



C A L I F O R N I A

DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

OFFICE OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

DATA REPORT:

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVOLVING
FIREARMS IN CALIFORNIA**

NOVEMBER 2023

*liberty
and justice
under law*



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LETTER FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL BONTA

For decades, California has made necessary strides in combatting domestic violence and supporting survivors. In recent decades, our state saw large decreases in the rates of both domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving firearms and domestic violence-related gun homicides. Unfortunately, like much of the United States, we saw a backslide in our progress during the pandemic. We are committed to regaining our forward momentum and taking our work to protect Californians and to prevent violence further than it has ever been.

Addressing the close and devastating connection between domestic violence and gun violence is key to our strategy. When an abuser has access to a firearm, the risk to the safety and lives of those around them goes up.

When an abusive male partner has access to firearms, the risk of their female partner being killed increases by 1,000%. When a domestic violence incident involves a firearm, it is 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force. Across the U.S., the majority of domestic violence homicides are committed with firearms. And, finally, people who have committed domestic violence are at higher risk of committing future abuse and of perpetrating mass violence.

The data is clear: violent people should not have firearms.

Violence is not an accident. It is also not inevitable and it can be prevented. Removing dangerous weapons from dangerous people is key to that goal. I am proud of the work we are doing at the California Department of Justice to uphold, defend, and enforce our state's vital domestic violence and gun safety laws and policies, including Domestic Violence Restraining Orders (DVROs) and other court protection orders that get firearms away from people who should not have them.

DVROs protect the rights, liberty, and safety of people who are under serious threat. They have been shown to increase survivor safety and prevent gun violence, including mass shootings. They are an evidence-based, constitutional, commonsense tool for safety. They must be accessible and effectively implemented, served, and enforced to protect survivors and the community from violence and other harms.

As Attorney General, I am here to support, protect, and defend all Californians, especially those who have long been overlooked, undervalued, or ignored. Out of that mission was born California DOJ's Office of Community Awareness Response, and Engagement — or CARE.

The goal of this team is to make California DOJ available and accessible to every Californian. They are here to listen to and advocate for you. That includes the team of dedicated and well-trained advocates in our Victims Services Unit. This unit works to support every Californian whose safety, security, and rights have been violated — including survivors of domestic violence. Healing is a critical part of justice, and a journey no one should have to walk alone.

This report gives an in-depth look at the ties between domestic violence and firearms, shining a light on the problem at hand, and illuminating the path to safety before us. We have the tools, experience, and understanding to tackle this issue head on and save vulnerable people from a trauma no one should ever experience.

Violence against another person, especially against an intimate partner or family member, is never acceptable. As California's Chief Law Enforcement Officer, I promise to put the full force of my office into protecting, advocating for, and standing by survivors.

In solidarity,

Rob



ABOUT THE OFFICE OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Attorney General Bonta launched the California Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) with the mission of supporting data- and impact-driven efforts to effectively and equitably prevent gun violence and related traumas.

Gun violence has devastating impacts across California and the nation—gunshot wounds are the leading cause of death for the American child today.¹ But public and private actions can make an enormous difference by reducing risk, increasing safety and well-being, interrupting cycles of violence, and proactively preventing tragedy.²

California is a leader in adopting new legislation and violence prevention programs that bolster safety and substantially reduce gun violence over the long-term. As [OGVP's 2023 Data Report on the Impact of Gun Violence in California](#) lays out, our state has substantially lower rates of firearm-related homicide, suicide, and overall firearm mortality compared to the national average. With new laws and programs also come new challenges and ongoing responsibilities for implementation, coordination, and public education across many different agencies, communities, and stakeholder groups.

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention works to support implementation, coordination, sustainability, and public understanding of these efforts by:

- Serving as an information resource hub for data, policy, and legal expertise on gun violence prevention matters within DOJ and with external stakeholders and the public.
- Serving as a liaison to survivors, advocates, researchers, community partners, and policymakers.
- Publishing data reports and materials about gun violence prevention policies, trends, impacts, research findings, and funding opportunities.
- Promoting coordination across different states, between California agencies, and with local and community-based partners.
- Uplifting effective policy interventions, safety planning tools, and evidence-based best practices.
- Identifying and proactively addressing gaps and barriers to success for gun violence prevention efforts.
- Uplifting holistic prevention and intervention-oriented efforts to address risk factors for gun violence.
- Uplifting effective community violence intervention initiatives & supporting efforts to sustain and scale their work.
- Uplifting the needs and voices of survivors of gun violence.

1 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER database; see also, Matt McGough, et al, “Child and Teen Firearm Mortality in the U.S. and Peer Countries,” Kaiser Family Foundation (Jul. 18, 2023), <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/child-and-teen-firearm-mortality-in-the-u-s-and-peer-countries/>. In 2020, firearm-related injuries overtook motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death for US children aged 1-17, and remained the leading cause of death for this age group in 2021 and 2022.

2 See, e.g., April Zeoli, et al., “Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Association with Intimate Partner Homicide,” *American Journal of Epidemiology* 187, no. 11 (2018); Garen Wintemute, et al., “Extreme Risk Protection Orders Intended to Prevent Mass Shootings: A Case Series,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 171, no. 9 (2019); Michael C. Monuteaux, et al., “Association of Increased Safe Household Firearm Storage With Firearm Suicide and Unintentional Death Among US Youths,” *JAMA Pediatrics* 173, no. 7 (2019); P. Jeffrey Brantingham, et al., “The Impact of the GRYD Incident Response Program on Gang Retaliations: GRYD Research & Evaluation Brief No. 2,” Los Angeles Mayor’s Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) (2020).



INTRODUCTION

This report documents the impact of firearm-related domestic violence³ incidents across California, including our state’s long-term progress in reducing domestic violence involving firearms, significant increases since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, large differences among counties across the state, and impacts on different populations based on victims’ reported sex, age, and race or ethnicity. This report generally uses the term “domestic violence” to include both family and intimate partner-related violence, which may occur in public as well as private spaces.

Domestic violence and gun violence are devastating, intertwined societal challenges.⁴ A significant portion of shootings and homicides nationwide are connected to domestic violence, especially violence perpetrated against women and children.⁵ At the national level, recent Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data indicated that at least 50% of female homicide victims and at least 16% of male homicide victims are killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member,⁶ and a majority of child homicide victims aged 14 and under are killed by a family member.⁷ As discussed further below, this likely undercounts the true number of victims killed in incidents connected to domestic violence.⁸ As with U.S. homicides overall,⁹ a majority of domestic violence homicides are committed with firearms.¹⁰

Researchers evaluating the prevalence of nonfatal domestic violence with firearms have estimated that about 4.5 million women alive today have been threatened by an intimate partner with a gun and that nearly one million have been shot, shot at, or had a gun used against them by an intimate partner.¹¹

3 Domestic violence may include different forms of both fatal and nonfatal violence committed against a person’s family members or current or former intimate partners.

4 See California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, “Preventing & Reducing Gun Violence Injuries and Fatalities: A California Toolkit for Communities, Survivors, and Service Providers,” <https://endinggv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Toolkit.pdf> (citing Susan Sorenson and Rebecca Schut, “Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19(4) (2018): 431–442).

5 The most common form of domestic violence-related homicide in California and nationally is intimate partner homicide committed against a female victim. See FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (Dec. 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/female-murder-victims-and-victim-offender-relationship-2021>; OGV analysis of homicide records reported to DOJ (accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data) for homicides in California from 2013–2022; see also, Jill Theresa Messing, et al, “Preventing Intimate Partner Homicide: The Long Road Ahead,” *Homicide Studies*, 26(1), 91–105 (2022).

6 See FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (Dec. 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/female-murder-victims-and-victim-offender-relationship-2021>.

7 OGV analysis of data from Puzanchera, C., Chamberlin, G., and Kang, W., “Easy Access to the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports: 1980–2020” (2021) (publishing data from the FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports 1980–2020 showing that from 2018–2020, at least 1,260 out of 2,167 homicides reported to the FBI involving a victim under the age of 15 identified the offender as the victim’s family member), <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezashr/>.

8 See FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (Dec. 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/female-murder-victims-and-victim-offender-relationship-2021>.

9 OGV analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. In 2021, firearm homicides represented 20,958 out of 26,031 total homicides (80.5%) nationwide, including 3,073 out of 4,395 (70%) adult female-victim homicides; 16,333 out of 19,415 (84%) adult male victim-homicides; and 1,552 out of 2,220 (70%) homicides involving victims under the age of 18.

10 Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler, “Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises,” *J. Law Med. Ethics*, 2023 Spring; 51(1): 64–76 (citing April Zeoli, et al, “Risks and Targeted Interventions: Firearms in Intimate Partner Violence,” *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 38(1): 125–139 (Jan. 1, 2016)); OGV analysis of data from the CDC WISQARS National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) online data portal (from 2018–2020, death records reported by participating jurisdictions into the National Violent Death Reporting System indicated that firearms were the cause of death for 3,868 out of 7,125 homicides in which the suspected offender was the victim’s family member or current or former intimate partner); OGV analysis of data from Puzanchera, C., Smith, J., and Kang, W., “Easy Access to NIBRS Victims, 2016: Victims of Domestic Violence,” (publishing data from the FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports 1980–2020 showing that firearms were the cause of death for at least 469 out of 928 domestic violence-related homicides reported to the FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in 2016), <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezanibrsdv/>.

11 See id.

Researchers have also found that homicide is among the leading causes of death in the U.S. during pregnancy and postpartum and that “these homicides are linked to a deadly mix of intimate partner violence and firearms.”¹² Records compiled by the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive¹³ showed that in 2022, more than twice as many minors in the U.S. were killed or injured in domestic violence shootings than in school shootings.¹⁴

For individual survivors, an abusive partner or family member’s access to firearms can significantly increase risk of trauma, intimidation, coercive control, sexual violence, abuse, shootings, and death.¹⁵ An abusive male partner’s access to firearms increases risk of female victim homicide by 1,000%, and domestic violence incidents involving firearms are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.¹⁶ People who have committed domestic violence and abuse are at higher risk of committing future acts of domestic violence and abuse, and often escalate the severity of their conduct over time.¹⁷ They are also at higher risk of perpetrating mass violence, including violence against other victims who are not a family member or intimate partner; in 68% of mass shootings between 2014 and 2019, the shooter was found to have a history of domestic violence and/or killed at least one family member or current or former intimate partner in their attack.¹⁸

Fortunately, effectively implemented public policy and safety interventions can meaningfully increase safety and well-being for domestic violence survivors and the wider community. California has been a leader in efforts to empower and protect survivors, including by providing a range of support services, crisis intervention and safety planning options, and protections against gun violence. These include Domestic Violence Restraining Orders, Criminal Protection Orders, and other protection order options

