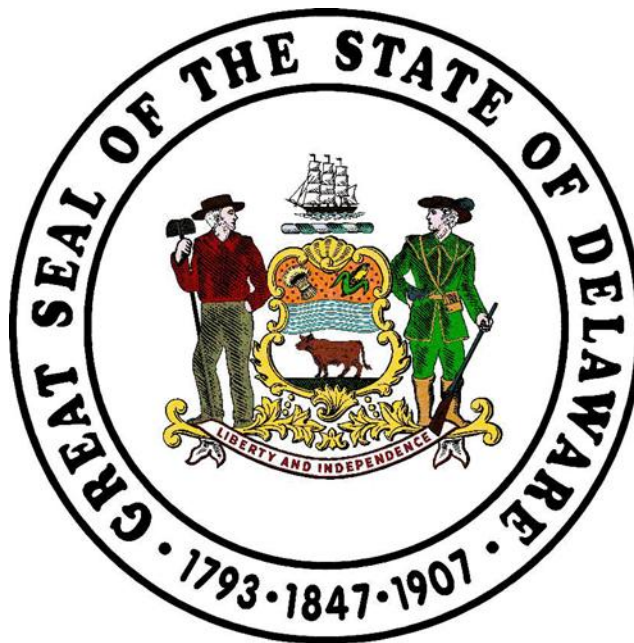


Crime in Delaware 2020 – 2024 Executive Brief



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

Crime in Delaware: 2020 – 2024

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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Crime in Delaware 2020 – 2024

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2020 – 2024*. *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 2020 through 2024. 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 2020 – 2024* 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

Since the 2017-2021 Crime in Delaware report, the Center has encouraged caution when interpreting statistics from 2020 and 2021 and comparing trends based on the totals for those years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent State of Emergency declarations, court closings, and travel restrictions within the State of Delaware, it was previously not possible to discern if, or how much, those events impacted year-to-year changes in offense totals, though the data suggested differential impacts on crime and arrests.

However, as more regional, national and international research has emerged on the pandemic’s impact on police agencies, correctional systems, judicial systems, and on crime (e.g., Police Executive Research Forum, 2021; Lum, Maupin, & Stoltz, 2022), some patterns have become evident that can inform an exploration of the relationship between the pandemic and Delaware crime during 2020 and 2021. While such an exploration could not be undertaken within the timeframe of this iteration of *Crime in Delaware*, the SAC intended to explore such trends before the next report.

It is important to reiterate that caution for both this report and the next (the 2020-2024 and 2021-2025 report series): data for a pandemic year will serve as the baseline year for the five-year comparisons. For some crimes, 2020 values will be significantly elevated compared to previous years, while for others, 2020 values may be substantially lower. Also, arrest counts generally appear to have been suppressed in 2020 as compared to what would be expected based on prior year data. It is important, therefore, to not draw any conclusions based just on differences between 2020 and 2024 without first carefully examining the longer-term trends in the data.

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2020 – 2024* 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 3% since 2020.*** The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2020 was 66,569 compared with 64,583 in 2024 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Violent Offenses experienced a 7% increase. Serious Property Offenses and Drug Offenses both decreased (5% and 22%, respectively), while the Other Property and Social Offenses was essentially unchanged compared to 2020. Offense trends by County are presented later in this brief (Figures E4-E6).
 - In New Castle County, total reported offenses decreased by 10% from 2020 to 2024. New Castle County accounted for 51% of the statewide total in 2024.
 - For Kent County, the number of total offenses in 2024 compared to 2020 was 14% higher. Kent County accounted for 24% of the overall statewide offenses.
 - In Sussex County, total offenses in 2024 compared to 2020 decreased just 1%. Sussex County accounts for 25% of the overall statewide reported offenses.
- ***Statewide violent crime is higher overall.*** The number of Violent Offenses reported increased 7% from 2020 to 2024, with just a 1% increase compared to 2023 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were 5% lower in 2024 when compared to 2020.
 - Kent and Sussex Counties both saw large increases in Violent Offenses from 2020 to 2024, 24% and 16%, respectively.
- ***There were 65 statewide homicides in 2024¹—59 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 4 Vehicular Homicide, and 2 Other Negligent Manslaughter. The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 20% lower compared to 2020, but 37% higher compared to 2023.²***

¹ Per the State Bureau of Identification, the Delaware NIBRS program manager, 3 homicide reports—1 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter (New Castle), 2 Vehicle Homicides (Sussex)—had not been finalized by the respective reporting agencies by the FBI's final data submission deadline. As a result, those incidents were not included in the data files downloaded and analyzed for Crime in Delaware. They will be included in SBI's next data file update and the corrected 2024 values will be updated in the 2025 Crime in Delaware Reports.

