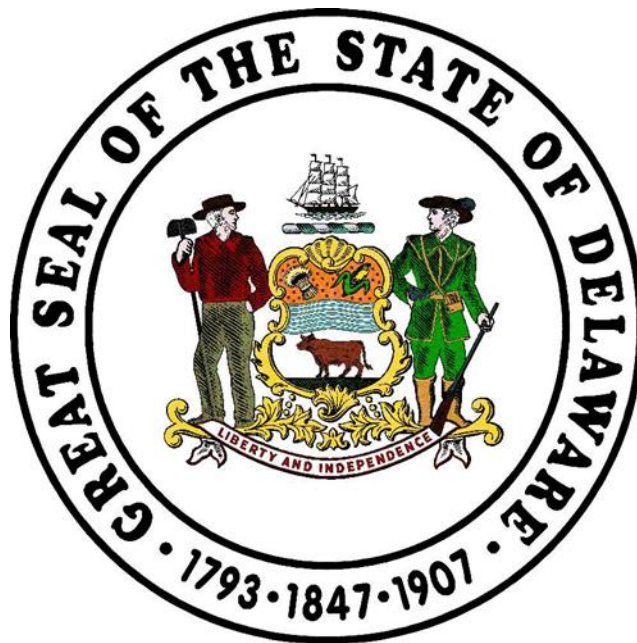


Crime in Delaware 2014 – 2018 Executive Brief



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Statistical Analysis Center
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Crime in Delaware: 2014 – 2018

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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

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

Crime in Delaware 2014 – 2018

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2014 – 2018*. *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 2014 through 2018.

Crime in Delaware provides information for 24 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 specific graphs to illustrate long term trends.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2014 – 2018* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center's website (<http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>).

Detailed, jurisdiction level offense data can be viewed and downloaded from the Delaware Open Data Portal.

<https://data.delaware.gov/Public-Safety/State-of-Delaware-NIBRS-Crime-Report-Totals-by-Jur/8njr-fz7r>

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2014 – 2018* report contains extensive data and statistics on serious offenses, clearances, adult and juvenile arrests, and crimes against law enforcement officers. This report includes a summary of this data at the state and county levels, followed by a more 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.

