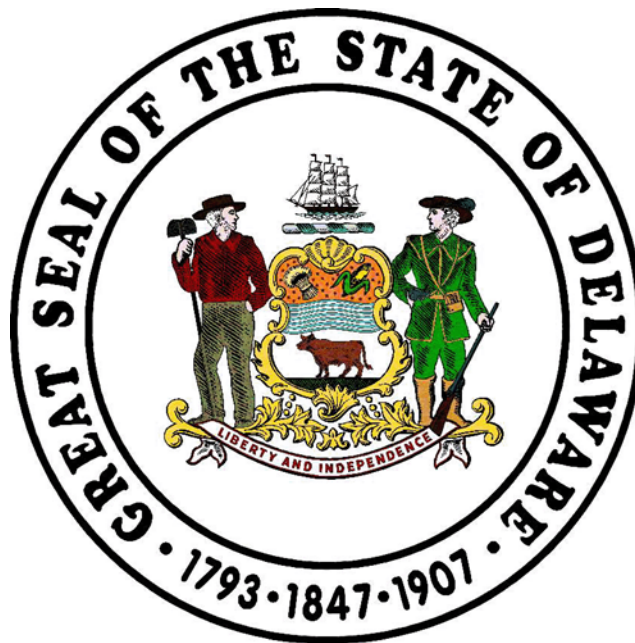


Crime in Delaware: 2011 – 2015 Executive Brief



August 2016

Prepared by the
Statistical Analysis Center
Delaware Criminal Justice Council
In Conjunction with the
State Bureau of Identification

Crime in Delaware: 2011 – 2015

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

Thomas F. MacLeish
Director

Authors:
Eric Rager and Jim Salt

This report is supported by the State Justice Statistics Grant Number 2014-BJ-CX-K028.

The points of view expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice.

State of Delaware Document number 100703 20160805

Please visit our website at <http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>

Crime in Delaware 2011 – 2015

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2011 – 2015*. *Crime in Delaware* is the official report of serious crime known to Delaware law enforcement agencies. This report covers data about serious crimes reported to state, county, and local police agencies for the years 2011 through 2015.

Crime in Delaware provides information about 23 Violent, Serious Property, Drug/Narcotic and Other Property and Social offenses¹ reported in Delaware's implementation of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) operated by the State Bureau of Investigation of the Delaware State Police. Final data for the years 2011 through 2014 and preliminary data for 2015 are included in this report. Additional years of data are included in the graphs to illustrate long term trends.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2011 – 2015* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center's website (<http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>).

Note to the reader

Crime in Delaware 2011 – 2015 continues the changes made in the previous two reports to the statistical methodology and to the design of the report to make information easier to find, understand, and use. These changes are intended to provide the reader with more, easy to understand information about crime trends.

A statistical note: Data for a calendar year are not considered final for the purposes of the *Crime in Delaware* report until offense counts become sufficiently stable, usually 12-15 months after the end of that year. Therefore, final data are provided for the 2011 – 2014 period and preliminary data for 2015.

In calculating differences between 2015 and previous years, preliminary data were used for all years to remove distortion that makes such differences appear larger or smaller than they actually are if final and preliminary data are mixed. Final data are used for comparisons between the years 2011 through 2014. Graphic figures that plot final and preliminary counts are included as appropriate to illustrate trends in the data as these are both useful and much less susceptible to distortion.

¹ In 2013, the FBI began the process of collecting data about human trafficking as mandated by the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. Human Trafficking is now included as a Group A Offense in the NIBRS data (making it the 23rd offense in that group) and is classified as a violent offense

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2011 – 2015* report contains extensive data and statistics on serious offenses, clearances, adult and juvenile arrests, and crimes against law enforcement officers. The report includes a summary of this data at the state and county levels, followed by a detailed breakdown based on five major topic areas: 1) Violent Offenses, 2) Serious Property Offenses, 3) Drug/Narcotic Offenses, 4) Other Property and Social Offenses, and 5) crimes against law enforcement officers. The data for each topic area are organized by state and county.

Below are key findings from this extensive set of Delaware crime data.

Serious Offenses

Overall, the occurrence of serious crime has decreased notably since 2011. The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2011 was 95,872 compared with 86,610 in 2014, a decrease of 9.6% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Preliminary data for 2015 suggest that pattern is continuing, with the number of offenses at 82,850, a decline of about 13,000 offenses (around 13.5%) compared to 2011.

