

**Rochester Homicide Statistics for  
2021**

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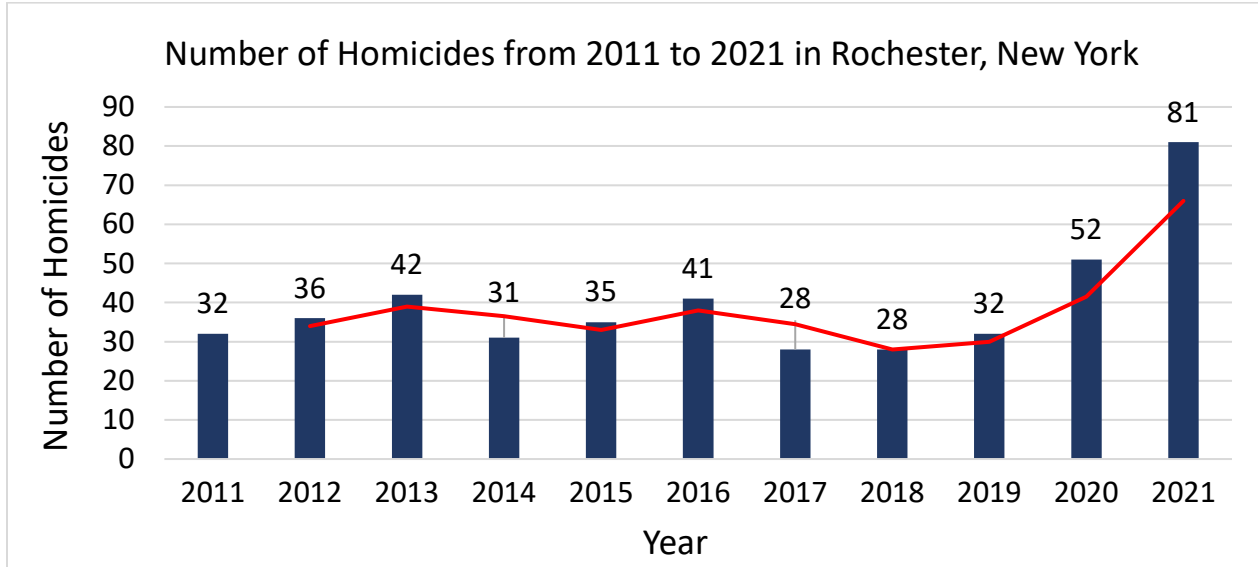
## **Introduction**

This report examines homicide data reflecting incidents occurring in the City of Rochester in 2021. Using data gathered from the Rochester Police Department's Open Data Portal, we aim to discuss Rochester's homicide count over the last 10 years and homicide rate from 2000 to 2021. This report also seeks to explore victim demographics, namely victim age, gender, and ethnicity, followed by a brief review of weapon types and location of incidents. To provide further context, some sections include national level homicide data for comparison. This paper is updated and released annually to reflect yearly data. We hope this report serves as a valuable tool for local agencies, policy makers, and the general public in their attempts to evaluate current strategies to decrease violent crime in our city.

## **Rochester's Homicide Count & Rate**

The homicide count from 2011 to 2021 can be found in Figure 1. In 2021, Rochester had 81 reported homicides, resulting in the highest number of victims in the past decade. From 2020 to 2021, Rochester experienced an approximate 55.8% increase in homicides. Though yearly fluctuations are a common feature of violence in American cities, an increase of this magnitude is rare. Indeed, previous analyses conducted by the Center for Public Safety Initiatives suggest that "up to 20% yearly fluctuations in homicide and shooting victimization [are] relatively common" (Alzheimer, Klofas, & Gray, 2017, p.6). This, coupled with the fact that Rochester experienced a 62.5% increase in homicide from 2019 to 2020, suggests that homicide has continued to surge *consistently*, but only within the past two years. Only subsequent years can determine whether these homicide levels are anomalies or part of a long-term trend.

