

2026

Virginia Office for Substance Abuse Prevention

Annual Report

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Thomas W. Kirby

Chair
Timothy D. Hugo

Vice Chair
L. Mark Stepanian

Board of Directors
Lisa N. Jennings
Jack E. Kerrigan
Lucretia Mason-Underdue

December 1, 2026

Dear Members of the General Assembly:

The Virginia Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (VOSAP) Collaborative is pleased to provide this report in accordance with §4.1-103.02, *Code of Virginia*. Consistent with its statutory responsibilities, VOSAP provides leadership, opportunities and an environment to further strengthen Virginia's youth substance prevention infrastructure to ensure that prevention efforts are more unified, collaborative and evidence based.

This report highlights national and state youth substance use data and details the prevention efforts and initiatives VOSAP member agencies and statewide partners have implemented during fiscal year 2026.

VOSAP looks forward to providing continued leadership and coordination of Virginia's substance abuse prevention efforts. Thank you for your support and please contact us if you would like additional information about VOSAP.

Sincerely,

Timothy D. Hugo

Timothy D. Hugo, Chair
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority

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Executive Information

The Commonwealth of Virginia



Governor Abigail Spanberger

Secretariats represented in VOSAP

Stanley M. Meador, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
Dr. Jeffery O. Smith, Secretary of Education
Marvin Figueroa, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority Board and Leadership



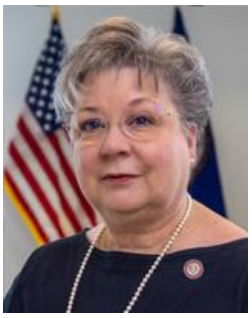
Tim Hugo,

Chair



L. Mark Stepanian,

Vice Chair



Lisa N. Jennings



Jack Kerrigan



Lucretia Mason-Underdue

Thomas Kirby, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Executive Summary

The Virginia Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (VOSAP), operating as the VOSAP Collaborative, is pleased to report on substance abuse prevention efforts in the Commonwealth of Virginia. VOSAP member agencies represent four secretariats: Education, Health and Human Resources, Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Transportation. External to state government, VOSAP partners with community coalitions and other organizations that promote health, safety and wellness within the Commonwealth.

The VOSAP Collaborative promotes and supports data-driven prevention planning, evidence-based prevention programming, capacity development and formal data-driven evaluation. During VOSAP Collaborative meetings, representatives from 13 agencies and organizations reported on individual and joint projects related to prevention and identified ways to further support their shared mission to promote health and safety in the Commonwealth. While a range of prevention efforts were discussed in 2026, particular attention was paid to the state of recreational cannabis use in the absence of a retail market, the ongoing opioid epidemic and improving visibility and awareness of the varied and overlapping prevention programs and resources available in Virginia.

Statutory Authority

Pursuant to HB 1291 and SB 678 of 2012 (Chapter 835 of the 2012 Acts of Assembly), enacted through § 4.1-103.02 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Governor's reorganization of executive branch of state government states**:**

“The responsibility for the administration of a substance abuse prevention program transfers from the Governor to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. The bill gives the ABC Board the duty to (i) coordinate substance abuse prevention activities of agencies of the Commonwealth in such program, (ii) review substance abuse prevention program expenditures by agencies of the Commonwealth, and (iii) determine the direction and appropriateness of such expenditures. The Board is to cooperate with federal, state, and local agencies, private and public agencies, interested organizations, and individuals in order to prevent substance abuse within the Commonwealth. The Board must report annually by December 1 to the Governor and the General Assembly on the substance abuse prevention activities of the Commonwealth. [Enactments 103-104; HJ 49 #37]”

VOSAP Collaborative Mission

The mission of VOSAP is to support positive youth development by providing strategic statewide leadership, fostering collaboration and the sharing of resources at all levels, and providing tools and training to practice evidence-based prevention to reduce the incidence and prevalence of substance abuse and its consequences.

VOSAP Collaborative Goals

In addition to being responsive to ad hoc requests, the VOSAP Collaborative works to fulfill the following goals:

- VOSAP will be a working group where individual agency information, successes and challenges pertaining to prevention activities are openly shared and coordinated to eliminate redundancies.
- VOSAP will support the collection and analysis of state epidemiological data to support prevention planning, funding, and programming.
- VOSAP will promote use of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Strategic Prevention Framework.
- The VOSAP Collaborative will use agency websites and social media to provide prevention information and highlight prevention work.

VOSAP/GOSAP Archive

VOSAP's predecessor organization was the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) and the associated GOSAP Collaborative. Members of the Collaborative voted to change the name of the organization to VOSAP in 2013. The Collaborative operates under a Memorandum of Agreement signed by all participating agency directors.

During fiscal year 2021, in compliance with Virginia ABC's records retention policies, the GOSAP records previously maintained in the archives of the Library of Virginia were destroyed.

VOSAP Collaborative Members

VOSAP has been a part of the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) since 2012. The Virginia ABC Youth Education and Prevention Coordinator serves as the coordinator for the VOSAP Collaborative, among other statewide initiatives. Collaborative meetings are held quarterly. The collaborative is comprised of the following organizations:

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC)
Wyatt Anderson, Youth Education and Prevention Coordinator
VOSAP Facilitator

Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA)
Brianna Bonat, Director of Public Health and Engagement
Sakina Weekes, Education and Prevention Specialist

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
Colleen Hughes, Deputy Director, Office of Addiction, Recovery, and Wellness Supports
Jennifer Farinholt, Behavioral Health Wellness Consultant
Marfel Barnet, Data Manager

Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
Natasha Fortune, Juvenile Justice Program Coordinator
Betsy Bell, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Programs Coordinator

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
Erin Coppedge, LPC, CSOTP, CSAC, Therapist Supervisor

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Kristina Yager, Impaired Driving Program Manager
Katharine Beachboard, Deputy Director of Strategy

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
Nenneya Shields, Opioid Abatement Grant Manager
Jennifer Vedder, Coordinator for Health, Physical, Family Life & Driver Education
Robin Shepherd, Driver Education Specialist
Kristinne Stone, Behavioral Health Programs Specialist

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
Injury and Violence Prevention Team

Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
Stephen Wade MUP; Health Opportunity Special Projects Manager

Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY)
Michael Parsons, Director of Programs

Virginia National Guard (VNG)
Staff Sergeant Wayne B. Graves, Drug Demand Reduction-Civil Operation Specialist

Virginia State Police (VSP)
Kendall Lythgoe, YOVASO Education and Interactive Program Coordinator

Community Coalitions of Virginia (CCoVA)
Travis Fellows, Coalition Coordinator
Jennifer Lewis-Cooper, Finance Director

The Strategic Prevention Framework

VOSAP Collaborative member agencies subscribe to the **Strategic Prevention Framework** (SPF) (**Figure 1**) created by **SAMHSA** to guide its substance use prevention initiatives. The framework allows prevention professionals to better understand both the behavioral and environmental health issues related to substance misuse, but it can also be applied to many other public health issues that may affect a community. There are five steps to the SPF: assessment, capacity, planning, implementation and evaluation. Sustainability and cultural competence are two concepts that are interwoven throughout each step. The SPF is successful due to its emphasis on data-driven decisions and a team-based approach to prevention. The framework is represented in a circular format because prevention work is not linear; a team may return to a step in the process or perform two steps at once depending on the nature and evolution of the public health problem.

Figure 1. The Strategic Prevention Framework



Data collection and the evaluation of available, current data is within the assessment step of the SPF. Assessment involves gathering an understanding of community prevention needs, as well as data and research that can help identify and prioritize health problems. During this step, prevention professionals collect information that can tell them about the nature of the problem, risk and protective factors that influence the problem and the amount of community capacity available to address the problem, including the community's readiness for change and its available resources.

VOSAP member agencies routinely reference and report on the following national and state data to inform prevention professionals of potential gaps and needs for substance use prevention services and to support the implementation of prevention initiatives.

Youth Substance Use Data

National Data

National data discussed below focuses primarily on the **Monitoring the Future** (MTF) project. MTF is a longitudinal study of the behaviors, attitudes and values of American secondary school students, college students and young adults. Each year, a total of approximately 50,000 eighth, 10th and 12th grade students are surveyed. In addition, annual follow-up questionnaires are mailed to a sample of each graduating class for several years after their initial participation.

The MTF study has been funded by a series of investigator-initiated research grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a part of the National Institutes of Health. MTF is conducted at the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.

The results of the study inform policymakers at all levels of government to monitor progress toward national health goals. Study results are also used to monitor trends in substance use among adolescents and young adults, as they are routinely used in the White House Strategy on Drug Abuse.

When tracking all drug use trends in adolescents over the last half century, researchers can confidently say that there has been a widespread decline in youth substance use. When illicit drug use emerged as an adolescent epidemic in the 1960s, prevention work led to a broad decrease in prevalence rates over time, with a short spike during the 1990s termed the "1990s drug relapse." Since this time, youth drug use has continued to decline, with most rates sitting at or near all-time lows. Data from 2020-21 captured student substance use behaviors before and after social distancing policies were widely adopted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, nearly all youth substance use behaviors decreased, most likely due to increased parental supervision and disrupted youth social networks.

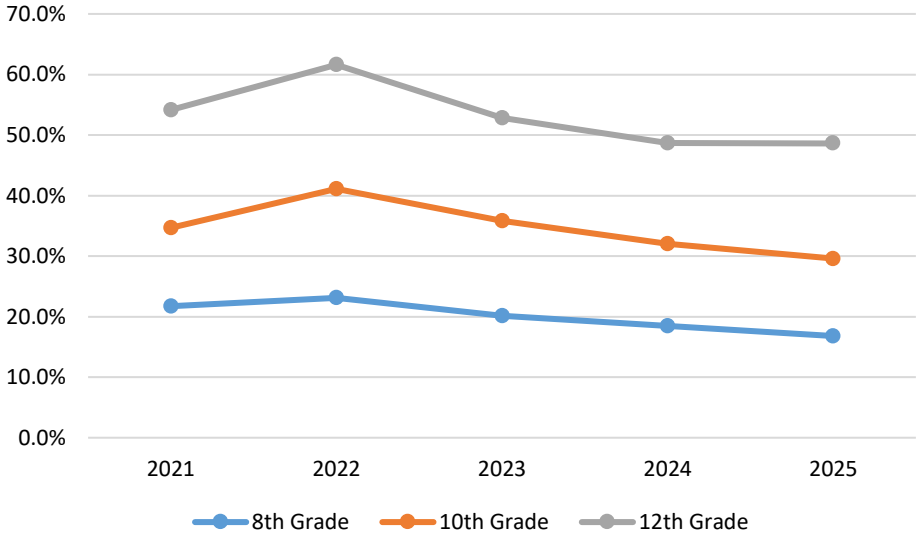
The MTF data below highlights general trends over time in addition to lifetime prevalence (i.e., any use during one's life) of the most commonly used substances (i.e. alcohol, nicotine and cannabis) and illicit drugs used by secondary students from 2021-25. In some cases, current use (e.g., use within 30 days of the survey) is shown where notable trends are captured or lifetime prevalence data was not collected. MTF 2021 survey data collection was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which social distancing and remote learning policies were in place. Thus, results from these years provide a snapshot of how adolescent substance use changed when most schools returned to in-person instruction. While some substance use showed a return to higher rates the following year in 2022, the overall trend of decreasing rates continued or remained roughly the same through 2025.

