

Oakland County Medical  
Examiner's Office  
Pontiac, Michigan



Annual Report  
2020

## 2020 Oakland County Medical Examiner Annual Report

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To the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and to the citizens of Oakland County:

In accordance with Public Act 181 of 1953 commonly referred to as the Medical Examiners Act, the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office is charged with determining the cause and manner of death in any violent, sudden, unexpected, suspicious or otherwise unexplained death, inclusive of all jail deaths and deaths in police custody occurring in Oakland County.

This report includes statistical data from the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office for the years 2016 to 2020. The total number of cases reported increased 14.5% for 2020 while the number of autopsies and inspections remained relatively the same as 2019. Oakland County experienced a 61.53% increase in the number of homicides reported, 4% increase in death scenes investigated, 19% increase in cremation permits requested, and a 63% increase in unclaimed bodies.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office hosts several multi-jurisdictional meetings to discuss specific types of cases where deaths may have been preventable. A prime example is the child death review meeting held monthly. Any death involving a child under the age of 18 is reviewed by the forensic pathologists, prosecutor's office, law enforcement, protective services, forensic psychiatrists, area pediatricians, State Department of Public Health, a Consumer Product Safety Commission representative and any other appropriate specialty depending on the circumstances unique to that case. Similar teams review drug related deaths as well as any deaths resulting from domestic violence.

The Medical Examiner's Office continues to partner with educational as well as government organizations for instruction and training. Presentations on cause and manner of death and tours are conducted for: basic police academies, advanced police crime scene training, detective schools, auxiliary and reserve police academies, several community citizen police academies and more. Along with hosting several medical students in 2020 the Medical Examiner's Office continued the partnership with Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center. Each year several pathology residents will spend about a month here in the final stages of their training before testing to become board-certified pathologists.

I hope you find this report informative. It is my pleasure to present to you the 2020 Annual Report for the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office.

Respectfully submitted,



Ljubisa J. Dragovic, M.D., FCAP, FAFS, FNAME  
Chief Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner

“Show me the manner in  
which a nation or a  
community cares for its  
dead and I will measure  
with mathematical  
exactness the tender  
mercies of its people, their  
respect for the laws of the  
land and their loyalty to  
high ideals”

**Gladstone**

## Medical Examiner Staff

### Forensic Pathologists

Ljubisa J. Dragovic, M.D.  
Chief Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner

Kanubhai Virani, M.D.  
Deputy Chief Forensic Pathologist

Bernardino Pacris, M.D.  
Deputy Forensic Pathologist

Andrew Hanosh, M.D.  
Deputy Forensic Pathologist

Patrick Cho, M.D.  
Deputy Forensic Pathologist

Shauna Bryan, M.D.  
Deputy Forensic Pathologist

### Toxicology

Li Wang, PhD.  
Diana Schell

### Autopsy Attendants

Christina Grammatico, Supervisor  
Danielle Jamieson  
April Leder  
Jennifer Guthrie  
Melissa Ohlrich

### Administrative

Casimir Miarka, Administrator  
Corrine Runyan, ME Office Supervisor  
Dana Campbell, ME Office Assistant  
Joyce Alexander, ME Office Assistant  
D'Arcy McAvoy, ME Office Assistant  
Amber Lofton, ME Office Assistant

### Investigators

Mark Giroux - Chief Investigator  
Marlene Rodgers  
Arthur McNamara  
Raymond Jankowski  
Keith Batchelor  
James Martinez  
Mitchell Brown  
Jeffrey Collins

### Histology

Karen Goldsworthy-Darnell

The Oakland County Medical Examiner’s Office serves nearly 1.3 million county residents by providing 24/7 services. Staffing is adjusted to handle most business, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Autopsies are conducted 7 days a week and reports of death are taken 24/7.

Autopsies are conducted to determine cause and manner of death for reported deaths occurring within Oakland County that meet the medical examiner case reporting criteria. This includes a complete internal and external examination, investigation, cytopathology and toxicological analysis when necessary. The final work product is the autopsy report.

All cremations occurring within Oakland County are approved by the Medical Examiner. The number of requests for cremation permits increased 19%. Prior to that cremation permit requests remained steady since 2016.

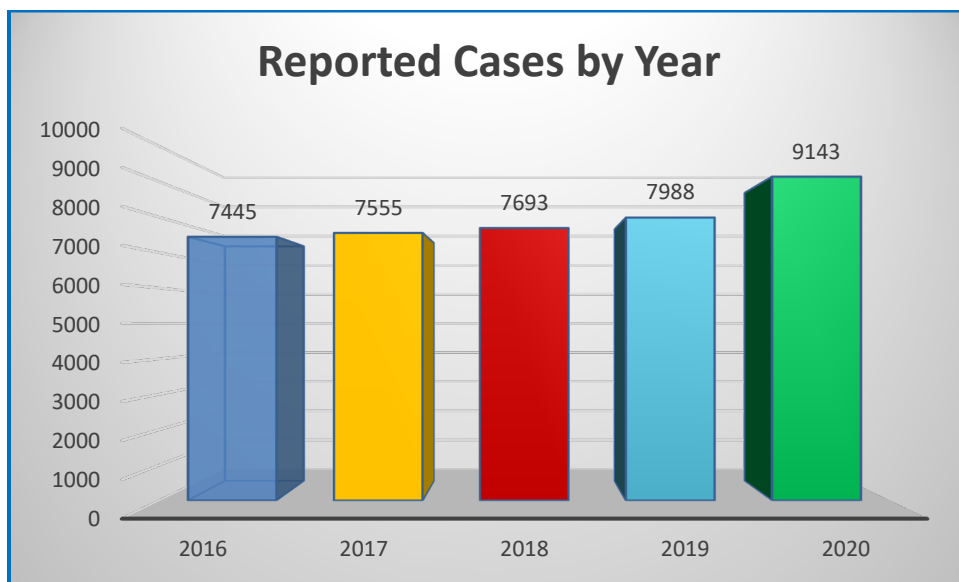
The State of Michigan made changes in the law regarding the rights of disposition and made the Medical Examiner for each county the final backstop for unclaimed bodies. As a result of these changes the Medical Examiner’s Office must file paperwork with the Department of Health and Human Services when a body is unclaimed. In 2020, Oakland County observed a 63% increase in unclaimed bodies.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner’s Office Child Death Review team conducted 36 reviews during the 2020 calendar year

