



National Evaluation of the Drug-Free Communities Support Program Summary of Findings through 2014

The goals of the Drug-Free Communities Support Program are to strengthen community collaboration and to reduce youth substance use.

Administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), with support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program funds community coalitions to prevent and reduce youth substance use. The contributions of community coalitions constitute a critical part of the Nation’s drug prevention infrastructure. They are a catalyst for creating local change where drug problems manifest and affect the citizens of this country. A summary of findings based on data reported by DFC grantees, presented in full in the 2014 National Evaluation Report, follows.

Long-Term Change in DFC Core Measures

Prevalence of Youth Substance Use Has Declined Significantly in DFC Communities. Prevalence of past 30-day use declined significantly between the first and the most recent data reports across all substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana) and school levels (middle and high school). This was true for both all DFC grantees ever funded (Figure 1) and for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 DFC grantees only (Figure 2). In addition, FY2013 DFC grantees reported significant decreases in past 30-day illicit prescription drug use (core substance added in 2012). Percentage change decreases were largest for prevalence of past 30-day use of tobacco. Prevalence of past 30-day use of marijuana among high school students decreased significantly but showed the smallest percentage change when compared across substances.

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PAST 30 DAY USE: FIRST REPORT TO MOST RECENT REPORT (ALL DFC GRANTEE EVER FUNDED)

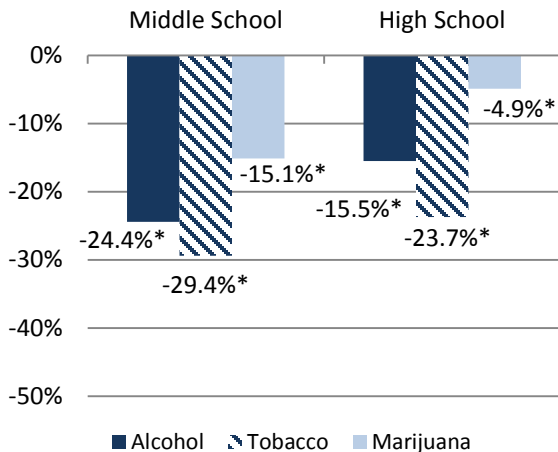
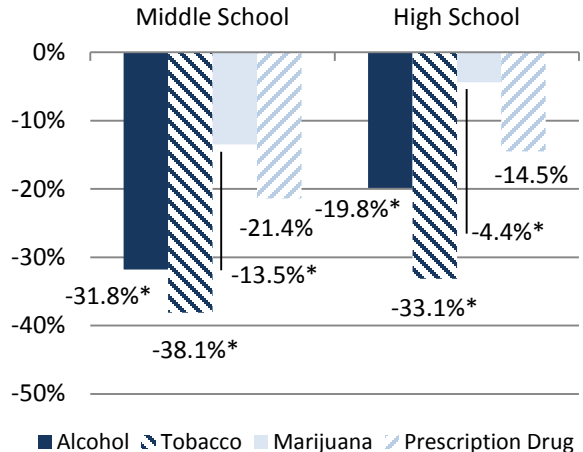


FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PAST 30 DAY USE: FIRST REPORT TO MOST RECENT REPORT (FY2013 DFC GRANTEE ONLY)



Perceptions of Risk and Perception of Parental Disapproval of Tobacco and Alcohol Use Have Increased Significantly:

Among all DFC grantees ever funded and among FY2013 DFC grantees, perception of risk for alcohol and tobacco use and perception of parental disapproval increased significantly among DFC youth at both the middle and high school levels between the first report and the most recent report.

Perceptions of Youth Marijuana Use:

Perception of risk of marijuana use did not change significantly for either middle school or high school youth between first and most recent report among all DFC grantees ever funded. Among FY2013 DFC grantees only, perception of risk of marijuana use was unchanged for middle school youth and *declined* significantly in high school youth. Perception of parental disapproval of marijuana use did increase significantly among middle school youth for all DFC grantees ever funded and for FY2013 DFC grantees. However, among high school youth, perception of parental disapproval increased significantly for all DFC grantees ever funded but not for FY2013 DFC grantees only.

Recent Trends in Change in DFC Core Measures: 2013 Report versus Most Recent Report

The following trends were observed among DFC grantees that reported on outcome data collected in 2013 as compared to their next most recent report. Because DFC grantees are required to report outcome data every two years, these recent trends are based on data from less than half of the FY2013 DFC grantees.