Alcohol Use

Data in 2025 continued to show a downward over the last five years across eighth, 10th and 12th graders (**Figure 2**). While these results did not significantly differ from 2024, the pattern of results continues the marked trend of reduced youth alcohol use over the past 25 years. Though not pictured below, other measures of alcohol use, like binge drinking, show the same encouraging declines.

These youth trends are consistent with both the **2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health** and **Gallup's Consumption Habits Survey** indicating that Americans in general are drinking at historic lows. To what extent this outcome is due to economic concerns, health concerns and/or shifting tastes remains to be fully seen. However, it should be noted that Gen Z, a cohort once showing low preference for alcohol, has reportedly shifted to drink in roughly equal proportion to the total global adult population, **as measured by ISWR**, a data provider for the alcohol industry.

Figure 2. Year-to-year comparison of lifetime prevalence of alcohol.



Nicotine Use

With the exception of 12th graders, lifetime cigarette prevalence (Figure 3) continued to decline to its lowest recorded levels. However, the increase of 0.8% that was observed for 12th graders in 2025 was not statistically significant difference from 2024. This was also found to be the case for the modest decreases in eighth and 10th graders' lifetime prevalence data.

Lifetime vaped nicotine (Figure 4) among eighth, 10th and 12th graders all showed decreases relative to 2024. This was not found to be statistically significant for each grade.

Lifetime prevalence of nicotine pouch use (Figure 5) represents a new and quickly changing area to consider. First tracked by MTF in 2023, rates of lifetime nicotine pouch use in 2025 increased across all grades, however, at a rate that did not meet statistical significance.

Most notably, current use of any nicotine product (Figure 6) revealed a significant increase for 12th graders, reaching nearly 22%. Meanwhile, eighth and 10th graders remained stable. This particular increase for 12th graders is driven by a combination of small non-significant increases across current cigarette, e-cigarette and nicotine pouch use when aggregated.

Data from the **2025 Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey** (NYTS) can shed additional light on these trends. Measuring nicotine use across middle and high school students, the NYTS found that while overall youth nicotine use has declined from 2022-25, those using nicotine products tend to show persistent frequent use. Among current youth e-cigarette and nicotine pouch users, 27.5% and 17.6% reported using these products daily, respectively. Flavored products remain popular, with roughly 90% of both nicotine and e-cigarette users using fruit, candy or mint flavors.

Another consideration for trends in youth nicotine use is the changing legal landscape of nicotine products. In May and June 2026, respectively, the FDA **authorized marketing of fruit-flavored e-cigarettes**, with restrictions to mitigate youth risk, as well as marketing claims that some nicotine pouch products may be called **potential lower risk alternatives to cigarettes**.

Figure 3. Year-to-year comparison of reported lifetime prevalence of cigarettes.

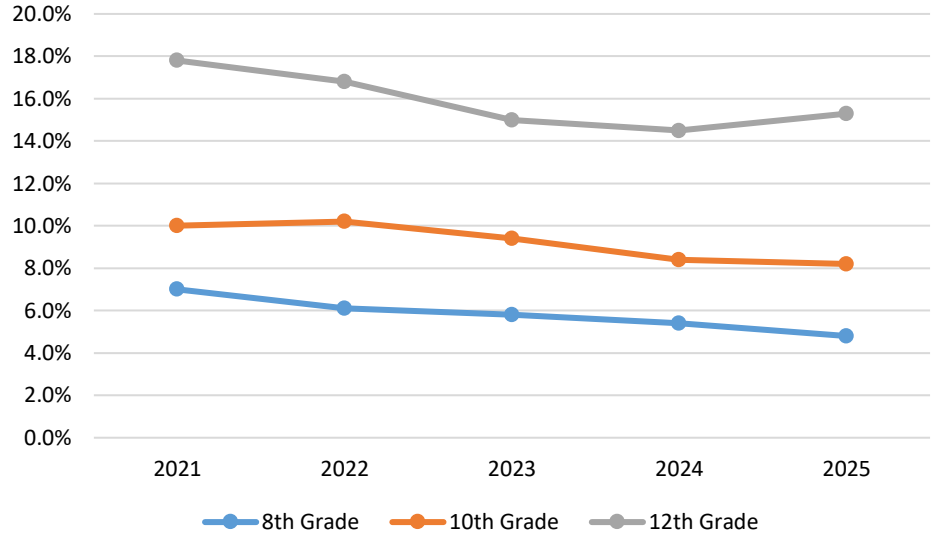


Figure 4. Year-to-year comparison of reported lifetime prevalence of vaped nicotine.

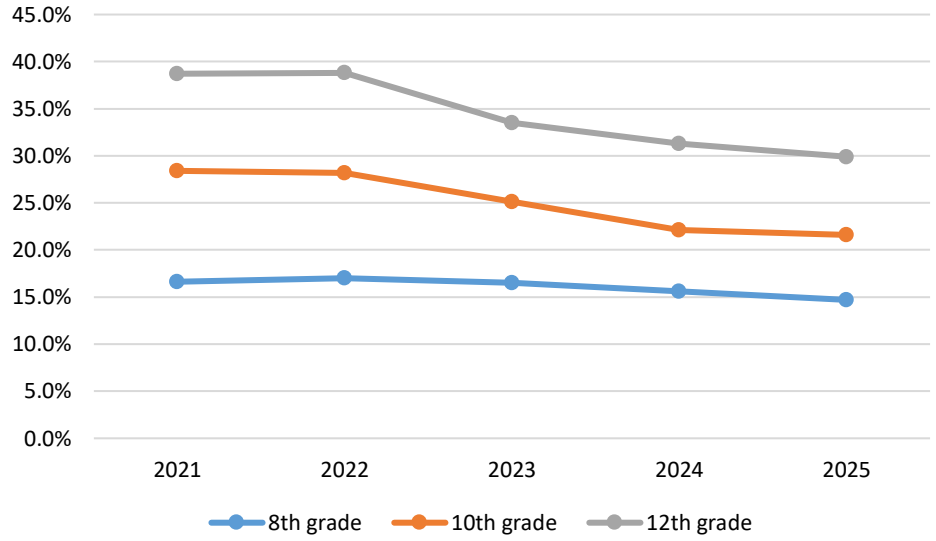


Figure 5. Year-to-year comparison of reported lifetime prevalence of nicotine pouches.

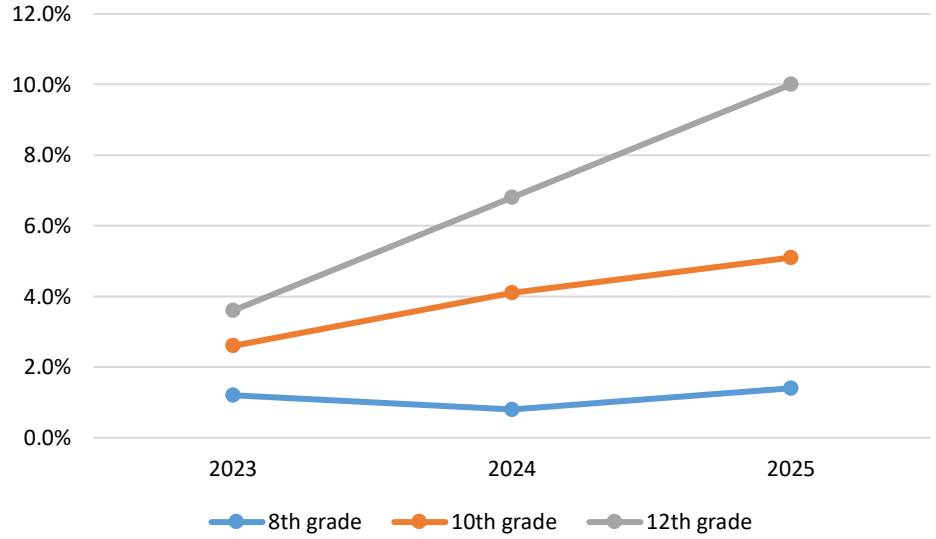
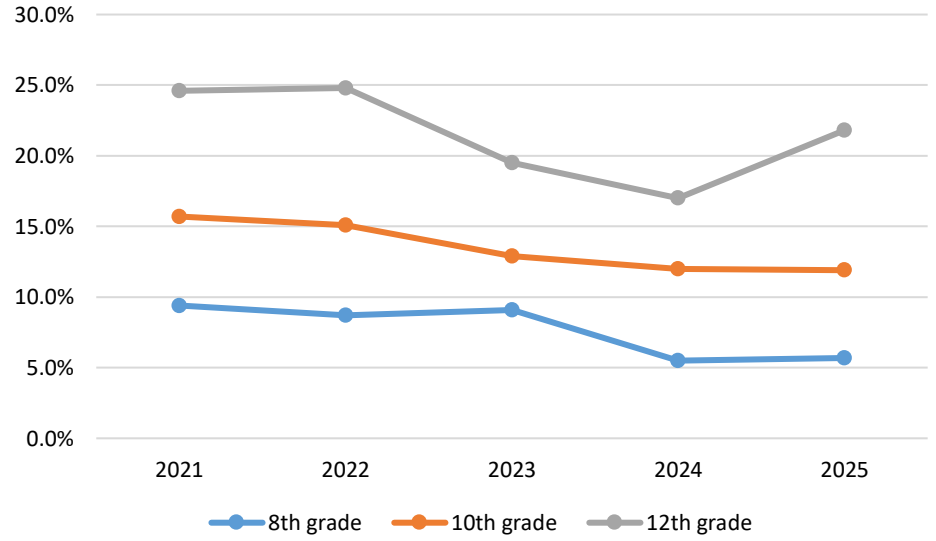


Figure 6. Year-to-year comparison of current nicotine use.



