



GUN VIOLENCE FACT SHEET: SHOOTING INCIDENTS INVOLVING *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

Background

The Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) has been shown to be an effective tool for reducing community gun violence in jurisdictions across the country.¹ GVRS uses data-driven identification to bring services to individuals at the very highest risk for involvement in gun violence as victims or suspects.

A Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA) is commonly used within GVRS as a first step toward data-driven identification. GVPAs use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, predominantly from law enforcement agencies, to understand the people, gangs/groups, places, and circumstances at highest risk for gun violence, especially community violence, in a given jurisdiction.

While GVPAs are primarily used to understand dynamics surrounding community violence, their data can also provide important insights into other forms of gun violence, such as domestic violence. This brief uses GVPA data to examine domestic violence shootings across three cities: Indianapolis, Indiana; Memphis, Tennessee; and Knoxville, Tennessee. While domestic violence related shootings are a small portion of all shootings in these jurisdictions, it is important to explore and better understand what the data tells us about these cases.

¹ [Gun Violence Reduction Strategy](#)



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Across the United States, there are variations in how domestic violence is defined. Despite the fact that domestic violence and intimate partner violence are often used interchangeably, many states define domestic violence to include a number of familial and interpersonal relationships, including parents and children, current and former cohabitants, and an array of different family members.² Domestic violence can include coercive control, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and/or financial abuse.³ For this analysis, which focuses only on fatal and nonfatal domestic violence shootings, NICJR has defined domestic violence broadly, to include violence involving many types of domestic relationships, such as children, parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, roommates, former partners, and others with similar relationships.

² [National Conference of State Legislators: Domestic Violence/Domestic Abuse Definitions and Relationships](#)

³ [Learn More About Abuse](#)

Domestic Violence Shootings are Particularly Deadly

The prevalence of fatal and nonfatal domestic violence shootings varied considerably across the three cities.⁴ Despite this variation, in all three locations, homicides were about twice as likely as nonfatal shootings to be related to domestic violence. Domestic violence shootings do not make up the majority of shootings, but shootings related to domestic violence are much more likely to be deadly than shootings related to other circumstances.



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Percentage of Shootings That
Were Domestic Violence
Incidents, Knoxville 2022–2024

Knoxville



Fatal Shootings (n=82)

16

19.51%

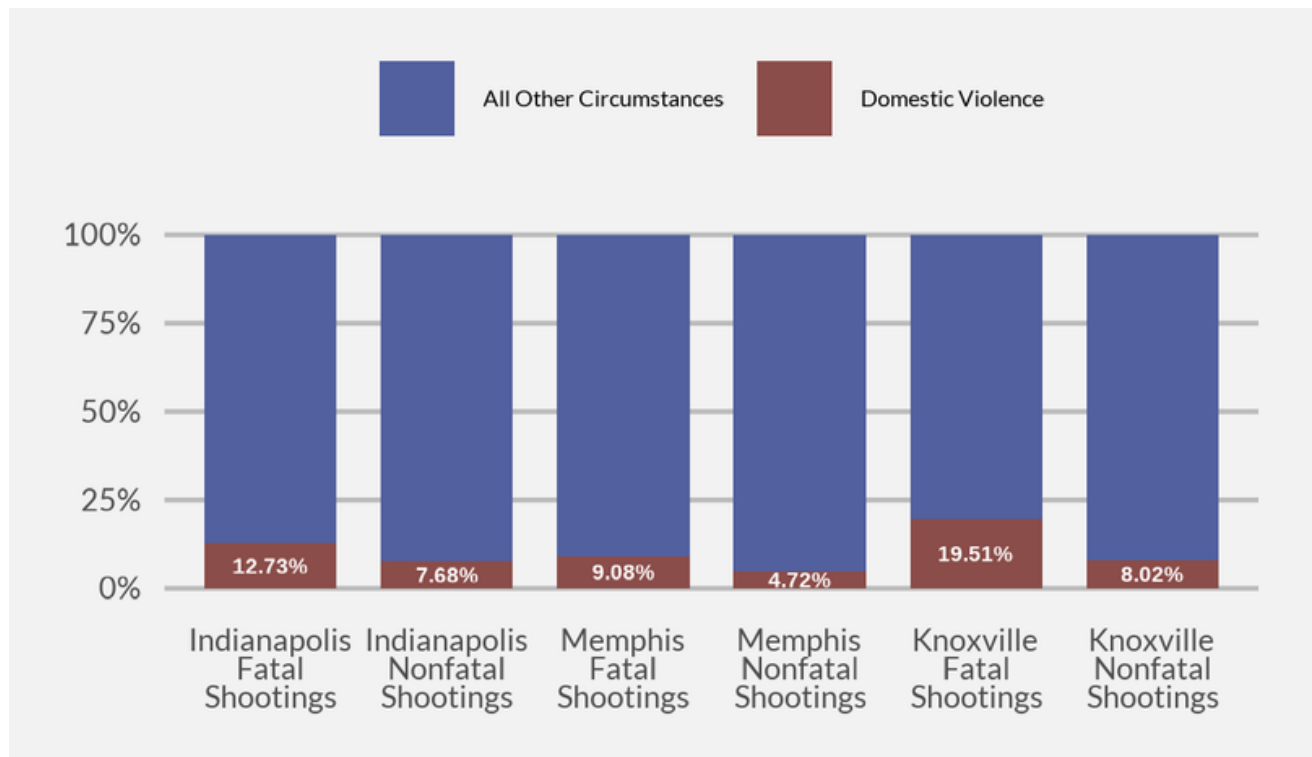
Nonfatal Shootings (n=162)

13

8.02%

⁴ See Methods for more information about data used for this analysis.

