
Summary Report

2025

Administered by:



GRANTS, RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION

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ADMINISTRATION



On behalf of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), the Kansas Young Adult Survey (KYAS) was administered every other year through 2021 and yearly thereafter to the hard-to-reach population of young adults aged 18-25 both in college and not in college.

The survey began in 2017 and asks about health, mental health, stress, substance use, and driving under the influence of various substances.

This statewide survey provides valuable information needed to monitor behavior and attitudes and to plan for prevention.

Full data can be found at: <https://kctcdata.org/kansas-young-adult-survey>

METHODOLOGY



Young adults residing in Kansas between the ages of 18 to 25 with cell phone numbers were randomly recruited by text message to an online survey. Those who responded to the text were directed to online consent prior to being directed to the survey.



Subjects were informed of a \$5 or a \$10 Amazon or Walmart thank you card to be processed via a separate link after the survey was submitted.



Final sample size was 674 respondents. The data were weighted to be representative of Kansas adults aged 18 to 25 and balanced to match population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, and region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



OVERVIEW

The 2025 Kansas Young Adult Survey provides a comprehensive snapshot of behavioral health, substance use, food insecurity, and risk behaviors among Kansas young adults. The data show measurable progress in alcohol and vaping reduction, but persistent mental health burden, economic strain, and marijuana-related driving risks remain critical concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

Mental Health: Persistent High Burden

- **41.4%** felt sad or hopeless for two or more consecutive weeks in the past year.
- **20.6%** seriously considered suicide.
- **10.1%** made a suicide plan.
- Respondents reported an average of **10.6 days of poor mental health** in the past 30 days.

Young adults are more likely to seek help from:

- Partner/significant other (33.7%), friends (23.9%), or parent (19.1%)

Implication: Peer- and relationship-based prevention strategies are essential complements to formal mental health services.

Food Insecurity: Ongoing Economic Vulnerability

- **25.3% of college students** and **35.3% of non-college young adults** worried about food running out.
- Meal skipping remains elevated among non-college young adults.
- **58%** report annual income below \$20,000.

Implication: Financial stress continues to drive both mental health and behavioral risk. Cross-sector solutions (education, workforce, food access) remain critical.

Substance Use: Encouraging Declines, Emerging Risks

30-Day Use Trends

- **Alcohol:** 57.2% - continued a multi-year decline (62.3% in 2023, 59.4% in 2024, 57.2% in 2025)
- **Cigarettes:** 10.6% - increased from 9.4% in 2024, driven primarily by higher use among ages 18–21 (12.6% reporting past 30-day use)
- **E-Cigarettes/Vaping:** 26.2% - gradual decline (29.2% in 2023, 27.3% in 2024, 26.2% in 2025)
- Among 2025 users:
 - 72% vaped nicotine
 - 43% vaped marijuana or THC
 - 11% vaped nicotine and marijuana at the same time
- **Marijuana:** 29.2% - slight decline (30.6% in 2023, 30.8% in 2024, and 29.2% in 2025)
- Among 2025 users:
 - 72% smoked it
 - 53% vaped it
 - 36% consumed via edibles or beverages

Other Substances

- **Smokeless tobacco** 6.8% - increased from 4.2% in 2024 potentially reflecting rising popularity of nicotine pouches. (<https://www.cdcfoundation.org/blog/Nicotine-Pouch-Use-Surges-Among-Young-People>)
- **Cocaine** 2.8% - slight increase from 2.5% in 2024
- **Prescription stimulant misuse** - 1.1% - decreased from 1.5% in 2024
- **Methamphetamine** 0.5% - slight decrease from 0.8% in 2024

Positive Trends: Sustained declines in alcohol and vaping suggest prevention efforts are having an impact. Knowledge of where to access Narcan if someone around them overdoses increased from 32.4% in 2023 to 52.2% in 2025, suggesting improved awareness and access to overdose reversal resources among young adults.

Concern: Marijuana use remains normalized, with multiple modes of consumption (smoking, vaping, edibles). Tobacco patterns suggest product substitution rather than full cessation.

Tobacco Cessation Readiness

- 68.8% of vaping users plan to quit.
- 64.6% of smokeless tobacco users plan to quit.
- Only 38.4% of cigarette users plan to quit permanently.

Implication: Tobacco cessation readiness varies by product. While most vaping and smokeless tobacco users intend to quit, fewer than 40% of cigarette users plan to stop permanently, suggesting a need for targeted cessation support.

Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

- **12.5%** of young adults reported driving under the influence of marijuana.
- **11.9%** reported alcohol-impaired driving.

Marijuana-impaired driving now slightly exceeds alcohol-impaired driving.

Implication: Marijuana risk perception and impaired driving education require increased emphasis.

