

# Arrests in Lake County for Illegal Possession of a Firearm

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

**RESEARCH BRIEF**  
Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy, and Practice  
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO  
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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.<sup>1</sup>

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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, and particularly in Lake County. 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.<sup>2</sup> Of these statewide deaths involving firearms, 15 of the homicides and 24 of the suicides took place in Lake County.<sup>3</sup> More prevalent than fatal gun incidents are non-lethal, violent crimes committed with guns, such as robberies, assaults and batteries, and sexual assaults.

However, it is important to recognize that not all crimes in Lake County 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. 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 Firearm Owner's Identification/FOID card or a Concealed Carry License/CCL, or possessing a gun in prohibited places).<sup>4</sup>

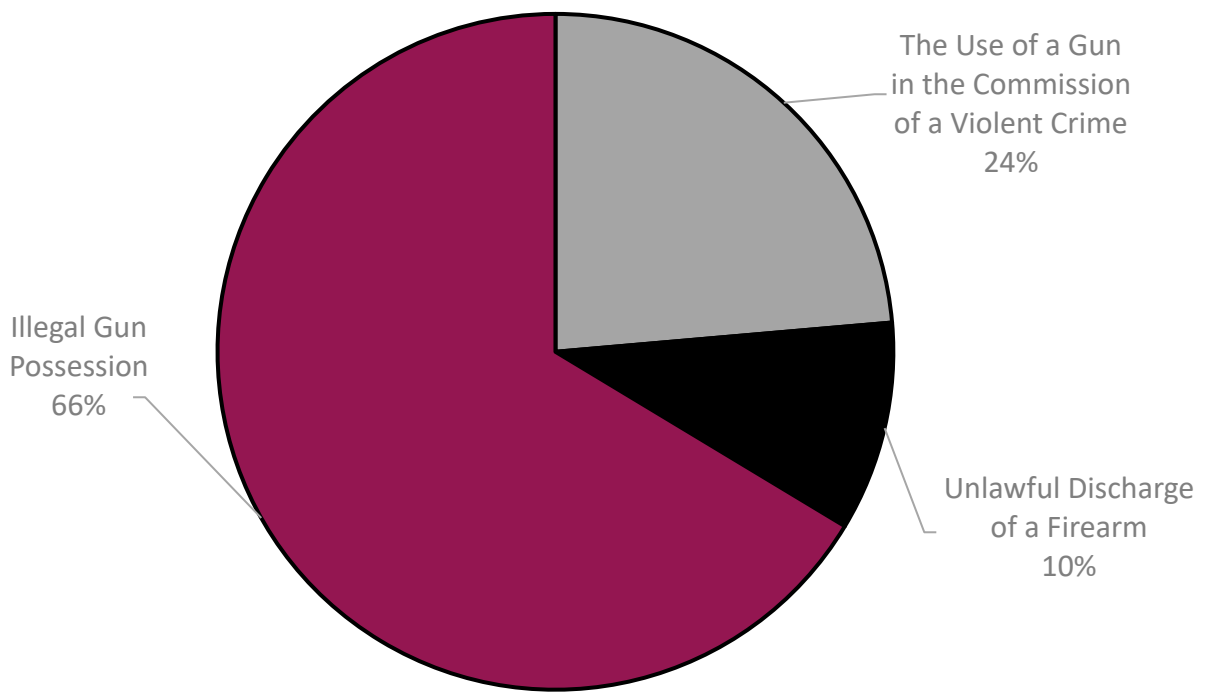
Illinois' legal terminology can create confusion regarding the prevalence of gun crimes involving violence. If someone possesses a gun when legally not allowed to do so, they can be arrested and charged with the crime of "unlawful use of a weapon" or "aggravated unlawful use of a weapon." The phrase "use of a weapon" can be misleading, because in most instances it is only defining the illegal *possession* of a firearm.

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 analyzed information on individuals arrested in Lake County 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.



Most people arrested in Lake County 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 3,000 arrests involving a little over 2,500 unique individuals that explicitly included a gun offense among the arrest charges (Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> Because arrests for illegal gun possession account for such a large portion (66%) of the gun crime arrests in Lake County, 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 in Lake County, SFY 2009 to 2019



