



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 20, 2020

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact: Linda Russell  
901.385.4230  
lrsell8@memphis.edu

## FIRST QUARTER CRIME STATS SHOW MIXED RESULTS Some March Figures Possibly Affected by COVID-19

**MEMPHIS** – The Public Safety Institute at the University of Memphis and the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission have released preliminary crime figures from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) for the first quarter of 2020 (January-March) compared to certain previous years.

The first quarter figures show mixed results, with some results possibly affected by a change in community activity during March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The major violent rate is based on the aggregate number of reported murders, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults. Compared to the first quarter of last year, the violent crime rate dropped 4.3% in the City of Memphis and 5.2% throughout Shelby County. The decline was driven by reductions in reported aggravated assaults and rapes. While making up a very small part of the aggregate major violent crime number, the most serious violent crime of murder jumped 18.9% in Memphis compared to the first quarter of last year and increased 21.6% countywide.

Reported robberies increased slightly in Memphis (+ 2.1%) and declined slightly countywide (- 1.1%) during the first quarter. However, the slight increase for the quarter was driven by a significant increase in March. In Memphis, reported robberies were 21.2% higher than in March of last year.

Major property crime is based on the aggregate number of burglaries, motor vehicle thefts and other felony thefts. The overall major property crime rate remained basically steady compared to the first quarter of last year. However, there were very significant swings in the burglary and motor vehicle theft categories.

Reported burglaries plummeted by 23.4% in Memphis and 23.8% countywide compared to the first quarter of 2019. Looking at March alone, reported burglaries in Memphis were down 24% compared to March of last year. This may be attributable to a significant number of citizens staying at home in March due to the COVID-19 crisis.

At the same time, reported motor vehicle thefts skyrocketed by 23.6% in Memphis and 21.7% throughout Shelby County. In March alone, reported motor vehicle thefts in Memphis were up 31.5% compared to March of 2019.

In past years, reported robberies and vehicle thefts have tended to increase during the summer months when schools are not in session. Due to spring breaks coupled with the COVID-19 crisis, schools were closed for most of March.

“Based on preliminary figures from the Memphis Police Department, the significant increases in reported robberies and motor vehicle thefts and significant decreases in reported burglaries in March continued during the first two weeks of April,” said Bill Gibbons, executive director of the Public Safety Institute and president of the Crime Commission.

Reported domestic violence incidents were down during the first quarter compared to 2019 – by 3% in Memphis and 3.2% countywide. And in March alone, reported domestic violence incidents were down 9.3% in Memphis compared to March of 2019.

However, Gibbons gave a word of caution on the domestic violence figures.

“It is very possible that many victims of domestic violence feel trapped during the COVID-19 crisis, feeling it is unsafe to call 911 with perpetrators remaining close by in the home and with no alternative places to go for safety. Even under difficult circumstances, victims should always try to safely seek help,” Gibbons said.

The TBI also measures 54 different categories of crime (called Group A crimes) to get a picture of the overall crime rate. During the first quarter, the overall Group A crime rate dropped 2.2% in Memphis and 4.4% throughout the county.

More information on local crime trends are available on the Crime Commission’s website at [www.memhiscrime.org](http://www.memhiscrime.org).

