

Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2021

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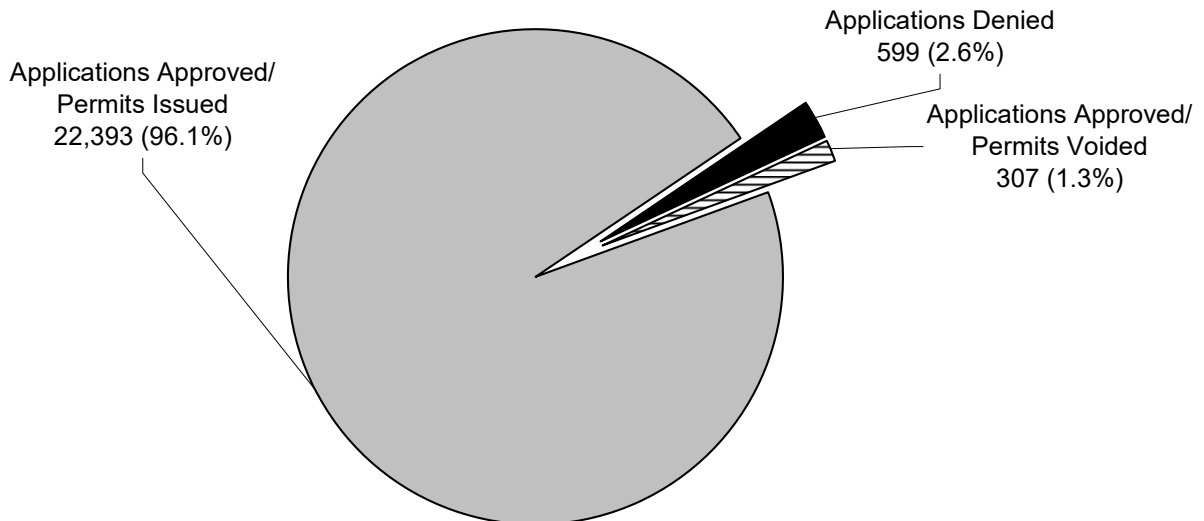
Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2021. This is the twenty-second annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Denied

A total of 23,299 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2021, marking a 10.8% decrease from 26,122 applications processed in 2020. Of the applications processed in 2021, 96.1% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 1.3% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within a specified time period; and 2.6% were denied due to one or more disqualifying factors. Figure 1 provides additional information. Denials are described in greater detail throughout this report.

Figure 1: Firearm Permit Application Outcomes, State of Hawaii, 2021

23,299 Applications Processed



Registrations and Importations

The 22,393 permits issued statewide in 2021 cover a total of 57,091 firearms registered throughout the year, resulting in a 6.8% increase from the 53,481 firearms registered during 2020. Just over half (29,143, or 51.0%) of the firearms registered during 2021 were imported from out-of-state, with the balance accounted for by transfers of firearms that were previously registered in Hawaii. Independent estimates made during the late-1990s by the Department of the Attorney General and the City & County of Honolulu Police Department conservatively placed the number of privately owned firearms in Hawaii at “at least one million.” Adding to that rough tally during the 2000 through 2021 period, a total of 754,329 firearms were registered (including some more than once, by different owners) and 394,255 were imported, while an unknown number of firearms permanently left the state.

Permits and Registrations, by Firearm Type

In the State of Hawaii, single-use permits are issued to acquire specific handguns, while annual permits are issued in order to acquire an unlimited number of longarms (rifles and shotguns). By firearm type, 53.8% (12,046) of the permits issued during 2021 were to acquire handguns, while 46.2% (10,347) were longarm permits. The tally of handgun permits is perennially confounded, however, as some of the county police departments issue a single permit listing all handguns that will be acquired simultaneously from the same source (i.e., one permit per transaction, per HRS § 134-2(e)), while the other departments issue one permit per handgun even if they are acquired in the same transaction.

Longarms accounted for 55.4% (31,600) of all firearms registered during 2021 (57,091). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 43.2% (24,678) and 12.1% (6,922) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 44.6% (25,491) of firearms registered throughout 2021 were handguns.

