



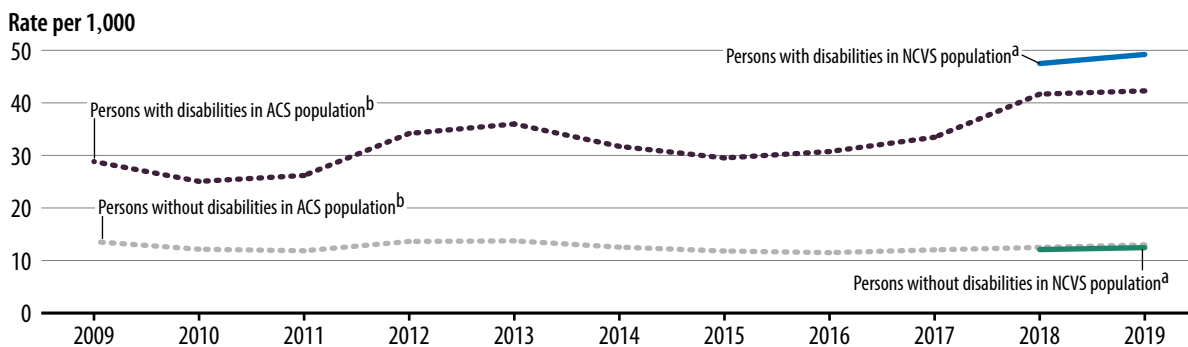
Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009–2019 – Statistical Tables

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In 2019, the rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities was nearly four times the rate for persons without disabilities (49.2 compared to 12.4 per 1,000 age 12 or older) (**figure 1**). Since July 2016, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) has asked all respondents their disability status, allowing rates by disability status to be generated

solely from NCVS data. See *Methodology*. Prior to this, American Community Survey (ACS) population data were used to calculate the rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities, which was at least twice the rate for persons without disabilities every year from 2009 to 2019.

FIGURE 1
Rate of violent victimization, by disability status, 2009–2019 (2-year rolling averages)



Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. The definition of noninstitutional population differs by survey. See *Methodology*. Estimates are based on 2-year rolling averages. For each year, rates for the population without a disability were adjusted using direct standardization with the population with a disability as the standard population. See appendix table 2 for estimates and standard errors.

^aRates were calculated with population data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

^bRates were calculated with population data from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008–2019; and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008–2019.

Highlights

From 2017 to 2019—

- Persons with disabilities were victims of 26% of all nonfatal violent crime, while accounting for about 12% of the population.
- The rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities (46.2 per 1,000 age 12 or older) was almost four times the rate for persons without disabilities (12.3 per 1,000).
- One in three robbery victims (33%) had at least one disability.
- Persons with cognitive disabilities had the highest rate of violent victimization (83.3 per 1,000) among the disability types measured.
- Nineteen percent of rapes or sexual assaults against persons with disabilities were reported to police, compared to 36% of those against persons without disabilities.



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This report provides rates of nonfatal violent victimization against persons with and without disabilities, describes types of disabilities, and details victim characteristics. Nonfatal violent crimes include rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated

assault, and simple assault. Findings are based on BJS's NCVS, a household survey that collects data on residents of the United States age 12 or older (excluding those living in institutions).

Disability and the National Crime Victimization Survey

Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act

The Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act of 1998 (P.L. 105–301) mandates that the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) include statistics on crimes against persons with disabilities and the characteristics of these victims. The act was designed “to increase public awareness of the plight of victims of crime with developmental disabilities, to collect data to measure the magnitude of the problem, and to develop strategies to address the safety and justice needs of victims of crime with developmental disabilities.” Section 5 of the act directed the Department of Justice to include statistics relating to “the nature of crimes against individuals with developmental disabilities; and the specific characteristics of the victims of those crimes” in the NCVS. This report is a part of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) series on crime against persons with disabilities. More information can be found on the BJS website, <https://bjs.ojp.gov>.

Disability population

During 2017–19, about 12% of the U.S. population age 12 or older living outside of institutions had a disability, according to the NCVS. (See appendix table 1.) Among noninstitutionalized persons with disabilities, 47% were male and 53% were female. Seventy percent of persons with disabilities were white, 13% were black, and 12% were Hispanic. Forty-eight percent of the population with a disability was age 65 or older, compared to 14% of the population without a disability.

Change in NCVS disability questions

In July 2016, the NCVS questions on disability status and type were moved to the Basic Screen Questionnaire (Form NCVS-1). Since that change, the survey has asked all respondents their disability status. This allows the NCVS to be used to generate population estimates and rates by disability status and type of disability. See *Methodology*.

Types of disability

The NCVS adopted survey questions from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) to classify respondents with disabilities. The NCVS defines disability as the product of interactions among individuals' bodies; their physical, emotional, and mental health; and the physical and social environment in which they live, work, or play. A disability exists where this interaction results in limitations of activities and restrictions to full participation at school, work, or home or in the community.

Disabilities are classified according to six limitations:

- hearing (deafness or serious difficulty hearing)
- vision (blindness or serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses)
- cognitive (serious difficulty in concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition)
- ambulatory (difficulty walking or climbing stairs)
- self-care (a condition that causes difficulty dressing or bathing)
- independent living (physical, mental, or emotional condition that impedes doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor or shopping).

