

The Oakland Gun Tracing Project

Quick Facts

YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE

- In Alameda County in 1998, more youths age 13-19 were **killed by guns** than by any other means.ⁱ
- During 1998 and 1999, almost 100 Oakland residents were victims of **gun-related homicide**; at least 40 were under age 25.ⁱⁱ
- Guns were affiliated with over 200 crimes involving juveniles (under age 18) as suspects and victims in 1998 and 1999.
- **The Cycle of Violence** – A significant percentage of juveniles who have been victims of violent crimes enter the juvenile justice system as a perpetrator before or after their victimization.
 - **71%** of juveniles involved as suspects or victims in a gun-related crime in 1998 and 1999 had a *minimum* of one interaction with the Alameda County Probation Department; **32%, nearly 1/3**, had a *minimum* of 5 probation referrals.
 - **38%** of juvenile victims of gun violence in 1998 & 1999 had prior offenses and **28%** were arrested at least once within a 2-year period following the firearm incident.
- In a single year (December 1999 to December 2000), Highland Hospital in Oakland admitted **49 youth** to the trauma unit for **gun injuries**.
- **Costs** – The total cost of **incarceration** for a juvenile offender in California is **\$48,000 per year**.ⁱⁱⁱ As of 1995, the average **cost of hospitalization for each firearm injury** case treated in Alameda County hospitals was **\$24,000**.^{iv}

SUPPLY-SIDE: THE ILLEGAL GUN MARKET

HOW DO JUVENILES GET THEM, WHEN 21 IS THE LEGAL AGE TO PURCHASE A HANDGUN?

- In 1998 and 1999, 3,000 guns were **physically recovered** by the **Oakland Police Department**.
- **60%** of the juvenile crime guns recovered by the Oakland Police Department in 1998/99 were, at one point, **legally purchased within the San Francisco Bay Area**.
(More information is needed to discover how many times the guns changed hands between the point of legal purchase and use in a juvenile-related crime.)
- Less than **4%** of the firearms associated with Oakland juveniles in 1998 & 1999 were reported by the owner as **lost or stolen**.
- The **market supplying Oakland youth with firearms** appears to be largely a **local problem** of undocumented, street-level transactions. "**Straw purchasers**" are people who buy guns legally and sell them illegally to juveniles and felons.^v

DEMAND-SIDE: JUVENILES AS SUSPECTS AND VICTIMS

- Out of all 263 juveniles involved in gun violence in 1998 & 1999:
 - **70%** of the suspects and **43%** of the victims are African American males. In contrast, Census figures for the year 2000 show that African American males comprise only 20% of the Oakland population under age 18.
 - **55%** of juvenile gun victims were attacked by suspects of their own race.
 - **78%** were not living with both biological parents at the time of the gun-related incident. In contrast, national Census figures for 2000 show that only 30% of youth under age 18 do not reside with two married, biological or adoptive step-parents.
- **29%** of the probation referrals made on behalf of the juveniles in our study were dropped.
- An estimated **500 to 600** youth per year are taken into police custody and released without services.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND

- ✓ Hire a full-time Firearm Technician Analyst to implement a *comprehensive* firearms tracing program within the Oakland Police Department.
- ✓ Create a city ordinance requiring gun owners to report gun theft and loss to local law enforcement in a timely manner, with an imposed fine for non-compliance.
- ✓ Create a task force to establish dialogue and coordination among local, state and national agencies managing separate gun information systems, as well as community groups affected by gun violence.
- ✓ Construct prompt, effective and coordinated services for juveniles when they first come in contact with the criminal justice system.

**"Why is it that we can walk to get any kind of gun...we want,
but we have to take the bus to get school supplies?"**

Art - Castlemont High School student

ⁱ State of California, Department of Health Services. Death Records, 1998.

ⁱⁱ Oakland Police Department Crime Data. Compiled by the East Oakland Partnership to Reduce Juvenile Gun Violence, 2001.

ⁱⁱⁱ California Youth Authority. *Ward per capita cost*, Fiscal year 2001/02. www.cya.ca.gov/about/wardcost.html

^{iv} Alameda County Public Health Department Violent Injury Report, 1994 and 1995.

^v Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms. *Following the Gun: Enforcing Federal Laws Against Firearms Traffickers*, June 2000.