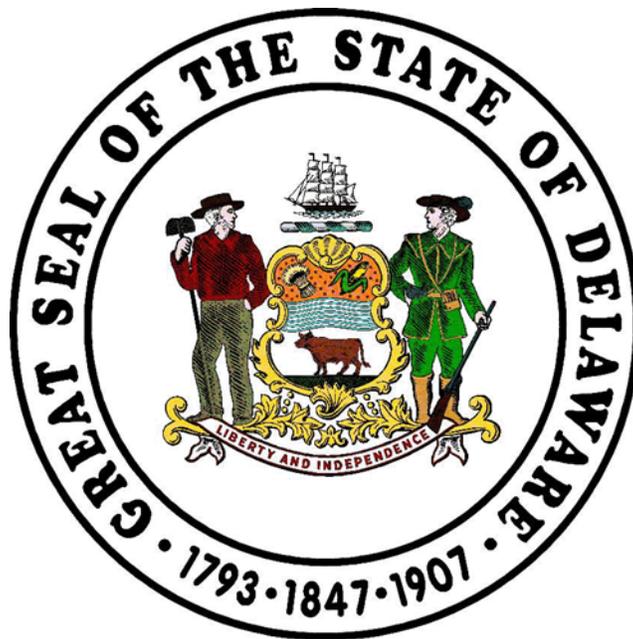


Crime in Delaware: 2012 – 2016 Executive Brief



September 2017

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

Crime in Delaware: 2012 – 2016

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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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 20170904

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

Crime in Delaware 2012 – 2016

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2012 – 2016*. *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 2012 through 2016.

Crime in Delaware provides information for 24¹ Violent, Serious Property, Drug/Narcotic and Other Property and Social offenses reported in Delaware's implementation of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) operated by the State Bureau of Identification of the Delaware State Police. Additional years of data are included in the graphs to illustrate long term trends.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2012 – 2016* 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:

In previous reports, "Final" data was distinguished from "Preliminary" data due to the fact that offense totals tended to fluctuate, sometimes substantially, for 12-15 months after the end of a given reporting year. Since these fluctuations would otherwise distort the magnitude of any changes in crime when comparing data considered volatile to data considered stable, a decision was made to compare final data to final data and preliminary data (not yet considered stable) to preliminary data.

However, in recent years, due to additional quality control work on the part of DELJIS and SBI, this fluctuation has diminished to less than 0.5% of total offenses. For reporting purposes, this level of fluctuation is considered to be inconsequential. Therefore, as of the 2016 reporting year, a decision was made to eliminate the distinction between preliminary and final data. However, the SAC will continue to monitor the level of data fluctuation each year and will adjust our reporting approach if data issues warrant it.

Please see the full report (<http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>) for information about methodology and considerations.

¹ In 2016, the FBI changed the process of collecting data about cruelty to animals. Cruelty to Animals is now included as a Group A Offense in the NIBRS data (making it the 24th offense in that group) and is classified as an "Other Property & Social Offense".

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2012 – 2016* 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.

Note to the reader: Drug Offense Changes

On June 18th, 2015, legislation was signed to change Delaware drug statutes that decriminalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana in certain situations. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the situation, possession of a small amount of marijuana is a civil violation rather than a criminal offense. This change, which went into effect on December 18th, 2015, could possibly have multiple impacts on the drug offense data contained within all of the Crime in Delaware reports. At this time it is too early to determine the impacts from this change but decreases in reported Group A offenses and arrests may be a possible set of outcomes.

Serious Offenses

Overall, the occurrence of serious crime has decreased notably since 2012. The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2012 was 93,756 compared with 83,342 in 2016, a decrease of 11.1% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1.) 2016 data shows a continued downward trend in overall offenses since 2008.