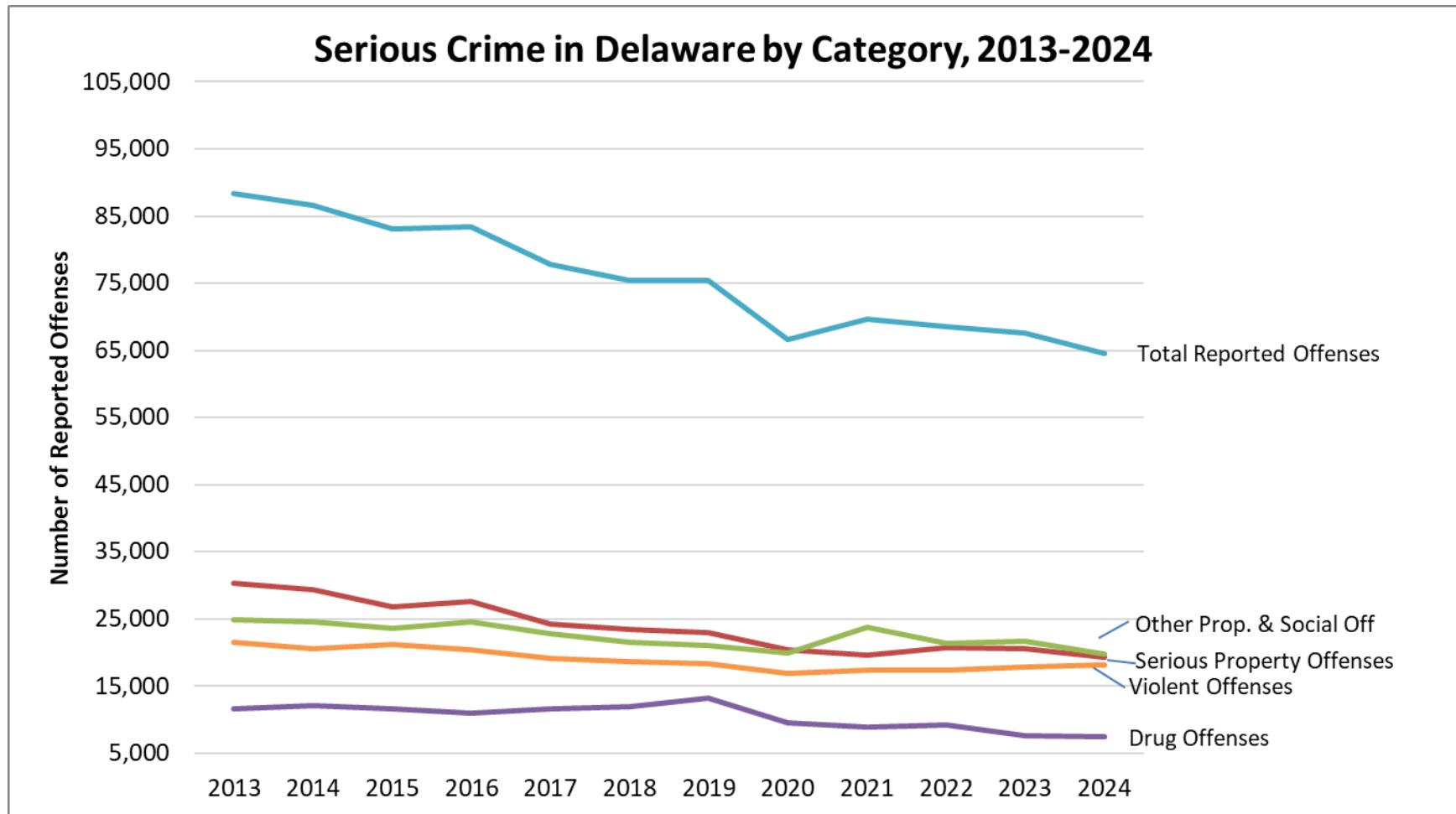
² In 2019, the FBI began including Vehicular Homicides under the Criminally Negligent Manslaughter category. Starting with the 2018-22 report, the SAC began reporting offenses for this crime separately from other Negligent Manslaughter offenses to allow for better insights regarding Criminal Homicide.