Marijuana Use

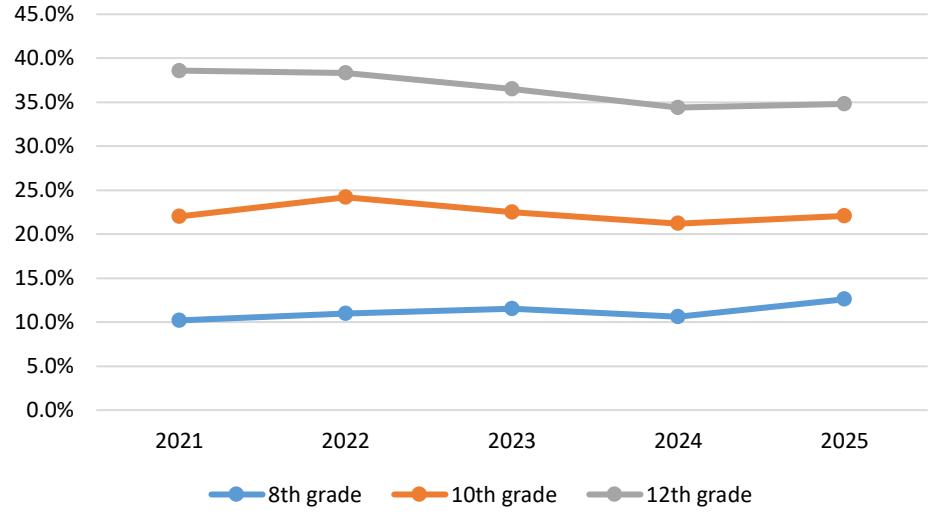
Relative to last year, 2025 lifetime marijuana use showed slight non-significant increases among 10th and 12th graders by less than a percentage point, with a small, non-significant decrease in eighth grade use by 1.7% (Figure 7).

In 2025, for the first time, the MTF survey began tracking past-year use of *any* hemp-derived psychoactive product (e.g., Delta-8, Delta-10, etc.), which sit at 2%, 6% and 9% for eighth, 10th and 12th graders, respectively. While this data is new, a 2024 survey asked a similar question which only addressed Delta-8. When comparing both questions, all grade levels showed decreases in 2025, with 10th and 12th grade responses reaching statistical significance. Taken together, this is a clear indication that use of psychoactive hemp substances is indeed decreasing among youth.

This is welcome news, considering the ever-changing landscape of marijuana and hemp-derived products. In November 2025, Congress revised the federal definition of hemp to ban most intoxicating hemp products. Notably, while recreational marijuana is legal in Virginia for adults, recreational sales

are not set to launch until July 2027. For more information on cannabis laws see **Cannabis Laws Overview — Virginia Cannabis Control Authority**.

Figure 7. Year-to-year comparison of reported lifetime prevalence of marijuana.



Other Drug Use

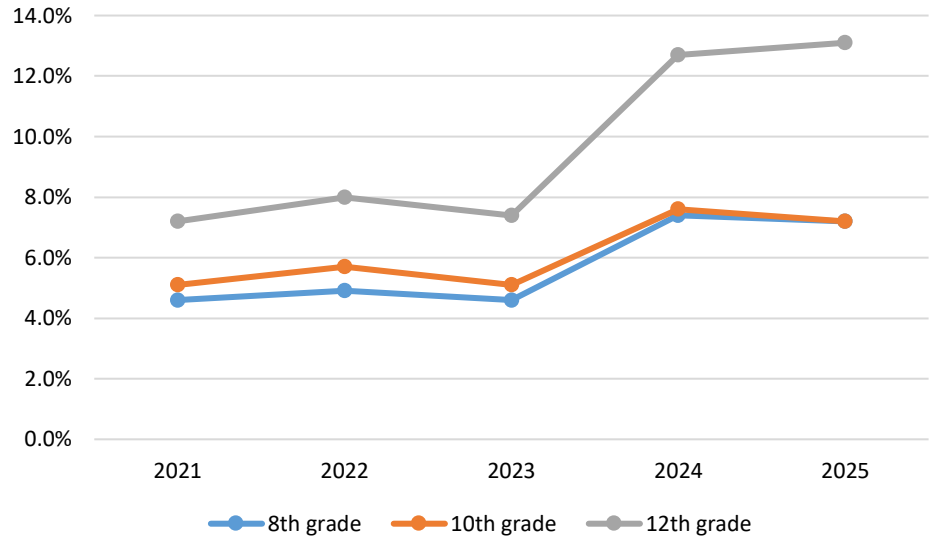
In 2025 annual use of any illicit substance other than marijuana was found to have no significant change across all three grades relative to 2024 (Figure 8). It should be noted that 2024 data indicates a change in survey questions. That is, students were asked to consider not just misuse of "sedatives" but prescription sleeping medications and anti-anxiety medications. As a result, rates in 2024 jumped 1% to 3% relative to the prior year, directly attributable to this wording.

This is also an important category to consider as it relates to the likelihood of youth encountering fentanyl or related synthetic opioids in illicit pills or powders. While youth are far less likely than adults to use the illicit pills and powders with the greatest risk of containing these substances, their deadliness has caused an increase in overdoses, while far lower than rates in the larger population.

A 2026 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report states that from 2023-24, overdose deaths among those 15-24 years old declined by 37%. Across this same period, the overdose rate involving synthetic opioids decreased by roughly 35% as well. While there is not a neat way to assess accidental youth encounters with fentanyl or similar opioids in self-reported data, state data in the following section can better assess the scope of the problem in Virginia.

Greater context can, on all national opioid deaths, be gained from the CDC's page on **Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic**. There, the opioid epidemic is explained as occurring in three waves, starting with prescription opioid deaths in 1990s, followed by heroin overdose deaths in the 2010s and synthetic opioid overdose deaths in 2013, spiking the rate of deaths most drastically. While the overdose death rate remains shockingly high, there has been a 4% dip in that rate from 2023 to 2024.

Figure 8. Year-to-year comparison of reported 12-month prevalence of any illicit drug (other than marijuana.



Comparing National Data and Virginia Data

The most straightforward way to compare Virginia to national data on youth substance use is through the bi-annual **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** (YRBS), to which Virginia contributes through the **Virginia Youth Survey**.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The YRBS was developed in 1990 by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. These behaviors, often established during childhood and early adolescence, include:

- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence;
- Sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
- Alcohol and other drug use;
- Tobacco use;
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors; and
- Inadequate physical activity.

The YRBS includes national, state, territorial, tribal government and local school-based surveys of representative samples of sixth through 12th grade students. These surveys are conducted every two years, usually during the spring semester. The national survey, compiled by the CDC, provides data representative of sixth through 12th grade students in public and private schools. The state, territorial, tribal government and local surveys conducted by departments of health and education provide data representative of mostly public middle and high school students within each jurisdiction.

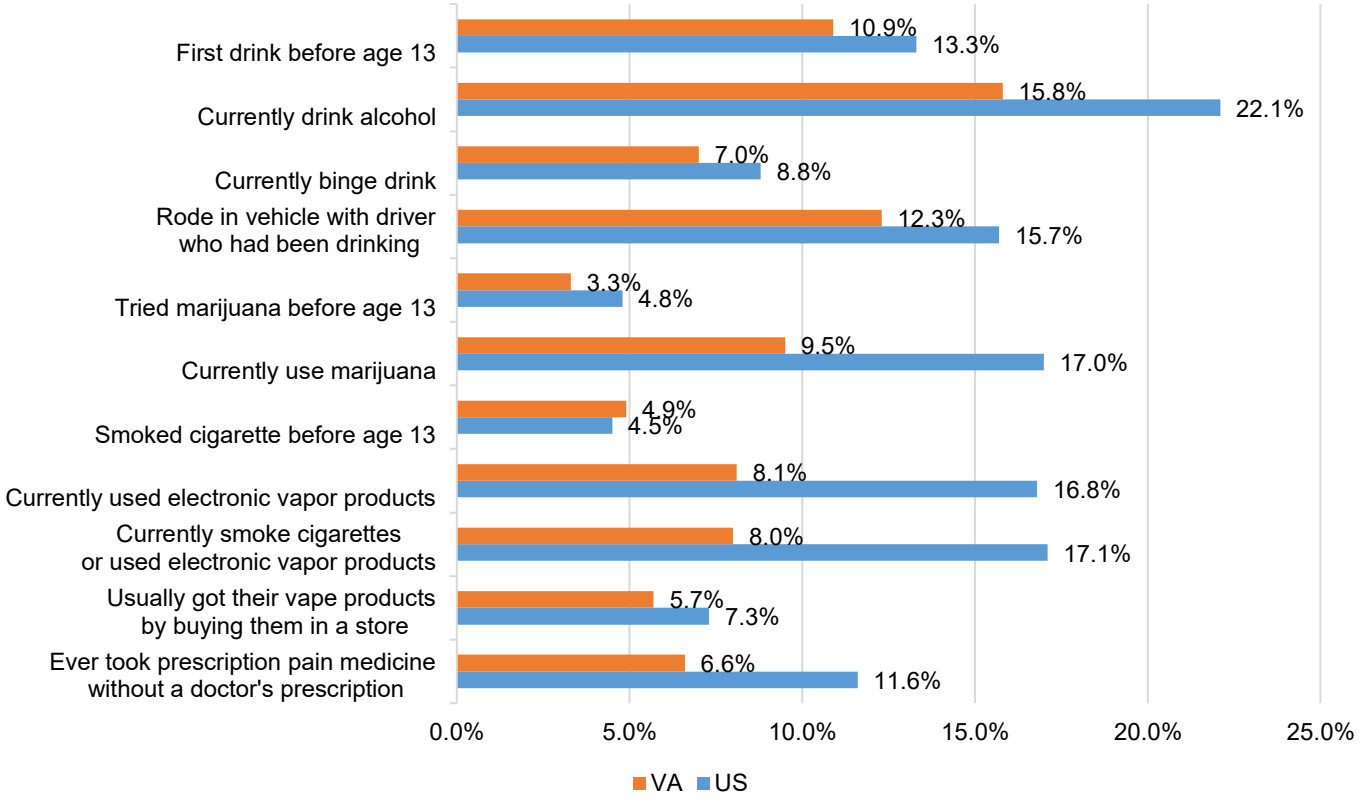
The Virginia Youth Survey (VYS)

The VYS is the Commonwealth's contribution to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and measures the health risk behaviors of Virginia middle and high school students. The survey is implemented by VDH

and VFHY with the support of the VDOE for dissemination of the questionnaire within schools. Middle school students are asked about 60 questions while high school students are asked about 90 questions along with additional questions related to VFHY's peer crowd research.

