

Criminal Victimization Experiences, Fear of Crime, Perceptions of Risk,  
and Opinion of Criminal Justice Agents among a Sample of Kentucky Residents

Kentucky Justice Cabinet

Office of the Secretary

Final Report (DRAFT)

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## SUMMARY

In this study, we used telephone interviews with a sample of Kentucky residents to collect data relating to four major outcome variables of interest. These variables included: (1) fear of criminal victimization; (2) perceived risk of criminal victimization; (3) opinions of criminal justice agents; and (4) self-reported victimization experiences for various offenses organized by property crime, violent crime, and sexual crime categories.

In an effort to make the sample as representative of the state as possible, we used quotas according to race, gender, and geographic location (rural, suburban, and urban). Despite the fact that the survey response rate was 26.15 percent (N=1,991), comparisons of the demographic profile of respondents with the state profile revealed many similarities. Nevertheless, the sample was not perfectly representative for education and income (the sample contained greater proportions of persons with higher educations and incomes) and age (the sample also contained a lower proportion of persons aged 18-24 years as well as a lower proportion of those 66 years and over). Although we feel we made every effort to make the sample representative of the state, we believe caution is still warranted in generalizing the findings of this study to the state as a whole. The findings can be generalized to the state population only to the extent that survey respondents display characteristics similar to those of the population.

In general, the majority of respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied with the various criminal justice agencies included in the survey, and overall, expressed greater satisfaction with the police than with other agencies. Over half of the respondents thought that crime levels in their communities had not changed over the past year, but nearly one in four indicated that there was an area within one mile of their homes where they would be afraid to walk alone at night. More respondents were fearful of property crime than violent crime

although relatively few respondents (under 20 percent) indicated that fear of crime had kept them from doing things they wanted to do. The activities the respondents most commonly avoided due to fear of victimization included walking/running/riding a bike at night and going places alone. On the other hand, a majority of respondents said they had engaged in defensive activities to guard against victimization. The most common of these were installing outside security lights and door bolts. Over one in four respondents had obtained firearms during the past year due to fear of crime. Most respondents did not rate their perceived risk of criminal victimization as being high. In general, the highest levels of perceived risk were associated with the crimes of theft and burglary, but even for those crimes, the average risk ratings were under 4 on a 10-point risk scale.

For every crime type included on the survey, the vast majority of respondents said they had not been victimized during the past year. Respondents were far more likely to have been victimized by property crime than violent crime in the past 12 months. The most commonly reported types of victimization included vandalism, breaking and entering (or an attempt at such), and theft. When respondents were asked about their lifetime victimization experiences with sexual assault, over 13 percent (including over 18 percent of female respondents) indicated that someone had forced or attempted to force them into some kind of unwanted sexual activity. Furthermore, over 11 percent (including almost 22 percent of female respondents) indicated that someone had forced or attempted to force them to have sex. For every type of crime included in the survey, some persons had been victimized multiple times.

For each crime type, a substantial minority (and, in some instances, a majority) of those who had been victimized did not report all their victimizations to the police. Crimes most commonly reported included attacks with a weapon, motor vehicle theft, robbery, burglary, and

vandalism. For other crimes, less than half of those who had been victimized reported their victimizations to the police. The most common reasons for not reporting victimizations to the police included beliefs that the police should not be bothered with minor victimizations and beliefs that the police either would not, or could not, do anything to help.

In the case of simple and aggravated assaults, persons who reported having been victimized most often said that the offender was a stranger. However, for the other crimes, the offender was more likely to be a family member, someone well known to the victim, and/or a casual acquaintance.