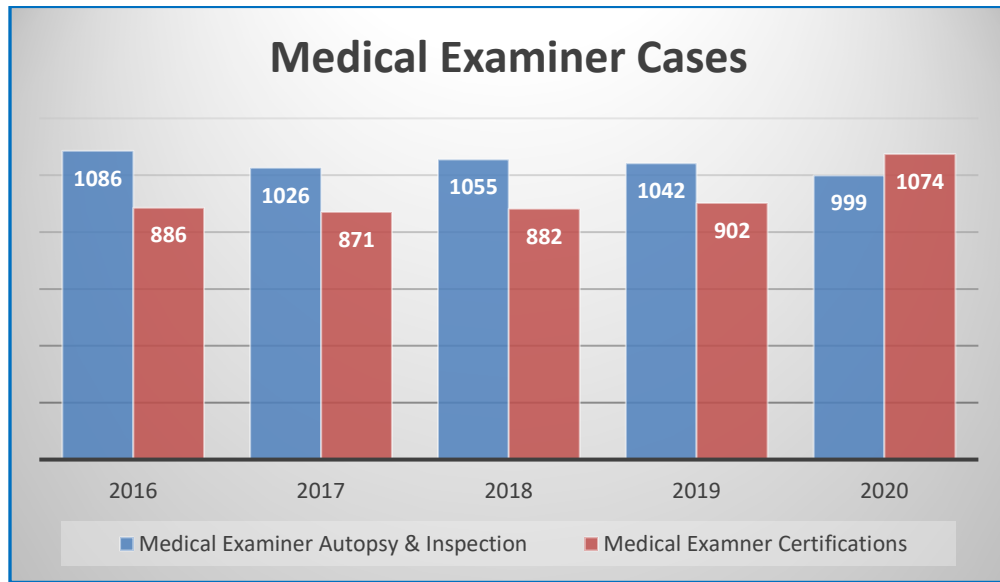
Report turnaround time is case dependent. Normal turnaround time can vary from 30 days to months depending on the specific merits and complexities of each case.

There is no charge for one copy of the autopsy report to the immediate Next of Kin. Autopsy reports are public record and requests to obtain copies of autopsy reports by parties who are not the immediate next of kin, are handled by Freedom of Information Act guidelines. Public records can be obtained by visiting the FOIA Request Center at [Oakgov.com](http://Oakgov.com)

