

SANDAG

CJBRIEF

Research findings from
the Criminal Justice
Clearinghouse

San Diego Crime Victims and Suspects in 2023

January 2025

Introduction

This SANDAG CJ Brief offers a comprehensive overview of victims affected by crimes against persons and property in the San Diego region. It complements other SANDAG crime reports by providing a more complete picture that includes both victims and suspects. In this brief, victim and suspect characteristics are analyzed by crime type, with a focus on identifying which subgroups of the region’s population were most at risk of victimization.

Data in this brief were derived from California Incident Based Reporting System (CIBRS)/National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) crime data, which became the standard for law enforcement crime reporting in the United States on January 1, 2021. Due to this new reporting format, the crime statistics presented here are not comparable to data prior to 2021.

Unlike the data sourced from CIBRS, homicide data were compiled directly from local law enforcement agencies, referred to in this Brief as the 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report. Additionally, suspect data, which was gathered at the time of the crime and prior to any litigation, are also presented in this report.

Previous versions of this brief included data on victims of violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property crimes (burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft), as defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting Summary Reporting System (UCR Summary). To maintain a similar level of analysis using CIBRS/NIBRS, this report focuses on three crimes against persons offenses (assault, homicide, and non-consensual sex offenses) and four crimes against property offenses (burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and robbery). For a full list of offenses and a comprehensive analysis of crime statistics in the San Diego region, visit [Crime in the San Diego Region: 2021 Through 2023](#).

In total, data is presented for 36,995 victims and 50,333 suspects of crimes against persons, along with 62,380 victims and 63,662 suspects of crimes against property. This CIBRS/NIBRS data collection effort, extraction, and validation was supported by the Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), along with Police Departments in Chula Vista, Coronado, Escondido, La Mesa, National City, Oceanside, San Diego, and the Sheriff’s Department (for the jurisdictions of Lemon Grove, San Marcos, Vista, and other unincorporated areas). Their support and cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

Highlights

- In 2023, relative to their proportion in the population, Black individuals were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to be a victim of a crime against persons, as well as a suspect of such crimes.
- The largest proportion of homicide victims were Hispanic (45%). Homicide victims that were Hispanic or Black tended to be younger in age than those that were White.
- Males were overrepresented as victims in all crimes against property—most notably in robberies, where more than two in three (69%) were male.
- Females accounted for more than four in five victims of non-consensual sex offenses (86%), while males represented 96% of identified suspects in such offenses.
- Across all age groups, youth 17 and under comprised the highest proportion of victims of non-consensual sex offenses (36%).
- More than half (56%) of homicides with a known weapon involved the use of a firearm.

Victims of crimes against persons

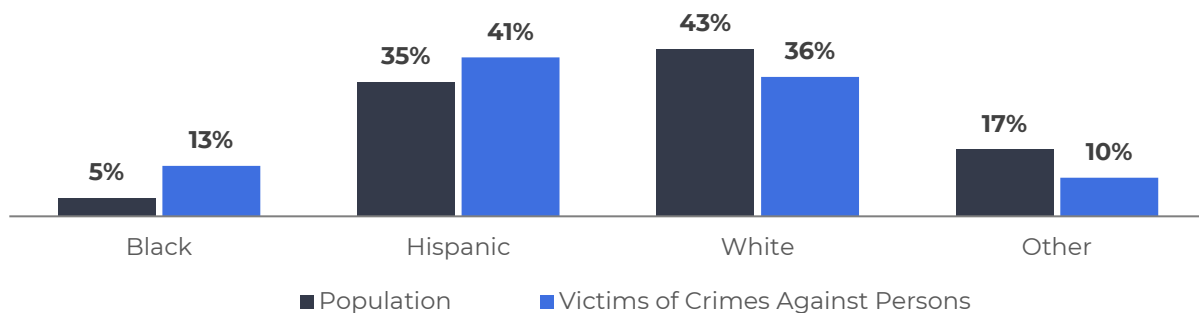
This section examines the demographics of victims of crimes against persons reported in 2023. Crimes against persons are analyzed overall and across three distinct categories: homicide, non-consensual sex offenses,¹ and assault.²

All references to homicide data are based on information provided directly by law enforcement agencies, as they provide specific incident details not available in the CIBRS/NIBRS database. The demographic statistics on overall crimes against persons (Figures 1, 2, and 3) were compiled using CIBRS/NIBRS data, where homicide counts may differ slightly due to the database's continuous updates. These differences in counts are marginal, as homicides represent less than 0.5% of all crimes against persons.

