



STATISTICAL BRIEF

January 2021

NCJ 255969

Race and Ethnicity of Violent Crime Offenders and Arrestees, 2018

Allen J. Beck, Ph.D., *BJS Statistician*

In 2018, based on data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, black people were overrepresented among persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes (33%) and for serious nonfatal violent crimes (36%) relative to their representation in the U.S. population (13%) (table 1).¹ White people were underrepresented. White people accounted for 60% of U.S. residents but 46% of all persons arrested for rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and other assault, and 39% of all arrestees for nonfatal violent crimes excluding other assault. Hispanics, regardless of their race, were overrepresented among arrestees for nonfatal violent crimes excluding other assault (21%) relative to their representation in the U.S. population (18%).

These UCR data on incidents of nonfatal violent crime can be compared to data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to determine how much offense and arrest differences by race and ethnicity can be attributed to differences in criminal involvement. The NCVS collects information on victims' perceptions of offenders' race, ethnicity, and other characteristics in incidents of violent crime. This survey is administered to persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. The 2018 NCVS data file includes interviews from 151,055 households.

An examination of offenders' characteristics, as reported by victims in the NCVS, provides information on racial and ethnic disparities beyond an arrestee and population-based comparison. Based on the 2018 NCVS and UCR, black people accounted for 29% of violent-crime offenders and 35% of violent-crime offenders in incidents reported to police, compared to 33% of all persons arrested for violent crimes (table 2). (See *Methodology* for differences in how violent crimes are measured in the NCVS and UCR.)

¹Serious nonfatal violent crimes include rape, robbery, and aggravated assault and exclude other assault.

At the same time, white offenders were underrepresented among persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes (46%) relative to their representation among offenders identified by victims in the NCVS (52%). When limited to offenders in incidents reported to police, white people were found to be arrested proportionate to their criminal involvement (48%). Hispanic offenders were overrepresented among persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes (18%) relative to their representation among violent offenders (14% of all violent offenders and 13% of violent offenders in incidents reported to police). However, victims were unable to determine if the offender was Hispanic in 9% of single-offender

TABLE 1
Race or ethnicity of the U.S. resident population and of persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes, 2018

Race/ethnicity	U.S. resident population, July 1, 2018	Persons arrested, UCR 2018	
		Nonfatal violent crimes ^a	Nonfatal violent crimes excluding other assault
White ^b	60.4%	45.9%	38.7%
Black ^b	12.5	33.0	36.1
Hispanic	18.3	17.6	21.4
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^b	0.7	1.9	1.9
Asian ^b	5.7	1.3	1.5
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^b	0.2	0.3	0.4
Two or more races ^b	2.2	--	--

Note: See appendix table 1 for estimation of arrests by race and ethnicity.
--Not reported.

^aIncludes rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and other assault. Excludes murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States, 2018, table 43; National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016, (National Criminal Justice Archive, Study Number 37066); and U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019.

incidents and 12% of multiple-offender incidents, which may have resulted in some underestimates of Hispanic offenders' involvement in violent crime (not shown in tables).

Among the most serious incidents of violent crime (rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault), there were no statistically significant differences by race between offenders identified in the NCVS and persons arrested per the UCR (table 3). White and black people were arrested proportionate to their involvement in serious nonfatal violent crime overall and proportionate to their involvement in serious nonfatal violent crime reported to police. Hispanics accounted for 21% of persons arrested for serious nonfatal violent crime but 12% of persons involved in serious nonfatal violent crime reported to police. However, some of this difference may be due to victims not knowing the ethnicity of their assailants, even if they knew their race.

TABLE 2
Race or ethnicity of offenders in the NCVS and of persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes, 2018

Race/ethnicity of offender	All nonfatal violent crimes		
	Offenders in the NCVS ^a	Offenders in NCVS incidents reported to police ^a	Persons arrested in the UCR ^{*b}
White ^c	52.2% †	48.3%	45.9%
Black ^c	28.9	34.9	33.0
Hispanic	14.2 †	12.6 †	17.6
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^c	1.6	1.4	1.9
Asian ^c	1.8	1.8	1.3
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^c	0.4!	0.5!	0.3
Two or more races ^c	1.0	0.6!	--

Note: Based on incidents in which the victim reported the race/ethnicity of the offender(s). See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

--Not reported.