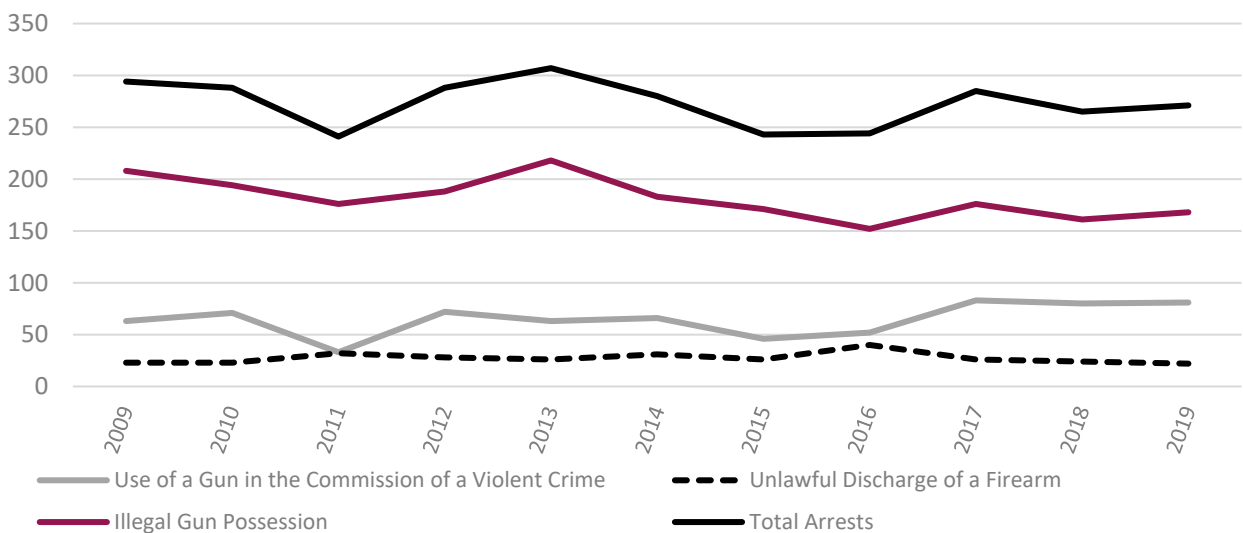
Source: Analyses by Loyola’s Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

# ARREST TRENDS

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

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*), reveals a slight decrease in arrests for illegal possession of a gun starting after 2014. Between 2014 and 2019,<sup>6</sup> 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) decreased 8%, from a little over 180 to less than 170 (Figure 2). Arrests for unlawful discharge of a firearm also decreased, but to a greater degree. Between 2014 and 2019, arrests for unlawful discharge of a firearm decreased 29%, but accounted for only 10% of all gun arrests during this time period (Figure 1). Meanwhile, arrests for use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime *increased* 23%, and accounted for a little less than one-quarter of gun arrests. Thus, while arrests decreased for the unlawful discharge of a firearm and illegal possession of a firearm between 2014 and 2019, arrests for violent crimes committed with a firearm increased during that period.

Figure 2: Arrests for Gun Crimes in Lake County, 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

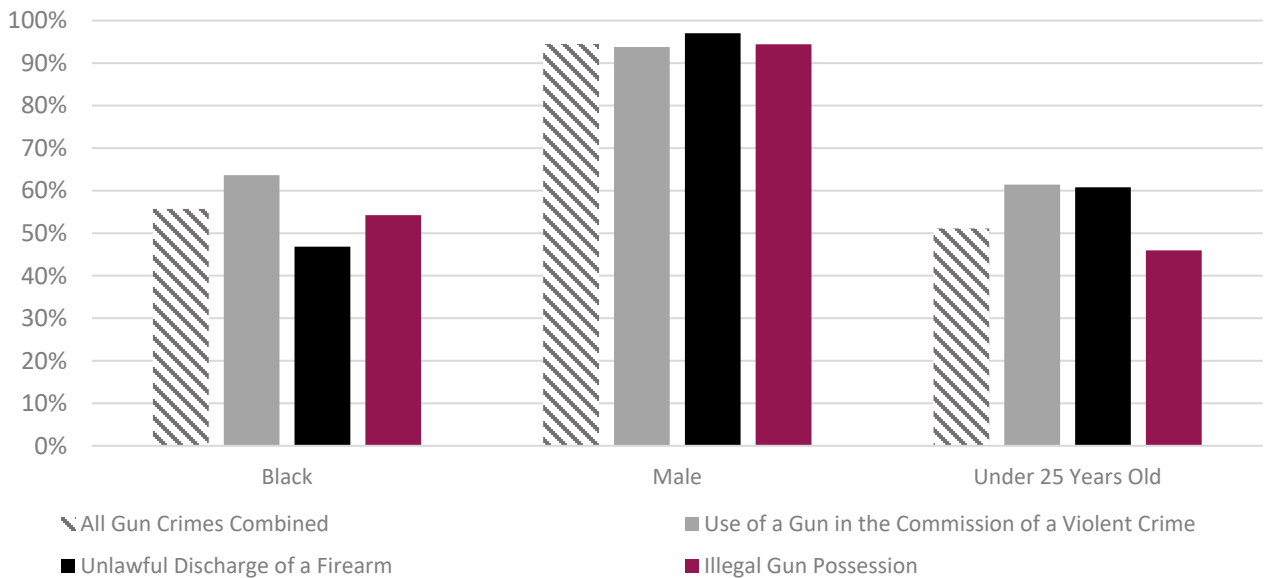


# PERSONS ARRESTED

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

Most of the people arrested for all gun crimes combined in Lake County were Black, male and under the age of 25 (Figure 3). However, the demographic characteristics of those arrested varied slightly by the specific types of gun crimes. For example, among those arrested for the illegal possession of a gun (the most prevalent gun arrest as seen in Figure 1), 54% were Black, 94% were male, and 46% were under the age of 25. Similarly, almost all (94%) of those arrested for the use of a gun in the commission of a violent crime were male, but a slightly higher percent of those arrested for using a gun in a violent crime were Black (64%) and under the age of 25 (61%) than was the case with arrests for illegal gun possession.<sup>7</sup>

