WEAPONS ARE AGGRESSIVE CUES THAT AUTOMATICALLY AND UNCONSCIOUSLY ELICIT AGGRESSION.

WEAPONS EFFECT

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BETWEEN 1963 TO 2020

186,239

American children aged 0 to 17 years were killed by a firearm.

REFLECTS MORE THAN

4X

The number of American soldiers killed in action in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars combined.

THE SIGHT OF A GUN EVOKES VIOLENCE

"GUNS NOT ONLY PERMIT VIOLENCE, THEY CAN STIMULATE IT AS WELL. THE FINGER PULLS THE TRIGGER, BUT THE TRIGGER MAY ALSO BE PULLING THE FINGER."

DURING 2017 - EVERYDAY

9

Children aged 0 to 17 years were killed by a firearm.

EQUATES TO ONE CHILD EVERY

2 hours 34 minutes

Of course, using a gun can make aggressive acts more lethal. But can simply seeing a gun increase aggression? Research evidence indicates that the answer is "yes." This effect, called the "weapons effect," is rarely if ever considered in discussions of gun violence.

The "weapons effect" was first reported in a 1967 classic experiment conducted by Leonard Berkowitz and Anthony LePage.

Participants were male college students tested in pairs, although one of the students was actually an accomplice pretending to be a participant.

The study was ostensibly about "stress," with electric shocks being the stressor. The two students took turns evaluating each other's performance on a task using between 1 electric shock ("very good evaluation") and 10 electrical shocks ("very bad evaluation").

First, the participant-generated ideas a publicity agent might use to promote a popular singer. By the flip of a coin, the accomplice gave the participant either 1 shock (unprovoked) or 7 shocks (provoked).

Next, the accomplice generated ideas a used car salesperson might use to sell more cars, and the participant "evaluated" the accomplice's ideas using electrical shocks, which was the aggression measure.

The participant was seated at a table that had a 12-gauge shotgun and a .38-caliber revolver on it, or badminton racquets and shuttlecocks on it. The items on the table were described as part of another study that another experimenter had supposedly forgotten to put away.

There was also a control condition with no items on the table. The experimenter told participants to ignore the items on the table, but they apparently could not. Provoked participants who saw the guns were more aggressive than the other participants (i.e., gave more shocks to the accomplice).

Berkowitz and LePage dubbed this effect the "weapons effect," and proposed that it occurs because weapons are aggressive cues that can automatically and unconsciously elicit aggression.

REGARDLESS OF GENDER OR AGE REAL OR TOYS GUNS INCREASE AGGRESSION

THE WEAPONS EFFECT HAS BEEN REPLICATED MANY TIMES, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE LAB

Since 1967, the weapons effect has been replicated many times, both inside and outside the lab.

In a driving simulation experiment, for example, participants were more aggressive drivers when there was a handgun on the seat than when there was a tennis racket on the seat.

A similar effect was found in a survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,770 American drivers; those with a gun in their vehicle, compared to those with no gun in their vehicle, were significantly more likely in the past year to make obscene gestures at other drivers (23% vs. 16%), tailgate (14% vs. 8%), or both (6.3% vs. 2.8%), even after controlling for several factors related to aggressive driving.

A 2018 comprehensive review integrated the results from all available weapons effect studies, which included 151 effect-size estimates from 78 independent studies involving 7,668 participants.

This review found a significant weapons effect for provoked and unprovoked participants, for males and females, for participants of all ages, for college students and nonstudents, and even for toy weapons.

The weapons effect was also positively correlated with the year the study was conducted, indicating that the weapons effect is getting larger over time. The weapons effect was significant in laboratory studies but was nonsignificant in field studies.

AMERICA CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 17 YEARS

15X

More likely to die from gunfire than children in 31 other high-income countries combined.

WEAPON TYPE NOT IMPORTANT

THE PRESENCE OF A TASER GUN INCREASED AGGRESSION AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS

POLICE OFFICERS WHO CARRY A WEAPON, INCLUDING A TASER LIKELY TO BE ASSAULTED

Since the 2018 meta-analysis was published, an important large (N=678) field study was published in 2019. In this field study, police officers were randomly assigned to carry TASER guns that were visible (n=339) or to not carry TASER guns (n=339).

A TASER gun fires two small barbed darts with wires into the victim's skin. Electric shock is delivered through the wires, which leaves the victim temporarily incapacitated because they lose control of their muscles.

Results found that the number of physical assaults against police officers was more than twice as high in the TASER group (0.4425 per 1,000 incidents) than in the no-TASER group (0.2094 per 1,000 incidents).

Thus, the mere presence of a TASER gun increased aggression against police officers.

GUN VIOLENCE

2nd

Leading cause of death for children aged 0 to 17 years, and the leading cause for Black children.

GUN VIOLENCE

more deaths

than cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma, HIV/AIDS, and opioids combined.

SUMMARY

INCLUSION OF THE WEAPONS EFFECT IN ANY DISCUSSION ON GUN VIOLIENCE

In summary, research shows that simply seeing a gun can make people more aggressive. Results from weapons effect studies suggest that guns and other weapons should be out of sight rather than displayed openly. Open carry laws might especially trigger a weapons effect.

The recommendation that any discussions on gun violence and gun legislation include research into the weapons effect is strongly made.


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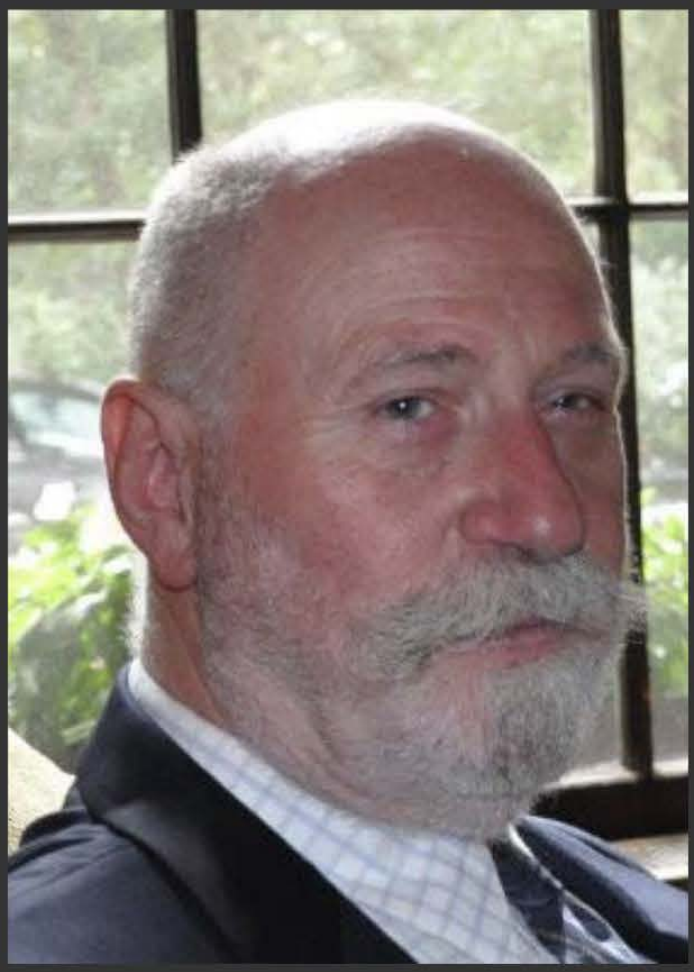

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MEDIA FINDING EXPERTS

Freely Available

ABCT has a list of speakers and subject matter experts on topics such as PTSD, anxiety, suicide, and more. Further details are available on the website or by contacting the ABC Press Office.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

About: Brady Organization research and statistics on gun violence in America and conducts research, community, and community organizing on issues around gun control.
Learn more: www.bradyunited.org

About: Wear Orange, raises awareness of the impact of gun violence on communities by calling attention to the impact of guns.
Learn more: www.wearorange.org

About: Everytown for Gun Safety is an American nonprofit organization that advocates for gun control and against gun violence.
Learn more: www.everytown.org

About: Amnesty International is a global organization that campaigns for global human rights, by investigating and exposing the facts of abuse whenever and wherever abuses happen.
Learn more: www.amnesty.org

About: The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence is an affiliate charitable organization of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. EFSGV identifies and implements evidence-based policy solutions and programs to reduce gun violence in all its forms.
Learn more: www.efsgv.org

About: The Child Welfare League of America is a coalition of private and public agencies that serve children and families across America who are vulnerable. CWLA provides expertise, leadership, and innovation on policies, programs, and practices.
Learn more: www.cwla.org

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

About: Children's Defense Fund support policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation.
Learn more: www.childrensdefense.org

About: Healthy Children provides the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) approved information on issues relevant to children's development and physical and psychological wellbeing.
Learn more: www.healthychildren.org

About: Firearm Safety Among Children and Teens (FACTS) at the University of Michigan supports research focused on the prevention of firearm injury in children and teens.
Learn more: www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/facts/index.html

JOURNALISTS RESOURCES

About: New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center, Rutgers School of Public Health. provides high-quality, multi-disciplinary research on gun violence causality and prevention and translates this research into clear and actionable policies and programs.

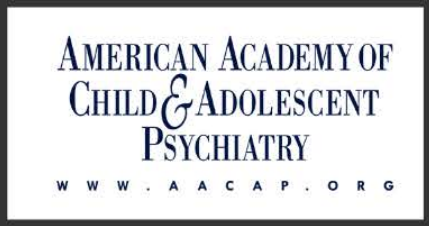
Learn more: gunviolenceresearchcenter.rutgers.edu

About: Centers for Disease Control, conducts research and disseminates information on firearm violence and prevention.

Learn more: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/

About: Prevention Institute is a national nonprofit whose mission is to build prevention and health equity to ensure the places where all people live, work, play and learn foster health, safety, and wellbeing

Learn more: www.preventioninstitute.org



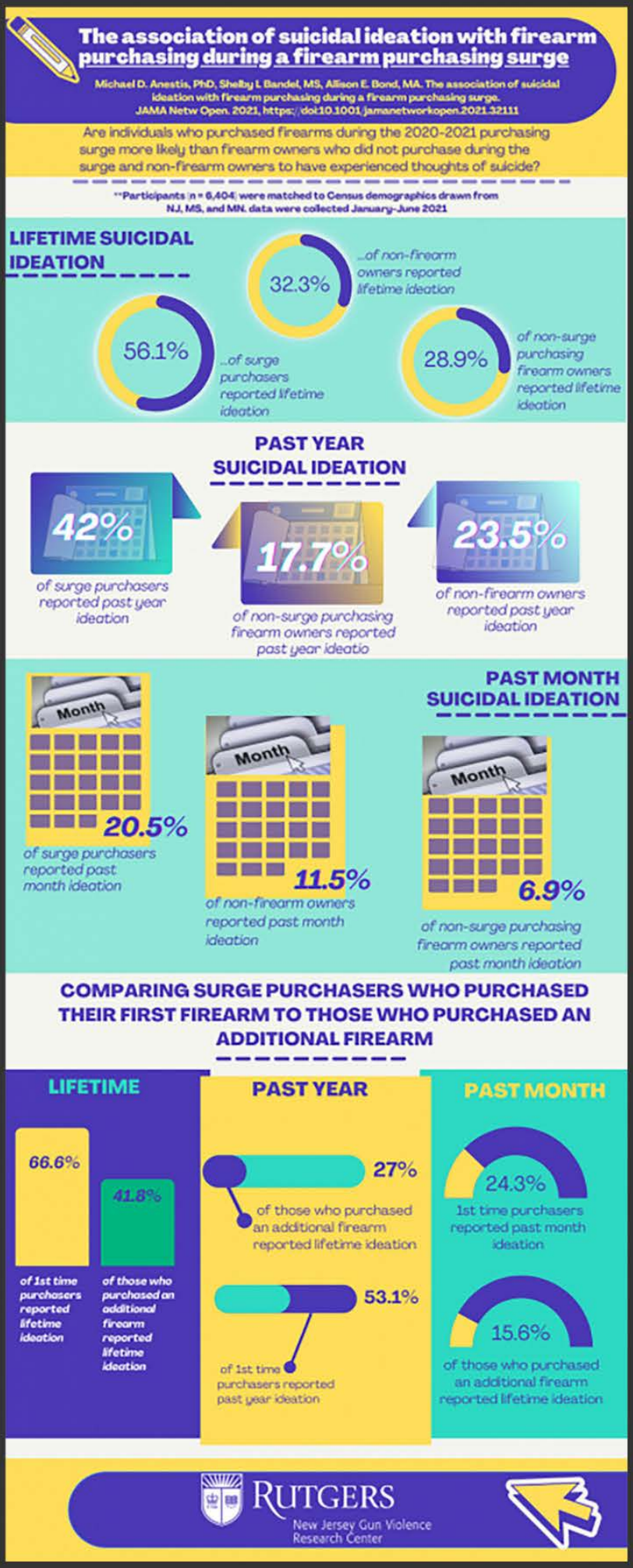
About: The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry provides a range of resources on the psychiatric impact of stressful circumstances for children, including an extensive library on guns and violence.
Learn more: www.aacap.org

About: The RAND Corporation provides research data and an extensive library on guns and violence. RAND's reports are free to downloadand from anywhere in the world.
Learn more: www.aacap.org

About: The Gun Violence Archive (GVA) provides freely accessible research data and reports on gun violence, including mass shootings and Police related fatalities.
Learn more: www.gunviolencearchive.org

GUN VIOLENCE STATISTICS

Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence and Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. (2021). A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making: A Review of 2019 CDC Gun Mortality Data. Available: http://efsgv.org/2019CDCdata



