



*"Striving Toward a **Healthier** Community."*

SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW ANNUAL REPORT 2024





*"Striving Toward a **Healthier** Community."*

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OVERVIEW

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the suicide fatality review (SFR) process is to reduce the incidence of suicide deaths in Stark County, through a multidisciplinary and comprehensive review of individual suicide deaths. The SFR committee identifies, evaluates, and makes recommendations to improve community programs and systems that serve Stark County residents.

The Ohio Revised Code 307.643 states "The purpose of the suicide fatality review committee is to decrease the incidence of preventable suicide deaths by doing all of the following:

(A) Promoting cooperation, collaboration, and communication between all groups, professions, agencies, or entities engaged in suicide prevention, education, or mental health treatment efforts.

(B) Maintaining a comprehensive database of all suicide deaths that occur in the county or region served by the review committee in order to develop an understanding of the causes and incidence of those deaths.

(C) Recommending and developing plans for implementing local service program changes and changes to the groups, professions and agencies, or entities that serve local residents that might prevent suicide deaths.

(D) Advising the department of health of aggregate data, trends, and patterns concerning suicide deaths."

This report provides information and recommendations community leaders and stakeholders have recommended after analyzing suicide deaths that occurred in 2024.



SFR MEETING TIME TABLE AND STRUCTURE

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings are held quarterly, or as often as necessary. Four meetings were held in 2024.

Structure

The SFR Board was created according to Section 307.641 of the ORC, and per ORC 307.642, consisting of the following required members:

- Kirkland Norris, R.E.H.S, M.P.H, Health Commissioner
- George T. Maier, Stark County Sherriff
- Amanda Uhler MPH, RN, Public Health Official
- John Aller, LICDC-CS, LPCC-S, Executive Director of Stark County Mental Health and Addition Recovery
- Dr. Maureen Ahmann, D.O., Physician

Additional Board Members in accordance to ORC 307.642

- Janet Weir Creighton, Stark County Commissioner
- Ronald Rusnak, M.D., Stark County Coroner
- Daniel Speece MSN, RN, Veteran Community Representative
- Elena Aslanides-Kandis M.Ed, LPCC-S, Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery
- Anju Mader M.D., Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery
- Tim Berczik, Jackson Township Fire Department
- Major Ryan Carver, Stark County Sherriff's Office
- Donna Edwards, Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery
- Aubrey Neuenschwander BSN, RN, Stark County Health Department
- Maria Maurillo, MPH, RN, Stark County Health Department
- Kathy Kyle, MSW, LISW, Direction Home

Voting

Each appointed official pursuant to ORC 307.642 and each agency has one vote on each matter brought before the team.

Quorum

At all meetings of the SFR team, the presence of a least a majority (3 of the 5 appointed officials) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction/purpose of business and voting.

SFR REVIEW PROCESS AND DATA SOURCES

The SFR committee is focused on decedents of suicide who resided in Stark County. Recognizing suicide as a public health issue is founded on an understanding of suicidal behavior arising from contextual, biological, environmental, systemic, and social stressors. This approach focuses on prevention by addressing the known factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of suicide.

For each death by suicide, the committee collects:

- Age
 - Sex
 - Race
 - Ethnicity
 - Year of Death
 - Location of Death
- Cause of Death
 - Contributing Factors
 - Health Information
 - Public Records
 - Community Services
 - Any Other Pertinent Information/Service Record

The cases reviewed in this report were deaths that occurred in 2024. Each case review is discussed among the team to gather a comprehensive understanding of the context of the decedent's life and the events and actions that led to the fatality. The discussions highlight potential contributing factors, intervention implications and recommendations for systemic improvements.

STARK COUNTY SUMMARY INFORMATION

Sex	75.4% Male	24.6% Female			
Race	92.8% White	7.2% Other			
Ethnicity	98.6% Non-Hispanic	1.4% Hispanic			
Method	56.5% Firearm	23.2% Hanging	1.4% Blunt Force	15.9% Drug Toxicity	2.9% Cut or Pierce

