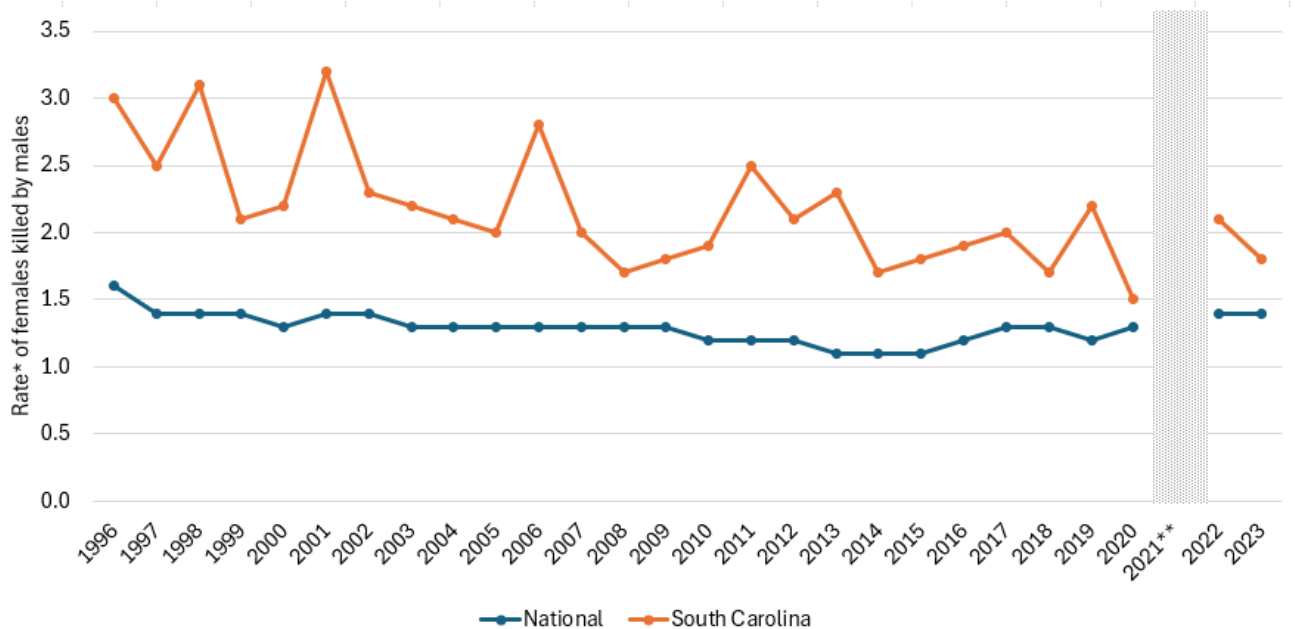


South Carolina’s History of Deadly Violence Against Women

Compared to national rates, South Carolina has consistently had higher rates of female victims killed by male offenders in single victim/single offender incidents. South Carolina was among the 10 states with the highest rates of females killed by males for 23 out of the past 25 years (1996 – 2020)¹ and ranks 17th in the nation in terms of household firearm ownership rates.² However, South Carolina has experienced an overall decline in the rate of females killed by males since it had the highest rate in the nation in 1998 as detailed in the 2000 edition of the Violence Policy Center’s (VPC) annual report *When Men Murder Women*.³ In 2023, South Carolina’s rate of females killed by males was 1.8 per 100,000, compared to the national rate of 1.4 per 100,000 (Figure 1). A total of 51 female victims were killed by males in the state that year.^a

Figure 1. Rate of females killed by males in South Carolina and nationally, 1996 — 2023⁴



*Rates are per 100,000 and not adjusted for age

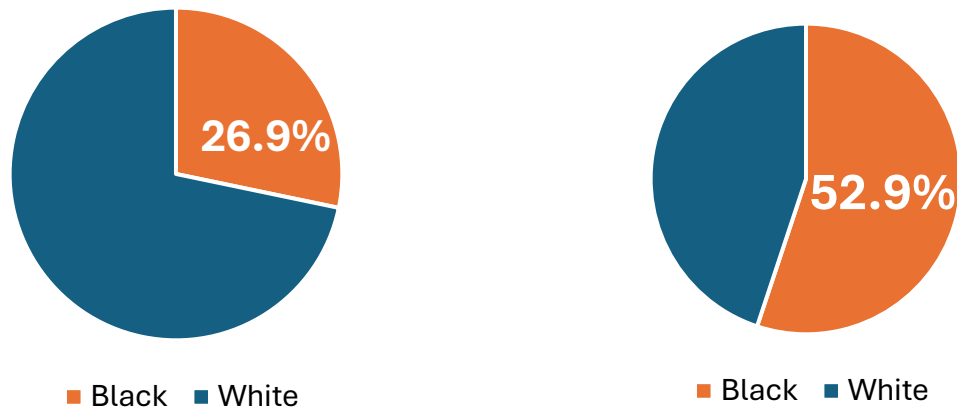
**FBI crime data are not shown for 2021 due to unreliability of data caused by the transition between FBI crime data reporting systems (depicted by grey area of graph)

^a Due to changes in the way Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime data are collected and reported, beginning with 2021 data, the VPC has not been able to rank the states or offer state-level information for all 50 states. The VPC hopes that at some point in the near future FBI crime data will once again be sufficiently robust to allow for a more complete analysis of the data, including state rankings.

