



# UTAH STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT

# 2024

Statewide Information & Analysis Center  
Department of Public Safety

241218-1202030





**“TO SERVE UTAH BY PROVIDING INNOVATIVE INTELLIGENCE THAT ADVANCES RESPONSE TO PUBLIC SAFETY THREATS WHILE PROTECTING PRIVACY RIGHTS FOR ALL.”**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SCOPE

*Scope: This State Threat Assessment prepared by the Utah Statewide Information & Analysis Center (SIAC) assesses the threats of cyber, targeted violence, and organized crime within/or impacting the State of Utah, and Utah citizens from October 2023 to October 2024. This assessment is intended for Federal, State, Local, and Tribal partners responsible for mitigating threats and protecting Utah and/or the United States, and its citizens and highlights threat actors, activities, targets, facilitation platforms, and the evolution of the threats impacting Utah. The information cutoff date for this assessment is 31 October 2024.*

The Utah Statewide Information & Analysis Center (SIAC) assesses the observed cyber, targeted violence, and organized criminal threat to Utah remains substantial, particularly due to malicious actors adoption of generative artificial intelligence (AI), use of cryptocurrency and cryptocurrency scams, ongoing geopolitical climate, threats and hoax threats to schools, and a notable significant increase in the use and distribution of fentanyl in Utah. All threat actors in each of SIAC's tracked threat domains continue to adapt and evolve tactics in order to evade law enforcement or further their efforts. In addition, each threat domain saw a lack of Utah-specific direct victim reporting, which contributes to gaps in an understanding of the threats to Utah. The SIAC assesses these threats will remain persistent and continue in 2025 based on reporting in each of the subject areas along with notable changes seen in 2024.





# CYBER

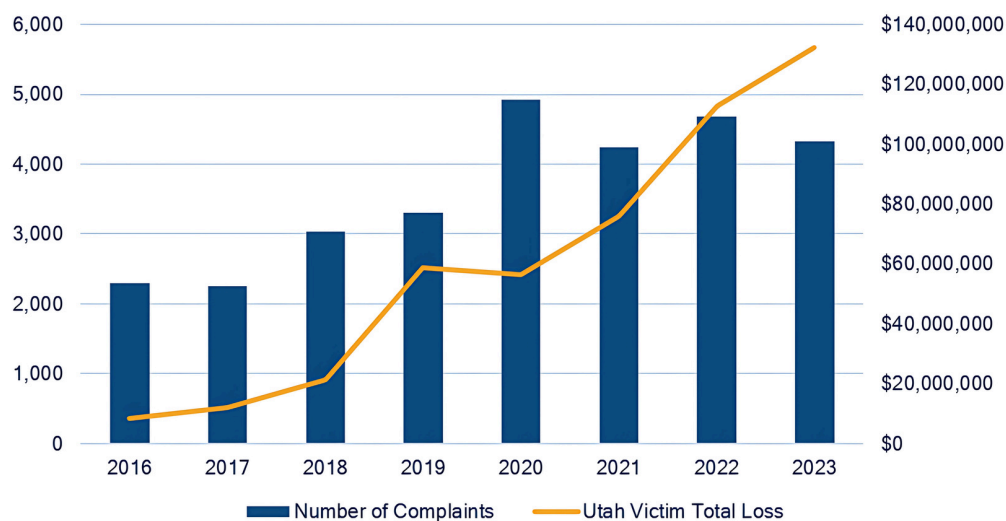


The Utah Statewide Information & Analysis Center (SIAC) assesses cyber threats will almost certainly, continue to increase as the availability of internet, internet-connected devices, sharing platforms, and hacking tools become more readily available.

## THREAT ACTORS

Cyber threat actors including nation state threat actors, financially motivated cyber criminals, and hacktivists likely present a threat to Utah based on their access to resources, intent, skill levels, and ongoing geosocial and political events.

