



## 2024 Mass and Targeted Violence Fact Sheet

Developed by [Wellstone Collaborative Strategies](#) for Trailhead Institute

### Focus 1. Define & Monitor the Problem

In 2023, 76 victims were killed or injured during mass shooting events in Colorado. A total of **416 people were killed or injured in Colorado across 80 mass shootings** between 2014 and September 24, 2023. Source: Gun Violence Archive.

Mass shootings include a wide range of high casualty events, such as hate crimes targeting people or communities based on identity, domestic terrorism, drive-by, school or workplace shootings, and others. Below is a summary of the data provided in the [Gun Violence Archive](#), CDPHE, and Statista. An *interactive map* of yearly mass shootings in the United States from 2015 to 2023 can be found [here](#).

- **71%** of the 80 mass shootings occurred in the Denver Metro area. Another 24% occurred in the Pikes Peak region, 4% on the West Slope, and 1% in the San Luis Valley.
- **107** people were killed and 309 injured in mass shootings from 2014 to September 24, 2024 (**Figure 1**).
- Since 1982, **96%** of US mass shootings were carried out by a male perpetrator. Female perpetrators accounted for 3% and male-female pairs accounted for the remaining 1%. Source: [Statista](#).
- **2.8%** of the total firearm related deaths in 2021 were a result of mass shootings in Colorado. That's 30 out of a total of 1,059 firearm-related deaths that year.

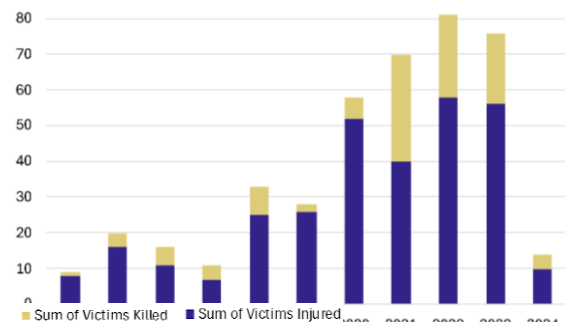


Figure SEQ Figure \ ARABIC 1. Sum of victims killed and injured in Colorado mass shootings from 2014 to September 2024. Source: Gun Violence Archive.

There is much variation in how mass shootings are defined and counted. We are using the Gun Violence Archive's definition which classifies mass shootings as events where at least four people - not including the shooter(s) - are killed or injured by a firearm. These incidents can occur in a number of public and private settings. Incidents of mass violence disproportionately target random individuals based on characteristics such as gender, race, religion, or ethnicity.

### Focus 2: Develop Understanding of Risk & Protective Factors

**Risk Factors:** Mass shootings are relatively rare events, so it is often difficult to understand the risk factors associated with them. It may be impossible to detect which individuals will commit an act of mass violence from thousands of others we would classify as "at risk." For this reason, we need to not only think about the individual risk factors but also the community and societal risks associated with mass shootings.

**Individual Risk Factors:** The following may be individual risk factors:

- Homicidal and/or suicidal ideation.<sup>i</sup>
- Blame-based ideology (e.g., workplace, school, individual, or identity group).<sup>i</sup>
- History of research of mass shooting events and perpetrators.<sup>i</sup>
- Demonstrated lack of empathy.<sup>ii</sup>
- Sadistic behavior.<sup>ii</sup>
- Damaged masculinity.<sup>ii</sup>
- Obsession with weapons and death.<sup>ii</sup>
- Paranoid thinking.<sup>ii</sup>
- Exposure to radicalization.
- Limited exposure to diverse people and ideas.
- Substance abuse.

**Environmental Factors:** The following may be environmental risk factors:

- Family and neighborhood characteristics, such as childhood abuse, exposure to violence at a young age, parental suicide, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, severe bullying, and other Adverse Childhood Experiences.<sup>i</sup> Also being ostracized by peers, social isolation, and not having access to a support system.<sup>iii</sup>
- Access to firearm(s).<sup>i</sup>
- Identifiable crisis-point for the shooter in the days, weeks, or months before violence.<sup>i</sup>
- School characteristics, such as large class size and a high student-to-teacher ratio are associated with more mass shootings.<sup>iii</sup>
- Point-in-time environmental characteristics, such as large gatherings of people.
- High exposure to violent media as a child.<sup>iii</sup>

**Protective Factors:** The following were identified during 2023 Roundtable discussions:

- Access to relevant resources and supports, including mental health care.
- Access to green spaces, especially in urban areas.
- Connection to others and support network.
- Exposure to diverse people and ideas.

### Focus 3: Engage the Community to Promote Multi-Sector Prevention Strategies

Below are potential community public health strategies identified to address mass shootings:

#### Upstream (e.g., root cause and social determinants of health)

- Support social-emotional skill development.<sup>iv</sup>
- Remove notoriety motivation of shooters.<sup>iv</sup>
- Support for children and families for those with high ACE scores.<sup>iv</sup>
- Destigmatize mental health services.<sup>ii</sup>
- Develop civic and community spaces for men; redefine masculinity.
- Reduce potential grievances that create motive for an attack – grievances are typically related to feeling bullied, victimized, stress due to finances or health, or workplace issues. Consider opportunities for training or supporting adults in addressing grievances through interpersonal communication skills or public dialogue.
- Acknowledge that communities that are most likely to be targets of mass violence may require additional protections.
- Increase funding for child protective services to minimize child abuse and improve access to mental health services.<sup>ii</sup>

#### Direct Prevention

- Conduct school risk assessments.<sup>iv</sup>
- Ensure safe gun storage practices.<sup>iv</sup>
- Ensure crisis infrastructure (this includes architectural adjustments that provide shelter, safety, and safe passage).<sup>iv</sup>
- Confront & report – attackers often tell someone they have a weapon, have grievances, or say goodbyes. Believe them & report ASAP.
- Harden schools and other targets (e.g., school design that promotes transparency, visibility, and natural surveillance)
- Limit high-capacity firearm availability.<sup>iv</sup>

#### Intervention

- Provide anonymous reporting with integrated response system (e.g., Safe2Tell).<sup>iv</sup>
- Conduct school threat assessments.<sup>iv</sup>
- Provide behavioral threat assessments through Release of Information (ROI) and service-coordinated Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs)
- Employ triggered interventions for individuals at high-risk based on their search history.
- Integrate law enforcement databases / interagency coordination and reporting.<sup>iv</sup>
- Use temporary firearm removal and storage immediately after a crisis (e.g., via Extreme Risk Protection Orders).

## Preparedness and Response

- Integrate school, hospital, and law enforcement preparedness.<sup>iv</sup>
- Provide training for unarmed employees to talk down or handle an active shooter.<sup>iv</sup>
- Provide training for anyone to provide emergency first aid during a crisis (e.g., Stop the Bleed).
- Enact standard response protocols.<sup>iv</sup>

## Recovery

- Provide counseling supports that bring people together (e.g., students, teachers, and staff in a school setting).<sup>iv</sup>
- Use child fatality & murder review teams.<sup>iv</sup>
- Support restorative justice.
- Adhere to and promote media guidelines.

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<sup>i</sup> Densley, James and Peterson, Jillian. (2021) [The Violence Project: How to Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic](#). Abrams Press.

<sup>ii</sup> Langman, Peter. (2019) [Desperate identities: A bio-psycho-social analysis of perpetrators of mass violence](#). Criminology & Public Policy.

<sup>iii</sup> Bushman, B.J., et. al. (2018). [Risk factors for youth violence: Youth violence commission, International Society for Research on Aggression \(ISRA\)](#). *Aggr Behav*, 44: 331-336.

