

# Using Data to Prevent Firearm Harms in Colorado

Findings from the Inaugural Colorado Firearm Injury Prevention Survey

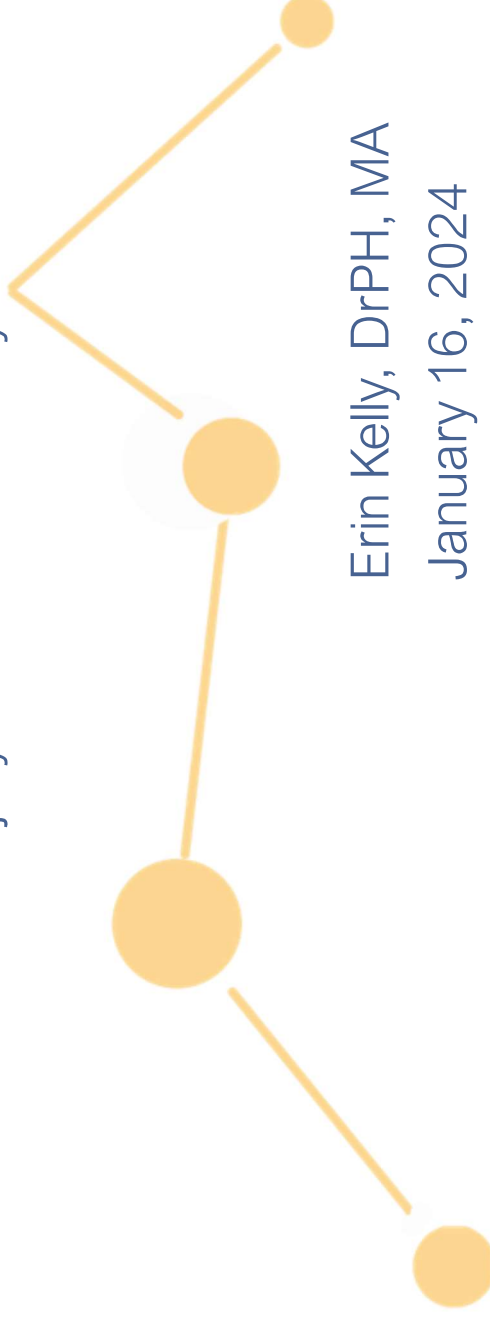


Sign up for the Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative newsletter to receive updates about COFIPS



**Injury & Violence Prevention Center**  
colorado school of public health

Erin Kelly, DrPH, MA  
January 16, 2024



# Acknowledgements



Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

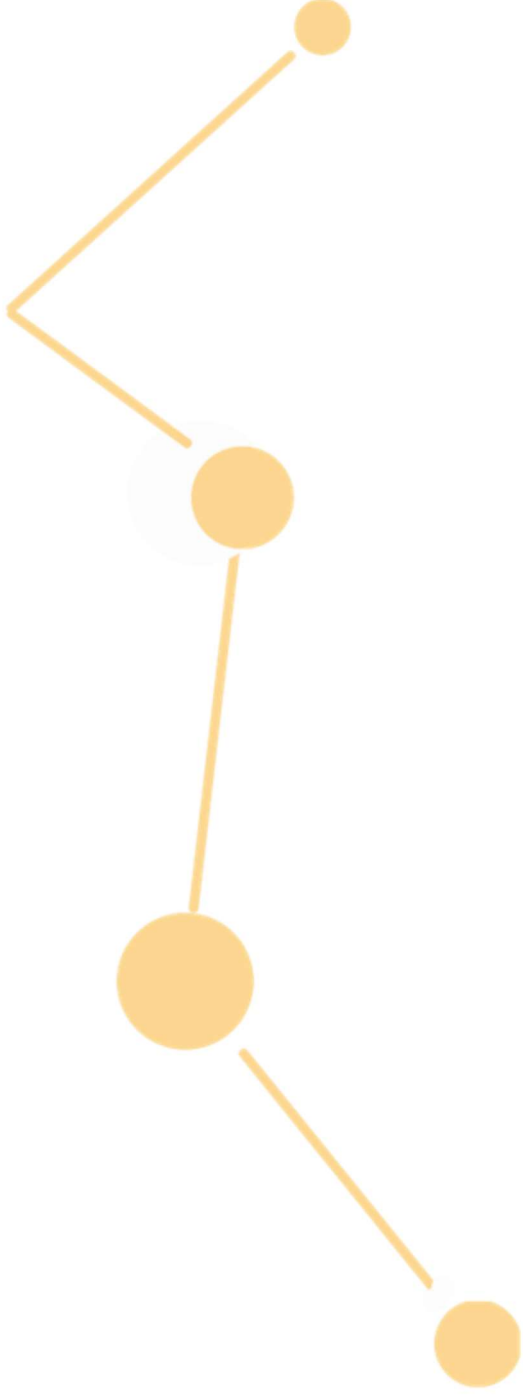
**Injury & Violence  
Prevention Center**  
colorado school of public health

COFIPS is possible due to funding from the **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP)**. The OGVP also supported the development of the survey.

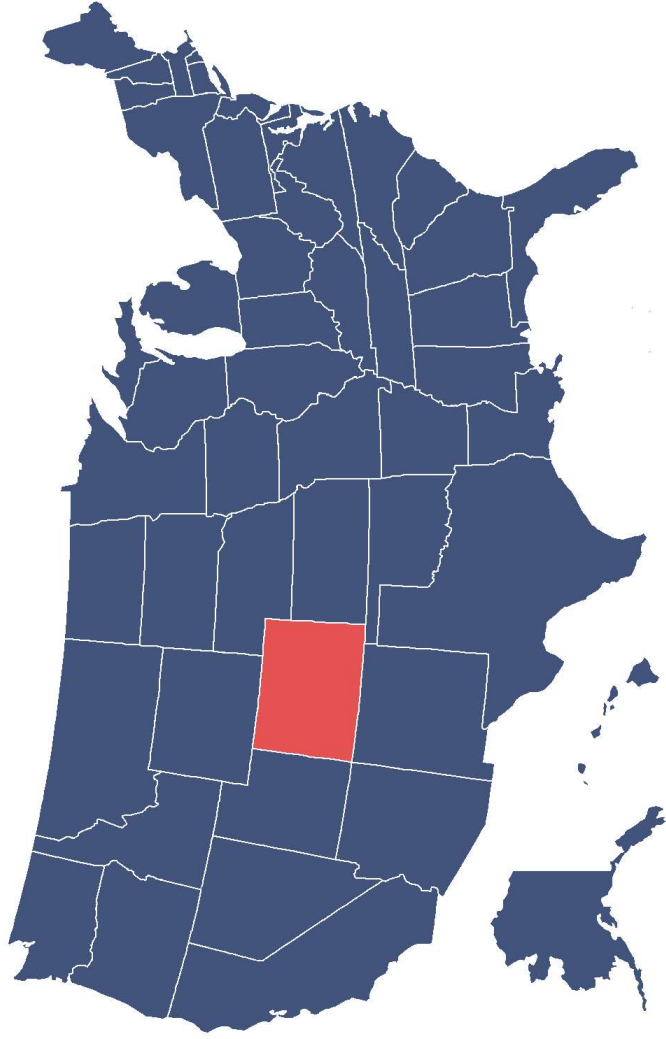
*This content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the University of Colorado nor the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Gun Violence Prevention.*

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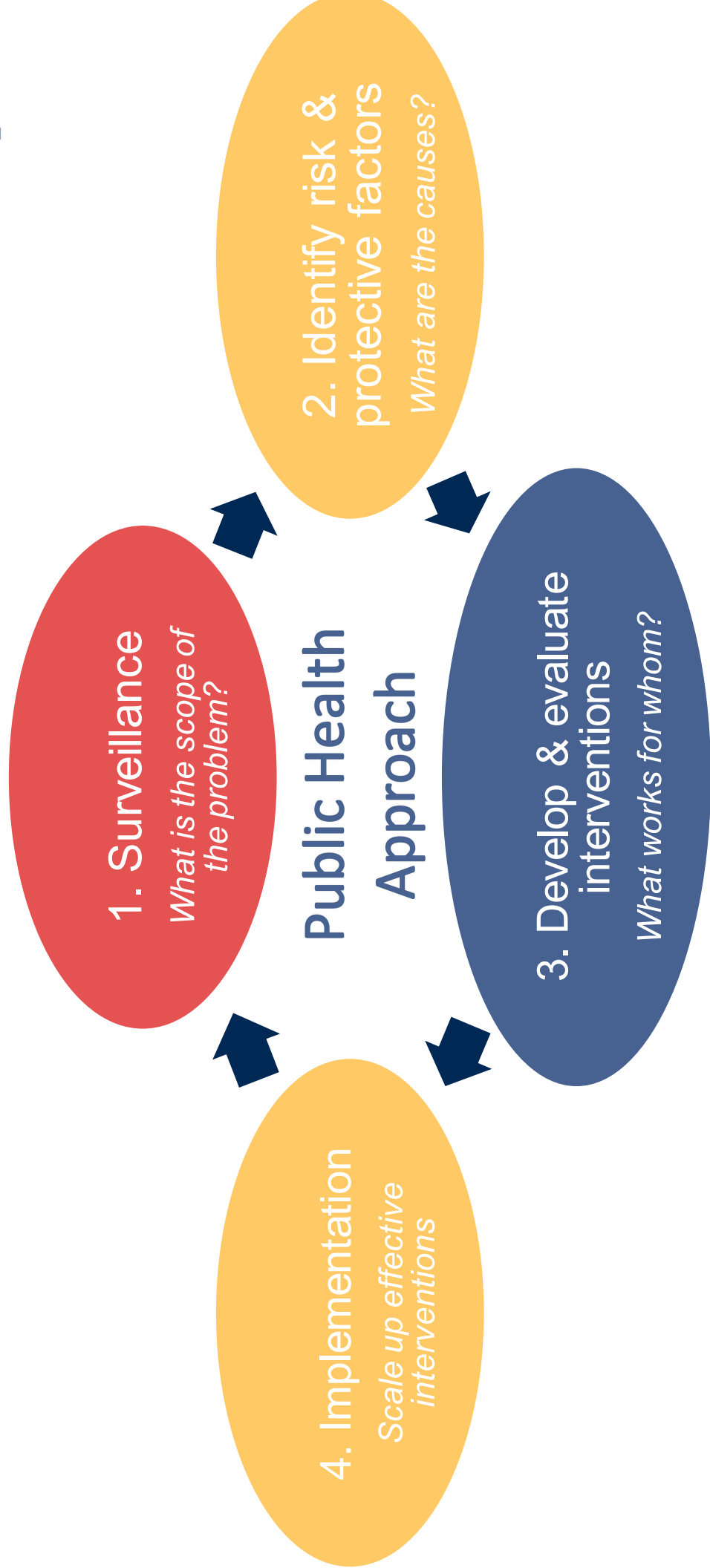
# OVERVIEW



## Why is this topic important?



- More people die from firearms than from motor vehicle accidents.
- In 2021, almost 50,000 died due to firearms in the U.S.
  - 3.6x more were injured by firearms than died.
- Colorado has the 21<sup>st</sup> highest firearm death rate in the U.S.



