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**Violence Policy Center**

# Hispanic Victims of Lethal Firearms Violence in the United States

2021 EDITION

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This study is also available in Spanish at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/hispanicesp21.pdf>.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

- **The homicide victimization rate for Hispanics in the United States is nearly twice as high as the homicide victimization rate for whites.** The Hispanic homicide victimization rate in 2019 was 5.15 per 100,000. In comparison, the homicide victimization rate for whites was 2.62 per 100,000. (p. 3)
- **Homicide is the third leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 15 to 24.** Eighty-seven percent of the victims were killed with a gun. (p. 4)
- **In 2019, more than 4,000 Hispanics were killed by guns.** That year 2,301 Hispanics died in gun homicides, 1,534 died in gun suicides, 60 died in unintentional shootings, and 163 died in other circumstances (including legal intervention and undetermined intent). (p. 3)
- **Nearly 70,000 Hispanics were killed by guns between 1999 and 2019.** During this period, 44,614 Hispanics died in gun homicides, 21,466 died in gun suicides, and 1,182 died in unintentional shootings. (p. 3)
- **Most Hispanic murder victims are killed with guns.** In 2019, guns were used in nearly three-quarters of the homicides where the victims were Hispanic (p. 5). The latest data shows that for homicides where the victim was Hispanic and a gun was used, 66 percent of these shootings involved a handgun, the highest percentage of all races and ethnicities. (p. 9)
- **Hispanic victims are more likely to be killed by a stranger than the national average.** The latest data from 2019 shows that when the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 33 percent of Hispanic victims were killed by a stranger. Nationwide, 24 percent of all homicide victims were killed by strangers. (p. 10)
- **A large percentage of Hispanic homicide victims are young.** The most recent available data shows 33 percent of Hispanic homicide victims in 2019 were age 24 and younger. In comparison, 34 percent of Black homicide victims and 19 percent of white homicide victims were age 24 and younger that year. (p. 11)
- **As a result of the limitations in current data collection, the total number of Hispanic victims is almost certainly higher than the reported numbers suggest.** Government agencies often report data on race but not on ethnic origin. Recognizing the changing demographic landscape in the United States, it is clear that fully documenting such victimization is a crucial step in preventing it.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Governmental agencies that collect data on death and injury should obtain complete information on the ethnic origin of individuals in addition to their race. This will ensure complete and accurate data collection on Hispanic victims of lethal violence.

- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be captured by all governmental agencies, regardless of department, and at all levels — local, state, and national — for all pertinent users and subjects of agency services.
- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be self-reported and not based solely on a person's surname or other measure.
- All public access data and published reports issued by governmental agencies should include information on ethnic origin in addition to race.
- The U.S. Department of Justice — specifically, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Justice Statistics — should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization.
- States with a substantial proportion of Hispanic residents should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization and deaths due to all causes, including violence.

Improved data collection is essential to fully understanding the scope of lethal firearms violence against Hispanics and helping develop effective measures to reduce such violence. At the same time additional efforts, both supporting current programs and activities as well as identifying new violence-reduction opportunities and approaches, should include the following.

- Support for community-based violence intervention programs that are holistic and encourage participation by all stakeholders.
- Educational efforts to better inform Hispanics of the risks associated with bringing a firearm into the home as measured by increased risk for homicide, suicide, and unintentional firearm deaths compared to how rarely guns are used in justifiable homicides. This is especially important in the face of current coordinated efforts by the gun industry targeting Hispanics as potential first-time gun buyers.<sup>1</sup>
- Improved access to resources for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Identification of anti-trafficking measures that could help interrupt the flow of illegal firearms to impacted communities.

1 For more information, please see the January 2021 Violence Policy Center study *How the Firearms Industry and NRA Market Guns to Communities of Color* (<https://vpc.org/how-the-firearms-industry-and-nra-market-guns-to-communities-of-color-contents/>).

## DEFINITIONS

The terms and definitions for race and ethnicity in this report are derived from U.S. Census Bureau definitions. Race and ethnicity are two separate designations. Federal data commonly uses the term “Black” rather than African-American and “Hispanic” instead of Latino or Latinx. For the purposes of this report the definitions below will be used.

### Race

#### American Indian or Alaska Native

A non-Hispanic person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

#### Asian

A non-Hispanic person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East (e.g., China, Japan), Southeast Asia (e.g., Vietnam, Thailand) or the India subcontinent (e.g., India, Pakistan).

#### Black

A non-Hispanic person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

#### Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

A non-Hispanic person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

#### White

A non-Hispanic person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

### Ethnicity

#### Hispanic

A person of *any race* having origins in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central or South America, or other Spanish cultures.

As noted above, the definitions used in this study are dictated by the terms utilized by government agencies in the collection of information. The Violence Policy Center recognizes the role played by language and the importance of identity language. The VPC understands that the population included within the term Hispanic may not identify with this label. While this term is used throughout this study to remain consistent with the data as reported, the VPC’s intent is not to reiterate or endorse any implications that may accompany it. Hopefully, in the near future data collection will become more sensitive and responsive to relevant terminology and identity language.

