



The Problem



Current Trends



Solutions



Rental Property Issues & Possibilities

REDUCING CRIME IN RENTAL PROPERTIES OF GASTONIA



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Chronic Nuisance Properties

REDUCING CRIME IN GASTONIA'S RENTAL PROPERTIES

The Problem

Rental Properties that are associated with repeat public service calls that negatively affect the health, safety and quality of life for citizens.

Current Trends

Overview of cities and towns across NC that have similar issues and their programs and ordinances set in place.

A Solutions for the City of Gastonia

My recommendation for the City of Gastonia based on research and interviews with other NC cities and towns.





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Example Problem Locations

2010 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



1808 S. Perry Street
21 Repeat Calls to Service



316 S. Highland Street
22 Repeat Calls to Service



2424 Sunset Avenue
25 Repeat Calls to Service



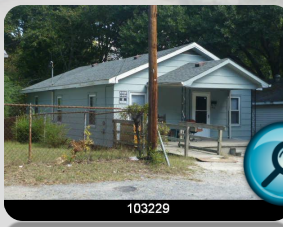
1019 Holland Avenue
28 Repeat Calls to Service



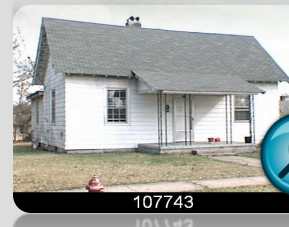
2315 Sunset Avenue
29 Repeat Calls to Service



410 N Boyd Street
29 Repeat Calls to Service



416 S. Scruggs Street
33 Repeat Calls to Service



312 S. Weldon Avenue
49 Repeat Calls to Service





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Example Problem Locations

2010 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE

845 Glenn Street

92 Repeat Calls to Service



137509

137509



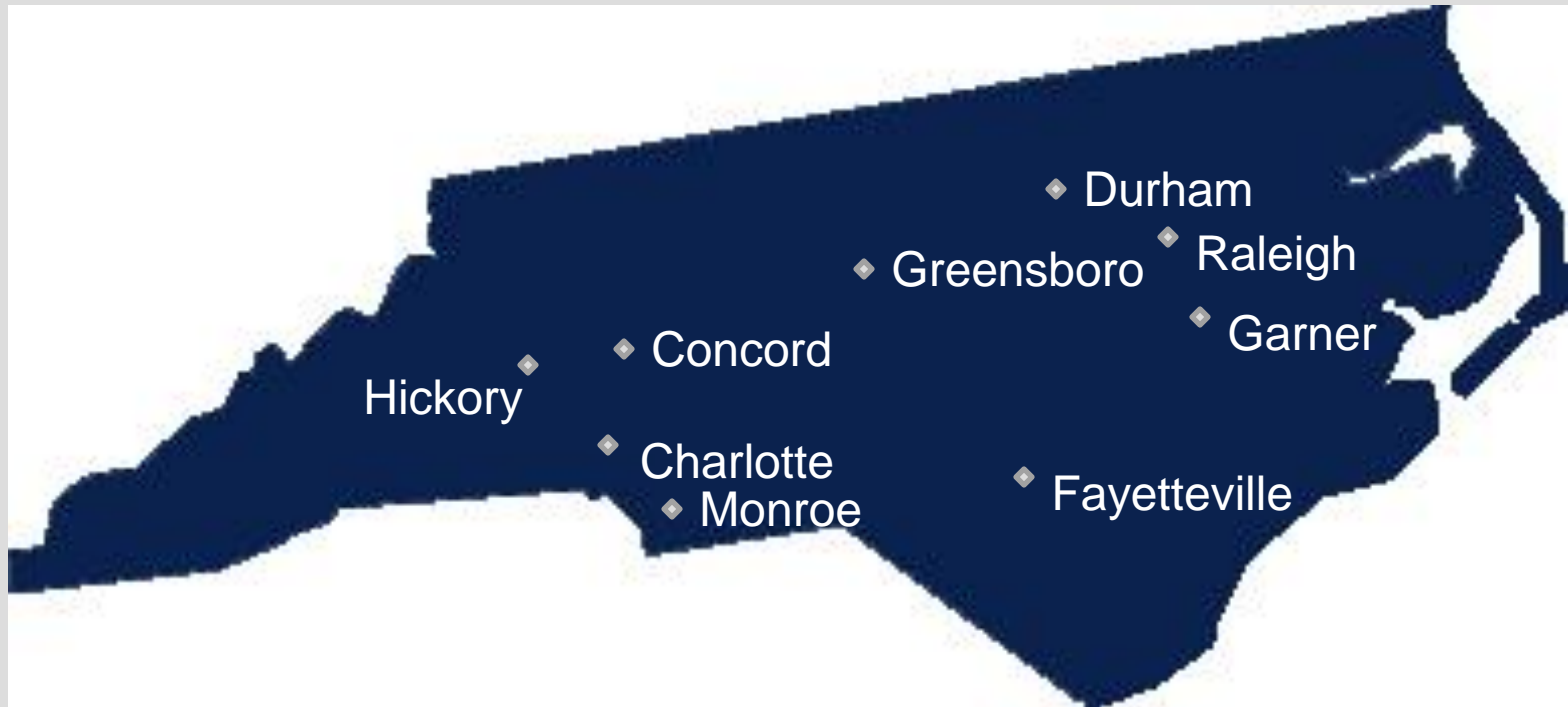
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Current Trends Across NC

9 DIFFERENT CITY ORDINANCES/PLANS LOOKED AT





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Types of Programs in NC

REDUCING CRIME IN GASTONIA'S RENTAL PROPERTIES

Rental Permit Programs

This type of program **involves all rental property owners**. All must apply for a permit on all houses, townhouses, condos and apartment complexes. All units are inspected at least once in a five year period in addition to problem properties are inspected upon complaint.

PROP (Probationary Rental Occupancy Permits)

This program focuses on rental units that have high repeat calls for minimum housing codes through Code Enforcement . Some cities base this program on criminal calls for service as an **additional** factor when issuing a permit (PROP).

