



health and safety

OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S YOUTH

A Deep Dive into the 2025 Portrait of Northern Virginia's Youth

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community research



Welcome and Introduction



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*Community Foundation for
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Welcome and Introduction

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Community Foundation for
Northern Virginia





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Generation	Birth Year	Age in 2022	Age in 2023	Age in 2024
Z	1997	25	26	27
Z	1998	24	25	26
Z	1999	23	24	25
Z	2000	22	23	24
Z	2001	21	22	23
Z	2002	20	21	22
Z	2003	19	20	21
Z	2004	18	19	20
Z	2005	17	18	19
Z	2006	16	17	18
Z	2007	15	16	17
Z	2008	14	15	16
Z	2009	13	14	15
Alpha	2010	12	13	14
Alpha	2011	11	12	13
Alpha	2012	10	11	12
Alpha	2013	9	10	11
Alpha	2014	8	9	10
Alpha	2015	7	8	9
Alpha	2016	6	7	8
Alpha	2017	5	6	7
Alpha	2018	4	5	6
Alpha	2019	3	4	5
Alpha	2020	2	3	4
Alpha	2021	1	2	3

“Generation Zalpha”



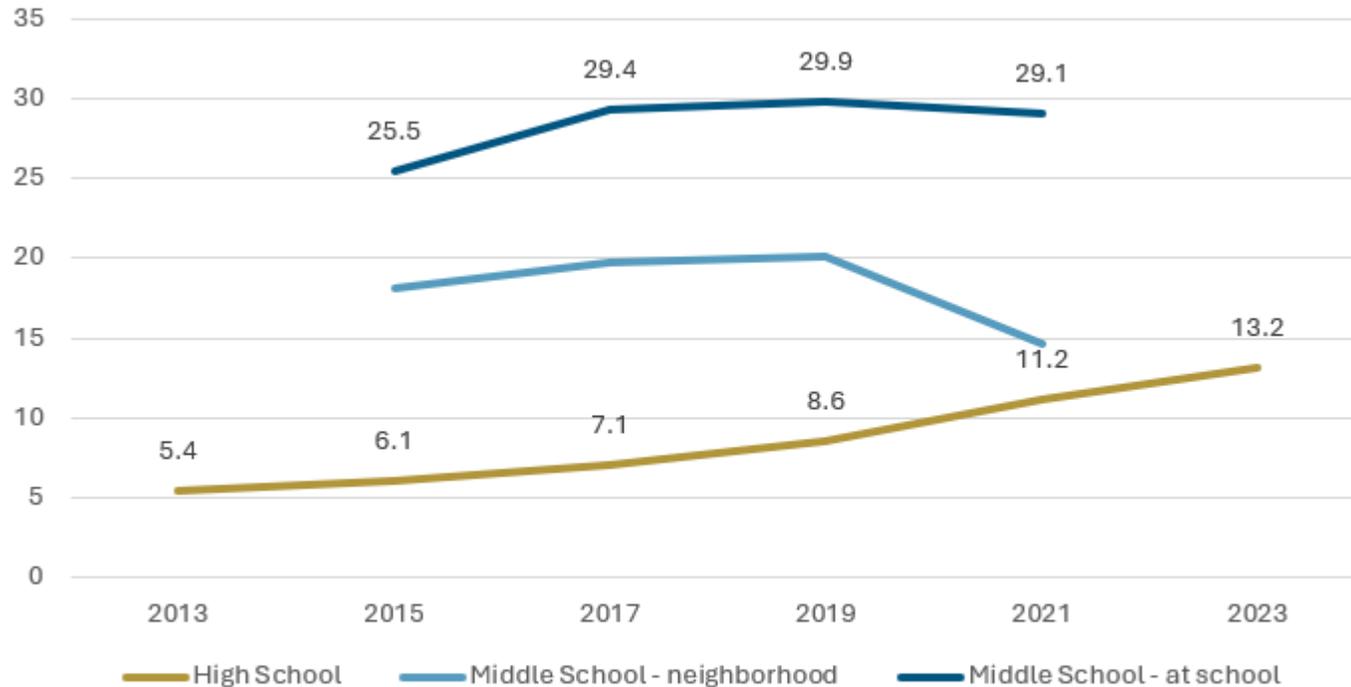
Who are Northern Virginia's Youth?

- Most youth are 10-24 years old
- The population of children 5 and under has decreased
- More youth identify as multiracial or multiethnic than a decade ago
- Nearly 50% of NOVA youth live in immigrant families



Feelings of Safety

Students who did not feel safe at school or in neighborhood, 2013 to 2023



*In Virginia, the percentage of **High School students** who “did not go to school because they **felt unsafe**” more than doubled over 10 years*

*In NOVA, **10%** of High Schoolers and **27%** of Middle Schoolers report **feeling unsafe at school***

Hispanic/Latino students consistently reported feeling unsafe at school or in the neighborhood more than other groups.

Source: Insight Region analysis of Virginia Youth Survey Trend Data, 2013-2023

Note: This question was not included in the 2023 Middle School survey



Feelings of Safety

SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICER (SSO)

Approximately **55%** of Schools in Virginia

- Employed by the local school
- Maintain order and discipline; prevent crime
- Investigate violations of law or policy
- Detain students who violate law or policy
- Enforce laws on school property, school buses, or at school-sponsored events
- Ensure safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

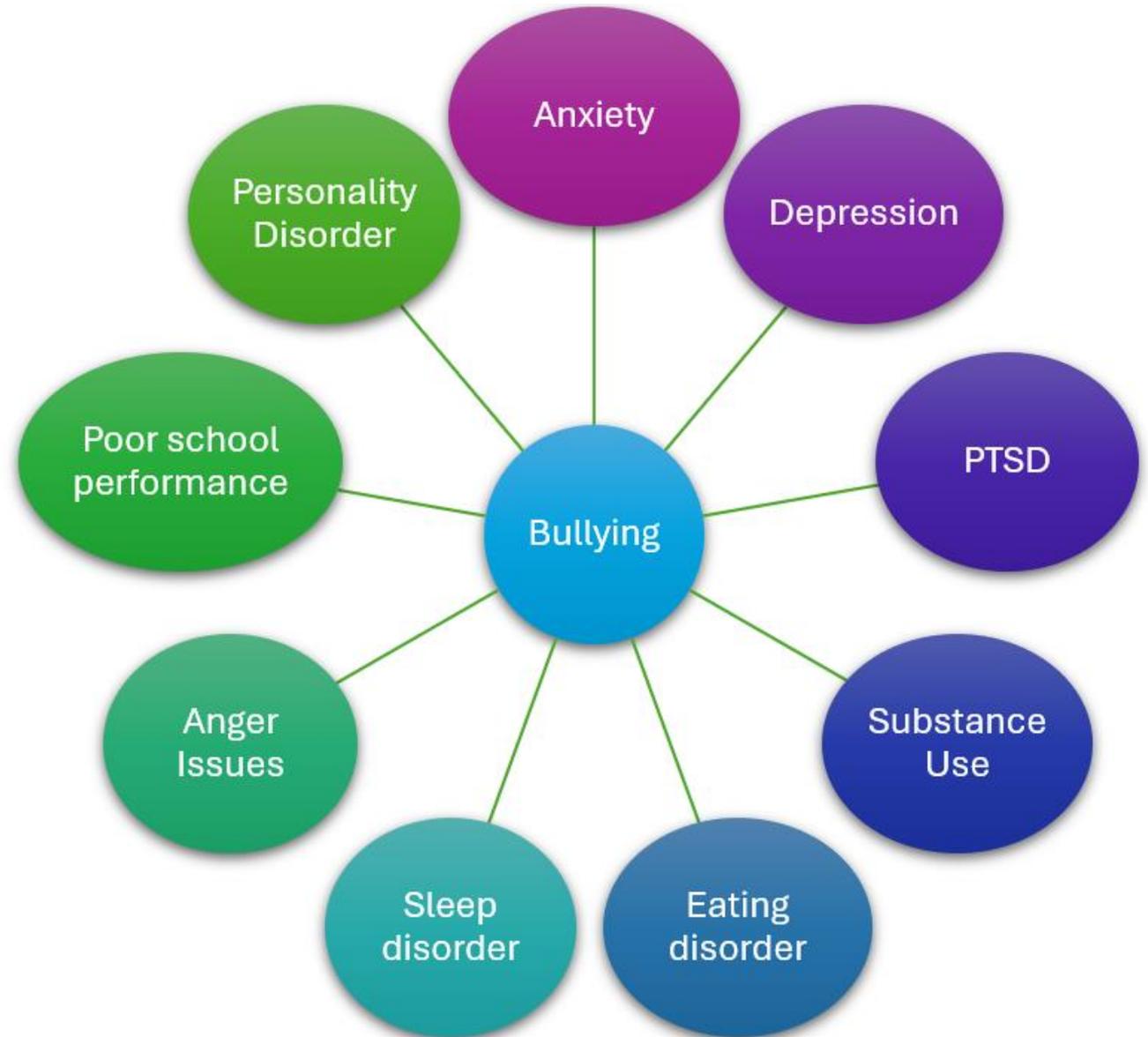
Approximately **68%** of Schools in Virginia

- Employed by local police
- Certified law enforcement officer
- Provides law enforcement and security services to public schools
- Law-Related Educator
- Role Model and Informal Mentor

25% of students and 50% of teachers said that they would feel SAFER if their school had an SRO.