Violent crime by type of crime

- The rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities (46.2 per 1,000 age 12 or older) was nearly four times the age-adjusted rate¹ for persons without disabilities (12.3 per 1,000) during 2017–19 (**table 1**).²
- For persons with disabilities, the rate of violent crime, excluding simple assault, (17.9 per 1,000) was more than four times the rate for persons without disabilities (4.0 per 1,000).
- The rate of simple assault against persons with disabilities (28.3 per 1,000) was more than three times the rate for persons without disabilities (8.3 per 1,000).
- Although persons with disabilities accounted for 12% of the population, they were victims in 26% of violent crime incidents (**table 2**).
- Thirty-three percent of robbery victimizations involved a victim with a disability, which was higher than the percentages of aggravated assault (27%), rape/sexual assault (27%), and simple assault (25%) victimizations against those with disabilities.

¹Rates for persons without disabilities were adjusted to account for differences between the age distributions for persons with and without disabilities. See *Methodology*.

²In this report, significance is reported at both the 90% and 95% confidence levels. See figures and tables for testing on specific findings.

TABLE 1
Rate of violent victimization, by type of crime and disability status, 2017–19

Type of crime	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities	
		Age-adjusted ^{a*}	Unadjusted
Violent crime	46.2 †	12.3	18.1
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	17.9 †	4.0	6.3
Rape/sexual assault	4.1 †	0.9	1.6
Robbery	5.6 †	1.1	1.6
Aggravated assault	8.2 †	2.0	3.1
Simple assault	28.3 †	8.3	11.8

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Rates are per 1,000 persons. Excludes persons with unknown disability status (1% of population). See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

*Comparison group with age-adjusted rates compared to rates for persons with disabilities.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

^aRates for the population without a disability were adjusted using direct standardization with the population with a disability as the standard population. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

TABLE 2
Percent of violent victimizations against persons with disabilities, by type of crime, 2017–19

Type of crime	Percent of violent victimizations
Violent crime	26.5%
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	28.6%
Rape/sexual assault	26.5 ‡
Robbery*	33.3
Aggravated assault	27.1 ‡
Simple assault	25.3% †

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Violent victimizations against persons with unknown disability status accounted for 1% of all violent victimizations. See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

‡Difference with comparison group is significant at the 90% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

Violent crime by sex, race or ethnicity, and age

- During 2017–19, the rate of violent victimization against males with disabilities was 42.7 per 1,000, compared to 13.4 per 1,000 males without disabilities (table 3).
- For females with disabilities, the rate of violent victimization was 49.4 per 1,000, compared to 11.3 per 1,000 for females without disabilities.
- For each racial and ethnic group measured, persons with disabilities had higher violent victimization rates than persons without disabilities.
- For whites, blacks, Hispanics, and persons of other races, the rate of violent victimization for persons with disabilities was at least triple that of persons without disabilities.
- Hispanics with disabilities (55.3 per 1,000) had a higher rate of violent victimization than blacks with disabilities (39 per 1,000) (testing performed and not shown).
- During 2017–19, the rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities was at least 3.5 times the rate against those without disabilities for each age group measured except persons age 65 or older (table 4).

TABLE 3

Rate of violent victimization against persons with and without disabilities, by victim characteristics, 2017–19

Victim characteristic	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities	
		Age-adjusted ^{a*}	Unadjusted
Total	46.2 †	12.3	18.1
Sex			
Male	42.7 †	13.4	18.3
Female	49.4 †	11.3	17.9
Race/ethnicity			
White ^b	45.1 †	11.7	18.5
Black ^b	39.0 †	12.5	17.5
Hispanic	55.3 †	12.3	16.8
Other ^{b,c,d}	56.5 †	12.2	18.9

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Rates are per 1,000 persons. Excludes persons with an unknown disability status (1% of population). See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

*Comparison group with age-adjusted rates compared to rates for persons with disabilities.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

^aRates for the population without a disability were adjusted using direct standardization with the population with a disability as the standard population. See *Methodology*.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

^cIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

^dCategories are not shown separately due to small numbers of sample cases.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

TABLE 4

Rate of violent victimization and average annual number of persons, by victim’s disability status and age, 2017–19

Age of victim	Persons with disabilities			Persons without disabilities		
	Population		Rate per 1,000 persons	Population		Rate per 1,000 persons*
	Average annual number	Percent		Average annual number	Percent	
Total	33,996,520	100%	46.2 †	238,778,440	100%	18.1
12–15	1,056,950	3.1	145.5 †	15,412,790	6.5	29.4
16–19	1,041,050	3.1	179.0 †	15,604,310	6.5	24.7
20–24	1,244,540	3.7	130.4 †	20,005,220	8.4	28.8
25–34	2,149,640	6.3	111.6 †	42,412,320	17.8	23.4
35–49	3,981,010	11.7	78.7 †	56,849,770	23.8	17.5
50–64	8,380,670	24.7	47.2 †	53,902,240	22.6	13.3
65 or older	16,142,650	47.5	7.5	34,591,780	14.5	5.7

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Excludes persons with an unknown disability status (1% of population). See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

- Among persons age 65 or older, there was no statistically significant difference between the rates of violent victimization by disability status.
- Among those with disabilities, the violent victimization rate of persons ages 16 to 19 (179.0 per 1,000 persons) was similar to that of persons ages 12 to 15 (145.5 per 1,000 persons) and higher than the rates for other age groups (testing performed and not shown).