In New Castle County, the number of offenses decreased since 2011 by about 8,400 (around 15%) from 53,945 to about 45,000. For Kent County, the number of total offenses compared to 2011 decreased about 11%, with offenses declining from 19,649 to about 17,000. In Sussex County, offenses decreased since 2011 from 22,287 to just under 20,000 (a decrease of about 11%). Offense trends by county are presented at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

Violent crime is lower in the State. The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased about 13% from 2011 to 2015 but preliminary data shows an increase from 2014 to 2015 of about 3% after a 4 year decline (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were about 14% lower as compared to 2011, while Kent saw a roughly 12% decline, but both counties show an increase from 2014 to 2015. Sussex County saw a 10% decline over the five year period.

The number of Homicides in 2015 (66) was the highest total of the five year period. There were 45 Homicides in New Castle County in 2015, the second highest total in the five year report period. Kent County had 15 Homicides in 2015, the highest total in the report period. Sussex County experienced 4 Homicides in 2015 which was and equal to 2011 totals and a decrease from recent years.

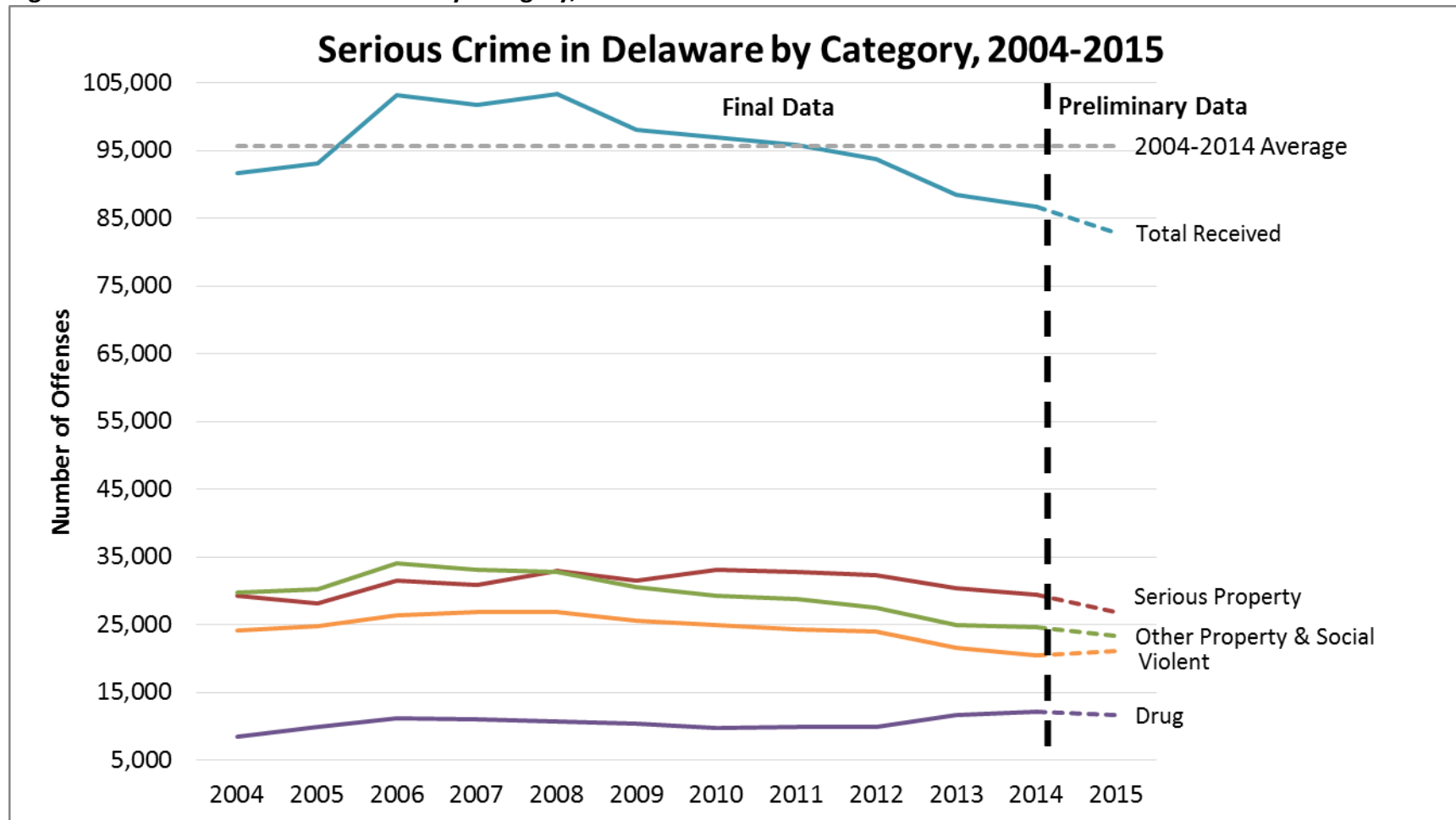
Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary 2011 – 2015

