

# Policies to Reduce Gun Violence in Illinois

Research, Policy Analysis,  
and Recommendations

2022 UPDATE



## About this Report

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# Executive Summary

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Though Illinois has stronger gun violence prevention laws than much of the country, there are specific actions Illinois could take to further reduce rates of firearm death and injury in the state. This report offers several recommendations, backed by empirical research, that state actors should adopt to achieve this end. The recommendations are divided among four main issue areas and preceded by an overview of the current state law and relevant research supporting the recommendations that follow. As public health researchers and advocates, our recommendations are for Illinois to:

## 1 Improve Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) Implementation

- a. Assign statewide FRO coordinators to serve as a liaison between petitioners and the court system
- b. Mandate clear and comprehensive reporting on FRO use
- c. Mandate FRO training for those involved in implementation
- d. Expand the list of eligible FRO petitioners to include licensed healthcare providers
- e. Provide FRO education to key partners and advocates in the violence prevention space
- f. Extend the six-month FRO to one year
- g. Utilize Byrne JAG funding for FRO implementation

## 2 Improve FOID Card Process

- a. Raise the age to 21 to buy firearms & obtain a FOID Card
- b. Require individuals applying for a FOID Card to apply for the license and to undergo fingerprinting in person at a state agency or state-certified vendor
- c. Convene experts and impacted groups in the mental health community to reevaluate potential stigmatization in the FOID denial and revocation criteria
- d. Submit Governor Pritzker's recommendations to expand the use of Clear and Present Danger Reports to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules' proposed rules process

## 3 Ban the Sale, Transfer, Manufacture, and Possession of Large Capacity Magazines

## 4 Counteract Gun Trafficking

- a. Establish an anti-gun trafficking unit within ISP
- b. Create accountability for firearm dealers in Illinois by codifying a public nuisance law for dangerous firearm distribution practices to fit within the PLCAA exception

## Purpose

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The purpose of this brief is to provide an overview of gun violence in Illinois, summarize evidence relevant to policies associated with reductions in gun violence, and provide policy recommendations that a variety of system actors in Illinois should consider as part of their gun violence reduction efforts.

## Gun Violence in Illinois

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Gun deaths have steadily increased over the last decade in Illinois. From 2011–2020, the gun death rate increased 64%.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, 1,745 Illinoisans died from gun violence, including 1,167 firearm homicides (encompassing at least 67 domestic violence-related homicides)<sup>2</sup> and 543 firearm suicides.<sup>1</sup> Firearms were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1–19 years, taking the lives of 196 Illinois children and teens in 2020.

Gun violence does not impact all people in the state equally. In 2020, men were over 10 times as likely to be gun homicide victims than women. Black people, especially Black men, are at an increased risk of dying by firearms. Young Black men ages 15–34 were 74 times as likely to die by firearm homicide than white men in 2020 and Black women were over 12 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white women from 2016 to 2020.

While both rural and urban counties in Illinois are impacted by gun violence, there are widespread county variations in gun violence in the state. The three counties with the highest gun death rates from 2011–2020 were St. Clair County, Massac County, and Vermilion County. Cook County had the sixth highest gun death rate in the state. In general, the more rural a county is in Illinois, the higher the firearm suicide rate it has. The inverse is true about firearm homicides. Seventy-five percent of all gun homicides occurred in Cook County from 2011 to 2020 even though it makes up only 41% of the state’s overall population. The key firearm prevention policies outlined in the brief are associated with reductions in many forms of gun violence.