## INTRODUCTION

### FOCUS ON HISPANICS

In 2001, the United States experienced a historic demographic change. For the first time, Hispanics became the largest minority group in the nation, exceeding the number of Black residents.<sup>2</sup> With a population in 2019 of 60.6 million, Hispanics represent 18.5 percent of the total population of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

This study is intended to report the latest national information available at the time of writing on Hispanic homicide victimization and suicide in the United States, the role of firearms in homicide and suicide, and overall gun death figures. Recognizing this demographic landscape, the importance of documenting such victimization is clear.

### AVAILABLE NATIONAL DATA ON HISPANIC LETHAL VICTIMIZATION

The two major sources of national lethal victimization information — public health and criminal justice records — include Hispanic ethnicity as well as race, but unfortunately in a manner that is neither comprehensive nor consistent.

- The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains national public health data as recorded by death certificates and compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).<sup>4</sup> The CDC collects mortality data that includes homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths. While the CDC data is the most comprehensive available to measure *total* fatal victimization in each category as well as age and race/ethnicity, it lacks the additional information categories contained in the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report for homicides.
- The U.S. Department of Justice is the repository of national criminal justice records. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) compiles data on reported crime, including homicide, through its Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and its Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR), which is a subset of the UCR. Homicide-related information that is unique to the SHR includes: the age of both the victim and offender; the circumstances surrounding the homicide; the relationship of the victim to the offender; and, more detailed information on the type of weapon used, including whether a gun used was a handgun, rifle, or shotgun.<sup>5</sup>

2 "Hispanics Now Largest Minority, Census Shows," *New York Times*, January 22, 2003.

3 United States Census Bureau population estimates (<https://www.census.gov/>).

4 The CDC also maintains the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), a public health surveillance and reporting system that records more detailed data on violent deaths through the review of additional resources, such as death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, and information from crime laboratories to aid in the development of violence-reduction approaches (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nvdrs/index.html>). NVDRS began collecting data on violent deaths from six states in 2002, followed by progressive additions to the system over several years. In 2018, NVDRS was expanded to include data collection from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. While these jurisdictions currently participate in NVDRS, comprehensive national information from all reporting entities is not yet available.

5 The FBI is scheduled to make dramatic and disturbing changes in the way it collects and reports crime data. The changes would drastically reduce the availability of state and local data and deprive researchers access to detailed data that can help prevent gun violence and other crime. The FBI has announced that beginning in 2021, it will stop collecting detailed crime data from police agencies that are not ready to participate in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), an updated and expanded version of the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system. While full implementation of NIBRS would be an improvement on the current UCR system, for 2019 only about half of law enforcement agencies that participated in the UCR program submitted their information through the new system. Instead of allowing local agencies who miss the deadline to continue to report crime data via the UCR, the FBI will partner with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to create national estimates to account for the missing information. BJS forecasts that the estimates will cover approximately 25 percent of the more than 16,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States that report to the UCR. These changes would represent a dramatic step backwards and hobble efforts to understand and prevent gun violence, domestic violence, homicide, and, in fact, all types of violent crime.

While the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report offers the most information available on homicide at the national level, the data — especially in the context of reporting ethnicity — is limited. For example, in the SHR data used for this report, information on the Hispanic ethnicity of homicide victims was available for only 45 of the 50 states (as recently as 2015 the number of states reporting Hispanic ethnicity to the SHR was only 24).<sup>6</sup> The FBI *does not* collect data on suicides or unintentional deaths.

Recognizing the strengths and limitations of each of these two separate data sets, this study will utilize 2019 CDC data (the most recent available at time of writing) for information on Hispanic homicide, suicide, and overall gun death; leading causes of death; and, the use of firearms in Hispanic homicide and suicide. It will utilize 2019 FBI data (the most recent available at time of writing) for information on homicide not contained in the CDC data.

**Section One: Public Health Data.** Using this data for Hispanics we will: rank the leading causes of death, including homicide and suicide; detail the number of homicides and suicides, sex, and the victimization rates; and, present historical data on Hispanic homicide, suicide, and overall gun death.

**Section Two: Criminal Justice Data.** Using this information, we will detail for Hispanics: the types of firearms used in homicide; the relationship of homicide victims to their offenders; and, the circumstances of the homicides.

**Section Three: Conclusion.** This section offers policy recommendations based on the study's findings.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2019, the most recent year for which data was available at the time of writing, all states with the exception of Alabama and Florida participated in the SHR.



## SECTION ONE: PUBLIC HEALTH DATA

In 2019, the most recent year for which complete data is available, more than 4,000 Hispanics were killed by firearms in the United States. Between 1999 and 2019, nearly 70,000 Hispanics were killed by guns.