County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2021 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2021

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	13,807	4,899	2,938	1,655	23,299
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	13,350	4,620	2,801	1,622	22,393
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	210	7	73	17	307
Applications Denied	247	272	64	16	599
Denial Rate*	1.8%	5.6%	2.2%	1.0%	2.6%
Firearms Registered	32,828	11,600	8,149	4,514	57,091
Firearms Imported	16,843	6,103	3,763	2,434	29,143

* The most comparable national figure is a 7.0% average denial rate in 2018 for 719 local law enforcement agencies nationwide that conduct background checks for firearm purchases (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021).

As compared to Hawaii’s resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2021 (see Figure 2). (If the counties’ registration activity occurred in equal proportion to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal value/height.)

Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Denied versus Resident Population Distribution, 2021

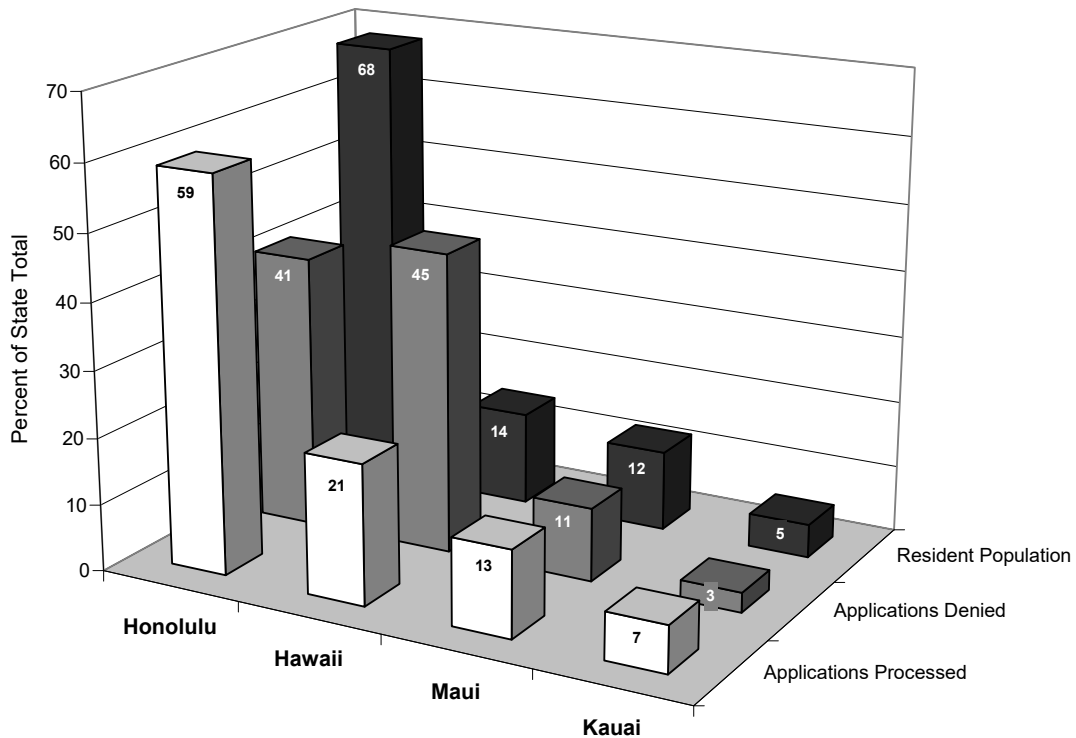
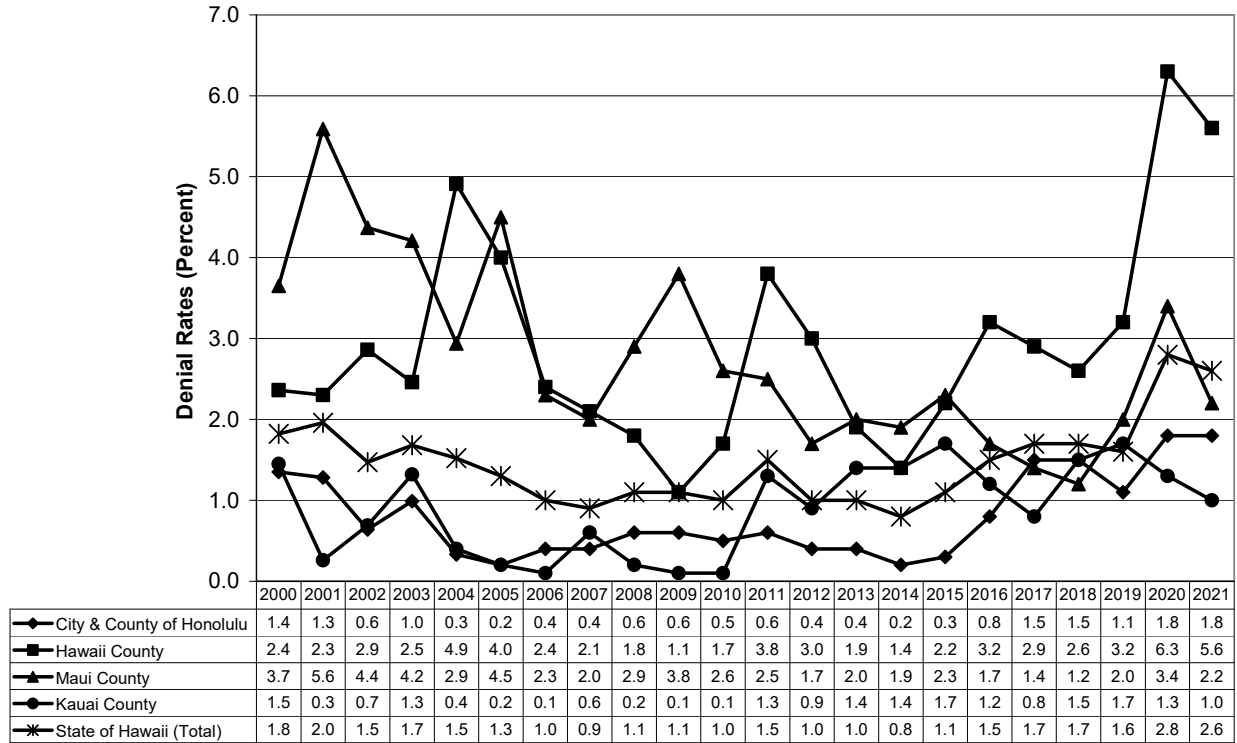