Bullying

- **Bullying** is when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student repeatedly.
- Bullying is NOT when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way
- **Electronic bullying** is being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.



Bullying

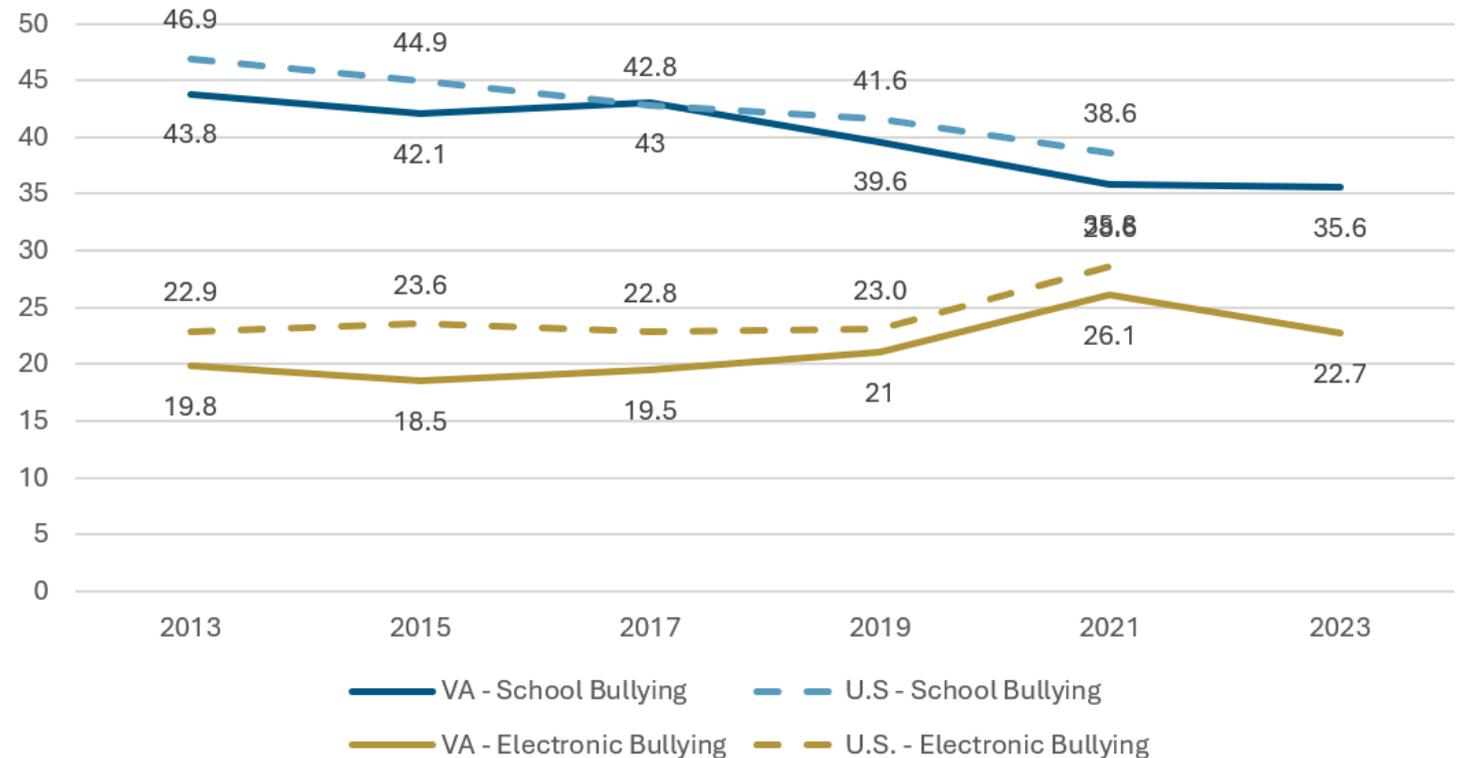
Middle School Bullying (in figure):

- School: 18% decrease
- Online: 30% increase

High School Bullying:

- School: 22% decrease
- Online: 18% decrease

Middle School Bullying Trends, 2013 to 2023

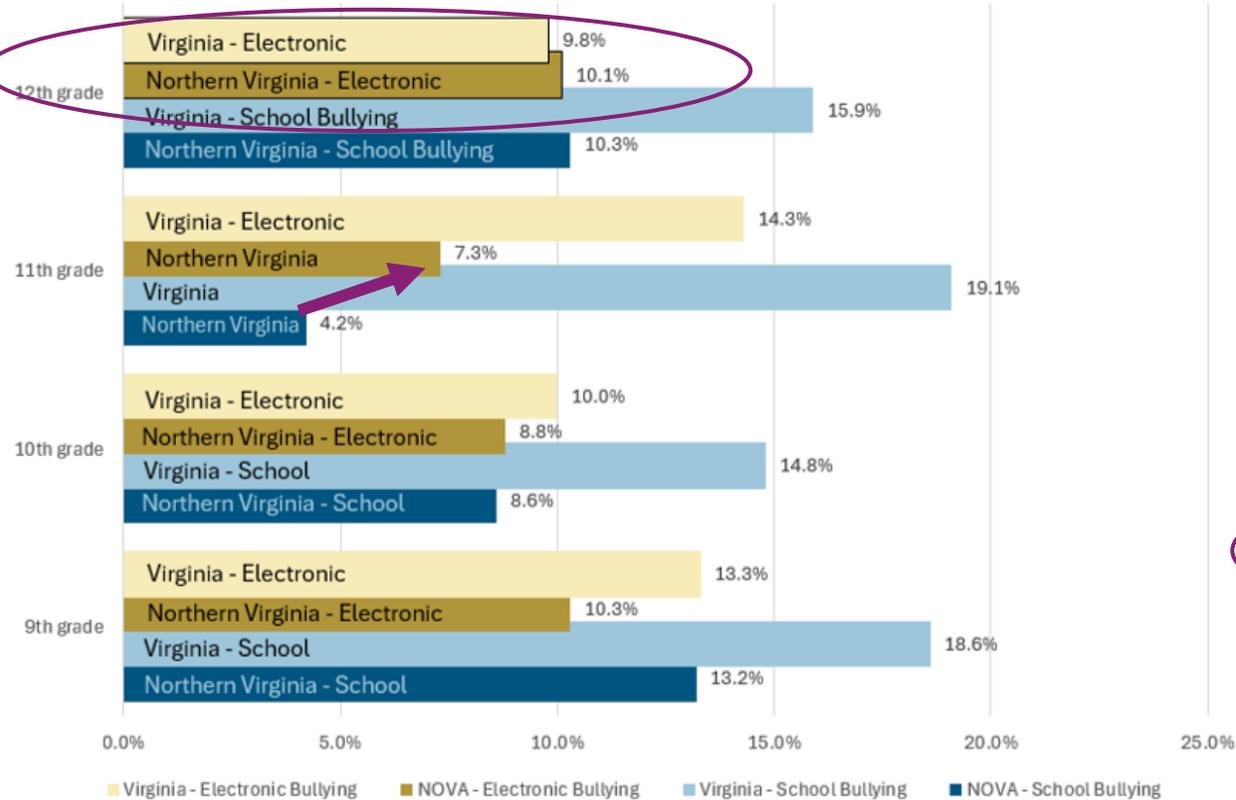


Source: Insight Region® analysis of VYS data from VDH and CDCs Youth Risk Behavior Survey Surveillance System

