



SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF
THE WEST VIRGINIA QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY 2016-2018

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INTRODUCTION

As stated in the attached two reports, the West Virginia Quality of Life Survey (WVCQLS) was launched in the summer of 2016. This study was heavily informed by the guidance of Dr. Stephan Haas, former Director of the West Virginia Division of Justice and Community Services. Additionally, Dr. Haas convened an advisory group of advocates who also provided us with valuable input. As is the case with all research, time and financial limitations precluded the research team from covering all issues raised by the advisory group. Rather than repeat the details provided in the two attached reports, the main objective of this one is to summarize the key findings of both phases of the WVCQLS.

PHASE ONE

Below are the key findings. In the past year:

- 7.7% (estimated number = 107,300) reported break-ins to home, car, or garage.
- 5.5% (estimated number = 76,942) stated that objects inside their home were stolen.
- 5.9% (estimated number = 81,838) said that objects were stolen outside their home.
- 0.31% (estimated number = 4,337) had their pockets picked.
- 1.84% (estimated number = 25,740) had a car, bicycle, or motorcycle stolen.
- 0.94% (estimated number = 13,150) said they were robbed.
- 2.19% (estimated number = 30,637) were beaten up, attacked, or hit with something.
- 2.53% (estimated number = 35,394) were sexually assaulted. Note: this figure includes assaults committed by current or former intimate partners, as well as acquaintances and strangers.
- 8.2% (estimated number = 114,714) of the sample experienced one or more of the eight types of intimate partner physical violence in the past year.

- 2.5% (estimated number = 34,974) were victims of one or more of the six variants of sexual violence committed by current or former intimate or romantic partners.
- 12.1% (estimated number = 169,273) of the participants were victims of bias-motivated violent offenses.
- 2.9% (estimated number = 40,570) were victimized by bias-motivated property offenses.
- 20.3% (estimated number = 283,988) were stalked and/or harassed.
- Those living in interdependent communities reported the highest levels of safety.
- Those living in communities characterized by alienation and conflict reported the lowest levels of safety.
- 54.1% said that litter in their community was either a small or big problem.
- 41.4% indicated that empty buildings in their community was either a small or big problem.
- 61.1% reported that illegal drug dealing was either a small or big problem in their community.
- Knowledge of community crime-based resources ranged from 43% for prosecution-based victim services to 60.26% for specialized victim services for children.
- 3% (estimated number = 40,570) used one or more of the six types of victim services.

PHASE TWO

Dr. Douglas Spence replaced Dr. Haas during phase two and decided that the research team should continue using telephone survey techniques. However, the survey was slightly modified with the intent to increase response rates. Below are the key findings.

- 6.22% (estimated number = 87,269) reported being victims of break-ins.
- 8.62% (estimated number = 120,942) had objects stolen outside their home.
- 1.73% (estimated number = 24,273) had their pockets picked.
- 0.34% (estimated number = 4,770) had a car, truck, or motor vehicle stolen.
- 0.69% (estimated number = 9,681) were robbed.
- 2.76% (estimated number = 38,724) were assaulted.
- 1.03% (estimated number = 14,451) were assaulted with a weapon.
- 2.45% (estimated number = 34,374) were sexually assaulted. Note: this figure includes assaults committed by current or former intimate partners.
- 7% (estimated number = 97,792) experienced intimate partner physical violence.
- 10% (estimated number = 140,304) experienced bias-motivated verbal assaults.
- 6.25% (estimated number = 87,690) were unwillingly exposed to racist, sexist, or other offensive on-line images in the last 12 months.
- 4.56% (estimated number = 62,991) were either stalked or harassed.

CONCLUSIONS

Below are five tables comparing data generated by Phase 1 and Phase 2. Arguably, the most salient conclusion to be drawn from comparing the two studies is that response rates did not markedly increase or decrease in Phase 2. Low response rates in general, as noted in the attached two reports, are now common. Perhaps, then, the next step is to conduct a large-scale panel study and/or a social media survey. Even so, WVCQLS data provide more accurate accounts of crime victimization than do police statistics. Ideally, these findings will help policy makers and service providers enhance the quality of life in West Virginia.

