

# SECTION II

## Crime Index Offenses Reported

### CRIME INDEX TOTAL

#### DEFINITION

The Crime Index is composed of selected offenses used to gauge fluctuations in the overall volume and rate of crime reported to law enforcement. The offenses included are the violent crimes of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

#### TREND

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants<sup>1</sup></i>
1998	12,485,714	4,619.3
1999	11,635,149	4,266.8
Percent change	-6.8	-7.6

<sup>1</sup>Trend data do not include arson. See page 54.

The 1999 Crime Index total, estimated at 11.6 million offenses, is the lowest since 1978. This total represented the eighth consecutive annual decline in the Crime Index, which is down 7 percent from the 1998 number. The Nation's cities collectively recorded a 7-percent drop, with cities having populations of 25,000 to 99,999 recording the greatest decrease at 8 percent. Suburban counties registered an 8-percent Crime Index decline and rural counties a 7-percent downturn.

The 1999 national Crime Index total was 16 percent lower than in 1995 and 20 percent lower than in 1990.

Geographically, the Southern States, the most populous area of the Nation, accounted for 41 percent of the total volume of Crime Index offenses. The Western States comprised 23 percent of the total number; the Midwestern States, 22 percent; and the Northeastern States, 14 percent. The Western States showed a Crime Index decrease of 10 percent from the 1998 figures. The Northeastern States and the Midwestern States each were down 7 percent, and the Southern States registered a 5-percent decrease. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

The monthly offense distribution shows the greatest number of Crime Index offenses occurred in August, and the fewest occurred in February.

Table 2.1

**Crime Index Total by Month**  
Percent distribution, 1995-1999

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	8.1	8.1	8.2	8.5	8.0
February	7.2	7.6	7.3	7.5	7.2
March	8.1	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.0
April	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
May	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4	8.4
June	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.5
July	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.1
August	9.3	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.2
September	8.5	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.5
October	8.8	8.7	8.7	8.5	8.7
November	8.2	7.9	7.9	7.8	8.2
December	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.3

## Rate

The Crime Index rate for 1999 is the lowest—4,267 per 100,000 of the Nation's inhabitants—since 1973. By community type, cities outside metropolitan areas had a Crime Index rate of 4,561 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants, and metropolitan areas had a rate of 4,600 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants. Rural counties experienced a rate of 1,901 offenses per 100,000. (See Table 2.) The overall 1999 Crime Index rate dropped 8 percent from the 1998 level, 19 percent from the 1995 level, and 27 percent from the 1990 level.

Regionally, the South, the Nation's most populous region, had a Crime Index rate of 4,932 offenses per

100,000 inhabitants, the West registered 4,328, the Midwest noted 4,041, and the Northeast 3,233.

The rates in all four regions declined from 1998 to 1999. The Western region had an 11-percent downturn in Index crime, the Midwestern region showed an 8-percent fall, the Northeastern region had a 7-percent decline, and the Southern region dropped 6-percent. (See Table 4.)

## Nature

Violent and property crimes together comprise the Crime Index. In 1999, violent crimes accounted for 12 percent of Crime Index offenses, and property crimes made up 88 percent. The property crime of larceny-theft had the highest volume of offenses reported to law enforcement, and the violent crime of murder had the lowest volume of offenses reported to law enforcement. (See Figure 2.3.)

In 1999, the estimated total value of the stolen property for all Crime Index offenses was \$15.2 billion. The greatest loss came from thefts of motor vehicles followed by the loss of televisions, radios, stereos, etc.; jewelry and precious metals; and currency, notes, etc.

There was a 36-percent recovery rate for monetary losses in connection with stolen property as reported to law enforcement agencies nationally in 1999. Stolen motor vehicles had the highest recovery percentages, trailed by livestock, clothing and furs, and firearms. (See Table 24.)

