



pennsylvania

COMMISSION ON CRIME
AND DELINQUENCY

Understanding & Addressing Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

2021 Criminal Justice Advisory Board Conference

April 20, 2021

Presenters



Samantha Koch

Senior Project Manager

Office of the Executive Director

PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency



Geoff Kolchin

Deputy Director, Violence Prevention

Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency

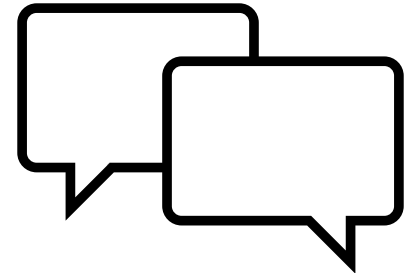
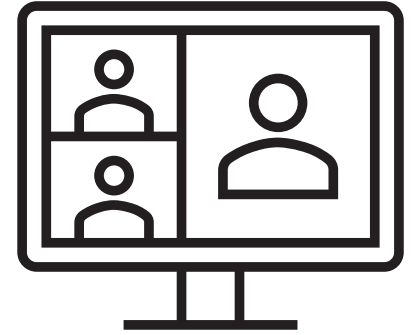


What We'll Cover Today

- 1. What the Data Shows:** Firearm-related Crime, Injury & Fatalities in Pennsylvania
- 2. PCCD's Gun Violence Prevention & Reduction Initiatives**
 - 1. Special Council on Gun Violence*
 - 2. Office of Gun Violence Prevention*
- 3. Impacts of COVID-19 on State & Local Efforts**
- 4. What's Next?**
 - 1. Investing in Effective Gun Violence Prevention/Intervention Programs*
 - 2. Statewide Community of Practice*
 - 3. Expanding Data & Research*

Before We Begin...

1. **This session is being recorded.**
2. **At the end of each section, we'll pause and give time for folks to ask questions, share thoughts, etc., via the "Chat" feature.**
3. **Questions in the "Chat" will be reviewed and moderated by Todd Ferretti.**



WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Shootings – whether intentional or unintentional – occur every day in communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, affecting individuals, families, and communities.

“The reality is, mass shootings take place every day on the streets of our city, across the entire country... All life has value. You don’t have to lose it in large quantities before we start to pay attention to something that is as pressing an issue as gun violence... [W]e need to do everything we can to protect people.”

*- Charles H. Ramsey, PCCD Chairman & Special Advisor to the Governor,
Remarks at Signing of Executive Order 2019-06*

Over the past two decades,* 28,990 people in Pennsylvania have died as a result of firearm-related injuries.

**1999-2019 (latest available data)*

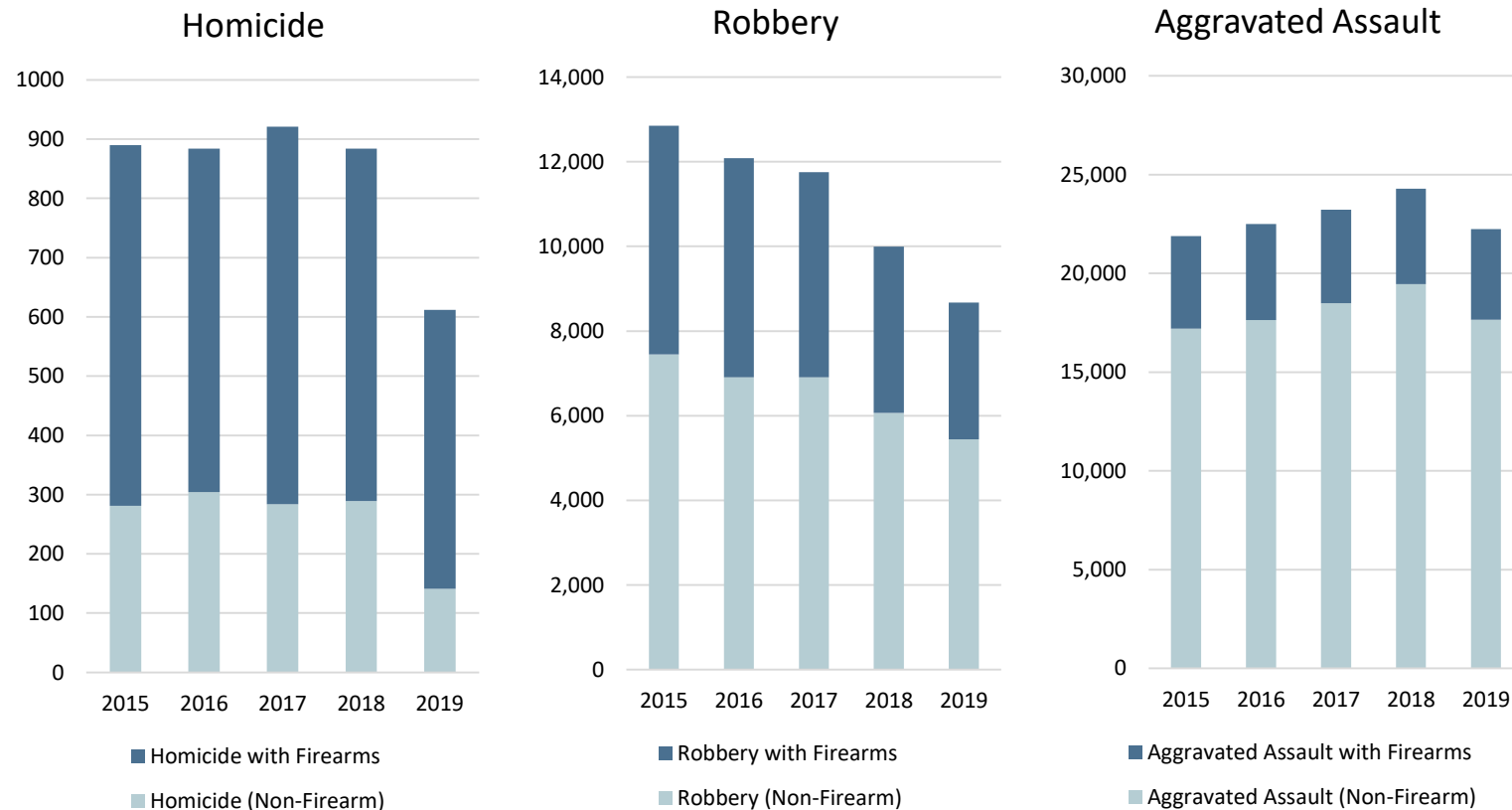
What the Data Shows:

Firearm-related Crime, Injury & Fatalities in PA

- In Pennsylvania, the rate of **firearm suicide increased 20%** and **gun homicide increased 12%** from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 13% increase and 26% increase across the U.S., respectively.
- More than **three-quarters of homicides** in Pennsylvania involve firearms (77% in 2019).
- From 2015 to 2019, **118** women were fatally shot by an intimate partner in Pennsylvania; more than half of intimate partner homicide victims were killed with a gun.
- Research suggests gun violence costs Pennsylvania **\$12.1 billion** each year, of which **\$567.4 million** is paid by taxpayers.

Firearm-related Crime in PA

Crimes Committed with Firearms, 2015-2019



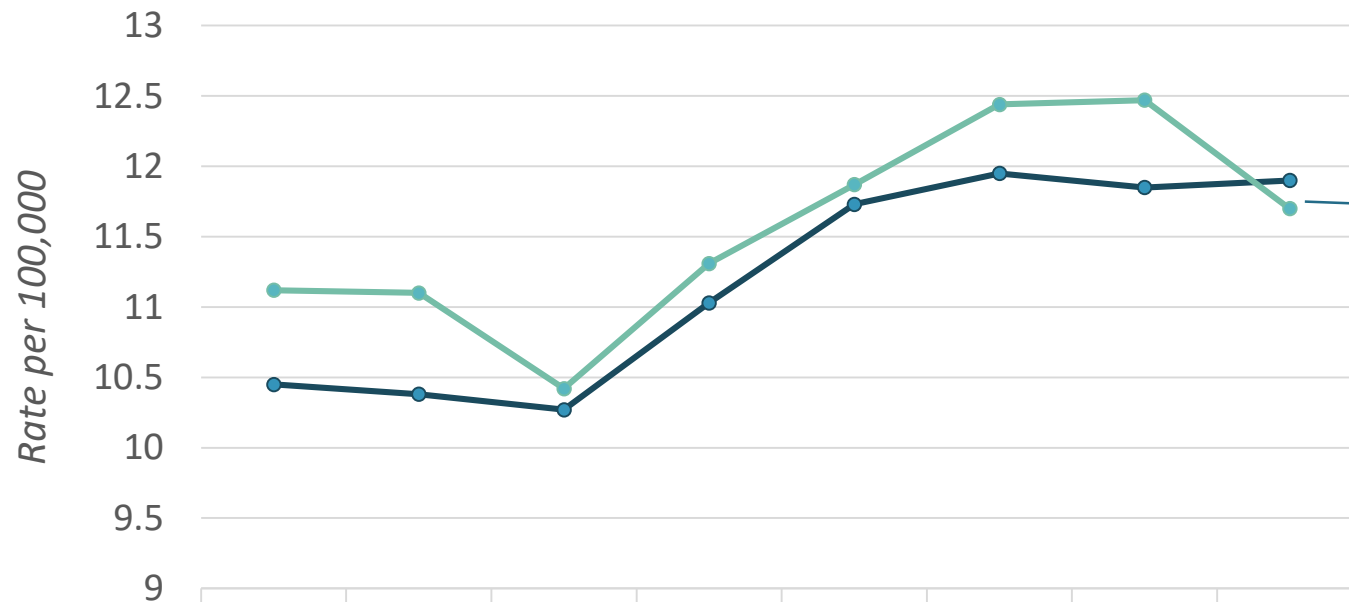
Gun violence is a significant public safety concern. Guns are used in the vast majority of homicides (77% in 2019). Firearms also play a role in other violent crimes, such as robbery and aggravated assault.