Race and ethnicity

The racial/ethnic characteristics of crimes against persons victims differed from their representation in the San Diego region.³ Compared to their proportion of the population, Black individuals were nearly three times more likely to be a victim of a crime against persons (5% vs. 13%) (Figure 1). Hispanic individuals were also overrepresented, though to a lesser degree (35% vs. 41%). Conversely, White individuals and individuals of 'Other' races and ethnicities experienced victimization at lower rates than their population proportion.

Figure 1: Victims of crimes against persons by race/ethnicity (2023)⁴



Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

In 2023, Black and Hispanic populations were disproportionately affected by all three types of crimes against persons analyzed (Table 1). Both groups were overrepresented as victims of homicide, non-consensual sex offenses, and assault. However, Black individuals experienced the highest relative overrepresentation, with victimization rates at least twice their population share. In contrast, White and 'Other' populations were less likely to be victims relative to their population share.

¹ Non-consensual sex offenses include rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and fondling.

² For the purposes of this report, assault includes both simple and aggravated assault.

³ 2023 population estimates were derived from [SANDAG's Population and Housing Estimates](#).

⁴ Crimes against persons is a CIBRS/NIBRS category that includes the following 15 offenses: murder, negligent manslaughter, justifiable homicide, rape, sodomy, sexual assault with an object, fondling, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, kidnapping/abduction, incest, statutory rape, human trafficking-commercial sex acts, and human trafficking-involuntary servitude.

Table 1: Crimes against persons by type and race/ethnicity (2023)

Race/Ethnicity	Population	Homicide	Non-Consensual Sex Offenses	Assault
Black	5%	19% ▲	10% ▲	14% ▲
Hispanic	35%	45% ▲	42% ▲	41% ▲
White	43%	30% ▼	37% ▼	36% ▼
Other	17%	6% ▼	11% ▼	10% ▼

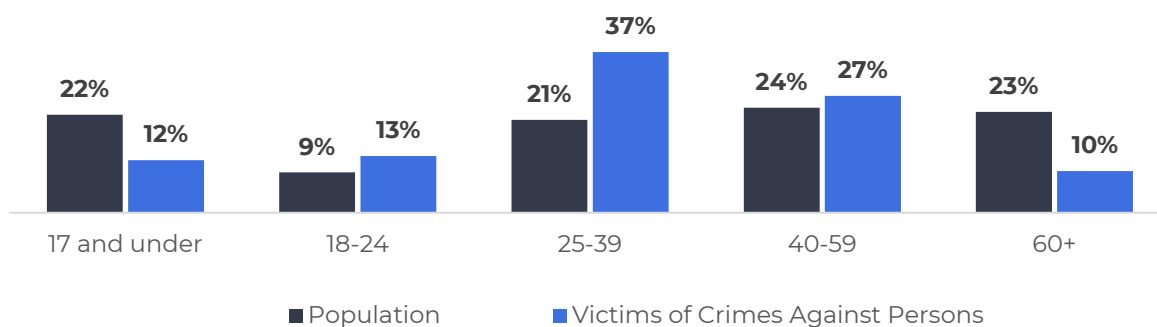
Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Age

In 2023, individuals aged 25 to 39 represented 21% of the population but experienced the highest victimization rate for crimes against persons, at 37% (Figure 2). In contrast, individuals aged 17 and under, as well as those 60 years and older, were underrepresented as victims of such crimes. Despite each of those groups comprising almost one-fourth of the population, only 12% of youth 17 and under and 10% of individuals 60 and older reported being victims of a crime against persons in 2023.