In New Castle County, the number of offenses decreased since 2012 by 6,800 (13%) from 53,643 to 46,804. For Kent County, the number of total offenses in 2016 compared to 2012 decreased a little more than 9%, with offenses declining from 19,024 to 17,218. In Sussex County, offenses decreased since 2012 from 21,089 to 19,320 (a decrease of 8%). Offense trends by county are presented at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

Statewide Violent crime is lower overall. The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased 15% from 2012 to 2016, but there was a small increase in 2015. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

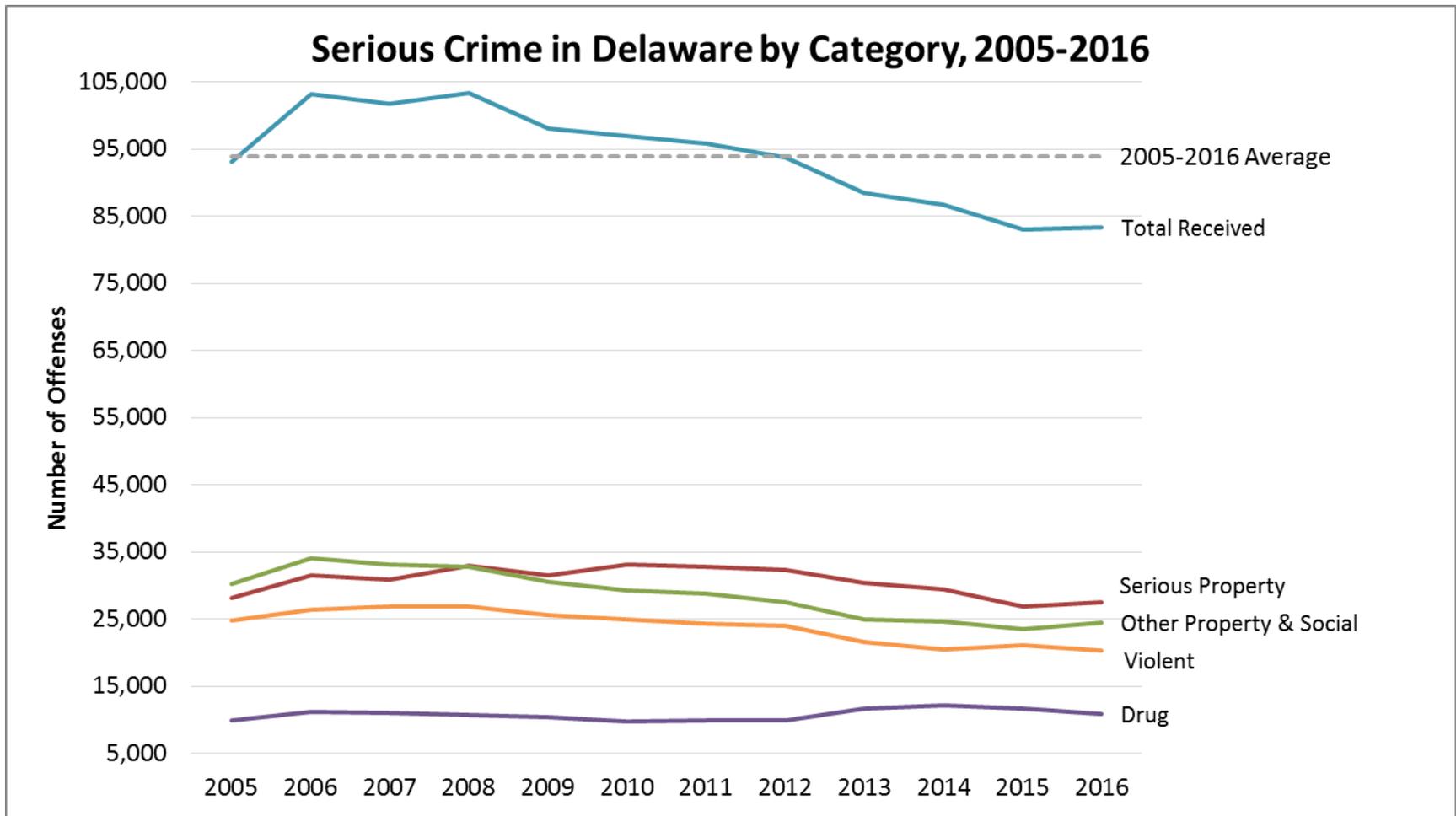
In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were just over 19% lower as compared to 2012, Kent saw a 5% decline, but has increased 7% since 2014. Sussex County saw a 14% decline over the five year period.