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

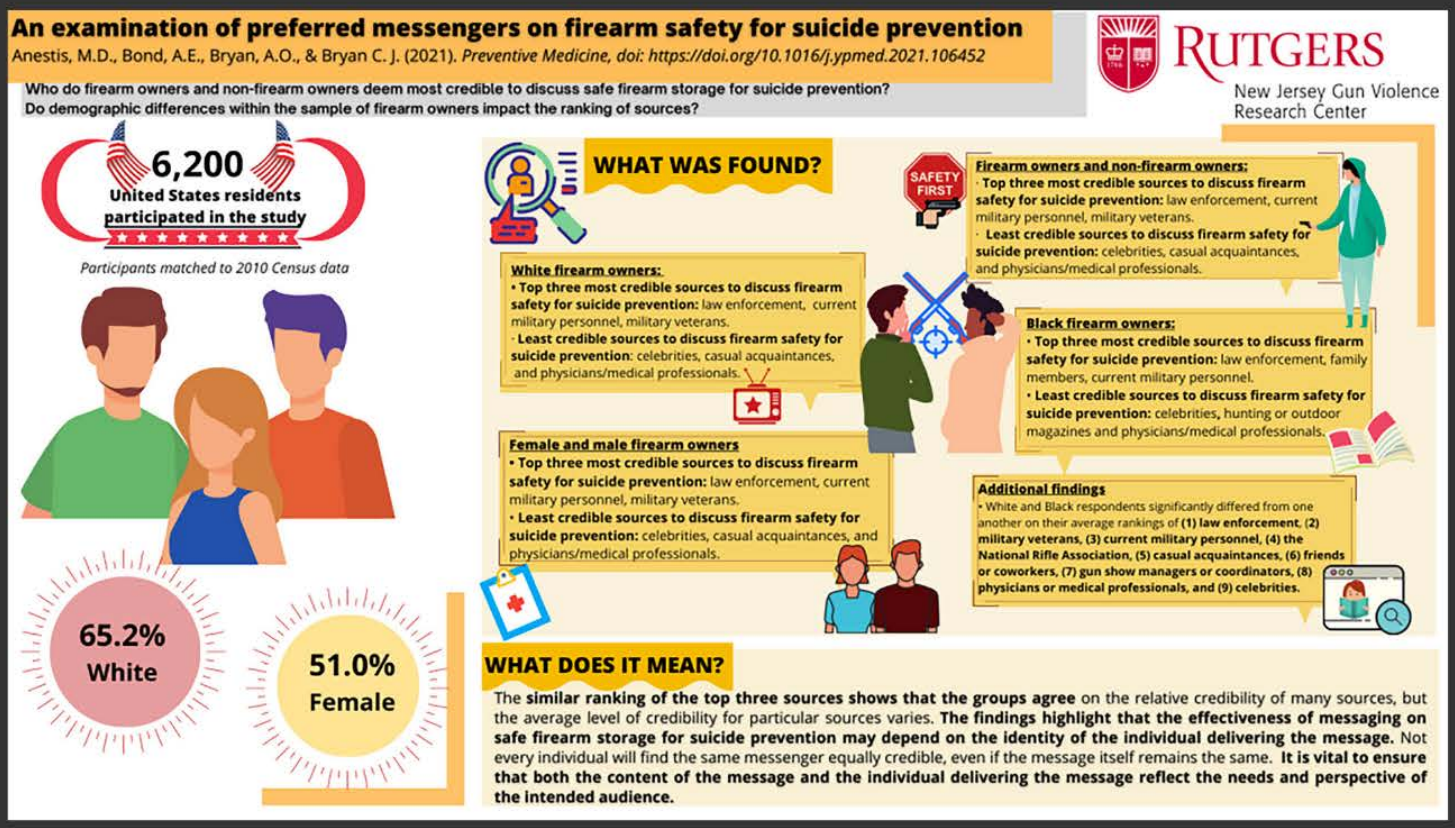
New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center

Anestis, M. D., Bandel, S. L., & Bond, A. E. (2021). The association of suicidal ideation with firearm purchasing during a firearm purchasing surge. JAMA network open, 4(10), e2132111-e2132111.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center

Anestis, M. D., Bond, A. E., Bryan, A. O., & Bryan, C. J. (2021). An examination of preferred messengers on firearm safety for suicide prevention. Preventive medicine, 145, 106452.



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center

Bond, A. E., & Anestis, M. D. (2021). Firearm type and number: examining differences among firearm owning suicide decedents. Archives of suicide research, 1-8.

Firearm type and number: Examining differences among firearm owning suicide decedents

Among firearm owners, are the type of firearms owned and the number of firearms owned associated with dying by suicide using a firearm rather than by another method?

RUTGERS
New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center

Participants

What was found?

Handgun ownership was associated with having **died by suicide using a firearm...**

88.8% **of handgun owning suicide** decedents died by **self-inflicted gunshot wound.**

Shotgun ownership was not associated with having **died by suicide using a firearm...**

81.8% **...of shotgun owning suicide decedents died using a firearm and** the large majority of shotgun owners also owned handguns. **The number of firearms owned was inversely associated with dying by suicide using a firearm.**

What do the findings mean?

The findings provide insight into what differentiates firearm owners who die by suicide using a firearm **rather than by another method. It is important to understand** the reason for ownership and how it may affect storage of a firearm.

For example

...if handguns are owned primarily for protection, they may be stored unsafely, and therefore be more easily accessible during a time of crisis. **Safe storage of all firearms should be encouraged in order to put time and distance between an individual in crisis and the most lethal method for suicide.**

Conclusions

The vast majority of firearm owning suicide decedents in our sample died by firearm suicide rather than by another method. Even still, not all firearm owners who died by suicide did so using a firearm. It appears that handgun ownership is particularly relevant to the choice to use a firearm, perhaps because they are logistically easier to use in a suicide attempt and perhaps because they are more likely than shotguns to be stored in a manner that leaves them readily available during a moment of crisis. Better understanding what prompts the decision to use specific methods for suicide can help us be better positioned to intervene and prevent individuals at the greatest risk of using a method with a high likelihood of causing their death.

Please cite this article as: Bond, A.E. & Anestis, M.D. (2021). Firearm type and number: examining differences among firearm owning suicide decedents. Archives of Suicide Research.

Firearm Safety for Families

Studies show children are naturally curious, even about a firearm they've been warned not to touch.

Kids are safer when:
Firearms are in a lockbox or safe, unloaded. Ammunition is locked away separately.

Kids are safest when:
firearms are stored outside the home.

healthychildren.org
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents. from the American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Keep the "safe" in fiream safety

Hiding a gun is not enough! Kids are curious, and studies show they usually know where a family keeps a gun.

Gun safes can lower the risk a curious child will be hurt:

Safe or lockbox for handguns

Locked gun safe for rifles

Gun trigger locks—inexpensive and effective

Lock box for ammo

healthychildren.org
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents. from the American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Source: Guns in the Home. American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention (AAPCI). 2021

Fast Facts: 2019 and 5-Year Averages

Gun Deaths, 2019

In 2019, nearly 40,000 Americans were killed by gun violence, including over 14,400 by homicide and nearly 24,000 by suicide. Gun violence killed nearly 109 Americans daily, including 39 by homicide and 66 by suicide. This is a horrifying reality for our country -- one we must change.

	Gun deaths total, 2019	Average daily gun deaths, 2019	Gun death rate, 2019
Homicide	14,414	39	4.59
Suicide	23,941	66	6.84
Unintentional	486	1	0.16
****Legal Intervention**	520	1	0.17
Undetermined Intent	346	1	0.09
Total	**39,707**	**109**	**11.86**

Note: Rates listed are age-adjusted to allow for accurate comparisons between populations with different age distributions.

***A cautionary note about "legal intervention" data: Strong evidence shows that the government's data (including the CDC data presented here) provide a substantial under-count of police-involved injuries and deaths.[1] To address this gap, several media sources have tracked police-involved shootings in recent years, most notably the Washington Post's Fatal Force database, finding more than double the number of police-involved fatal shootings than are reported in FBI and CDC databases. The Fatal Force database reported that 999 and 1,000 Americans were shot and killed by police in 2019 and 2020 respectively, nearly double the number that the CDC reported. Ultimately, better data on police-involved injuries and deaths are sorely needed. Compulsory and comprehensive data collection at the local level, reporting to the federal government, and transparency in the public dissemination of data will be critical for understanding this unique kind of gun violence and developing evidence-based solutions to minimize police-involved shootings.*

Gun Deaths Among Children and Teens, 2019

Tragically, more than 3,300 children and teens (ages 0-19) were killed by gun violence in 2019, including over 2,000 by homicide and 1,100 by suicide. An average of nine children and teens were killed by gun violence daily in 2019, including six by homicide and three by suicide.

	Child and teen gun deaths total, 2019	Average daily child and teen gun deaths, 2019	Child and teen gun death rate, 2019
Homicide	2,023	6	2.48
Suicide	1,167	3	1.43
Unintentional	117	<1	0.14
Legal Intervention	19	<1	Unreliable
Undetermined Intent	64	<1	0.08
Total	**3,390**	**9**	**4.15**

1 Barber, C., Azrael, D., Cohen, A., Miller, M., Thymes, D., Wang, D. E., & Hemenway, D. (2016). Homicides by police: comparing counts from the national violent death reporting system, vital statistics, and supplementary homicide reports. *American Journal of Public Health*. 106(5), 922-927.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

The following averages are based on the most recent five years of CDC data, 2015-2019.

Average Number of Gun Deaths, 2015-2019

Every year from 2015 through 2019, an average of nearly 40,000 Americans were killed by guns, including over 14,000 by homicide and 23,000 by suicide. This totals more than 100 gun deaths every single day.

	Average annual gun deaths, 2015-2019	Average daily gun deaths, 2015-2019	Average gun death rate, 2015-2019
Homicide	14,062	39	4.51
Suicide	23,437	64	6.80
Unintentional	483	1	0.15
Legal Intervention	521	1	0.17
Undetermined Intent	324	<1	0.09
Total	**38,826**	**106**	**11.73**

Note: Rates listed are age-adjusted to allow for accurate comparisons between populations with different age distributions.

Average Number of Gun Deaths Among Children and Teens, 2015-2019

On average, over 3,200 children and teens (ages 0-19) were killed by guns annually from 2015-2019, including over 1,800 by homicide, 1,100 by suicide, and 115 unintentionally. Nine children and teens died from gun violence every day.

	Average annual child and teen gun deaths, 2015-2019	Average daily child and teen gun deaths, 2015-2019	Average child and teen gun death rate, 2015-2019
Homicide	1,855	5	2.26
Suicide	1,176	3	1.43
Unintentional	115	<1	0.14
Legal Intervention	26	<1	0.03
Undetermined Intent	59	<1	0.07
Total	3,231	9	3.94

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

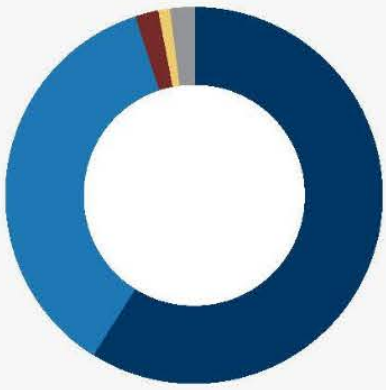
Gun Deaths in the United States: 2019 and Trends Over Time

Gun violence was a leading cause of death in 2019. On average, 109 individuals died from gun violence every day in 2019. For the year in total:

- 39,707 people died from gun violence in the U.S., a small decrease of 33 gun deaths from 2018. 2,112 more Americans died by gun violence (39,707) than by car crashes (37,595).
- It was the third consecutive year of nearly 40,000 gun deaths, capping a decade during which the overall gun death rate increased 17% (10.1 to 11.86 deaths per 100,000, age-adjusted, 2010-2019).
- Males were disproportionately impacted across all forms of gun violence and accounted for 86% of gun death victims. Black males were at especially high risk, with the highest rate of gun death among demographic groups (43.09 deaths per 100,000).

FIGURE 1

Number of Gun Deaths by Intent, 2019



60.3%	Suicide
36.3%	Homicide
1.2%	Unintentional
.09%	Undetermined
1.3%	Legal Intervention

Gun violence comes in many forms and that was true in 2019:

- The proportion of homicides upticked slightly as compared to the previous year, representing 36% of all gun deaths. More than 14,400 individuals were firearm homicide victims in 2019, including 2,023 children and teens (ages 0-19). This equated to an average of 39 firearm homicides every day.
- Suicides continued to make up 60% of all gun deaths. Nearly 24,000 individuals died by firearm suicide, including 1,167 children and teens (ages 0-19). This equated to an average of 66 lives lost every day.
- While the majority of gun deaths are homicides and suicides (combined 96%), people died by other forms of gun violence too, including unintentional,[2] legal intervention,[3] and undetermined intent.[4]

2 "Unintentional" is the description used for a death that was not caused purposely. In gun violence, examples include fatal injuries that occur when a weapon misfires or is mishandled by a child and results in the victim being shot (in contrast with homicide and suicide, both of which involve an intent to pull the trigger and cause harm). Unintentional injuries and deaths are often called "accidents," which can imply that nothing could be done to stop them from happening; we do not use "accident" terminology because gun violence is preventable. Easy access to firearms, particularly unsecured firearms and the presence of firearms in risky situations, increases risk of unintentional injury and death by firearm. Mitigating access with safer storage practices and through evidence-based policy prevents unintentional gun violence.

3 "Legal intervention" is the description used by the CDC for injuries inflicted by the police or other law enforcement agents, including military on duty, in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, suppressing disturbances, maintaining order, and other legal actions. Cases in which a police or other law enforcement officer discharges a firearm are also known as police-involved or officer-involved shootings.

4 While the intentionality of the injury that caused a person's death is most often known or determined in the course of death investigations, there are some cases wherein the available information is insufficient to enable the medical or legal authority to make a distinction between an unintentional injury, self-harm (suicide), or assault (homicide). These cases are described as having an "undetermined" intent.