Crime Free Housing

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a **crime prevention program** designed to reduce crime, drugs, and gangs on apartment properties.

Use of Current Code Enforcement Ordinances

Some towns found that **moving the Code Enforcement Department under the umbrella of the Police Department**, ensured that better/stricter follow through by officers created the change needed in rental properties.



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Important Points From Interviews

REDUCING CRIME IN GASTONIA'S RENTAL PROPERTIES

Five things became clear through the research and conversations with each city/town;

1. Code Enforcement must do their jobs and follow through,
2. The high cost permits impacted landlords that were in compliance met with a lot of resistance,
3. The plans that started small seem to be the most successful in achieving their goals,
4. The most successful plans that relate most to our goals were the plans in which CE was brought under the Police Department's Supervision,
5. All cities/towns agree that problem properties that have been cleaned up have had a positive affect on economic development and increased desirability of the area.



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Overview of Raleigh's Program

PROBATIONARY RENTAL OCCUPANCY PERMIT

- In 2005, implemented the Probationary Rental Occupancy Permit program (PROP),
- Program concentrates on properties and property owners who have a history of repeat violations and non-compliance. Requires **ALL** landlords to register their rental property
- Mainly focused on student housing which is the highest percentage of rental property
- High permit costs, heavy fines and rental restrictions are the foundation of control.

Program has received a lot of flack due to the unreasonable permit costs i.e. apartment buildings cost \$30, plus \$10 for each unit.

Raleigh has an approx. population of 342,194 citizens, 54,000 rental properties and 19 inspectors.

Please see **copy of ordinances** and other supporting materials.

Contacts for Raleigh was Mayor Meeker, Denise F. Robinson and Larry Strickland



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Overview of Garner's Program

RENTAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE

- Program started over seven years ago as a supplement to the lack of county tax information
- Database assists many city departments including the police and fire department
- City has had great success in neighborhoods
- Program has reduced abatement costs and criminal activity
- Changes have lead to economic development

A new phase of targeted area programs has just begun. All residents and property owners of an area are given 2 weeks notice that the police, fire, public works, inspection and other departments will be in there area for a week and explain what they are looking for and what will be done. The police have used this new phase to work on gang related criminal activity in rental properties.

Garner has an approx. population of 26,000 citizens and 1 code enforcement officer.

Please see **copy of ordinances** provided along with their current application.

Contacts for Garner are Andy Till and Paul Ray.





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Please Note:

Overview of Fayetteville's Program

RENTAL REGISTRATION

Fayetteville has met with a lot of bad press and opposition with this project due to the heavy permit costs and landlords who have not caused issue being penalized.

Started with three options to meet the need to crack down on slumlords whose residences endanger the public.

- PROP Program is the way that they are headed
- All rentals will be registered as a business and must obtain a license for each dwelling within 30 days of ownership and pay fees which will pay for the program
- Owners must designate a local agent within 25 miles to be able to respond in case of an emergency of violating
- Utility service shall not be provided to vacant residential rental properties that aren't Registered
- Violations or failure to register can result in civil penalties
- Appeals will likely be handled through Inspections, Board of Appeals on Dwellings and Buildings

Fayetteville has also been the best city as to information and garnering the public's input. They have many materials including video online to explain the issues.

Fayetteville has an approx. population of 207,445 with an 40% of their income on rental property.

This program was created due to the express wishes of citizens and landlords seeing an area about to get out of hand, but do not appreciate the expense.

Please **see copy of matrix** for future program and support materials.

Contacts for Fayetteville Assistant CM Doug Hewitt and the Inspections Department





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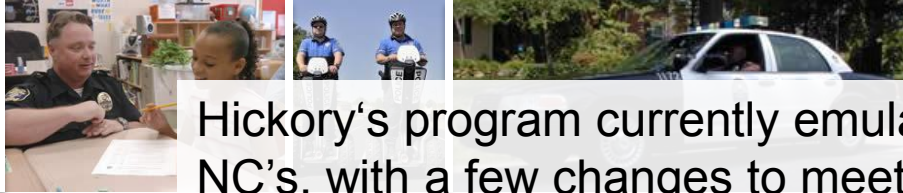
Overview of Greensboro's Program

LOCAL ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (LOE)

- Started in 2004,
- Massive undertaking, with a goal of inspecting every property within 5 years,
- Program was started to create a database of rental properties and ensure that all properties met minimum housing requirements,
- Program was started in hopes to create a state wide mandate. Based off a report from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) due to public health issues such as risks associated to lead hazards such as an exploratory program in New Jersey's Bureau of Housing Inspections (BHI)

Greensboro has an approx. population of 238,440 citizens, 42,000 rental properties and 7 inspectors.

Please see **copy of ordinances** and support documents provided.



Overview

RENTAL REGISTER

- Found that the follow through in Code Enforcement was not the standard they needed,
- Replicated the Program in 3 Departments Supervision,
- Focus was on both minimum housing standards and areas that had the most problem properties that had repeat calls to service
- Created a database of legal landlords
- Decreases city abatement costs by addressing all issues,
- Created a partnership with Habitat for Humanities in which properties that could be saved, but owners did not have the money to improve the houses, sold their properties to Habitat for Humanities
- Implemented a **Chronic Nuisance Ordinance** which would cease written notice to owner, and send out contractors to fix the issues with selling fines and penalties
- Offers education classes for landlords

Hickory's program currently emulates Concord, NC's, with a few changes to meet their needs. Monroe, NC and Garner, NC have all been in contact with Captain Baer for information on next step phases. Garner has started the next step phase they discussed- targeted area concentration by multiple departments.

Since the programs inception in 2008 Hickory has successfully cleaned up **66 problem houses with minimal cost to the city.** Of the 66 houses **only 5 had to go before City Council for action.** Others were successfully abated once landlords were explained the issues, costs and process.

Hickory's success has been well documented with statistics and costs. Program cost under \$20,000 to implement, with uniforms (511 pants and polo shirts), NC Department of Insurance Inspectors Certifications, office space and furniture, and a database. The database was the most expensive cost @\$17,000.