**For more detailed information about gun violence in Illinois, see the Fact Sheet on page 15**



# Policy Recommendations

## 1 Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) Implementation

### OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAW

Effective as of 2019, Illinois' Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) law was designed to prevent foreseeable instances of gun violence and suicide before they occur. A FRO is a civil order that temporarily prohibits an individual (known as a respondent) who has been found by a court to pose a significant risk of harming themselves or others from acquiring and possessing firearms, a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) Card, and any Concealed Carry License. Law enforcement and family members are authorized to petition for a FRO.<sup>3</sup> In Illinois, "family members" include a current spouse, former spouse, person with whom the respondent has a minor child in common, parent, child, or stepchild of the respondent, any other person related by blood or present marriage to the respondent, or a person who shares a common dwelling with the respondent.<sup>3</sup>

FROs include short- and long-term orders that are applied in different circumstances. Short-term orders, also known as Emergency FROs, last up to 14 days if granted and do not require the respondent to be present during the evidentiary hearing.<sup>4</sup> Emergency FRO hearings occur when a respondent "poses an immediate and present danger of causing personal injury" to themselves or others by possessing a firearm.<sup>4</sup> The respondent is entitled to a court hearing to plead their case before a long-term order is initiated, but the short-term order ensures that no one is harmed in the week or two before then. Long-term orders, also known as Six-Month FROs, require a finding that the respondent "poses a significant danger" to themselves or others by possessing firearms.<sup>5</sup> Both orders require evidentiary hearings before a judge to be granted, and a long-term order may be terminated early or extended in additional hearings.<sup>6</sup>

### RELEVANT RESEARCH

Firearm Restraining Orders, also called extreme risk protection orders or extreme risk laws, among other names, help to put time and space between an at-risk individual and a firearm and have the potential to save lives in the 19 states and the District of Columbia that have such laws. Though these laws are still relatively new, a growing body of research suggests that extreme risk laws are valuable gun violence prevention tools and have been used when respondents threaten homicide, including mass shootings, and suicide.<sup>7,8,9,10, 11, 12</sup> A study of Connecticut's ERPO-style law estimated that for every 10–20 firearm removals issued, one life was saved.<sup>13</sup> Further, a study out of UC Davis found that support for, and willingness to use, extreme risk laws was lowest among Black Californians, though more research is needed to evaluate equity concerns with implementation across the country.<sup>14</sup>

### RECOMMENDED CHANGES

#### a. Assign statewide FRO coordinators to serve as a liaison between petitioners and the court system

Some jurisdictions have dedicated staff focusing on implementation of ERPOs. These staff may also work on other firearms enforcement and violence prevention issues, such as enforcing firearms prohibitions related to civil and criminal domestic violence protective orders, conducting

threat assessments, and being a member of a crisis intervention team. These teams are often multijurisdictional, multidisciplinary, and collaborative. For example, the Regional Domestic Violence Firearms Enforcement Unit in King County, Washington, is tasked with harm reduction and prevention in the county.<sup>15</sup> Their team is trained in how to use firearm removal laws, such as the ERPOs, in their state.

#### **b. Mandate clear and comprehensive reporting on FRO use**

Researchers, advocates, and policy makers need comprehensive data on FRO implementation to determine where and how the law is being applied and recognize opportunities for improving the policy or implementation. Illinois State Police (ISP) must be required to collect data and report on FRO use. For recommendations on key data to collect, see page 24 of the Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy's ERPO report.<sup>16</sup>

#### **c. Mandate FRO training for those involved in implementation**

FROs are still a relatively new policy. As such, regular training is necessary to improve implementation. All system actors, including law enforcement, judges, judicial administration, and prosecutors, must be required to participate in regular training.

#### **d. Expand the list of eligible FRO petitioners to include licensed healthcare providers**

Currently, only law enforcement and family members are allowed to petition for a FRO. Extreme risk laws were created with the intent that those closest to the respondent could intervene to help prevent a tragedy from occurring. Often, healthcare providers can fit into this category. According to the Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy, "The rationale behind this expansion is that healthcare providers are trained to identify and mitigate crises, and many providers already engage with people in crisis or who are otherwise at elevated risk of violence to self or others as a regular part of their professional work. Further, healthcare providers may provide an important alternate pathway to an ERPO for people who do not want to immediately involve law enforcement."<sup>16</sup> As such, we recommend that licensed healthcare providers be included in the list of eligible petitioners.

