

Rochester Homicide Statistics for 2018

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Introduction

This report examines the number of homicides that occurred in the year 2018, focusing on the City of Rochester, NY. The report includes comparisons of homicide data collected from 24 cities, including Rochester, over time. The rate of homicides per 100,000 residents is reported in order to account for population differences among the various cities included. Due to the Uniform Crime Report not being updated for more than six months into the following year, this report is based on information provided by various news outlets and police department websites. Because of this, we anticipate that there will be small differences in counts when official data are released. This paper is updated and released annually to reflect yearly data.

This paper also aims to examine fluctuations in Rochester's homicide rate for the past 10 years. We also highlight the differences in homicide rates in 2017 and 2018 for 24 cities throughout the US. The comparisons made in this paper are important to analyze when looking for changes or patterns in homicide levels. Cross-city comparisons raise issues of similarity and differences that may guide understanding of violence levels across communities and illustrate change and stability over time.

Results

Rochester

In 2018 Rochester, NY had 28 reported homicides. This is one less homicide than 2017, and significantly lower than the 2016 homicide count (43). These numbers are somewhat encouraging. A homicide count of 28 is the second lowest yearly total over the last 10 years. It is important to note, however, that yearly fluctuations are a common feature of violence in most American cities. An example of such fluctuations for the City of Rochester can be found in Figure 1. Figure 1 reveals that over the last 10 years Rochester's homicide count has oscillated between 27 and 43 homicides per year.

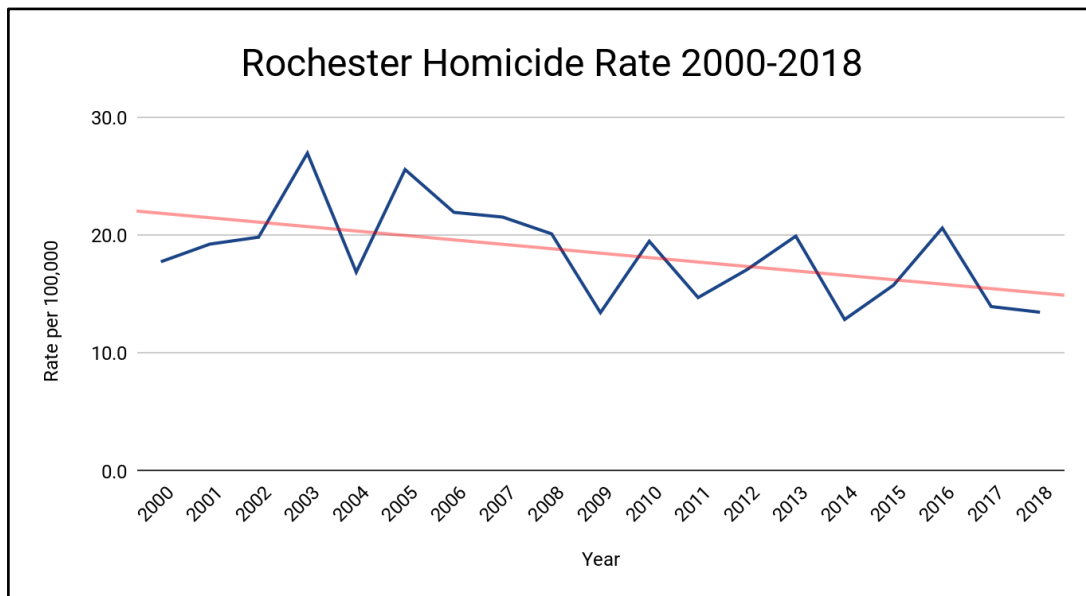
Figure 1.



Making comparisons over time, and with other cities, is aided by the use of homicide rates. An examination of homicide rates makes it possible to make comparisons in crime levels while taking city population into consideration. For this paper, US Census population estimates were used to calculate the rate of homicide per 100,000 residents.

Figure 2 looks at the Rochester homicide rate from 2000-2018. Although clear fluctuations are present, this figure shows a general decline in the Rochester homicide rate over the last 19 years. Importantly, this decline cannot be attributed to decreasing City population because comparisons of homicide rates takes population changes into account.¹

Figure 2.



