



Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2021

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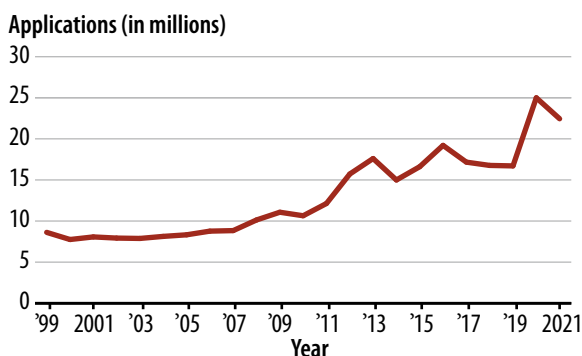
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In 2021, about 22.4 million applications for firearm transfers and permits were subject to background checks under the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act) (figure 1). This was a 10% decrease from about 25.0 million applications in 2020. About 371,000 applications were denied during the year for a denial rate of 1.7% (table 1).

Findings in this report are based on the Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). FIST collects information on firearm applications, denials, and reasons for denial from state and local checking agencies and combines it with data from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Section. FIST also collects data on denials that the FBI referred to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) Denial Enforcement and NICS Intelligence (DENI) Branch for investigation and possible prosecution.

FIGURE 1

Estimated number of applications for firearm transfers and permits since the first full year of the Brady Act's permanent provisions, 1999–2021



Note: The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) began operations in 1998. From February 28, 1994 to November 29, 1998, state and local checking agencies conducted background checks on applicants, mainly on handgun transfers. See *Presale Handgun Checks, the Brady Interim Period, 1994–98* (NCJ 175034, BJS, June 1999). The law's permanent provisions took effect when NICS began operations on November 30, 1998. Totals for 2011 and 2013 were estimated. See *Methodology*. See table 1 for totals.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 1999–2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Transaction Statistics, 1999–2021.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The FBI and state and local checking agencies received about 22.4 million applications for firearm transfers and permits in 2021, a 10% decrease from 25.0 million in 2020.
- About 371,000 (1.7%) applications for firearm transfers and permits were denied in 2021.
- From 1994, when the Brady Act became effective, to 2021, over 314.1 million applications were subject to background checks and about 4.8 million (1.5%) applications were denied.
- The FBI received more than 11.1 million applications in 2021 and denied about 154,000 (1.4%), while state and local checking agencies received more than 11.3 million applications and denied about 217,000 (1.9%).
- In 2021, state checking agencies denied applications for 4.4% of purchase permits, 1.7% of instant checks, 1.6% of exempt carry permits, and 0.9% of other approvals.

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HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

- Local checking agencies denied applications for 5.0% of purchase permits, 1.6% of exempt carry permits, and 1.1% of other approvals in 2021.
- A felony conviction, indictment, charge, or arrest in the applicant's records prompted over 156,000 denials (46%) in 2021.
- The number of firearm transfer and permit applications increased by 160% from 1999 to 2021, while the number of denials increased by 82%.
- ATF field offices investigated 15,000 denials referred by the FBI in 2021.
- The number of prohibited-person records available for background checks in the NICS Indices database increased by 9% in 2021.

Terms and definitions

Application—Information submitted to a checking agency about a prospective firearm purchaser to determine whether the individual is disqualified from receiving a firearm or obtaining a permit to receive a firearm under state or federal law. A prospective firearm purchaser or a firearm seller may submit the information to a checking agency.

Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act)—An act passed by the U.S. Congress that mandated federal background checks on prospective firearm purchases and established the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The Brady Act took effect on February 28, 1994. For more information, see *Background Check Laws and Procedures*.

Checking agency—The FBI or a state or local governmental agency that conducts background checks in the NICS or state records. Checking agencies are typically law enforcement agencies.

Denial—A decision by a checking agency to prohibit an applicant from receiving a firearm or a state permit to receive a firearm because a disqualifying factor was found during the background check.

Federal firearms licensee (FFL)—A firearm seller, also known as a federally licensed firearms dealer, that is licensed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to buy, sell, and transfer firearms. All entities that regularly engage in firearms sales must be FFLs. They must also enroll in NICS if they reside in states where FFLs contact the FBI, instead of state points of contact (POCs), to request NICS checks.

Firearm—Any weapon that is designed or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.

Handgun—A firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired using a single hand, such as a pistol or revolver.

Long gun—A firearm that has a barrel length of about 30 inches to improve accuracy and range, commonly has a shoulder butt, and is designed to be fired with two hands, such as a rifle or shotgun.

National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)—A national system administered by the FBI that checks available federal, state, local, and tribal records to determine whether prospective firearm purchasers are disqualified from receiving firearms.

Private transfer—A firearm transfer between two persons who are not FFLs.

State permit or check types: States use four methods to approve a prospective purchaser to receive a firearm. A state may use one or more of these methods depending on the type of firearm being transferred and relevant state law.

Exempt carry permit—A permit issued by a state or local checking agency after a successful NICS check that exempts the holder (for up to 5 years under an ATF regulation or state law) from a new background check when presented to a seller (an FFL or, in some states, a non-FFL seller) for a firearm transfer.

Instant check—A background check system that requires a seller to transmit a prospective purchaser's information to a checking agency by telephone or computer and the agency to respond immediately or as soon as possible.

Other approval—A background check system that requires the seller to transmit the prospective purchaser's information to a state or local checking agency by telephone or other means and the agency to respond within an established time limit.

Purchase permit—A government-issued document (such as a permit, a license, or an identification card) that is issued by a state or local checking agency after a background check and must be presented to a seller for a firearm transfer.

State point of contact (POC)—An agency designated by state law to access NICS for checks on applications originating in its state.

Transaction—An inquiry to NICS about a prospective firearm purchaser.

Transfer—The physical change in possession of a firearm from one person to another, whereas a purchase is the exchange of money for a firearm.

There were about 22.4 million applications for firearm transfers and permits and about 371,000 denials in 2021

State and local checking agencies and the FBI received about 22.4 million applications for firearm transfers and permits in 2021, marking a 10% decrease from the 25.0 million applications received in 2020 (**table 1**). Checking agencies denied about 371,000 applications in 2021, for a denial rate of 1.7%. From the time the Brady Act became effective in 1994 to 2021, over 314.1 million applications were subject to background checks and nearly 4.8 million applications (1.5%) were denied.

TABLE 1

Estimated number of firearm applications and denials since the effective date of the Brady Act, 1994–2021

	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
Total	314,126,000	4,787,000	1.5%
Brady interim period^a			
1994–1998	12,740,000	312,000	2.4%
Permanent Brady^b	301,386,000	4,475,000	1.5%
1998 ^c	893,000	20,000	2.2
1999	8,621,000	204,000	2.4
2000	7,753,000	153,000	2.0
2001	8,068,000	150,000	1.9
2002	7,926,000	136,000	1.7
2003	7,883,000	126,000	1.6
2004	8,133,000	126,000	1.5
2005	8,324,000	132,000	1.6
2006	8,772,000	135,000	1.5
2007	8,836,000	136,000	1.5
2008	10,131,000	147,000	1.5
2009	11,071,000	150,000	1.4
2010	10,643,000	153,000	1.4
2011 ^d	12,135,000	160,000	1.3
2012	15,718,000	192,000	1.2
2013 ^d	17,602,000	193,000	1.1
2014	14,993,000	193,000	1.3
2015	16,610,000	226,000	1.4
2016	19,203,000	265,000	1.4
2017	17,163,000	237,000	1.4
2018	16,765,000	230,000	1.4
2019	16,706,000	243,000	1.5
2020	24,994,000	398,000	1.6
2021	22,440,000	371,000	1.7

Note: Totals are rounded to the nearest 1,000. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. For information on the FIST sample design and checking agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*.

^aFrom February 28, 1994 to November 29, 1998, background checks on applicants were conducted by state and local checking agencies, mainly on handgun transfers. See *Presale Handgun Checks, the Brady Interim Period, 1994–98* (NCJ 175034, BJS, June 1999).

^bThe National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) began operations in 1998. Under that system, checks on handgun and long gun transfers are conducted by the FBI and state and local agencies.

^cIncludes counts from November 30, 1998 to December 31, 1998 that are based on the FBI's 1998–1999 NICS Operations Report and may include multiple transactions for the same application.

^dTotals for 2011 and 2013 were estimated. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 1995–2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Transaction Statistics, 1998–2021.

State and local checking agencies received more than 11.3 million background check applications in 2021, and the FBI received more than 11.1 million

The FBI processed all NICS checks for federal firearms licensees (FFLs) in 31 states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. territories in 2021. It also processed NICS checks on only long gun applications for FFLs in six other states. Of the more than 11.1 million applications for firearm transfers checked by the FBI in 2021, about 154,000 (1.4%) were denied ([table 2](#)).

State and local checking agencies conducted background checks for over 11.3 million transfer and permit applications in 2021 and denied about 217,000 (1.9%). State agencies accounted for 9.8 million background checks and 180,000 denials (1.8%) and local agencies received over 1.5 million applications and denied about 37,000 (2.5%).