There are marked differences in the consistency and questions asked to middle school and high school student samples. Between the two categories, few data points overlap across middle and high school student drug use questions to compare directly in an effort to be age appropriate. Below, Figure 9 shows how Virginia 2023 high school data relates to national averages from 2023, where there are corresponding questions. Data for 2025 has not yet been released.

Figure 9: Virginia State and National Rates of Substance Use Behaviors (High School)



Virginia Data

The following summary goes into greater depth on notable youth substance use trends found in VYS from 2013-23 for middle and high school students, supplemented by other sources where applicable. Please note that "current" use of a substance indicates use on at least one day during the last 30 days before the survey was taken by students. For more detailed information and full data, please see the middle and high school survey reports located at **https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/data-tables/**.

Alcohol Use

For middle school students (**Figure 10**), the percentage of those who first drank alcohol before age 11 decreased in 2023 relative to 2021 and 2019. When only considering the change from 2021, this was not a significant decrease. This represents the lowest level recorded since the question was first asked in 2013.

For high school students (**Figure 11**), questions directly assessing alcohol use are at their lowest levels ever as well. There was a significant decrease in those reporting to have had a drink before age 13 across the last 10 years, with the 2023 figure at 10.9%. Like the middle school students, the rate in 2023 did not significantly differ when only compared to 2021.

High school students showed similar declines in measures of current drinking and current binge drinking (i.e., consuming four or more drinks in a row for females, or five or more for males). These reductions were found to be significant over the last five and 10 years, respectively, but not when compared only to 2021 data. Data on current high school binge drinking was not collected prior to 2017.

The rate of high school students riding in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking (within the last 30 days) decreased significantly when viewed over the last 10 years. It should be noted that while there was an increase of 3.5% since 2021, this uptick was not found to be statistically significant.

Figure 10: Year-to-year comparison middle school student lifetime alcohol use.

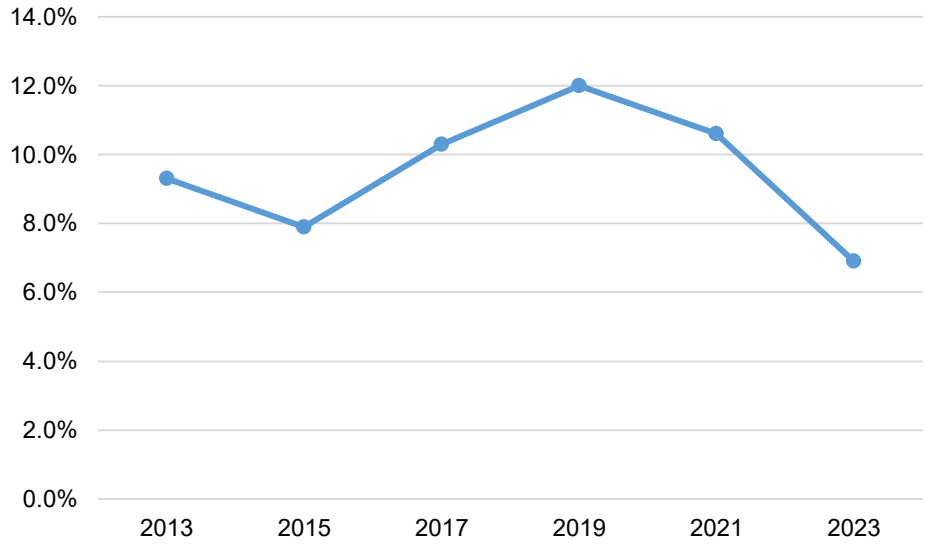
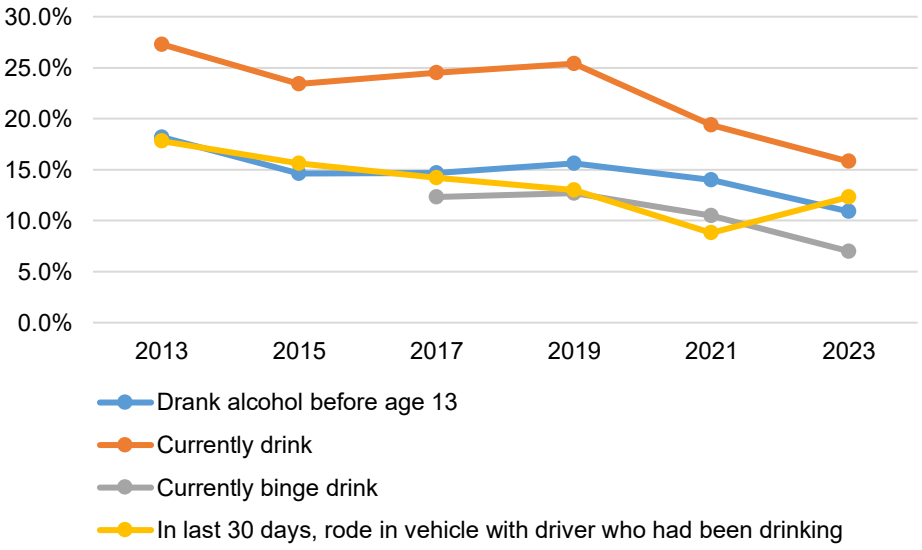


Figure 11: Year-to-year comparison of Virginia high school student alcohol use behaviors



Nicotine Use

For nicotine use behaviors in middle school students (**Figure 12**), the percentage of those who currently smoke cigarettes (i.e., with the last 30 days) was at the lowest level recorded at 0.4%. This represents a significant reduction from 2021 rates, as well as when viewed over the last decade. Electronic vapor product use also sits at its lowest level of 3.7%. This represents a significant decrease when viewed from 2015-23.

Students who ever used an electronic vapor product increased by 0.8% relative to 2021, to 10% of students. However, this was not found to be a meaningful uptick. When the range of data from 2017-2023 was considered, there were significant decreases over that timeframe, representing effective prevention efforts since vaping products rose to prominence and prevalence peaked in 2019 at 14.9%.

For high school students, nicotine use sits at its lowest levels ever (**Figure 13**). Data showed significant decreases in both those who currently smoke cigarettes or use electronic vapor products, and when vaping product use is considered alone. These decreases were found to be significant relative to 2021 and when viewed over the last eight years, which is as long as these questions have been asked.

Students reporting to have smoked a cigarette before age 13 continued to decrease, though the 2023 rate of 10.9% was not found to be a significant change from 2021. Like above, when all data is taken together, this represented a notable decrease over time.

Newer data on how high school students are acquiring their vape products is potentially concerning if left unchecked. Of students who currently vape, 5.7% reported purchasing these themselves from stores, up from 3.4% in 2021 (**Figure 14**). While this is not enough of a jump to indicate a significant change, it is worth monitoring closely as it relates to enforcement efforts.

While Virginia youth data specific to nicotine pouch use is not directly assessed, it is already a topic of concern. Like national poison control centers, Virginia's poison control centers have seen increases in calls related to the accidental ingestion of nicotine pouches. The 2025 Virginia Youth Survey will be

the first to directly ask youth about nicotine pouches so we can better track and respond to this problematic trend.

Supplementing data from the Virginia Youth Survey, Virginia Commonwealth University have an ongoing **research study** in which confiscated vaping products in Virginia schools may be submitted and their contents analyzed. These results have shown that much like national trends, the overwhelming majority of those vapes submitted are flavored and are not authorized for sale by the FDA. Additionally, data from the 2024-2025 school year indicated that of the nearly 1,300 vaping products collected, roughly 83% contained nicotine, 14% contained cannabinoids.

Figure 12: Year-to-year comparison of Virginia middle school student nicotine use behaviors.

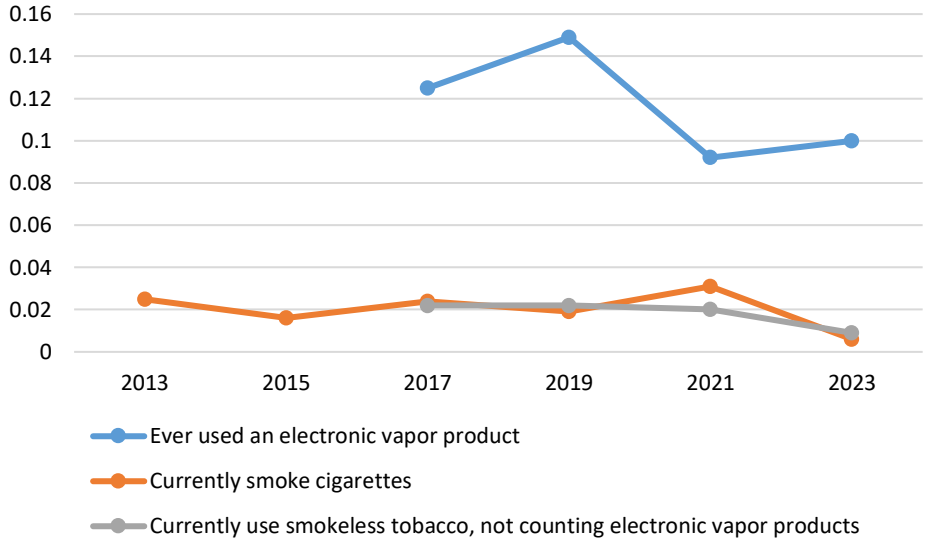


Figure 13: Year-to-year comparison of high school student nicotine use behaviors.