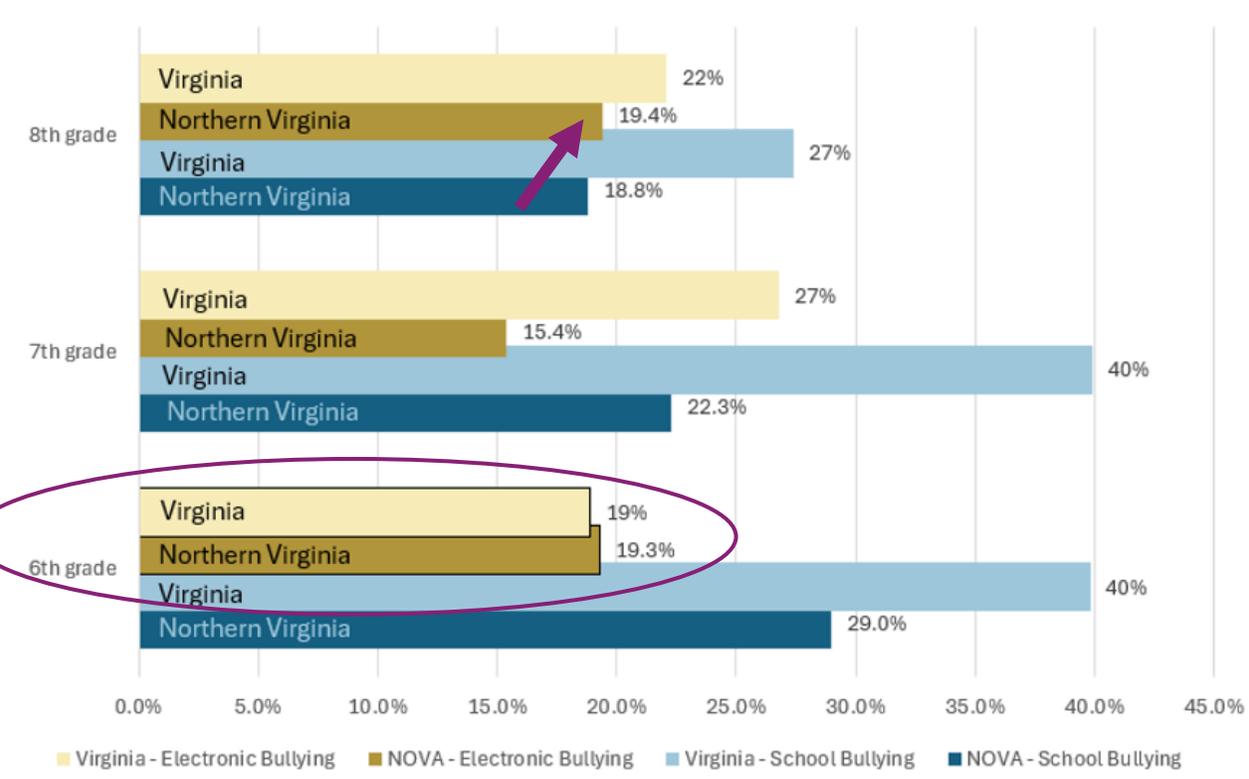


Bullying

Percentage of High School Students Ever Bullied, by Grade, 2023



Percentage of Middle School Students Ever Bullied, by Grade, 2023



Source: Insight Region analysis of Virginia Youth Survey data made available by Virginia Department of Health

Source: Insight Region analysis of 2023 Virginia Youth Survey data made available by Virginia Department of Health



Online Bullying

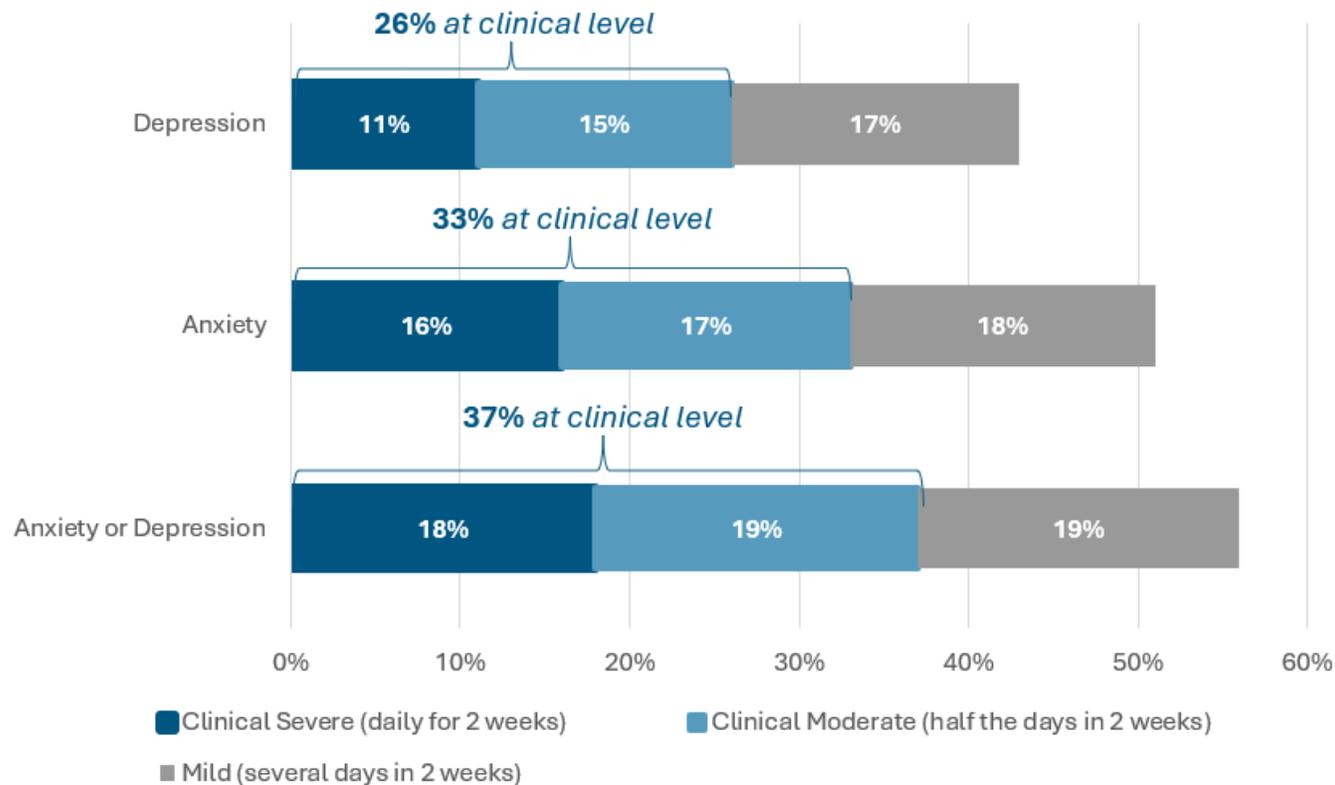
Almost **20%** of 8-12 graders believe:

“I have the right to say anything I want online, even if what I say hurts someone or violates someone's privacy.”

