



Pennsylvania  
**Commission on Crime  
and Delinquency**

# **Violent Crime Trends & Clearance Rates in Pennsylvania**

**Preliminary Analysis of Gun Violence Investigation & Prosecution (GVIP)  
Grant Program Impact**

Prepared by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD)

*January 2026*

# Introduction

## About this Report

This report examines violent crimes reported and resolved - or “cleared” - in Pennsylvania between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2024 (FYs 2022-23 and 2023-24). It includes statewide trends as well as those among counties funded through PCCD’s **Gun Violence Investigation and Prosecution (GVIP) grant programs**. Funded through one-time ARPA dollars and authorized by [Act 54 of 2022](#), this program aims to strengthen local capacity to address violent crime involving firearms.

## Data Sources, Methodology & Limitations

- This report uses publicly available data reported through Pennsylvania’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System, administered by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).
- Clearance rates represent the proportion of crimes solved during a given period relative to the total number of offenses reported in that same period. They do **not** necessarily reflect resolution of crimes that occurred within that timeframe.
- Comparability is limited for homicide clearance rates for areas that reported no homicides, and small incident counts in some jurisdictions may skew clearance trends.
- Reporting lags and other factors may result in underreporting of clearances in UCR data.
- By its very nature, since UCR only captures offenses reported to law enforcement authorities, the full scope of crimes may not be reported to police.<sup>i</sup>

## Key Findings

- Across Pennsylvania, violent crime went down and clearance rates went up from FY 2022 to FY 2024, suggesting broader improvements in public safety.
- 19 counties received GVIP funding, with some counties using grants to support county-wide efforts while others designated funding for specific local agencies.
- Preliminary analysis suggests GVIP funding may have helped accelerate progress in some areas.
- GVIP-funded counties saw a significant drop in homicides - down 32.5% from FY 2022 to FY 2024.
- At the same time, homicide clearance rates improved significantly in funded counties - up more than 8 percentage points - and was higher than the average clearance rate of non-funded counties (91.3% vs. 83.7%, respectively).
- GVIP-funded counties also saw more significant declines in aggravated assaults compared to non-funded counties, and they also experienced a greater improvement in assault clearance rates (7.5 percentage point increase compared to 1.5 points, respectively).

# National & Statewide Trends

## Why Clearance Rates Matter

**Clearance rates are a widely used measure of law enforcement performance because they can signal how effectively they investigate and resolve crimes, especially violent offenses like homicide and assault.<sup>ii</sup>** In general, high clearance rates suggest that police departments are successfully identifying and arresting offenders - a core function of law enforcement. Higher clearance rates can also increase public confidence and trust in law enforcement and improve perceptions of fairness, effectiveness, and legitimacy. By contrast, when crimes go unsolved, that trust often erodes, especially in communities already disproportionately impacted by violence.<sup>iii</sup>

Research also shows linkages between solving and deterring violent crimes. A greater likelihood of accountability and consequences can disrupt cycles of violence and reduce the number of homicides, shootings, and other forms of violence.<sup>iv</sup> Reductions in crime and violence are also linked to higher clearance rates, as decreased workloads enable law enforcement to solve more cases.<sup>v</sup>

That said, consistently solving violent crimes is no small feat - especially in a state like Pennsylvania, which has more than 1,200 local law enforcement agencies,<sup>vi</sup> many of which are small and operating in rural areas with fewer resources. These agencies often face staffing shortages, outdated technology, and limited access to specialized investigative resources.<sup>vii</sup> In this context, targeted investments at the federal, state, and local levels can be important catalysts for improving clearance rates across jurisdictions, helping to increase capacity and adoption of evidence-based practices.<sup>viii</sup>

## National Violent Crime Trends & Clearance Rates

**After sharp upticks during the pandemic, homicides and other violent crimes have decreased sharply in calendar years (CY) 2023 and 2024, with preliminary data suggesting further declines have continued into CY 2025.<sup>ix</sup>** However, nationally, the rate at which violent crimes are solved by law enforcement remains somewhat low.

