

Waco Police Department Violent Crime Strategic Response



May 2022

Waco Police Department 2022 Violent Crime Strategic Response

Introduction

Since 2019, national violent crime trends have risen, with marginal increases in the crime rate per 100,000 people between 2019 and 2020. The State of Texas has seen similar increases with violent crime trends increasing since 2018 (See Appendix A). When compared to itself, the City of Waco experienced a gradual increase in 2018, with a slight decline in 2019, and increases in violent crime in both 2020 and 2021 (See Appendix B).

Since the beginning of 2022, the Waco Police Department (WPD) has seen an increase in the number of murders occurring in our city. Although several motives have been determined, murders due to interpersonal disputes (domestic, acquaintances, disturbances), gang violence, the potential for retaliation, and the loss of innocent lives due to the recklessness in which many of these murders occur, heightens our concern, and undoubtedly pose a threat to Public Safety.

To date, we have had 13 murders (11 homicide investigations, seven cleared by arrests), over 40 incidents of deadly conduct (random discharges of firearms, and/or drive-by shootings with no victims), and a report of 123 stolen weapons. Year-To-Date statistically, overall, both violent crime and non-violent crime in the City of Waco are flat (no change) in comparison to last year.

**See Appendix C for the Year-to-Date Homicide table, Appendix D for a map of incidents of Deadly Conduct, and Appendix E for the Year-to-Date Crime Table.

This violent crime strategic response is designed to take a comprehensive approach to combat gang violence and other gun-related crime impacting the safety of our city. This approach involves each Command of the Waco Police Department and other law enforcement and community partners, including Patrol, Street Crimes, the Career Criminal Apprehension and Supervision Team (CCAST), the Texas Anti-Gang Office (TAG), Special and Criminal Investigations, the Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET), Community Outreach, department volunteers – both sworn and support, the District Attorney's Office and Federal Prosecutor's Office, as well as local law enforcement partners. Waco community stakeholders including Waco Independent School District, LeVega Independent School District, area clergy, youth organizations, businesses, and Waco social service organizations are also instrumental in our prevention, intervention, and reduction and apprehension efforts. During this initiative, we will also seek the assistance of other individuals/organizations who are invested in the future of our youth and our city.

This plan is being implemented within the framework of our department's mission and our commitment to Relational Policing – building trust through transparency, respect, engagement, building emotional capital, and accountability. Included in this plan are the objectives, intended results, prevention and intervention strategies, reduction and apprehension strategies, and our internal and external communications strategies.

Objectives:

- To continue to increase positive interactions through community engagement
- Emphasize a crime prevention focus through practice and education
- Work cooperatively with community stakeholders for collaborative intervention
- Proactively engage in focused and strategic enforcement
- Apprehend and hold offenders accountable who are involved in criminal activity

Intended Results:

- Increased Community Engagement
- Implementation of Crime Prevention Strategies
 - Educating Community on Crime Prevention Strategies
 - Communicating Crime Prevention Strategies via Social Media
- Stakeholder partnerships
 - Improved communication
 - Increased community involvement
 - Problem Solving
 - Increased witness/reportee/victim participation in solving crime
 - Proactive engagement from community influencers (mentorship, violence interrupters, conflict resolution, and de-escalation training, education, and job opportunities for justice-involved individuals)
 - Ongoing prevention/intervention efforts
 - Proactive engagement from community influencers
 - School Walks
 - Reading
 - Police Activities/Athletic League
 - Back2School Events
 - Trunk or Treat
 - Community Opportunity Event
 - Crime Prevention Summit
 - Teen and Police Service (TAPS) – clubs (starting in middle schools)
- The arrests and apprehension of violent offenders, and the removal of guns, drugs, and other illegal contraband off the streets of Waco

This strategy will be measured and evaluated based on comparative violent crime data from month to month in 2022, violent crime data by month compared to 2021, and year-to-date violent crime data compared to last year. Additionally, arrest data and contraband recovery will be considered, noting that decreases in both arrests and crime could be evidence of successful prevention, intervention, and crime reduction efforts.