Figure 1. Percentage of Shootings That Were Domestic Violence Incidents



Domestic Violence Shootings are Much Less Demographically Concentrated than Community Violence Incidents

Women and Girls Make Up a Larger Percentage of Individuals Involved in Domestic Violence Shootings Compared to Community Violence Shootings

Consistent with other kinds of gun violence, men are involved in domestic violence shootings much more often than women. Across all three cities and both types of shootings, the vast majority of domestic violence shooting suspects are men. Perhaps more surprisingly, men also constitute the majority of nonfatal domestic violence shooting victims in two out of three cities and half of nonfatal domestic violence shooting victims in the third. While women do account for the majority of fatal domestic violence shooting victims in two out of the three cities, the percentage of men who are victims is much higher than common narratives about domestic violence convey. As discussed further below, this pattern reflects the wide variety of familial and domestic relationships in which these shootings occur.

Figure 2. Sex of Domestic Violence Shooting Victims

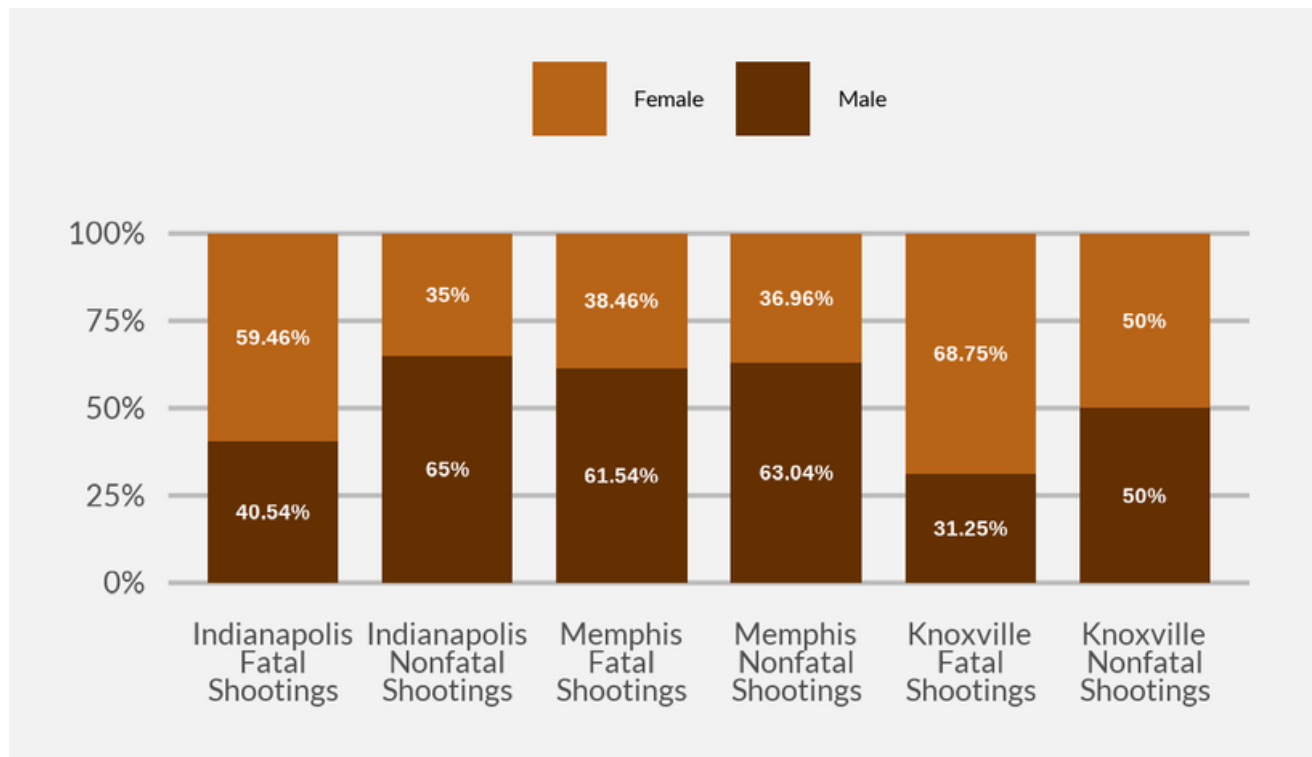
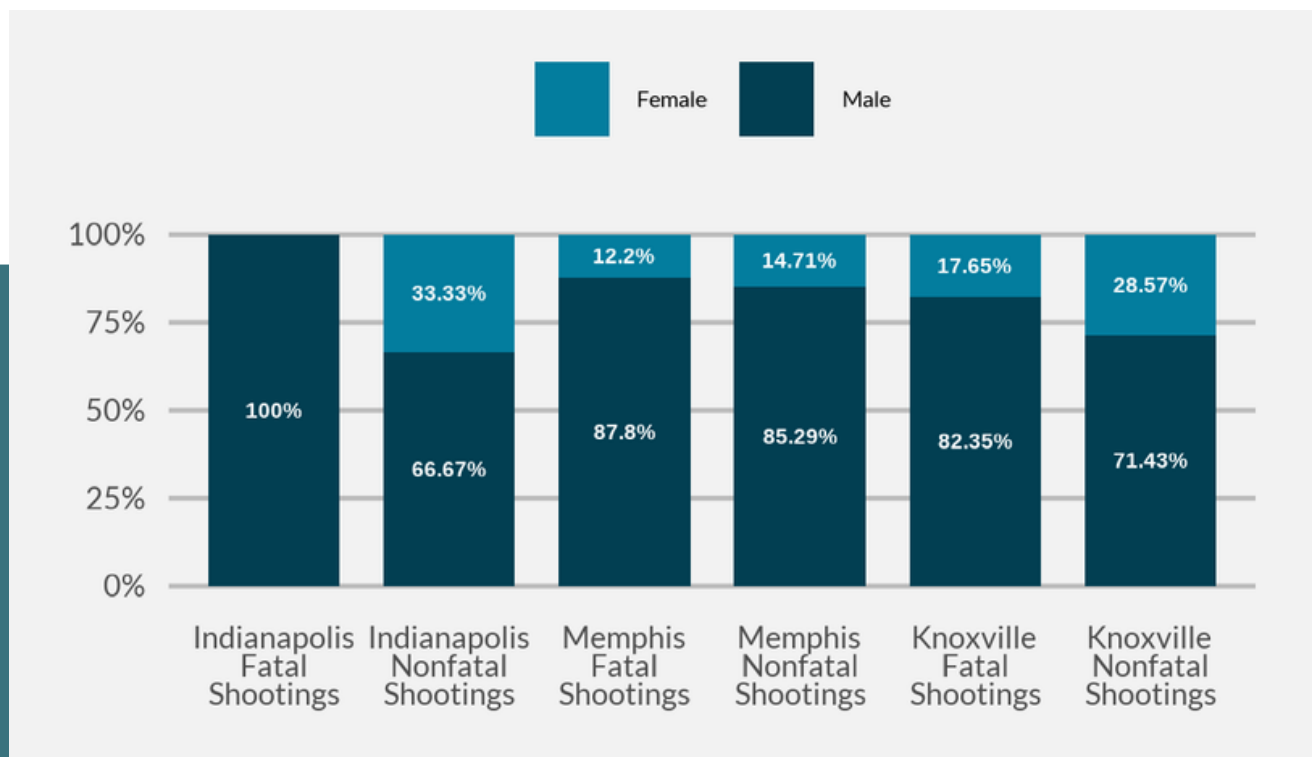


