

Alaska's rate of sexual assault is four times national average, according to latest FBI numbers

By

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A police crime lab and Anchorage Police Department officers investigating a homicide in 2016. (Photo: Zachariah Hughes, Alaska Public Media – Anchorage)

New data from the FBI show that violent crime in Alaska increased last year. Though reports of crime nationally are generally on the decline, by most measures Alaska is bucking that trend. The state also continues to have the highest rate of sexual assault in the nation.

The FBI recently released the latest numbers from its [Uniform Crime Reporting Program](#). The figures are collected from law enforcement agencies all around the country, giving a broad picture of crime at the national, [state](#), and [even municipal](#) levels. By several important metrics, Alaska is going in the opposite direction as the rest of the country.

Though violent crime is down 3 percent nation-wide, in Alaska it increased by the same three percentage points from 2017 to 2018. And Alaskans experience violent crimes like murder and assault at more than twice the rate as the average American, 885 per 100,000 in Alaska, versus 380.6 per 100,000 nationally.

It's a similar story with sexual assault. Alaska saw an 11 percent increase in the number of sexual assaults reported to law enforcement, much higher than the 2.7 percent uptick nationally. But the rate at which Alaskans report sexual assaults is nearly four times as high as the U.S. as a whole: 161.6 per 100,000, compared to 42.6 nationally.

In contrast, the number of murders fell significantly by 24 percent in the state, from 62 in 2017 to 47 in 2018, more than half of which, 26, occurred in Anchorage. At 6.4 percent, Alaska's homicide rate is still above the national average of 5 percent, but lower than several other states.

And in Alaska, reports of property crime fell by 7.1 percent, not dramatically different from declines nationally in crimes like burglary and car-theft, 6.3 percent.

According to the FBI, state law enforcement agencies reported seven separate incidents of hate crimes in Alaska during 2018. Four of those were based on a bias against the victim's race or ethnicity, and were reported in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Kotzebue. Two incidents in Juneau centered on religion, and another report of bias over a person's disability status in Fairbanks was also cited by the Bureau. That's an increase over 2017, which saw just four reports of hate crimes, but lower than the 11 logged by law enforcement agencies in 2016 in Alaska.