NICJR
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform

Snohomish County, Washington
GUN VIOLENCE PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Summary Report | January 2023 – December 2024



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Introduction

Snohomish County, Washington, sits just north of Seattle, less than 200 miles south of the Canadian border. The county is home to 864,113 residents spread across 20 cities and towns and four tribal lands. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Snohomish, like much of the country, experienced a significant rise in violence. In 2019, the county experienced 11 homicides;[1] by 2022, that number more than doubled to 23. Homicides remained elevated through 2023 (with 25 homicides), but began to trend downward again in 2024, when there were 17 homicides. While this decline is promising, violence remains elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Snohomish County has consistently maintained a homicide rate below the state average, even when homicides increased significantly (Table 1). While the county has a relatively low homicide rate overall, homicides are highly concentrated geographically, and the City of Everett, where the majority of Snohomish County homicides occur, has consistently had a far higher rate than the rest of the county or state. In 2022, when homicides in Snohomish County surged, the homicide rate in Everett was more than double the state rate.

Table 1. Homicide Rates in Washington State and Snohomish County, 2019–2024[2]

Year	Washington	Snohomish County	Everett
2019	2.53	1.27	5.31
2020	3.79	1.39	3.54
2021	4.08	1.39	3.54
2022	4.83	2.66	10.62
2023	4.72	2.89	9.73
2024	3.92	1.97	5.31

In 2025, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) was commissioned by the Washington State Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention under the Department of Commerce to conduct a Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA) in Snohomish County in partnership with the county's Community Safety Council (CSC). The CSC is composed of individuals who are knowledgeable about gun violence in Snohomish County and work across sectors including public health, education, community-based organizations, public defense, and law enforcement as well as community members who have been directly impacted by gun

[1] Crime in Washington Annual Reports, 2019–2024
[2] Tribal lands data are not included due to data unavailability.

violence. A GVPA is a set of analytical exercises designed to support the implementation of violence reduction strategies by analyzing the people, places, and networks at greatest risk for violence.[3]

This analysis examined all firearm homicides and aggravated assaults with a firearm in Snohomish County across two years, from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024.[4] The 28 homicide incidents involved 28 unique victims and 36 suspects. The 569 aggravated assaults with a firearm involved 838 victims and 603 suspects.[5] This analysis examines the characteristics of these incidents and the individuals involved.[6]

Before summarizing findings, it is important to define several terms used throughout this report:

- **Homicide**: A criminal homicide in which a killing was intentional or due to criminal negligence (i.e., murder). Only homicides using a firearm are included unless otherwise noted.
- **Aggravated Assault with a Firearm**: An incident in which a physical attack on a person occurred with a firearm and resulted in a documented physical injury requiring medical treatment,[7] regardless of the manner of victim injury. This can include incidents in which individuals were shot (nonfatal shootings) as well as incidents where an assault was committed but no shots were fired.
- **Group**: A wide range of dynamics and structures present in criminally active street groups. Individuals at high risk for violence are likely to associate within particular groups and social networks, ranging from more highly organized, formal gangs to more loosely associated, informal neighborhood crews and cliques.
- **Suspect**: A person arrested and/or a person of interest for a nonfatal shooting or homicide.

Victims and Suspects of Gun Violence

Demographics

The age of individuals involved in firearm homicides and aggravated assaults with a firearm in Snohomish County varies widely, though the figures are similar across the two types of gun violence. These individuals are, on average, in their late 20s to early 30s and most commonly

[3] Gun Violence Problem Analyses typically include analysis of criminal history data for individuals involved in gun violence. Criminal history data were not available for this analysis.
[4] A GVPA typically only evaluates firearm homicides and nonfatal injury shootings. In Snohomish County, NICJR evaluated all aggravated assaults with a firearm, including both nonfatal injury shootings and incidents involving non-shooting injuries, due to data limitations that did not allow for parsing of nonfatal shootings and aggravated assaults.
[5] Emergency medical services data from the Washington State Injury and Violence Data Dashboard showed that 40 individuals were hospitalized for an assaultive firearm injury in 2023 and 2024, indicating the majority of aggravated assaults with a firearm do not result in a shooting requiring hospitalization.
[6] Methodology, including data sources and limitations, is discussed in Data and Methods below.
[7] Washington State Legislature 137-25-025

18–44 years old. Adults account for the vast majority of individuals involved in these forms of gun violence, although Snohomish County does have a higher than usual percentage of youth under 18 involved in homicides. In interviews, law enforcement and representatives from community-based organizations noted that the age of those involved in gun violence ranges widely, from 13–50 years old, which is approximately consistent with law enforcement data.