# Why did we administer COFIPS?

1

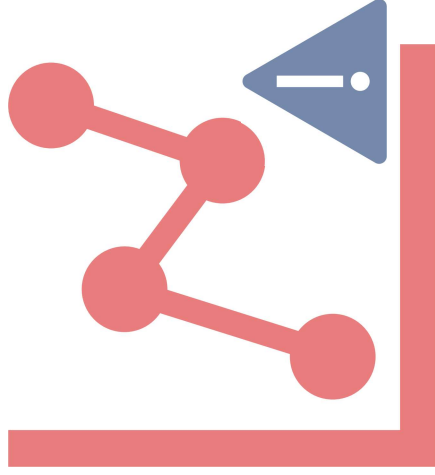
Advance understanding of firearm-related topics

2

Monitor trends over time

3

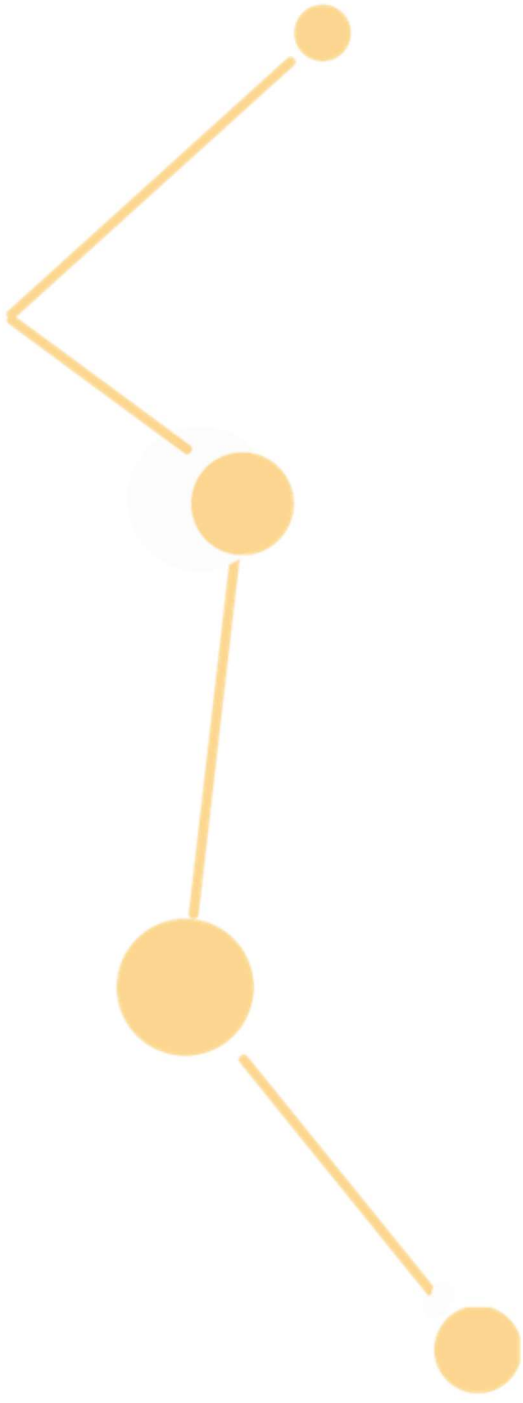
Inform responsive education and prevention of firearm harms



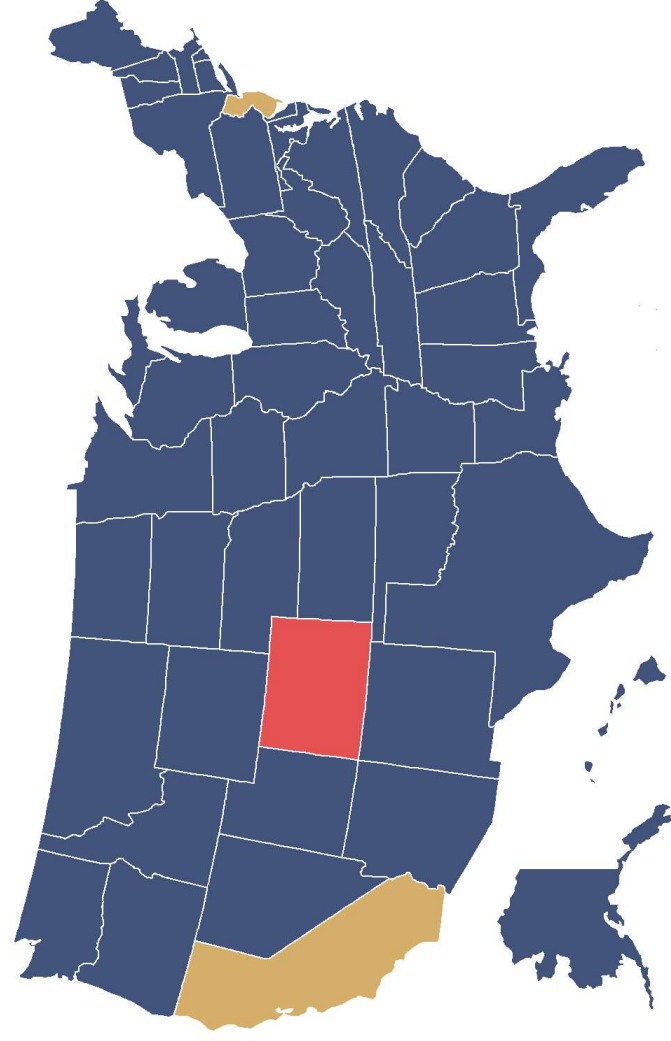
Data infrastructure is lacking, especially at state level

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# METHODS

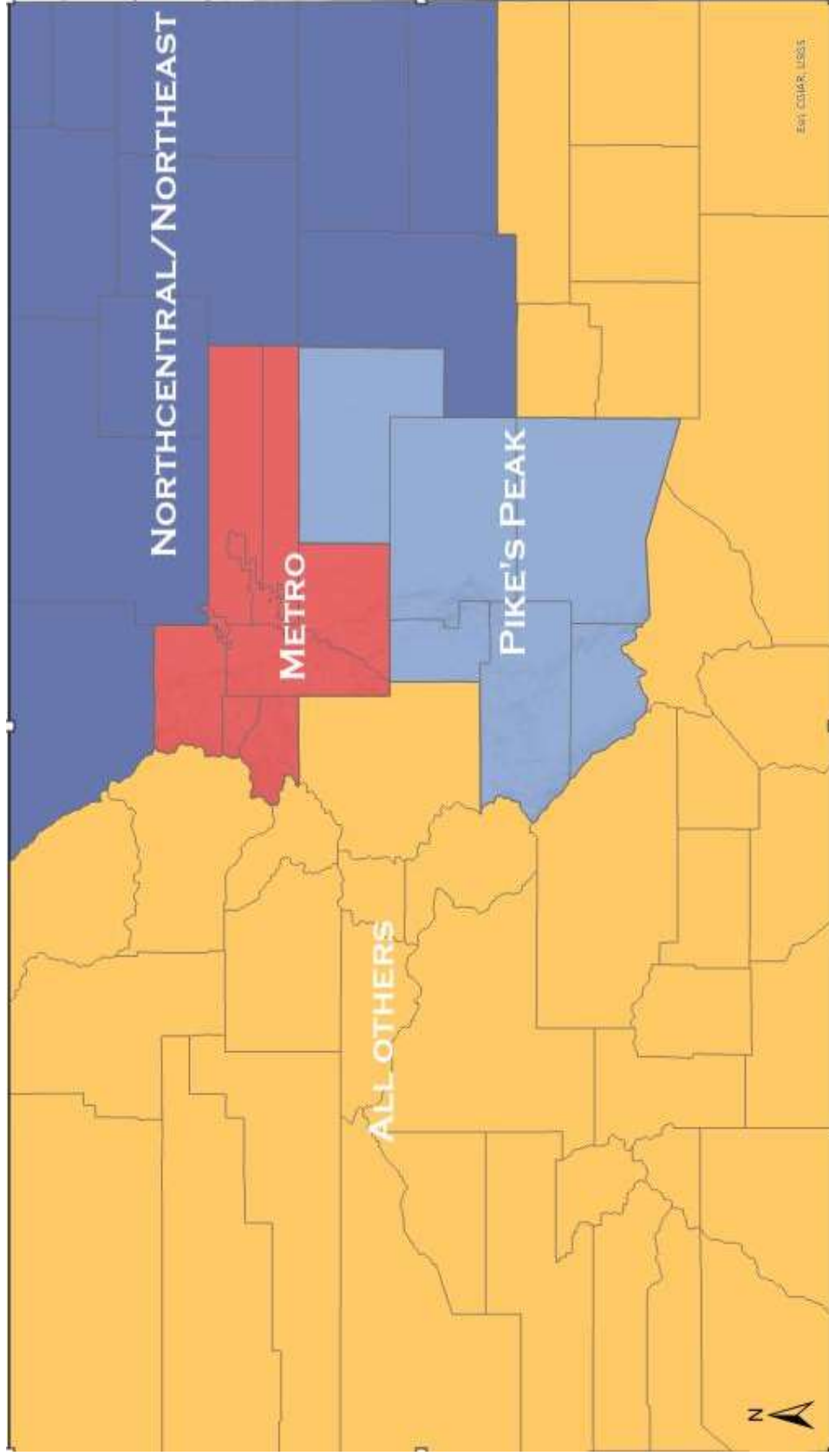


# What is COFIPS?



- **Odd years:** Core survey, representative of Coloradans (state, regional)
- **Even years:** Specialty survey, focused on impacted communities or groups supporting education and prevention efforts





# What did we ask about?

**Firearms  
Culture, &  
Access, &  
Safety  
Behaviors**

**Concerns &  
Experiences  
with Firearm  
Harms**

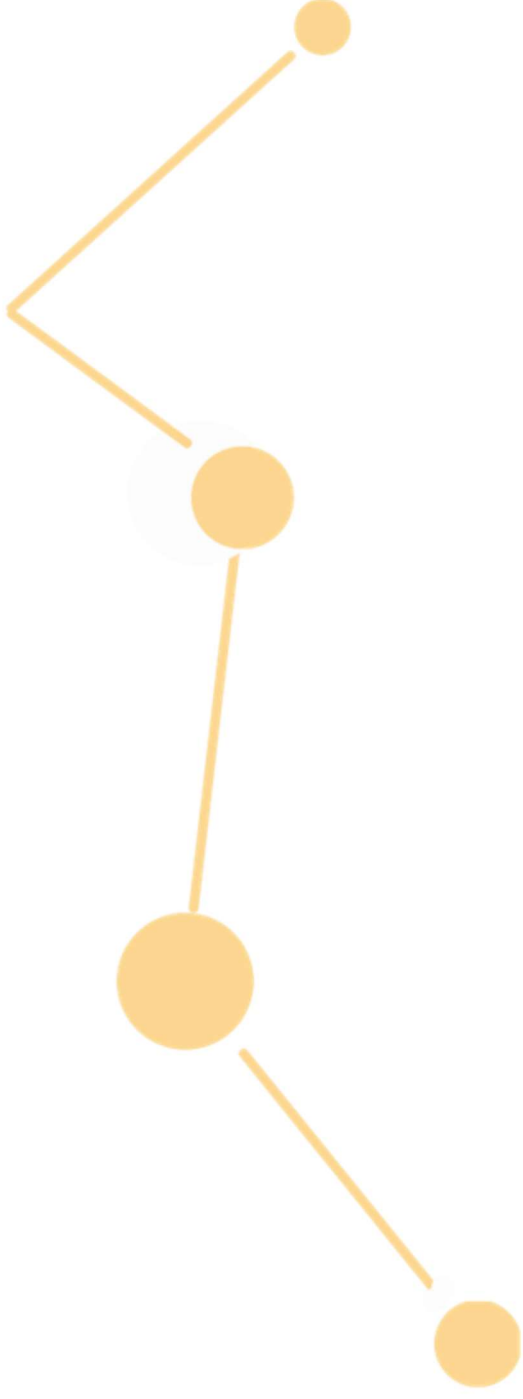
**Awareness &  
Opinions on  
Prevention  
Practices and  
Policies**

