Firearm Violence Across North Carolina

In Rural, Urban, and Suburban Areas

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North Carolina Criminal Justice Analysis Center

DPS Governor's Crime Commission
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive assessment of firearm violence across North Carolina. Focusing on the most recent five years of available data, we identify firearm violence trends and how they differ across rural, urban, and suburban communities. **Figure 0.1** displays the statewide rates of the forms of firearm violence included in this study. The findings highlight regional and demographic disparities that can inform where prevention and policy efforts may provide the greatest impact. Together, these analyses identify seven key findings:

Finding 1: North Carolina experienced a statewide wave of firearm homicide beginning in 2019 that peaked at the end of 2021 and has since steadily declined. Between 2019 and 2021, yearly firearm homicides increased 72% statewide. In 2021, firearm homicides peaked but then decreased by 29% through June 2025. Non-fatal shootings followed a similar trend.

Finding 2: Firearm suicide is more prevalent than firearm homicide in North Carolina and rates are still on the rise. Older adults (65+) face the highest risk, particularly in rural counties. Firearm suicides increased every year between 2014 and 2023, the latest year for which data is available. From 2019-2023, North Carolina recorded 4,628 firearm suicides, surpassing the number of firearm homicides.[1] Only urban counties had more firearm homicide than suicide. Non-Hispanic white individuals, men, adults 65+, and rural individuals had the highest rates, which follows a national increase in firearm suicide among older men in the rural South.[2]

Finding 3: Youth age 20-24 have the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence and face an elevated risk for firearm suicide. Across counties all forms of interpersonal firearm violence (homicide, other firearm crime, non-fatal shootings), young adults aged 20-24 consistently experienced the highest rate of violence. Rates were also elevated for youth and young adults aged 15-19 and 25-29. These results show that young people experience the most risk for firearm violence during the transition to adulthood.

Finding 4: The majority of interpersonal firearm violence victims are Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic residents experience disproportionately high victimization rates; and Hispanic individuals face the highest risk in urban counties. Across the

FIGURE 0.1 Five-year rates of firearm violence by type statewide
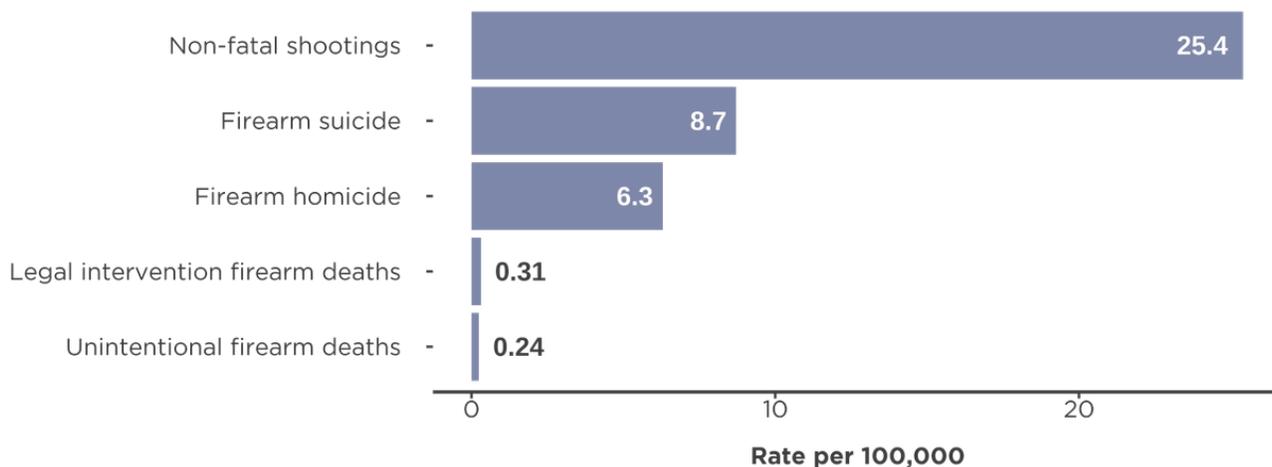
Sources: National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) (firearm homicide); NC Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) (firearm suicide, legal intervention, and unintentional firearm deaths); NC Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NC DETECT) (non-fatal shootings). Note: The five-year window for firearm homicide and non-fatal shootings (2020-2024) is different from NC-VDRS data (2019-2023). At the time of this report, 2024 NC-VDRS data is not finalized. All rates are calculated per 100,000 individuals.

state, Black, non-Hispanic individuals had the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence. Black, non-Hispanic violence rates were highest in rural counties. Although non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic individuals make up a small percentage of overall victims, relative to their population size they consistently experienced the second-highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence. Hispanic victimization rates were relatively low in rural and suburban counties, but higher in urban counties.

Finding 5: Rural counties had higher firearm violence levels than urban or suburban counties between 2020 and 2024. Rural counties had the highest rates of firearm homicide, non-fatal shootings, firearm suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, and legal intervention firearm deaths between 2020 and 2024. Figure 0.2 shows that in 2020 urban counties had the highest firearm homicide rate, but with the 2021 spike in violence rural counties had the highest rate of firearm homicide by the end of 2024. These findings align with national analyses that detected increasing rates of firearm violence in small rural cities and towns in the South.[3]

Finding 6: Urban firearm homicides totals from 2020-2024 matched rural counties. However, urban counties reported far more other firearm crime but far fewer firearm suicides than rural counties. While urban counties ended 2024 with a lower rate of firearm homicide than rural counties, the five-year total and rate of firearm homicides were nearly identical. Urban counties had more than twice the rate of other reported firearm crimes as rural and suburban counties, despite similar firearm homicide levels. Conversely, urban counties had around half the rate of firearm suicide as rural counties.

Finding 7: Suburban counties had the lowest rates of interpersonal firearm violence, but a higher firearm suicide rate than urban counties. Suburban counties (which include counties with smaller regional cities as well), had consistently lower levels of firearm violence than the rest of the state with the exception of firearm suicide. Suburban counties had the second-highest firearm suicide rate, just behind rural counties.

FIGURE 0.2 Yearly firearm homicide rates by rural, urban, and suburban counties

At the end of 2024, rural counties in North Carolina had the highest total count and rate of firearm homicide.
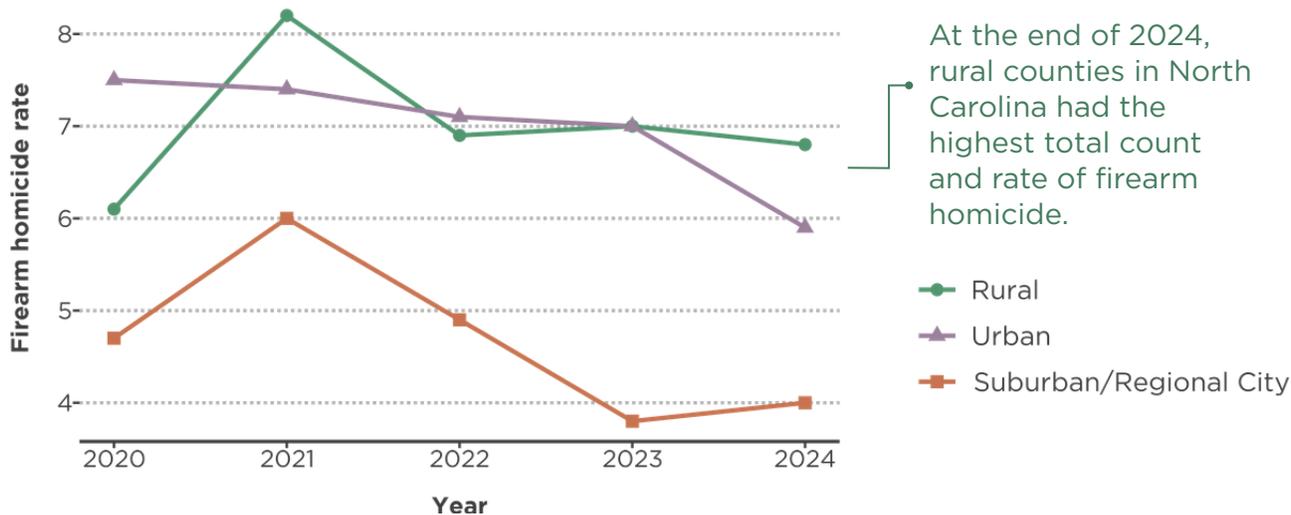
Source: NIBRS. All rates are calculated per 100,000 residents.

[1] Mendelson, A. (2025, September 18). The Quiet Crisis: What's Driving Gun Suicides Among Older Americans? The Trace. https://www.thetrace.org/2025/09/gun-suicide-data-older-americans-men/
[2] Pierce, O., Mascia, J., & Brownlee, C. (2024, March 27). You're More Likely to Be Shot in Selma Than in Chicago. The Trace. https://www.thetrace.org/2024/03/gun-violence-statistics-urban-rural/

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Rural, Urban, and Suburban Firearm Violence in North Carolina

Established in 2018, the Criminal Justice Analysis Center (CJAC) analyzes crime and violence data across the state to provide insight into key public safety issues affecting North Carolina residents. CJAC produces data-driven reports to inform conversations among the public, the Governor's Crime Commission, and other public safety partners. CJAC also provides open access to state crime data via the NC Justice Data Portal.

Introduction

This report investigates the prevalence and patterns of firearm violence in North Carolina in recent years. Firearms are used in many forms of violence—both criminal and non-criminal—including homicides, aggravated assaults, suicides, unintentional injuries, and legal interventions. The majority of homicides in the United States are committed with a firearm.[1] In this report, "firearm" refers to any weapon that uses an explosive to rapidly expel a projectile like a bullet, including pistols, handguns, shotguns, rifles, and more.[2]

No single entity in North Carolina tracks firearm violence. Records of firearm violence show up in many different criminal justice and public health systems. This research brings together data from three public safety data sources to provide a detailed overview of firearm violence in our state: (1) criminal incident data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collected from North Carolina law enforcement by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, (2) the NC Division of Public Health Injury and Violence Prevention Branch (IVPB) Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS), and (3) non-fatal shooting-related emergency department records collected through the North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NC DETECT). NC DETECT, North Carolina's statewide syndromic surveillance system, was created by the North Carolina Division of Public Health in collaboration with the Carolina Center for Health Informatics in the UNC Department of Emergency Medicine. CJAC produced this report through collaboration with IVPB and consultation with the NC Office of Violence Prevention. For more information about the methods and data sources used in this report, see Appendix B.

Our analysis focuses on recent trends in firearm violence between 2020 and the first six months of 2025.[3] It breaks down trends by geographic area (urban, rural, and suburban), type of violence, and demographic group. While this research focuses on the prevalence of firearm violence and not its cascading impacts, readers should remember that each number in this report represents real lives and families.

[1] Remrey, L. (2025). Homicide Victimization in the United States, 2023 (NCJ 309889). Bureau of Justice Statistics.
[2] Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. (2018). ATF Guidebook—Importation & Verification of Firearms, Ammunition, and Implements of War. U.S. Department of Justice.
[3] At the time of this report's release, NIBRS data, which comprises the majority of data analyzed, was available through the first six months of 2025, NC-VDRS data was available through 2023, and NC DETECT data was available through 2024.

Chapter 1
Statewide Firearm Violence

This chapter outlines statewide firearm violence patterns, providing the foundation for the rural, urban, and suburban analyses that follow

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

Between 2020 and 2024, 3,393 homicides committed with firearms were reported in North Carolina. Homicide is defined as the offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Factoring in population size, North Carolina had a rate of 6.3 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents. During the same period, the overall NC homicide rate was 8.0 per 100,000, with 78% of homicides involved firearms. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, single-year national homicide rates varied between 5 and 7 per 100,000 residents in the same period, putting North Carolina slightly above average.[1]

These firearm homicide numbers include the increase in homicide and violent crime that occurred during the initial years of the COVID-19 pandemic (**Figure 1.1**). That increase was followed by some of the largest single-year declines in violent crime recorded in the United States.[2]

Table 1.1 breaks down experiences of firearm homicide across different demographic groups in North Carolina. Within the study period, men were about four times more likely

TABLE 1.1. Statewide firearm homicide victimization number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Statewide	3,383	100	6.3
Sex			
Male	2,730	81	10.4
Female	637	19	2.3
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	85	3	15.4†
Black, non-Hispanic	2,332	69	20.7†
Hispanic	243	7	4.0†
Other, non-Hispanic	48	1	1.6
White, non-Hispanic	675	20	2.1‡
Age			
0-14	85	3	0.9
15-19	467	14	13.0
20-24	588	17	16.4
25-29	528	16	14.9
30-34	459	14	12.5
35-44	576	17	8.4
45-54	336	10	5.0
55-64	197	6	2.9
65+*	110	3	-

The Black, non-Hispanic rate was **10x higher** than the white, non-Hispanic rate.

The mean age of FH victims was **33 years old** but the age group with the highest rate was **20-24 year-olds.**

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Firearm Homicide
SOURCE: NIBRS

than women to be victims of firearm homicide. Despite accounting for 20% of North Carolina's total population according to the 2020 census, Black, non-Hispanic residents accounted for 69% of all firearm homicides between 2020 and 2024. Black, non-Hispanic residents experienced the highest raw number and rate of firearm homicide across racial/ ethnic groups. Although American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic residents make up a small percentage of the state's population, and only 3% of all firearm homicides, they have the second-highest rate of firearm homicide. These numbers may underestimate the extent of firearm violence among North Carolina's American Indian population because native ethnicity is not always accurately recorded in criminal justice and death records.

In the last five years, 20-24 year-olds had the highest rate of firearm homicide, although the average age of victims was slightly higher at 33 years old. The majority (64%) of all firearm homicide victims were between the ages of 20 and 44. The average age of firearm homicide victims increased slightly between 2020 and 2024 (from 33 to 34).

Figure 1.1 illustrates the spike and then decline in firearm homicides in North Carolina between 2020 and the first six months of 2025. This pattern reflects spikes in violence seen across the United States during that time. Statewide, firearm homicides reached its highest 12-month level at 769 recorded victims in 2021, a 72% increase from 2019. Following the statewide peak in 2021, the number of firearm homicides steadily decreased, falling 29% through June 2025 to a rate of 5.0 homicides per 100,000 residents. Although the 2025 data are preliminary, the first six months alone saw a 12% decrease in firearm homicide. This trend follows declining homicide numbers across the country.

Law enforcement across the state record additional information on incidents in NIBRS that provide insight into the nature of firearm homicide, such as the type of firearm, location of the incident, and relationship between victim and offender. This information is only

FIGURE 1.1. Statewide firearm homicide total and rates over time, 2020-2024
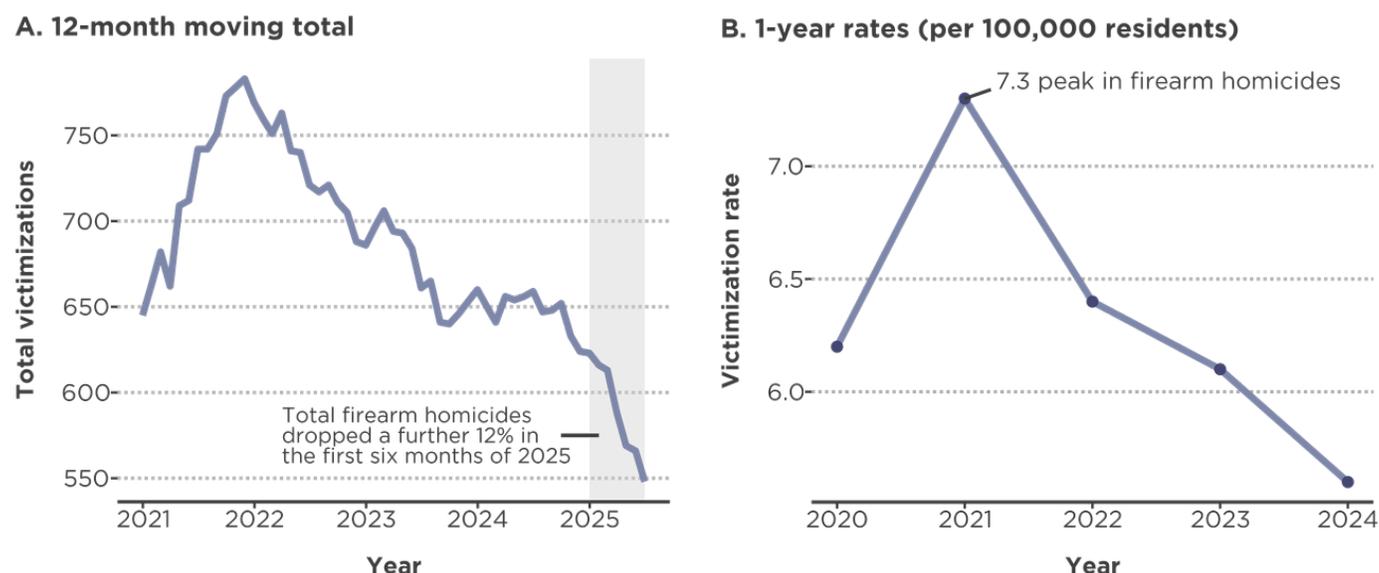
A. 12-month moving total

Total firearm homicides dropped a further 12% in the first six months of 2025

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

7.3 peak in firearm homicides

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data from 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 1.2. Relationship of victim to offender

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

**FIGURE 1.3.
Percent of victims who lived in jurisdiction**
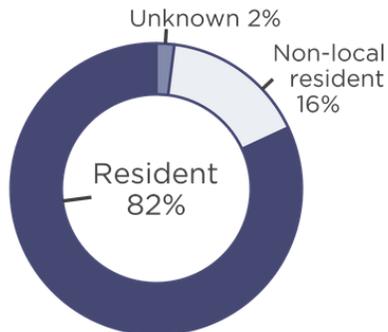
**FIGURE 1.4.
Percent handgun**
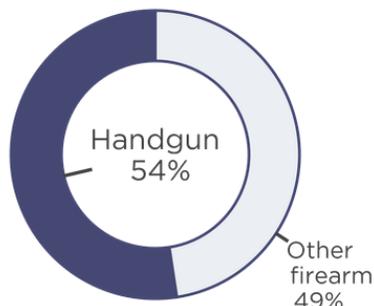
available when discovered through an investigation and recorded. As shown in **Figure 1.2**, less than half of firearm homicide victimizations in NIBRS include information on the relationship between the victim(s) and offender(s). In cases where relationship was recorded, the most common relationship was between people who knew each other but were not family.

NIBRS also records whether victims lived in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred. **Figure 1.3** shows the vast majority of victims are killed in the jurisdiction in which they live. Very few victims are not local residents.

Figures 1.4 and **1.5** examine the characteristics of the firearms used in homicides. Handguns were used in just over half of all incidents. Other types of firearms (shotguns, rifles, and unknown firearm types) were used in about 49% of victimizations. NIBRS also records whether the firearm used was an automatic weapon. Automatic firearms are defined as "any firearm that shoots or is designed to shoot, more than one shot at a time by a single pull of the trigger without manual reloading."[3] Automatic firearms were rarely used in firearm homicides, comprising only 3% of firearm homicides. Note non-automatic firearms includes semi-automatic weapons.

**FIGURE 1.5.
Percent automatic**
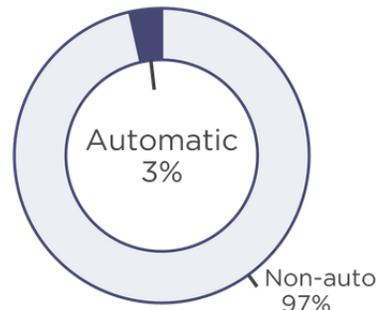
Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to whether the victim lived in the reporting jurisdiction and is not related to immigration status. Fig. 1.3. excludes data from one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, Fig 1.4 totals more than 100%

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 1.6. Location of firearm homicides statewide, 2020-2024

51%	**31%**	**10%**
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
8%	**<1%**	**<1%**
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison
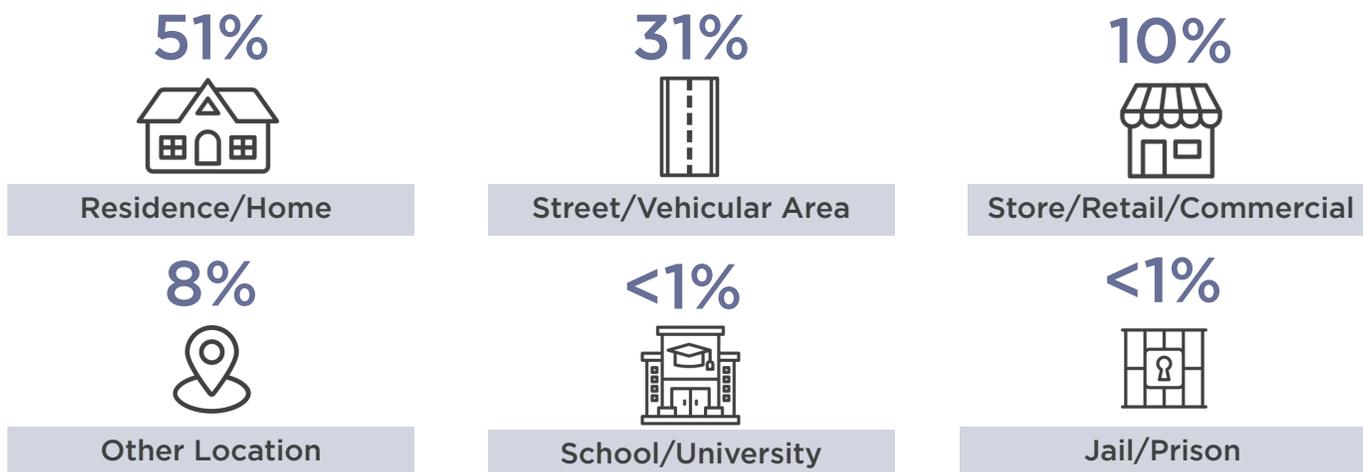
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Around half of firearm homicides occur within a residence or home **(Figure 1.6)**, and the second most common location was in street/vehicular areas. Street/vehicular areas include roads and streets as well as parking lots, garages, alleys, sidewalks, and highways. The third most common location was stores and retail areas, which accounted for 10% of firearm homicides. Less than 10% of homicides occurred elsewhere. Schools and universities accounted for less than one percent of all firearm homicides.

Finally, **Figure 1.7** examines firearm homicide rates by county (For more information about county-level rates, see Appendix A). County-level findings illustrate the importance of examining both raw counts and rates when trying to understand where firearm violence is occurring. The map below depicts rates, which divide homicide counts by the total population of the county, allowing for standardized comparison of the level of violence occurring in a given county. The counties with the highest rate of firearm homicides were

FIGURE 1.7. Firearm homicide rates per 100,000 residents by county, 2020-2024

Rate per 100,000
- > 25.0
- 15.0 - < 25.0
- 6.3 - < 15.0
- < 6.3 (Statewide rate)
- No rate (<20 FH)
- Low NIBRS coverage
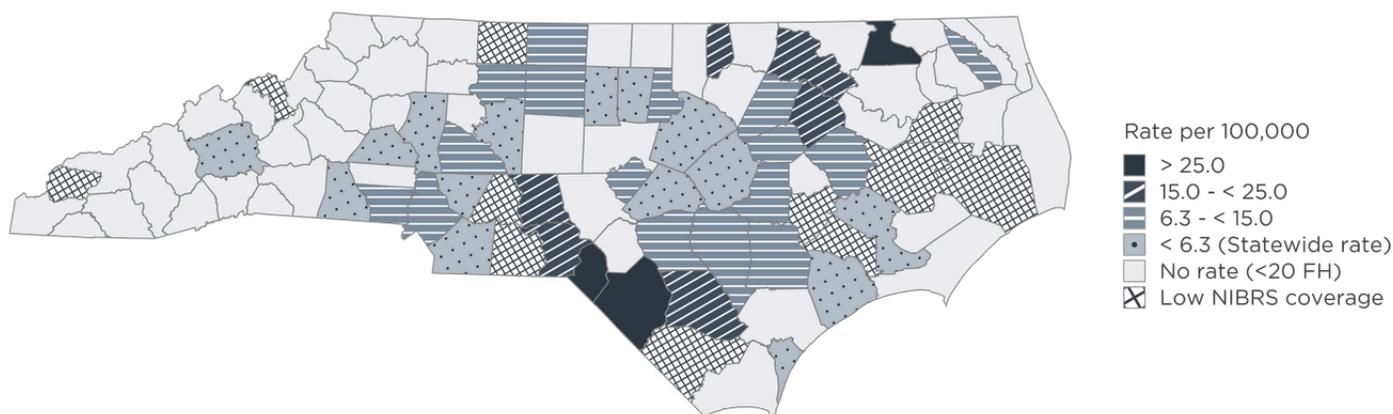
Source: NIBRS. The map displays the five-year firearm homicide victimization rate for counties. Rates were not calculated for counties with fewer than 20 firearm homicides because rates are considered unstable for comparison. Counties with NIBRS coverage below 80 percent of the total county population were also excluded.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

Hertford County (34.2), Robeson County (29.9) and Scotland County (29.9), all are rural counties in the eastern half of the state. This means that relative to the total population of the county, these counties have more firearm violence per person than any urban county in the state. While the levels of violence are higher in these counties, in terms of raw numbers of firearm homicides, the majority of firearm homicides take place in cities. The counties with the largest number of firearm homicides between 2020 and 2024 were Mecklenburg County where Charlotte is located (453), Guilford County where Greensboro is located (298), and Durham County where Durham is located (194). However, while these cities account for the majority of firearm violence in the state, relative to the size of their populations all three counties have lower levels of violence and rates below 12.0 firearm homicides per 100,000.

Several counties do not have a rate reported because they have low NIBRS coverage, meaning less than 80% of their population is accounted for by reporting law enforcement agencies in the county. Additionally, rates are not reported for counties that have fewer than 20 firearm homicides, which is too small of a number to produce a stable rate estimate.

[1] Remrey, L. (2025). Homicide Victimization in the United States, 2023 (NCJ 309889). Bureau of Justice Statistics.
[2] Lopez, E., & Boxerman, B. (2026). Crime Trends in U.S. Cities: Year-End 2025 Update. Council on Criminal Justice. https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-year-end-2025-update/
[3] Criminal Justice Information Services Division. (2025). 2025.0 National Incident-Based Reporting System User Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, p. 118.

IN FOCUS:
Long-term firearm homicide trends

Taking a long-term look at firearm homicide offers important context for current trends. **Figure 1.8** depicts single-year rates of firearm homicide in North Carolina 1995-2024.

Violence of all types increased across the United States towards the end of the 20th century, with high levels of firearm homicide in the 1980s and 1990s. This wave of violence reached its height in the mid-1990s, and the early 2000s saw declining violent crime across the country. Criminologists refer to this period as "The Great Crime Decline." While this was a widespread trend, not all states followed the same trajectory. Each state has a unique mix of social, environmental, and policy factors that combine to influence crime.

One factor that affects the interpretation of crime trends in North Carolina is population growth. North Carolina's population has nearly doubled since 1990, and NC continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the nation. While counts of firearm homicide are higher in 2024 than in 1995, population change plays some role in that increase. Indeed, despite the higher count, the rate of violence is lower in 2024 than 1995.

However, even accounting for population change, the 2020-2021 spike in firearm homicide reached a level similar to the 1980s and 1990s. In 1995, NC's firearm homicide rate was 6.5 per 100,000, which is lower than the 2021 peak of 7.3. The FBI Supplemental Homicide Records, which go back to the 1980s, estimate firearm homicide rates from the 1980s and early 1990s likely surpassed the 2021 rate, though not by much. Fortunately, the recent spike in firearm homicide has been coming down as quickly as it went up.

FIGURE 1.8. Firearm homicide rates in North Carolina, 1995-2024
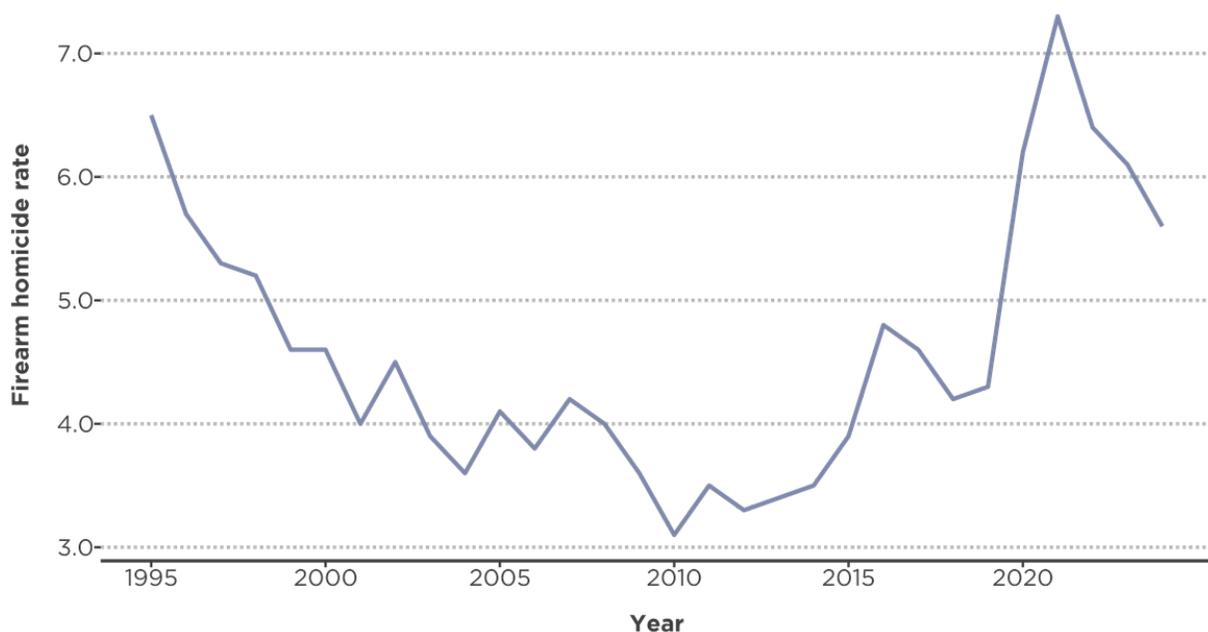
Source: NC State Bureau of Investigation (SBI). This data comes from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Summary-Based Reporting data from 1995-2024. Before transitioning to NIBRS in 2019, the SBI facilitated the collection of statewide criminal incident data through the FBI's UCR program, the predecessor to NIBRS. Due to the serious nature of homicide, additional data was collected on homicide similar to the current NIBRS program, allowing for comparison of homicide data going back several decades.

