

# MISSOURI CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY, 2016: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Sociology  
University of Missouri



# EXECUTIVE REPORT

## MISSOURI CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY, 2016

### Description of Reports

A total of six reports, including this one, have been produced from the MCVS data. The following is a description of each report.

Summary Report: This report contains 1) an introduction that describes the sample and population demographics, a Missouri metro/nonmetro county map, and a description of demographic variables, and 2) cross tabulations between demographic characteristics and (a) crime percentage distributions, (b) follow up questions for crime victimizations, and (c) perceptions of crime, community, law enforcement, and policy. The appendices include the survey script, methodology, and the number of respondents per county.

Executive Report: This report presents overall prevalence of crime victimization for the state of Missouri, and summarizes results from the reports on perceptions of law enforcement, neighborhood trust, safety, and fear, and intimate partner violence. The report also includes a comparison of urban and rural respondents, description of victims' experiences, methodological considerations, and directions for future research that have been gleaned from administering the Missouri Crime Victimization Survey.

Intimate Partner Violence Report: This report presents descriptive statistics for five types of intimate partner violence (IPV)—physical abuse, emotional abuse, harassment, stalking, and sexual abuse—by demographic characteristics.

Neighborhood Trust, Safety, and Fear Report: This report examines survey responses to questions about trusting neighbors, feeling safe in one's neighborhood, and fear of violent crime. The report presents responses to these questions by race, age, sex, education, income, and metro/nonmetro residence.

Perceptions of Law Enforcement Report: This report covers a wide array of perceptions of law enforcement, including assessment of their effectiveness regarding several types of crime (e.g. drugs, burglary) as well as whether or not they treat people fairly and with respect. The report breaks down the responses to these questions by race, age, education, and income.

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For additional questions about the Missouri Crime Victimization Survey, contact:

Mark L. Ritchey, PhD  
Statistical Analysis Center, Director  
Research and Development Division  
Missouri State Highway Patrol  
Voice: 573-526-6259 x 1205  
Email: [mark.ritchey@mshp.dps.mo.gov](mailto:mark.ritchey@mshp.dps.mo.gov)

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In this report, we briefly describe the state population, background information on the MCVS survey, findings on overall victimization by crime type, and some perceptions of the social environment. We conclude with a methodological note aimed to provide information to other investigators that may be conducting a future iteration of this or a similar survey. Readers should note the descriptions of all reports that we generated on the previous page as they contain the vast majority of our findings.

## THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Missouri is home to a little over 6 million residents. Approximately 30% of Missourians live in nonmetro areas according to the 2010 U.S. Census. By comparison, only 20% of U.S. residents live in nonmetro areas. While the majority of U.S. and Missouri residents reside in metro areas, a large portion of these populations remain nonmetro. Metro and nonmetro populations often face a number of distinct challenges when it comes to crime and victimization. Given that the metro/nonmetro composition of Missouri tilts further towards nonmetro than the nation as a whole, considering area of residence was critical to the study of crime and victimization in the state.

The population of Missouri may also be an aging population. While persons 65 years of age or older made up 14% of the population in the 2010 census, more recent data from the American Community Survey places that percentage at 16.1%.

The racial composition of the state is primarily non-Hispanic White (79.7%) and Black (11.8%). Other race-ethnic groups include Asian (2%), Hispanic or Latino (4.1%), and those who selected two or more races (2.2%). While the percentage of Black Missourians is comparable to that of the U.S., the state is more predominantly White than the rest of the nation which has a non-Hispanic White population of 61.3%. This difference is likely due to the much smaller Hispanic and/or Latino population of Missouri (4.1%) compared to the U.S. overall (17.8%).

## THE MISSOURI CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

The Missouri Crime Victimization Survey<sup>1</sup> (MCVS) was conducted in spring 2016 to estimate statewide crime victimization of adults. The Missouri State Highway Patrol partnered with researchers from the University of Missouri and the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) to develop and conduct the survey, and analyze the data. This survey of 2,008 respondents was conducted via phone and largely modeled after the National Crime Victimization Survey. For technical details see the 2016 Missouri Crime Victimization Survey Summary Report. A key strength of the MCVS is that it offers an empirical look at how nonmetro and metro residents compare across their victimization experiences as well as in their

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for this project was provided by the Missouri State Highway Patrol Statistical Analysis Center who received funding from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Report No. SRC-1611 to support the project. The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the MO State Highway Patrol or the Department of Justice.