Assessments of strategies will be made to determine if methods need to be adjusted.

Prevention

The WPD is committed to actively engaging in efforts to reduce and deter crime through prevention. We will build better partnerships with our local schools, reignite our Police Activities League (PAL) program, host community events, and participate in programs such as Law Enforcement Against Drugs and Violence (LEAD).

Building Better Partnerships

The WPD Neighborhood Engagement Team will continue to build partnerships with our local school districts to actively engage marginalized students who are susceptible to violence. Our team has begun and will continue to randomly visit and walk the halls of schools, participating in classroom events such as reading to students, and participating in and leading school-sponsored afterschool programs. The goal of this objective is to develop relationships and engage in conversations that will encourage support and offer alternatives to criminal activity. Another intended outcome is to interrupt familial justice-involved cycles.

Police Activities League

The WPD's Community Outreach Unit is reigniting the Police Activities League (PAL). This nationwide organization intentionally engages youth to aid in preventing juvenile crime and violence through mentorship, enrichment and education, athletic, and recreational opportunities. We have applied to renew our local chapter to reach at-risk youth to deter them from gangs, drugs, and other criminal activity and have recently held our first board meeting to implement this program.

Community Events

The WPD will continue to partner with community stakeholders to host events that support the well-being of our youth and increase positive interactions. These events include but are not limited to our Back2School Bash, Trunk or Treat, Crime Prevention Summit, Community Opportunity (currently in the planning stages), and other activities which allow us to connect with our youth and young people.

Law Enforcement Against Drugs and Violence program

Members of our Community Outreach and Neighborhood engagement teams recently had the opportunity to attend a Law Enforcement Against Drugs and Violence (LEAD) conference. This program provides a curriculum to engage youth by educating them on the dangers of drugs, drug-related crimes, bullying, mutual respect, goodwill, and positive relationships with their communities and law enforcement. We are currently working with Waco ISD to participate in their efforts with this program within our schools.

Intervention

As an agency, we are also committed to using strategies to interfere with and change the trajectory of the lives of youth and other individuals who have been justice-involved or who may be continuously exposed to criminal behaviors. We will do this through events such as our upcoming "Community Opportunity" and by implementing other programs to support at-risk youth.

Community Opportunity

Our Neighborhood engagement team is preparing a **Community Opportunity** event that will focus on providing marginalized youth with resources to better engage social determinants such as mentorship, jobs, food shortages, and housing. Our NET officers have already begun attempting to collaborate with mentoring organizations with mentors who have lived experiences.

Project Safe Start

WPD has partnered with WISD and LeVega ISD to pilot a program like **Project Safe Start** in Houston. For 2022, this program will be led by WPD Chaplains, Officer Damon Vice (NET), and Richard Thompson III. The program involves local clergy walking the halls of Middle and High Schools during the last two or three days of school for increased adult presence, to reduce opportunities for disruptive behaviors.

TAPS

We will continue to encourage and support our local ISDs to include the Teen And Police Service (TAPS) programs/clubs in our local Middle and High Schools. TAPS is an eleven-week, two-hour-a-week commitment for both students and police officers. The TAPS program aims to empower at-risk youth, engage law enforcement to minimize social distance among at-risk youth, and enhance communities by providing a curriculum of tools for our students to be better citizens.

Violence Interrupters

WPD is also researching an opportunity to use violence interrupters to "intervene in hostile conflicts to prevent escalation, assist high-risk individuals in avoiding retaliation and empower the community to denounce violence as a norm." We are seeking representation from racially diverse groups, who may or may not have been justice-involved and are willing to influence the behavior of individuals involved in high-risk violent behaviors.

