

I WAS SHOT 12 TIMES WALKING INTO WORK.

DAYS LATER WHITNEY/STRONG WAS CREATED



A MESSAGE FROM WHITNEY AUSTIN

On September 6th, 2018, I received the greatest blessing - by the grace of God I survived a mass shooting and returned home safely to my precious family and friends. It was with this blessing that my husband and I decided to start an organization to ensure others did not face the same trauma we (and thousands of others) experienced on this day. Whitney/Strong and our many supporters share a value system rooted in love for community, common ground, and data-driven solutions. I hope you will find a way to begin to solve this problem with us.

READ
WHITNEY'S
STORY



GET THE
2022
IMPACT REPORT

COMMUNITY-LEVEL CHANGE AT WHITNEY/STRONG



Save A Life (SAL) is Whitney/Strong's educational program that offers free, evidence-based prevention training in communities with high rates of firearm homicides (Louisville and Cincinnati) and suicides (Gallia County, OH). Trainings include suicide prevention, firearm safety, and STOP THE BLEED®. More than 1,800 people have been trained through SAL to date, a 20% increase in the number served since 2022. We are proud to partner with research partners at the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University for continuous improvement of our training program to ensure our SAL participants gain statistically significant increases in knowledge and confidence.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGE AT WHITNEY/STRONG

After playing a pivotal role in the passage of the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022, Whitney/Strong continues its focus on state-level legislative change in Kentucky. Committed to bipartisan work since 2018, W/S has worked with lawmakers and stakeholders across the state to develop a custom solution for Kentucky to prevent the use of firearms in crisis moments. This custom solution is Crisis Aversion and Rights Retention (CARR). Thanks to several bipartisan teams, including now Senators Westerfield and Yates, we are proud to participate in a second Interim Committee meeting on CARR.



READ MORE FROM
THE WASHINGTON POST



OUR REACH CONTINUES TO GROW



We educated 1 million Kentuckians on the Crisis Aversion and Rights Retention (CARR) Bill through a billboard and digital campaign with Sandy Hook Promise.



Thanks to partnerships with the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, and local nonprofits, W/S has distributed more than 13,000 gun locks across Kentucky and Ohio.



W/S has created a data scientist fellowship at University of Cincinnati to analyze our Save A Life survey data for statistically significant outcomes. Our first fellow is Ph.D. candidate Ryan Motz.



Our common ground message is resonating nationally, providing media opportunities to spread the mission far and wide. Whitney was excited to share our work on *Meet the Press Reports* with Chuck Todd in October.

VISIT [WHITNEYSTONG.ORG](https://whitneystrong.org)

Common ground for the Commonwealth.

Keep Kentuckians Safe. And Our Gun Rights Too.

- In Kentucky, **more than half** of households own at least one gun.¹
- **There were 947 firearm related deaths in Kentucky in 2021.** 534 (56%) were suicides and 373 (39%) were homicide/legal intervention.²
- In Kentucky's rural areas, **68% of firearm deaths were from suicide in 2021**, a 26% increase in firearm deaths from suicide since 2001.³ Firearm suicides are 1.4 times higher in rural areas than in urban areas.⁴
- **79% of Kentucky's veteran suicides in 2020** were by firearm, compared to 64.9% of overall Kentucky suicides.⁵ Farmers (36.1 per 100,000) and Miners (54.2) also have a significantly higher suicide rate than the general population (27.4).⁶
- In 2021, one Kentuckian died by firearm suicide **every 16 hours**.⁷
- Per the Gun Violence Archive, **there have been eight incidents of mass violence** in our state this year: Lexington (1), Louisville (6), and Paducah (1).

Common Ground for the Commonwealth

Whitney/Strong is dedicated to finding common ground solutions to gun death and injury. We're balancing Kentuckians' tradition of firearm ownership with public safety and the **urgent need to ensure the mental health and wellness of gun owners.**

Helping Gun Owners Help Gun Owners

If we connect gun owners to help when they need it most, we can lessen the likelihood firearms will be misused - be that in acts of violence against self, others, or both.

