

Victims of Crime Act Victim Compensation Formula Grant Program

FISCAL YEAR 2019 DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Compensation program provides supplemental funding to state compensation programs across the United States and its territories. State compensation programs offer financial compensation to individuals for expenses they incurred as a result of a crime, distinguishable from restitution.¹ Compensation funding may be used for a range of expenses, such as medical and dental care, funeral and burial costs, mental health treatment, and loss of income. Compensation funds may also be used for childcare, relocation, replacement of some personal items, and other specified uses, depending on the jurisdiction.

Data in this report includes all state compensation claims, regardless of the funding source. The percentage of VOCA funding provided to the states is set by statute. The annual grant amount is based on 60 percent of each state's compensation payments from 2 years prior to the grant year. In fiscal year (FY) 2019, 54 states and territories received VOCA Victim Compensation grants.² Together, these grantees provided \$399,558,500 (a 2 percent decrease over FY 2018) in compensation funding to 235,314 claims.³

APPLICANT POPULATION

In FY 2019, there were 273,309 people who applied for compensation benefits. Of those, 82 percent were primary victims of crime whose victimization was the basis for the application. The other 18 percent were secondary victims of crime. Primary victims are individuals who suffered harm as a direct result of the crime. A secondary victim (also referred to as indirect victim), is “a person who is impacted by a crime but who is not the direct victim of the crime; this is often a friend, family member, or significant other of a direct victim, or a member of the victim's workplace or community.”⁴



¹ Restitution is payment made by the offender as directed by the court to cover expenses related to the crime that were incurred by the victim. For more information about restitution, please navigate to the following website address: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga/victim-witness-assistance/understanding-restitution>.

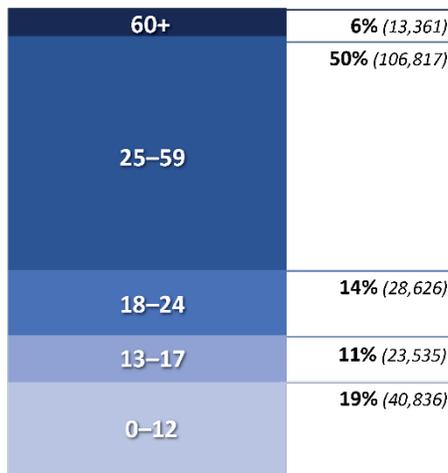
² The 54 states and territories are 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands did not receive VOCA Victim Compensation grants in FY 2019.

³ In addition to the VOCA Victim Compensation award, Massachusetts was awarded an additional compensation award in FY 2016 for the New England Compounding Center victims. Funds were administered in accordance with VOCA program guidelines and metrics were captured in the PMT on a quarterly basis. These data are included in the information presented within this report.

⁴ Office for Victims of Crime. n.d. Glossary. Retrieved on March 18, 2021 from https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/model-standards/6/glossary.html#demo2_tip.

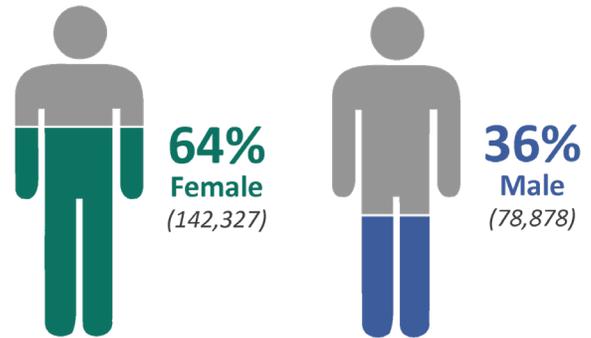
Age

Age was self-reported by 95 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.