- There were 39 homicides in New Castle County in 2024—35 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 3 Vehicular Homicide, and 1 Other Negligent Manslaughter. The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 34% lower compared to 2020, but 46% higher than 2023.
- Kent County had 14 homicides in 2024 (all Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses). The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 7% lower compared to 2020 but 56% higher than 2023, which was the lowest total for the five-year reporting period (9).
- Sussex County experienced 12 homicides in 2024—10 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 1 Vehicular Homicide, and 1 Other Negligent Manslaughter (2 additional Vehicular Homicides remain pending—see foot note 1). The number of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter offenses was 43% higher compared to 2020 and tied 2023's record high of 10.

Table E-1: Delaware Offenses Received, Clearances, and Differences, 2020 – 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Offenses Received	66,569	69,596	68,461	67,573	64,583
Percent Cleared	52.0%	47.5%	50.1%	49.8%	52.2%
Violent Offenses	16,938	17,334	17,278	17,887	18,122
Percent Cleared	75.4%	74.0%	75.2%	76.3%	77.5%
Serious Property Offenses	20,315	19,607	20,678	20,585	19,322
Percent Cleared	27.7%	24.2%	24.6%	26.9%	29.6%
Drug Offenses	9,476	8,942	9,220	7,521	7,350
Percent Cleared	95.8%	94.5%	95.6%	94.9%	94.6%
Other Property, Social Offenses	19,840	23,713	21,285	21,580	19,789
Percent Cleared	36.0%	29.7%	34.8%	33.9%	35.5%
	2023 - 2024	2020 - 2024	Avg. 2020 - 2023 vs 2024		
Total Offenses Received	-4.4%	-3.0%	-5.1%		
Violent Offenses	1.3%	7.0%	4.4%		
Serious Property Offenses	-6.1%	-4.9%	-4.8%		
Drug/Narcotic Offenses	-2.3%	-22.4%	-16.4%		
Other Property, Social Offenses	-8.3%	-0.3%	-8.4%		

