

*THE STATE OF CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
IN FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS*

*AN INDEPENDENT, COMPREHENSIVE
RESEARCH ANALYSIS*

Second Edition – Updated March 2025

INTRODUCTION

Commissioned by Fort Bend County District Attorney Brian Middleton, the second edition of this report delivers an expanded and comprehensive analysis of crime and criminal justice trends in Fort Bend County, Texas. Building upon the initial study completed in January 2024, this updated version incorporates an additional two years of National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data, integrates insights from qualitative interviews with key officials, and provides further recommendations for informed decision making, policy recommendations, and alignment with recognized best practices in the field.

Dr. Elizabeth Gilmore and Dr. Kevin Buckler, who authored the initial report in January 2024, continue to lead this ongoing study as independent researchers (they are not full-time employees of the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office).

From the inception of this report, District Attorney Middleton emphasized the necessity for an objective and comprehensive analysis of crime trends, law enforcement operations, and the broader criminal justice system in Fort Bend County. He underscored a commitment to transparency, asserting that findings should be reported truthfully, irrespective of whether they reflected positively, neutrally, or negatively on any agency or office, inclusive of his own. In alignment with this directive, the researchers, serving as independent and neutral parties, remain dedicated to conducting impartial and rigorous analysis throughout the ongoing analysis.

Since the project's establishment, District Attorney Middleton has emphasized the importance of independent research, recognizing its capacity to produce valid and unbiased results. Independent research, when conducted using a systematic and exhaustive approach, can offer a level of objectivity that internal reviews may lack due to potential conflicts of interest or biases. By engaging external scholars, District Attorney Middleton aimed to foster public trust in the findings and to support the development of evidence-based strategies for improving justice outcomes. This report is grounded in empirical data, both qualitative and quantitative, offering a balanced and nuanced understanding of current challenges and opportunities currently existing in Fort Bend County.

The project encompasses a complex and evolving scope, presenting ongoing challenges that are actively addressed in collaboration with District Attorney Middleton. Regular reviews and adjustments are integral to the project's adaptive management strategy, ensuring alignment with its objectives and responsiveness to emerging issues. This iterative approach facilitates continuous improvement and upholds the project's commitment to transparency and effectiveness. Conducting a longitudinal analysis of crime data required the aggregation and standardization of information from multiple law enforcement agencies, each with its own reporting systems, protocols, and policies. These differences presented obstacles to obtaining clean, consistent, and comparable datasets. Additionally, many law enforcement agencies faced limitations in resources related to data management, further complicating the process. Variances in data management systems, differences in how data were tracked, and occasional limitations in access due to privacy concerns for citizens further complicated the process. These barriers underscore why large-scale, cross-agency crime studies remain rare and demanding.

Nonetheless, District Attorney Middleton remained committed to the endeavor, believing that the benefits of a comprehensive understanding of crime and justice in Fort Bend County outweighed the difficulties. He has continued to provide ongoing support by facilitating access to data and relevant contacts while maintaining a clear boundary to ensure the research remained independent. His support

reflects a broader commitment to evidence-based decision-making and a desire to improve safety and justice for the residents of Fort Bend County.

With this assurance, the research team has undertaken a second iteration of the report, maintaining a steadfast commitment to deepening the understanding of the subject matter. This ongoing effort underscores the importance of independent research in producing reliable, valid, and unbiased results, fostering public trust, and informing evidence-based strategies for improving justice outcomes.

This revised report offers an expanded and updated analysis of crime and criminal justice trends in Fort Bend County, Texas. It details the data collected, methods employed, insights from qualitative interviews, interpretive findings, and refined recommendations. By contextualizing local trends within broader best practices in criminal justice, the report serves as a resource to aid policymakers, practitioners, and community members in making informed decisions that promote safety, fairness, and transparency throughout Fort Bend County's justice system.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH

Beyond the Official Statistics: The Reality of Underreported Crime

In criminal justice research, it is a longstanding and widely accepted practice to base large-scale crime data analyses on incidents reported to law enforcement agencies. These analyses commonly utilize data from nationally recognized systems such as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program and, more recently, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which provide standardized information on reported crimes across various jurisdictions. While these sources are invaluable for identifying trends, by design, they inherently exclude crimes not reported to law enforcement, leading to an incomplete representation of actual criminal activity.

Readers must understand that crime data from national sources such as the UCR or NIBRS, or data presented by their local police department in an annual report, constitutes only a *portion* of the actual criminal activity occurring within any community. While this limitation is widely recognized in fields that frequently research criminal justice issues, it is worth acknowledging in the context of this report. A notable fact persists in arguably every community in the United States: not all crime is reported to law enforcement.

As such, the underreporting of crime leads to a discrepancy between actual criminal activity and official statistics. This phenomenon is commonly referred to "dark figure of crime," by researchers in the field - a term that denotes the gap between the true incidence of crime and the number of crimes recorded by police. This discrepancy presents a significant challenge in crime data analysis, as it affects the accuracy of crime trends and statistics. It is an issue that remains pervasive in criminological research, as the unreported nature of many crimes means that official crime data cannot fully capture the complete reality of criminal behavior.

Several factors contribute to the dark figure of crime, including the victim's willingness or reluctance to report crimes. Victims may choose not to report crimes for a variety of reasons, such as fear of retaliation, distrust in the police, or feelings of shame and embarrassment (particularly in cases involving a "known offender" when the crime involves intimate partner violence or sexual assault). According to research, underreporting is frequent for crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and even child abuse (*Baumer, 2002*). These types of crimes are often viewed as private or personal

matters, and cultural norms, social stigma, and differing perceptions of severity can significantly influence how victims interpret their experiences. As a result, victims may fear not being believed or being stigmatized by authorities or their communities, leading many incidents to go unreported and therefore absent from official statistics (*Lorenz, Dewald, & Venema, 2021*).

Additionally, some victims may perceive certain offenses, particularly minor or non-violent crimes, as too insignificant to report, or doubt that law enforcement lacks the resources or willingness to take meaningful action. This perception can be especially prevalent in cases such as petty theft, vandalism, or harassment, where victims may assume that the chances of recovery or prosecution are minimal. For example, a person whose child's bicycle is stolen from an apartment complex parking lot might choose not to report the incident, assuming the police cannot track the property and that the case would be deprioritized among more serious crimes.

Victims may also choose not to report crimes due to practical considerations, such as the perceived insignificance of the incident or the anticipated inconvenience of engaging with law enforcement. For instance, an individual discovering their car has been vandalized while en route to work may opt against reporting the damage, believing that the time required to notify the agency, wait for an officer, and file a report would cause undue delays. These victims may also perceive that the likelihood of recovering damages is minimal, and therefore, their victimization is perceived as not worthy of their investment of time.

Beyond logistical concerns, a significant barrier to crime reporting is the level of trust individuals have in law enforcement. Negative past experiences, perceived bias, or a general sense of police ineffectiveness can deter victims from seeking assistance. Distrust is particularly pronounced in communities that have experienced over-policing or discriminatory practices. Research indicates that areas with depleted levels of perceived community social capital are correlated with higher levels of police distrust (*MacDonald & Stokes, 2006*).

Conversely, certain types of crimes are more likely to be reported to the police. For example, crimes such as auto theft, substantial burglaries, or major property damage are more likely to be reported because victims often need a police report to file insurance claims or attempt to recover stolen property. Similarly, crimes that have a clear financial impact, such as fraud or identity theft, are more likely to be reported when victims seek compensation or legal remedies.

The reporting rate for certain violent crimes, such as robberies where the perpetrator is often unknown to the victim, tends to be higher due to the immediate danger and trauma experienced by the victim. These types of crimes often compel the victim to seek immediate police intervention for both safety and to report a tangible loss. Compared to other types of violent crime, homicide tends to be a crime that is most precisely recorded and contains the most complete data in law enforcement records (*Oberwittler, 2019; Smit, Dr Jong, & Bijleveld, 2011*).

While fluctuations exist, victims of some types of crimes are more likely to report incidents in hopes of receiving immediate assistance, to prevent further victimization, or to create an official record of the incident. This tendency also creates a skew in the data, as crimes with a higher propensity to be reported are often more visible in official statistics compared to those that remain unreported.

The dark figure of crime thus remains a critical challenge in *all* crime data analysis, as it directly impacts the perceived prevalence and severity of criminal activities within a given area. Researchers and the subsequent consumers of the research produced, must recognize that police reports and official data provide only a partial view of the true crime landscape.

To help address the limitation of unreported crime, the researchers made a sustained effort to engage directly with leaders and data managers from each law enforcement agency included in the study. These conversations aimed to contextualize observed crime trends and provide a deeper understanding of the reported data. Local agencies were cooperative in sharing incident details, report data, and other relevant information upon request. The researchers incorporated information about the demographics and characteristics of the communities within each geographical area. This collaboration helped ensure that the analysis was informed by local insights, providing a more nuanced interpretation of the data and how it reflects the realities of crime and policing in those specific regions.

In future iterations of the report, the research team intends to expand these efforts by involving additional community stakeholders, such as victim support organizations, mental health professionals, and residents, through interviews and observational methods to further enrich the analysis.

Understanding Differences Between UCR and NIBRS: Implications for Crime Data Reporting and Interpretation

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) are two distinct crime data collection and reporting systems, managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The two programs vary significantly in their data collection methods, scope, and detail. As such, any subsequent report generated by one of these systems has its unique structure, advantages, and limitations compared to the other. Most notably, the UCR and NIBRS report and count crime data variables differently, creating a difference in findings between the systems. Understanding the differences between these systems is included for discussion within this report; as such, understanding is crucial for accurately interpreting crime statistics and analyzing crime trends over time.

During the 1920's members of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police formed the Committee on Uniform Crime Reporting. The goal of the committee was to develop a standardized system of police data and statistics for consistency in reporting and to provide an overall national picture of crime in the United States. After investigating variations between state criminal codes and the differing forms of record keeping amongst agencies, the committee submitted a plan that could be used by agencies to report data. This initial report identified seven basic offense definitions and the data requirements for each. The seven crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and larceny) were initially deemed "Crime Index Offenses" because it was believed that they served as indicators that demonstrated which types of crime was increasing or decreasing in the United States. At the time, the reporting and collection of data was a completely manual undertaking, as no computers existed to assist with the compilation of data, making it critical to have a system that was as succinct as possible.

In January of 1930, 400 cities that represented 20 million citizens in 43 states marked the inaugural collective of agencies to begin participating in the UCR program. In that same year, Congress authorized the Attorney General to collect national crime data. In response, he designated the FBI to serve as the national clearinghouse for the collection of crime statistics. The stated objective of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program was to produce a reliable set of criminal statistics at both a state and national level for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. The data was also intended for use by other professionals and scholars who expressed interest in examining crime trends and were looking for data that was comparable across jurisdictions to assess trends. At the same time, the information was

thought to serve as an important reference source for the general public as an indicator of the crime factor within society.

For nearly 60 years, the UCR program remained virtually unchanged regarding the type of data collected and disseminated (with computers assisting with automating data collection in the 1960s and arson being added as the eighth index crime in 1979). However, in the 1980s, it became obvious that the UCR had become outdated and required evaluation and revision. In 1985, the FBI and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) made significant revisions to the UCR system, including adding new offenses, increasing information about victims and offenders, and expanding availability to interested users. Over time, revisions and modifications were made on an ongoing basis to include different crimes and incorporate changing terminology and definitions (the term Crime Index was discontinued in 2003, and the eight offenses were then referred to as Part I crimes, with the ninth and tenth crimes, human trafficking and involuntary servitude added in 2013).

Near the end of its time, the UCR employed a summary-based reporting system, where each month law enforcement agencies submitted aggregate data on crimes, which were categorized into two groups. Part I offenses, which were believed to be the most serious crimes, and Part II offenses, which included less severe crimes such as simple assault, drug violations, public drunkenness, and fraud (*FBI, n.d.*).

One of the primary limitations and frequent criticisms of the UCR program was its use of the "hierarchy rule." Under this rule, when multiple offenses occurred during a single incident, only the most serious offense was reported (with later exceptions made for three offenses: Arson, Human Trafficking – Commercial Sex Acts, and Human Trafficking - Involuntary Servitude, which were eventually designated to always be counted). For example, if both a robbery and a murder took place in the same event, only the murder would appear in the official UCR data. As a result, less serious offenses were excluded from reporting, leading to concerns about the underrepresentation of crime in official statistics. Despite this shortcoming, the UCR's summary-based format made it simpler for law enforcement agencies to compile and submit data, a practice that undoubtedly contributed to its longevity as a national standard.

In the mid-1980s, as the United States entered a period of technological growth, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was developed as a more detailed and comprehensive successor to the UCR, aiming to address some of the limitations frequently attributed to the UCR. Although initially implemented in the 1980s, NIBRS did not officially replace the UCR system nationwide until January 2021.

As the name implies, NIBRS collects incident-based data, capturing detailed information about each crime, including the nature and types of offenses, characteristics of victims and offenders, and the relationship between the parties involved (*Addington, 2009*). Unlike the UCR, NIBRS does not apply the hierarchy rule, meaning *all* offenses that occur within a single incident are recorded. This feature allows NIBRS to provide a more complete picture of criminal activity, though it also makes data collection more complex and time-consuming for law enforcement agencies. The richness of NIBRS data can support a more nuanced analysis of crime patterns. However, the transition from UCR to NIBRS has posed challenges, particularly when comparing historical UCR data with the newer NIBRS data.

An important difference between the systems is the sheer number of crime categories identified by each program, with NIBRS expanding categories and types of crimes reported. Unlike the UCR, NIBRS also distinguishes between attempted and completed crimes and expanded the definition of rape to include not only female but also male victims. The evolution from UCR to NIBRS has made it difficult to compare crime trends over time, as the differences in methods can lead to variations in crime rates. These

differences can be attributed to changes type of data that is collected rather than actual shifts in criminal activity. (*FBI, n.d.*). UCR scoring also collects less detailed information on each incident compared to NIBRS, making comparisons between the systems quite difficult.

The shift from UCR to NIBRS promised to mark a significant advancement in the quality and depth of crime data available in the United States. While NIBRS offers a more complete and detailed dataset for analyzing crime, its adoption requires adjustments in how crime trends are interpreted, especially when looking at historical data collected under the UCR system. Understanding the differences between these reporting systems and their respective strengths and limitations is essential for policymakers, researchers, and law enforcement officials seeking to make informed decisions based on crime data.

The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) has faced several challenges since its implementation, despite its reported detailed crime reporting capabilities compared to the previous Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system. One significant issue is limited nationwide participation; as of May 2024, approximately 82% of the U.S. population was covered by NIBRS reporting law enforcement agencies (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2024*). However, certain populous states, including California and New York, have developed their unique reporting systems that are believed to be compatible with NIBRS but may result in inconsistencies in national data coverage (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023; Congressional Research Service, 2021*). This lack of universal participation creates gaps in data, impacting the accuracy and reliability of nationwide crime statistics, and often alienating rural, lesser-funded agencies and the citizens they serve from the data.

Additionally, as NIBRS reporting requires more nuanced and detailed incident data, these requirements can create a barrier to participation for smaller or lower-funded agencies. The NIBRS system mandates comprehensive input on various factors like incident time, relationship dynamics between involved parties, and the presence of weapons, requiring more time and resources from reporting agencies. Smaller agencies, especially those with limited resources, may struggle to meet these demands, leading to issues with data quality and uniformity (*Office of Justice Programs, 2023*). To mitigate these challenges, the FBI and the Bureau of Justice Statistics have launched initiatives like the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) to encourage participation by offering technical support and resources to under-resourced agencies (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023; Office of Justice Programs, 2023*).

Several police agencies included in this study did not adopt NIBRS-based reporting until 2020, with one agency waiting until the official federal deadline in January 2021 to complete the transition. As a result, the researchers selected 2020 as the starting point for their analysis, ensuring that all data would be NIBRS-compliant. This approach allowed for a more consistent and accurate comparison of crime data across agencies, minimizing discrepancies between the two reporting systems.

2020: A Challenging Year for Crime Data Analysis Amid National Trends

The year 2020 marked a significant and sudden shift in crime trends across the United States, with notable increases in certain types of crime, with a particular focus on rises in violent crime victimization. After a decade of generally stable or declining crime rates, 2020 saw a sharp rise in violent offenses, particularly homicides. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data, homicides increased by nearly 30% in 2020 compared to the previous year, representing one of the largest single-year increases ever recorded in the U.S. (*FBI, 2021*). This surge disrupted the relatively steady trends

observed from 2010 to 2019, making 2020 a statistical outlier in recent crime data. While notable, it is important to consider the participation rate for that year, as well as comparative homicide rates outside of the past decade.

Texas, like many other states, experienced a similar rise in violent crime rates in 2020. While the state's overall crime rates had generally followed national trends during the prior decade, 2020 saw a noticeable spike in homicides and aggravated assaults. Texas' homicide rate, for instance, mirrored the national increase, with many urban areas such as Houston and Dallas reporting significant upticks in violent incidents. However, Texas also differed from some states in its property crime trends, with certain categories of theft and burglary remaining more stable than in other parts of the country (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2021*).

The year 2020 presents challenges as a starting point for crime data analysis due to its unique and unprecedented context. The COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread social disruptions, including economic instability, changes in policing practices, and significant societal stressors. These factors, combined with increased tensions surrounding issues of policing and racial justice, contributed to a volatile environment that is not easily comparable to previous years. Consequently, crime data from 2020 diverges sharply from the trends seen between 2010 and 2019, when crime rates, in particular violent crime, were more consistent.

Starting an analysis with data from 2020 risks conflating long-term trends with the exceptional conditions of that year. It is possible that using 2020 data as a baseline may exaggerate the apparent decline or increase in crime rates in subsequent years, as these trends might reflect a normalization rather than a true shift in underlying crime patterns. The researchers for this report emphasize the importance of interpreting the 2020 data with caution, acknowledging the unique societal and economic factors that make it a statistical outlier. These unusual conditions, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and related social upheavals, require careful consideration when analyzing trends that include the year 2020. As such, analyses comparing 2020 to subsequent years will be consistently reviewed and analyzed in future iterations of this report to ensure a standardized assessment over time.

Interpreting Crime Rate Changes: Understanding Factors Beyond Raw Numbers

It is crucial to understand that an *increase* in crime rates does not necessarily reflect a surge in actual criminal activity or heightened danger to citizens within a community. Various factors can contribute to fluctuations in reported crime rates, including shifts in law enforcement practices, legislative changes, advancements in investigative technology, and changes in public trust and reporting behaviors. Understanding these nuances is essential for interpreting crime data accurately and for distinguishing between real increases in crime and changes driven by external factors.

One significant factor influencing crime rates is the engagement in the use of traffic stops as a tool to fight crime. While this practice does not come without its share of criticism, the use of discretionary stops, and the subsequent interactions that occur between the police and citizen remain to be one of the most utilized proactive police activities (*Lum, et al. 2020*). When police engage in discretionary stops, it is arguable that police remain visible within the community, serving as both a general and specific deterrent of crime (*Nagin, 1998*). Beyond this deterrent presence, research indicates that engagement in discretionary stops can result in police seizing contraband, such as narcotics or weapons (specifically firearms), as well as assessing citizens for outstanding active warrants (*Gaston, 2019*). Some studies have

indicated that the pre-textual stops may prove to be a powerful mechanism that patrol officers can utilize to keep their communities safe. Other research has asserted that the use of discretionary stops can lead to crime reduction, especially when police employ this technique in hot spot areas (*Braga & Weisburd, 2020; Rosenfeld, Deckard, & Blackburn, 2014*). Proactive initiatives have certainly been employed by various police agencies evaluated within this report and will be discussed in further detail in the corresponding sections of this report.

Additionally, crime rates can increase because of changes in community trust and willingness to report crimes. When citizens feel more confident in their local police, they are more likely to report incidents, thereby contributing to an increase in recorded crime rates. In Fort Bend County, efforts by the local sheriff's office to build positive relationships with residents have likely led to a greater number of citizens reporting crimes because of previous positive interactions with law enforcement. In the summer of 2023, for example, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office announced a series of eight community meet-and-greet events, which allowed attendees to meet their local law enforcement officers while learning about the services provided by the department (*Edwards, 2023*). In December of 2024, Rosenberg Police Department's Community Relations Officers were involved with helping Friends of North Rosenberg pass out a holiday lunch to the community during their participation in a program called "Breaking Bread." The Stafford Police Department engages in a multitude of outreach initiatives, including "house watch" programs and "coffee with a cop" (*City of Stafford, 2024*).

Other similar positive community policing practices, such as Citizens Police Academies (CPAs), can significantly improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community by fostering mutual trust and understanding. Through these programs, residents gain insight into police operations, learn about public safety strategies, and engage directly with officers (which can dispel misconceptions and reduce fear of law enforcement). This increased familiarity and positive interaction can enhance citizens' comfort in reporting crimes and collaborating with police. For example, the Sugar Land Police Department's Citizen Police Academy provides residents with hands-on experiences, such as patrol ride-alongs and crime scene investigation simulations, which strengthen community-police relations and promote greater involvement in public safety efforts (*City of Sugar Land, n.d.*). Sugar Land Police Department is not the only law enforcement agency in Fort Bend County to host Citizens Police Academies; other examples include (but are not limited to) the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Missouri City Police Department, and Rosenberg Police Department, all of which offer similar programs to engage and educate the public on law enforcement practices.

