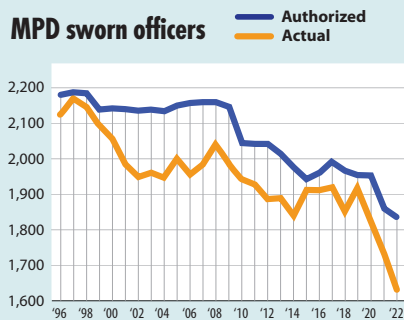




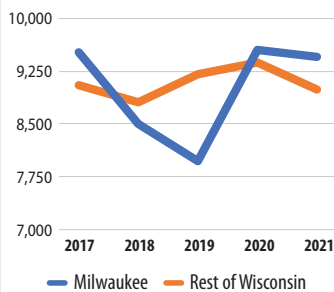
MPD sworn officers



Over the last 25 years, the Milwaukee Police Department has experienced a

-25% reduction in sworn officers.
(538 officers)

Violent crimes: Milwaukee and rest of Wisconsin



+123%

Retirements of senior ranking officers more than doubled from June to December 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.

A Plan to Improve Public Safety

Wisconsin's criminal justice system must first and foremost work to reduce crime, improve public safety and achieve justice for victims.

The Badger State remains, on the whole, a safe place that's been getting safer. But Wisconsinites who live and work in Milwaukee have seen dramatic increases in homicide, auto theft and aggravated assault. For some specific offenses, other Wisconsin cities are also seeing worsening trends.

There are more homicides in Milwaukee each year than in the rest of Wisconsin combined — a record 194 in 2021 in Milwaukee vs. a total of 127 everywhere else.

Milwaukee, which has only 10% of the state's population, had twice as many car thefts as the entire rest of the state in 2021.

There are several factors contributing to these increases.

A Shrinking Police Force

There are fewer officers in Milwaukee, where the Police Department experienced a 25% reduction in sworn officer staffing levels (a total of 538 fewer officers) over the last 25 years. The city's population was down only 4% over that same period.

The number of officers per capita dropped from 350 per 100,000 residents in 1997 to 280 per 100,000 in 2022.

Projections suggest the ranks will fall to as few as 1,432 sworn officers by the end of 2023, a 34% drop from 1997, when MPD had 2,169 sworn officers.

Reasons for this decline include:

- **Rising attrition** — Between 2018-'21, more than 520 officers willingly left the Milwaukee force.
- **Recruitment woes** — Each year between 2015 and 2018, MPD appointed roughly 190 new officers to the force. That fell to 45 in 2019, 66 in 2020, 31 in 2021 and none in the first three months of 2022.
- **Leadership loss** — Retirements for senior ranking officers, including sergeants, lieutenants, captains and inspectors, more than doubled (up 123%) from June to December 2020 compared with the same period in 2019.

Not surprisingly, arrests are falling, meaning more offenders face little to no accountability.

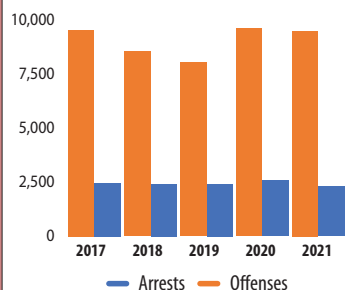
Overburdened Prosecutors and Public Defenders

Wisconsin's court system is plagued by massive delays and a growing backlog of criminal cases. It now takes more than a year for a court to resolve an armed robbery charge, 14 months to resolve a sexual assault case and more than 15 months to resolve an allegation that someone committed a murder. →

"Paralegals start at more an hour (than assistant district attorneys)."

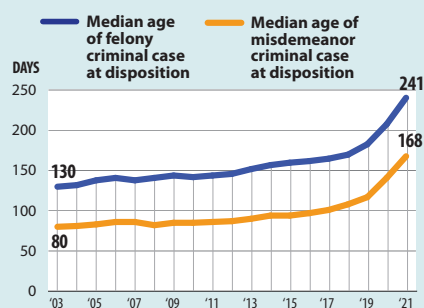
— **Melissa Inlow**,
Clark County district attorney

Violent crimes, offenses vs. arrests: Milwaukee



In 2021, there were more homicides in Milwaukee, with just 10% of the state's population, than in the rest of Wisconsin combined — 194 in Milwaukee vs. a total of 127 everywhere else.

Wisconsin's growing backlog of criminal cases



Source: Wisconsin Court System

Victims are often waiting a year or even longer for justice. Some defendants have been inappropriately released to commit more crimes. Others are being denied for too long the constitutional guarantees to a quality, state-funded defense meant to ensure that the innocent are not unjustly incarcerated.

Even a return to pre-pandemic performance will result in the state having nearly 900,000 backlogged cases by 2030.

Wisconsin provides all of the state's funding for the state's Public Defender Board and a portion of the personnel costs for the state's district attorneys' offices. The state's funding for these core government functions is significantly lower on a per capita basis than the other states surveyed by the Badger Institute.

Assistant district attorneys and assistant public defenders in Wisconsin earn less than their peers in other states. This contributes to a significant failure to retain talent.

SOLUTIONS

Crime

- Focus policy reforms and resources on Milwaukee.
- Focus on initiating and supporting the reinvigoration of the Milwaukee Police Department.
- Focus on restoring accountability to lawbreakers by reversing a trend of declining arrests.

Policing

- Increase MPD force levels by increasing both authorized positions and recruiting efforts.
- Bolster the detective ranks so that the department can solve more crimes.
- Maintain or increase recruiting and performance standards to improve police morale.
- Emulate places that have reversed negative crime and police morale trends.
- Identify how the state previously reduced case backlogs and disposition times.

Prosecutors/Public Defenders

- Require annual tracking of prosecutor and public defender office turnover.
- Require courts to track the number of and justification for continuances.
- Improve the starting salary and rate of pay progression for assistant district attorneys and assistant public defenders.
- Require the Legislative Audit Bureau to publish its annual analysis of the caseload of each district attorney's office and to provide additional prosecutor positions to fill any reported gap.
- Revise the Wisconsin Code so that its statutorily proscribed caseload standard for assistant public defenders conforms to national caseload standards.



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For more information on how to improve public safety in Wisconsin, visit:

badgerinstitute.org/crime-and-justice