

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



**CRIME  
COMMISSION**  
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS. SAFE COMMUNITY.

## A Message To The Community

Our community has a lot of positive momentum. Blue Oval City and related businesses should bring thousands of good-paying jobs to Shelby Countians. Our tourism industry is booming, with over 12 million visitors in 2023. In 2023, a record of more than 4.2 million people flew to Memphis international Airport with Memphis as their final destination point. We have a new convention center, a reimagined Tom Lee Park, and the new Memphis Art Museum under construction downtown. The University of Memphis is now an R1 top tier national research university. Downtown is surrounded by a booming medical community, with St. Jude, LeBonheur Children's Hospital, and the UT Health Science Center all expanding.

The key to building on this momentum is to get a handle on our unacceptably high crime rate.

We saw some encouraging signs during the latter part of 2023. For the entire year, though, crime rates in almost all major categories moved in the wrong direction compared to 2022. That includes major violent crime (driven primarily by an increase in reported robberies), major property crime (driven mainly by reported vehicle thefts and break-ins), reported domestic violence, and overall crime.

Especially disturbing was the number of juveniles charged with serious offenses. And guns continue to be the overwhelming weapon of choice in violent crimes. (See the accompanying charts.)

However, in the city of Memphis, the last half of 2023 showed a fairly consistent decline in reported incidents for major categories of crime. (See the accompanying chart.) During the fourth quarter of the year (October-December), reported vehicle thefts dropped 16.4% compared to the last quarter of 2022. And we finally began to see a decrease in the number of guns reported stolen from vehicles. (See the accompanying chart.)

In 2023, we made significant progress on a number of important Safe Community Action Plan steps, including the City's focused deterrence initiative, federal prosecution of gun crimes, consistent MPD investigations of aggravated assaults involving the discharge of firearms, launching a system on intensive supervision and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation for serious juvenile offenders, and developing and beginning to implement a strategic plan to address domestic violence. We worked to (1) address the arbitrary limit on the juvenile justice system of an offender's 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and (2) insure that public safety is the number one criteria in setting conditions of bail.

We have focused on identifying and advocating best practices to prevent and reduce crime that work if implemented correctly, scaled up, and sustained over time, as well as on changes to parts of our criminal justice system that need to be fixed. With a healthy sense of urgency, we will continue to work hard to make our community a safer place.

We hope this annual report will be informative. To learn more about the Crime Commission, the Safe Community Action Plan, and crime trends, go to <https://memphiscrime.org>.

Respectfully,



Ben Adams  
Board Chair



Bill Gibbons  
President

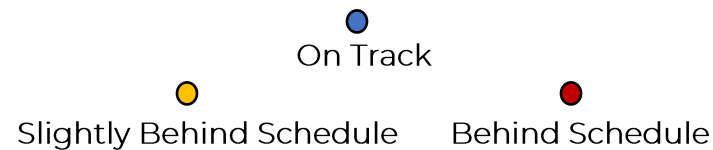
# The Safe Community Action Plan

Recently, the Council on Criminal Justice identified ten essential steps that a community's action plan to reduce violence should include. The new Safe Community Action Plan addresses all ten steps.

- ◇ The plan commits to specific, concrete outcomes.
- ◇ The plan has a focus on key people and places driving the violence.
- ◇ It engages key players as stakeholders in the plan's implementation.
- ◇ It offers those responsible for violence opportunities to change their behavior.
- ◇ The plan emphasizes place-based policing and investments.
- ◇ It places responsibility for violence reduction at the top.
- ◇ With focus on victims of domestic violence, it recognizes the need for trauma-informed approaches.
- ◇ The plan recognizes the importance of workforce development for ex-offenders.
- ◇ It supports funding for new stakeholders and approaches.
- ◇ It recognizes the importance of assessing performance based on data and information sharing.

Coupled with the parameters set by the Crime Commission Board of Directors, taken together, the 20 Action Steps spelled out in the plan can, if implemented properly and sustained, have a significant impact on our community crime rate.

