

THE COST

— OF GUN VIOLENCE — THE DIRECT COST TO TAXPAYERS

Rochester, NY, once the hub for the slavery abolition movement, is a manufacturing city in “upstate” New York. The birthplace of Kodak and Xerox companies, Rochester is also known for its significant role in the development of the film and photography industry. It is the state’s fourth most populous city, with a population of 209,352 that is 43.2% White, 37.9% Black, 19.7% Latino, and 3.5% Asian.¹ The larger Rochester metropolitan area is home to just over 1 million residents.²

Rochester has one of the highest homicide rates in the nation.³ In 2021, it had the highest per capita homicide rate among cities with a similar population size, and it ranked fourth highest among all US cities.⁴ In July 2021, Mayor Malik D. Evans declared a state of emergency due to increased gun violence that was still in effect as of June 10th, 2024.⁵

When someone is shot in Rochester, there is an immediate, multifaceted, and very expensive response from an array of government agencies. The Fire Department dispatches Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), government-contracted ambulances respond, and several Rochester Police Department (RPD) units descend on the scene. Investigators from the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office also often arrive, and if the victim is declared dead on the scene, the Coroner is called. All of this is only for the shooting scene itself. For a surviving victim, there is also typically a hospitalization, which is frequently paid for by tax dollars. Rehabilitation follows

in the case of serious injury, and victim compensation is generally provided. There is also often a lengthy investigation by the Rochester Police Department and the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office. With the RPD homicide clearance rate at 68.4% in 2023, a trial and a long incarceration period frequently follow. When there are multiple victims and/or suspects, these efforts and costs multiply for a single shooting incident. These are just some of the costs of each shooting in Rochester.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) was commissioned by the Rochester Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) to conduct this detailed analysis that documents the government expenses accompanying every fatal or nonfatal shooting in Rochester. In tracking the direct costs per shooting incident, NICJR has deliberately used the low end of the range for each expense. This study does not include the loss-of-production costs when the victim or suspect were working at the time of the incident. Nationally, those costs have been estimated at an additional \$1–2 million for each shooting incident. This means that the calculated cost of \$3,256,672.38 for a fatal shooting in Rochester is a conservative estimate; the real cost is likely even higher.

In the past three years, Rochester has averaged approximately 55 fatal shootings and 298 nonfatal shootings annually, although this does appear to be decreasing. At this rate, each year of shootings will ultimately cost taxpayers

\$773,885,635.88, with both immediate costs such as crime scene response and longer-term costs such as lost tax revenue and long-term incarceration. If Rochester could reduce its gun violence rate by just 20%, that could result in government savings \$154,777,127.18 for every year of shootings.

Notably, Rochester has already taken important steps toward reducing shootings and improving public safety. The City established an Office of Violence Prevention to collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other agencies that work to end violent crime.⁶ The Rochester OVP created Pathways to Peace, a street-level team that connects credible messengers with people dealing with violence, gangs, drug abuse, or other issues that might pose a threat to their well-being. Staff develop positive relationships with these individuals to interrupt violence in the community. The Rochester OVP has also collaborated with contracted partners like Operation Go and A Horse’s Friend to offer summer programming, paid internships, employment opportunities, and other enrichment programs for youth to support violence prevention.

Rochester also has an Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) housed within the Rochester OVP.⁷ This office oversees the Mayor’s Peacemaker Fellowship in partnership with Advance Peace, which identifies the few individuals at the highest risk of committing gun violence in the city and connects them with community-based services and resources that create pathways away from violence.⁸ With support from programs like the Peacemaker Fellowship, Rochester has seen a nearly 20% decrease in fatal shootings and more than a 30% decrease in nonfatal shootings since 2021.⁹

1. Census Quick Facts, Rochester City, NY

2. Census Reporter, Rochester, NY Metro Area

3. Throughout the report, “fatal shootings” and “homicides” are not used synonymously. “Fatal shootings” refers to shooting incidents resulting in the death of the victim; “homicides” refers to all homicides in general.