Interpersonal gun violence disproportionately affects people and communities of color.

- Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate 67.5% of gun homicide victims were Black, even though they represent just 12% of Pennsylvania's population.
- Black and Hispanic/Latinx people are more likely to be murdered using firearms compared with Whites (23x and 7x, respectively).

Firearm-related Fatalities in PA

Firearm-related Fatality Rates, U.S. vs. Pennsylvania, 2012-2019

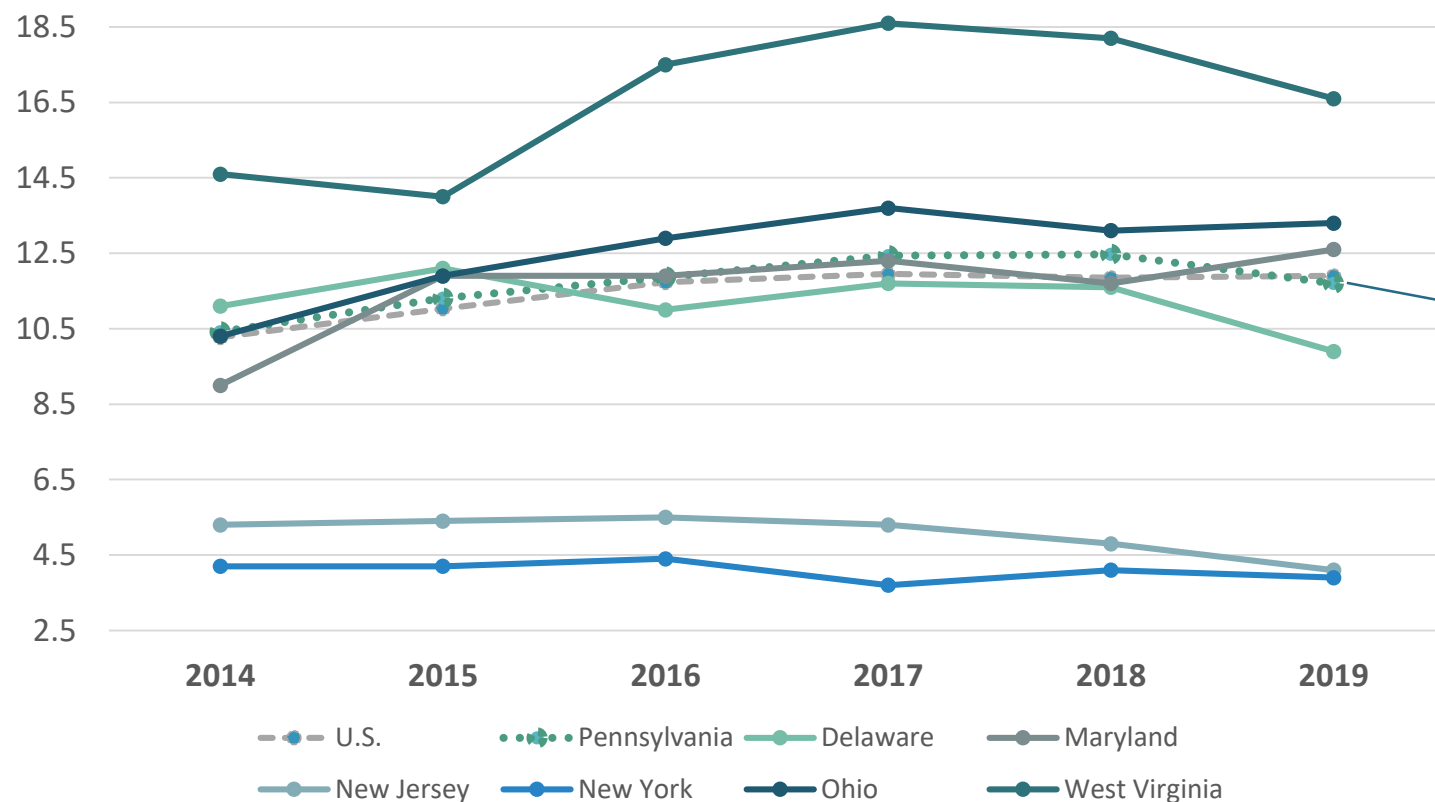


While firearm-related fatalities increased nationally in 2019, they decreased in Pennsylvania. (including reductions in both firearm suicide and firearm homicide rates). 2019 was also the first year since 2012 where the Commonwealth's fatality rate was lower than the national average.

Data Sources: [Firearm Mortality by State](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, accessed 3/19/2021; [Pennsylvania Gun Deaths: 2019](#), EFSGV, accessed 3/19/2021.

Firearm-related Fatalities in PA (*continued*)

Firearm-related Fatality Rates in PA vs. Neighboring States, 2014-2019

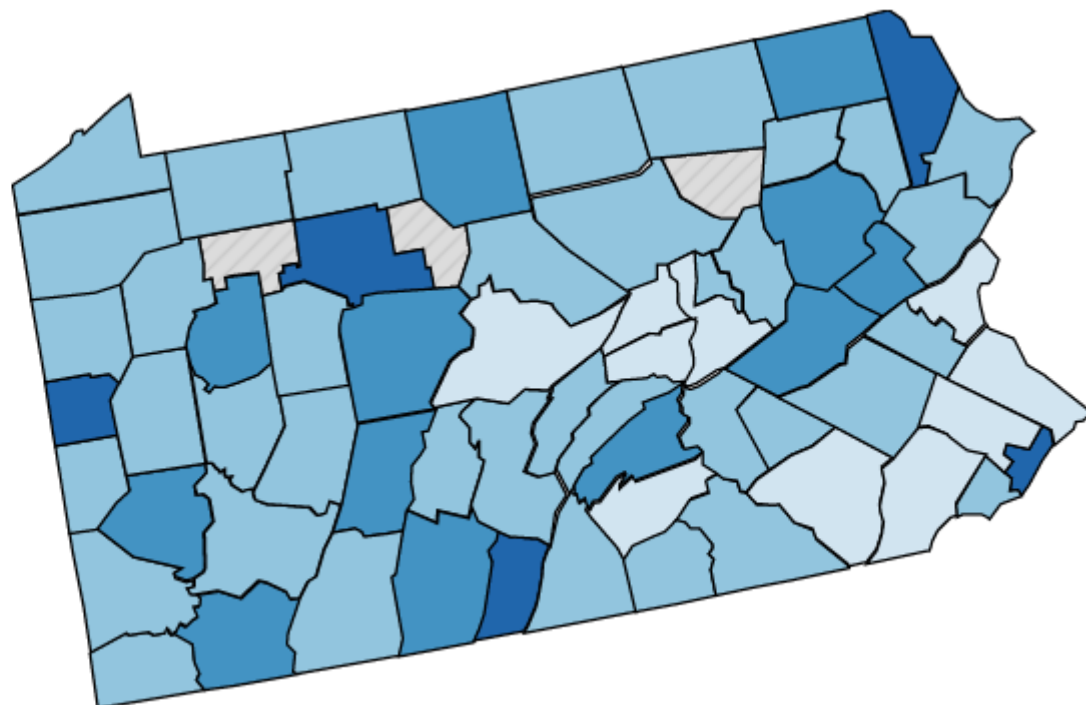
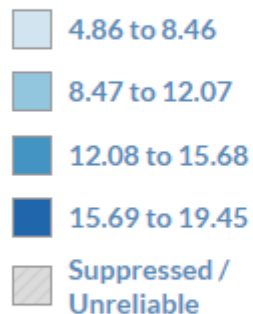


PA's firearm-related fatality rate has historically been higher than those of many of its neighboring states. Ohio and West Virginia – more rural states – have had higher rates than PA in each of the past five years. In 2019, rates decreased in all neighboring states except Maryland and Ohio (*rates increased slightly nationally*).

