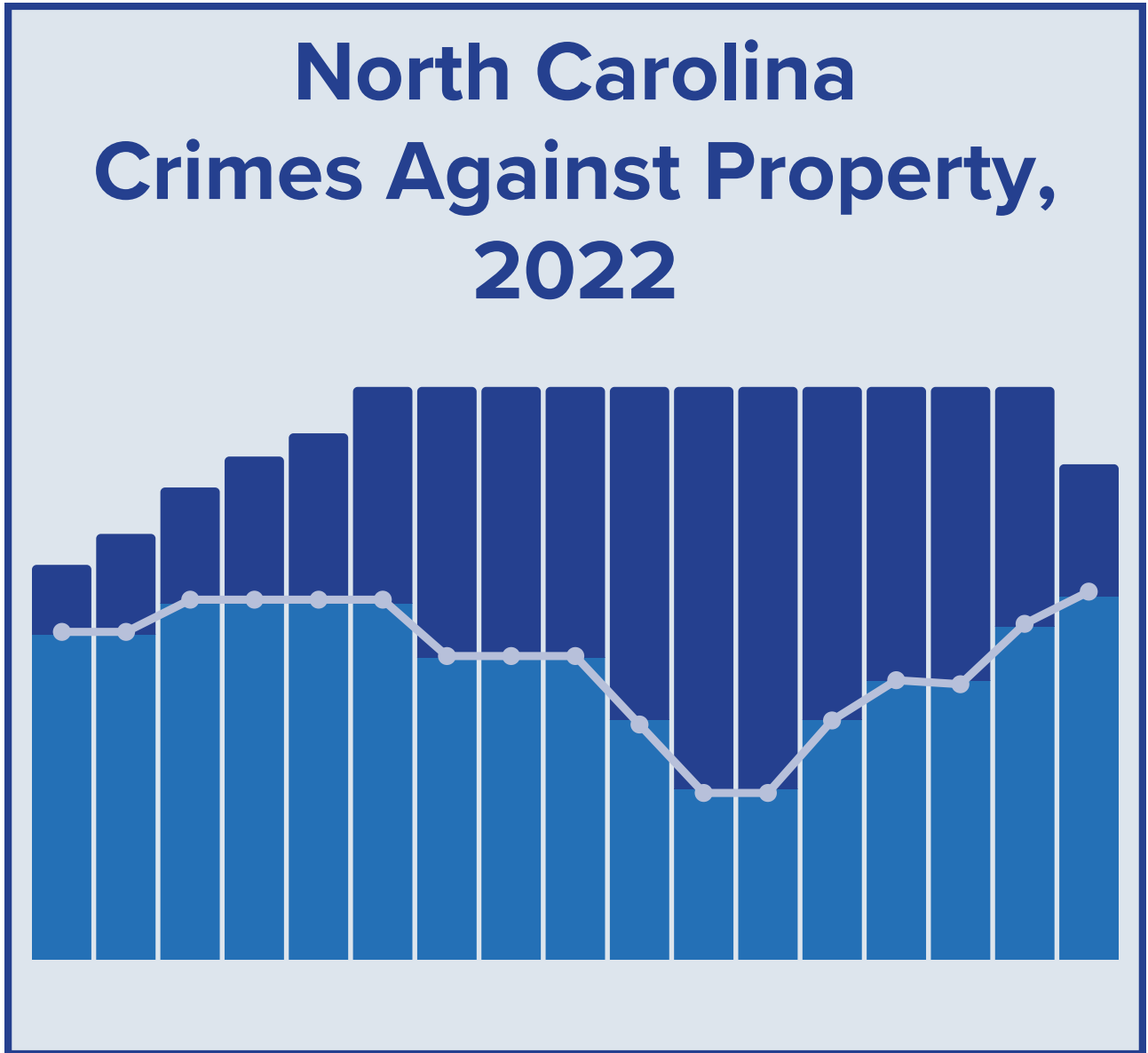# North Carolina Crimes Against Property, 2022

Introduction

The Criminal Justice Analysis Center, established in 2018, analyzes crime data to support insight into criminal justice trends in North Carolina. This research relies on reports that are voluntarily submitted by law enforcement agencies to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System.

In 2022, 408 North Carolina agencies submitted at least one incident to NIBRS, up from 402 in 2020. Those agencies' jurisdictions covered 97% of the state's population in each year.

