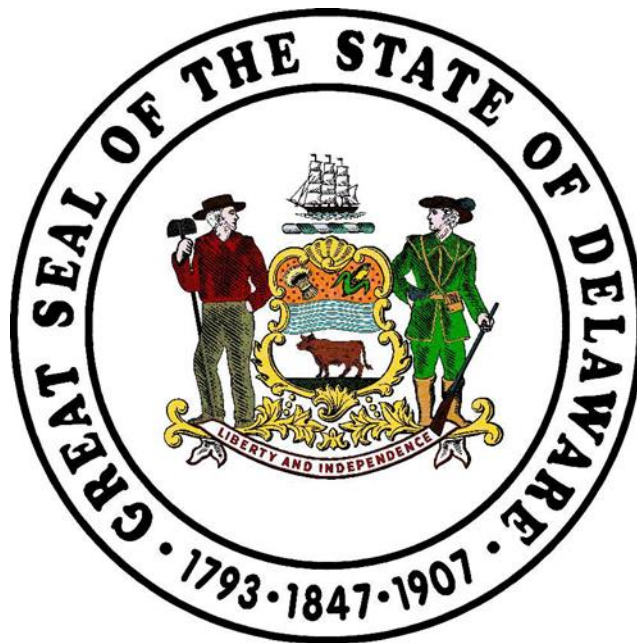


# Crime in Delaware 2019 – 2023 Executive Brief



November 2024

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

# Crime in Delaware: 2019 – 2023

## Executive Brief

### An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

Philisa Weidlein-Crist  
Director

Author:  
Jim Salt, PhD

State of Delaware Document number 100703-24-11-02

Please visit our website at <http://sac.delaware.gov/>

# Crime in Delaware 2019 – 2023

## Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2019 – 2023*. *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 2019 through 2023. Serious crimes for the purpose of this report are those the Federal Bureau of Investigation identifies as “Group A Offenses” in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The “Group A Offenses” are those more serious/significant crimes such as Murder, Rape, Robbery, Theft, etc. Other “Group B” Offenses, which are not covered in this report, tend to be more minor in nature, such as Curfew/Vagrancy violations, Disorderly Conduct, and “Other” minor offenses.

*Crime in Delaware* provides information for 24 Violent, Serious Property, Drug/Narcotic, and Other Property and Social Offenses reported in Delaware’s implementation of 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 2019 – 2023* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center’s website (<http://sac.delaware.gov/>).

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>

Caution should be used when comparing criminal offense trends involving 2020 and 2021 totals. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent State of Emergency declarations, court closings, and travel restrictions within the State of Delaware, it is not possible to discern if, or how much, those events impacted year-to-year changes in offense totals.

## Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2019 – 2023* 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 is organized by state and county. Below are key findings from this extensive set of Delaware crime data.

### Serious Offenses

- **Overall, reported serious crime has decreased 10% since 2019.** The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2019 was 75,348 compared with 67,573 in 2023 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Compared to 2022, Violent Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses experienced modest increases, while Drug Offenses decreased substantially. Offense trends by County are presented later in this brief (Figures E4-E6).
  - In New Castle County, the number of total offenses decreased by 11% from 2019 to 2023. New Castle County accounted for 54% of the overall statewide reported offenses in 2022.
  - For Kent County, the number total offenses in 2023 compared to 2019 was 3% lower. Kent County accounted for 22% of the overall statewide reported offenses.
  - In Sussex County, total offenses in 2023 compared to 2019 decreased 14%. Sussex County accounts for 24% of the overall statewide reported offenses.
- **Statewide violent crime is slightly lower overall.** The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased 2% from 2019 to 2023, but also saw a 4% increase compared to 2022 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
  - In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were 9% lower in 2023 when compared to 2019.
  - Kent County saw an 9% increase in Violent Offenses from 2019 to 2023, and Sussex County, a 2% increase.
- **There were 53 statewide homicides in 2023—43 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 9 Vehicular Homicide, and 1 Other Negligent Manslaughter. The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 10% lower compared to 2019 and the lowest number for the five-year reporting period.<sup>1</sup>**