Violent crime by disability type

- Among the disability types measured, the rate of violent victimization was highest for persons with cognitive disabilities (83.3 per 1,000) (table 5).
- Persons with cognitive disabilities had a higher rate of violent victimization, excluding simple assault, (34.6 per 1,000) than other disability types.
- Persons with hearing disabilities had the lowest victimization rates of violent crime (23.6 per 1,000) and violent crime, excluding simple assault, (9.4 per 1,000) among the disability types examined (testing performed and not shown).

TABLE 5
Rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities, by disability type and type of crime, 2017–19

Disability type	Violent crime	Violent crime, excluding simple assault	Simple assault
Hearing	23.6 †	9.4 †	14.2 †
Vision	47.6 †	26.0 †	21.6 †
Cognitive*	83.3	34.6	48.7
Ambulatory	34.7 †	15.0 †	19.7 †
Self-care	37.1 †	16.6 †	20.5 †
Independent living	38.4 †	20.2 †	18.1 †

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Includes persons with multiple disability types. Rates are per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, except for the rates for independent living disabilities, which are per 1,000 persons age 15 or older. See *Methodology*. Violent crime, excluding simple assault, includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

Violent crime by victim-offender relationship

- Strangers committed a lower percentage of violent victimizations against persons with disabilities (32%) than against persons without disabilities (41%) (table 6).
- A similar percentage of violent victimizations against persons with (11%) or without (13%) disabilities was committed by an intimate partner.
- Other relatives (including parents, children, and other relatives) accounted for a higher percentage of violent victimizations against persons with disabilities (14%) than against persons without disabilities (7%).
- The percentage of violent victimizations committed by a non-relative the victim knew was similar for victims with (33%) and without (30%) disabilities.

TABLE 6
Victim-offender relationship, by victim's disability status, 2017–19

Victim-offender relationship	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities*
Total	100%	100%
Intimate partner ^a	11.4	12.7
Other relative ^b	14.4 †	6.5
Well-known/casual acquaintance	32.9	29.7
Stranger	31.6 †	40.7
Unknown	9.8	10.4

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Excludes violent victimizations with victims who had an unknown disability status (1% of victimizations). See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

^aIncludes spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends.

^bIncludes parents, children, and other relatives.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

Violent crime by reporting to police

- Violent crime against persons with disabilities (38%) was less likely to be reported to police than violence against persons without disabilities (45%) (table 7).
- Violent crime against persons with no disabilities was more likely to be reported to police than violence against persons with a single disability type (32%).
- Violence against those with cognitive disabilities (36%) was less likely to be reported to police than violence against those with no disabilities.
- Nineteen percent of rapes or sexual assaults against persons with disabilities were reported to police, which was lower than the percentage for victims without disabilities (36%) (table 8).
- Robberies (45%) and simple assaults (33%) against persons with disabilities were less likely to be reported to police than robberies (57%) and simple assaults (41%) against persons without disabilities.

TABLE 7
Violent crime reported to police, by victim's disability status and disability type, 2017–19

Disability status and type	Reported to police
Persons without disabilities*	44.7%
Persons with disabilities	37.9 †
Single disability type	32.0 †
Multiple disability types	45.5
Disability type ^a	
Hearing	46.8%
Vision	43.2
Cognitive	36.4 †
Ambulatory	46.0
Self-care	45.4
Independent living	43.6

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Excludes violent victimizations with victims who had an unknown disability status (1% of victimizations). For persons ages 12 to 14, independent living disabilities are excluded as a disability type. See *Methodology*. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

^aIncludes persons with multiple disability types.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

- The majority of violent crime against persons with (68%) and without (62%) disabilities that was reported to the police was reported by the victim (table 9).
- A household member other than the victim reported a higher percentage of the violent crime that was reported to the police against victims with disabilities (10%) than against victims without disabilities (7%).

TABLE 8
Violent crime reported to police, by disability status and type of crime, 2017–19

Type of crime	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities*
Violent crime	37.9% †	44.7%
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	46.0%	50.8%
Rape/sexual assault	18.6 †	36.3
Robbery	45.2 †	56.8
Aggravated assault	60.3	55.3
Simple assault	32.9% †	41.3%

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Excludes violent victimizations with victims who had an unknown disability status (1% of victimizations). See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

TABLE 9
Person who notified police of violent crime, by victim's disability status, 2017–19

Person who notified police	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities*
Total	100%	100%
Victim	67.8 ‡	61.5
Other household member	10.1 †	6.5
Someone official	6.6 ‡	9.5
Police were at the scene	2.8 †	8.6
Someone else	11.4	12.4
Police notified some other way	1.3	1.5

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Excludes violent victimizations with victims who had an unknown disability status (less than 1% of victimizations reported to police). "Someone official" includes a guard, apartment manager, school official, and other officials. In less than 1% of cases, the person who contacted police was unknown. See appendix table 11 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

‡Difference with comparison group is significant at the 90% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

Methodology

Survey coverage

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is an annual data collection carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau. The NCVS is a self-reported survey that is administered annually from January 1 to December 31. Annual NCVS estimates are based on the number and characteristics of crimes that respondents experienced during the prior 6 months, excluding the month in which they were interviewed. Therefore, the 2019 survey covers crimes experienced from July 1, 2018 to November 30, 2019, with March 15, 2019 representing the middle of the reference period. Crimes are classified by the year of the survey and not by the year of the crime.