## TOTAL REPORTED CASES



## CASES ACCEPTED BY MEDICAL EXAMINER



## CASES BY MANNER OF DEATH

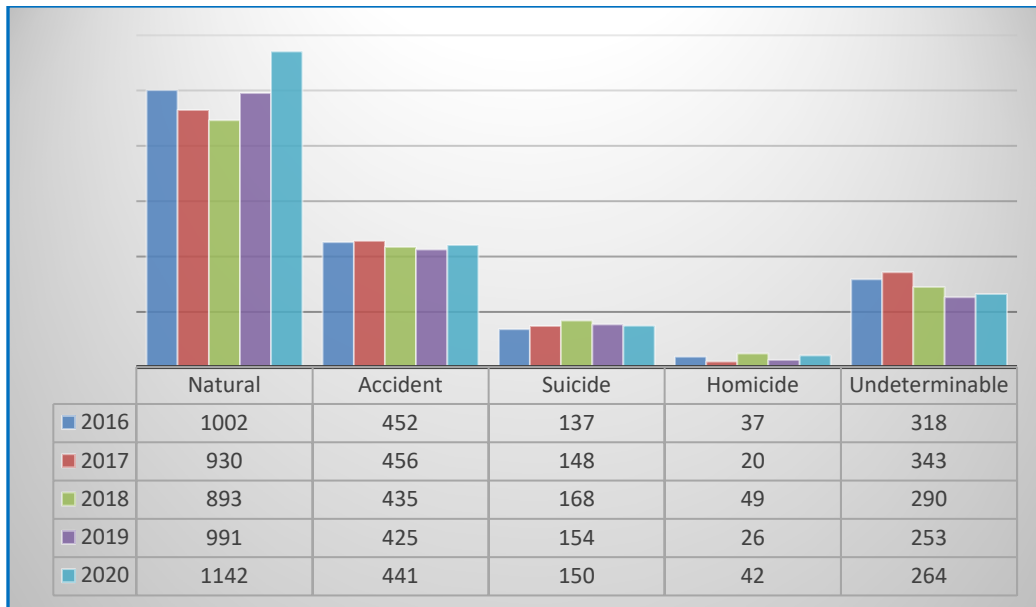