## Administration and Analysis

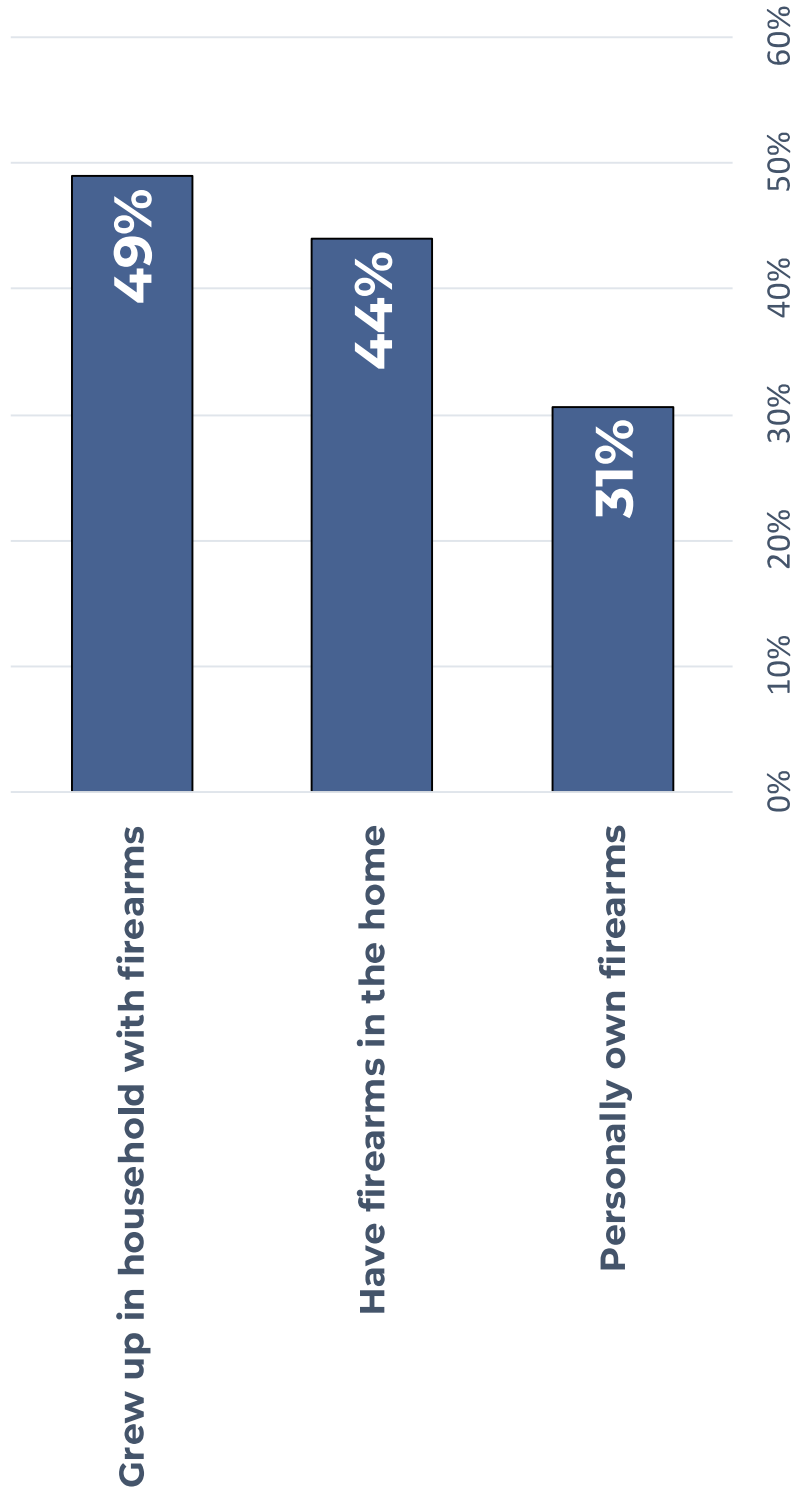
- Online survey from May-June 2023
- Partnered with Ipsos to administer
- 1,520 total participants
- The sample was weighted to be statistically representative of the state and regions

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# FINDINGS



# Colorado Context: Firearms Culture



Firearm Ownership  
in Colorado



## Firearm Access and Storage Practices

### Why Important?



Those who have access to firearms are at increased risk of theft and injury and death (due to presence and lethality).



Secure storage of firearms can prevent unauthorized access and help save lives.



Decisions on how to store depend on personal circumstances and home context.

# Firearm Access & Storage Opinions

## Coloradans Agree That...

Temporarily removing firearms from the home if someone is in crisis decreases the risk of injury and death involving a firearm.

71%

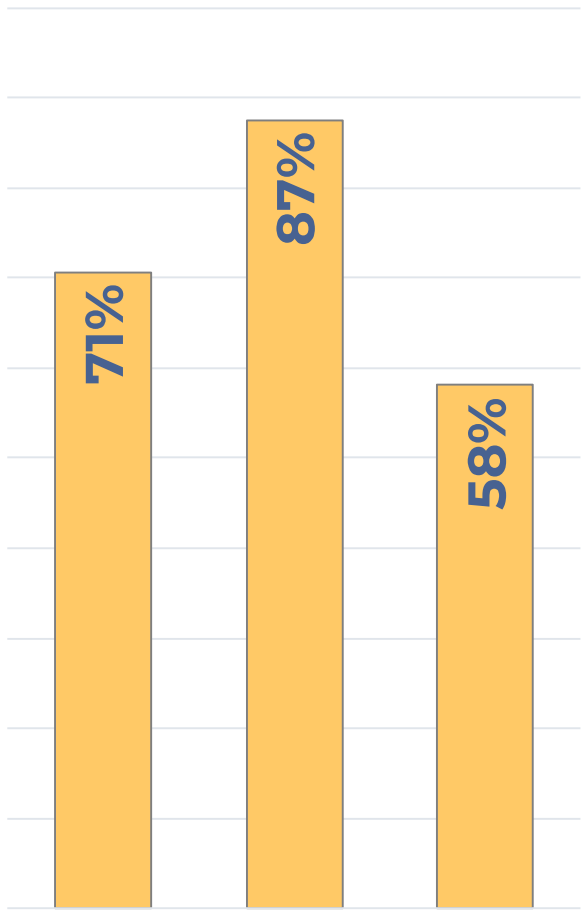
Securely storing firearms can reduce the risk of firearm injury and death.

87%

Access to a firearm increases the risk of injury and death involving a firearm.

58%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



# Who Owns Firearms in Colorado

Twice as many men own firearms compared to women.

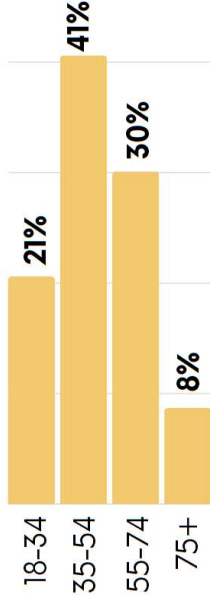


**27%**

of firearm owners are Veterans.

**88%** of Coloradans who personally own a firearm are white.

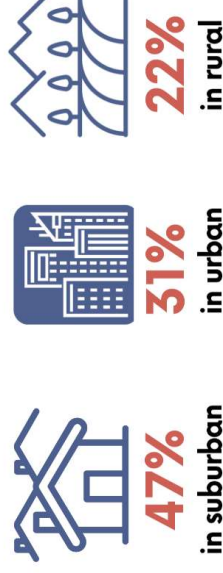
Most Colorado adults who personally own firearms are between the ages of 35-54.



Children live in

**38%** of the Colorado households that own firearms.

The majority of Colorado who personally own firearms live in suburban areas.



Firearm Ownership  
in Colorado





# Firearm Safety Education in Colorado

**63%**

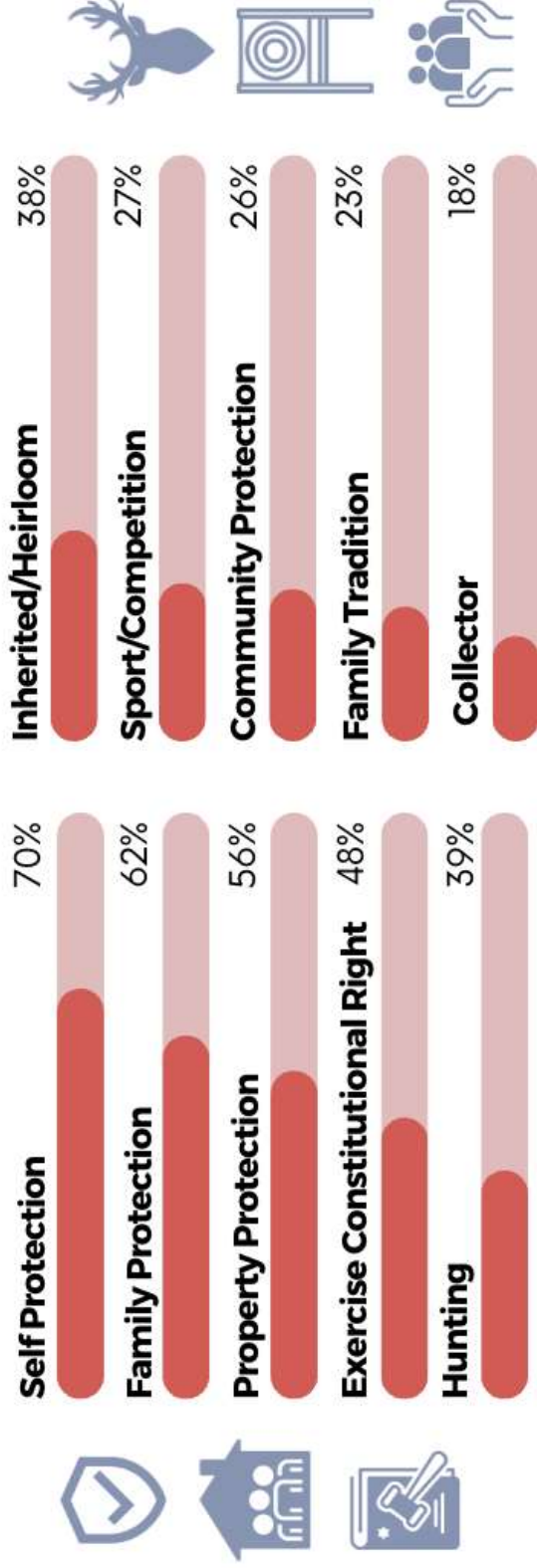
of Coloradans with **firearms in the home** have taken a class on firearm safety



**75%**

of Coloradans who **personally own a firearm** have taken a class on firearm safety