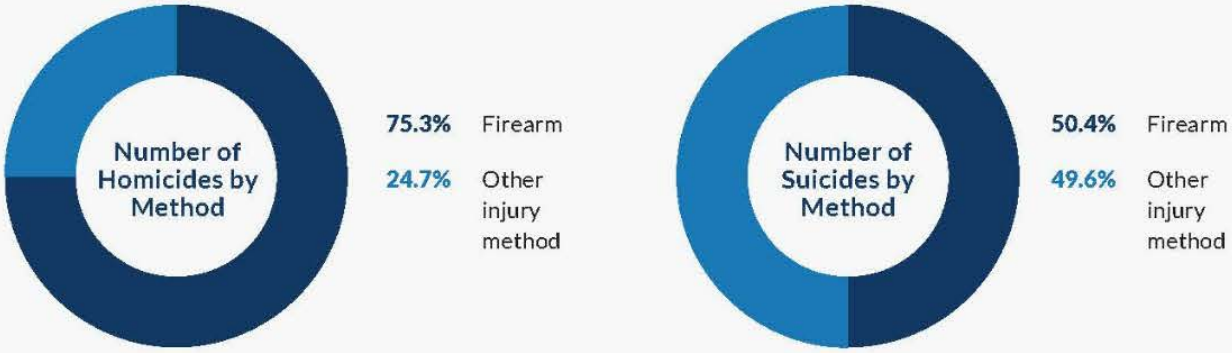
Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

The Lethality and Accessibility of Firearms Drives Up Homicides and Suicides

Due to their high lethality and ease of accessibility, firearms are often the method of choice for both homicides and suicides.

FIGURE 2

Homicide and Suicide by Injury Method (Firearm v. Non-Firearm), 2019



In 2019, 75% of all homicides were committed by firearm:

- While only 22% of *attempted* homicides with a gun are lethal, guns are still an incredibly lethal means that may also result in nonfatal but very serious injuries.[5]
- Guns are used in homicides nearly nine times more than the second most common method of homicide (cutting/piercing) and more than 30 times more than suffocation.

In 2019, 50% of all suicides involved firearms:

- While poisoning is the most commonly used suicide *attempt* method (used in approximately 60% of all suicidal acts), firearms, which account for less than 10% of all suicidal acts,[6] account for half of all suicide *deaths*.
- While poisoning is lethal less than 3% of the time, 90% of suicide attempts involving firearms are lethal.[7]
- The second most lethal suicide attempt method is drowning (56% of suicidal acts by drowning result in death), yet it is far less likely to happen.[8] There were nearly 46 times more firearm suicide deaths than deaths by drowning in 2019.

5 Cook PJ, Rivera-Aguirre AE, Cerdá M, & Wintemute G. (2017). Constant lethality of gunshot injuries from firearm assault: United States, 2003-2012. American Journal of Public Health.
6 Conner A, Azrael D, & Miller M. (2019). Suicide case-fatality rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014. A nationwide population-based study. *Annals of Internal Medicine*.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 3

Homicide Rates, by Method, 2019

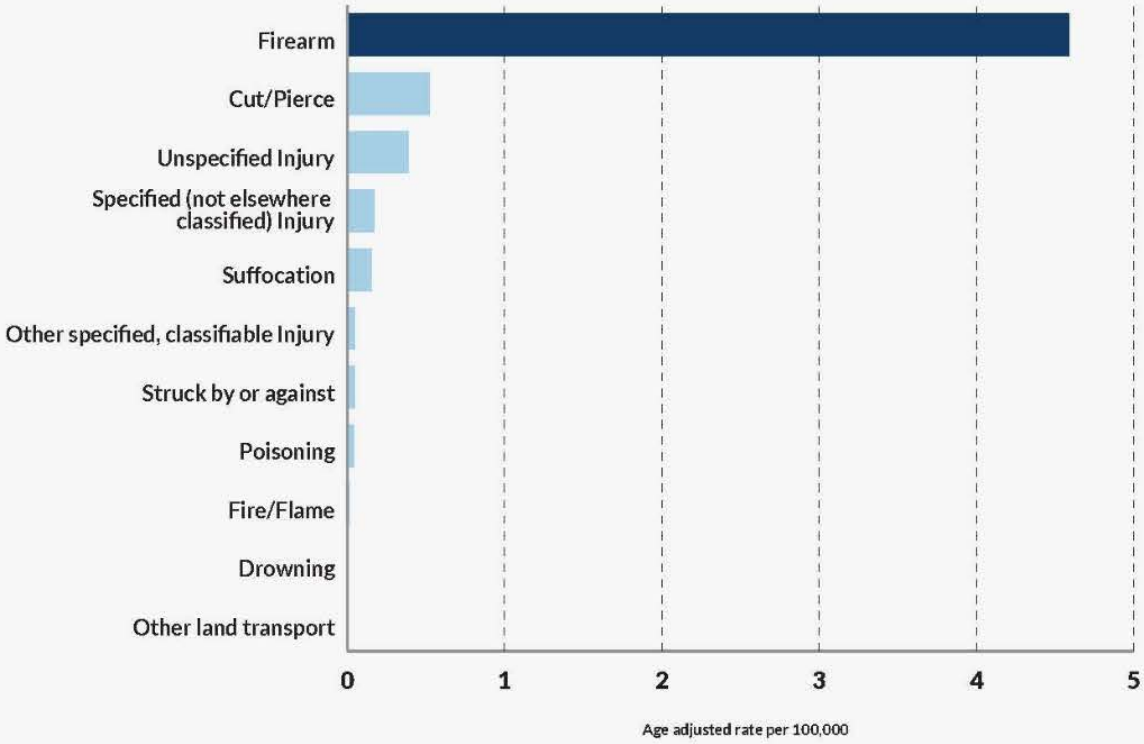
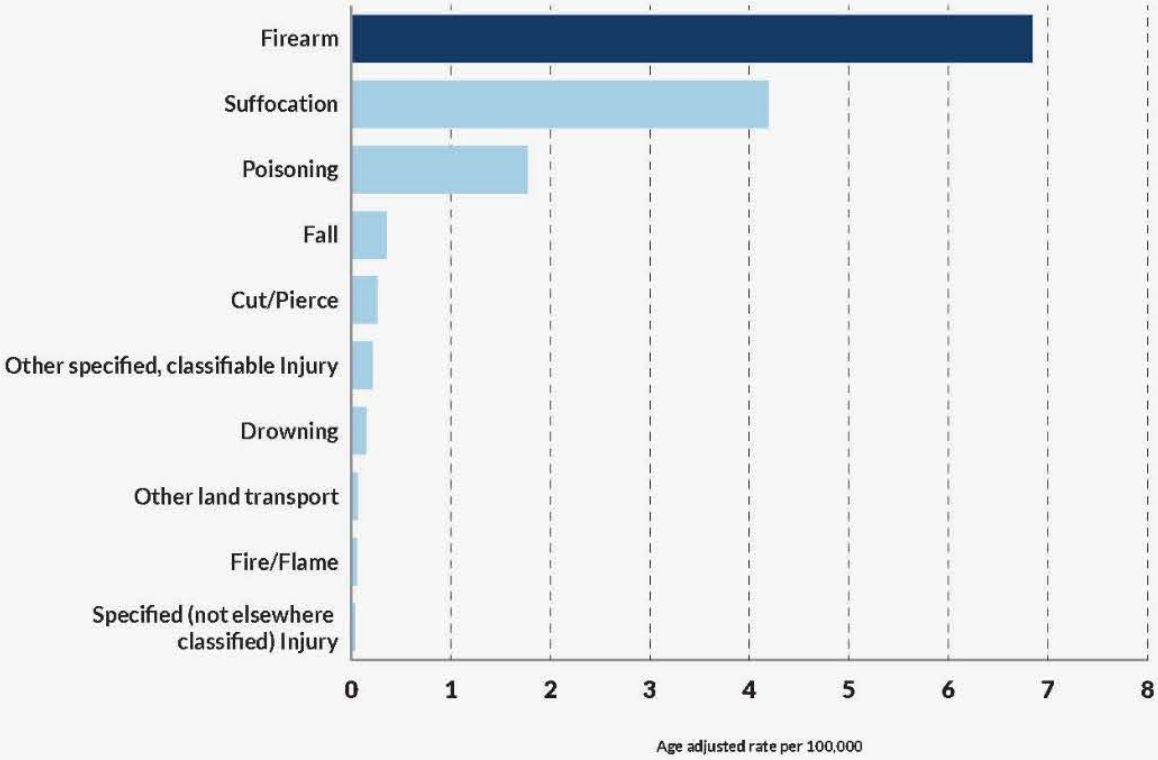


FIGURE 4

Suicide Rates, by Method, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Two Decades of Gun Violence

One way to better understand gun violence is to explore its changes and impacts on communities over time. By examining the last two decades of gun death data, we see that gun violence deaths have escalated in recent years, driven by a significant spike in firearm homicides and steady growth in firearm suicides.

Gun Violence Trends, 2000-2019

Nearly 40,000 people died by gun violence in 2019, part of a three-year-cluster in which there were nearly 40,000 annual gun deaths. This capped a two-decade period during which nearly 570,000 lives were lost to gun violence -- similar to the entire population of Wyoming.

- Over the last 20 years, the most recent five years have been the deadliest. The highest gun death rate occurred in 2017, followed by 2018, 2019, 2016, and 2015.
- The largest single-year increase in the overall gun death rate was from 2014 to 2015; this substantial 7.3% jump can be directly attributed to the astronomical increase in the firearm homicide rate that year.
- The lowest gun death rate over the last 20 years occurred in 2004, 13 years prior to the peak. The next lowest gun death rates occurred in 2009, 2010, 2000, and 2011.
- The increase from the lowest to highest gun death rate (occurring in 2004 and 2017, respectively) was 20%.

Firearm Homicide Trends, 2000-2019

More than 14,000 people were killed by firearm homicide in 2019, capping two decades during which more than 200,000 lives were lost to firearm homicide, more Americans than were lost in World War I and Vietnam combined.

- After years of decline (from 2006-2011), the firearm homicide rate fluctuated before an astronomical rise from 2014 to 2015.
- Over the last 20 years, the most recent four years have been the deadliest. The highest firearm homicide rate occurred in 2017, followed by 2016, 2019, 2018, and 2006.
- The largest single-year increase in the firearm homicide rate was from 2014 to 2015, when the rate increased 18%. Another substantial jump in the firearm homicide rate occurred the following year, from 2015 to 2016, when the rate increased 11%.
- The lowest firearm homicide rate over the last 20 years was in 2014, three years prior to the peak. The next lowest firearm homicide rates occurred in 2011, 2013, 2010, and 2000.
- The increase from the lowest to highest firearm homicide rate (occurring in 2014 and 2017, respectively) was 31%.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

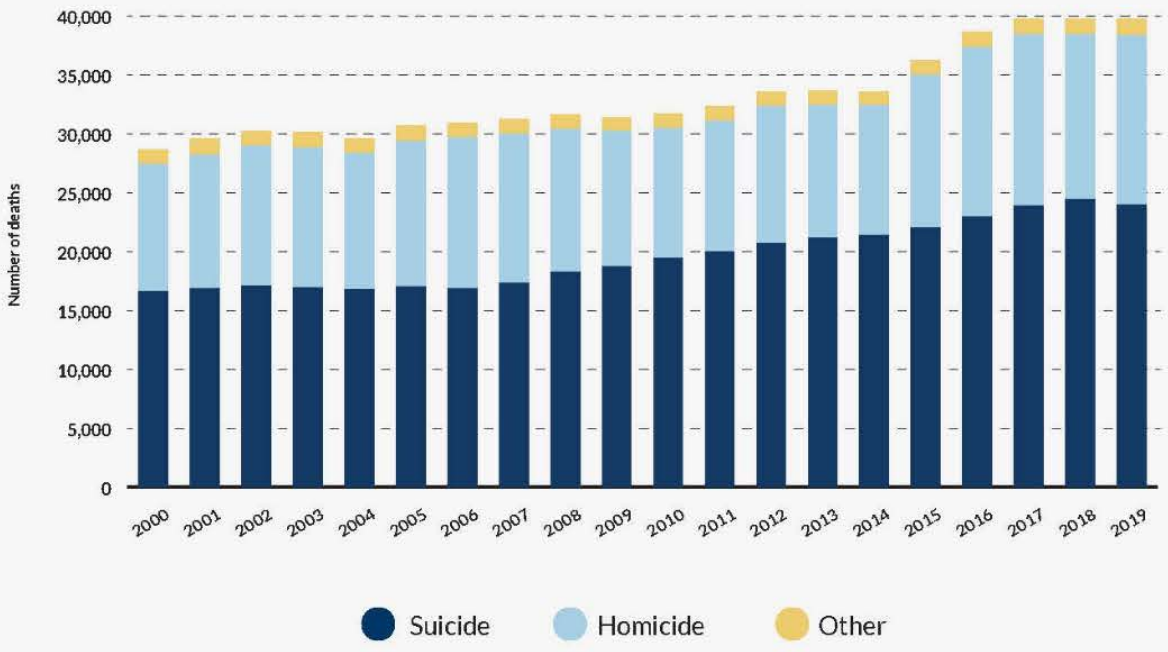
Firearm Suicide Trends, 2000-2019

Nearly 24,000 Americans died by firearm suicide in 2019, capping two decades during which more than 340,000 people were lost to firearm suicide, 50,000 more than the number of U.S. troops killed in World War II.

- Overall, the firearm suicide epidemic has been growing, despite the year 2019 showing a slight reprieve, with the rate dropping by nearly 3% from 2018.
- Over the last 20 years, the most recent five years have been the deadliest. The highest firearm suicide rate occurred in 2018, followed by 2017, 2019, 2016, and 2015.
- The largest single-year increase in the firearm suicide rate was from 2015 to 2016, when the rate increased 3.7%. The single-year increase was similar (3.6%) from 2007 to 2008. The change in the firearm suicide rate from year to year has been consistently and steadily increasing, with only a few exceptions.
- The lowest firearm suicide rate over the last 20 years occurred in 2006, 12 years prior to the peak. The next lowest gun death rates occurred at the start of the new millenium, in 2007, 2004, 2005, and 2003.
- The increase from the lowest to highest firearm suicide rate (occurring in 2006 and 2018, respectively) was 27%.