Firearm-related Fatalities in PA (*continued*)

Gun Death Rate per 100,000 by County, 2010-2019

Age-adjusted gun death rate per 100,000

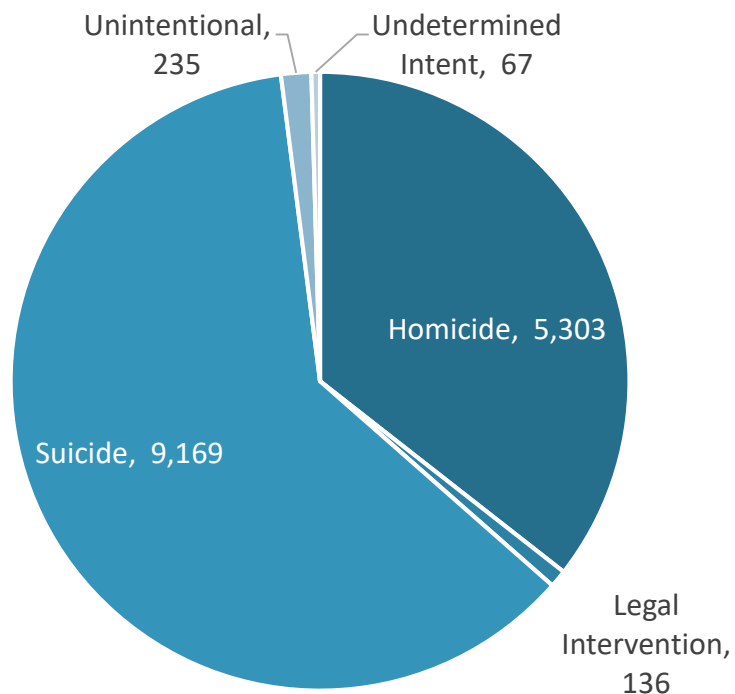


There are significant variations in gun death rates across PA's 67 counties – from the lowest in **Union County (4.9%)** to the highest in **Philadelphia (19.5%)**. The overwhelming majority of fatal shooting victims in PA are male (88%). Young Black males in PA are disproportionately impacted by gun homicide, while middle-age and older White males are disproportionately impacted by firearm suicide.

Data Sources: [Pennsylvania Gun Deaths: 2019](#), EFSGV, accessed 3/19/2021.

Firearm-related Fatalities in PA (*continued*)

Gun Deaths in PA by Manner of Death, 2010-2019



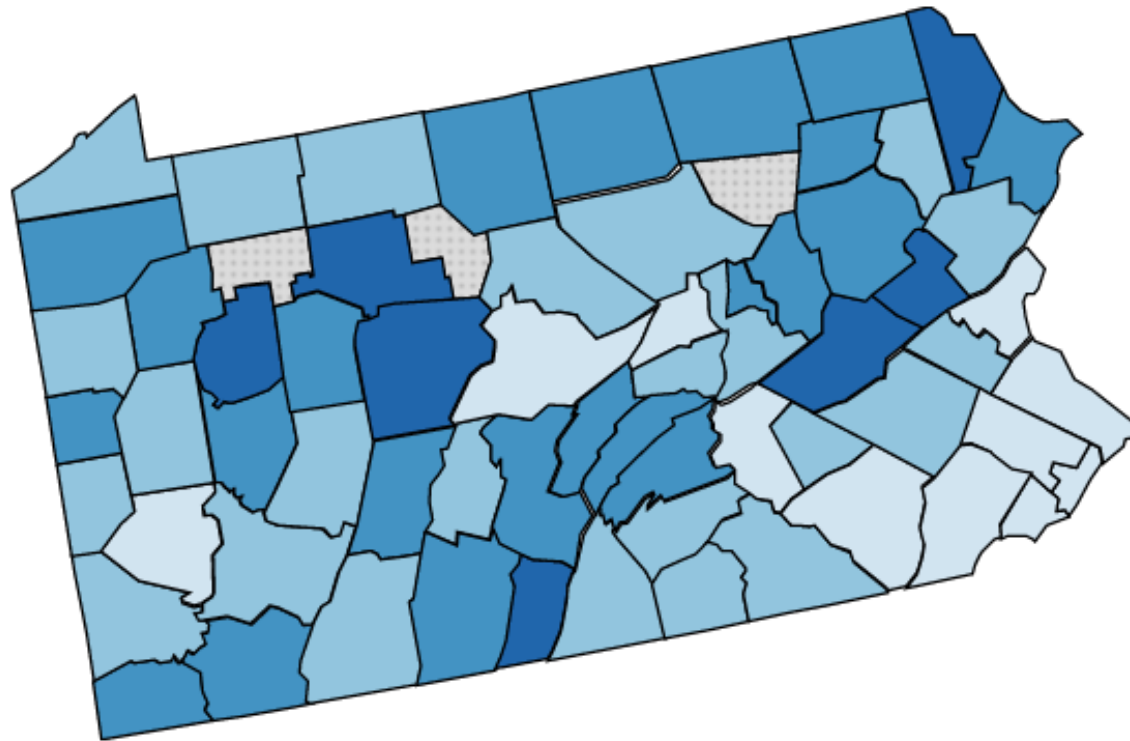
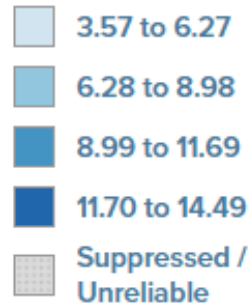
Although most people think of homicides when they hear the phrase “gun violence,” the reality is that the majority of firearm-related deaths in PA are suicides (62%). Half of all suicides in PA are by firearm. In 2019, there were 964 firearm suicide deaths in PA, including 33 children and teens (ages 0-19).

Data Sources: [Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System \(WISQARS\)](#), [Fatal Injury - Pennsylvania](#), CDC, 2012-2019, accessed 3/19/2021.

Firearm Suicide in Pennsylvania

Firearm Suicide Rates by County, 2010-2019

Age-Adjusted Firearm
Suicide Rate per 100,000



The firearm suicide rate in PA has increased by 20% in the past decade – more than the national average increase (13%) – and trends are especially concerning for children and teens as well as veterans. Rural counties have higher rates of firearm suicide than urban counties.

Data Sources: [Prevent Firearm Suicide – Pennsylvania](#), EFSGV, accessed 3/19/2021.

While much attention has understandably been paid to the lives lost to gun violence, less is known about those surviving nonfatal shootings.

Nonfatal Shootings: What the Research Does (and Doesn't) Show

- A [study](#) published in December 2020 in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found that for every firearm-related death, two individuals survive.
 - Unintentional injuries were the most common nonfatal shooting injuries and had the lowest case fatality rate.
 - The study's authors found that rates of unintentional firearm-related injury were higher in rural areas compared with urban communities.

Nonfatal Shootings:

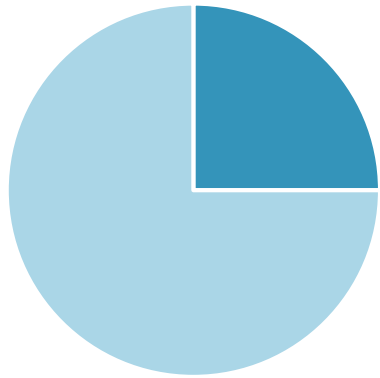
What the Research Does (and Doesn't) Show (*cont.*)

- **While most shooting victims ultimately survive their physical injuries, the long-term costs – physical, mental, emotional, and financial – are often significant.**
 - A recent 50-state [analysis](#) estimated the ***annual economic costs of gun violence in Pennsylvania is a staggering \$12.1 billion*** – of which \$567.4 million is paid by taxpayers – when considering factors like lost income, employer costs, healthcare, and law enforcement and criminal justice involvement.
- Analysis of data from the PA Healthcare Cost Containment Council (PHC4) [published](#) by the Philadelphia Dept. of Public Health in February 2020 found that **nearly 1 in 7 victims of gun violence experience paralysis.**
 - More than half of individuals who were paralyzed due to firearm-related injury were less than 35 years old – potentially experiencing decades of life with severe disabilities.

Nonfatal Shootings: Addressing Data & Research Gaps

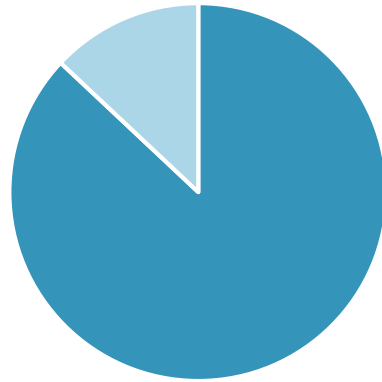
- National nonfatal gun violence estimates are available through the ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's nonfatal injury reports*** as well as the ***National Emergency Department Sample (NEDS)***, but they have limitations.
 - State and local nonfatal shooting and firearm-related injury data is less readily available, creating a significant gap for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.
- Recognizing this gap, one of the recommendations (#35) in the Special Council on Gun Violence's [final report](#) was to ***significantly increase investments in data collection, reporting, analyses and research*** focused on fatal and nonfatal firearm-related injuries and crimes.
 - As part of its [Office of Gun Violence Prevention Research Agenda](#), PCCD has accessed data from PHC4 to learn more about nonfatal firearm-related injuries across the Commonwealth, including costs associated with treatment and recovery from these physical injuries.

Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries in the U.S.



1/4

Research suggests nearly one-fourth of individuals who survive nonfatal gun assault injuries will be shot again in the next decade.

