

VOLUNTARY OUT-OF-HOME FIREARM STORAGE

A toolkit for creating maps

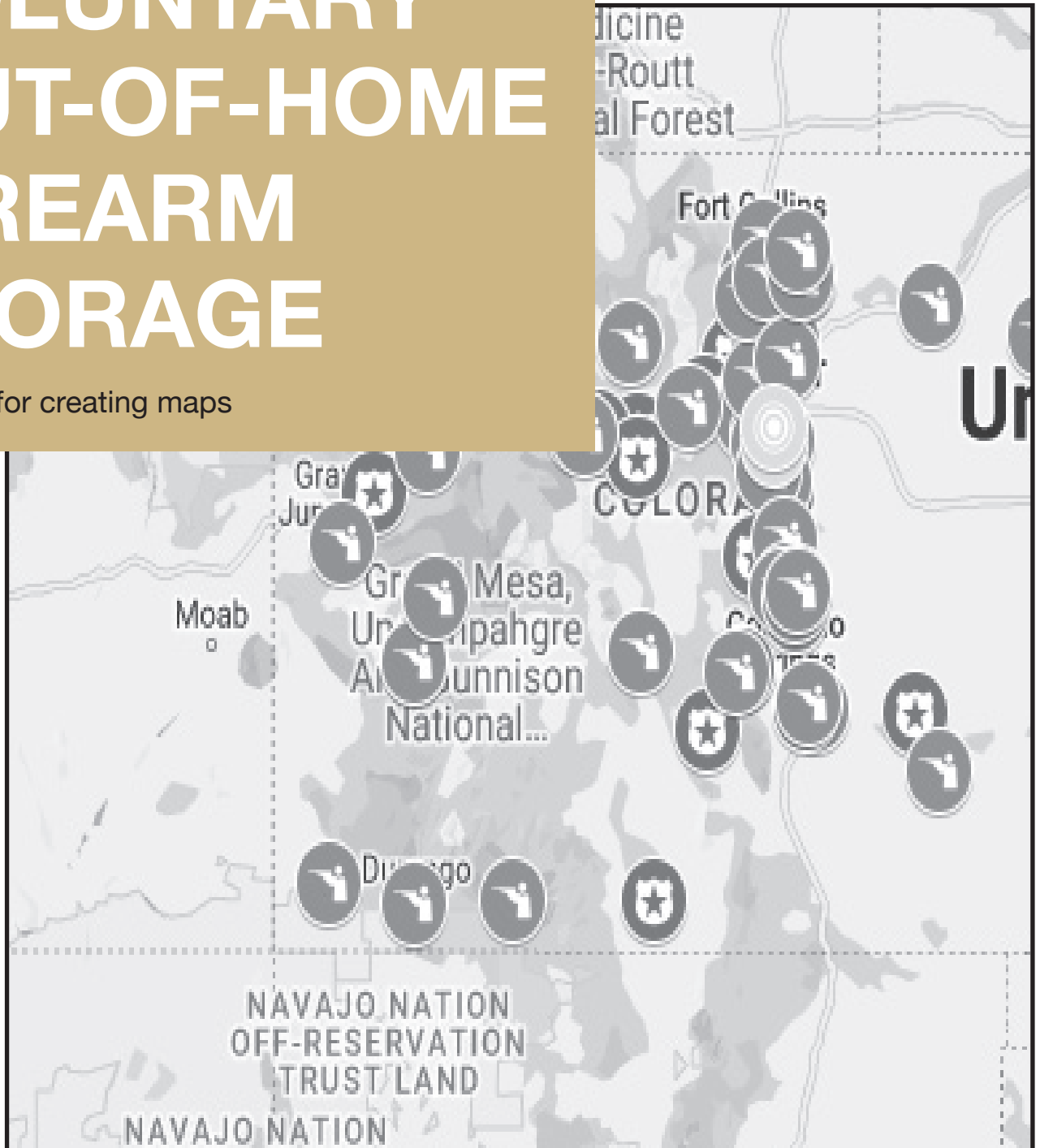


TABLE OF CONTENTS

About this Toolkit	Pg 3
A Primer on Voluntary, Temporary Firearm Storage	Pg 3
How to Find Potential Storage Sites	Pg 8
Best Practices for Conducting Outreach to Potential Storage Sites	Pg 9
Building a Firearm Storage Map in Google Maps	Pg 12
Legal Issues in Providing Temporary Storage	Pg 13
Sharing Firearm Storage Maps with Potential Users	Pg 15
Maintenance of Firearm Storage Programs	Pg 17
Policy and Programmatic Recommendations to Support Temporary Storage	Pg 17
Sample Storage Agreements or Protocols	Pg 18
References	Pg 19

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Suggested citation: Brandspigel S, Barnard L, Knoepke C, McCarthy M, McIntyre S, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Rivara F, Betz ME. 2022. Promoting Voluntary, Temporary Firearm Storage and Development of Firearm Storage Maps: A Toolkit for Injury Prevention. University of Colorado Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative and University of Washington Firearm Injury & Policy Research Program. Available at: <https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/ivpc/research-practice/firearm-injury-prevention>

Acknowledgements: Work by Timothy Kelly contributed to the conceptualization of this toolkit. We appreciate the helpful contributions of Laura-Mae Baldwin and Jacquelyn Clark in reviewing a draft of this document.

