

Crime State Rankings 2009

Purpose of This Book

The primary purpose of *Crime State Rankings 2009* is to serve as a resource for state and local government and law enforcement officials and community members as every governor, mayor, and concerned citizen needs access to straightforward, organized criminal justice information to begin to address public safety issues in their own states and communities. Containing a wealth of information, this book provides a unique approach by which readers can compare states' reported crime rates (per 100,000 persons) to the national level of reported crime (i.e., comparison score).

In previous editions, the terms “safest” and “dangerous” were used to describe the states with the lowest and highest rankings. These terms will no longer be used because perceptions of safety and danger are just that—the perceptions of the individuals who live in these communities. We want to emphasize that the analyses in this book are purely descriptive. At no time do we attempt to explain why there are differences between and among states. Such explanations are beyond the scope of this book but are currently being pursued by criminologists and other social science researchers.

To enhance the usefulness of *Crime State Rankings 2009*, we have added a new chapter that provides histograms of the results of selected analyses along with measures of central tendency, such as median, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values. This analysis is provided so the reader can better understand how the values for a particular variable are distributed for all fifty states and where a particular state's ranking falls based on its value of the variable under examination.