**Figure 1: Hispanic Firearm Deaths in the United States, 1999 to 2019**

Year	Firearm Homicide	Firearm Suicide	Firearm Unintentional	Other Firearm Deaths*	Total Firearm Deaths
1999	1,939	794	66	79	2,878
2000	1,958	813	59	61	2,891
2001	2,123	798	86	80	3,087
2002	2,168	834	60	81	3,143
2003	2,316	835	71	97	3,319
2004	2,241	888	56	93	3,278
2005	2,453	824	95	97	3,469
2006	2,472	817	66	109	3,464
2007	2,385	931	65	111	3,492
2008	2,260	863	39	94	3,256
2009	2,115	955	47	85	3,202
2010	1,919	962	37	90	3,008
2011	1,831	946	52	118	2,947
2012	1,870	1,023	48	120	3,061
2013	1,750	1,034	49	118	2,951
2014	1,746	1,116	32	116	3,010
2015	2,021	1,162	37	112	3,332
2016	2,287	1,313	58	113	3,771
2017	2,268	1,423	50	143	3,884
2018	2,191	1,601	49	177	4,018
2019	2,301	1,534	60	163	4,058
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,614</b>	<b>21,466</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>2,257</b>	<b>69,519</b>

\* "Other" includes legal intervention and undetermined intent.

For the general population in 2019, violent causes of death ranked 10th (suicide) and 16th (homicide) among all leading causes of death. These data for the general population, however, mask stark racial and ethnic differences.

### HOMICIDE

In 2019, there were 3,122 Hispanic victims of homicide by all means in the United States. The Hispanic homicide victimization rate for that year was 5.15 per 100,000 (the firearm homicide rate for Hispanics was 3.80). In comparison, the overall homicide victimization rate for that year was 5.83 per 100,000 (firearm homicide rate of 4.39),

the Black homicide victimization rate was 23.20 per 100,000 (firearm homicide rate of 19.66), and the white homicide victimization rate was 2.62 per 100,000 (firearm homicide rate of 1.59).

While nationally homicide ranked 16th among all leading causes of death, for Hispanics it ranked 12th, for Blacks it ranked seventh, and for whites, it ranked 20th.

**Figure 2: Ranking of Homicide as the Leading Cause of Death for General Population, All Races, and Hispanics, 2019**

Race or Ethnicity for Both Sexes, All Ages	Ranking of Homicide, Any Means, Leading Cause of Death
General Population	16
Hispanic	12
American Indian/Alaska Native	12
Asian/Pacific Islander	18
Black	7
White	20

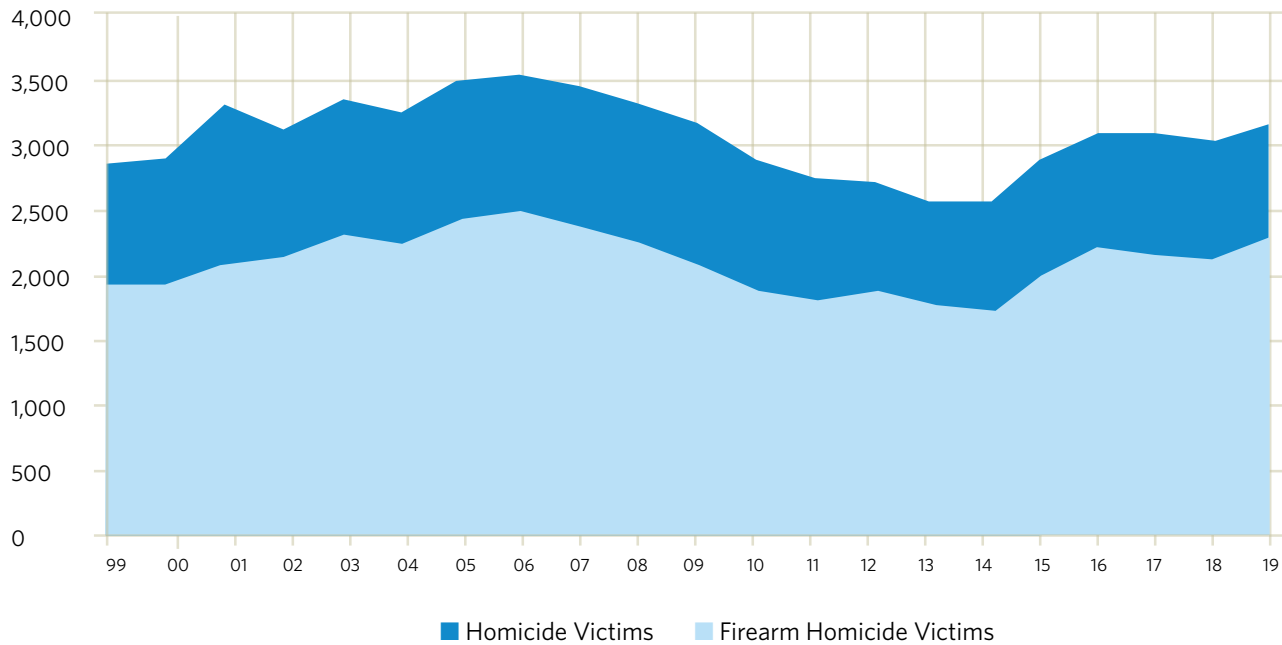
Looking at youth and young adults, however, in 2019 homicide ranked as the third leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 15 to 24. Homicide ranked as the leading cause of death for Blacks in this age group, third for American Indian/Alaska Natives and whites, and fourth for Asian/Pacific Islanders.

