



**KEY FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
OF LETHAL
HISPANIC/LATINO
FIREARM
VICTIMIZATION
IN CALIFORNIA**



Violence Policy Center



This document offers select information from the February 2019 Violence Policy Center study *Lethal Hispanic/Latino Firearm Victimization in California*. Funded under a grant from the Hope and Heal Fund, the full study is available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/CAlatino.pdf>.

For English and Spanish language versions of the study, its key findings and recommendations, and social media tools, please visit <http://www.vpc.org/CAlatino/>.

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. We understand that the population included within the term Hispanic may not identify with this label. While this term is used throughout the study to remain consistent with the data as reported, our 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, such as Latino/a or Latinx.

Additional information for white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native victims is contained in the full study.

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The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national nonprofit educational organization that conducts research and public education on violence in America and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public.

This study was funded by the Hope and Heal Fund, the only collaborative-based fund in California committed to preventing gun violence in California. The Hope and Heal Fund invests in innovative, strategic and evidence-based solutions to prevent gun violence. The Hope and Heal Fund harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities, government and philanthropy to ensure homes and communities in California are safe and free from gun death, injury and trauma. For more information about the Hope and Heal Fund, please visit hopeandhealfund.org.

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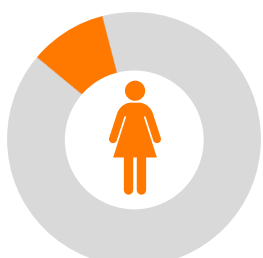
KEY FINDINGS FROM SECTION ONE: PUBLIC HEALTH DATA — ALL AGES AND SECTION TWO: PUBLIC HEALTH DATA — AGES 10 TO 24

In 2016, for Hispanics of all ages:

- Nine hundred and twenty-one Hispanics were killed by firearms in California in homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths.
- There were 909 Hispanic victims of homicide by any means in California. The Hispanic homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 5.95 per 100,000. Of these, 672 (74 percent) were killed by gunfire. The Hispanic firearm homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 4.40 per 100,000.
- There were 783 Hispanic male victims murdered in California. The Hispanic male homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 10.19 per 100,000. Of these, 605 (77 percent) were killed by gunfire. The Hispanic male firearm homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 7.88 per 100,000.
- There were 126 Hispanic female victims murdered in California. The Hispanic female homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 1.66 per 100,000. Of these, 67 (53 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic female firearm homicide victimization rate for 2016 was 0.88 per 100,000.
- Homicide ranked as the 12th leading cause of death for Hispanics in California (7th for Hispanic males and 16th for Hispanic females).



Percentages of Hispanic victims of homicide by firearm in California in red, non-firearm homicide victims in gray.



Percentages of Hispanic victims of suicide by firearm in California in orange, non-firearm suicide victims in gray.

- There were 848 Hispanic suicide victims by any means in California. The Hispanic suicide rate for 2016 was 5.55 per 100,000. Of these, 231 (27 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic firearm suicide rate for 2016 was 1.51 per 100,000.
- There were 694 Hispanic male suicide victims in California. The Hispanic male suicide rate for 2016 was 9.03 per 100,000. Of these, 216 (31 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic male firearm suicide rate for 2016 was 2.81 per 100,000.
- There were 154 Hispanic female suicide victims in California. The Hispanic female suicide rate for 2016 was 2.03 per 100,000. Of these, 15 (10 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic female firearm suicide rate for 2016 was 0.20 per 100,000.

- In 2016, suicide ranked as the 13th leading cause of death for Hispanics in California (9th for Hispanic males and 15th for Hispanic females).

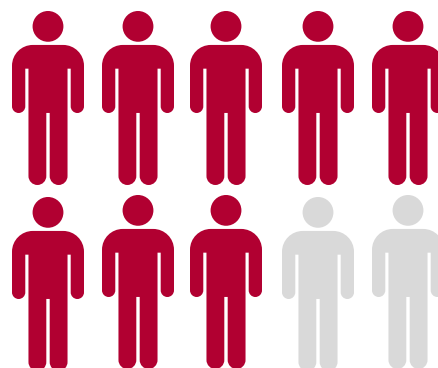
From 1999 to 2016, for Hispanics of all ages:

- More than 16,600 Hispanics died from guns in California: 12,912 in firearm homicides, 3,402 in firearm suicides, and 319 in unintentional firearm deaths. Broken out by sex, guns killed 15,222 Hispanic males and 1,411 Hispanic females.
- Nearly three quarters of all Hispanic homicide victims in California were killed with a firearm (74 percent).
- A third of all Hispanic suicide victims in California used a firearm (33 percent).