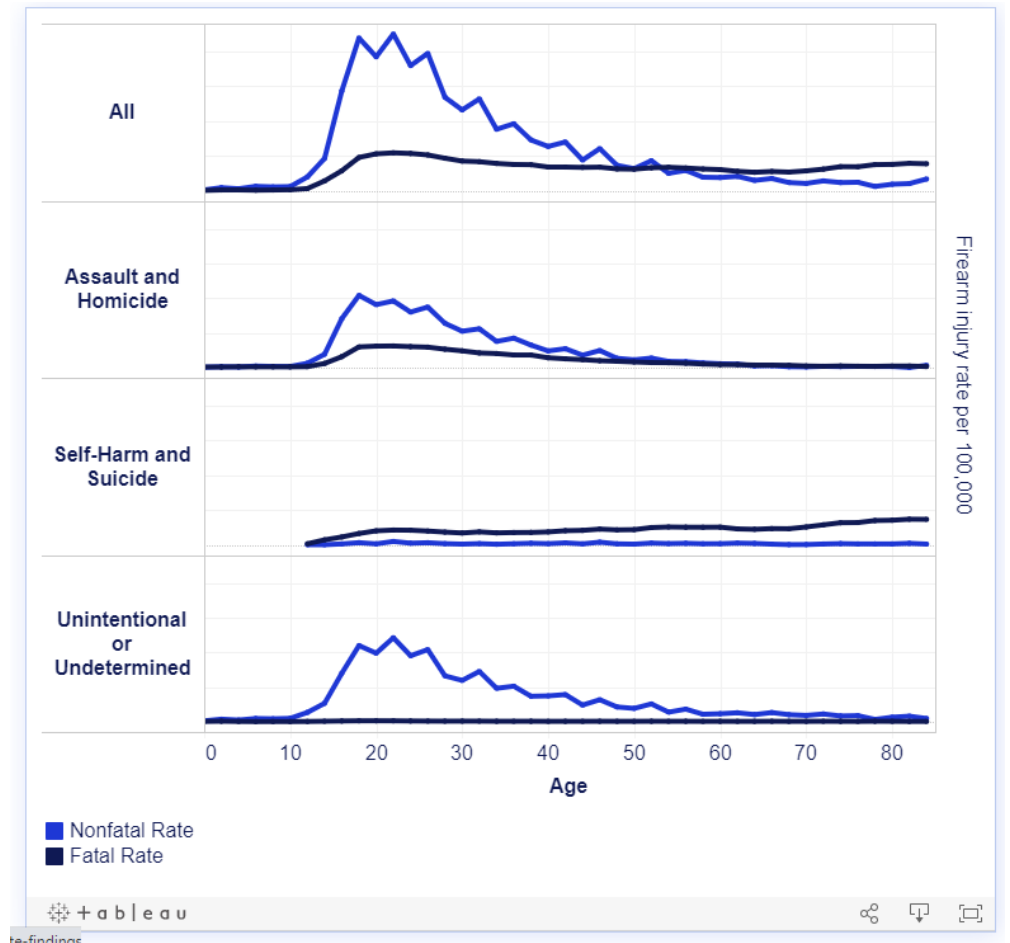


87%

National hospitalization data suggests the overwhelming majority – 87% -- of those treated for gunshot wounds are male, mostly adolescents and young adults.

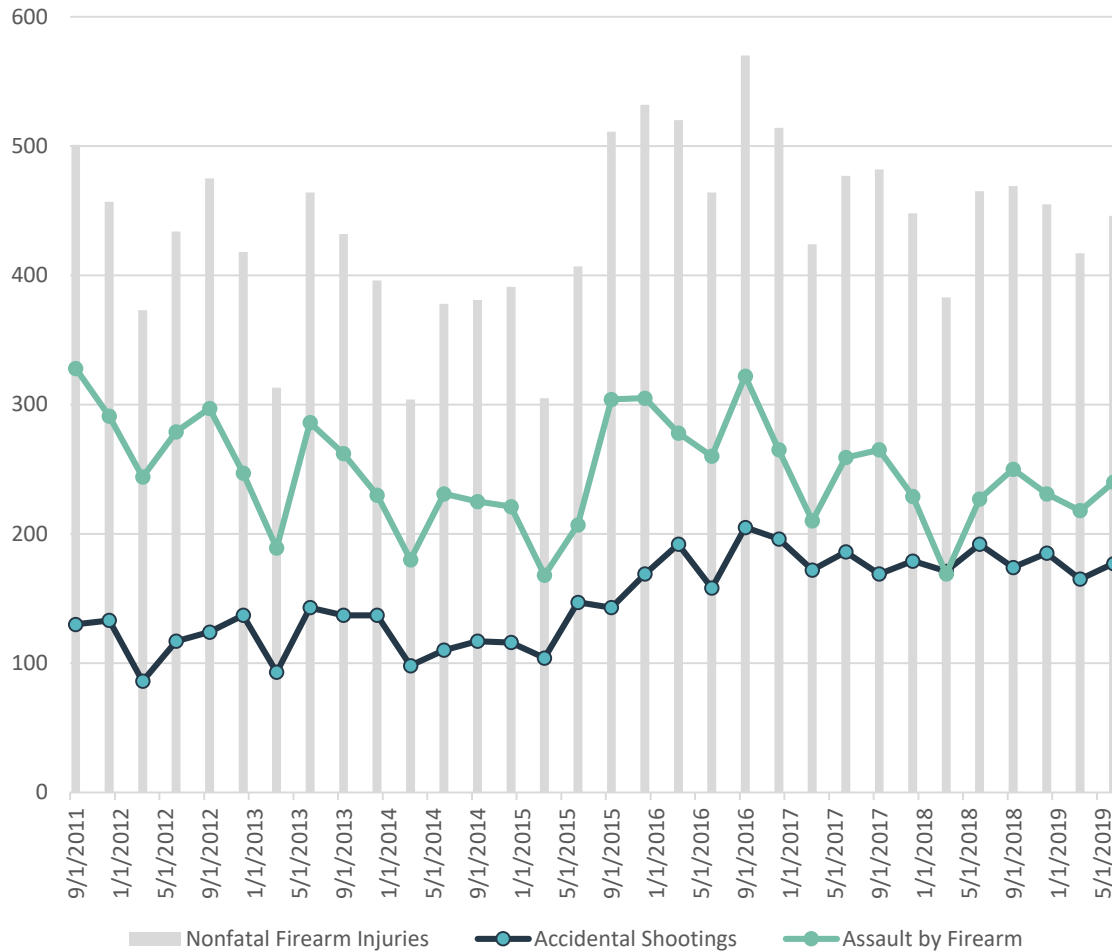
Data Sources: *A More Complete Picture: The Contours of Gun Injury in the United States*, Everytown Research, December 4, 2020; *EveryStat: Pennsylvania*, Everytown for Gun Safety, accessed 3/23/2021.

Firearm Injuries Peak in Young Adulthood

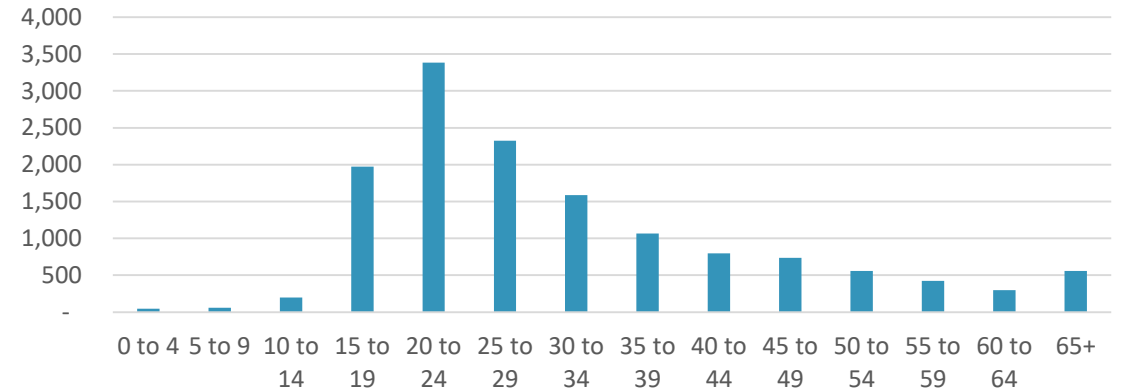


Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries in PA

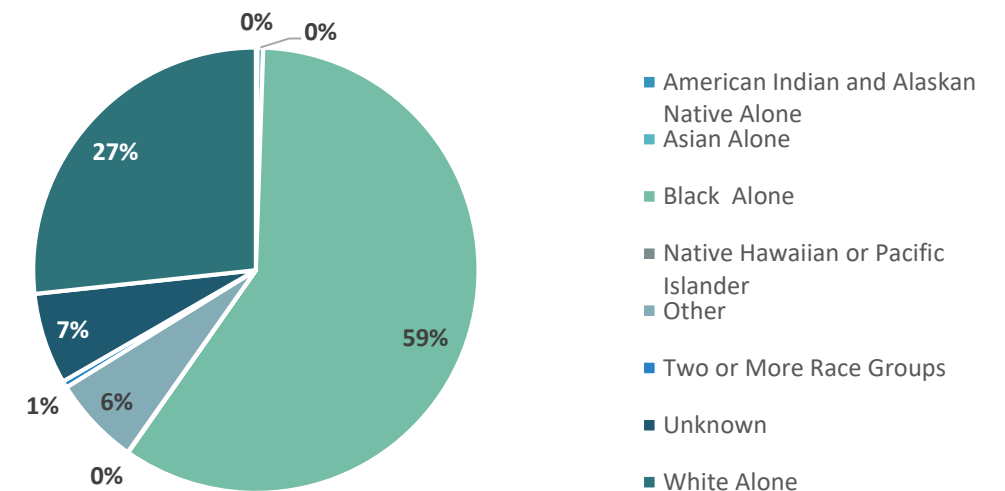
Nonfatal Firearm Injuries by Quarter, 2011-2019



