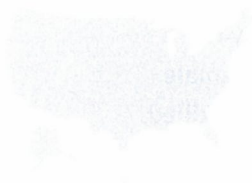


Gun Violence in Kentucky

OVERVIEW

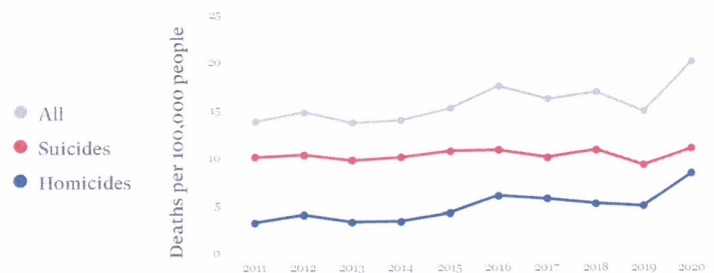
In an average year, **770** people die and **1,531** are wounded by guns in Kentucky. Kentucky has the **11th-highest** rate of gun violence in the US.



Data on states, congressional districts, and counties:
[EveryStat.org](https://www.everystat.org)

GUN DEATHS OVER TIME

In Kentucky, the rate of gun deaths increased **46%** from 2011 to 2020, compared to a **33%** increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased **9%** and gun homicides increased **159%** compared to a **12%** increase and **70%** increase nationwide, respectively.

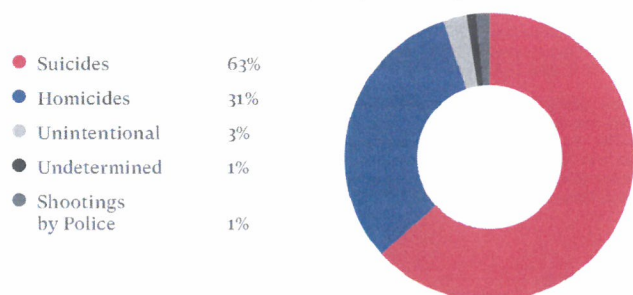


COST OF GUN VIOLENCE

Kentucky has the **18th-highest** societal cost of gun violence in the US at **\$2,155** per resident each year. Gun deaths and injuries cost Kentucky **\$9.6 billion** each year, of which **\$183.4 million** is paid by taxpayers.

GUN DEATHS BY INTENT

In Kentucky, **63%** of gun deaths are suicides and **31%** are homicides. This is compared to **59%** and **38%** nationwide, respectively.



SOURCES:

Gun deaths: CDC, WONDER, five-year average: 2016–2020.

Gun violence trends: CDC, WONDER, 2011–2020.

Gun injuries: Ted R. Miller, David Swedler, and Kate Schnippel analysis of HCUP nonfatal injury: 2019.

Cost of gun violence: Ted R. Miller and Bruce Lawrence analysis of CDC fatal injury: 2019 and HCUP nonfatal injury: 2019.

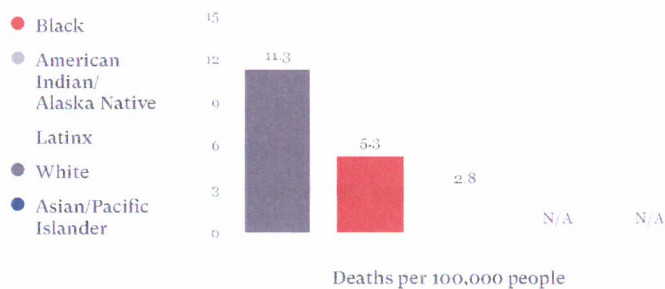
Rankings are based on the 50 states and Washington, DC, with first being highest, 51st lowest. Death and injury rankings are based on rates, economic cost rankings are based on average societal per-resident cost. Overall state gun violence rankings are calculated by adding count of gun deaths plus count of nonfatal gun injuries divided by population.

Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

GUN SUICIDES AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

Every year, an average of **487** people in Kentucky die by gun suicides and **68** are wounded by gun suicide attempts—a rate of **10.4** suicides and **1.5** suicide attempts per 100,000 people. Kentucky has the **11th-highest** rate of gun suicides and gun suicide attempts in the US.