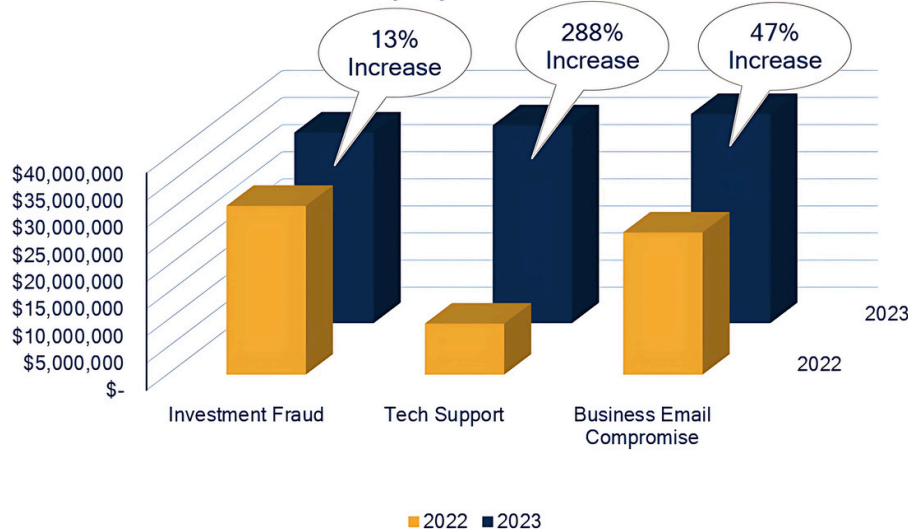
FBI IC3 - Utah Internet Crime Statistics



## THREAT ACTIVITY

Cyberattack methods utilizing social engineering methods will almost certainly continue to evolve and exploit victims through business email compromise, tech support fraud, phishing, ransomware, and cryptocurrency-enabled scams. According to 2023 IC3 reporting, the costliest cybercrimes in Utah were investment fraud, tech support, and business email compromise.

Most Costly Cybercrimes in Utah





## THREAT TARGETS

Targets of cybercrimes include the State of Utah, Utah-based private and public organizations, and Utah citizens of all age ranges.

## FACILITATION PLATFORMS

Some of the common facilitation platforms used by threat actors include: sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, the dark web, and cryptocurrency ATMs.

## LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING

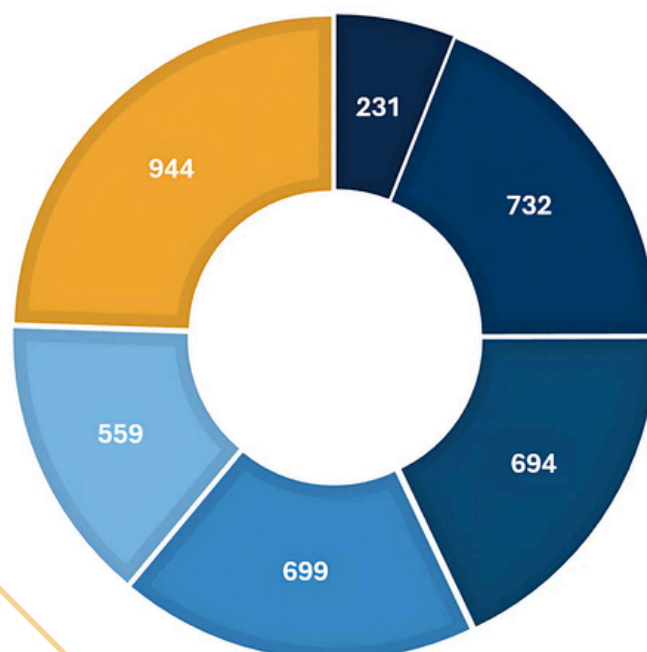
A lack of Utah-specific victim reporting likely leaves a gap in SIACs assessment of the cyber threat.

## EVOLUTION OF THE THREAT

Financially motivated cyber actors' adoption of AI and cryptocurrency will likely present investigative challenges for law enforcement and ransomware attacks will continue to extort Utah businesses and government.

## UTAH 2023 IC3 COMPLAINTS BY AGE GROUP

■ Under 20 ■ 20-29 ■ 30-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60+



# TARGETED VIOLENCE & TERRORISM

The SIAC assesses threats inspired by both domestic and foreign ideologies very likely remain persistent throughout Utah. Violent extremists and adversarial nation states, similarly continue to evolve, aiming to influence the volatile sociopolitical climate in the U.S., exploiting world events and social issues to actively influence political polarization to encourage followers to conduct violent acts.