###

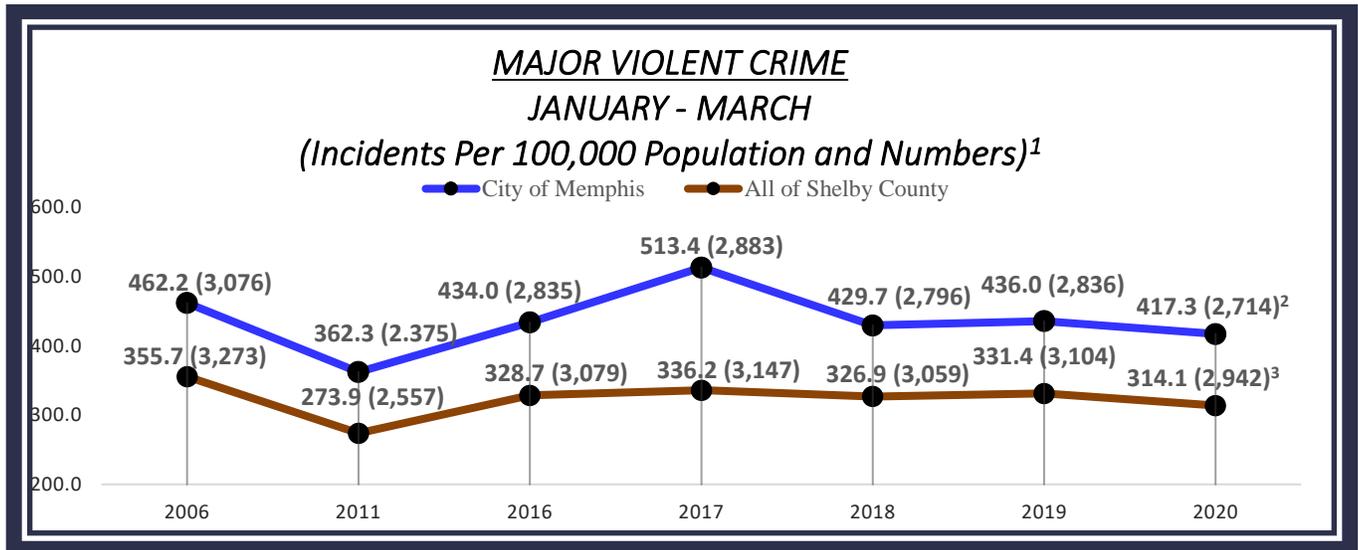
**About the Crime Statistics:** In measuring overall crime rates and trends, the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and the Public Safety Institute use data reported by local enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS), which was developed and is maintained by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. An incident is defined in TIBRS as “one or more offenses committed by the same offender or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place.” Certain types of violent crimes and domestic violence offenses, however, uniquely refer to a victim count versus an incident count. All rates are calculated based on per 100,000 population.

**About the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission ([www.memphiscrime.org](http://www.memphiscrime.org)):** Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is an independent, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that “quarterbacks” the work of the Safe Community Plan and its partners. It is funded through the generous contributions of many private sector donors. Ben Adams, chairman emeritus of Baker Donelson law firm, serves as chair of the board, and Bill Gibbons serves as president of the Commission.

**About the Safe Community Plan ([www.memphiscrime.org](http://www.memphiscrime.org)):** Launched in 2007, the Safe Community Plan, an action plan spearheaded by the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, is a community-based crime reduction

initiative. Implementation of the Safe Community Plan is chaired by Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weirich.

**About the Public Safety Institute ([www.memphis.edu/psi/](http://www.memphis.edu/psi/)):** The Public Safety Institute of the University of Memphis is an interdisciplinary part of the University community committed to identifying and advancing best practices in the field of public safety. It is housed in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. Bill Gibbons serves as executive director.