In CY 2024, only 44% of violent crimes reported to law enforcement across the U.S. were solved.<sup>x</sup> A 50-state analysis of violent crime and accountability compiled by the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center found that violent crime rates decreased in 39 states and the District of Columbia between CY 2019 and CY 2024, and that the solve rate for these crimes increased in 24 states.<sup>xi</sup>

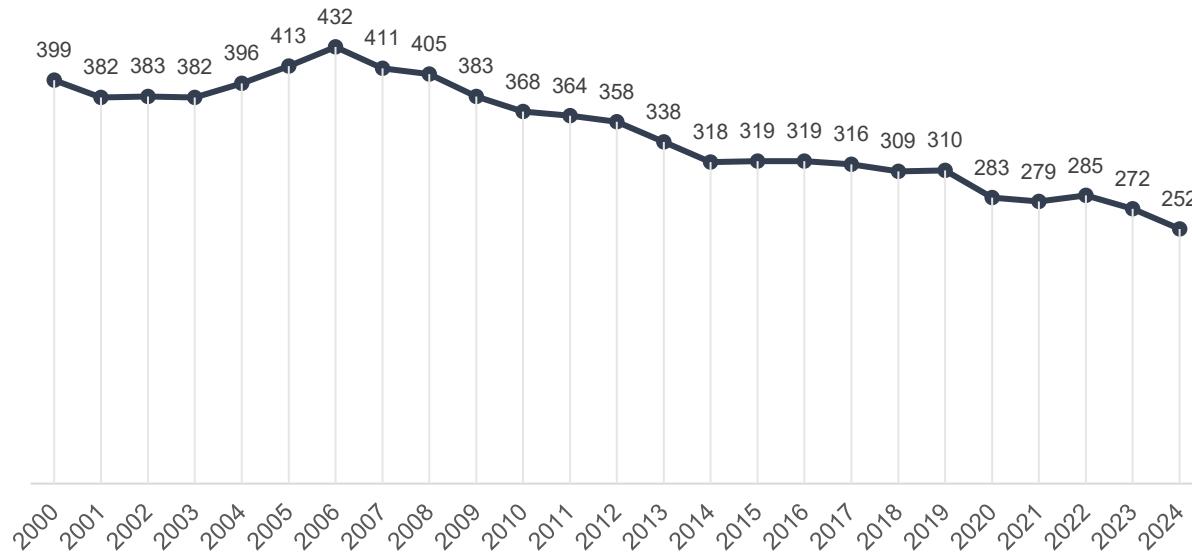
In CY 2024, the national homicide clearance rate increased to 60% - up three points from the prior year. Early estimates of CY 2025 data suggest a homicide clearance rate of 65%.<sup>xii</sup> While these improvements are promising, gaps remain: on average, only one in five nonfatal shootings result in an arrest nationwide.<sup>xiii</sup> This means that a significant share of firearm-related assaults do not result in closure.

## Pennsylvania Violent Crime Trends & Clearance Rates

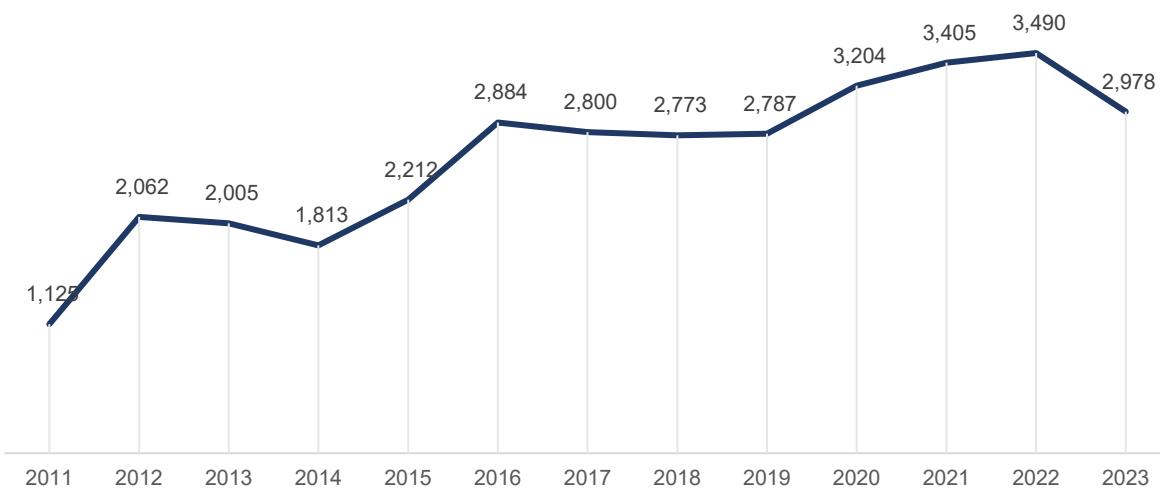
**In Pennsylvania, violent crime is down 21% from almost a decade ago (see Figure 1).<sup>xiv</sup>** However, during that same period, the statewide homicide rate increased by 44%. More recent data from UCR suggests a critical turning point: in CY 2024, homicide offenses fell by 23%