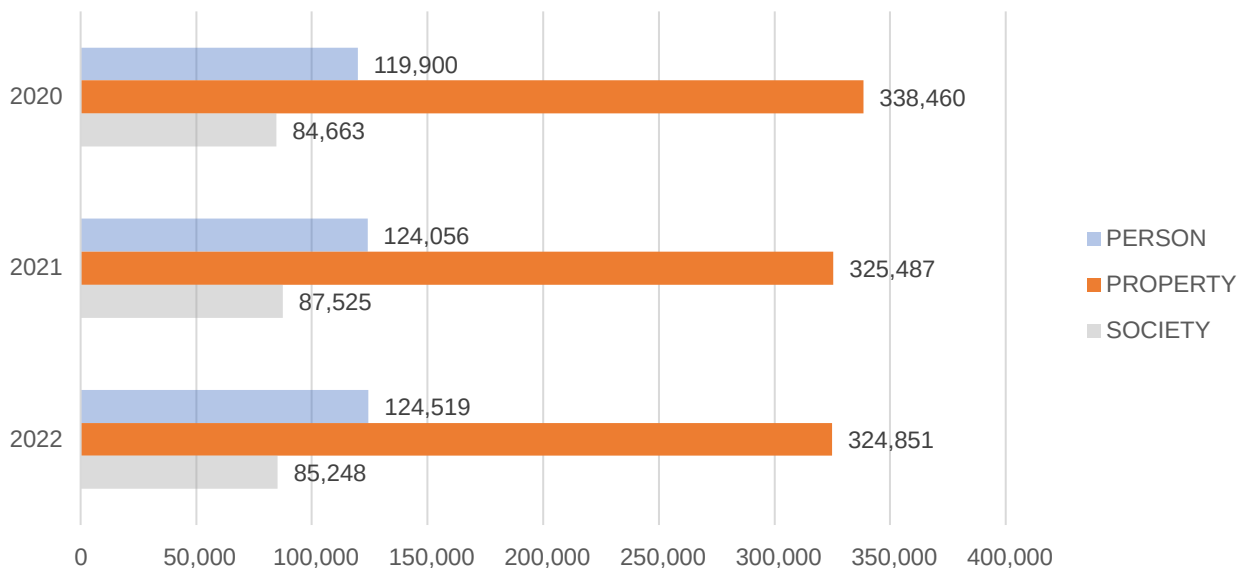In NIBRS, crimes are divided into three categories:

- crimes against persons, harm to individuals;
- crimes against property, attempts to unlawfully obtain money, goods, or some other benefit; and
- crimes against society, prohibited behaviors such as drug use and prostitution. [1]

This report is the second in a series on reported crime in North Carolina in the calendar year 2022.[2] To allow for lags in reporting, we began work on the series in October 2023. This report will present data on crimes against property reported in 2022, as well as trends over the years 2020-2022, based on NIBRS data retrieved in March-April 2024.

Incidents

A criminal incident as defined by the FBI in the NIBRS User Manual consists of "one or more offenses committed by the same offender, or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place." In 2022, law enforcement agencies reported over 500,000 such incidents. Crimes against property occurred in 63% of all incidents, down slightly from 65% in 2020.