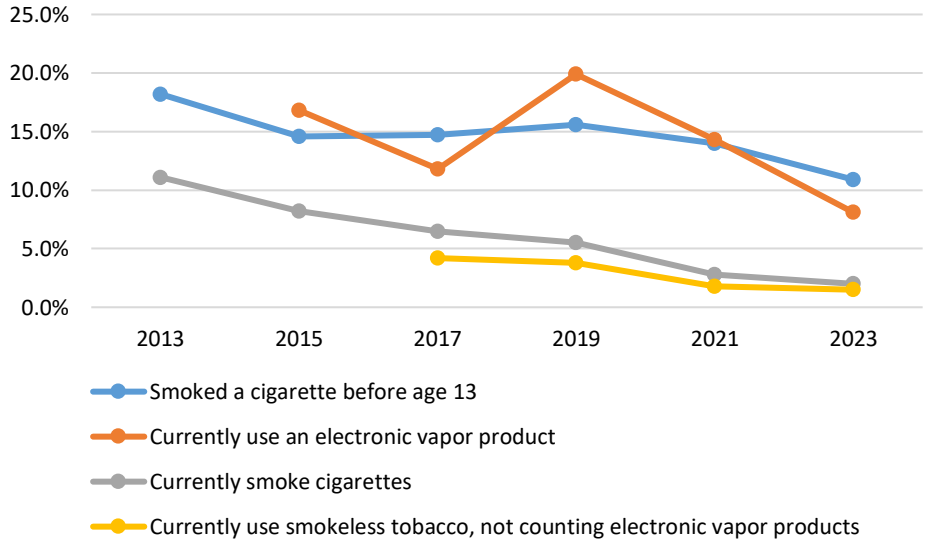
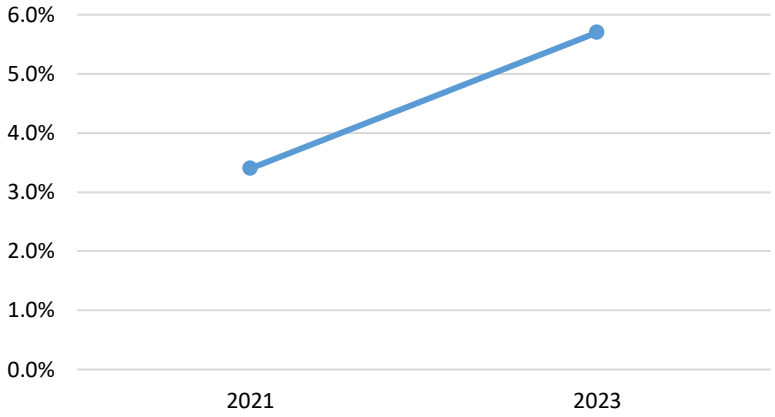


Figure 14: High school students who usually got their electronic vapor products by buying them in a store, of those who currently vape.



Marijuana Use

While middle school students trying marijuana before age 11 (Figure 12) has decreased over time, it is up slightly from 2021, at 1.1%. The reduction from just over 3% in 2017, while welcome, was not found to be statistically significant.

High school student marijuana use (Figure 13) also shows steady improvement. Only 3.3% of students tried marijuana before age 13. While this modest change from 2021 was not significant, the overall trend down from 7.5% in 2013 has been a significant decrease.

Figure 12: Year-to-year comparison of middle school students trying marijuana before age 11.

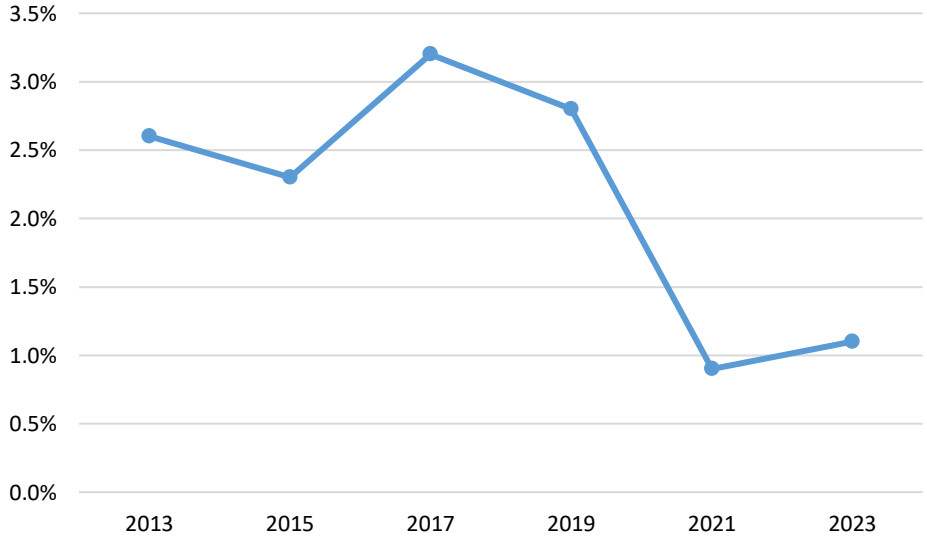
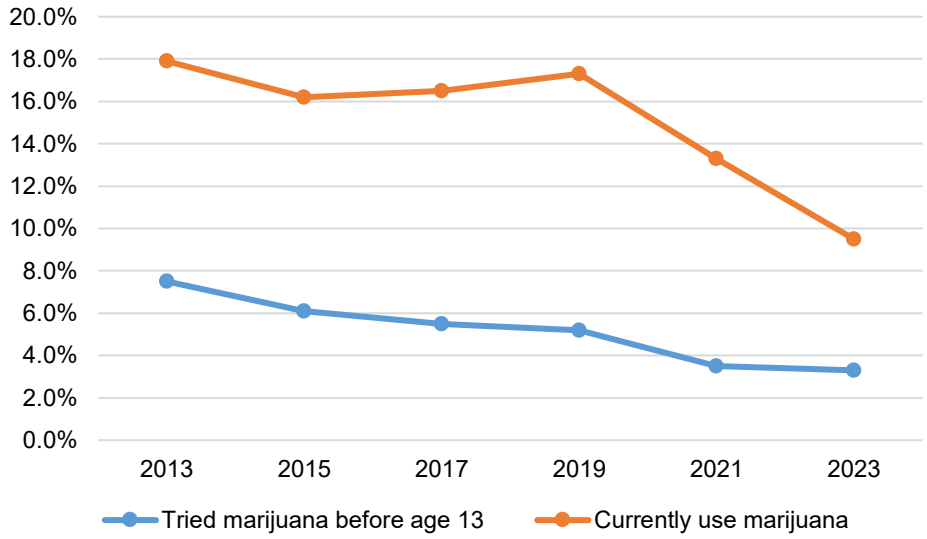


Figure 13: Year-to-year comparison of high school student marijuana use.



Other Drug Use

While students are not asked about all categories of drugs in the Virginia Youth Survey, there is some 2023 data pertaining to the abuse of prescription drugs. While questions of this sort have been asked in prior use, the question has been framed differently (e.g., current vs. lifetime prevalence) and cannot be compared directly across years.

For middle schoolers in 2023, 7.6% reported ever having taken a prescription pain medication without a doctor's prescription, or differently than how a doctor instructed. For high school students, 6.6% reported having taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription one or more times in their life.

This data is notable not only because we want to track it to reduce rates, but because it may lead to insights for gauging the extent to which youth may encounter fentanyl and synthetic opioids. While fentanyl found in illicitly manufactured pills would not have been prescribed by a doctor, it is not uncommon for youth to be unaware of the source of drugs they receive.

Additional insights can be supplemented by visualizations of **VDH data on overdose deaths**. In 2024, Virginia experienced 1,548 overdose deaths, considering all drugs, a 37% decrease from 2023. Of these deaths, 110 were those ages 15-24. For all overdose deaths in 2024, 68% involved fentanyl or synthetic opioids.

Virginia rates of all drug overdose deaths peaked in 2021, with 2,059 deaths and declined by 4% in 2023. Fentanyl and synthetic opioids represented 80% of all overdose deaths at this time. As localities and organizations continue to implement **Opioid Abatement** funds on effective treatment and prevention in response to the opioid crisis, there is reason for future optimism as 2025 data is finalized.

Youth Substance Use Prevention Efforts

Prevention Activities Overview

VOSAP is tasked with collecting and reporting substance use prevention activity data from agencies of the Commonwealth. The following section summarizes the youth substance use prevention efforts of member agencies in the following areas: spending, activities and initiatives, gaps in youth substance use prevention efforts and unmet substance use prevention needs.

While all VOSAP Collaborative agencies contribute to preventing youth substance use, not all work explicitly on youth substance use prevention programs. Many VOSAP members conduct activities better characterized as caregiver support or community support, influencing a multitude of risk and protective factors predicting youth substance use.

To provide a more comprehensive view of the interconnected nature of youth substance use prevention efforts, three focus areas were established in fiscal year 2023 to better organize the activities of VOSAP Collaborative members. For ease of reference, the framework below outlines which VOSAP Collaborative members offer activities and initiatives in each of the three identified focus areas elaborated below. Table 1 summarizes the same information visually. Organizations not included in a particular focus area may collect data or have otherwise reported a cross-cutting approach in support, and these instances are indicated in each written entry, where applicable.

Youth Access and Drug Education
Encompasses initiatives and activities to reduce risk factors of drug availability, association with substance-using peers and the promotion of protective individual factors related to drug education and refusal skills more directly.

- Virginia ABC (ABC)
- Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA)
- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
- Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
- Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY)
- Virginia State Police (VSP)

Caregiver Support
Encompasses programming to support parents and caregivers directly by increasing protective factors of family engagement, family support and parental monitoring.

- Virginia ABC (ABC)
- Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA)
- Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
- Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)

Community Support
Encompasses programming to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors for a broader community audience, including but not limited to other areas like school connectedness and mental health challenges.

- Virginia ABC (ABC)
- Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA)
- Community Coalitions of Virginia (CCoVA)
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
- Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
- Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)

Table 1. Summary of activities and initiatives of VOSAP members across focus areas.

VOSAP Member	Youth Access and Drug Education	Caregiver Support	Community Support
ABC	X	X	X
CCA	X	X	X
CCoVA			X
DBHDS	X	X	X
DCJS	X	X	X
DJJ	X	X	X
DMV	X		
VDOE	X	X	X
VDH	X	X	X
VDSS		X	X
VFHY	X		
VNG	X	X	X
VSP	X		

Spending Overview

During fiscal year 2026, $11,479,014 was spent throughout Virginia on youth substance use prevention efforts, with $35,246,428 spent on substance use prevention more generally, both rounded to the nearest dollar. Table 2 and Table 3 respectively provide specific organization spending totals for substance use prevention efforts.

Organization prevention budgets are funded through federal budget allocations, federal grants, general fund allocations, organization revenue and state grants. While all VOSAP member organizations deal with youth substance use prevention in some capacity, not all have budget items that exclusively identify this purpose. For more detail on the budget categories that contributed to estimated prevention expenses, see each organization's description below.

Table 2. Expenses for youth substance use prevention efforts by organization.