Risk Perception Gaps

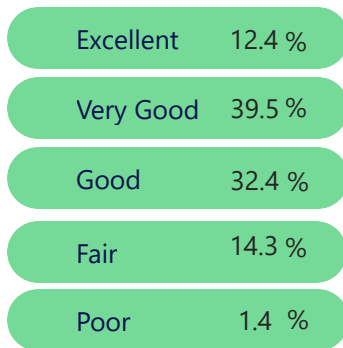
- 87.6% perceive great risk of harm from intentional or accidental fentanyl use.
- Only 11.8% perceive great risk from regular marijuana use.
- 23.8% perceive great risk from daily alcohol use.
- Low perceived risk of marijuana (only 11.8% perceive “great risk”) aligns with demonstrated higher marijuana DUI rates.

Implication: Lower perceived harm for marijuana and alcohol likely contributes to sustained use rates.

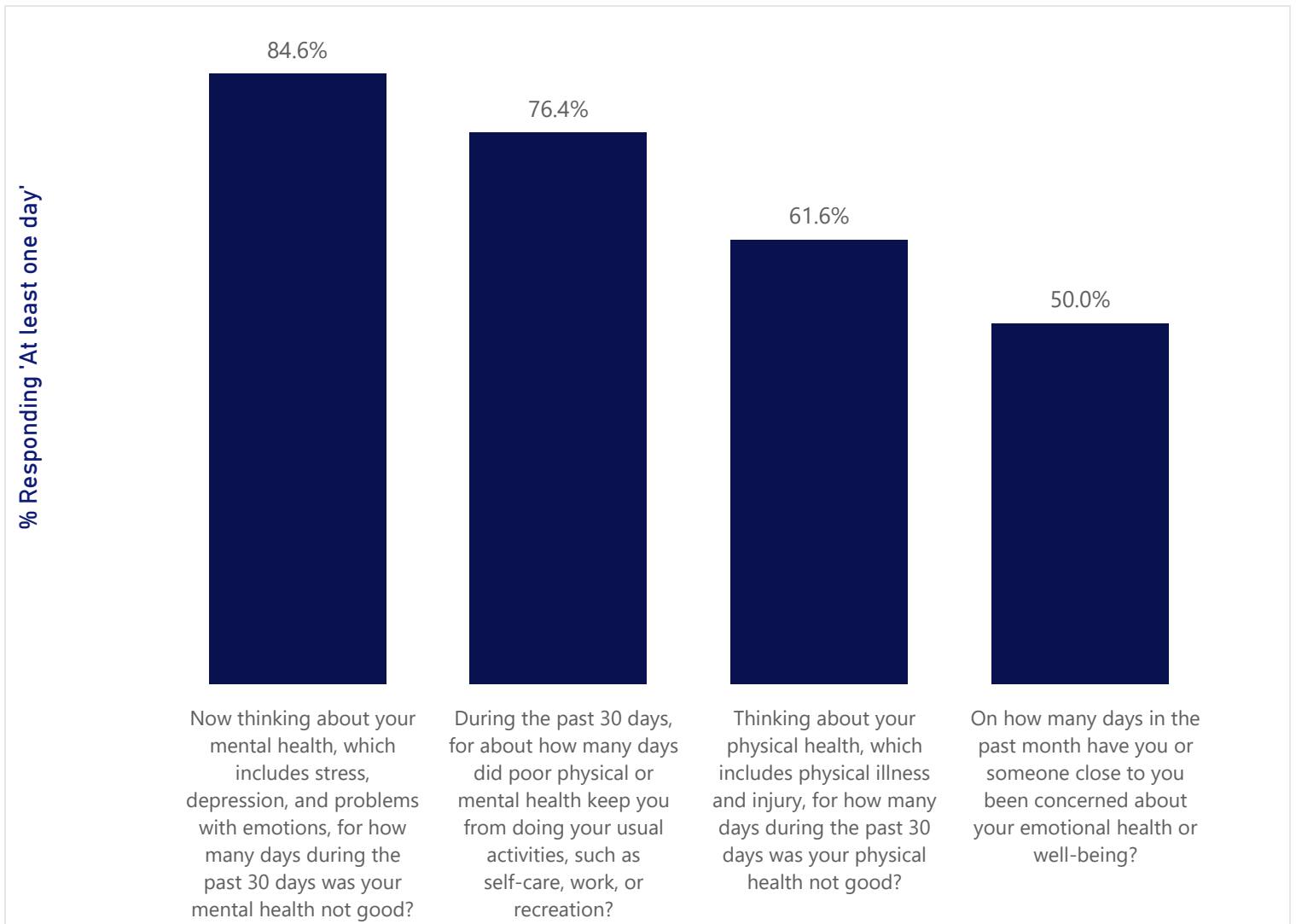
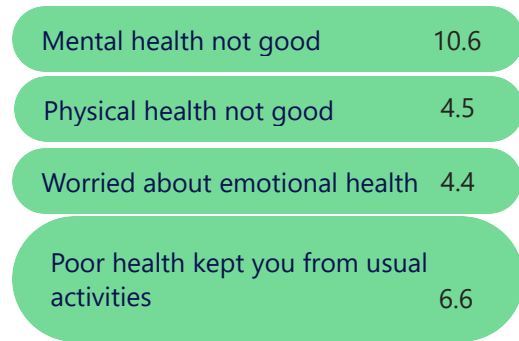
HEALTH