^aIncludes rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Excludes murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

^bIncludes rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and other assault. Excludes murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States, 2018, table 43; and National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016, (National Criminal Justice Archive, Study Number 37066).

The NCVS provides the basis for comparing the race and ethnicity of violent offenders with persons in the U.S. population and persons arrested

Previous reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on the race and ethnicity of violent offenders have been based either on violent victimizations or on violent incidents.² Estimates of violent victimization represent the number of persons victimized and count the characteristics of offenders multiple times if more than one victim was present during an incident. Estimates of violent crime incidents represent the number of incidents but do not account for the number of offenders or their characteristics when incidents involve two or more offenders. Estimates in this report are based on violent offenders to facilitate comparisons with the race and ethnicity of U.S. residents and of persons arrested. (See *Methodology*.)

²See *Race and Hispanic Origin of Victims and Offenders, 2012-15* (NCJ 250747, BJS, October 2017) for an analysis based on violent victimizations. See *Criminal Victimization, 2019* (NCJ 255113, BJS, September 2020), for an analysis based on incidents of violent crime.

TABLE 3
Race or ethnicity of offenders in the NCVS and of persons arrested for serious nonfatal violent crimes, 2018

Race/ethnicity of offender	Serious nonfatal violent crimes		
	Offenders in the NCVS ^a	Offenders in NCVS incidents reported to police ^a	Persons arrested in the UCR ^{*b}
White ^c	43.8%	40.9%	38.7%
Black ^c	35.9	42.8	36.1
Hispanic	15.5 †	12.0 †	21.4
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^c	1.1!	1.4!	1.9
Asian ^c	2.6	2.5	1.5
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^c	0.3!	0.2!	0.4
Two or more races ^c	0.7!	0.3!	--

Note: Based on incidents in which the victim reported the race/ethnicity of the offender(s). See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

--Not reported.

^aIncludes rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Excludes murder, non-negligent manslaughter, and simple assault.

^bIncludes rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Excludes murder, non-negligent manslaughter, and other assault.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States, 2018, table 43; and National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016, (National Criminal Justice Archive, Study Number 37066).

Victims were able to report the race or ethnicity of the offender in 86% of violent crime incidents

Victims in two-thirds (67%) of nonfatal violent crime incidents said they knew all or some of the offenders or had seen them before. Among incidents involving a single offender, 69% of victims said they knew or had seen the offender before. Among incidents involving multiple offenders, 34% of victims said all of the offenders were known, 18% said some were known, and 48% said all were strangers they had never seen before or said they did not know (not shown in tables).

Victims reported the race or ethnicity of offenders in 75% of nonfatal violent crime incidents involving Asian victims, 82% of incidents involving Hispanic or black victims, and 88% of incidents involving white victims (table 4). Overall, victims in 3.9 million nonfatal violent crime incidents reported information on the race or ethnicity of nearly 5.0 million offenders linked to these incidents (table 5).

The number of offenders per incident varied by the offenders' race and ethnicity. Victims reported an average of 1.5 black offenders in incidents involving at least one black offender, compared to 1.2 white offenders in incidents involving at least one white offender and 1.3 Hispanic offenders in incidents involving at least one Hispanic offender. The ratios were similar in incidents involving at least one

TABLE 4
Reported race or ethnicity of violent crime offenders by race or ethnicity of victim, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of victim	Race/ethnicity of offender	
	Reported	Not reported
Total	85.8%	14.2%
White ^a	87.8	12.2
Black ^a	82.0	18.0
Hispanic	81.8	18.2
American Indian/Alaska Native ^a	91.9	8.1
Asian ^a	75.4	24.6
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^a	100.0!	0.0!
Two or more races ^a	90.2	9.8

Note: Estimates exclude incidents in which the victim did not know the race or ethnicity of the offender(s). Percentages based on nonfatal violent crime incidents, including rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) offender (1.2), at least one offender who was a Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (1.2), or at least one Asian offender (1.1).

The average number of offenders per incident did not vary significantly by victims' race or ethnicity (table 6). Overall, victims reported an average of 1.3 offenders per incident. The average ranged from 1.2 offenders per incident among Asian and AIAN victims to 1.4 among black victims, though the differences were not statistically significant. The percentage of single-offender incidents was lower among black victims (78%) than among white (90%) or AIAN (91%) victims.

Black offenders accounted for 22% of single-offender incidents and 43% of multiple-offender incidents (table 7). White offenders accounted for 59% of single-offender incidents and 38% of multiple-offender incidents. Hispanic offenders accounted for similar portions of single-offender (14%) and multiple-offender incidents (16%).