Serious Offenses Received 2011 – 2015¹						
	Final Counts				Preliminary Count	
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Violent Offenses	24,312	24,035	21,551	20,484	21,057	
Serious Property Offenses	32,823	32,337	30,329	29,413	26,801	
Drug Offenses	9,967	9,956	11,608	12,113	11,595	
Other Property, Social Offenses	28,770	27,428	24,911	24,600	23,397	
Total Offenses Received	95,872	93,756	88,399	86,610	82,850	
Percentage Difference in Serious Offenses Received						
	Final Differences			Preliminary Differences²		
	11 - 12	12-13	13 - 14	14 - 15	11 - 15	Average 11-14 -15
Violent Offenses	-1.14%	-10.33%	-4.95%	2.86%	-12.95%	-6.47%
Serious Property Offenses	-1.48%	-6.21%	-3.02%	-8.86%	-18.32%	-14.06%
Drug Offenses	-0.11%	16.59%	4.35%	-4.27%	17.23%	6.78%
Other Property, Social Offenses	-4.66%	-9.18%	-1.25%	-4.68%	-17.87%	-10.88%
Total Offenses Received	-2.21%	-5.71%	-2.02%	-4.26%	-13.14%	-8.77%

¹ Final data are provided for the 2011 – 2014 period and preliminary data for 2015.

² Preliminary data were used when making comparisons with 2015. For the other three sets of comparisons (2011 – 12, 2012 – 13, and 2013 – 2014) final data were used.

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2004 – 2015



Serious Property crime is also lower. The number of Serious Property Offenses reported decreased about 18% from 2011 to 2015. Motor vehicle-related theft offenses and Burglary offenses decreased around 22% and 37%, respectively, while Shoplifting offenses increased by about 12%. Shoplifting did decrease from 2014 to 2015 though. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1)

In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2015 was about 17% lower compared to 2011. Kent county saw a 16% decrease while Sussex county saw a 23% decrease during this period.

In New Castle County, theft of motor vehicles was about 25% lower compared to 2011 and theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories was down around 50%. Burglary offenses were 40% lower. Shoplifting offenses were about 26% higher compared to 2011. For Kent County, theft of motor vehicles was about 28% lower since 2011, while theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories was down around 46%. Burglary offenses were about 29% lower. The number of Shoplifting offenses rose 8% while Theft from a Building stayed relatively even compared to 2011. In Sussex County, theft of motor vehicles was approximately 21% lower, with a roughly 39% decrease in the theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories. Burglary was around 32% lower, while Shoplifting and Theft from a Building offenses were around 8% and 5% lower, respectively, compared to 2011. Larceny also saw a decrease in Sussex County of 18%.

Drug/Narcotic Offenses were higher in 2015. Overall, there was an increase of about 17% compared to 2011. There was an increase from 2012 to 2014, but preliminary data suggests a decrease from 2014 to 2015 of just over 4%. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1)

In New Castle County, the number of offenses between 2011 and 2015 increased about 3%, this is after a two year long increase. Preliminary data seems to show a decrease in 2015, much like the overall state numbers totals. In Kent County, there was an increase of about 26%, but with most of the gain occurring from 2012 to 2013. Sussex County experienced the largest increase compared to 2011, about 40%, reflective of a pattern of steady increases since 2011.

Substantially fewer Other Property and Social Offenses were reported in 2015. From 2011 to 2015, there was around an 18% decrease in these offenses. There has been a steady decline in this offense category over the past five years (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

Between 2011 and 2015, both New Castle and Kent Counties experienced decreases in Other Property and Social Offenses of approximately 19%. The number of these offenses in Sussex County showed a smaller decline (about 14%) during this period, reflective of a general pattern of decline during the report period.