FIGURE 5

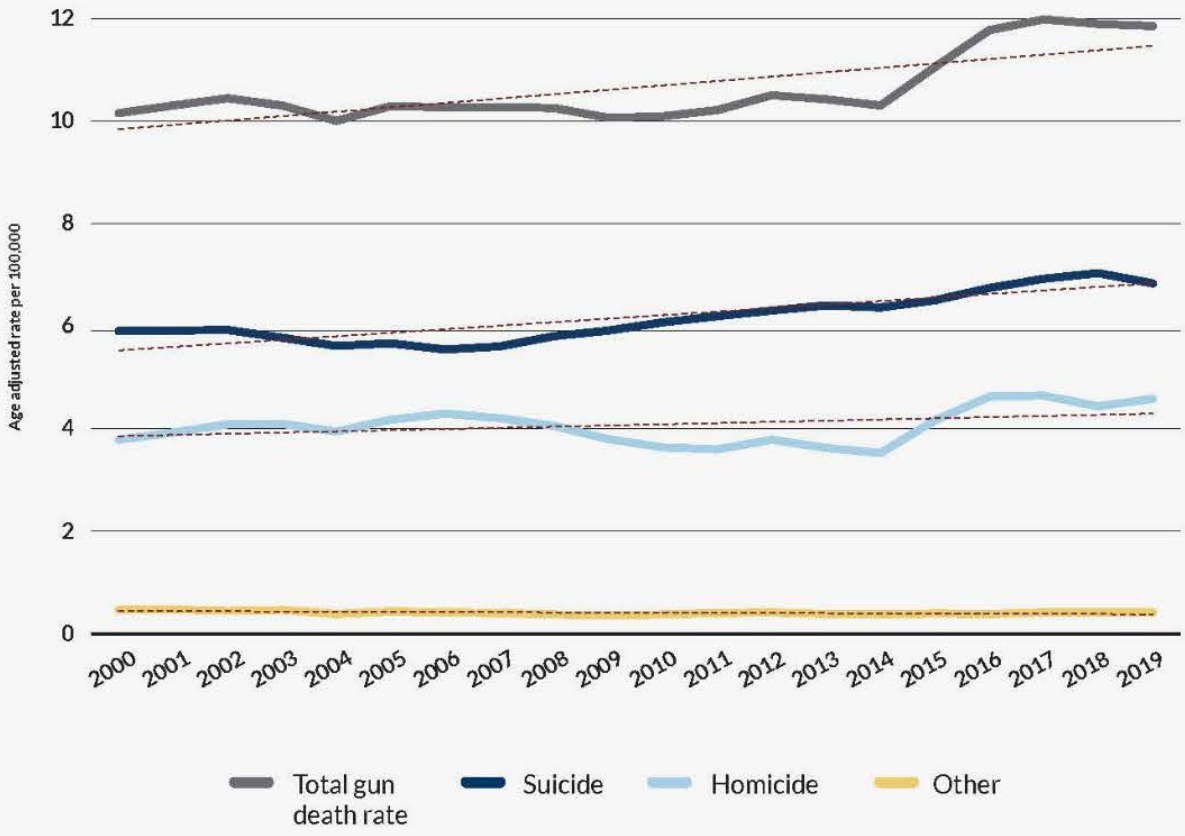
Number of Gun Deaths, 2000-2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 6

Gun Death Rates by Intent, 2000-2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Disproportionate Impacts

Gun Violence Overall by Demographics

While nobody is immune from gun violence, some demographic groups are at much higher risk than others:

By sex:

- Males are six times more likely to die by gun violence (any intent) than females, making up 86% of U.S. firearm deaths in 2019 (84% of homicides and 87% of suicides).

By age:

- Gun deaths impact both younger and older generations. In fact, the age groups most impacted by gun deaths are young adults (ages 15-34) followed by older adults (ages 75 and older). This is primarily due to homicide victims being disproportionately young and suicide decedents skewing more elderly.

By race/ethnicity among males:

- Black males are disproportionately impacted and have by far the highest rate of gun death, nearly twice as high (1.8x) as the second-highest (and also disproportional) rate of gun death among American Indian/Alaska Native males. Continuing in order descending by rate are White, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islanders. Black males were more than twice as likely to die by firearms than White males in 2019.

By race/ethnicity among females:

- The highest firearm death rate is among American Indian/Alaska Natives, followed closely by Black females. Continuing in order descending by rate: are White, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islanders. American Indian/Alaska Native females were 1.4 times more likely to die by firearms than the White females in 2019.

To stop gun violence in all its forms, broad prevention efforts to reduce risk to the population as a whole must be implemented together with tailored solutions for high-risk populations. Understanding how risk differs across the population by sex, race/ethnicity, and age, and broken down by gun death intent (homicide and suicide), is critical for designing these interventions.

Demographic categories:

The CDC WONDER database allows mortality data to be broken down into the following demographic categories: age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. The four race categories are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, and White. Hispanic origin is considered an ethnicity, which is why it is not considered a race category. For example, a person may be classified as American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic, Asian and Hispanic, Black and Hispanic, or White and Hispanic. Hispanic origin is classified as "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino."

For our analysis, we chose to use "Hispanic or Latino" as a distinct category regardless of race, and selected "Not Hispanic or Latino" for each of the race categories. This ensured that individuals were not counted twice in different demographic groups and follows common practice used by the CDC for data analyses.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Homicide by Demographics

There was a 66x difference in risk of firearm homicide between Black males and Asian females (the highest and lowest risk demographics, respectively). A closer look at demographic data reveals:

By sex:

- More than eight in ten U.S. firearm homicide victims were male (84%) in 2019. Males were five times more likely to be victims than females.

By age:

- Firearm homicide victims are disproportionately young. Across the population -- all races combined, all sexes -- the highest risk age for dying by firearm homicide was 15-24 years old. Separated by race/ethnicity, this young age (15-24) is the highest risk age for Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islanders, but the risk is highest at slightly older ages for American Indian/Alaska Native (25-34) and White (35-44) populations.

By race/ethnicity among males:

- Fifty-three % of all firearm homicide victims (63% of male victims) in 2019 were Black males. Across all ages, Black men were nearly 8 times more likely to die by firearm homicide than the general population (all sexes) and 14 times more likely to die by firearm homicide than White men. Black males were followed by (in order of decreasing risk): American Indian/Alaska Native, Latino/Hispanic, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander males.

- Young Black males (15-34) are especially disproportionately impacted, making up 2% of the population but accounting for 37% of all gun homicide fatalities in 2019. Their rate of firearm homicide was more than 20 times higher than White males of the same age group.

By race/ethnicity among females:

- Black females had the highest risk of firearm homicide among females of all other races and ethnicities, followed by (in order of decreasing risk): American Indian/Alaska Native, Latino/Hispanic, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander females. Black females and American Indian/Alaska Native females also were both at greater risk of firearm homicide than both White and Asian/Pacific Islander males. Black females were more than four times more likely to be firearm homicide victims than White females.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Suicide by Demographics

There was a 38.5x difference in firearm suicide risk between White men and Asian women (the highest and lowest risk demographics, respectively). A closer look at demographic data reveals:

By sex:

- Nearly nine in ten U.S. firearm suicide decedents are male (87% in 2019), reflecting the increased risk of firearm suicide for males as compared to females across all races/ethnicities and age groups. Males were nearly seven times more likely to die by firearm suicide than females.

By age:

While the overall data shows that firearm suicide victims were disproportionately elderly (75+ is the highest risk age group for the population as a whole), this was skewed by White men, the highest risk demographic.

- The risk for White males increased across the lifespan and peaked at ages 75+.
- Among males of each racial and ethnic identity other than White, the risk of suicide by firearm peaked much younger, among men ages 15-34.
- The risk of firearm suicide for White females peaked at ages 45-54 in 2019.
- Among females of each racial and ethnic identity other than White, the risk of suicide by firearm peaked younger, among women ages 25-34.

By race/ethnicity among males:

- The majority of all firearm suicide decedents are White males (73%). White males had the highest firearm suicide rate overall, followed by (in order of decreasing risk): American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander males.
- Across all ages, White men were more than twice as likely to die by firearm suicide than the general population (all sexes). American Indian/Alaska Native males also have a disproportionately high rate of firearm suicide (11.16 deaths per 100,000), although there are far fewer suicide deaths among this demographic due to the smaller size of the population as a whole. In 2019, 17,427 White males and 152 American Indian/Alaska males died by firearm suicide.
- White males were at the highest risk for firearm suicide at all ages except 15-34, during which the risk was highest for American Indian/Alaska Native males.

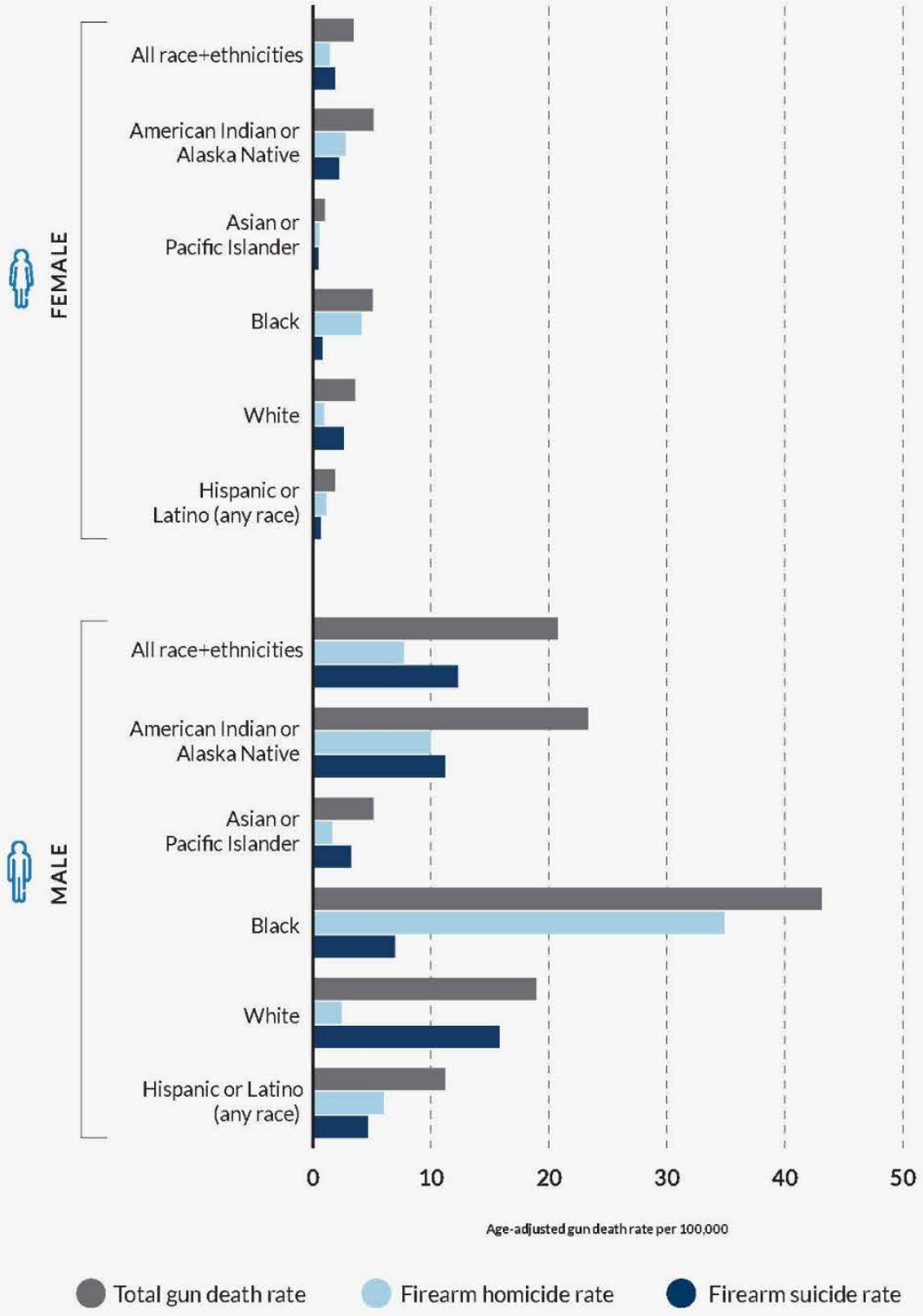
By race/ethnicity among females:

- The majority of all female firearm suicide decedents are White females (86%). White females had the highest firearm suicide rate both overall and within each age group, followed by (in order of decreasing risk): American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander females.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 7

Gun Death Rates by Demographic Groups, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Geographic Variations

Overall gun death rates at the state level show substantial variation, such as the seven-fold difference in risk between the states with the lowest and highest overall gun death rates (Massachusetts and Alaska in 2019, respectively). In 2019, by urbanization level:

- The total gun death rate was highest in the most rural counties, driven largely by having the highest rate of firearm suicide as compared to other urbanization levels.
- Homicide rates, on the other hand, were highest in urban counties (large central metro and medium metro counties), but much more evenly distributed across urbanization levels, with a smaller spread between the lowest and highest rates.
- The total gun death rate was lowest in the suburbs (large fringe metro counties), a combination of having the lowest homicide rate and second-lowest suicide rate.

A person's geographic location is directly connected to the risk of gun violence. For example, in Maryland in 2019, someone living in Baltimore City was 13 times more likely to die by firearm than someone living 40 miles down the road in Montgomery County. Understanding these differences adds critical context to gun violence prevention efforts.

