

HAMILTON / COUNTED

Accountability through data.

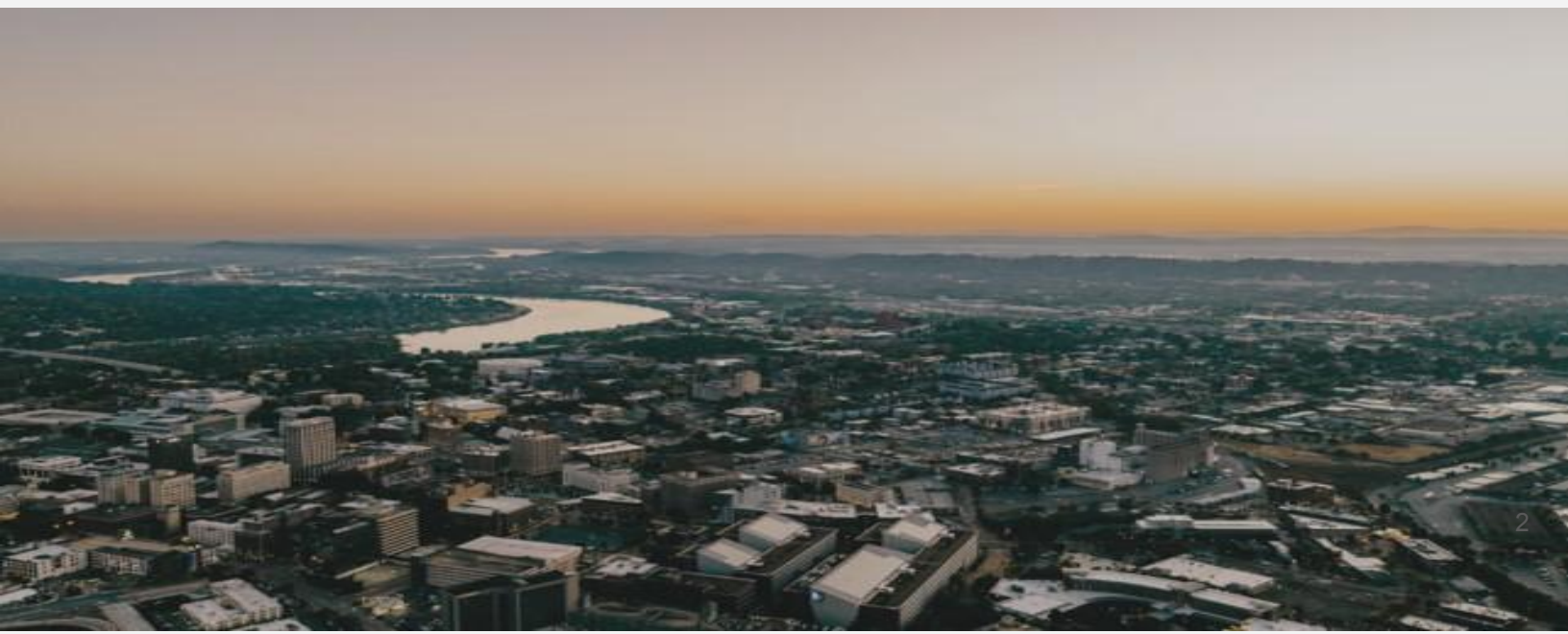
2024 QUARTER 2





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A Message from Mayor Wamp



Over the last two years, I have met people from all walks of life who have shared their unique journeys with me, helping to shape the priorities and initiatives of the County Mayor's office. As we continue to focus much of our effort on students and young families, Hamilton Counted has provided countywide insights into the challenges we face.

This data project has forced us to confront the reality that many in our community are being left behind as Hamilton County continues to be a regional leader in job growth and quality of life.

For example, while overall crime is down across Hamilton County, murders within the city of Chattanooga have risen. Throughout the first half of 2024, murders have increased nearly 42 percent when compared to 2022, while nonfatal shootings in Chattanooga have remained steady year-over-year. The harsh reality of violent crime in our community should serve as a challenge to those of us in leadership positions to continue to pursue pathways to productive futures for our young men.

The most encouraging data in this report shows that for the second consecutive quarter, fatal overdoses have decreased, dropping nearly 30 percent over the first half of the last two years. Every death is a tragedy, a family forever changed, which is why the county funded a chief opioid prosecutor, who is hard at work prosecuting dealers of these deadly drugs. So far, the District Attorney's Office has successfully convicted five individuals on second degree murder or distribution of drugs resulting in death.

In this year's county budget, we funded the creation of the Center for Thriving Families in the face of increasing enrollment in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Fortunately, nearly \$600,000 of additional funding has been made available for four more nutrition educators to assist families in need. Another ominous data point is the number of food boxes distributed by the Chattanooga Area Food Bank rising nearly 77 percent through the first half of the year, compared to two years ago. Furthering the county's commitment to assisting families in need, we allocated funding to the Food Bank in this year's budget and are exploring opportunities for the Center for Thriving Families to partner with the Food Bank to serve vulnerable families in our county.

In the long run, Hamilton Counted will reveal our improvement in key areas or lack thereof. Government too often lacks both transparency and accountability, but our aim with this data project is to increase both. As we begin to prepare the Q3 Hamilton Counted report (in an all-new format in partnership with local firm Datably), our hope is that this newly accessible data will serve as a guide to better direct investment of local tax dollars to strategies that work and neighborhoods in need.

Crime in Hamilton County



Per Capita is number of crimes per 10,000 residents.