In 2016, for Hispanics ages 10 to 24:

- Three hundred and twenty-two Hispanics ages 10 to 24 were killed by firearms in California in homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths.

- There were 316 Hispanic victims of homicide ages 10 to 24 by any means in California. The Hispanic homicide victimization rate for this age group in 2016 was 8.03 per 100,000. Of these, 261 (83 percent) were killed by gunfire. The Hispanic firearm homicide victimization rate for this age group for 2016 was 6.63 per 100,000.



In 2016, 84% of Hispanic male victims of homicide ages 10 to 24 in California were killed by gunfire.

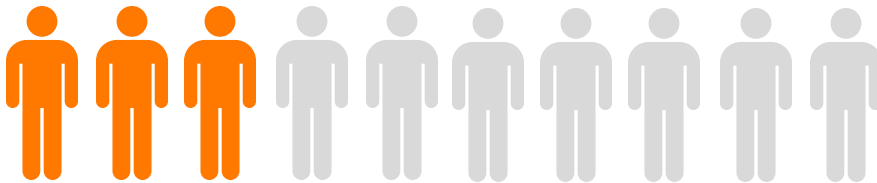
- There were 282 Hispanic male victims ages 10 to 24 murdered in California. The Hispanic male homicide victimization rate for this age group for 2016 was 14.06 per 100,000. Of these, 237 (84 percent) were killed by gunfire. The Hispanic male firearm homicide victimization rate for this age group for 2016 was 11.82 per 100,000.



In 2016, 71% of Hispanic female victims of homicide ages 10 to 24 in California were killed by gunfire.

- There were 34 Hispanic female victims ages 10 to 24 murdered in California. The Hispanic female homicide victimization rate for this age group in 2016 was 1.76 per 100,000. Of these, 24 (71 percent) were killed by gunfire. The Hispanic female firearm homicide victimization for this age group for 2016 was 1.24 per 100,000.

- In 2016, homicide ranked as the 2nd leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 10 to 24 in California (2nd for Hispanic males in this age group and 4th for Hispanic females in this age group).
- There were 186 Hispanic suicide victims ages 10 to 24 by any means in California. The Hispanic suicide rate for this age group for 2016 was 4.73 per 100,000. Of these, 61 (33 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic firearm suicide rate for this age group for 2016 was 1.55 per 100,000.
- There were 150 Hispanic male suicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California. The Hispanic male suicide rate for this age group for 2016 was 7.48 per 100,000. Of these, 57 (38 percent) involved a firearm. The Hispanic male firearm suicide rate for this age group for 2016 was 2.84 per 100,000.
- There were 36 Hispanic female suicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California. The Hispanic female suicide rate for this age group for 2016 was 1.86 per 100,000.



In 2016, 38% of Hispanic male victims of suicide ages 10 to 24 in California were killed with guns.

From 1999 to 2016, for Hispanics ages 10 to 24:

- Nearly 7,500 Hispanics ages 10 to 24 died from guns in California: 6,505 in firearm homicides, 814 in firearm suicides, and 166 in unintentional firearm deaths. Broken out by sex, guns killed 7,012 Hispanic males and 466 Hispanic females, ages 10 to 24.
- More than eight out of 10 Hispanic homicide victims ages 10 to 24 were killed with firearms (85 percent).
- Nearly a third (32 percent) of all Hispanic suicide victims ages 10 to 24 used a firearm.

KEY FINDINGS FROM SECTION THREE: CRIMINAL JUSTICE HOMICIDE DATA

In 2016, for Hispanics of all ages in California:

- For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 75 percent of Hispanic victims (612 out of 819) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 67 percent (411 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 124 victims (15 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 29 victims (4 percent) killed by a blunt object, and 27 victims (3 percent) killed by bodily force.
- For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 53 percent of Hispanic victims (200 out of 378) were murdered by someone they knew. One hundred twenty-seven victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 50 victims (25 percent) were intimate acquaintances of the offender.
- Among female victims, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 91 percent of Hispanic female victims (70 out of 77) were murdered by someone they knew. Twenty-seven of these females (39 percent) were killed with guns. Of the 70 Hispanic female victims who knew their offenders, 44 victims (63 percent) were intimate acquaintances of the offender. Of the Hispanic female intimates murdered, 21 were killed with guns (48 percent).
- For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 86 percent (440 out of 512) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Twenty-eight percent (124 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Six percent (26 homicides) were drive-by shootings.