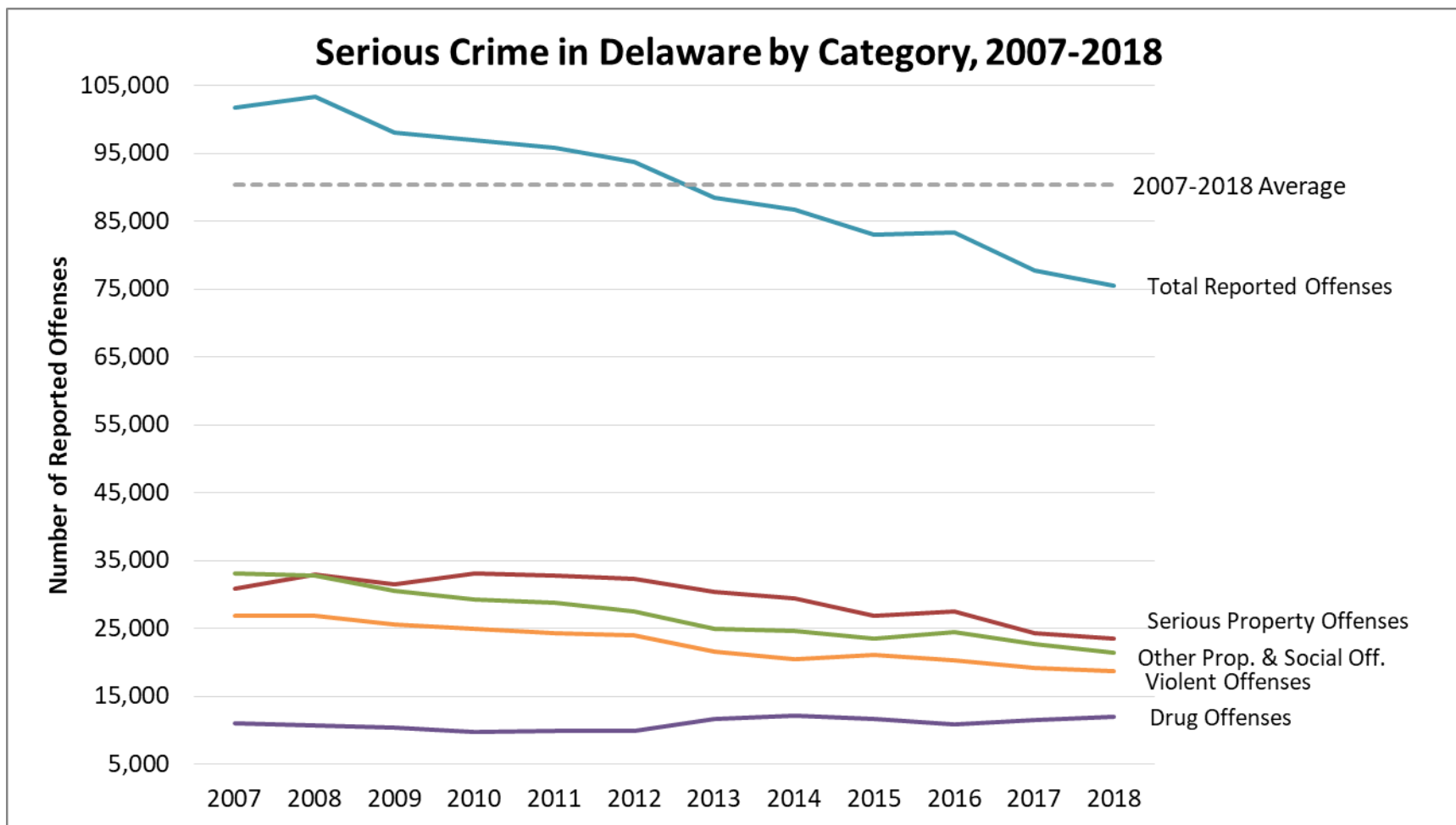
Serious Offenses

- **Overall across the state reported serious crime has decreased notably since 2014.** The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2014 was 86,610 compared with 75,484 in 2018, a decrease of almost 9% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1.) 2018 data shows a continued downward trend in overall offenses since 2008.
 - In New Castle County, the number of total offenses decreased since 2014 by almost 13% from 48,322 to 42,154.
 - For Kent County, the number of total offenses in 2018 compared to 2014 decreased almost 12%, with offenses declining from 17,291 to 15,265.
 - In Sussex County, offenses decreased since 2014 from 20,997 to 18,065 (a decrease of 14%). Offense trends by county are presented at the end of this brief (Figures E4-E6).
- **Statewide violent crime is lower overall.** The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased 8% from 2014 to 2018, with a small increase in 2015. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were 1% lower as compared to 2014 while Kent County saw a 7% decline.
 - Sussex County saw a 5% decline.
- **There were 48 statewide homicides in 2018 which is a decrease from a high in 2015 of 66.** It should be noted that reported homicides in 2018 were the lowest for the five year report period.
 - There were 36 homicides in New Castle County in 2018, the lowest total in the five year report period.
 - Kent County had 6 homicides in 2018, a tie for the lowest of the report period.
 - Sussex County experienced 6 homicides in 2018 which was 200% increase from 2017 and 3rd highest for the report period.

Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary, 2014 – 2018

Serious Offenses Reported 2014 – 2018						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Violent Offenses	20,484	21,101	20,343	19,115	18,684	
Serious Property Offenses	29,413	26,834	27,565	24,298	23,420	
Drug Offenses	12,113	11,613	10,920	11,545	11,940	
Other Property, Social Offenses	24,600	23,354	24,514	22,776	21,440	
Total Offenses Reported	86,610	83,082	83,342	77,734	75,484	
Percentage Difference in Serious Offenses Reported						
	14 – 15	15 – 16	16 - 17	17 - 18	14 – 18	Average 14-17 vs 18
Violent Offenses	3.0%	-3.6%	-6.0%	-2.3%	-8.8%	-7.8%
Serious Property Offenses	-8.8%	2.7%	-11.9%	-3.6%	-20.4%	-13.4%
Drug Offenses	-4.1%	-6.0%	5.72%	3.4%	-1.4%	3.4%
Other Property, Social Offenses	-4.3%	4.2%	-7.1%	-5.9%	-12.9%	-10.1%
Total Offenses Reported	-4.1%	0.3%	-6.7%	-2.9%	-12.9%	-8.7%

