Crime Rate

Crime rates are both a predictor and a consequence of important economic and social indicators such as drug use, perceived and actual levels of safety, economic conditions, and changing demographics. Crime rate data was obtained from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program. The program is a nationwide, cooperative, statistical collection system that includes nearly 17,000 city, county, and state law enforcement agencies, which voluntarily report crime data for their jurisdictions. These statistics are used to compile a Crime Index that measures fluctuations in the overall volume and rate of crime. The Crime Index aggregates eight offenses, including the violent crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, as well as the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.¹

Number of Crimes

- 12,971 crimes in the SouthCoast were reported to police in 2011; 2,595 (20.0%) violent crimes and 10,376 (80.0%) non-violent crimes.
- Property crimes such as larceny/theft (6,724 crimes or 51.8%) and burglary (2,760 crimes or 21.3%) accounted for the majority of crimes in the SouthCoast.
- Fall River and New Bedford accounted for 67.6 percent of the total crimes reported in the region, while the two cities accounted for 54.1 percent of the SouthCoast’s total population.

Figure 1

Number of Reported Crimes in the SouthCoast, 2011

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program

¹ One of the limitations of the UCR is that the data reports crimes known to police, that is, crimes that are reported. However, for various reasons, not all victims report crimes and thus the actual number of crimes committed are higher than what is reported.
Trends

The number of crimes reported in the SouthCoast increased by 14.9% from 2000 to 2011, although they have declined by 3.6% since 2005 (see Figure 2).

- The 2011 estimated violent crime total is 33.5% above the 2000 level but 2.2% below the 2005 level.
- The 2011 property crime total is 11.3% above the 2000 level but 3.9% below the 2005 level.

Figure 2
Trends in the Number of Reported Crimes

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program
Crime Rates

The crime rate measures the number of crimes per 100,000 persons. While crime rates have declined at the state and national levels since 2000, the crime rate in the SouthCoast has increased over this period. The SouthCoast crime rate increased by 8.0% from 2000 to 2011, but has declined by 4.1% since 2005.

While crime rates have declined in the SouthCoast and at the national and state levels since 1995, the crime rate in the SouthCoast has been steadily increasing since 2000, which has been fueled primarily by violent crimes. Conversely, crime rates continued to decline statewide and nationally over this period. Overall, the SouthCoast’s Crime rate increased by 4.8 percent from 1999 to 2009, while the crime rate declined by 15.4 percent statewide and 18.8 percent nationally over this period.

Figure 3
Crime Rate: 2000 to 2011 (Crimes Per 100,000 Persons)

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program
Violent Crime Rate

Two sub-indices have been created to track violent crimes and property crimes. The violent crime rate includes murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. As the accompanying chart shows, the SouthCoast’s violent crime rate is considerably higher than the state and national violent crime rates and increased by 9.7 percent from 1999 to 2009. In comparison, the violent crime rate declined by 17.1 percent statewide and by 18.0 percent nationally over this period.

Figure 4
Violent Crime Rate: 2000 to 2011 (Crimes Per 100,000 Persons)

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program

Property Crime Rate

The property crime index includes burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. The SouthCoast’s property crime rate has remained relatively stable since 2003, while property crime rates declined statewide and nationally over this period. The SouthCoast’s property crime rate increased by 3.6 percent from 1999 to 2009, while the property crime rate declined by 15.0 percent statewide and by 18.9 percent nationally over this period.

Figure 5
Property Crime Rate: 2000 to 2011 (Crimes Per 100,000 Persons)

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program