Please see **copy of ordinance**

Contact for Hickory was Captain Reed Baer, Support Services Commander



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Overview of Charlotte's Program

RESIDENTIAL RENTAL REMEDIAL ACTION PROGRAM

- Focuses on all levels of disorder, including minimum housing code, criminal activity and repeat calls to service.
- Created a formula for Disorder Risk Threshold to help determine target properties
- Uses a defined remedial action program to assist landlords with cleaning up their properties
- Assigned a Police Official as the person responsible for administrating the article
- Enforces registration for properties that only meet the Disorder Risk
- Enforces heavy fines, mandatory meetings and termination of public utility services if continued issues occur with no action taken by landlord
- Two year plan in most cases to start nuisance abatement process

Charlotte has an approx. population of 650,000 citizens, 110,323 rental properties and 7 inspectors.

Please see **copy of ordinances** provided.

Contacts for Charlotte Mayor Foxx, CMPD Attorney's Judy Emken & Mark Nuvel, Nuisance Abatement Officer Pat Barker



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Seattle vs. Charlotte Ordinances

RENTAL REMEDIAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE

Seattle, Washington

Chronic Nuisance Properties Ordinance

- Defines the nuisances, focused on repeat called to service and criminal activity,
- Has heavy fines for repeat calls and for being labeled a Chronic Nuisance Property,
- Has a remedial type program or agreement from property owner to make changes at property,
- 5, 10 and 30 day periods of time to fix issues and report to Chief of Police.

Charlotte, North Carolina

Residential Rental Remedial Action Program

- Defines the nuisances, focused on minimum housing code, repeat called to service and criminal activity,
- Has heavy fines for being labeled a Chronic Nuisance Property,
- Has a remedial program or agreement from property owner to make changes at property,
- Has education classes for landlords,
- 6 month, 1 year and 2 year periods of time to fix issues and report to police representative.

Essentially the same thing except Seattle has a shorter time frame and defines all police related chronic nuisances clearly in the ordinances, in a much more forthright manner.



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Solution for the City of Gastonia

OUTLINE OF POTENTIAL PROGRAM FOR GASTONIA

- 1.) Create a **FREE registration database** for all rental property owners. For up to six months after the initial public notice, landlords must register their property(ies), including documenting owner contact address, legal representative contact information and property management company information. Failure to register all rental properties within the free six month period will result in a \$100 registration fee. New rental property owners must register their rental property within the first six months of ownership. Failure to will result in a \$100.00 registration fee.
- 2.) Create a **Remedial Action Program** that list not only minimum housing issues, but **clearly defines chronic nuisances in regards to criminal behaviors and the definition of what nuisance activities are, such as the Seattle, WA ordinance**. Also create an ordinance that states **after three notices have been sent to a landlord, violations are automatically corrected and fines including abatement costs are automatically charged to landlord without further notification**, such as Concord and Hickory, NC.
- 3.) Create a **fine based system for repeat calls to service** based off of court cases that have already proven the legality of such fines. Fine system would start after 10 calls to the same location that are determined to not be victim related, including Domestic Violence calls per the Violence Against Women Act. Each fine would be \$200 per call, charged to the landlord.
- 4.) Define **that Community Coordinators are the ones responsible for the remedial action programs and administration of the ordinance**.
- 5.) Create a **stronger relationship** between Community Coordinators, Code Enforcement and City Collections to ensure success.



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Solution for the City of Gastonia

REMEDIAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE

1. A rental property has been identified as a Chronic Nuisance per a formula, such as Charlotte's Disorder Risk Threshold.
2. The Community Coordinator of that district contacts the landlord or legal contact through phone and mail that their property has been listed as a chronic nuisance property and is in remedial action. Notice outlines actions that must be taken with 5 business days
 - I. A fine of \$50 must be paid
 - II. A face-to-face meeting must be arranged so the claim and facts can be presented to landlord for clarification and answer,
 - III. A remedial action agreement must be signed
 - IV. If the above three are not completed within 5 business days a \$100 fine for each day accumulated, after 30 days property turned over to city attorneys office.
3. Landlord then must meet with Community Coordinator Officer after 3 months to review progress and alternatives. If the landlord has taken care of the issue , the landlord will remain on probation a period of 3 additional months and then roll off the program.

If the landlord has not corrected the problem, but has proven to have tried, further help and intervention will be offered the police department. A mandatory building inspection will be made by Code Enforcement and the landlord must attend mandatory education classes on "How to Find the Right Tenant" and "How to Keep an Eye on Your Property".



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Solution for the City of Gastonia

REMEDIAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE CONT.

If the landlord has been unsuccessful due to lack of follow through, fines will begin at \$100 a day, a mandatory building inspection will be made by Code Enforcement, mandatory education classes of “How to Find the Right Tenant” and “How to Keep an Eye on Your Property” and will be given notice that public utility services to that location will be terminated until landlord has meet program requirements.

- 4) After a 6 month period, the landlord still has not been able to effect change on their property, both the landlord and the Community Coordinator Officer, Community Coordinator Sergeant and District Captain will meet to determine further action. Courses of action may include;
 - I. if landlord has tried to correct the problem, but has proven to have worked within signed agreement and no solution has been made, a suggest ion will be offered to work with Habitat for Humanity on the purchase of property, demolition of property, and suggest meeting with a civil attorney for further available options to the landlord.
 - II. if landlord has not corrected the problem and refuses to work within the program, public utility services will be terminated, code violations will be handled through the city without further notice at landlords expense and property will begin abatement process.



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Solution for the City of Gastonia

FUTURE PHASES FOR REMEDIAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE

Future phases would include:

- 1.) Focused Targeted Area- such as Garner and Hickory with multidepartment participation,
- 2.) Owner Occupied Residential Properties,
- 3.) Commercial Properties



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Solution for the City of Gastonia

GOALS FOR SUCCESS

To have an ordinance in effect by July 2011;

- Have a database ready and available as soon as possible with all city departments having access,
- Trips to Charlotte, Hickory, Garner and Fayetteville to review first hand their program and meet with team leaders for feedback and support,
- Appoint team to create and finalize COG's program,
- Training of Community Coordinators,
- Certification of at least one Police Officer with the NC Department of Insurance to allow better communication between the police and Code Enforcement Department,
- Creation of Education Programs,
- Create a clear and concise communication program to property owners explaining program,
- Start small. Concentrate on the top 20 problem houses to start and move forward from there.