compared to the prior year (719 versus 932), with 31 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties reporting fewer murders. Encouragingly, nonfatal firearm injuries - which had been rising for years - are also beginning to decline (see Figure 2). Since 2022, Pennsylvania's homicide clearance rates have also shown improvement, increasing from 61% in FY 2022-23 to 69% in FY 2023-24. During that same period, clearance rates for assaults also improved, increasing from 57% to 61%.

**Figure 1:** Violent crime rates (per 100k) in Pennsylvania have declined 37% since CY 2000.



**Figure 2:** Nonfatal Firearm Injuries in Pennsylvania, CY 2011- CY 2023<sup>xv</sup>



**Analysis shows that violent crime has dropped statewide while clearance rates have improved from FY 2022 to FY 2024.** While promising, there has been variation from county to county as it relates to both crime and clearance rates. Homicides increased in 14 counties,<sup>xvi</sup> and clearance rates vary widely. In fact, 16 counties fall below the statewide homicide clearance rate of 69% (see Figure 3); half are designated as rural by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

**Figure 3:** Counties with Below-Average Homicide Clearance Rates (CY 2024)<sup>xvii</sup>

County	Homicides Reported (2024)	Homicides Cleared (2024)	Clearance Rate (2024)	Population
Carbon*	1	0	0.0%	65,616
Elk*	1	0	0.0%	31,213
Jefferson*	1	0	0.0%	44,635
Potter*	1	0	0.0%	16,050
Beaver	8	2	25.0%	166,704
Juniata*	3	1	33.3%	22,854
Westmoreland	7	3	42.9%	352,050
Allegheny	138	68	49.3%	1,241,895
Cumberland	10	5	50.0%	271,694
Delaware	40	20	50.0%	581,017
Lycoming*	2	1	50.0%	112,863
Mercer*	6	3	50.0%	108,431
Dauphin	25	15	60.0%	292,698
Chester	12	8	66.7%	551,417
Montgomery	18	12	66.7%	877,692
Northumberland*	3	2	66.7%	90,207

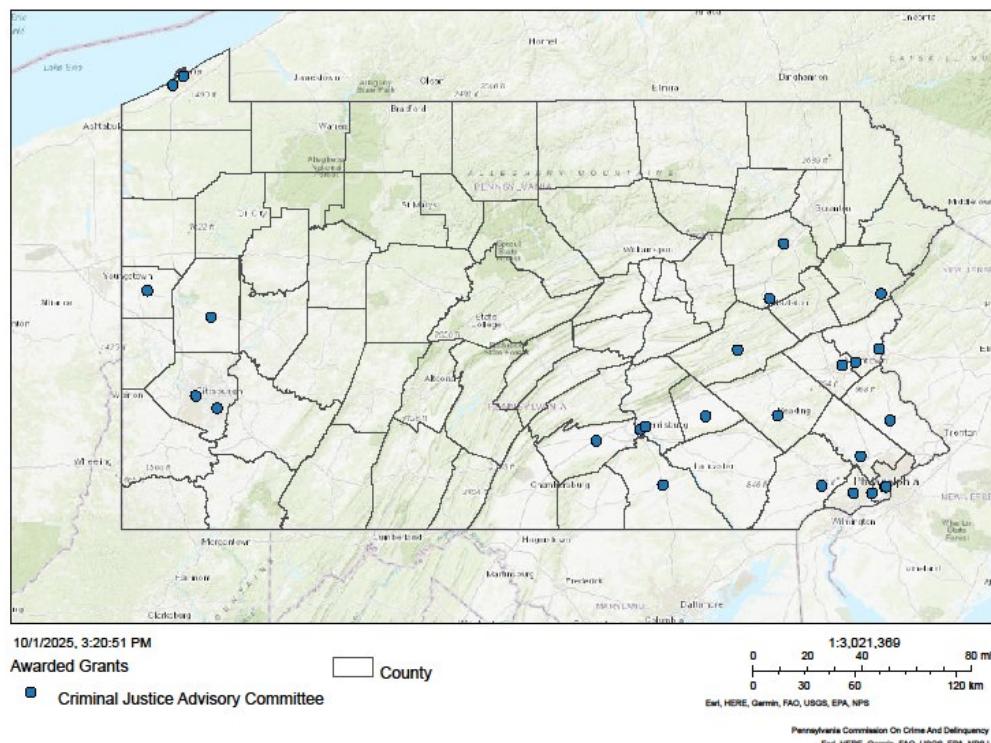
\* = Rural county (based on population density < 291 persons/sq. mi.)

