

Arrests in Illinois for Illegal Possession of a Firearm

EXAMINING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS IN ARRESTS FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CRIMES INVOLVING GUNS

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Data Sources: This research brief relied on data from the Illinois Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) maintained by the Illinois State Police and provided by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.¹

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INTRODUCTION

Gun violence is a serious threat to public safety nationally, and exacts an enormous toll on the State of Illinois. During 2018, more than 780 people in Illinois were murdered with a gun, and an additional 573 people in the state died by suicide with a firearm.² Even more prevalent than fatal gun incidents are non-lethal crimes committed with guns, such as robberies, assaults and batteries, and sexual assaults. However, due to the nature of these offenses, it is usually difficult for the police to identify and arrest a suspect. Nationally, and in Illinois, the rate at which non-fatal gun crimes are solved (i.e., the “clearance rate”) is less than 33%.³

However, it is important to recognize that not all crimes in Illinois involving a firearm are offenses where a victim was threatened or shot at with a gun. Indeed, many gun crimes, such as the illegal possession of a gun, do not involve a violent action towards a victim. However, Illinois’ legal terminology can create confusion regarding the prevalence of gun crimes involving violence. In Illinois, there are several reasons why a person would not be legally allowed to possess a gun, either because of their age, criminal history, or not having applied for the required Firearm Owner’s Identification (FOID) card or the Concealed Carry License (CCL).⁴ If someone possesses a gun when legally not allowed to do so, they can be arrested and charged with the crime of “unlawful use of a weapon” or “aggravated unlawful use of a weapon.” The phrase “use of a weapon” can be misleading, because in most instances it is only defining the illegal possession of a firearm.

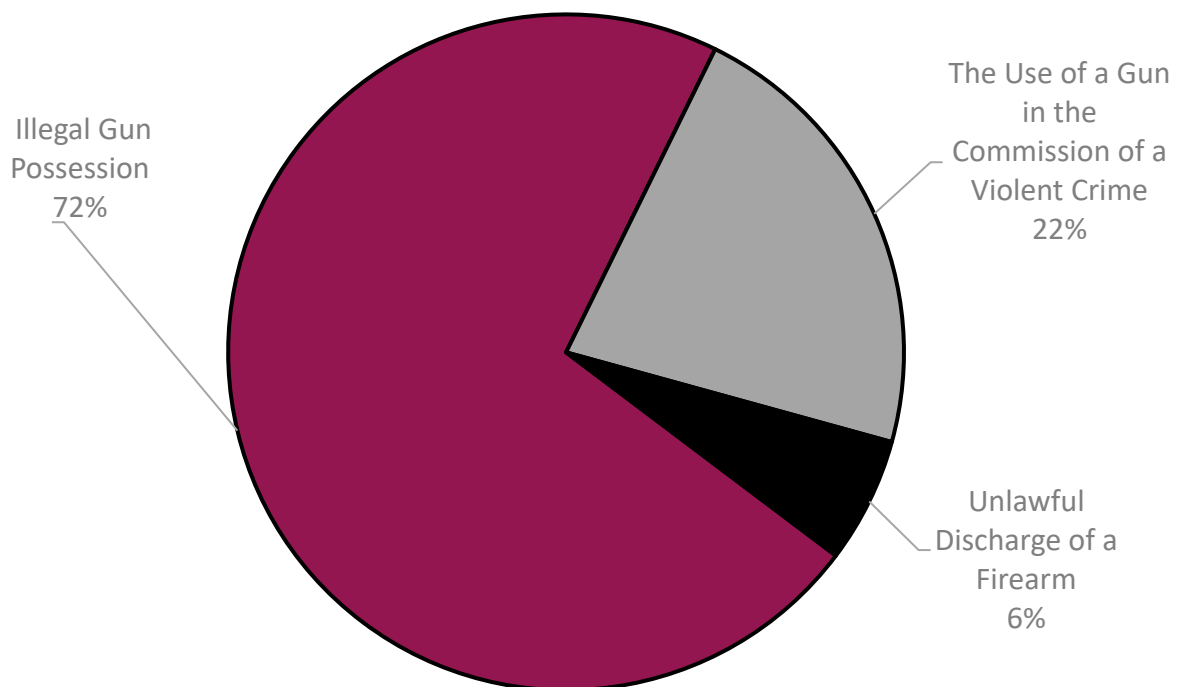
Under Illinois law, there are different categories of crimes involving a gun, which can be grouped into three broad categories: (1) the use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime (i.e., murder, robbery, assault/battery, criminal sexual assault), (2) the unlawful discharge of a firearm (i.e., shooting a gun under circumstances prohibited by law, such as in the direction of buildings or people), and (3) the illegal possession of a gun (i.e., the possession of a gun by persons prohibited from possessing guns due to their age, criminal record, or not having applied for/received a FOID card or a CCL, or possessing a gun in prohibited places).⁵

Using Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) data provided by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and the Illinois State Police, Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice has been analyzing information on individuals arrested in Illinois for non-lethal crimes involving a gun (i.e., excluding murder). This research brief presents the first set of analyses from this effort, and provides a detailed description of the trends in arrests, and the characteristics of those arrested, for the crime of illegal possession of a gun. Importantly, most



people arrested in Illinois for a crime involving a gun are arrested for the illegal possession of a gun (Figure 1), not the use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime or the unlawful discharge of a firearm. Specifically, between state fiscal year (SFY) 2009 and 2019, there were just over 105,000 arrests involving 82,842 unique individuals that explicitly included a gun offense among the arrest charges (Figure 1).⁶ Given that arrests for illegal gun possession account for such a large portion (72%) of the gun crime arrests in Illinois, a closer examination of these arrests and the characteristics of people arrested for these crimes is critical to fully understand the justice system's response to crimes involving a gun.