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Violence Against Women Act

RENTAL REMEDIAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE

- The **Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA)** is a United States federal law. It was passed as Title IV, sec. 40001-40703 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 HR 3355 and signed as Public Law 103-322 by President Bill Clinton on September 13, 1994. It provided \$1.6 billion to enhance investigation and prosecution of the violent crime perpetrated against women, increased pre-trial detention of the accused, imposed automatic and mandatory restitution on those convicted, and allowed civil redress in cases prosecutors chose to leave unprosecuted.
- DENYING ACCESS TO JUSTICE: THE COST OF APPLYING CHRONIC NUISANCE LAWS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE *Cari Fais- Columbia Law review article.*

Due to the above Act, numbers that determine a houses' disorder threshold cannot include domestic violence calls. It is believed that including these calls in the formula would minimize a victims inclination o call for assistance, if they felt that the security of their home may be taken from them due to any programs or ordinances.



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QUESTIONS



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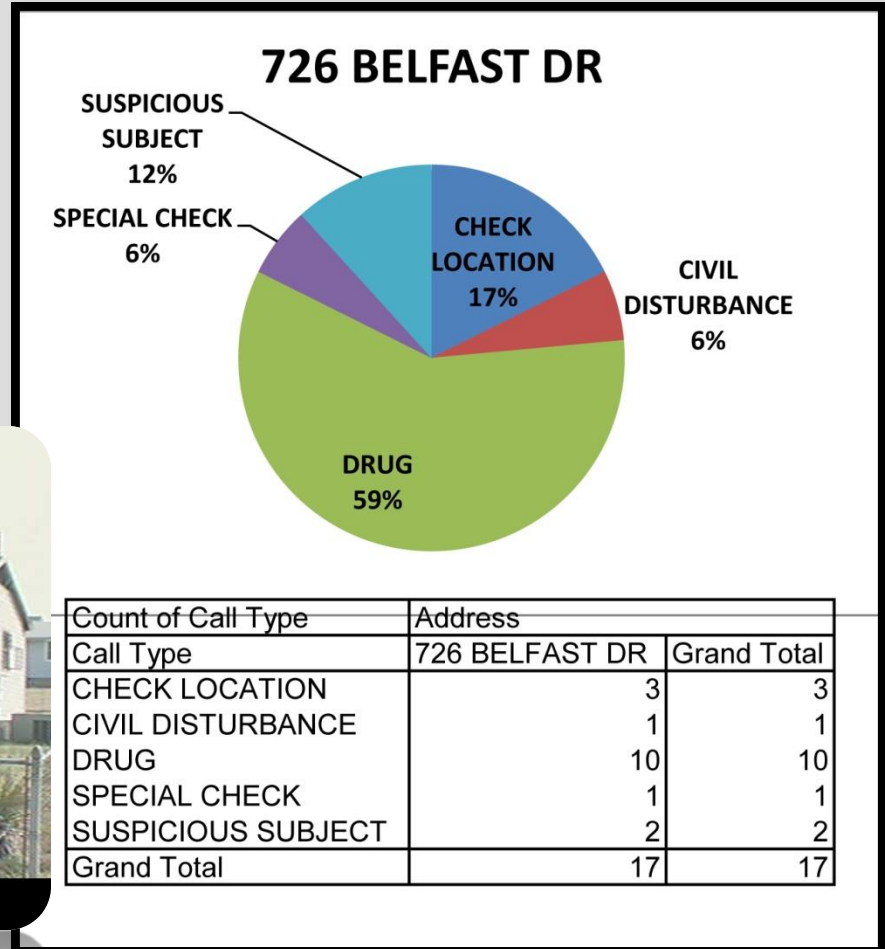
726 Belfast Drive

17 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



137746

137746



Count of Call Type	Address	
Call Type	726 BELFAST DR	Grand Total
CHECK LOCATION	3	3
CIVIL DISTURBANCE	1	1
DRUG	10	10
SPECIAL CHECK	1	1
SUSPICIOUS SUBJECT	2	2
Grand Total	17	17



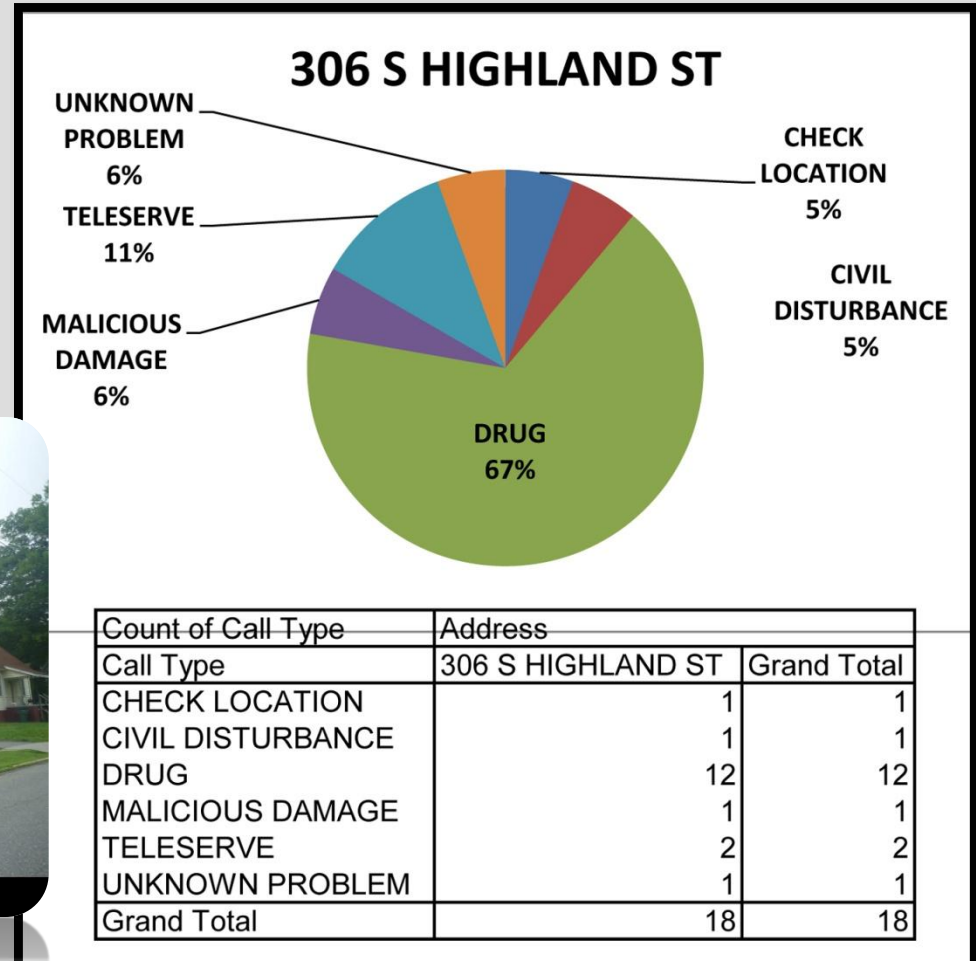
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306 S. Highland Street