Organization	Expenses
Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth	$7,968,000
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles	$2,408,335[AB]
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services	$450,000
Virginia Department of Education	$400,000[C]
Virginia State Police	$316,861
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority	$251,502
Community Coalitions of Virginia	Unable to report [C]
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice	Unable to report[D]
Virginia Department of Social Services	Unable to report[D]
Virginia Cannabis Control Authority	Unable to report[C]
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services	Unable to report[C]
Virginia Department of Health	Did not report
Virginia National Guard	Did not report

[A] *Follows federal fiscal year, Oct. 1 – Sept. 30.*
[B] *Does not include grant awarded to Virginia State Police*
[C] *Unable to separate youth prevention from overall prevention efforts*
[D] *Unable to separate prevention from treatment efforts*

Table 3. Expenses for overall substance use prevention efforts by organization.

Organization	Expenses
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services	$15,517,667[A]
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles	$8,554,278[BC]
Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth	$7,968,000[D]
Virginia Cannabis Control Authority	$913,667
Virginia Department of Social Services	$700,000
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services	$450,000
Virginia Department of Education	$400,000
Virginia State Police	$316,861
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority	$381,482
Community Coalitions of Virginia	$44,473
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice	Unable to report[E]
Virginia Department of Health	Did not report
Virginia National Guard	Did not report

[A] *Does not include grant awarded to VFHY*
[B] *Does not include grant awarded to Virginia State Police*
[C] *Follows federal fiscal year, Oct. 1 – Sept. 30*
[D] *Does not include funds to VFHY for media campaign to Virginia Department of Social Services.*
[E] *Unable to separate prevention from treatment efforts*

VOSAP Collaborative Member Spending and Activities

Virginia ABC

The mission of Virginia ABC is to strengthen the Commonwealth through public safety, education and revenue from the responsible regulation and sale of alcoholic beverages. The Community Health & Engagement (CH&E) Division specifically supports these aims directly by providing data, research, evidence-based programming, strategic resources and genuine partnership in order to ensure Virginians are able to make informed choices. Education and prevention coordinators for all ages (i.e., K-12 and parents, adults, licensees), supported by a capacity building specialist and data, research & evaluation specialist, manage programs and resources to prevent youth alcohol use, social providing/hosting and high-risk drinking.

Virginia ABC funds substance use prevention efforts through organizational revenue, spending $251,502 on youth substance use prevention efforts. In fiscal year 2026, Virginia ABC received a $50,000 grant from the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA) spent on a media campaign to prevent intoxicated driving. An additional $129,980 was spent on alcohol education and prevention efforts, not specific to youth, totaling $381,482. Virginia ABC's alcohol education and prevention programs and resources target audiences throughout the lifespan including youth, parents, college students, adults 21 and older, older adults, licensees and health care professionals.

Programs and resources were implemented throughout the during fiscal year 2026 to address youth substance use prevention are explained in greater depth below.

Youth Access and Drug Education

Underage Buyer Program. The Underage Buyer (UB) program is an ongoing effort by Virginia ABC to visit alcohol and tobacco retailers throughout the Commonwealth to verify compliance with the state age requirements for tobacco and alcohol sales. Special agents, who are sworn officers from Virginia ABC's Bureau of Law Enforcement, accompany underage operatives during attempts to purchase cigarettes or alcohol at grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants and other businesses, including Virginia ABC stores. The purpose of the UB program is not to trick businesses. In fact, it is the hope of Virginia ABC that 100% of the businesses comply with state law by not selling to the underage buyer. Virginia ABC special agents throughout the state complete nearly 400 alcohol and tobacco compliance checks every month.

In data available from fiscal year 2025, Virginia ABC stores demonstrated a 98% compliance rate for in-store purchases, while licensees showed compliance rates of 88%.

Publications. Virginia ABC CH&E provides the public with free and age-appropriate publications. The publications for elementary, middle and high school students are listed below, with parent publications recorded in the Caregiver Support focus area. College, adult, older adult, licensee and health care professionals' publications are included listed in the Community Support area.

In fiscal year 2026, the following prevention publications were distributed for K-12 audiences:

- 17,945 elementary publications
- 1,650 middle school publications
- 3,192 high school publications

Being Outstanding Leaders Together Against Drugs and Alcohol (BOLT) offers free online trainings and resources to increase the capacity of middle school prevention professionals as they

work to reduce youth substance use among their students. BOLT materials align with the Virginia Department of Education Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) Standards of Learning (SOLs) and support middle school prevention activities including in-classroom curriculum instruction and participation in substance use awareness weeks.

Through BOLT, students demonstrate knowledge of the effects of alcohol and other drugs on the body and brain, as well as identify substance use consequences; understand the importance of peer leadership and positive decision making; and recognize youth substance use influences and the key concepts of social providing and peer pressure. BOLT materials can be incorporated into both in-person and virtual learning lesson plans.

In fiscal year 2026, 61 individuals completed BOLT online training for middle school professionals.

Miss Virginia School Tour: Virginia ABC provides a grant to the Miss Virginia Opportunity (formerly Miss Virginia Organization), which funds the tour program. Miss Virginia visits elementary schools spreading a message of health, wellness and prevention to students and teachers. At each visit, students receive a copy of Virginia ABC's Elementary Activity Workbook. The Miss Virginia School Tour messaging aligns with the Virginia Standards of Learning of Advocacy and Health Promotion, Essential Health Concepts and Healthy Decisions. During fiscal year 2026, the Miss Virginia School Tour provided two methods for participation: virtual and in-person. Through the Miss Virginia School Tour, students demonstrate knowledge of how to identify what is safe and healthy for their bodies; learn what positive choices are and how to make them and how to say "no" when something is not healthy for their bodies; learn what it means to be a leader in their community and among their friends; and learn to identify who is a trusted adult and understand the role they play in their lives.

In fiscal year 2026, the Miss Virginia School Tour visited 75 elementary schools across 41 districts, reaching 16,053 elementary school students across the state.

YADAPP: The Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP) is a peer-led program for high school students to address underage substance use at the high school level. The annual YADAPP program kicks off with a weeklong conference each summer where students and adults are trained in substance use prevention best practices to develop a strategic plan to address a youth substance use issue in their community.

YADAPP focuses on providing participants, adult sponsors and youth staff curriculum on leadership, drug and alcohol prevention and strategic planning. Through YADAPP, program participants: broaden their knowledge of substance use prevention and work as a team to create a high school substance use prevention plan for their school; learn leadership skills needed to address common issues among youth; and network and build supportive relationships with others from across Virginia.

In July 2026, the YADAPP kickoff conference was held at Christopher Newport University, where 18 teams of four students and one adult sponsor learned to develop strategic prevention plans addressing underage drug and alcohol use in their schools and communities.

Teams received coaching from YADAPP youth staff to make modifications to their strategic plans to ensure they followed the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) prevention strategies. After the plans were finalized, teams implemented their plans in their schools and communities utilizing leadership and prevention skills learned during the training modules. Virginia ABC provided five mini grants of $250 each as seed money for teams submitting exemplary prevention plans. Additionally, Virginia ABC provided The Wheeler Award ($500) to one team in support of their continued work on a

prevention plan that was accomplished from the previous year.

At the conclusion of the 2024-25 school year, YADAPP teams' prevention plans reached a total of 33,330 individuals in their schools and communities.

Project Sticker Shock: Project Sticker Shock aims to raise community awareness about Virginia laws to prevent underage youth from obtaining alcohol from adults 21 or older or using a fake ID to purchase alcohol. During an event, participants place stickers and window clings that warn about the legal consequences for providing alcohol to underage youth and using a fake ID to purchase alcohol on cases and coolers of alcohol at local retailers. This program encourages partnership among community organizations, youth, retail establishments, law enforcement, media and other community members. Additionally, Virginia ABC uses Project Sticker Shock materials to label social providing prevention messaging on Virginia ABC products being delivered to customers.

In fiscal year 2026, across two Project Sticker Shock events, 1,210 stickers were used at retail locations to raise awareness, with at least 75 youth and adults participating in these events. Additionally, 63,961 retail delivery customers were reached with Project Sticker Shock materials.

Caregiver Support

Health Communication Campaign. Virginia ABC partnered with DMV on a video to raise awareness around the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence. The Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign video titled "What's the Damage?" aired from April 1-30, 2026 across broadcast and cable TV, social media ads and the Virginia ABC Facebook page. In total, it delivered more than 9 million impressions, directing viewers to learn more at **www.whatsthedamage.org**.

Power of Parents: Virginia ABC partners with MADD Virginia to bring the Power of Parents program, free of charge, to parents and communities in Virginia. The Power of Parents handbooks and training improve how parents and teens relate to each other and can help guide middle and high schoolers in positive decision making. The Power of Parents handbooks and training are adapted from Dr. Robert Turrisi's research at Pennsylvania State University with the goal of empowering parents to have effective conversations with their children about drinking. Handbooks are available online for downloading or ordering. Training is offered online or in-person for groups.

In fiscal year 2026, 1,391 Power of Parents handbooks were distributed, with 222 individuals receiving training.

Publications: As indicated earlier, Virginia ABC CH&E provides the public with free publications for all ages, including parents. Parent publications provide important alcohol facts and best practices for talking to children about alcohol. In fiscal year 2026, 2,806 parent publications were distributed across the state.

Community Support

Alcohol Education and Prevention Grants: Alcohol Education and Prevention Grants provide funding of up to $10,000 to organizations that are working to prevent underage and high-risk drinking. Grant applicants must address one or more priorities including underage drinking prevention, social providing/social hosting prevention or high-risk drinking prevention. Grantees are encouraged to build partnerships and embrace collaboration to achieve a meaningful, measurable and long-lasting impact.

In fiscal year 2026, Virginia ABC provided eight Alcohol Education and Prevention grants for a total of

$49,064 in grant funding. Of the eight grantees, five specifically engaged in youth alcohol prevention activities and reached 3,282,606 individuals across the state.

HEADS UP: The Higher Education Alcohol and Drug Strategic Unified Prevention (HEADS UP) program provides free online trainings, resources and materials to increase knowledge of substance misuse and high-risk drinking among college faculty/staff, students and their parents, and to build the capacity of student leaders to hold substance misuse education or awareness events. HEADS UP informs and equips these individuals to effectively promote healthy decision-making and advocate for substance misuse education and prevention programming on college campuses.

In fiscal year 2026, 2,372 individuals completed HEADS UP online training, and 11,060 materials were distributed to support 26 college alcohol misuse prevention programming events.