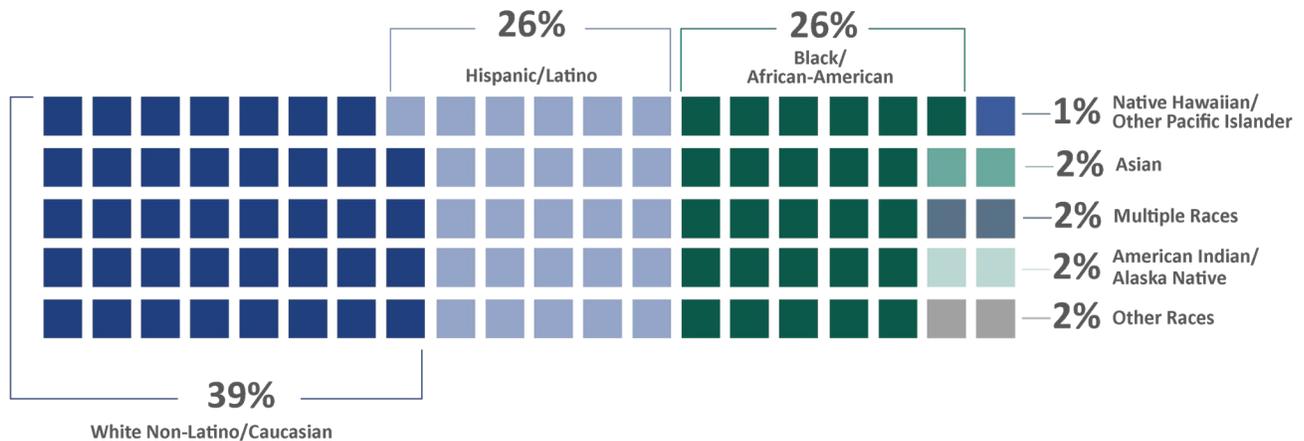
Gender

Gender was self-reported by 99 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.



Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity was self-reported by 85 percent of primary victims who applied for compensation.

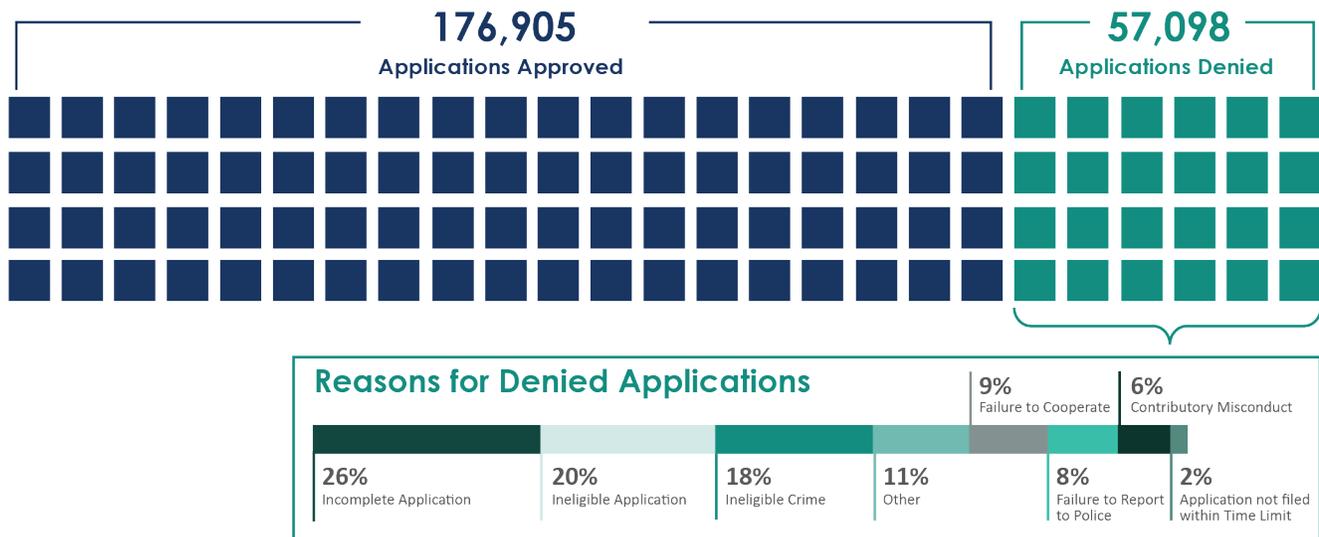


In FY 2019, 39 percent of individuals who applied for benefits were White Non-Latino/Caucasian, 26 percent were Hispanic/Latino, and 26 percent were Black/African-American. This demographic breakdown is similar to the self-reported race/ethnicities in FY 2018.

PAYMENT STATISTICS

Application Information

In FY 2019, grantees received 235,926 applications for compensation, as well as 76,105 applications for sexual assault forensic exams, for a total of 312,031 applications.⁵ There were 34 grantees that maintained a separate application process for forensic exams. Grantees approved 76 percent applications and denied 24 percent applications during the year.⁶



Grantees engaged in numerous outreach efforts to improve awareness about their respective compensation programs. Most grantees conducted trainings, delivered presentations, and hosted informational booths at conferences, community events, and victim services meetings. States also distributed brochures and flyers and posted information on state and local websites as well as through social media outlets.