Table 2. Shooting Suspects and Victims: Age[8]

	Homicide		Aggravated Assault w/ a Firearm	
Age	Victims (N=27)	Suspects (N=36)	Victims (N=828)	Suspects (N=432)
17 and under	18.52%	30.56%	15.94%	13.89%
18–24	3.70%	30.56%	17.15%	25.46%
25–34	22.22%	27.78%	21.50%	26.39%
35–44	37.04%	8.33%	21.01%	20.60%
45–54	14.81%	2.78%	12.80%	6.71%
55+	3.70%	-	11.59%	6.94%
Mean	34.63	24.06	33.84	30.80

Individuals involved in Snohomish County gun violence are most often men. Women are rarely involved in gun violence, but when they are, they are most often victims of aggravated assaults. While women and girls are rarely involved as victims and suspects, interviews indicated that they are often involved in other ways, such as being a party to or subject of disputes, or through ties to gangs and groups involved in gun violence incidents.

Table 3. Shooting Suspects and Victims: Sex

	Homicide		Aggravated Assault w/ a Firearm	
Sex	Victims (N=26)	Suspects (N=36)	Victims (N=838)	Suspects (N=603)
Female	15.38%	5.56%	32.82%	8.29%
Male	84.62%	94.44%	67.18%	91.71%

[8] Variations in data availability contributed to differences in sample sizes (n's) across the analyses.

Individuals involved in Snohomish County gun violence are most often Latino or White. Black and Latino individuals are overrepresented compared to the county's population, while White individuals' involvement is consistent with, or less than, their share of the county population.

Table 4. Suspects and Victims in Shootings: Race

	Homicide		Aggravated Assault w/ a Firearm		
Race	Victims (N=26)	Suspects (N=35)	Victims (N=763)	Suspects (N=555)	County Population
American Indian-Alaskan Native	-	-	0.26%	1.26%	1.70%
Asian	-	2.86%	5.90%	2.34%	16.30%
Black	11.54%	14.29%	9.17%	26.13%	4.60%
Hawaiian-Pacific Islander	-	-	0.39%	1.44%	0.70%
Latino	19.23%	62.86%	22.94%	21.98%	12.70%
Middle Eastern / North African	-	-	0.52%	0.18%	-
Multiracial	-	-	2.10%	1.08%	5.40%
Non-Hispanic White	69.23%	20.00%	58.72%	45.59%	61.00%

Overview of Gun Violence Incidents

From January 2023 through December 2024, Snohomish County experienced 28 firearm homicides and 569 aggravated assaults with a firearm. The majority of homicides occurred in the Everett Police Department (EPD) jurisdiction, followed by the jurisdiction of the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office (SCSO), while SCSO's jurisdiction experienced the most aggravated assaults, followed by EPD. Police department jurisdictions do not align exactly with city limits. SCSO responds to all incidents in the county that are outside of other police departments' jurisdiction, such as unincorporated areas, as well as incidents in which other departments require additional resources.



Table 5. Overview of Gun Violence Incidents in Snohomish County by Law Enforcement Jurisdiction, January 2023–December 2024

Jurisdiction	Homicides	Aggravated Assaults w/ Firearm	Jurisdiction	Homicides	Aggravated Assaults w/ Firearm
Edmonds Police Department	1	27	Lake Stevens Police Department	-	12
Everett Police Department	15	169	Mill Creek Police Department	-	13
Lynnwood Police Department	2	37	Monroe Police Department	-	4
Marysville Police Department	2	58	Mountlake Terrace Police Department	-	20
Snohomish County Sheriff's Office	8	181	Mukilteo Police Department	-	9
Arlington Police Department	-	21	Snohomish Police Department	-	2
Brier Police Department	-	2	Stanwood Police Department	-	2
Gold Bar Police Department	-	4	Sultan Police Department	-	5
Granite Falls Police Department	-	3	Total	28	569

Circumstances of Gun Violence Incidents

Robberies are significant contributors to gun violence in Snohomish County, especially aggravated assaults with a firearm. Law enforcement data showed that one homicide and 200 aggravated assaults with a firearm (35.00%) were related to robberies. Interviewees noted that robberies are common in marijuana shops and on the street. Street robberies are often for items such as clothing and shoes, and they are often motivated more by wanting to show disrespect to the victim than by monetary gain.

