CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

A Strategic Plan to Sustain California's Record Progress Against Gun Violence

Part I: Where We Are, How We Got Here, What We Need

Office of Gun Violence Prevention

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Introduction

This report documents something genuinely historic. In 2024, the most recent year of data available, California achieved its lowest firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide rate on record—and opened the largest gap ever recorded between our state and the rest of the nation on all three measures. These record reductions were driven by especially large declines in firearm homicide in our most impacted communities. Provisional data indicates that this progress continued into 2025.

It is worth pausing to reflect on just how significant this progress has been: As recently as 2010, a child under 18 was more likely to die from bullet wounds in California than in the rest of the U.S. on average. By 2024, a child in the rest of the nation was nearly three times as likely to die from bullet wounds as a child in our state.

California's progress was built on a foundation of strong gun safety laws and ghost gun reforms, accelerated by historic—but now fast-declining—levels of state, local, and federal investment in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives, protective order and firearm relinquishment programs, and other targeted efforts to build gun violence prevention capacity where it is needed most. The data in this report makes clear that where those investments were made, lives were saved—often quickly and dramatically.

However, without prompt action in state and local budgets, this record-setting progress is at risk. Vital gun violence prevention programs are facing significant state and local funding cuts at the same time that the federal government is walking away from its role in funding gun violence prevention and victim care. As a result, many of the programs that helped California achieve historic reductions in gun violence are, or soon will be, grappling with severe cuts to funding, staffing, and lifesaving services. Those same programs and initiatives have helped California:

- Drive transformational reductions in firearm homicide, with many California cities experiencing record low homicide rates and over 50% reductions in homicide since 2021.
- Cut firearm homicide rates by more than half (52%) for young Hispanic men from 2021 to 2024, and by 48% for young Black men.
- Cut firearm death rates for children under 18 to about one-third the rate recorded in the rest of the U.S. on average.
- Open a record large safety gap between California and the rest of the U.S. for rates of firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide.

Assembly Bill 1252 (2024, Wicks) requires the California Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Gun Violence Prevention to publish a report to the Legislature outlining a strategic plan to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years. This report represents the first of two parts of that strategic plan. It provides a foundation of data to inform gun violence prevention policy, priorities, and budgeting over the next five years. Based on this data, this report also emphasizes four priority recommendations to sustain California's record-setting progress, with an emphasis on the need for strategic investments through state and local budgets. California is at a precipice. As our leaders grapple with many competing funding priorities and destabilizing federal action, we must decide if we have enough will and strategic focus to demand continued progress against gun violence, and to invest accordingly.

California's Record-Setting Progress Against Gun Violence

In February 2026, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published final mortality statistics for 2024 based on death certificates filed for U.S. residents in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.[1] **This data confirms that in 2024**, **California achieved the state's lowest firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide rates on record** since the CDC began to collect this data in 1968.[2] Historic reductions in firearm homicide also drove California's overall homicide rate to its lowest level on record in CDC data.

This record-setting progress was driven by particularly large reductions in firearm homicides in many of the most disproportionately impacted populations in California, especially for Black and Hispanic men and boys. These reductions have been observed since 2022 and are important for achieving equality in access to safety. For 15-24-year-old Hispanic men and boys, 2024 was not just California's safest year on record; firearm homicide rates for this population were 31% below California's previous record low.

Despite destabilizing federal action and funding cuts, provisional data indicates that this record-setting progress continued into 2025.[3] In short: In recent years, communities across California became safer from gun violence than at any other time on record.

California's progress also stands out compared to the rest of the U.S. **In 2024, California opened the largest gap ever recorded between our state and the rest of the U.S. on average for rates of firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide**. This safety gap widened even as many other state and local governments also took effective action against gun violence in response to a record nationwide surge in shootings in 2020 and 2021. The Biden Administration spurred nationwide progress through a combination of policy change, enhanced enforcement, regulation of some ghost gun products, and strategic investments in building local governments' prevention capacity—especially in community violence intervention ("CVI") initiatives that interrupt cycles of retaliatory shootings by engaging, healing, and protecting shooting survivors and others at highest risk. These state, local, and federal efforts have contributed to large declines in gun violence in communities across the nation since 2022.[4]

California took even more comprehensive action that yielded even more significant reductions in gun violence. California was one of three states that achieved record low firearm homicide rates in 2024, after reducing statewide firearm homicide rates by 35% in three years.[5] Of the nation's 50 largest cities, the four with the largest reductions in gun death and injury from 2021 to 2025 were all in California.[6] As discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, California's response has included nation-leading efforts to address the ghost gun crisis; strengthen firearm industry oversight and accountability; invest in firearm relinquishment and protection order programs; and *significantly* expand investments in CVI initiatives in our most impacted communities.

Some may assume that California's record reductions in gun violence were driven by broader societal trends, or more general criminal justice, economic, or public health policies driving reductions in both firearm and non-firearm incidents alike. **But notably, California's recent progress is specific to gun violence, and was likely driven by effective action and investments to address the unique dynamics that fuel gun violence.** When firearm deaths are *excluded*, California's homicide and suicide rates have remained relatively stable in recent years and have been nearly identical to the rest of the nation for decades. (See graphs on pages 31-32).

In contrast, large reductions in *firearm* deaths in 2022, 2023, and 2024 have continued California's long-term transformation from a state with exceptionally high rates of gun violence three decades ago, to a state with average rates of gun violence one decade ago, into a state that now has substantially lower

rates of gun violence than the rest of the nation on average—and, as a result, substantially lower rates of homicide and suicide overall.

It is difficult to celebrate record declines in gun violence as we still mourn the brutal death or injury of thousands of Californians who are shot each year. However, to sustain and build on our safety progress and prevent even more shootings, we must recognize what is working and why. Because few headlines are written about shootings prevented, many people and policymakers do not know enough about the critical work happening every day in our state to intervene and stop shootings before they occur, recur, or escalate. This work should be understood, celebrated, protected, and scaled. California has shown that transformational progress against gun violence is not an idealistic fantasy. It should be the goal and demand of every state and community.

California has challenging work ahead to sustain this progress and can draw important lessons from the handful of other states that have consistently maintained much lower rates of firearm mortality. But California has been rowing quickly in a much safer direction than most of the nation. If, for the past decade, the rest of the U.S. had the same firearm death rate per capita as California's new record low, there would have been 185,000 fewer Americans killed by firearms in one decade alone—that is over three times the number of U.S. service members killed in the Vietnam War[7]—and hundreds of thousands fewer nonfatal shootings.[8]

This did not happen by accident.

This progress is a remarkable policy achievement and represents the cumulative impact of countless individual acts of service. In fiscal terms, this progress also likely reflects an enormous return on budgetary investments in CVI and other gun violence reduction initiatives, since preventing a single firearm homicide saves California taxpayers millions of dollars on average.[9]

But this is not a mission accomplished report.

Rather, it is an urgent call to action because many of the strategies and investments that helped drive California's recent progress are now at risk. As detailed in this report, California's record reductions in gun violence have likely been driven in significant part by historic—but now fast declining—levels of state, local, and federal investment in CVI initiatives and other programs designed to build local gun violence prevention capacity in our most impacted communities.

Many of those effective investments have been cut, repurposed, or will soon expire—as a result of the Trump Administration's devastating actions to dismantle federal agencies and grant programs—but also as a result of state and local funding shortfalls and drifting budgetary priorities, the expiration of federal assistance through the American Rescue Plan Act and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and the expiration of short-term California Budget Act investments.

These investments were not abstract numbers on a chart. They directly expanded a workforce of public safety specialists focused on preventing gun violence and protecting survivors at greatest risk. They helped drive record reductions in gun violence.

As discussed in more detail in this report, California's targeted investments in CVI helped our most impacted communities collectively hire hundreds of violence intervention professionals to intervene with thousands of gunshot survivors and other people at highest risk. Those professionals provided survivors caught in cycles of retaliatory shootings with structured pathways away from violence and gang involvement, and ensured survivors fleeing dangerous situations can access protective services like safe shelter away from someone threatening their life. Other recent state and local investments in protection order and firearm relinquishment programs have enabled courts, law enforcement agencies,

prosecutors, and community partners to hire personnel focused on ensuring that protective orders provide meaningful protection from gun violence and armed abuse. This investment in dedicated staffing capacity has allowed communities to recover thousands more illegally possessed firearms each year from individuals found by a court to be a danger to themselves or others—replacing passive honor systems with well-coordinated initiatives focused on proactive information-sharing, compliance, and protection for those who need it most.

Declining state, local, and federal investment in these and other targeted gun violence prevention programs will mean that these sources of safety, shelter, and off-ramps from violence will disappear from too many communities and for too many people in danger.

This report documents California's historic progress from 2022-2025, but warns that this progress is now colliding with a difficult budget climate and a federal government intent on abdicating its role in supporting evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence. In some cities that have recently lost federal and now state funding for gun violence prevention programs, there are concerning signs that gun violence is increasing in 2026 amid recent layoffs and service cuts.[10]

Therefore, this report poses an urgent question to state and local policymakers: Is there sufficient will and strategic focus to continue to build on the effective strategies and investments that drove much of California's recent progress? If strengthened, these strategies and investments could lead to further historic gains for public safety.

The Foundation of California's Strategic Plan: Data and the Budget

Assembly Bill 1252 (2024, Wicks) requires the California Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Gun Violence Prevention to publish a report to the Legislature outlining a strategic plan to reduce gun violence over the next five years. The report must include recommendations on "*legislation, improvements to statutory implementation, and increased programmatic funding necessary to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence in California*."[11]

This report represents the first part of that strategic plan. The Office of Gun Violence Prevention will publish the second part in the months to come with additional policy and implementation recommendations building on the priorities identified in this report.

First, this report seeks to provide a comprehensive foundation of data to inform gun violence prevention policy, priorities, and budgeting. California has been setting record lows for gun violence in recent years. To chart a strategic plan for the years to come, it is important to first document where we stand today, how California has been making historic progress, and where additional resources and policy focus are needed most to protect and build on that progress.

As this report will show, California has made especially significant progress in reducing firearm homicide rates for young men of color, who have had by far the highest rates of firearm homicide in California and nationally. California has achieved these reductions through a combination of policies and investments. Chapter 3 of this report discusses California's recent gun violence prevention efforts and Chapter 4 focuses on the impact of California's recent investments in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives in particular. This report will also show that California has been impacted by an enormous nationwide surge in domestic violence-related gun violence particularly impacting women and children of color. While California's policies have helped avert the much larger spikes in domestic violence-related firearm homicide seen across the rest of the U.S., Chapter 5 will focus on the need for additional policies and investments to better protect domestic violence survivors from gun violence and armed abuse in California. Chapter 6 will show that gun traffickers seeking to circumvent California's nation-leading gun safety reforms make California the destination state for the largest gun trafficking pipeline in the nation. This Chapter emphasizes the need for additional resources to address the interstate trafficking pipelines and ghost gun manufacturing operations fueling gun violence in our state.

Second, based on the data, this report emphasizes an overarching recommendation as the foundation for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's strategic plan:

Champion gun violence prevention through the Budget, with a strategic focus on the people and places at greatest imminent risk.

This report identifies four leading state and local funding priorities discussed below, and includes data showing why these investments are critical to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence in our state.

Priority Recommendations

1. **Invest in CVI and trauma recovery services.**

   - State policymakers: Significantly increase funding for CVI initiatives. As detailed in Chapter 4, investments through the Break the Cycle of Violence Act's California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program helped drive record reductions in gun violence in many of our most impacted communities, but the program has half as much funding available for the 2026-2029 grant cycle compared to the 2022-2025 cycle, even as policy changes and federal funding cuts drove about three times as many applicants to request funding support. The CalVIP program should prioritize scarce resources for CVI initiatives in communities with the highest rates of homicide to work with individuals at a very high risk of victimization or involvement in community gun violence in the near future.

   - State policymakers: Sustain funding for Trauma Recovery Centers that provide mental health and wrap-around services for under-served survivors of violent crime.

   - Local policymakers: Cities and counties with persistently high rates of gun violence should implement and sustainably fund evidence-based CVI initiatives, with a strategic focus on providing violence intervention services—with specificity and intensity[12]—to individuals at highest risk of involvement in community gun violence in the near future.[13] These local governments should establish Offices of Violence Prevention or Neighborhood Safety to coordinate and implement CVI strategies, in partnership with other agencies and service providers, as a permanent component of the jurisdiction's public health and safety infrastructure. To ensure accountability and sustainability, these CVI-implementing offices should generally report to city or county leadership and receive dedicated, stable funding sufficient to implement a comprehensive CVI strategy focused on the people and places at highest risk, following recommendations from leading experts and technical assistance providers in this field, such as the National Office of Violence Prevention Network's "Offices of Violence Prevention Toolkit," the U.S. Justice Department's (now-archived) "CVI Implementation Checklist" and CVI implementation resources,[14] the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention,[15] Cities United,[16] the Urban Peace Institute,[17] and the Crime and Justice Policy Lab at the University of Pennsylvania (formerly the California Partnership for Safe Communities).[18]

2. **Invest in domestic violence intervention and victim services.**

   - State and local policymakers: State and local investments are needed to offset devastating federal funding cuts and shortfalls impacting existing domestic violence victim services, including shelters, safety planning supports, and legal aid to assist survivors with obtaining court protective orders to prevent gun violence, armed intimidation, and other abuse.

   - State and local policymakers: CalVIP Grants and CVI initiatives are specifically focused on individuals at risk of community, street, and gang violence. State policymakers should establish and fund a new companion grant program focused on reducing domestic violence-related homicide and gun violence. Modeled on the success of the CalVIP program and CVI initiatives, these efforts should support coordinated and multidisciplinary preventive and protective interventions, like the "High Point Model" or Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center's "Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT)" Model, that work to reduce risk of domestic violence homicide or near-lethal assault with individuals at highest risk. These resources should be strategically focused on implementing these strategies in the communities with the highest rates of domestic violence-related gun violence and homicide. Local governments should also invest in these strategies, especially in communities with the

highest rates of domestic violence-related gun violence and homicide.

3. **Invest in protective order implementation & firearm relinquishment compliance.**

   - State policymakers: Renew expiring funding for the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program and/or establish and fund a new related grant program focused on improving implementation, service, and enforcement of court protective and restraining orders in cases involving firearms or high risk of homicide, with a focus on firearm relinquishment compliance. Grantees from 11 counties collectively reported facilitating the relinquishment of 3,000 firearms from 901 people subject to firearm-prohibiting court orders in one year alone. Grant funding should be prioritized for communities with the highest rates of gun violence.

   - State policymakers: Appropriate new and ongoing funding to authorize California DOJ to establish an automated protected person information portal to provide survivors who obtain protective orders with direct electronic access to critical information about their own protective order case, including whether the court order has been properly reported to law enforcement databases; served on the restrained individual; expired; or violated by the restrained individual unlawfully attempting to purchase firearms. Multiple other states have developed these information portals in recent years to ensure survivors have immediate access to information vital to their safety. California should be a leader in empowering survivors with safety information.

   - Local policymakers: Develop and fund coordinated partnerships between courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, family justice centers, and other stakeholders to promote safe and proactive implementation, service, and enforcement of firearm-prohibiting court protective orders, with a focus on cases involving firearms or other indicators of heightened risk for homicide. Local governments should also ensure that law enforcement agencies adopt and robustly implement new policies and procedures mandated by AB 451 (2025, Petrie-Norris) to promote prompt and effective service and enforcement of firearm-prohibiting protection orders.

4. **Invest in investigating and disrupting gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations.**

   - State policymakers: Fund a new California DOJ team dedicated to combatting gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing, with resources to staff and develop more task force partnerships with local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies in communities most impacted by gun crime and violence in our state. This anti-trafficking initiative would help supplement California DOJ's existing firearm investigation and enforcement teams, who are required to focus on inspecting California-based firearm dealers and gun shows and recovering illegally possessed firearms through the Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) program. After California lawmakers invested in building these DOJ teams' authority and capacity to inspect California-based firearm and ammunition businesses and gun show operations, the percentage of crime guns traced to California-based businesses has fallen significantly. (The term "crime gun" refers to a firearm recovered by law enforcement after the firearm was (1) used in a crime, (2) suspected to have been used in a crime, or (3) illegally possessed).

     But a large majority of crime guns recovered in California now cannot be traced to a California dealer sale, primarily because they are illegally manufactured ghost guns or guns trafficked in from other states with weaker gun safety laws. As detailed in Chapter 3, California's crime gun trends since 2019 have overwhelmingly been driven by trends

related to ghost guns. And as detailed in Chapter 6, the flow of crime guns from Arizona to California represents by far the largest gun trafficking corridor in the nation. Additional resources for a California DOJ-led initiative to combat gun trafficking would help fill the vacuum left by severe federal cuts to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and bolster our capacity to disrupt the trafficking networks fueling gun crime and violence in our state.

Why Focus on the Budget Now?

State and local lawmakers are grappling with destabilizing federal action on many fronts and, relatedly, difficult budget and revenue decisions. But sustaining California's safety progress will require continued and expanded state and local investments to offset devastating federal funding cuts and build on our critical but waning investments in gun violence prevention capacity.

California's transformational progress against gun violence has been built on a foundation of decades of legislative policy change, including implementation and enforcement of the more than 100 gun violence prevention-related bills Governor Gavin Newsom has signed into law. Protecting and building on this foundation of gun safety laws is critical. This foundation provides stakeholders with effective tools for preventing gun violence, and DOJ is sponsoring multiple gun violence prevention bills in 2026 to continue to build on that foundation.

But gun violence prevention also requires capacity—it requires people—to implement and use those safety tools to prevent and protect. Background check laws, for example, save lives when there is sufficient investment in the people and systems needed to promptly report relevant records into background check systems and conduct thorough background checks effectively.

In different contexts—including community and gang violence, domestic violence, terroristic mass shooting attacks, or suicide—there are highly effective modern strategies for identifying the relatively small segment of the population whose behaviors indicate exceptionally high risk of victimization or perpetration, and intervening in a preventative capacity to provide structured pathways toward safety and off-ramps from violence. A number of California jurisdictions have developed programs to implement these strategies and have been recognized as national models. Their successes have been made possible by public investments that allowed visionary leaders to staff the (often small but mighty) teams of public safety professionals necessary to turn best practice strategies on paper into programs effectively intervening with people navigating the most difficult and dangerous days of their lives.

California's record reductions in gun violence have been driven in significant part by historic—but now fast declining—levels of state, local, and federal investment from 2022-2025 in efforts to build this prevention capacity in our most impacted communities. **Because California has achieved such significant results through these (now declining) budgetary investments and has successfully enacted and defended much more gun safety legislation than any other state, the critical priority over the next five years will be to sustain and build gun violence prevention capacity through state and local budgets.**

That is especially true now, as a wave of lawsuits from the firearm industry and special interest groups threaten even foundational gun safety reforms, and as the Trump Administration's actions exacerbate the conditions for violence and abdicate the federal government's role in funding gun violence prevention, investigations, research, and victim services. For example:

- Federal cuts to CVI and other gun violence prevention programs: In 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice terminated about 370 federal grants originally valued at $820 million that had been awarded to public safety, mental health, and victim service programs. The largest cuts were

made to CVI and other gun violence prevention programs. Grantees had already spent down a portion of these grant funds but these cuts rescinded an estimated $500 million in federal investments in public safety.[19] Programs in multiple California communities had already hired and employed victim service and violence intervention professionals, built critical relationships, and implemented successful violence intervention strategies in reliance on these funds, and received sudden grant termination notices impacting staffing and services.[20] On top of these cuts, in April 2025, the U.S. Department of Education canceled up to $1 billion in grants that had already been awarded to support school mental health programs around the nation. California DOJ has been involved in litigation to restore and protect that funding.[21]

- New restrictive conditions on federal gun violence prevention grants: Under the Trump Administration, federal agencies have imposed new conditions on a range of public safety grants, including the CVI-focused "Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative," that in practice warp these programs' purpose or make federal funding streams unworkable for communities in California.[22] California governments and nonprofits will likely continue to see significant decreases in federal public safety dollars in coming years; some violence prevention programs are still operating with the support of federal grants awarded under the Biden Administration that will soon lapse.

- Federal cuts to domestic violence services: Amid enormous nationwide surges in domestic violence-related shootings over the past decade, the Trump Administration has proposed slashing federal funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, which administers grants for domestic violence victim services, and has terminated programs designed to bolster communities' capacity to address the intersection of domestic abuse and gun violence.[23] Federal block grants for victim services (Victims of Crime Act Assistance Grants) are also largely funded through federal financial penalties on corporate misconduct; in part because the federal government has been prosecuting fewer white collar crime cases over the past decade, the federal Crime Victims Fund that supports many domestic violence and other victim services has been depleting at an alarming rate.[24] To address this challenge, California passed the California Crime Victims Act in 2024 (AB 2432, Gabriel) to establish a state-level funding source for victim services through financial penalties on corporate misconduct but there is not yet sufficient revenue in this fund to sustain domestic violence victim services grappling with federal cuts. Survivor advocates are prioritizing efforts to obtain temporary state funding to offset further federal funding cuts and shortfalls.[25]

- Federal cuts to gun trafficking investigations and enforcement: Under the Trump Administration, 80% of the special agents tasked with investigating gun crime at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) have reportedly been shifted to work immigration enforcement cases, causing what current and former federal law enforcement officials have described as a historic drop in gun trafficking investigations and firearm dealer inspections.[26] The President's Budget proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in further cuts to ATF capacity, including by eliminating crime gun tracing modernization projects and by eliminating over 500 federal law enforcement investigator positions responsible for investigating firearm industry misconduct. The U.S. Justice Department's own analysis stated these proposals would "reduce ATF's capacity to regulate the firearms and explosives industries by approximately 40 percent in [Fiscal Year] 2026."[27]

- Stripping resources away from stopping hate-motivated shootings and domestic terror attacks: In 2019, under the first Trump Administration, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security published a "Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence" (including mass shootings) that warned that "White supremacist violent extremism. . . is one of the most potent forces driving domestic terrorism" in the United States.[28] The Biden Administration's

National Security Council released an updated National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism that echoed many of the same findings and priorities and stated that across a wide range of ideologies animating rising threats of domestic terror and mass violence, "racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (principally those who promote the superiority of the white race) and militia violent extremists are assessed as presenting the most persistent and lethal threats."[29] In 2025, the Trump Administration reportedly redirected counterterrorism personnel and funds to focus on mass deportation operations,[30] and issued an executive order and National Security Presidential Memorandum on Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence that made no mention of racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists or militia violence except in the context of what the Administration described as "anti-fascist" movements' "extremism on migration, race, and gender[.]"[31] Among other things, this signals a concerning shift in federal focus and resources away from preventing hate and militia-based violence.

- Deterring crime reporting and participation in safety building services: Fear of mass deportation and militarized patrols threaten to deter crime victims, domestic abuse survivors, and others in danger from coming forward to seek safety and justice, or to participate in violence intervention, counseling, or substance abuse programs.[32] Researchers have documented how escalations in immigration enforcement rhetoric and tactics led to declines in the number of domestic violence calls for assistance per capita in immigrant communities in Los Angeles.[33]

- Increasing poverty and decreasing utilization of mental health and preventive services: In 2025, the federal government enacted tax and healthcare legislation predicted to functionally transfer trillions of dollars in wealth from the most impoverished Americans (at the highest risk of gun violence) to the wealthiest Americans, with cost savings for the federal government relying in significant part on policies predicted to reduce low-income Americans' utilization of medical care, substance use prevention, mental health care, and preventive services.[34] The Medicaid/Medi-Cal-insured population represent the vast majority of gun assault victims and survivors in our state.[35]

- Expiration of the American Rescue Plan Act and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act: President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law in 2021. Among other things, this pandemic relief package allocated over $360 billion in one-time assistance to state, local, and tribal governments. The Biden Administration urged state and local governments to use these funds to improve public safety and local government staffing, and many cities and counties dedicated these funds toward grant programs to address gun violence. Those ARPA funds must generally be expended by the end of 2026, meaning that many prevention programs funded through this one-time source are facing funding cliffs. President Biden also signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act into law in 2022, which authorized $15 billion over five years to states "for targeted, primarily community-based services, including community violence prevention, mental health services, and school safety."[36] The Trump Administration has cancelled some of those investments; others will expire in the coming years.

Expanded state and local investments in gun violence prevention are needed to offset these and other federal government cuts and actions over the next five years.

It is also important to acknowledge that, as budgets reflect priorities, **other states with smaller budgets have been spending much more on gun violence prevention per capita than California**, and are safer for it. California is recognized as a national leader on gun safety policy for good reason,[37] and our cities and community-based organizations have helped develop national models for gun violence prevention.[38] But California has significantly lagged multiple other states' efforts to prioritize gun violence prevention in the budget. New York and Massachusetts have been national leaders in investing

in CVI for over a decade, and their firearm homicide rates in 2024 were 39% and 55% below California's record low respectively.[39] On a per capita basis, Massachusetts[40] and Pennsylvania[41] are now investing three to four times more in CVI strategies than California; Illinois is investing up to nine times more.[42] California began to meaningfully invest state funding in CVI initiatives under Governor Newsom, and the impact and return on these investments has been substantial. However, the future of even those relatively modest investments is now uncertain.

From 2021 to 2023, California's Budget Acts included record levels of General Fund investment in CVI initiatives—more state funding for CVI in three budget years than in all previous years combined—and then zero dollars in 2024 and 2025. Due to standard time delays for grant application, review, and administration, the 2021-2023 Budget Act allocations funded CVI grants from late 2022 through the beginning of 2026. During the same period, CalVIP-funded cities across California achieved record declines in shootings and firearm homicide among the highest risk population of young Black and Latino boys and men.

For future budget allocations, in 2023, California enacted the "Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act" (AB 28, Gabriel), which generates new revenue from a modest firearm industry excise tax to permanently fund CVI, firearm relinquishment programs, and other victim service and gun violence prevention initiatives through a new Special Fund.[43] This law represents a historic commitment to permanently fund gun violence prevention and victim services—or it could. AB 28 has so far generated substantially less revenue than projected, leaving a gap of over $100 million in state gun violence prevention funding per year. Instead of bolstering California's investments in CVI and gun violence prevention, the revenue generated in that Special Fund has, in its first year of implementation, replaced lapsed General Fund investments and at a much lower level. The coalition of lawmakers and advocates who fought to pass this law for years were fighting for *more* investment in CVI, firearm relinquishment programs, and other lifesaving gun violence prevention and victim service initiatives. Urgent action through California's Budget is needed to fulfill that promise.

Without prompt action in this year's Budget, for the 2026-2029 grant cycle, California is set to reduce its state-level investment in CVI initiatives roughly by half, even as expanded implementation of CVI strategies and federal funding cuts drove nearly three times as many programs to apply for state funding support. Bold, urgent action is needed to recommit California to the effective investments that drove much of our recent progress.

Finally, strategic state and county-level investment is critical to help the most impacted jurisdictions in our state address the intersecting challenges of concentrated poverty and concentrated gun violence. Gun death and injury can impose devastating harm on all communities. But interpersonal gun violence imposes an enormously unequal toll on the high-poverty communities least equipped to fund gun violence prevention infrastructure through local revenue alone. Jurisdictions grappling with concentrated poverty and violence face severe fiscal constraints that make them less capable of resourcing strategies to identify and intervene with people on a pathway to gun violence. Those fiscal constraints can fuel a self-reinforcing cycle of violence causing violence, leading to reduced economic activity and property values, resident displacement and retreat from public spaces, declining community trust and engagement with public authorities, and a declining local tax base that leaves the community with even fewer resources with which to prevent and protect. Economists have noted that in this manner, poverty is a cause of gun violence, but gun violence also contributes to community poverty.[44]

However, as multiple case studies in Chapter 4 show, strategically targeted investments that build public capacity to proactively and intensively engage with those at the highest risk of gun violence can quickly create the conditions for transformative, virtuous cycles too. California's state and local governments can achieve transformative and cost-saving results quickly when they are resource-equalizing partners for safety.

This reflects the core thesis of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's strategic plan. Achieving sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years will require a comprehensive, data-driven approach that includes:

- Implementing and defending effective **firearm access policy**, such as firearm eligibility standards, background check, and firearm relinquishment requirements and programs that prevent people with the most significant histories of violent or dangerous conduct from possessing or acquiring firearms and ammunition.

- Placing reasonable and constitutional **guardrails around the firearm industry's basic profit motive** to sell as many weapons to as many people as possible, no matter how dangerous the weapon or buyer. This includes investments in firearm industry oversight and inspections, consumer notice and product safety requirements, restrictions on the sale of military-style weaponry and large-capacity magazines, and laws that strengthen gun violence victims' ability to seek courtroom justice and accountability for firearm industry misconduct.

- Taking strong, proactive action to **stop the ghost gun industry** from selling skip-the-background-check products and services to people who are too young or dangerous to pass a firearm background check in our state, and to **curb other illegal gun trafficking networks** that fuel gun crime and violence.

- Promoting **safe and responsible firearm ownership**, such as through policies that educate parents about the risks of unsecured firearms, distribute firearm safety devices, and require firearm owners to securely store weapons when they are not in use.

- Ensuring people in danger have **reliable pathways to safety**, including shelter and relocation for survivors fleeing dangerous circumstances, and court protection and restraining orders that include effectively enforced protections against gun violence.

- **And investing public dollars strategically to address the chronic, structural inequalities in risk, resources, and prevention capacity that fuel chronic, structural inequalities in safety across our state and nation.**

Executive Summary: Key Data Findings & Recommendations

This section briefly summarizes some of the top-level data takeaways and policy recommendations this report will present in detail. Readers who want to go directly to the data may turn to Chapter 1 beginning on page 20.

1. **California has been making historic progress:** In recent years, California has achieved historic reductions in gun violence that stand apart from national trends. In the most recent year of data available (2024), California achieved its lowest rates on record for firearm death, firearm suicide, and especially firearm homicide, representing the largest gap on record between rates in California and the rest of the nation on average. Provisional data indicates that these trends very likely continued into 2025.

2. **The toll of gun violence is not borne evenly. State funding investments should strategically target people and places at highest risk:** Firearm death, suicide, and injury impose enormous harm on every community, and firearm laws, protective order processes, and other interventions play a critical role for the safety of all people. However, some California communities have *much* higher rates of firearm violence than others. Overall, interpersonal gun violence is very disproportionately concentrated in communities grappling with concentrated, chronic poverty and disinvestment. Poverty is a risk factor for gun violence victimization and perpetration at the individual level; most gun assault survivors in California are Black or Hispanic males within California's lower-income Medi-Cal-insured population. Poverty is also a risk factor for gun violence at the community level. Communities with deep and concentrated poverty typically have a much lower tax base, and do not have equal resources and public capacity to prevent and protect. This inequality in resources and capacity is connected to inequality in safety outcomes. State and county funding must play a critical role in addressing this inequality and building public capacity to prevent gun violence for the people and places at highest risk.

3. **Preventing community gun violence & domestic gun violence must be key priorities:** Media coverage of gun violence focuses primarily on indiscriminate mass shootings and other targeted domestic terror attacks in public spaces. California has adopted critical policy reforms to prevent these shootings, and to reduce shooters' capacity to inflict mass casualties with military-style assault weapons, machine guns, and large-capacity magazines. Mass shootings cause enormous ripple effects of trauma and fear through entire communities, and California now has much lower rates of mass shooting victimization than the rest of the nation on average. However, comprehensive gun violence prevention policy and investments must also focus on the most common drivers of gun violence, which are **community violence** (including cycles of street, gang, or group member-involved shootings that disproportionately impact men of color), and **domestic violence** (including family, intimate partner, and gender-based gun violence that disproportionately impacts women and children of color).

4. **Many data sources overlook the majority of gun violence victims who survive. Effective gun violence intervention strategies do not:** A large majority of victims who are intentionally shot by another person, or who are shot unintentionally, require significant medical attention but survive. But the overwhelming majority of people who intentionally shoot themselves do not survive. As a result, data analysis focused only on fatal firearm incidents is often skewed toward suicide, and risks overlooking the needs and experience of the majority of gunshot victims impacted by interpersonal gun violence and unintentional shootings. Effective gun violence reduction strategies recognize that there are many shooting survivors who are at very high risk of being shot again and killed and, for some, of being involved in cycles of retaliatory violence.

It must be a key public health and safety priority to reach, heal, and protect these survivors, people close to them, and others who are at very highest risk of victimization and/or perpetration of gun violence in the near future.

5. **California is making critical progress to stop the proliferation of illegally manufactured ghost guns in crime. But the ghost gun industry is shifting its tactics in response and remains a major safety threat.** Ghost guns are illegally made firearms manufactured by unlicensed individuals from products sold without any traceable serial number, sale record, or background check—an obvious and attractive source of weaponry for people who are too young or too dangerous to pass a firearm background check in California. Since 2022, California has taken critical action to reverse a nearly decade-long trend toward exponential increases in the number of unserialized, privately manufactured ghost guns recovered from crime. Increases in ghost gun recoveries were responsible for most of the increase in crime gun recoveries in California during the pandemic-era spike in gun violence from 2019 to 2021, and progress against ghost guns has been responsible for most of the subsequent decrease in crime gun recoveries since 2022. However, the ghost gun industry continues to "innovate" new ways to seek to sell skip-the-background-check access to firearms, including through 3D-printed firearms and machine gun conversion devices, which represent a fast-growing public safety threat. Policy, litigation, and enforcement efforts should continue to prioritize efforts to curb the proliferation of ghost guns and 3D-printed machine gun conversion devices in crime.

6. **Investments in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives have played a significant role in driving large reductions in gun homicide for young men of color.** California has achieved especially significant reductions in firearm homicide for young men of color, who have had by far the highest rates of firearm homicide victimization in California and nationally. These historic reductions have been driven in significant part by local, federal, and state Budget Act investments in CVI initiatives—especially through the Break the Cycle of Violence Act's California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program—that strategically target limited resources for intensive interventions and protection for the people and places at highest risk of community gun violence. Some other states and local governments have invested in CVI initiatives for decades. At the state-level, California invested more in CVI programs from 2022 to 2025 than in all previous years combined. Many California communities are specifically crediting CalVIP-supported investments in CVI programs with driving record reductions in homicide.

7. **Community violence intervention initiatives are facing devastating funding cuts at all levels of government.** From 2022-2025, California's communities received a critical influx of short-term state, local, and funding investments in CVI initiatives that contributed to historic reductions in gun violence. Unfortunately, many of these investments are being cut or repurposed. For the 2026-2029 grant cycle, the CalVIP Grant Program received applications totaling nearly $1.1 billion in requested funding for CVI initiatives in California's most impacted communities. Without supplemental funding through the Budget, California's CalVIP Program will only have sufficient funding to award $107 million over the next three years to 10% of those applicants. This is about half the amount the state invested in CalVIP Grants from 2022-2025, even as the number of CVI initiatives requesting state funding support has tripled.

8. **Additional resources are needed to address domestic and gender-based gun violence.** California's policies and investments have made California a national leader in preventing family, intimate partner, and gender-based gun violence; women and children are about half as likely to be killed by firearms in California compared to the rest of the nation on average. However, California has not been immune to an alarming decade-long trend toward significantly increased rates of fatal and nonfatal domestic gun violence. Federal funding cuts have jeopardized existing services for domestic violence victims. State and local funding should protect these existing

services and also invest in a new program modeled on the success of CalVIP for programs that engage, heal, and protect domestic violence survivors at highest risk of homicide or nearly-lethal assault in the near future, in communities with the highest rates of domestic violence-related homicide.

9. **Additional resources are needed to ensure protective orders provide meaningful protection by proactively ensuring people ordered by a court to relinquish firearms promptly and safely comply.** California has established an array of nine court protective orders that include provisions to prevent gun violence and protect survivors of violence and abuse, including by ordering an individual found to have engaged in violent or dangerous conduct to relinquish all firearms for a temporary period. These processes also prevent that individual from passing firearm-related background checks while the court order remains in effect. While these processes create critical pathways to safety, stakeholders in California and across the U.S. report that—due to limited capacity and prioritization by courts, law enforcement, and other safety stakeholders—implementation and enforcement of these court orders against dangerous individuals often relies on passive honors' systems and reactive punishment after violence has already occurred.

