National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) Special Report on Suicide

KENTUCKY, 2013-2014

Size
Divided into 120 counties covering 39,000 square miles

Population
26th most populated state with 4.4 million residents

Race/ethnicity of state population
85% White non-Hispanic, 8% Black, 3% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, <1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 2% two or more races

NVDRS participation
Kentucky Violent Death Reporting System (KVDRS) joined NVDRS in 2004; first year of data collection in 2005

A LOOK AT SUICIDE IN KENTUCKY

TYPES OF VIOLENT DEATHS IN KENTUCKY
- Nearly all (88%) violent deaths occurring in Kentucky in 2013-2014 were classified as suicide or homicide.
- Suicide was the most common manner of violent death in Kentucky (N=1409, 70%), occurring 3.7 times as often as homicide (N=377, 19%).
- The remaining deaths from violence were attributed to undetermined manner (N=182, 9%), legal intervention (N=20, 1%), and unintentional firearm death (N=35, 2%).

SUICIDE IN KENTUCKY
- State rates. Kentucky’s suicide rate* in 2013-2014 was 16.0 per 100,000 residents, a 22% increase from 13.1 in 2004-2005 and a 29% increase from 12.4 in 2009-2010.
- State/U.S. comparison. The suicide rate in Kentucky was 21% higher than the U.S. suicide rate (13.2) and was the seventh highest of all NVDRS states.
- Race/ethnicity. Suicide victims were 93% White, 4% Black, 1% Hispanic, and 2% other/two or more races/unknown.
- Sex. Males accounted for 80% of suicide victims (29.9/100,000 ages 10+) and females accounted for 20% (7.2/100,000 ages 10+). The suicide rate among males was highest for those ages 45-64 (36.4/100,000). For females, the suicide rate was also highest among those ages 45-64 (9.9/100,000).


Percents in this state profile may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*All rates in this profile are occurrence ratios based on the number of resident and non-residents deaths that occurred in the state per 100,000 resident population.
SUICIDE METHODS
- A firearm was used in 64% of suicides, followed by hanging/strangulation/suffocation (19%), and poisoning (11%).
- Use of a firearm was the most common method for both males (65%) and females (56%). Males ages 65+ had the highest firearm suicide rate (29.0/100,000). (See infographic)

ADDITIONAL SUICIDE DEMOGRAPHICS
- **Veterans.** Eighteen percent (18%) of suicide victims were identified as veterans, (served in the U.S. Armed Forces) on the death certificate, including 42% of victims ages 65+.
- **Sexual orientation.** Six (6) victims were identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- **Homeless status.** Eleven (11) victims were identified as homeless at the time of death.
- **Marital status.** Thirty-six percent (36%) of victims were married, 23% were never married, 26% were divorced, 6% were widowed, and 9% had another or unknown marital status.
- **Education level.** Among victims ages 25+, 47% were a high school or GED graduate, 19% had less than a high school education, 33% had some college or a college degree, and 1% had an unknown education level.

SUICIDE CIRCUMSTANCES
- In 64% of Kentucky’s deaths by suicide, circumstances were documented in the records (N=907).
- The most frequently cited circumstances were current depressed mood (40%), relationship problems (30%), current mental health problem (27%), non-alcohol substance abuse problem (27%), intimate partner problem (25%), and a recent/imminent crisis (24%). A suicide note was left in 18% of the incidents.
- The most frequent or notable circumstances by age group are shown in the chart below.