



# INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE

*Kashea Kovacs, Ph.D., Research Analyst  
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## Scope of Study

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- ▶ Staff examined intentional homicides that occurred in Virginia between 2017 and 2022, including:
  - Nature and circumstances;
  - Victim and offender demographics;
  - Charges filed and case dispositions; and,
  - Criminal history records of convicted offenders.
  
- ▶ Intentional homicide included completed acts of capital/aggravated murder, first and second degree murder, felony murder, and voluntary manslaughter.
  - Did not include attempts, conspiracies, or solicitation.



## Increases in Intentional Homicides

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- ▶ Virginia experienced a *significant* increase in intentional homicides between 2017 and 2022.
  
- ▶ Virginia is consistent with the rest of the United States in terms of:
  - increases in homicides;
  - firearm use in homicides;
  - location of homicides;
  - demographics of homicide victims and offenders; and,
  - criminal history records of convicted homicide offenders.



## Factors Contributing to Homicide Increases

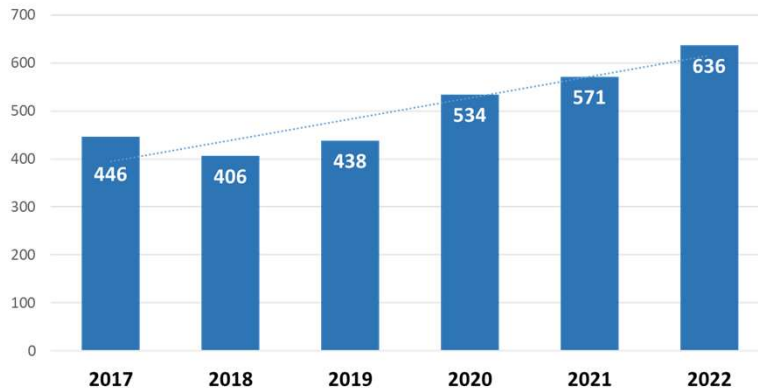
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- ▶ COVID-19 pandemic
- ▶ Individuals feeling “disrespected” (in-person and online)
- ▶ Gang and group disputes (territory, retaliation, etc.)
- ▶ “Ferguson effect” (decrease in proactive policing)
- ▶ Access to firearms and firearm thefts
- ▶ Drugs, drug sales, and drug markets (in-person and online)
- ▶ Mental health challenges and lack of treatment resources
- ▶ Domestic violence incidents
- ▶ Increase in police-community tensions
- ▶ Decrease in perceptions of police legitimacy



## Virginia Intentional Homicides

► Intentional homicides increased by 43% in Virginia.



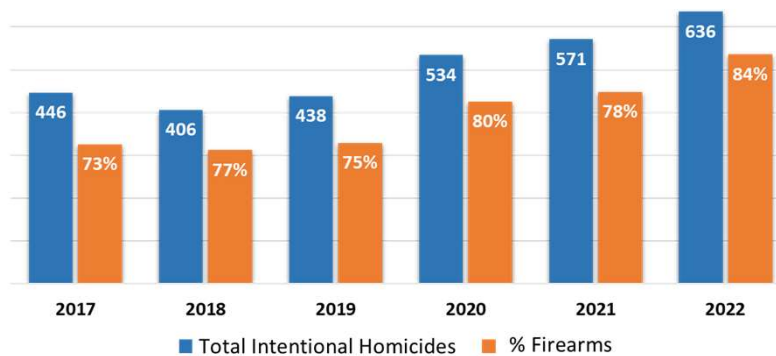
Source: Virginia State Police, UCR-IBR Program, 2017-2022, as of April 2023.  
Virginia State Crime Commission

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## Firearm Use in Intentional Homicides

► Firearms were used in the vast majority of these homicides.



Source: Virginia State Police, UCR-IBR Program, 2017-2022, as of April 2023.  
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## Location of Intentional Homicides

- ▶ The vast majority occurred in Virginia's metro/urban areas, with 57% in 10 localities.