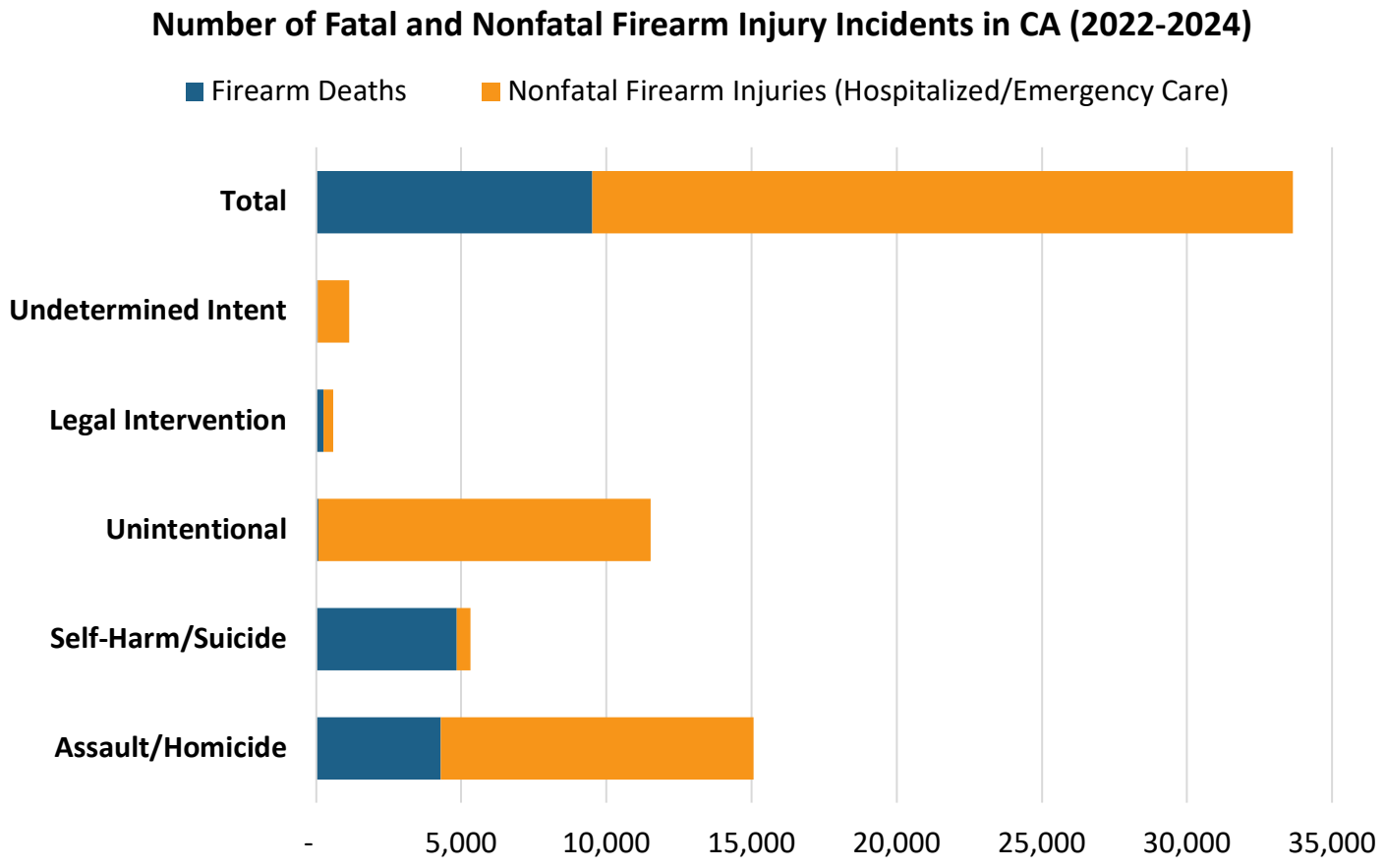
   In recent years, California has enacted nation-leading legislative reforms to improve implementation of protective orders by addressing access barriers and placing clearer mandates for courts and law enforcement to proactively serve and enforce these orders and promote firearm relinquishment compliance. Inspired by the success of some local government programs, California helped support these mandates through *one-time* General Fund investments that directed the Judicial Council of California to establish the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program. In 2023 and 2024, this program awarded $28.5 million for court-law enforcement partnerships in all 13 counties that applied for this funding. Grantees used these resources to hire court and law enforcement staff dedicated to ensuring that protective orders actually protect, and that violations of these court orders with respect to firearms are treated as a safety priority; grantees in 11 counties reported facilitating the relinquishment of over 3,000 firearms in one year. That one-time funding will begin to expire in April 2027 (for the first round of grantees) and in April 2028 (for other grantees). Sustaining funding for this program and similar protective order and relinquishment compliance efforts should be a priority for improving trust in the legal system and protecting individuals who have petitioned courts for safety interventions to prevent gun violence.

10. **Additional resources are needed to investigate illegal gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations.** As the federal government significantly dismantles federal law enforcement capacity to investigate gun trafficking and illegal ghost gun manufacturing offenses, expanded state and local resources are required to fill this dangerous vacuum. California DOJ has implemented nation-leading firearm industry oversight programs, including by building dedicated teams at DOJ's Bureau of Firearms responsible for inspecting California-based firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and gun show operations. These efforts have helped to very significantly reduce the percentage of crime guns recovered in California that were sold by a California business, and are generally tied to legislative mandates and investments that require DOJ to focus on California businesses. However, a large majority of firearms recovered from crime in California now cannot be traced to any California dealer sale. Illegal ghost gun manufacturing and interstate gun trafficking pipelines, especially from Arizona, Nevada, and Texas, play a leading role in fueling gun violence in our state. This report recommends that the Legislature approve additional and ongoing funding for California DOJ to lead an initiative to combat these leading gun trafficking sources. Additional investment and legislative authorization is needed for DOJ to increase investigative staffing capacity and develop new task force partnerships with local partners to proactively investigate and prosecute gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations fueling gun violence at the source.

Chapter 1.

Data on Gun Violence Survivors & the Cycle of Gun Violence

Data on Fatal & Nonfatal Firearm Injuries in California[45]



	Assault/ Homicide	Self-Harm/ Suicide	Unintentional	Legal Intervention[46]	Undetermined Intent	Total
Firearm Deaths	4,290	4,848	84	246	46	**9,514**
Nonfatal Firearm Injuries *(Hospitalization or Emergency Dept. admission)*	*10,777*	*474*	*11,446*	*335*	*1,099*	***24,131***
% Fatal[47]	28.5%	91.1%	0.7%	42.3%	4.0%	**28.3%**

Most of the data presented in this report focuses on statistics and trends for firearm death instead of nonfatal shootings because in recent years, many states and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have published state-level data only for fatal incidents, based on all reported death certificates. Inconsistent crime classification and reporting practices across different states and agencies can also present challenges for comparing nonfatal shooting incident data across different jurisdictions based on reported crimes.

However, in order to understand the societal impact of gun violence, as well as the importance of community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives to the trends discussed in this report, it is important to recognize that a majority of shooting victims survive. Many of those survivors are left to face life-altering physical and mental wounds, and the prospect of returning to a home or community where one or more people sought to take their life and may try to do so again. Due to data limitations regarding nonfatal gun violence, these survivors are often erased from public health and safety statistics, policy analysis, and funding decisions.

Thankfully, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) publishes state and county-level data regarding firearm deaths *and* some nonfatal firearm injuries—those that result either in hospitalization or emergency department care in the state. This CDPH nonfatal injury data does not include all people shot, shot at, or otherwise injured or abused with firearms, but provides crucial information for measuring the impact of the most medically severe nonfatal gun violence incidents in our state.

This CDPH data shows that for every person killed by firearms in California, between two to three others survive but require serious medical intervention for gunshot wounds. In the three year period from 2022-2024, 9,514 California residents died from firearm injuries, and 24,131 others were hospitalized or admitted to emergency departments for nonfatal firearm injuries. Combined, there were 33,645 fatal or medically severe gunshot wound incidents in California over this period. (This data refers to "incidents" instead of "people" because in some cases, this data may include the same person multiple times if that person was shot in separate shooting incidents over this period; as discussed further below, people who survive firearm assault shootings are at very elevated risk of being shot again, especially in the first year after surviving a nonfatal shooting).[48]

Of these 33,645 fatal or medically severe nonfatal firearm injury incidents in California:

- 45% were caused by intentional interpersonal shootings (firearm assaults or homicides).
- 34% were caused by unintentional shootings.
- 16% were caused by intentional self-harm or suicide.
- 2% were classified as the result of "legal intervention" (deaths caused by law enforcement, military operations, or others with legal authority to use deadly force acting in the line of duty, whether or not that use of force was lawful).
- 3% were classified as "undetermined intent." (Nearly all of these unclassified incidents were nonfatal firearm injuries).

Intent plays a very large role in a person's likelihood of surviving a gunshot injury. Combining fatal and medically severe nonfatal injury data shows that from 2022-2024, 91% of people who intentionally shot themselves with a firearm in California died as a result, compared to 28.5% of people who were intentionally shot by another person in a firearm assault, and 0.7% of people who were severely injured in an unintentional shooting.

Intentionally self-inflicted shootings represented 16% of all fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries combined. But because self-harm shootings are so uniquely lethal, they represented 1% of nonfatal firearm injury incidents but 51% of all firearm deaths in California over this period.

However, intentional interpersonal shootings and unintentional shootings were much more common overall. Even as California recorded significant reductions in interpersonal gun violence, from 2022 to 2024 the state recorded 10,777 firearm assault shootings in which a victim was intentionally shot by another person but survived—over double the number of self-harm-related firearm deaths and nonfatal injuries combined.

At the national level, an even larger majority of firearm deaths are suicides.[49] Again, this statistic only reflects *fatal* firearm injuries, and does not account for the much larger number of people who survive interpersonal shootings or medically serious firearm accidents.

Policy and data analysis that only focuses on fatal outcomes skews the data toward the most commonly lethal incidents (intentional self-harm and suicide), understates the public safety impact of unintentional and interpersonal shootings, and too often ignores the unique harms and dangers faced by the large majority of gun assault victims who survive.

It is also notable that this CDPH data indicates a relatively steady trend toward firearm assault injuries becoming more frequently lethal in California: In 2016, 25.5% of firearm assault injuries were fatal, but that percentage increased almost every year since, rising to 28.7% in 2024. This 3.2% increase in case fatalities for gun assault victims may seem relatively small, but has a significant impact on overall firearm homicide rates. If California had the exact same number of firearm assault injuries in 2024 but had 2016 rates of case survival, California's (record low) firearm homicide rate in 2024 would have been 11% lower, and 136 fewer people would have been killed in firearm homicides in our state in just one year. This trend toward increased case lethality is consistent with other research indicating that gun assault injuries have become more frequently fatal on average in the United States, likely due in part to market trends toward higher-caliber weapons, semiautomatic rifles, and the proliferation of illegal conversion devices designed to convert certain firearm models into automatic machine guns capable of firing many more rounds in a shorter period of time.[50] Gun assault victims shot multiple times or with higher-caliber weapons are much less likely to survive.[51]

Gun Assault Survivors & Violent Reinjury in California

From 2022-2024, there were 10,777 incidents in California in which a person survived an intentional firearm assault shooting requiring hospitalization or emergency department care.[52] Analysis of CDPH nonfatal firearm injury data shows that the overwhelming majority of these survivors were low-income Black or Hispanic men over the age of 18:[53]

- **Sex:** 87% of firearm assault survivors were male.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Over three-quarters of firearm assault survivors were identified as Hispanic or Black.[54]
- **Age:** About three-quarters (74%) of firearm assault survivors were between the ages of 15-39.[55] 2% of firearm assault survivors were under the age of 15 and 10% were under the age of 18. Note that gun violence prevention programs that focus exclusively on minors do not serve the 90% of gun assault survivors who are over 18.
- **Health insurance:** 70% of firearm assault survivors received health insurance coverage through California's Medicaid program (Medi-Cal) for lower-income residents. Additionally, 7% were publicly insured through other public health insurance programs, and 9% were uninsured. This is another important indicator that interpersonal gun violence disproportionately impacts people in poverty. It also has important implications for the role victim service and health care systems play—especially Medi-Cal—in providing effectively tailored trauma recovery and support services for shooting survivors in their care.
- **Length of stay in hospital:** Of the 5,354 patients hospitalized for firearm assault injuries:
    - 16% were treated and released within one night of being admitted to the hospital. Most required longer-term care and medical intervention.
    - 52% were hospitalized at the initial admitting hospital for at least five days. One-quarter of those survivors hospitalized for five days or more were subsequently transferred to other hospitals for further care and treatment before being released.

This CDPH data indicates that from 2022-2024, the average (modal) gun assault survivor in California[56] was a Hispanic or Black male in his twenties, admitted to the hospital on a weekend, hospitalized for over one week, and publicly insured through the Medi-Cal program for low-income Californians.[57]

After shooting survivors are treated and discharged, many are left to grapple with life-altering traumas, impairments, economic challenges, and physical and mental wounds. Many may require significant and costly post-discharge care to regain the ability to walk, talk, or eat, and may be at risk of losing their livelihood after nearly losing their life.[58]

Many shooting survivors are also at extremely elevated risk of being shot again and killed after they are discharged from the hospital back into their community and the precarious circumstances that led to their initial victimization. Researchers affiliated with the California Firearm Violence Research Center followed outcomes for patients hospitalized or treated in emergency departments for gun assault injuries in California from 2005-2013. Researchers found that, compared to the statewide average, the firearm homicide rate was **over 60 times higher** for people who had previously survived one nonfatal firearm assault injury, and **over 120 times higher** for people who had survived multiple.[59]

Another study followed outcomes for gun assault survivors who were treated and discharged from a major trauma center in Oakland, California. Of the gun assault patients who survived an initial

shooting but then died within five years after being discharged from the hospital, **79% were killed** in a subsequent firearm homicide.[60] Gun assault survivors were at especially high risk during the first year after discharge, when they were **over five times more likely to die** overall compared to patients who had been hospitalized for non-firearm assault injuries including stabbings.[61]

To place shooting survivors' risk of violent reinjury in context, it is important to note that nationwide, a large majority of shootings do not lead to an arrest. An analysis of 202 municipal police departments nationwide estimated that in 2017, only 30% of aggravated gun assaults and 46% of firearm homicides were cleared by arrest or other means.[62] In the typical case, a gun assault survivor may be returned to a community where people who nearly killed them remain at large and undeterred.

Researchers have documented how these dynamics may make it more likely that a subset of survivors or others close to them will resort to vigilante retaliation, fueling cycles of shootings between street groups, cliques, or gangs that can spread like a contagion through social networks and leave many more people in surrounding communities traumatized and vulnerable in the crossfire.[63] This cycle of shootings, injury, trauma, and retaliation means there is a significant overlap between those who have been direct or secondary victims of community gun violence—meaning people have been shot or shot at directly or whose close family members, friends, or group members have been shot or shot at—and those who later commit community gun violence.[64] Most victims do not become offenders, but most people involved in perpetrating community gun violence have been victims of violence or had a person close to them victimized.[65] Some gang shootings are connected to economic factors such as competition for illegal markets, but a larger number of community violence shootings are committed by people, including gang members, to settle personal conflicts—what experts refer to as "expressive" violence instead of "instrumental" violence committed for economic gain.[66]

These cycles of community gun violence perpetrated by a relatively small number of highest-risk people drive a significant portion of gun violence. Researchers with the National Network for Safe Communities examined data from nearly two dozen cities across the U.S. and found that on average, at least half of homicides and 55% of nonfatal shootings in those cities were perpetrated by and/or against people affiliated with gangs, street groups, or social networks whose members engaged in violence to settle personal conflicts. These groups were found to make up less than 1% of the population of those cities, even in cities with some of the highest rates of violence in the country, yet were connected to at least half these cities' shootings.[67]

There are effective strategies for intervention, prevention, and aftercare that specifically and intensively[68] engage gun assault patients and other individuals at highest risk with a range of supports to promote their safety, trauma recovery, and desistance from violence. These strategies fall under the umbrella term "community violence intervention" or CVI.[69] These interventions use data-driven processes to identify and relentlessly engage individuals at highest risk through violence prevention professionals who have themselves often been survivors of gun or gang violence. Through assertive, often daily engagement, these professionals work to break through and build positive relationships with a population that has often been violently traumatized and alienated from criminal justice, health, mental health, victim service, and other systems and supports.[70] These relationships provide the foundation for short-term safety improvements and long-term behavioral change through individualized safety plans that often combine cognitive behavioral interventions, trauma counseling, assertive life coaching and mentorships, conflict mediation and crisis response, and shelter and relocation away from dangerous circumstances.[71] If they receive evidence-based CVI services, gun assault patients and others at highest risk are, on average, less likely to be shot again, and less likely to be involved in retaliatory violence.[72]

However, a 2019 report by the California Health Benefits Review Program estimated that just 3% of California Medi-Cal enrollees treated for community-violence-related injuries received these services

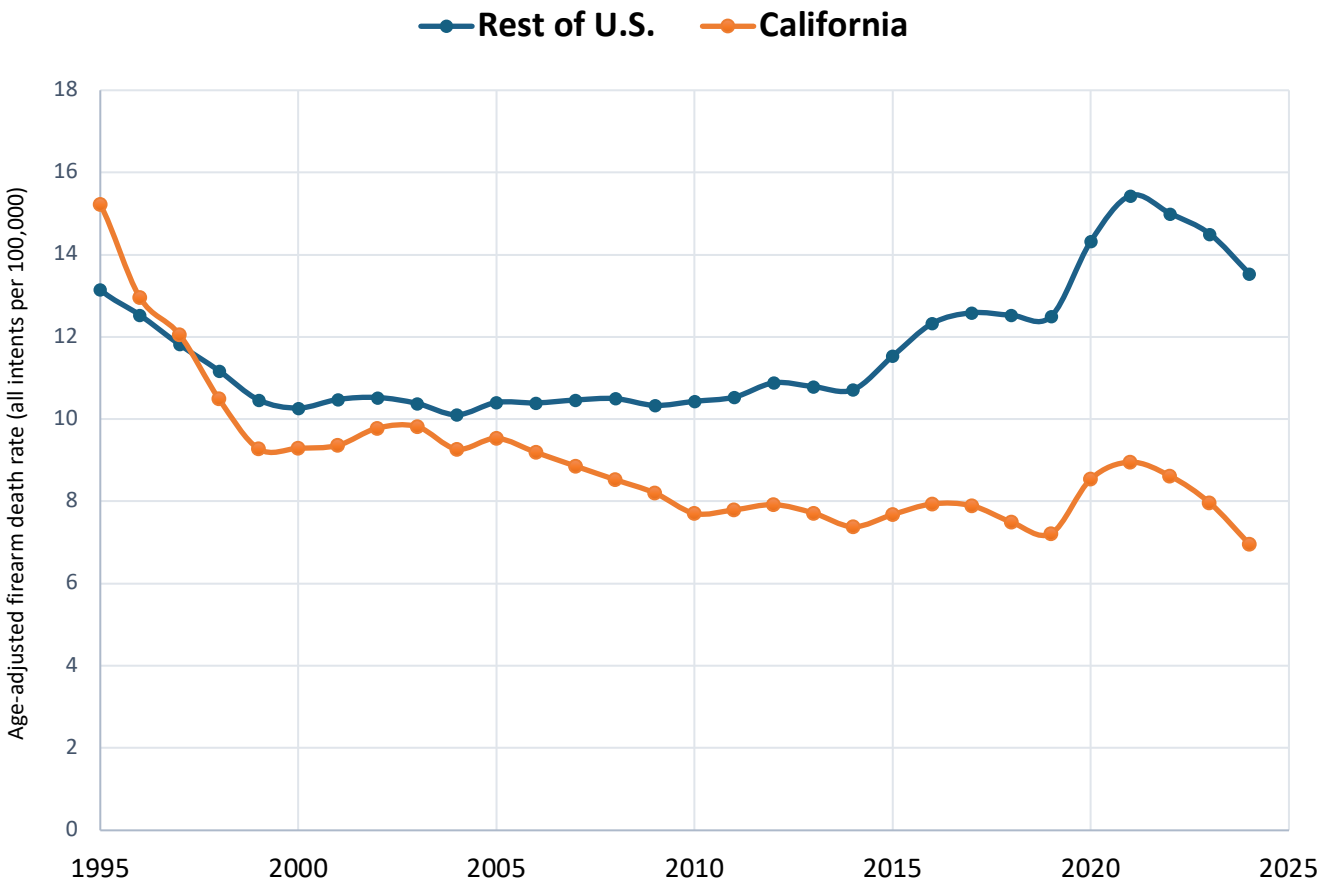
in California.[73] (As described above, Medi-Cal is the health insurer for a large majority of gun assault survivors in California.[74]) Since that 2019 report, California has made substantial new investments to help expand and sustain CVI initiatives through the Break the Cycle of Violence Act and its California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program.

The impact of these investments is reflected in data in Chapter 2 showing large firearm homicide reductions for young Black and Hispanic men in particular and in the CVI case studies in Chapter 4 describing how cities with some of the highest rates of gun violence in our state have used CVI investments to transform public safety.

Chapter 2.

Data on California's Historic Progress Against Gun Violence

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Overall Firearm-Related Mortality Rates



In 2024, California achieved its lowest firearm death rate on record in CDC data. (This was a record low for both age-adjusted and non-age-adjusted ("crude") firearm death rates; where available, age-adjusted rates are generally used to compare trends over time and across different states.)

California has made substantial long-term progress in reducing per capita rates of firearm-related mortality over the last three decades, especially compared to trends over the rest of the nation (the other 49 states and D.C. combined).

Final CDC data for 2024 shows that California's age-adjusted[75] per capita firearm death rate (6.96 per 100,000) was about half (49% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S. (13.54 per 100,000), and the seventh lowest out of all 50 states. **This was the largest gap on record between firearm mortality rates in California and the rest of the U.S.**

That "rest of the U.S." grouping includes multiple populous states with much lower rates of firearm-related mortality than California (including Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York), excluding those states would show even larger disparities between California and the rest of the nation.

Impact in Lives Saved

In an August 2023 report, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention published data showing that if the rest of the U.S. had the same firearm death rate per capita as California over the preceding decade, nearly 140,000 fewer Americans would have been killed by bullet wounds in those 10 years alone.

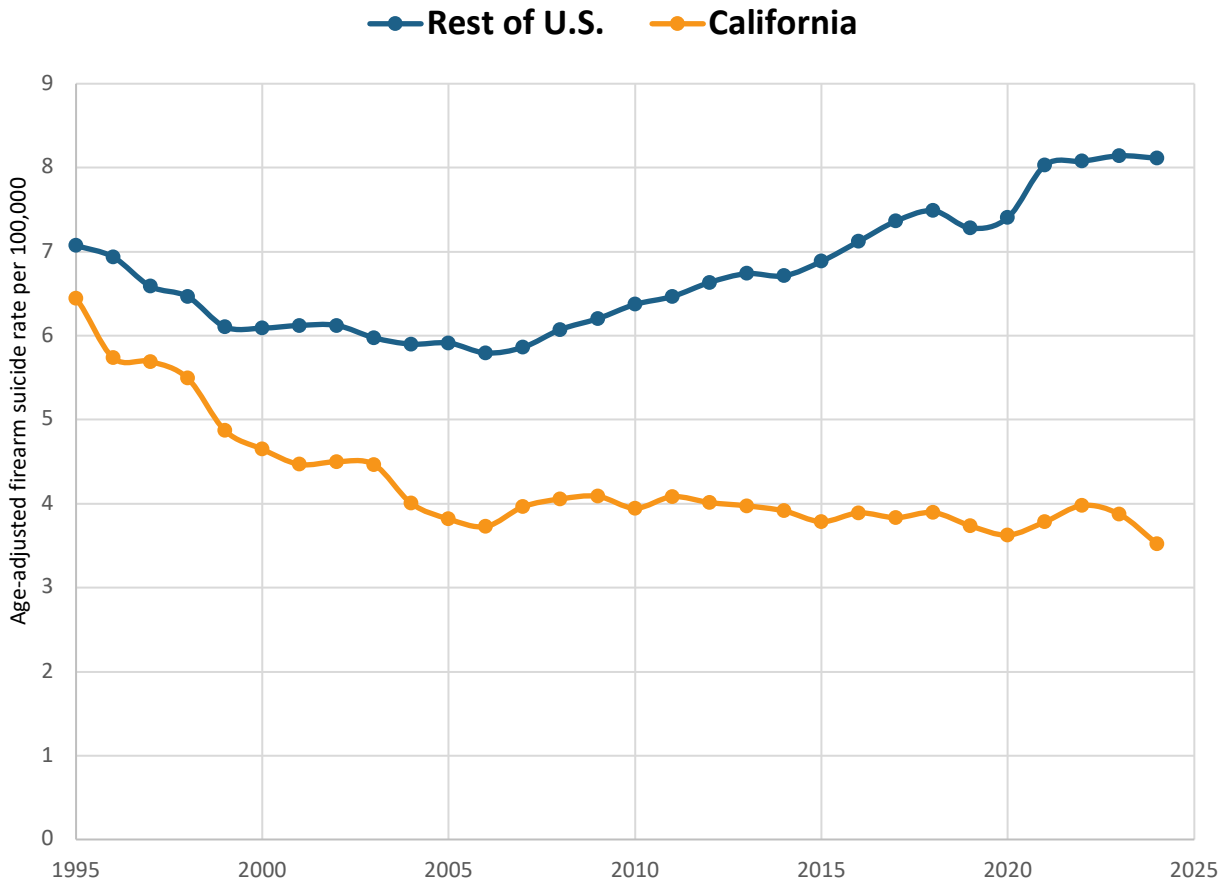
Less than three years later, that statistic is already significantly out of date:[76]

- Currently, if the rest of the U.S. had the same firearm death rate *per capita* as California in the decade from 2015-2024, there would have been about 160,000 fewer American gun deaths in that decade alone.

- And if the firearm death rate in the rest of the U.S. over that decade had matched California's new record low rate, there would have been 185,000 fewer American gun deaths in one decade alone.

- Conversely, if in the past decade, California's firearm death rate had matched the rate for the rest of the U.S., California would have lost nearly 22,000 more people to fatal firearm injuries in a single decade, and tens of thousands more would likely have been shot in this state.

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Suicide Rates



In 2024, California achieved its lowest firearm suicide rate on record in CDC data.

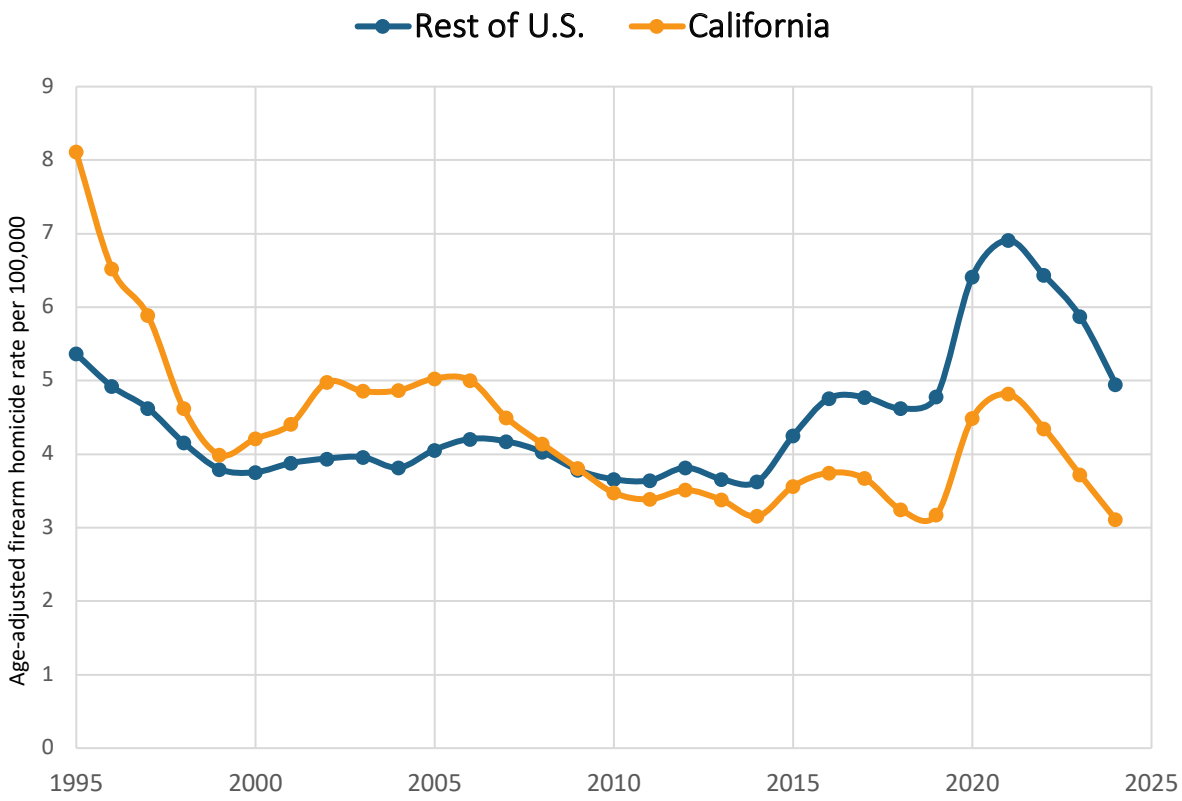
30 years ago, California had slightly lower rates of firearm suicide compared to the rest of the nation on average, but this gap has grown nearly every year for decades.

In 2024, California's age-adjusted per capita firearm suicide rate (3.52 per 100,000) was less than half (57% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S. (8.12 per 100,000). **This represented the largest gap on record between firearm suicide rates in California and the rest of the nation on average.**

For the rest of the U.S., the year with the lowest firearm suicide rate on record was 2006; since then, firearm suicide rates in the rest of the nation have increased nearly every year, and rose by 40% between 2006 and 2024.

In California, in comparison, firearm suicide rates remained relatively stable over this period, falling by 6% to a new record low in 2024.

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Homicide Rates

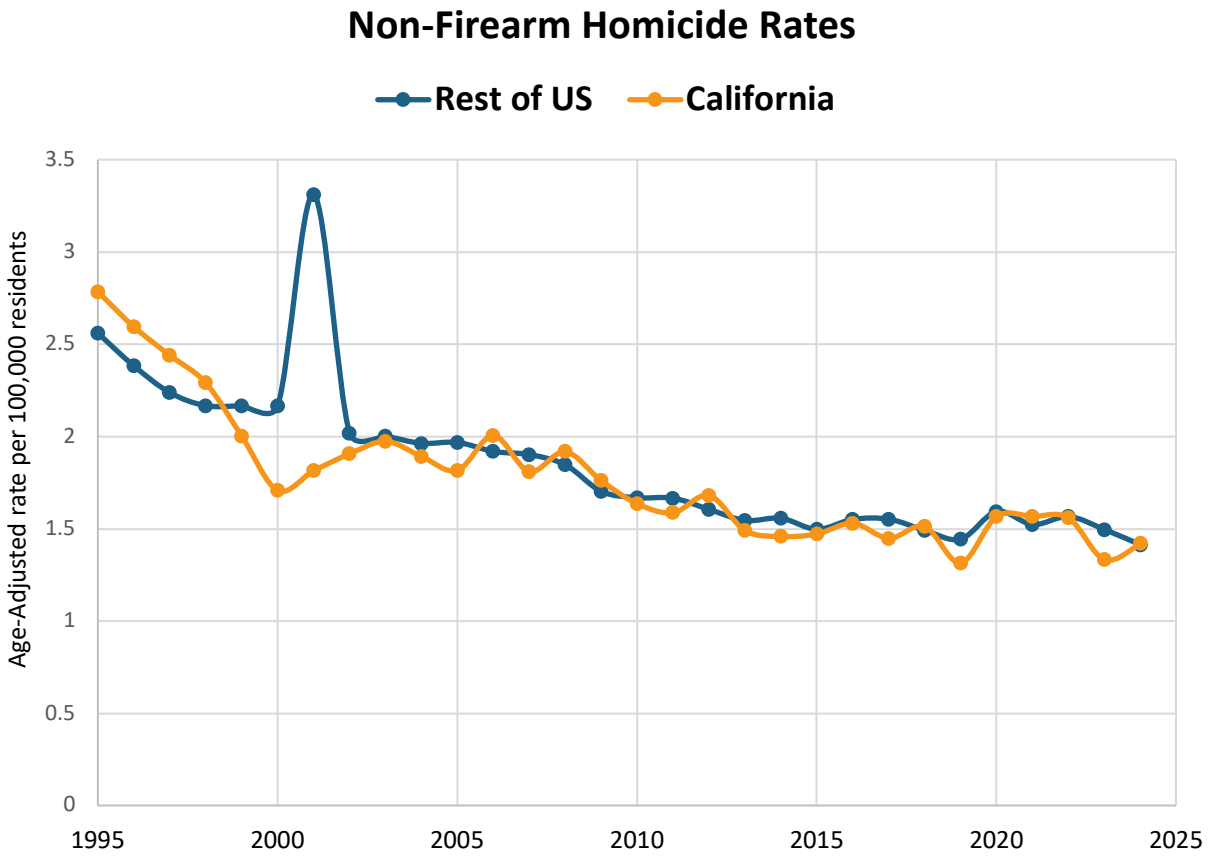


In 2024, California achieved its lowest firearm homicide rate on record in CDC data. That year, California also recorded the lowest number of people killed in firearm homicides since 1974, when California's population was about half as large.

In the early 1990s, California was a unique outlier with the third *highest* firearm homicide rate of any state in the country. In the decades since, California has transformed its gun violence prevention laws, policies, and investments, and has made significant long-term progress. Even after years of large reductions, as recently as 2009, California still had higher firearm homicide rates than the rest of the U.S. combined. However, by 2024, California's age-adjusted per capita firearm homicide rate (3.12 per 100,000) was 37% below the rate recorded for the rest of the nation (4.95 per 100,00). **This represented the largest safety gap on record between firearm homicide rates in California and the rest of the U.S.**

Like the rest of the nation, California recorded very large spikes in firearm homicides in 2020 and 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and large decreases from 2022-2024. But outside California, the firearm homicide rate across the rest of the U.S. was 37% higher in 2024 than it had been one decade earlier. Over the same period, California reduced firearm homicides to a new record low. California's firearm homicide rate fell by 35% from 2021 to 2024, and CDPH data indicates that nonfatal firearm assaults fell by 37%.[77] Provisional data indicates that these record reductions continued in 2025.

