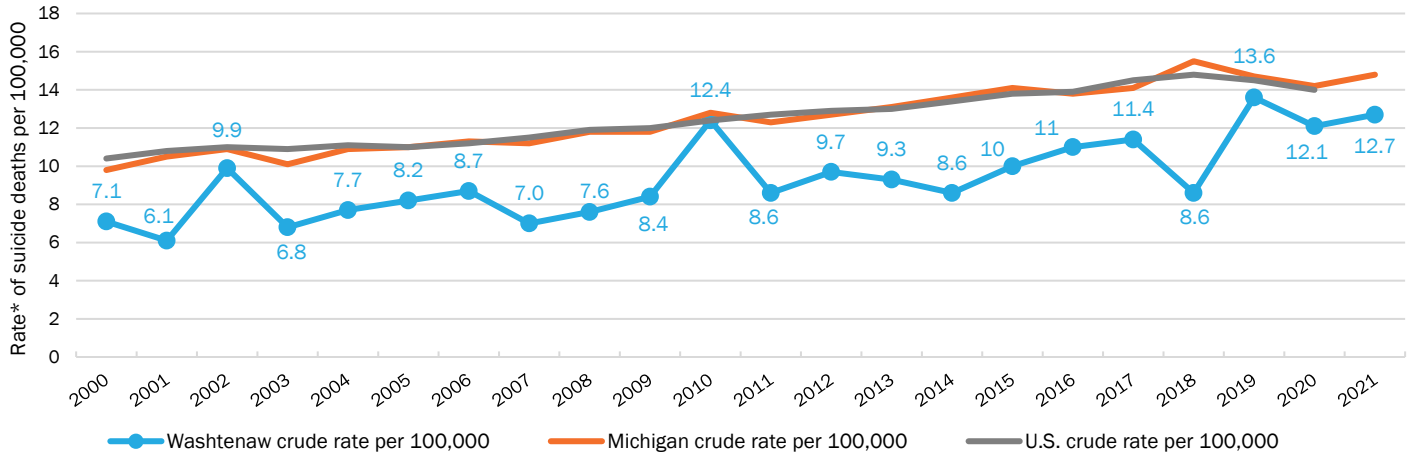




Suicide Report

Suicide Completion Rate*, 2000 - 2021
Residents of Washtenaw County, Michigan, and the U.S.



Source: U.S. data is from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) annual mortality data files (U.S. 2021 data not available at the time of this report). Michigan and Washtenaw County data is from Geocoded Michigan Death Certificate Registries, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS).

*Rates are not age-adjusted: crude rates are per 100,000 population using population estimates specific to the year and geographic area.

