



# ALCOHOL USE IN ILLINOIS YOUTH

ILLINOIS YOUTH SURVEY

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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CENTER FOR PREVENTION  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

2024





## About the Illinois Youth Survey

The Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) is a statewide, school-based survey administered every two years to 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. Funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the IYS gathers self-reported data on substance use, mental health, perceptions of risk, school climate and safety.

The survey has two goals:

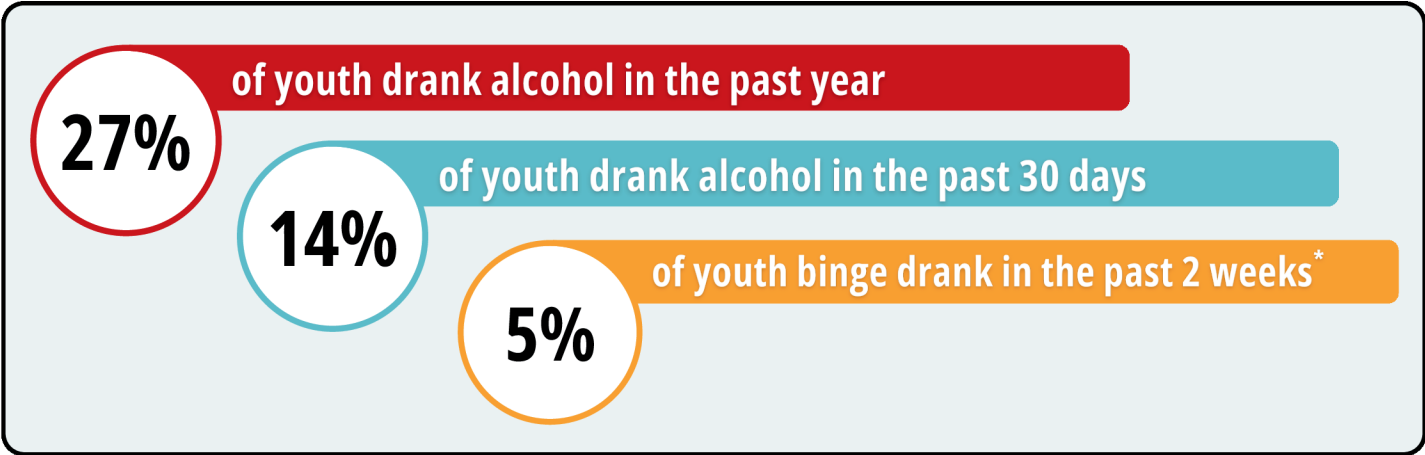
- To provide schools with local data to inform prevention efforts
- To generate reliable statewide estimates on key health indicators

In 2024, more than 172,000 students from 675 schools participated in the IYS. The data presented in this report is based on a scientifically weighted, representative sample of 10,490 students from 153 public schools across Illinois, capturing trends across the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade levels.