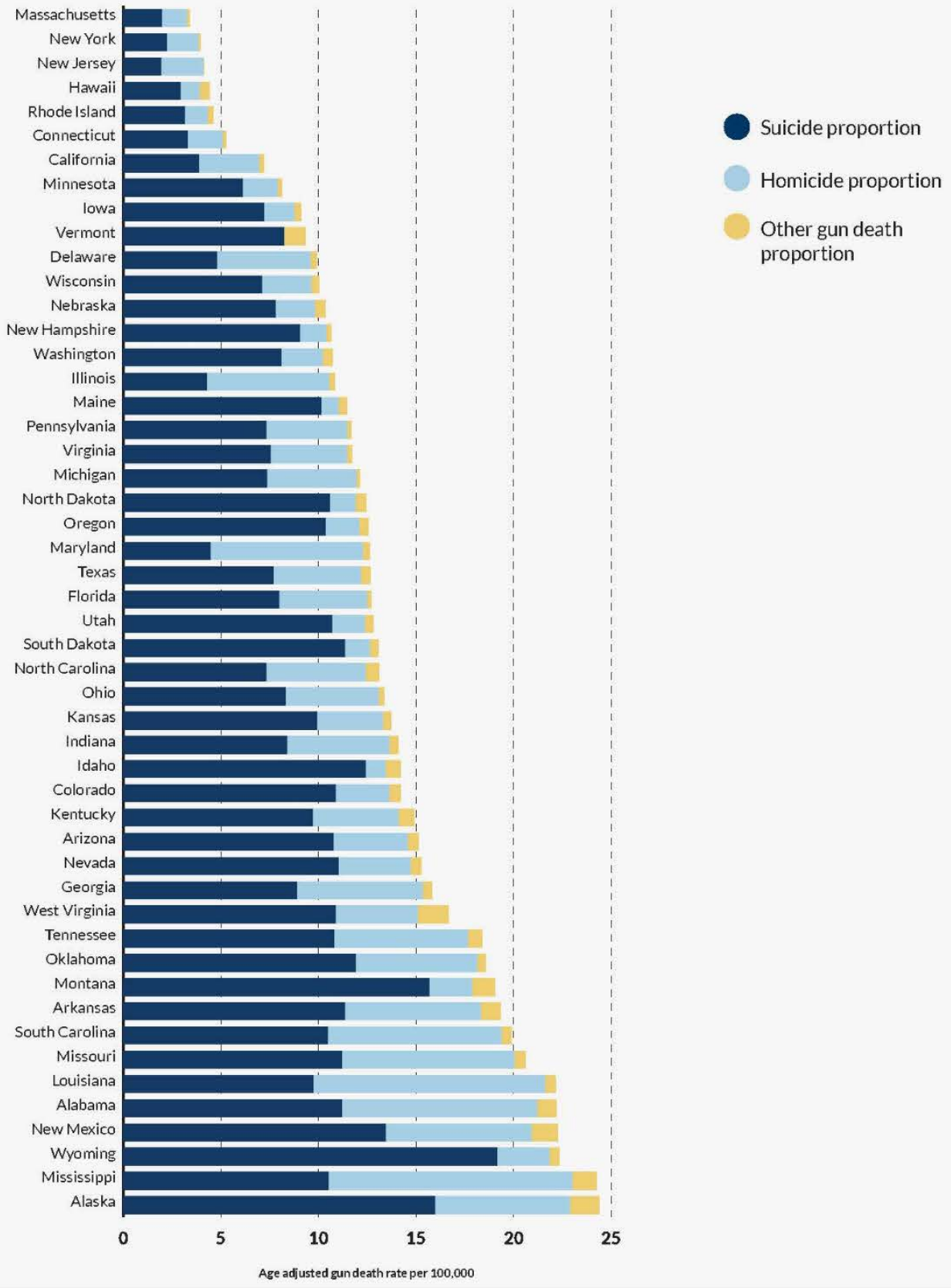
Why use rates of deaths?

While numbers of gun deaths can help illustrate the burden of gun violence in a particular community, because the total population varies significantly by geographic area, firearm death rates (the number of gun deaths per 100,000 total population) provide an important measure for comparison. For example, Cook County (Chicago), Illinois has by far the highest number of firearm homicides out of any county in the country, averaging over 600 each year. However, because Cook County has a population of 5.2 million residents, the firearm homicide rate is lower than many other large metro counties with smaller populations. In fact, Cook County's firearm homicide rate is, on average, 12.12 deaths per 100,000 people, ranking it 72nd in the country and a fraction of the homicide rate in the highest rate counties, such as Macon County, Alabama, which had the highest firearm homicide rate from 2015-2019 -- 44.44 deaths per 100,000 people -- an average of eight gun homicides per year in a population less than 20,000 people. Clearly, the sheer number of firearm homicides illustrates that Cook County is in the midst of a gun violence crisis, but this crisis is not unique to Chicago; it is equally devastating in cities across the United States and among more rural counties, as well.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 8

Gun Death Rates by State, Ranked Lowest to Highest, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Overall Gun Violence Rates Across the States

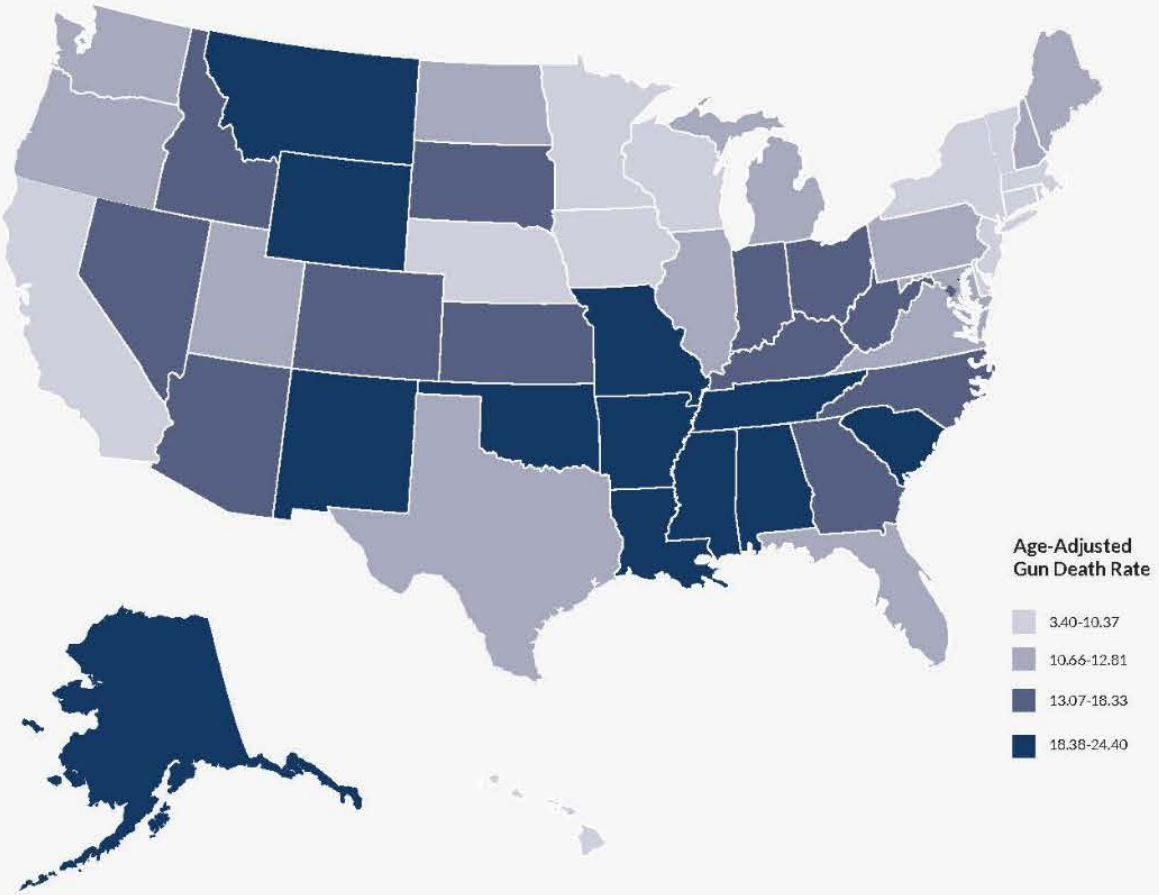
The five states with the highest overall gun death rates in 2019 were Alaska, Mississippi, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Alabama. Alaska had the highest gun death rate for 7 of the last 10 years, which in 2019 was seven times higher than Massachusetts, which had the lowest rate. Mississippi ranked in the five highest overall gun death rates in the country every year in the last decade, while Alabama and Louisiana did so for all but one year.

On the other end of the spectrum, the five states with the lowest overall gun death rates in 2019 were Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Hawaii, and Rhode Island. Hawaii, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island each ranked in the five lowest overall gun death rates for all of the last 10 years.

Figure 8 displays how the 50 states and District of Columbia fared with gun deaths in 2019, ranking them from lowest to highest gun death rate. It additionally shows the proportion of deaths attributed to homicide, suicide, and other intents (law enforcement intervention, unintentional, and unclassified).

FIGURE 9

Gun Death Rates by State, 2019



A Closer Look: Gun Violence by Intent Across Counties and Urbanization Levels

Looking more closely at gun violence at the county level, separated by intent (homicide and suicide), helps to better understand the burden of gun violence in a specific community. We looked at 2019 data by county urbanization level and individual county data using five-year averages from 2015-2019 (just one year of data would not produce a reliable rate of gun homicide or suicide for comparison).

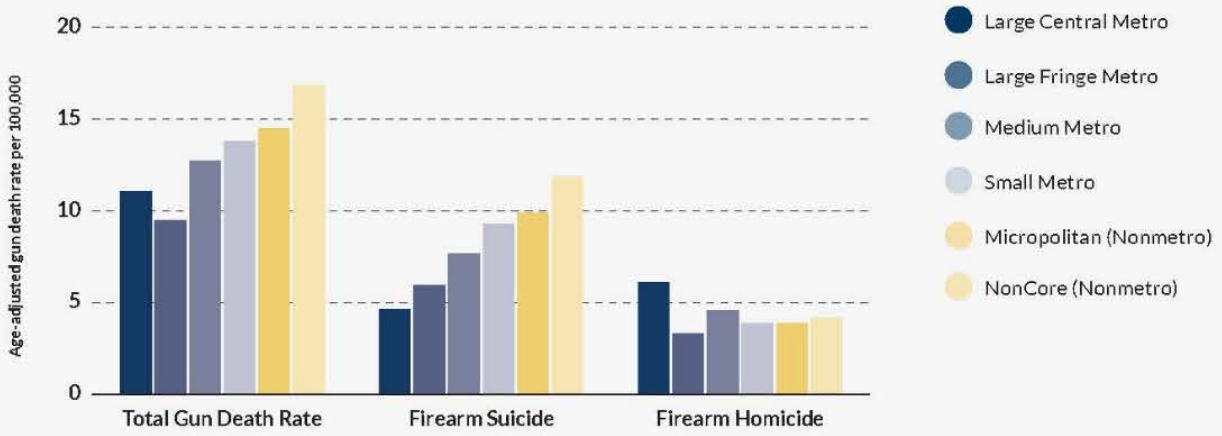
While county-level data layers valuable context on top of state data, data at an even more local level -- census tracts -- is much needed to truly understand concentrations of gun violence. Because county size varies significantly within and between states, data at this level does not consistently portray the most accurate representation of the local areas most impacted by gun violence. Taking a closer look at Los Angeles (LA) County, CA, which has a population of 10 million, we find that it had 670 firearm homicides in 2019, a rate of 6.47 deaths per 100,000 people, which is above the national average but below the state average. Stopping here, however, would be insufficient, as LA County county comprises neighborhoods and cities with populations larger than many U.S. counties and extremely disparate firearm homicide rates. For example, Burbank and Compton, cities in LA County with populations of approximately 100,000 each, had one and sixteen firearm homicides in 2019,[9] respectively. They shoulder very different burdens of gun violence and require different approaches to prevention.

About urbanization levels:

The CDC classifies counties by level of urbanization using a six-level urban-to-rural classification scheme. The most urban category consists of "central" counties of large metropolitan areas and the most rural category consists of nonmetropolitan "noncore" counties. The six classification levels for counties from most urban to most rural are large central metro (≥1 million population and covers a principal city), large fringe metro (≥1 million population but does not cover a principal city, akin to suburbs), medium metro (≥250,000 but <1 million population), small metro (<250,000 population), micropolitan (nonmetro; has an urban cluster of ≥10,000 but <50,000 population), and noncore (nonmetro; most rural). See the Glossary for formal definitions of each.