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- 12 See Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler, “Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises,” *J. Law Med. Ethics*, 2023 Spring; 51(1): 64–76; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, “Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women in U.S.,” (Oct 21, 2022), <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/homicide-leading-cause-of-death-for-pregnant-women-in-u-s/>; Maeve Wallace, et al, “Homicide During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period in the United States, 2018-2019,” *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 138: 762-769 (2021)). See also, Maeve Wallace, “Trends in Pregnancy-Associated Homicide, United States, 2020,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 112(9): 1333-1336 (Sep. 1, 2022).
- 13 The Gun Violence Archive compiles and maintains a searchable online database of gun violence incidents collected from law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources, accessible at Gunviolencearchive.org.
- 14 See Jennifer Mascia, “Dangerous Homes: Guns and Domestic Violence Exact a Deadly Toll on Kids,” *The Trace* (Mar. 23, 2023), <https://www.thetrace.org/2023/03/guns-domestic-violence-child-deaths/>.
- 15 See, e.g., Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler, “Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises,” *J. Law Med. Ethics*, 2023 Spring; 51(1): 64–76; Susan Sorenson and Rebecca Schut, “Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(4) (2018): 431–442; National Domestic Violence Hotline, “Hotline Focus Survey Provides Firsthand Look at Intersection of Firearms & Domestic Violence; Highlights Need for Stronger Laws and Equal Protection” (Jun. 2014), <https://www.thehotline.org/news/hotline-focus-survey-provides-firsthand-look-at-intersection-of-firearms-highlights-need-for-stronger-laws-and-equal-protection/>.
- 16 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “Domestic Violence & Firearms” (2022), https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/guns_and_dv_2022.pdf (citing Chelsea M. Spencer and Sandra M. Stith, “Risk Factors for Male Perpetration and Female Victimization of Intimate Partner Homicide: A Meta-Analysis,” *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 21(3):527-540 (Jun. 2018) and citing Linda Saltzman, et al, “Weapon involvement and injury outcomes in family and intimate assaults,” *JAMA*, 267(22):3043-3047 (1992)).
- 17 See, e.g., Viet Nguyen and Mia Bird, “Tailoring Domestic Violence Programs to Reduce Recidivism,” *Pub. Policy Inst. Cal.* (Jun. 12, 2018); Katie Zezima, et al., “Domestic Slayings: Brutal and Foreseeable,” *The Washington Post* (Dec. 9, 2018), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/domestic-violence-murders/>; *United States v. Castleman*, 572 U.S. 157, 160 (2014) (“Domestic violence often escalates in severity over time, and the presence of a firearm increases the likelihood that it will escalate to homicide.”).
- 18 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “Domestic Violence & Firearms” (2022), at https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/guns_and_dv_2022.pdf (citing Lisa Geller, et al, “The Role of Domestic Violence in Fatal Mass Shootings in the United States, 2014-2019,” *Injury Epidemiology*, 8 (38) (2021)). See also, A.J. Kivisto, et al, “Firearm Use Increases Risk of Multiple Victims In Domestic Homicides,” *J. Am. Acad. Psychiatry Law*, 48(1).
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that work to disarm people found through court processes to have perpetrated violence and abuse.¹⁹ Researchers have demonstrated that these policies are vital to survivors' safety and to the safety of the community at large.²⁰ As this report documents, these policies have helped California achieve substantial long-term reductions in firearm-related domestic violence and in gun homicides for women and children—progress that stands apart from national trends.

But this report also shows that some counties report *much* higher rates of domestic violence-related incidents than the statewide average. The report also documents significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a large increase in calls for law enforcement assistance reporting use or threatened use of firearms in domestic violence-related incidents. Amid this large increase in reported firearm-related domestic violence during the pandemic, court records also showed a notable decrease in the number of survivors seeking the protections of the Domestic Violence Restraining Order.

This data report aims to inform stakeholders' efforts to address these recent challenges, especially in communities most impacted by firearm-related domestic violence. It also aims to spotlight a continued need and priority: to effectively implement, enforce, and preserve California's vital domestic violence prevention and gun safety policies like the Domestic Violence Restraining Order.

19 Under California law, people who need protection from a current or former intimate partner, cohabitant, or close family member may be eligible for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) and people who need protection from other individuals may qualify for other court protection orders that include firearm access provisions, including Civil Harassment Restraining Orders, Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders, Workplace Violence Restraining Orders, and Private Postsecondary School Violence Prevention Restraining Orders. Eligible petitioners, including law enforcement, may also seek Gun Violence Restraining Orders, which can prohibit respondents from accessing firearms and ammunition for temporary periods but do not name specific individuals as protected parties or include other safety provisions, such as orders requiring respondents to stay away from and not contact or harass specific individuals. In criminal cases, courts may also issue Criminal Protective Orders to protect a witness to, or victim of, a crime, including domestic violence offenses. See California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, "Preventing & Reducing Gun Violence Injuries and Fatalities: A California Toolkit for Communities, Survivors, and Service Providers," <https://endinggv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Toolkit.pdf>.

20 See, e.g., April Zeoli et al., "Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations with Intimate Partner Homicide," 187 *Am. J. Epidemiology* 2365, 2365 (2018); Carolina Díez et al., "State Intimate Partner Violence-Related Firearm Laws and Intimate Partner Homicide Rates in the United States, 1991 to 2015," 167 *Annals Internal Med.* 536, 541 (2017); ; April Zeoli & Daniel Webster, "Effects of Domestic Violence Policies, Alcohol Taxes and Police Staffing Levels on Intimate Partner Homicide in Large U.S. Cities," 16 *Inj. Prevention* 90, 90 (2010).

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

1. *Long-Term Progress:* California has made substantial long-term progress in reducing the incidence of domestic violence involving firearms, and relatedly, in reducing gun homicide rates for women and children, who are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence homicides. From 1993 to 2019, California recorded a 63% reduction in per capita rates of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving firearms, a 61% reduction in domestic violence-related gun homicides, a 67% reduction in female-victim gun homicide rates, and an 80% reduction in gun homicide rates for children aged 14 and under.
2. *Lower Gun Homicide Rates Among Women and Children in California:* In recent years, California's gun homicide rates for women and children have been much lower than rates recorded for the rest of the nation as a whole. From 2018-2022, California's female-victim gun homicide rate was about half (46% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the U.S. (the other 49 states and the District of Columbia combined) and for children aged 14 and under, California's gun homicide rate was less than half (57% below) the rate for the rest of the U.S.
3. *Increase in Domestic Violence Involving Firearms During COVID-19 Pandemic:* Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, California has experienced substantial increases in domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving reported use or threatened use of firearms. The number of domestic violence calls involving firearms increased by 80% between 2019 and 2021 to the highest number reported in nearly three-decades.
4. *Decrease in Domestic Violence Restraining Order Filings During COVID-19 Pandemic:* During the pandemic, court records showed a 17% decrease in the number of cases filed seeking the protections of a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) in California.
5. *Difference in County-Level Domestic Violence Data:* County-level analysis shows substantial variation across California's counties in per capita rates of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving firearms, domestic violence-related homicides involving firearms, and DVRO case filings.
6. *Majority of Homicides Involving Women and Children Connected to Domestic Violence:* Over the past decade, a majority of all female homicide victims in California were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member, and a majority of child homicide victims between the ages of one and 14 were killed by a family member.
7. *Domestic Violence-Related Gun Homicide Victims:* In California, a majority of people killed in domestic violence-related gun homicides from 2013-2022 were adult women, 83% of whom were killed by a current or former intimate partner. Adult males or minors killed in domestic violence gun homicides were much more likely to be killed by family members. The vast majority of minors killed in domestic violence-related gun homicides were killed by a parent.
8. *Racial Disparities:* From 2013-2022, a plurality of domestic violence gun homicide victims in California were non-Hispanic white, followed closely by Hispanic victims. But Black victims were disproportionately represented among adult female, adult male, and minor victims of domestic violence gun homicides.

DATA NOTES AND LIMITATIONS

This report includes analysis of two primary datasets of publicly accessible records published on DOJ's OpenJustice online data portal.²¹ The first dataset compiles information reported about domestic violence-related calls requesting law enforcement assistance (such as 911 calls). The second dataset reports information about homicides in California, including any information reported by the law enforcement agency (if known) about the weapon used to perpetrate the homicide and the victim's relationship to one or more people identified as the suspected offender.²²

For both datasets, DOJ aggregates information reported by law enforcement agencies across the state, such as the number of domestic violence-related calls for assistance received by the reporting agency each month. These datasets rely on the determinations made by each reporting law enforcement agency; for instance, an agency responding to a call for assistance determines whether to classify and report that call as "domestic violence-related". The OpenJustice online data portal provides accompanying data description documents with more detailed explanations of the context, characteristics, and known limitations for these datasets, including a list of the agencies that have not reported relevant records for certain periods.²³

These datasets provide crucial information but likely undercount the true number of domestic violence incidents involving firearms. There may be variability in law enforcement agencies' practices in classifying cases and reporting relevant records regarding homicides and domestic violence-related calls for assistance, and a small number of agencies have not reported relevant data for certain periods. There is also likely variability between and within different communities in domestic violence survivors' willingness and ability to report domestic violence crimes and request law enforcement assistance; national crime victim survey data has indicated that about half of domestic violence-related victimizations are not reported to law enforcement.²⁴ Homicide records also likely undercount the number of people killed by a family member or current or former intimate partner in part because a significant number of homicide records reported to DOJ (and nationally) report that no relevant information is known about the suspected offender or the offender's relationship to the victim. As discussed below, the percentage of homicides with the victim-offender relationship reported as unknown substantially increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may in part reflect nationwide declines in homicide clearance rates.²⁵ It is likely that at least some of these unsolved homicides are connected to domestic violence.

This report generally uses the term "domestic violence" to include both family and intimate partner-related violence, which may occur in public as well as private spaces. Different sections of California law provide different definitions of "domestic violence".²⁶ California's Family Code, including statutes governing Domestic Violence Restraining Orders, generally defines "domestic violence" to include abuse committed against current or former intimate partners, cohabitants, and close family members, including

21 See DOJ OpenJustice Online Data Portal at <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

22 For the purposes of this report, OGVP classified as a homicide as domestic violence-related if the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former spouse, current or former dating partner, or family member of the victim.

23 Section 13730 of the California Penal Code generally requires law enforcement agencies in California to record specified information about all domestic violence-related calls for assistance made to the agency and to report to DOJ monthly about the total number of domestic violence calls received and the number of those cases involving weapons or strangulation or suffocation. See also, DOJ Open Justice Data Portal, Domestic Violence Related Calls for Assistance dataset "README" file, <https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/dataset/2023-06/domestic-%20violence-%20Related-%20calls%20for-service-context-06-29-2023.pdf> and Homicide dataset "README" file, https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/dataset/2023-06/Homicide%20Context_06122023.pdf.

24 See U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Criminal Victimization, 2019," Table 6 (Sept. 2020), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv19.pdf>.

25 See California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, "Office of Gun Violence Prevention Data Report: The Impact of Gun Violence in California," 35 (Aug. 2023), <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-Data-Report-2022.pdf>.

26 See, e.g., California Penal Code § 13700(b) and California Family Code § 6211.

children.²⁷ The Penal Code generally defines “domestic violence” more narrowly to refer to violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain unrelated adult cohabitants.²⁸ The law requiring law enforcement agencies to report information about domestic violence-related calls for assistance applies this narrower definition,²⁹ and accordingly, data presented in this report regarding domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally includes calls regarding violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants, but not other family members. This report classifies homicides as “domestic violence-related homicides” based on the reported victim-offender relationship to include any homicide where the reporting agency recorded that one or more of the suspected offenders was a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the victim.

It is also worth noting that DOJ’s annual Homicide in California Report provides the number and percentage of homicide cases where a reporting law enforcement agency identified the circumstances contributing to the homicide as a “domestic violence-related argument”.³⁰ For the purposes of this report, OGVVP classified a homicide as a “domestic violence-related homicide” based on the reported victim-offender relationship, regardless of whether a “domestic violence-related argument” was identified as the contributing circumstance. Over the past decade, a majority of homicide records reported to DOJ identifying the victim as the offender’s family member or current or former intimate partner did *not* report a domestic violence-related argument as the contributing circumstance; for instance, the contributing circumstance was recorded as “A lover’s triangle,” an “Argument over money or property (revenge over money or property),” a “Brawl due to influence of alcohol (i.e., argument while intoxicated)” or “Other arguments (revenge)” for 11% of homicides identifying the suspected offender as the victim’s current or former intimate partner, and “child abuse” was recorded as the contributing circumstance for a majority of homicides involving victims under 18 who were killed by a family member.³¹ Therefore, the number of homicides classified as “domestic violence-related homicides” in this report substantially exceeds the number of homicides connected to domestic violence arguments in DOJ’s Homicide in California Report.

It should also be noted that this victim-offender-relationship classification does not include all homicides connected to domestic violence. From 2013-2022, law enforcement agencies in California reported that a “domestic violence-related argument” was the contributing circumstance for 34 homicides in which the victim was killed by someone *other than* a family member or current or former intimate partner, including 28 gun homicides.³² Researchers have previously estimated that 20% of people killed in homicides related to intimate partner violence were “corollary victims” including victims’ family members, new intimate partners, friends, acquaintances, police officers, and strangers.³³

Finally, county-level analysis included in this report should be interpreted with caution. Counties with small populations and/or relatively small numbers of reported incidents may experience especially large fluctuations in per capita rates.

27 California Family Code § 6211.

28 California Penal Code § 13700(b).

29 California Penal Code §§ 13700(b); 13730.

30 See, e.g., California Department of Justice, 2022 Homicide in California Report, Tables 21-24 (Jun. 2023), <https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Homicide%20In%20CA%202022f.pdf>.

