



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Beyond the Headlines: Bringing Together Data and People to Improve Public Safety Outcomes

August 26, 2024 | Madeleine Dardeau and Paul Nichols



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government, with policy and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities.

How We Work

- We bring people together.
- We drive the criminal justice field forward with original research.
- We build momentum for policy change.
- We provide expert assistance.

Our Goals

- Break the cycle of incarceration.
- Advance health, opportunity, and equity.
- Use data to improve safety and justice.

The CSG Justice Center assists state and local jurisdictions on a wide range of public safety topics.



Justice Reinvestment is a data-driven approach to improve public safety, reduce corrections and related criminal justice spending, and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and reduce recidivism. Justice Reinvestment focuses on adults in the criminal justice system.



Stepping Up is a national initiative calling on counties across the country to reduce the prevalence of people with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance addictions being held in county jails.

**The Justice and Mental
Health Collaboration
Program (JMHCP)**

JMHCP facilitates collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, and mental health and substance use treatment systems to better serve people with mental illnesses and to increase public safety.



IOYouth helps states align their policies, practices, and resource allocation with what research shows works to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for youth while enhancing public safety.

What is the challenge?

The public is concerned about crime and distrustful of the justice system.

78% of people think that there is **more crime across the United States** than in previous years.

40% of people are “very dissatisfied” with **policies to control or reduce crime**.

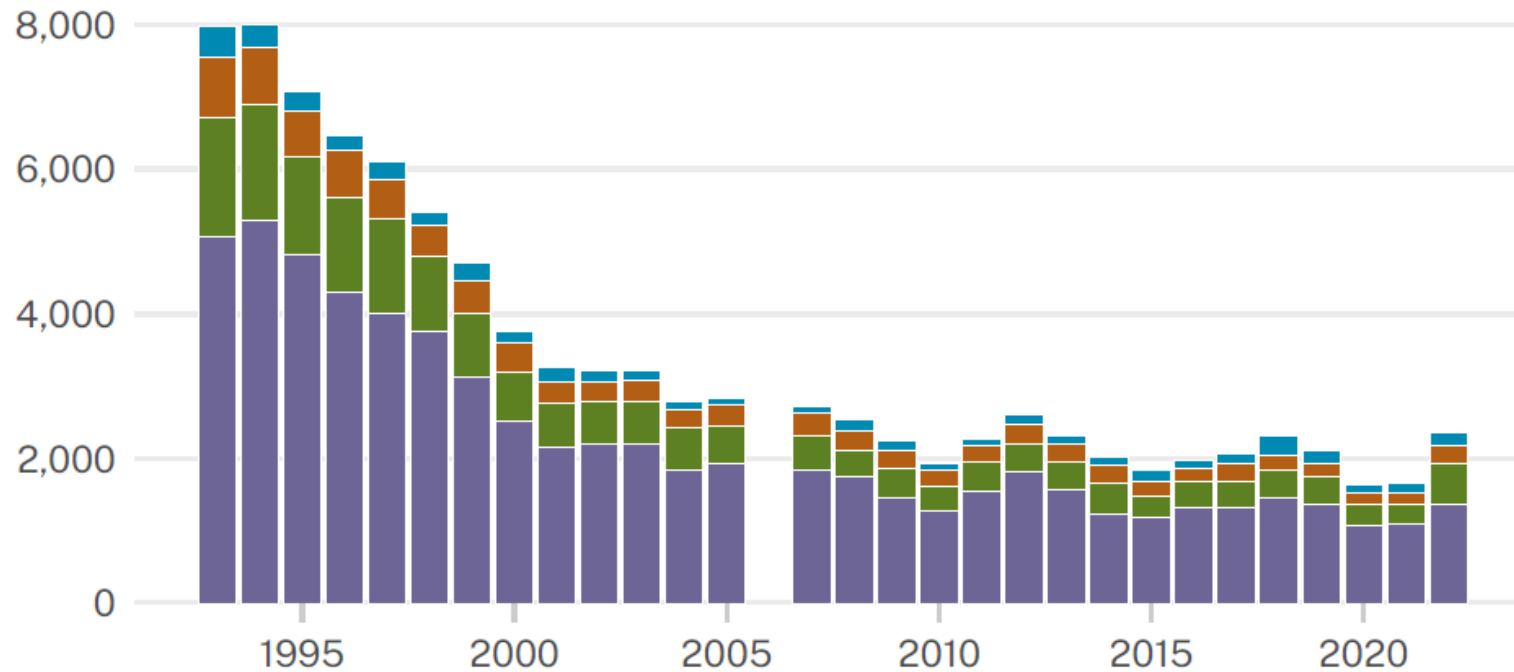
17% of people have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of **trust in the justice system**.

The rate of violent victimizations in 2022 was 70 percent lower than in 1993.

Violent victimizations

Rate per 100k residents, United States

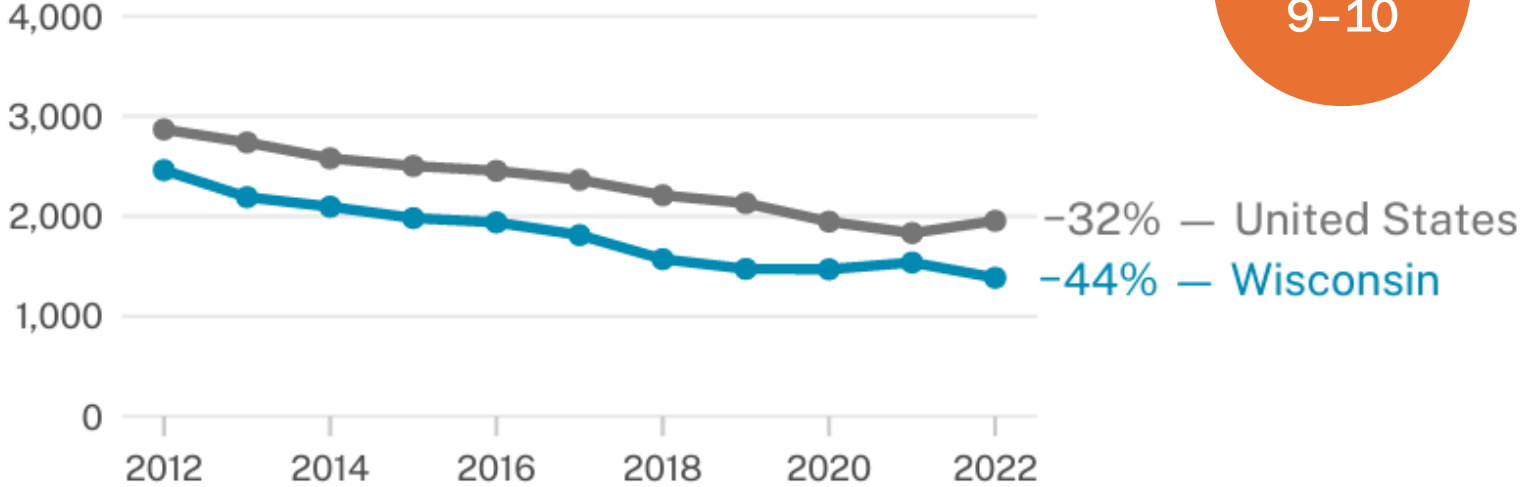
Simple assault Aggravated assault Robbery Rape



