

THE COST

OF GUN VIOLENCE THE DIRECT COST TO TAX PAYERS

The City of Detroit has long been known as the heart of the American automotive industry. Early in the twentieth century, the promise of manufacturing jobs and freedom from the Jim Crow South led to massive population growth in Detroit as part of the Great Migration, with the city swelling from 265,000 residents at the turn of the century to 1.5 million by 1930. However, in the latter half of the century, Detroit saw a mass exodus of White residents along with a significant increase in violent crime. In 1950, White residents made up 84% of the city's population; today, Detroit's population of 620,000 is 78% Black and 10% White, making it the city with the highest rate of Black residents among larger US cities.

In 2018, Detroit achieved its lowest number of homicides in 50 years, but like much of the US, the city saw sharp increases in violence as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. From 2019 to 2020, murders in Detroit increased by 19%, and non-fatal shootings increased a staggering 53%. While these numbers have since decreased, they are still well above pre-pandemic levels.

When someone is shot in Detroit, 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 Detroit Police Department (DPD) units descend on the scene. Investigators from the Wayne County Prosecutor'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 Detroit Police Department and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, who are sometimes joined by the US Attorney. With the city's homicide clearance rate at 50% in 2021, 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 non-fatal shooting in Detroit.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) was commissioned by the Public Welfare Foundation to conduct this detailed analysis that documents the government expenses accompanying every¹ fatal or non-fatal shooting in Detroit. 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 \$1,719,087 for a fatal shooting in Detroit is a conservative estimate; the real cost is likely even higher.

Detroit has recently invested in community-based gun violence intervention efforts. In July 2023, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan announced that six community-based organizations had been selected to conduct community violence intervention through a \$10 million ShotStoppers pilot program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. The City plans to evaluate the program's impacts, and if the results are promising, will seek to extend the program further.

As the City has experienced, a relatively small investment in effective gun violence intervention strategies can yield significant reductions in shootings, save lives, and produce massive savings. In the past three years, Detroit has averaged approximately 1,303 combined fatal and non-fatal shootings annually, which cost taxpayers almost \$1,865,501,266 per year. If Detroit could reduce its gun violence rate by just 20%, that could result in government savings of about \$373,100,253 every year.

1. 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.



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 recent 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)."²

In neighborhoods where rates of violence are highest, community members also bear the burden of tension and trauma. The normalization 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, like disease, violence is a contagion that can breed in areas of social dysfunction. The National Institutes of Health explains 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."³

Even more significant is the impact of violence on children. Experiencing violence, witnessing violence, and having close friends or family members victimized by violence produces trauma and vicarious trauma. 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. 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.⁴

Population

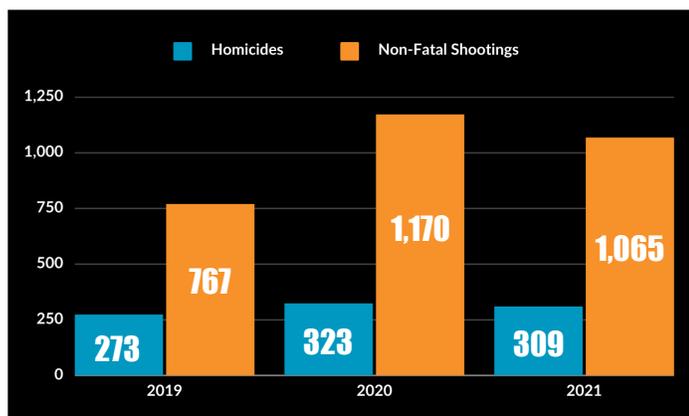
620,376



2,200

Police Force

Homicides and Non-Fatal Shootings



Homicide Clearance Rates

2019	51%
2020	42%
2021	50%

2. Report on the Economic Impact of Homicides: Philadelphia Controller

3. The Contagious Spread of Violence Among US Adolescents Through Social Networks

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

Detroit, Michigan **COST BREAKDOWN**



CRIME SCENE RESPONSE

The crime scene response to a severe non-fatal or fatal shooting typically includes a heavy police presence, fire/ EMT staff, and medical transport staff. The Detroit Police Department deploys up to 14 officers, including patrol, homicide unit personnel, and other supervisory-level officers, to respond to a typical fatal shooting.



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 to \$144,617 per incident. With a little more than 40% of gunshot victims either uninsured or on Medicaid, these costs represent a tremendous strain on Detroit's hospital network.



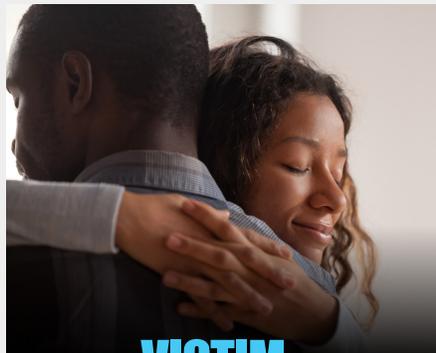
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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 fatal shooting 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 a non-fatal or fatal shooting case average about two years.