FIGURE 10

Gun Death Rates by Urbanization, 2019

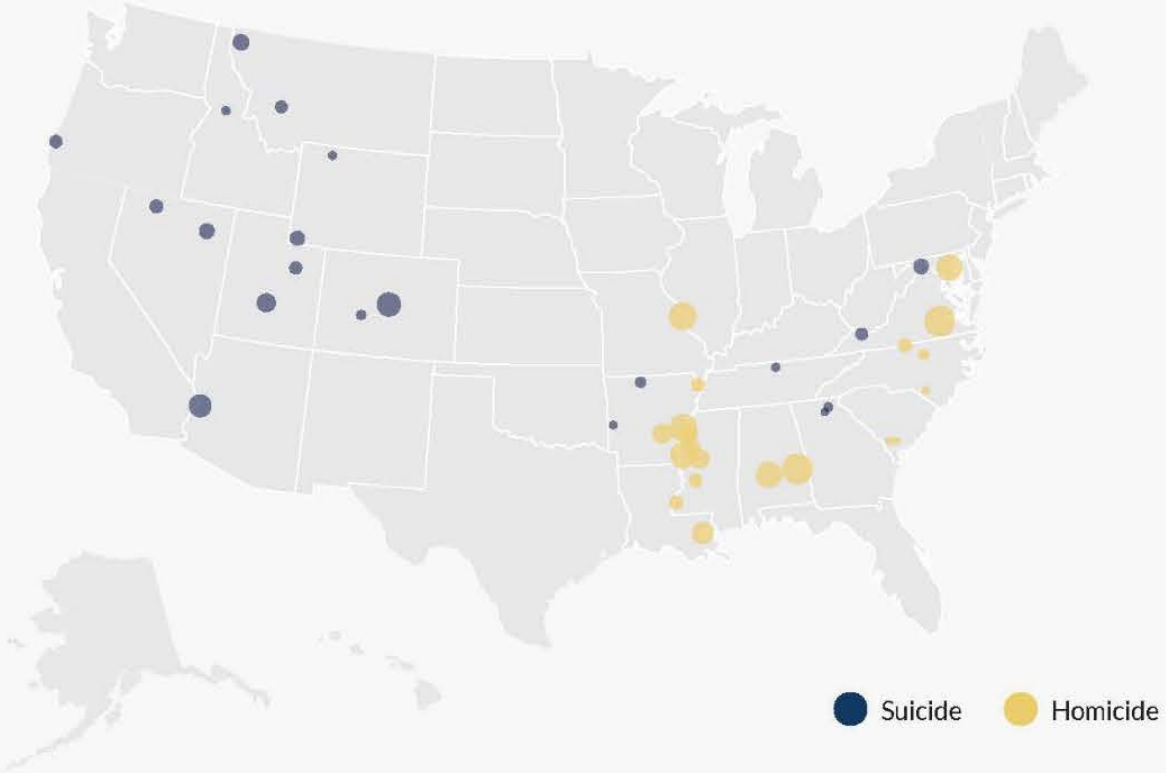


9 Los Angeles Times, The Homicide Report. Accessed January 25, 2021 for Burbank: https://homicide.latimes.com/neighborhood/burbank/year/2019 and for Compton: https://homicide.latimes.com/neighborhood/compton/year/2019.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 11

Counties with the Highest Rates of Firearm Homicide and Suicide, 2015-2019



Counties with the Highest Firearm Suicide Rates, 2015-2019	Counties with the Highest Firearm Homicide Rates, 2015-2019
Park County, CO	Macon County, AL
La Paz County, AZ	Petersburg City, VA
Sevier County, UT	St. Louis City, MO
Morgan County, WV	Phillips County, AR
Lincoln County, MT	Baltimore City, MD
Elko County, NV	Dallas County, AL
Duchesne County, UT	Washington County, MS
Humboldt County, NV	Orleans Parish, LA
Silver Bow County, MT	Holmes County, MS
McDowell County, WV	Coahoma County, MS
Uinta County, WY	Jefferson County, AR
Curry County, OR	Leflore County, MS
Marion County, AR	Adams County, MS
Gunnison County, CO	Hinds County, MS
Lumpkin County, GA	Danville City, VA
Park County, WY	Mississippi County, AR
Macon County, TN	Vance County, NC
Dawson County, GA	Colleton County, SC
Idaho County, ID	Robeson County, NC
Polk County, AR	Hampton County, SC

See appendix 6 for the list of counties with the highest firearm homicide rates and suicides with accompanying data.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Geography of Homicide

By urbanization level:

When clustered by urbanization level, the highest rate of firearm homicide in 2019 was in large central metro counties (most urban), 1.3 times higher than the national average and 1.8 times higher than large fringe metro counties (suburbs), where the homicide rate is lowest. The next highest rates were in medium metro and then noncore metro (most rural) counties. As compared to firearm suicide rates, the firearm homicide rate was more evenly distributed across all types of counties, the difference between the most urban and most rural counties was much smaller, and there was no clear trend to track rates as counties became more rural or urban. Because of their higher rates and large populations, the vast majority -- 89% -- of firearm homicides occur in metropolitan areas (large, medium, and small metro and large fringe metro).

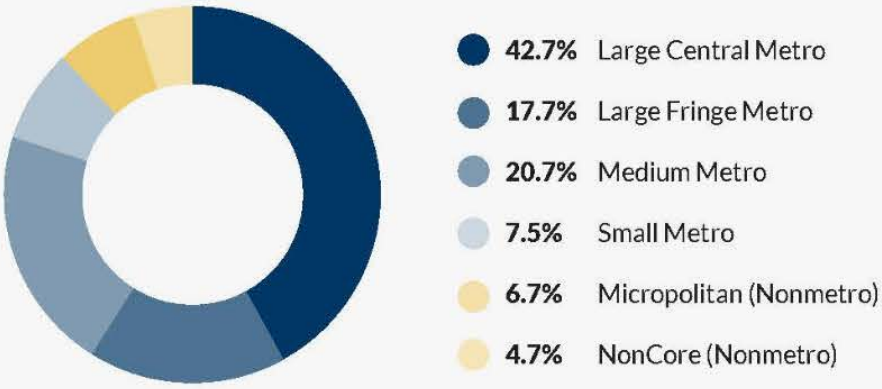
Looking at specific counties:

When looking at individual counties rather than consolidated by urbanization, a different pattern emerges. Of the 20 counties with the highest rates of firearm homicide, the majority are rural (14/20 were noncore or micropolitan non-metro) and only the remaining 6 are metropolitan (large, medium, and small metro, and large fringe metro). While high rates in sparsely-populated counties represent small total numbers of deaths, these rates are alarmingly high and indicate a significant burden on communities. Notably, 19 of the top 20 are in the South.

See appendix 6 for the list of counties with the highest firearm homicide rates.

FIGURE 12

Proportion of Firearm Homicides by Urbanization Level, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Geography of Suicide

By urbanization level:

The firearm suicide rate increases as counties become more rural. When clustered by urbanization level, in 2019, noncore (non-metro, most rural) counties had the highest rate of firearm suicide, 1.7 times higher than the national average and 2.6 times higher than large central metro (urban, big city) counties, where the firearm suicide rate was lowest. Because the total population is concentrated in cities and large suburbs as compared to more rural areas, the majority of firearm suicides -- 78% -- still occur in metropolitan areas (large, medium, and small metro, and large fringe metro), despite the lower rates.

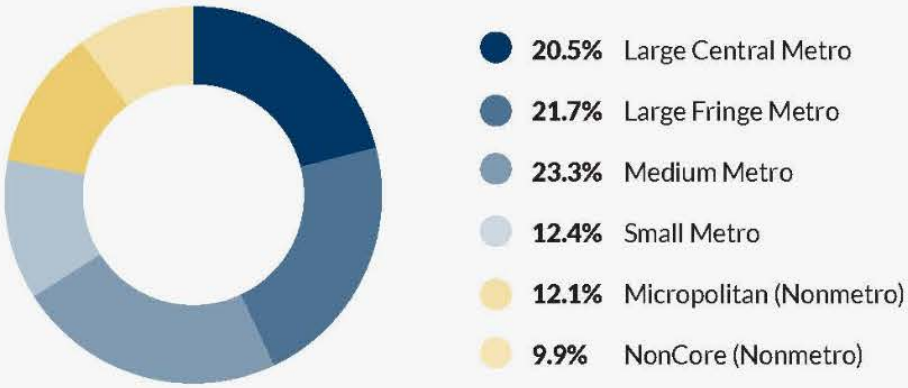
Looking at specific counties:

The 20 counties with the highest rates of firearm suicide from 2015-2019 were mostly rural (17/20 were noncore or micropolitan nonmetro) and nearly all clustered in the Mountain West (12/20) and South (7/20).

See appendix 7 for the list of counties with the highest firearm suicide rates.

FIGURE 13

Proportion of Firearm Suicides by Urbanization Level, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Gun Violence as a Leading Cause of Death

A Leading Cause of Death Among Young People

Unlike other leading causes of death, such as cancer or heart disease, gun violence disproportionately impacts children and young adults.

Children and teens 1-19 years:

Firearms were the leading cause of death in 2019 for American children and teens ages 1-19, prematurely taking the lives of nearly 3,400 Americans -- the second-highest total in twenty years -- and accounting for nearly one in ten deaths in this age group. Of these youngest victims, 44% were Black. More than half of all Black teens (15-19) who died in 2019 -- a staggering 57% -- were killed by gun violence. While suicides are 60% of all gun deaths across the whole U.S. population, homicides are the most common type of gun death among children and teens -- 60% of child and teen gun deaths were homicides and 34% were suicides.

Young adults 20-39 years:

Firearms are the leading cause of death for young adults ages 20-24 as well, accounting for almost one in four deaths in this age group and over half of the deaths among young Black men, specifically. While firearms drop to be the second leading cause of death for the general population for ages 25-34, they hold their position as the leading cause of death among Black men through age 39.

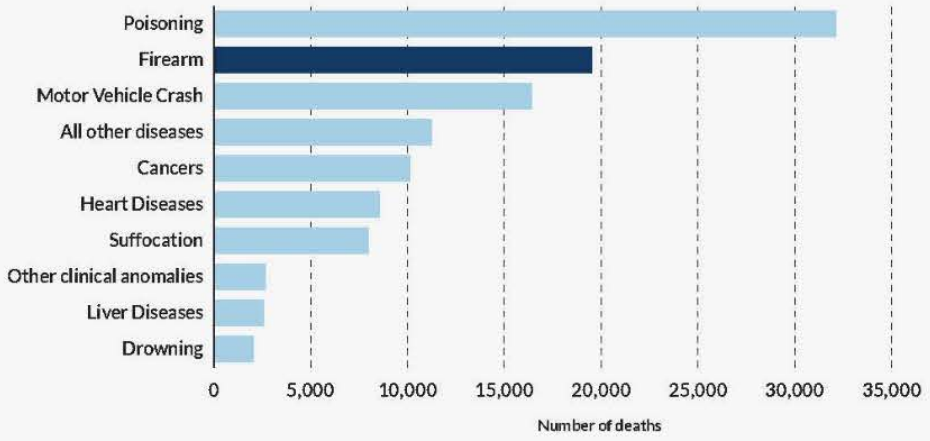
Total population under 40 years:

In total, 19,524 Americans under the age of 40 died by gun violence in 2019 -- 49% of all gun deaths. But while we know the numbers, the loss is immeasurable. When a young person is shot and killed, they lose decades of potential: the potential to grow up, have a family, contribute to society, and pursue their passions in life. Families lose a child, parent, or other loved one; the loss is felt across neighborhoods and communities. Despite the enormous toll gun violence inflicts on Americans, scant attention and only minimal funding is allocated to study and prevent this leading cause of death among young people.

FIGURE 14

Leading Causes of Death for Americans, Ages 1-39

By Injury Mechanism and all Other Leading Causes



Note: We chose not to include infant deaths in our analyses, as infants (under age 1) are at a unique risk for age-specific causes of death, including perinatal period deaths (stillbirths and deaths in the first 7 days of life) and congenital anomalies (commonly referred to as birth defects). If including infant deaths, the ten leading causes of death in 2019 for Americans ages 0-39 are as follows, starting with the leading cause of death: poisoning, firearm, motor vehicle crash, all other diseases, perinatal deaths, cancers, suffocation, heart diseases, congenital diseases, and other clinical anomalies. In 2019, 12 infants were killed by firearms.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Firearm Fatalities Compared to Other Forms of Fatal Injuries

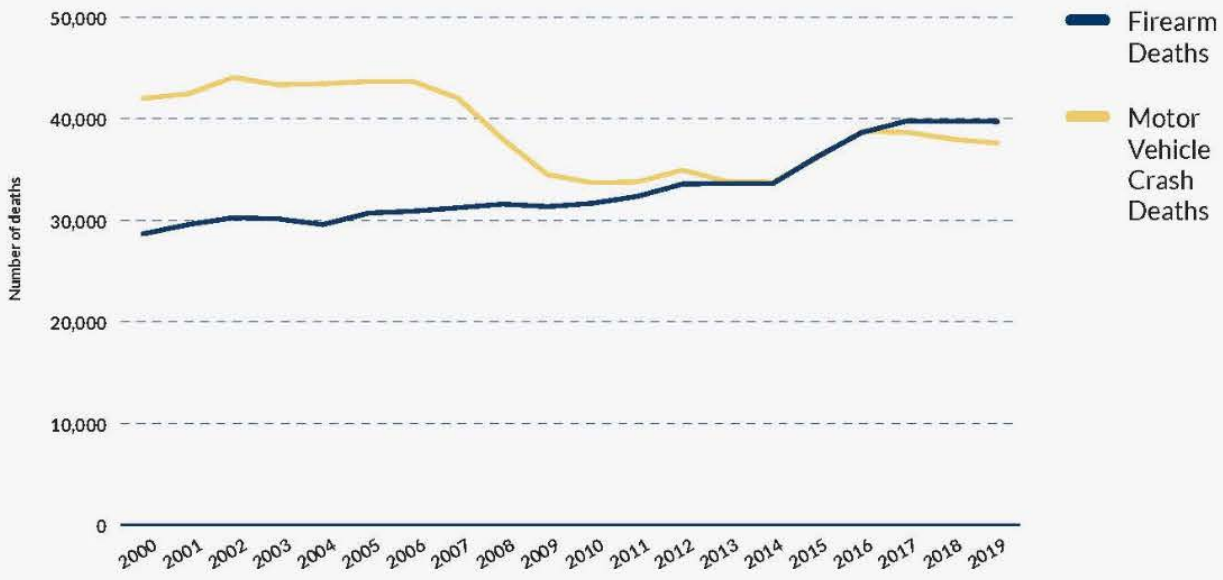
Injuries make up a substantial burden of premature death in the United States, and among injury mechanisms, firearms are one of the deadliest. In 2019, poisonings, falls, firearms, motor vehicle crashes, and suffocation were the five leading causes of injury-related death. Gun deaths outnumbered all the remaining causes of injury-related death combined.