Other Firearm Crime
SOURCE: NIBRS

NIBRS collects data on firearm usage for a specific set of offenses: aggravated assault, robbery, kidnapping/abduction, negligent manslaughter, human trafficking, sexual assault/rape, and extortion/blackmail.[1] This report looks at these offenses as a group, which we refer to as other firearm crime. Aggravated assault followed by robbery account for the majority of offenses included in this category. Due to its serious nature, homicide is one of the most reliably reported crimes. Offenses like aggravated assault and robbery are not always reported to law enforcement. The National Crime Victimization Survey estimates 60-70% of aggravated assault victims and around 40% of robbery victims report to law enforcement.[2] Therefore, these findings only apply to reported crimes, which may look systematically different from crimes that go unreported. While these cases involved firearms, it does not mean that a firearm was fired or used to injure someone.

Table 1.2 breaks down other reported firearm crimes by victim demographic. Some of the offenses in this category, like robbery, may be committed against an organization or piece

TABLE 1.2. Statewide other reported firearm crime number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Statewide	119,131	100	222
Sex			
Male	66,714	58	254
Female	48,286	42	176
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	3,197	3	579†
Black, non-Hispanic	69,251	58	615†
Hispanic	14,463	12	238†
Other/Unknown, non-Hispanic	2,696	2	87†
White, non-Hispanic	25,686	22	79‡
Age			
0-14	12,647	11	132
15-19	14,573	12	407
20-24	17,118	14	477
25-29	14,238	12	401
30-34	12,920	11	352
35-44	19,219	16	281
45-54	11,878	10	176
55-64	7,354	6	107
65+*	4,405	4	-

While men account-ed for 81% of firearm homicides, **more women are victims** of other firearm crimes.

Like firearm homicide, **Black** and **American Indian/Alaska Native** residents have the highest victimization rates for other reported firearm crime.

The mean age of victims was **32 years old** but the age group with the highest rate was **20-24 year-olds.**

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

of property. For those incidents, no victim demographics are collected. Aggravated assault and robbery are the most common other firearm crimes. However, 97% of other firearm crime victims are individuals and represented in Table 1.2. All victims, regardless of whether or not they are a person are represented in the statewide total count and rate.

A more even split is seen between male and female victims of other firearm crime compared to firearm homicides (81% and 19%). However, similar to homicides, Black, non-Hispanic victims make up the largest percentage of all victims and have the highest rate of victimization. The ages of victims of other firearm crime follow a similar pattern to firearm homicide victims. The average age of victims was 32 and the age group with the highest rate is 20-24 year-olds. The age groups immediately below (ages 15-19) and above (ages 25-29) have the next highest victimization rate.

Figure 1.9 shows the totals and the rate of firearm crime victimization over time. Other firearm crime peaked earlier than firearm homicide—at the beginning rather than the end of 2021. From its peak, other firearm crime dropped steadily through the first six months of 2025. The 12-month count of victimizations neared 27,000 in mid-2021, then dropped by almost 6,000 victimizations per 12-month period by mid-2025. The one-year rates emphasize the steady decline between 2020 and 2024.

Table 1.3 (next page) provides the total number of victimizations by offense type. Aggravated assault accounted for the majority of reported firearm crimes (78%), followed by robbery (19.5%). The table also reports what percent of victimizations under each offense type involved firearms between 2020 and 2024. Firearms were used in 56% of reported aggravated assaults, 55% of robberies, 24% of kidnappings/abductions, and 22% of negligent manslaughter victimizations.

FIGURE 1.9. Statewide other firearm crime total and rates over time, 2020-2024
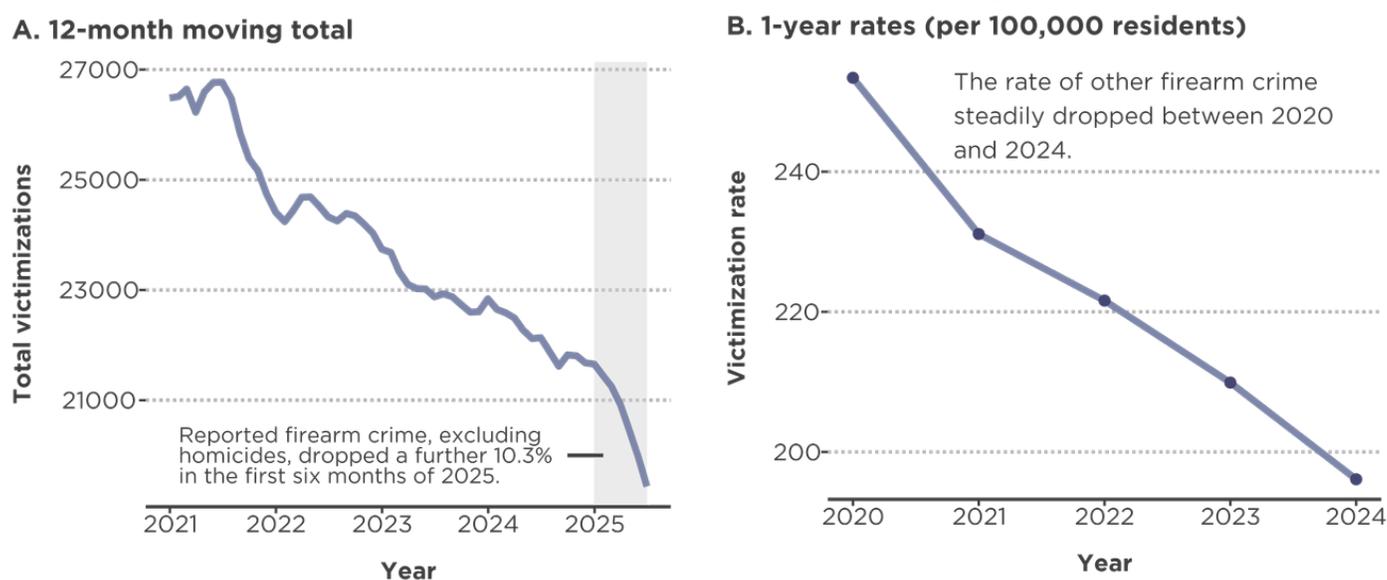
A. 12-month moving total

Reported firearm crime, excluding homicides, dropped a further 10.3% in the first six months of 2025.

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

The rate of other firearm crime steadily dropped between 2020 and 2024.

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

Other Firearm Crime
SOURCE: NIBRS

TABLE 1.3. Statewide other reported firearm crime by offense type

Offense w/ firearm	Total	Percent firearm[a]	Percent OFC[b]
Aggravated Assault	92,956	56.2	78.0
Robbery	23,230	55.3	19.5
Kidnapping/Abduction	2,298	24.3	1.9
Negligent Manslaughter	78	21.8	0.1
Human Trafficking	12	7.2	0.0
Sexual Assault/Rape	473	6.3	0.4
Extortion/Blackmail	84	1.4	0.1
Total: Other firearm crime	119,131	17.2	100.0

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. a The percentage of victimizations for a given offense type that involved firearms. b Each offense type's share of total other firearm crime (OFC) victimizations, 2020-2024.

Relatively small percentages of reported human trafficking, sexual assault, and extortion cases involved firearms.

Figure 1.10 and 1.11 examine the characteristics of weapons used in other firearm crimes. Handguns were used in over half of all victimizations. All other types of firearms combined were used in about 42% of victimizations. Compared to firearm homicides, handguns account for a larger percentage of other reported firearm crimes (62% vs. 54%). Automatic firearms were rarely used in other firearm crimes, accounting for only 3% of all victimizations. These percentages are nearly identical to the firearm homicide percentages.

Similar to homicide, most reported victimizations for other firearm crime took place within people's homes (56%), as shown in **Figure 1.12** (next page). The second most common location was streets, parking garages, and other vehicular areas (23%), again followed by stores and commercial spaces (15%). Less than 10% of incidents occur elsewhere. Once again, less than one percent of victimizations occurred in schools. The top three most common areas for other firearm crime are the same as firearm homicides; however, 31% of firearm homicides occur in the street/vehicular area compared to 23% seen below.

FIGURE 1.10.
Percent handgun

Handgun 62%
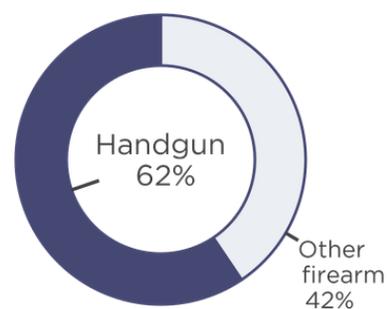
Other firearm 42%

FIGURE 1.11.
Percent automatic

Automatic 3%

Non-auto 97%
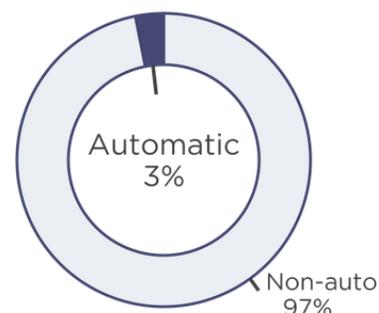
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may total over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent handgun totals over 100%.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 1.12. Location of other reported firearm crime statewide, 2020-2024

56%

Residence/Home

23%

Street/Vehicular Area

15%

Store/Retail/Commercial

6%

Other Location

<1%

School/University

<1%

Jail/Prison
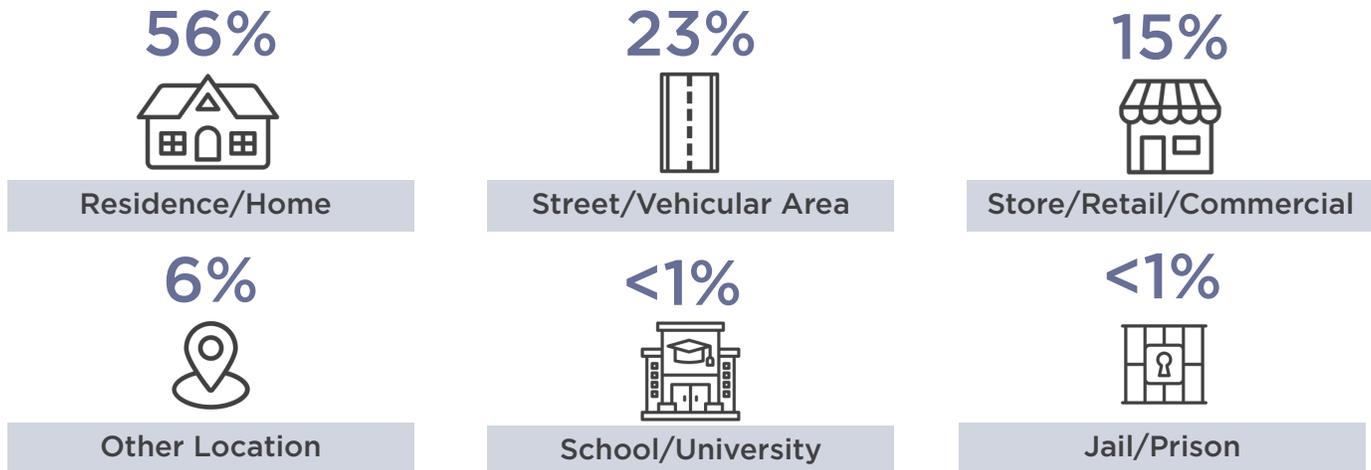
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 1.13 illustrates the majority of other firearm crimes occurred to victims within the jurisdiction in which they live. Very few victims were not local residents. This is similar to what is reported with statewide firearm homicide percentages.

Finally, only 35% of other reported firearm crime victimizations included details about the relationship between the victim and the offender (**Figure 1.14**). This is less than the 45% reported in firearm homicides. Of the relationships identified, nearly half of the victims knew their offender, but they were not family members. About one-third of the victims did

**FIGURE 1.13.
Percent of victims who lived in jurisdiction**
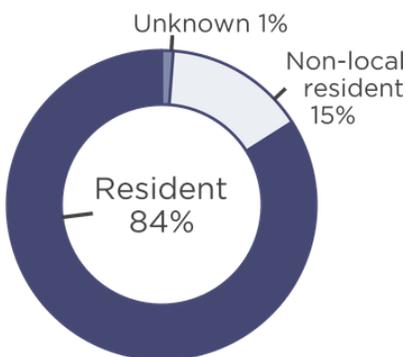
Unknown 1%

Non-local resident 15%

Resident 84%

FIGURE 1.14. Relationship of victim to offender
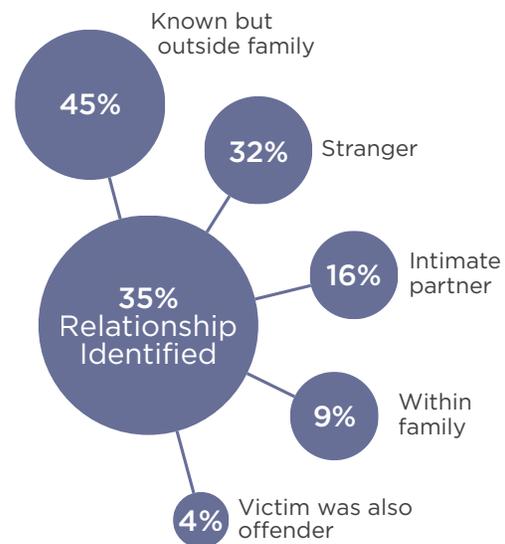
Known but outside family

45%

32% Stranger

**35%
Relationship
Identified**

16% Intimate partner

9% Within family

4% Victim was also offender

Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to the victim's residence in the reporting jurisdiction, and is not related to immigration status. Fig. 1.12. excludes data from one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status.

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

victim's intimate partner. Notably, the percentage of identified relationships involving strangers was much higher for other reported firearm crime than for firearm homicide. For firearm homicide, 56% of offenders were known but outside of the family and only 14% were identified as strangers. The varying nature of the types of offenses included among other firearm crimes likely explains some of this variation. For example, the relationship dynamics of robbery differ from the dynamics of a homicide.

[1] In NIBRS, law enforcement also report the type of weapon involved for additional offenses: justifiable homicide, simple assault, weapon law violations, violation of the National Firearm Act of 1934*, weapons of mass destruction*, and explosives*. *Denotes offenses for federal and tribal law enforcement reporting only. Federal offenses for non-firearm weapons were excluded. Simple assault was excluded because assaults involving firearms are classified as aggravated. Justifiable homicide was excluded because it is not a crime. Weapons law violations were excluded because this report focuses on firearm violence not illegal possession.
[2] Tapp, S. N., & Coen, E. J. (2025). Criminal Victimization, 2024 (NCJ 310547). Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

Between 2020 and 2024, 13,647 non-fatal shooting emergency department (ED) visits were were recorded in North Carolina. Some of these shootings were the result of aggravated assaults or robberies included in the NIBRS other firearm crime data, some may involve unreported assaults, and others may have been unintentional or self-inflicted. [1] Examining patterns in non-fatal shootings alongside NIBRS homicide data and NC-VDRS death records allows us to confirm whether demographic patterns in each dataset align or diverge from one another. This process, referred to as triangulation, provides a more comprehensive look at an issue and can increase the validity of findings.

The number and rate of non-fatal shootings shown in **Table 1.4** are higher than the rate of firearm homicide. This is expected, as more shootings occur than deaths from those shootings. The demographic breakdown of non-fatal shootings mirrors statewide firearm homicide findings. The vast majority of non-fatal shootings seen in emergency departments involved men versus women. Note that this is different from the findings for other reported firearm crimes. This indicates that while women and men both become victims of crimes involving firearms, men are more likely to be injured or killed by firearms.

TABLE 1.4. Statewide non-fatal shooting ED visit number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Statewide non-fatal shootings	13,647	100	25.4
Sex			
Male	11,231	82	42.8
Female	2,067	15	7.5
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	274	2	49.6
Black, non-Hispanic	8,169	60	72.5
Hispanic	756	6	12.5
Other, non-Hispanic	419	3	13.6
White, non-Hispanic	3,550	26	10.9
Age			
0-14	478	4	5.0
15-19	2,240	16	62.5
20-24	2,695	20	75.0
25-29	2,126	16	59.9
30-34	1,644	12	44.8
35-44	1,987	15	29.1
45-54	1,005	7	14.9
55-64	645	5	9.4
65+	492	4	5.3

Although higher, the demographic patterns of non-fatal shootings mirror the demographics of firearm homicides.

The mean age of non-fatal shooting victims was **31 years old.**

Source: NC DETECT. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding and missing demographic data. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

FIGURE 1.15. Non-fatal shooting numbers and rates over time, 2020-2024
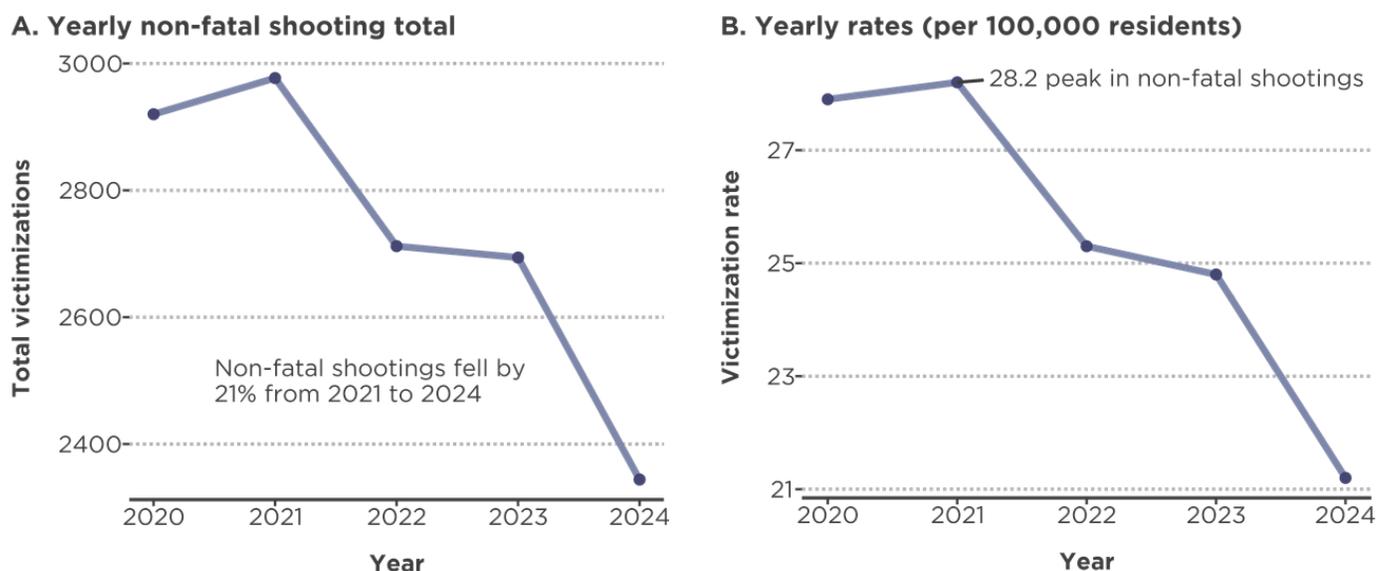
Source: NC DETECT. Figure A plots the yearly total non-fatal shooting total. Moving monthly totals were not available for NC DETECT data. Data from 2025 was not finalized at the time of this publication.

Black, non-Hispanic non-fatal shooting rates were higher than any other race/ethnicity, followed by American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic. American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic non-fatal shootings again have the second-highest rate of non-fatal shootings, although they represent a small proportion of cases.

The age group with the largest percentage of non-fatal shootings is the 20–24-year-olds, closely followed by 15–19-year-olds and then 25-29-year-olds. People over 45 and under 14 were the least likely to have gone to the ED with a non-fatal shooting injury, similar to statewide firearm homicide numbers. Taken together with the similar findings from firearm homicide and other reported firearm crime victims, these findings confirm that youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 29 experience the highest risk of being shot or killed with a firearm, especially from ages 20 to 24.

The rise and fall of non-fatal shooting emergency department visits shown in **Figure 1.15** looks similar in shape to firearm homicide numbers (**Figure 1.1**). Statewide non-fatal shootings increased from 2020 into 2021 and have decreased statewide through 2024. Non-fatal shooting victimizations fell from their peak of almost 3,000 emergency department visits per year in 2021 to below 2,400 per year in 2024. Non-fatal shooting rates mirror those trends.

[1] NC DETECT data cannot determine the cause of a non-fatal firearm injury seen in emergency departments (e.g., self-inflicted, accidental, criminal, etc.). While the patients' report is recorded, self-report in those circumstances can be unreliable, patients may be unable or unwilling to report what happened, and hospitals may not record the information.

Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Between 2019 and 2023, 4,628 suicides involving firearms were recorded in North Carolina. During an overlapping five-year period (2020-2024), 3,383 firearm homicides were reported in NIBRS. Although 2024 NC-VDRS data is not yet finalized, data from these overlapping periods indicate that firearm suicide is more prevalent in North Carolina than firearm homicide.[1] Nationally, firearm suicides have accounted for the majority of all firearm deaths since 1995.[2]

Thus far, the demographic findings for firearm victimizations have looked very similar across types of violence. Victims are primarily Black, non-Hispanic and between the ages of 15 and 29. In stark contrast, the demographic groups most impacted by firearm suicide are white, non-Hispanic individuals and older adults (**Table 1.5**). Of people who died by firearm suicide within the study period, 82% were identified as White, non-Hispanic. People age 65 or older accounted for over a quarter of all firearm suicide deaths and have the highest firearm suicide rate (13.5) compared to any other age group. While the 20-24 age group had the next highest rate, indicating a higher risk for all types of firearm violence, people age of 45-54 and 55-64 had the next two highest rates. Altogether, over half (57%)

TABLE 1.5. Statewide firearm suicide death total, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2019-2023

	Number	Percent	Rate	
Statewide firearm suicide	4,628	100	8.7	
Sex				Men account for the majority of firearm suicides in North Carolina.
Male	3,977	86	15.3	
Female	651	14	2.4	
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	45	1	8.1	Unlike firearm homicide, **white, non-Hispanic individuals** have the highest firearm suicide rate.
Black, non-Hispanic	556	12	5.0	
Hispanic	182	4	3.2	
Other, non-Hispanic	57	1	1.9	
White, non-Hispanic	3,780	82	11.6	
Age				
10-14	41	1	1.2	The mean age of firearm suicide victims was **49 years old,** which is 16 years older than the mean age of homicide victims.
15-19	216	5	6.1	
20-24	441	10	12.4	
25-29	328	7	9.2	
30-34	345	7	9.6	
35-44	601	13	9.0	
45-54	687	15	10.1	
55-64	755	16	11.0	
65+	1,214	26	13.5	

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents. Data for youth under the age of 10 is not reported.

Firearm Suicide
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

of firearm suicides occurred to adults age 45 and older. Similar to firearm homicides, the majority of firearm suicide victims were male. Previous analysis of NC-VDRS data from the NC Injury Violence Prevention Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services confirms that for white, non-Hispanic individuals, the vast majority of firearm-related deaths are suicides; for Black, non-Hispanic individuals, the vast majority of firearm-related deaths are homicides.[3]

Figure 1.16 also illustrates a stark difference between trends in firearm suicide versus trends in firearm suicide and other non-fatal shootings. Where firearm homicide, other reported firearm crime, and non-fatal shootings have declined steadily in the last few years, firearm suicide has been increasing through 2023. This also aligns with national trends showing increasing firearm suicide rates as firearm homicide rates decline.[2]

While suicide rates in the United States have typically been highest in older, White males, recent national studies report increasing suicide rates among Black populations, particularly youth. Suicide rates among Black youth (age 10-19) have skyrocketed across the country, with a 254% increase since 2014.[2] Firearm suicide has also doubled among Hispanic children of the same age.

Figure 1.17A (next page) displays the firearm suicide rate by race/ethnicity for white, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; and Hispanic individuals. While the white, non-Hispanic population has the highest rate of firearm suicide between 2014 and 2023, rates are increasing faster for other racial/ethnic populations. **Figure 1.17B** (next page) plots the yearly percent change in the moving 5-year rates for Black versus white, non-Hispanic individuals.[4] Since 2016 there have been several years where the firearm suicide rate for Black, non-Hispanic individuals increased by close to 10% or more from the previous year. The rate for white, non-Hispanic individuals increases by only a few percentage points each year.

FIGURE 1.16. Firearm suicide deaths and rates over time, 2014-2023
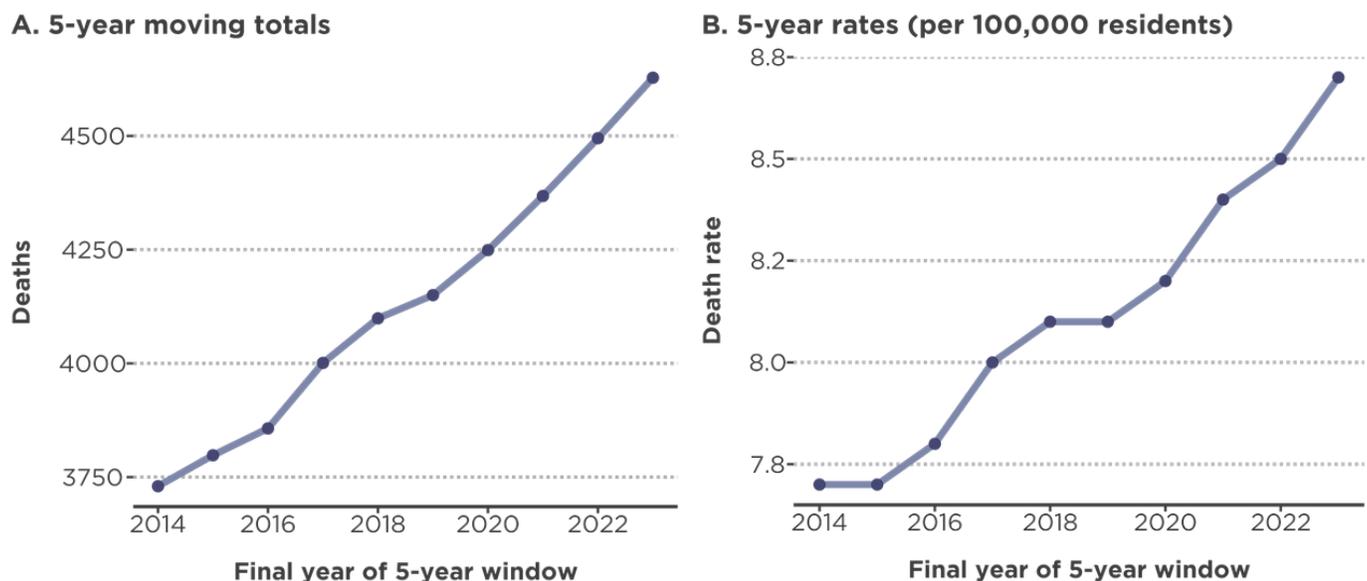
A. 5-year moving totals

B. 5-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 1.17. Firearm suicide rates by race over time, 2014-2023

Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size. Fig. B. shows the percent change in the five year rate compared to the previous year. Only Black, non-Hispanic and white, non-Hispanic are compared because they are the two racial/ethnic groups with the highest total number of firearm suicide deaths in North Carolina. For other racial/ethnic groups, the five-year totals are too small, resulting in unstable percent change fluctuations year-to-year.

[1] NC-VDRS also includes information about firearm homicides, using a wider definition of homicide than NIBRS (which is why NC-VDRS homicide numbers are slightly higher than NIBRS homicide numbers in same-year comparisons). Comparing the NC-VDRS firearm homicide numbers to firearm suicide numbers from the same time period (2019-2023) also shows that the total number of firearm suicides exceeded that of firearm homicides.
[2] Kim, R., Wagner, E. D., Nestadt, P. S., Somayaji, N., Horwitz, J., & Crifasi, C. K. (2025). Gun Violence in the United States 2023: Examining the Gun Suicide Epidemic. Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
[3] Injury and Violence Prevention Branch. (2025). Firearm Injury and Death in North Carolina, 2023. NCDHHS Division of Public Health.
[4] For NC-VDRS data, our analysis calculates moving 5-year rates for each year. In practice that means the 2021 rate covers 2017-2021, the 2022 rate covers 2018-2022, and so on. Looking at just one year of data can be misleading when numbers are small. Single year firearm suicide numbers can get very small when breaking down data by demographic groups. Just a few additional cases can cause rates to swing wildly for smaller demographic groups. Combining several years helps smooth out random variation and shows the underlying trend more clearly. Yearly percent change calculates the difference between the five-year window ending on one year (e.g. 2022) with the five-year window ending the previous year (e.g., 2021). Although the windows overlap, comparing overlapping windows still tells us how much rates are moving up or down each year using stable, multi-year rates instead of unstable single-year rates. Yearly percent change is calculated for the two racial/ethnic groups with the largest number of firearm suicides (white, non-Hispanic and Black, non-Hispanic).