Figure 3. Sex of Domestic Violence Shooting Suspects



Relationships Between Victims and Suspects in Domestic Violence Shootings are More Complex Than Indicated in Common Narratives

Fatal domestic violence shootings most often involve a male suspect and a female victim, followed by cases involving male suspects and male victims. This is different from community violence, where the vast majority of shootings occur between two or more men.

Nonfatal domestic violence shootings, however, vary more in the sex of the suspects and victims involved. In Indianapolis, most incidents involved a male suspect and male victim, while in Memphis and Knoxville, incidents more often involved male suspects and female victims.

When women are suspects in domestic violence shootings, the victims are almost always men. However, when men are suspects in domestic violence shootings, women are only slightly more often victims than men.

Table 1. Sex of Victims and Suspects in Fatal Domestic Violence Shootings

	Indianapolis		Memphis		Knoxville	
	Female Suspect	Male Suspect	Female Suspect	Male Suspect	Female Suspect	Male Suspect
Female Victim	-	60.71%	2.70%	45.95%	-	62.50%
Male Victim	-	39.29%	10.81%	40.54%	18.75%	18.75%

Table 2. Sex of Victims and Suspects in Nonfatal Domestic Violence Shootings

	Indianapolis		Memphis		Knoxville	
	Female Suspect	Male Suspect	Female Suspect	Male Suspect	Female Suspect	Male Suspect
Female Victim	-	25.00%	4.35%	43.48%	-	50.00%
Male Victim	33.33%	41.67%	13.04%	39.13%	28.57%	21.43%

While specific victim-suspect relationships were not formally documented for analysis, the interview process used to identify domestic violence shootings revealed that these incidents frequently occur between parents and children, siblings, roommates, and LGBTQ+ partners, as well as within complex "love triangles" involving current, former, or prospective partners.⁵

Domestic Gun Violence Impacts People Across All Demographic Groups—But Black Individuals are Overrepresented

Across the three cities, there was little consistency in the racial breakdown of individuals involved in domestic firearm violence. In Indianapolis and Knoxville, people involved in domestic gun violence were more often White compared to Memphis, patterns that are consistent with overall city demographics. Knoxville also had the largest proportion of Latino individuals involved in domestic violence shootings, despite having the lowest proportion of Latino residents among the three cities.⁶

Consistent with analyses of community gun violence more broadly, domestic violence shootings disproportionately impact Black people in all three cities, although they are less racially concentrated than other types of shootings.⁷

Black Population Percentage vs. Fatal Domestic Violence Shooting Victims, Indianapolis