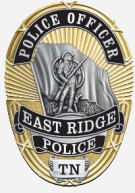
East Ridge data is not available for 2022; therefore, the East Ridge population has been subtracted when computing overall crime rates in 2022. Their population and data have been included in the 2023 and 2024 data.

January 1 - June 30	HAMILTON COUNTY Pop. 374,682 ^[1] ^[2] ^[3]			
	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024
CRIME ^[2]				
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	825	917	816	-11.01%
AUTO BURGLARY	1,751	1,232	1,156	-6.17%
AUTO THEFT	808	640	749	17.03%
BURGLARY	720	608	497	-18.26%
MURDER	14	15	18	20.00%
RAPE	91	91	89	-2.20%
ROBBERY	139	105	95	-9.52%
TOTALS:	4,348	3,608	3,420	-5.21%

Quarters 1 & 2: January 1 - June 30						
Hamilton County Non-Fatal Shootings ^[4]	2023		2024		% Change Incidents	% Change Victims
	Incidents	Victims	Incidents	Victims		
COLLEGEDALE	0	0	0	0	N/C	N/C
CITY OF CHATTANOOGA	42	46	44	49	4.76%	6.52%
EAST RIDGE	1	1	1	1	0.00%	0.00%
HAMILTON COUNTY	3	4	1	1	-66.67%	-75.00%
LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN	0	0	0	0	N/C	N/C
RED BANK	1	1	0	0	-100.00%	-100.00%
SODDY DAISY	0	0	1	1	N/C	N/C
SIGNAL MOUNTAIN	0	0	0	0	N/C	N/C
TOTAL	47	52	47	52	0.00%	0.00%

Hamilton County Crime Rates ^[1] ^[2] ^[3]				
January 1 - June 30				
Crime Category	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024
Violent Crime ^[**]	1,069	1,128	1,018	-9.75%
Property Crime ^[***]	3,279	2,480	2,402	-3.15%

Crime in Hamilton County

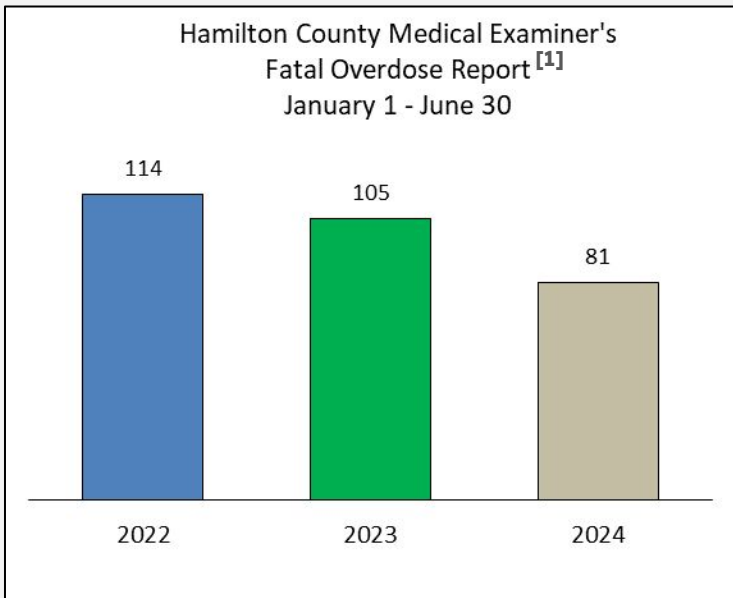


January 1 - June 30	COUNTY Includes Lakesite and Walden Pop. 121,334				CHATTANOOGA Pop. 184,086				COLLEGEDALE Pop. 11,255			
CRIME	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	93	101	119	17.82%	691	735	616	-16.19%	6	13	5	-61.54%
AUTO BURGLARY	111	96	82	-14.58%	1575	1012	961	-5.04%	21	17	23	35.29%
AUTO THEFT	67	57	31	-45.61%	716	518	671	29.54%	10	4	2	-50.00%
BURGLARY	111	76	79	3.95%	568	454	358	-21.15%	14	17	16	-5.88%
MURDER	2	1	0	0.00%	11	12	17	41.67%	0	2	0	0.00%
RAPE	24	10	7	-30.00%	62	70	67	-4.29%	3	1	1	0.00%
ROBBERY	4	6	3	-50.00%	133	97	89	-8.25%	1	1	0	-100.00%
TOTALS:	412	347	321	-7.49%	3756	2898	2779	-4.11%	55	55	47	-14.55%

