

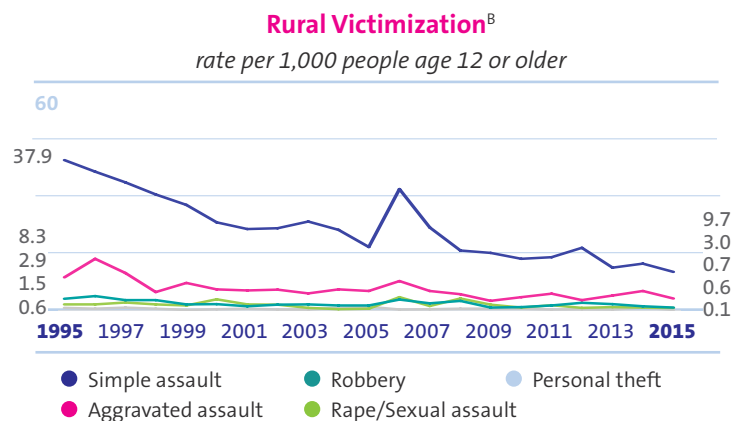
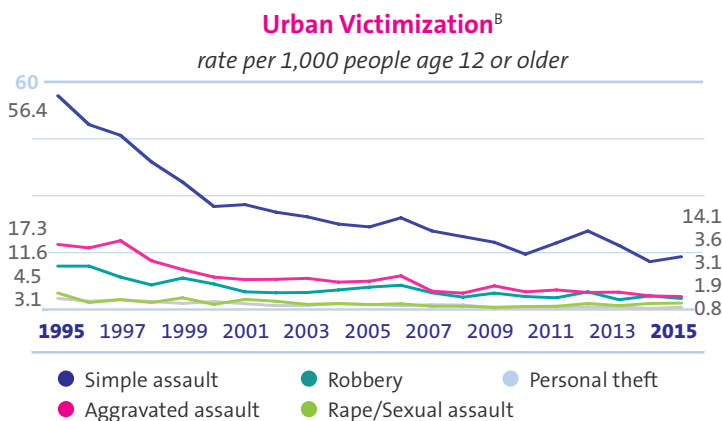


# Urban and Rural Victimization

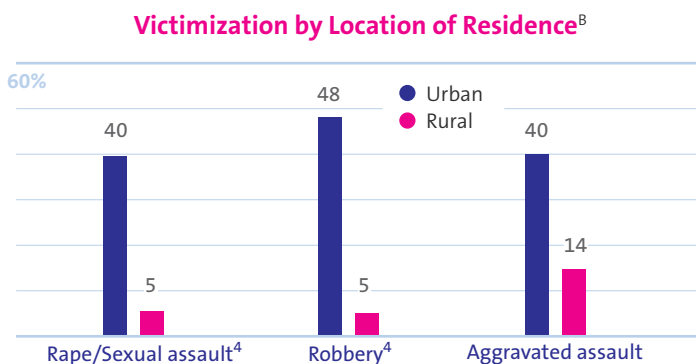
While national-level crime statistics provide important information regarding overall crime trends, they cannot always demonstrate differences in crime and victimization at the sub-national level or clearly isolate factors contributing to crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has recognized the need for more nuanced sub-national victimization data, and is working to estimate crime at the state and local levels through the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) Subnational program.<sup>1</sup> While existing research—including data collected by the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program and the NCVS—indicates that **urban areas generally have higher crime rates than suburban or rural areas**, there are exceptions. **Demographics, geography, and culture each are related to the incidence, prevalence, and types of victimization.**<sup>A</sup> For more about the UCR and NCVS, see the *Crime and Victimization in the United States* fact sheet in this series.

## CRIME TRENDS

Since 1995, **serious violent victimizations<sup>2</sup> in urban areas have decreased by approximately 74%**. Other forms of victimization, including simple assault and personal theft, have also declined by 75% and 74%, respectively. In comparison, serious violent victimizations in **rural areas** have decreased by **67%**, while simple assaults have dropped 74%.<sup>3,4B</sup>



In 2015, victimizations of people from urban areas accounted for 40% of all rapes and sexual assaults, 48% of robberies, and 40% of aggravated assaults. Victimization of people from rural areas accounted for 5% of rapes and sexual assaults, 5% of robberies, and 14% of aggravated assaults.<sup>B4</sup>



## DID YOU KNOW?

In both urban and rural areas, **youth ages 12 to 14** have the **highest rate** of victimization.<sup>B</sup>

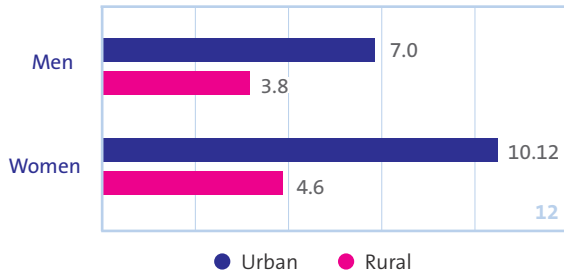
**LGBT students in rural locales experienced higher frequencies of victimization** at school based on their sexual orientation or gender expression. They were also less likely to have access to LGBT-related resources or support.<sup>C</sup>