Compared to car crashes:

The burden of firearm injury is often compared to car crashes, and their numbers are similar. In the last three years, however, for the first time more Americans died by guns than by car crashes (in 2019, 39,707 and 37,595 deaths, respectively). Reducing motor vehicle injuries and their severity has long been a focus of injury prevention policy; while there is clearly more work to do, substantial reductions have been made. A similarly comprehensive approach to gun violence prevention also holds promise.[10,11]

FIGURE 15

Firearm Deaths and Motor Vehicle Traffic Deaths, 2000-2019



Other notable injury death comparisons:

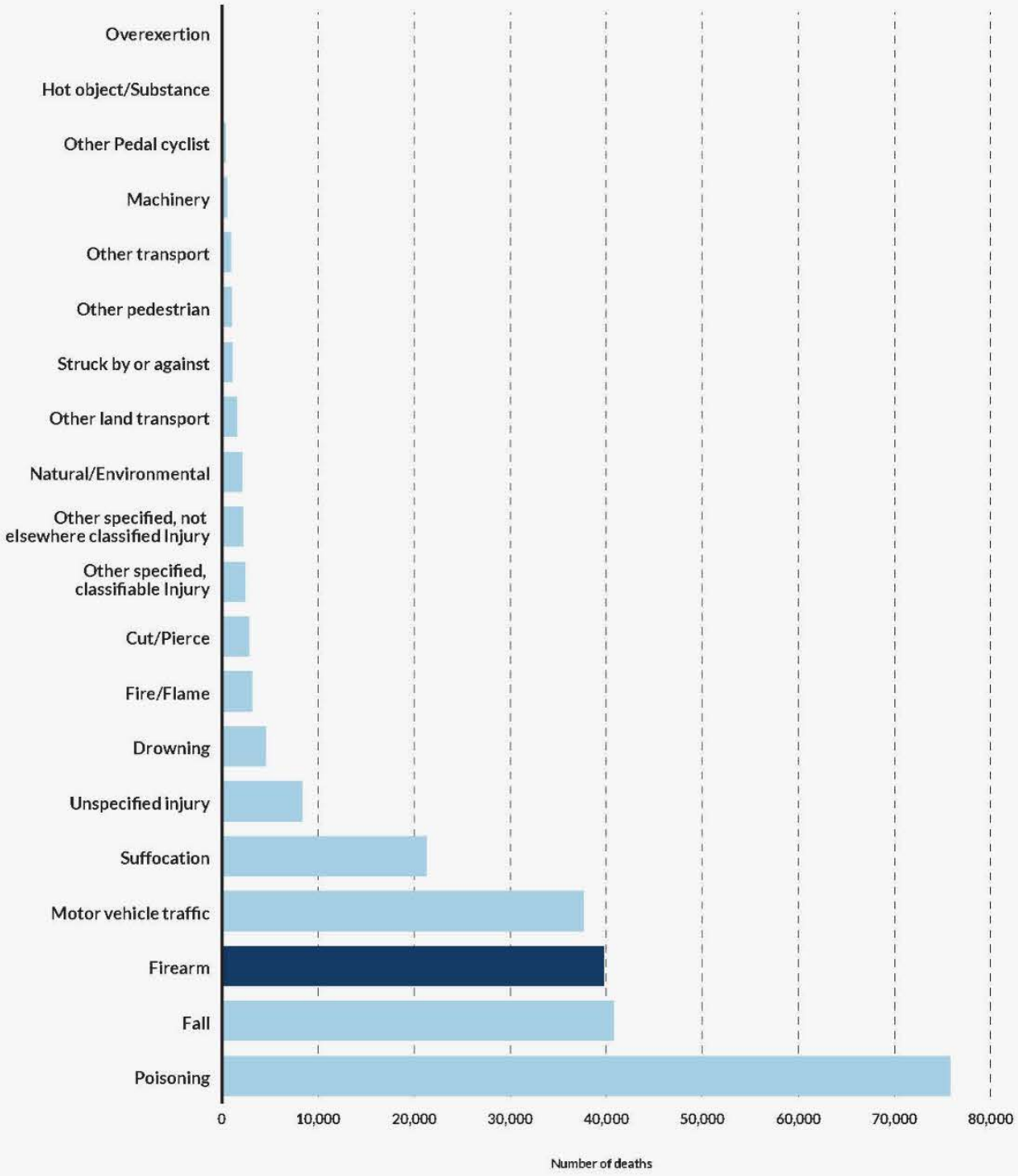
- 14 times as many Americans died by a gunshot than by cutting/piercing (knife, etc.)
- Nearly 9 times more Americans died by a gunshot than by drowning
- Nearly 13 times more Americans died by a gunshot than in a fire

10 Mozaffarian D, Hemenway D, Ludwig DS. Curbing Gun Violence: Lessons From Public Health Successes. JAMA. 2013;309(6):551–552. doi:10.1001/jama.2013.38
11 Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. (2020). The Public Health Approach to Gun Violence Prevention. efsgv.org/PublicHealthApproachToGVP

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

FIGURE 16

Total Injury Deaths by Mechanism, 2019



Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

Policy Recommendations to Stop Gun Violence

Gun violence is an ongoing yet preventable public health tragedy affecting communities all over the United States. It is also a complex issue that requires many approaches to its prevention, starting with the collection and timely dissemination of data. The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence and Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence are committed to advancing evidence-based policies, programs, and practices and ensuring that these preventative measures are designed and implemented equitably. Fortunately, there are a myriad of effective options at the federal, state, and local levels.

To improve how firearms data are collected and disseminated, we recommend all levels of government:

- Collect more comprehensive gun violence data for fatal and non-fatal firearm injuries, shootings that may not involve physical injuries, police-involved shootings, and firearm-involved crimes where no shots were fired, including domestic violence-related threats.
- Make data publicly available where possible, particularly to researchers studying gun violence and its prevention.
- Invest in resources to support the timely release of firearms injury and fatality data.

To stop gun violence in all its forms, we recommend:

- Apply the public health approach, with an equity lens, for effective gun violence prevention.[12]
- Fund and conduct gun violence research, and improve data infrastructure, which is fundamental for effective gun violence prevention.
- Enact and implement a true universal background check law that requires background checks on all gun sales and transfers, including private and online sales, and eliminate "default proceed" sales.
- Enact and implement state firearm licensing laws and support equitable implementation through local, state, and federal funding.
- Enact and implement state extreme risk laws to prevent tragedy before it occurs and support robust implementation through federal funding.
- Invest in community violence intervention and prevention programs and address the underlying social and economic inequalities that drive firearm violence.
- Support implementation of healthcare professional training on lethal means safety counseling so they are prepared to ask patients about firearm access and provide effective and respectful counseling when appropriate.
- Expand both federal and state domestic violence firearm prohibitions to reduce abusers' access to firearms and improve collection and reporting of domestic violence-related data.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

- Reinstate the federal ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines.
- Prohibit the manufacture, purchase, and possession of "ghost guns."
- Repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA).
- Require that new semi-automatic pistols manufactured, sold, or imported into the U.S. are equipped with microstamping technology.
- Enact and implement state prohibitions on the open carry of firearms in public and strongly regulate concealed carry of firearms to help protect public safety.
- Repeal state-level stand your ground laws, which run counter to centuries of self-defense doctrine and make it legal for individuals to kill another even when they can easily and safely retreat.
- Improve police accountability and strengthen police legitimacy through procedurally just policing practices.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 1:

United States Gun Deaths by Intent, 2000-2019

	Total Gun Deaths	Firearm Suicide Deaths	Firearm Homicide Deaths	Unintentional Gun Deaths	Legal Intervention Deaths*	Gun Deaths by Undetermined Intent
2000	28,663	16,586	10,801	776	270	230
2001	29,573	16,869	11,348	802	323	231
2002	30,242	17,108	11,829	762	300	243
2003	30,136	16,907	11,920	730	347	232
2004	29,569	16,750	11,624	649	311	235
2005	30,694	17,002	12,352	789	330	221
2006	30,896	16,883	12,791	642	360	220
2007	31,224	17,352	12,632	613	351	276
2008	31,593	18,223	12,179	592	326	273
2009	31,347	18,735	11,493	554	333	232
2010	31,672	19,392	11,078	606	344	252
2011	32,351	19,990	11,068	591	454	248
2012	33,563	20,666	11,622	548	471	256
2013	33,636	21,175	11,208	505	467	281
2014	33,594	21,386	11,008	461	464	275
2015	36,252	22,018	12,979	489	484	282
2016	38,658	22,938	14,415	495	510	300
2017	39,773	23,854	14,542	486	553	338
2018	39,740	24,432	13,958	458	539	353
2019	39,707	23,941	14,414	486	520	346

***A cautionary note about "legal intervention" data: Strong evidence shows that the government's data (including the CDC data presented here) provide a substantial under-count of police-involved injuries and deaths.13 To address this gap, several media sources have tracked police-involved shootings in recent years, most notably the Washington Post's Fatal Force database, finding more than double the number of police-involved fatal shootings than are reported in FBI and CDC databases. The Fatal Force database reported that 999 and 1,000 Americans were shot and killed by police in 2019 and 2020 respectively, nearly double the number that the CDC reported. Ultimately, better data on police-involved injuries and deaths are sorely needed. Compulsory and comprehensive data collection at the local level, reporting to the federal government, and transparency in the public dissemination of data will be critical for understanding this unique kind of gun violence and developing evidence-based solutions to minimize police-involved shootings.*

13 Barber, C., Azrael, D., Cohen, A., Miller, M., Thymes, D., Wang, D. E., & Hemenway, D. (2016). Homicides by police: comparing counts from the national violent death reporting system, vital statistics, and supplementary homicide reports. *American Journal of Public Health*. 106(5), 922-927.

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 2:

United States Gun Death Rates, by Intent, 2000-2019

	Gun Death Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Firearm Suicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Firearm Homicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Unintentional Gun Death Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000
2000	10.16	5.91	3.79	0.26
2001	10.31	5.91	3.93	0.28
2002	10.45	5.93	4.09	0.27
2003	10.31	5.78	4.1	0.25
2004	10.01	5.62	3.95	0.22
2005	10.3	5.67	4.18	0.27
2006	10.27	5.55	4.3	0.24
2007	10.28	5.61	4.21	0.2
2008	10.26	5.81	4.06	0.19
2009	10.07	5.92	3.8	0.18
2010	10.1	6.08	3.64	0.2
2011	10.22	6.2	3.6	0.2
2012	10.51	6.31	3.79	0.19
2013	10.43	6.41	3.63	0.16
2014	10.31	6.37	3.53	0.14
2015	11.06	6.51	4.17	0.15
2016	11.78	6.75	4.63	0.17
2017	11.99	6.93	4.65	0.16
2018	11.9	7.04	4.44	0.14
2019	11.86	6.84	4.59	0.16

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 3:

United States Gun Death Numbers by Demographic Groups, 2019

	Total Gun Deaths	Firearm Homicide Deaths	Firearm Suicide Deaths
Female (all races/ethnicities)	**5,666**	**2,287**	**3,216**
American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	70	37	31
Asian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	108	61	47
Black (non-Hispanic)	1,118	909	177
White (non-Hispanic)	3,811	932	2,775
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	555	346	184
Male (all races/ethnicities)	**34,041**	**12,127**	**20,725**
American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	315	135	152
Asian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	532	167	334
Black (non-Hispanic)	9,277	7,590	1,411
White (non-Hispanic)	20,340	2,261	17,427
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	3,503	1,955	1,350

APPENDIX 4:

United States Gun Death Rates by Demographic Groups, 2019

	Total Gun Death Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Firearm Homicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Firearm Suicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000
Female (all races/ethnicities)	**3.39**	**1.42**	**1.85**
American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	5.09	2.75	2.19
Asian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	0.95	0.53	0.41
Black (non-Hispanic)	5.03	4.11	0.76
White (non-Hispanic)	3.57	0.93	2.57
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	1.87	1.15	0.61
Male (all races/ethnicities)	**20.7**	**7.69**	**12.27**
American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	23.30	9.98	11.16
Asian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	5.09	1.58	3.19
Black (non-Hispanic)	43.09	34.88	6.90
White (non-Hispanic)	18.89	2.42	15.8
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	11.20	5.97	4.61

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 5:

State Variations, 2019

	TOTAL GUN DEATHS					FIREARM HOMICIDES			FIREARM SUICIDES		
State	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Total Gun Death Rate	Total Gun Deaths	Total Gun Death Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Total Gun Deaths Among Children and Teens (Ages 0-19)	Child and Teen Gun Death Rate per 100,000	Firearm Homicide Deaths	Firearm Homicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Homicide Rate	Firearm Suicide Deaths	Firearm Suicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Suicide Rate
Alabama	5	1,076	22.18	98	8.06	486	10.67	4	543	10.59	13
Alaska	1	179	24.4	24	12.19	51	7.2	11	117	15.68	2
Arizona	17	1,136	15.12	79	4.3	285	4.11	26	809	10.4	14
Arkansas	9	580	19.32	51	6.55	208	7.38	9	341	10.83	8
California	45	2,945	7.22	235	2.37	1,246	3.18	29	1,586	3.74	44
Colorado	19	846	14.21	74	5.26	164	2.89	30	647	10.71	10
Connecticut	46	190	5.27	10	Unreliable	65	1.97	36	118	3.08	45
Delaware	41	93	9.93	10	Unreliable	45	5.21	18	45	4.35	41
District of Columbia	13	141	18.33	20	13.39	128	16.52	1	12	Unreliable	*
Florida	27	2,872	12.7	187	3.97	1,013	5.2	19	1,808	7.27	33
Georgia	15	1,695	15.8	163	5.82	691	6.67	12	955	8.65	26
Hawaii	48	62	4.42	Suppressed	Suppressed	14	Unreliable	*	41	2.81	47
Idaho	20	255	14.2	16	Unreliable	18	Unreliable	*	223	12.25	5
Illinois	36	1,367	10.84	179	5.69	791	6.58	13	540	3.96	43
Indiana	21	958	14.09	100	5.7	355	5.53	15	570	8.08	27
Iowa	43	294	9.1	26	3.18	49	1.72	40	233	6.96	37
Kansas	22	403	13.74	43	5.5	99	3.51	28	291	9.83	22
Kentucky	18	682	14.88	58	5.18	201	4.82	22	445	9.28	23
Louisiana	6	1,013	22.15	107	8.89	542	12.35	3	446	9.23	24
Maine	35	163	11.46	10	Unreliable	13	Unreliable	*	144	9.85	20
Maryland	29	757	12.61	59	3.96	468	8.19	7	268	4.07	42
Massachusetts	51	247	3.4	18	Unreliable	95	1.39	43	142	1.87	49
Michigan	32	1,220	12.12	83	3.45	458	4.95	20	742	6.98	36
Minnesota	44	465	8.12	37	2.56	102	1.9	37	350	5.96	40
Mississippi	2	710	24.23	64	8.2	366	13.08	2	308	9.92	19
Missouri	7	1,252	20.6	122	7.99	537	9.33	6	681	10.7	11
Montana	10	209	19.03	17	Unreliable	24	2.29	33	172	15.31	3
Nebraska	39	205	10.37	13	Unreliable	40	2.09	35	154	7.7	31
Nevada	16	490	15.27	33	4.34	118	3.99	27	354	10.67	12