The Solution

A bipartisan bill, **Crisis Aversion and Rights Retention (CARR)**, allows for the temporary transfer of firearms away from people on the brink of crisis. It ensures you have a way to intervene before your loved one misuses a gun. States with processes for the temporary transfer of firearms **see rates of suicide by firearm drop between 7 and 14 percent**.⁸ Recent studies show compelling evidence for mass violence prevention too.⁹

Nearly **80% of individuals considering suicide give some sign** of their intentions.¹⁰

Studies conducted over 30 years show that **90% of mass shooters engaged in suicidal behavior before their attacks, and 80% expressed their intent to others**.¹¹

When the signs are visible, CARR is the tool.

CARR Is Supported By



Behind the Numbers with Whitney/Strong

700+

Petition
Signatures
Gathered

32

Counties
Represented
with Signatures

1MM +

Kentuckians
educated on
CARR

20,000 +

Emails sent in
support of CARR

2

Interim Hearings
with Joint Judiciary
Committee

6000+

Supporter
Base

1 Schell, Terry L., Samuel Peterson, Brian G. Vegetabile, Adam Scherling, Rosanna Smart, and Andrew R. Morral, State-Level Estimates of Household Firearm Ownership. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL354.html>.

2 CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021.

3 Id. and CDC, Mortality 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database 2001, comparing total firearm suicide deaths in non-metro locations in Kentucky 2021 vs. total firearm suicide deaths in non-metro locations in Kentucky 2001.

4 CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Fatal Injury 2011-2020 on WISQARS Database. Urban is classified as large central metro and large fringe metro counties. Rural is classified as nonmetro counties.

5 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Kentucky Veteran Suicide Data Sheet, 2020. <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2020/2020-State-Data-Sheet-Kentucky-508.pdf>

6 Disparities in Suicide." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023 (citing 2016 data). https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html#industry_occupation.

7 CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021.

8 Kivisto, A.J., & Phalen, P. (2018). Effects of risk-based firearm seizure laws on suicide rates in Connecticut and Indiana, 1981-2015. *Psychiatric Services*, 69(8), 855-862.

9 Pear VA, Pallin R, Schleimer JP, et al Gun violence restraining orders in California, 2016–2018: case details and respondent mortality *Injury Prevention* 2022;28:465-471.

10 "Promote Hope, Healing and Help to Prevent Suicide." 2023. NAMI. Accessed December 13. <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2016/Promote-Hope-Healing-and-Help-to-Prevent-Suicide>.

11 A. Lankford, Identifying Potential Mass Shooters and Suicide Terrorists With Warning Signs of Suicide, Perceived Victimization, and Desires for Attention and Fame. *Journal of Personality Assessment* (2018).

Support Statements from across Kentucky

Kirsten Russell

Daughter of Ruth Perkins who was killed by her mentally ill son in April of 2018

The reason I wholeheartedly support the passage of the CARR Law in Kentucky is incredibly personal. This law could have saved my mother's life.



Mac Brown

Business Executive and Former Chairman of the Republican Party of Kentucky

I do not see CARR as legislation that takes away our right but rather one that protects our right, the right to Life. I ask that the members of this joint committee and the remaining members of the House and Senate seriously consider the ramifications the problem mental health is causing society and pass this bill.

Dr. Maryanne Elliott

Wife of Tommy Elliott who died in the 4/10/23 Mass shooting at Old National Bank

CARR provides a compassionate approach to crisis intervention, and I know it will save lives from suicide and more.



Jason Hall

Executive Director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky

As a pro-life Kentuckian, I believe it is a moral imperative that we find effective ways to save lives threatened by gun violence.

