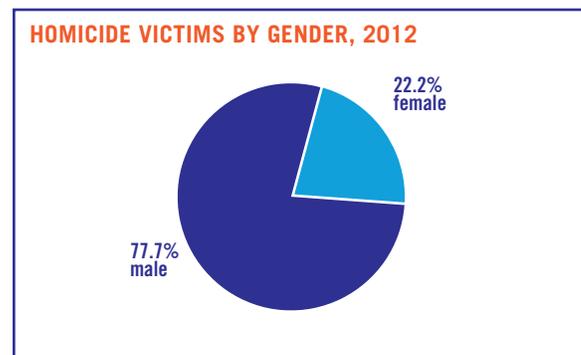


# HOMICIDE

Police recorded 14,827 homicides in the United States during 2012, the most recent year for homicide data. While this rate of 4.7 homicides per 100,000 people is a slight increase from the previous two years, it constitutes a decrease from 2009 (5.0 per 100,000 people) and is down substantially from 1993 when the homicide rate was about twice as high.<sup>1</sup> Overall, homicide victims are primarily male (77.7 percent of victims)<sup>2</sup> as are homicide perpetrators (64.6 percent of offenders).<sup>3</sup> Minorities are disproportionately affected by homicide. Although only 12.9 percent of the U.S. population is black,<sup>4</sup> nearly half of homicide victims are black.<sup>5</sup> Homicide also disproportionately affects younger people; young adults (ages 20 to 24) constitute the largest percentage of victims in 2012.<sup>6</sup> Homicides generally are perpetrated by someone known to the victim.<sup>7</sup> Almost 10 percent of all homicides were known to have been perpetrated by an intimate partner.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, children under four years of age who died as a result of child abuse or neglect represented a disproportionate number of homicide victims.<sup>9</sup> More than 60 percent of the murders that occurred in 2012 were solved by arrest or exceptional means.<sup>10,11</sup> Mass shootings constitute a small subset of homicide but have garnered a great deal of media attention, particularly in recent years. Given the interest in these crimes, a separate section is devoted to [Mass Casualty Shootings](#).

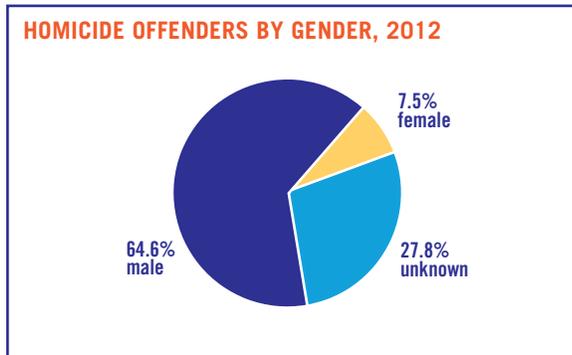
- 1 Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), Table 1, accessed June 5, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/1tabledatacoverviewpdf/table\\_1\\_crime\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_states\\_by\\_volume\\_and\\_rate\\_per\\_100000\\_inhabitants\\_1993-2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/1tabledatacoverviewpdf/table_1_crime_in_the_united_states_by_volume_and_rate_per_100000_inhabitants_1993-2012.xls).
- 2 Ibid., Table 2, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_2\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).
- 3 Ibid., Table 3, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_3\\_murder\\_offenders\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_3_murder_offenders_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).
- 4 Calculated from United States Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2012*, generated using the CPS Table Creator, accessed June 23, 2014, <https://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html>.
- 5 Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), Table 2, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_2\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., Table 10, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_10\\_murder\\_circumstances\\_by\\_relationship\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_10_murder_circumstances_by_relationship_2012.xls).
- 8 Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data, Table 10, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_10\\_murder\\_circumstances\\_by\\_relationship\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_10_murder_circumstances_by_relationship_2012.xls).



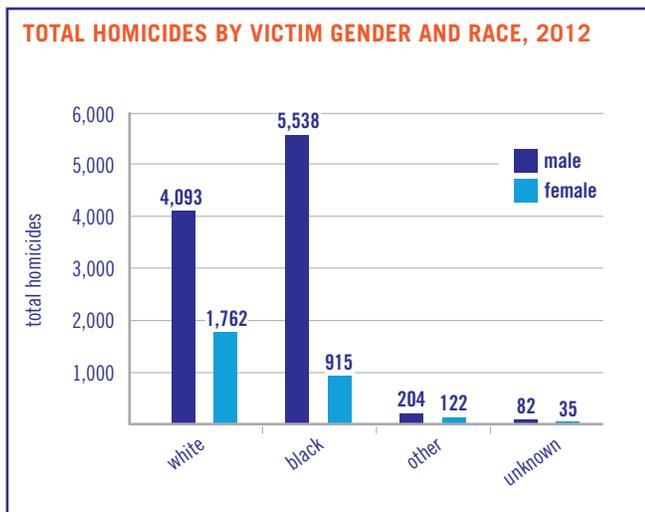
- In 2012, 77.7 percent of murder victims were male and 22.2 percent female.<sup>12</sup>

- 9 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, *Child Maltreatment 2012*, Table 4-3, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.
- 10 For the complete requirements of what qualifies a cleared or closed offense for the purpose of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, see Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012, Clearances*, accessed October 27, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledatacoverviewpdfs/table\\_25\\_percent\\_of\\_offenses\\_cleared\\_by\\_arrest\\_or\\_exceptional\\_means\\_by\\_population\\_group\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledatacoverviewpdfs/table_25_percent_of_offenses_cleared_by_arrest_or_exceptional_means_by_population_group_2012.xls);
- 11 Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 25, accessed June 5, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledatacoverviewpdfs/table\\_25\\_percent\\_of\\_offenses\\_cleared\\_by\\_arrest\\_or\\_exceptional\\_means\\_by\\_population\\_group\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledatacoverviewpdfs/table_25_percent_of_offenses_cleared_by_arrest_or_exceptional_means_by_population_group_2012.xls).
- 12 Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data Table 2, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_2\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).