The design of this study also allowed a number of demographic comparisons. Compared to men, women were more fearful of crime, more likely to perceived themselves at risk of victimization, more likely to believe crime had increased in the last year, and more likely to be victims of sex crimes. Compared to non-whites, whites expressed more positive attitudes toward criminal justice agencies, as did respondents from urban or suburban areas. Respondents from rural areas were more likely to believe that crime had increased over the past year. When compared with non-graduates, college graduates expressed less fear of crime, were less likely to see themselves at risk of victimization, displayed higher opinions of criminal justice agents, and were less likely to be victimized by sex crimes across their lifetimes. In comparison to unmarried respondents, those who were married were less fearful of walking alone at night and less likely to be victimized by all crimes, except for lifetime sexual victimization. People with lower incomes (i.e., below \$40,000 annually) were more fearful of crime, displayed higher perceptions of risk, evidenced lower perceptions of criminal justice, were more likely to think crime had increased, and were more likely to be the victims of both violent and sex crimes. Compared to non-victims, respondents who had been victimized by crime were more fearful of

crime, saw themselves at higher risk of victimization, and had lower perceptions of criminal justice agents. Victims of a particular crime category were more likely to be victims of other categories as well. Respondents who reported liberal political ideologies expressed greater fear of crime and lower perceptions of criminal justice, compared to those having more conservative ideologies. Finally, this study yielded some counterintuitive findings with regard to age. Consistent with what one would expect based on prior research, younger respondents were less likely to think crime had increased and were more likely to be victims of property, violent, and sex crimes. However, persons aged 36-50 were more fearful of crime than those over 50, perceived themselves as being at greater risk than those 18-35, and were more likely to have experienced sexual victimization in their lifetimes.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, a substantial body of literature has developed in the United States and other nations on the subject of criminal victimization. Broadly construed, this literature includes surveys of self-reported incidents of victimization for various crime categories as well as surveys of fear of crime, perceptions of victimization risk, and perceptions of criminal justice agents among the public. With national research suggesting that only about one-third of all crime is reported to the police via official arrest and crime data, such surveys have become an important component of the information used by criminal justice agencies and lawmakers in developing policy and determining funding priorities. The present research incorporates these topics into a survey of a sample of Kentucky residents.

In 1999, the Kentucky Criminal Justice Council collaborated with a regional university to conduct a baseline statewide victimization mail survey. The survey consisted of questions in three areas: (1) attitudes regarding the criminal justice system, (2) fear of crime, and (3) victimization within the past year. Self-administered surveys were sent to a random sample of 18,000 Kentucky residents, and approximately 4000 surveys were returned. Following the issuance of a final report by the primary university researcher in December 1999, Council staff conducted additional analyses of the data that compared results to national findings and highlighted policy implications.

In 2003, the Kentucky Criminal Justice Council, in collaboration with the State Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) and the Public University Research Consortium (PURC), submitted a research announcement for academic researchers in the PURC network to assist in telephone survey development and data collection for another statewide crime victimization study. On June 17, 2003, the Center for Criminal Justice Education and Research (CCJER) located within

the College of Justice and Safety at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) submitted a proposal and was shortly thereafter awarded the contract.

The initial research announcement stated that once all telephone interviews were completed, the database would be forwarded to the SAC for data analysis and report preparation. When the SAC Research Coordinator position was vacated during the data collection phase, the contract with EKU was amended to allow the CCJER to analyze the data and submit a written report.

### **SUMMARY OF PRIOR LITERATURE**

#### **Fear of Crime and Victimization in the United States**

Even though the crime rate has declined dramatically since 1992 as measured by both police (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1993; Federal Bureau of Investigation 2003) and victimization data (United States Department of Justice 2003), many citizens remain wary, perhaps fearful, of violent crime. In the United States, many people argue that crime, and fear associated with crime, represent two of society's greatest problems.

From its inception, the General Social Survey (GSS), a national survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, has asked respondents the following question: "Is there any area right around here--that is, within a mile--where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" In 2002, 32 percent of respondents answered yes, a smaller percentage responding affirmatively than in any year since 1972 (Maguire and Pastore 2003: 132-133). Nevertheless, one in three Americans still remain fearful of walking alone in their neighborhood at night, despite dramatic reductions in violent crime.