Figure 1: Arrests for Gun Crimes, SFY 2009 to 2019



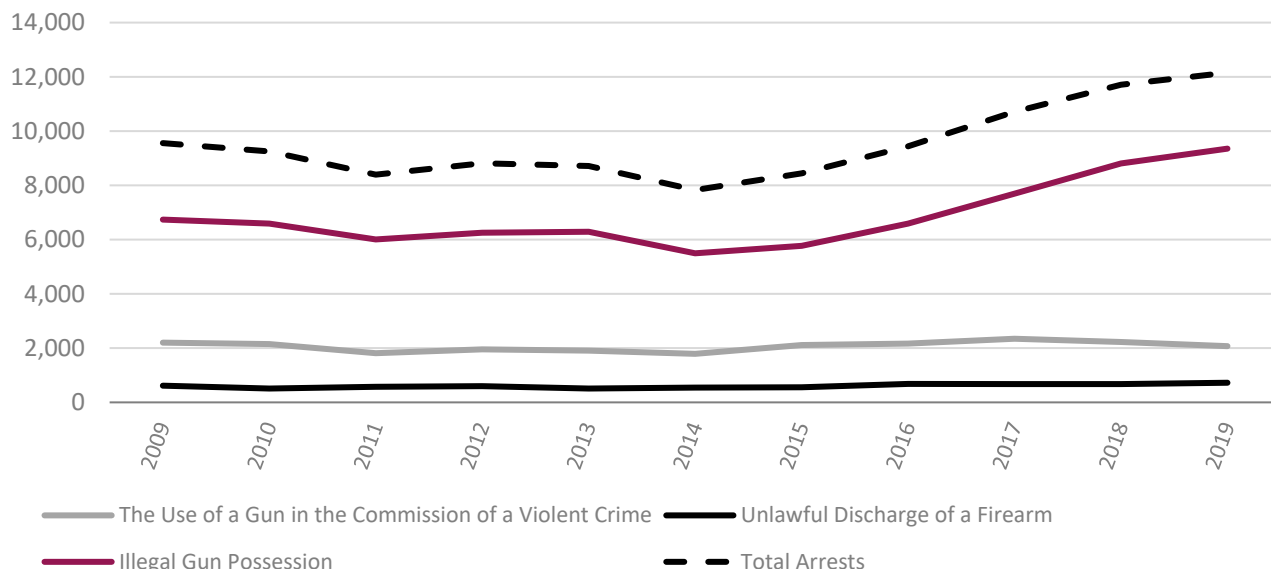
Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

ARREST TRENDS

Between 2014 and 2019, increases in arrests for the illegal possession of a gun drove overall increases in gun arrests.

When examining arrests for the three broad categories of crimes involving a gun (use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime, unlawful discharge of a firearm, and illegal possession of a gun), increases in arrests for illegal possession of a gun showed a substantial rise starting after 2014. Between 2014 and 2019,⁷ arrests for illegal possession of a gun (in which the defendant had no accompanying arrest charges of use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime or unlawful discharge of a firearm) increased 70%, from fewer than 6,000 to more than 9,000 (Figure 2). Arrests for use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime and unlawful discharge of a firearm also increased, but to a lesser degree. Arrests for use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime increased 16% between 2014 and 2019, and accounted for less than one-quarter of gun arrests (Figure 1). Similarly, arrests for unlawful discharge of a firearm increased 33%, but accounted for only 6% of all gun arrests. Thus, while arrests increased across all three gun crime categories between 2014 and 2019, most of the overall increase in gun arrests was due to a dramatic increase in arrests for the illegal possession of a gun.

Figure 2: Arrests for Gun Crimes, by Offense, SFY 2009-2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

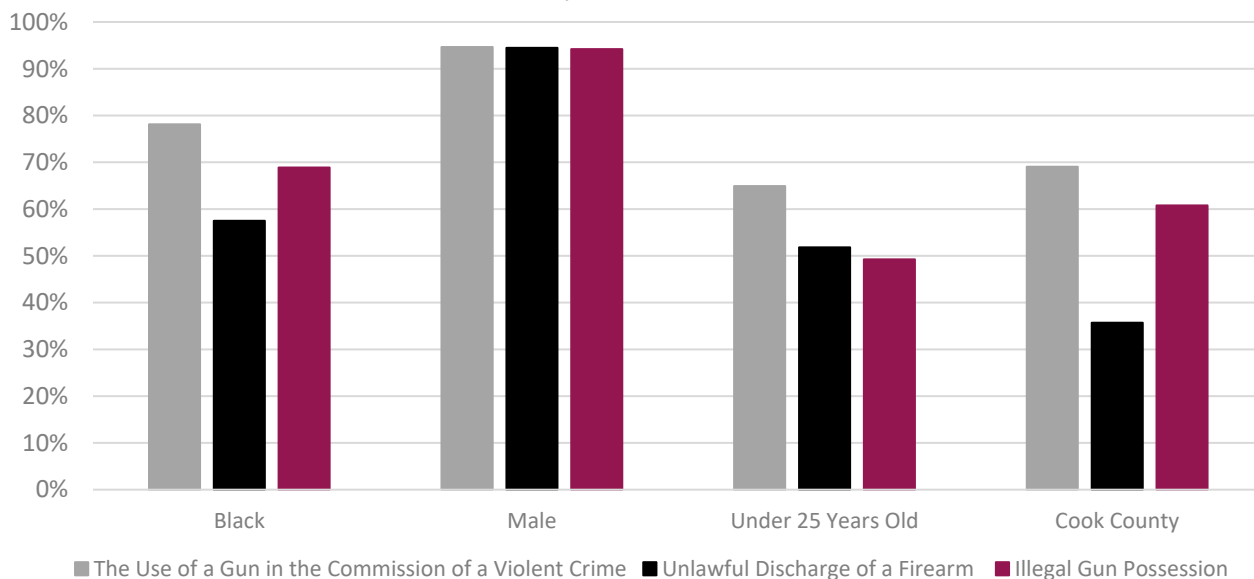


PERSONS ARRESTED

The majority of people arrested for gun crimes were Black, male, and persons under 25 years old.

