



# Gun Death in Wisconsin

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 EDITION



**Violence Policy Center**



WISCONSIN ANTI-VIOLENCE EFFORT

OCTOBER 2025

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This study was authored by VPC Public Health Analyst Terra Wiens, MPH.

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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.

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## **A note about race and ethnicity definitions:**

The terms and definitions for race and ethnicity in this report are derived from U.S. Census Bureau definitions.

### **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). This report includes those commonly referred to as “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 — in this category.

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

**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.

## Introduction

Gun violence affects all communities in the United States, but in different ways. This study, a joint project of WAVE Educational Fund<sup>a</sup> and the Violence Policy Center,<sup>b</sup> offers an overview of lethal gun violence in Wisconsin. Understanding how gun violence affects specific geographic locations and populations allows prevention efforts to be more effectively tailored to impacted communities.

This study utilizes 2023 data<sup>c</sup> from the following sources:

- Mortality data from the WISQARS database maintained by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Firearms trace data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

The report also presents personal stories of Wisconsin residents impacted by gun violence who have turned pain into purpose through gun violence prevention advocacy. Though statistics and analysis are necessary to aid in the development of effective public policy and increase public understanding of the true nature and scope of gun violence, it is imperative to never lose sight of the real-world impact of gun death and injury. The VPC and WAVE Educational Fund want to express their sincere appreciation to those who shared their experiences for this report. Their voices provide a critical, human context to this ongoing tragedy.

a WAVE Educational Fund is a statewide, grassroots organization dedicated to preventing gun violence, injuries, and deaths in Wisconsin through education and advocacy. For more information, please see [waveedfund.org](http://waveedfund.org).

b The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national national research, education, and advocacy organization working to stop gun death and injury. For more information, please see [www.vpc.org](http://www.vpc.org).

c At the time this study was researched and published, data from the year 2023 was the most comprehensive and recently available information from these sources.

# Overall Gun Death in Wisconsin

Gun violence has a significant impact on communities: both nationally and in Wisconsin. In 2023, guns claimed 46,728 lives in the United States. Of these, 762 Wisconsin lives were lost to guns in suicides, homicides, and other firearm deaths (Table 1).

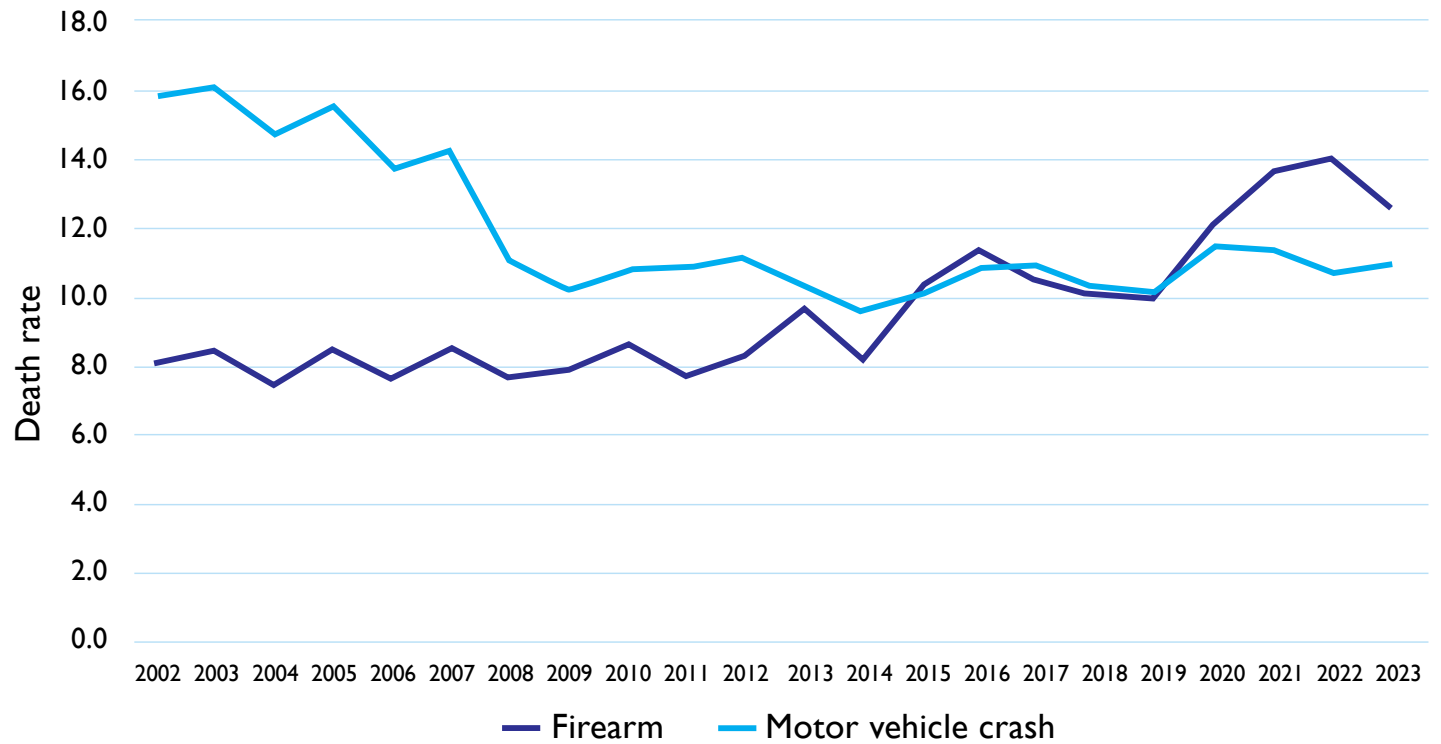
Table 1. Firearm deaths in Wisconsin by year, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>

	Firearm suicide	Firearm homicide	Unintentional firearm deaths	Total firearm deaths*
2018	420	153	--	598
2019	427	153	--	604
2020	442	253	--	717
2021	484	290	--	793
2022	529	277	--	830
2023	502	236	--	762

-- Indicates value has been suppressed because the number is too small to publish due to privacy concerns (nine or fewer deaths)  
\*Total firearm deaths include homicides, legal intervention deaths, suicides, unintentional deaths, and deaths of undetermined intent

Since 2020, firearm deaths have outpaced motor vehicle deaths in Wisconsin, a shocking fact when one considers a person’s daily exposure to motor vehicles as opposed to firearms (Figure 1).

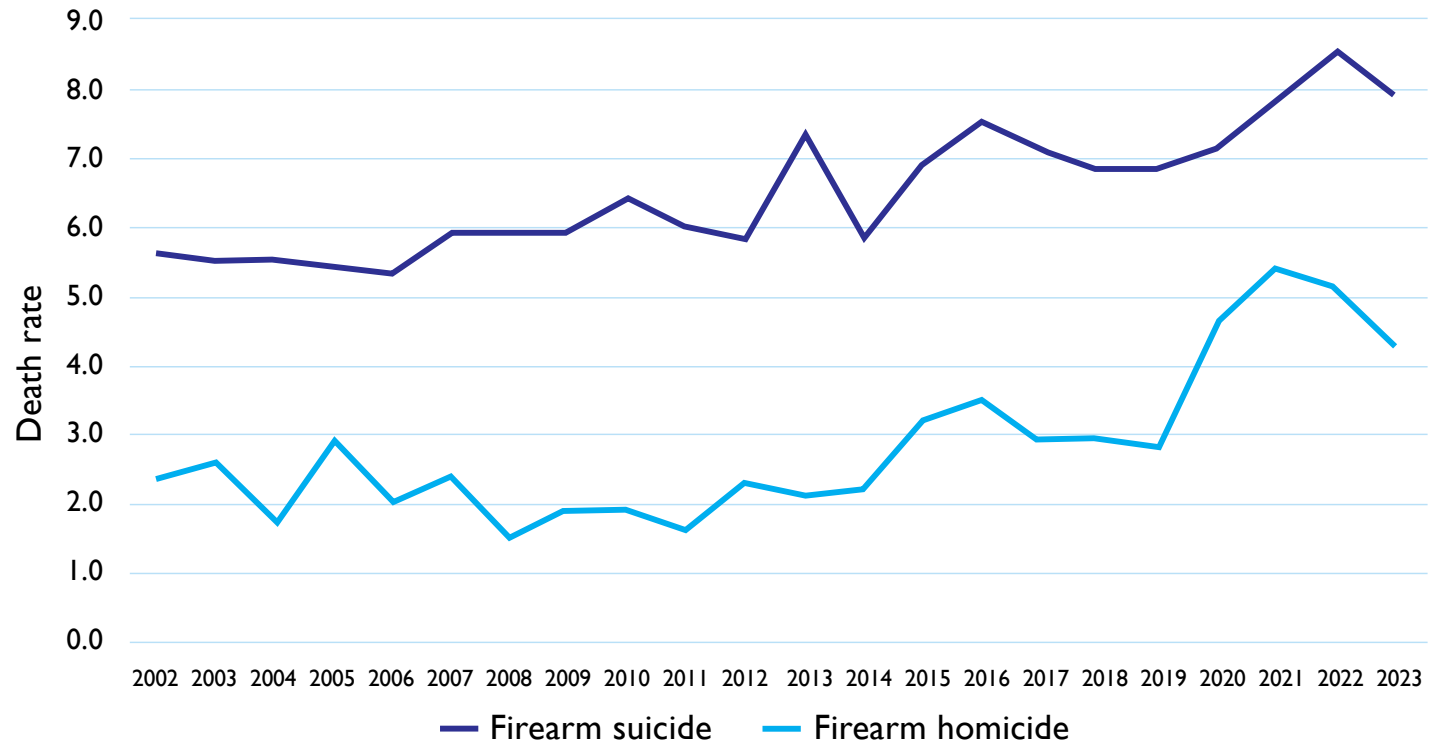
Figure 1. Rate<sup>d</sup> of firearm deaths and motor vehicle deaths in Wisconsin, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>



<sup>d</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all rates presented in this report are adjusted for age and per 100,000.

Rates of both suicides and homicides due to firearms have increased in Wisconsin over the last two decades (Figure 2). Though firearm suicide rates decreased between 2022 and 2023 from 8.5 per 100,000 to 7.9 per 100,000, rates are still substantially higher than they were two decades ago. After increasing drastically between 2019 and 2021, firearm homicide rates peaked in 2021 at 5.4 per 100,000 and then decreased to 4.3 per 100,000 in 2023. Over the last two decades there has been a general increase in rates of all firearm deaths in both rural and urban areas of the state,<sup>e</sup> though both areas saw a decrease in recent years (Figure 3).

**Figure 2. Rate of firearm homicide and firearm suicide in Wisconsin, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>e</sup> The terms “rural” and “urban” used in this report are based on the National Center for Health Statistics’ 2013 Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties, which categorizes counties into six urbanization categories. The “rural” category (also known as “non-metro”) includes micropolitan and non-core counties and the “urban” category (also known as “metro”) includes counties considered large central metro, large fringe metro, medium metro, and small metro. More information is available at <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/help/injury-reports/#data-filters-metro-non-metro-indicator>.



## Jenevia Blanks



Jenevia, right, attends a legislative listening session with a friend and fellow advocate.

My personal story starts with a close cousin of mine, who was very young, being killed by gun violence. At the time, something in me said, “There’s so much injustice in the world; we need to do something.”

