

African-American Homicide Rate Nearly Quadruple the National Average



By Alex Berezow, PhD — August 10, 2017



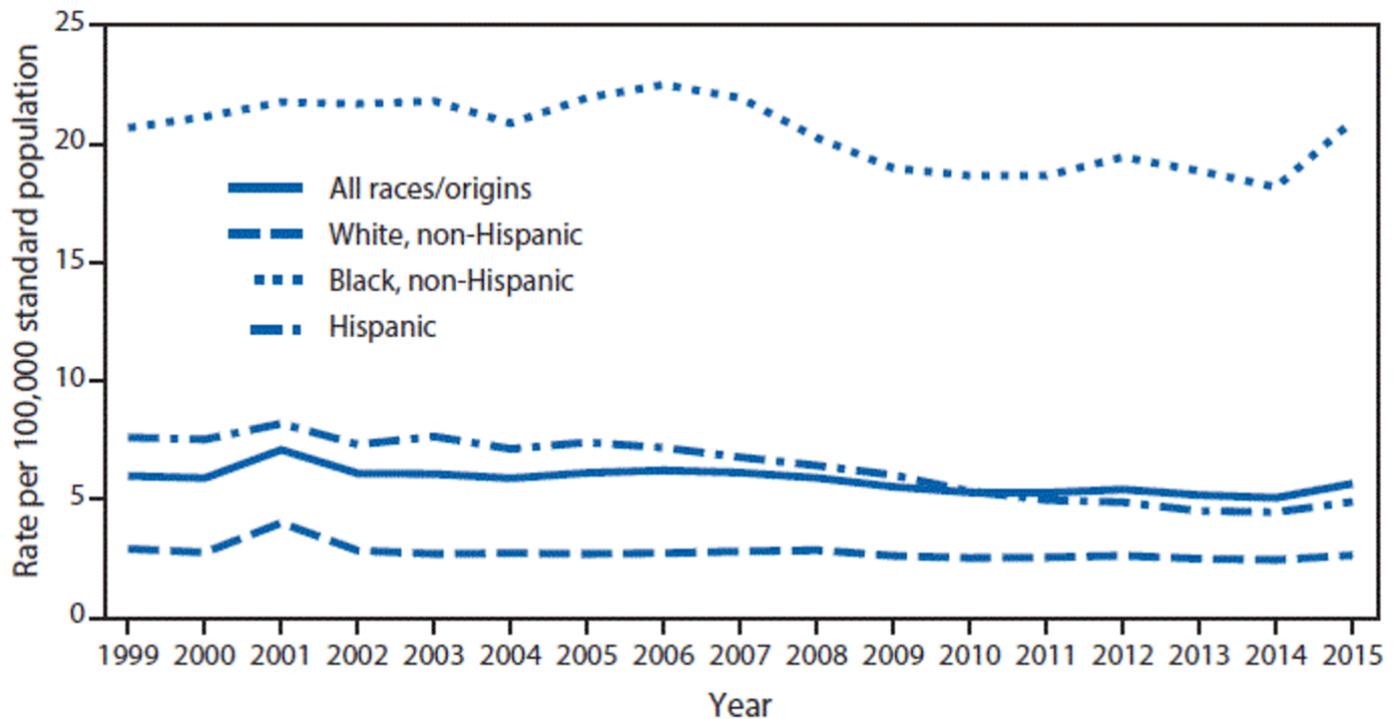
Gateway to murder. (Credit: Wikipedia)

[1]

Murders in America have increased recently. This has been made horrifyingly obvious by the tragic nightly news stories coming from Chicago, a city whose homicide rate has skyrocketed in the last few years. (The homicide rate in Chicago is a legitimate [hockey stick graph](#) [2].)

The homicide rate in Chicago, though extremely alarming, is not the nation's worst for a large city. That dubious distinction goes to St. Louis. Other cities with higher homicide rates than Chicago include Memphis, Baltimore, New Orleans, Detroit, Cleveland, and Birmingham. (*The Economist* has an excellent [interactive graphic](#) [3] that compares the homicide rate in 50 of America's most violent cities.)

Now, the CDC has provided additional data, showing homicide rates in America by race. (See below.)



The CDC confirms that, following an extended period of general decline, the overall homicide rate -- as well as the homicide rate within each racial group -- has increased from 2014 to 2015. In 2015, the homicide rates were (per 100,000 population):

- 20.9 for blacks (non-Hispanic)
- 4.9 for Hispanics
- 2.6 for whites (non-Hispanic)
- 5.7 for all races

Compared to the national average, the homicide rate was 54% lower for whites, 14% lower for Hispanics, and 267% higher for blacks. Put another way, the homicide rate among African-Americans is nearly quadruple that of the national average.

Last year, President Obama highlighted the importance of this issue. He [said](#) [4], "The single greatest cause of death for young black men between the ages of 18 and 35 is homicide. And that's crazy. That is crazy." Actually, it's worse than that. According to the [CDC](#) [5], homicide is the #1 cause of death for African-Americans in all age groups from 15 to 34 (i.e., 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 34).

[Source](#) [6]: "QuickStats: Age-Adjusted Rates for Homicides, by Race/Ethnicity— United States, 1999–2015." *MMWR* 66 (31): 839. Published: 11-Aug-2017. DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm6631a9.

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Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Louis#/media/File:St._Louis_skyline_September_2008.jpg

- [2] <https://espnfivethirtyeight.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/arthur-murderchicago.png?quality=90&strip=info&w=1150&ssl=1>
- [3] <https://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2017/02/daily-chart-3>
- [4] <http://abcnews.go.com/US/obama-murder-rate-african-american-community-whack/story?id=40592847>
- [5] <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/lcod/men/2014/black/index.htm>
- [6] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6631a9.htm>