

## ***Violent Crime Reduction 2021-2025***

*“For the past three years, the Justice Department has been executing a comprehensive strategy to reduce violent crime — one rooted in local communities.*

*And we’re seeing promising trends in the form of crimes prevented and lives saved.*

*According to available data from 2023 — murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault show considerable declines from 2022.*

*And in nearly 90 major cities across the country today, violent crime has continued to drop during the first six months of this year compared to the same time period last year, including a 17% decrease in homicides.” – [Deputy Attorney General Monaco, September 17, 2024](#)*

In 2021, the country faced an uptick in violent crime that started during the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after taking office, the Attorney General Garland announced that Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco would be issuing and implementing a comprehensive [Violent Crime Reduction Strategy](#). Recognizing that every jurisdiction – large, small, rural, urban – faces unique challenges that cannot be addressed by a one-size-fits-all policy – the strategy was data-driven and deployed federal resources, including cutting-edge tools, in the most effective way: to act as a force multiplier for state and local law enforcement on the front lines of the fight against violent crime.

Among other efforts, the strategy focused on targeting the most significant drivers of violent crime—including gun violence and repeat offenders – and measured the results of these efforts by impact, through actual decreases in violent crime. The strategy also prioritized building trust in communities and investing in community-based prevention and intervention programs.

After peaking during the pandemic, violent crime numbers [began to trend significantly downwards in 2023](#), including double-digit drops in homicide rates across many major cities. 2023 had one of the lowest violent crime rates in the past half-century and [preliminary data for 2024](#) shows that violent crime has continued to decline considerably, including a 17.5% decline in murder, 7.1% decrease in rape, 3.6% decrease in aggravated assault, and 7.8% decline in robbery over the first three quarters of the year.

Details on how this meaningful reduction in violent crime was accomplished nationwide are included in this document.

### ***Focusing enforcement efforts on the most significant drivers of violent crime***

The Department recognized that different communities have different drivers of violent crime, including gun violence, organized criminal groups, and narcotics trafficking. To best drive down violent crime, the Department targeted its efforts in cities and communities around the country using data driven, evidence-based strategies tailored to local needs. Efforts included:

- **Illegal Firearms Trafficking Strike Forces:** In [June 2021](#), the Attorney General announced the launch of firearms trafficking strike forces to combat the flow of illegal firearms and the violence they feed into major metropolitan areas, which ultimately focused on New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Baltimore, Newark, and Washington, D.C. In April of 2024, ATF built on these successes with the creation of a National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC), which integrates ATF's intelligence, operations, and partnerships in a centralized, whole-of-government center.
- **Carjacking Task Forces:** Also in 2022, the Department stood up four task forces with state and local law enforcement partners in Washington, DC; Chicago; Philadelphia; and Tampa that brought together prosecutors, officers, agents, and analysts to crunch data, share intelligence, and apply best practices to prevent car jackings. As carjacking rates fell in those districts, the Department [expanded the task forces](#) to seven new districts build on their successes, an additional seven task forces were launched in April 2024.
- **Operation Overdrive:** Launched in 2022 to reduce drug violence and drug poisoning deaths, [Operation Overdrive](#) partners the DEA with state and local law enforcement officials to identify the communities with the highest rates of violence and drug poisoning deaths and then target the criminal networks and individuals driving the most harm in these communities. Operation Overdrive led to more than [2,000 arrests, over 1,000 seized firearms, and over 10 million deadly doses](#) of fentanyl and methamphetamine removed from the criminal market.
- **Operation North Star:** Launched in 2022 to apprehend fugitives connected to the most serious crimes, Operation North Star identifies locations with a significant increase in homicides and shootings and then focuses federal resources on targeting fugitives within those areas. Operation North Star resulted in the arrest of more [than](#) 8,000 [violent fugitives nationwide](#).
- **Violent Crime Initiative:** In September of 2022, the Department [launched](#) the Violent Crime Initiative in Houston; a surge of federal law enforcement tools and resources to target gangs terrorizing communities. Following a 20% decline in murders in 2023 and a further 13% decline in 2024 in Houston, the initiative expanded to include Memphis, St. Louis, Jackson, and Hartford. Each of these cities where data is available saw a decline in murders last year.
- **Expanding Crime Gun Intelligence:** Crime Gun Intelligence Centers are centralized law enforcement hubs that focus exclusively on investigating and preventing gun violence in local communities. They use cutting-edge technologies, including ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and eTrace systems, to rapidly develop and pursue investigative leads to identify the most prolific trigger pullers and take them off the streets — helping to push case-closure rates up and driving violent crime down.
  - Since 2021, the ATF helped opened more than 60 new CGIC facilities, contributing to the decline in violent crime in these cities.
  - As of the end of 2023, there were 6.5 million entries of ballistic evidence in NIBIN, which generated over 1,060,000 investigative leads provided to ATF's federal, state, local, Tribal, territorial, and international law enforcement partners.