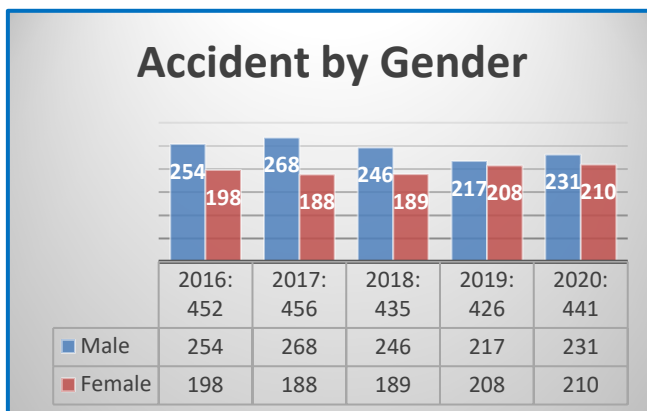
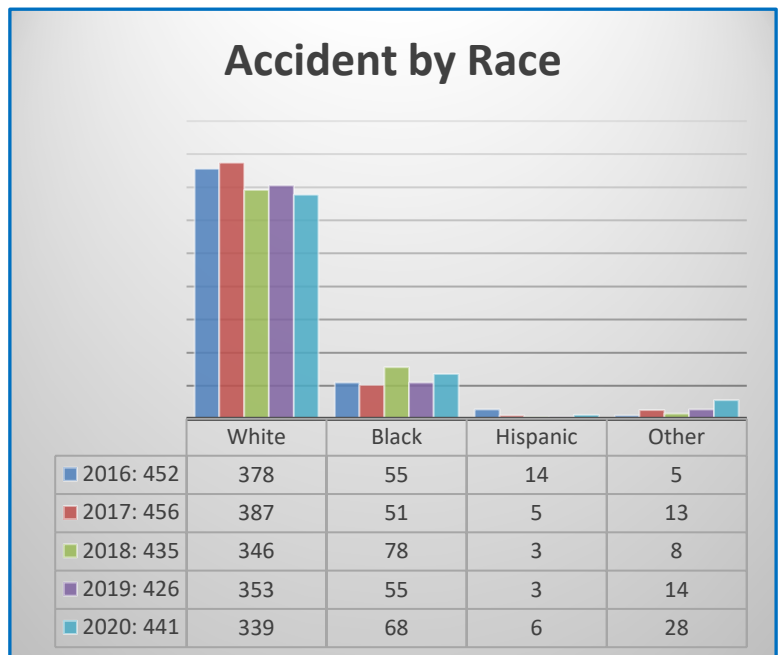
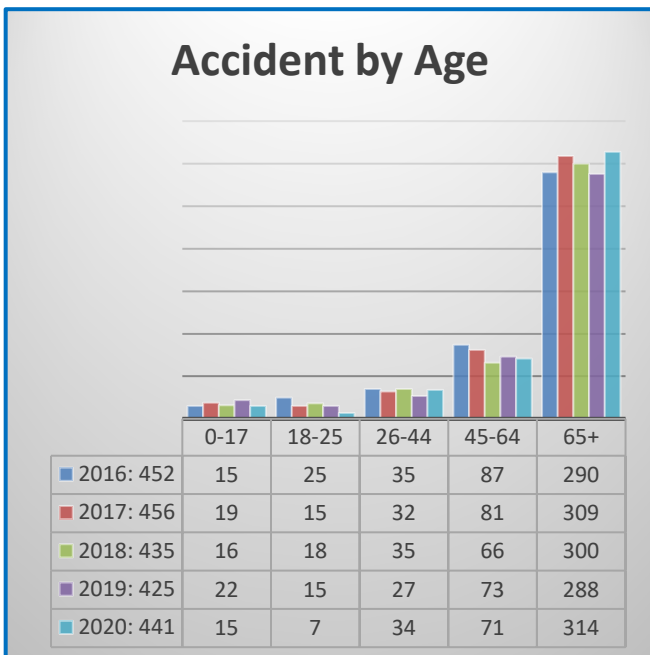
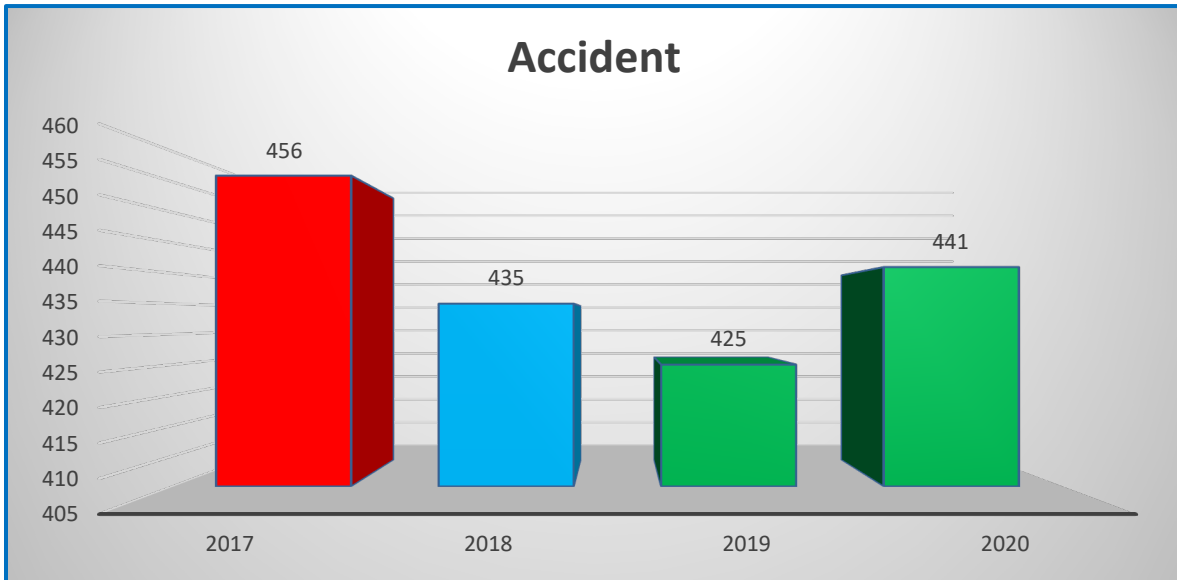