---

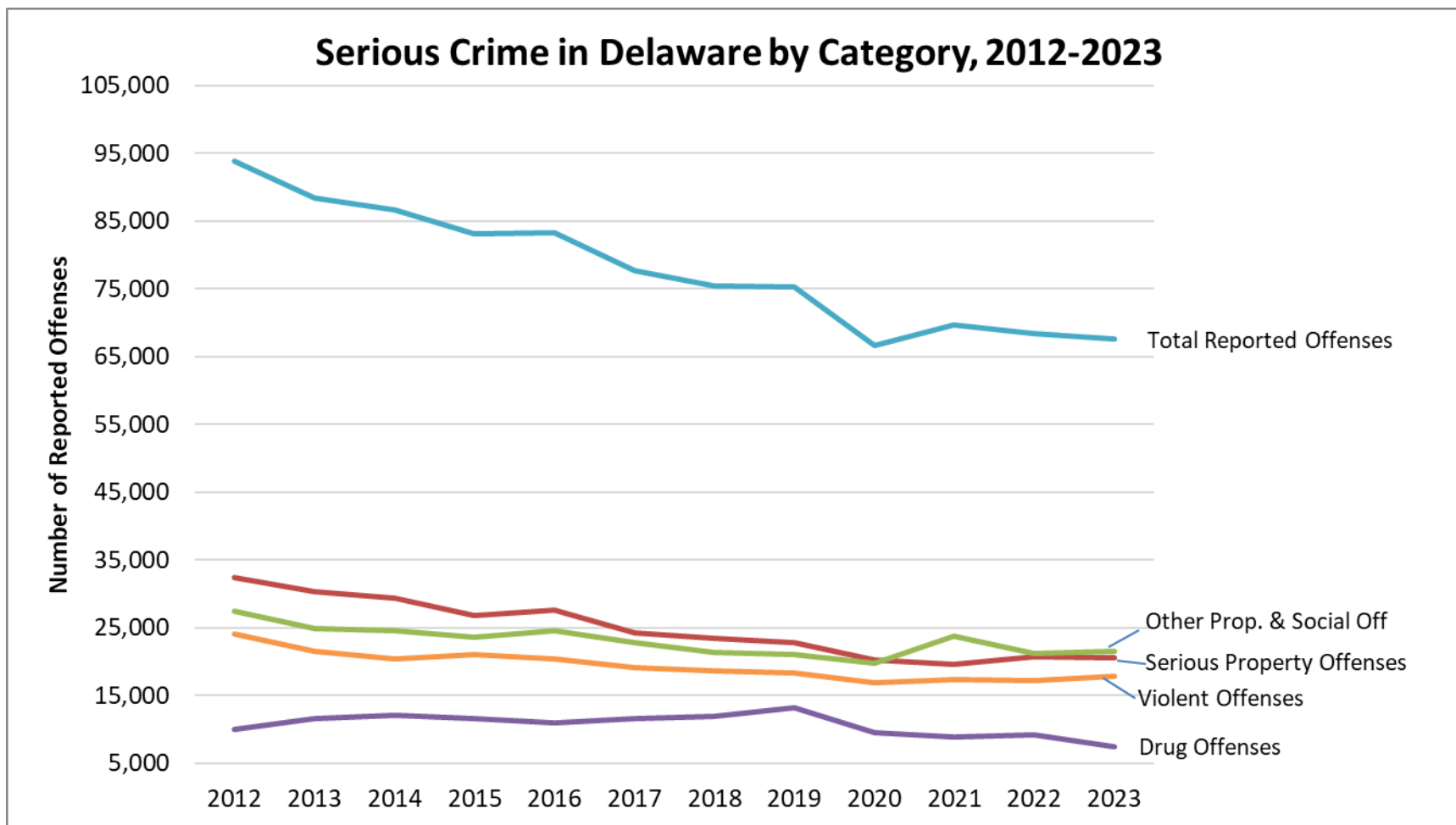
<sup>1</sup> In 2019, the FBI began including Vehicular Homicides under the Criminally Negligent Manslaughter category. Starting with the 2018-22 report, the SAC began reporting offenses for this crime separately from other Negligent Manslaughter offenses to allow for better insights regarding Criminal Homicide.

- There were 28 homicides in New Castle County in 2023—24 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 4 Vehicular Homicide, and no Other Negligent Manslaughter. The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 37% lower compared to 2019 and the lowest number for the five-year reporting period.
- Kent County had 9 homicides in 2023 (all Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses). The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 29% higher compared to 2019 but the second lowest number for the five-year reporting period.
- Sussex County experienced 16 homicides in 2023—10 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 5 Vehicular Homicide, and 1 Other Negligent Manslaughter. The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 233% higher compared to 2019, eclipsing 2022’s record high of 9.

