



at the heart of campus safety

UNDERSTANDING CLERY STATISTICS —

The Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act, passed in 1990, requires all colleges and universities who receive Title IV funding to share information about crime on campus and their efforts to improve campus safety. Additionally, the law requires institutions to inform the public of crime in or around campus. This information is made publicly accessible through the institution's annual security report (ASR). Colleges and universities must outline specific policies and procedures within their ASRs, including those related to disseminating timely warnings and emergency notifications, options for survivors of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSAS), and campus crime reporting processes.

Crime statistics shared within the ASR reflect the number of Clery defined crimes reported to have occurred within Clery defined geographic categories of an institution.

Often these statistics can be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Intended as a resource for all, this document provides a more comprehensive look at what the numbers all mean, clarifying what Clery statistics do and do not represent.

The first step in understanding Clery statistics is knowing what crimes must be recorded. The below box depicts all Clery Act crimes which campuses represent as statistics within their ASRs.

Clery Crimes

Criminal Offenses

- Homicide
- Sex Offenses
- Robbery
- Aggravated Assault
- Burglary
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Arson

Hazing

VAWA Offenses

- Dating Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking

Arrests & Referrals

- Weapons Law Violations
- Drug Law Violations
- Liquor Law Violations

Hate Crimes

- All criminal offenses plus:
 - ♦ Larceny-theft
 - ♦ Simple Assault
 - ♦ Intimidation
 - ♦ Destruction/damage or vandalism of property

Hate Crime Bias Categories

- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- National Origin
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

Clery Geography*

The second step in understanding Clery crime statistics is knowing the geographic categories under the Clery Act. If a Clery Act crime is reported to have occurred within Clery geography then it can be counted as a Clery crime statistic.

On-Campus:

- Any building or property owned or controlled by an institution within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area and used by the institution in direct support of, or in a manner related to, the institution's educational purposes, including residence halls; and
- Any building or property that is within or reasonably contiguous to paragraph (1) of this definition, that is owned by the institution but controlled by another person, is frequently used by students, and supports institutional purposes (such as a food or other retail vendor).

In plain language: An institution's core, main campus.

On-campus Student Housing:

- Any student housing facility that is owned or controlled by the institution, or is located on property that is owned or controlled by the institution, and is within the reasonably contiguous geographic area that makes up the campus.

Noncampus:

- Any building or property owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the institution; or
- Any building or property owned or controlled by an institution that is used in direct support of, or in relation to, the institution's educational purposes, is frequently used by students, and is not within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area of the institution.

In plain language: Noncampus properties are those that are not contiguous to the core campus but are used by students for the educational purposes of the institution. Noncampus does not mean "off campus"; it refers to specific properties owned or controlled by the campus or by a student organization officially recognized by the campus. Noncampus does not automatically refer to all surrounding neighborhoods of a college campus, nor does it include all properties that students happen to rent.

Public Property:

- All public property, including thoroughfares, streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities, that is within the campus, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus.

In plain language: The public property that immediately borders and is accessible from the campus. (For many institutions, this is the public sidewalk that borders the campus, the public street, and the public sidewalk on the other side of the street.) It also includes public property within the core campus.

*As defined by the [Clery Act](#)

Who is a Campus Security Authority?

The third step in understanding Clery crime statistics is knowing that it is not enough to have a Clery crime occurring in Clery geography. That information must be reported to a campus security authority or a CSA. That role is then responsible for reporting that information to a designated collection body at an institution. Once that information is reported it can be recorded as a Clery crime statistic.

The Clery Act defines a CSA as:

- A campus police department or a campus security department of an institution
- Any individual or individuals who have responsibility for campus security but who do not constitute a campus police department or a campus security department
- Any individual or organization specified in an institution's statement of campus security policy as an individual or organization to which students and employees should report criminal offenses
- An official of an institution who has significant responsibility for student and campus activities, including, but not limited to, student housing, student discipline and campus judicial proceedings.

