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FIREARM VIOLENCE IN KING COUNTY:
A LOOK AT THE DATA

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Presentation Outline

Background

Youth firearm violence

Firearm suicide

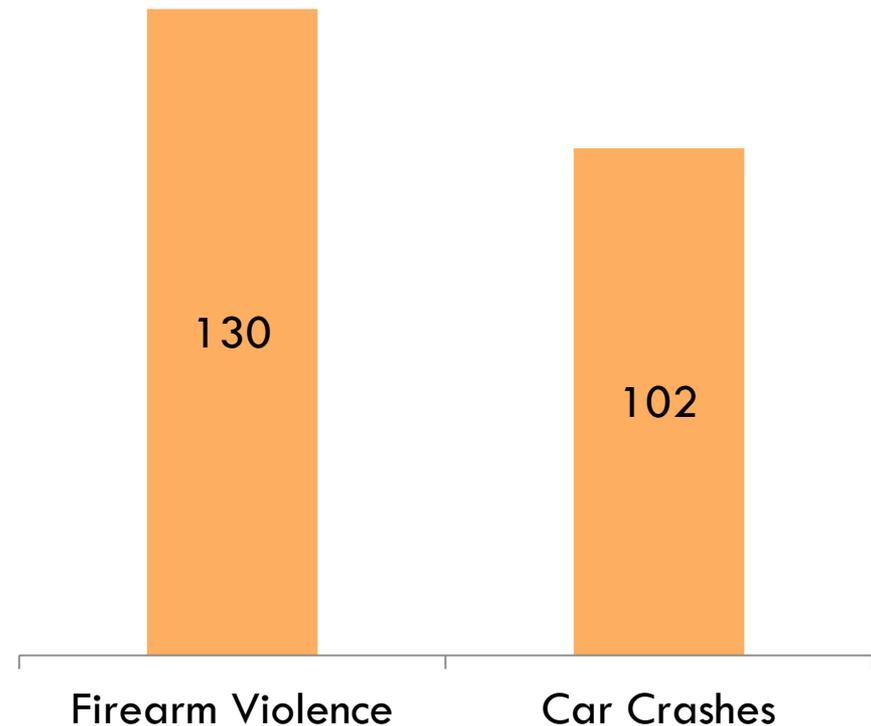
Firearm domestic violence

Data needs

Firearm violence is a public safety and public health issue

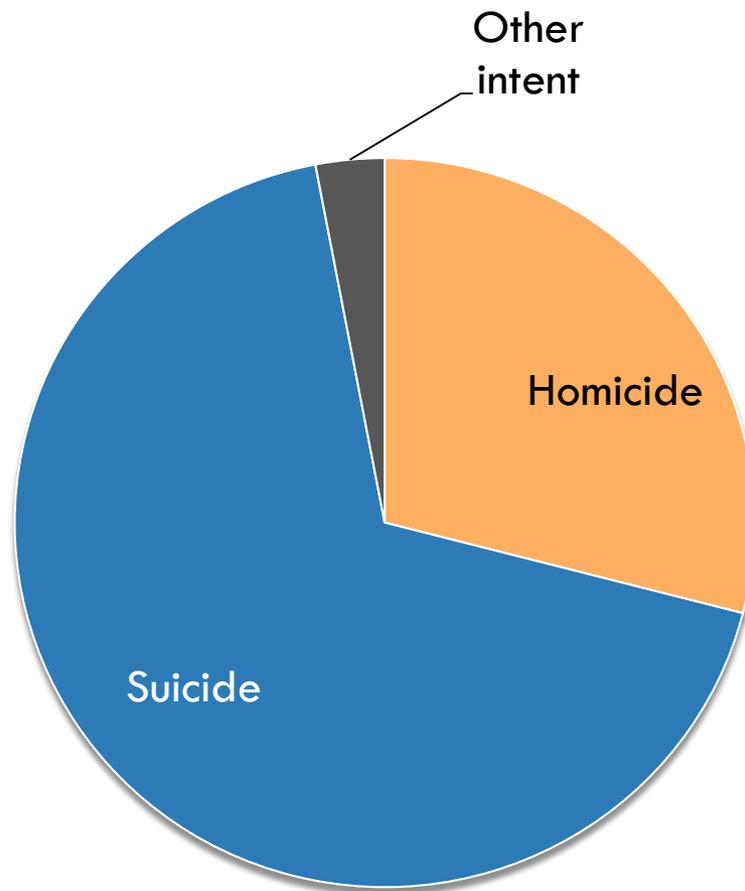
- More people in King County are killed each year by gun violence than car crashes
- On average, 130 people die from gun violence
- \$177 million each year in medical costs & lost productivity in King County