18 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



107848

101848



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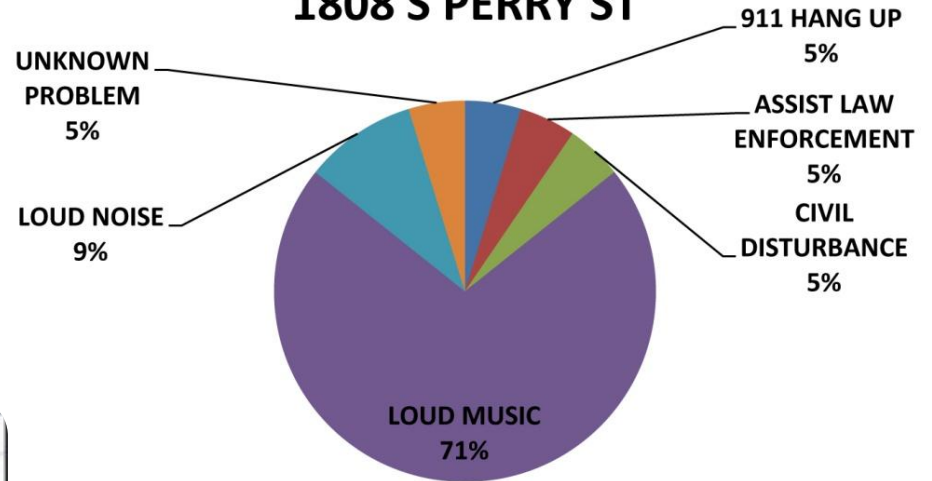


1808 S. Perry Street

21 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



1808 S PERRY ST



113464

113464

Count of Call Type	Address	
Call Type	1808 S PERRY ST	Grand Total
911 HANG UP	1	1
ASSIST LAW ENFORCEMENT	1	1
CIVIL DISTURBANCE	1	1
LOUD MUSIC	15	15
LOUD NOISE	2	2
UNKNOWN PROBLEM	1	1
Grand Total	21	21



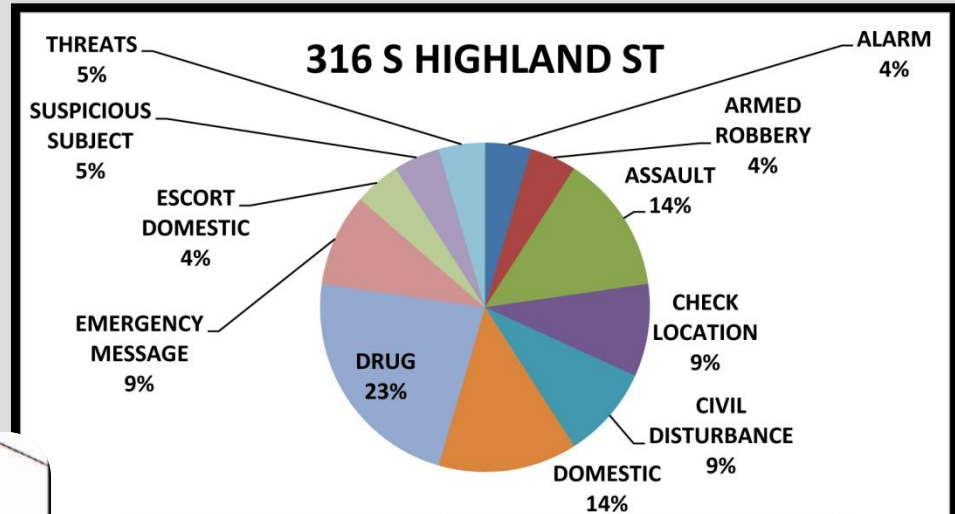
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316 S. Highland Street

22 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



107846

101846

Count of Call Type	Address	
Call Type	316 S HIGHLAND ST	Grand Total
ALARM	1	1
ARMED ROBBERY	1	1
ASSAULT	3	3
CHECK LOCATION	2	2
CIVIL DISTURBANCE	2	2
DOMESTIC	3	3
DRUG	5	5
EMERGENCY MESSAGE	2	2
ESCORT DOMESTIC	1	1
SUSPICIOUS SUBJECT	1	1
THREATS	1	1
Grand Total	22	22