The number of homicides in 2016 (61) was the second highest total in the five year period (66 in 2015 was the high). There were 46 homicides in New Castle County in 2016, the second highest total in the five year report period. Kent County had 8 homicides in 2016, a 46% decrease from a report period high in 2015 of 15. Sussex County experienced seven homicides in 2015 which was a slight increase from 2012, but more than doubles the total in 2015 of three.

Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary 2012 – 2016

Serious Offenses Received 2012 – 2016						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Violent Offenses	24,035	21,551	20,484	21,101	20,343	
Serious Property Offenses	32,337	30,329	29,413	26,834	27,565	
Drug Offenses	9,956	11,608	12,113	11,613	10,920	
Other Property, Social Offenses	27,428	24,911	24,600	23,354	24,514	
Total Offenses Received	93,756	88,399	86,610	83,082	83,342	
Percentage Difference in Serious Offenses Received						
	12-13	13 - 14	14 – 15	15 – 16	12 – 16	Average 12-15 - 16
Violent Offenses	-10.33%	-4.95%	3.01%	-3.59%	-15.36%	-6.65%
Serious Property Offenses	-6.21%	-3.02%	-8.77%	2.72%	-14.76%	-7.28%
Drug Offenses	16.59%	4.35%	-4.13%	-5.97%	9.68%	-3.55%
Other Property, Social Offenses	-9.18%	-1.25%	-4.33%	4.16%	-10.62%	-2.41%
Total Offenses Received	-5.71%	-2.02%	-4.07%	0.31%	-11.11%	-5.25%

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2005 – 2016



Serious Property crime is also lower. The number of Serious Property Offenses reported decreased about 15% from 2012 to 2016. Serious Property offenses have been on an overall decline during the five year report period but did show a small increase (3%) from 2015 to 2016. Burglary offenses statewide have decreased just over 32%. Motor Vehicle Theft has been down overall, but saw a sharp increase from 2015 to 2016 (21%). (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)

In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2016 was 11% lower compared to 2012. Kent county saw a 22% decrease while Sussex county saw an 18% decrease during this period.

- In New Castle County, Motor Vehicle Theft has increased 10% from 2012. This can be attributed to a 33% increase from 2015 to 2016. Burglary has decreased 38% from 2012 but increased 7% from 2015 to 2016. Larceny was on a downward trend but has increased 7% from 2015 to 2016.
- For Kent County, Burglary has decreased 40% since 2012 which mirrors the overall state trend in Burglary. Motor Vehicle Theft has decreased almost 26% since 2012. Larceny has decreased over the five year period (17%).
- In Sussex County, Burglary has dropped 16% since 2012, which is a noticeably smaller than New Castle and Kent. Larceny has decreased 18% while Motor Vehicle Theft decreased 35%.

Drug/Narcotic Possession Offenses were higher in 2016. Overall, there was an increase of 10% compared to 2012. Drug/Narcotic offenses have increased 23% over this period, while Drug Equipment decreased 9%. Although Drug Offenses are up from 2012, they have shown a decline since 2014. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)

- In New Castle County, overall Drug Offenses have decreased 3% which follows a substantial decrease since 2014. Possession charges increased 12% since 2012, but were overshadowed by a 31% decrease in Drug Equipment offenses.
- Kent County has seen a 22% increase since 2012, mainly attributable to a 27% increase from 2012 to 2013 with small fluctuations since that period. Both possession and equipment charges have increased since 2012.
- Sussex County overall Drug Offenses have increased 25% from 2012 with a small decrease from 2015 to 2016. Possession charges increased 39% while equipment charges increase 11%.

Fewer Other Property and Social Offenses were reported from 2012 to 2016. From 2012 to 2016, there was an almost 11% decrease in these offenses, but there was a small increase from 2015 to 2016 (4%). Prostitution, although a lower frequency crime, saw a 100% increase from 2012. Stolen Property offenses increased 33% over this same period (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1.)

Between 2012 and 2016, both New Castle and Kent counties experienced decreases in Other Property and Social Offenses of at least 11%. The number of these offenses in Sussex County showed a smaller 7% decline during this period.