TABLE 5
Number of violent crime incidents and number of offenders, by race or ethnicity of offender, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of offender	Number of incidents ^a	Number of offenders ^b	Ratio of offenders to incidents
Total	3,857,100	4,957,600	1.29
White ^c	2,250,300	2,588,800	1.15 †
Black* ^c	980,800	1,432,600	1.46
Hispanic	560,900	702,300	1.25 †
American Indian/Alaska Native ^c	64,700	78,600	1.21 †
Asian ^c	78,700	86,800	1.10 †
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^c	17,800!	21,100!	1.19!
Two or more races ^c	47,300	47,300	1.00 †

Note: Estimates are based on nonfatal violent crime incidents, including rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. Incident weights were not adjusted for series victimization. Estimates exclude incidents in which the victim did not know the race or ethnicity of the offender(s). See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aDetails may not sum to totals because multiple-offender incidents with offenders of more than one race or ethnic group are counted more than once (e.g., incidents with both white and black offenders are counted in each group).

^bDetails may not sum to totals due to rounding.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

Violent crime involvement by race and ethnicity relative to the U.S. population

Relative to their share of the U.S. population (60%), white people were underrepresented among offenders in nonfatal violent crimes overall (52%) (table 8). They accounted for 45% of offenders involved in aggravated assaults and 31% of offenders involved in robbery. They were not underrepresented to a statistically significant degree among offenders involved in rape or sexual assault (56%) or simple assault (59%).

Black people were overrepresented among offenders in nonfatal violent crimes overall (29%) relative to their share of the U.S. population (13%). Half of all offenders involved in robbery (51%), a third involved in aggravated assault (34%), and more than a fifth involved in simple assault (23%) and rape or sexual assault (22%) were black.

Hispanic offenders were involved in serious nonfatal violent crimes (16%) nearly proportionate to their representation in the U.S. population (18%). Hispanics were underrepresented to a statistically significant degree among offenders involved in simple assault (13%).

Among other racial groups, Asians (6% of the U.S. population) were consistently underrepresented among violent offenders, except for their involvement in rape or sexual assault (5%). Between 1% and 2% of offenders involved in robbery, aggravated assault, or simple assault were Asian.³

³The NCVS provides rich detail on the relationship between race and ethnicity and violent crime victimization. For example, a previous BJS report found that at each level of poverty, there were no statistically significant differences between whites and blacks in the rate of violent victimization. (See *Household Poverty and Nonfatal Violent Victimization, 2008-2012*, NCJ 248384, BJS, November 2014.) However, the NCVS has little information on violent offenders beyond their demographic characteristics. More detailed information on violent offenders is available from BJS based on personal interviews of prison and jail inmates. (For more information, see the *Survey of Inmates in Local Jails* (<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=274>) and *Survey of Prison Inmates* (<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=488>) data collections on the BJS website.)

TABLE 6

Percentage of single- and multiple-offender violent crime incidents, by race or ethnicity of victim, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of victim	All incidents	Percent of incidents		Average number of offenders per incident
		Single-offender incidents	Multiple-offender incidents	
Total	100%	87.6%	12.4%	1.29
White ^a	100	90.0 †	10.0 †	1.29
Black* ^a	100	77.6	22.4	1.35
Hispanic	100	86.2	13.8	1.32
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^a	100	90.7 †	9.3 †	1.16
Asian ^a	100	89.9	10.1	1.16
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^a	100	72.3 !	27.7 !	1.28 !
Two or more races ^a	100	83.7	16.3	1.22

Note: Based on nonfatal violent-crime incidents in which the victim reported the race/ethnicity of the offender(s). See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

TABLE 7

Percentage of offenders by race or ethnicity in single- and multiple-offender violent crime incidents, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of offender	Percent of offenders	
	Single-offender incidents*	Multiple-offender incidents
Total	100%	100%
White ^a	58.8	38.0 †
Black ^a	22.2	43.4 †
Hispanic	13.6	15.5
American Indian/Alaska Native ^a	1.4	2.0
Asian ^a	2.1	0.9 !
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^a	0.5 !	0.3 !
Two or more races ^a	1.4	--
Number of offenders	3,399,000	1,558,600

Note: Based on nonfatal violent-crime incidents in which the victim reported the race/ethnicity of the offender(s). See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