On average, Kansas young adults reported their mental health was not good on average of 10 the past 30 and that they or someone else was concerned about their emotional health on average 4 days of the past 30.

How would you rate your physical health:



Average number of days this month



FOOD INSECURITY



Food insecurity, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food,” is an important national health problem and an underrecognized social determinant of health. People experiencing food insecurity often consume a nutrient-poor diet, which may contribute to the development of obesity, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. *

Food insecurity among young adults remains a significant and persistent issue. While fewer young adults are reporting meal skipping over time, food-related anxiety continues to affect a large portion of this population, signaling ongoing financial strain and vulnerability.

How many times have you been worried that food at home would run out before you or your family got money to buy more? (At least once in the past year)

	In college	Not in college
2023	21.4%	42.8%
2024	19.8%	39.5%
2025	25.3%	35.3%

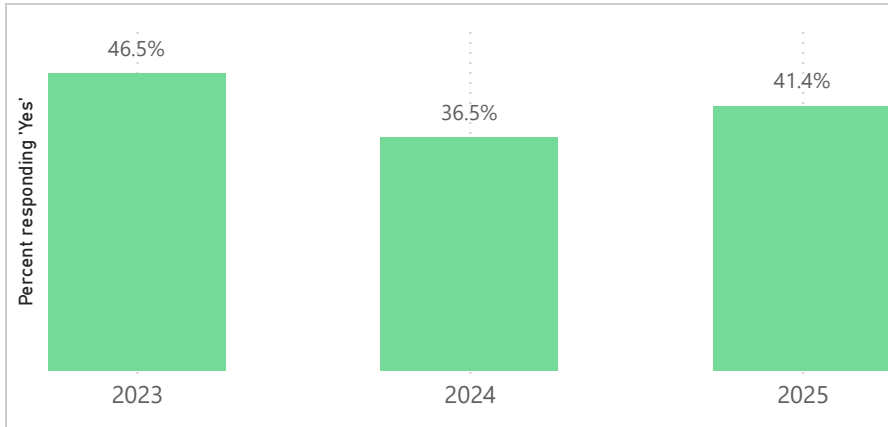
Food insecurity remains substantially higher among non-college young adults, but the gap between non-college and college young adults has narrowed.

How many times have you skipped a meal because you or your family did not have enough money to buy food? (At least once in the past year)

	In college	Not in college
2023	21.0%	39.5%
2024	21.6%	31.6%
2025	21.0%	29.7%

Non-college young adults continue to report higher rates of meal-skipping and are 8–15 percentage points above their college peers.

* National Library of Medicine Published online 2016 Aug 24. doi: [10.1177/0033354916664154](https://doi.org/10.1177/0033354916664154)

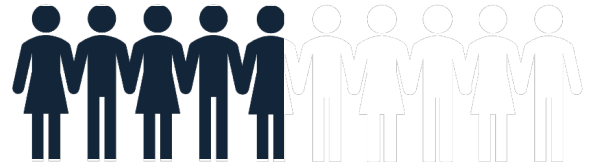


During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

At any time during the past 12 months

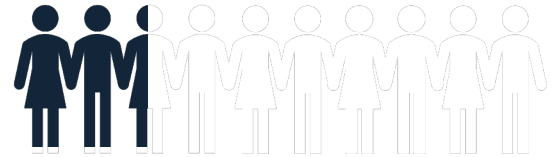
Have you seriously thought about killing yourself?

20.6%



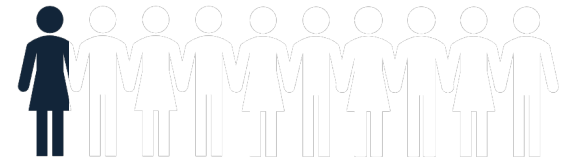
Have you made a plan about how you would kill yourself?

