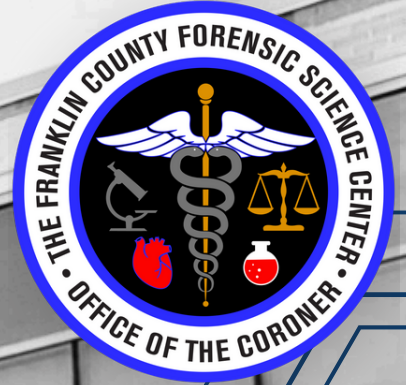


Nathaniel R. Overmire, D.O.

Franklin County Coroner

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



FRANKLIN COUNTY FORENSIC



Dr. Nate Overmire

Dr. Nate Overmire



Table Of Contents

Mission, Vision and Values	01
Statement from the Coroner	02
Prioritizing Future Talent	03
Organ and Tissue Donation	04
Fatality Review Boards	05
Investigation Specialists	06
2023 Summary Data	07
Manners of Death	08
Trends Data	14
Unidentified Persons	22
2023 Budget	24
Fatality Preparedness & Management	25





Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

The mission of the Franklin County Coroner's Office is to serve and protect the interest of the community by maintaining the highest standard of professionalism and integrity in determining the cause and manner of death. We are a dedicated team that is committed to providing excellence, compassion and respect to every family and community member.

Vision

Our vision is to be a national leader in forensic science and investigation as we seek the truth on behalf of the families and community members we serve. We are committed to collaboration, excellence and compassion.

Values

- We are driven by **service** - we are passionate about serving families and community members who may be at their most vulnerable.
- We embrace **integrity** - all our work is done with integrity and transparency.
- We are committed to **excellence** - we are committed to constant improvement to achieve excellence.
- We are **respectful** - we treat everyone with respect. We provide dignity for the decedents; we are compassionate and respectful to the families and community members we serve; we respect our community partners, and we respect one another.
- We are focused on **collaboration** - we value the contribution of our community partners and each other and know that collaboration is essential to obtaining outcomes.
- We value the strength found in **diversity** - in our community and in our workplace.

Statement from Dr. Overmire

To the Franklin County Community,

I am incredibly grateful to serve you as Coroner. Each day I work with a talented and highly skilled staff to serve the residents of Franklin County to bring justice to families. What is never far from my mind is that behind each figure or statistic is a real person who has left behind grieving loved ones. It is important that we never forget this.

Far too many individuals have perished as a result of a drug overdose, gun violence or suicide. Too many of our infants also are dying, often labeled as being from “sudden unexplained” causes. It is part of my job to share these statistics with you, to relate to the community any patterns in the causes of death, and to encourage policy makers at the local, state and federal levels to support policies which will reduce the number of people who end up in the Coroner’s care each year. It is my hope that each person lives their full natural lives.

I encourage you to read this report to learn about the trends we are witnessing. Please do not hesitate to contact my office, we are always looking to collaborate with people of good will for the betterment of our residents.



Dr. Nathaniel Overmire
Franklin County Coroner



MISSION of the Franklin County Coroner
is to serve and protect the interests of the
community by maintaining the highest standards
of professionalism and integrity in determining
the cause and manner of death. We are a
dedicated team that provides a
Excellence, Commitment
to every family member.

Prioritizing Future Talent



EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Franklin County Coroner's Office is committed to educating the next generation of forensic pathologists, investigators, and technicians. The office has opportunities for:

- Interns
- Medical rotations
- Pathology Assistants
- High school and College classes



EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We have partnered with numerous high schools, colleges, and institutions including:

- Center of Science and Industry (COSI)
- The Ohio State University
- West Virginia University
- Tiffin University
- Lake Erie College of Medicine
- Wayne State University
- Reynoldsburg High School



LET'S TALK!

Schools wishing to explore collaboration with FCCO should contact us:

- CoronerEducationProgram@franklincountyohio.gov

Students seeking internships should visit the FCCO website:

- <https://coroner.franklincountyohio.gov/careers>

Life Saving Organ ————— and Tissue Donation



Once every 48 hours, an Ohioan dies waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. Right now, there are more than 108,000 men, women and children on the national transplant waiting list for a lifesaving organ. In the last ten years, more than 2,000 Ohioans have died waiting. In Ohio, there are more than 3,100 people including about 700 in Central Ohio, waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. As transplantation of hearts, kidneys, lungs, pancreases and livers has emerged as the preferred and most successful treatment of many life-threatening diseases, the need for these life-saving gifts has increased. The Franklin County Coroner's Office continues to strongly support organ, tissue and eye donation with its partners, Lifeline of Ohio and the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank.



www.lifelineofohio.org



www.coleb.org





FATALITY REVIEW BOARDS

The Franklin County Coroner's Office participates in several fatality review boards. The boards involve numerous public health and other specialists to review the circumstances around certain kinds of deaths and make recommendations on how to prevent these kinds of deaths in the future. The panels select a sample of the deaths in Franklin County and examine them in detail through the eyes of experts in the hope that these unfortunate decedents can assist in decreasing mortality in our community.

The FCCO forensic pathologists, investigators and other staff participate in the following committees:

- **Traffic:** This committee examines the circumstances around deaths involving vehicles, including deaths to pedestrians and drivers and passengers in other vehicles like bicycles and motorcycles. The circumstances around these deaths include the physical surroundings including road dimensions and design, vehicle speeds and time of day and/or season of the year.
- **Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths (SUID):** As of September 2014, Ohio coroners are required to complete a death scene investigation using the CDC protocol and a standard investigation reporting form. The investigation form is to be shared with the local Child Fatality Review board reviewing the death. Some of these SUID are diagnosed as accidental suffocation, positional asphyxia, overlay (the obstruction of breathing caused by the weight of a person or animal lying on the infant), or undetermined.
- **Child:** This committee examines several major causes of unexpected child deaths under the age of 18 years, including through vehicular accidents; abuse and neglect; firearms and weapons; drowning; and other causes often related to safety.
- **Suicides:** Utilizing our Suicide Investigations Specialist, this committee examines the psychosocial factors that may have influenced the decedent to take his or her own life.
- **Overdose:** The rash of overdose deaths in our community has made the work of this committee more important than ever. The committee examines the circumstances leading up to the death, but also examines trends in the availability of the drugs and substances that result in the overdose deaths.
- **Domestic Violence:** This panel examines deaths, both homicides and suicides, caused by domestic violence, for examination of the systemic interventions into known incidents of domestic violence occurring in the family of the deceased prior to the death, for consideration of altered systemic response to avert future domestic violence deaths, or for development of recommendations for coordinated community prevention and intervention initiatives to eradicate domestic violence.



Turn Pain Into Purpose

Investigation Specialists



SUICIDE INVESTIGATIONS & POSTVENTION SPECIALIST

DALLAS ALLEN

Dallas Allen is the Suicide Investigations and Postvention Specialist at the Franklin County Forensic Science Center, Office of the Coroner in Columbus, Ohio. Dallas conducts full psychosocial investigations, facilitates the Franklin County Suicide Fatality Review Committee and provides grief support to individuals who have lost loved ones to suicide. As of July 2021, Dallas became the first person in the nation to hold this title within a medicolegal office.

In addition to his position at the Coroner's office, Dallas is also a board member for LOSS Community Services, the vice-chair of the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and a Resource and Care Connections Committee member for the Attorney General's Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness.

OVERDOSE SPECIALIST

VANESSA GAY

Vanessa Gay is the Overdose Specialist at the Franklin County Forensic Science Center, Office of the Coroner in Columbus, Ohio. Vanessa conducts full psychosocial investigations, participates in the Overdose Fatality Review Board, and provides grief support to individuals who have lost loved ones to an overdose.

In addition to her position at the coroner's office, Vanessa works as a Registered Nurse at a level 1 trauma center. Here she works as a Forensic Nurse Examiner working with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in forensic nursing.



Summary Data

TOTAL REFERRED DEATHS	5,455
Accepted as Coroner's Cases	2,974
Not Assigned as Coroner's Cases	2,481

MANNER OF DEATH AFTER INVESTIGATION

Accidental	1,613
Homicide	184
Natural	918
Suicide	199
Undetermined	51
Fetal Demise	9

AUTOPSIES

Total Performed	1,117
Franklin County Cases	1,117
Out of County Cases	0

EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Total Performed	1,059
Franklin County External Examinations	1,059
Out of County External Examinations	0
Partial Examinations	87
Death Certificate Only	743

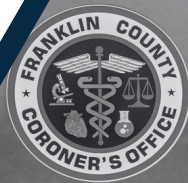
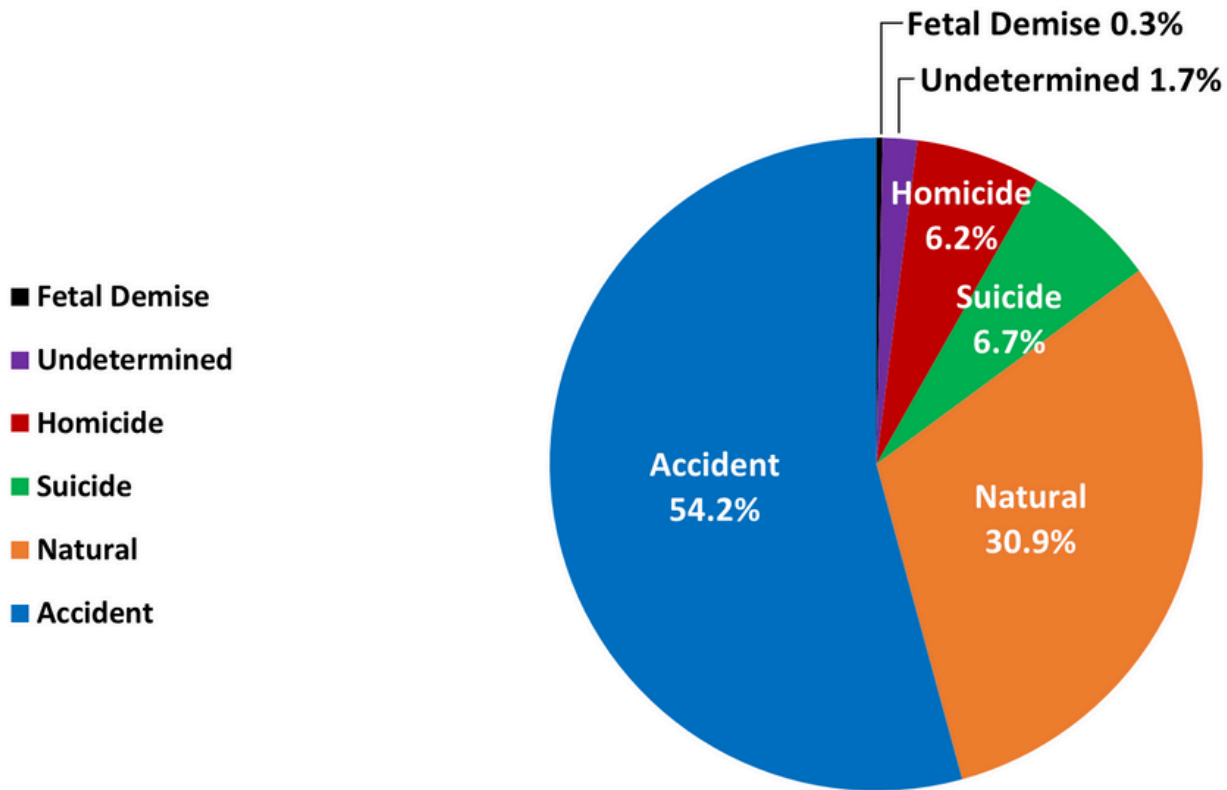
ADDITIONAL FIGURES