--Not reported.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

TABLE 8**Percentage of offenders in violent crime incidents by type of crime and race or ethnicity compared to the U.S. resident population, 2018**

Race/ethnicity	U.S. resident population, July 1, 2018*	Percent of offenders ^a					
		Nonfatal violent crimes	Serious nonfatal violent crimes	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White ^b	60.4	52.2 †	43.8 †	55.7	31.0 †	44.8 †	59.2
Black ^b	12.5	28.9 †	35.9 †	22.1 †	51.1 †	33.9 †	23.3 †
Hispanic	18.3	14.2 †	15.5	15.0	15.6	16.6	12.7 †
American Indian/Alaska Native ^b	0.7	1.6 †	1.1 !	0.3 !	0.4 !	2.0 !	1.9 †
Asian ^b	5.7	1.8 †	2.6	4.7 !	1.9 ! †	1.9 ! †	1.1 †
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^b	0.2	0.4 !	0.3 !	0.5 !	0.0 !	0.3 !	0.6 !
Two or more races ^b	2.2	1.0 †	0.7 !	1.7 !	0.0 !	0.6 ! †	1.2 †

Note: See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

! Interpret estimate with caution. Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aExcludes incidents in which the victim did not know the race or ethnicity of the offender(s).

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018; and U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019.

Methodology

National Crime Victimization Survey data on violent offenders' race and ethnicity

Offender characteristics

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collects offender information from victims in the Crime Incident Report (CIR). Offender demographic characteristics are based on the victims' perceptions. The section in the CIR on offenders begins with a question about the number of offenders. (For a more detailed description of the NCVS methodology, see *Criminal Victimization, 2018*, NCJ 253043, BJS, September 2019).

For violent crime incidents involving a single offender, respondents are asked about the offender's relationship to the victim, demographic characteristics (including sex, race, ethnicity, and age), membership in a street gang, use of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident, and previous crimes against the respondent or respondent's household.

For violent incidents involving multiple offenders, respondents are asked similar questions, such as whether the offender demographic characteristics apply to all or most of the offenders. Respondents are asked if any of the offenders were Hispanic or Latino, followed by whether they were mostly Hispanic, mostly non-Hispanic, or an equal number of Hispanic and non-Hispanic. Respondents are then asked what the race or races were of their offenders.⁴

Following the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards for measuring race and ethnicity, the offender race categories in the 2018 NCVS were white; black; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and persons of two or more races.⁵ Offenders reported as Hispanic were classified as Hispanic, regardless of their reported race.

Estimating the race or ethnicity of offenders

NCVS estimates in this report use incident weights unadjusted for series incidents to produce estimates of the number offenders. Inclusion of series weights would result in counting the same offender(s) multiple

times, up to a maximum of 10 times.⁶ Additional information on series victimization is detailed in the report *Methods for Counting High-Frequency Repeat Victimization in the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCJ 237308, BJS, April 2012).

Incident weights were adjusted by the number of violent offenders and their characteristics as reported by victims. Incidents in which the race or ethnicity of the offender was not reported were excluded. The adjustments varied by the type of incident and number of offenders:

Single-offender incidents—The incident weight was not adjusted (adjustment factor = 1.0). Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin were classified as Hispanic, regardless of their reported race.

Multiple-offender incidents, all offenders of the same race—The incident weight was adjusted based on the number of offenders (adjustment factor = 2.0 for incidents with two offenders; 3.0 for incidents with three offenders; and up to 15.0 for incidents involving 15 offenders). In six incidents, the number of multiple offenders was unknown and was imputed to equal two.

Multiple-offender incidents, at least one offender was Hispanic—The adjustment factor for “mostly Hispanic or Latino” offenders (“all Hispanic” offenders was not provided as a response category) was 2.0 for incidents involving two offenders; 2.5 for incidents involving three offenders; 3.5 for four offenders; and up to 7.0 for nine offenders. The adjustment factor for “mostly non-Hispanic” was assigned the middle value of the minority range (e.g., adjustment factor = 1.0 for incidents involving two or three offenders; and 1.5 for five or six offenders).

In incidents that involved an “equal” number of Hispanics and non-Hispanics, the adjustment factor for Hispanics was coded as the middle value of the number of offenders (e.g., adjustment factor = 1.0 for incidents involving two offenders). Odd numbers of offenders were divided by 2 and assigned the integer value plus 0.5 (e.g., Hispanic adjustment factor = 1.5 for incidents involving three offenders).