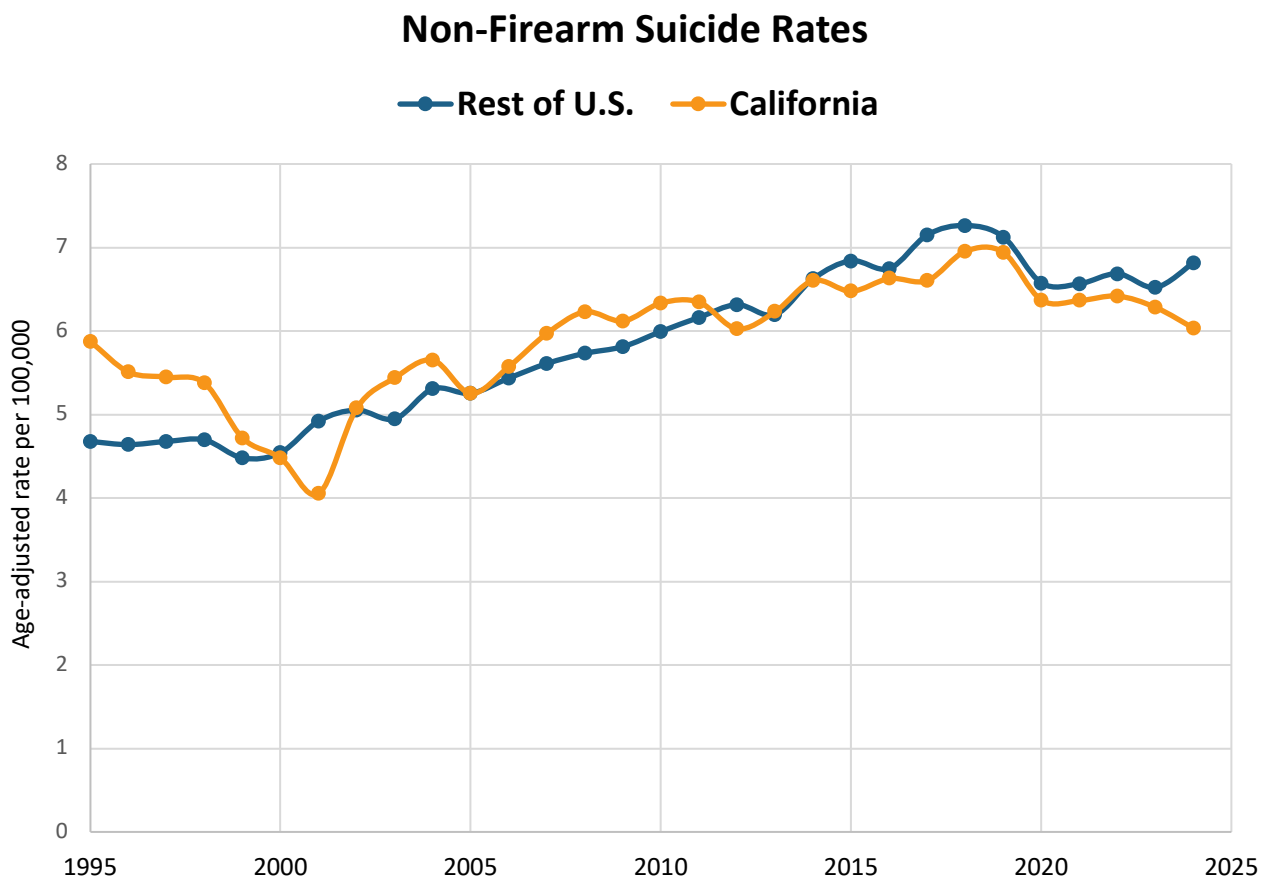
Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Non-Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates



Despite important differences between California and other states on a range of public health and safety policies and expenditures, demography, poverty, criminal justice, behavioral health, and more, California's homicide and suicide rates and trends have been nearly identical to the rest of the nation for decades—*when firearm deaths are excluded*. (A notable exception occurred in 2001, when thousands of victims were killed in non-firearm homicides in other states as a result of the September 11th terror attacks). The fact that California now has much lower rates of homicide and suicide overall compared to the rest of the nation is mostly (or, in the homicide context, entirely) explained by California's comparative progress on reducing *firearm* deaths.

In 2024, compared to the rest of the U.S., California's:

- Non-firearm homicide rate was 1% higher.
- Firearm homicide rate was 37% lower (and a new record low for California).
- Combined homicide rate was 29% lower (and a new record low for California).



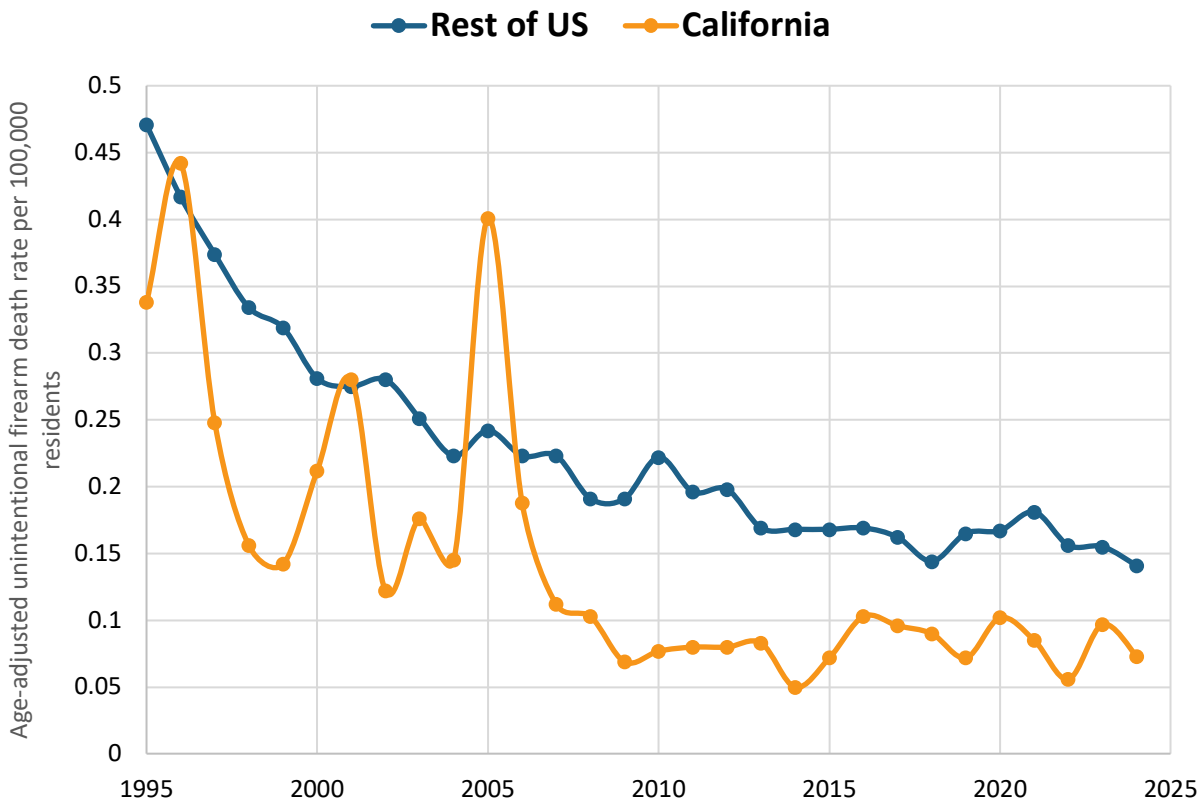
In 2024, compared to the rest of the U.S., California's:

- Non-firearm suicide rate was 11% lower.
- Firearm suicide rate was 57% lower (and a new record low for California).
- Overall combined suicide rate was 33% lower.

These graphs show that in both California and the rest of the U.S., there has been a long-term trend toward moderate *decreases* in non-firearm homicide, and *increases* in non-firearm suicide, with relatively small disruption to these trends during and after the pandemic.

That relative stability during the pandemic is particularly notable for homicides because, in 2020, the U.S. experienced the largest single-year increase in homicide in our nation's history.[78] The graph of non-firearm homicides shows almost no trace of that record surge in violence, indicating that our nation's pandemic-era surge in murder was almost entirely a crisis of gun violence. (As discussed in more detail on pages 46-49 below, available data in California shows that this pandemic surge in gun violence was likely driven in significant part by a surge in gun violence involving ghost guns.[79])

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Unintentional Firearm Death Rates

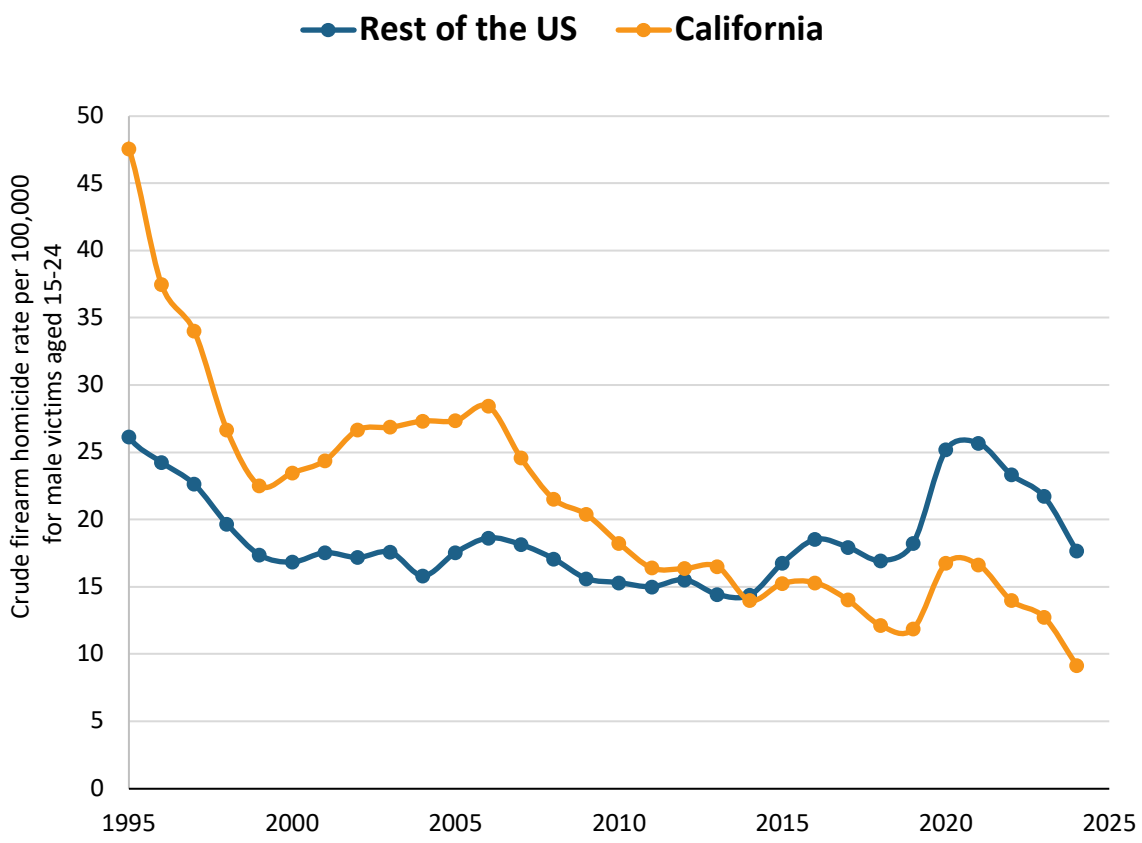


California has maintained much lower rates of unintentional firearm mortality than the rest of the nation on average for nearly two decades. In 2024, the rest of the U.S. recorded its lowest unintentional firearm death rate on record in CDC data. But California's unintentional firearm death rate that same year (0.073 per 100,000) was much lower than that record low, **about half (48% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S.** combined (0.141 per 100,000).

California has been a national leader in efforts to reduce unintentional firearm deaths and injuries, including through policies requiring new handgun models sold in the state to pass product safety testing and incorporate safety features designed to prevent unintentional shootings; and requiring that firearm owners safely secure their firearms when they are not in use, especially to prevent unsupervised access by minors.

As discussed in Chapter 1, data regarding unintentional firearm *deaths* very significantly understates the public health and safety impact of unintentional shootings. For every person killed by unintentional gunshot injuries in California, more than 130 others survive but require hospitalization or emergency department care for often very severe, unintentional gunshot injuries.

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Homicide Rates for Young Men and Boys Aged 15-24

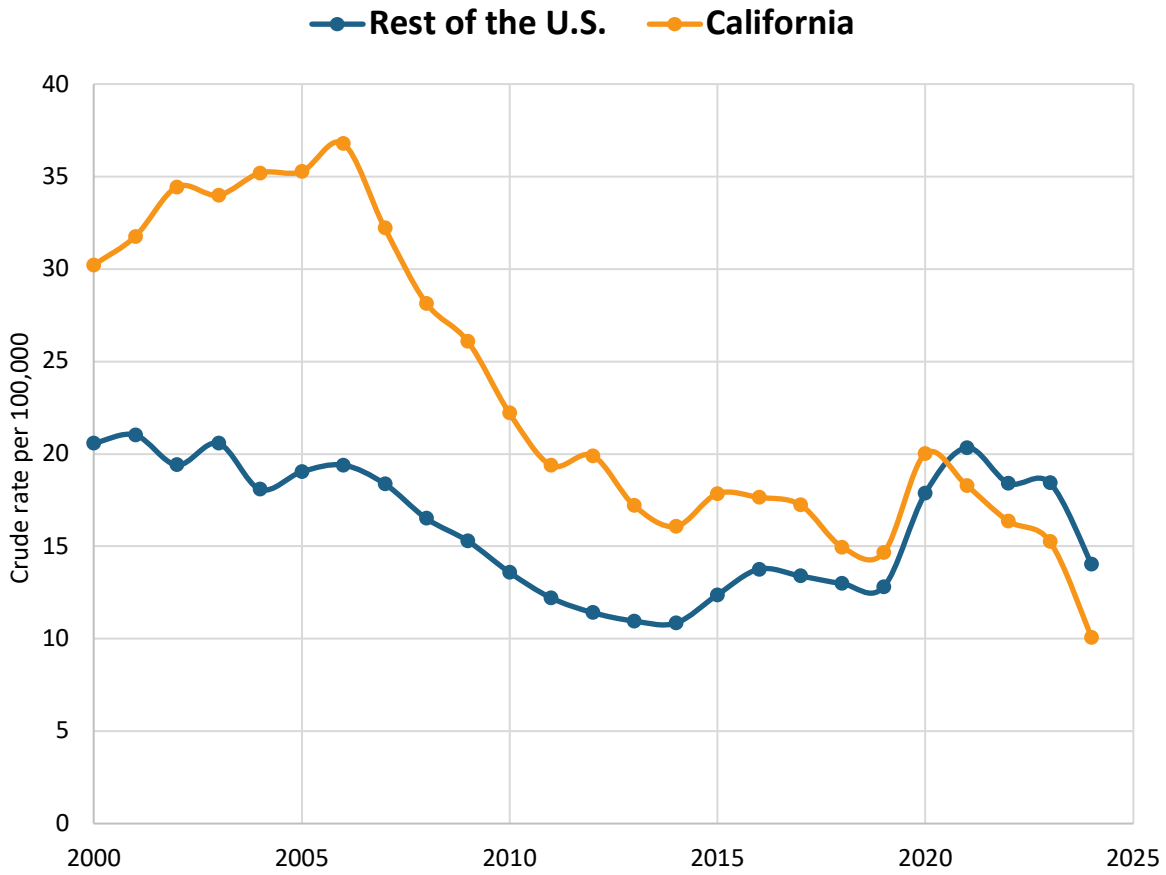


CDC data shows that the age groups that suffer the highest rates of firearm homicide victimization in the U.S. are young men and boys aged 15-19 and 20-24.[80] California has made especially substantial progress in reducing firearm homicide rates for this highest-risk group. **In 2024, California achieved its lowest firearm homicide victimization rate on record for 15-24-year-old males in CDC data**. 2024's record low was 23% below the state's previous record low in 2019, and two-thirds (67%) below the rate recorded in 2004, just two decades earlier.

In 1995, California had the third highest firearm homicide rate for 15-24-year-old males out of all 50 states—82% *higher* than the rest of the nation. One important turning point occurred in 2007 when the City of Los Angeles began to establish and fund one of the nation's first comprehensive CVI initiatives, described as a "Marshall Plan to end gang violence," through a new Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development.[81]

Because California was starting from a uniquely high rate of gun violence for young men and boys, even after years of large declines, as recently as 2013, California still had higher firearm homicide rates for this age group than the rest of the U.S. But by 2024, the firearm homicide rate for 15-24-year-old males in California (9.16 per 100,000) was **about half (48% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S.** (17.65 per 100,000). This represented the **largest safety gap on record** between California and the rest of the nation for this highest-risk age group.

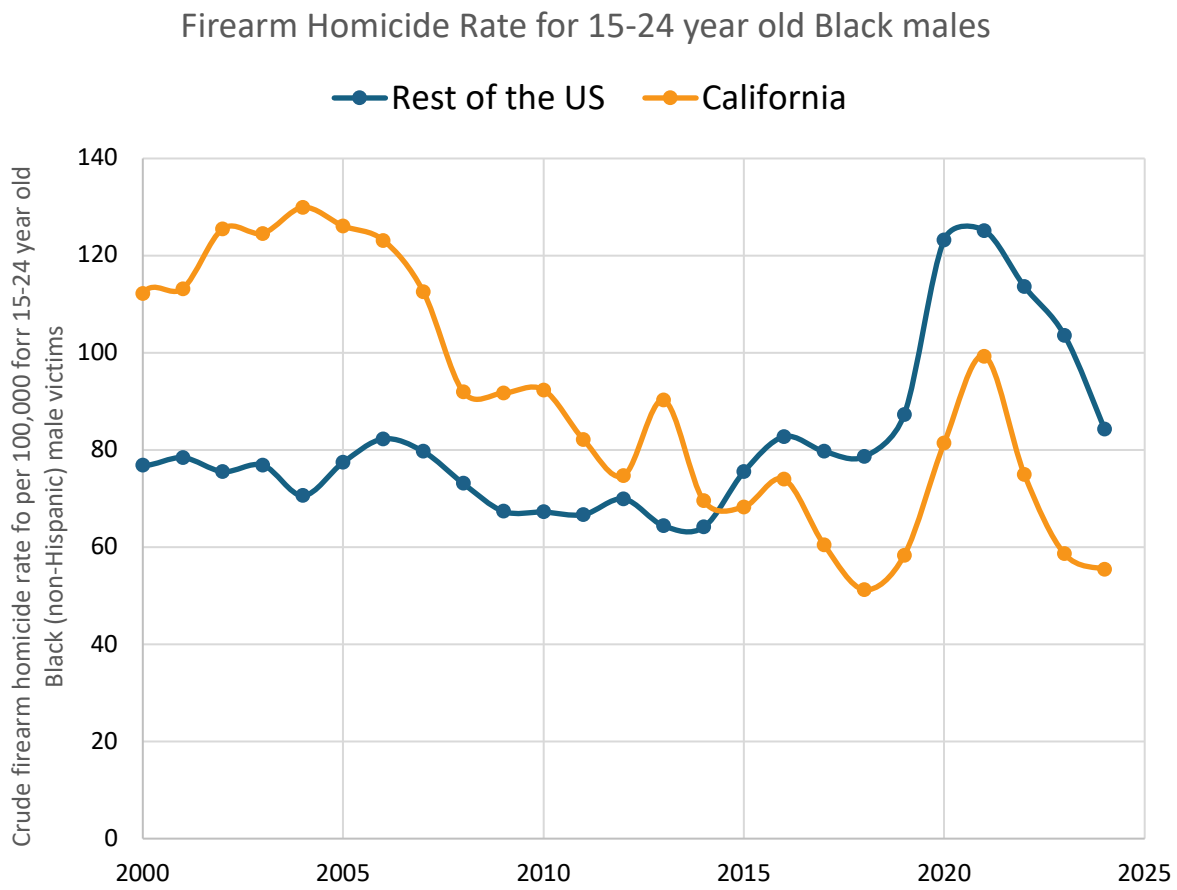
Firearm Homicide Rate for 15-24-year old Hispanic males



California has made especially strong recent progress in reducing firearm homicide victimization rates for Hispanic men and boys in the 15–24-year-old age group. For this population, California's record low in 2024 was 31% below the state's previous record low in 2019, half (50% below) the rate recorded in 2020, and 71% below the rate recorded in 2004, just two decades earlier.

Young Hispanic men and boys have faced uniquely high rates of firearm homicide victimization in California, even after our state became significantly safer than the rest of the U.S. for most other demographic groups on average. California's large reductions were occurring from a uniquely high starting point. As a result, even after very significant reductions starting in 2007, California's firearm homicide rate for Hispanic men and boys aged 15-24-year-old was still higher than the rest of the U.S. as recently as 2020. But by 2024, California's firearm homicide rate for this population (10.07 per 100,000) fell to 28% below the rest of the U.S. (14.03 per 100,000).

In 2024, California also achieved a record low firearm homicide rate for 15-24-year-old (non-Hispanic) White boys and men, and the state's second lowest rate on record for 15-24-year-old (non-Hispanic) Black boys and men. (This demographic breakdown is not available from the CDC for other racial or ethnic groups for whom there were fewer than 10 firearm homicides in California per year among 15–24-year-olds men and boys, although deaths for all racial and ethnic groups are included in the aggregate statistics for all 15–24-year-olds).

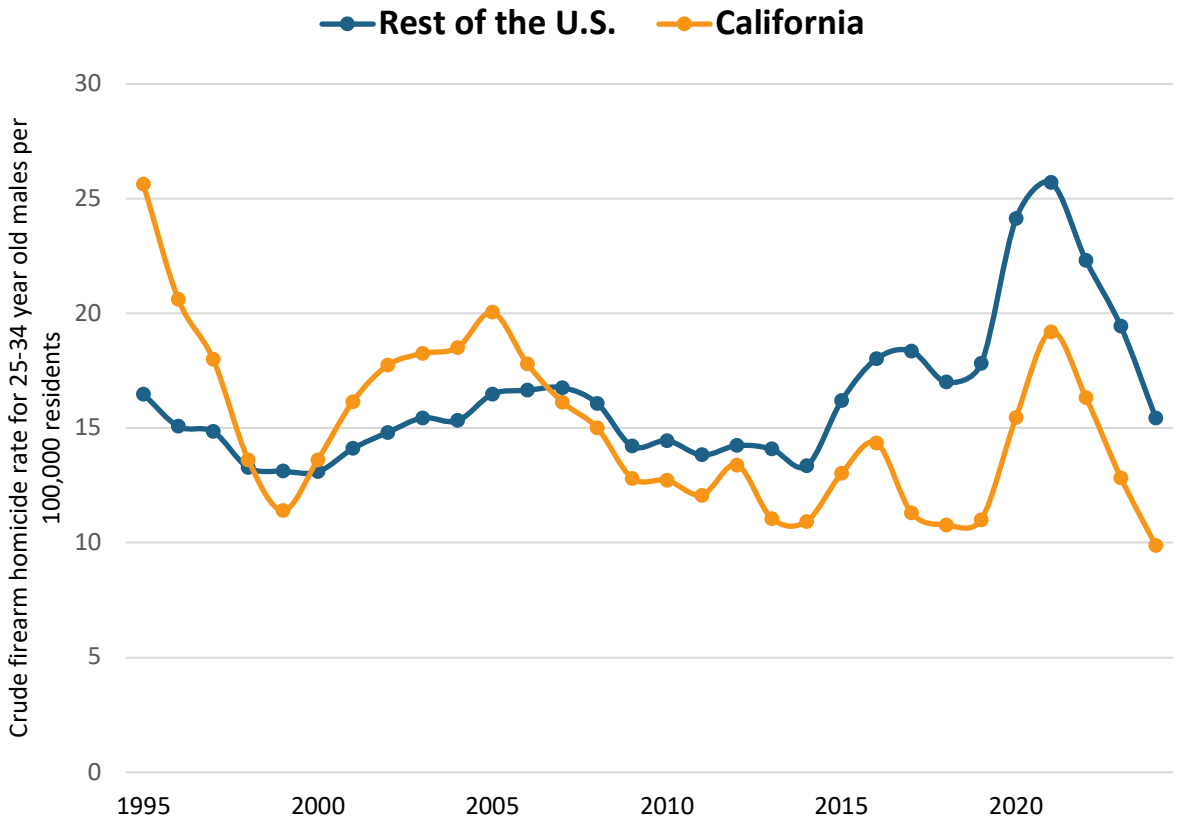


Among 15–24-year-olds, Black men and boys have suffered by far the highest rates of firearm homicide victimization of any racial or ethnic group, in both California and the rest of the U.S. Even after years of reductions, as recently as 2014, California's firearm homicide rate for these Black young men and boys was still higher than the rest of the nation.

But a large safety gap has emerged over the past decade: From 2014 to 2024, firearm homicide rates for Black men and boys in this age group fell by 20% in California but increased by 31% in the rest of the nation. By 2024, California's firearm homicide victimization rate for Black men and boys in this age group (55.49 per 100,000) was 34% below the rest of the U.S. (84.29 per 100,000).

Black young men and boys suffered particularly large increases in firearm homicide during the pandemic in both California and the rest of the U.S. Then, from 2021 to 2024, California's firearm homicide rate for 15-24-year-old Black men and boys fell by 44% to the second lowest rate on record.

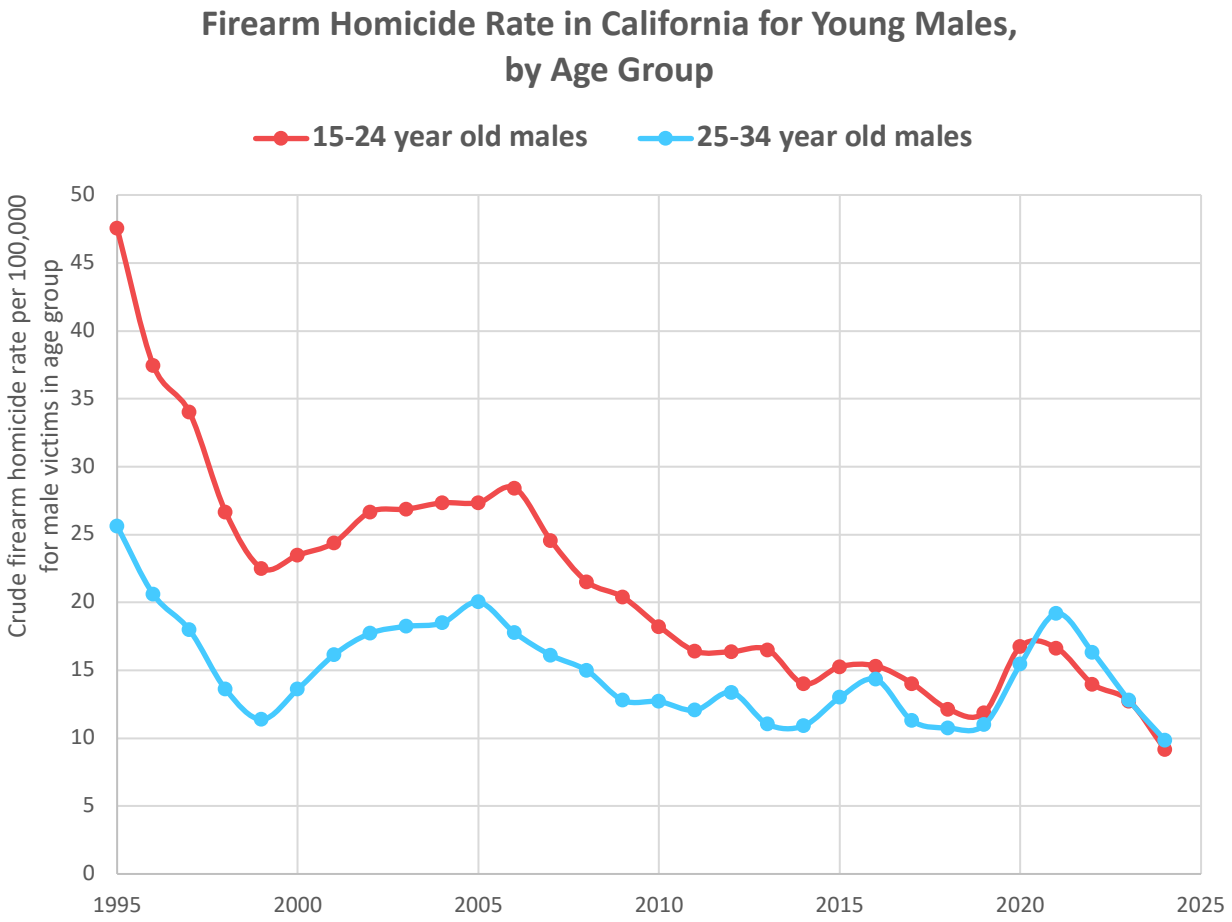
Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Homicide Rates for Male Victims Aged 25-34



After 15-24 year old boys and men, the age groups with the highest firearm homicide victimization rate nationally are men aged 25-29 and 30-34.[82] **In 2024, California achieved its lowest firearm homicide rate on record for 25-34-year-old men in CDC data.** 2024's record low was 8% below the state's previous record low in 2018, and about half (46% below) the rate recorded in 2004, two decades earlier.

A generation ago, California was an outlier with uniquely high rates of gun violence for men in this age group. In 1995, California had the fifth highest firearm homicide rate for 25-34-year-old men out of all 50 states—56% *higher* than the rest of the nation. But by 2024, the per capita firearm homicide rate for 25-34-year-old males in California (9.88 per 100,000) was **36% below the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S.** (15.45 per 100,000).

This progress was driven by especially large reductions in firearm homicide rates for Black and Hispanic men in this age group, reversing large spikes during the pandemic. From 2021 to 2024, California cut firearm homicide rates by more than half (52%) for 25-34-year-old Hispanic men, and by 48% for Black men aged 25-34, a **new record low for Black men in this age group**, who have historically had by far the highest rates of firearm homicide victimization.

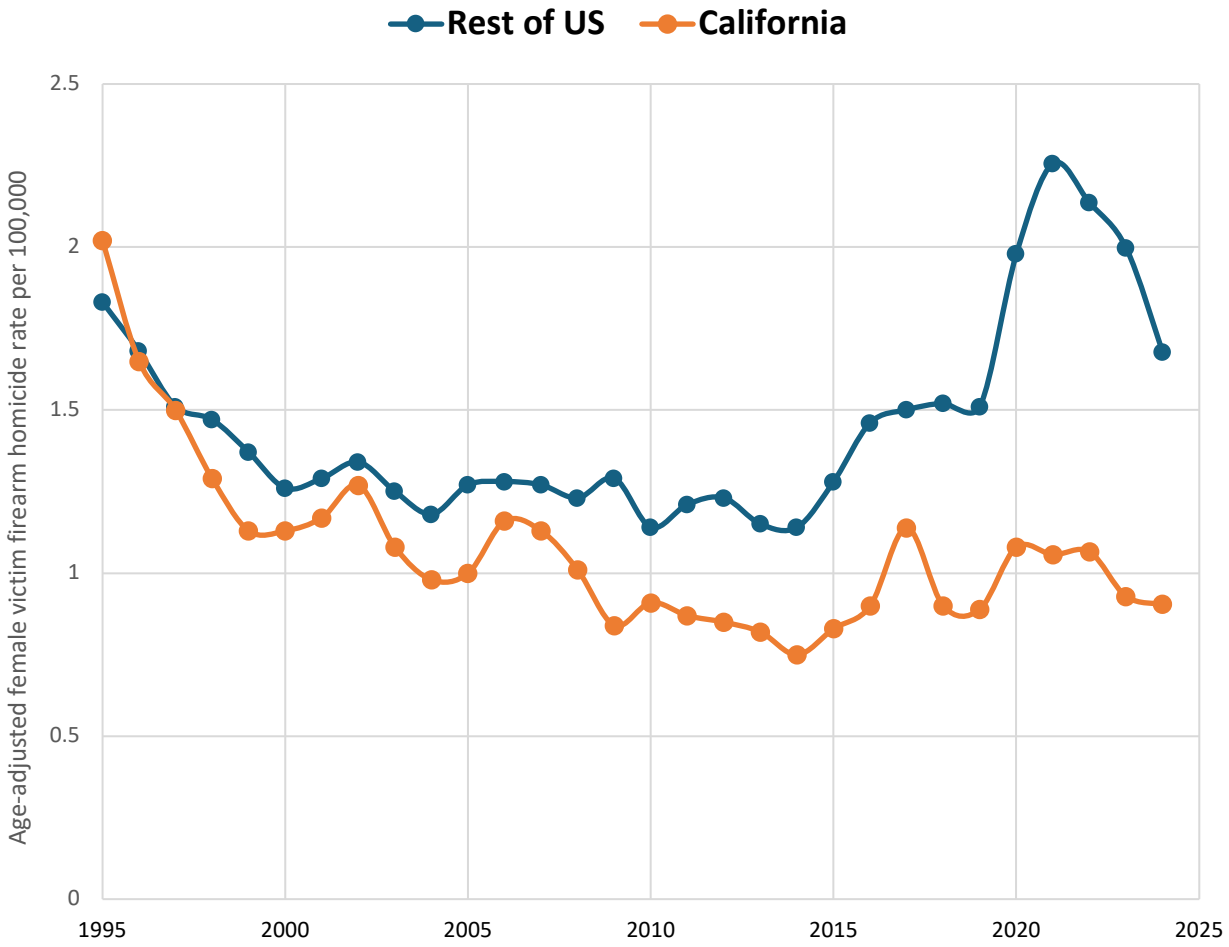


In 2024, California achieved record low firearm homicide victimization rates for men and boys in both the 15-24 and 25-34-year-old age groups. But California's reductions have been especially large among 15-24-year-olds, over both the short-term and longer-term.

Historically, this younger cohort has had much higher rates of firearm homicide both in California and nationally. In 1995, California's firearm homicide rate for males was 86% higher for 15-24-year-olds compared to 25–34-year-olds.

But since 2021, 25–34-year-old men have become, narrowly, the age group with the highest firearm homicide victimization rates in California. This is a contrast with current statistics for the rest of the nation as a whole and with California's historical dynamics in which gun violence was often deemed synonymous with youth violence. State and local investments in violence prevention and intervention should be balanced to address risk across the age spectrum.

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Homicide Rates for Female Victims



While California set historic lows in 2024 for firearm homicide rates overall, especially for young men and teen boys, California achieved record low firearm homicides rates for female and child-victim firearm homicides in 2014. Since that time, our nation has experienced an enormous spike in domestic violence-related gun violence, especially for women of color. As the graph above shows, California's policies and investments have helped to mitigate this devastating national trend and avert *many* tragedies. The gap between the blue and orange lines on this graph is measured in thousands of brutal tragedies that could have been prevented through policies and investments like California's. But for female-victim homicide trends, the safety impact of California's policies over the past decade is unfortunately measured in much smaller increases compared to the rest of the U.S., instead of the record-setting lows California recorded for firearm homicides overall.

In California and nationally, a majority of female homicide victims are killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member, as discussed in more detail in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's report on *Domestic Violence Involving Firearms* (2023).[83] There is limited recent data available to track rates and trends for domestic violence-related homicides across different states, but CDC data on female-victim firearm homicides reflects the disproportionate impact of family and intimate partner-related violence on women and girls.

California was an early national leader in enacting policies to address the intersecting dangers of domestic violence and gun violence, including through policies designed to prevent individuals who

have engaged in domestic abuse to keep or acquire firearms or ammunition while subject to domestic violence-related protective orders or after they are convicted of domestic violence crimes. As a result, California has had lower rates of female-victim firearm homicide compared to the rest of the U.S. since 1996—much earlier than for male victims. This safety gap widened considerably in recent years, especially during the pandemic.

In 2024, California's age-adjusted per capita firearm homicide rate for female victims (0.91 per 100,000) was **about half (46% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S**. (1.68 per 100,00); from 2021-2023, California's female-victim firearm homicide rate was less than half the rate for the rest of the nation.

While California has had much lower rates of firearm homicide for female victims compared to the rest of the nation, both California and the rest of the U.S. experienced record low female-victim firearm homicide rates in 2014 followed by increases, to different degrees. Across the rest of the U.S., the female-victim firearm homicide rate nearly doubled from 2014 to 2021 (increasing by 98%), with large increases between 2014 and 2019 followed by a 49% spike between 2019 and 2021. Female-victim firearm homicide rates increased across all racial groups, but these trends disproportionately impacted Black women and girls. From 2014 to 2021 the firearm homicide rate for Black female victims doubled in California and nearly tripled in the rest of the U.S.

During the pandemic, there was a surge in domestic violence shootings, especially in states with the weakest gun safety laws; researchers examining this increase in female-victim domestic violence shootings found that "states with weaker gun laws bore the brunt of the violence."[84]

Across the rest of the nation, female-victim firearm homicide rates fell in 2022, 2023, and 2024, but still remained 47% higher in 2024 compared to one decade earlier. Compared to 2014, in the rest of the U.S., firearm homicides rates in 2024 were 23% higher for White females, 37% higher for Hispanic females, 65% higher for Native American females, and 89% higher for Black females. (This CDC data is not available for other racial or ethnic groups for these years).