Figure 3 (next page) presents historical data on permit application denial rates for the State of Hawaii and each of the four counties. The City & County of Honolulu’s denial rate in 2021 (1.8%) tied that jurisdiction’s record high rate set in 2020.

Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Denial Rates, State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2021



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the 22 years for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2021, the number of statewide permit applications annually processed increased by 253.1%, the number of firearms annually registered climbed 319.3%, and the number of firearms annually imported rose by 303.2%.

Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends, State of Hawaii, 2000-2021

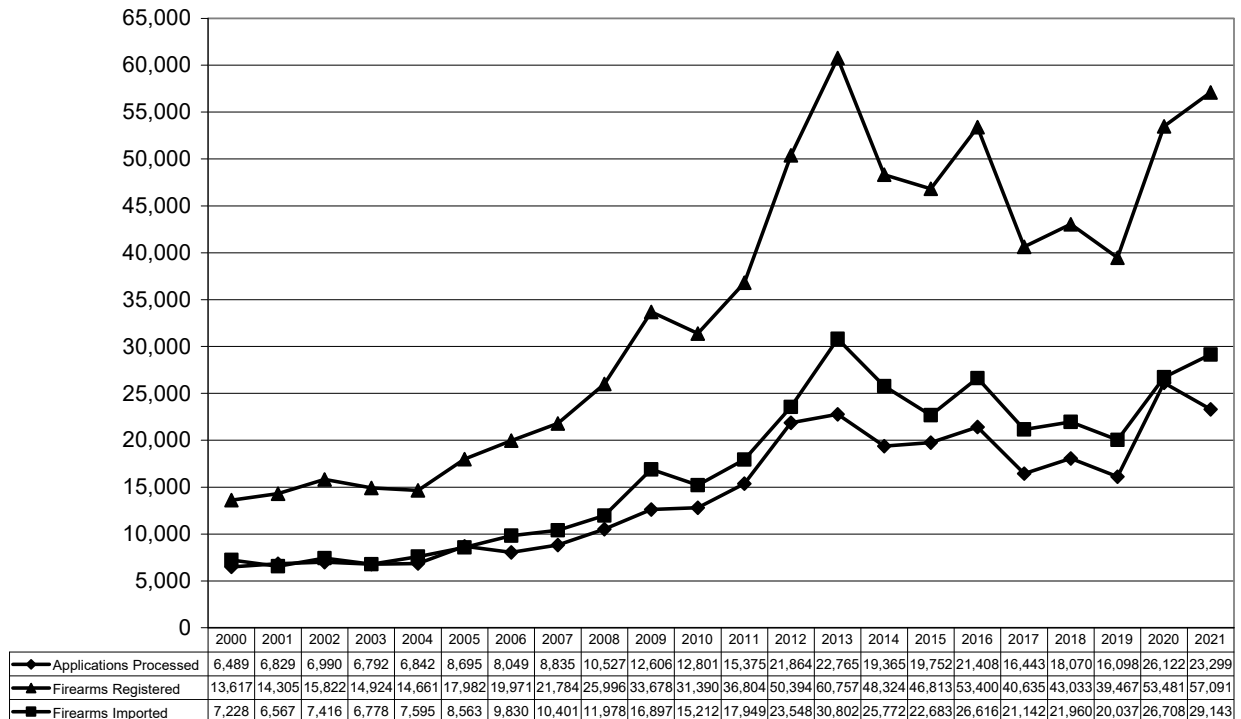
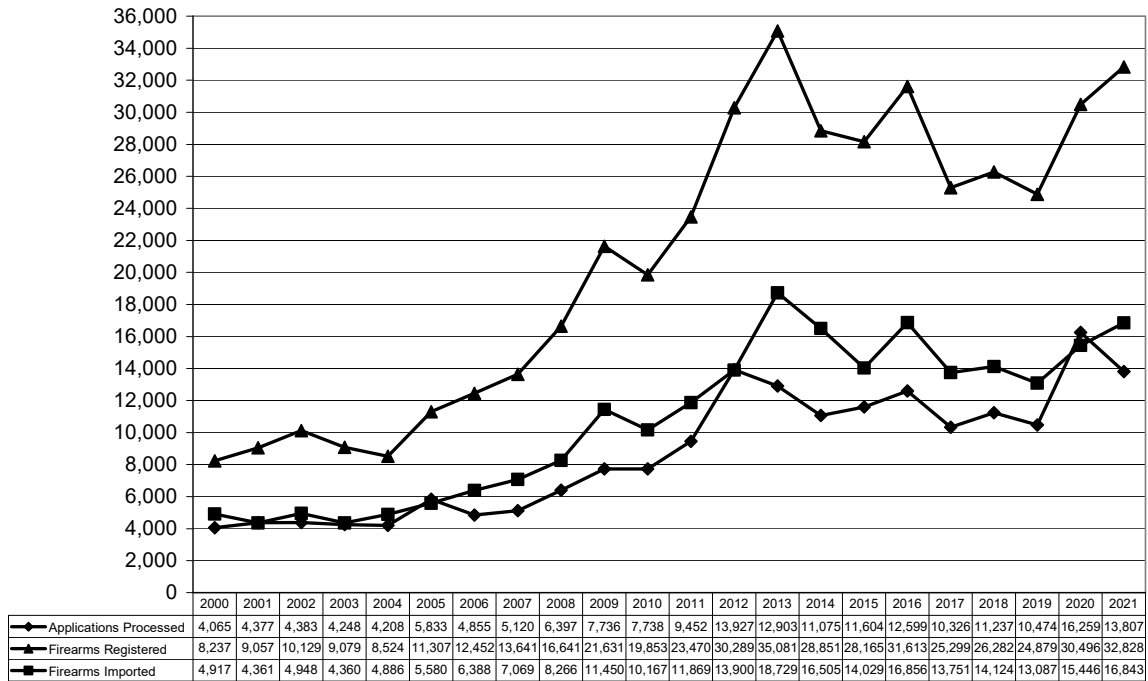


Figure 5 shows that, between 2000 and 2021 in the City & County of Honolulu, the annual tally of permits processed increased by 239.7%, the number of firearms annually registered rose by 298.5%, and the number of firearms annually imported climbed 242.5%.