BJS National Crime Victimization Survey

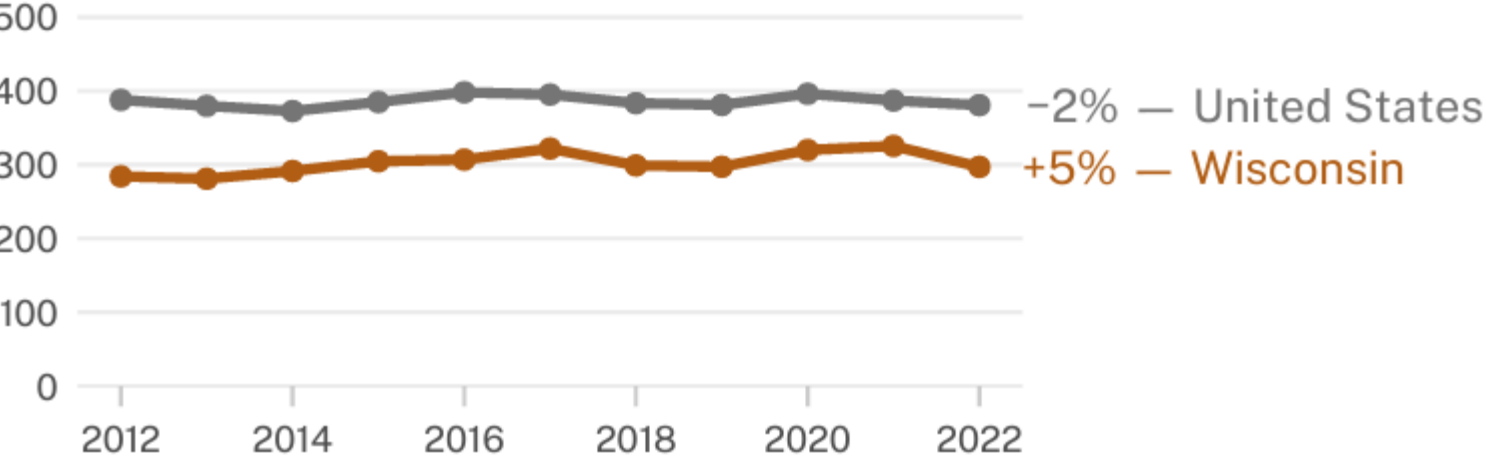
Nationally, property crime declined **32 percent** from 2012 to 2022.

Property index crime reported to police, 2012-2022



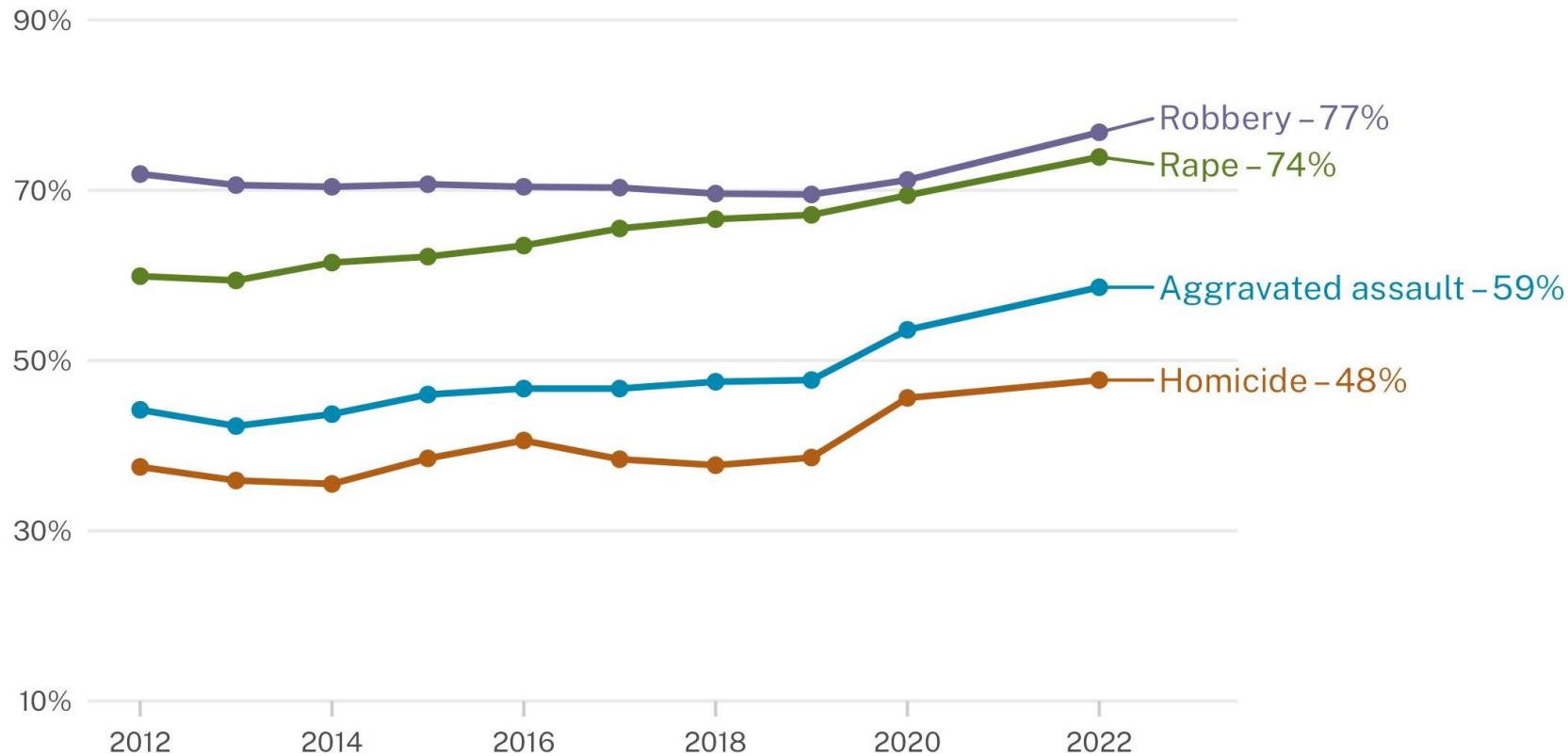
During this same period, violent crime also declined **2 percent** despite a spike in 2020.