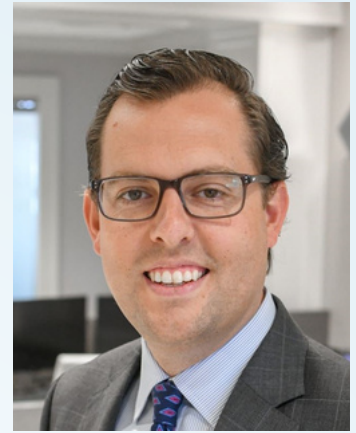
Impetus

As a diverse group of education, faith, and business leaders from Louisville, we know too well that public safety is directly tied to a thriving and successful city. At the same time, we've heard from our brave men and women in law enforcement that they are exhausted with being out armed by civilians and they need new policy solutions to support their work to keep our city safe. It is for these reasons that we urge lawmakers to support CARR, a critical piece of legislation.

Nate Haney

CEO, Entrepreneur, and Former Republican Strategist

My family and I wholeheartedly support Whitney/Strong and its efforts to protect innocent lives through CARR. We live in a fallen, imperfect world and CARR is a useful tool to help circumvent the suicide and homicide of innocent people. We are honored to support Whitney/Strong as it has meaningful conversations to bring about positive change which ultimately will make our communities safer.



Jeff Barrick

Brother to Josh Barrick who died in the 4/10/23 mass shooting at Old National Bank

This shooting and the loss of Josh has darkened our lives forever. Gun violence is tearing lives apart. One side blames mental health, while the other blames guns for these senseless tragedies. Let's come together and address both with this bill that truly makes sense. It allows family and friends the ability to seek help for the transfer of firearms away from an individual who is suffering from a mental health crisis so they can get the help they need before a tragedy ensues.



Dr. Sheila Schuster

Psychologist and Mental Health Advocate

The research is very clear: when a firearm is available to an individual who is in crisis and experiencing suicidal ideation, it is the most frequent source of deaths by suicide (55% in 2021). We also know that these individuals, if they are not successful in their suicide attempt, will often not attempt suicide again. CARR legislation would make it possible for family members and others close to the individual to notify law enforcement to have the guns transferred at the time of crisis, thus saving lives.

