The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) is a CDC-funded statewide surveillance system that collects detailed information on deaths that occur in North Carolina resulting from violence: homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention and deaths for which intent could not be determined. NC-VDRS is a multi-source system that gathers information from death certificates, medical examiner reports and law enforcement reports. The goal of this system is to aid researchers, legislators, and community interest groups in the development of public health prevention strategies to reduce violent deaths. NC-VDRS began collecting data in January 2004. This document summarizes all deaths from violence among non-Hispanic (NH) African American residents for the years 2008-2017.

- For the year 2017, there were 2,270,022 NH African Americans living in North Carolina, accounting for 22.1% of the state’s population.

- NH African Americans had the third highest rate of violent death by race in North Carolina for the years 2008-2017 (20.9 per 100,000 population).


There were 3,175 homicides (70.9%), 1,073 suicides (24.0%), 41 unintentional firearm deaths (0.9%), 91 deaths from legal interventions (2.0%), and 99 deaths of undetermined intent (2.2%).

NH African Americans accounted for 54.9% of all homicides and 8.4% of all suicides, across all racial groups in North Carolina from 2008 to 2017.

In contrast, NH whites accounted for 86.6% of all suicides and 33.1% of all homicides, across all racial groups in North Carolina from 2008 to 2017.
• The majority of homicides (78.6%) and suicides (54.4%) among NH African Americans were committed using firearms.

• The second most common method of homicide was sharp instruments (10.3%).

• The second most common method of suicide was hanging (22.0%).

Of all homicides among NH African Americans with known circumstance information, a little less than half (47.3%) involved an argument or conflict.

Another serious crime (e.g., robbery, burglary) precipitated 33.7% of homicides among NH African Americans.

Of these homicides, 17.9% were suspected to have been related to drug dealing, trade, or use.

The second most common method of suicide was hanging (22.0%).

• More than a third (37.7%) of NH African American suicide victims were described as having a current mental health problem, and 30.5% were receiving treatment for a mental health problem at the time of suicide.

• Among NH African American suicide victims with known circumstance information, 33.5% had experienced a recent problem with an intimate partner.

• Nearly a quarter (23.7%) of NH African American suicide victims disclosed their intent to complete suicide, and 22.5% left a note.