Figure 2: Victims of crime against persons by age (2023)



Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Young adults aged 18 to 24 were particularly at risk for homicide and non-consensual sex offenses, with victimization rates at least twice their share of the region’s population (Table 2). Adults aged 25 to 39 were especially at risk for assault, with a victimization rate nearly double their share of the population (21% vs. 38%). Notably, youth aged 17 and under were disproportionately affected by non-consensual sex offenses, representing 36% of all victims—the highest percentage across all age groups.

Table 2: Crimes against persons by type and age (2023)

Age	Population	Homicide	Non-Consensual Sex Offenses	Assault
17 and under	22%	4% ▼	36% ▲	11% ▼
18-24	9%	22% ▲	21% ▲	12% ▲
25-39	21%	30% ▲	25% ▲	38% ▲
40-59	24%	25% --	14% ▼	28% ▲
60+	23%	19% ▼	4% ▼	11% ▼

Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented; -- equally represented +/- 1%

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Gender

Females and males each account for 50% of the population and 50% of crimes against persons victims (Figure 3); however, this gender distribution differs substantially when broken down by crime type. Specifically, in 2023, males were overrepresented among victims of homicide (86%)⁵ and assault (53%) while females accounted for more than four in five victims of non-consensual sex offenses (86%) (Table 3).

Figure 3: Victims of crimes against persons by gender (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Table 3: Crimes against persons by type and gender (2023)

Gender	Population	Homicide	Non-Consensual Sex Offenses	Assault
Female	50%	14% ▼	86% ▲	47% ▼
Male	50%	86% ▲	14% ▼	53% ▲

Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

⁵ Compared to the other two crimes against persons categories included in this analysis, the sample size for homicides was significantly lower, with 83 homicides recorded (of which 71 were male victims).

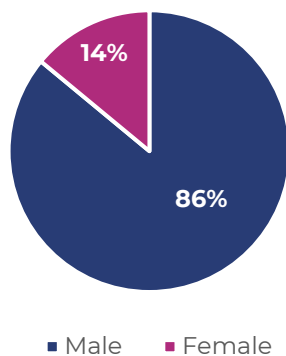
Homicide victims

Given the gravity and profound impact of homicide, additional analyses on the characteristics of homicide victims are provided. Unlike the rest of the data presented in this report, which were derived from CIBRS/NIBRS (through ARJIS), homicide data were collected from local law enforcement agencies, as they provide additional data elements. Specifically, data was submitted by Police Departments in San Diego, Chula Vista, National City, Coronado, Escondido, Oceanside, and La Mesa, as well as the Sheriff's Department (for the jurisdictions of San Marcos, Vista, Lemon Grove, and other unincorporated areas).

Homicide victim demographics

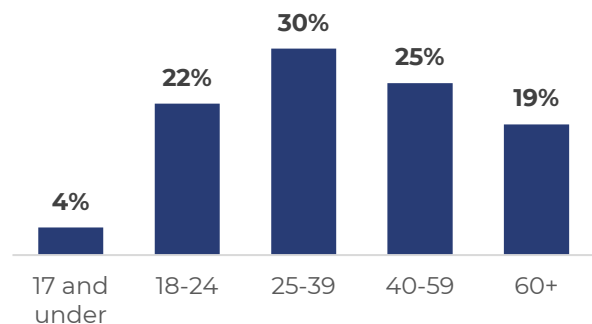
In 2023, there were 83 homicides reported in the region, comprised of 71 males (86%) and 12 females (14%) (Figure 4).⁶ Victimization was most concentrated among young to middle-aged adults: nearly one in three (30%) victims were between the ages of 25 and 39, and one in four (25%) were aged 40 to 59 (Figure 5). Individuals aged 18 to 24 experienced victimization at a rate similar to those aged 60 and over (22% and 19%, respectively).

