

# Our Public Health Approach to Firearm Injury Prevention

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# Firearm-related injury is a public health issue

- In an average year:



**155** King County residents die from firearm-related injuries  
(68% suicide, 25% homicide)



**149** hospitalizations for nonfatal firearm injuries in King County  
(46% unintentional, 40% assault)

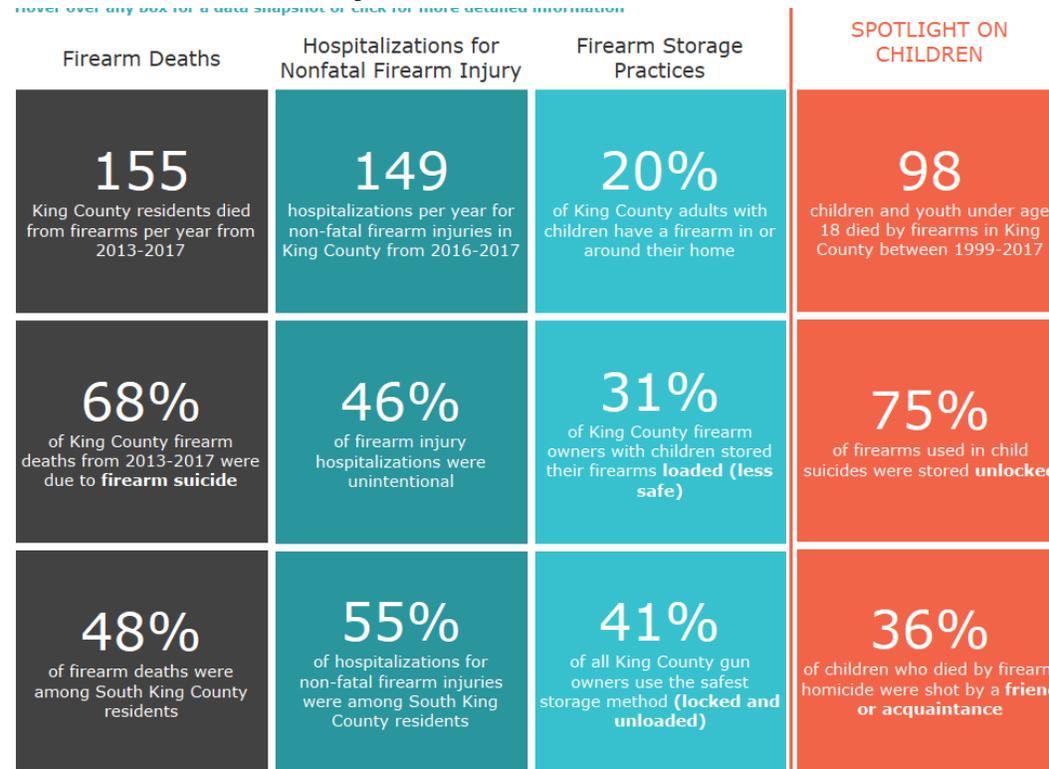
- Injury and psychological trauma from being shot can contribute to lifelong experiences of mental and physical illness and harmful community trauma.
- Firearm-related injury and death are predictable and preventable.

# The public health approach to firearm tragedy prevention



# 1. Understanding the problem using data

## Public Health – Seattle & King County’s firearm injury data and data from the community



[www.kingcounty.gov/firearms](http://www.kingcounty.gov/firearms)

## 2. Identifying known risk and protective factors

- What are risk factors for perpetrating firearm violence?
  - Research carried out as part of the Shots Fired project
- What are risk factors for firearm theft or misuse?



# Firearm Perpetration Study

- Several risk factors are identified in literature, but no research specific to King County
- Approach
  - Identify the strongest risk factors by comparing people who committed violent crimes with and without firearms
  - Select 208 firearm assault perpetrator cases and 738 non-firearm assault perpetrators, ages 18-29, convicted between 2006 and 2016
  - Extract data on history and system engagement from Electronic Court Records, public health data, court system data

# What we found (quantitative research)

What do we know so far from studying approx. 1000 convicted cases?



## Education (Middle School)

**7.5 times** more likely to drop out of middle school\*



## Previous Convictions

Ranges from **1.4 times** to **10 times** more likely to have criminal convictions\*



## Previous Firearm and Assault Injuries

Firearm perpetrators are **2.5 times** more likely to have sustained gun shot wound (GSW)\*, **1.4 times** more for assault wound\*



## Drugs and Alcohol

**2.5 times** more likely to have used opioids and **3.4 times** more likely to have used stimulants (48 hours prior to indexed firearm perpetration)\*

\*(compared to non-firearm perpetrators)

# Washington State firearm ownership & storage issues

- **63%** of firearm-owning households report at least one unsafely stored firearm
- Over **250,000 children** in WA State live in a household with at least 1 unsafely stored firearm
- Among older adults living in a firearm owning household, **one quarter** have at least one firearm stored unlocked and loaded



# A key protective factor: storing firearms locked up

- Unintentional injury prevention
- Suicide prevention (especially for young people)
- Prevents firearms being misused by a household member in crisis
- Theft prevention (keeping firearms from being trafficked and used in violence or crime)



### 3. Work with those most affected to design, implement, & evaluate appropriate interventions

- Safe storage promotion
- Law enforcement partnerships
- Youth engagement



Violence & Injury Prevention staff member presenting a lock box demo

# Some of our stakeholders

- Firearm owners and users
- Youth and families affected by firearm violence
- Firearm retailers
- Medical systems
- Law enforcement and prosecutors
- Policymakers

# The Lock It Up program promotes voluntary safe storage of firearms.



SIMPLE. SECURE. READY.

- **Partnerships with firearm and safe storage device retailers**  
Give a discount on storage devices to customers who mention the program; share information
- **Partnerships with law enforcement**  
Share information with Concealed Pistol License applicants
- **Public education**  
Health fairs, website, presentations, data dissemination
- **Community partnerships**  
We are a resource and convener across the spectrum of gun violence prevention work

For more information: [www.kingcounty.gov/lockitup](http://www.kingcounty.gov/lockitup)

# Listening to youth voice:

## The Youth & Young Adult Firearm Violence Report

- Engaging with youth and young adults affected by gun violence and their families and communities
- Empowering those with lived experience of gun violence and listening to community voices
- Gathering information and making recommendations for collaborative problem-solving
- Ultimately, addressing firearm violence with community-informed strategies that work

Unpublished report, expected release in early 2020.

# For more information:

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## For more information:

[www.kingcounty.gov/firearms](http://www.kingcounty.gov/firearms)