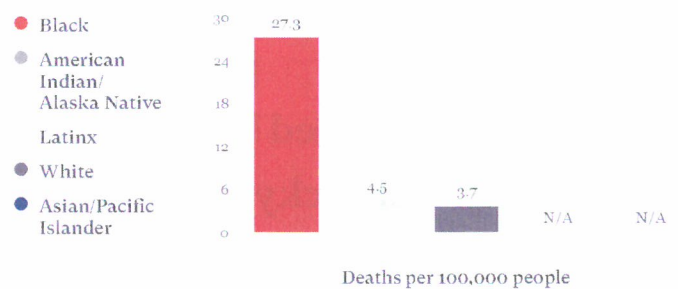
Gun Suicides By Race/Ethnicity in Kentucky



GUN HOMICIDES AND ASSAULTS

Every year, an average of **253** people in Kentucky die by gun homicides and **593** are wounded by gun assaults—a rate of **6.0** homicides and **13.3** assaults per 100,000 people. Kentucky has the **14th-highest** rate of gun homicides and gun assaults in the US. In Kentucky, **80%** of all homicides involve a gun, compared to **76%** nationwide.

Gun Homicides By Race/Ethnicity in Kentucky



CHILDREN AND TEENS GUN DEATHS

Guns are the **leading** cause of death among children and teens in Kentucky. In Kentucky, an average of **70** children and teens die by guns every year, of which **38%** of these deaths are suicides and **51%** are homicides. In the US, **35%** of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides and **60%** are homicides.

SOURCES:

Gun suicides and gun homicides: CDC, WONDER, five-year average: 2016–2020. Homicides include shootings by police.

Gun suicide attempts and gun assaults: Ted R. Miller, David Swedler, and Kate Schnippel analysis of HCUP nonfatal injury: 2019.

Children and teens gun deaths: CDC, WONDER, five-year average: 2016–2020, ages 0–19; Leading causes of death: CDC, WONDER, 2020, ages 1–19.

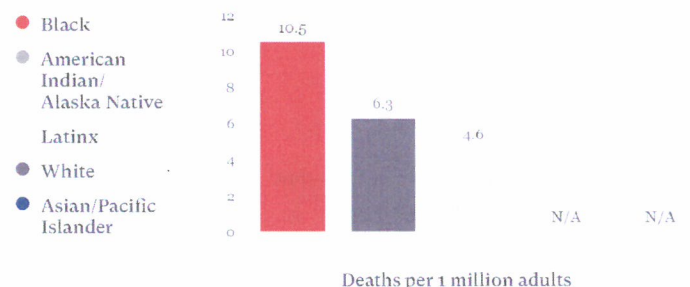
Intimate partner homicides: CDC, National Violent Death Reporting System, 2019; Intimate partner homicides by race and ethnicity: CDC, National Violent Death Reporting System, 2018–2019.

Note: Gun violence data on EveryStat and in this fact sheet includes individuals who die or are wounded by guns and visit a hospital for care. The impact of gun violence extends far beyond those who are killed or physically injured, but data on those who witness gun violence, are threatened with a gun, or know or care for someone wounded or killed is not systematically collected at this time.

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES

In 2019, **15** women were fatally shot by an intimate partner in Kentucky. **68%** of female intimate partner homicide victims were killed with a gun, compared to **67%** nationwide.

Intimate Partner Homicides by Race/Ethnicity in Kentucky





Talking To Your Children About Guns

Every year, 350 children unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else when they find unlocked, loaded guns.¹ Nearly 700 American children die by gun suicide each year.² One study showed that over 80 percent of children under the age of 18 who died by gun suicide used a gun belonging to a family member.³ The Be SMART program, designed to prevent these shootings, recognizes **that secure storage by adult gun owners is essential to preventing unauthorized, unsupervised access to firearms by children.**

It is always an adult's responsibility to prevent unauthorized access to guns, not a curious child's responsibility to avoid guns. That means always keeping all firearms unloaded, locked, and stored separately from ammunition.

And yet research shows that approximately 4.6 million American children live in homes with guns that are not stored securely.⁴ We recognize that until every gun is securely stored, children are still at risk of finding unsecured guns, and parents need guidance on how to talk to their children about what to do if that happens. The suggestions below, developed in collaboration with Marjorie Sanfilippo, Ph.D., a professor and expert on children's behaviors around firearms, are a good place to start:

Tips for Talking to Young Children:

- Make it part of the normal safety conversation you have with your children.
- Keep the language simple; for example: "If you see a gun, don't touch it. Tell an adult right away."
- Tell children not to touch a gun, even if it looks like a toy.
- Assure children they will not get in trouble if they tell an adult they've seen a gun.
- Repeat it on a regular basis.

Tips for Talking to Adolescents:

- Include it in your general safety conversations about topics like drugs, alcohol, and drunk driving.
- Tell them to immediately leave any situation where an unsecured gun is present.

- Tell them not to listen to a friend who says a gun is unloaded or otherwise safe.
- Give your teen strategies to get out of a situation where a gun is present—or brainstorm them together. For example, you could agree that your teen would say: "Mom just texted me that I have to get home right now."
- Assure them that it's OK to ask people about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes they may be visiting, but offer to do it for them if they don't feel comfortable.

