

SECTION IV

Persons Arrested

In addition to gauging law enforcement's response to crime, arrest counts supply definitive data regarding the age, sex, and race of perpetrators. Arrest policies and practices may deviate from time to time or even town to town such as during a local police campaign to deter juvenile violence. Though the arrest practices for certain unlawful conduct such as drunkenness, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, and related violations may differ among agencies, those for robbery, burglary, and other serious crimes are more likely to be uniform and consistently enforced throughout all jurisdictions. According to UCR Program procedures, an arrest must be counted on each separate occasion a person is taken into custody, notified, or cited. However, annual arrest figures do not measure the number of individuals arrested since one person may be arrested several times during the year for the same or different offenses.

Law enforcement agencies made an estimated 14 million arrests nationwide for all criminal infractions excluding traffic violations in 1999. The highest arrest counts within specific crime categories included 1.5 million arrests each for drug abuse violations and driving under the influence, 1.3 million arrests for simple assaults, and 1.2 million arrests for larceny-thefts. Drug abuse violations and alcohol-related arrests combined accounted for an estimated 31 percent of the overall arrests in 1999. (See Table 29.)

In 1999 there were 5,317 arrests per 100,000 inhabitants in the United States. Arrest rates among city population groupings ranged from 6,741 in cities with under 10,000 inhabitants to 4,883 in cities with populations from 25,000 to 49,999. Law enforcement agencies in rural counties and suburban counties recorded arrest rates of 4,308 and 4,205 per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively. (See Table 31.) By region, the South noted an arrest rate of 6,034 per 100,000 population; the Midwest, 5,551; the West, 5,155; and the Northeast, 4,223. (See Table 30.)

Tables in this report that show the age, sex, or race of persons arrested contain limited or no data for certain states. Limited arrest statistics were provided by Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, and South Carolina due to reporting problems at the state level. No arrest data were available from Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia. In addition, arrest data were not received from contributing law enforcement agencies in Kansas as a result of their NIBRS conversion efforts. The estimated arrest totals of the above mentioned states, however, were included in Table 29, "Estimated Arrests, United States, 1999."

Arrest Trends

Nationwide, a 5-percent decrease from the previous year's figures was noted for the total number of arrests

(excluding traffic violations) in 1999. Arrests for Crime Index offenses declined 8 percent, with 6- and 9-percent drops, respectively, in arrests for violent crimes and those for property crimes.

The total number of adult arrests dipped 4 percent, and juvenile arrests fell 8 percent from 1998 to 1999. Violent crime arrests decreased 6 percent for adults, and juvenile violent crime arrests declined 8 percent. Property crime arrests dropped 9 percent for adults and 11 percent for juveniles. (See Table 36.)

By community type, the Nation's cities collectively experienced a decrease of 5 percent in the total number of arrests for 1999; suburban counties, a decline of 4 percent; and rural counties, a 3-percent decrease. (See Tables 44, 50, and 56.)

From 1995 to 1999, arrest trends show total arrests in the Nation were down 3 percent. Juvenile arrests for the 5-year period fell 9 percent, and adult arrests decreased 2 percent. (See Table 34.)

Arrests for all offenses were down 1 percent when comparing 1990 figures to 1999 figures. Crime Index offense arrests fell 22 percent, with a 9-percent decrease reported for violent crime arrests and a 26-percent drop noted for property crime arrests.

An examination of trend data for drug abuse violations indicates that the 1999 arrest total for this offense was 2 percent lower than in 1998, 7 percent above the 1995 level, and 36 percent higher than in 1990. The types of drugs involved in drug arrests during 1999 by geographic region are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Arrests for Drug Abuse Violations
by region, 1999

Drug violations	United States Total	North-eastern States	Mid-western States	Southern States	Western States
Total ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sale/Manufacturing: ¹	19.5	26.7	19.8	16.6	18.3
Heroin or cocaine and their derivatives	10.0	19.6	6.6	8.5	7.5
Marijuana	5.5	5.7	8.2	4.7	5.0
Synthetic or manufactured drugs	1.2	.7	.7	2.1	.8
Other dangerous nonnarcotic drugs	2.9	.7	4.2	1.2	4.9
Possession: ¹	80.5	73.3	80.2	83.4	81.7
Heroin or cocaine and their derivatives	24.5	29.2	15.1	22.0	27.4
Marijuana	40.5	39.7	51.2	52.8	27.8
Synthetic or manufactured drugs	1.9	1.3	1.5	2.4	2.0
Other dangerous nonnarcotic drugs	13.5	3.0	12.5	6.2	24.5