It should be noted that the rate of intimate partner violence victimization is consistent with those uncovered by other surveys. The rate of sexual assault, however, is relatively low, but this is the outcome of conducting a general crime survey. For example, it is well known that studies specifically crafted to only study woman abuse (e.g., sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking) always yield higher sexual assault rates than do projects such as the National Crime Victimization Survey. Under the direction of WVDJCS officials, the research team was mandated to measure a broad range of harms, as well as other issues, such as people's perceptions of their community. Hopefully, the state of West Virginia will find the time and resources to administer a detailed sexual assault survey in the near future.

Despite this caveat, the survey elicited useful statistics, including those that address community contexts in which crime and disorder occur. More specifically, to the best of the research team's knowledge, the WVCQLS is the first victimization survey to include measures of the psychodynamics of communities. Further, this project provides useful information about West Virginia residents' knowledge and use of services.

Table 1. Demographics of Quality of Life Survey Phase 1 and Phase 2		
	WVCQL Phase 1(%)	WVCQL Phase 2(%)
Sex *		
Male	42.3	44.3
Female	56.6	55.7
Education		
No High School Degree	6.6	3.8
HS Degree/Some College	65.9	57.0
Bachelor's Degree or higher	27.5	39.3
Race		
White	93.9	93.1
Non-White	6.1	6.9
Age		
Average	50.7	50.7

Table 2. West Virginian's Experience with Property and Violent Crime EVER				
	Phase 1	Phase 1(%)	Phase 2	Phase 2(%)
Property Crime				
Break-in ^a	125	38.5	124	42.8
Objects Stolen Outside Home ^c	93	28.5	84	29.0
Pocket Picked ^d	23	7.0	19	6.6
Motor Vehicle Theft				
Violent Crime				
Robbery ^f	25	7.8	14	4.8
Assault ^g	45	14.0	59	20.3
Assault with Weapon	22	6.8	25	8.6

Table 3. West Virginian’s Experience with Property and Violent Crime Past 12 Months

	Phase 1	Phase 1(%)	Phase 2	Phase 2(%)
Property Crime				
Break-in ^a	25	7.7	18	6.3
Objects Stolen Outside Home ^c	19	5.9	24	8.3
Pocket Picked ^d	1	0.3	5	1.7
Violent Crime				
Robbery ^f	3	0.9	2	0.7
Assault ^g	7	2.2	8	2.8

Table 4. West Virginian’s Experience with Intimate Partner Physical Assault Past 12 Months

	Phase 1	Phase 1(%)	Phase 2	Phase 2(%)
Shoved, shook, pinched, or scratched you, or pulled your hair	12	4.1	13	4.5
Slapped you	12	4.1	12	4.1
Threw something at you that could hurt you	13	4.4	9	3.1
Bent your fingers or twisted your arms	5	1.7	4	1.4
Hit, punched, kicked, or bit you	12	4.1	10	3.4
Beat you up	3	1.0	5	1.7
Burned you, choked you, or tried to strangle or suffocate you	1	0.3	1	0.3
Used or threatened to use a weapon against you	4	1.4	3	1.0

Table 5. West Virginian’s Experience with Sexual IPV Past 12 Months

<i>In the last 12 months, how often have you had unwanted sex with someone you were dating or a spouse/partner because...</i>	Phase 1	Phase 1(%)	Phase 2	Phase 2(%)
you were pressured	4	1.4	3	1.0
you were slipped drugs and/or alcohol and couldn’t physically say no	2	0.7	2	0.7
he/she took advantage of you when you were physically unable to say no because you had too much to drink and/or used drugs	3	1.1	4	1.4
he/she threatened you with physical harm if you did not give in	1	0.4	1	0.3
he/she tried to physically force you, but you were able to escape it	1	0.4	1	0.3
he/she physically forced you to have sex	2	0.7	2	0.7