10.1%

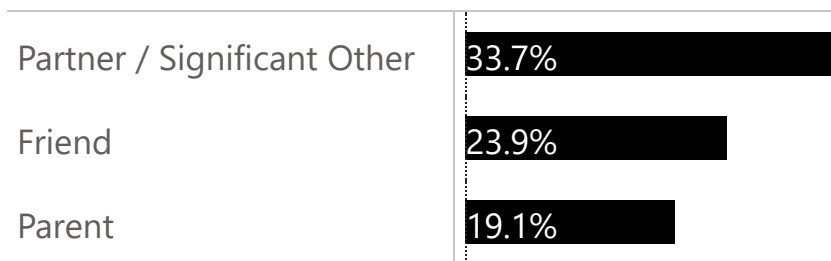


Have you tried to kill yourself?

1.8%



If you had a mental health concern, where are you most likely to go for help?



Young adults are more likely to seek support for mental health concerns from a partner, friends, or a parent than from formal mental health services.

SUBSTANCE USE



While a quarter of young adults reported using E-CIGARETTES/VAPING DEVICES in the past 30 days, there has been a consistent downward trend in reported use. Of those who reported vaping, 72% vaped nicotine, 43% vaped marijuana or THC, and 11% vaped nicotine and marijuana at the same time.

CIGARETTE use declined from 2023 to 2024, followed by a modest increase in 2025 among young adults ages 18–21, with 12.6% reporting use. In contrast, cigarette use among those ages 22–25 continues to trend downward.

ALCOHOL remains the most used substance among young adults. However, reported use has decreased steadily over the past three years, with the lowest use in 2025, with 57.2% reporting drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.



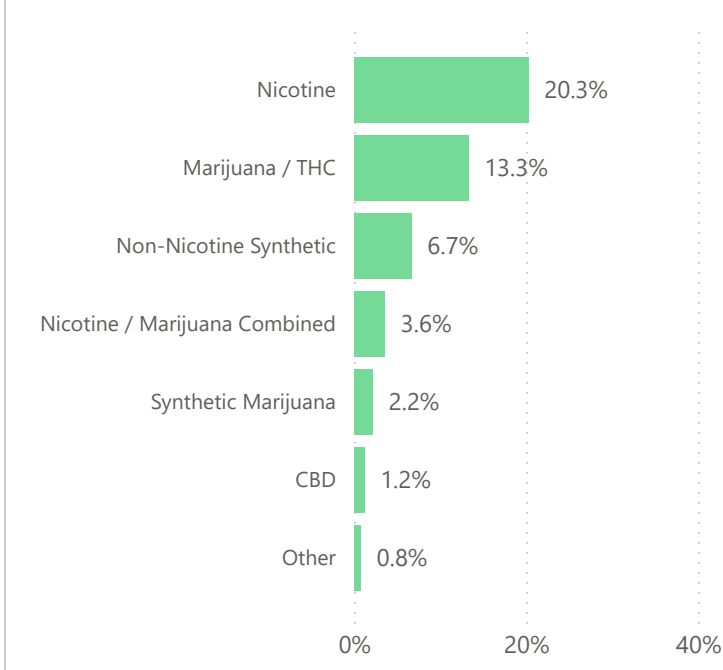
Past 30-day MARIJUANA use has remained relatively stable, with a marginal reduction in 2025; 29.2% of young adults reported use. Of those who reported use, 72% smoked it, 53% vaped it, and 36% ate or drank it.