Although the majority of gun arrests involved the illegal possession of a gun, there were some similarities in the characteristics of people arrested across the three gun crime categories. For example, most of the people arrested for a gun crime were Black, male, and under the age of 25 (Figure 3). Among those arrested specifically for the illegal possession of a gun, 69% were Black, 94% were male, and roughly 50% were under the age of 25. The analyses also revealed geographic variation in gun arrests. The majority of arrests involving the use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime (69%) and the illegal possession of a gun (61%) occurred in Cook County (primarily within Chicago). Specifically, 54% of the statewide arrests for the use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime occurred in Chicago, as did 47% of the statewide arrests for the illegal possession of a gun. In contrast, only one-third (36%) of arrests for the unlawful discharge of a firearm took place in Cook County. Overall, during the study period, 9 of Illinois' 102 counties saw 2,000 or more arrests for crimes involving a gun, and these 9 counties accounted for 82% of all gun arrests in the state (see Figure 7 for a list of these 9 counties).

Figure 3: Demographic Characteristics of Persons Arrested for a Gun Crime, by Offense, SFY 2009 to 2019

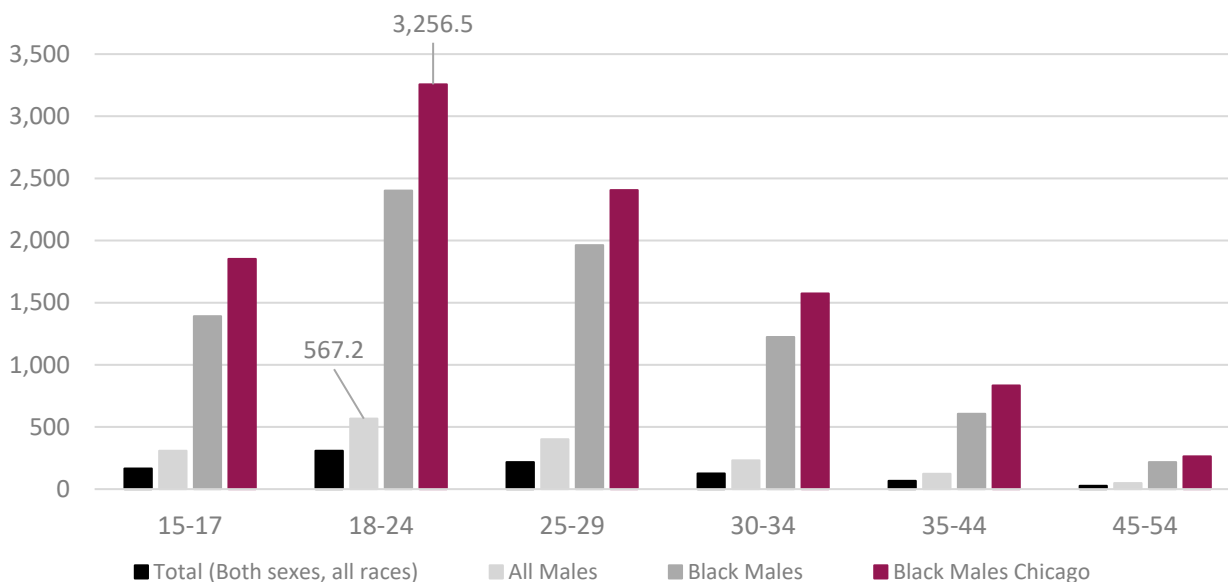


Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



The analyses also revealed that males between the ages of 18 and 24 had the highest arrest rates for crimes involving a gun (Figure 4).⁸ Black males between the ages of 18 and 24 had the highest arrest rate statewide; for every 100,000 Black male between the ages of 18 and 24, there were 2,404 arrests (Figure 4). Further, the arrest rate for 18 to 24 year-old Black males in Chicago was more than 3,200 per 100,000 population, or 10-times higher than the overall arrest rate for 18 to 24 year-olds in Illinois (Figure 4). By comparison, the statewide arrest rate for White males between 18 and 24 was 307 per 100,000, and 1,108 per 100,000 for Hispanic males between 18 and 24 (not shown in figure).

Figure 4: Annualized Arrests Rates per 100,000 for Gun Crimes, 2016-2018



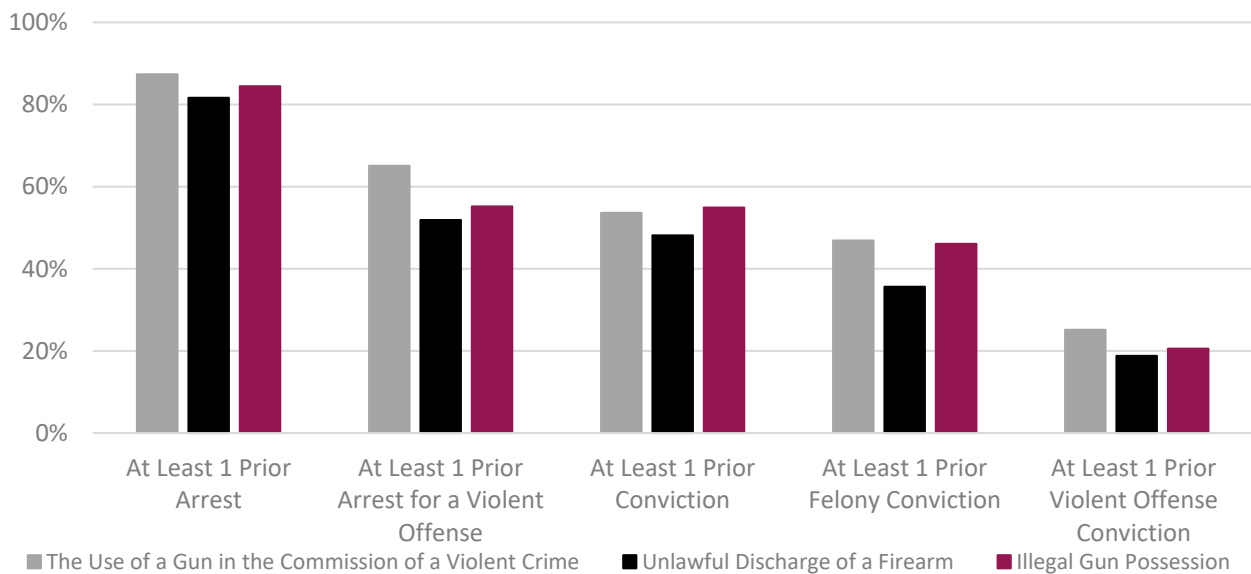
Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