4. Rochester Institute of Technology, 2022 Homicide Statistics for 24 U.S. Cities

5. Rochester park to close early daily after recent violence, mayor announces

6. Rochester Office of Violence Prevention

7. Rochester Office of Neighborhood Safety

8. Rochester Peacemaker Fellowship

9. RPD Open Data Portal, Rochester, NY Shooting Victims

THE GREATER COMMUNITY COST OF GUN VIOLENCE

There are significant community costs of gun violence beyond the direct costs included in NICJR's calculations. In addition to the direct financial burden borne by taxpayers, areas with high rates of gun violence experience the loss of community resources and decreases in property values. Businesses, community events, and other vital resources often flee from violent neighborhoods. Further, a study by the Controller for the City of Philadelphia examining the economic impact of gun violence on property values found that "a single homicide lowers sale prices by 2.3 percent in the immediate neighborhood (within 0.75 miles of the homicide)."¹⁰

Community members in neighborhoods where rates of violence are highest also bear the burden of community tension and trauma. The normalization or expectation of violence can lead to high rates of gun possession and the resolving of minor disputes with gun violence. The public health approach to violence shows that violence is a contagion that can breed in areas of social dysfunction. The National Institutes of

Health notes that "Contagious diseases and violence tend to cluster in similar ways.... There are geographic 'hot spots' for contagious diseases, such as the 2015 measles outbreak linked to Disneyland in California involving clusters of unvaccinated children. Likewise, there are geographic hot spots for violent crime on specific streets and in specific neighborhoods."¹¹

Finally, experiencing violence, witnessing violence, and having close friends or family members victimized by violence produces trauma and vicarious trauma among children. In the 1990s, the groundbreaking Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente revealed that children who have traumatic experiences when they are young have significantly higher rates of poor health outcomes as they age.^{12,13} Additional studies have proven that the experience of trauma negatively impacts the brain function of young people and can cause depression, behavioral challenges, academic disruption, and delinquency.

Population

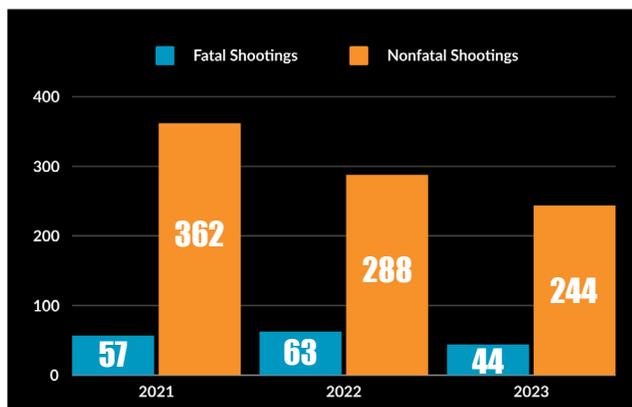
209,352



Police Force

722

Fatal and Nonfatal Shootings 2021-2023



Homicide Clearance Rates

2021	62.3%
2022	63%
2023	68.4%

10. [Report on the Economic Impact of Homicides: Philadelphia Controller](#)

11. [The Contagious Spread of Violence Among US Adolescents Through Social Networks](#)

12. [Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults](#)

13. While the CDC-Kaiser ACEs study is not available to the public, information about the study may be found [here](#).

Rochester, New York

COST BREAKDOWN



CRIME SCENE RESPONSE

The crime scene response to a fatal shooting or severe nonfatal shooting typically includes a heavy police presence, fire/EMT staff, and medical transport staff. Based on responses from RPD, Rochester typically deploys 7 RPD personnel including 5 Officers and 2 Investigators to respond to a fatal shooting. The Crime Scene Response calculation is a conservative figure. Pensions and other benefits, capital costs, and debt services for both Rochester Fire Department and RPD are allocated separately.



HOSPITAL & REHABILITATION

Once a victim has been transported to the hospital, the costs of treatment in a trauma unit, surgery, inpatient stay, and rehabilitation are exorbitant. Average costs can range from \$88,525.00 to \$144,617.00 per incident. With a little more than 40% of gunshot victims either uninsured or on Medicaid, these costs represent a tremendous strain on Rochester's hospital network.



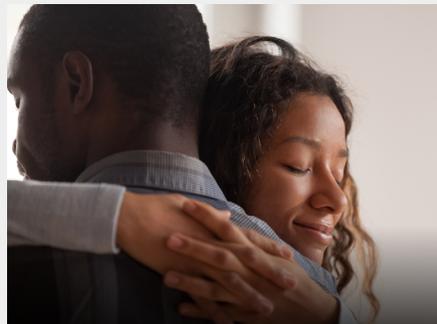
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Justice system costs include police investigation, prosecution and defense attorneys, court personnel and judges, and the use of court facilities. Due to the consequences of a homicide conviction, these cases go to trial more often than other types of cases. Sometimes these cases involve multiple suspects with multiple court dates and separate trials. From the time of arrest, court proceedings in fatal or nonfatal shooting cases average about two years.



INCARCERATION

Incarceration accounts for a large portion of the costs once a suspect is arrested. A stay in the Monroe County jail system costs an average of \$241,804.92 for the pretrial incarceration period. Following a trial, an inmate is incarcerated within the New York State prison system at a cost of \$1,494,675.00 for those convicted of attempted murder and \$2,644,425.00 for those convicted of homicide.