Some grantees have undergone efforts to better understand the effectiveness of their current outreach efforts, and strategies to improve them for victims in general and for specified underserved populations. For example, it was determined that outreach, training, and support directed toward allied professionals (rather than directly to victims) increased the number of applications received.

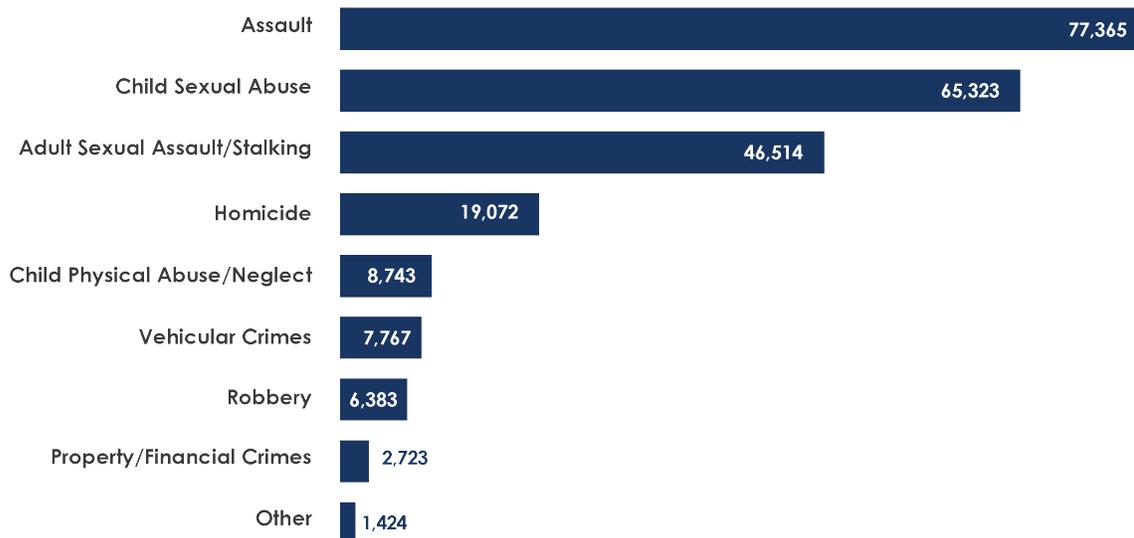
In FY 2019, 15 grantees reported an increase in the number of compensation applications received. Among these grantees, some of the reasons for the increase in applications included the ability to submit electronic applications through an online portal and increased program advocacy and outreach. Grantees worked to increase program awareness by engaging in community events, presenting at various conferences and trainings for allied professionals, building partnerships, and developing public service announcements. There was also an eight percent increase over FY 2018 in the number of victim service organizations who received VOCA assistance funding that helped individuals complete a compensation application.

⁵ The process for filing compensation applications differs among grantees. In FY 2019, 23 grantees reported that one application is filed per crime (including both primary and secondary victims) and 32 grantees reported that separate applications are filed for primary and secondary victims. There was 1 grantee that changed their application process midway through FY 2019, so their response is reflected in both processes.
⁶ The number of applications determined may include applications received during and prior to FY 2019.

There were 31 grantees that reported changes to laws, initiatives, or policies that affected their state’s victim compensation program. Although the changes reported by grantees are only applicable to their state’s respective compensation program, there were some similarities across multiple states. These included an increase in compensatory funding for funeral/burial expense, an expanded definition of family, an extension in the timeframe that a crime must be reported, and no longer denying eligibility to victims due to a previous felony charge.

Claims Paid

In FY 2019, there were 235,314 claims paid. Thirty-three percent of the claims paid were for assault victimizations, followed by child sexual abuse (28 percent), sexual assault (20 percent), and homicide (8 percent). This breakdown of the top four crime types by number of claims paid has remained consistent since FY 2015. The number of claims paid has decreased from the number paid in FY 2018 (243,281) and the total amount paid decreased by 3 percent.



Types of Victimization Related to Crime Type

Grantees could report on five types of victimizations that were related to a crime type, if applicable. For example, a compensation claim for the crime of assault or child sexual abuse could relate to a victimization type of domestic and family violence. In FY 2019, there were 51,456 claims paid that were related to specific victimization types.