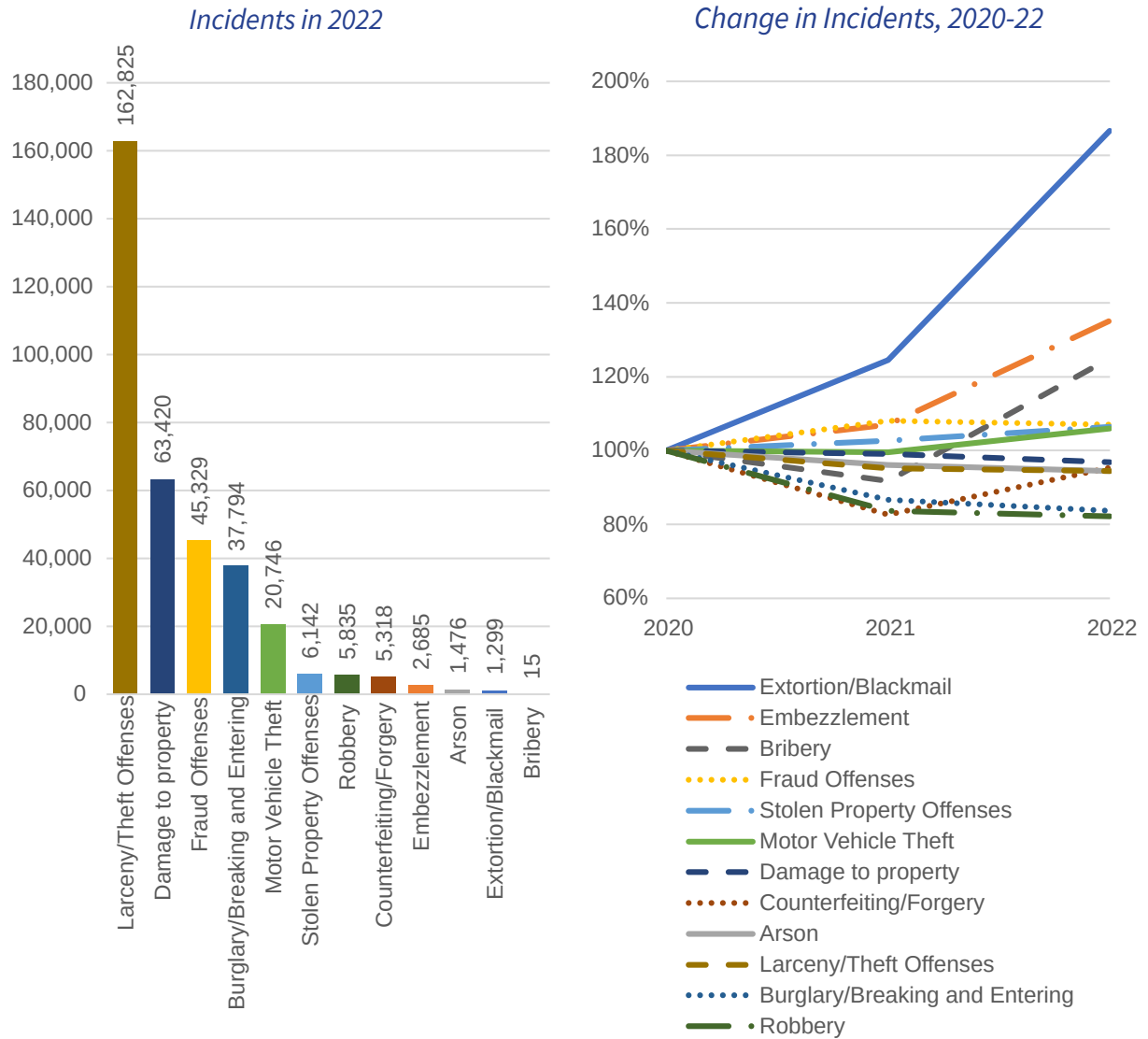*Figure 1: North Carolina NIBRS Incidents Reported, 2020-2022*

[1] 2023.0 National Incident-Based Reporting System User Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation—Criminal Justice Information Services Division; 2023.
[2] CJAC previously published the North Carolina Crimes Against Persons Annual Report for 2022.

Trends by offense type

Figure 2 shows trends in the types of the twelve broad types of property crimes defined in NIBRS.[3] The chart on the left shows the total number of incidents reported to NIBRS in 2022 for each type of property crime. The chart on the right shows the change in each type of property crime between 2020 and 2022. For each crime type, 100% represents the number of incidents in 2020.

Figure 2: Property Crimes in North Carolina, 2020-2022

Incidents in 2022

Change in Incidents, 2020-22

The most common type of property crime reported is larceny or theft, which decreased from 2020 to 2022. Damage to property, burglary and robbery also decreased. However, fraud increased from 2020 to 2021 and remained above 2020 levels in 2022 despite a slight decline. Motor vehicle theft saw an increase in 2022 after little change from 2020-21.

While embezzlement and extortion remain among the rarest property crimes reported, both increased sharply, from 1,987 and 686 incidents respectively in 2020 to 2,685 and 1,299 in 2022.

[3] Note that motor vehicle theft is counted separately from other larceny/theft offenses but does not include the taking of vehicles in any other crime, such as robbery (e.g. carjacking) or burglary. For definitions of all offense types, refer to the NIBRS User Manual.