Comparing Cities

Table 1 represents the homicide levels and percent changes from 2017 to 2018 in select cities across the country. This table allows us to see increases and decreases in homicide rates from last year. The cities with the largest increases between 2017 and 2018 are Buffalo, NY and Albany, NY, with year-to year rate increases of 32.89% and 46.59%, respectively. The cities with the largest decreases during 2017-2018 were Hartford, CT and Richmond, VA. It is also

¹ According to Census Estimates, the population of the city of Rochester decreased from 219,826 in 2000 to 208,046 in 2018.

important to note that during 2016-2017, Hartford, CT was among the cities with one of the largest increases in our sample of US cities. The spike in homicides in Hartford during 2016-2017 may account for the drastic decline that is seen in Table 1 for the current year.

Rochester, NY had a decrease in the homicide rate of 3.15% from 2017 to 2018. This is compared to a 32% decline in homicide rates in Rochester, NY from 2016 to 2017. Compared to the 24 cities in our sample, Rochester ranks 16 in homicide rate. Of the major metropolitan areas in the state of New York, only New York City had a lower homicide rate than Rochester in 2018. Buffalo, Syracuse, and Albany all had higher homicide rates than Rochester in 2018.

Table 1. United States City Homicide Number, Rate, and Percent Difference of Each for 2017/2018

City	2017 Homicides	2017 Population Estimate	2017 Homicide Rate	2018 Homicides	Current Population Estimate	2018 Homicide Rate	% Change Number	% Change Rate
1. St. Louis, MO	205	311,404	65.8	187	308,626	60.6	-9.63%	-8.65%
2. Detroit, MI	267	672,829	39.7	261	673,104	38.8	-2.30%	-2.34%
3. New Orleans, LA	157	391,495	40.1	146	393,292	37.1	-7.53%	-8.03%
4. Pittsburgh, PA	57	303,624	18.8	52	302,407	17.2	-9.62%	-9.18%
5. Cleveland, OH	130	383,810	33.9	129	385,525	33.5	-0.78%	-1.23%
6. Newark, NJ	70	281,770	24.8	77	285,154	27.0	9.09%	8.00%
7. Richmond, VA	67	223,170	30.0	56	227,032	24.7	-19.64%	-21.71%
8. Washington, DC	115	681,170	16.9	160	693,972	23.1	28.13%	26.77%
9. Buffalo, NY	38	256,908	14.8	57	258,612	22.0	33.33%	32.89%
10. Chicago, IL	664	2,704,965	24.5	561	2,716,000	20.7	-18.36%	-18.84%
11. Atlanta, GA	75	472,506	15.9	88	486,290	18.1	14.77%	12.29%
12. Oakland, CA	77	419,987	18.3	75	425,195	17.6	-2.67%	-3.94%
13. Hartford, CT	29	123,287	23.5	21	123,400	17.0	-38.10%	-38.22%
14. Syracuse, NY	21	143,378	14.6	23	143,396	16.0	8.70%	8.68%
15. Albany, NY	8	98,106	8.2	15	98,251	15.3	46.67%	46.59%
16. Rochester, NY	29	208,886	13.9	28	208,046	13.5	-3.57%	-3.15%
17. Dallas, TX	166	1,317,942	12.6	152	1,341,000	11.3	-9.21%	-11.12%
18. Anchorage, AK	35	298,192	11.7	28	294,356	9.5	-25.00%	-23.39%
19. Denver, CO	58	693,060	8.4	67	704,621	9.5	13.43%	11.99%
20. Colorado Springs, CO	38	465,084	8.2	38	464,474	8.2	0.00%	0.13%
21. Boston, MA	56	672,840	8.3	56	685,094	8.2	0.00%	-1.82%
22. Los Angeles, CA	282	3,976,324	7.1	256	4,000,000	6.4	-10.16%	-10.81%
23. Seattle, WA	27	704,358	3.8	31	724,745	4.3	12.90%	10.38%
24. New York City, NY	290	8,537,673	3.4	289	8,623,000	3.4	-0.35%	-1.35%

Comparing US Homicide Rates among Cities with Similar Populations

In our sample of US cities, we have compared homicide rates among cities of similar population sizes. As stated earlier in this report, Rochester, NY has a current a population estimate of 208,046. We have compared Rochester, NY with cities that have a population below 250,000 in Figure 3. In Figure 3 we see that among the five cities with population sizes below 250,000, Rochester, NY had the lowest homicide rate at 13.5 homicides per 100,000 residents. This is a change from the previous year, where Albany, NY ranked the lowest with a homicide rate of 8 per 100,000 for 2016-2017.