- 2023 Fairfax County Youth Survey

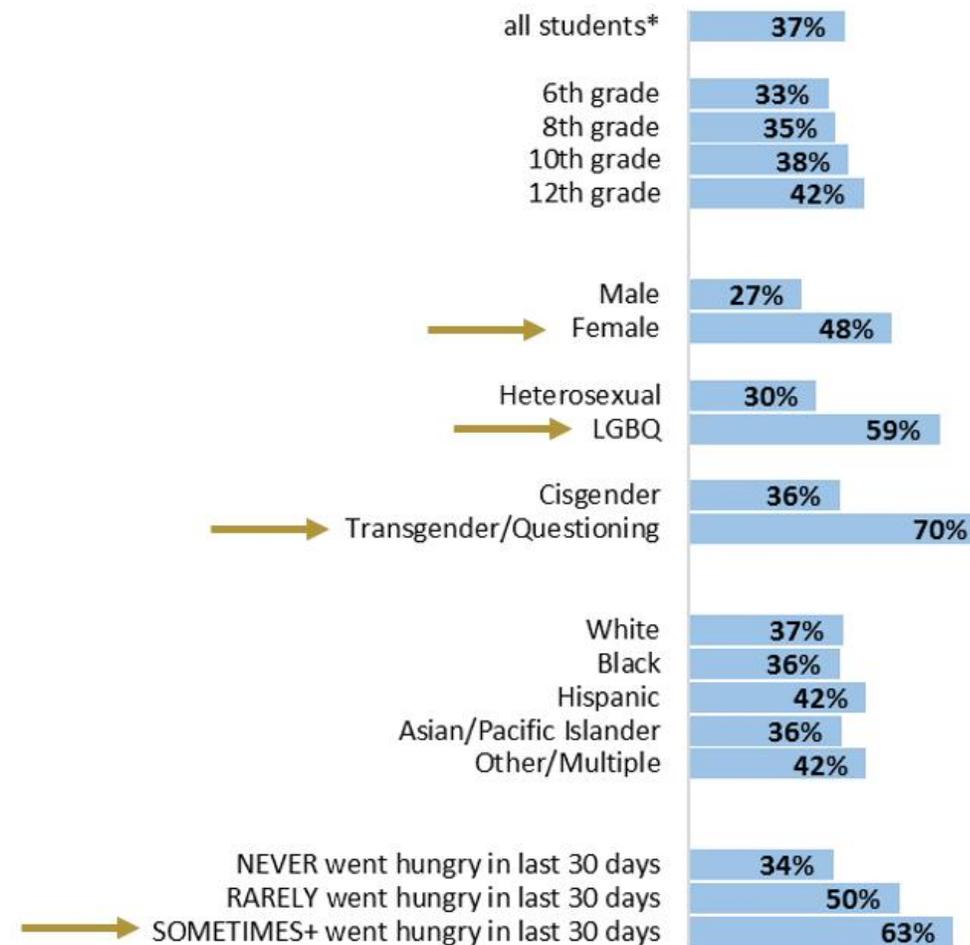
Mental Health

Percent of High School students with a recent mental health need.



Source: Insight Region analysis of data from Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions, 2022, obtained through FOIA request

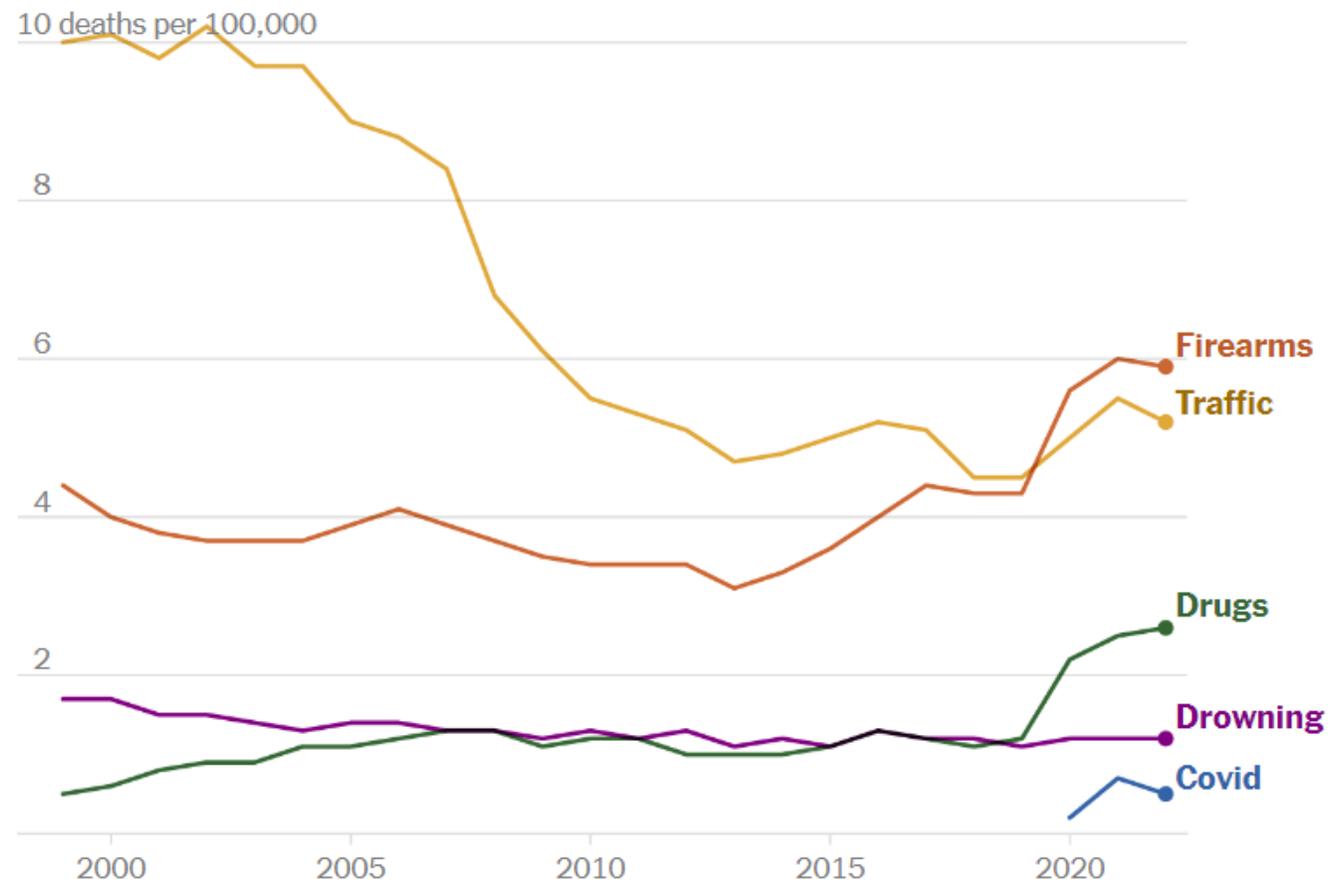
Demographics of students who reported a recent mental health need



Source: Insight Region analysis of Fairfax County Youth Survey, 2021

Leading Causes of Death for Children

Causes of death for children



Note: The chart shows the mortality rate for children ages one through 19 • Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER database • By The New York Times