**Figure 3: Ranking of Homicide as the Leading Cause of Death, Ages 15 to 24, for General Population, All Races, and Hispanics, 2019**

Both Sexes, Ages 15 to 24	Ranking of Homicide, Any Means, Leading Cause of Death	Percentage of Victims Killed With a Firearm
General Population	3	91%
Hispanic	3	87%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	67%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	82%
Black	1	95%
White	3	82%

In 2019, 74 percent of Hispanic homicide victims were killed with firearms. (Because the CDC data does not report what type of firearm — handgun, rifle, or shotgun — was used in the homicide, this question is addressed in *Section Two* of this report using 2019 data from the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Report.) During the period 1999 to 2019, more than two-thirds of all Hispanic homicide victims were killed with firearms (69 percent).

**Figure 4: Hispanic Homicide Victims and Hispanic Firearm Homicide Victims, 1999 to 2019**



**Figure 5: Number of Homicide Victims, Homicide Rate, and Percentage Killed With a Firearm, Hispanic Victims, 1999 to 2019**

Year	Homicide Victims	Homicide Rate per 100,000	Percentage Killed With a Firearm
1999	2,864	8.44	68%
2000	2,917	8.18	67%
2001	3,331	8.97	64%
2002	3,129	8.10	69%
2003	3,355	8.38	69%
2004	3,271	7.88	69%
2005	3,520	8.18	70%
2006	3,524	7.90	70%
2007	3,466	7.50	69%
2008	3,331	6.97	68%
2009	3,179	6.44	67%
2010	2,890	5.73	66%
2011	2,759	5.32	66%
2012	2,740	5.18	68%
2013	2,571	4.76	68%
2014	2,610	4.74	67%
2015	2,886	5.13	70%
2016	3,187	5.55	72%
2017	3,186	5.44	71%
2018	3,045	5.11	72%
2019	3,122	5.15	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,883</b>	<b>6.39</b>	<b>69%</b>

Hispanic victims of firearm homicide are overwhelmingly male. In 2019, 85 percent of Hispanic victims of firearm homicide were male. In comparison, 71 percent of white firearm homicide victims were male. Eighty-nine percent of Black firearm homicide victims were male, as were 78 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native victims and 73 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander victims.

**Figure 6: Firearm Homicide Victims by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex, 2019**

Race	Male Victims	Percent	Female Victims	Percent	Total Victims
Hispanic	1,955	85%	346	15%	2,301
American Indian/Alaska Native	135	78%	37	22%	172
Asian/Pacific Islander	167	73%	61	27%	228
Black	7,590	89%	909	11%	8,499
White	2,261	71%	932	29%	3,193
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,127</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14,414</b>

## SUICIDE

Nationally suicide ranked 10th among all leading causes of death in 2019 and also ranked 10th for Hispanics. For American Indian/Alaska Natives it ranked eighth, for whites it ranked ninth, for Asian/Pacific Islanders it ranked 11th, and for Blacks it ranked 15th.

**Figure 7: Ranking of Suicide as the Leading Cause of Death for General Population, for All Races, and Hispanics, 2019**

Total (Both Sexes, All Ages)	Ranking of Suicide, Any Means, Leading Cause of Death
General Population	10
Hispanic	10
American Indian/Alaska Native	8
Asian/Pacific Islander	11
Black	15
White	9