Bodies Transported	2,397
Storage Cases	44
Scene Investigations	1,486
Toxicology Investigations	2,403
Non-Human Bones Found	29

Sudden Infant Deaths were reported in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code 313.121. SID total is also reflected in the Manner of Death categories; Natural, Accidental, & Undetermined. **Present language also identifies this cause of death as Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)**

20

Manners of Death (2023)

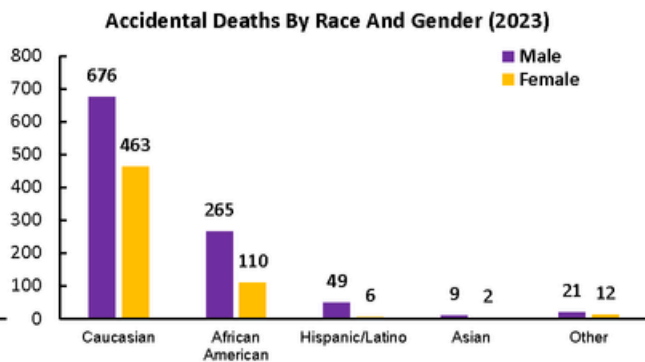
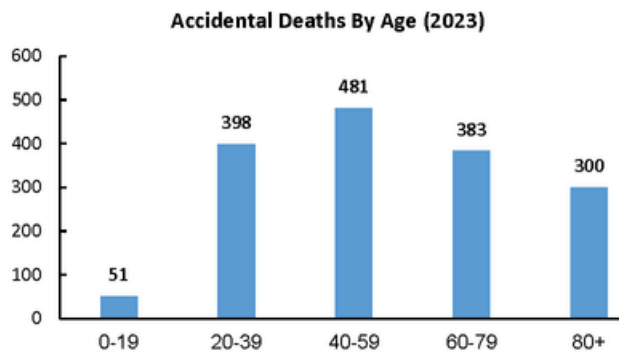
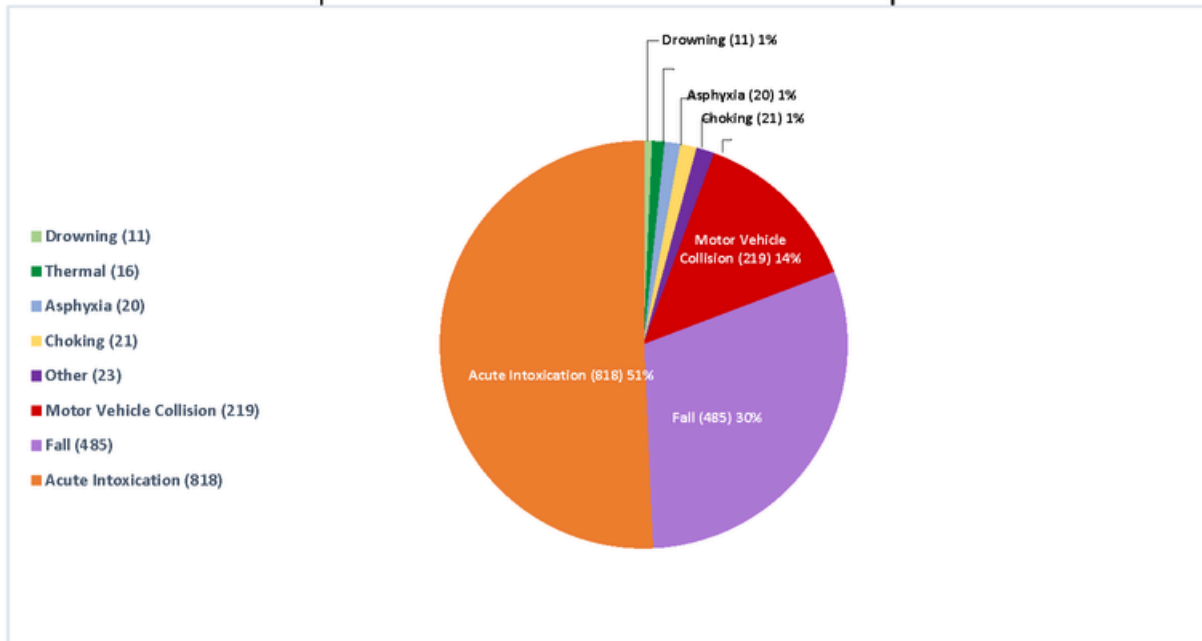


2090 FRANK ROAD
FRANKLIN COUNTY
FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER
Nathaniel R. Overmire, D.O.
FRANKLIN COUNTY CORONER

Manner of Death: Accidental

An accidental death is a result of an unnatural cause where there is no evidence of intent to cause harm and the fatal outcome was unintentional.

ACCIDENTAL CASES	
2022	1561
2023	1613

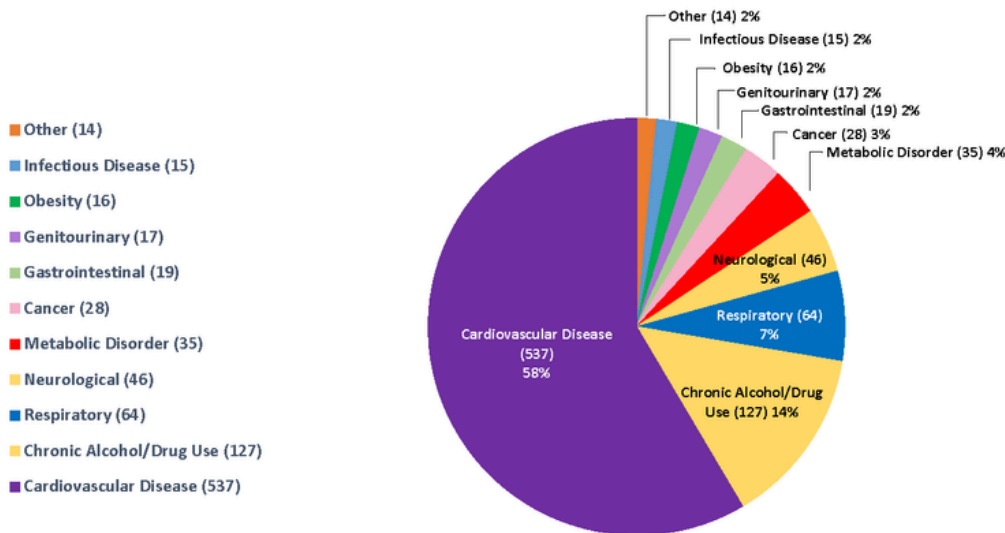


Manner of Death: Natural

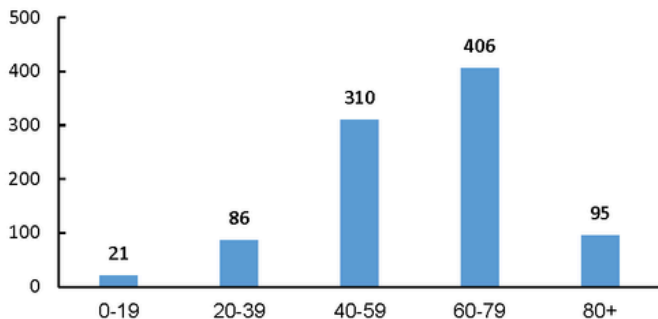
A natural death is one due to a spontaneous or naturally occurring disease or degenerative process. A death so classified can fall under the jurisdiction of the Coroner because of the sudden or unexpected nature of the death, because there was no physician with knowledge or awareness of the decedent's condition, or when circumstances surrounding the death arouse suspicion.