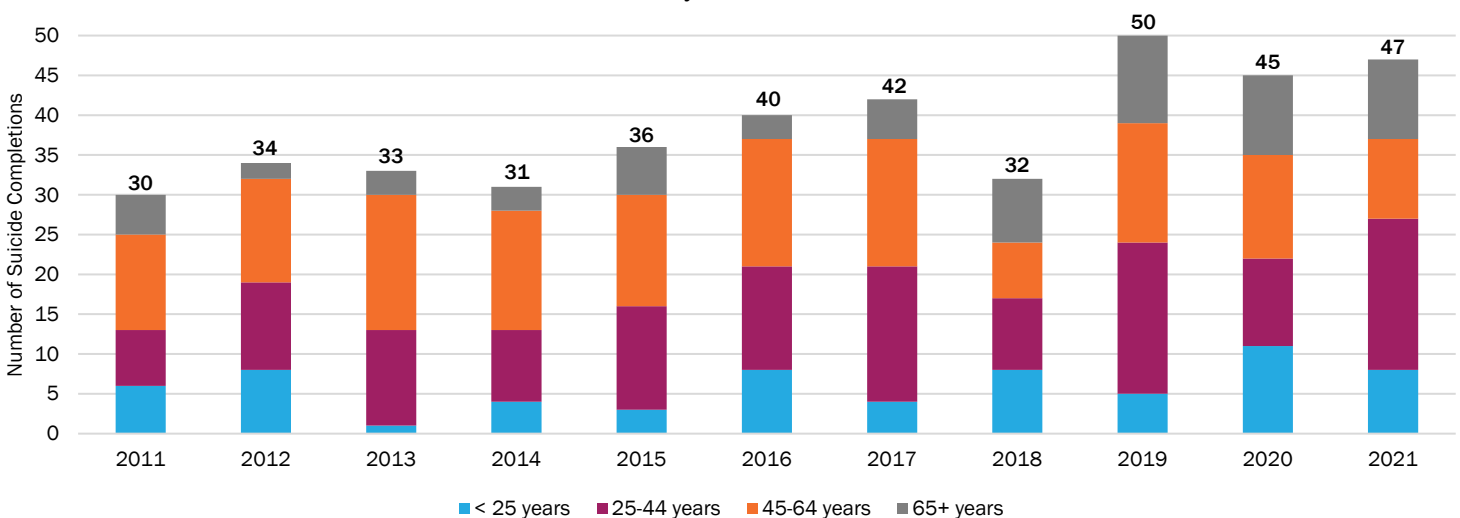
Suicide Death Rates Have Been Increasing for the Past Two Decades

Suicide death rates have been increasing since 2000, a pattern observed across the U.S., in Michigan, and in Washtenaw County. Overall, **Washtenaw County has had lower suicide rates compared to Michigan and the U.S.** However, this gap has been narrowing in recent years, as suicide rates in Washtenaw County seem to be increasing faster than state and national trends.

While the Pandemic Did Not Substantially Change Overall Suicide Death Rates, It May Have Impacted Youth More

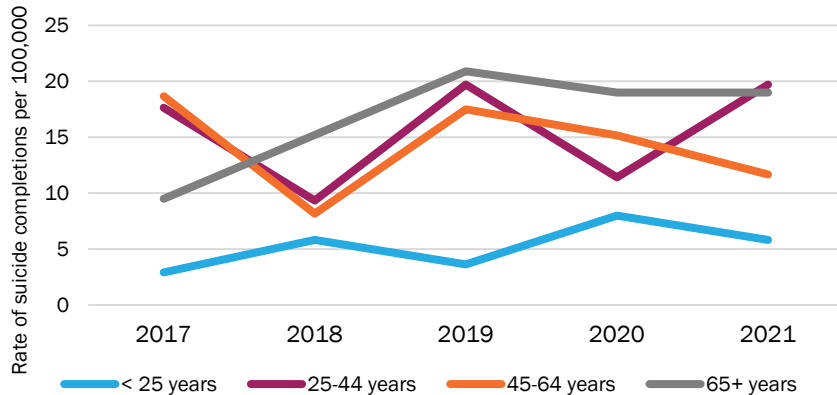
Overall suicide death rates for Washtenaw County and Michigan were not substantially impacted by the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for Washtenaw County residents under 25 years old, the number and rate of suicide completions doubled from 2019 to 2020, and then decreased slightly in 2021. This data may suggest that the first year of the pandemic had a bigger impact on youth mental health than other age groups in Washtenaw County.

Suicide Completions by Age Group
Washtenaw County Residents 2011 - 2021

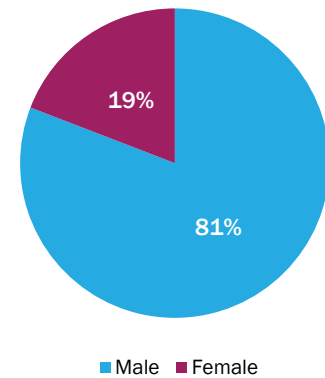


Source: Geocoded Michigan Death Certificate Registry - Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, MDHHS.