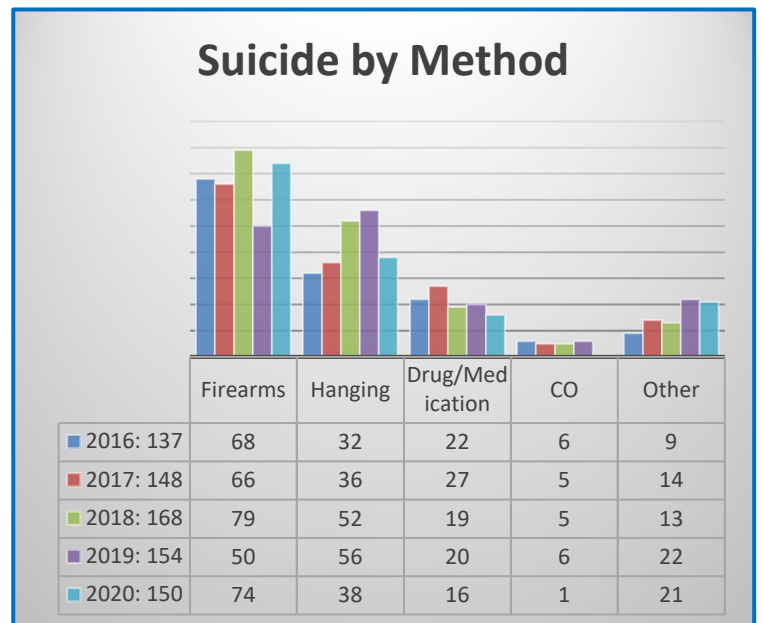
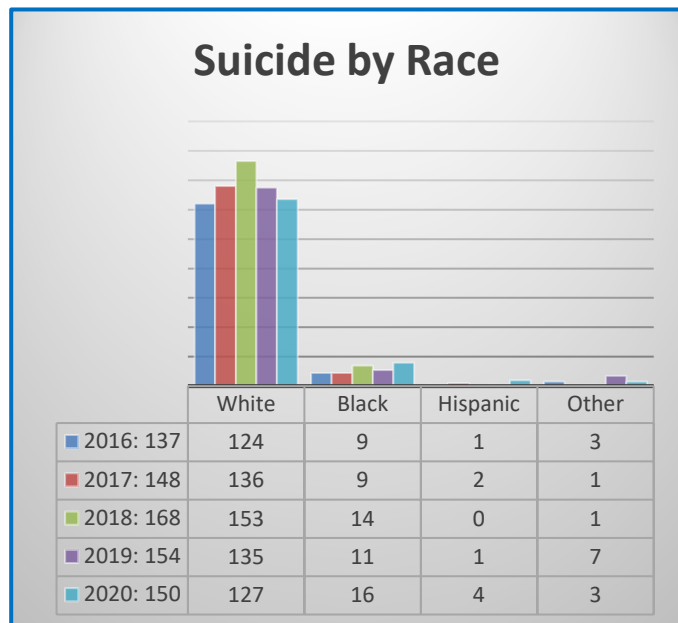
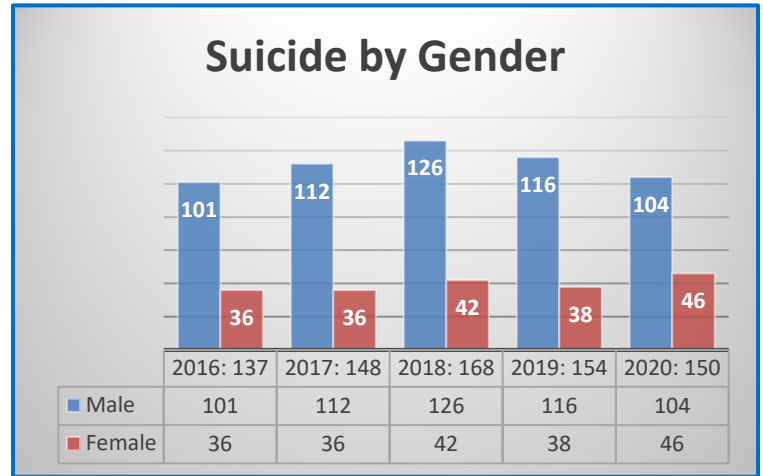
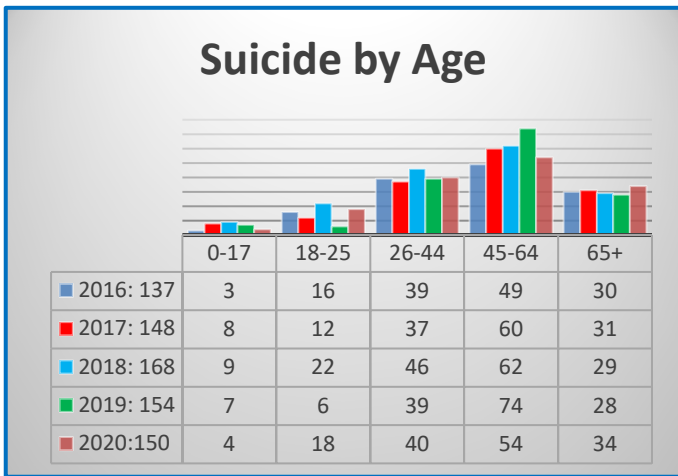
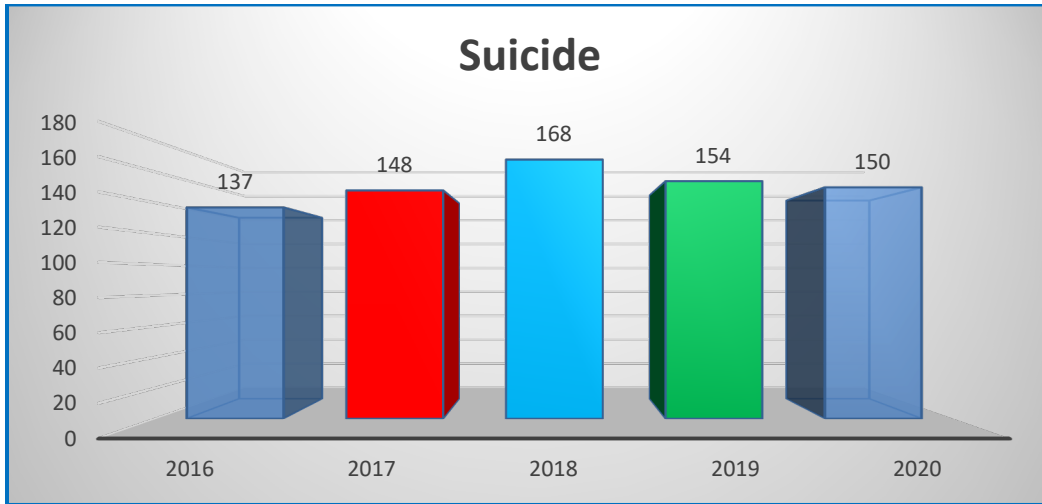
Table 1: Private Autopsies and Other County Cases referred to the Oakland County Medical Examiner