Violent index crime reported to police, 2012-2022



The percentage of violent crimes reported to police that were unsolved increased 10 percent over the last decade.

National unsolved rate of violent crime by offense, 2012–2022



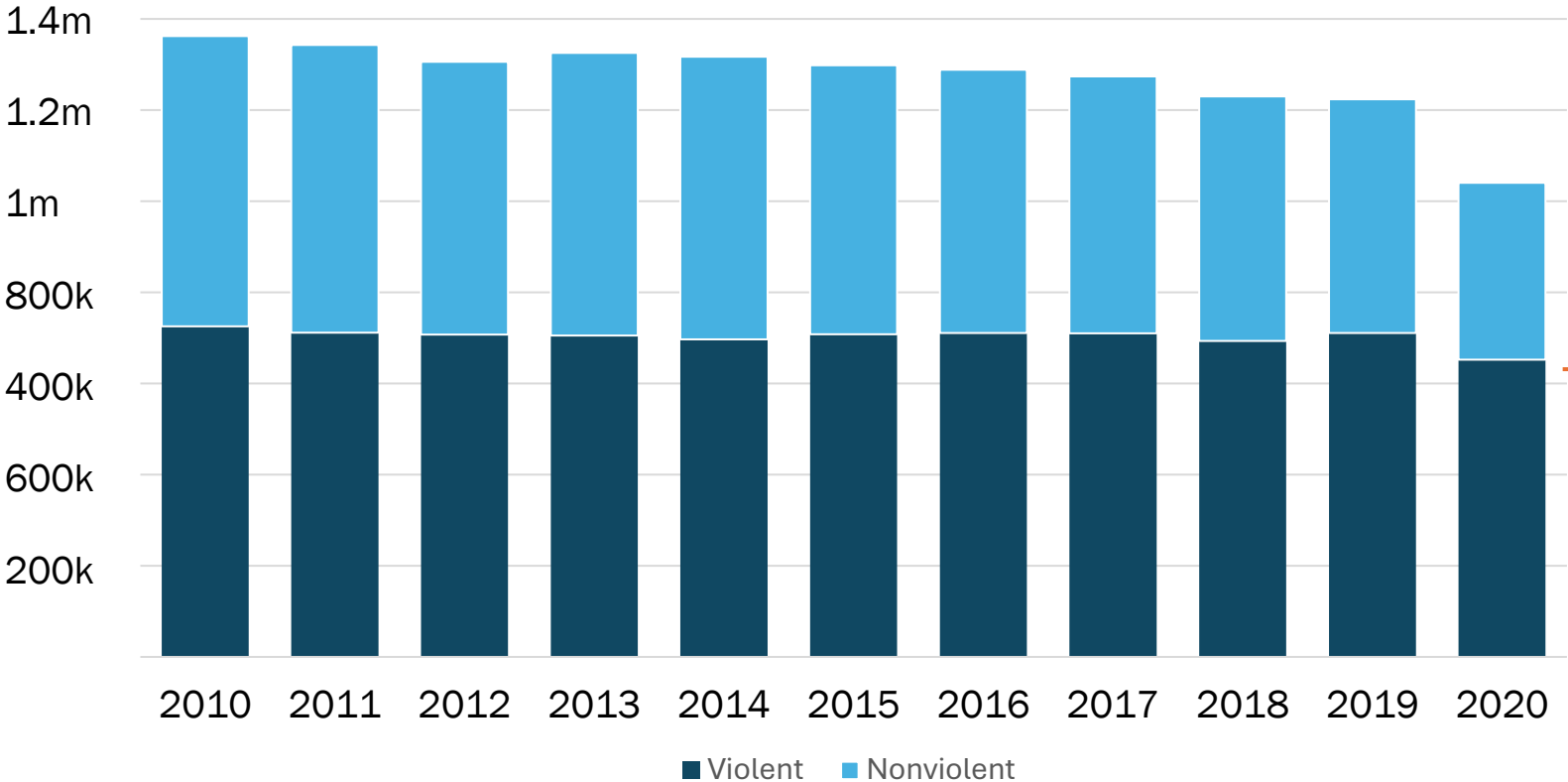
Change rate unsolved by offense, 2012–2022:

- +10% Homicide
- +14% Aggravated Assault
- +14% Rape
- +5% Robbery

FBI Crime in the United States, Table 25

From 2010 to 2020, the overall state prison population across the U.S. dropped 25 percent.