In 2021, state agencies reported almost 6.3 million applications for instant checks, nearly 1.5 million for exempt carry permits, 907,000 for purchase permits, and 1.2 million for other approval checks

In 2021, 13 of the 34 jurisdictions where state-level agencies did background checks (or compiled local agency data on background checks) conducted instant checks. These agencies received about 6.3 million applications for instant checks, the most common type of application, and denied over 105,000 (1.7%) ([table 3](#)).

Sixteen state agencies conducted background checks or compiled local data for exempt carry permits, the second-most common type of application in 2021. Of the 1.5 million applications received for exempt carry permits, over 24,000 were denied (1.6%).

State agencies in seven states and the District of Columbia conducted background checks or compiled local data for purchase permits in 2021. Of the 907,000 applications reported, 4.4% (over 40,000) were denied.

Checking agencies in California, Maryland, and Rhode Island used other approval systems to process applications for firearm transfers. Of the nearly 1.2 million other approval firearm transfer applications reported in 2021 in these three states, about 10,000 (0.9%) were denied.

TABLE 2
Firearm applications and denials, by type of checking agency and type of permit or check, 1999–2021

Type of checking agency and type of permit/check	2021				1999–2021		
	States ^a	Applications	Denials	Percent denied	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
National total (FIST and FBI)		22,439,932	370,718	1.7%	301,385,689	4,474,755	1.5%
FBI total ^b	43	11,106,931	153,565	1.4%	160,707,478	2,039,507	1.3%
State and local total (FIST) ^c	43	11,333,001	217,153	1.9%	140,678,211	2,435,248	1.7%
State checking agencies		9,829,613	179,822	1.8%	119,856,675	1,983,237	1.7%
Instant check	13	6,262,879	105,201	1.7	78,409,505	1,363,380	1.7
Exempt carry permit	16	1,493,288	24,242	1.6	14,404,824	185,601	1.3
Purchase permit	8	906,967	40,344	4.4	10,656,610	296,184	2.8
Other approval	3	1,166,479	10,035	0.9	16,385,737	138,073	0.8
Local checking agencies ^d		1,503,388	37,331	2.5%	20,821,536	452,010	2.2%
Exempt carry permit	8	721,048	11,241	1.6	8,914,645	132,138	1.5
Purchase permit	5	453,661	22,581	5.0	8,885,614	291,758	3.3
Other approval	1	328,679	3,509	1.1	3,021,278	28,116	0.9

Note: See *Terms and definitions* for an explanation of permit and check types. Details may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 2 for standard errors for local checking agencies.

^aA state or equivalent jurisdiction may be included in more than one category.

^bThese numbers come from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) section. Includes the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories, for which the FBI processed all background checks in the NICS.

^cThese estimates are collected through BJS's Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program. Includes NICS checks that state and local checking agencies conducted. The District of Columbia is included in the number of states under state and local total and state purchase permit.

^dTotals were estimated because local agencies were sampled. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Transaction Statistics, 1999–2021.

TABLE 3**Firearm applications and denials reported by state agencies, by type of permit or check and jurisdiction, 2021**

Type of permit/check and jurisdiction	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
All permit/check types and jurisdictions	9,829,613	179,822	1.8%
Instant check	6,262,879	105,201	1.7%
Colorado	452,777	9,717	2.1
Connecticut	169,766	7	0.0
Florida	1,316,662	15,969	1.2
Illinois	494,798	3,337	0.7
Nevada	139,251	2,420	1.7
New Hampshire	78,216	676	0.9
New Jersey	216,280	421	0.2
Oregon	338,330	1,129	0.3
Pennsylvania	1,402,602	24,061	1.7
Tennessee	687,350	34,436	5.0
Utah	152,890	1,766	1.2
Virginia	613,311	8,761	1.4
Wisconsin	200,646	2,501	1.2
Exempt carry permit	1,493,288	24,242	1.6%
Alaska	2,120	23	1.1
Arizona	84,662	1,450	1.7
Arkansas	54,479	2,466	4.5
Kansas	26,737	4	0.0
Kentucky	12,903	419	3.2
Louisiana	40,789	1,438	3.5
Michigan ^a	219,156	4,635	2.1
Minnesota ^{a,b}	110,078	1,627	1.5
Mississippi	29,285	9	0.0
Nebraska	22,788	378	1.7
North Dakota	8,400	240	2.9
Ohio ^a	205,777	2,668	1.3
South Carolina	162,746	4,020	2.5
Texas	358,207	3,277	0.9
Utah	147,348	1,544	1.0
Wyoming	7,813	44	0.6
Purchase Permit	906,967	40,344	4.4%
Connecticut	47,231	57	0.1
District of Columbia	7,152	380	5.3
Hawaii ^a	23,299	599	2.6
Illinois	334,784	30,793	9.2
Maryland	45,549	1,997	4.4
Massachusetts ^a	96,862	2,540	2.6
Michigan ^a	30,300	1,103	3.6
New Jersey ^a	321,790	2,875	0.9
Other approval	1,166,479	10,035	0.9%
California	1,028,235	9,052	0.9
Maryland	109,139	576	0.5
Rhode Island ^a	29,105	407	1.4

Note: Counts are from state agencies that reported data on firearm transfers or permits from their own background checks, unless otherwise noted. For information on the FIST sample design and agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*.

^aCounts are from a state agency that compiled data on firearm transfers or permits from local checking agencies in the jurisdiction.

^bThe state's concealed carry permits are exempt only under state law.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

Local checking agencies processed more than 1.5 million firearm applications and over 37,000 denials for exempt carry permits, purchase permits, and other approval checks in 2021

Local checking agencies in 12 states processed applications and denials, issued permits, or conducted background checks for various types of firearm transfers or permits in 2021. These agencies did not report

counts to a state-level entity.¹ Nearly 454,000 purchase permit applications were reported, with about 22,600 denials (5.0%) (table 4). Of 721,000 exempt carry permit applications, about 11,200 were denied (1.6%). Local checking agencies received about 329,000 applications for other approval types and denied about 3,500 (1.1%).

¹In Minnesota, Nebraska, and Nevada, both state and local agencies reported various types of firearm transfers or permits.

TABLE 4
Firearm applications and denials reported by local agencies, by type of permit or check and size of population served, 2021

Type of permit/check and population served	Number of local agencies ^a	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
All permit/check types and population sizes	~	1,503,388	37,331	2.5%
Purchase permit	705	453,661	22,581	5.0%
9,999 or less	320	27,604	385	1.4
10,000–99,999	317	162,843	8,589	5.3
100,000–199,999	34	65,113	5,880	9.0
200,000 or more	34	198,101	7,726	3.9
Exempt carry permit	596	721,048	11,241	1.6%
9,999 or less	185	28,287	278	1.0
10,000–99,999	335	267,777	3,761	1.4
100,000–199,999	45	130,074	2,447	1.9
200,000 or more	31	294,911	4,755	1.6
Other approval^b	164	328,679	3,509	1.1%
9,999 or less	61	12,757	150	1.2
10,000–99,999	91	164,694	1,502	0.9
100,000–199,999	6	38,125	382	1.0
200,000 or more	6	113,102	1,475	1.3

Note: Totals are from local agencies that reported data on firearm transfers or permits. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. For information on the FIST sample design and agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*. See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

~Not applicable. Agencies may be included in more than one category.

^aSome agencies may be included in more than one permit category. See table 10 for respondent totals.

^bProcessed only by local checking agencies in Washington state.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

Felony convictions, indictments, or arrests accounted for about half (46%) of all denials in 2021

Among agencies that reported reasons for denying firearm transfers or permits, felony convictions were the most common reason for denial, prompting more than one-third (35%) of denials in 2021 (table 5). About 6% of denials were due to being under an indictment or an information and 5% were due to felony arrests without a disposition on record. Felony convictions accounted for almost half (49%) of denials by the FBI, 24% by state checking agencies, and 17% by local checking agencies.

State-law prohibitions were the most common nonfelony reason for denial in 2021 (19%), accounting for 28% of denials by state agencies, 24% by local agencies, and 8% by the FBI. Drug use or addiction and mental health commitments or adjudications each accounted for 7% of denials by all checking agencies. About 6% of denials were due to misdemeanor convictions of domestic violence and 4% were due to fugitive from justice status or warrants for arrest.