Suicide Completion Rate* by Age Group
Washtenaw County Residents, 2017 - 2021



Suicide Completions by Gender
Washtenaw County Residents, 2021



Source for above figures: Geocoded Michigan Death Certificate Registry - Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, MDHHS.
*Rates are per 100,000 population, using Washtenaw County 2021 5-Year American Community Survey estimates.

Washtenaw County Suicide Death Trends and Demographics

During 2021, 47 Washtenaw County residents died by suicide, of which 81% were male. Males also made up 81% of all Michigan residents who died by suicide in 2021. This overrepresentation of males among suicide completions is consistent with national trends.

The rate of suicide completions among Washtenaw County residents over the age of 65 has increased over the last few years. This age group has the highest rate of suicide completions from 2018 to 2020 (the average rate across these three years was 18.4 deaths per 100,000). Individuals under the age of 25 had the lowest rate of suicides from 2017-2021, with a slightly increasing trend since 2017 (the average rate across these five years was 5.2 deaths per 100,000). Again, we see that the rate of suicide completions among those under 25 years doubled from 2019 to 2020.

82% of Washtenaw County residents who died by suicide identified as White and 17% identified as part of another racial group (this included Black/African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and other – not including those of unknown race), from 2019-2021. Nationally, the racial/ethnic group with the highest suicide rates in 2020 were non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaskan Natives followed by non-Hispanic Whites, according to the CDC.

Suicide Methods in Washtenaw County

Firearms most common, especially for older residents

The use of firearms was the most common (43%) method for suicide completions among Washtenaw County residents from 2019 to 2021, followed by hanging/suffocation (31%), and drug overdose (15%). These methods of suicide are also the most common across the U.S. Nationally, suicide deaths by firearms accounted for over half (53%) of all suicide deaths in 2020 according to the CDC.

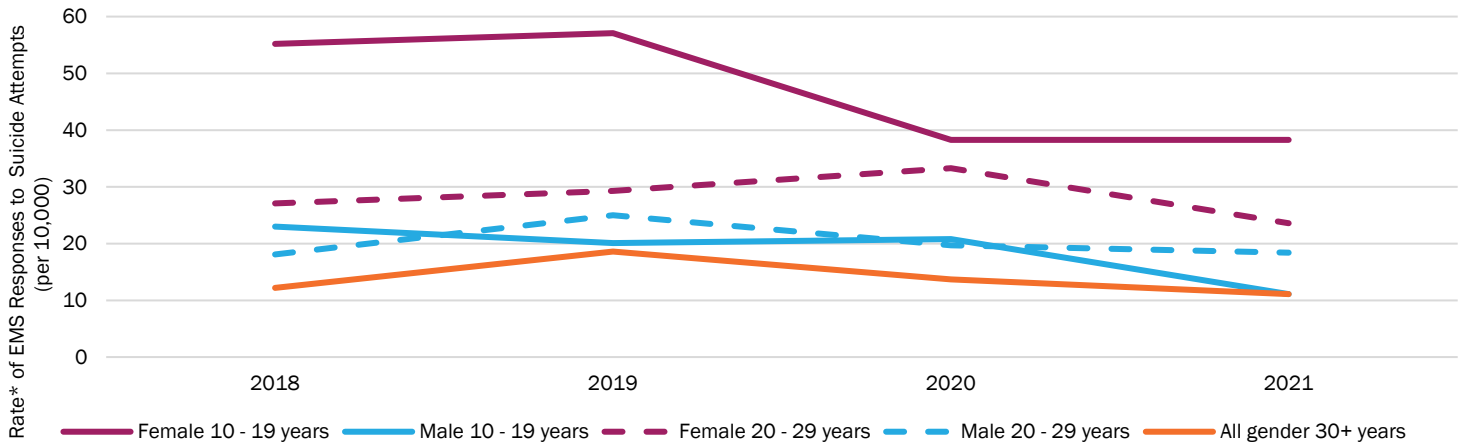
Suicide methods seem to vary by age group. For Washtenaw County residents under the age of 25, the most common method was hanging/suffocation (48%), followed by drug overdose (21%), then firearms (17%) from 2019-2021. For the two oldest age groups (45-64 years and 65+ years), the use of firearms was over 50% among Washtenaw County residents.