Currently, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, and the District of Columbia all allow certain healthcare providers to petition for ERPOs.<sup>17</sup>

#### **e. Provide FRO education to key partners and advocates in the violence prevention space**

Key partners need to be aware that the FRO exists and understand how it can be used to prevent gun violence. Specifically, individuals or groups that can petition or who are involved in the FRO process need to be educated. FRO education can be provided through the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) or ISP. Key groups to engage include:

- Office of the Attorney General
- State's attorneys
- Court clerks
- Law enforcement, including crisis intervention teams
- Judges
- Magistrates

- Judicial staff
- Local Veterans Affairs Hospital staff
- Public health professionals
- Clinicians
- Domestic violence advocates
- Suicide prevention advocates
- Dementia specialists
- Community members from communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence
- Clergy
- Gun owners and family members of gun owners

**f. Extend the six-month FRO to one year**

Petitioners for a FRO in Illinois may seek either an emergency or six-month (“final”) FRO. Illinois is unique among most states with ERPO laws in that its final FRO only lasts six months. Oftentimes, the risk of violence to self or others persists longer than six months. As such, the Illinois legislature should amend its FRO law and extend the final order to one year.

**g. Utilize Byrne JAG funding for FRO implementation**

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority should expand FRO implementation by using newly available federal funding through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 expanded the list of eligible criteria that JAG funds can go toward stating that funds can be used for the “implementation of State crisis intervention court proceedings and related programs or initiatives” including, “extreme risk protection order programs.”<sup>18, 19</sup> In addition, the federal legislation dedicated \$750 million for state crisis intervention programs to be disbursed to states over five years using the JAG allocation formula. Based on how this formula disbursed funds to states in 2021, Illinois can expect to receive an estimated \$5.5 million annually in funds that can be used to hire county FRO coordinators, to train law enforcement and other collaborators, and for other methods of improving FRO implementation. While the DOJ has yet to issue clear guidance and a timeline around these new funds, Illinois should begin planning how to best use these federal funds to ensure courts, law enforcement, and other public safety partners in jurisdictions across the state build the infrastructure to improve the implementation of its FRO law.

## 2 Improve Firearm Owner’s Identification (“FOID”) Card Process

### OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAW

Illinois generally requires that individuals obtain a license, known as a Firearm Owner’s Identification (“FOID”) Card, to acquire or possess firearms in the state.<sup>20</sup> FOID Cards are sought from the Illinois Department of State Police and may be applied for online or by mail.<sup>21</sup> FOID Card applicants must be Illinois residents, pass a background check, and be over the age of 21 or have written consent of a parent or legal guardian if they are under 21.<sup>22</sup> A FOID Card costs \$10 and is valid for 10 years.<sup>23</sup> There is no limit to the number of firearms a FOID cardholder may purchase or possess.

Several criteria are considered during the applicant’s background check. Age, residency, state and federal criminal history, and other background characteristics are weighed during the application process.<sup>24</sup> FOID Card applications can also be denied due to adjudicated determinations of mental health, diagnoses of developmental or intellectual disabilities, or prior mental health facility admissions within five years of applying.<sup>24</sup> Applications shall be approved or denied within 30 days from the date that the application was received.<sup>25</sup> Applicants do not need to submit fingerprints or undergo training to obtain a FOID Card. Certain law enforcement officers and valid Illinois concealed carry license holders are exempt from the FOID process.<sup>26</sup>

All FOID Cards must include the cardholder’s name, date of birth, sex, residence, physical description, recent photograph, and signature, along with a FOID Card number unique to the individual.<sup>27</sup> FOID cardholders have reciprocity in the neighboring states of Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, or Kentucky if they are not otherwise prohibited from possession of firearms there.<sup>28</sup> Starting January 1, 2023, FOID cardholders may have their FOID automatically renewed if they have submitted a set of fingerprints to the ISP.<sup>29</sup>