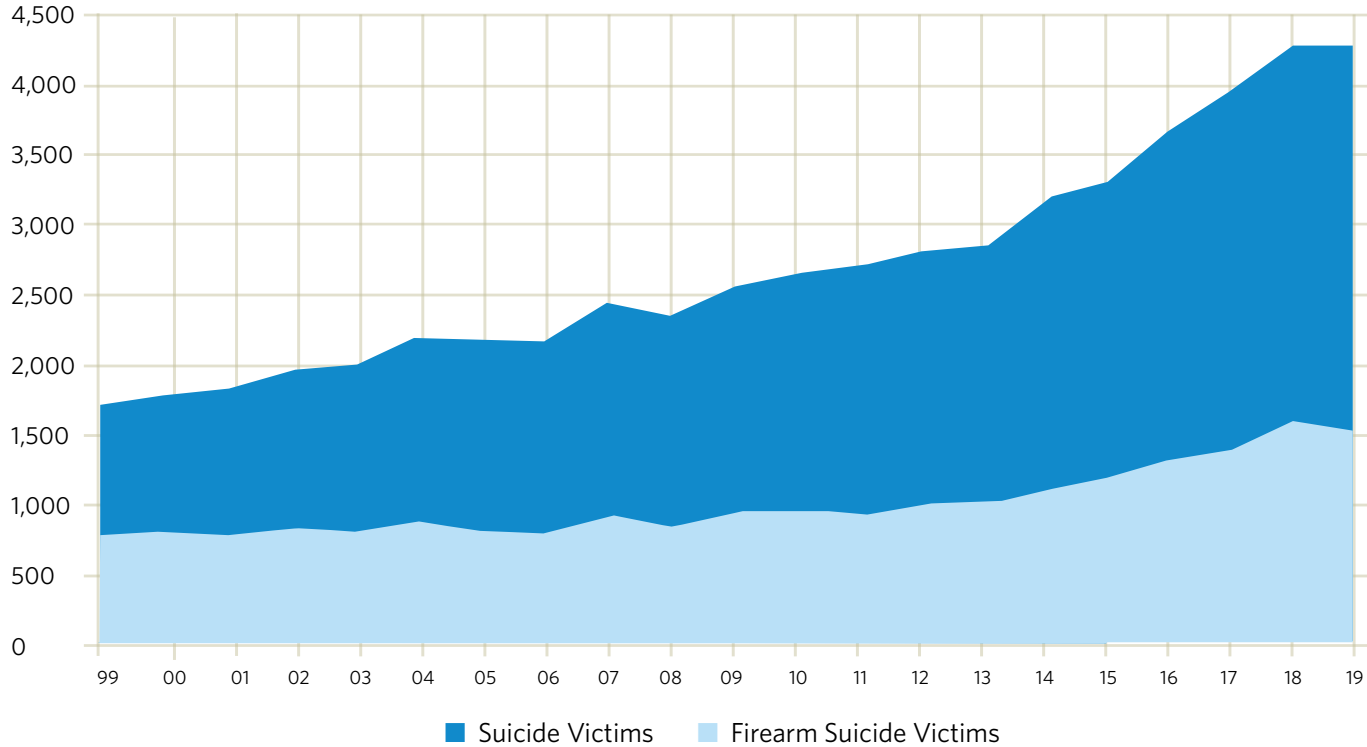
Looking at youth and young adults, however, in 2019 suicide ranked as the second leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 15 to 24. Suicide also ranked as the second leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Natives, and whites. Suicide was the leading cause of death for Asian/Pacific Islanders ages 15 to 24, and third for Blacks in this age group.

**Figure 8: Ranking of Suicide as the Leading Cause of Death, Ages 15 to 24, for General Population, All Races, and Hispanics, 2019**

Both Sexes, Ages 15 to 24	Ranking of Suicide, Any Means, Leading Cause of Death	Percentage of Victims Killed With a Firearm
General Population	2	47%
Hispanic	2	37%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	64%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	28%
Black	3	51%
White	2	51%

During the period 1999 to 2019, 38 percent of all Hispanics who took their own lives did so with a firearm.

**Figure 9: Hispanic Suicide Victims and Hispanic Firearm Suicide Victims, 1999 to 2019**



**Figure 10: Number of Suicide Victims, Suicide Rate, Percentage Killed With a Firearm, Hispanic Victims, 1999 to 2019**

Year	Suicide Victims	Suicide Rate	Percentage Killed With a Firearm
1999	1,695	4.99	47%
2000	1,787	5.01	45%
2001	1,850	4.98	43%
2002	1,954	5.06	43%
2003	2,007	5.01	42%
2004	2,207	5.32	40%
2005	2,188	5.09	38%
2006	2,177	4.88	38%
2007	2,465	5.34	38%
2008	2,345	4.91	37%
2009	2,573	5.22	37%
2010	2,661	5.27	36%
2011	2,720	5.25	35%
2012	2,837	5.36	36%
2013	2,865	5.31	36%
2014	3,246	5.89	34%
2015	3,303	5.87	35%
2016	3,668	6.38	36%
2017	3,933	6.71	36%
2018	4,313	7.23	37%
2019	4,331	7.15	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,125</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>38%</b>

For all races, victims of firearm suicide are overwhelmingly male. In 2019, 88 percent of Hispanic victims of firearm suicide were male. Eighty-nine percent of Black firearm suicide victims were male, as were 83 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native victims, 86 percent of white victims, and 88 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander victims.