This concern about crime often has a striking effect in the lives of people. In fact, some scholars argue that fear of crime is a more severe problem than crime itself (Clemente and Kleiman 1976). Fearful individuals may not travel at night, may avoid certain areas that they consider "dangerous," and may engage in myriad other avoidance behaviors and adaptive strategies. Further, they may develop anger, hostility, and stereotypes toward the perceived source of their fears.

Until very recently, fear of crime was most often measured with a single item indicator. Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) determined that more than 40 percent of the studies they reviewed used a single item indicator of fear of crime. They argued, however, that fear of crime cannot be accurately measured in this manner. One measure commonly used in fear of crime research is the GSS question listed above. Ferraro (1995) and Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) suggest that there are at least two problems with this measure: (1) the question is a single-item indicator and the reliability of the indicator is unknown; (2) the question does not specify "fear of what," which may cause the question to measure something other than fear of crime.

Due to the aforementioned criticism levied at research that used single item indicators to measure fear of crime, other fear of crime researchers have incorporated questions asking about specific crimes to measure fear. These questions often ask respondents how "afraid" they are of situations such as "having someone break into your home while you are away," "being raped or sexually assaulted," and "being murdered" (LaGrange et al., 1992: 330) and often combine these measures into fear of criminal victimization indexes. In the vast majority of studies using these strategies, the fear of criminal victimization indices had reliability coefficients of .70 or above, indicating that they were reliable measures of fear (May 2001).

Criticisms notwithstanding, then, the most well accepted measurement of fear of crime appears to be multi-item indices assessing respondent fears of specific crimes, using words such as "fear" and "afraid."

In general, researchers using the aforementioned measurement techniques determine that: (1) females are more fearful of criminal victimization than males; (2) Blacks are more fearful of criminal victimization than Whites; (3) individuals with lower levels of education and income have higher levels of fear of criminal victimization than their counterparts with higher levels of education and income; (4) individuals who have been victimized by crime are more fearful of criminal victimization than those who have not; and (5) as age increases, fear of criminal victimization typically increases (see May, 2001 for review).

### **Perceived Risk versus Fear of Crime**

Another recent critique of research in the area of fear of crime concerns inattention to the distinction between an individual's fear of criminal victimization and that same individual's perceived risk of victimization. Investigation into the distinction between perceived risk and fear of criminal victimization resulted from the persistent finding that women and the elderly are more fearful of criminal victimization than their younger and male counterparts, despite the fact that the elderly and women are much less likely to be victimized by crime (LaGrange and Ferraro 1989; Warr 1984).

Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) and Ferraro (1995) demonstrate that measures of risk of criminal victimization are often mistaken for measures of fear of crime. They argue that questions such as that used by the GSS to measure fear or "How safe do you feel or would you feel being out alone in your neighborhood at night?" (the question used by the National Crime Survey (NCVS) to measure fear) are asking people to appraise their victimization risk, not their

actual fear of crime. Furthermore, just because someone doubts that they will be victimized by crime does not mean that they are unafraid of crime. In the same manner, an elevated sense of perceived risk does not automatically lead to heightened levels of fear (LaGrange and Ferraro 1987).

Ferraro (1995) argued that many researchers confound fear and risk in their research and attempted to explicate the distinction between the two phenomena. He argued that fear is an emotional response, while risk involves a cognitive judgment. Thus, these phenomena are not interchangeable and must be measured individually. Ferraro argued that many researchers not only fail to make the distinction between fear of crime and perceived risk, they also fail to measure risk of criminal victimization at all. He cited several studies that have measured risk and argued that there are two basic approaches to measuring risk. One is to examine official crime statistics to provide an official or "objective" risk assessment (Janson and Ryder 1983). Another is to ask respondents to evaluate their own risk of victimization. Ferraro called this method "perceived risk" and cited several studies that have used it (LaGrange and Ferraro 1989; Warr and Stafford 1983).

The Gallup organization annually queries the American public regarding how likely they think they are to be victimized by crime (arguably, a measure of individual perceptions of risk of victimization). Americans were most likely to feel that they would: (1) have their home burglarized when they were not there and (2) have their cars stolen or broken into. Less than one in five were at least occasionally concerned that they would be raped or murdered (Maguire and Pastore 2003).