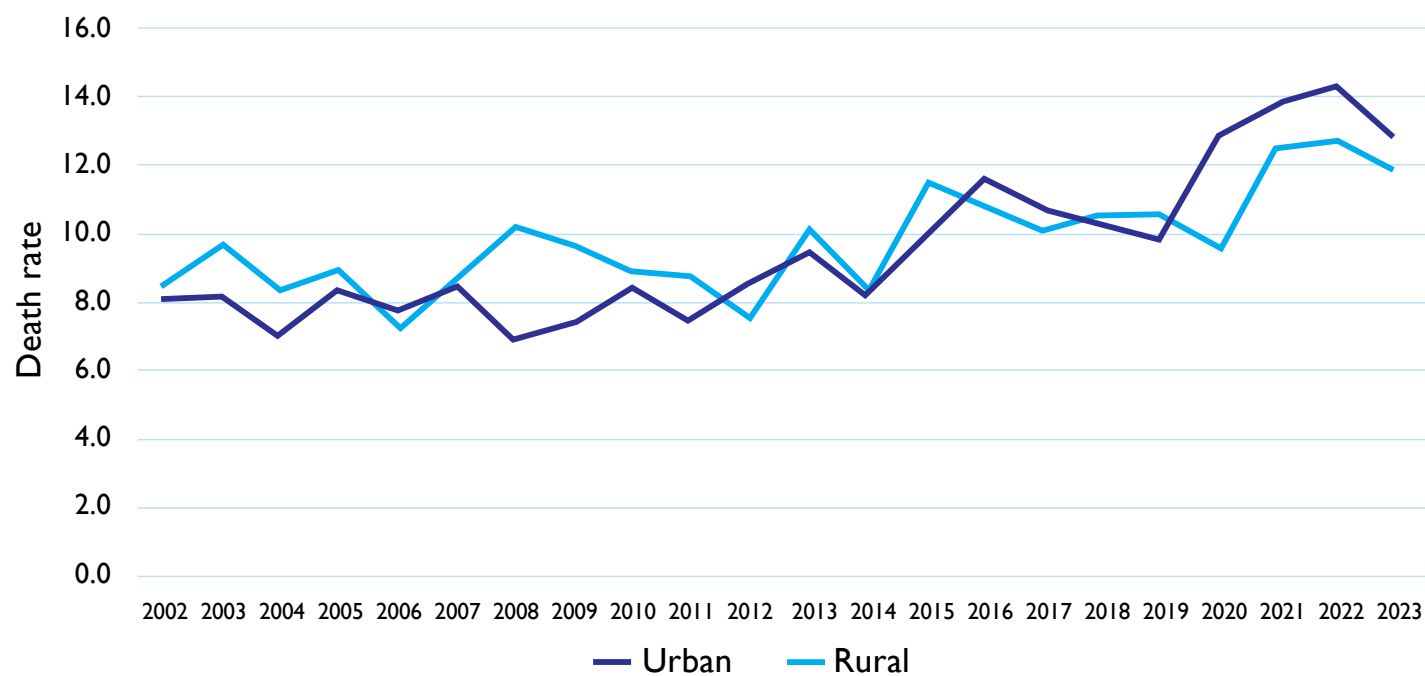
Several of my loved ones were taken too soon. I want to turn my hurt and anger into something meaningful to help others in the community heal from gun violence — to let them know I’m standing with them in solidarity. No other family should have to deal with the pain of gun violence or the stigma attached to it.

We have to help communities heal. I volunteer with Moms Demand Action, and I show up for survivors. I’ve participated in a lot of marches to let other survivors know I am with them. That’s very important. I table at events to share resources, or get involved in the community. There are people in underserved communities who don’t have basic necessities like food, clothing, or shelter. Because of these disparities, it may cause some to do whatever is necessary to survive, and sometimes that survival does take on the form of violence. When people are desperate, when others have harmed them — it can lead to gun violence. That’s where we need our legislators to stand up to help and not turn away.

I want to keep sending a message to legislators that this violence is an epidemic, and something has to be done. It’s not acceptable that we keep having so many lives cut short by gun violence.

Any time you can make baby steps and have a positive impact, it’s really important to do so. That’s why I do this work.

Figure 3. Firearm death rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>





## Suicide in Wisconsin

In 2023, 920 lives were lost to suicide in Wisconsin (Table 2). The majority of suicide victims (including those who died by firearm suicide) were male and white.

**Table 2. Demographic characteristics of all suicide victims and firearm suicide victims in Wisconsin, 2023<sup>1</sup>**

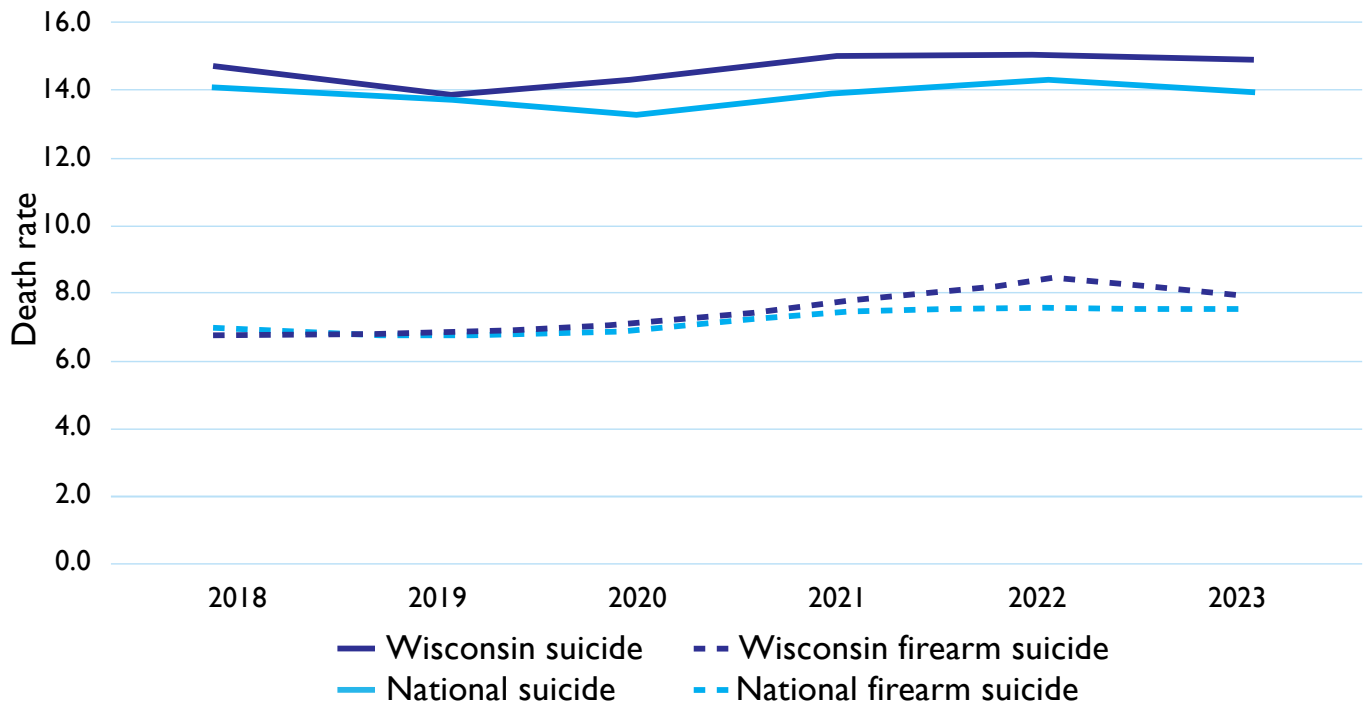
	All suicide victims	Firearm suicide victims
<b>Total victims</b>	920 (100.0%)	502 (100.0%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	726 (78.9%)	448 (89.2%)
Female	194 (21.1%)	54 (10.8%)
<b>Age</b>		
< 10	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
10-24	122 (13.3%)	68 (13.5%)
25-44	305 (33.2%)	148 (29.5%)
45-64	309 (33.6%)	164 (32.7%)
65-79	137 (14.9%)	89 (17.7%)
80+	47 (5.1%)	33 (6.6%)
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	18 (2.0%)	10 (2.0%)
Asian, non-Hispanic*	12 (1.3%)	--
Black, non-Hispanic	43 (4.7%)	26 (5.2%)
White, non-Hispanic	805 (87.5%)	439 (87.5%)
More than one race, non-Hispanic	--	--
Hispanic	38 (4.1%)	20 (4.0%)

\*The "Asian" category includes Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders

-- Indicates value has been suppressed because the number is too small to publish due to privacy concerns (nine or fewer deaths)

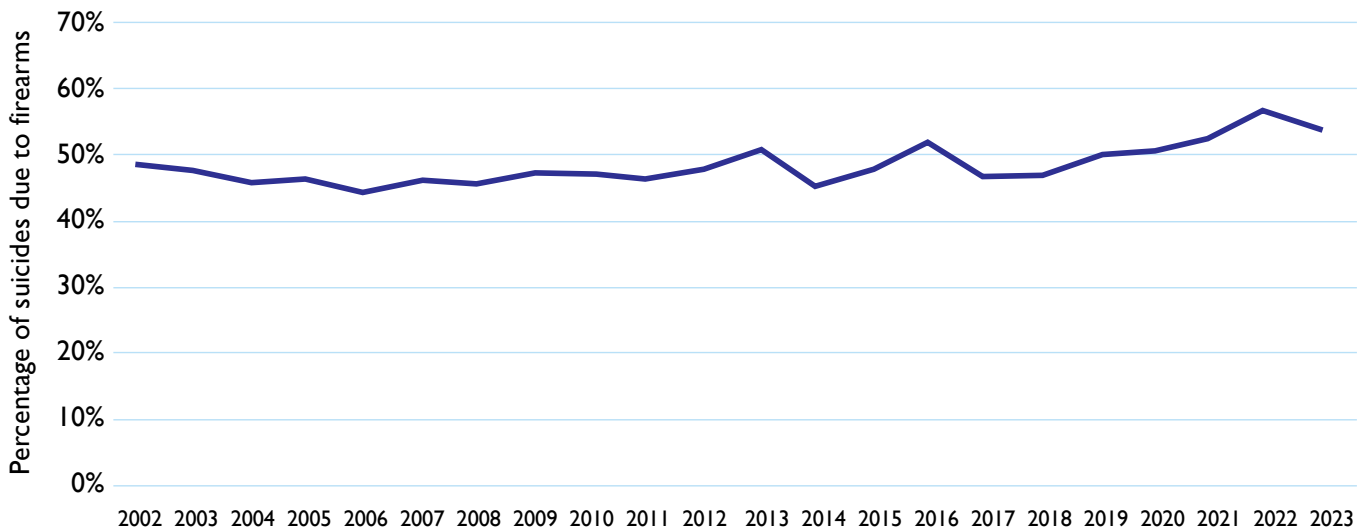
Rates of overall suicide and firearm suicide in Wisconsin are similar to national rates (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Suicide and firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin and the U.S., 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



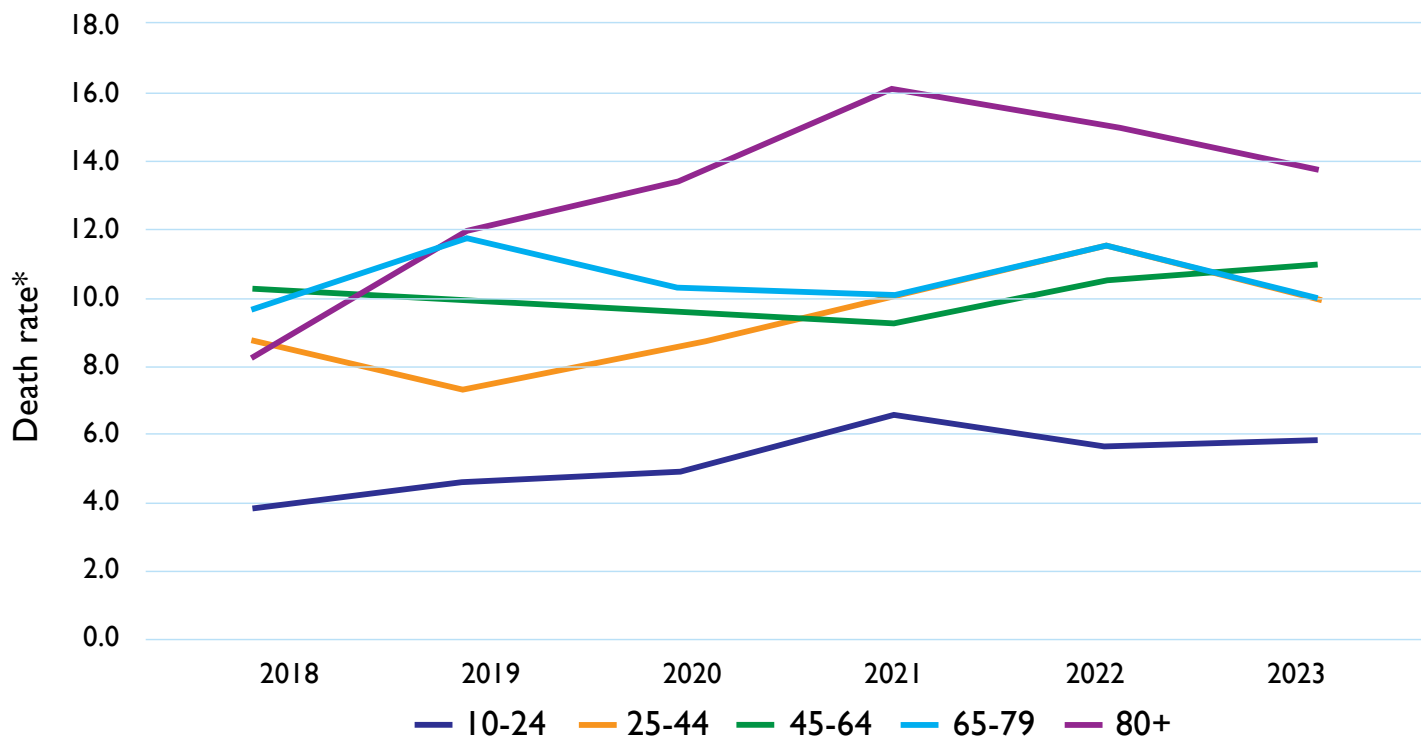
Understanding the role firearms play in suicide deaths is important to developing suicide prevention strategies. The percentage of suicides due to firearms in Wisconsin has increased in recent years, from 47.0 percent in 2017 to 57.3 percent in 2022, and then decreased to 54.6 percent in 2023 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Percentage of suicides in Wisconsin due to firearms, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



Examining firearm suicide rates for different age groups reveals important differences (Figure 6). Wisconsin residents ages 80 and older have the highest rates of firearm suicide, though rates in this age group decreased between 2021 and 2023, from 16.0 per 100,000 to 13.7 per 100,000. Firearm suicide rates increased between 2021 and 2023 among those ages 45 to 64, from 9.2 per 100,000 to 11.0 per 100,000.