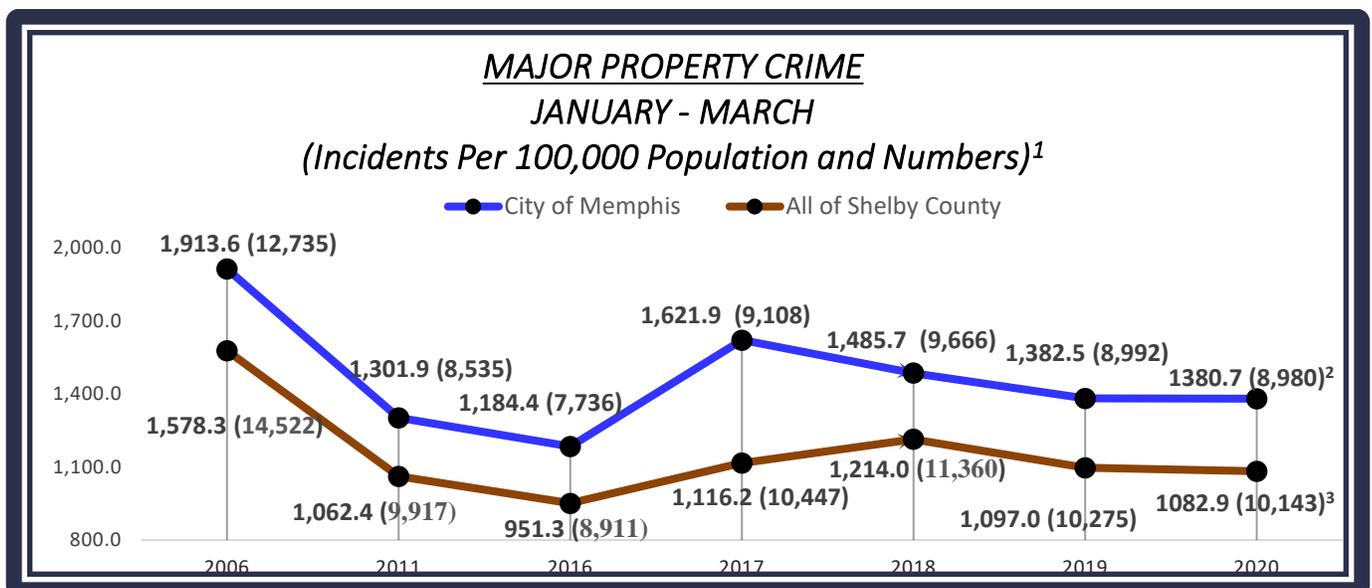


<sup>1</sup> Includes murders, forcible rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2019 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 9.7 percent from 2006 and an decrease of 4.3 percent from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 11.7 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 5.2 percent from 2019 in all of Shelby County.



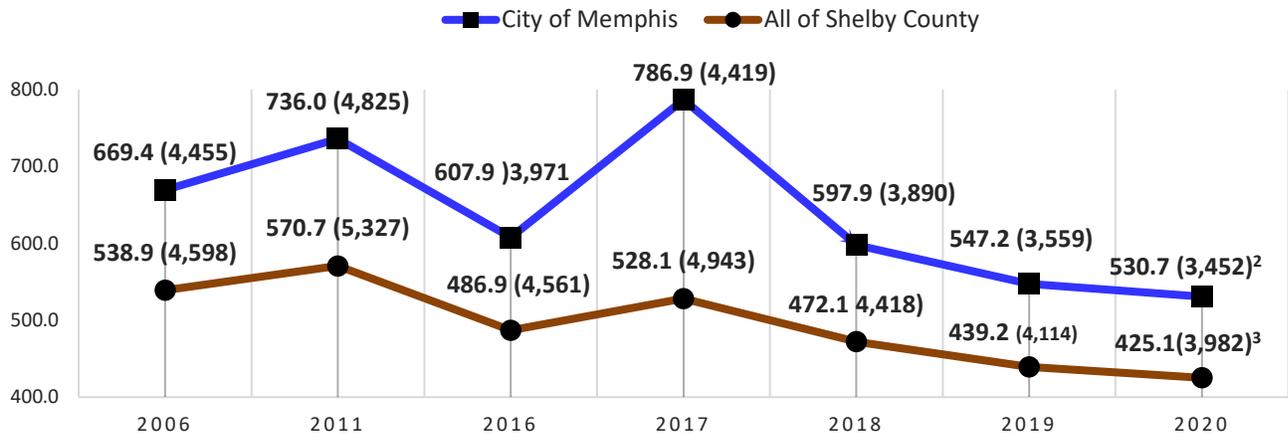
<sup>1</sup> Includes burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and other felony thefts.

Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2019 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 27.8% from 2006 and a decrease of 0.1% from 2019 in the City of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 31.4% from 2006 and a decrease of 1.3% from 2019 in all of Shelby County.

**REPORTED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENSES**  
**JANUARY - MARCH**  
**(RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION AND NUMBERS)<sup>1</sup>**