NATURAL CASES

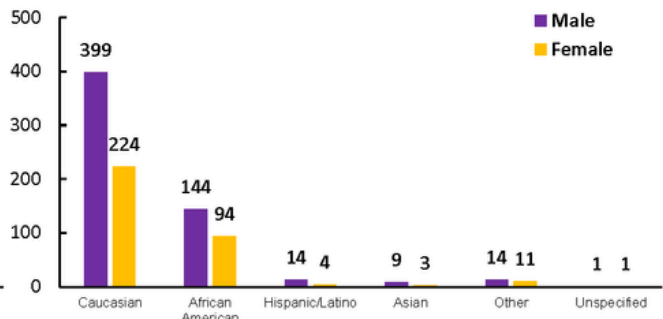
2022	1012
2023	918



Natural Deaths By Age (2023)



Natural Deaths By Race And Gender (2023)

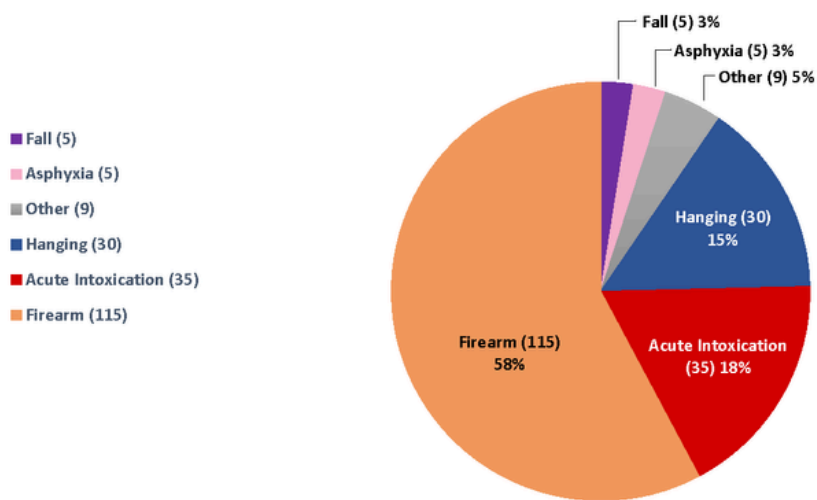


Manner of Death: Suicide

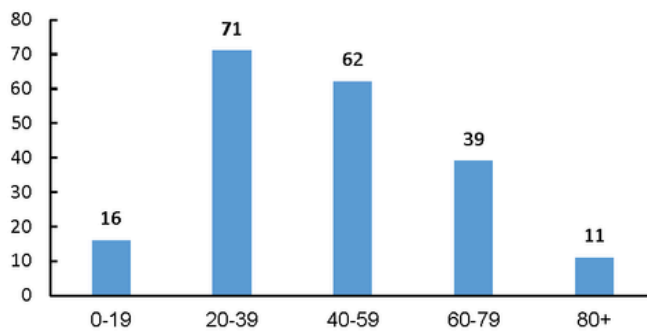
A suicide is a death resulting from a self-inflicted injury which ends one's life.

SUICIDE CASES

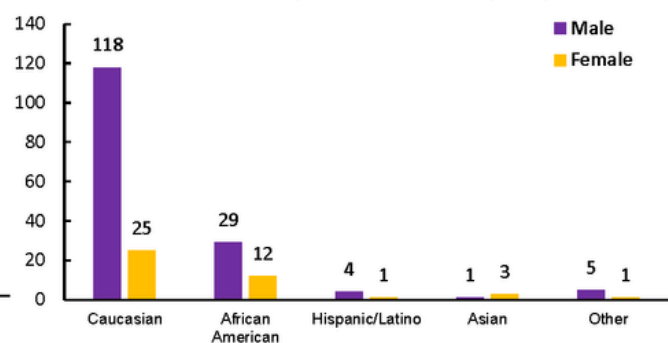
2022	203
2023	199



Suicide Deaths By Age (2023)



Suicide Deaths By Race And Gender (2023)

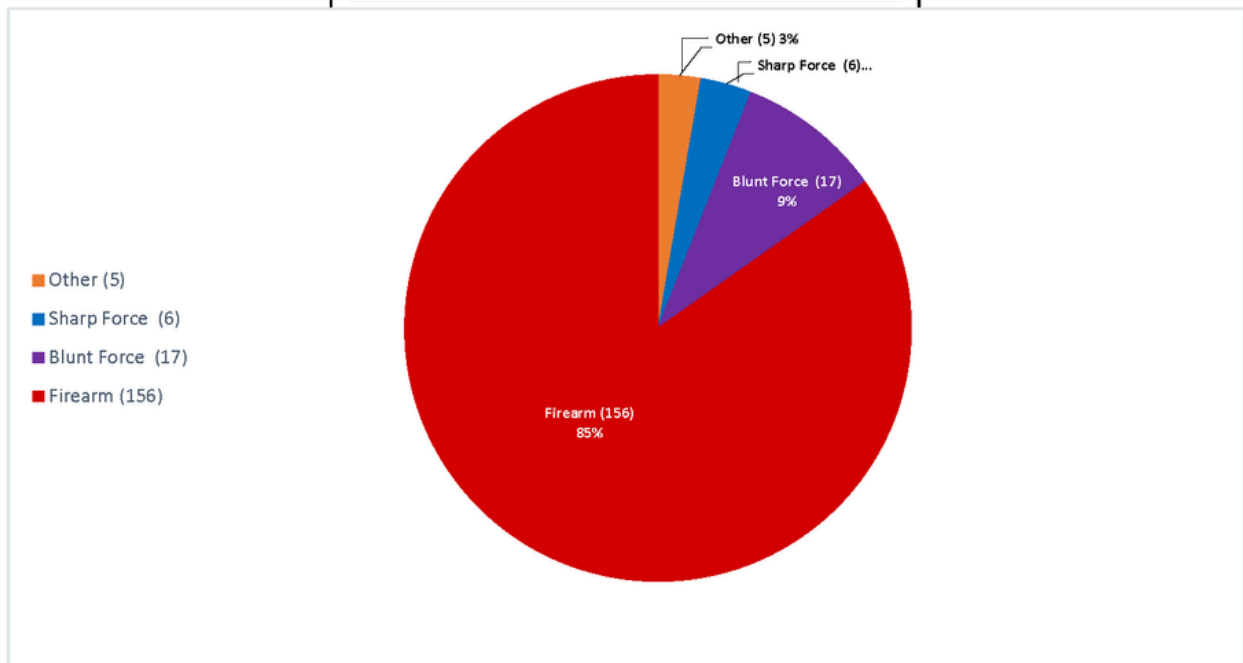


Manner of Death: Homicide

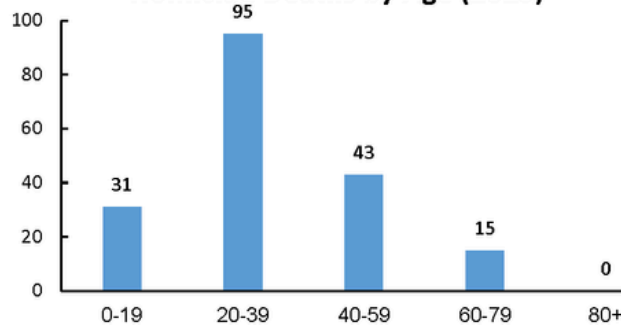
A homicide death is a death resulting from a voluntary action committed by another person. A homicide is not necessarily a murder. This classification does not necessarily indicate criminal intent, which is determined by the legal process.

HOMICIDE CASES

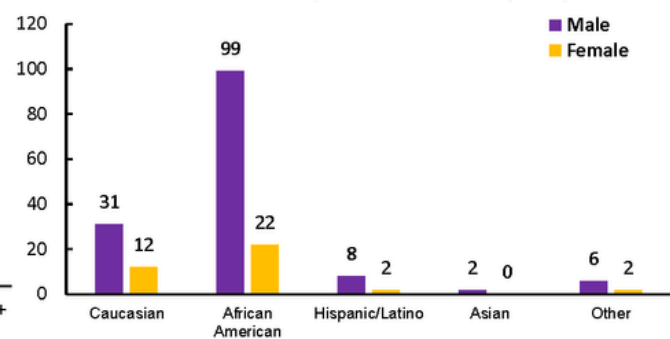
2022	173
2023	184



Homicide Deaths by Age (2023)



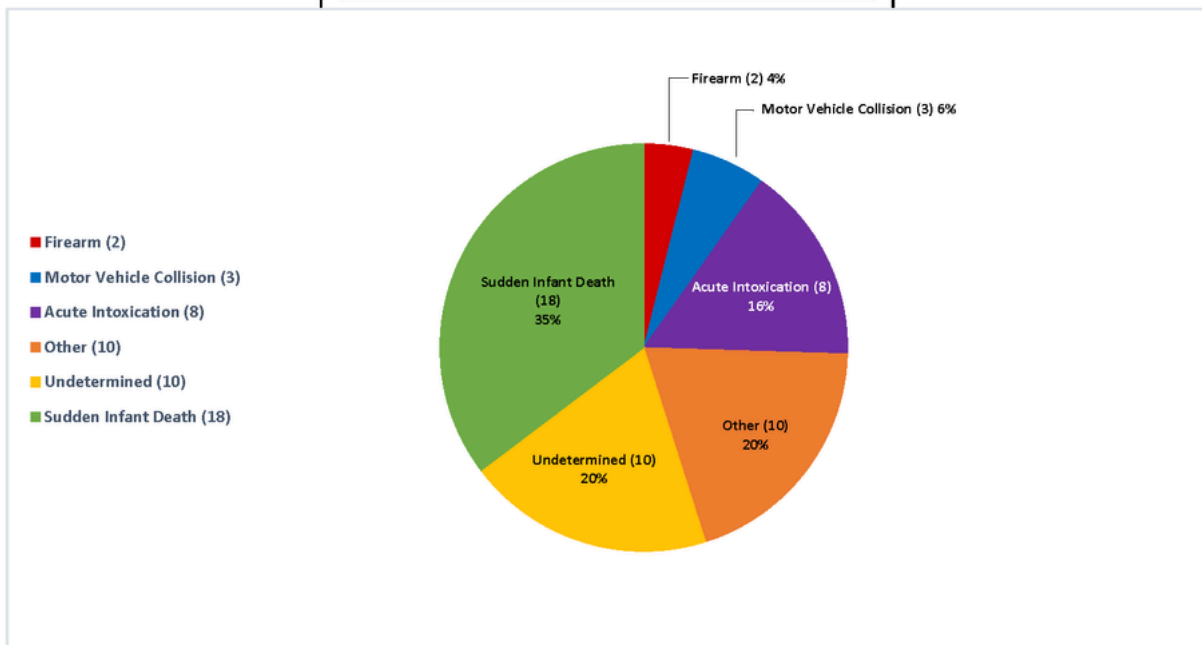
Homicide Deaths By Race And Gender (2023)



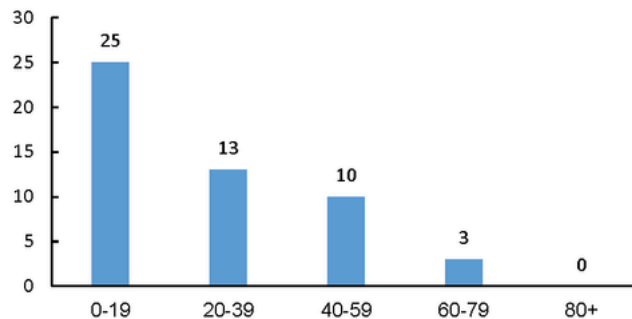
Manner of Death: Undetermined

“Undetermined” is a classification used when the information pointing to one manner of death is no more compelling than one or more other competing manners of death in thorough consideration of all available information.