VICTIMIZATION TYPE

TOP RELATED CRIME TYPES

Domestic and Family Violence 46,220 claims	Assault (34,060 claims) Child Sexual Abuse (4,454 claims)
Mass Violence 2,139 claims	Assault (1,625 claims) Homicide (349 claims)
Elder Abuse/Neglect 1,430 claims	Assault (564 claims) Fraud/Financial Crimes (505 claims)
Bullying 1,186 claims	Assault (827 claims) Child Sexual Abuse (226 claims)
Hate Crime 481 claims	Assault (379 claims) Homicide (39 claims)

Assault was the most common crime type related to victimizations, as 37,455 assault claims were related to at least one victimization type. Assault was one of the top two crime types related to each victimization type. The largest increase among victimization types was bullying with a 40 percent increase from FY 2018 to FY 2019. Mass violence saw a 27 percent decrease from FY 2018 to FY 2019.⁷

Notable Trends & Issues

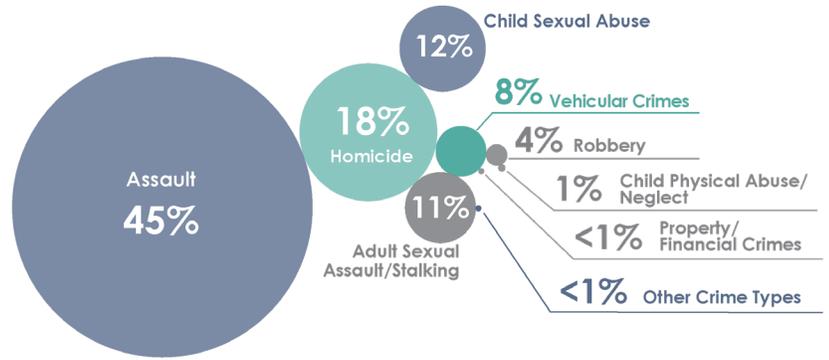
Grantees reported notable trends and emerging issues that affected their state compensation programs. The most commonly reported topics included:

- A decrease in the amount and frequency of court cost collections (e.g., fines, penalties, criminal assessments) resulting in less state compensation funding available. In some jurisdictions this occurred as part of legislative changes or other mechanisms included within broader state and local criminal justice reform. Several grantees also expressed concern about the uncertainty of grant funds available in the future.
- An increase in victim awareness of the state compensation program due to the increase in the amount of VOCA Victim Assistance grant funds received by states.
- An increase in staff turnover, shortages, and vacancies which often leads to a backlog of compensation applications, resulting in delayed payment to victims.
- An increase in claims related to the opioid crisis. Some of these applications are submitted for property-related crimes, such as burglary and fraud. Unfortunately, property-related claims are not eligible for victim compensation so victims of the opioid crisis are often not able to receive compensation.

Total Amount Paid by Crime Type

⁷ OVC's Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program also provides funding and resources to jurisdictions that have experienced incidents of mass violence and terrorism that significantly increased the burden of victim assistance and compensation for the responding jurisdiction.

In FY 2019, 45 percent of compensation funds paid were for assault victimizations, followed by homicide (18 percent), child sexual abuse (12 percent), and adult sexual assault/stalking (11 percent).⁸ This distribution is similar to how compensation funds were distributed across crime types in FY 2018.

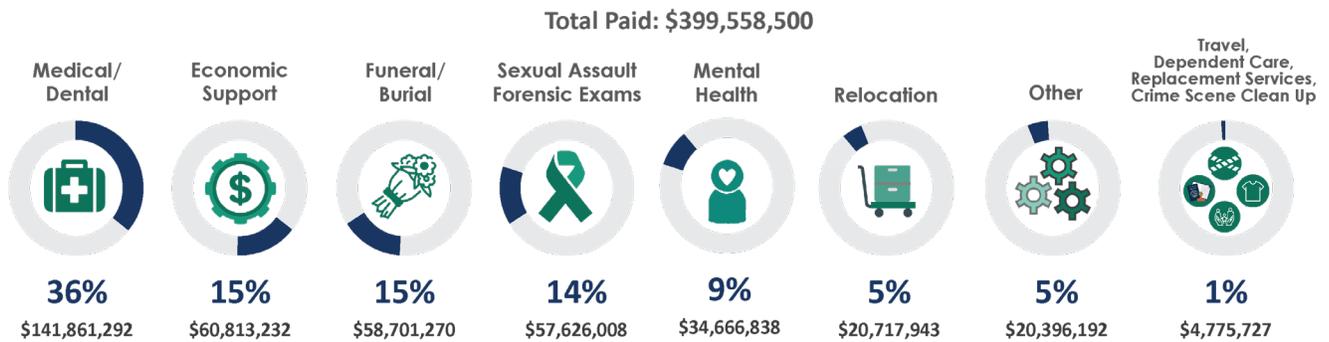


⁸ See appendix A for crime type categorizations.