% of Population That Is Black



27.9%

% of Fatal Domestic Violence Shooting Victims Who Are Black



72.9%

Indianapolis

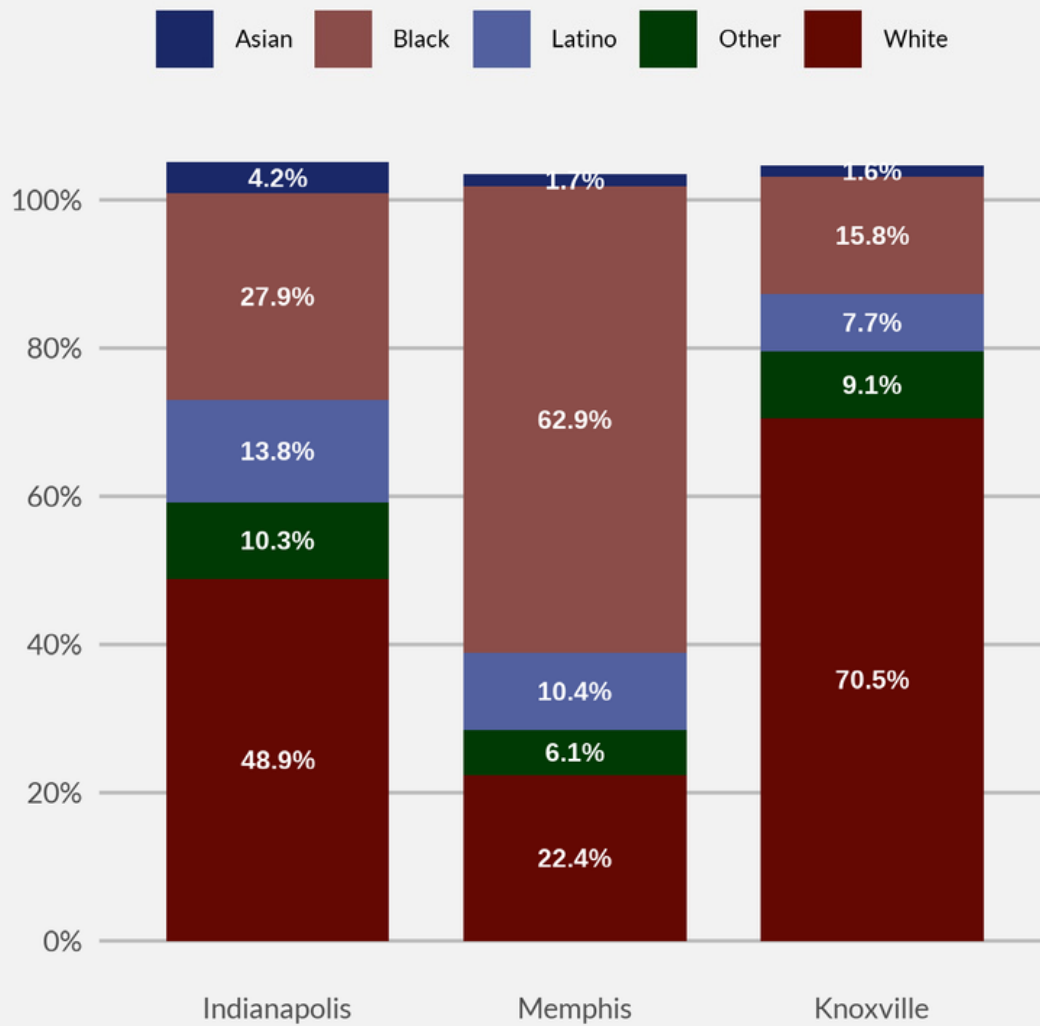


⁵ See Methods for more information on the interview process.

⁶ Census Bureau QuickFacts: Indianapolis, Knoxville, Memphis

⁷ To see overall shooting dynamics in all three cities, see NICJR's Gun Violence Problem Analyses for each city, [here](#).

Figure 4. Indianapolis, Memphis, and Knoxville City Race/Ethnicity Demographics^{8,9}



⁸ U.S. Census Bureau

⁹ Totals exceed 100% because Latino individuals are counted both as Latino and an additional race category other than White.