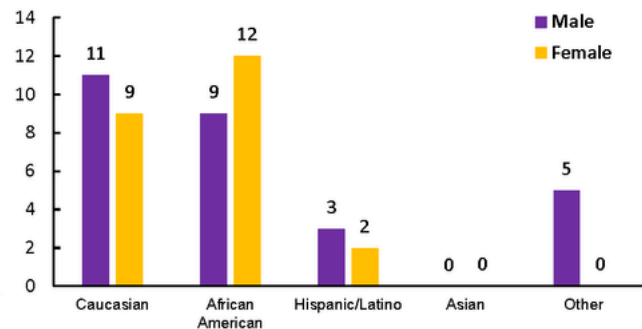
UNDETERMINED CASES	
2022	51
2023	51



Undetermined Deaths By Age (2023)

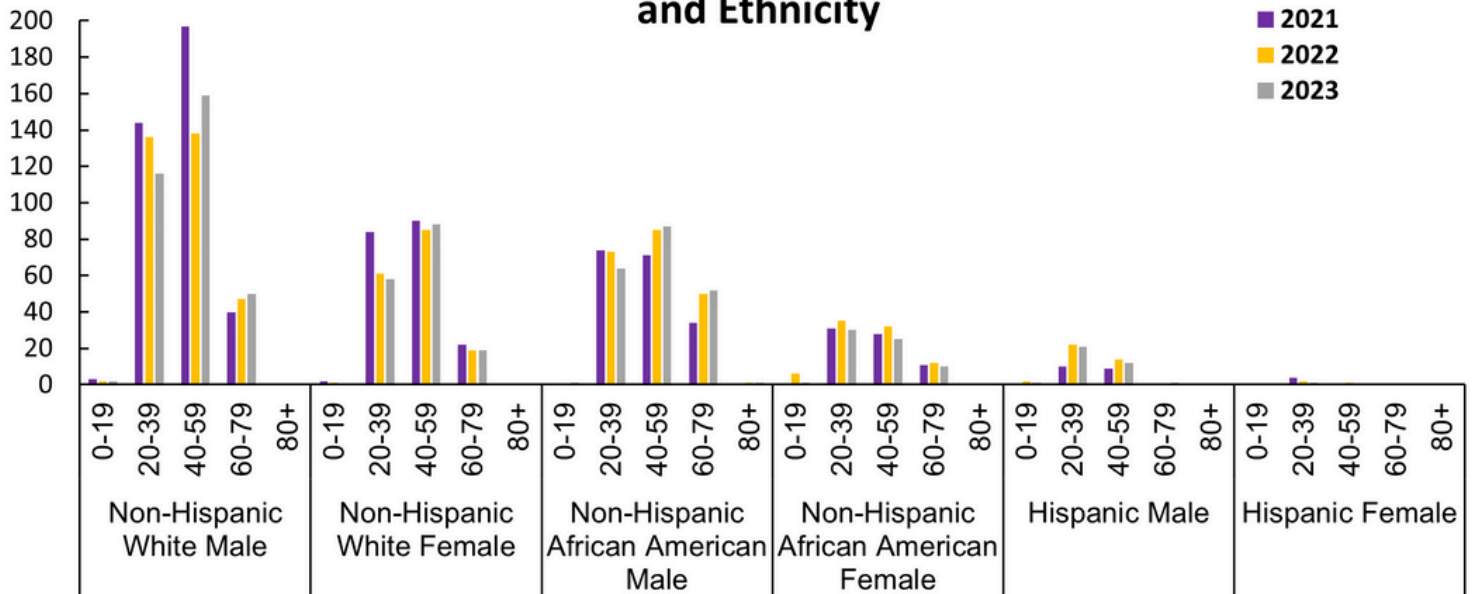


Undetermined Deaths By Race And Gender (2023)

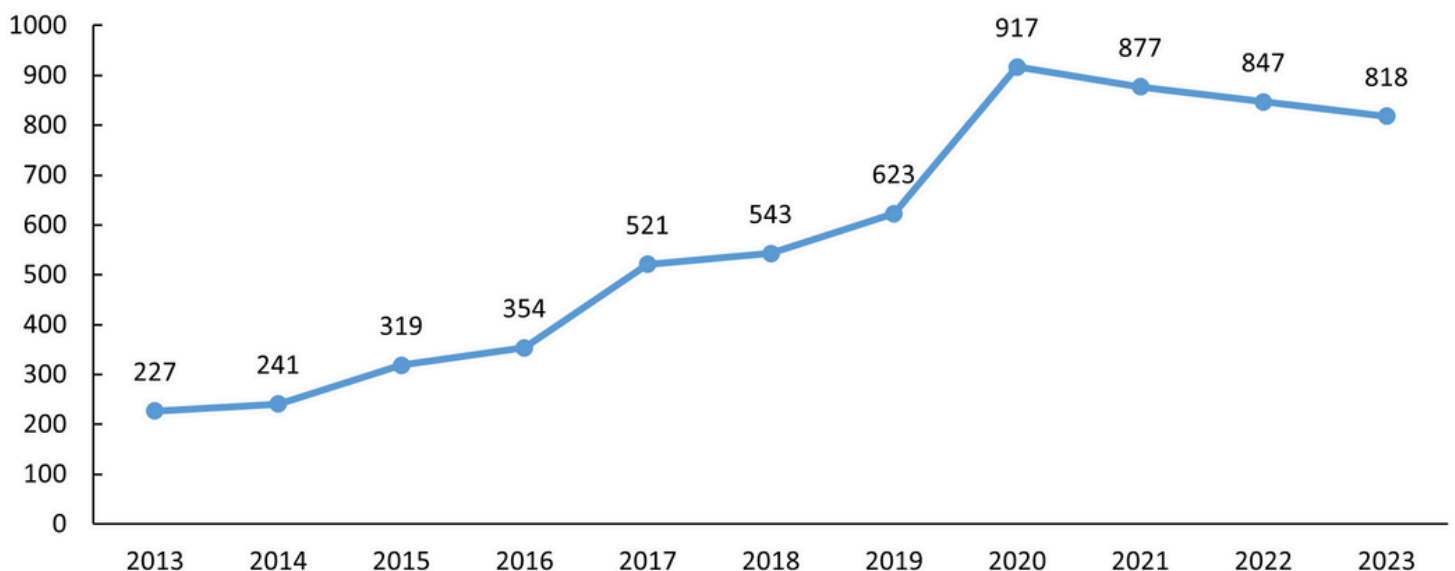


Overdose Trends

Accidental Acute Intoxication Deaths by Years, Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