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2007 – 2018



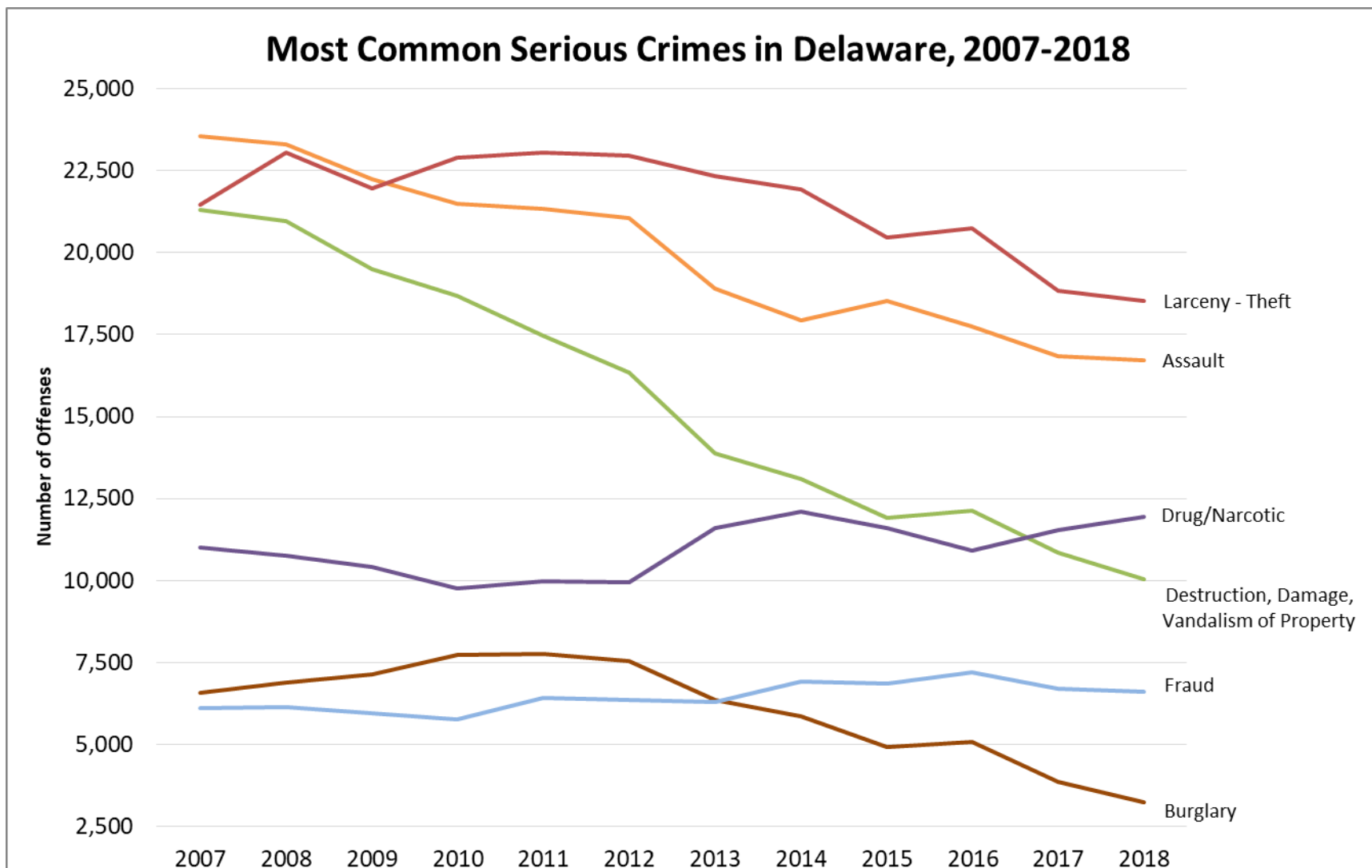
- **The crime rate is lower.** The Statewide Crime Rate decreased from 92.6 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2014 to 77.5 in 2018, a difference of around 16%. This change in the Crime Rate reflects a 13% decrease in the number of offenses and a 4% increase in Delaware’s population.
- **Serious property crime is down.** The number of reported Serious Property Offenses decreased 20% from 2014 to 2018. This category of offenses has 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 decreased 45%. Larceny offenses have been decreasing overall with a small increase in 2016. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2018 was 16% lower compared to 2014. Burglary has decreased 44% from 2014. Despite a spike in 2016, Larceny has decreased 12% since 2014.
 - Kent County saw a 22% decrease. Burglary has decreased 44% since 2014 which mirrors the overall state trend. Larceny offenses decreased 19% over the same period. Motor Vehicle Theft has had mixed trends year to year.
 - Sussex county saw a 29% decrease during this period. Burglary has dropped 46% since 2014, which is the largest percentage decrease of the three counties. Larceny has decreased 22% while Motor Vehicle Theft decreased 32%.
- **Overall Drug/Narcotic Offenses were similar to 2014.** Drug/Narcotic possession offenses have increased 26% over this period, while Drug Equipment offenses decreased 39%. Total Drug offenses have been gradually climbing the past 2 years. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, overall Drug Offenses have decreased almost 10% since 2014 but increased 10% from 2017 to 2018. Possession offenses increased 18% since 2014, but were overshadowed by a 59% decrease in Drug Equipment offenses.
 - Kent County has seen a 7% increase since 2014, mainly attributed to a 42% increase in possession offenses; however equipment offenses were down 30%.
 - Sussex County overall Drug Offenses increased 7% from 2014. Possession offenses are up over 32% from 2014. Drug equipment offenses are down 19%.