Figure 4: Homicide victims by gender (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Figure 5: Homicide victims by age (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Hispanic individuals accounted for the largest proportion of homicide victims (45%), followed by White (30%), Black (19%), and those in the 'Other' category (6%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Homicide victims by race/ethnicity (2023)

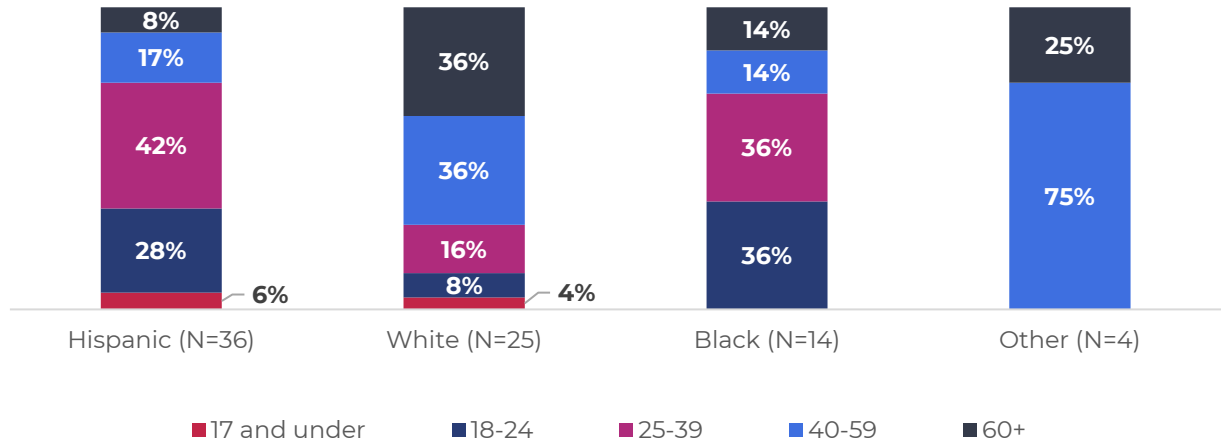


Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

⁶ Due to the small sample size and notable disparity in the number of female and male homicide victims, gender was not analyzed in depth, as comparisons would not yield reliable results. Further research with a larger sample size is necessary for a comprehensive analysis of gender-based patterns.

Joint analyses of race and age revealed distinct patterns about the age groups most vulnerable within each racial/ethnic category. White homicide victims tended to be older, with nearly three-fourths aged 40 or older (72%) (Figure 7). In contrast, Black and Hispanic homicide victims were more likely to be younger, with 71% of Black victims and 69% of Hispanic victims falling within the 18 to 39 age range.⁷

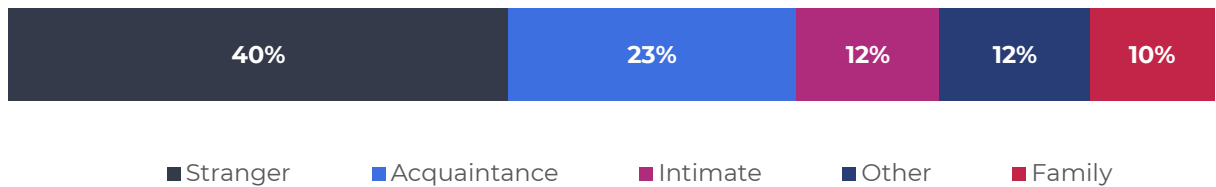
Figure 7: Homicide victims by race/ethnicity and age (2023)



Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Over one-third (37%) of all reported homicides did not identify a victim-suspect relationship at the time of the incident (not shown). Of the 52 cases that did report a known relationship, two in five (40%) incidents involved strangers and nearly one-fourth (23%) involved acquaintances (Figure 8). A combined 22% involved intimate or familial relationships.