The NCVS is administered to persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. It collects information on nonfatal personal crimes (rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, and personal larceny (purse-snatching and pickpocketing) and household property crimes (burglary or trespassing, motor vehicle theft, and other types of theft). The survey collects information on threatened, attempted, and completed crimes.³ It collects data both on crimes reported and not reported to police. Unless specified otherwise, estimates in this report include threatened, attempted, and completed crimes. In addition to providing annual level and change estimates on criminal victimization, the NCVS is the primary source of information on the nature of criminal victimization incidents.

Survey respondents provide information about themselves (including age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability status, marital status, education level, and income) and whether they experienced a victimization. For each victimization incident, respondents report information about the offender (including age, sex, race, ethnicity, and victim-offender relationship), characteristics of the crime (including time and place of occurrence, use of weapons, nature of injury, and economic consequences), whether the crime was reported to police, reasons the crime was or was not reported, and experiences with the criminal justice system.

³For more information on type of crime classification, see *National Crime Victimization Survey, 2016 Technical Documentation* (NCJ 251442, BJS, December 2017).

Household information, including household-level demographics (e.g., income) and property victimizations committed against the household (e.g., burglary or trespassing), is typically collected from the reference person. The reference person is any responsible adult member of the household who is unlikely to permanently leave the household. Because an owner or renter of the sampled housing unit is normally the most responsible and knowledgeable household member, this person is generally designated as the reference person and household respondent. However, a household respondent does not have to be one of the household members who owns or rents the unit.

In the NCVS, a household is defined as a group of persons who all reside at a sampled address. Persons are considered household members when the sampled address is their usual place of residence at the time of the interview and when they have no primary place of residence elsewhere. Once selected, households remain in the sample for 3½ years, and eligible persons in these households are interviewed every 6 months, either in person or over the phone, for a total of seven interviews.

First interviews are typically conducted in person, with subsequent interviews conducted either in person or by phone. New households rotate into the sample on an ongoing basis to replace outgoing households that have been in the sample for the full 3½-year period. The sample includes persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings, and excludes persons living on military bases or in institutional settings such as correctional or hospital facilities.

Measuring disability status in the NCVS

Since 2007, the NCVS used questions developed for the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) to measure the rate of victimization against persons with disabilities. The questions identify persons who may require assistance to maintain their independence, be at risk for discrimination, or lack opportunities available to the general population due to limitations related to a prolonged (i.e., 6 months or longer) sensory, physical, mental, or emotional condition. More information about the ACS and the disability questions is available on the U.S. Census Bureau's website at <https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-ac.html>.

In July 2016, the disability questions in the NCVS were moved to the Screener Form (NCVS-1), which allowed for the collection of disability status of all respondents.⁴ As a result, rates by disability status could be generated solely from NCVS data. Prior to July 2016, the NCVS collected this information on the Crime Incident Report (NCVS-2), so disability status was collected only from crime victims and population data from the ACS was used to compute rates by disability status.

Using the NCVS to generate population estimates generates different population estimates from those generated using ACS data. The universe of the NCVS is persons age 12 or older residing in noninstitutional settings, which includes housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The universe of the ACS is larger but can be limited to those age 12 or older living in noninstitutional group quarters and housing units.

However, what constitutes “noninstitutional group quarters” differs by survey. In the NCVS, noninstitutional group quarters include college dormitories, rooming houses, religious group dwellings, group homes for adults, treatment facilities for adults, and workers’ group living quarters. In the ACS, noninstitutional group quarters include the aforementioned types of dwellings as well as military barracks, homeless shelters, and maritime and merchant vessels, which the NCVS excludes. This results in the NCVS covering fewer settings than the ACS. As a result, using the NCVS to calculate the populations of persons by disability status and type will result in different estimates compared to using the ACS.

During 2017–19, on average, the NCVS recorded about 280,000 fewer persons age 12 or older living in noninstitutional settings on average than the ACS (**table 10**). Annually, the number of persons classified as having disabilities was about 34 million in the NCVS, compared to 39.2 million in the ACS. For each disability type, NCVS data produced a lower average annual number of persons than the ACS data.

⁴For more information on changes to the NCVS questionnaire in 2016, see *Criminal Victimization, 2017* (NCJ 252472, BJS, December 2018).

Disability questions included in the NCVS

Question 169a. Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?

Question 169b. Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?

Question 170a. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty:

1. Concentrating, remembering or making decisions?
2. Walking or climbing stairs?
3. Dressing or bathing?

Question 170b. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping?