Note: In December 2015, Delaware passed legislation that decriminalized certain marijuana possession offenses. Depending on various circumstances, these offenses are civil offenses. Due to the Federal Government still recording these offenses as criminal, they are part of the Drug Offense totals in this report.

- ***Fewer Other Property and Social Offenses were reported from 2014 to 2018.*** From 2014 to 2018, there was a 13% decrease in these offenses (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Weapon law violations saw a 14% decrease. Stolen property offenses were up almost 30%.
 - Between 2014 and 2018, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties experienced decreases in Other Property and Social Offenses of 11%, 14%, and 16% respectively. The number of these offenses in Sussex County showed a smaller decline during this period.
 - Property Destruction/Vandalism offenses have decreased noticeably across all three counties.

- ***The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2014 to 2018 were mixed.*** Weapons Law Violations (1,908 in 2018) were 14% lower compared to 2014 totals. Robberies with a Firearm (405 offenses in 2018) decreased 41% from 2014 with a significant decline from 2016 totals. Assaults with a Firearm (897 in 2018) have decreased over 7% since 2014, and have declined every year since a high in 2016.
 - In New Castle County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down 42% since 2014, and have decreased steadily since 2015. Assault with a Firearm offenses have increased almost 16% since 2014. Weapons Law Violations are down 19% from 2013.
 - In Kent County, Robbery with a Firearm has shown a 22% increase from 2014, and a steady decline since 2016. Assault with a Firearm offenses have increased 61% from 2014 totals. Weapons Law Violations have increased 11% from 2014.
 - In Sussex County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down over 48% compared with 2014 totals. Offenses of Assault with a Firearm have decreased 34% since 2014. The number of Weapons Law Violations has decreased 19%.

Figure E-2: Most Common Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2007 – 2018



Clearances

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

- **Based on 2018 data, offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to the rates from 2014 through 2018** (see Figure E-3). Overall, all crime categories had clearance rates at or near those of previous years, while just over half of the offenses (53.5%) in 2018 were cleared by the end of the calendar year. Drug and Violent offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (95.3% and 75.9% respectively). Serious Property offenses and Other Property and Social offenses were cleared at rates of 28.8% and 37.7% respectively.
 - In New Castle County, 45.6% of all 2018 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic offenses (93.7%) and Violent offenses (68.7%).
 - In Kent County, 62.3% of 2018 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic offenses (94.9%) and Violent offenses (82.9%) being cleared at the highest rates.
 - In Sussex County, 64.4% of all 2018 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic offenses (98.1%) and Violent offenses (85.0%) having the highest rates.