# Reasons for Ownership in Colorado



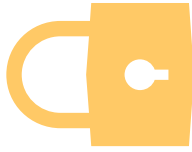
Firearm Ownership  
in Colorado



# Secure Storage in Colorado

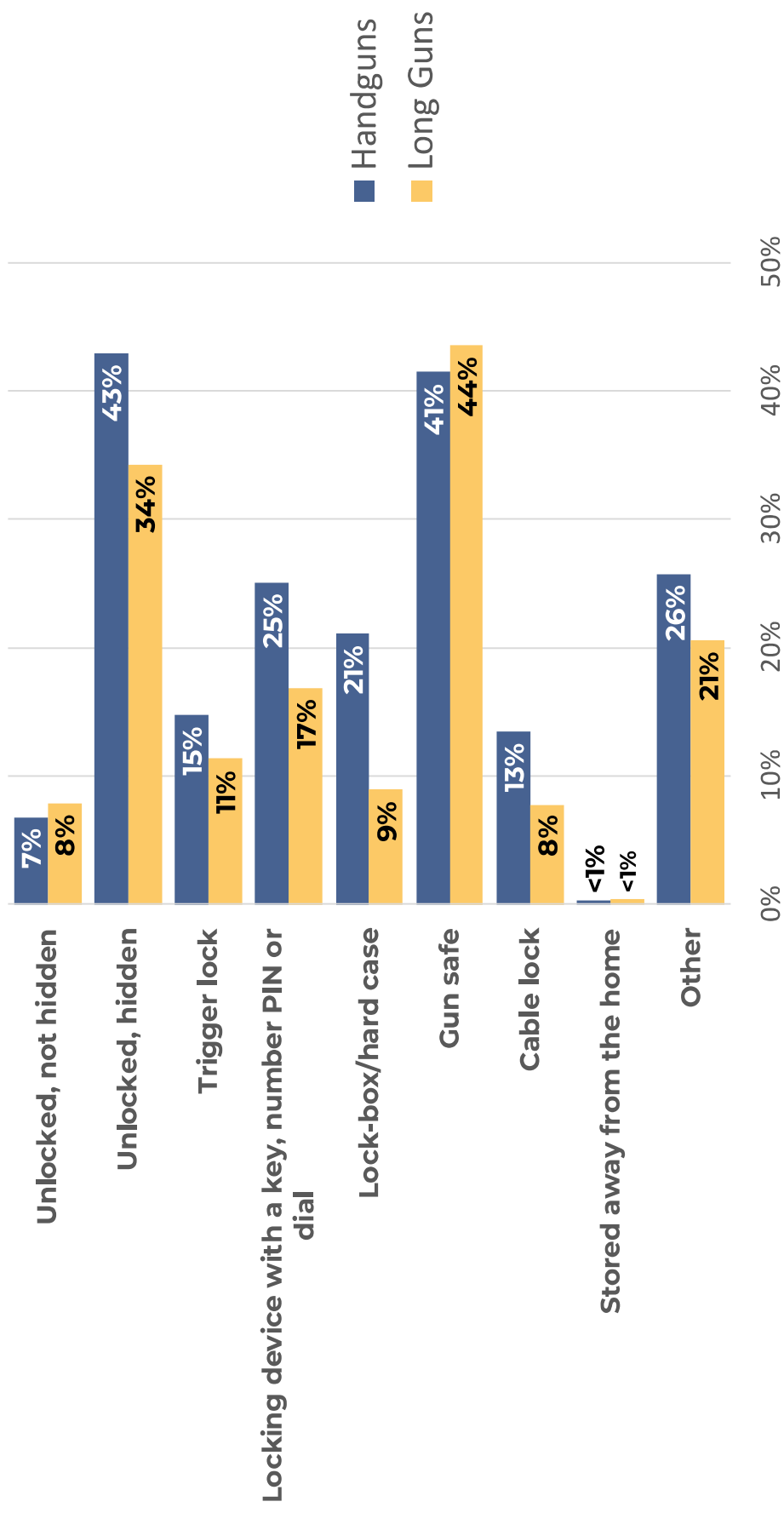


**65%** of Coloradans  
with **firearms** in the home  
have **all firearms**  
**locked and unloaded**

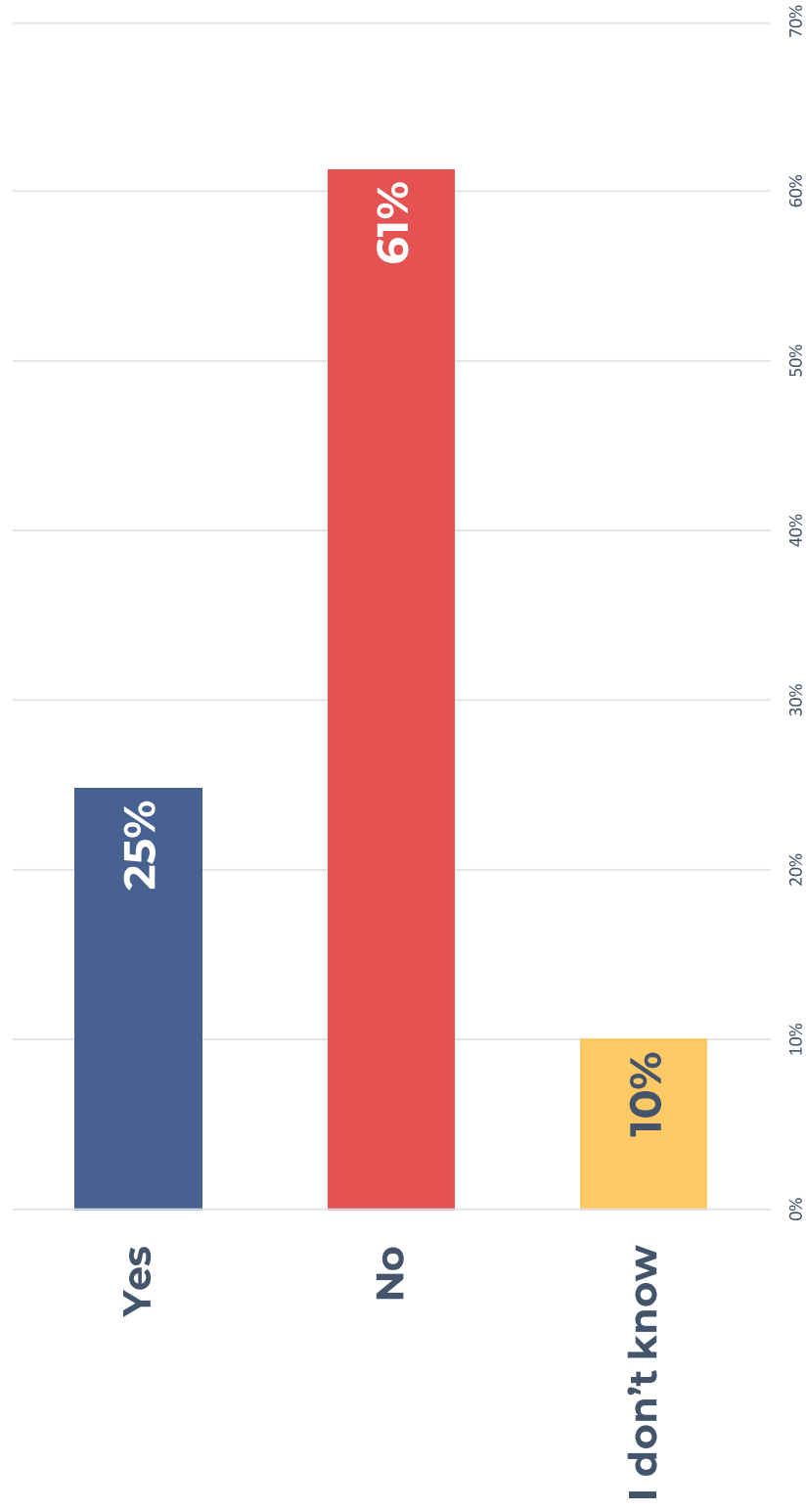


Learn more about  
secure storage

## Firearm Storage Methods



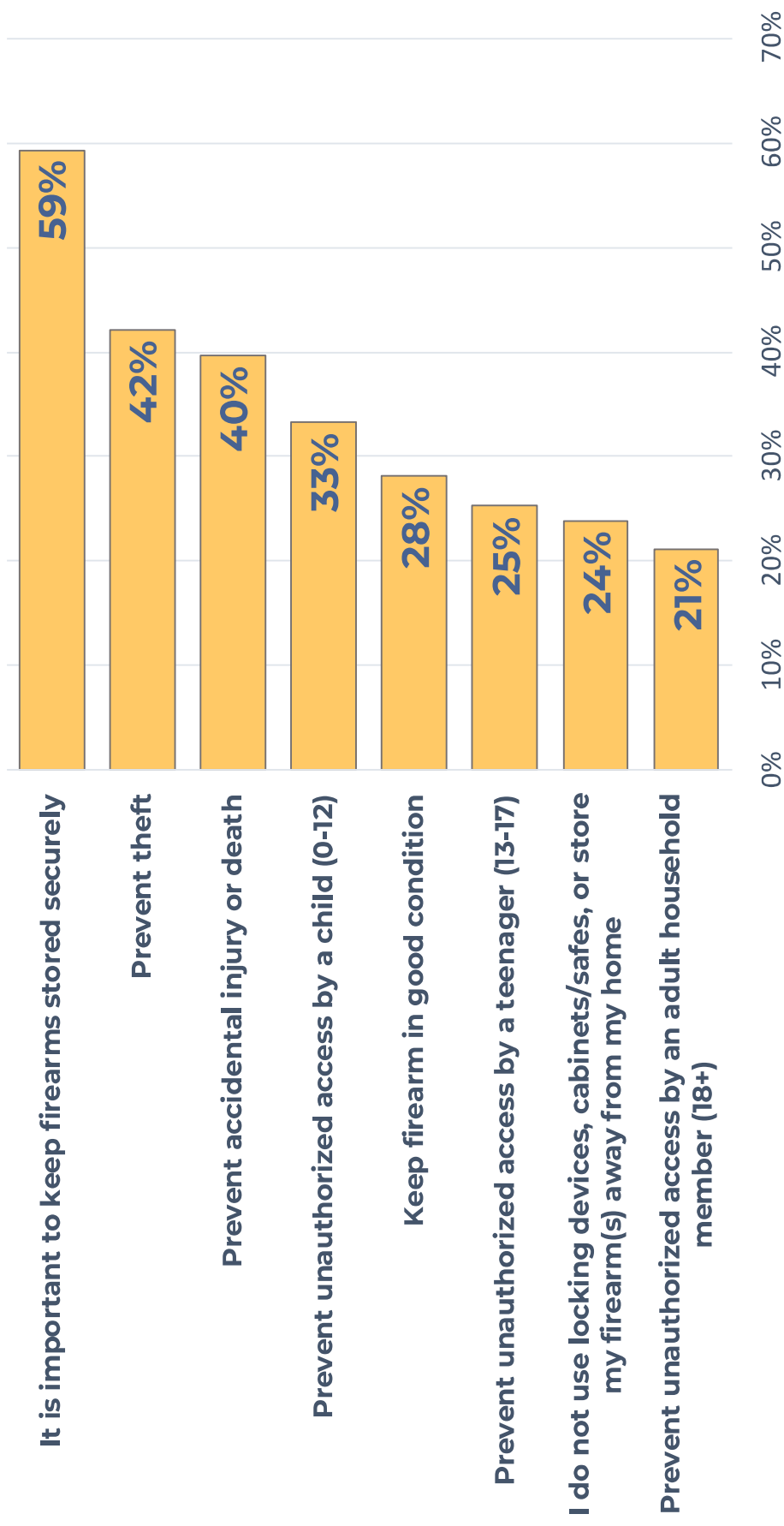
## Plans for Temporary Safe Storage Among Coloradans with Firearms in the Home