California's gun and domestic violence prevention policies likely helped avert the *much* larger spikes seen in other states. During and after the pandemic, women and girls were about twice as likely to be murdered with firearms in the rest of the country compared to California, and the increase in female-victim firearm homicide rates from 2019 to 2021 was 2.6 times larger across the rest of the U.S. In recent years, there has also been a historically large gap between female-victim firearm homicide rates in California and the rest of the U.S.

However, California has not been immune to these devastating national trends. In California, the firearm homicide rate for female victims increased by a smaller but substantial 19% from 2014 to 2019, and by another 19% between 2019 and 2021. California's female-victim firearm homicide rate fell in 2023 and 2024 but remained 21% higher in 2024 compared to one decade earlier. Compared to 2014, California's 2024 rate was 8% higher for White females, 27% higher for Hispanic females, and 61% higher for Black females. (This data is not available for female victims in other racial groups for whom there were fewer than 10 firearm homicides in California per year).

This and other data discussed in Chapter 5 indicates that there has been a substantial increase in domestic violence survivors' exposure to gun violence over the past decade, both nationally and in California. This increase impacted all racial and ethnic groups but disproportionately impacted Hispanic, Native American, and especially Black women.

The 2019-2021 surge in female-victim firearm homicides across the U.S. was fueled *in part* by the effects of the pandemic, which exacerbated stressors and risk factors for perpetration of domestic

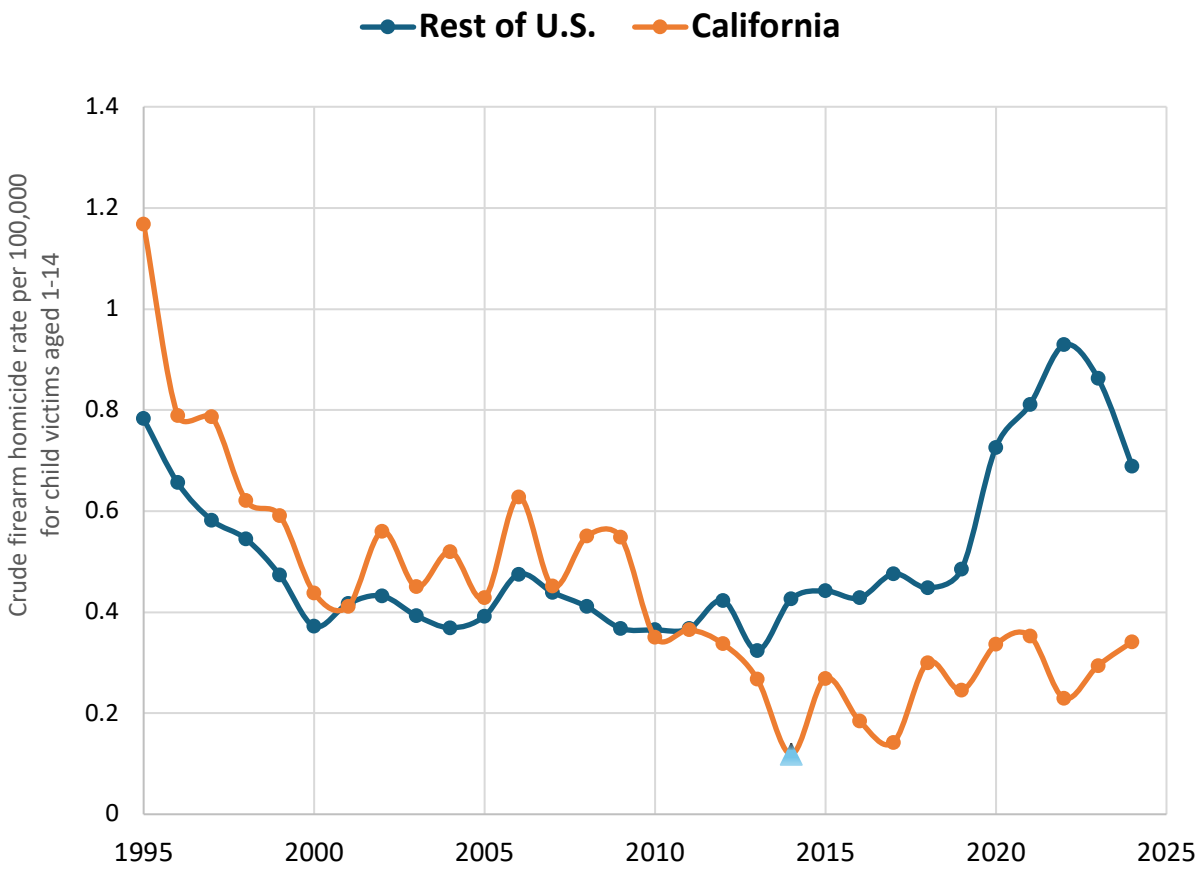
violence; isolated survivors from people capable of intervening to help report abuse and protect them; and disrupted the work of victim service providers and shelters, law enforcement, civil and criminal courts, and other sources of safety and shelter in the community.[85]

It is important to emphasize, though, that this national surge in femicide was specifically a surge in shootings: From 2019-2021, there was a 2% decrease in rates of *non-firearm* female-victim homicide in the United States but a 49% increase in rates of female-victim *firearm* homicides. **This surge in domestic violence shootings occurred amidst a record surge in sales of fully assembled firearms, and of nominally unfinished "ghost gun" products designed to provide buyers with skip-the-background-check access to finish-it-yourself firearms**.[86]

A disproportionate percentage of those new firearm purchases were made by people who abused their partners. Researchers in one study found that pandemic firearm purchasers (individuals who purchased a firearm between March 2020 and October 2021) reported much greater levels of intimate partner violence perpetration and antisocial behavior compared to both non-gun owners and individuals who owned firearms before the pandemic but did not make a firearm purchase during that period.[87] Another large research survey study conducted in California and Louisiana in 2023 found that individuals who said they had perpetrated intimate partner violence in the past year were 10 times more likely to own firearms than non-perpetrators and over five times more likely to have purchased a new firearm in the past year.[88] (Recent victims of intimate partner violence were also more likely to have purchased a firearm in the past year, although intimate partner violence victimization was not associated with first-time purchases by victims).[89]

When adjudicated abusers could not pass a firearm background check in our state, many turned to the skip-the-background-check ghost gun market. From 2019 to 2021, the number of ghost guns recovered by law enforcement agencies in California in connection with suspected criminal activity overall increased by 589%; the number recovered from domestic violence and abuse crimes increased by 1,236%.[90]

Comparing California to the Rest of the U.S.: Firearm Homicide Rates for Child Victims Aged 1-14[91]



*See Endnote 27 for more information on 2014 data

Media coverage about the shootings of children commonly focus on horrific school shootings that cause broad ripple effects of fear and trauma for parents, students, and educators. California has adopted nation-leading policies to prevent and reduce the lethality of those shootings. But as discussed in more detail in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's *Domestic Violence Involving Firearms* report (2023), a majority of child homicide victims aged 1-14 are killed by a family member, most commonly a parent.[92] For some children, school may be the safest place they will be all day. An analysis by *The Trace* found that from 2018-2022, three times as many children in the U.S. were shot in domestic violence incidents as in school shootings; because domestic violence shootings were more likely to result in death, eight times as many children were killed in domestic violence incidents.[93]

Overall, a majority of shootings involving four or more victims in the U.S. are connected to family or intimate partner violence, like a mass shooting at a Sacramento church in 2022 where a violent and abusive man subject to a Domestic Violence Restraining Order was attending a supervised visit with his daughters under the conditions of that court order. The Domestic Violence Restraining Order would have blocked him from passing a firearm or ammunition background check. But armed with an illegally manufactured ghost gun, he shot and killed his three daughters, a church executive chaperoning his visit, and then himself.

As recently as 2011, firearm homicide rates for children aged 1-14 were nearly identical in California and the rest of the nation. But in recent years, an enormous safety gap emerged, as California has maintained *much* lower firearm homicide rates for children compared to the rest of the U.S. on

average. In 2024, California's per capita firearm homicide rate for children aged 1-14 (0.34 per 100,000) was **less than half the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S.** (0.69 per 100,000). The largest safety gap occurred in 2022, when firearm homicide rates for children were *four times* higher in the rest of the U.S. on average compared to California.

Nationally, the pandemic years coincided with an enormous spike in child-victim firearm homicide rates, fueled by a surge in family violence shootings.[94] Across the rest of the U.S., the firearm homicide rate for children aged 1-14 nearly doubled (increasing 92%) from 2019 to 2022. Child victim firearm homicide rates fell in 2023 and 2024 across the rest of the U.S., but still remained 42% higher in 2024 than in 2019, and 62% higher than in 2014.

In California, firearm homicide rates for children also increased during the pandemic, but our state's gun and domestic violence prevention policies and investments likely helped avert many tragedies and the *much* larger spikes seen across most of the nation.

It is again notable that while California set record lows in 2024 for firearm homicide rates *overall*, California's firearm homicide rates for the demographic groups most impacted by family and intimate partner violence, including children, were considerably higher in 2024 compared to one decade earlier.

Additional state and county-level data regarding domestic violence victims' exposure to gun violence in California is discussed in Chapter 5 starting on Page 70.

Chapter 3.

Policy Change & Investments that Drove California's Recent Progress

What Drove California's Record Reductions in Firearm Homicide?

California's rates of *non-firearm* homicide and suicide have remained relatively stable and, for decades, have been nearly identical to the rest of the nation on average. California has likely achieved historic progress *against gun violence* through a set of strategic actions—including by funding in the state Budget—to address the unique dynamics that fuel gun violence specifically. This section highlights some of the important gun violence prevention policies and investments that likely contributed to this progress.

At the outset, it is important to point out: These gun violence prevention policies did not impede lawful firearm commerce. While the pandemic-era surge in gun sales has receded in California and nationally, the number of legally recorded firearm owners in California increased by 21% between January 2021 and January 2025,[95] and more than 900,000 firearms were lawfully sold in the state every year over this period.[96]

California did not achieve record-setting reductions in gun violence by solving the challenges of concentrated poverty either: California achieved record reductions in violence even as poverty and unemployment rates increased with the expiration of pandemic-era assistance programs. California also did not achieve record reductions through reactive mass arrest and incarceration approaches; statewide arrest, probation, and incarceration rates have generally been declining in recent years and are lower than they were one decade ago.

It is also important to note that California's historic reductions from 2022-2024 predate the Trump Administration, which, since taking office in 2025, has gutted federal funding for gun violence prevention, mental health, and victim services; pulled federal law enforcement away from investigating gun crime and domestic extremists; and likely deterred crime reporting and help-seeking through militarized patrols and mass deportations in communities that, according to CDC death certificate data, had never been safer from homicide or gun violence in California's recorded history.

Many analyses of the nation's "Great Murder Decline" assume that as the pandemic receded, a surge in homicides would recede too. But it was not inevitable that record spikes in firearm homicide during the pandemic would return to any "normal" pre-pandemic baseline or be followed by record-setting lows. Nationwide, pandemic-era spikes in homicide and gun crime in 2020 and 2021 were fueled in part by a record surge in sales of both fully assembled firearms and of nominally unfinished "ghost gun" products designed to provide buyers with unfettered, skip-the-background-check access to finish-it-yourself firearms.[97] This surge in legal and illegal firearm acquisition introduced firearms into many homes for the first time, and multiple research studies found that individuals who purchased their first firearms during the pandemic were, as a group, much more likely to have risk factors for violence and suicide compared both to non-firearm-owners and to individuals who had acquired firearms before the pandemic.[98]

In California, the surge in skip-the-background-check ghost gun products was of particularly devastating consequence. Court documents indicated that from 2017 to 2023, a single ghost gun company sold more than 200,000 ghost gun kits into California without background checks, sale records, or traceable serial numbers before legislation and litigation actions stopped these business practices. These kits included nominally unfinished ghost gun products that ghost gun company executives described as "basically a pistol in a box" sold to illegal purchasers including minors, adjudicated domestic abusers, gun traffickers, and domestic terrorists.[99]

This flood of firearms contributed to surges specifically in *firearm* violence, and many of those weapons—sold illegally without background checks or sale records—are still in our communities.

However, California has taken comprehensive action on multiple fronts to address the specific dangers and dynamics fueling gun violence in our state. That comprehensive response included "supply-side" policies and investments in oversight to place reasonable, constitutional checks and guardrails around the firearm industry's basic profit motive to sell as many weapons as possible, no matter how dangerous the weapon or the purchaser. They also include "demand-side" policies that seek to intervene with individuals on a pathway to gun violence in order to reduce risk that they will be able or motivated to reach for a firearm to perpetrate harm. Like two pedals on a bicycle, both of these policies can move communities toward safety individually, and using both together can achieve much more.

A. *Ghost Gun Reform:*

Since 2019, overall crime gun trends in California have overwhelmingly been driven by trends related to ghost guns, including the very large increases in crime gun recoveries between 2019 and 2021, and large decreases since 2022.

Effective in August 2022, the Biden Administration took executive action to ensure some ghost gun products were regulated as "firearms" under federal law and subject to background check, sale record, and serial number requirements nationwide. California has gone much further, starting in June 2022, when California enacted and enforced a number of nation-leading legislative reforms and accountability tools to stop the ghost gun industry from selling skip-the-background-check access to finish-it-yourself firearm products. In the years since, California has continued to enact legislation to build on those reforms, and has also used civil and criminal enforcement efforts to stop very dangerous ghost gun industry business practices.

(A summary of ghost gun trends data is provided below; for more detailed data and discussion about the proliferation of ghost guns in crime and California's response, see the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's report, *California's Fight Against the Ghost Gun Crisis: Progress and New Challenges (2024)*.[100] Note that some of the statistics below slightly differ from statistics published in that 2024 report because these statistics are drawn from dynamic databases that are regularly updated with additional records, including late-reported records for crime guns recovered in an earlier year that were not reported to DOJ within statutory deadlines).

California requires state and local law enforcement agencies to report information to California DOJ about firearms recovered from suspected criminal activity that were illegally used or possessed "crime guns." This data shows that the pandemic surge in firearm violence in California was fueled by the proliferation of illegally manufactured ghost guns.

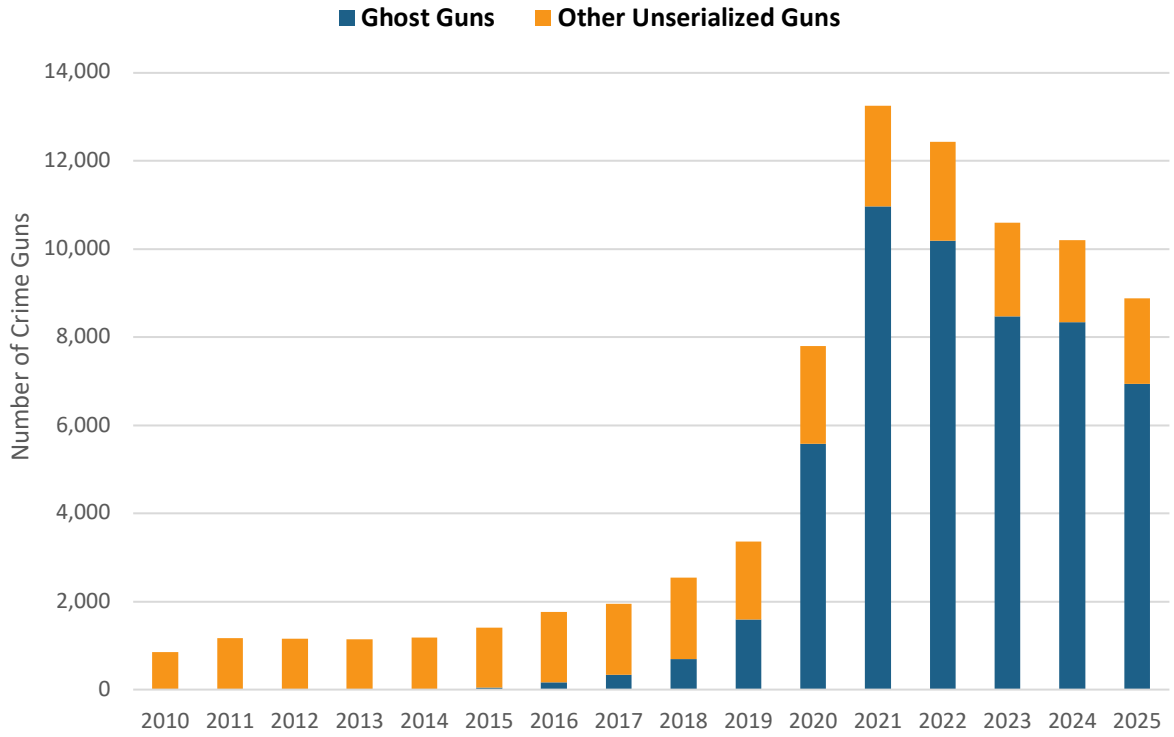
From 2019 to 2021, law enforcement agencies in California reported a 31% increase in the total number of crime guns recovered from suspected criminal activity in the state. This included a 10% increase in the number of (largely commercially manufactured) firearms recovered with serial numbers, and a 589% increase in unserialized ghost guns produced by unlicensed individuals from skip-the-background-check kits and products.

Data published in the 2024 ghost gun report showed that there was an even larger increase in the number of ghost guns recovered from violent crimes, violations of protective orders, and especially domestic violence offenses. From 2019 to 2021, in California, there was a:

- 659% increase in ghost guns recovered from all violent crimes.
- 667% increase in ghost guns recovered from homicides.
- 852% increase in ghost guns recovered from crimes involving violations of court orders, parole, or probation.

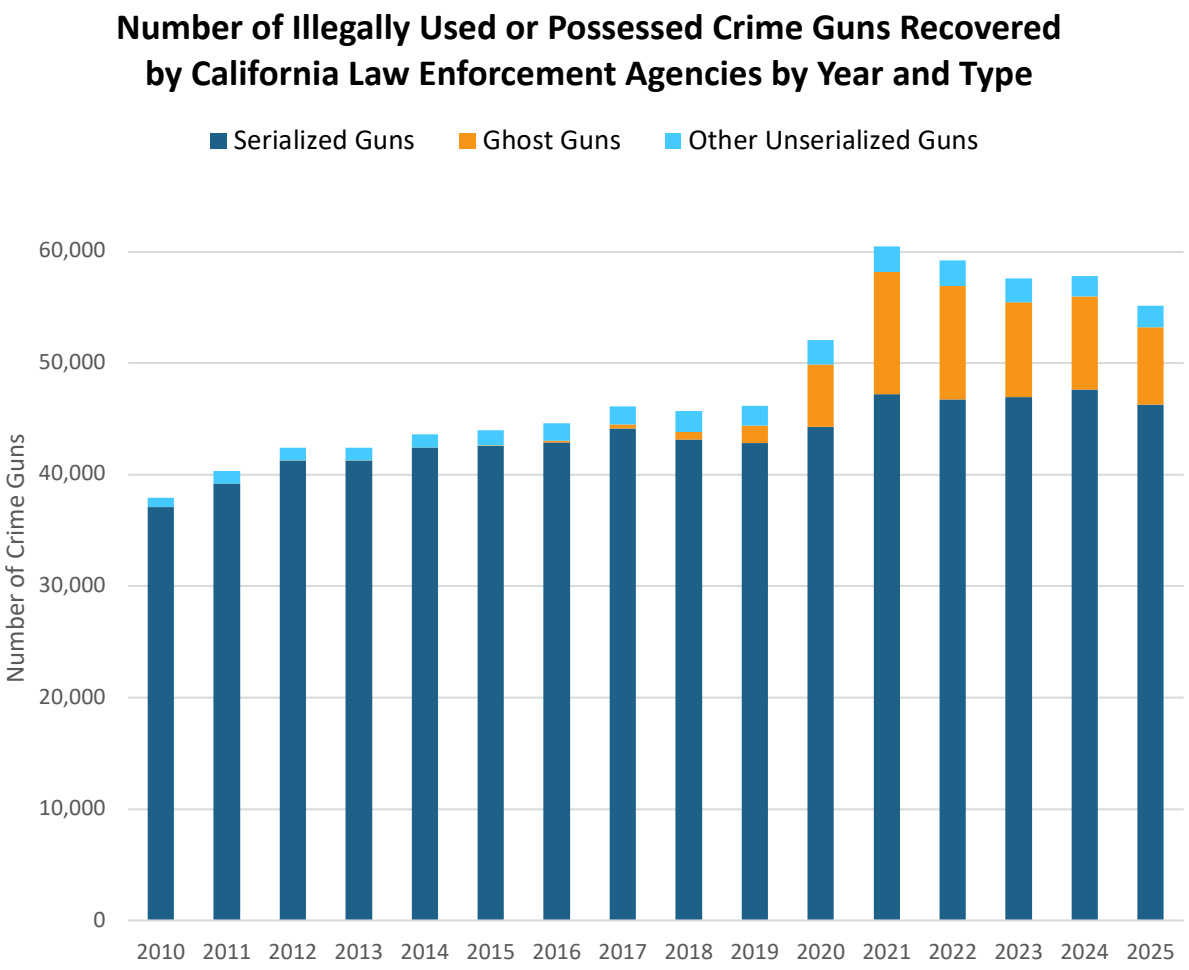
- 1,037% increase in ghost guns recovered from violent gun crimes.
- 1,236% increase in ghost guns recovered from domestic violence and abuse crimes.
- 4,600% increase in ghost guns recovered from gun homicides against a police officer.

Number of Ghost Guns & Other Unserialized Firearms Recovered as Crime Guns in California, By Year



This surge in illegally used or possessed ghost guns accounted for about two-thirds (66%) of the total increase in crime guns recovered in California between 2019 to 2021. Though most crime guns recovered by law enforcement were still commercially manufactured serialized firearms, the surge in ghost guns accounted for most of the increase, especially in crime guns recovered from violent crime and domestic violence offenses. As detailed in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's 2024 ghost guns report, this data likely substantially *understates* the true scope of the ghost gun crisis; many ghost guns may bear counterfeit serial numbers or branding, mimic commercial firearm models, or use some components from commercially manufactured firearms, which can cause law enforcement agencies to erroneously classify some ghost guns as commercially manufactured firearms. In other words, ghost guns likely drove an even larger share of the pandemic surge in gun violence than these statistics show.

Just as the proliferation of ghost guns accounted for most of the total increase in crime guns in California during the record spike in gun violence from 2019-2021, California's progress against the proliferation of ghost guns since 2022 has accounted for most of the state's overall decrease in guns recovered from crime. From 2021 to 2025, the number of serialized firearms recovered from crime declined by 2% and the number of ghost guns recovered from crime declined by 37%. Declining ghost gun recoveries accounted for over three-quarters (76%) of California's total decrease in crime gun recoveries from 2021 to 2025.



California's efforts halted and reversed what had been an eight-year pattern of extremely large increases: From 2013 to 2021, the number of ghost guns recovered from crime in California each year tripled, then quadrupled the next year, then tripled, nearly doubled, doubled, doubled, tripled, and then nearly doubled again—before substantially *decreasing* four years in a row.

If that previous upward trend in ghost gun recoveries continued as it had from 2013-2021, law enforcement agencies in California may have expected to recover tens of thousands more illegally used or possessed ghost guns from 2023 to 2025. Every one of those weapons was designed to arm someone who did not pass a background check with a weapon designed to end life.

The ghost gun crisis is far from over and California law enforcement agencies are still recovering far more illegally manufactured ghost guns today than in the years before the pandemic. The ghost gun industry is also shifting quickly to focus on products and services designed to facilitate the illegal manufacture of ghost guns produced with 3D-printers and computer numerical control (CNC) milling machines instead of nominally unfinished "80%" frame or receiver products. Based on data and recommendations in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's report on ghost guns, in 2025, California DOJ sponsored a package of nation-leading reforms to address these emerging threats through Assembly Bill 1263 (Gipson). California DOJ will also be implementing and enforcing Senate Bill 704 (Arreguín) to require background checks and sale records for the purchase of firearm barrels, which are commonly used to complete 3D-printed ghost gun builds. (For more information about these laws, see the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention's December 2025 informational bulletin[101] and California Ghost Gun Laws Reference Guide.[102])

Proactive and vigilant efforts are needed to address the dangerous and shifting tactics used by the ghost gun industry to facilitate the illegal manufacture of firearms in our state, including through civil enforcement actions against entities that cause and facilitate the illegal manufacture of 3D-printed ghost guns and machine guns.[103] While this continues to be a major public safety priority, California's comprehensive litigation, enforcement, and legislative responses have had a vital impact for public safety. They present a model for other state and federal policymakers to more comprehensively address the ghost gun crisis nationwide.

B. *Other Vital New Gun Violence Prevention Policies and Investments*

In addition to effective action to reverse the proliferation of ghost guns in crime, California has enacted over 100 pieces of gun violence prevention-related legislation under Governor Gavin Newsom, including effective action to:

1. **Strengthen and invest in firearm industry oversight and responsibility**, with small but expanded California DOJ teams at the Bureau of Firearms focused on regulating and inspecting firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and gun show operations. This investment in dedicated oversight authority, staffing, and capacity matters: As discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, the percentage of crime guns traced to California-based businesses has fallen significantly as California's investment in oversight capacity significantly increased. After new legislation provided additional funding and authority for California DOJ's Bureau of Firearms to inform gun show operators about their legal responsibilities and routinely inspect gun show operations, the number of legal violations uncovered at gun shows fell by 76% between the first year of gun show inspections and the second.[104] In 2022, California DOJ also co-sponsored the Firearm Industry Responsibility Act (AB 1594, Ting) to help clarify and expand gun violence victims' and public officials' ability to hold firearm industry members accountable in court for unlawful and dangerous business conduct.

2. **Strengthen eligibility standards for firearm and ammunition purchases** to prevent a relatively small portion of the population with the most significant histories of dangerous or criminal conduct from possessing firearms and ammunition and from passing firearm-related background checks. California also enacted laws to **raise the minimum age to 21** for most civilians to purchase firearms from a licensed dealer. Firearm industry commerce remains robust: In 2022, 2023, and 2024, about 800,000-900,000 firearms have been lawfully sold or transferred to California residents each year. But as a result of nation-leading eligibility standards, about 0.7% of those who attempted to purchase a firearm through a licensed dealer in California failed a firearm eligibility check due to a prohibiting conviction, court order, or similar disqualification, and were blocked from completing the purchase.[105] California's ammunition background check requirements that took effect in mid-2019 have also played an important role in preventing people with significant histories of violent or dangerous behavior from acquiring lethal weaponry, and have helped law enforcement identify unlawful firearm possessors when buyers with a dangerous criminal history or other disqualifying record attempt to purchase ammunition for firearms they cannot legally use or possess.

3. **Expand implementation of the Gun Violence Restraining Order.** Some individuals exhibit very dangerous warning signs that they are on a pathway to gun violence or suicide without becoming subject to categorical firearm prohibitions, including a majority of people who perpetrate targeted mass attacks in public spaces, according to analyses by the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center. Established in 2016, California's Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVROs) is one critical gap-filling safety intervention. It provides law enforcement officers, family members, and other eligible community members with a mechanism for obtaining an individualized adjudication from the courts that a person who

would otherwise be legally eligible to purchase and possess firearms is a significant danger to themselves or others, and should be temporarily prohibited from accessing firearms. From 2021 to 2024, the number of longer-term (one- to five-year) GVROs issued in California more than doubled. Over two years from 2024 to 2025, California courts issued about 1,500 longer-term GVROs statewide to address dangerous firearm access in cases where a court found by clear and convincing evidence that a person posed a significant danger of causing injury to themselves or others with firearms and that a GVRO was necessary under the circumstances. (More data about trends toward increased utilization of the GVRO and decreased mass shooting victimization rates is provided in Chapter 7).

4. **Improve awareness and implementation of all firearm-prohibiting court protection and restraining orders**. California has a broad array of civil and criminal court protection and restraining orders designed to protect victims who have been targeted with violence, threats, or abuse and need court-ordered safety protections. Like the GVRO, these other protection and restraining order processes include provisions to suspend a dangerous individual's legal access to firearms and ammunition for a temporary period, as well as many other safety provisions, such as "stay away" orders requiring a dangerous individual to stay away from a person they have harmed or threatened.

   In recent years, California has enacted significant legislation and made one-time budgetary investments focused on improving access to, implementation, and enforcement of these orders to prevent gun violence. Some California communities have implemented robust protective order implementation programs, including those supported by grant funding awarded through the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP) Grant. Established in 2022 by the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Byrne SCIP Grant provides time-limited funding to states over five annual installments for certain gun violence prevention purposes focused on protection orders, and mental health and crisis response. California's Judicial Council received about 40% of California's Byrne SCIP funding to support various projects related to firearm-prohibiting court orders and mental health diversion orders; the remainder was allocated by the Board for State and Community Corrections (BSCC) through competitive grants available to all cities and counties in the state. This funding will expire soon, and the BSCC is expected to make its last round of Byrne SCIP grant awards in 2027.

5. **Strengthen laws and investments in firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability**. In recent years, California has enacted significant legislation requiring courts, local law enforcement, and prosecuting agencies to take a more proactive role in ensuring that people who become legally prohibited from keeping their firearms after a criminal conviction or court protective order are promptly separated from their weapons.[106] These efforts seek to replace passive, siloed, and reactive honors' systems with coordinated firearm relinquishment partnerships invested in ensuring proactive information-sharing, compliance, accountability, and safety through prevention.

   As discussed in California DOJ's annual "Armed and Prohibited Persons System" reports, court protection and restraining orders are by far the most common way that a California resident becomes legally prohibited from keeping firearms they already possess.[107] A high-profile gun violence case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2024, *United States v. Rahimi*, highlighted the dangers survivors face when courts and law enforcement do not treat proactive firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability as a public safety priority. In that case, public reporting indicates that a domestic abuse survivor provided testimony to a Texas court that her ex-boyfriend had brutally battered her, fired his firearm toward her, and threatened to kill her if she told anyone. The court found that he was likely to commit domestic violence again and issued a Domestic Violence Protective Order against him that ordered him to relinquish

all firearms, but he did not comply. He remained in unlawful possession of firearms for about 11 more months after a court ordered him to relinquish the firearm he had shot toward the mother of his child; while unlawfully armed during that time, he committed at least six more shootings in his community. California's policymaking and investments in firearm relinquishment programs seek to prevent those outcomes and better protect targeted survivors and the public from gun violence.

California has long been a national leader in investing in firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability, including by establishing and funding the Armed and Prohibited Persons System (APPS) program since 2006. Administered by the California DOJ's Bureau of Firearms, the APPS program employs about 50-60 special agents statewide dedicated to investigating and recovering unlawfully possessed firearms from people who legally purchased or registered their weapons in California, then failed to relinquish them after becoming subject to a criminal conviction, court order, or other legal disqualification that made it illegal for them to continue to possess firearms. Since its inception, the APPS program has facilitated the relinquishment of tens of thousands of illegally possessed firearms and is a testament to California's commitment to survivor safety. However, the APPS program is not designed or resourced to investigate the more than 12,000 newly armed and prohibited individuals added to the APPS caseload every year. While the APPS program is a vital safety net, most APPS cases involve individuals who were ordered by a court to relinquish all firearms but unlawfully failed to comply. When this occurs, courts, law enforcement, and prosecuting agencies at the local level are the first line of defense to ensure that people who become subject to new firearm prohibitions understand their legal obligations to relinquish all firearms—including illegally acquired firearms like ghost guns that would not appear in DOJ APPS teams' databases—and promptly and safely comply.

Starting in the 2022 Budget Act, California made one-time state investments in firearm relinquishment and protective order implementation programs through the new Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program. Administered by the Judicial Council of California, that program awarded multi-year grants totaling about $28.5 million to 13 county superior courts applying with law enforcement or prosecuting agency partners beginning in 2023 and 2024. These funds have been used to hire personnel dedicated to communicating with newly prohibited people about their firearm relinquishment obligations, identifying for the court individuals who possess firearms and have failed to relinquish them, and coordinating prompt follow-up action with local law enforcement or prosecutors if the prohibited person fails to comply. Anecdotally, many stakeholders have indicated that these investments have led court or local law enforcement agencies to implement firearm relinquishment verification efforts in a much more proactive and coordinated manner than ever before.

Anecdotal reports are reinforced by data showing that California's focus on firearm relinquishment is leading to important progress:

- In just one fiscal year (2024-2025), 11 grantee courts collectively reported facilitating the relinquishment of **over 3,000 firearms from 901 individuals** who became subject to firearm-prohibiting court orders.[108] Some grantees receiving "Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program" (Byrne SCIP) grants from BSCC also dedicated their grant funds for similar firearm relinquishment purposes with a focus on protective order cases.
- In 2024 and again in 2025, California DOJ removed **a record** number of individuals from the APPS database due to compliance and enforcement efforts by DOJ and/or local partners verifying that the firearm owner lawfully relinquished or was involuntarily separated from all known firearms.

- In the span of just two years, from 2023 to 2025, there was a **35% increase in the number of individuals removed from the APPS database of illegal firearm possessors due to compliance and enforcement efforts**.[109]

However, the number of individuals identified as unlawfully armed in APPS continues to grow due to limited relinquishment-focused resources colliding with increased firearm ownership, an increased number of firearm records reported to DOJ regarding previously owned firearms, and stronger eligibility standards leading to more people becoming prohibited from keeping weapons after a criminal conviction, court order, or involuntary admission to a mental health facility.

Investments in local firearm relinquishment programs are vital to preventing individuals from ever becoming illegally armed APPS cases in the first place. But funding for the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program will expire for many grantees within the next budget year, in April 2027, and funding for other programs receiving funding through that program and the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program grant will also expire in the coming two years.

6. **Expand public education efforts encouraging firearm owners to safely secure their firearms** when they are not in use or readily accessible, especially to prevent access by unsupervised minors, including by requiring school districts to send regular notices to parents regarding the risks and legal consequences for failing to secure firearms to prevent unsupervised access by children. California became the first state to promote voluntary out-of-home storage during periods of crisis by, among other things, requiring retail firearm dealers to offer temporary voluntary firearm safekeeping services for a reasonable fee.

7. Many cities and counties used one-time federal pandemic assistance funds through the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** to address law enforcement, victim service, and emergency responder staffing shortfalls, cut emergency response times, and especially invest in violence intervention programs and infrastructure. Some leading criminologists have theorized that this one-time surge in flexible federal investment in local government staffing and capacity was a leading explanation for nationwide progress against homicide since 2022, especially because many of these investments were "directed locally toward all manner of violence prevention and intervention. These were investments directly in the people who work directly with young people who are at the greatest risk of violence and victimization."[110]

8. **Crucially, California has also made historic levels of new investment in community violence intervention (CVI) initiatives designed to interrupt cycles of retaliatory shootings**. As Chapter 1 emphasized, about three-quarters of gun assault victims shot in our state survive; these survivors are at least 60 times as likely to be shot again and killed as the average Californian.[111] A majority of these survivors are Black or Hispanic men and boys in California's low-income Medi-Cal (Medicaid)-insured population. Investments in CVI initiatives seek to direct intensive prevention and protective resources toward the people at highest imminent risk in the most impacted communities, with a common focus on engaging gunshot survivors and those closest to them who are involved in cycles of violence.

   Historic levels of new local, federal, and especially state-level investments in these initiatives from 2022 to 2025 likely played a very significant role in California's record reductions in firearm homicide, which have been especially pronounced for young men of color. As discussed below, there have been particularly large reductions in firearm homicides in communities that began to receive substantial state investments in CVI initiatives through the Break the Cycle of Violence Act's California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program in late 2022 and 2023.[112]

Of all the investments discussed above, investments in CVI have had perhaps the most dramatic and measurable impact on firearm homicide rates in California's most impacted communities— and face the most immediate funding threat. Chapter 4 examines the impact and importance of California's investments in CVI in more detail.