## THREAT ACTORS

Lone actors and homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) motivated or inspired by a perceived grievance or extremist ideologies are the most likely to conduct an attack in the state of Utah.

- Violent extremists and adversarial nation states likely amplified their efforts online to influence the U.S. Presidential election and continue to exploit sociopolitical grievances to incite anger and radicalization among their followers.

## THREAT ACTIVITIES

Some individuals in Utah almost certainly threaten or express a desire to commit targeted acts of violence or criminal activity; while some don't have the means to carry out their expressed threats, others seek out destructive tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs).

## THREAT TARGETS

Violent extremists continue to target government officials and facilities, religious and minority institutions, law enforcement, large public venues, and critical infrastructure.

129

Hate Crimes Reported  
from Oct 1- Aug 28

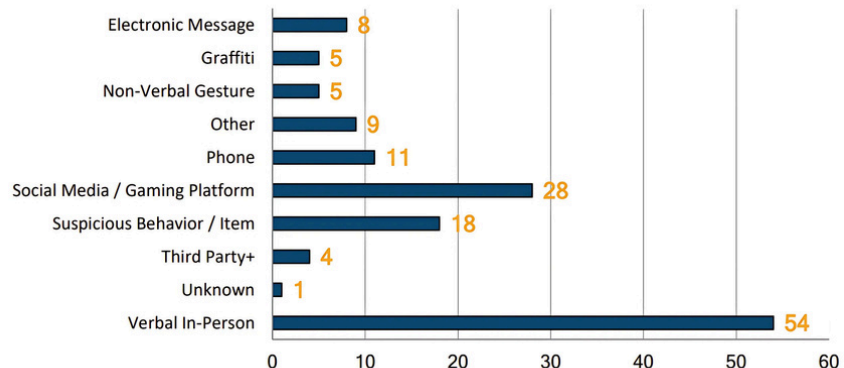
45

Anti-  
LGBTQ+

15

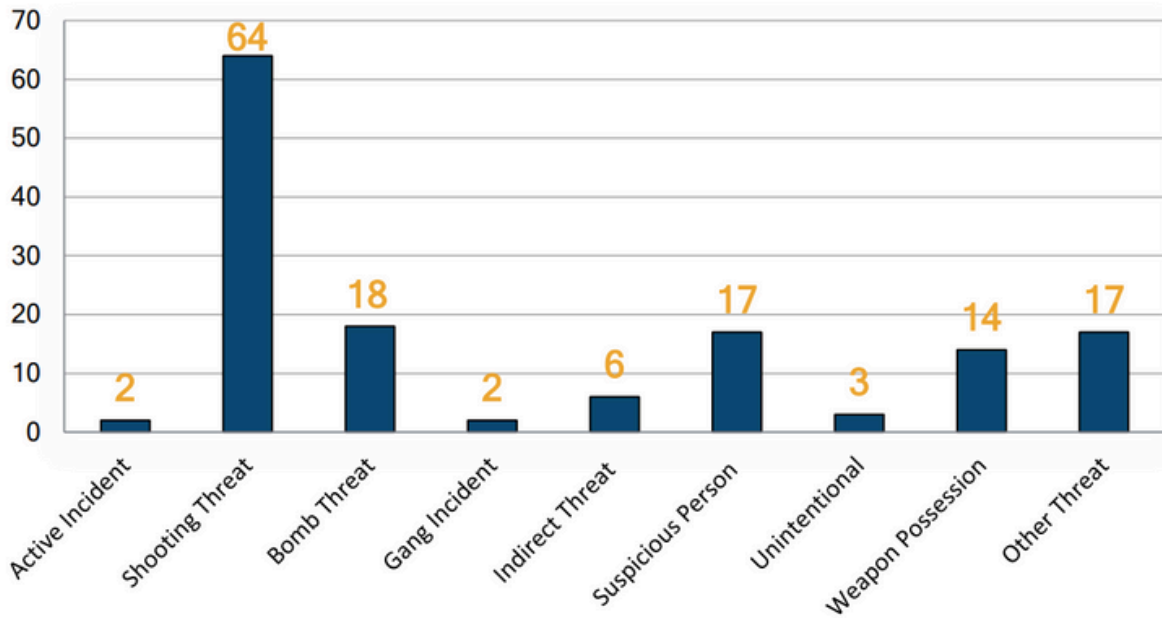
Anti-Black or African  
American

### SCHOOL THREAT COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS 2023-24



# TARGETED VIOLENCE & TERRORISM

SCHOOL THREAT CATEGORIES 2023-24



## SCHOOL THREAT ACTIVITIES

Utah schools will likely continue to see an increase in both credible and hoax threats. During the 2023 school year, the SIAC is aware of **143** school threats made against Utah schools, a weekly average of **3.5** school related hoax and or threat incidents.

## LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING

Inconsistent criminal definitions between federal and local agencies, and lack of intelligence reporting via private citizens and law enforcement agencies, leaves a significant gap in understanding the full extent by which lone actors, and violent extremists are operating in Utah.