### RELEVANT RESEARCH

Firearm purchaser licensing laws that have in-person application requirements and/or fingerprint verification of applicants’ identity have been shown to reduce firearm homicides,<sup>30, 31, 32, 33</sup> firearm suicides,<sup>30, 34</sup> fatal mass shootings,<sup>35</sup> and law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty.<sup>36</sup> A key mechanism by which firearm purchaser licensing reduces gun violence appears to be the prevention of the diversion of firearms for criminal use.<sup>37, 38</sup> As reported in a prior Johns Hopkins report, Illinois and North Carolina—the only purchaser licensing states that don’t require in-person application, fingerprints, or safety training—have higher percentages of crime guns with indicators of trafficking or diversion and a higher share of crime guns originating from within-state sources than states with more comprehensive firearm purchaser licensing laws.<sup>39</sup>

Illinois is also an outlier among states with firearm purchaser licensing laws in that the state allows youth ages 18–20 to acquire a license to purchase handguns if they have parental permission. Minimum age restrictions for firearm acquisition are grounded in data demonstrating that adolescents ages 18–20 have high rates of homicide victimization and perpetration, suicidality, and risky behavior leading to unintentional injuries.<sup>40</sup> Especially among males, adolescent brain development shows less capacity to regulate emotions, avoid impulsive behavior, and anticipate consequences of risk-taking behavior in comparison to adults.<sup>41</sup> State laws establishing 21 as the minimum legal age for purchasing handguns are associated with reductions in suicide rates among the restricted age groups.<sup>42, 43</sup> Current research has not found a significant relationship between age 21 minimum age restrictions for firearms and homicides perpetrated by young adults.<sup>44</sup>



## RECOMMENDED CHANGES

### a. Raise the age to 21 to buy firearms & obtain a FOID Card

Firearms were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1–19 years in Illinois, taking the lives of 196 Illinois children and teens in 2020.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, many mass shootings have been perpetrated by young adults under the age of 21. The perpetrators of the 2022 mass shootings in Buffalo, NY, and Uvalde, TX, were both 18-year-olds who legally purchased their guns.<sup>45</sup> Further, the perpetrator of the Highland Park, IL shooting was under 21 when he legally purchased his guns.<sup>46</sup>

The human brain is still under development in adolescence and early adulthood. Data shows that states prohibiting the purchase of handguns until age 21 saw a reduction in firearm suicides among 18- to 20-year-olds.<sup>43</sup> This policy will not only save lives, but it is popular among the general public. Research from our Center found that 73% of survey respondents—including 61% of gun owners—supported raising the age to own a semiautomatic weapon to at least 21.<sup>47</sup> Putting additional time between an individual seeking to buy a gun and the gun purchase itself is an evidence-based approach to preventing gun violence.

### b. Require individuals applying for a FOID Card to apply for the license and to undergo fingerprinting in person at a state agency or state-certified vendor

Illinois is one of two states with licensing laws that do not require individuals seeking a license to apply for and obtain a license in person from an agency, such as law enforcement. In Illinois, individuals seeking a FOID Card are also not required to undergo fingerprinting and safety training. As noted in our 2019 report, Illinois (excluding Chicago) and North Carolina “have higher percentages of crime guns with time to crime under one year (15.9% and 16.7%, respectively) and higher percentages of crime guns originating from within-state sales (65.0% and 72.5%, respectively) than is the case for other purchaser licensing states that require in-person application, fingerprint verification and/or safety training.”<sup>39</sup> Licensing laws are one of the most effective ways to prevent many forms of gun violence, but only if they include specific components and applicant requirements. Illinois should update its licensing law to require individuals seeking a license to apply for a FOID Card and undergo fingerprinting in person.

### c. Convene experts and impacted groups in the mental health community to reevaluate potential stigmatization in the FOID denial and revocation criteria

The criteria for the denial or revocation of FOID Cards contains language that may be stigmatizing to persons living with mental health conditions. Many Americans live with mental health conditions, and research shows that these individuals are more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators.<sup>48</sup> Yet, diagnoses related to mental health and other conditions are focal considerations during the FOID application process, even if the diagnoses do not impact an individual’s risk of danger to themselves or others. The FOID Act was first passed in 1968 and has undergone several iterations since then.<sup>49</sup> Routine reevaluation is necessary to ensure the policy aligns with current research and our understanding of neurodiversity. Experts and impacted groups in the mental health community should convene to discuss the specific criteria for denial and revocation of a FOID Card to ensure the list includes empirically supported risk factors for violence and avoids stigmatizing language.