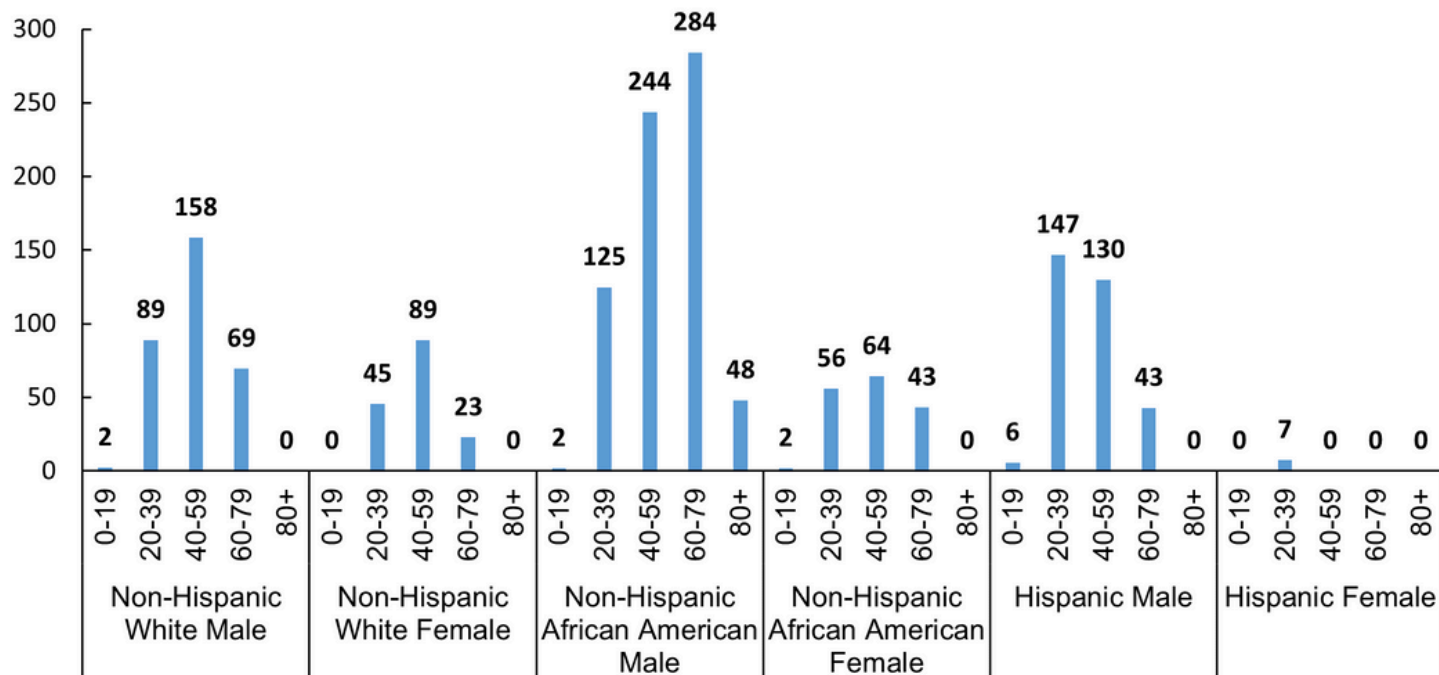


Accidental Acute Intoxication Deaths by Years

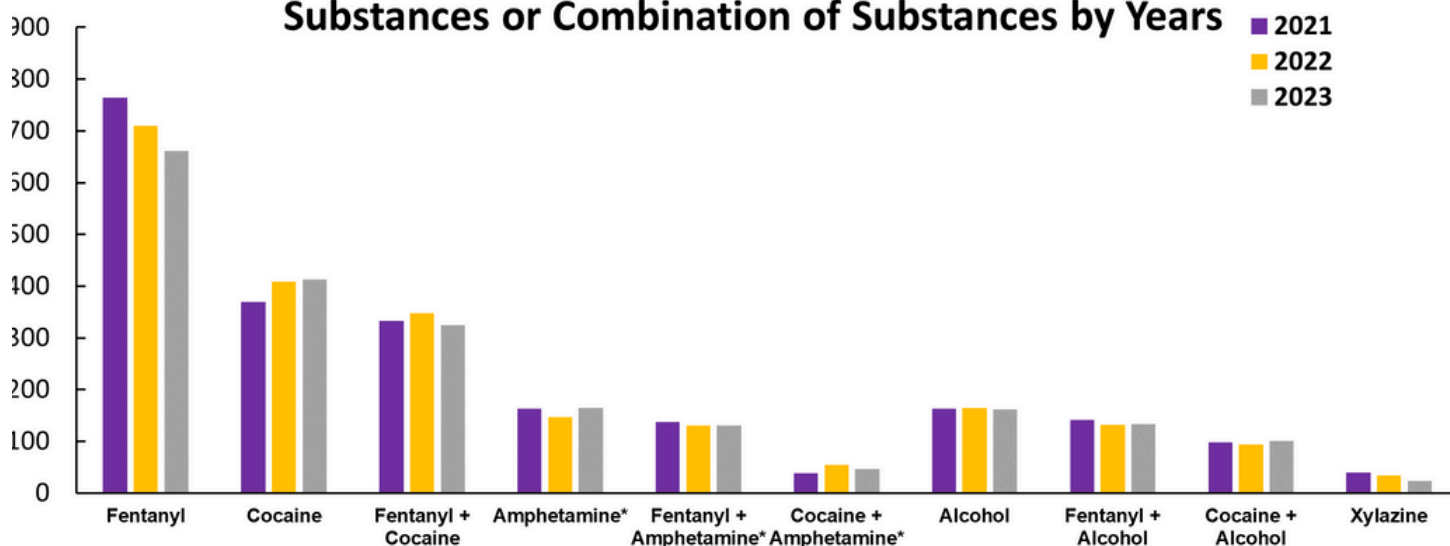


Overdose Trends

2023 Accidental Acute Intoxication Age-Specific Death Rate (Per 100,000) by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity



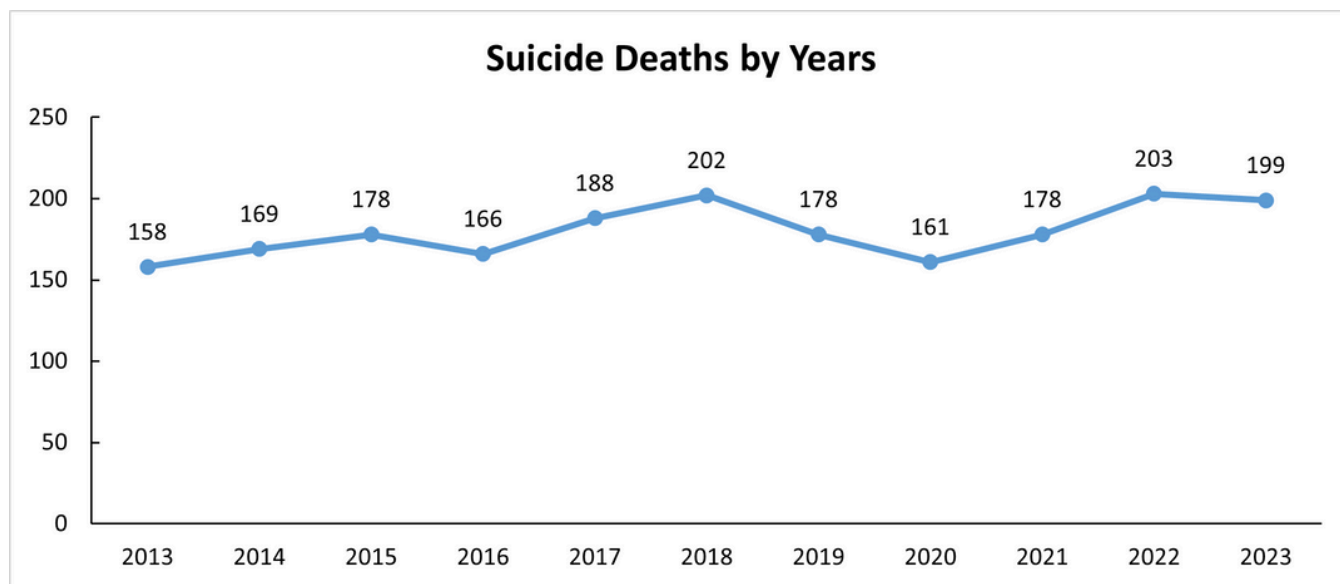
Accidental Acute Intoxication Deaths Involving Selected Substances or Combination of Substances by Years



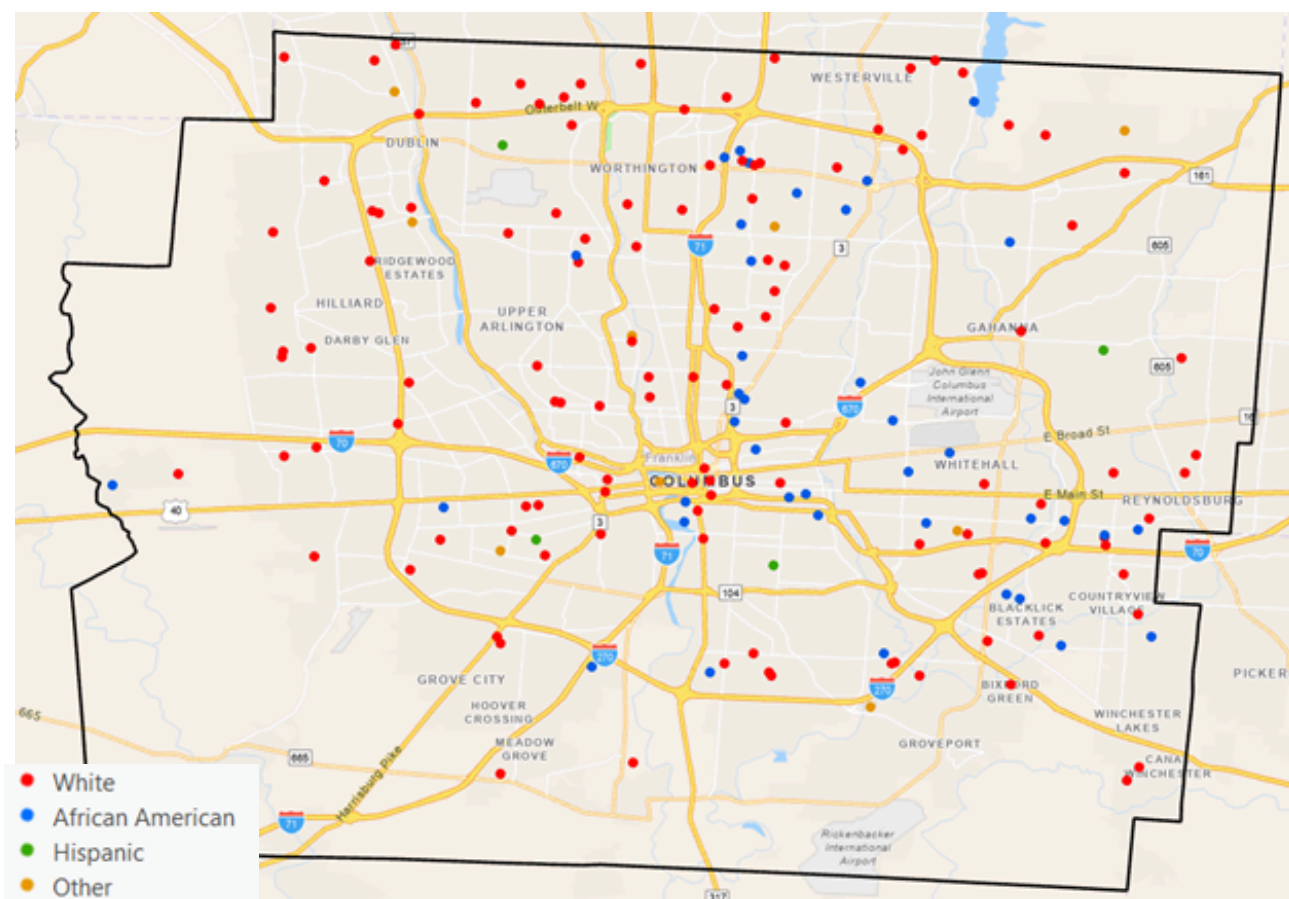
*Amphetamine and Methamphetamine are included within the same category.