National prison population by offense type, 2010–2020*

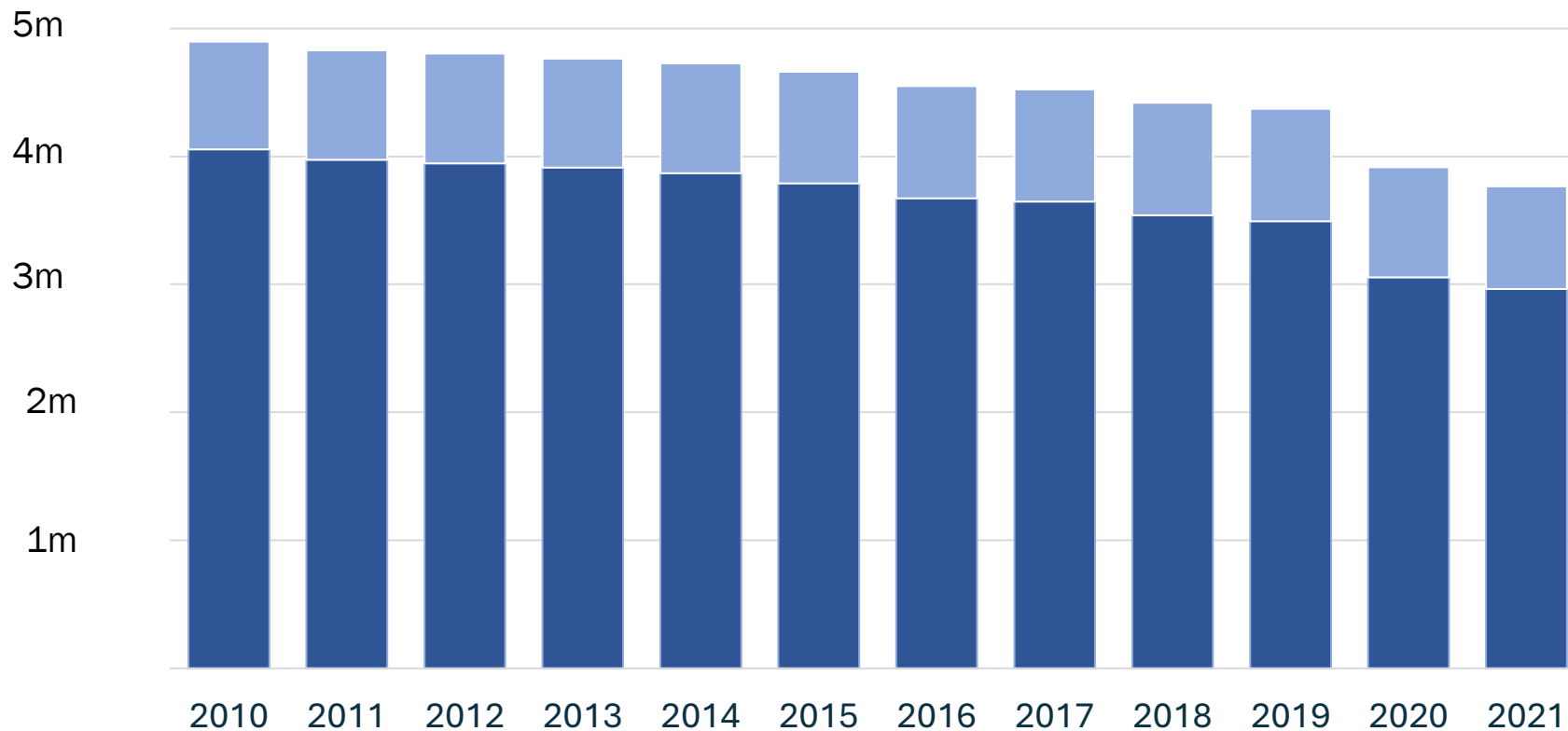


+18%
Increase in average time served for violent offenses, 2010–2020

* 2020 is the most recent year for which data is available.
“The Footprint: Tracking the Size of America’s Criminal Justice System,” The Council on Criminal Justice, accessed October 3, 2023, <https://counciloncj.foleon.com/the-footprint-trends-in-crime-arrests-and-the-total-correctional-population/the-footprint/#state-prison>.

Similar to the prison population, the overall supervision population in the U.S. dropped 23 percent from 2010 to 2021.

National supervision population, 2010–2021*



From 2010 to 2021:

- 4%

parole population

- 27%

probation population

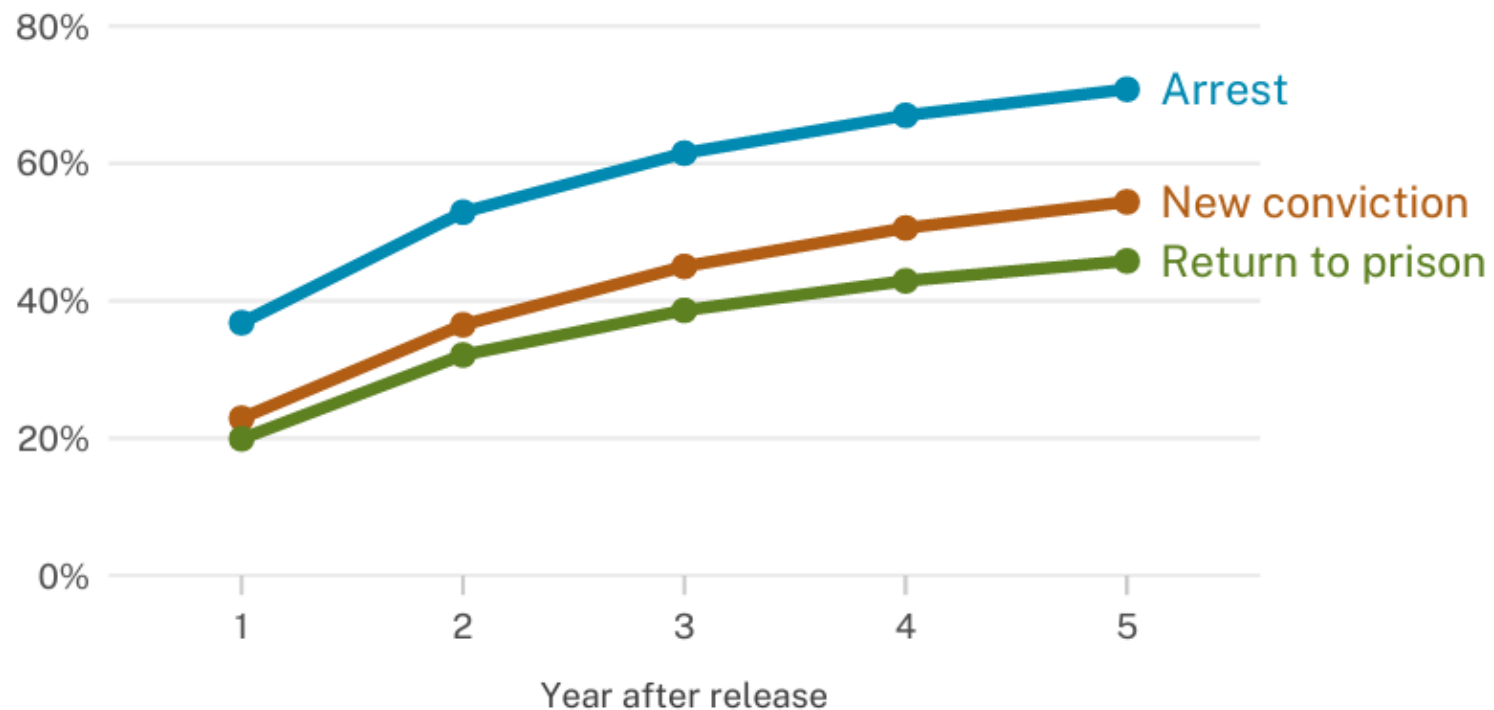
■ Parole
■ Probation

* 2021 is the most recent year for which data is available.