Two of the most frequently reported crimes – Assault and Destruction, Damage, and Vandalism of Property Offenses – showed distinct downward trends from 2012 to 2016. Assault trends have been somewhat mixed in the past three years. Property Destruction offenses have been on a long decline since 2006 but did see a small increase from 2015 to 2016. Larceny saw a slight increase in 2016 after a multiple-year decline. Drug Offenses are higher than 2012 totals but are down 10% from a high in 2014. Fraud has increased slowly from 2012. Burglary has been decreasing except from 2015 to 2016 where it saw a small increase (see Figure E-2).

- In New Castle County, Larceny offenses had been on a fairly steady decline, until 2016, when they rose sharply from 2015 totals. Property Destruction offenses have been on a decade long downward trend but recently increased from 2015. Drug Offenses are comparable to 2012 totals but down from a 2014 high.
- In Kent County, Larceny and Property Destruction both continue downward trends, but at different rates. Assaults are down, but have been climbing since 2014. Drug Offenses are relatively mixed after a marked increase from 2012 to 2013.
- In Sussex County, Assault, Larceny and Property Destruction offenses are all continuing overall downward trends. Drug Offenses are higher than 2012 but have dropped from a high in 2015. Burglary is down overall, while Fraud has had a mixed trend over the five years.

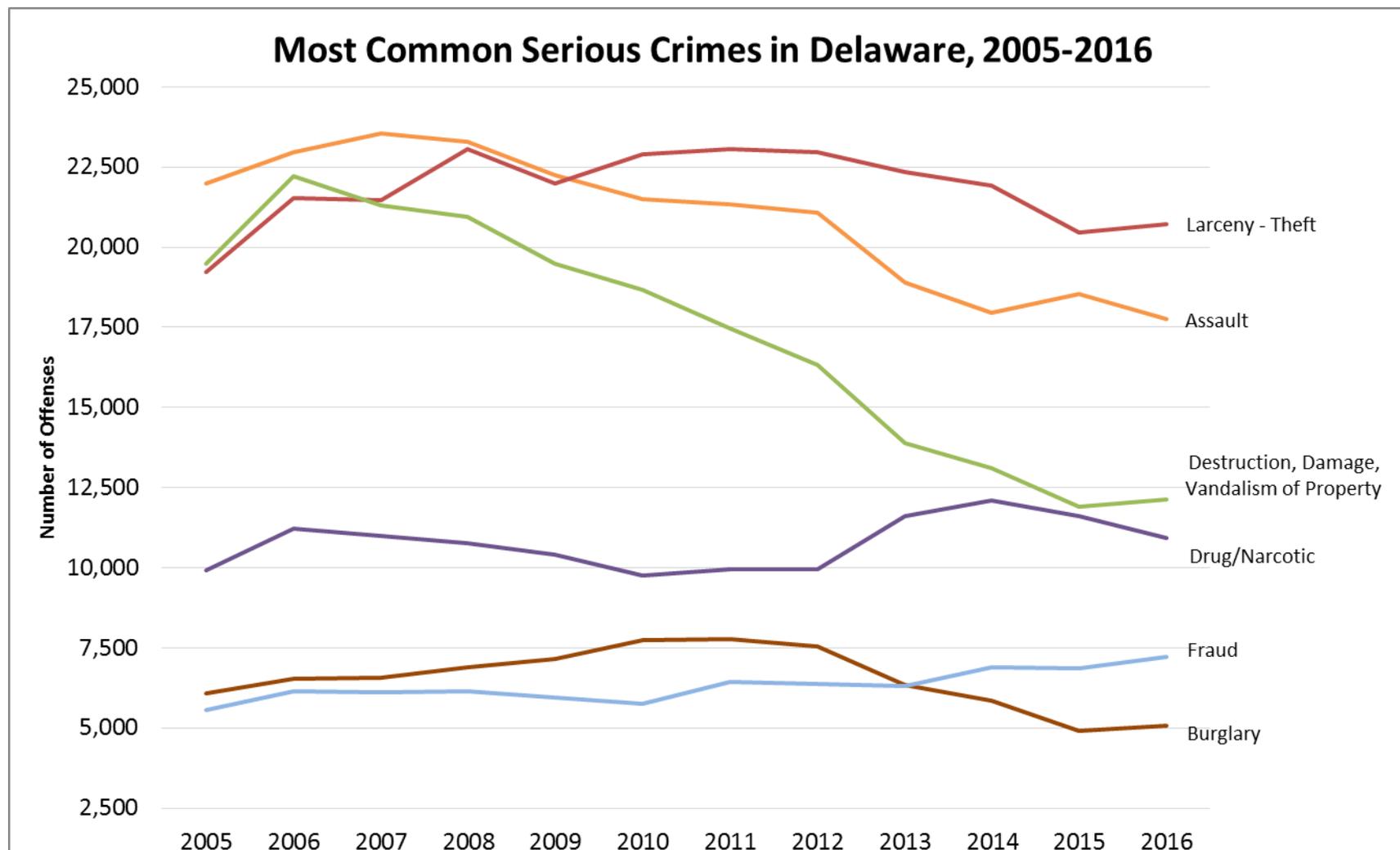
The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2012 to 2016 were mixed. Weapons Law Violations (2,348 in 2016) were relatively flat compared to 2012 totals. Robberies with a Firearm (772 offenses in 2016) decreased 13% from 2012 but 2016 had the second highest total in the five year period. Assaults with a Firearm (1,174 in 2016) increased 21% between 2012 and 2016, with a 10% increase from 2015 to 2016.