VICTIM SUPPORT

Many victim support costs are covered by the New York State Office of Victim Services. Surviving victims of nonfatal shootings and families of homicide victims receive a maximum of \$50,000.00 in compensation to cover costs such as burial expenses, medical expenses, and counseling. Including costs such as autopsies and Social Security benefits increases the total cost for victim support to \$90,120.00 for a fatal shooting.



LOST TAX REVENUE

New York State collects \$1,487.00 in tax for those making \$30,000.00 a year. Monroe County and the City of Rochester have a combined sales and use tax of 8%. When a fatal or nonfatal shooting occurs, both income and sales tax often cannot be collected from the incarcerated individual(s) and fatal shooting victim(s). Each incident can represent lost tax revenue from a minimum of two individuals for 15 to 25 years.



Fatal Shooting Cost

Nonfatal Shooting Cost

CRIME SCENE
\$6,154.03

CRIME SCENE
\$5,107.48



Police Response: **\$2,093.10**
Scene Cleanup: **\$2,500.00**
Fire/EMT: **\$1,560.93**

\$1,046.55: Police Response
\$2,500.00: Scene Cleanup
\$1,560.93: Fire/EMT

HOSPITAL
\$88,525.00

HOSPITAL
\$144,617.00



ER/Trauma Center: **\$1,428.00**
Gunshot Surgery: **\$87,097.00**

\$1,428.00: ER/Trauma Center
\$87,097.00: Gunshot Surgery
\$56,092.00: Rehabilitation

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
\$71,293.43

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
\$8,054.38



Police Investigation: **\$32,670.00**
DA & Public Defender: **\$31,679.79**
Court Process: **\$6,943.64**

\$3,564.00: Police Investigation
\$3,543.52: DA & Public Defender
\$946.86: Court Process

INCARCERATION
\$2,886,229.92

INCARCERATION
\$1,736,479.92



Pretrial Incarceration: **\$241,804.92**
Prison Placement: **\$2,644,425.00**

\$241,804.92: Pretrial Incarceration
\$1,494,675.00: Prison Placement

VICTIM SUPPORT
\$90,120.00

VICTIM SUPPORT
\$68,660.00



Coroner's Office: **\$2,800.00**
Victim Compensation: **\$50,000.00**
Social Service Assistance: **\$37,320.00**
(one year of support for two families)

\$50,000.00: Victim Compensation
\$18,660.00: Social Service Assistance
(one year of support for one family)

LOST REVENUE
\$114,350.00

LOST REVENUE
\$36,592.00



Income Tax: **\$74,350.00**
(both suspect & murder victim)
Sales Tax: **\$40,000.00**
(both suspect & murder victim)

\$23,792.00: Income Tax
(for suspect, plus one year for injured victim)
\$12,800.00: Sales Tax
(for suspect, plus one year for injured victim)