Average annual number of King County deaths from gun violence, 2006-2010



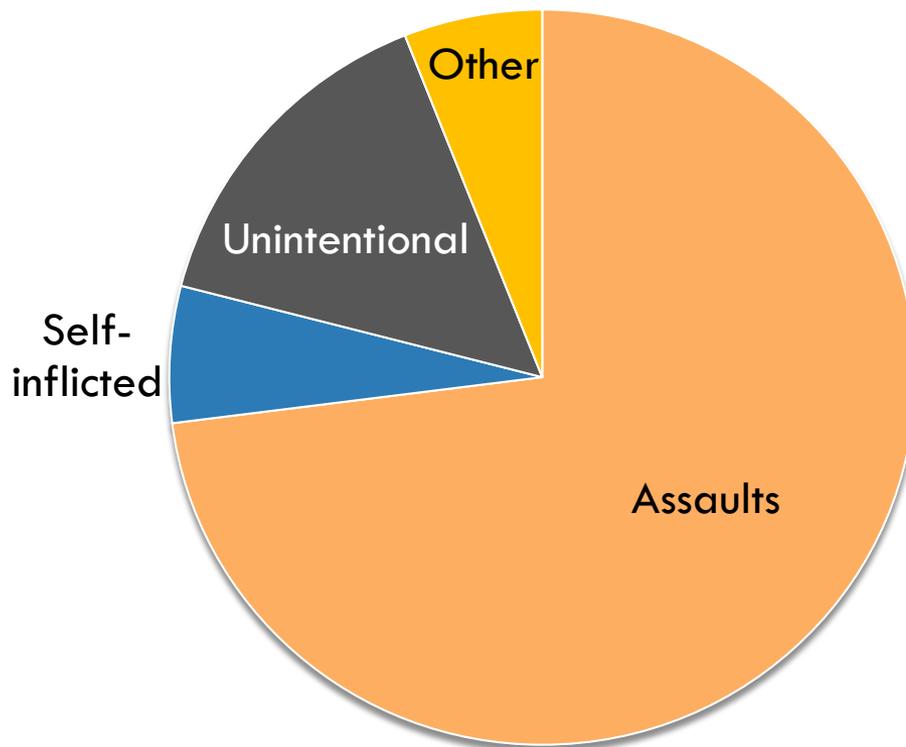
Firearm deaths in King County: Twice as many firearm suicides as homicides

- Homicide: 29%
- Suicide: 68%
- Other Intent: 3%
 - ▣ Unintentional: 0.3%
 - ▣ Legal intervention/undetermined: 2.7%



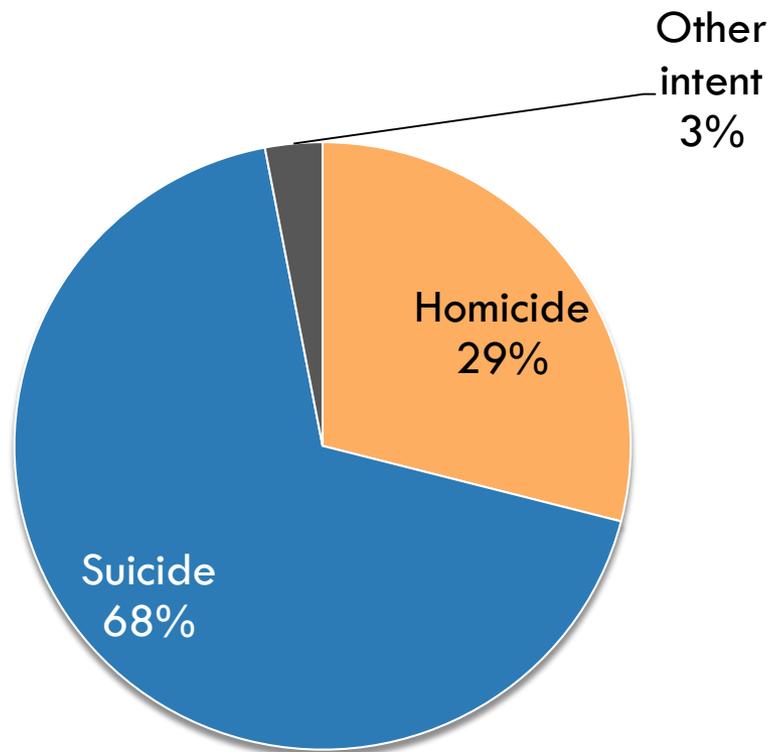
Firearm hospitalizations in King County: About 3 out of 4 due to assaults