- In New Castle County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses are down 14% since 2012 but have increased 21% since 2013. Assault with a Firearm offenses have increased 29% since 2012, with a steady increase since 2013. Weapons Law Violations have been relatively flat from 2012 to 2016.
- In Kent County, Robbery with a Firearm has shown an 8% increase from 2012, but has shown 11% and 30% increases the past 2 years. Assault with a Firearm offenses have increased 7% from 2012, but also showed noticeable increases the past 2 years, 48% and 10%. Weapons Law Violations have increased almost 17% from 2012, with the past 2 years showing increases (16% and 18% respectively).

- In Sussex county, Robbery with a Firearm offenses are down considerably (41%) from 2012. Assault with a Firearm has increased 11% since 2012, 44% since 2015. The number of Weapons Law Violations has shown just over a 3% decrease but has been relatively flat over the report period.

The Crime Rate is lower. The Statewide Crime Rate moved from 101.9 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2012 to 87.4 in 2016, a difference of around 14%. This change in the Crime Rate reflects an 11% 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, 2005 – 2016



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 2016 data, offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to or better than the rates from 2012 through 2015 (see Figure E-3). Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (93.4% and 74.1% respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 32.2% and 40.8% respectively. Although comparable to previous years, three out of four offenses had clearance rates slightly lower than the past three years. Overall, just over half of the offenses (52.7%) in 2016 were cleared by the end of the calendar year.

- In New Castle County, 45% of all 2016 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (90.7%) and Violent Offenses (65.6%).
- In Kent County, 63% of 2016 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.0%) and Violent Offenses (84.0%) being cleared at the highest rates.
- In Sussex County, 63% of all 2016 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (95.3%) and Violent Offenses (84.5%) having the highest rates. In each county, all four categories of offenses were cleared at rates comparable to the previous four years. Clearance trends are presented at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

Arrests

The number of all arrests in 2016 decreased 13% compared to 2012. Declines occurred across all main offense categories (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The most notable decreases were for Violent offenses (16% since 2012) and Drug offenses (18%). Juvenile arrests were markedly lower across all but one crime category during this period (a 19% decrease overall). Other Property/Social offenses saw the only juvenile arrest increase from 2012 totals (24%). Total adult arrests were 12% lower with all categories showing decreases. Arrest trends by county are located at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).