31 OGVVP’s analysis of homicide records reported to DOJ (accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data) found that from 2013-2022, there were 2,923 homicides in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the victim. A domestic violence-related argument was reported as the contributing circumstance for 910 (31%) of these homicides. Child abuse was reported as the contributing circumstance for 271 (9%). A “lover’s triangle,” an “Argument over money or property (revenge over money or property),” a “Brawl due to influence of alcohol (i.e., argument while intoxicated)” or “Other arguments (revenge)” was reported as the contributing circumstance for 624 (21%) of these homicides, including 158 (11%) of the 1,423 homicides in which the reporting agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner of the victim.

32 See *id.*

33 See, e.g., Sharon G. Smith, PhD, et al, “Intimate Partner Homicide and Corollary Victims in 16 States: National Violent Death Reporting System, 2003–2009,” *Am J Public Health*, 104(3): 461–466 (Mar. 2014) www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3953789/.

CALIFORNIA'S LONG-TERM PROGRESS IN REDUCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVOLVING FIREARMS

California is a leader in enacting policies to prevent domestic violence,³⁴ including through vital gun violence prevention measures. Available data indicates that these efforts have helped California significantly reduce the incidence of domestic violence, especially domestic violence involving firearms.

Thirty years ago, in 1993, California law enforcement agencies reported receiving nearly 239,000 domestic violence-related calls requesting law enforcement assistance, including 2,951 domestic violence calls involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms (1.2% of all domestic violence calls for assistance that year).³⁵ In the same year, law enforcement agencies in California also reported at least 489 domestic violence-related homicides in which a family member or current or former intimate partner of the victim was identified as a suspected offender, including 269 perpetrated with firearms.³⁶

By 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, California law enforcement agencies reported receiving just over 161,000 domestic violence-related calls for assistance and 1,388 domestic violence calls involving firearms (0.86% of all domestic violence calls for assistance that year).³⁷ In 2019, law enforcement agencies in California reported 288 domestic violence-related homicides in which a family member or current or former intimate partner of the victim was identified as a suspected offender, including 133 perpetrated with firearms.³⁸

California's population grew from 31,274,928 in 1993 to 39,437,610 in 2019, a 26% increase.³⁹ Accordingly, on a per capita basis, from 1993 to 2019, California law enforcement agencies reported:

- A 47% reduction in domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance
- A 63% reduction in domestic violence-related calls for assistance involving firearms
- A 53% reduction in domestic violence-related homicides
- A 61% reduction in domestic violence-related gun homicides

34 As described in the Data Notes and Limitations section, different sections of California law provide different definitions of "domestic violence". California's Penal Code sections requiring law enforcement agencies to report information about domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally define "domestic violence" to mean abuse committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants, but not other family members. See California Penal Code §§ 13700(b); 13730. California's Family Code, including statutes governing Domestic Violence Restraining Orders, generally defines "domestic violence" to mean abuse committed against current or former intimate partners, cohabitants, and close family members, including children. See California Family Code § 6211. For the purposes of this report, OGVP classified a homicide as a domestic violence-related homicide if the reporting agency recorded that one or more of the suspected offenders was a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the victim.

35 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data. As described in the Data Notes and Limitations section, information regarding domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally refers to calls for assistance in incidents involving violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants. See California Penal Code §§ 13700(b); 13730.

36 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Homicides in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data. As discussed in the Data Notes and Limitations section, for the purposes of this report, OGVP classified a homicide as a domestic violence-related homicide if the reporting agency recorded that one or more of the suspected offenders was a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the victim.

37 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

38 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Homicides in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

39 Population statistics used in this report were drawn from data reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Databases at wonder.cdc.gov.

These reductions were especially vital to increasing safety for women and children, who are disproportionately affected by domestic violence and abuse.⁴⁰ From 1993 to 2019, California’s female-victim gun homicide rate fell by 67%,⁴¹ and California’s gun homicide rate for children aged 14 and under fell by 80%.⁴²

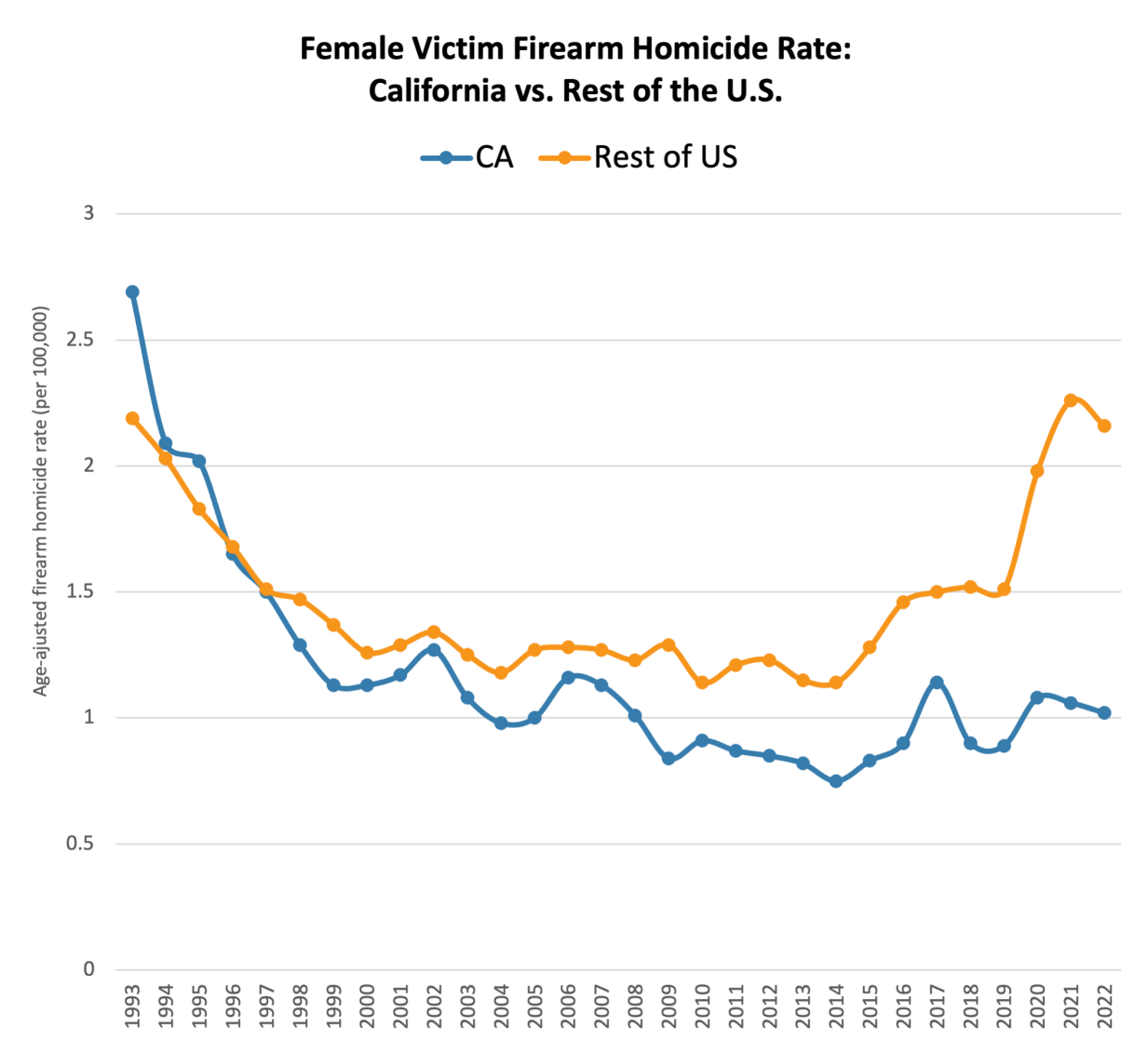
This long-term progress in reducing domestic violence involving firearms has helped California produce much lower gun homicide rates per capita involving female or child victims compared to the rest of the nation as a whole (the other 49 states and D.C. combined). From 2018-2022, California’s female-victim gun homicide rate was about half (46% below) the rate recorded for the rest of the nation combined.⁴³ California’s gun homicide rate for children aged 14 and under was less than half (57% below) the rate recorded in the rest of the nation.⁴⁴

As **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** show below, California’s long-term progress in reducing gun homicide rates for women and children stands apart from national trends.

Although California experienced increases in gun homicide rates for both female and child victims during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rest of the nation suffered much larger increases. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that from 2019 to 2021, female-victim gun homicide rates increased by 19% in California and by 49% in the rest of the U.S.⁴⁵ Gun homicide rates for children aged 14 and under increased by 45% in California and by 68% in the rest of the U.S.⁴⁶

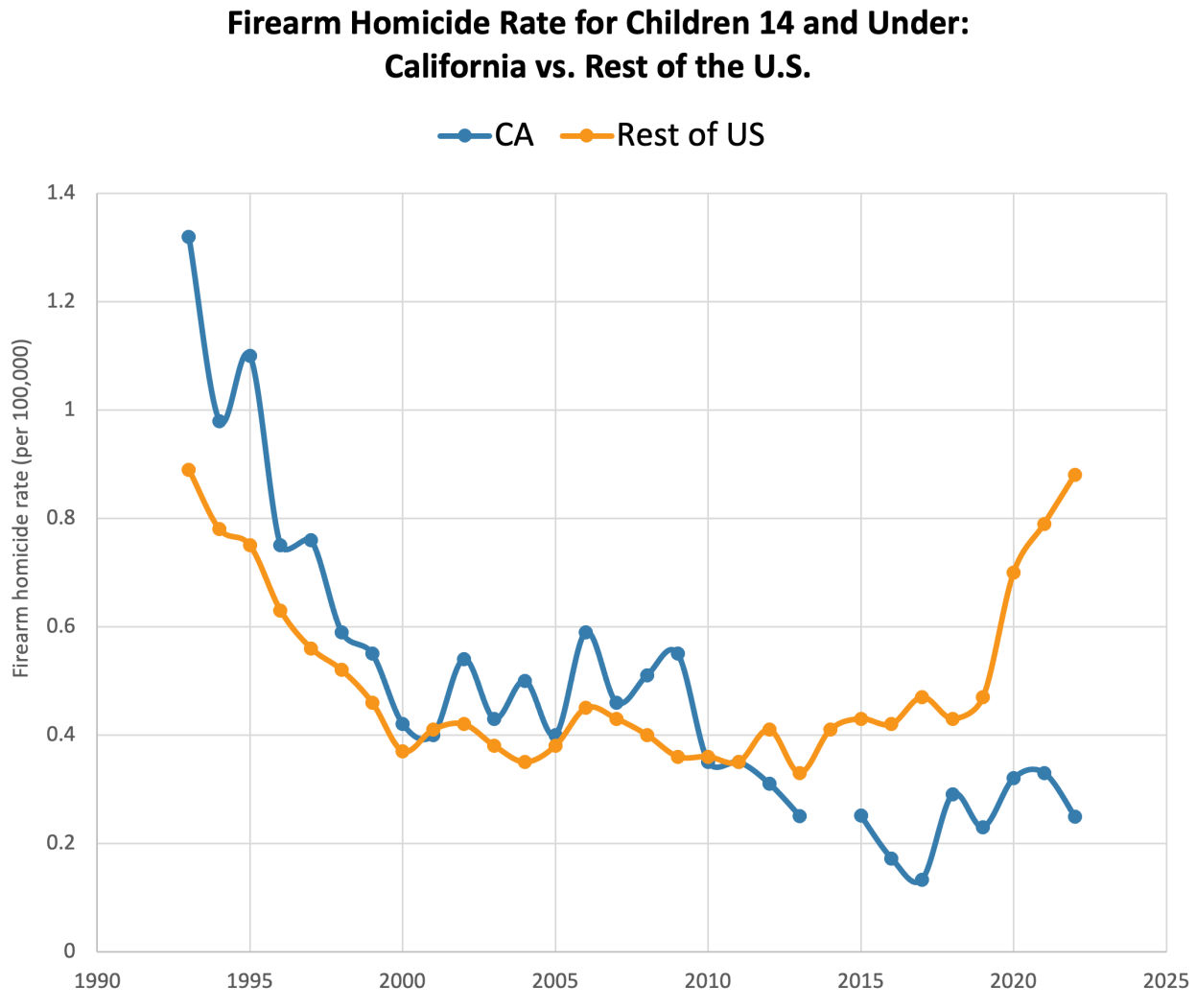
- 40 The FBI reported that at the national level in 2021, domestic violence related-homicides (including family and intimate partner homicides) represented at least 50% of all homicides involving female victims, 16% involving male victims, and over 50% involving children aged 14 and under. See FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (Dec. 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/female-murder-victims-and-victim-offender-relationship-2021>; OGVP analysis of data from Puzanchera, C., Chamberlin, G., and Kang, W., “Easy Access to the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports: 1980-2020” (2021) (publishing data from the FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports 1980-2020 showing that from 2018-2020, at least 1,260 out of 2,167 homicides reported to the FBI involving a victim under the age of 15 identified the offender as the victim’s family member), <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezashr/>. In California, OGVP’s analysis of homicide records from 2013-2022 found that 60% of homicide victims killed by either a family member or current or former intimate partner were female, including 80% of victims killed by a current or former intimate partner.
- 41 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. From 1993 to 2019, the age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate for California residents fell by 67% from 2.69 per 100,000 residents to 0.89. (California’s non-age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate fell by 68% from 2.75 to 0.89 per 100,000 residents). Age-adjusted rates seek to control for the effects of age from crude rates so as to allow for comparisons across populations with different underlying age structures. See CDC, “Frequently Asked Questions: What exactly are age-adjusted rates?”, wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/faq.html#6.
- 42 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. From 1993 to 2019, the gun homicide rate for California residents aged 14 and under fell by over 80% from 1.32 per 100,000 residents to 0.23. (California suffered fewer than 20 gun homicides in 2019 involving victims aged 14 and under and as a result, the CDC flags the per capita rate for 2019 as “unreliable”; using a count of homicides for both 2018 and 2019 shows that from 2018-2019, California recorded a combined rate of 0.26 gun homicides involving victims aged 14 and under per 100,000 residents, 80% below the rate recorded in California in 1993).
- 43 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. From 2018-2022, the age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate for California residents was 1.01 per 100,000 residents, compared to 1.88 for the other 49 states and D.C. combined. The non-age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate for California residents was 45% below the rest of the U.S. (0.99 per 100,000 residents in California, compared to 1.79 for the other 49 states and D.C. combined).
- 44 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. From 2018-2022, the gun homicide rate for children aged 14 and under for CA residents was 57% below the rest of the U.S. (0.284 per 100,000 in CA compared to 0.655 for other 49 states and D.C. combined).
- 45 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online data portal. From 2019 to 2021, the age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate in California increased from 0.89 per 100,000 residents to 1.06, and increased in the rest of the U.S. (the other 49 states and D.C. combined) from 1.51 per 100,000 residents to 2.26. (The non-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate increased by 16% in California, from 0.89 to 1.03 per 100,000 residents and by 49% in the rest of the U.S., from 1.44 per 100,000 residents to 2.14).
- 46 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online data portal. From 2019 to 2021, the gun homicide rate for children aged 14 and under increased from 0.23 per 100,000 residents to 0.33 in California (see Footnote 30 for additional