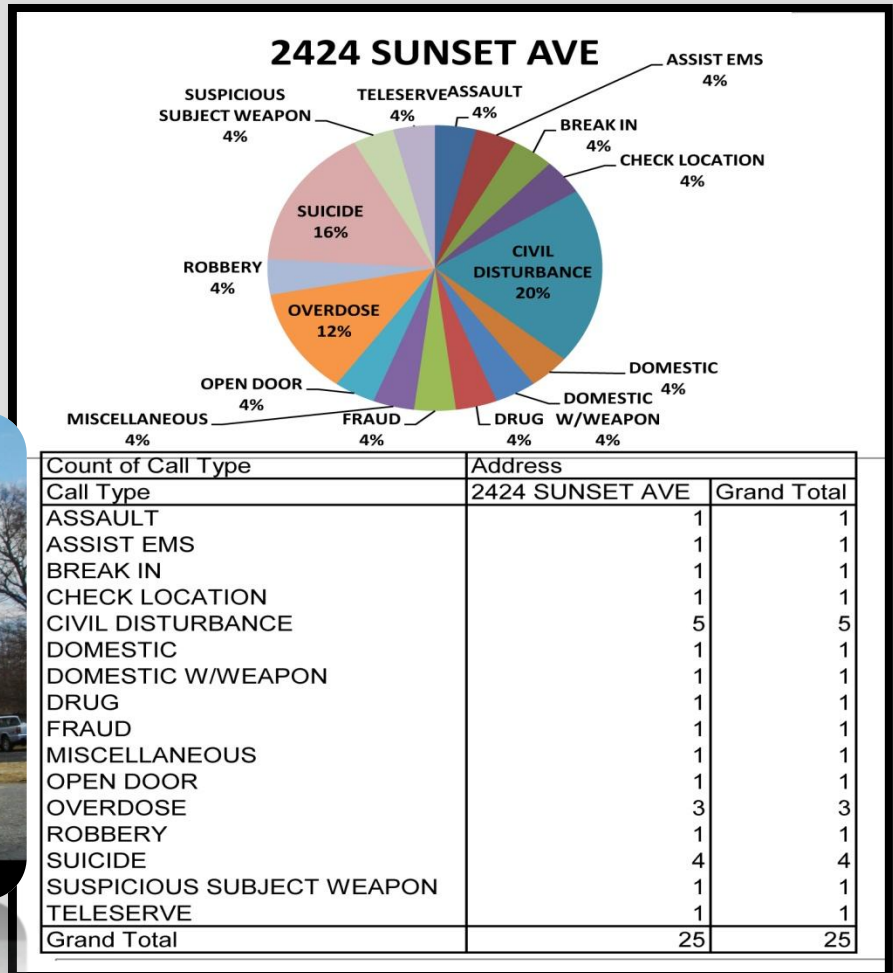
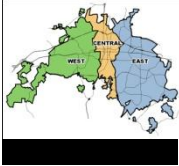
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2424 Sunset Avenue

25 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



102213
J0SSJ3



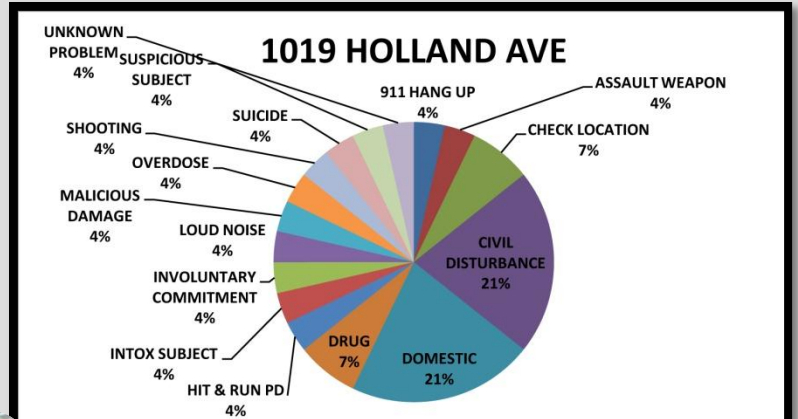
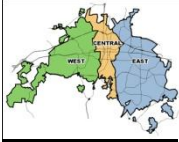
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1019 Holland Avenue

28 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



103370

103310

Count of Call Type	Address	
Call Type	1019 HOLLAND AVE	Grand Total
911 HANG UP	1	1
ASSAULT WEAPON	1	1
CHECK LOCATION	2	2
CIVIL DISTURBANCE	6	6
DOMESTIC	6	6
DRUG	2	2
HIT & RUN PD	1	1
INTOX SUBJECT	1	1
INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT	1	1
LOUD NOISE	1	1
MALICIOUS DAMAGE	1	1
OVERDOSE	1	1
SHOOTING	1	1
SUICIDE	1	1
SUSPICIOUS SUBJECT	1	1
UNKNOWN PROBLEM	1	1
Grand Total	28	28



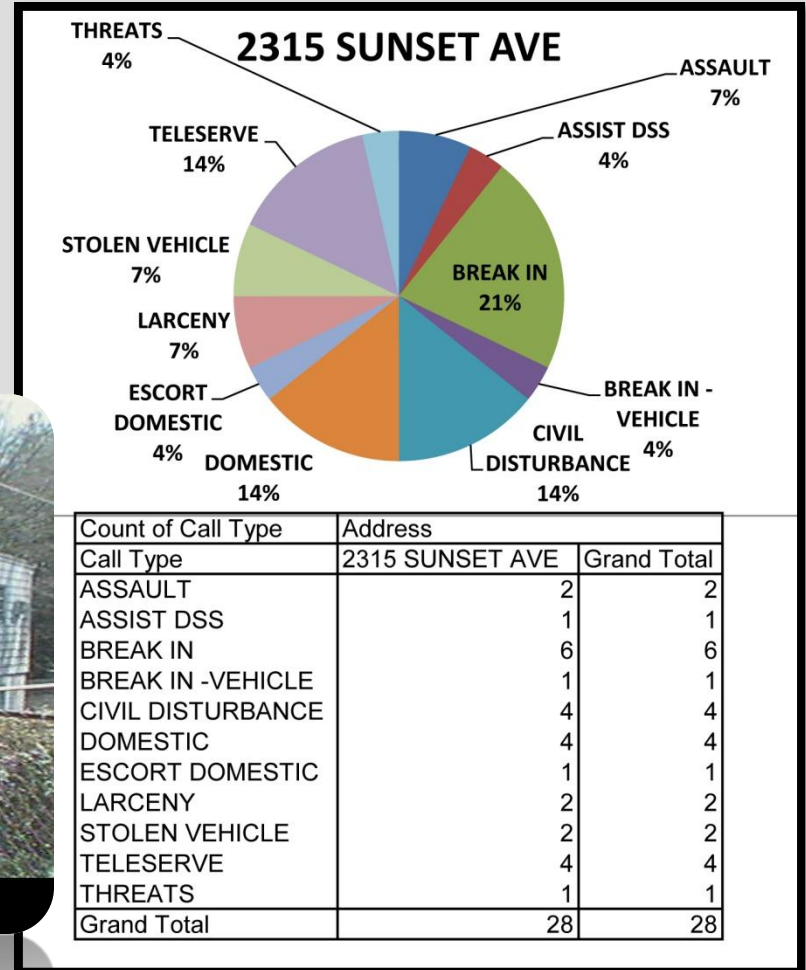
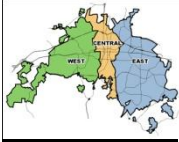
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2315 Sunset Avenue