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

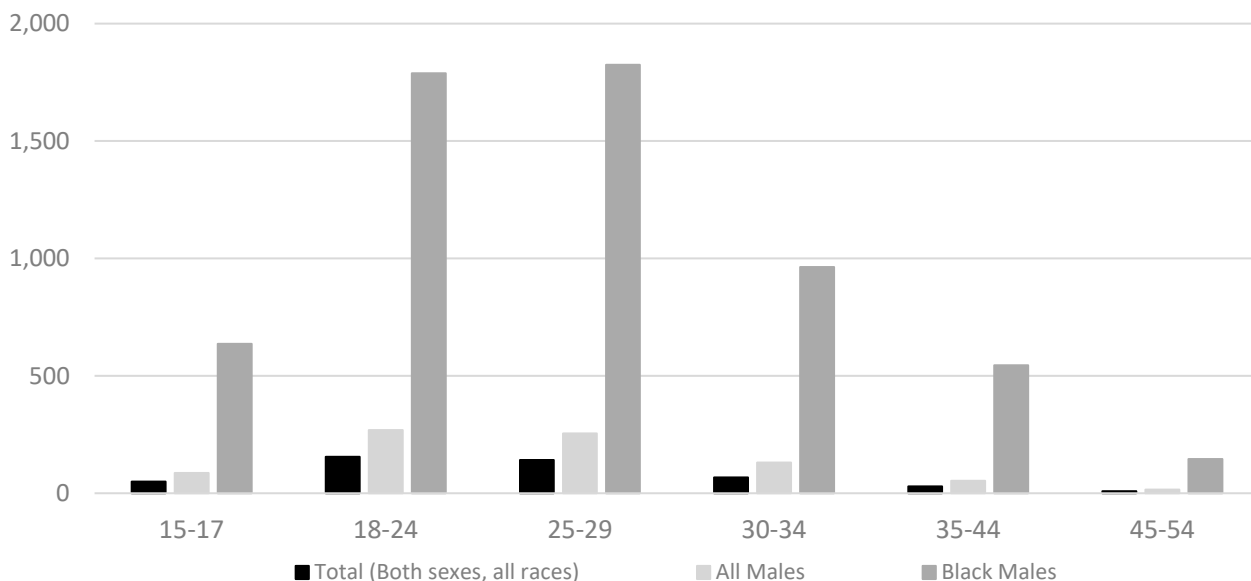


Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data provided by the Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



The analyses also revealed that males between the ages of 18 and 24 in Lake County had the highest arrest rates for crimes involving a gun (Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> Black males between the ages of 18 and 24 had the highest arrest rate in Lake County; for every 100,000 Black males between the ages of 18 and 24, there were 1,788 arrests (Figure 4). By comparison, the arrest rate for White males (excluding Hispanic males) between the ages of 18 and 24 was 70 per 100,000 (not shown in figure), and 255 per 100,000 for Hispanic males (not shown in figure) between 18 and 24 years old in Lake County.

Figure 4: Annualized Arrest Rates per 100,000 for Gun Crimes in Lake County, 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

