

CONTINUED FROM THE COVER

Crime

From A1

The factors that influence regularly fluctuating crime levels, including the number of homicides and shootings, are many. Researchers believe the Covid-19 pandemic was a primary driver behind the rise and fall of the surge in violence nationally in those years, according to a recent report from NPR.

Continued drop

Through June 30, 14 people were killed in Buffalo. The six-month total has been lower only once since 2007 – that was in 2015, when 13 people were killed. Last year, 19 people were killed from January through June.

Through the end of June this year, 52 people were shot – either injured or killed – in the city. Over the same period last year, there were 79 shooting victims.

This year's figure is the lowest level for the first six months of the year since at least 2011. The prior low for the first half of the year came two years ago, with 73 people shot.

In May of this year, only two people were shot. That's the lowest figure for May since there were nine people shot that month in 2013.

Police Commissioner Alphonso Wright said members of his department are "building trust" in the community and working hard to make the city safer.

Joseph Fahey, the former Northwest District chief who earlier this month was appointed deputy commissioner of administration, said the more information community members share with police, the better they can do their jobs.

While the department's crime numbers show a decrease, the work by Most Valuable Parents hasn't slowed, said Mia Ayers-Goss, the group's executive director.

The education and an-



BUFFALO NEWS FILE PHOTO

Buffalo Police detectives investigate a triple homicide on Ashley Street in 2021. Shootings in Buffalo have been falling since the recent high points of 2020 and 2021, when the city averaged about one person shot every day.

ti-violence nonprofit organization, known as MVP, focuses on prevention. Many of the youth the organization works with are students chronically suspended from school, Ayers-Goss said, so her organization regularly sees violence that doesn't involve the use of a firearm; instead, young people are fighting and getting jumped, situations that involve serious altercations. Gang violence is "way too high" in the city, she said.

"We are still going to funerals on a regular basis.

We're still dealing with trauma, with families that have been traumatized on a regular basis," Ayers-Goss said.

Many people and groups in Buffalo are doing great things to combat violence, Ayers-Goss said, adding she believes the community needs to be more aggressive in working with each other, coming together more regularly to help young people before they get into trouble.

Despite the decreases in the number of people shot, 52 people shot in six months

is still too many. Buffalo is still in a gun violence crisis, she said.

"The bottom line is it's a good thing numbers are going down – I thank God for

that – but are we where we need to be? Absolutely not," she said.

All of this year's homicide victims, except one, have been men. The only female victim was a 17-year-old girl stabbed May 4 in a home on Commonwealth Avenue. Police and prosecutors have charged her brother with second-degree murder.

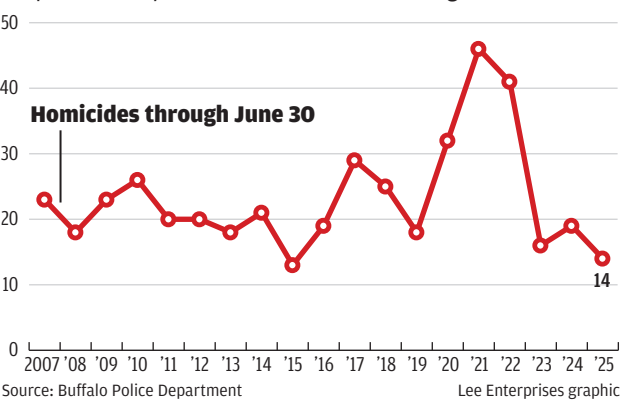
For what are known as index crimes – homicides, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies and motor vehicle thefts, which are reported to the FBI – Buffalo saw 5,534 of those crimes through Tuesday. That's a drop of 14% compared to the same time last year when there were 6,472 reported, according to Buffalo Police.

According to department statistics, overall property crime is down 16% year over year, including a 36% drop in vehicle thefts.

Crime statistics do not include incidents that have gone unreported to authorities.

Homicides decline

This year, 14 people were homicide victims. That's a slight drop from last year and the second-lowest figure since 2007.





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