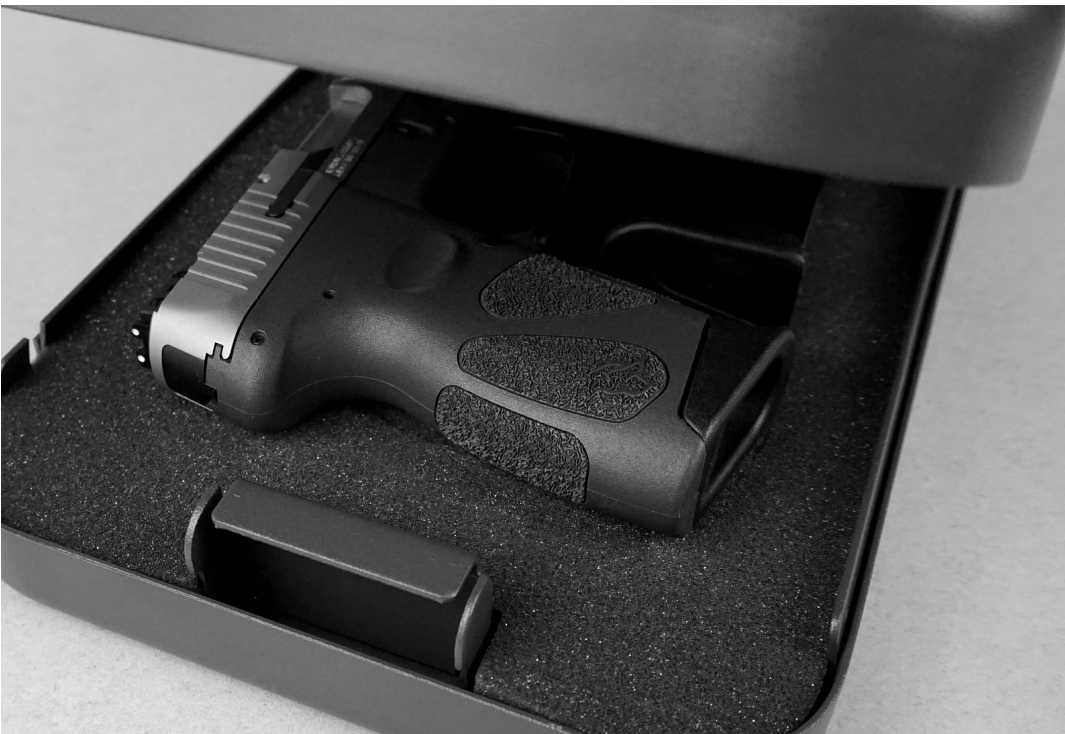
This toolkit was developed by a research team based at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus ([Injury and Violence Prevention Center](#) and [Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative](#)) and the University of Washington's Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center Firearm Injury & Policy Research Program. These organizations have developed firearm storage maps in Colorado and Washington, respectively.

The research team from these two organizations received [NIH funding](#) to study the implementation of these maps in order to support their creation in other states. This project included interviews and surveys with firearm retailers/ranges, law enforcement agencies, firearm owners and their family members, and community organizations and agencies. Through this project, the team collected information about key issues in voluntary, temporary firearm storage, along with recommendations for next steps.

This toolkit provides practical information about voluntary, temporary firearm storage, including the rationale for offering this type of storage and logistics in developing a storage program or a map of storage options. It describes how to find storage suppliers, common concerns, and step-by-step instructions for building a firearm storage map. It is designed to support community organizations, community coalitions, injury or suicide prevention organizations, academic programs focusing on injury/suicide prevention, and other groups that are seeking to promote voluntary, temporary firearm storage.

This toolkit is not intended to provide legal guidance, and we do not address the different issue of court-ordered storage such as Extreme Risk Protection Order or domestic violence restraining orders that limit access to firearms. Our focus is voluntary, temporary firearm storage by adults in the United States.

A PRIMER ON VOLUNTARY, TEMPORARY FIREARM STORAGE



Reducing access to firearms during times of suicide risk can save lives – and voluntary, temporary storage of firearms outside of the home (at firearm retailers, ranges, or law enforcement agencies) is often recommended by health and suicide prevention organizations. Online state maps showing locations willing to provide firearm storage are a new intervention designed to link community members to options for voluntary out-of-home firearm storage.

REDUCING ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, firearms are used in half of all suicides in the U.S. Reducing access to firearms when someone is at risk of suicide can help prevent suicide deaths because of the relative short time preceding many suicide attempts and the high lethality of firearm attempts compared to other methods. Putting time and space between a person at risk and the most lethal method can create a safer environment while suicidal feelings pass and the person at risk gets help. Reducing access to lethal means during times of suicide risk is an evidence-based approach to suicide prevention recommended by numerous national organizations.

VOLUNTARY VS. COURT-ORDERED STORAGE

Voluntary firearm storage is different from removal of firearms required by Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) or “Red Flag Laws”. With ERPOs, a person who a court rules is at high risk of harming themselves or others must relinquish all firearms and may not purchase any until the ERPO expires. In voluntary storage, a firearm owner and his/her family chooses to temporarily store firearms away from home, with no official involvement of a court or law enforcement officials (unless law enforcement provides the storage). Voluntary approaches are generally preferred by firearm owners, with ERPOs an option if other efforts fail.

VOLUNTARY STORAGE STATISTICS

FIREARM OWNERS

A 2021 study of firearms owners in Colorado and Washington found that as many as one quarter had stored their firearms away from the home, car or garage in the last five years. The most common place respondents stored a firearm away from the home was at a family member's home or a self-storage facility. Firearm retailers, friends' or neighbors' home, and shooting ranges were also common storage locations. Law enforcement agencies, pawn shops and military armories were less commonly used storage locations.

The most common reasons individuals stored firearms away from the home were extended travel out-of-town, having young children in the home, buying, selling or renting their home, having teenagers in the home, or having concerns about mental health or substance use for someone in the household.



When asked how likely they would be to store firearms away from the home under certain circumstances, 64% of firearm owners said they would be somewhat or very likely to seek out-of-home storage if someone in the household had mental health or substance use concerns.