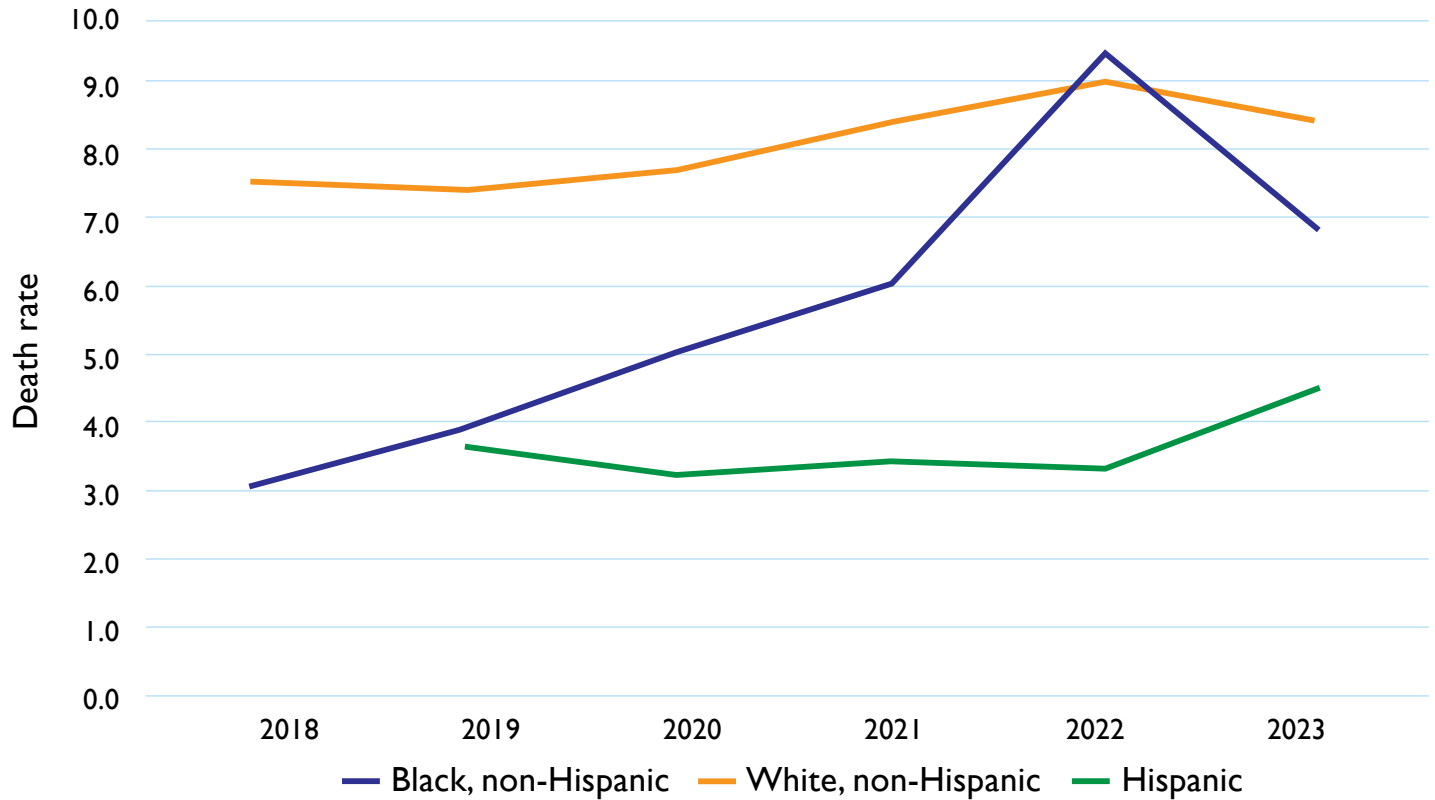
**Figure 6. Firearm suicide rates\* in Wisconsin by age group, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



\*Rates are not adjusted for age

Suicide by firearm also varies by race in Wisconsin. Though the white population in Wisconsin has historically had the highest rate of suicide by firearm in the state, the Black population surpassed this disturbing metric in 2022 (Figure 7). Between 2018 and 2022 the firearm suicide rate among Black Wisconsin residents more than tripled — from 3.0 per 100,000 to 9.4 per 100,000. The firearm suicide rate then decreased to 6.8 per 100,000 among Black Wisconsin residents in 2023. The rate has also increased among Hispanic residents in recent years, from 3.6 per 100,000 in 2019 to 4.5 per 100,000 in 2023.

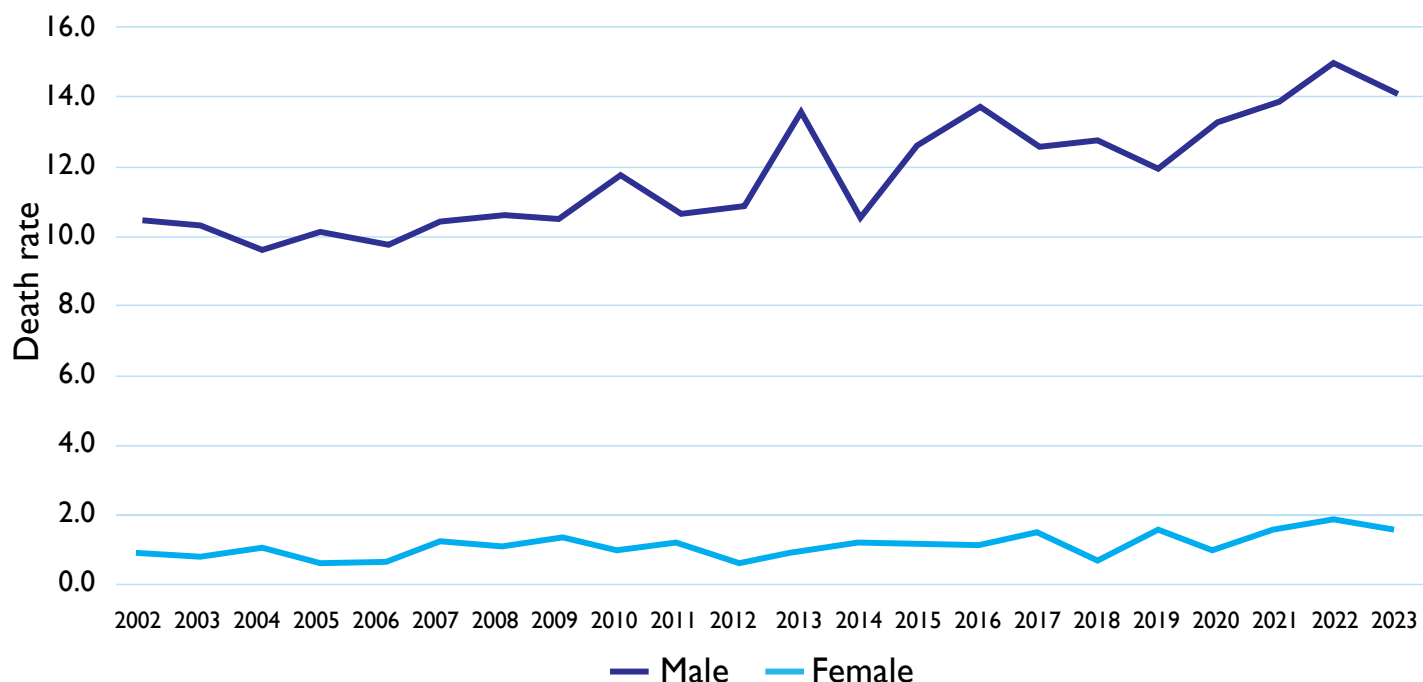
**Figure 7. Firearm suicide rates\* in Wisconsin by race and ethnicity, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



\* The 2018 suicide death rate for the Hispanic population is suppressed due to a small number of deaths in this category

Males in Wisconsin have significantly higher firearm suicide rates compared to females, and rates have been increasing since 2019, from 12.1 per 100,000 to 14.2 per 100,000 in 2023 (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by sex, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

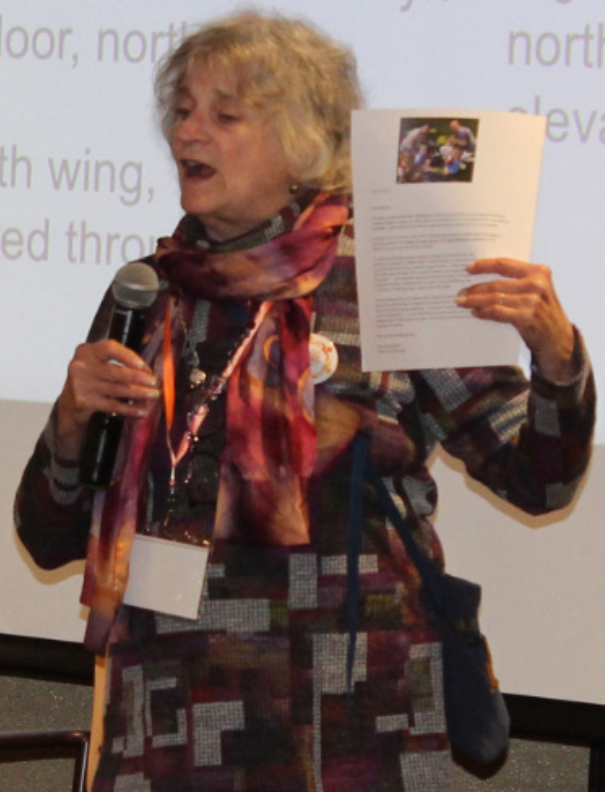


### **Suicide and Geography**

Over the last two decades, firearm suicide rates have remained higher in rural Wisconsin compared to urban areas (Figure 9). Though rates have increased statewide in recent years, the increase was more pronounced in rural areas, jumping from 8.2 per 100,000 in 2020 to 11.4 per 100,000 in 2022. Rates decreased in both rural and urban areas between 2022 and 2023, though both are substantially higher than they were two decades ago.

## Phyllis Brostoff

Phyllis shares an open letter to all Wisconsin legislators, written after the death of her son, about the need for stronger gun laws.



I have always supported the idea of gun violence prevention, but my son's suicide by gun forced me to be more active. Specifically, I believe that a waiting period to buy a gun needs to be required. I know that if there had been even a one-hour waiting period, he would have had time to change his mind, or one of us would have been alerted to his plan. A waiting period is a simple, life-saving measure that our current legislators refuse to enact. I am speaking up because silence is not an option.

