

Violence Policy Center: Wisconsin ranked #4 for Black homicide victimization

Posted on Wednesday, Jul 13, 2022

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Washington, DC — Wisconsin has the fourth-highest Black homicide victimization rate in the nation with a rate of 27.24 per 100,000—one and a half times the national Black homicide victimization rate and more than five and a half times the overall homicide rate nationwide—according to a new analysis by the Violence Policy Center (VPC).

In addition to national data, the annual study, [Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2019 Homicide Data](#), also 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 It is based on unpublished data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR).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 2019, the most recent year for which comprehensive national data is available. This is the 16th year the Violence Policy Center has released the study. To see past editions of the study, [click here](#).

“Black men, women, boys, and girls are the most impacted victims of homicide in our nation, yet year after year this shocking and unacceptable toll is allowed to continue. These deaths almost always involve a gun, and the resulting devastation ravages families, friends, and community members. The goal of our research is to help support advocates and organizations working on the ground to stop this lethal violence while, at the same time, continuing to educate and engage the public and policymakers on the need to address this ongoing national crisis,” states VPC Executive Director Josh Sugarman.

For WISCONSIN, the study finds that in 2019:

- Of the 117 Black homicide victims, 91 were male and 26 were female.
- Fifteen Black homicide victims (13 percent) were less than 18 years old and 1 victim (1 percent) was 65 years of age or older. The average age was 32 years old.
- When the weapon used could be identified, 84 percent of the Black homicide victims (89 out of 106) were killed with guns. Of these, 43 percent (38 victims) were killed with handguns.
- For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 75 percent of Black homicide victims (51 out of 68) were killed by someone they knew. Seventeen were killed by strangers.
- For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 77 percent (61 out of 79) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 51 percent (31 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

For the entire UNITED STATES, the study finds that in 2019:

- There were 7,441 Black homicide victims in the United States that year. Black Americans represented 14 percent of the U.S. population, yet accounted for 52 percent of all homicide victims.
- For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 88 percent of Black victims (6,190 out of 7,056) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 64 percent (3,935 victims) were killed with handguns.
- On average, more than 20 Black Americans died each day from homicide, of these, 17 were known to have died from gun homicides.
- The Black homicide victimization rate in the United States was nearly four times the overall national victimization rate and nearly seven times the white homicide victimization rate. In 2019, the black homicide victimization rate was 18.08 per 100,000. In comparison, the overall national homicide victimization rate was 4.79 per 100,000. For whites, the national homicide victimization rate was 2.69 per 100,000.
- Eighty-seven percent of Black homicide victims were male (6,454 of 7,441) and 13 percent were female (986 of 7,441). The sex of one victim was unknown.
- The Black male homicide victimization rate in the United States was more than four times the overall male victimization rate and more than eight times the white male homicide victimization rate. In 2019, the homicide victimization rate for Black male victims was 32.49 per 100,000. In comparison, the overall rate for male homicide victims was 7.68 per 100,000 and the rate for white

male homicide victims was 3.88 per 100,000.

- The Black female homicide victimization rate in the United States was more than twice the overall female victimization rate and three times the white female homicide victimization rate. In 2019, the homicide victimization rate for Black female victims was 4.60 per 100,000. In comparison, the overall rate for female homicide victims was 1.95 per 100,000 and the rate for white female homicide victims was 1.52 per 100,000.
- For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 77 percent of Black victims (2,282 out of 2,954) were killed by someone they knew. The number of victims killed by strangers was 672.
- For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 70 percent (2,856 out of 4,102) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 56 percent (1,591 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 (see the July 2017 VPC study [*The Relationship Between Community Violence and Trauma: How Violence Affects Learning, Health, and Behavior*](#)). At the same time, the firearms industry, looking to expand beyond its shrinking base of white male gun owners, has launched an organized marketing campaign focusing on Black and Latino Americans. If successful, such efforts can only increase gun death and injury in these communities (see the January 2021 Violence Policy Center study [*How the Firearms Industry and NRA Market Guns to Communities of Color*](#)).

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/blackhomicide22.pdf>.