Arrests

- The number of arrests in 2018 decreased almost 26% compared to 2014 with a 13% decrease in the number of reported offenses over the same period. Declines occurred across all main offense categories (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The most notable decreases were for Serious Property Offenses (34% since 2013) and Drug Offenses (39%). Juvenile arrests were lower across all crime categories during this period (a 26% decrease overall)¹. Total adult arrests were 25% 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 29% lower compared to 2014. Overall, juvenile arrests were 35% lower in 2018, with decreases in arrests for all categories. Total adult arrests were 28% lower with all categories decreasing. It should be noted that adult Drug arrests were 50% lower from 2014 to 2018.
 - In Kent County, the number of total arrests was 25% lower, with decreases among all four categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 28% lower than in 2014, with a 23% increase in only Other Property/Social arrests. Adult arrests were 24% lower, with decreases in all categories.

¹ After exploratory research, the Statistical Analysis Center found that the statewide Juvenile Civil Citation program, along with other procedural changes, appears to have contributed notably to the decrease in juvenile arrests. This appears most notably in Drug and Larceny arrests.

- In Sussex County, arrests were 20% lower than in 2014 with decreases in all categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 33% lower than in 2014 overall, with decreases in all categories. The number of total adult arrests was down 18%. While overall Drug arrests for Sussex County are down 28%, Drug offenses are up 7% from 2014 to 2018.

Since 2016, there have been noticeable declines in drug arrests despite relatively stable reported and cleared drug offenses. The primary cause for this arrest decline can be attributed to the civil marijuana possession statute changes that were implemented in December 2015. A smaller, yet still significant, portion is due to the surge in statewide overdoses over the last few years. In many overdose situations, an individual that has overdosed and survives is typically not arrested for the drug possession that led to the overdose unless there are other circumstances involved in the incident.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2014 – 2018

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Arrests	29,219	27,994	26,039	23,739	21,695
Violent Offenses	9,526	9,508	9,313	8,591	8,493
Serious Property Offenses	8,149	7,442	7,218	6,201	5,338
Drug Offenses	7,413	7,016	5,300	4,928	4,513
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,131	4,028	4,208	4,019	3,351
Total Adult Arrests	25,811	24,792	23,031	21,103	19,416
Violent Offenses	8,010	8,030	7,910	7,356	7,364
Serious Property Offenses	7,183	6,602	6,487	5,530	4,793
Drug Offenses	6,892	6,587	4,937	4,577	4,225
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,726	3,573	3,697	3,640	3,034
Total Juvenile Arrests	3,408	3,202	3,008	2,636	2,279
Violent Offenses	1,516	1,478	1,403	1,235	1,129
Serious Property Offenses	966	840	731	671	545
Drug Offenses	521	429	363	351	288
Other Property and Social Offenses	405	455	511	379	317