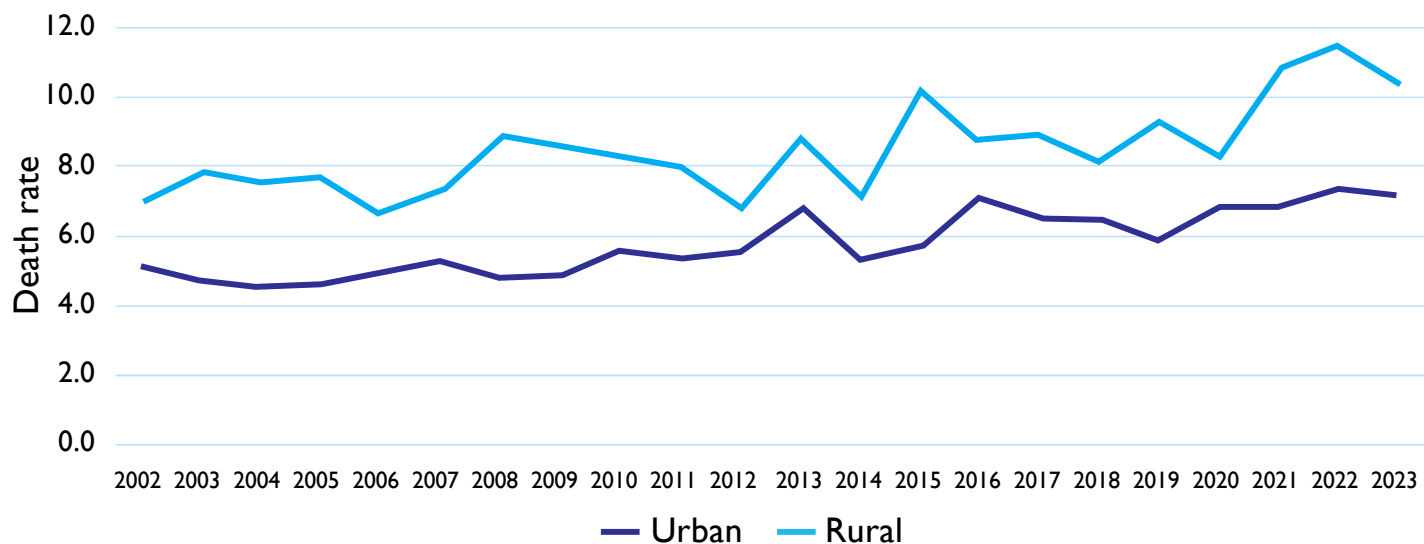
I've been an advocate since I was 24 years old, and I'm 80 now. My path began in the 1960s, working for the federal government on a program that funded education for a variety of health care professions. One summer I worked in Philadelphia for a project talking with people living in an area that was going to undergo "urban renewal," which really was cities building highways right through Black communities, destroying neighborhoods, so that white people could live in the suburbs and commute into the city to work. I was also involved in the movement to stop the war in Vietnam.

I have a Master's degree in social work, and advocacy for social justice is central to my professional identity. I taught social work, ran a shelter for homeless families, and worked in one of the first programs to assist elderly people to continue to live in their own homes rather than being forced to move into a nursing facility. Eventually, I co-founded an agency that provided geriatric care management and in-home care services to the elderly. We started with just two people and grew to nearly 200.

Am I hopeful for the future? It's a difficult question to answer. However, there are a lot of people organizing at the grassroots level for a return to the values of respect for science, public health, and tolerance. I am heartened to see ordinary, everyday people participating in mass demonstrations.

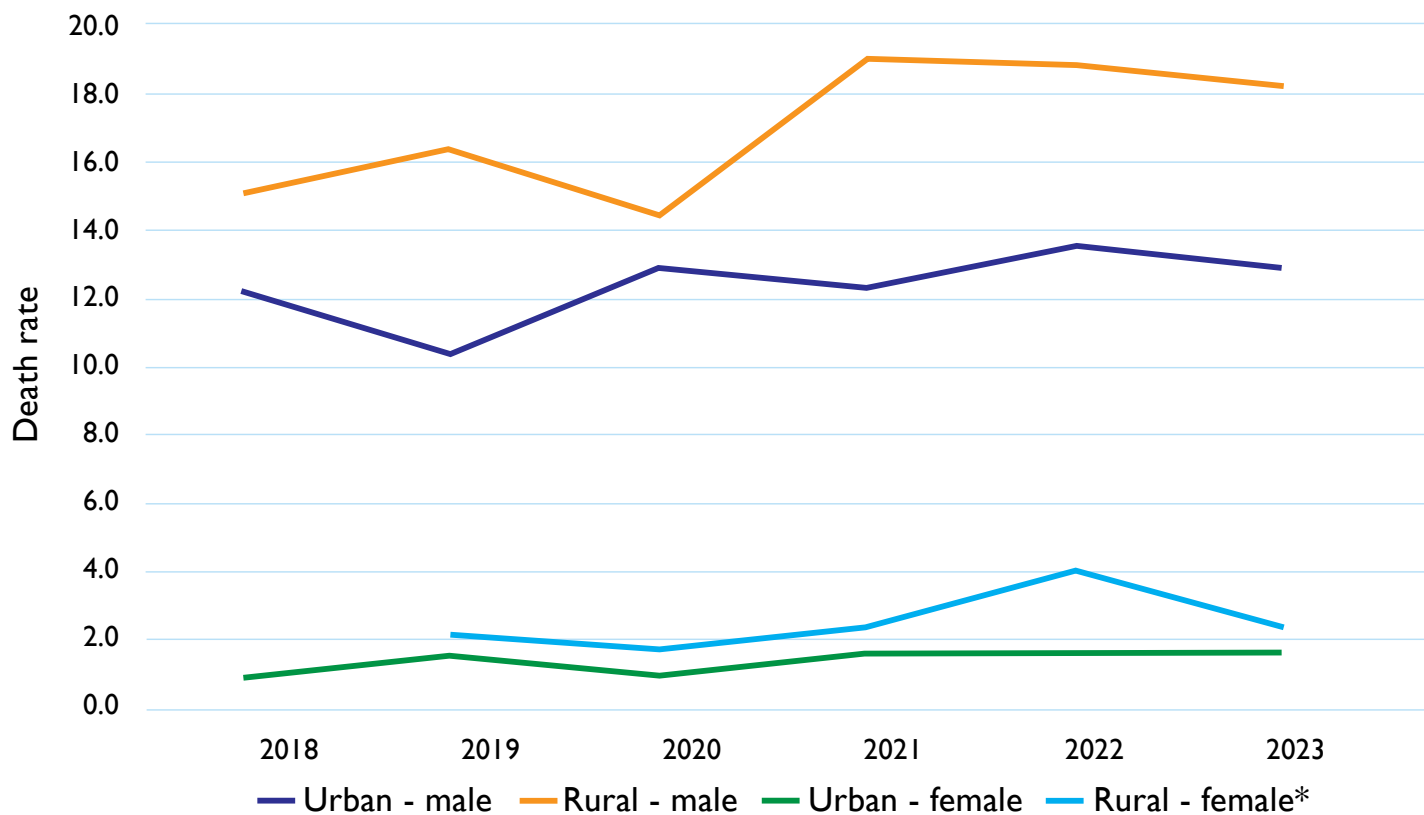


**Figure 9. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



Males in rural areas have the highest rates of firearm suicide compared to those in urban areas and females (Figure 10).

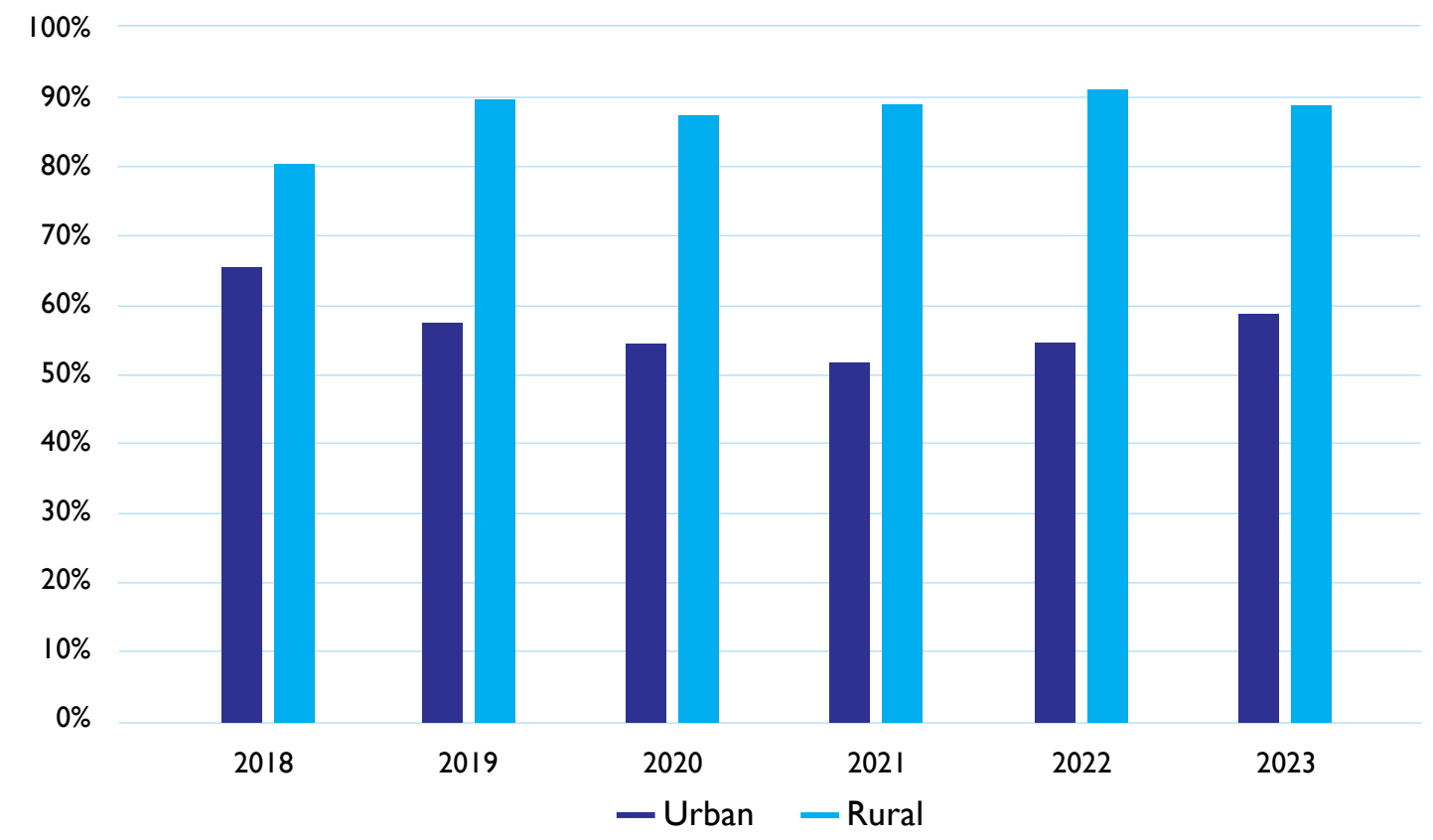
**Figure 10. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by sex and geography, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



\*The 2018 suicide death rate for the rural female population is suppressed due to the small number of deaths in this category

Indeed, the majority of firearm deaths in rural areas of Wisconsin are suicide deaths (Figure 11). In 2023, 88.5 percent of all firearm deaths in rural areas were firearm suicide deaths, while 58.2 percent of all firearm deaths in urban areas were firearm suicide deaths.

**Figure 11. Percentage of firearm deaths in Wisconsin due to suicide by geography, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



## Homicide in Wisconsin

In 2023, 284 lives were lost to homicide in Wisconsin (Table 3). The majority of homicide victims (including those who died by firearm homicide) were male and Black.