# Investing in Safer Communities

## Pennsylvania's Approach to Reducing Community Violence & Improving Clearance Rates

In September 2022, Pennsylvania launched the Gun Violence Investigation and Prosecution (GVIP) Grant Program to help local law enforcement and prosecutors investigate and prosecute gun-related crimes. Authorized by [Act 54 of 2022](#) and funded with \$50 million in one-time federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, GVIP supported agencies during a period of rising homicides and shootings across the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 4:** Awarded GVIP Grants<sup>xviii</sup>



**GVIP grants were provided for projects in 19 Pennsylvania counties, supporting both county-wide and local initiatives.** These grants helped agencies hire personnel, fund overtime for detectives, and invest in tools like forensic technology, license plate readers, and crime analysis software. In York County, for example, GVIP funding contributed to a 31% increase in homicide case clearances, a 37% increase in nonfatal shooting clearances, and a 167% increase in successful prosecutions.

GVIP also included a data-sharing requirement with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), enabling PCCD to track outcomes and share findings through a [public dashboard](#). Early results suggest that GVIP-funded agencies were better equipped to pursue firearm-related offenses, with higher conviction rates than non-recipient agencies.

<sup>1</sup> Note: As of December 2025, 19 of the 29 awarded GVIP projects have been fully expended and closed out. All projects are scheduled to conclude by September 30, 2026.

Beyond GVIP, PCCD administers other funding streams that support law enforcement modernization and violence prevention. These include the **Local Law Enforcement Support (LLES) Grant Program**, which provided \$135 million in one-time ARPA funding to help police departments address urgent staffing, training, and equipment needs authorized in the FY 2022-23 state budget. In addition, PCCD administers the **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)** program and assists the **Pennsylvania Virtual Training Network (PAVTN)**, which provides online training for officers—especially in rural or under-resourced areas.

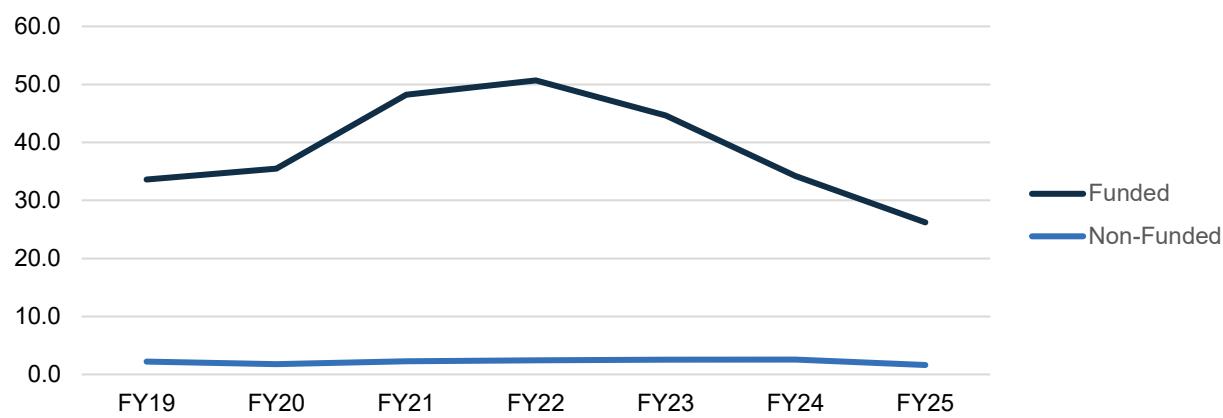
Since inception in 2021, Pennsylvania has also invested over \$235 million in community-based violence prevention through its **Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grants Initiative**, supporting hundreds of local projects and launching the **PA Peace Alliance**, a statewide learning network for violence reduction practitioners.