When describing the characteristics of those arrested for gun crimes, it is also important to consider the nature of their criminal history prior to the current gun arrest (Figure 5). One way to gauge the extent of a person’s prior criminal history is to examine the number and nature of prior arrests. Overall, most —more than 80%—of those arrested for a gun crime between SFY 2009 and 2019 had at least one prior arrest, regardless of the type of gun crime. Depending on the specific type of gun crime, a smaller portion—between 52% and 65%—of those arrested had one or more prior arrests for a violent crime.⁹ For example, of those arrested for the illegal possession of a gun between SFY 2009 and 2019, 84% had at least one prior arrest, and 55% had at least one prior arrest for a violent crime. However, as described earlier, it must also be kept in mind that violent crimes often have low clearance rates (i.e., they do not result in the perpetrator being arrested).



Another way to consider an individual’s criminal history is to look at their prior *convictions*. Under Illinois law, prior *convictions* (not prior arrests) determine whether the seriousness of current charges may be elevated (e.g., classifying someone as an “armed habitual criminal” or a “felon in possession of a firearm”). Just over 50% of those arrested for the commission of a violent crime with a gun or illegal possession of a gun, and just under 50% of those arrested for illegal discharge of a gun, had a prior conviction for *any* crime. However, 25% or less of those arrested for the various gun crimes examined had a prior conviction for a violent crime. Significantly, while most of those arrested for gun crimes had been previously *arrested*, a substantial portion had never been previously *convicted* of a crime, and the vast majority had never been convicted of a violent crime. Thus, while those who are arrested for the illegal possession of a gun are often described as “violent gun offenders,” the legal criteria generally used to determine criminal history—prior conviction for a violent crime—suggests that most do not actually have a history of violence that has resulted in a conviction.

Figure 5: Criminal History of Persons Arrested for a Gun Crime, by Offense, SFY 2009 to 2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

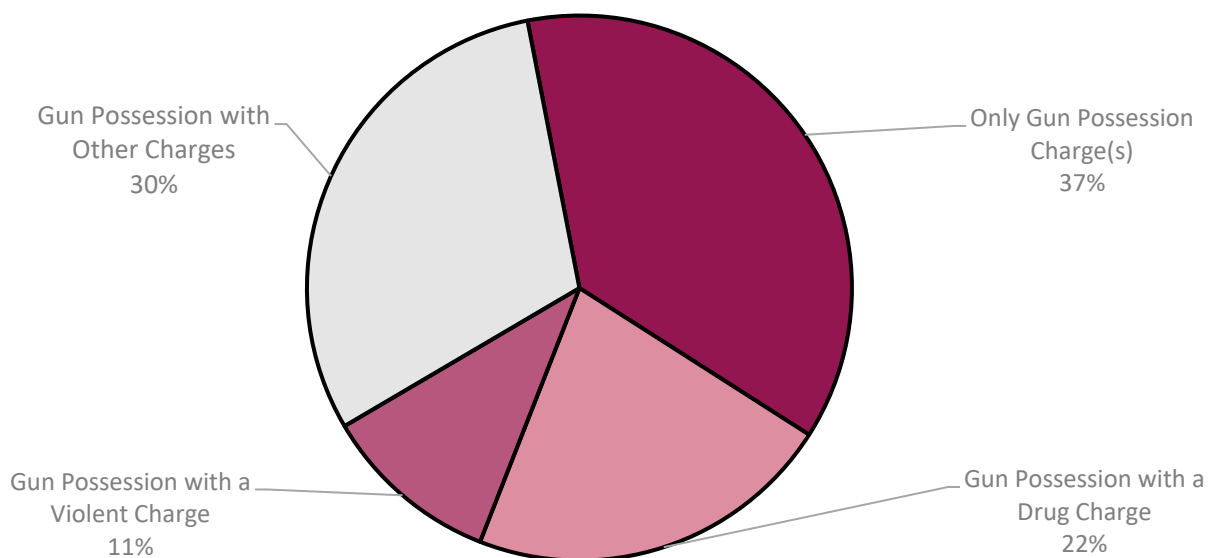


ARRESTS FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF A GUN

Most arrests for illegal possession of a gun included additional charges for non-violent crimes.

Because most gun arrests involve the illegal possession of a gun, more detailed and focused analyses of the nature and outcome of these arrests are critical to understanding how gun cases are handled by the justice system. Individuals are often arrested for multiple charges during a single arrest event. Based on the CHRI data used in this study, it is possible to look at both the illegal possession of a gun charges and additional non-gun charges for which individuals were arrested during the same arrest event. Overall, 37% of arrest events involving a charge of illegal gun possession included no additional non-gun charges (Figure 6). Of all the arrests for illegal gun possession, a relatively small percent involved additional charges for violent crimes (11%), and none of these violent crimes included a charge of using a gun in the commission of a violent crime. Roughly 22% of illegal gun possession arrest events also included a charge related to a drug-law violation, and 30% also included some other type of arrest charge. Overall, illegal gun possession arrest events included an average of 2.75 total arrest charges.