Each law enforcement agency evaluated in this report demonstrated a strong commitment to community engagement, as reflected through their official websites, social media activity, and coverage in local news outlets. These agencies appear to make deliberate and sustained efforts to connect with the communities they serve, and those efforts are often met with positive reception. This level of outreach reflects a promising foundation for fostering trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the public, factors that research suggests may increase citizens' willingness to report crime. Looking ahead, future iterations of this report aim to explore differences in community engagement strategies and identify common practices that may contribute to effective, meaningful interactions and improved public safety outcomes.

There is evidence to suggest that there may be an increased willingness to report crime, which is particularly evident in areas with established, effective community outreach programs that create situations in which citizens may feel safer communicating with officers due to established positive rapport

and/or trust. While this results in higher reported crime rates, it reflects improved community-police relationships and trust in law enforcement rather than an actual increase in crime levels.

Legislative changes can also lead to perceived increases in crime rates by reclassifying certain behaviors as more serious offenses. In 2009, for example, Texas law was revised to re-classify the crime of strangulation and suffocation to a felony (upgrading the offense as it was previously classified as a misdemeanor). Before this change, many incidents of non-lethal strangulation were recorded as lesser offenses, if even reported (this crime was previously perceived by both law enforcement and crime victims as “less harmful” due to a lack of visible injuries following the incident). However, due to recent reclassification, cases of strangulation and suffocation are now more frequently documented and prosecuted as felonies. This change has contributed to a statistical increase in reported serious crime rates (*Gracia, 2020*). This legislative change does not necessarily indicate an increase in the incidence of strangulation but rather reflects the shift in how such cases are categorized and subsequently reported in official crime statistics.

Advancements in forensic science and investigative techniques, such as the use of DNA analysis and, more recently, advancements in genetic genealogy, have also influenced crime investigation and subsequent investigation and arrest rates. In the past two decades, DNA technology has evolved significantly, allowing law enforcement agencies to solve cases that would have previously gone undetected or may have remained unsolved. The use of genetic genealogy has also gained prominence as a tool for solving cold cases by tracing DNA left at crime scenes to distant relatives of potential suspects. This method has been employed in several high-profile cases, resulting in increased clearance rates for older crimes or cases that have been classified as “cold” (*Glynn, 2022*). While this does not necessarily reflect a surge in new criminal activity, it can impact crime rates as previously unsolved cases are often added to the existing statistics upon resolution, as the NIBRS system is designed to capture detailed information about criminal incidents, including those that are solved long after they occur. When a “cold case” is resolved, the law enforcement agency handling the case can update or submit the incident information to NIBRS, even if the case was initially reported before the agency adopted the NIBRS reporting system.

Technological advancements have also further impacted crime reporting rates, particularly through the widespread availability of smartphone devices and home security systems. The ubiquitous presence of smartphones enables more individuals to capture video/photographic evidence of crimes, such as assaults or thefts, and provide it directly to police. Additionally, the increased use of high-quality home security cameras has led to greater detection and documentation of crimes like package theft and trespassing (*FBI, 2021*). In Fort Bend County, the availability of home surveillance footage has helped law enforcement solve cases more efficiently and has also led to an increase in reported incidents as residents can now provide video evidence of crime-related events that might have previously gone unreported.

Lastly, changes and growth in population can have a direct effect on crime rates. As populations increase, particularly in fast-growing areas like Fort Bend County, the absolute number of reported crimes may rise simply due to the larger number of residents. More residents create more opportunities for interactions, some of which may involve conflicts or criminal behavior. Population growth can thus inflate crime statistics in some models, particularly if the rate per capita is not recognized, distinguished, or properly accounted for. This makes the distinctions between overall crime counts compared to crime rates per 1,000 or 100,000 people, when analyzing trends, essential.

In summary, an increase in recorded crime rates does not always equate to a rise in actual criminal activity or community risk. Closer analysis often reveals that multiple factors, such as proactive policing strategies, improved community trust leading to higher reporting, legislative reclassifications, advancements in crime detection technology, and population growth, can all influence crime statistics. These factors may contribute to higher reported crime rates without directly indicating an increased threat to public safety. Recognizing and accounting for these influences enables a more accurate interpretation of crime data, helping to ensure that public policies and community safety initiatives are informed by the true dynamics underlying the numbers. To better understand the distinct characteristics of each community and the techniques utilized by the varying law enforcement agencies, the researchers of this project collaborated closely with law enforcement leadership at each agency to contextualize local conditions and the specific populations they serve.

Conversely, it is also paramount to understand that a *decrease* in reported crime rates is not always indicative of a genuine reduction in criminal activity or an increase in safety for a community. Several factors can influence crime statistics without reflecting actual changes in the prevalence of crime. Understanding these nuances is equally essential for accurate interpretation of crime trends and for making informed decisions about public safety and resource allocation.

One significant factor that can lead to a decrease in crime rates is a change in law enforcement practices, such as a shift in priorities or reporting standards. For instance, some police departments, when faced with resource restraints, may focus more on serious offenses and deprioritize minor infractions. This shift can result in fewer incidents of lesser crimes like petty theft or vandalism being recorded by law enforcement, which may make overall crime rates appear lower. However, this type of change would not necessarily indicate that such crimes are no longer occurring; rather, they may simply be less likely to result in a police report (*Lynch & Addington, 2019*). In this context, a reduction in crime rates could reflect changes in police focus rather than a true decline in criminal behavior or crime victimization.

Factors related to policy changes led by other local criminal justice leadership can also lead to a decrease in the reported crime rate. A recent local example can be found in Harris County, Texas, where, under the leadership of former District Attorney Kim Ogg, significant reforms were made to how marijuana possession cases were handled by her office. One of the most notable initiatives was the launch of the Misdemeanor Marijuana Diversion Program (MMDP) in 2017. This program allowed individuals found in possession of up to four ounces of marijuana to avoid arrest and prosecution, provided they completed a short education program. The goal of this initiative was to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system by diverting low-level offenders away from court proceedings, thereby allowing law enforcement to focus on more serious crimes (*Harris County District Attorney's Office, 2017*).

The impact of this policy shift was notable in terms of reported crime rates. By reducing the number of arrests and criminal charges for minor marijuana offenses, the program led to a decrease in the number of drug-related cases processed through the court system. As a result, crime statistics that would have previously included lower-level marijuana offenses were diverted from arrest, leading to the numbers reflecting a lower overall crime rate. It is important to note that this decline does not necessarily indicate that fewer people in Harris County have marijuana; instead, it shows a shift in how these cases are managed and reported, emphasizing alternative resolutions over traditional criminal charges (*Cox & Lansdowne, 2017*). While the MMDP program was not without its critics, with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's press secretary stating "he does not believe law enforcement has the discretion to choose what laws to

enforce and what laws to ignore”, Ogg defended her stance states that the program was within “the lawful discretion of ever DA in the country” (*Clemens, 2017*).

The policy implemented by Ogg aligns with broader trends seen across the United States, where many jurisdictions have moved towards decriminalizing marijuana and/or implementing diversion programs. These changes have led to a reallocation of police resources, reducing the emphasis on minor drug offenses and focusing more on violent crimes and public safety. In Harris County, this approach has been highlighted by its proponents as a more efficient use of taxpayer funds and public resources, minimizing the long-term negative impacts of criminal records on low-level offenders (*Mansoor, 2017*).

While the MMDP has contributed to a lower reported crime rate for drug-related offenses, it is essential to recognize that such decreases do not necessarily reflect a change in the underlying behavior or substance use in the community. Instead, the decrease in crime rate reflects a decision by leadership to address these behaviors through non-criminal means, emphasizing community education and rehabilitation. Thus, when analyzing changes in crime rates, it is crucial to consider the role of policy shifts, such as MMDP, can have in shaping the data, and the broader implications for community safety and justice.

Changes in reporting behavior among citizens can also contribute to a decrease in crime rates. When community trust in law enforcement diminishes, victims may be less likely to report crimes, leading to a drop in official crime statistics. This phenomenon is particularly common in communities where there have been high-profile incidents of police misconduct or where residents feel that reporting will not lead to meaningful outcomes. In such cases, a decline in crime rates might suggest that citizens are unwilling to contact police when victimized, as opposed to an actual decrease in crime. Research has shown that communities with high levels of mistrust in the police, such as those that have experienced recent social unrest, often see a drop in reported crimes, even as residents continue to experience crime victimization (*Tyler, Fagan, & Geller, 2014*).

Legislative changes can influence reported crime rates without necessarily indicating a shift in actual criminal behavior. For instance, when legal definitions are revised or certain offenses are decriminalized, actions that were once classified as crimes may no longer appear in official statistics. A clear example of this is the decriminalization of marijuana possession in several states, which has resulted in notable declines in drug-related arrests and charges, thereby contributing to a reduction in overall crime rates (*Maier et al., 2017*). While such changes reduce the legal consequences for specific behaviors, they do not necessarily reflect improvements in public safety—nor do they suggest a decrease in the use of marijuana, which continues to be prevalent and has likely increased.

Technological advancements and changes in the availability of data can also affect reported crime rates. For instance, the adoption of predictive policing technologies or other forms of data-driven enforcement may lead to a focus on specific geographical areas or types of crime, potentially causing a decline in reported incidents in other categories. Additionally, changes in how crimes are classified or processed through reporting systems, such as the recent nationwide transition from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), can result in shifts in recorded crime rates without reflecting actual changes in criminal behavior (*Rosenfeld, 2020*). These shifts can make it challenging to interpret whether observed decreases are genuine or a byproduct of evolving data collection methods.

External events that create widespread social disruption, such as public health emergencies, can also impact crime reporting, and in certain types of offenses can contribute to a decline in the number of

reported incidents, even when the occurrences of those crimes might be increasing. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a noticeable decline in reported cases of specific types of crimes, such as child abuse. However, while reported cases might have decreased, does not necessarily indicate a reduction in actual incidents of child abuse. Instead, many experts believe that the decline in reporting was due to the unique conditions of the pandemic, where children were less visible to mandatory reporters like teachers, social workers, and healthcare professionals (*Sharma, et al., 2021; Theodorou, Brown, Jackson, & Beres, 2022; Kovler et al., 2021*). Texas was no exception to these national patterns. During the COVID-19 pandemic, child abuse reports in the state dropped by approximately 20% in 2020 compared to previous years—a decline largely attributed to school closures and lockdown measures, which limited children's contact with educators and other mandated reporters (*Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2021*).

Despite the lower numbers of reported child abuse cases, the COVID-19 pandemic likely created conditions that increased the risk of abuse. Many families faced heightened stress due to financial hardships, health concerns, and the pressures of homeschooling or childcare without external support. These factors may have contributed to an increase in child abuse incidents that went undetected and were not reported to police. Studies suggest that the true extent of child abuse during this period was likely minimized, emphasizing the need for alternative methods of detection and intervention when children are not in regular contact with mandatory reporters or others (*Rapoport, Reisert, Schoeman, & Adesman, 2021; Brooks-Gunn J, Schneider, & Waldfogel J., 2013*).

In sum, a reduction in crime rates does not always equate to a safer community. It is often influenced by factors such as changes in policing practices, variations in community reporting behavior, legislative reforms, and advancements in data collection methodologies. To accurately assess community safety, it is critical to analyze crime data in context and to consider underlying factors that may contribute to shifts in reported crime levels.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of *the true crime rate*, researchers in this project worked closely with law enforcement leaders from each agency. This collaboration allowed them to consider local contexts and alternative factors that can influence crime statistics. By doing so, the researchers ensured that the analysis considered community-specific dynamics, variations in reporting practices, and agency-specific practices, all of which are crucial for interpreting crime data accurately. This approach provides clarity on apparent fluctuations in crime rates and supports the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the broader context, contributing to a deeper and more nuanced view of the state of crime and criminal justice practices in Fort Bend County, Texas.

Essential Information Specific to Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County Population Growth

Fort Bend County, Texas, has experienced significant population growth over the past two decades. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the county's population has increased from about 350,000 in 2000 to over 830,000 by 2022, making it one of the fastest-growing counties in the state (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2022*). This growth, averaging over 3% annually in recent years, has been driven by both economic development and the attractiveness of the region for families and businesses alike. The population of Fort Bend County is projected to continue increasing, potentially surpassing 1 million

residents by the year 2026 (*World Population Review, 2024*). This surge in population is also projected to continue long-term, with estimates suggesting that the county could reach around 1.8 million residents by 2050 (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023; World Population Review, 2024*).

Fort Bend County Infrastructure Changes

The rapid and sustained population growth in Fort Bend County has been met with strategic investments in the county's road network and transportation infrastructure, designed to accommodate the increasing demands of a swiftly growing community.

In recent years, Fort Bend County has focused heavily on transportation improvements in response to this population boom, including projects like the expansion of the Grand Parkway (State Highway 99) and the Fort Bend Toll Road. These developments are designed to alleviate traffic congestion and improve connectivity between outlying suburban areas and the Greater Houston region (*Varma, 2024*). Other initiatives, such as the ongoing improvements to the I-69 corridor, aim to enhance freight movement and ease commutes for residents, making the county more accessible and attractive for future development (*Fort Bend County Economic Development Council, 2023*).

In 2019, voters in the City of Sugar Land approved over \$10 million in funding for street infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing transportation efficiency and reinvesting in the city's roadway system. Of that amount, \$1.7 million was allocated for the expansion of University Boulevard—a critical north-south corridor increasingly burdened by traffic due to rapid residential development and the growing popularity of regional attractions such as the Smart Financial Centre. Construction on the project began in June 2024 and includes the addition of new southbound and northbound lanes from New Territory Boulevard to just south of Lexington Boulevard, along with targeted intersection upgrades to improve traffic flow and safety. In April 2025, Sugar Land City Council approved the Interlocal agreement amendment in conjunction with Fort Bend County, bringing the total project funding to \$5.31 million (*Vogel, 2025*).

The expansion is designed to accommodate the area's continued growth, including the nearby University of Houston campus extension, Brazos River Park, and ongoing commercial development along U.S. Highway 59. Notably, the Smart Financial Centre regularly draws large event crowds, which has placed additional strain on the corridor—a challenge this project aims to directly address.

Business growth has paralleled the county's infrastructure expansion. Fort Bend has become a hub for diverse industries, including logistics, manufacturing, and corporate services. Major companies like Amazon and Frito-Lay have invested heavily in the region. Frito-Lay's recent \$200 million expansion in Rosenberg added new manufacturing lines and increased warehouse capacity, creating 160 new full-time jobs (*Kent, 2021*). In 2021, Amazon opened an 850,000-square-foot fulfillment center in Richmond. According to the company, the new fulfillment center has the potential to create an additional 1,000 jobs in the area (*deGroot, 2021*). The company also announced expansion plans in Missouri City and stated the new 1 million square foot facility there would create an additional 500 jobs (*Taylor, 2020*).

In 2018 Adam Schiller, co-founder of Edge Realty served as the primary developer of a 192-acre location in Stafford that has now become known as “The Grid.” Located at the intersection of Hwy 59 and West Airport Road, the development area hosts a balance of restaurant, commercial, and residential spaces and has approximately 1,500 on-site apartment units (*Weaver, 2024*). Re-envisioning the old Texas Instruments campus, The Grid houses businesses such as Costco Business Center with plans for a Target

to open in 2025. Within proximity, visitors to The Grid can dine at restaurants such as In and Out Burger, Whiskey Cake, and Snooze A.M. Eatery, with plans for a Portillo's opening in 2025. The location also features a dog park and several outdoor recreation areas (*The Grid, n.d.*). Schiller is quoted as viewing Fort Bend County as an “incredibly dense,” geographical area, and is aware of how the local population creates high traffic on the roadways that pass The Grid with high frequency (*Weaver, 2024*). According to an East Fort Bend Development Authority presentation to Fort Bend County Commissioners on March 12, 2024, an estimated 328,000 cars drive past The Grid daily, as they drive along roadways such as Hwy. 59, West Airport Boulevard, Kirkwood Road, and Murphy Road (*Weaver, 2024*).

In October 2021, Texas State Technical College's Fort Bend County campus welcomed its first cohort of students into the Tesla START training program. One of only two programs statewide, the goal is to enroll students as Tesla-paid hourly interns, allowing them to gain technical expertise and earn certifications through a combination of in-class theory, hands-on labs, and self-paced learning. Graduates of this nationwide program are eligible to work at Tesla Service Centers across the United States. The program aims to address the growing demand for service technicians trained to work on electric vehicles (*Galvan, 2021*). In 2022, Tesla opened a substantial sales and service center off the Southwest Freeway in Richmond, Texas, which may potentially increase demand for these specialized service technicians.

Following a public conflict with California government officials in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tesla relocated its headquarters to Austin, Texas. Before the move was officially announced, several Texas counties, including Fort Bend County, actively lobbied for Tesla's relocation. A Fort Bend County Judge was among the officials who pitched the area to Tesla's CEO, Elon Musk (*Walker, 2020*). While Musk ultimately chose Austin as Tesla's new headquarters, he has recently applied for permits to double the size of Tesla's factory in Austin (*Lambert, 2024*). This significant expansion has the potential to create ripple effects, possibly impacting Tesla's operations in Fort Bend County, including both consumer-facing facilities and workforce development initiatives such as the Tesla START program.

In addition to infrastructure and business developments, Fort Bend County has also invested in new entertainment venues, further enhancing the area's appeal to residents and visitors alike. Notable projects include the Fort Bend County EpiCenter, a 230,000-square-foot sports, and entertainment complex in Rosenberg, which opened in 2023. The EpiCenter is designed to host various events, from concerts and sports tournaments to community gatherings, and serves as an emergency operations center during natural disasters (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*).

The county also boasts many popular existing entertainment destinations such as Sugar Land Town Square, Constellation Field, and the Stafford Center. In addition, Fort Bend County also has substantial spaces for dining, shopping, and outdoor events, which only further contributes to its reputation as a vibrant and family-friendly community capable of providing an abundance of varied activities for its residents to partake in (*Fort Bend County, 2023*). These various developments underscore the county's commitment to maintaining a high quality of life for its residents while anticipating future continued growth. The investments in transportation, business, and entertainment not only support current needs but also position Fort Bend as a location that will continue to grow and experience substantial and steady population increases.

Given the county's rising population, the demand for enhanced public services, including those provided by law enforcement and related investigative public servants, will assuredly rise as well. In order for Fort Bend County to ensure the safety of its citizens amid these changes, a proactive approach to

policing and public service, including increasing personnel, updating technologies, and strengthening community partnerships, is imperative.

In summary, Fort Bend County's pro-business environment—characterized by comparatively low tax rates, business-friendly regulations, and strong growth potential—has positioned it as a desirable location for both national and international enterprises. These favorable conditions continue to attract new residents and businesses alike, supporting a robust local economy and driving sustained growth and development throughout the region.

As Fort Bend County experiences an exciting period of growth and development, ongoing investments in roadways and infrastructure reflect a strong commitment to supporting the region's rapid expansion. However, it is equally important that public safety staffing keep pace. In addition to maintaining the safety of county residents, the addition of trained personnel will be essential to address evolving needs such as traffic management, emergency response, and crime prevention. These investments in public servants are critical to ensuring that, alongside physical infrastructure, the county has the human capacity to sustain the safety and well-being of its growing population.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Fort Bend County Communities

Fort Bend County has consistently been recognized at the national level for its exceptional racial and ethnic diversity, frequently cited as a model of demographic richness and cultural inclusivity. This assertion is supported by demographic data; according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Fort Bend County exhibits a highly diverse population, with no single racial or ethnic group comprising a clear majority. As of the most recent data, about 30% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, 21% as Black or African American, 20% as Asian, and approximately 28% as White (non-Hispanic) (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; USAFacts, 2022*). The county's population of approximately 21% Black or African American residents and about 20% Asian residents is in stark contrast to national figures, where about 13.6% of the population identifies as Black or African American and 6% as Asian (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2022*). This unique balance across racial and ethnic groups is what has made Fort Bend one of the most racially and ethnically diverse counties in the United States.

Fort Bend County's diversity is further underscored by a diversity index score of 76.3%, which measures the likelihood that two randomly selected residents, will be from different racial or ethnic groups. This score is significantly higher than the Texas state average (according to the 2020 U.S. Census, Texas has a diversity index score of 67.0%) and further affirms Fort Bend among the most diverse counties in the nation (*Understanding Houston, 2023*). This rich mix of cultural backgrounds has fostered a vibrant community that contributes to the region's social and economic resilience. The county's diversity is often seen as a strength, promoting a broader range of cultural experiences, innovative business opportunities, and a dynamic workforce.

Comparing Fort Bend County Arrest Procedures to Practices in Other Neighboring Jurisdictions

In neighboring Harris County, Texas, law enforcement officers are required to obtain permission from the District Attorney's Office before arresting in most criminal cases. This process involves Intake Division of the District Attorney's Office, where prosecutors review the evidence and determine whether probable cause exists for the arrest. The Intake Division operates 24/7 to assist law enforcement with legal

guidance and to ensure that the charges filed are supported by sufficient evidence (*Harris County District Attorney's Office, 2023*). This additional step in the arrest process is intended to uphold legal standards, but it can also slow the rate at which arrests are made, potentially resulting in lower arrest numbers in official statistics.

