

# Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

## Arizona Youth Survey 2012 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 administers the Arizona Youth Survey (AYS). The AYS is a school-based survey designed to collect information on the prevalence of drug use and other risky behaviors among Arizona 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth and inquire about the circumstances in which they live. In the spring of 2012, the survey was successfully implemented in 349 schools from all 15 Arizona counties resulting in a final sample size of 62,817 youth. Among the data collected were reported measures of lifetime and past 30-day substance use. This data brief provides a concise overview of the results from the 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012 AYS for youth marijuana use relative to county, respondent demographics, risk and protective factors, age of initiation of marijuana use, and other selected measures.

**Table 1. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in Their Lifetime by County**

| County                  | 2006        | 2008        | 2010        | 2012        |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Apache                  | 46.5        | 43.7        | 38.9        | 37.1        |
| Cochise                 | 23.5        | 26.5        | 24.9        | 25.3        |
| Coconino                | 41.1        | 35.5        | 36.9        | 28.9        |
| Gila                    | 35.5        | 35.7        | 44.9        | 36.1        |
| Graham                  | 33.5        | 26.0        | 31.5        | 23.4        |
| Greenlee                | 34.9        | 29.9        | 34.1        | 34.8        |
| La Paz                  | 30.9        | 32.1        | 31.7        | 31.8        |
| Maricopa                | 26.5        | 25.3        | 28.4        | 27.9        |
| Mohave                  | 38.2        | 30.7        | 31.6        | 37.0        |
| Navajo                  | 39.3        | 42.1        | 29.2        | 27.2        |
| Pima                    | 35.6        | 32.0        | 40.9        | 32.2        |
| Pinal                   | 34.4        | 31.8        | 33.2        | 29.2        |
| Santa Cruz              | 23.9        | 26.8        | 28.4        | 19.4        |
| Yavapai                 | 32.1        | 27.3        | 29.4        | 33.8        |
| Yuma                    | 20.9        | 16.5        | 23.3        | 14.1        |
| <b>State of Arizona</b> | <b>29.2</b> | <b>27.4</b> | <b>29.9</b> | <b>28.7</b> |

### Lifetime and 30-Day Marijuana Use by Arizona Youth

In 2012, 28.7 percent of Arizona 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported having used marijuana in their lifetime (Table 1). Lifetime marijuana use among youth in Arizona has remained relatively stable from 2006 to 2012, with some small year-to-year variations. Of the 15 Arizona counties, respondents in 9 counties reported higher lifetime usage rates in 2012 compared to the state rate. Apache, Mohave, and Gila counties reported the highest lifetime marijuana usage rates in 2012, which were approximately 30 percent higher than the state rate. Yuma and Santa Cruz counties had the lowest lifetime marijuana usage rates in 2012.

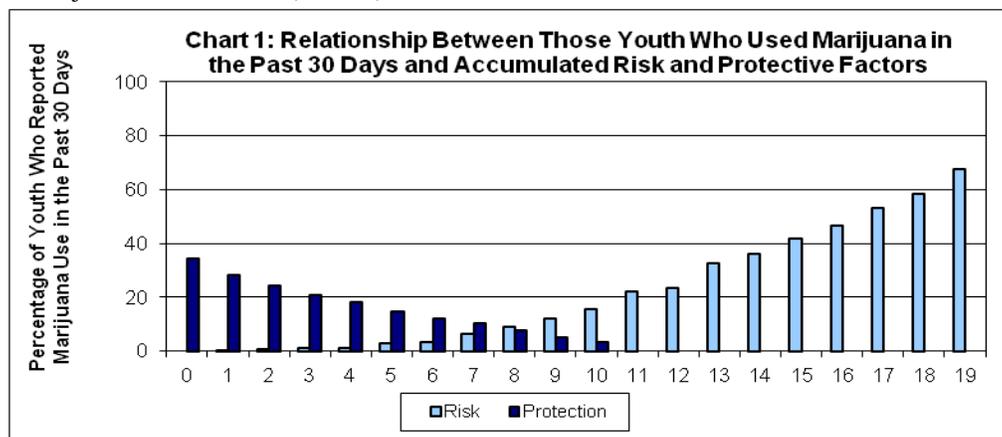
The 2012 AYS also revealed that the percent of Arizona students who reported having used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey (14.3 percent, Table 2) was higher than the percent of students who reported 30-day cigarette use (12.9 percent). This difference is statistically significant. While the 30-day marijuana use rate figure is slightly lower than 30-day marijuana usage rates reported in 2010, it is higher than the levels reported in 2006 and 2008. In 2012, six Arizona counties reported higher 30-day marijuana usage rates compared to the state rate. Apache, Gila, Mohave, and Yavapai counties reported the highest rates of 30-day marijuana use, which were approximately 20 percent higher than the state rate. Santa Cruz and Yuma counties reported the lowest 30-day marijuana usage rates.