WPD has identified a funding opportunity through the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs – Bureau of Justice Assistance for a Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative. According to the details provided in the grant, *"One of the features of this opportunity (Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Violent Crime) is its focus on the benefits of investing in community-based violence prevention and intervention programs, as well as the importance of approaches that intervene to break patterns of violence in the lives of those individuals at the highest risk of engaging in or becoming victims of violence."*

Waco Connect will be completing the grant application. In addition to support from the Waco Police Department, we have identified other Waco area 501c3 organizations that focus on prevention and intervention who will be invited to participate. As required of the grant, this will involve "*holistic, coordinated interventions attending to the multiple needs of individuals at high risk of gang and gun violence.*"

The grant is due June 16, 2022. We will work cooperatively with Waco Connect to provide data and objectives and goals for reducing crime through prevention and intervention methods.

Proactive Response

Our proactive responses include ongoing strategies by our Street Crimes and Career Criminal Apprehension and Supervision Team (CCAST), gang intelligence officers, and patrol. We will also adopt modern technology and employ communication strategies to achieve our goals.

Crime Reduction & Apprehension

Street Crimes & Career Criminal Apprehension and Supervision Team

As a result of the increase in gun-related violence, the Street Crimes and CCAST units will be working evening shift hours 1500-0100, primarily with weekend coverage, until further notice.

Street Crimes and CCAST will serve as a crime reduction unit and be proactive in:

- Conducting traffic stops, surveillance, and self-initiated activity in targeted areas where violence is occurring and on targeted individuals who are wanted or are persons of interest in gang-related or associated violence.
- Responding to any calls identified as gang-related, have gang-related ties, and those calls with violent offenders or the potential for escalated violence.

Gang Intelligence Officers

Since December 1, 2021, Waco Police Department has responded to many reports of deadly conduct, disorderly conduct, aggravated assault, homicide, and other miscellaneous calls that involve hybrid gang members.

As part of this initiative, the WPD Gang Unit will:

- Work with the FBI to help assist with the investigations. Our goal is to delve deeper into the cases to determine links to other cases, and the potential for further violence and/or retaliation, in order to obtain arrest warrants upon developing supporting evidence.
- Follow-up on leads shared, and
- Continue to work with Criminal Investigations and Special Crimes Divisions on investigations related to gang activity.

Patrol

Patrol Operations Command personnel are using their uncommitted time to proactively interrupt illegal activities, including offenses related to firearms, involving gang members. Using information provided by TAG personnel combined with their knowledge and experience, they have already made numerous arrests, including BMV, evading arrest, aggravated assault, unlawful carrying of weapons (UCW), and drug offenses. Patrol officers are also contacting and communicating with gang officers on incidents that are believed to be gang-related.

Technology as Force Multipliers:

In addition to the above, WPD will adopt both gunshot detection technology and static Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs).

Comprehensive use of automated license plate readers (ALPRs). Our goal is to obtain a package from Flock with the deployment of static ALPR cameras that would assist us in identifying persons involved in discharges, and other gun-related offenses, and the identification of suspicious vehicles involved in other criminal activity.

Overall successes since January 1, 2022

The crime reduction and apprehension efforts presented have been ongoing since the uptick in gang-related activity. So far this year, we have made arrests in seven murders, 13 sexual assaults, 25 robberies, and 388 assaults. We have also recovered 281 firearms (these include weapons collected as evidence, found property, safe keeping, and recovered stolen), since January 1, 2022 (See Appendix F).

Communication

Internal, external, and inter-agency communication is essential to the success of this proposal. Our Public Information Officer will continue working with Communications and Marketing, local media outlets, and the community using social media, our podcasts, press releases, and mini-campaigns promoting Public Safety and Crime Prevention to share information with our community. Our Podcasts will continue to be posted weekly, and press releases and posts daily when arrests or significant incidents occur. We will also begin sharing monthly arrest stats related to violent crime (See Appendix F). Finally, we will share Relational Policing events and opportunities as they occur.