**d. Submit Governor Pritzker’s recommendations to expand the use of Clear and Present Danger Reports to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules proposed rules process**

At the request of Governor Pritzker on July 18, 2022, ISP submitted an emergency rule allowing broader use of Clear and Present Danger Reports to deny approval for a FOID Card or revoke a current FOID Card.<sup>50</sup> This emergency action was taken shortly after it was discovered that the Highland Park shooter had a Clear and Present Danger Report issued against him in 2019, but it was not considered during his 2020 FOID Card application because he did not have a FOID Card or FOID application at the time the report was made.<sup>51</sup> To address this loophole in the FOID application process, the emergency rule “allows for the use and maintenance of historic clear and present danger information even if the subject was not actively seeking or holding a FOID Card at the time a Clear and Present Danger Report was made and allows for use of these reports in possible future evaluations.”<sup>50</sup> While emergency rules go into effect within 10 days of filing for a change, they only remain in effect for 150 days. Thus, we urge ISP to submit these changes to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) to make them permanent.

### 3 Large Capacity Magazines

#### OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAW

At present, Illinois has no law restricting the size of magazines for firearms. The federal government had a large capacity magazine (LCM) ban enacted in 1994 that prohibited the sale and possession of firearm magazines containing more than 10 rounds of ammunition, but that law expired in 2004.<sup>52</sup> Since then, 11 states and the District of Columbia have implemented LCM laws in some form. California, Colorado, Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island and all outlaw the possession of magazines holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.<sup>53, 54</sup> Colorado prohibits the possession of magazines holding over 15 rounds of ammunition, and Vermont has a 10-round limit for long guns and 15 for handguns.<sup>55</sup> Hawaii’s LCM ban only applies to handgun magazines.<sup>56</sup> Washington state prohibits the manufacture, import, distribution, sale, or offer for sale of a firearm magazine holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition, but does not prohibit the possession of such devices.<sup>57</sup>

#### RELEVANT RESEARCH

LCMs allow shooters to rapidly fire many bullets without having to stop to reload. Firearms with LCMs are account for about half of all firearms used in fatal mass shootings<sup>58</sup> and two-thirds of the most deadly shootings.<sup>59</sup> Among all fatal mass shootings, the number of victims shot is two to three times higher when an LCM is used compared with firearms without an LCM. Research has shown that bans of LCMs are associated with significant reductions in the rate of fatal mass shootings and victims killed.<sup>35, 60, 61</sup>

#### RECOMMENDED CHANGE

##### **Ban the Sale, Transfer, Manufacture, and Possession of Large Capacity Magazines**

The Illinois General Assembly should introduce and pass legislation banning the sale, transfer, manufacture, and possession of magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition in the state. The law should also prohibit the attempted sale and transfer of LCMs. To address LCMs that were obtained before the ban was implemented, provisions should be included to allow for the modification or surrender of LCMs before the law takes effect. We recommend the law allow 180 days for the owners of LCMs in Illinois to permanently modify their magazines to hold no more than 10 rounds of ammunition or surrender their LCMs to law enforcement. Exemptions should be made for active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces and National Guard.

## 4 Counteract Gun Trafficking

### OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAW

Illinois utilizes several laws and tools to combat gun trafficking. It is a felony offense for someone without a FOID Card to bring, or cause to be brought, any firearms or ammunition into Illinois for the “purpose of sale, delivery, or transfer to any other person or with the intent to sell, deliver, or transfer the firearm or firearm ammunition to any other person.”<sup>62</sup> This law does not apply to nonresidents who may lawfully possess firearms in their home state.<sup>63</sup> Illinois criminalizes the knowing delivery of a firearm to someone prohibited under Federal or State law and providing false or misleading information to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms transaction record.<sup>64</sup> It is also illegal in the state to knowingly alter, change, remove, or obliterate the serial number on firearms, possess firearms with altered serial numbers, or deliver stolen firearms.<sup>65</sup>