INCARCERATION

Incarceration accounts for a large portion of the costs once a suspect is arrested. A stay in the Wayne County jail system costs an average of \$164,250 for the pretrial incarceration period. Following a trial, an inmate is incarcerated within the Michigan prison system at a cost of \$905,418 for those convicted of attempted murder and \$1,156,923 for those convicted of murder.



VICTIM SUPPORT

Many victim support costs are covered by the Michigan Division of Victim Services. Surviving victims of non-fatal shootings and families of fatal shooting victims receive, on average, \$45,000 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 as much as \$75,004.



LOST TAX REVENUE

Michigan has a state income tax rate of 4.25%, a 2.4% city tax, and a sales and use tax of 6%. When a non-fatal shooting or fatal shooting occurs, the City loses the ability to collect both income and sales tax from the incarcerated individual(s) and fatal shooting victim(s). Each incident can represent lost tax revenue from a minimum of two individuals for 20 to 25 years.

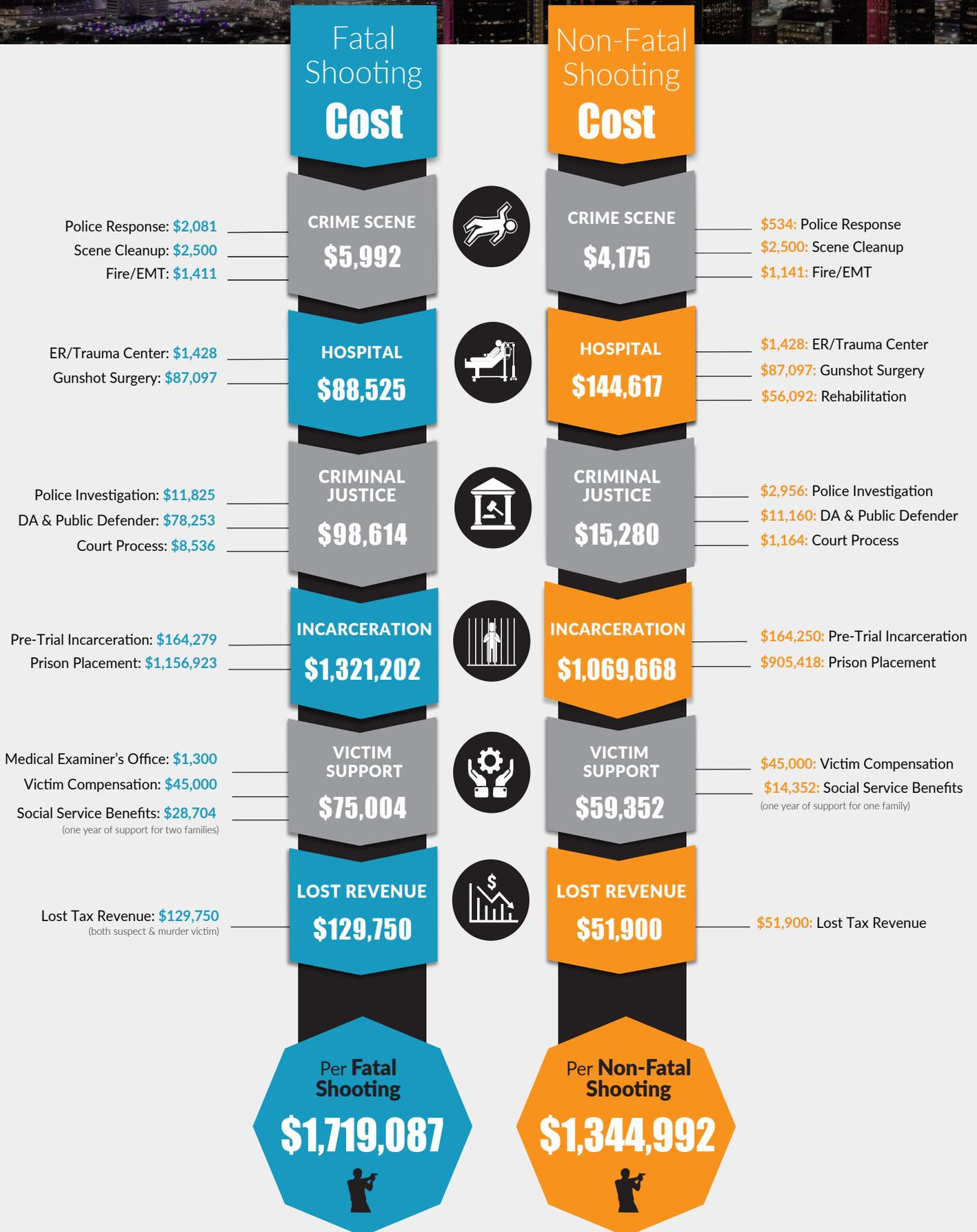


Detroit
Michigan

THE COST Per Shooting

The governmental cost of gun violence to the City, County, and State

NICJR
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform





CRIME SCENE	Subject: Police Response	Fire/EMT Transport	Scene Clean Up	
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Compensation Schedule for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Cost of Gun Violence: The Price Tag for Taxpayers
	Notes	<p>Initial police response to a fatal shooting scene typically includes 9 Patrol, 1 Lieutenant, 1 Sergeant, and 3 Detectives. They remain on the scene for 3-6 hours. Initial police response to a non-fatal shooting scene typically includes 4 Patrol, 1 Sergeant, and 1 Detective. They remain on scene for 1-4 hours.</p>	<p>Fire & EMT Budget: \$136,894,832 Total Responses: 120,000 average Cost per response = \$1,141</p>	<p>Average cost among competitive vendors to clean up crime scenes involving blood: \$2,500</p>
HOSPITAL	Subject: Emergency Room / Surgery for Gun-Shot 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	<p>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)</p>		
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	Subject: Police Investigation	District Attorney (DA) & Public Defender (PD)	Court Process	
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Prosecuting Attorney - Detroit, MI - Wayne County Government Jobs Salary Schedule from Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (provided directly to NICJR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 House Bill 5749 Part-Time Court Officer - Detroit, MI Court Clerk Salary in Michigan, United States Court Reporter Salary in Michigan, United States
	Notes	<p>The cost of the police investigation is calculated by multiplying the average salary and benefits for officers assigned to the Homicide Department in Detroit by the average amount of time spent investigating fatal and non-fatal shootings.</p> <p>\$47/hour x 250 hours = \$ 11,750 for a fatal shooting \$47/hour x 62.5 hours = \$2,397 for a non-fatal shooting</p>	<p>The cost of prosecution and defense is calculated by multiplying the average amount of time spent by attorneys by hourly salaries.</p> <p>DA: \$34/hour x 1,087 hours for a fatal shooting = \$36,958 PD: \$38/hour x 1,087 hours for a fatal shooting = \$41,306 DA: \$34/hour x 155 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$5,270 PD: \$38/hour x 155 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$5,890</p>	<p>The cost to the court system is calculated by multiplying the average amount of time spent by judges and court staff by hourly salaries.</p> <p>Judge: \$77/hour x 44 hours for a fatal shooting = \$3,388 Court staff (combined hourly rate): \$117/hour x 44 hours for a fatal shooting = \$5,148 Judge: \$77/hour x 6 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$462 Court staff (combined hourly rate): \$117/hour x 6 hours for a non-fatal shooting = \$702</p>