**Table 3. Demographic characteristics of all homicide victims and firearm homicide victims in Wisconsin, 2023<sup>1</sup>**

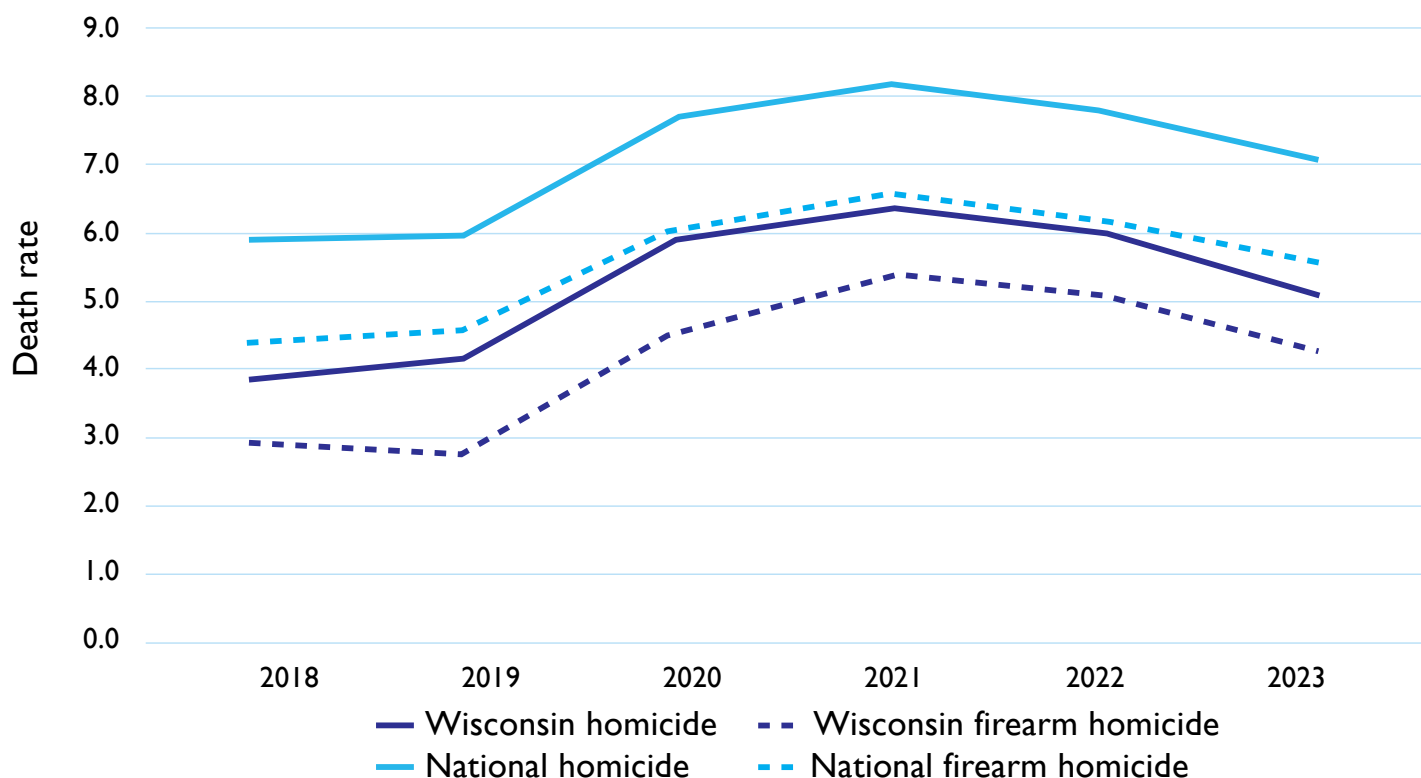
	All homicide victims	Firearm homicide victims
<b>Total victims</b>	284 (100.0%)	236 (100.0%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	219 (77.1%)	195 (82.6%)
Female	65 (22.9%)	41 (17.4%)
<b>Age</b>		
< 10	--	--
10-24	86 (30.3%)	78 (33.1%)
25-44	124 (43.7%)	106 (44.9%)
45-64	53 (18.7%)	42 (17.8%)
65-79	12 (4.2%)	--
80+	--	--
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	--	--
Asian, non-Hispanic*	--	--
Black, non-Hispanic	176 (62.0%)	155 (65.7%)
White, non-Hispanic	65 (22.9%)	45 (19.1%)
More than one race, non-Hispanic	--	--
Hispanic	36 (12.7%)	32 (13.6%)

\*The “Asian” category includes Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders

-- Indicates value has been suppressed because the number is too small to publish due to privacy concerns (nine or fewer deaths)

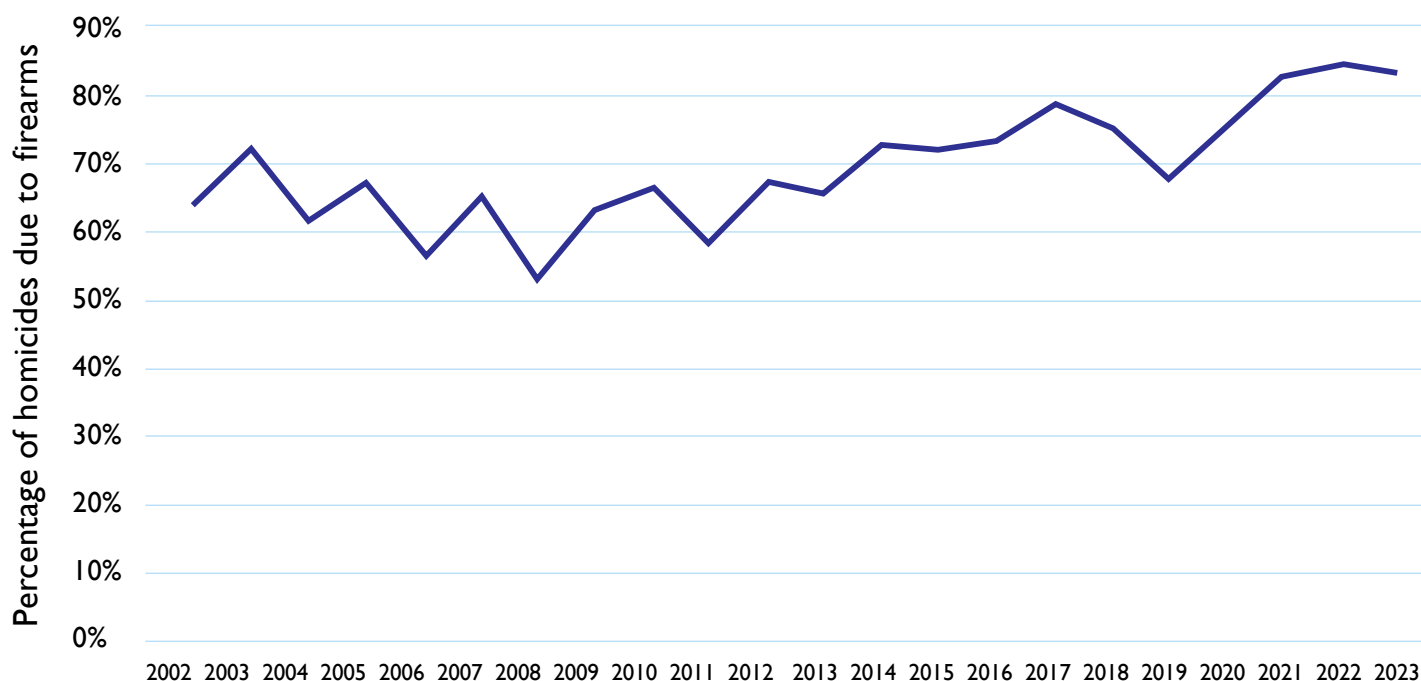
Homicide and firearm homicide rates are lower in Wisconsin compared to national rates (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Homicide and firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin and the U.S., 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



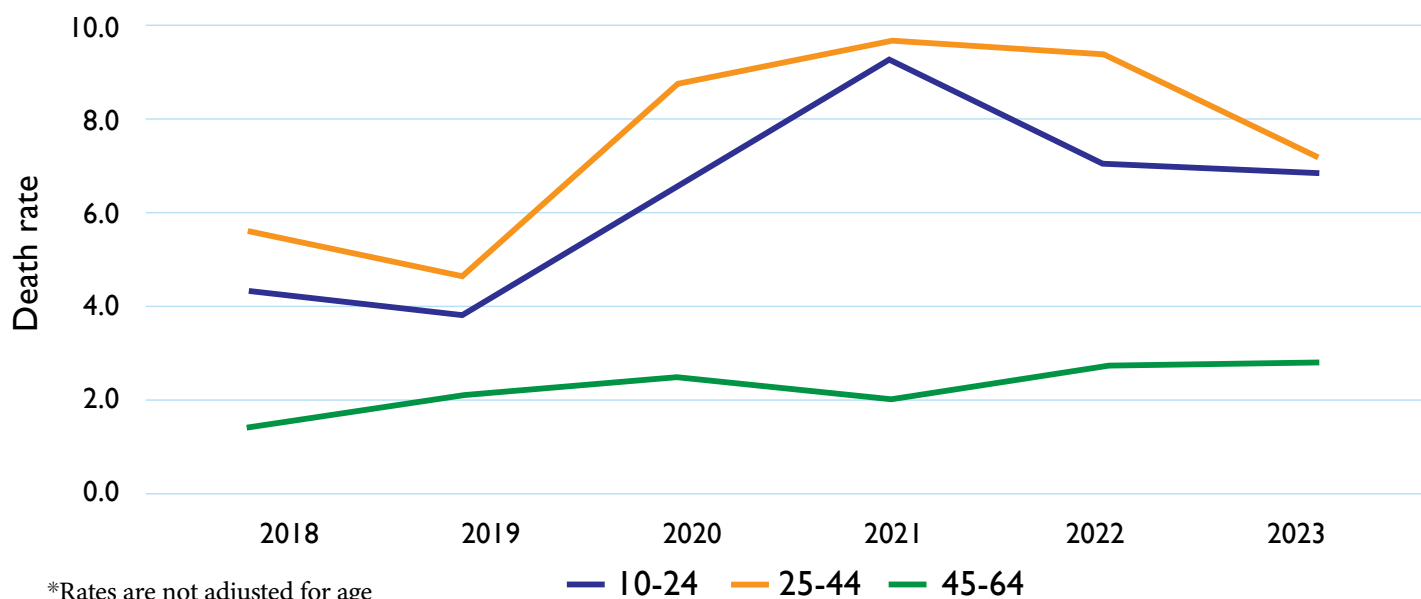
Similar to suicide, the percentage of homicides due to firearms has increased in recent years, from 67.7 percent in 2019 to 83.1 percent in 2023 (Figure 13).

**Figure 13. Percentage of homicides in Wisconsin due to firearms, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



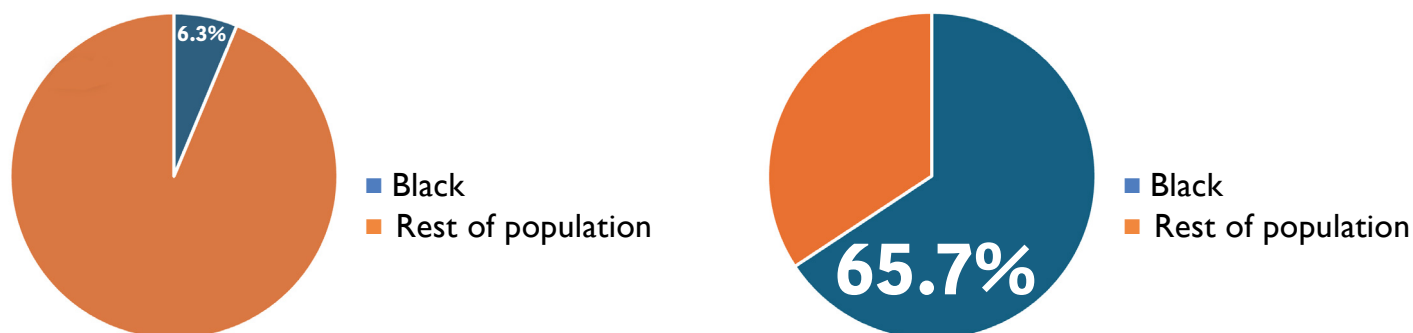
The highest firearm homicide rate in Wisconsin was among 25 to 44 year olds, increasing from 4.6 per 100,000 in 2019 to 9.6 per 100,000 in 2021, and then decreasing to 7.1 per 100,000 in 2023 (Figure 14). Though rates are decreasing among 10 to 24 year olds and 25 to 44 year olds, the firearm homicide rate has been increasing among 45 to 64 year olds, from 2.0 per 100,000 in 2021 to 2.8 per 100,000 in 2023.

**Figure 14. Firearm homicide rates\* in Wisconsin by age,\*\* 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



Significant racial disparities exist in Wisconsin with regard to firearm homicide. Though only 6.3 percent of the Wisconsin population is Black, nearly two-thirds of firearm homicide victims in the state were Black in 2023 (Figure 15).

**Figure 15. Black percentage of Wisconsin population (left figure); Black percentage of firearm homicide victims in Wisconsin (right figure), 2023<sup>1</sup>**



## Pastor Marty Calderon



Marty, top right, stands with other Promise Keepers and violence prevention advocates at an event during National Gun Violence Awareness weekend. Photo credit: Milwaukee Office of Community Wellness and Safety.

I do work with the Promise Keepers. We're very involved in the southside of Milwaukee, where I grew up. We go out to crime scenes, do mediation, and provide outlets to residents in these neighborhoods. At times I get to be a liaison — reach youth before the police have to get involved.