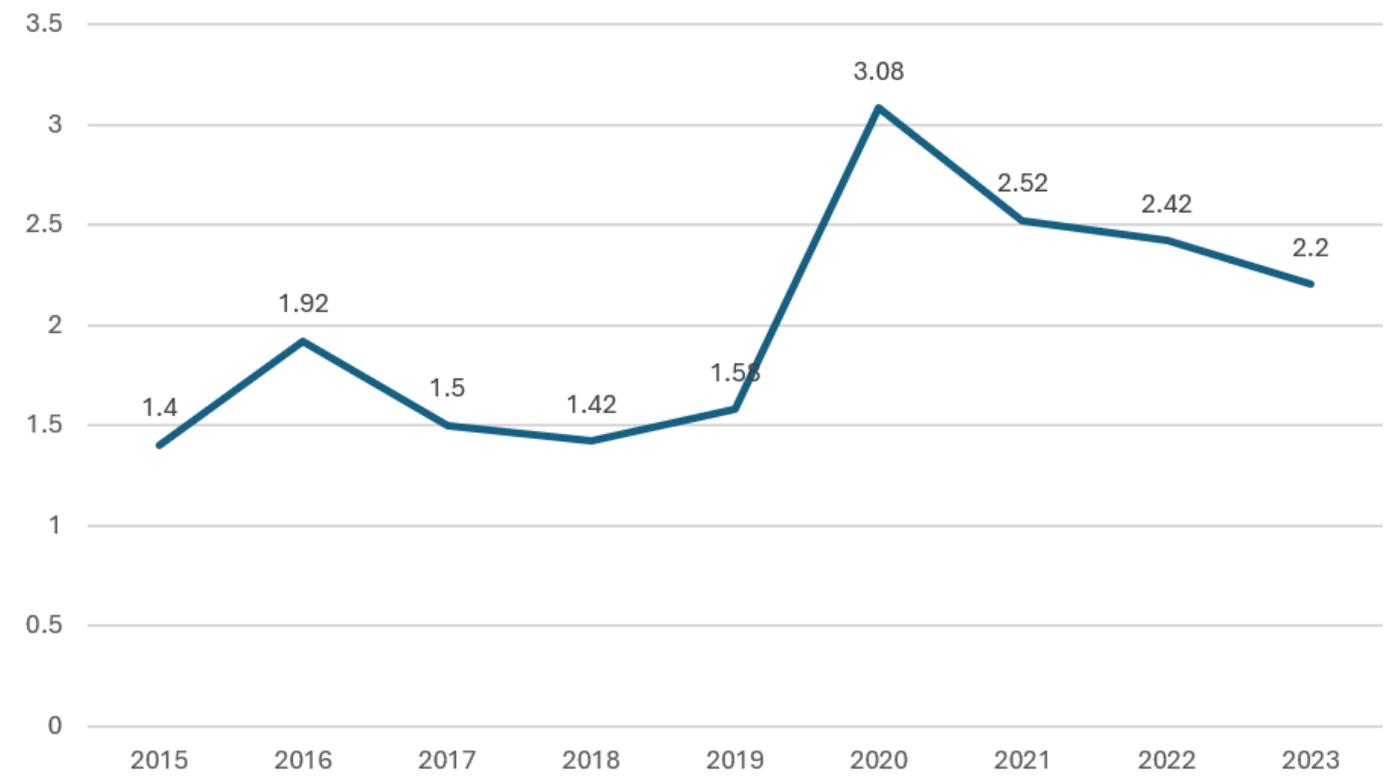
Firearm Injury Trends

Firearm injury has not returned to pre-pandemic lows.

Northern Virginia saw an increase in firearm injury from 2019 to 2021.

Still, rates of firearm injury in NOVA are less than half the rate in the Commonwealth

Northern Virginia: Average annual rate of firearm injury per 10,000 ED visits, 2015-2023



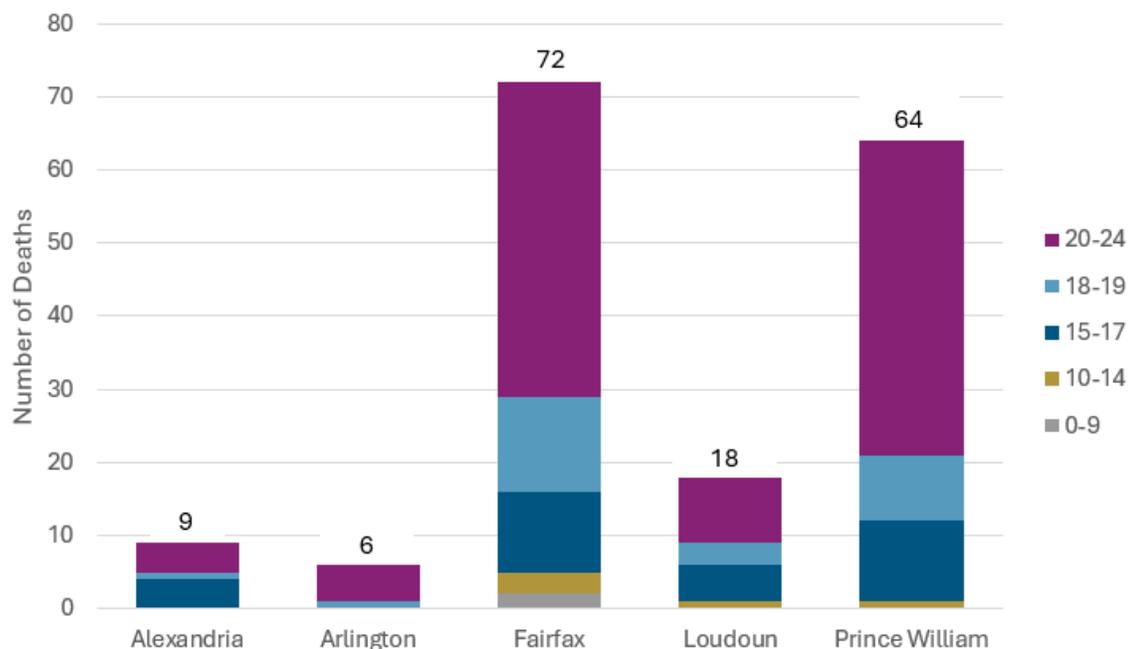
Source: Insight Region analysis of VDH Public Use Data, Rate of Firearm Injuries per 10k ED visits, 2015-2023

Firearm Deaths

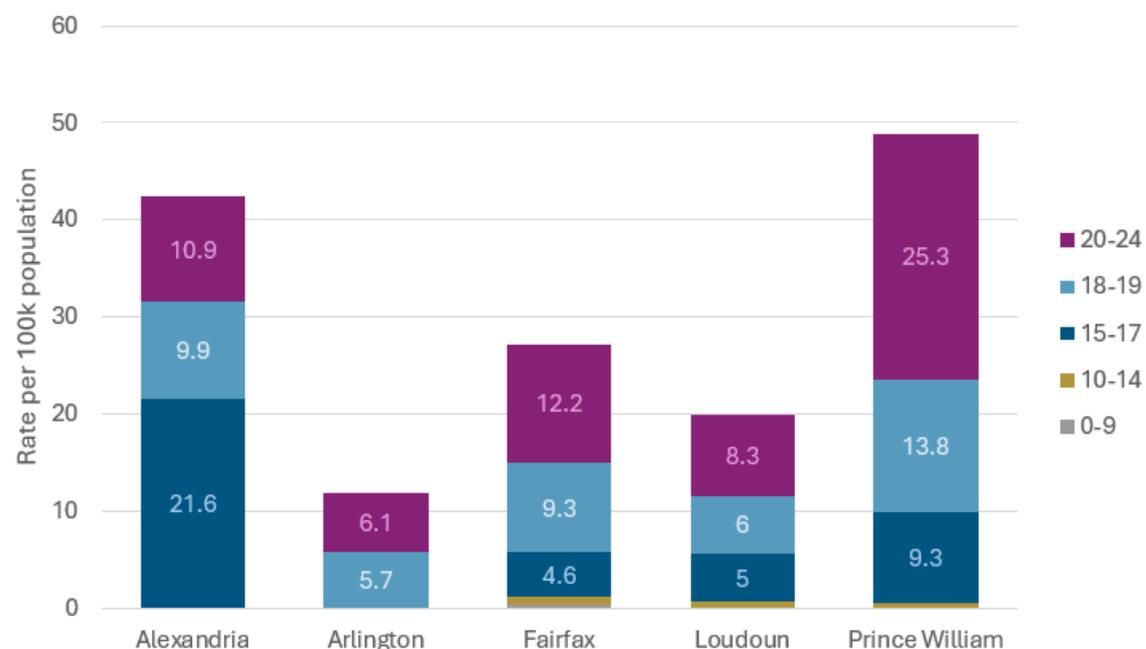
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170 Youth Firearm Deaths in Northern Virginia, 2020-2023

