



# MARIJUANA USE IN ILLINOIS YOUTH



ILLINOIS YOUTH SURVEY

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

---

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:

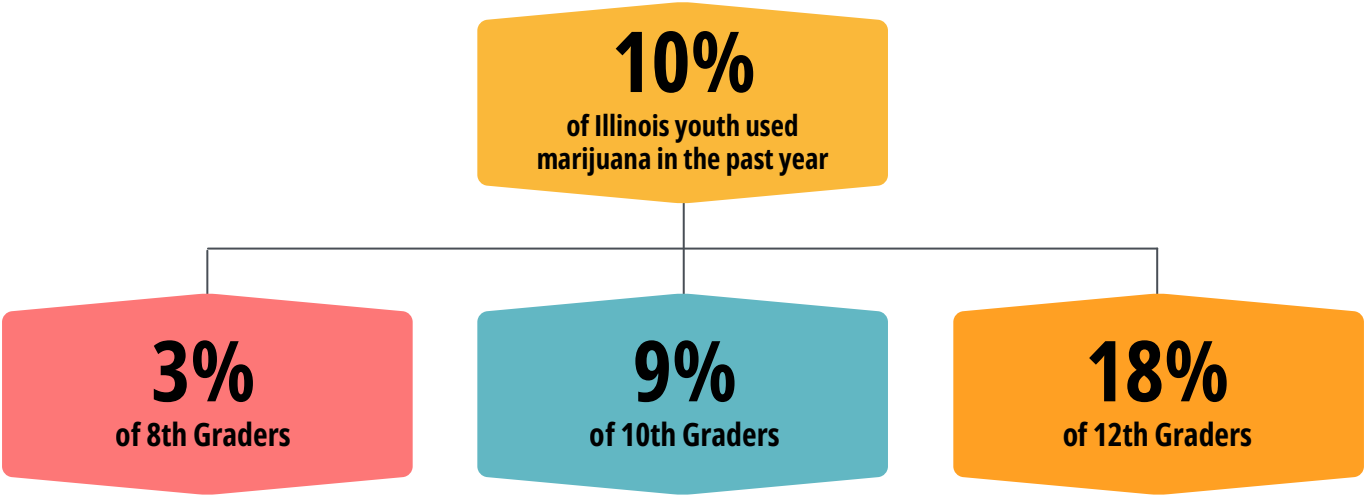
- To provide schools with local data to inform prevention efforts
- To generate reliable statewide estimates on key health indicators

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

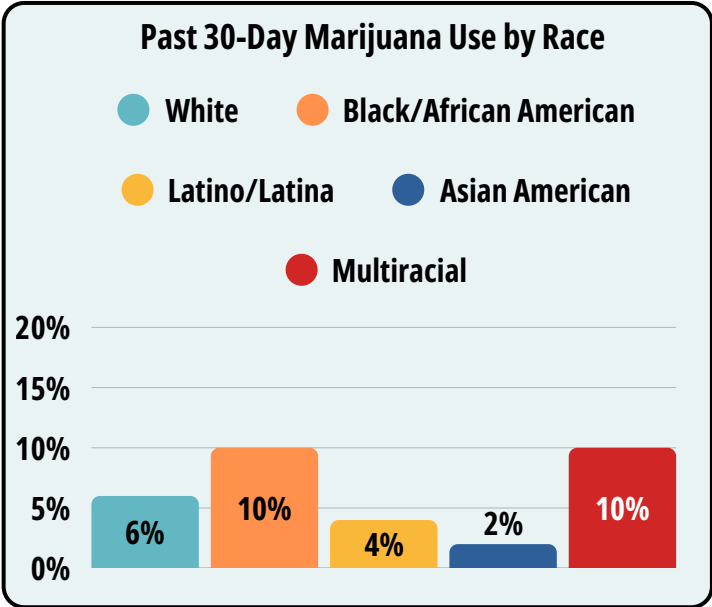
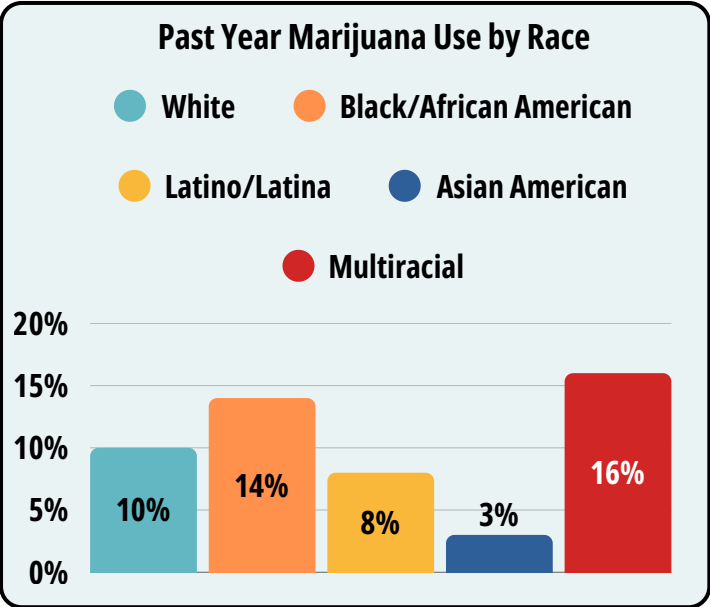