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

State	TOTAL GUN DEATHS					FIREARM HOMICIDES			FIREARM SUICIDES		
	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Total Gun Death Rate	Total Gun Deaths	Total Gun Death Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Total Gun Deaths Among Children and Teens (Ages 0-19)	Child and Teen Gun Death Rate per 100,000	Firearm Homicide Deaths	Firearm Homicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Homicide Rate	Firearm Suicide Deaths	Firearm Suicide Rate (age adjusted) per 100,000	Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Suicide Rate
New Hampshire	38	156	10.66	Suppressed	Suppressed	20	1.48	42	132	8.86	25
New Jersey	49	368	4.13	38	1.77	193	2.39	32	173	1.71	50
New Mexico	4	471	22.27	40	7.52	158	8.16	8	284	12.68	4
New York	50	804	3.94	50	1.11	326	1.74	39	455	2.09	48
North Carolina	24	1,397	13.11	116	4.47	541	5.41	16	781	6.99	35
North Dakota	31	93	12.44	10	Unreliable	10	Unreliable	*	79	10.29	15
Ohio	23	1,578	13.35	142	4.92	565	5.21	17	980	7.85	30
Oklahoma	11	737	18.56	70	6.61	246	6.56	14	473	11.52	6
Oregon	30	566	12.56	25	2.59	78	1.88	38	466	10.16	18
Pennsylvania	34	1,541	11.67	100	3.36	548	4.65	23	964	6.77	39
Rhode Island	47	48	4.58	Suppressed	Suppressed	12	Unreliable	*	33	2.9	46
South Carolina	8	1,012	19.88	95	7.61	453	9.5	5	532	9.84	21
South Dakota	25	113	13.07	10	Unreliable	11	Unreliable	*	98	11.25	7
Tennessee	12	1,270	18.38	103	6.14	474	7.37	10	746	10.22	16
Texas	28	3,683	12.66	388	4.73	1,299	4.5	24	2,237	7.65	32
Utah	26	394	12.81	32	3.11	51	1.6	41	329	10.78	9
Vermont	42	67	9.34	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	*	59	8.03	28
Virginia	33	1,025	11.71	87	4.17	342	4.18	25	661	7.25	34
Washington	37	842	10.71	56	3.04	165	2.22	34	637	7.96	29
West Virginia	14	300	16.64	20	4.97	76	4.86	21	196	10.16	17
Wisconsin	40	604	10.03	49	3.45	153	2.82	31	427	6.78	38
Wyoming	3	133	22.33	13	Unreliable	16	Unreliable	*	114	19.08	1

**Denotes where the state firearm homicide or suicide rate is unreliable and cannot be compared.*

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 6:

Counties with the Highest Firearm Homicide Rates, 2015-2019

Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Homicide Rate	County	Urbanization	Firearm Homicide Deaths (2015-2019)	Population (per year)	Firearm Homicide Rate (age adjusted, five-year average) per 100,000
1	Macon County, AL	NonCore (Nonmetro)	41	18,666	44.44
2	Petersburg City, VA	Large Fringe Metro	64	31,804	43.76
3	St. Louis City, MO	Large Central Metro	647	307,826	41.86
4	Phillips County, AR	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	32	18,574	40.83
5	Baltimore City, MD	Large Central Metro	1207	608,829	38.36
6	Dallas County, AL	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	60	39,172	36.22
7	Washington County, MS	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	73	46,111	35.08
8	Orleans Parish, LA	Large Central Metro	607	391,111	31.2
9	Holmes County, MS	NonCore (Nonmetro)	26	17,742	30.07
10	Coahoma County, MS	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	33	23,267	28.77
11	Jefferson County, AR	Small Metro	92	69,127	28.58
12	Leflore County, MS	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	38	29,436	27.33
13	Adams County, MS	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	34	31,078	25.21
14	Hinds County, MS	Medium Metro	297	238,508	25.07
15	Danville City, VA	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	47	41,169	24.72
16	Mississippi County, AR	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	50	42,124	24.21
17	Vance County, NC	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	46	44,428	23.18
18	Colleton County, SC	NonCore (Nonmetro)	35	37,720	22.26
19	Robeson County, NC	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	137	132,499	22.06
20	Hampton County, SC	NonCore (Nonmetro)	20	19,629	22.03

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

APPENDIX 7:

Counties with the Highest Firearm Suicide Rates, 2015-2019

Ranking, Highest to Lowest Firearm Suicide Rate	County	Urbanization	Firearm Suicide Deaths (2015-2019)	Population (per year)	Firearm Suicide Rate (age adjusted, five-year average) per 100,000
1	Park County, CO	Large Fringe Metro	29	17,796	34.39
2	La Paz County, AZ	NonCore (Nonmetro)	33	20,655	30.17
3	Sevier County, UT	NonCore (Nonmetro)	27	21,345	28.05
4	Morgan County, WV	NonCore (Nonmetro)	23	17,703	26.66
5	Lincoln County, MT	NonCore (Nonmetro)	22	19,505	26.35
6	Elko County, NV	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	65	52,398	25.35
7	Duchesne County, UT	NonCore (Nonmetro)	23	20,225	25.01
8	Humboldt County, NV	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	21	16,861	24.53
9	Silver Bow County, MT	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	41	34,737	24.48
10	McDowell County, WV	NonCore (Nonmetro)	23	18,656	24.33
11	Uinta County, WY	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	22	20,523	23.83
12	Curry County, OR	Micropolitan (Nonmetro)	37	22,721	23.77
13	Marion County, AR	NonCore (Nonmetro)	21	16,471	22.79
14	Gunnison County, CO	NonCore (Nonmetro)	21	16,824	22.77
15	Lumpkin County, GA	NonCore (Nonmetro)	36	32,458	22.39
16	Park County, WY	NonCore (Nonmetro)	34	29,333	22.19
17	Macon County, TN	Large Fringe Metro	27	23,915	21.93
18	Dawson County, GA	Large Fringe Metro	27	24,497	21.87
19	Idaho County, ID	NonCore (Nonmetro)	20	16,395	21.86
20	Polk County, AR	NonCore (Nonmetro)	24	20,104	21.76

Source: A Public Health Crisis Decades in the Making. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFSGV). 2021

OVERVIEW

- Black youth represented less than 15 percent of the total youth population but 52 percent of youth prosecuted in adult criminal court in 2018. Black youth are nine times more likely than white youth to receive an adult prison sentence, American Indian/Alaska Native youth are almost two times more likely, and Hispanic youth are 40 percent more likely.

GUN VIOLENCE: Child and teen gun deaths hit a 19-year high in 2017 and have remained elevated since.

- Gun violence was the leading cause of death for children and teens ages 1-19 in 2018, surpassing motor vehicle accidents for the first time.
- In 2019, 3,371 children and teens were killed with guns—one every 2 hours and 36 minutes.
- Black children and teens had the highest gun death rate, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens. Black children and teens were 4 times more likely to die from gun violence than their white peers.
- The United States has more guns than people—and nearly 1 in 5 are sold without background checks.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN: Family separation and anti-immigrant policies are dangerous to children's health, development, and well-being.

- Nearly 1 in 4, approximately 18 million, U.S. children lived with at least one immigrant parent in 2018.
- More than 1 in 4 immigrant children did not have health coverage in 2019, 25.5 percent compared to 5.1 percent of native-born citizen children.
- An estimated 6.9 million children lived with undocumented parents. Chronic uncertainty and distress about the threat of enforcement activity destroy children's sense of safety and their mental health.

Each Day in America

2	mothers die from complications of childbirth.
5	children are killed by abuse or neglect.
8	children or teens die by suicide.
9	children or teens are killed with a gun.
20	children or teens die from accidents.
46	children or teens are injured with a gun.
59	babies die before their first birthday.
121	children are arrested for violent crimes.
223	children are arrested for drug crimes.
514	public school students are corporally punished.*
678	babies are born without health insurance.
827	babies are born into extreme poverty.
860	babies are born with low birthweight.
1,541	babies are born into poverty.
1,785	children are confirmed as abused or neglected.
1,909	children are arrested.
2,906	high school students drop out.*
14,206	public school students are suspended.*

*Based on 180 school days a year

Source: The State of America's Children. Children's Defense Fund. 2021

GUN VIOLENCE

IN 2019, A CHILD OR TEEN WAS KILLED WITH A GUN EVERY

2 HOURS AND 36 MINUTES.

Even before COVID-19, another epidemic was killing our children at higher rates: gun violence. Gun violence was the leading cause of death for all children and teens ages 1-19 in 2018, surpassing motor vehicle accidents for the first time in history.[1] Children and teens are far more likely to die from gunfire than COVID-19,[2] yet our leaders continue to allow gun violence to go uncurbed and gun laws to go unchanged.

After years of congressional inaction, a growing number of children are paying with their lives. In 2019, 3,371 American children and teens were killed with guns—enough to fill more than 168 classrooms of 20 (see **Table 35**).

- Child and teen gun deaths hit a 19-year high in 2017 and have remained elevated since.[3]
- In 2019, nine children and teens were killed with guns each day in America—one every 2 hours and 36 minutes.[4]
- Guns killed more children and teens than cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma, HIV/AIDs, and opioids combined.[5]
- While mass shootings grabbed fleeting public and policymaker attention, routine gunfire took the lives of more children and teens every week than the Parkland, Sandy Hook, and Columbine massacres combined.
- Since 1963, nearly 193,000 children and teens have been killed with guns on American soil—more than four times the number of U.S. soldiers killed in action in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars combined.[6]

Shamefully, gun deaths reflect only part of the devastating toll of America's growing gun violence epidemic. Many more children and teens are injured than killed with guns each day in our nation.

- For every child or teen fatally shot, another 5 suffered non-fatal gunshot wounds.[7]
- An estimated 16,644 children and teens were injured with guns in 2018—one every 32 minutes.[8]

Gun violence affects all children, but children of color, boys, and older youth are at greatest risk.

- Black children and teens had the highest gun death rate in 2019 (11.9 per 100,000) followed by American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens (6.4 per 100,000).[9]
- Although Black children and teens made up only 14 percent of all children and teens in 2019, they accounted for 43 percent of child and teen gun deaths.[10]
- Black children and teens were four times more likely to be killed with guns than their white peers.[11]
- Eighty-six percent of children and teens who died from gunfire in 2019 were boys. Boys were six times more likely than girls to die in gun homicides. Black boys were 18 times more likely to be killed in gun homicides than white boys.[12]
- Eighty-five percent of child and teen gun deaths occurred among 15- to 19-year-olds, but infants and toddlers were far from immune. Guns killed more preschoolers than law enforcement officers in the line of duty. In 2019, 86 children under 5 were killed with guns compared with 51 law enforcement officers in the line of duty.[13]

No child is safe in a nation with easy access to deadly weapons. Even before the pandemic drove up fear and gun sales, there were too many firearms in our homes and streets—and a shocking number were sold without background checks.

- As of 2017, American civilians owned 393 million firearms—more than one gun per person. In contrast, U.S. military and law enforcement agencies possessed 5.5 million.[14]

Source: The State of America's Children. Children's Defense Fund. 2021

- Americans accounted for less than five percent of the global population, but owned nearly half (46 percent) of all civilian guns in the world.[15]
- Nearly 1 in 5 guns are sold without a background check due to a loophole in federal law exempting sales at gun shows, online, or between private individuals.[16]

Children are learning there are no safe spaces in our gun-saturated nation. Many children even live in homes with loaded, unlocked guns and know where they are kept. Too often, this leads to tragic accidents and preventable deaths. With a growing number of children learning and playing at home during COVID-related closures, the risk of gun accidents and suicides has only increased.

- A third of households with children have a gun and nearly half of gun-owning households with children do not store all of their firearms safely.[17]
- An estimated 4.6 million children live in homes with at least one unlocked and loaded gun—and most children know where these guns are kept.[18] About 3 in 4 children ages 5-14 with gun-owning parents know where firearms are stored and more than 1 in 5 have handled a gun in the home without their parents' knowledge.[19]
- Guns in the home are more likely to endanger than protect loved ones. The presence of a gun in the home makes the likelihood of homicide three times higher, suicide three to five times higher, and accidental death four times higher.[20]
- Eight children and teens are killed or injured in accidental shootings involving an improperly stored gun each day in America.[21]

It is long past time for leaders to end America's gun violence epidemic. Congress must urgently pass common-sense gun safety measures like universal background checks and child access prevention laws to protect children from firearms in their homes, schools, and communities. All children deserve the chance to live, learn, and play safely—free from violence and fear.

COVID-19 is Magnifying Our Gun Violence Epidemic and Highlighting the Need for Immediate Reform

The pandemic has created and exacerbated so many crises for children and families and gun violence is no exception. Unprecedented increases in gun sales—coupled with financial insecurity, social isolation, and other stressors—are magnifying America's gun violence crisis.

- Nearly two million guns were sold in March 2020 alone—the second highest number of guns ever sold in a single month—and this disturbing trend continued in the months that followed.[22]
- Even with much of the country on lockdown, mass shootings hit a record high in 2020. Children witnessed, suffered, or died in 611 mass shootings in 2020—up from 417 in 2019.[23]
- Gun accidents in the home have also surged during the pandemic. School and child care closures have exacerbated children's risk of dying in gun accidents at home. Between March and May 2020, accidental gun deaths by children increased by 30 percent relative to rates over the past three years.[24]
- The pandemic has also intensified factors that contribute to gun-related domestic violence and community violence: job losses and financial insecurities have left victims of domestic violence more vulnerable to harm as well as fueling community gun violence.[25]

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the consequences of our nation's longstanding failure to pass policies to keep children safe where they live and learn. Our leaders must not only advance meaningful solutions to address the COVID-19 crisis but also the ongoing gun violence crisis in America. We cannot allow children to die at the hands of these crises.

Source: The State of America's Children. Children's Defense Fund. 2021

WEAPON'S EFFECT

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