Out of Home Storage  
Locations in Colorado

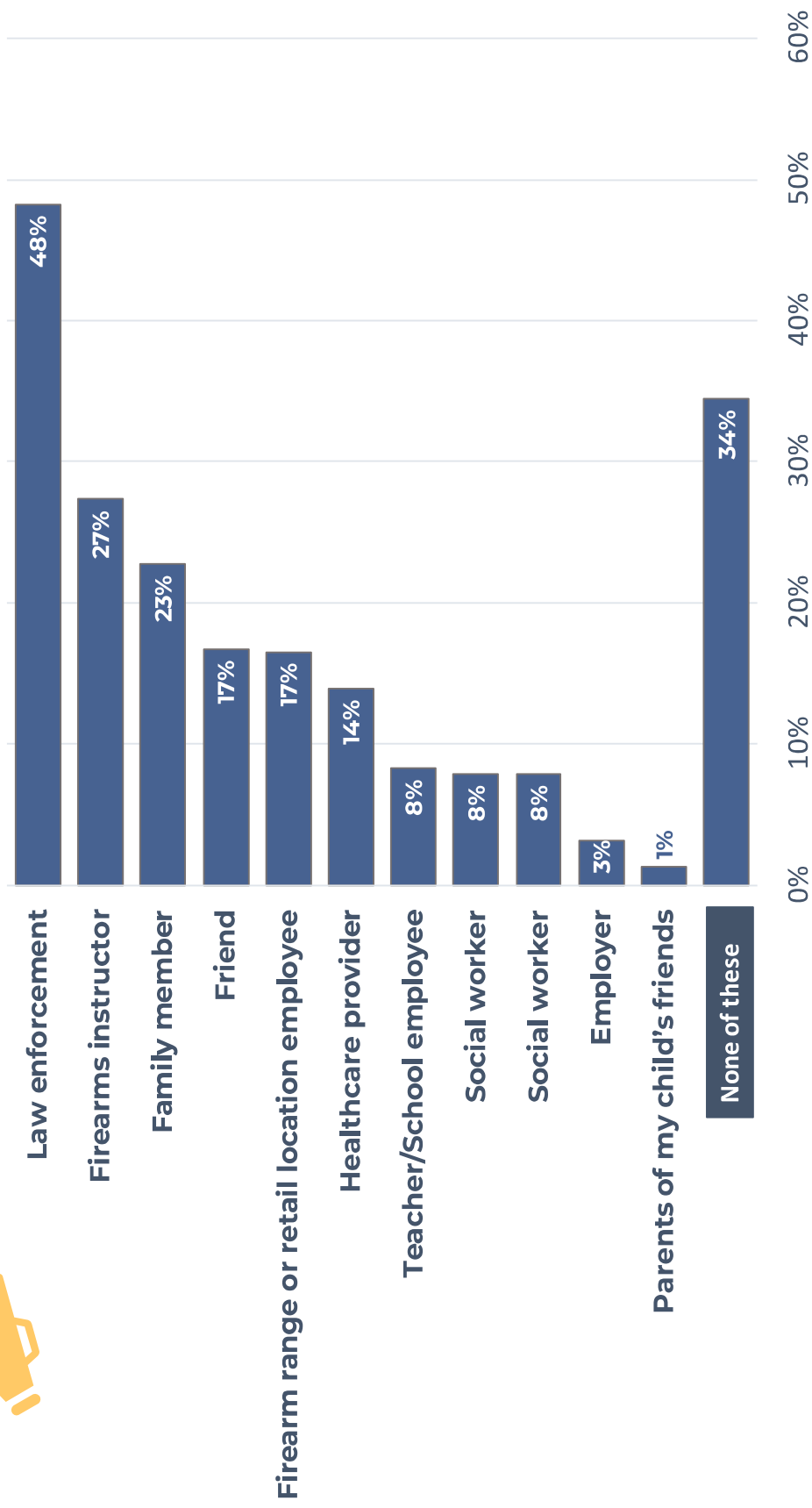


## Why People Lock Their Guns





## Promoters of Secure Firearm Storage



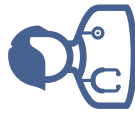


**\*Teacher/School employee**

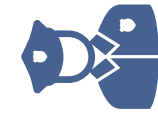


**Friend**

**\*Parents of my child's friends**



**Family member**  
**Healthcare provider**



**\*Employer**  
**Firearms instructor**

**Firearm range or retail location employee**

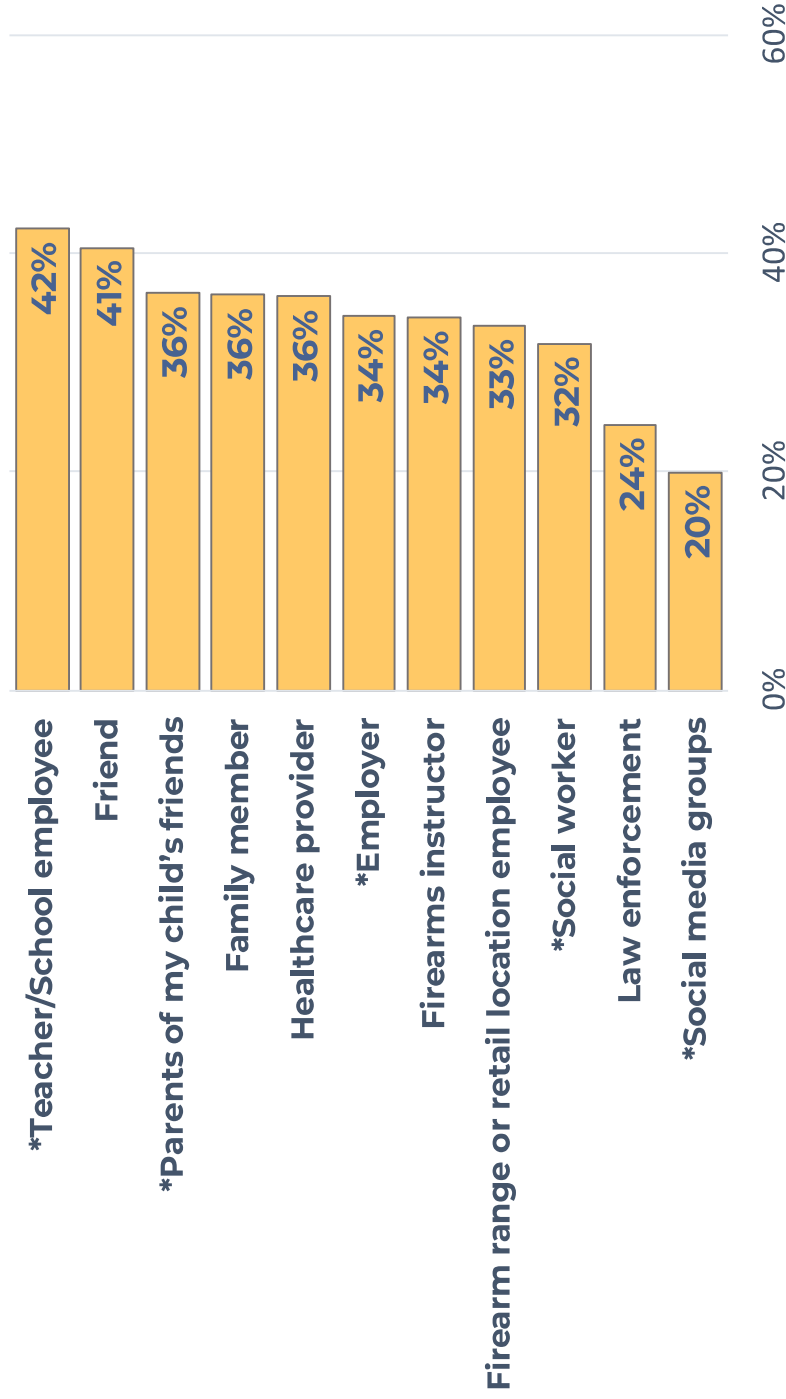


**\*Social worker**

**Law enforcement**

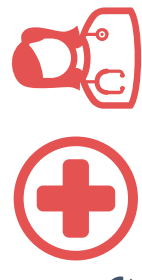
**\*Social media groups**

## Messengers That Led to More Secure Firearm Storage

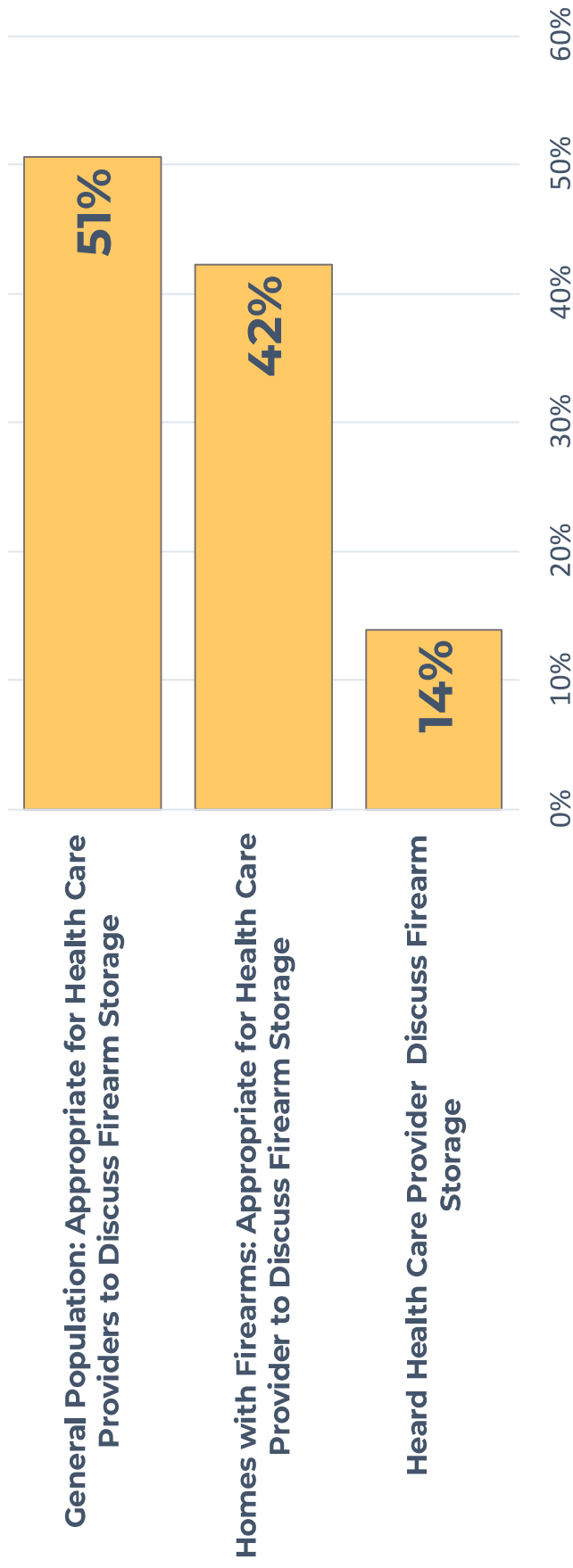


\* Calculations for these values may be unstable as n<30





## Healthcare's Role in Promoting Safe Storage



## Implications for education and prevention for those who access firearms:



Prevent unauthorized access to firearms with secure storage practices.



Educate on the importance of locking and unloading firearms, especially in situations where they are needed.



Use the right message with the right messenger.

## Coloradan's Concerns about Firearm-Related Harms

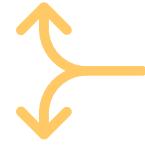
### Why Important?



Understand and address the fears of Coloradans

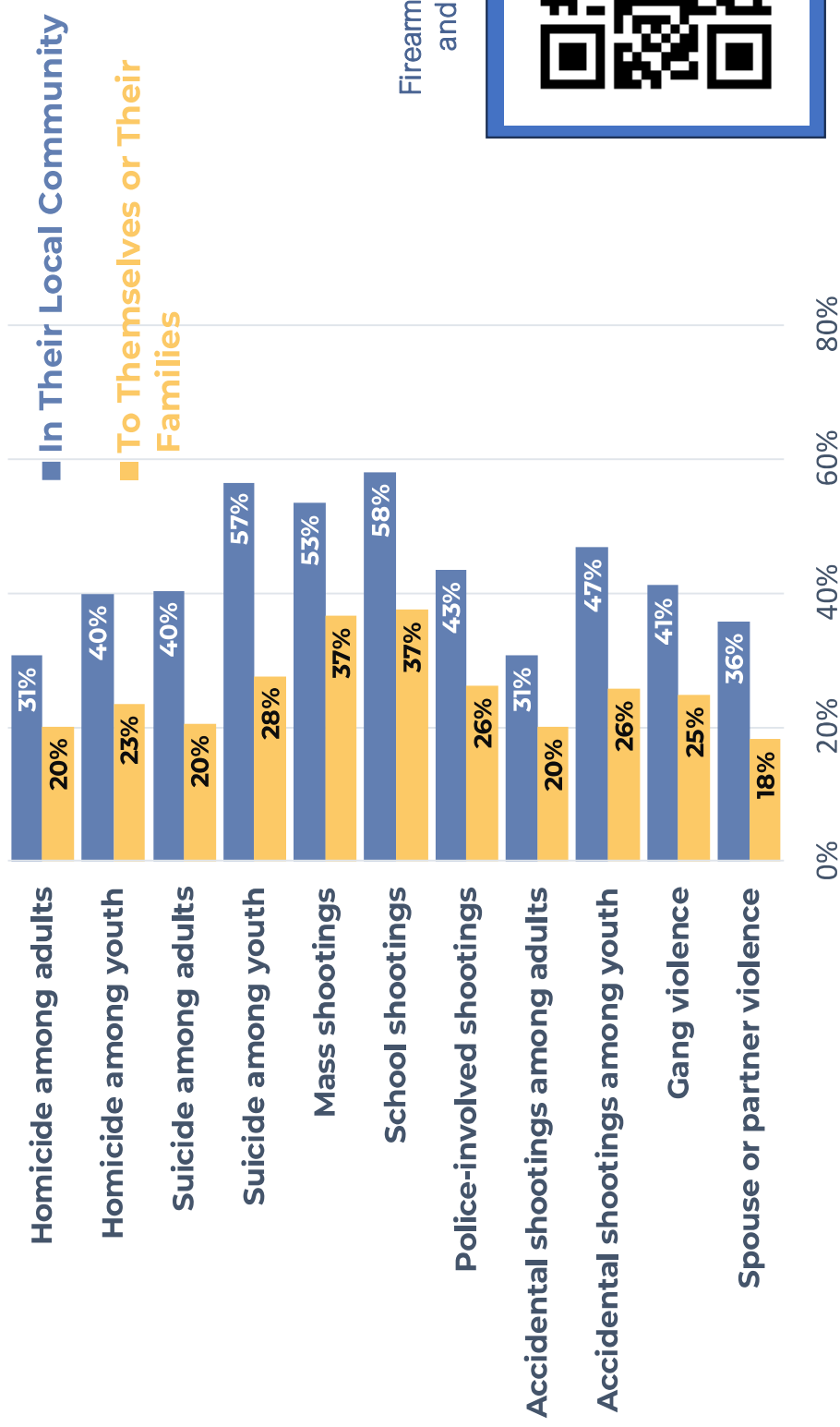


Understand experiences of those impacted



Understand what actions are being taken as a result of experiences and fears informs education and prevention