Figure 5. Race/Ethnicity of Domestic Violence Shooting Victims

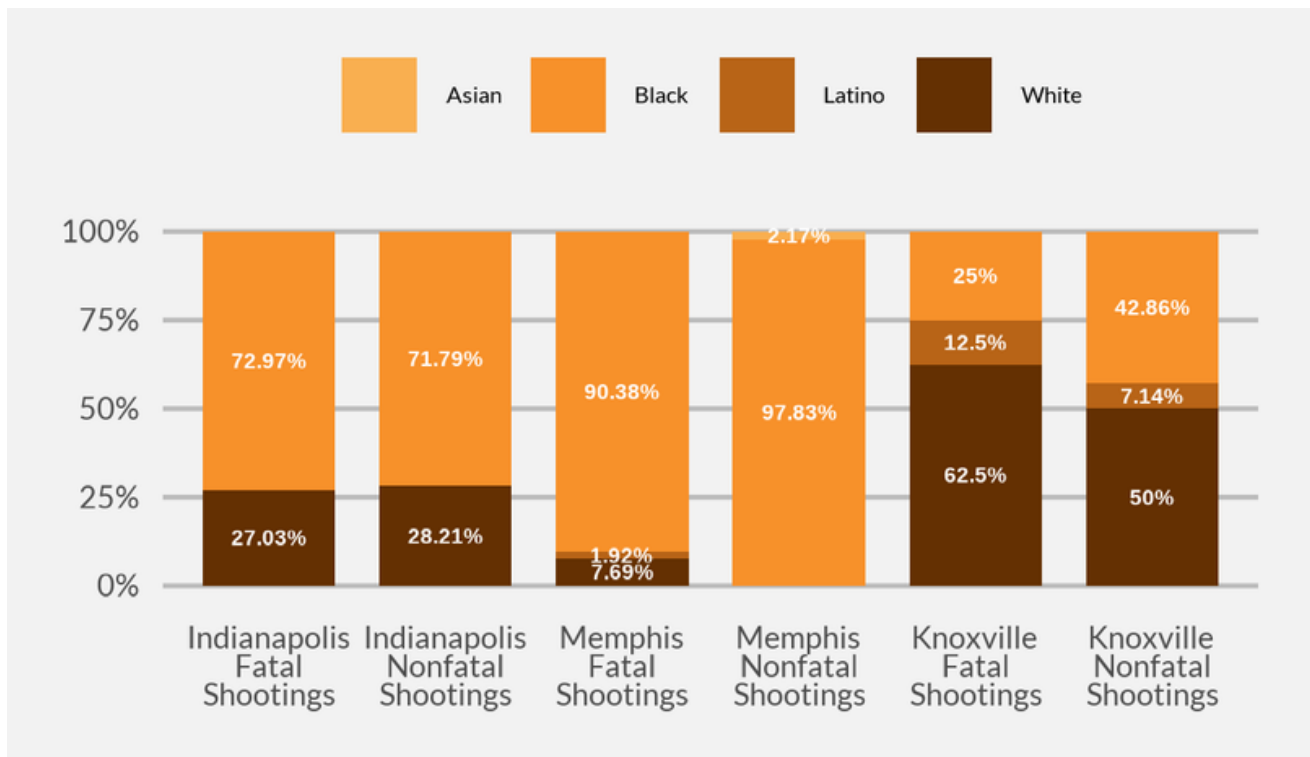
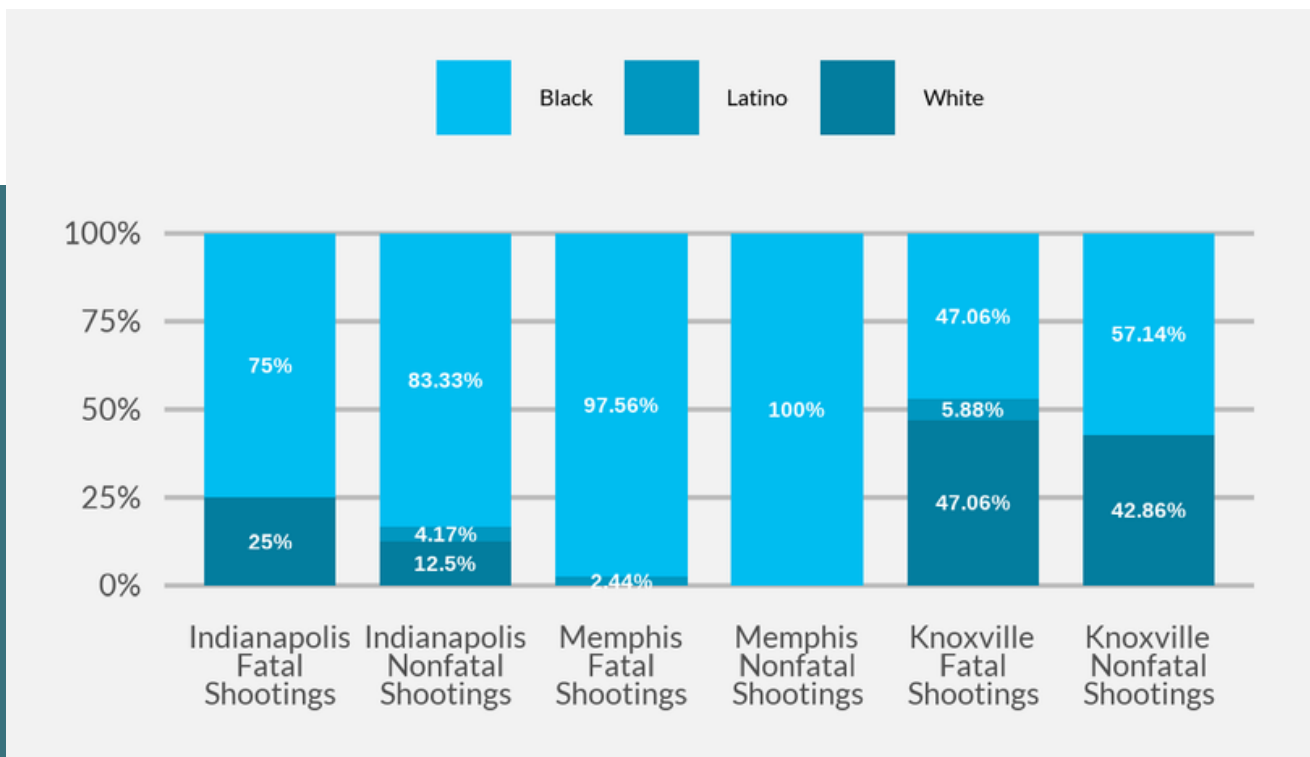


Figure 6. Race/Ethnicity of Domestic Violence Shooting Suspects



People Involved in Domestic Violence Shootings are Older Than Those Involved in Other Types of Shootings

Individuals involved in domestic violence shootings tend to be older than individuals involved in shootings as a whole. These shootings rarely involve youth, and they often involve individuals over 35 years old.