Method of Suicide Completion by Age
Washtenaw County Residents, 2019 - 2021

Method of Suicide:	< 25 years (N=29)	25 - 44 years (N=46)	45 - 64 years (N=33)	65+ years (N=29)
Firearms	17%	43%	58%	52%
Hanging/Suffocation	48%	33%	24%	21%
Drug Overdose	21%	9%	12%	24%
Other*	14%	15%	6%	3%

Source for table: Washtenaw County Medical Examiner (ME) Office and Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD). See data notes at the end of this report¹.
*Other includes blunt force and blast injuries (ex. fall from height, pedestrian-train/car collision), carbon monoxide poisoning, chemical asphyxia, and drowning.

Rate* of EMS Responses to Suicide Attempts by Age & Gender
Washtenaw County Residents, 2018 - 2021



Source: Emergency Medical Service (EMS) data submitted to Michigan EMS Information System (Mi-EMSIS) accessed through the BioSpatial platform. This data represents EMS responses to different events (or syndromes) as documented by EMS personnel. EMS data may contain duplicates as multiple EMS personnel can respond to one event. *Rates are per 10,000 population, using Washtenaw County 2021 5-Year American Community Survey estimates.

Suicide Completions and Attempts by Gender

Unlike the gender breakdown for suicide completions where males made up the majority (81%) of completions, females between the ages of 10-19 years consistently had the highest rate of EMS responses to suicide attempts from 2018 to 2021, followed by females between the ages of 20-29 years. This inverse pattern by gender in suicide attempts vs. completions has been consistently observed across the U.S., according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). This may be due to several different factors but is most likely attributed to the differences in the methods used most commonly by males versus females. According to NIMH, males often use more lethal methods (such as firearms) than females. This is consistent with Washtenaw County’s suicide completion data from 2019 to 2021 which showed 47% of males who died by suicide used firearms, while only 30% of females who died by suicide used firearms. Of all females who died by suicide, 37% were attributed to a drug overdose, compared to males who died by suicide, only 9% were attributed to a drug overdose.

Rates of EMS responses to suicide attempts among both females and males ages 10-19 years have decreased from 2018 to 2021 (solid lines in above graph). Meanwhile, rates of EMS responses to suicide attempts among both females and males ages 20-29 years (dashed lines in above graph), as well as all residents over 30 years (orange line in above graph), have remained fairly stable for this same time period.

LGBTQ+ Youth Face Mental Health Disparities – More Local Data is Needed

Our data sources do not include sexual orientation information and only include binary male and female gender options; therefore, we do not have sufficient data collected on LGBTQ+ people and suicide in Washtenaw County. According to the Trevor Project’s 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ+ Youth, **45% of LGBTQ+ youth in Michigan seriously considered suicide in 2022 and 15% attempted suicide.** Data collection and interventions regarding this population and their mental health must be improved.

¹Date notes: Data from the Geocoded Michigan Death Certificate Registry reported by Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, MDHHS was used for total annual counts of suicide deaths among Washtenaw County residents and information on age and gender. This data includes Washtenaw County residents that may have died outside of the county that would not have been reported by the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner (ME) Office and therefore represents a more complete dataset. A slightly smaller sample size of data from the Washtenaw County ME Office was used for more detailed information on race and suicide method.

Visit washtenaw.org/suicide for additional data.

Questions? Contact [Shannon Phillips, MPH](mailto:Shannon.Phillips@washtenaw.org), Epidemiologist, Washtenaw County Health Department. Anyone in Washtenaw County can call the Community Mental Health CARES team 24/7 with any mental health questions: 734-544-3050