**Table E-1: Delaware Offenses Received, Clearances, and Differences, 2019 – 2023**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total Offenses Received</b>	<b>75,348</b>	<b>66,569</b>	<b>69,596</b>	<b>68,461</b>	<b>67,573</b>
<b>Percent Cleared</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>52.0%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>50.1%</b>	<b>49.8%</b>
Violent Offenses	18,306	16,938	17,334	17,278	17,887
Percent Cleared	77.6%	75.4%	74.0%	75.2%	76.3%
Serious Property Offenses	22,872	20,315	19,607	20,678	20,585
Percent Cleared	30.8%	27.7%	24.2%	24.6%	26.9%
Drug Offenses	13,195	9,476	8,942	9,220	7,521
Percent Cleared	95.8%	95.8%	94.5%	95.6%	94.9%
Other Property, Social Offenses	20,975	19,840	23,713	21,285	21,580
Percent Cleared	39.9%	36.0%	29.7%	34.8%	33.9%
	2022 - 2023	2019 - 2023	Avg. 2019-2022 vs 2023		
<b>Total Offenses Received</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>-10.3%</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>		
Violent Offenses	3.5%	-2.3%	2.4%		
Serious Property Offenses	-0.4%	-10.0%	-1.4%		
Drug/Narcotic Offenses	-18.4%	-43.0%	-26.3%		
Other Property, Social Offenses	1.4%	2.9%	0.6%		

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2012 – 2023



- **The crime rate is lower.** The statewide crime rate decreased from 76.7 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2019 to 65.6 in 2023. This change in the crime rate reflects just over a 10% decrease in the number of offenses and a 4.2% increase in Delaware’s population.
- **Serious Property crime is down.** The number of reported Serious Property Offenses decreased 10% from 2019 to 2023. Burglary offenses decreased 37% from 2019 to 2023 and Larceny by 11%. However, Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses increased 52% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
  - In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2023 was 7% lower compared to 2019. Burglary decreased 36% from 2019, with Larceny decreasing 10%. Motor Vehicle Theft, however, was 59% higher for the same period.
  - Kent County saw a 4% decrease from 2019 to 2023. Burglary decreased 32% since 2019. Larceny offenses decreased 6% for the same period, while Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses increased 31% (but a 20% decrease compared to 2022).
  - Sussex County saw a 23% decrease from 2019 to 2023. Burglary decreased 42% since 2019, Larceny by 22%. However, Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses increased 31%, but experienced a 15% decrease compared to 2022.
- **Overall Drug/Narcotic Offenses decreased 43% from 2019.<sup>2</sup>** Drug/Narcotic Possession Offenses decreased 46% over this period, while Drug Equipment Offenses decreased 34% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
  - In New Castle County, from 2019 to 2023 Possession Offenses decreased 56% and Drug Equipment offenses decreased 51%.
  - In Kent County, there was a 27% decrease in Possession Offenses from 2019 to 2023, Drug Equipment Offenses by 19%.
  - Sussex County Possession Offenses were 41% lower compared to 2019, Drug Equipment Offenses, 31% lower.