28 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



102249

105549



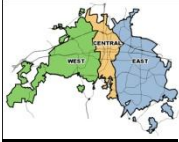
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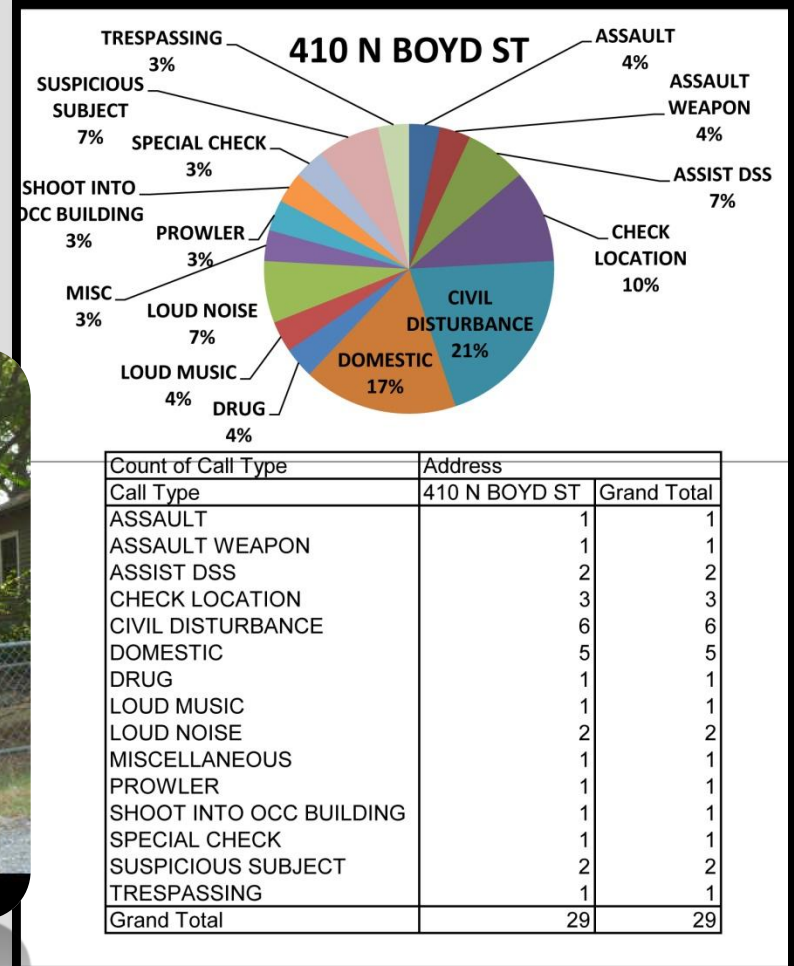
410 N. Boyd Street

29 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



103193

103193





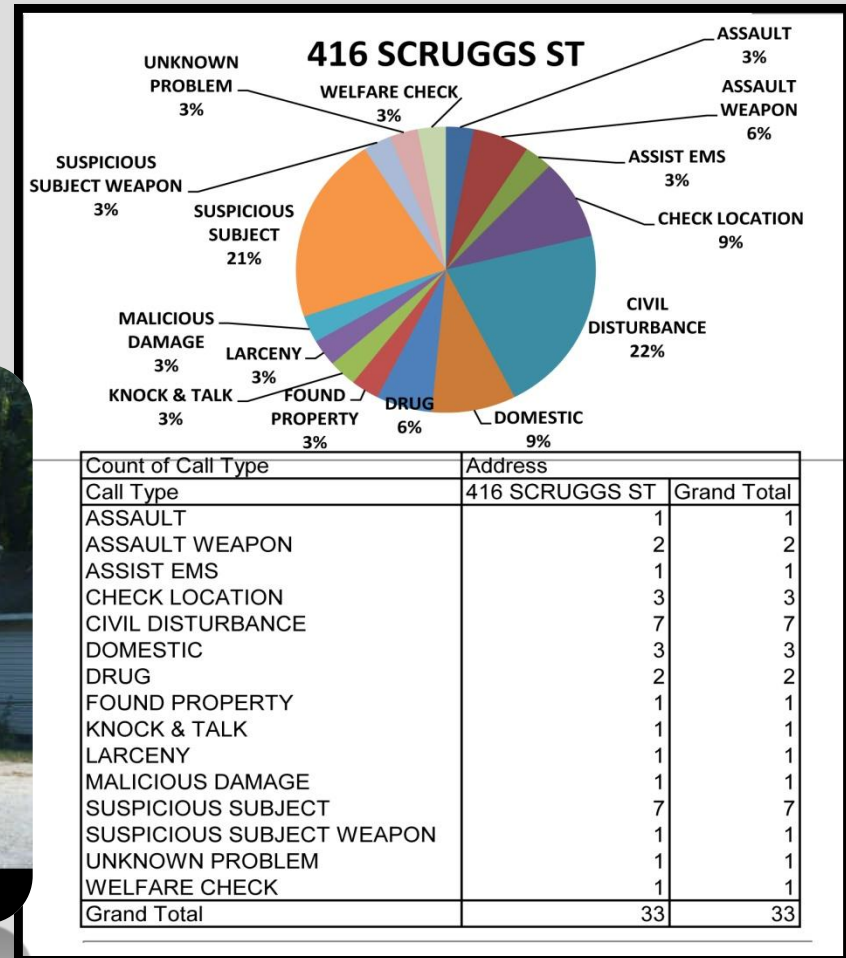
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416 Scruggs Street