Other Firearm Deaths

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

NC-VDRS also reports firearm-related deaths that were unintentional or occurred through legal intervention. Unintentional firearm deaths refer to circumstances where the victim died as a result of a firearm discharge, but the firearm was not intentionally directed at the victim. An example would be an accidental discharge that occurred while playing with or cleaning a firearm. Legal intervention deaths includes victims killed by a police officer, military police officer, or other law

TABLE 1.6. Statewide unintentional and legal intervention firearm death total and rate per 100,000, 2019-2023

Statewide	Number	Rate
Unintentional firearm deaths	130	0.24
Legal intervention firearm deaths	166	0.31

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Rates were not calculated for counts <20 at which point rates become unstable. No demographics were analyzed due to the small number of cases. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

enforcement officer acting in the line of duty. These deaths occur in relatively small numbers each year, amounting to 130 unintentional firearm deaths and 166 legal intervention deaths over the five year study period (2019-2023). Due to the small number of deaths, a demographic breakdown of unintentional and legal intervention deaths was not possible.[1] **Table 1.6** displays the count and rate for these forms of firearm-related violence.

While firearm homicides have decreased in North Carolina since 2020, unintentional firearm death totals and rates have climbed steadily since then (**Figure 1.18**). The five-year moving total was at its lowest in 2017, dipping below 70 deaths. Similarly, the lowest five-year rate for unintentional firearm deaths was in 2017. Since 2017, unintentional firearm deaths have been increasing, reaching 130 deaths between 2019 and 2023.

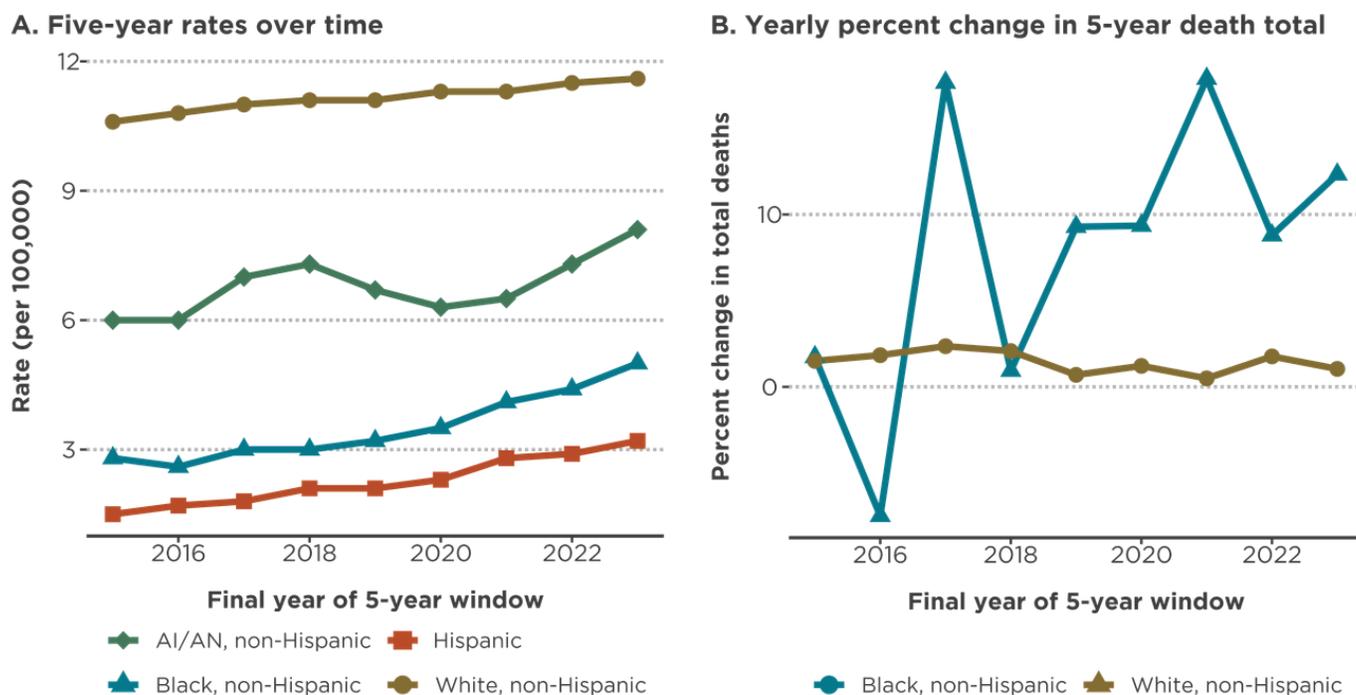**FIGURE 1.18. Unintentional firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023**
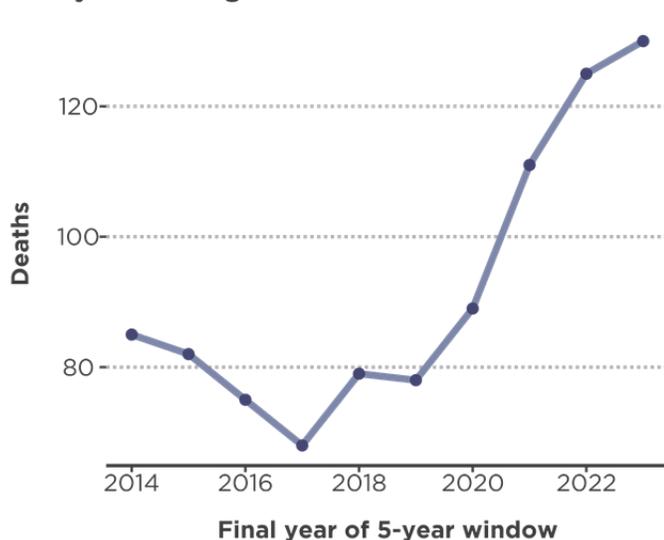
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Other Firearm Deaths
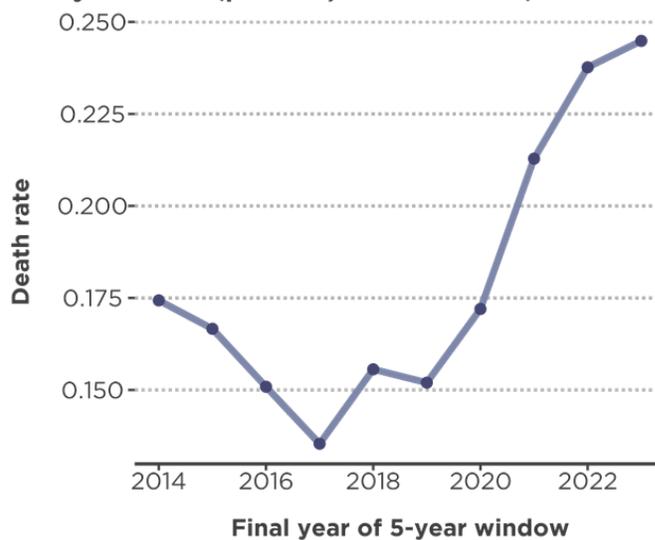
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 1.19. Legal intervention firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
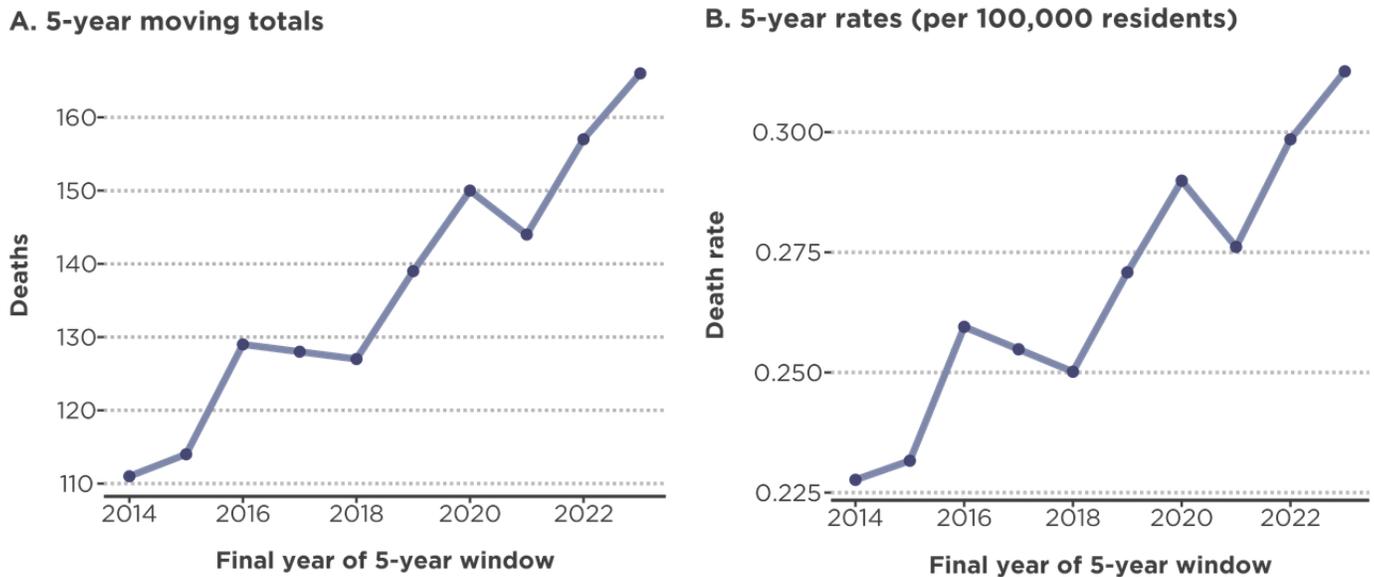
A. 5-year moving totals

B. 5-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Legal intervention firearm deaths occurred slightly more frequently than unintentional firearm deaths. Legal intervention deaths have been increasing, with some variation, since 2014, as displayed in **Figure 1.19**. Although there were slight declines in both in 2017, 2018 and 2021, the five-year moving total is over 50 deaths higher in 2023 than it was in 2014.

[1] Out of respect and consideration for the family and friends of people who have died and are represented within NC-VDRS, we followed IVPB and CJAC data suppression guidelines to ensure that data is presented in a way that no individual can be identified. Breaking down unintentional and legal intervention firearm deaths into demographic sub-groups would risk the identification of individuals.

Chapter 2
Rural Firearm Violence

Key Findings

Rural counties experience some of the highest rates of firearm violence in the state.
- Firearm homicide totals and rates were similar to urban counties.
- Rural counties had the highest total and rate of non-fatal shootings.
- Rural counties had the highest total and rate of firearm suicides.
- Only other firearm crime had far higher levels in urban counties versus rural counties.
- Unintentional firearm deaths and legal intervention firearm deaths were relatively rare, but more common in rural counties than in the rest of the state.

When looking within counties, **large rural towns with populations between 10,000 and 50,000 had the highest rate of firearm homicide** in North Carolina between 2020 and 2024. Small rural towns and large cities had the next highest rates.

Notable trends in rural firearm homicide and other firearm crime:
- Compared with other firearm types, **handguns were used less often** in homicides and other firearm crimes in rural counties.
- Less than half of victimizations included information on victim-offender relationship. Of cases with data, **most offenders were known but not family OR intimate partners**.
- **Most victimizations occurred in homes and residences**. This pattern was consistent across the state, though the proportion in homes/residences was highest in rural counties.

Demographic findings for rural counties:
- **The Black, non-Hispanic firearm homicide rate was higher in rural counties** than urban and suburban counties. Rural counties also had the highest Black, non-Hispanic non-fatal shooting rate and the second-highest Black, non-Hispanic other firearm crime rate.
- **American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic rural individuals had some of the highest rates of firearm violence** relative to their population size. Despite making up a small percentage of victims, they had the second-highest rate of firearm homicide, non-fatal shootings, and firearm suicide. They had the highest victimization rate from other firearm crime. The majority of American Indian/Alaska Native firearm victimization statewide occurs in rural counties, where many of North Carolina's recognized tribes are located.
- Like the rest of the state, **rural young adults age 20 to 24 faced the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence** (homicides, other firearm crime, and non-fatal shootings). The average age of rural firearm homicide victims was 35 years old.
- Like the rest of the state, **white, non-Hispanic rural individuals had the highest firearm suicide rate**, though they experienced low levels of interpersonal firearm violence.
- **Older adults, particularly adults 65+, faced the highest rate of firearm suicide**. Rural counties had the second-highest firearm suicide rate for adults 65+, just below suburban counties. The average age of firearm suicide victims was 52, the oldest in the state.

Firearm Homicide
SOURCE: NIBRS

Between 2020 and 2024, rural counties experienced a similar total and rate of firearm homicide as urban counties in North Carolina. The rate (7.0) was higher than the statewide rate (6.3) for the same time period. The In Focus feature (**Figure 2.17**) will show that when rural areas are separated into large towns, small towns, and unincorporated areas, the violence is concentrated in small and large towns at even higher rates (see p. 42 for more on how we defined "rural"). **Table 2.1** presents the demographic breakdown of firearm homicides in rural counties.

The general demographic pattern of firearm homicide in rural counties follows that of firearm homicides statewide. The vast majority of victims are men. Black, non-Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native populations have the highest victimization rates across racial/ethnic groups, and young adults age 20-24 have the highest victimization rate across age groups. Although age group rates followed a similar pattern, the mean age of rural county victims was significantly higher than that of urban counties (34.5 vs. 31).[1]

TABLE 2.1. Rural firearm homicide victimization number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Rural counties	1,300	100	7.0
Sex			
Male	1,027	79	11.2
Female	268	21	2.8
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	84	6	20.0†
Black, non-Hispanic	846	65	24.1†
Hispanic	40	3	2.4
Other, non-Hispanic	12	1	-
White, non-Hispanic	318	24	2.6‡
Age			
0-14	37	3	1.2
15-19	159	12	14.0
20-24	199	15	18.2
25-29	190	15	17.7
30-34	175	13	15.6
35-44	228	18	10.8
45-54	147	11	6.5
55-64	83	6	3.1
65+*	63	5	-

Black, non-Hispanic people had the highest rate of firearm homicide in rural counties, higher than Black individuals in urban (19.7) and suburban counties (18.1)

The mean age of firearm homicides in rural counties was **35 years old**, which is higher than in other areas of the state.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 individuals.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 2.1. Rural firearm homicide total and rates over time, 2020-2024
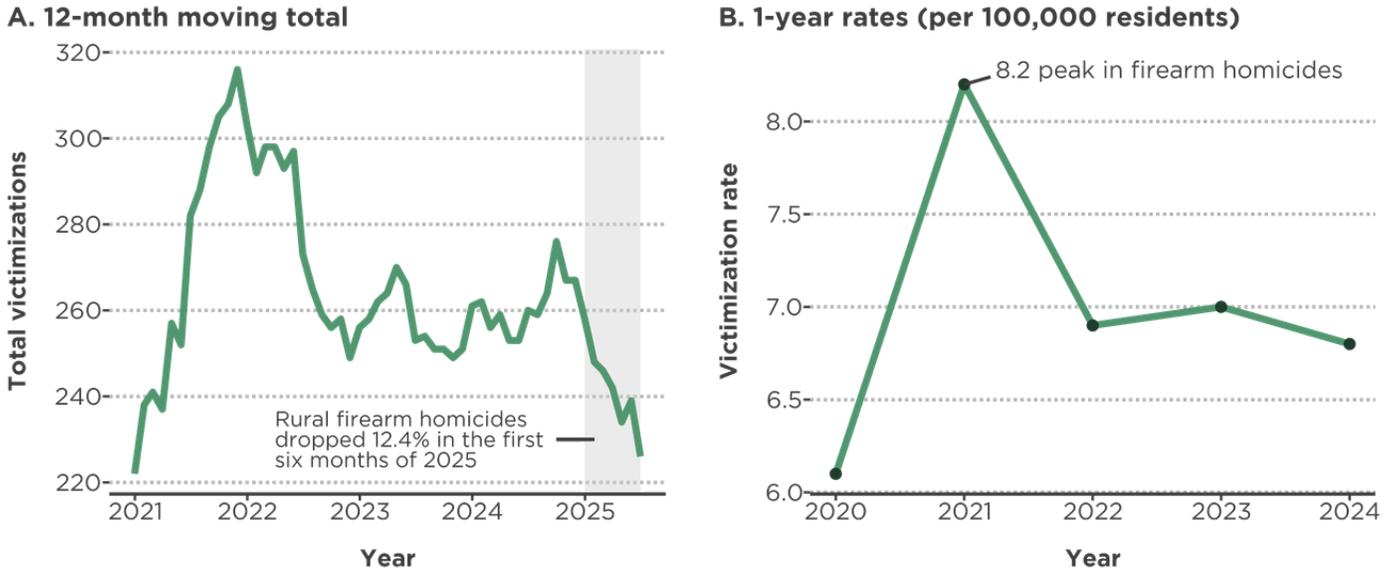
A. 12-month moving total

Rural firearm homicides dropped 12.4% in the first six months of 2025

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

8.2 peak in firearm homicides

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

FIGURE 2.2. Relationship of victim to offender
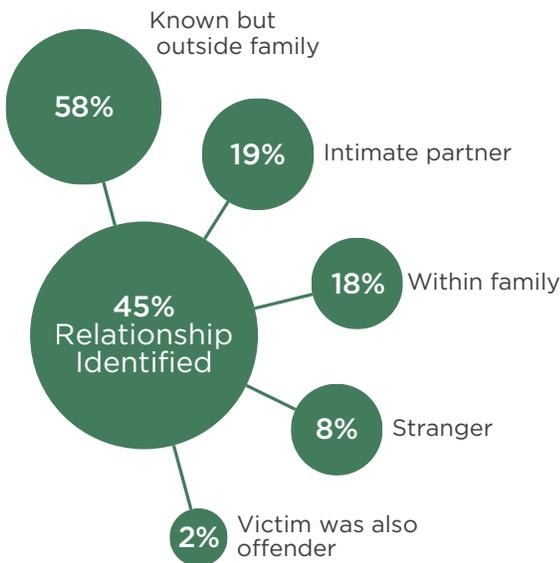
Known but outside family

58%

19% Intimate partner

45% Relationship Identified

18% Within family

8% Stranger

2% Victim was also offender

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

Nearly all American Indian/Alaska Native firearm homicide deaths in North Carolina occur in rural counties.

Figure 2.1 reveals that rural counties followed a different year-to-year trajectory than urban firearm homicides. Firearm homicides in rural counties increased sharply through 2022, dropped through 2023, and then had smaller spikes throughout 2023 and 2024. Preliminary data from the first six months of 2025 show rural firearm homicides have begun to decrease again. The chapter on urban counties finds a different pattern in firearm homicide, with a rapid increase prior to 2021, variations up and down through 2023, and then a rapid decrease beginning mid-2024. The highest rate of rural firearm homicide was 8.2 per 100,000 in 2021, higher than the peaks of both urban (7.5) and suburban (6.0) counties. In 2024, rural counties had the highest single-year rate of firearm homicide.

Out of the cases with information on victim-offender relationships (**Figure 2.2**, a higher

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

percentage of rural firearm homicides were committed by an intimate partner compared to urban homicides (19% rural vs 14% urban) and by family members (18% rural vs 10% urban).[1] Significantly fewer rural firearm homicides were committed by strangers (8% rural vs 22% urban).[1]

Similar to urban and statewide firearm homicides, the majority of victims in rural counties were killed in the jurisdictions in which they live (**Figure 2.3**). However, more firearm homicides in suburban areas occur to people who live elsewhere (non-local: 15% rural, 14% urban, 22% suburban).

Handguns were used less often in rural firearm homicides, at only 45% (**Figure 2.4**). That number is significantly lower than urban counties, where 62% of firearm homicides involved handguns.

Automatic weapons were involved in a small number of rural homicides (**Figure 2.5**). However, that is higher than usage in urban counties (4% rural vs. 2% urban).[1] Suburban/regional city counties have the highest reported usage (5.5%).

Figure 2.6 shows a greater percentage of firearm homicides occurred in residences/

FIGURE 2.3. Percent of victims who lived in jurisdiction

Unknown 2%
Non-local resident 15%
Resident 84%
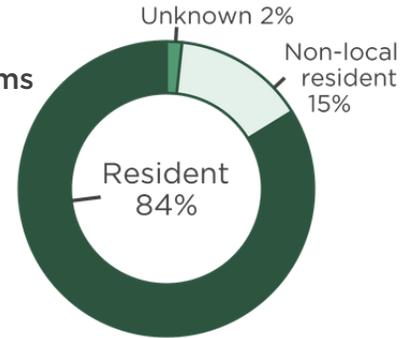
FIGURE 2.4. Percent handgun

Handgun 45%
Other firearm 57%
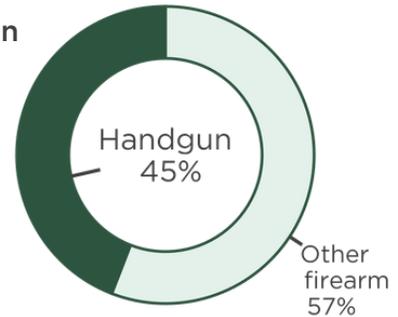
FIGURE 2.5. Percent automatic
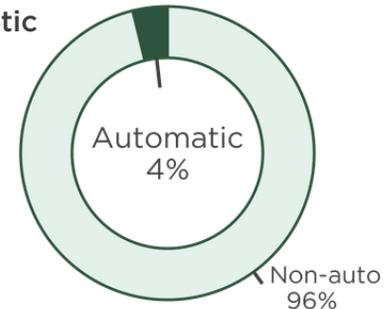
Automatic 4%
Non-auto 96%

Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to the victim's residence in the reporting jurisdiction, and is not related to immigration status. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, so percent firearm totals to over 100%.

FIGURE 2.6. Location of firearm homicides in rural counties, 2020-2024

58%
Residence/Home

27%
Street/Vehicular Area

7%
Store/Retail/Commercial

8%
Other Location

<1%
School/University

0%
Jail/Prison
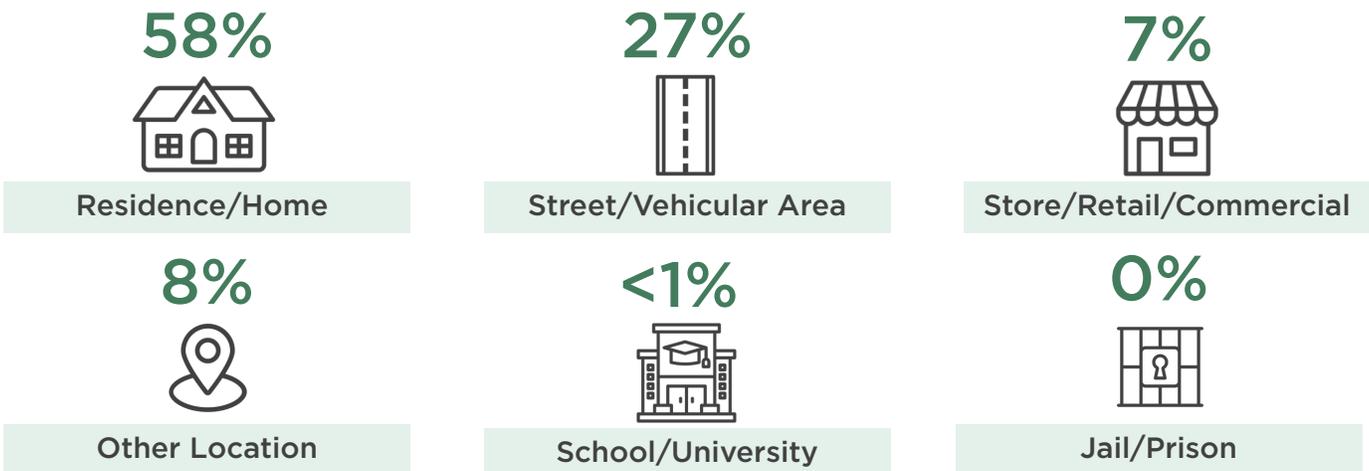
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

homes compared to urban counties (58% rural vs. 41% urban).[1] Fewer rural firearm homicides occurred in street/vehicular areas (27% rural vs. 37% urban) and stores/commercial areas (7% rural vs. 13% urban).[1] This dynamic poses a challenge for violence prevention in rural counties, where strategies developed to address street-level violence in cities may not work as well.

[1] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

Rural counties had a lower rate of other reported firearm crime from 2020 to 2024 compared to the statewide rate in the same window (159 per 100,000 rural vs. 222 per 100,000 statewide). Other reported firearm crime was substantially lower in rural counties compared to urban counties, but slightly higher than suburban/regional city counties (342 per 100,000 and 151 per 100,000 respectively).

Table 2.2 details the demographic breakdown of other firearm-related crime in rural counties. Similar to statewide other firearm crime, women in rural counties make up a greater share of victimizations than that for firearm homicide. Notably, the rural American Indian/Alaska Native population experiences the highest rate of other firearm crime compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Many of the state's recognized tribes reside in rural counties. Black, non-Hispanic rural individuals make up the majority of firearm-related crime victims, and they have the second-highest victimization rate. White, non-Hispanic rural individuals experience the lowest rate of other firearm-related crime. The age

TABLE 2.2. Rural other reported firearm crime number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Rural counties	29,450	100	159
Sex			
Male	16,876	59	185
Female	11,665	41	124
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	2,944	10	701†
Black, non-Hispanic	15,981	56	456†
Hispanic	1,468	5	87†
Other/Unknown, non-Hispanic	538	2	94†
White, non-Hispanic	7,739	27	62‡
Age			
0-14	3,067	11	98
15-19	3,619	13	319
20-24	4,067	14	372
25-29	3,388	12	315
30-34	3,019	11	269
35-44	4,821	17	228
45-54	3,018	11	133
55-64	2,002	7	76
65+*	1,307	5	-

American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic rural individuals have the highest rate of other firearm-related crime, surpassing the rate of Black, non-Hispanic rural individuals.

The mean age of other firearm crime victims in rural counties was **32 years old**, which is a few years younger than the mean age of rural firearm homicide victims.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 individuals.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 2.7. Rural other firearm crime total and rates over time, 2020-2024
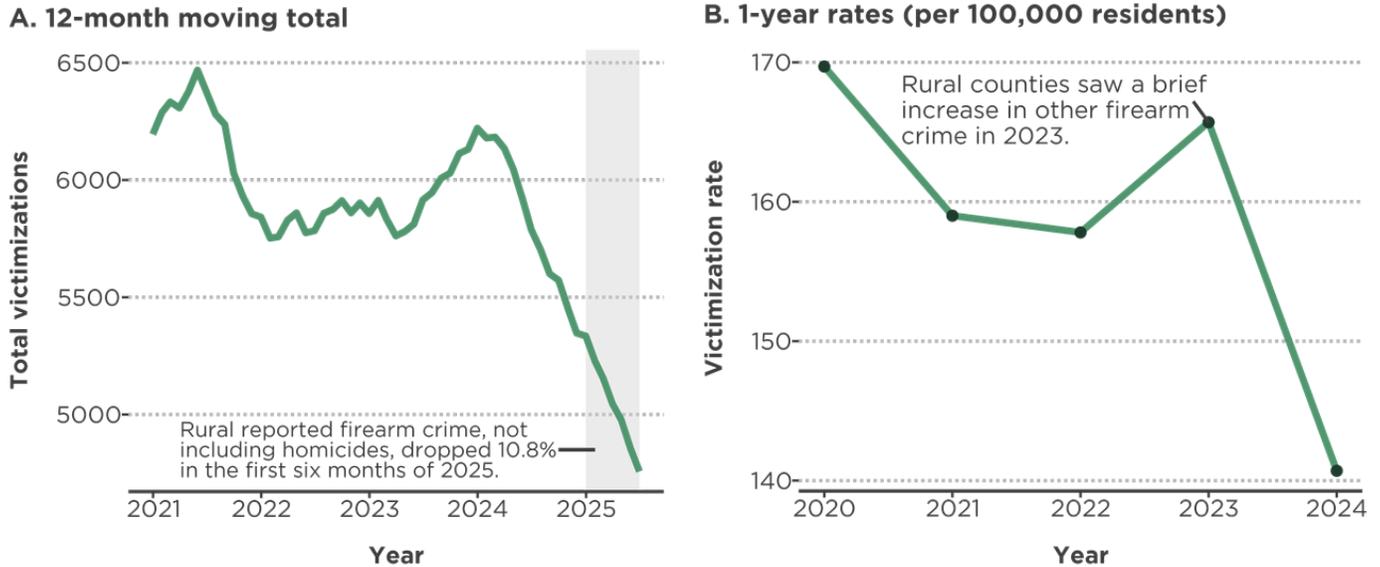
A. 12-month moving total

Rural reported firearm crime, not including homicides, dropped 10.8% in the first six months of 2025.

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

Rural counties saw a brief increase in other firearm crime in 2023.

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

breakdown is similar to the statewide numbers as well as suburban and urban counties. Residents age 20-24 had the highest rate of victimization compared to other age groups. Very few people over the age of 55 were the victims of other firearm crimes.