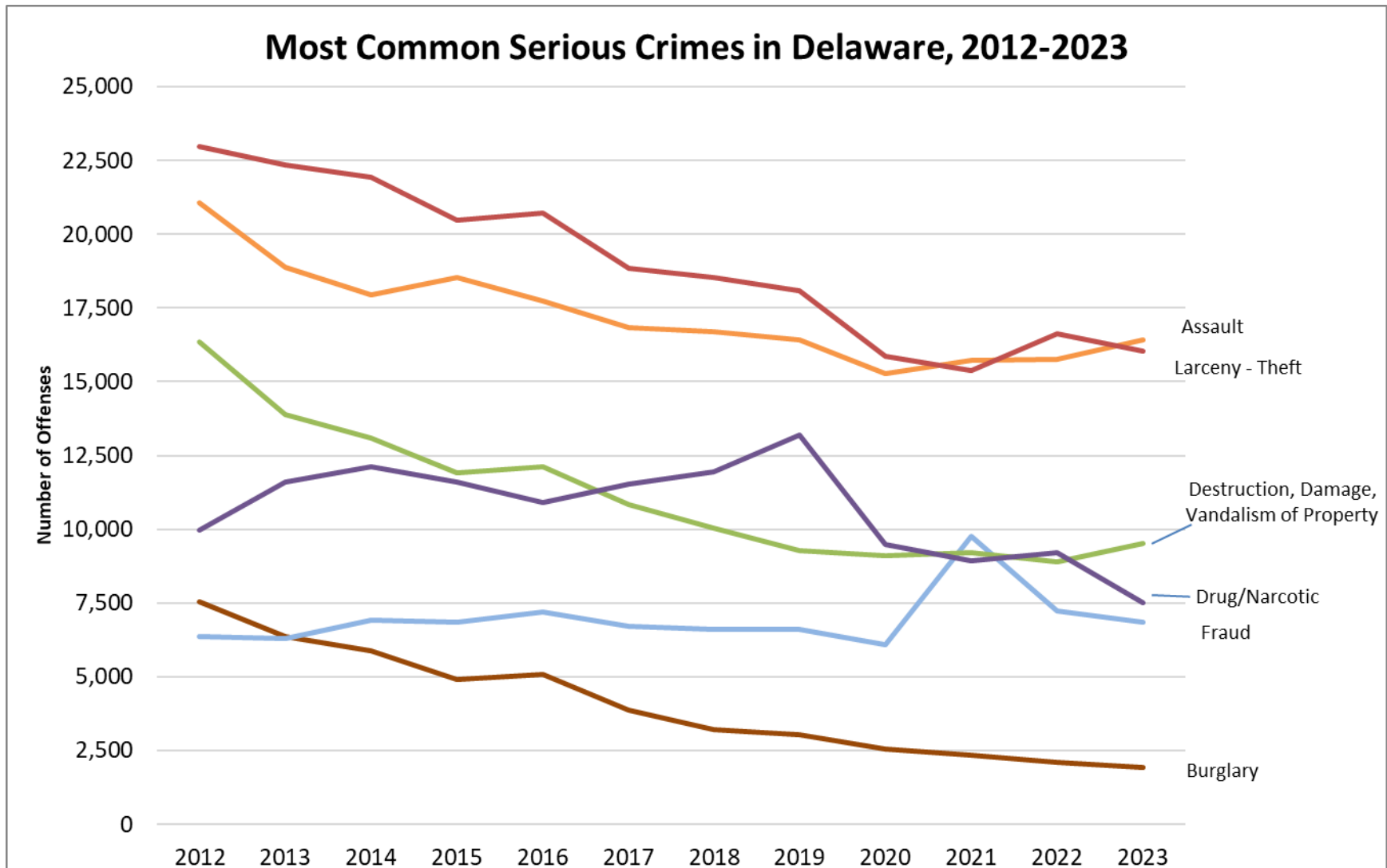
---

<sup>2</sup> 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 in 2022, they are part of the Drug Offense totals in this report.

- ***The number of Other Property and Social Offenses increased 3% from 2019 to 2023.*** Fraud, Weapon Law Violations, and Destruction, Damage, or Vandalism of Property saw increases of 4%, 6%, and 3%, respectively. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
  - Between 2019 and 2023, New Castle and Kent Counties each experienced increases of 4% in Other Property and Social Offenses. Sussex County totals decreased by 5%.
  - Property Destruction/Vandalism Offenses increased 10% in New Castle, but decreased 7% in Kent and 11% in Sussex. Weapon Law Violations, however, experienced a 2% decrease in New Castle, but increases of 17% and 25%, respectively, in Kent and Sussex.
  
- ***The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2019 to 2023 were mixed.*** Weapons Law Violations were 6% higher compared to 2019. Robberies with a Firearm decreased 19% from 2019, though there was a 5% increase from 2022 to 2023. Assaults with a Firearm decreased 1% since 2019 and 4% from 2022 to 2023.
  - In New Castle County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses decreased 12% since 2019, but increased 18% compared to 2022. Assault with a Firearm offenses decreased 7% since 2019.
  - In Kent County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses declined 54% from 2019. Assault with a Firearm offenses decreased 2% from the 2019 total.
  - In Sussex County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses decreased 33% compared with 2019 totals. Assault with a Firearm offenses increased 32% since 2019 but declined 12% from 2022 to 2023.