In all three cities, individuals involved in domestic violence homicides were older than 35, on average, while individuals involved in nonfatal domestic violence shootings were, on average, in their early to mid-thirties.

Individuals 55 and older are involved in gun violence relatively infrequently, but they do constitute a greater percentage of individuals involved in domestic violence-related shootings than those involved in shootings related to other circumstances.

Table 3. Age of Domestic Violence Shooting Victims

Age Range	Indianapolis		Memphis		Knoxville	
	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings
17 and Under	2.70%	2.50%	5.77%	6.52%	-	-
18–24	10.81%	32.50%	15.38%	23.91%	31.25%	35.71%
25–34	32.43%	32.50%	34.62%	28.26%	6.25%	14.29%
35–44	21.62%	22.50%	17.31%	23.91%	18.75%	14.29%
45–54	13.51%	5.00%	15.38%	6.52%	37.50%	35.71%
55 and Older	18.92%	5.00%	11.54%	10.87%	6.25%	-
Average Age	39.51	31.52	35.54	34.35	38.06	35

Table 4. Age of Domestic Violence Shooting Suspects

Age Range	Indianapolis		Memphis		Knoxville	
	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings	Fatal Shootings	Nonfatal Shootings
17 and Under	6.67%	-	2.44%	6.45%	-	-
18–24	10.00%	31.25%	17.07%	19.35%	29.41%	7.69%
25–34	43.33%	31.25%	34.15%	35.48%	23.53%	30.77%
35–44	13.33%	15.62%	31.71%	19.35%	5.88%	30.77%
45–54	10.00%	15.62%	4.88%	12.90%	11.76%	23.08%
55 and Older	16.67%	6.25%	9.76%	6.45%	29.41%	7.69%
Average Age	37.77	33.56	35.39	34.68	38.35	37.38

Individuals Involved in Domestic Gun Violence are More Likely Than Not to be Known to the Criminal Justice System

Individuals involved in domestic violence shootings, whether as victims or suspects, have often been previously arrested.¹⁰ This means that individuals who are at high risk for domestic violence shootings may have similar backgrounds or risk factors as those involved in community gun violence.

This also shows that, while domestic violence is often thought of as occurring within the home or being hidden, the individuals involved in domestic violence shootings are often already known to the criminal justice system by the time a shooting occurs, and therefore may be identifiable as high-risk for gun violence involvement.

In two of the three cities, suspects in fatal shootings were more likely to have a prior arrest than suspects in nonfatal shootings. For victims, those involved in nonfatal shootings were more likely to have a prior arrest in all three cities.

Importantly, this analysis only shows the frequency of any previous criminal history; it does not describe the level or type of prior involvement such as type and number of prior arrests, previous incarceration, or previous supervision history. Given the patterns identified here, a deeper analysis of the prior justice involvement of those involved in domestic violence shootings is warranted.

¹⁰ Indianapolis arrest history only dated back to 2019, and Memphis arrest history only dated back to 2018. As such, these are likely underestimates of prior criminal justice system involvement.



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Figure 7. Percentage of Domestic Violence Shooting Victims Who Have a Prior Arrest