In contrast, Fort Bend County does *not* require officers to seek such pre-arrest approval from the District Attorney's Office. In Fort Bend, law enforcement officers have greater autonomy to make arrests based directly on their assessment of probable cause, without needing initial review by the DA's office. This procedural difference can contribute to higher reported arrest rates in Fort Bend County, as officers can proceed more directly with arrests (*Fort Bend County, 2023*). The more streamlined process in Fort Bend allows for quicker action in response to criminal incidents, but it can also result in a higher volume of recorded arrests compared to neighboring Harris County.

This disparity in arrest procedures can affect the comparison of crime rates between Harris County and Fort Bend County (or other counties with varying practices). While there are notable differences in many variables making comparisons between Fort Bend and Harris Counties extraordinarily difficult, this variance in procedure is worthy of discussion despite these differences.

In Fort Bend, the ability for law enforcement to make arrests without initial DA approval may lead to a higher number of incidents being captured in crime data, inflating the apparent crime rates. In comparison practices in Harris County, where arrests might be more selectively processed, could lead to lower report crime reach. Although this report does not make any notable effort to compare Fort Bend and Harris Counties, authorities and policymakers need to take these procedural differences into account when examining the content of the report. Noting these differentiations is particularly important as citizens, community members, and leaders from both counties frequently draw comparisons between the two counties' data and examine practices related to safety.

METHOD

To conduct this study, the researchers contacted the Chiefs or Sheriff of nine law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County; the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Fulshear Police Department, Meadows Place Police Department, Missouri City Police Department, Needville Police Department, Richmond Police Department, Rosenberg Police Department, Stafford Police Department, and Sugar Land Police Department. Each of these agencies expressed a willingness to meet with the researchers to discuss the scope and objectives of the project.

It is important to note that all participating law enforcement agency leaders expressed a clear and consistent willingness to support the project and contribute to its success. Each demonstrated openness in providing access to relevant data, while maintaining appropriate standards of privacy and confidentiality, and engaged constructively with the research team throughout the process. Their ongoing cooperation and readiness to share information as needed remain essential to ensuring the completeness and rigor of the data collection and analysis and has undoubtedly played a key role in the project's success.

The year 2020 was selected as the starting point for analysis. This was the year when most agencies transitioned to reporting their crime incident data to the NIBRS system and moved away from the UCR system. The decision was based on the needed for maintaining consistency in data analysis, as the transition to NIBRS among the agencies examined in the report standardized how incidents were recorded and reported.

While detailed information on the differences between the NIBRS and UCR systems is provided earlier in the report, but it is essential to reiterate that these two systems differ significantly. NIBRS is an incident-based, offering more granular details about each crime event, and it eliminates the UCR's hierarchy rule, which previously led to only the most severe offense being reported in multi-offense incidents. NIBRS also collects more data about each incident reported. The shift to NIBRS, initiated by federal mandates, has made comparisons between data from the two systems challenging, due to their distinct methods.

The authors obtained the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data on incidents, offenses, victims, and known offenders from the Texas Department of Public Safety (Texas DPS) website (*Report Center (nibrs.com)*). For definitions of "incident," "offense," "victim," and "known offender," see the footnotes in the tabled data for the Aggregate Fort Bend County crime rates (Table AFBC 1).

Upon completion of the NIBRS analysis, the researchers reached out to meet with agency leaders again to discuss any findings (often related to outliers), requesting facts to add context to the results, and gather additional qualitative information to produce a more comprehensive report. These findings can be found in the *Agency Contextualization* subheading in the *Findings* section of this report.

Calculation of Crime Rates and Percent Increase/Decrease

The primary goal of this project is to estimate the crime rate in Fort Bend County as an aggregate unit. Secondly, the study aims to report crime rates for specific law enforcement agencies operating in Fort Bend County (FBC). Crime rate calculations are reflected for offenses committed (rather than incidents) using the following formula:

$$\text{Rate Per 100,000} = \frac{100,000 * \# \text{ of Offenses}}{\text{Actual Population}}$$

We also report percentage increases and decreases from year to year using the following formula.

$$\text{Percent Increase/Decrease} = \frac{\text{Current Crime Rate} - \text{Initial Crime Rate}}{\text{Initial Crime Rate}}$$

An important caveat is that we do not calculate rates, or percentage increases or decreases when base offense raw numbers are under 100 due to the instability of the statistics when used for small numbers.

The following population data was used to calculate crime rates for Aggregate FBC and each respective law enforcement unit in the county.

Table Population Data: Populations Used to Calculate Crime Rates

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024¹
Aggregate FBC	818,027	854,175	889,146	916,778	958,434
Fulshear	16,856	25,169	34,264	42,616	
Mead. Place		4,755	4,671	4,596	
Missouri City	74,259	74,800	76,500	76,773	
Needville	3,113	3,059	3,040	3,088	
Richmond	11,627	11,800	12,520	12,816	
Rosenberg	38,202	39,468	40,739	41,104	
Stafford	17,666	17,200	17,427	17,338	
Sugar Land	111,026	110,000	109,414	108,515	
FBC Sheriff	545,278	567,924	590,571	609,932	

¹ The 2024 U.S. Census data only include 2024 population estimates for all Fort Bend County. It does not include U.S. Census estimates for each jurisdiction.

Texas Department of Public Safety National Incident-Based Reporting System Data

The Texas DPS data tabulates incident, offense, victim, and known offender information in three broad categories for reporting purposes: Person Offenses, Property Offenses, and Offenses Against Society (for a list of included offenses within each category, see the footnotes in Table AFBC 1). Additionally, the Texas DPS data reporting utilizes offense-specific incident, offense, victim, and known offender data for key street-level crimes of interest to Fort Bend County residents (see the column categories in Table AFBC 2 for a list of these specific offenses).

Study Objective 2 (crime rates for each FBC law enforcement entity) is consistent in method, in that the researchers captured the incident, offense, victim, and known offender information from the Texas DPS website. The researchers then utilized these offense numbers to calculate relevant crime rates per 100,000 population for each FBC law enforcement agency. The only difficulty encountered in uniformly applying this method to all agencies is specific to Meadows Place PD and their crime data for 2020.

Meadows Place PD is the only FBC law enforcement agency examined in this study that had yet to transition from UCR data collection and reporting to NIBRS data collection and reporting in time for the 2020 NIBRS cycle. Meadows Place PD did report its data to NIBRS in 2021 and has continued to do so. Therefore, we have no official Texas DPS NIBRS data on the Meadows Place PD to calculate the 2020 crime rate.

It is important to note that although Meadows Place PD was the sole law enforcement agency examined in this report that was not reporting to NIBRS in 2020, they remained in compliance with the timeline set in place by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, which required all law enforcement agencies to submit their data in compliance with NIBRS guidelines by January 1, 2021.

Study Objective 1 (the overall crime picture for Aggregate FBC) was more challenging for three reasons (outside of the classic issues surrounding the analysis of reported crime data as articulated in this report). First, the Texas DPS does not report crime information by county, so we developed a method to aggregate upward to county-level data.

Second, the researchers did not calculate any Meadows Place PD crime rates for 2020. The missing Meadows Place PD data for 2020 means that the 2020 Aggregate FBC crime rates may be less precise than the 2021 and 2022 crime rates, particularly if the Meadows Place PD experienced lower or higher crime rates than the other jurisdictions in 2020. We are, however, confident that the absence of data for the Meadows Place PD did not tremendously impact our 2020 Aggregate FBC crime rate estimates and calculations as the Meadows Place PD incident, offense, victim, and known offender numbers relative contribution to the overall crime counts for 2021 and 2022 are low (and therefore they are likely equally relatively low in 2020 as well).

Third, determining the appropriate year-to-year population counts (to use in the crime rate calculations) for the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FBCSO) is a challenge. Whereas the remaining law enforcement agencies included in this report have geographical boundaries that are readily definable, the FBCSO has little to no role in most crimes known and investigated in Fort Bend County within the geographical boundaries of the other law enforcement agencies. Using the known population statistics for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 (818,027; 854,175; 889,146; 916,778; and 958,434) to calculate crime rates for the FBC Sheriff's Office without adjustment would artificially lower the crime rates reported here for the FBC Sheriff's Office, as the population would be a higher reflection of the area than it receives and investigates crime reports from citizens.

As such, to obtain population estimates for the relevant FBCSO, we subtract the populations of the geographical boundaries of the other agencies from the overall FBC population. In essence, the sum of the Fulshear PD, Meadows Place PD, Missouri City PD, Needville PD, Richmond PD, Rosenberg PD, Stafford PD, and Sugar Land PD contained in the middle block of numbers in the Population Table Data (see above) subtracted from the Aggregate Fort Bend County population totals, represents the estimated population coverage for the FBC Sheriff's Office for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Alternative Method: Law Enforcement Agency Data

At the onset of this project, the authors considered an alternative method to collect information on NIBRS-reported crime to calculate crime rates and attempted to obtain more detailed data from each agency. After meeting with each agency's leader (or appointed leader) to discuss the study, the researchers emailed each agency. The researchers requested offense-specific information directly from each agency to obtain a picture of each agency's crime issues and a plan to aggregate upward toward understanding crime in Fort Bend County.

Unfortunately, the structure and content of the data were too varied across the agencies to achieve Study Objectives 1 and 2, so we alternatively used the data from the Texas DPS website for the body of this report, as it is currently the most consistent method. A more detailed review of the description, justification, and agency challenges related to this data collection is discussed in this report in the *Discussion* section specific to *Analysis Limitations, Limited Agency Resources* section.

The Appendix also includes reportable information from the initial inquiries with agencies, provided it was available and could be interpreted with minimal time required for analysis. The researchers believe the Texas DPS NIBRS data method produced more consistent, structured, and sound findings than the data collected from individual agencies (if provided). As such, we report those findings (obtained from DPS NIBRS data) in the main body of the report and the other findings (obtained from agency-provided data) in the Appendix.

Percent Offenses Cleared

A clearance rate represents whether the law enforcement agency solved the offense through arrest or by exceptional means. We use clearance rates obtained from the Texas DPS NIBRS website (*Report Center (nibrs.com)*). The site reports clearance rates only for the broad crime categories: Person Offenses, Property Offenses, and Offenses Against Society. For each agency, we report information on the percentage of cases cleared by arrest and by exceptional means and the percentage increase or decrease from 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022, and 2022 to 2023. Percent increase or decrease is reflected here as:

$$\text{Percent Increase/Decrease: } \frac{\text{Current \%} - \text{Initial \%}}{\text{Initial \%}}$$

We apply the same rule for clearance rates as for crime rates. When the base number of offenses is less than 100, we do not calculate percentages, or percentage increases or decreases due to the instability of small numbers. The research team also initially pursued an alternative strategy to obtain clearance rates

by the agency for a range of offenses and aggregate upward to a percent cleared but experienced many of the same consistency problems as we did with the agency-obtained crime rate data. We report the information we obtained from the agencies in the Appendix for the agencies that could provide this data.

FINDINGS

Fort Bend County Aggregate

Table AFBC 1: Fort Bend County Aggregated: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	6,386	13,602	1,839
Offenses ⁵	7,260	13,703	1,839
Victims ⁶	7,260	14,818	1,839
Known Offenders ⁷	6,818	12,556	2,351
Rate/100,000 ⁸	887.50	1,675.13	224.81
2021			
Incidents ⁴	6,397	14,109	2,120
Offenses ⁵	7,266	14,400	2,120
Victims ⁶	7,266	15,324	2,120
Known Offenders ⁷	6,799	12,607	2,538
Rate/100,000 ⁸	850.65	1,685.84	248.19
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-4.15	.70	10.40
2022			
Incidents ⁴	6,729	16,260	2,272
Offenses ⁵	7,510	16,428	2,272
Victims ⁶	7,510	17,583	2,272
Known Offenders ⁷	7,050	9,903	2,648
Rate/100,000 ⁸	844.63	1,847.62	255.53
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-.71	9.60	2.96
2023			
Incidents ⁴	6,792	14,779	2,441
Offenses ⁵	7,570	14,853	2,441
Victims ⁶	7,576	15,966	2,441
Known Offenders ⁷	7,065	6,676	2,850
Rate/100,000 ⁸	825.71	1,620.13	266.25
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-2.24	-12.31	4.20
2024			
Incidents ⁴	7,149	14,733	2,121
Offenses ⁵	7,969	15,002	2,121
Victims ⁶	7,969	15,836	2,121
Known Offenders ⁷	7,363	6,462	2,418
Rate/100,000 ⁸	831.46	1,565.26	221.30
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	.69	-3.39	-16.88

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on Fort Bend County population of 818,027 (2020), 854,175 (2021), 889,146 (2022), 916,778 (2023), and 958,434 (2024).

**Table AFBC 2: Fort Bend County Aggregated: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	6,245	289	23	235	1,040	6,484	661
Offenses ²	7,112	299	28	235	1,108	6,484	694
Victims ³	7,112	299	28	349	1,298	6,933	684
Known Offenders. ⁴	6,672	304	27	336	920	5,928	554
Rate/100,000 ⁵	869.41	36.55	NA ⁶	28.73	135.45	792.64	84.84
2021							
Incidents ¹	6,011	313	30	237	921	6,928	761
Offenses ²	6,859	334	30	237	1,175	6,928	805
Victims ³	6,859	334	30	363	1,147	7,474	779
Known Offenders. ⁴	6,390	321	35	298	831	6,073	682
Rate/100,000 ⁵	803.00	39.10	NA ⁶	27.75	137.56	811.08	94.24
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-7.64	6.98	NA ⁶	-3.42	1.56	2.33	11.09
2022							
Incidents ¹	6,441	232	18	242	1,161	8,364	816
Offenses ²	7,215	237	18	242	1,278	8,364	867
Victims ³	7,215	237	18	365	1,469	8,848	849
Known Offenders. ⁴	6,741	235	24	263	754	5,086	485
Rate/100,000 ⁵	811.45	26.65	NA ⁶	27.22	143.73	940.68	97.51
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	1.05	-31.83	NA ⁶	-1.91	4.49	15.98	4.49
2023							
Incidents ¹	6,494	252	24	232	865	7,217	886
Offenses ²	7,272	255	25	232	900	7,217	922
Victims ³	7,272	255	25	362	1,049	7,742	925
Known Offenders. ⁴	6,747	258	31	242	393	3,478	408
Rate/100,000 ⁵	792.56	27.81	NA ⁶	25.31	98.17	787.21	100.57
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-2.33	4.35	NA ⁶	-7.02	-31.69	-16.31	3.14
2024							
Incidents ¹	6,844	264	21	189	898	7,532	680
Offenses ²	7,914	280	24	189	1,120	7,532	727
Victims ³	7,644	280	24	291	1,082	7,988	704
Known Offenders. ⁴	7,055	260	22	214	381	3,532	320
Rate/100,000 ⁵	825.72	29.21	NA ⁶	19.72	116.86	785.86	75.85
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	4.18	5.03	NA ⁶	-22.08	19.04	-.17	-24.58

¹ Incident: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on Fort Bend County population of 818,027 (2020), 854,175 (2021), 889,146 (2022), 916,778 (2023), and 958,434 (2024).

⁶ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table AFBC 3: Fort Bend County Aggregated: Person, Property, Society Offenses
Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Person Offenses¹	Property Offenses²	Offenses Against Society³
2020			
% Cleared	72.96	14.14	72.27
% Cleared by Arrest	30.27	8.08	68.52
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	42.69	6.05	3.75
Total Incidents	6,386	13,602	1,839
Total Incidents Cleared	4,659	1,923	1,329
Cleared by Arrest	1,933	1,100	1,260
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,726	823	69
2021			
% Cleared	70.56	13.46	80.66
% Cleared by Arrest	27.93	7.68	76.70
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	42.63	5.78	3.96
Total Incidents	6,397	14,109	2,120
Total Incidents Cleared	4,514	1,899	1,710
Cleared by Arrest	1,787	1,083	1,626
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,727	816	84
% Cleared Increase/Decrease	-3.29	-4.81	11.61
% Cleared Arrest Increase/Decrease	-7.73	-4.95	11.94
% Cleared E/M Increase/Decrease	-.14	-4.46	5.60
2022			
% Cleared	66.95	12.67	80.42
% Cleared by Arrest	27.06	7.50	77.82
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	39.89	5.17	2.60
Total Incidents	6,729	16,261	2,272
Total Incidents Cleared	4,505	2,060	1,827
Cleared by Arrest	1,821	1,219	1,768
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,684	841	59
% Cleared Increase/Decrease	-5.12	-5.87	-.29
% Cleared Arrest Increase/Decrease	-3.11	-2.34	1.46
% Cleared E/M Increase/Decrease	-6.43	-10.55	-34.34
2023			
% Cleared	69.83	13.37	80.84
% Cleared by Arrest	32.04	8.29	77.73
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	37.79	5.08	3.11
Total Incidents	6,792	14,779	2,443
Total Incidents Cleared	4,743	1,976	1,975
Cleared by Arrest	2,176	1,225	1,899
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,567	751	76
% Cleared Increase/Decrease	4.30	5.52	.52
% Cleared Arrest Increase/Decrease	18.40	10.53	-.12
% Cleared E/M Increase/Decrease	-5.26	-1.74	19.62
2024			
% Cleared	63.62	12.16	73.31
% Cleared by Arrest	30.89	8.44	71.00
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	32.73	3.72	2.31
Total Incidents	7,149	14,733	2,121
Total Incidents Cleared	4,548	1,791	1,555
Cleared by Arrest	2,208	1,243	1,506
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,340	548	49
% Cleared Increase/Decrease	8.90	9.08	9.31
% Cleared Arrest Increase/Decrease	3.60	-1.77	8.65
% Cleared E/M Increase/Decrease	-13.38	-26.78	-25.72

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

Contextualizing Individual Law Enforcement Agencies

Providing context for the data contained in this report is crucial for understanding the findings as they relate to each law enforcement agency examined. Each agency operates under distinct conditions influenced by its jurisdiction size, community demographics and population, available resources, and internal policies, and various other factors.

These factors influence not only the reporting of crime but also the implementation of law enforcement practices, complicating direct comparisons across agencies. Differences in community-police relationships, resource allocation, and localized crime patterns all contribute to variability in how incidents are recorded and prioritized. Recognizing these contextual distinctions is essential for a more accurate and nuanced interpretation of the data, ensuring that observed trends are understood within the appropriate local framework.

This research approach highlights that the reported crime data alone cannot be fully understood without considering the context of each agency's operations and the unique challenges they may encounter. Therefore, this report includes a contextual analysis of each law enforcement agency to offer a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the data.

Data for this contextualization of each law enforcement agency was gathered through a multi-faceted approach. First, the researchers examined the characteristics of each agency, including the size, resources, and scope of operations, to understand the capacities and challenges specific to each department. Additionally, we utilized census data to comprehend the demographics of the areas that each agency serves, allowing us to consider factors such as population density, socio-economic conditions, and racial diversity. To further deepen our understanding, we conducted in-depth interviews with key members of each law enforcement agency. These interviews provided valuable insights into the day-to-day realities, operational needs, and perspectives of those working within the agencies, offering a rich context that numbers alone cannot provide. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data was essential for a comprehensive evaluation of the agencies involved in this study to give the best understanding of the state of crime in Fort Bend County.

Individual Agency Findings

Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

Table FBCSO 1: Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	4,426	8,449	672
Offenses ⁵	4,990	8,540	672
Victims ⁶	4,990	9,072	672
Known Offenders ⁷	4,655	9,039	825
Rate/100,000 ⁸	915.13	1,566.18	123.24
2021			
Incidents ⁴	4,263	8,283	640
Offenses ⁵	4,784	8,401	640
Victims ⁶	4,784	8,918	640
Known Offenders ⁷	4,486	8,667	708
Rate/100,000 ⁸	842.37	1,479.25	112.69
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-7.95	-5.55	-8.56
2022			
Incidents ⁴	4,655	9,643	884
Offenses ⁵	5,104	9,736	884
Victims ⁶	5,104	10,230	884
Known Offenders ⁷	4,796	5,462	976
Rate/100,000 ⁸	864.25	1,648.57	149.69
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	2.59	11.44	32.83
2023			
Incidents ⁴	4,645	9,208	858
Offenses ⁵	5,115	9,245	858
Victims ⁶	5,115	9,750	858
Known Offenders ⁷	4,798	3,400	928
Rate/100,000 ⁸	839.61	1,515.42	141.00
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-2.85	-8.07	-5.81
2024			
Incidents ⁴	4,956	9,128	679
Offenses ⁵	5,464	9,352	679
Victims ⁶	5,464	9,695	679
Known Offenders ⁷	5,058	3,294	710
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office service population of 545,278 (2020), 567,924 (2021), 590,571 (2022), and 609,932 (2023).