## Concerns About Violent Events Happening...



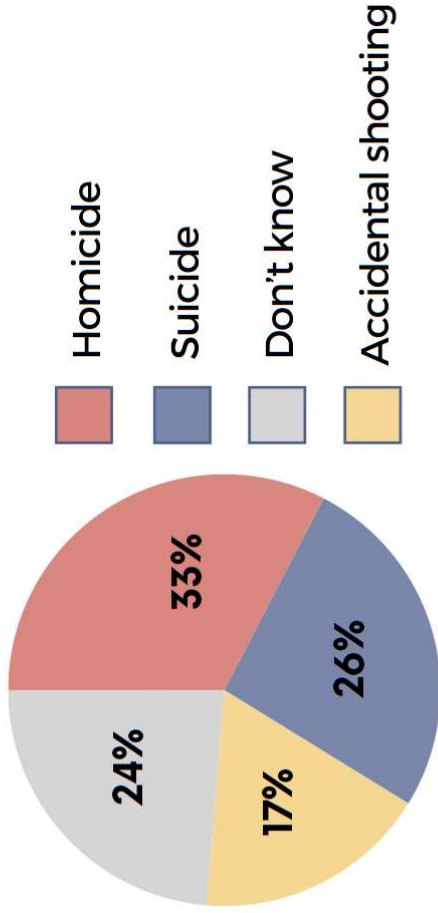
Firearm Perceptions  
and Realities



## PERCEPTION

Most Colorado adults (18+) believe **homicide** is the most common cause of death involving firearms in our state...

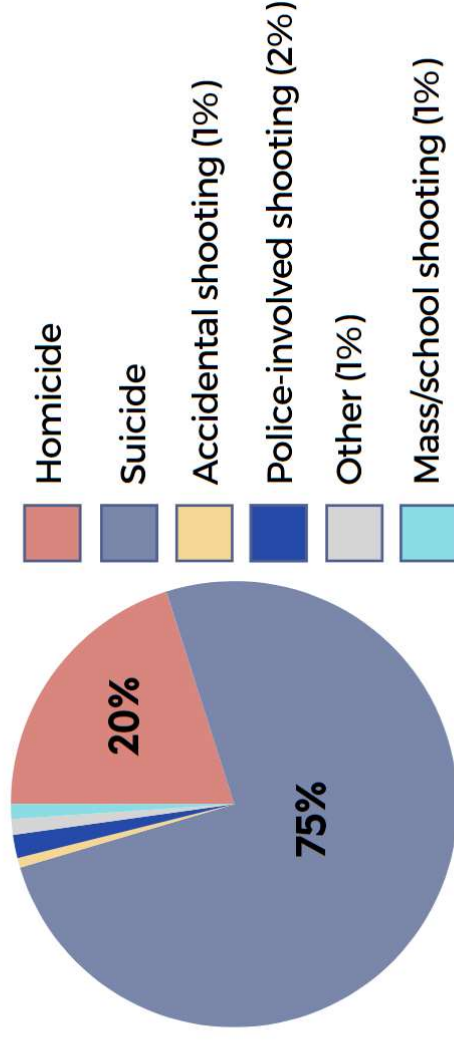
BELIEFS AMONG COLORADO ADULTS



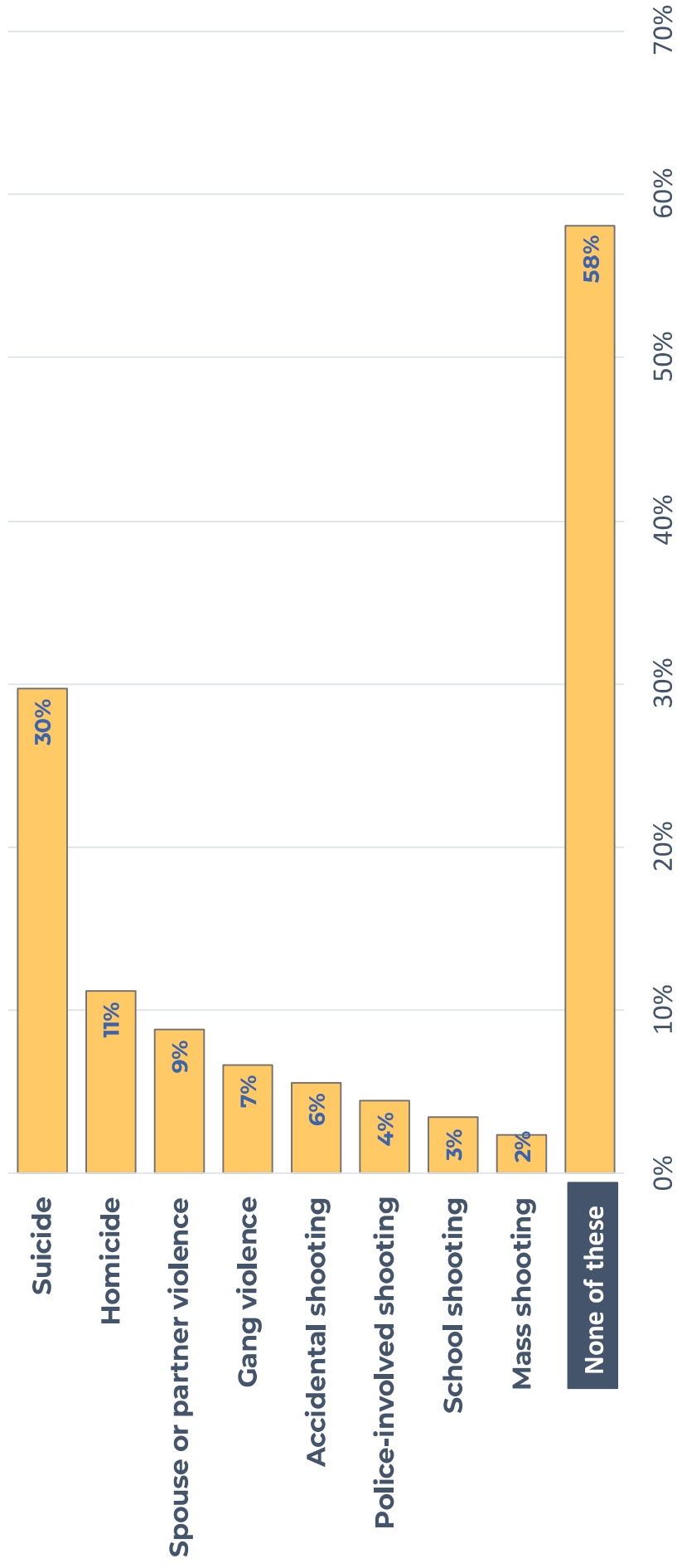
## REALITY

...however, the majority of firearm-involved deaths in Colorado are **suicides**.

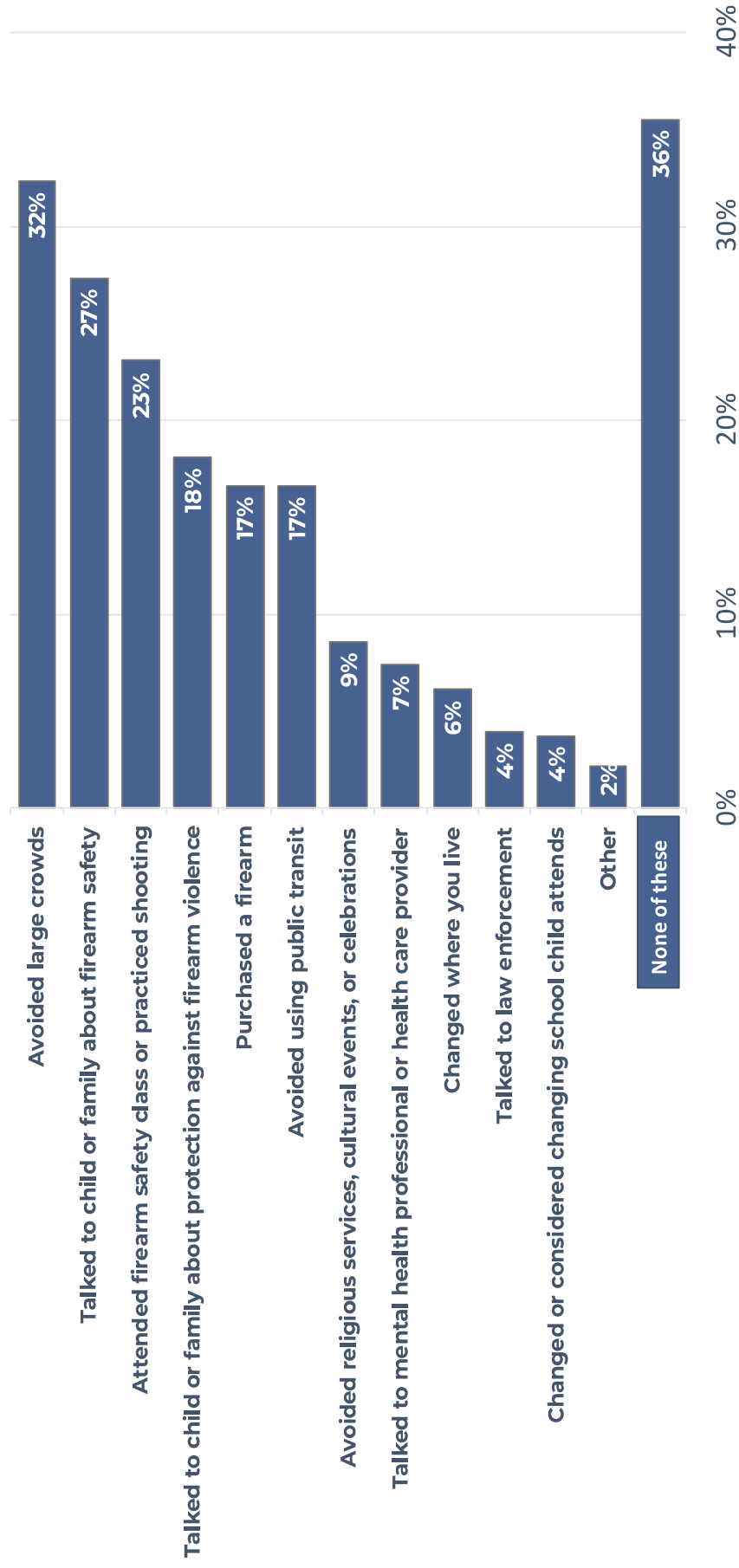
FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO BY INTENT  
(2017-2021, N=4221)<sup>12</sup>