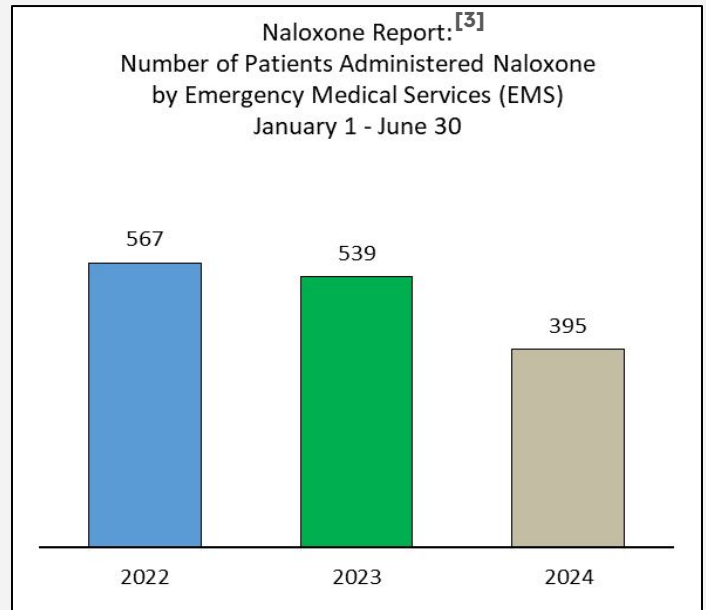
January 1 - June 30	EAST RIDGE Pop. 21,936 ^[3]				LOOKOUT MTN Pop. 2,070				RED BANK Pop. 11,959			
CRIME	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	-	34	38	11.76%	0	0	0	0.00%	22	21	20	-4.76%
AUTO BURGLARY	-	64	58	-9.38%	1	6	1	-83.33%	18	20	18	-10.00%
AUTO THEFT	-	33	26	-21.21%	0	0	0	0.00%	8	19	11	-42.11%
BURGLARY	-	31	24	-22.58%	0	1	0	-100.00%	19	4	6	50.00%
MURDER	-	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
RAPE	-	8	13	62.50%	0	0	0	0.00%	1	0	0	0.00%
ROBBERY	-	1	2	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	1	0	1	0.00%
TOTALS:	0	171	161	-5.85%	1	7	1	-85.71%	69	64	56	-12.50%

January 1 - June 30	SIGNAL MTN Pop. 8,883				SODDY DAISY Pop. 13,159			
CRIME	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2023 to 2024
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	0	1	2	N/A	13	12	16	33.33%
AUTO BURGLARY	8	1	5	400.00%	17	16	8	-50.00%
AUTO THEFT	0	0	0	0.00%	7	9	8	-11.11%
BURGLARY	0	3	1	-66.67%	8	22	13	-40.91%
MURDER	0	0	0	0.00%	1	0	1	0.00%
RAPE	0	0	0	0.00%	1	2	1	-50.00%
ROBBERY	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
TOTALS:	8	5	8	60.00%	47	61	47	-22.95%

Substance Misuse & Overdose Trends

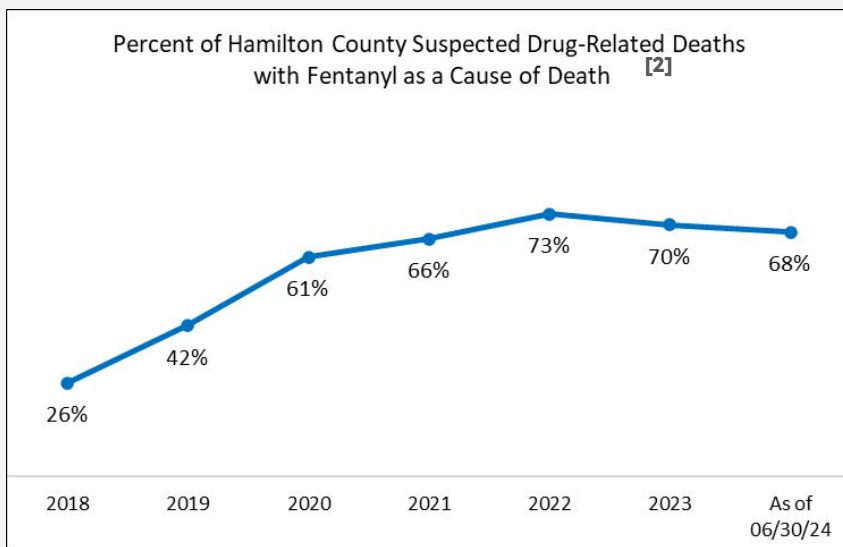


Fatal overdoses are down almost 29% in the first half of 2024 compared to the first half of 2022.

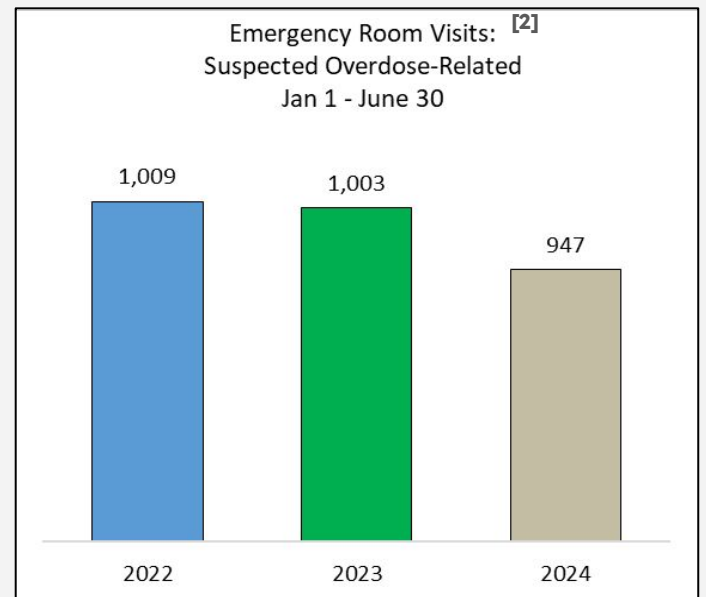


There was a 30% decrease in patients administered Naloxone by EMS in the first half of 2024 compared to 2022.

While there is no concrete answer as to why naloxone distributions by EMS are down, medical professionals believe it could be attributed to Narcan be more readily available and laws enacted to force providers to prescribe Narcan when prescribing opioid-based medications. Fatal overdoses have started to decrease, which may be a factor in these numbers as well.



While Fentanyl remains the main driver in suspected drug-related deaths, Hamilton County is seeing a slow and steady decrease since 2022.