Motor vehicle theft is **4x more likely** to occur in **urban** areas than rural areas.<sup>B</sup>

# CURRENT DATA ON URBAN AND RURAL VICTIMIZATION

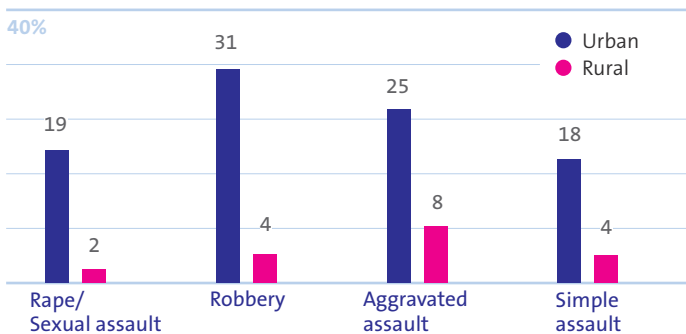
Residents of **urban areas experienced the highest rates of victimization** in 2015. On average, the rate of serious violent victimization among men and women in urban areas was about 2x higher than in rural areas.<sup>B</sup>

**Serious Violent Victimization by Locale and Sex<sup>B</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 people 12 or older



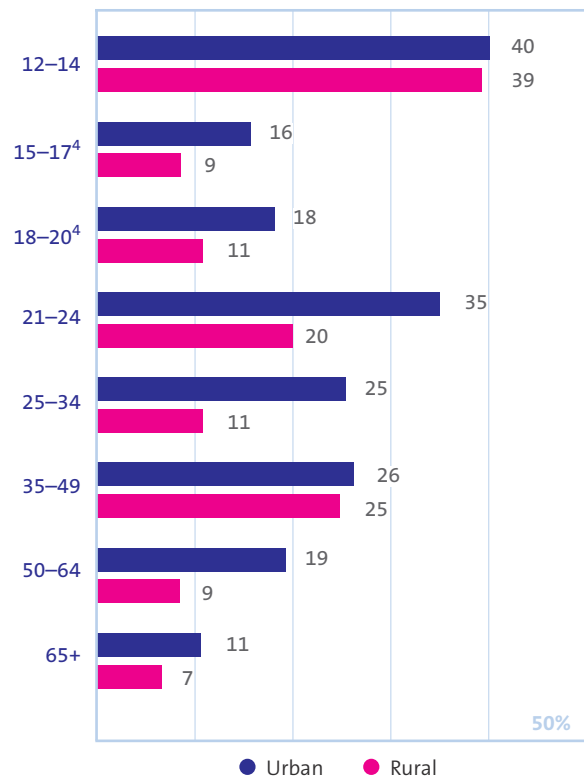
**Only 55% of serious violent victimizations in 2015 were reported to the police.** Victimization of those living in urban locales were more likely to be reported to the police, compared to those in rural locales. **Rape and sexual assault** are among the **least reported** forms of victimization; an estimated 19% of rape and sexual assault victimizations were reported to the police in urban areas. Comparatively, an estimated 2% of rape and sexual assault victimizations were reported to the police in rural areas.<sup>B</sup>

**Victims Who Reported Victimization to Police<sup>B</sup>**  
percentage by location of residence



In 2015, rates of violent victimization for different age groups were generally greater in urban than rural communities, though those residents ages 12 to 14 and 35 to 49 experienced similar rates of victimization in urban and rural areas. **Youth ages 12 to 14 had the highest rates of violent victimization in both urban and rural communities.**<sup>B</sup>

**Violent Victimization by Locale and Age<sup>B</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 people



## NOTES

- For more on this effort, see: [www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=911](http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=911). State- and local-level data will be available in future BJS reports.
- Serious violent victimizations include rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.
- The NCVS also collects and reports information on victimization in suburban areas. Generally, those numbers are mid-way between urban and rural victimization, or are closer to urban than rural. For more information on Suburban Victimization, please visit BJS's Victimization Analysis Tool (NVAT) at [www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=navat](http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=navat).
- Interpret data with caution, based on 10 or fewer sample cases or the coefficient of variation is greater than 50%. For more information, please see BJS NVAT note on Methodology: [www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=navat](http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=navat).

## SOURCES

- Ralph A. Weisheit and Joseph F. Donnermeyer, "Change and Continuity in Crime in Rural America," *Criminal Justice* vol. 1 (2000)
- Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Crime Victimization Survey, Concatenated File, 1995 - 2015*, (U.S. Department of Justice)
- GLSEN, "2013 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of LGBT Youth in Our Nation's Schools," (2014), [www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report\\_0.pdf](http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report_0.pdf)