⁶Series victimizations involve multiple crimes that are often indistinguishable to victims, making it difficult for them to separate the details of each event. To handle these repeated victimizations, the NCVS records a series victimization when the respondent reported experiencing six or more similar crimes during the 6-month reference period and was unable to recall or describe each event in detail. The NCVS records the victim's report of the number of times this type of victimization occurred and collects detailed information only for the most recent victimization.

⁴For all questions included on the NCVS CIR, see https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ncvs18_cir.pdf.

⁵See Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, Office of Management and Budget, Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, October 1997.

In incidents that involved offenders of more than one racial group among non-Hispanics, the adjustment factors for “mostly” were assigned the average of the majority values (e.g., black adjustment factor = 4.5 and other-races adjustment factor = 1.5 in incidents of “mostly black” offenders with six non-Hispanic offenders).

Multiple-offender incidents, no offender was Hispanic—Adjustment factors were assigned to incidents for each racial group. In incidents with four or fewer offenders, “mostly” was the number of offenders minus 1 (e.g., adjustment factor = 3.0 in incidents with four “mostly white” offenders; and 2.0 in incidents with three “mostly white” offenders). Adjustment factors for offenders not among the “mostly” group were assigned the middle value of the range of minority values (e.g., adjustment factor = 1.0 in incidents with three offenders).

For incidents with five or more offenders, “mostly” was the middle value of the range of majority values (e.g., adjustment factor = 3.5 in incidents with five offenders of “mostly” some race; and 7.5 in incidents with 10 offenders of “mostly” some race). Adjustment factors for offenders not among the “mostly” group were assigned the residual value (e.g., adjustment factor = 1.5 in incidents with five offenders; and 2.5 in incidents with 10 offenders).

For incidents with an “equal” number of offenders in each racial group, the adjustment factor was the middle value of the number of offenders. Odd numbers of offenders were divided by 2 and assigned the integer value plus 0.5 (e.g., adjustment factor = 1.5 in incidents with three offenders).

The adjustment factors when applied to the unadjusted incident weights provide an estimate of the total number of offenders. (See table 5.) Overall, victims reported the race or ethnicity of more than 4.9 million offenders of violent crimes.

An incident is a specific criminal act involving one or more victims and one or more offenders. In 2018, there were an estimated 6.0 million violent crime incidents. To avoid double counting of the same offenders by victims in series crime, the incident series weights were not adjusted (that is, they were treated as a single incident rather than weighted by the number of incidents, up to a maximum of 10 incidents). The number of unadjusted violent crime incidents totaled 4.6 million in the 2018 NCVS.

Standard error computations

When national estimates are derived from a sample, as with the NCVS, caution must be used when comparing one estimate to another or when comparing estimates over time. Although one estimate may be larger than another, estimates based on a sample have some degree of sampling error. The sampling error of an estimate depends on several factors, including the amount of variation in the responses and the size of the sample.

One measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate is the standard error. The standard error may vary from one estimate to the next. Generally, an estimate with a smaller standard error provides a more reliable approximation of the true value than an estimate with a larger standard error. Estimates with relatively large standard errors have less precision and reliability and should be interpreted with caution.

For complex sample designs, there are several methods that can be used to generate standard errors around a point estimate (e.g., numbers, percentages, and rates). In this report, Taylor Series Linearization (TSL) methods were utilized to estimate the standard errors for numbers and percentages by the race and ethnicity of offenders. The TSL method directly estimates variances through a linearized function by combining variance estimates from the stratum and primary sampling units (PSUs) used to sample households and persons. In the NCVS, the design parameters used for computing TSL variances are PSEUDOSTRATUM (stratum) and HALFSAMPLE (PSU).

Because some multiple-offender incidents involved offenders of different racial or ethnic groups, standard errors were estimated iteratively for each group. The standard errors for the number and percentage of white offenders were estimated first, based on the white adjustment factor times the unadjusted incident weight. To account for multiple-offender incidents with a combination of white offenders and offenders of other racial or ethnic groups, the numbers of offenders were allocated proportionately to ensure that the sum of offenders equaled the total number of offenders. The same procedures were applied to each subsequent racial or ethnic group. As a result, the estimated standard errors for each group account for the overlap of groups among multiple-offender incidents.