Innovative Response to Opioids Crisis Update

This summer, Hamilton County awarded a second round of opioid grants, distributing \$264,000 to six local organizations committed to ending the opioid epidemic.

“The organizations we’ve chosen have the ability to respond to the opioid crisis beyond what government efforts can accomplish,” said Mayor Wamp. “Recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach won’t put an end to this epidemic, we have awarded funding to organizations serving all facets of the addiction cycle, from prevention to recovery.”

“These organizations have presented the county with innovative ideas or proven strategies in tackling the opioid crisis,” said Commissioner Joe Graham. “This epidemic has plagued communities nationwide, and it will require creative leadership from both the public and private sector to have a genuine impact on local families.”

Organizations Awarded Innovative Response to Opioids Grants

The McNabb Center: \$75,000

Council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, Inc. (CADAS): \$50,000

Transform Ministries: \$50,000

Men of Valor: \$49,430

Erlanger Medical Center: \$20,000

The Launch Pad: \$20,000

Hamilton County has been awarded \$250,000 to build out the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) pilot program for inmates at the Hamilton County Jail and Detention Center. The MAT program will provide medical assistance in tandem with therapeutic and behavioral support to incarcerated individuals suffering from substance misuse. Earlier in the year, Mayor Wamp allocated opioid funds to construct and equip space at the jail for this programming.

Prosecution Data^[4]

- Convictions for 2nd degree murders or distribution of schedule II drug resulting in death: **5 convictions**
- Pending 2nd degree murder cases: **13 cases**
- Convictions for A or B felony drug cases: **11 convictions**
- Pending A or B felony drug cases: **68 cases**
- Total drug related and accompanying cases being handled: **109 cases**

Substance Misuse & Overdose Resources

1. [Hamilton County Coalition](#)

The Hamilton County Coalition works to prevent overdose deaths, promote addiction recovery, and reduce underage drinking and tobacco use. They have a number of community partners who stand ready to connect individuals and families with resources, training, and recovery programs to combat the opioid epidemic.

2. [Tennessee REDLINE](#)

Tennessee REDLINE serves as a 24/7/365 referral service to addiction treatment for people and their families looking for help for substance use disorder. Anyone can call or text 800-889-9789 for confidential referrals. The service is provided by the Tennessee Association for Alcohol, Drug, and other Addiction Services (TAADAS) through a contract with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS).

3. [SAMHSA](#)

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) offers a free, confidential, 24/7/365 treatment referral and information service in English and Spanish for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Anyone can call their national helpline at 1-800-662-4357.

4. [988 Lifeline](#)

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7/365, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for individuals and their loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

5. [Find Help Now](#)

FindHelpNowTN.org features a near real-time treatment opening locator for substance misuse that guides individuals to available treatment opening based on factors such as the type of treatment needed, insurance programs and payment methods, in-or-out-patient treatment options, and location. Facilities on the site are asked to update the availability of their residential, in-patient, and out-patient services regularly to ensure the most current information is available.

6. [United Way Chattanooga](#)

United Way of Greater Chattanooga unites individuals and families with resources allowing people to reach their full potential through education, stability, and health and well-being. Individuals with a 423 area code can call or text 211 for support during a crisis Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Food & Nutrition Assistance

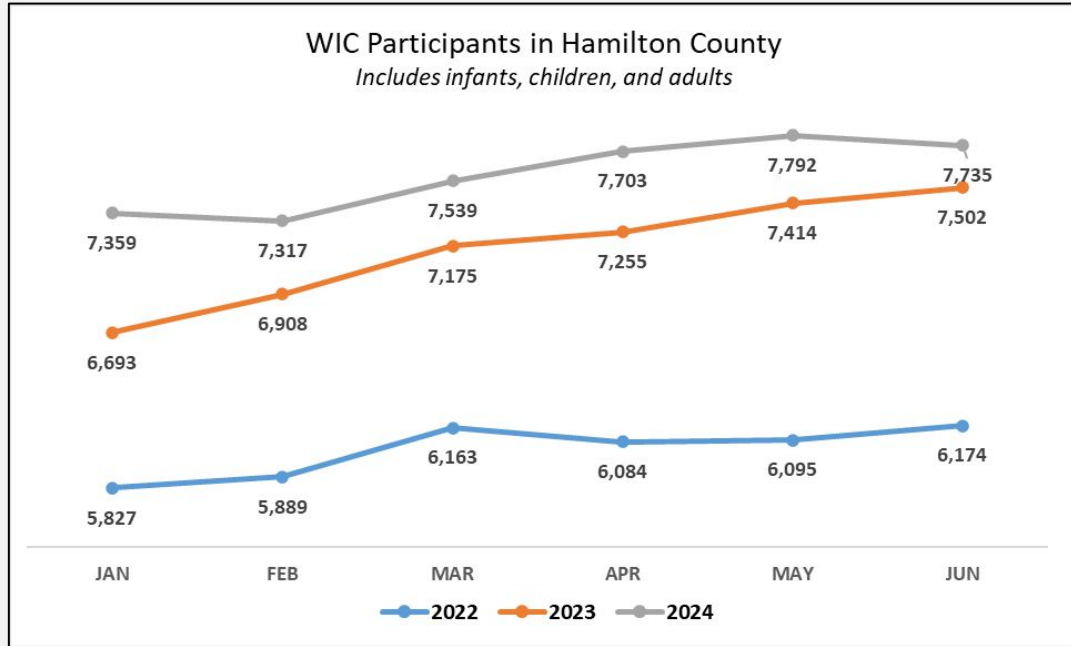


Women, Infants, and Children

The WIC program is funded through the USDA. WIC services are provided through the Tennessee Department of Health in 126 entities across the state, including county health departments, stand-alone clinics, and hospital sites.