Figure 5: Firearm Registration Trends, City & County of Honolulu, 2000-2021



As shown in Figure 6, the number of permits processed annually in Hawaii County during the 2000-2021 period leaped 327.5%, the number of firearms annually registered increased by 299.6%, and the number of firearms annually imported surged 391.8%.

Figure 6: Firearm Registration Trends, Hawaii County, 2000-2021

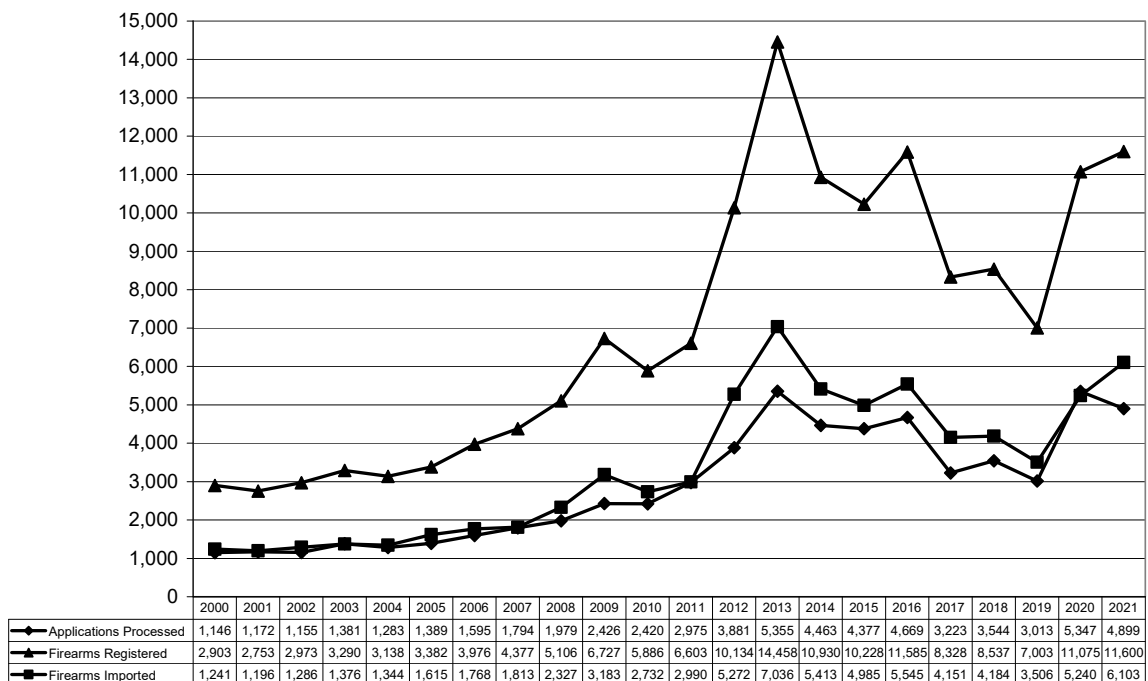
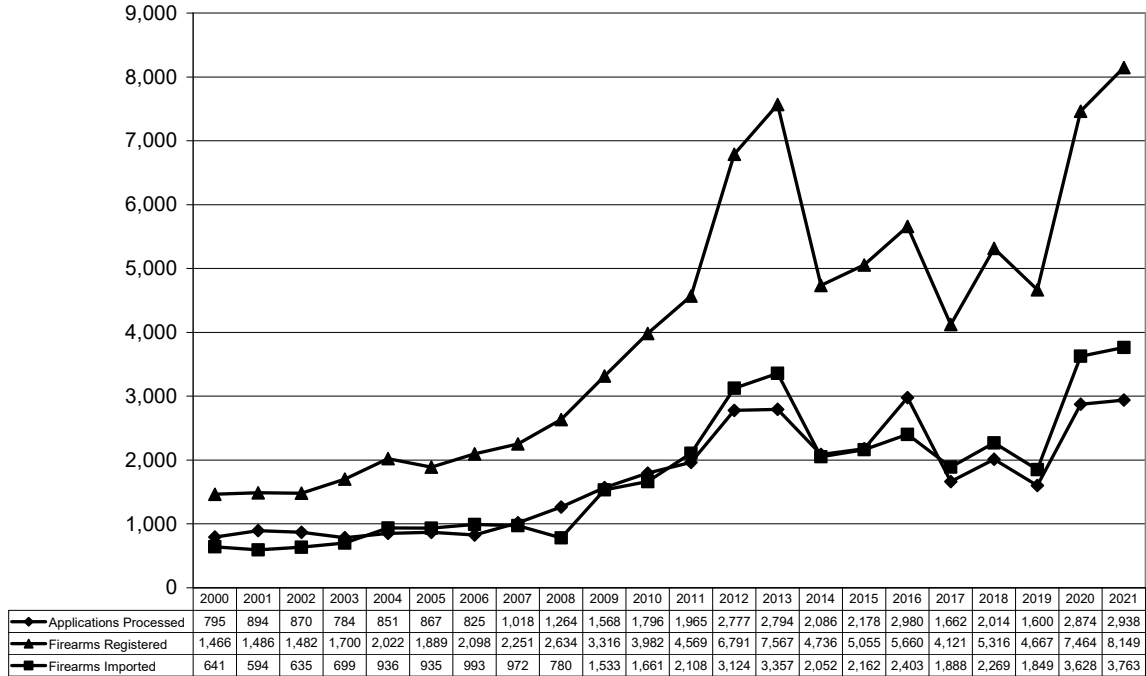