	Weighted Count
8th	3,470
10th	3,639
12th	3,381
Total	10,490

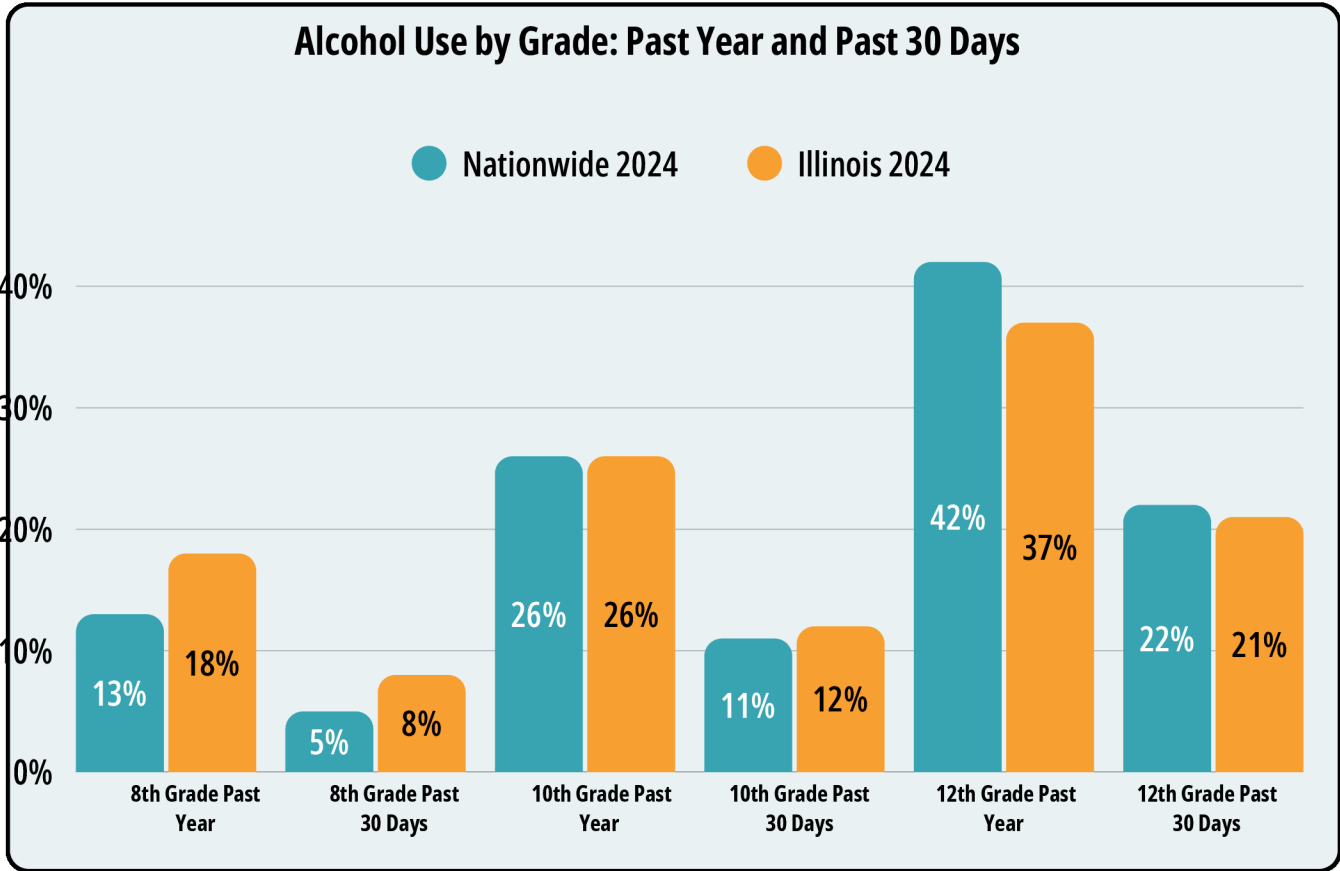
**Note:** The 2020 and 2022 IYS were impacted by COVID-19 and related school closures and precautions, resulting in lower statewide participation. Due to insufficient data, statewide reports could not be reliably produced for these years. The most recent IYS with reliable statewide data is from 2018.

# Frequency



## Illinois vs. National Trends

When comparing the Illinois Youth Survey to national data\*\*, Illinois youth had similar rates of alcohol use. However, 8th graders in Illinois tended to have higher alcohol consumption, whereas 12<sup>th</sup> graders were lower compared to their peers across the country.

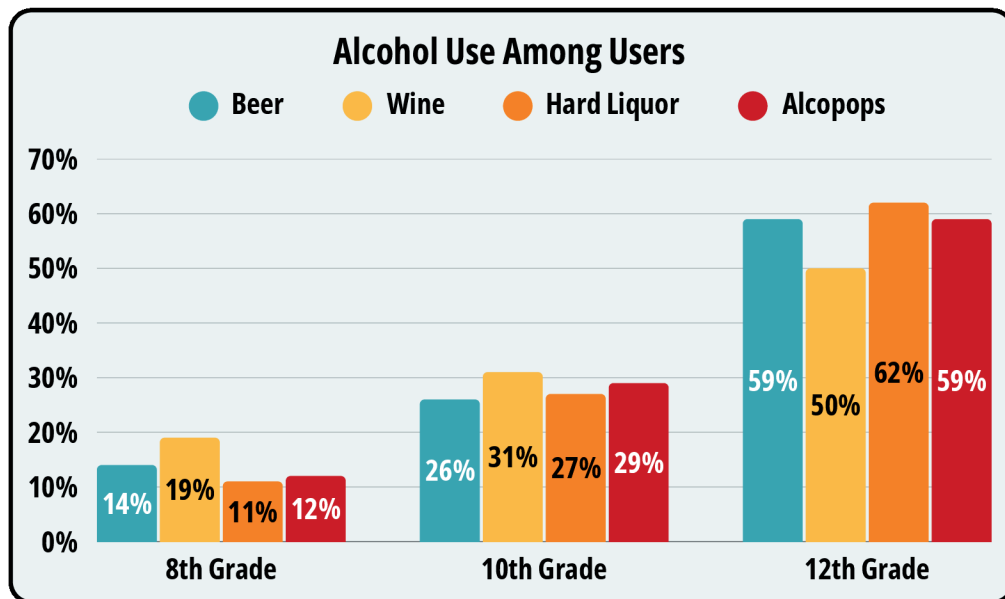


\*Binge drinking is defined as 5 or more drinks at one occasion  
\*\*National data refers to the 2024 Monitoring the Future Survey