Figure 1. Female-Victim Firearm Homicide Rate in California and Rest of the U.S. (1993-2022).⁴⁷



⁴⁷ information about this data for 2019) and from 0.47 per 100,000 residents to 0.79 in the rest of the U.S. combined. OGVP analysis of firearm homicide data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. All 2022 data from the CDC analyzed in this report is provisional and may be subject to future adjustments to reflect a relatively small number of additional death certificates for 2022 received, processed, and published through the WONDER Database after OGVP accessed this dataset on October 13, 2023.

Figure 2. Firearm Homicide Rate for Children Aged 14 and Under in California and Rest of the U.S. (1993-2022).⁴⁸



48 Id. The graph above excludes information about gun homicides in California for 2014 because the CDC generally “suppresses” (declines to publish) information for any time period or population in which there are fewer than 10 deaths of the requested type; the CDC suppressed information about gun homicides in California for 2014 among child victims aged 14 and under. The CDC also flags the per capita rate as “unreliable” for any time period or population in which there are fewer than 20 deaths of the requested type; California recorded fewer than 20 gun homicides among children aged 14 and under in each year from 2013 to 2017 and in 2019.

PANDEMIC-ERA INCREASES IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVOLVING FIREARMS

Despite California’s long-term progress and much lower rates of gun violence compared to most other states, analysis of data on domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance indicates that California suffered a significant increase in domestic violence incidents involving the use or threatened use of firearms after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. (As described in the Data Notes and Limitations section, California’s law requiring law enforcement agencies to report information about these domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally defines “domestic violence” to mean incidents involving violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants).⁴⁹

Although the vast majority of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance in California do not involve firearms, those that do can be especially dangerous. Survivors are at *much* higher risk of being forcibly coerced, abused, threatened, shot, or killed when a perpetrator of abuse has access to and uses firearms.⁵⁰ Firearm-related domestic violence incidents can also be uniquely dangerous for law enforcement officers responding to intervene and protect survivors;⁵¹ an analysis of law enforcement officers’ deaths in the line of duty found that domestic violence-related calls were among the most dangerous encounters for responding officers and that 95% of officers killed when responding to domestic violence calls were killed with a firearm.⁵²

In California, between 2019 and 2021, law enforcement agencies across the state reported a 2% increase in the overall number of domestic violence-related calls requesting law enforcement assistance.⁵³ But over the same period, there was an *80% increase* in the number of domestic violence calls involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms.⁵⁴ The percentage of domestic violence calls involving firearms increased from 0.86% in 2019 to 1.52% in 2021.⁵⁵ In 2021, the total number of reported domestic violence calls involving firearms in California reached the highest level since 1995, and the percentage of domestic violence calls involving firearms reached the highest level since 1991.⁵⁶

These increases are consistent with other state and national data: As noted above, from 2019 to 2021, female-victim gun homicide rates increased by 19% in California and by 49% in the rest of the U.S.⁵⁷ Over the same period, gun violence incident records compiled by the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive also documented a 65% increase in the number of minors killed or injured in domestic violence

49 See California Penal Code §§ 13700(b); 13730.

50 See, e.g., Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler, “Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises,” *J. Law Med. Ethics*, 2023 Spring; 51(1): 64–76; ., Susan Sorenson and Rebecca Schut, “Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 19(4) (2018): 431–442; National Domestic Violence Hotline, “Hotline Focus Survey Provides Firsthand Look at Intersection of Firearms & Domestic Violence; Highlights Need for Stronger Laws and Equal Protection” (Jun. 2014), <https://www.thehotline.org/news/hotline-focus-survey-provides-firsthand-look-at-intersection-of-firearms-highlights-need-for-stronger-laws-and-equal-protection/>.

51 Nick Bruel & Mike Keith, “Deadly Calls and Fatal Encounters: Analysis of U.S. Law Enforcement Line of Duty Deaths When Officers Responded to Dispatched Calls for Service and Conducted Enforcement, 2010-2014,” at 15 (2016).

52 Id.

53 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data; CA DOJ, 2022 “Crime in California” Report, Table 48, data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Crime%20In%20CA%202022f.pdf.

54 Id.

55 Id.

56 Id.

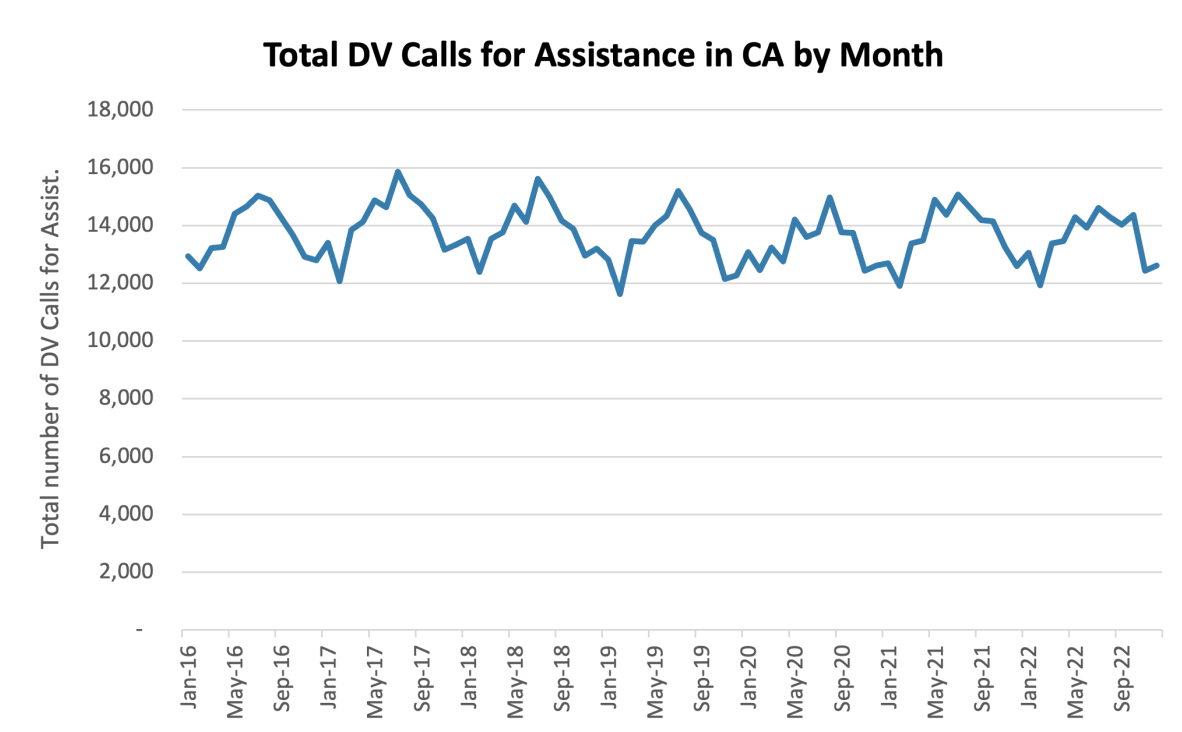
57 OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online data portal. From 2019 to 2021, the age-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate in California increased from 0.89 per 100,000 residents to 1.06, and increased in the rest of the U.S. (the other 49 states and D.C. combined) from 1.51 per 100,000 residents to 2.26. (The non-adjusted female-victim gun homicide rate increased by 16% in California, from 0.89 to 1.03 per 100,000 residents and by 49% in the rest of the U.S., from 1.44 per 100,000 residents to 2.14).

shootings nationwide.⁵⁸ The national ghost gun crisis⁵⁹ likely exacerbated these risks, providing people who could not pass a firearm background check with new ways of illegally acquiring weapons assembled from gun build kits sold without background checks or other safety precautions.⁶⁰

In 2022, the spike in reported firearm-related domestic violence calls in California receded somewhat from 2021 levels, as the state saw a 15% reduction in the total number of firearm-related domestic violence calls reported statewide.⁶¹ But the number of reported calls involving firearms in 2022 was still more than 50% higher than the number reported in 2019. Aside from 2021, 2022 saw the highest total number and percentage of domestic violence calls for assistance involving firearms reported in decades.⁶²

The graphs and tables below show these trends in more detail.

Figure 3. Total Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance by Month in California (2016-2022).⁶³



58 See Jennifer Mascia, “Dangerous Homes: Guns and Domestic Violence Exact a Deadly Toll on Kids,” The Trace (Mar. 23, 2023), <https://www.thetrace.org/2023/03/guns-domestic-violence-child-deaths/>.

59 Ghost guns” are firearms manufactured or assembled by unlicensed individuals without a traceable serial number and are often assembled from gun build kits sold without background checks, sale records, or other safety precautions.