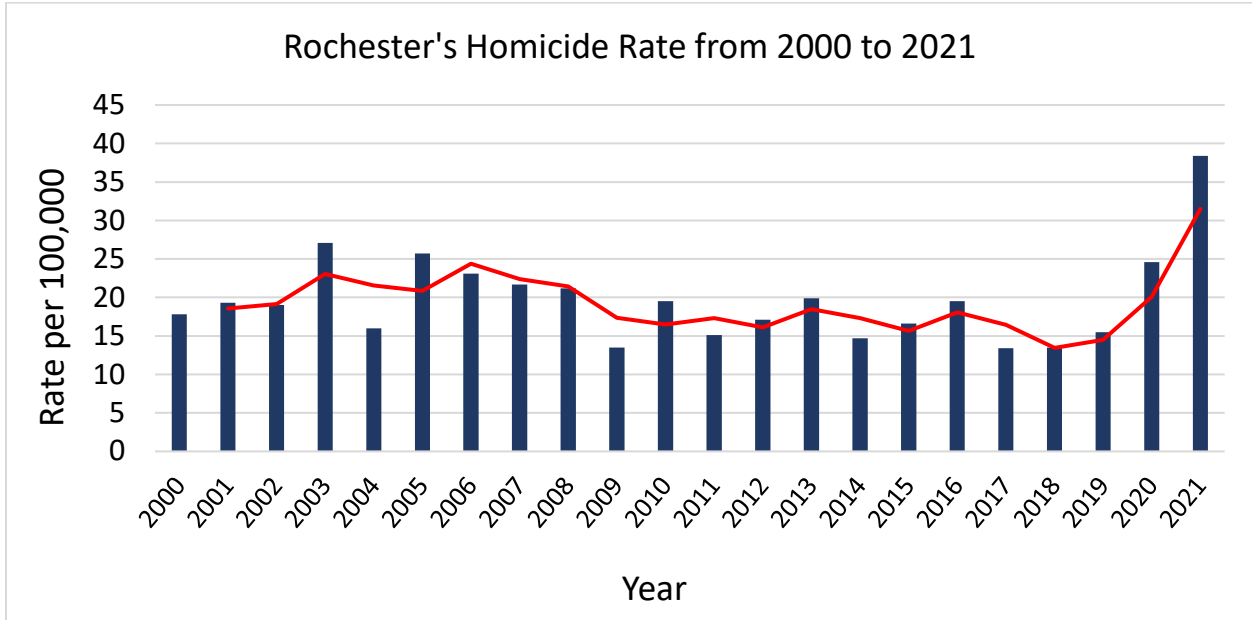
Figure 1.



Comparing homicide levels over time requires the use of homicide rates. By considering changes in population, homicide rates allow us to make standardized comparisons in crime levels. To also remain consistent with current data practices, this report uses U.S. Census population estimates to calculate the rate of homicide per 100,000 residents.

Figure 2 illustrates Rochester’s homicide rate from 2000 to 2020. Though significant fluctuations have occurred in the past, the overall homicide rate remained relatively stable from 2000 to 2019. However, the substantial increase in 2020 reversed the decades-long decrease in homicide rates. This trend was also observed on the national level; “In 2020, murders in the United States spiked more than 27 percent – the largest increase in at least six decades” (Lopez, 2022, para.1). In 2021, the homicide rate increased by 56%, similar to 2020’s increase of 58.7%. Nonetheless, Rochester’s homicide rate is the highest it’s been in over two decades.

Figure 2.