SUBSTANCE USE TRENDS

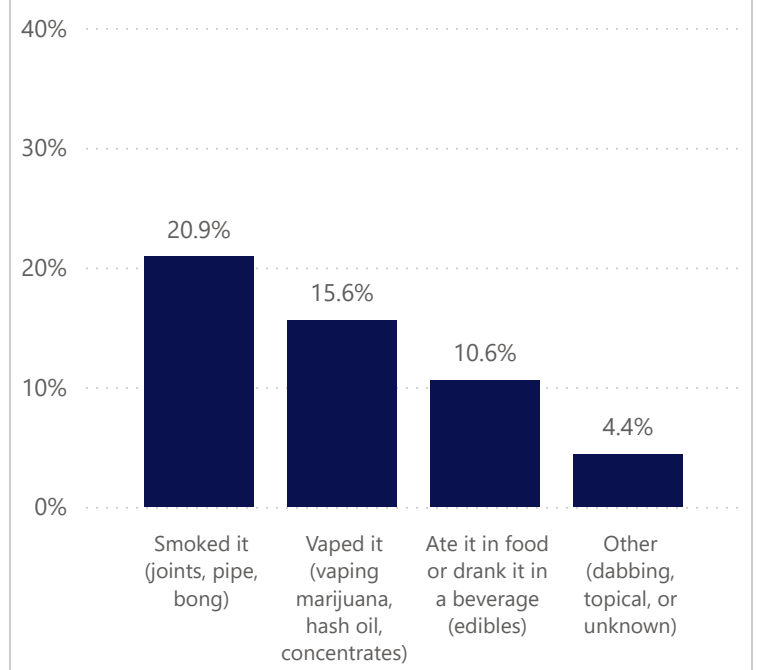
30-Day Use

	Percent reporting any use		
	2023	2024	2025
Alcohol	62.3%	59.4%	57.2%
Marijuana	30.6%	30.8%	29.2%
E-Cigarettes or other vaping devices	29.2%	27.3%	26.2%
Rx Stimulants	10.9%	9.2%	11.0%
Cigarettes	10.4%	9.4%	10.6%
Smokeless Tobacco	5.4%	4.2%	6.8%
LSD	3.2%	2.5%	3.1%
Cocaine / Crack	1.5%	2.5%	2.8%
Rx Tranquilizers	2.4%	3.9%	2.1%