## **Consequences of Fear of Crime**

Fear, depending on its intensity, is experienced as apprehension, uneasiness, uncertainty, or complete insecurity. One has the feeling that one lacks safety, a feeling of danger and impending disaster. One feels a threat to one's very existence, whether physically or psychologically (Izard 1977). As such, some individuals may change their day-to-day activities based on their fear of crime. For example, they may refuse to leave their house after dark, completely avoid speaking to strangers when they do go out, or refuse to walk alone (even in daylight).

On the other hand, there may be another group of people who, while still fearful of victimization, refuse to change their behaviors based on that fear. These individuals may adopt a proactive approach to fear by taking steps to alleviate it. A limited number of studies have attempted to examine the actions people take because of their fear of criminal victimization. These actions are generally grouped into two categories: avoidance behaviors and defensive behaviors (Ferraro 1995).

Avoidance behaviors, or limitations people put on their activity as a result of fear, are commonly referred to as "constrained behaviors" (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed 1988; Ferraro 1995). Constrained behaviors include avoiding unsafe areas at night (the most common form of behavioral adaptation to fear or perceived risk of crime), avoiding unsafe areas during the day, and limiting or changing other daily activities (Ferraro 1995).

Whereas with constrained behavior, individuals place limitations on their conduct (e.g. avoiding unsafe areas), defensive behaviors involve an individual's rational decision to perform some type of action to allay their fear of crime. There is a wide array of defensive behaviors an

individual could possibly choose (e.g. installing security systems, buying a watchdog, purchasing a gun).

Again, the Gallup organization regularly asks Americans about the types of avoidance and defensive behaviors in which they engage. Their polls suggest that almost half (43 %) of respondents avoid going to certain places or neighborhoods because of a concern about crime, while one in three have a dog for protection, one in four have had a burglar alarm installed in their home, and one in five respondents have bought a gun for protection inside their home. One in ten have carried a gun for protection outside the home due to their concern over crime (Maguire and Pastore 2003).

### **Opinions of the Criminal Justice System**

Most people have a great deal of confidence in the police-- data from national surveys suggest that three in five citizens (61 %) have "...a great deal/quite a lot" of confidence in police (Maguire and Pastore 2003). Almost half (47 %) have that same confidence in the United States Supreme Court. Typically, however, people react more favorably to police than courts (Roberts and Stalans 1997). While age and race significantly impact people's view of the police, these variables have little to do with people's view of the courts. Further, confidence in the criminal justice system has little to do with fear of crime, victimization history, or perceptions of crime (Roberts and Stalans 1997).

While numerous authors have examined confidence in the police and confidence in the criminal justice system in general (see Roberts and Stalans 1997 for review), scant research exists that examines confidence in local prosecutors, public defenders, jails, community corrections programs, or prisons. As such, further exploration of predictors of confidence in these agencies is needed.

Additionally, Americans have also been regularly queried regarding their opinion about changes in the rate of crime in their area. In 2002, for example, approximately one in three respondents (37 percent) to a Gallup poll concerning this topic suggested that crime in their area was going up, while approximately the same percentage (34 percent) agreed that crime was going down in their area. One in four respondents (24 percent) felt that crime had stayed about the same (Maguire and Pastore 2003).

### **Victimization Experiences**

Annually, the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducts a household survey of approximately 50,000 households regarding their victimization experiences. This report, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) begun in 1972 to provide more detailed information on victims of crime in the United States, provides the most comprehensive data about victims available (United States Department of Justice 2003). Data from 2002 reflect the following: (1) victimization rates for both property and violent crimes were the lowest since the NCVS began in 1973; (2) approximately half of all violent crime victimizations and two in five property crime victimizations were reported to the police; and (3) the property crime victimization rate was over six times higher than the violent crime victimization rate (Rennison and Rand 2003).