Since 2018, marijuana use among youth has declined from 14% to 10%, consistent with national trends. However, use increased noticeably with grade level, highlighting the need for early intervention. Concurrently, disparities in marijuana use based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status have widened, highlighting a need for targeted prevention efforts.

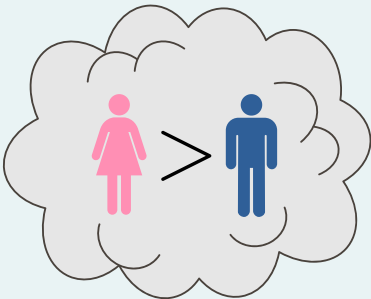
# Demographic Patterns

## Race/Ethnicity

Notably, marijuana use is most common among Multiracial and Black/African American youth. They reported the highest percentages of use for both past year and past 30 days, while Asian American youth reported the lowest rates of use.

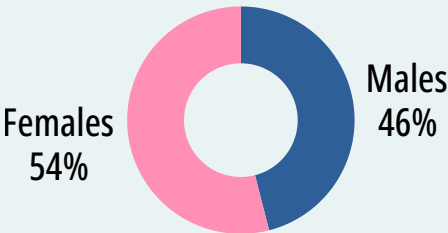


Gender

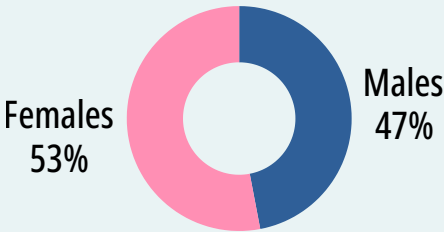


Females reported higher marijuana use than males in both the past year and past 30 days, mirroring national trends.

Past Year Marijuana Use



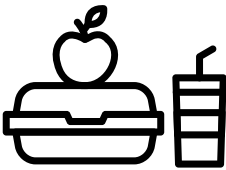
Past 30-Day Marijuana Use



Despite higher reported use, females perceived greater harm from marijuana use than males.

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.

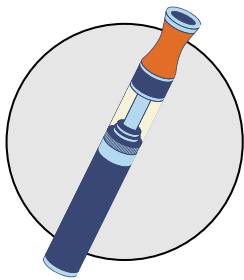


While no differences were seen between these groups for past 30-day or past year use, **early use (age 13 or younger) was more common among youth who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.** Early use is an indicator for problematic use later in life.

Lunch Status	Early Marijuana Use (≤ Age 13)
Free Lunch	5%
Reduced-Price Lunch	4%
Neither	2%

# Methods of Marijuana Use

Youth were asked about the different ways they use marijuana. The most commonly used method of marijuana consumption in Illinois was a vape. Other forms included smoking (61%), edibles (45%), and dabbing (19%).