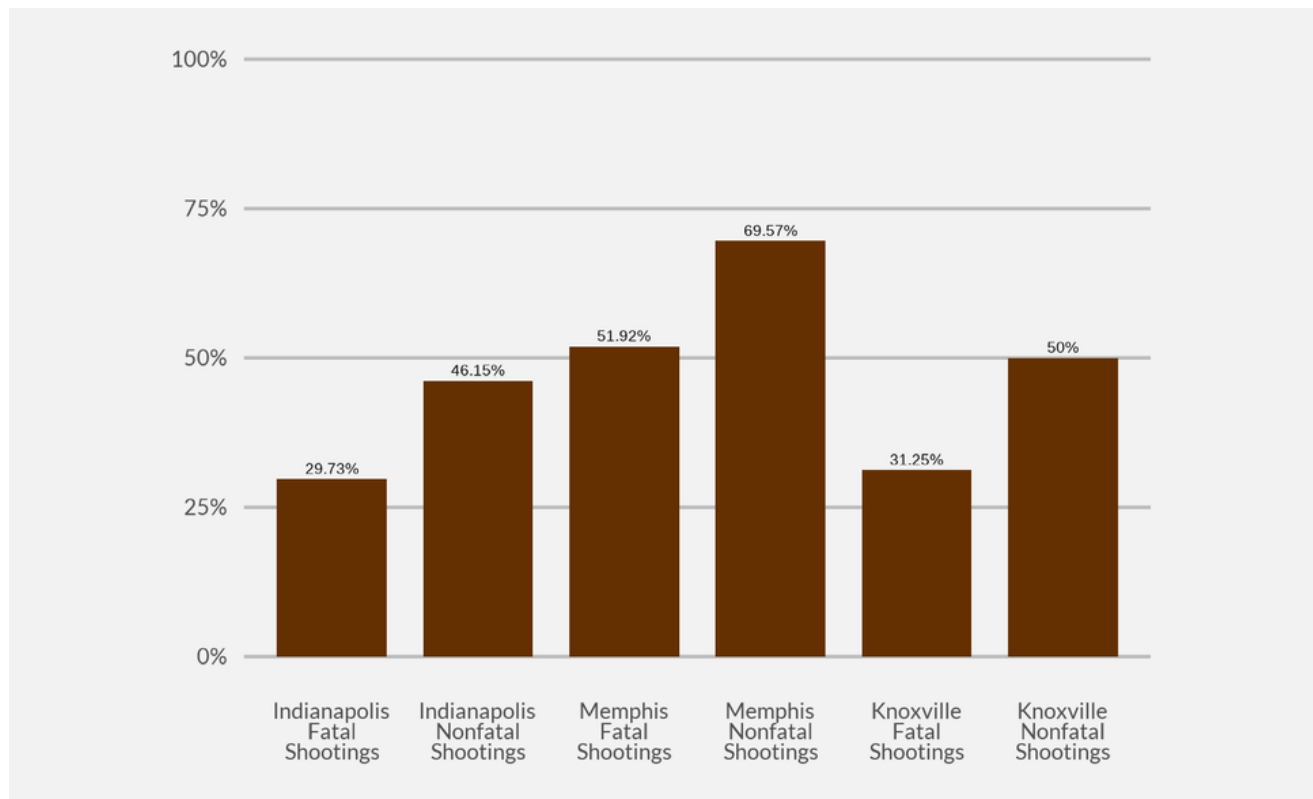
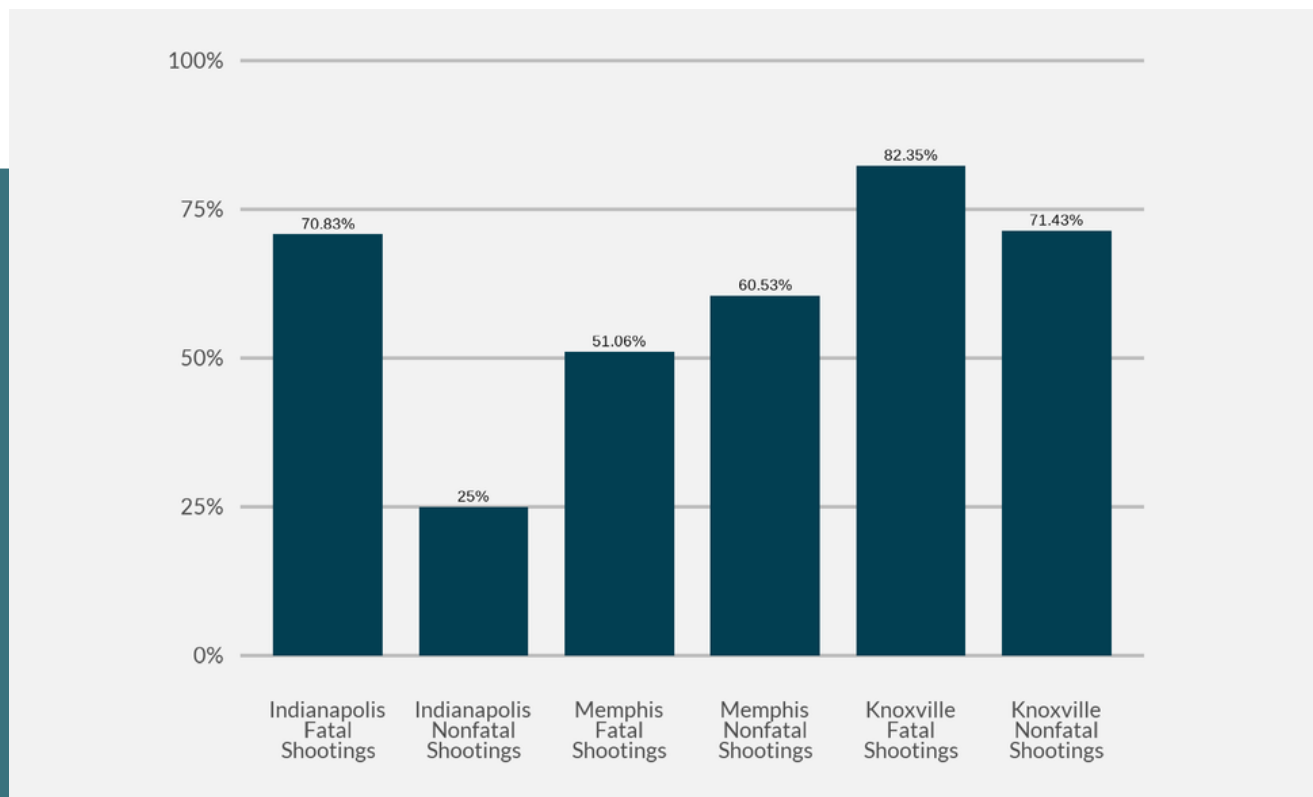
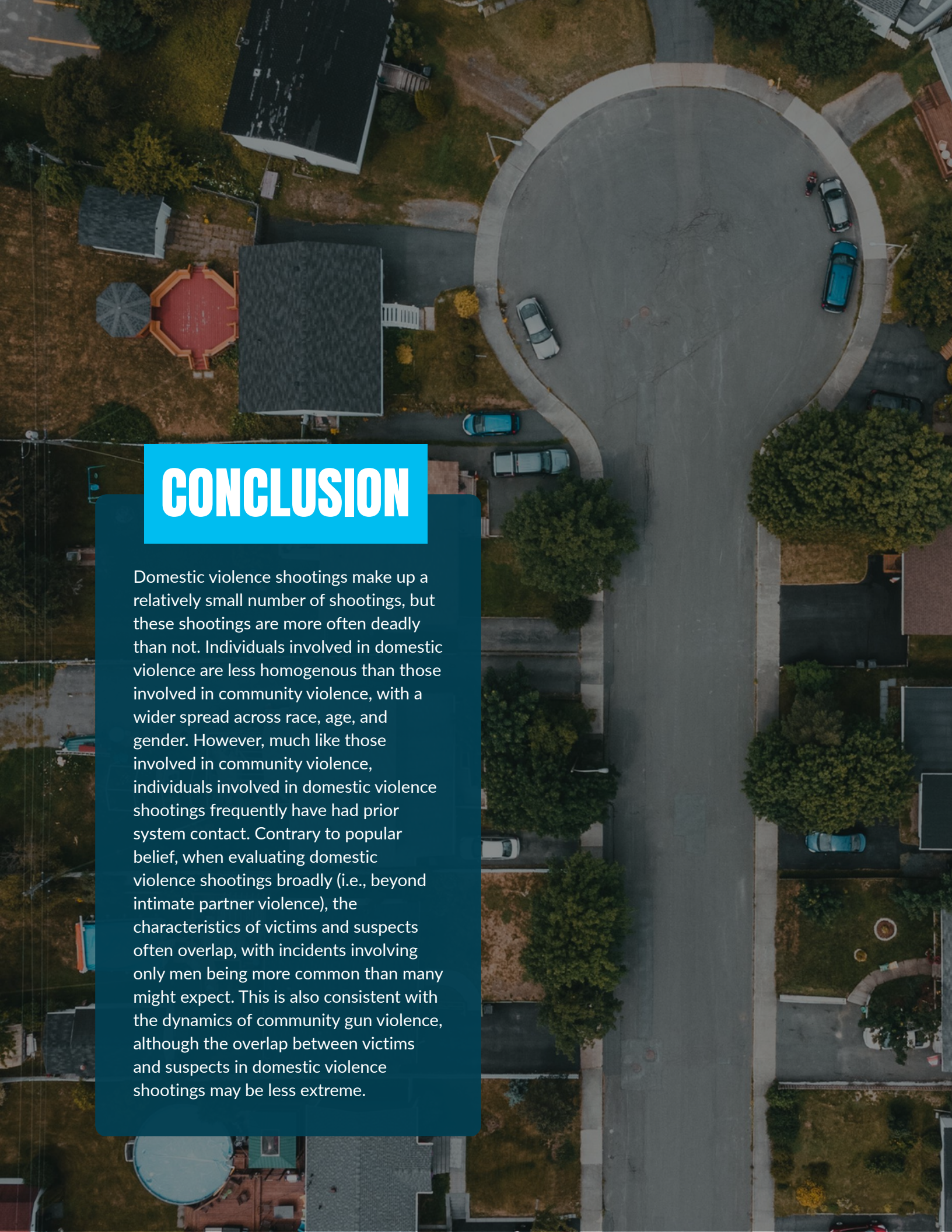