Additionally, the NCVS data examine demographic traits of victims as well. The NCVS results annually determine that: (1) with the exception of victimization by rape, males are more likely to be victimized by both property and violent crime than females; (2) household income has an inverse relationship with violent victimization experience—in other words, residents of households with lower annual incomes are more likely to be victimized by violent crime than residents of households with higher annual incomes; (3) unmarried respondents are more likely to be victimized by violent crime than married respondents; (4) among adults, younger

respondents are more likely to be victimized by violent crime than older respondents; and (5) urban households are more likely to be victimized by property crime than suburban or rural households (Rennison and Rand 2003). These patterns have remained consistent since the inception of the survey.

### **Importance of this Study in Kentucky**

While the aforementioned studies have regularly queried United States citizens regarding their perceptions of risk, opinions of the criminal justice system, and their fear of criminal victimization and the consequences of that fear, minimal research has examined these topics with a sample of Kentucky residents. It is possible that the rural nature of Kentucky (with only two metropolitan areas), its largely White population, and its Southern heritage may help make the perceptions and experiences of its residents distinct from those of other states and/or the nation as a whole. Thus, the findings from this study should provide legislators, policy makers, and other officials revealing information about Kentucky.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Sampling**

The population targeted for this project was the state of Kentucky. In order for the survey to be representative of the state, the survey contained three demographic quotas: race, gender and rural/suburban/urban location. The rural/suburban/urban quota was pre-coded in the telephone sample obtained from the Survey Sampling Institute (SSI); therefore, a question did not have to be asked of the respondent pertaining to that variable. The other two demographic questions were the first questions asked of respondents once they agreed to participate in the survey. After a quota became full, the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system

automatically notified the interviewer. At that point, the interviewer would ask the respondent three filler criminal justice related questions, thank them, and terminate the interview.

SSI generated the telephone sample used in this survey via a random digit dial procedure meant to yield a true probability sample. The statewide representative sample of Kentucky households with unlisted and listed telephone numbers was of sufficient size to accomplish approximately 2,000 completed telephone interviews intended to provide results that could be interpreted at a 95% confidence level with a 2.6 percent error margin.

### **Survey Instrument**

Two meetings with Kentucky Justice Cabinet and Kentucky Criminal Justice Council representatives were held to design and construct the survey instrument. An initial meeting with a Justice Cabinet representative on July 31, 2003 was conducted to initiate the development of a survey draft and to establish survey quotas and interviewer protocols. Following this meeting, a draft of the survey was presented by the CCJER team in a formal presentation to the Council's Executive Committee and Data Advisory Team on September 9, 2003. Feedback from this meeting was utilized to revise the survey. Additional drafts of the survey were submitted via email to this same group for further review. This group approved a final version of the survey on September 23, 2003. The instructions provided for interviewers and the survey instrument itself appear in Appendices A and B, respectively.

### **Data Collection**

The CCJER lab utilized seven interviewing stations to conduct the telephone interviews. For this project, a total of 20 interviewers were hired and trained to complete interviews, and a total of 13 interviewers actively worked on this project. Surveying began on September 30, 2003 and was completed on November 24, 2003. The interviewers logged a total of 958.8 hours on the interviewing system to complete 1,991 interviews.

The interviewers made a total of 51,176 telephone calls to potential respondents around the state of Kentucky. A total of 15,954 numbers were resolved. Table 1 below describes how these numbers were resolved.

**Table 1. Resolution of Phone Interviews**

<b>Resolution:</b>	<b>Frequency:</b>
Completed interview	1991
Refused to start interview	5517
Language problems	48
Terminated during interview	106
Non-working number	3527
Non-residential number	2068
User resolved (fax, quota full)	1806
Maximum number of attempts made	891

It can be seen from Table 1 that a total of 1,991 interviews were completed after establishing contact with 7,614 respondents. Of the 7,614 respondents, 5,517 refused to start the interview, and 106 terminated the interview before it was completed. Hence, a final response rate of 26.15 percent was achieved.