Figure 6: Arrests for Illegal Gun Possession, Nature of Arrest Charges, SFY 2009 to 2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



As noted above, most (63%) of the arrest events involving illegal possession of a gun involved some other charge, and of these other charges, 37% were for felony-level offenses. Thus, of all those arrested for illegal gun possession, 23% had an accompanying charge for another felony offense (i.e., 37% of the 63%). Under Illinois' Armed Violence statute (720 ILCS, 5/33 A-2), a person who illegally possesses a gun during the commission of any other felony can be charged and convicted of Armed Violence. In Illinois, Armed Violence is a Class X felony and requires a prison sentence of 6 to 30 years if convicted. Thus, Illinois law classifies the illegal possession of a gun during any felony, such as drug possession or delivery, theft, possession of a stolen car, etc., the same as violent crimes committed with a gun, such as armed robbery, aggravated criminal sexual assault, or aggravated battery. Of those arrested for illegal gun possession with an accompanying felony-level offense, 87% of the accompanying felonies were non-violent offenses, with drug-law violations accounting for the single largest category (27%) of these accompanying felony charges.

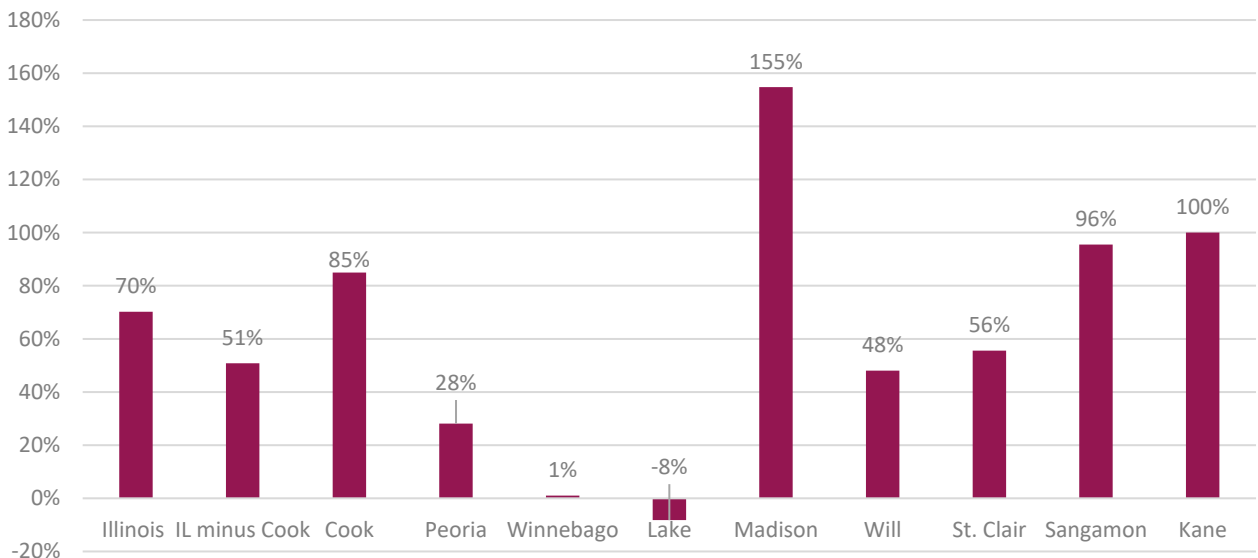


CHANGES IN ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION ARRESTS

Arrests for illegal possession of a gun generally increased between 2014 and 2019. However, this increase varied across Illinois' counties, changing the nature of arrests and the characteristics of persons arrested.

As seen in Figure 2, there was a dramatic (70%) increase in the number of arrests for the illegal possession of a gun between 2014 and 2019. However, the trends in arrests during this period varied across Illinois' large counties. For example, in Cook County (which includes Chicago) arrests for illegal possession of a gun increased 85% between 2014 and 2019. Other large counties experienced even larger increases. For example, in Madison, Sangamon and Kane Counties (in southern, central and northern Illinois, respectively) arrests for illegal possession of a gun increased more than 95%. In contrast, other counties saw relatively small or no changes in the number of arrests during this period. For example, arrests in Winnebago County were stable (increasing 1%), while in Lake County they fell 8%.

Figure 7: Percent Change in Illegal Gun Possession Arrests, by County, SFY 2014 to 2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