TABLE 10
Average annual number of persons age 12 or older, by disability status and disability type for ACS and NCVS, 2017–19

Disability status and type	NCVS	ACS	Difference*
Total	274,888,780	275,169,210	-280,430
Persons without disabilities	238,778,440	235,942,910	2,835,530
Persons with disabilities	33,996,520	39,226,300	-5,229,770
Disability type			
Hearing	10,804,770	11,278,290	-473,530
Vision	4,723,950	7,242,420	-2,518,470
Cognitive	11,827,900	14,360,360	-2,532,460
Ambulatory	18,923,730	20,623,830	-1,700,100
Self-care	5,768,370	7,627,540	-1,859,180
Independent living	12,246,010	14,765,790	-2,519,780

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding and because respondents could report multiple disability types. For persons ages 12 to 14, independent living disabilities are excluded as a disability type. See *Methodology*. Disability status was unknown for about 1% of persons, according to National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data. ACS denotes American Community Survey.

*The average annual number from the NCVS minus the average annual number from the ACS.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19; and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–19.

Age restriction on independent living disabilities

In the ACS, persons ages 12 to 14 are not asked about having independent living disabilities and are, therefore, excluded from the populations with independent living disabilities. Since July 2016, the NCVS disability questions have also followed this rule. In this report, rates of violence against persons with independent living disabilities are per 1,000 persons age 15 or older, compared to rates per 1,000 persons age 12 or older for other disability types.

Limitations of the estimates

The NCVS was designed to measure the incidence of criminal victimization against the U.S. civilian household population, excluding persons who live in institutions or are homeless. Institutions include adult correctional facilities, juvenile facilities, nursing or skilled nursing facilities, inpatient hospice facilities, residential schools for persons with disabilities, and hospitals with patients who have no usual home elsewhere. The measures of crime against persons with disabilities (as measured by the NCVS) cover only persons with disabilities who are living among the general population in noninstitutional settings.

Subsequently, there is some coverage error in using solely the noninstitutionalized population. For example, in 2019, according to the ACS, about 14% of persons age 12 or older who lived in noninstitutional settings had a disability. This is compared to 54% of those living in institutionalized settings (not shown). Because persons in institutionalized settings would not be covered in the NCVS, estimates of violence against these persons were not counted. This results in an undercount of violence against persons with disabilities.

Certain aspects of the NCVS design can also contribute to underestimating the level or type of violence against persons with disabilities. For example, the survey instruments, modes of interview, and interviewing protocols used in the NCVS may not be suited for interviewing persons who have difficulty communicating, especially by telephone. Some persons have disabilities that limit their verbal communication and use technology to enhance their ability to communicate, but many persons do not have access to such technology.

Proxy interviews may also lead to an underestimate of violence against persons with disabilities. The survey requires direct interviews with eligible respondents but

allows the use of proxy interviews with a caregiver or other eligible party in a limited set of circumstances. A proxy interview is allowed when a respondent is physically or mentally incapable of responding. The survey restrictions on proxy interviews were instituted because someone else may not know about the victimization experiences of the respondent, or because the person providing the information via proxy may be the perpetrator of the violence experienced by the respondent. Because proxy respondents may be more likely to omit crime incidents or may not know some details about reported incidents, the number or types of crimes against persons with disabilities may be underestimated. During 2017–19, information from about 3% of violent crime incidents against persons with disabilities was obtained from proxy interviews, compared to 2% of violent crime incidents against persons without disabilities (not shown).

Direct standardization

In general, persons with disabilities are older than persons without disabilities. In addition, crime rates vary with age. To account for these differences, BJS produced age-adjusted rates for the population without a disability that reflect an age distribution that matches that of the population with a disability. To generate age-adjusted rates of violent victimization of the population without a disability, direct standardization was used for the population with a disability as the standard population.⁵ This procedure eliminates the issue of different age distributions between populations.

The age-adjusted violent victimization rate, using direct standardization (R_d), is calculated as follows:

$$R_d = \sum (w_a \times r_a)$$

where—

R_d = age-adjusted rate of violent victimization of the population without a disability calculated using direct standardization,

w_a = weight calculated from the population with a disability for age-group a , and

r_a = unadjusted rate of violent victimization of the population without a disability in age-group a .

⁵For more information on direct standardization, see Curtin, L. R. & Klein, R. J. (1995). Direct standardization (age-adjusted death rates). *Healthy People 2000: Statistical Notes, 6 Revised*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/statnt/statnt06rv.pdf>.

The weight (w_a) for age-group a is calculated as follows:

$$w_a = \frac{n_a}{N}$$

where—

w_a = weight calculated from the population with a disability for age-group a,

n_a = number of persons in age-group a in the population with a disability, and

N = total number of persons in the population with a disability.

Nonresponse and weighting adjustments

The 2017–19 NCVS data file includes 451,639 household interviews. Overall, 73% of eligible households completed interviews. Within participating households, interviews with 731,477 persons were completed, representing an 83% response rate among eligible persons from responding households.

Victimizations that occurred outside of the U.S. were excluded from this report. In the period of 2017–19, about 1% of the unweighted victimizations occurred outside of the U.S.