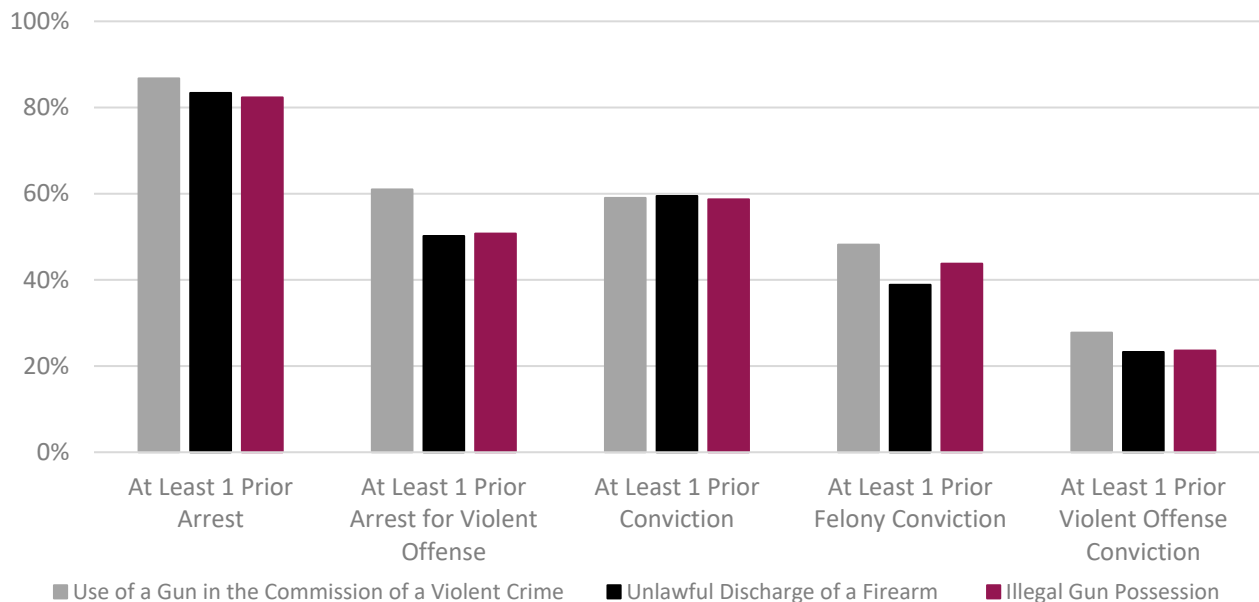
When analyzing the characteristics of those arrested for gun crimes, it is also important to consider the nature of their criminal history prior to the current gun arrest (Figure 5). One way to gauge the extent of a person’s prior criminal history is to examine the number and nature of prior *arrests*. Overall, most —more than 80%—of those arrested in Lake County 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 50% and 61%—of those arrested had one or more prior arrests for a violent crime.<sup>9</sup> For example, of those arrested for the illegal possession of a gun between SFY 2009 and 2019, 87% had at least one prior arrest, and 60% had at least one prior arrest specifically for a violent crime. However, 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).<sup>10</sup> The extent of prior arrest histories among people arrested in Lake County for gun crimes were slightly more extensive than people arrested in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties.<sup>11</sup>



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 under 60% of those arrested for a gun crime, regardless of the type of gun crime, had a prior conviction for *any* crime. However, 28% or less of those arrested for the various gun crimes examined had a prior conviction specifically 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. People arrested in Lake County for gun crimes generally had slightly more extensive histories of prior convictions for any crime, and specifically for violent crimes, than those arrested in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties. Additionally, those arrested in Lake County for gun crimes had slightly higher rates of prior convictions for felony offenses when compared to those arrested in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 5: Criminal History of Persons Arrested for a Gun Crime in Lake County, 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

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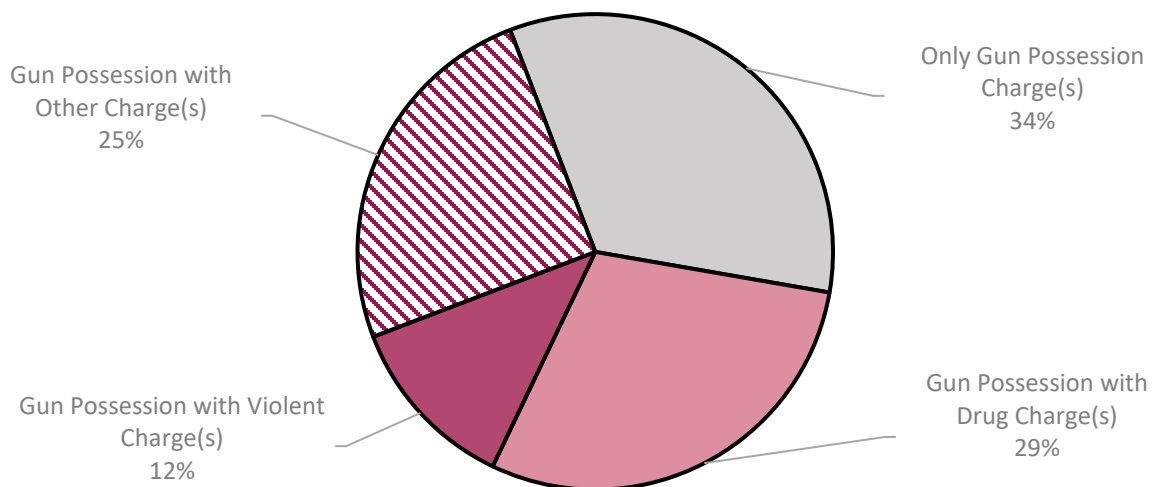
Most arrests for illegal possession of a gun included additional charges for non-violent crimes.

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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, 34% of arrest events in Lake County involving a charge of illegal gun possession did not include additional, non-gun charges (Figure 6). Of all the arrests for illegal gun possession, a relatively small percent involved additional charges for violent crimes (12%), and none of these violent crimes included a charge of using a gun in the commission of a violent crime (i.e. they were not charged with committing a violent crime with a gun). Roughly, 29% of illegal gun possession arrest events also included a charge related to a drug-law violation, and 25% included some other type of arrest charge. Overall, illegal gun possession arrest events in Lake County included an average of 3.28 total arrest *charges*. In general, these characteristics of the arrest events were slightly different to those seen in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 6: Arrests for Illegal Gun Possession in Lake County, 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, the majority (66%) of the arrest events in Lake County involving illegal possession of a gun involved some other charge, and of these other charges, 40% were for felony-level offenses. Thus, of all those arrested for illegal gun possession, 26% had an accompanying charge for another felony offense (i.e., 40% of the 66%). 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 with a firearm. Of those arrested for illegal gun possession with an accompanying felony-level offense (and thus eligible to be charged and convicted of Armed Violence), 87% of the accompanying felonies were non-violent offenses. Indeed, drug-law violations accounted for the single largest category (38%) of these accompanying felony charges.