Due to Albany’s dramatic increase, Rochester now has the lowest homicide rate of cities with a similar population from our sample. Albany, NY, Syracuse, NY, and Hartford, CT all range between a 15.0 and 17.0 homicide rate. Although the homicide rate for Richmond, VA did decrease from the previous year, it still remains the highest homicide rate for cities in the sample with a population under 250,000.

Figure 3.

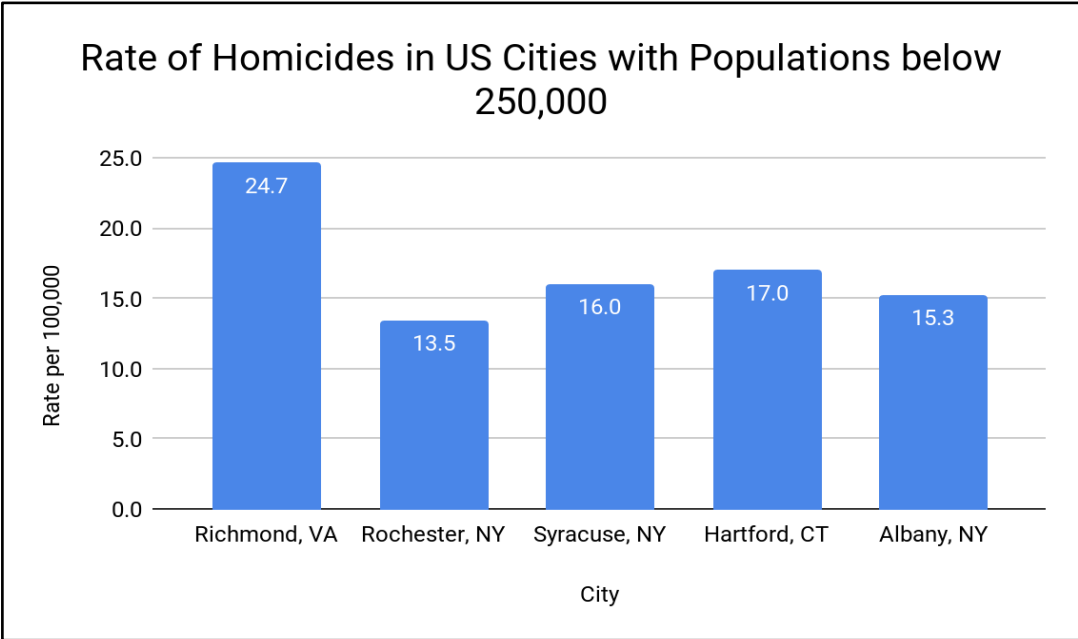


Figure 4 below is a comparison of seven cities with populations between 250,000-400,000. St Louis, Missouri stands out with the highest homicide rate in 2018 in this chart, and for all of the 24 cities evaluated in this report. There is substantial variation in homicide levels for cities examined in Figure 4, with Anchorage reporting a rate of 9.5 per 100,000 and St. Louis reporting a rate of 60.6 per 100,000.

Figure 4.