Two of the most frequently reported crimes – Assault offenses and Destruction, Damage, and Vandalism of Property – showed distinct downward trends from 2011 to 2015. Assault has shown a recent increase from 2014 to 2015. Larceny and Burglary are both down from 2011 totals while Drug/Narcotics and Fraud are both showing an increase since 2011 (see Figure E-2).

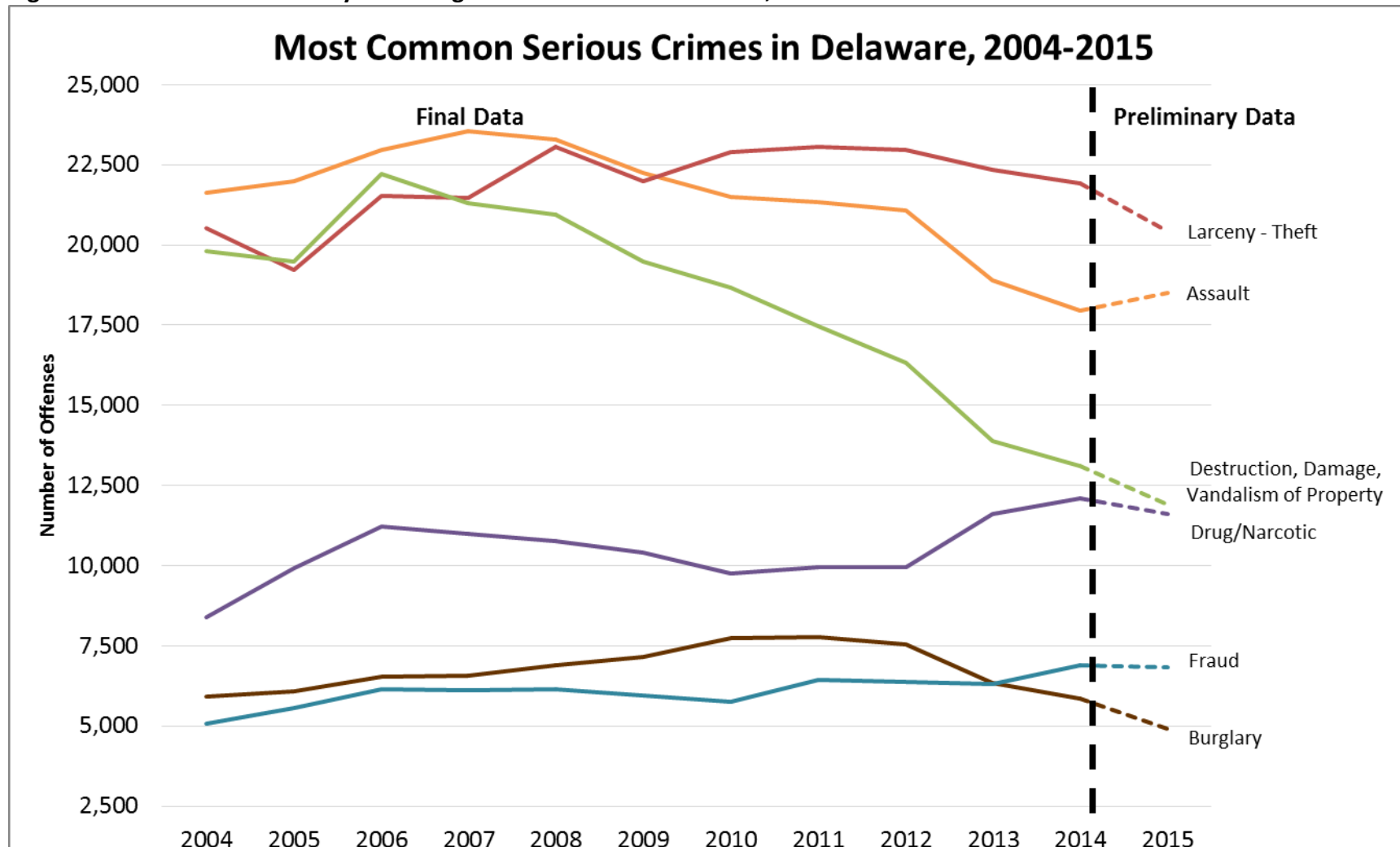
In New Castle County, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism offenses continued a long downward trend while Assault appears to show a sharp increase after a similar long downward trend. The trends for each of the other offenses, aside from Fraud, showed a decrease. While Burglary and Drug offenses show a decrease, overall they are fairly mixed. In Kent County, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism offenses appear to have increased slightly after a distinct downward trend from 2011. Larceny showed a decrease since 2013 after reaching a high in 2012. Drug/Narcotic offenses were mixed since 2011 but higher overall. The remaining most common offenses showed mixed trends since 2011. In Sussex County, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism showed a distinct downward trend from 2011. The number of Larceny offenses has trended downward, similar to Kent County, while Fraud has decreased for 2015 after steadily climbing since 2011. Burglary shows a mixed, but downward trend. Assault also has been decreasing over the report period.