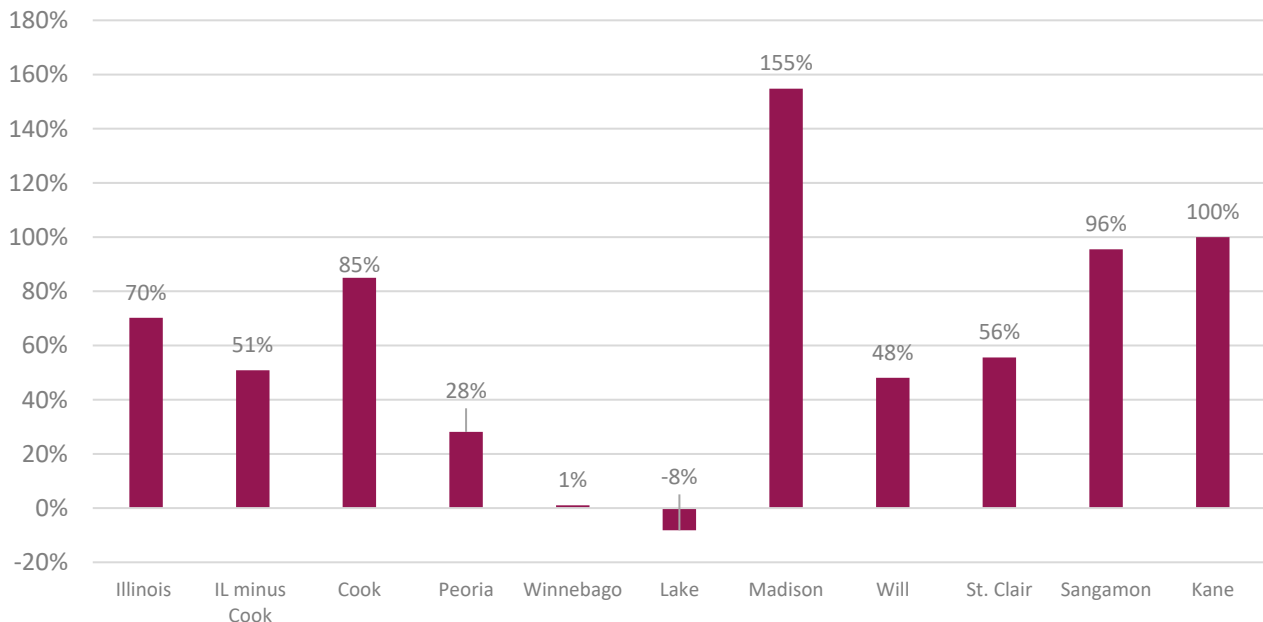


# CHANGES IN ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION ARRESTS

Arrests for illegal possession of a gun decreased 8% in Lake County between 2014 and 2019, unlike the increase seen across most large counties in Illinois.

As seen in Figure 2, there was a small (8%) decrease in the number of arrests for the illegal possession of a gun in Lake County between 2014 and 2019, compared to increases seen in most of 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 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 large counties, such as Winnebago County (Rockford) saw relatively small or no changes in the number of arrests during this period.