Chapter 4.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence: California's Transformative Investments in CVI

Why Community Violence Intervention is Vital

Across the nation, public health and public safety systems have often sought to address epidemic levels of chronic, concentrated community gun violence primarily through upstream prevention programs working with young people *before* they are involved in dangerous behavior, or through reactive crisis response and punishment after a person has engaged in violent or criminal conduct. Both can play a very important role for safety and accountability. Yet, in practice, both often fail to preventatively intervene with and protect people at highest imminent risk, leading to extremely high rates of violent reinjury and death for shooting survivors involved in cycles of retaliatory violence.

If gun violence is analogized to fire safety, this might be like if a community funded preventative forest management and Smokey Bear public education campaigns to prevent fires from starting and funded reactive efforts to rescue people from burning buildings and prosecute arsonists—without also funding the fire response necessary to contain and extinguish the fires that are currently blazing. Just as fire often causes more fire, gun violence often causes more gun violence. But both preventative and punitive systems have traditionally treated cycles of retaliatory street violence among people at highest imminent risk as all but inevitable. They too often fail to fight the fires that are blazing now.

That is the gap the modern field of community violence intervention or CVI seeks to fill. Devone Boggan, a national leader in the CVI field, launched Richmond, California's Office of Neighborhood Safety CVI initiative, which transformed public safety in his city, as described in more detail below. He emphasizes that: "Structural inequities fuel the conditions where violence can take root. Unchecked violence fuels its own cycle, independent of those inequities. Gun violence is driven by gun violence. Until we learn to respond to it in healthy, human ways, the cycle continues."[113]

In a series of recent essays on the future of CVI, Boggan writes:

> The most critical distinction between CVI and traditional public safety responses is timing. CVI operates before violence erupts, not after. It relies on trusted messengers—violence interrupters, outreach workers, and credible mentors—who are embedded in communities and connected to the individuals most at risk of shooting or being shot.
>
> Rather than waiting for a crisis, CVI professionals anticipate it. They intervene in the moments that matter most: when a conflict is brewing, when retaliation is being planned, when a young person is deciding whether to pick up a gun.
>
> This proactive engagement is what makes CVI both urgent and effective.[114]
>
> . . .
>
> CVI complements policing. It fills in where policing cannot go. . . Law enforcement agencies often recognize this and are increasingly working in partnership with CVI teams—not to co-opt the work, but to complement it.[115]
>
> . . .
>
> When cities fund CVI, they don't just reduce violence—they build community-driven capacity, responsibility, and accountability, increase community trust, reduce trauma, and save public dollars. The benefits are measurable. The outcomes are sustainable. And the impact stretches far beyond the absence of harm.[116]

At the local and community level, California cities and nonprofits have been leaders for decades in

developing many of the nation's leading models for CVI strategies. Some California cities achieved large reductions in gun violence through sustained local investment in these coordinated CVI initiatives.

But until recently—with a few important exceptions—California's most impacted communities implemented these CVI strategies with virtually no state or federal funding support. Other states, especially New York and Massachusetts, achieved much lower rates of firearm homicide by combining gun policy reform with significant and sustained state investments in local CVI and gun violence prevention initiatives focused on targeted and intensive prevention, protection, and behavioral transformation for those in greatest danger.[117]

That began to change when California combined policymaking and investments to establish the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program. CalVIP is designed to fund local capacity building efforts to interrupt cycles of retaliatory gang, group, or other community violence-related shootings among individuals identified as highest risk of victimization or involvement in community gun violence in the near future.[118]

California's Return on Investments in CalVIP

CalVIP began as a small $9 million per year grant program in California's 2017 Budget Act, championed by Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer and a coalition of gun violence prevention and survivor advocates, faith leaders, and children's wellness advocates. In 2019, CalVIP received a one-time increase to $30 million in the 2019 Budget Act, and was codified into law as a temporary pilot program by the Break the Cycle of Violence Act, AB 1603 (2019, Wicks).

In response to a large surge in shootings during the pandemic, California invested $227 million in General Fund investments in CalVIP over three budget years, starting in the 2021 Budget Act, championed by advocates and Assembly Member Wicks. Though California still invested much less per capita than some other states over this period, this Budget push meant that California invested more state funding in CVI initiatives over three years than in all previous years combined. The results were substantial. (About $209 million was awarded as competitive grants for local CVI initiatives. The remainder has been allocated for related purposes, especially for grants to train, certify, and expand the CVI workforce statewide). These funds began to reach grantees in late 2022.

Many local communities also significantly expanded investment in CVI initiatives, including to provide a local funding match previously required to qualify for state CalVIP funds. The Biden Administration also established a federal Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) at the U.S. Department of Justice, modeled in part on the success of California's CalVIP program, and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 included (what was supposed to be) $250 million over five years for CVI initiatives nationwide. Across the country, from 2021 to 2025, the number of cities and counties with CVI-focused Offices of Violence Prevention nearly quadrupled—and many reported record reductions in gun violence.[119]

In 2023, California passed AB 762 (Wicks), which turned the Break the Cycle of Violence Act from a temporary pilot program into a more permanent part of California's public safety infrastructure. That legislation also addressed numerous access barriers, including by removing requirements that often-cash-strapped grantees provide a 100% local funding match to qualify for state funding support. That same year, California also passed the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act, AB 28 (Gabriel)—with the strong support of the California Attorney General and California DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention—which leveraged a modest new firearm industry excise tax to generate permanent revenue to expand the CalVIP program and other gun violence prevention and victim service initiatives. (However, the CalVIP Program has not received any additional General Fund investment since 2023).

Pursuant to the updated Break the Cycle of Violence Act,[120] CalVIP grants are now available to cities that have the highest rates and overall numbers of homicides and firearm assaults, and who apply alongside required community-based partners. These funds are also available to hospitals, nonprofits, tribal governments, and other community-based organizations applying for state CVI grants directly, and to counties that have a CalVIP-eligible city within their jurisdiction. The majority of individuals served by CalVIP-funded initiatives are Black and Hispanic men and boys aged 13-34 identified as high-risk for violent victimization or involvement in violence in the near future.[121] Individuals who have already been shot or shot at, or who are connected to a recent victim of gun violence, are the priority population for many programs.

As a result of these local, federal, and state investments in CVI, there are now many more violence intervention professionals working as part of a broader, coordinated public safety infrastructure in our most impacted communities. These professionals work to identify those at highest risk and relentlessly engage, protect, and support participants on a structured pathway to safety and away from retaliation. Because shootings so often result in retaliatory shootings, effective efforts to interrupt the cycle of violence with one survivor can often prevent multiple shootings in the near- and long-term. These targeted interventions can also serve broader upstream prevention purposes too: youth in impacted communities become more likely to carry firearms and associate with gangs if they have witnessed or been chronically exposed to shootings, so effectively stopping the cycle of violence among those at highest risk now can also reduce the risk that others will be exposed to shootings in their community and engage in riskier behaviors in the future.[122]

In recent years, with state and federal funding support, many more cities and counties in California have launched new Offices of Violence Prevention focused on coordinating CVI efforts. Both directly and through nonprofit partners, these local offices employ trained violence intervention professionals, who are often survivors of gun violence who left gang life and seek to protect and shepherd others in their community to safety. These professionals often respond to shootings in their community, sometimes as co-responders; engage gun violence survivors at the hospital bedside; support grieving families and community members in the aftermath of a shooting; mediate emerging gang conflicts and prevent retaliation; provide those at highest risk with cognitive behavioral interventions and services like relocation assistance away from a person or gang that has threatened their life; and engage individuals at highest risk with structured safety plans and life transformation programs designed to keep them safe, alive, and free from gangs and incarceration if possible.

CVI programs' ability to achieve large reductions in gun violence quickly is not independent of other factors or gun safety reforms. For example, CVI professionals working to persuade a gunshot victim not to commit or promote retaliatory violence may find it easier to keep the peace if their client and his family cannot order a skip-the-background-check ghost gun kit online in a moment of impulsive anger or buy ammunition without a background check. When CVI experts effectively respond and defuse conflicts, law enforcement officers may receive fewer call-outs, allowing officers to focus scarce time and resources on other safety priorities, and potentially reducing safety risks to law enforcement officers and risks of officer-involved shootings too. When there are fewer shootings to solve, homicide detectives can solve more of them more quickly, building trust and legitimacy with survivors and the community. And when communities' public safety infrastructure can more effectively and equitably deliver safety and safer life alternatives, fewer young people may seek out extra-legal sources of protection that in practice significantly increase risk of gun violence for entire communities.

CVI initiatives are a complement, not a substitute, for upstream prevention and criminal enforcement. But in comparison to other strategies, intervention strategies focused on the highest risk people and places have been especially under-funded and under-valued for generations.

California's relatively modest state-level CVI initiative investments have contributed to historic reductions in gun violence in many of our most impacted communities, as described in the case studies below.

Case Study #1: Bakersfield

Bakersfield, the largest community in Kern County, California, is an instructive case study in how state and local investments in CVI capacity drove historic reductions in gun violence.

For years, Kern County recorded the highest rates of firearm violence in California. In December 2021, CalMatters published an article titled, "'*Devil on the loose': What's behind Kern County's soaring homicide rate?*" The report noted that Kern County had the highest firearm homicide rate in California, approximately double the national average, and that Bakersfield had just been named one of the 10 most dangerous cities in the U.S.[123] A report from expert criminologists at the California Partnership for Safe Communities (now the University of Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Policy Lab) noted that, "Bakersfield has a higher poverty rate than many California cities; it has a somewhat lower overall violent crime rate but a particular problem with gun and gang violence. In many neighborhoods, a homicide or non-fatal injury shooting takes place almost every day and has a significant negative impact on community health and wellbeing."[124]

These statistics—the devastating human loss, brutality, and suffering they represent—plagued Bakersfield for years, but they were not inevitable. From 2021 to 2024, Bakersfield achieved a 74% reduction in fatal and nonfatal shooting incidents, driving a 61% decrease in homicide overall.[125] Data from the Kern County District Attorney's Office noted that there has been an especially significant reduction in gang-related homicides countywide, falling from 26 in 2023, to 15 in 2024, and seven in 2025.[126]

Bakersfield's City Manager wrote that these reductions "are not a coincidence," and specifically credited a new CVI initiative supported by CalVIP grant funding with this progress:

> These improvements are the results of new strategies used since 2022 when the City launched its Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), funded by the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant and supplemented by resources from the Public Safety & Vital Services (PSVS) Measure [a local ballot measure to generate and dedicate new sales tax revenue for public safety purposes].[127]

In a 2025 op-ed, Bakersfield's City Manager and a leading community partner on the violence intervention strategy explained:

> Bakersfield's Gun Violence Reduction Strategy is a data-driven, partnership-based approach where individuals at very high risk of being involved in gun violence are identified, engaged and informed of their imminent risk by a partnership of community, government and police leaders, are offered intensive community services and supports to heal from the impact of violence on their lives and to step away from further violence, and where those who continue to engage in gun violence are prioritized for focused law enforcement action.
>
> The intensive community services are provided by Community-based Violence Intervention workers who foster strong relationships between individuals and community resources, providing life-saving services, addressing trauma, and creating pathways for positive change. CBOs [community-based organizations] support individuals in moving beyond crisis, set personal goals for growth, and develop the skills needed for lasting transformation. This includes ongoing mentoring and case management, cognitive behavioral therapy, job training and education.

> When approached through this level of wraparound support, CVI [community violence intervention] strengthens physical, social and economic conditions, reducing the root causes of violence and fostering long-term community well-being.

A report from the California Partnership for Safe Communities described how Bakersfield's strategy is "data-driven, partnership-based, and harm reduction focused:"[128]

> Bakersfield's CalVIP-funded GVRS strategy combines concepts from several evidence-informed strategies: the group violence reduction strategy (also known as focused deterrence) is a primary framework, with elements of police-community trust building (through procedural justice) and significant investment in building community violence intervention (CVI) capacity. . . This combined strategy seeks to reduce violence citywide while providing support and opportunities for community members at highest risk of violence. Together, the city and community partners also work to strengthen community-police relations with residents and neighborhoods who are directly impacted by violence.[129]

To turn this evidence-based model into a real-world success required meaningful, sustained investments in building gun violence prevention capacity. For years, community-based programs in Bakersfield had already been providing critical violence intervention services to some individuals at highest risk, but these programs operated with very limited and sporadic funding, and often little coordination. Critical new investments from both the state and city government allowed Bakersfield and its community-based partners to build the capacity to implement best practice CVI strategies, including through dedicated staffing, more coordinated organizational infrastructure and leadership, mission-driven cross-agency partnership, planning assistance from experts in the field, and expanded teams of culturally competent violence prevention professionals working in a more coordinated manner to identify, engage, and serve those at highest risk. Those professionals needed time, coordination, and resources to build trusting relationships with individuals estranged from nearly every other system of care and safety, proactively mediate conflicts, interrupt cycles of retaliation, and protect those in greatest danger.

The CalVIP program made its first grant award to the Bakersfield area in 2018, allocating $500,000 over three years to a leading community-based organization, Garden Pathways, to implement a CVI initiative in three Kern County communities. At the time, this was the maximum competitive award available out of the CalVIP pilot program's very limited pot of $9 million in statewide funding. These funding amounts are emblematic of the chronic funding scarcity and outsized expectations placed on many CVI and other gun violence prevention programs: Garden Pathways received about $166,000 in state support per year to reduce gang and gun violence in three jurisdictions in an area with some of the highest firearm homicide rates in the nation. That funding needed to stretch to help cover staff salaries, grant management and billing requirements, data collection, and client services, including counseling, case management, and costs to temporarily relocate gunshot survivors and others in danger.

Growing investments in CalVIP allowed Bakersfield's CVI programs to meaningfully expand. First, a one-time investment of $30 million for CalVIP Grants in the 2019 Budget Act allowed for somewhat larger investments in safety. The CalVIP program allocated $1.5 million over three years to the City of Bakersfield and its community-based partners for the October 2020-December 2023 grant period, during which time the city studied, planned, and began to implement its new coordinated CVI-focused Gun Violence Reduction Strategy.

Then, advocates fought for a significant expansion of CalVIP, and the Governor proposed investing about $76 million in state General Fund investment in CalVIP Grants per year for three years, in the 2021, 2022, and 2023 Budget Acts. This expansion allowed CalVIP to invest an additional $3.1 million in the City of Bakersfield's initiative from 2022-2025, and to invest over $4 million in other community-

based violence intervention partners serving high risk individuals in Bakersfield, including $2 million for Garden Pathways. A local sales tax ballot measure in the City of Bakersfield helped generate additional local revenue to match this state funding and support dedicated staffing, organizational leadership, and data analysis support for the initiative in the City Manager's Office, Bakersfield Police Department, and nonprofit partners. CalVIP also invested about $1 million in grant funds in programs to address gun and gang violence in other more rural surrounding communities in Kern County.

In three years, with the right strategy and new capacity to implement that strategy, Bakersfield reduced the number of fatal and nonfatal shooting incidents by nearly three-quarters.

As the California Partnership for Safe Communities report noted, "The State of California's CalVIP Grant program presented a much-needed opportunity to take on this difficult challenge [of gun and gang violence] in a more comprehensive and evidence-informed way. This opportunity allowed Bakersfield city and community leaders to analyze the dynamics of violence in Bakersfield, and the needs of young people at highest risk of involvement in violence, so they could more effectively intervene and break the cycle of violence."[130] The City Manager announced in 2025 that Bakersfield would formalize creation of its Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention to "maintain this momentum and ensure these gains are not only celebrated but also protected for years to come."[131]

The City of Bakersfield and Garden Pathways were among the approximately 10% of CalVIP applicants that successfully applied for the most recent round of CalVIP grants announced in February 2026.

Case Study #2: Richmond

The City of Richmond in California's East Bay was among the earliest recipients of CalVIP support, receiving the maximum $500,000 over three years with a grant award beginning in 2018. Richmond and multiple community partners have successfully competed for CalVIP funding in every grant cycle since.

Richmond was one of the earliest effective implementers of CVI strategies in California. In 2007, Richmond was ranked as the ninth most dangerous city in the United States. A CNN report documented how "gun violence [had] spiraled out of control in Richmond. . . Fueled by gang violence, neighborhood rivalries and large-scale unemployment among black youth, the violence led to 47 homicides in Richmond in 2007 – a record for the city and a rate more than eight times the national average."[132] Near the end of 2007, Richmond founded a city-level Office of Neighborhood Safety, tasked with supplementing law enforcement efforts by proactively engaging and intervening with individuals identified as highest risk for victimization and involvement in gun violence the near future, who were estranged from law enforcement and systems of safety.

After some initial activities involving street-level conflict mediation and intensive mentoring for youth, Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety launched the Operation Peacemaker Fellowship to focus its scarce resources more specifically and intensively on a smaller number of individuals identified as highest risk. The Office used data from law enforcement, hospitals, and community partners to identify individuals connected to cycles of gun violence in the city, and invite them to participate in an intensive 18-month fellowship program combining individually tailored mentorship, case management, cognitive behavioral therapy, workforce development opportunities, social service navigation, substance abuse treatment, and excursion activities with potential enemies or rival gang members. After six months of successful progress and participation, fellows could qualify for stipends averaging $300-750 per month for up to nine months for achieving certain milestones for behavioral transformation on a pathway away from gun violence. During their fellowships, the young men met with parents who lost their children to gun violence to understand the impact of their behaviors and address their own traumatic exposure to gun violence; the program's leaders emphasized that all of their clients had had family members, friends, or neighbors killed.[133]

By focusing preventative resources specifically and intensively on these highest risk individuals, Richmond achieved and sustained very significant reductions in gun violence. The number of homicides reported by the Richmond Police Department fell by more than three-quarters from 47 in 2007 to 11 in 2014. Local funding cuts and pandemic-era spikes in violence impacted Richmond too, and homicides rose back up to 20 in 2020.

But since then, sustained by a combination of local funding and significant new state investments from CalVIP, Richmond reduced homicides to six in 2025, the city's lowest number on record.[134] Academic research evaluations specifically credited the Office of Neighborhood Safety's Operation Peacemaker Fellowship program with achieving these large reductions in gun violence.[135]

Richmond's program—especially the fellowship stipend for reaching successful milestones—once received significant attention in national media reports misleadingly describing this program as "cash for criminals" and "paying kids not to shoot."[136] Researchers with the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform estimated in 2022 that a single homicide in Richmond cost taxpayers around $3.2 million for direct law enforcement, court, and medical response costs borne by the government. For a tiny fraction of that amount, Richmond used small financial incentives to engage people at highest risk in structured pathways to safety, paid them for their time and positive participation for a limited period, and set them on a transformative course that also freed the broader community from gun violence. At the same time, law enforcement implemented targeted violence reduction efforts focused on those who continued to engage in violent behaviors.

Richmond's program was so successful in reducing gun violence that the city has been on the cusp of losing eligibility for CalVIP Grant funding, which is reserved for communities defined as "disproportionately impacted by gun violence." But Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety and another local partner were among the approximately 10% of CalVIP applicants that successfully applied for the most recent round of CalVIP grants announced in February 2026.

Case Study #3: Oakland

The City of Oakland provides another important case study for the importance of sustained commitment to community violence intervention, and the dangers of disinvestment and strategic drift away from the people and places at highest risk.

In the 1990s, an Oakland community-based organization called Youth Alive! developed one of the first national models for hospital-linked CVI interventions engaging gunshot survivors at the hospital bedside and in their community to interrupt the cycle of violence and retaliation.[137] This became a national model. But local community-based programs operated with limited resources and minimal public investment compared to the scale of the city's challenges with concentrated poverty and gun violence. In 2012, Oakland's homicide rate was nearly seven times higher than the national average. "Oakland earned the dubious distinction of being the third 'Most Dangerous' city in the nation" that year and had "consistently ranked in the top 10 most violent cities in the country for the past four decades."[138]

But community and faith leaders led by Faith in Action East Bay demanded a new strategy to achieve transformative change for safety.[139] They were informed by data-driven local "problem analyses" conducted by the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) and California Partnership for Safe Communities finding that a majority of shootings in the city were driven by a relatively small population (approximately 300–350 people) with specific risk factors: primarily men aged 18–35 with gang/group connections, prior shooting victimization, and a connection to a recent shooting.[140] In October 2012, Oakland began to implement a coordinated CVI Gun Violence Reduction Strategy called the "Ceasefire strategy" to interrupt cycles of violence among these highest-risk individuals. That program was strengthened by a 2014 local tax measure that dedicated some funding specifically for CVI

purposes.[141]

With increased coordination, capacity, and data-driven focus, Oakland cut homicides and injury shootings nearly in half from 2012 to 2018 (from 679 homicides and injury shootings to 345).[142] Independent evaluators found that most of these reductions were directly attributable to the CVI strategy.[143] In a 2019 report, gun violence prevention experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence documented Oakland's strategy as a "Case Study in Hope."[144] Oakland's model would later inspire other cities, including Bakersfield's CalVIP-supported Gun Violence Reduction Strategy, and similar highly effective efforts implemented in cities such as Indianapolis and Baltimore that have also experienced very large recent reductions in gun violence.[145]

A 2018 evaluation by NICJR emphasized that Oakland had achieved these reductions by adhering strategically to four core components of the Gun Violence Reduction Strategy:

> "1) Data-driven identification of the groups and individuals at the very highest risk of being involved in a shooting.
>
> 2) Respectful communication of that risk directly to those groups and individuals.
>
> 3) Make services, supports, and opportunities available that address the needs and build on the strengths of those at the very highest risk of gun violence. Services and supports are most effective when given by respected members of the community with similar lived experiences or are otherwise credible to the target population ("Credible Messengers").
>
> 4) Focused Enforcement: Police conduct narrowly focused enforcement operations specifically on those individuals that continue to engage in violent crime after receiving communication and with the explicit purpose of preventing further violence."[146]

Oakland's Gun Violence Reduction Strategy also involved a comprehensive program to improve police-community relations and engagement, including through trainings and practical changes with city police officers, as well as strategic shifts that caused "OPD proactive units to spend far less time doing unfocused, area-based enforcement with low-risk individuals, and a much greater amount of time understanding the current violence dynamic and focusing on the very small number of individuals driving that violence." [147]As shootings and homicides fell significantly, reported use of force incidents by the city police department also fell by 75%.[148] As part of the city's strategy, the Oakland Police Department also created a "Ceasefire Unit" focusing "intelligence gathering and enforcement specifically on individuals and groups who are driving and committing gun violence. The approach aims to minimize arrests while preventing shootings."[149]

However, after Oakland achieved very significant progress for public safety, its strategy fell apart for multiple years. Evaluators reported that "Oakland disinvested from [this CVI] strategy from 2019 to 2023" and homicides in the city increased from 67 in 2018 to 119 in 2023.[150] To understand why, in 2023, the Mayor requested an independent audit by the gun violence prevention experts who had helped develop and implement the successful Ceasefire model. That audit concluded:

> "The City of Oakland [had] gradually walked away from the Ceasefire strategy, notably in 2020 [when] there was a clear shift away from ensuring that the components of the Ceasefire strategy were focused on groups and individuals at the highest risk of gun violence; and that the strategy was implemented with sufficient quality to impact citywide violence . . . During the audit process, we found that . . . each essential element of the strategy was significantly watered down, resources stripped away, or refocused. As a result, the Ceasefire strategy no

longer impacted citywide levels of violence in Oakland and as such the City of Oakland has not been effectively implementing the Ceasefire strategy since 2020."

Since early 2024, under new leadership in Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention, Oakland has taken significant steps to reinvest in CVI and renew its focus on individuals at highest-risk—namely, individuals who have at least three of the following four risk factors:

1) The individual is connected to a street crew or group.

2) The individual has been intentionally shot, stabbed, or shot at before.

3) The individual has a history with the criminal or juvenile justice system.

4) In the past six months, the individual has had a close friend of family member shot or arrested for a shooting.[151]

Since then, Oakland has recorded *historic* progress once more. From 2023 to 2025, with the support of local investments, substantial CalVIP grant investments from the state, and Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) grants from the Biden Administration investing in both city, county, and community-based CVI initiatives, Oakland cut homicides and shootings by 49% in two years; **in 2025, Oakland recorded its lowest number of homicides since 1967,** when the City's population was significantly smaller.[152] Recent analyses showed that from 2021 to 2025, Oakland had the seventh largest decline in gun death and injury incidents among the 50 largest cities in the nation.[153]

However, the city is now facing the dangers of disinvestment once more. In 2025, the Trump Administration terminated millions in CVIPI grants that had been invested in community-based victim service and CVI organizations in Oakland, and warped the CVIPI program in a manner that made it unworkable for California cities to apply for renewed funding. Then, in early 2026, Oakland's state CalVIP grant expired; the City applied for continued funding but its application was *not* among the 10% of highest scored proposals selected to receive CalVIP grant awards. As the city navigates other fiscal challenges, its Department of Violence Prevention and community-based partners are grappling with the impact of these devastating funding and capacity cuts—just a few years after steering public safety in the city back from the harmful impacts of previous rounds of disinvestment and drift toward record-setting progress.

Policy Discussion: The Priority Need for State and Local Investment in CVI

Oakland is not alone in facing the dangers of disinvestment from CVI. **Twelve California cities that implemented successful CalVIP-supported CVI initiatives from 2022-2025 are now receiving *zero* state investment in CVI, including**:

- Chula Vista, which reported a more than 60% reduction in homicides from 2022 to 2024.[154]

- Fresno, which reported a 70% reduction in homicides from 2021 to 2025 (the lowest number recorded in 51 years), and a 76% reduction in nonfatal shooting victims.[155] Independent research evaluators found that Fresno's CVI program, modeled on Richmond's, was "associated with a statistically significant reduction in total gun-related crimes, as well as gun-related homicides and assaults."[156] The Trump Administration terminated federal funding for Fresno's CVI partners in 2025.

- Modesto, which reduced homicides from 25 in 2015, to 10 in 2021, to zero criminal homicides in 2025, for the first time in 40 years. The Modesto Police Chief cited CalVIP-supported programs and a local tax measure generating new revenue for public safety as critical to these reductions.[157]

- Pasadena, which reduced homicides by 86% from 2022 to 2024 (from seven to one).[158]

- Pomona, which reduced homicides by over 60% between 2022 to 2025.[159]

- Salinas, which reduced homicides by 63% between 2021 to 2024 (to a level 85% below 2015). Salinas's Mayor described the CalVIP-supported Community Alliance for Safety and Peace CVI initiative as a "game-changer" for public safety.[160]

- San Bernardino, which reduced homicides by 65% from 2022 to 2024, and reduced reported firearm assaults by 53%.[161] The Mayor emphasized that CVI initiatives played "a key role" in these reductions.[162]

- San Francisco, which reduced homicides by 50% from 2022 to 2025 to the lowest number in 70 years. Research evaluations of San Francisco's CalVIP-supported Violence Reduction Initiative (VRI) found the program was associated with "significant gun violence reductions," with impacts strengthening as service components were implemented."[163]

Quite simply: Many effective city and nonprofit-led CVI initiatives that helped California achieve record low firearm homicide rates are now losing all state and federal funding support. They will have to cut back on staffing and services without prompt action in state and local budgets to sustain CVI infrastructure as a vital and permanent pillar for public safety.

Many cities are facing budget shortfalls, and the federal government is walking away from its role and investments in public safety and CVI. With minimal notice, in 2025 the Trump Administration terminated about $500 million in public safety and victim service grants nationwide, with the largest cuts made to gun violence prevention and CVI programs.

These federal cuts are devastating. Eight leading community-based CVI programs in California had already successfully competed for federal funds and spent years planning and implementing CVIPI-supported programs shown to have a significant impact. Relying on those funds, they hired dedicated

professionals and implemented violence intervention and victim service programs that were abruptly terminated without advance notice, cause, or apparent concern for the public safety consequences.

As devastating as these federal cuts have been to CVI programs and communities, California's communities overall have been much more reliant on local and state investment than federal dollars. The federal CVIPI initiative awarded about $18.5 million in CVIPI funds to California local governments and nonprofits implementing CVI initiatives (a significant portion terminated by the Trump Administration before it could be spent), but from 2022-2025, California's CalVIP program invested $227 million in CVI initiatives in the state.

However, California Budget Acts have not provided any General Fund investment in CVI since 2023, and CalVIP is now relying solely on tax revenue from AB 28 to fund this work at a much lower level. This funding crunch has occurred alongside a surge in interest from local governments and nonprofits requesting CalVIP grants, fueled by a combination of federal funding cuts, local budget issues, expanded awareness about CVI strategies, and legislation reforming access barriers. In August 2025, the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) received more applications for CalVIP grants for the 2026-2029 cycle than that grant-making agency has ever received for any grant in its history, with applicants requesting nearly $*1.1 billion* in total to implement violence intervention projects. In February 2026, BSCC announced $107 million in CVI grant awards over three years—about half the state funding CalVIP previously invested in CVI initiatives like Bakersfield's, Richmond's, and Oakland's from 2022-2025.

To build on California's record-setting safety progress, especially for young men of color in our most impacted communities, will require sustained commitment and investment in CVI, and strategic focus to ensure these investments support interventions with the highest risk people and places.

Specifically, California policymakers should prioritize efforts to:

1. **Sustain and expand state investments in CalVIP.**

In 2024, California DOJ's Offices of Gun Violence Prevention and of Community Awareness, Engagement, and Response organized regional roundtable convenings around California bringing together hundreds of CVI professionals and leaders around the state. In every roundtable across the state, participants shared an overwhelmingly consistent message emphasizing that:

- New CalVIP-supported CVI initiatives represented a game-changing investment in community safety.
- By eliminating access barriers and counterproductive administrative burdens, implementation of AB 762 (Wicks) would ensure more highly effective CVI programs could participate in the CalVIP program; and
- Stable, predictable, and stronger investments in CalVIP were *the* critical priority for sustaining recent reductions in gun violence.

While California's recent investments in CalVIP were historic, and contributed to historic progress for public safety, other states have made much larger investments in CVI and are safer for it. A coalition of advocates is pushing a state budget request this year seeking $55 million from the General Fund to support additional CalVIP Grants over three years. This funding request would represent the bare minimum required to match California's investment in CalVIP from 2022-2025, but would still be *far* less than other states are investing per capita. This funding request would allow the BSCC to award CalVIP grants to about 15% of applicants instead of 10%. This would make a critical difference for some communities but leave significant unmet needs in many others.

A strategic plan to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence over the next five years will require much more significant investments in CalVIP Grants and the CVI strategies they fund, especially after the federal government has walked away from its investment in this work.

California's Budget Acts should reflect our state's leadership in building and sustaining lifesaving and highly cost-effective CVI initiatives in our most impacted communities. It is the Office of Gun Violence Prevention's assessment that these are some of the most cost-effective investments the state could make to reduce gun violence.

2. **Strengthen local investments in building a more permanent and accountable CVI infrastructure.**

The state should be a much stronger funding partner for communities grappling with concentrated poverty and gun violence, who often have an unequal tax base with which to address these challenges through local resources alone.

But local governments must also prioritize stable, predictable, and stronger investments in CVI initiatives that are built to last for their communities—not as a short-term strategy tied to one mayor or one grant period, but as a permanent component of the jurisdiction's public safety infrastructure and budgeting. These CVI initiatives should be championed by, and accountable to, city or county leadership at the highest levels to ensure sustained impact.

Robust and comprehensive CVI approaches are often led by Offices of Violence Prevention or Neighborhood Safety reporting to the Mayor, and combine coordinated elements of the Gun Violence Reduction Strategy, hospital-based violence intervention with survivors, targeted street outreach and trauma-informed care interventions at trauma recovery centers and other locations, peace fellowships for those at highest risk, and crisis management and conflict mediation capacity through "credible messenger" violence interrupters or peacekeepers who respond to and prevent emerging conflicts and shootings.[164] These strategies focus on the people and places at highest risk and complement other important investments in upstream prevention programs for young people who may become higher risk and in community transformation to address systemic drivers of community gun violence over the longer-term. As discussed below, however, CVI initiatives should be empowered to remain hyper-focused on interventions with those at highest risk, especially until and unless funding and staffing levels grow significantly to enable a broader approach that would not, in practice, draw scarce resources and intervention and protection capacity away from gunshot survivors and others at highest risk today.

3. **Invest in the CVI workforce and field to support the success of CVI initiatives.**

Pursuant to California's Break the Cycle of Violence Act, the CalVIP program sets aside up to 5% of its funds to invest in the chronically under-resourced field of CVI, instead of specific local CVI initiatives. BSCC began to award most of these set-aside funds in 2025, including through competitive grants for programs that train and certify CVI specialists to expand the field of frontline professionals; provide technical assistance to help plan, study, and improve new CVI initiatives; help grantees manage data collection requirements; and sustain frontline violence prevention professionals in their often dangerous and difficult work, such as through mental health and wellness supports for workers exposed to shootings and vicarious trauma. Now that CalVIP has matured from a temporary pilot program to a somewhat larger and more permanent funding stream, sustained, robust investment in CalVIP would allow BSCC and/or other agencies to make aligned, longer-term investments to support the success of the field too, including by appointing a CalVIP program director or establishing an Office of CVI at BSCC, as proposed by Assembly Bill 2378 (Gabriel, 2026) and/or hiring additional CVI experts focused on program development and impact.

4. **Protect what makes CVI effective and unique by focusing on preventative interventions with those at highest risk.**

Public investment in gun violence prevention has often left a chronic funding gap for CVI strategies seeking to interrupt cycles of violence among people in greatest imminent danger, including the majority of gunshot victims who survive, and who are at extremely elevated risk of being shot again and killed. That is the unique gap that CVI initiatives are designed to fill. Most of the highest-risk clients served by CVI programs have been repeat victims of violence and are alienated and disconnected from social services, public health, law enforcement and the legal system, and other sources of safety. CalVIP is effectively *the* state grant program supporting this intensive intervention work to engage, heal, and protect individuals at highest risk of being shot on our streets today.

But at the state and local level, there have been repeated efforts to transform or dilute CalVIP and other small and vital CVI funding streams into something much less focused on the people and places at highest risk. In practice, these are often well-intentioned efforts to spread scarce resources a mile wide and an inch deep in a manner that would make the whole community less safe. CVI does not work in a vacuum; it fills a unique and critical role in a broader public health and safety ecosystem. But protecting CVI initiatives' funding, strategic focus, and fidelity to evidence-based models focused on individuals at highest risk is vital to CVI programs' long-term impact.

The first director of Richmond, California's Office of Neighborhood Safety, CVI expert, Devone Boggan, wrote a vital essay on this topic in late 2025 about the need for public investments in CVI to maintain a disciplined, strategic focus on reaching "those at the center of gun violence and the individuals on the frontlines who serve them."[165] He writes:

> "Far too often, public funding for CVI gets scattered like seed across scores of well-meaning activities. . . . [T]his very act will most certainly prevent the required depth and dilute any accountability. . .
>
> CVI was developed to address gun violence occurring in our most impacted communities. Its focus was to be on those 'driving' gun violence – or our 'highest risk' individuals. Today, drift occurs where 'highest risk' is defined by one's exposure rather than involvement in gun violence. Drift also occurs where CVI is serving people solely because they live in under-resourced neighborhoods, or they attend schools near gun violence, or fit broad demographic or statistical profiles. CVI loses effectiveness when proximity replaces probability, when 'highest risk' is defined by environment instead of behavior, and when eligibility is driven by demographics rather than real-time gun violence dynamics.
>
> When dollars are stretched thin and misdirected, fewer of the people most likely to shoot or be shot are reached—and lives that could be transformed are missed. CVI must keep its focus on those involved in gun violence. We cannot scale CVI by broadening its mission; we can only scale it by deepening its precision . . . To define and protect [CVI's] purpose is to invest in lasting peace—this is where the opportunity in this moment lies."[166]

Risk assessment tools should be embedded in CVI programs' intake and service delivery models,[167] and state and local funding streams for CVI should ensure CVI programs have stable and sufficient funding and focus to effectively intervene with those at very highest risk.

5. **Tighten eligibility requirements for CalVIP and other public safety funding streams to ensure funding is strategically targeted on communities with the highest rates of homicide and firearm assault.**

At a time of deep funding scarcity for CVI and other gun violence prevention programs, public investments should be very specifically targeted on the communities with the highest rates of homicide and firearm assault.