## Law Enforcement Response

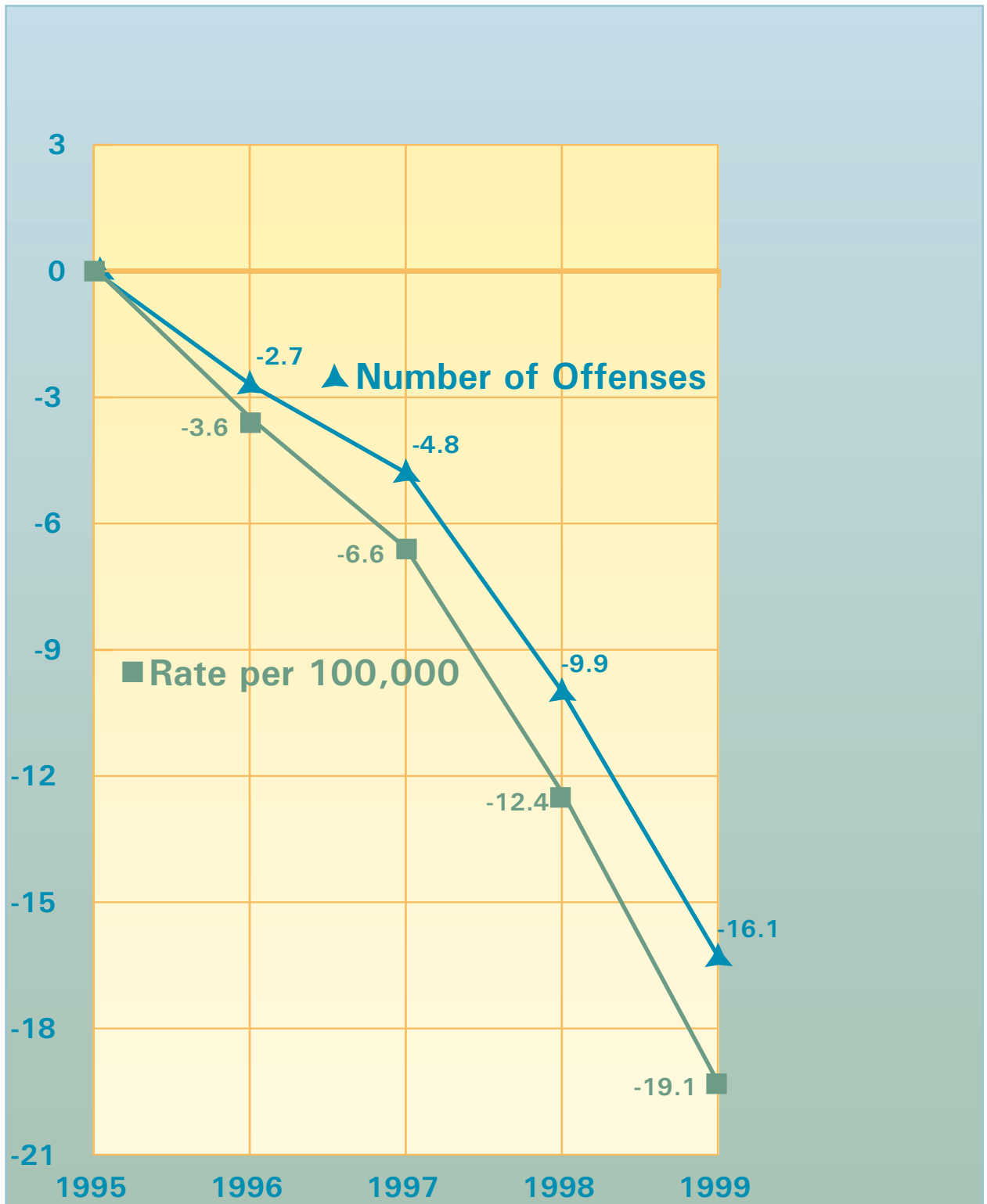
An estimated 2.3 million arrests were made for Index crimes by law enforcement agencies around the Nation, which resulted in a 21-percent clearance rate. Clearances can occur by arrest or by exceptional means when some element beyond law enforcement control precludes the placing of formal charges against the offender. The arrest of one person may clear several crimes, or several persons may be arrested in connection with the clearance of one offense.

The 1999 total Crime Index arrests fell 8 percent from 1998 arrest numbers. Adult arrests dropped 8 percent, and juvenile arrests declined 10 percent. Categorized by gender, male arrests fell 9 percent, and female arrests fell 7 percent. (See Tables 36 and 37.)

Each offense in the Crime Index dropped in the number of persons arrested from 1998 to 1999. Arrests for murder were down 12 percent; forcible rape, 8 percent; robbery, 9 percent; and aggravated assault, 5 percent. Arrests for burglary sank 11 percent, larceny-thefts were down 9 percent, arrests for motor vehicle theft fell 6 percent, and arrests for arson dipped 3 percent as shown in Table 36.

