Crime inflicts a substantial toll on individuals, businesses, and communities. Understanding the total cost of crime—which includes costs related to lost quality of life, general fear, and other intangibles, in addition to the more obvious costs related to lost property, incarceration, and the like—can help cities decide how best to invest their crime-control dollars. RAND's Cost of Crime Calculator lets city leaders and residents calculate the total cost of crime in their communities and assess the potential value of hiring additional police officers. The calculator can be found at http://cqp.rand.org/cost-of-crime.

The many costs of crime

The Cost of Crime to Residents and the Value of an Officer

Per capita cost of crime in 2010

In some cities, hiring one additional officer could save the community hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, even after the total annual cost of employment is factored in.

Total expected crime-cost savings from hiring an additional police officer in 2010

This calculation considers only the seven serious crimes classified by the FBI as "Part I" crimes and excludes the costs of unreported incidents. Thus, the total cost of crime in 2010 was probably much higher.