- Assaults: 73%
- Self-inflicted: 6%
- Unintentional: 15%
- Other intent: 6%

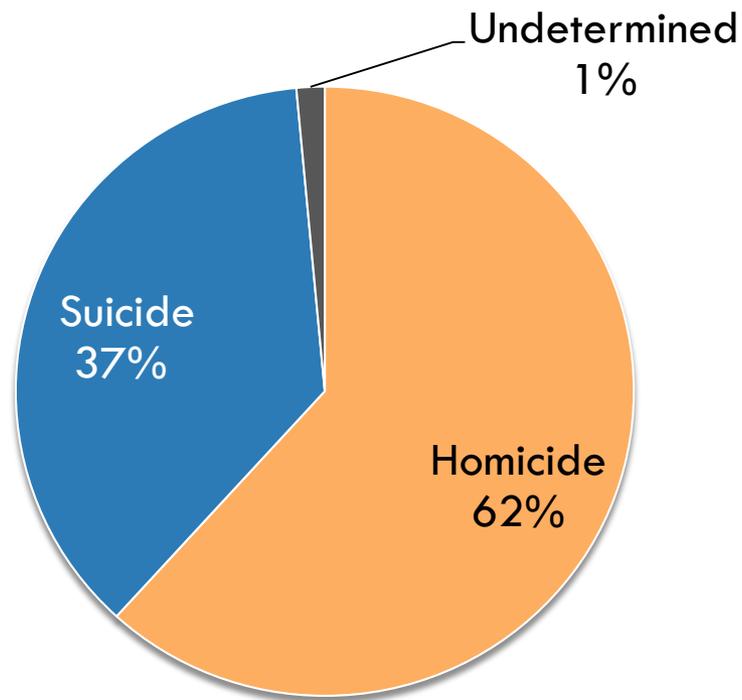


Among children, firearm homicides are more common than suicides

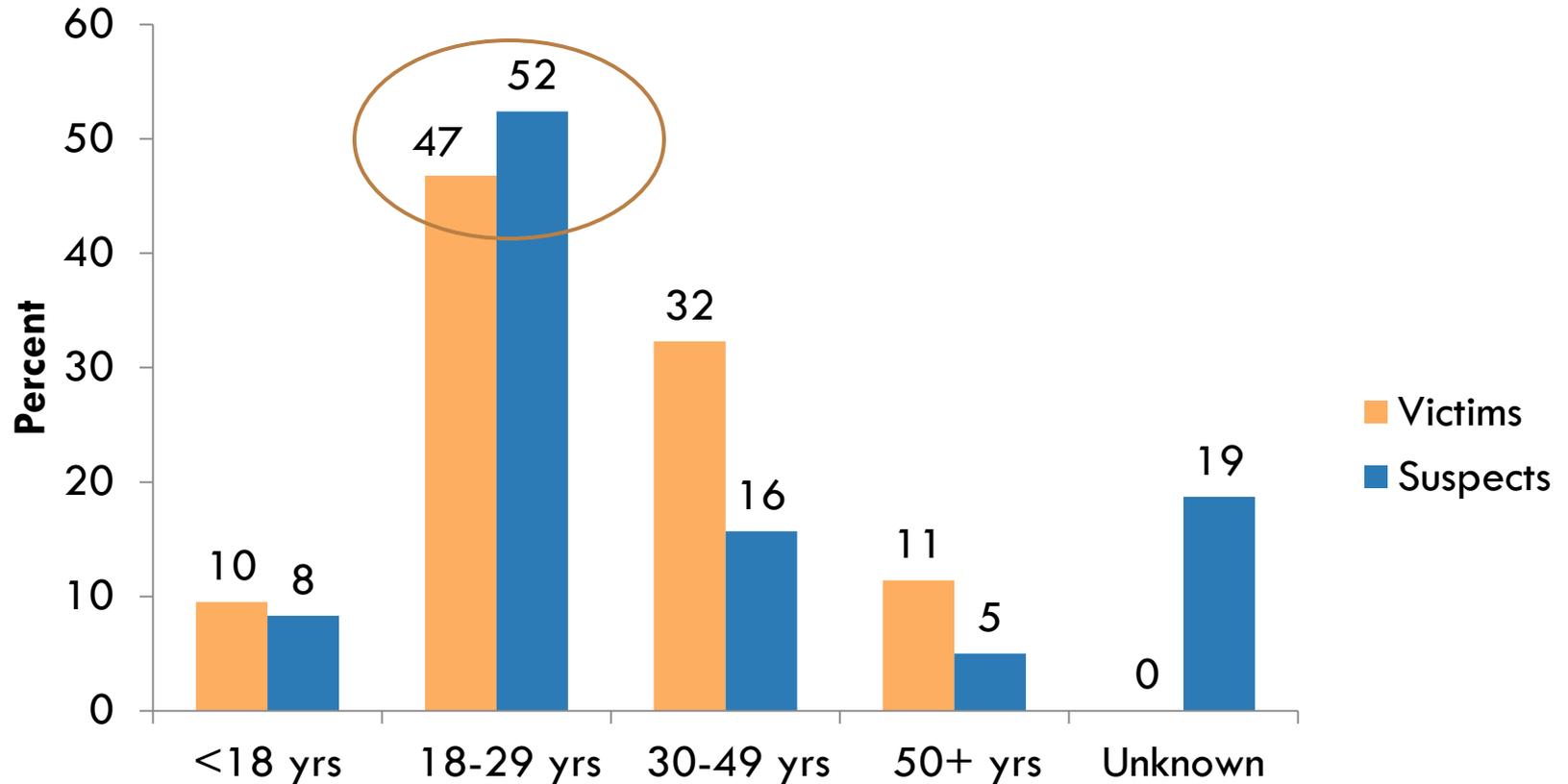
**King County Firearm Deaths –
All Ages, 2006-2010**