TABLE 5

Reasons for denial of applications for firearm transfers and permits, by type of checking agency, 2021

Reason for denial	All checking		FBI ^a		State		Local	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	336,618	100%	153,565	100%	160,795	100%	22,258	100%
Felony reasons	155,975	46.3%	91,251	59.4%	59,236	36.8%	5,488	24.7%
Felony conviction	117,946	35.0	75,723	49.3%	38,376	23.9	3,847	17.3
Under indictment/information ^b	20,849	6.2	15,528	10.1	4,279	2.7	1,042	4.7
Felony arrest with no disposition ^c	17,180	5.1	~	~	16,581	10.3	599	2.7
Nonfelony reasons	180,643	53.7%	62,314	40.6%	101,559	63.2%	16,770	75.3%
State-law prohibition	62,842	18.7	11,766	7.7	45,632	28.4	5,444	24.5
Drug use/addiction	23,223	6.9	15,599	10.2	6,489	4.0	1,135	5.1
Misdemeanor conviction of domestic violence	20,439	6.1	10,500	6.8	7,821	4.9	2,118	9.5
Mental health commitment/adjudication	22,932	6.8	8,484	5.5	13,150	8.2	1,298	5.8
Fugitive from justice/warrant	14,236	4.2	7,299	4.8	6,114	3.8	823	3.7
Protection/restraining order	10,268	3.1	3,863	2.5	5,674	3.5	731	3.3
Illegal/unlawful entry into U.S.	7,780	2.3	4,687	3.1	2,821	1.8	272	1.2
Local-law prohibition ^d	1,529	0.5	~	~	~	~	1,529	6.9
Other prohibitions ^e	17,393	5.2	116	0.1	13,858	8.6	3,419	15.4

Note: Reasons for denial were based on 18 U.S.C. § 922 or state law (see *Background check and permit procedures*). Totals were based on state and local agencies that reported reasons for denial and on information from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Operations Report. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. For more information on the FIST sample design and agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*. See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

~Not applicable.

^aThe FBI began a new classification system in 2008 and reclassified all its denials from 1999 to 2008. FBI counts of denials should not be compared to counts in reports from BJS's *Background Checks for Firearm Transfers* series that were published before 2008.

^bAn information is a formal accusation of a crime. It differs from an indictment in that it is made by a prosecuting attorney rather than a grand jury.

^cFelony arrest with no disposition is a prohibition in certain states but is not a federal prohibition.

^dState and local laws may impose prohibitions in addition to the federal prohibitions. Examples of these include prohibitions based on juvenile offense records, adjudications of delinquency, misdemeanor convictions for an offense other than domestic violence, and mental health orders that do not cause a federal prohibition.

^eInclude juveniles, persons dishonorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces, persons who renounced U.S. citizenship, and other unspecified persons.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Transaction Statistics, 2021.

The number of applications for firearm transfers and permits received by checking agencies increased by 160% from 1999 to 2021

Checking agencies received 160% more applications for firearm transfers and permits in 2021 (22.4 million) than in 1999 (8.6 million), the first full year that NICS was in operation (table 6). The number of people age 18 or older in the 50 states and the District of Columbia increased 25% during that period.² The number of denials increased by 82% from 1999 (204,000) to 2021 (371,000).

From 1999 to 2021, the rate at which applications were denied for a felony conviction, indictment, or arrest declined from 1.7% to 0.8%. About 46% of all denials in 2021 were for a felony reason, down from 73% in 1999. The denial rate for a nonfelony reason, such as a misdemeanor conviction of domestic violence, drug use or addiction, or a mental health commitment or adjudication, was 0.6% in 1999 and 0.9% in 2021. During this period, the share of denials that were due to a nonfelony reason doubled, from 27% to 54%.

²See National Center for Health Statistics [NCHS]. (n.d.). Bridged-race population estimates, United States July 1st resident population by state, county, age, sex, bridged-race, and Hispanic origin. Compiled from 1990–1999 bridged-race intercensal population estimates (released by NCHS on July 26, 2004). Retrieved September 6, 2022, from <https://wonder.cdc.gov/bridged-race-v2020.html>. See U.S. Census Bureau National Population by Characteristics: 2020–2024, Vintage 2023, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-detail.html>.

TABLE 6
Percent change in applications, denials, reasons for denial, and rates of denial, 1999 and 2021

	1999	2021	Percent change ^a
Number of applications	8,621,000	22,440,000	160.3%
Number of denials ^b	204,000	371,000	81.9%
For felony reasons	148,000	172,000	16.2
For nonfelony reasons	56,000	199,000	255.4
Percent of applications denied	2.4%	1.7%	-30.1%
For felony reasons	1.7	0.8	-55.4
For nonfelony reasons	0.6	0.9	36.5
Percent of denials			
For felony reasons ^c	72.5%	46.4%	-36.1%
For nonfelony reasons	27.5	53.6	95.4

Note: Applications are for firearm transfers and permits. Totals are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and may not sum to totals shown in other tables. Estimates are based on data reported by the FBI and by state agencies that reported reasons for denial to the Firearm Inquiry Statistics program. For information on the FIST sample design and agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*. See table 5 for felony and nonfelony reasons for denial.

^aPercent change is calculated using the following formula: $100 \times ((2021 \text{ value}/1999 \text{ value}) - 1)$.

^bThe FBI began a new classification system in 2008 and reclassified all its denials from 1999 to 2008. FBI counts of denials should not be compared to counts in reports from BJS's *Background Checks for Firearm Transfers* series that were published before 2008.

^cSome checking agencies did not report reasons for denial. The percentage of denials for felony reasons is estimated by dividing the reported number of denials for felony reasons by the total number of denials. The total number of felony denials is estimated by multiplying the percentage of denials for felony reasons by the total number of denials.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 1999 and 2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Transaction Statistics, 1999 and 2021.

About 15,000 denials were referred to ATF field divisions for further investigation in 2021

The FBI's NICS Section refers all firearm applications it denies to the ATF's DENI Branch for further screening. The DENI Branch, in turn, refers denials that may merit prosecution (under ATF or U.S. attorney guidelines) to ATF field divisions for further investigation. The DENI Branch referred about 15,000 denials (9% of all FBI denials referred to the ATF) to field divisions in 2021 (table 7).

If the FBI finds a record that prohibits a firearm transfer to an applicant within 3 business days of initiating a NICS check, it issues a standard denial. If the FBI needs more than 3 business days to determine if the applicant

is prohibited from a firearm transfer, the FFL may transfer the firearm to the applicant under the Brady Act (unless state law prohibits such transfers) while awaiting the results of the NICS check. In such instances where a firearm has been transferred but the FBI later finds the transfer should not have occurred, the FBI makes a delayed denial referral to the ATF. In 2021, the DENI Branch referred about 3,700 delayed denials (2% of FBI denials referred to the ATF) and 10,700 standard denials (7% of FBI denials referred to the ATF) to ATF field divisions. A felony conviction (30%) was the most common reason for referring a denial to an ATF field division in 2021, followed by a misdemeanor conviction of domestic violence (17%) and an adjudication of mental illness (15%).

TABLE 7

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigation of denials referred by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021

	Number	Percent
Total FBI denials referred to ATF's DENI Branch	161,469	100%
DENI Branch referrals to ATF field divisions ^a		
Referred to field ^b	14,412	8.9%
Delayed denials ^c	3,672	2.3
Standard denials ^d	10,740	6.7
Not referred to field ^b	146,928	91.0
Canceled ^e	129	0.1
Reasons for referrals to ATF field divisions ^f	15,033	100%
Convicted felon	4,496	29.9
Domestic violence misdemeanor	2,608	17.3
Adjudicated mentally defective	2,227	14.8
Subject to protective order	1,878	12.5
Under felony indictment/information ^g	1,766	11.7
Fugitive from justice	1,016	6.8
Unlawful user of controlled substance	633	4.2
Illegal/unlawful alien	276	1.8
State prohibition	93	0.6
Career armed criminal	21	0.1
Dishonorable discharge	19	0.1
Renounced U.S. citizenship	0	0.0

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. DENI denotes Denial Enforcement and NICS Intelligence.

^aA denial is referred if it is likely to merit prosecution under Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) criteria or U.S. attorney criteria.

^bIncludes an unspecified number of denials that were later overturned.

^cDenials that the FBI issued after a federal firearms licensee (FFL) transferred a firearm to an applicant. An FFL may transfer a firearm to an applicant under an "open transaction" if the FBI needs more than 3 business days to complete a background check in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

^dDenials that the FBI issued within 3 business days of a NICS check because the FBI found a record that prohibits the applicant from a firearm transfer.

^eNICS checks that should not have been conducted and were canceled by the FBI.

^fCounts may not equal delayed denials plus standard denials because denials can be received and referred in different calendar years. A status of "delayed" or "standard" is assigned on the date the ATF receives a denial from the FBI, while a reason for referral is assigned on the date a denial is referred to a field division.

^gAn information is a formal accusation of a crime. It differs from an indictment in that it is made by a prosecuting attorney rather than a grand jury.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Denial Enforcement and NICS Intelligence Branch, Firearm Denial Statistics, 2021.

Background Check Laws and Procedures

Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Act) mandates that anyone attempting to transfer (purchase or receive) firearms from a federal firearms licensee (FFL) must undergo a criminal background check. The Brady Act established the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), administered by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, which contains data on persons who are prohibited by federal and state laws from purchasing or possessing a firearm.

The Brady Act took effect on February 28, 1994, with the implementation of interim provisions that required FFLs to obtain background checks from state and local checking agencies and to wait 5 days before transferring a firearm (unless an approval was transmitted sooner). The 5-day federal waiting period was eliminated on November 30, 1998, when the Brady Act's permanent provisions went into effect with the launch of NICS.