Most public health and safety investments and competitive grant programs are made available to all cities or all counties in the state, or have been allocated to specific jurisdictions identified in the Budget—without prioritizing funding for communities that have the highest rates of homicide and gun violence. Though "project need" is a key scoring criteria for many grants, in practice, many relatively well-off communities with relatively low rates of homicide have developed nation-leading programs and proven successful at demonstrating project need and outcompeting other communities for public safety grants.

To direct more funding toward highest need communities, the Break the Cycle of Violence Act directed BSCC to develop a list of cities that are "disproportionately impacted by gun violence" and eligible to compete for CalVIP funding based on having the highest rates and/or numbers of homicides or firearm assaults in the state. This was an important step toward equalizing safety resources and ensuring maximum impact for communities in greatest need.

However, recent amendments to the CalVIP statute opened eligibility to counties that have very low rates of homicide or firearm assault, as long as they have at least one city of any size in that county that is "disproportionately impacted by gun violence." Relatedly, the CalVIP statute opened eligibility to tribal governments located in those counties, regardless of their homicide rate. Opening eligibility to county and tribal governments is a positive step toward integrating CVI in more jurisdictions, but lawmakers should further tighten the eligibility requirements for CalVIP to ensure that very scarce CVI investments are strategically targeted on communities that have had the very highest rates of homicides and firearm assaults for at least two of the preceding three years. Counties with very low rates of homicide should not be eligible for CalVIP funding when there is only sufficient revenue to meet 10% of requested need, and even greater emphasis should be placed in the grant scoring process for CalVIP and other public safety grants on a community's rates of homicide and firearm assault.

These recommendations aim to ensure that California's state and local policymakers recognize the central importance of CVI strategies and investments to a five-year strategic plan to reduce gun violence in our state. California's ability to sustain and build on recent progress requires more funding for CVI interventions and the CVI workforce, and requires strategic discipline too, to ensure an all-of-the-above prevention strategy does not in practice come at the expense of programs saving gunshot victims and others at extremely high risk.

Chapter 5.

Protecting Survivors from a National Surge in Domestic Gun Violence

Data on Increased Family and Intimate Partner Gun Violence in California

In Chapter 2, this report analyzed CDC data showing that since 2014, California has been impacted by a devastating national increase in female and child-victim firearm homicides driven by a surge in family and intimate-partner-related gun violence.

Other data sources also indicate that there has been a significant increase in domestic violence victims' exposure to gun violence in California over the past decade. California law requires law enforcement agencies to report information to California DOJ about the number of calls for service or assistance (such as 911 calls) the agency receives in incidents involving domestic violence perpetrated against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants.[168] Agencies reporting this information also report whether the domestic violence incident involved the reported use or threatened use of firearms.

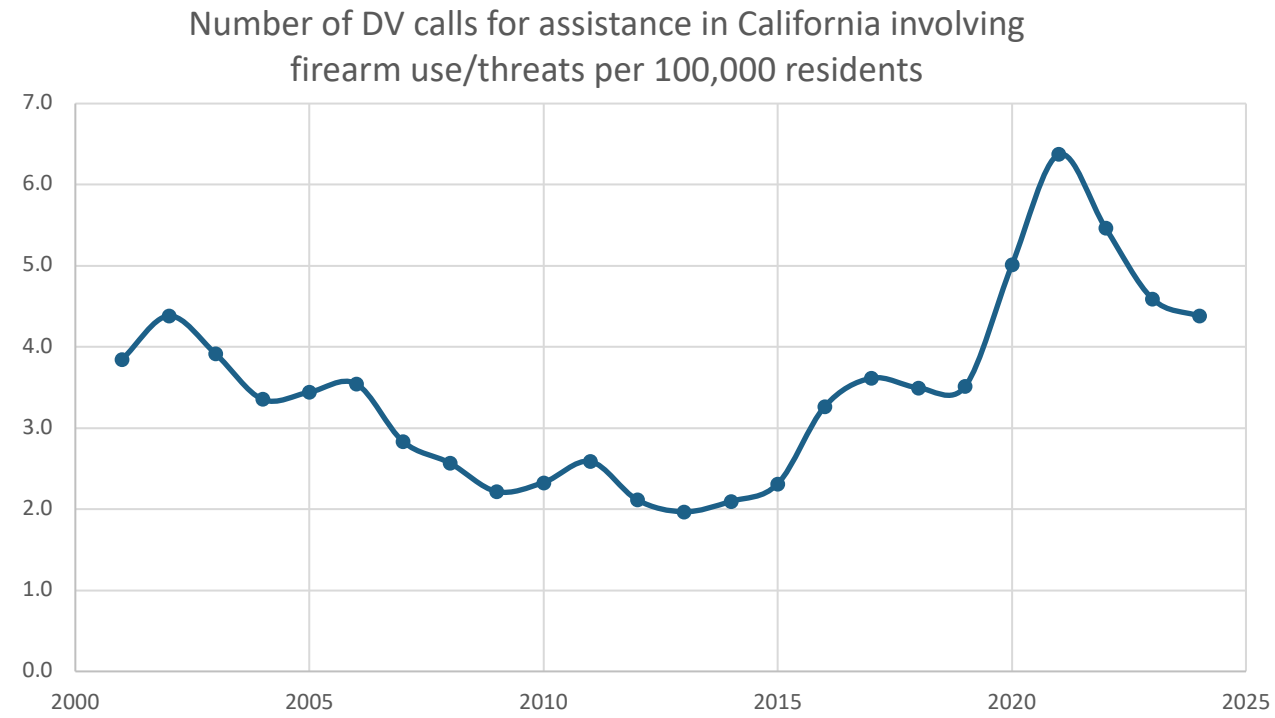
Between 2019 and 2021, law enforcement agencies across California reported a 2% increase in the overall number of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance.[169] But over the same period, they reported an *80% increase* in the number of those domestic violence calls involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms.[170] This pandemic-era surge in domestic violence calls for assistance involving firearm use and threats occurred on top of large increases from 2014 to 2019 too.

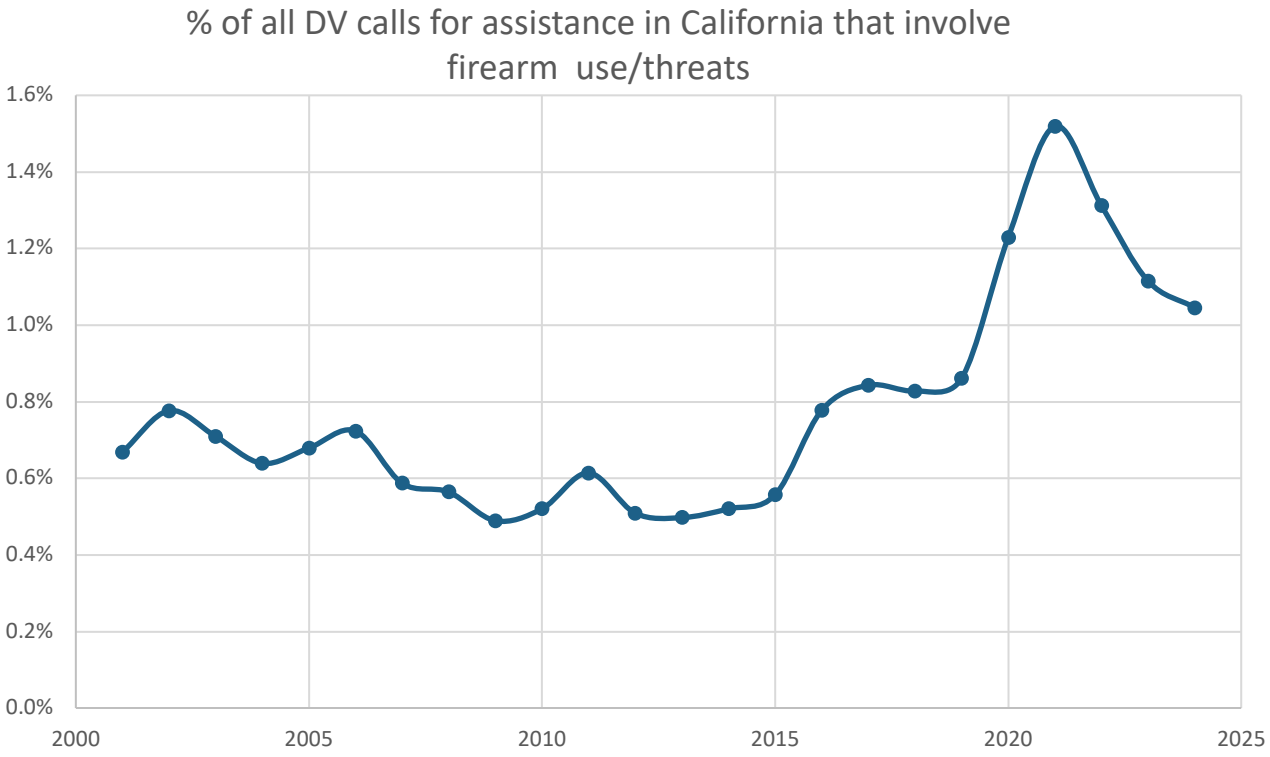
In less than a decade in California, from 2014-2021, the number and per capita rate of calls for assistance in domestic violence incidents involving firearms *tripled*. This was not explained by increased help-seeking or record reporting; from 2014 to 2021, the total number of domestic violence calls for assistance increased by 5% while the number of those calls involving firearm use or threats tripled. Law enforcement agencies were receiving similar numbers of domestic violence calls, but recording that a *much* larger percentage of those calls involved individuals threatening or attacking their partners or household members with firearms.

The percentage of all domestic violence calls for assistance that involved the use or threatened use of firearms in California increased from 0.5% of all domestic violence calls in 2014, to 0.86% in 2019, and 1.52% in 2021.[171] The vast majority of domestic violence calls do not involve firearm use or threats, but the tripling of the number and percentage of calls that do involve firearms frequently bring particular dangers to targeted victims, the public, and responding officers and co-responders.

California recorded important reductions in these statistics in 2022, 2023, and 2024—and has remained *much* safer for women and children than the rest of the U.S. on average. But in 2024, the per capita rate of domestic violence calls involving firearms in California was still 25% higher than in 2019, and over double the rate recorded in 2014. Similarly, in 2024, the percentage of all domestic violence calls that involve firearm use or threats remained 21% higher than in 2019 and double the percentage in 2014.

Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance Involving Firearm Use or Threats in California

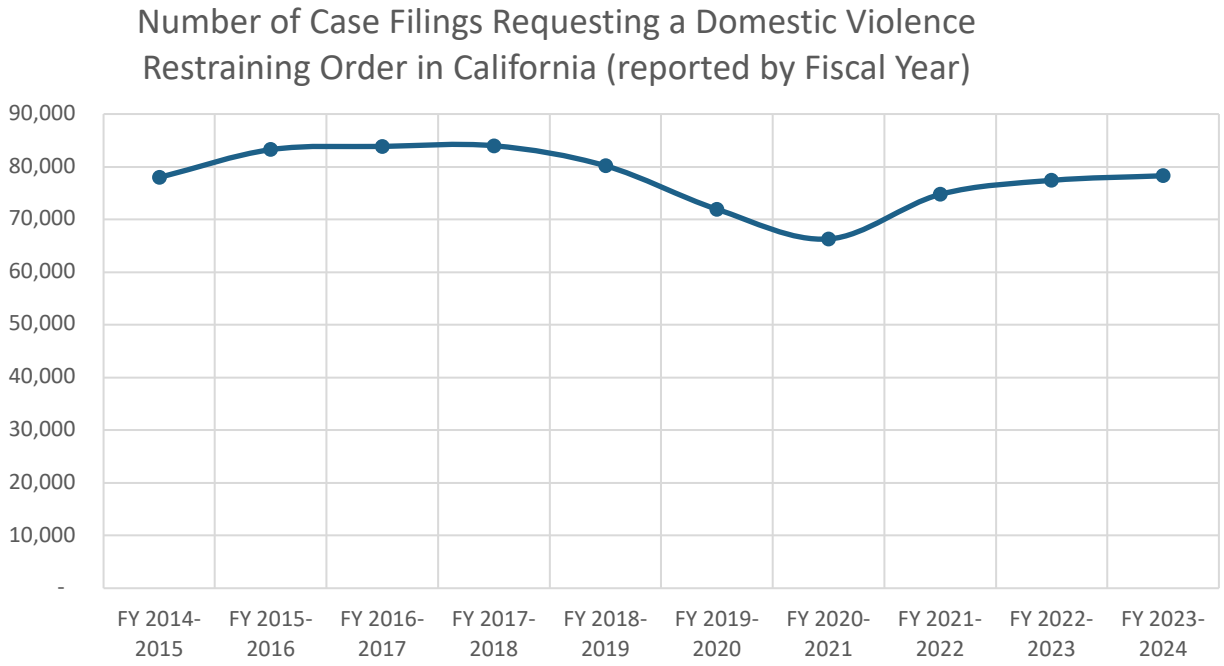




Requests for Domestic Violence Restraining Orders in California

Amid this large increase in domestic violence survivors' exposure to firearm threats and violence, California courts might have expected to see a corresponding surge in requests for court protective orders, like Domestic Violence Restraining Orders (DVROs) which are designed to protect victim-survivors and require dangerous individuals to relinquish all firearms. Instead, however, in California there was a notable decline in the number of people requesting these firearm-prohibiting protective orders during the pandemic. *Many* more people were in acute danger from domestic gun violence, but fewer were accessing pathways to safety through our courts.

The Judicial Council of California publishes data (graphed below) about the number of cases filed in California's Superior Courts based on a request for a DVRO.[172] (This court system data is published based on fiscal years instead of calendar years). According to these court statistics, from the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year (the last full fiscal year before the COVID-19 pandemic) to the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year, the number of cases filed in California requesting a DVRO fell by 17% to the lowest number filed in any year since California courts were required to report these records.[173]



Utilization of the DVRO has partially rebounded in recent years, which has likely played an important role in the 14% reduction in firearm homicide rates in California for female victims from 2021-2024 and the 31% reduction in the rate of domestic violence calls for assistance involving firearm use or threats over this period. But the number of DVRO cases filed in California has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels and has not increased to an extent commensurate with spikes in survivors' exposure to threats and violence with firearms—despite California's significant policy, grant funding, and public education efforts to promote access to, and implementation of, these processes. Among many other things, recently enacted California laws promote access to DVROs and other protective orders through, e.g., free electronic filing, remote video conference hearings for parties and witnesses, and new mandates for all local law enforcement agencies to serve protective orders for free upon petitioners' request and recover the abusive person's firearms at the time of service. New mandates also required courts to make findings regarding firearm relinquishment compliance in protective order cases, to promptly report noncompliance to local prosecutors and law enforcement, and to take findings of unlawful firearm possession into account when making orders governing an abusive parent's custody or visitation with children.

County-Level Domestic Violence Calls for Assistance Data

The table below shows there is significant variation across California's counties in domestic violence survivors' exposure to threats or attacks with firearms. This data can be used to identify communities that have the most urgent need for additional state and local resources focused on preventing domestic violence-related gun violence.

Many of the counties most impacted by domestic violence involving firearms are in more rural regions of Northern California, in the Central Valley and Inland Empire, and Los Angeles. Many of these counties also have relatively high rates of legally recorded firearm commerce and ownership (see pages 98-101) and high rates of female-victim homicide overall.

From 2020-2024:

- The 10 California counties with the *highest percentage* of domestic violence calls for assistance involving firearm use or threats, out of all domestic violence calls, were in declining order: Trinity, Sierra, Kern, Calaveras, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Fresno, and Glenn.

- The 10 California counties with the *highest rate* of domestic violence calls involving firearms per 100,000 county residents were in declining order: Del Norte, Kern, Trinity, Sierra, Fresno, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Lake, Los Angeles, and Glenn.

In total, from 2020-2024, California law enforcement agencies reported receiving about 811,000 domestic violence-related calls for assistance, including 10,102 (1.25%) that involved reported use or threatened use of firearms.

County	Total Domestic Violence Calls for Assistance (2020-2024)	Domestic Violence Calls Involving Firearms (2020-2024)	% of Total DV Calls that Involve Firearms (2020-2024)	DV Calls Involving Firearms per 100,000 Residents[174] (2020-2024)	Female-Victim Homicides per 100,000 Residents[175] (2020-2024)
Alameda	25,437	318	1.25%	19.28	7.09
Alpine	43	-	0.00%	-	-
Amador	679	8	1.18%	19.31	9.66
Butte	6,032	41	0.68%	19.72	5.77
Calaveras	1,107	21	1.90%	45.41	-
Colusa	445	1	0.22%	4.55	9.10
Contra Costa	15,487	257	1.66%	22.06	3.18
Del Norte	4,946	49	0.99%	180.77	11.07
El Dorado	3,307	17	0.51%	8.82	4.15
Fresno	53,070	777	1.46%	76.42	6.00
Glenn	691	10	1.45%	35.10	3.51
Humboldt	3,395	20	0.59%	14.87	6.69
Imperial	2,569	17	0.66%	9.43	6.66
Inyo	679	4	0.59%	21.35	16.01
Kern	33,827	1,325	3.92%	144.80	10.38
Kings	2,915	19	0.65%	12.39	5.87
Lake	2,443	29	1.19%	42.55	5.87

County	Total Domestic Violence Calls for Assistance (2020-2024)	Domestic Violence Calls Involving Firearms (2020-2024)	% of Total DV Calls that Involve Firearms (2020-2024)	DV Calls Involving Firearms per 100,000 Residents[174] (2020-2024)	Female-Victim Homicides per 100,000 Residents[175] (2020-2024)
Lassen	818	10	1.22%	32.94	3.29
Los Angeles	184,595	3,443	1.87%	35.10	5.16
Madera	3,816	35	0.92%	21.75	6.21
Marin	2,338	4	0.17%	1.55	0.39
Mariposa	536	1	0.19%	5.85	11.71
Mendocino	1,677	5	0.30%	5.54	4.43
Merced	9,173	101	1.10%	34.80	8.27
Modoc	224	2	0.89%	23.26	23.26
Mono	361	3	0.83%	22.82	15.21
Monterey	7,388	23	0.31%	5.26	2.97
Napa	2,090	8	0.38%	5.93	3.71
Nevada	1,353	17	1.26%	16.59	3.90
Orange	47,904	203	0.42%	6.41	2.02
Placer	4,274	38	0.89%	9.07	2.62
Plumas	447	2	0.45%	10.30	-
Riverside	35,072	271	0.77%	10.93	4.56
Sacramento	33,390	410	1.23%	25.72	6.27
San Benito	1,171	5	0.43%	7.43	1.49
San Bernardino	40,558	702	1.73%	31.95	6.05
San Diego	85,898	540	0.63%	16.42	2.86
San Francisco	15,984	129	0.81%	15.54	3.73
San Joaquin	22,813	345	1.51%	43.27	6.90
San Luis Obispo	3,706	10	0.27%	3.55	1.78
San Mateo	9,362	35	0.37%	4.71	3.10
Santa Barbara	8,310	52	0.63%	11.72	2.93
Santa Clara	33,183	174	0.52%	9.15	2.42
Santa Cruz	4,192	21	0.50%	7.93	3.40
Shasta	2,032	23	1.13%	12.68	3.86
Sierra	63	3	4.76%	93.55	-
Siskiyou	873	9	1.03%	20.71	13.80
Solano	9,988	127	1.27%	28.10	7.74
Sonoma	10,391	104	1.00%	21.44	3.30
Stanislaus	15,038	54	0.36%	9.75	5.96
Sutter	2,519	30	1.19%	30.35	4.05
Tehama	1,824	19	1.04%	29.16	7.67
Trinity	248	16	6.45%	100.88	6.31
Tulare	14,841	152	1.02%	31.75	6.48
Tuolumne	1,680	4	0.24%	7.34	-
Ventura	27,229	31	0.11%	3.70	2.51
Yolo	4,051	10	0.25%	4.53	4.99
Yuba	2,575	18	0.70%	21.30	2.37
Statewide Total	**811,057**	**10,102**	**1.25%**	**25.71**	**4.64**

Policy Discussion: Priority Recommendations for Protecting Survivors from Domestic Gun Violence

Promoting domestic violence survivor safety must continue to be a priority to achieve sustained reductions in gun violence for all Californians.

It is important to place these domestic violence-related statistics in context: The data above documents an enormous surge in domestic violence victims' exposure to gun violence and armed intimidation *in California*—a state that managed to avert the far larger increases in domestic violence-related homicides seen across the rest of the U.S. Domestic violence survivors in other states have suffered *much* larger increases in gun violence on average, especially in states with much weaker policy frameworks for preventing people who perpetrate domestic violence from keeping or purchasing firearms.

In 2024, it took a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *U.S. v. Rahimi* to overturn a Texas-based federal appellate court decision and affirm that a domestic violence protective order could constitutionally prohibit an abusive man from possessing the firearms he had fired in the direction of the mother of his child, and threatened to kill her with if she told anyone.[176] After the court received testimony that he had used a firearm against the victim, it ordered him not to possess firearms and informed him that it would be a crime to do so, but he did not comply. Without proactive compliance and accountability efforts, he remained unlawfully armed for 11 more months and committed six more shootings in his community.

California's policies and investments are likely making a critical difference in preventing many cases like these—recent years have seen enormous safety gaps emerge between California and the rest of the U.S. for firearm homicide rates for female and child victims. And despite alarming trends, women and children under 15 in California still experience *much* lower rates of firearm homicide than adult men or older teenaged males. In 2024, California's firearm homicide rate was nearly six times higher for male victims than for female victims, and over 11 times higher for Californians aged 15 and older compared to children under 15.

However, sustained and stronger state and local funding efforts are needed to renew and build on recent investments in protective order implementation, service, and enforcement programs, especially through the expiring Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program. By hiring staff specifically dedicated to addressing the firearm relinquishment gaps highlighted in the *U.S. v. Rahimi* case, these investments can make a transformative difference for survivor safety by ensuring swift compliance or accountability when violent and abusive individuals violate court orders and the law by unlawfully possessing firearms. In just one fiscal year (2024-2025), 11 courts receiving Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program funding collectively reported facilitating the relinquishment of **over 3,000 firearms from 901 individuals** who became subject to firearm-prohibiting court orders.[177]

These efforts are critical for survivor safety because domestic abuse survivors are at *much* higher risk of being forcibly coerced, controlled, shot, or killed when an abusive person has access to firearms.[178] Studies have estimated that gunshot wounds are four times as likely to result in death compared to stab wounds,[179] and that domestic violence assaults involving firearms are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.[180]

When comparing males who had abusively *injured* their female partners to those who had killed them, researchers also found that **an abusive partner's direct access to a firearm was *the* strongest risk factor for intimate partner homicide**.[181] (These researchers counted a person as having "direct access" if they had a firearm in the home or otherwise had ready access through their job or similar sources). If an abusive male partner:

- Had a history of mental health problems, the likelihood of intimate partner homicide increased by 30%.
- Abused alcohol or drugs, the likelihood of intimate partner homicide increased by 85%.
- Had abused the victim while she was pregnant, stalked the victim, or perpetrated rape or forced sex, the likelihood of intimate partner homicide increased by three to five times.
- Had previously threatened the victim with a weapon or nonfatally strangled her, the likelihood of intimate partner homicide increased by about seven times.

And if the abusive partner had direct access to a firearm, the likelihood of intimate partner homicide increased by 11 times.[182]

Efforts to ensure people engaged in domestic violence are separated from firearms are also protective for many more people beyond the abusive person's most immediately at-risk partners, family, or household members. Researchers estimate that 20% of people killed in homicides connected to intimate partner violence are "corollary victims" who do not have a family or intimate partner relationship with the perpetrator, such as an abuse survivor's new romantic partner, family member, friend, neighbor, support network, or first responders.[183] The U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center has also emphasized that domestic abuse and violent misogyny are significant risk factors for public mass shooting attacks, so effective policies and investments to separate adjudicated domestic abusers from firearms are an important intervention for protecting the public from mass shooting attacks too.[184]

To better protect survivors from a national surge in domestic gun violence, lawmakers and other stakeholders should implement the following recommendations:

1. **Ensure new protective order laws and law enforcement protocols are robustly implemented.** In 2025, California enacted legislation developed with California DOJ, AB 451 (Petrie-Norris), that requires law enforcement agencies to adopt *and implement* new written protocols and procedures by January 1, 2027, in order to promote consistent implementation, service, and enforcement of DVROs and other protective orders that include firearm prohibitions.[185] Local governments should ensure that local law enforcement agencies adopt and robustly implement these new agency policies to ensure that protective orders are treated as a public safety priority, and provide stronger protection from gun violence—including by ensuring more orders are promptly recorded in law enforcement databases, served on restrained people, and enforced to separate the restrained person from all firearms, and that noncompliance is promptly identified and addressed to promote safety and trust in the protective order process.

2. **Enact the Survivors' Pathway to Safety Act into law.** In 2026, California DOJ is co-sponsoring AB 1753 (Stefani), which the California DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention developed with survivor advocates. This bill includes a large package of about a dozen provisions designed to close gaps and improve implementation of firearm-prohibiting protective orders, and to ensure courts, law enforcement, and prosecutors coordinate and communicate effectively to ensure firearm relinquishment compliance and accountability in these cases. California lawmakers should pass this bill into law.

3. **Policymakers at all levels of government must continue to elevate protective order access, implementation, enforcement, and firearm relinquishment as a funding priority**, including by renewing California's expiring General Fund investment in the Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program through the Judicial Council and/or establishing a related grant program at another agency to support similar protective order firearm relinquishment partnerships.

4. **State policymakers should also allocate funding for California DOJ to establish an automated protected person information portal to empower survivors** who obtain protection orders with vital information about their own case; multiple other states have established similar portals to modernize victim notification systems in a manner that promotes both transparency and safety. California DOJ has recommended that the Legislature authorize the department to establish this portal and share otherwise confidential information with survivors about their own protective order case, but legislation enacted in 2025 authorizes California DOJ to do so only upon receiving necessary appropriations that the Legislature has not yet authorized.

5. **Policymakers at all levels should also sustain funding for critical survivor services,** including shelters and legal aid, which are suffering devastating federal funding cuts and shortfalls that may impact survivors' access to justice and safety.

6. **Policymakers should also prioritize new efforts to support domestic violence homicide intervention programs** that focus preventative and protective resources on proactively identifying and intervening with individuals at highest risk of victimization or perpetration of domestic violence homicide in the near future.[186] In other words, California should create a "CalVIP" for domestic violence. Multiple relatively similar strategies have demonstrated significant promise in reducing domestic violence homicide, including the "High Point" North Carolina model and the Geiger Center's Domestic Violence High-Risk Team Model. Like CVI initiatives, these strategies rely on the insight that many intimate partner homicides can be predicted and prevented by coordinated, multidisciplinary teams of dedicated public safety professionals. Based on the successful model of the CalVIP grant program, new state and local funding for domestic violence intervention initiatives should be focused on where these resources are needed most: reaching individuals at highest risk in communities with the greatest need, based on rates of domestic violence-related homicide, female-victim homicide, and/or domestic violence calls for assistance involving use or threats with firearms.[187]

Through these comprehensive efforts, California can continue to lead the nation in protecting survivors from a national crisis of domestic violence-related shootings.

Chapter 6.
Curbing Illegal Gun Trafficking

Crime Guns and Gun Trafficking in California

Crime gun tracing data identifies the licensed firearms dealer who conducted the last legally recorded sale of a firearm before it was recovered by law enforcement as an illegally used or possessed "crime gun"[188] in connection with a criminal investigation. Crime gun tracing data from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) shows that a large majority of illegally used or possessed crime guns recovered in California either cannot be traced to any firearms dealer sale (including ghost guns) or are traced back to sellers located in *other* states with fewer gun safety regulations and safeguards like background check requirements.

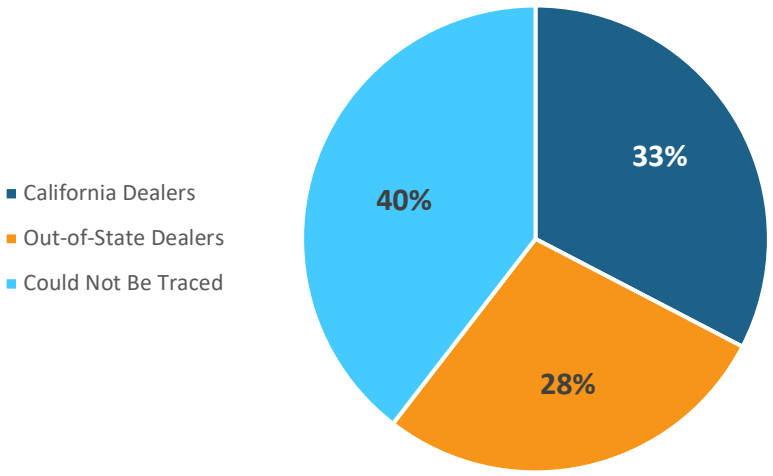
This data indicates that gun crime and violence in California is fueled by both the ghost gun industry and interstate gun trafficking, as both sources seek to circumvent our state's nation-leading gun safety laws and unlawfully arm people who could not lawfully purchase firearms in California. From 2017-2021, California accounted for 12% of all guns recovered from crime nationwide and traced by ATF, in line with our share of the national population, but California accounted for 55% of all crime guns identified as ghost guns nationwide.[189] Additionally, new research discussed below shows that the largest gun trafficking pipeline in North America is for guns sold in Arizona and trafficked to California.[190]

2023 is the most recent year for which national crime gun tracing data is available from ATF. In 2023, ATF reported that it received law enforcement requests to trace the sale history of 56,382 crime guns that were recovered by law enforcement in California in connection with criminal investigations that year. ATF was able to successfully trace the dealer source of 34,087 (60%) of those firearms recovered from crime in California by identifying the purchaser and licensed firearms dealer who conducted the last recorded sale of the firearm.

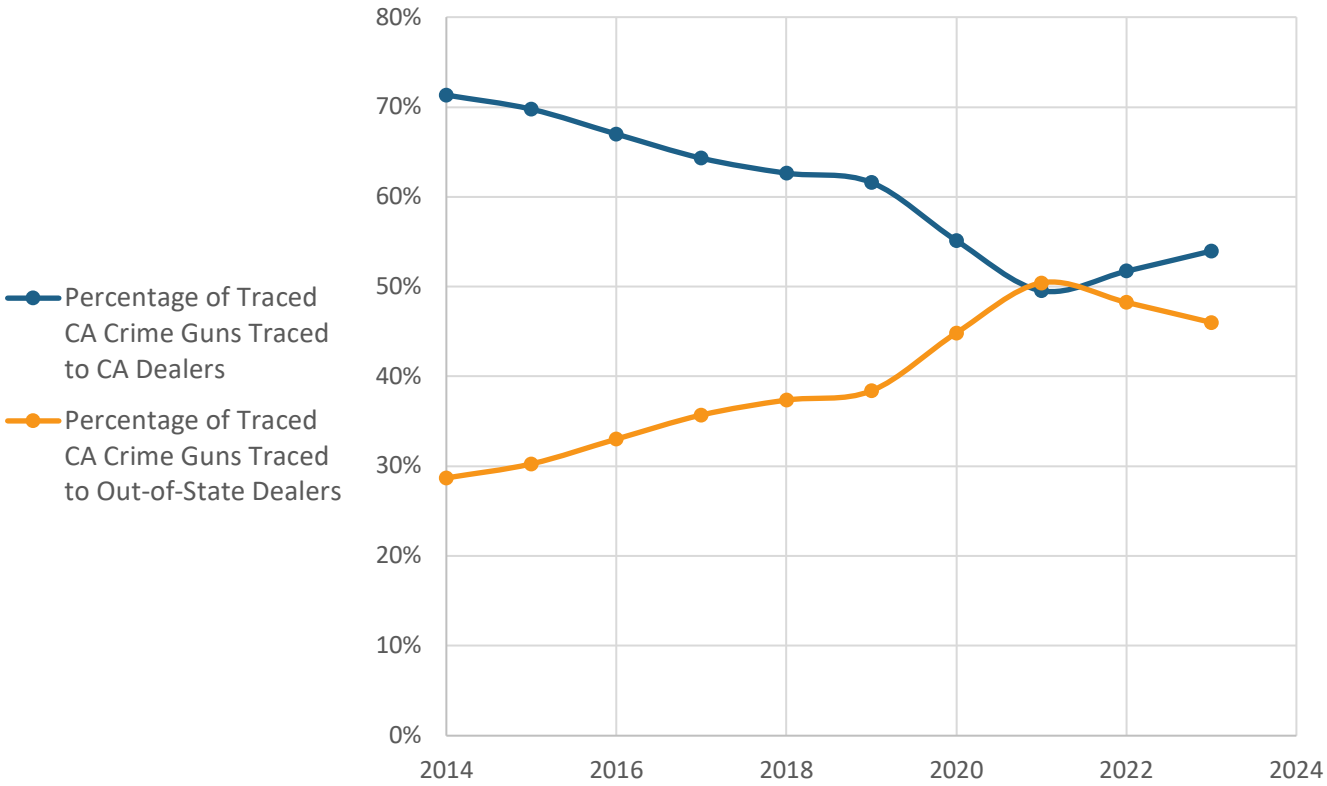
Of the 56,382 crime guns recovered in California and submitted to ATF for tracing:

- ATF successfully traced 18,402 (33%) to a firearms dealer located in California.
- ATF successfully traced 15,685 (28%) to dealers located in other states or territories.
- The remaining 40% could not be traced to any dealer sale. A significant portion of these firearms were likely untraceable because they were unserialized, privately manufactured ghost guns that typically would not have an associated record of sale through a licensed firearms dealer.

Sources of Crime Guns Recovered in California in 2023
(ATF National Crime Gun Tracing Data)



Percentage of Crime Guns Recovered in California Traced to California Dealers vs Out-of-State Dealers:

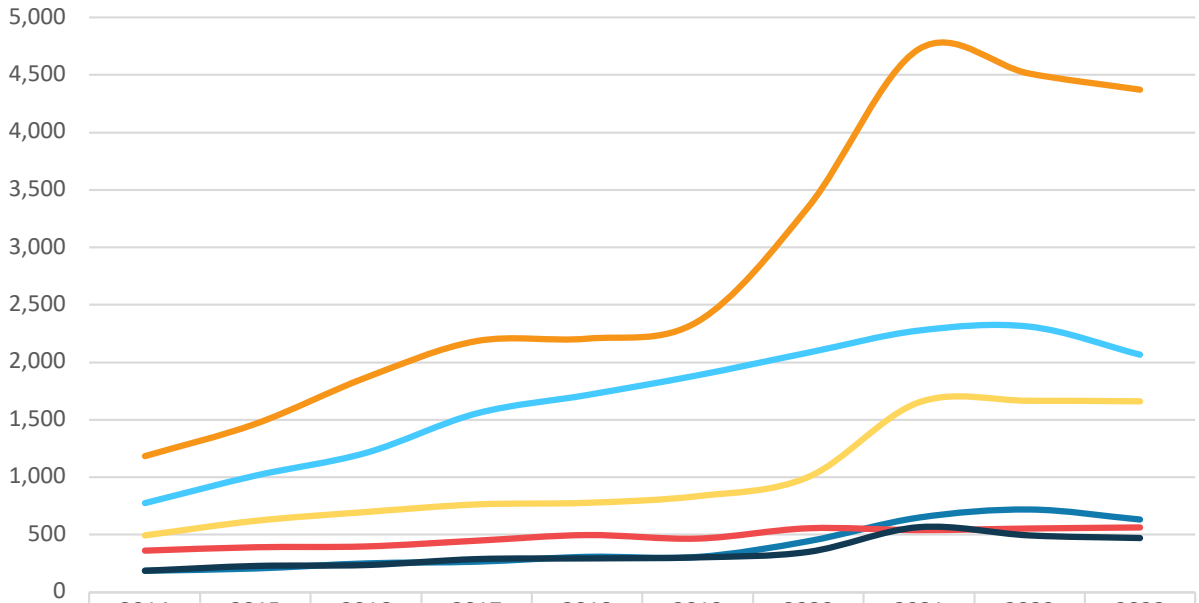


Over the past decade, the percentage of crime guns recovered in California traced back to California dealers has fallen significantly. In 2014, ATF reported that California dealers were the source of 71% of the crime guns recovered in California that could be successfully traced to a dealer sale; that percentage fell to 49.6% in 2021 and 54% in 2023. (Note that this data excludes crime guns like ghost guns that could not be traced to any dealer sale).