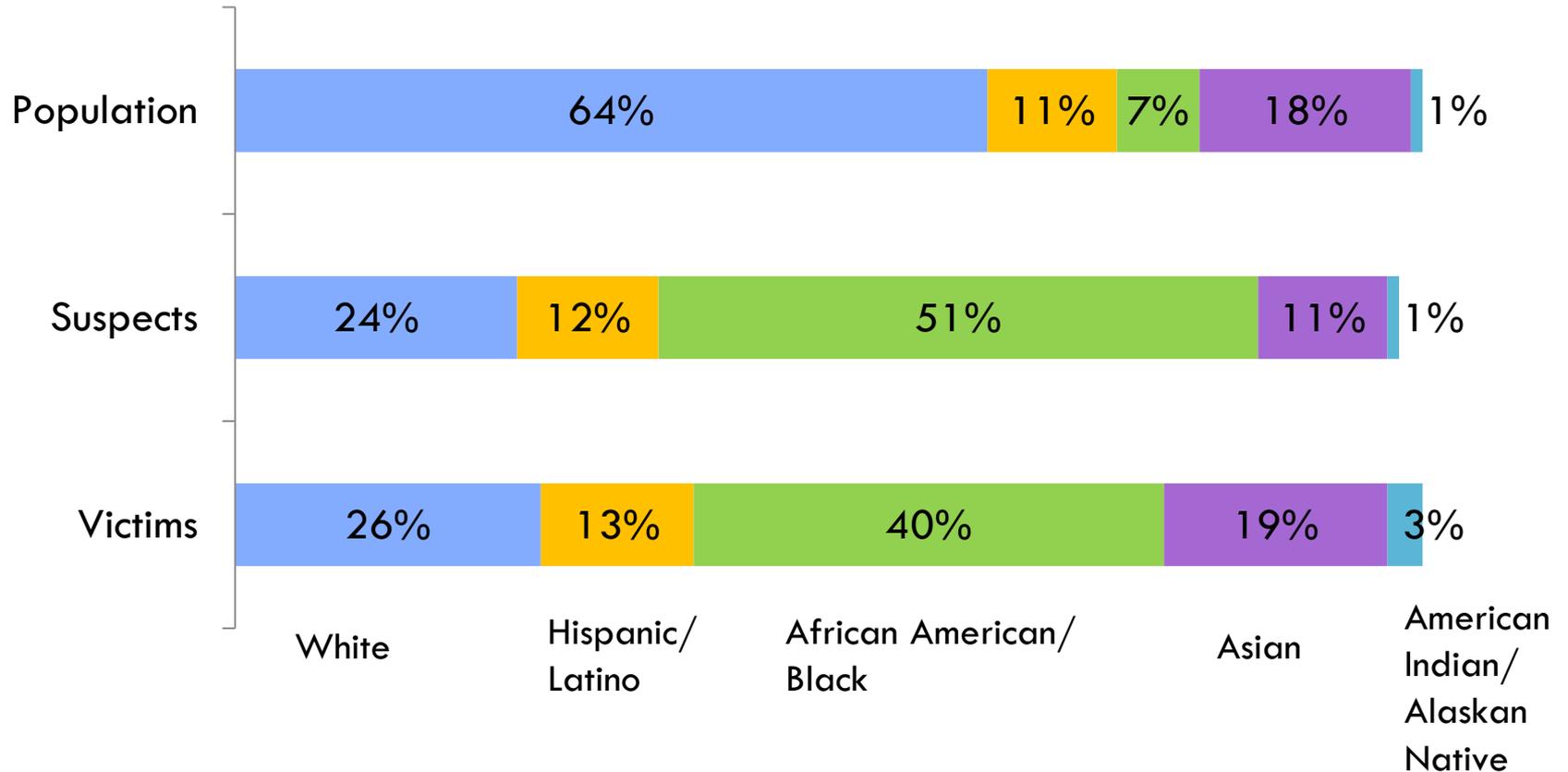
**King County Firearm Deaths –
Children (<18 yrs.), 1999-2012**



Young adults, ages 18-29, comprise about half of both firearm homicide victims and suspects

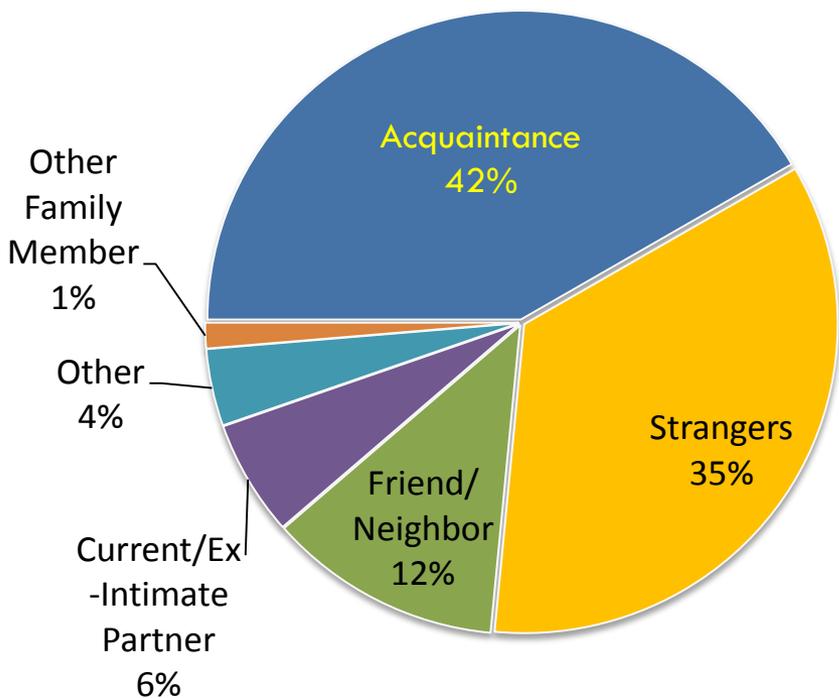


Firearm homicides of 18-29 year olds disproportionately affect African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native young adults

