



MEDIA RELEASE

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Monroe County Community Partnership for Gun Safety Strategic Plan Details Firearm Crime Trends and Outlines Goals

Monroe County, PA—A countywide strategic plan focused on gun safety in Monroe County is now available for all community members to review. Informed by data analysis, surveys, and focus groups the intention of the strategic plan is to achieve realistic, local-level, data-driven, research-based recommendations, policies, and practices that promote firearm safety and prevent gun violence.

"Last June we brought more than 70 representatives together from around the county and launched the Community Partnership for Gun Safety," said Grants Manager Jennifer Strauch. "During the last 12 months we met regularly, identified a mission statement, surveyed community members, held focus groups, evaluated a variety of health and crime data, and finalized an actionable strategic plan that is a critical part of gun safety and violence prevention efforts in Monroe County."

Compared to the state and the nation, Monroe County has consistently reported lower rates of firearm violence from assaults over the last 20 years. More recently, however, a concerning trend has emerged: nearly two-thirds of all suicides in Monroe County are firearm-related, a rate that exceeds state and national averages. Additionally, data indicates a noticeable increase in firearm-related court cases, particularly felony cases involving firearms, in 2020 and early 2021.

"As a business owner and invited member of the community partnership, I learned a lot about gun safety that I thought I knew, but I didn't know how it affected our community" said Thomas R. Wilkins owner of Pocono GunKeepers an FFL armory in the Poconos. "I think the statistics available in the report are of great value to all of us who own firearms in Monroe County".

Four goals have been identified in response to firearm crime trends, crime drivers, community firearms history and behavior, and community interest in firearm safety education and safe storage:

- Foster and maintain firearm safety among current owners

- Decrease the intersection between mental health and firearm-related incidents
- Foster and maintain firearm safety among youth
- Increase safety in communities with a prevalence of firearm-related incidents

“As a first responder, firearm safety is a huge priority because we regularly respond to and witness the breadth of impact caused by gun violence,” said Chief Jennifer Lyon of the Stroud Area Regional Police Department. “We value the community feedback shared, as well as the collaborative effort to meet community needs in an intentional, thoughtful, and consistent manner to save lives and reduce harm. We remain committed to being a strong partner in this effort to increase firearm safety.”

With the strategic plan complete, Monroe County Community Partners for Gun Safety will begin implementing goals and objectives, focusing on policies and programs that support community firearm safety interests.

Launched in June 2023, the Monroe County Community Partnership for Gun Safety is a collaboration of county leadership and agencies, community providers, law enforcement officers, and community members. The partnership’s mission is to save lives and reduce the harm caused by firearms and gun violence in our community through advocacy and partnerships that provide education, support, and resources. Support and funding (\$50,000) for this project comes from the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency](#), Gun Violence Investigation and Prosecution Grant Program. For more information about the Monroe County Community Partnership for Gun Safety, send an email to jstrauch@monroecountypa.gov.

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