¹Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

Age

During 1999, 6 percent of all persons arrested nationally were under the age of 15; 17 percent were under 18; 32 percent were under 21; and 45 percent were under 25. Persons in the under-25 age group also accounted for 47 percent of arrestees in the Nation's cities collectively and 41 percent of those arrested in both suburban and rural counties. (See Tables 41, 47, 53, and 59.)

Nationally, age distribution figures for Crime Index offense arrestees show that 28 percent were under the age of 18; 43 percent, under 21; and 55 percent, under 25. The under-25 age group accounted for 44 percent of the violent crime arrests and 58 percent of the property crime arrests in 1999.

Larceny-theft was the offense resulting in the most arrests of persons under age 18, whereas adults were most often arrested for driving under the influence. (See Table 38.)

Sex

Seventy-eight percent of all the persons arrested in the Nation during 1999 were male. Males also accounted for 74 percent of the Crime Index arrestees, totaling 83 percent of those arrested for violent crimes and 70 percent of those arrested for property crimes. (See Table 42.) The offenses for which men were most often arrested, drug abuse violations and driving under the influence, jointly comprised 23 percent of all male arrests. Those same offenses account for 16 percent of overall female arrests and 21 percent of total arrests. By gender, 45 percent of male violent crime arrestees and 41 percent of female violent crime arrestees were under the age of 25.

As in previous years, larceny-theft was the offense for which females were most often arrested. In 1999, larceny-theft arrests totaled 14 percent of all female arrests and 71 percent of female arrests for Index offenses. Fifty-six percent of all female larceny-theft arrestees were under 25 years of age.

From 1998 to 1999, the number of female arrests decreased 4 percent and that for males declined 5 percent. Arrests for violent crimes declined for both genders over the past year, 7 percent for males and 4 percent for females.

Comparing 1995 and 1999 figures, male arrests fell 5 percent, but female arrests were up 4 percent. During that same time, male violent crime arrests fell by 17 percent, and female violent crime arrests rose 2 percent.

Over the past decade, 1990 to 1999, total arrests have dipped 1 percent with arrests of males decreasing 5 percent and arrests of females climbing 18 percent. Despite a 37 percent rise in female arrests for violent crimes during this time period, overall violent crime arrests fell by 9 percent and male violent crime arrests were down 15 percent. (See Tables 32-37.)

Race

In 1999, of those arrested nationwide, 69 percent of the arrestees were white, 29 percent were black, and the remainder were of other races. (See Table 43.) Race distribution figures also showed that whites accounted for 64 percent of the Index crime arrests, 66 percent of the property crime arrests, and 59 percent of the violent crime arrests.

Table 29

Estimated Arrests¹

United States, 1999

Total^{2,3}	14,355,600	Embezzlement	17,300
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	14,920	Stolen property; buying, receiving, possessing	124,100
Forcible rape	29,220	Vandalism	285,000
Robbery	109,840	Weapons; carrying, possessing, etc.	175,500
Aggravated assault	490,790	Prostitution and commercialized vice	92,200
Burglary	301,500	Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	93,800
Larceny-theft	1,213,300	Drug abuse violations	1,557,100
Motor vehicle theft	144,200	Gambling	10,400
Arson	17,100	Offenses against the family and children	153,500
		Driving under the influence	1,549,500
		Liquor laws	683,600
Violent crime ⁴	644,770	Drunkenness	673,400
Property crime ⁵	1,676,100	Disorderly conduct	655,600
Crime Index total ⁶	2,320,900	Vagrancy	30,800
		All other offenses	3,809,000
Other assaults	1,322,100	Suspicion	8,000
Forgery and counterfeiting	109,300	Curfew and loitering law violations	170,000
Fraud	371,800	Runaways	150,700

¹ Arrest totals are based on all reporting agencies and estimates for unreported areas.

² Does not include suspicion.

³ Because of rounding, figures may not add to total.

⁴ Violent crimes are offenses of murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

⁵ Property crimes are offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

⁶ Includes arson.