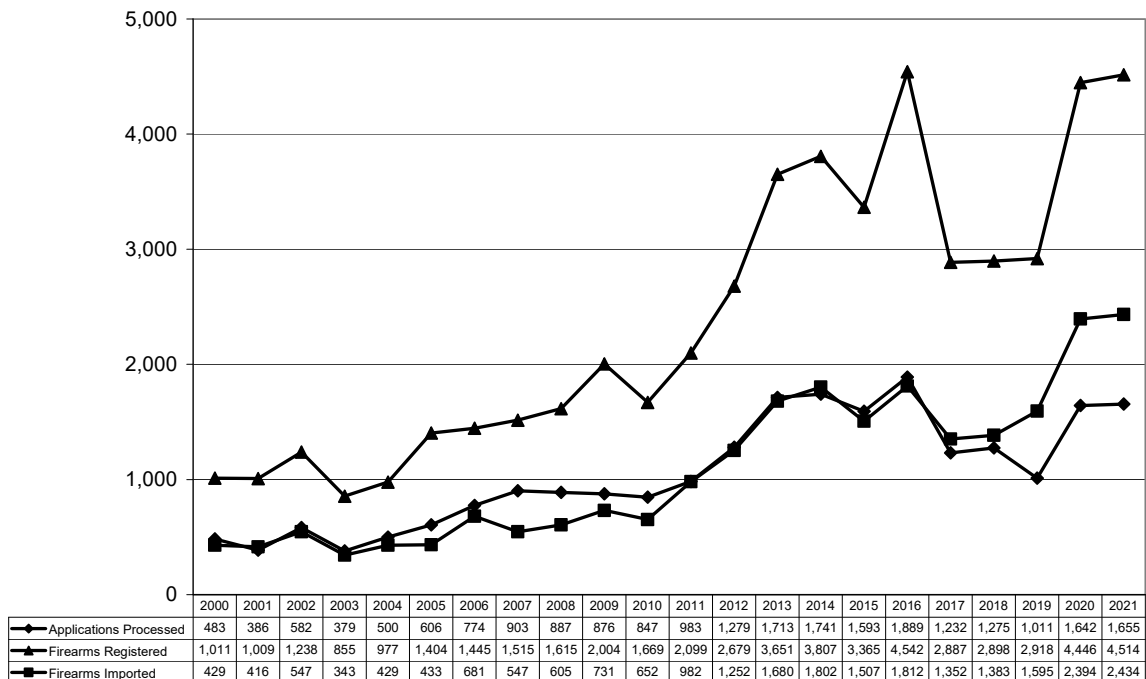
Figure 7 reveals that, between 2000 and 2021 in Maui County, the annual number of permits processed increased by 269.6%, the number of firearms annually registered soared 455.9%, and the tally of firearms annually imported skyrocketed 487.1%. Record high tallies for all three categories were reported for 2021.