Like rural firearm homicides, other firearm crime rose in 2021, started to decline through 2023, but then increased again in 2024 before starting to decline precipitously (**Figure 2.7**). This double peak in interpersonal firearm violence differs from urban and suburban

TABLE 2.3. Rural other reported firearm crime by offense type

Offense w/ firearm	Total	Percent firearm[a]	Percent OFC[b]
Aggravated Assault	24,309	51.7	82.5
Robbery	4,259	63.2	14.5
Kidnapping/Abduction	715	27.1	2.4
Negligent Manslaughter	24	19.0	0.1
Human Trafficking	-	-	<0.1
Sexual Assault/Rape	123	1.0	0.4
Extortion/Blackmail	18	1.4	0.1
Total: Other firearm crime	29,450	15.6	100

More robberies in rural counties were committed with a firearm vs. other regions of the state.

Altogether, fewer of these offenses in rural counties involved firearms vs. urban counties (20%).

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. a The percentage of victimizations for a given offense type that involved firearms. b Each offense type's share of total other firearm crime (OFC) victimizations, 2020-2024.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

counties, which saw a steady drop in other firearm crimes between 2020 and 2024. Total other firearm crime victimizations in rural counties increased by around 6% from 2022 to 2023 before dropping in 2024.

Aggravated assault made up an even greater percentage of other reported firearm crime in rural counties compared to statewide numbers (**Table 2.3**). However, more robberies in rural areas involved firearms compared to other regions of the state, even urban counties (63% rural vs. 55% urban/statewide).

A handgun was used in less than half of all rural other firearm crime victimizations. Handguns were used less often in rural counties compared to urban counties (48% rural vs. 70% urban).[1]

Automatic firearms were rarely used in other firearm crimes, at only 3% of

FIGURE 2.8.
Percent handgun

Handgun
48%
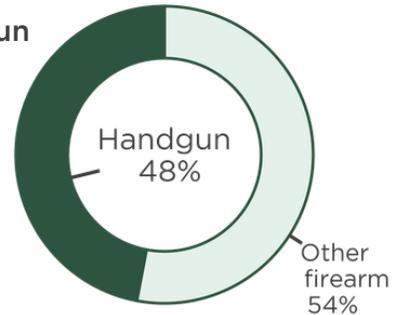
Other
firearm
54%

FIGURE 2.9.
Percent automatic

Automatic
3%

Non-auto
97%

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent firearm totals to over 100%.

victimizations (**Figure 2.9**), which matches the statewide figure. Suburban counties have the highest rate of automatic firearm usage.

Like rural firearm homicide, the majority of other firearm-related crime in rural counties occurred in people's residences/homes (**Figure 2.10**). This is higher than the share of victimizations that occurred in residences/homes in urban counties (60% rural vs. 55% urban).[1] In urban counties, more victimizations occurred in stores/commercial areas than in rural counties (11% rural vs. 16% urban). While fewer rural firearm homicides occurred in streets/vehicular areas compared to urban counties, a similar percentage of other firearm-

FIGURE 2.10. Location of other reported firearm crime in rural counties, 2020-2024
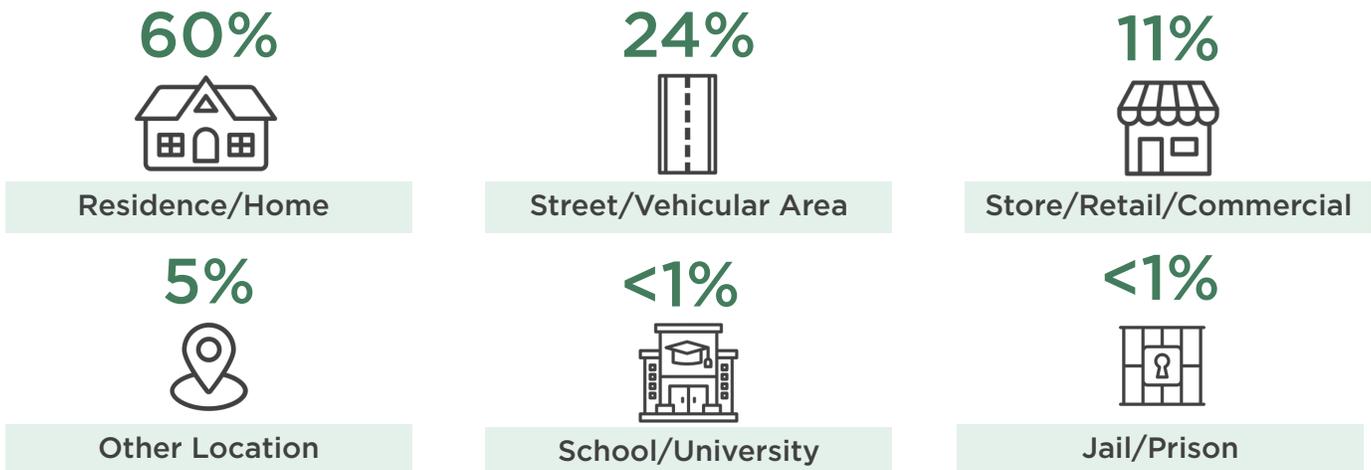
60%	24%	11%
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
5%	<1%	<1%
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 2.11.
Percent of victims who
lived in jurisdiction
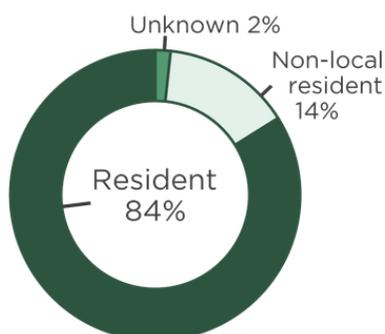
Unknown 2%

Non-local
resident
14%

Resident
84%

Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to the victim's residence in the reporting jurisdiction, and is not related to immigration status.

FIGURE 2.12. Relationship of victim to offender
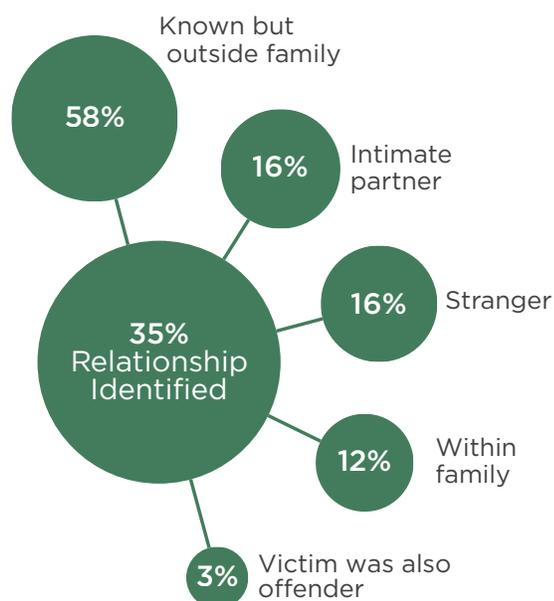
Known but
outside family

58%

16% Intimate partner

16% Stranger

35%
Relationship
Identified

12% Within family

3% Victim was also offender

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

related crime occurred in these spaces in rural and urban counties (24% rural vs. 22% urban).

Similar to rural firearm homicides, 84% of other firearm crimes occur in the jurisdiction in which the victim resides (**Figure 2.11**). The percentage for rural counties was nearly identical to the statewide figure and the figure in urban and rural counties (84% statewide, 85% urban, 82% suburban).

For other reported firearm crimes in rural areas, only 35% of victimizations included information on the relationship between the victim(s) and offender(s)(**Figure 2.12**). Out of cases with information, more than half of victims knew their offender but were not family members. Similar to rural firearm homicides, known but outside family offenders made up a much greater percentage of other reported firearm crime cases than urban counties (58% rural vs. 37% urban).[1] Rural counties also had a much lower percentage of identified relationships reported as strangers (16% rural vs. 43% urban).[1]

[1] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

Rural counties, with a rate of 31.0 per 100,000, experienced a higher level of non-fatal shootings than suburban (17.9 per 100,000) and urban counties (26.3 per 100,000). Considering this finding alongside rural firearm homicide and other firearm-related crime findings reveals that between 2020 and 2024, rural counties had less firearm-related crime than urban counties but a similar levels of firearm homicide and even higher levels of non-fatal shootings.

The demographics of rural non-fatal shootings again followed a similar pattern to rural firearm homicides (**Table 2.4**). The disparity in victimizations between men and women was wide, and similar across all regions of the state. Black, non-Hispanic rural individuals again have the highest total and rate of non-fatal shootings compared to other racial/ethnic groups, followed in rate by American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic individuals. The Black, non-Hispanic non-fatal shooting rate (91.8) was substantially higher than suburban (55.2) and urban (68.3) counties. In terms of raw totals, the number of Black, non-Hispanic non-fatal shootings was about evenly split between rural and urban counties (3,219 rural shootings vs. 3,462 urban shootings). Young adults age 20-24 again

TABLE 2.4. Rural non-fatal shooting ED visit number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Rural non-fatal shootings	5,757	100	31.0
Sex			
Male	4,862	84	18.5
Female	823	14	3.0
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	229	4	54.6
Black, non-Hispanic	3,219	56	91.8
Hispanic	253	4	15.1
Other, non-Hispanic	125	2	21.8
White, non-Hispanic	1,813	31	14.6
Age			
0-14	220	4	2.3
15-19	856	15	23.9
20-24	1,127	20	31.4
25-29	861	15	24.3
30-34	701	12	19.1
35-44	882	15	12.9
45-54	457	8	6.8
55-64	330	6	4.8
65+	246	4	2.7

For rural non-fatal shootings, **Black, non-Hispanic individuals** again had the highest victimization rate.

The mean age of non-fatal shooting victims in rural counties was **32 years old**, which is slightly older than that of victims in urban counties (mean of 30).

Source: NC DETECT. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding and missing demographic data. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 individuals.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

FIGURE 2.13. Rural non-fatal shooting numbers and rates over time, 2020-2024
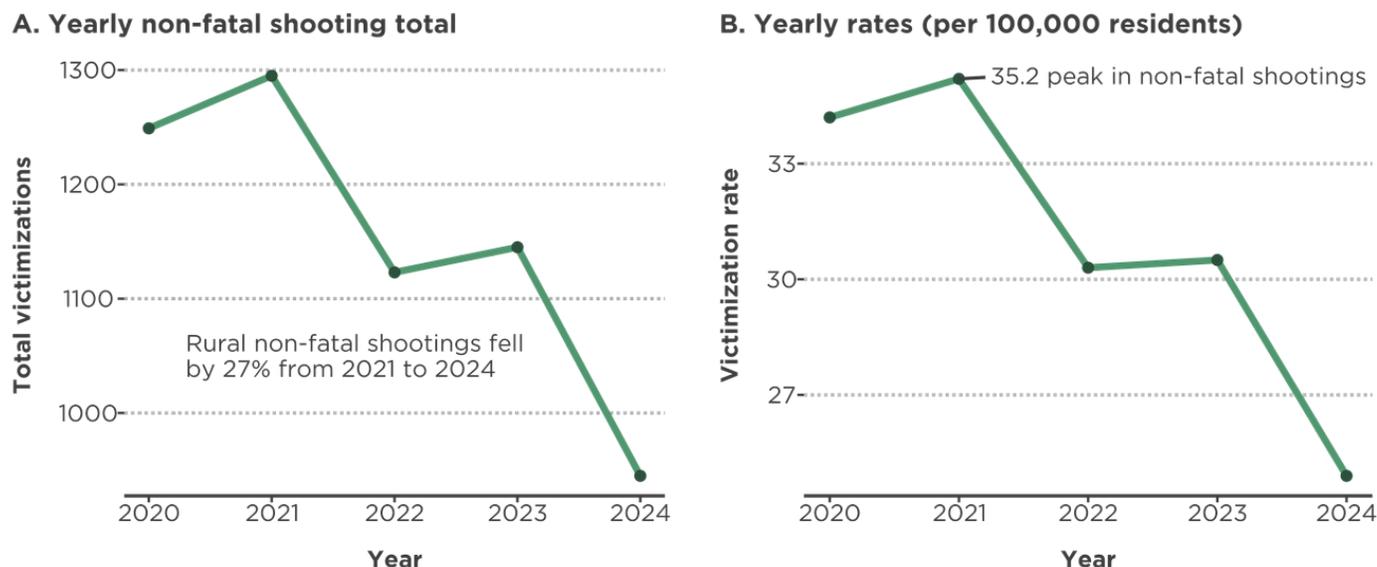
Source: NC DETECT. Figure A plots the yearly total non-fatal shooting total. Moving monthly totals were not available for NC DETECT data. Data from 2025 was not finalized at the time of this publication.

had the highest victimization rate of any age group. While 20-24-year-olds consistently experienced the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence, rural young adults in this age range had the highest rate of non-fatal shootings (31.4) compared to the same cohort in urban counties (28.0) and suburban counties (15.6).

The year-to-year changes in rural non-fatal shootings follow a similar pattern as rural firearm homicides and other firearm-related crime (**Figure 2.13**). Rural non-fatal shootings increased in 2021, fell through 2022, and had a minor increase again in 2023 before falling through 2024. Urban and suburban counties did not experience similar increases in 2023, both declining yearly from 2021 through 2024.

From their peak in 2021, rural non-fatal shootings dropped by around 27%, a difference of over 300 shootings. The rate fell from a peak in 2021 of 35.2 to 23.2 per 100,000 residents in 2024. Non-fatal shooting rates in urban counties also peaked in 2021 at 28.9, but the suburban rate was the highest in 2020 at 22.8, following a more linear decline through 2024.

Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Rural counties experienced more firearm suicides between 2019 and 2023 than firearm homicides between 2020 and 2024 (2,034 suicides vs. 1300 homicides), similar to both statewide and suburban county findings.[1] Also similar, the demographics of firearm suicide were unique compared to other forms of violence. Rural white, non-Hispanic individuals and adults over 45 experienced the highest rates of firearm suicide (**Table 2.5**). Men remain the sex most likely to experience all types of firearm violence across the state.

White, non-Hispanic individuals had a higher firearm suicide rate in rural counties (14.2) than either urban (8.0) or suburban (11.9) counties. The total number of deaths from firearm suicide among this demographic was highest in rural areas, and white, non-Hispanic individuals make up a greater percentage of all firearm suicides in rural counties (86%) compared to suburban (82%) and urban (72%) counties.

Overall, 75% of suicides by firearm occurred among people 35 and older, though 20-24-year-olds have the highest rate after adults over 45. The average age of victims in rural counties was six years older than the average in urban counties (age 46).

TABLE 2.5. Rural firearm suicide death number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2019-2023

	Number	Percent	Rate
Rural firearm suicide	2,034	100	11.0
Sex			
Male	1,749	86	19.2
Female	285	14	3.0
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	34	2	8.0
Black, non-Hispanic	171	8	4.8
Hispanic	53	3	3.3
Other, non-Hispanic	16	1	-
White, non-Hispanic	1,758	86	14.2
Age			
10-14	15	1	-
15-19	86	4	7.6
20-24	139	7	12.8
25-29	112	6	10.3
30-34	130	6	11.8
35-44	260	13	12.4
45-54	328	16	14.2
55-64	368	18	13.8
65+	596	29	15.2

White non-Hispanic individuals in rural counties faced the highest firearm suicide rate across the state.

The mean age of firearm suicide victims in rural counties was **52 years old**, which was the oldest across the state.

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 individuals. Data for youth under the age of 10 is not reported.

Firearm Suicide
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 2.14. Rural firearm suicide death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
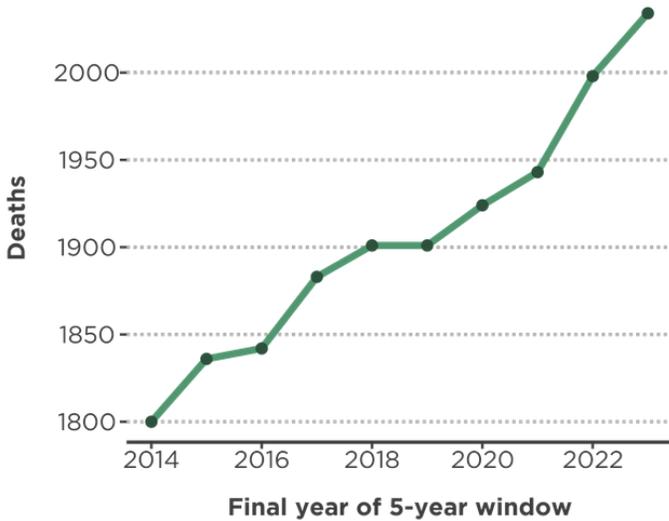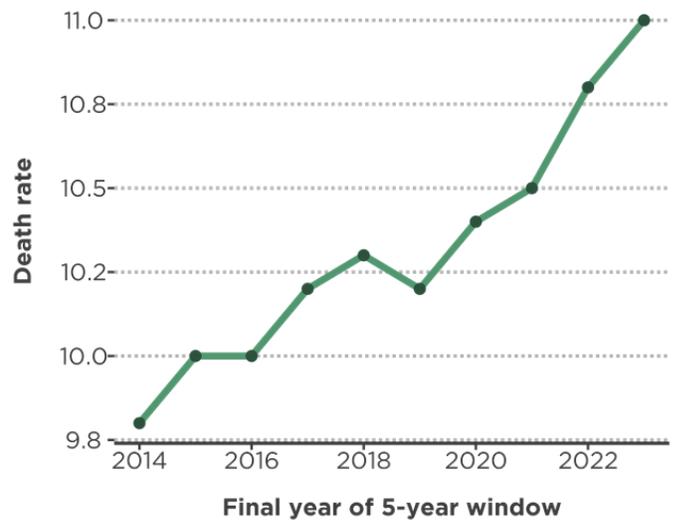
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Following the statewide trend, firearm suicides in rural counties increased between 2014 and 2023. Nationwide data indicates that rural areas across the country experience higher rates of firearm suicide.[2]

Altogether these findings indicate that older, white, non-Hispanic individuals of rural North Carolina counties face a high level of risk for firearm suicide.

[1] Although these time periods differ, additional data from NC-VDRS add evidence to the finding that firearm suicides were more prevalent in rural counties than firearm homicide. NC-VDRS also includes information about firearm homicides, using a wider definition of homicide than NIBRS (which is why NC-VDRS homicide numbers are slightly higher than NIBRS homicide numbers in same-year comparisons). Comparing the NC-VDRS firearm homicide numbers to firearm suicide numbers from the same time period (2019-2023) also shows that the total number of firearm suicides exceeded that of firearm homicides in rural counties.
[2] Kim, R., Wagner, E. D., Nestadt, P. S., Somayaji, N., Horwitz, J., & Crifasi, C. K. (2025). Gun Violence in the United States 2023: Examining the Gun Suicide Epidemic. Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Other Firearm Deaths

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Firearm deaths due to unintentional causes and legal interventions were relatively rare in rural counties between 2019 and 2023, but their levels were slightly higher compared to urban and suburban counties.

The unintentional firearm death rate in rural areas was 0.26 per 100,000 in 2019-2023 (**Table 2.6**), compared to 0.24 in urban counties and 0.22 in suburban counties. The five-year unintentional firearm death total dropped from 50 in 2010-2014 to only 34 in 2013-2017 (**Figure 2.15**). After 2019, levels began to increase, climbing back to just below 50 in 2019-2023. The rates follow the same pattern. While all regions of the state saw an increase in unintentional firearm death around 2017 to 2019, rural counties experienced more of a return to previous levels. Urban and suburban counties began at lower levels prior to this increase.

TABLE 2.6. Rural unintentional and legal intervention firearm death total and rate per 100,000, 2019-2023

Rural counties	Number	Rate
Unintentional firearm deaths	49	0.26
Legal intervention firearm deaths	65	0.35

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Rates were not calculated for counts <20 at which point rates become unstable. No demographics were analyzed due to the small number of cases. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

The legal intervention death rate in rural areas was 0.35 per 100,000 in 2019-2023 (**Table 2.6**), compared to 0.26 in urban counties and 0.33 in suburban counties. The five-year total of legal intervention firearm deaths rose more steadily between 2014 and 2023 (**Figure 2.16**). In 2010-2014, legal interventions led to 37 firearm deaths in rural counties, rising to 50 in 2012-2016 and then up to 65 in 2019-2023. Because of the small number of cases, that change comes out to a 76% increase between 2014 and 2023.

FIGURE 2.15. Rural unintentional firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
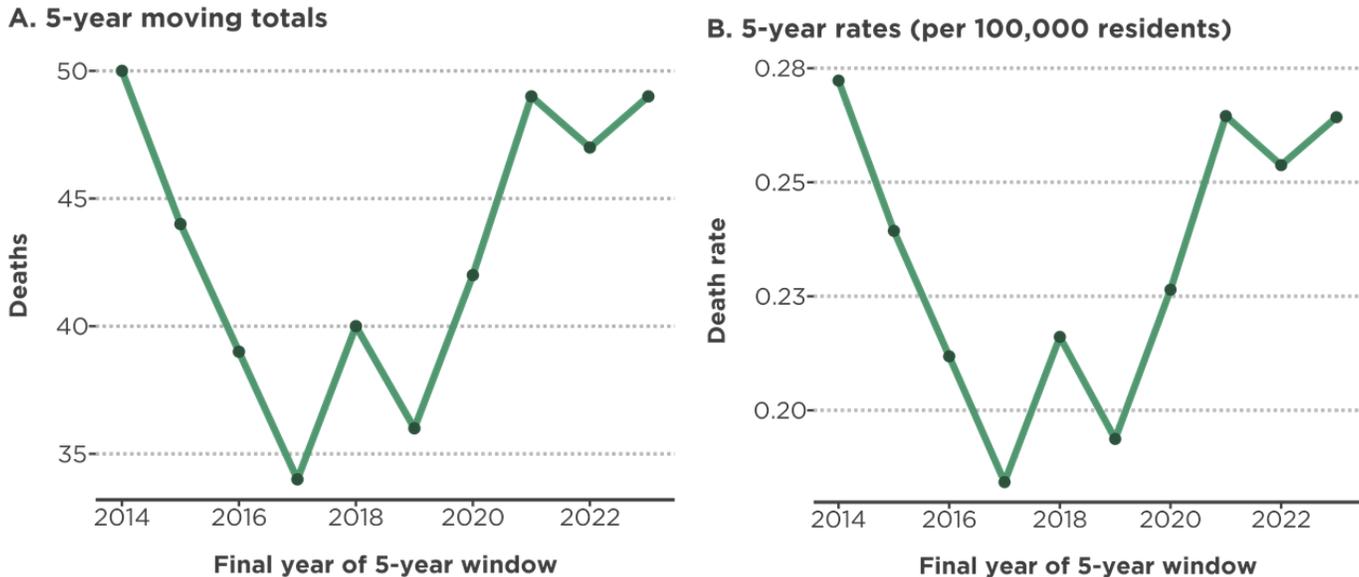
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Other Firearm Deaths

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 2.16. Rural legal intervention firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
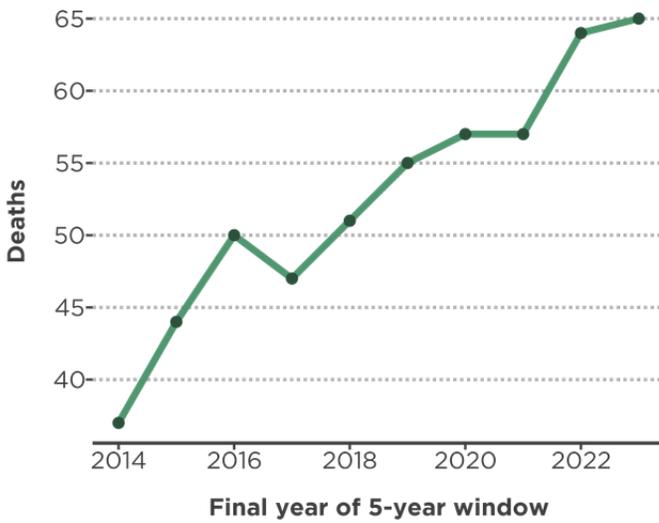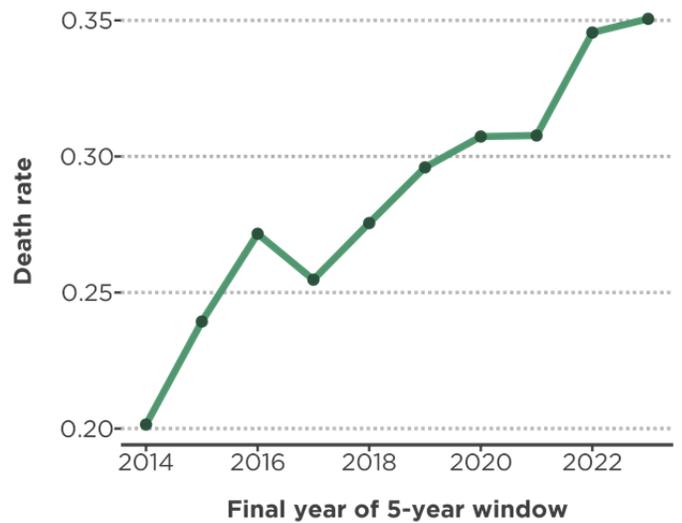
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Rates followed the same pattern as the total increases. Urban and suburban counties also saw increases in legal intervention firearm deaths between 2014 and 2019, but experienced a bit more year-to-year fluctuation in totals compared to the more steady rise in rural counties.

IN FOCUS: What counts as rural?

In this report, we used the NC Rural Center's county classifications to define counties as rural, urban, or suburban based on county population density. This provides the most consistent definition across datasets for comparisons. However, even urban counties like Forsyth or Wake have suburban communities and farmland. To test our county findings, we classified law enforcement jurisdictions by population size into large cities, small/medium cities, suburban cities/towns, large towns, small towns, and truly rural areas. Appendix B contains a full explanation of how these categories were defined. Around 55% of North Carolina's population lives in large/small towns and rural areas.

Figure 2.17 compares the 2020-2024 levels of firearm homicide in rural counties to levels in large towns (10,000 to <50,000 residents), small towns (1,000 to < 10,000 residents), and truly rural areas (unincorporated land and towns < 1,000 residents). Recall rural counties as a whole had a five-year rate of 7.0 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents. This was on par with the rate of firearm homicide in urban counties. However, when we broke the data into more granular categories, large towns and small towns outside of cities and suburbs had the highest rates of firearm violence in the state. Large towns experienced 12.2 firearm homicides per 100,000. Small towns experienced 10.4 firearm homicides per 100,000. This compares to 10.3 per 100,000 in large cities and 6.5 per 100,000 in small cities. The comparison also reveals that truly rural areas had the lowest rate of firearm violence in the state (4.3 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents).

This data demonstrates that rural counties have been experiencing rates of firearm homicide on par with or even higher than NC's largest cities, but that violence is concentrated in small and large towns and not truly rural areas. The single-year rates in Figure 2.17 show that firearm homicide in large towns remained elevated throughout the last five years and small towns experienced a spike in violence that had not fallen back to previous levels by the end of 2024. However, preliminary 2025 does show declining firearm homicide numbers in large towns, small towns, and truly rural areas.

FIGURE 2.17. Firearm homicide by different definitions of rural, 2020-2024
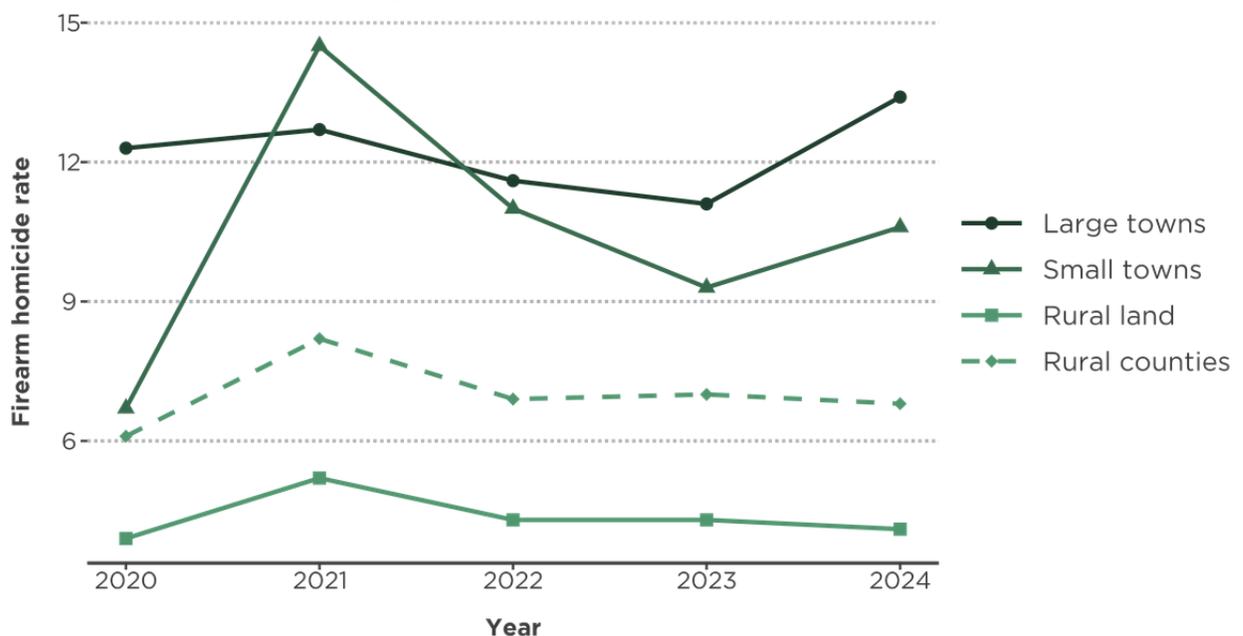
Source: NIBRS. Figure displays single-year firearm homicides rates per 100,000 residents.