FIREARM RETAILERS/RANGES

In a survey of retailers/ranges in Colorado and Washington, nearly half (44.5%) indicated they have ever provided firearm storage. Of those providing storage, the most common method of firearm storage is locked storage where store staff have access. A minority (4.7%) of retailers/ranges that provide storage offer rental of storage lockers where the firearm owner retains a key.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

A 2021 survey of law enforcement agencies in Colorado and Washington found that 53% provide voluntary, temporary storage upon request by community members. Sixty percent of agencies had received at least one storage request in the prior 12 months.(3)

WHERE VOLUNTARY STORAGE HAPPENS

Various locations may be suitable for voluntary firearm storage, and each has benefits and limitations. Having a range of available options can ensure that each individual and family can make the choice that fits their preferences.

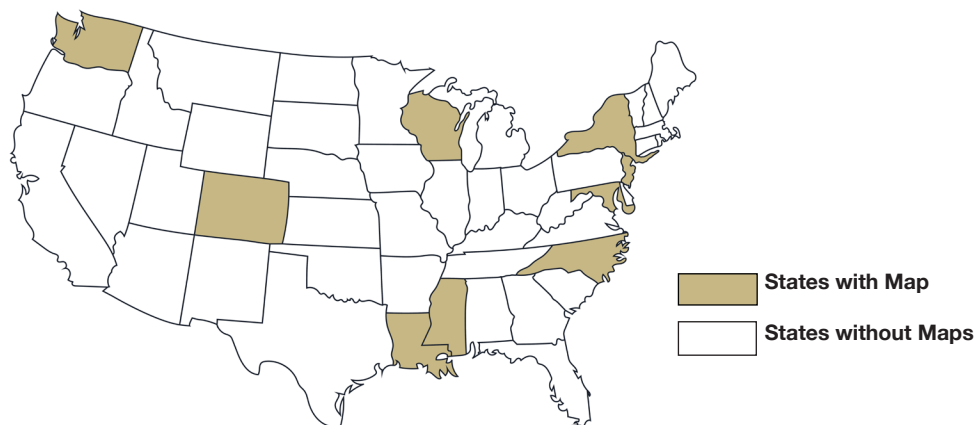
	BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS
FIREARM RETAILERS/RANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have existing infrastructure for firearm storage • Already known to firearm owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long distance travel may be required • Liability concerns for business
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have existing infrastructure for firearm storage • Higher security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitancy among potential storage users • Privacy concerns
SELF-STORAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some self-storage facilities prohibit firearm or ammunition storage • Potential for high cost (safes) • Owner retaining unmediated access may increase risk during crisis
FAMILY MEMBER/FRIEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily accessible • Personal contacts known and trusted by firearm owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeterminate security • Not contractually secure • May constitute a private transfer (depending on state law) and require a background check be conducted by a licensed firearms dealer
PAWN SHOPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily accessible • Some, but not all, have federal firearm licenses and provide storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on storage terms, may raise concerns about ability to retrieve the firearm

FIREARM STORAGE MAPS

Online firearm storage maps are designed to help individuals find storage locations near them. Storage may be offered by individual locations without a map (or without participating in a map). The creation of a state map may encourage some locations to provide storage, particularly if it's something they weren't sure how to do or of which they weren't aware. As of September 2022, 8 states have publicly available firearm storage maps, and others are being created at the time of this toolkit's publication.

Existing Maps as of September 2022

LOCATION	MAP DESCRIPTION	ORGANIZATION HOSTING	LINK
COLORADO - STATEWIDE	The map was created by the University of Colorado Injury and Violence Prevention Center in 2019.	Colorado Firearm Safety Coalition (in partnership with the University of Colorado Injury and Violence Prevention Center)	Colorado Firearm Storage Map
LOUISIANA SOUTHERN REGION	This map of firearm storage options in South Louisiana. The project also provides funds for firearm storage cabinets.	The Vision Coalition (Veteran-Informed Safety Intervention and Outreach Network)	The Armory Project
MARYLAND-STATEWIDE	Developed in 2020, the map was created by a team at Johns Hopkins University.	Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence	Maryland Safe Storage Map
MISSISSIPPI-STATEWIDE	This map was developed in 2021 by a team at the University of Southern Mississippi.	Website of Dr. Mike Anestis, now Executive Director of New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center and Associate Professor of Urban-Global Public Health at Rutgers University	Mississippi Safe Firearm Storage Map
NEW JERSEY-STATEWIDE	This map was developed in 2021 by a team at Rutgers University.	New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center	NJ Safe Firearm Storage Map
NEW YORK - STATEWIDE	Published in 2021, this map was developed by the Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium at the Rockefeller Institute of Government. The Consortium partnered with the New York State Police and New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to develop this online firearm storage map	Rockefeller Institute of Government	New York Firearm Storage Map
WASHINGTON STATEWIDE	The map was created in 2020. Directly under the map is an embedded spreadsheet of all the different organizations within the state that offer voluntary storage and is complete with various information about each location.	University of Washington's Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center	Washington Firearm Safe Storage Map
WISCONSIN - STATEWIDE	Wisconsin: The map was created by the Southeastern Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Task Force. It contains the map itself on the right side of the screen as well as a link for businesses to add themselves to the map. The site also includes informational materials and a sample contract.	The Southeastern Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Task Force	Wisconsin Firearm Safe Storage Facilities



HOW TO CONTACT POTENTIAL STORAGE SITES WHEN CREATING A MAP

Create a State List of Potential Storage Suppliers:

Retailers/ranges:

- Obtain a state Federal Firearm Licensee (FFL) list. This is a publicly available list of all federally licensed gun dealers and can be downloaded by state at the [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives website](#). Note that this list will include individuals who buy and sell firearms out of their home and do not have a brick-and-mortar business location. These licensees generally do not have the business or physical infrastructure to provide voluntary storage, so they are typically not contacted for inclusion on a state map.
- Search business listings in Google Maps. The Colorado team systematically searched the entire state of Colorado on Google Maps using search terms like gun shop(s), firearm, armory, firing range, and shooting range to identify potential storage sites that are open to the public.