The program is designed to provide supplemental food assistance and nutrition education to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children until age five. ^[1]

Average WIC Participants January 1 - June 30			
2022	2023	2024	% Change 2022 to 2024
6,039	7,158	7,574	25.42%



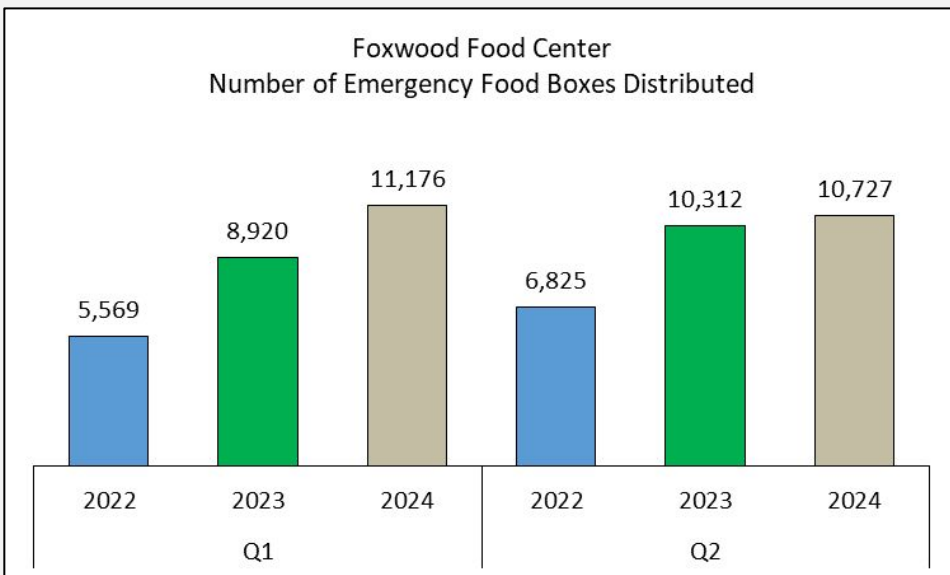
The average number of WIC participants has increased 25% in the first half of 2024 compared to the first half of 2022.



**CHATTANOOGA AREA
FOOD BANK**

The Chattanooga Area Food Bank partners with retailers, manufacturers, farmers, buying alliances and individual donors to end hunger in the region. ^[2]

Foxwood Food Center is Hamilton County's largest brick and mortar food pantry, and the only one operated by the Chattanooga Area Food Bank.



Total Food Boxes Distributed: Q1 & Q2			
2022	2023	2024	% Change 2022 to 2024
12,394	19,232	21,903	76.72%

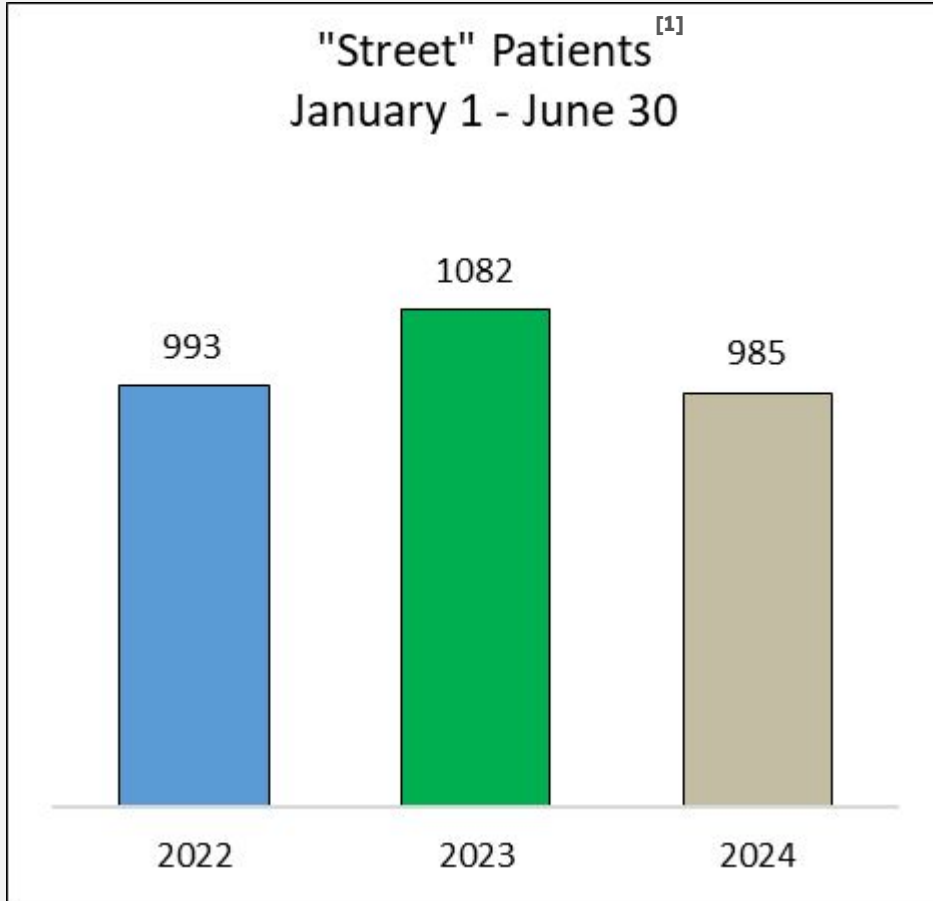
The Chattanooga Area Food Bank is seeing numbers that mirror trends nationally. The increase in need is believed to be a combination of the end of covid-assistance programs, inflation, and increased awareness about the Foxwood Food Center.