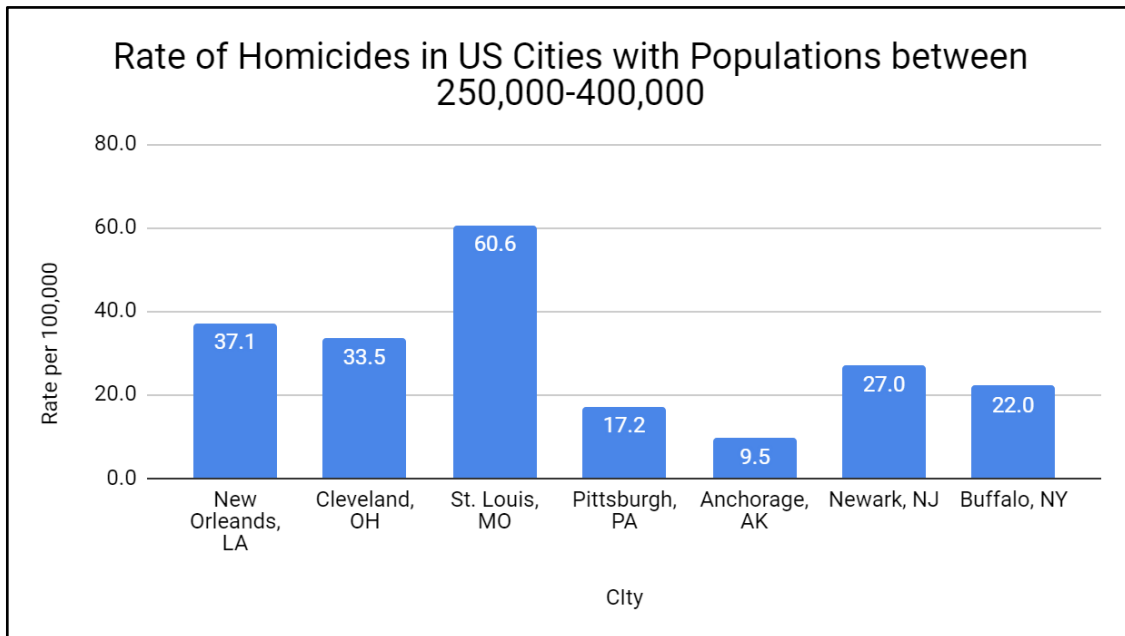
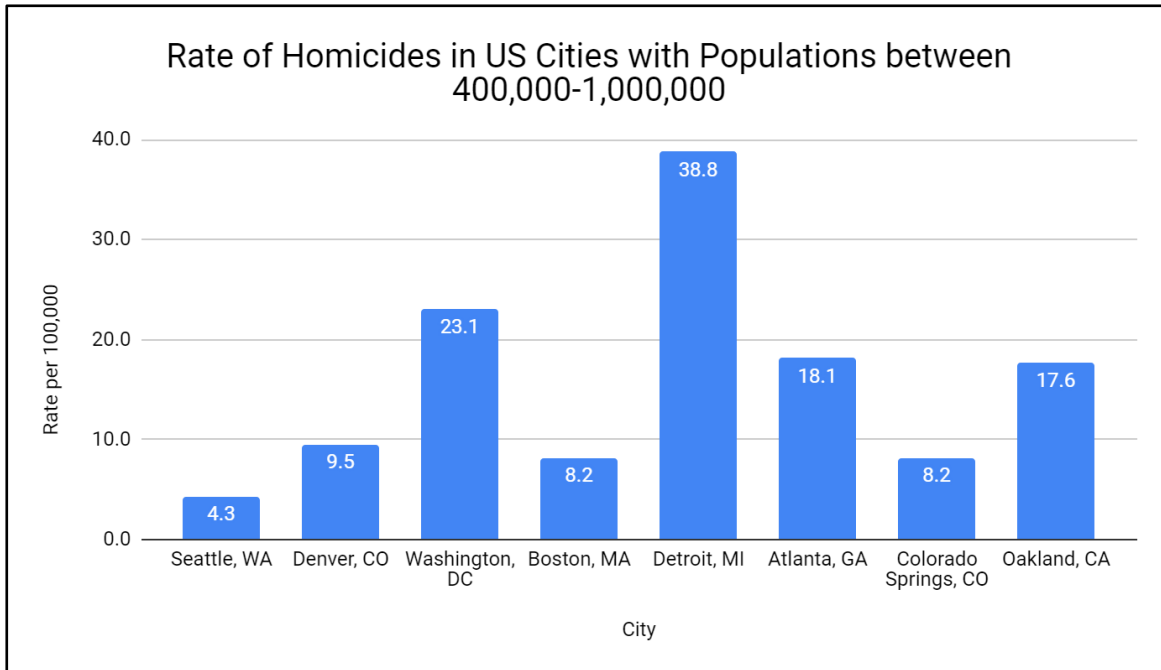


Figure 5 shows homicide rates for cities with populations between 400,000 and 1,000,000. Again, there is substantial variation in homicide rates among cities examined in this figure. The homicide rate in Seattle is 4.3 per 100,000, making it one of two cities in our sample with a homicide rate that is lower than the national average. Detroit, Michigan, on the other hand, had a 2018 homicide rate of 38.8 per 100,000.