As noted in the full study, while information from the CDC's WISQARS database 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, location). The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) annual Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) does report such information, albeit on a smaller number of incidents. Section Three: Criminal Justice Homicide Data of the full study presents information maintained by the California Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC) for submission to the FBI SHR.



In 2016 for homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 75 percent of Hispanic victims were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 67 percent were killed with handguns.

- For homicides in which the location could be determined, 50 percent (405 out of 818) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Twenty-one percent (173 out of 818) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Seven percent (57 out of 818) occurred at another residence, and seven percent (59 out of 818) occurred in a vehicle.

In 2016, for Hispanics ages 10 to 24 in California:



In 2016 for homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 83 percent of Hispanic victims ages 10 to 24 were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 68 percent were killed with handguns.

- For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 83 percent of Hispanic victims ages 10 to 24 (237 out of 284) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 68 percent (161 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 38 victims (13 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments and one victim (less than 1 percent) killed by bodily force.
- For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 41 percent of Hispanic victims ages 10 to 24 (52 out of 127) were murdered by someone they knew. Fifty-three victims were killed by strangers. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 12 victims (23 percent) were intimate acquaintances of the offender.
- Among female victims, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 83 percent of Hispanic female victims ages 10 to 24 (15 out of 18) were murdered by someone they knew. Nine of these females (60 percent) were killed with guns. Of the 15 Hispanic female victims ages 10 to 24 who knew their offenders, 10 victims (67 percent) were intimate acquaintances of the offender. Of the Hispanic female intimates ages 10 to 24 murdered, five were killed with guns (50 percent).
- For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 86 percent (163 out of 189) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Twenty-two percent (36 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Eight percent (13 homicides) were drive-by shootings.
- For homicides in which the location could be determined, 54 percent (151 out of 280) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Eleven percent (32 out of 280) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Ten percent (28 out of 280) occurred at another residence, and 10 percent (28 out of 280) occurred in a vehicle.

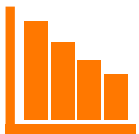
RECOMMENDATIONS

FIREARMS



- Effective violence prevention strategies must include measures that recognize the role played by firearms, especially handguns, in lethal Hispanic victimization. In addition, it is important to recognize that a significant percentage of the most impacted age group, victims ages 10 to 24, cannot legally purchase a handgun in California unless they are over the age of 21. Recognizing these facts, prevention strategies to limit exposure to firearms in this age range are of the utmost importance. Key components of such a strategy could include the identification of the make, model, and caliber of weapons most preferred by this age group as well as analyses identifying the sources of the weapons.
- Resources should be devoted to the development, identification, implementation, and expansion of effective and comprehensive violence intervention and prevention strategies that include a focus on the psychological well-being of survivors of, and witnesses to, gun violence. Such trauma-informed efforts should be tailored to local circumstances and needs while engaging community leaders and stakeholders. At the same time, state and regional policies should incorporate elements necessary to help ensure effective community practices.

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION



- Ensure full funding of, and participation in, the California Violent Death Reporting System (Cal-VDRS), part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).
- Improve data quality and accuracy by linking data sets across sectors with a unique case identifier.
- Improve collection and access to county, city, and neighborhood level data.
- Identify and add useful modules and/or increased sample sizes to existing statewide surveys.
- Identify ways to make current public databases more easily accessed and understood to increase their utility. Provide user-friendly technical assistance to public data users.
- For those who administer or contribute to different data sets or collection systems, create and support opportunities to analyze and discuss potential ways to integrate and synthesize such information.

IMPROVING RACE AND ETHNICITY INFORMATION



- Increase commitment to regularly administered, fully funded statewide survey data to complement mortality information for context in a manner similar to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).
- Explore the potential of improving data collection through legislative mandates or modified policy guidelines.
- Improve and expand the understanding of the complex nature of data collection and interpretation surrounding race and ethnicity and its intertwined relationship with other social determinants of health (e.g., poverty, housing segregation, educational and employment opportunity). Promote the proper understanding, limitations, and interpretation of data analyses based on the existing race and ethnicity classifications.
- Identify best practices for guidelines and training on how to better identify and report ethnicity.
- Link and compare information within different database systems to ensure the integrity and accuracy of ethnic classification.
- Engage Hispanic and other communities of color (e.g., community organizations) in problem-solving around data collection and use.

Because of limitations in data collection, the true scale of gun violence's impact on Hispanic men, women, boys, and girls in California is not fully known. Comprehensive, consistent, and reliable information from a broad range of sources is necessary to ensure that violence prevention policies work to save lives, protect families, and ensure healthy communities. This is true not only for Hispanics in California, but for all residents of the state.



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