“The Footprint: Tracking the Size of America’s Criminal Justice System,” The Council on Criminal Justice, accessed October 3, 2023, <https://counciloncj.foleon.com/the-footprint-trends-in-crime-arrests-and-the-total-correctional-population/the-footprint/#state-prison>.

While the national recidivism rate is declining, 46 percent of people released from prison in 2012 returned to incarceration within 5 years.

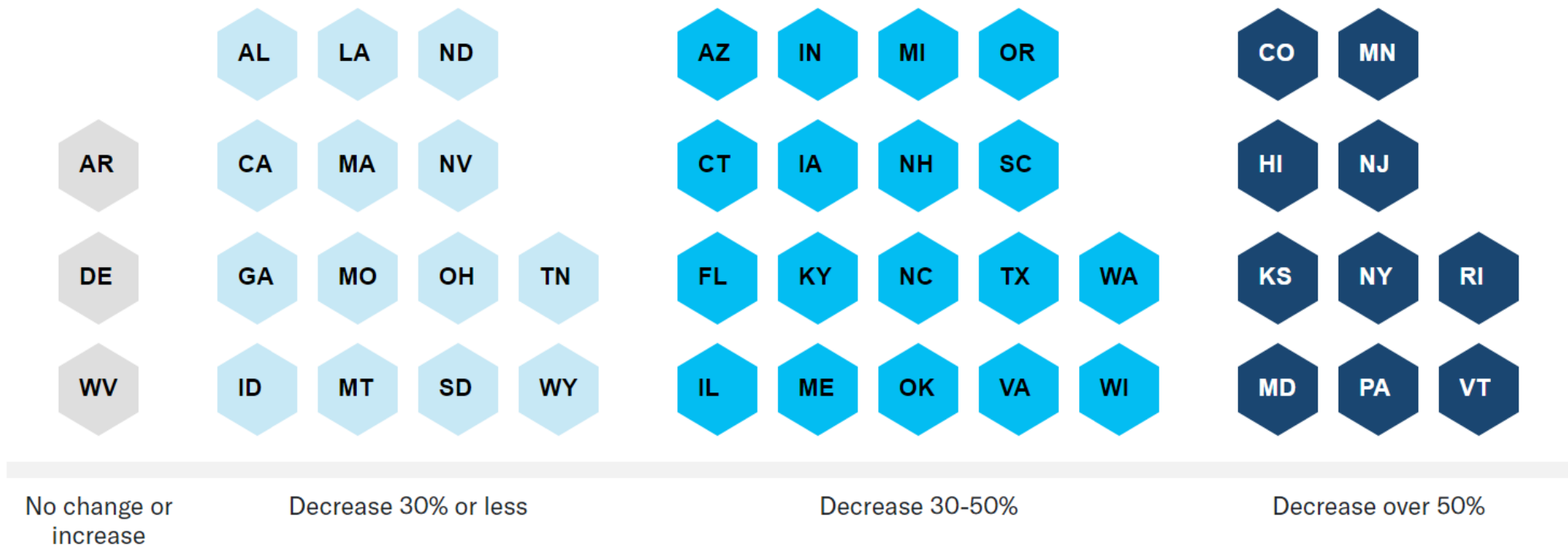
Cumulative percentage of people released from prison who had a recidivism event within 5 years of release
34 states, 2012 releases



From 2018 to 2021, prison admissions from supervision decreased by one-third across the country.

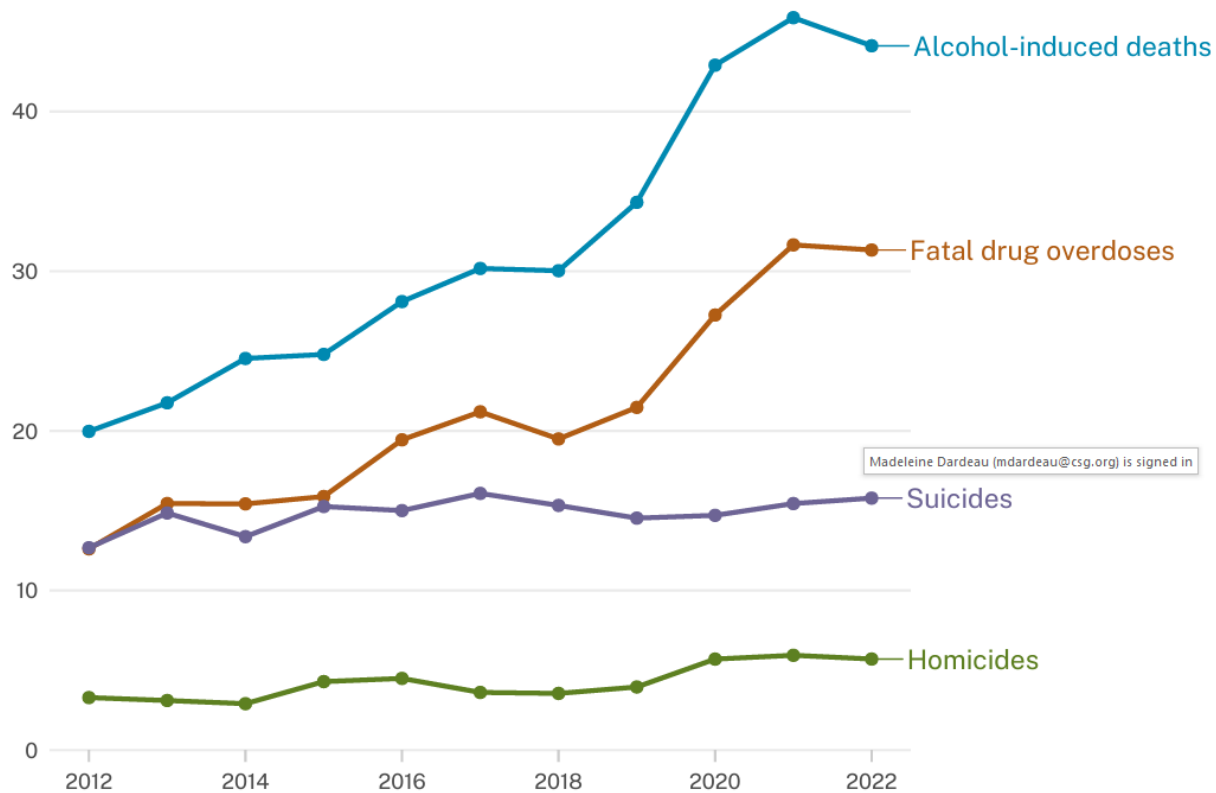
However, **1 in 4** people in state prison were incarcerated because they violated the terms of their supervision in 2021.