Figure 8: Top five homicide victim-suspect relationships (2023)



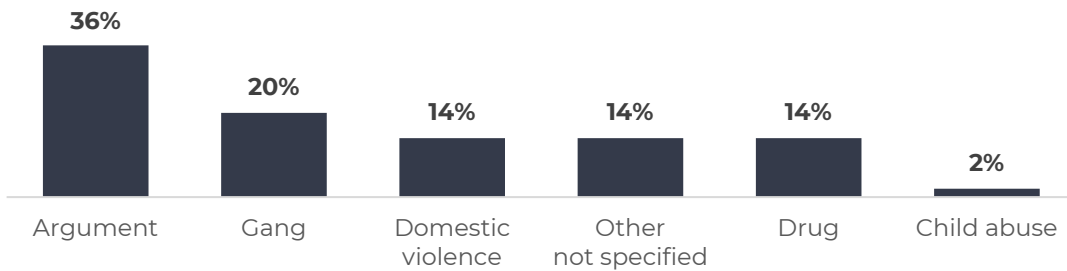
Note: Percentages do not total 100 as only the top five categories are shown.
Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Homicide motives and weapons used

About half (53%) of all reported homicide incidents included known motives. Of those 44 cases, the most common motives were arguments (36%), followed by gang-related incidents (20%) (Figure 9). Additionally, of the 68 homicide incidents with a known weapon, more than one in two (56%) involved the use of firearms (Figure 10).

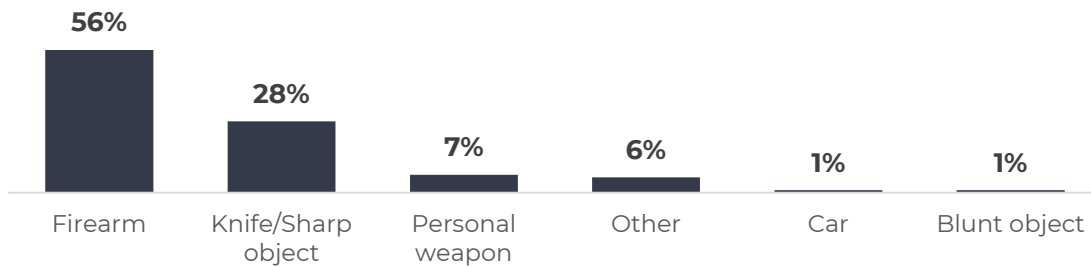
⁷ The figures presented for individual age categories in Figure 7 are rounded, which may result in minor discrepancies between the individual and combined percentages of categories.

Figure 9: Homicide motives (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

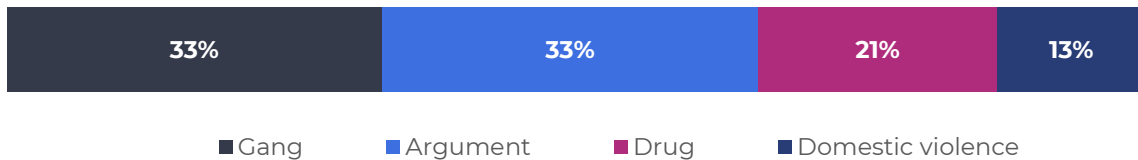
Figure 10: Weapons used in homicides (2023)



Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

Firearms were most commonly used in homicides resulting from gang violence or interpersonal conflicts. Specifically, of the 24 firearm-related homicides, the primary motives were gangs (33%) and arguments (33%) (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Homicides involving a firearm by motive (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; 2023 Homicide Supplemental Report