Over this period, California strengthened state laws governing firearm dealer business requirements and strengthened the California DOJ's oversight role and capacity, including by mandating and funding California DOJ's Bureau of Firearms to conduct regular inspections of firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and gun show operations in California.

ATF data indicates that in response to these and other efforts, individuals who could not pass a firearm background check in California or who are engaged in criminal conduct in our state have become much more likely to obtain their firearms from out-of-state sources or, as described earlier, through illegal ghost gun products. In 2023, a majority of California-recovered crime guns traced to out-of-state sources were traced to dealers in just three top source states: Arizona (the source of 28% of out-of-state firearms recovered from crime in California), Nevada (13%), and Texas (11%). The next three top source states for out-of-state crime guns recovered in California were Utah (4%), Oregon (4%), and Georgia (3%).

Crime Guns Recovered in California but Sold by Dealers in Other Leading Source States

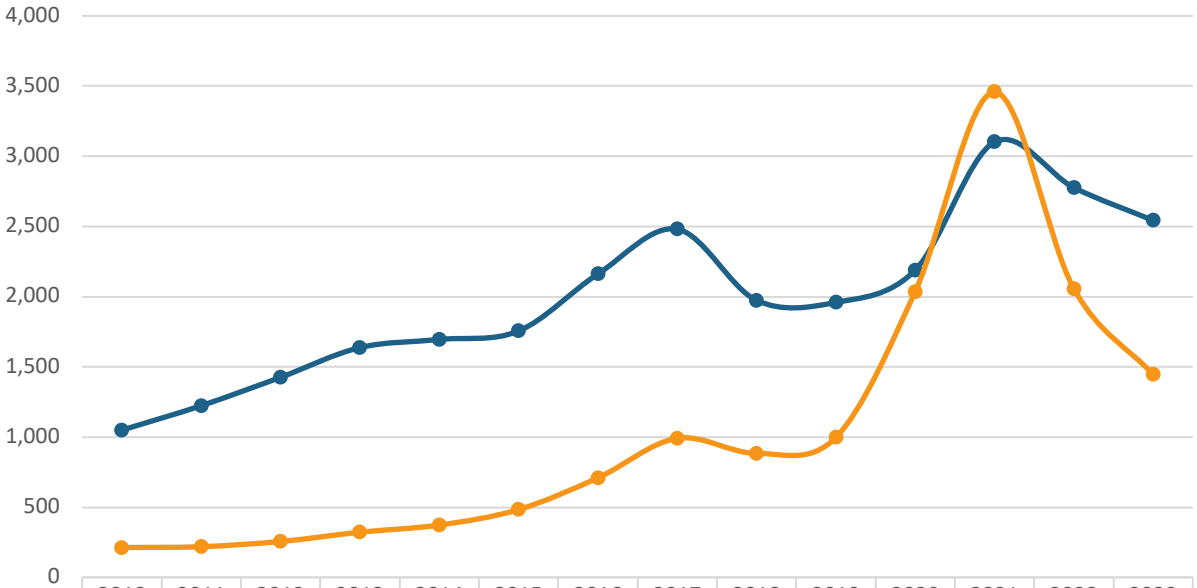


	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Arizona	1,184	1,465	1,868	2,185	2,206	2,355	3,352	4,725	4,512	4,372
Nevada	774	1,013	1,211	1,554	1,714	1,886	2,083	2,275	2,309	2,065
Texas	494	621	698	764	778	836	1,003	1,653	1,667	1,662
Utah	186	206	250	265	307	306	443	648	718	631
Oregon	364	393	400	449	497	467	555	539	553	562
Georgia	184	226	234	286	292	301	349	565	493	470

Over the past decade, many more California crime guns have been traced back to dealers in the top six other source states, especially Arizona, Nevada, and Texas. In 2021, amid a record surge in gun violence during the pandemic, dealers in these six source states sold more firearms recovered as crime guns in California with a short-time-to-crime than California dealers.

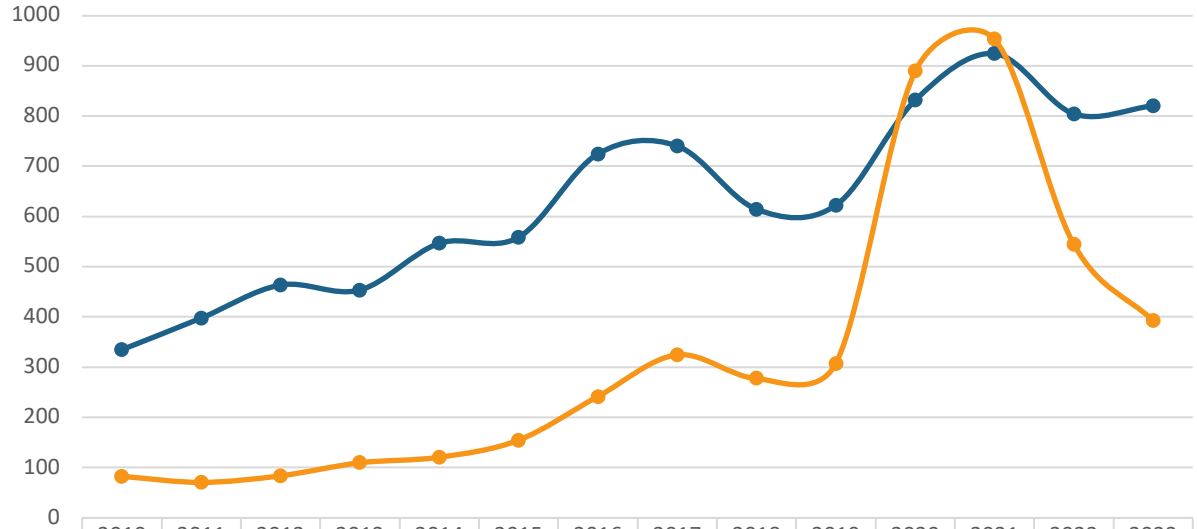
The graphs below show that these top source states (especially Arizona, Nevada, and Texas) played an especially major role in fueling gun crime in California during the pandemic and represented an especially large percentage of crime guns recovered with a very short "time-to-crime" period between the dealer sale and the firearm's recovery by law enforcement. (This short "time-to-crime" measure is a strong indicator that the purchaser acquired the firearm with intent to use the firearm in crime or quickly traffic and divert the weapon to illegal markets.)

Source of Crime Guns Recovered in California Within One Year of Dealer Sale



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CALIFORNIA	1,050	1,224	1,426	1,638	1,696	1,756	2,162	2,482	1,975	1,960	2,190	3,103	2,778	2,544
TOP SIX STATES	215	221	258	324	375	485	711	993	886	999	2,037	3,459	2,058	1,447

Source of Crime Guns Recovered in California Within Three Months of Dealer Sale



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CALIFORNIA	334	397	463	453	546	558	724	740	614	622	831	924	804	820
TOP SIX STATES	82	70	83	109	120	154	241	324	277	307	889	953	544	392

The Nation's Largest Gun Trafficking Pipeline Funnels Crime Guns into California

In most states, the vast majority of firearms recovered from crime were also sold by dealers in that same state. For example, in 2023, 84% of the crime guns recovered in Arizona that ATF could successfully trace to a dealer sale were traced to a dealer in Arizona. Compared to California, Arizona has *much* weaker gun safety laws, including no universal firearm background check requirements, no bulk firearm purchase restrictions, few limitations on the sale of uniquely dangerous weaponry and ghost gun products, and much weaker eligibility standards that allow more people with significant histories of dangerous behavior to pass firearm background checks. As a result, prohibited buyers and gun traffickers in states like Arizona have much weaker incentives to source their weapons from out-of-state sources—and, unfortunately, gun traffickers in California have much stronger incentives to source weapons from states like Arizona.

This is one indicator of the strength and effectiveness of California's gun safety laws and investments in firearm industry oversight, inspections, and licensing. It is also an indicator that, even as we make record progress against gun violence, California faces constant headwinds from the much weaker gun safety laws in other states and at the federal level.

ATF data shows that California is uniquely impacted by interstate gun trafficking. For example:

- In 2023, California firearm dealers were identified as the source of 2,363 (0.63%) of the nearly 374,000 traced crime guns recovered by law enforcement in *all other states and territories combined* that year, including 237 firearms recovered by law enforcement in Arizona.

- In the same year, dealers in Arizona were identified as the source of 4,372 crime guns recovered by law enforcement *just in California alone*.

- This means ATF traced over 18 times as many crime guns flowing from Arizona dealers to California as ATF traced flowing in the opposite direction.

Only three other states (Delaware, Maryland, and New York) recovered a larger number of crime guns traced to sellers in California compared to the number of crime guns California recovered and traced to sellers in those states. The remaining 46 states were net exporters of crime guns to California, often by a very substantial margin, as shown in more detail in the table below.

New research published in February 2026 analyzed ATF crime gun tracing data from 2015-2023 to identify 12 high volume "gun trafficking corridors" that involved at least 1,000 firearms that were acquired from dealers in one state and then recovered from crime in another state or North American nation within one year of the last recorded dealer sale.[191] This analysis showed that **the largest gun trafficking corridor in North America by far was for crime guns trafficked from Arizona to California**. This Arizona-to-California corridor involved nearly twice as many crime guns recovered with a short time-to-crime (6,629) compared to the second largest corridor trafficking guns from Texas to Mexico (3,789).

Among the 12 high-volume gun trafficking corridors identified by these researchers, California was also the destination state for the fourth largest gun trafficking corridor in North America (involving 3,748 crime guns trafficked from Nevada to California), and the seventh largest (involving 1,482 crime guns trafficked from Texas to California).

These researchers' other findings reinforce the conclusion that gun traffickers are exploiting much

weaker gun safety laws in Arizona, Nevada, and Texas. On a per capita basis, compared to California, Arizona dealers sold *95 times* more guns recovered from crime in Mexico within one year of the dealer sale; Texas firearm dealers sold 47 times as many; and Nevada firearm dealers sold 10 times as many.[192]

These states are not simply exporters of crime guns; their relatively weak gun safety laws fuel in-state gun crime and violence too. Among all 50 states, on a per capita basis, law enforcement agencies in Arizona recovered the fifth highest number of guns from crime within one year of dealer sale; Nevada recovered the sixth highest number, and Texas recovered the 14th highest number.[193] California's progress against gun violence is challenged by our proximity to these leading gun trafficking sources and corridors.

ATF Tracing Analysis for Crime Guns Recovered in 2023:

	Number of Crime Guns Recovered in This State in 2023 Traced to a California Firearms Dealer (crime guns *exported* from CA)	Number of Crime Guns Recovered in California in 2023 Traced to a Firearms Dealer in This State (crime guns *imported* into CA)	Ratio of Crime Guns Exported into CA/ Crime Guns Imported from CA
Alabama	20	181	9.1
Alaska	10	73	7.3
Arizona	237	4,372	18.4
Arkansas	9	332	36.9
California	18,402	18,402	1.0
Colorado	97	294	3.0
Connecticut	4	25	6.3
Delaware	7	5	0.7
District of Columbia	10	1	0.1
Florida	134	420	3.1
Georgia	45	470	10.4
Guam & Northern Mariana Islands	0	4	
Hawaii	8	9	1.1
Idaho	40	346	8.7
Illinois	83	136	1.6
Indiana	41	163	4.0
Iowa	16	48	3.0
Kansas	11	132	12.0
Kentucky	24	144	6.0
Louisiana	36	232	6.4
Maine	0	11	
Maryland	39	31	0.8
Massachusetts	18	25	1.4
Michigan	38	93	2.4
Minnesota	26	67	2.6
Mississippi	9	201	22.3
Missouri	25	279	11.2

	Number of Crime Guns Recovered in This State in 2023 Traced to a California Firearms Dealer (crime guns *exported* from CA)	Number of Crime Guns Recovered in California in 2023 Traced to a Firearms Dealer in This State (crime guns *imported* into CA)	Ratio of Crime Guns Exported into CA/ Crime Guns Imported from CA
Montana	19	185	9.7
Nebraska	10	29	2.9
Nevada	244	2,065	8.5
New Hampshire	0	26	
New Jersey	14	17	1.2
New Mexico	30	258	8.6
New York	47	39	0.8
North Carolina	49	180	3.7
North Dakota	6	56	9.3
Ohio	45	199	4.4
Oklahoma	29	428	14.8
Oregon	164	562	3.4
Pennsylvania	44	107	2.4
Puerto Rico	19	3	0.2
Rhode Island	1	3	3.0
South Carolina	30	115	3.8
South Dakota	30	37	1.2
Tennessee	66	251	3.8
Texas	251	1,662	6.6
US Virgin Islands	0	0	0.0
Utah	69	631	9.1
Vermont	4	6	1.5
Virginia	48	137	2.9
Washington	131	455	3.5
West Virginia	5	32	6.4
Wisconsin	19	58	3.1
Wyoming	2	50	25.0

Not all firearms submitted by law enforcement for ATF crime gun tracing investigations were necessarily used in crime, and not all crime guns are submitted to ATF for tracing. Nonetheless, this data reinforces other research findings that a disproportionate share of guns used in crime in California are trafficked into California after they are acquired from sellers in other states with fewer firearm regulations and safeguards, especially Arizona, Nevada, and Texas.[194]

Policy Discussion: Priority Recommendations for Curbing Gun Trafficking and Ghost Gun Manufacturing

Since 2023, California DOJ has published a first-of-its kind annual Crime Guns in California report that provides comprehensive detail and transparency to the public about the manufacturers and dealers associated with illegally used or possessed crime guns recovered by law enforcement in California.[195] The crime gun analysis in these reports provides important information to the public, but is based on dealer sale records reported to California DOJ for the one-third of California crime guns that can be traced to a California dealer sale. California must build capacity to address the sources of the remaining two-thirds of crime guns as well.

Over the past decade, California has strengthened and invested in firearm industry oversight and responsibility, with small but expanded California DOJ teams focused on inspecting and regulating firearm dealers, ammunition vendors, and most recently, in gun show operations. These oversight efforts and investments have led to safety and compliance improvements quickly. The percentage of crime guns sold by California-based businesses has fallen substantially, and the average number of legal violations uncovered per gun show inspection in California fell by 71% after just one year.[196]

But California DOJ's authorized budget for crime gun investigation and staffing is focused on inspecting California businesses and gun show events only. Additional resources are needed to authorize California DOJ to augment these important efforts and address the large majority of guns used in crime in our state that cannot be traced to any California dealer sale—including the growing threat of 3D-printed ghost guns and the fact that California is the destination state for the first, fourth, and seventh largest gun trafficking corridors in North America.

To address these leading sources of crime guns in California, the Legislature should approve ongoing funding for California DOJ to lead a new initiative to combat gun trafficking. This funding would allow the California DOJ to build and staff teams focused on expanding investigative capacity and developing new task force partnerships with other state and local partners to proactively investigate and prosecute gun trafficking operations, especially interstate trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing operations fueling gun violence in California.

This funding is especially important now as the Trump Administration seeks to significantly dismantle ATF's capacity to investigate interstate gun trafficking and illegal ghost gun manufacturing offenses, and as developments in 3D-printing technology and ghost gun industry business practices threaten to ignite a new wave of illegally manufactured ghost guns and machine guns in crime.

Without stronger investments in capacity to investigate and curb these leading sources of crime guns, California's gun safety laws and standards will likely yield diminishing returns, undermined by traffickers circumventing our lifesaving protections and progress.

Chapter 7.
Preventing Mass Shootings

Preventing Mass Shootings

Different sources use varying definitions for the term "mass shooting." Some sources examine the number of people shot, while others use narrower definitions that examine only the number of victims killed. Some sources include only relatively indiscriminate attacks in public spaces, while others include more targeted attacks and family annihilation shootings or other multiple-casualty attacks in private residences. According to most definitions, on average, mass shootings have become more frequent in the U.S. in recent decades, and resulted in more casualties, particularly since the 2004 expiration of a federal law that had placed some limitations on the sale and manufacture of large-capacity magazines and assault weapons for a 10-year period.[197] Of the 10 highest casualty shootings in modern U.S. history, six occurred between 2016 and 2023, and eight have occurred since 2007.

The nonprofit Gun Violence Archive (GVA) collects detailed incident data about shootings in which a person shot at least four other victims in a single incident.[198] Applying this 4+ victims shot definition, GVA recorded 345 mass shootings nationwide in 2017, and 335 in 2018. But the number of mass shooting incidents nationwide rose significantly both before and during the pandemic, rising to 413 in 2019, 610 in 2020, and 690 in 2021. The number of mass shooting incidents nationwide has fallen in recent years, with 660 in 2023, 504 in 2024, and 408 in 2025.[199] The number of victims killed or injured in these attacks has followed similar trendlines (as shown in the data visuals below).

GVA data shows that from 2023-2025:

- Across the U.S., there were 1,572 mass shooting incidents; 1,593 victims were killed in these attacks (not including the shooter) and 6,747 others were shot and injured.

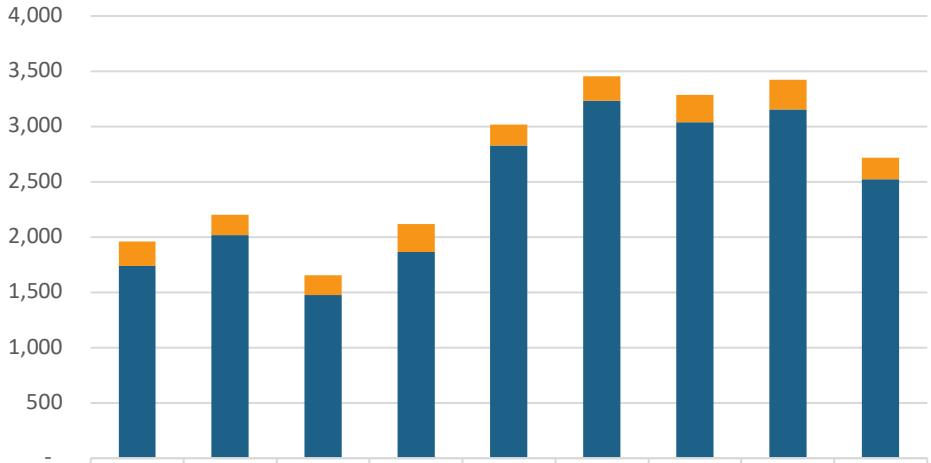
- In California, there were 119 mass shooting incidents, in which 139 victims were killed (not including the shooter), and 488 others were shot and injured.

California has just under 12% of the U.S. population and had 7.5% of the nation's victims killed or injured in mass shootings from 2023-2025. **Over this period, California's mass shooting victimization rate fell below pre-pandemic rates (to 1.60 per 100,000 residents) and fell to 38% below the rest of the nation on average (2.58 per 100,000).**[200]

California has been a leader in efforts to proactively prevent mass shootings, including by enacting the nation's first comprehensive "extreme risk protection order" or "red flag" law (called the Gun Violence Restraining Order or GVRO in California).[201] Many mass shootings are also connected to domestic violence or perpetrated as acts of family annihilation; effective efforts to intervene and remove firearms from people engaged in domestic violence are critical to preventing mass shootings. California has also enacted important laws to reduce shooters' capacity to inflict mass casualties by enacting limitations on the sale, manufacture, and possession of uniquely dangerous weapons and devices, such as machine guns, large-capacity magazines, assault weapons, and rapid-fire trigger activators, that enable gunmen to fire large numbers of rounds in a short period of time, often in an indiscriminate manner.

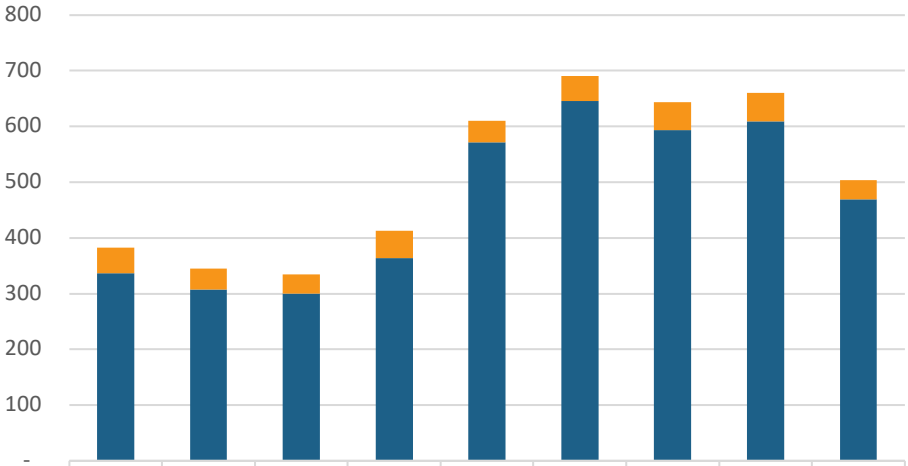
Mass shootings shape the character of public life, cause significant community-wide trauma, and demand effective and coordinated prevention efforts. But it is also important that policymakers and public safety stakeholders respond to the needs of the vast number of victims impacted by other forms of gun violence too. In the decade between 2016-2025, over 26,000 Americans were killed or injured in mass shootings where four or more victims were shot. These incidents, including mass shootings in public and private spaces, represented about **3.5%** of firearm homicides,[202] underscoring the enormous societal impact of many other forms of gun violence in America, including tens of thousands of shootings that may never make the news.[203]

Victims Killed or Injured in Mass Shootings by Year (Gun Violence Archive data)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Victims killed or injured in Mass Shootings in California	221	185	178	252	188	221	247	268	190
Total Victims killed or injured in Mass Shootings in Rest of US	1,737	2,016	1,477	1,866	2,831	3,233	3,038	3,155	2,526

Mass Shooting Incidents (4+ victims shot) by Year (Gun Violence Archive data)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mass Shooting Incidents in California	45	38	35	49	39	45	50	51	35
Mass Shooting Incidents in Rest of US	337	307	300	364	571	645	593	609	469

Mass Shooting Data Table (Gun Violence Archive Data)

	Mass Shooting Incidents in US	Victims Killed in Mass Shootings in US	Victims Injured in Mass Shootings in US	Total Victims Killed or Injured in Mass Shootings in US	Mass Shooting Incidents in California	Victims Killed in Mass Shootings in CA	Victims Injured in Mass Shootings in CA	Total Victims Killed or Injured in Mass Shootings in CA
2016	382	428	1,530	1,958	45	31	190	221
2017	345	417	1,784	2,201	38	36	149	185
2018	335	347	1,308	1,655	35	48	130	178
2019	413	428	1,690	2,118	49	59	193	252
2020	610	495	2,524	3,019	39	35	153	188
2021	690	669	2,785	3,454	45	58	163	221
2022	643	637	2,648	3,285	50	58	189	247
2023	660	723	2,700	3,423	51	72	196	268
2024	504	512	2,204	2,716	35	45	145	190
2025	408	358	1,843	2,201	33	22	147	169

Increasing Utilization of Gun Violence Restraining Orders

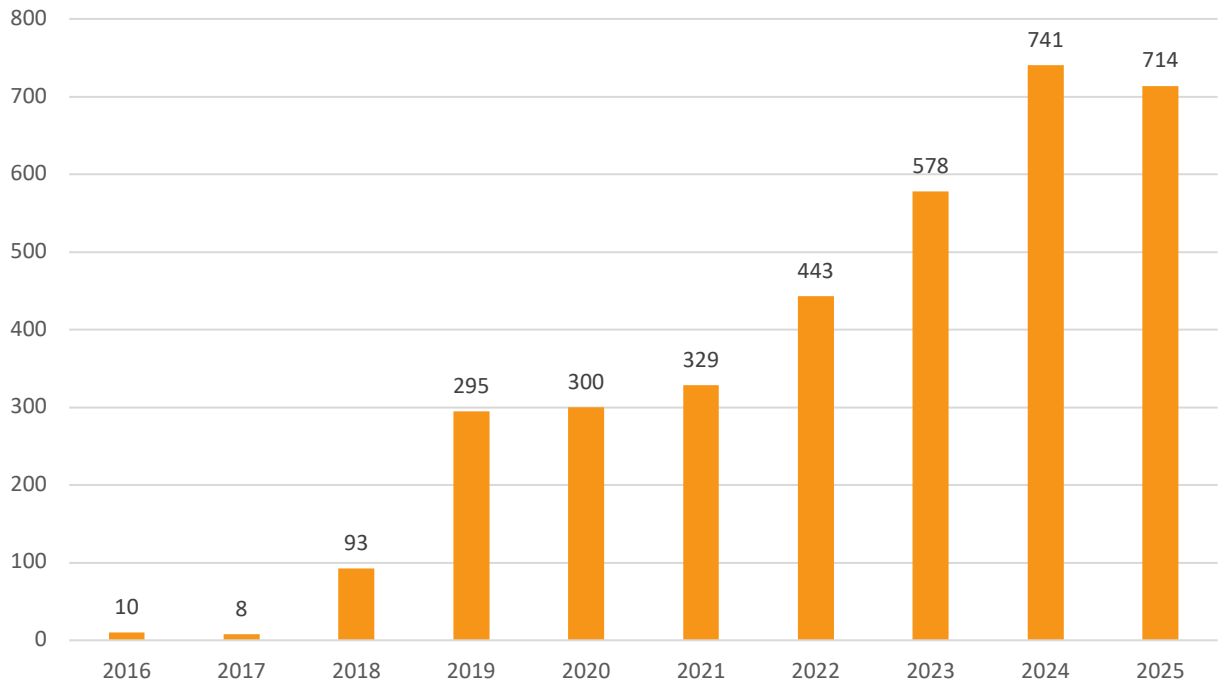
Through effective behavioral threat assessment and management strategies, many mass shootings and other targeted shooting attacks can be prevented if public safety stakeholders have the training, partnerships, and staffing resources to identify and proactively intervene with individuals on a pathway to gun violence, before they have necessarily committed a crime or made specific shooting threats. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California DOJ, and state and local grant funding have prioritized efforts to support implementation of Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVRO) and other court protection and restraining orders that include provisions to prevent gun violence. (For more information about these pathways to safety for people in danger, please see the publications, resources, model policies, and implementation guides in the footnote.[204])

California's GVRO is a fast-moving harm prevention process that empowers law enforcement and other petitioners to proactively intervene to separate firearms from an individual on a dangerous pathway to gun violence or suicide, and prevent them from passing firearm-related background checks, *before* that individual has necessarily engaged in criminal conduct, and *before* they have necessarily directed threats, violence, or abuse toward any specific victim(s) in particular. This is relatively unique to the GVRO process and can be crucial for public safety in some circumstances, including mass shooting and domestic terror prevention. According to analyses by the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, most mass shootings and similar attacks in public spaces are perpetrated by individuals who: (1) were *not* legally prohibited from possessing or purchasing firearms,[205] but who (2) had exhibited significant warning sign behaviors and communications prior to their attack that were "so concerning, they should have met with an immediate response," including efforts to restrict firearm access.[206] These warning signs may not always involve criminal threats directed at specific identifiable victims: A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) study noted that a majority of active shooters leaked their intent to commit violence to at least one other person prior to their attack but "in some cases what was communicated was a more general goal of doing harm to others…without a particular person or group in mind."[207] This is one of the gaps the GVRO was created to address.

In recent years, more law enforcement agencies around the state have been pursuing and obtaining GVROs, especially longer-term orders that can provide multi-year protections. As the graph below shows, from 2021 to 2024, the number of longer-term (1-5 year) GVROs issued statewide more than doubled.

Notably, a very large percentage of all GVROs issued in California are from two of California's 58 counties, San Diego and Santa Clara, where city and county agencies have leveraged a combination of state and local funding investments to build teams specifically dedicated to requesting and enforcing GVROs and other firearm-prohibiting court protection order processes. This provides a model for other communities to invest in local multi-agency partnerships focused on obtaining court protection and restraining orders, including but not limited to GVROs, to reduce risk of gun violence in cases where a person who would otherwise have legal access to firearms indicates significant dangerousness to themselves, another person, or the public at large.

Number of Longer-Term (1-5 year) GVROs Issued Each Year in California



Chapter 8.

County-Level Data on Gun Violence and Firearm Commerce

Firearm Death and Injury by County and Type (CDPH)

A strong overarching recommendation from this report is that state and local policymakers should ensure that scarce gun violence prevention resources are invested strategically with a disciplined focus on the people and places in greatest need and danger. Data can help identify which communities are most disproportionately impacted by different forms of gun violence and injury to inform these strategic investments and grant eligibility requirements.

Due to privacy-related concerns, the CDC and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) both typically "suppress" (do not release) data points regarding 10 or fewer incidents. For instance, they generally do not release information about the number of firearm homicides that occurred in any county that had 10 or fewer firearm homicides per year, and do not release information about the number of firearm homicides in a specific demographic group for whom there were 10 or fewer firearm homicides in a given jurisdiction or time period. (These statistics are included in aggregated statewide statistics, however). These restrictions make it challenging for communities with smaller populations to access and analyze data about the impact of gun violence, especially if they seek to understand trends and rates for subsets of the overall population or certain types of firearm incidents.

The table below publishes CDPH data for each California county combining fatal firearm incidents with nonfatal firearm incidents that resulted either in hospitalization or emergency department admission. By combining these fatal and nonfatal statistics and aggregating them over multiple years, we are able to access and publish CDPH firearm incident data for every county in the state. Combining fatal and nonfatal firearm incident data also ensures that the large number of people who survive medically severe firearm assaults and unintentional firearm injuries are not erased from gun violence statistics.

An important takeaway from this county data is that gun violence imposes very disproportionate impacts on some California communities compared to others. As discussed above, many of California's public health and safety investments and competitive grant programs are made available to all cities or all counties in the state or have been allocated to specific jurisdictions identified in the Budget—without prioritizing funding for communities that have the highest rates of gun violence. In practice, this means that a substantial percentage of California's state-level investments in gun violence prevention has gone to support nation-leading models in communities with some of the lowest rates of firearm death and violence in our state.

The county-level data below seeks to help policymakers and grant-makers identify which communities are most impacted by different forms of gun violence and injury, in order to ensure more public health and safety grant funding is strategically targeted on our most impacted communities.

Total Firearm Death and Injury

The table below shows very large disparities in total firearm death and injury rates across California. The 10 counties with the highest total rates of firearm death and injury in California from 2023-2024 were, in declining order: San Joaquin, Solano, Alameda, Lake, Kings, Kern, Del Norte, Tehama, Merced, and Lassen. The top four of these counties had rates at least 50% above the statewide average.

The 10 counties with the lowest total rates of firearm death and injury in California from 2023-2024 were, in ascending order: Alpine, Mono, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Napa, Sonoma, Orange, San Luis Obispo, and Placer.

Firearm Suicide and Self-Harm Injury

The table below shows very large disparities in firearm suicide and self-harm injury rates across California. More rural counties with very high rates of legally recorded firearm ownership have California's highest rates of firearm suicide and self-harm injury. The 10 counties with the highest rates of firearm suicide and self-harm injuries in California from 2023-2024 were, in declining order: Sierra, Siskiyou, Plumas, Inyo, Del Norte, Trinity, Calaveras, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino. These counties have firearm suicide rates between two to seven times California's statewide average.

The 10 counties with the lowest rates of firearm suicide and self-harm injury in California from 2023-2024 were, in ascending order: Alpine, Mono, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Marin, San Mateo, Alameda, Los Angeles, Kings, and Monterey.

Firearm Homicide and Assault Injury

The table below shows very large disparities in firearm homicide and assault injury rates across California. The 10 counties with the highest rates of firearm homicide and assault injury in California from 2023-2024 were, in declining order: San Joaquin, Alameda, Kings, Los Angeles, Tehama, Solano, Kern, Contra Costa, and Fresno.

The 10 counties with the lowest rates of firearm homicide and assault injury in California from 2023-2024 included six counties with no recorded firearm homicides or assault injuries—Alpine, Modoc, Mono, Plumas, Sierra, and Trinity—as well as Mariposa, Inyo, Colusa, and Tuolumne.

Unintentional Firearm Death and Injury

The table below shows large disparities in unintentional firearm death and injury rates across California. The 10 counties with the highest rates of unintentional firearm death and injury in California from 2023-2024 were, in declining order: San Joaquin, Solano, Modoc, Kings, Kern, Lake, Merced, Mariposa, and Tulare counties.

The 10 counties with the lowest rates of unintentional firearm death and injury from 2023-2024 included four counties with no recorded unintentional firearm deaths or injuries—Alpine, Mono, Sierra, and Colusa—as well as Marin, San Mateo, Sonoma, Amador, Ventura, and Santa Clara.

County	Total Firearm Deaths + Injuries	Total Firearm Death + Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Firearm Suicides + Self-Harm Injuries	Firearm Suicides + Self-Harm Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Firearm Homicide + Assault Injuries	Firearm Homicide + Assault Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Unintentional Firearm Deaths + Injuries	Unintentional Firearm Deaths + Injury *Rate per 100,000*
Alameda	1,400	42.7	98	3.0	937	28.6	308	9.4
Alpine	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Amador	18	22.4	10	12.5	5	6.2	3	3.7
Butte	116	27.9	41	9.9	31	7.5	36	8.7
Calaveras	27	30.2	14	15.7	5	5.6	7	7.8
Colusa	8	18.2	4	9.1	3	6.8	0	0.0
Contra Costa	670	29.3	99	4.3	332	14.5	206	9.0
Del Norte	19	36.6	9	17.3	5	9.6	5	9.6
El Dorado	62	16.5	32	8.5	6	1.6	21	5.6
Fresno	591	29.0	92	4.5	288	14.1	191	9.4
Glenn	17	29.5	5	8.7	4	6.9	4	6.9
Humboldt	87	32.4	38	14.2	23	8.6	22	8.2
Imperial	93	25.8	14	3.9	39	10.8	30	8.3
Inyo	11	29.1	7	18.5	1	2.6	2	5.3
Kern	714	39.1	120	6.6	268	14.7	290	15.9
Kings	125	40.9	10	3.3	58	19.0	52	17.0
Lake	56	41.5	19	14.1	14	10.4	21	15.6
Lassen	20	35.4	7	12.4	7	12.4	5	8.9
Los Angeles	6,467	33.2	624	3.2	3,363	17.3	2,216	11.4
Madera	77	24.3	20	6.3	37	11.7	20	6.3
Marin	39	7.8	13	2.6	15	3.0	8	1.6
Mariposa	11	32.4	4	11.8	1	2.9	5	14.7
Mendocino	50	28.1	23	12.9	11	6.2	16	9.0
Merced	211	36.2	33	5.7	75	12.9	88	15.1
Modoc	4	23.1	1	5.8	0	0.0	3	17.3
Mono	1	3.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Monterey	207	23.9	32	3.7	90	10.4	70	8.1
Napa	32	11.9	12	4.5	7	2.6	12	4.5
Nevada	39	19.6	22	11.1	5	2.5	10	5.0
Orange	845	13.4	238	3.8	209	3.3	356	5.7
Placer	122	14.7	52	6.3	22	2.7	45	5.4
Plumas	9	24.0	7	18.7	0	0.0	2	5.3
Riverside	1,272	25.9	244	5.0	404	8.2	568	11.6

County	Total Firearm Deaths + Injuries	Total Firearm Death + Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Firearm Suicides + Self-Harm Injuries	Firearm Suicides + Self-Harm Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Firearm Homicide + Assault Injuries	Firearm Homicide + Assault Injury *Rate per 100,000*	Unintentional Firearm Deaths + Injuries	Unintentional Firearm Deaths + Injury *Rate per 100,000*
Sacramento	923	29.4	152	4.8	379	12.1	359	11.4
San Benito	29	21.7	5	3.7	11	8.2	13	9.7
San Bernardino	1,538	35.1	255	5.8	593	13.5	579	13.2
San Diego	995	15.1	314	4.8	286	4.3	362	5.5
San Francisco	392	23.6	29	1.7	226	13.6	94	5.7
San Joaquin	903	57.1	89	5.6	457	28.9	304	19.2
San Luis Obispo	77	13.7	40	7.1	9	1.6	28	5.0
San Mateo	145	9.9	41	2.8	60	4.1	40	2.7
Santa Barbara	160	17.9	37	4.1	73	8.2	46	5.1
Santa Clara	380	10.1	93	2.5	111	3.0	150	4.0
Santa Cruz	90	16.9	35	6.6	29	5.4	22	4.1
Shasta	119	33.2	43	12.0	37	10.3	31	8.7
Sierra	2	31.3	2	31.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Siskiyou	30	34.4	19	21.8	5	5.7	4	4.6
Solano	385	43.4	50	5.6	141	15.9	167	18.8
Sonoma	123	12.8	62	6.5	31	3.2	28	2.9
Stanislaus	298	27.1	53	4.8	98	8.9	137	12.5
Sutter	50	25.0	10	5.0	13	6.5	26	13.0
Tehama	47	36.3	16	12.4	22	17.0	8	6.2
Trinity	9	28.2	5	15.7	0	0.0	4	12.5
Tulare	327	34.3	62	6.5	115	12.0	134	14.0
Tuolumne	24	22.8	12	11.4	3	2.9	9	8.6
Ventura	259	15.8	87	5.3	85	5.2	65	4.0
Yolo	70	15.6	17	3.8	28	6.3	20	4.5
Yuba	46	27.6	14	8.4	13	7.8	19	11.4
NA/Unknown	439	NA	14	NA	226	NA	161	NA
California (Total)	**21,280**	**27.3**	**3,500**	**4.5**	**9,316**	**11.9**	**7,432**	**9.5**

Rates of Recorded Firearm Ownership in California by County

The table below compares the number of individuals associated with at least one legally recorded or registered firearm reported to California DOJ databases compared to the U.S. Census population for the county.[208] This data shows very large variation in rates of recorded firearm ownership across California. More rural counties in northern California and the High Sierra region have much higher rates of recorded firearm ownership compared to the statewide average.