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Private Autopsy	26	23	19	32	34
Other County			82	59	

# ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

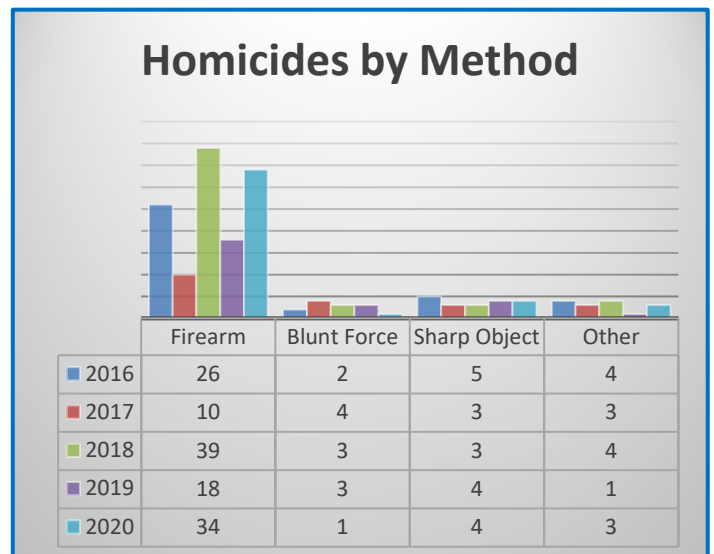
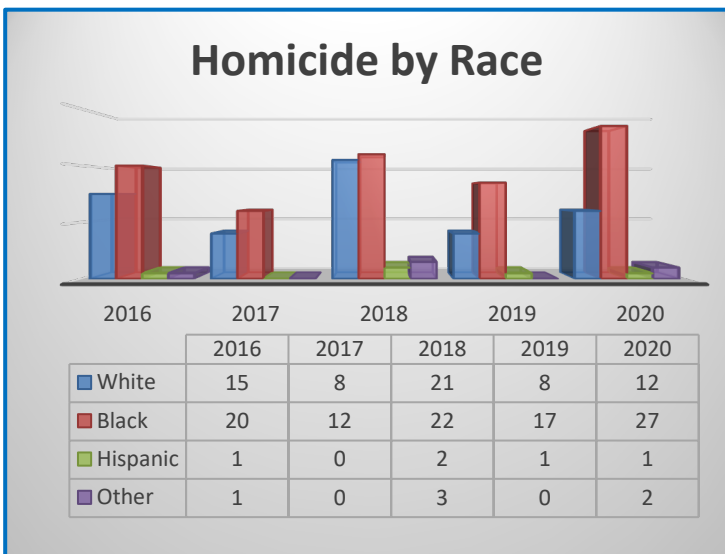
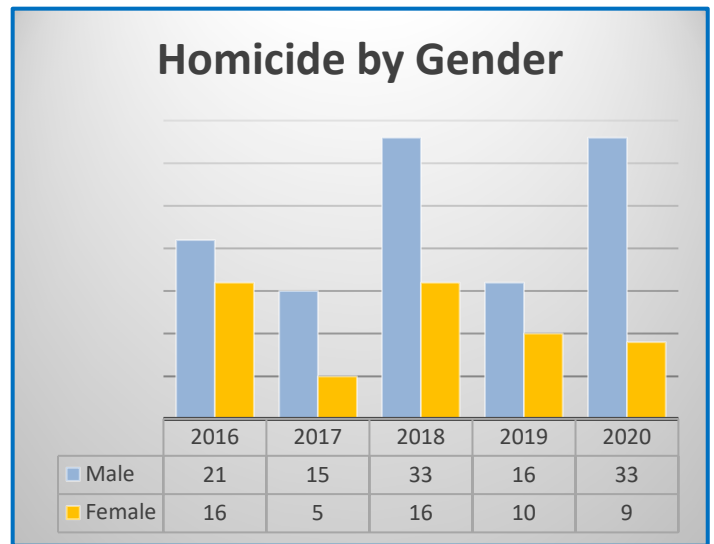
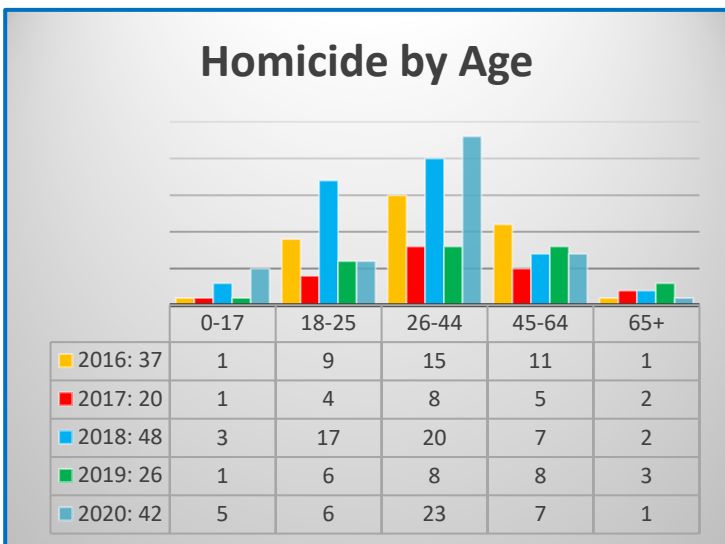
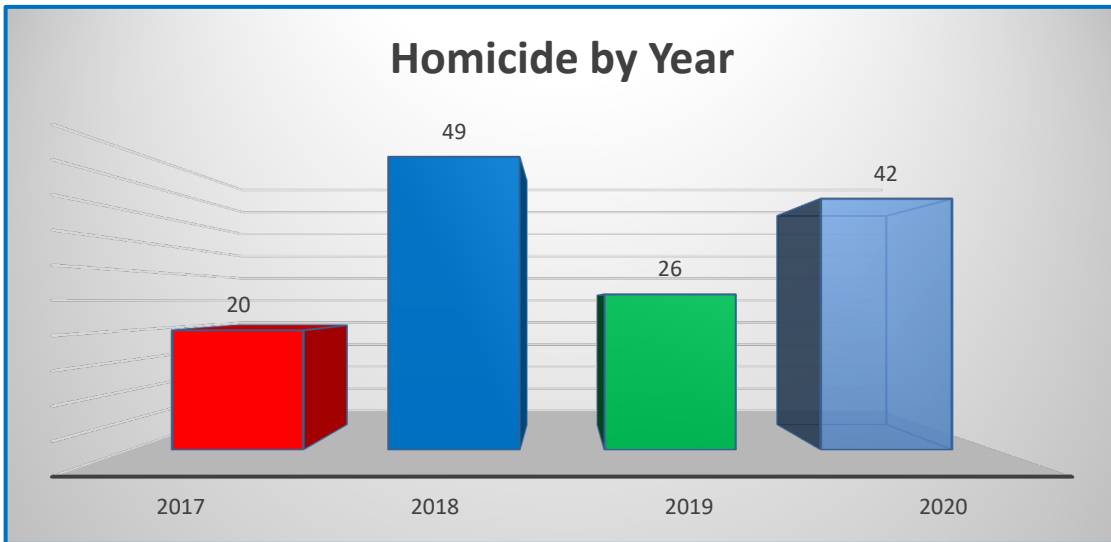