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perceptions of their social environment.

The MCVS is the first survey capable of providing accurate estimates of crime and victimization in the state of Missouri. Monthly crime data is reported to the Missouri State Highway Patrol through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics website, which was instituted as mandatory for law enforcement agencies in the state in 2001. However, there are limitations in estimating the prevalence of crime from these reports. First, the reports only include crimes that are reported to law enforcement agencies. Second, they only include crimes that those law enforcement agencies report to the State Highway Patrol. Unreported crimes are not included.

Surveys such as the MCVS are intended to capture some of the instances of crime and victimization that go unreported. Several other states have administered surveys similar to the MCVS in order to obtain additional data for filling the gap between actual crime and reported crime. Surveys such as these provide a tool for understanding crime and victimization in the state in addition to the Uniform Crime Reports.

## CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Table 1 displays the prevalence of several types of victimization in the state of Missouri by age, sex, race<sup>1</sup>, and metro/nonmetro residence. We can see that intimate partner violence (IPV) has been reported by nearly 13% of the Missouri population. The prevalence of IPV is higher among younger age groups and women, with minimal differences across race or metro/nonmetro residency. Violent crime is slightly less prevalent than IPV, with just over 10% of the population reporting being victim of such a crime in the past 12 months. The prevalence of violent crime victimization appears highest among younger age groups and men, with minimal differences across race or metro/nonmetro residency. Property crime is the most prevalent form of victimization experienced in the state, with nearly a third (31.3%) of all Missourians reporting experiencing it. Prevalence of property crime is highest among younger age groups, men, those who fall into the Other racial category, and metro area residents. Identity theft was the second most prevalent of all the forms of victimization reported, with roughly a quarter (24.3%) of all respondents experiencing it. This form of victimization was most prevalent among those of working age; that is, in the categories of 25-34, 35-49, and 50-64. There are drop-offs in prevalence for identity theft for the oldest and youngest age groups. Identity theft victimization is also more prevalent among men, those in the Other racial category, and those living in metro areas.

Further analysis within crime type, not shown in Table 1, adds context. Among those who experienced property crime, most only experienced it once in the past 12 months. The most common property crime to be experienced more than once was a home break-in (37%). Those who experienced a home break-in or motor vehicle theft had the highest percentage reporting that they had contacted the police—this ranged from 38% to 83%. People who experienced property crime overwhelmingly reported that they were not offered any kind of victim services, with the highest prevalence being for motor vehicle theft (8.6%).

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Table 1. Missouri Victimization, by Age, Sex, Race, and Residence<sup>a</sup>

			IPV <sup>b</sup>	Violent <sup>c</sup>	Property <sup>d</sup>	Identity <sup>e</sup>
Demographic		% Yes	12.6	10.5	31.3	24.3
Age	18-24	% Yes	21.4	24.3	38.8	19.8
	25-34	% Yes	14.7	14.4	39.5	21.5
	35-49	% Yes	15.5	10.7	36.6	32.2
	50-64	% Yes	9.4	7.3	28.1	26.8
	65+	% Yes	4.7	2.4	17.0	16.5
Sex	Female	% Yes	13.2	8.4	29.4	21.9
	Male	% Yes	11.9	12.8	33.3	26.8
Race	Black	% Yes	13.0	10.8	34.7	19.5
	White	% Yes	12.2	10.5	30.2	24.5
	Other	% Yes	12.7	10.3	45.7	31.3
MSA	Metro	% Yes	12.4	10.7	32.0	25.6
	Nonmetro	% Yes	13.0	10.0	29.4	20.6

<sup>a</sup> Percentages do not sum to total. They are the percent within each category who responded in the affirmative to being victim of one or more of that type of crime.