Figure 7: Firearm Registration Trends, Maui County, 2000-2021



As shown in Figure 8, the number of permits processed annually in Kauai County from 2000 through 2021 increased by 242.7%, the number of firearms registered leaped 346.5%, and the number of firearms imported surged 467.4%. A record high tally of firearms imported was reported for 2021.

Figure 8: Firearm Registration Trends, Kauai County, 2000-2021



Permit Application Denials

As noted earlier, 2.6% (599) of the permit applications were denied statewide in 2021. The majority of the denials were for longarm (409, or 68.3%) rather than handgun (190, or 31.7%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, handgun permit applications in 2021 were denied at a rate (1.5%) that is less than half the denial rate for longarm permit applications (3.7%).

Roughly one-quarter (142, or 23.7%) of the denials in 2021 were due to the applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 1.0% (6) were due to pending cases.

It is a misdemeanor in the State of Hawaii to provide falsified information on firearm permit applications, unless the falsified information pertains to criminal or mental health histories, in which case it is a felony offense (HRS § 134-17). In 2021, falsified criminal or mental health information, or both, were provided in 47.6% (285) of the 599 denial cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 9.5% (57) of the cases; falsified criminal/mental health information in addition to other falsified information was provided in 1.2% (7) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 41.7% (250) of the cases.

Table 2 presents broad categorical data on the reasons for denied permit applications.

Table 2: Reasons for Denied Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2021

	#	%*
Medical Marijuana**	213	35.6
Mental Health-Related Issue***	185	30.9
Other Criminal Offense	157	26.2
Domestic Violence****	38	6.3
Drug Offense	23	3.8
Restraining/Protective Order	15	2.5
Other Reason (e.g., immigration status disqualifier)	11	1.5

* Figures do not total 100 percent due to multiple reasons for some denials.

** Includes current and former medical marijuana patients. The police departments allow former patients to apply for firearm permits no less than one year after the expiration of their medical marijuana card.

*** Includes adverse mental health diagnoses and treatment, drug or alcohol abuse/addiction and treatment, and other/unspecified reasons provided by healthcare providers. Denials for any of these reasons can be satisfactorily cleared with a verified doctor's note stating that the applicant is not adversely affected. While an original denial cannot be appealed or overturned, a new application may be submitted and the appropriate permit will be issued. At least one of the state's major healthcare providers flags virtually any sort of mental health issue or treatment noted in their clients' historical medical records, and does not provide a means to obtain a clearance, leaving such applicants to seek clearance from outside doctors.

**** Includes domestic violence-related offenses and counseling/treatment.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of information entered into a description field for each denial in 2021.

Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Denials, State of Hawaii, 2021