Nonfatal Shooting Victims by Age Group, 2011-19



Nonfatal Shooting Victims by Race, 2011-19

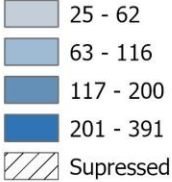


Data Source: Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4)

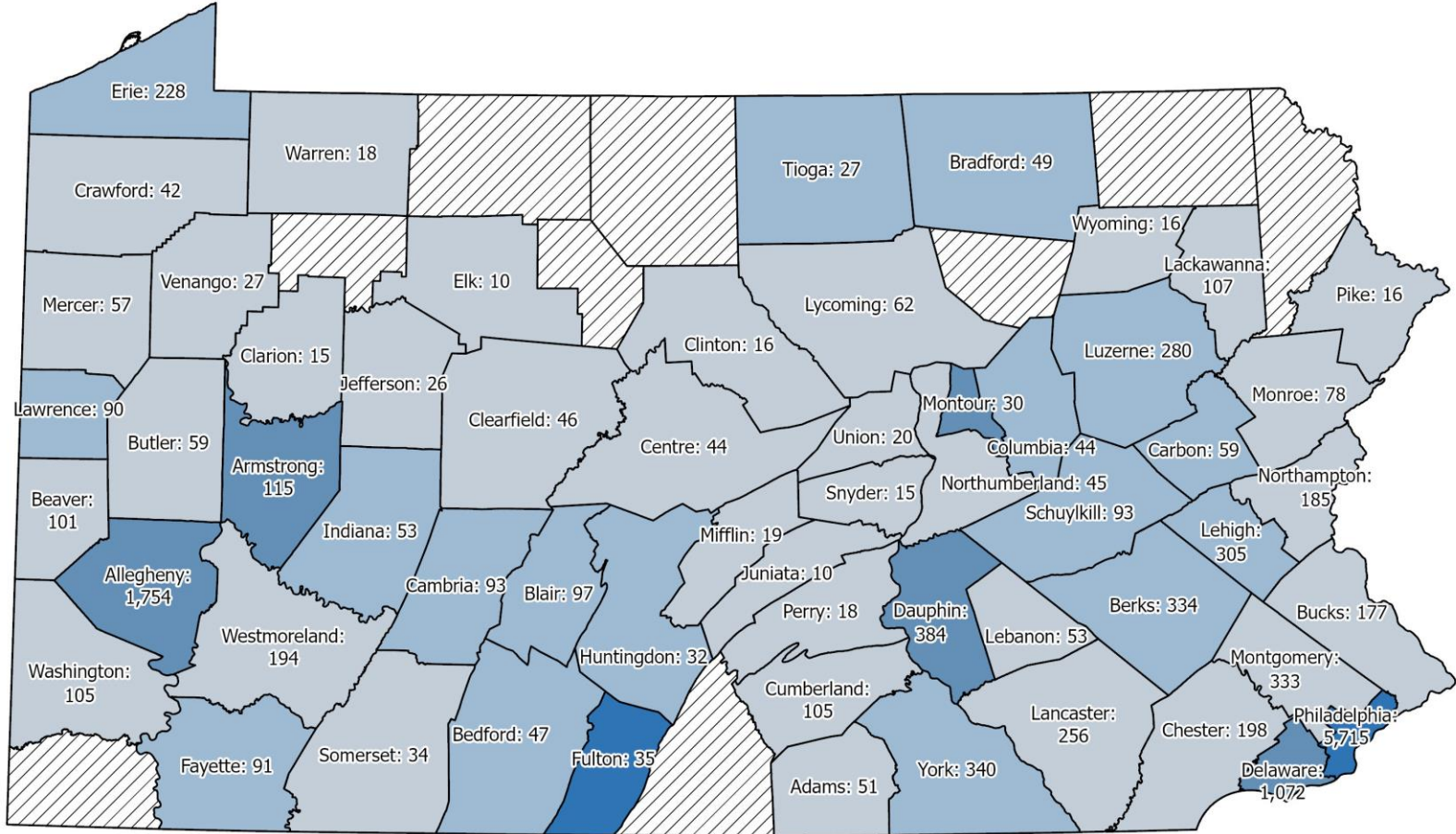
Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries by County

Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries July 2011 to April 2019

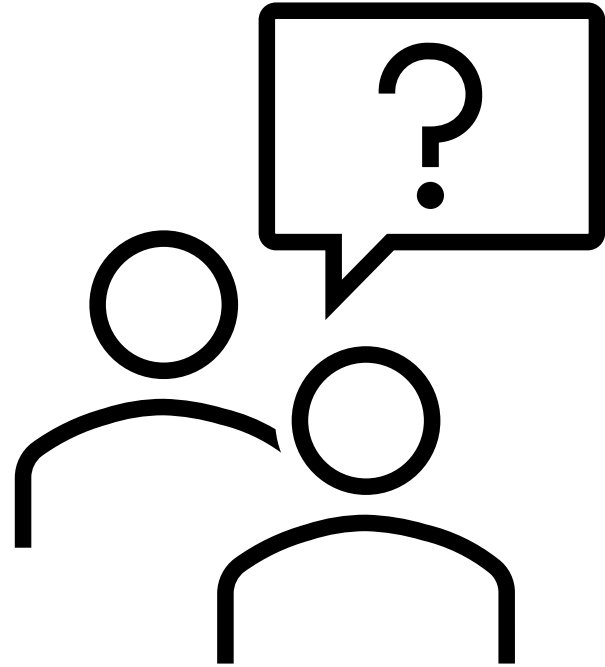
Per 100,000



Incident Type	Incident Count
Assault by firearm	6,120
Accidental	4,746
Undetermined intent	922
Self-Harm	663
Legal Intervention/Other	163



Data Sources: Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4), data accessed March 2020.



Questions?

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION & REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Over the past year, PCCD has listened to and learned from people and communities impacted by gun violence so we can direct financial resources and other supports toward necessary and effective work.

“Knowing you can just get shot and knowing I live so far away from school that if I walk down the wrong block and I don’t notice somebody sees that I’m not supposed to be there, then they pull out a gun – that’s my life... How many of us have to die before we say enough is enough?”

- Student, Philadelphia, PA, testimony provided at the Dec. 6, 2019 “Reducing Community Gun Violence” public hearing hosted by members of the Governor’s Special Council on Gun Violence

Executive Order 2019-06

- Signed into effect by Governor Tom Wolf in August 2019, [Executive Order 2019-06](#) tasks state agencies with working together to identify and implement evidence-based initiatives to help address gun violence as a public health and public safety crisis.
- The Order created new entities within state government to support these efforts, including an [Office of Gun Violence Prevention](#) at PCCD.
- The Order also established an 18-member Special Council on Gun Violence within PCCD responsible for making recommendations to the Governor and Commission.
- The Special Council's [Final Report of Findings, Recommendations & Action Steps](#) was published in March 2020, establishing a roadmap for the work of PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention.