Many of the counties with the highest rates of recorded firearm ownership in the state also have very high rates of firearm suicide compared to California's statewide average. Some also have relatively high rates of interpersonal gun violence too, especially domestic violence-related homicide and calls for assistance involving use or threatened use of firearms. Some counties with the lowest rates of legally recorded firearm ownership have uniquely low rates of firearm homicide and assault. However, some other counties with lower rates of legally recorded firearm ownership have relatively high rates of firearm homicide and assault, indicating that an especially large portion of gun violence in those communities is likely perpetrated with ghost guns or other illegally trafficked or manufactured firearms acquired without a legal dealer sale or transaction recorded in California DOJ databases.

Note that there are limitations in this data. Not all legally owned firearms are recorded in California DOJ databases, and some individuals who reported a primary address in one county for firearm purchase or registration purposes may be counted as residing in a different county for U.S. Census purposes.[209] (This helps to account for the unusual data point for small Alpine County showing more legally recorded firearm owners than permanent residents in that county; Alpine County has more housing units than residents, indicating that firearm purchaser and registration records associated with an Alpine County address might often be associated with seasonal, secondary, property-based, or otherwise non-permanent resident addresses rather than with the more permanent resident population included in Census Bureau statistics.)[210]

County	Estimated Percentage of County Population with Legal Firearm Purchase or Registration Record in California DOJ Databases, Based on Purchaser Address Reported to DOJ
Alpine	104% (See Endnote)[211]
Lassen	29.9%
Calaveras	26.7%
Modoc	26.3%
Mariposa	25.6%
Amador	25.5%
Shasta	25.2%
Siskiyou	22.7%
Sierra	22.3%
Glenn	21.7%
Inyo	21.6%
Plumas	21.3%
Tuolumne	20.5%
Trinity	20.1%
Del Norte	19.5%
Humboldt	19.2%
Butte	18.8%

County	Estimated Percentage of County Population with Legal Firearm Purchase or Registration Record in California DOJ Databases, Based on Purchaser Address Reported to DOJ
El Dorado	18.5%
Tehama	17.7%
Colusa	17.0%
Yuba	16.9%
Nevada	16.8%
Mendocino	16.6%
Sutter	16.4%
Lake	15.3%
Placer	14.6%
Mono	14.5%
San Luis Obispo	13.4%
Kern	13.2%
Stanislaus	12.9%
Solano	12.6%
Madera	12.4%
Kings	11.8%
Tulare	11.5%
San Bernardino	11.3%
San Benito	10.7%
Ventura	10.6%
Fresno	10.6%
Napa	10.5%
Riverside	10.5%
San Joaquin	10.4%
Merced	10.3%
Sacramento	10.1%
Sonoma	10.1%
San Diego	10.0%
Contra Costa	8.8%
Orange	8.6%
Santa Barbara	8.1%
Yolo	8.0%
Santa Cruz	8.0%
Monterey	7.3%
Los Angeles	6.9%
Alameda	6.4%
Imperial	6.4%
San Mateo	6.2%
Marin	5.8%
Santa Clara	5.6%
San Francisco	4.2%
California Total	**9.2%**

Approved Firearm Background Checks in 2024 By Firearm Type and Purchaser's County of Residence

The table above documents rates of legally recorded firearm ownership, regardless of when an individual acquired or registered their firearm(s). The table below instead shows data regarding more recent firearm commerce and acquisitions, based on the number of firearm background checks that the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms approved for transactions in 2024 broken down by firearm type and the purchaser's county of residence.

This data shows that some more rural counties have much higher rates of legal firearm commerce than others; on a per capita basis, Colusa County had nearly eight times as many approved firearm background check transactions in 2024 compared to San Francisco County. Again, some counties with the lowest rates of legally recorded firearm ownership in the state also have uniquely low rates of firearm homicide and assault, while some other counties with relatively high rates of firearm homicide and assault have lower than average rates of legally recorded firearm ownership, indicating that an especially large portion of gun violence in those communities is likely perpetrated with ghost guns or other illegally trafficked or manufactured firearms not reflected in California DOJ databases of legally recorded firearm sales and transactions.

County Name	Hand-guns	Long Guns	Other Firearms (incl. frame/ receiver)	Total Ap-proved Fire-arm Back-ground Checks	Approved Fire-arm Checks per 1,000 residents
Colusa	518	781	5	1,304	59.1
Lassen	740	890	2	1,632	57.6
Calaveras	1,467	1,136	24	2,627	56.5
Shasta	4,905	5,235	69	10,209	56.4
Siskiyou	986	1,282	40	2,308	54.3
Mariposa	444	412	1	857	50.3
Amador	1,116	969	20	2,105	50.1
Glenn	550	680	1	1,231	43.5
El Dorado	4,522	3,803	24	8,349	43.3
Sutter	2,202	1,959	61	4,222	42.8
Tehama	1,277	1,389	8	2,674	41.5
Butte	4,050	4,283	75	8,408	40.4
Yuba	1,697	1,585	63	3,345	38.2
Tuolumne	1,160	866	23	2,049	38.0
Nevada	1,948	1,816	7	3,771	36.9
Humboldt	2,271	2,556	47	4,874	36.8
Mendocino	1,493	1,695	5	3,193	35.8
Placer	8,905	6,444	140	15,489	35.7
Inyo	297	354	2	653	35.3
Lake	1,236	1,134	14	2,384	35.2
Modoc	105	183	6	294	34.6
Madera	3,227	2,250	29	5,506	33.3
Trinity	224	287	3	514	32.9

County Name	Hand-guns	Long Guns	Other Firearms (incl. frame/ receiver)	Total Ap-proved Fire-arm Back-ground Checks	Approved Fire-arm Checks per 1,000 residents
Stanislaus	10,643	6,670	316	17,629	31.7
Tulare	9,155	5,893	175	15,223	31.5
San Benito	1,252	910	7	2,169	31.4
San Luis Obispo	4,620	4,001	84	8,705	30.9
Kern	17,298	9,737	1,339	28,374	30.8
Sierra	43	48	0	91	29.2
Solano	7,828	4,787	41	12,656	27.8
San Joaquin	14,177	8,114	332	22,623	27.7
Riverside	44,617	22,819	2,035	69,471	27.5
Ventura	14,600	7,817	398	22,815	27.3
San Bernardino	37,852	20,430	1,608	59,890	27.0
Napa	1,914	1,643	6	3,563	26.8
Plumas	209	295	0	504	26.8
Merced	4,715	3,098	24	7,837	26.4
Kings	2,315	1,562	39	3,916	25.3
Fresno	15,718	9,541	268	25,527	24.9
Sonoma	6,448	5,120	48	11,616	23.9
Sacramento	22,346	13,944	406	36,696	22.8
Orange	44,585	23,244	1,272	69,101	21.8
San Diego	41,639	24,874	2,156	68,669	20.8
Alpine	15	7	0	22	20.0
Yolo	2,482	1,898	80	4,460	19.8
Contra Costa	14,460	8,324	172	22,956	19.6
Monterey	4,764	3,016	229	8,009	18.4
Mono	117	116	2	235	18.1
Santa Barbara	4,490	3,279	151	7,920	17.8
Los Angeles	112,487	52,667	3,368	168,522	17.3
Del Norte	197	249	3	449	16.6
Santa Cruz	2,278	1,729	55	4,062	15.5
Imperial	1,697	999	43	2,739	15.1
Marin	1,965	1,589	6	3,560	13.9
Alameda	13,997	7,302	348	21,647	13.1
San Mateo	5,820	3,200	131	9,151	12.3
Santa Clara	14,055	8,975	213	23,243	12.1
San Francisco	4,172	1,989	129	6,290	7.6
California Total	**530,310**	**311,875**	**16,153**	**858,338**	**21.8**

Conclusion: The Path Forward

As this report noted at the start: California has achieved something genuinely historic. In recent years, California became safer from gun violence than any other time on record. This progress was not an accident. And it is also not destined to continue.

To sustain this record-setting progress amid federal funding cuts will require sustained and *expanded* state and local investments. It will also require strategic focus to ensure scarce public resources are targeted effectively on bolstering public capacity where the federal government has abdicated its role, and on data-driven intervention strategies focused on prevention and protection for the people and places at highest risk.

Informed by a foundation of data, this report has identified four state and local funding priorities for achieving sustained reductions in gun violence:

1. **Invest in community violence intervention (CVI) and trauma recovery services** with a strategic focus on intervention services for gun assault survivors and others at greatest imminent risk in our most impacted communities.

2. **Invest in domestic violence intervention and victim services**, including to protect existing services impacted by federal cuts and invest in new, CalVIP-modeled intervention strategies focused on individuals at highest risk of domestic violence homicide in our most impacted communities.

3. **Invest in protective order implementation and firearm relinquishment compliance** by renewing funding for the expiring Firearm Relinquishment Grant Program or similar efforts, and funding a 21st Century protected person information portal that gives survivors direct access to information about their own protective order case.

4. **Invest in disrupting gun trafficking and ghost gun manufacturing** by funding a new California DOJ-led initiative to build more state and local partnerships to investigate and prosecute gun trafficking pipelines fueling gun crime and violence in California, and fill the vacuum left by the federal government's devastating cuts to ATF investigations and capacity.

Ultimately, this report poses a direct question: Will California's state and local budgets reflect the lessons of our recent historic successes? California has shown that transformational progress against gun violence is not an idealistic fantasy. It is up to us now to choose to demand further progress against gun violence, and to invest accordingly.

Endnotes

1 The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) typically takes about a year to collect and process this data. Though it is released with significant time lags, it represents the most comprehensive statistics available for comparing mortality data across states and over time.

2 2024 was a record low for per capita rates of firearm death, firearm suicide, and firearm homicide in California using either age-adjusted or non-age-adjusted (crude) rates; where available, age-adjusted rates are generally used to compare trends over time and across different states.

3 See, e.g., AH Datalytics Real-Time Crime Index, "Reported UCR Part One Crimes by Month: Murders in California for Full Sample" (accessed Jan. 29, 2026) (showing 793 murders reported by sample of California law enforcement agencies for January – November 2025 compared to 999 murders over the same period in 2024), at https://realtimecrimeindex.com; Staff Memorandum for Committee on Revision of the Penal Code, "Staff Memorandum 2025-19 Violent Crime Data for Quarter 3 2025" (Nov. 14, 2025) (noting that California cities data compiled by the Major Cities Chiefs Association showed an 18% drop in homicides and a 9% drop in aggravated assaults for the first three quarters of 2025 compared to 2024), at https://clrc.ca.gov/CRPC/Pub/Memos/CRPC25-19.pdf; Olga Pierce, "A Trace Analysis of 150 U.S. Cities Shows One of the Greatest Drops in Gun Violence — Ever," *The Trace* (Oct. 23, 2025) (based on analysis of Gun Violence Archive gun violence incident data for a sample of 11 California cities in The Trace Gun Violence Data Hub. (2025), at www.thetrace.org/2025/10/gun-violence-dropping-why-us-cities-data/; Libor Jany, "L.A. on pace to see lowest homicide total in nearly 60 years as killings plummet," *Los Angeles Times* (Jul. 9, 2025) (noting that homicides in California's largest city fell by more than 20% in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024), at www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-07-09/los-angeles-homicide-total-2025.

4 See Chandler Hall, "What City Leaders Say Is Helping Drive Down Gun Violence in Their Communities," Center for American Progress (Apr. 7, 2026), at www.americanprogress.org/article/what-city-leaders-say-is-helping-drive-down-gun-violence-in-their-communities/; Council on Criminal Justice, "What's Driving the Drop in Homicide? How Low Might It Go?" (Jan. 22, 2026), at https://counciloncj.org/whats-driving-the-drop-in-homicide-how-low-might-it-go/; White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, "Report on Implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act," (Jun. 2024), at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/A-Report-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Bipartisan-Safer-Communities-Act.pdf.

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8 Based on OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER, Multiple Cause of Death data portal. In 2024, California's crude firearm death rate was 7.24 per 100,000. If the rest of the U.S. (the other 49 states and D.C. combined) had a firearm death rate of 7.24 per 100,000 from 2015-2024 instead of 13.63 per 100,000, there would have been 209,995 firearm deaths in the rest of the U.S. instead of 395,542, a difference of 185,547 deaths.

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12 See National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform, "GVRS: The Successful Gun Violence Reduction Strategy" (Jan. 2026), p. 1 at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/The_Successful_GVRS.pdf.

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52 Based on OGVP analysis of data from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) EpiCenter for 2022-2024.

53 Id.

54 Among firearm assault survivors in California: 46% were Hispanic; 30% were Black; 11% were White; 2.4% were multiracial; 2% were Asian; 0.5% were Pacific Islander; 0.1% were American Indian or Alaska Native. For 7.3%, race and ethnicity were identified as "other" or unknown.

55 Among firearm assault survivors in California:

- 2% wee under the age of 15
- 15% were aged 15-19
- 16% were aged 20-24
- 16% were aged 25-29
- 15% were aged 30-34
- 12% were aged 35-39
- 9% were aged 40-44
- 6% were aged 44-49
- 9% were over the age of 50.

56 Based on OGVP analysis of data from CDPH EpiCenter for 2020-2021, identifying most common race/ethnicity, gender, age, day of admission, duration of hospital stay, and expected insurance provider for individuals hospitalized for firearm assault injuries in California from 2020-2021.

57 OGVP analysis of data from CDPH EpiCenter for 2020-2021.

58 Shantell Kirkendoll, "Surviving Gun Violence," Duke University School of Medicine, Magnify Magazine (Feb. 28, 2024), at https://medschool.duke.edu/stories/surviving-gun-violence. See also, e.g., Everytown for Gun Safety, "When the Shooting Stops: The Impact of Gun Violence on Survivors in America" (updated May 9, 2024), at https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-survivors-in-america/; Zirul Song, et al., "Changes in Health Care Spending, Use, and Clinical Outcomes After Nonfatal Firearm Injuries Among Survivors and Family Members: A Cohort Study," *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 175, No. 6 (Apr. 2022), at www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M21-2812

59 Veronica Pear, et al., "Risk factors for assaultive reinjury and death following a nonfatal firearm assault injury: A population-based retrospective cohort study," *Prev Med.,* Vol. 139 (2020).

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61 Id.

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65 See, e.g., Council on Criminal Justice, Violent Crime Working Group, "Victimization, Trauma, Mental Health, and Violent Crime," (Nov. 17, 2021), https://councilоncj.org/vcwg-meeting-bulletin-6/; California Firearm Violence Research Center, BulletPointsProject, "Community Gun Violence" (last accessed Apr. 2, 2026), at www.bulletpointsproject.org/community-gun-violence.

66 See, e.g., Jens Ludwig, "Before the Trigger is Pulled," Vital City (Sep. 10, 2025), at www.vitalcitynyc.org/before-the-trigger-is-pulled/; John Klofas, et al., "Retaliatory Violent Disputes Guide No. 74 (2019)," University of Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Policy Lab and National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR), "Identifying High-Risk Populations for a Public Health Approach to Community Violence Intervention" (Feb. 2026), at https://nicjr.org/files/galleries/VHRI_Report_Final.pdfArizona State University Center for Problem Oriented Policing, at https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/retaliatory-violent-disputes; Brittany Nieto and Mike McLively, "All Hands on Deck: The Role of Counties in Addressing Community Violence," Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (Jun. 6, 2024), at https://giffords.org/lawcenter/report/all-hands-on-deck-the-role-of-counties-in-addressing-community-violence/#footnote_10_85557; Shani Buggs, Presentation: "Understanding and Preventing Interpersonal Gun Violence in U.S. Cities" (Dec. 11, 2019), p. 11-13, at https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/btb25-1k-00ppt.pdf; California Department of Justice, "Homicide in California 2024" report, Table 21, at https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/Homicide%20In%20CA%202024%20final.pdf#:~:text=Of%20the%20homicides%20where%20the%20contributing%20circumstance,a%20rape%2C%20robbery%2C%20or%20burglary%20(Table%2021).

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74 Based on OGVP's analysis of data from CDPH EpiCenter for 2020-2021.

75 Age-adjusted rates seek to control for the effects of age from crude rates so as to allow meaningful comparisons across populations with different underlying age structures. See CDC, "Frequently Asked Questions: What exactly are age-adjusted rates?," https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/faq.html#6.

76 Based on OGVP analysis of underlying cause of death and nonfatal injury data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER and WISQARS databases for 2015-2024:

- From 2015-2024, the crude (non-age-adjusted) per capita firearm death rate in California was 8.15 per 100,000; California experienced 32,019 firearm-related deaths. Over the same period, the crude per capita firearm death rate in the rest of the United States (the other 49 states and D.C. combined) was 13.63 per 100,000; the rest of the U.S. suffered at least 395,542 firearm-related deaths. If California had the same firearm death rate as the rest of the U.S. over this period, it would have suffered 53,564 firearm deaths instead of 32,019, a difference of 21,545 deaths. If the rest of the U.S. had the same firearm death rate as California over this decade, it would have suffered 236,443 firearm deaths instead of 395,542, a difference of 159,099 deaths.
- In 2024, California's crude firearm death rate was 7.24 per 100,000. If the rest of the U.S. had a firearm death rate of 7.24 per 100,000 from 2015-2024, there would have been 209,995 firearm deaths in the rest of the U.S. instead of 395,542, a difference of 185,547 deaths.
- Fatal and nonfatal firearm injury data published by both the CDC and the California Department of Public Health indicate that for every one firearm death, there are multiple nonfatal firearm injuries requiring hospitalization or emergency department care. Data from the CDC WISQARS Database reports that there were

46,728 firearm deaths nationwide in 2023 and an estimated 161,690 nonfatal emergency department visits for firearm injuries. Data from the California Department of Public Health similarly reports that from 2020-2023, there were 13,675 firearm deaths and nearly three times as many nonfatal firearm injuries requiring hospitalization or emergency department care.

77 Based on OGVP analysis of data from the CDC WONDER data portal and the CDPH EpiCenter data portal. Age-adjusted and crude (non-age-adjusted) firearm homicide data from the CDC and CDPH both show a 35% reduction in firearm homicide rates in California from 2021 to 2024. CDPH crude firearm assault injury data shows a 37% reduction in per capita rates of nonfatal firearm assault injuries resulting in hospitalization of emergency department care.

78 See Associated Press, "FBI: 2020 homicides up nearly 30%, largest 1-year jump ever" (Sep. 27, 2021), https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-crime-homicide-violent-crime-132443b2bc09707394698e6a90d3f388; Center for American Progress, "The Recent Rise in Violent Crime Is Driven by Gun Violence" (Jun. 3, 2022), www.americanprogress.org/article/the-recent-rise-in-violent-crime-is-driven-by-gun-violence/. Underlying Cause of Death data reported by the CDC WONDER database shows that at the national level, from 2019 to 2020, age-adjusted firearm homicide rates increased by 35%, and age-adjusted non-firearm homicide rates increased by 12%. In 2021, nationwide age-adjusted firearm homicide rates increased by another 8% and non-firearm homicide rates decreased by 4%.

79 Ghost guns are unserialized, "DIY" firearms illegally manufactured by unlicensed individuals from "skip-the-background-check" gun build kits and products, and/or using machines like 3D printers and CNC milling machines.

80 Based on OGVP analysis of Underlying Cause of Death data from the CDC WONDER database for 2024 for crude (non-age-adjusted) firearm homicide rates per capita in the U.S. nationwide by 5-year age group and victim sex. The two age groups with the highest rates of firearm homicide victimization were 20–24-year-old males (18.28 per 100,000) and 15–19-year-old males (15.78 per 100,000), followed by 25–29-year-old males (15.52), 30–34-year-old males (14.61), and 35–39-year-old males (13.30).

81 See Catalyst California, "2007: Groundbreaking report by Advancement Project California Transforms the Discussion Around Gang Violence" (Feb. 12, 2025), at www.catalystcalifornia.org/blog/groundbreaking-report-by-the-advancement-project-transforms-the-discussion-around-gang-violence-; Advancement Project, "Citywide Gang Activity Reduction Strategy: Phase III Report" for City of Los Angeles (Jan. 12, 2007), available at https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2007/07-0071_rpt_cla_1-12-07.pdf.

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84 See Jonathan Shipley, et al., "Domestic firearm violence against women (2018–2021)," *Surgery Open Science*, Vol. 17, Pages 75-59 (Jan. 2024), at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589845024000101.

85 See, e.g., Council on Criminal Justice, National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice, "Impact Report: COVID-19 and Domestic Violence Trends" (Feb. 2021), at https://councilоncj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Domestic-Violence-During-COVID-19-February-2021.pdf; Everytown Research & Policy, "Gun Violence and COVID-19 in 2020: A Year of Colliding Crises" (May 7, 2021), at https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-and-covid-19-in-2020-a-year-of-colliding-crises/#impact-on-domestic-violence.

86 See DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "Impact of Gun Violence in California" (Aug. 2023), p. 20-22, at www.oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-Data-Report-2022.pdf.

87 See, e.g., Brian Hicks, et al., "Who bought a gun during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States?: Associations with QAnon beliefs, right-wing political attitudes, intimate partner violence, antisocial behavior, suicidality, and mental health and substance use problems," PLoS ONE, Vol. 18, No. 8 (Aug. 2023), at https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0290770; Jakana Thomas, et al., "Intimate partner violence and firearm purchasing: cross-sectional analysis of statewide survey data from California and Louisiana adults," *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 25, No. 4144 (Nov. 2025), at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-025-25361-w#Sec6..

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89 See id.

90 DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "California's Fight Against the Ghost Gun Crisis" (Oct. 2024), p. 23, at www.oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ogvp-report-ghost-guns.pdf.

91 Note that the CDC identifies per capita rates as "unreliable" for years in which fewer than 20 homicides were reported in for the relevant demographic group (which occurred in California in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019). The CDC also suppresses mortality data for 2014 because there were fewer than 10 firearm homicides involving victims aged 1-14 in California that year. As a result, the data for 2014 in this graph reflects the per capita rate for nine firearm homicides in California that year, which would represent a record low, although there may have been even fewer than nine; CDC data indicates that there were fewer than 10.

92 See DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, "Data Report: Domestic Violence Involving Firearms in California" (Nov. 2023), p. 32, at https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/OGVP%20Report%20-%20Domestic%20Violence%20%26%20Firearms%20in%20CA.pdf.

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23, 2023), www.thetrace.org/2023/03/guns-domestic-violence-child-deaths/.

94 From 2019 to 2021, gun violence incident records compiled by the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive documented a 65% increase in the number of minors killed or injured in domestic violence shootings nationwide. See Jennifer Mascia, "Dangerous Homes: Guns and Domestic Violence Exact a Deadly Toll on Kids," *The Trace* (Mar. 23, 2023), www.thetrace.org/2023/03/guns-domestic-violence-child-deaths/.

95 Based on data reported in the DOJ Armed and Prohibited Persons System Report for 2025 (published March 13, 2026). This refers to the number of individuals with at least one lawfully purchased or registered firearm record associated with the individual in the California DOJ's Automated Firearms System. Note that this does not include records regarding unlawfully acquired firearms, such as illegally manufactured ghost guns, or firearms for which an owner failed to lawfully submit a registration record to the California DOJ.

96 Based on analysis of firearm purchase application and denials data from the Dealer Record of Sale (DROS) database for 2023 identifying about 900,000 total firearm applications and about 6,600 denials due to firearm prohibitions.

97 See DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "Impact of Gun Violence in California" (Aug. 2023), p. 20-22, at www.oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-Data-Report-2022.pdf; DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "California's Fight Against the Ghost Gun Crisis: Progress and New Challenges" (Oct. 2024), at https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ogvp-report-ghost-guns.pdf; Chandler Hall, "Report: COVID-19's Impact on Gun Violence in America," Center for American Progress (Mar. 13, 2025), at www.americanprogress.org/article/covid-19s-impact-on-gun-violence-in-america/#:~:text=According%20to%20data%20from%20The,fatally%20injured%20by%20a%20gun; Champe Barton, "New Data Suggests a Connection Between Pandemic Gun Sales and Increased Violence," *The Trace* and *FiveThirtyEight* (Dec. 8, 2021), at www.thetrace.org/2021/12/atf-time-to-crime-gun-data-shooting-pandemic/#:~:text=At%20the%20same%20time%2C%20shootings,been%20purchased%20the%20previous%20year; Everytown for Gun Safety, "Report: Gun Violence and COVID-19 in 2020: A Year of Colliding Crises" (May 7, 2021), at https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-and-covid-19-in-2020-a-year-of-colliding-crises/#:~:text=Gun%20sales%20have%20surged%20during,their%20communities%20during%20the%20pandemic

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100 DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention report, "California's Fight Against the Ghost Gun Crisis: Progress and New Challenges" (Oct. 2024), at https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ogvp-report-ghost-guns.pdf.

101 California DOJ, Division of Law Enforcement, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, Information Bulletin: No. 2025-DLE-18, "New Laws Related to Ghost Guns, Firearm Manufacturing, and the Sale and Delivery of Firearm Accessories, Firearm Barrels, and Firearm Manufacturing Machines" (Dec. 23, 2025), at https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2025-dle-18.pdf.

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103 See California Department of Justice, Press Release: "Ghost Gun Crackdown: Attorney General Bonta Files Landmark Lawsuit" (Feb. 6, 2026), at https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/ghost-gun-crackdown-attorney-general-bonta-files-landmark-lawsuit.

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105 Based on analysis of firearm purchase application and denials data from the Dealer Record of Sale (DROS) database for 2023 identifying about 900,000 total firearm applications and about 6,600 denials due to firearm prohibitions.

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107 See California DOJ, "Armed and Prohibited Persons System Report 2025" (Mar. 2026), at https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2025-apps-report.pdf (reporting that 62% of all individuals added to the DOJ database of armed and prohibited persons during 2025 were prohibited from possessing firearms by court protection and restraining orders).

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189 OGVP analysis of ATF National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns – Volume Two, Supplementary Data Factsheets for California and other states and territories, at https://www.atf.gov/firearms/nationalfirearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-crime-guns-volume-two and https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/california-state-report/download (showing that California was the recovery state for 20,875 of the 37,980 suspected privately made firearms recovered by law enforcement and submitted through tracing requests

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194 See, e.g., Everytown for Gun Safety, "Everytown Analysis: ATF Data Shows Increases in Key Indicators of Gun Trafficking During 2020" (Dec. 20, 2021) (finding that in 2020, California was, by far, the leading destination state for trafficked guns that moved across state lines and were used in a crime within three years from the time of purchase and that Arizona was the second leading source state for such trafficked guns); Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Annual Gun Law Scorecard," https://giffords.org/lawcenter/resources/scorecard/ (ranking the strength of each state's gun safety laws; in 2023, CA received an A grade and Arizona received an F).

195 California DOJ, "Crime Guns in California, Mandated Reporting Statistics, AB 1191 Legislative Report" (Jun. 30, 2025), https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ab1191-crime-gun-report-2025.pdf.

196 Based on data reported in the California DOJ 's Annual Gun Show Report for 2025, published pursuant to AB 2552. The total number of violations documented by DOJ investigators decreased by 76%, from 211 in 2024 to 51 in 2025. The average number of violations per inspection decreased by 71%, from 6.81 in 2024 to 1.96 in 2025.

197 See, e.g., Alex Lars Lundberg, et al., "Public Mass Shootings: Counterfactual Trend Analysis of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban," *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* (Sept. 20, 2024), at https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11429070/; Charles DiMaggio, et al., "Changes in US mass shooting deaths associated with the 1994-2004 federal assault weapons ban: Analysis of open-source data," *Journal of Trauma Acute Care Surg.* (Jan. 2019), at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30188421/; Christopher Koper, et al., "Criminal Use of Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Semiautomatic Firearms: an Updated Examination of Local and National Sources," *Journal of Urban Health* (Oct. 2, 2017), at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11524-017-0205-7. See also, e.g., Louis Klarevas, et al., "The Effect of Large-Capacity Magazine Bans on High-Fatality Mass Shootings, 1990–2017," *American Journal of Public Health* (Dec. 2019), at https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6836798/ (comparing high-fatality mass shootings from 1990-2017 in states with and without a ban on large-capacity magazines (LCMs) and finding that "states without an LCM ban experienced significantly more high-fatality mass shootings and a higher death rate from such incidents.").

198 See Gun Violence Archive, "General Methodology," at www.gunviolencearchive.org/methodology (last accessed Nov. 3, 2025).

199 OGVP analysis of incident records from the Gun Violence Archive database at GunViolenceArchive.org

200 This analysis refers to the number of victims killed or injured in 4+ victim mass shooting incidents per capita, based on analysis of data from the Gun Violence Archive and population data from the CDC WONDER database.

201 "Red flag law" generally refers to a legal process that authorizes eligible petitioners to present evidence to a court that an individual has demonstrated a significant risk of harming themselves or others with firearms; these laws authorize courts, upon finding sufficient evidence, to issue a civil order that suspends the respondent's legal access to firearms and ammunition for a temporary period. California's process is called the "Gun Violence Restraining Order" or GVRO. California law also provides additional options for people experiencing threats, violence, stalking, or abuse to obtain other court protective and restraining orders that prohibit an individual from accessing firearms and ammunition for a temporary period based on evidence that the individual has engaged in violent, abusive, or other dangerous conduct, including but not limited to Domestic Violence, Civil Harassment, and Workplace Violence Restraining Orders.

202 Data from the CDC WONDER Database indicates that 52,952 people were killed in firearm homicides in the US from 2022-2024.

203 See, e.g., Elinore J. Kaufman, et al., "Making the news: Victim characteristics associated with media reporting on firearm injury," *Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 141 (Dec. 2020), www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743520302991 (study finding that half of all shootings were not reported in the news).

204 The Office of Gun Violence Prevention has published in-depth reports, implementation and training resources, and quick reference guides to California's nine court protective and restraining order processes that include provisions to prevent gun violence in different circumstances. These resources include:

- **Quick Reference Guide to California's Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence**. This resource (revised in November 2024) provides a concise summary and comparison chart about California's nine court protection and restraining orders that include provisions to prevent gun violence.
- **Report on Pathways to Safety: California's Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence**. Released in June 2024, this report provides an in-depth guide to the unique features and differences between each type of protection order available in California to help stakeholders understand the full range of options available to protect survivors and the public from gun violence.

In March 2026, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention also published a set of resources designed to inform and assist law enforcement agencies, their legal counsel, and other stakeholders about how to effectively utilize the Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) process. These GVRO resources include:

- **A Model GVRO Policy for California Law Enforcement Agencies**. This Model GVRO Policy includes comprehensive guidance about the GVRO process, including information about the types of circumstances in which officers should consider requesting GVROs or other safety interventions; the types of evidence courts may consider in GVRO cases; and the process required to obtain, document, serve, and enforce all three types of GVROs.
- **A GVRO 10-Year Progress Report: Data and Recommendations for Improved Implementation**. Marking

10 years since California's GVRO law first took effect in 2016, this report analyzes data and research on the GVRO to assess our state's progress and leading challenges with implementing the GVRO to prevent gun violence. The report provides demographic and trends data about GVROs issued in our state, documents significantly increased utilization of this process since 2021, and spotlights the successful impact of some local GVRO programs. The report also identifies three priority recommendations for improving implementation of the GVRO. A central recommendation is for law enforcement agencies to designate GVRO coordinators and develop streamlined processes for city attorneys, county counsel, or other legal counsel to advise and represent law enforcement agency petitioners in GVRO matters, especially for managing the court form filing and hearing process to obtain longer-term GVROs that last for up to five years instead of expiring within 21 days.

- **A GVRO Implementation Guide**. This resource provides a comprehensive desk reference and training resource about the GVRO process. It includes explanatory background, GVRO process flow charts, and best practice checklists to help law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders navigate common barriers, develop GVRO cases informed by behavioral threat assessment strategies, evaluate additional and alternative safety interventions to address dangerous firearm access when targeted victims are in danger, and successfully request, serve, document, and enforce GVROs to protect public safety.

205 U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, "Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020," p. 38 (Jan. 2023), www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-01/usss-ntac-maps-2016-2020.pdf.

206 See *id.* at vi, 52.

207 See Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013," p. 24-26 (2018), www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view. See also, e.g., Jillian Peterson, et al., "Communication of Intent to Do Harm Preceding Mass Public Shootings in the United States, 1966 to 2019," *JAMA Netw. Open* 4(11) (2021). www.jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2785799; Sandy Hook Promise, "Prevent Gun Violence by Knowing the Signs," www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/gun-violence/know-the-signs-of-gun-violence/; U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Dept. of Education, "Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates," p. 23-24 (Jul. 2004), www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/threatassessmentguide.pdf.

208 Firearm ownership is generally reported to California DOJ databases when a person purchases or acquires a firearm through a licensed firearms dealers in California. The dealer is generally required to report information to DOJ about that sale or transaction. In some other circumstances, individuals are also required to submit forms to California DOJ to record ownership of a firearm, including firearms acquired from a intra-family transaction or by operation of law, a firearm brought into the state by a new resident (called a "personal firearm importer" in statute), or to register possession of an otherwise prohibited assault weapon. Note, however, that firearm dealers were generally not required to report sale or transaction records for long guns acquired before 2014, and many unfinished frame or receiver ghost gun products were sold without sale record as well before passage of stronger gun ghost gun reform legislation in 2022.

209 See id. and endnote below.

210 Note that this data indicates that Alpine County has more legally recorded firearm owners than permanent residents, based on U.S. Census Bureau data. Census county population estimates are intended to represent people who reside in the county, whereas the firearm purchaser or owner primary address field reflects the address designated as primary within an administrative firearm-related database maintained by the California Department of Justice. In Alpine County, this distinction may be especially important because the resident population is very small, and Alpine County also is the county in California with more housing units than residents: www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html. That pattern is consistent with the possibility that firearm purchaser and registration records associated with an Alpine County address might often be associated with seasonal, secondary, property-based, or otherwise nonresident addresses rather than with the more permanent resident population included in U.S. Census Bureau population statistics.

211 Id.