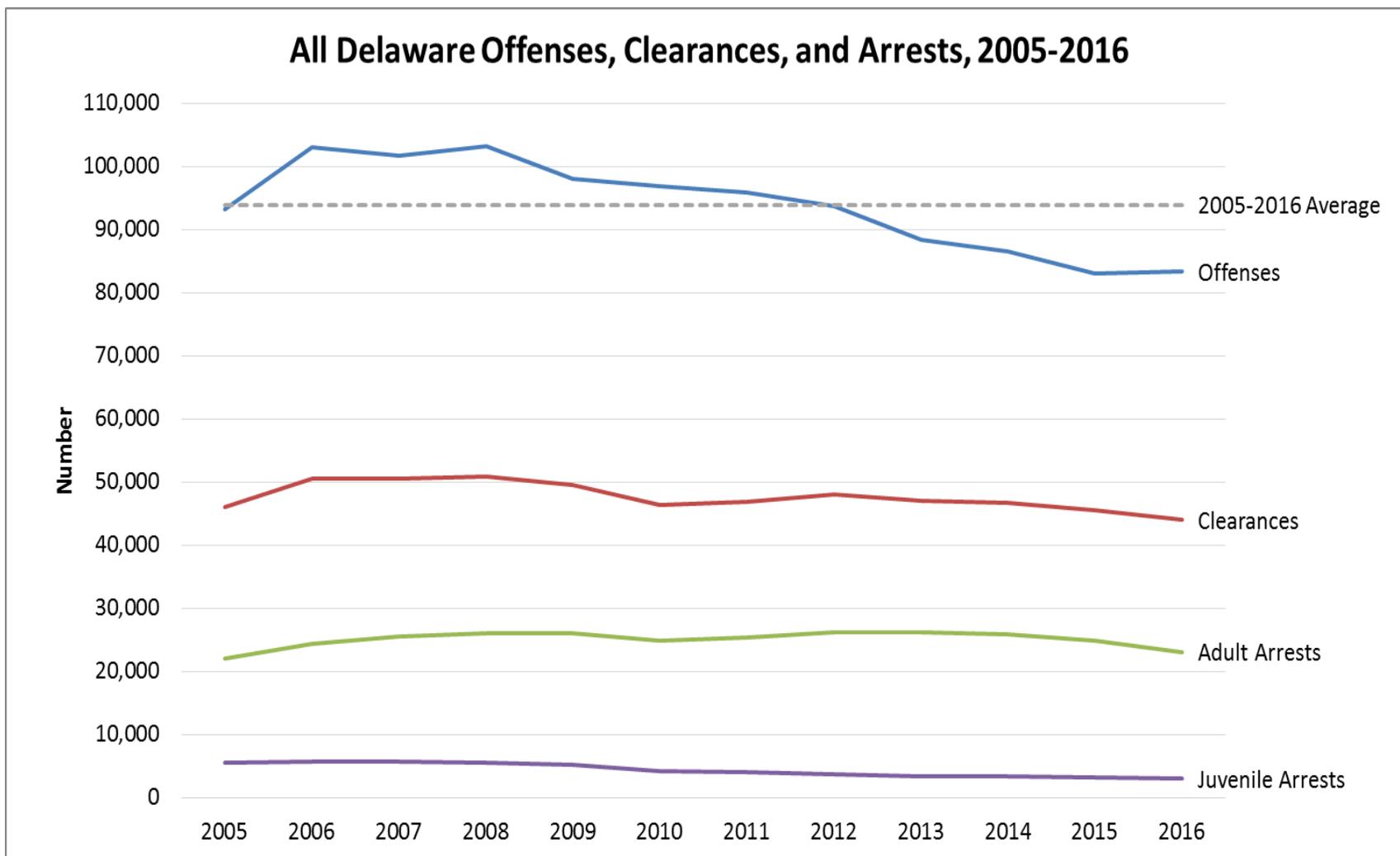
- In New Castle County, total arrests were 16% lower compared to 2012. Overall, juvenile arrests were 18% lower in 2016, with decreases in arrests for all categories except Other Property/Social offenses (27% increase). Total Adult arrests were 15% lower with only Serious Property Offenses increasing (2%). It should be noted that adult Drug arrests were more than 29% lower from 2012 to 2016.
- In Kent County, the number of total arrests was 14% lower, with decreases among all four categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 21% lower than in 2012, with an increase in only Other Property/Social offenses. Adult arrests were 13% lower, with decreases in all categories. Although adult Drug arrests are relatively equal with 2012 totals, there was a 16% decrease from 2015 to 2016.

- In Sussex County, arrests were 6% lower than in 2012, with half the categories decreasing. Overall, juvenile arrests were 21% lower than in 2012, with all categories showing a decrease. The number of total adult arrests was down 4%. Unlike the other two counties, Sussex saw a small increase in adult Drug arrests (4%).