- The sex of the offender was unknown in 27.8 percent of homicides in 2012. Among those cases, 64.6 percent of offenders were male and 7.5 percent were female.<sup>13</sup>



- An estimated 14,827 persons were murdered nationwide in 2012, constituting a 1.1 percent increase from 2011 and a 10.3 percent decrease from 2003.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2012, 45.9 percent of homicide victims were white and 50.6 percent were black. For 3.6 percent of victims, race was classified as “other” or “unknown.”<sup>15</sup>



- In 2012, homicide was generally intra-racial in cases where the race of both the victim and offender were known: white victims made up 84 percent of those murdered by white offenders and black victims made up 91 percent of those murdered by black offenders.<sup>16</sup>
- For homicides in which the age of the victim was known in 2012, 8.6 percent of homicide victims were under 18; 33.5 percent were between the ages of 20 and 29; 20.3 percent were between the ages of 30 and 39; 13.5 percent were between 40 and 49; 12.4 percent were between 50 and 64; and 4.8 percent were age 65 and older.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2012, in the majority of homicide cases in which the age of the offender was known, most offenders (62.4 percent) were 18 or older. Of the homicides committed by offenders 18 or older, 28.5 percent of the homicide offenders were between the ages 20 and 29.<sup>18</sup>
- For homicides in which the type of weapon was known in 2012, 69.4 percent were committed with firearms. Of the homicides committed with firearms, 71.9 percent were committed with a handgun; 3.6 percent with rifles; 3.4 percent with shotguns, 1.2 percent with other guns; and 19.8 percent with an unknown firearm type.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data Table 3, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_3\\_murder\\_offenders\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_3_murder_offenders_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Table 1A.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Expanded Homicide Data Table 2, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_2\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data Table 6, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_6\\_murder\\_race\\_and\\_sex\\_of\\_victim\\_by\\_race\\_and\\_sex\\_of\\_offender\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_6_murder_race_and_sex_of_victim_by_race_and_sex_of_offender_2012.xls).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data Table 2, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_2\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data, Table 3, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_3\\_murder\\_offenders\\_by\\_age\\_sex\\_and\\_race\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_3_murder_offenders_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data, Table 8, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_8\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_weapon\\_2008-2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded_homicide_data_table_8_murder_victims_by_weapon_2008-2012.xls).

- Knives or cutting instruments were used in 12.4 percent of murders; personal weapons (e.g., hands, fists, feet) were used in approximately 5.3 percent of murders; 4.1 percent of murders were committed with blunt objects (e.g., clubs and hammers); and 8.8 percent of murders were committed with other weapons (e.g., poison, fire, strangulation, and explosives).<sup>20</sup>
- In 2012, 45.1 percent of homicides had an unknown victim-offender relationship; 21.3 percent of homicide victims were killed by an acquaintance; 12.2 percent were killed by a stranger; 9.8 percent were killed by an intimate partner (husband, wife, boyfriend, or girlfriend); 7.9 percent were killed by a family member; 2.7 percent were killed by a friend; and 1.0 percent were killed by someone else (neighbor, employer, or employee).<sup>21</sup>
- In 2012, homicides occurred in connection with another felony (such as rape, robbery, or arson) in at least 14.4 percent of incidents.<sup>22</sup>
- Of the homicides that occurred in connection with another felony, 5.1 percent of murder victims in 2012 were robbed in conjunction with being killed.<sup>23</sup>
- Law enforcement cleared (by arrest or exceptional means) 62.5 percent of the murders that occurred nationwide in 2012.<sup>24</sup>

## Special Cases of Homicide Involving Children

- An estimated 1,315 children died in 2012 due to child abuse or neglect, according to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Approximately three-quarters (75.7 percent) of these children were younger than four years of age. Of the children who died due to child abuse or neglect, 44.4 percent were less than 1 years of age.<sup>25</sup> ★

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., *calculated from data in* Expanded Homicide Data, Table 10, accessed June 18, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded-homicide\\_data\\_table\\_10\\_murder\\_circumstances\\_by\\_relationship\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded-homicide_data_table_10_murder_circumstances_by_relationship_2012.xls).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, Table 25, accessed June 5, 2014, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledataoverviewpdfs/table\\_25\\_percent\\_of\\_offenses\\_cleared\\_by\\_arrest\\_or\\_exceptional\\_means\\_by\\_population\\_group\\_2012.xls](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/tables/25tabledataoverviewpdfs/table_25_percent_of_offenses_cleared_by_arrest_or_exceptional_means_by_population_group_2012.xls).

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Child Maltreatment 2012*, Table 4-3, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.