## FACILITATION PLATFORMS

Lone actors, and violent extremists in Utah are almost certainly using encrypted applications and advanced technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to recruit, communicate, and commit illegal transactions.

## EVOLUTION OF THE THREAT

The threat of targeted violence in Utah will remain persistent as violent extremists continue to evolve and adapt to thwart mitigation efforts by law enforcement.



# ORGANIZED CRIME

The SIAC assesses organized criminal threats will likely **continue to persist** in Utah, facilitated by Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs), and local gangs. Law enforcement continues to see an increase in fentanyl seizures and overdoses, with fentanyl leading as the top seized drug in 2024 rather than methamphetamine in previous years.

## THREAT ACTORS

The SIAC assesses transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) very likely remain the most impactful organized crime threat actor to Utah due to availability of resources and their ability to facilitate crime in Utah. Local criminal gangs and gang violence are frequently encountered by law enforcement and the public in Utah. Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) maintain a presence within Utah, and Utah will likely see an increase in criminal activity due to an increase in membership and disputes over territory control.

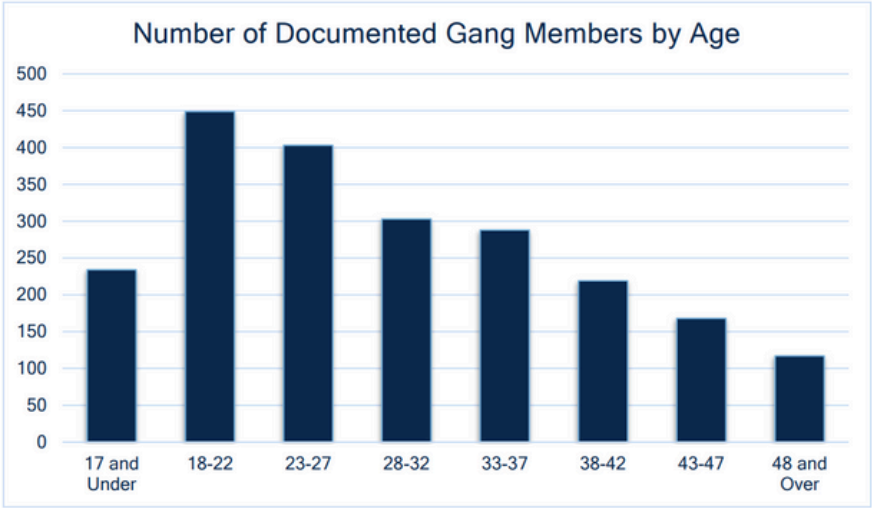
## THREAT ACTIVITIES

Drug distribution and gun violence in Utah will likely continue to increase, particularly crimes relating to illicit fentanyl distribution and violent territory disputes by local gang members. Organized criminal groups continue to expand their criminal enterprises throughout Utah through drug trafficking, weapon distribution, and human trafficking. Increases in fentanyl and Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products within the state of Utah continue to be reported, as well as consistent reporting of sex and labor trafficking.