Law enforcement agencies:

- Some state maps include law enforcement agencies, but some do not, given that firearm owners may prefer storage at firearm retailers/ranges. A list of law enforcement agencies can be purchased at the [National Public Safety Information Bureau](#). State regulatory agencies, like the Department of Public Safety, may be able to provide a list of all law enforcement agencies in the state.

Other locations:

- There may be other places to consider for out-of-home, temporary storage (ex: pawn shops, self storage units, etc.) depending on your location and local firearm laws. If you choose to include these in your storage map, modify your search terms in Google Maps to include them.



BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING OUTREACH POTENTIAL STORAGE SITES

Once you've identified potential storage sites in your area, it's time to reach out.

Contact Sites on List

- Initial contact can be done by person, email, or telephone, depending on the location and availability of contact information.
- In Colorado and Washington, outreach to law enforcement agencies was done by email in order to be sure the request could be routed to the person with decision-making authority. In instances where the contact information was missing or incorrect, we called the agency to get a working email address. Contact information for law enforcement agencies may also be identified by internet searches and Google Maps.
- For each contact, ask whether temporary storage is offered and whether the site is interested in being listed.

Sample language for contacting firearm retailers/ranges:

"Hi [SITE], I'm calling to see if you offer voluntary, temporary gun storage?"

"My name is [NAME] and I am part of the [ORGANIZATION], an organization that works on suicide prevention and gun safety. Currently we are calling every firearm retailer/range [and law enforcement agency] across the state to find locations that either currently offer voluntary, temporary gun storage on a case-by-case basis, or are willing to offer it if requested. We are creating an online map that lists trusted sites where community members T voluntarily store their guns in times of personal crisis such as feeling suicidal. Does this sound like something that [SITE] would feel comfortable being listed on?"

Follow-up with disclosure: "We are just gathering this information and distributing it. We are not setting up any kind of infrastructure for insurance, providing any education or training on how this storage should take place."

If "no" for any site, then ask, "Do you know of any other [retailer/range] that might store firearms?"

Other helpful lines:

- *"The last thing we want to do is tell you how to do business. That's why the website will clearly state that the listed businesses consider requests for storage on a case-by-case basis."*
- *"You can set your own terms with the firearm owner about the specifics of storage, such as charging a fee, length of time that firearms will be stored and number of firearms that you are willing to accept."*
- *"We want to make sure that you still feel empowered to make your own decisions whether or not to offer storage depending on the individual circumstances."*
- *"I appreciate your concerns about potential liability and I recognize that there are still unanswered questions. As you consider participating, I want to make clear that I am not in a position to offer legal advice."*

- *“My goal is not to be a salesperson and sell you on this idea. I just want to explain who we are and what we are trying to do and let your business make their own informed decision.”*
- *“We view this map as an important connector between firearm owners in crisis and trusted local gun shops who can hopefully provide a life-saving service.”*
- If questions are raised about ERPO/Red Flag legislation: *“This map is not connected to ERPOs. The map is focused on voluntary, temporary storage, not court-mandated relinquishment like ERPOs/red flag laws.”*

Sample language for contacting law enforcement

“Hello, I’m [NAME], and I’m part of a team at [ORGANIZATION] that is putting together a map of available options for temporarily storing firearms at law enforcement agencies in [AREA]. Does your agency accept firearms for temporary storage in times of personal crisis, such as feeling suicidal? Who is the right person to speak to about this?” End by asking for the appropriate contact person’s email address to facilitate an email at the end of the project.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL OUTREACH

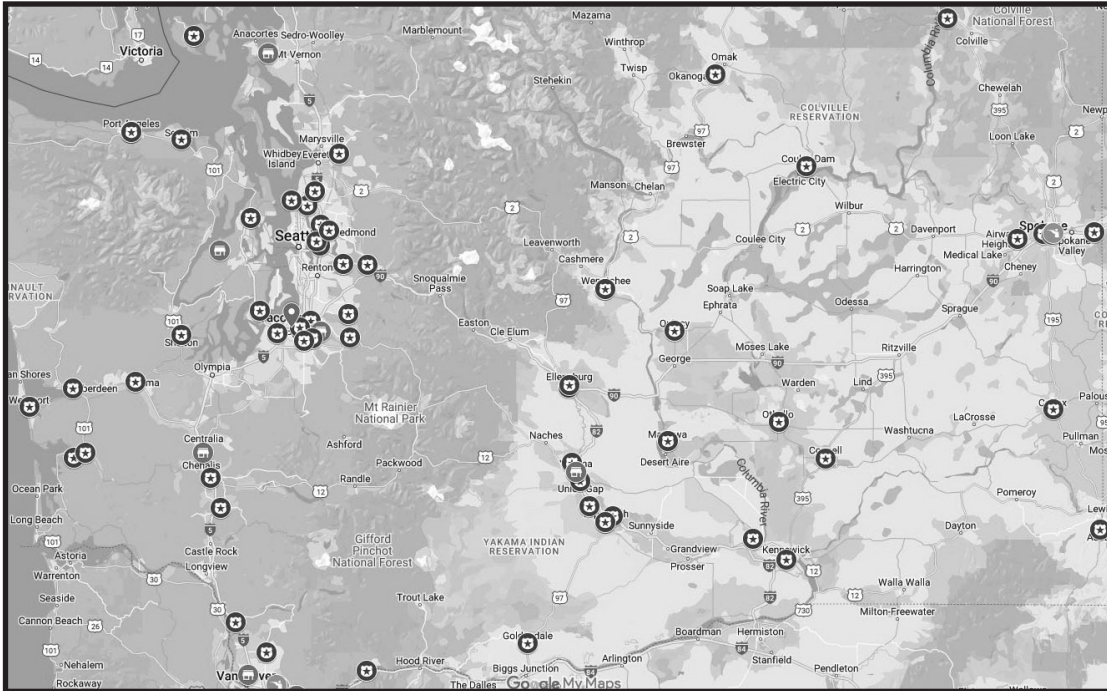
Consider these elements of successful outreach as you plan your approach:

- Partner with trusted organizations – In Colorado, a project team collaborated closely with the Colorado Firearm Safety Coalition to build and host the firearm storage map. The coalition includes representatives from the firearms community as well as public health and medical professionals and they helped to review project materials and advise on the initiative. Consider whether there are organizations in your community or state that may garner the trust of firearm retailers/ranges and explore opportunities to work together on expanding voluntary storage options.
- Consider who will host the map – Locations may be more willing to participate in the map if it is hosted by a neutral or firearm-friendly organization than one that advocates for gun control legislation. Also consider your state geography and politics; locations in rural areas may be less interested in participating if the site is associated only with a very urban organization, for example.
- Develop a plan Before you begin, determine your protocol for contacting potential storage sites. In Colorado and Washington, every retailer/range that had a listed phone number was called twice during normal business hours. Overall, the team identified almost 500 retailers/ranges in Colorado with this method, although the majority did not answer. The team assumed that sites that did not answer were unlikely to offer storage.
- Talk to the right person – When calling firearm retailers/ranges, ask for the manager or owner. Not all the employees may know the policy on storage, so asking the manager or owner can lead to the most accurate information.
- Get to the point – When calling firearm retailers/ranges, many programs found it helpful to lead with a question about whether or not the site offers firearm storage. Even if a site has not offered firearm storage in the past, this opens a conversation about why someone might seek out storage. A location may have not yet had a request for storage, but still be willing to consider future requests and be listed on a storage map.

- Lead with suicide prevention – Don't be afraid to use the word 'suicide' during conversations with firearm retailer/range owners when you are discussing firearm storage. While this is not the only reason someone may seek out temporary storage, it is a clear crisis situation. Many storage sites are interested in preventing suicides in their community.
- Create a process to opt-in – Creating a storage map is program development, not a formal research study. While a full consent process is not required, it is important to have a clear process for sites to be included in a storage map. This could include verbal assent or an emailed or mailed formal intake form indicating that they wish to be listed. Sites willing to consider storage (or who already provide it) should be asked if they were willing to be on map, and if so to provide a preferred name & phone number as well as any details they would like included (e.g. cost of storage).
- Create a process to update listings or opt-out – State clearly the process for changing their listing or being removed from the map as well so that a site can maintain control over their participation in the program. This can be as simple as sending an email to a contact person who can remove or edit their listing if desired.
- Address storage logistics – For existing firearm storage maps, the organizations building the maps did not provide guidelines around when and how storage should take place. Individual storage sites can determine when, whether and how they provide storage, whether they have a formal program or decide on a case-by-case basis. Sites that are interested in a formal storage program can reach out to [Hold My Guns](#), which provides structured guidelines for storage sites.
- When contacting potential storage sites, you may hear questions or concerns about liability and legal issues, as these are very common questions. While some information on these concerns is covered in the Legal Issues section, some of these questions are not fully resolved. We recommend taking note of the concerns and being clear that your organization is not providing legal advice and it is totally up to the individual business/agency to determine how they operate and if they would like to be listed. Do not approach calls from the viewpoint of a salesperson. Instead, simply stick to the facts and let the firearm retailers/ranges or law enforcement agencies make their own risk/benefit analysis
- Provide information on privacy for people seeking storage – Retailers are often sensitive to the idea of a database tracking people with mental health issues, so it may be helpful to share how the storage map will be shared, what if any data will be available on website users, and who will be accessing that data. Firearm storage maps do not collect any specific information on people who use the sites, including issues like mental health. The maps only list sites willing to consider temporary storage.
- Follow-up – Keep track of all communication including date and name of contact. Have a plan to recontact sites if you do not receive a response, and to confirm their participation. A welcome packet for new storage locations could provide additional suicide prevention resources and ensure they have a record of participation in the storage map. Your state office of suicide prevention may have resources that can be provided to retailers/ranges interested in more materials. Several state maps including Colorado, Washington and Wisconsin link to resources on firearm safety and suicide prevention.

BUILDING A FIREARM STORAGE MAP IN GOOGLE MAPS

Building a custom map in Google Maps is easy and free. Once you have a list of sites to include, you can add them to a custom map. Then the map can be publicly shared on the web or embedded in another website.



HOW TO CREATE A CUSTOM MAP

1. Create a Google account for the project, like “ColoradoGunStorage@gmail.com.”
2. While signed into the Google account for your map project, navigate to the “[My Maps](#)” page
3. Click “Create a new map”.
4. Go to the top left and click “Untitled map” and create a new name for your map. You can also add a description here
5. To add storage locations to the map, use the search bar in the top middle part of the map. Once you have found the correct location, click in the lower left-hand corner of the location.
6. Once a location is added, navigate to the control panel and find the location just added. By clicking on the paint can on the right-hand side of the location name, you can change the color and icon that will be displayed in this location.
7. If desired, you can separate specific location types (e.g. law enforcement vs retailers/ranges) into specific layers and name them accordingly.
8. You can change the base map view by clicking the Down Arrow Next to “Base map” in the bottom of the left panel. To choose a style, click one of the images.
9. If want to see how it looks in the map viewer, click Preview.
10. To continue editing your Map, sign in to [My Maps](#) and you’ll see maps you’ve made or viewed as well as maps shared with you.