We will continue to look for opportunities to create our own narrative regarding the work our team is doing. We will do this through social media posts, press releases, and in partnership with local news organizations.

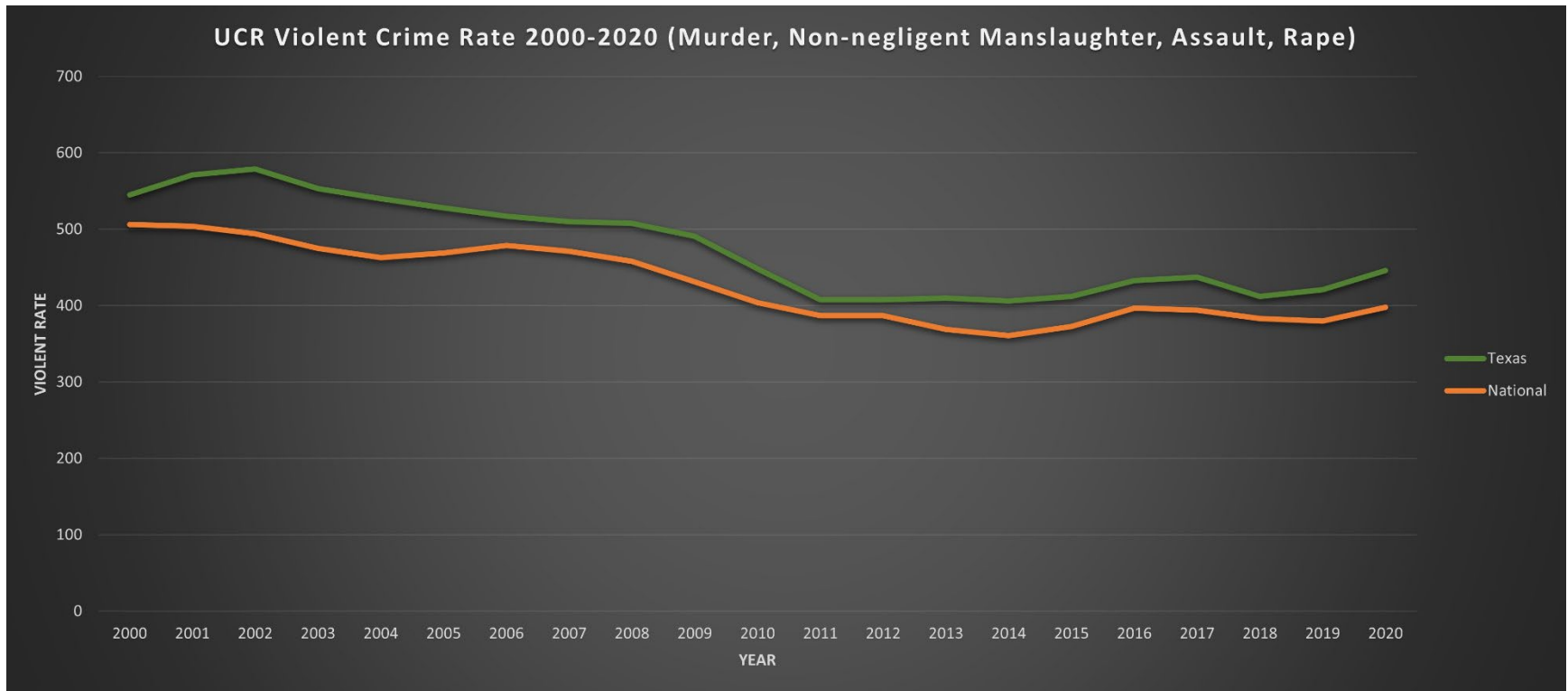
At the beginning of this plan, we developed a strategy to improve communication with our area Independent School Districts (ISDs) and other area law enforcement agencies impacted by the recent murders. We have committed to sharing information regarding gang members and

associates, and information related to gang activity that could escalate into violence. We are also sharing information, when possible, about individuals arrested and/or are victims of gun violence.