Location of Homicides, CY17-CY22				
Rank	Locality	# Incidents	# Victims	% Total Incidents
1	Richmond City	375	394	13%
2	Norfolk City	271	289	10%
3	Newport News City	156	161	6%
4	Portsmouth City	155	169	6%
5	Hampton City	115	120	4%
6	Petersburg City	115	123	4%
7	Fairfax County	110	124	4%
8	Henrico County	108	115	4%
9	Virginia Beach City	96	113	3%
10	Roanoke City	87	90	3%
<b>Total Across 10 Localities</b>		<b>1,588</b>	<b>1,698</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Total Intentional Homicide Incidents</b>		<b>2,810</b>	<b>3,031</b>	

Source: Virginia State Police, UCR-IBR Program, 2017-2022, as of April 2023.  
Virginia State Crime Commission



## Victim-Offender Relationships

- ▶ The known relationships between the victim(s) and offender(s) in Virginia remained similar.
  - Almost half of relationships are unknown or missing.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Total
Acquaintance	107	99	123	128	163	150	25%
Family	46	49	51	52	49	61	10%
Intimate Partner	54	43	40	63	52	56	10%
Stranger	22	11	26	25	39	32	5%
Missing	22	46	70	112	133	153	18%
Unknown	142	143	124	154	133	184	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>2,957</b>

Source: Virginia State Police, UCR-IBR Program, 2017-2022, as of April 2023, missing n=74.



## Victim Demographics

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- ▶ 3,031 individuals were victims of intentional homicide:
  - 76% were male.
  - 50% were between ages 18 and 34.
  - 64% were Black individuals.
    - 33% were White individuals.
    - 3% were individuals of other races.

Source: Virginia State Police, UCR-IBR Program, 2017-2022, as of April 2023.



## Offender Demographics

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- ▶ 3,060 individuals were charged with intentional homicide:
  - 870 individuals were convicted of intentional homicide:
    - 90% were male.
    - 68% were between ages 18 and 35.
    - 60% were Black individuals; 39% were White individuals.
  - 2,190 individuals were not convicted of intentional homicide or the charges were still pending as of May 2023:
    - 87% were male.
    - 73% were between ages 18 and 35.
    - 65% were Black individuals; 34% were White individuals.

Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. \* Staff identified 870 individuals convicted of intentional homicide in the CCRE data; however, additional convicted individuals were identified through court records for staff's criminal history record review.



## Intentional Homicide Charge Dispositions

- ▶ Of the 3,060 individuals charged:
  - 28% (870) were convicted of intentional homicide;\*
  - 27% (826) were *nolle prosequi*;
  - 25% (773) were still pending as of May 2023;
  - 13% (405) were convicted of a different offense;
  - 3% (93) were dismissed;
  - 3% (81) were found not guilty; and,
  - <1% (12) were other disposition.

Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. \* Staff identified 870 individuals convicted of intentional homicide in the CCRE data; however, additional convicted individuals were identified through court records for staff's criminal history record review.



## Racial Disparities

- ▶ Black males were disproportionately overrepresented as *both* victims and offenders of intentional homicide.
  - Black males comprise 9% of Virginia's overall population.
    - The population of Black males in Virginia's metro/urban areas ranged from 5% to 38% of that locality's overall population.
- ▶ 64% of intentional homicide victims were Black males.
  - The 2021 Virginia homicide victimization rate for Black males was 11.5 times higher than that of White males (OCME).
- ▶ 65% of individuals charged with and 60% of individuals convicted of intentional homicide were Black males.



## Criminal History Record Review

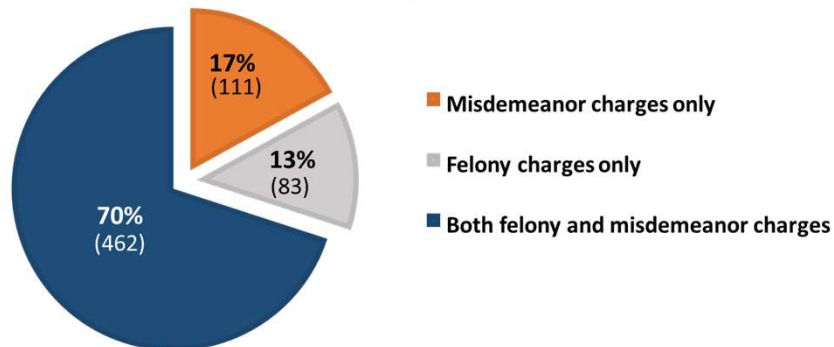
- ▶ 930 adults were convicted of an intentional homicide that occurred between 2017 and 2022 (“adult cohort”).\*
  - 69% were convicted of first or second degree murder.
- ▶ 71% (656 of 930) of the adult cohort had a prior in-state criminal history record.
  - Criminal history records (CHR) varied significantly.

Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE and the Virginia Supreme Court- OES circuit court case management system, as well as Alexandria and Fairfax circuit court case management systems. Analysis by Crime Commission staff. \* Staff identified 870 individuals convicted of intentional homicide in the CCRE data; however, additional convicted individuals were identified through court records for staff's criminal history record review.