In FY 2019, there were 27 states that reported compensatory funding for other crime types not specifically listed above. Some of the other crime types that were reported included violation of a court protective order, threatening/intimidation, and disorderly conduct.⁹

Total Amount Paid by Expense Type

In FY 2019, \$399,558,500 was paid in compensatory funds. A total of 36 percent of compensation funds were used for medical/dental expenses, followed by economic support (15 percent), funeral/burial expenses (15 percent), and sexual assault forensic exams (14 percent). The top four expense types paid and the distribution of funds among these expenses are similar to FY 2018.



Medical/dental expenses

Medical/dental expenses were the largest expense type paid in FY 2019, totaling \$141,861,292 in compensation payments. Medical/dental expenses were the most common expense type reported for victims of arson, assault, driving under the influence/driving while intoxicated, human trafficking, kidnapping, other vehicular crimes, robbery, and terrorism.



Economic support

Economic support expenses were the second largest expense paid in FY 2019, totaling \$60,813,232 in compensation payments. Economic support provides payments to individuals who experienced monetary losses due to a crime such as loss of income or support payments. Economic support was the most common expense type paid for fraud/financial crimes and stalking. Additionally, compensation for economic support was paid to victims of every crime type.



Funeral/burial expenses

Funeral/burial expenses were the third largest expense paid in FY 2019, totaling \$58,701,270 in compensation payments. Homicide claims accounted for 90 percent of the funeral/burial expenses paid, and other vehicular crimes and DUI/DWI accounted for another 8 percent.

⁹ Violation of court protective order and disorderly conduct were also commonly reported as other victimization types by VOCA Victim Assistance grantees in FY 2019.



Sexual Assault Forensic Exams

Sexual assault forensic exams for victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse were the fourth largest expense type paid in FY 2019. States paid \$28,550,089 in compensation funds for child sexual abuse claims and \$29,075,919 for sexual assault claims, totaling \$57,626,008.

Expenses by Crime Type

Assault, homicide, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault received the greatest amount of compensation payments in FY 2019.

Assault

Assault claims for compensation have received the highest number of applications and funding amounts over the past four years. In FY 2019, victims of assault received \$180,333,354 across 77,365 claims. Fifty-eight percent of compensation funds for victims of assault were used for medical/dental expenses, followed by economic support (18 percent), relocation (9 percent), mental health (7 percent), and other expenses (7 percent).¹⁰

Homicide

Homicide claims received \$72,828,522 in compensation funding in FY 2019. This represents the second highest amount of compensation funds paid by crime type, even though the number of homicide claims paid (19,072) was less than the number of assault, child sexual abuse, and sexual assault claims paid. Most compensation funding for homicide claims was used for funeral/burial expenses (72 percent), followed by economic support (17 percent), and mental health expenses (4 percent). Additionally, medical/dental and other expenses received 3 and 2 percent of compensation funds, respectively.¹¹

Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault

In FY 2019, victims of child sexual abuse and sexual assault (CSA/SA) received \$88,355,185 in compensation funding, an increase of 2 percent over the total reported in FY 2018. Of that total, \$45,972,215 was provided to victims of child sexual abuse and \$42,382,970 to victims of sexual assault.

There were 110,248 claims paid for CSA/SA (65,043 and 45,205, respectively). Among victims of CSA/SA who received compensation, sexual assault forensic exams were the most common expense type (65 percent), followed by mental health (15 percent), medical/dental (7 percent), and other expenses (5 percent).¹²

¹⁰ The remaining 1 percent spanned the following expense types: Funeral/burial, travel, dependent care, replacement services, and crime scene clean-up.

¹¹ The remaining 2 percent spanned the following expense types: Travel, dependent care, relocation, crime scene clean-up, and replacement services.

¹² The remaining 8 percent spanned the following expense types: Economic support, relocation, travel, dependent care, replacement services, funeral/burial, and crime scene clean-up.

CONCLUSION

Crimes may have wide-reaching consequences for victims, their family and friends, the community, and society in general.¹³ The unexpected financial costs associated with these consequences may cause additional harm to the individuals affected. The financial assistance provided by VOCA-supported compensation programs to primary and secondary victims help alleviate some of the fiscal and emotional burden experienced as a direct result of the crime. The data reported by Victim Compensation programs across the country in FY 2019 demonstrate the valuable assistance that the program provides to victims of crime.