Homelessness & Health

All data comes directly from the Hamilton County Homeless Health Care Center.

“Street patients” matches the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition of “unsheltered.”

An unsheltered person would meet the requirements to be considered “Category 1 – Literally Homeless.” In general, for purposes of the Point-in-Time (PIT) count, HUD considers individuals and families sleeping in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g., abandoned buildings, train stations, or camping grounds) as “unsheltered” homeless.^[2]



TOTAL CLINIC VISITS: Q1 & Q2 ^[1]		
2022	2023	2024
9,259	9,659	10,561

Clinic visits are up 14% since 2022.

Important note: The above chart counts visits to the clinic, not the number of patients visiting the clinic. A patient is counted every time they visit the clinic in these numbers.



Partnership

for Families, Children and Adults

Victim Services

24/7 Crisis Hotline
423-755-2700

Crisis Text Line
423-356-3620

Partnership's 24/7 Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline is completely confidential.

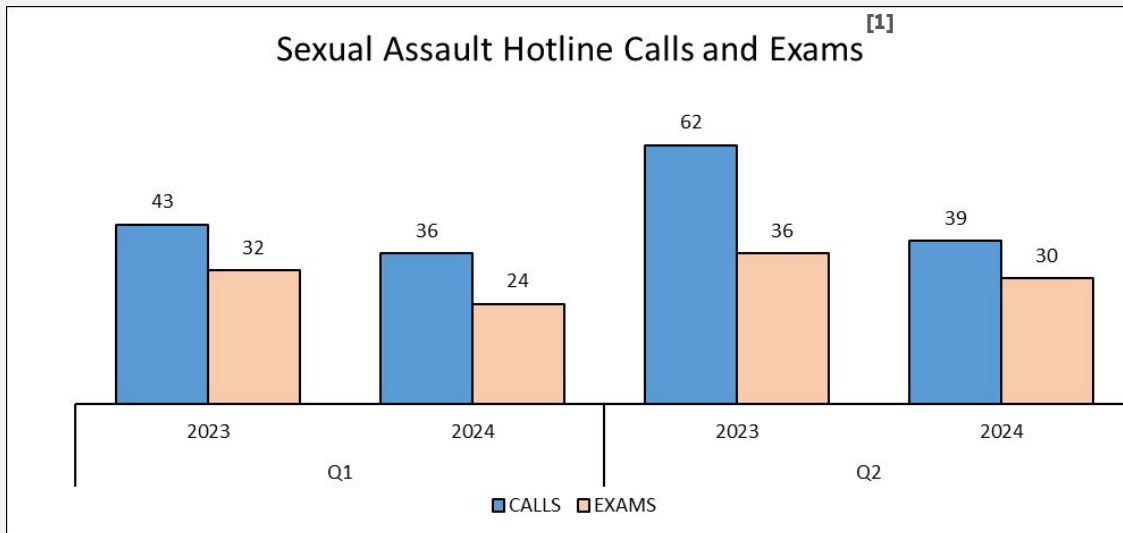
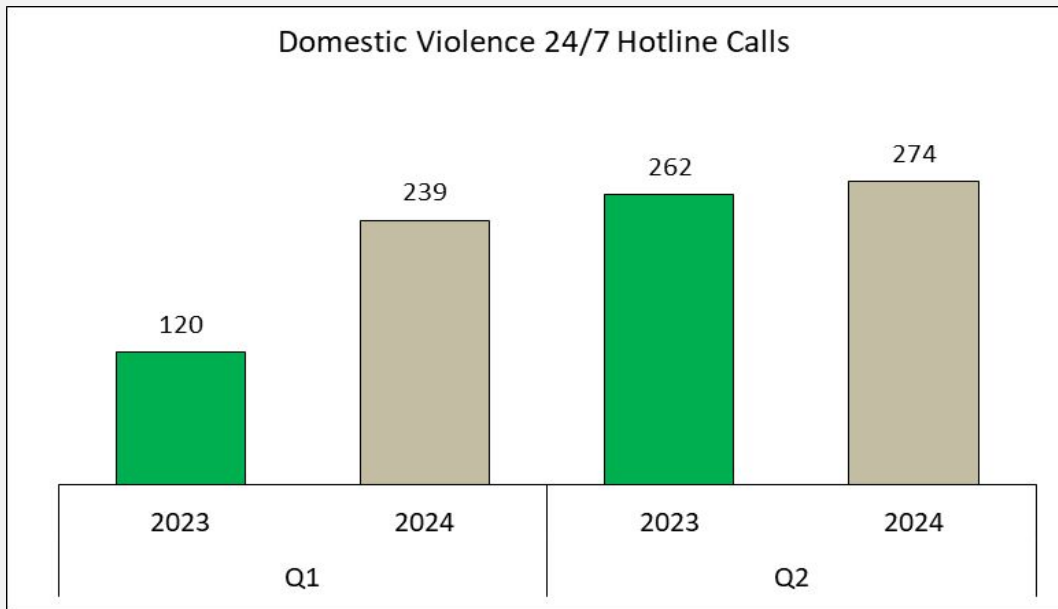
Sexual assault exams are reflective of assaults that occurred in Hamilton County.