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2007 – 2018

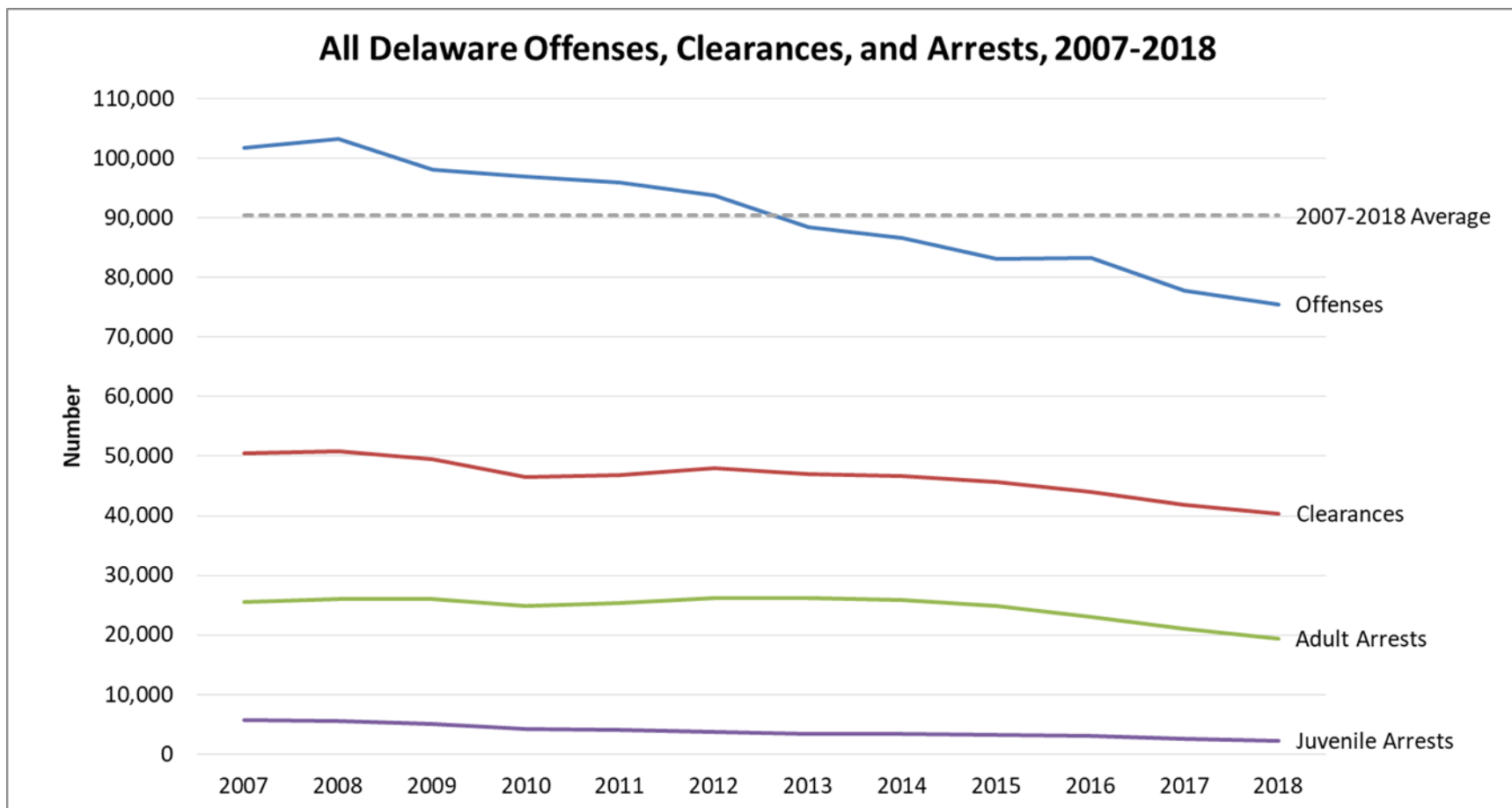


Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2007 – 2018