Law enforcement data showed that domestic violence accounted for two homicides (7.14%) and 66 aggravated assaults (11.60%). This is consistent with the perception of interviewees, who noted that domestic violence involving guns most often involves threats and rarely escalates to shootings. Court data further supported interviewees' observation, as 18.41% of prosecuted cases in 2023 and 2024 that included firearm-related charges were related to domestic violence; domestic violence incidents make up a larger proportion of incidents that involve guns but do not result in shootings or injuries than homicide and assault incidents.[9] Notably, interviews also indicated that domestic violence incidents in the county frequently do

[9] Only includes cases filed by the prosecutor's office that explicitly include charges related to a firearm such as illegal firearm possession, or assault with a firearm. Not all cases in which a firearm was used in the commission of a crime are ultimately charged with crimes that explicitly reference firearms.

not involve romantic partners. For example, in the last five years there have been multiple shootings between parents and their children. It is also noteworthy that Snohomish County has experienced multiple domestic violence murder-suicide incidents in the last five years.

Interviewees indicated that drugs are a significant driver of gun violence in the county. One person stated, "There's a lot of violence, gun violence specifically, regarding the buying and selling of drugs." This includes robberies of drugs or to obtain money to buy drugs, drug sales that become robberies, and disputes over debts. Fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin are most commonly involved in gun violence incidents, and vapes and marijuana are commonly involved in violence involving youth not old enough to purchase these products legally. Interviewees also noted that unhoused individuals frequently become involved in drug-related gun violence incidents, particularly as victims. Individuals involved in gangs and groups are often also involved in these incidents, through the sale, purchase, and use of drugs.

Gangs, groups, and cliques were identified as the greatest contributor to gun violence in the county, especially for homicides. One interviewee noted, "with gangs, it's shoot to kill," and others indicated that the majority of homicides in recent years have been related to gangs/groups/cliques. Gun violence incidents involving gangs/groups/cliques are often due to disputes over tagging and claiming territory, disrespect, and arguments over women and intimate relationships, or as a way for new members to be initiated into groups.

Drive-by shootings were also discussed as a common way that gangs and groups engage in gun violence, although the majority of these incidents only involve property damage, not injuries or deaths. Law enforcement data indicated that two homicides and 78 aggravated assaults were related to drive-by shootings, although that does not necessarily mean all of those incidents were also gang/group/clique related. Social media also plays a large role in disputes, including perpetuating retaliation and escalating conflicts.

Geography of Gun Violence Incidents

Both law enforcement data and interviews indicated that the majority of gun violence occurs in south Snohomish County. Gun violence is particularly concentrated in the west side of county, especially in and around Everett. The northwest quadrant of the county has also experienced some gun violence, but significantly less than the southwest.