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2012 – 2016

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Arrests	29,974	29,584	29,219	27,994	26,039
Violent Offenses	11,029	10,171	9,526	9,508	9,313
Serious Property Offenses	8,119	7,717	8,149	7,442	7,218
Drug Offenses	6,440	7,378	7,413	7,016	5,300
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,359	4,318	4,131	4,028	4,208
Total Adult Arrests					
	26,226	26,235	25,811	24,792	23,031
Violent Offenses	9,439	8,663	8,010	8,030	7,910
Serious Property Offenses	6,960	6,780	7,183	6,602	6,487
Drug Offenses	5,880	6,845	6,892	6,587	4,937
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,947	3,947	3,726	3,573	3,697
Total Juvenile Arrests					
	3,721	3,349	3,408	3,202	3,008
Violent Offenses	1,590	1,508	1,516	1,478	1,403
Serious Property Offenses	1,159	937	966	840	731
Drug Offenses	560	533	521	429	363
Other Property and Social Offenses	412	371	405	455	511

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2005 – 2016



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

In 2016, 414 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about 7% lower when compared to 2012. Almost all offenses (97.1%) were cleared before the end of 2016. The 2016 figure is 7% higher than 2015 (see Table E-3). Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 95%.

In New Castle County, there were 214 assault offenses against officers in 2016, down 17% from 2012. In Kent County, this number (77) was 21% lower. Sussex County (123) was the only county to show an increase (40%) which was mostly attributable to a 30% increase from 2015 to 2016. Clearance rates for all three counties were above 96%.

No officers were killed in 2016, although about 19% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. No officers were killed in the line of duty during the 2012 through 2016 period. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2016 that resulted in injury is slightly higher than the past four years.

In New Castle County, about 17% of assault offenses against officers in 2016 resulted in injury. In Kent County, 22% resulted in injuries (higher than the previous four years and has been slowly but steadily increasing), while in Sussex County, about 20% 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 2012 through 2016 period. More than four out of every five assaults against officers involved the use of hands, fists, or feet as a weapon. Although firearms were not often used to injure a law enforcement officer, their use has seen a marked decline since 2014.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2012–16

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2012 – 2016					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Officers Assaulted	444	478	387	386	414
Officers Killed	0	0	0	0	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	3	1	2	0	1
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	15.5%	17.2%	14.7%	17.9%	18.8%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	97.3%	94.8%	97.2%	96.1%	97.1%

Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2005 – 2016

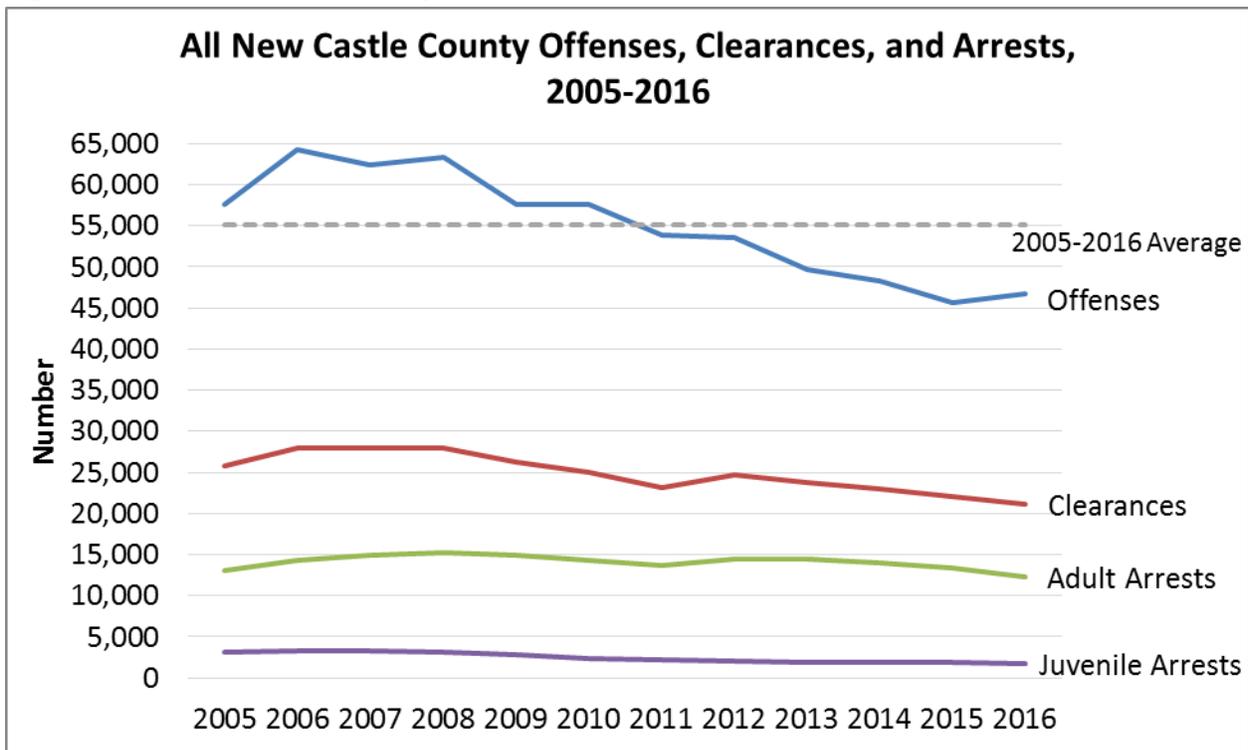


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2005 – 2016

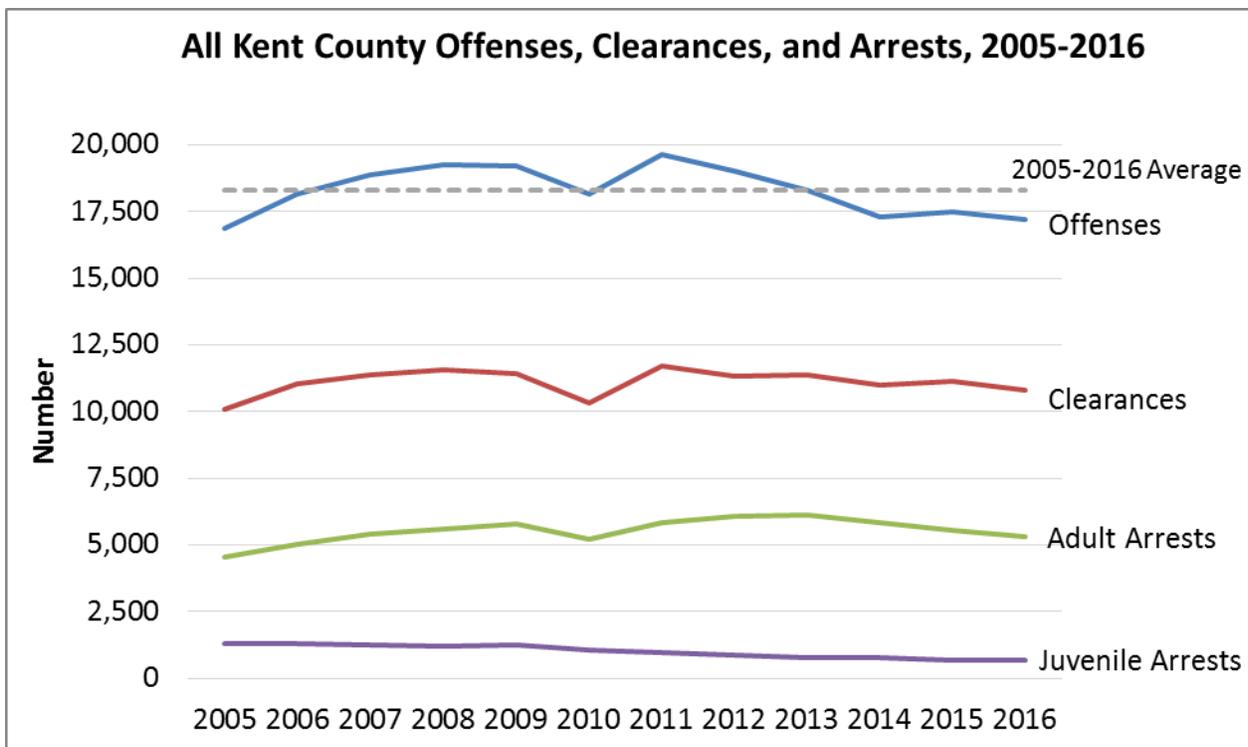


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2005 – 2016