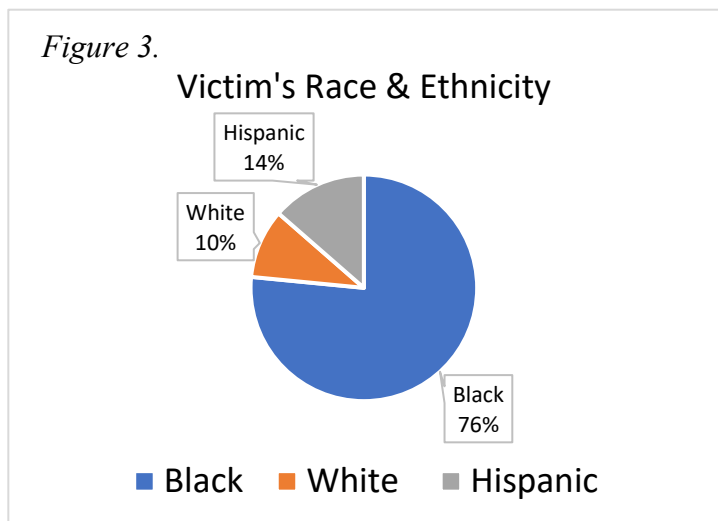


### Victim Demographics

The Rochester Police Department's Open Data Portal provides a glimpse into victim demographics. The data is determined primarily by the first responding officer, allowing for mistakes in ethnicity, race, and gender. The following data details 2021 victim demographics.

#### *Victim's Ethnicity & Race*

Rochester's homicide victims by race/ethnicity can be seen in Figure 3 below. In 2021, Black or African American victims were disproportionately represented in homicide data. Indeed, three out of every four victims were Black or African American, resulting in 76% of victims. To put this into perspective, Black or African Americans represent



only 39.8% of the City of Rochester's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). This, when coupled with the fact that Black or African-Americans represent 52.4% of victims on the national level, indicate that racial disparities exist in homicide victimizations. Moreover, while White victims represented only 10% of homicides in Rochester, they account for 43.1% of victims on the national level. Conversely, Hispanic/Latino representation in national homicide data is comparable to Rochester's, as only a 2.6% difference exists.

### *Victim's Age*

Table 1 illustrates the ages of Rochester's homicide victims in 2021 and compares it to national homicide data for 2019 provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). The most noticeable difference between Rochester and national levels was for ages 20 to 24, with Rochester (21%) being 5.6% higher than the national figure (15.4%). In Rochester, ages 20 to 24 had the most homicide victims, while nationally most occurred at ages 25 to 29, barely higher than those aged 20 to 24. While 43.5% of the FBI data consisted of homicide victims of those ages 20 to 34, 56.8% of those in Rochester in 2021 were ages 20 to 34. The groups with the least victims in Rochester occurred for ages 1 to 4, 5 to 8, 9 to 12, 60 to 64, and 70 to 74, with 0 homicides occurring in these age groups during 2021. Nationally, the lowest homicide levels occurred at ages 9 to 12, at 0.6%. The median age of victims in Rochester in 2021, 29 years old, was lower than national levels in 2019, 30 to 34 years old.

Table 1.

Age	Rochester's Homicide Victims 2021	Percentage	National Homicide Victims 2019	Percentage	Difference
Infant (under 1)	1	1.2%	154	1.1%	0.1%
1 to 4	0	0.0%	210	1.5%	1.5%
5 to 8	0	0.0%	116	0.8%	0.8%
9 to 12	0	0.0%	87	0.6%	0.6%
13 to 16	5	6.2%	307	2.2%	4.0%
17 to 19	4	4.9%	1,136	8.2%	3.2%
20 to 24	17	21.0%	2,149	15.4%	5.6%
25 to 29	16	19.8%	2,161	15.5%	4.2%
30 to 34	13	16.1%	1,753	12.6%	3.5%
35 to 39	6	7.4%	1,370	9.8%	2.4%
40 to 44	7	8.6%	1,103	7.9%	0.7%
45 to 49	2	2.5%	797	5.7%	3.3%
50 to 54	4	4.9%	630	4.5%	0.4%
55 to 59	3	3.7%	640	4.6%	0.9%
60 to 64	0	0.0%	463	3.3%	3.3%
65 to 69	1	1.2%	282	2.0%	0.8%
70 to 74	0	0.0%	207	1.5%	1.5%
75 +	2	2.5%	278	2.0%	0.5%
Unknown	0	0.0%	84	0.6%	0.6%
Total	81	100.0%	13,927	100.0%	N/A

*Victim's Gender*

Of the 81 Rochester homicides in 2021, 82.72% (67 people) were male and 17.28% (14 people) were female (Rochester Police Department). This data does not account for other genders or non-binary citizens, strictly placing people in either male or female. The FBI released homicide statistics for 2019 that shows approximately 78.32% of victims were male, 21.48% were female, and 0.20% were unknown (FBI, 2020). Compared to the 2019 data the FBI published, Rochester's 2021 data showed male homicide victims are slightly higher (4.40%

higher) than national levels, while female homicide victims are slightly lower (4.20% lower) than national levels.