# Impact of GVIP Investments in Pennsylvania

## GVIP-funded Counties Report Significant Decline in Homicides and Increase in Homicide Clearance Rates

Preliminary analysis suggests that GVIP funding may have helped accelerate progress in some key public safety areas, particularly homicides and homicide clearance rates. GVIP-funded counties were more likely than non-funded counties to have higher numbers of homicides - consistent with the GVIP program's goal to assist jurisdictions with higher rates of firearm homicides and violent crime.

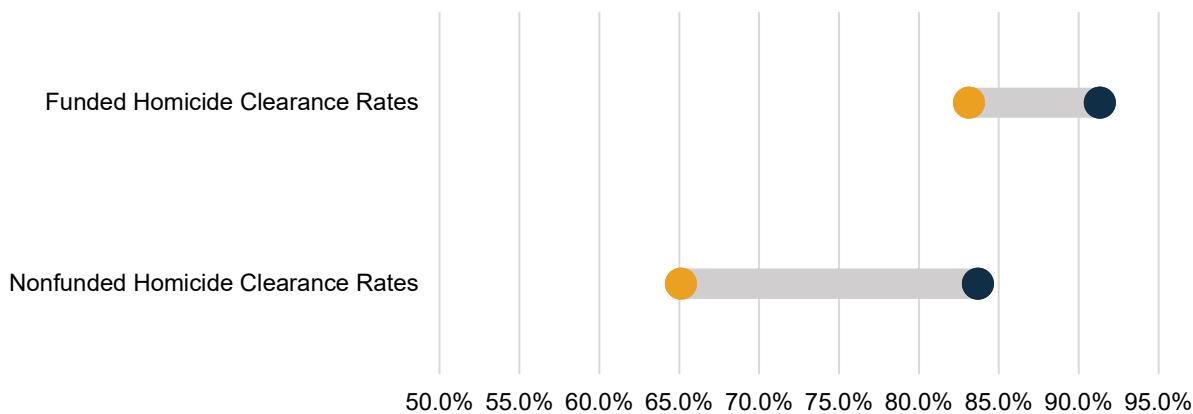
**Figure 5.** Average Counts of Homicides for GVIP-funded and Non-funded Counties (FY 2019 - FY 2025)



On average, GVIP-funded counties saw a 32.5% drop in homicide offenses from FY 2022 to FY 2024. By comparison, non-funded counties saw a slight increase in the average number of reported homicide offenses (increasing from 2.4 to 2.6).

During the same timeframe, both groups of counties - GVIP-funded and non-funded - demonstrated significant improvements in average homicide clearance rates, as shown in Figure 6. During this same period, funded counties' average clearance rate increased from 83.1% to 91.3%, an increase of over 8%. Non-funded counties reached an average homicide clearance rate of 83.7% in FY 2024, slightly lower than in GVIP-funded areas, but made a larger leap from FY 2022 levels (65.1%). This is likely due to a number of factors, including the relatively low number of homicides in non-funded counties. With smaller case volumes, even modest increases in the number of homicide cases cleared can result in larger percentage changes, making clearance rate improvements appear more dramatic than in counties with higher homicide counts.