Chapter 3
Urban Firearm Violence

Key Findings

After rural counties, urban counties face the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence.
- Firearm homicide totals and rates were similar to rural counties.
- Urban counties had by far the highest total and rate of other firearm crime.
- Urban counties had the second-highest rate of non-fatal shootings.
- Urban counties had the lowest rate of firearm suicide.
- Unintentional firearm deaths and legal intervention firearm deaths were relatively rare and less common in urban versus rural counties. Urban counties had the lowest rate of legal intervention firearm deaths.

When looking within counties, **large cities with 200,000+ residents had a higher rate of firearm homicide than small/medium cities between 50,000 and 200,000 residents**. Small and large towns in rural areas had higher rates than cities, though large cities were only just behind small towns.

Notable trends in urban firearm homicide and other firearm crime:
- **Handguns were the firearm type of choice** in the majority of firearm homicides and other firearm crime.
- Less than half of victimizations included information on victim-offender relationships. Of cases with data, **most offenders were known but not family OR strangers**.
- **Most victimizations occurred in homes and residences**, though **a greater proportion of firearm homicides occurred in street/vehicular areas** in urban counties than other counties. Other firearm crimes in urban counties still largely occurred in homes and residences.

Demographic findings for urban counties:
- **Black, non-Hispanic individuals had the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence in urban counties** (homicides, other firearm crime, and non-fatal shootings).
- **Hispanic individuals in urban counties had higher firearm homicide and other firearm crime victimization rates** compared to other counties.
- Like the rest of the state, **urban young adults age 20 to 24 faced the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence**. The average age of firearm homicide victims was 31, which was younger than rural and suburban counties.
- **Urban young adults age 20 to 24 also had the highest firearm suicide rate.** This was distinctly different from other counties, where adults 65+ have the highest rates. In urban counties, adults age 65+ have the second-highest firearm suicide rate.
- **White, non-Hispanic individuals had the highest firearm suicide rate**, though they experienced low levels of interpersonal firearm violence.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

Between 2020 and 2024, urban counties experienced a similar total and rate of firearm homicide as rural counties in North Carolina. The rate (7.0) was higher than the statewide rate (6.3) for the same time period. The In Focus feature (**Figure 3.17**) shows that when urban counties are broken down into large cities and small/medium cities, firearm homicide is even higher in large cities (see p. 58 for more). **Table 3.1** presents the demographic breakdown of firearm homicides in urban counties.

Men in urban counties were more likely to be victims of firearm homicide (83%) compared to women, which is similar to rural and suburban counties (both have 79% male homicide victims). Men in urban counties have the highest rate of firearm homicide (12.0 per 100,000) compared to rural (11.2) and suburban counties (7.6). Once again, Black, non-Hispanic individuals face the highest rate of firearm homicide within urban counties, though Black, non-Hispanic individuals of rural counties have an even higher rate (24.1). There were too few firearm homicides where the victims' race was recorded as American

TABLE 3.1. Urban firearm homicide victimization number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Urban counties	1,337	100	7.0
Sex			
Male	1,111	83	12.0
Female	219	16	2.2
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	-	-	-
Black, non-Hispanic	998	75	19.7†
Hispanic	156	12	6.2†
Other, non-Hispanic	24	2	1.4
White, non-Hispanic	158	12	1.6‡
Age			
0-14	28	2	0.8
15-19	208	16	15.7
20-24	261	20	20.0
25-29	225	17	15.7
30-34	182	14	12.1
35-44	211	16	7.8
45-54	117	9	4.7
55-64	75	6	3.4
65+*	19	1	-

The rate of firearm homicide for **Hispanic individuals** was notably higher in urban counties, with relatively low rates in other regions.

The mean age of urban firearm homicide victims was **31 years old**, which is the youngest of any region.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

Indian/Alaska Native to report. Almost all recorded American Indian/Alaska Native firearm homicides occurred in rural counties. In urban counties, Hispanic individuals had the second-highest rate of firearm homicide. While Hispanic individuals accounted for a relatively small percentage of firearm homicides statewide, 65% of Hispanic firearm homicide victims died in urban counties. Accordingly, the urban Hispanic firearm homicide rate (6.2) was higher than the rate in rural (2.4) and suburban (2.5) counties.

The mean age of firearm homicide victims in urban counties was the youngest (31 years old) compared to rural counties (35) and suburban counties (33). Youth age 20-24, the highest risk group statewide, experience the highest rate of firearm homicide in urban counties (20.0 per 100,000 urban; 18.2 per 100,000 rural; 10.7 per 100,000 suburban).

Figure 3.1 shows that unlike rural and suburban counties, urban counties did not experience a distinct spike in firearm homicides in 2021. However, the data in **Figure 3.1.A** was limited to the study period (2020-2024). Data from the years prior to 2020 (available through the NC State Bureau of Investigation), shows that firearm homicides began rising in urban counties in 2019, a year earlier than rural and suburban counties. Urban firearm homicides peaked in 2020 at a rate of 7.5 homicides per 100,000 residents, while rural firearm homicides peaked in 2021 at 8.2 homicides per 100,000 residents. Suburban firearm homicides also peaked in 2021 at a lower rate of 6.0 homicides per 100,000 residents.

Firearm homicides in urban counties declined slowly through 2023 before a rapid decline in 2024. That decline continued into 2025 accordingly to preliminary data from NIBRS. Rural and suburban counties experienced rises and falls in firearm homicide at different times throughout this period, though firearm homicides were falling in all regions of the state by the end of 2024 into 2025. Urban counties ended 2024 with a lower rate of firearm

FIGURE 3.1. Urban firearm homicide total and rates over time, 2020-2024
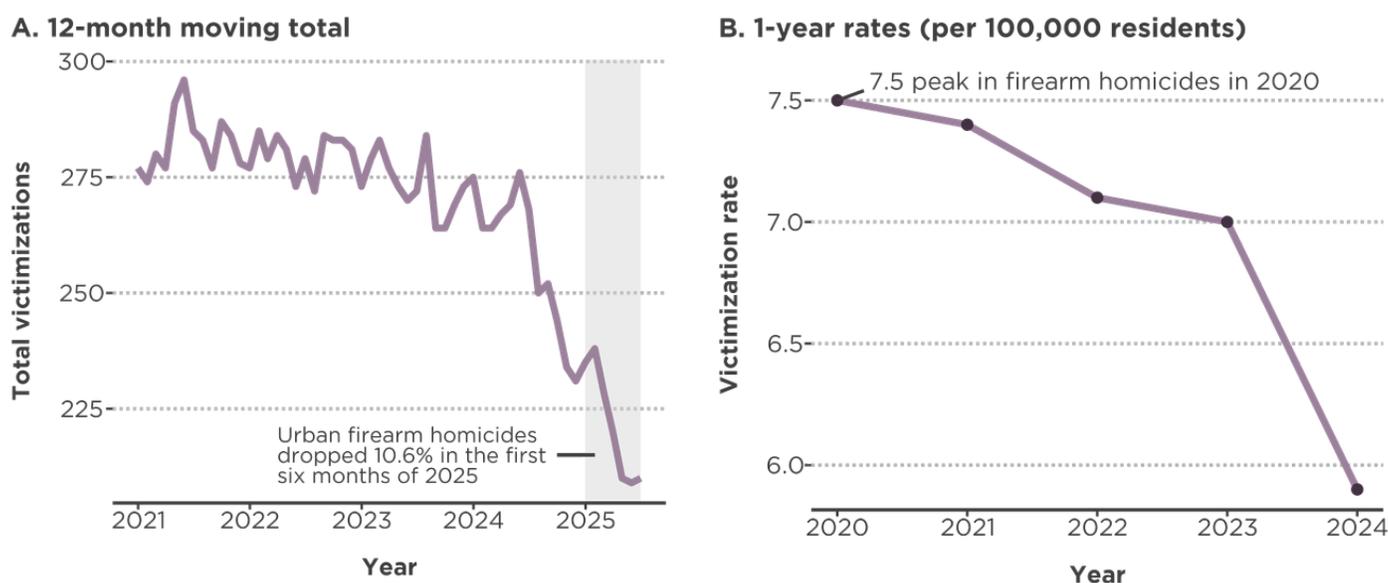
A. 12-month moving total

Urban firearm homicides dropped 10.6% in the first six months of 2025

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

7.5 peak in firearm homicides in 2020

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

Firearm Homicide
SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 3.2. Relationship of victim to offender
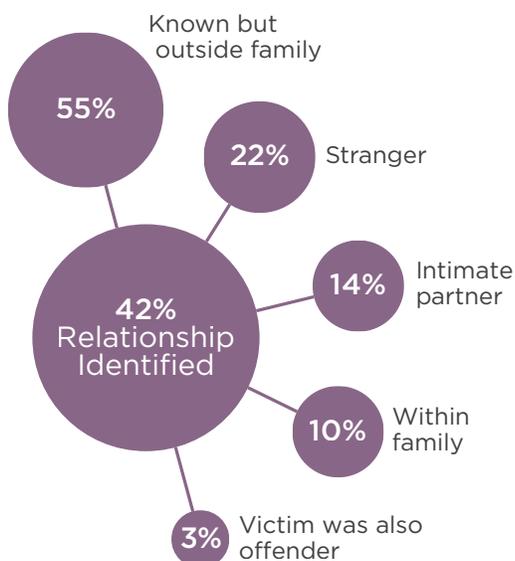
Known but outside family

55%

22% Stranger

42% Relationship Identified

14% Intimate partner

10% Within family

3% Victim was also offender

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

FIGURE 3.3. Percent of victims who lived in jurisdiction

Unknown 2%
Non-local resident 14%
Resident 84%

FIGURE 3.4. Percent handgun

Handgun 62%
Other firearm 41%
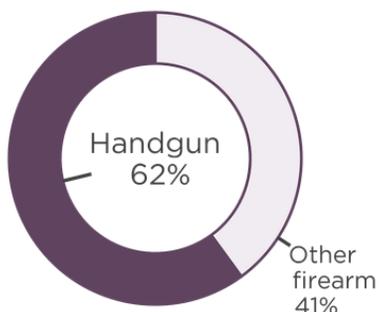
FIGURE 3.5. Percent automatic

Automatic 2%
Non-auto 98%

homicide than rural counties (5.9 per 100,000 urban residents vs. 6.8 per 100,000 rural residents).

Similar to other counties, victim-offender relationships were identified in less than half of cases (**Figure 3.2**). Out of the cases where a relationship was recorded, more offenders were identified as strangers (22%) than in rural (8%) or suburban (9%) counties.[1] However, like other counties the majority of offenders with relationship information reported were known to victims but not family (55%).

Victims were just as likely to reside in the jurisdiction where they were killed as rural counties (**Figure 3.3**). Slightly more victims lived outside the jurisdiction in suburban counties (22% non-local residents vs. 14% non-local residents in urban counties).[1] However, the resident status figures for urban counties exclude one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status in NIBRS.

Handguns were used in a greater percentage of homicides in urban counties (62%) compared to rural (45%) and suburban (54%) counties (**Figure 3.4**).[1] Urban counties reported the lowest usage of automatic weapons in firearm homicides (**Figure 3.5**). Only 2% of urban firearm homicides involved automatic

Source: NIBRS. Fig 3.3. excludes data from one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent firearm totals to over 100% as the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 3.6. Location of firearm homicides in urban counties, 2020-2024

41%	37%	13%
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
9%	<1%	0%
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison
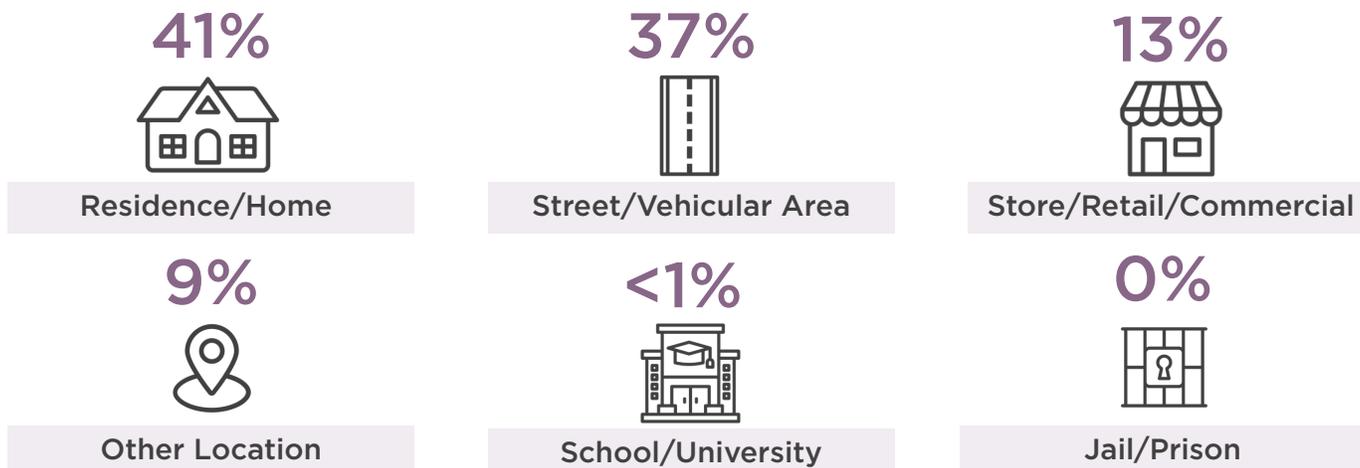
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

weapons compared to 4% in rural counties and 5.5% in suburban counties.

The amount of firearm homicides that occurred in residences/homes and streets/vehicular areas looked different in urban counties (**Figure 3.6**). In urban counties, more firearm homicides occurred in street/vehicular areas (37% urban vs. 24% rural and 27% suburban). [1] Residences/homes were still the most common location of firearm homicides in urban counties (41%), though a smaller percentage than suburban (56%) and rural (58%) counties.

[1] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

Urban counties had a much higher rate of other firearm crime (342 victimizations per 100,000 residents) than both rural (158 per 100,000) and suburban (151 per 100,000) residents. This differs from homicides, where rural and urban counties had very similar rates of deaths. Despite the difference in the level of other firearm-related crime in urban counties, the populations with the highest rates looked similar for both homicide and other firearm crime in urban counties (**Table 3.2).**

Black, non-Hispanic urban individuals had the highest rate of victimization from firearm-related crime, followed by Hispanic urban individuals. Again this higher level of Hispanic victimization was unique to urban counties. Hispanic individuals accounted for 18% of other firearm crime victims in urban counties, compared to only 7% in suburban counties and 5% in rural counties. Similar to rural and suburban counties, more women were victims in other firearm-related crime compared to firearm homicides victims, who were overwhelmingly male (83% of urban firearm homicide victims were men). Young adults

TABLE 3.2. Urban other reported firearm crime number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Urban counties	65,660	100	342
Sex			
Male	36,440	57	393
Female	26,860	42	271
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	126	0	216†
Black, non-Hispanic	40,040	63	790†
Hispanic	11,278	18	446†
Other/Unknown, non-Hispanic	1,695	3	102
White, non-Hispanic	10,266	16	104‡
Age			
0-14	7,358	12	210
15-19	8,045	13	606
20-24	9,514	15	729
25-29	8,039	13	560
30-34	7,247	11	484
35-44	10,394	16	384
45-54	6,408	10	257
55-64	3,803	6	170
65+*	2,163	3	-

Other firearm crime victimization rates also were also higher for **urban Hispanic residents** versus Hispanic residents in other regions.

The mean age of other firearm crime victims was **31 years old**, which was younger than rural and suburban counties.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Other Firearm Crime
SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 3.7. Urban other firearm crime total and rates over time, 2020-2024
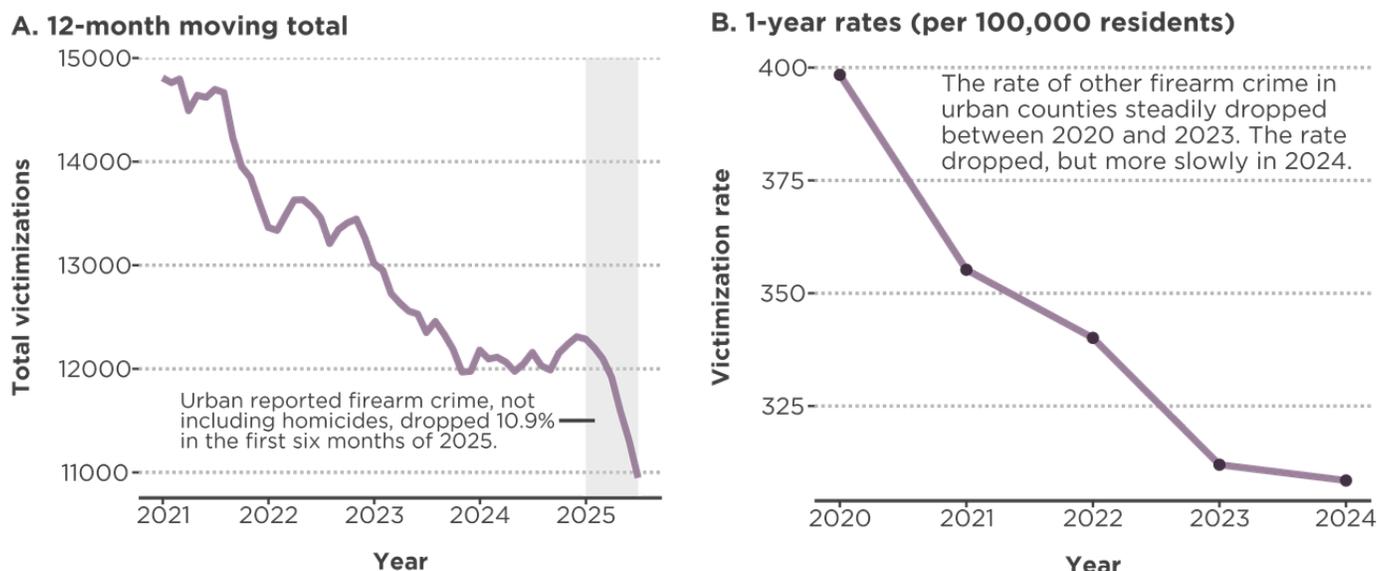
Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

age 20-24 experienced the highest rate of other firearm crime, consistent with the rest of the state. The average age of urban victims (31) was one year younger than other counties.

Other firearm crime in urban counties declined steadily each year from 2020 to 2023 (**Figure 3.7**). The decline slowed between 2023 and 2024, but preliminary numbers from 2025 show other firearm crime is likely on the decline again. This pattern differs a bit from urban firearm homicides rates, which saw faster declines after 2023. Looking at these cases by offense type (Table 3.3), robbery makes up a greater percentage of other

TABLE 3.3. Urban other reported firearm crime by offense type

Offense w/ firearm	Total	Percent firearm[a]	Percent OFC[b]
Aggravated Assault	49,715	63.7	75.7
Robbery	14,578	54.7	22.2
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,038	23.6	1.6
Negligent Manslaughter	29	25.0	<0.1
Human Trafficking	10	7.2	<0.1
Sexual Assault/Rape	239	1.9	0.4
Extortion/Blackmail	51	1.6	0.1
Total: Other firearm crime	65,660	20.4	100.0

More **aggravated assaults** involved firearms in urban counties than other parts of the state.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. a The percentage of victimizations for a given offense type that involved firearms. b Each offense type's share of total other firearm crime (OFC) victimizations, 2020-2024.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

reported firearm crime in urban counties (22%) compared to rural counties (14.5%). More reported aggravated assaults in urban counties involved a firearm (64%) compared to suburban (47%) and rural (52%) counties.

Similar to homicides, handguns were involved in most firearm-related crime reported (70% of victimizations) (**Figure 3.8**). Urban counties had the highest percentage of handgun use during other firearm crimes compared to rural (48%) and suburban (62%) counties.[1]

The usage of automatic weapons in urban firearm crime was lower in urban counties than both suburban and rural counties (**Figure 3.9**). While usage was similar in rural and urban counties, suburban counties had the highest usage of automatic weapons in other firearm crime (5% suburban vs 3% urban).[1] Overall, automatic weapons usage was relatively rare across both homicide and other firearm-related crime.

**FIGURE 3.8.
Percent handgun**

Handgun 70%

Other firearm 36%
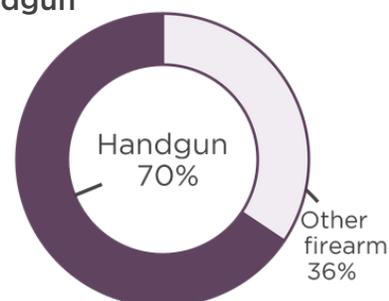
**FIGURE 3.9.
Percent automatic**
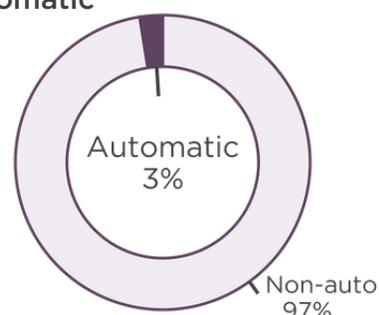
Automatic 3%

Non-auto 97%

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent firearm totals to over 100%.

Over half of other firearm crimes occur within the victim's home or residence, a greater percentage than in urban firearm homicides (**Figure 3.10**). In urban counties, more firearm homicides occurred in streets/public vehicular areas (37%) compared to other reported firearm crime victimizations (only 22%). Like other counties, the second most common location for other firearm crime types was in the street or public vehicular areas, followed

FIGURE 3.10. Location of other reported firearm crime in urban counties, 2020-2024
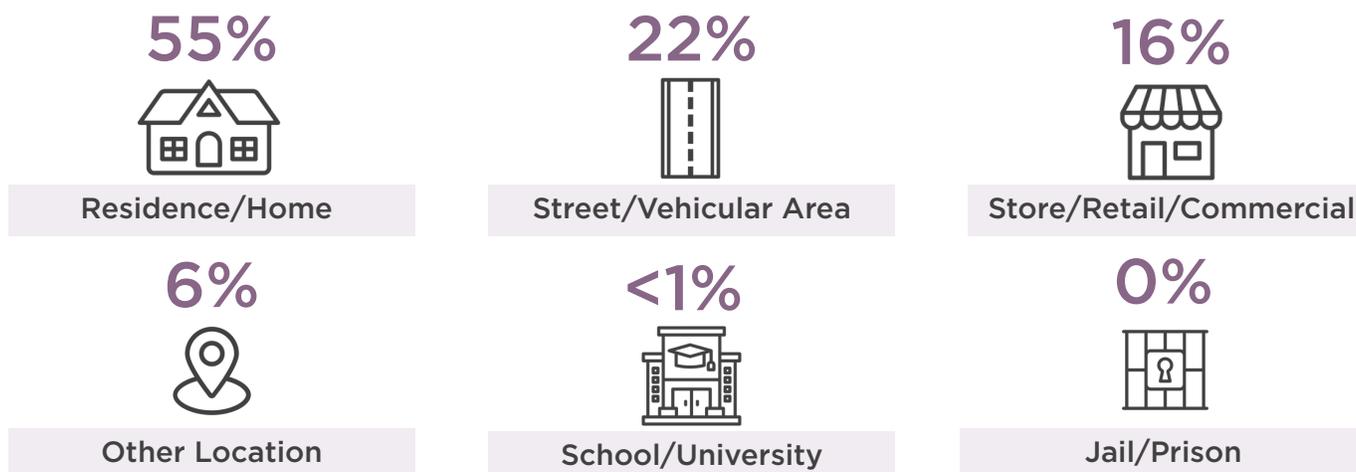
55%	22%	16%
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
6%	<1%	0%
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 3.11.
Percent of victims who
lived in jurisdiction
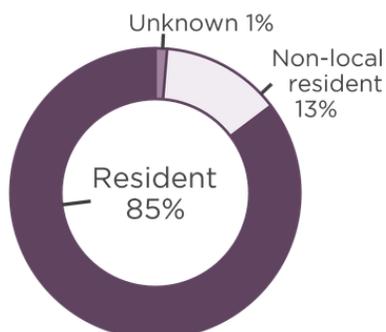
Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to the victim's residence in the reporting jurisdiction, not immigration status. Fig. 3.11. excludes data from one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status.

FIGURE 3.12. Relationship of victim to offender
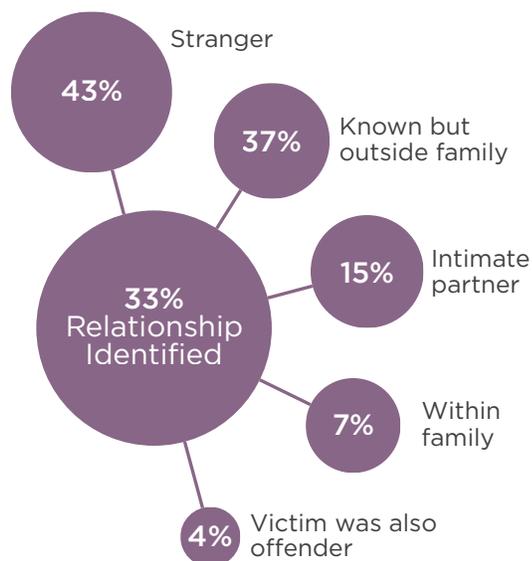
Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

by store/retail/commercial areas. This means that firearm-related crime occurs in similar locations across the state, while firearm homicide in urban counties specifically occurs more in streets/public vehicular areas.

Most victims of other firearm crimes were residents of the jurisdiction where the crime occurred (**Figure 3.11**). Urban counties reported the lowest percentage of non-local resident victims (13%) compared to rural (14%) and suburban (17%) counties.[1] However, the resident status figures for urban counties exclude one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status in NIBRS.

Only 34% of other firearm crime cases included information on the relationship between victim(s) and offender(s) (**Figure 3.12**). That is a smaller percentage of cases than rural (37%) or suburban (40%) counties.

Of cases where a relationship was recorded, urban offenders were the most common relationships identified (43%). That is a larger percentage than both rural (16%) and suburban (22%) counties.[1] In suburban and rural areas, most offenders were identified as known to the victim but not family, which was the second most common relationship reported in urban counties.[1]

[1] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

Urban counties had the second-highest rate of non-fatal shootings between 2020 and 2024 with a rate of 26.3 per 100,000 individuals (**Table 3.4**). Rural counties had the highest rate at 31.0 shootings per 100,000 individuals. Therefore, while urban counties had the highest rate of other firearm-related crime by a wide margin, rural counties had a similar or higher rate of injury and death resulting from firearms. It is important to note that this non-fatal shooting data includes shootings that result from all manner of causes (e.g., criminal, self-inflicted, accidental).

Consistent with suburban and rural counties, urban Black, non-Hispanic victims have the highest rate of non-fatal shootings compared to other races/ethnicities. Notably, non-Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native individuals recorded the second-highest rate, although they make up less than one percent of all non-fatal shootings. While the number of firearm homicide victims reported as non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native was too small to be reported for urban counties, this data indicates that Native individuals in North Carolina cities still face an increased risk of firearm violence. While Hispanic individuals in urban counties showed the same elevated risk seen in the findings for other types of firearm violence, that

TABLE 3.4. Urban non-fatal shooting ED visit number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Urban non-fatal shootings	5,048	100	26.3
Sex			
Male	4,007	79	15.3
Female	821	16	3.0
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	25	<1	42.9
Black, non-Hispanic	3,462	69	68.3
Hispanic	382	8	15.1
Other, non-Hispanic	221	4	13.2
White, non-Hispanic	697	14	7.1
Age			
0-14	161	3	1.7
15-19	928	18	25.9
20-24	1,006	20	28.0
25-29	842	17	23.7
30-34	616	12	16.8
35-44	685	14	10.0
45-54	306	6	4.5
55-64	190	4	2.8
65+	109	2	1.2

The mean age of urban non-fatal shooting victims was **30 years old**, which was younger than rural and suburban counties.

Source: NC DETECT. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding and missing demographic data. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

Non-Fatal Shootings

elevation was not as pronounced in non-fatal shooting data as it was for NIBRS data, nor was it present in the firearm suicide data for urban counties. Both the urban and rural county non-fatal shooting rate for Hispanic individuals was 15.1 per 100,000, although Hispanic victims made up a larger percentage of non-fatal shootings by number in urban counties. There could be a number of explanations for why the pattern of firearm violence for Hispanic individuals looks slightly different across data sources. However, enough triangulation exists across those data sources to indicate that Hispanic individuals of urban North Carolina counties are facing an elevated risk of gun violence.

Interestingly, yearly non-fatal shooting trends (**Figure 3.13**) also look different than the trends that NIBRS data revealed. Where the spike in firearm homicides and other firearm-related crime appeared to increase prior to 2020, non-fatal shooting visits to emergency departments continued to rise through 2021. After 2021, non-fatal shootings follow a similar pattern to homicides, showing a slow decline through 2023 and then a steeper decline into 2024. We caution against over-interpreting these differences because each data source captures different aspects of firearm violence in urban counties (homicides vs. reported crime vs. all manner of non-fatal shootings). According to both NIBRS and NC DETECT emergency department records, firearm violence remained elevated in urban counties through 2023 and then began dropping more quickly in 2024 and into 2025. Different types of urban firearm violence may have peaked at different points between 2020 and 2021.