## THREAT TARGETS

Organized crime members are very likely to continue targeting vulnerable populations with criminal acts to strengthen their organization and increase financial gain. Organized criminal groups targets include rival gang members, at-risk adults, youth, individuals struggling with substance abuse, and the general public experiencing indiscriminate gang violence.

# ORGANIZED CRIME



(U) Documented gang members and associates in the Salt Lake and Ogden-Weber Metropolitan areas<sup>55</sup>

## FACILITATION PLATFORMS

Organized criminal groups will likely continue to facilitate illicit activities through social media platforms and websites, weapons sales, and highways to evade and limit law enforcement encounters.

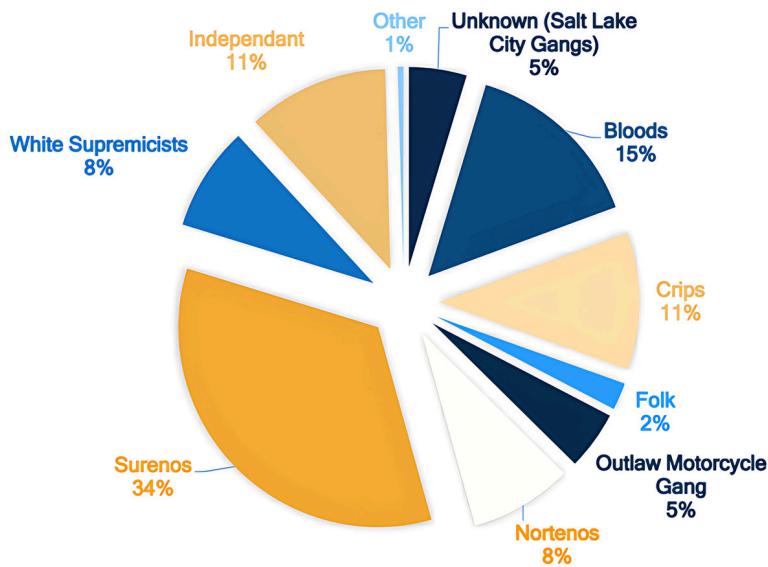
## LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING

The organized criminal footprint within Utah is likely much greater than reported. A full and accurate assessment of organized crime activity in the State of Utah is limited due to the clandestine nature of the illicit activity.

## EVOLUTION OF THE THREAT

The organized criminal threat to Utah has evolved in the past year based on changes in the drug landscape, particularly the increase in fentanyl seizures. Utah saw an increase in human trafficking related to organized criminal activity, and an increase in local gang activity.

## NUMBER OF DOCUMENTED GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES



(U) Documented gang members and associates in the Salt Lake and Ogden-Weber Metropolitan areas<sup>5</sup>

# OUTLOOK



## CYBER

The observed cyber threat to Utah in 2024 is **substantial**, consistent with previous years reporting from SIAC. Private and public sector networks in Utah experienced significant damage due to cyberattacks or the threat of cyberattacks, resulting in substantial economic loss. The reach of cyber threats is wide-ranging and persistent, causing harm on an international scale. The SIAC assesses with **HIGH CONFIDENCE** cyber threats will continue to increase as the availability of internet, internet-connected devices, sharing platforms, and hacking tools become more readily available.



## TARGETED VIOLENCE

The observed threat of targeted violence in Utah is **substantial**, based on mitigation of multiple threats to schools and government officials, an increase of hate crimes and threats to minorities seen throughout 2024, significant increase in threat investigations, and reports of Utah-based individuals subscribing to violent extremist ideologies. Targeted violence has far reaching consequences of targeted attacks causing significant harm on a regional scale, with potential for widespread damage, and fear. The SIAC assesses with **MEDIUM CONFIDENCE** the threat of targeted violence in Utah will remain persistent as violent extremists continue to evolve and adapt to thwart mitigation efforts by law enforcement. The impact of individual targeted violent acts will vary based on the scale of each individual attack.