11. Once you have finalized adding all locations on the Google Map and you are happy with how it looks, you must change the permissions from “Private” to “Public” before posting or embedding this map. In the control panel select “Share” and turn on “Anyone with this link can view” and “let others search for and find this map on the internet”. If you have an account specific for this project, you can also select “let others see your name and photo on this map”.
12. The link to your map will be at the bottom of the share page after turning on the first two options.
13. You can also share the map with specific people by selecting “Share to drive”, adding their email to “Add people and Groups”. Do not change from “Viewer” to “Editor” when sharing with specific people unless you want open access editing by anyone on the internet.
14. To embed the map into a webpage, click Preview, select “Share” and then click “embed on your site”. A pop-up message will say “To embed this map in your own website, copy the following HTML and paste it in the source code for your page: XXX”.
15. Helpful website with screenshots of each step:
<https://www.howtogeek.com/664890/how-to-create-a-custom-map-in-google-maps/>

OTHER MAPPING PLATFORMS

Other platforms, including those maintained by Esri such as ArcGIS or Tableau, are also available for creating these types of maps. Many health departments and academic institutions have access to these types of software, which are generally regarded as a more powerful mapping tool. However, they require specific training to use and a license to maintain and operate. Additionally, most of the public is extremely familiar with Google Maps functioning so we believe using Google Maps is the most accessible way to display this type of map.

LEGAL ISSUES IN PROVIDING TEMPORARY STORAGE

Legal and liability issues are the most common concern for potential storage suppliers though we know of no such liability cases brought forward because of firearm storage maps.

These concerns include:

During storage:

- Regulatory compliance when providing storage in accordance with state and federal law and regulations (e.g. how to log firearm)
- Liability for damage or theft of firearms occurring while temporarily stored with the supplier

After storage:

- Concerns regarding ability to refuse to return a firearm to an owner if the storage provider does not believe them to be safe
- Legal issues if the owner does not retrieve them in a timely manner (though this can be addressed in the storage contract)
- Liability upon return of the firearm to someone (e.g. if the owner subsequently uses it in a suicide attempt or crime)

To the best of our knowledge, there is little to no case law regarding temporary transfer of firearms during periods of personal crisis, so questions around liability remain unanswered though recent legislation (described below) has attempted to address this in some states. Organizations creating storage maps are generally not in a position to offer protection from legal liability.

A substantial number of private businesses and law enforcement agencies continue to participate in storage programs despite this uncertainty. Some ways that storage sites address these issues include:

- Standardize the process: Many storage locations have developed a standard process for intake of firearms for temporary storage and have a standard contract between the storage facility and the fire arm owner ([see example from Wisconsin](#)). This process includes:
 - Determining what, if anything, employees will ask individual about their reasons for storing firearms with you. Some locations train staff not to ask for personal details on the reason for storage that are not needed for the purposes of a business transaction.
 - Determining how the site will return firearms after storage, including need for appointment and process if the owner attempts to retrieve their firearm(s) but they a) fail the background check, or b) make staff otherwise feel uncomfortable transferring firearms to them.
 - Gathering the necessary information from the firearm owner (e.g. name, phone, reason for storage if collected) through an agreement form
 - Providing clear information to the owner about background check requirements, length of time that storage is permitted, cost of storage, limit on number of firearms that can be stored, and what will happen if the owner doesn't return
 - Ensuring compliance with ATF guidelines for logging the firearm transfer
- Know federal and state laws as they pertain to firearm storage: As of publication of this toolkit, two states that have explicitly addressed liability concerns in state statute (both passed in 2022). [Louisiana passed HB 260](#).

“No person shall have a cause of action against a federal firearms licensee operating lawfully in the state of Louisiana for any act or omission arising from a firearm hold agreement and resulting in personal injury or death of any natural person, including the return of any firearms to the individual firearm owner by a federal firearms licensee at the termination of a firearm hold agreement.”

[Washington State passed HB 118](#):

“A dealer who provides a service of allowing a person to temporarily store a firearm on the dealer’s premises in a storage locker, box, or container that is locked and not accessible to the dealer does not hereby create a special relationship, for civil liability purposes, between the dealer and the person who temporarily stores the firearm on the dealer’s premises.”

- Understand ATF requirements: Federal Firearms Licensees can take a firearm into inventory for temporary storage in the same way as other acquisitions. The same process is used to return a firearm as a new purchase. The return requires the completion of the ATF Form 4473 and compliance with the NICS background check. In addition, some licensees have storage lockers available, where only the firearm owner maintains a key – in these cases a transfer does not place. Law enforcement agencies, while not subject to ATF requirements for retailers, have their own processes for logging and storing firearms.