**Table FBCSO 2: Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	4,426	173	11	117	618	3,747	349
Offenses ²	4,990	178	14	117	683	3,747	375
Victims ³	4,990	178	14	174	784	3,902	359
Known Offenders ⁴	4,655	188	16	174	675	4,052	379
Rate/100,000 ⁵	915.13	32.64	NA ⁷	21.46	125.26	687.17	68.77
2021							
Incidents ¹	4,031	185	17	107	560	3,706	395
Offenses ²	4,540	197	17	107	642	3,706	431
Victims ³	4,540	197	17	164	692	3,935	406
Known Offenders ⁴	4,234	194	18	153	579	3,908	417
Rate/100,000 ⁵	799.40	34.69	NA ⁷	18.84	113.04	652.55	75.89
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-12.64	6.28	NA ⁷	-12.21	-9.76	-5.04	10.35
2022							
Incidents ¹	4,467	146	10	129	770	4,387	402
Offenses ²	4,912	150	10	129	822	4,387	443
Victims ³	4,912	150	10	188	941	4,532	419
Known Offenders ⁴	4,593	151	12	148	485	2,460	228
Rate/100,000 ⁵	831.74	25.40	NA ⁷	21.84	139.19	742.84	75.01
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	4.05	-26.78	NA ⁷	15.94	23.13	13.84	-1.16
2023							
Incidents ¹	4,468	153	12	148	599	3,918	478
Offenses ²	4,938	153	12	148	606	3,918	508
Victims ³	4,938	153	12	238	709	4,079	497
Known Offenders ⁴	4,606	159	18	162	262	1,437	171
Rate/100,000 ⁵	810.59	25.09	NA ⁷	24.26	99.36	642.38	83.29
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-2.54	-1.23	NA ⁷	11.11	-28.62	-13.52	11.04
2024							
Incidents ¹	4,754	176	17	112	547	4,138	358
Offenses ²	5,521	184	20	112	732	4,138	397
Victims ³	5,251	184	20	160	657	4,346	368
Known Offenders ⁴	4,851	179	18	124	194	1,476	121
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office service population of 545,278 (2020), 567,924 (2021), 590,571 (2022), and 609,923 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table FBCSO 3: Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	77.09	12.39	60.71
% Cleared by Arrest	21.71	5.23	54.17
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	55.38	7.16	6.55
Total Incidents	4,426	8,449	672
Total Incidents Cleared	3,412	1,047	408
Cleared by Arrest	961	442	364
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,451	605	44
2021			
% Cleared	74.20	10.76	72.50
% Cleared by Arrest	17.24	3.63	61.09
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	56.96	7.12	11.41
Total Incidents	4,263	8,283	640
Total Incidents Cleared	3,163	891	464
Cleared by Arrest	735	301	391
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,428	590	73
2022			
% Cleared	66.98	8.83	76.24
% Cleared by Arrest	17.01	2.62	71.83
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	49.97	6.20	4.41
Total Incidents	4,655	9,643	884
Total Incidents Cleared	3,118	851	674
Cleared by Arrest	792	253	635
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,326	598	39
2023			
% Cleared	72.41	9.54	73.49
% Cleared by Arrest	23.95	3.20	69.30
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	48.46	6.33	4.18
Total Incidents	4,651	9,206	860
Total Incidents Cleared	3,368	878	632
Cleared by Arrest	1,114	295	596
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2,254	583	36
2024			
% Cleared	64.18	7.72	62.30
% Cleared by Arrest	23.97	3.31	59.35
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	40.21	4.41	2.95
Total Incidents	4,956	9,128	679
Total Incidents Cleared	3,181	705	423
Cleared by Arrest	1,188	302	403
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1,993	403	20

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

Agency Contextualization - Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FBCSO) is the largest law enforcement agency in Fort Bend County, Texas, with a rich history dating back to its founding in 1837. Serving a rapidly growing community, the FBCSO is responsible for law enforcement and public safety across unincorporated areas of the county (they also assist other agencies in the incorporated areas of the county as requested) covering

approximately 875 square miles (*Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, 2023; Fort Bend County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, 2023*).

The Sheriff's Office currently employs over 800 personnel, including around 565 sworn peace officers and additional reserve deputies who support the agency's operations. The department is structured to handle a wide range of public safety needs, from routine patrol duties to specialized law enforcement functions (*Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, 2023*). The agency's jurisdiction includes key highways and thoroughfares such as the Grand Parkway (State Highway 99) and Interstate 69, which require coordinated patrols to manage traffic safety and respond to incidents across the expanding county.

The sheriff, elected by the residents of the county, serves a four-year term and is responsible for overseeing the law enforcement activities within the county, including managing the county jail, providing patrol services, and ensuring public safety. The current sheriff, Eric Fagan, who took office in January 2021, was re-elected by a narrow margin in November 2024 (with official results finding Sheriff Fagan received 50.07% of the vote, compared to his opponent, Marshall Slot earned 49.93% of the vote) (*Goodman, 2024*). Changes in leadership, such as a new sheriff, can significantly impact the policies, priorities, and practices of the office, as each sheriff brings their own philosophy on law enforcement and public safety. Shifts in leadership for example, might lead to changes in community engagement strategies, resource allocation, or approaches to crime prevention and investigation (*Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, 2021*).

In terms of the sheer size of the area the agency patrols, deputies from the Sheriff's Office may respond to calls from incredibly locations ranging from small farming communities to major highways and dense suburban neighborhoods. Fort Bend County's geography includes rural farmland, residential developments, and important transportation corridors, including major thoroughfares like Interstate 69 and Highway 90, which see heavy traffic. Deputies may respond to accidents on highways, suspected crime in suburban areas, or even incidents in isolated rural locations where law enforcement presence is likely limited. This wide-ranging jurisdiction requires the Sheriff's Office to have the capacity to address both common urban crimes and unique rural issues, such as livestock theft or property disputes in less populated locations (*Texas Association of Counties, 2022*).

The vast area and diverse landscape patrolled by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office present significant logistical challenges. On occasion deputies must travel long distances to respond to calls, sometimes crossing several miles of more open land between populated areas. This creates a need for efficient communication systems and well-coordinated backup support, especially when handling emergencies that occur on the outer perimeters of their jurisdiction. Additionally, as Fort Bend County continues to experience rapid population growth, the demands on the Sheriff's Office are increasing, requiring ongoing expansion of personnel and resources to ensure adequate coverage (*Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, 2023*).

FBCSO also operates various specialized units and task forces to address specific community needs. This includes a SWAT team, a K-9 unit, and air support, which are critical for responding to high-risk situations and aiding during emergency operations (*Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, 2024*). The department has invested in advanced technologies, such as automated license plate readers and a crime victim liaison officer, to support crime prevention and assist victims of crime (*Fort Bend County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, 2024*).

Despite these resources, the FBCSO faces challenges common to many rapidly growing suburban areas. As the population of Fort Bend County continues to increase, the demand for services has also risen,

straining existing resources and necessitating ongoing adjustments in staffing levels and operational strategies. The Sheriff's Office has had to adapt to these changes while managing budget constraints and maintaining a focus on community engagement and public trust (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*). Addressing these challenges effectively is crucial to ensuring that the agency continues to provide high-quality public safety services to the diverse and expanding community it serves.

In June 2024, Sheriff Eric Fagan reported that approximately 13% of sworn positions within his agency remained unfilled and indicated a goal of hiring roughly 80 new officers to address the staffing gap (*Weber, 2024*). He noted that the department has faced increasing challenges in recruiting replacements as more senior officers retire. Sheriff Fagan attributed these difficulties, in part, to compensation disparities—highlighting that starting salaries for new deputies were comparable to those offered by private-sector employers such as the Texas-based retail chain Buc-ee's. In late October 2024, Sheriff Fagan announced a temporary hiring freeze on approximately half of the agency's open positions—around 58 roles—as a measure to reallocate funding toward employee raises (*Weber, 2024*). He emphasized that the freeze was intended as a short-term solution, with the goal of reinstating the positions in the future. As a result of this reallocation, the agency's employees were projected to receive average salary increases exceeding 20% (*Weber, 2024*).

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office also operates the Fort Bend County Jail, a U.S. Department of Justice-certified facility in full compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Notably, it was the first jail in the State of Texas to receive this certification. The facility has a total capacity of 1,783 beds, along with an additional 90 holding cells, and maintains an average daily population that fluctuates between 900-950 individuals. In July of 2024 Assistant Chief Deputy Manual Zamora reported that county's staffing rate supports 578 inmates, requiring detention staff to work their required five shifts plus one additional eight-hour shift. This is necessary to remain in compliance with Texas Commission on Jail Standards, the state's regulatory agency, which requires a staffing ratio of one staff member to 48 inmates (*Vogel, 2024*).

It is critical for policymakers to recognize that the Sheriff's Office is not only responsible for public safety in the community, but also for the ongoing operation and staffing of county detention facilities. This responsibility is particularly significant in the current landscape, as sheriff's departments across Texas are experiencing staffing shortages, in part due to increased competition for personnel. Following the passage of House Bill 3, which mandates that school districts employ armed security, many detention officers have transitioned to school-based roles which offer higher pay, compounding staffing challenges for detention facilities (*Texas House Bill 3, 2023*).

Additionally, potential shifts in inmate populations due to proposed legislation, such as Texas Senate Bill 4, which would authorize the arrest of individuals for illegal border crossings, could significantly increase operational demands if enacted. Although the legislation is currently on hold in the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, its implications underscore the need for sustained investment in staffing, infrastructure, and resource planning to support the Sheriff's Office in fulfilling its dual role in community protection and custodial care (*Texas Senate Bill 2, 2024*).

Fulshear Police Department

Table FPD 1: Fulshear Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	8	89	55
Offenses ⁵	9	90	55
Victims ⁶	9	100	55
Known Offenders ⁷	8	28	69
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2021			
Incidents ⁴	27	131	75
Offenses ⁵	27	131	75
Victims ⁶	27	133	75
Known Offenders ⁷	27	44	91
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2022			
Incidents ⁴	39	164	100
Offenses ⁵	40	165	100
Victims ⁶	40	198	100
Known Offenders ⁷	39	84	110
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	481.56	291.85
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	-7.48	NA ⁹
2023			
Incidents ⁴	41	185	115
Offenses ⁵	42	191	115
Victims ⁶	42	224	115
Known Offenders ⁷	40	115	127
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	448.19	234.65
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	-6.92	-19.60
2024			
Incidents ⁴	54	156	138
Offenses ⁵	64	156	138
Victims ⁶	64	172	138
Known Offenders ⁷	58	100	155
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on Fulshear Police Department service population of 16,856 (2020), 25,169 (2021), 34,264 (2022), 42,616 (2023).

⁹ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table FPD 2: Fulshear Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	8	--	--	--	5	46	5
Offenses ²	9	--	--	--	6	46	5
Victims ³	9	--	--	--	8	49	6
Known Offenders ⁴	8	--	--	--	2	15	2
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	24	3	--	--	7	67	11
Offenses ²	24	3	--	--	7	67	11
Victims ³	24	3	--	--	7	68	11
Known Offenders ⁴	24	3	--	--	1	26	7
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	37	2	--	--	10	80	12
Offenses ²	38	2	--	--	10	80	13
Victims ³	38	2	--	--	16	95	13
Known Offenders ⁴	37	2	--	--	4	36	9
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	40	1	--	--	9	92	3
Offenses ²	41	1	--	--	15	92	3
Victims ³	41	1	--	--	22	106	4
Known Offenders ⁴	39	1	--	--	5	77	6
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2024							
Incidents ¹	54	--	--	1	16	80	--
Offenses ²	63	--	--	1	16	80	--
Victims ³	63	--	--	2	20	84	--
Known Offenders ⁴	57	--	--	4	7	62	--
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on Fulshear Police Department service population of 16,856 (2020), 25,169 (2021), and 34,264 (2022).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table FPD 3: Fulshear Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses
Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	8	89	55
Total Incidents Cleared	6	2	10
Cleared by Arrest	6	2	10
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
2021			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	3.05	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	3.05	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	27	131	75
Total Incidents Cleared	9	4	25
Cleared by Arrest	9	4	25
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
2022			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	4.27	17.00
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	4.27	17.00
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	39	164	100
Total Incidents Cleared	8	7	17
Cleared by Arrest	8	7	17
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
2023			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	3.24	26.09
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	3.24	26.09
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	41	185	115
Total Incidents Cleared	13	6	30
Cleared by Arrest	13	6	30
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
2024			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	5.13	19.57
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	5.13	19.57
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	54	156	138
Total Incidents Cleared	32	8	27
Cleared by Arrest	32	8	27
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Fulshear Police Department

The Fulshear Police Department has a history of growth and adaptation in response to the evolving needs of its community. Originally a small town, Fulshear has experienced significant expansion in recent years, driven by the broader growth trends in Fort Bend County. The city of Fulshear, which had a population of just over 600 residents in the late 1980s, has grown exponentially, making it the fastest-

growing city currently examined in this report, and the second fastest-growing city in the United States between the years 2022 and 2023 (*Kelly, 2024*).

A recent national analysis identified the 30 fastest-growing affluent suburbs in the United States, ranking them based on population growth from 2018 to 2023 among communities with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 and median household incomes of \$150,000 or more. The City of Fulshear ranked first on the list, with an astounding population increase of 236.74% over the five-year period. The study reported Fulshear's median household income at \$178,398 and an average home value of \$521,157, underscoring the area's rapid expansion and economic affluence (*Turner, 2025*).

Research also indicates that the population of residents in Fulshear will continue to increase as more families and businesses move into the area (*Fulshear, TX, 2023; World Population Review, 2024*). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Fulshear's population has increased from around 5,000 residents in 2017 to more than 17,000 residents by 2023. This rapid growth has placed increasing demands on local law enforcement, necessitating adjustments to staffing and resource allocation.

The Fulshear Police Department provides law enforcement services across approximately 10 square miles, primarily within the city limits. Although geographically compact, the city's rapid population growth has led to increased call volumes and a more complex public safety environment. The department is staffed by approximately 20 full-time officers, supported by an additional 8 certified personnel in supervisory roles (*Fulshear, TX, 2024*). Given its limited staffing relative to the city's expanding needs, the department may rely on interagency collaboration, particularly with the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, to manage larger incidents and periods of heightened activity. This coordinated approach is essential to maintaining public safety as Fulshear continues to grow.

In response to this rapid growth, the Fulshear Police Department has expanded both its personnel and resources to meet the rising demand for law enforcement services. The department has seen an increase in staffing levels, the acquisition of new equipment, and enhanced training programs for officers. These changes have been essential as the department now responds to a broader range of incidents, from traffic management on growing suburban roads to addressing crime in newly developed neighborhoods. The department's focus on community-oriented policing has also strengthened, helping to build trust within the rapidly expanding population (*City of Fulshear, 2022*).

Geographically, Fulshear is situated along key regional routes such as FM 1093 and FM 359, which connect it to other parts of Fort Bend County and the Greater Houston area. These roads, combined with the city's proximity to other larger highways, can create specific traffic control and safety challenges that require targeted law enforcement efforts. The relatively small size of the department means that officers must be able to adapt to various situations and have a range of responsibilities from routine patrols to community engagement activities.

Recent challenges facing the Fulshear Police Department are closely tied to the city's rapid population growth, which has outpaced the expansion of law enforcement resources. The significant influx of new residents has increased the demand for public safety services, placing added pressure on the department to sustain response times and provide adequate coverage across its jurisdiction.

A thorough review of City Council records conducted by the researchers in this report finds that nearly a decade prior to Fulshear's most intensive population growth, Police Chief Kenny Seymour demonstrated early awareness of the city's development trajectory and took proactive steps to increase departmental staffing in anticipation of future public safety demands.

While the Fulshear Police Department is actively hiring, its highly competitive salary structure and robust benefits package may contribute to a lower vacancy rate compared to other agencies evaluated by researchers in this report. Officers employed by Fulshear PD receive a starting salary ranging from \$74,561 to \$79,124, along with a comprehensive, cost-effective health and welfare package. Medical, dental, vision, long-term disability, and life insurance premiums are fully covered by the City for full-time employees, with a 25% contribution toward dependent healthcare. Additionally, the City of Fulshear contributes \$1,723 annually to each officer's Health Savings Account (HSA). Long-term disability coverage is fully funded by the City, and benefits take effect the first day of the month following the employee's start date. The department also offers opportunities for professional growth through specialized divisions, including Criminal Investigations, K-9, Traffic, Community Liaison, and Recruiting—making Fulshear an attractive destination for law enforcement professionals seeking both competitive compensation and career development (*Fulshear Police Department, 2025*).

The growing needs of the City of Fulshear highlight the importance of strategic planning and resource allocation for the police department to adapt to the evolving dynamics of the community. Addressing future staffing shortages and securing additional funding for equipment and training are critical steps to ensure that the department can continue to meet the safety expectations of its residents while managing the impacts of growth effectively.

Meadows Place Police Department

Table MPPD 1: Meadows Place Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴			
Offenses ⁵			
Victims ⁶			
Known Offenders ⁷			
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
2021			
Incidents ⁴	14	165	15
Offenses ⁵	15	165	15
Victims ⁶	15	168	15
Known Offenders ⁷	16	26	17
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	3,470.03	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹		NA ⁹
2022			
Incidents ⁴	16	162	16
Offenses ⁵	17	166	16
Victims ⁶	17	164	16
Known Offenders ⁷	17	23	17
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	3,553.84	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	2.42	NA ⁹
2023			
Incidents ⁴	17	132	23
Offenses ⁵	20	134	23
Victims ⁶	20	134	23
Known Offenders ⁷	21	39	25
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	2,915.58	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	-17.96	NA ⁹
2024			
Incidents ⁴	14	138	17
Offenses ⁵	14	138	17
Victims ⁶	14	142	17
Known Offenders ⁷	14	82	19
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on Meadows Place Police Department service population of 4,755 (2021) 4,671 (2022), and 4,596 (2023).

⁹ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table MPPD 2: Meadows Place Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹							
Offenses ²							
Victims ³							
Known Offenders ⁴							
Rate/100,000 ⁵							
2021							
Incidents ¹	14	--	--	1	4	110	18
Offenses ²	15	--	--	1	4	110	18
Victims ³	15	--	--	1	4	112	18
Known Offenders ⁴	16	--	--	1	1	14	1
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	2,313.35	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	--	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	15	1	--	3	4	108	27
Offenses ²	16	1	--	3	4	108	31
Victims ³	16	1	--	5	4	108	27
Known Offenders ⁴	16	1	--	4	2	9	6
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	2,312.14	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	.05	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	16	1	--	--	8	93	13
Offenses ²	19	1	--	--	8	93	15
Victims ³	19	1	--	--	8	94	13
Known Offenders ⁴	20	1	--	--	2	27	4
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2024							
Incidents ¹	14	--	--	2	17	97	4
Offenses ²	14	--	--	2	17	97	4
Victims ³	14	--	--	3	17	98	4
Known Offenders ⁴	14	--	--	2	11	56	4
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on Meadows Place Police Department service population of 4,755 (2021), 4,671 (2022), and 4,596 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table MPPD 3: Meadows Place Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared			
% Cleared by Arrest			
% Cleared by Exceptional Means			
Total Incidents			
Total Incidents Cleared			
Cleared by Arrest			
Cleared by Exceptional Means			
2021			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	6.67	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	6.06	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	.60	--
Total Incidents	14	165	15
Total Incidents Cleared	5	11	13
Cleared by Arrest	5	10	13
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	1	--
2022			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	4.94	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	4.94	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA ⁴	--	--
Total Incidents	16	162	16
Total Incidents Cleared	2	8	14
Cleared by Arrest	1	8	14
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1	--	--
2023			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	6.06	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	5.30	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	.76	--
Total Incidents	17	132	23
Total Incidents Cleared	6	8	16
Cleared by Arrest	6	7	16
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	1	--
2024			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	5.07	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	--	3.62	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA ⁴	1.45	--
Total Incidents	14	138	17
Total Incidents Cleared	2	7	11
Cleared by Arrest	--	5	11
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2	2	--

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Meadows Place Police Department

The Meadows Place Police Department serves a small, but strategically positioned, community near Houston. Incorporated in 1983, Meadows Place has grown into a residential area with a population of approximately 4,767 residents (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2022*). Despite its small geographical area, which is approximately one square mile, the city has its own dedicated police department. The department's small

size and focused jurisdiction allow it to concentrate on providing localized law enforcement services, often working with the Sugar Land and Stafford Police Departments and the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (all of which share geographical borders with this department).

The Meadows Place Police Department is a relatively small force, comprising about 17 full-time officers, 2 part-time sworn officers, and is supported by a few civilian staff members (*City of Meadows Place, 2023*). The department's primary responsibilities include patrolling local streets, monitoring community safety, and providing traffic control along the major roads that border the city, such as U.S. Highway 59 and Beltway 8. The department also engages in community outreach programs to maintain close ties with residents, emphasizing crime prevention and public safety awareness.

One of the unique challenges facing the Meadows Place Police Department is its proximity to Houston and the sheer volume of commuter traffic that flows through its jurisdiction. Because many residents travel to and from Houston for work, the city sees a significant number of non-residents passing through it daily. This transient population can impact local crime rates, as incidents involving commuters, increasing incidents such as traffic violations and minor criminal activity, which are often reported within the city's limits (*Meadows Place, TX, 2023*). As a result, crime rates in the area are reflective of the actual safety of residents but rather the challenges associated with being a transit hub for commuters.

As Meadows Place continues to experience growth and higher traffic flow caused by commuter traveling through the city, the demand for law enforcement resources has increased. Research has uncovered that the department faces the challenge of maintaining a robust police presence with a relatively small force, making it difficult to address the rising needs of a busy community. Additional funding and support for officer recruitment and retention would help the department manage these challenges more effectively, ensuring that it can continue to provide high-quality services to residents and maintain the safety of those traveling through the area (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*).