Hotline calls for sexual assault and domestic violence came from Hamilton County residents.

Partnership began tracking their data differently in July 2022; therefore, 2022 data is not available.

Total Calls and Exams: Q1 & Q2			
Jan - Jun	2023	2024	% Change
DV CALLS	382	513	34.29%
SA CALLS	105	75	-28.57%
SA EXAMS	68	54	-20.59%

While there is no definitive answer as to why calls to the domestic violence hotline have risen, Partnership has done a better job of collecting data, particularly from the homeless population in Chattanooga. Additionally, they have focused on educating the community on resources available to victims through community events.





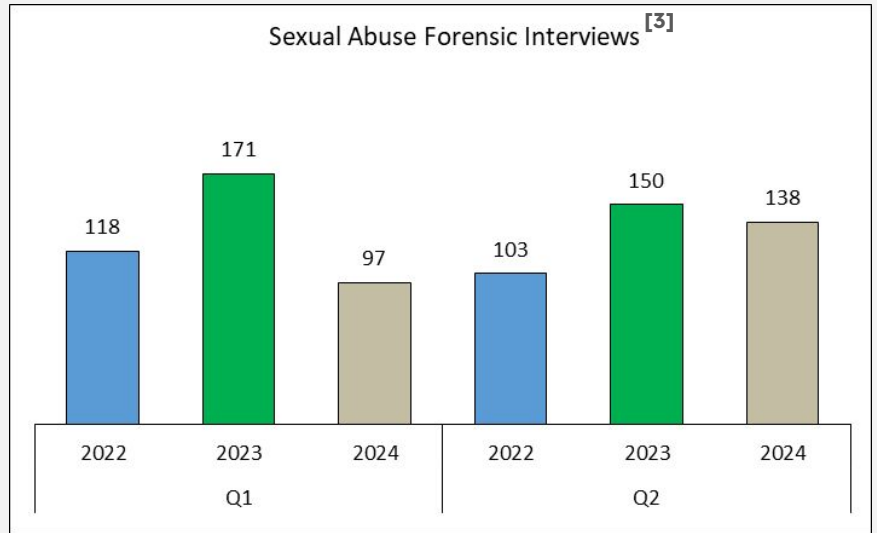
Victim Services

**Child Abuse
Reporting Hotline
877-237-0004**

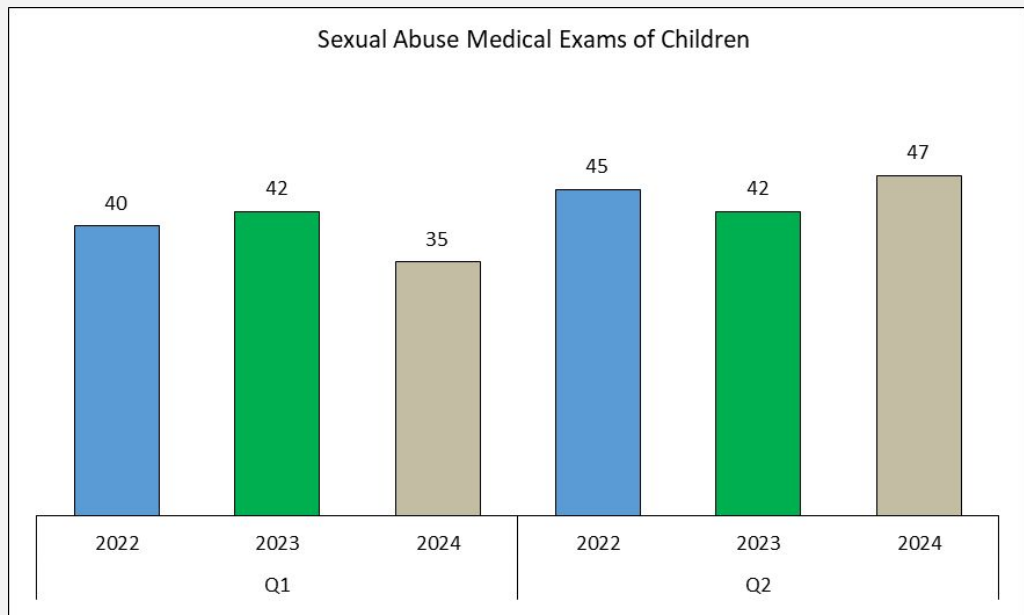
All referrals received by the CAC come from the Department of Children's Services or law enforcement in Hamilton County.

Every child with an allegation is forensically interviewed, but not all are recommended for a medical exam. The child may not be dealing with acute abuse, rather an incident that occurred years ago, which might not qualify the child for an exam. All services are provided at no cost to clients for as long as services are needed. ^[2] ^[3]

Total Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviews		
Jan 1 - Jun 30		
2022	2023	2024
221	321	235



Total Sexual Abuse Medical Exams		
Jan 1 - Jun 30		
2022	2023	2024
85	84	82



Sources

CRIME IN HAMILTON COUNTY

[1] - Population is a current estimate from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hamiltoncountytennessee>. All populations are an estimation. Hamilton County population, less East Ridge (21,936), is 352,746.

[2] - All crime data is provided by the respective Hamilton County municipal agency using their Records Management System. 2024 data is considered "operational" and subject to change as each agency finalizes their data.

* Violent Crimes: The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines violent crimes as those offenses that involve force or threat of force and is composed of four offenses: murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Source: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/violent-crime>

** Property Crimes: The FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The object of the theft-type offenses is the taking of money or property, but there is no force or threat of force against the victims.