Percent change in prison admissions from supervision, 2018–2021



In most states, deaths due to alcohol and drugs have significantly increased in the last several years.

Cause of death, Wisconsin, 2012–2022
Rate per 100k residents

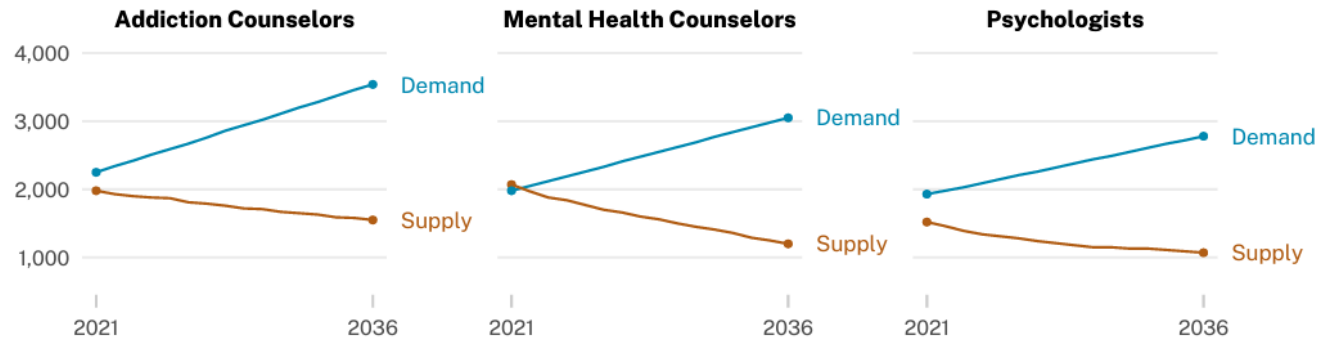


Nationally, **four times** more people died of drug overdoses, and almost **twice** as many people died by suicide compared to homicide in 2022.

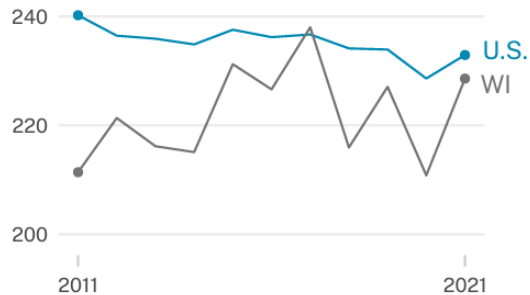
States continue to struggle with critical workforce shortages in behavioral health and public safety.

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19

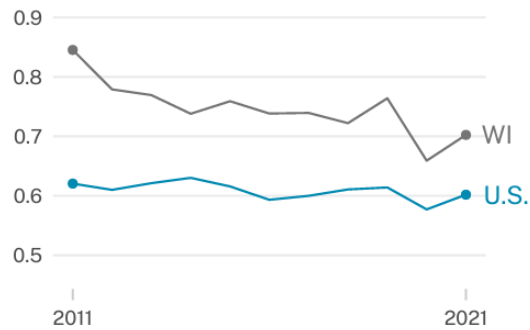
Projected supply and demand of behavioral health providers, Wisconsin



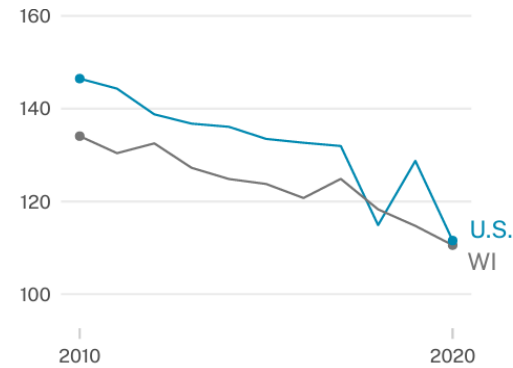
Police officers and detectives employed, Wisconsin



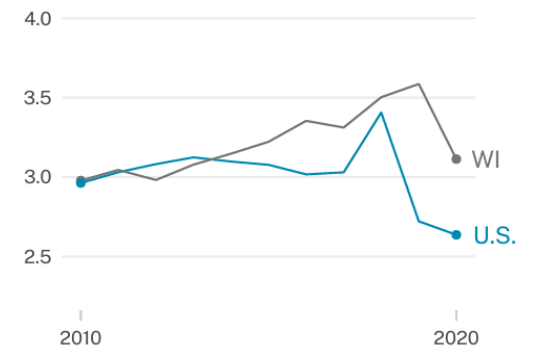
Police officers and detectives per violent crime, Wisconsin



Correctional officers employed, Wisconsin



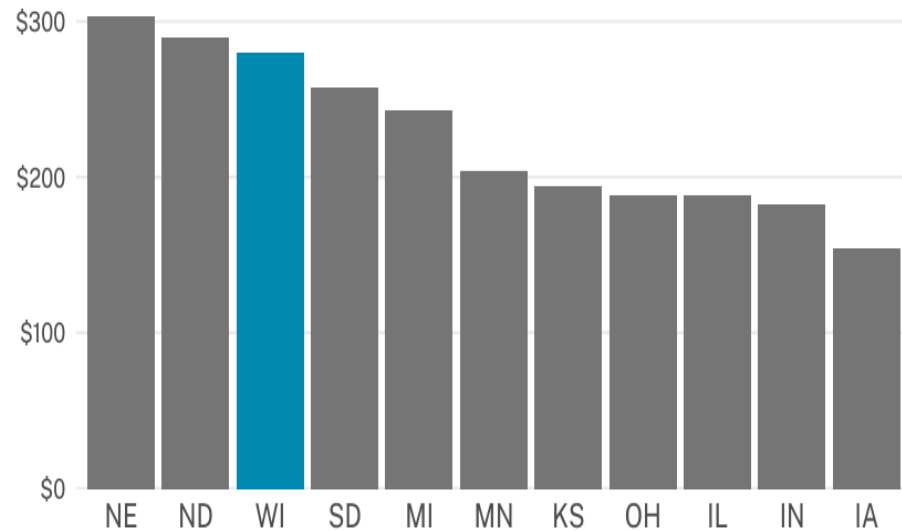
Number of incarcerated persons per correctional officer, Wisconsin