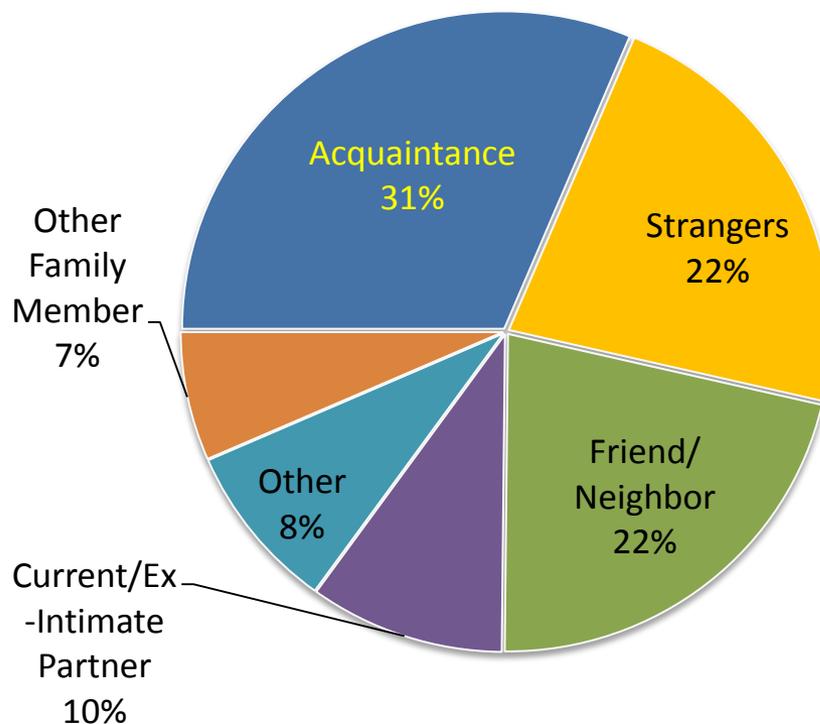


Young victims more often strangers or acquaintances of suspects; closer relationships with suspects for older victims

18-29 Years



30+ Years

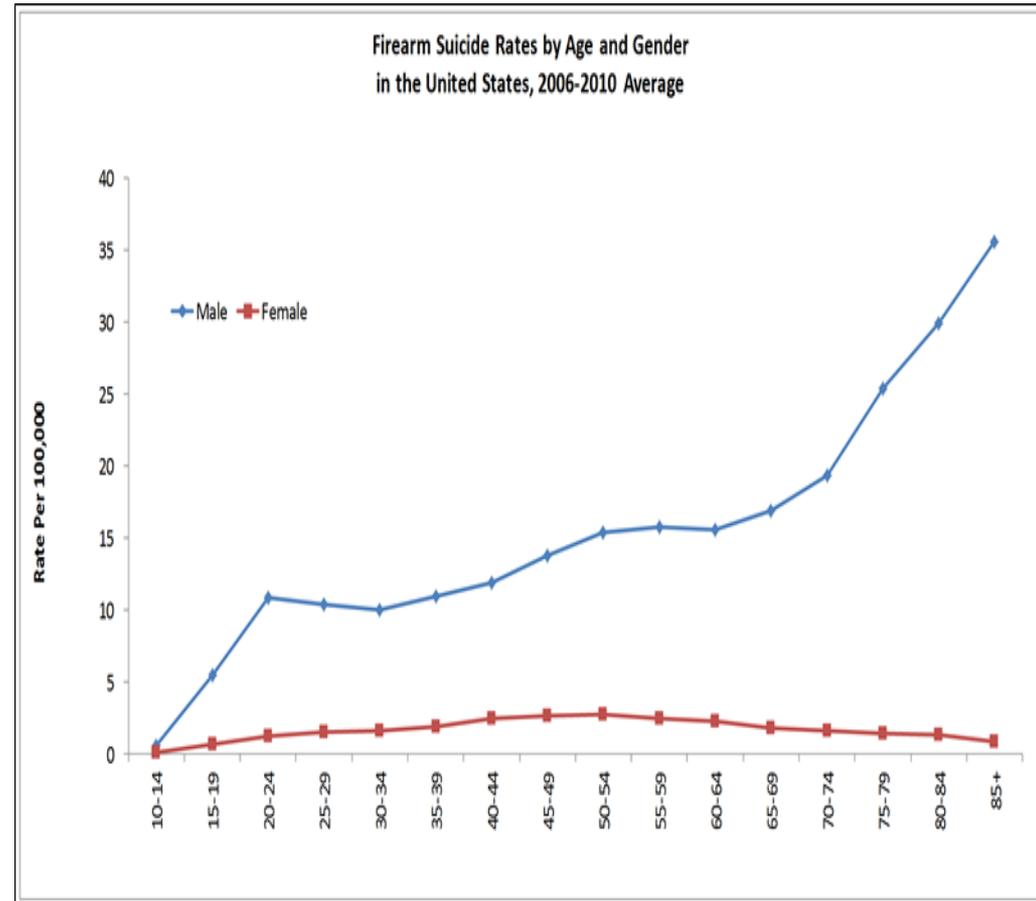


Youth firearm homicides summary

- Among children (<18 yrs), firearm homicides are more common than firearm suicides
- Young males are more likely to die from firearm homicides than young females
- Young victims more often strangers or acquaintances with suspects
- African Americans of all ages face firearm homicide rates seven times higher than whites