Statistical tests were conducted to determine whether differences in percentages of offenders by race or ethnicity were statistically significant from percentages

of U.S. residents and of persons arrested for violent crimes. The primary test procedure was the Student's t-statistic, which was used to test the difference between the sample estimates and the percentages among U.S. residents and among persons arrested for violent crimes in 2018. Estimated percentages and standard errors provided in this report may be used to generate a confidence interval around the estimate as a measure of the margin of error.

The following example illustrates how standard errors may be used to generate confidence intervals: Based on the 2018 NCVS, the percentage of black persons among violent offenders was 28.9%, with a standard error of 2.6%. (See table 2 and appendix table 2.) A confidence interval around the estimate is generated by multiplying the standard error by ± 1.96 (the t-score of a normal, two-tailed distribution that excludes 2.5% at either end of the distribution). Therefore, the 95% confidence interval around the estimated percentage of black violent offenders, for example, would be $28.9\% \pm (2.6\% \times 1.96)$ or (23.8% to 34.0%). In other words, if the same methods to select samples and compute a confidence interval estimate for each sample were repeatedly used, then the true population parameter (percentage of black persons among violent offenders) would be expected to fall within the interval estimates 95% of the time.

Comparisons of race and ethnicity percentages between NCVS-reported offenders and U.S. residents or persons arrested for violent crimes were determined to be statistically significant when the percentages were outside of the confidence interval for offenders in the NCVS. For example, the percentage of black persons among U.S. residents was 12.5% in 2018, which was outside of the 95% confidence interval of 23.8% to 34.0% of violent offenders identified as black in the NCVS. (See appendix table 7 for standard errors.) As a result, the percentage of black persons among violent offenders was determined to be statistically significant and not due to sampling error.

A coefficient of variation (CV) is another measure of reliability and a means for determining precision across estimates with differing levels or metrics. CVs (not shown in tables) represent the ratio of the standard error to the estimate. Estimates with a CV of greater than 50% are flagged and should be interpreted with caution.

Data on race or ethnicity of persons arrested for violent crime

The FBI collects data on arrested persons through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which includes the Summary System (SRS) and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Unlike data reported through the UCR's traditional SRS—an aggregate monthly tally of crimes known to police and of arrests—NIBRS captures details on each crime incident and characteristics of victims and persons arrested. In 2018, 7,283 law enforcement agencies submitted NIBRS data to the UCR, representing 43.7% of the 16,659 law enforcement agencies that submitted data to the UCR program during the year.

The UCR counts one arrest for each instance in which a person is arrested, cited, or summoned for an offense. The SRS collects arrest data separately by race and ethnicity, while NIBRS provides the ability to combine race and ethnicity into a single classification, consistent with OMB reporting standards. For comparison purposes in this report, information from the SRS and NIBRS were combined to provide estimates of race and ethnicity.

The estimation process was based on the arrests by race for each crime type and arrests of Hispanics by crime type from the combined SRS and NIBRS. (See appendix table 1.) NIBRS data from 2016, the most recent comparable data available, were used to estimate the proportion of Hispanic persons by race for each crime type in the SRS. For each crime type, the number of Hispanics arrested was multiplied by the proportion of Hispanics within each racial category to obtain an estimated number of Hispanics by race by crime type. These estimates were then subtracted from the total counts for each racial category to obtain counts that separated Hispanics from non-Hispanics of different races.

The following example illustrates how these estimates were calculated: In 2018, the UCR reported a total of 12,794 whites (regardless of ethnicity) and 4,090 Hispanics (regardless of race) who were arrested for rape. To determine the number of Hispanic whites among arrestees for rape, the proportion of white persons among Hispanic arrestees for rape in NIBRS (0.9675) was applied to the Hispanic total (4,090). This estimate (3,957) was subtracted from the total arrests of whites (12,794) to obtain the number of non-Hispanic whites arrested for rape (8,837).

The estimation process was repeated for each crime type and racial group. The estimates by race and ethnicity were then summed across crime types and converted to percentages. Overall, an estimated 17.6% of persons arrested for nonfatal violent crime were Hispanic; 45.9% were non-Hispanic white; 33.0% were non-Hispanic black; 1.9% were non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native; 1.3% were non-Hispanic Asian; and 0.3% were non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Percentages were also calculated for nonfatal violent crime excluding other assaults.