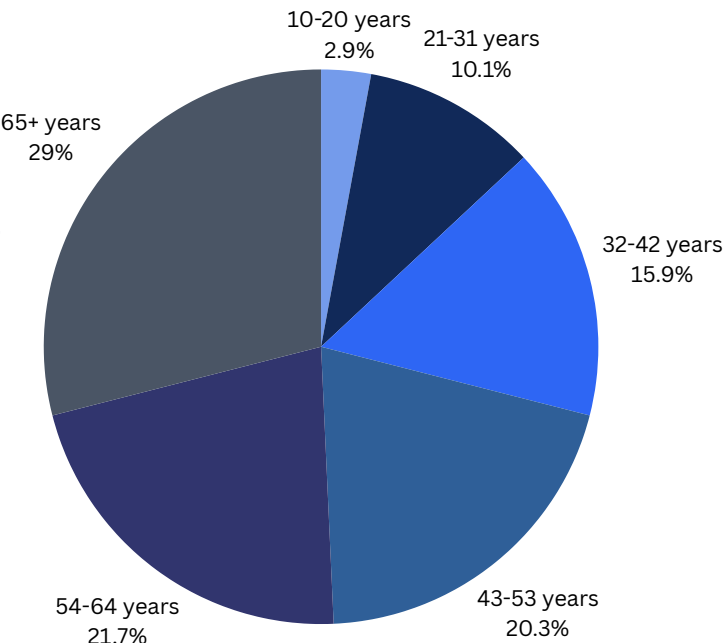
SFR ANNUAL REPORT SURVEY

Table 1: County Metrics

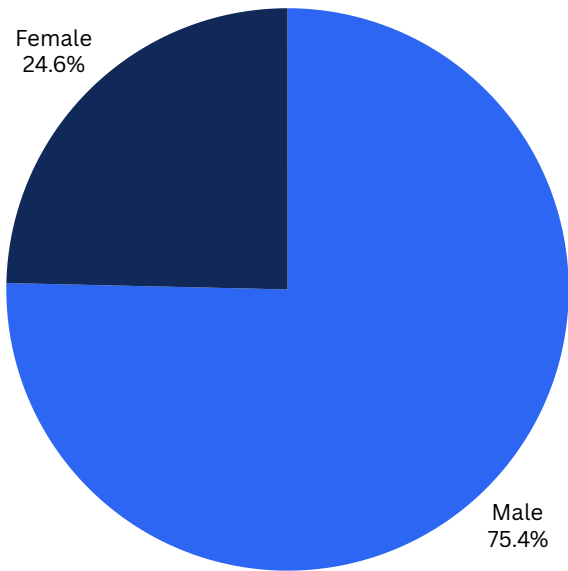
Total number of cases reviewed by SFR Committee	15
Total number of cases occurred in 2024*	69

Cases reviewed occurred in 2023 and 2024
*Per DataOhio Portal Mortality Protected Download 2.10.25