Pattern of firearm suicides differs from firearm homicides

- In the U.S. and King County, firearm suicide rates increase with age and are the highest among elderly men
- King County firearm suicide rates for males are eight times higher than for females
- In King County, whites & American Indian/Alaska Natives have the highest firearm suicide rates



Firearm ownership and storage practices

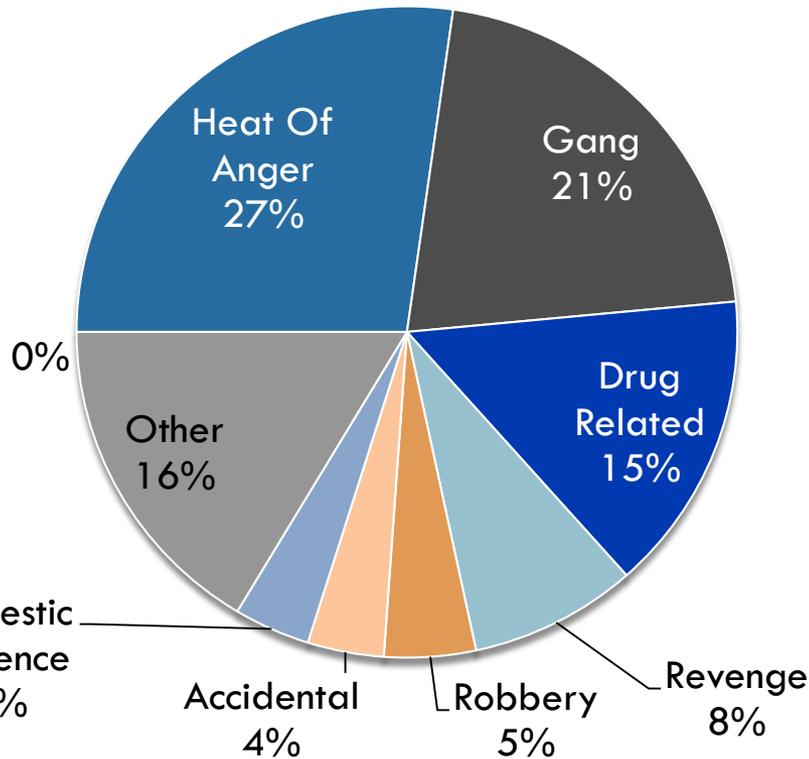
- Nearly one-quarter of King County households have firearms
- Firearms valued at over \$4 million were reported stolen in Washington in 2012
- Statewide 84 incidents involving a firearm in school system during 2011-2012 school year
- **Risk of completed firearm suicide among King County youth <18 years is 9.2 times higher when firearms are stored unlocked**