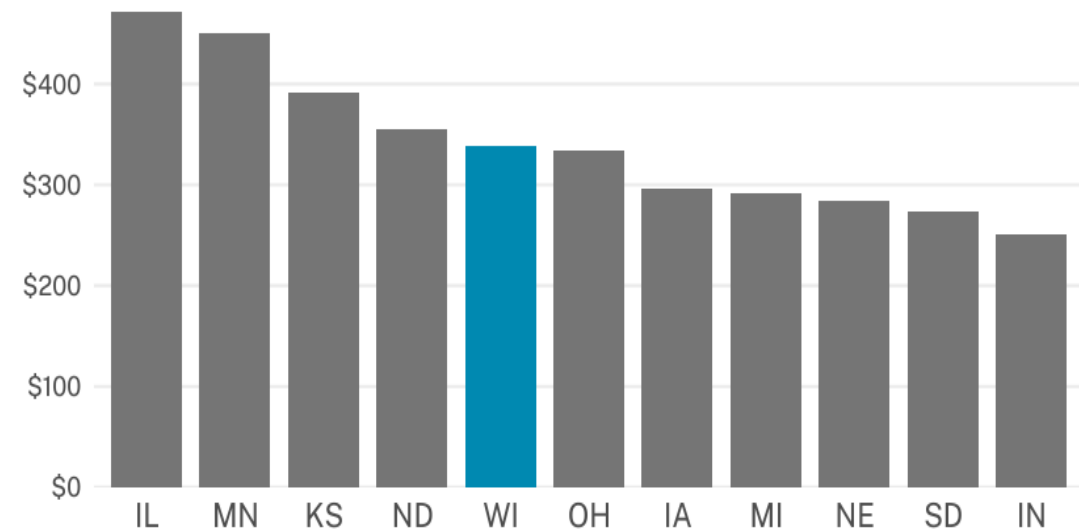
States invest considerable funding in public safety to achieve intended system and community outcomes.

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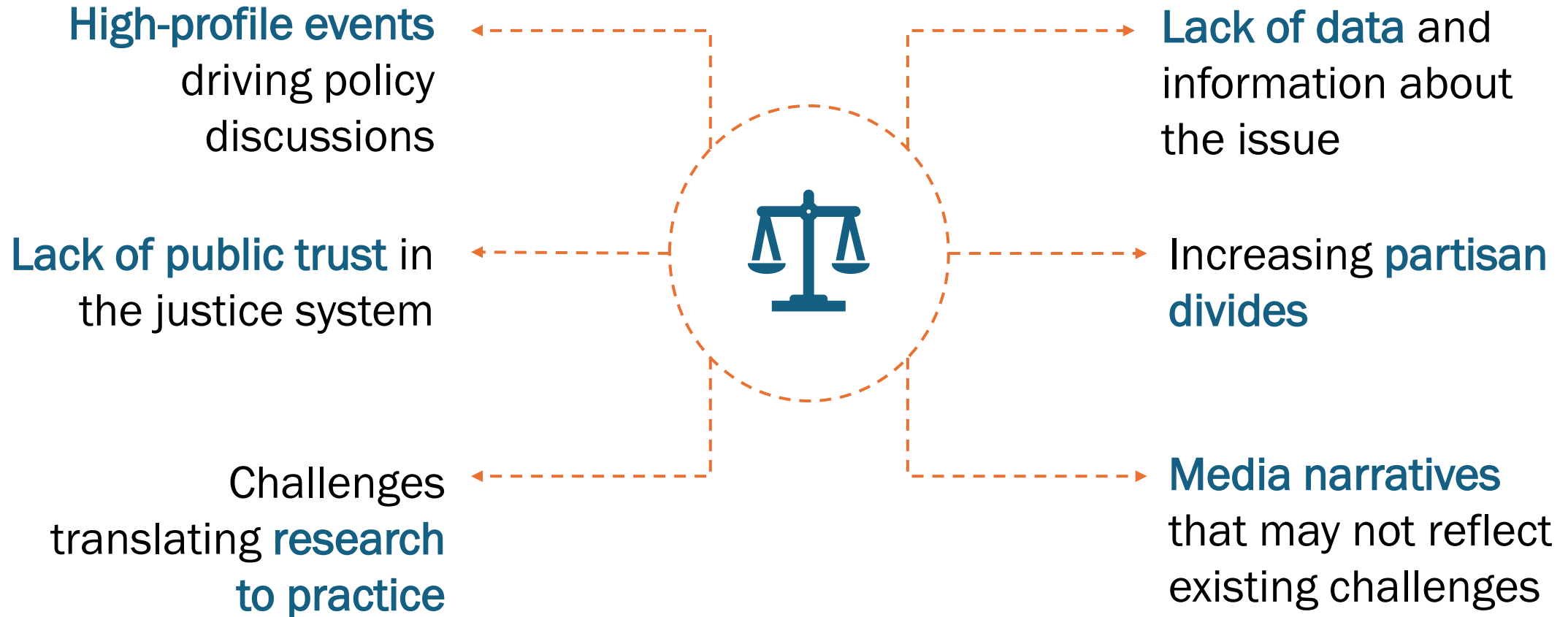
State and local corrections expenditures
Total per resident, Midwestern Region, 2021



State and local law enforcement expenditures
Total per resident, Midwestern Region, 2021