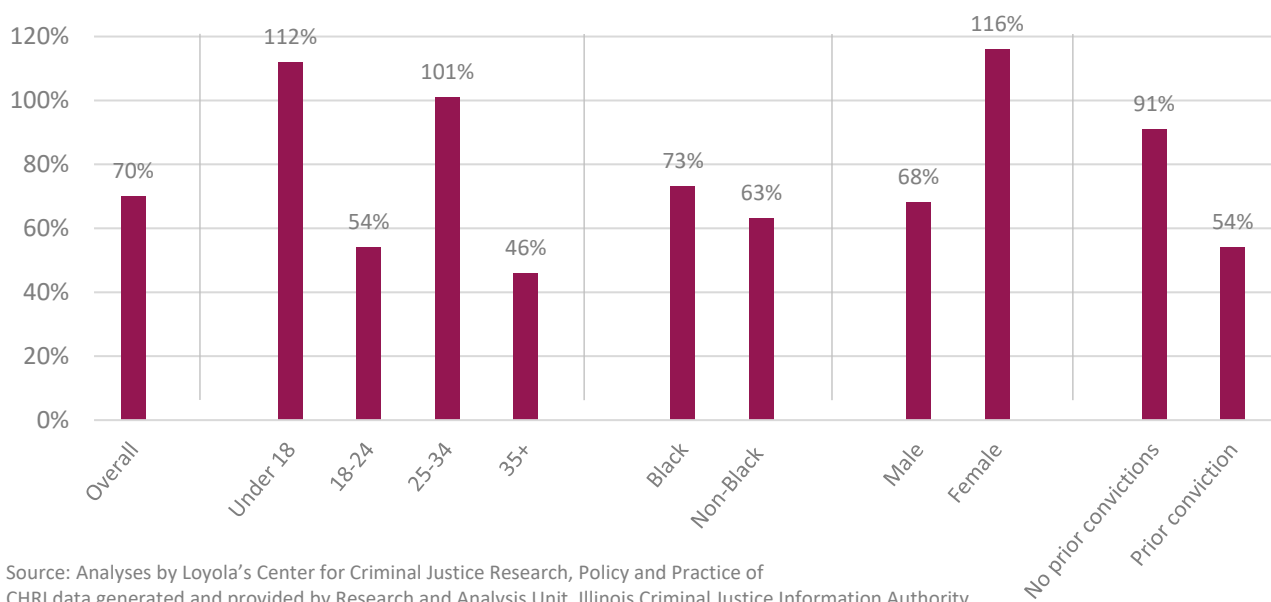


Increases in arrests for illegal possession of a gun also varied by the age and sex of the person arrested. While people under the age of 18 accounted for a relatively small proportion (8%) of arrests for illegal possession of a gun between 2014 and 2019, the number of arrests for this age group more than doubled, increasing 110%. Similarly, arrests among people between 25 and 34—the age group that accounted for a quarter of the arrests during this period—also doubled (increasing 100%). By comparison, there was just a 54% increase in the number of arrests for people 18 to 24 years old, and a 46% increase in arrests for people over the age of 34. Similarly, although females accounted for an extremely small portion (6%) of the people arrested for illegal gun possession throughout the study period, between 2014 and 2019 arrests of females increased more than 110%, compared to a 68% increase in arrests of males during that period.

As described earlier, Black individuals accounted for nearly 70% of all the people arrested for illegal gun possession during the study period (Figure 3), and their arrest rates relative to their representation in the population are also high (Figure 4). That said, while there was a 70% overall increase in the number of people arrested for illegal gun possession between 2014 and 2019, the percent change in arrests for Black people was only slightly higher (73%) than arrests for all other racial categories combined (63%).¹⁰

When it came to the criminal histories of those arrested, and how these changed during this period of increased arrests for illegal gun possession, a shift appears to have occurred. Between 2014 and 2019, arrests for illegal gun possession of those who had no prior convictions for any crime increased more than 90%, while arrests of those with a prior conviction also increased, but to a smaller degree (54%). As a result of this shift, 48% of those arrested in 2019 had no prior convictions, compared to 43% of those arrested in 2014.

Figure 8: Percent Change in Gun Possession Arrests, by Arrestee Demographics, 2014 to 2019

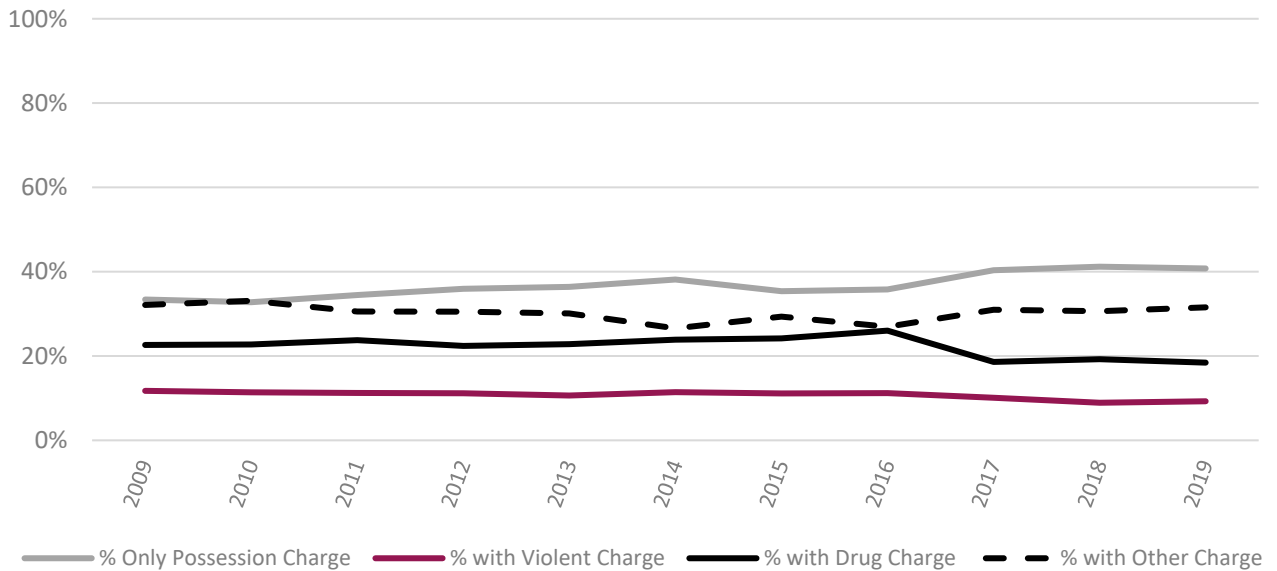


Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



Finally, an increasing proportion of the arrests for illegal possession of a gun involve only a charge(s) for illegal gun possession. Specifically, in SFY 2009, 24% of all arrests for illegal possession of a gun involved only charges specific to illegal gun possession (Figure 9). However, by SFY 2019, this increased to 34%. Relatedly, it appears that a decreasing proportion of the arrests for illegal possession of a gun involve an accompanying charge related to a drug-law violation. In SFY 2014, 24% of arrests also included at least one arrest charge for a drug-law violation, but by SFY 2019 this fell to 18%.