Methodology for U.S. population of persons age 12 or older

During 2018, more than half of violent victimizations were committed by someone known to the victim (not shown in tables). Because most violent crime victims know their offender, most can provide reliable information about their race and Hispanic origin. Even in incidents of stranger-perpetrated violent crime, victims may be able to accurately identify the offender's race and ethnicity using cues, such as the location of the crime, appearance, language used, mannerisms of the offender, and information from other sources, including police reports or arrest records. NCVS questions aim to establish general characteristics of offenders instead of unique identities. Research on eyewitness testimony indicates that victims can identify general characteristics of offenders, such as sex, race, ethnicity, and age, and are more often correct than incorrect when identifying these characteristics.

Differences in how violent crimes are measured in the NCVS and UCR

The NCVS measures crime reported to and not reported to police. The UCR measures only crime recorded by police. The NCVS and UCR measure an overlapping, but not identical, set of offenses:

- The NCVS measures rape and sexual assault. Although the UCR measures rape similarly, it includes a broader category in its arrest statistics: “sex offenses, excluding prostitution and commercialized vice.” This includes “offenses against chastity, common decency, morals, and the like. Incest, indecent exposure and statutory rape are included.” Because this broader definition does not match up with the NCVS, arrest data for these sex offenses were excluded from this report.
- The NCVS distinguishes aggravated assault from simple assault. The NCVS defines aggravated assault as an attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether an injury occurred, and an attack without a weapon when serious injury results. It defines simple assault as an attack or attempted attack without a weapon, resulting either in no injury, in a minor injury (e.g., a bruise, black eye, cut, scratch, or swelling), or in an undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.
- The UCR arrest data, used in this report, utilizes similar distinctions (unlike the UCR summary data which does not include simple assault) but with the addition of an “other assault” category that includes stalking, intimidation, coercion, and hazing. These crimes categorized under “other assault” are not measured in the NCVS.

APPENDIX TABLE 1

Estimating the number of persons arrested for violent offenses by race/ethnicity, UCR 2018

	Number of persons arrested by offense				All violent offenses	
	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Other assault	Number	Percent
All races^a						
Total	18,776	66,789	298,040	794,787	1,178,392	100%
White	12,794	29,025	184,527	512,025	738,371	62.7
Black	5,376	36,187	100,393	254,360	396,316	33.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	267	676	6,736	15,711	23,390	2.0
Asian	289	641	5,078	10,348	16,356	1.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	50	260	1,306	2,343	3,959	0.3
Hispanics only^b						
Total	4,090	12,823	65,056	125,007	206,976	100%
White	3,957	11,972	61,991	119,341	197,261	95.3
Black	121	607	2,575	4,549	7,852	3.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	4	102	299	735	1,140	0.6
Asian	4	142	158	308	612	0.3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	4	0	33	74	111	0.1
Race/ethnicity combined^c						
Total	18,776	66,789	298,040	794,787	1,178,392	100%
White ^d	8,837	17,053	122,536	392,684	541,110	45.9
Black ^d	5,255	35,580	97,818	249,811	388,464	33.0
Hispanic	4,090	12,823	65,056	125,007	206,976	17.6
American Indian/Alaska Native ^d	263	574	6,437	14,976	22,250	1.9
Asian ^d	285	499	4,920	10,040	15,744	1.3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^d	46	260	1,273	2,269	3,848	0.3

Note: Race and ethnicity totals are collected separately in the UCR summary system. The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provides incident-level detail needed to classify arrestees by race and ethnicity in combination. In 2016, 6,849 law enforcement agencies (approximately 37% of all agencies that were eligible to participate in the UCR Program) reported crime data via NIBRS. These agencies covered approximately 31% percent of the United States' population.

^aBased on total arrests by race for each crime type as reported by state and local law enforcement agencies. Excludes arrests in agencies that did not provide race information.

^bFor each crime type and racial group, the total number of Hispanics arrested was estimated by multiplying the proportion Hispanic for race (as reported in NIBRS) by the total number of Hispanics arrested (as reported in UCR summary data, table 43a). For example, 96.75% of Hispanics arrested for rape were Hispanic/Latino. Consequently, of the 4090 Hispanics arrested for rape, an estimated 3,957 were white.

^cBased on total arrests by race minus estimated arrests of Hispanics by race for each crime type.

^dExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime in the United States, 2018, table 43a; and National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2016, (National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Study number 37066).