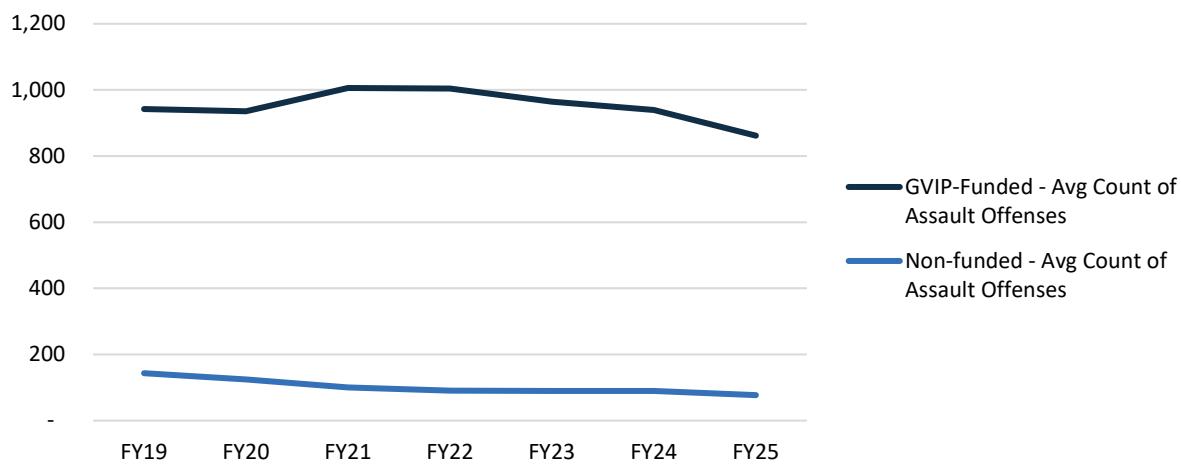
**Figure 6.** All counties - GVIP-funded or not - experienced significant gains in homicide clearance rates from **FY 2022** to **FY 2024**, with GVIP-funded counties reaching an average 91.3% clearance rate.



### GVIP Counties Saw Sharper Declines in Aggravated Assaults and Greater Improvements in Clearance Rates Compared to Non-funded Areas

GVIP recipient counties saw similar patterns regarding aggravated assaults. While GVIP-funded counties had higher numbers of aggravated assault incidents during this period compared to non-funded counties, they also made outsized reductions in these offenses. From FY 2022 to FY 2024, average counts of reported aggravated assaults within funded counties decreased by 6.4%, while nonfunded counties only experienced a 1.1% decrease in assault counts.

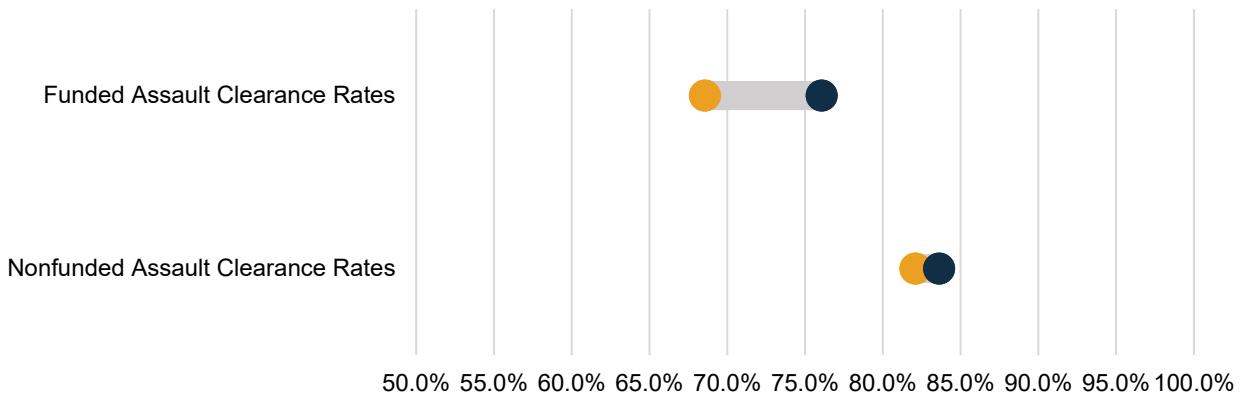
**Figure 7.** Average Count of Assault Offenses in GVIP-funded vs. Non-funded Counties (FY 2019 - FY 2025)



Between FY 2022 and FY 2024, the average aggravated assault clearance rate among funded counties rose from 68.6% to 76.1%, marking a 7.5 percentage point increase. In contrast, non-funded counties saw a more modest improvement of just 1.5 percentage points over the same period. Notably, the average clearance rate in non-funded counties decreased by 4.1 percentage points in FY 2023 - a decline not observed in GVIP-funded counties. This

divergence suggests that funding may have helped mitigate fluctuations and maintain higher and more stable clearance rates among GVIP-funded counties.

**Figure 8.** GVIP-funded counties made larger gains in aggravated assault clearance rates from **FY 2022** to **FY 2024** compared to non-funded counties.