The Brady Act enforces prohibitions previously established by the Gun Control Act (GCA), 18 U.S.C. § 922, which prohibits transfer of a firearm to a person who:

- is under indictment for, or has been convicted of, a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than 1 year
- is a fugitive from justice

- is an unlawful user of, or addicted to, a controlled substance
- has been adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution
- is illegally or unlawfully in the United States or has been admitted to the United States under a nonimmigrant visa
- has been discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions
- has renounced U.S. citizenship
- is subject to a court order that restrains such person from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner or a child
- has been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence
- is younger than age 18 for long guns or age 21 for handguns.

In addition to the prohibitions listed in the GCA, which are the nationwide minimum standards for denying a firearm transfer or permit application, states may enact their own prohibitions, specifications, or requirements for the transfer or possession of firearms. An applicant who is denied a firearm transfer or permit may appeal to the FBI or a state point of contact (POC), depending on the state and type of permit or check. Some jurisdictions allow a further appeal to a court. A denied person who submitted a false application or has an outstanding warrant may be subject to arrest and prosecution under federal or state laws.

Background check and permit procedures

Each state government determines the extent of its involvement in the NICS process (table 8). Three basic levels of state involvement currently exist:³

- In a **full POC state**, the state directly queries NICS for a background check on all firearm transfers originating in the state. On December 31, 2021, there were 13 full POC states.
- In a **partial POC state**, the state conducts a NICS check on all handgun transfer applicants, but FFLs in the state are required to contact the FBI for NICS checks for long gun transfers. On December 31, 2021, there were six partial POC states.
- In a **non-POC state**, the state does not conduct NICS checks. Instead, FFLs are required to contact the FBI directly for NICS checks on all firearm transfers originating in the state. On December 31, 2021, 31 states and the District of Columbia were non-POC jurisdictions. Additionally, the five U.S. territories did not have POCs.

³See appendix table 7 for information on the level of involvement in each state.

TABLE 8
Number of states, by type of check, point of contact status, and reporter of Firearm Inquiry Statistics data, 2021

	Number of states
Type of permit/check	
Handgun transfer	26
Instant check	13
Purchase permit	13
Other approval	5
Long gun transfer	17
Instant check	11
Purchase permit	7
Other approval	2
Exempt carry permit	24
FBI NICS background check only	8
POC status	
Non-POC (FBI conducts checks for all firearms)	32
Full POC (POC conducts checks for all firearms)	13
Partial POC (POC checks handguns, FBI checks long guns)	6
Reporter of FIST data	
FBI reports NICS handgun and long gun data	32
FBI reports NICS long gun data only	6
State agency reports transfer/permit data for entire state	34
Local agencies report transfer/permit data	12

Note: Includes the District of Columbia. States may be included in more than one subcategory. FIST denotes Firearm Inquiry Statistics. NICS denotes National Instant Criminal Background Check System. POC denotes point of contact.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

An FFL initiates a background check of an applicant for a firearm transfer or permit by contacting either the FBI or POC to query NICS. Applicant information is collected on ATF Form 4473, Firearm Transaction Record, and includes the applicant's name, descriptive data (e.g., date of birth, sex, race, state of residence, and country of citizenship), and other information that may immediately identify an applicant as prohibited from receiving or possessing a firearm and negate the need to continue the check. NICS searches for records about the applicant in several databases:⁴

- The FBI's Interstate Identification Index (III) maintains individual fingerprint-supported criminal history records. As of December 31, 2021, III contained 82,842,849 records that NICS could access during a background check.

- The FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) contains data on persons who are the subjects of protection orders or active criminal warrants, immigration violators, known or suspected terrorists, sex offenders, and other persons who may pose a threat to officer and public safety. As of December 31, 2021, NCIC contained 7,362,581 records that NICS could access during a background check.
- The NICS Indices, a database created specifically for the NICS program, maintains information contributed by federal, state, local, and tribal agencies pertaining to persons prohibited from receiving or possessing a firearm pursuant to federal and state law. Typically, the records maintained in the NICS Indices are not available via the III or NCIC. As of December 31, 2021, the NICS Indices contained 25,430,959 records (table 9).

⁴See Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2022). *National Instant Background Check System Operational Report 2020–2021*. <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics-2020-2021-operations-report.pdf/view>.

TABLE 9

Records of persons prohibited from receiving or possessing a firearm in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System Indices, yearend 2020 and 2021

Type of record	December 31, 2020 submissions			December 31, 2021 submissions			Percent change, yearend 2020–2021 ^c
	Total	Federal ^a	State ^b	Total	Federal ^a	State ^b	
Total	23,377,233	11,909,241	11,467,992	25,430,959	12,907,692	12,523,267	8.8%
Felony conviction	4,615,459	1,444,166	3,171,293	4,862,239	1,518,720	3,343,519	5.3
Under indictment/information ^d	183,386	53,282	130,104	214,517	58,537	155,980	17.0
Fugitive from justice	145	53	92	248	77	171	71.0
Unlawful user/addicted	49,746	21,239	28,507	59,908	28,307	31,601	20.4
Adjudicated mental health	6,396,880	263,263	6,133,617	6,776,082	265,619	6,510,463	5.9
Illegal/unlawful entry into U.S.	9,994,293	9,993,330	963	10,892,227	10,891,974	253	9.0
Dishonorable discharge	18,923	18,819	104	19,251	19,132	119	1.7
Renounced U.S. citizenship	53,975	53,955	20	56,487	56,456	31	4.7
Protection/restraining order	76,910	538	76,372	73,419	544	72,875	-4.5
Domestic violence misdemeanor	222,191	46,018	176,173	238,000	50,164	187,836	7.1
State law prohibition	1,765,325	14,578	1,750,747	2,238,581	18,162	2,220,419	26.8

Note: The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Indices are used exclusively for NICS checks and contains records of persons who are prohibited by federal or state law from receiving or possessing a firearm.

^aIncludes submissions from federal agencies, U.S. District Courts, tribal agencies, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

^bState totals include U.S. territories.

^cPercent change is calculated using the following formula: $100 \times ((\text{yearend 2021 total value} / \text{yearend 2020 total value}) - 1)$.

^dAn information is a formal accusation of a crime. It differs from an indictment because it is made by a prosecuting attorney rather than a grand jury.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Indices, 2020–2021.

As applicable, a NICS search will also query U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) databases, which contain information on non-U.S. citizens. In 2021, the NICS Section and POC states sent 404,209 queries to ICE.

State and local agencies may also access records in their own state and search records that are not electronically available to the FBI. A checking agency may also request a paper record from a court, mental health facility, or law enforcement agency.

After reviewing relevant records, the FBI or POC informs the FFL that the transaction may proceed, is denied, or is delayed for further review. Some states have an additional waiting period (after a transfer application is filed with a seller or permit application is filed with a checking agency) that must expire before the firearm transfer or permit issuance may be completed. Some states require a person attempting to receive a firearm through a private transfer to obtain a purchase permit or undergo an instant check.

Types of permits and checks

Four methods are used by states to approve a prospective firearm purchaser. A state may use more than one of these methods (e.g., for different types of firearms) or require two steps (e.g., a permit and an instant check) before a purchase is approved.

Purchase permits require that a prospective firearm purchaser undergo a background check to obtain a government-issued document (i.e., permit, license, or identification card) that is presented to a seller to receive a firearm. Twelve states and the District of Columbia had purchase permit systems in 2021. Permits were issued by local agencies in nine states, and by three state agencies and the District of Columbia police.

Instant checks (instant approvals) require a seller to transmit a purchaser's application to a checking agency by telephone or computer, after which the agency is required to respond as quickly as possible without delay. Thirteen state agencies (and the FBI) maintained instant check systems in 2021.

Other approval systems, used by four states in the FIST data collection for 2021, require a seller to transmit a purchaser's application or information to a checking agency. The transfer of the firearm is delayed until a statutory waiting period expires or the agency completes a background check. In 2021, checks were conducted by local agencies in one state and by state agencies in three states.

Exempt carry permits are issued after a background check that exempts the holder from undergoing a new check at the time of purchase or transfer. These permits are qualified by the ATF as a valid alternative to the NICS check and are issued after a state or local checking agency has conducted a NICS check and verified that the applicant's possession of a firearm would not violate state or federal law. These permits are valid for a maximum of 5 years from their issuance date and are only for firearm transfers in the state where the permit is issued. Twenty-four states offered exempt carry permits in 2021. Unlike the other three methods, use of an exempt carry permit is not a requirement but an option for the permit holder.

While the Brady Act requires NICS checks of all prospective firearm purchasers who apply for a firearm transfer from an FFL, they can bypass the check if they hold a state permit to receive, possess, or carry a firearm that the ATF has qualified as a valid alternative to the NICS check. An ATF-qualified permit is issued after a state or local checking agency has conducted a NICS check and verified that the applicant's possession of a firearm would not violate state or federal law. The permit is valid for a maximum of 5 years from its issuance date and only for firearm transfers in the state where the permit is issued.