APPENDIX TABLE 2**Standard errors for tables 2 and 3: Race or ethnicity of violent crime offenders in the NCVS, 2018**

Race/ethnicity of offender	All violent crime offenders in the NCVS ^a		Violent crime offenders in the NCVS, excluding simple assault	
	All	Reported to police	All	Reported to police
White ^b	2.7%	3.6%	3.5%	5.1%
Black ^b	2.6	4.0	3.8	5.9
Hispanic	1.5	1.8	2.5	2.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^b	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9
Asian ^b	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.2
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^b	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2
Two or more races ^b	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1

^aIncludes rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Excludes murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX TABLE 3**Standard errors for table 4: Reported race or ethnicity of violent crime offenders by race or ethnicity of victim, NCVS 2018**

Race/ethnicity of victim	Race/Hispanic origin of offender	
	Reported	Not reported
Total	1.2%	1.2%
White ^a	1.2	1.2
Black ^a	3.7	3.7
Hispanic	3.1	3.1
American Indian/Alaska Native ^a	2.9	2.9
Asian ^a	8.7	8.7
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^a	--	--
Two or more races ^a	3.9	3.9

--Not calculated.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX TABLE 4**Standard errors for table 5: Number of violent crime incidents and number of offenders, by race or ethnicity of offender, NCVS 2018**

Race/ethnicity of offender	Number of incidents ^a	Number of offenders	Ratio of offenders to incidents
Total	147,813	224,538	0.03
White ^b	124,146	157,363	0.03
Black ^b	67,160	158,116	0.07
Hispanic	46,013	80,426	0.07
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^b	17,438	20,634	<.01
Asian ^b	22,397	21,382	0.07
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^b	675	6,335	0.12
Two or more races ^b	11,242	11,242	0

^aMultiple-offender incidents with offenders of more than one race or ethnic group are counted more than once (e.g., incidents with both white and black offenders are counted in each group).

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Standard errors for table 6: Percentage of single- and multiple-offender violent crime incidents, by race or ethnicity of victim, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of victim	Percent of incidents		Average number of offenders per incident
	Single-offender incidents	Multiple-offender incidents	
Total	1.2%	1.2%	0.04
White ^a	1.2	1.2	0.05
Black ^a	4.7	4.7	0.07
Hispanic	2.9	2.9	0.10
American Indian/ Alaska Native ^a	4.5	4.5	0.11
Asian ^a	5.1	5.1	0.09
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander ^a	23.6	23.6	0.24
Two or more races ^a	8.1	8.1	0.09

Note: Based on violent crime incidents in which the victim reported the race/ethnicity of the offender(s).

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Standard errors for table 7: Percentage of offenders by race or ethnicity in single- and multiple-offender violent crime incidents, NCVS 2018

Race/ethnicity of offender	Percent of offenders	
	Single-offender incidents*	Multiple-offender incidents
White ^a	2.0%	6.3%
Black ^a	1.4	6.7
Hispanic	1.1	3.0
American Indian/Alaska Native ^a	0.5	0.7
Asian ^a	0.6	0.5
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^a	0.2	0.3
Two or more races ^a	0.3	--
Number of offenders	138,443	94,174

--Not calculated.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

Standard errors for table 8: Percentage of offenders in violent crime incidents by type of crime and race or ethnicity compared to the U.S. resident population, 2018

Race/ethnicity	Percent of offenders					
	Nonfatal violent crimes ^a	Serious nonfatal violent crimes	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
White ^b	2.7%	3.5%	5.3%	3.2%	4.9%	2.8%
Black ^b	2.6	3.8	3.9	4.0	6.6	2.4
Hispanic	1.5	2.5	3.4	2.5	2.6	1.5
American Indian/Alaska Native ^b	0.4	0.5	0.3	--	1.0	0.6
Asian ^b	0.4	0.9	1.8	1.2	0.6	0.5
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ^b	0.1	0.2	0.5	0	0.3	0.2
Two or more races ^b	0.2	0.3	0.9	0	0.1	0.3

--Less than 0.05%.

^aExcludes incidents in which the victims did not know the race or ethnicity of the offender(s).

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2018; and U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Jeffrey H. Anderson is the director.

This report was written by Allen J. Beck. Barbara Oudekerk, Heather Brotsos, Jenna Truman, and Alexia Cooper verified the report.

Edrienne Su edited the report. Theodore Robinson produced the report.

January 2021, NCJ 255969



Office of Justice Programs
Building Solutions • Supporting Communities • Advancing Justice
www.ojp.gov