Publications: As indicated previously, Virginia ABC CH&E provides the public with free publications for all ages, with each emphasizing alcohol facts alongside relevant issues for the respective audience. College, adult and older adult publications serve a larger audience addressing topics like binge drinking and bystander intervention, responsible party hosting and medicine interactions, respectively.

Virginia ABC also offers health care professionals publications with tips on how to effectively screen patients, communicate responsible drinking habits and elicit self-motivation to make healthier choices.

Additionally, responsibility guides for licensees support them in maintaining a safe and regulated business. These publications discuss the facts of alcohol education and prevention alongside Virginia ABC's laws and regulations.

In fiscal year 2026, the following publications were distributed:
- 1,654 college publications
- 704 adult publications
- 777 older adult publications
- 720 responsibility guides for licensees
- 148 health care professional publications

VHESUAC: The Virginia Higher Education Substance Use Advisory Committee is a state committee established by the Code of Virginia that aims to further education, prevention, intervention and recovery efforts about substance use on college and university campuses across the Commonwealth. VHESUAC is staffed by Virginia ABC and partners with college and university staff to fill resource gaps in current campus efforts. VHESUAC resources and efforts are guided by a five-year strategic plan that was created by campus professionals. In fiscal year 2026, VHESUAC recognized three campuses in the third year of the Campus Recognition Program, which publicly recognizes college and university campuses that are implementing initiatives mentioned in the **VHESUAC Strategic Plan**.

Virginia Cannabis Control Authority

As an independent, political subdivision, the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority's (CCA) mission is to promote public safety, advance public health, and protect communities in the Commonwealth through effective medical cannabis oversight and balanced and inclusive cannabis regulation, policy, and education. The CCA addresses substance misuse prevention throughout the Commonwealth through education, outreach, and the development of initiatives and resources.

The Virginia CCA spent a total of $913,667 on substance use prevention efforts in fiscal year 2026.

Youth Access and Drug Education

Educational Resources for Teens: In fiscal year 2026, Virginia CCA continued to promote its educational resources. The “Talking About Cannabis (for Teens)” youth toolkit received a total of 174 downloads, and our toolkit for adults ages 18 to 25 years old, “Talking About Cannabis (for Young Adults),” received 183 downloads.

Caregiver Support

Educational Resources for Parents: The “Talking About Cannabis (for Parents)” parent toolkit received 156 downloads. Collectively, the Virginia CCA’s three toolkits for youth, young adults, and caregivers received 513 downloads.

Community Support

Outreach Events: The Virginia CCA participated in 47 educational events, conferences, and presentations in fiscal year 2026, with a total of 1,718 attendees. During these educational outreach initiatives, the Virginia CCA distributed 4,955 printed educational resources to stakeholders. In fiscal year 2026, the Virginia CCA fulfilled 84 resource orders, totaling 118,965 printed educational resources, through their educational resources order form. In total, the Virginia CCA distributed 123,920 physical copies of educational resources, with 10,282 resource downloads.

Safe Driving Campaign: Launched in October 2025, the CCA’s latest safe driving campaign provides public safety messaging throughout the Commonwealth. In fiscal year 2026, safe driving campaign messaging aired in 16,836 spots across a variety of media, such as radio, streaming, and social media services, with 74,059,623 estimated impressions across the state. The CCA will re-issue its biennial impaired driving survey in fiscal year 2027 to inform future safe driving campaign initiatives.

Across all media, the campaign had a reach of 30,106,699 impressions. The CCA re-issued its safe driving survey in fiscal year 2025 to inform future safe driving campaign.

The Virginia CCA’s safe driving partner toolkits are available online to promote responsible and safe driving. The four toolkits are tailored to government prevention and driving safety organizations, cannabis business and advocacy organizations, colleges and universities, and Spanish-speaking audiences. In fiscal year 2026, the safe driving partner toolkits had a total of 589 downloads.

Community Coalitions of Virginia

Community Coalitions of Virginia (CCoVA) is a network of community coalitions and like-minded organizations addressing substance use prevention in Virginia. CCoVA’s mission is to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce substance use and related risk factors in Virginia communities in ways that are measurable and that improve the well-being of individuals and communities. We do this by providing education, advocacy resources, and outreach to our members. While CCoVA does not directly address youth substance use, many of our member organizations do and we support their efforts in various ways.

CCoVA is a 501(c)3 organization that typically receives funding from two sources: a reimbursement contract with DBHDS funded by the State Opioid Response Grant (SOR) and organizational funds

(membership dues, donations, and registration fees for our annual conference).

CCoVA spent $44,473 on prevention efforts in fiscal year 2026 which went to administrative expenses, staff pay, and training opportunities. These activities support member organizations, most of which perform youth substance use prevention activities as part of their missions. None of this funding was used for treatment activities.

Community Support
Monthly meetings with coalitions across the state are held virtually on Zoom on the first Monday of each month. Guest speakers are brought in to provide education and to discuss projects and initiatives relevant to the work of our members. Attendees have the opportunity to promote events, highlight successful initiatives, and request help from other organizations as needed.

Advocacy: The coalition coordinator regularly tracks bills during the General Assembly session to keep members and stakeholders informed of pending legislation. This, along with hosting a state meeting at the annual CADCA National Leadership Forum, helps to keep members informed about pending legislation and priorities.

Outreach: A weekly newsletter is distributed to the membership detailing relevant news, as well as grant and training opportunities. Events and initiatives hosted by member organizations are also promoted to help them reach a larger audience. This information is also shared via social media (Facebook and LinkedIn).

Training: CCoVA partnered with DBHDS to host the CADCA Mini-Academy in March and April 2026. This training opportunity brought together 28 attendees from across the Commonwealth to reinforce core prevention concepts and learn the basic principles of coalition work. Additionally, in fiscal year 2026, we began planning for the 2026 CCoVA Summit, a conference that gives us the opportunity to provide education for our member organizations. We were unable to host a conference in the fall of 2025, so we are excited to bring this event back in September 2026. This will not only provide training and education but will also allow us to promote the successful initiatives of our member organizations.

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

DBHDS' mission is to support individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life. As such, it uses a proactive and supportive approach to address the underlying factors contributing to youth substance use while also empowering individuals to make healthy choices in their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. This includes promoting activities and environments that reduce the likelihood of youth turning to substances as a coping mechanism.

As seen in **Table 3**, DBHDS provides the greatest amount of funding for overall substance use prevention efforts, spending $15,517,667. CSB Prevention, or Behavioral Health Wellness, teams utilize this funding to implement an array of strategies to prevent substance misuse/substance use disorder. These were unable to be separated between youth and adult prevention spending. Additionally, $56,623,523 was used to fund treatment efforts.

DBHDS is funded through the SAMHSA Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Block Grant (SUPTR) and the SAMHSA State Opioid Response Grant (SOR). Some additional funding from the General Fund covers tobacco retailer compliance checks and prevention efforts surrounding Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs).

DBHDS collects data on the distribution of their substance use prevention resources to each CSB in the state, grouped among five DBHDS regions. In fiscal year 2026, 54,269,657 prevention resources were distributed to CSBs across the state, with 7,449,408 resources specifically targeted to youth.

DBHDS and DBHDS-funded partners provide the following evidence-based prevention resources, grouped below based on the VOSAP Report focus areas:

Youth Access and Drug Education

- Afterschool Programs
- Alternative Events
- Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices
- Girls Circle
- Healthy Alternatives for Little Ones
- Life Skills Training (Botvin)
- Lift Up Virginia
- Mentor Programs
- Peer Leadership Programs
- Problem Gambling Youth Training
- Project Sticker Shock*
- Project SUCCESS
- Ripple Effect for Teens
- Rise Above
- Sources of Strength
- Student Wellness Programs
- Too Good for Drugs
- Too Good for Violence
- Unfazed Media Campaign
- Youth Leadership Programs

Caregiver Support

- 24/7 Dads
- ACEs Training
- Activate Your Wellness
- Beyond the Bet Campaign
- Children in Between
- Hidden in Plain Sight
- Lock and Talk
- Lift Up Virginia
- Nurturing Parenting Program
- Making Parenting a Pleasure
- Parenting Wisely
- REVIVE Training
- Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)
- Strengthening Families
- Talk. They Hear You
- Understanding Dad

Community Support

- ACEs Training
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) Training
- Beyond the Bet Campaign
- Community Presentations & Information Distribution
- Community Resilience Initiative – Trauma Informed Trainings
- Counter Tools (Merchant Education)
- Drug Deactivation Packets & Smart Pill Bottles (Distribution)
- Drug Take Backs
- Lock and Talk (Social Marketing, Community Presentations, and Resource Distribution)
- Mental Health First Aid- Youth, Adult & Teen
- Permanent Drug Drop boxes
- Prescription Bag Stickers
- QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention
- REVIVE Training
- safeTALK Training
- Signs of Suicide (SOS) Training
- Sources of Strength
- Supply Reduction – Resource Distribution
- Talk Saves Lives Training

**Virginia ABC program*

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

DCJS is responsible for planning and carrying out programs and initiatives to improve the criminal justice system's functioning and effectiveness. Virginia receives federal funds from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (**OJJDP**) under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act Title II Formula Grants Program.

The Title II grant program provides funding to support state and local efforts to plan, establish, operate, coordinate, and evaluate policies and projects, directly or through grants and contracts with public and private agencies, for the development of more effective education, training, research, prevention, diversion, treatment, and rehabilitation programs around juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice system improvement efforts.

Virginia's Title II funds are used for maintaining compliance with core requirements of the JJDP Act, to reduce disproportionality in the juvenile justice system, serve system-involved youth in their home communities, and increase and strengthen family engagement and community involvement for youth by improving the availability of evidence-based programs.

Youth Access and Drug Education, Caregiver Support, Community Support

DCJS Title II funding opportunities support state and local governments in planning, implementing, or enhancing evidence-based programs and system change initiatives that promote youth development and improve the juvenile justice system. DCJS provided about $450,000 in funding to youth prevention activities through these channels, impacting various risk factors related to youth access and drug education, caregiver support and community support.

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) provided virtual programming for K-12 personnel and law enforcement. These programs cover a variety of topics but largely pertain to preventing youth drug use in the context of **Mental Health and Trauma Support** training.

Additionally, DCJS facilitates the Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions each year, administered to middle and high school students in alternating years. The survey measures student and teacher/staff perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, student engagement in school, and the extent of bullying and teasing at school. The survey is a component of the annual school safety audit which school divisions are required to submit to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS), according to **§ 22.1-279.8.B** of the *Code of Virginia*.

