

Gun Violence and the Faith Community

Is gun violence in Illinois a serious problem?

- In 2006, 1,036 people died from firearm-related injuries in Illinois, 625 of which were homicides.¹
- In 2006, 369 children and young people ages 0-25 in Illinois were killed by guns. From 1999 to 2006, 3,369 children and young people have been killed by guns in Illinois.²
- In 2006, guns were used in 372 suicides in Illinois.³
- In 2006, African Americans, which represent 15% of the state's population, were victims in 50% or 520 of firearm-related deaths in Illinois. Of these deaths, 89% were homicides.⁴
- In the 2008-2009 school year, at least 36 Chicago Public School students have been killed, most from gun violence. Since January, more than 1 in 10 homicide victims in Chicago have been 16 or younger.⁵

Why the faith community is concerned about gun violence...

- In Illinois, 83% of residents are affiliated with a faith tradition.⁷ People of faith live, work, and raise families across Illinois all the while being subjected to a growing epidemic of gun violence.
- Most Americans (84%) feel that religion is important in their lives, with 57% feeling that it is very important.⁸ In the aftermath of neighborhood violence, public shootings, and personal tragedies from gun violence, people of faith look to religion for understanding, support, guidance, and direction.
- Faith leaders across Illinois have denounced gun violence and easy access to guns as violating the central principle of preserving the sanctity of life.

What is the Illinois Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence?

Illinois Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (ICPGV), a project of Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (ICHV), is a research-based public education campaign to promote meaningful gun policy reform in Illinois. Working with a statewide advisory group representing law enforcement, the medical and public health communities, faith-based organizations, local and state policymakers, victims and advocacy groups, ICPGV informs the public and the media on the facts about gun violence and prevention policies.

How can I get involved with ICPGV?

- Call **773-209-1002** or email info@icpgv.org.
- Sign up for email alerts for updates on legislation and facts at www.icpgv.org.
- Contact your legislators and write letters to the editor of your local newspaper. Go to www.icpgv.org to learn how.

¹⁻⁴ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2006*.

⁵ Schaper, David. "Youth killings reach crisis level in Chicago," All Things Considered, National Public Radio. May 27, 2009.

⁷ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, U.S. Religious Landscape Survey of 35,556 adults. May 8 – Aug 13, 2007.

⁸ Gallup Poll, "Religion," 2006.