**Figure 11: Firearm Suicide Victims by Race and Sex, 2019**

Race	Male Victims	Percent	Female Victims	Percent	Total Victims
Hispanic	1,350	88%	184	12%	1,534
American Indian/Alaska Native	152	83%	31	17%	183
Asian/Pacific Islander	334	88%	47	12%	381
Black	1,411	89%	177	11%	1,588
White	17,427	86%	2,775	14%	20,202
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,725</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>3,216</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>23,941</b>

## SECTION TWO: CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA

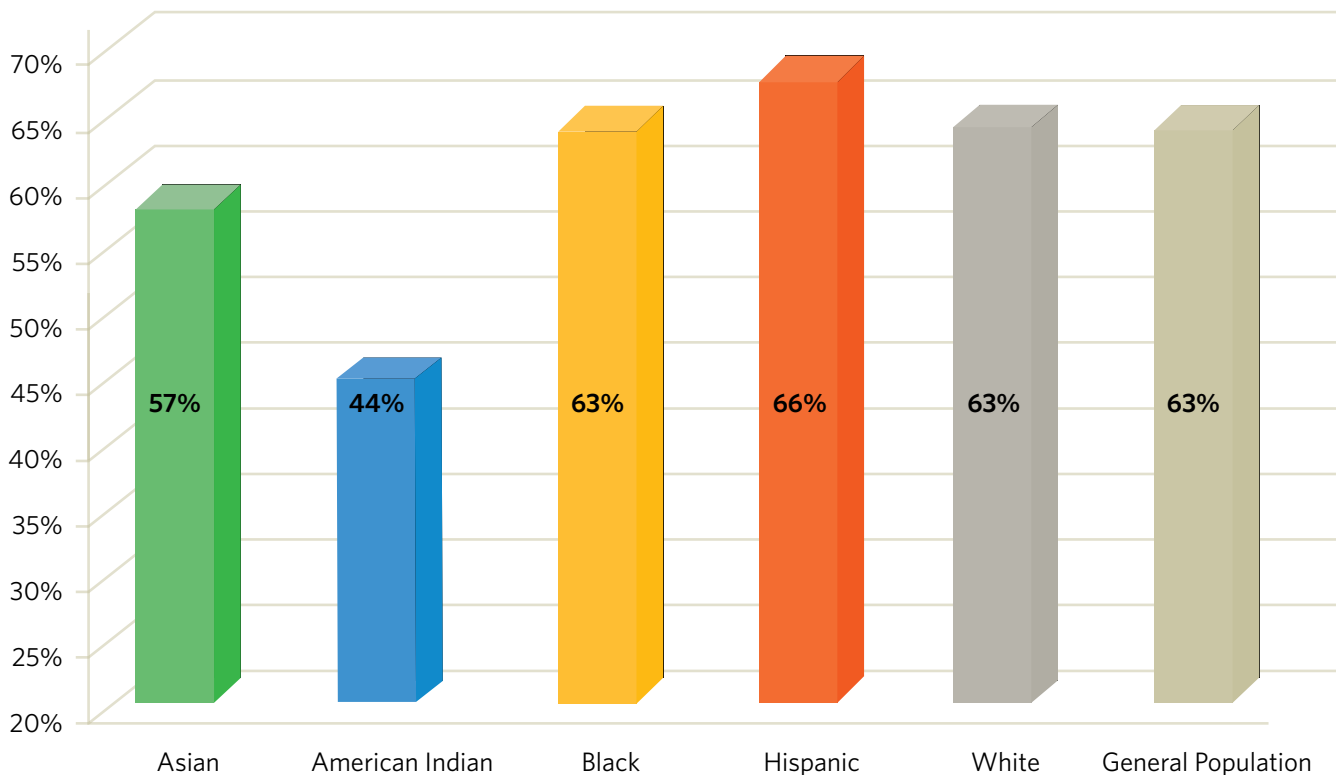
As noted in the prior section, while data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the most comprehensive tally of Hispanic lethal victimization, it offers very limited data on the type of firearms used in homicides and no information on the factors surrounding the homicide (e.g., victim to offender relationship, circumstances, gang involvement). The FBI's annual Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) does report such information, albeit on a smaller number of incidents.<sup>7 8</sup>

In 2019, the Supplementary Homicide Report contained data for 2,296 Hispanic homicide victims. This section details data unique to the SHR data set for these deaths.<sup>9</sup>

### TYPES OF FIREARMS USED IN HOMICIDES

In 2019, where the type of weapon<sup>10</sup> used in the homicide could be determined, for Hispanic victims, 66 percent of all gun homicides involved a handgun. In comparison, handguns were used in 63 percent of Black homicides involving a gun and 63 percent of white homicides involving a gun. Overall, handguns were the most prevalent firearm used in homicides in 2019 (63 percent).

**Figure 12: Percentage of Firearm Homicides Involving Handguns, by Race and Ethnicity, 2019**



7 The SHR provides incident-based information on criminal homicides. The data, provided monthly by reporting agencies, contains information describing the victim(s) of the homicide, the offender(s), the relationship between victim and offender, the weapon used, and the circumstance of the incident.

8 In 2019 the CDC reported 3,122 Hispanic homicide deaths, of which 2,301 involved a firearm. The FBI's SHR reported that in 2019 (the most recent year available) there were 2,296 Hispanic homicide victims of which 1,623 involved a firearm.

9 Abbreviated titles are used for two racial categories: American Indian also includes Alaska Native and Asian also includes Pacific Islander.

10 The definition of weapons includes the following categories: firearms (i.e., types unknown, handguns, rifles, shotguns, and other firearms); knives and other cutting instruments; blunt object; using the body as a weapon (i.e., fists, feet, teeth, etc.); poison; narcotics or drugs; explosives; strangulation/hanging; asphyxiation; drowning; fire; and defenestration, as well as other types.