33 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



103229

103558



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312 S. Weldon Street

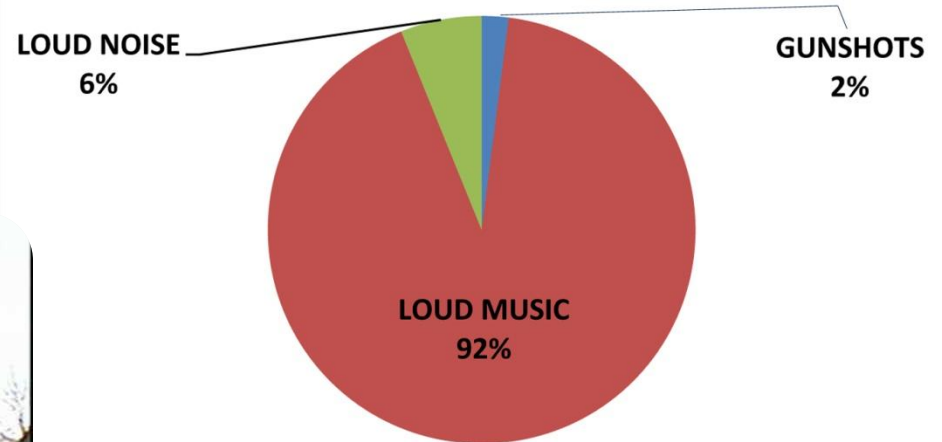
49 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



107743

107743

312 S WELDON ST

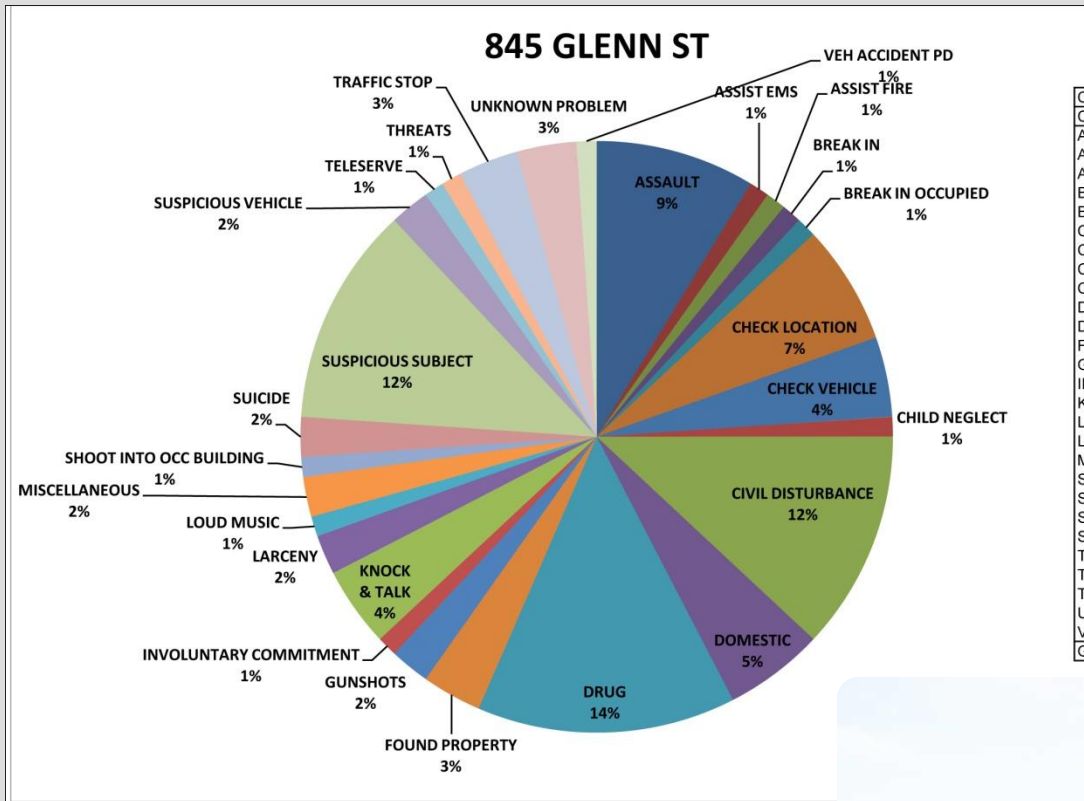


Count of Call Type	Address	
Call Type	312 S WELDON ST	Grand Total
GUNSHOTS	1	1
LOUD MUSIC	45	45
LOUD NOISE	3	3
Grand Total	49	49



845 Glenn Street

92 REPEAT CALLS TO SERVICE



Count of Call Type	Address	Grand Total
ASSAULT	845 GLENN ST	8
ASSIST EMS		1
ASSIST FIRE		1
BREAK IN		1
BREAK IN OCCUPIED		1
CHECK LOCATION		6
CHECK VEHICLE		4
CHILD NEGLECT		1
CIVIL DISTURBANCE		11
DOMESTIC		5
DRUG		13
FOUND PROPERTY		3
GUNSHOTS		2
INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT		1
KNOCK & TALK		4
LARCENY		2
LOUD MUSIC		1
MISCELLANEOUS		2
SHOOT INTO OCC BUILDING		1
SUICIDE		2
SUSPICIOUS SUBJECT		11
SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE		2
TELESERVE		1
THREATS		1
TRAFFIC STOP		3
UNKNOWN PROBLEM		3
VEH ACCIDENT PD		1
Grand Total		92



331208