A law effective in 2021 required the Illinois Department of State Police to establish a web-based system to aid in tracking and disseminating information about firearm crimes in the state and information about the firearms used in the commission of those crimes.<sup>66</sup> To compliment these efforts, the Illinois Office of the Attorney General developed a web resource known as the “Crime Gun Connect” platform to share crime gun data analysis with law enforcement.<sup>67</sup> The law also requires the ISP to “compile reports on the number of Firearm Owner’s Identification Card checks to determine firearms trafficking or straw purchase patterns” and make de-identified information accessible to researchers and state agencies for analysis.<sup>68</sup>

### RELEVANT RESEARCH

Data from federal gun trafficking investigations demonstrate that reckless firearm dealers play a key role in nearly half of trafficked guns.<sup>69</sup> Research has shown that public reporting by the ATF of gun dealers that are selling guns quickly diverted for criminal use can prompt more responsible sales practices that dramatically reduce gun trafficking.<sup>70</sup> Illinois has two types of laws shown to reduce gun trafficking—state licensing of firearm dealers and firearm purchaser licensing.<sup>71</sup> Research has shown that state laws licensing firearm dealers were only associated with lower rates of guns diverted for criminal use if strong regulations were combined with regular compliance checks.<sup>72</sup> Other studies have shown that undercover stings of suspected scofflaw gun dealers, followed by lawsuits seeking court-ordered reforms to firearm sales practices, significantly reduce the diversion of firearms for criminal misuse soon after retail sale.

Legal action, and even the threat of legal action, against reckless gun dealers has been successful at reducing firearm trafficking. Lawsuits brought against gun dealers linked to a disproportionate number of guns recovered from criminal suspects and crime scenes in Chicago were associated with a 62% reduction in crime gun diversions from Illinois gun dealers.<sup>73</sup> Successful lawsuits against out-of-state gun dealers linked to suspected gun trafficking rings bringing guns into New York City led to mandated reforms in sales practices.<sup>73</sup> The number of guns sold by these dealers that were later connected to crimes in New York City dropped by 82% after the lawsuits.<sup>74</sup>

The overwhelming majority of legal challenges to the firearm industry have been blocked by federal legislation for over 15 years. Signed into law in 2005, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) is a brief but uncompromising law that shields the gun industry from almost all civil liability for the harm inflicted by its products.<sup>75</sup> More specifically, the primary purpose of PLCAA was to prevent people from bringing civil lawsuits against members of the gun industry, including manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and importers of firearms or ammunition, when the firearm worked as intended.<sup>76</sup> PLCAA largely removed litigation as a viable tool to hold the gun industry

accountable for its dangerous business practices, as has been done with the tobacco and automotive industries, and has been criticized for exacerbating the public health crisis of gun violence in the United States.<sup>77</sup> Though PLCAA has six exceptions to the blanket immunity it provides for the firearm industry, few have proven viable in practice.<sup>78</sup>

However, one exception recently has been used to get around the immunity provided by PLCAA. This exception allows for lawsuits to bypass PLCAA immunity for the firearm industry if the firearm industry knowingly violated pre-existing state or federal laws applicable to the sale of the product at issue.<sup>78</sup> For instance, New York City’s litigation against gun dealers implicated in trafficking guns into the city has survived PLCAA challenges because New York has a specific state law against negligent business practices that create a public nuisance.<sup>79</sup> In addition to heightened legal accountability measures for licensed gun dealers, research has also shown that law enforcement task forces using data-driven practices for identifying and disrupting gun trafficking rings can significantly reduce the number of firearms illegally diverted to criminal markets.<sup>80</sup>

