Methodology and Sourcing

May 2022

Local Budgets and Police Expenditure in the Top 25 Cities: Methodology

Each city budget is unique—organized according to local convention—and is publicly available online on the city's website in a PDF document or, occasionally, in a downloadable or searchable file. There is no up to date (i.e., Fiscal Year 2022) national database of city budgets to gather this information nationally.

Most cities' police budget data includes the city's general fund spending on policing (i.e., allocations made entirely from the city's own expenditures), as well as external sources of funding, including state and federal funds. To reflect an accurate proportion of funds spent on a city's police budget compared to its total annual budget, all total city budget numbers reflect the city's general fund spending in addition to all external sources of funding.

At the time of publication in February 2022, all recorded cities have posted their adopted budgets for FY2021, which spans a 12-month period that often begins in July 2020. Because the most recently published data for each city only reflects the adopted budgets, not the actual budgets calculated after the fiscal year, we opted to use FY 2020 actual budget data for all cities in order to reflect the most accurate data available.

For each city, we have included a link to the budget book or open data source. (See Appendix B below.)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Statistical Briefing Book Crime Reported Definition

Crime data is based on estimated number of arrests by offense, gender, and race. For 2000-2014, data was developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and disseminated through 'Arrest Data Analysis Tool.' Online. Available from the BJS website. Arrest estimates for 2015-2019 were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice based on data published in the FBI's Crime in the United States reports.

FBI Crime Reported Definition

Crime reported by The Bureau represents offenses known. "Law enforcement agencies tabulate the number of Part I offenses brought to their attention based on records of all reports of crime received from victims, officers who discover infractions, or other sources, and submit them each month to the FBI either directly or through their state UCR Programs. Part I offenses include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson...When, through investigation, an agency determines that complaints of crimes are unfounded or false, the agency eliminates that offense from its crime tally through an entry on the monthly report".[1]

FBI Crime Statistics Caution

"Each year when *Crime in the United States* is published, some entities use the figures to compile rankings of cities and counties. These rough rankings provide no insight into the numerous variables that mold crime in a particular town, city, county, state, tribal area, or region. Consequently, they lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting communities and their residents. Valid assessments are possible only with careful study and analysis of the range of unique conditions affecting each local law enforcement jurisdiction."[2]

FBI Hate Crime Definition

"The Hate Crime Statistics Program of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program collects data regarding criminal offenses that were motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against the victim's race/ethnicity/ancestry, gender, gender identity, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and were committed against persons, property, or society. Because motivation is subjective, it is sometimes difficult to know with certainty whether a crime resulted from the offender's bias. Moreover, the presence of bias alone does not necessarily mean that a crime can be considered a hate crime. Only when a law enforcement investigation reveals sufficient evidence to lead a reasonable and prudent person to conclude that the offender's *actions* were motivated, in whole or in part, by his or her bias, should an agency report an incident as a hate crime."[3]

---

[1]Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Justice Information Services Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime in the United States, 2019, Methodology; https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/methodology
[2]Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime in the United States; https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/cius-summary
[3]Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Hate Crime Statistics; https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/resource-pages/methodology

5/24/2022

Appendix: A

National and City Crime, Earnings, Police, and Population Sources

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Crime Data Explorer (CDE)	https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/pages/le/pe
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program	https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Statistical Briefing Book, Gender Arrests	https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/ucr.asp?table_in=1
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Statistical Briefing Book, Race Arrests	https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/ucr.asp?table_in=2
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis	https://fred.stlouisfed.org/
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Data Finder	https://beta.bls.gov/dataQuery/search
U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS)	https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html
U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division	https://www.census.gov/topics/population.html
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, Criminal Victimization	https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/list?series_filter=Criminal%20Victimization

5/24/2022

Appendix B

Budget Sources

Austin	TX	https://financeonline.austintexas.gov/afo/afo_content.cfm?s=1&p=57
Boston	MA	https://www.boston.gov/departments/budget
Charlotte	NC	https://charlottenc.gov/budget/Pages/default.aspx
Chicago	IL	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/obm/supp_info/budgetdocuments.html
Columbus	OH	https://www.columbus.gov/finance/financial-management-group/Budget-Management/
Dallas	TX	https://dallascityhall.com/departments/budget/financialtransparency/Pages/Prior-Budgets.aspx
Denver	CO	https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Department-of-Finance/Our-Divisions/Budget-Management-Office-BMO/City-Budget
Detroit	MI	https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-budget
El Paso	TX	https://www.elpasotexas.gov/omb/city-budget/overview/
Fort Worth	TX	https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/planning-data-analytics/budget
Houston	TX	http://www.houstontx.gov/budget/
Indianapolis	IN	https://www.indy.gov/activity/city-and-county-budget
Jacksonville	FL	https://www.coj.net/departments/finance/budget
Los Angeles	CA	https://lacontroller.org/budgets/
Nashville	TN	https://www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/management-and-budget/citizens-guide-budget/documents-and-resources
New York	NY	https://council.nyc.gov/budget/
Oklahoma City	OK	https://www.okc.gov/departments/finance/financial-and-budget-reports/budget-and-tax-reports
Philadelphia	PA	https://phlcouncil.com/tag/budget-fy2020/
Phoenix	AZ	https://www.phoenix.gov/Budget/Library
San Antonio	TX	https://www.sanantonio.gov/Budget/Budget-Archives#187461997-prior-to-2017
San Diego	CA	https://www.sandiego.gov/finance/annual/
San Francisco	CA	https://sfmayor.org/archived-budget-documents
San Jose	CA	https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/budget/budget-documents
Seattle	WA	https://www.seattle.gov/city-budget-office/budget-archives
Washington	DC	https://cfo.dc.gov/page/current-and-past-fiscal-year-budgets