In the early 2000s, I was doing a lot of work with some people involved with gangs. I was able to establish relationships and get to know group leaders. At one point, a guy was shot and killed. His friends were sure this group down the street had done it — they were going to deal with it, but I said, "Give me five days to figure this out." That other group was very insistent that it wasn't them. I was able to set up a meeting between the two leaders. They were able to sit down, talk, and then walk away and shake hands. They went from, "We're gonna do anything we have to do here," to being able to shake hands and call a truce. And the neighbors started to see that. They started to feel safer; there wasn't as much chaos going on. To this day, that truce still exists.

We have one spot now where our presence on the block changed the whole atmosphere in the area. We started mowing people's lawns for them, doing trash pickups, holding church services, helping people clean their houses up. And you could see it. People were happier; they felt safer there. They started sitting on their porch again, being outside more. And the data was there, too; some types of crimes went down.

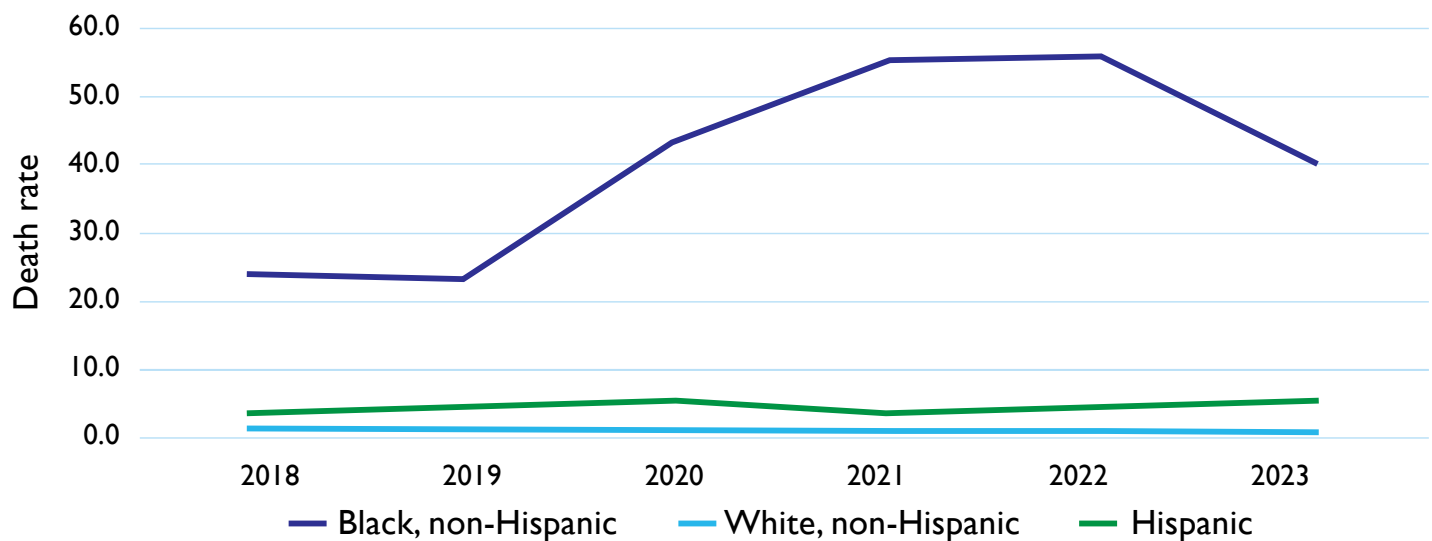
I have so many hopes for the future: seeing people happy, seeing neighborhoods change. If you have a heart to serve, a passion to help others, if you're willing to learn, this is a great position to have.



Though rates have remained relatively stable for the white population in the state, rates of firearm homicide have more than doubled among the Black population in Wisconsin — from 23.0 per 100,000 in 2019 to 56.1 per 100,000 in 2022 (Figure 16). Rates then decreased to 40.0 per 100,000 in 2023. In 2023, Black residents in Wisconsin were 40 times more likely to die by firearm homicide compared to white residents, for whom the firearm homicide rate was 1.0 per 100,000. The Violence Policy Center’s annual study *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States* found that Wisconsin had the fourth highest rate of Black homicide victimization in the nation in 2023, surpassed only by Missouri, Illinois, and Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>

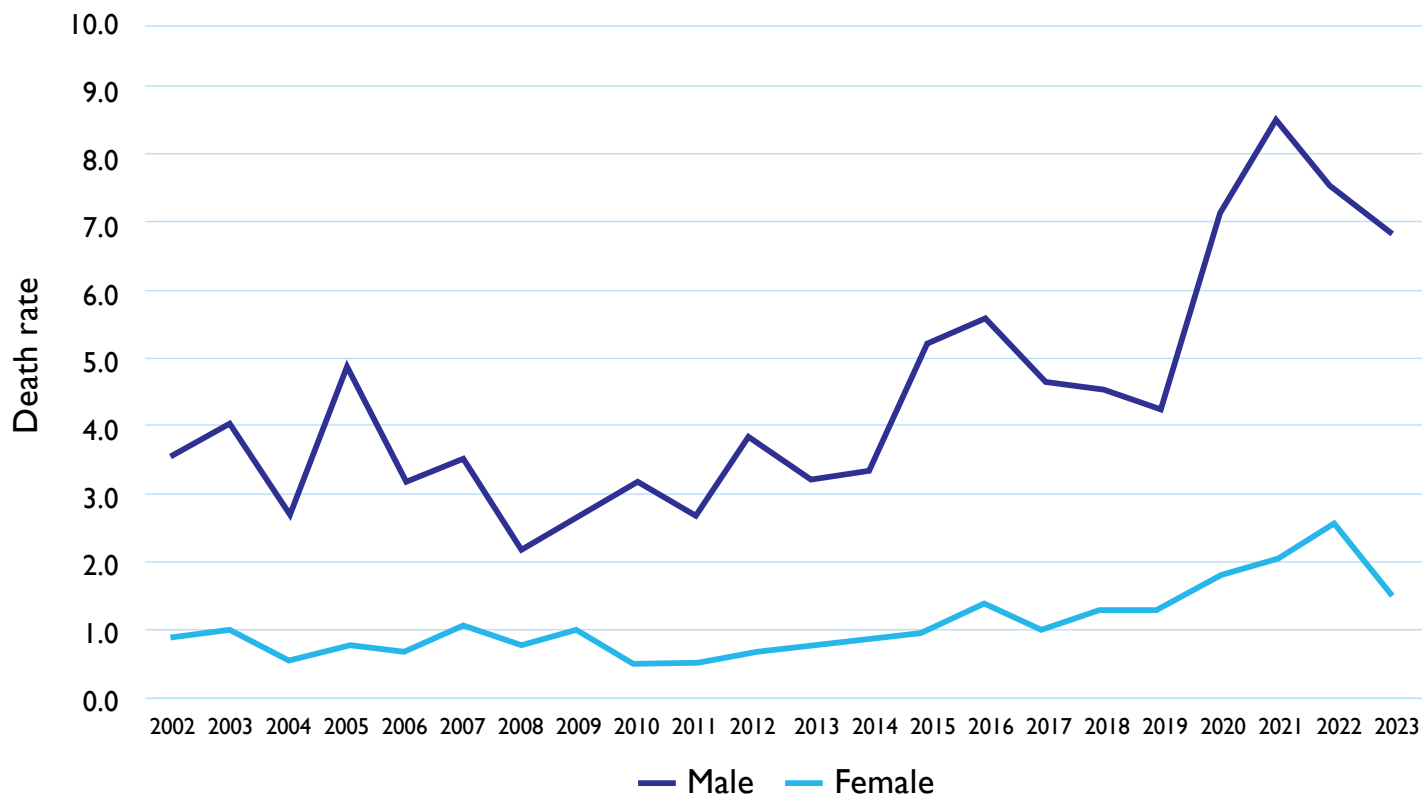
Firearm homicide rates have also increased among Hispanic Wisconsin residents, from 3.7 per 100,000 in 2021 to 5.7 per 100,000 in 2023.

**Figure 16. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by race and ethnicity, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



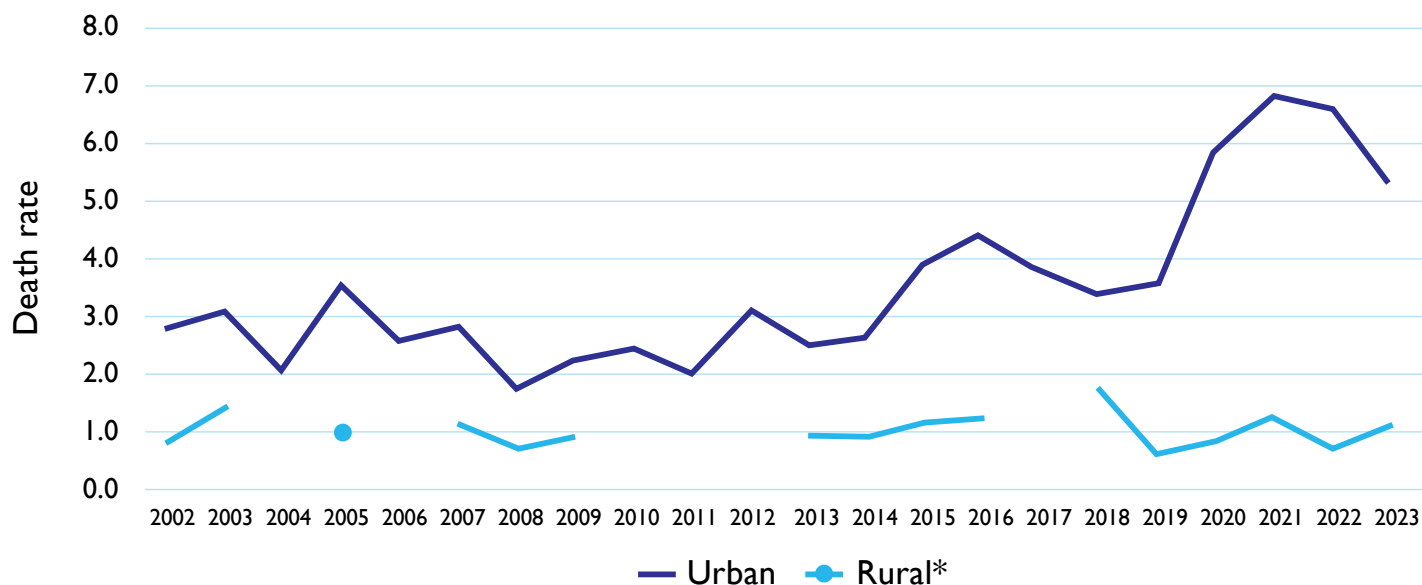
Firearm homicide rates have also increased more substantially among males in Wisconsin compared to females (Figure 17) — from 4.3 per 100,000 in 2019 to 8.6 per 100,000 in 2021. Over the last few years, rates among males have decreased to 6.9 per 100,000 in 2023.

**Figure 17. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by sex, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



Firearm homicide rates increased dramatically in urban areas of the state between 2018 and 2021, from 3.3 per 100,000 to 6.7 per 100,000 (Figure 18). Rates have since decreased to 5.2 per 100,000 in 2023.