NCVS data are weighted to produce annual estimates of victimization for persons age 12 or older living in U.S. households, excluding persons who live in institutions or are homeless. Because the NCVS relies on a sample rather than a census of the entire population, weights are designed to adjust to known population totals and to compensate for survey nonresponse and other aspects of the complex sample design.

NCVS data files include person, household, victimization, and incident weights. Person weights provide an estimate of the population represented by each person in the sample. Household weights provide an estimate of the household population represented by each household in the sample. After proper adjustment, both person and household weights are also typically used to form the denominator in calculations of crime rates. For personal crimes, the incident weight is derived by dividing the person weight of a victim by the total number of persons victimized during an incident, as reported by the respondent. For property crimes measured at the household level, the incident weight and the household weight are the same because the victim of a property crime is considered to be the household as a whole. The incident weight is most

frequently used to calculate estimates of offenders' and victims' demographics.

Victimization weights used in this report account for the number of persons victimized during an incident and for high-frequency repeat victimizations (i.e., series victimizations). Series victimizations are similar in type to one another but occur with such frequency that a victim is unable to recall each individual event or describe each event in detail. Survey procedures allow NCVS interviewers to identify and classify these similar victimizations as series victimizations and to collect detailed information on only the most recent incident in the series.

The weighting counts series victimizations as the actual number of victimizations reported by the victim, up to a maximum of 10. Doing so produces more reliable estimates of crime levels than counting such victimizations only once, while the cap at 10 minimizes the effect of extreme outliers on rates. According to the 2017–19 data, series victimizations accounted for 1.4% of all victimizations and 3.3% of all violent victimizations. Additional information on the enumeration of series victimizations is detailed in the report *Methods for Counting High-Frequency Repeat Victimizations in the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCJ 237308, BJS, April 2012).

Standard error computations for percentages and unadjusted rates

When national estimates are derived from a sample, as with the NCVS, caution must be used when comparing one estimate to another or when comparing estimates over time. Although one estimate may be larger than another, estimates based on a sample have some degree of sampling error. The sampling error of an estimate depends on several factors, including the amount of variation in the responses and the size of the sample. When the sampling error around an estimate is taken into account, estimates that appear different may not be statistically significant.

One measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate is the standard error. The standard error may vary from one estimate to the next. Generally, an estimate with a smaller standard error provides a more reliable approximation of the true value than an estimate with a larger standard error. Estimates with relatively large standard errors have less precision and reliability and should be interpreted with caution.

For complex sample designs, there are several methods that can be used to generate standard errors around a

point estimate (e.g., numbers, percentages, and rates). In this report, for percentages and unadjusted rates, generalized variance function (GVF) parameters were used for variance estimation. Parameters are produced for GVFs that compute the variance of any crime estimate based on the value of that crime estimate. The GVF parameters are generated by fitting estimates and their relative variance to a regression model, using an iterative weighted least-squares procedure where the weight is the inverse of the square of the predicted relative variance.

The U.S. Census Bureau produces GVF parameters for BJS, which account for aspects of the NCVS's complex sample design and represent the curve fitted to a selection of individual standard errors, using a specialized version of BRR based on Fay's method.⁶ GVFs express the variance as a function of the expected value of the survey estimate.⁷ For more information on GVFs, see *National Crime Victimization Survey, 2016 Technical Documentation* (NCJ 251442, BJS, December 2017).

BJS conducted statistical tests to determine whether differences in estimated numbers, percentages, and rates in this report were statistically significant once sampling error was taken into account. Using statistical analysis programs developed specifically for the NCVS, all comparisons in the text were tested for significance. The primary test procedure was the Student's t-statistic, which tests the difference between two sample estimates. Findings described in this report as increases or decreases passed a test at either the 0.05 level (95% confidence level) or 0.10 level (90% confidence level) of significance. Figures and tables in this report should be referenced for testing on specific findings.

Estimates and standard errors of the estimates provided in this report may be used to generate a confidence interval around the estimate as a measure of the margin of error. The following example illustrates how standard errors may be used to generate confidence intervals:

Based on the 2017–19 NCVS, 37.9% of violent crime against persons with disabilities was reported

⁶Fay, R. E. (1989). Theory and application of replicate weighting for variance calculations. In American Statistical Association, *Proceedings of the Survey Research Methods Section* (pp. 212–217). http://www.asasrms.org/Proceedings/papers/1989_033.pdf

⁷Wolter, K. M. (1984). An investigation of some estimators of variance for systematic sampling. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 79(388), 781–790. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1984.10477095>

to police. (See table 7.) Using the GVFs, BJS determined that the estimated victimization rate has a standard error of 2.07%. (See appendix table 9.) A confidence interval around the estimate is generated by multiplying the standard error by ± 1.96 (the t-score of a normal, two-tailed distribution that excludes 2.5% at either end of the distribution). Therefore, the 95% confidence interval around the 37.9% estimate during 2017–19 is $37.9 \pm (2.07 \times 1.96)$ or (33.90% to 41.99%). In other words, if BJS used the same sampling method to select different samples and computed an interval estimate for each sample, it would expect the true population parameter (percentage of violent crime against persons with disabilities that was reported to police) to fall within the interval estimates 95% of the time.

