

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Statistical Analysis Center Data Brief



Arizona Youth Survey, 2014

Marijuana Data Brief

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona.

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Every two years the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) administers the Arizona Youth Survey (AYS). The AYS (<http://azcjc.gov/ACJC.Web/sac/AYS.aspx>) is a school-based survey designed to collect information on the prevalence of drug use and other risky behaviors among Arizona 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students and inquire about the circumstances in which they live. In the spring of 2014, the survey was successfully implemented in 243 schools from all 15 Arizona counties resulting in a final sample size of 48,244 students. Among the data collected were self-reported measures of lifetime and past 30-day substance use. This data provides a concise overview of the results from the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 AYS on youth marijuana use.

Table 1. Lifetime Marijuana Use by Grade, 2006-2014

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
8th Grade Youth	18.3%	16.2%	17.8%	16.2%	14.9%
10th Grade Youth	34.0%	32.5%	34.3%	34.7%	32.4%
12th Grade Youth	42.6%	43.1%	44.7%	44.8%	44.7%

Lifetime and 30-Day Marijuana Use by Arizona Youth

From 2006 to 2014, the percentage of 8th grade students who have reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime decreased from 18.3 percent in 2006 to 14.9 percent in 2014 (Table 1). In contrast to 8th grade students, the percentage of 10th grade students who reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime remained relatively stable from 2006 to 2014 and the percentage of 12th grade students who reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime slightly increased from 2006 to 2014. In 2014, approximately one-third of 10th grade students and nearly one-half of 12th grade students in Arizona reported trying marijuana at least once in their lifetime. The percentage of 8th grade students who reported using marijuana during the 30 days immediately preceding their participation in the AYS has also slightly declined from 2006 to 2014 (Table 2). In contrast, from 2006 to 2014 the percentage of 10th and 12th grade students in Arizona who reported past 30-day use has increased. In 2014, approximately one

Table 2. Past 30-day Marijuana Use by Grade, 2006-2014

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
8th Grade Youth	8.5%	7.6%	8.9%	7.7%	6.9%
10th Grade Youth	15.7%	15.1%	17.4%	17.7%	16.8%
12th Grade Youth	18.1%	18.7%	21.3%	22.5%	22.9%

more than one in five 12th grade students reported past 30-day use of marijuana.

30-Day Marijuana Use by Respondent Demographics

When looking at 30-day marijuana use by gender, males and female 8th grade students had similar use rates, 6.8 and 7.0 percent, respectively (Table 3). Among 10th and 12th grade students, a larger percentage of males reported past 30-day marijuana use than females. Among 12th grade students, more than one-fourth of males reported past 30-day marijuana use compared to less than one-fifth of females. Past 30-day marijuana use by race reveals significant variation. Asian youth have the lowest rate of past 30-day marijuana use among 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. Native Americans have the highest rate of use with approximately one in ten 8th grade students and nearly one in four 10th grade students reporting past 30-day marijuana use. Of the 12th grade students who participated in the 2014 AYS, Black students reported the highest rate of past 30-day use with more than one-fourth reporting recent use. When looking at the ethnicity of students, Hispanic students, regardless of grade, reported higher rates of use than Non-Hispanic students. The difference between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic use rates are the largest among 8th grade students and decrease as youth get older.

Youth Perceptions of Risk and Disapproval of Marijuana Use

Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the risk of experimental and regular use of marijuana, as well as their and their parents opinion of marijuana use (Table 4). From 2006 to 2014, the percentage of students who reported that there is 'no risk' or 'slight risk' of harm in trying marijuana once or twice increased from 47.0 percent in 2006 to 61.1 percent in 2014. Similarly, when asked about the risk of harm

Table 3. Past 30-day Marijuana Use by Grade and Respondent Demographics, 2014

	8th	10th	12th
All Youth	6.9%	16.8%	22.9%
Gender			
Females	7.0%	16.0%	19.5%
Males	6.8%	17.6%	26.6%
Race			
Asian	2.7%	8.0%	14.5%
Black	7.4%	15.5%	27.6%
Native American	11.0%	24.7%	25.1%
Pacific Islander	7.3%	19.0%	16.7%
White	4.9%	16.3%	22.9%
Multi-Racial	8.0%	18.7%	26.3%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic	9.0%	18.8%	23.4%
Non-Hispanic	5.2%	15.9%	22.4%

Table 4. Youth Perceptions of Risk and Disapproval of Marijuana Use, 2006-2014

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
No or Slight Risk of Harm of Trying Marijuana Once or Twice	47.0%	47.5%	52.0	56.5%	61.1%
No or Slight Risk of Harm of Regular Use of Marijuana	19.1%	21.8%	25.8%	30.2%	42.7%
Parental Disapproval (smoking marijuana is very wrong or wrong)	72.0%	80.4%	84.0%	76.4%	76.9%
Respondent Disapproval (smoking marijuana is very wrong or wrong)	70.8%	76.7%	74.1%	72.3%	70.3%