- **Confronting Emerging Firearms Threats:** The Department took several critical steps to confront the newest and most sophisticated firearm threats, including:
  - **Machine Gun Conversion Devices (MCDs):** The Department created a standing committee dedicated to investigating and implementing best practices to stop the illegal production of MCDs, which convert semi-automatic firearms into fully automatic machineguns. ATF also convened leaders from the 3D printing industry, members of academia, and law enforcement partners for the first-ever summit of its kind to combat the proliferation of MCDs.
  - **ATF's Emerging Threats Center.** In January 2023, the Emerging Threats Center (ETC) was established due to the proliferation of Privately Made Firearms, MCDs, silencers, and other firearms related technology posing a substantial risk to public safety and the law enforcement community.
- **Enhanced Background Checks:** The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 requires that the FBI conduct additional, enhanced checks for firearm purchasers under the age of 21. Specifically, the BSCA requires the FBI to conduct outreach to state juvenile justice, mental health, and local law enforcement, to determine if any potentially prohibiting records exist.
  - The FBI began conducting such checks after the law went into effect and prevented over 950 firearm purchases prevented solely because of these enhanced background checks.
- **Firearms Trafficking and Straw Purchasing Prosecutions:** The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act also created the first stand-alone prohibitions on firearms trafficking and straw purchasing. Because straw purchasers and traffickers frequently funnel firearms to felons and others prohibited from possessing firearms, and who intend to use guns for nefarious purposes, stopping these crimes is critical to public safety.
  - Under these new authorities, over 700 defendants were charged with straw purchasing or firearms trafficking under these new authorities.
- **Ensuring Firearms are Sold Lawfully and Responsibly.** The Department prevented the sale of firearms to felons and other prohibited persons, such as through unlicensed dealing, and “ghost gun” kits.
  - **Frame or Receiver Final Rule:** Published in 2022, this regulation ensures the proper marking, recordkeeping, and traceability of all firearms manufactured, imported, acquired and disposed by federal firearms licensees. The final rule has helped to combat the spread of unserialized “ghost guns,” which can make crime gun tracing impossible.
  - **Engaged in the Business Final Rule:** Published in 2024, this regulation clarifies that an individual must be licensed to sell firearms and conduct background checks, when their intent is to “predominantly earn a profit.”

- **Records of Stolen Firearms Interim Final Rule:** Published in 2024, this regulation allows licensed importers, manufacturers, and dealers of firearms to access records of stolen firearms in the National Crime Information Center (“NICS”), so they can determine whether a firearm has been reported stolen.
- **Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Strategy:** While the overwhelming majority of federal firearms licensees (FFLs) comply with federal law and are critical partners in preventing gun violence, the Department made clear that certain willful violations of law would result in a notice of license revocation, absent extraordinary circumstances. Under this policy, ATF revoked the licenses of over 300 FFLs due to their willful violations of important firearms laws.