## RELATIONSHIP OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS TO OFFENDERS

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, Hispanic victims were more likely to be killed by a stranger (33 percent). In comparison, 23 percent of Black victims were killed by a stranger and 20 percent of white victims were killed by a stranger. Overall, 24 percent of homicide victims were killed by a stranger.

Of victims who knew their offenders, 21 percent of Hispanic victims were intimate acquaintances of the offender.<sup>11</sup> In comparison, 27 percent of white victims and 17 percent of Black victims were intimate acquaintances of the offender. For the overall population, 22 percent of homicide victims were intimate acquaintances of the offender.

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF HOMICIDES

For all races, for homicides in which the circumstances could be determined, 71 percent were not related to the commission of another felony.<sup>12</sup> For Hispanics, 67 percent of the homicides were not related to the commission of another felony. Seventy-three percent of white homicides and 70 percent of Black homicides were not related to the commission of another felony.

For all races, of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony, 52 percent involved arguments between the victim and the offender and one percent involved brawls due to alcohol or drugs.

Fifty-one percent of Hispanics killed in homicides not related to the commission of another felony were killed during arguments (compared to 56 percent of Black victims and 49 percent of white victims). One percent of Hispanics killed in homicides not related to the commission of another felony were killed in brawls due to alcohol or drugs (the same percentage as white and Black victims).

For all races, gang-related killings<sup>13</sup> accounted for eight percent of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony.<sup>14</sup> For Hispanics, of the homicides not related to the commission of another felony, 19 percent were gang-related, compared to 10 percent for Black victims and one percent for white victims.

11 An intimate acquaintance is defined as a boyfriend/girlfriend, common-law husband/common-law wife, homosexual relationship, husband/wife, or ex-husband/ex-wife. There is no designation for ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend in the SHR.

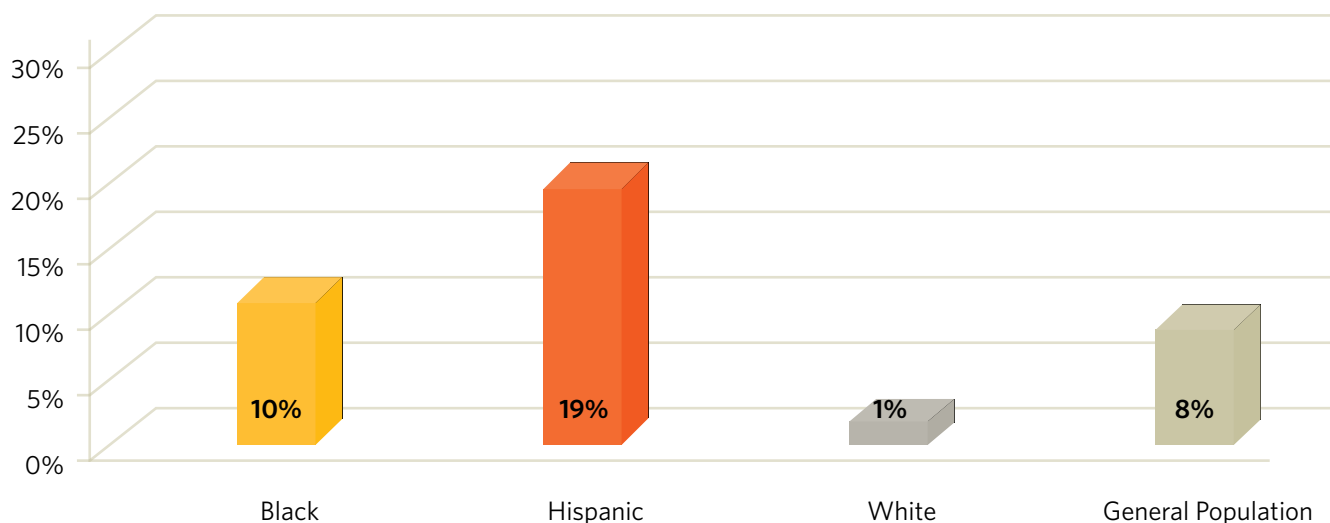
12 The felony murder category refers to killings that occur in conjunction with the commission of another crime such as rape, robbery, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, prostitution and commercialized vice, other sex offenses, narcotic drug laws, gambling, and other types of unspecified crimes.

13 The category "Gangland-related/gang killings" involves both gangland-related homicides involving adult offenders and victims, representing a type of organized crime killing, as well as juvenile gang killings, which involve youth gangs.

14 Forty-eight percent of the recorded gang-related homicides in the 2019 SHR were committed in California, which may be in part due to more comprehensive reporting



**Figure 13: Percentage of Homicides Not Related to Another Felony That Were Gang-Related, by Race and Ethnicity, 2019**



**AGE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS AND GANG INVOLVEMENT**

For all victims, 29 percent of homicide victims were age 24 or younger. For Hispanic victims, 33 percent of homicide victims were age 24 and younger. In comparison, 34 percent of Black homicide victims were age 24 and younger and 19 percent of white victims were age 24 and younger.