## The Safe Community Action Plan Status Report



### Gun Violence

- **Action Step 1:** Maintain and scale up the current focused deterrence initiative which uses a “carrot and stick” approach and apply it to serious juvenile offenders as well as adults.
- **Action Step 2:** Scale up the current Group Violence Intervention effort by expanding the number of credible violence interveners who seek to prevent acts of retaliatory violence.
- **Action Step 3:** Continue vigorous federal prosecution of gun crime as a priority through Project Safe Neighborhoods.
- **Action Step 4:** Communicate to the street level a clear message about the consequences of engaging in gun crime.
- **Action Step 5:** Develop and implement an effort to reduce thefts of vehicles and guns from vehicles.
- **Action Step 6:** Establish a special Memphis Police Department Unit to investigate aggravated assault incidents involving guns more effectively.

## Juveniles

- **Action Step 7:** Expand efforts to meet the needs of our community's vulnerable youth before they encounter law enforcement or the juvenile justice system, with emphasis on character and emotional development, good decision-making, and goal setting.
- **Action Step 8:** To help break the cycle of repeat delinquent offenders, implement a community-wide youth assessment center that (1) is based on a model with a proven track record of working and (2) provides needs assessments and appropriate interventions for non-violent offenders.
- **Action Step 9:** Develop a system of intensive supervision, rehabilitation, and treatment for serious juvenile offenders.

## Law Enforcement Staffing/Development

- **Action Step 10:** Resolve shortages in local law enforcement staffing and effectively use personnel and technology to maintain and scale up data-driven, proactive policing.
- **Action Step 11:** Loosen the residency requirement for local law enforcement officers.
- **Action Step 12:** Involve the community in the recruitment of local law enforcement officers (from Reimagining Policing Report).
- **Action Step 13:** Establish a public safety optional or charter high school for students who are interested in law enforcement and other public safety careers (from Reimagining Policing Report).

## Community Involvement

- **Action Step 14:** Expand the number of neighborhood watch groups in the City of Memphis.
- **Action Step 15:** Expand SafeWays' intensive crime prevention program for apartment communities.
- **Action Step 16:** Establish a Neighborhood Safety Initiative that strengthens community relations with law enforcement and other public agencies by focusing on specific crime and blight hotspots for specific periods of time.
- **Action Step 17:** Help break the cycle of repeat offenders by increasing employment opportunities for those supervised by the Tennessee Department of Correction and mandated by the Board of Parole to report to the Shelby County Office of Re-Entry as the department's Community Resource Center.
- **Action Step 18:** Address the fragmented behavioral health resources for those within the criminal justice system by (1) identifying assets and gaps in processes and resources and (2) creating a coordinating group to develop a plan for ongoing actions and improvements.

## Domestic Violence

- **Action Step 19:** Establish an effective Domestic Violence Task Force made up of key stakeholders to oversee (1) development of a strategic plan for addressing domestic violence and (2) implementation of the plan.

## Justice System Reform

- **Action Step 20:** Enact truth-in-sentencing state legislation to insure accountability for criminal conduct and confidence in our state's sentencing structure.

# 2023 DATA\*

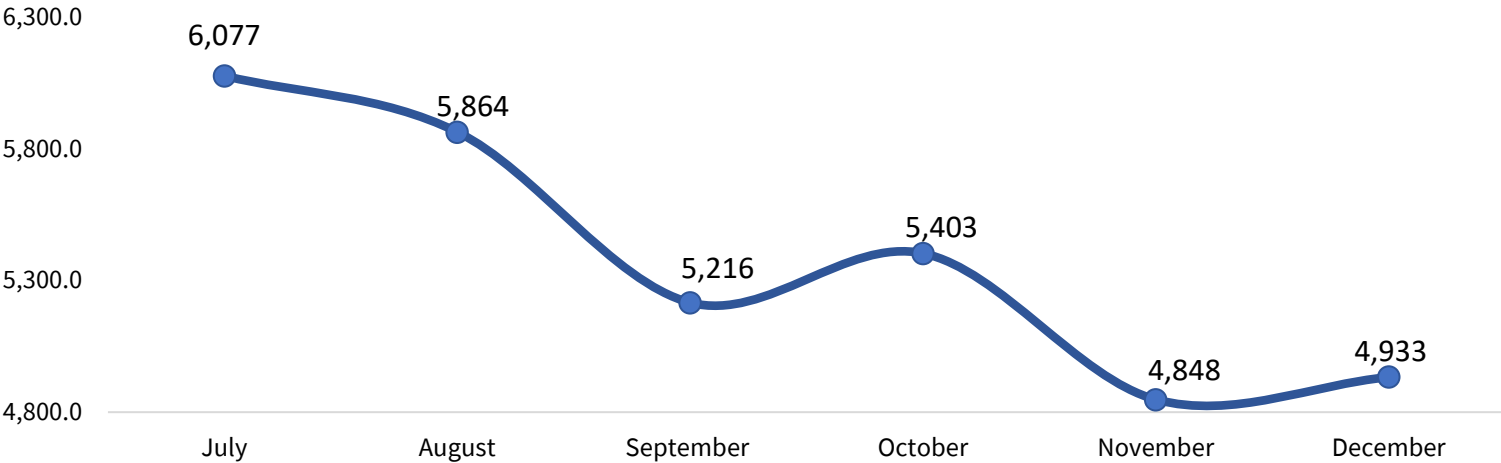
**6.0%** ▲  
**Overall Crime Rate  
In Shelby County**  
*In 2023 compared to 2022*