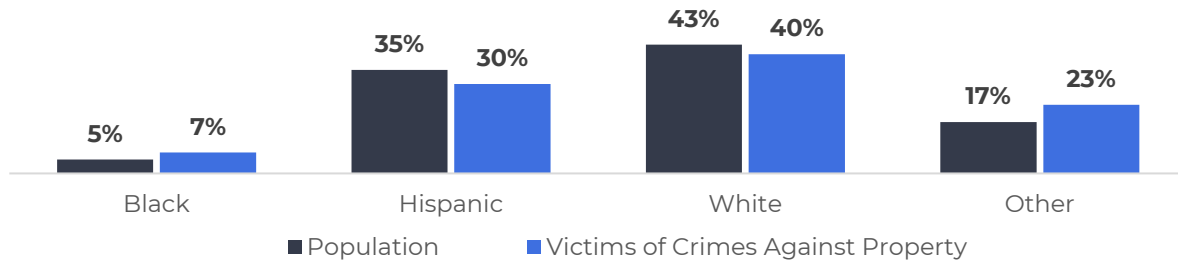
Victims of crime against property

The following section examines the demographics of victims of crimes against property reported in 2023. Crimes against property are analyzed both overall (encompassing 25 offenses) and across four categories: burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and robbery.

Race and ethnicity

The representation of racial/ethnic groups as victims of crimes against property is relatively proportional to their population shares, with only minor deviations. Specifically, Hispanic and White individuals were less victimized relative to their population size, while 'Other' and Black individuals were overrepresented (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Victims of crime against property by race/ethnicity (2023)⁸



Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Analysis of specific crimes against property by type and victim race/ethnicity offers additional insights. Hispanic individuals (35% of the population) were overrepresented as victims of motor vehicle theft (41%) and robbery (50%) (Table 4). In contrast, White individuals, comprising 43% of the population, were underrepresented in both of those categories but were more susceptible to being victims of burglary (50%). Black individuals were slightly overrepresented in each category, but experienced robbery victimization at double their population share (5% vs. 10%).

Table 4: Crimes against property by type and race/ethnicity (2023)

Race/Ethnicity	Population	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Robbery
Black	5%	7% ▲	7% ▲	6% --	10% ▲
Hispanic	35%	24% ▼	26% ▼	41% ▲	50% ▲
White	43%	50% ▲	45% ▲	28% ▼	27% ▼
Other	17%	19% ▲	23% ▲	24% ▲	13% ▼

Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented; -- equally represented +/- 1%

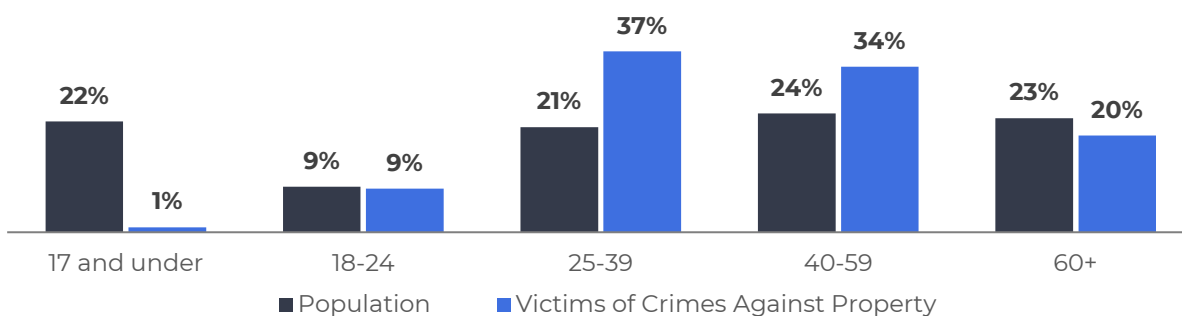
Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

⁸ Crimes against property is a CIBRS/NIBRS category including 25 offenses: robbery, burglary, 8 types of larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, vandalism/destruction of property, counterfeiting/forgery, 7 types of fraud, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, bribery, and stolen property.

Age

The relationship between age and crime against property victimization is consistent with what we know about different stages of life. Unsurprisingly, children and youth—possibly due to their lower levels of independence and opportunity—were highly underrepresented as victims of crimes against property, accounting for 1% of victims (Figure 13). In contrast, adults aged 25 to 39 and 40 to 59 were overrepresented compared to their population proportion. Notably, individuals aged 60 and older represented twice as large a share of victims in crimes against property (20%) as they did in crimes against persons (10%).