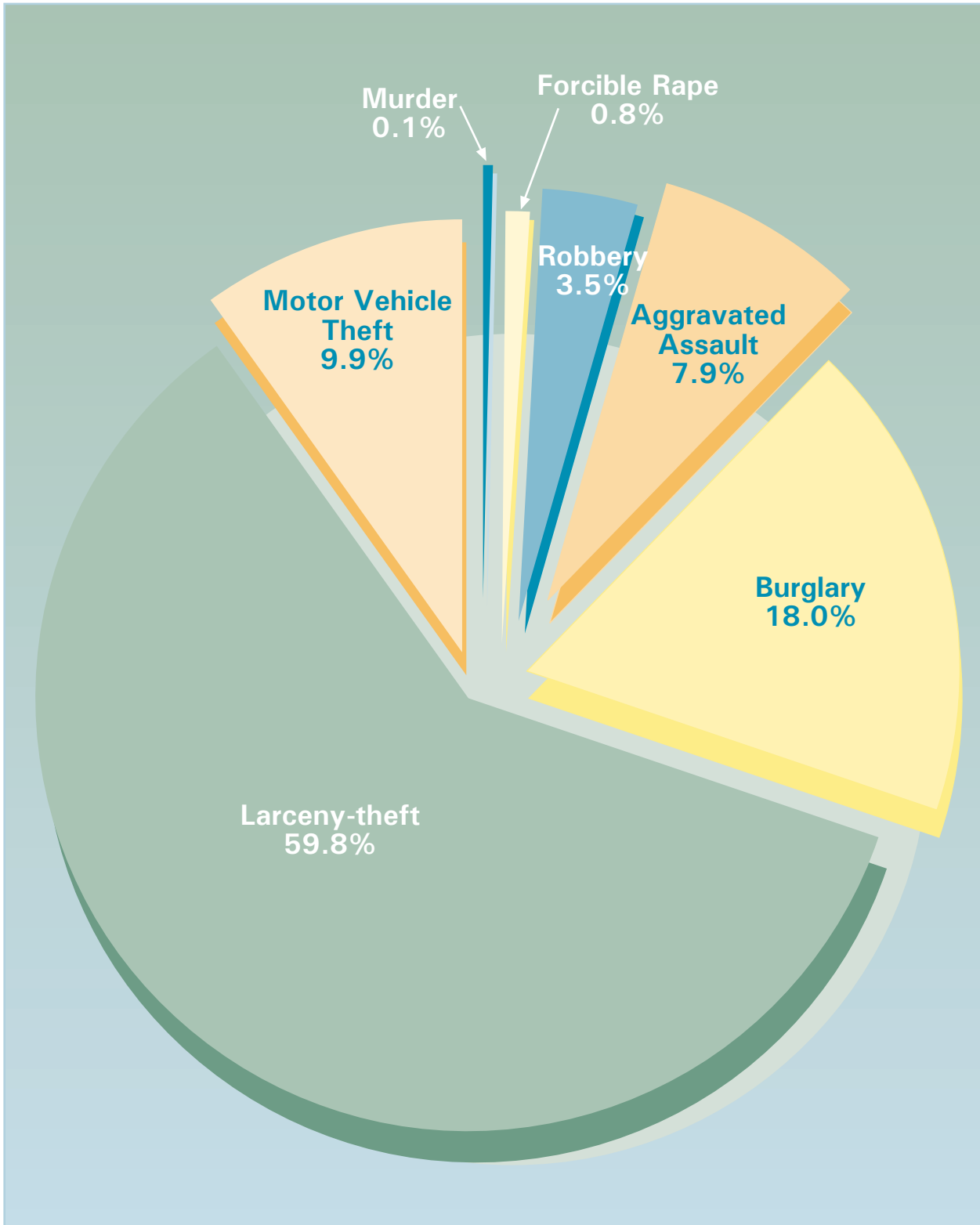
# Figure 2.2

Crime Index  
Percent Change  
from 1995



# Figure 2.3

**Crime Index Offenses**  
Percent Distribution 1999



# Figure 2.4

Regional Violent and  
Property Crime Rates  
PER 100,000 INHABITANTS  
1999