## Who is Drinking?

### Grade

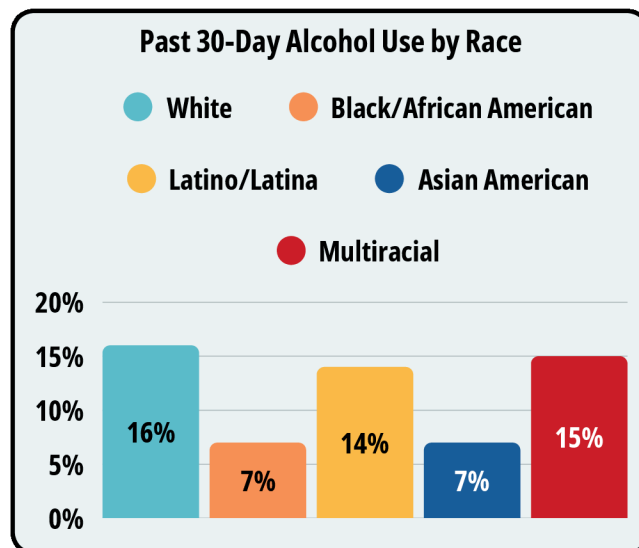
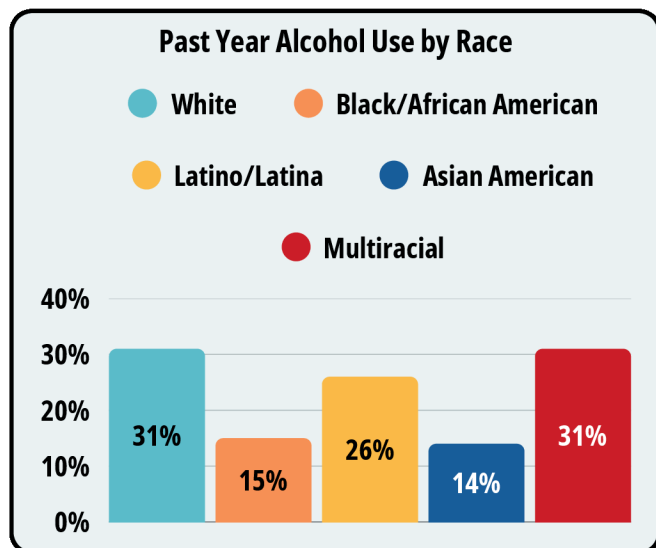
When looking at youth who reported drinking in the past 30 days, 12th grade youth chose hard liquor (such as vodka, whisky, or gin) the most, while 8th and 10th graders preferred wine.



Since 2018, beer and hard liquor use declined across all grades. In contrast, 12th grade alcopop use rose sharply—from 41% to 59%—and wine use edged up from 43% to 50%.

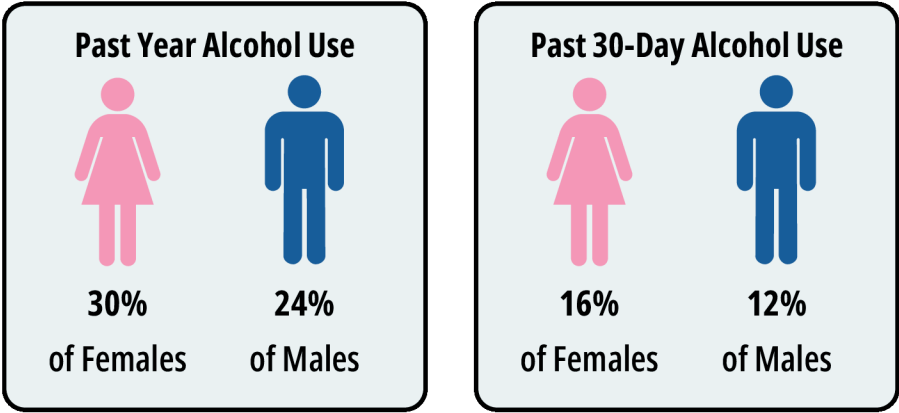
## Race/Ethnicity

White, Multiracial, and Latino/Latina youth had the highest rates of drinking for both the past year and past 30 days. Additionally, these groups reported the highest rates of drinking at ages 14 or younger, which is an indicator for problematic drinking later in life.



Gender

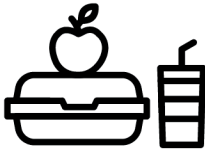
Females had higher rates of reported alcohol use for both the past year and the past 30 days. Females also reported slightly higher rates of binge drinking in the past 2 weeks.



Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) was determined using lunch program eligibility as a measure for income. Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch were classified as lower income, while those receiving neither were considered higher income.