Trends in 2022

Some offenses varied in frequency over the course of the year. Figure 3 displays how each type of offense varied by quarter in 2022. As the quarters are not precisely equal in length, the calculation was based on a per-day average.[4]

In the table, differences of over 5% from the average for the year are marked by either a red or blue triangle, while a yellow circle indicates an average number of incidents. As an example, the 162,825 larceny incidents correspond to 446 incidents per day. During the first quarter, there were 420 larceny incidents per day, 5.8% below the full-year average, so Q1 is marked with a downward-pointing blue triangle. In the second quarter, there were 463 incidents of larceny per day. As this is within 5% of the average, Q2 is marked with a yellow circle. Larceny incidents increased to 470 per day (5.4% above average) in the third quarter, which is accordingly marked with an upward-pointing red triangle. Finally, in the fourth quarter there were 430 incidents per day, 3.6% below the yearly average. Again, this is marked with a yellow circle.

Figure 3: Offense Frequency by Quarter

Offense Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Incidents
Larceny/Theft Offenses	▼	●	▲	●	162,825
Damage to property	●	▲	●	▼	63,420
Fraud Offenses	●	●	●	●	45,329
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	●	▲	▲	▼	37,794
Motor Vehicle Theft	▼	●	▲	●	20,746
Stolen Property Offenses	●	●	●	●	6,142
Robbery	●	●	●	▼	5,835
Counterfeiting/Forgery	●	●	●	●	5,318
Embezzlement	▼	●	▲	▲	2,685
Arson	▲	▲	●	▼	1,476
Extortion/Blackmail	▼	●	▼	▲	1,299

Legend	
▲	High (at least 5% above full-year average)
●	Average
▼	Low (at least 5% below average)

Many crimes were highest in the middle of the year. Larceny and motor vehicle theft peaked in the third quarter, with the lowest levels in the first quarter. Damage to property and burglary saw earlier peaks, in the second quarter,[5] and were lowest in the fourth quarter. Meanwhile, embezzlement incidents were more common in the second half of the year, and arsons occurred more often in the first half. Fraud, stolen property offenses, robbery and counterfeiting were mostly equally distributed throughout the year.

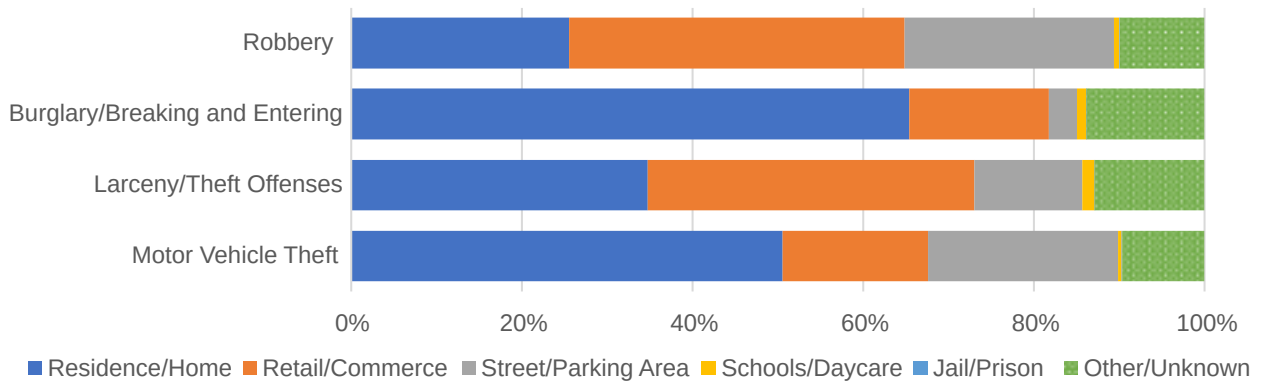[4] Bribery is excluded as there were only fifteen total incidents reported.
[5] There were 110 burglaries per day in Q2 and 109 per day in Q3.