# Conclusion

Preliminary findings from PCCD's early analysis of the GVIP program indicate signs of progress in reducing violent crime and improving clearance rates. While these trends are encouraging, they represent an initial snapshot, and additional research and data analysis is needed to understand additional factors that may be driving these changes locally and statewide. To that end, PCCD plans to build on this initial work by conducting deeper analyses of trends in violent crime and clearance rates following the conclusion of all GVIP-funded projects later in 2026.

Through its work at Pennsylvania's designated Statistical Analysis Center, PCCD regularly publishes novel research and criminal justice data and statistics. More information about these efforts and a gallery of published maps and dashboards can be found on [PCCD's website](#).

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<sup>i</sup> Lauritsen, Janet, and Ernesto Lopez. 2025. When Crime Statistics Diverge: Understanding the Two Major Sources of Crime Data in the U.S. Council on Criminal Justice. June 2025. <https://counciloncj.org/when-crime-statistics-diverge/>

<sup>ii</sup> Jillian Snider, "Solving Crime, Protecting Communities: A Blueprint for Safer Streets," R Street, June 17, 2025, <https://www.rstreet.org/research/solving-crime-protecting-communities-a-blueprint-for-safer-streets/>.

<sup>iii</sup> Jeff Asher, "Police Departments Nationwide Are Struggling to Solve Crimes," *The New York Times*, December 5, 2023.

<sup>iv</sup> Ellie Rushing and Dylan Purcell, "Philly detectives are solving homicides at the highest rate in 40 years as violence plummets and tech improves," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 16, 2025, <https://www.inquirer.com/crime/philadelphia-homicide-clearance-rate-unsolved-murders-20251016.html>.

<sup>v</sup> Jeff Asher, "Fewer Crimes Usually Means Higher Clearance Rates," December 2, 2024, <https://jasher.substack.com/p/fewer-crimes-usually-means-higher>.

<sup>vi</sup> *Policing in Pennsylvania*, PCCD.

<sup>vii</sup> Gibbs, Jennifer C. 2021. Police Chiefs Serving Small and Rural Municipalities: Profiles and Concerns – Executive Summary. Harrisburg, PA: Center for Rural Pennsylvania. <https://rural.pa.gov/download.cfm?file=Resources/PDFs/research-report/Police-Chiefs-Serving-Small-Rural-Municipalities-2021-Executive-Summary.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> Anthony A. Braga, "Improving Clearance Rates of Shootings: A Review of the Evidence," Manhattan Institute, July 20, 2021.

<sup>ix</sup> Asher, Jeff. *Testimony before the Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives*. September 29, 2025. <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU13/20250929/118642/HHRG-119-JU13-Wstate-AsherJ-20250929-U17.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> Lopez, Ernesto, and Bobby Boxerman. 2025. Crime Trends in U.S. Cities: Mid-Year 2025 Update. Council on Criminal Justice. July 2025. <https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-mid-year-2025-update/>

<sup>x</sup> *A State Policy Guide for Solving More Violent Crime: How State Policymakers Can Increase Violent Crime Solve Rates*, CSG Justice Center.

<sup>xi</sup> *50-State Crime Data*, CSG Data Center, accessed November 6, 2025.

<sup>xii</sup> When determining clearance rate trends using more recent data, it is important to note that some agencies report their data all at once in December, so an analysis of yearly data before December is going to be incomplete. As nationally recognized crime data analyst Jeff Asher recently highlighted, clearance rates reported in December tend to be lower than the rest of the year, which means we cannot accurately report on 2025 clearance data yet. However, rolling clearance rates over 12 months indicates a national trend of increasing clearance rates for murder since 2022.

<sup>xiii</sup> McLendon, Lindsey, Rachael Eisenberg, and Nick Wilson. 2024. Improving Public Safety Through Better Accountability and Prevention. Center for American Progress. May 16, 2024. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/improving-public-safety-through-better-accountability-and-prevention/>

<sup>xiv</sup> Data Source: Pennsylvania UCR data, analyzed by PCCD's Office of Research, Evaluation and Strategic Policy Development, October 2025.

<sup>xv</sup> Data Source: Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4), provided in 2024.

<sup>xvi</sup> Allegheny, Bucks, Cambria, Carbon, Chester, Clearfield, Crawford, Dauphin, Delaware, Lackawanna, Mercer, Perry, Pike, Washington.

<sup>xvii</sup> Data Source: Pennsylvania UCR Dashboard.

<sup>xviii</sup> Data Source: PCCD Grants Map.