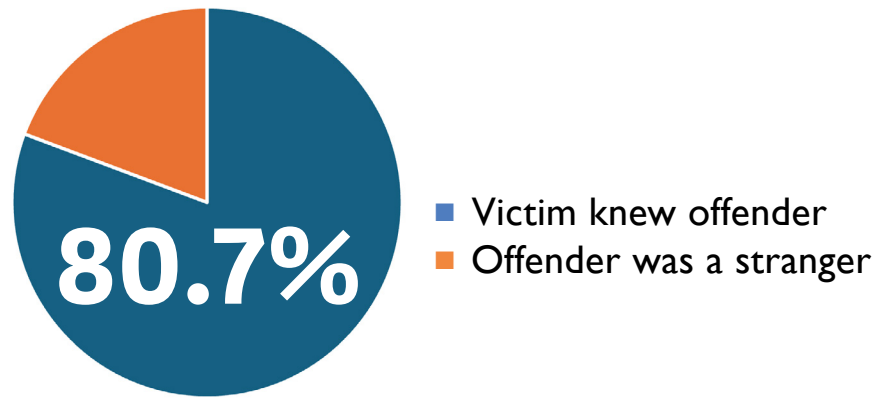
**Figure 18. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**



\*The rural firearm homicide rate is suppressed for the years 2004, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2017 due to the small number of firearm homicide deaths in these years

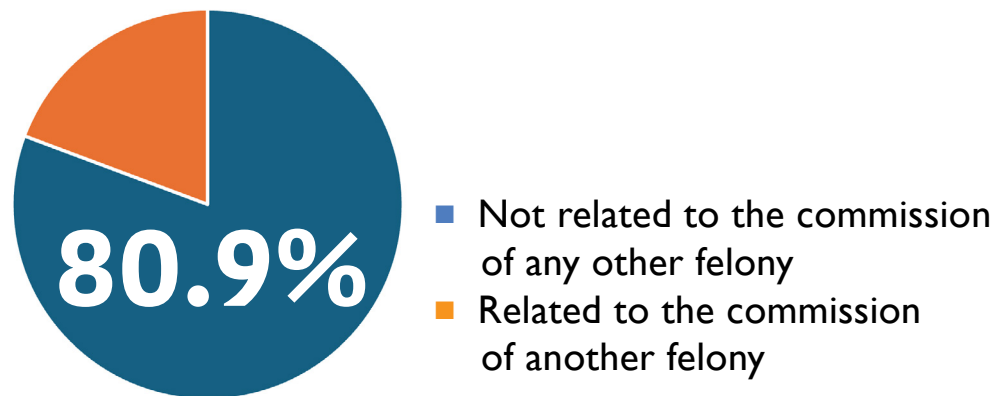
According to 2023 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 80.7 percent of Wisconsin homicide victims were killed by someone they knew (138 out of 171, Figure 19).

**Figure 19. Percentage of homicide victims who knew their offender, Wisconsin, 2023<sup>3</sup>**



For Wisconsin homicides in which the circumstances were known, 80.9 percent (161 out of 199) were not related to the commission of any other felony (Figure 20). Of these, 38.5 percent (62 homicides) involved an argument between the victim and offender.

**Figure 20. Percentage of homicides that were not related to the commission of any other felony, Wisconsin, 2023<sup>3</sup>**



## Kristina Paris



Kristina, left, poses with a WAVE board member while tabling at an event to raise awareness about gun violence prevention.

I was sexually assaulted at gunpoint on August 5th, 1990. Not everybody feels comfortable speaking publicly about all this, but I've always felt that I was so lucky to live through that experience. As long as I have a voice, I will do my best to speak for those who have been silenced.

At the time of my assault, I was volunteering with an organization that was working on gun violence prevention issues, so it added more reasons for me to work on that. Shortly after, as Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort (WAVE) Educational Fund was formed, I volunteered as a founding member, and I later worked at WAVE. It was a natural progression for me. Decades later, I have retired, but I continue to volunteer with WAVE, where I help spread education and awareness about gun violence and its solutions.

It is clear that my efforts have had a powerful impact. One time, I was speaking on a panel at a library, and a high schooler came up to me. She had read about me in the paper. She said my story made her more mindful of her surroundings when she came home at night, which had helped her stay safe once when someone was following her.

I am also a musician in an Irish band, and it has been fun to use my platform to introduce other Irish music lovers to WAVE and other local organizations and the work that they do. My band even held an Irish music fundraiser that allowed us to hand a check to a sexual assault support group to fund their own phone line to reduce wait times for people who called for help.

More recently, I've started volunteering with a restorative justice program. I speak with people who are incarcerated and share my story as part of this program. There's data to show that when incarcerated people hear these stories, it helps them have more positive outcomes after being released from prison.

If you want to do advocacy work in your community, go for it. If you're passionate about something and bring together the different parts of your world, it pulls in new people, too. So be creative. Connect with people. If you're willing, bare your soul. As little or as big as you want — it will make a difference.

# Wisconsin Gun Deaths Compared to Other Great Lakes States

When compared to other Great Lakes states, Wisconsin had the second lowest overall firearm death rate as well as firearm homicide death rate (Table 4). However, Wisconsin was tied with Michigan for the third highest firearm suicide rate. Indiana had the highest firearm suicide rate in 2023, followed by Ohio.

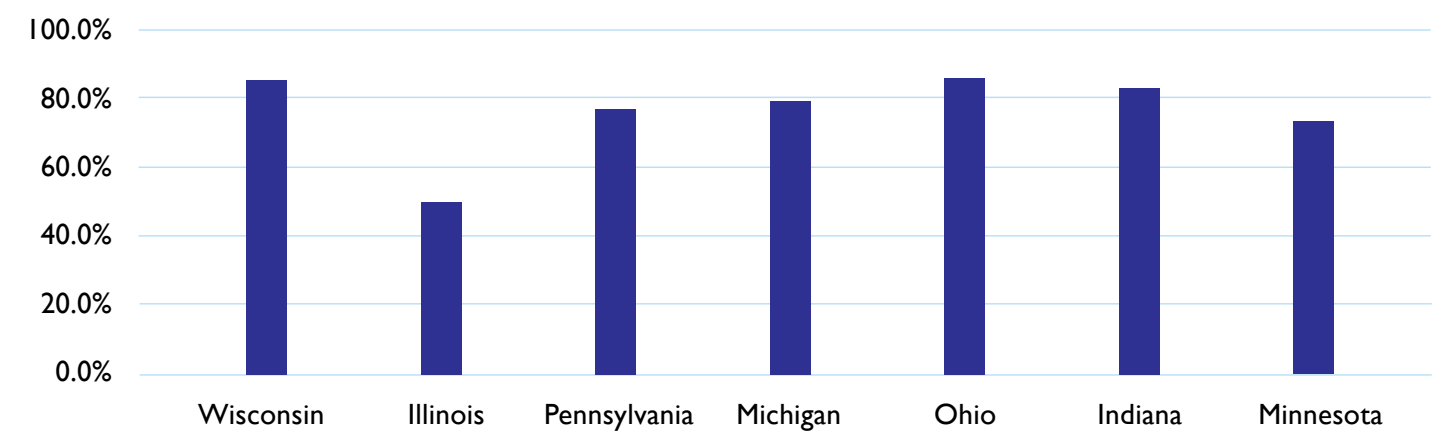
Table 4. Firearm death rates by state, 2023<sup>1</sup>

	Overall firearm	Firearm suicide	Firearm homicide
Wisconsin	12.6	7.9	4.3
Indiana	18.3	10.6	6.7
Ohio	15.0	8.3	6.4
Michigan	13.9	7.9	5.6
Pennsylvania	13.6	7.5	5.8
Illinois	13.6	5.1	8.2
Minnesota	8.9	6.2	2.4

# Wisconsin Crime Gun Trace Data from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

The vast majority of firearms recovered in Wisconsin originate in-state (84.9 percent, Figure 21). This percentage is similar to other Great Lakes states, with the exception of Illinois (Table 5).

**Figure 21. Percentage of firearms sourced in the state of recovery for Great Lakes states, 2023<sup>4</sup>**



**Table 5. Source states for firearms recovered in Great Lakes states, 2023<sup>4</sup>**

	In-state	Other named U.S. states and Puerto Rico
Wisconsin	6,053 (84.9%)	1,072 (15.1%)
Illinois	9,147 (51.4%)	8,661 (48.6%)
Pennsylvania	9,969 (77.6%)	2,871 (22.4%)
Michigan	7,370 (79.2%)	1,935 (20.8%)
Ohio	15,195 (84.4%)	2,804 (15.6%)
Indiana	9,025 (82.4%)	1,932 (17.6%)
Minnesota	3,100 (74.0%)	1,088 (26.0%)



In 2023, more than 8,400 firearms were recovered in Wisconsin and traced. The vast majority of the firearms recovered and traced were handguns — 79.0 percent were pistols and 5.4 percent were revolvers (Table 6).

**Table 6. Firearm types with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>**

	Number (%) recovered
Pistols	6,672 (79.0%)
Rifles	705 (8.4%)
Revolvers	460 (5.4%)
Shotguns	392 (4.6%)
Machine gun conversion devices	89 (1.1%)
Receivers/Frames	82 (1.0%)
Other*	41 (0.5%)

\*Other includes Derringers, machine guns, silencers, combinations, and unknown types

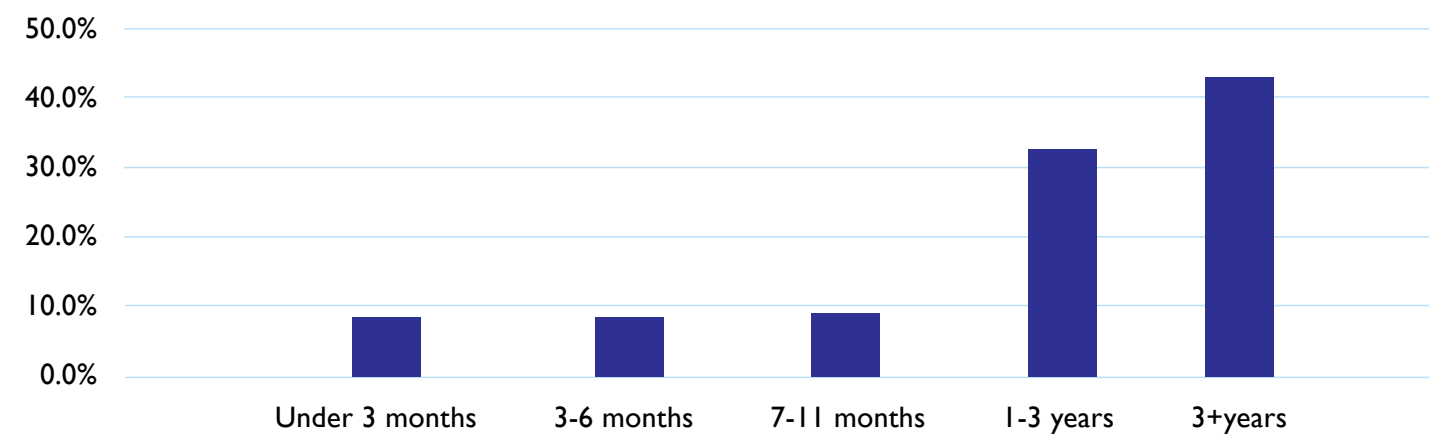
More than one-third of firearms recovered in Wisconsin were traced because the weapon was under investigation (36.0 percent, Table 7).

**Table 7. Top categories reported on firearm traces with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>**

	Number (%) traced
Firearm Under Investigation	3,041 (36.0%)
Possession of Weapon	1,891 (22.4%)
Carrying Concealed Weapon	1,050 (12.4%)
Weapon Offense	433 (5.1%)
Dangerous Drugs	387 (4.6%)
Found Firearm	381 (4.5%)
Suicide	206 (2.4%)
Family Offense	202 (2.4%)
Homicide	120 (1.4%)
Other	730 (8.6%)

More than 40 percent of the firearms traced were first recovered by law enforcement three or more years after the weapon was originally purchased (Figure 22).

Figure 22. ‘Time-to-crime’ percentages for firearms with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>



Where information about the age of possessors was available, nearly one-third of possessors were age 24 or younger (Table 8).

Table 8. Age of possessors of firearms with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>

Age category	
17 and under	325 (5.3%)
18-24	1,606 (26.4%)
25-30	1,214 (19.9%)
31-50	2,452 (40.3%)
51+	489 (8.0%)

Nearly 45 percent of firearms recovered in Wisconsin were recovered in Milwaukee (Table 9).

Table 9. Top recovery cities for firearms with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>

City	
Milwaukee	3,781 (44.8%)
Madison	413 (4.9%)
West Allis	348 (4.1%)
Racine	322 (3.8%)
Kenosha	275 (3.3%)
Waukesha	196 (2.3%)
Wauwatosa	188 (2.2%)
Beloit	144 (1.7%)
Green Bay	142 (1.7%)
Appleton	134 (1.6%)
Other municipalities	2,494 (29.6%)

## Conclusion

Gun violence remains an ongoing public health crisis in Wisconsin. Firearms are playing an increasingly lethal role in both suicide and homicide deaths in the state. Key findings presented in this report include the following.