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2013 – 2024



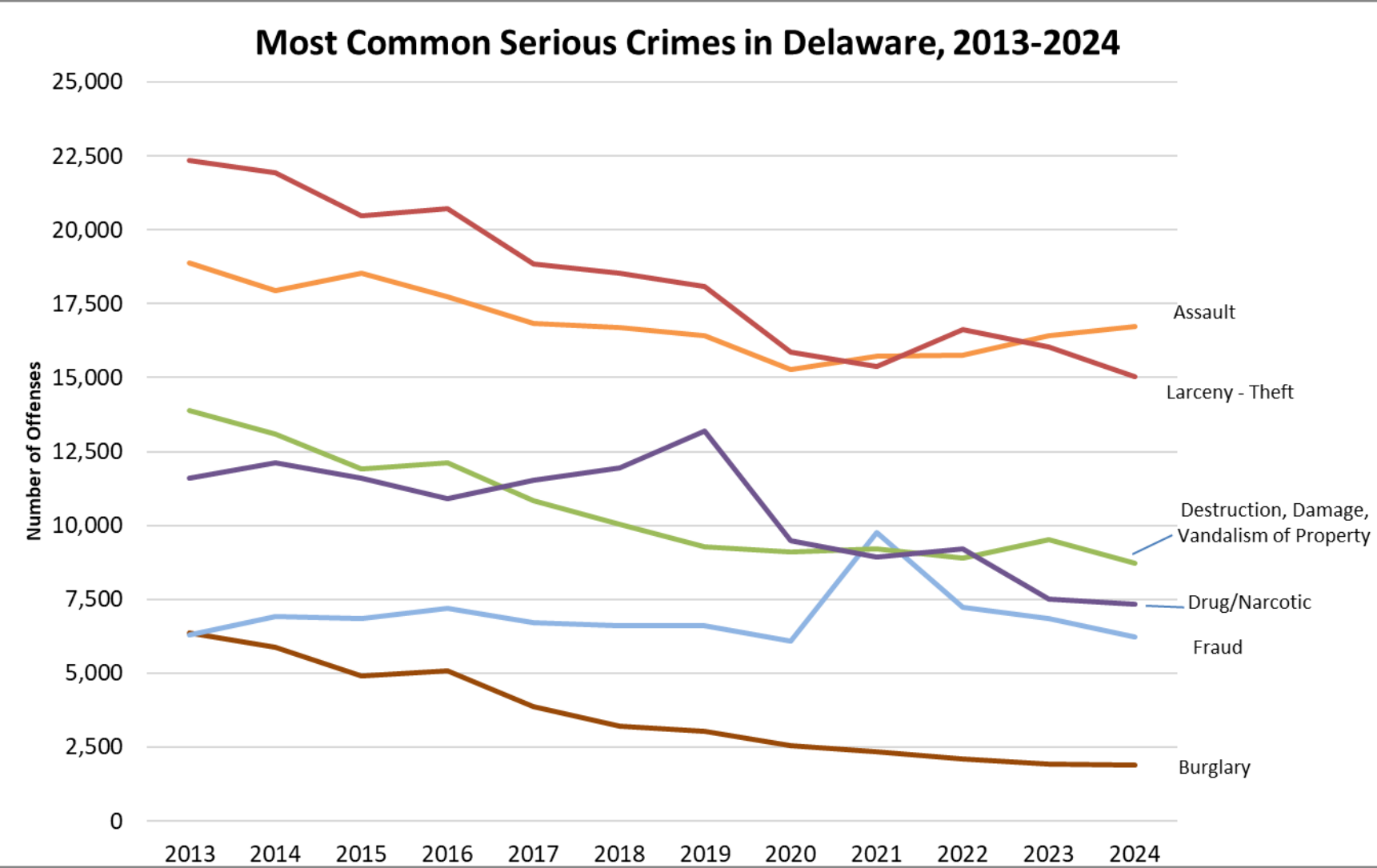
- ***The crime rate is lower.*** The statewide crime rate decreased from 67.1 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2020 to 62.3 in 2024. This change in the crime rate reflects a 3% decrease in the number of offenses and a 4.1% increase in Delaware’s population.
- ***Serious Property crime is down.*** The number of reported Serious Property Offenses decreased 5% from 2020 to 2024. Burglary offenses decreased 26% from 2020 to 2024 and Larceny by 5%. However, Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses increased 26%, though there was an 11% decrease from 2023 to 2024 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2024 was 10% lower compared to 2020. Burglary decreased 31% from 2020, with Larceny decreasing 11%. Motor Vehicle Theft was 22% higher for the same period, but experienced a 16% decrease from 2023 to 2024.
 - Kent County saw a 15% increase from 2020 to 2024. Burglary decreased 27% since 2020. Larceny offenses increased 19% for the same period, Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses by 39%.
 - Sussex County saw a 10% decrease from 2020 to 2024. Burglary decreased 8% since 2020, Larceny by 12%. However, Motor Vehicle Theft Offenses increased 43%.
- ***Overall Drug/Narcotic Offenses decreased 20% from 2020.***³ Drug/Narcotic Possession Offenses decreased 31% over this period, while Drug Equipment Offenses decreased 2% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, from 2020 to 2024 Possession Offenses decreased 42% and Drug Equipment Offenses decreased 20%.
 - In Kent County, there was a 5% decrease in Possession Offenses from 2020, but a 22% increase in Drug Equipment Offenses.
 - Sussex County Possession Offenses decreased 30% compared to 2020, Drug Equipment Offenses by 6%.

³ 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 was essentially unchanged in 2024 compared 2020. However, the 2024 total represents a 17% decrease from the five-year high in 2021.*** Fraud saw an increase of 3%, while Weapon Law Violations and Destruction, Damage, or Vandalism of Property decreased 10%, and 4%, respectively. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - Between 2020 and 2024, Sussex and Kent Counties each experienced increases in Other Property and Social Offenses (4% and 9%, respectively). New Castle County totals decreased by 5%.
 - Property Destruction/Vandalism Offenses decreased 3% in New Castle, 2% in Kent, and 12% in Sussex. Weapon Law Violations, however, experienced a 27% decrease in New Castle, but increases of 23% and 24%, respectively, in Kent and Sussex.

- ***The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2020 to 2024 were lower, overall.*** Weapons Law Violations were 10% lower compared to 2020. Robberies with a Firearm decreased 35% from 2020. Assaults with a Firearm decreased 28% since 2020.
 - In New Castle County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses decreased 38% since 2020. Assault with a Firearm offenses decreased 42% since 2020.
 - In Kent County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses were infrequent, but declined 30% from 2020. Assault with a Firearm offenses decreased 19% from the 2020 total, with a 4% increase from 2023 to 2024.
 - In Sussex County, Robbery with a Firearm offenses were infrequent, but decreased 14% compared with 2020 totals. Assault with a Firearm offenses increased 30% since 2020, 28% from 2023 to 2024.