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

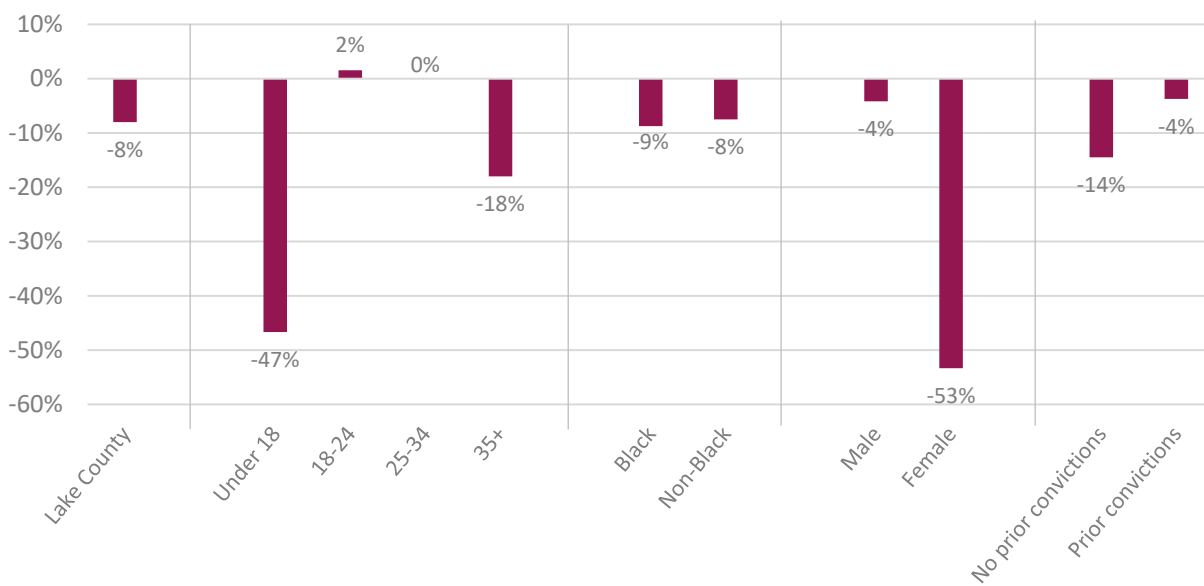


Source: Analyses by Loyola's Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice of CHRI data generated and provided by Research and Analysis Unit, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



Decreases in arrests for illegal possession of a gun in Lake County also varied by the age and sex of the person arrested (Figure 8). While people under the age of 18, whose cases would usually be handled in juvenile court, accounted for just 6% of arrests for illegal possession of a gun between 2014 and 2019, the number of arrests for this age group experienced the largest decrease (down 47%) among all of the age groups. Similarly, there was an 18% decrease in arrests for people over the age of 34. By comparison, there was a 2% increase in the number of arrests for people 18 to 24 years old. People between the ages of 18 to 24 years old are often referred to as “emerging adults” because, despite having reached social and legal adulthood, research has shown that cognitively this age group still tends to exhibit immaturity when it comes to impulsivity and decision-making.<sup>14</sup> Arrests among people between 25 and 34—the age group that accounted for 34% of the arrests during this period—stayed the same. Finally, although females accounted for an extremely small portion (6%) of the people arrested for illegal gun possession in Lake County, between 2014 and 2019 arrests of females decreased more than 50%, compared to a 4% decrease in arrests of males during that period (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percent Change in Gun Possession Arrests, by Arrestee Demographics in Lake County, 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

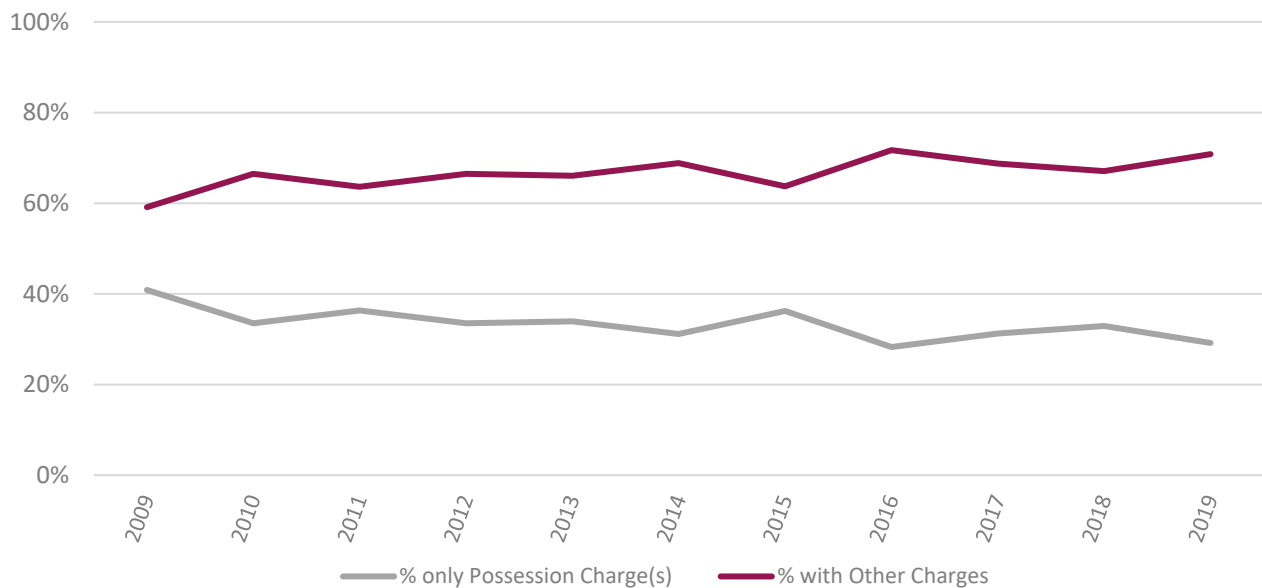
As described earlier, Black individuals accounted for little over 50% of all the people arrested for illegal gun possession during the study period (Figure 3), and their arrest rates relative to their representation in the population are very high (Figure 4). The change in the number of people arrested for illegal gun possession between 2014 and 2019 was very similar for Blacks (down 9%) and all other racial categories combined (down 8%, Figure 8). 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 in Lake County more than doubled, compared to a 5% increase for African American individuals and a 17% decrease for whites. During the 2016 to 2019 period, Hispanic individuals accounted for 12% of all arrests for illegal gun possession in Lake County.