RACE

Out of 51 female homicide victims in South Carolina in 2023, 27 were Black (52.9 percent) and 22 were white (43.1 percent). The victim's race was unknown for two victims. While Black females comprise only 26.9 percent of the female South Carolina population, they represent 52.9 percent of all female homicide victims killed by males. With a rate of 3.6 per 100,000, Black females in South Carolina are three times as likely to be killed by a male compared to white females (1.2 per 100,000). The rate of Black females killed by males is higher in South Carolina compared to nationally. In 2023, Black females in the U.S. were murdered by males at a rate two and a half times as high as white females: 3.1 per 100,000 versus 1.2 per 100,000.⁵ This further illustrates the racial disparities in lethal gun violence among female residents of South Carolina (Figure 2).

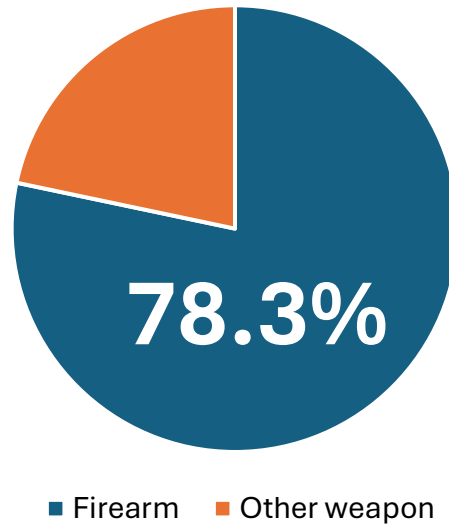
Figure 2. Black percentage of South Carolina female population (left figure)⁶; Black percentage of South Carolina female homicide victims (right figure)⁴, 2023



MOST COMMON WEAPONS

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 78.3 percent of victims (36 out of 46) were killed with guns (Figure 3). Of these, 80.6 percent (29 victims) were killed with a handgun. Four females were killed by bodily force, three were killed with a knife or other cutting instrument, and three were killed with a blunt object.

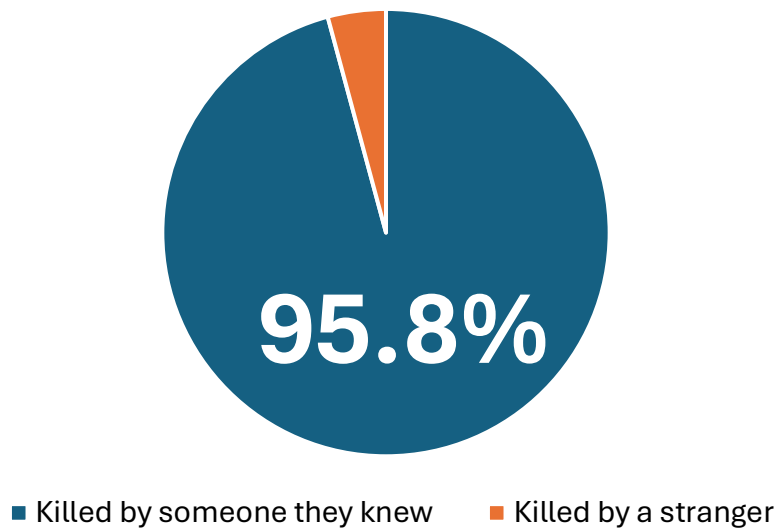
Figure 3. Percentage of female homicide victims in South Carolina killed with firearms, 2023⁴



VICTIM/OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 95.8 percent of female victims (46 out of 48) were murdered by a male they knew (Figure 4). Two victims were killed by a stranger. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 60.9 percent (28 victims) were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders.

Figure 4. Percentage of female homicide victims in South Carolina killed by someone they knew, 2023⁴



AGE

Victim age was available for all but one female homicide victim in South Carolina in 2023. No victims were less than 18 years old and eight victims were age 65 and older (16.0 percent). The average victim age was 41.9 years old.

CIRCUMSTANCE

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 79.4 percent (27 out of 34) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 74.1 percent (20 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

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The national report, When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2023 Homicide Data can be found at <https://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2025.pdf>.