- Between 2018 and 2022, the firearm suicide rate among Black Wisconsin residents more than tripled — from 3.0 per 100,000 to 9.4 per 100,000 before decreasing to 6.8 per 100,000 in 2023.
- Firearm suicide has increased more rapidly in rural areas of Wisconsin compared to urban areas and was substantially higher in 2023 compared to two decades ago.
- Between 2019 and 2022, the firearm homicide rate among Black Wisconsin residents more than doubled from 23.0 per 100,000 to 56.1 per 100,000 before decreasing to 40.0 per 100,000 in 2023.
- Firearm homicide rates have increased dramatically among male Wisconsin residents, from 2.2 per 100,000 in 2008 to 8.6 per 100,000 in 2021. Rates then decreased to 6.9 per 100,000 in 2023.
- Firearm homicide rates have nearly quadrupled in urban areas of the state, from 1.7 per 100,000 in 2008 to 6.5 per 100,000 in 2022. Rates then decreased to 5.2 per 100,000 in 2023.
- The majority of homicide victims in Wisconsin know their killer (80.7 percent).
- The majority of firearms recovered in Wisconsin originated in Wisconsin (84.9 percent) and handguns were the most common type of firearm recovered in the state and traced (79.0 percent were pistols and 5.4 percent were revolvers).

## WAVE Educational Fund

The data presented in this report describe the devastating impact of fatal gun violence on Wisconsin residents. The WAVE Educational Fund advocates for safer Wisconsin communities by rallying public support, pressing for action, and giving people across the state a place to turn for trusted information and bold leadership on gun violence prevention policies.

## Wave Educational Fund's Recommended Gun Violence Prevention Policies for Wisconsin

- An extreme risk law, which would allow families and law enforcement officers a way to ask a judge to temporarily prohibit a person in crisis from purchasing or possessing a gun.
- A requirement for comprehensive gun purchaser screenings to help keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.
- A statewide domestic violence misdemeanor law aligned with federal law to more effectively disarm domestic abusers.
- More robust child access prevention policies to protect our youngest citizens from unintentional shootings.
- Statewide funding for community violence intervention (CVI) programs to help deescalate conflicts before they turn violent and connect people in underserved communities with essential resources.

### Policy Successes

As WAVE Educational Fund continues to advocate for stronger gun violence prevention laws, legislators report hearing more from their constituents than they did in the past about the critical need for stronger gun laws, and bipartisan support for these policies has increased significantly. In addition to furthering lifesaving laws, WAVE, along with their supporters and the coalitions they lead, has consistently stopped bills that have been shown in other states to increase gun deaths. WAVE opposes the pro-gun lobby's agenda that promotes widespread access to guns by relentlessly countering initiatives like reckless "guns in schools" legislation.

### Other Work by WAVE Educational Fund

In addition to WAVE's policy priorities, the organization works to raise awareness about gun violence and engage with communities that are heavily impacted by gun violence.

WAVE Educational Fund raises awareness by providing educational and advocacy materials through social media, email, in-person presentations, on-the-ground activities, and their website. WAVE also frequently participates in events hosted by partner organizations and especially seeks to partner with and support Black- and Brown-led organizations focused on gun violence prevention.

Through public policy, education and awareness, and community engagement, WAVE Educational Fund is helping build a future where everyone can live free from gun violence.

## References

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## Appendix

Figure 1. Rates of firearm deaths and motor vehicle deaths in Wisconsin, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>

Year	Firearm	Motor vehicle crash
2002	8.1	15.8
2003	8.4	16.0
2004	7.4	14.7
2005	8.5	15.6
2006	7.6	13.7
2007	8.5	14.3
2008	7.7	11.1
2009	7.9	10.2
2010	8.6	10.8
2011	7.7	10.8
2012	8.3	11.1
2013	9.7	10.3
2014	8.2	9.6
2015	10.3	10.1
2016	11.4	10.9
2017	10.5	10.9
2018	10.1	10.3
2019	10.0	10.1
2020	12.1	11.6
2021	13.6	11.4
2022	14.0	10.7
2023	12.6	11.0



**Figure 2. Rates of firearm suicide and firearm homicide in Wisconsin, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Firearm suicide	Firearm homicide
2002	5.6	2.3
2003	5.5	2.6
2004	5.5	1.7
2005	5.4	2.9
2006	5.3	2.0
2007	5.9	2.4
2008	5.9	1.5
2009	5.9	1.9
2010	6.4	1.9
2011	6.0	1.6
2012	5.8	2.3
2013	7.3	2.1
2014	5.8	2.2
2015	6.9	3.2
2016	7.5	3.5
2017	7.1	2.9
2018	6.8	2.9
2019	6.8	2.8
2020	7.1	4.6
2021	7.8	5.4
2022	8.5	5.1
2023	7.9	4.3

**Figure 3. Firearm death rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Urban	Rural
2002	8.0	8.2
2003	8.0	9.6
2004	6.9	8.3
2005	8.3	8.9
2006	7.6	7.2
2007	8.4	8.7
2008	6.8	10.1
2009	7.3	9.6
2010	8.3	8.9
2011	7.4	8.6
2012	8.5	7.4
2013	9.5	9.9
2014	8.1	8.2
2015	9.8	11.5
2016	11.6	10.7
2017	10.7	10.0
2018	10.1	10.5
2019	9.8	10.5
2020	12.9	9.5
2021	13.8	12.5
2022	14.3	12.7
2023	12.8	11.9

**Figure 4. Suicide and firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin and the U.S., 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Wisconsin suicide	Wisconsin firearm suicide	National suicide	National firearm suicide
2018	14.8	6.8	14.2	7.0
2019	14.0	6.8	13.9	6.8
2020	14.4	7.1	13.4	6.9
2021	15.1	7.8	14.0	7.5
2022	15.2	8.5	14.3	7.6
2023	15.0	7.9	14.1	7.6

**Figure 5. Percentage of suicides in Wisconsin due to firearms, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Percentage
2002	49.1%
2003	47.9%
2004	46.5%
2005	47.0%
2006	44.6%
2007	46.4%
2008	46.3%
2009	47.7%
2010	47.7%
2011	47.1%
2012	48.1%
2013	51.4%
2014	45.8%
2015	48.3%
2016	52.5%
2017	47.0%
2018	47.3%
2019	50.5%
2020	51.0%
2021	53.5%
2022	57.3%
2023	54.6%

**Figure 6. Firearm suicide rates\* in Wisconsin by age group, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

Year	10-24	25-44	45-64	65-79	80+
2018	3.9	8.7	10.2	9.7	8.2
2019	4.6	7.3	9.8	11.7	11.8
2020	4.9	8.5	9.5	10.3	13.3
2021	6.6	10.0	9.2	10.1	16.0
2022	5.7	11.5	10.5	11.5	15.0
2023	5.9	9.9	11.0	10.0	13.7

\*Rates are not adjusted for age

**Figure 7. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by race and ethnicity, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Black, non-Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Hispanic*
2018	3.0	7.5	--
2019	3.9	7.4	3.6
2020	5.0	7.7	3.2
2021	6.0	8.4	3.4
2022	9.4	9.0	3.3
2023	6.8	8.4	4.5

\*The 2018 death rate for the Hispanic population is suppressed due to the small number of deaths in this category

**Figure 8. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by sex, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Male	Female
2002	10.5	1.1
2003	10.4	1.0
2004	9.8	1.3
2005	10.2	0.8
2006	10.0	0.9
2007	10.6	1.4
2008	10.7	1.3
2009	10.6	1.5
2010	11.9	1.2
2011	10.8	1.4
2012	11.0	0.8
2013	13.6	1.2
2014	10.5	1.4
2015	12.6	1.4
2016	13.8	1.4
2017	12.7	1.7
2018	12.8	0.9
2019	12.1	1.7
2020	13.2	1.2
2021	14.0	1.8
2022	15.0	2.1
2023	14.2	1.8

**Figure 9. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Urban	Rural
2002	5.1	7.0
2003	4.7	7.8
2004	4.6	7.5
2005	4.6	7.7
2006	4.9	6.6
2007	5.3	7.4
2008	4.8	8.9
2009	4.9	8.6
2010	5.6	8.3
2011	5.3	8.0
2012	5.5	6.8
2013	6.7	8.7
2014	5.3	7.1
2015	5.8	10.1
2016	7.1	8.8
2017	6.6	8.8
2018	6.4	8.1
2019	5.9	9.2
2020	6.8	8.2
2021	6.9	10.8
2022	7.4	11.4
2023	7.1	10.4

**Figure 10. Firearm suicide rates in Wisconsin by sex and geography, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Urban - male	Rural - male	Urban - female	Rural - female*
2018	12.2	15.0	0.9	--
2019	10.4	16.3	1.6	2.1
2020	12.9	14.4	1.0	1.8
2021	12.3	18.9	1.6	2.4
2022	13.5	18.8	1.6	4.0
2023	12.9	18.1	1.6	2.4

\*The 2018 suicide death rate for the rural female population is suppressed due to the small number of deaths in this category

Figure 11. Percentage of firearm deaths in Wisconsin due to suicide by geography, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>

	Urban	Rural
2018	66.4%	81.0%
2019	62.9%	89.7%
2020	55.0%	86.7%
2021	52.3%	88.1%
2022	54.4%	91.0%
2023	58.2%	88.5%

Figure 12. Homicide and firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin and the U.S., 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>

	Wisconsin homicide	Wisconsin firearm homicide	National homicide	National firearm homicide
2018	3.9	2.9	5.9	4.4
2019	4.2	2.8	6.0	4.6
2020	6.0	4.6	7.7	6.1
2021	6.4	5.4	8.2	6.6
2022	6.0	5.1	7.8	6.2
2023	5.1	4.3	7.1	5.6

**Figure 13. Percentage of homicides in Wisconsin due to firearms, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Percentage
2002	63.9%
2003	71.8%
2004	61.6%
2005	67.4%
2006	56.7%
2007	65.3%
2008	52.9%
2009	63.6%
2010	66.7%
2011	58.1%
2012	67.4%
2013	65.3%
2014	72.9%
2015	72.0%
2016	73.4%
2017	78.7%
2018	75.0%
2019	67.7%
2020	75.7%
2021	83.3%
2022	84.7%
2023	83.1%

**Figure 14. Firearm homicide rates\* in Wisconsin by age, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	10-24	25-44	45-64
2018	4.3	5.6	1.4
2019	3.8	4.6	2.1
2020	6.6	8.7	2.5
2021	9.2	9.6	2.0
2022	7.0	9.3	2.7
2023	6.8	7.1	2.8

\*Rates are not adjusted for age



**Figure 16. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by race and ethnicity, 2018 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Black, non-Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Hispanic
2018	24.2	0.9	3.8
2019	23.0	0.8	4.5
2020	43.6	1.1	5.6
2021	55.2	1.1	3.7
2022	56.1	0.8	4.9
2023	40.0	1.0	5.7

**Figure 17. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by sex, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Male	Female
2002	3.6	0.9
2003	4.1	1.0
2004	2.7	0.6
2005	4.9	0.8
2006	3.2	0.7
2007	3.6	1.1
2008	2.2	0.8
2009	2.7	1.0
2010	3.2	0.5
2011	2.7	0.5
2012	3.9	0.7
2013	3.3	0.8
2014	3.4	0.9
2015	5.3	1.0
2016	5.7	1.4
2017	4.7	1.0
2018	4.6	1.3
2019	4.3	1.3
2020	7.2	1.8
2021	8.6	2.1
2022	7.6	2.6
2023	6.9	1.5

**Figure 18. Firearm homicide rates in Wisconsin by geography, 2002 — 2023<sup>1</sup>**

	Urban	Rural
2002	2.7	0.8
2003	3.0	1.4
2004	2.0	--
2005	3.5	1.0
2006	2.5	--
2007	2.8	1.1
2008	1.7	0.7
2009	2.2	0.9
2010	2.4	--
2011	2.0	--
2012	3.0	--
2013	2.5	0.9
2014	2.6	0.9
2015	3.8	1.1
2016	4.3	1.2
2017	3.7	--
2018	3.3	1.7
2019	3.5	0.6
2020	5.7	0.8
2021	6.7	1.2
2022	6.5	0.7
2023	5.2	1.1

-- Indicates value has been suppressed because the number is too small to publish due to privacy concerns (nine or fewer deaths)

Figure 21. Percentage of firearms sourced in the state of recovery for Great Lakes states, 2023<sup>4</sup>

Wisconsin	84.9%
Illinois	51.4%
Pennsylvania	77.6%
Michigan	79.2%
Ohio	84.4%
Indiana	82.4%
Minnesota	74.0%

Figure 22. ‘Time-to-crime’ percentages for firearms with a Wisconsin recovery, 2023<sup>4</sup>

Under 3 months	8.0%
3-6 months	7.8%
7-11 months	7.8%
1-3 years	32.7%
3+ years	43.7%



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