Missouri City Police Department

Table MCPD 1: Missouri City Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	406	1,117	172
Offenses ⁵	478	1,117	172
Victims ⁶	478	1,271	172
Known Offenders ⁷	477	1,351	217
Rate/100,000 ⁸	643.69	1,504.19	231.62
2021			
Incidents ⁴	411	1,068	298
Offenses ⁵	480	1,112	298
Victims ⁶	480	1,180	298
Known Offenders ⁷	448	1,225	357
Rate/100,000 ⁸	641.71	1,486.63	398.40
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	.31	-1.17	72.00
2022			
Incidents ⁴	490	1,278	247
Offenses ⁵	586	1,329	247
Victims ⁶	586	1,460	247
Known Offenders ⁷	567	1,474	283
Rate/100,000 ⁸	766.01	1,737.25	322.88
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	19.37	16.86	-18.96
2023			
Incidents ⁴	523	996	253
Offenses ⁵	620	996	253
Victims ⁶	620	1,058	253
Known Offenders ⁷	604	664	289
Rate/100,000 ⁸	807.58	1,297.33	329.54
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	5.42	-25.32	2.06
2024			
Incidents ⁴	551	1,137	328
Offenses ⁵	637	1,138	328
Victims ⁶	637	1,223	328
Known Offenders ⁷	604	653	377
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on Missouri City Police Department service population of 74,259 (2020), 74,800 (2021), 76,500 (2022), and 76,773 (2023).

**Table MCPD 2: Missouri City Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	382	21	1	41	88	555	57
Offenses ²	453	21	2	41	88	555	57
Victims ³	453	21	2	70	107	615	61
Known Offender ⁴	442	26	1	83	101	655	64
Rate/100,000 ⁵	610.03	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	747.38	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	387	23	1	34	71	568	60
Offenses ²	454	25	1	34	115	568	60
Victims ³	454	25	1	59	89	606	61
Known Offender ⁴	424	23	1	53	89	640	68
Rate/100,000 ⁵	606.95	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	153.74	759.36	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-.50	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1.60	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	464	22	4	23	90	685	76
Offenses ²	560	22	4	23	141	685	76
Victims ³	560	22	4	42	154	735	81
Known Offender ⁴	540	23	4	24	107	796	86
Rate/100,000 ⁵	732.03	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	184.31	859.42	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	20.61	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	19.88	17.92	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	485	33	3	21	48	563	92
Offenses ²	580	34	3	21	48	563	92
Victims ³	580	34	3	37	53	584	95
Known Offender ⁴	563	35	4	20	29	390	47
Rate/100,000 ⁵	755.47	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	733.33	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	3.20	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-14.67	NA ⁷
2024							
Incidents ¹	520	27	3	21	76	680	68
Offenses ²	605	28	3	21	77	680	68
Victims ³	605	28	3	34	91	716	69
Known Offender ⁴	573	27	3	15	32	430	26
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on Missouri City Police Department service population of 74,259 (2020), 74,800 (2021), 76,500 (2022), and 76,773 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table MCPD 3: Missouri City Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses
Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Person Offenses¹	Property Offenses²	Offenses Against Society³
2020			
% Cleared	77.34	18.08	87.21
% Cleared by Arrest	40.15	9.49	86.04
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	37.19	8.59	1.16
Total Incidents	406	1,117	172
Total Incidents Cleared	314	202	150
Cleared by Arrest	163	106	148
Cleared by Exceptional Means	151	96	2
2021			
% Cleared	74.21	22.19	95.64
% Cleared by Arrest	36.74	14.14	94.97
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	37.71	8.05	.67
Total Incidents	411	1,068	298
Total Incidents Cleared	305	237	285
Cleared by Arrest	150	151	283
Cleared by Exceptional Means	155	86	2
2022			
% Cleared	81.43	20.26	89.07
% Cleared by Arrest	37.35	14.32	87.85
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	44.08	5.95	1.21
Total Incidents	490	1,278	247
Total Incidents Cleared	399	258	220
Cleared by Arrest	183	183	217
Cleared by Exceptional Means	216	76	3
2023			
% Cleared	80.88	24.60	81.03
% Cleared by Arrest	40.34	18.17	80.23
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	40.54	6.43	.79
Total Incidents	523	996	253
Total Incidents Cleared	423	245	205
Cleared by Arrest	211	181	203
Cleared by Exceptional Means	212	64	2
2024			
% Cleared	76.59	27.18	81.40
% Cleared by Arrest	40.65	21.81	79.57
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	35.93	5.36	1.83
Total Incidents	551	1,137	328
Total Incidents Cleared	422	309	267
Cleared by Arrest	224	248	261
Cleared by Exceptional Means	198	61	6

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Missouri City Police Department

The Missouri City Police Department (MCPD) in Fort Bend County, Texas, has a well-established history of serving a diverse and growing community. Missouri City extends across parts of both Fort Bend and Harris counties, providing the MCPD with a complex jurisdiction that includes both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. The city's location adjacent to Houston means that its officers often encounter crime and traffic issues that spill over from the larger urban center (*Missouri City, TX, 2023*). The MCPD is also responsible for patrolling a portion of the expanding residential community of Sienna, a major master-planned development in Fort Bend County that has seen significant growth in recent years (*Houston Chronicle, 2024*).

With a department of about 112 sworn officers and 34 civilian staff members, the MCPD manages law enforcement services for a city that includes over 74,000 residents as of the 2020 Census (*Missouri City, TX, 2023; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022*). The department's responsibilities cover a range of urban and suburban settings, including major thoroughfares like State Highway 6 and Fort Bend Parkway, which connect Missouri City with the broader Houston metropolitan area. These roads serve as key arteries for commuters, adding to the complexity of the department's traffic management and enforcement duties.

One of the recent challenges for the MCPD has been balancing the demands of a growing population with the resources available to the department. Missouri City's expanding jurisdiction, including dense residential areas, such as portions of Sienna, require increased patrol coverage and community engagement efforts, but, like other agencies, the department has faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining enough officers to meet these needs. Chief Brandon Harris, who assumed leadership of the Missouri City Police Department in 2024, has emphasized the need for additional resources to support the department's mission, particularly as the city continues to grow and diversify (*Varma, 2024*). The department continues to experience challenges in recruiting and retaining certified officers, with data from 2022 reporting vacancies at an all-time high (at that time the department openings for 31 officers) (*Vogel, 2024*).

Geographically, researchers in this report have observed that crime is more concentrated in the northeastern portions of Missouri City, which are closer to Harris County, an area that generally sees higher crime rates comparative to Fort Bend County. The southern regions of Missouri City, particularly neighborhoods like Sienna and Lake Olympia, report significantly lower crime rates and are considered some of the safest in the city. This distribution of crime reflects the socio-economic and urban characteristics of the areas bordering Harris County, where higher population density and proximity to Houston's urban center may contribute to increased criminal activity (*CrimeGrade.org, 2023*).

Crime rate and correlated crime clearance in Missouri City is also impacted by the implementation of their drone program; MCPD was the first agency in Fort Bend County to utilize drones to search for missing or fleeing subjects. Since its inception, the program has grown to be one of the most robust programs in the region and is often requested by other local law enforcement agencies to assist with their searches.

Missouri City's crime trends demonstrate the importance of focusing policing resources in areas with higher crime concentrations, particularly in the northeast, where residents can face a higher risk of

property and violent crimes. The city's efforts to monitor and address crime in these areas will be crucial as Missouri City continues to grow and develop (*CrimeGrade.org, 2023*).

The challenge of retention and recruitment of officers is compounded by the competitive market for law enforcement personnel, a trend seen across many departments nationwide. As Missouri City continues to attract new residents and businesses, the police department must secure sufficient funding for staffing and training to ensure that it can maintain public safety and effectively serve both long-time residents and newcomers. Addressing these needs proactively will be vital in managing the impacts of growth and maintaining the safety of citizens.

Needville Police Department

Table NPD 1: Needville Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	15	16	1
Offenses ⁵	20	16	1
Victims ⁶	20	17	1
Known Offenders ⁷	16	5	1
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2021			
Incidents ⁴	26	29	1
Offenses ⁵	28	29	1
Victims ⁶	28	30	1
Known Offenders ⁷	24	12	1
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2022			
Incidents ⁴	31	48	2
Offenses ⁵	33	48	2
Victims ⁶	33	48	2
Known Offenders ⁷	29	14	2
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2023			
Incidents ⁴	22	35	4
Offenses ⁵	23	35	4
Victims ⁶	23	35	4
Known Offenders ⁷	21	4	4
Rate/100,000 ⁸	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁹	NA ⁹	NA ⁹
2024			
Incidents ⁴	16	22	1
Offenses ⁵	18	22	1
Victims ⁶	18	22	1
Known Offenders ⁷	16	6	1
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, and human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on the Needville Police Department service population of 3,113 (2020), 3,059 (2021), 3,040 (2022), and 3,088 (2023).

⁹ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table NPD 2: Needville Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	15	0	0	0	0	4	0
Offenses ²	20	0	0	0	0	4	0
Victims ³	20	0	0	0	0	5	0
Known Offenders ⁴	16	0	0	0	0	1	0
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	24	2	0	1	1	10	1
Offenses ²	26	2	0	1	1	10	1
Victims ³	26	2	0	1	1	11	1
Known Offenders ⁴	22	2	0	1	0	3	2
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	31	0	0	1	2	28	3
Offenses ²	33	0	0	1	2	28	3
Victims ³	33	0	0	1	2	28	3
Known Offenders ⁴	29	0	0	1	0	6	0
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	19	2	1	--	--	29	1
Offenses ²	20	2	1	--	--	29	1
Victims ³	20	2	1	--	--	29	1
Known Offenders ⁴	19	1	1	--	--	2	1
Rate/100,000 ⁵	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷
2024							
Incidents ¹	15	1	--	--	2	11	2
Offenses ²	16	2	--	--	2	11	2
Victims ³	16	2	--	--	2	11	2
Known Offenders ⁴	15	1	--	--	1	4	--
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on the Needville Police Department service population of 3,113 (2020), 3,059 (2021), 3,040 (2022), and 3,088 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table NPD 3: Needville Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA ⁴	--	--
Total Incidents	15	16	1
Total Incidents Cleared	8	--	1
Cleared by Arrest	1	--	1
Cleared by Exceptional Means	7	--	--
2021			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	--
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	--
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA ⁴	--	--
Total Incidents	26	29	1
Total Incidents Cleared	18	1	--
Cleared by Arrest	7	1	--
Cleared by Exceptional Means	11	--	--
2022			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	--
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	--
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	--
Total Incidents	31	48	2
Total Incidents Cleared	17	3	--
Cleared by Arrest	2	1	--
Cleared by Exceptional Means	15	2	--
2023			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	22	35	4
Total Incidents Cleared	4	--	2
Cleared by Arrest	4	--	2
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
2024			
% Cleared	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	NA ⁴	--	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--
Total Incidents	16	22	1
Total Incidents Cleared	7	--	1
Cleared by Arrest	7	--	1
Cleared by Exceptional Means	--	--	--

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Needville Police Department

The Needville Police Department in Fort Bend County, Texas, has a long history of serving its small, yet growing, community. Established as the primary law enforcement agency for the city, the department covers a jurisdiction of about 2 square miles and serves a population of approximately 2,823

residents (*Needville Area Chamber of Commerce, 2024; City of Needville, 2023*). Despite its small geographical size, the department plays a crucial role in maintaining safety in both the city and surrounding areas, often working alongside the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office for incidents that extend beyond city limits, particularly in the unincorporated parts of the county.

The Needville Police Department is small, comprising around 6 full-time officers (*TX County Offices, 2024*). Due to its limited size, the department must prioritize its resources carefully, focusing on local patrolling, responding to community calls, and engaging in community policing efforts. The city is located near State Highway 36 and Farm-to-Market roads, making it a conduit for traffic traveling between larger urban areas like Houston and rural parts of southern Fort Bend County. As a result, the police frequently interact with non-residents traveling through Needville, which can influence the types of incidents they encounter and report.

Needville has faced challenges typical of smaller law enforcement agencies, such as maintaining adequate staffing levels and securing funding for modern policing and training resources. As the broader Fort Bend County area experiences growth, the city of Needville is positioned to follow a similar trend, with population growth moving south and west from rapidly expanding cities like Fulshear (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*). This anticipated growth will increase the demand for police services, requiring the department to expand its capabilities and hire additional officers to keep pace with the changing needs of the community.

The potential population boom in Needville underscores the importance of preparing for increased calls for service and the need for updated training and technology. Additionally, as more residents move into the area, the department will need to manage the challenges associated with higher traffic volumes and increased interactions with commuters. Addressing these needs proactively could help mitigate potential increases in reported crime rates that often accompany rapid population growth, ensuring that the city remains a safe place for both new and long-time residents.

Richmond Police Department

Table RichPD 1: Richmond Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	112	228	24
Offenses ⁵	125	228	24
Victims ⁶	125	235	24
Known Offenders ⁷	111	138	29
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,075.08	1,960.95	NA ⁹
2021			
Incidents ⁴	151	257	42
Offenses ⁵	163	257	42
Victims ⁶	163	273	42
Known Offenders ⁷	149	158	47
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,381.36	2,177.97	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	28.49	11.07	NA ⁹
2022			
Incidents ⁴	107	383	71
Offenses ⁵	114	383	71
Victims ⁶	114	420	71
Known Offenders ⁷	100	247	84
Rate/100,000 ⁸	910.45	3,059.11	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-34.08	40.46	NA ⁹
2023			
Incidents ⁴	152	414	67
Offenses ⁵	174	415	67
Victims ⁶	174	469	67
Known Offenders ⁷	155	306	83
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,357.68	3,238.14	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	49.12	5.85	NA ⁹
2024			
Incidents ⁴	132	455	75
Offenses ⁵	138	455	75
Victims ⁶	138	486	75
Known Offenders ⁷	140	409	95
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on the Richmond Police Department service population of 11,627 (2020), 11,800 (2021), 12,520 (2022), and 12,816 (2023).

⁹ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table RichPD 2: Richmond Police Department: Select Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	99	9	--	12	23	125	23
Offenses ²	112	9	--	12	23	125	23
Victims ³	112	9	--	16	24	127	23
Known Offenders ⁴	98	9	--	13	9	86	11
Rate/100,000 ⁵	963.28	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,075.08	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	130	12	5	16	30	142	13
Offenses ²	142	12	5	16	30	142	13
Victims ³	142	12	5	19	31	154	13
Known Offenders ⁴	130	11	5	5	9	109	4
Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,203.39	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,203.39	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	24.93	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	11.93	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	100	7	--	12	38	237	16
Offenses ²	107	7	--	12	38	237	16
Victims ³	107	7	--	18	43	251	16
Known Offenders ⁴	93	7	--	7	11	179	8
Rate/100,000 ⁵	854.63	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,892.97	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-28.98	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	57.30	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	137	7	2	9	34	238	15
Offenses ²	157	7	3	9	35	238	15
Victims ³	157	7	3	11	39	255	16
Known Offenders ⁴	141	7	1	9	14	208	9
Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,225.03	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,857.97	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	43.34	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-1.89	NA ⁷
2024							
Incidents ¹	120	10	--	7	35	322	9
Offenses ²	126	10	--	7	35	322	9
Victims ³	126	10	--	14	36	332	10
Known Offenders ⁴	127	8	--	16	27	326	7
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on the Richmond Police Department service population of 11,627 (2020), 11,800 (2021), 12,520 (2022), and 12,816 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table RichPD 3: Richmond Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	56.25	27.63	NA
% Cleared by Arrest	51.79	26.32	NA
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	4.46	1.32	--
Total Incidents	112	228	24
Total Incidents Cleared	63	63	22
Cleared by Arrest	58	60	22
Cleared by Exceptional Means	5	3	--
2021			
% Cleared	43.71	36.96	NA
% Cleared by Arrest	43.05	36.58	NA
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	NA	NA	--
Total Incidents	151	257	42
Total Incidents Cleared	66	95	35
Cleared by Arrest	65	94	35
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1	1	--
2022			
% Cleared	41.12	32.38	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	39.25	32.11	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	1.86	.26	--
Total Incidents	107	383	71
Total Incidents Cleared	44	124	64
Cleared by Arrest	42	123	64
Cleared by Exceptional Means	2	1	--
2023			
% Cleared	42.11	23.19	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	39.47	22.95	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	2.63	.24	--
Total Incidents	152	414	67
Total Incidents Cleared	64	96	62
Cleared by Arrest	60	95	62
Cleared by Exceptional Means	4	1	--
2024			
% Cleared	30.30	46.37	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	29.55	46.15	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	0.76	0.22	--
Total Incidents	132	455	75
Total Incidents Cleared	40	211	65
Cleared by Arrest	39	210	65
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1	1	--

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Richmond Police Department

The Richmond Police Department plays a critical role in maintaining public safety within the city of Richmond, which serves as the county seat. Founded to serve a growing community, the department has evolved alongside the city, which has seen increasing activity as a center for local government and

services. Covering approximately 4.4 square miles, the Richmond Police Department manages a range of responsibilities, including handling the high influx of traffic and visitors during the day due to the presence of county offices, courthouses, and other governmental functions (*Richmond Police Department, 2024*). The Richmond Police Department was also identified in this report as an agency whose reported crime rates may be influenced by a substantial influx of non-resident visitors within its jurisdiction. This dynamic presents challenges when attempting to draw direct comparisons based solely on the city's residential population.

The department consists of about 40 full-time officers and a few part-time staff members, which is relatively small compared to the demands of the area (*TX County Offices, 2024*). The city's geographical position along key routes, such as U.S. Highway 90A, adds to the complexity of law enforcement duties, as officers must manage both local traffic and commuters traveling between the urban centers of Houston and other parts of Fort Bend County. Richmond's role as the county seat also means that the police often coordinate with the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office for incidents that require broader jurisdictional oversight, particularly in unincorporated areas adjacent to the city.

A unique aspect of the Richmond Police Department's responsibilities includes patrolling areas around OakBend Medical Center, which serves as the main hospital in Fort Bend County that provides specialized mental health services for individuals requiring mental health evaluations (*OakBend Medical Center, 2023*). This makes the hospital a focal point for both emergency medical services and incidents involving mental health crises. As a result, the department must be prepared to address situations that require coordination with healthcare providers, adding a layer of complexity to their policing duties and an increase in calls for service specific to assisting with the unique population served by this hospital.

The Richmond Police Department currently faces several challenges, including the need for more resources to keep pace with increasing demands for public safety services. Like many small departments, it struggles with issues related to staffing and retention, as attracting and maintaining qualified officers has become more difficult amid a competitive market for law enforcement personnel (*Richmond Police Department, 2024*).

Furthermore, as Fort Bend County's population continues to grow, including the expected increase in residents moving southward into areas near Richmond, there is a pressing need for strategic planning to expand the department's capacity. Ensuring that the Richmond Police Department has adequate resources and support will be crucial for maintaining safety and effectively managing the increased demands that come with the city's unique position as a hub of governmental activity and healthcare services.

Rosenberg Police Department

Table RosenPD 1: Rosenberg Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	819	895	529
Offenses ⁵	962	899	529
Victims ⁶	962	1,024	529
Known Offenders ⁷	926	345	702
Rate/100,000 ⁸	2,518.19	2,353.28	1,384.74
2021			
Incidents ⁴	744	849	588
Offenses ⁵	880	866	588
Victims ⁶	880	987	588
Known Offenders ⁷	809	370	726
Rate/100,000 ⁸	2,229.65	2,194.18	1,489.81
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-11.46	-6.76	7.59
2022			
Incidents ⁴	696	1,001	585
Offenses ⁵	820	1,015	585
Victims ⁶	820	1,139	585
Known Offenders ⁷	766	482	729
Rate/100,000 ⁸	2,012.81	2,491.47	1,435.97
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-9.73	13.55	-3.61
2023			
Incidents ⁴	659	894	511
Offenses ⁵	755	912	511
Victims ⁶	755	1,058	511
Known Offenders ⁷	662	441	598
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,836.80	2,218.76	1,243.19
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-8.74	-10.94	-13.43
2024			
Incidents ⁴	711	877	456
Offenses ⁵	828	878	456
Victims ⁶	828	980	456
Known Offenders ⁷	739	455	539
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on the Rosenberg Police Department service population of 38,202 (2020), 39,468 (2021), 40,739 (2022), and 41,104 (2023).

