

Violence Policy Center, WAVE Educational Fund: Wisconsin ranked #2 for Black homicide victimization

Posted on Wednesday, May 29, 2019

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Contacts: Sally Martinelli, (202) 822-8200 x104, smartinelli@vpc.org
Jeri Bonavia, WAVE Educational Fund, (414) 351-9283, jmbwave@aol.com

91 Percent of Black Homicide Victims in Wisconsin were Killed with Guns

Washington, DC — Wisconsin has the second-highest black homicide victimization rate in the nation with a rate of 37.57 per 100,000—nearly twice the national black homicide victimization rate and more than seven times the overall homicide rate nationwide—according to a new analysis by the Violence Policy Center (VPC).

The annual study, *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2016 Homicide Data*, ranks the states according to their black homicide victimization rates. It is based on unpublished data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR). The study details homicide rates for 2016, the most recent year for which comprehensive national data is available. This is the 13th year the Violence Policy Center has released the study. To see past editions of the study, [click here](#).

This is the sixth year in a row that Wisconsin has ranked within the 10 states with the highest black homicide victimization rates.

“The devastating and disproportionate impact homicide, almost always involving a gun, has on black men, boys, women, and girls in America is a national shame,” states VPC Executive Director Josh Sugarmann. “These deaths devastate families, traumatize communities, and should provoke an outcry for change. The goal of our

research is to help educate the public and policymakers, spur action, and aid community leaders already working to end this crisis.”

“In all parts of our country, people of color are disproportionately affected by gun violence, but this study highlights just how much work Wisconsin needs to do and just how essential it is that we do that work immediately,” said Jeri Bonavia, executive director of WAVE Educational Fund. “We urgently call on the Wisconsin Legislature to pass evidence-based policies that will save lives in our state.”

In 2016, the national black homicide victimization rate was 20.44 per 100,000, and the overall national homicide victimization rate was 5.10 per 100,000. Nationwide, 87 percent of black homicide victims were killed with guns.

For WISCONSIN, the study finds that in 2016:

Of the 144 black homicide victims, 124 were male and 20 were female. Nine black homicide victims (6 percent) were less than 18 years old and 3 victims (2 percent) were 65 years of age or older. The average age was 31 years old. When the weapon used could be identified, 91 percent of the black homicide victims (128 out of 140) were killed with guns. Of these, 75 percent (96 victims) were killed with handguns.

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 66 percent of black homicide victims (45 out of 68) were killed by someone they knew. Twenty-three were killed by strangers.

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 71 percent (53 out of 75) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 70 percent (37 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

For the entire UNITED STATES, the study finds that in 2016:

There were 7,756 black homicide victims in the United States that year. Blacks represented 13 percent of the U.S. population, yet accounted for 51 percent of all homicide victims.

The black homicide victimization rate in the United States was 20.44 per 100,000. In comparison, the overall national homicide victimization rate was 5.10 per 100,000. For whites, the national homicide victimization rate was 2.96 per 100,000. Of the 7,756 black homicide victims, 6,748 were male, 1,003 were female, and five were of unknown sex. The homicide victimization rate for black male victims was 37.12 per 100,000. The homicide victimization rate for black female victims was 5.07 per 100,000.

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 87 percent of black victims (6,505 out of 7,442) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 66 percent (4,319 victims) were killed with handguns.

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 75 percent of black victims (2,297 out of 3,054) were killed by someone they knew. The number of victims killed by strangers was 757.

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 71 percent (3,051 out of 4,315) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 48 percent (1,470 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. In addition, individuals living in communities where violence is prevalent are at higher risk for a broad range of negative health and behavior outcomes. An increased understanding of how trauma resulting from community violence influences development, health, and behavior can lead to improvements in the way many social services are delivered as well as policy changes at the local and federal levels. For more information, see the July 2017 VPC study *The Relationship Between Community Violence and Trauma: How Violence Affects Learning, Health, and Behavior*.

The FBI data includes incidents reported as justifiable homicides of black victims killed by law enforcement. Nationwide, there were 116 such incidents reported in 2016. The data does not specifically identify killings by police that are not ruled justifiable. In December 2015, the FBI announced that it would dramatically expand its data collection on violent police encounters by 2017. In October 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice outlined a plan to improve the collection of law enforcement use of force data.

The rate of black homicide victimization is calculated by dividing the number of black homicide victims by the black population, and multiplying the result by 100,000. This is the standard and accepted method of comparing fatal levels of gun violence.

The full study is available at <http://vpc.org/studies/blackhomicide19.pdf>.