CRIME

Murders in U.S. Cities Reach Record Lows Again

Chicago tops the list, but with fewer homicides than the year before

By Josh Sanburn @joshsanburn ⎮ Jan. 02, 2014 ⎮ 5 Comments

The number of homicides in the United States' biggest cities hit record lows again in 2013 as the murder rate nationally continued to drop to levels not seen since the 1960s.

According to year-end data released by police departments around the country, Chicago still leads the country in homicides with 415, but that number declined 18% from 2012 and is the fewest since 1965. Crime has been a problem in pockets of the city's South Side and West Side neighborhoods for years. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel hired a new superintendent of police soon after he was elected to shift the department's strategy in an attempt to prevent future crimes. But while the murder rate declined to roughly 43 homicides per 100,000 residents (down from 50 in 2012), the number of murders in Chicago still outpaced every other major metropolis in the U.S.

Scott Olson / Getty Images

Friends, fellow students, and others hold a candlelight vigil at Harsh Park in memory of Hadiya Pendleton on February 2, 2013 in Chicago.
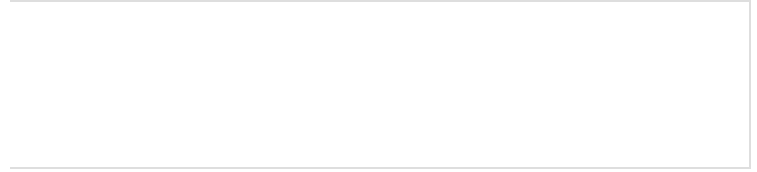
New York had 333 murders in 2013, less than one a day, a record low and a much lower rate than Chicago at four homicides per 100,000 residents. In Detroit, the city had 332 murders, 54 fewer than the year before and the first time in three decades there have been fewer than 350 homicides in a year.

Los Angeles (255) and Philadelphia (246) both had fewer murders, but Baltimore (234) saw a jump in homicides. While the overall crime rate was down for the year, murders in Baltimore increased almost 8% from 2012.

Washington, D.C., experienced 104 homicides in 2013, an increase from 88 in 2012 — in part because of the mass shooting at the Washington Navy Yard that killed 12 people in September. However, violent crime overall — which includes rape and assault — is down.

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ere were 412 homicides in Chicago in 2013. There were