Rx Pain Relievers	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%
Rx Stimulant Misuse	1.8%	1.5%	1.1%
Rx Tranquilizer Misuse	0.9%	0.4%	0.8%
Ecstasy	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%
Methamphetamine	1.4%	0.8%	0.5%
Rx Pain Reliever Misuse	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%

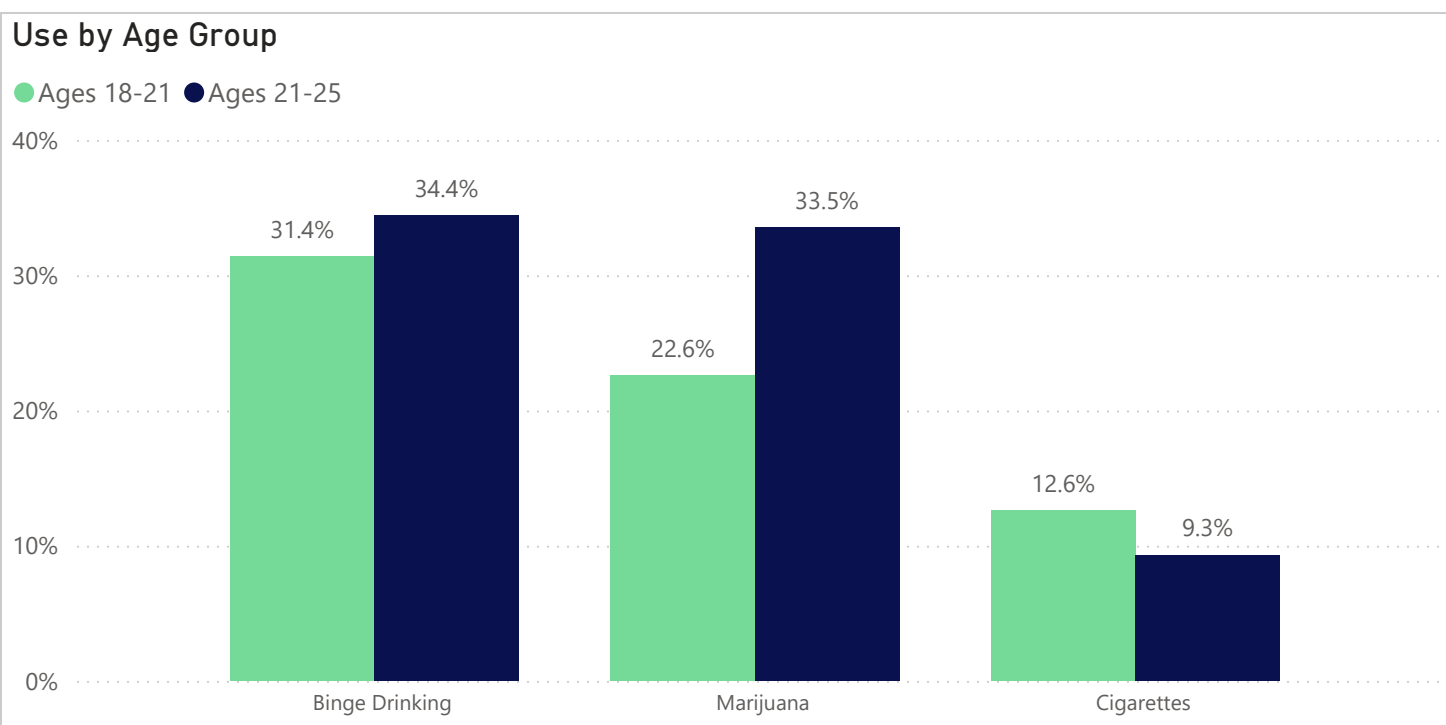
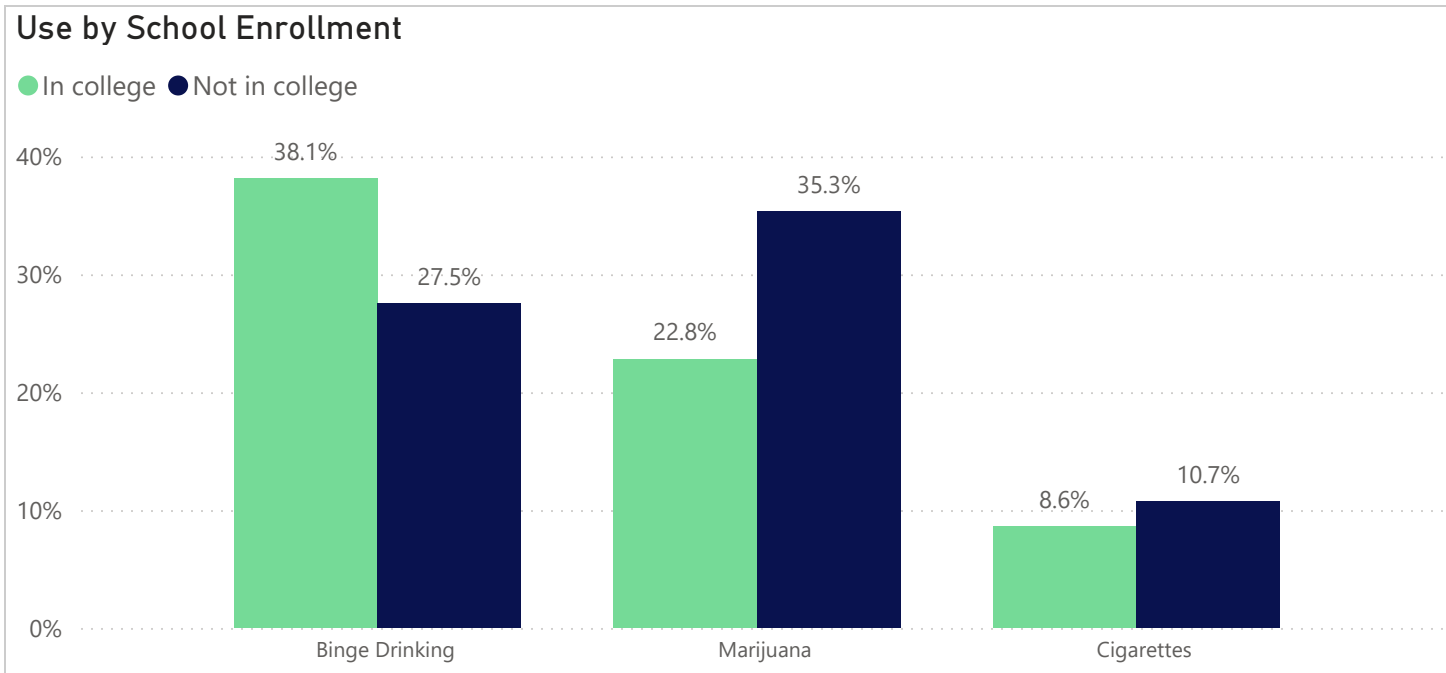
Substances Vaped in the Past 30 days