Summary of Special Council Recommendations

PREVENTION

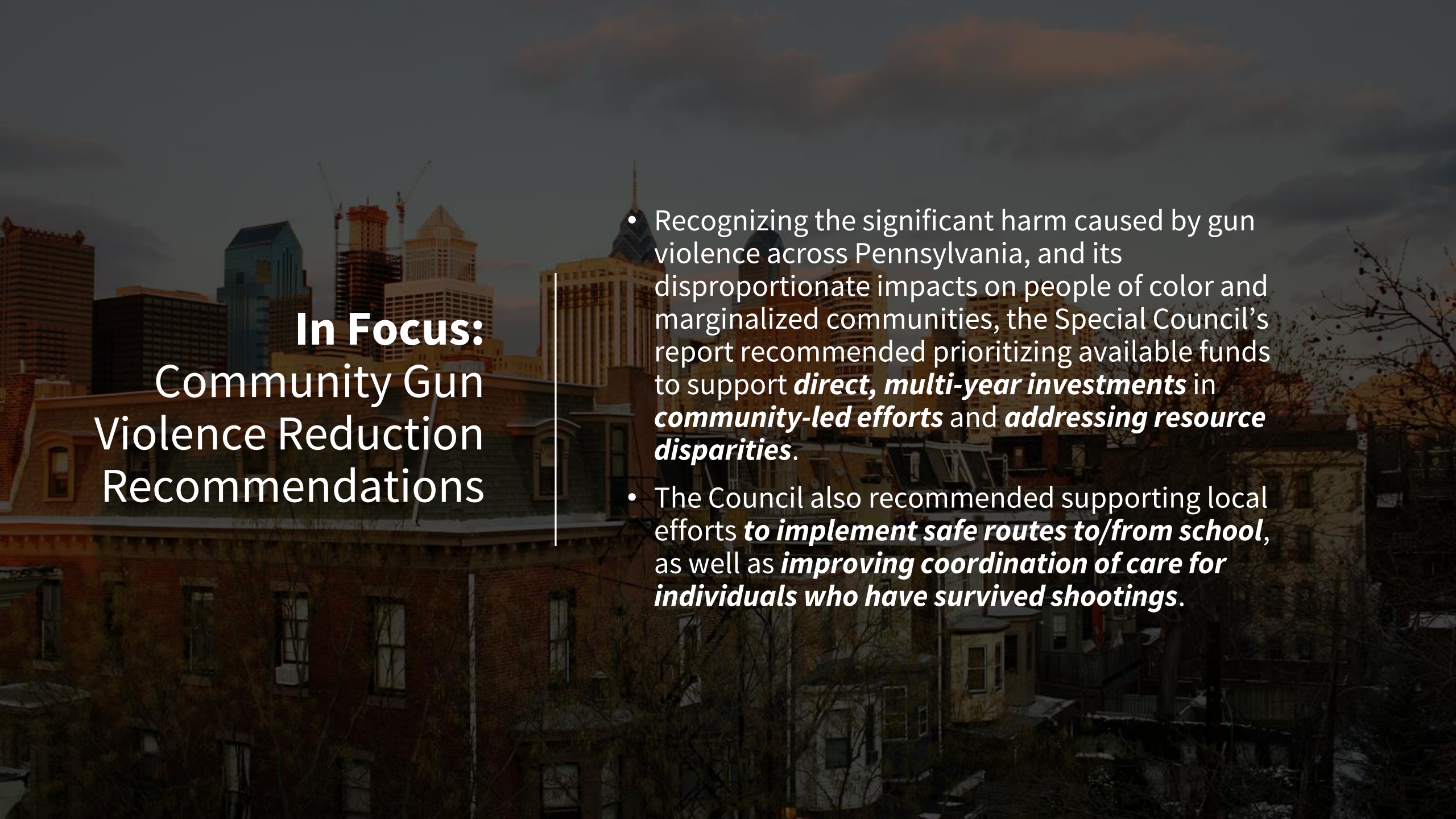
1. **Prevention:** Stopping Gun Violence Before It Begins
2. **Keeping Firearms Out of the Wrong Hands:** Preventing Situations Where Weapons Can Be Used to Harm Self or Others

RESPONSE & INTERVENTION

3. **Mental Health:** Intersections of Trauma, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Gun Violence
4. **Community Gun Violence:** Supporting Effective Community-led Efforts to Reduce Gun Violence
5. **Training and Education:** Enhancing Prevention, Intervention, and Response Skills

SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT

6. **Coordinated Planning and Response:** Enhancing Preparation, Mitigation, Response and Recovery Efforts
7. **Informing Better Policies and Practices:** Supporting Gun Violence Data Collection, Research, and Evaluation



In Focus: Community Gun Violence Reduction Recommendations

- Recognizing the significant harm caused by gun violence across Pennsylvania, and its disproportionate impacts on people of color and marginalized communities, the Special Council's report recommended prioritizing available funds to support *direct, multi-year investments* in *community-led efforts* and *addressing resource disparities*.
- The Council also recommended supporting local efforts *to implement safe routes to/from school*, as well as *improving coordination of care for individuals who have survived shootings*.

PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention

- PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) was established pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order and is housed within the agency's Office of Justice Programs.
- The mission of OGVP is to reduce gun violence in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by supporting state and community decisionmakers and leaders, advancing knowledge and understanding through data and research, and investing in effective prevention and intervention strategies.
- More information about OGVP and its priorities is available on [PCCD's Gun Violence webpage](#).

\$ PCCD Investments in Gun Violence Prevention

- **Since FY 2017-18, PCCD has made approximately \$3.8 million in state funding available to 11 municipalities through the Reducing Gun Violence Grant Program.**
 - Eligible applicants included all Pennsylvania municipalities.
 - Funding supported implementation of specific models/strategies (*Operation Ceasefire, Cure Violence Health Model, county gun violence task force*) or “other strategies that result in the reduction of gun violence and increased safety in communities.”
- In addition, in 2020, PCCD announced the availability of \$7.5 million in state funds for ***FY 2021 Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Grants*** (priority consideration for projects addressing gun violence).
 - 11 applications totaling \$3.1m specifically addressing gun violence were approved by the School Safety and Security Committee at its Feb. 24, 2021 meeting.

2019 PCCD Gun Violence Reduction Grants

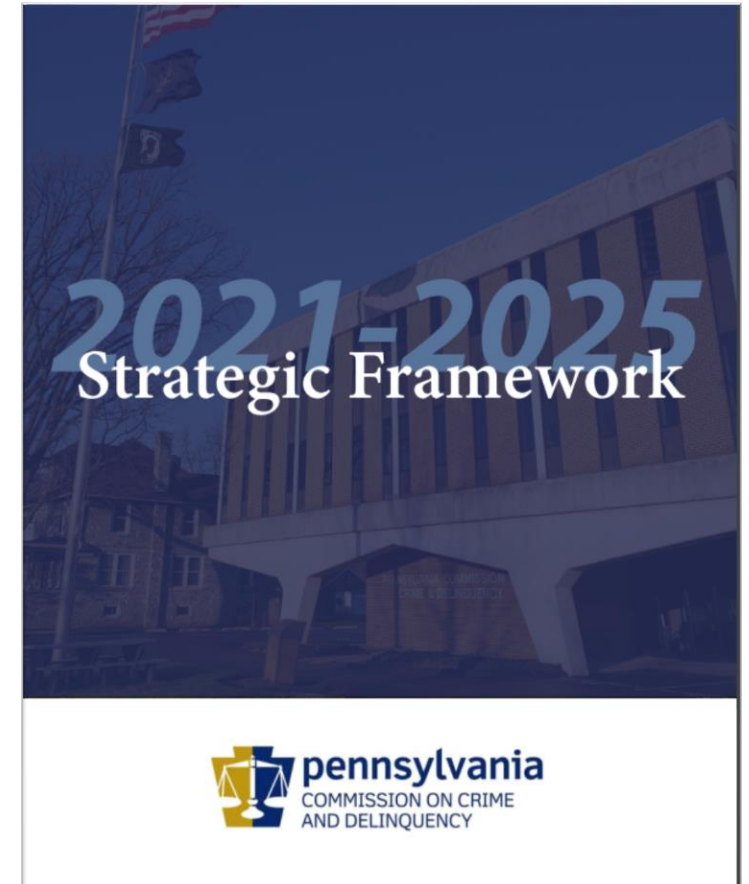
PUBLIC HEALTH / CURE VIOLENCE	PUBLIC SAFETY / FOCUSED DETERRENCE	GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegheny County – <i>Cure Model</i> • Allentown City – <i>Zero Youth Violence Program</i> • City of Chester (Temple University) – <i>Cure Chester Gun Violence Reduction Project</i> • Johnstown City – <i>Cure Violence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of McKeesport – <i>McKeesport Alternative Policing Strategies (MAPS) & McKeesport Gun Violence Reduction Program</i> • Erie County – <i>Erie Gun Working Group (EGWG) / Operation Ceasefire (focused deterrence)</i> • York City – <i>Group Violence Intervention (GVI) focused on hot spots policing, fatal and nonfatal shooting investigation/response</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaware County – <i>Anti-Violence Strike Force</i> • Luzerne County – <i>Gun Violence Reduction Task Force & Trigger Lock Operations (hot spot policing)</i>
<p>HYBRID APPROACH: Models Spanning Public Health and Public Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Philadelphia – <i>Community Crisis Intervention Program (CCIP)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Pittsburgh – <i>GVI model</i> 		

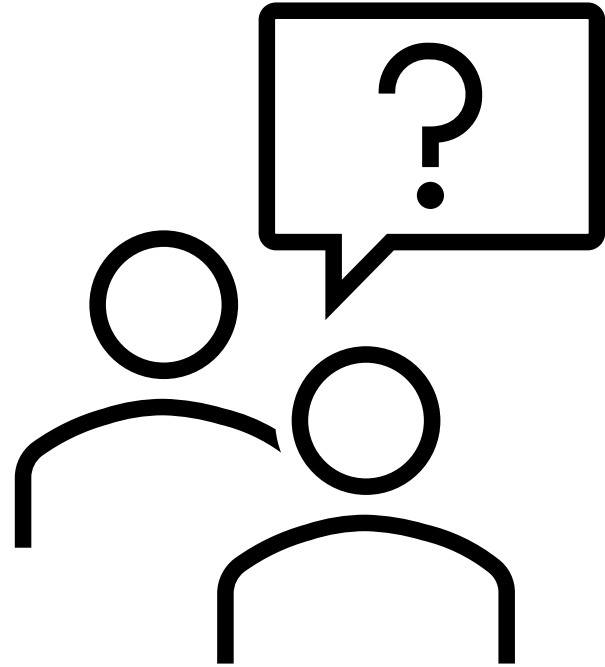
PCCD's 2021-2025 Strategic Framework

- PCCD's [*2021-2025 Strategic Framework*](#) was unanimously adopted by the Commission on December 9, 2020.
- The Framework serves as a foundation for setting agency-wide priorities and informing decision-making.
- The plan included goals and objectives explicitly focused on gun violence prevention and reduction.