in the regular use of marijuana the percentage of students who reported that there is 'no risk' or only a 'slight risk' of harm increased from 19.1 percent of students in 2006 to 42.7 percent in 2014. In contrast, the percentage of students who reported that their parents believe that smoking marijuana is 'very wrong' or 'wrong' has remained relatively high. From 2006 to 2014, the percentage of students who reported that their parents believe that marijuana use is 'very wrong' or 'wrong' ranged from a low of 72.0 percent in 2006

to a high of 84.0 percent in 2010. Students were also asked how wrong it is for "someone your age" to smoke marijuana. The percentage of students who reported that it was 'very wrong' or 'wrong' for someone their age to smoke marijuana increased from 70.8 percent in 2006 to 76.7 percent in 2008, but since 2008 the percentage of students who report that smoking marijuana by someone their age is 'very wrong' or 'wrong' has consistently declined. After a single year increase from 70.8 percent in 2006 to 76.7 percent in 2008, the percentage of students who reported that it is 'very wrong' or 'wrong' for someone their age to smoke marijuana has decreased to 70.3 percent in 2014.

Easy Access to Marijuana

During each administration of the AYS, students are asked their perceptions of how easy it is to obtain a variety of substances, including marijuana. Not surprisingly, as students get older, a larger percentage perceive marijuana as 'very easy' or 'sort of easy' to obtain (Table 5). Approximately, one-third of 8th grade students in Arizona reported that marijuana was 'very easy' or 'sort of easy' to get. By the time youth are in 12th grade, two-thirds to three-fourths of Arizona students report that marijuana is 'very easy' or 'sort of easy' to obtain. Over time, there has been little change in students' perceptions of the ease of access to marijuana.

Table 5. Youth Perceptions of "Very Easy" or "Sort of Easy" Access to Marijuana, 2006-2014

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
8th Grade Students	35.7%	35.9%	36.6%	33.6%	31.0%
10th Grade Students	63.4%	64.3%	61.0%	61.4%	59.0%
12th Grade Students	72.6%	72.8%	69.3%	69.4%	69.1%

By the time youth are in 12th grade, two-thirds to three-fourths of Arizona students report that marijuana is 'very easy' or 'sort of easy' to obtain. Over time, there has been little change in students' perceptions of the ease of access to marijuana.

Where Youth Get Marijuana

The 2012 and 2014 AYS asked students who reported past 30-day marijuana where they obtained their marijuana (Table 6). The most frequently reported source for marijuana was from friends. In 2014, slightly more than two-thirds of 8th grade students and slightly more than three-fourths of 10th and 12th grade students who reported past 30-day marijuana use reported getting marijuana from their friends. The second most frequently reported source of marijuana was from someone at a party. In 2014, approximately one-fourth of students who reported past 30-day marijuana use reported getting marijuana from a party. A significant percentage of students in all grades also report obtaining marijuana from someone with a medical marijuana card. In 2014, of the youth that reported using marijuana in the past 30-days, 10.9 percent of 8th grade students, 13.4 percent of 10th grade students, and 17.7 percent of 12th grade students reported obtaining marijuana from someone with a medical marijuana card, which is the only source that increased for all grades from 2012 to 2014. Finally, in contrast to other sources for obtaining marijuana, as students age the percentage who reported getting marijuana from a family member or from someone at school declines.

Table 6. Where Youth Get Marijuana, 2012 and 2014*

	8th Grade Students		10th Grade Students		12th Grade Students	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
From someone with a Medical Marijuana Card	8.5%	10.9%	10.9	13.4%	14.9%	17.7%
From friends	72.7%	69.6%	80.8%	77.9%	80.9%	78.2%
From a family member	17.4%	16.8%	14.7%	14.7%	12.7%	11.9%
From someone at a party	25.9%	25.0%	28.9%	28.4%	30.4%	27.6%
From someone at home	6.1%	6.3%	6.3%	5.3%	6.0%	5.5%
From someone at school	15.8%	14.8%	14.9%	12.3%	10.1%	7.6%

*Respondents selected all that applied

of the youth that reported using marijuana in the past 30-days, 10.9 percent of 8th grade students, 13.4 percent of 10th grade students, and 17.7 percent of 12th grade students reported obtaining marijuana from someone with a medical marijuana card, which is the only source that increased for all grades from 2012 to 2014. Finally, in contrast to other sources for obtaining marijuana, as students age the percentage who reported getting marijuana from a family member or from someone at school declines.

About the Arizona Youth Survey

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission's Arizona Youth survey is mandated by A.R.S. § 41-2416, which requires ACJC to "...measure both attitudes and actual prevalence of substance abuse by children..." Since 2002, ACJC has implemented a survey that has at its core, the Hawkins and Catalano Risk and Protective Factor Framework (Hawkins, et al., 1992). The risk and protective framework collects information on a large number of risk factors that, when present in a youth's life, increases the probability of that youth engaging in drug use and delinquency. Similarly, the framework also collects information on protective factors that, when present in a youth's life, decreases the probability of that youth engaging in drug use and delinquency. These factors can be found in a youth's community, school, family, and peer groups. Combined with information collected by the AYS on drug use and delinquency, this information can be used to better understand the unique risk and protective factors impacting youth's lives and target prevention and intervention resources in the areas where there is the greatest need.

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