# SUICIDE



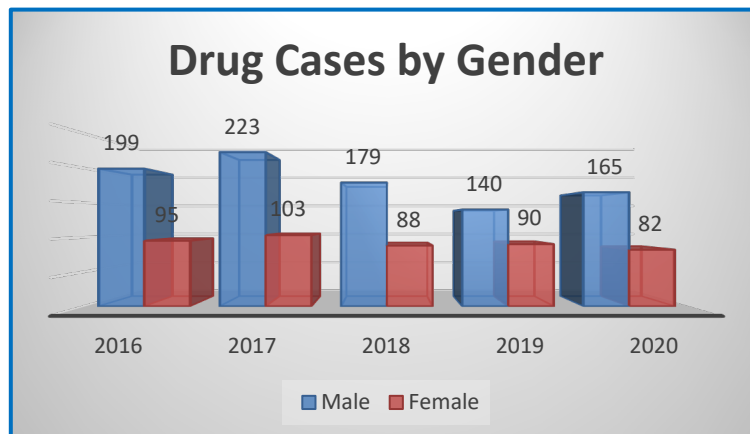
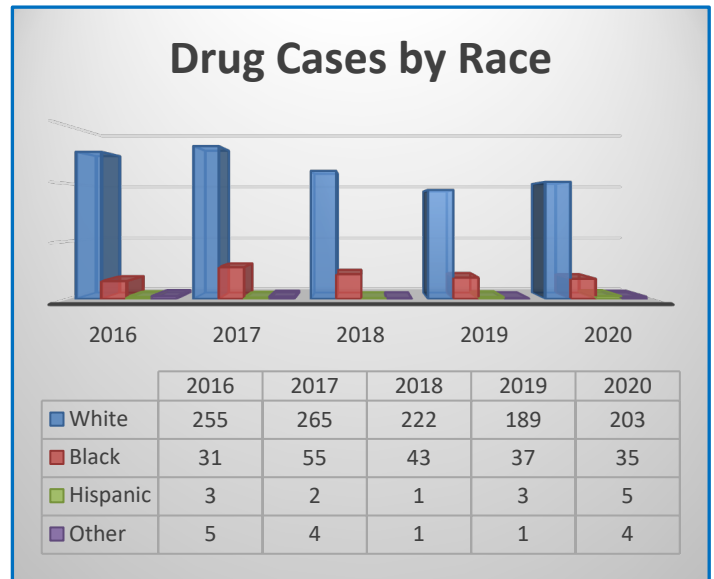
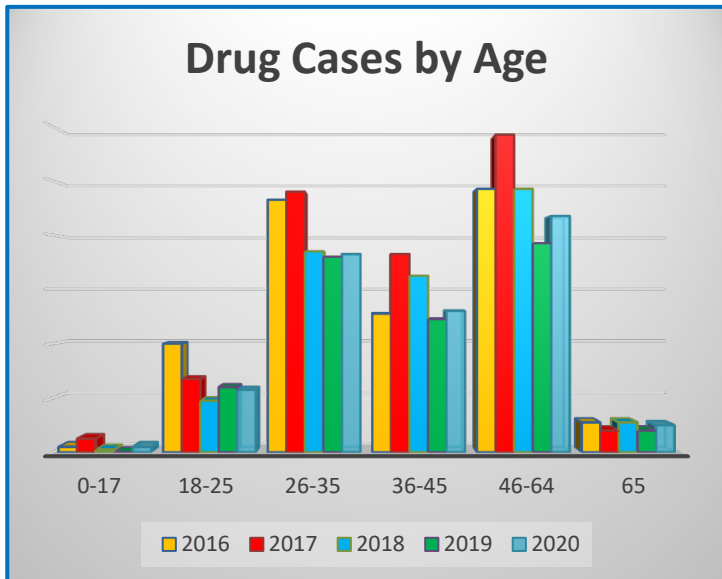
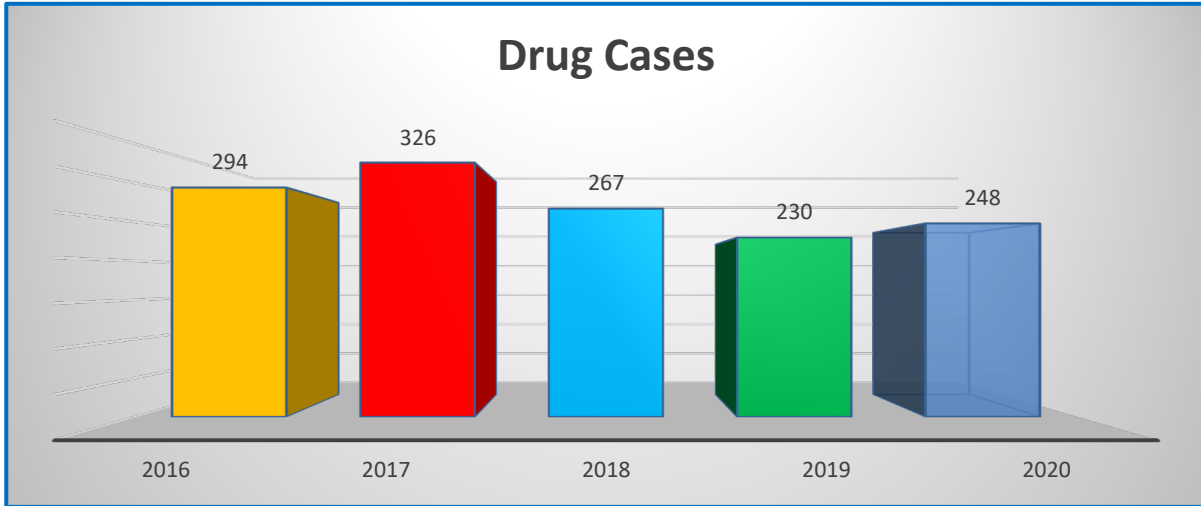