**Table RosenPD 2: Rosenberg Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

		Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020	Incidents ¹	758	53	5	26	143	439	70
	Offenses ²	896	58	5	26	145	439	72
	Victims ³	896	58	5	32	173	500	72
	Known Offenders ⁴	869	49	4	20	37	162	25
	Rate/100,000 ⁵	2,345.43	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	379.56	1,149.15	NA ⁷
2021	Incidents ¹	703	36	4	22	83	442	57
	Offenses ²	838	37	4	22	99	442	58
	Victims ³	838	37	4	30	114	515	59
	Known Offenders ⁴	861	39	7	15	32	170	31
	Rate/100,000 ⁵	2,123.24	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,119.89	NA ⁷
	Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-9.47	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-2.55	NA ⁷
2022	Incidents ¹	669	22	1	22	71	562	67
	Offenses ²	791	23	1	22	84	562	68
	Victims ³	791	23	1	37	88	611	72
	Known Offenders ⁴	736	21	1	26	30	256	20
	Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,941.63	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,379.51	NA ⁷
	Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-8.55	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	23.18	NA ⁷
2023	Incidents ¹	629	29	1	10	67	527	74
	Offenses ²	724	30	1	10	84	527	75
	Victims ³	724	30	1	15	84	641	83
	Known Offenders ⁴	634	26	2	5	29	247	40
	Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,761.39	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,282.11	NA ⁷
	Rate Pct. Inc./Dec	-9.28	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-7.06	NA ⁷
2024	Incidents ¹	672	34	--	8	57	504	72
	Offenses ²	786	37	--	8	57	504	73
	Victims ³	786	37	--	12	72	555	78
	Known Offenders ⁴	701	30	--	4	22	271	52
	Rate/100,000 ⁶							
	Rate Pct. Inc./Dec ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on the Richmond Police Department service population of 38,202 (2020), 39,468 (2021), 40,739 (2022), and 41,104 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table RosenPD 3: Rosenberg Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	54.58	11.51	91.12
% Cleared by Arrest	53.85	11.06	91.12
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	.73	.45	--
Total Incidents	819	895	529
Total Incidents Cleared	447	103	482
Cleared by Arrest	441	99	482
Cleared by Exceptional Means	6	4	--
2021			
% Cleared	60.08	12.49	94.05
% Cleared by Arrest	58.06	12.37	94.05
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	2.02	.12	--
Total Incidents	744	849	588
Total Incidents Cleared	447	106	553
Cleared by Arrest	432	105	553
Cleared by Exceptional Means	15	1	--
2022			
% Cleared	65.37	16.18	94.19
% Cleared by Arrest	65.23	16.18	94.02
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	.14	--	.17
Total Incidents	696	1,001	585
Total Incidents Cleared	455	162	551
Cleared by Arrest	454	162	550
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1	--	1
2023			
% Cleared	64.49	15.77	91.39
% Cleared by Arrest	62.21	14.99	91.39
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	2.28	.78	--
Total Incidents	659	894	511
Total Incidents Cleared	425	141	467
Cleared by Arrest	410	134	467
Cleared by Exceptional Means	15	7	--
2024			
% Cleared	73.42	21.21	90.35
% Cleared by Arrest	57.81	15.96	90.13
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	15.61	5.25	0.22
Total Incidents	711	877	456
Total Incidents Cleared	522	186	412
Cleared by Arrest	411	140	411
Cleared by Exceptional Means	111	46	1

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

Agency Contextualization - Rosenberg Police Department

The Rosenberg Police Department (RPD) serves the city of Rosenberg; a community that consists of a mix of residential and commercial areas. The department has grown alongside the city, which has a population of approximately 38,000 residents and spans about 37.2 square miles (*Rosenberg Police Department, 2023*). Rosenberg’s status as a hub for county services and its location near major transportation routes, including U.S. Highway 59, contribute to a substantial influx of daytime traffic as

people commuting for work and/or needing access to county services will travel within its jurisdiction, creating unique policing challenges.

The RPD employs about 106 personnel, including around 80 full-time sworn officers (*Rosenberg Police Department, 2023*). The Patrol Division's responsibilities include responding to calls for service, conducting investigations, and providing community-oriented policing to address crime and safety concerns. In addition to routine patrols, the department utilizes specialized units like K9, SWAT, Community Relations, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Units to enhance their operational capabilities (*Rosenberg Police Department, 2023*).

One of the unique challenges the department faces is managing the impact of socioeconomic factors within its jurisdiction. Recent data available for poverty rates in Rosenberg, Texas, comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates for 2019. According to this data, approximately 17.2% of Rosenberg residents were living below the poverty line (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2020*), which is higher than both the state average of approximately 14% and the overall poverty rate in Fort Bend County, which is about 8.9%. This data highlights significant economic challenges within the City of Rosenberg, comparative to the county as a whole, or even when compared to other municipalities within the county and state (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2023*).

Additionally, the city has a substantial number of rental properties, contributing to a transient population. As of recent data, approximately 46% of households in Rosenberg, Texas are renter-occupied, while the remaining 54% are owner-occupied. This reflects a substantial portion of the population relying on rental properties, which has grown alongside the city's overall development and increasing population (*RentCafe, 2024; Redfin, 2024*).

Furthermore, within the city of Rosenberg, a significant portion of the housing market is allocated to low-income, government-subsidized units, including Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and other federally assisted programs. As of the most recent data, about 208 units are income-based apartments where tenants typically pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent and utilities. 192 units are rent-subsidized apartments, providing affordable housing to low-income households without direct rental assistance. These units make up a portion of the broader rental housing market in Rosenberg, helping support economically vulnerable populations in the city (*PublicHousing.com, 2024; AffordableHousingOnline, 2024*). These socioeconomic conditions can correlate with increased calls for police service and more frequent reports of certain types of crimes, such as property offenses and disputes, requiring additional attention and resources from the department.

The opening of the Fort Bend County Epicenter in Rosenberg, Texas, represents a significant addition to the area's entertainment and economic landscape. This new 230,000-square-foot venue, which includes a 10,000-seat arena and multiple event spaces, is set to host a variety of activities, ranging from concerts and sports events to community gatherings and graduations (*Fort Bend Epicenter, 2023*). The center's location along the U.S. 59 corridor makes it easily accessible, attracting not only residents but also visitors from neighboring regions, including those traveling from Houston.

The introduction of this major entertainment venue has implications for local law enforcement and public safety in Rosenberg. With an increase in large-scale events, the Rosenberg Police Department will face greater demands in managing crowd control, traffic flow, and security concerns during events. The department, which already deals with the complexities of patrolling a growing population and managing traffic along major routes, may need additional resources and staffing to ensure the safety of both event attendees and residents during these gatherings (*Rosenberg Police Department, 2023*).

The Epicenter is also likely to drive economic growth by attracting more visitors and potentially stimulating new business investments in the area. However, this growth can present challenges such as increased traffic congestion and a higher potential for incidents related to large gatherings, such as public disturbances or petty crimes. To address these challenges effectively, the Rosenberg Police Department may require additional support, including more officers and enhanced training for managing large events and diverse crowds.

As the Epicenter contributes to the city's development, city planners and law enforcement need to collaborate on strategies that ensure public safety while capitalizing on the opportunities presented by this new venue. Proactive planning, such as establishing clear event management protocols and securing state-of-the-art surveillance equipment, could help the Rosenberg Police Department meet the demands of this new entertainment hub while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for visitors and residents alike.

As Rosenberg continues to develop and attract new residents, the RPD faces the ongoing challenge of maintaining adequate staffing levels to address the growing demand for services. Recruitment and retention remain critical concerns, as the department competes with other law enforcement agencies in the Houston metropolitan area for qualified officers. Expanding resources for training and increasing staff to match the city's growth are essential for maintaining effective law enforcement services.

Moreover, the Rosenberg Police Department serves a city with a poverty rate that is significantly higher than the average rate for Fort Bend County as a whole. This strain can increase the demand for policing resources. Higher poverty rates are often associated with increased crime and social issues, requiring more robust law enforcement efforts to address both crime prevention and community safety (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2022*). As a result, the Rosenberg Police Department will likely need additional policing resources to meet the unique challenges posed by its socioeconomic landscape. Addressing these needs will help ensure that the RPD can continue to provide a safe environment for both the city's long-term residents and those who commute into the area for work or access to services (*Rosenberg Economic Development Council, 2023*).

Stafford Police Department

Table StaffPD 1: Stafford Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases and Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	261	815	160
Offenses ⁵	299	819	160
Victims ⁶	299	918	160
Known Offenders ⁷	295	713	193
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,692.52	4,636.02	905.69
2021			
Incidents ⁴	373	1,208	155
Offenses ⁵	454	1,217	155
Victims ⁶	454	1,320	155
Known Offenders ⁷	468	1,504	187
Rate/100,000 ⁸	2,639.53	7,075.58	901.16
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	55.95	52.62	-.50
2022			
Incidents ⁴	281	1,156	97
Offenses ⁵	330	1,160	97
Victims ⁶	330	1,217	97
Known Offenders ⁷	347	1,417	117
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,893.61	6,656.34	NA ⁹
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-28.26	-5.93	NA ⁹
2023			
Incidents ⁴	291	843	120
Offenses ⁵	340	846	120
Victims ⁶	340	911	120
Known Offenders ⁷	355	1,053	153
Rate/100,000 ⁸	1,961.01	4,879.45	692.12
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	3.56	-26.69	NA ⁹
2024			
Incidents ⁴	240	718	73
Offenses ⁵	292	724	73
Victims ⁶	292	802	73
Known Offenders ⁷	297	868	88
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on the Stafford Police Department service population of 17,666 (2020), 17,200 (2021), 17,427 (2022), and 17,338 (2023).

⁹ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table StaffPD 2: Stafford Police Department: Select Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	249	11	1	19	52	471	69
Offenses ²	287	11	1	19	52	471	73
Victims ³	287	11	1	21	63	534	73
Known Offenders ⁴	282	12	1	29	45	400	45
Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,624.59	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	2,666.14	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	349	24	--	30	77	674	117
Offenses ²	426	28	--	30	80	674	123
Victims ³	426	28	--	44	91	733	119
Known Offenders ⁴	442	26	--	55	100	830	132
Rate/100,000 ⁵	2,476.74	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	3,918.61	715.12
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	52.45	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	46.98	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	267	11	3	20	44	759	95
Offenses ²	316	11	3	20	44	759	99
Victims ³	316	11	3	24	52	797	95
Known Offenders ⁴	329	11	7	41	54	940	102
Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,813.28	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	4,355.31	568.08
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	-26.79	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	11.14	-20.56
2023							
Incidents ¹	273	17	--	11	36	526	103
Offenses ²	322	17	--	11	36	526	106
Victims ³	322	17	--	15	42	568	104
Known Offenders ⁴	331	19	--	19	37	683	115
Rate/100,000 ⁵	1,857.19	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	3,033.80	611.37
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	2.42	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-30.34	7.63
2024							
Incidents ¹	238	2	--	13	55	436	64
Offenses ²	290	2	--	13	55	436	70
Victims ³	290	2	--	25	65	481	68
Known Offenders ⁴	295	2	--	24	59	546	77
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on the Stafford Police Department service population of 17,666 (2020), 17,200 (2021), 17,427 (2022), and 17,338 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Table StaffPD 3: Stafford Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses
Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Person Offenses¹	Property Offenses²	Offenses Against Society³
2020			
% Cleared	67.05	15.95	33.75
% Cleared by Arrest	47.89	14.23	32.50
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	19.16	1.72	1.25
Total Incidents	261	815	160
Total Incidents Cleared	175	130	54
Cleared by Arrest	125	116	52
Cleared by Exceptional Means	50	14	2
2021			
% Cleared	67.56	17.80	33.55
% Cleared by Arrest	47.45	14.32	29.03
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	20.11	3.48	4.52
Total Incidents	373	1,208	155
Total Incidents Cleared	252	215	52
Cleared by Arrest	177	173	45
Cleared by Exceptional Means	75	42	7
2022			
% Cleared	58.01	21.89	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	39.50	19.03	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	18.51	2.85	NA ⁴
Total Incidents	281	1,156	97
Total Incidents Cleared	163	253	37
Cleared by Arrest	111	220	29
Cleared by Exceptional Means	52	33	8
2023			
% Cleared	49.83	28.94	77.50
% Cleared by Arrest	38.49	24.44	48.33
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	11.34	4.51	29.17
Total Incidents	291	843	120
Total Incidents Cleared	145	244	93
Cleared by Arrest	112	206	58
Cleared by Exceptional Means	33	38	35
2024			
% Cleared	32.92	14.48	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Arrest	32.50	13.79	NA ⁴
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	0.42	0.70	NA ⁴
Total Incidents	240	718	73
Total Incidents Cleared	79	104	48
Cleared by Arrest	78	99	27
Cleared by Exceptional Means	1	5	21

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Percent and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Agency Contextualization - Stafford Police Department

The Stafford Police Department serves the city of Stafford, Texas, which is unique for its location spanning both Fort Bend and Harris counties. Founded as a key center for commerce in the Houston metropolitan area, Stafford has evolved into a diverse community with a mix of residential and commercial properties. The city covers about 7 square miles, and its location along major routes such as U.S. Highway 59 (I-69) and U.S. 90A places it at a strategic junction, just southwest of Beltway 8 and close to downtown Houston (*Stafford, TX, 2023*). This proximity to key transportation corridors increases the flow of traffic and people through the city, impacting the nature of law enforcement activities in the area.

Historically a smaller community, Stafford has seen an influx of new residents and businesses due not only to its proximity to Houston but also its reputation as a tax-friendly city, having no city property tax since 1995 (*City of Stafford, 2024*). This unique tax policy has drawn businesses and developers to the area, contributing to the city's robust economic commercial growth. The population of Stafford continues to rise, with more than 18,000 residents as of the 2020 Census, reflecting a steady increase in individuals seeking to benefit from the economic opportunities and affordable living conditions (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2021*).

The Stafford Police Department has approximately 50 sworn full time officers, along with civilian support staff, to investigate crime and respond to calls for service within its jurisdiction. The Police Department is tasked with patrolling both residential neighborhoods and the high-traffic commercial corridors that make up the majority of the city. The influx of people to the city for work, shopping, or transit adds to the department's challenges, requiring diligent traffic management and proactive community policing strategies. The department also faces the complexities of managing safety along Highway 59, which is undergoing construction in various locations, adding to the risks of traffic incidents and congestion (*Chron, 2023*).

Stafford's commercial-heavy profile contributes significantly to the police department's operational focus. With a high concentration of businesses, including retail centers, office parks, and manufacturing facilities, the Stafford Police Department frequently responds to calls for service at commercial properties.

Incidents such as property theft, vandalism, and minor disturbances are relatively common within the city, and reported robbery rates often appear higher than those of neighboring jurisdictions do. This trend is likely influenced by the city's proximity to several major freeways and highways, which provide convenient access for transient, opportunistic offenders. These transportation corridors facilitate both the commission of crimes and rapid departure from the area, making the city a more frequent target for certain types of offenses. As a result, the city's overall crime statistics may appear elevated; however, these figures are often concentrated in commercial zones and do not necessarily reflect an increased threat to long-term residential safety. It is important to interpret these data points within the appropriate context, recognizing that the presence of high-traffic commercial areas can significantly affect reported crime rates without corresponding increases in community-level risk (*Stafford, TX, 2024*).

The department has highlighted the need for additional resources to keep pace with the growth and the evolving nature of its responsibilities. Retaining officers and attracting new recruits is a challenge, especially given the competitive job market for law enforcement in the Houston metropolitan area. As Stafford continues to grow and attract more businesses, ensuring that the police department is well

equipped to manage the associated safety concerns is crucial for maintaining the city's appeal to both residents and commercial interests.

Sugar Land Police Department

Table SgldPD 1: Sugar Land Police Department Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
Incidents ⁴	339	1,993	226
Offenses ⁵	377	1,994	226
Victims ⁶	377	2,181	226
Known Offenders ⁷	330	937	315
Rate/100,000 ⁸	339.56	1,795.98	203.56
2021			
Incidents ⁴	388	2,119	306
Offenses ⁵	435	2,222	306
Victims ⁶	435	2,315	306
Known Offenders ⁷	372	601	404
Rate/100,000 ⁸	395.45	2,020.00	278.18
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	16.46	12.47	36.66
2022			
Incidents ⁴	414	2,425	270
Offenses ⁵	466	2,426	270
Victims ⁶	466	2,707	270
Known Offenders ⁷	389	700	330
Rate/100,000 ⁸	425.91	2,217.27	246.77
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	7.70	9.77	-11.29
2023			
Incidents ⁴	436	2,075	490
Offenses ⁵	481	2,079	490
Victims ⁶	481	2,331	490
Known Offenders ⁷	403	659	641
Rate/100,000 ⁸	443.25	1,914.94	451.55
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	4.07	-13.63	82.98
2024			
Incidents ⁴	475	2,102	354
Offenses ⁵	514	2,139	354
Victims ⁶	514	2,314	354
Known Offenders ⁷	437	595	434
Rate/100,000 ⁸			
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.			

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

⁴ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

⁵ Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

⁶ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁷ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁸ Based on the Sugar Land Police Department service population of 111,026 (2020), 110,000 (2021), 109,414 (2022), and 108,515 (2023).

**Table SgldPD 2: Sugar Land Police Department: Select Offenses
Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	Assault	Sex Offenses	Homicide	Robbery	Burglary	Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
2020							
Incidents ¹	308	22	5	20	111	1,097	88
Offenses ²	345	22	6	20	111	1,097	89
Victims ³	345	22	6	36	139	1,201	90
Known Offenders ⁴	302	20	5	17	51	557	28
Rate/100,000 ⁵	310.74	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	99.98	988.05	NA ⁷
2021							
Incidents ¹	349	29	3	26	95	1,209	89
Offenses ²	394	31	3	26	197	1,209	90
Victims ³	394	29	3	45	118	1,340	91
Known Offenders ⁴	337	22	4	13	26	373	20
Rate/100,000 ⁵	358.18	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	179.09	1,099.09	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	15.27	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	79.13	11.23	NA ⁷
2022							
Incidents ¹	391	21	--	33	132	1,518	118
Offenses ²	442	21	--	33	133	1,518	118
Victims ³	442	21	--	51	169	1,691	123
Known Offenders ⁴	368	19	--	13	61	404	26
Rate/100,000 ⁵	403.97	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	121.56	1,387.39	NA ⁷
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	12.78	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-32.13	26.23	NA ⁷
2023							
Incidents ¹	421	9	5	33	64	1,231	107
Offenses ²	465	10	5	33	68	1,231	107
Victims ³	465	10	5	46	92	1,387	112
Known Offenders ⁴	388	9	5	27	15	408	15
Rate/100,000 ⁵	428.51	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	1,134.41	98.60
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec.	6.08	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	NA ⁷	-18.23	-8.56
2024							
Incidents ¹	457	14	1	25	93	1,264	103
Offenses ²	493	17	1	25	129	1,264	104
Victims ³	493	17	1	41	122	1,365	105
Known Offenders ⁴	422	13	1	25	28	361	33
Rate/100,000 ⁶							
Rate Pct. Inc./Dec. ⁶							

¹ Incidents: An incident is an event or episode where a crime occurs.

² Offenses: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, multiple crimes may occur. This is a count of the number of crimes.

³ Victims: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one victim. This is a count of the number of victims.

⁴ Known offenders: At a criminal event or during a criminal episode, there may be more than one known offender. This is a count of the number of known offenders.

⁵ Based on the Sugar Land Police Department service population of 111,026 (2020), 110,000 (2021), 109,414 (2022), and 108,515 (2023).

⁶ Unable to calculate due to unavailable U.S. Census data for 2024 disaggregated at the individual jurisdiction level.

⁷ Rate and percent increase and decrease data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate rate and percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Table SgldPD 3: Sugar Land Police Department: Person, Property, Society Offenses Clearance Rates, Percent Increases & Decreases 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Person Offenses ¹	Property Offenses ²	Offenses Against Society ³
2020			
% Cleared	69.03	18.87	89.38
% Cleared by Arrest	52.51	13.80	80.09
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	16.52	5.07	9.29
Total Incidents	339	1,993	226
Total Incidents Cleared	234	376	202
Cleared by Arrest	178	275	181
Cleared by Exceptional Means	56	101	21
2021			
% Cleared	64.18	16.00	92.48
% Cleared by Arrest	53.35	11.51	91.83
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	10.82	4.48	.65
Total Incidents	388	2,119	306
Total Incidents Cleared	249	339	283
Cleared by Arrest	207	244	281
Cleared by Exceptional Means	42	95	2
2022			
% Cleared	72.22	16.20	92.59
% Cleared by Arrest	55.07	10.80	89.63
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	17.15	5.40	2.96
Total Incidents	414	2,426	270
Total Incidents Cleared	299	393	250
Cleared by Arrest	228	262	242
Cleared by Exceptional Means	71	131	8
2023			
% Cleared	67.66	17.26	95.51
% Cleared by Arrest	56.42	14.51	94.90
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	11.24	2.75	.61
Total Incidents	436	2,074	490
Total Incidents Cleared	295	358	468
Cleared by Arrest	246	301	465
Cleared by Exceptional Means	49	57	3
2024			
% Cleared	55.37	12.42	85.03
% Cleared by Arrest	48.21	10.99	84.75
% Cleared by Exceptional Means	7.16	1.43	0.28
Total Incidents	475	2,102	354
Total Incidents Cleared	263	261	301
Cleared by Arrest	229	231	300
Cleared by Exceptional Means	34	30	1

¹ Person offenses include assault offenses, homicide offenses, human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, and sex offenses (forcible and non-forcible).

² Property offenses include arson, bribery, burglary/breaking and entering, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, larceny/theft offenses, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and stolen property offenses.

³ Offenses against society include animal cruelty, drug/narcotic offenses, gambling offenses, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, and weapons law violations.

Agency Contextualization- Sugar Land Police Department

The Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD) in Fort Bend County, Texas, serves a growing and diverse community that spans over 42 square miles. Established in the mid-20th century, the department has evolved significantly to meet the needs of this rapidly expanding city, which now boasts a population of more than 111,000 residents (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2020*). Sugar Land’s strategic location along major

transportation corridors like U.S. Highway 59 (Interstate 69) and State Highway 6 makes it a key suburban hub in the Houston metropolitan area, requiring the SLPD to manage both local and through traffic, contributing to the complexity of their policing efforts (*Sugar Land, TX, 2023*).

The department consists of approximately 240 personnel, including approximately 180 sworn officers (*Houston Chronicle, 2024*). Despite its relatively robust size for a suburban police department, the SLPD has challenges associated with patrolling both residential neighborhoods and busy commercial zones. A large portion of Sugar Land's area is comprised of master-planned residential communities, where maintaining neighborhood safety remains a priority. At the same time, the department is responsible for overseeing high-traffic areas like Sugar Land Town Square, Constellation Field, and the Smart Financial Centre, which hosts a variety of events and concerts throughout the year. These venues attract significant numbers of visitors, particularly on weekends and during major events, necessitating increased patrols and strategic crowd management to ensure safety (*Sugar Land Police Department, 2023*).