¹³ Lugo, K. and Przybylski, R. 2018. Estimating the Financial Costs of Crime Victimization. Washington, D.C. Retrieved on April 9, 2021 from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/254011.pdf>.

APPENDIX A: CRIME TYPE CATEGORIZATIONS

Grantees reported data on claimants who received funding in 16 crime types. OVC consolidated these 16 crime types into nine larger categories. The following list outlines the types of crimes that make up each category.

1. Adult sexual assault/stalking
 - Sexual assault
 - Stalking
2. Assault
3. Child physical abuse/neglect
4. Child sexual abuse
 - Child sexual abuse
 - Child pornography
5. Homicide
6. Other crime types
 - Human trafficking
 - Kidnapping
 - Terrorism
7. Property/financial crimes
 - Arson
 - Burglary
 - Fraud/financial crimes
8. Robbery
9. Vehicular crimes
 - DUI/DWI
 - Other vehicular crimes

APPENDIX B: EXPENSES PAID BY CRIME TYPE

Crime Type	Claims Paid	Medical/Dental	Funeral/Burial	Economic Support	SAFE	Other	Mental Health	Relocation	Travel	Dependent Care	Replacement Services	Crime Scene Clean Up
Arson	372	\$129,090	\$84,523	\$54,002	\$0	\$28,458	\$31,011	\$112,284	\$753	\$0	\$8,229	\$5,460
Assault	79,062	\$105,381,154	\$556,275	\$30,070,070	\$0	\$24,286,795	\$12,410,496	\$13,286,627	\$932,000	\$915,970	\$316,679	\$99,081
Burglary	1,637	\$322,821	\$0	\$213,638	\$0	\$263,275	\$196,180	\$121,231	\$18,853	\$0	\$72,785	\$9,683
Child Physical Abuse/Neglect	9,447	\$918,248	\$117,873	\$300,276	\$0	\$806,251	\$3,104,677	\$252,281	\$78,167	\$25,125	\$6,357	\$571
Child Pornography	224	\$9,887	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$9,426	\$104,113	\$30,573	\$7,135	\$0	\$3,615	\$0
Child Sexual Abuse	71,203	\$2,629,721	\$2,737	\$1,343,079	\$30,268,602	\$2,886,795	\$8,581,242	\$1,250,569	\$473,665	\$81,961	\$46,073	\$2,140
DUI/DWI	3,105	\$5,873,876	\$1,833,106	\$3,378,162	\$0	\$396,178	\$200,025	\$18,200	\$124,924	\$11,714	\$8,320	\$0
Fraud/Financial Crimes	604	\$1,136	\$0	\$672,841	\$0	\$31,971	\$3,094	\$1,000	\$2,681	\$0	\$981	\$0
Homicide	19,533	\$2,250,109	\$52,988,394	\$13,621,209	\$0	\$3,865,872	\$2,473,993	\$321,287	\$806,115	\$616,932	\$20,508	\$212,566
Human Trafficking	254	\$40,692	\$7,171	\$40,147	\$0	\$19,867	\$134,115	\$87,094	\$2,502	\$1,980	\$1,193	\$0
Kidnapping	1,138	\$514,012	\$84,748	\$231,297	\$0	\$80,137	\$371,694	\$127,967	\$14,459	\$3,253	\$570	\$1,300
Other Vehicular Crimes	4,703	\$9,893,299	\$3,123,342	\$4,568,153	\$0	\$344,393	\$263,672	\$119,370	\$130,450	\$20,475	\$10,034	\$0
Robbery	6,653	\$9,193,763	\$39,140	\$2,027,619	\$0	\$620,170	\$1,332,722	\$450,941	\$41,425	\$67	\$140,365	\$21,698
Sexual Assault	43,844	\$3,677,003	\$24,490	\$1,725,316	\$26,318,754	\$1,411,405	\$3,838,155	\$1,443,737	\$169,875	\$3,826	\$90,311	\$1,619
Stalking	1,326	\$49,663	\$0	\$473,095	\$0	\$221,075	\$326,674	\$577,185	\$23,021	\$5,991	\$2,760	\$5,118
Terrorism	176	\$156,166	\$12,571	\$77,932	\$0	\$9,649	\$95,446	\$3,500	\$0	\$0	\$239	\$0
Grand Total	243,281	\$141,040,641	\$58,874,372	\$58,797,335	\$56,587,356	\$35,281,717	\$33,467,308	\$18,203,846	\$2,826,025	\$1,687,295	\$729,019	\$359,236