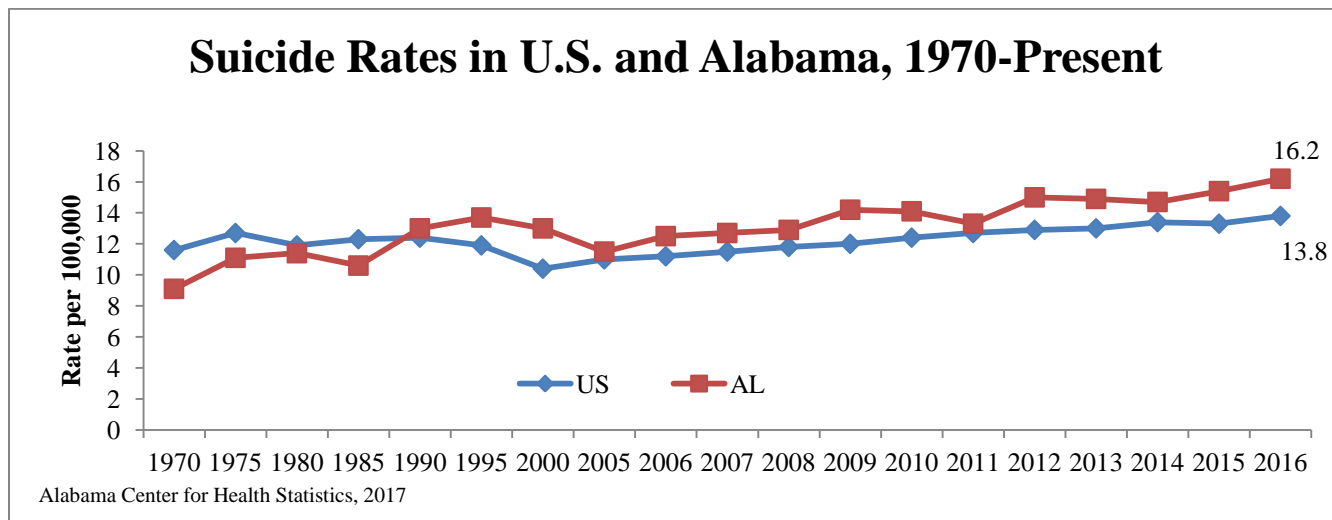
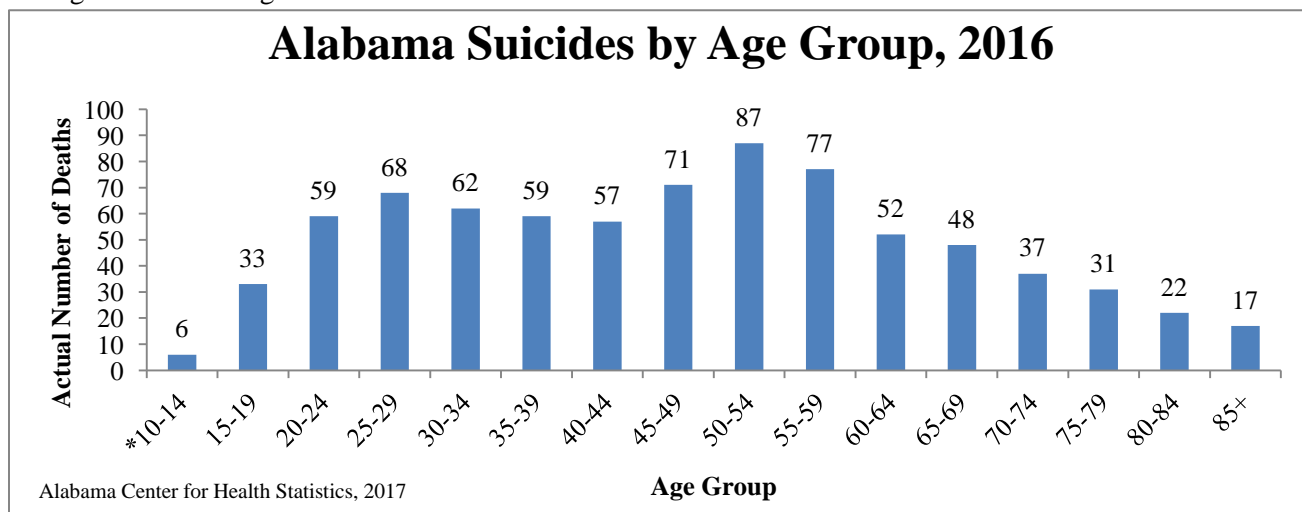


# Alabama Suicide Fact Sheet

Nationally, suicide is the **10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death** and the **2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death** for youth and young adults between the ages of 10-24 years. A person dies by suicide every 12 minutes in the United States. Every day, over 120 Americans take their own lives. There are over one million annual attempts in the United States, which translates to one attempt every 31 seconds. For each suicide, it is estimated that at least 6 other people are intimately affected.