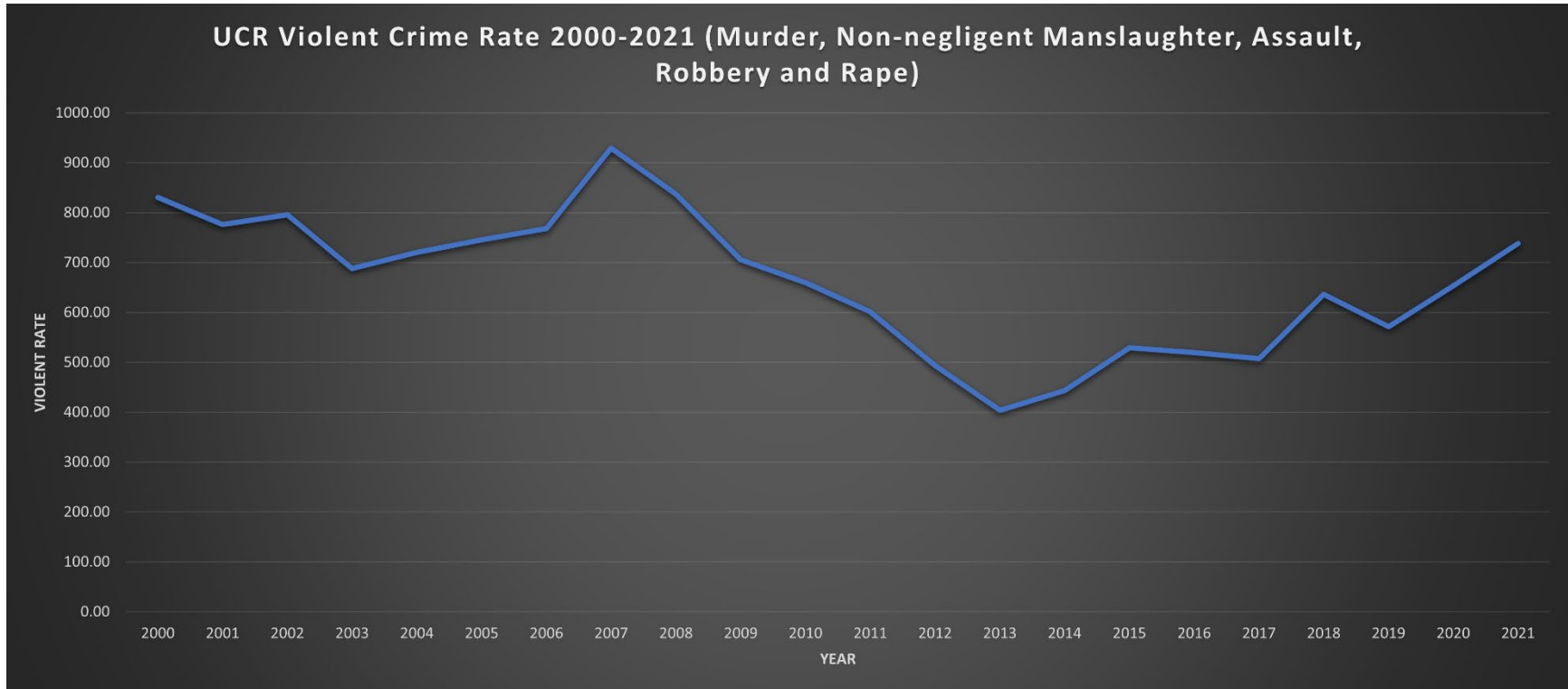
Finally, we will continue to provide weekly updates in Council Reports of significant arrests, seizures, weapon recoveries, and any statistics related to special operations regarding gang activity or the recovery of weapons. We will frequently assess the success of our efforts and adjust, as necessary.