The response rate is a clear limitation of this study. The most conservative and safest strategy (and the one recommended by the research team) is to say that findings from the sample can be generalized to the population of the state only to the extent that the population possesses characteristics similar to those found in the sample. It is certainly possible that persons with particular characteristics (e.g., prior victimization experiences) were systematically more likely to complete the interviews. We do know from the data in Table 1 that, by far, the most common reason for non-responding was a refusal to begin the interview.

On the other hand, recent research (Curtin, Presser, and Singer 2000; Keeter, Miller, Kohut, Groves, and Presser 2000) suggests that small response rates do not necessarily indicate larger biases. To illustrate, in Keeter et al.'s randomized experimental study utilizing telephone

surveys, the two experimental groups had very different response rates (60.6% versus 36.0%). However, only 14 of 91 variables showed significant substantive differences. Although high response rates are better than low ones, continuing research efforts are being made to determine the conditions under which non-response seriously biases survey estimates.

There were a total of 36,113 call attempts made in which the telephone number was not resolved through the interviewing process. Table 2 below describes the status of these numbers.

**Table 2. Non-Resolution of Phone Interviews**

Status:	Frequency:
No answer	17987
Busy	5281
Scheduled callback	1835
Dialer Nuisance (Answering Machine, etc.)	11010

On average, one telephone number was dialed 3.29 times to get a completed interview.

### **Comparison of Sample to Population**

Table 3 shows the degree to which the sample's demographical profile is similar to the state's demographic characteristics, according to the 2000 census. As mentioned earlier, the survey contained three demographic quotas: race, gender, and rural/suburban/urban location. However, during the interviews, additional demographical questions were asked of the respondents. With the exception of education and income, and to a lesser extent age, the sample's demographic profile is very similar to the state profile. When compared to the state, the sample displays greater levels of education and income.

Although these differences are a limitation, there are four reasons why we thought these two dissimilarities were not of great enough concern to merit weighting of the variables: (1) the units of analyses for the sample and the 2000 census data are different (see notes at the bottom of

Table 3), thus introducing the opportunity for less similarity; (2) given existing trends, such as those found in examining improvements in education and income between the 1990 and 2000 census for Kentucky (United States Bureau of Census, 1990; United States Bureau of Census, 2000), the state's education and income profile has most likely slightly improved in the four years since the 2000 census was conducted, thus making the sample and 2000 census data more similar; (3) the missing data in the sample, which the reported census data does not have, contains data that could make the two more similar (as well as dissimilar); and (4) the percent differences between the sample and 2000 census data are not significant (i.e., do not exceed 20 percent) for any demographic category. Since our sample matched very closely the 2000 census data by utilizing quota sampling, we felt that weighting would not significantly improve any estimates.

**Table 3. Comparison of Sample and Population Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic Variable	Sample (Frequency & %)	*Population 2000 Census (Frequency & %)
Gender		
Male	1015 (48.5)	1,975,368 (48.9)
Female	1072 (51.3)	2,066,401 (51.1)
Missing Data	5 (.2)	
Race		
White	1865 (89.2)	3,678,740 (91.0)
Black	159 (7.6)	311,000 (7.7)
Other	57 (2.7)	96,581 (2.4)
Missing Data	10 (.5)	
Is there any area within 1 mile of your home where you are afraid to walk at night?		
Yes	507 (24.2)	NA
No	1529 (73.1)	
Missing Data	55 (2.7)	
Marital Status**		
Married	1247 (59.6)	1,844,628 (57.3)
Widowed	114 (5.5)	231,630 (7.2)
Divorced	268 (12.8)	353,637 (11.0)
Separated	48 (2.3)	57,237 (1.8)
Never Married	307 (14.7)	730,035 (22.7)
Missing Data	107 (5.1)	