Figure 13: Victims of crime against property by age (2023)



Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Individuals in the 25 to 39 and 40 to 59 age range were overrepresented in all categories, collectively constituting 63% of robberies, 67% of burglaries, 70% of larcenies, and 75% of motor vehicle thefts (Table 5). Young adults aged 18 to 24 were particularly more prone to robbery, accounting for nearly one in five (18%) robbery incidents—double their proportion of the population (9%). Conversely, individuals aged 60 and older had lower victimization rates in all categories, except for burglary, where they were slightly overrepresented.

Table 5: Crimes against property by type and age (2023)

Age	Population	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Robbery
17 and under	22%	1% ▼	1% ▼	<1% ▼	7% ▼
18-24	9%	6% ▼	9% --	8% --	18% ▲
25-39	21%	31% ▲	38% ▲	39% ▲	36% ▲
40-59	24%	36% ▲	32% ▲	36% ▲	27% ▲
60+	23%	26% ▲	19% ▼	17% ▼	11% ▼

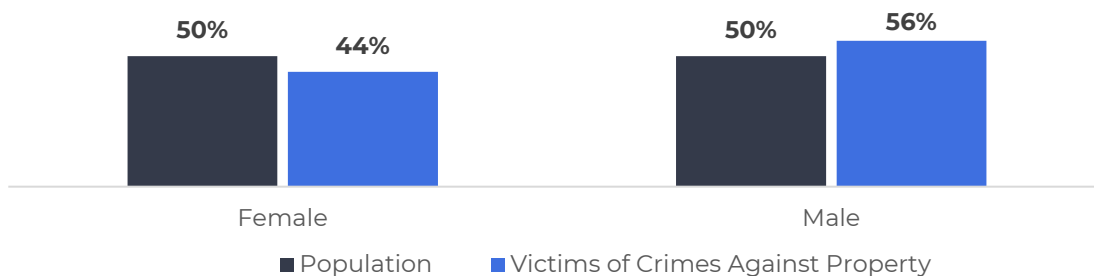
Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented; -- equally represented +/- 1%

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Gender

Although males and females each constitute approximately 50% of the population in the region, males were overrepresented as victims in crimes against property, while females were underrepresented (Figure 14). This trend was consistent across all categories of crimes against property, with the most notable disparities observed in motor vehicle theft and robbery, where over two-thirds of victims were male (67% and 69%, respectively) (Table 6).

Figure 14: Victims of crime against property by gender (2023)



Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Table 6: Crime against property by type and gender (2023)

Gender	Population	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Robbery
Female	50%	44% ▼	44% ▼	33% ▼	31% ▼
Male	50%	56% ▲	56% ▲	67% ▲	69% ▲

Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Suspects

This section presents the demographic characteristics of suspects involved in crimes against persons and property in the region, highlighting key patterns related to race/ethnicity, age, and gender. When interpreting these data, it is important to acknowledge the extensive body of research on racial disparities and overrepresentation within the United States criminal justice system. These disparities contribute to the disproportionalities observed in this report.⁹ While not the central focus of this analysis, understanding these historical and social contexts provides a critical lens for interpreting the data.

⁹ Nellis, A. (2016). *The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons*. The Sentencing Project. Retrieved from [The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf](#); The Sentencing Project. (2018). *Report of The Sentencing Project to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance Regarding Racial Disparities in the United States Criminal Justice System*. Washington, D.C. Available online at [UN-Report-on-Racial-Disparities.pdf](#)

Suspects of crimes against persons

As with victim's data, suspect characteristics also varied by crime type. In crimes against persons, suspects identified as Hispanic and Black were overrepresented across all categories, with Black suspects three to four times more likely to be identified as a suspect compared to their representation in the population (Table 7). Notably, of the 57 homicide incidents where a suspect's race/ethnicity was identified, half (51%) were Hispanic.