Storage Practices among Households with Firearms – King County, 2009

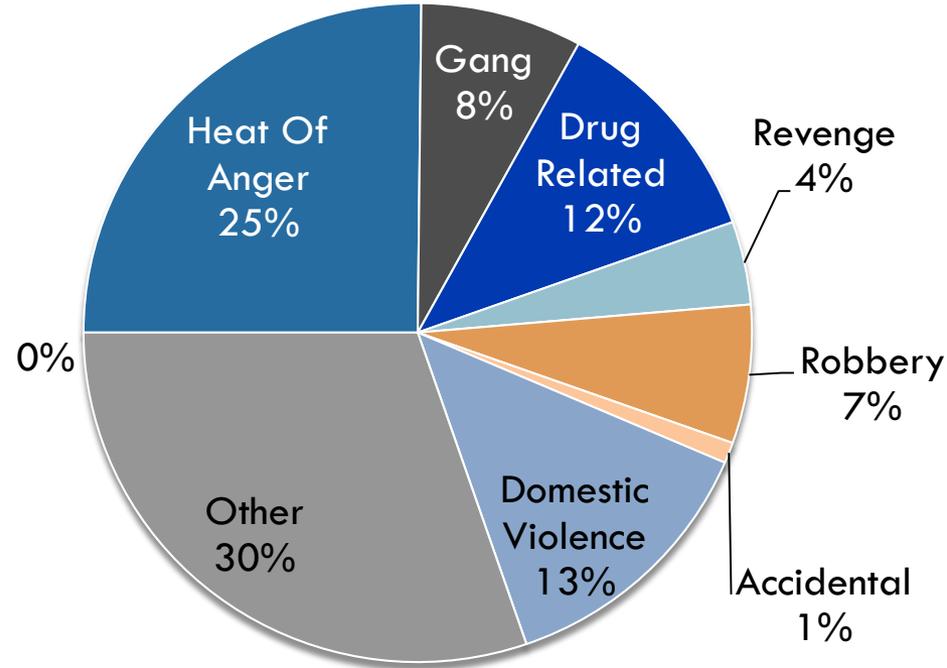


Total motives/crime classifications of firearm homicides by victim age

18-29 Years

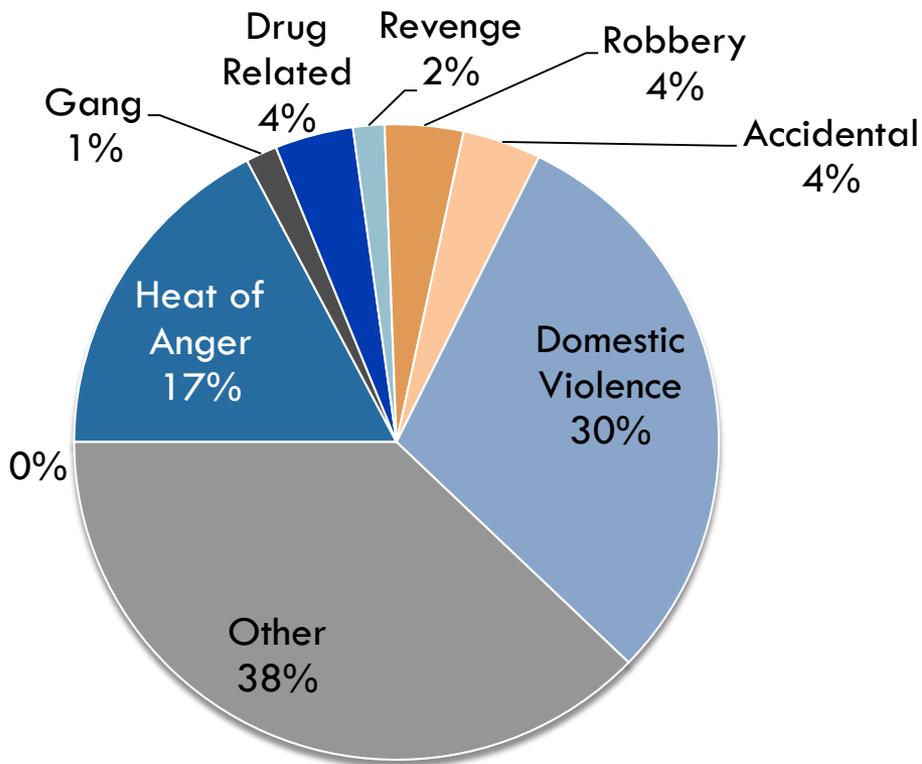


30+ Years

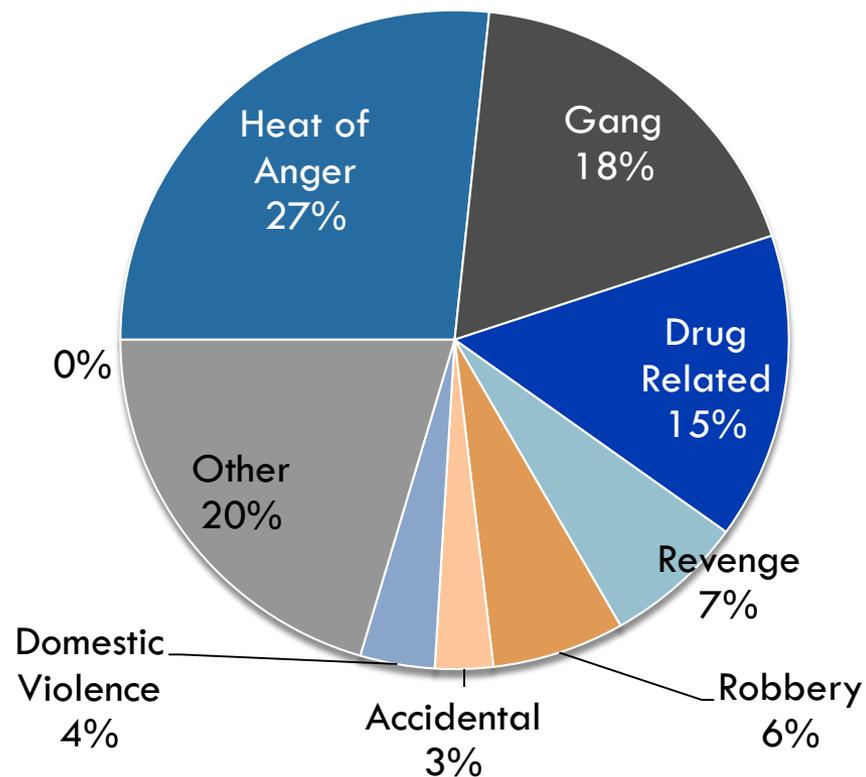


Total motives/crime classifications of firearm homicides by victim gender

Females

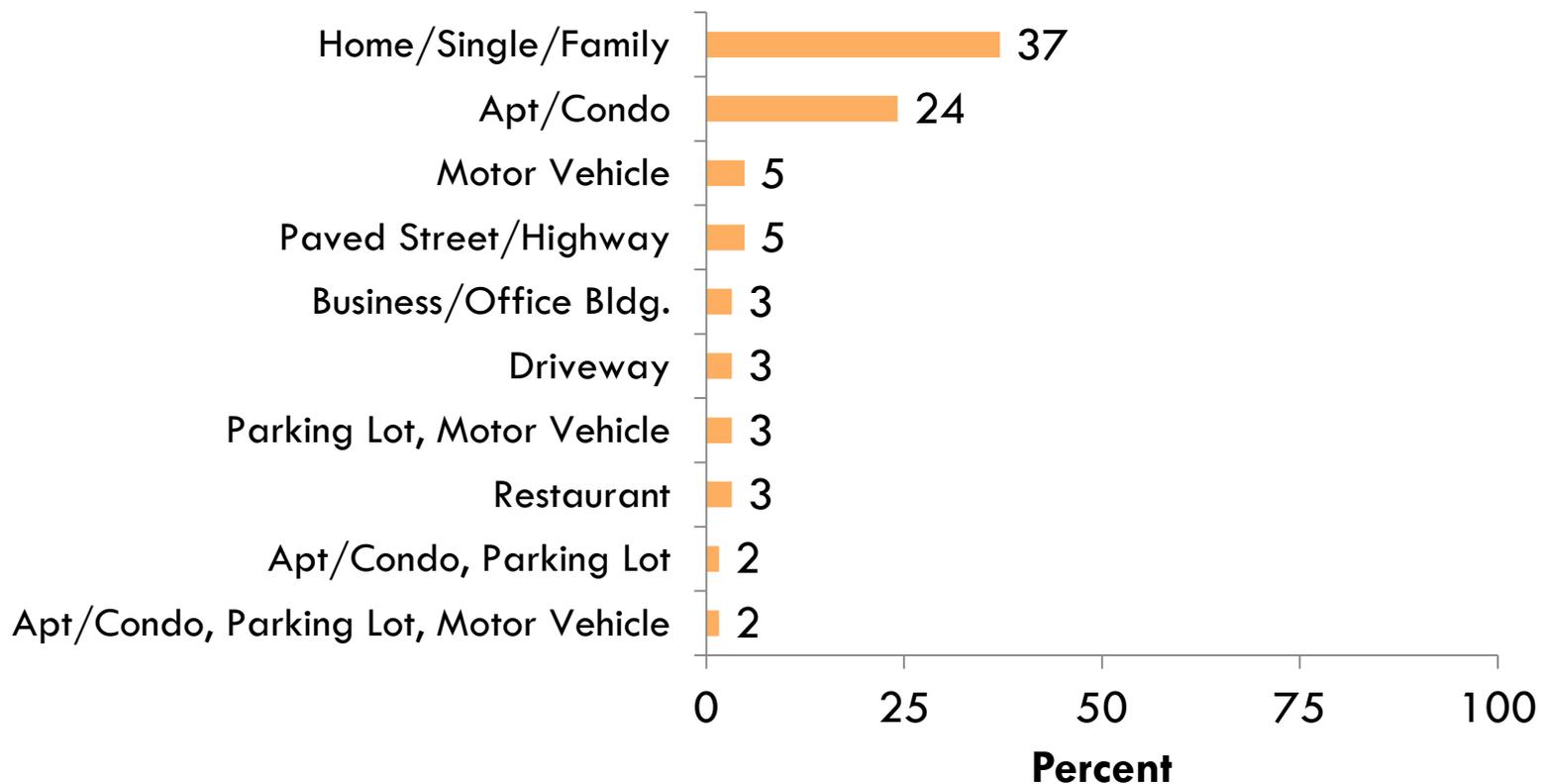


Males



Over 60% of domestic violence firearm homicides occurred in a private residence

10 Leading Locations – Domestic Violence Firearm Homicides



Domestic violence firearm homicides summary

- Domestic violence was reported as a motive 3 times more often among victims older (≥ 30 yrs.) than younger victims
- Domestic violence is reported as a motive more often in incidents involving female than male firearm homicide victims
- Majority ($\sim 60\%$) of domestic violence firearm homicides occurred in a private residence

Data needs for prevention efforts

- Contextual information to understand circumstances of incidents and identify risk factors
 - ▣ What individual- and community-level factors lead to patterns of suicide and homicide?
- Details on prior histories of violence or interactions with law enforcement
 - ▣ Individual information may be available through law enforcement or court records; often cannot be shared due to legal restrictions
- Systematic, standardized data collection and sharing mechanisms

Key findings – firearm violence in King County

- Magnitude and pattern of firearm homicide and suicide deaths are different
 - Rate of firearm suicide is two times higher than firearm homicides
- Firearm homicides impact male youth of color