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES

### a. Establish an anti-gun trafficking unit within ISP

An anti-gun trafficking unit established within ISP should pool crime gun trace data from local law enforcement agencies, identify and investigate suspected gun traffickers, and bring cases to the ATF that involve out-of-state actors. New York recently created a similar initiative, referred to as the Gun Trafficking Interdiction Unit, that was funded through state budget allocations to the state police.<sup>81</sup> The Department of Justice also launched “five cross-jurisdictional strike forces” to address firearm trafficking in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area/Sacramento Region, and Washington, D.C., back in 2021.<sup>82</sup>

### b. Create accountability for firearm dealers in Illinois by codifying a public nuisance law for dangerous firearm distribution practices to fit within the PLCAA exception

Some states have considered passing public nuisance laws specifically drafted to pertain to the harm caused by firearms and ammunition, after courts ruled that the “predicate” law in question needed to pertain to firearms.<sup>83</sup> New York was the first to pass such a law in 2022.<sup>84</sup> California, Delaware, and New Jersey passed similar legislation that same year.<sup>85</sup> Illinois can do the same.

## Endnotes

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- 16 Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy. (2020). Extreme Risk Protection Orders: New Recommendations for Policy and Implementation. Available: [www.efsgv.org/ERPO2020](http://www.efsgv.org/ERPO2020)
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- 18 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, S.2938, 117th Cong. (2022).
- 19 34 U.S. Code § 10152 (a)(1)(I).
- 20 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/2; see also 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/2(a), (c-5), noting that individuals with valid permits to carry concealed handguns may possess firearms and ammunition without a FOID Card, but mostly require a FOID Card to purchase them.
- 21 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/4.
- 22 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/4(a); 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/3.1(b).
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- 24 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 65/8.
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- 84 See N.Y. Gen. Bus. Law § 898-b (McKinney), stating that "[n]o gun industry member, by conduct either unlawful in itself or unreasonable under all the circumstances shall knowingly or recklessly create, maintain or contribute to a condition in New York state that endangers the safety or health of the public through the sale, manufacturing, importing or marketing of a qualified product."
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# Illinois Gun Deaths in 2020



**1,745**  
gun deaths in  
Illinois, including

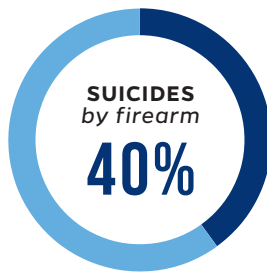


**196**  
children and  
teens (0-19)

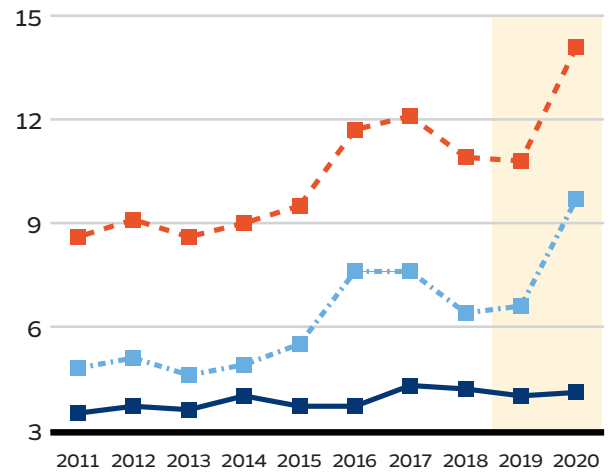
An average  
of **nearly five**  
people per day.



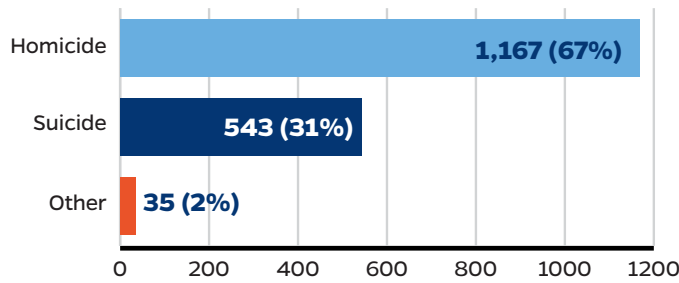
## BY METHOD



## TRENDS OVER TIME



## BY INTENT



The firearm homicide rate doubled over the last decade and **increased almost 50% from 2019 to 2020.**