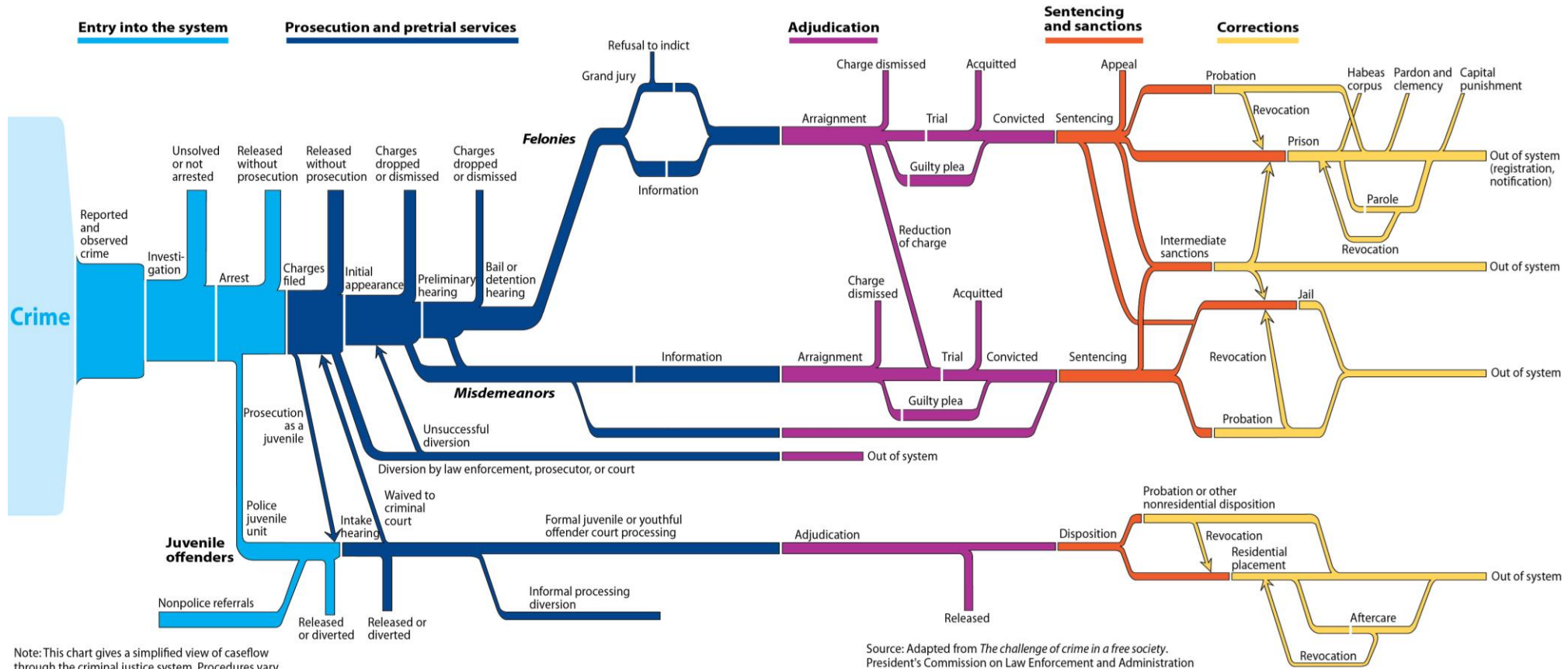


What factors complicate criminal justice policymaking?



The criminal justice system is complex, and each part is interdependent on the others.

Criminal Justice System Flowchart



Note: This chart gives a simplified view of caseload through the criminal justice system. Procedures vary among jurisdictions. The weights of the lines are not intended to show actual size of caseloads.

Source: Adapted from *The challenge of crime in a free society*. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967. This revision, a result of the Symposium on the 30th Anniversary of the President's Commission, was prepared by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1997.

How can policymakers respond?

Policymakers can take a comprehensive approach to improving public safety outcomes.

Define the Issue

Identify the problem and target the specific outcomes that you want to improve.

Know Your State Context

Ask the right questions to better understand the issue in your state.

Identify Policy Options

Tailor promising and evidence-based practices to your state context.

Sustain Support

Maintain partnerships through implementation and deal with challenges together.

A Case Study: Addressing Violent Crime

“There are too few consequences for people who are committing violent crime.”

“Violent crime is out of control.”

“Violent crime is being driven by people released from prison and reoffending after serving very short sentences.”

“I no longer feel safe in my community.”

Define the Issue

What's the problem?

- Concerns about crime, violence, and safety
- High-profile media coverage about violent crime
- Law enforcement concerns about staffing, retention, and capacity to address crime and violence

What is the desired outcome?

- Increased personal and community safety
- Increased accountability for people who commit violent offenses
- Increased justice for victims of violent crime
- Law enforcement that is resourced and trained to effectively address crime and violence



Know Your State Context

Examine your state data

- Violent crime trends by offense
- Unsolved violent crime trends
- Differences by region, county, and department
- Law enforcement staffing trends
- Recidivism trends for people on supervision and leaving incarceration

Key Questions

- Is violent crime higher than in previous years? If so, is that true across the state or just in certain areas?
- Are specific violent offenses up or down?
- How much violent crime goes unsolved? Are there differences by geography, offense, or race?
- Is law enforcement struggling with hiring and retaining staff compared to prior years?
- How are arrests of people on supervision or leaving incarceration contributing to violent crime trends?
- What is the average length of stay for violent offenses in your state? How has this changed over time?

Know Your State Context

Talk to stakeholders closest to the issue

- Law enforcement
- Community organizations and representatives
- Victim service organizations and advocates
- Corrections leadership
- Other public safety leadership

Key Questions

- What challenges do they see to improving community safety?
- What is the state of community-law enforcement relationships?
- What are the barriers to solving more violent crime? Crime lab processing times?
- What violence prevention and intervention services exist in the community? What's working? What's not?
- How do corrections officials work with people on supervision or reentering from incarceration to reduce recidivism?
- How may corrections budget, staffing, and capacity be impacted by increasing sentence lengths for violent offenses?
- How are victims of violent crime supported? What's working? What's not?

Identify Policy Options

Pursue **policies** to improve identified outcomes using evidence-based or promising practices tailored to your state's context

- Grant funding to support law enforcement capacity to solve more violent crimes
- Targeted investments in prevention and intervention
- Increased victim service supports
- Addressing crime lab backlogs
- Etc.

Improve **data collection and reporting** to inform future decision-making.

Establish a **working group** to explore the issue and build consensus support.

Implement a **media and communications** strategy.



Evidence-based policymaking

Evidence-based programs and practices are grounded in empirical evidence, scientific research, and outcome evaluation that prove effectiveness in achieving the desired positive outcomes.

Promising programs and practices show initial evidence or indicators of effectiveness in addressing a particular issue or achieving a desired outcome.

Sustain Support

70%

estimate of change initiatives that will ultimately **fail**.

Strategies to sustain support through implementation

- Build in **outcome measures** and data tracking.
- Resource agencies as needed to **fully implement** change.
- Maintain partnerships to stay **focused** on and maintain **urgency** around implementation.
- Consider a **crisis** communication plan.

Questions?

What criminal justice challenge does your state face?

Question 1

What data would you need to better understand the challenge? What questions does it prompt?

Question 2

What stakeholders would you need to engage about the challenge? What kinds of questions should you ask?

Question 3

How can you sustain support through implementation to achieve intended outcomes?

Thank You!

Join our distribution list to receive updates and announcements:

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/resources/newsletters/>

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