### Risk and Protective Factors

At the core of the AYS are questions based on a risk and protective factor prevention model. This model is based on research that has identified several risk and protective factors for delinquency and substance use. Illustrating the value of a risk and protective factor approach to substance abuse prevention, the 2012 AYS data reveal that as the number of risk factors to which youth are exposed increases, so too does the percentage of youth who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days. Conversely, as the number of protective factors to which youth are exposed increases, the percentage of youth who report marijuana use decreases (Chart 1).

**Table 2. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days by County**

| County                  | 2006        | 2008        | 2010        | 2012        |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Apache                  | 22.9        | 22.0        | 20.8        | 17.8        |
| Cochise                 | 8.6         | 11.3        | 12.8        | 10.8        |
| Coconino                | 17.4        | 16.1        | 16.7        | 13.9        |
| Gila                    | 16.3        | 14.3        | 22.2        | 17.5        |
| Graham                  | 16.2        | 10.5        | 14.0        | 10.8        |
| Greenlee                | 13.8        | 13.4        | 14.9        | 15.0        |
| La Paz                  | 13.4        | 14.4        | 10.6        | 14.0        |
| Maricopa                | 12.1        | 11.9        | 14.3        | 14.3        |
| Mohave                  | 16.7        | 13.1        | 16.2        | 17.9        |
| Navajo                  | 18.6        | 19.3        | 14.0        | 13.6        |
| Pima                    | 15.8        | 13.8        | 18.8        | 16.3        |
| Pinal                   | 17.1        | 13.9        | 15.1        | 12.5        |
| Santa Cruz              | 10.1        | 10.3        | 12.6        | 8.4         |
| Yavapai                 | 13.8        | 12.0        | 14.3        | 16.9        |
| Yuma                    | 7.8         | 7.0         | 10.8        | 3.8         |
| <b>State of Arizona</b> | <b>13.1</b> | <b>12.5</b> | <b>14.8</b> | <b>14.3</b> |



**Table 3. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days by Demographics**

|                  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Overall          | 13.1 | 12.5 | 14.8 | 14.3 |
| Grade            |      |      |      |      |
| 8th Grade        | 8.5  | 7.6  | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| 10th Grade       | 15.7 | 15.1 | 17.4 | 17.7 |
| 12th Grade       | 18.1 | 18.7 | 21.3 | 22.5 |
| Gender           |      |      |      |      |
| Male             | 15.0 | 13.6 | 16.3 | 16.1 |
| Female           | 11.5 | 11.4 | 13.3 | 12.7 |
| Race**           |      |      |      |      |
| Asian            | 7.0  | 4.6  | 5.2  | 6.1  |
| Pacific Islander | 13.7 | 12.8 | 13.4 | 16.1 |
| Native American  | 25.3 | 27.4 | 26.1 | 21.8 |
| Black            | 12.2 | 10.5 | 13.0 | 15.1 |
| White            | 12.0 | 12.3 | 14.1 | 13.9 |
| Multi-Racial     | *    | 12.6 | 13.3 | 14.4 |
| Ethnicity        |      |      |      |      |
| Hispanic         | 12.5 | 11.8 | 15.3 | 14.8 |
| Non-Hispanic     | *    | 12.8 | 14.4 | 14.1 |

\* Indicates that the information was not available in that particular administration of the survey.  
 \*\* Non-Hispanic ethnicity only.