But for gang-related homicides, 47 percent of the victims were age 24 and younger. For Hispanic homicides that were gang-related, 43 percent were age 24 and younger. In comparison, 50 percent of Black gang-related victims were age 24 and younger and 41 percent of white gang-related victims were age 24 or younger.

**Figure 14: Victims Age 24 and Younger as a Percentage of All Homicides and Gang-Related Homicides**

Race	Percentage of All Homicides, Victims Age 24 and Younger	Percentage of Gang-Related Homicides, Victims Age 24 and Younger
Hispanic	33%	43%
Black	34%	50%
White	19%	41%
All Races	29%	47%

## SECTION THREE: CONCLUSION

Hispanics in the United States are disproportionately affected by lethal firearms violence. Because of limited data collection, the true scale of gun violence's effect on Hispanic men, women, and children is not fully known. What cannot be denied is that due to these limits in data collection, the total number of Hispanic victims of gun violence is almost certainly higher than the reported numbers suggest.

Comprehensive, reliable, and continuing public health and criminal justice data is necessary for effective violence prevention policies to save lives, protect families, and ensure healthy communities. This is true not only for the Hispanic population, but for all Americans.

Recognizing this, governmental agencies that collect data on death and injury should obtain complete information on the ethnic origin of individuals in addition to their race. This will ensure complete and accurate data collection on Hispanic victims of lethal violence, aid in violence prevention policies, and save lives. Specific recommendations toward this goal include the following.

- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be captured by all governmental agencies, regardless of department, and at all levels — local, state, and national — for all pertinent users and subjects of agency services.
- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be self-reported and not based solely on a person's surname or other measure.
- All public access data and published reports issued by governmental agencies should include information on ethnic origin in addition to race.
- The U.S. Department of Justice — specifically, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Justice Statistics — should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization.
- States with a substantial proportion of Hispanic residents should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization and deaths due to all causes, including violence.

Improved data collection is essential to fully understanding the scope of lethal firearms violence against Hispanics and helping develop effective measures to reduce such violence. At the same time additional efforts, both supporting current programs and activities as well as identifying new violence-reduction opportunities and approaches, should include the following.

- Support for community-based violence intervention programs that are holistic and encourage participation by all stakeholders.
- Educational efforts to better inform Hispanics of the risks associated with bringing a firearm into the home as measured by increased risk for homicide, suicide, and unintentional firearm deaths compared to how rarely guns are used in justifiable homicides. This is especially important in the face of current coordinated efforts by the gun industry targeting Hispanics as potential first-time gun buyers.<sup>15</sup>

15 For more information, please see the January 2021 Violence Policy Center study *How the Firearms Industry and NRA Market Guns to Communities of Color* (<https://vpc.org/how-the-firearms-industry-and-nra-market-guns-to-communities-of-color-contents/>).

- Improved access to resources for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Identification of anti-trafficking measures that could help interrupt the flow of illegal firearms to impacted communities.

## Appendix: The 50 States and the District of Columbia Hispanic Firearm Death Data, 2019<sup>16</sup>

State	Hispanic Firearm Deaths	Death Rate per 100,000
Alabama	26	11.64
Alaska	*	*
Arizona	257	11.12
Arkansas	*	*
California	899	5.77
Colorado	134	10.66
Connecticut	25	4.16
Delaware	*	*
District of Columbia	*	*
Florida	367	6.48
Georgia	71	6.77
Hawaii	*	*
Idaho	17	7.41
Illinois	128	5.77
Indiana	40	8.17
Iowa	10	5.04
Kansas	40	11.23
Kentucky	*	*
Louisiana	23	9.31
Maine	*	*
Maryland	27	4.19
Massachusetts	41	4.80
Michigan	38	7.19
Minnesota	*	*
Mississippi	13	12.99
Missouri	34	12.65
Montana	*	*
Nebraska	*	*
Nevada	66	7.33
New Hampshire	*	*
New Jersey	37	1.99
New Mexico	205	19.85
New York	84	2.24
North Carolina	62	6.04
North Dakota	*	*

16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WISQARS (Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) database (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

State	Hispanic Firearm Deaths	Death Rate per 100,000
Ohio	37	7.86
Oklahoma	32	7.30
Oregon	37	6.53
Pennsylvania	91	9.10
Rhode Island	*	*
South Carolina	33	10.75
South Dakota	*	*
Tennessee	42	10.73
Texas	881	7.64
Utah	36	7.79
Vermont	*	*
Virginia	34	4.07
Washington	75	7.56
West Virginia	*	*
Wisconsin	35	8.47
Wyoming	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,058</b>	<b>6.70</b>

\* State level counts and rates based on fewer than 10 deaths have been suppressed by the National Center for Health Statistics.



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