How Marijuana Was Consumed in the Past 30 Days



SUBSTANCE USE COMPARISONS BY GROUPS



TOBACCO CESSATION



Vaping users showed the strongest intention to quit (68.8%), while Cigarette users showed the lowest overall commitment to quitting permanently (38.4%). This may suggest different stages of dependency, risk perception, or cultural normalization across product types.

Tobacco Product	Yes Response
Do you plan to stop smoking cigarettes for good?	38.4%
Do you plan to stop using electronic cigarettes or other vaping devices for good?	68.8%
Do you plan to stop using smokeless tobacco for good?	64.6%

Cigarette users may need more support and encouragement to quit, since fewer of them say they plan to stop for good.

Vaping users show strong interest in quitting, so cessation programs could be highly effective.

Smokeless tobacco users seem ready to quit soon, which makes them good candidates for quit-support programs.

When do you intend to quit?	Cigarettes	E-Cigarettes or other vaping devices	Smokeless Tobacco
In the next 7 days	30.9%	23.3%	25.5%
In the next 30 days	10.1%	14.8%	23.5%
In the next 6 months	9.0%	19.7%	17.4%
In the next year	37.6%	29.2%	14.9%
More than one year from now	12.3%	12.9%	18.7%

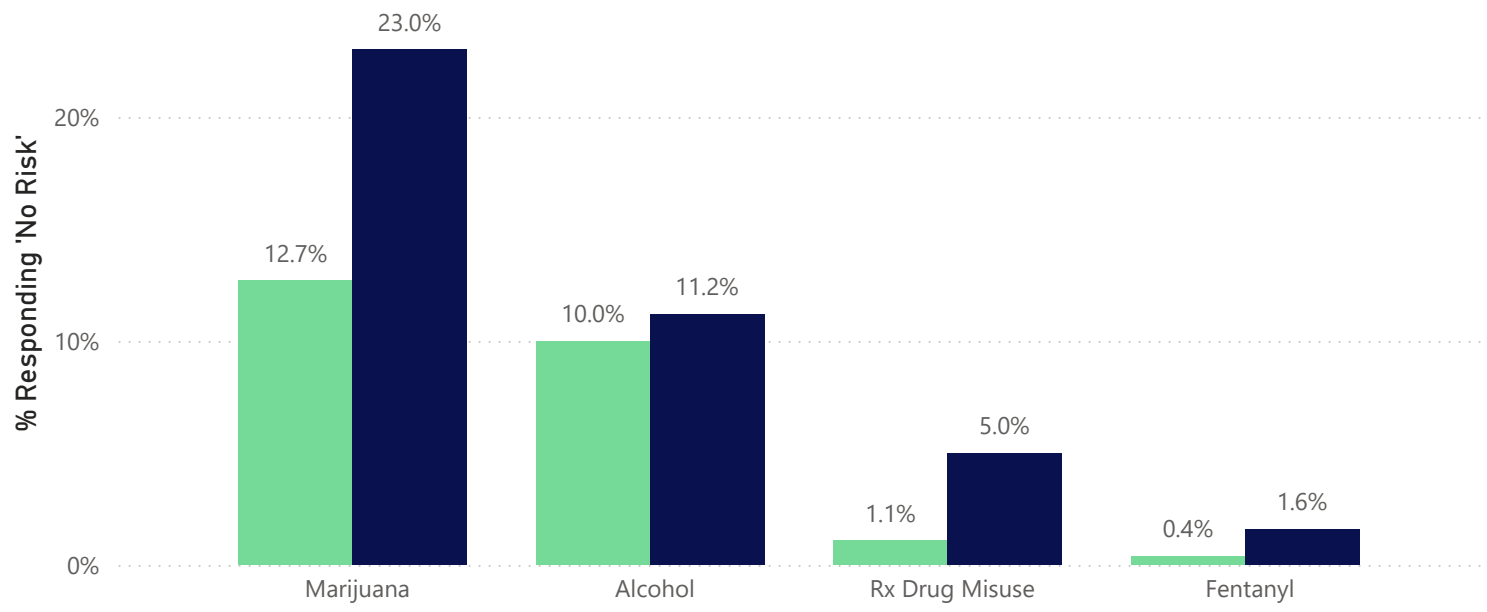
PERCEIVED RISK OF HARM

How much do people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they

	No Risk	Slight Risk	Moderate Risk	Great Risk
.... smoke marijuana regularly?	18.5%	43.8%	25.9%	11.8%
.... take fentanyl accidentally or on purpose?	1.4%	2.7%	8.3%	87.6%
.... take one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage (beer, wine, or hard liquor) nearly every day?	10.5%	30.5%	35.1%	23.8%
.... use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?	3.2%	9.9%	28.4%	58.4%