- Firearm suicide affect older adult white males
- “Heat of Anger” is the leading firearm homicide motivation for all ages, while domestic violence is an increased factor among victims 30 years and older
- Domestic violence is reported as the motive more commonly among female firearm homicide victims and primarily occurred in a private residence
- Limited contextual information to understand circumstances of incident and presence of risk factors (e.g. suspect criminal history or firearm ownership)

Thank You.

Acknowledgements

Washington State Attorney General's Office

Homicide Investigation Tracking System Program Staff

Public Health – Seattle & King County

Prevention Division, Injury and Violence Prevention Unit

Assessment, Policy Development and Evaluation Unit

Data sources for this presentation

Data Source	Provider	Limitations
Death Certificates	WA State Department of Health	Limited information on perpetrator or incident circumstances
Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS)	WA State Department of Health	Emergency department visits not included; inpatient discharge information (not medical record)
Medical Examiner Data	King County Medical Examiner's Office	Deaths based on occurrence rather than residence; includes non-residents of King County
Homicide Investigation Tracking System (HITS)	WA State Attorney General's Office	Limited information on suicides
Child Death Review	Public Health – Seattle & King County	Case series; limited to deaths under 18 years of age

Seattle PD and King County Sheriff's Office cover over 70% of firearm homicide occurrences

Firearm Homicide Occurrences by Law Enforcement Agency Jurisdiction — King County, WA, 2001-2012