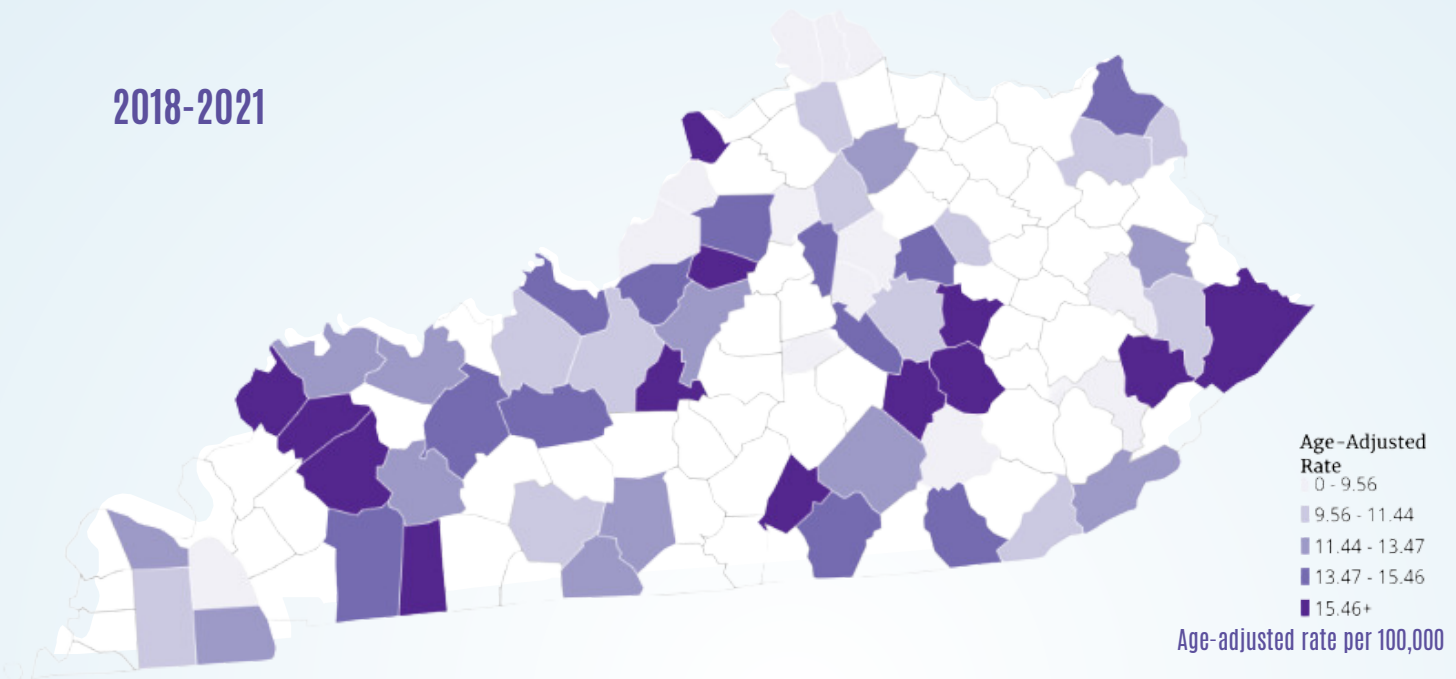


Read their full statements by scanning the QR code

Firearm Suicide Rates by County

Rural counties in Kentucky had a gun suicide rate 1.4 times as high as urban counties.

2018-2021



Counties

| County | Age-Adjusted Rate | County | Age-Adjusted Rate |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 Trimble | 27.11 | 13 Hopkins | 15.47 |
| 2 Jackson | 24.85 | 14 Grayson | 15.44 |
| 3 Webster | 23.05 | 15 Whitley | 15.36 |
| 4 Russell | 19.18 | 16 Wayne | 15.21 |
| 5 Rockcastle | 18.69 | 17 Garrard | 14.99 |
| 6 LaRue | 18.61 | 18 Meade | 14.82 |
| 7 Spencer | 18.25 | 19 Greenup | 14.50 |
| 8 Todd | 18.04 | 20 Shelby | 14.33 |
| 9 Knott | 17.92 | 21 Ohio | 13.97 |
| 10 Estill | 16.11 | 22 Clark | 13.81 |
| 11 Pike | 16.09 | 23 Woodford | 13.74 |
| 12 Union | 15.79 | 24 Bullitt | 13.63 |
| | | 25 Christian | 13.62 |

Kentucky Gun Deaths in 2021



947

gun deaths in
Kentucky, including



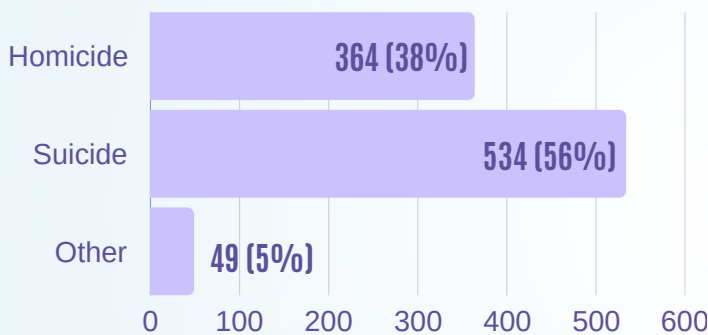
93

children and
teens (0-19)

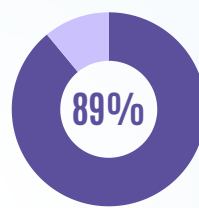


An average of 1
person killed
every 9 hours

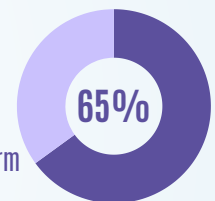
A majority of gun deaths in Kentucky are
suicide