Location

Figures 4 through 6 show the reported locations of each type of property crime. Figure 4 includes crimes that consist of directly taking property from a victim. Figure 5 shows those crimes where deceit or coercion is used to obtain some benefit. The remaining property crimes—arson, damage to property and stolen property offenses—are shown in Figure 6.
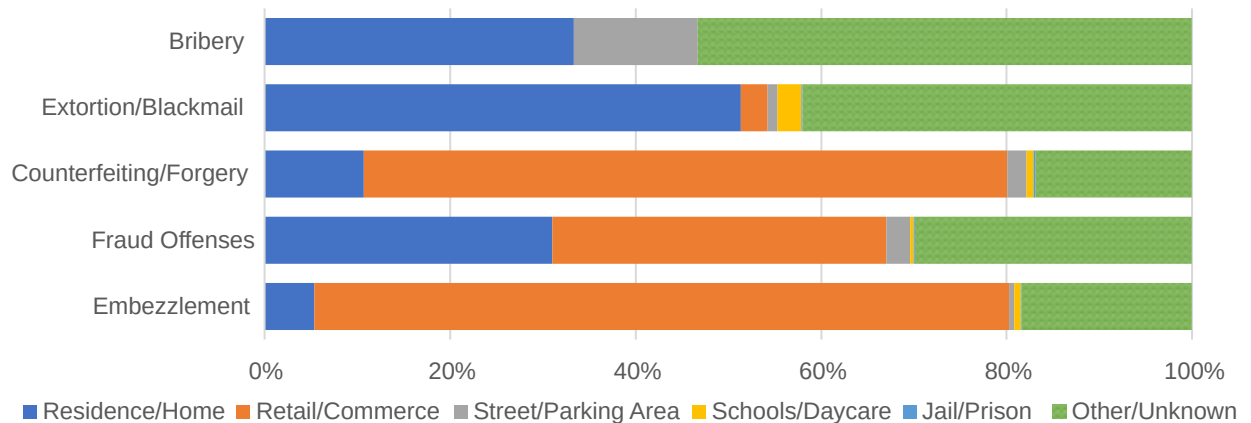
Note that multiple locations may sometimes be associated with offenses of the same type in one incident; in those incidents, all distinct locations were counted. Additionally, while the number of incidents at a jail or prison is often not visible in the graphs, that location type was reported at least once for each of the crime types except bribery.

Figure 4: Locations (Direct Taking of Property)

Robberies and larcenies were likely to take place in retail or commercial locations, while burglaries primarily occurred at residences. Motor vehicle theft also occurred most often at residences, just over 50% of the time.
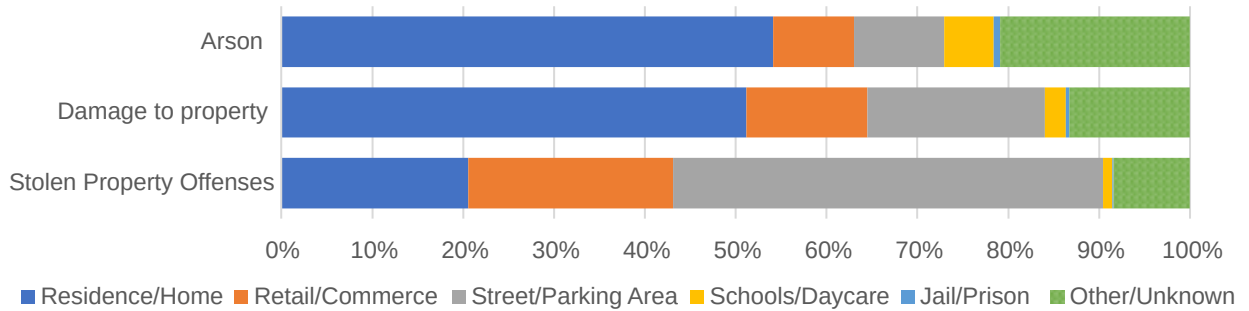
Figure 5: Locations (Deceit/Coercion Crimes)

75% of embezzlements and 69% of counterfeiting/forgery offenses occurred in retail/commercial locations. Fraud was also somewhat more likely to occur at a retail/commercial establishment than a residence. On the other hand, most instances of extortion happened at residences.

This group of offenses also saw a greater share of other/unknown locations. The largest share of these is accounted for by the "cyberspace" location. Seventeen percent of frauds, 35% of extortions and 27% of briberies occurred in cyberspace.

Figure 6: Locations (Other Property Crimes)

Figure 6: Locations (Other Property Crimes)