Methodology

Data used for this report were collected and prepared by the Regional Justice Information Service Commission (REJIS) through a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) under the Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program. Conducted annually since 1999, the FIST survey collects data on applications for and denials of firearm transfers from all state checking agencies and a representative sample of local checking agencies. FIST also utilizes FBI data, which includes the five U.S. territories. Information about the FIST program can also be found on the BJS website at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/firearm-inquiry-statistics-fist-program>.

FIST frame

The FIST program collected data from three types of reporting sources to generate the 2021 estimates for firearm transfer and permit applications and denials:

- **FBI.** The FBI provided data for the 31 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 U.S. territories that relied on the FBI to conduct all NICS checks on handgun and long gun transfer applicants. The FBI also provided data for the six states that relied on it to conduct background checks on long gun transfer applicants only.
- **State agency reporters.** BJS collected data from the 33 state agencies and the District of Columbia Police Department. These agencies either conducted background checks required by law or compiled data for their entire jurisdiction (e.g., states where local agencies conduct background checks but report counts to a state-level entity).⁵ BJS requested internal reports or published data from 17 state agencies and asked the agencies to verify the information. The remaining state agencies were surveyed for their counts.
- **Local reporting agencies.** BJS surveyed 976 local agencies in 12 states that issued permits, tracked applications and denials, or conducted background checks for various types of firearm permit or transfer systems and did not report counts to a state-level entity.⁶ BJS administered the FIST survey to a sample of local agencies in three states and to all local agencies in nine states.

⁵Two separate agency units in New Jersey reported to FIST. These units were counted as a single reporter so that totals for the entire state could be reported.

⁶The FIST program obtains data from law enforcement agencies and other types of local agencies that conduct these activities, such as probate courts in Georgia and county clerks or other types of administrative offices in New York.

In 30 states, more than one source was used due to multiple types of checks conducted in the state.

FIST sample

State laws determine which governmental agencies conduct background checks for a firearm transfer or permit. For FIST, it is important to distinguish between local agencies that are authorized by statute to conduct background checks and local agencies that actually conduct them. For example, local agencies in certain states may be legally authorized, but not required, to conduct background checks for firearm transfers or permits.

BJS determined that eligible reporting agencies should be those that were authorized and known to conduct background checks or maintained information on critical FIST data elements, which included applications, denials, and reasons for denial when reported.⁷ Agencies that delegated background check functions to other checking agencies were considered out of scope if they neither conducted nor maintained records of checks. Other out-of-scope agencies were those that had closed since the 2021 FIST sampling frame was constructed and those that had only part-time employees who each worked less than 35 hours per week.

To construct the 2021 sampling frame, REJIS, under the direction of BJS, included local reporting agencies from the 2019–2020 frame that had responded to the FIST survey at least once in the previous 3 years and had a verified status of conducting background checks or of processing or tracking applications for firearm transfers or permits. REJIS reviewed new state firearm legislation and the ATF Permanent Brady Permit Chart to determine if any states should be added to the frame.

Most FIST data consisted of counts obtained from the FBI and counts collected from state agency reporters. Local agencies accounted for 6.7% of the national application total and 10.1% of the national denial total. BJS conducted a census of local reporting agencies in nine states in 2021: Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. In three states (Georgia, Minnesota, and Washington), BJS sampled local reporting agencies due to the large number of potentially eligible local reporting agencies (ranging from 159 in Georgia to more than 300 in Minnesota). REJIS created a stratified sample, or created sampling groups, based on population that equated to:

⁷For FIST, collecting application and denial data from agencies that conduct background checks or track applications for transfers or permits is considered the most accurate and sometimes only means of assessing background check activity.

- Stratum 1: rural—population of 9,999 or fewer residents
- Stratum 2: small cities—population of 10,000 to 99,999
- Stratum 3: small metropolitan areas—population of 100,000 to 199,999
- Stratum 4: large metropolitan areas—population of 200,000 or more.

These population categories were selected to be consistent with definitions of various population levels. Additionally, the categories allowed the collection to maintain some consistency with portions of the methodology used for previous FIST collections. BJS and REJIS took several steps to determine whether correlates could be found between population size and the number of applications, including several variables (such as the number of sworn personnel) from BJS’s 2008 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies and 2016 Law Enforcement Agency Roster. BJS determined that using the four standard categories for census-place populations correlated with the number of applications better than other variables did. Sampling was conducted for local reporting agencies in strata 1 and 2, while local reporting agencies in strata 3 and 4 were kept in the sample with certainty.

The final designated sample included 623 enumerated (self-representing, or SR) local reporting agencies in states where all local reporting agencies were enumerated, and 353 sampled (non-self-representing, or NSR) local reporting agencies in the three states where strata 1 and 2 were sampled. After adjusting for local agencies that were ineligible to participate in the survey, the final sample consisted of 1,010 state agency reporters and local reporting agencies, with an overall response rate of 78% (table 10). One hundred percent of state agency reporters responded, and 78% of local checking agencies responded.

TABLE 10

Number of reporting agencies that participated in the Firearm Inquiry Statistics survey, 2021

Reporting agencies	Total	Sample	Responses	Response Rate
Total	1,300	1,010	791	78.3%
State agency reporters	34	34	34	100%
Local checking agencies	1,266	976	757	77.6%
Population served				
9,999 or fewer	535	346	248	71.7%
10,000–99,999	611	510	413	81.0
100,000–199,999	64	64	52	81.3
200,000 or more	56	56	44	78.6

Note: Agencies that were ineligible to participate in the Firearm Inquiry Statistics survey were deemed out of scope and removed from all counts of reporting agencies.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

For the 2021 data collection, BJS and REJIS utilized 16 survey forms to facilitate the use of terminology tailored to individual states or groups of states. State-specific instructions served to minimize respondent burden. REJIS used multiple survey modes (e.g., online form, email, paper survey, and fax) and a rigorous strategy for following up with nonresponding agencies to increase survey responses.

Estimation

BJS and REJIS summed counts from state agency reporters, state-level estimates (for states with local reporting agencies), and the FBI’s NICS federal transaction data to estimate the total number of applications for firearm transfers and permits received and denied across the country. REJIS applied design weights and nonresponse adjustment factors for enumerated and sampled local reporting agencies to generate estimates of the number of applications and denials at the state level. Estimation of statewide data was only required for two agencies. Estimates were generated for 14 local agencies.

Weighting for local reporting agencies

The 2021 FIST data collection provides for two basic weighting structures for local reporting agencies: a weight applied to SR agencies and a weight applied to NSR agencies.

SR agencies (enumerated)

Local reporting agencies in strata 3 and 4 (large agencies) were selected with certainty and given a design weight of 1 ($w_1 = 1$). A nonresponse adjustment (w_2) was applied to responding agencies to compensate for the agencies that did not respond.

NSR agencies (sampled)

The process for calculating weights for NSR local reporting agencies was similar to that for SR local reporting agencies, except NSR agencies (the small agencies in strata 1 and 2 of the sampled states) received a design weight of greater than 1 ($w_1 > 1$) according to the population-based stratum and the state in which they were located. This weight reflects the inverse of the probability of selection for the state and stratum size (cell) in which the agency resided. Weights were adjusted for any agencies that were out of scope in the sampled states.

Nonresponse adjustment

The nonresponse adjustment accounts for agencies that were ineligible (out of scope) and for nonresponding agencies. It consists of a ratio adjustment of the sum of the weighted eligible agencies (per state and population size stratum) to the sum of weighted responding agencies (also per state and population size stratum). A nonresponse adjustment was applied to each cell (stratum within state) if there was any nonresponse. This created a specific adjustment for each cell that applied to all states, whether enumerated or sampled.

Partial-year reporting adjustment

A weight consisting of a ratio adjustment to account for missing months of data was applied to adjust for any agency that reported only partial-year data. This adjustment to account for missing months was necessary for two local reporting agencies. The use of this adjustment occurred prior to the calculation of the final weight.

Final weights

The final weights (Fw) applied to each FIST case are the product of a design weight (w1) and a nonresponse adjustment weight (w2) for $Fw = w1 \times w2$. (See [table 11](#).)

TABLE 11
Final weights by state and population category for local reporting agencies, 2021

State	Population category			
	9,999 or fewer	10,000–99,999	100,000–199,999	200,000 or more
Georgia	4.00	1.66	1.30	1.50
Idaho	1.25	1.92	1.00	1.00
Iowa	1.17	1.18	1.25	1.00
Minnesota	4.07	1.61	1.00	1.00
Montana	1.94	1.13	1.33	~
Nebraska	1.35	1.21	1.00	1.00
Nevada	2.00	1.40	~	1.00
New York	1.00	1.50	1.67	1.50
North Carolina	1.00	1.16	1.07	1.18
South Dakota	1.55	1.45	1.00	~
Washington	4.07	1.94	1.20	1.00
West Virginia	1.09	1.38	1.50	~

~Not applicable. No weights were applied because no agencies were within the population cell.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

Item nonresponse imputation for local reporting agencies

For the 2021 FIST data collection, REJIS identified few instances of missing data on applications for firearm transfers or permits, compared to other missing data (e.g., reasons for denial). For partial responses to count, respondents had to report either the number of applications received or the number of denials issued. If neither type of data was provided, the respondent was classified as a nonrespondent. When data were missing for only applications or only denials, REJIS used a conditional mean imputation to estimate the number of applications or denials.⁸ For 2021, six respondents had missing application data, and seven respondents had missing denial data.