	599 Total Denials	#	%*
abuse of family/household member		20	3.3
abuse of family/household member + drug offense		1	0.2
abuse of family/household member + felony (unspecified)		2	0.3
abuse of family/household member + medical marijuana		2	0.3
abuse of family/household member + terroristic threatening + mental health issue		1	0.2
active BOLO ("be-on-the-lookout")		1	0.2
adjudicated mental defective		8	1.3
alcohol abuse treatment		5	0.8
alcohol abuse treatment + DUI		1	0.2
alcohol addiction		1	0.2
anger management counseling		2	0.3
arrest (unspecified)/no disposition (mainland)		2	0.3
arrests (unspecified)/no disposition (mainland)		1	0.2
assault		27	4.5
assault + drug offense		1	0.2
assault arrest/no disposition		3	0.5
assault on a police officer		1	0.2
assault x 2		2	0.3
assault x 3 + unauthorized entry into motor vehicle		1	0.2
battery (mainland)		6	1.0
battery and felony (unspecified) arrests/no disposition (mainland)		2	0.3
battery arrest/no disposition (mainland)		5	0.8
battery of spouse arrest/no disposition (mainland)		1	0.2
burglary + theft		2	0.3
burglary + theft + drug offenses		1	0.2
crime of violence (unspecified)		26	4.3
crime of violence arrest (unspecified)/no disposition		7	1.2
disorderly conduct		3	0.5
disorderly conduct + anger management counseling		2	0.3
disorderly conduct + substance abuse treatment		1	0.2
disorderly conduct/no response re details (mainland)		1	0.2
domestic abuse/assault/battery (mainland)		3	0.5
drug offense		8	1.3
drug offense + arrest for resisting arrest/no disposition		1	0.2
drug offense + fighting in public		2	0.3
drug offense + larceny arrest/no disposition		2	0.3
drug offense + substance abuse treatment		1	0.2
drug offense arrest/no disposition		3	0.5
drug offenses + substance abuse treatment		2	0.3
failed to complete alcohol abuse treatment & anger management counseling		1	0.2
felonies (unspecified; mainland) + mental health diagnosis		1	0.2
felonies (unspecified)		2	0.3
felony (unspecified) & weapons arrests/no disposition		1	0.2
felony (unspecified)		11	1.8
felony arrest (unspecified)/deferral		1	0.2
felony arrest (unspecified)/no disposition		25	4.2
felony arrests w/o convictions		2	0.3
felony arrests/no disposition		2	0.3
fighting in public		1	0.2
harassment		4	0.7
harassment + medical marijuana		1	0.2

immigration status disqualifier	1	0.2
injury on spouse (mainland)	1	0.2
medical marijuana	202	33.7
mental health & substance abuse treatment	2	0.3
mental health diagnosis	23	3.8
mental health diagnosis + alcohol abuse treatment	2	0.3
mental health diagnosis + medical marijuana	2	0.3
mental health diagnosis + positive field test for drugs	1	0.2
mental health diagnosis + substance abuse treatment	3	0.5
mental health issue	62	10.4
mental health issue + medical marijuana	1	0.2
mental health issues + alcohol & substance abuse treatment	3	0.5
mental health treatment	27	4.5
mental health treatment + medical marijuana	1	0.2
murder	1	0.2
restraining order	13	2.2
restraining order + mental health issue	2	0.3
sex assault arrest/no disposition + active warrant (mainland)	1	0.2
substance abuse treatment	25	4.2
substance abuse treatment + DUI under 21	1	0.2
suicide attempt	2	0.3
suicide attempt + medical marijuana	2	0.3
theft	2	0.3
theft arrest/no disposition	1	0.2
warrant (unspecified)	1	0.2
warrant for failure to pay fine + medical marijuana	2	0.3
warrant for probation violation (mainland)	2	0.3

* Due to rounding, figures do not total 100%.

Permits to Carry Firearms

Hawaii's county police departments also process permit applications for the carrying of firearms in public. Statewide in 2021, 124 employees of private security firms applied for and were issued carry permits, and one (0.8%) was denied. A total of 21 carry permits were applied for by private citizens in 2021, including 17 applications in the City & County of Honolulu, two in Hawaii County, and two in Kauai County. The two (9.5%) applications in Kauai County were approved, and the rest (90.5%) were denied, by the respective county's chief of police.

Confiscations

A total of seven prohibited firearms were confiscated statewide by police firearm registration personnel in 2021, including four "assault pistols," two short-barrel rifles, and one short-barrel shotgun, as defined and prohibited by state law. All seven confiscations occurred in the City & County of Honolulu.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with input and assistance from the county police departments' firearm registration personnel. As the volume of registration activity documented in this report demonstrates, these dedicated professionals work hard to serve their communities.

Hawaii County Police Department

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The entire Firearms Registration Section, in particular:
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Kauai County Police Department

Scott Yamaguchi, Weapons Registration Clerk

Maui County Police Department

Melanie Wong, Firearms Registration Clerk

Reference

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