Figure E-2: Most Common Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2013 – 2024



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 2024 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 just over half of the total number offenses (52.2%) in 2024 cleared by the end of the calendar year. Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (94.6% and 77.5%, respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 29.6% and 35.5%, respectively.
 - In New Castle County, 43.2% of all 2024 offenses were cleared, with the highest clearance rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (90.6%) and Violent Offenses (70.5%).
 - In Kent County, 60.6% of 2024 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.9%) and Violent Offenses (83.0%) being cleared at the highest rates.
 - In Sussex County, 62.9% of all 2024 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.5%) and Violent Offenses (84.2%) having the highest clearance rates.

Arrests

Generally, changes in arrest counts appear to reflect the impact of the COVID pandemic. Compared to prior years, counts for both adult and juvenile arrests appear suppressed in both 2020 and 2021, with arrest counts gradually returning toward pre-pandemic levels in recent years. Therefore, caution should be used in drawing conclusions about arrest activity based on the 2020-2024 comparisons.

- The number of arrests in 2024 increased 5% compared to 2020, while there was a 3% decrease in the number of reported offenses over the same period. Increases occurred across all main offense categories except Drug Offenses, which saw a 5% decline (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The most notable increase was for Other Property and Social Offenses (16%). Juvenile Arrests were higher across all crime categories during this period (a 33% increase overall). Total Adult Arrests were 3% higher with all categories but Drug Offenses showing increases. Arrest trends by county are located at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).
 - In New Castle County, however, total arrests were 2% lower in 2024 compared to 2020. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 11% higher in 2024, with increases in arrests for half of the four categories. Total Adult Arrests were 3% lower with half of the four categories experiencing decreases.
 - In Kent County, the number of total arrests was 24% higher, with increases in all four categories. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 91% higher than in 2020, with most categories increasing by a similar percent. Adult Arrests were 21% higher, with increases in all four categories.

- In Sussex County, arrests were 2% higher than in 2020 with increases in half of the four categories. Overall, Juvenile Arrests were 56% higher than in 2020, with increases in all four categories. The number of total Adult Arrests, however, was down 2%, with decreases in half of the four categories.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2020 – 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Arrests	18,715	18,641	18,756	19,171	19,635
Violent Offenses	7,616	7,706	7,581	8,086	8,172
Serious Property Offenses	4,235	3,588	3,639	4,154	4,401
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	4,141	4,437	4,473	3,729	3,917
Other Property and Social Offenses	2,723	2,910	3,063	3,202	3,145
Total Adult Arrests	17,208	17,263	17,086	17,033	17,633
Violent Offenses	6,911	6,969	6,734	7,049	7,108
Serious Property Offenses	3,841	3,329	3,335	3,606	3,956
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	4,039	4,318	4,317	3,610	3,798
Other Property and Social Offenses	2,417	2,647	2,700	2,768	2,771
Total Juvenile Arrests	1,507	1,378	1,670	2,138	2,002
Violent Offenses	705	737	847	1,037	1,064
Serious Property Offenses	394	259	304	548	445
All Drug/Narcotic Offenses	102	119	156	119	119
Other Property and Social Offenses	306	263	363	434	374