**Multiple drugs are usually involved in overdose deaths; individual deaths may be reported in more than one category.

Suicide Trends



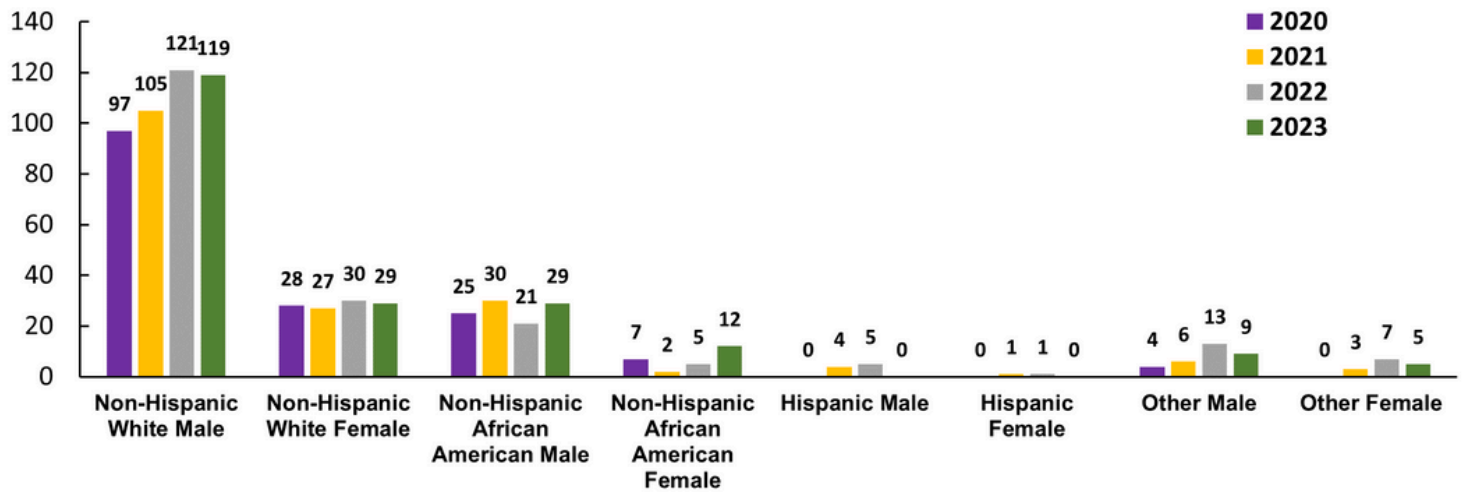
2023 Franklin County Suicide Deaths by Race and Ethnicity



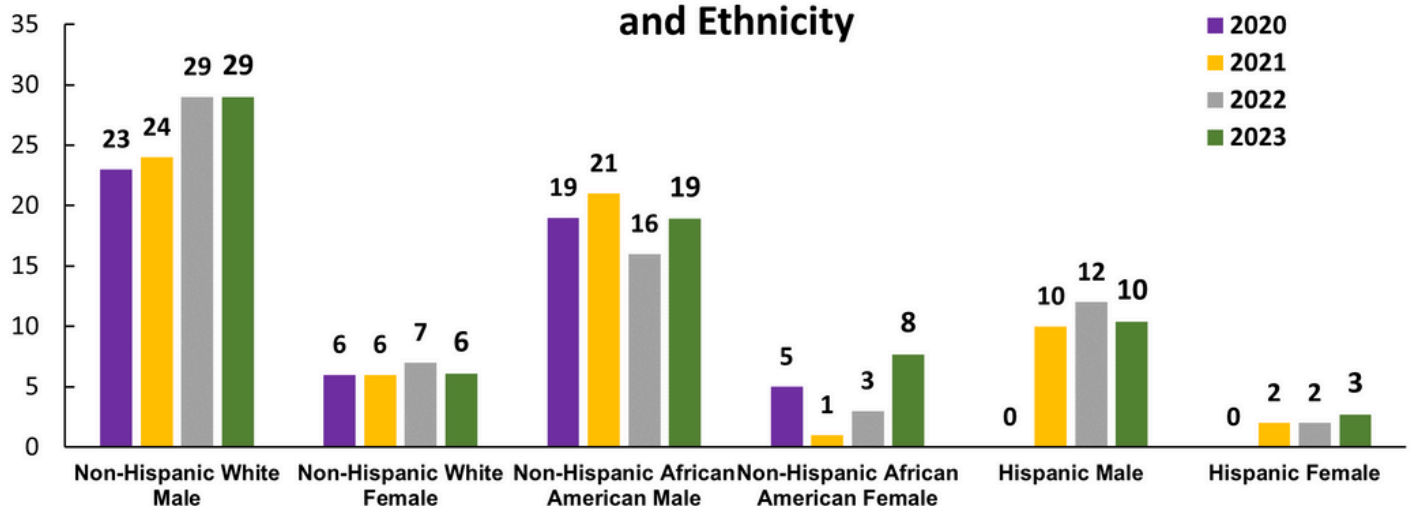
Only cases where injury occurred in Franklin County are shown on the map.

Suicide Trends

Suicide Deaths by Year, Race, and Ethnicity



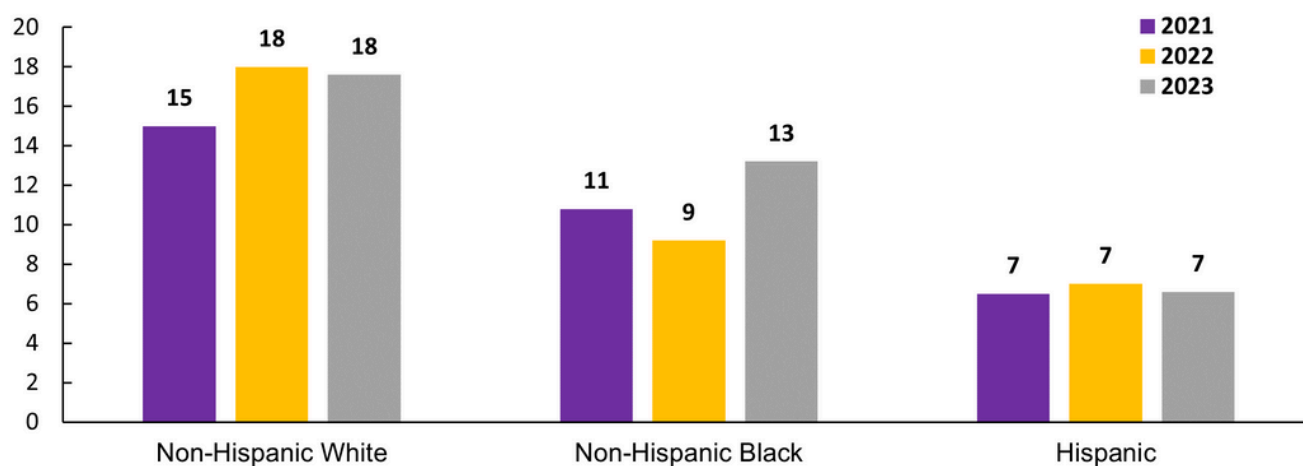
Suicide Age-Adjusted Death Rates (Per 100,000) by Year, Race, and Ethnicity



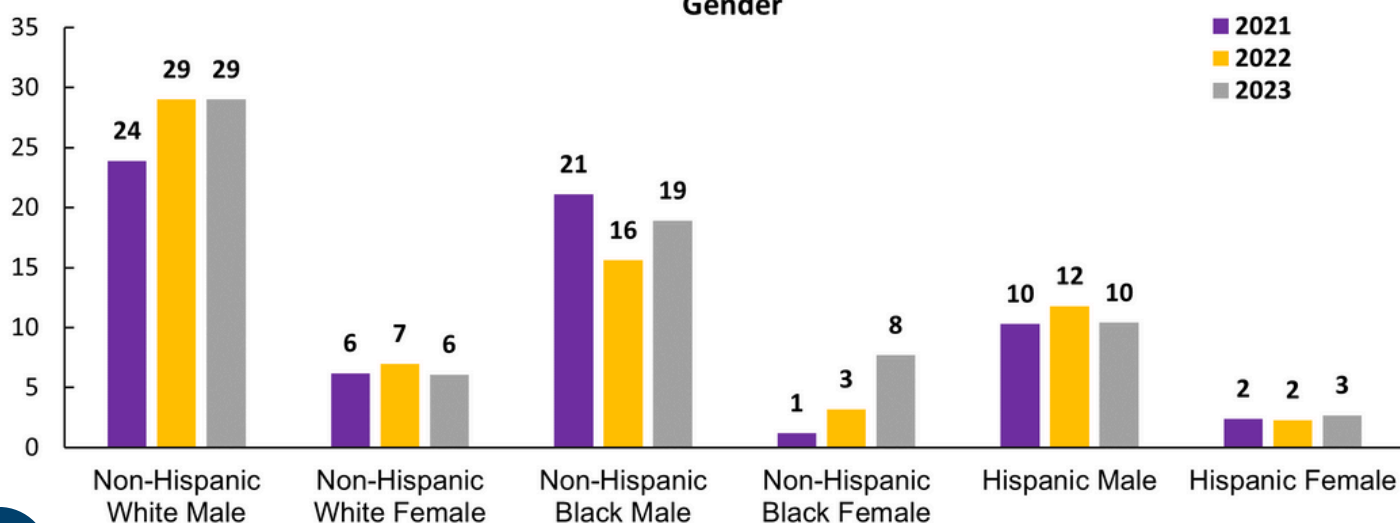
Suicide Trends

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Acute Intoxication	22	19	20	23	35
Firearm	88	79	89	90	114
Hanging	52	46	61	63	30
Other	17	16	13	27	19
Total	179	160	183	203	198