**6.3%** ▲  
**Major Violent Crime Rate  
In Shelby County**  
*In 2023 compared to 2022*

**15.8%** ▲  
**Major Property Crime Rate  
In Shelby County**  
*In 2023 compared to 2022*

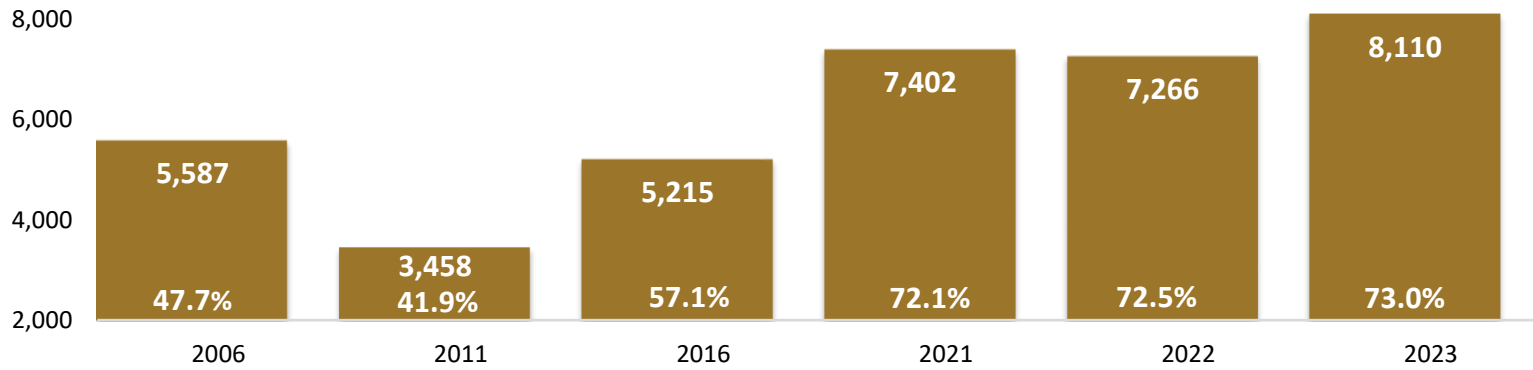
\* Based on preliminary data from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

## City of Memphis Last Half of 2023 Shows Downward Trend in Crime\*



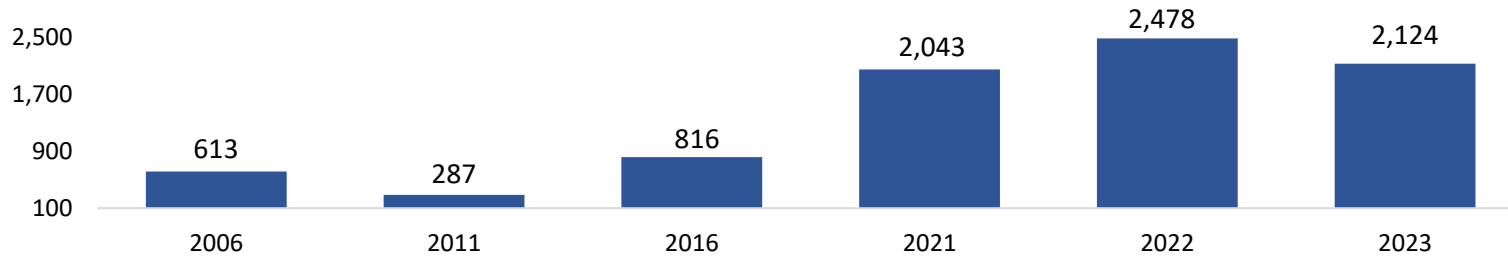
\* Includes reported incidents of homicides, robberies, rapes, aggravated assaults, arsons, auto thefts, other felony thefts, and burglaries.  
Source: Memphis Police Department