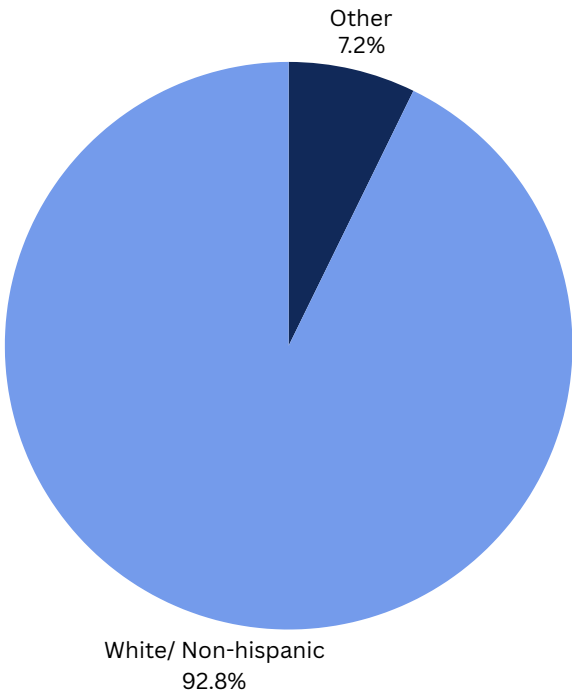
Graph 1: Age Metrics



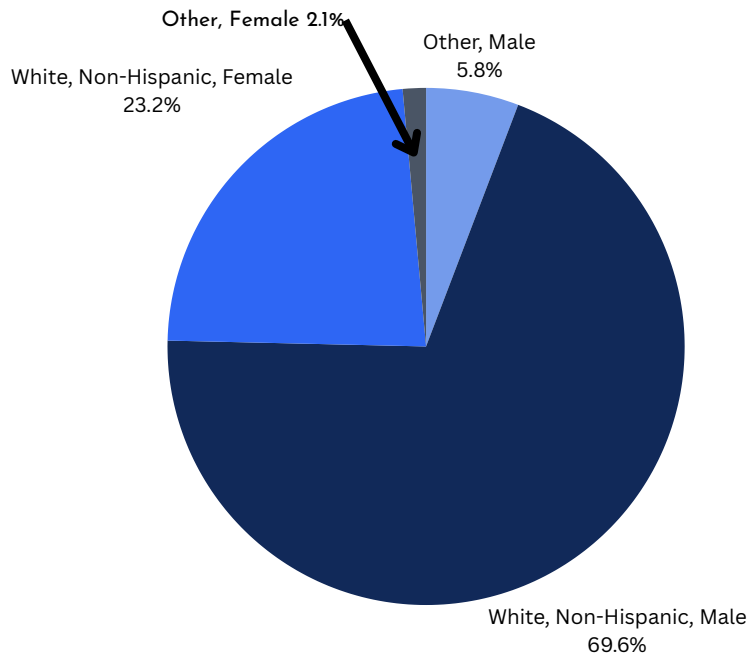
Graph 2: Sex Metrics



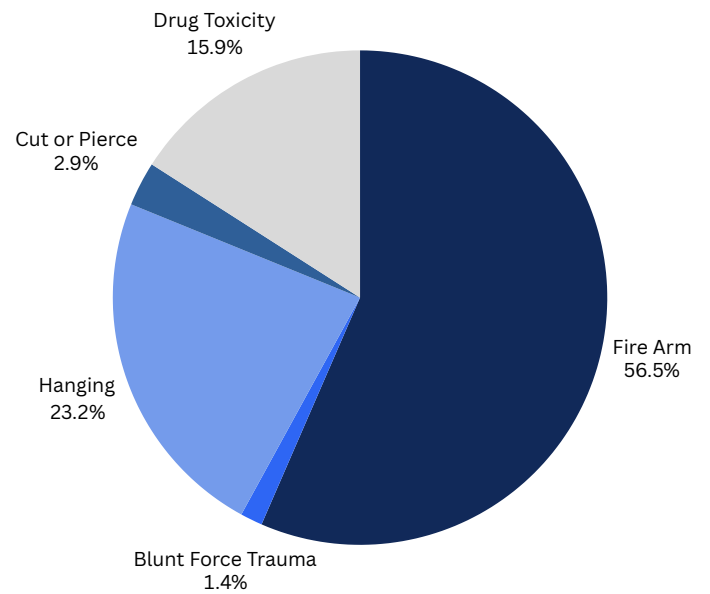
Graph 3: Race/Ethnicity Metrics



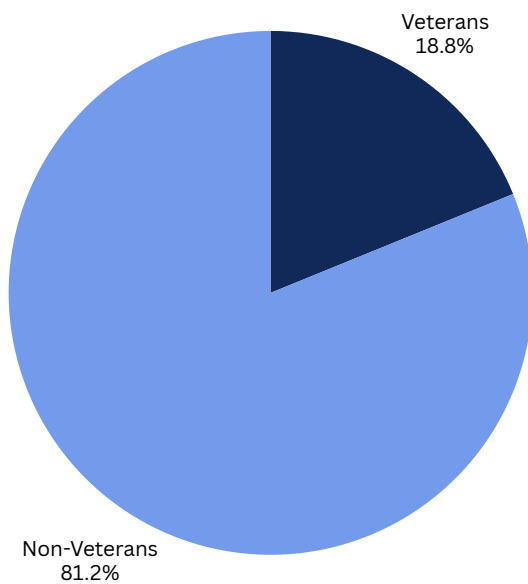
Graph 4: Race/Ethnicity/Sex Metrics



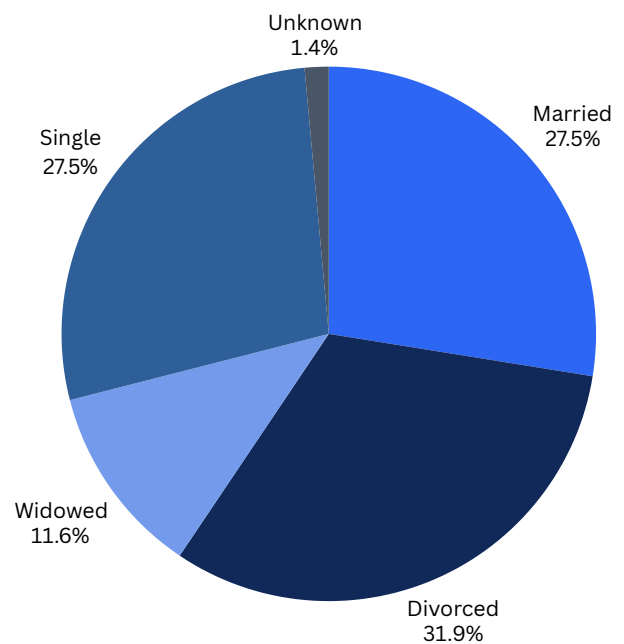
Graph 5: Method Metrics



Graph 6: Armed Services Metrics



Graph 7: Marital Status Metrics



STARK COUNTY SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW

2024 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommendations from the Suicide Fatality Review team. Some recommendations may have been made more than once.

Community Recommendations

- Create Community
- Community Campaign: Check on Your Neighbors (2 Times)
- Community Campaign: See Something, Say/Do Something (3 Times)
- Provide Grief Resources at Touch Points; At Time of Death, Funeral home, Vital Statistics Offices, Include information about loved ones who may be at higher risk (3 Times)
- Provide community connection sites/hubs for members to gather
- Access to safe gun storage and education (4 Times)
- Loss team implementation for family members
- Community Center or open spaces for gathering and meaningful connections
- Community awareness: Mindfulness Walk
- Transportation for elderly and vulnerable populations
- Utilization and implementation of safety plans
- Community education about Stark County Mobile Crisis
- Community education with Stark County specific resources
- Advertise mental health resources late at night with targeted posts and ads
- Use specific algorithms to target ads and education to people that are searching for key topics
- Promote workplace programs, employee assistance programs
- Distribute information to parents who are caring for adult children regarding transition planning
- Educate public on signs of suicidal ideation
- Funding for alcohol treatment programs (2 Times)
- Advocate for policy change that after multiple over the influence charges, court ordered drug and alcohol treatment program would be completed

Provider Based Recommendations

- Educate primary care providers on warning signs of suicide
- Have skilled nursing facilities screen patients for access to lethal means prior to discharge home
- Provide increased supports after someone receives a terminal diagnosis
- Refer to mental health after major cardiac events
- Create a system to notify primary care providers when a patient has passed away
- Mental health follow-up and support after an overdose event