# HOMICIDE

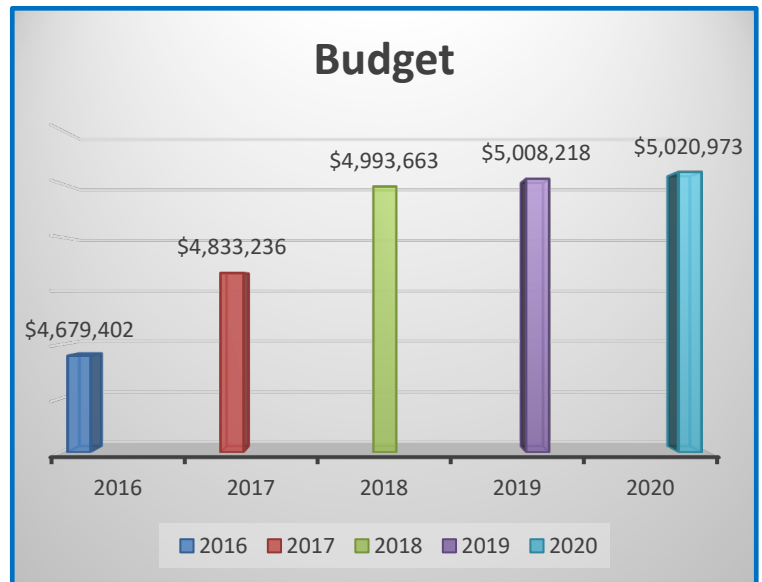
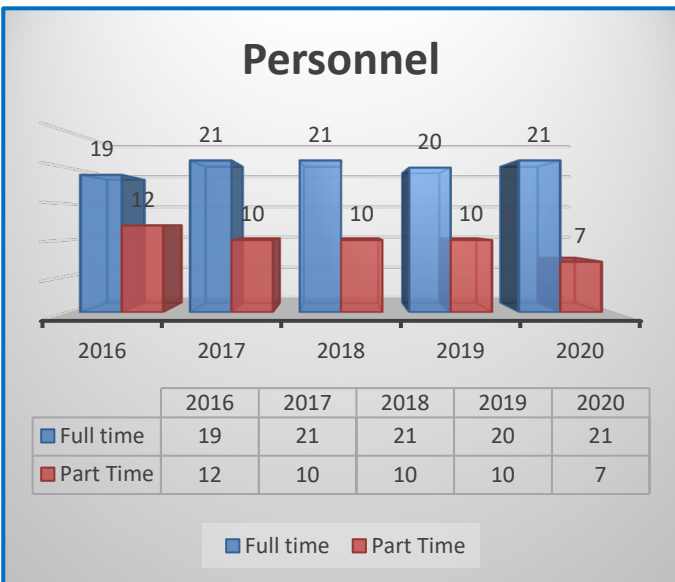
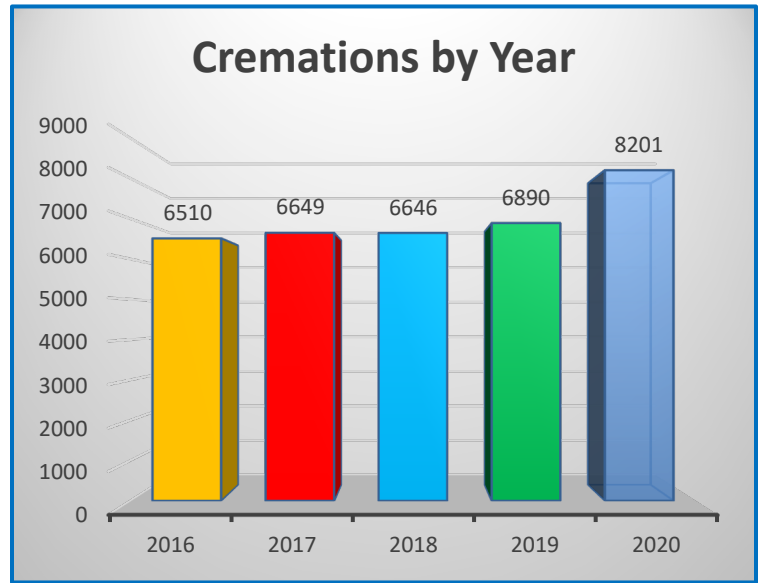
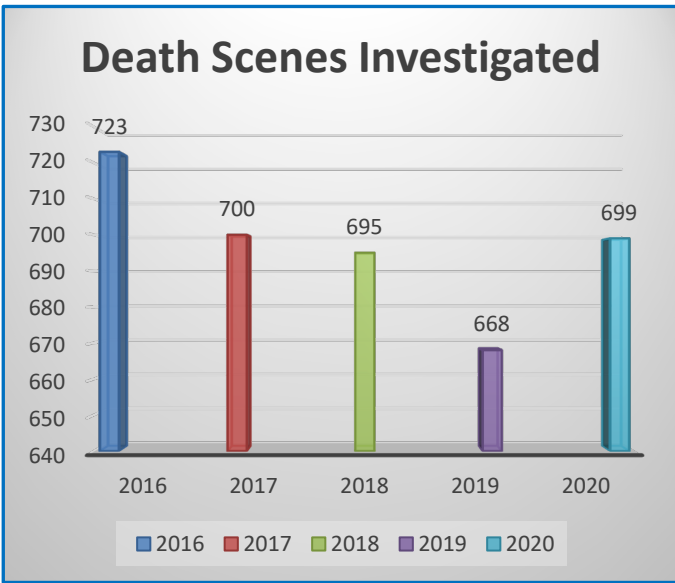


# DRUG CASES

The following charts represent the number of cases where Drug Abuse, Drug Intoxication, or Medication Intoxication was listed as the primary cause of death.



## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bodies to Morgue	116	1069	1079	1052	1032
Unclaimed Bodies	26	31	46	41	67
Toxicology Cases	1033	696	729	655	652
Unidentified Bodies	0	0	0	1	1
Exhumations	1	0	0	0	1