Two of the three firearm-related offenses decreased between 2011 and 2015. Weapons Law Violations (2,255 in 2015) and Robberies with a Firearm (765 offenses in 2015) decreased about 4% and 5%, respectively compared to 2011, although the latter category increased about 12.5% from 2014 to 2015. Assaults with a Firearm (1,065 in 2015) increased about 25% between 2011 and 2015, with a 10% increase from 2014 to 2015.

In New Castle County, 2015 Weapons Law Violations were almost even with 2011 and Robbery with a Firearm offenses were up just under 2% from 2011, although the latter category increased about 16% from 2014 to 2015. Assault with a Firearm offenses were about 49% higher, with an increase of 16% compared to 2014. In Kent County, Weapons Law Violations and Robbery were both down 14% and 32% respectively while Assault with a Firearm offenses were up 2% compared to 2011. It should be noted that preliminary data for Assault with a Firearm shows a 48% increase from 2014 to 2015. The number of Weapons Law Violations and Robbery with a Firearm offenses in Sussex County experienced decreases of roughly 8% and 18%, respectively, since 2011, and each decreased compared with 2014—around 6% and 11% respectively. Assault with a Firearm offenses decreased roughly 20% since 2011, with a 40% decrease since 2014.

The Crime Rate is lower. The Statewide Crime Rate moved from 106 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2011 to about 87.8 in 2015, a difference of around 17%. This change in the Crime Rate reflects a roughly 13% decrease in the number of offenses and a 4% increase in Delaware's population.

Figure E-2: The Most Commonly Occurring Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2004 – 2015



Clearances

For crime reporting and analysis purposes, an offense is considered ‘cleared’ or solved when a suspect is either arrested and subsequently referred for prosecution or cannot be arrested but is otherwise clearly identifiable.

Based on 2015 preliminary data, ***offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to or better than the rates from 2011 through 2014*** (see Figure E-3). Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (94.8% and 75.5% respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 32.2% and 42.6% respectively, both highs for the reporting period. Overall, just over half of the offenses (54.9%) in 2015 were cleared by the end of the calendar year.

In New Castle County, about 48% of all 2015 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (93.9%) and Violent Offenses (67.4%). In Kent County, about 64% of 2015 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (94.9%) and Violent Offenses (85.9%) being cleared at the highest rates. In Sussex County, about 62% of all 2015 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.2%) and Violent Offenses (85.2%) having the highest rates. In each county, all four categories of offenses were cleared at rates comparable to the previous four years. Clearance trends by county are presented at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

Arrests

The number of all arrests in 2015 decreased around 5% compared to 2011. Declines occurred within all Serious Offense categories except for Drug Offenses (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). Juvenile arrests were markedly lower across all four crime categories during this period (a 21% decrease overall). The total number of adult arrests was almost 3% lower, only Drug arrests showed an increase. Arrest trends by county are presented at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

In New Castle County, total arrests were almost 5% lower compared to 2011. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 16% lower in 2015, with decreases in arrests for all four crime categories. Total Adult arrests were around 3% lower with all categories showing a decrease except for Serious Property Offenses which saw a 10% increase.