INCARCERATION	Subject: Pre-Trial Incarceration	State Prison: Attempted Murder Case	State Prison: Murder Case	
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne County FY21-22 Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Briefing: Corrections - December 2022 Michigan Legislature - Section 750.84 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Briefing: Corrections - December 2022 Michigan Legislature - Section 750.84
	Notes	<p>Wayne County Department of Corrections budget: \$115,816,952</p> <p>Average daily population: 1,410 Average daily cost per inmate: \$225 Average period of pretrial incarceration: 2 years \$225/day x 2 years = \$164,250</p>	<p>Michigan Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$50,301</p> <p>Non-fatal shooting conviction sentence: 20 years, subtracting pretrial time served</p> <p>\$50,301 x (20 years - 2 years) = \$905,418</p>	<p>Michigan Department of Corrections annual cost to house an adult: \$50,301</p> <p>Murder conviction sentence: 25 years, subtracting pretrial time served</p> <p>\$50,301 x (25 years - 2 years) = \$1,156,923</p>
VICTIM SUPPORT	Subject: Victim Compensation	Social Service Benefits	Medical Examiner's Office	
	Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michigan Crime Victim Compensation Reference Guide What Costs May Be Covered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Temporary Assistance to Needy Families State Plan Michigan Snap Benefits - Detroit Free Press 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Wayne County Medical Examiner staff
	Notes	<p>Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Division of Victim Services covers costs that include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical expenses Loss of wages Burial support Rehabilitation Crime scene cleanup Grief counseling <p>Fatal Shooting Victim: \$45,000 for expenses including burial costs and lost wages</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Michigan SNAP = \$740 for family of 3 Michigan TANF = \$456 for family of 3 This study estimates 1 year of assistance. \$1,196/month x 12 months x 2 families = \$28,704</p>	<p>Cost per autopsy = \$1,300</p>
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"> Sales and Use Tax Information Income tax calculator 2023 - Michigan Michigan Tax Rates & Rankings 		
	Notes	<p>4.25% state income tax + 2.4% city tax for the first \$30,000 Total annual income tax at \$30,000/year: \$1,995 Sales and use tax (county and state): 6% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$600 Total annual combined tax: \$2,595 Lost tax revenue for a 20-year sentence for attempted murder (\$2,595 x 20 years): \$51,900 If the shooting victim does not work for one year, an additional \$2,595 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$54,495</p>		<p>4.25% state income tax + 2.4 city tax for the first \$30,000 Total annual income tax at \$30,000/year: \$1,995 Sales and use tax: 6% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$600 Total annual combined tax: \$2,595 Lost tax revenue for a 25-year sentence for murder (\$2,595 x 25 years): \$64,875 If the shooting victim loses their life, an additional \$64,875 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$129,750</p>