## Prior In-State Criminal Charges

- ▶ Of the 656 adults with a prior in-state CHR:

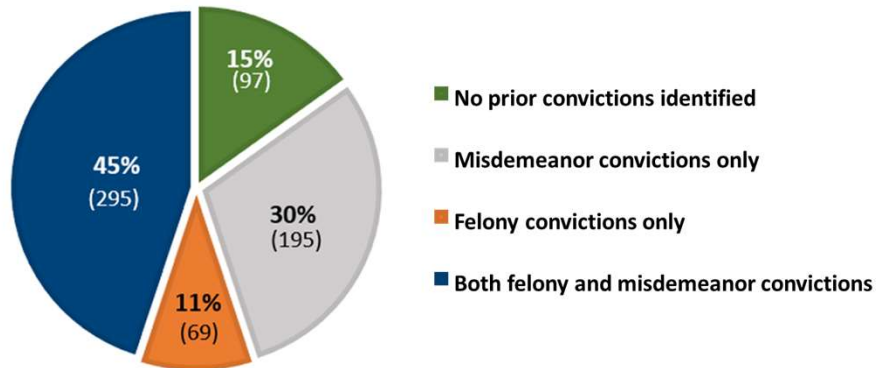


Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.



## Prior In-State Criminal Convictions

► Of the 656 adults with a prior in-state CHR:



Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.

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## Criminal History Record Review

► Of the 656 adults with a prior in-state CHR:

- 5% (32 of 656) had at least one prior in-state violent felony conviction per Va. Code § 19.2-297.1.
- 67% (438 of 656) were sentenced to at least one prior term of active incarceration.

Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.

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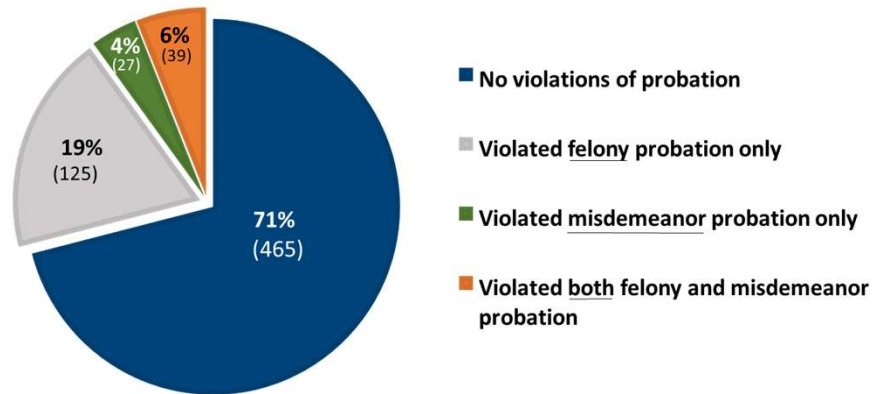
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## Prior In-State Probation Violations

► Of the 656 adults with a prior in-state CIIR:



Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.

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## Pending Charges

► 19% (176 of 930) of the adult cohort had *at least* one pending charge at the time of the intentional homicide.

- Felony most common offense types: narcotics, larceny, and assault.
- Misdemeanor most common offense types: assault, weapon, and contempt.

Source: Virginia State Police, CCRE. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.

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## Supervision Status

- ▶ **Pretrial services agency supervision:** 6% (53 of 930) of the adult cohort at the time of the homicide.
  - Most common offenses: narcotics, assault, and weapon.
- ▶ **Local community corrections supervision:** 3% (30 of 930) of the adult cohort at the time of the homicide.
  - Most common offenses: assault, narcotics, and larceny.
- ▶ **State supervision (DOC):** 18% (168 of 930) of the adult cohort at the time of the homicide.
  - Nearly 60% were on medium level supervision.
  - Most common offenses: larceny, narcotics, weapon, and assault.

Source: Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, PTCC case management system for pretrial and local CC supervision and the Virginia Department of Corrections for state probation supervision. Analysis by Crime Commission staff.



## Protective Orders

- ▶ 14% (133 of 930) of the adult cohort were subject to a protective order that was issued between 2017 and 2022 before the intentional homicide.
  - 29 of 133 adults were subject to a protective order at the time of the homicide.
    - 6 of 29 adults killed the named petitioner.
    - The victim-offender relationships were grandmother, mother, father, estranged wife, girlfriend, and 2 year old son.

Source: Virginia State Police, protective order case management system.



## Community-Based Violence Intervention

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- ▶ Intentional homicide is a serious public health and criminal justice concern.
- ▶ The General Assembly recently allocated \$30 million for community-based violence intervention and the Safer Communities Program in Virginia.
- ▶ The Crime Commission will receive quarterly reports from DCJS on these intervention efforts.



## DISCUSSION