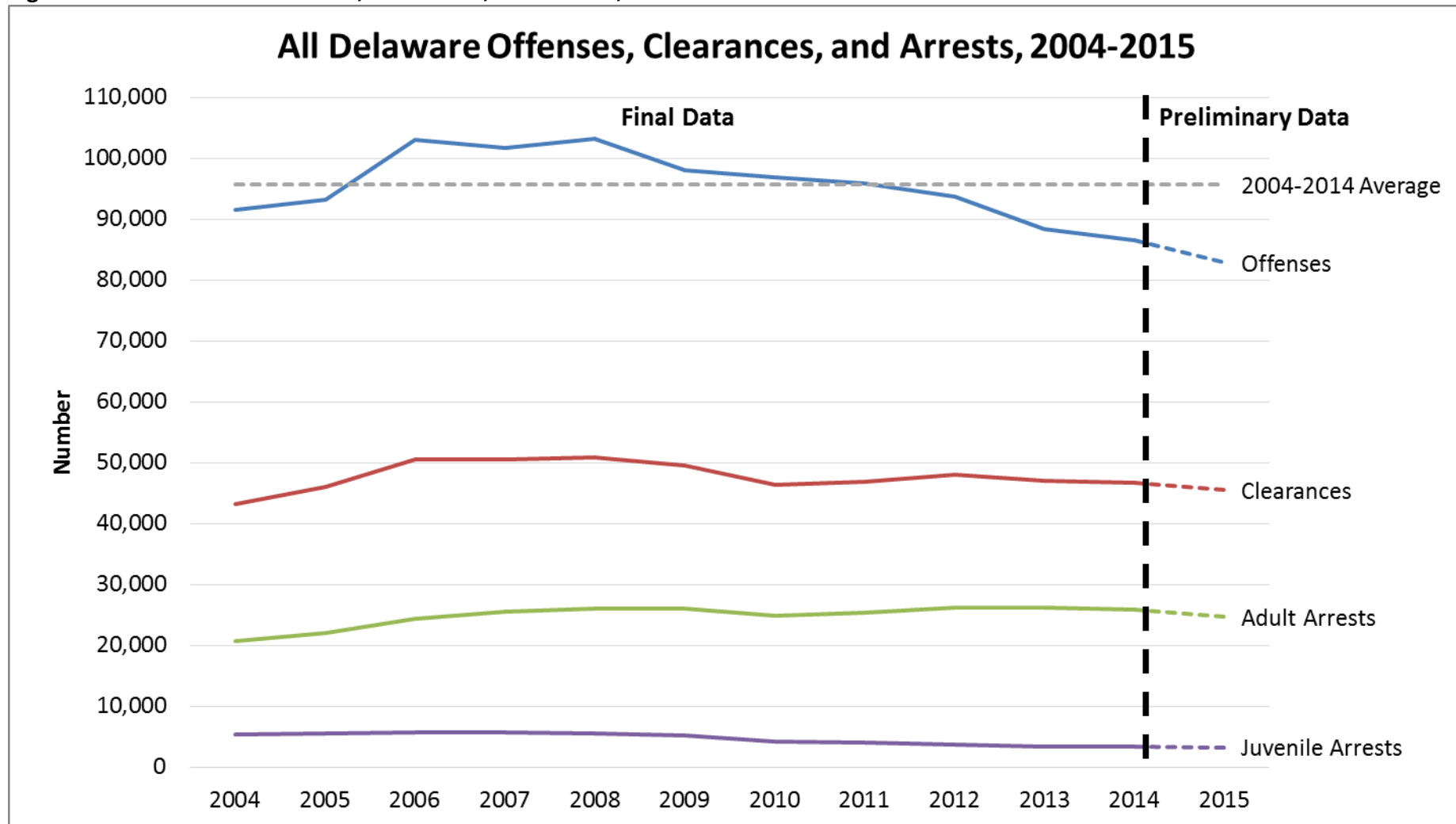
In Kent County, the number of total arrests was around 9% lower, with decreases among three of the four categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 27% lower than in 2011, with decreases for all categories. Adult arrests were around 5% lower, with decreases in all categories aside from Drug Offenses which saw a 39% increase from 2011 totals.