Legend: Residence/Home, Retail/Commerce, Street/Parking Area, Schools/Daycare, Jail/Prison, Other/Unknown
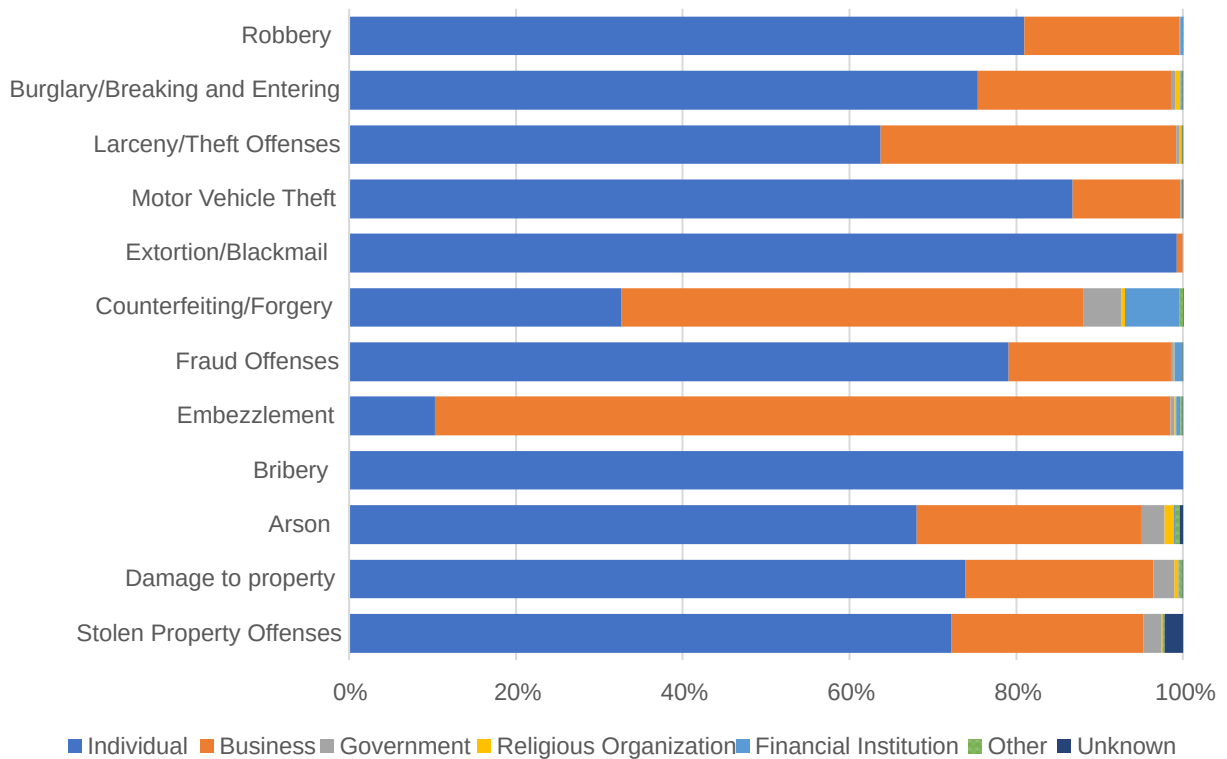
Arson and damage to property each happened at residences in just over half the cases. The latter offense saw a greater share happen in streets and parking areas, 20% versus 10%. Stolen property offenses were most often reported as occurring in streets and parking areas, with that being 47% of offenses.

Victim Type

Figure 7 shows the types of victims of each crime in 2022. For each offense type, victims are counted once per incident. For example, if an individual was a victim of a burglary and a larceny in the same incident, they are counted in both categories. However, if they were a victim of two different larceny offenses in the same incident, they are counted only once. Additionally, if the same person was victimized in two separate incidents, they are counted twice. The most common types of victims are individuals and businesses.
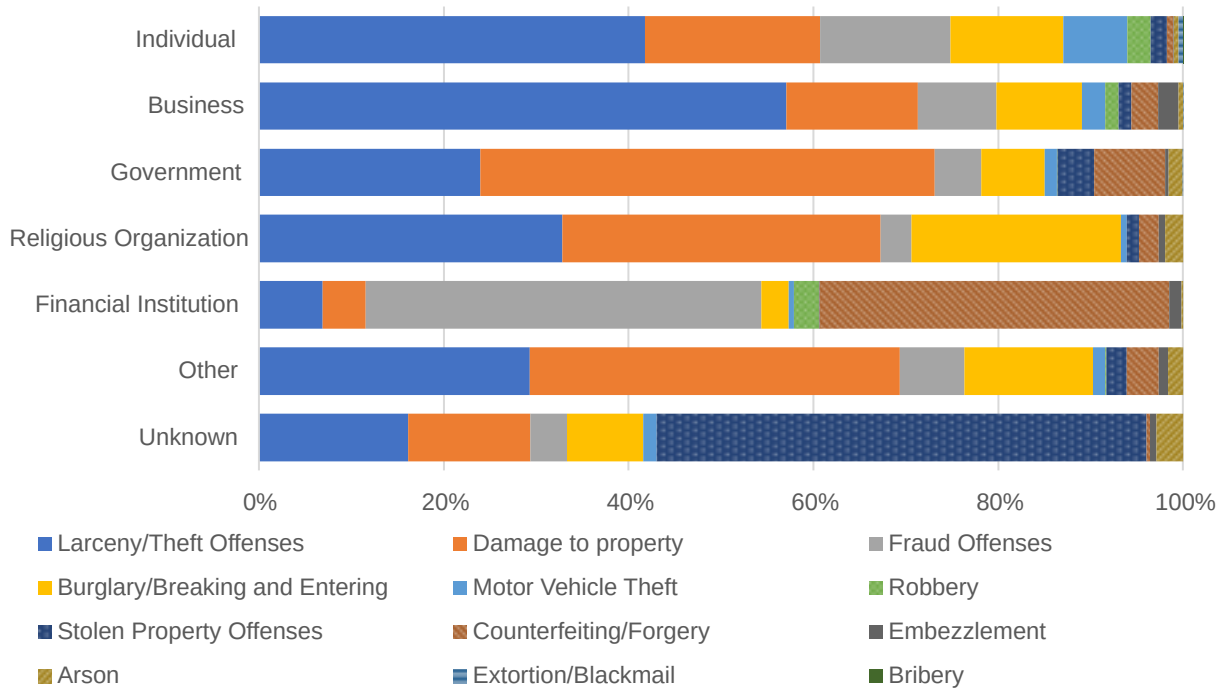