Total youth firearm deaths in Northern Virginia, 2020-2023



Rate of youth firearm deaths per 100k in Northern Virginia, 2020-2023

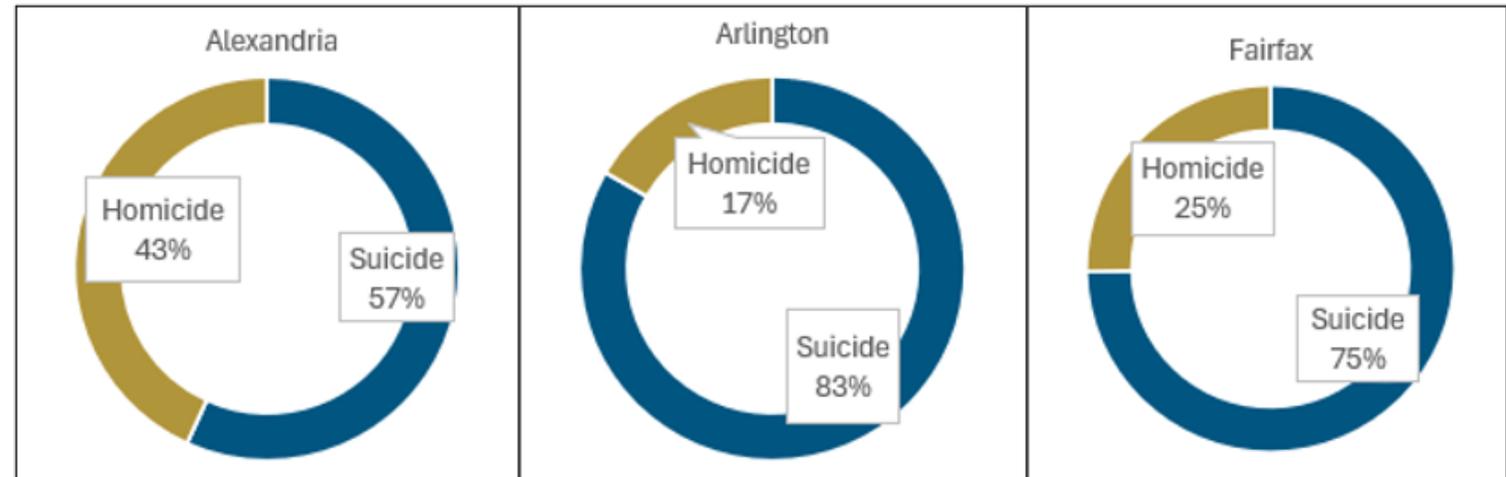


Source: Insight Region analysis of VDH Public Use Data, Firearm Deaths by District and Age

Source: Insight Region analysis of VDH Public Use Data, Firearm Deaths by District and Age

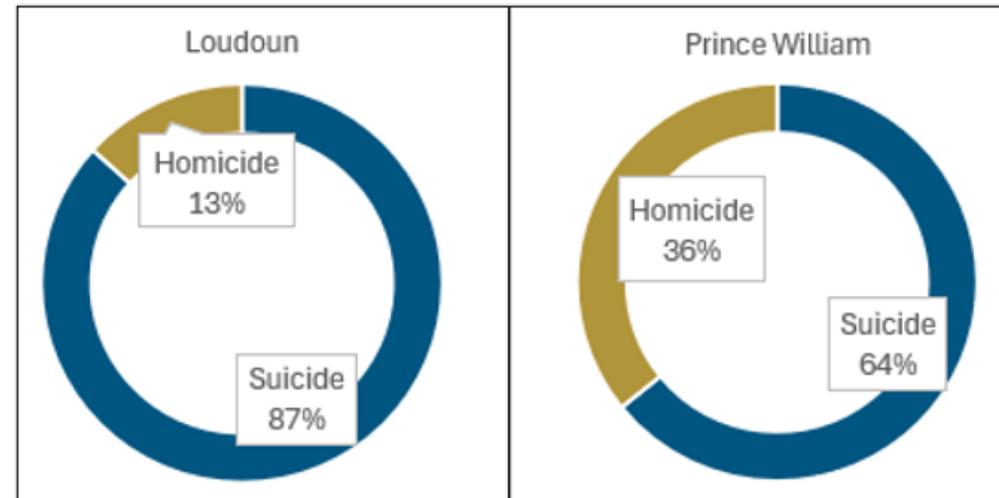
Firearm Deaths

Firearm deaths per 100k population in Northern Virginia, by intent, 2020-2023



Most firearm deaths in all jurisdictions of Northern Virginia are **suicides**, not homicides.

Firearm suicide deaths are 4 times higher among males than females.



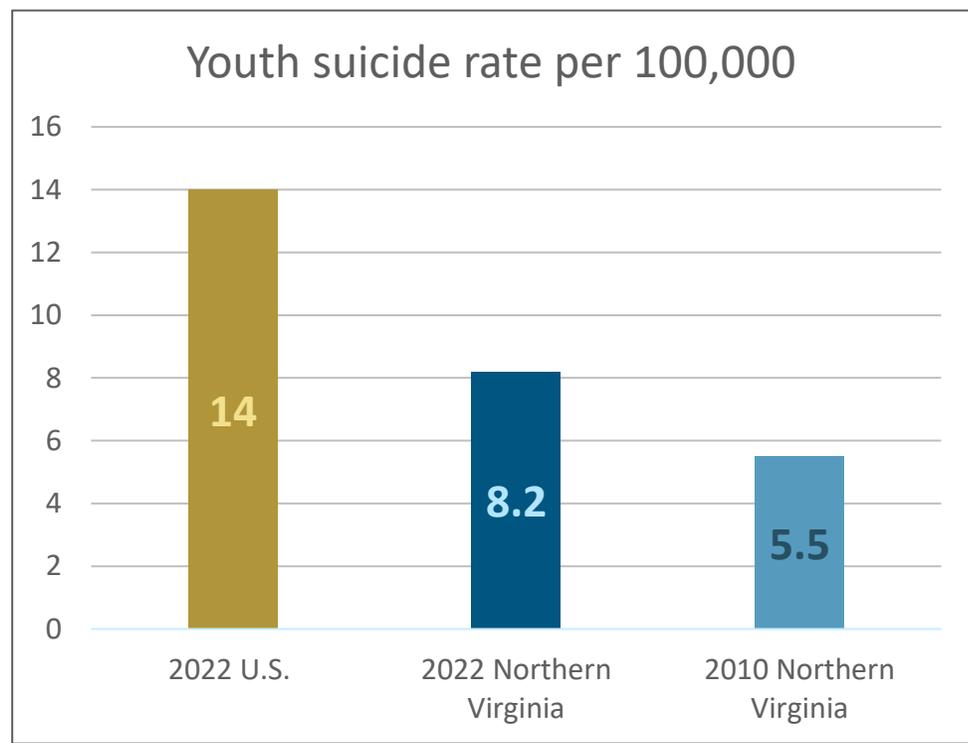


Suicide

988
SUICIDAL
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

If you or someone you know
needs support now,
CALL OR TEXT: 988
CHAT: 988lifeline.org

Talk with us.





Substance Use

Northern Virginia

In 2023, there were 63 drug overdose deaths among 0- to 24-year-olds in 2023.

Youth drug overdose deaths in Northern Virginia increased 43% from 2022.