60 For example, a February 2022 mass shooting at a Sacramento church was perpetrated by a man prohibited from accessing firearms under an active Domestic Violence Restraining Order; law enforcement officials reported that he used an unserialized ghost gun rifle to shoot and kill his three daughters and a chaperone supervising his visit with the children. See Abené Clayton, “A father used a ghost gun to kill his three daughters. It’s a sign of a growing crisis,” The Guardian (Mar. 8, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/08/a-father-used-a-ghost-gun-to-kill-his-three-daughters-its-a-sign-of-a-growing-crisis>. For more discussion and statistics related to the proliferation of unserialized ghost guns in California, see the “Ghost Guns in California” section in the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention Data Report: The Impact of Gun Violence in California (Aug. 2023), <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-Data-Report-2022.pdf>.

61 Id.

62 Id.

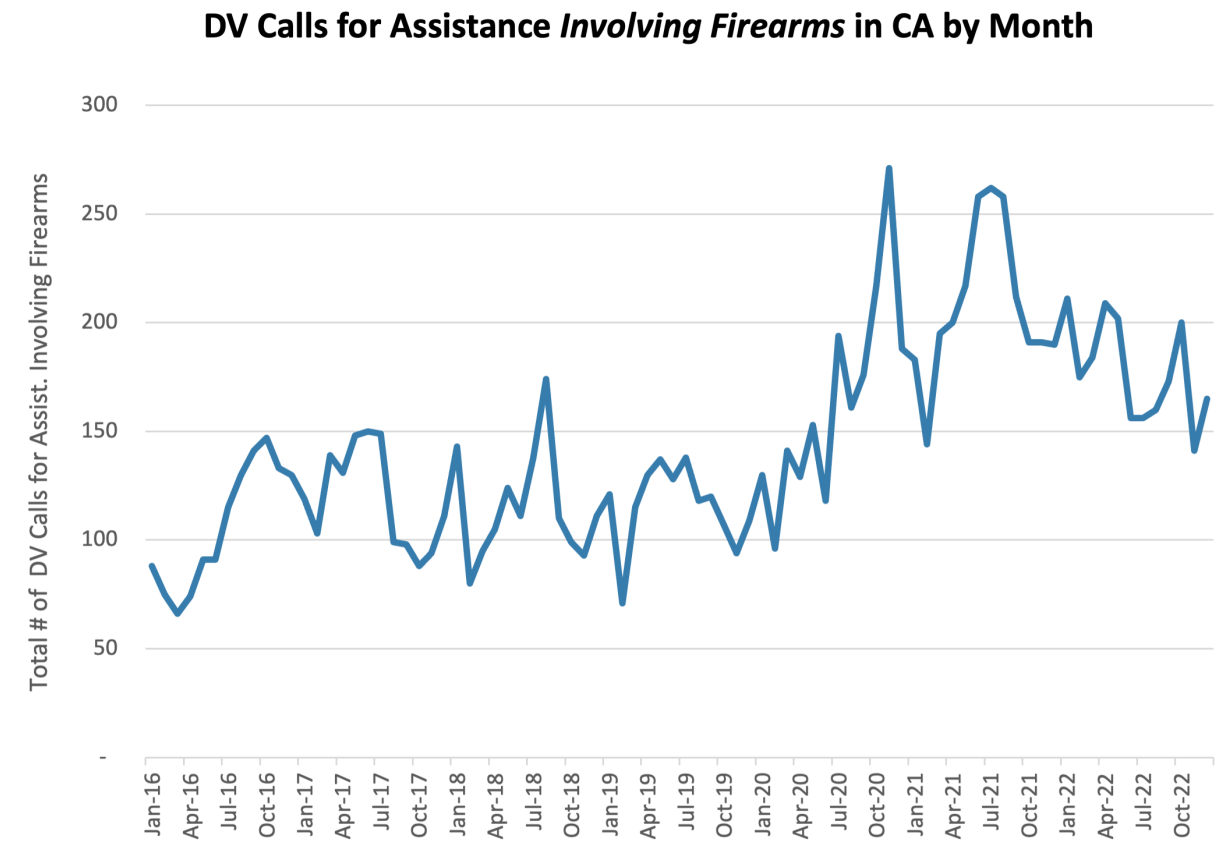
63 OGVP analysis of datasets compiling records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

As **Figure 3** shows, there have been relatively predictable patterns in recent years in the overall number of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance reported in California. Between 2016 and 2022, law enforcement agencies across the state reported receiving higher numbers of domestic violence calls during summer months and relatively similar total numbers year over year. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 appears to have coincided with some declines in domestic violence calls for assistance overall but the total number of such calls reported in 2020 and subsequent pandemic years was similar to the number reported in 2016-2019.

Figure 4. Total Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance by Year in California (2016-2022).⁶⁴

2016:	164,569
2017:	169,362
2018:	166,890
2019:	161,123
2020:	160,646
2021:	164,608
2022:	162,422

Figure 5. Total Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance Involving Firearms by Month in California (2016-2022).⁶⁵



64 Id.; CA DOJ, 2022 “Crime in California” Report, Table 48, data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Crime%20In%20CA%202022f.pdf.

65 OGVP analysis of datasets compiling records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

As **Figure 5** shows, starting around the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in the number of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance in California involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms. The number of reported firearm-related domestic violence calls in California continued to increase almost every month between February and November 2020, a period during which California and the rest of the nation experienced large increases in overall gun homicides and gun sales.⁶⁶ After some substantial declines in early 2021, the number of firearm-related domestic violence calls spiked again and peaked in the summer months of 2021. Law enforcement agencies across California reported 96 firearm-related domestic violence calls for assistance in February 2020 but 271 in November 2020 and 258 in August 2021.

The number of firearm-related domestic violence calls generally trended downward in late 2021 and throughout 2022 but law enforcement agencies continued to receive a much higher number of such calls compared to early 2020 and previous years before the pandemic.

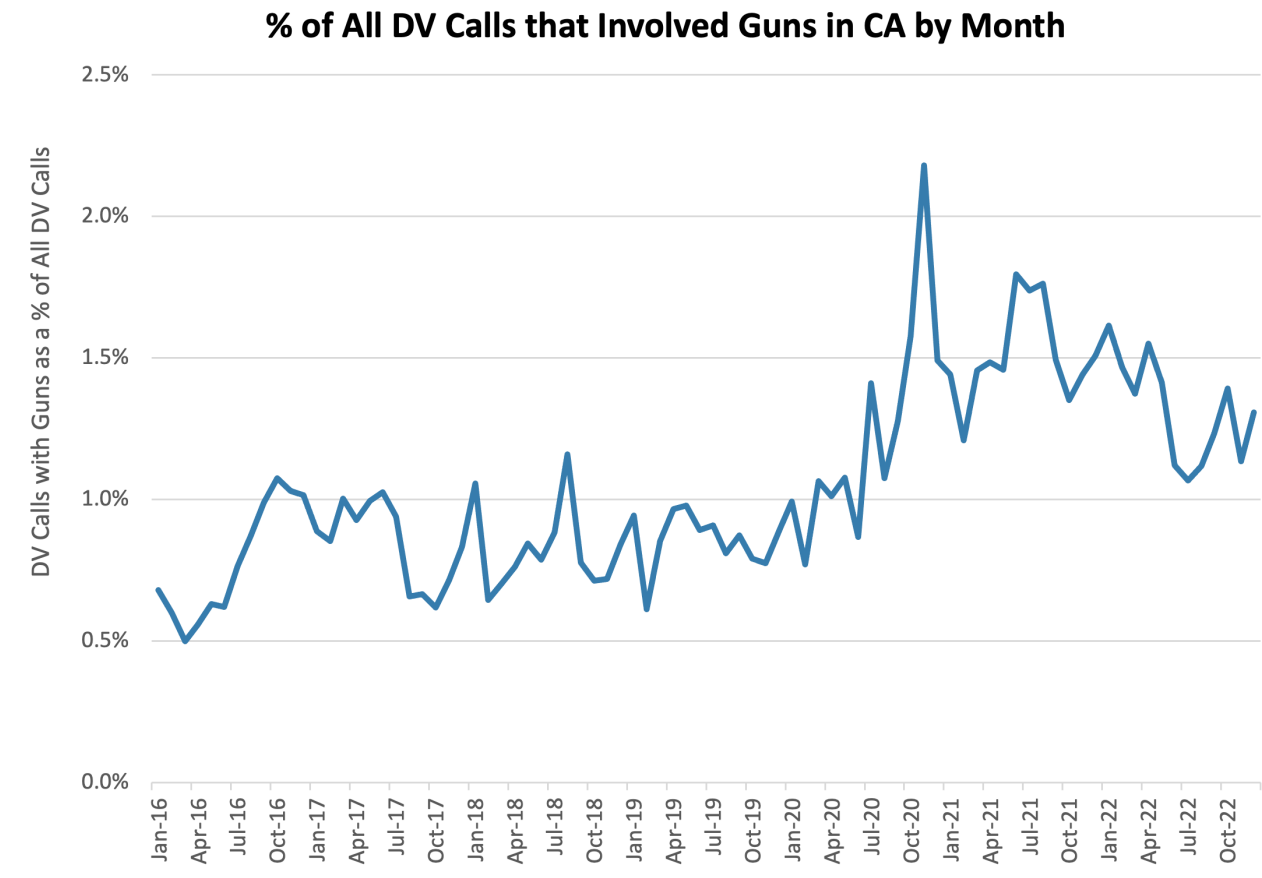
Figure 6. Total Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance Involving Firearms by Year in California (2016-2022).⁶⁷

2016:	1,281
2017:	1,429
2018:	1,383
2019:	1,388
2020:	1,974
2021:	2,501
2022:	2,132

66 See California Department of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “Office of Gun Violence Prevention Data Report: The Impact of Gun Violence in California,” 19-20 (Aug. 2023), <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/OGVP-Data-Report-2022.pdf>.

67 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data; CA DOJ, 2022 “Crime in California” Report, Table 48, data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Crime%20In%20CA%202022f.pdf.

Figure 7. Percentage of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance that Involve Firearms by Month in California.⁶⁸



Beginning around the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms significantly increased from 0.8% of all domestic violence calls for assistance in February 2020 to a peak of 2.2% in November 2020. Despite trending downward in late 2021 and throughout much of 2022, calls involving firearms continued to make up a substantially higher percentage of all domestic violence calls compared to the years before the pandemic.

Figure 8. Percentage of Domestic Violence Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance that Involve Firearms by Year in California.⁶⁹

2016:	0.78%
2017:	0.84%
2018:	0.83%
2019:	0.86%
2020:	1.23%
2021:	1.52%
2022:	1.31%

68 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

69 OGVP analysis of records reported to DOJ on Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance in California, accessed through openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data.

Figure 9. Number of Cases Filed in California Superior Courts Based on Request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order, by Fiscal Year.⁷⁰

FY 2014-15:	77,981
FY 2015-16:	83,252
FY 2016-17:	83,855
FY 2017-18:	83,982
FY 2018-19:	80,186
FY 2019-20:	71,934
FY 2020-21:	66,286
FY 2021-22:	74,223

As more survivors reported threats of firearm-related domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, data from the court system indicates that fewer survivors sought the protections of a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO). DVROs and other types of court protective orders can provide a range of safety protections under California law, including provisions to disarm respondents found to have perpetrated family or intimate partner violence and suspend their legal access to firearms and ammunition.⁷¹

The Judicial Council of California publishes court statistics and caseload data including information about the number of cases filed in California’s Superior Courts based on a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order.⁷² (This court system data is published based on fiscal years instead of calendar years).

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 Domestic Violence Restraining Order fell by 17% from 80,186 to 66,286, the lowest number filed in any year since California courts were required to report these records starting in FY 2014-2015.⁷³ The number of court filings requesting a Domestic Violence Restraining Order partially rebounded to 74,223 in the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year but did not match the average number of filings recorded in the years before the pandemic.

Figure 9 above shows the number of cases filed per fiscal year in California’s Superior Courts based on requests for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order. **Figure 13** below shows this information for each county.

70 Based on data reported by the Judicial Council of California on the publicly accessible Court Data and Statistics Dashboard, www.courts.ca.gov/dashboard.htm.