Figure 4.

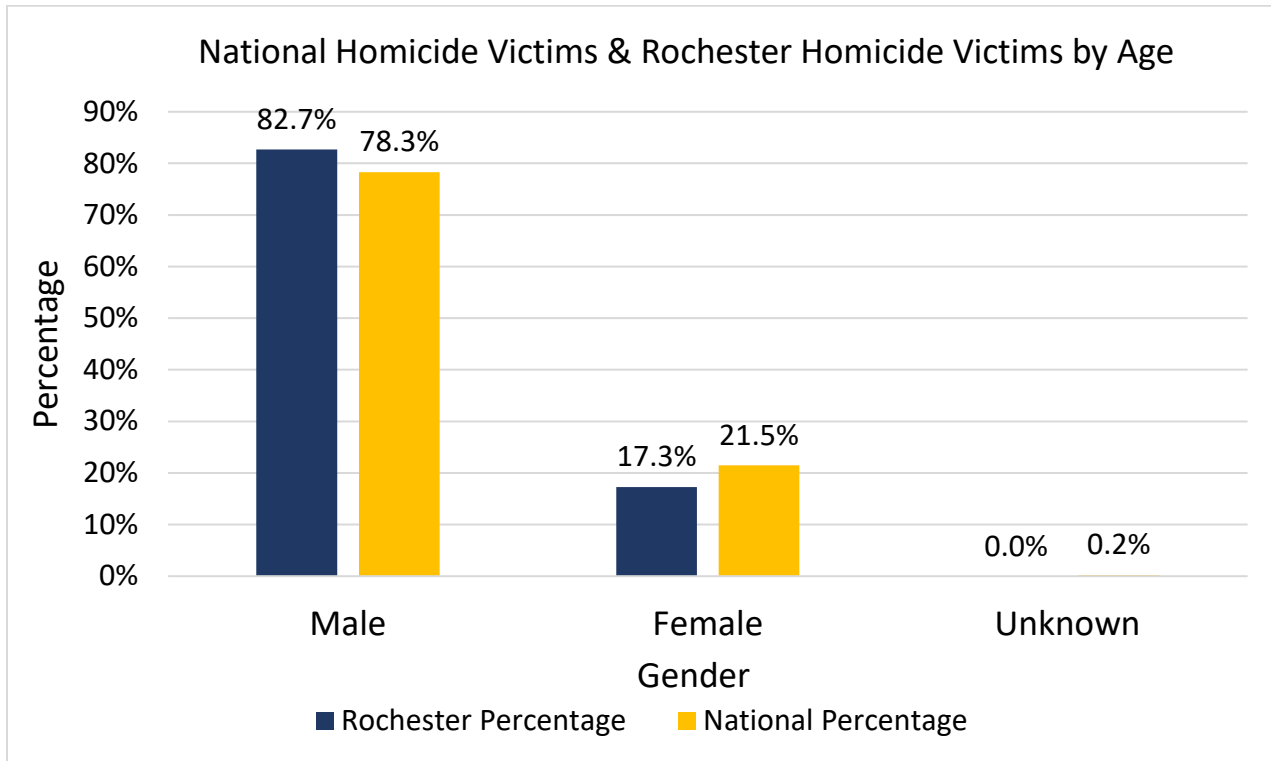


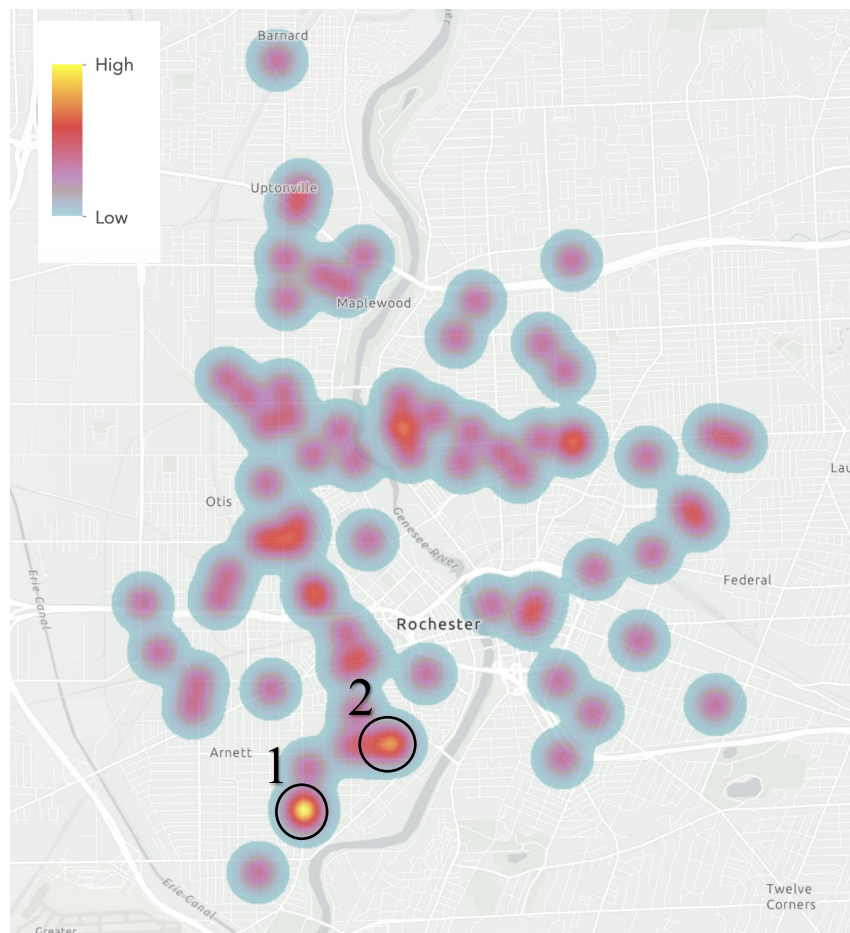
Figure 4 displays the national percentage of homicide victims from the FBI in 2019 versus the Rochester percentage of 2021. In Rochester, it is clear that more men are victims of homicide compared to national levels, even though it is a relatively small percentage larger, and less women are victims of homicide compared to national levels.

### Location of Incidents

Though the location of homicide incidents were relatively dispersed throughout the city, two locations were identified as “hotspots” where several incidents occurred within close proximity of each other. Figure 5 illustrates a map of Rochester’s homicides in 2021. The first hotspot identified (circle 1), represents three incidents that occurred along Genesee St towards S. Plymouth Ave. All three incidents transpired less than .07 miles of each other, which is

equivalent to the distance of a soccer field. The second hotspot identified (circle 2) represents two incidents that occurred along Seward St. towards Columbia Ave. These incidents happened within .03 miles of each other, which is about the length of a football field. While not identified as hotspots, other areas also experienced high levels of homicide, namely the Northeast Quadrant and the Lyell-Otis neighborhood. Historically, these neighborhoods have experienced elevated levels of homicide, particularly within the past two decades.

*Figure 5.*

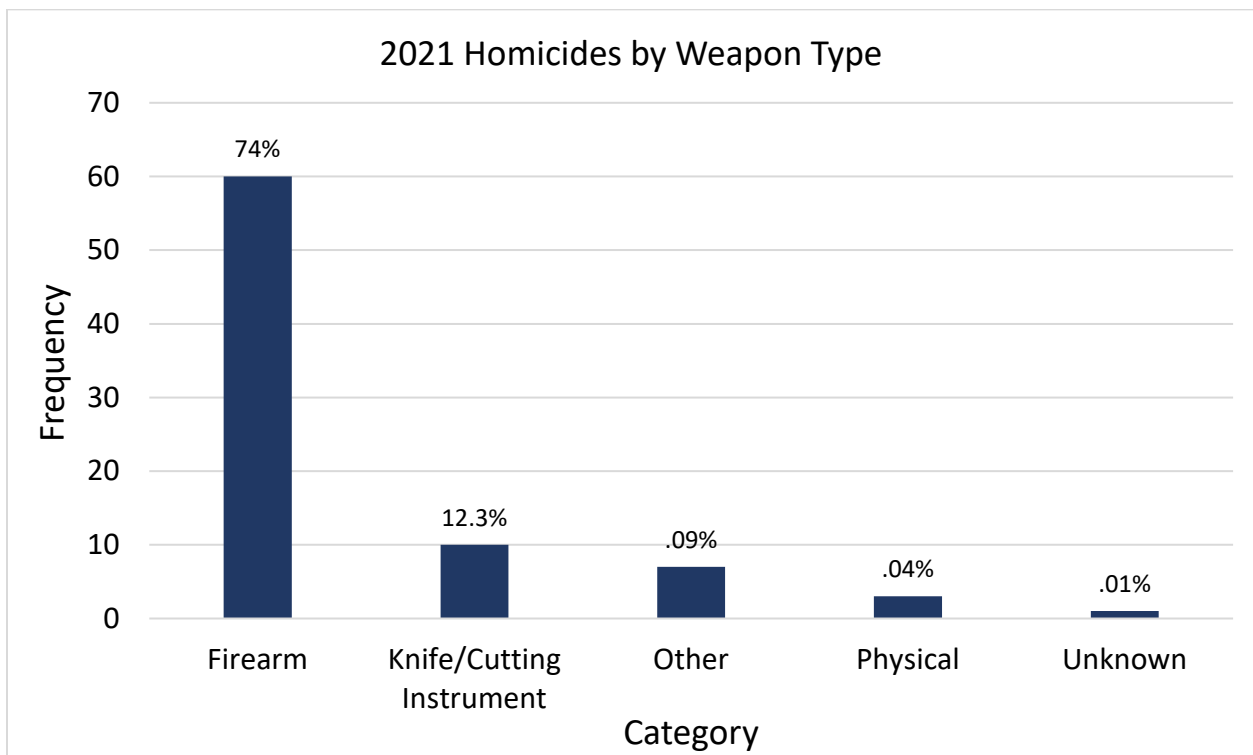




## Weapon Type

In 2021, approximately 74% of homicides were committed with a firearm. This statistic is comparable to national figures, as 75% of homicides that occurred in 2018 were committed with a firearm (The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, 2021). Other fatal weapons were less common, namely a knife/cutting instrument (12.3%) and a physical object (.04). Rochester's 2021 homicides by weapon type can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6.



## Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to provide a snapshot of homicides in Rochester by examining homicide trends over time, victim demographics, location of incidents, and weapons used. We found that, though homicide levels have been gradually declining since 2000, the recent increases in 2020 and especially 2021 could prefigure a long-term trend or remain anomalous. This can only be determined in subsequent years. Despite these fluctuations, young

black males have consistently and overwhelmingly been the subject of homicide victimization in Rochester and across the country. Moreover, gun violence has been the majority cause of these homicides, firearms being the weapon used in 74% of incidents in Rochester. Though relatively dispersed across the city, several of these homicides were concentrated in two hotspots of the south-west region of Rochester, namely in the Genesee and Seward St. areas.

Although no exact cause has been determined, elevated homicide levels may be attributed to stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest resulting from the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Daniel Prude, and an increase in gun sales beginning in 2020 (Lopez, 2020; Jablow, 2020). Nonetheless, additional research is necessary for confirming the causes of this phenomenon. Identifying the catalysts of elevated homicide levels is vital in implementing and assessing current strategies aimed at decreasing violent crime in Rochester. We hope this report provides valuable insight into Rochester's homicide trends and encourages local agency leaders and policymakers to explore innovative evidence-based practices for addressing fatal crime in the city.

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