Goal 2: We invest in ideas and strategies that improve systems and help make Pennsylvanians and communities safer.

- Objective 2.1. Provide support for effective, community-led efforts to prevent gun violence.





Questions?

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON STATE & LOCAL EFFORTS

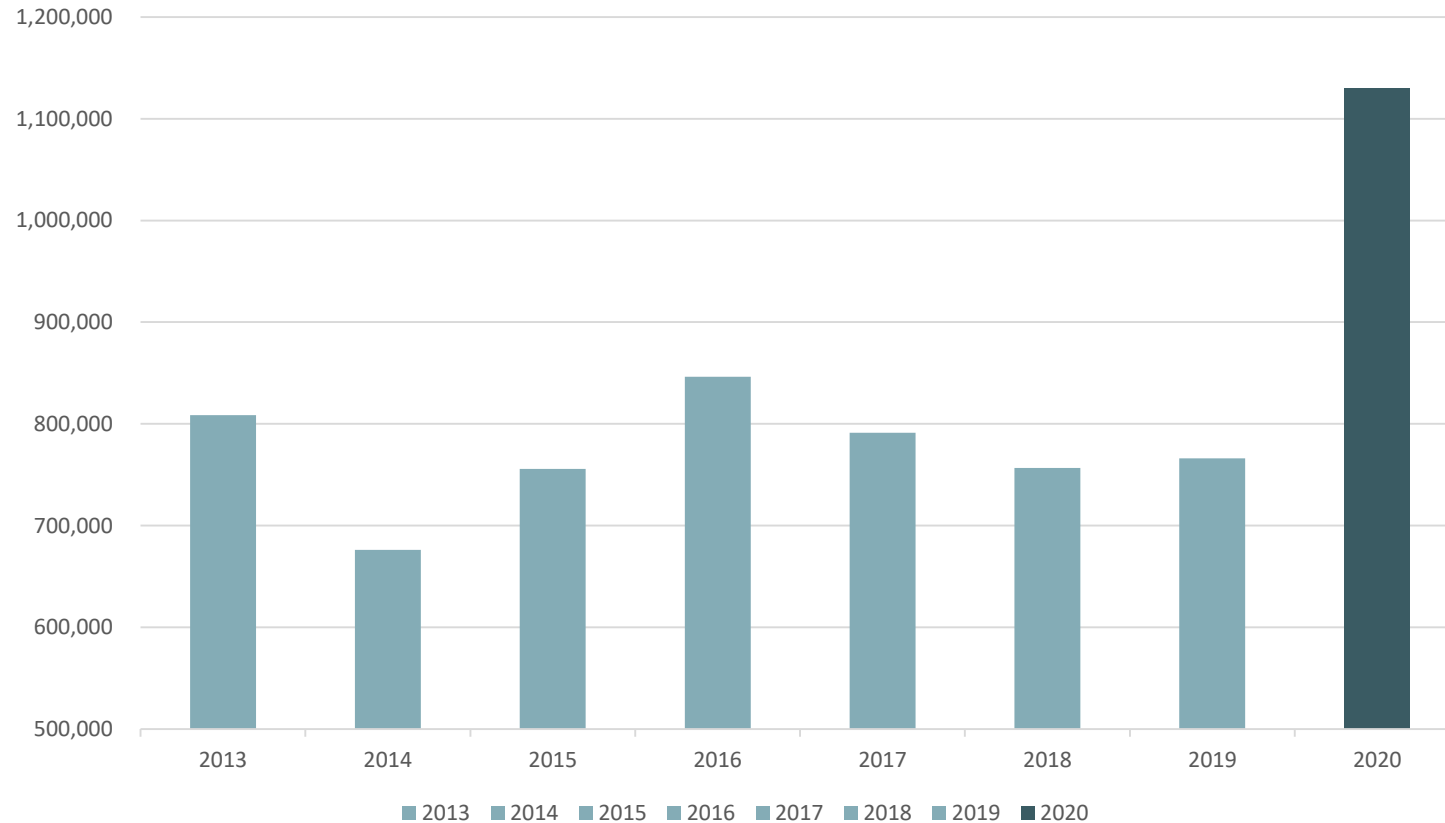
COVID-19's social, economic, and emotional toll – coupled with historic surges in gun sales – has created a 'perfect storm' of gun violence risk factors for many households and communities.

Recent Trends: COVID-19

- In the wake of COVID-19 and widespread social unrest, preliminary data suggest a significant increase in the number of shootings and gun homicides in Pennsylvania in 2020.
 - According to the *Gun Violence Archive* database, there were an estimated 784 firearm-related murders (up from 621 in 2019), 2,575 shootings (up from 1,840 in 2019), and 34 mass shootings (up from 19 in 2019) statewide in 2020.
 - In the City of Philadelphia, homicides increased by 40% in 2020 compared with 2019, resulting in the second highest number of killings in the past 60 years.

Record-breaking Firearm Sales in 2020

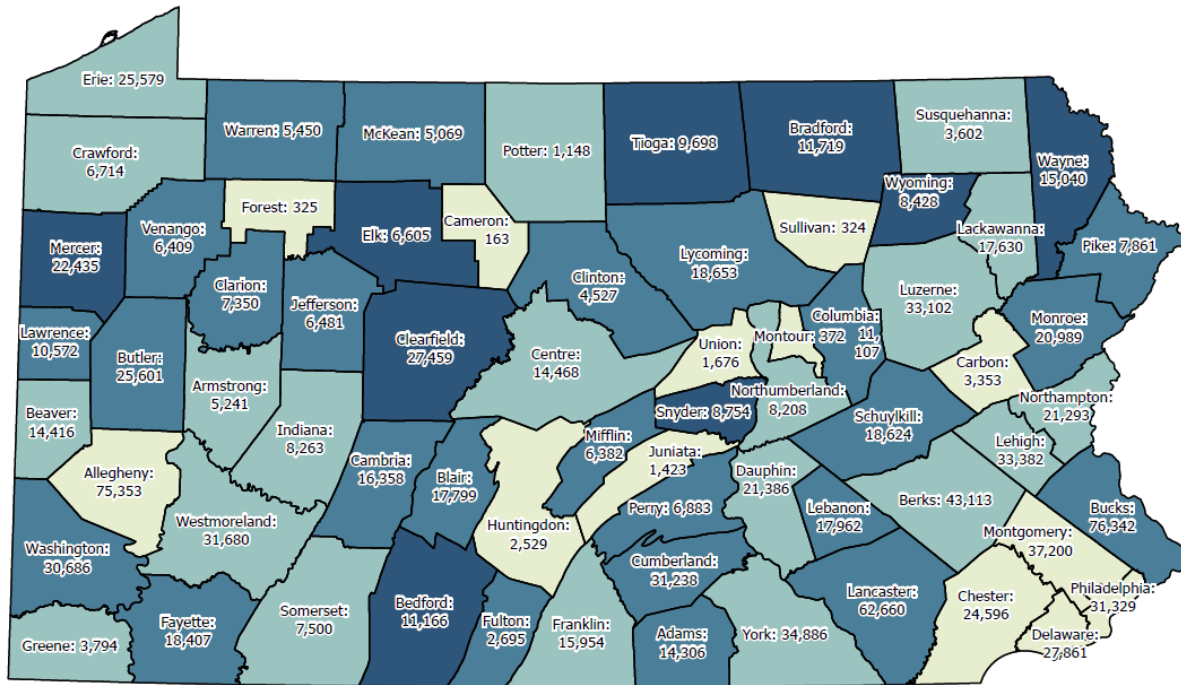
PA Firearm Sales & Transfers by Year, 2013-2020



Background check requests through the PA Instant Check System (PICS) increased by **47%** in 2020 compared with the prior year. PA State Police (PSP) reported that October through December 2020 was the busiest quarter in the 22-year history of PICS (**420,581 background checks**) – beating the prior record set in the previous quarter. More than **1.1 million firearm sales and transfers** were completed statewide in 2020.