Per Fatal Shooting
\$3,256,672.38

Assuming one suspect

Per Nonfatal Shooting
\$1,999,510.78

Assuming one suspect

CRIME SCENE	Subject: Police Response	Fire / EMT Transport		Scene Cleanup
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correspondance with Rochester Police Department RPD Open Data Portal Sworn Pay FY 2021-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rochester Fire Department Statistics City of Rochester 2023-2024 Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Cost of Violence: The Price Tag for Taxpayers
	Notes	Initial police response to a homicide scene typically includes 5 Officers and 2 Investigators on scene for an average of 6 hours. Initial police response to a nonfatal shooting scene typically includes 5 Officers and 2 Investigators on scene for an average of 3 hours. The rates calculated here include base pay and overtime pay only. Fatal shooting (\$59.40/hour x 6 hours x 2 Investigators) + (\$46.01/hour x 6 hours x 5 Officers) = \$2,093.10 Nonfatal shooting (\$59.40/hour x 3 hours x 2 Investigators) + (\$46.01/hour x 3 hours x 5 Officers) = \$1,046.55	Fire & EMT budget: \$61,335,000.00 Total responses: 39,294 Cost per response = \$1,560.93	Average cost among competitive vendors to clean up crime scenes involving blood: \$2,500.00
HOSPITAL	Subject: Emergency Room / Surgery for Gunshot Victim			
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020 National Trends and Cost Burden of Surgically Treated Gunshot Wounds in the US 2021 Firearm Injuries: Health Care Service Needs and Costs 		
	Notes	Average cost of gunshot victims treated and released the same day: \$1,428 (ER base cost) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery and hospital stay: \$87,097 (surgery cost) + \$56,092 (hospital stay and care) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery, hospital stay, and release to outpatient care: \$144,617 (ER, surgery, rehabilitation)		
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	Subject: Police Investigation	District Attorney (DA) & Public Defender (PD)		Court Process
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correspondance with Rochester Police Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant District Attorney Grade II Public Defender Assistant Grade II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Salaries of County Judges Court Reporter and Court Officer Trainee Salaries Court Clerk Salary in Rochester, NY
	Notes	The cost of the police investigation is calculated by multiplying the average salary and benefits for assigned Investigators by the average amount of time spent investigating fatal and nonfatal shootings. NICJR used 30 hours for nonfatal shootings and 275 for fatal. Fatal shooting \$59.40/hour x 275 hours x 2 Investigators = \$32,670.00 Nonfatal shooting \$59.40/hour x 30 hours x 2 Investigators = \$3,564.00	The cost of prosecution and defense is calculated by multiplying the average amount of time spent by attorneys working on a fatal or nonfatal shooting case by the hourly rates for those positions. Fatal shooting DA: \$40.73/hour x 418.4 hours = \$17,041.43 PD: \$40.73/hour x 359.4 hours = \$14,638.36 Nonfatal shooting DA: \$40.73/hour x 20.5 hours = \$834.97 PD: \$40.73/hour x 66.5 hours = \$2,708.55	The cost to the court system is calculated by multiplying hourly rates by the average amount of time spent by judges and court staff (combined hourly rate) working on a fatal or nonfatal shooting case. Fatal shooting Judge: \$60.38/hour x 44 hours = \$2,656.72 Court staff: \$97.43/hour x 44 hours = \$4,286.92 Nonfatal shooting Judge: \$60.38/hour x 6 hours = \$362.28 Court staff: \$97.43/hour x 6 hours = \$584.58
INCARCERATION	Subject: Pretrial Incarceration	State Prison: Attempted Murder Case		State Prison: Murder Case
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monroe Adopted County Budget 2023 Monthly Jail Population Trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Correction Statistics 2021 New York Penal Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Correction Statistics 2021 New York Penal Law
	Notes	Monroe County Department of Corrections budget: \$89,709,628.00 Average daily population: 742 \$89,709,628.00/742 = \$120,902.46 average annual cost per inmate Average period of pretrial incarceration: 2 years \$120,902.46 x 2 years = \$241,804.92	New York State Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$114,975.00 Injury shooting conviction sentence: 15 years, subtracting pretrial time served \$114,975.00 x (15 years - 2 years) = \$1,494,675.00	New York State Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$114,975.00 Murder conviction sentence: 25 years, subtracting pretrial time served \$114,975.00 x (25 years - 2 years) = \$2,644,425.00
VICTIM SUPPORT	Subject: Victim Compensation	Social Service Assistance		Medical Examiner's Office
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Office of Victim Services Victim Compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: Increases in TANF Cash Benefit Levels Are Critical to Help Families Meet Rising Costs USDA Fiscal Year 2024 Cost-of-Living Adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 Monroe County Adopted Budget
	Notes	Victims of a crime can receive up to \$50,000.00 for expenses related to the incident including burial costs for fatal shooting incidents, medical fees support, and coverage for damages to personal property.	A severely injured shooting victim often cannot return to work immediately. Since the victim and perpetrator may be major financial contributors to their households, many families may need to apply for social services support. USDA SNAP: \$766.00 for family of 3 TANF: \$789.00 for family of 3 This study estimates 1 year of assistance. \$1,555.00/mo x 12 months x 2 families = \$37,320.00	Monroe County Medical Examiner 2024 Autopsy Fee: \$2,800.00
LOST REVENUE	Subject: Lost Tax Revenue: One Person Incarcerated	Lost Tax Revenue: Murder (Loss of Revenue for Two People)		
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023 New York State Tax Table NYS Sales and Use Tax Rates by Jurisdiction 		
	Notes	Total annual income tax at \$30,000/year: \$1,487.00 Combined city and county sales and use tax: 8% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$800.00 Total annual combined tax: \$2,287.00 Lost tax revenue for a 15-year sentence for attempted murder (\$2,287.00 x 15 years): \$34,305.00 If the shooting victim does not work for one year, an additional \$2,287.00 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$36,592.00		
		Total annual income tax at \$30,000/year: \$1,487.00 Combined city and county sales and use tax: 8% Total annual sales tax for a person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$800.00 Total annual combined tax: \$2,287.00 Lost tax revenue for a 25-year sentence for murder (\$2,287.00 x 25 years): \$57,175.00 If the shooting victim loses their life, an additional \$57,175.00 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$114,350.00		