One of the key challenges the SLPD faces is managing the influx of people during events, where the combination of large crowds and alcohol consumption can increase the likelihood of disturbances, traffic incidents, and alcohol-related offenses. While these incidents may contribute to a rise in reported crime rates, they do not necessarily reflect a decline in the safety of the city's residents. Rather, the increased presence of non-residents during events is a critical factor in shaping the department's operational focus and resource allocation (*Varmaj, 2024*).

In 2017, the City of Sugar Land officially annexed the Greatwood subdivision, transitioning its policing responsibilities from the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office to the Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD). This annexation integrated Greatwood, a large residential community located along U.S. Highway 59, into Sugar Land's city limits, thereby making the SLPD responsible for all law enforcement services within the neighborhood (*Sugar Land, TX, 2023*). This change aimed to streamline services and provide more localized police coverage to the residents of Greatwood.

The inclusion of Greatwood expanded the area and population that the SLPD needed to serve. As a master-planned community with thousands of homes, Greatwood added a significant residential area to the department's jurisdiction. This led to increased demands for police services, including patrolling neighborhood streets, responding to residential incidents, and managing traffic along major nearby thoroughfares like U.S. Highway 59, which runs adjacent to the community (*Koetting, 2017*). The annexation required the SLPD to adapt its resources and strategies to ensure the safety and security of this growing part of the city.

The change has also placed additional demands on the department's resources, as Greatwood's residents now rely on the SLPD for emergency response and routine policing services. This transition emphasizes the need for continued investment in law enforcement personnel and resources to maintain service levels as the city's boundaries and responsibilities expand. This need is particularly pertinent given the potential for increased calls for service in a community that blends residential living with proximity to high-traffic routes (*Sugar Land, TX, 2023*).

Moreover, the ongoing construction along U.S. Highway 59 presents logistical challenges for the department, particularly in managing traffic and minimizing disruptions for residents and visitors alike. The construction can result in increased traffic incidents and delays, requiring the SLPD to adapt their patrol strategies and coordinate closely with other agencies to ensure smooth traffic flow (*Sugar Land, TX, 2023*).

To effectively address these challenges, the SLPD has identified a need for additional resources, including more officers and updated training facilities (*Varma, 2024*). As Sugar Land continues to attract new residents and expand its commercial base, providing adequate support to the SLPD will be crucial for maintaining public safety and ensuring the city remains a desirable place to live and visit.

Qualitative Analysis: Non-Participant Observation of Police-Citizen Interactions at Public Community Events- A Preliminary Analysis

Purpose

The primary objective of the data collected for this report is to explore how police officers engage with community members in informal, non-enforcement settings throughout Fort Bend County—such as community festivals, town halls, and department-led outreach events. While public perceptions of law enforcement have been studied extensively, particularly in relation to crime and enforcement, far less is known about interactions that occur in everyday, non-criminal contexts. Notably, prior research has shown that approximately 70 to 80 percent of calls for police service are unrelated to criminal activity and instead involve requests for public assistance (*Kappeler & Potter, 2017; Vaughan et al., 2018; Wuschke et al., 2017*). Despite this, limited scholarly attention has been paid to observing and analyzing routine, informal encounters between officers and the public. Given that positive interpersonal interactions can play a vital role in shaping public trust and increasing citizens' willingness to report crime, the researchers in this study aimed to examine these settings as a critical component of understanding the broader context of policing in the region.

Research Design

A qualitative, non-participant observational study was designed and conducted in Fort Bend County. The primary researcher attended multiple police-involved community events as a silent observer and recorded the nature, tone, and content of police-community interactions using a semi-structured observation protocol.

Site Selection

Events were selected across multiple jurisdictions (urban, suburban, and rural) and various departments to ensure a diverse range of contexts. These events included but were not limited to, "Coffee with a Cop" sessions, safety information presentation, school presentations, Community Engagement Events and "National Night Out."

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select events that involved informal, voluntary contact between police and civilians in Fort Bend County. Sampling aimed to observe 10 events, ensuring representation at varying different times of day, locations, and differing community demographics.

Observation Protocol

The primary researcher used a structured form adapted and modified for relevancy, based on the existing from the literature surrounding procedural justice (Mazerolle et al., 2013), focusing on:

- **Officer demeanor** (e.g., respectful, dismissive, authoritative)
- **Verbal communication** (e.g., tone, approachability, clarity)
- **Non-verbal behaviors** (e.g., eye contact, gestures)
- **Engagement behaviors** (e.g., initiating conversation, offering help)
- **Citizen responses** (e.g., receptiveness, skepticism, avoidance)

Field notes were recorded discreetly during each observation and were supplemented immediately afterward to ensure accuracy and completeness. At no point were the observed law enforcement agencies or citizens made aware that data collection was occurring. Additionally, the research team did not inform the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office of the intention to capture this specific type of observational data until the data collection process was fully completed. These methodological decisions were deliberate, made with the intent to minimize the potential for bias or behavioral modification resulting from awareness of the research activity.

Ethical Considerations

All observations occurred in public spaces where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy. No identifiable data related to specific officers or citizen was collected, to ensure ethical integrity, including minimizing observer influence and preserving anonymity of individuals.

Data Analysis

Field notes and observation protocols were coded thematically using qualitative content analysis. Codes were derived from both existing literature and inductively based on emergent patterns. Comparative analysis across events aims to identify recurring themes, variations by setting, and implications for training and engagement strategies. Secondary analysis and review by the researcher not involved in data collection will be completed following the initial reported analysis, to add rigor to findings and uncover additional themes.

Summary of Initial Findings: Non-Participant Observation Study of Police-Citizen Interactions in Fort Bend County at Community Events

Over the past year, a series of non-participant observations were conducted to examine informal interactions between law enforcement personnel and community members across Fort Bend County. While a full thematic analysis of the collected field notes is still underway, preliminary findings are sufficiently robust to offer an early summary. A more detailed analysis will be provided in future iterations of this report as coding and pattern identification processes continue.

The primary researcher—a Fort Bend County resident with familiarity in qualitative methods—randomly selected ten community events for observation. Each event was publicly advertised by the

hosting law enforcement agency and occurred in a clearly defined public space, such as parks, civic centers, or municipal buildings. These events varied in format and included town hall-style forums, informational fairs, safety events, and informal community engagement initiatives.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher employed a strict non-participant observation approach. At no point did the researcher engage with law enforcement personnel in any meaningful way. Minimal interaction with community members was limited to socially expected gestures—such as returning a greeting or expressing appreciation if a fellow attendee held a door or shared printed material. In events characterized by open discussion or audience-style seating, the researcher adopted subtle behavioral strategies to preserve observational anonymity, such as maintaining the appearance of casual attendance (e.g., using a mobile phone, wearing sunglasses at outdoor events). This passive and discreet approach was designed to minimize the researcher's influence on the observed behaviors, in alignment with best practices in qualitative fieldwork (*Creswell & Poth, 2018*).

Initial Findings

Table 1: Preliminary Themes – Police Interactions with Children and Teens

<u>Theme Category</u>	<u>Subtheme/Behavior</u>	<u>Frequency (n)</u>	<u>Descriptive Example</u>
Positive Social Interactions	Officers playing games with children	19	Officers engaged in ball games, hopscotch, or other playful activities with children.
	Fist bumps/high fives (officer initiated, returned by child)	16	Officer offered high five or fist bump unprompted; child responded positively.
	Fist bumps/high fives (child initiated, returned by officer)	11	Child initiated gesture; officer responded warmly with matching gesture.
	Friendly verbal joking (officer initiated, returned by child)	3	Officer made a playful or funny comment; child responded with laughter or a verbal reply.
	Friendly verbal joking (child initiated, returned by officer)	2	Child made a playful comment; officer responded with laughter or good-natured banter.
	Verbal affirmations from officer	6	Officer complimented child (e.g., “Your Bluey hat is so cool”); child smiled and said thank you.
	Verbal affirmations from child	3	Child complimented officer (e.g., “Your badge is cool, bruh”); officer responded with smile and high five.
Uncategorized Positive	Child enthusiastically runs to officer (Paw Patrol reference)	1	Child yelled “Chase on the case!” and was warmly picked up by officer, (despite caregiver’s embarrassment).
	Officer plays peek-a-boo with young child	2	Two different officers played peek-a-boo with toddlers in extended interactions.
Negative Interaction	Officer greeting elicited fear in toddler	1	Officer said hello; toddler cried and hid. Parent noted child is afraid of strangers (child also avoided others at the event).

Table 2: Preliminary Themes – Police Interactions with Citizens

<u>Theme Category</u>	<u>Subtheme/Behavior</u>	<u>Frequency (n)</u>	<u>Descriptive Example</u>
Positive Social Interactions	Citizens verbally thanked officers for their service	14	Citizens approached officers and expressed gratitude: “Thank you for your service.”
	Citizens asked clarifying questions about the topic of the event	11	Citizens sought to better understand the topic; officers responded clearly and respectfully.
	Citizens verbally greeted officers warmly	9	Warm greetings such as “Thanks for coming” or “We’re glad you’re here” were observed.
	Citizens used non-verbal greetings (e.g., handshakes, back pats)	7	Friendly gestures offered by citizens were returned by officers.
	Officers used non-verbal greetings to initiate or respond	5	Officers nodded, offered handshakes, or returned gestures when approached by citizens.
	Citizens approached officers to ask about crime or police presence	7	Citizens asked questions like “Is crime rising in this area?” and received informative replies.
	Citizens initiated neutral-topic conversations (sports, weather)	6	Citizens and officers discussed light, non-event topics in a relaxed, positive exchange.
	Citizens brought beverages (water, coffee) to officers	3	Unsolicited kind gestures; officers accepted and expressed thanks.
	Citizens made playful or humorous comments to engage officers	2	Remarks like “We better behave, the police are here!” were received with smiles or laughter.
Attempted Positive Engagement	Officers made verbal efforts to engage, not clearly received due to noise	3	Officers made comments or greetings that were likely unheard in loud outdoor environments.
No Negative Interactions	No negative citizen-officer interactions were observed	0	All recorded interactions were either positive or neutral in tone and reception.

Narrative Summary of Preliminary Findings

The preliminary themes summarized in the accompanying tables reflect initial findings from a nonparticipant observational study conducted at ten community events held across Fort Bend County. These findings will be further developed and refined in future iterations of this report, including more formal thematic coding and contextual analysis.

Interactions Between Law Enforcement and Children/Teens

A high frequency of positive social interactions was observed between law enforcement officers and children or teens. These interactions included officers engaging in games, exchanging non-verbal gestures like high fives and fist bumps, and participating in lighthearted verbal exchanges. While the majority of interactions were positive and appeared mutually engaging, one instance of a fearful child response was noted, which seemed to be more indicative of general stranger anxiety than police-specific aversion.

Events that were outdoors, featured games or activities, or offered food (either by the host agency or by attending citizens) consistently drew larger crowds and appeared to facilitate more natural and sustained interactions between officers and young attendees. The diversity of Fort Bend County was reflected in these gatherings, both among officers and attendees. Although the researcher made best-effort observations regarding racial and ethnic representation, these identifications were based on visual interpretation and are therefore inherently limited. It was noted that the demographic representation largely mirrored the population makeup of Fort Bend County, with a slight underrepresentation of individuals of Asian descent and a slight overrepresentation of Hispanic attendees and officers.

Interactions Between Law Enforcement and Adult Citizens

Similarly, interactions between law enforcement officers and adult citizens were overwhelmingly positive. Citizens were frequently observed thanking officers for their service, engaging in conversation, ranging from inquiries about crime to light-hearted discussions about sports or weather, and offering gestures of appreciation such as handshakes or even bringing refreshments. Officers responded with warmth, attentiveness, and approachability.

Events that extended beyond standard informational presentations, particularly those involving activities, food, or outdoor settings, saw higher attendance and more dynamic interaction. The inclusion of food, regardless of whether it was provided by the agency or attending citizens, also appeared to enhance turnout and participation. Notably, the events demonstrated a diverse and engaged cross-section of the county's population, supporting a preliminary impression that Fort Bend County law enforcement may enjoy a more favorable public relationship than national trends would suggest.

Limitations and Future Considerations

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of these findings. First, all events observed were public and voluntarily attended. In some cases, participants were brought by family members or caregivers, but their presence still implies a degree of openness to engagement with law enforcement. This

introduces a selection bias that must be considered when interpreting the overwhelmingly positive nature of the interactions. Furthermore, while these findings are encouraging, they represent only a snapshot in time and are not generalizable beyond the specific events and populations observed.

Nonetheless, these positive encounters are noteworthy and may have meaningful implications for community trust, youth perception of law enforcement, and broader public safety outcomes. Future research conducted for this report will aim to expand these observations, improve the precision of demographic documentation, and further examine the context and impact of community-police interactions across different settings.

Qualitative Analysis: Leadership Transformation and Operational Impact at the Sugar Land Police Department

Qualitative Method: Open-Ended Interviews with Chief Mark Poland

To gain a deeper understanding of dramatic changes in reported crime rates between the years 2022 and 2023 that occurred within the Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD), the research team employed a qualitative approach grounded in open-ended, semi-structured interviews—an established method in criminal justice research for capturing rich, contextualized perspectives. Over the course of the reporting period, multiple interviews were conducted with Chief Mark Poland, focusing on his leadership philosophy, organizational reform efforts, and operational outcomes.

These interviews were designed to be conversational yet purposeful, guided by a flexible interview protocol that allowed the researcher collecting the data to explore emergent themes while ensuring consistency across sessions. Questions were designed to be open-ended and allow for elaboration, encourage reflection, and elicit detailed narratives regarding internal departmental culture, decision-making processes, and the implementation of strategic changes, such as the introduction of the “Six Pillars” leadership framework, as described by Chief Poland.

This method enabled the researcher conducting the interviews to capture both descriptive accounts and interpretive insights, offering a comprehensive view of the challenges and strategies associated with organizational change in a law enforcement setting. Interviews were documented through detailed field notes and thematic coding, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns across sessions, a process consistent with grounded theory principles commonly applied in qualitative criminal justice research.

The decision to use open-ended interviews aligns with best practices for examining complex organizational dynamics and leadership effectiveness, particularly in environments where quantitative metrics alone may not fully capture cultural or relational shifts. These data provide valuable context to supplement the operational outcomes presented in the SLPD’s 2023 Annual Report, demonstrating the impact of leadership philosophy on measurable performance indicators, as well as a theme correlated to this report – the importance of understanding the need for contextualization beyond reported crime rate.

Qualitative Results: Leadership Transformation and Operational Impact at the Sugar Land Police Department

According to data collected from interviews, upon assuming his leadership of the Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD) in late 2022, Chief Mark Poland was presented with findings from an

independent study evaluating the internal structure of the Sugar Land Police Department. Chief Poland reported carefully reading the report, and was surprised to find the researchers had conducted interviews of employees and documented various negative findings, including low morale and perceptions of inadequate leadership within the department. Recognizing the need for organizational change, Chief Poland initiated a comprehensive engagement strategy, including one-on-one meetings, informal group discussions, and participation in departmental events, to understand and address employee concerns.

According to Chief Poland, his engagement with department employees led him to institute his "Six Pillars" framework: Family, Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Growth, and Communication, a set of principles he had used at his previous place of employment when working as the undersheriff for Loudoun County. Chief Poland reported that these principles were not only communicated through official channels but were also reinforced through consistent messaging by departmental leaders and integration into daily operations. Chief Poland's active participation in meetings and training sessions further emphasized the department's commitment to these values.

The implementation of this framework coincided with notable operational outcomes and impact on crime data. According to the SLPD's 2023 Annual Report, there was a significant increase in traffic stops (up 56% from the previous year) leading to an increase arrests for crimes related to weapons and narcotics. While these proactive measures contributed to a rise in reported crime rates, they also correlated with a decrease in burglary of motor incidents (-24%) and alongside a decrease in burglary (-50%) suggesting that these proactive stops enhanced community safety. Furthermore, when the proactive stops were disaggregated from the other reported crime, the overall crime rate (defined as all NIBRA Group A Offenses) decreased by 18.6%, when compared to the previous year, even though the reported number shows an overall rate of 27.45% (which appears "steady" when compared to the 2022 value of 27.98%).

Key Themes Identified from Interviews with Chief Poland

Leadership Engagement: Direct interactions with staff to understand and address concerns.

- **Organizational Culture Shift:** Introduction and reinforcement of the "Six Pillars" to guide departmental values and behaviors.
- **Operational Enhancements:** Increased proactive policing efforts leading to higher detection of illicit activities and a reduction in certain crime categories.
- **Community Impact:** Improved public safety outcomes through strategic leadership and operational reforms.

This mixed-method analysis of the Sugar Land Police Department highlights the critical role of responsive leadership in driving meaningful organizational reform and enhancing community outcomes. It also reinforces a central theme of this report: law enforcement agencies must be examined through a contextual lens that extends beyond crime rate statistics. A deeper, more nuanced understanding of each department's internal dynamics, leadership strategies, and community engagement practices is essential to accurately assess agency performance and inform evidence-based policy decisions.

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Fort Bend County: A Safe Community

Based on the data (both numerical and qualitative) and subsequent analysis this initial report finds Fort Bend County is safe place to live, with crime rates consistently below both national and state averages.

For example, between the years 2020 and 2022, where crime rates were commonly at their highest, Fort Bend County, Texas, demonstrated lower crime rates than several nearby counties, particularly regarding violent crime rates and homicides. Fort Bend's violent crime rate, which included assault, robbery, rape, and murder, consistently ranked among the lowest in Texas's urban and suburban counties. According to reports from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Fort Bend County government data, in 2021, Fort Bend reported a violent crime rate of approximately 1.871 incidents per 1,000 residents, which included offenses such as assault, robbery, rape, and murder. This rate contrasts significantly with Harris County's higher violent crime rate of 4.136 incidents per 1,000 residents, highlighting a notable difference in crime trends between suburban Fort Bend and the more densely populated urban environment of Harris County (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2021*). While it is difficult to compare Fort Bend County to Harris County, these findings remain notable for this report, particularly when considering some of the initial findings of this report that indicate in some jurisdictions, crime is concentrated in areas where Fort Bend County and Harris County, meet.

This finding is consistent beyond comparison with Harris County; when Fort Bend County is compared to other similarly sized counties, similar patterns emerge. Between 2020 and 2022, Fort Bend County, Texas, consistently reported lower violent crime rates compared to Travis, Collin, and Denton counties, indicating a relatively safer environment among Texas counties with populations ranging from 1.3 million to slightly over 1 million residents. Fort Bend County's violent crime rate averaged 1.645 incidents per 1,000 residents annually, ranking among the lowest for Texas counties of similar population size. In contrast, Travis County had a higher violent crime rate of 4.211 per 1,000 residents in 2021, with a significant share of aggravated assault and robbery cases. Collin and Denton counties, while also lower than Travis, also showed slightly higher rates than Fort Bend, illustrating Fort Bend's relatively safer status, comparative across Texas counties (*CrimeGrade.org, 2022; Texas DPS, 2022*).

This finding remains consistent even when comparing Fort Bend County to other Texas counties with smaller populations, including Hidalgo, El Paso, and Montgomery counties. To reiterate in 2021, Fort Bend County, Texas, had a violent crime rate of approximately 1.87 incidents per 1,000 residents (its highest reported year). In contrast, Hidalgo County recorded a violent crime rate of around 3.69 per 1,000 residents, driven largely by higher rates of assault and robbery. Meanwhile, Montgomery County, a suburban county similar in structure to Fort Bend, had a slightly higher violent crime rate of 2.53 per 1,000, while El Paso County reported a notably higher violent crime rate of 4.56 per 1,000 residents (*Texas DPS, 2022*).

Looking beyond comparisons within Texas, Fort Bend County's violent crime and homicide rates were well below the national averages. In 2021, the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) recorded an average violent crime rate of approximately 3.8 incidents per 1,000 residents across the United States. Fort Bend County's violent crime rate was nearly half of this national average, indicating a significantly lower incidence of violent crime in comparison to the broader U.S. rates.

Homicides, a particularly severe category of violent crime, also remained low in Fort Bend County with a rate below both state and national averages. In 2020, the homicide rate in Fort Bend County was reported at approximately 0.038 per 1,000 residents, a low rate when compared to the national average of around 0.07 per 1,000 residents according to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). In 2021, Fort Bend County's homicide rate remained stable at about 0.038 per 1,000, still below the national average, which slightly increased in response to a national rise in homicides likely influenced by broader factors and impacted particularly by urban areas like Harris County (with a rate of 0.136 per 1,000). The trend continued through 2022, with Fort Bend's homicide rate staying comparatively lower than national figures, (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2022; FBI NIBRS, 2022*).

While it is interesting to attempt to make comparisons between Fort Bend County and other Texas counties, and even compared to the national rate, the fact remains that it is difficult to compare Fort Bend County to any other county due to its diverse population of citizens. As discussed in the earlier introductory section of this report, Fort Bend County remains one of the most diverse counties in the country. This not only makes comparisons difficult but also brings up an interesting point when considering the diverse population of citizens in Fort Bend County.