Figure 9: Percent of Illegal Gun Possession Arrests Involving Other Charges, SFY 2009 to 2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

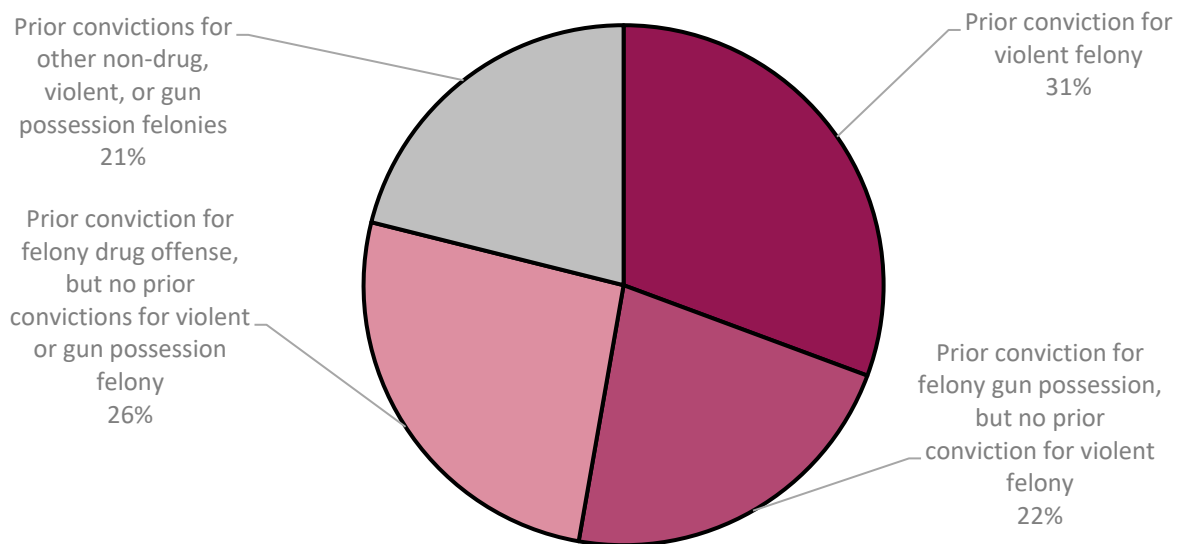


VOLUME AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ARRESTS FOR SPECIFIC ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION OFFENSES

Important subcategories of illegal gun possession arrests include “felons in possession of a firearm,” “Armed Habitual Criminal,” and “first time weapon offenders.”

The broad category of arrests for the illegal possession of a gun includes a number of subcategories of particular interest to practitioners and policy makers, including arrests of people legally classified as “felons in possession of a firearm.” Often when the public hears the term “felon in possession of a firearm,” the assumption is that all felonies are violent crimes. However, Illinois law categorizes a broad range of non-violent offenses as felonies, including the illegal possession of drugs and most retail thefts. As seen in Figure 5, 46% of those arrested for illegal gun possession between SFY 2009 and 2019 had a prior felony conviction. Analysis of this sub-group indicates that most (69%) had no prior conviction for a felony violent crime (Figure 10); 22% had a prior felony conviction for illegal gun possession (but no prior violent felony offense) and 26% had a prior felony conviction for a drug-law violation (but no prior conviction for a felony gun possession or violent offense).

Figure 10: Nature of Prior Convictions Among Those With Felony Convictions Arrested for Illegal Possession of a Firearm, SFY 2009 to 2019



Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



On average, 4.9 years had elapsed between the most recent prior felony conviction and the current arrest; 20% of arrestees had more than 7 years elapse since their most recent felony conviction. In addition, those arrested for illegal gun possession who had a prior felony conviction were older (with an average age of 30 years) than people arrested for other illegal possession of gun offenses (with an average age of 27 years-old), the majority (76%) were Black males, and 64% of these statewide arrests occurred in Cook County.

Not only is the possession of a firearm by a person with a prior felony conviction a violation of federal law, and as a result, potentially subject to federal prosecution,¹¹ but a conviction as a felon in possession of a firearm also carries with it a substantial prison sentence under Illinois' state law. In Illinois, a person who is convicted as a felon in possession of a firearm is guilty of a Class 2 Felony if the prior felony conviction includes illegal possession of a gun or a Class 3 Felony if the prior conviction does not include illegal possession of a gun. A Class 2 felony carries a prison sentence of at least 3 years, and up to 7 years, and a Class 3 felony carries a prison sentence of at least 2 years, and up to 5 years. Since 2006, a person convicted of a Class 2 felon in possession of a firearm offense faces a mandatory prison sentence (i.e., the offense is non-probationable) and since 2012, a person convicted of a Class 3 felon in possession of a firearm offense also faces a mandatory prison sentence.

The analyses also identified the number of people arrested in Illinois for illegal possession of a gun who could potentially be charged under the "Armed Habitual Criminal" designation. Under Illinois law, anyone convicted of illegal possession of a gun who has two or more prior convictions for a forcible felony, illegal possession of a gun, or a Class 3 Felony or higher drug-law violation can be considered an Armed Habitual Criminal (720 ILCS 5/24-1.7). Being convicted as an Armed Habitual Criminal requires a mandatory prison sentence of at least 6 years, and up to 30 years (i.e., a Class X felony in Illinois). Of those arrested for illegal possession of a gun between 2009 and 2019, 10% potentially met the criteria to be considered an Armed Habitual Criminal.¹² Of that small portion (10%) who could potentially be considered an Armed Habitual Criminal, more than one-half (54%) did not have any prior convictions for a crime of violence; in other words, 54% of those potentially subject to the Armed Habitual Criminal law in Illinois only had prior convictions for drug-law violations or previous illegal possession of a gun offenses. These individuals tended to be considerably older, (with an average age of 32 years), than the rest of those arrested for illegal possession of a gun (with an average age of 27 years).