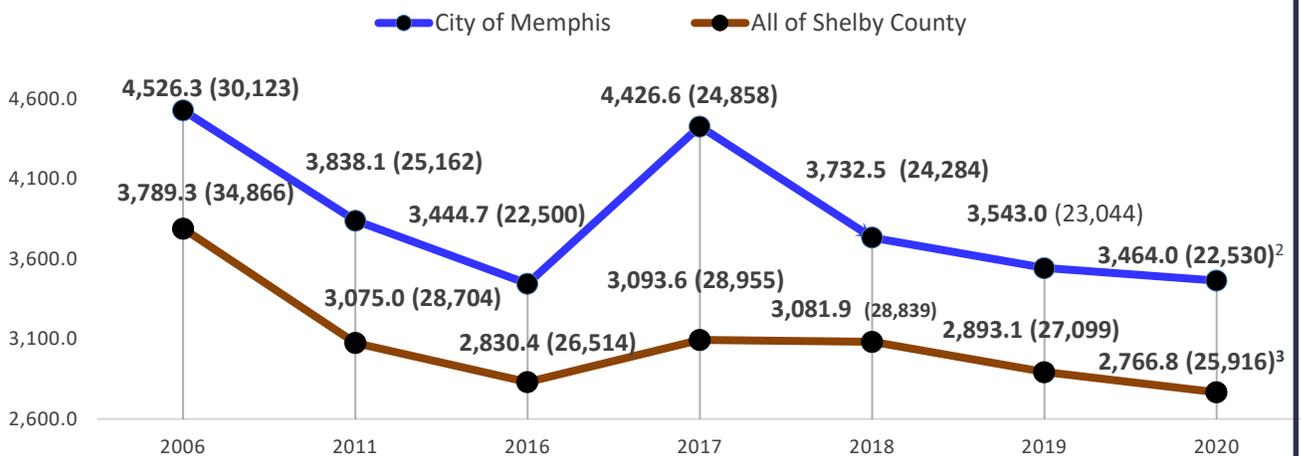


<sup>1</sup> Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2020 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 20.7 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 3.0 percent from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a decrease of 21.1 percent from 2006 and a decrease of 3.2 percent from 2019 in all of Shelby County.

**OVERALL CRIME**  
**JANUARY - MARCH**  
**(Incidents Per 100,000 Population and Numbers)<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The overall crime rate is measured by 54 separate types of "Group A crimes" tracked by the T.B.I. Source: Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The 2019 TBI figures are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 figure is a 23.5 percent decrease from 2006 and a 2.2 percent decrease from 2019 in the city of Memphis.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 figure is a 27.0 percent decrease from 2006 and a 4.4 percent decrease from 2018 for all of Shelby County.

Table 2.2 Memphis, TN: Crime Rates: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Memphis, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES											
CRIME RATES (Offenses per 100,000 Population*)											
January 1 - March 31, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder <sup>2</sup>	4.8	3.8	7.7	8.0	4.9	5.7	6.8	40.7%	77.4%	-11.6%	18.9%
Rape <sup>2,3</sup>	16.7	22.6	19.7	29.9	16.0	18.9	15.2	-8.7%	-32.6%	-22.9%	-19.5%
Aggravated Assault <sup>2,4</sup>	256.0	234.1	288.9	344.2	306.2	330.3	312.4	22.0%	33.4%	8.1%	-5.4%
Robbery	184.7	101.7	117.7	131.2	102.7	81.2	82.9	-55.1%	-18.5%	-29.6%	2.1%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>2,4</sup></b>	<b>462.2</b>	<b>362.3</b>	<b>434.0</b>	<b>513.4</b>	<b>429.7</b>	<b>436.0</b>	<b>417.3</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>-3.9%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>
Burglary	531.8	402.4	303.4	363.5	288.5	274.1	209.9	-60.5%	-47.8%	-30.8%	-23.4%
Theft Offenses	1154.6	798.2	784.5	1082.2	993.8	970.9	1000.9	-13.3%	25.4%	27.6%	3.1%
Motor Vehicle Theft	227.2	101.3	96.5	176.3	203.3	137.5	169.9	-25.2%	67.7%	76.1%	23.6%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>1913.6</b>	<b>1301.9</b>	<b>1184.4</b>	<b>1621.9</b>	<b>1485.7</b>	<b>1382.5</b>	<b>1380.7</b>	<b>-27.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>5</sup>	782.3	840.5	630.6	786.0	600.2	561.3	535.8	-31.5%	-36.2%	-15.0%	-4.5%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>6</sup>	205.4	226.1	156.2	165.4	138.5	123.5	111.8	-45.6%	-50.6%	-28.4%	-9.5%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>6</sup>	64.0	47.7	47.2	56.1	48.4	49.4	67.8	5.9%	42.0%	43.8%	37.4%
Domestic Violence	669.4	736.0	607.9	786.9	597.9	547.2	530.7	-20.7%	-27.9%	-12.7%	-3.0%
<b>Total Group A Offenses<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>4526.3</b>	<b>3838.1</b>	<b>3444.7</b>	<b>4426.6</b>	<b>3732.5</b>	<b>3543.0</b>	<b>3464.0</b>	<b>-23.5%</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>
<b>Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm<sup>3</sup></b>			<b>337.4</b>	<b>379.1</b>	<b>328.5</b>	<b>340.7</b>	<b>342.7</b>			<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

\* Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.