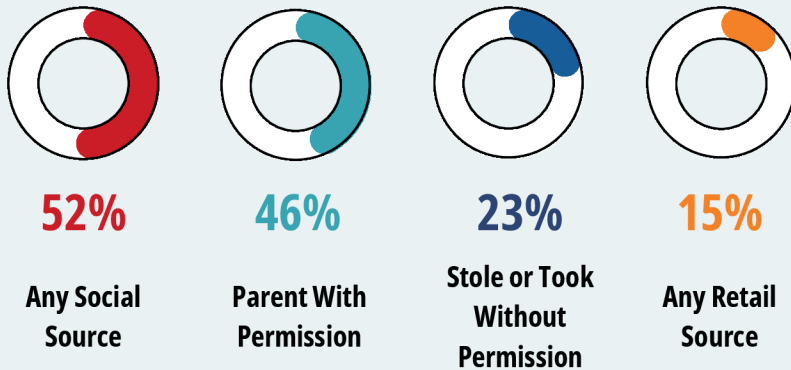
Higher income youth had the highest rates of alcohol use for the past year and past 30 days.



Lunch Status	Past Year Use %	Past 30-Day Use %
Free Lunch	24%	12%
Reduced-Price Lunch	25%	14%
Neither	29%	15%

## Obtaining Alcohol

Past-Year Alcohol Sources\*



Most youth obtained alcohol through social sources, such as friends, parties, siblings, or adults (excluding parents). The next most common source was from their parents with permission.

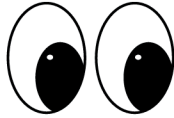
Notably, 8th grade students reported the highest rates of receiving alcohol from their parents with permission.

### Closer Look

Knowing how youth access alcohol can help schools, parents, and communities better target prevention efforts. These findings show that not all youth get alcohol the same way—how they get it often depends on their social and economic circumstances.

- **Females** and **higher income** youth reported higher rates of stealing alcohol.
- **Latino/Latina, Black/African American**, followed by **Asian American** youth were most likely to obtain alcohol from their siblings.
- **Higher income** youth reported greater access through parties and other social sources than lower income youth.
- **Latino/Latina** and **White** youth were highest in obtaining alcohol from their parents with permission.

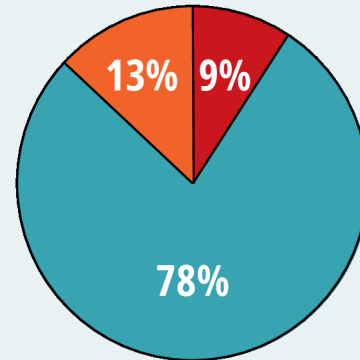
## Perceptions



Students' perceptions of peer drinking can influence their own choices. Most students overestimated how common alcohol use really is. Only **9% accurately estimated** how many of their peers drank in the past 30 days, while **78% overestimated** peer alcohol use. When students think 'everyone is doing it,' they may feel more pressure to drink themselves.

### Estimates of Peer Drinking

- Accurate Perception
- Overestimation
- Underestimation

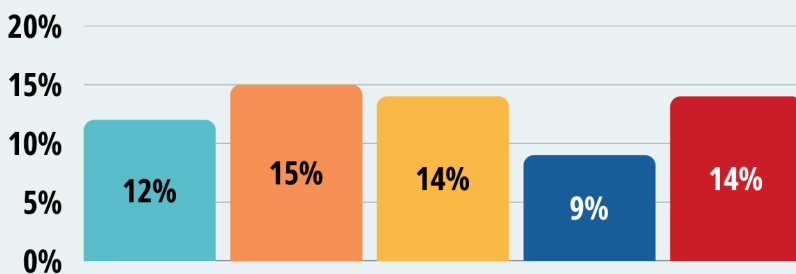


## Social Image

Perceptions of alcohol and popularity differed across groups. Black/African American youth were more likely to believe drinking would make them appear cool, despite lower alcohol use rates. In contrast, White youth—who had higher alcohol use—were among the least likely to view alcohol as a way to enhance their social image.

### "Very Good" or "Good" Chance They Would be Seen as "Cool"

- White
- Black/African American
- Latino/Latina
- Asian American
- Multiracial



Lower income youth were more likely to believe drinking regularly makes them look cool.

Females were more likely than males to believe drinking regularly would make them be perceived as cool.

## Parental Monitoring



**75%**

of youth said they had a conversation with their parents or guardians in the past year about not drinking and driving or getting in a car with someone who had been drinking.



**49%**

of youth said that their parent/guardian spoke to them about not using alcohol.



**4%**

of youth reported getting into trouble while using drugs or alcohol. Black/African American youth reported getting into trouble the most, but they did not have the highest rates of use.

## Problematic Substance Use

The CRAFFT Screening Tool was used to assess potential substance use concerns among adolescents. A score of 2 or higher indicates the need for a substance use assessment.

**Some groups of youth reported higher levels of problematic substance use**

- Females were higher than males
- Lower income youth
- Multiracial youth

**Youth Who Had a CRAFFT Score of 2 or Higher**