Tips for All Ages:

- Don't have the conversation only once. Talk to them frequently, just as you would about other crucial safety issues.
- Make sure they understand that any situation where there's an unsupervised gun is a dangerous situation.

It is important to remember that **talking to children about guns is a precaution, not a guarantee of safety.** One study found that young children who go through a week-long gun safety training are just as likely as children with no training to approach or play with a handgun when they find one.⁵

This is one reason we take issue with the National Rifle Association's program to reduce unintentional shootings by children, Eddie Eagle, as it focuses solely on educating children not to touch guns without permission and to alert an adult if they find a firearm. That alone is not nearly sufficient to reduce unsupervised access to guns by children.

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety, "#NotAnAccident Index: Unintentional Shootings by Children," <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/notanaccident/>. A yearly average was developed using data from 2015 to 2021. Incidents from the index are collected from media reports of unintentional shootings by children under the age of 18 that result in injury or death.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using five years of most recent available data: 2016 to 2020. Analysis includes children aged 0 to 17.

³ Renee M. Johnson et al., "Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?" *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 40, no. 6 (2010): 609–11.

⁴ Matthew Miller and Deborah Azrael, "Firearm Storage in US Households with Children: Findings from the 2021 National Firearm Survey," *JAMA Network Open* 5, no. 2 (2022): e2148823.

⁵ Marjorie S. Hardy, "Teaching Firearm Safety to Children: Failure of a Program," *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 23, no. 2 (2002): 71–76.



Facts and Resources on Child Firearm Suicide

Gun violence has a devastating impact on children in America. **In fact, nearly 40 percent of child gun deaths are suicides**—nearly 700 child gun suicides each year.¹ One study showed that over 80 percent of children under the age of 18 who died by gun suicide used a gun belonging to a parent or relative.² For people of all ages, access to a gun increases the risk of death by suicide by three times.³

Most people who attempt suicide do not die—unless they use a gun.⁴ In fact, 90 percent of suicide attempts with a gun result in death—a much higher fatality rate than any other means of self-harm.⁵ This contributes to the fact that 41 percent of child suicides involve a gun.⁶

A national survey of high school students found that 20 percent had seriously considered attempting suicide within the last year.⁷ And one study showed that 41 percent of adolescents in gun-owning households report having “easy access” to the guns in their home.⁸

Signs to look out for when concerned that a loved one may be suicidal:⁹

- Prolonged sadness and depression
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Hopelessness
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Withdrawing/Isolation
- Aggression or agitation
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Talking about killing themselves

Research shows that secure firearm storage is associated with a decreased risk of child firearm suicide. One study showed that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries among children and teenagers.¹⁰ The risk of gun violence and self-harm have grown during the COVID-19 pandemic, with kids experiencing increased levels of stress and isolation, and more guns being purchased. These factors make it even more important that firearms are stored securely.

Some additional key steps you can take to support your loved one include: inviting an honest conversation, listening and supporting your loved one, and encouraging them to see a mental health professional or a primary care physician.¹¹

Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-8255. Available 24 hours a day.

Trevor Project, the LGBTQ youth suicide prevention line

Call TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386.

Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached by calling or texting 988 or chatting on <http://988lifeline.org>.



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using five years of most recent available data: 2016 to 2020. Children aged 0 to 17.

² Renee M. Johnson et al., "Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?" *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 40, no. 6, (2010): 609–11.

³ Andrew Anglemeyer, Tara Horvath, and George Rutherford, "The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 160, no. 2 (2014): 101–10.

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Firearm Suicide in the United States," December 28, 2021, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/firearm-suicide-in-the-united-states/>.

⁵ Andrew Conner, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, "Suicide Case-Fatality Rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: A Nationwide Population-Based Study," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 171, no. 2 (2019): 885–95.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using five years of most recent available data: 2016 to 2020. Analysis includes children aged 0 to 17.

⁷ Sherry Everett Jones et al., "Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness among High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic—Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021," *MMWR Supplement* 71, no. 3 (April 2022): 16–21.

⁸ Joseph A. Simonetto et al., "Psychiatric Comorbidity, Suicidality, and In-Home Firearm Access Among a Nationally Representative Sample of Adolescents," *JAMA Psychiatry*, 72, no. 2 (2015): 152–59.

⁹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs," (2022), <https://afsp.org/risk-factors-protective-factors-and-warning-signs>.

¹⁰ David C. Grossman et al., "Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Injuries," *JAMA* 293, no. 6 (2005): 707–14.

¹¹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "When Someone is at Risk," (2022), <https://afsp.org/when-someone-is-at-risk>.