Figure E-2: Most Common Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2012 – 2023



## 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 2023 data, offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to prior reporting periods** (see Figure E-3). Overall, all crime categories had clearance rates at or near those of previous years, with half of the total number offenses (49.8%) in 2023 cleared by the end of the calendar year. Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (94.9% and 76.3%, respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 26.9% and 33.9%, respectively.
  - In New Castle County, 40.2% of all 2023 offenses were cleared, with the highest clearance rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (91.4%) and Violent Offenses (68.6%).
  - In Kent County, 60.2% of 2023 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.3%) and Violent Offenses (81.9%) being cleared at the highest rates.
  - In Sussex County, 62.1% of all 2023 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (97.4%) and Violent Offenses (85.0%) having the highest clearance rates.

## Arrests

- The number of arrests in 2023 decreased 15% compared to 2019, while there was a 4% 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 (25% since 2019) and Drug Offenses (22%). Juvenile Arrests were lower across all but one crime category during this period (a 10% decrease overall). Total Adult Arrests were 15% lower with all four 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 20% lower in 2023 compared to 2019. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 21% lower in 2023, with decreases in arrests for all but one category. Juvenile Arrests for Drug Offenses were 50% lower. Total Adult Arrests were 20% lower with all categories experiencing decreases.
  - In Kent County, the number of total arrests was 5% lower, with decreases in all but one of the four categories. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 5% higher than in 2019, with increases in all but one category. Adult Arrests were 6% lower, with decreases in half of the four categories.
  - In Sussex County, arrests were 12% lower than in 2019 with decreases in three of the four categories. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 9% higher than in 2019, with increases in three of the four categories. The number of total Adult Arrests was down 14%, with decreases in all but one category.

**Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2019 – 2023**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Total Arrests</b>	<b>22,456</b>	<b>18,715</b>	<b>18,641</b>	<b>18,756</b>	<b>19,171</b>
Violent Offenses	8,699	7,616	7,706	7,581	8,086
Serious Property Offenses	5,508	4,235	3,588	3,639	4,154
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	4,807	4,141	4,437	4,473	3,729
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,442	2,723	2,910	3,063	3,202
<b>Total Adult Arrests</b>	<b>20,080</b>	<b>17,208</b>	<b>17,263</b>	<b>17,086</b>	<b>17,033</b>
Violent Offenses	7,502	6,911	6,969	6,734	7,049
Serious Property Offenses	4,946	3,841	3,329	3,335	3,606
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	4,541	4,039	4,318	4,317	3,610
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,091	2,417	2,647	2,700	2,768
<b>Total Juvenile Arrests</b>	<b>2,376</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,378</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>2,138</b>
Violent Offenses	1,197	705	737	847	1,037
Serious Property Offenses	562	394	259	304	548
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	266	102	119	156	119
Other Property and Social Offenses	351	306	263	363	434