71 Under California law, people who need protection from a current or former intimate partner, cohabitant, or close family member may be eligible for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) and people who need protection from other individuals may qualify for other court protection orders that include firearm access provisions, including Civil Harassment Restraining Orders, Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders, Workplace Violence Restraining Orders, and Private Postsecondary School Violence Prevention Restraining Orders. Eligible petitioners, including law enforcement, may also seek Gun Violence Restraining Orders, which can prohibit respondents from accessing firearms and ammunition for temporary periods but do not name specific individuals as protected parties or include other safety provisions, such as orders requiring respondents to stay away from and not contact or harass specific individuals. In criminal cases, courts may also issue Criminal Protective Orders to protect a witness to, or victim of, a crime, including domestic violence offenses. See California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, “Preventing & Reducing Gun Violence Injuries and Fatalities: A California Toolkit for Communities, Survivors, and Service Providers,” <https://endinggv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Toolkit.pdf>.

72 See Judicial Council of California, 2023 Court Statistics Report, 81, 98, www.courts.ca.gov/documents/2023-Court-Statistics-Report.pdf. The Court Statistics Report defines a “Family law (domestic violence)” case to mean: “A family law case type based on a Request for Domestic Violence Restraining Order (form DV 100) seeking protection under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Fam. Code, § 6200).”

73 *Id.* at 98; footnote D (noting that the data field for Family law (domestic violence) case filings was “not required to be reported separately for all courts prior to FY 14-15. Once required, courts had the option of amending historical breakout dating back to FY 11-12.”

COUNTY COMPARISONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVOLVING FIREARMS

As with other forms of gun violence, there are significant differences across communities in California in rates of reported domestic violence involving firearms.

In the five years between 2018 and 2022, law enforcement agencies across California reported receiving 9,378 domestic violence-related calls for assistance involving the reported use or threatened use of firearms statewide, representing 1.15% of the 815,689 total domestic violence-related calls for assistance reported statewide over this period.⁷⁴

OGVP’s county-level analysis found that some counties reported receiving many more domestic violence-related calls for assistance overall and on a per capita basis. (Note that counties with smaller populations and/or smaller numbers of reported incidents may experience especially large fluctuations in per capita rates). The leftmost columns in **Figure 10** below show the number and per capita rate⁷⁵ of all domestic violence-related calls for assistance reported for each county in California from 2018-2022. The 10 counties with the highest per capita rates of domestic violence calls for assistance overall were Del Norte, Kern, Inyo, Fresno, Lake, Ventura, Merced, Alpine, Yuba, and Tehama. Law enforcement agencies in three counties, Del Norte, Kern, and Inyo, reported receiving domestic violence calls at more than double the per capita rate reported statewide.⁷⁶

Some counties also reported receiving significantly more domestic violence-related calls for law enforcement assistance *involving the use or threatened use of firearms*. The rightmost columns in **Figure 10** below show the number and per capita rate⁷⁷ of domestic violence calls involving firearms reported for each county from 2018-2022, as well as the percentage of all domestic violence calls that involved firearms for each county. The 10 counties with the highest per capita rates of domestic violence calls involving firearms were Kern, Del Norte, Fresno, Lake, Calaveras, Trinity, Merced, San Joaquin, Glenn, and Plumas.⁷⁸ Law enforcement agencies in five counties reported receiving domestic violence calls involving firearms at more than double the per capita rate reported statewide (Kern, Del Norte, Fresno, Lake, and Calaveras);⁷⁹ Kern County law enforcement agencies reported receiving domestic violence calls for assistance involving firearms at nearly *nine times* the per capita rate reported across California as a whole (41.9 per 100,000 residents in Kern County compared to 4.8 per 100,000 statewide).⁸⁰

Kern County reported some of the highest per capita rates of domestic violence calls for assistance overall and a uniquely large percentage of those calls involved reported use or threatened use of firearms (4.42% in Kern County compared to 1.15% statewide), by far the highest percentage in the

74 OGVP analysis of Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance data, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. As described in the Data Notes and Limitations section, California’s law requiring law enforcement agencies to report information about domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally defines “domestic violence” to mean incidents involving violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants, but not other family members. See California Penal Code §§ 13700(b), 13730.

75 County population statistics for 2018-2022 used in this report were drawn from county population data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Database.

76 OGVP analysis of Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance data, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

77 County population statistics for 2018-2022 used in this report were drawn from county population data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Database.

78 OGVP analysis of Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance data, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

79 Id.

80 Id.

state.⁸¹ See **Figure 11** for a ranking of all counties in California by the percentage of reported domestic violence-related calls for assistance that involved firearms from 2018-2022.

Figure 10. County-Level Data Regarding Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance in California (2018-2022).⁸²

County	Total DV Calls	DV Calls Per 100,000 Residents	DV Calls Involving Firearms	DV Calls Involving Firearms Per 100,000 Residents	Percentage of All DV Calls That Involved Firearms
Alameda	27,482	332.3	265	3.2	0.96%
Alpine	39	679.7	0	0.0	0.00%
Amador	675	334.7	5	2.5	0.74%
Butte	6,150	571.9	53	4.9	0.86%
Calaveras	1,190	515.2	23	10.0	1.93%
Colusa	531	490.5	0	0.0	0.00%
Contra Costa	15,346	265.7	208	3.6	1.36%
Del Norte	5,465	3951.6	50	36.2	0.91%
El Dorado	4,197	435.8	9	0.9	0.21%
Fresno	40,810	813.2	669	13.3	1.64%
Glenn	625	441.3	9	6.4	1.44%
Humboldt	3,493	515.8	16	2.4	0.46%
Imperial	2,798	311.0	14	1.6	0.50%
Inyo	769	839.7	4	4.4	0.52%
Kern	42,921	949.1	1,896	41.9	4.42%
Kings	3,173	416.2	14	1.8	0.44%
Lake	2,673	809.7	35	10.6	1.31%
Lassen	915	597.7	8	5.2	0.87%
Los Angeles	184,956	373.3	2,908	5.9	1.57%
Madera	3,487	441.4	31	3.9	0.89%
Marin	2,492	192.9	9	0.7	0.36%
Mariposa	547	637.8	1	1.2	0.18%
Mendocino	2,013	456.1	7	1.6	0.35%
Merced	9,645	686.7	103	7.3	1.07%
Modoc	255	585.8	2	4.6	0.78%
Mono	403	578.8	3	4.3	0.74%

81 Id.

82 OGVP analysis of Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance data, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. As described in the Data Notes and Limitations section, California’s law requiring law enforcement agencies to report information about domestic violence-related calls for assistance generally defines “domestic violence” to mean incidents involving violence committed against a current or former intimate partner or certain adult cohabitants. See California Penal Code §§ 13700(b), 13730. County population statistics for 2018-2022 used in this report were drawn from county population data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Database.

County	Total DV Calls	DV Calls Per 100,000 Residents	DV Calls Involving Firearms	DV Calls Involving Firearms Per 100,000 Residents	Percentage of All DV Calls That Involved Firearms
Monterey	8,454	390.0	25	1.2	0.30%
Napa	2,389	349.9	6	0.9	0.25%
Nevada	1,317	261.1	15	3.0	1.14%
Orange	51,098	322.9	190	1.2	0.37%
Placer	3,994	197.2	33	1.6	0.83%
Plumas	560	582.5	6	6.2	1.07%
Riverside	34,464	279.6	212	1.7	0.62%
Sacramento	24,752	316.4	247	3.2	1.00%
San Benito	1,089	337.6	5	1.6	0.46%
San Bernardino	41,896	383.7	676	6.2	1.61%
San Diego	88,497	534.8	523	3.2	0.59%
San Francisco	16,509	388.9	105	2.5	0.64%
San Joaquin	23,752	614.8	276	7.1	1.16%
San Luis Obispo	3,397	241.0	8	0.6	0.24%
San Mateo	10,006	266.1	36	1.0	0.36%
Santa Barbara	8,339	376.2	46	2.1	0.55%
Santa Clara	31,413	330.0	140	1.5	0.45%
Santa Cruz	4,698	350.2	27	2.0	0.57%
Shasta	1,823	202.3	28	3.1	1.54%
Sierra	50	325.7	0	0.0	0.00%
Siskiyou	1,000	458.3	11	5.0	1.10%
Solano	10,690	477.4	100	4.5	0.94%
Sonoma	9,875	403.7	73	3.0	0.74%
Stanislaus	15,715	571.1	57	2.1	0.36%
Sutter	2,199	451.4	15	3.1	0.68%
Tehama	2,157	665.3	17	5.2	0.79%
Trinity	209	302.9	6	8.7	2.87%
Tulare	13,123	557.7	98	4.2	0.75%
Tuolumne	1,497	549.1	8	2.9	0.53%
Ventura	30,821	733.0	24	0.6	0.08%
Yolo	4,169	380.7	11	1.0	0.26%
Yuba	2,687	665.7	12	3.0	0.45%
Statewide Total	815,689	415.3	9,378	4.8	1.15%

Figure 11. Counties in California Ranked by the Percentage of All Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Law Enforcement Assistance that Involved Firearms (2018-2022).⁸³

County	Percentage of All DV Calls for Assistance from 2018-2022 that Involved Firearms
Kern	4.42%
Trinity	2.87%
Calaveras	1.93%
Fresno	1.64%
San Bernardino	1.61%
Los Angeles	1.57%
Shasta	1.54%
Glenn	1.44%
Contra Costa	1.36%
Lake	1.31%
San Joaquin	1.16%
Nevada	1.14%
Siskiyou	1.10%
Plumas	1.07%
Merced	1.07%
Sacramento	1.00%
Alameda	0.96%
Solano	0.94%
Del Norte	0.91%
Madera	0.89%
Lassen	0.87%
Butte	0.86%
Placer	0.83%
Tehama	0.79%
Modoc	0.78%
Tulare	0.75%
Mono	0.74%
Amador	0.74%
Sonoma	0.74%
Sutter	0.68%
San Francisco	0.64%

83 OGVP analysis of Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance data, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

Riverside	0.62%
San Diego	0.59%
Santa Cruz	0.57%
Santa Barbara	0.55%
Tuolumne	0.53%
Inyo	0.52%
Imperial	0.50%
San Benito	0.46%
Humboldt	0.46%
Yuba	0.45%
Santa Clara	0.45%
Kings	0.44%
Orange	0.37%
Stanislaus	0.36%
Marin	0.36%
San Mateo	0.36%
Mendocino	0.35%
Monterey	0.30%
Yolo	0.26%
Napa	0.25%
San Luis Obispo	0.24%
El Dorado	0.21%
Mariposa	0.18%
Ventura	0.08%
Alpine	0.00%
Colusa	0.00%
Sierra	0.00%
Statewide Total	1.15%

Figure 12. County-Level Data on Domestic Violence-Related Gun Homicides in California (2018-2022).⁸⁴

Figure 12 below provides for each county the number and per capita rate of domestic violence-related gun homicides reported by law enforcement agencies from 2018-2022. (For the purposes of this report, OGVP classified a homicide as domestic violence-related if the reporting law enforcement agency recorded that (1) the homicide was perpetrated with a firearm, and (2) that one or more of the suspected offenders was identified as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim).

Per capita rates should be interpreted with caution particularly for counties with smaller populations and smaller numbers of domestic violence gun homicides reported. See the Data Notes and Limitations section for additional information about the underlying dataset’s characteristics and limitations.

County	Total DV Gun Homicides Reported (2018-22)	DV Gun Homicides Per 100,000 Residents (2018-22)
Alameda	21	0.25
Alpine	0	-
Amador	5	2.48
Butte	4	0.37
Calaveras	0	-
Colusa	0	-
Contra Costa	14	0.24
Del Norte	2	1.45
El Dorado	4	0.42
Fresno	32	0.64
Glenn	0	-
Humboldt	2	0.30
Imperial	3	0.33
Inyo	2	2.18
Kern	34	0.75
Kings	6	0.79
Lake	7	2.12
Lassen	0	-
Los Angeles	153	0.31
Madera	5	0.63
Marin	1	0.08
Mariposa	1	1.16
Mendocino	6	1.35

⁸⁴ This data presents OGVP’s analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. County population statistics for 2018-2022 used in this report were drawn from county population data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Database.

