

# Violence in the City of Pittsburgh: First Six Months of the Year

AUGUST 2015

## Homicides and Other Types of Violence

In the first six months of 2015, there were 20 homicides in the City of Pittsburgh, a decrease over the five-year average and since 2014.

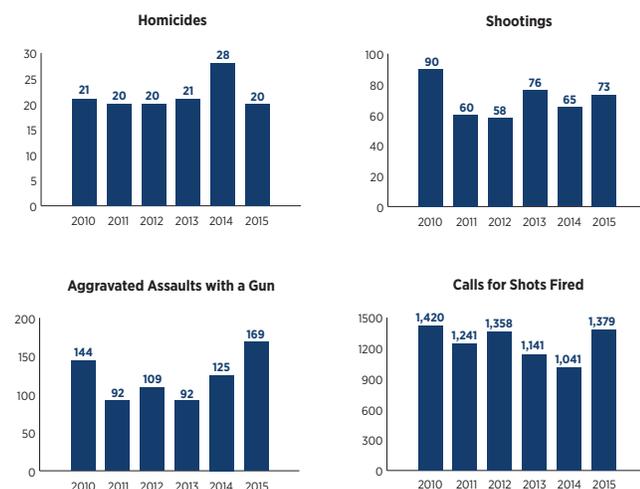
Although homicides are most likely to receive media attention, other types of violence (shootings, aggravated assaults with a firearm and calls for services for shots fired) were more likely to occur than homicides. For example, in the first six months of 2015, there were almost four shootings, nine aggravated assaults with a gun, and 73 calls for shots fired incidents for every homicide.

## Trends

No consistent trends were discernable across all types of violence examined; in 2015, homicides were down, while shootings, gun assaults and calls for shots fired incidents were up. Specifically, as seen in **Figure 2**, on average there were:

- 22 homicides per year over the period. Between January and June 2015, homicide was down 9 percent over the average and 29 percent over 2014.
- 66 shootings per year over the period; in 2015, shootings were up 10 percent over the average
- 117 gun assaults without injury over the period; in 2015, they were up 44 percent over the average.
- 1,227 calls for services for shots fired over the period; in 2015, they were up 12 percent over the five-year average

FIGURE 2: Violence Trends in Pittsburgh, First Six Months of 2011-2015



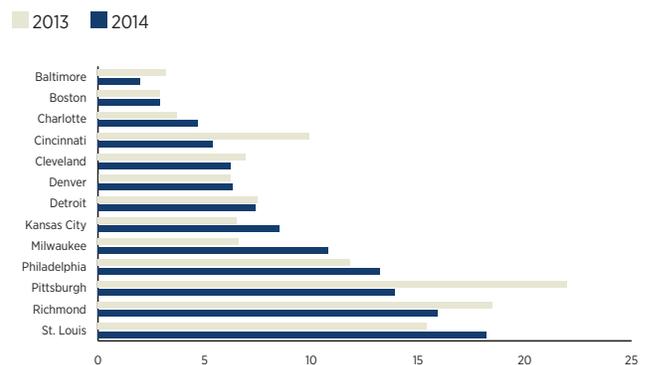
## Homicide Comparison to Benchmark Cities

Comparative homicide data for Pittsburgh and the 11 *PittsburghToday* benchmark cities were available only through 2014 (federal data for the first six months of 2015 are not yet complete).

In Pittsburgh, the first six months of 2014 saw a 30 percent increase in homicides over 2013. For those first six months of 2014, Pittsburgh's homicide rate (8.5 per 100,000) was slightly higher than the benchmark average (8.4 per 100,000). Boston and Richmond also saw increases in violence during this time, but these were offset by significant reductions in Denver, Kansas City and Detroit (see **Figure 3**).

However, 2015 is shaping up to be a different story. Homicides are down in Pittsburgh and up in a lot of other cities. Milwaukee, which in 2014 had one of its lowest annual homicide totals in city history, has recorded 84 murders so far this year, more than double the 41 it recorded at the same point last year. The number of murders in the first six months of 2015 jumped by 33 percent or more in both Baltimore and St. Louis.

FIGURE 3: Homicides, Pittsburgh and Benchmark Cities, First Six Months of 2013 and 2014



## Homicide Victims

The demographic characteristics of homicide victims during the first six months of 2015 are consistent with historic demographic trends.

**Gender:** Men were nearly four times more likely to be victims of homicide than women and made up 80 percent of all homicide victims

**Race:** African Americans represented 90 percent of all homicide victims.

**Age:** Young adults were much more likely to be homicide victims than the rest of the population. The median age of homicide victims was 34. Individuals under 25 accounted for 45 percent of all victims in the City of Pittsburgh. Individuals under 35 accounted for 80 percent of victims.