## Experiences with Firearm Harms



## Protections Taken Against Firearm Violence



# Implications for education and prevention for those who have experienced or are concerned about firearm harms:



Get the facts out in a non-sensationalized manner



Support people who have experienced or fear these harms by promoting resources and programs that can help them to heal and protect them from these harms



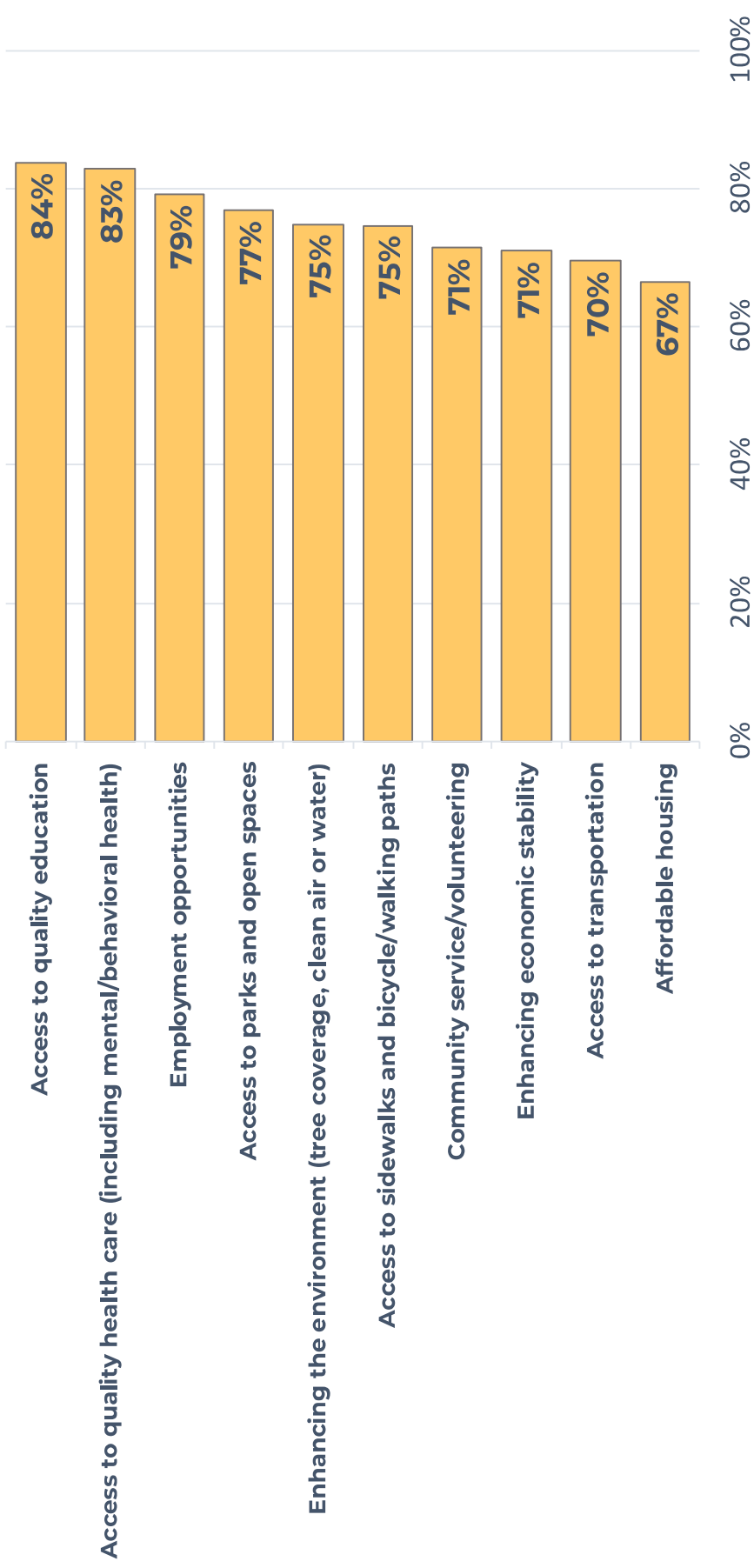
## Creating Protective Environments

### Why Important?



We can invest in, promote, and implement solutions that address the root causes of firearm harms and build community assets, resources, and regulations that protect against firearm harms.

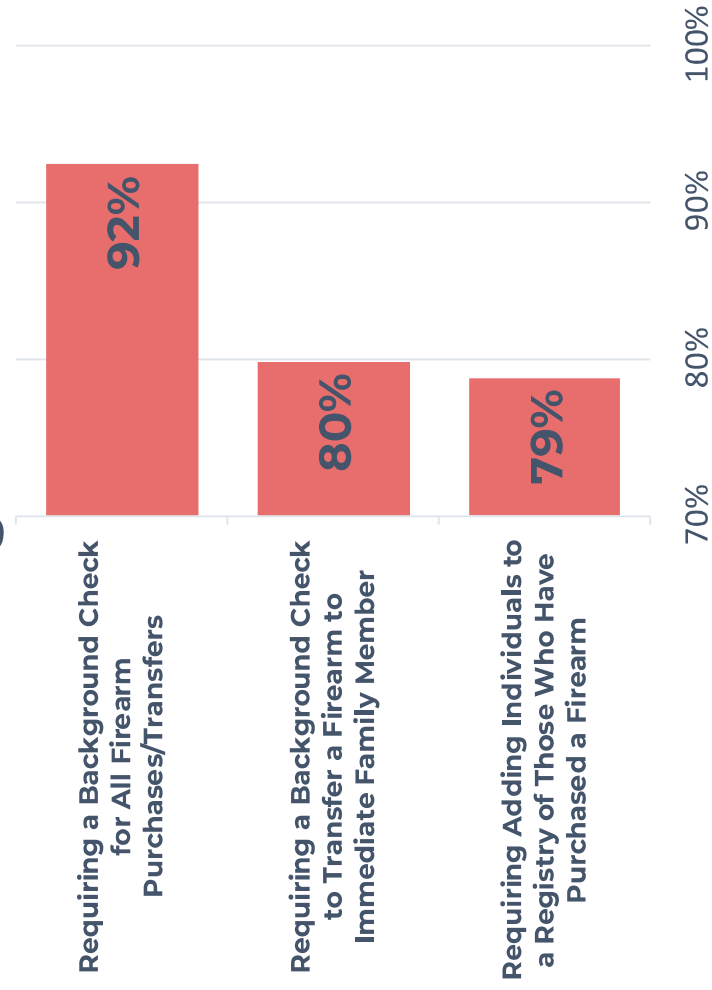
## Support Investments to Create Protective Environments



## Existing Colorado Laws



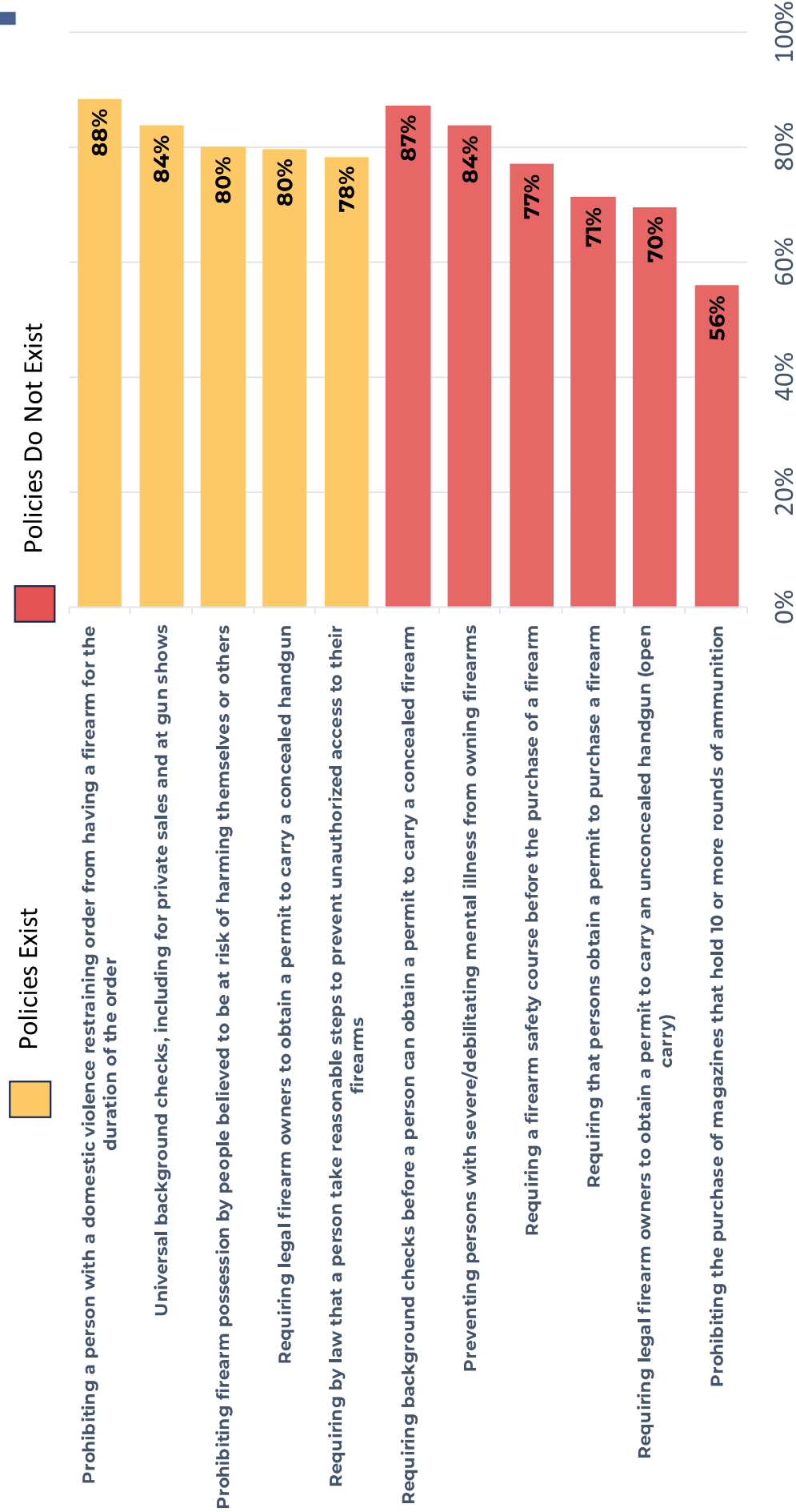
## Non-Existing Colorado Laws



Values indicate the percentage of Coloradans who think each law exists

For additional documentation on Colorado firearm laws please refer to the appendix at the end of this slide deck

# Support for Firearm Policies



For additional documentation on Colorado firearm laws please refer to the appendix at the end of this slide deck

## Appropriate to Issue an ERPO if...



## Implications for education and prevention for creating protective environments:



Many issues where we commonly agree we can be doing work to create communities where people have access to resources that give them a better quality of life.