Source:

<https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/property-crime#:~:text=Definition,of%20force%20against%20the%20victims>

Part 1 Crime is defined by the National Uniform Crime Reporting Program and refers to serious crime that occur with regularity in all areas of the country and are likely to be reported to police. Part 1 violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Part 1 property crimes include burglary, theft, and auto theft.

Source: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/offense-definitions>

[3] - East Ridge Police Department changed Records Management Systems in August 2022; therefore, 2022 data is not available and will not be included in crime counts, rates, and percent changes.

[4] - Non-fatal shooting incident definition and information can be found here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9187788/>

SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND OVERDOSES

[1] - Fatal overdose data provided by the Hamilton County Medical Examiner's Office and the Hamilton County Health Department's Epidemiologists. You can find the epidemiologists overdose surveillance reports here:

<https://health.hamiltontn.org/en-us/communityhealth/overdoseprevention.aspx>

There may be additional suspected drug-related death data reported over this time period in subsequent reports as data is finalized.

Drug-related deaths are those deaths that the Hamilton County Health Department receives from the Hamilton County Medical Examiner's Office with a cause of death listed as an acute overdose or a death resulting from chronic drug abuse.

Acute overdose deaths are those deaths in which the Hamilton County Medical Examiner listed drugs (either an overdose or a toxicity) as a primary cause of death or contributing cause of death on the death certificate and in the medical examiner report. The Medical Examiner determines the cause of death and contributing cause of death following a thorough investigation, including (as appropriate): scene investigation, medical records review, external examination, autopsy, histology, and postmortem toxicology reports. Some deaths may have substances listed on the toxicology report in concentrations that are not high enough to result in or contribute to a death, and are therefore, not a cause of death; in these cases, these deaths do not count as an acute overdose death.

Chronic drug abuse deaths are those deaths in which the cause of death is due to chronic substance abuse and the individuals did not overdose at the time of death.

Jurisdiction: Currently, the Hamilton County Medical Examiner Office (which is also the Southeast Tennessee Regional Forensic Center) primarily handles deaths that occur within Hamilton County with occasional cases referred from adjoining counties. Those referred cases do not count in the Hamilton County statistics. Individuals who are injured or overdose in other counties, transported to a medical facility in Hamilton County and die in Hamilton County, will have their death certificate done by the Hamilton County Medical Examiner Office. Those cases are included in Hamilton County statistics. The converse also holds: an injury or overdose occurring in Hamilton County, with death in a different county or state, will be included in that jurisdiction's statistics, not Hamilton County.

[2] - Non-fatal data: All non-fatal overdose-related emergency department visits from Hamilton County hospitals were included in this data, regardless of the patient's county of residence. Data was pulled from ESSENCE - NSSP using the CDC All Drug Overdose (version 2) query, which includes relevant ICD-10-CM codes, ICD-9-CM codes, SNOMED codes, and relevant terms in the chief complaint free text field.

There may be additional suspected nonfatal overdose-related emergency department visit data reported over this time period in subsequent reports as data is finalized.

[3] - Hamilton County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Naloxone data provided by EsoSuite.

* "Narcan is the brand name for naloxone, the medication designed to reverse an opioid overdose. This means that it attaches to opioid receptors and reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. But, naloxone has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system, and it is not a treatment for opioid use disorder. Examples of opioids include heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine." Source: *National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.* <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/naloxone>

[4] - Prosecutor data came directly from the prosecutor's office.

Sources

FOOD AND NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

[1] - All WIC data is provided by the Hamilton County Health Department and the TN Department of Health WIC Program.

[2] - All Food Bank data is provided by the Chattanooga Area Food Bank.

HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH

[1] - Hamilton County's Homeless Health Care Center data provided by eClinicalWorks from the Hamilton County Health Department.

* Homelessness Housing Status Definitions

Homeless Shelter – Patients who are living in an organized shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. Shelters that generally provide meals and a place to sleep are regarded as temporary and often limit the number of days or the hours of the day that a resident may stay at the shelter.

Transitional Housing – Transitional housing units are generally small units (six people is common) where people transition from a shelter and are provided extended, but temporary, housing stays (generally between 6 months and 2 years).

Doubled Up – Patients who are living with others. The arrangement is considered to be temporary and unstable, though a patient may live in a succession of such arrangements over a protracted period.

Street – Patients who are living outdoors, in a vehicle, in an encampment, in makeshift housing/shelter, or in other places generally not deemed safe or fit for human occupancy.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Permanent supportive housing usually is in service-rich environments, does not have time limits, and may be restricted to people with some type of disabling condition.

Other – Patients who were housed when first seen during the year and were no longer homeless, but who were still eligible for the program because they experienced homelessness during the previous 12 months.

Unknown – Patients known to be experiencing homeless whose housing arrangements are unknown.

[2] - HUD's definitions and categories of homeless can be found here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/category-1/>

VICTIM SERVICES

[1] - Sexual assault exams are counted by the county in which the assault occurred, not necessarily where the victim lives.

[2] - The following child maltreatment data counts children as 18 years old and younger.

[3] - A child may disclose more than one type of violence but are categorized by the type of violence from their initial intake from the Department of Children's Services.

Table of Contents page McDonald Farm photo by photographer Robin Rudd / Chattanooga Times Free Press and the Tennessee River photo by William Vest and Jay Buchanan.

A Message from Mayor Wamp page photos contributed by Hamilton County Press Secretary, Haley Burton.

Hamilton Counted report created by Senior Data Analyst Jennifer Baggett.