Observations of Safety Specific to Minority Populations Residing in Fort Bend County

The historical context of violent victimization in the United States reveals a persistent disparity impacting Black and Hispanic populations, which has been significantly shaped by socio-economic, systemic, and policy-driven factors. Research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and countless peer-reviewed journals indicates that Black Americans have faced elevated rates of violent victimization for decades, with rates for robbery and homicide disproportionately affecting young Black men and women. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that in 2020, Black Americans had a homicide rate of approximately 23.5 per 100,000 people, which was significantly higher than that for other racial and ethnic groups (*CDC, 2023*). Another recent national study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that, for most teenagers, accidental injuries are the leading cause of death. However, among Black males aged 12 to 19, homicide surpasses accidents as the primary cause of death (*CDC, 2023*).

Hispanic communities have similarly experienced higher rates of violent victimization comparative to their White counterparts, though at slightly lower levels than Black populations. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) indicate that violent crime victimization, including homicide, continues to disproportionately impact Hispanic communities in the United States. The violent crime victimization rate for Hispanic individuals in 2021 was higher than in prior years, with an increase that parallels broader national trends in rising violent crime rates. This disparity can be attributed to various systemic issues, including socioeconomic challenges, concentrated urbanization, and historical factors affecting neighborhood safety and resource access (*BJS, 2022; CDC, 2023*). The CDC also reports that for Hispanic individuals, homicide consistently ranks as a leading cause of death, particularly among young adults. In 2021, firearm-related homicides among Hispanic males reached one of the highest rates, with socio-economic factors like concentrated poverty and inadequate social services contributing to heightened risks in Hispanic communities (*CDC, 2021; Violence Policy Center, 2022*).

The violent victimization rates for Black and Hispanic populations in the U.S. during the years of data examined in this report (2020-2024) also reflected an ongoing disparity when compared to the national average for other racial and ethnic groups. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the violent victimization rate for Black individuals was around 16.5 incidents per 1,000 people in 2020, a rate that rose significantly by 2022, reaching approximately 23.5 per 1,000. Hispanic populations also experienced elevated rates, though generally slightly lower than Black Americans (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021, 2023*).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's data, the Black population in the United States represented approximately 12.4% of the total population in 2020, which grew slightly to 14.9% in 2021. Meanwhile, the Hispanic or Latino population accounted for 18.7% of the total U.S. population in 2020 and grew by about 1.2% between 2020 and 2021, continuing its trend as one of the fastest-growing demographic groups (*Census Bureau, 2021; Census Bureau, 2023*).

Given Fort Bend County's diverse demographics, with a Black population of approximately 21% and a Hispanic population of around 30%, (both above the national averages of 12.4% and 18.5% respectively) (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2020*), one might logically anticipate a higher violent crime victimization rate in comparison to national averages. However, Fort Bend County consistently reports a violent crime victimization rate significantly *lower* than the national average. This observation highlights the impact of Fort Bend's proactive community safety strategies and suggests a unique resilience in this suburban area that the researchers of this report hope to investigate further in future iterations of this report.

Agency Contextualization is Critical to Accurately Understand Crime Rate

The results section of this crime data analysis report highlights the critical role of integrating both quantitative crime rate data and qualitative insights from law enforcement agencies. While numerical crime rates provide a foundational understanding of crime patterns within Fort Bend County, examining each agency's unique context allows for a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing these rates. Through qualitative data collection, the report gains insights into agency-specific challenges, resources, and community dynamics, all which shape crime outcomes. This approach not only provides a richer perspective on crime trends but also allows us to understand the structural and social variables that quantitative data alone cannot capture.

The value of incorporating qualitative data lies in its ability to highlight factors that are often invisible in quantitative metrics alone. For example, qualitative insights can reveal information about community relations, agency staffing levels, resource allocation, and agency priorities, each of which can influence crime rates and clearance rates within a specific jurisdiction (*Maxfield & Babbie, 2018*). Without these insights, comparisons between agencies may overlook critical differences in context, leading to potential misinterpretations. Studies suggest that qualitative data contribute to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of law enforcement performance, particularly when crime data alone could paint an incomplete picture (*Patton, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2017*). This approach supports a more comprehensive crime analysis that is sensitive to the distinctive characteristics and needs of each community.

Incorporating qualitative data also fosters more collaborative approaches to public safety. By understanding each agency's experiences, policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies that are

more responsive to local needs. For example, insights into community-police relationships can highlight areas for improvement in community outreach, which is crucial for fostering a safer environment and improving crime-reporting accuracy. Overall, blending quantitative crime rate data with qualitative insights from law enforcement agencies provides a robust and well-rounded approach to understanding and addressing crime in Fort Bend County.

LIMITATIONS

Variations in Record Management Systems

In Fort Bend County, Texas, various law enforcement agencies utilize different Records Management Systems (RMS) to handle and track their data. These systems are crucial for managing information related to incidents, arrests, and crime reports. However, the use of multiple RMS platforms across agencies can create significant challenges when it comes to analyzing data countywide. Each RMS has its own set of features, formats, and data-tracking capabilities, which makes it difficult to integrate information from different systems into a single, comprehensive dataset. For instance, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office may use a different system than the Sugar Land Police Department or the Rosenberg Police Department, leading to inconsistencies in how data is recorded and categorized (*Crandon, 1995*).

These discrepancies are particularly problematic when trying to analyze trends across the county. One RMS might emphasize detailed incident reporting, while another could focus more on arrest records or case outcomes. Some systems track data such as racial demographics, response times, or types of offenses more comprehensively or code the data differently than others. As a result, researchers and policymakers attempting to analyze crime trends across Fort Bend County face difficulties reconciling these differences. For example, one police department's RMS might categorize certain offenses differently than another, leading to potential misinterpretations of the data when aggregated or compared.

To address these issues, efforts have been made to adopt more unified data-sharing systems or at least establish common standards across agencies. Nevertheless, the transition toward a more integrated system has been slow due to the high costs of upgrading RMS platforms and the training required for officers to adapt to new systems. In the meantime, these technological disparities continue to hinder the ability to analyze and respond effectively to crime trends in the county (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2023*).

NIBRS Reporting Inaccuracies

When law enforcement agencies collect data through their Records Management Systems (RMS), the goal is for these systems to communicate seamlessly with the databases used by NIBRS (National Incident-Based Reporting System), which is managed by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). However, this process is not always flawless.

While RMS platforms are designed to send detailed crime data to NIBRS for standardized reporting, errors and discrepancies can occur. These errors may stem from technical issues in how the RMS system "talks" to NIBRS or from inconsistencies in how certain incidents are categorized and reported by the RMS system versus NIBRS. For example, an offense may be properly recorded in the

agency's RMS, but during the data transmission process to NIBRS, it might be miss categorized or some details might be lost.

These discrepancies between the RMS data and what is recorded in NIBRS are often "caught" by law enforcement agencies, which may review and correct errors after the data is reported. However, the complexity of RMS-NIBRS integration means that not all errors are identified or corrected, leading to gaps or inaccuracies in the NIBRS data. This is particularly significant when NIBRS data is used for research purposes, as it was in this project. While NIBRS provides a more standardized dataset than individual RMS systems, researchers must recognize that it is not without flaws. These discrepancies may affect the accuracy of crime trend analysis, community safety assessments, and policy decisions based on the data.

Moreover, since NIBRS data is used as a national reporting standard, the potential for inaccuracies across different jurisdictions further complicates data analysis. Agencies that have fewer resources may struggle to maintain a high level of accuracy in their RMS-to-NIBRS reporting, while others might catch more errors during review processes. This underscores the importance of understanding that, while NIBRS offers a valuable standardized dataset, the data should be critically evaluated for potential inconsistencies (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2023*).

During the data compilation and analysis phase of this project, researchers identified multiple discrepancies between internal law enforcement agency data and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data as listed on the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) website. Conversations with agency leadership confirmed that these inconsistencies were known and had been reported to DPS, with some agencies noting repeated attempts to address the issues. Certain agencies even reported multiple in-person visits from DPS representatives responsible for data oversight, intended to address these reporting inaccuracies. Despite these efforts, the discrepancies remain unresolved; indicating persistent gaps in data alignment between agency submissions and DPS records. This situation suggests that, although there has been coordinated effort to rectify these issues, data discrepancies continue to pose a challenge to data.

Constraints in Agency Resources

During this study, it became evident that every participating police agency in Fort Bend County faced challenges related to a lack of resources for data collection and analysis. Even those departments with dedicated data analysts had to pull staff away from their regular duties, significantly disrupting the departments' ability to manage other operational needs. For agencies without data analysts, the task of gathering, compiling, and preparing data fell to investigative staff, potentially diverting their focus away from ongoing cases and core investigative work. This not only impacted the efficiency of data collection but also strained the capacity of these departments to maintain normal operations (*Jones & Smith, 2022*).

As the requested data was received from each agency, it became evident that every department encountered unique challenges in meeting the initial data request. Some struggled with the technical aspects of extracting data according to the specifications required for analysis, while others faced difficulties due to inconsistent data storage practices or limitations in their reporting software. These challenges resulted in significant variability in the type and scope of data submitted by each agency, making the process of standardizing and analyzing the data provided by each law enforcement agency, complex.

The disparities in the data from different departments also highlighted how varied the data recording practices were across Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies. Differences included variations in how incidents were categorized, inconsistencies in timeframes related to the offense, and the depth of detail provided for each record. These variations created difficulties in conducting a uniform analysis and required extensive efforts to reconcile discrepancies and ensure that comparisons could be made with as much accuracy as possible. Despite these challenges, the willingness of each department to engage in the process allowed the research team to compile a more comprehensive picture of crime trends and reporting practices in Fort Bend County, albeit with necessary adjustments to account for data inconsistencies.

This challenge is not unique to Fort Bend County. Across the United States, many law enforcement agencies lack the necessary resources to effectively compile and analyze their data. Budget constraints and personnel shortages make it difficult for police departments to prioritize data management, even though accurate and timely data is essential for crime analysis, resource allocation, and policy development. The burden of reallocating staff from investigative or patrol duties to data collection underscores the systemic issue facing many agencies: without proper funding and specialized personnel, departments struggle to meet both operational and analytical demands.

Moving forward, addressing these resource gaps must be a priority for both local law enforcement agencies and policymakers. As this project continues, it will be essential to ensure that the necessary tools and personnel are in place for accurate data collection and analysis. Doing so will not only improve the quality of crime data but also enhance the capacity of police agencies to respond to the needs of their communities more effectively. Increasing investment in data infrastructure and staffing should be seen as a critical component of future law enforcement strategies (*Texas Department of Public Safety, 2023*).

Contextual Data Gaps in the NIBRS Reporting System

While the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provides valuable standardized crime data, even fully accurate data (which the data is not) lacks the contextual depth needed to fully understand crime trends, law enforcement operations, and community needs. While NIBRS focuses on capturing specific details about offenses, offenders, and victims, it fails to capture the critical qualitative information that can reveal underlying patterns, such as the social, economic, or environmental factors influencing crime rates in a particular area. For instance, while NIBRS may record an increase in thefts or assaults, it does not provide insight into why these incidents are happening or how specific communities are being affected. Understanding these dimensions requires going beyond the numbers and integrating qualitative data collection, such as interviews, surveys, and community input.

Moreover, NIBRS data does not adequately capture the unique needs and resources of each individual law enforcement agency. Different police departments face distinct challenges, such as varying crime types, resource constraints, and community relations, which NIBRS data alone cannot reflect. For example, a rural department may struggle with understaffing, while an urban department may face challenges related to gang violence or homelessness. Without understanding these contextual details, it is difficult for policymakers or researchers to allocate resources effectively or to tailor interventions that address the specific needs of each community.

Therefore, it is crucial to go beyond the quantitative data provided by NIBRS and collect qualitative data that can offer a more comprehensive understanding of local crime issues and police

operations. This involves not only reviewing crime statistics but also conducting interviews with officers, community members, and other stakeholders to gain insights into the social dynamics affecting crime rates. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, researchers and law enforcement can develop more informed strategies that address the root causes of crime and better support the needs of individual police agencies.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessing Ongoing Population Growth in Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County, Texas, has experienced uninterrupted population growth for over two decades, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 6.77% since 2000. From 2010 to 2023, the county's population expanded from 590,253 to an estimated 857,324 residents, representing substantial growth over 13 consecutive years. This trend shows no signs of reversing, as projections suggest Fort Bend's population will continue to rise, potentially exceeding 1 million residents by 2027 (*Neilsberg, 2024; Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2021*).

Such rapid population growth presents challenges for local law enforcement and community safety. As the population expands, the demand for policing services grows, requiring an increase in staffing and resources to maintain adequate coverage and response times. In the coming years, Fort Bend County law enforcement must continue to adapt to address increased calls for service, potential traffic issues, and the complexities of a more diverse community. Effective planning and resource allocation will be essential to ensure that the county remains safe for its residents, even as the demographics and density of the area evolve (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*).

Additionally, the rise in population can affect crime statistics and reporting. As the number of residents increase, more incidents may be reported, potentially leading to a rise in certain crime rates, even if the per capita crime rate remains stable. This makes it important for policymakers and community leaders to consider both raw numbers and population-adjusted rates when evaluating the effectiveness of public safety strategies and resource needs. The continued growth in Fort Bend County highlights the need for strategic investment in public safety infrastructure to maintain a high quality of life and the relative rate of safety, as the community evolves and grows.

The significant population increase poses challenges for local law enforcement, particularly in terms of resource allocation and maintaining public safety. As more people move into the county, there is a growing need for additional police officers, emergency services, and community-based safety programs to ensure that the area remains safe and well served. Planning for this growth will require strategic investments in policing and public safety to keep pace with the expanding population (*Fort Bend Economic Development Council, 2023*).

Initial research indicates that certain crime patterns in Fort Bend County are particularly concentrated in locations bordering Harris County. These localized crime clusters highlight potential influences from neighboring regions, which may impact crime dynamics within Fort Bend. As Fort Bend County continues to experience significant population growth and urban development, it becomes increasingly crucial to monitor and assess these crime patterns carefully. Without thorough examination and strategic intervention, there is a risk that such concentrated crime zones could spread further into other

parts of Fort Bend County. Proactive measures, such as targeted resource allocation and the implementation of appropriate crime prevention strategies are essential for maintaining safety and mitigating potential issues associated with this growth. Continued research and data-driven strategies fueled by this research will be fundamental in ensuring effective community safety measures.

The combination of rapid growth and ongoing projections for future expansion makes Fort Bend County an important case study in managing suburban development. As the county continues to grow, local leaders and policymakers will need to address these challenges to maintain the high quality of life that has made the area so attractive to newcomers.

Additional Standardization in Future Research

This research report underscores the importance of gathering accurate and detailed crime data to create meaningful insights for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and the public. The analysis reveals that data sourced directly from local law enforcement agencies are often more precise and comprehensive than data obtained from broader reporting systems. Direct agency data include additional details, such as case-specific insights, resource constraints, and unique operational challenges. Therefore, we recommend that future iterations of this report prioritize direct data collection from local agencies to enhance accuracy and contextual understanding.

However, a standardized framework for collecting and reporting this data across agencies is essential to ensure consistency and reliability. Current practices in data collection vary significantly, which can lead to inconsistencies in data quality and comparability. Establishing a standardized approach would benefit all agencies involved, enabling clearer comparisons, and a more cohesive regional or national picture of crime trends. This standardization should include uniform definitions, clear guidelines on data points, and structured templates that agencies can use to report their data effectively.

Additionally, most, if not all agencies involved in this report lack the resources or personnel required to systematically collect, analyze, and compile detailed data needed to produce an even more comprehensive report. Therefore, we recommend that agencies receive additional support, including training programs, technical assistance, and potential funding, to strengthen their data collection capabilities. By providing agencies with the tools and resources they need, future reports will benefit from richer, more actionable data that reflect the complexities of each community. This approach will support a more transparent and comprehensive understanding of crime trends and agency needs, ultimately helping to guide data-driven policies and resource allocations

Toward a Deeper Understanding: The Need for Ongoing Research

Ongoing research intensively examining crime trends in Fort Bend County has significant value beyond informing District Attorney Middleton and members of the District Attorney's Office. The detailed data provided within this report can serve to guide local and state law enforcement agencies in designing targeted crime prevention programs, particularly in neighborhoods or demographic groups identified as vulnerable to specific types of crime. By understanding crime patterns and resource needs at a granular level, agencies can allocate personnel and resources more effectively, ensuring community needs are met efficiently. Such research also aids policymakers in crafting public safety legislation that

directly addresses the unique challenges facing Fort Bend County, while considering the impact of additional factors such as population growth, county infrastructure, among many additional variables.

In addition, community organizations, public health officials, and educational institutions can also leverage this research to support outreach initiatives, youth engagement programs, and mental health services that contribute to long-term crime reduction. Schools, for instance, may use insights from crime data to tailor programs aimed at keeping at-risk youth engaged in positive activities and away from criminal behavior. Public health agencies can benefit by examining links between crime and mental health needs, enabling them to prioritize services in areas with high levels of violence or substance abuse. The collaborative use of this data across sectors not only supports a safer community but fosters a multi-dimensional approach to reducing crime over time, emphasizing preventative measures alongside traditional law enforcement responses.

APPENDIX

**Appendix Table FBCSO: Crime Rate 2020, 2021, 2022
Percent Increase/Decrease
Select Offenses**

	2020	2021		2022	
	Rt./100,000	Rt./100,000	% I/D ¹	Rt./100,000	% I/D ¹
Aggravated Assault	110.59	102.65	-7.17	104.98	2.27
Burglary	123.97	107.58	-13.22	135.97	26.38
Forcible Fondling	7.70	14.97		10.67	
Forcible Rape	33.93	35.57		27.77	
Forcible Sodomy	5.69	4.75		4.23	
Credit Card-ATM Fraud	75.92	58.28		57.91	
Counterfeiting-Forgery	35.03	36.10		58.76	
Drug-Narcotics Violations	86.93	76.95		103.12	
Human Trafficking Offenses	0.00	0.00		0.00	
Intimidation-Stalking	87.85	78.00		76.71	
Kidnapping-Abduction	7.15	5.11		5.93	
Larceny-Theft	725.50	685.83	-5.47	782.97	14.16
Manslaughter	0.55	0.00		0.00	
Motor Vehicle Theft	72.26	72.90		71.12	
Murder and Non-Neg. Manslaughter	1.47	2.99		1.69	
Pornography-Obscene Material	18.52	19.02		23.88	
Robbery	22.01	20.07		23.37	
Stolen Property	0.00	0.00		0.00	
Sexual Assault with Object	0.00	0.00		0.34	
Simple Assault	666.63	594.80	-10.78	647.85	8.92
Destruction-Damage-Vandalism	302.05	284.90	-5.68	292.26	2.58

¹ Percent increases and decreases in data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

**Appendix Table MPPD: Crime Rate 2020, 2021, 2022
Percent Increase/Decrease
Select Offenses**

	2020	2021		2022	
	Rt./100,000	Rt./100,000	% I/D ¹	Rt./100,000	% I/D ¹
Aggravated Assault		42.06 (2)		64.23 (3)	
Burglary		105.15 (5)		85.63 (4)	
Forcible Rape		63.09 (3)		21.41 (1)	
Credit Card-ATM Fraud		105.15 (5)		64.23 (3)	
Counterfeiting-Forgery		21.03 (1)		42.82 (2)	
Drug-Narcotics Violations		210.30 (10)		278.31 (13)	
Intimidation-Stalking		21.03 (1)		21.41 (1)	
Larceny-Theft		946.37 (45)		813.53 (38)	
Motor Vehicle Theft		378.55 (18)		578.03 (27)	
Simple Assault		273.40 (13)		321.13 (15)	
Destruction-Damage-Vandalism		147.21 (7)		128.45 (6)	

¹ Percent increases and decreases in data are unstable when the starting point (raw number) is low. As such, we do not calculate percent increases and decreases when the starting point is less than 100.

Appendix Table NPD: Contextualized Data, Crimes Reported by Agency								
	Agg. Ass.	Spl. Ass.	Burglary	Cred.-Fr.	Intimidat.	Theft	Sex. Ass.	Misc./Van.
<i>Victim</i>								
Age	34 (4)	35 (25)	48 (11)	52 (27)	35 (6)	40 (24)	15 (5)	51 (19)
Male	3	11	6	11	3	12	4	11
Female	1	14	6	11	3	12	1	8
White	2	23	10	22	6	18	4	18
Black	2	2	--	--	--	4	1	1
Asian	--	--	2	--	--	2	--	0
<i>Offender</i>								
Age	27.67 (3)	32 (24)	--	37 (7)	32 (5)	25 (9)	31 (5)	30 (10)
Male	2	17	--	6	4	5	5	7
Female	1	7	--	1	1	4	--	3
White	2	21	--	6	5	6	4	9
Black	1	3	--	1	--	2	1	1
<i>Relation.</i>								
Spouse/Ex	1	7	--	1	1	--	--	--
Oth. Fam.	--	2	--	--	--	1	1	--
Sibling	--	1	--	1	--	--	--	--
Acq./Frd.	1	3	--	2	3	5	2	6
Dating	1	6	--	1	--	--	2	2
Child	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stranger	--	1	--	3	1	2	--	1
<i>Location</i>								
Residence	2	23	8	10	4	12	3	13
Business	2	1	3	16	--	7	--	2
Pub. Spc.	--	1	3	2	--	6	--	5
School	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--
Cyberspace	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	--
<i>Weapon</i>								
Handgun	3	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Personal	0	24	--	--	--	--	1	--

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