In population stratum 1, REJIS replaced missing values with the mean number of applications of other agencies in the same state that were in the same population category. In population stratum 2, REJIS employed a basic multiple-imputation strategy for agencies with complete data, accounting for the number of denials, the actual population size served, and the number of applications. The result was a within-state and stratum-based sum of imputed values proportionate to the population allocation of imputed applications or denials per agency.

Standard errors

REJIS computed standard errors for the estimates of total applications, total denials, and the ratio of denials to total applications across states and size of region for local reporting agencies. The standard error computations account for various aspects of the FIST design, including stratification of data collection by a combination of state and population-served categories and finite population sampling (without replacement) across the states and population categories of interest.

REJIS approximated the FIST design by using an IBM SPSS Complex Samples module that generated final strata reflective of the various combinations of state and population categories in the sample design. Data from SR local reporting agencies were treated as certainty samples with an initial selection probability of 1.

⁸Schafer, J. L., & Schenker, N. (2000). Inference with imputed conditional means. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 95(449), 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.2000.10473910>.

For these states and population category combinations, complete responses would have a negligible contribution to the overall standard errors for a given estimate. To account for this and the fact that finite population correction (FPC) factors for the samples generated by the FIST design were small, FPCs were directly incorporated into the standard error computations. Finally, estimates for local reporting agencies included one additional subdomain of agency type: local or state (centralized reporting).

All computations were generated using the final sampling weight, which incorporated adjustments for missing values, nonresponse, and an adjustment for population eligibility or coverage. In some cases, standard error computations were not possible, as only one local reporting agency reported information from a given type of application in areas where more than one local reporting agency was queried (via sample or census). In these cases, no standard error was calculated.

Variance and standard error estimates were generated using the IBM SPSS Complex Samples software package. This analysis used the Taylor linearization method for a “stratified without replacement” design to calculate standard errors.

Reasons for denial

BJIS has collected information about reasons for denying applications for firearm transfers and permits since FIST’s inception in 1995. The FIST survey first asks agencies if they record the reason(s) why an application was denied. The FBI, 29 (85.3%) state agency reporters, and 639 (84.3%) local reporting agencies indicated that they record the reason(s) why an application was denied.

The FIST survey includes 12 categories that reflect the most common reasons for denial and closely match the categories of federal prohibitions on the purchase or possession of firearms by certain persons. The categories are broad enough to include state prohibitions that may not be identical to the federal prohibitions.

Respondents were asked to record their denials in the most appropriate categories. When REJIS obtained denial data from an agency’s website or internal report that did not closely match a FIST category, REJIS determined which denial category best matched the reported reason and verified the classification with the responding agency.

Of the agencies that reported denials and indicated that they record the reason(s) for denial, 96.6% of state agency reporters and 96.3% of local agencies provided at least some reasons for these denials.

Local checking agencies in Iowa and North Carolina conducted background checks for purchase permits and exempt carry permits. In these 2 states, there were 36 local checking agencies that reported denials for one of these check types and reported zero denials for the other check type. For the check type that had denials, these agencies reported reasons for denial. For the check type that had zero denials, these agencies reported that they would have been able to report a reason for denial had one occurred. Twenty-eight of these agencies were in Iowa and the other 8 were in North Carolina. These 36 agencies are included in the 96.3% of local agencies that provided at least some reasons for denial noted above.

Another 159 local reporting agencies reported no denials but said they would have been able to report a reason for a denial had one occurred.

Survey responses presented two main challenges to reporting reasons for denial. First, while BJIS has observed an increase in responses to survey questions about reasons for denial, a relatively high degree of item nonresponse and incomplete responses has persisted. For example, some respondents provided more than one reason for some denials, others provided reasons for only some denials, and yet others did not provide reasons for any denials.

Second, the method by which agencies record or track reasons for denial varies. The FBI reports one reason for each denial, based on the first prohibition found during a background check. By comparison, BJIS and REJIS have observed variations in how reasons for denial are recorded by state agency reporters and local reporting agencies. Some agencies record only the most serious offense found during a background check, while others record only the first reason found. Of local reporting agencies that recorded the reason(s) for denial, approximately 75.4% recorded all reasons found during a background check, while about 15.7% recorded only one reason for each denial. Approximately 5.0% of the local agency reporters stated they did not know how a reason for a denial was recorded. About 37.9% of state agency reporters recorded all reasons for denial, and 31.0% recorded only one reason for each denial. Seven (24.1%) state agency reporters indicated that they did not know how denial reasons were recorded.

Due to the high item nonresponse and variation in the way reasons for denial were reported, REJIS calculated a simple estimation for the number of reasons for denial by local reporting agencies. Estimates used the base weight rather than the final weight that was applied to all other

estimates for local reporting agencies. This was done to better align responses from sampled local reporting agencies with those from states in which a census of local reporting agencies was conducted. Counts of reasons for denial from the FBI and state agency reporters were reported, and no estimates were generated for them.

Jurisdiction notes

The following notes provide additional information about background checks for firearm transfers and permits in jurisdictions that submitted data directly to the Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program for the 2021 collection. A jurisdiction's statutes should be consulted for complete details on its firearm laws. States (Alabama, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Vermont) and U.S. territories excluded from this list rely entirely on the FBI to conduct firearm transfer background checks and do not have separate state or local checks.

Alaska—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Alaska was not a point of contact (POC) state.

Arizona—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Arizona was a non-POC state.

Arkansas—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Arkansas was a non-POC state.

California—A state agency conducted other approval checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. California was a full POC state.

Colorado—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Colorado was a full POC state.

Connecticut—The state authorized two types of purchase permits, and every handgun transferee was required to obtain one of the permits. A purchase permit was also required for a long gun. In addition, a state agency conducted instant checks at the point of transfer on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Connecticut was a full POC state.

District of Columbia—The chief of police conducted checks on applicants for a registration certificate (categorized by the FIST program as a purchase permit), which was required to obtain a handgun or long gun. In addition, the FBI conducted National Instant Criminal Background Check System checks requested by dealers who transferred a firearm after receiving a buyer's registration certificate. The District of Columbia was a non-POC jurisdiction.

Florida—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Florida was a full POC state.

Georgia—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Georgia was a non-POC state.

Hawaii—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun or long gun. Local agencies conducted checks on purchase permit applicants. Hawaii was a full POC state.

Idaho—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Idaho was a non-POC state.

Illinois—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun or long gun. In addition, a state agency conducted instant checks at the point of transfer on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Illinois was a full POC state.

Iowa—Handgun and long gun purchasers had the options of presenting a purchase permit or an exempt carry permit, or undergoing a NICS check by the FBI. Local agencies conducted checks on applicants for purchase and exempt carry permits. Iowa was a non-POC state.

Kansas—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Kansas was a non-POC state.

Kentucky—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Kentucky was a non-POC state.

Louisiana—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for 5-year exempt carry permits and lifetime carry permits that are exempt for 5 years after issuance. Both types of permits may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Louisiana was a non-POC state.

Maryland—A purchase permit issued by a state agency was required to obtain a handgun. In addition, the state agency conducted other approval checks on applicants for transfers of handguns and assault weapons, which were designated by state law as regulated firearms. Maryland was a partial POC state.

Massachusetts—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun or long gun. Two types of purchase permits were included in the FIST survey data. Local agencies conducted checks on permit applicants. Massachusetts was a non-POC state.

Michigan—A purchase permit was required for a handgun transfer between two individuals who were not licensed dealers. An exempt carry permit may have been substituted for the purchase permit and may have also been used to acquire a long gun. Checks were conducted by local agencies on purchase permit applicants and by a state agency on exempt carry permit applicants. Michigan was a non-POC state.

Minnesota—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun or an assault weapon. An exempt carry permit may have been substituted for the purchase permit. Local agencies conducted checks on applicants for purchase and exempt carry permits. Minnesota was a non-POC state.

Mississippi—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Mississippi was a non-POC state.

Montana—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Montana was a non-POC state.

Nebraska—Local agencies conducted checks on applicants for a purchase permit, which was required to obtain a handgun. An exempt carry permit issued by a state agency may have been substituted for the purchase permit. Both types of permits may have been used to acquire a long gun. Nebraska was a partial POC state.

Nevada—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Nevada was a full POC state.

New Hampshire—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun transfers. New Hampshire was a partial POC state.

New Jersey—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun or long gun. Local agencies and the state police conducted checks on purchase permit applicants. In addition, the state police conducted instant checks at the point of transfer on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. New Jersey was a full POC state.

New York—The state's purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun and certain types of long guns. Local agencies conducted checks on purchase permit applicants. New York was a non-POC state.

North Carolina—A purchase permit was required to obtain a handgun. An exempt carry permit may have been substituted for the purchase permit. Both types of permits may have been used to acquire a long gun. Local agencies conducted checks on applicants for purchase and exempt carry permits. North Carolina was a partial POC state.

North Dakota—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. North Dakota was a non-POC state.