Appendix

A



Appendix B



APPENDIX

C



**Waco Police
Department
Homicide Chart
Jan 1, 2022 -
June 3, 2022**



<u>Date</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Motive</u>	<u>Victim(s) Race/Sex</u>	<u>Arrestee Race/Sex</u>
1/21/2022	1900 Block JJ Flewellen Rd.	Arrested	Murder	Unknown	Black Male	Black Male
1/30/2022	1600 Block Faulkner Ln.	Investigation Open	Double Murder	Robbery	(2) Black Males	*
2/3/2022	2300 Block S. New Rd.	Arrested	Murder	Family Violence	Hispanic Female	Black Male
2/20/2022	700 Block Ruby Ave.	Investigation Open	Murder	Gang Related	Black Male	*
3/5/2022	700 Block Austin Ave.	Arrested	Murder	Disturbance	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Male
3/14/2022	900 Block Wooded Acres Dr.	Arrested	Double Murder	Family Violence	(2) White Females	White Male
4/3/2022	2300 Block S. 2nd St.	Investigation Open	Murder	Disturbance	Black Male	*
4/9/2022	1500 Block N. 11th St.	Arrested	Homicide	Unknown	White Male	White Male
4/15/2022	3100 Block Pipkin Ln.	Arrested	Murder	Unknown	White Male	Hispanic Male
5/1/2022	3400 Block Morrow Ave.	Investigation Open	Murder	Unknown	Hispanic Female	
5/17/2022	5300 Block Bosque Blvd.	Arrested	Murder	Disturbance	Black Male	Black Female

*Table does not include non-criminal homicides such as self-defense or homicides referred to a Grand Jury. Grand Jury referrals will be added if an indictment is made and determined the homicide was a criminal act.

APPENDIX D

Appendix E



Waco Police Department
3115 Pine Ave
Waco, TX 76708
Monthly/Year to Date Crime Statistics



WACO, TX	<u>Apr-21</u>	<u>Apr-22</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>YTD 2021</u>	<u>YTD 2022</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Murder	1	3	200%	4	9	125%
Sexual Assault	20	11	-45%	57	47	-18%
Robbery	12	9	-25%	59	34	-42%
Assault	180	184	2%	661	693	5%
<u>Violent Crimes Total:</u>	213	207	-3%	781	783	0%
Burglary of Hab/Bldg/Mach	56	65	16%	264	224	-15%
Burglary of Motor Vehicle	86	79	-8%	355	323	-9%
Theft/Fraud	231	251	9%	840	907	8%
Narcotics Offense	70	77	10%	229	236	3%
Criminal Mischief	106	85	-20%	340	333	-2%
Vehicle Stolen	32	39	22%	144	140	-3%
<u>Non-Violent Crimes Total:</u>	581	596	3%	2,172	2,163	0%
<u>Grand Total:</u>	794	803	1%	2,953	2,946	0%

* This report encompasses four violent crimes (Murder, Sexual Assault, Robbery and Assault) and six non-violent crimes (Burg of Hab/Bldg/Mach, Burg of Motor Vehicle, Theft/Fraud, Criminal Mischief, Narcotics Offense and Vehicle Stolen). If a crime is not listed for a particular neighborhood, it did not occur during the given date ranges.

