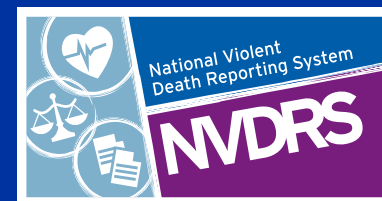# CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)

Violence is a Major Public Health Problem

In the United States, seven people per hour die a violent death. More than **19,000 people were victims of homicide** and almost **45,000 people died by suicide** in 2016 alone. The economic costs are staggering—with suicide costing the U.S. economy **$57 billion** and homicide **$30 billion**, and this is just the costs for medical care and lost work. Other costs, including the emotional toll on victims' families and the costs to the criminal justice system for arrest and incarceration of offenders are substantial and not included in this estimate. Also, many Americans survive violent experiences and are left struggling with long-term physical, psychological, and emotional consequences. Violence erodes entire communities—reducing productivity, decreasing property values, disrupting social services, and making people feel unsafe in the places where they live, work, and learn.

A Comprehensive Look at Violent Deaths

NVDRS covers all types of violent deaths—including homicides and suicides—in all settings and for all age groups. NVDRS includes **over 600 unique data elements** that provide valuable context about violent deaths such as relationship problems; mental health problems and treatment; toxicology results; and life stressors, including recent problems with a job, finances, or physical health problems. Extensive information about the incidents, such as weapons used, characteristics of suspects, and locations where they occurred are included. Such data are far more comprehensive than what is available elsewhere.
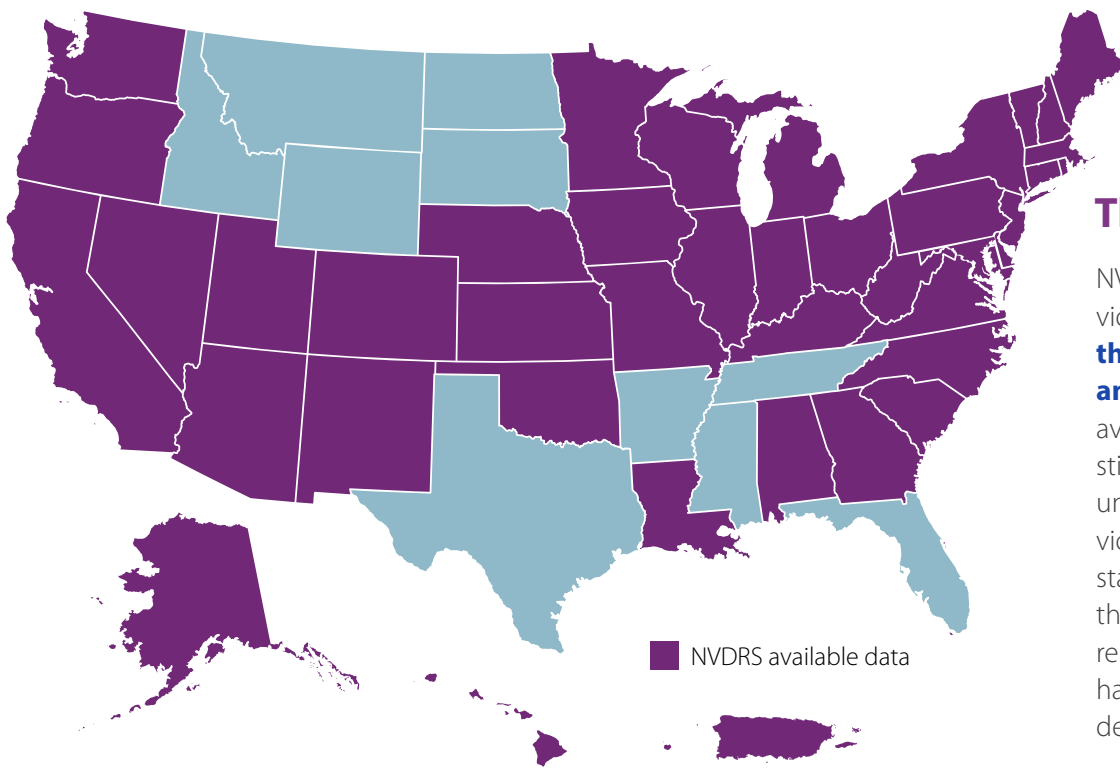
Linking Data to Get the Whole Story

To help find answers to prevent violent deaths, we need to know the facts. CDC's NVDRS links information about the **"who, when, where, and how"** from data on violent deaths and provides insights about **"why"** they occurred.

Frontline investigators including law enforcement, coroners, and medical examiners collect valuable information about violent deaths. However, these data are seldom combined in a systematic manner to provide a complete picture.

NVDRS provides a clearer understanding of violent deaths. NVDRS is the only state-based surveillance (reporting) system that pools data on violent deaths and their circumstances from multiple sources into one anonymous database. No personally identifiable information is collected.

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Division of Violence Prevention

The Reach of NVDRS

NVDRS pulls together data on violent deaths in **40 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico**. If data are not available for your state, you can still use NVDRS data to better understand general patterns of violent deaths in participating states. However, keep in mind that NVDRS data are not nationally representative. We still do not have a complete picture of violent deaths across the nation.

■ NVDRS available data

What NVDRS Can Do

- **Inform decision makers** and program planners about the magnitude, trends, and characteristics of violent deaths.

- **Educate your community** about circumstances that contribute to violence in your county, state, or territory.

- **Develop and tailor** violence prevention efforts to maximize benefits.

- **Evaluate the impact** of prevention programs and strategies.

Accessing NVDRS

CDC's Injury Center distributes information from NVDRS at the state and national level in both summary and topic-specific **reports**.

NVDRS data are stored in an incident-based database. Descriptive data can be accessed free of charge from **Web-Based Injury Statistics Query And Reporting System (WISQARS)**.

What Makes NVDRS Unique

Other data systems mainly count deaths and provide basic demographic information. In contrast, NVDRS:

- **Gathers and links** detailed investigative information from several sources, including law enforcement, medical examiners and coroners, toxicology, and death certificates. With this linked information, NVDRS is able to provide a more complete picture of the circumstances that contribute to violent deaths.

- **Helps identify** emerging issues, such as veteran suicide.

- **Combines data about deaths** that occurred during the same violent event to help identify circumstances of multiple homicides or homicides followed by the suicide of the homicide suspect.

- **Collects information** on the suspect and the relationship of the victim to the suspect to better characterize homicides.

CDC provides technical assistance for NVDRS in the form of manuals and complementary resources.

For further information on NVDRS, visit **https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nvdrs**.