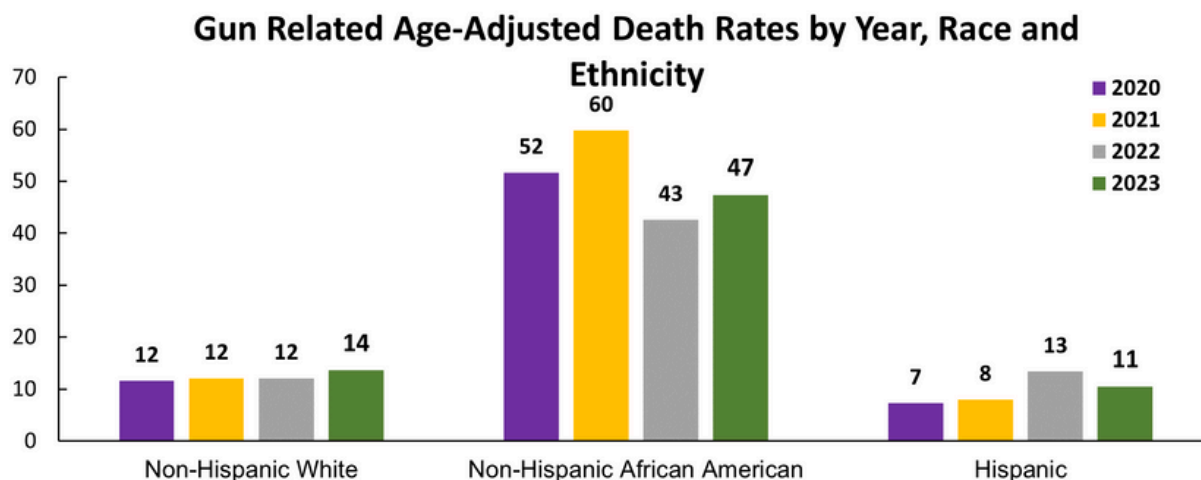
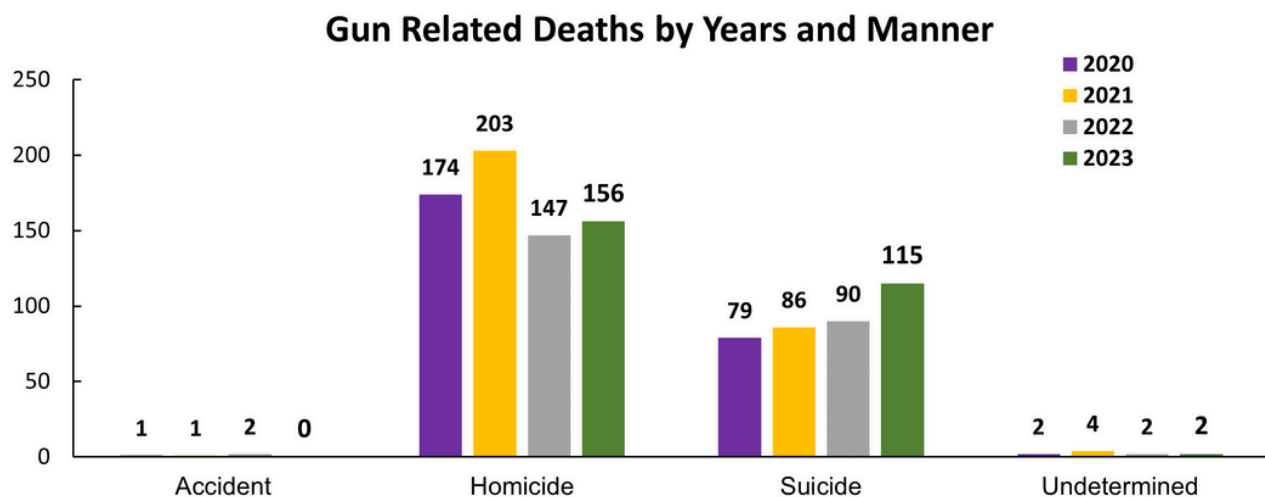
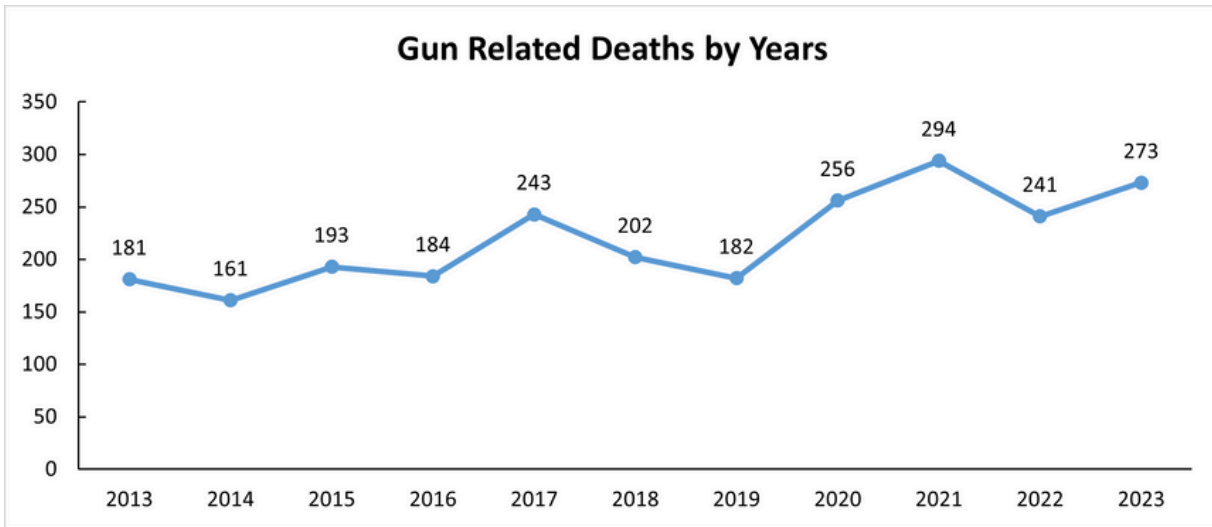
Suicide Age-Adjusted Death Rates (Per 100,000) By Years, Race, and Ethnicity



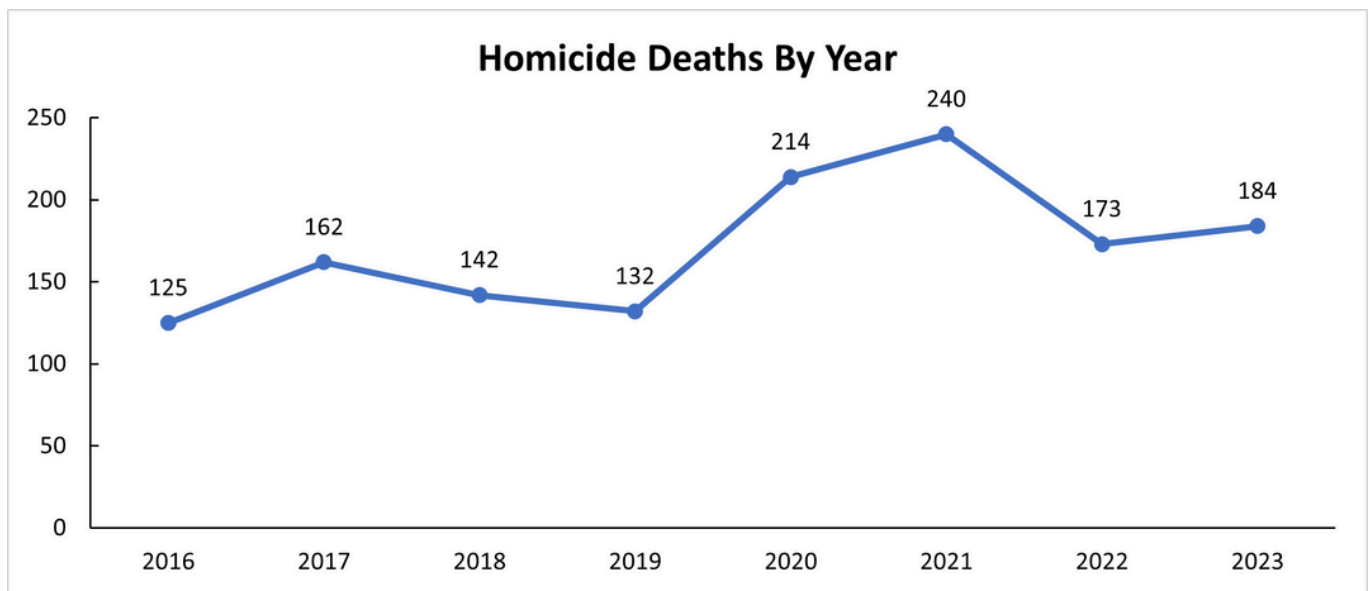
Suicide Age-Adjusted Death Rates (Per 100,000) By Years, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender



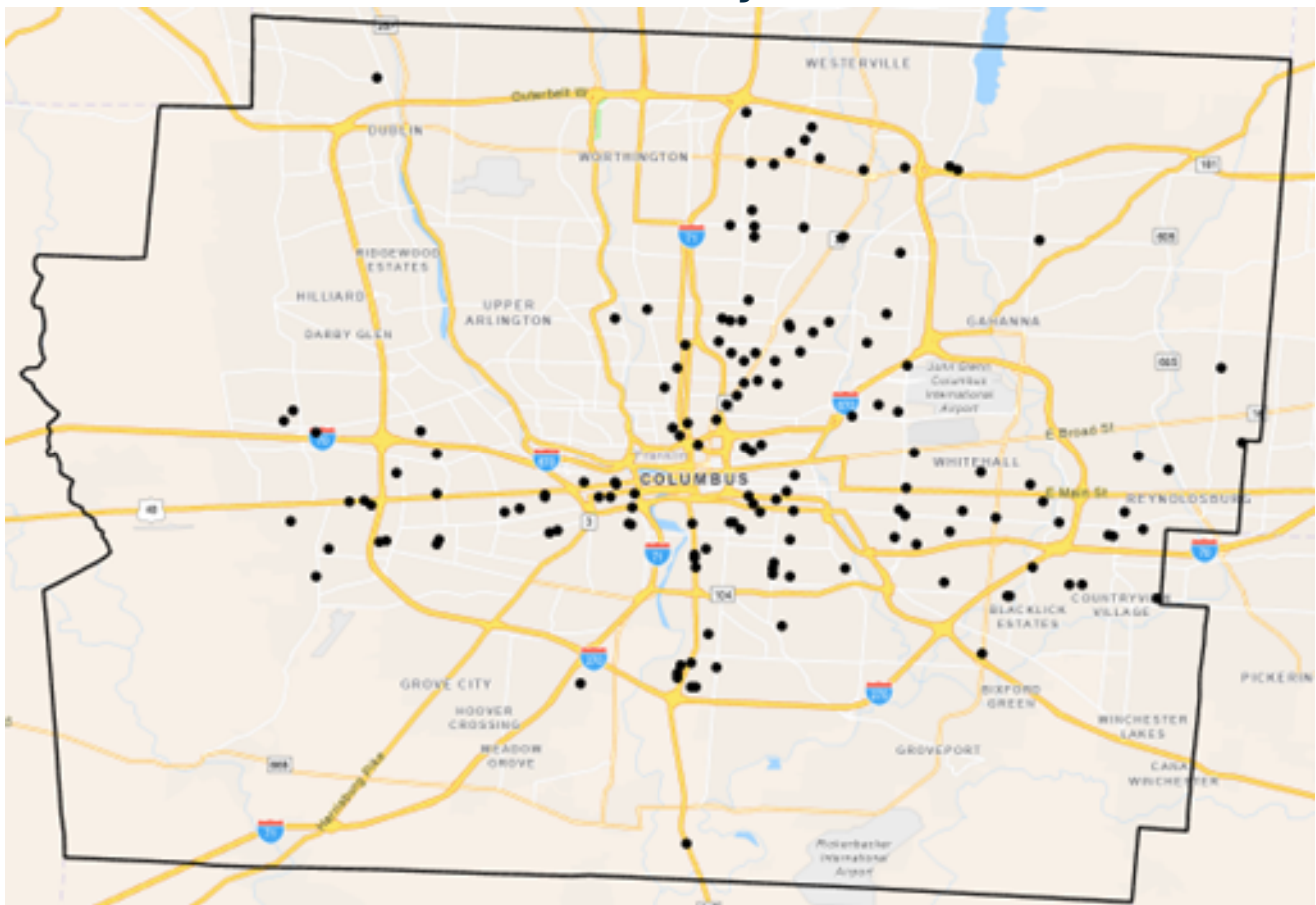
Gun Violence Trends



Homicide Trends



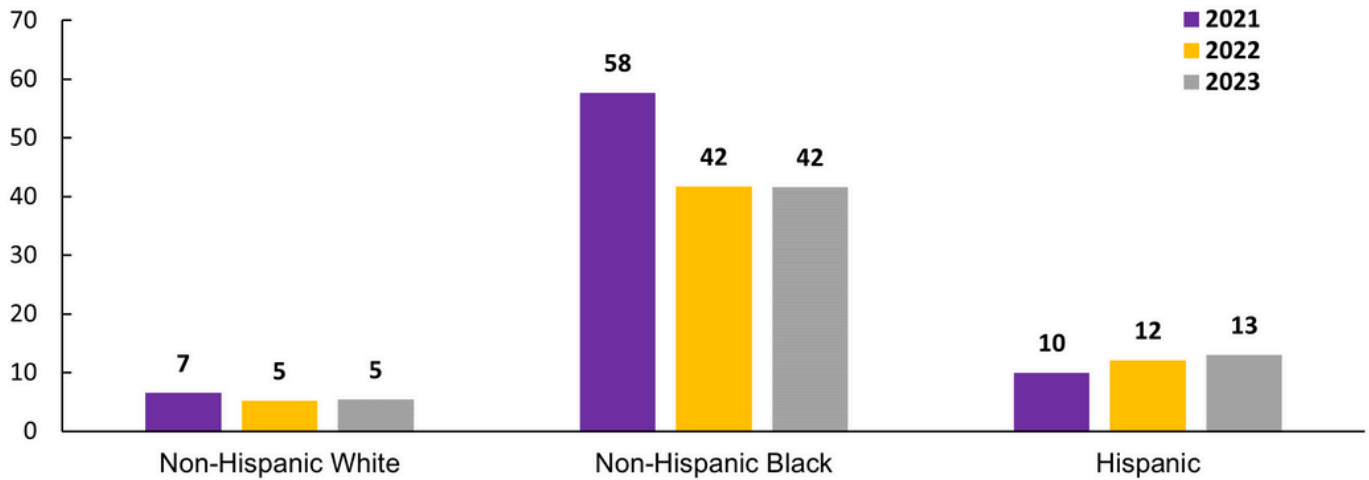
2023 Franklin County Homicides



<https://coroner.franklincountyohio.gov>

Homicide Trends

Homicide Age-Adjusted Death Rates (Per 100,000) By Years, Race, and Ethnicity



Unidentified Persons



Determining identity of the remains is one of the first steps in a medicolegal death investigation. A variety of methods are used at the Franklin County Coroner's Office to research and confirm a decedent's identity. If the identification is in question at the time the body is admitted, our team will begin to identify what tools or resources are needed to identify the decedent.

Most identifications are resolved within days to weeks; however, in some cases no identification leads can be found, and cases must be submitted to national missing persons database, The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS).

Currently, less than 10 cases, including some dating back to the 1980s, remain unidentified. Our team members continue to work with stakeholders, such as Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation to match these with missing persons and participates in Missing Person Day events in Ohio to attempt to gather leads.

Returning unidentified individuals to their loved ones is a priority and it is a continuous process. For additional information on these cases please visit our website: www.coroner.franklincountyohio.gov

Decedents Still Unidentified

FCCO Case #	Date Located	John or Jane Doe?	BCI #	NamUs #	Notes
89-2994	11/3/1989	John Doe	2005	14619	Body of a white male located on 11/03/1989 located on Walcutt Road.
93-2908	10/11/1993	John Doe	203	17869	The body of a black male found in woods between Alum Creek & Rt. 33 on 10/11/1993.
97-2573	8/9/1997	Jane Doe	187	17868	Remains of a black female located on the west bank of the Scioto river.
07-1801	5/30/2007	John Doe	1959	616	Unknown Hispanic male found in Scioto river
21-5442	12/8/2021	John Doe	3315	88076	Body found under an overpass (I-670) in the area south of Vine Street, Columbus, OH 43215.

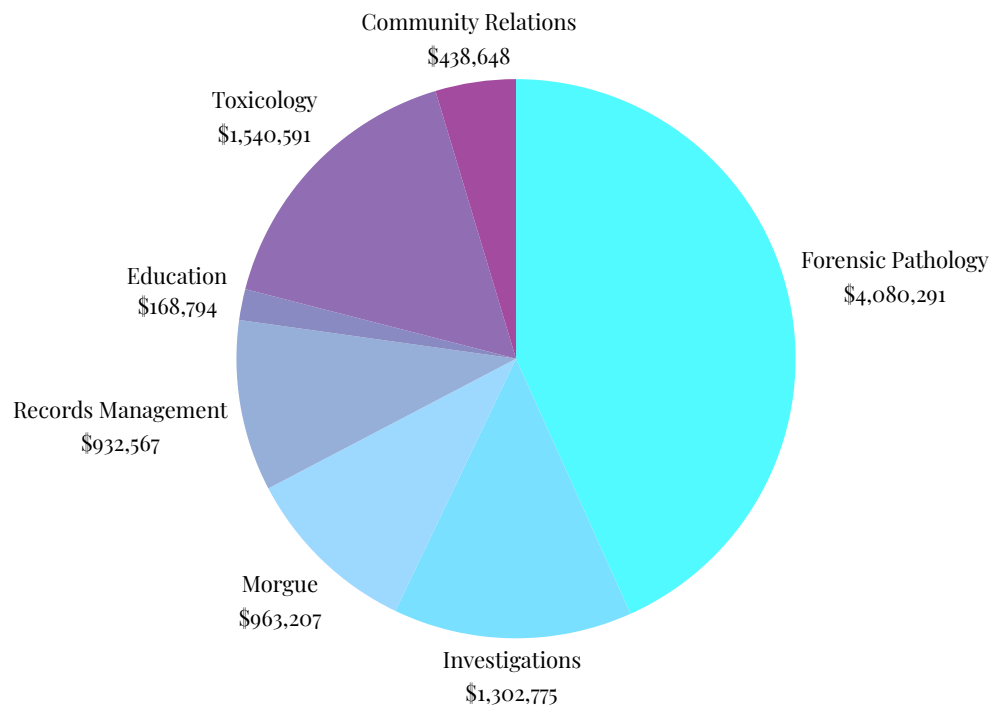
Unidentified Persons

How Initially-Unidentified Decedents were Identified (2023)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Photography/Visual	430	361	397	396	395	356	384	353	378	379	403	398	4630
Fingerprints	43	43	32	47	37	39	49	39	33	32	25	37	456
Dental	1	1	2				1	2	1	1			9
Radiology	4	2	3	4	5	3		4	1	4	3	6	39
DNA		1			1		1			1		1	5
Totality of Circumstances	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	2	2	3		1	26
Government ID	21	18	18	25	18	16	14	15	19	16	21	24	225
Scar/Marks/Tattoos									1				1
Surgical Implant											1		1
Other	2		1	3	1			3	1		2	2	15
Non-human	2			3	1				1	2	1		10

Budget

Investing in High Quality Forensic Services



BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2023

- Total Expenditures \$9,426,873
- Forensic Pathology Department is properly staffed to manage Franklin County case load.
- Hired new Overdose Investigator Specialist to perform indepth psychosocial investigations and to perform prevention education.
- Hired Quality Assurance and Education Coordinator to focus on creation of forensic pathology fellowship program.

Fatality Preparedness & Management

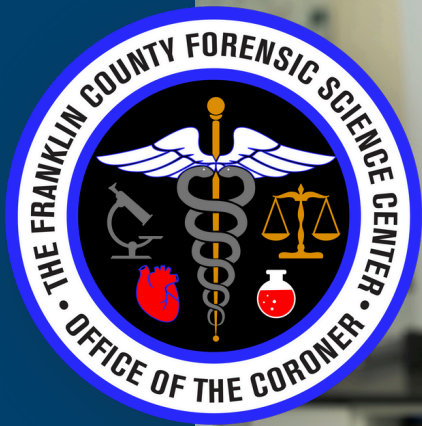
To effectively respond to an incident from mass casualty to severe weather related (i.e. tornados) incidents, the increase of incidents across the country have highlighted an emerging threat that requires comprehensive planning and preparation prior to the incident taking place. The Coroner's Office will work with all public safety services agencies within Franklin County to develop a plan, conduct training and exercises, and purchase equipment necessary to support this type of incident.

The FCCO engages with the public and our partner agencies through education, training, exercises and drills, and community outreach to assist our residents and first responders with preparedness. Additionally, FCCO personnel collaborate with partners to review and revise our Mass Fatality Plan and to prepare for the variety of hazards that could impact our community.

Fatality preparedness and management is the ability to coordinate with other organizations (e.g., law enforcement, healthcare, and emergency management) to ensure the proper recovery, handling, identification, transportation, tracking, storage, and disposition of human remains and personal effects; certify cause of death; and facilitate access to mental/behavioral health services to the family members, responders, and survivors of an incident. Fatality Management Services is one of the 32 Federal Core Capabilities in support of the National Preparedness Goal.



**American
Red Cross**



2090 Frank Road
Columbus, Ohio 43223
<https://coroner.franklincountyohio.gov>



614-525-5290



2023

PREPARED BY

JEREMY BLAKE

SENIOR ADVISOR &
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS