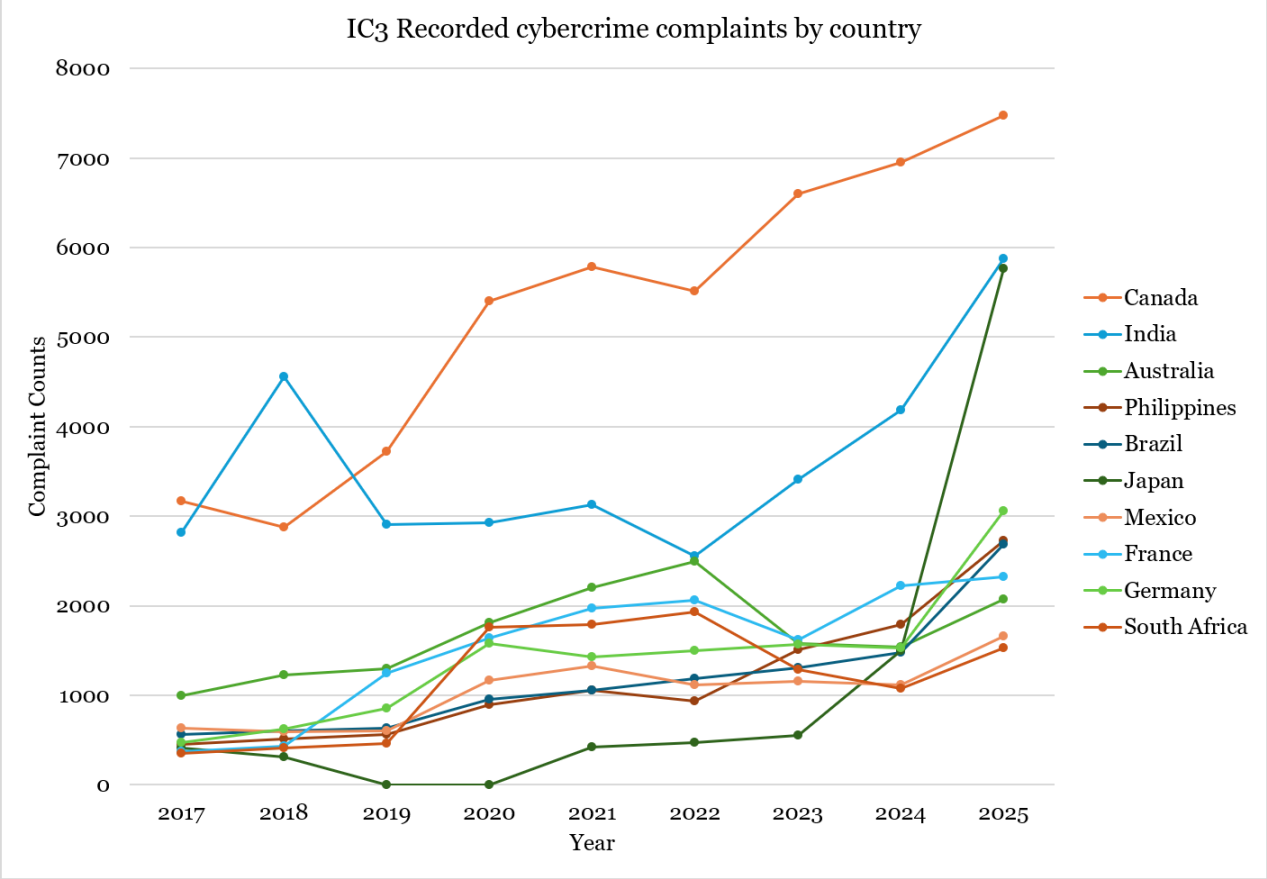
Data source: FBI Crime Data Explorer https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/

Figure d1: IC3 Recorded cybercrime complaints in the U.S. and U.K.



Note: IC3 collects international data through voluntary online submissions via its reporting portal. Data source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2017-2025). Internet crime report. Internet Crime Complaint Center. https://www.ic3.gov/AnnualReport/Reports

Figure d2: IC3 recorded cybercrime complaints by top countries



Note: IC3 collects international data through voluntary online submissions via its reporting portal. Data source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2017-2025). Internet crime report. Internet Crime Complaint Center. https://www.ic3.gov/AnnualReport/Reports