Figure 7: Victim Type

Legend: Individual, Business, Government, Religious Organization, Financial Institution, Other, Unknown

The majority of victims of property crimes were individuals. This was also true of each category of property crime except embezzlement (88% of victims were businesses) and counterfeiting/forgery (55% businesses). Notably, over 99% of extortion victims were individuals.

While individuals and businesses together accounted for over 98% of victims, government, religious organizations, financial institutions and others were also victimized. Figure 8 is another view of the data in Figure 7, showing how the types of property offenses committed varied with the type of victim.
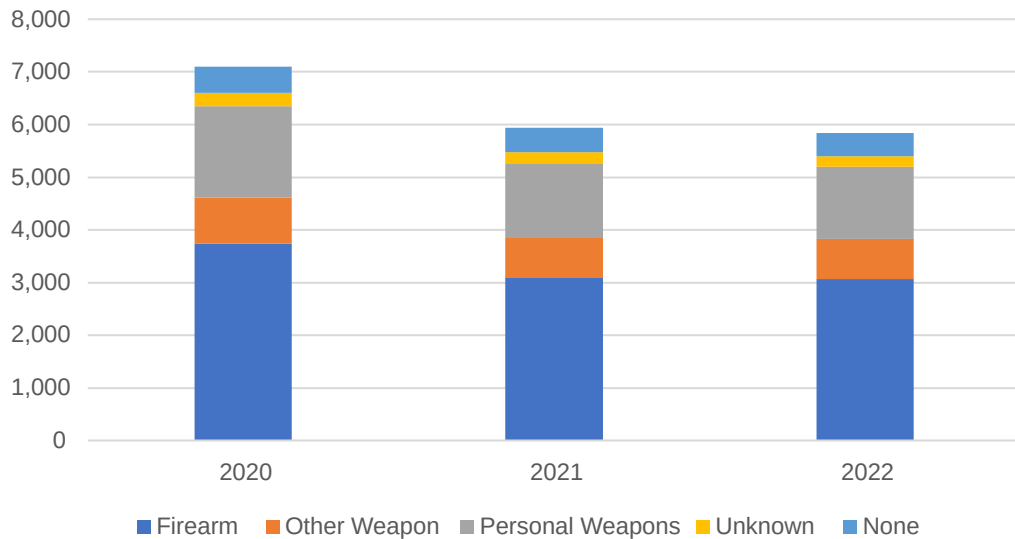
Figure 8: Offense Type by Victim Type

Businesses who were victims of property crime were more likely than individuals to be victims of larceny, counterfeiting and embezzlement. Damage to property was the most common crime committed against both government and religious organizations. It accounted for just under half of all government victims and 34% of religious organization victims. Another 23% of crimes committed against religious organizations were burglaries. Meanwhile, financial institutions were most commonly victimized in incidents of fraud and counterfeiting.

Weapons

For the crimes of robbery and extortion, a weapon or force type may be reported in connection with the offense. Figure 9 shows the percentage of each weapon reported in robberies from 2020 to 2022. The phrase "personal weapons" means the use of one's body parts as weapons.