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2012 – 2023

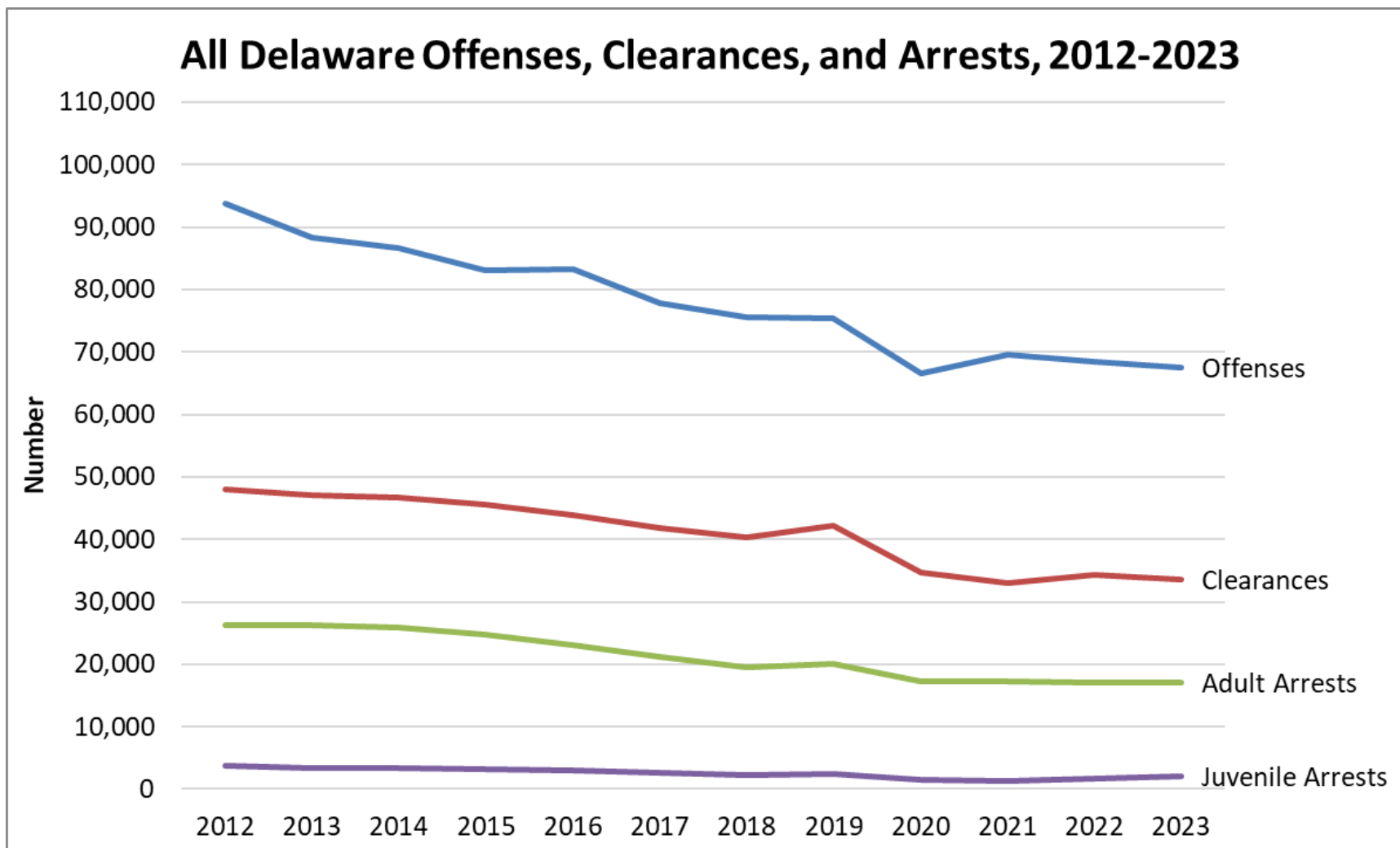


Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2012 -2023