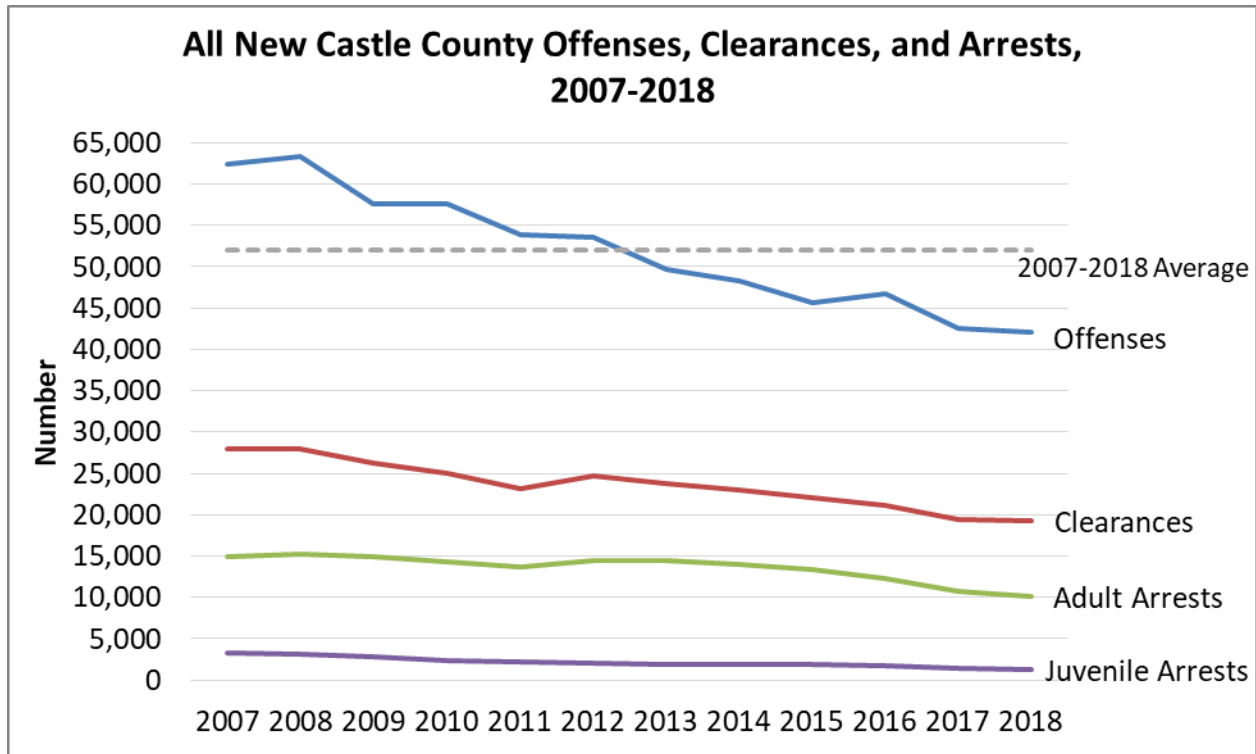


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2007-2018

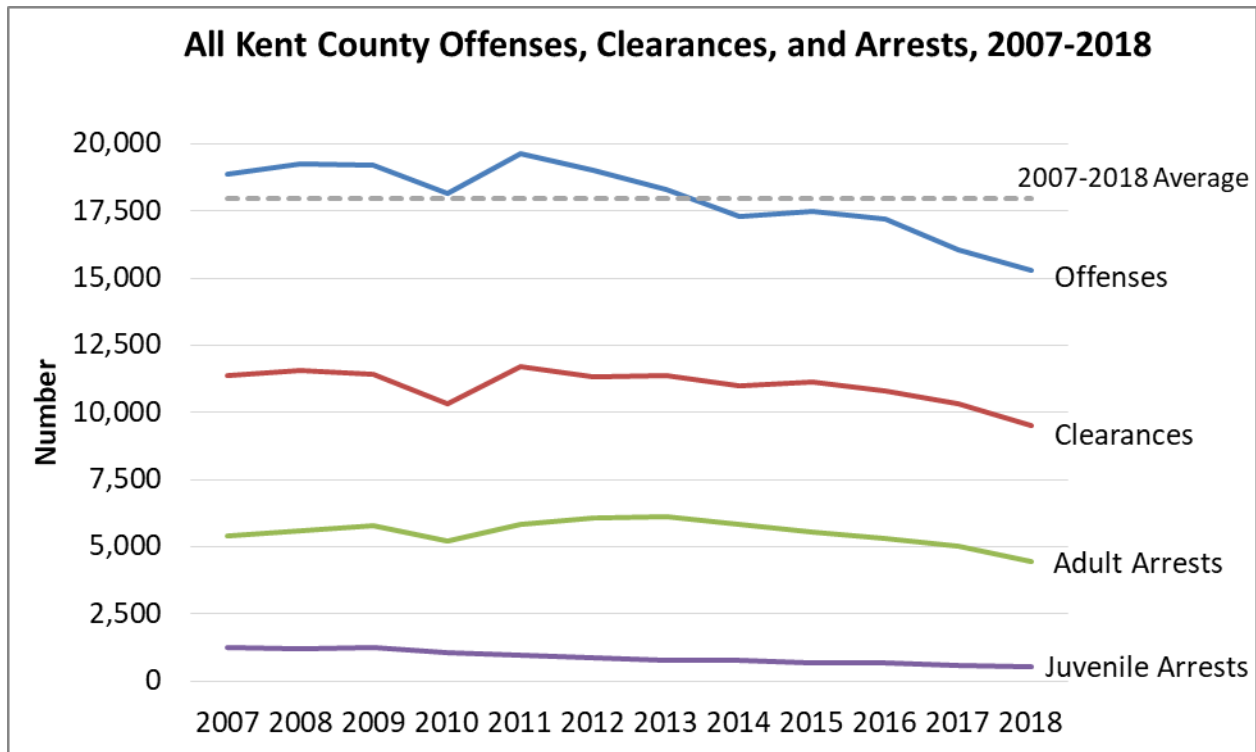
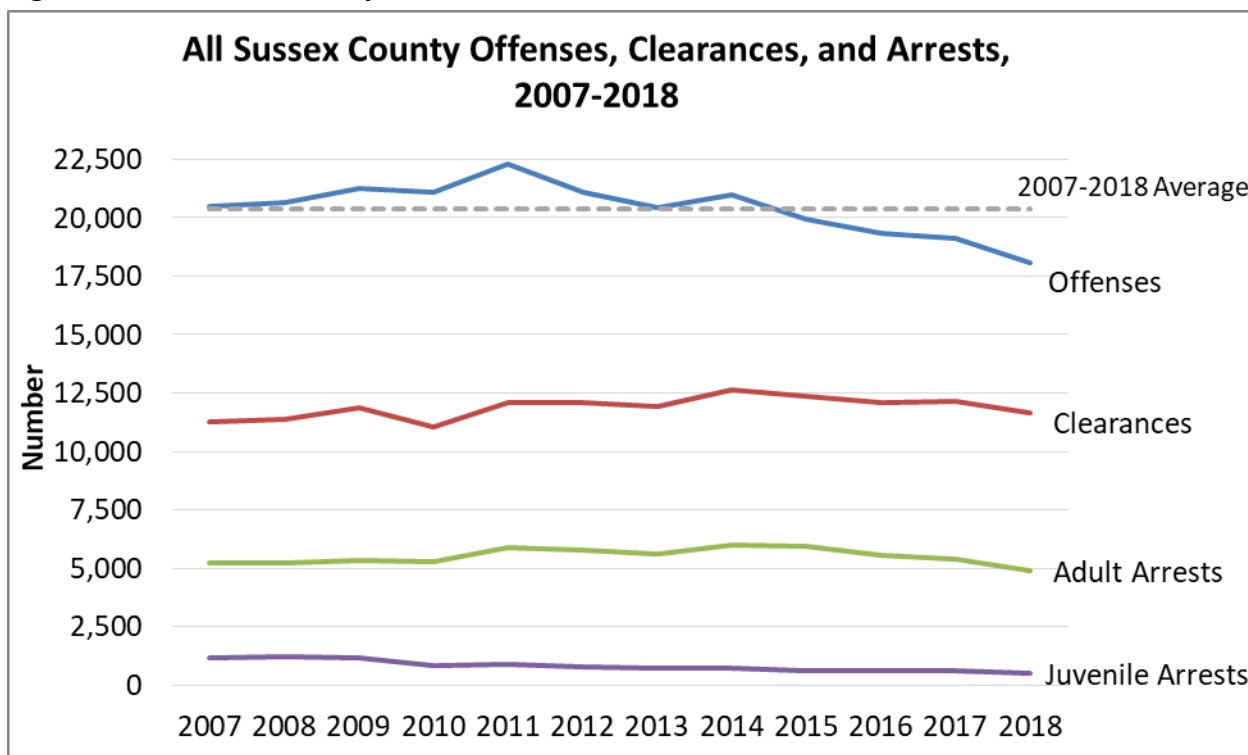