Figure 8. Percentage of Domestic Violence Shooting Suspects Who Have a Prior Arrest





CONCLUSION

Domestic violence shootings make up a relatively small number of shootings, but these shootings are more often deadly than not. Individuals involved in domestic violence are less homogenous than those involved in community violence, with a wider spread across race, age, and gender. However, much like those involved in community violence, individuals involved in domestic violence shootings frequently have had prior system contact. Contrary to popular belief, when evaluating domestic violence shootings broadly (i.e., beyond intimate partner violence), the characteristics of victims and suspects often overlap, with incidents involving only men being more common than many might expect. This is also consistent with the dynamics of community gun violence, although the overlap between victims and suspects in domestic violence shootings may be less extreme.



METHODS

In 2025, NICJR completed a series of analyses of gun violence dynamics across three cities: Indianapolis, Indiana; Memphis, Tennessee; and Knoxville, Tennessee. Indianapolis data included firearm homicides from January 2022 – December 2023 and nonfatal shootings from January 2023 – December 2023. Memphis data included firearm homicides from July 2022 – June 2024 and nonfatal shootings September 2023 – July 2024. Knoxville data included homicides and nonfatal shootings from January 2022 – December 2024. As a part of these analyses, researchers interviewed law enforcement officers about the fatal and nonfatal shooting cases they investigated over the previous two or three years to gain insight into the circumstances that led to these shootings. Based on these interviews, researchers coded the circumstances of each incident, including domestic violence incidents. Importantly, these incidents were coded based upon case summaries, not charging decisions. Additionally, these cases involve any type of domestic violence, not only intimate partner violence. Some cases were not coded by circumstance due to insufficient information or because the lead detective was unavailable for interview. These cases were excluded here.

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7/365. Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or Text START to 88788.