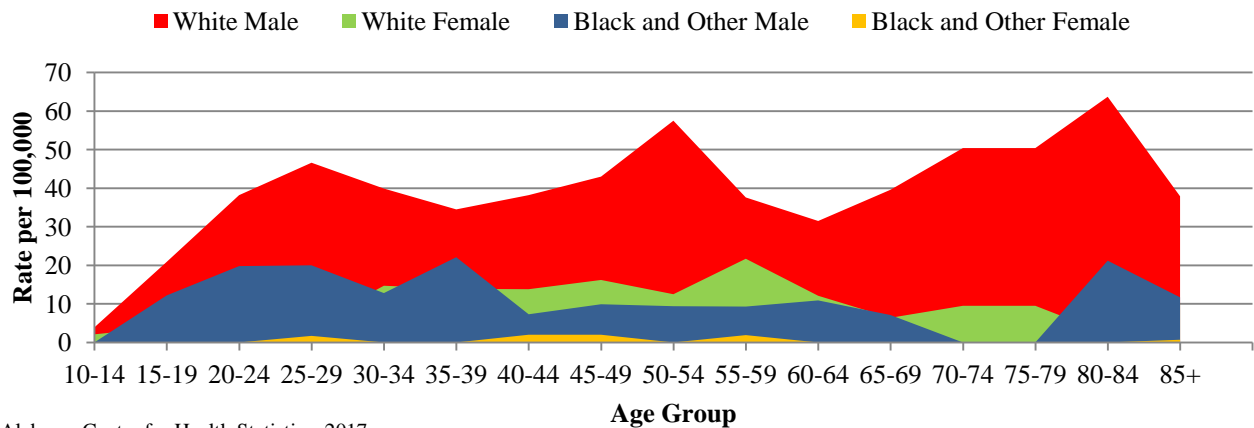


The 2016 suicide rate in Alabama was 16.2 per 100,000 population. Alabama has shown a pattern of higher rates than the U.S. national average since 1990, including the most recently available national rate of 13.8 (2015). It was the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Alabama with **786 citizens lost to suicide** in 2016, as compared to **543 deaths due to homicide**. Ninety-eight youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24 died by suicide in 2016 with 59 of those deaths in young people ages 20-24. Suicide rates are highest among the White, non-Hispanic population, particularly males. Of the 786 suicides in Alabama, 712 were completed among the White, non-Hispanic population. It is the **sixth leading cause of death among White males**. The number of suicides among older adults is low due to death from other causes. However, suicide rates are relatively high particularly among White males age 85 and over.



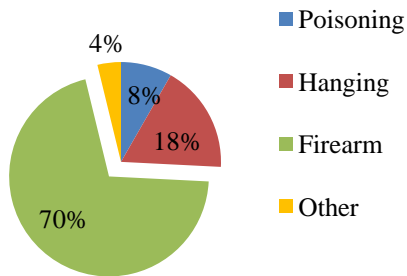
\*The state of Alabama abides by the mandate of the World Health Organization which states that any death of a child under the age of 10 cannot be declared a suicide.

## 2016 Alabama Suicide Rates by Age, Race, and Sex



### 2016 Alabama Suicide by Method

**70%**  
of suicides in  
Alabama are  
by firearms



Alabama has a higher percentage of suicides by firearms (70%) than the U.S. average of 50%. This is true for both women (65%) and men (71%). The second most common method is by hanging or suffocation (18%). Suicide by poison (8%) is mostly by use of medication.

### Myths About Suicide:

- No one can stop a suicide.  
**Fact:** *If a young person gets the help they need, they are less likely to be suicidal again.*
- Confronting a person about suicide will only make them angry and increase the risk of suicide.  
**Fact:** *Asking about suicide lowers anxiety, opens up communication, and reduces risk of impulsive acts.*
- Suicidal people keep their plans to themselves.  
**Fact:** *Most suicidal people communicate their intent at some point near their attempt.*
- Those who talk about suicide don't do it.  
**Fact:** *People who talk about suicide may try or even complete it.*
- Once a person decides to complete suicide, there is nothing anyone can do to stop them.  
**Fact:** *Suicide is the most preventable kind of death.*
- Most suicides happen during the holidays.  
**Fact:** *There are seasonal variations in suicide rates.*

### Risk Factors:

- Previous suicide attempt
- Current talk of suicide or making a plan
- Strong wish to die or preoccupied with death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Depression
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Recent attempt by friend or family member
- Mental Illness
- Social Isolation

### Protective Factors:

- Network of family or friends (social support)
- Religiosity or Spirituality
- Marital Status
- Reduced access to lethal means

### How Can I Help?

- Ask "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- Listen to their problems
- Stay with them until they get help or are in a safe place
- Lock up firearms and prescription drugs
- Do **not** tell them everything is going to be okay
- Do **not** promise to keep it a secret
- Let them know help is available

### For more information:

Alabama Department of Public Health  
[www.alabamapublichealth.gov/suicide](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/suicide)  
 Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resource Coalition  
[www.asparc.org](http://www.asparc.org)  
 American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicideology.org](http://www.suicideology.org)  
 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

### **TOLLFREE HOTLINE NUMBER**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
**1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)**

Updated by Danita Crear, DrPH  
 Alabama Department of Public Health  
 January 4, 2018