Number and Percentage of Reported Violent Incidents Involving Guns in Memphis in 2023



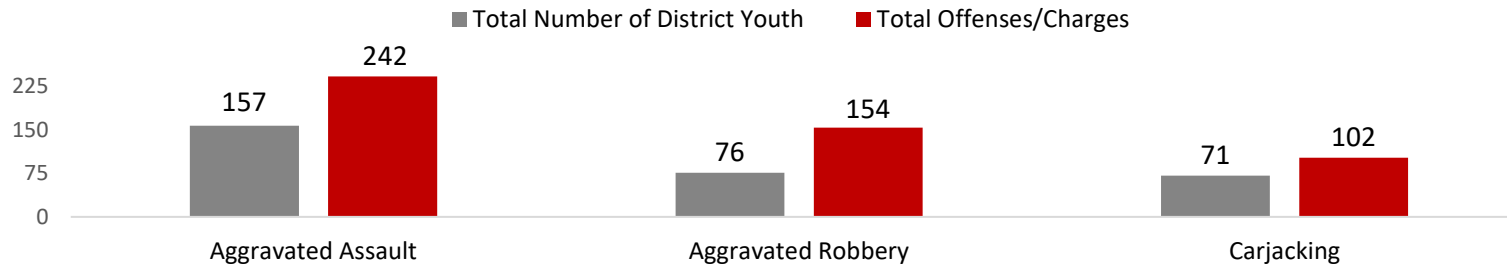
Source: Memphis Police Department

Guns Reported Stolen From Motor Vehicles in Memphis in 2023



Source: Memphis Police Department

Serious Delinquent Juvenile Offenses (Charges) with the Highest Frequency in 2023



Source: Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County.

# The Memphis Shelby Crime Commission

The Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation governed by a diverse 50-member board of directors made up of key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. Its primary mission is to improve public safety in the Memphis and Shelby County community by identifying and promoting evidence-based and evidence-informed best practices. It is the leading community-based entity focused on public safety. It has created unprecedented partnerships with businesses, schools, neighborhood organizations, faith-based entities, public safety agencies, and local violence prevention organizations.

The Crime Commission was created in 1996 at a time when the Memphis community was experiencing a disturbing increase in violent crime in particular. Looking at approaches taken in a number of other cities, key public and private stakeholders came together to create the Crime Commission as an independent entity to identify and promote best practices to improve public safety.

For more information go to <https://memphiscrime.org/>



## Research Partnership With the University of Memphis

Monitoring progress and assessing the impact of the Safe Community Action Plan is aided by a partnership between the Crime Commission and the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute (PSI). The Institute is housed in the University's School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy and draws on researchers from multiple disciplines and departments across the University, including the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. One of the hallmarks of this collaborative effort is to bring academic rigor to assessment of the crime prevention and reduction objectives of the Safe Community Action Plan.

The PSI plays a key role in independently evaluating and assessing the success of Safe Community Action Plan steps as they are implemented.

In 2023, evaluations or assessments were completed on focused deterrence, violence intervention, the Youth and Family Resource Center, the Neighborhood Safety Initiative, and domestic violence (resulting in a domestic violence strategic plan).

All are available on the PSI website at <https://www.memphis.edu/psi/research/> and the Crime Commission website at <https://memphiscrime.org/>.



600 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 400  
Memphis, TN 38105

## OUR MISSION

The Crime Commission seeks to improve public safety in the Memphis and Shelby County community by identifying and promoting evidenced-based and evidence-informed best practices.