



Crime, Inequality & Public Safety

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Certain populations still face a number of challenges in obtaining equal pay, equal access to housing, health care and other basic necessities. Contributing factors, relevant statistics, and recommendations are included in the Pace of Progress 2020. Its goal is to shed light on the current conditions in Delaware's communities of color in areas such as housing, education, health, and employment.

The Crime, Inequality, & Public Safety section presented by Dillard, Lantz, & Nunley touches on the following:

- Violent Crime
- Juvenile & Adult Justice System
- Incarceration & Arrests
- Pretrial Reform
- Recidivism
- Safety and Victimization

FAST FACTS

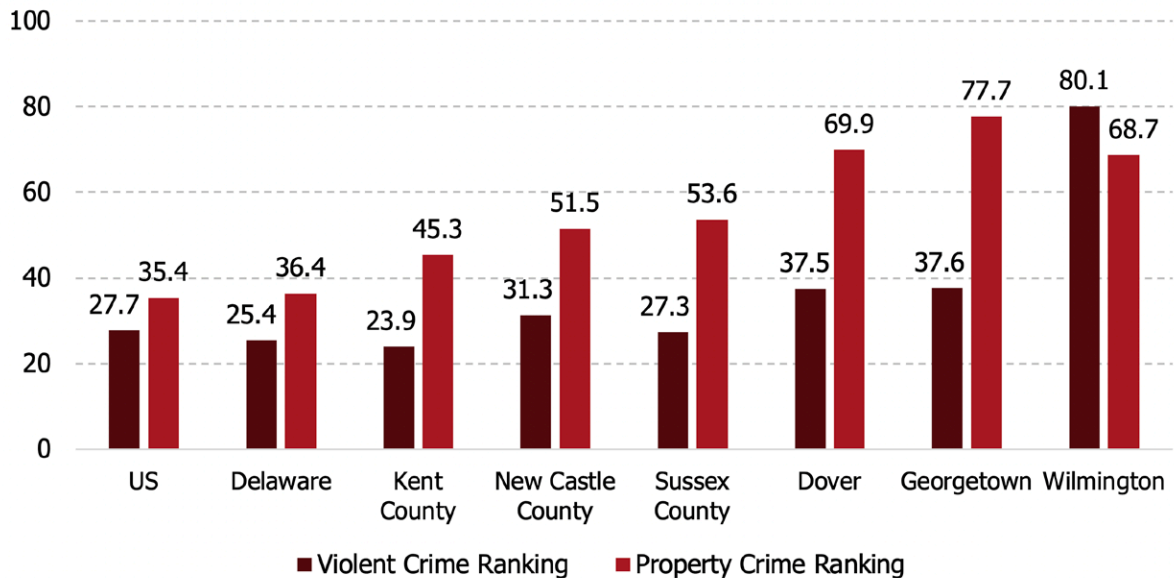
Bryan Stevenson, native Delawarean, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, and author of *Just Mercy*, aptly described the state of the American criminal justice system: "We have a criminal justice system that treats you better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent." It is no surprise that the United States has the highest incarceration rate among developed countries, including China, Russia, and Brazil in prison and jail populations.

VIOLENT CRIMES

Delaware, like many states, struggles with elevated rates of violence and crime. These social ills negatively influence public safety in communities, and shape overall quality of life for residents of the state of Delaware. Despite decreasing crime rates, particularly for violent crimes, Delaware continues to rank above the nation. Delaware's crime rate is 4.53 per 100,000 compared to the national rate of 4.0 per 100,000. The chart below provides an overview of the crime profile for the state using a ranking of 1 (low) and 100 (high) based on crime rates. Within Delaware, disparities exist in violent and property crime rankings at the county and city levels. For example, the city of Wilmington has the highest reported violent crime rates, reaching more than three times the state average. In 2017, Wilmington saw more gunshot wound victims in the state's history. Georgetown has higher property crime rates, at more than twice the state average. Property crimes include shoplifting, theft, arson, and vandalism.



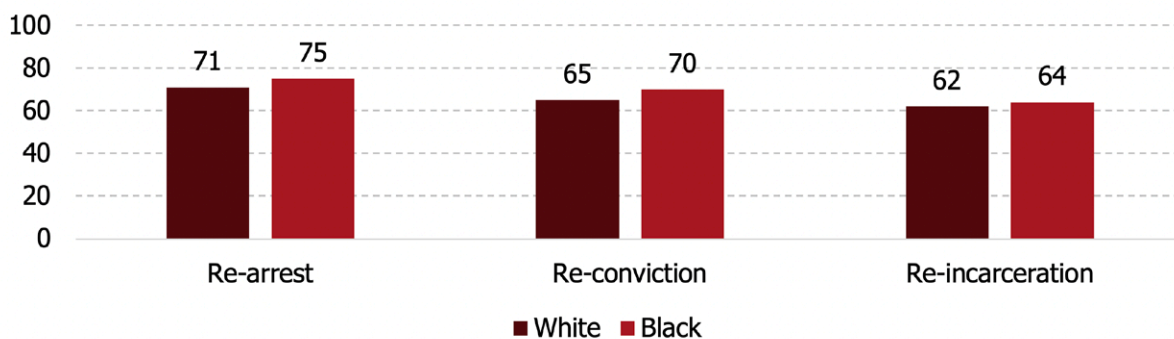
Crime Ranking by Location



RECIDIVISM

According to the ACLU’s Smart Justice Report, Delaware is less successful than other states at ensuring that people who leave prison do not-reoffend (ACLU, n.d.). Delaware Statistical Analysis Center reports a re-arrest rate of 73% of those individuals released from prison within 3 years of their release (Weidlein-Crist & Huenke, 2017), whereas the Smart Justice Report of a 30-state study found that the average rearrests rate was 68% after 3 years (ACLU, n.d.). Even starker, the Delaware reconviction rate is 68% within 3 years compared to an average of 45% in other states. As expected, the recidivism rate across all points is higher for Black than for White offenders.

Recidivism Rates by Race



RECOMMENDATIONS

The role that the criminal justice system plays in communities of color negatively impacts Black and Brown Delawareans across most life factors. More significantly, however, is the role of discrimination and institutional and structural racism across other systems. As indicated in other sections of this report, the disproportionate negative outcomes in education, employment, housing and other areas contribute to the overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Recommended strategies include:

- Track cases from arrest to disposition to allow for understanding of disproportionate representation by race, gender, jurisdiction, prior criminal record across both the juvenile and adult systems;
- Flag trends through longitudinal reporting in both the juvenile and adult systems;
- Commit to research-based policy development and data-based evaluation of existing juvenile and adult criminal justice policies;
- Transform Delaware's juvenile and adult criminal justice strategy to prioritize successful re-entry across all components of the system;
- Continue to build on the expansion of expungement for adult and juvenile records;
- Create racial and ethnic impact statements for all juvenile and adult criminal justice legislation;
- Examine enforcement and arrest policies to determine basis for minority overrepresentation;
- Examine court practices to better understand the role of court proceedings in minority over-representation;
- Shift prosecutor strategies to focus on justice, successful reentry, and communities;
- Invest in alternatives to prison;
- Shorten sentences, especially for non-violent offenses; and
- Create special commission charged with making recommendations for feasible reforms in areas of pre-trial, sentencing, and correction.



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