

# Colorado Crime Update: Colorado 8<sup>th</sup> in Violent Crime, 4<sup>th</sup> in Property Crime, 4<sup>th</sup> in Auto Theft

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation recently revised its national crime data to reflect latecomer reports from police agencies. In doing so, it was revealed that the national violent crime rate rose in 2023 rather than fell. CSI is presenting the FBI's Colorado's crime data to firmly establish the Centennial State's trends, which remain largely unchanged as a result of the update.

Crucially, crime is not just a social ill but an economic one. Previous CSI findings have highlighted the negative economic consequences of crime. In 2022, the tangible and intangible costs of Colorado's crime totaled \$4,623 per Coloradan.

## Key Findings

- Even though Colorado's violent crime rate came down in 2023 from a peak in 2022, it is still at an elevated rate equivalent to the average rate of violent crime during the mid-nineteen nineties (1994 and 1995)
- It again has the 8<sup>th</sup>-highest violent crime rate among U.S. states and the District of Columbia, the same ranking as in 2022.
- Colorado's violent crime rate came down in 2023 from a peak in 2022.
- While Colorado's property crime rate came down in 2023 from a peak in 2022, it is still a top ten state with the nation's 4<sup>th</sup>-highest property crime rate.
- Colorado ranks 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for auto theft, down from #1 in 2021.

## Violent and Property Crime

Colorado's violent crime rates have been elevated for three years following a steady upward rise beginning in the early 2010s. Violent crime reached its lowest rate in the FBI's records in 2013, with 305 violent crimes per 100,000. That rose to 401 by 2018.

Violent crime rates rose quickly after 2019. By 2022, there were 500 violent crimes per 100,000 in Colorado. Between 2021 and 2023, the average violent crime rate in Colorado was 485 per 100,000, which is slightly higher than the average violent crime rate from 1994 and 1995. Both homicide rates and aggravated assault rates conform to this trend. At 475 per 100,000, Colorado had the nation's 8<sup>th</sup> highest violent crime rate in 2023. This is the same rank it held in 2022.

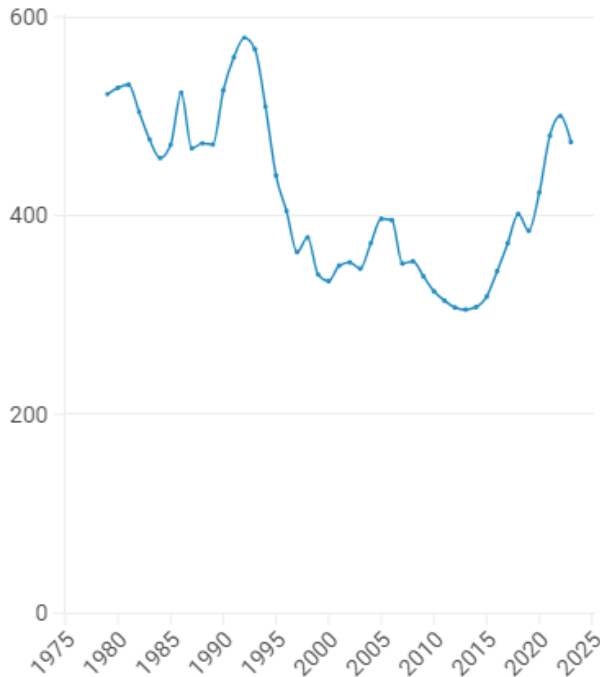
Property crime rates have been falling in Colorado since 1979, when there were 6,259 property crimes per 100,000.

From 2010 to 2019, the property crime rate was an average 2,657 per 100,000, which was about half the property crime rate of 1991. They climbed to 3,174 in 2022, then fell again in 2023 to slightly above the 2010s average.

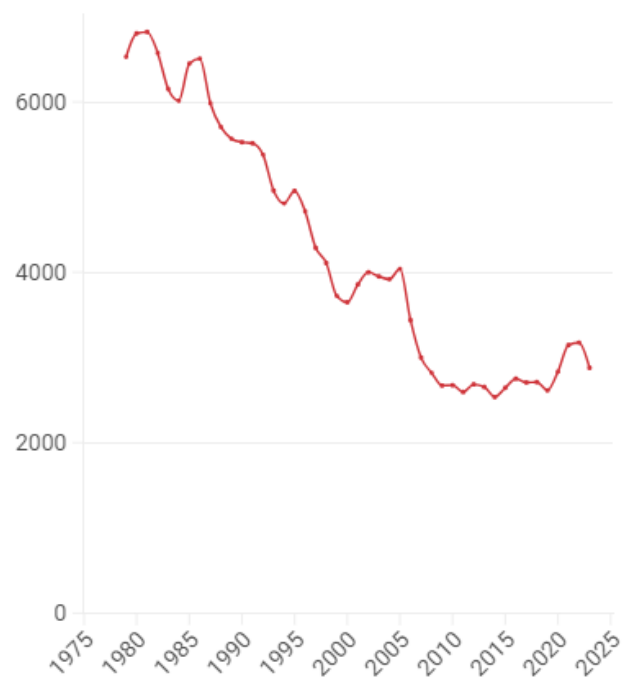
However, property crime rates have been declining elsewhere as well, and at a faster rate than Colorado's. Colorado's property crime rate was 2,879 per 100,000 in 2023, which is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest property crime rate among U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