\* Rates and population figures are based on 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, and 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. The latest estimates available, 2018 Estimates, are used to calculate the 2019 and 2020 population estimates based on the UCR methodology which are then used for calculating the rates for 2019 and 2020 respectively.

POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	665,512	655,590	653,184	561,562	650,618	650,410	650,410

**Table 2.1 Memphis, TN: Number of Offenses: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Memphis, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES											
January 1 - March 31, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder <sup>2</sup>	32	25	50	45	32	37	44	37.5%	76.0%	-12.0%	18.9%
Rape <sup>2,3</sup>	111	148	129	168	104	123	99	-10.8%	-33.1%	-23.3%	-19.5%
Aggravated Assault <sup>2,4</sup>	1,704	1,535	1,887	1,933	1,992	2,148	2,032	19.2%	32.4%	7.7%	-5.4%
Robbery	1,229	667	769	737	668	528	539	-56.1%	-19.2%	-29.9%	2.1%
MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME <sup>2,4</sup>	3,076	2,375	2,835	2,883	2,796	2,836	2,714	-11.8%	14.3%	-4.3%	-4.3%
Burglary	3,539	2,638	1,982	2,041	1,877	1,783	1,365	-61.4%	-48.3%	-31.1%	-23.4%
Theft Offenses	7,684	5,233	5,124	6,077	6,466	6,315	6,510	-15.3%	24.4%	27.0%	3.1%
Motor Vehicle Theft	1,512	664	630	990	1,323	894	1,105	-26.9%	66.4%	75.4%	23.6%
MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME	12,735	8,535	7,736	9,108	9,666	8,992	8,980	-29.5%	5.2%	16.1%	-0.1%
Simple Assault <sup>5</sup>	5,206	5,510	4,119	4,414	3,905	3,651	3,485	-33.1%	-36.8%	-15.4%	-4.5%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>8</sup>	1,367	1,482	1,020	929	901	803	727	-46.8%	-50.9%	-28.7%	-9.5%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>6</sup>	426	313	308	315	315	321	441	3.5%	40.9%	43.2%	37.4%
Domestic Violence	4,455	4,825	3,971	4,419	3,890	3,559	3,452	-22.5%	-28.5%	-13.1%	-3.0%
Total Group A Offenses <sup>7</sup>	30,123	25,162	22,500	24,858	24,284	23,044	22,530	-25.2%	-10.5%	0.1%	-2.2%
Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm <sup>7</sup>			2,204	2,129	2,137	2,216	2,229			1.1%	0.6%

\* Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.

**Table 1.2 Shelby County, TN: Crime Rates: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report											
Shelby County, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES											
CRIME RATES (Offenses per 100,000 Population*)											
January 1 - March 31, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020											
Selected Offenses of Interest											
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20
Murder	3.5	2.8	5.3	4.8	3.5	4.0	4.8	38.1%	72.5%	-10.0%	21.6%
Rape <sup>2</sup>	13.0	17.6	15.6	20.5	12.8	15.6	12.7	-2.6%	-27.7%	-18.5%	-18.5%
Aggravated Assault <sup>3</sup>	201.4	179.3	221.5	229.0	234.0	251.1	236.5	17.4%	31.9%	6.8%	-5.8%
Robbery	137.8	74.2	86.3	81.9	76.5	60.7	60.1	-56.4%	-19.0%	-30.3%	-1.1%
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>355.7</b>	<b>273.9</b>	<b>328.7</b>	<b>336.2</b>	<b>326.9</b>	<b>331.4</b>	<b>314.1</b>	<b>-11.7%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>
Burglary	431.8	319.5	236.7	240.3	228.4	211.1	160.9	-62.7%	-49.6%	-32.0%	-23.8%
Theft Offenses	967.3	663.3	640.9	758.6	828.3	779.4	792.5	-18.1%	19.5%	23.6%	1.7%
Motor Vehicle Theft	179.2	79.6	73.7	117.3	157.3	106.4	129.5	-27.7%	62.7%	75.8%	21.7%
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>1578.3</b>	<b>1062.4</b>	<b>951.3</b>	<b>1116.2</b>	<b>1214.0</b>	<b>1097.0</b>	<b>1082.9</b>	<b>-31.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>
Simple Assault <sup>4</sup>	644.3	660.2	530.3	554.1	502.4	475.8	446.8	-30.7%	-32.3%	-15.8%	-6.1%
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>5</sup>	206.3	189.9	153.4	140.3	146.1	130.5	113.5	-45.0%	-40.3%	-26.0%	-13.0%
Weapon Law Violations <sup>5</sup>	53.7	38.1	42.8	43.8	44.6	41.4	53.9	0.4%	41.4%	25.9%	30.2%
Domestic Violence	538.9	570.7	486.9	528.1	472.1	439.2	425.1	-21.1%	-25.5%	-12.7%	-3.2%
Total Group A Offenses <sup>6</sup>	3789.3	3075.0	2830.4	3093.6	3081.9	2893.1	2766.8	-27.0%	-10.0%	-2.2%	-4.4%
Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm <sup>6</sup>			252.0	247.8	250.9	255.5	255.4			1.3%	0.0%

\* Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.

\* Rates and population figures are based on 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, and 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. The latest estimates available, 2018 Estimates, are used to calculate the 2019 and 2020 population estimates based on the UCR methodology which are then used for calculating the rates for 2019 and 2020 respectively.

POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	920,106	933,457	936,759	935,973	935,764	936,686	936,686

**Table 1.1 Shelby County, TN: Number of Offenses: 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020**

Operation Safe Community - Crime Trend Report												
Shelby County, TN - TIBRS' GROUP A OFFENSES												
January 1 - March 31, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020												
Selected Offenses of Interest												
Offense Type	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2006-20	% Change 2011-20	% Change 2016-20	% Change 2019-20	
Murder	32	26	50	45	33	37	45	40.6%	73.1%	-10.0%	21.6%	
Rape <sup>2</sup>	120	164	146	192	120	146	119	-0.8%	-27.4%	-18.5%	-18.5%	
Aggravated Assault <sup>3</sup>	1,853	1,674	2,075	2,143	2,190	2,352	2,215	19.5%	32.3%	6.7%	-5.8%	
Robbery	1,268	693	808	767	716	569	563	-55.6%	-18.8%	-30.3%	-1.1%	
<b>MAJOR VIOLENT CRIME<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>3,273</b>	<b>2,557</b>	<b>3,079</b>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>3,104</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>	
Burglary	3,973	2,982	2,217	2,249	2,137	1,977	1,507	-62.1%	-49.5%	-32.0%	-23.8%	
Theft Offenses	8,900	6,192	6,004	7,100	7,751	7,301	7,423	-16.6%	19.9%	23.6%	1.7%	
Motor Vehicle Theft	1,649	743	690	1,098	1,472	997	1,213	-26.4%	63.3%	75.8%	21.7%	
<b>MAJOR PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>14,522</b>	<b>9,917</b>	<b>8,911</b>	<b>10,447</b>	<b>11,360</b>	<b>10,275</b>	<b>10,143</b>	<b>-30.2%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	
Simple Assault <sup>4</sup>	5,928	6,163	4,968	5,186	4,701	4,457	4,185	-29.4%	-32.1%	-15.8%	-6.1%	
Drug/Narcotic Violations <sup>5</sup>	1,898	1,773	1,437	1,313	1,367	1,222	1,063	-44.0%	-40.0%	-26.0%	-13.0%	
Weapon Law Violations <sup>5</sup>	494	356	401	410	417	388	505	2.2%	41.9%	25.9%	30.2%	
Domestic Violence	4,958	5,327	4,561	4,943	4,418	4,114	3,982	-19.7%	-25.2%	-12.7%	-3.2%	
<b>Total Group A Offenses<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>34,866</b>	<b>28,704</b>	<b>26,514</b>	<b>28,955</b>	<b>28,839</b>	<b>27,099</b>	<b>25,916</b>	<b>-25.7%</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>	
<b>Total Group A Offenses Involving Firearm<sup>6</sup></b>			<b>2,361</b>	<b>2,319</b>	<b>2,348</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>2,392</b>			<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Due to changes in reporting offenses involving firearms, TIBRS figures are not comparable to data prior to 2016.