Figure 9: Weapons Used in Robberies

The number of reported robberies decreased over the three-year period, but the weapons used were similar. Firearms were used in between 52% and 53% of robberies each year.

While the crime of extortion may involve a threat of violence, it is distinguished from robbery in that the victim is not in fear of immediate harm. Most cases of extortion did not involve a weapon. When a weapon was reported, it was most often personal weapons or other weapons, with only 1% of all extortion offenses involving a firearm.

Use of Force in Burglaries

A burglary offense may be reported as involving forcible or non-forcible entry.[1] Figure 10 shows the numbers of each entry method reported in 2022 by the location of the burglary.[2]

In 2022, 61% of burglaries were reported to involve forcible entry. The proportion was higher in retail/commercial locations. Burglars used force less often when the crime happened at a residence, in a street or parking area, or at a school or daycare.
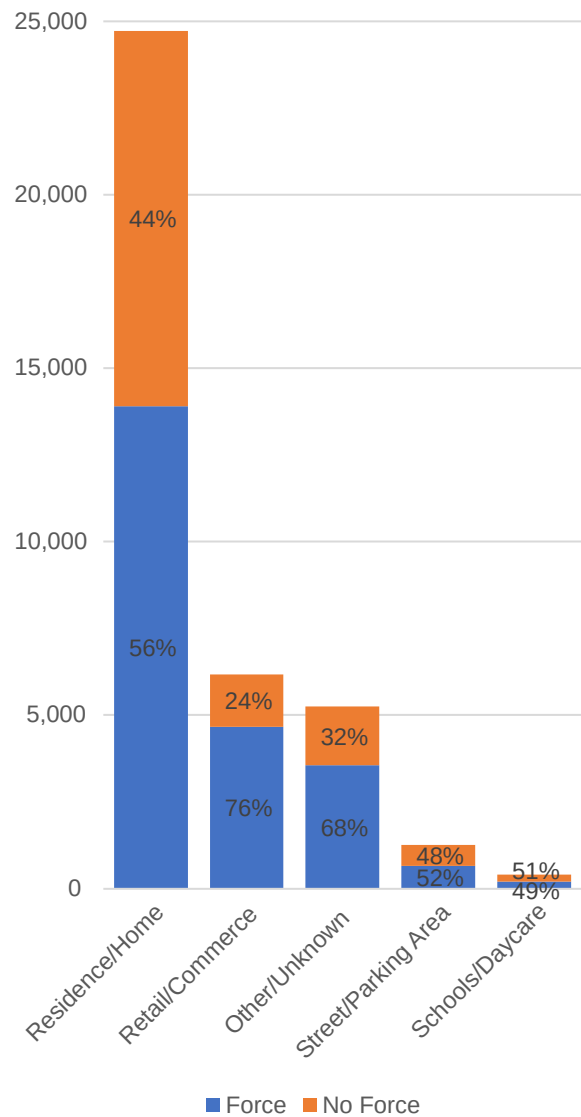
Conclusion

Property crimes dropped overall between 2020 and 2022, but the trends differed among the specific types of crime:

- Crimes that involve directly taking something from another's possession were down, with the exception of motor vehicle theft.
- Arson and damage to property also decreased.
- Extortion, embezzlement and fraud all increased.

Additionally, we found the following:

- The summer saw more crime than the winter.
- Most property crime occurred at either a residence or a retail/commercial location. For certain crimes, a substantial number occurred in cyberspace.
- The majority of victims of property crimes were individuals.
- Guns were used in about half of robberies.
- Most burglaries involved forced entry, especially at commercial/retail locations.

Figure 10: Burglary Entry Method by Location, 2022

When considering the information in this report, it is important to recall that NIBRS data is provided by law enforcement agencies. CJAC cannot guarantee that there are no errors in the data provided. Moreover, the data can only reflect information that is known to law enforcement. This means in particular that criminal incidents not reported to law enforcement are absent from this data.

[1] As defined in the NIBRS User Manual, force means the use of "force of any degree or a mechanical contrivance of any kind (including a passkey or skeleton key) to unlawfully enter a building or other structure. Agencies should also include burglary by concealment inside a building followed by exiting the structure as forced entry. An unforced entry is one where the burglar unlawfully entered through an unlocked door or window, but used no force."
[2] The location category of Jail/Prison is not shown. Only one burglary occurred there in 2022.