



Gun Violence and the Faith Community

Is gun violence in Illinois a serious problem?

- From 1999 to 2005 guns killed 8,018 Illinois residents.¹
- In 2005, 1,019 people died from firearm-related injuries in Illinois, about three people every day. Of these gun deaths, over half were homicides.²
- Guns were used in 2,617 suicides in Illinois from 2000-2005.³
- In 2005, African Americans were victims in 42% or 429 of firearm-related deaths in Illinois. Of these deaths, 90% were homicides.⁴
- In 2005, 130 children aged 0-19 in Illinois were killed by guns, 13% more deaths than 2004. From 1999 to 2005, 1,039, children have been killed by guns in Illinois.⁵
- Twenty-six Chicago public school children were killed by guns in 2007.⁶

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?

The Illinois Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (ICPGV), a project of Legal Community Against Violence, is a research-based public education campaign formed in 2007 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, victims, local and state policymakers and advocacy groups, ICPGV informs the public, policymakers and the media on the facts about gun violence and prevention policies. ICPGV volunteers make thousands of phone calls, generate letters to state legislators, and attend in-district meetings to urge policymakers to support commonsense gun violence prevention policies.

How can I get involved with ICPGV?

- Call **773-209-1002** or email **info@icpgv.org**.
- Ask your congregation to join the **ICPGV Statewide Advisory Group**.
- 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.

¹⁻⁵ 2005 is the most recent year for which state-level data is available. Statistics compiled from 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, 1999-2005*.

⁶ Chicago Public Schools, Office of Communications.

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.