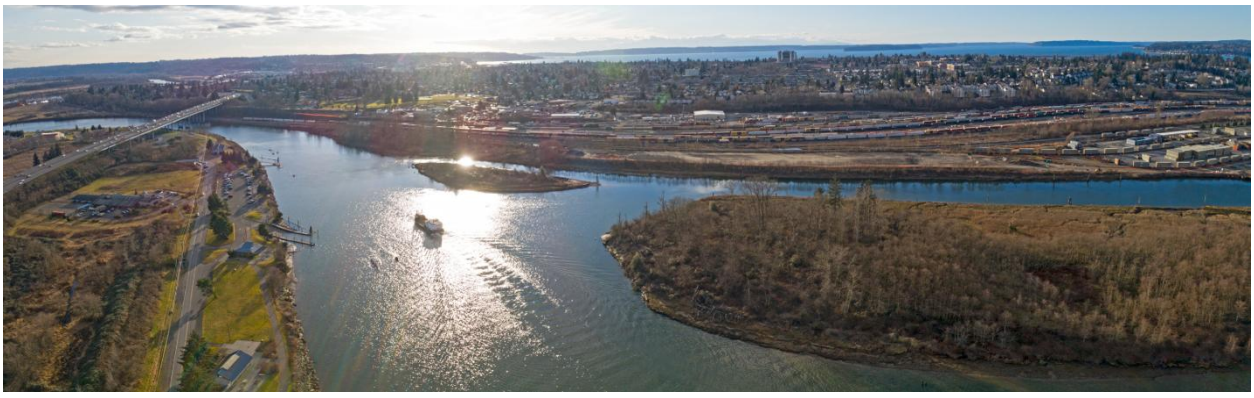


Figure 1. Map of Gun Homicides in Snohomish County, January 2023–December 2024

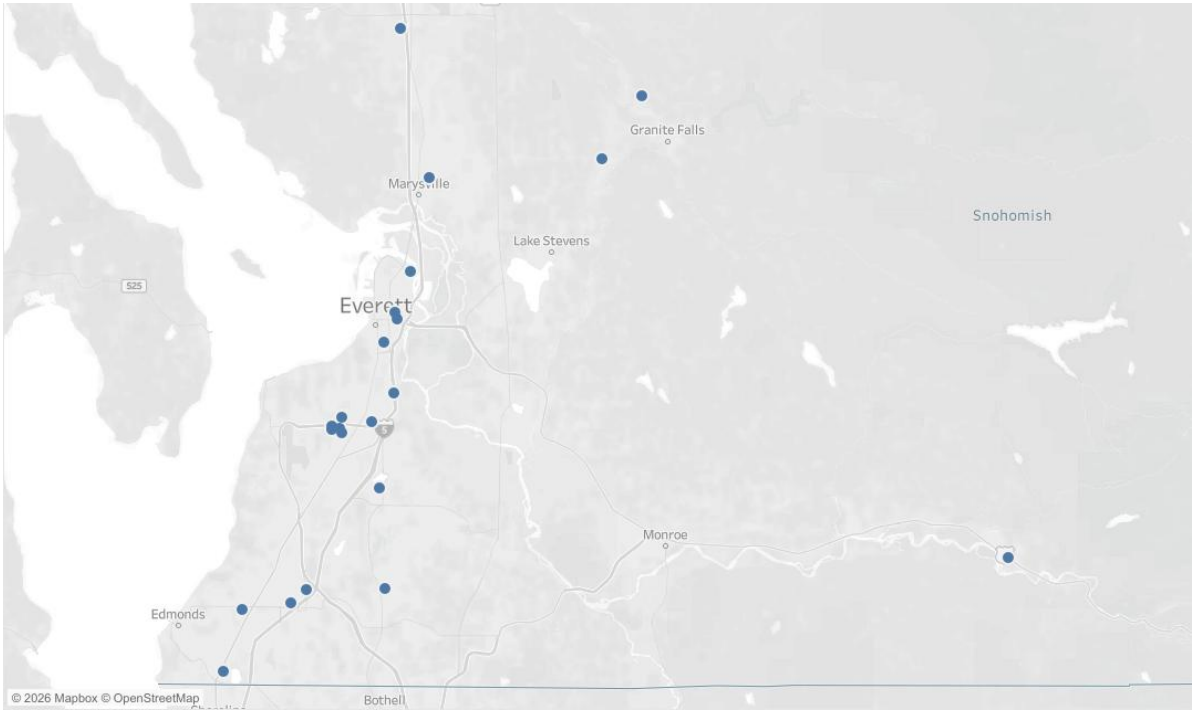
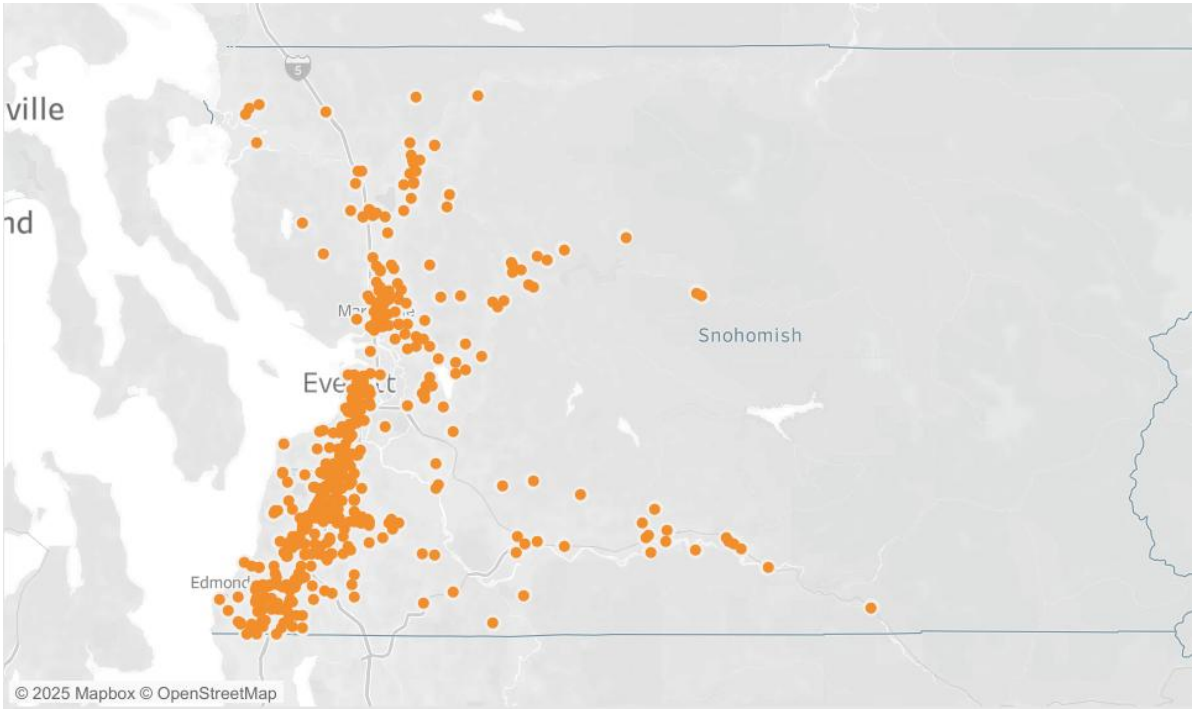