For this report, BJS also calculated a coefficient of variation (CV) for all estimates, representing the ratio of the standard error to the estimate. CVs (not shown in tables) provide another measure of reliability and a means for comparing the precision of estimates across measures with differing levels or metrics.

Standard error computations and statistical significance for age-adjusted rates

Due to the complexity in generating age-adjusted rates of violent crime, other methods were used to compute standard errors and determine statistical significance.⁸ The standard error for the age-adjusted rate of violent victimization against persons without disabilities was calculated as follows:

$$S_a = \sqrt{\sum(w_a^2 \times v_a)}$$

where—

S_a = standard error for an age-adjusted rate of violent victimization against persons without disabilities that was computed using direct standardization,

w_a = weight calculated from persons with disabilities for age-group a, and

v_a = variance calculated for an unadjusted rate of violent victimization of persons without disabilities for age-group a using information from the GVF parameters that the U.S. Census Bureau produced for the NCVS.

⁸For more information on computing standard errors for age-adjusted rates, see Anderson, R. N., & Rosenberg, H. M. (1998). Age standardization of death rates: Implementation of the year 2000 standard. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 47(3). https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr47/nvsr47_03.pdf.

To calculate statistical significance among rates with at least one age-adjusted rate, the standard error for the age-adjusted rate was calculated using the formula above. A Student's t-statistic also was calculated, which tests the difference between two sample estimates. Findings described in this report as higher, lower, or different passed a test at either the 0.05 level (95% confidence level) or 0.10 level (90% confidence level) of significance.

APPENDIX TABLE 1**U.S. population, by disability status and demographic characteristics, 2017–19**

Demographic characteristic	Persons with disabilities		Persons without disabilities	
	Average annual number	Percent of total	Average annual number	Percent of total
Total	33,996,520	12.4%	238,778,440	86.9%
Sex				
Male	16,067,650	47.3%	116,585,220	48.8%
Female	17,928,870	52.7	122,193,220	51.2
Race/ethnicity				
White ^a	23,658,810	69.6%	146,366,780	61.3%
Black ^a	4,284,430	12.6	28,488,690	11.9
Hispanic	3,982,320	11.7	42,577,740	17.8
Other ^{a,b,c}	2,070,960	6.1	21,345,240	8.9
Age				
12–15	1,056,950	3.1%	15,412,790	6.5%
16–19	1,041,050	3.1	15,604,310	6.5
20–24	1,244,540	3.7	20,005,220	8.4
25–34	2,149,640	6.3	42,412,320	17.8
35–49	3,981,010	11.7	56,849,770	23.8
50–64	8,380,670	24.7	53,902,240	22.6
65 or older	16,142,650	47.5	34,591,780	14.5
Disability type				
Hearing	10,804,770	31.8%	~	~
Vision	4,723,950	13.9	~	~
Ambulatory	18,923,730	55.7	~	~
Cognitive	11,827,900	34.8	~	~
Self-care	5,768,370	17.0	~	~
Independent living	12,246,010	36.0	~	~

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding and because respondents could report multiple disability types. Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. For persons ages 12 to 14, independent living disabilities are excluded as a disability type. See *Methodology*. Disability status was unknown for about 1% of persons.

~Not applicable.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

^bIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

^cCategories are not shown separately due to small numbers of sample cases.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 2

Estimates and standard errors for figure 1: Rate of violent victimization, by disability status, 2009–2019 (2-year rolling averages)

Year	ACS population ^a						NCVS population ^b					
	Persons with disabilities		Persons without disabilities*				Persons with disabilities		Persons without disabilities**			
	Rate ^c	Standard error	Age-adjusted rate ^c	Standard error	Unadjusted rate	Standard error	Rate ^c	Standard error	Age-adjusted rate ^c	Standard error	Unadjusted rate	Standard error
2009	28.8 †	3.02	13.6	0.74	23.1	1.51	~	~	~	~	~	~
2010	25.1 †	2.68	12.1	0.66	20.1	1.38	~	~	~	~	~	~
2011	26.2 †	2.52	11.9	0.58	20.0	1.26	~	~	~	~	~	~
2012	34.2 †	2.59	13.6	0.57	22.7	1.15	~	~	~	~	~	~
2013	36.0 †	3.15	13.7	0.67	22.9	1.39	~	~	~	~	~	~
2014	31.7 †	2.60	12.5	0.58	20.0	1.15	~	~	~	~	~	~
2015	29.5 †	2.49	11.8	0.59	17.7	1.05	~	~	~	~	~	~
2016	30.7 †	2.46	11.5	0.56	17.3	0.99	~	~	~	~	~	~
2017	33.5 †	2.24	12.0	0.50	17.8	0.86	~	~	~	~	~	~
2018	41.7 †	2.31	12.5	0.46	18.4	0.80	47.5 †	2.62	12.1	0.45	18.2	0.79
2019	42.3 †	2.79	13.0	0.56	18.6	0.96	49.2 †	3.22	12.4	0.55	18.3	0.95

Note: Based on the noninstitutionalized U.S. resident population age 12 or older. Rates are per 1,000 persons. Estimates are based on 2-year rolling averages. Questions about disability status in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) were moved to the screener form in July 2016, allowing the calculation of populations by disability status using NCVS data. See *Methodology*.