### *Fostering Trust in Communities We Serve*

Building trust and legitimacy within the communities the Department serves is essential to driving down violent crime. Efforts by the Department to strengthen these relationships include:

- **United States Attorneys:** All 93 U.S. Attorneys have worked to implement the Department’s Comprehensive Strategy within their districts and made landmark achievements in reducing violent crime and building trust within their communities. A sampling of these achievements is available here: <https://www.justice.gov/dag/media/1384801/dl>. And, on [December 11, 2023](#), the Department released a [Violent Crime Reduction Roadmap](#), to connect these communities with the information and resources they need to meet the complex and evolving challenges to help reduce violent crime.
- **Tribal Justice:** The Department launched joint operations to address violent and drug-related crimes in Tribal communities. These include FBI’s Operation Not Forgotten to surge resources into Tribal communities to address unsolved crimes and the [Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons \(MMIP\) Regional Outreach Program](#).
- **Improving Accountability in Hiring of Law Enforcement Officers:** As directed by Executive Order 14074, the Department established the National Law Enforcement Accountability Database ([NLEAD](#)) a first of its kind database for to centralize federal law enforcement officer records and increase accountability and transparency in law enforcement hiring.

### *Investing in Community-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs*

Experience and research have shown that prevention and intervention can be highly effective complements to the strategic enforcement of criminal laws. These kinds of programs are almost always best coordinated by local community and government partners, but the Department has a significant role to play in supporting them through grant funding, training, and technical assistance.

Over the last four years, the Justice Department invested over \$17 billion in public safety through grant funding at state, local, and Tribal levels, including through:

- **COPS Grants:** Over the last four years, DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) distributed over \$2 billion in grants, including over \$650 million in COPS Hiring Grants with a focus on violent crime reduction. Those grants included funding for law enforcement agencies across the country to hire new, fulltime officers:
  - 2024: \$157 million to 235 law enforcement agencies to hire nearly 1,200 officers.
  - 2023: \$217 million to 394 law enforcement agencies to hire 1,730 officers.
  - 2022: \$139 million to 180 law enforcement agencies to hire 973 officers.

**Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) Grants:** DOJ made historic grant investments with funding from the landmark, bipartisan law focused on reducing and protecting communities from gun violence:

- Over \$238 million in Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program [grants](#) to states for the creation and implementation of extreme risk protection order programs.
- Over \$73 million in supplemental Office of Justice Programs (OJP) STOP School Violence [grants](#) to enhance school security.
- \$40 million in supplemental Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) School Violence Prevention Grant Program [grants](#), funding research on the causes and consequences of school violence.
- Over \$94 million in supplemental Community Violence Intervention Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) [grants](#) to be used for violence-reduction research and supporting community violence intervention and prevention initiatives.
- Nearly \$75 million in [National Criminal History Improvement Program \(NCHIP\)](#) Supplemental Funding, supporting state and local efforts to improve access to criminal history records.

### *Measuring Success*

The Department made clear from the outset that it would measure the impact of its strategy in the form of actual reduction in violence in communities. To monitor and drive implementation of the comprehensive strategy the Deputy AG established a [Violent Crime Reduction Steering Committee](#) – chaired by Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General – to streamline coordination between components on all aspects of the Department's efforts to reduce violent crime, including policy choices, budget prioritization, research and data collection, and coordination with state, local, and tribal partners.

The Committee tracked the downward trajectory in violent crime including through the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data, which showed:

- From 2021 to 2022, the [UCR data](#) showed promising signs of declines in violent crime, including an overall decline in violent crime of 1.7% and a 6.1% decline in murder.
- From 2022 to 2023, [UCR data](#) showed a continuation of that decline, with the overall decline in violent crime at 3% and a 11.6% decline in murder.
- From 2023 to 2024, the most recent preliminary [UCR data](#) for 2024 shows violent crime further declining to a rate of 10.3% and murder decreasing by 22.7%. This most recent data also shows a 17.7% decline in rape and 13.6% decline in robbery.
- In addition, [preliminary data from 85 cities](#) comparing data through the third quarter of 2023 to 2024 showed a 17.5% decline in murder, a 7.1% decrease in rape, a 3.6% decrease in aggravated assault, and a 7.8% decline in robbery over the first three quarters of the year.

The Committee also released a [final report](#) in January of 2025 with additional visibility into how the Justice Department successfully implemented its comprehensive strategy to drive down violent crime.