## Offenders

**Gender:** During the first six months of 2015, there were 14 offenders whose gender was identified; 93 percent were men and 7 percent were women.

**Race:** Over the time period, there were 12 offenders whose race was identified; 83 percent were African American and 17 percent were Hispanic.

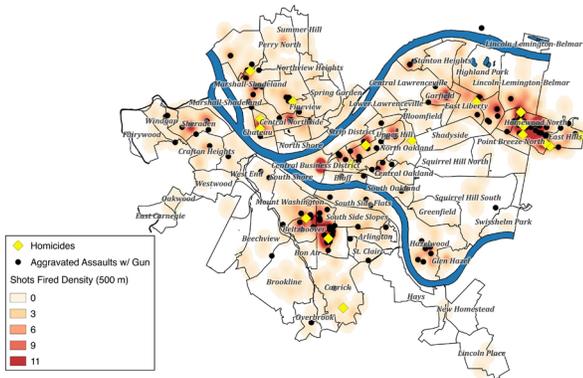
**Age:** Over the time period, there were 13 offenders whose age was identified. Of those, 23 percent were individuals under 25. Individuals under age 35 accounted for 100 percent of perpetrators identified. The median age of offenders identified was 26.

**Where Did Violence Occur?**

Figure 4 shows the density of all violence for the first six months of 2015. Forty-seven percent of homicides occurred in the East End of Pittsburgh (Homestead, East Liberty), 21 percent on the Northside (Manchester, Marshall-Shadeland and Perry South), 16 percent in South Pittsburgh (Beltzhoover, Carrick and Knoxville).

The vast majority of shots fired occurred in Homewood, South Pittsburgh (Knoxville, Allentown), the Hill District (Bedford Dwellings, Middle Hill) and the Northside (Perry South and Central Northside). These neighborhoods also experienced 38 percent of all shootings and 33 percent of all aggravated assaults with a gun that did not result in injury.

**FIGURE 4: Location of Violence in Pittsburgh, January through June, 2015**



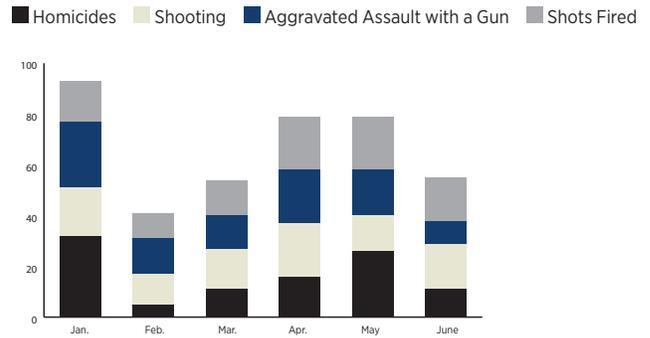
Most homicides occurred in Pittsburgh Police Zone 5 (47 percent), followed by Zone 1 (21 percent), Zone 3 (16 percent) and Zone 2 (11 percent). Only one homicide occurred in Zone 4 and none occurred in Zone 6.

**When Did Violence Occur?**

**Violence by Month**

January of 2015 was more violent than had been typical of January; its 290 total incidents represent a 32 percent increase over the January average of the last five years. This was offset by a relatively peaceful June of 2015; its 269 incidents were 14 percent less than a typical June over the last five years.

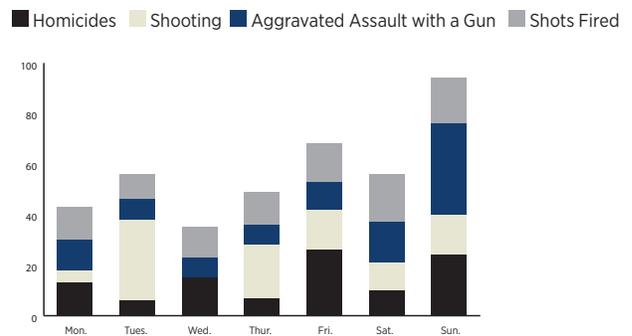
**FIGURE 5: Pittsburgh Violence by Month, by Percentage, January through June 2015**



**Violence by Day of the Week**

During the first half of 2015, 54 percent of violence took place on Friday, Saturday or Sunday; this is consistent with the distribution over the last five years.

**FIGURE 6: Pittsburgh Violence by Day of Week, by Percentage, January through June 2015**



**Violence by Time of Day**

The majority of violence (75 percent) between January and June of 2015 occurred between 6pm and 6am. However, there was variation by type of violence. Only 49 percent of gun assaults without injury occurred during this time, where 79 percent of calls for shots fired were recorded during these hours.

**FIGURE 7: Pittsburgh Violence by Time of Day, January through June, 2015**