When it came to the criminal histories of those arrested, and how these changed during this period of fewer arrests for illegal gun possession in Lake County, a slight shift appears to have occurred. Between 2014 and 2019, arrests for illegal gun possession of those who had no prior convictions for any crime decreased 14%, while arrests of those with a prior conviction also decreased, but to a smaller degree (4%). Because of this shift, 39% of those arrested in 2019 had no prior convictions, compared to 42% of those arrested in 2014.

Figure 9: Arrests for Illegal Gun Possession in Lake County, by Nature of Arrest 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

Finally, while there did appear to be a consistent and substantive change in the degree to which arrests for illegal possession of a gun involved other charges during the period examined, no one specific type of crime appeared to drive this change. For example, 41% of the SFY 2009 arrests for illegal possession of a gun in Lake County involved only charges specific to illegal gun possession (Figure 9), but by SFY 2019 that had fallen to 29%. Relatedly, it appears that a decreasing proportion of the arrests for illegal possession of a gun in Lake County involve an accompanying charge related to a drug-law violation. In SFY 2014, 32% of arrests also included at least one arrest charge for a drug-law violation, but by SFY 2019 this fell to 29%

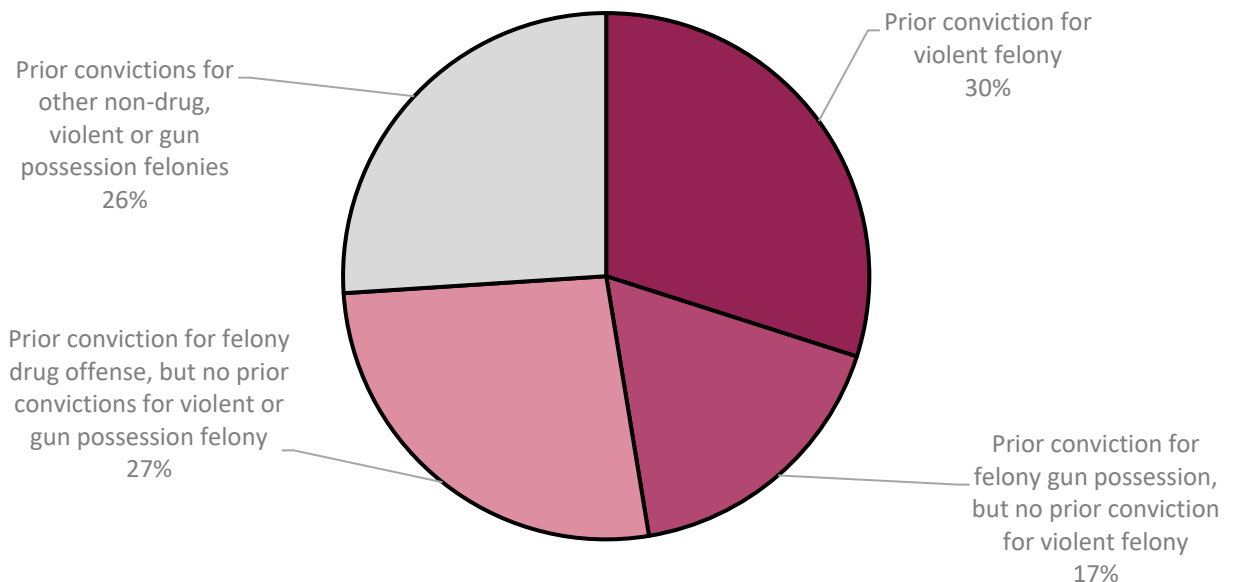


# VOLUME AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ARRESTS FOR SPECIFIC ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION OFFENSES

Important subcategories of illegal gun possession arrests include “Felons in Possession of a Firearm,” “Armed Habitual Offender,” and “First Time Weapon Offender.”

**“Felons in Possession of a Firearm:”** Often when the public hears the term “felon in possession of a firearm,” the assumption is that the individual has been convicted of a violent crime. 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 previously in Figure 5, 44% 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 (70%) had no prior conviction for a felony violent crime (Figure 10). Disaggregating further, 17% had a prior felony conviction for illegal gun possession (but no prior violent felony offense) and 27% 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 in Lake County, 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, 4.4 years had elapsed between the most recent prior felony conviction and the current arrest; 18% of arrestees had more than 7 years lapse since their most recent felony conviction. In addition, those arrested for illegal gun possession who had a prior felony conviction were slightly older (with an average age of 30 years) than people arrested for other illegal possession of gun offenses (with an average age of 28 years-old) and the majority (64%) were Black males.

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,<sup>15</sup> 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). Similarly, since 2012, a person convicted of a Class 3 felon in possession of a firearm offense also faces a mandatory prison sentence.