<sup>b</sup> Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was coded as such if respondent reported they had experienced a spouse, partner, or significant other attack or threaten to attack them (q35); emotionally abuse them (q37); harass them (q39); stalk them (q40); or sexually abuse them (q41) in the past 12 months.

<sup>c</sup> Violent crime was coded as such if respondent reported they had experienced someone trying to take something directly from them directly by using force (q24); being hit, attacked, or beaten (q25); being attacked with a weapon (q26); being threatened (q27); being forced to have sexual intercourse (q28); being forced to have other unwanted sexual activity (q29) in the past 12 months.

<sup>d</sup> Property crime was coded as such if respondent reported they had experienced: someone trying to steal their motor vehicle (q19); someone trying to steal items from inside their vehicle (q20); their property damaged or vandalized (q21); someone trying to break into one of their properties (q22); someone trying to steal from them without force (q23) in the past 12 months.

<sup>e</sup> Identity theft crime was coded as such if respondent reported they had experienced: someone trying to use their credit cards without permission (q30); someone trying to use their financial accounts (q31); someone using another type of their account (q32); someone trying to use their personal information to obtain services (q33); someone trying to use their accounts or credit cards to run up debts (q34) in the past 12 months

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Similar to property crime, identity related crimes were typically only experienced once in the past 12 months by victims. The most common identity related crime to be experienced multiple times was the use of credit cards (33.9%) or other accounts (33.3%). In general, a much lower percentage of victims of identity related crimes reported them to police than any other type of crime except for forced sexual activity (18.5%). The range for reporting the last incident of identity related crime to the police ranged from 13% for use of credit card to 29% for use of personal information for services. Only small percentages of victims of identity related crimes were offered any victim services. This ranged from approximately 6% for use of credit card to 15% for personal information for services.

Being threatened was the most common type of violent crime—and any crime—to be experienced more than once in the past 12 months. Over half (53.7%) of all who experienced it, experienced it more than once in that time frame. Forced sexual activity was also commonly experienced more than once among victims, with nearly half (48.7%) of victims reporting that it happened more than once in the past 12 months. Victims of forced sexual activity had a much smaller percentage reporting that they had called the police for the most recent incident than other types of violent crime. Less than 20% of victims who experienced forced sexual activity had reported the last incident to police, while just under 80% of those who had been stolen from with force had called the police. While the percentage of victims of violent crime who reported that they were offered victim services is generally higher than that for other types of crimes, they remain fairly low, ranging from less than 10% for being threatened to roughly 35% for forced sexual intercourse. Only 13.5% of those who experienced forced sexual activity were offered any victim services.

One out of eight Missourians was the victim of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the past 12 months. The most common type of abuse reported was emotional abuse, followed by physical abuse, stalking, harassment, and sexual abuse. IPV victimization rates in the past 12 months were higher for Blacks, younger people, and those with lower incomes. Women and men report similar rates of IPV in the last 12 months as do residents of metro and nonmetro areas.

While in each case the above patterns are important to note, readers should remain cognizant of the percentage of the overall sample who reported being victims of a violent crime.

## PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Overall, Missourians hold favorable views of law enforcement. Favorable views of law enforcement were most common among respondents who were White, older, and had higher levels of education and income. Large racial gaps are particularly notable in Missourians' perceptions of respect and fair treatment by law enforcement with Blacks reporting more concerns in these areas. Missourians appeared to be quite similar in their perceptions of law enforcement regardless of metro or nonmetro residence.

In cases where differences were found, they were minimal. Most Missourians report that they are likely to call in the event of a serious or violent crime.

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Missourians generally trust the people in their neighborhood, feel safe in their neighborhood, and do not frequently fear being the victim of a violent crime. However, this general sense of ease in one's neighborhood is not equally felt. Racial minorities, low-SES (i.e. education and income), and metro populations tend to report less trust and safety, and more fear of violent crime. Race, in particular, stands out as a key factor in whether people report that they trust their neighbors, feel safe in their neighborhood, or fear being the victim of a violent crime. Further, a lower percentage of Missourians living in metro areas reported trust in neighbors, feeling of safe, and never fearing becoming victim of a violent crime.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The 2016 Missouri Crime Victimization Survey is the first of its kind completed in Missouri. We include this brief methodological note to identify some of the challenges and successes we experienced with the hope that it will benefit future researchers. We focus primarily on issues related to sampling and questionnaire design.