Examples:

- A dean of students who oversees student housing, a student center or student extracurricular activities
- A director of athletics or a team coach
- A faculty advisor to a student group
- A student resident advisor or assistant or a student who monitors access to dormitories
- A coordinator of fraternity and sorority life

What Clery Statistics Do and Do Not Say

- Statistics compiled for the ASR and shared with the Department of Education DO INCLUDE those reported to the CSAs described above, such as campus police or security, a coach, an advisor to a student group, or a dean of students.
- These statistics DO INCLUDE incidents documented by resident assistants of students violating campus weapons, drug, or liquor law policies that are also violations of state and local weapons, drug, and liquor laws.
- These statistics DO INCLUDE all reports to CSAs of Clery crimes that occurred within Clery geography, regardless of whether the individual reporting to a CSA or the involved parties were members of the campus community.
- These statistics DO INCLUDE all reports to CSAs of Clery crimes that occurred within Clery geography, regardless of whether the person chose to move forward with the criminal justice or campus disciplinary process. Additionally, the outcome of any proceeding has no impact on these statistics.
- These statistics DO NOT always represent incidents shared with confidential resources on campus such as a counseling center. Pastoral and professional counselors are exempt from Clery reporting.
- These statistics DO NOT include incidents that were not reported to the institution.
- These statistics DO NOT reflect incidents reported that occurred in areas that are not Clery geography (such as at an off-campus party at a location not owned or controlled by the institution or by a recognized student organization, an incident that occurs at a local bar or club, or an incident that occurs in the hometown of a student).

Things to Consider:

There are specific rights and options afforded under the Clery Act (and Title IX, a civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs or activities) to campus victims of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. There are often other campus responsibilities that come into play when a report is made, even if the incident doesn't fall within Clery's statistical reporting requirements.

The Clery Act is the only federal law that requires recording and reporting of crime statistics at institutions of higher education; there is currently no federal requirement to publish statistics on Title IX incidents.

The statistics captured by the Clery Act are necessary and useful as they provide a snapshot of what IS occurring within the properties that an institution owns/controls, which are the locations where an institution has the most authority to conduct responsible and effective prevention and response efforts.

Moving Forward

Clery Act statistics capture reports of campus crime, but too often crimes go unreported and therefore are missed or not included. For example, a 2019 study conducted by the Association of American Universities found that when students were asked about their opinions on if an official would take a report of sexual assault seriously, 65.6 percent of students reported it was “very” or “extremely” likely the official would take the report seriously, but only 43.6 percent of transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, or otherwise gender nonconforming students and 53 percent of women felt the same way. Other reasons for not reporting include the belief that they could handle it themselves, the incident was not serious enough to contact a program or resource, and because the person felt embarrassed, ashamed, or that it would be too emotionally difficult to report.

For More Information on Climate Surveys

Because crime is currently underreported, many institutions are looking to climate surveys to help them understand what’s not being reported and why.

For more information on climate surveys, please see <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf> and <https://changingourcampus.org/research-publications/#assessment>

Suggestions to Mitigate Underreporting:

To help alleviate underreporting and encourage all members of your campus community to report crimes:

Re-examine your messaging around what constitutes a reportable crime or incident on your campus and how a student or employee might report that information. Who are you leaving out of that instruction? Who are you focusing on and how?

Highlight your annual security report in as many forums as possible. Share it during open houses, orientations, commencement and convocation addresses, athletic events, and student organization recruitment fairs. Remember, this document is not just about statistics – it’s about giving your community access to information and resources. It contains all the information you want to share – let it work for you.

Remind students and employees regularly through your website, emails and social media posts how to report crimes and to whom. Repeated exposure to this message and embedding attention to violence prevention within your campus culture will elicit change.

Train those who could receive reports of crimes how to best listen to and document that information in an unbiased, accepting, and caring way.

While there are limitations to data collection, it is the main requirement that helps institutions gauge crimes impacting the campus community and consider what crimes are not being reported. This knowledge informs institutions about what they need to do differently to continue to educate on what violence looks like on campuses today, what type of prevention programming they are utilizing, including frequency and effectiveness, and how to report a crime if and when someone wants to.

References

Association of American Universities (2020). Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct. Retrieved from [https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20%20and%20appendices%201-7_\(01-16-2020_FINAL\).pdf](https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20%20and%20appendices%201-7_(01-16-2020_FINAL).pdf)

Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016) Campus climate survey validation study final technical report [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf>

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[https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:20%20section:1092%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:20%20section:1092%20edition:prelim))