
Fact Sheet

Official Statistics on Murder and Robbery in Louisiana, 2005

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The state of Louisiana has historically had a high rate of violent crime. This fact sheet analyzes data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports for the year 2005, the latest year for which the relevant data are available at the time of this writing. The purpose of the analysis is to examine the rates of homicide and robbery in the state of Louisiana, and compare these figures to those of the Southern region and the Nation.

Figure 1 provides the conventional rates of homicide per 100,000 people for the nation, the southern region, and the state of Louisiana. During this year, the national rate of murder was 5.6 per 100,000 people. The southern regional average was slightly higher than this at 6.6 per 100,000. This finding is consistent with a long term historical trend in which the southern region of the US has had higher average murder rates than the rest of the country. The final bar of this graph displays the homicide rate

for the state of Louisiana in 2005, which is 9.9 per 100,000. This rate is 50% higher than the regional average, and 77% higher than the national average. Another way to think about this is that Louisiana's murder rate was just under two times the national rate.

Figure 2 provides the analogous data for robbery. In contrast to homicide, the situation with robbery is slightly different. In this case the national rate is about 140 per 100,000 and the southern regional average is slightly higher than this. On the other hand, Louisiana is below both the southern regional and the national average in its rates of robbery with a rate of 118 robberies per 100,000 people. In this case Louisiana is about 15% below the national rate.

It is often useful to break down crime statistics and compare the rates of metropolitan areas to those in nonmetropolitan areas. On average, rates of violence are lower in nonmetropolitan

communities, and so this is a potentially confounding factor that should not be overlooked. In Figure 3 the homicide data are provided for Louisiana, the southern region, and the nation broken down by metropolitan and nonmetropolitan status. In the southern region metro counties have a slightly higher murder rate than nonmetro counties. Notably, for Louisiana there is a big gap. Metro counties in Louisiana experience almost three times the murder rate that nonmetro counties do (11.81 versus 3.89).

Figure 4 provides the analogous data for robbery. In this case, metropolitan area robbery rates are all much higher than nonmetropolitan rates, but the metro robbery rates in Louisiana are lower than that for metro areas in the southern region. Overall these data indicate that while murder rates are generally higher than the regional average in Louisiana during 2005, the latest year for which data are available, robbery rates were generally lower than the regional average.

It is likely that Hurricane Katrina affected UCR data reporting in 2005, and future fact sheets will examine the extent to which this factor is relevant to this report.

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