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2007 – 2018



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

- ***In 2018, 425 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about 10% higher when compared to 2014.*** Almost all offenses (93%) were cleared before the end of 2018. Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 95%.
 - In New Castle County, there were 222 assault offenses against officers in 2018, up 9% from 2014. About 15% of assault offenses against officers in 2018 resulted in injury.
 - In Kent County, this number (103) was 13% higher and a report period high. 17% of assaults resulted in injuries in Kent County.
 - Sussex County (100) was up 9% from 2014 while 19% of those assaults led to an injury.

Most assault-related offenses occurred while responding to disturbances, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners. Responding to a disturbance, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners accounted for more than 60% of assaults against officers during the 2014 through 2018 period. More than three out of four assaults on an officer are using the subjects' hands, fists or feet. Although firearms were not often used to injure a law enforcement officer, they were used much less often in 2018 (2.1%) compared to a high in 2017(6.6%). This may also be influenced by one incident in 2017 that accounted for a large number of assaults.

No officers were killed in 2018 and about 17% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. Overall, two officers were killed in the line of duty during the 2014 through 2018 period. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2018 that resulted in injury is comparable to the past four years. There were a record 24 attempted homicides of officers in 2017. Eighteen offenses were attributed to the shooting death of an officer and a subsequent stand-off where the subject fired upon multiple responding officers. There were no attempted homicides on officers in 2018.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2014–18

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2014 – 2018					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Officers Assaulted	387	386	414	407	425
Officers Killed	0	0	0	2	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	2	0	1	24	0
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	14.7%	17.9%	18.8%	17.4%	16.7%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	97.2%	96.1%	97.1%	93.6%	93.4%