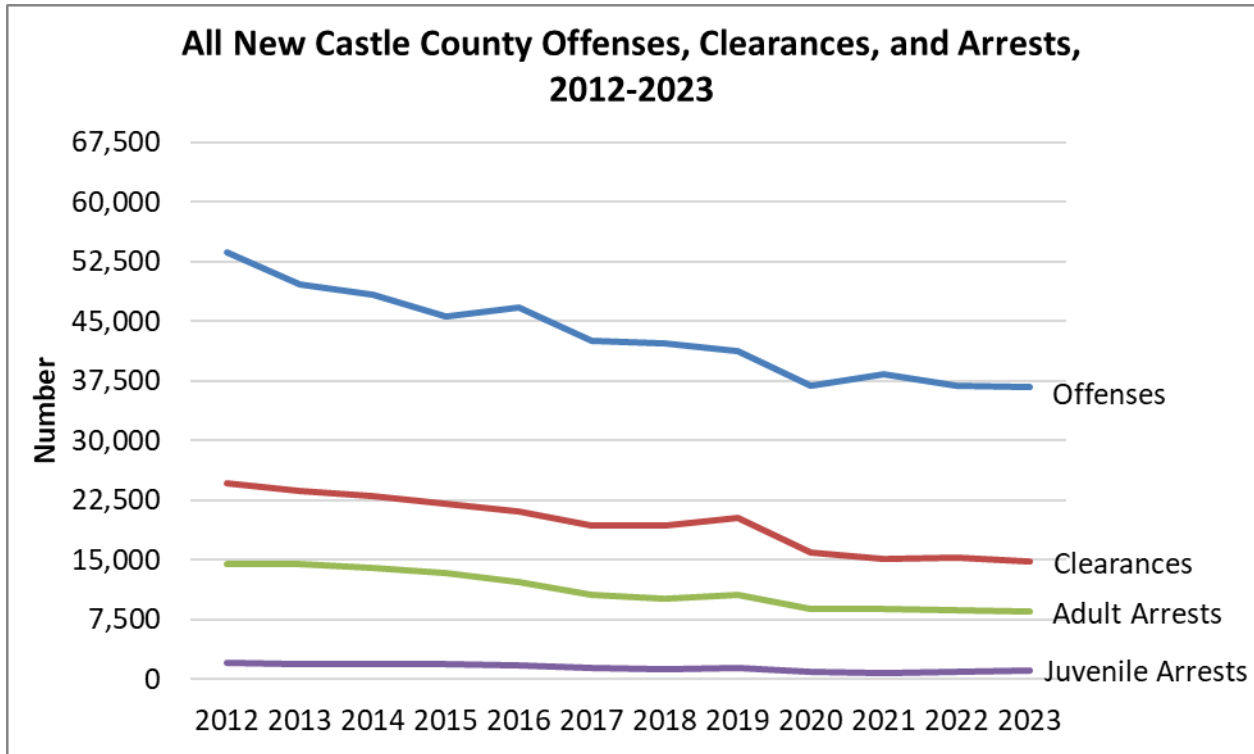


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2012-2023

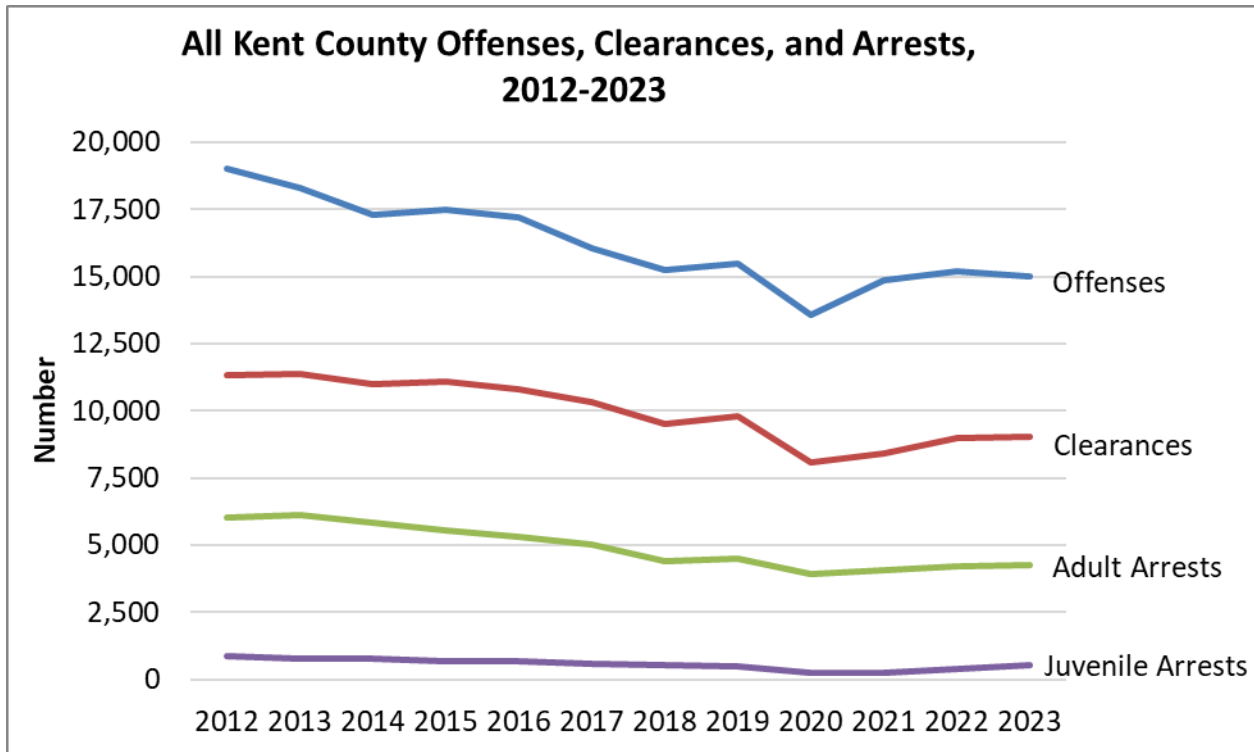
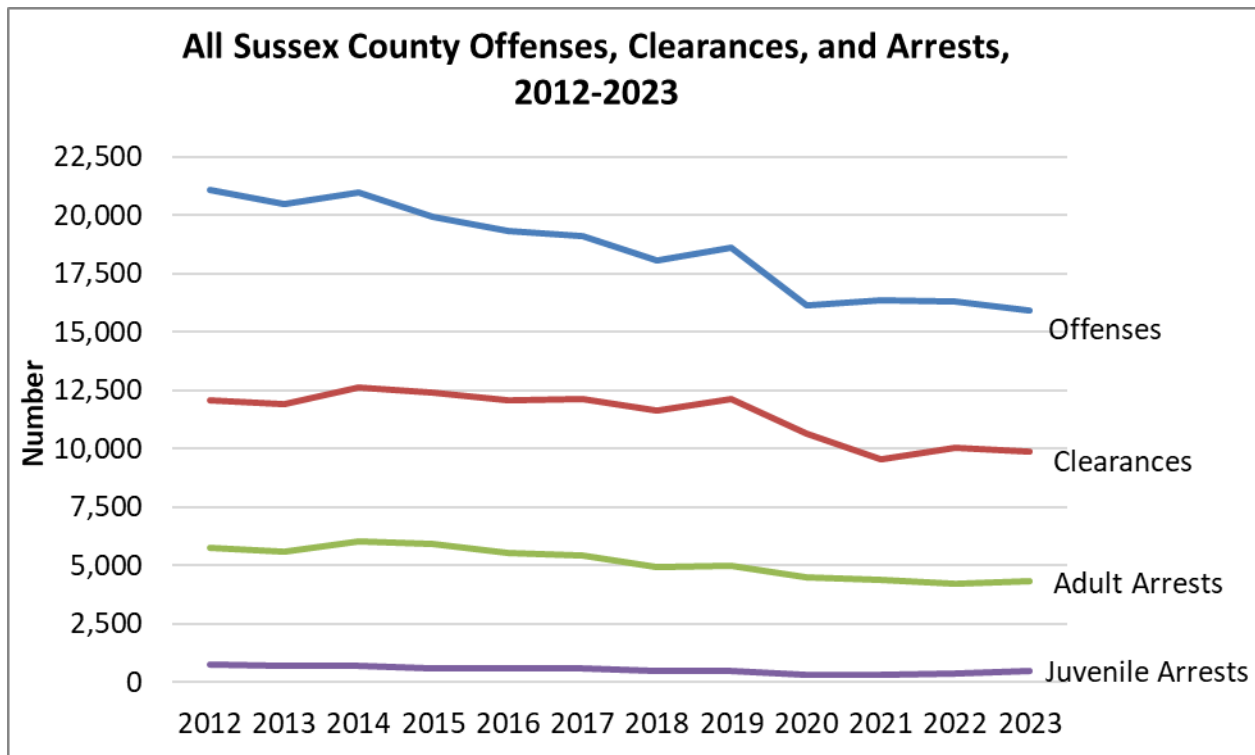