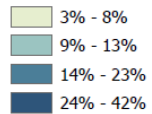
2020 Firearm Sales in PA (continued)

Firearm Sales & Transfers by Pennsylvania County, 2020

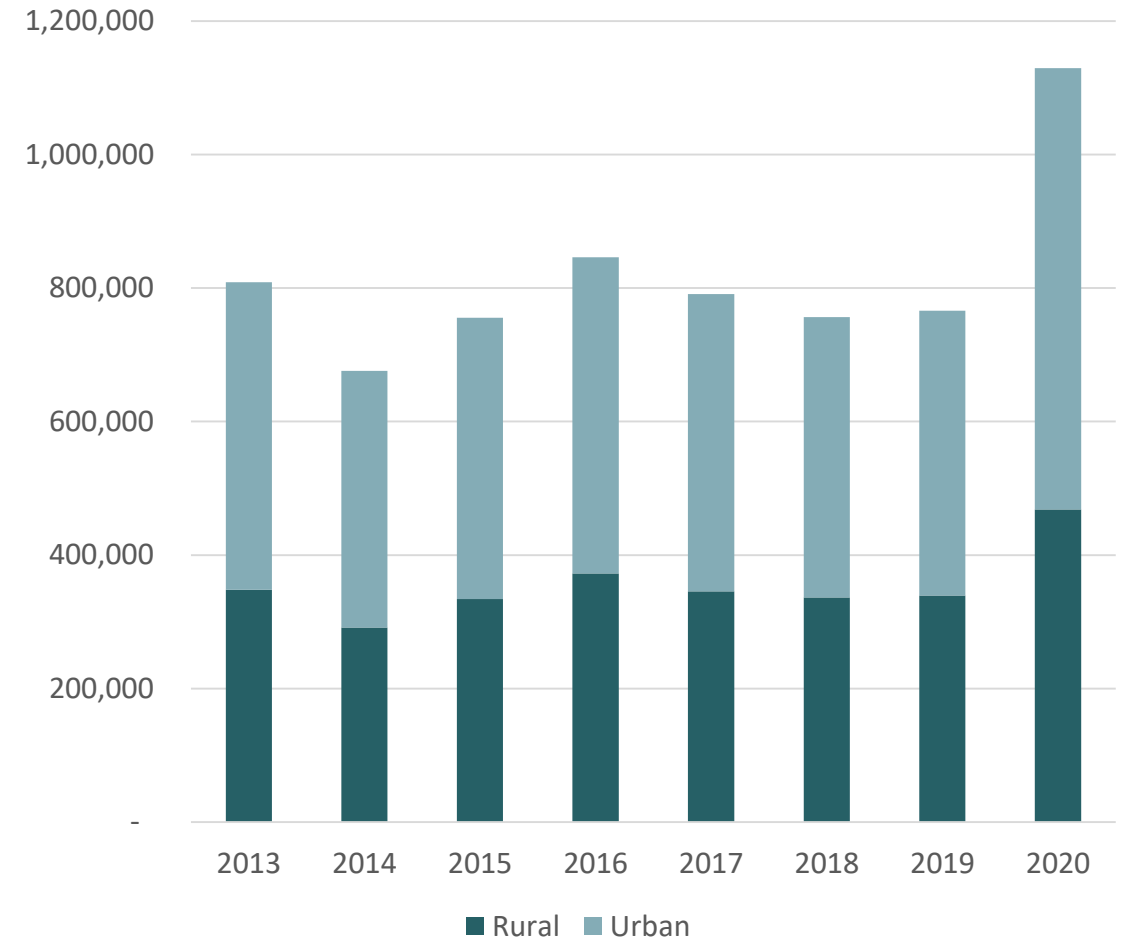


Handguns, Long Guns,
and Frames Receivers

Per Capita: Age 18+



Rural vs. Urban Firearm Sales & Transfers in PA, 2013-20



Data Source: Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Records and Identification.

State-Level Impacts of COVID-19



Budget & Funding



Program Implementation



Coordination & Collaboration

Adjusting to the “New Normal”: COVID and Local Gun Violence Reduction Efforts

- To understand how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted local gun violence prevention efforts, between December 2020 and January 2021, PCCD staff met virtually with nine out of 11 Gun Violence Reduction grantees.
- These conversations were also designed to ***gather information about the different strategies they have put in place using state funding to prevent shootings, homicides, and other firearm-related crime*** in their communities.
- Grantees shared ***success stories as well as “lessons learned”*** from their efforts to curb gun violence using a variety of models and programs, including the ***adaptations they made in light of the COVID-19 crisis***.

Local Impacts of COVID-19

“There was an expectation that COVID-19 would lead to less violence, fewer shootings – but the opposite happened.”

– Gun Violence Reduction grantee

The pandemic and resulting social distancing measures upended many traditional approaches to gun violence prevention and intervention, forcing communities to adjust and adapt.

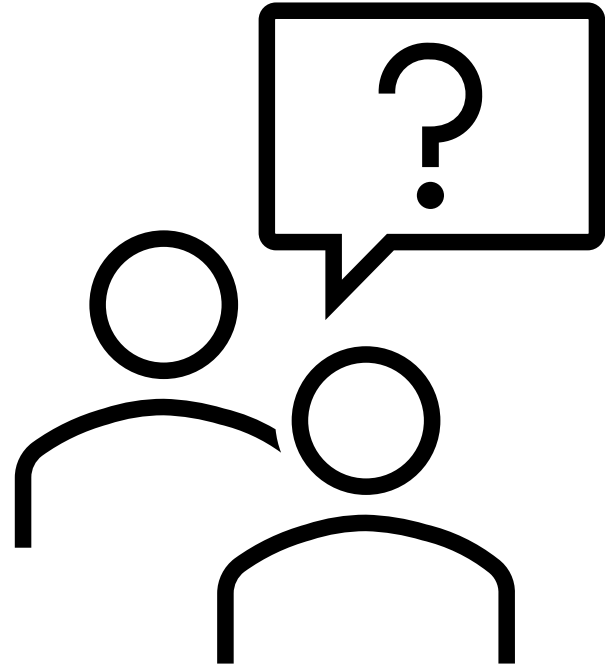
- COVID-19 created significant implementation challenges for all FY 2019 Gun Violence Grant Program sites and was especially disruptive for intervention efforts focused on engaging youth and schools.
- Participants noted challenges implementing post-shooting interventions early in the pandemic due to restrictions on visits in settings like hospitals and jails. Grantees also reported difficulty maintaining collaboration and community-based partnerships in a socially distanced environment.

COVID-19 catalyzed factors associated with increases in crime and violence.

- This included historic/systemic racial and economic disparities, reduced or modified behavioral health services (e.g., telehealth) leading to changes in treatment, and stay-at-home orders increasing opportunities for domestic violence.

Common Challenges & “Lessons Learned”

- Relationships matter.
- Sustainability is challenging.
- It’s difficult to ‘prove a negative’ when it comes to gun violence prevention models.
- Finding the right ‘credible messengers’ is critical – and often challenging work.
- Break down silos between public health and public safety approaches to violence prevention.
- Need to document, inventory, and disseminate promising practices and effective models.



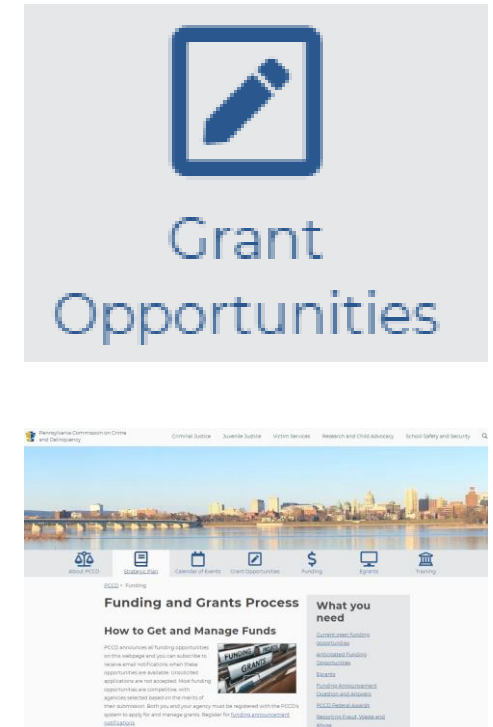
Questions?

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the year ahead, PCCD will continue to leverage available resources to advance local gun violence reduction strategies and promising practices.

Investing in Effective Strategies

- PCCD plans to release ***competitive funding announcements*** focused on enhancing local capacity to reduce community gun violence.
- These solicitations will build on PCCD's prior investments and will focus on ***supporting community-based organizations working in areas with the highest rates of gun violence.***
- Funding will support ***effective, community-designed and community-led strategies to decrease shootings*** and increase public safety in the short- and long-term.
- More information about funding priorities, applicant eligibility, and other criteria will be made available on PCCD's website and through a ***webinar for prospective applicants*** (date TBA).



Statewide Community of Practice (CoP)

- Based on recommendations from the Special Council on Gun Violence and feedback provided by current Gun Violence Reduction grantees, PCCD plans to launch a new Statewide Community of Practice (CoP) initiative.
- The CoP will connect grantees and local community leaders, facilitating opportunities for capacity and coalition building, peer support, as well as the sharing of promising practices.
- CoP members will also help inform the work of PCCD's Office of Gun Violence Prevention as well as other state-level policymakers and leaders, providing opportunities to hear directly from people and organizations addressing gun violence at the local level.

Expanding Data & Research

- PCCD's Office of Research, Evaluation & Strategic Policy Development and the Office of Gun Violence Prevention will continue to work together to ***make progress on the agency's Gun Violence Research Agenda***, developed pursuant to the Special Council's report.
- PCCD will continue to ***analyze previously unexplored or isolated public health and public safety datasets*** to better understand the unique dynamics of fatal and nonfatal shootings as well as firearm-related crimes in Pennsylvania.
- ***PCCD is uniquely positioned to advance these efforts*** as Pennsylvania's justice planning and policymaking agency, and through its role as the Statistical Analysis Center for the Commonwealth.

Questions and Next Steps

- For more information about PCCD's Prevention Efforts, please feel free to contact Geoff Kolchin, Deputy Director for Prevention Initiatives, at gkolchin@pa.gov or 717-265-8483.
- To be notified via email when PCCD releases a competitive funding announcement, please visit this link: <https://www.pccdegrants.pa.gov/Egrants/Public/Subscribe.aspx> and submit your email address.

Thank You! Any Questions?