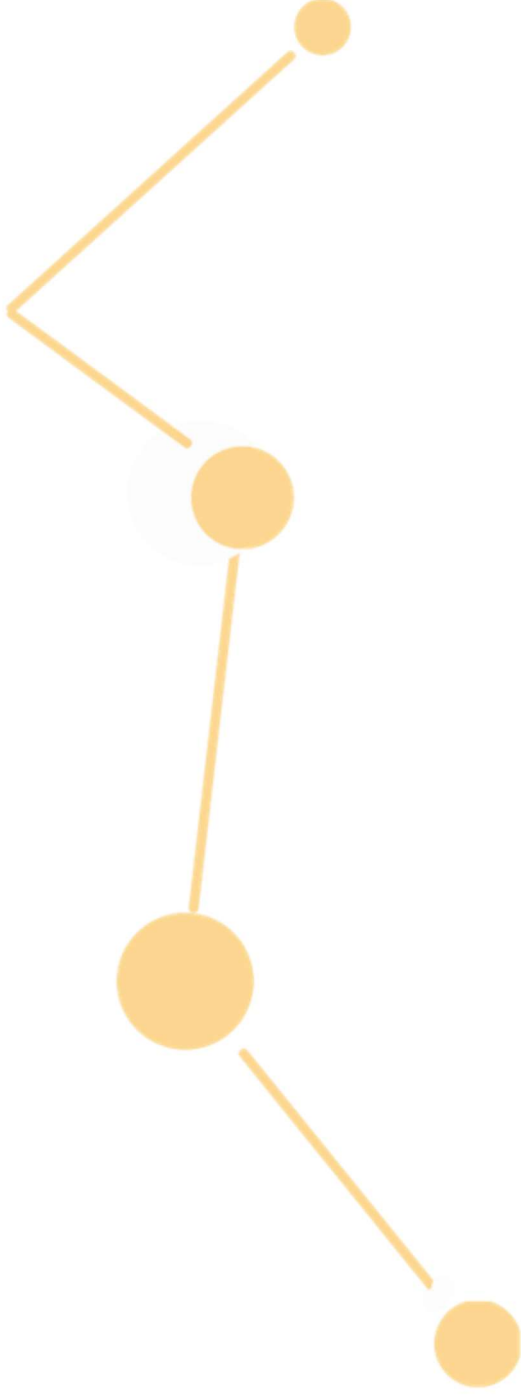
Many areas where laws already exist that people support and there are opportunities for support of additional regulations.



Policy-makers should engage affected communities in the policy process; these findings help to give some overarching opinions and perspectives.

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# NEXT STEPS



## **Use the state and regional data to inform local action!**

- ✓ **Make individual changes to your own practices/behaviors**
- ✓ **Apply for funding using COFIPS data to support your program or strategies**
- ✓ **Guide prevention strategies implemented by your government agency or community organization**





**Sign up for the FIPI newsletter to hear about when we release more resources.**



- ✓ **Dashboard**
- ✓ **More brief reports on specific topics**
- ✓ **Peer-reviewed publications**



## Ongoing Administration

**2024:** Administer specialty survey; determining the focus currently.

**2025:** Second iteration of the core survey, so we can monitor trends over time.



# Thank You

## **FIPI/IVPC Staff**

- Kate Little
- Andrew MacFarland
- Jessica Buck-Atkinson
- Ginny McCarthy
- Leslie Barnard
- Rachel Johnson
- Ashley Brooks-Russell
- Emmy Betz
- Chris Knoepke
- Joe Simonetti
- Matt Wetenkamp
- Shale Wong

## **OGVP Staff**

- Jonathan McMillan
- Eric France
- Kristin McDermott



Sign up for the Firearm Injury  
Prevention Initiative newsletter  
to receive updates about  
**COFIPS**



**cofips.org**  
Fill out contact form

# Appendix – Existing Colorado Laws



Survey respondents were asked: "To the best of your knowledge, does Colorado have a law..."

... that punishes or leads to consequences for firearm owners whose firearms could be or are accessed by unsupervised children or unauthorized users?

Answer: Yes. According to HB21-1106, "unlawful storage of a firearm is a class 2 misdemeanor." Moreover, "a person commits unlawful storage of a firearm" if they own it if they "know or reasonably should know that... a juvenile can gain access to the firearm without the permission of the juvenile's parent or guardian." Additionally, the law states that "firearms must be responsibly and securely stored when they are not in use to prevent access by unsupervised juveniles and other unauthorized users," with specific definitions of responsible and secure storage in the law."

... requiring a background check prior to all firearm purchases/transfers?

Answer: Not exactly. Although Colorado generally requires a background check before firearm purchases from both licensed firearm sellers and during private sales, there are some exceptions:

According to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-112, the following

exceptions apply to background check requirements:

- A transfer of an antique firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. sec. 921(a)(16), as amended, or a curio or relic, as defined in 27 CFR 478.11, as amended;
- A transfer that is a bona fide gift or loan between immediate family members, which are limited to spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, first cousins, aunts, and uncles;
- A transfer that occurs by operation of law or because of the death of a person for whom the prospective transferor is an executor or administrator of an estate or a trustee of a trust created in a will;
- A transfer that is temporary and occurs while in the home of the unlicensed transferee if: (I) The unlicensed transferee is not prohibited from possessing firearms; and (II) The unlicensed transferee reasonably believes that possession of the firearm is necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to the unlicensed transferee;
- A temporary transfer of possession without transfer of ownership or a title

to ownership, which transfer takes place: (I) At a shooting range located in or on premises owned or occupied by a duly incorporated organization organized for conservation purposes or to foster proficiency in firearms; (II) At a target firearm shooting competition under the auspices of, or approved by, a state agency or a nonprofit organization; or (III) While hunting, fishing, target shooting, or trapping if: (A) The hunting, fishing, target shooting, or trapping is legal in all places where the unlicensed transferee possesses the firearm; and (B) The unlicensed transferee holds any license or permit that is required for such hunting, fishing, target shooting, or trapping; (f) A transfer of a firearm that is made to facilitate the repair or maintenance of the firearm; except that this paragraph

- does not apply unless all parties who possess the firearm as a result of the transfer may legally possess a firearm;
- Any temporary transfer that occurs while in the continuous presence of the owner of the firearm;
- A temporary transfer for not more than seventy-two hours. A person who transfers a firearm pursuant to this paragraph (f) may be jointly and severally liable for damages proximately caused by the transferee's subsequent unlawful use of the firearm; or
- A transfer of a firearm from a person serving in the armed forces of the United States who will be deployed outside of the United States within the next thirty days to any immediate family member, which is limited to a spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, niece, nephew, first cousin, aunt, and uncle of the person.
- In addition: (a) An owner, manager, or employee of a business that repairs or maintains firearms may rely upon a transferor's statement that he or she may legally possess a firearm unless the owner, manager, or employee has actual knowledge to the contrary and may return possession of the firearm to the transferor upon completion of the repairs or maintenance without a background check; (b) Unless a transferor of a firearm has actual knowledge to the contrary, the transferor may rely upon the statement of an owner, manager, or employee of a business that repairs or maintains firearms that no owner, manager, or employee of the business is prohibited from possessing a firearm."

... requiring firearm owners to report lost or stolen firearms to the police?

Yes. According to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-113, "a person who owns a firearm and who has reasonable cause to believe that the firearm has been lost or stolen shall report such fact to a law enforcement agency not more than five days after discovering that the firearm has been lost or stolen." If they fail to do

so, they have committed "a civil infraction, punishable by a twenty-five dollar fine." There are no apparent exceptions.

... requiring a background check prior to transferring a firearm to an immediate family member (e.g., adult child, sibling)?

No. As above, according to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-112, there is an exception to background check requirements in the case of a transfer that is a bona fide gift or loan between immediate family members, which are limited to spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, first cousins, aunts, and uncles.

... requiring individuals to be added to a registry when they purchase a firearm?

No. According to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 29-11.7-102, not only is there no state registry, local governments are prohibited from keeping a registry. "(1) A local government, including a law enforcement agency, shall not maintain a list or other form of record or database of: (a) Persons who purchase or exchange firearms or who leave firearms for repair or sale on consignment; (b) Persons who transfer firearms, unless the persons are federally licensed firearms dealers; (c) The descriptions, including serial numbers, of firearms purchased, transferred, exchanged, or left for repair or sale on consignment."

... allowing certain individuals (like law enforcement or family members) to ask a judge to sign an order that makes it illegal for someone to have or buy firearms if that person is believed to be an immediate danger to themselves or others?

Yes. According to Colo. Rev. Stat. 13-14.5-103, ERPOs may be issued when the court finds a preponderance of evidence that a person "poses a significant risk of causing personal injury to self or others in the near future by having in his or her custody or control a firearm or by purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm." Please note, the statute listed above has not yet been updated to reflect the adjustments made by SB23-170, which expanded the list of who can petition for an extreme risk protection order beyond law enforcement and family members to include licensed medical care providers, licensed mental health-care providers, licensed educators, and district attorneys. Even after the passage of this law, the question is still accurate as written.

# Appendix – Support for Policies



**Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of support or opposition for the following policies:**

**Requiring that persons obtain a permit to purchase a firearm**

*No such law exists in Colorado*

**Prohibiting a person with a domestic violence restraining order from having a firearm for the duration of the order**

*This law exists in Colorado.*

According to Colo. Rev. Stat. § 13-14-105.5(11), "if the court subjects a person to a civil protection order pursuant to a provision of this article and the protection order qualifies as an order described in 18 U.S.C. sec. 922 (d) (8) or (g), the court, as part of such order:

- Shall order the person to:
  - Refrain from possessing or purchasing any firearm or ammunition for the duration of the order, and
  - Relinquish, for the duration of the order, any firearm or ammunition in the respondent's immediate possession or control or subject to the respondent's immediate possession or control..."

**Universal background checks, including for private sales and at gun shows**

*This law exists in Colorado, with exceptions as noted above under question 3.1.*

**Prohibiting firearm possession by people believed to be at risk of harming themselves or others**

*This law exists in Colorado, as long as an ERPO has been issued.*

**Preventing persons with severe/debilitating mental illness from owning firearms**

*This is not in itself a law in Colorado, however an ERPO may be issued if the person's severe/debilitating mental illness caused them to be a danger to self or others. Additionally, federal background checks apply. Federal law—under 18 U.S.C. § 922(d), it is unlawful for any person to sell or otherwise dispose of any firearm or ammunition to any person knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that such person "has been adjudicated as a mental defective or has been committed to any mental institution."—including a person who has been found incompetent to stand trial, not guilty by reason of lack of mental responsibility, found insane by a court in a criminal case, or involuntarily committed to an institution.*

**Prohibiting the purchase of magazines that hold 10 or more rounds of ammunition**

*This law exists in some form in parts of Colorado. Colorado law, Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-301, bans the "sale, transfer, or possession" of high-capacity magazines holding 15 or more rounds of ammunition, though not (explicitly) their purchase. Additionally, the law may not have been written or enforced in such a way that it is functioning as intended. Additionally, several local governments in Colorado have passed ordinances addressing large capacity magazines. The City of Boulder has passed an ordinance (found in city municipal code section 5-2) that bans the sale or possession of "assault weapons," defined in part as weapons with a magazine capacity of 10 rounds or more, or 5 rounds or more for shotguns. Denver Municipal Code Sec. 38-130 bans the sale or transfer of possession of an "assault weapon," defined, in part, as "all semiautomatic action, centerfire rifles with a detachable magazine with a capacity of twenty-one (21) or more rounds. All semiautomatic shotguns with a folding stock or a magazine capacity of more than six (6) rounds or both." The City of Vail's 1994 ordinance bans semi-automatic rifles with detachable magazines capable of holding 21 or more rounds.*

**Requiring by law that a person take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorized access to their firearms**

*This law exists in Colorado: HB21-1106*

**Requiring background checks before a person can obtain a permit to carry a concealed firearm**

*This law does not exist in Colorado. Concealed carry permitting occurs through local Sheriff's offices, and although there are several requirements for obtaining a permit, it is not explicitly stated in statute that an applicant must undergo a background check during the application process. However, permittees should undergo a background check when purchasing the weapon they intend to carry as a concealed firearm.*

**Requiring a firearm safety course before the purchase of a firearm**

*This law does not exist in Colorado.*

**Requiring legal firearm owners to obtain a permit to carry a concealed handgun**

*This law exists in Colorado: Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-12-203*

**Requiring legal firearm owners to obtain a permit to carry an unlicensed handgun (open carry)**

*This law does not exist in Colorado.*