Perception of No Risk of Harm by College Enrollment

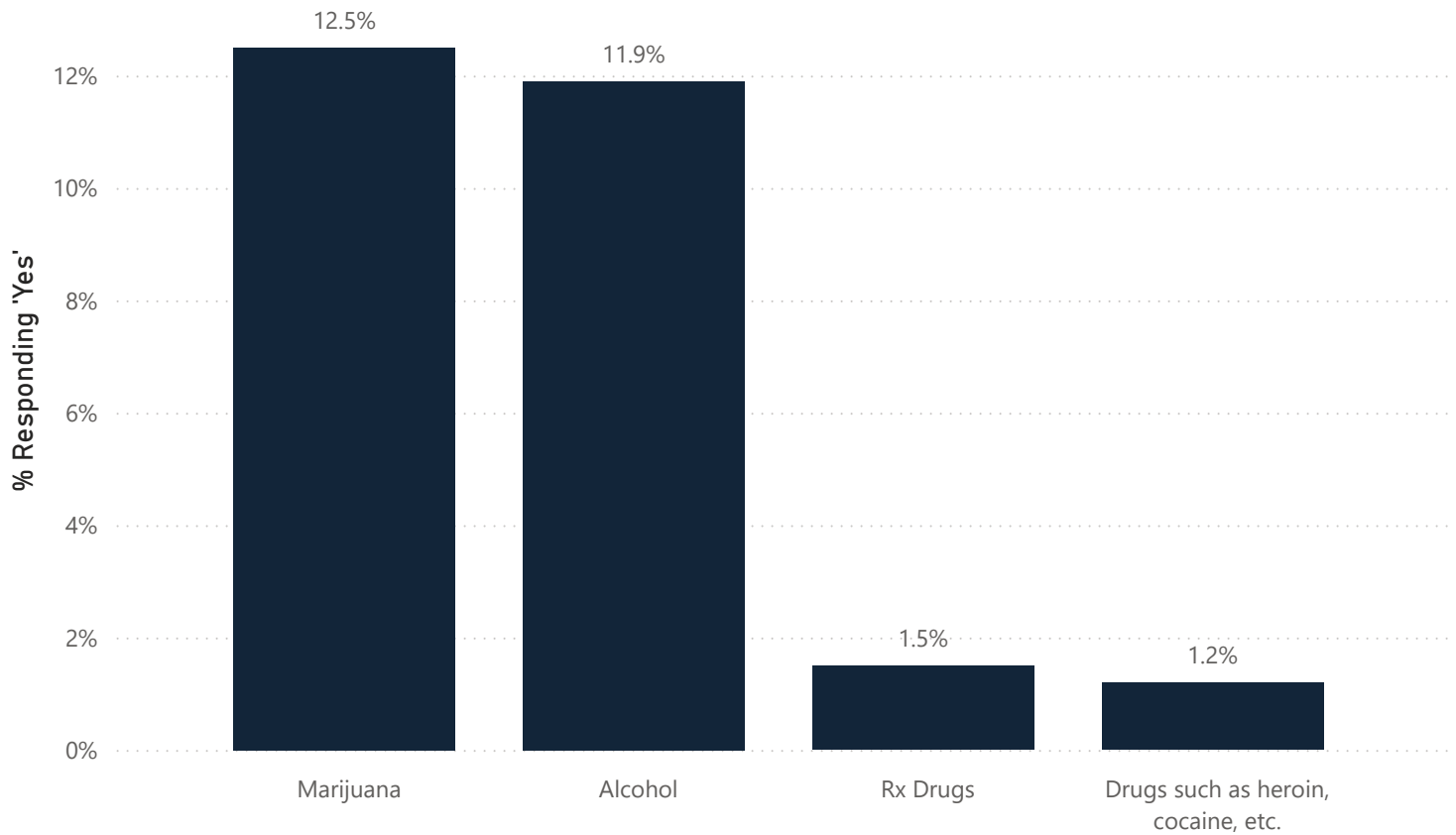
● In college ● Not in college



DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE



DUI by Substance



	Alcohol	Drugs such as heroin, cocaine, etc.	Marijuana	Rx Drugs
Ages 21 to 25	11.2%	0.2%	13.5%	0.5%
In college	13.6%	0.5%	7.5%	1.1%
Not in college	10.6%	1.6%	16.6%	1.2%
Under 21	13.1%	2.8%	11.0%	3.1%

DEMOGRAPHICS



Category	Percent Surveyed
AGE	
Under 21 years old	38.6%
Ages 21 through 25 years old	61.4%
ETHNICITY	
Hispanic	18.0%
Not Hispanic	81.7%
MILITARY STATUS	
Previously Served or Currently Serving in the Military	1.2%
Has not previously served	98.8%
Ever deployed in active combat zone (% of those previously served)	5.4%
Never deployed	94.6%
PARENT/GUARDIAN	
Parent / Guardian of a child under 18	11.0%
No children	89.0%
RACE	
White	80.4%
Black or African American	7.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0%
Asian	5.3%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	6.2%
Multi-racial	0.0%
Other	0.6%
SEX	
Male	51.5%
Female	48.5%

DEMOGRAPHICS II



Category	Percent Surveyed
EDUCATION	
8th Grade or Less	0.6%
High School Incomplete (Grades 9, 10 and 11)	4.3%
High School Complete (Grade 12 or high school equivalency)	32.2%
Vocational/Technical School (includes Cosmetology schools, Welding Certificate Programs)	4.5%
Some College	33.2%
Junior College Graduate (2 Year, Associates Degree)	9.3%
4 Year College Graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	11.0%
Graduate Work (Master's, Law/Medical School, etc)	3.6%
Other	1.4%
EMPLOYMENT	
Full-time	31.4%
Part-time employee	39.9%
Unemployed and looking for work	16.0%
Unemployed and not looking for work	12.8%
INCOME	
Less than \$20,000	58.0%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13.0%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	9.7%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1.2%
\$150,000 or more	0.7%