Ohio—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Ohio was a non-POC state.

Oregon—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Oregon was a full POC state.

Pennsylvania—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Pennsylvania was a full POC state.

Rhode Island—Local agencies conducted other approval checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Rhode Island was a non-POC state.

South Carolina—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. South Carolina was a non-POC state.

South Dakota—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. South Dakota was a non-POC state.

Tennessee—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Tennessee was a full POC state.

Texas—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Texas was a non-POC state.

Utah—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers and conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits. Utah was a full POC state.

Virginia—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun and long gun transfers. Virginia was a full POC state.

Washington—Local agencies conducted other approval checks on applicants for handgun transfers. Washington was a partial POC state.

West Virginia—Local agencies issued exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. West Virginia was a non-POC state.

Wisconsin—A state agency conducted instant checks on applicants for handgun transfers. Wisconsin was a partial POC state.

Wyoming—A state agency conducted background checks on applicants for exempt carry permits that may have been used for handgun or long gun transfers. Wyoming was a non-POC state.

APPENDIX TABLE 1
Firearm applications and denials by state and local agencies, by jurisdiction and type of permit or check, 2021

Jurisdiction and permit/ check type	Applications		Denials		Percent denied	
	Estimate or count	Standard error	Estimate or count	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Alaska						
Exempt carry permit	2,120	~	23	~	1.1%	~
Arizona						
Exempt carry permit	84,662	~	1,450	~	1.7%	~
Arkansas						
Exempt carry permit	54,479	~	2,466	~	4.5%	~
California						
Other approval	1,028,235	~	9,052	~	0.9%	~
Colorado						
Instant check	452,777	~	9,717	~	2.1%	~
Connecticut	216,997	~	64	~	0.0%	~
Instant check	169,766	~	7	~	0.0	~
Purchase permit	47,231	~	57	~	0.1	~
District of Columbia						
Purchase permit	7,152	~	380	~	5.3%	~
Florida						
Instant check	1,316,662	~	15,969	~	1.2%	~
Georgia						
Exempt carry permit ^a	285,306	13,943	6,813	619	2.4%	0.18%
Hawaii						
Purchase permit	23,299	~	599	~	2.6%	~
Idaho						
Exempt carry permit ^a	26,303	1,068	119	8	0.5%	0.04%
Illinois	829,582	~	34,130	~	4.1%	~
Instant check	494,798	~	3,337	~	0.7	~
Purchase permit	334,784	~	30,793	~	9.2	~
Iowa	99,911	2,646	1,274	156	1.3%	0.16%
Purchase permit ^a	6,473	296	310	28	4.8	0.30
Exempt carry permit ^a	93,438	2,516	963	143	1.0	0.16
Kansas						
Exempt carry permit	26,737	~	4	~	0.0%	~
Kentucky						
Exempt carry permit	12,903	~	419	~	3.2%	~
Louisiana						
Exempt carry permit	40,789	~	1,438	~	3.5%	~
Maryland	154,688	~	2,573	~	1.7%	~
Other approval	109,139	~	576	~	0.5	~
Purchase permit	45,549	~	1,997	~	4.4	~
Massachusetts						
Purchase permit	96,862	~	2,540	~	2.6%	~
Michigan	249,456	~	5,738	~	2.3%	~
Purchase permit	30,300	~	1,103	~	3.6	~
Exempt carry permit	219,156	~	4,635	~	2.1	~
Minnesota^b	176,600	~	3,477	~	2.0%	0.07%
Purchase permit ^a	66,522	8,415	1,850	165	2.8	0.23
Exempt carry permit ^c	110,078	~	1,627	~	1.5	~
Mississippi						
Exempt carry permit	29,285	~	9	~	0.0%	~
Montana						
Exempt carry permit ^a	14,169	862	173	21	1.2%	0.16%

Continued on next page

APPENDIX TABLE 1 (continued)
Firearm applications and denials by state and local agencies, by jurisdiction and type of permit or check, 2021

Jurisdiction and permit/ check type	Applications		Denials		Percent denied	
	Estimate or count	Standard error	Estimate or count	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Nebraska^b	60,213	~	2,057	~	3.4%	0.39%
Purchase permit ^a	37,425	2,657	1,679	279	4.5	0.60
Exempt carry permit	22,788	~	378	~	1.7	~
Nevada^b	201,149	~	2,924	~	1.5%	0.01%
Instant check	139,251	~	2,420	~	1.7	~
Exempt carry permit ^a	61,898	802	504	15	0.8	0.02
New Hampshire						
Instant check	78,216	~	676	~	0.9%	~
New Jersey	538,070	~	3,296	~	0.6%	~
Instant check	216,280	~	421	~	0.2	~
Purchase permit	321,790	~	2,875	~	0.9	~
New York						
Purchase permit ^a	70,065	6,632	1,679	239	2.4%	0.32%
North Carolina	482,867	24,400	19,475	1,012	4.0%	0.16%
Purchase permit ^a	273,176	18,648	17,063	987	6.2	0.28
Exempt carry permit ^a	209,691	7,156	2,411	90	1.1	0.05
North Dakota						
Exempt carry permit	8,400	~	240	~	2.9%	~
Ohio						
Exempt carry permit	205,777	~	2,668	~	1.3%	~
Oregon						
Instant check	338,330	~	1,129	~	0.3%	~
Pennsylvania						
Instant check	1,402,602	~	24,061	~	1.7%	~
Rhode Island						
Other approval	29,105	~	407	~	1.4%	~
South Carolina						
Exempt carry permit	162,746	~	4,020	~	2.5%	~
South Dakota						
Exempt carry permit	3,174	288	106	46	3.3%	1.24%
Tennessee						
Instant check	687,350	~	34,436	~	5.0%	~
Texas						
Exempt carry permit	358,207	~	3,277	~	0.9%	~
Utah	300,238	~	3,310	~	1.1%	~
Instant check	152,890	~	1,766	~	1.2	~
Exempt carry permit	147,348	~	1,544	~	1.0	~
Virginia						
Instant check	613,311	~	8,761	~	1.4%	~
Washington						
Other approval ^a	328,679	18,995	3,509	168	1.1%	0.05%
West Virginia						
Exempt carry permit ^a	27,070	1,302	152	36	0.6%	0.13%
Wisconsin						
Instant check	200,646	~	2,501	~	1.2%	~
Wyoming						
Exempt carry permit	7,813	~	44	~	0.6%	~

Note: For information on the FIST sample design and agencies that reported data, see *Methodology*.

~Not applicable. No sampling error was present because complete counts were reported.

^aTotals were estimated. See *Methodology*.

^bStandard errors are not applicable because a portion of the estimate came from a state agency that reported complete counts.

^cThe state's concealed carry permits are exempt only under state law.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 2**Standard errors for 2021 data in table 2: Firearm applications and denials, by type of checking agency and type of permit or check, 1999–2021**

Type of checking agency and type of permit/check	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
Local checking agencies	35,829	1,275	0.07%
Exempt carry permit	16,008	645	0.08
Purchase permit	21,673	1,066	0.18
Other approval	18,995	168	0.05

Note: No sampling error was present for totals from the FBI and state agency reporters in table 2 because they reported complete counts.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 3**Standard errors for table 4: Firearm applications and denials reported by local agencies, by type of permit or check and size of population served, 2021**

Type of permit/check and population served	Applications	Denials	Percent denied
All permit/check types and population sizes	35,829	1,275	0.07%
Purchase permit	21,673	1,066	0.18%
9,999 or less	1,493	42	0.14
10,000–99,999	9,618	475	0.33
100,000–199,999	2,383	435	0.71
200,000 or more	19,217	849	0.21
Exempt carry permit	16,008	645	0.08%
9,999 or less	1,020	62	0.21
10,000–99,999	6,040	281	0.09
100,000–199,999	3,297	230	0.16
200,000 or more	14,418	530	0.15
Other approval	18,995	168	0.05%
9,999 or less	2,112	34	0.20
10,000–99,999	18,570	161	0.09
100,000–199,999	3,395	32	0.08
200,000 or more	0	0	0.00

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 4**Standard errors for table 5: Reasons for denial of applications for firearm transfers and permits, by type of checking agency, 2021**

Reason for denial	Local	
	Number	Percent
Total	975	~
Felony reasons	298	1.34%
Felony conviction	171	0.77
Under indictment/information	132	0.59
Felony arrest with no disposition	154	0.69
Nonfelony reasons	802	3.60%
State-law prohibition	550	2.47
Drug use/addiction	85	0.38
Misdemeanor conviction of domestic violence	170	0.76
Mental health commitment/adjudication	79	0.36
Fugitive from justice/warrant	58	0.26
Protection/restraining order	47	0.21
Illegal/unlawful entry into U.S.	42	0.19
Local-law prohibition	303	1.36
Other prohibitions	420	1.89

Note: No sampling error was present for the FBI and state agency reporters because they reported complete counts.

