

Suicides in Chicago Decline from 2005 to 2015

Suicide is a leading cause of death for both youth and adults nationally. Suicide differs in rural and urban areas, with rural areas having higher prevalence; this usually results in less attention to suicide in urban areas. Here we present information on the demographics of suicide in Chicago across three time points. Using data from the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS), we describe what suicide looks like in Chicago and how it has changed over the past 10 years. IVDRS is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System, which pools information about the “who, when, where and how” of violent deaths to provide a more complete picture and develop insight into “why” they occur.

This IVDRS Data Brief is the second in a series about violent deaths in the City of Chicago over three time points: 2005, 2010 and 2015. This second data brief examines overall suicide rates in the City of Chicago by demographic group and weapon type. Information about how the data are collected is presented in the first Data Brief (*The Illinois Violent Death Reporting System, July 2015*).

Suicide rates are highest among Caucasians at each time point, 3 or more times higher than African Americans and Latinos.

Overall, there were 194 suicides recorded in IVDRS in the City of Chicago in 2005, 187 in 2010 and 178 in 2015. As depicted in Table 1, suicide rates in Chicago are comparable to other large cities, although Chicago's suicide rate decreased over time as New York City's and Los Angeles' suicide rates increased. The suicide rates per 100,000 people in the City of Chicago were 7.18, 6.93 and 6.54 in 2005, 2010 and 2015, respectively.

RATE PER 100,000

A rate, or per capita value, helps compare values among groups of different sizes. To find out if, for example, one city has higher levels of murder than another, you need to determine a *per capita* murder rate. That is, the number of murders *for each person in that group*. The homicide rate in the City of Chicago was determined by dividing the number of homicides by the total population of the city for that year. To keep from using a small decimal, statisticians typically multiply the result by 100,000, and give the result as the *number of homicides per 100,000 people*. (Adapted from RobertNiles.com)

Table 1. Suicide rates per 100,000: Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles

CITY	2005	2010	2015
Chicago	7.2	6.9	6.5
New York City	6.0	6.1	6.7*
Los Angeles	7.1	8.1	7.8**

*2014 estimate used

**2013 estimate used

Table 2 shows suicide rates per 100,000 in the City of Chicago by sex, race/ethnicity and age group at each time point. In both 2005 and 2010, suicide rates among males were four times higher than for females; in 2015, rates were three times higher than those of females. Caucasians had the highest suicide rate compared to African Americans and Latinos at each time point. In 2005, victims 65 years and older had the highest rates of suicide. For 2010 and 2015, the highest rates of suicide occurred among 55- to 64-year-olds.

Table 2. Suicide rates per 100,000 in the City of Chicago over time by sex, race/ethnicity and age group

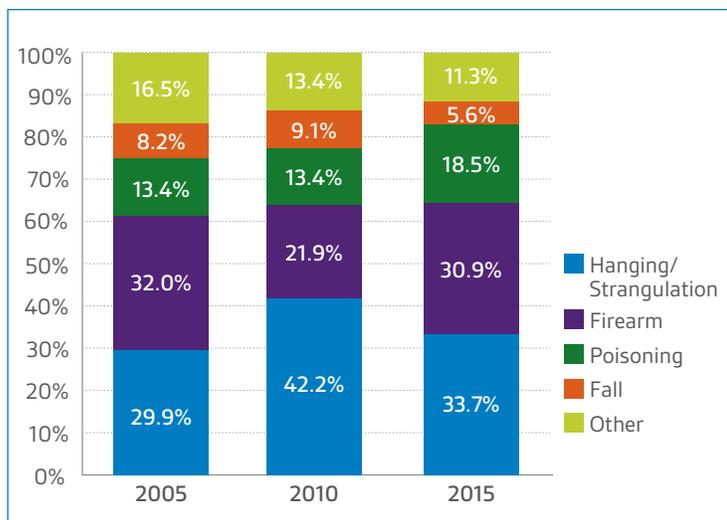
CATEGORY	2005	2010	2015
SEX			
Male	11.5 (n=150)	11.0 (n=144)	10.2 (n=134)
Female	3.1 (n=44)	3.1 (n=43)	3.1 (n=44)
RACE/ETHNICITY			
Caucasian	14.4 (n=118)	13.6 (n=116)	12.6 (n=109)
African American	4.6 (n=43)	3.1 (n=28)	4.3 (n=36)
Latino	2.8 (n=22)	3.9 (n=30)	3.5 (n=28)
AGE GROUP*			
15 to 24	6.4 (n=24)	4.9 (n=20)	6.1 (n=23)
25 to 34	8.7 (n=40)	7.7 (n=39)	7.4 (n=39)
35 to 44	10.3 (n=41)	9.9 (n=37)	8.1 (n=31)
45 to 54	9.9 (n=34)	10.3 (n=35)	9.1 (n=30)
55 to 64	8.6 (n=21)	11.9 (n=32)	10.1 (n=29)
65+	12.3 (n=34)	8.9 (n=24)	7.7 (n=24)

*Age group 10-14 years not shown due to insufficient number of cases

Suicides by hanging/strangulation and poison increased from 2005 to 2015, and suicides by firearm and falls decreased from 2005 to 2015.

In 2005, the means most often used by suicide victims in the City of Chicago was firearms. However, from 2005 to 2010, there was a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of suicide victims who died by firearm, and a statistically significant increase in the proportion of suicide victims who died by hanging/strangulation. In both 2010 and 2015, the most common method of suicide in the City of Chicago was hanging/strangulation (Figure 1). Compared to the City of Chicago, the proportion of suicide victims in the United States overall who die by firearm is markedly higher: 52%, 51% and 50% in 2005, 2010 and 2014, respectively (WISQARS, CDC).

Figure 1. Proportion of suicide means in the City of Chicago over time



*Statistically significant increase in suicide by hanging/strangulation from 2005 to 2010

**Statistically significant decrease in suicide by firearm from 2005 to 2010

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



No matter what problems you are dealing with, we want to help you find a reason to keep living. By calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** you'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7.

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Illinois Department of Public Health



Suicide prevention resources

dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/suicide-prevention

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



Our mission: Save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide.

We've set a bold goal to reduce the annual suicide rate in the U.S. 20 percent by 2025.

afsp.org/about-suicide/

CONTACT INFORMATION

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