County	Total DV Gun Homicides Reported (2018-22)	DV Gun Homicides Per 100,000 Residents (2018-22)
Merced	2	0.14
Modoc	0	-
Mono	1	1.43
Monterey	7	0.32
Napa	0	-
Nevada	0	-
Orange	14	0.09
Placer	4	0.20
Plumas	0	-
Riverside	60	0.49
Sacramento	40	0.51
San Benito	1	0.31
San Bernardino	58	0.53
San Diego	44	0.27
San Francisco	10	0.23
San Joaquin	21	0.54
San Luis Obispo	2	0.14
San Mateo	9	0.24
Santa Barbara	7	0.31
Santa Clara	17	0.18
Santa Cruz	2	0.15
Shasta	4	0.44
Sierra	0	-
Siskiyou	1	0.46
Solano	8	0.36
Sonoma	8	0.33
Stanislaus	14	0.51
Sutter	0	-
Tehama	3	0.92
Trinity	2	2.89
Tulare	14	0.59
Tuolumne	1	0.36
Ventura	10	0.24
Yolo	4	0.37
Yuba	4	0.99
Statewide Total	674	0.34

Among California counties with over 100,000 residents on average from 2018-2022, two counties (Kings and Kern) reported more than double California’s statewide rate of domestic violence gun homicides per capita.⁸⁵ Five more counties with over 100,000 residents reported per capita rates of domestic violence gun homicides that were at least 50% higher than the statewide average (Fresno, Madera, Tulare, San Joaquin, and San Bernardino).⁸⁶

CDC data also shows that many of the same counties suffered some of the highest per capita rates of female-victim gun homicides in California. From 2018-2022, according to CDC records, the female-victim gun homicide rate was more than double California’s statewide average in Kern and Fresno County; 78% above the statewide average in San Joaquin County, and 45% above the statewide average in San Bernardino County.⁸⁷ (The CDC does not publish this data for any county that experienced fewer than 10 female-victim gun homicides over this period).

Figure 13. County-Level Data on Cases Filed in California Superior Courts Based on Request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order.⁸⁸

As Figure 13 shows, courts in most California counties reported declines during the COVID-19 pandemic in the number of cases filed based on a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO). On a per capita basis, there were also substantially more DVRO case filings in some counties than others over the period from Fiscal Year 2018-2022.

County	DVRO Filings FY 2014-2015	DVRO Filings FY 2015-2016	DVRO Filings FY 2016-2017	DVRO Filings FY 2017-2018	DVRO Filings FY 2018-2019	DVRO Filings FY 2019-2020	DVRO Filings FY 2020-2021	DVRO Filings FY 2021-2022	DVRO Filings Per 100,000 Residents (FY 2018-22)
Alameda	2,715	2,987	2,787	2,695	2,670	2,286	1,931	2,295	143.6
Alpine	-		1	3	3	1	-	3	174.3
Amador	93	92	102	120	90	101	92	135	266.8
Butte	628	664	720	760	718	531	482	606	288.0
Calaveras	108	69	94	128	130	88	102	103	238.6
Colusa	16	9	21	23	31	18	23	46	130.3
Contra Costa	2,494	2,691	2,634	2,539	2,430	2,001	1,878	2,248	192.1
Del Norte	99	106	94	94	109	87	89	68	323.2
El Dorado	419	388	386	426	397	409	320	330	195.4
Fresno	1,965	2,748	2,689	2,379	2,062	1,862	1,286	1,435	179.8
Glenn	59	13	75	136	79	84	66	69	306.4
Humboldt	452	433	410	430	446	405	413	430	313.7

85 This data presents OGVP’s analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. County population statistics for 2018-2022 used in this report were drawn from county population data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Database. Counties were considered to have over 100,000 residents if CDC indicated that they had over 100,000 residents on average in the years from 2018-2022.

86 Id. Ten other counties with under 100,000 residents on average from 2018-2022 reported per capita rates of domestic violence-related gun homicides that were more than double the rate reported statewide.

87 OGVP analysis of county-level firearm homicide data from the CDC WONDER online data portal.

88 Based on OGVP analysis of data reported by the Judicial Council of California on the publicly accessible Court Data and Statistics Dashboard, www.courts.ca.gov/dashboard.htm. Population statistics used in this report were drawn from data reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, accessed through the CDC WONDER Online Databases at wonder.cdc.gov.

County	DVRO Filings FY 2014-2015	DVRO Filings FY 2015-2016	DVRO Filings FY 2016-2017	DVRO Filings FY 2017-2018	DVRO Filings FY 2018-2019	DVRO Filings FY 2019-2020	DVRO Filings FY 2010-2021	DVRO Filings FY 2021-2022	DVRO Filings Per 100,000 Residents (FY 2018-22)
Imperial	270	283	240	247	208	198	206	233	121.4
Inyo	74	66	84	58	51	33	27	20	206.4
Kern	2,635	2,862	3,048	2,877	2,695	2,316	2,128	2,340	273.2
Kings	181	282	287	314	351	338	355	398	230.4
Lake	230	255	267	287	257	251	265	250	396.8
Lassen	79	56	66	69	62	64	53	77	212.3
Los Angeles	21,492	22,191	21,765	21,737	19,724	17,389	14,341	18,630	185.3
Madera	306	296	294	281	248	211	202	250	150.9
Marin	287	263	215	194	268	249	207	263	91.4
Mariposa	38	41	57	55	45	46	44	53	283.3
Mendocino	192	284	290	278	233	255	183	250	271.7
Merced	587	649	821	834	809	768	678	724	271.5
Modoc	44	42	43	37	32	29	32	48	408.9
Mono	9	11	20	11	16	17	22	18	120.6
Monterey	488	570	716	634	594	552	611	680	141.7
Napa	286	273	243	283	246	239	253	282	190.8
Nevada	177	230	234	214	195	166	194	202	192.5
Orange	4,614	5,053	4,700	4,553	4,667	4,196	3,599	4,412	135.4
Placer	765	814	719	846	761	777	704	672	185.7
Plumas	36	47	63	78	53	72	71	72	359.9
Riverside	6,640	6,950	6,703	6,735	6,544	5,669	5,096	5,358	238.6
Sacramento	3,899	3,872	3,995	3,936	3,675	3,526	3,660	3,531	234.3
San Benito	55	45	57	67	89	100	109	107	146.3
San Bernardino	5,083	5,794	6,209	6,449	5,933	5,134	5,274	5,292	257.2
San Diego	5,854	7,456	7,265	7,386	7,477	7,214	8,424	8,071	233.1
San Francisco	1,140	1,164	1,121	1,181	1,089	825	763	802	109.8
San Joaquin	1,682	1,612	2,011	2,004	1,989	1,821	1,773	1,979	247.6
San Luis Obispo	374	383	375	346	380	342	277	315	117.8
San Mateo	684	903	796	854	881	740	621	561	97.3
Santa Barbara	420	408	470	584	589	492	266	405	105.4
Santa Clara	2,140	1,542	1,923	1,904	2,008	1,957	1,951	2,012	103.3
Santa Cruz	435	367	363	324	344	285	307	314	117.3
Shasta	484	495	519	445	596	584	500	624	305.0
Sierra	12	2	6	3	6	7	8	7	201.9
Siskiyou	209	167	187	187	173	190	174	180	414.3
Solano	1,334	1,468	1,351	1,352	1,292	1,200	1,006	923	257.8

County	DVRO Filings FY 2014-2015	DVRO Filings FY 2015-2016	DVRO Filings FY 2016-2017	DVRO Filings FY 2017-2018	DVRO Filings FY 2018-2019	DVRO Filings FY 2019-2020	DVRO Filings FY 2010-2021	DVRO Filings FY 2021-2022	DVRO Filings Per 100,000 Residents (FY 2018-22)
Sonoma	483	412	474	562	565	541	513	542	111.3
Stanislaus	1,701	1,932	2,002	1,917	1,617	1,430	1,205	1,414	275.6
Sutter	356	311	475	718	639	647	507	471	612.1
Tehama	150	192	189	187	278	211	261	274	373.5
Trinity	47	63	74	59	47	43	47	53	360.9
Tulare	997	1,110	1,130	1,191	1,279	1,092	1,098	1,359	255.8
Tuolumne	209	191	200	191	216	165	182	151	331.9
Ventura	1,163	952	1,008	1,016	1,017	897	654	1,062	110.5
Yolo	294	362	451	442	435	478	448	481	208.6
Yuba	298	331	316	322	348	305	305	293	389.7
Statewide	77,981	83,252	83,855	83,982	80,186	71,934	66,286	74,223	191.7

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DRIVES A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF VIOLENCE PERPETRATED AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PARTICULAR

At the national level, FBI data showed that in 2021, at least 50% of female homicide victims in the U.S., compared to 16% of male victims, were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.⁸⁹ (At least 34% of female homicide victims were killed by a current or former intimate partner and at least 16% by a family member).⁹⁰ These are likely undercounts since information about the victim-offender relationship was unlisted or reported as unknown for an additional 20% of female victim homicides.⁹¹ As discussed in the Data Notes and Limitations section, this count also does not include other victims killed in homicides connected to domestic violence; researchers estimated that 20% of people killed in homicides related to intimate partner violence were “corollary victims” including family members, new intimate partners, friends, acquaintances, police officers, and strangers.⁹²

In California in 2021, homicide records reported to DOJ indicated that at least 43% of female homicide victims, and 7% of male victims, were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.⁹³ Similar to the national data, this is likely an undercount; the victim-offender relationship was unlisted or reported as unknown for an additional 31% of female homicide victims and 52% of male homicide victims that year.⁹⁴ (The percentage of homicides where law enforcement agencies reported the victim-offender relationship as unlisted or unknown jumped during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for female-victim homicides. The victim-offender relationship was reported as unknown for 20% of female-victim homicides in California from 2013-2019 but 30% from 2020-2022).⁹⁵

Over a longer time period, in the decade from 2013-2022, at least 15% of all homicide victims in California were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.⁹⁶ In cases where the victim-offender relationship was reported (including incidents where the suspected offender was identified as a stranger), 29% of all California homicide victims were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member over this period.⁹⁷

Domestic violence-related homicides represented a much larger percentage of all homicides perpetrated against women and minors. From 2013-2022, at least 51% of female homicide victims in

89 FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (Dec. 2022), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/female-murder-victims-and-victim-offender-relationship-2021>.

90 Id.

91 Id.

92 See, e.g., Sharon G. Smith, PhD, et al, “Intimate Partner Homicide and Corollary Victims in 16 States: National Violent Death Reporting System, 2003–2009,” *Am J Public Health*, 104(3): 461–466 (Mar. 2014), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3953789/>.

93 OGVP analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. This analysis found that in 2021, there were 391 female-victim homicides and 1,968 male-victim homicides reported to DOJ, including 167 (43%) female-victim homicides and 130 (7%) male-victim homicides in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim. (Two other homicides were reported without information about either the victim’s sex or victim-offender relationship).

94 Id. The suspected victim-offender relationship was reported as unknown or unlisted for 121 (31%) female-victim homicides and 1,033 (52%) male-victim homicides.

95 OGVP analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

96 Id. From 2013-2022, there were 19,247 homicides reported to DOJ, including 2,923 (15%) in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.

97 Id. The suspected victim-offender relationship was reported as unknown or unlisted for 9,003 (47%) of the 19,247 total reported homicides. Of the 10,244 homicides with information identifying the victim-offender relationship, 2,923 (29%) identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.

California were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.⁹⁸ The victim-offender relationship was unlisted or reported as “unknown” for an additional 23% of female-victim homicides in California over this period.⁹⁹ In cases where the victim-offender relationship was reported (including incidents where the suspected offender was identified as a stranger), nearly two-thirds (66%) of female homicide victims in California were killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.¹⁰⁰

A majority (51%) of all female homicide victims in California were killed with firearms, including 45% of female homicide victims killed by a current or former intimate partner or family member.¹⁰¹

From 2013-2022, law enforcement agencies’ reports also indicated that at least 58% of homicides involving a victim aged 1-14 were perpetrated by a family member.¹⁰² The victim-offender relationship was unlisted or reported as “unknown” for an additional 15% of homicides involving victims in this age group; in cases where the victim-offender relationship was reported (including incidents where the suspected offender was identified as a stranger), over two-thirds (69%) of homicide victims between the ages of 1-14 in California were killed by a family member.¹⁰³

About one-third (32%) of all homicide victims aged 1-14 in California were killed with firearms over this period, including 20% of victims aged 1-14 who were killed by a family member.¹⁰⁴

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- 98 Id. From 2013-2022, there were 3,452 homicides reported to DOJ identifying the victim’s sex as female, including 1,752 (51%) in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.
- 99 Id. From 2013-2022, there were 3,452 homicides reported to DOJ identifying the victim’s sex as female, including 806 (23%) with the suspected victim-offender relationship reported as unknown or unlisted.
- 100 Id. Of the 2,646 female-victim homicides reported with information identifying the victim-offender relationship, 1,752 (66%) identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.
- 101 Id. Of the 3,452 homicides reported to DOJ identifying the victim’s sex as female, at least 1,771 (51%) were perpetrated with firearms. Of the 1,752 female-victim homicides in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim, 782 (45%) were perpetrated with firearms.
- 102 Id. From 2013-2022, there were 484 homicides reported involving a victim aged 1-14. 283 (58%) of these homicides identified one or more suspected offenders as a family member of the victim.
- 103 Id. Of the 484 homicides reported involving a victim aged 1-14, 71 reported the suspected victim-offender relationship as unknown or unlisted and 283 of the remaining 413 identified one or more suspected offenders as a family member of the victim.
- 104 Id. Of the 484 homicides reported involving a victim aged 1-14, at least 153 (32%) were perpetrated with firearms. Of the 283 homicides involving a victim aged 1-14 in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified one or more suspected offenders as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim, 56 were perpetrated with firearms (20%).

Figure 14. Analysis of Data on Female-Victim Homicides in California, Including Reported Victim-Offender Relationship and Weapon (2013-2022).¹⁰⁵

Year	Total Female-Victim Homicides	Total Female-Victim Gun Homicides	Total Female-Victim DV Homicides	Total Female-Victim DV Gun Homicides	% of Female-Victim Homicides That Were DV	Total Female-Victim Homicides w/ Offender Relationship Unknown	% of Female-Victim Homicides w/ Offender Relationship Unknown	% of Female-Victim Homicides With Known Offender Relationship That Were DV
2013	313	153	170	73	54%	65	21%	69%
2014	309	146	162	63	52%	64	21%	66%
2015	321	159	173	78	54%	61	19%	67%
2016	326	170	167	75	51%	83	25%	69%
2017	362	193	201	98	56%	68	19%	68%
2018	351	177	198	86	56%	65	19%	69%
2019	333	174	175	81	53%	64	19%	65%
2020	385	211	173	77	45%	110	29%	63%
2021	391	196	167	63	43%	121	31%	62%
2022	361	192	166	88	46%	105	29%	65%
5-Year Total (2018-2022)	1,821	950	879	395	48%	465	26%	65%
10-Year Total (2013-2022)	3,452	1,771	1,752	782	51%	806	23%	66%

¹⁰⁵ OGVP analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>. For the purposes of this report, a homicide was classified as domestic violence-related if the law enforcement agency reporting the homicide reported that one or more of the suspected offenders was a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.

ANALYSIS OF VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GUN HOMICIDES IN CALIFORNIA

In the decade from 2013 to 2022, law enforcement agencies in California reported 1,254 gun homicides in which one or more suspected offenders were identified as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.¹⁰⁶ (For the purposes of this section, these homicides are referred to as “domestic violence gun homicides”). In these domestic violence gun homicides, 60% of the victims were adult females, 34% were adult males, and 6.5% were minors under the age of 18. Among these victims, 59% were killed by a current or former intimate partner (30% killed by a current spouse,¹⁰⁷ 2% by a former spouse, and 27% by a current or former dating partner), and 41% were killed by family members.

Within these domestic violence gun homicide cases, there was significant variation in the most common type of victim-offender relationships, depending on the reported age and sex of the victim.

For *adult female* victims, the vast majority (83%) were killed by a current or former intimate partner. Nearly half (45%) were killed by a current spouse, 3% were killed by an ex-spouse, and 35% were killed by another current or former intimate partner; 17% were killed by a family member.

By comparison, adult male victims and minors under 18 were much more likely to be killed by a family member than a current or former intimate partner.

For *adult male* victims of domestic violence gun homicides, 26% were killed by a current or former intimate partner but 74% were killed by a family member; 21% of all adult male victims of domestic violence gun homicides were killed by their child or stepchild and 19% were killed by a sibling.

For *minors* under 18, nearly three-quarters of domestic violence gun homicide victims (73%) were killed by a parent. Additionally, 8.5% were killed by a current or former dating partner, 11% were killed by a sibling, and 7% were killed by another family member.

The tables below provide more detailed analysis regarding the offender-relationship for these domestic violence gun homicides.

106 Data presented in this section represents OGVP’s analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

107 Including a small number of common-law marriages.

Figure 15. Victim-Offender Relationship for All Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013-2022).

DV Gun Homicide Victim Killed By:	Total DV Gun Homicides (2013-2022)	% of All DV Gun Homicides
Spouse	375	29.9%
Child	146	11.6%
Parent	107	8.5%
Sibling	107	8.5%
In-Laws	46	3.7%
Other Family	109	8.7%
Current/Former Dating Partners	336	26.8%
Ex-Spouses	28	2.2%
Total	1,254	

Figure 16. Victim-Offender Relationship for Adult Female-Victim Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013-2022).

Adult Female-Victim DV Gun Homicide Victim Killed By:	Total Adult Female-Victim DV Gun Homicides (2013-2022)	% of All Adult Female-Victim DV Gun Homicides
Spouse	335	44.8%
Child	59	7.9%
Parent	11	1.5%
Sibling	16	2.1%
In-laws	16	2.1%
Other Family	25	3.3%
Current/Former Dating Partners	262	35.1%
Ex-spouses	24	3.2%
Total	748	

Figure 17. Victim-Offender Relationship for Adult Male-Victim Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013-2022).

Adult Male-Victim DV Gun Homicide Victim Killed By:	Total Adult Male-Victim DV Gun Homicides (2013-2022)	% of All Adult Male-Victim DV Gun Homicides
Spouse	40	9.4%
Child	87	20.5%
Parent	36	8.5%
Sibling	82	19.3%
In-laws	29	6.8%
Other family	79	18.6%
Current/Former	67	15.8%
Dating Partners		
Ex-Spouses	4	0.9%
Total	424	

Figure 18. Victim-Offender Relationship for Domestic Violence Gun Homicides for Victims Under 18 in California (2013-2022).

Minor-Victim Under 18 DV Gun Homicide Killed By:	Total DV Gun Homicides Minor-Victim Under 18 (2013-2022)	% of All DV Gun Homicides Minor-Victim Under 18
Spouse	0	0.0%
Child	0	0.0%
Parent	60	73.2%
Sibling	9	11.0%
In-laws	1	1.2%
Other family	5	6.1%
Current/Former Dating Partners	7	8.5%
Ex-Spouses	0	0.0%
Total	82	

ANALYSIS OF VICTIM RACE AND ETHNICITY IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GUN HOMICIDES IN CALIFORNIA

The tables below present OGVP’s analysis of victims’ race and ethnicity for the 1,254 gun homicides reported to DOJ from 2013–2022 in which the reporting law enforcement agency identified a suspected offender as a current or former intimate partner or family member of the victim.¹⁰⁸ (For the purposes of this section, these homicides are referred to as “domestic violence gun homicides”). A plurality (38%) of these domestic violence gun homicide victims were identified as non-Hispanic white, followed closely by Hispanic victims (33%), but Black victims were disproportionately represented among adult female, male, and minor victims of domestic violence gun homicides.¹⁰⁹ Non-Hispanic Black residents represented about 6% of California’s population in 2022¹¹⁰ but 17% of California’s domestic violence gun homicide victims over the past decade.¹¹¹ Indigenous women and children are also disproportionately impacted by domestic violence and by gun homicide in California and nationwide.¹¹²

Figure 19. Recorded Race/Ethnicity of Victim for All Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013–2022).

Victim Race/Ethnicity	Total DV Gun Homicides	% of All DV Gun Homicides
White	473	37.7%
Hispanic	416	33.2%
Black	211	16.8%
Asian	95	7.6%
Native American	12	1.0%
Pacific Islander	8	0.6%
Other	37	3.0%
Unknown	2	0.2%
Total	1,254	

108 Data presented in this section represents OGVP’s analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

109 Id.

110 See United States Census Bureau, “QuickFacts California,” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/RHI225222>.

111 OGVP’s analysis of Homicide records reported to DOJ, accessed through <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.

112 See OGVP analysis of data from CDC WONDER Online Data Portal. See also, Emiko Petrosky, MD, et al, “Homicides of American Indians/Alaska Natives — National Violent Death Reporting System, United States, 2003–2018,” CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries, 70(8), 1–19 (Nov. 19, 2021); Futures Without Violence, “The Facts on Violence Against American Indian/Alaskan Native Women,” <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Violence%20Against%20AI%20AN%20Women%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>; National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, “The Risk Firearms Pose to Indigenous Women” (Jun. 2021), <https://www.niwrc.org/restoration-magazine/june-2021/risk-firearms-post-indigenous-women>;

Figure 20. Recorded Race/Ethnicity of Victim for Adult Female-Victim Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013-2022).

Victim Race/Ethnicity	Total Adult Female-Victim DV Gun Homicides	% of Adult Female-Victim DV Gun Homicides
White	294	39.3%
Hispanic	247	33.0%
Black	95	12.7%
Asian	70	9.4%
Native American	6	0.8%
Pacific Islander	7	0.9%
Other	27	3.6%
Unknown	2	0.3%
Total	748	

Figure 21. Recorded Race/Ethnicity of Victim for Adult Male-Victim Domestic Violence Gun Homicides in California (2013-2022).

Victim Race/Ethnicity	Total Adult Male-Victim DV Gun Homicides	% of Adult Male-Victim DV Gun Homicides
White	156	36.8%
Hispanic	133	31.4%
Black	97	22.9%
Asian	23	5.4%
Native American	5	1.2%
Pacific Islander	1	0.2%
Other	9	2.1%
Unknown	0	0.0%
Total	424	

Figure 22. Recorded Race/Ethnicity of Victim for Domestic Violence Gun Homicides for Victims Under 18 in California (2013-2022).

Victim Race/Ethnicity	Total Minor-Victim Under 18 DV Gun Homicides	% of Minor-Victim Under 18 DV Gun Homicides
White	23	28.0%
Hispanic	36	43.9%
Black	19	23.2%
Asian	2	2.4%
Native American	1	1.2%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.2%
Unknown	0	0.0%
Total	82	

CONCLUSION

Recognizing the dangerous link between domestic violence and gun violence, California has adopted and invested in a range of policies that meaningfully increase safety for survivors and the broader community. Available data indicates that these efforts have made a vital difference for many and set California on a path of long-term progress that has stood apart from national trends. But the data also shows that some of California's communities have suffered vastly higher rates of firearm-related domestic violence than the statewide average. Since the start of the pandemic, survivors across the state have also faced dangerous increases in firearm-related domestic violence while court records show fewer survivors seeking the protections of a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO).

Addressing these challenges requires renewed focus on implementation of California's domestic violence and gun safety policies, including the Domestic Violence Restraining Order. It is essential that DVROs and California's other court protection orders¹¹³ are accessible, effectively implemented, promptly served, and consistently enforced to protect those at highest risk and prevent domestic violence, gun violence, and other harms.

113 Under California law, people who need protection from a current or former intimate partner, cohabitant, or close family member may be eligible for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) and people who need protection from other individuals may qualify for other court protection orders that include firearm access provisions, including Civil Harassment Restraining Orders, Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders, Workplace Violence Restraining Orders, and Private Postsecondary School Violence Prevention Restraining Orders. Eligible petitioners, including law enforcement, may also seek Gun Violence Restraining Orders, which can prohibit respondents from accessing firearms and ammunition for temporary periods but do not name specific individuals as protected parties or include other safety provisions, such as orders requiring respondents to stay away from and not contact or harass specific individuals. In criminal cases, courts may also issue Criminal Protective Orders to protect a witness to, or victim of, a crime, including domestic violence offenses. See California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, "Preventing & Reducing Gun Violence Injuries and Fatalities: A California Toolkit for Communities, Survivors, and Service Providers," <https://endinggv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Toolkit.pdf>.