

Each year from 2004 to 2015, U.S. residents experienced an average of 250,000 hate crime victimizations. There was no statistically significant change in the rate of violent hate crime victimization (0.7 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) during that time.

Defining hate crimes

The Hate Crime Statistics Act defines hate crimes as those “that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, gender or gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” The Bureau of Justice Statistics’ National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) measures crimes perceived by victims to be motivated by an offender’s bias against them for belonging to or being associated with a group largely identified by these characteristics. It is one of the two principal sources of annual information on U.S. hate crimes that uses this definition. Unlike the FBI data, which is based on hate crimes known to law enforcement, the NCVS includes hate crimes both reported and unreported to police.

Hate crime motivation and evidence

During the 5-year aggregated period from 2011 to 2015, nearly half (48%) of hate crime victimizations were motivated by racial bias. About a third of victims believed they were targeted because of their ethnicity (35%) or gender (30%). More than a fifth of victims believed the hate crime was motivated by persons or groups they were associated with (23%) or their sexual orientation (22%). About 17% of hate crime victimizations were believed to be motivated by the victim’s religion, and 16% were motivated by the victim’s disability.

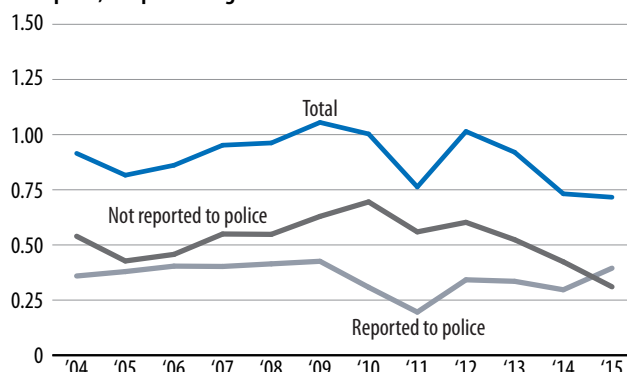
The NCVS requires one of three types of evidence in order to classify a victimization as a hate crime. In almost all hate crime victimizations (99%) during 2011-15, the offender’s use of hate language was evidence that the crime was motivated by hate. In 7% of hate crime victimizations, the incident was confirmed to be a hate crime by police investigators. In 5% of hate crime victimizations, the offender left hate symbols at the scene.

Types of crimes and police involvement

The majority (90%) of hate crimes during 2011-15 involved violence, and about 29% were serious violent crimes (rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault). Overall, violent crime accounted for a higher percentage of hate

Violent hate crime victimizations reported and not reported to police, 2004–2015

Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older



Note: Hate crime includes incidents confirmed by police as bias-motivated and incidents perceived by victims to be bias-motivated because the offender used hate language or left behind hate symbols. Estimates based on 2-year rolling averages centered on the most recent year.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2004–2015.

(90%) than nonhate (25%) victimizations. About two-thirds (62%) of hate crimes were simple assault, and about a third of hate crimes were either aggravated assault (18%), robbery (8%), or theft (7%).

More than half (54%) of hate crime victimizations were not reported to police during 2011-15. The most common reason victims didn’t report to police was that the victimization was handled another way (41%), such as privately or through a non-law enforcement official. Violent nonhate (28%) crimes reported to police were nearly three times more likely to result in an arrest than violent hate (10%) crimes.

Victim demographics

During 2011-15, males (0.9 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) and females (0.8 per 1,000) had similar rates of hate crime victimization. Hispanics (1.3 per 1,000) experienced a higher rate of violent hate victimization than non-Hispanic whites (0.7 per 1,000). Persons in households in the lowest income bracket (\$24,999 or less) had the highest rate of victimization when compared to all other income categories.

The full report (*Hate Crime Victimization, 2004-2015*, NCJ 250653), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.