**Table 3. Comparison of Sample and Population Demographic Characteristics (cont'd)**

Demographic Variable	Sample (Frequency & %)	*Population 2000 Census (Frequency & %)
Age		
18-24	201 (9.6)	401,858 (13.4)
25-35	434 (20.6)	632,494.2 (21.0)
36-45	458 (22.0)	637,074 (21.2)
46-55	383 (18.4)	539,033.2 (17.9)
56-65	282 (13.6)	361,716.4 (12.0)
66 and over	207 (9.5)	432,219.4 (14.4)
Missing Data	126 (6.0)	
Education***		
No high school diploma	151 (7.2)	685,000 (25.9)
High school Diploma or GED	560 (26.8)	888,277 (33.6)
Vocational Program	87 (4.2)	
Some College	378 (18.1)	490,170 (18.5)
Two-year College Degree	169 (8.1)	129,481 (4.9)
College Graduate	406 (19.4)	271,418 (10.3)
Some Graduate or Professional	233 (11.1)	182,051 (6.9)
Missing Data	107(5.1)	
Income****		
Less than \$10,000	138 (6.6)	220,692 (13.9)
\$10,001-\$20,000	235 (11.2)	256,494 (16.1)
\$20,001-\$30,000	250 (12.4)	232,489 (14.6)
\$30,001-\$40,000	249 (12.0)	197,200 (12.4)
\$40,001-\$50,000	207 (9.9)	174,456 (11.0)
\$50,001-\$75,000	339 (16.2)	274,530 (17.2)
Over \$75,000	341 (16.3)	235,878 (14.8)
Missing Data	332 (15.9)	
Political Beliefs		
Very Conservative	303 (14.5)	
Somewhat Conservative	559 (26.7)	
Moderate	622 (29.7)	
Somewhat Liberal	287 (13.7)	
Very Liberal	128 (6.1)	
Missing Data	192 (9.2)	

\* Due to the differences in the manner in which some of the demographical data were categorized, some of the categorical data were interpolated.

\*\* Data collected from the 2000 census included respondents age 15 and over; data for the sample came from respondents age 18 and over.

\*\*\* Sample used respondents 18 years and older; 2000 census used respondents 25 years and older

\*\*\*\* Income for 2000 census taken from total number of households in Kentucky

## SURVEY RESULTS

With some exceptions, to achieve more logical groupings of information, we present the study's findings in this section according to the order that items appeared in the survey instrument.

**Table 4. Citizen Satisfaction with Criminal Justice System Components**

	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Don't Know		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>In general, how satisfied are you with...</b>										
Police who serve your community	649	31.0	1040	49.7	24	1.1	205	9.8	148	7.1
Jail that serves your community	454	21.7	865	41.4	296	14.2	223	10.7	209	10.0
Prosecutors in your local court system	336	16.1	951	45.5	281	13.4	281	13.4	204	9.8
Adult court system that serves your community	297	14.2	957	45.8	224	10.7	351	16.8	225	10.8
The prison system in Kentucky	266	12.7	880	42.1	313	15.0	354	16.9	231	11.0
Public defenders in your local court system	260	12.4	907	43.4	443	21.2	263	12.6	174	8.3
Juvenile courts that serve your community	237	11.3	749	35.8	451	21.6	344	16.5	265	12.7
Community-oriented corrections program that serves your community	227	10.9	868	41.5	405	19.4	324	15.5	215	10.3

Respondents were first asked to indicate their satisfaction with various criminal justice agencies in their community (see Table 4). Four in five respondents (80.7 percent) were either somewhat or very satisfied with the police who served their community. For each of the other agencies, approximately three in five respondents were either somewhat satisfied or very

satisfied with the agency's performance. Nevertheless, only for police and jail were more than one in five respondents very satisfied. Respondents were most dissatisfied with the court system and the community-oriented corrections programs in their communities. With the exception of the police, at least one in ten (and sometimes one in five) respondents did not have an opinion about the criminal justice component under study, indicating a greater need for awareness regarding criminal justice issues among a substantial minority of Kentucky residents.

