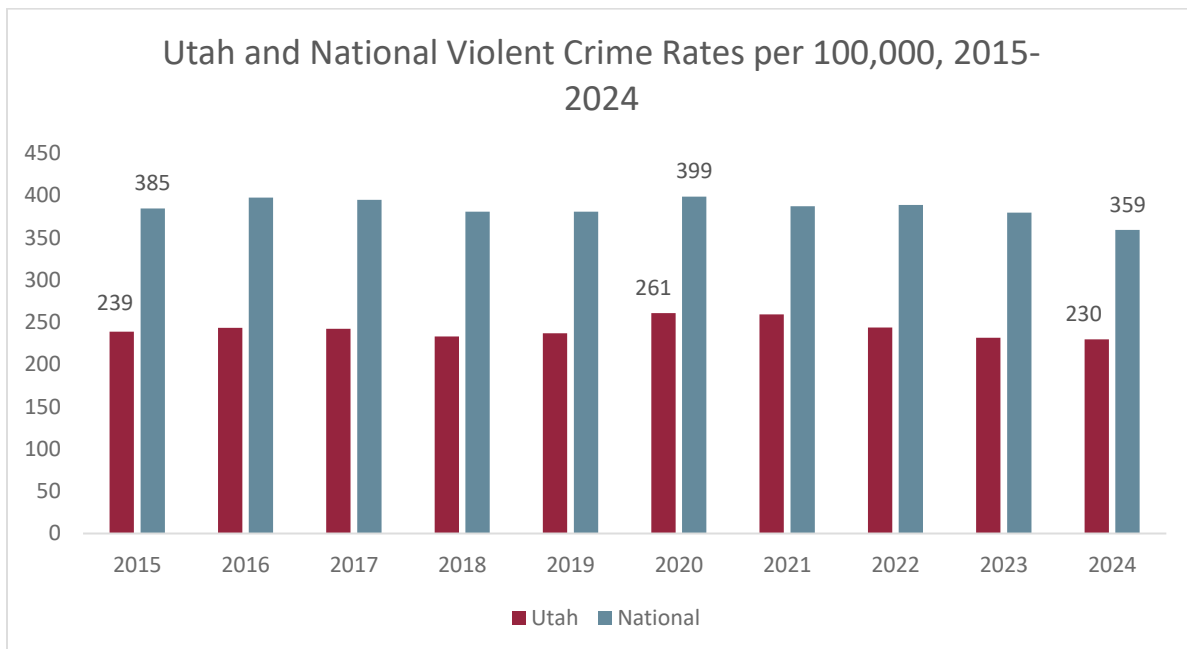


Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Violent Crime in Utah

How does Utah’s violent crime rate compare to the national rate?

- Utah’s violent crime rate has been **consistently lower** than the national violent crime rate.
- From 2015 to 2024, the national violent crime rate decreased by 7% while Utah’s violent crime rate decreased by 4%.



How has violent crime changed in Utah since the COVID-19 pandemic? Nationally?

- In 2020, Utah’s violent crime rate peaked but has **declined every year since**.
- Utah’s violent crime rate **decreased by 12%** from 2020 to 2024, while the national violent crime rate decreased by 10%.

Does increasing penalties deter violent crime?

- **No.** Longer prison sentences do little to deter crime, partly because individuals know little about sanctions for specific offenses. Evidence suggests that shorter sentences may deter, whereas longer sentences produce only modest deterrence, at best.
- **Longer sentences may increase recidivism.** Studies show that long sentences may exacerbate recidivism. Incarcerated individuals may become desensitized to prison as a punishment.

Are people on probation and parole contributing to more violent crime?

- **No.** Of those released to parole in FY2022, 18% returned to prison with a new conviction within 3 years of release, the lowest rate since FY2013. This rate has **decreased** since peaking at 27% in FY2017.
- **No.** Probationer rates of return to prison within three years of probation start was 10% in FY2022 – similar to those who started probation in FY2015 – indicating **there has not been an increase in new offenses committed by those on probation.** This rate has **decreased** since its peak of 14% in FY2016.

Did Utah's Smart on Crime policies release more violent offenders?

- **No.** Utah's prison system saw an **11% decrease** in releases from 2015 to 2024.
- **No.** Smart on Crime policies did not alter sentencing or release laws for violent offenses.

Has public safety changed since the 2015 Smart on Crime Policies?

- **Yes.** In 2024, Utah's violent crime rate was the lowest since 2015.
- **Yes.** In Utah, arrest rates for violent crime have increased 20% since 2015, while violent crime arrest rates decreased by 11% nationally.
- The use of prison beds for nonviolent offenses **decreased** from 41% in FY2015 to 28% in FY2025, permitting an increased focus on more violent offenders.

Sources:

CCJJ, JRI Update, Annual Report, 2025

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime Data Explorer

National Institute of Justice, Five Things About Deterrence, 2016