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2012 – 2023



## Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

- ***In 2023, 391 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, 13% lower when compared to 2019.*** Almost all offenses (94%) were cleared before the end of 2023. Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 93%.
  - In New Castle County, there were 194 Assault Offenses against officers in 2023, down 21% from 2019 and almost 8% from 2022. Twenty-four percent of assaults against officers in 2023 resulted in injury.
  - In Kent County, assaults on officers (88) were 11% lower than 2019 but unchanged from 2022. Fewer than 20% of assaults resulted in injuries in Kent County.
  - Sussex County assaults on officers (109) were up 7% from 2019 but 6% lower compared to 2022. One-fifth of assaults in 2023 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 60% of assaults against officers in 2023. These activities accounted for 60-65% of assaults from 2019 to 2023. Almost three-fourths of all assaults on an officer (73%) were from the subject using their hands, fists, or feet. Firearms were not often used to injure a law enforcement officer (3%), a rate similar to the past five years.

***No officers were killed in 2023 and 22% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries.***

Overall, one officer was killed in the line of duty from 2019 to 2023. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2023 that resulted in injury was down from five-year highs in 2021 and 2022. There was one attempted homicide of an officer in 2023. (Note: In 2020, five attempted homicides resulted from one incident, three from another incident, and two from yet a third separate incident, with the others being single incidents.)

**Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2019–23**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Officers Assaulted</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>391</b>
Officers Killed	0	0	1	0	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	1	12	5	1	1
<b>Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>Assault-related Offenses Cleared</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>95.7%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>	<b>93.6%</b>