In Sussex County, arrests were about 3% lower than in 2011, with three of the four categories decreasing. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 29% lower than in 2011, with all categories showing a decrease. The number of total adult arrests was up less than 1%. Much like Kent County, a substantial increase in arrests for Drug Offenses (51%) negated the decreases in the other categories.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2011 – 2015

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	Final Counts				Preliminary Counts
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Arrests	29,389	29,974	29,584	29,219	27,823
Violent Offenses	10,971	11,029	10,171	9,526	9,460
Serious Property Offenses	7,799	8,119	7,717	8,149	7,407
Drug Offenses	6,139	6,440	7,378	7,413	6,978
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,480	4,359	4,318	4,131	3,978
Total Adult Arrests					
	25,344	26,226	26,235	25,811	24,640
Violent Offenses	9,226	9,439	8,663	8,010	7,991
Serious Property Offenses	6,535	6,960	6,780	7,183	6,571
Drug Offenses	5,581	5,880	6,845	6,892	6,549
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,002	3,947	3,947	3,726	3,529
Total Juvenile Arrests					
	4,045	3,721	3,349	3,408	3,183
Violent Offenses	1,745	1,590	1,508	1,516	1,469
Serious Property Offenses	1,264	1,159	937	966	836
Drug Offenses	558	560	533	521	429
Other Property and Social Offenses	478	412	371	405	449

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2004 – 2015



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

In 2015, 385 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about 26% lower when compared to 2011. The preliminary 2015 figure is notably lower than three of the previous four years (see Table E-3). ***Almost all offenses (96%) were cleared before the end of 2015.*** Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates above 95%.

In New Castle County, there were 221 assault offenses against officers in 2015, down about 17% from 2011. In Kent County, this number (71) was around 48% lower and in Sussex County (93), roughly 16% lower. Clearance rates for all three counties were above 94%.

No officers were killed in 2015, although about 18% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. One officer was killed in the line of duty during the 2011 through 2015 period. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2015 that resulted in injury is consistent with the rates for the four prior years.

In New Castle County, about 15% of assault offenses against officers in 2015 resulted in injury. In Kent County, about 21% resulted in injuries (higher than the previous four years and has been steadily increasing), while in Sussex County, about 23% led to an injury. For New Castle and Sussex Counties, injury rates were generally comparable to those for the previous four years.

Most assault-related offenses occurred while responding to disturbances, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners, and most often involved single-officer vehicles. Responding to a disturbance, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners accounted for more than 60% of assaults against officers during the 2011 through 2015 period. Three out of every four assaults against officers involved the use of hands, fists, or feet as a weapon. About one in 17 assaults during this period involved the use of a firearm or a cutting instrument.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2011–15

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2011 – 2015					
	Final Data				Preliminary Data
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Officers Assaulted	517	444	478	387	385
Officers Killed	1	0	0	0	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	6	3	1	2	0
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	14.7%	15.5%	17.2%	14.7%	17.9%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	96.3%	97.3%	94.8%	97.2%	95.8%

Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2004 – 2015

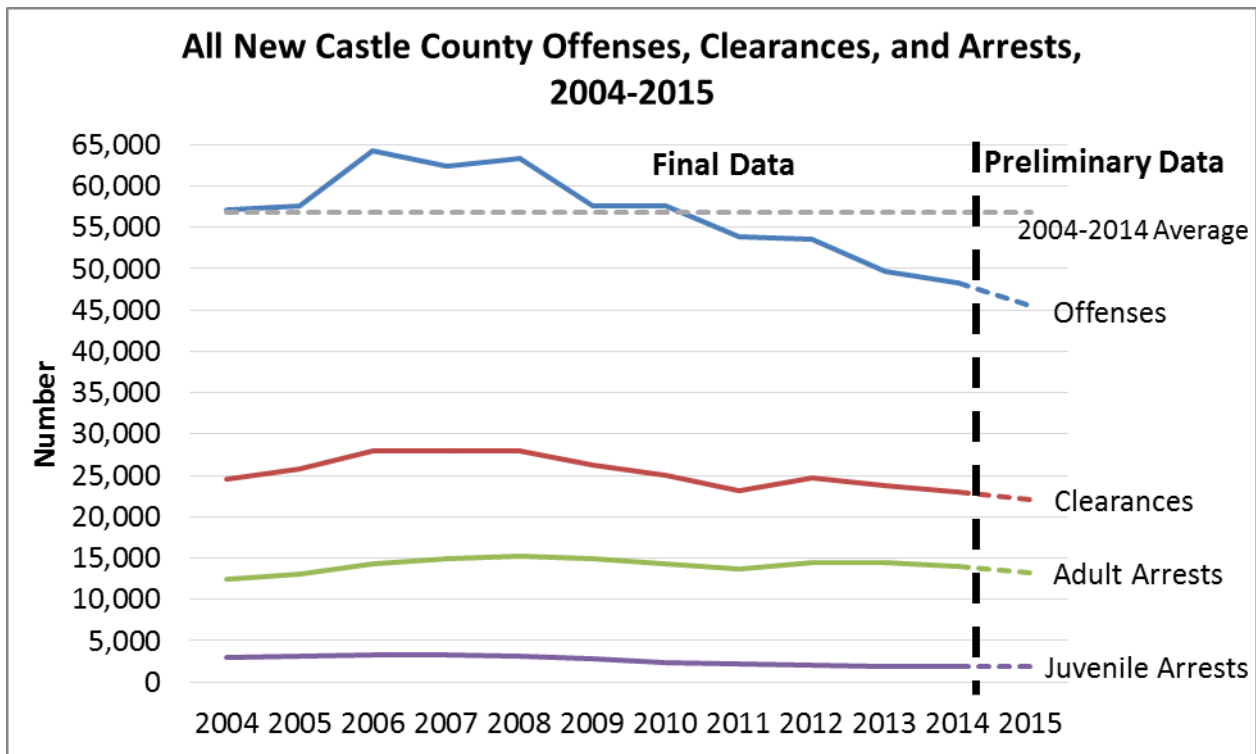


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2004 – 2015

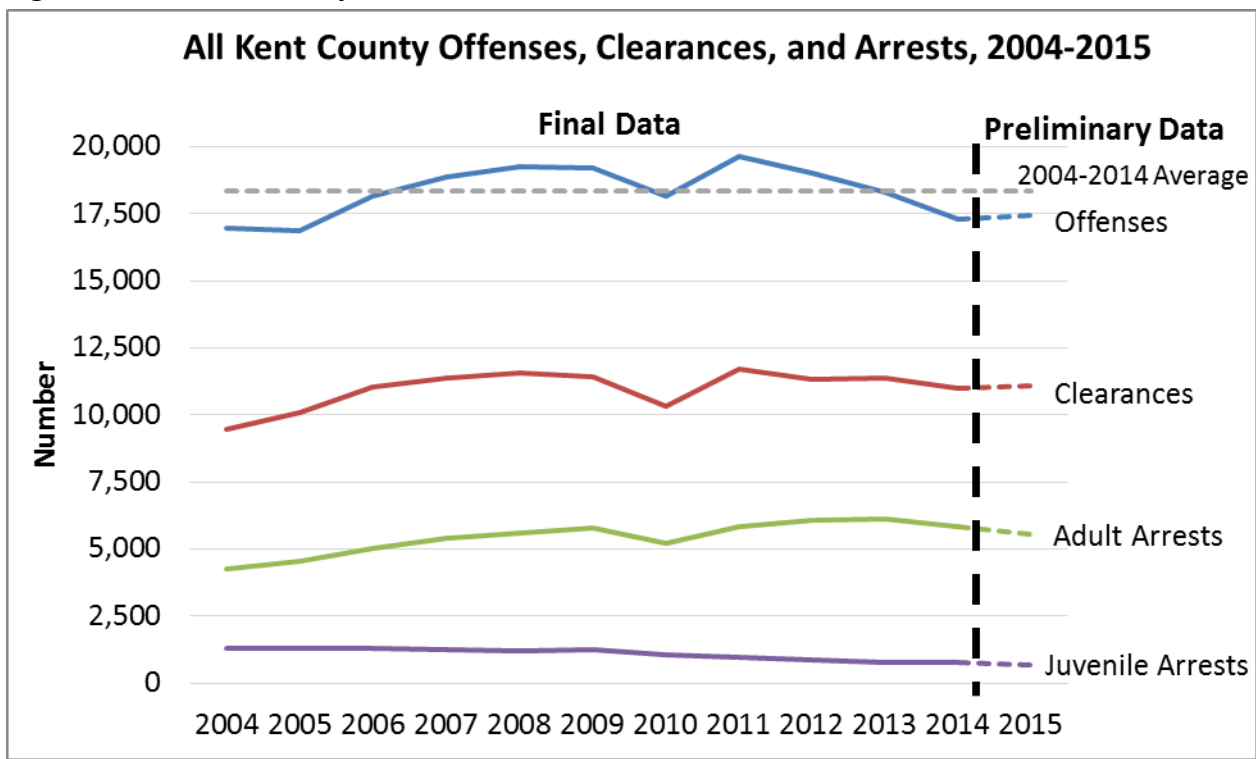


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2004 – 2015

