

Suicide

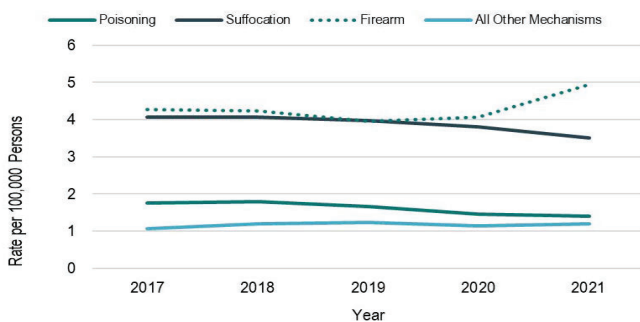
UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. A suicide is a death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior. Suicide is a growing public health problem, affecting all people, ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. There is no single cause of suicide, as several factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels may increase the risk for suicide and protect against it. Suicide contributes to premature death, morbidity, lost productivity, and healthcare costs. ***Suicide is preventable.***

Impact and Magnitude of Suicide

In 2021, suicide ranked as the 11th leading cause of death in the United States; suicide ranked as the 15th leading cause of death in Illinois. Firearms are consistently used more in suicide deaths than other means and the problem is getting worse.

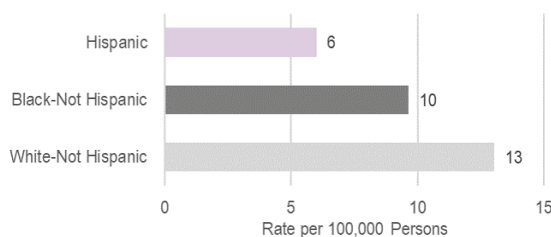
Figure 1: Top Mechanisms of Suicide Over Time, 2017-2021



Suicide by Population Characteristics

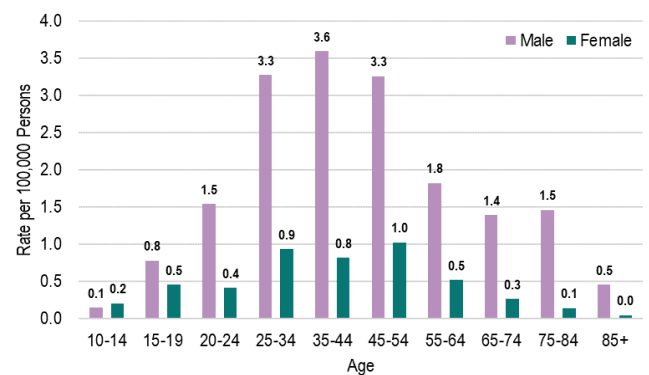
White not-Hispanic individuals have higher suicide rates per 100,000 persons than other race/ethnicities.

Figure 2: Suicide by Race/Ethnicity, 2021



Suicide data is available and included only for those 10 years of age and above.

Figure 3: Rates of Suicide by Age and Sex, 2021



In 2021, rates of suicide among males are much greater than among females for most age groups. Males aged 35-44 have the highest rate of suicide per 100,000 persons. Among health regions, the highest suicide rate per 100,000 residents was observed in urban areas.

Figure 4: Suicide by Regions, 2021[†]

Health Region	Count	Rate
1. Urban	349	14.6
2. Rural	279	13.3
3. Collar Counties	321	10.0
4. Cook County	490	9.2

[†] The rate calculations presented in Figure 4 are based on 2021 suicide count data, and 2020 population data (based on the 2010 census).

Special Emphasis Report: Suicide

Suicide Prevention Strategies

Suicide is preventable, and everyone can play a role. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive approach that occurs at all levels of society. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a set of strategies to help states, communities, and individuals reduce risk and increase resilience (see figure at right).

For planning and prevention resources visit [CDC's Suicide Prevention website](#).

Means: Reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal means is an important part of suicide prevention. Learn more about means reduction at [Harvard's Means Matters](#) or at [AFSP's Project 2025](#).

Circumstances: Suicide is complex, and many factors contribute to thoughts of suicide. Learn more from CDC's [Vital Signs](#).

Support: If you think someone you know is considering suicide, talk to them and connect them to the support they need. Learn [5 Steps](#) you can take to be a supportive and empathetic listener for them.

Lived Experience: If you are thinking of suicide or made a suicide attempt, please know that help is available. Along with supportive family and friends, people who have experienced thoughts of suicide and suicide attempt survivors have created strong peer communities. Learn more at [Now Matters Now](#).

Postvention: It is important to support the individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide loss, to reduce the cycle of trauma and increased risk. Learn more at the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988

988lifeline.org/chat

Crisis Text Line

Text 741741

Veterans' Crisis Line

Dial 988 then Press 1 or text 838255

For questions about this publication, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's Violence and Injury Prevention Section via email at dph.safety@Illinois.gov

Special Emphasis Report: Suicide

Suicide Prevention Activities

PREVENTION – The IDPH Violence & Injury Prevention Section (VIPS) was awarded a federal youth suicide prevention grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. The grant will concentrate on providing depression screening in school-based health centers, improving timely referrals, providing technical assistance for suicide victims and family members, and additional training. VIPS also received federal funding from the CDC to expand the comprehensive suicide prevention approach. The grant will focus on disproportionately affected populations by reducing lethal means within communities at risk, promoting state wide safe messaging, implementing Zero Suicide Academy's, and providing coping and problem solving skills.

DATA & SURVEILLANCE – Northwestern University is IDPH's bona fide agency for the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS). IVDRS links to the who, what, when, where, how, and why violent deaths occur. IVDRS covers all types of violent deaths – including homicides and suicides – in all settings for all age groups. VIPS also obtained an injury and violence prevention epidemiologist in 2023. The epidemiologist is responsible for injury surveillance and analytics, including assessment of risk and protective factors for suicide and other injury topics.

PARTNERSHIPS – IDPH director-appointed Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance is a multi-disciplinary advisory board guiding the implementation of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. With support from the Maternal and Child Health Program, VIPS facilitates an ad hoc committee focused on strategies to address suicide prevention among children, youth, and young adults. Through funding from the Illinois State Board of Education, VIPS will provide suicide prevention trainings with school personnel. VIPS also partnered with team members from multiple agencies working on a Community of Practice through the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. The focus of the program is finding the right partners and partnerships for the alliance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SUCCESSSES – General revenue funds (GRF) for suicide prevention support IDPH suicide prevention infrastructure and implementation of strategies in the state plan. From these funds VIPS was able to add a suicide prevention coordinator, to offer funding opportunities to facilitate a Suicide Prevention Summit and Zero Suicide Academy, and to create a Suicide Prevention Project. GRF funds also were allocated increase awareness of the Firearms Restraining Order Act and of Safe Storage. The IDPH Office of Communications is leading public awareness efforts around these two topics, while VIPS is overseeing the implementation of education materials and distribution of gun locks/safes.

CONTACT - VIPS established an email account to monitor and respond to violence and injury prevention questions within Illinois. Contact dph.safety@Illinois.gov for violence and injury prevention questions.

IDPH Violence and Injury Prevention Section is an awardee of the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's Core State Injury Prevention Program which builds infrastructure, data, and partnerships, with a focus on preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and transportation-related injury.

- *Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan - <https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/files/publications/illinoisstrategicplan2020reduced.pdf>*
- *Illinois Violent Death Reporting System - <https://sites.northwestern.edu/ivdrs/>*