*Comparison group with rates calculated with population data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for persons with disabilities are compared to age-adjusted rates for persons without disabilities.

**Comparison group with rates calculated with population data from the NCVS for persons with disabilities are compared to age-adjusted rates for persons without disabilities.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

~Not applicable.

^aRates were calculated with population data from the ACS.

^bRates were calculated with population data from the NCVS.

^cRates for the population without a disability were adjusted using direct standardization with the population with a disability as the standard population. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2008–2019; and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008–2019.

APPENDIX TABLE 3

Standard errors for table 1: Rate of violent victimization, by type of crime and disability status, 2017–19

Type of crime	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities	
		Age-adjusted	Unadjusted
Violent crime	2.53	0.45	0.77
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	1.28	0.19	0.35
Rape/sexual assault	0.55	0.08	0.15
Robbery	0.59	0.09	0.13
Aggravated assault	0.76	0.13	0.21
Simple assault	1.85	0.36	0.57

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 4

Standard errors for table 2: Percent of violent victimizations against persons with disabilities, by type of crime, 2017–19

Type of crime	Percent of violent victimizations
Violent crime	1.17%
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	1.58%
Rape/sexual assault	2.78
Robbery	2.59
Aggravated assault	1.97
Simple assault	1.32%

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Standard errors for table 3: Rate of violent victimization against persons with and without disabilities, by victim characteristics, 2017–19

Victim characteristic	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities	
		Age-adjusted	Unadjusted
Total	2.53	0.45	0.77
Sex			
Male	3.04	0.62	0.95
Female	3.22	0.52	0.93
Race/ethnicity			
White	2.78	0.53	0.90
Black	4.52	1.00	1.43
Hispanic	5.70	0.84	1.22
Other	7.33	0.99	1.66

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Standard errors for table 4: Rate of violent victimization and average annual number of persons, by victim's disability status and age, 2017–19

Age of victim	Rate per 1,000	
	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
Total	2.53	0.77
12–15	15.79	2.44
16–19	17.59	2.17
20–24	14.05	2.21
25–34	10.59	1.52
35–49	7.01	1.15
50–64	4.01	0.98
65 or older	1.02	0.66

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

Standard errors for table 5: Rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities, by disability type and type of crime, 2017–19

Disability type	Violent crime	Violent crime, excluding simple assault	
		Simple assault	Simple assault
Hearing	2.40	1.27	1.75
Vision	4.92	3.20	3.07
Cognitive	5.05	2.76	3.65
Ambulatory	2.53	1.39	1.77
Self-care	3.94	2.27	2.76
Independent living	3.11	1.95	1.95

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 8

Standard errors for table 6: Victim-offender relationship, by victim's disability status, 2017–19

Victim-offender relationship	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
Intimate partner	1.20%	0.89%
Other relatives	1.35	0.61
Well-known/casual acquaintances	1.97	1.36
Strangers	1.94	1.51
Unknown	1.11	0.80

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 9

Standard errors for table 7: Violent crime reported to police, by victim's disability status and disability type, 2017–19

Disability status and type	Reported to police
Persons without disabilities	1.55%
Persons with disabilities	2.07
Single disability type	2.40
Multiple disability types	2.88
Disability type	
Hearing	4.22%
Vision	4.38
Cognitive	2.40
Ambulatory	2.94
Self-care	4.50
Independent living	3.30

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 10**Standard errors for table 8: Violent crime reported to police, by disability status and type of crime, 2017–19**

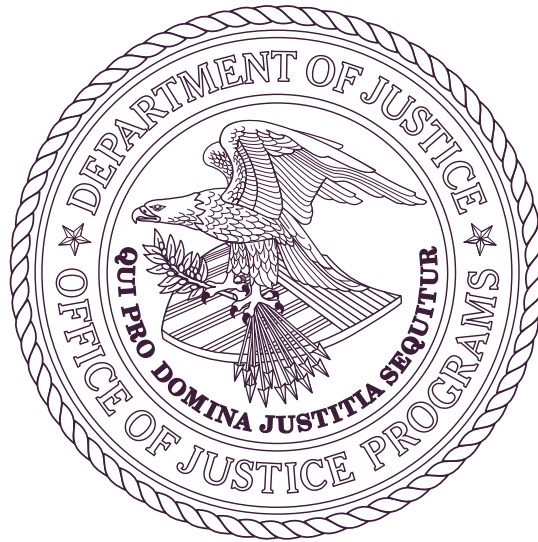
Type of crime	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
Violent crime	2.07%	1.55%
Violent crime, excluding simple assault	2.82%	2.08%
Rape/sexual assault	4.11	3.50
Robbery	4.29	3.31
Aggravated assault	3.76	2.63
Simple assault	2.34%	1.74%

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.

APPENDIX TABLE 11**Standard errors for table 9. Person who notified police of violent crime, by victim's disability status, 2017–19**

Person who notified police	Persons with disabilities	Persons without disabilities
Victim	2.94%	2.03%
Other household member	1.64	0.82
Someone official	1.30	1.01
Police were at the scene	0.82	0.95
Someone else	1.74	1.16
Police notified some other way	0.53	0.36

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–19.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Doris J. James is the acting director.

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