In terms of age, adults ages 18 to 39 were overrepresented as suspects in all categories of crimes against persons. Young adults (18 to 24) were more than four times as likely to be suspects of homicides, accounting for 38% of suspects compared to 9% of the population. Individuals aged 25 to 39 were more than twice as likely to be suspected in assaults (46% compared to 21%). Gender differences were stark; males were overwhelmingly overrepresented in all categories, but most notably in non-consensual sex offenses, where they represented 96% of suspects.

Table 7: Characteristics of suspects of crimes against persons by type (2023)

Characteristics	Population	Homicide	Non-Consensual Sex Offenses	Assault
Black	5%	14% ▲	21% ▲	21% ▲
Hispanic	35%	51% ▲	42% ▲	44% ▲
White	43%	25% ▼	27% ▼	28% ▼
Other	17%	11% ▼	10% ▼	7% ▼
17 and under	22%	11% ▼	8% ▼	7% ▼
18-24	9%	38% ▲	14% ▲	14% ▲
25-39	21%	30% ▲	36% ▲	46% ▲
40-59	24%	11% ▼	34% ▲	27% ▲
60+	23%	11% ▼	9% ▼	6% ▼
Female	50%	14% ▼	4% ▼	26% ▼
Male	50%	86% ▲	96% ▲	74% ▲

Demographic: ▲ overrepresented; ▼ underrepresented

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Sources: SANDAG; ARJIS; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates v2023

Suspects of crimes against property

Demographic information is thoroughly presented for suspects involved in crimes against persons; however, suspects in crimes against property are less commonly identified, limiting available demographic data. Of the 63,662 suspects in crimes against property, it was only possible to identify gender for 71% of suspects, race/ethnicity for 64%, and age for 40%. For this reason, only a brief summary of the findings for suspects involved in crimes against property is provided.

Analyses revealed that in 2023, suspects of crimes against property were more likely to be male, Hispanic or Black, and between the ages of 25 to 39. Specifically, over three-fourths (76%) of reported suspects were identified as male, with the highest proportion found in burglaries (84%). The racial/ethnic distribution of suspects of crimes against property mirrored the distribution observed in crimes against persons, with individuals identified as Hispanic and Black overrepresented relative to their population share. In particular, suspects identified as Black were three to five times more likely to be suspected in all categories compared to their 5% representation of the region's population. Conversely, those identified as White and those of 'Other' races/ethnicities were underrepresented across the board.

Suspects aged 25 to 39 made up the largest proportion across all categories of crimes against property, despite their share of the population being similar to that of other age groups. Of the incidents with known suspect information, half of all burglaries (50%) and nearly half of all larcenies and motor vehicle thefts (48% each) involved suspects in this age range. However, relative to their representation in the general population, young adults aged 18 to 24 were most likely to be suspects of robbery (9% of the population versus 24% of suspects).

Summary

To fully understand the broader impact of crime, it is important to provide data on victims to better understand who is most at risk for specific crimes. While data on suspects can provide valuable insights into crime patterns, it is important to interpret this information within the larger societal context of historic racial disparities in the United States criminal justice system. Understanding these societal influences may offer explanations as to why certain groups in society are more vulnerable to victimization or are more likely to be involved in criminal activities. Although crime rates have fluctuated over time, the characteristics of victims and suspects have remained largely unchanged.

Key takeaways from this 2023 analysis are outlined below.

- Relative to their share of the county's population, Black and Hispanic individuals were disproportionately affected by crimes against persons, while White individuals and those in the 'Other' category were less likely to be victims.
- Black individuals were three to four times more likely to be identified as suspects in crimes against persons, compared to their representation in the population.
- Individuals aged 60 and older were more likely to be victims of crimes against property than crimes against persons, though they remained underrepresented as victims compared to their share of the population.
- Females accounted for more than four in five victims of non-consensual sex offenses (86%), while males represented 96% of identified suspects in such offenses.
- Young adults aged 18 to 24 were more than four times as likely to be suspected in homicides relative to their share of the population.
- White homicide victims tended to be older in age than Hispanic and Black homicide victims.
- Arguments and gang relations were the most prevalent motives for homicides.