The highest yearly non-fatal shooting rate in urban counties between 2020 and 2024 was 28.9 per 100,000 individuals in 2021. This was higher than the 2020 peak in suburban counties (22.8) but lower than the 2021 peak in rural counties (35.2).

FIGURE 3.13. **Urban non-fatal shooting numbers and rates over time, 2020-2024**

A. Yearly non-fatal shooting total

B. Yearly rates (per 100,000 residents)

Source: NC DETECT. Figure A plots the yearly total non-fatal shooting total. Moving monthly totals were not available for NC DETECT data. Data from 2025 was not finalized at the time of this publication.

Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Urban counties had the lowest rate of firearm suicide between 2019 and 2023, with a rate of 5.8 deaths per 100,000 compared to both rural (11.0 deaths per 100,000) and suburban (9.6 per 100,000). Urban counties experiencing the lowest rate of firearm suicide stands out from the findings thus far, particularly compared to suburban/regional city counties which typically had the lowest firearm violence rates. Also unlike the rest of the state, firearm homicide appears to be more prevalent than firearm suicide in urban counties.[1]

While the prevalence of firearm suicide may be lower in urban counties, the demographics follow the same pattern as the other parts of the state—with the exception of victim age (**Table 3.5**). Like firearm suicide deaths statewide, male victims make up the majority of deaths at similar levels to rural and suburban counties. White, non-Hispanic individuals have the highest rate of firearm suicide deaths, followed by Black, non-Hispanic individuals. Young adults age 20 to 24 had the highest rate of firearm suicide, which differs from rural and suburban counties where adults 65 and older had the highest rate. The average age of firearm suicide victims in urban counties was notably younger than the average age in rural counties (46 years old urban vs. 52 years old rural). It should be noted

TABLE 3.5. Urban firearm suicide death number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2019-2023

	Number	Percent	Rate
Urban firearm suicide	1,091	100	5.8
Sex			
Male	946	87	10.4
Female	145	13	1.5
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	6	1	-
Black, non-Hispanic	230	21	4.6
Hispanic	47	4	2.0
Other, non-Hispanic	17	2	-
White, non-Hispanic	787	72	8.0
Age			
10-14	9	1	-
15-19	66	6	5.1
20-24	126	12	9.9
25-29	91	8	6.4
30-34	97	9	6.6
35-44	160	15	6.0
45-54	155	14	6.3
55-64	161	15	7.3
65+	226	21	8.7

Unlike other areas of the state, firearm suicide deaths were less prevalent than firearm homicide deaths in urban counties.

The mean age of urban firearm suicide victims was **46 years old**, which was younger than in rural and suburban counties.

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents. Data for youth under the age of 10 is not reported.
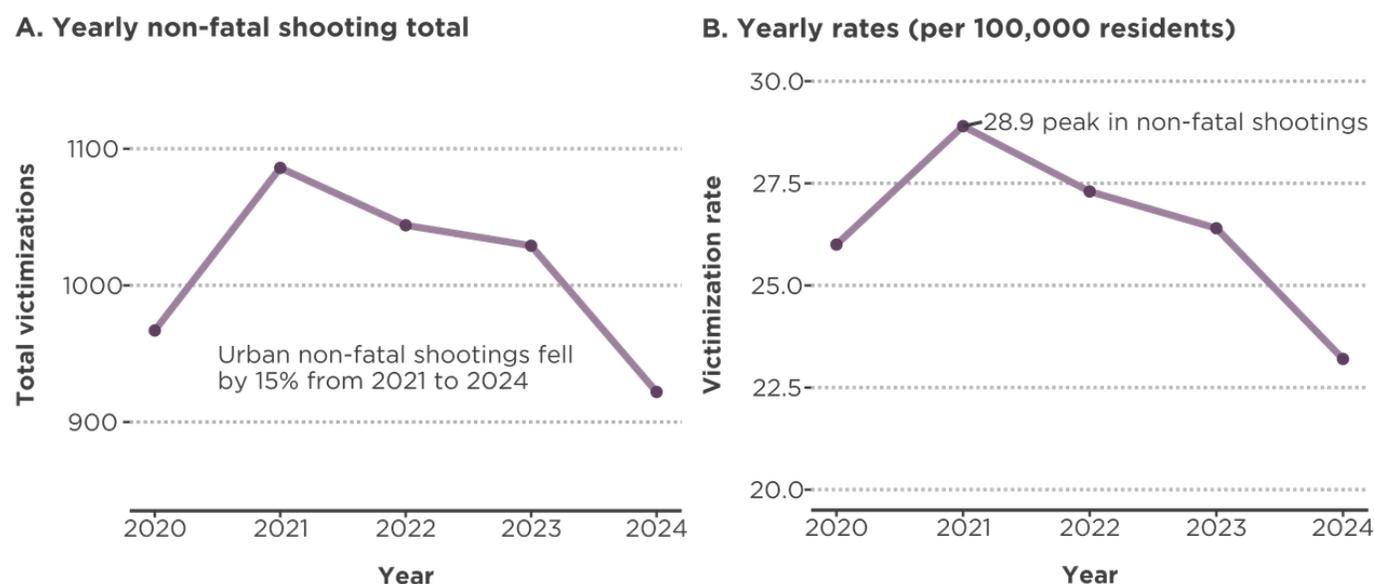
Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

that statewide, young adults age 20 to 24 had the highest firearm suicide rates after older adults. Despite the high rate among 20-24 year-olds, 50% of all urban firearm suicide deaths occur in adults over the age of 45.

Like statewide totals, firearm suicides increased steadily in urban counties between 2014 and 2023 (**Figure 3.14**). The rise is on par with what occurred in rural and suburban counties, as well as what is happening nationwide. In 2023, the five-year firearm suicide rate was lower in urban counties (5.8 deaths per 100,000) than rural (11.0 deaths per 100,000) and suburban (9.6 deaths per 100,000) counties.

FIGURE 3.14. Urban firearm suicide death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
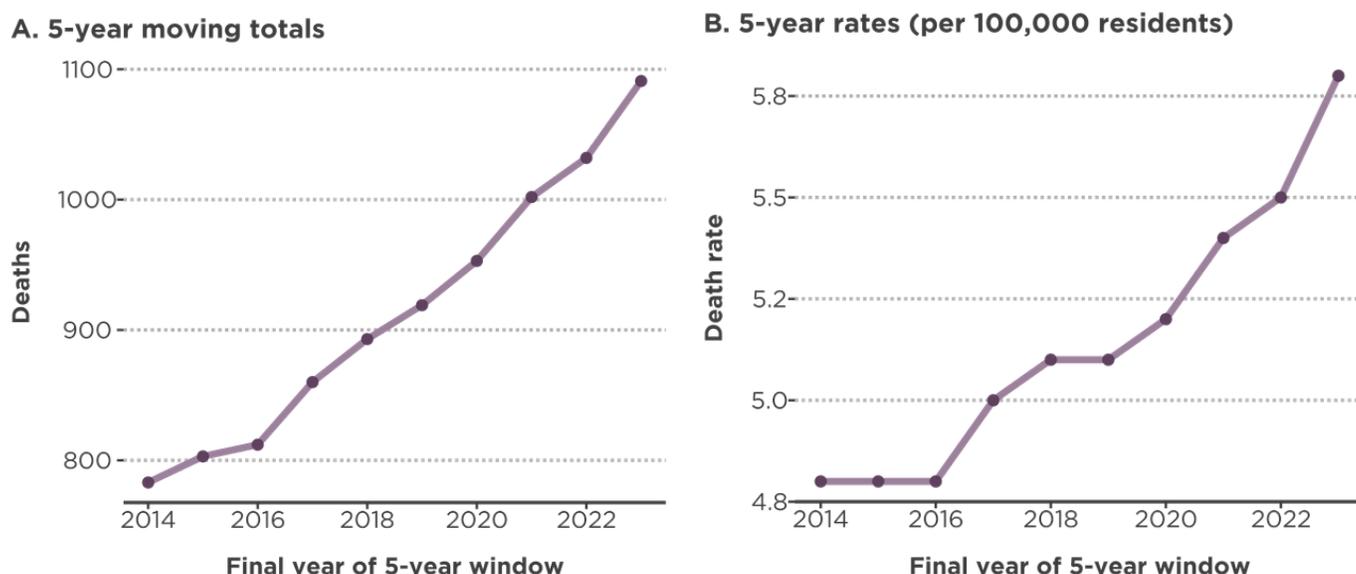
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

[1] Although the time periods differ for firearm suicide and homicide differ because of data availability, additional data from NC-VDRS add evidence to the finding that firearm suicides were less prevalent in urban counties than firearm homicide. NC-VDRS also includes information about firearm homicides, using a wider definition of homicide than NIBRS (which is why NC-VDRS homicide numbers are slightly higher than NIBRS homicide numbers in same-year comparisons). Comparing the NC-VDRS firearm homicide numbers to firearm suicide numbers from the same time period (2019-2023) also shows that the total number of firearm homicides exceeded that of firearm suicides in urban counties.

Other Firearm Deaths

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Firearm deaths due to unintentional causes and legal interventions were relatively rare in urban counties between 2019 and 2023, and occurred at slightly lower levels compared to rural counties.

The unintentional firearm death rate in urban counties was 0.24 per 100,000 in 2019-2023 (**Table 3.6**), compared to 0.26 in rural counties and 0.22 in suburban counties. Unintentional firearm deaths rose in urban counties after 2016. The five-year total increased from 11 in 2016 to 45 in 2023, an increase of over 300%. Urban counties experienced more of a straightforward increase in unintentional firearm deaths during this time period, compared to suburban and rural counties, where totals fluctuated more year-to-year.

The legal intervention death rate in urban areas was 0.26 per 100,000 in 2019-2023 (**Table 3.6**), compared to 0.35 in rural counties and 0.33 in suburban counties. This was also one of the only forms of violence where urban counties had the lowest recorded rate. The five-year legal intervention death total fluctuated year to year, but overall rose between 2015 and 2023 (**Figure 3.16**). In 2011-2015, legal interventions led to a low of 31 firearm deaths in urban counties. In 2019-2023, legal interventions led to a high of 49 deaths, a 58% increase between 2014 and 2023. Legal intervention firearm deaths started at similar levels in urban, rural, and suburban counties in 2014, and increased in all

TABLE 3.6. Urban unintentional and legal intervention firearm death total and rate per 100,000, 2019-2023

Urban counties	Number	Rate
Unintentional firearm deaths	45	0.24
Legal intervention firearm deaths	49	0.26

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Rates were not calculated for counts <20 at which point rates become unstable. No demographics were analyzed due to the small number of cases. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

FIGURE 3.15. Urban unintentional firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
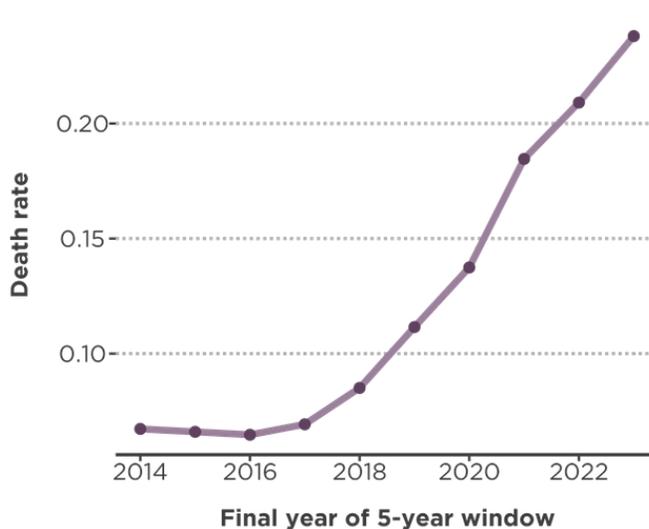
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Other Firearm Deaths
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 3.16. Urban legal intervention firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
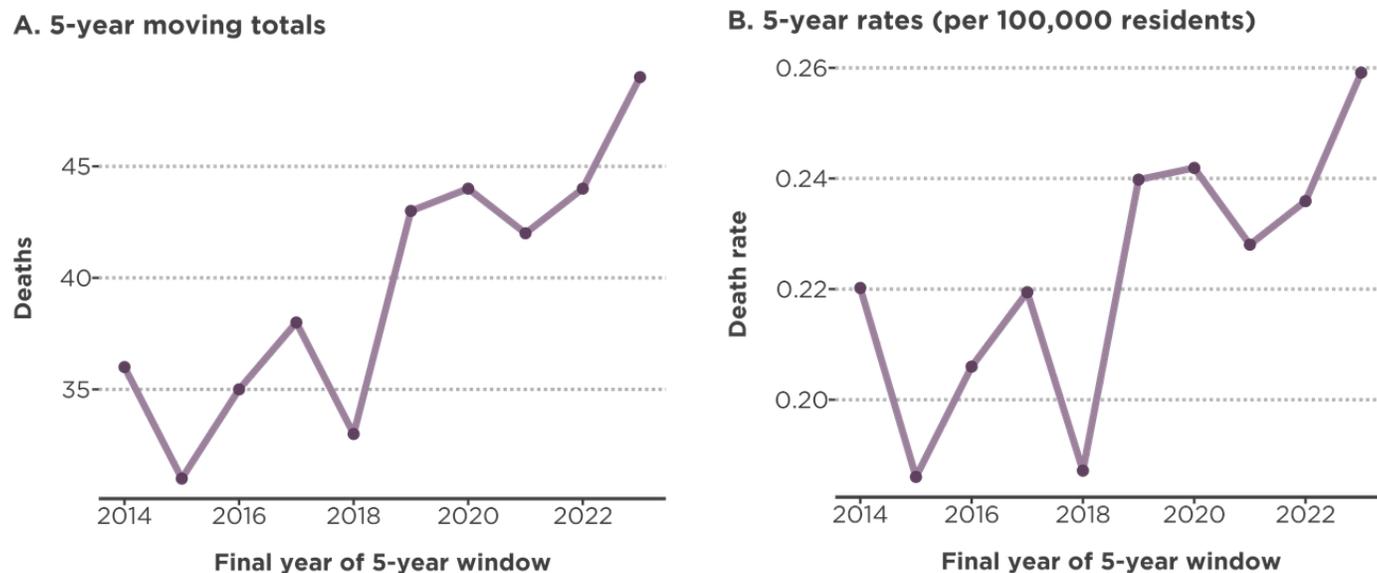
A. 5-year moving totals

B. 5-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

regions between 2014 and 2023. Rural counties experienced the largest increase in legal intervention deaths. In all regions, the highest five-year count and rate of legal intervention firearm deaths in this period was recorded in 2023. That was a total of 49 deaths in urban counties, 65 deaths in rural counties, and 51 deaths in suburban counties.

IN FOCUS: What counts as urban?

Just like rural, what counts as "urban" can be tricky to define. The NC Rural Center's county classifications, which are based on county population density, provide the cleanest way to define urban areas across datasets. However, as we noted, many urban counties contain suburban communities and farmland. It is possible that including those areas artificially lowers urban county violence rates. Using a secondary classification method— classifying jurisdictions by population size into large cities, small/medium cities, suburban cities/towns, large towns, small towns, and truly rural areas (see Appendix B)—we compared rates of firearm homicide in urban counties to rates limited to the jurisdictional boundaries of NC's largest cities (200,000+ residents) and small/medium cities (50,000 to <200,000 residents). Around 31% of North Carolina's population lives in these cities.

Figure 3.17 compares the 2020-2024 rates of firearm homicide in urban counties as a whole, large cities, and small/medium cities. Urban counties as a whole had a five-year rate of 7.0 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents. Large cities in North Carolina had a higher rate of 10.3 firearm homicides per 100,000. Small/medium cities were closer to the overall urban county rate at 6.5 firearm homicides per 100,000. This puts large cities on par with the small towns, which had 10.4 firearm homicides per 100,000. However, large towns exceed the rate of all cities at 12.2 firearm homicides per 100,000. Truly rural areas and suburbs had the lowest rates of firearm homicide in this classification system.

These comparisons provide further evidence that firearm violence remains a pressing issue in urban areas <u>and</u> that towns in rural areas are facing similar or higher levels of firearm violence. The single-year rates in Figure 3.17 shows how levels of violence varied throughout the study period. Both large and small/medium cities had declines similar to the one detected in urban county-level data, though the decline in small/medium cities began earlier. Preliminary 2025 data (not shown here), indicate that the decline in small/ medium cities may have leveled off in 2025. All areas had declines in firearm homicide in the first six months of 2025 except for small/medium cities.

FIGURE 3.17. Firearm homicide by different definitions of urban, 2020-2024
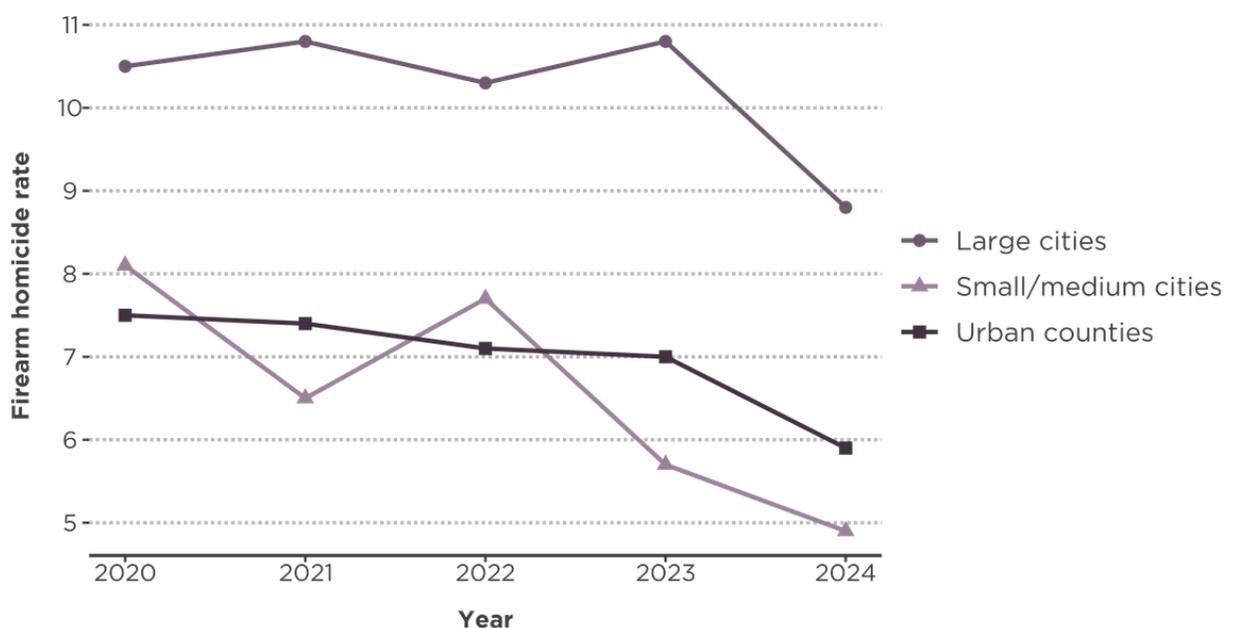
Source: NIBRS. Figure displays single-year firearm homicides rates per 100,000 residents.

Chapter 4
Suburban Firearm Violence

Key Findings

Suburban counties had the lowest rates of most forms of firearm violence, with suicide as a notable exception.
- Suburban counties had the lowest rates of firearm homicide, other firearm crime, non-fatal shootings, and unintentional firearm death.
- Suburban counties had the second-highest firearm suicide rate, just behind rural counties. Some demographic groups experienced higher firearm suicide rates in suburban counties than rural or urban counties (see demographic findings).
- Unintentional firearm deaths and legal intervention firearm deaths were relatively rare. Suburban counties had the lowest rate of unintentional firearm deaths.

Notable trends in suburban firearm homicide and other firearm-related crime:
- **Handguns were the firearm type of choice in the majority of firearm homicides** and other firearm crime. Still handgun usage was lower in suburban counties than urban counties.
- **Automatic weapons were used more often in suburban counties** than other counties, though they still accounted for only a small percentage of homicides and other firearm-related crimes
- Less than half of victimizations included information on victim-offender relationship. Of cases with data, **most firearm homicide offenders were known but not family OR intimate partners**. Of cases with data, **most other firearm crime offenders were known but not family OR strangers**.
- In suburban counties, **more firearm homicide and other firearm crime victims lived outside the jurisdiction where the offense took place** compared to urban counties.
- Like rural counties, **most victimizations in suburban counties occurred in homes and residences**. The proportion of victimizations occurring in stores and commercial spaces looked more similar to urban counties.

Demographic findings for suburban counties:
- **Black, non-Hispanic individuals had the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence in suburban counties** (homicides, other firearm crime, and non-fatal shootings).
- **Young adults in suburban counties age 20-24 and 25-29 faced the highest rates of interpersonal firearm violence**. The average age of firearm homicide victims was 33.
- Like the rest of the state, **white, non-Hispanic suburban individuals had the highest rate of firearm suicide**, though they experienced relatively low levels of interpersonal violence.
- **The Black, non-Hispanic firearm suicide rate was higher in suburban counties** than urban or rural counties.
- **Older adults, particularly adults 65+, faced the highest rate of firearm suicide**. The firearm suicide rate for adults 65+ was highest in suburban counties, followed closely by rural counties. The average age of firearm suicide victims in suburban counties was 48.

Firearm Homicide
SOURCE: NIBRS

Between 2020 and 2024, suburban/regional city counties experienced the lowest rate of firearm homicide in North Carolina (referred throughout as suburban counties).[1] Suburban counties recorded 746 firearm homicides for a rate of 4.7 homicides per 100,000 residents, compared to 7.0 homicides per 100,000 in rural and urban counties. The In Focus Feature (**Figure 4.17**) will show that even when you narrow suburban counties to the towns and cities surrounding urban areas, the suburbs of North Carolina have some of the lowest rates of firearm violence in the state (see p. 74 for more on how we defined "suburban"). **Table 4.1** presents the demographic breakdown of firearm homicide in suburban counties.

Although suburban counties may have lower overall rates of firearm homicide, men and Black, non-Hispanic suburban individuals still faced the highest rates of violence. We do not see the same elevated risk for Hispanic individuals in suburban counties that we saw in urban counties. Unlike in rural or urban counties, young adults age 25 to 29 experienced

TABLE 4.1. Suburban firearm homicide victimization number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Suburban counties	746	100	4.7
Sex			
Male	592	79	7.6
Female	150	20	1.9
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	-	-	-
Black, non-Hispanic	488	65	18.1†
Hispanic	47	6	2.5
Other, non-Hispanic	12	2	-
White, non-Hispanic	199	27	1.9‡
Age			
0-14	20	3	0.7
15-19	100	13	8.9
20-24	128	17	10.7
25-29	113	15	10.9
30-34	102	14	9.7
35-44	137	18	6.8
45-54	72	10	3.6
55-64	39	5	2.0
65+*	28	4	-

As in the rest of the state, **Black, non-Hispanic individuals** had the highest victimization rate.

The mean age of suburban firearm homicide victims was **33 years old**, which is older than urban counties but younger than rural counties.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
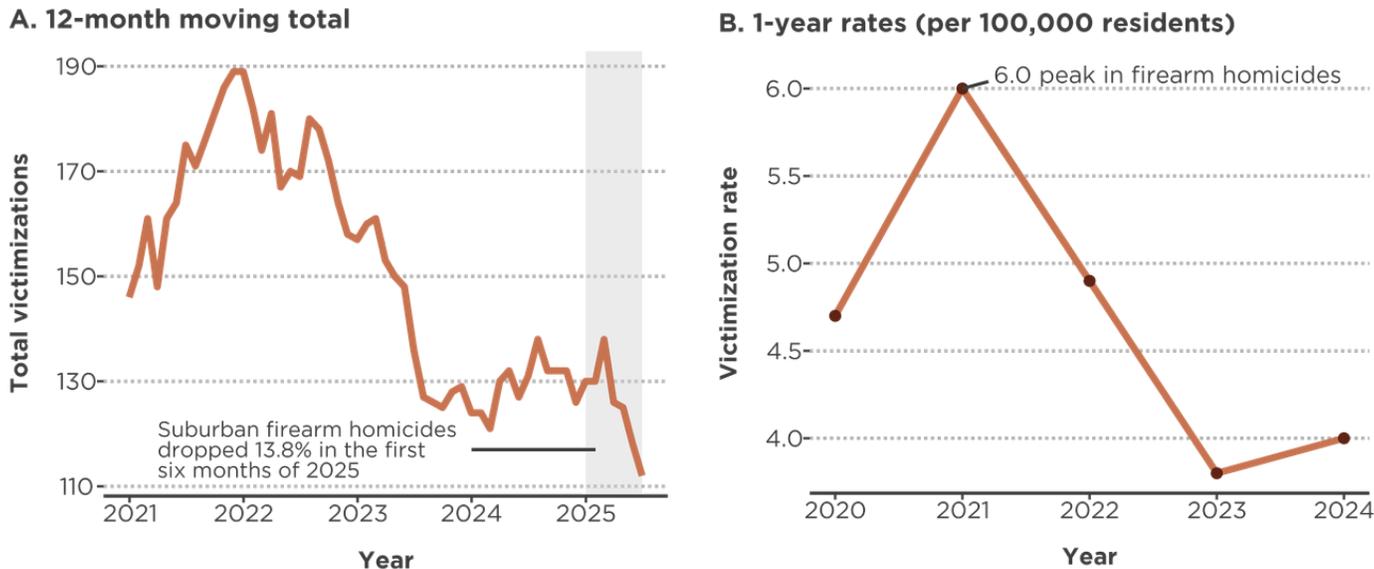† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
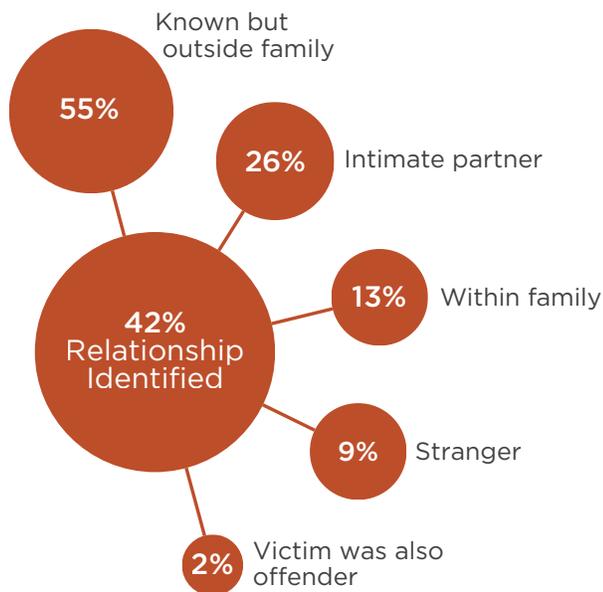‡ Comparison group.

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 4.1. Suburban firearm homicide total and rates over time, 2020-2024

A. 12-month moving total

Suburban firearm homicides dropped 13.8% in the first six months of 2025

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

6.0 peak in firearm homicides

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data from 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

FIGURE 4.2. Relationship of victim to offender

Known but outside family 55%

Intimate partner 26%

42% Relationship Identified

Within family 13%

Stranger 9%

Victim was also offender 2%

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

the highest rate of firearm homicide, followed very closely by young adults age 20 to 24.

Between 2020 and 2024, suburban firearm homicides followed a trajectory more similar to rural counties than urban counties. Firearm homicides rose through the end of 2021 and then declined as fast as they rose over the next two years (**Figure 4.1**). Where rural firearm homicides leveled off between 2022 and 2024, suburban firearm homicides continued falling through 2023 and then experienced a slight uptick in 2024. Preliminary data from the first six months of 2025 indicate that suburban firearm homicides started to drop again. Within the study period, suburban firearm homicide rates peaked in 2021 at 6.0 per 100,000, which was lower than both the urban peak at 7.5 in 2020 and the rural peak at 8.2 in 2021.

Similar to urban and rural counties, the relationship between the victim and offender was identified in less than half of

Firearm Homicide

SOURCE: NIBRS

firearm homicides (**Figure 4.2**). Out of cases where a relationship was recorded, the majority (55%) of identified offenders were known to victims, but outside of their family, followed by intimate partners (26%). Offenders were less likely to be identified as strangers in suburban counties, compared to urban counties.[2]

In suburban counties, more firearm homicide victims lived outside the jurisdiction where they were killed compared to urban counties (**Figure 4.3**). [2] Twenty-two percent of victims were not local residents versus 14% in urban and 15% in rural counties.

Handguns were less likely to be used in firearm homicides than urban counties (62%) but more likely than rural counties (45%)(**Figure 4.4**).[2] The automatic weapon findings from suburban counties are particularly notable. Though still only used in a minority of cases, automatic weapons were used in 5.5% of firearm homicides in suburban counties (**Figure 4.5**). That is a higher level of automatic weapon usage than both rural (4%) and urban (2%) counties.