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2013 – 2024

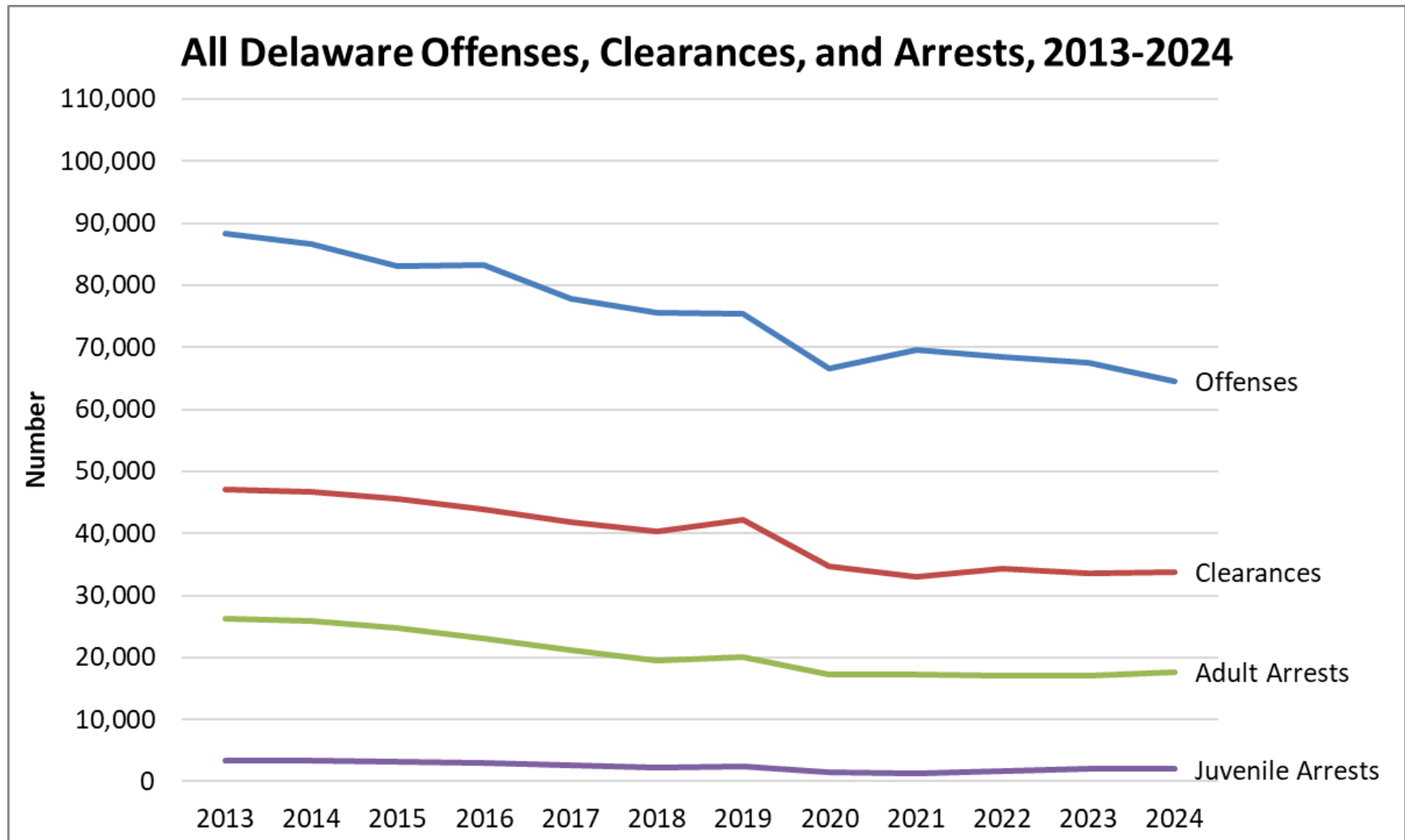


Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2013 -2024

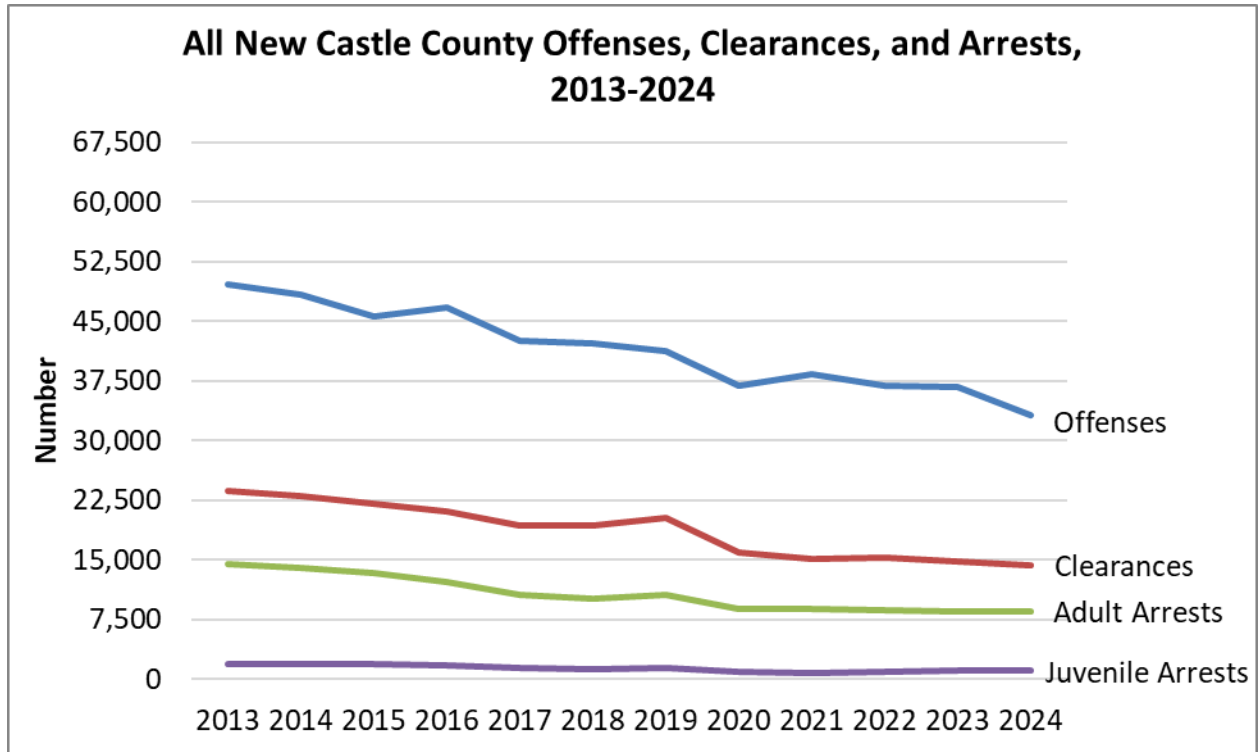


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2013-2024

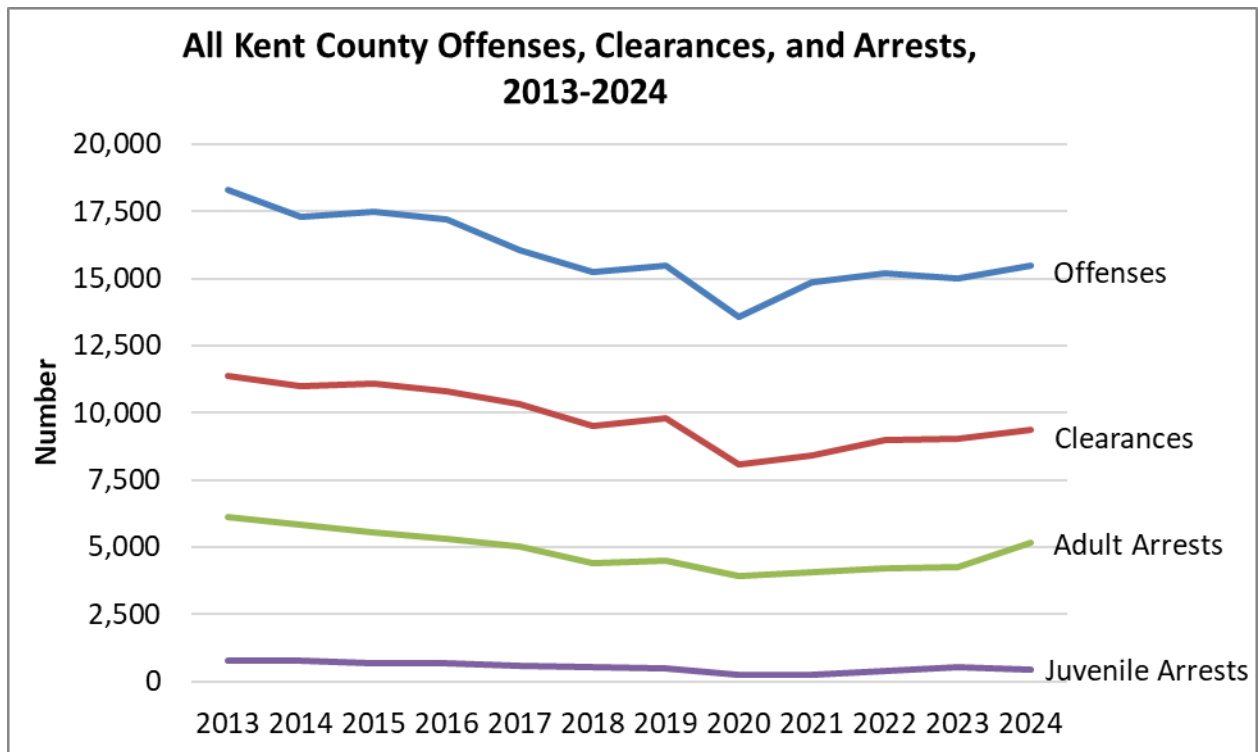
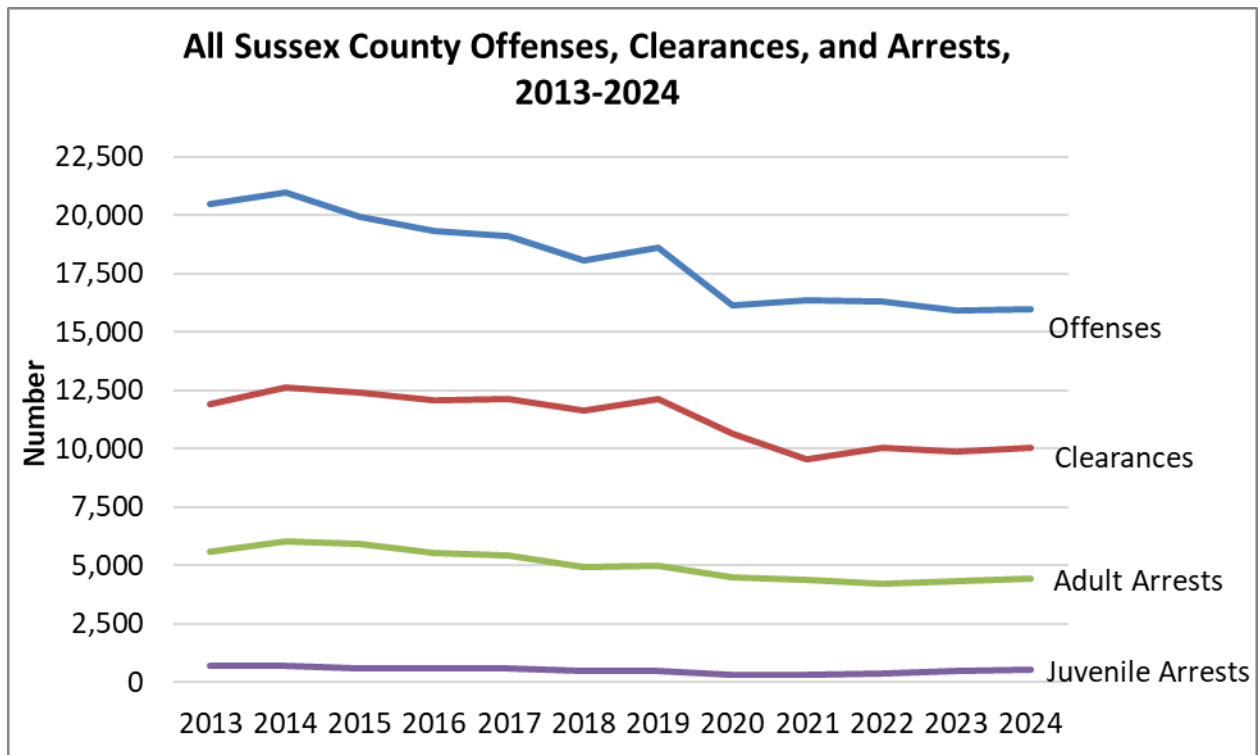


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2013 – 2024



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

- ***In 2024, 411 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, 3% higher when compared to 2020.*** Almost all offenses (93%) were cleared before the end of 2024. Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 93%.
 - In New Castle County, there were 209 Assault Offenses against officers in 2024, down 11% from 2020, but up 8% from 2023. Eighteen percent of assaults against officers in 2024 resulted in injury.
 - In Kent County, assaults on officers (105) were 98% higher than the pandemic low from 2020 and 19% higher than 2023. One-fourth of assaults resulted in injuries in Kent County.
 - Sussex County assaults on officers (97) were down 11% from 2020. One-third of assaults in 2024 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 61% of assaults against officers in 2024. These activities accounted for 60-65% of assaults from 2020 to 2024. Almost 80% of all assaults on an officer (79%) 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 2024 and 23% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries.

Overall, one officer was killed in the line of duty from 2020 to 2024. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2024 that resulted in injury was down from five-year highs in 2021 and 2022. There were no attempted homicides of an officer in 2024. (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, 2020–24

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Officers Assaulted	398	443	414	391	411
Officers Killed	0	1	0	0	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	12	5	1	1	0
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	17.3%	24.1%	24.1%	21.7%	23.4%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	95.7%	93.0%	94.9%	93.6%	93.4%

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