Respondents were asked to rate the change in crime in their community in the past 12 months. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that over half of the respondents stated that crime had stayed the same in their community, while 14.1 percent said it had increased and 28.9 percent stated that it had decreased.

**Table 5. Perceptions of Crime Change in the Past 12 Months**

	Greatly Decreased		Somewhat Decreased		Stayed the Same		Somewhat Increased		Greatly Increased	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
During the Past 12 months, has crime in your community...	49	2.3	247	11.8	1067	51.0	455	21.8	149	7.1

Respondents were also asked if there was "...any area within one mile of your home where you are afraid to walk alone at night?" One in four (24.2 percent) responded yes to this question. To further explore that perception, respondents were then asked to indicate whether fear of crime had prevented them from engaging in certain behaviors and were also asked to indicate how fearful they were of six specific crimes. The responses to these items are presented in Table 6.

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that fear of crime has had very little impact on the behavior of the vast majority of respondents (77.5 percent), although more than 1 in 20

respondents strongly agree that fear of crime has prevented them from doing things they want to do. By the same token, nearly half (49.6%) of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed to being afraid that someone will break into their homes, just over 40 percent strongly or somewhat agreed to being afraid of having money/possessions taken, and close to a third (30.6%) expressed at least some fear of being attacked with a weapon.

**Table 6. Impact of Fear of Crime on Behavior and Fear of Specific Crimes.**

	Strongly Agree		Somewhat Agree		Somewhat Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am afraid someone will break into my house while I am away	394	18.8	643	30.8	427	20.4	561	26.8
I am afraid of having my money/possessions taken from me	285	13.6	556	26.6	466	22.3	722	34.5
I am afraid of being attacked by someone with a weapon	209	10.0	431	20.6	549	26.3	841	40.2
I am afraid to go out at night because I might become a victim of crime	190	9.1	328	15.7	481	23.0	1030	49.3
I am afraid of being raped or sexually assaulted	142	6.8	268	12.8	442	21.1	1176	56.2
I am afraid of being murdered	124	5.9	228	10.9	468	22.4	1207	57.7
Fear of crime has prevented me from doing things I want to do	119	5.7	291	13.9	734	35.1	886	42.4

Respondents (n=410) who indicated that fear of crime had prevented them from doing the things they wanted to do were queried regarding activities they had avoided because of their fear of crime. Of those 410 respondents, 355 provided multiple responses. The responses are presented in Table 7. Approximately two in five (39.0 percent) of those who avoided activities

had avoided walking, running, or riding their bike at night because of fear of crime, while less than half that many (17.2 %) had avoided going places alone because of fear of crime. Smaller numbers had avoided shopping, traveling where they left the house unattended, and going to certain parts of the town where they lived.

**Table 7. Activities Avoided Because of Fear of Crime**

Activity	N	%
Walking/running/riding bike @ night	139	39.2
Going places alone	61	17.2
Shopping	37	10.4
Traveling/leaving house unattended	36	10.1
Going to certain parts of town/downtown	34	9.6
General fear of crime	26	7.3
Going to the park	20	5.6
Enjoying entertainment activities	17	4.8
Being outside in neighborhood at night	15	4.2
Driving at night	15	4.2
Doing errands	14	2.5
Outdoor activities	13	3.7
Letting kids play/walk alone	12	3.4
Parking	12	3.4
Leaving doors unlocked	7	2.0
Leaving car unattended	7	2.0
Other	7	2.0
Attending large, public functions	6	1.7
Walking dog	3	0.8
Moving to a new city/town	2	0.6

\*The percentages do not total 100% because some respondents provided more than one response.

Respondents were also asked to respond yes or no to a series of questions that asked them about “defensive behaviors” they had engaged in during the past 12 months. The results of those queries are presented in Table 8. Almost two in five respondents (39.7 %) had placed outside security lights at their home because of their fear of crime, while over one in three (36.8 %) had added door bolts. Interestingly, over one in four (25.9 %) had purchased a gun due to their fear of crime, while almost that many (24.9 %) had installed extra door locks. Smaller percentages