- Increased caregiver support and respite for chronic injuries
- Screening for living situations when individuals have voiced specific suicidal ideation and plans
- Use screening tool for anxiety and depression at each primary care visit

Military/First Responder Recommendations

- Increased contact and support after discharge from military
- Offer suicide grief resources for EMS or others responding to scene
- Increased veteran transportation services
- Connect with Stark County Veterans Affairs to provide gun storage locks to community members
- Create easier navigation of the Veterans Affairs system
- Create an active veteran community
- Community outreach and information distributed through veteran's programs and American Legion

School Based Recommendations

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation and use of shape tools
- Build community among peers, especially at the middle school level
- Utilize family support specialists in the schools to pass out gun storage locks
- Build and teach resiliency, starting with youth

STARK COUNTY SUICIDE FATALITY REVIEW

2024 Summary of Implementation

- Funeral homes were all provided with suicide loss survivor resource guides
- Suicide loss survivor resource guides were provided to the four health department vital statistics divisions to be distributed any time someone picks up a death certificate for a death by suicide. These guides are also available for the public to access at resource tables
- Mindfulness walk was held on September 8, 2024, at Petros Park
- Softball Showdown between Stark County and Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalitions was held on September 12, 2024, to provide hope to the community and raise awareness of suicide prevention efforts
- QPR training offered through StarkMHAR on a monthly basis
- Safe Home Kits provided by Stark County Suicide Prevention Coalition to various community agencies
- Gun storage lock distribution through Stark County Health Department and HealthMobile Unit
- Stakeholder meetings with Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation for 988 materials to be provided at alcohol point of sale locations
- Student intern began collecting and analyzing data to determine the potential patterns or relationships between alcohol, suicide or self-harm related emergency department and urgent care visits, along with criminal justice system history, and use of alcohol at the time of death



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