The problem is skewing younger

Virginia

In 2022, ***seven Virginians died of a drug overdose every day***

79% of overdose deaths involve fentanyl

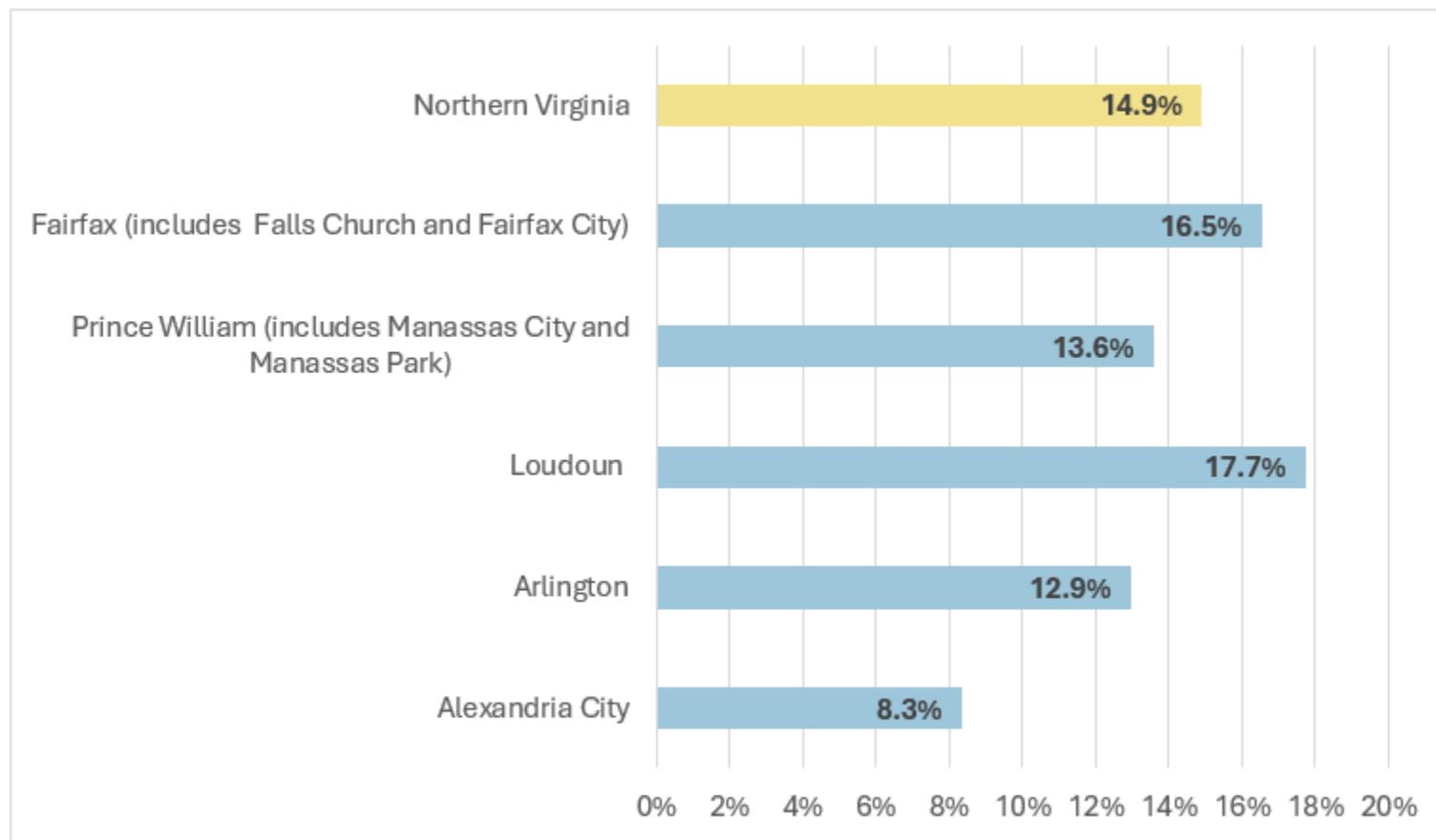


Opioids and Fentanyl

From 2018 to 2023 **15%** of all overdose deaths in Northern Virginia were youth.

That is **255 youth overdose deaths** over 5 years.

Percent of overdose deaths under 25, by jurisdiction (2018-2023)

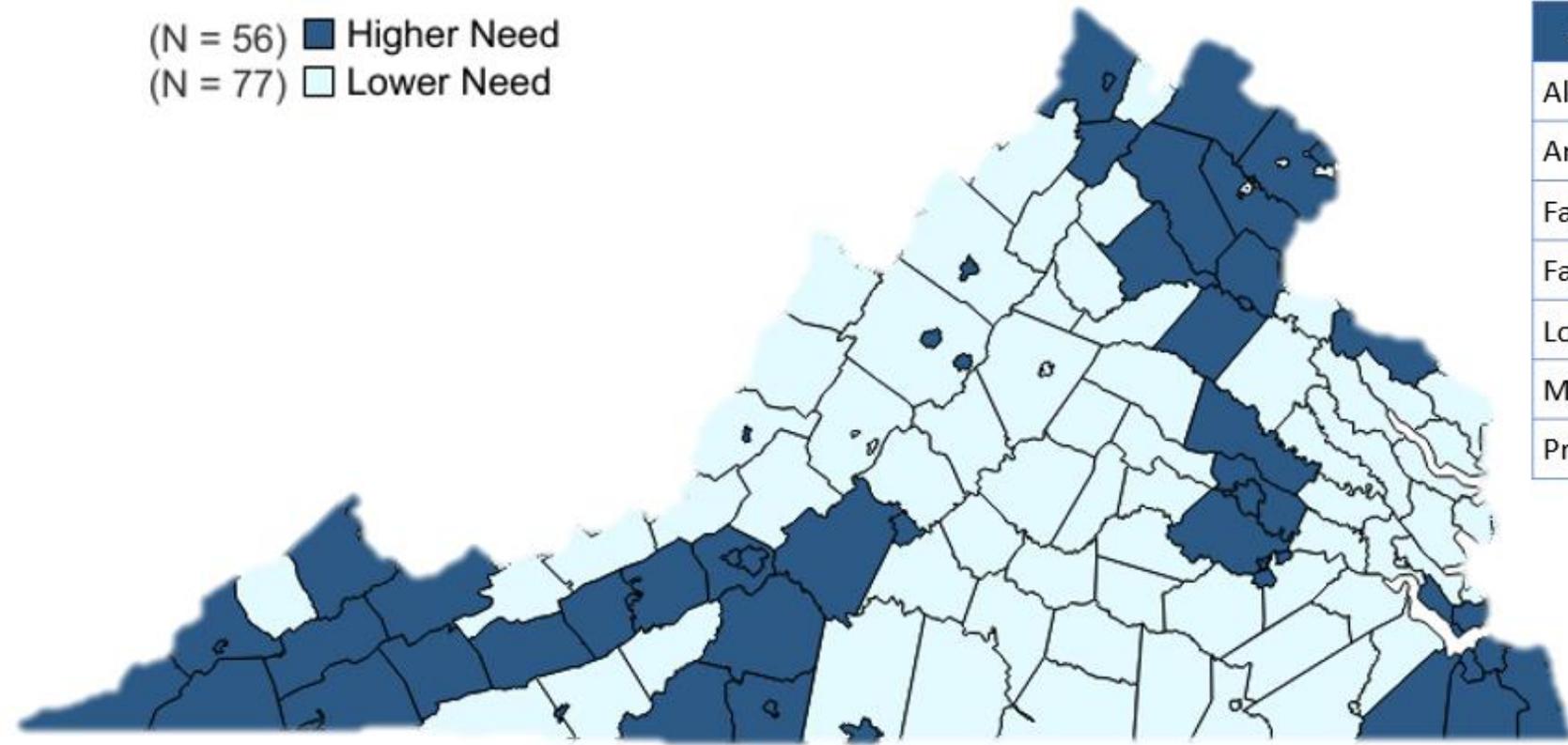


Source: Insight Region analysis of Virginia Department of Health (VDH) special data request.



Substance Use: Mapping Needs

(N = 56) ■ Higher Need
(N = 77) □ Lower Need



Jurisdiction	Score
Alexandria City	7
Arlington	11
Fairfax County	10
Fairfax City	3
Loudoun	10
Manassas	5
Prince William	11

The assessment score for each jurisdiction is compared to the state score of nine (9). Jurisdictions with scores of ten (10) or more are considered higher need for drug overdose-related outcomes and substance use.