**“Armed Habitual Criminal:”** The analyses also estimated the number of people arrested in Lake County 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). Conviction 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 SFY 2009 and 2019, 8% potentially met the criteria to be considered an Armed Habitual Criminal.<sup>16</sup> These individuals tended to be 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 28 years). Of that small portion (8%) who could potentially be considered an Armed Habitual Criminal, almost two-thirds (63%) only had prior convictions for drug-law violations or previous illegal possession of a gun offenses. In other words, more than one-half (63%) *did not have any prior convictions for a violent felony crime.*

**“First Time Weapon Offender:”** 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 18% of the adults arrested for illegal possession of a gun in Lake County during the



study period, and the vast majority (75%) of these 18 to 20 year-olds arrested statutorily qualify for this program.

## CONCLUSIONS

The majority of people arrested in Lake County 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 (49%) have no prior arrests for a violent crime, and the vast majority (76%) 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”), 70% 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.<sup>17</sup>

While efforts such as 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 11% of all of those arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession. We do not currently know the extent to which this sentencing option is being utilized in Lake County. However, if diverting individuals aged 18-20 away from mandatory prison sentences and into services results in better outcomes, then policy-makers should consider expanding the age eligibility for this program. Doing so would be warranted, given the age-specific arrests rates for illegal gun possession continues to peak into the mid-20's and a substantial portion of these individuals have no prior convictions for any crime.



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<sup>1</sup> 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 involved 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> The number of homicides with gun and suicides with a firearm that took place in Lake County was obtained from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER Online Database for Mortality. Specifically, using the "Detailed Mortality" option, which uses the WONDER database named "Underlying Cause of Death, 1999-2018."

<sup>4</sup> See 720 ILCS 5/24-1 for details of Illinois' unlawful use of a weapon ("UUW") statute. 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 cost between \$150 and \$200. On December 31, 2019, there were approximately 13,800 active CCL cards in Lake County, or a little less than 3% of Lake County's 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Analyses used data aggregated at the state fiscal year.

<sup>7</sup> Among those arrested in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties for a violent crime committed with a gun, 66% were Black, 93% were male, and 56% were under 25. Among those arrested in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties for illegal discharge of a firearm, 54% were Black, 94% were male, and 50% were under 25.

<sup>8</sup> 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 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> There was a 1 to 4 percentage point difference in the percent of people arrested for any crime between those arrested in Lake County versus Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties, depending on the type of gun crime. For example, 82% of people arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession had a prior arrest for any crime, compared to 80% of those arrested outside of Lake and Cook counties. In terms of the prevalence of prior arrests for violent crimes, there was a slightly smaller difference--a 1 to 3 percentage point difference, depending on the gun crime type -- between those arrested in Lake County versus the rest of Illinois excluding Lake and Cook counties. For example, 51% of people arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession had a prior arrested specifically for a violent crime, compared to 48% of those arrested outside of Lake and Cook counties.

<sup>12</sup> There was a 1 to 9 percentage point difference in the percent of people previously convicted for any crime between those arrested in Lake County versus Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties, depending on the gun crime type. For example, 59% of people arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession had a prior conviction for any crime, compared to 56% of those arrested outside of Lake and Cook counties. In terms of the prevalence of prior convictions for violent crimes, there was a slightly smaller difference—a 1 to 3 percentage point difference, depending on the gun crime type--between those arrested in Lake County versus the rest of Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties. For example, 24% of people arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession had a prior conviction specifically for a violent crime, compared to 21% of those arrested outside of Lake and Cook counties. Finally, there was a 1 to 5 percentage point difference in the percent of people previously convicted for a felony between those arrested in Lake





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County versus Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties, depending on the gun crime type. For example, 44% of people arrested in Lake County for illegal gun possession had a prior conviction for a felony, compared to 43% of those arrested outside of Lake and Cook counties.

<sup>13</sup> Among the illegal gun possession arrests in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties, 38% of the arrest events involved only charges of illegal gun possession (compared to 34% in Lake County), 22% of the arrest events included a charge related to a drug-law violation (compared to 29% in Lake County), 13% involved an additional charge for violent crime (compared to 12% in Lake County), and 26% included some other type of arrest charge (compared to 25% in Lake County). Overall, illegal gun possession arrest events in Illinois outside of Lake and Cook counties included an average of 2.7 total arrest charges, slightly lower than Lake County's average of 3.3 total arrest charges.

<sup>14</sup> Loeber, R., & Farrington, D. 2012. *From juvenile delinquency to adult crime: Criminal careers, justice policy, and prevention*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> 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.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/Felon\\_In\\_Possession\\_FY18.pdf](https://www.ussc.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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Fontaine, La Vigne, Leitson, Erondy, Okeke, and Dwivedi (2018): *We Carry Guns to Stay Safe*: Perspectives on Guns and Gun Violence from Young Adults Living in Chicago's West and South Sides. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved from: [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99091/we\\_carry\\_guns\\_to\\_stay\\_safe\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99091/we_carry_guns_to_stay_safe_1.pdf)