Figure 2. Map of Aggravated Assaults with a Firearm in Snohomish County, January 2023–December 2024



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Place-Based Dynamics

Among the cities in Snohomish County, Everett experienced the most firearm homicides and aggravated assaults with a firearm. Lynnwood and Marysville also experienced higher rates of violence than the rest of the county, with two firearm homicides and more than 50 aggravated assaults with a firearm each. Arlington, Edmonds, Granite Falls, Lake Stevens, Snohomish, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, and Snohomish each experienced more than 10 aggravated assaults with a firearm.

Table 6. Frequency of Gun Violence by City[10]

City	Homicides	Aggravated Assaults w/ Firearm
Arlington	1	32
Bothell	1	6
Edmonds	4	29
Everett	15	229
Gold Bar	1	6
Lake Stevens	1	19
Lynnwood	2	89
Marysville	2	65
Snohomish	1	13
Brier	-	3
Burien	-	1
Granite Falls	-	12
Mill Creek	-	13
Monroe	-	7
Mountlake Terrace	-	20
Mukilteo	-	9
Stanwood	-	5
Sultan	-	8
Unknown	-	3
Total	28	569



[10] Snohomish County Sherriff's Office responded to one incident in Burien, outside of Snohomish County. This incident is included in the analysis.

Areas identified in interviews as most impacted by gun violence included the southern side of the county, Marysville, South Madison Street, Sultan, and reservation lands, although law enforcement data for reservation lands were not available. Everett (especially South Everett) and Lynnwood (especially North Lynnwood), which neighbor one another, were considered highest risk for gun violence. Law enforcement data affirmed this, although those data also revealed that gun violence is concentrated on the west side of the county, which was not reflected in interviews.

