

Homicide Likely Reaching a New Historic Low as Most Crime Rates Continue to Decline at Mid-Year

New CCJ analysis finds 9 of 13 offenses declined in the first half of 2026, including an 18% drop in homicide; shoplifting the only offense remaining above 2019 levels

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WASHINGTON — Crime rates in large American cities continued to fall in the first half of 2026, with homicides down 18% from the same period in 2025 and 51% since the most recent peak in 2022, likely pushing the national homicide rate to a new historic low, according to an analysis released today by the [Council on Criminal Justice](#) (CCJ).

The study examined patterns for 13 crime types in 36 cities that have consistently and rapidly published monthly data over the past nine years. It found:

- Reported levels of 9 of 13 offenses were lower in the first half of 2026 than in the first half of 2025, with reported carjacking incidents seeing the largest drop (-47%) and drug offenses seeing the largest rise (+12%). Reported incidents of domestic violence rose 8%.
- Looking at trends over a longer period, only shoplifting (+5%) remained elevated compared to levels in the first half of 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide social justice protests of 2020.
- The reported rates of four offenses have dropped by 50% or more from their peaks over the past nine years: homicide (51% lower in the first half of 2026 than the first half of 2022), carjacking (-73% vs. 2023), residential burglary (-56% vs. 2018), and motor vehicle theft (-51% vs. 2023).
- Lethality—the share of serious violent crime that is fatal—fell 23% from the first half of 2025 and 20% from the first half of 2019 among 17 cities with sufficient data.

CCJ's [Year-End 2025](#) report estimated that the national homicide rate in 2025 would likely drop to about 4.0 per 100,000 residents. If confirmed by nationwide FBI data expected later this year, that would be the lowest level recorded in law enforcement or public health data since at least 1900. Trends through the first half of 2026 show that

the decline, which began in the second half of 2022, has continued, suggesting that the 2026 homicide rate will reach another historic low.

“This report is not evidence of the success or failure of any policy or practice,” wrote the co-authors, CCJ Senior Research Specialist Ernesto Lopez and Bobby Boxerman of the Missouri-based Regional Justice Information Service. “It simply documents recent crime trends from a sample of large U.S. cities.”

The report said there is no single or easy explanation for the trends. Researchers and practitioners have pointed to a [range of possible influences](#), including changes in criminal justice operations and strategies, technological advances, and broad shifts in society and culture. To examine the plausibility of multiple factors potentially driving the homicide decline, CCJ will convene a two-day summit in September with dozens of researchers from criminology, economics, psychology, sociology, public health, and related disciplines.

“Murder and other crime rates are falling across the map, in cities with different political leadership, housing and economic conditions, policing and prosecution strategies, violence reduction models, and levels of federal enforcement activity,” said CCJ President and CEO Adam Gelb. “Local policies and programs surely matter, but the striking consistency of the decline suggests that macro-level forces are exerting enormous influence as well.”

“As we continue to gain deeper understanding of the dynamics behind the nation’s crime trends, communities should invest in strategies that are supported by rigorous research and producing tangible results on the ground,” the report concluded. “For families who have lost loved ones to violence, even the continuing progress of 2026 is of little comfort. Keeping that in mind will help the United States stay on track toward a future of even greater public safety.”

City-Specific Homicide Trends

The number of homicides in the 30 cities providing data for that crime was 18% lower when comparing the first half of 2026 to the first half of 2025, representing 215 fewer homicides in those cities. A majority of the study cities (21 of 30) recorded a homicide decrease, including drops of more than 50% in Lincoln, NE (-100%), Rochester, NY (-76%), Little Rock, AR (-61%), Arlington, TX (-60%), and Colorado Springs, CO (-53%). Homicide rates went up in eight cities in the sample, with Norfolk, VA (+64%), San Francisco, CA (+55%), Dallas, TX (+30%), and Salt Lake City, UT (+20%), all experiencing double digit increases. The homicide rate in Pittsburgh, PA, remained even.

Examining trends over a longer period, there were 31% fewer homicides in the study cities in the first half of 2026 compared to the first half of 2019, the analysis found. Rates dropped in 26 of 30 cities in the sample, including declines of at least 50% in

Lincoln, NE (-100%), Rochester, NY (-76%), Baltimore, MD (-68%), and Arlington, TX (-50%). Four cities had January-June homicide rates above 2019 levels: Austin, TX (+74%), Norfolk, VA (+36%), Minneapolis, MN (+26%), and Pittsburgh, PA (+4%).

About the Report and Data

Co-authored by Lopez and Boxerman, the new analysis updates and supplements CCJ's [previous U.S. crime trends reports](#) with data through June 2026. It examines yearly and monthly rates of reported crime for 13 violent, property, and drug offenses in 36 large American cities that have consistently reported monthly data over the past nine years, including Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. The smallest city in the sample was Rochester, NY, with about 200,000 residents; the largest was New York, with roughly 8.5 million residents. The study cities are not necessarily representative of every large American city or the nation as a whole. Not all cities reported data for each offense and figures reported in the study may, and often do, differ from other sources and may be updated by the reporting jurisdictions.

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About the Council on Criminal Justice

The Council on Criminal Justice is a nonpartisan think tank and invitational membership organization that advances understanding of the criminal justice policy choices facing the nation and builds consensus for solutions that enhance safety and justice for all.