The location of suburban firearm homicides (**Figure 4.6**) aligned more with

FIGURE 4.3. Percent of victims living in jurisdiction

Unknown 2%
Non-local resident 22%
Resident 76%
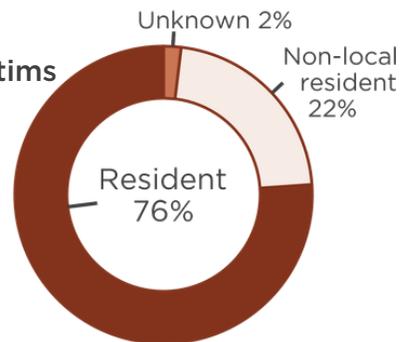
FIGURE 4.4. Percent handgun

Handgun 54%
Other firearm 48%
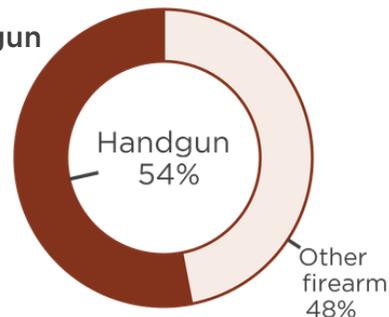
FIGURE 4.5. Percent automatic
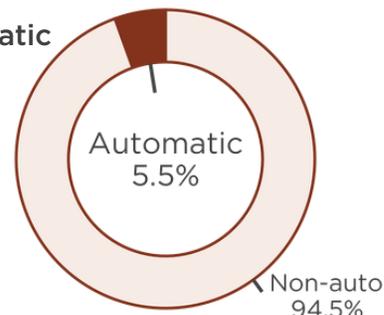
Automatic 5.5%
Non-auto 94.5%

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent firearm totals to over 100% as the categories are not mutually exclusive.

FIGURE 4.6. Location of firearm homicides in suburban counties, 2020-2024

56%	27%	10%
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
7%	<1%	0%
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison
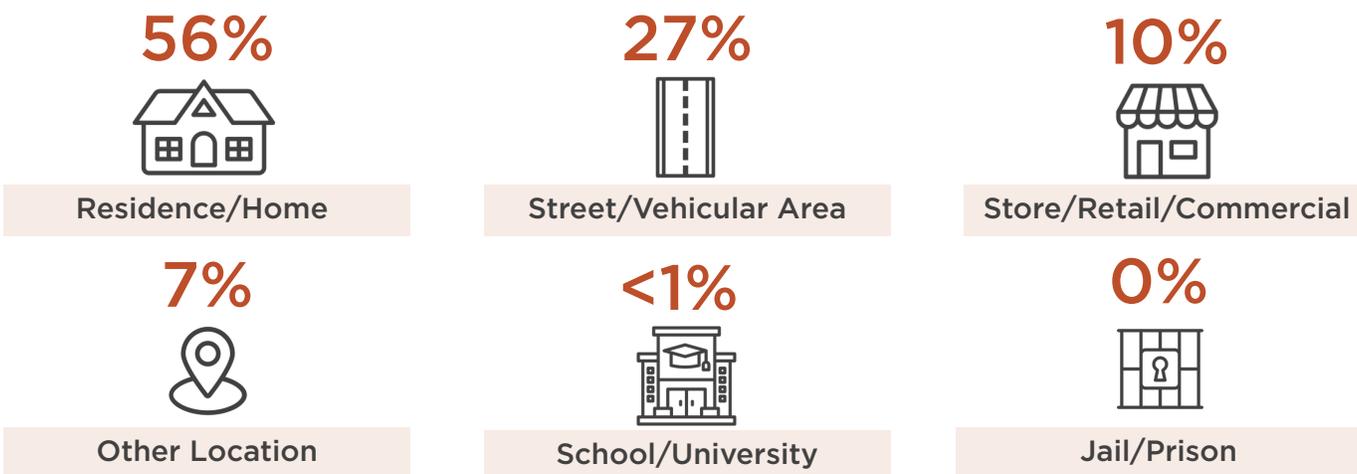
Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Firearm Homicide
SOURCE: NIBRS

rural counties than urban. Most firearm homicides occurred in homes and residences. This was the most common location for firearm homicides across all regions of the state, though urban counties had the smallest percentage (only 41% occurred in homes). Corresponding with this finding, fewer firearm homicides take place in street/public vehicular areas in suburban and rural counties (both 27%) than in urban counties (37%). Slightly more firearm homicides occurred in stores and other public commercial spaces in suburban counties (10%) compared to rural counties (7%).

[1] As a reminder, the designation of suburban/regional city comes from the classification of North Carolina counties developed by the NC Rural Center (https://www.ncruralcenter.org/how-we-define-rural/). See Appendix B for a full definition and list of suburban/regional city counties.
[2] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

Suburban counties experienced the lowest rate of other firearm crime from 2020 to 2024 at 151 victimizations per 100,000 residents (342 per 100,000 urban and 159 per 100,000 rural). This finding mirrors suburban firearm homicide rates, which were also lower than other regions of the state.

Table 4.2 details the demographic breakdown of other firearm related crime in suburban counties. Similar to other regions, more women were victims of other firearm crime compared to firearm homicide, where men are the predominant victims (79% of suburban firearm homicide victims were men). Also similar to other regions, Black, non-Hispanic residents in suburban counties make up the majority of victims of firearm-related crime. Black, non-Hispanic residents also had the highest victimization rate of all racial/ethnic groups in suburban counties. American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic residents had the second-highest rate of victimization despite making up the smallest percentage of victims. Consistent with findings from urban and rural counties, young adults age 20-24 experienced the highest rate of other firearm crime, followed by the age groups

TABLE 4.2. Suburban other reported firearm crime number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Suburban counties	24,021	100	151
Sex			
Male	13,398	58	171
Female	9,761	42	121
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	127	1	171†
Black, non-Hispanic	13,230	57	491†
Hispanic	1,717	7	92†
Other/Unknown, non-Hispanic	463	2	55†
White, non-Hispanic	7,681	33	74‡
Age			
0-14	2,222	10	76
15-19	2,909	13	260
20-24	3,537	15	296
25-29	2,811	12	271
30-34	2,654	11	252
35-44	4,004	17	199
45-54	2,452	11	123
55-64	1,549	7	79
65+*	935	4	-

The mean age of other firearm crime victims in suburban counties was **32 years old**, the same as rural counties and one year older than urban counties.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
* This count only includes victims ages 65-97. No rate was calculated
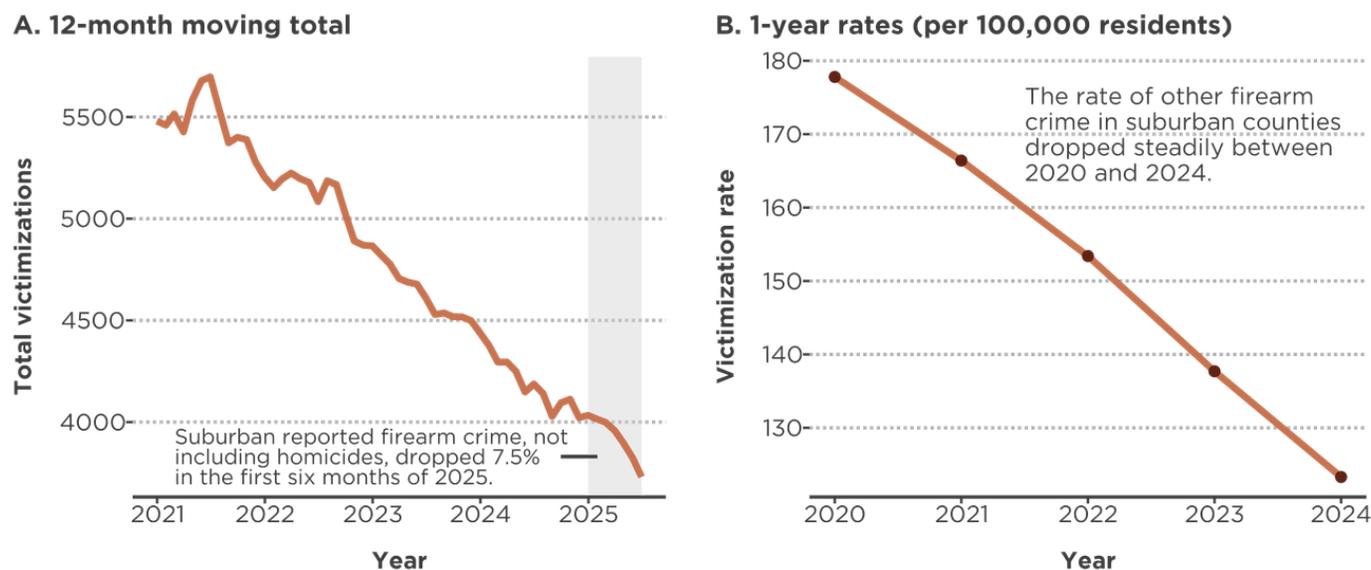† Difference with comparison group is significant at a 95% confidence level.
‡ Comparison group.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 4.7. Suburban other firearm crime total and rates over time, 2020-2024

A. 12-month moving total

Suburban reported firearm crime, not including homicides, dropped 7.5% in the first six months of 2025.

B. 1-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

The rate of other firearm crime in suburban counties dropped steadily between 2020 and 2024.

Source: NIBRS. Figure A plots the monthly moving total of the number of victimizations that occur in the prior 12-month period (e.g., the 12-month period for April 2023 would include all victimizations between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023). Figure A contains preliminary data from Jan. 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. NIBRS data for 2025 may shift slightly when finalized. For that reason, Figure B does not provide a rate for 2025.

immediately above and below them.

Other firearm crime in suburban counties declined steadily between 2020 and 2024 (**Figure 4.7**). Similar to urban counties, each year saw fewer victims than the preceding year. However, suburban counties had the most consistent declines each year in total victims and one-year rates compared to other counties.

Looking at these cases by offense type (**Table 4.3**), fewer aggravated assaults in suburban counties involved firearms (47%) compared to rural (52%) and urban counties (64%). Still,

TABLE 4.3. Suburban other reported firearm crime by offense type

Offense w/ firearm	Total	Percent firearm[a]	Percent OFC[b]
Aggravated Assault	18,932	46.9	78.8
Robbery	4,393	51.0	18.3
Kidnapping/Abduction	545	22.3	2.3
Negligent Manslaughter	25	21.7	0.1
Human Trafficking	0	-	0.0
Sexual Assault/Rape	111	1.2	0.5
Extortion/Blackmail	15	0.9	0.1
Total: Other firearm crime	24,021	13.2	100

Fewer aggravated assaults in suburban counties involved firearms compared to both urban and rural counties.

Altogether, fewer of these offenses in rural counties involved firearms than both urban and rural counties.

Source: NIBRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. a The percentage of victimizations for a given offense type that involved firearms. b Each offense type's share of total other firearm crime (OFC) victimizations, 2020-2024.

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

almost half of all reported aggravated assaults involved firearms. Across all these offense types, fewer reported crimes involved firearms in suburban counties (13%) compared to rural (16%) and urban counties (20%).

Handguns were used in a majority (62%) of all reported firearm-related crimes excluding homicides (**Figure 4.8**). Handgun usage in firearm-related crimes was higher in suburban counties than rural counties (48%) but lower than urban counties (70%).[1]

Automatic weapon usage in other firearm crimes was again higher in suburban counties than in urban and rural counties (**Figure 4.9**).[1] This is consistent with the higher use of automatic weapons in suburban firearm homicides. Though overall usage is still rare, 5% of victimizations involved automatic weapons in suburban counties compared to 3% in both rural and urban counties.

FIGURE 4.8. Percent handgun

Handgun 62%

Other firearm 41%
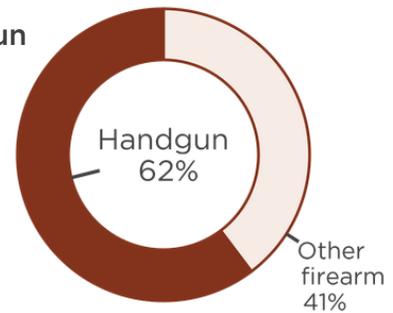
FIGURE 4.9. Percent automatic
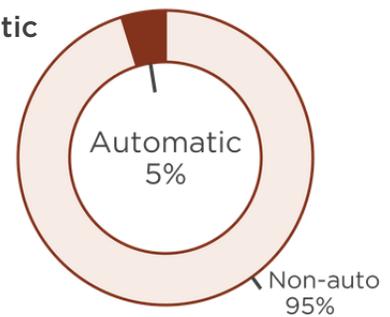
Automatic 5%

Non-auto 95%

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may total to over 100% due to rounding. Because multiple types of firearms may be used in the same incident, percent firearm totals to over 100%.

Like suburban firearm homicides, the majority of other firearm-related crime in suburban counties occurred in residences/homes (**Figure 4.10**). This aligns with the location of the majority of other firearm crime in the rest of the state. Like urban counties, more other firearm crime occurred in stores and public commercial areas (15% suburban, 16% urban, 11% rural).

FIGURE 4.10. Location of other reported firearm crime in suburban counties, 2020-2024
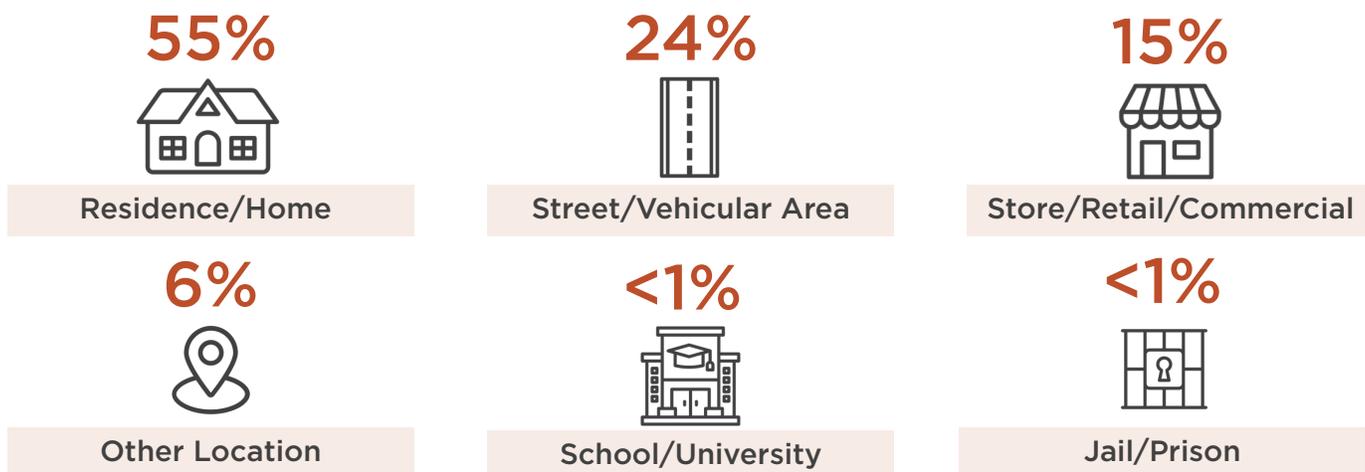
55%	24%	15%
Residence/Home	Street/Vehicular Area	Store/Retail/Commercial
6%	<1%	<1%
Other Location	School/University	Jail/Prison

Source: NIBRS. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

SUBURBAN

Other Firearm Crime

SOURCE: NIBRS

FIGURE 4.11.
Percent of victims who
lived in jurisdiction
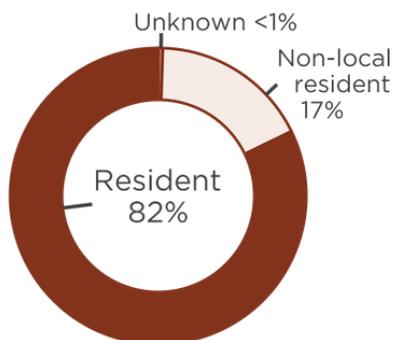
Unknown <1%

Non-local
resident
17%

Resident
82%

Source: NIBRS. Resident status refers to the victim's residence in the reporting jurisdiction, and is not related to immigration status. Fig. 4.11. excludes data from one large urban jurisdiction that does not record resident status.

FIGURE 4.12. Relationship of victim to offender
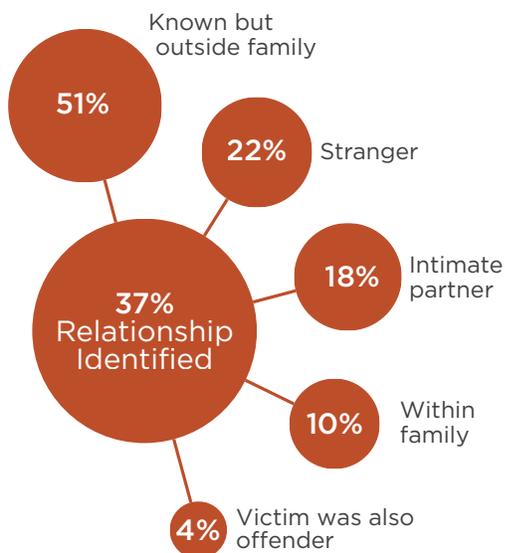
Known but
outside family

51%

22% Stranger

37%
Relationship
Identified

18% Intimate
partner

10% Within
family

4% Victim was also
offender

Source: NIBRS. The center bubble shows the percentage of firearm homicide victimizations in which a victim-offender relationship was recorded. The outer bubbles show the percentage distribution of relationship types among cases where the relationship was identified. Outer percentages may total to above 100 because some victimizations involve multiple offenders.

Consistent with urban and rural counties, most victims of other firearm crimes were residents of the jurisdiction of where the crime occurred (**Figure 4.11**). However, just like firearm homicide, a slightly higher percentage of firearm-related crime victims in suburban counties lived outside the jurisdiction where the crime occurred (17% suburban, 14% rural, 13% urban).[1]

For other firearm-related crimes in suburban counties, only 37% of victimizations included information on the relationship between the victim(s) and offender(s) (**Figure 4.12**). This is slightly higher than the availability of relationship information for other firearm crimes in rural (35%) and urban (33%) counties. Still, less than half of victimizations included an identified victim-offender relationship.

Out of suburban other firearm crime cases with relationship information, the most common type of victim-offender relationship was someone who was known to the victim, but not in the family (51%). This was also the most commonly reported relationship in rural firearm crime (58%). Urban counties reported strangers as the most common victim-offender relationship (43%). For suburban counties, strangers were the second-most common reported victim-offender relationship for other firearm crime.

[1] Indicates a comparison that was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

Suburban counties had the lowest non-fatal shooting rate at 17.9 shootings per 100,000 residents (**Table 4.4**). This compares to a rate of 26.3 shootings per 100,000 in urban counties and 31.0 shootings per 100,000 in rural counties. Considering this finding alongside suburban firearm homicide and other firearm-related crime, suburban counties consistently had lower levels of interpersonal firearm violence (homicide, other firearm crime, and non-fatal shootings) than other counties. The same was not true for suburban firearm suicide and legal intervention deaths (see following pages).

Similar to rural and urban counties, Black, non-Hispanic individuals made up over half of the victims of non-fatal shootings in suburban counties. Suburban Black, non-Hispanic individuals also had the highest rate of non-fatal shootings. Once again, American Indian/ Alaska Native, non-Hispanic individuals had the second highest non-fatal shooting rate, followed by the White, non-Hispanic individuals. Young adults age 20-24 had the highest non-fatal shooting rate of any age group in suburban counties, consistent with findings throughout this report. This data provides further evidence that people in their 20s— especially 20-24 year-olds—face the highest risk for all types of firearm violence except

TABLE 4.4. Suburban non-fatal shooting ED visit number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2020-2024

	Number	Percent	Rate
Suburban non-fatal shootings	2,842	100	17.9
Sex			
Male	2,362	83	9.0
Female	423	15	1.5
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	20	1	26.9
Black, non-Hispanic	1,488	52	55.2
Hispanic	121	4	6.5
Other, non-Hispanic	73	3	8.6
White, non-Hispanic	1,040	37	10.0
Age			
0-14	97	3	1.0
15-19	456	16	12.7
20-24	562	20	15.6
25-29	423	15	11.9
30-34	327	12	8.9
35-44	420	15	6.1
45-54	242	9	3.6
55-64	125	4	1.8
65+	137	5	1.5

The mean age of other firearm crime victims in suburban counties was **32 years old**, the same as rural counties and two years older than urban counties.
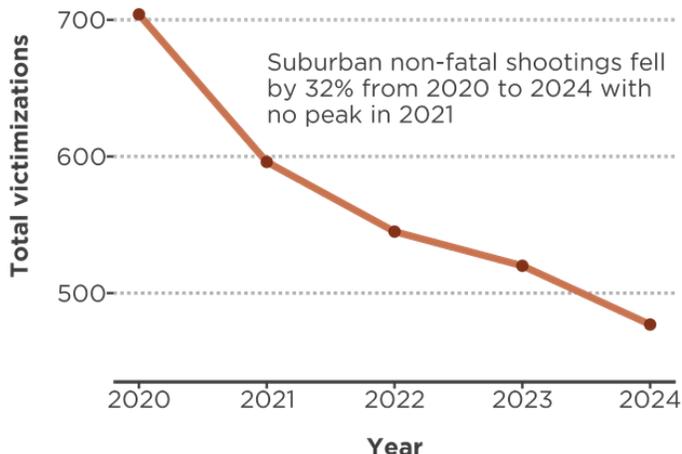
Source: NC DETECT. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding and missing demographic data. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.
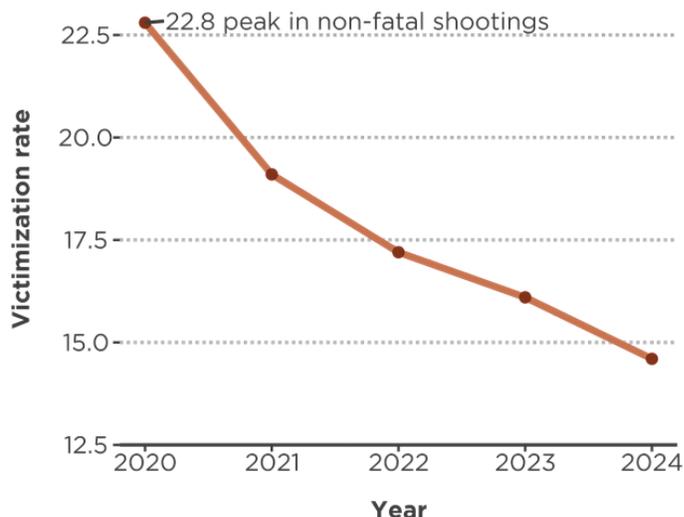
Non-Fatal Shootings

SOURCE: NC DETECT

FIGURE 4.13. Suburban non-fatal shooting numbers and rates over time, 2020-2024

A. Yearly non-fatal shooting total

B. Yearly rates (per 100,000 residents)

Suburban non-fatal shootings fell by 32% from 2020 to 2024 with no peak in 2021

22.8 peak in non-fatal shootings

Source: NC DETECT. Figure A plots the yearly total non-fatal shooting total. Moving monthly totals were not available for NC DETECT data. Data from 2025 was not finalized at the time of this publication.

suicide in suburban counties. The year-to-year changes in suburban non-fatal shootings follows a similar pattern to the decline we saw in other firearm-related suburban crime. **Figure 4.13** shows a steady decline in non-fatal shootings from their peak in 2020 to their lowest point in 2024. Unlike rural and urban counties, suburban counties did not see a spike of victimization in non-fatal shootings in 2021.

The peak rate of non-fatal shootings in suburban counties, 22.8 shootings per 100,000 residents in 2020, was lower than the peak in urban (28.9) and rural counties (35.2) that occurred in 2021. From their peak in 2020, suburban non-fatal shootings fell 32% by 2024, a difference of over 200 fewer shootings.

Firearm Suicide

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Suburban counties experienced more firearm suicides between 2019 and 2023 than firearm homicides between 2020 and 2024 (1,494 suicides vs. 746 homicides).[1] Suburban counties had a higher rate of firearm suicide than urban counties, which runs counter to the findings for most other types of firearm violence. Suburban counties had a firearm suicide rate of 9.6 deaths per 100,000 residents (**Table 4.5**) compared to 5.8 per 100,000 in urban counties and 11.0 per 100,000 in rural counties.

Once again, firearm suicide showed a unique demographic pattern compared to other types of firearm violence. Like rural and urban counties, white, non-Hispanic individuals had the highest firearm suicide rate of any racial/ethnic group in suburban counties. The Black, non-Hispanic firearm suicide rate (5.8 deaths per 100,000 individuals) was higher in suburban counties than both urban (4.6 per 100,000) and rural counties (4.8 per 100,000).

Similar to other counties, people 65 and older had the highest firearm suicide rate compared to any other age group. However, young adults age 20-24 had the second-highest firearm suicide rate. The firearm suicide rate for 20-24-year-olds in suburban

**TABLE 4.5. Suburban firearm suicide death number, percent, and rate per 100,000 by victim demographic, 2019-2023**

	Number	Percent	Rate
Suburban firearm suicide	1,494	100	9.6
Sex			
Male	1,277	85	16.6
Female	217	15	2.7
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	5	0	-
Black, non-Hispanic	153	10	5.8
Hispanic	81	5	4.6
Other, non-Hispanic	24	2	3.0
White, non-Hispanic	1,229	82	11.9
Age			
10-14	17	1	-
15-19	63	4	5.7
20-24	175	12	14.8
25-29	125	8	12.1
30-34	118	8	11.5
35-44	180	12	9.2
45-54	202	14	10.1
55-64	225	15	11.5
65+	389	26	15.6

The firearm suicide rate for **Black, non-Hispanic individuals** was higher in suburban counties than urban or rural counties.

The mean age of firearm suicide victims in suburban counties was **48 years old**, which was older than urban counties but younger than rural counties.

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Rates were not calculated for counts < 20, at which point rates become unstable. Suppressed counts and rates are indicated by '-'. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents. Data for youth under the age of 10 is not reported.

Firearm Suicide
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 4.14. Suburban firearm suicide death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023
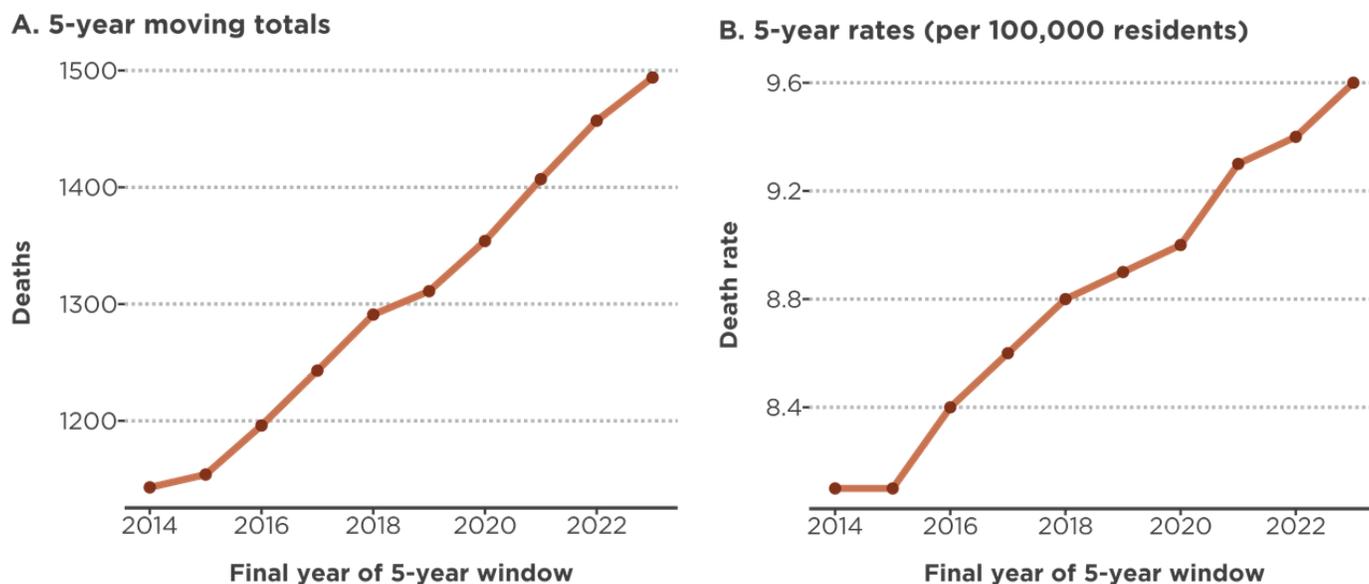
Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

counties (12.1 deaths per 100,000) was higher than urban counties (9.9 per 100,000) and just behind rural counties (12.8 per 100,000). The overall age pattern for firearm suicides looked slightly different in suburban counties versus rural counties, where firearm suicide rates are also high. Rural firearm suicide rates were higher for adults 45 and older, particularly adults 65 and older. In suburban counties, adults 65 and older still had the highest rate of firearm suicide, but adults between 45 and 64 had a lower rate than young adults age 20-24. Urban counties also had a higher rate for 20-24 year-olds than adults between 45 and 64.

Consistent with rural and urban counties, suicides caused by firearms increased from 2014 to 2023 (**Figure 4.14**). Consequently, the five-year rate recorded in 2023 was the highest firearm suicide rate recorded since 2014 for all county types.

[1] Although these time periods differ, additional data from NC-VDRS add evidence to the finding that firearm suicides were more prevalent in suburban counties than firearm homicide. NC-VDRS also includes information about firearm homicides, using a wider definition of homicide than NIBRS (which is why NC-VDRS homicide numbers are slightly higher than NIBRS homicide numbers in same-year comparisons). Comparing the NC-VDRS firearm homicide numbers to firearm suicide numbers from the same time period (2019-2023) also shows that the total number of firearm suicides exceeded that of firearm homicides in suburban counties.

Other Firearm Deaths

SOURCE: NC-VDRS

Firearm deaths due to unintentional causes and legal interventions were relatively rare in suburban counties between 2019 and 2023.