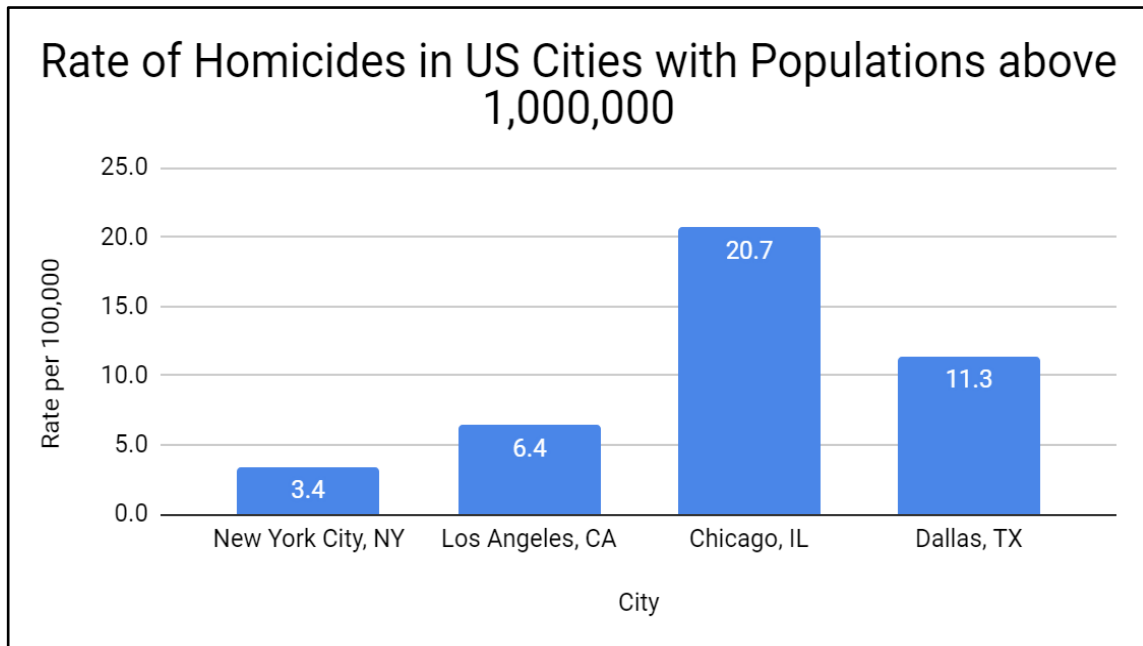
Figure 5.



In Figure 6 we examine cities with over 1,000,000 inhabitants. We see that Chicago, Illinois has the highest homicide rate among these cities. The New York City homicide rate of 3.4 is less than the national average of 5.4.² In 2018, there were 289 homicides in NYC, which is the second highest number of homicides of the 24 cities we compared. However, when NYC's large population is accounted for, it has the lowest homicide rate. This suggests that city population alone may not be a driver of violence levels.

² That national homicide rate is calculated by dividing the total number of homicides that occur in the United States in a given year, dividing that number by the total national population, and multiplying that quotient by 100,000. This national rate combines homicide rates in urban, suburban, and rural areas to provide a general picture of violence in America. Because a larger proportion of the American population resides in suburban and rural areas than urban areas, and the homicide rate is lower in suburban and rural areas than in urban areas, it is common for most cities to have a higher homicide rate than the national average. The fact that both Seattle and New York have lower homicide rates than the national average demonstrates the remarkably low (for American standards) homicide rates in those cities.

Figure 6.



Conclusion

This objective of this paper was to analyze homicide rates and yearly change in homicides across the United States, with an in depth focus on Rochester, NY. It is important to emphasize that fluctuations in yearly homicide data across cities is a common feature of violence in America. Thus, while year-to-year changes in violence are important indicators of the state of violence in a particular jurisdiction, and each life saved is intrinsically valuable, a change in year-to-year violence rates for a particular city is not necessary indicative of a trend. The data presented here provide a snapshot of violence in the cities that were examined, but do not provide any information concerning the broader context in which the violence occurred.

The fact that there is substantial variation in homicide across cities begs the question of why some cities are more violent than others. A complete explanation is beyond the scope of this paper, but these differences are likely driven by (1) the presence or absence of social conditions (i.e. poverty, social disadvantage, segregation, collective efficacy) that are conducive to high

levels of violence; and/or the ability of particular jurisdictions to implement justice related policy and practice that decreases rates of violence.

CPSI has conducted this study for the last few years. In the fall, when the Federal Bureau of Investigations releases the updated homicide statistics for 2018 we will compare the accuracy of our numbers against theirs. We hope that the data presented here will aid agency leaders and policy makers in their attempts to evaluate current strategies being used to reduce violence.

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