Adolescent Firearm Homicide in Chicago 2013–2017: Young Black Males at High Risk

This IVDRS Data Brief examines adolescent (15 to 19 years old) firearm homicide rates per 100,000 by Chicago Community Area (CCA) over a five-year interval: 2013 to 2017.

Compared to rates for adolescents in the United States and Chicago as a whole, Chicago’s black male adolescents are at greatly elevated risk for firearm homicide. In 2016, Chicago’s overall adolescent firearm homicide rate was about three times the national rate, while Chicago’s black male adolescent firearm rate was nearly 50 times the national rate (WISQARS, CDC Injury Center).

From 2015 to 2016, firearm homicide rates among Chicago’s black male adolescents increased sharply. From 2016 to 2017, firearm homicide rates among Chicago’s black male adolescents decreased by 25%. However, 2017 rates for this group were still 74% higher than in 2013 (Figure 1).

Between 2013 and 2017, the rate ratios between adolescent black males and all other male adolescent firearm homicide victims increased. This indicates increasing disparities between Chicago’s young black males and all other male adolescents. (Figure 2).

**Figure 1.** Adolescent firearm homicide rates per 100,000 for black males in Chicago, all others in Chicago, and the U.S.

**Figure 2.** Adolescent firearm homicide rate ratios comparing black males to non-black males in Chicago

RATE PER 100,000
A rate, or per capita value, helps compare values among groups of different sizes. To find out if, for example, the risk of homicide in one city is greater than in another city, you need to determine a per capita homicide rate. That is, the number of homicides for each person in that group. For example, the homicide rate in the City of Chicago was determined by dividing the number of homicides by the total population of the city for that year. To keep from using a small decimal, statisticians typically multiply the result by 100,000 and give the result as the number of homicides per 100,000 people. (Adapted from RobertNiles.com)

RATE RATIO
A rate ratio is a measure used to compare two rates which occur at the same time; for example, rates of homicide in two different populations. This tells us the relative risk of homicide in one population compared to the other. For example, a homicide rate ratio of black males to non-black males of 1.5 means that black males are one and a half times more likely to die of homicide than non-black males.

DATA SOURCE
The Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS) is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System, which pools information about the “who, when, where and how” of violent deaths to provide a more complete picture and develop insight into “why” they occur.
Community areas on the south and west sides of Chicago consistently experience the highest incidence of adolescent firearm homicide and are at increased risk for violence. Between 2013 and 2017, the pattern of violence showed significant consolidation into these areas of the city, as violence became overall less dispersed. The Chicago Community Area with the highest amount of youth firearm homicide shifted from the south side of the city in 2013 to the west side by 2017.

**Figure 3.** Adolescent homicide ranks by Chicago Community Area (CCA)

**Table 1.** Adolescent firearm homicides: Annual CCA rankings (name/corresponding CCA number); ranks with multiple CCAs are tied
RESOURCES

The following are selected resources for addressing youth violence in communities. These resources provide training, support and evidence-based strategies for violence prevention.

**Strengthening Chicago’s Youth (SCY)**
*www.scy-chicago.org*

Strengthening Chicago’s Youth (SCY) is a violence prevention collaborative and catalyst for innovation convened by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. Our mission is to connect and mobilize our community around a public health approach to violence prevention. We encourage partnerships that strengthen existing efforts so our youth can reach their full potential.

**Mothers Against Senseless Killing**
*www.ontheblock.org*

Mothers/Men Against Senseless Killings (MASK) was established in 2015 as a way to put eyes on the streets, interrupt violence and crime, and teach children to grow up as friends rather than enemies. MASK builds stronger communities through focusing on violence prevention, food insecurity, and housing. In addition, MASK partners to ensure that community members have access to city services, opportunities for education & professional growth, and economic development.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
*Veto Violence*  
*https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov*

Committed to stopping violence before it happens? This site offers training, tips and tools designed specifically for prevention practitioners. Use Veto Violence to help launch or enhance your local prevention efforts today.

**Chicago Survivors**
*www.chicagosurvivors.org*

Chicago Survivors provides multicultural crime victim/survivor services to surviving family members following homicide in Chicago. Our services are free and open to all families who have lost a loved one to violence. Our Crisis Response and Family Support Services are available in English and Spanish, and we will also provide in-time telephone translation of our services into over 200 languages.

**Communities Partnering 4 Peace — Metropolitan Family Services**
*www.metrofamily.org*

Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P), convened by Metropolitan Family Services, is a framework that provides a comprehensive, long-term approach to reducing violence and gang activity among the individuals and communities it serves.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**TECHNICAL NOTES**

For CAs in which there were less than 10 cases, data were suppressed to avoid identification of individual cases and to ensure the rates calculated are reliable. Population estimates came from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. Population estimates for 2016 were used as proxy for 2017. The sum of the all the Chicago CAs may not exactly match ACS totals for the City of Chicago because CA estimates were compiled using census tracts.

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