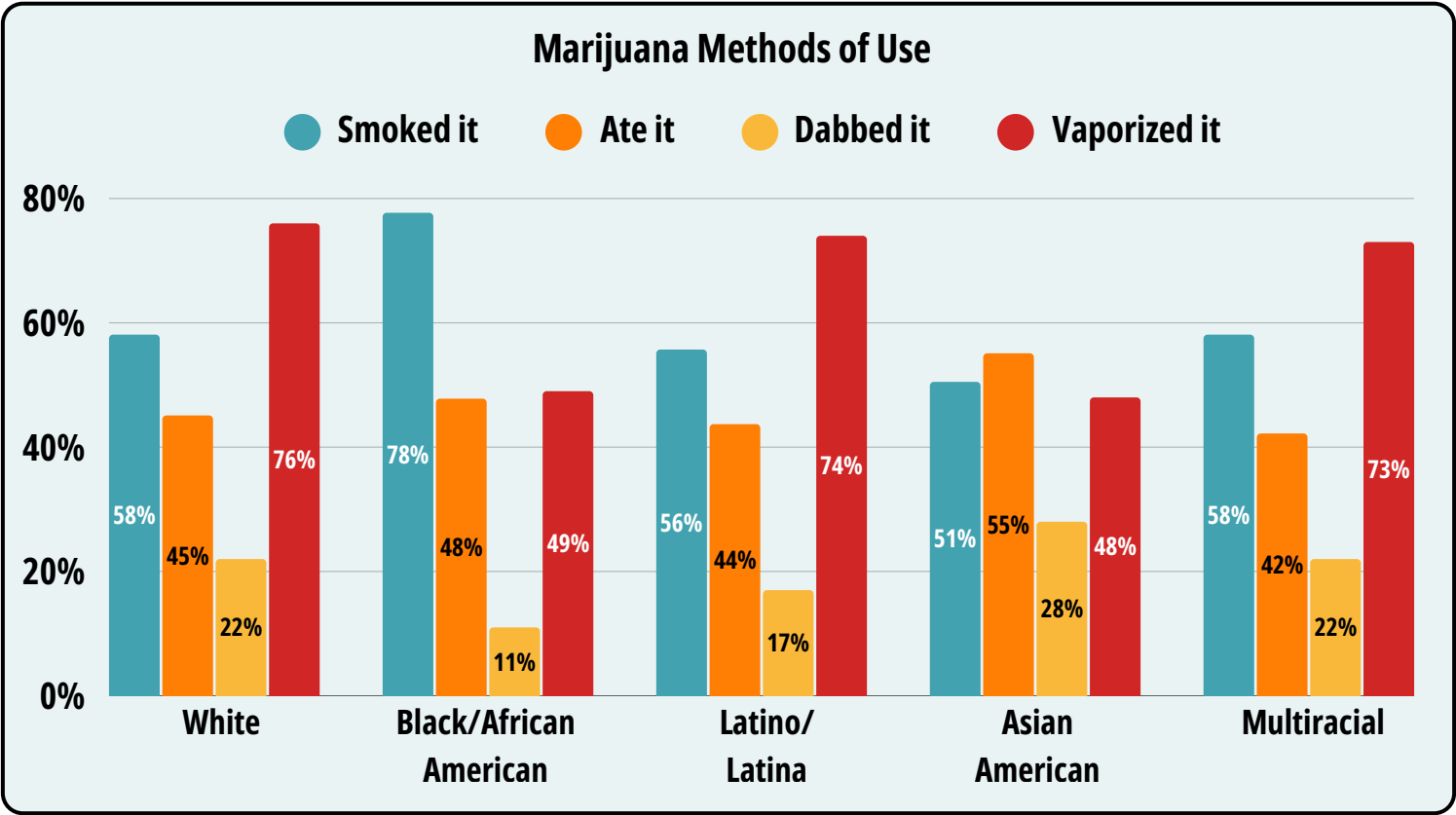


70%

of youth who used marijuana in the past month indicated they did so using a vape.

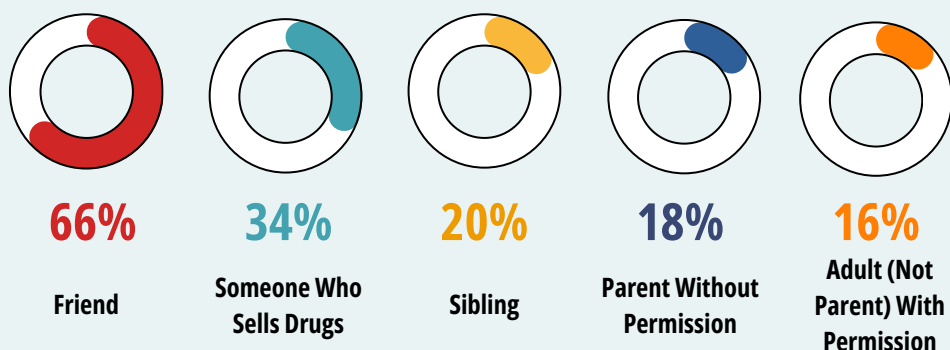
## Race/Ethnicity

White, Latino/Latina, and Multiracial youth had the highest rates of using marijuana vapes while Black/African American were more likely to smoke it. The use rates in the visual below are not mutually exclusive—youth were able to choose multiple methods of use.



## Obtaining Marijuana

Past-Year Marijuana Sources\*



The majority of youth obtained marijuana from a friend or someone they knew, rather than sourcing it themselves. To break these findings down further...



**Males** obtained marijuana from **someone who sells drugs** at a higher rate than females.

**Black/African American** youth were more likely to obtain marijuana from non-friend sources—particularly from **siblings or non-parental adults** with permission.