SHARING FIREARM STORAGE MAPS WITH POTENTIAL USERS

Potential users of out-of-home storage maps include:

- Firearm owners and those who live in homes with firearms
- Family members and friends of firearm owners
- Health care providers (e.g. mental health professionals, ER doctors, primary care providers)
- Social workers, crisis counselors, and individuals working with state 988 response teams

There are many circumstances when out-of-home storage may be sought which could be advertised to firearm owners including:

- A firearm owner is travelling out of state and want to keep firearms secure while they are away
- A teenager in the home is in crisis and at risk of suicide
- Grandchildren are visiting
- A couple is divorcing, and arguments are getting heated
- A family member is experiencing mental health or substance use concerns
- A homeowner is listing the home for sale and wants firearms to be secure while showings occur

Ensuring appropriate use of the map is key for its success and it is important that efforts be made to widely disseminate it. Many retailers/ranges consider offering storage on the map may only offer on a case-by-case basis. Ideally, maps should include guidance for users about calling a potential storage location with a request and asking:

- The process for storing
- Any costs
- Whether a background check will be conducted
- Any limits on how long guns can be stored

If you have Law Enforcement agencies on your map, include a note like this:

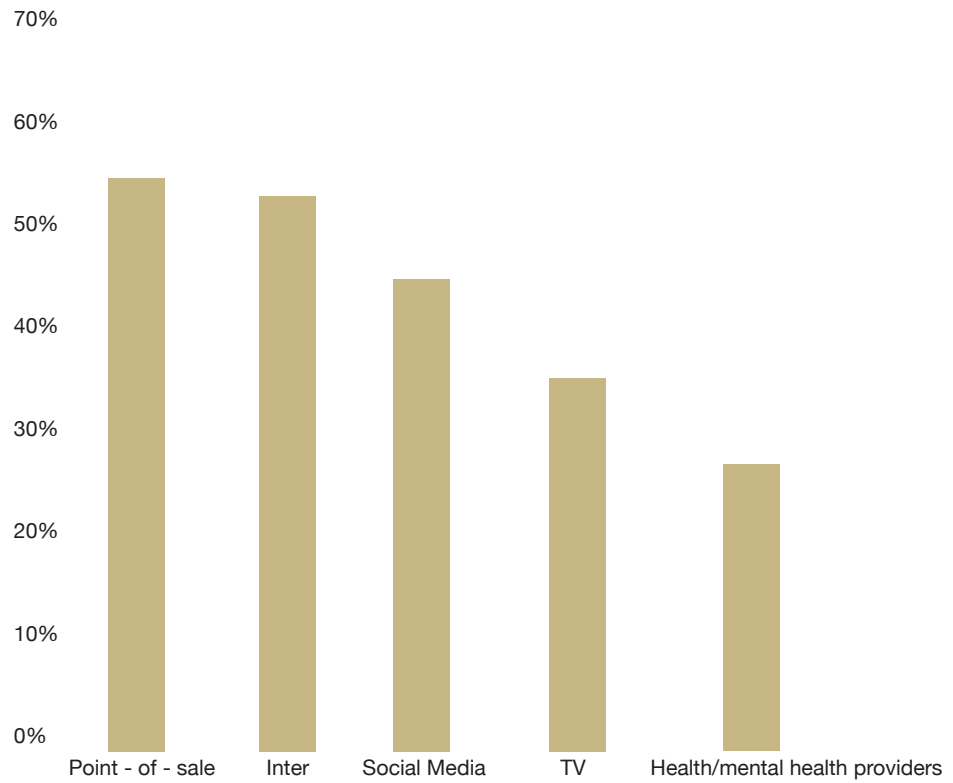
“Do not open carry firearms into a police station – always call in advance. Lock firearms in a case or leave them locked in your vehicle while making arrangements with law enforcement. Some locations provide pick-up services; you may inquire about that when you call.”

Data from research on best ways to share information

- In a recent survey of over 1,000 individuals who either own firearms or live in homes with firearms in Colorado and Washington state, only one fifth (19%) of all respondents had heard of the gun storage map in their state, indicating the need for additional dissemination.
- Most respondents (75%) said they would view it as positive if they learned a firearm retailer/range in their community was listed on the map, and 67% would view it as positive if they learned a law enforcement agency was listed on the map.

- When asked “What would be the 3 best ways to share information in your community about options for voluntary, temporary firearm storage away from the home?”, survey respondents indicated that the best ways would be information provided at point-of-sale for fire arms (58%), internet (56%), social media (45%), TV (36%), and sharing information via health care and mental health providers (30%)

Best ways to share information about voluntary, temporary firearm storage



- Qualitative interviews from storage suppliers, (firearm retailers/ranges and law enforcement agencies) and relevant state/national firearm organizations, firearm owners, and other states that have considered or created their own storage maps revealed additional opportunities for dissemination including AM radio, gun shows, YouTube channels and other social media, press releases, the NSSF, and local advertising (for example at coffee shops, gyms, libraries or community centers) and directly at supplier locations frequented by those with access to firearms.

Sample stakeholder list for state/local outreach

- Health care providers
- Behavioral health systems and service providers
- Crisis hotlines and centers
- Suicide prevention organizations
- Veteran’s organizations
- Law enforcement and public safety associations
- Clergy and religious organizations that provide counseling
- Gun violence prevention groups
- Educational institutions and school counselors

MAINTENANCE OF FIREARM STORAGE PROGRAMS

Once a firearm storage map is built and publicly available online, plan for the following:

- Responding to inquiries or requests: What contact information is provided to storage sites to request edits or removal of their listing? Some maps, like Wisconsin, include this on the map website itself. If it is an organizational email address, make a plan for who will check the email address and respond to any inquiries.
- Updating listings: Who will make updates to the map if sites want to be added, removed, or have information updated? Will regular outreach be conducted to all sites to renew their listing, or will you rely on sites to contact you if they wish to change their listing?
- Web maintenance and hosting: What organization hosts the website where the map is embedded? The website may have annual fees for maintenance, hosting and domain services that need to be budgeted for.
- Outreach and marketing: What outreach and marketing about the firearm storage program will you offer? If there are media inquiries about the site, who will respond?

POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Voluntary, temporary firearm storage holds promise as a key element of firearm safety and suicide prevention initiatives. To realize its full potential, there needs to be an expansion of both the number of community storage options as well as awareness and uptake of out-of-home storage by firearm owners. This section outlines some recommendations for areas where additional policy and programmatic changes are needed:

Organizational Policies and Programs

Integrate firearm storage maps with a broader range of suicide prevention activities – Outreach to potential storage suppliers is a great opportunity to build relationships with firearms retailers/ranges and law enforcement agencies and discuss suicide prevention. Storage sites are well-positioned to engage in other suicide prevention activities, like promoting trainings for staff on suicide prevention and sharing materials in their store about suicide prevention and crisis support for their customers. Consider linking the storage map to other suicide prevention activities for storage partners and ensure connections between the map and 988 and crisis intervention programs. Expand use of technology to improve safe storage site visibility - Currently firearm storage maps are created for specific geographic areas, such as counties or states, and are not linked nationally. Integrating firearm storage options into existing mapping platforms could make it easier for community members to find storage locations in their area. For example, a Google Maps search for other public health-related terms like “COVID testing” or “Prescription Drug Drop Box” reveals numerous options without having to visit a special custom map for that information. As out-of-home firearm storage becomes an increasingly common behavior to support health and safety, gathering and providing this information in existing map platforms could facilitate information sharing.

Regulatory Agencies and Policy Makers

Clarify regulatory processes and legal and liability concerns as they apply to voluntary, temporary storage - Many storage suppliers are unsure about the proper process for offering voluntary, temporary storage. Regulatory agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and local or state agencies can clarify this by explaining whether background checks are required when returning firearms to owners, and whether firearm retailers/ranges can refuse to return firearms to owners when concerned about safety. Storage sites also have questions about the proper procedures if a firearm owner does not pass a background check when they came to pick up their guns, or does not return for their firearms – clarification of ownership is needed for these scenarios. Legal and liability concerns remain major barriers to participation and could be addressed through legislation that clarifies liability in cases of temporary storage, such as the [new laws in Louisiana](#).

Address space concerns – Limited physical space for providing storage is an issue for storage sites. Law enforcement agencies generally provide storage in their evidence lockers, which are constrained and require complex procedures for adding and removing items. Space constraints could be addressed through funding for dedicated community storage lockers or for renovations that would allow “*safe deposit box*” style storage at community sites.

Identify ways to remove cost barriers to voluntary, temporary storage – Safe firearm storage is a community good, and it is important that we ensure all people, regardless of financial means, have access to safe options to protect themselves and their families during periods of crisis. Firearm storage away from the home has costs for the owner, including background check fees and, for some storage sites, storage fees. There are also costs for storage sites such as additional staff time, storage space, the cost of legal guidance and insurance, and resources to maintain a storage program. Identifying ways to reduce these costs for both community members and storage partners can ensure that temporary, voluntary firearm storage is accessible.

SAMPLE STORAGE AGREEMENTS, PROTOCOLS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- [Wisconsin Contract to Hold Firearm](#)
- [Wisconsin Safe Storage Pamphlet](#)
- [Louisiana Armory Project brochure](#) (Veteran-focused)

RELATED RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

For any questions, please contact Emmy Betz at marian.betz@cuanschultz.edu

Map creation

- Recorded webinar: “[Promoting voluntary out-of-home firearm storage to prevent suicide: the role of storage maps and community partners](#)” presented by Sara Brandspigel, MPH, Lauren Rooney, MPH, Leslie Bernard, MPH, & Jacquelyn Clark (March 8, 2022)
- Kelly T, Brandspigel S, Polzer E, Betz ME. Firearm Storage Maps: A Pragmatic Approach to Reduce Firearm Suicide During Times of Risk. *Ann Intern Med.* 2020 Mar 3;172(5):351-353. doi: 10.7326/M19-2944. Epub 2020 Jan 21. PMID: 31958811. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31958811/>
- Bongiorno DM, Kramer EN, Booty MD, Crifasi CK. Development of an online map of safe gun storage sites in Maryland for suicide prevention. *Int Rev Psychiatry.* 2021 Nov;33(7):626-630. doi: 10.1080/09540261.2020.1816927. Epub 2020 Oct 20. PMID: 33078657; 33078657/PMCID: PMC8055715. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

Retailers/ranges

- Barnard LM, Johnson RL, Brandspigel S, Rooney LA, McCarthy M, Meador L, Rivara FP, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Knoepke CE, Fortney JC, Peterson RA, Betz ME. Voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage: A survey of firearm retailers and ranges in two states. *Prev Med.* 2022 Aug 26:107220. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107220. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36037869. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36037869/>

Law enforcement

- Betz ME, Brandspigel S, Barnard LM, Johnson RL, Knoepke CE, Peterson RA, Rivara FP, Rowhani-Rahbar A. Voluntary, temporary out-of-home firearm storage: a survey of law enforcement agencies in two states. *Inj Epidemiol.* 2022 Jul 21;9(1):24. doi: 10.1186/s40621-022-00389-3. PMID:35864502; PMCID: PMC9302866. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35864502/>

Firearm owners

- Betz ME, Rooney LA, Barnard LM, Siry-Bove BJ, Brandspigel S, McCarthy M, Simeon K, Meador L, Rivara FP, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Knoepke CE. Voluntary, temporary, out-of-home firearm storage: A qualitative study of stakeholder views. *Suicide Life Threat Behav.* 2022 Feb 28. doi: 10.1111/sltb.12850. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 35224749. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35224749/>
- Thomas AC, Siry-Bove BJ, Barnard LM, Rooney L, McCarthy M, Mustafa A, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Rivara FP, Betz ME, Knoepke C. A Qualitative study on diverse perspectives and identities of firearm owners. *Inj Prev.* 2022 Apr 25:injuryprev-2022-044522. doi: 10.1136/injuryrev-2022-044522. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 35470245. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35470245/>