Firearms are the most common method for
homicide & suicide in Kentucky

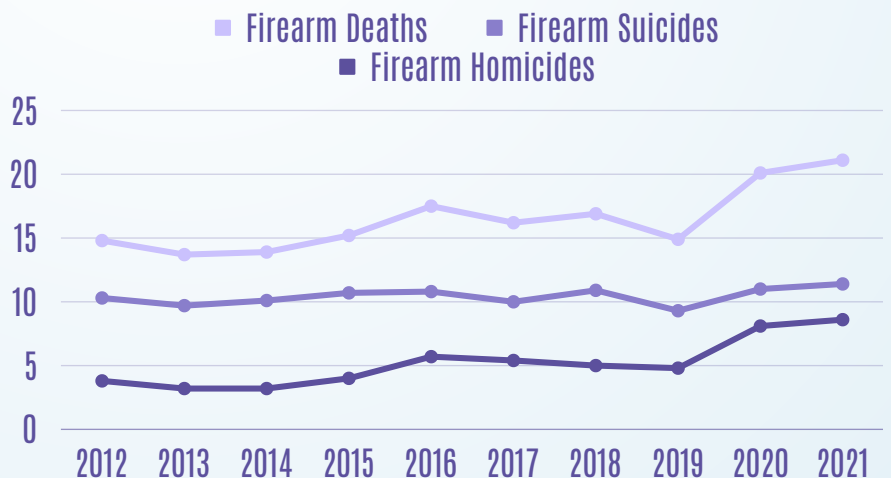


Homicides by firearm



Suicides by firearm

From 2012 to
2021 the gun
death rate
increased 43%



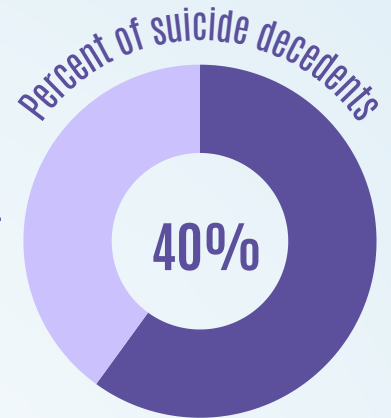
Key Takeaways

- Kentucky had the 13th highest gun death rate in the country in 2021.
- Firearms were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19.
- In 2019, there were 55 domestic violence-related homicides in Kentucky. 65% were by firearm¹

Demographics

Firearm Suicide in Kentucky

- Males were 8 times as likely to die by firearm suicide than females.
- Forty percent of all gun suicide decedents in 2021 were over the age of 54.
- In 2021, one Kenuckian died by firearm suicide every 16 hours

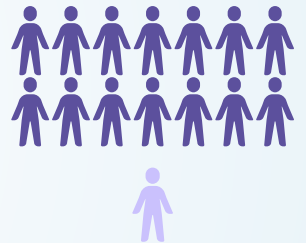


Mass Violence in Kentucky

- Per the Gun Violence Archive, there have been eight incidents of mass violence in our state this year: Lexington (1), Louisville (6), and Paducah (1).

Firearm Homicide in Kentucky

- Males were nearly 5 times as likely to die by firearm homicide than females.
- Black people are at the highest risk for gun homicide. They were nearly 14 times as likely to die by gun homicide than their white counterparts.



County Variation in Kentucky

- While narratives around gun violence often focus on cities, both rural and urban communities in Kentucky are impacted by gun violence.
- The three counties with the highest gun death rates from 2011 to 2020 were Wolfe County, Knott County, and Lee County. All Three counties had a gun death rate nearly twice the state average.²
- Rural counties in Kentucky had a gun suicide rate 1.4 times as high as urban counties.



¹ WISQARS. [2020] National Violent Death Reporting System (NDRS). <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/nvdrs/> domestic violence-related includes: spouse or other intimate partners (current or ex), parent, child, other relative, and victim injured by other intimate partner involvement.

² All data in the county variation section is from 2011-2020. Large central metro and large fringe metro counties are classified as Urban. Rural counties are classified as Nonmetro.