**Age of Initiation**

The overall age of youths' first marijuana use did not change from 2010 to 2012 remaining at 13.6 years of age (Table 5). There were only minor changes to the reported

**Table 5. Average Age of First Substance Use By Demographics**

|                  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Overall          | 13.2 | 13.5 | 13.6 | 13.6 |
| Gender           |      |      |      |      |
| Male             | 13.1 | 13.4 | 13.5 | 13.4 |
| Female           | 13.4 | 13.3 | 13.8 | 13.8 |
| Race**           |      |      |      |      |
| Asian            | 13.6 | 13.9 | 14.2 | 14.2 |
| Pacific Islander | 13.5 | 13.7 | 13.9 | 13.4 |
| Native American  | 12.5 | 12.6 | 12.9 | 12.4 |
| Black            | 12.9 | 13.4 | 13.4 | 13.4 |
| White            | 13.7 | 14.0 | 14.1 | 14.1 |
| Multi-Racial     | *    | 13.2 | 13.4 | 13.6 |
| Ethnicity        |      |      |      |      |
| Hispanic         | 13.0 | 13.2 | 13.4 | 13.2 |
| Non-Hispanic     | *    | 13.7 | 13.8 | 13.9 |

\* Indicates that the information was not available in that particular administration of the survey.  
 \*\* Non-Hispanic ethnicity only.

**30-Day Marijuana Use by Respondent Demographics**

Lifetime and past 30-day usage rates for marijuana increased substantially with grade level, with 12<sup>th</sup> graders using marijuana the most, followed by 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and then 8<sup>th</sup> graders (Table 3). Among Arizona 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, there has been a consistent increase in the percentage of students reporting 30-day marijuana use. Additionally, from 2008 to 2012 past 30-day marijuana usage rates among multi-racial youth also increased. Asian 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> students reported less than half the past 30-day marijuana use rates compared to all the other races.

**Youth Perceptions Regarding Marijuana Risk, Disapproval, and Access**

Less than half of the youth surveyed during the 2006 to 2012 administrations of the AYS believed there was great or moderate risk involved with trying marijuana once or twice (Table 4). From 2008 through 2012, youths' perceived risk of trying marijuana decreased by 10.8 percent. The percentage of youth who reported great or moderate risk of regular marijuana use decreased from 2006 through 2012. Youth perceptions of parent disapproval and peer disapproval for smoking marijuana also decreased slightly from 2006 through 2012. Finally, AYS data from 2006 through 2012 reveal that, over time, there have been small, but consistent declines in the percentage of youth who reported believing it is very easy or sort of easy to get marijuana.

**Table 4. Perceptions of Youth Regarding Marijuana Risk, Disapproval, and Access**

| Outcome   | Definition                  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 |
|---|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Perception of Risk (People are at Moderate or Great Risk of harming themselves if they...)  | Try Marijuana once or twice | 47.3 | 48.6 | 43.4 | 37.8 |
|   | Smoke Marijuana Regularly   | 78.3 | 75.8 | 71.0 | 66.2 |
| Perception of Parent Disapproval (Parents feel it would be Wrong or Very Wrong to...)       | Smoke Marijuana             | 94.2 | 93.9 | 93.3 | 92.1 |
| Perception of Peer Disapproval (I think it is Wrong or Very Wrong for someone my age to...) | Smoke Marijuana             | 78.6 | 78.4 | 75.3 | 74.1 |
| Percentage of youth that felt it would be easy or sort of easy to get marijuana             | Ease of Obtaining Marijuana | 53.9 | 53.3 | 52.9 | 51.4 |

age of first marijuana use from 2010 to 2012 in most demographic categories with some rising slightly (e.g. multi-racial youth) and others falling slightly (e.g. Native American youth). Of the students surveyed, in 2012 Asian and White youth were older when they started using marijuana than youth of other racial groups. Native American youth were the youngest when they first tried marijuana compared to youth of other racial groups. Finally, the average age of initiation of marijuana use for Hispanic youth was younger than Non-Hispanic youth.

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