- **Prevalence of Past 30-Day Use of Alcohol and Prescription Drugs Declined Significantly in DFC Grantee Communities:** Among DFC grantees that reported data from 2013, there was a significant decline in prevalence of past 30-day alcohol use at both the middle school level (-1.4 percentage points) and high school level (-3.2 percentage points) from their next most recent report (most commonly data from 2011).
- **Prevalence of Past 30-Day Use of Tobacco and Marijuana by High School Youth Declined Significantly but Remained Unchanged in Middle School Youth:** High school past 30-day prevalence of tobacco and marijuana use each decreased significantly (-2.3 percentage points and -0.9 percentage points, respectively). During this same time frame, prevalence of past 30-day use of tobacco and marijuana by middle school students remained unchanged, although fewer than 5% of these youth reported use.

General Trends in Prevalence of Past 30-Day Substance Use

While the Significant Declines in Prevalence of Past 30-Day use are Promising, Youth Substance Use Still Requires Prevention Efforts as Prevalence of Use Remains a Concern, Particularly for Alcohol. While past 30-day use decreased significantly across substances across all DFC grantees and for FY 2013 grantees only, ongoing prevention efforts are needed given the numbers of youth who continue to report use. Within both middle school and high school youth, at any given time nearly twice as many youth reported past 30-day use of alcohol as reported use of either tobacco or marijuana. For example, based on most recent reports for FY2013 Grantees, 9% of middle school and 29% of high school youth reported past 30-day use of alcohol. At this same time, less than 5% of middle school youth reported either tobacco or marijuana past 30-day use. Among high school youth, although both tobacco and marijuana use were much lower than alcohol use, more reported past 30-day use of marijuana than of tobacco (17% and 12%, respectively). Past 30-day prevalence of illicit use of prescription drugs was lowest across substances for both middle and high school youth (2% and 6%, respectively). Two-thirds of FY 2013 DFC grantees (67%) indicated they were able to put into place a prescription drug disposal program after receiving DFC funding.

Perception of Peer Disapproval

Perception of Peer Disapproval of Substance Use Declines Between Middle School and High School But Generally Increased Over Time at Each Grade Level. For FY 2013 DFC grantees, over 80% of middle school youth reported perceiving that their peers would think it would be wrong for them to use a given substance (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, illicit use of prescription drugs). Across substances, between 12% and 20% fewer high school youth reported perceived peer disapproval. That is, youth perceptions of peer disapproval of substance use decreases from middle to high school, suggesting that DFC coalitions may want to identify ways to prevent this change. While perceived peer disapproval is lower in high school youth than middle school youth, there were significant increases from first to most recent report of perception of peer disapproval at each grade level for FY 2013 grantees for all substances with the exception of perception of marijuana use among high school youth for peer disapproval which was unchanged. Around two-thirds of FY 2013 DFC grantees (65%) reported initiating a social norms campaign after receipt of DFC funding which may contribute to the increased perception of peer disapproval over time.

Findings Related to the Implementation of Prevention Strategies

DFC grantees are encouraged to engage in a range of activities, categorized by 7 strategy types, and clearly do so. Nearly all DFC coalitions (over 97%) engaged in Providing Information and Enhancing Skills activities, and many report these as a foundation for work in other strategies. The smallest percentage of DFC grantees engaged in activities related to Changing Physical Design, although more than two-thirds of DFC grantees engaged in these activities (67%). Slightly more than three-fourths of DFC coalitions (76%) reported engaging in activities related to Modifying/Changing Policies. Generally DFC grantees focus on modifying/changing one to two types of policies at a time. Modifying/Changing Policies related to drug-free schools was engaged in by the highest percentage of DFC grantees (32%), and these grantees reported being generally successful (195 grantees modified 151 school policies). Citizen Enabling/Liability policies had the second highest policy engagement, but reported far fewer successes (131 DFC grantees (22%) passed/modified 50 policies), suggesting that enacting these types of laws can take considerable effort and time.

NOTE: Given the evaluation design, a causal relationship cannot be claimed with certainty between DFC coalition activities and the outcomes reported here. However, the results are consistent with expectations that DFC is effective when the program has been implemented as intended. Please see the full report for additional information.

ONDCP | DFC National Outcome Evaluation Status Update

ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences