



IN 2026, NEW MEXICO MUST PURSUE URGENT, CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO END GUN VIOLENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- New Mexico has the third-highest gun death rate in the country, with rates of gun homicide and gun suicide ranking among the five highest nationally.
- Gun violence has risen in the state, with the gun death rate growing by 45 percent between 2015 and 2024, outpacing the national increase of 18 percent.
- This crisis takes an immense human and financial toll on New Mexico, which has the fifth-highest per-resident cost of gun violence in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

Last March, around 200 people gathered at a park in Las Cruces for a car meet, where a dispute turned violent when gunfire broke out. Two groups fired more than 50 shots, leaving bystanders in the crossfire and resulting in the deaths of three teenagers and injuries to more than a dozen others. Authorities ultimately charged four people in connection with the shooting, three of whom were minors.¹

New Mexico has [made progress](#) on gun safety laws in recent years, enacting foundational laws such as a background check requirement for all gun sales, an Extreme Risk or Red Flag law, a suite of domestic violence protections, a secure storage law, and a prohibition on auto sears.² But the state continues to see devastating shootings and exceptionally [high rates](#) of gun violence—with over 500 people shot and killed and 800 more wounded every year.³

Although New Mexico's current laws are critical for keeping guns out of dangerous hands, their full impact can be realized only with time and consistent policy implementation. Gun violence is a multifaceted public health crisis, and the state must continue urgently pursuing creative solutions to save lives and keep communities safe.

¹ Kayla Epstein. "Three Killed and 15 Injured in New Mexico Mass Shooting." BBC News, March 23, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0jn4jzj11o>.

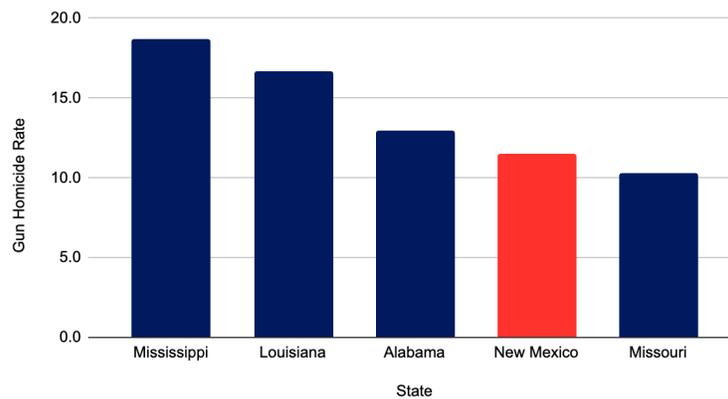
² Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Everytown Gun Law Rankings," accessed January 14, 2026, <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Everytown Research developed a yearly average using five years of the most recent available data: 2020 to 2024.

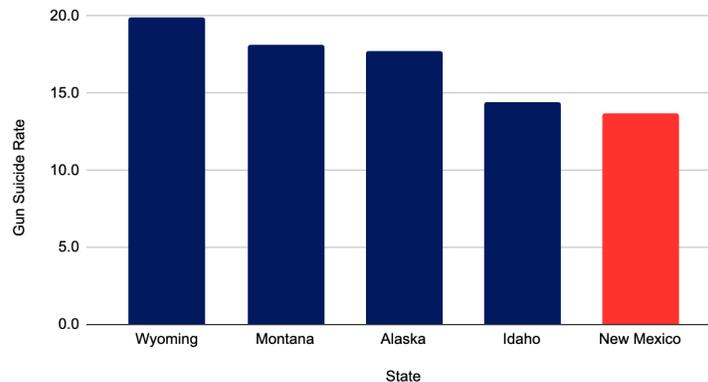
NEW MEXICO FACES UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Gun violence is a national epidemic—and New Mexico is among the states hardest hit, with a strikingly high rate of gun violence and the country’s third-highest gun death rate.⁴ From 2015 to 2024, New Mexico’s gun death rate rose by 45 percent compared to a nationwide increase of 18 percent.⁵ While no state is immune to the dual crises of gun homicide and gun suicide, only in New Mexico do both rates rank among the five highest in the nation.

States with the Highest Gun Homicide Rates



States with the Highest Gun Suicide Rates



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Everytown Research developed a yearly average using five years of the most recent available data: 2020 to 2024. The term “homicide” includes shootings by police.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Everytown Research developed a yearly average using five years of the most recent available data: 2020 to 2024.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Provisional Mortality Statistics, Multiple Cause of Death (accessed December 16, 2025). Rates are age-adjusted. Everytown Research developed a yearly average using 2015 and 2024 data.

And violence devastates communities throughout the state. Black, Latinx, white, and American Indian/Alaska Native people in New Mexico all face gun death rates much higher than the national average.⁶ With the breadth of the population vulnerable to gun violence, New Mexicans need comprehensive solutions.

NEW MEXICAN YOUTH FACE HIGH LEVELS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Guns have also become a troublingly common presence in the lives of young people. Shortly after the school year began in August, four guns in separate [incidents](#) were found at high schools in Albuquerque, with a [fifth](#) gun found just off campus in the possession of two students, all in a single day. An August 2025 [Albuquerque Journal article](#) reported that since students returned to in-person learning classrooms following the COVID-19 closures in 2020, Albuquerque Public Schools had recovered 62 guns on or near its campuses. From 2016 to 2020, district police had recovered 27 guns.

Incidents such as these expose a deeper problem in the state: Guns and gun violence are pervasive enough that even children have regular access to firearms. Law enforcement in the state attribute the rise of guns among young people to straw purchasing, gun trafficking, and the sales of guns on social media.⁷ It is crucial that efforts to address gun violence in New Mexico block the flow of firearms from reaching children in the first place.

This prevalence has put a substantial burden on the state's young people. Firearms are tied with motor vehicles for the leading cause of death among this population, killing an estimated 50 children and teens in New Mexico every year. These young people are about equally likely to die by gun homicide and gun suicide, underscoring that it is essential for policies to address both concerns.

GUN VIOLENCE INFLICTS A FINANCIAL COST

In addition to incalculable human loss, every shooting carries high financial costs. In [New Mexico](#), a single person wounded in a gun assault costs over \$600,000 in police response, criminal justice, and health care, as well as lost income and quality of life for the victim's loved ones. A single gun homicide costs more than \$12 million.⁸ Combined with the high rate of gun violence, the state is subjected to the fifth-highest per-resident

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Everytown Research developed a yearly average using five years of the most recent available data: 2020 to 2024. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black, white, and more than one race are defined as non-Latinx origin.

⁷ Jason McNabb, "The Dangers of Social Media: Kids Using Social Apps to Obtain Guns," KOAT Action 7 News, updated August 15, 2025, <https://www.koat.com/article/new-mexico-crime-social-media-apps-weapons/65783820>; Ann Pierret, "Feds Say New Mexicans Fueling Gun Crimes with Straw Purchases," KRQE News, updated February 2, 2023, <https://www.krqe.com/news/investigations/feds-say-new-mexicans-fueling-gun-crimes-with-straw-purchases/>.

⁸ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Economic Cost of Gun Violence Calculator Tool," 2022.

cost of gun violence in the entire country.⁹ Given that New Mexico faces instability from [a loss of federal funds](#), the state cannot afford to ignore a problem that [costs state taxpayers](#) over \$140 million every year.

CONCLUSION

New Mexico's high rates of gun violence have put too many of its communities at risk. Although the state has made important progress toward addressing gun violence, legislators and other policymakers must continue to implement existing laws and consider new ones. Taking further action on gun violence can help protect New Mexicans, ease fear among youth, and address the immense financial and human costs involved for people throughout the state.

⁹ Ted R. Miller and Bruce Lawrence analysis of CDC Fatal Injury: 2019 and HCUP Nonfatal Injury: 2019. Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/>.