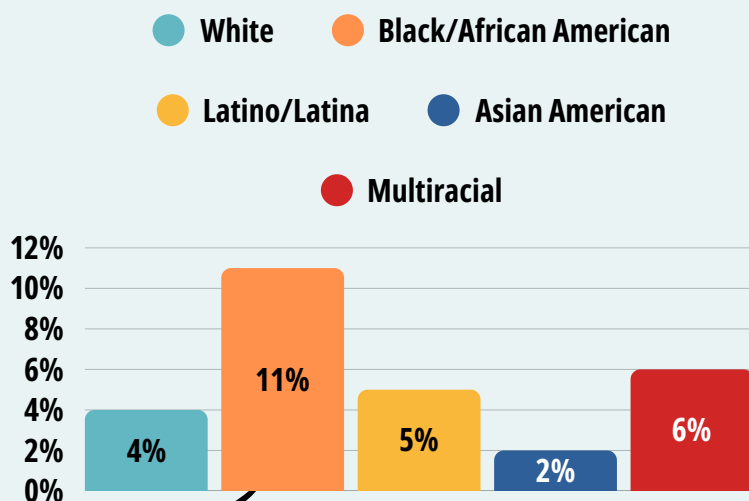
**Higher-income** youth were more likely to **receive marijuana from a friend**, whereas **lower-income** youth were more often **given marijuana by an adult**—either a parent or another adult with permission

## Perceptions

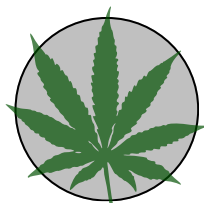
Among youth, those with the highest rates of marijuana use—specifically lower-income, female, Black/African American, and Multiracial youth—were especially prone to think that using marijuana would enhance their social image or make them appear cool.

Black/African American youth were more likely to view using marijuana as cool, indicating their high usage could be attributed to peer perceptions.

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



## Parental Monitoring



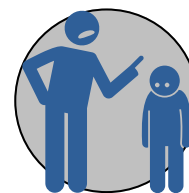
47%

of youth reported conversations with their parents/guardians about not using marijuana in the past year. This is a **7% decrease** from 2018.



14%

of youth said their family did not have clear rules about drugs or alcohol. This was reported most often by 12th graders, followed by 8th graders.



4%

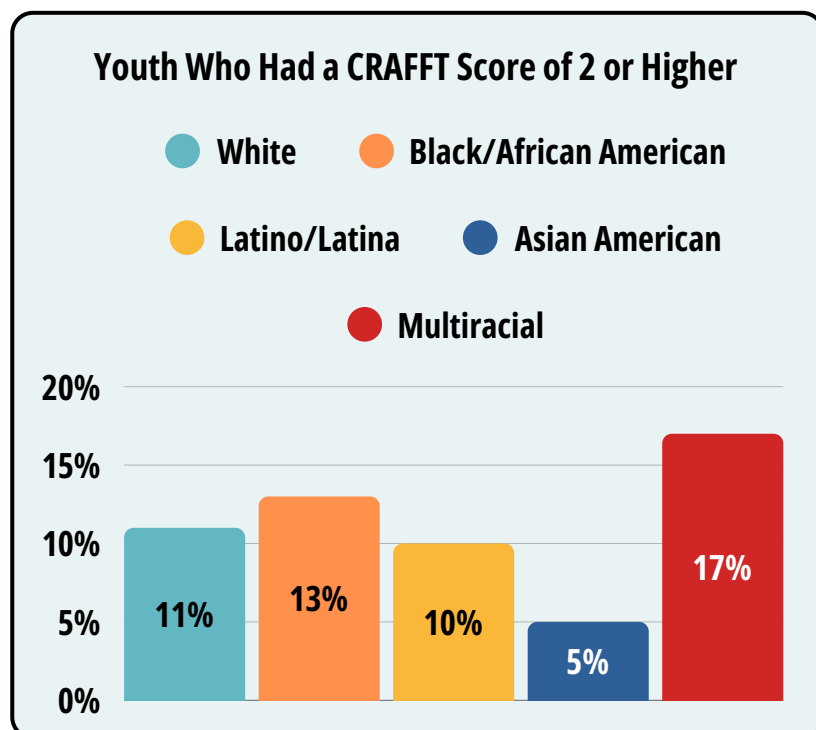
of youth reported getting into trouble while using drugs or alcohol. Black/African American youth reported the most, but did not have the highest use.

## 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





## ILLINOIS YOUTH SURVEY