## Colorado Crime Rates

Violent Crime Per 100,000



Property Crime Per 100,000



Source: FBI



## Motor Vehicle Theft

Motor vehicle theft has been a notable problem in Colorado since 2020. At one point the state claimed the highest motor vehicle theft rate in the nation. This prompted the state's General Assembly to revise a law that gave different penalties for auto theft based on the vehicle's value. Now, auto theft carries the same penalty regardless of value. Locally, the City of Aurora increased penalties for auto theft.

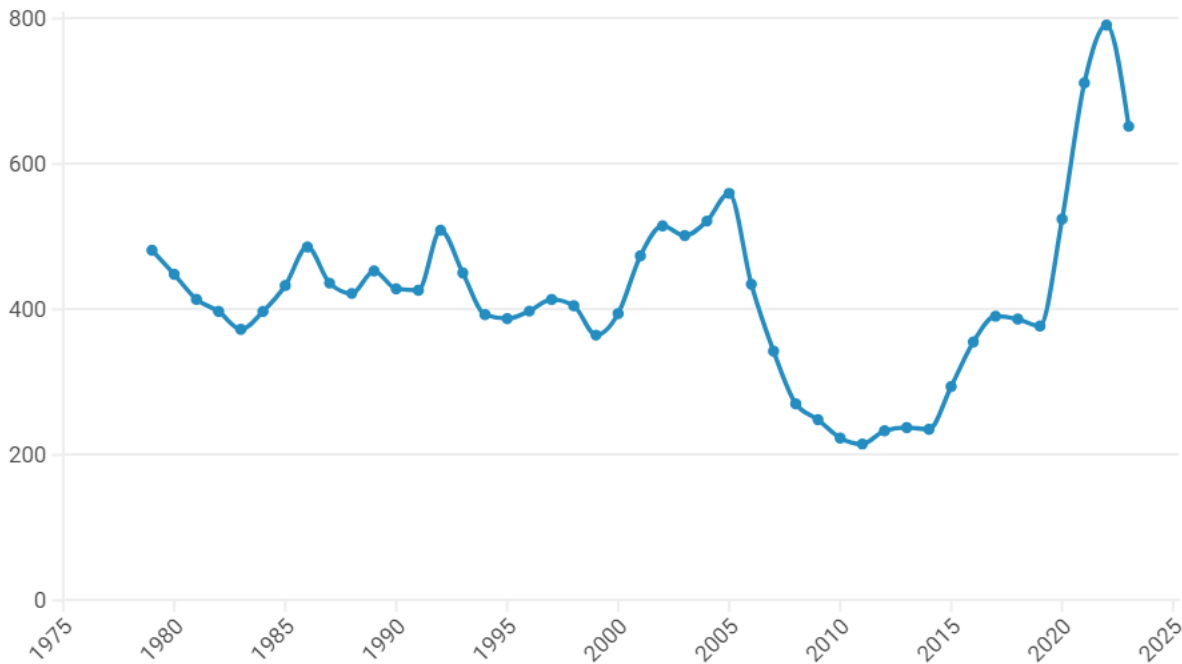
This change in policy has accompanied an improvement in auto theft rates.

In 2021, the auto theft rate was 791, the highest on record by far. That fell in 2023 to 652. Colorado now has the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> highest auto theft rate

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## Colorado Motor Vehicle Theft Rate By Year

Motor Vehicle Theft per 100,000



Source: FBI



## Bottom Line

Colorado's crime improved slightly in 2023, but levels remain some of the highest on record or highest in the nation.

Colorado's violent crime rate, which remained the nation's 8<sup>th</sup>-highest, has slightly dipped from a 2022 peak. Between 2021 and 2023, violent crime levels have been equivalent to 1994 and 1995. Meanwhile, while property crime has come down and remains at historically low levels. Colorado's property crime rate is the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> highest, as property crime rates have improved elsewhere since 1979.

Colorado's auto theft is improving, with a 21% decrease in auto theft rates from 2021 to 2023. Officials' steps to increase penalties may have contributed to Colorado moving from the nation's highest auto theft rate to its 4<sup>th</sup>-highest in 2023. The City of Aurora implemented mandatory minimum sentences for auto thefts as well, which preceded a local drop in auto thefts.

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State leaders should continue efforts to reduce crime, as Colorado's rates are high both historically and compared to the rest of the U.S.