Several streets and intersections were specifically indicated as high risk for violence, including 128th Street, 112th street, the intersection of 175th Street and Everett Avenue, 36th Street, 35th Avenue, Highway 99/Pacific Highway, and the 158th Street and Northwest Avenue intersection. Casino Road was most frequently highlighted as a high-risk area in interviews, with one person noting, “people tell me don’t go to Casino Road, it’s dangerous.” However, interviewees also said that much of the violence that occurs on Casino Road is not perpetrated by those who live there, with one interviewee stating, “oftentimes the violence that happens here is brought to Casino Road.” In particular, Bluffs at Evergreen Apartments, which is on Casino Road, has experienced significant violence.

In addition to these areas, Lions Park, Senator Henry M. Jackson Park, and Spruce Park were all indicated as high-risk areas. Affordable housing developments were also noted as high risk.

High-Risk Groups and Networks

According to interviews with law enforcement and practitioners from community-based organizations, the majority of individuals involved in gun violence are group/gang/clique involved. Many of the groups or cliques in the county are homegrown and do not meet the legal definition of a gang. These groups/cliques lack hierarchy and rules, and shootings involving these groups are often reckless. Alliances and rivalries between groups are fluid and often change, as does claimed territory, with groups frequently tagging areas and painting over other groups’ tags. Despite the lack of structure in these groups/cliques, it is generally seen as unacceptable to engage in gun violence against those who are not also involved in groups. Traditional, transnational gangs are also active in the area but are less often involved in gun violence.

Interviewees indicated that the majority of individuals involved in groups and gangs are Latino boys and young men, although boys and young men from Russian and Samoan immigrant communities are also at increased risk of group and gang involvement. Adolescent girls are also involved in groups at a higher rate than is typical, although law enforcement data indicate that girls are rarely involved in gun violence.

Recruitment into groups frequently occurs at schools, specifically with group members waiting behind schools to make contact with youth as they are leaving. While these patterns are concerning, it is important to note that although youth may constitute a high proportion of gang or group members, the majority of gun violence involves adults.

Social media plays a large role in perpetuating and escalating disputes. This occurs through music videos disrespecting other groups, promises of retaliation or bragging about slights, and posts that include taunting and crossing out other groups' tags. This most often occurs on Instagram, Discord, and Snapchat.

Additional Context

Several themes arose during interviews that provide additional context about what community members experience in the county indirectly related to violence. Interviewees explained that Snohomish County has little to no "night life," as residents are fearful of being out at night. Relatedly, bar fights and road rage incidents are common, with tensions rising between residents in recent years. These incidents generally do not result in shootings but do often result in threats or brandishing of firearms. Hate speech has become increasingly common in the county and has been a significant contributor to the rising tension.

Relatedly, northern parts of the county were not considered to be high risk for gun violence, but this area is known for the presence of White supremacist groups, which impacts the overall dynamics of the county. The presence of these groups causes increased exposure to racism and trauma for Black and Brown populations, who are most impacted by gun violence; contributes to rising tensions in the area that might make people quicker to reach for a gun in a dispute that might have otherwise remained nonviolent; and causes Black and Brown residents to not feel, or be, safe living in or visiting north Snohomish County. This dynamic relegates Black and Brown residents to living in south Snohomish County, which experiences both higher violence and lower investment of resources.

Another common theme among interviewees was the ease of access to firearms in the county. This shows up in two ways: frequent illegal possession and frequent legal carrying of firearms. As is common in many areas around the country, guns are often obtained by those too young or otherwise ineligible to purchase them legally by theft (often from cars) or from their own parents. It is also relatively common for teenagers not otherwise involved in violence or groups to steal their parents' firearms and sell them to those who are directly involved in violent crime. These and other guns are often passed around between people and involved in multiple crimes. Illegally owned guns also often come from gun trafficking centered in other nearby cities, such as Seattle. Illegal firearms are frequently used with switches, which allow for many rapid shots but reduced accuracy and may impact whether or not a shooting involves injuries or death.

Snohomish County has a large gun culture. Many residents own guns for home defense, hobbies, and hunting. The prevalence of unsecured guns in cars and homes contributes to the wide availability of stolen and illegally possessed firearms. Residents also often legally carry concealed or open carry firearms in an effort to feel safe. This can sometimes mean that guns are present at a dispute, which may lead to shots fired or gun threats in incidents that would not have otherwise risen to violence.

Interviewees also noted that many youth under the age of 18 lack sufficient supervision outside of school hours. Parents often work multiple jobs, and many families are single-parent households. When youth feel as though they do not belong at home and at school, they are

vulnerable to joining groups and gangs to feel a sense of safety and acceptance. Youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system, particularly through probation, also receive little supervision and support from the system.

Finally, interviewees consistently highlighted the impact of poverty and community disinvestment in the area, pointing out how this varies across the county. The southern part of the county, where the majority of gun violence occurs, also has the highest concentration of poverty. This area has also historically lacked sufficient social services for youth, families, and those at very high risk for gun violence. Several community members have been working toward greater service provision in the area, but often with limited funding and resources. Finally, many services in the area are led by women. Considering the high levels of involvement in gun violence among men and boys, particularly men and boys of color, there is an opportunity for more positive male role models and leaders to engage with very high-risk individuals and at-risk youth.

Data and Methodology

NICJR collaborated with the Snohomish County CSC to develop comprehensive data collection plans for this GVPA that best address the County's specific concerns related to gun violence and leverage the available data. GVPAs typically analyze homicide and nonfatal shooting data, but these analyses are also typically conducted in larger cities with higher incidents of gun violence and greater data infrastructure. The available data did not allow for the parsing of nonfatal shooting incidents and other aggravated assaults with a firearm, so all aggravated assaults were included in this analysis, regardless of whether or not a shooting occurred. Due to Washington privacy laws, deidentified data were utilized for this analysis. Since data were deidentified, they could not be connected to state-level criminal history records.

NICJR analyzed law enforcement data provided by the Snohomish County Sherriff's Office (SCSO), Everett Police Department (EPD), Lynnwood Police Department (LPD), and Marysville Police Department (MPD) for firearm homicides and incidents of aggravated assault with a firearm occurring between January 2023 and December 2024. Data included deidentified demographic information for victims and suspects as well as geographic data for incidents. NICJR also received data from the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office related to charges filed for gun violence incidents. Additionally, NICJR accessed publicly available data regarding emergency medical services for gun injuries and deaths from the Washington State Department of Health Injury and Violence Data Dashboard. In all incident-level analyses, homicides were counted per victim, and aggravated assaults with a firearm were counted by case numbers.

In addition to these quantitative data, NICJR conducted focus groups and interviews with SCSO, EPD, and LPD patrol officers and detectives; leaders and staff at community-based organizations in Snohomish County that work with youth and adults at risk for gun violence involvement; and an emergency room nurse working in the county's trauma hospital.

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Summary of Key Takeaways

Gun violence in Snohomish County occurs most frequently in the southwest side of the county, particularly in and around Everett. Individuals involved in gun violence in the area are most often White or Latino men aged 18–44, although Black men are overrepresented in gun violence. The majority of gun violence in Snohomish County is tied to drugs and groups/gangs/cliques. Shootings often occur due to arguments related to drug debts and robberies; disputes between unorganized, homegrown groups; and robberies largely meant to disrespect victims.



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Appendix A: Zip Codes of High-Risk Areas

Data related to the highest-risk zip codes in Snohomish County are presented here to provide a closer look at the geography of gun violence incidents in Snohomish County—information that is relevant to public health policy. The 98201 zip code experienced the greatest number of homicides and second greatest number of aggravated assaults with a firearm, while 98204 experienced the most aggravated assaults with a firearm. Zip codes 98223, 98087, 98203, 98208, and 98270 each experienced at least 30 aggravated assaults with a firearm.

Table 7. Frequency of Gun Violence by Zip Code

Zip Code	Homicides	Aggravated Assaults w/ Firearm
98012	1	19
98026	4	26
98036	1	28
98037	1	27
98201	6	63
98203	3	40
98204	3	80
98208	3	47
98223	1	33
98251	1	6
98258	1	19
98270	1	49
98271	1	16
98290	1	4
98020	-	3
98043	-	20
98087	-	37
98252	-	11
98272	-	7
98275	-	9
98292	-	6
98294	-	8
98296	-	9
Unknown	-	2
Total	28	569