## COSTS

**Gun violence costs Illinoisans more than \$19.5 billion per year.**  
This amounts to \$1,550 per Illinoisan.<sup>1</sup>



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Gun deaths have steadily increased over the last decade. From 2011-2020, the gun death rate increased 64%.
- Illinois had the 28<sup>th</sup> lowest gun death rate in the country in 2020.
- Firearms were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19.
- In 2020, there were at least 67 domestic violence-related homicides in Illinois. Fifty-two percent of the homicides were by firearm.<sup>2</sup>





DEMOGRAPHICS

Firearm Homicide in Illinois

- Males were over 10 times as likely to die by gun homicide than females.

**Black people are at the highest risk for gun homicide. They were 49 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white people.**

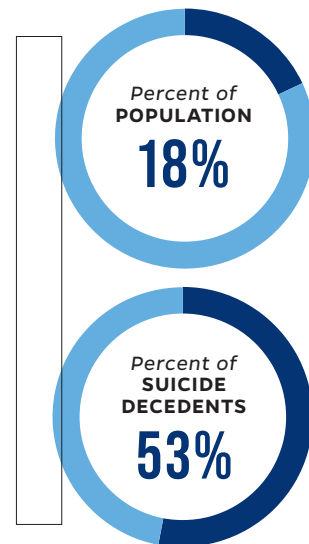
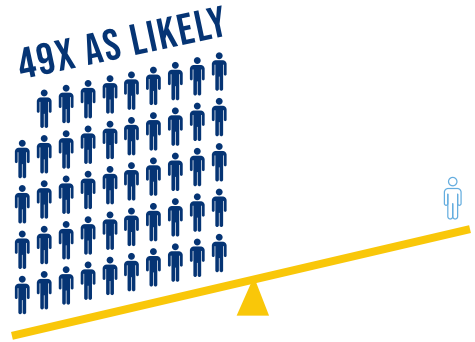
- Young Black males ages 15-34 were 74 times as likely to die by firearm homicide than white men in 2020.
- Young Hispanic/Latino males of the same age range were nearly 10 times as likely to die by firearm compared to their white counterparts.
- Black females were over 12 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white females from 2016 to 2020.

Firearm Suicide in Illinois

- Males were eight times as likely to die by firearm suicide than females.

**White males over the age of 34 accounted for 18% of the population in Illinois but 53% of all firearm suicide decedents in 2020.**

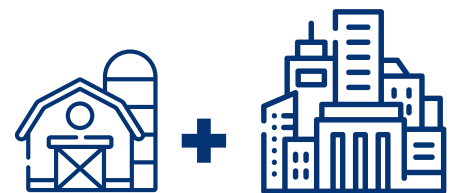
- Forty-two percent of all gun suicide decedents in 2020 were over the age of 54.



COUNTY VARIATION IN ILLINOIS

**While narratives around gun violence often focus on cities, both rural and urban communities in Illinois are impacted by gun violence.**

- The three counties with the highest gun death rates from 2011-2020 were St. Clair County, Massac County, and Vermilion County. Cook County had the 6th highest gun death rate in the state.<sup>3</sup>
- The more rural a county is in Illinois the higher the gun suicide rate. The gun suicide rate in rural counties was over two times as high as the rate in urban counties.
- The gun homicide rate in the most urban counties was nearly nine times as high as the rate in rural counties.
- Seventy-five percent of all gun homicides occurred in Cook County from 2011 to 2020 even though it makes up only 41% of the state's overall population.



All data is from the CDC WONDER from 2020 unless indicated.

Endnotes

- 1 WISQARS Cost of Injury. (2020). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available: <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/cost/>
- 2 Domestic Violence Homicide Report Illinois (2020). Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Available: <https://www.ilcadv.org/ilcadv-resources/?type=13>
- 3 All data in the county variation section is from 2011-2020. Large central metro and large fringe metro counties are classified as Urban. Rural counties are classified as Nonmetro.