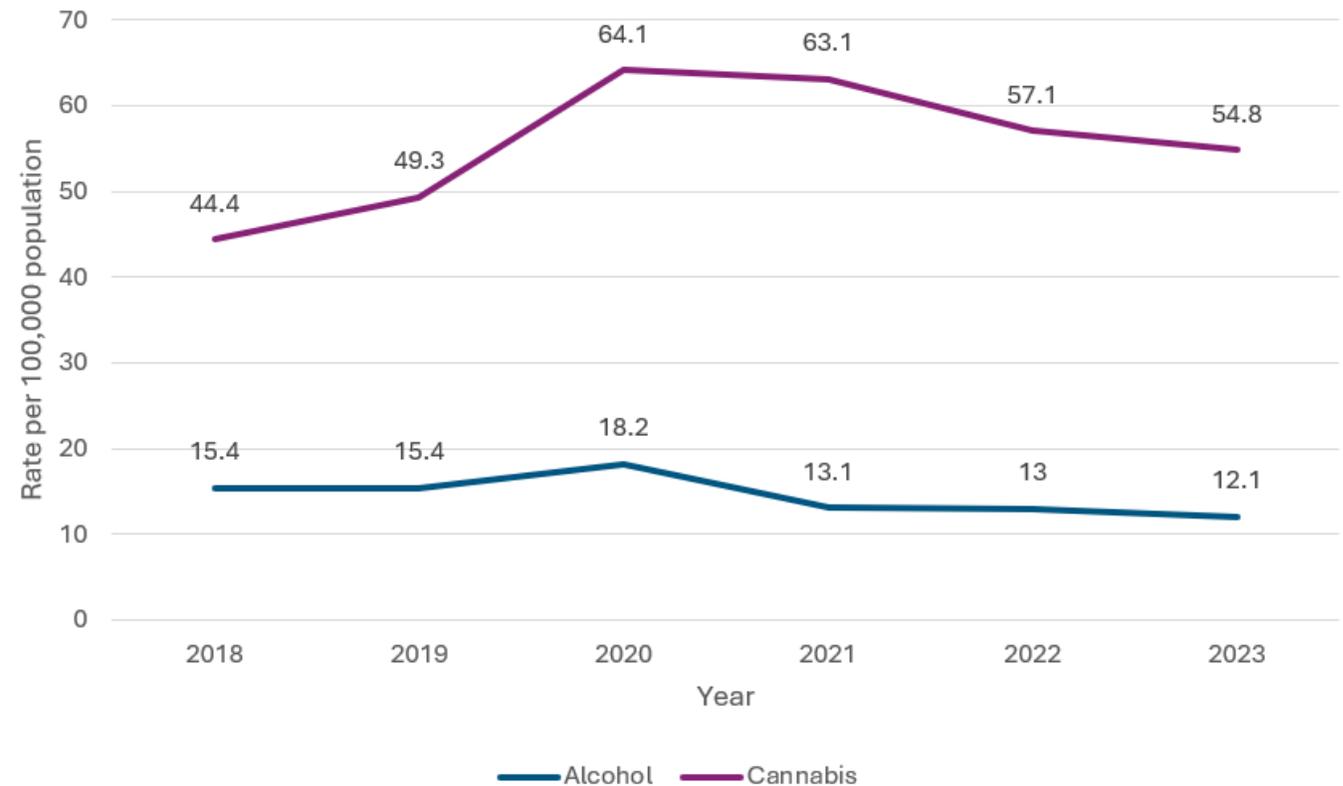
Alcohol and Cannabis

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The proportion of both U.S. and Virginia youth meeting the criteria for ***Alcohol Use Disorder*** nearly ***doubled*** from 2018 to 2020.

Among youth aged 0-19, ***cannabis related hospitalizations are nearly three times as high*** as alcohol-related hospitalizations

Trends in Rate of Alcohol and Cannabis-related Hospitalizations among Youth aged 0-19



Source: Insight Region analysis of Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Office of Family Health Services, Injury and Violence Epidemiology Team, Special Data Request, May 2024.

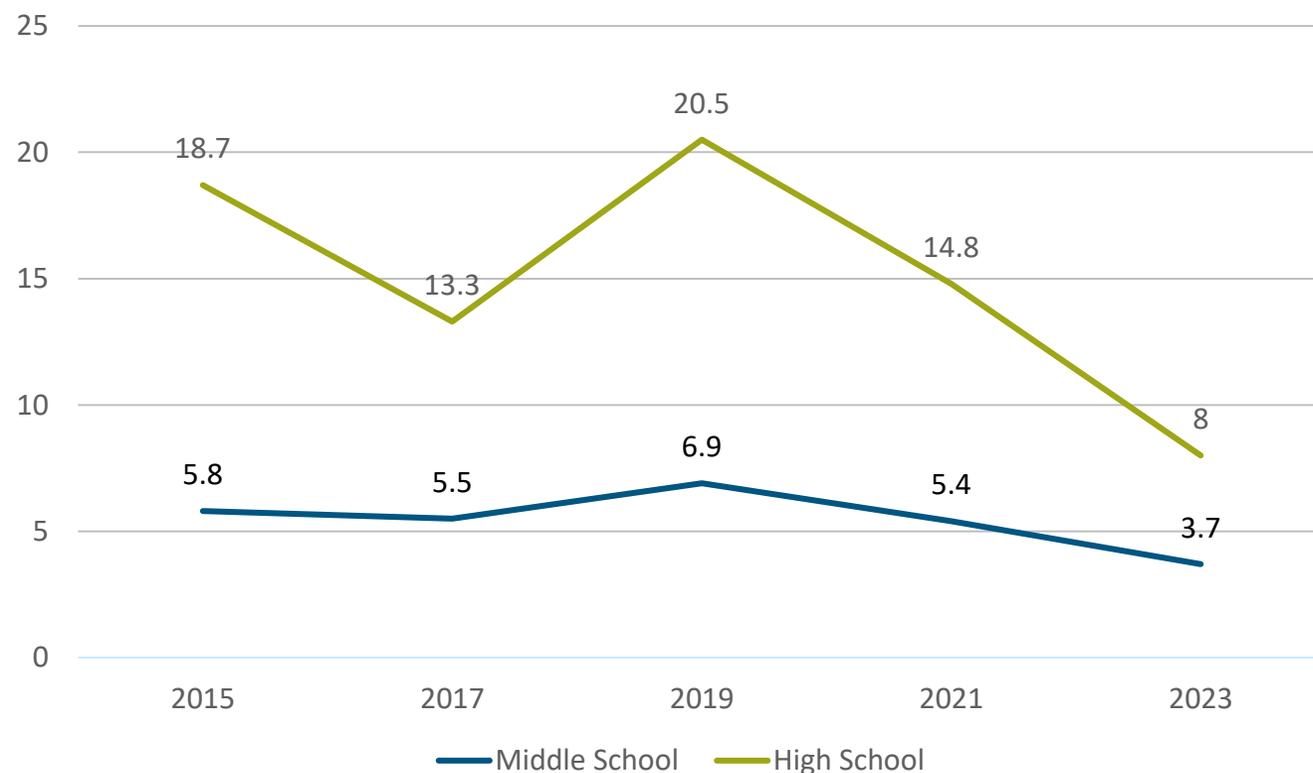


Tobacco and tobacco-related products

Significant declines in both High School and Middle School students' smoking and vaping.

The latest product from the tobacco industry is **Zyn**, a **tobacco-free nicotine product**, sold in flavors.

Percentage who smoked cigarettes or used electronic vapor products at least one day in the last 30 days



How is the Health and Safety of NOVA Youth?

Safety

- **Nearly 30% of Middle Schoolers feel unsafe**
- Feeling unsafe has **DOUBLED** over the past decade
- **Hispanic/Latino youth** report feeling unsafe more than other groups

Bullying

- In Middle Schools, bullying in person decreased 18%, but **electronic bullying increased about 30%**.
- In High Schools, bullying in person decreased 22% and electronic bullying decreased 18%

Mental Health

- **37%** of HS students had a recent, clinical Mental Health need
- Greater needs reported among students who are food insecure, female or LGBTQ+

Leading Cause of Death

- Firearms have become the leading cause of death for children
- In NOVA, firearm injury has **NOT** returned to pre-pandemic lows.
- There were **170 youth firearm deaths 2020-2023**

How is the Health and Safety of NOVA Youth?

Opioids

- **15%** of overdose deaths are of youth under age 25
- Youth overdoses are highest in Loudoun and Fairfax counties

Alcohol and Cannabis

- Cannabis-related hospitalizations were **3x as high** as alcohol-related hospitalizations

Tobacco

- **25%** of youth believe that tobacco-related products like vape and e-cigarettes are not harmful.



Questions or Comments?

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Next Insight Region Deep Dive: Health and Safety

Monday, April 7, 2025

Building on the Shape of the Region Event, this session will re-cap some of the event discussion and propose ideas for moving forward as a community to improve the Health and Safety of NOVA youth.



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2025
shape...>
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CONFERENCE

Our Children

Creating Safe, Supportive Futures for Northern Virginia's Youth

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 | Hybrid Event

7:30 am: Breakfast & Registration (in-person)

8:30 - 11:30 am: Conference Program (hybrid)

Valo Park Auditorium | McLean, VA

Presenting Partners:



Speakers:



**Rawle Andrews
Jr., Esq.**
American Psychiatric
Association Foundation



**Denise Bellows,
PhD**
Community Foundation
for Northern Virginia



**Sage Bolte, PhD,
LCSW, CST,
FAOSW**
Inova Health
Foundation



**Sandy Chung, MD,
FAAP, FACHE**
Virginia Mental Health
Access Program



**Rachael Deane,
JD**
VOICES for Virginia's
Children



**Holly C. Matto,
PhD, LCSW-C**
George Mason University's
College of Public Health



**Michelle Reid,
PhD**
Fairfax County Public
Schools



**Master Police
Officer Thomas J.
Rodriquez**
Manassas City Police Department



**Mark Kennedy
Shriver**
Don Bosco Cristo Rey
High School &
Save the Children Action
Network



**Gregory
Washington, PhD**
George Mason University



Drew Wilder
NBC4 Northern
Virginia Reporter