The unintentional firearm death rate in suburban counties was 0.22 per 100,000 in 2019-2023 (**Table 4.6**), compared to 0.26 in rural counties and 0.24 in urban counties, the lowest rate of the three. The five-year total number of unintentional firearm deaths fluctuated between 2014 and 2020, down to a low of 19 unintentional firearm deaths in 2020 (**Figure 4.15**). After 2020, the five-year total of unintentional deaths increased by 90% to 36 deaths in 2022 and then down slightly in 2023. Suburban, rural, and urban counties experienced some level of increase in unintentional firearm deaths over the last four to six years in this window. However, both suburban and urban counties had lower levels at the beginning of the study window in 2014.

The legal intervention death rate in suburban counties was 0.33 per 100,000 residents in 2019-2023 (**Table 4.6**). This is higher than the rate in urban counties (0.26) but lower than the rate in rural counties (0.35). Like rural and urban counties, the five-year total of legal intervention firearm deaths increased between 2014 and 2023. While the increase was more steady in rural counties, totals fluctuated from year to year in suburban counties like they did in urban counties. The lowest five-year total for legal intervention firearm deaths
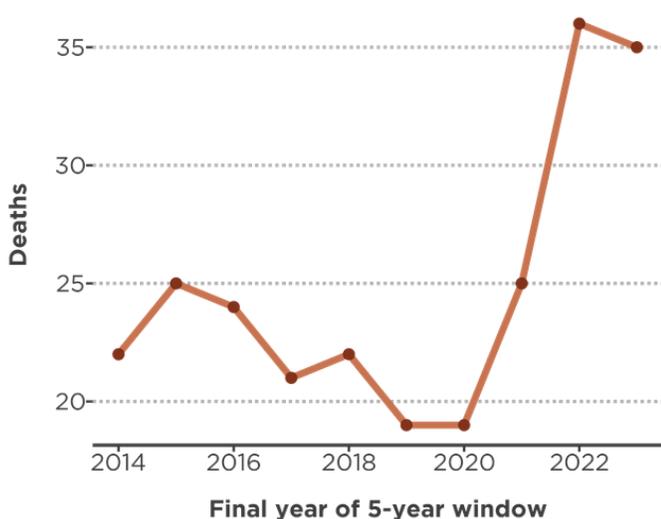
TABLE 4.6. Suburban unintentional and legal intervention firearm death total and rate per 100,000, 2019-2023

Suburban counties	Number	Rate
Unintentional firearm deaths	35	0.22
Legal intervention firearm deaths	51	0.33

Source: NC-VDRS. Note: Rates were not calculated for counts <20 at which point rates become unstable. No demographics were analyzed due to the small number of cases. Rates were calculated per 100,000 residents.

FIGURE 4.15. Suburban unintentional firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023

Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

Other Firearm Deaths
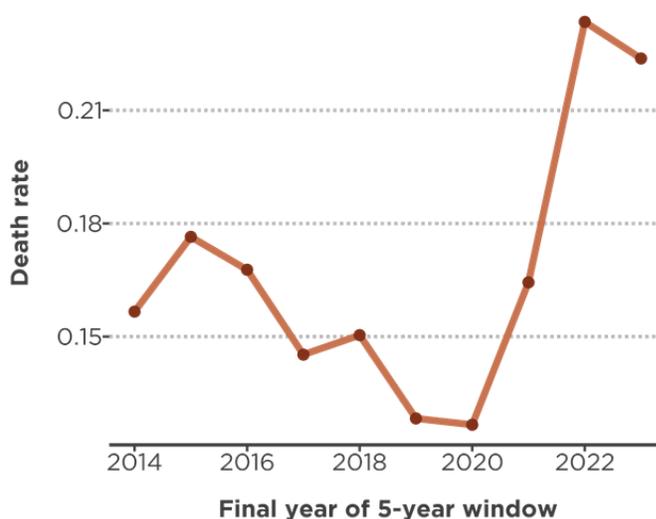
SOURCE: NC-VDRS

FIGURE 4.16. Suburban legal intervention firearm death totals and rates over time, 2014-2023

A. 5-year moving totals

B. 5-year rates (per 100,000 residents)

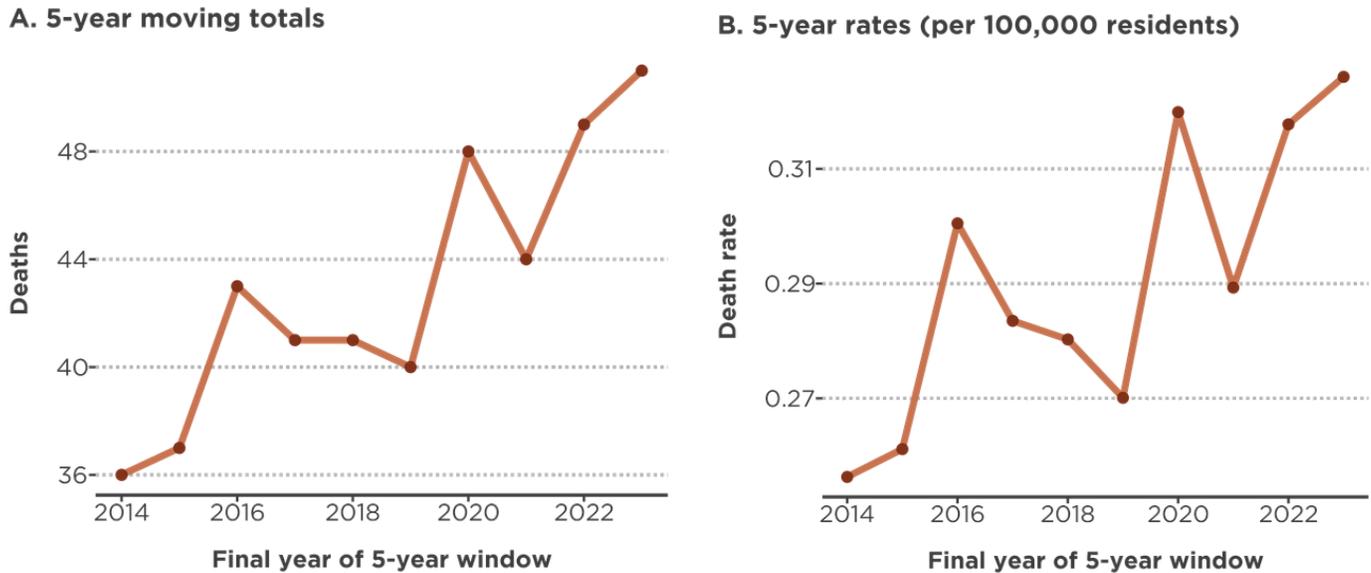Source: NC-VDRS. All NC-VDRS totals and rates are calculated for five-year rolling windows. The x-axis represents the last year in that five-year window (e.g., 2014 represents data from 2010 to 2014). The moving windows show change over time, but smooth out the noise created by year-to-year fluctuations with a smaller sample size.

was in 2014 at 36 total deaths. Urban, rural, and suburban counties all had similar raw totals for legal intervention firearm deaths in 2014. Between 2014 and 2023, the five-year total in suburban counties increased by 40% to 51 legal intervention firearm deaths, slightly higher than the total number in urban counties. Rates followed the same pattern as the total increases.

IN FOCUS: What counts as a suburb?

Most people have an internal idea of what a suburb is—often a community on the outskirts of a major city, typically middle class, with single-family housing. Note that none of these characteristics refer to population size or density, the measures that researchers typically use to distinguish between urban and rural areas. American suburbs have also grown more racially and economically diverse, challenging the stereotype of what a suburb looks like. All of these factors make defining what counts as a suburb in research difficult.

The NC Rural Center uses population density alone for their county classifications, which we rely on for most of this report. That classification groups together counties like Gaston outside of Charlotte and Buncombe, where Asheville is located, into one category of suburban/regional city counties. This clear definition is quite useful for analyses, and many of the counties in this category surround North Carolina's major urban counties. However, there are limitations to putting Asheville and all the more rural towns in those counties in the same group. To test our findings for suburban counties, we used a secondary classification method, classifying jurisdictions into large cities, small/medium cities, large towns, small towns, truly rural areas, and suburban cities/towns. We defined suburban jurisdictions using a combination of population size, county classification, and U.S. Census Bureau designations (see Appendix B for full details). According to this classification, around 14% of North Carolina's population lives in suburbs.

Figure 4.17 compares the firearm homicide rates for each definition of suburban from 2020 to 2024. As the figure shows, single-year rates for these two classification methods aligned quite closely during the study period. The five-year rate for suburban/regional city counties was 4.7 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents compared to 4.6 per 100,000. Across both definitions, suburbs experienced some of the lowest levels of firearm homicide (only rural jurisdictions outside of small/large towns had a lower rate). These findings also show that data from suburban/regional counties served as a good proxy for suburban areas in North Carolina.

FIGURE 4.17 Firearm homicide by different definitions of suburban, 2020-2024
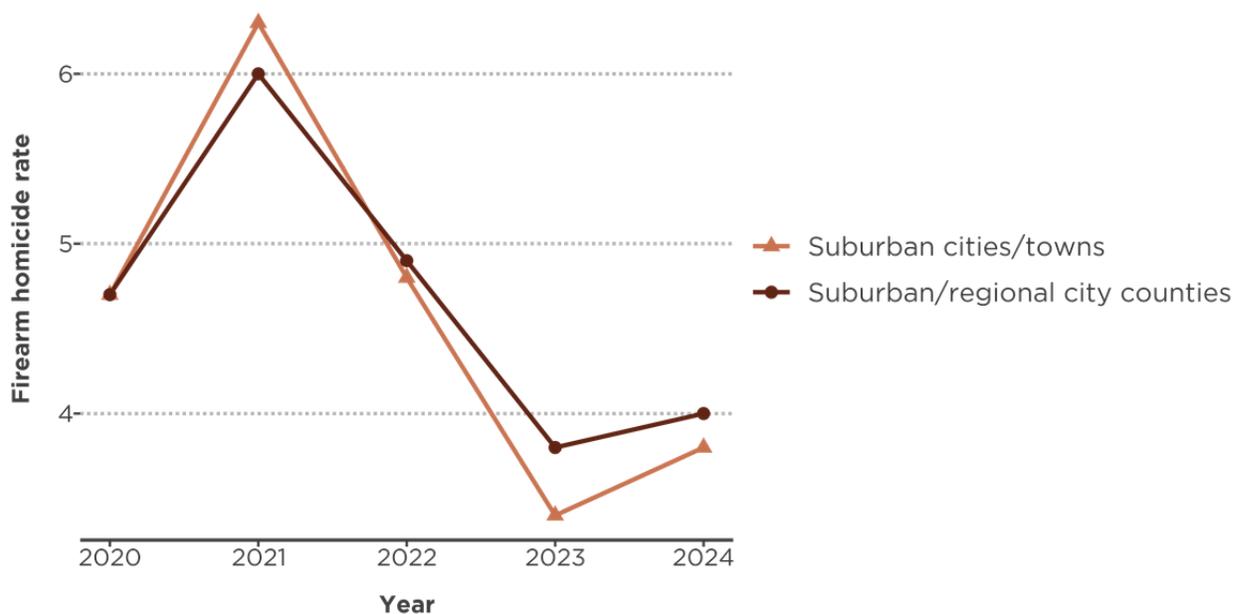
Source: NIBRS. Figure displays single-year firearm homicides rates per 100,000 residents.

County Tables

Five year totals, rates, and average victim age

County	FHom Total	FHom Rate	FHom Avg Age	OFC Total	OFC Rate	NFS Total	NFS Rate	FSuic Total	FSuic Rate	FSuic Avg Age
Alamance	38	4.3	34.9	1967	222.4	203	23	69	7.9	55.3
Alexander	<5	-	-	99	54.4	35	19.2	21	11.5	38.5
Alleghany	<5	-	-	10	-	9	-	11	-	-
Anson*	-	-	-	-	-	108	96.9	10	-	-
Ashe	<5	-	-	41	30.4	17	-	30	22.3	55.4
Avery	<5	-	-	33	37.3	12	-	13	-	-
Beaufort*	-	-	-	-	-	57	25.6	20	8.9	49.5
Bertie	16	-	-	152	177.1	93	108.3	<5	-	-
Bladen	29	19.6	38.6	264	178.6	57	38.6	12	-	-
Brunswick	5	-	-	411	53.9	55	7.2	85	11.5	59.3
Buncombe	50	3.6	31	1623	118.3	194	14.1	138	10.2	51.5
Burke	12	-	-	218	49.7	56	12.8	52	11.8	50.4
Cabarrus	37	3.1	30.6	893	75.6	189	16	80	6.9	48.9
Caldwell	17	-	-	174	43.2	60	14.9	61	15.1	48.2
Camden	<5	-	-	22	40.3	7	-	6	-	-
Carteret	5	-	-	144	41.6	11	-	44	12.8	54
Caswell	6	-	-	20	17.9	25	22.3	11	-	-
Catawba	39	4.8	36.8	1033	126.3	110	13.4	88	10.9	50.3
Chatham	18	-	-	312	77.9	28	7	39	10	45.6
Cherokee	<5	-	-	153	103.5	9	-	36	24.6	55.1
Chowan	6	-	-	131	189.4	50	72.3	<5	-	-
Clay	<5	-	-	15	-	<5	-	8	-	-
Cleveland	29	5.7	35.8	1074	212.7	216	42.8	56	11.2	47.5
Columbus*	-	-	-	-	-	125	49.9	32	12.5	46.7
Craven	31	6	41.9	596	116.2	140	27.3	59	11.5	50
Cumberland	193	11.4	31.2	7091	418.9	457	27	186	11	40.7
Currituck	<5	-	-	61	39.9	<5	-	19	-	-
Dare	<5	-	-	81	42.8	12	-	22	11.7	49.4
Davidson	33	3.8	35	615	71.1	166	19.2	104	12.2	48.1
Davie	12	-	-	164	74.3	37	16.8	16	-	-
Duplin	27	10.9	32.3	242	98.1	96	38.9	30	11.8	51.1
Durham	194	11.7	30.9	7306	439.7	680	40.9	76	4.6	46.2
Edgecombe	48	19.7	33	1248	512.1	250	102.6	19	-	-
Forsyth	166	8.5	32.9	8851	453.9	633	32.5	161	8.3	50
Franklin	14	-	-	357	96	63	16.9	55	15.2	48.9
Gaston	81	6.9	32.9	2215	188.6	308	26.2	127	11	52.2
Gates	<5	-	-	20	38.6	6	-	8	-	-
Graham*	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	5	-	-
Granville	15	-	-	415	136.3	113	37.1	45	14.8	52.9
Greene	15	-	-	93	90.8	25	24.4	6	-	-

Note: All rates are 5-year rates calculated per 100,000 residents. Rates are not calculated for counts less than 20 at which point they become unstable. Suppressed counts are indicated by -. * Indicates the county had less than 80% population coverage in NIBRS and firearm homicide (FHom) and other firearm crime (OFC) data are suppressed (Source: NIBRS, 2020-2024). Non-fatal shooting (NFS) data source: NC DETECT (2020-2024). Firearm suicide (FSuic) data source: NC-VDRS (2019-2023).

County Tables

Five year totals, rates, and average victim age

County	FHom Total	FHom Rate	FHom Avg Age	OFC Total	OFC Rate	NFS Total	NFS Rate	FSuic Total	FSuic Rate	FSuic Avg Age
Guilford	298	10.9	33.9	10572	385.9	994	36.3	187	6.9	46.1
Halifax	56	23.5	34.5	762	319.7	244	102.4	26	10.8	63.2
Harnett	41	5.9	-	1072	154.1	124	17.8	73	10.6	50.3
Haywood	7	-	-	129	41.2	44	14	41	13.1	49.2
Henderson	10	-	-	162	27.3	39	6.6	76	12.9	50.5
Hertford	34	34.2	31.9	209	210	106	106.5	12	-	-
Hoke	14	-	-	543	201.7	53	19.7	23	8.5	45.9
Hyde*	-	-	-	-	-	<5	-	<5	-	-
Iredell	28	2.8	37.1	1263	128.5	181	18.4	108	11.3	51.5
Jackson	<5	-	-	115	52.5	39	17.8	22	10.1	45
Johnston	22	1.9	25.1	646	55.2	134	11.4	82	7.3	49.5
Jones*	-	-	-	-	-	20	43	6	-	-
Lee	27	8.2	-	224	68.1	51	15.5	29	9	49.5
Lenoir*	-	-	-	-	-	115	41.9	23	8.4	47.6
Lincoln	5	-	-	307	66.2	66	14.2	47	10.4	50.5
Macon	5	-	-	37	19.5	39	20.6	36	19.3	55.1
Madison	<5	-	-	12	-	26	23.8	17	-	-
Martin	9	-	-	262	242.1	11	-	10	-	-
McDowell	9	-	-	85	37.9	64	28.6	25	11.1	55.4
Mecklenburg	453	7.8	29.4	29054	503.2	2073	35.9	292	5.1	43.3
Mitchell*	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	12	-	-
Montgomery	24	18.5	41.9	248	190.7	47	36.1	17	-	-
Moore	13	-	-	393	74.9	64	12.2	58	11.2	53.4
Nash	37	7.7	32.2	1163	241.7	210	43.7	44	9.2	48.7
New Hanover	62	5.3	-	1661	141.2	135	11.5	107	9.2	48.6
Northampton	13	-	-	131	154.7	91	107.5	13	-	-
Onslow	38	3.7	-	842	81	78	7.5	137	13.4	38.4
Orange	25	3.3	-	687	91.8	73	9.8	30	4	53.9
Pamlico	<5	-	-	38	61.3	12	-	6	-	-
Pasquotank	25	12.2	29.9	313	153.3	118	57.8	10	-	-
Pender	6	-	-	263	80.2	49	15	36	11.2	51.5
Perquimans	<5	-	-	71	107.2	29	43.8	5	-	-
Person	17	-	-	370	187.1	76	38.4	23	11.7	59.3
Pitt	61	6.9	33.9	1869	211	284	32.1	70	7.9	42.9
Polk	<5	-	-	24	24.1	5	-	18	-	-
Randolph	13	-	-	461	63	144	19.7	76	10.5	52.8
Richmond	45	21.3	-	739	349	126	59.5	18	-	-
Robeson	175	29.9	40	5751	983.9	493	84.3	43	7.2	50.5
Rockingham	29	6.3	32.9	571	124	133	28.9	42	9.2	52.9
Rowan	52	6.9	-	1441	192.3	175	23.4	84	11.4	54.2

Note: All rates are 5-year rates calculated per 100,000 residents. Rates are not calculated for counts less than 20 at which point they become unstable. Suppressed counts are indicated by -. * Indicates the county had less than 80% population coverage in NIBRS and firearm homicide (FHom) and other firearm crime (OFC) data are suppressed (Source: NIBRS, 2020-2024). Non-fatal shooting (NFS) data source: NC DETECT (2020-2024). Firearm suicide (FSuic) data source: NC-VDRS (2019-2023).

County Tables

Five year totals, rates, and average victim age

County	FHom Total	FHom Rate	FHom Avg Age	OFC Total	OFC Rate	NFS Total	NFS Rate	FSuic Total	FSuic Rate	FSuic Avg Age
Rutherford	7	-	-	256	78.9	91	28	38	11.7	52.4
Sampson	24	8.1	-	574	193	121	40.7	22	7.3	56.4
Scotland	50	29.8	-	1339	797.3	133	79.2	8	-	-
Stanly*	-	-	-	-	-	87	26.9	36	11.3	58.3
Stokes*	-	-	-	-	-	26	11.5	32	14.2	55.8
Surry	19	-	-	133	37.2	65	18.2	38	10.6	53.4
Swain	7	-	-	64	91.3	18	-	17	-	-
Transylvania	<5	-	-	42	24.9	32	19	21	12.4	45.9
Tyrrell	<5	-	-	13	-	<5	-	-	-	-
Union	34	2.7	-	1367	108.9	185	14.7	68	5.5	48.7
Vance	49	23.2	30.7	1488	703.2	213	100.7	9	-	-
Wake	164	2.8	40.9	8216	139.4	533	9	268	4.6	45
Warren	8	-	-	166	176.6	55	58.5	9	-	-
Washington*	-	-	-	-	-	24	44.4	7	-	-
Watauga	5	-	-	42	15.2	14	-	25	9	50.2
Wayne	57	9.6	-	1871	315.4	230	38.8	53	8.9	53.8
Wilkes	15	-	-	198	60.1	49	14.9	36	10.8	53.9
Wilson	39	9.8	-	817	206.1	232	58.5	36	9	53.2
Yadkin	9	-	-	85	45.2	23	12.2	30	16	53.2
Yancey	<5	-	-	12	-	15	-	12	-	-

Note: All rates are 5-year rates calculated per 100,000 residents. Rates are not calculated for counts less than 20 at which point they become unstable. Suppressed counts are indicated by -. * Indicates the county had less than 80% population coverage in NIBRS and firearm homicide (FHom) and other firearm crime (OFC) data are suppressed (Source: NIBRS, 2020-2024). Non-fatal shooting (NFS) data source: NC DETECT (2020-2024). Firearm suicide (FSuic) data source: NC-VDRS (2019-2023).

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Data Sources

The data sources for this report consist of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS), and the North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiological Collection Tool (NC DETECT). The North Carolina Office of State Management and Budget and the Federal Census Bureau supplied population data. CJAC obtained NC-VDRS and NC DETECT data through a partnership with NC Division of Public Health Injury and Violence Prevention Branch (IVPB).

NIBRS collects data reported by law enforcement agencies. North Carolina law enforcement agencies send NIBRS data to the NC State Bureau of Investigation, who shares the data with the Criminal Justice Analysis Center (CJAC) and other state and federal partners. Agencies report incidents, which are defined as "one or more offenses committed by the same offender, a group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place" (p.5).[1] Multiple offenders can be involved in a single incident. However, if the offenders did not act together, law enforcement are instructed to report more than one incident. One incident may involve multiple offenses (e.g., a robbery and aggravated assault that occur together) and may include multiple victims. For this report, homicide refers to offense 09A only, murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Other firearm crime refers to a set of 11 offenses that NIBRS collects weapon type for: negligent manslaughter (09B), kidnapping/abduction (100), rape (11A), sodomy (11B), sexual assault with an object (11C), criminal sexual contact (11D), robbery (120), aggravated assault (13A), extortion/blackmail (210), human trafficking commercial sex acts (64A), and human trafficking involuntary servitude (64B). Sexual assault offenses and human trafficking offenses were reported together. The number of homicides and other firearm crimes was calculated based on the number of victims (not offenses or incidents). Average age estimates from NIBRS exclude newborns and adults 98 and older.

NC-VDRS, housed within IVPB, collects information about all violence deaths that occur in North Carolina and to North Carolina residents. NC-VDRS obtains its data from law enforcement records, medical examiner's records, and death certificates. The NC-VDRS includes information on homicides, suicides, deaths from legal intervention (excluding death penalty executions), unintentional firearm deaths, and deaths where the cause is undetermined. NIBRS and NC-VDRS define homicide differently, so for the purposes of this report we used NIBRS data to report on firearm homicides. This report includes information only on deaths that occurred within North Carolina that involved a firearm. Deaths were counted in the county where they took place, not the home county of the resident. NC-VDRS data released by IVPB typically excludes deaths that occurred in North Carolina to out-of-state residents. To align with a community safety approach, we included all deaths that occurred in-state to capture all violence occurring within our communities. For these reasons, the numbers in this report may differ slightly from those on the NC-VDRS dashboard and publications.

NC DETECT collects nonfatal shooting records through a collaboration between North Carolina IVPB, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's Injury Prevention Research Center, and the Carolina Center for Health Informatics in the Department of Emergency Medicine. This report used emergency department data from NC DETECT, which serves as North Carolina's syndromic surveillance system. Please note that if less than 500 ED visits occurred in a county or region in a time period of under one year, any counts less than five were suppressed by IVPB before CJAC received the data. Counts less than five for a stratification such as race, sex,

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age group, etc. were suppressed if fewer than 500 ED visits occurred for any time period. Data includes all emergency department visits for non-fatal shootings between 2020 and 2024.

Analysis Methodology Notes

This report contains descriptive statistics for firearm deaths and crimes reported through NIBRS, NC-VDRS, and NC DETECT statewide data collections. All rates were calculated as the total number of deaths or victimizations over the population of the specified area multiplied to get a rate per 100,000. Both one-year rates and five-year rates were used in various places throughout the report. Although multiple years of data are used to calculate five-year rates, both one-year and five-year rates can be interpreted as the number of deaths/victimizations per 100,000 per year. Calculating rates with multiple years of data produces more stable estimates, which is particularly important when analyzing relatively rare events like violent deaths. They allow rates to be calculated when yearly totals are small or when reporting information at the county level or for smaller demographic groups. When case numbers are small, modest yearly changes can make changes in rates seem more dramatic than they are.

To protect confidentiality, death and victimization totals of less than five people were suppressed and not reported. Rates were only calculated from totals of at least 20 deaths or victimizations. Rates based on counts of less than 20 counts are considered less stable for the reasons outlined above.

In addition, NIBRS data was not reported at the county-level where less than 80% of the county population was covered by NIBRS on average over the five-year study period. While agencies who submit to NIBRS covers around 97% of the total North Carolina population, individual counties may have lower submission rates. All available data was used in analyses at the statewide and county class (rural, urban, and suburban) levels.

Defining Rural, Urban, and Suburban

Most people have an internal idea of what urban versus rural versus suburban areas of the state look like. However, talking to friends and neighbors will quickly reveal that definitions vary widely from person to person. For the purposes of research, all definitions have tradeoffs. We chose to use the NC Rural Center's classification to define counties as rural, urban, or suburban/regional city counties. These definitions are based on population density, which the NC Rural Center reports "better captures the county-centric identities many North Carolinians hold."[2] Rural counties are those with 250 people or fewer per square mile; suburban/regional city counties are those between 250 and 750 people per square mile; and urban counties are those with 750 people or more per square mile. See Appendix A for each county's designation. We chose this definition because of its simplicity and because NC-VDRS and NC DETECT data are available on the county level. NIBRS data, however, is collected at the agency-level. The jurisdictional boundaries of law enforcement agencies allowed us to test our results against an alternative classification system.

The In Focus features on pages 42, 58, and 74 report on the results of this comparison. Using NIBRS data, we classified jurisdictions first according to population size. We defined large cities as those with 200,000 people or more; small/medium cities as those with between 50,000 and 200,000; large towns as those between 10,000 and 50,000; small towns as those between 1,000 and up to 10,000; and all unincorporated jurisdictions (which are typically covered by sheriff's offices) as truly rural. To define suburban required additional

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considerations beyond population size. We used a combination of indicators from the Federal Census Bureau and the NC Rural Center's classifications of counties. Jurisdictions were classified as suburban if they had a population of at least 1,000 that was in an urban or suburban/regional city county, and were not designated a principal city in their metropolitan statistical area by the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau uses population and economic activity data to define principal cities as the largest city in each metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area.[3] In practice, this captures the jurisdictions in urban/suburban counties that surround North Carolina's major cities. For example, Buncombe County, where Asheville is located, is classified as a suburban/regional city in the NC Rural Center's classification. In this jurisdiction-level classification system, the area covered by the Asheville Police Department would get grouped with other small/medium cities. Jurisdictions in Buncombe County outside of Asheville would get classified as suburban. This classification system also has tradeoffs. We defined rural areas outside of small and large towns largely to include the jurisdictions of most NC sheriff's offices, which typically cover the unincorporated land in counties and towns too small to staff their own police department. However, a small set of towns that would fall into the small or large town categories were covered by the county sheriff's office. This set of towns made up approximately 7% of the rural area population, but there was no way to remove this data from the rural area category. We performed robustness checks, comparing rates including and excluding sheriff's offices covering large and small towns. Inclusion or exclusion of those jurisdictions did not meaningfully change the findings or size of rural area rates.

Though each classification system is imperfect, the findings from the In Focus features in this report provide depth and validation to the county-level results. For reference, we include each class's approximate population share of the total North Carolina population below.

County Class Categories:
- Rural counties: 35%
- Urban counties: 36%
- Suburban/regional city counties: 29%

Jurisdiction Class Categories:
- Large cities: 23%
- Small/medium cities: 8%
- Suburbs: 14%
- Large towns: 5%
- Small towns: 5%
- Rural areas: 45%

[1] 2025.0 National Incident-Based Reporting System User Manual, p. 5. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.
[2] NC Rural Center, https://www.ncruralcenter.org/how-we-define-rural/
[3] Federal Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/about.html

Contact & Acknowledgments

DPS

Governor's Crime Commission
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Resource List

If you or a loved one needs assistance, the following resources are available in North Carolina:

North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention. Developed the Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan to reduce of violence, harm from violence and firearm misuse across the state through a public health approach. Maintains a resource hub of educational resources. https://www.ncdps.gov/about-dps/current-initiatives/north-carolina-office-violence-prevention

NC S.A.FE. (Secure All Firearms Effectively). Provides free resources and free cable gun locks. https://www.ncsafe.org/

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988 for assistance. https://988lifeline.org/

National Domestic Violence Hotline. Call 1-800-799-7233 for assistance. https://www.thehotline.org/

SAMHSA 988 Partner Toolkit. Provides free 988 materials for states, tribes, crisis centers, communities, emergency service providers, and other partners. https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988/partner-toolkit

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Offers free suicide prevention trainings and resources. https://sprc.org/

North Carolinians Against Gun Violence. Educates North Carolinians about gun violence and organizes communities. https://www.ncgv.org/

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Provides a list of NC domestic violence service agencies and advocates for survivors statewide. https://nccadv.org/