Prior to sampling we familiarized ourselves with reports from other state-level victimization surveys. We concluded that in most cases states had two aims. The first was to assess victimization as it was the major purpose of the study. The second was to gather information about a topic of importance to that particular state. We were cognizant of the recent history in Missouri surrounding race-related policing events, particularly Ferguson, that received extensive media coverage. Given this, we chose to make attitudes toward police our primary special interest topic as we felt the information gleaned would benefit both law enforcement agencies and policy makers. We also included items related to fear of crime and neighborhood trust. Please review the codebook, the summary report, and/or the short reports for additional information. We anticipate that issues of policing and race will remain a social issue of importance in Missouri for the foreseeable future and recommend that future iterations of this survey include some of these items to track public opinion in the state over time. We also suggest that items related to additional timely social issues be included in the future as well. We anticipate that one of these topics will be attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. In addition, perceptions of the opioid crisis also warrant investigation.

The sampling design was necessarily impacted by the demographic and residential composition of the state. Our sample size is 2,008, which we consider to be adequate in terms of potential for research on subsamples and also a success given project resources. We identify both the decision to stratify sampling along metro and nonmetro counties and to obtain an adequate sample of Black respondents through oversampling in St. Louis and Kansas City as successes. We were limited by the small population of Black residents that reside in nonmetro counties in Missouri and identify the relative lack of rural Blacks as a limitation of the sample. We were also hindered by the low Latino population in the state (approximately four percent). We suggest that future investigators assess the distribution of the Latino population in Missouri and make an effort to capture a sample that is large enough for sub group analyses.

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We utilized a phone survey that mixed landline and cell phones. At this time this is an appropriate method to capture the state population that is stratified along metropolitan status, age and race. We anticipate that as survey research rapidly evolves, future sampling designs will include an online component that is consistent with technical innovations. The response rate was 8.8% which is within acceptable parameters<sup>2</sup>.

There are several items in the questionnaire that we feel should be improved upon and/or added in the future. First, identity theft is a growing crime concern. This survey includes two questions on identity theft but it would benefit from additional questions that better determine the type of theft that occurred, the context surrounding it, and the victim's response.

Second, we included an item about fear of crime in one's neighborhood. Previous research demonstrates that neighborhood disorder is correlated with fear of crime, which has implications for broader health and wellbeing. We recommend that future versions of this survey ask respondents about perceived neighborhood disorder.

Third, the items that focus on worries about social issues should be further clarified. The items are worded "next, I'm going to read you a list of potential problems in Missouri. For each, please tell me if you would say you are not at all worried, somewhat worried, or very worried?" Follow up questions should be designed that ascertain why the respondent thinks that particular issue is worrisome. For example, with regard to worry about race relations, are Missouri residents worried about race relations because they think racism is a problem in Missouri or because race-related protests are taking place in Missouri?

Fourth, victims of crimes were asked if they experienced distress. Future studies should probe more thoroughly on the nature of the distress and reactions to victimization in order to better ascertain the personal, social, and economic consequences of victimization.

Regarding attitudes toward police, we have three suggestions. First, it may be beneficial to understand the extent to which respondents have police officers in their personal social networks as that may influence their attitudes toward law enforcement. Second, we removed items that asked respondents about vicarious experiences with police due to time constraints. Investigators may want to include such items in the future. Last, political affiliation should be included because previous research has indicated that it is a strong indicator of attitudes towards the police.

Finally, future surveys should include items about sexual identity given that there is limited understanding of how sexual minorities navigate the criminal justice system as victims. Some law enforcement agencies in Missouri are incorporating training to assist sexual minorities that would benefit from this information.

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<sup>2</sup> Response rates have fallen across survey modalities in recent years and research has shown no clear relationship between response rates and survey quality. For more details on response rates see resources available from the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR.org).