

Crime Victims' Institute releases report on victimization in Texas

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The Crime Victims' Institute studies the impact of crime on victims, their friends, families, and society and makes policy recommendations to the Texas Legislature and victim advocacy groups. Credit: Harriet McHale/SHSU

The Crime Victims' Institute (CVI) released a summary of key indicators of victimization in Texas, which reflects changes in reported incidents, service utilization, and offender accountability over the last five years.

"We hope you will join us in our efforts to bring attention to these types of victimizations and those individuals affected by them in order to increase victim safety and hold offenders accountable for their actions," said Leana Bouffard, Director of the CVI at Sam Houston State University.

The 2016 Crime Victims' Institute Dashboard monitors trends in victimization across Texas between 2010 and 2015. The information can be used to strengthen intervention policies and practices, to implement prevention strategies, and to revise existing policies and programs to aid victims and survivors. Among the findings are:

- The number and rate of rape incidents and the number of college campuses reporting rapes were considerably higher in 2015 when compared to 2010 (This may be due, in part, to an expansion of the definition of rape in 2014)
- In 2015, the rate of rape incidents reported to police in Texas was 44.4 per 100,000, compared to 39.3 per 100,000 for the U.S. The Texas rate was 13 percent higher than the U.S. rate
- The number of intimate partner homicides reported was 20.4 percent higher in 2015 than they were in 2010
- The number of hate crime incidents rose 13 percent between 2010 and 2015
- There were 285 human trafficking incidents reported in 2015, the first year the crime was added to statewide [crime](#) reports from the Texas Department of Public Safety

The report also found a 10.8 percent decrease in the number of child physical and sexual abuse incidents reported over the last five years, and child fatalities affiliated with abuse/neglect also dropped 30 percent during this time period. In addition, investigations of elder abuse and maltreatment also declined.

Fewer adults and children sought assistance from shelters and hotlines over the last five years, but it is unclear whether the 10 percent drop indicates fewer people needing services or more individuals who are reluctant to access services. The number of victims who receive notification and participate in victim-offender mediation also increased between 2010 and 2015.

Finally, all indicators of offender accountability, including the clearance rate for forcible rape and the percentage of cases with a conviction, declined over the last five years.

Although the survey represents reported cases in Texas, many [crime victims](#) do not report incidents to police, especially those involving intimate, family, and sexual violence. Victims are often reluctant to report for a variety of reasons, which may include fear of reprisal, financial dependence on the offender, or fear of the criminal justice system response.

"It is important to remember that these numbers reflect only those incidents reported, while a vast amount of victimization goes unrecognized," Bouffard said.

"The 2016 Crime Victims' Dashboard," by Bouffard and Sara B. Zedaker, is available at the Crime Victims' Institute at www.crimevictimsinstitute.org/publications/

Provided by Sam Houston State University

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