## ORGANIZED CRIME

The observed organized crime threat to Utah in 2024 was **substantial**, with organized criminal groups targeting the general public and vulnerable populations within Utah. While organized criminal groups do not directly affect every individual within Utah, the scope and damage of these groups' activities are felt among many communities within the State in terms of emotional trauma, economic loss, and physical harm. The SIAC assesses with **HIGH CONFIDENCE** that the organized criminal threat to Utah will remain substantial based on the prevalence of drugs, gangs, gun violence, and human trafficking within Utah, and the new and evolving methods to evade detection.





If you have any questions about this product, please  
contact the SIAC at [siac.utah.gov](https://siac.utah.gov)

This report addresses DHS HSEC Code: HSEC-1, HSEC-3, HSEC-5, HSEC-6, HSEC-8, HSEC-9, HSEC-10; and  
SIAC Standing Information Requirements: UTSIAC-01, 03-01, 03-02, 05-01, 05-02, 05-03, 05-04, 08,  
09-01, 09-02, 09-03

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood or Probability

Almost no chance	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly even chance	Likely	Very likely	Almost certain(ly)
01-05%	05-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

## Appendix B: Confidence Intervals Regarding Analytic Judgments

Confidence levels are assigned to judgments and sources in order to inform individuals of the level of credibility assigned to the information. Typically, confidence levels are assigned to information received from sources and the analyst's level of confidence in the accuracy of that information based on their experience and other reporting that validates the source's reporting. Confidence levels are also assigned to threat analysis/outlook sections of reports to identify the analyst's level of confidence in their analysis of the identified situation based on the available information.

- **High Confidence** – indicates the judgment/analysis is based on high-quality information from multiple sources or from a single, highly reliable source, and the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment.
- **Medium Confidence** – indicates the judgment/analysis is credibly sourced and plausible but can be interpreted in various ways or is not sufficient to warrant a higher level of confidence.
- **Low Confidence** – indicates the judgment/analysis is based on information that has questionable credibility or plausibility, the information is too fragmented to make solid analytical inferences, or sources of information are questionable/unreliable.

## Appendix C: Threat Assessment Methodology

Domain Management is the systematic process by which the SIAC develops and improves the strategic, contextual, and domain awareness of threat issues. The Domain Analytic Methodology serves as the foundation for Domain Intelligence Assessments and the State Threat Assessment to address threat issues in Utah.

**Step 1:** Research relating to the overall domain intelligence question.

**Step 2:** Framework questions to address the overall domain intelligence question, What is the currently observed and potential impact of the threat issue in Utah? Framework questions address threat actors, threat activities, threat targets, facilitation platforms, level of understanding, and evolution of the threat.

**Step 3:** Answering the overall domain intelligence question includes determining the observed and potential impact of the threat to Utah using the following matrix.



## IMPACT LEVEL CHARACTERIZATION

What impact is the threat issue currently having on the AOR based on an assessment of the observed harm to the domain's safety, economy, government operation, US national security, or trust in law enforcement over the last 6-12 months? What impact could the threat issue have on the AOR over the next 12-24 months, based on an assessment of the potential harm to the domain's safety, economy, government operation, US national security, or trust in law enforcement?

	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Substantial</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Unobserved/Not Present</b>
Effect – Results or consequences of events that followed	Affects beyond the intended target and directly affiliated parties, with collateral implications	Affects the intended target and directly affiliated parties	Affects only the intended target	<p>If the fusion center or other elements have not observed the threat issue in the AOR due to a lack of intelligence, the threat is characterized as UNOBSERVED. If the FC or Other Elements have sufficient to indicate the threat is not present in the AOR, the threat is characterized as Not Present.</p>
Reach – the scope or extension of the Impact	Causing widespread harm affecting the majority of the US, and/or on a national or international scale	Causing harm on a regional scale or to specific subgroups, including individuals or small groups that may reside outside the AOR	Causing harm on a local scale, or no harm	
Damage- physical harm or injury, including value or loss	Large-scale economic loss, often in the billions of dollars, OR widespread fear or psychological/ physical trauma	Significant economic loss, often in the millions of dollars, OR fear or psychological/ physical trauma to specific groups	Minimal financial loss to individuals/small group, OR fear limited to an individual victim/organization	