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021; and Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Instant Criminal Background Check System Transaction Statistics, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Agencies that conducted background checks for firearm transfers or permits, by type of application and jurisdiction, December 31, 2021

Jurisdiction	Application for firearm transfer/purchase permit	Application for exempt carry permit ^a
United States	Federal Bureau of Investigation	—
Alabama	—	—
Alaska	—	Department of Public Safety
Arizona	—	Department of Public Safety
Arkansas	—	State police
California	Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms	—
Colorado	Bureau of Investigation InstaCheck Unit	—
Connecticut	State Police Special Licensing and Firearms	—
Delaware	—	—
District of Columbia	Metropolitan Police Department	—
Florida	Department of Law Enforcement	—
Georgia	—	County probate courts
Hawaii	Police departments	—
Idaho	—	County sheriffs
Illinois	State Police Firearm Services Bureau	—
Indiana	—	—
Iowa	County sheriffs	Department of Public Safety/county sheriffs
Kansas	—	Attorney general
Kentucky	—	State police
Louisiana	—	State police
Maine	—	—
Maryland	State Police Licensing Division	—
Massachusetts	Police departments	—
Michigan	Sheriffs and police departments	State police
Minnesota	Sheriffs and police departments	County sheriffs
Mississippi	—	Department of Public Safety
Missouri	—	—
Montana	—	County sheriffs
Nebraska	Sheriffs and police departments	State patrol
Nevada	Department of Public Safety	County sheriffs
New Hampshire	Department of Safety	—
New Jersey	State police /local police departments	—
New Mexico	—	—
New York ^b	Sheriffs and police departments	—
North Carolina	County sheriffs	County sheriffs
North Dakota	—	Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Ohio	—	County sheriffs
Oklahoma	—	—
Oregon	State Police Firearms Unit	—
Pennsylvania	State Police Firearms Division	—
Rhode Island	Police departments	—
South Carolina	—	Law Enforcement Division
South Dakota	—	County sheriffs
Tennessee	Bureau of Investigation Tennessee Instant Check System Unit	—
Texas	—	Department of Public Safety
Utah	Bureau of Criminal Identification	Bureau of Criminal Identification
Vermont	—	—
Virginia	State Police Firearms Transaction Program	—
Washington	Sheriffs and police departments	—
West Virginia	—	County sheriffs
Wisconsin	Department of Justice Firearms Unit	—
Wyoming	—	Attorney general

—The FBI conducted background checks for firearm purchases, or the jurisdiction did not issue exempt carry permits.

^aAgencies issued carry permits that could be used to waive a background check for a firearm purchase.

^bFirearm purchase licenses could also permit carry.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Types of background checks and permits for firearm transfers conducted by jurisdictions, December 31, 2021

Jurisdiction	Handgun transfers			Long gun transfers			Exempt carry permit
	Instant check	Purchase permit	Other approval	Instant check	Purchase permit	Other approval	
Federal	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
State/District	13	13	5	11	7	2	24
Alabama	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Alaska	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Arizona	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Arkansas	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
California	~	~	■	~	~	■	~
Colorado	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
Connecticut	■	■	~	■	■	~	~
Delaware	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
District of Columbia	~	■	~	~	■	~	~
Florida	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
Georgia	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Hawaii	~	■	~	~	■	~	~
Idaho	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Illinois	■	■	~	■	■	~	~
Indiana	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Iowa	~	■	~	~	~	~	■
Kansas	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Kentucky	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Louisiana	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Maine	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Maryland ^a	~	■	■	~	~	~	~
Massachusetts	~	■	~	~	■	~	~
Michigan	~	■	-	~	~	~	■
Minnesota ^b	~	■	■	~	~	~	■
Mississippi	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Missouri	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Montana	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Nebraska	~	■	~	~	~	~	■
Nevada	■	~	~	■	~	~	■
New Hampshire	■	~	~	~	~	~	~
New Jersey	■	■	~	■	■	~	~
New Mexico	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
New York ^c	~	■	~	~	■	~	~
North Carolina	~	■	~	~	~	~	■
North Dakota	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Ohio	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Oklahoma	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Oregon	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
Pennsylvania	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
Rhode Island	~	~	■	~	~	■	~
South Carolina	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
South Dakota	~	~	~	~	~	~	■
Tennessee	■	~	~	■	~	~	-
Texas	~	~	~	-	~	~	■
Utah	■	~	~	■	~	~	■
Vermont	~	~	~	-	~	~	~
Virginia	■	~	~	■	~	~	~
Washington	~	~	■	-	~	~	~
West Virginia	~	~	~	-	~	~	■
Wisconsin	■	~	~	-	~	~	~
Wyoming	~	~	~	-	~	~	■

■ Indicates type of check conducted or type of permit issued by agencies within the jurisdiction.

~ Not applicable.

^aHandgun requirements also apply to transfers of certain assault weapons.

^bHandgun and assault weapon buyers may obtain a purchase permit or use the other approval process.

^cPurchase permit applies to handguns and certain types of long guns.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

State involvement in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System process, by point of contact status, December 31, 2021

State	Non-POC ^a	Full POC ^b	Partial POC ^c	State	Non-POC ^a	Full POC ^b	Partial POC ^c
Total	32	13	6	Missouri	■	~	~
Alabama	■	~	~	Montana	■	~	~
Alaska	■	~	~	Nebraska	~	~	■
Arizona	■	~	~	Nevada	~	■	~
Arkansas	■	~	~	New Hampshire	~	~	■
California	~	■	~	New Jersey	~	■	~
Colorado	~	■	~	New Mexico	■	~	~
Connecticut	~	■	~	New York	■	~	~
Delaware	■	~	~	North Carolina	~	~	■
District of Columbia	■	~	~	North Dakota	■	~	~
Florida	~	■	~	Ohio	■	~	~
Georgia	■	~	~	Oklahoma	■	~	~
Hawaii	~	■	~	Oregon	~	■	~
Idaho	■	~	~	Pennsylvania	~	■	~
Illinois	~	■	~	Rhode Island	■	~	~
Indiana	■	~	~	South Carolina	■	~	~
Iowa	■	~	~	South Dakota	■	~	~
Kansas	■	~	~	Tennessee	~	■	~
Kentucky	■	~	~	Texas	■	~	~
Louisiana	■	~	~	Utah	~	■	~
Maine	■	~	~	Vermont	■	~	~
Maryland	~	~	■	Virginia	~	■	~
Massachusetts	■	~	~	Washington	~	~	■
Michigan	■	~	~	West Virginia	■	~	~
Minnesota	■	~	~	Wisconsin	~	~	■
Mississippi	■	~	~	Wyoming	■	~	~

Note: The FBI also conducts all National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) transfer checks for American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which are all non-POC. POC denotes point of contact.

■ Indicates the extent of the state's involvement in the NICS process.

~ Not applicable.

^aThe FBI conducts NICS checks on all firearm transfer applicants.

^bA state or local agency conducts NICS checks on all firearm transfer or purchase permit applicants.

^cA state or local agency conducts NICS checks on handgun applicants, while the FBI conducts NICS checks on long gun applicants.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

APPENDIX TABLE 8

Reporting of data to the Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, by jurisdiction, 2021

Jurisdiction	FBI reported NICS handgun and long gun data ^a	FBI reported only NICS long gun data	State agency reported transfer or permit data for entire state ^b	Local agencies reported transfer or permit data ^b
Total	32	6	34	12
Alabama	■			
Alaska	■		■	
Arizona	■		■	
Arkansas	■		■	
California			■	
Colorado			■	
Connecticut			■	
Delaware	■			
District of Columbia	■		■	
Florida			■	
Georgia	■			■
Hawaii			■	
Idaho	■			■
Illinois			■	
Indiana	■			
Iowa ^c	■			■
Kansas	■		■	
Kentucky	■		■	
Louisiana	■		■	
Maine	■			
Maryland		■	■	
Massachusetts	■		■	
Michigan	■		■	
Minnesota	■		■	■
Mississippi	■		■	
Missouri	■			
Montana	■			■
Nebraska		■	■	■
Nevada			■	■
New Hampshire		■	■	
New Jersey			■	
New Mexico	■			
New York	■			■
North Carolina		■		■
North Dakota	■		■	
Ohio	■		■	
Oklahoma	■			
Oregon			■	
Pennsylvania			■	
Rhode Island	■		■	
South Carolina	■		■	
South Dakota	■			■
Tennessee			■	
Texas	■		■	
Utah			■	
Vermont	■			
Virginia			■	
Washington		■		■
West Virginia	■			■
Wisconsin		■	■	
Wyoming	■		■	

Note: States with multiple reporters to the Firearm Inquiry Statistics (FIST) program either had multiple agencies conducting National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) checks or had more than one type of check or permit.

^aThe FBI also reports all NICS transfer checks for American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. FIST does not collect any other data from these jurisdictions.

^bState and local agencies may conduct NICS checks (as a full or partial point of contact) or conduct transfer or permit checks required by state law.

^cThe FBI began conducting all NICS checks for Iowa on July 1, 2021.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Firearm Inquiry Statistics program, 2021.

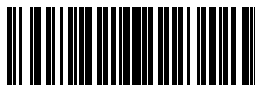


The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Kevin M. Scott, PhD, is the acting director.

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