Finally, at the other end of the continuum are young adults arrested for illegal possession of a gun who have no prior convictions or adjudications for violent crimes. Effective January 1, 2018, a provision in Illinois law created a "First Time Weapon Offender Program" as a sentencing option (730 ILCS 5/5-6-3.6). Prior to this new diversionary option, any adult (18 or older at the time of the offense) convicted of the illegal possession of a loaded gun faced a mandatory prison sentence. Those now eligible for this diversion program would normally face a prison sentence of 1 to 3 years prior to this sentencing option. Adults between 18 and 20 accounted for 20% of the adults arrested



for illegal possession of a gun during the study period, and the vast majority (79%) of these 18 to 20 year olds statutorily qualify for this program.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of people arrested in Illinois for gun crimes are arrested for the illegal possession of a gun. Despite the legal terminology used in Illinois to define these crimes—specifically, “unlawful use of a weapon” or “aggravated unlawful use of a weapon”— these offenses do not involve violence against victims. Further, while those arrested for the illegal possession of a gun are often cast as “violent gun offenders” by practitioners, elected officials, and the media, an examination of the criminal histories of those arrested shows that a substantial portion (nearly 50%) have no prior arrests for a violent crime, and the vast majority (80%) have no prior convictions for a violent crime. Further, among the sub-group arrested for illegal gun possession that have prior felony convictions (i.e., “felons in possession of a firearm”), 69% have no prior convictions for a violent felony offense.

Empirically, it is extremely difficult to determine whether those arrested for illegal possession of a gun are actually responsible for violent crimes committed with a gun, particularly when the clearance rate for violent crimes committed with a gun is so low. Often the assumption is that if someone illegally possesses a gun, lives in an area with high crime rates, and has previously been arrested, their motivation for possessing a gun is criminal. However, many of those who illegally possess guns do so for the same reasons as those who legally own and carry guns in Illinois: self-protection. For example, a survey by the Urban Institute of young people (aged 18 to 26) living in Chicago neighborhoods most impacted by violence found that one-third had illegally carried a firearm at some point in their lives, and among males, it was 50%. Almost all of those who reported having carried a firearm reported that self-protection was the primary reason, and those who had been previously victimized were even more likely to report carrying a gun for self-protection (Fontaine, La Vigne, Leitson, Erondou, Okeke, and Dwivedi, 2018).

While efforts like the passage of the First Time Weapon Offender Program have sought to recognize the nuance and sub-populations of those arrested for “unlawful use of a weapon,” the population *eligible* for this diversion program is relatively small, accounting for less than 16% of all of those arrested in Illinois for illegal gun possession. If this sentencing option is actually used for the 18 to 20 years olds who are eligible, and results in better outcomes than the mandatory prison sentences that would normally be imposed, consideration of expanding the age-eligibility may be warranted since the age-specific arrest rates for illegal gun possession continues to peak into the mid-20s, and a substantial portion of these individuals have no prior convictions for any crime.



Notes

¹ Data from the Illinois State Police's Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) system were extracted by the Research and Analysis Unit of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority in October of 2019 for all arrests that occurred in Illinois between January 1, 2008 through June 30, 2019 where at least one of the arrest charges involving a gun crime. In addition to the arrest event that resulted in the case being included in the study period, detailed information on *all* arrests for those individuals were also provided, along with information on court filings, court dispositions and court sentences.

² U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury data.

³ In 2018, it is estimated that only 23% of robberies, and 32% of aggravated assaults committed with a firearm are "cleared" (i.e., result in an arrest) nationally (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018: Crime in the U.S., Table 27). Based on analyses of Chicago Police Department data available through the City's data portal, the clearance rate in Chicago for these offenses is even lower.

⁴ A CCL requires the applicant be at least 21 years old, register with and submit their fingerprints to the Illinois State Police, pay a \$150 application fee every five years, and complete a 16 hour course by a certified instructor, which costs between \$150 and \$200. On December 31, 2019, there were almost 328,000 active CCL cards in Illinois, or less than 4% of Illinois 21 and older population. At the end of 2014, the year the CCL law was implemented in Illinois, there were just over 91,000 active CCL cards in Illinois.

⁵ See 720 ILCS 5/24-1 for details of Illinois' unlawful use of a weapon ("UUW") statute.

⁶ Illinois' state fiscal years (SFY) cover the period from July 1 through June 30, thus data for SFY 2009 covers the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2019. When an individual is arrested, they are often charged with multiple crimes. Our analyses included all individuals arrested during the study period for whom at least one arrest offense involved a gun.

⁷ Analyses used data aggregated at the state fiscal year.

⁸ The age-race-and sex-specific arrests rates included in this graph are only for the most recent three calendar year period (2016 to 2018), and are only counting unique individuals arrested so as not to inflate the rate of arrests per person within that population group. Three years of data were combined so as to minimize the influence on a specific year with low or high arrests, and this three year total of arrests were divided by three to create an annualized rate.

⁹ Violent crimes included all felony and misdemeanor offenses of assault, battery, robbery, sexual assault/sexual abuse, home invasion, vehicular highjacking, domestic battery, and homicide. Violent crimes did not include an arrest for illegal gun possession.

¹⁰ Prior to 2015, there was no ability in CHRI to indicate that the arrestee was Hispanic, and these arrests were primarily recorded as "White." Between SFY 2016 and 2019, arrests of Hispanic individuals increased 63%, compared to 45% for Black individuals and 19% for Whites. During the 2016 to 2019 time period, Hispanic individuals accounted for 10% of all arrests for illegal gun possession in Illinois.

¹¹ Although a federal offense, a felon in possession of a firearm is rarely prosecuted federally and is usually left to state and local prosecutors to handle. For example, in 2018 there were a total of 6,719 federal convictions for a felon in possession of a firearm *across the entire U.S.* (see https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/Felon_In_Possession_FY18.pdf), compared to more than 1,300 convictions for this offense in state courts in Illinois alone based on analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

¹² Being "potentially considered" an Armed Habitual Criminal was based on analyses of the person's criminal history using the CHRI data to determine if they had the requisite convictions specified in the Armed Habitual Criminal law.