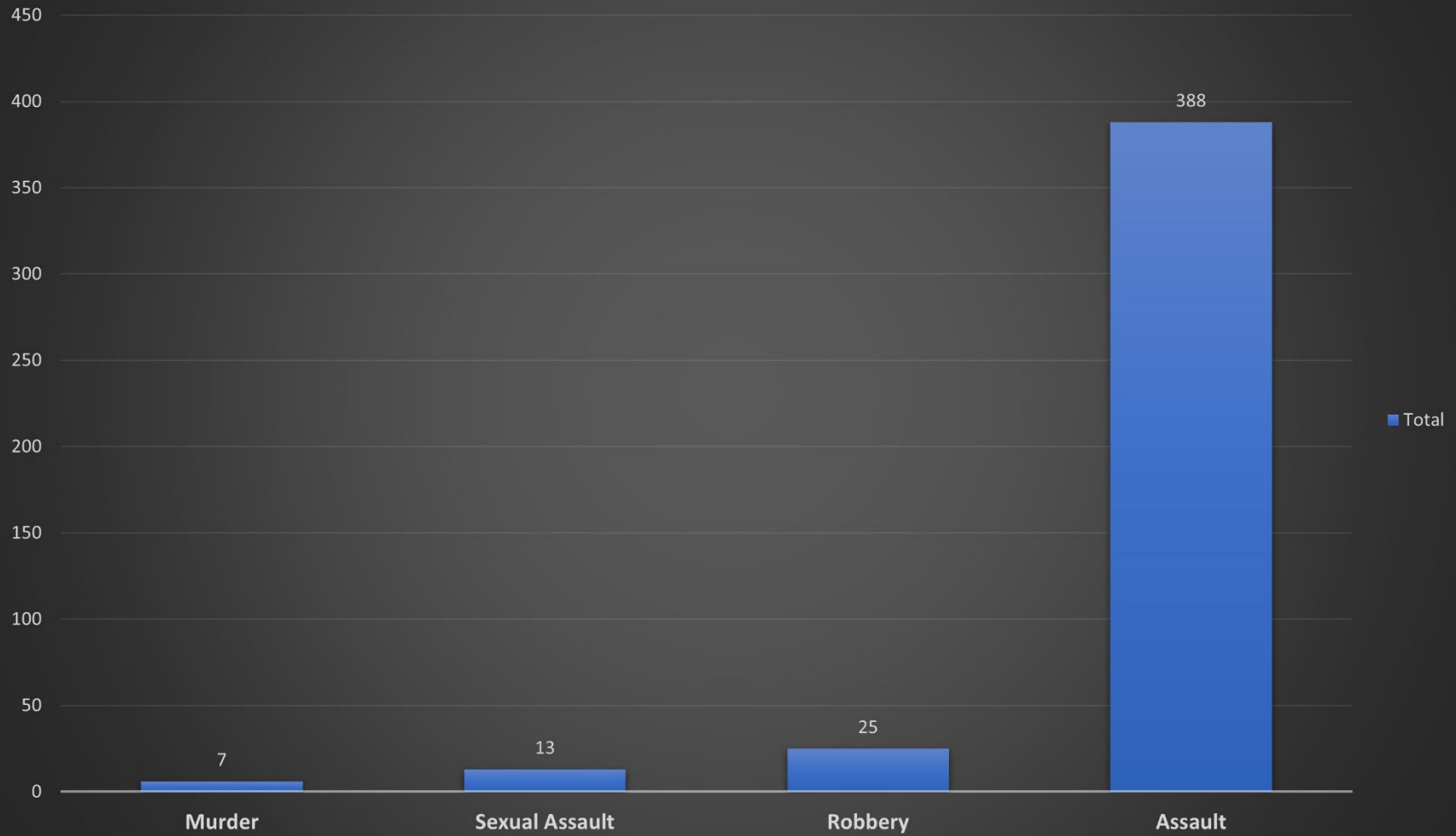
* Statistics reported do not reflect victim and/or suspect count. If no percent change is shown, the previous year or month had zero crimes resulting in an undefined equation.

* **Green** represents decrease in crime, **Yellow** represents no change and **Red** represents an increase in crime.

*This crime report is intended to be an overview of crime in Waco, Texas. Attempts to draw conclusions or to conduct comparisons against stats from other agencies should be avoided. Crime classifications can change throughout the life of the investigation and therefore these stats are only accurate on the date that this report is generated.

Appendix F

Waco PD YTD Violent Crime Arrests Jan 1 - June 1, 2022



END