Virginia Department of Education

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the administrative agency for the Commonwealth's public schools. In partnership with Virginia's 131 school divisions, the mission of VDOE is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed in life.

VDOE was awarded a grant from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) to implement evidence-based substance use prevention programming to schools that prevent and reduce opioid use disorder and the misuse of opioids through the **Opioid Abatement Education Plan** (OAEP). The OAEP is solely funded by the OAA and is a statewide effort by VDOE to spearhead innovative, cross-sector efforts to address opioid misuse by educating students, parents, school employees, and student-athletes about the dangers of drug use and how to prevent opioid misuse and addiction. The plan also includes amplifying cross-community connections between schools and larger coalition efforts to holistically address substance use in communities.

The grant award totals $520,250 for activities to be implemented across two performance periods: Oct. 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2025, and the same dates for 2025-2026. In fiscal year 2026, approximately $400,000 was spent. Additionally, the OAA awarded VDOE a grant of $518,700 to implement the Recovery Schools Technical Assistance and Grant Program over the same time period above. In fiscal year 2026, approximately $420,000 was spent as a part of this grant. Funding from the OAA grants were spent to train educators, provide resources to support opioid awareness and prevention instruction and to provide recovery schools with technical assistance and direct grants for operating activities.

Youth Access and Drug Education, Caregiver Support, Community Support

Health Education: Developmentally appropriate scaffolded substance use prevention standards are an integral component of the **Virginia 2020 Health Education *Standards of Learning*** (SOL). The learning outcomes for substance use and misuse should be addressed in the context of a comprehensive health curriculum that encourages the development of personal and social skills and values, and provides sequence, progression, continuity and links to other health issues that impact students' lives. The Health Education substance abuse prevention standards form a core component of the health curriculum and focus on equipping students with information about drugs, the ability to resist peer pressure to use drugs, and the life skills necessary to enable them to deal with different situations without turning to drugs.

Botvin LifeSkills Training: Local school divisions may elect to participate in ***Botvin Lifeskills Training*** **(LST)**. Botvin LST is a research-validated substance abuse prevention program proven to reduce the risks of alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and violence by targeting the major social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors. This comprehensive program provides adolescents and young teens with the skills needed to successfully handle challenging situations.

As part of the OAEP, and in partnership with the Virginia Tech (VT) Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), the VDOE supported the training of K-12 high-quality curriculum. These instructors include Health and Physical Education teachers, core curriculum teachers, school-based mental health professionals, and school resource officers who deliver the program directly to students. Currently active in over 25 school divisions and each of the eight VDOE Regions, the Opioid Abatement Education Plan continues to expand across the Commonwealth with a goal of training 200 new educators to deliver Botvin LST each year.

Since June 2023, the OAEP has reached over 40,000 new K-12 students in school divisions across the Commonwealth and trained over 450 educators to deliver Botvin LST with fidelity. Teachers have reported increased student participation and interest in the curriculum, highlighting its relevance and impact. Schools have also observed a growing awareness among students about healthy coping mechanisms and the importance of peer support in making positive life choices.

Recovery Schools: Per the Association of Recovery Schools, "recovery high schools are secondary schools designed specifically for students in recovery from substance use disorder or co-occurring disorders. Recovery high schools support students recovering from substance use disorders by offering a full range of academic services in a structured environment that promotes recovery.

Recovery high schools are typically small schools that offer both academic and diverse therapeutic services, including individual and group counseling, chemical dependency education, family support, and random drug testing. Recovery support programs enhance a person's "recovery capital," a concept that encompasses all resources related to the recovery process, including financial, human,

social, and community factors. Recovery high schools attempt to support a student's recovery and academic achievement by creating connectedness and social capital in a context that supports the building of their recovery capital.

As of the 2025-2026 school year in Virginia, 46 students enrolled into the program across four active recovery schools:

- Chesterfield Recovery Academy (Chesterfield County Public Schools): Opened August 2022
- Harbor Hope Center (Virginia Beach City Public Schools): Opened September 2025
- R.I.S.E. Academy (Loudoun County Public Schools): Opened August 2025
- River Ridge Learning Center (Waynesboro City Public Schools): Opened August 2025

School Health Services: **VDOE School Health Services**, in collaboration with the School Health Team at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), offers professional development opportunities for school health staff. These trainings focus on mental health, substance misuse awareness, immunization compliance, chronic conditions (support and management), legislation impacting school health, emergency preparedness, and school health data management. Through partnerships with the Virginia Association of School Nurses (VASN) and the Virginia Nurses Association (VNA), Virginia school nurses are able to earn continuing nursing education credit by participating in these learning activities.

The **School Nurse's Mental Health Toolkit** continues to play a key role in supporting mental health training and awareness for Virginia school nurses. These efforts are imperative to raise awareness about youth mental health, because when young people struggle without support, they may be at greater risk of turning to substances as a way to cope. In collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP), VDOE offered a Spring Webinar Series from January through May 2026. The series focused on a range of mental health topics and provided tools and strategies to help school nurses better support students.

The annual mandated School Health Survey has been updated to include questions about training requirements related to the use of opioid antagonists in the school setting for the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with COV § 22.1-274.4:1.

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) mission is to protect the public by preparing court-involved and committed youth to be successful citizens. To accomplish this mission, DJJ uses an integrated approach to juvenile justice, bringing together current research and best practices to target delinquent behavior; meet the needs of youth, victims and communities, and manage activities and resources in a responsible and proactive manner.

Approved substance use prevention and treatment activities are primarily funded through General Fund appropriations with additional appropriations illustrated within Special Funds, when approved. These amounts are approved and appropriated based on priorities of the Virginia General Assembly and associated committees. The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice provides Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) funding to localities to assist with crime control and substance abuse prevention and treatment activities.

In 2025, 592 youth (plus 441 prevention youth) received VJCCCA funding for substance use services including education and treatment. Final fiscal year numbers have not been finalized as of this report.

Additionally, many youth in contact with DJJ receive various services across the state through a Regional Services Coordination model, including youth on probation, on parole, and in direct care. Data for fiscal year 2026 is not available.

Youth Access and Drug Education

Drug Screening, Prevention and Treatment: Prevention of risk factors vs. treatment may be interwoven based on the individual's particular needs. All committed youth at DJJ who are assigned to Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (BAJCC), or a Community Placement Program (CPP) at a regional Juvenile Detention Center, undergo an evaluative process, which includes detailed background history and information regarding previous mental health treatment, family dynamics, interpersonal functioning, academic functioning, and history of criminal/delinquent behavior. Recommendations regarding treatment in the areas of mental health (including psychiatric services), substance abuse needs, aggression replacement training, and other treatment recommendations are made at this time.

As a part of this process, youth receive drug and alcohol screening and assessment tools that best fit their situations. First, the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory-A2 (SASSI-A2), or if 18 years or older, the SASSI-4. These help to identify individuals who have a low or high probability of having a substance use disorder. Further, any substance abuse history is documented on the JCC Intake Medical History Form, which includes information on frequency of use, age of first use and last use for a variety of drugs and alcohol.

Residents in direct care also receive the Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI) at the Court Services Unit (CSU) prior to commitment to help evaluate risk, needs, and protective factors to help develop case plans for juveniles. This tool includes a battery of questions on substance use and history. The YASI is updated quarterly at the facilities to enhance re-entry goals in collaboration with CSU staff and community partners.

Individualized treatment plans vary depending on severity of substance use. Subsequently, additional areas of treatment may be incorporated into individual sessions as necessary to address a variety of topics (e.g., skill building, alcohol and drug refusal techniques, decision making/problem solving, etc.).

Based on the battery of evaluations, assessments and screens, staff determine the best track for youth treatment. There are two tracks, as follows:

- Track I: Cannabis Youth Treatment 12 (CYT 12) – Residents who meet the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) criteria for Substance Use Disorder. Or Seven Challenges**.** Residents who meet criteria for more severe substance use disorders, including but not limited to Opioid Use and Polysubstance Use. Seven Challenges is a comprehensive counseling program for youth and young adults that incorporates work on drug problems. Seven Challenges is a health decision-making model that guides youth through the process of weighing the benefits versus the harm of their drug use, and other behavior.
- Track II: Cannabis Youth Treatment 5 (CYT 5) – Residents who have experimented with substances, but do not meet the DSM-5-TR criteria for Substance Use Disorder. JCC residents assigned to participate in substance abuse treatment are encouraged to collaborate with their treatment team and/or clinical provider with regard to their individualized treatment plan.

In fiscal year 2025, 77 of the 173 residents admitted to direct care completed "CATCH My Breath," an evidence-based youth vaping prevention program. It was offered to all youth, with or without an identified substance use need.

Seven Challenges: Seven Challenges, a comprehensive counseling program for youth and young adults that incorporates work on drug problems. Seven Challenges is a health decision-making model that guides youth through the process of weighing the benefits versus the harm of their drug use, and other behavior. Seven Challenges will transition to become JCC's primary substance use treatment program in fiscal year 2026.

Local Plans: Funding to localities through the Virginia Juvenile Community Control Crime Act (VJCCA) contributes to substance use assessments, evaluations, education, and treatment. When substance use treatment is needed, then clinical services are utilized.

- During fiscal year 2025, 32 local plans utilized substance use services.
- At least seven localities utilized funding to conduct substance use assessments and evaluations to determine the level of service needed.
- Three localities used funding for substance use prevention services. These prevention services are for youth who are presenting substance use behaviors, where services aim to further prevent juvenile justice involvement. The majority of youth participating are referred by the school system and this prevention service is used in conjunction with disciplinary actions.

- Educational Programs
  - 3rd Millenium Classrooms and Court Solutions Online Evidence-Based Programs.
    - Alcohol Wise
    - Under the Influence
    - Nicotine 101
    - THC 101
    - Other Drugs
    - Vaping
  - BOTVIN LifeSkills
  - VISION
  - Seven Challenges
  - Virginia Rules
  - Substance Abuse Group Program
  - Substance Use Group Education-SAGE
  - ARISE Life Skills

Caregiver Support, Community Support

Regional Service Coordination (RSC) Model: In 2025, DJJ transitioned from two contracted service coordination agencies to one agency to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the model. The RSC agency subcontracts with direct service providers to deliver an array of services for DJJ youth. Services through the RSC model are delivered to youth and families in the community and for some youth during commitment/direct care.

Substance use evaluations, mental health evaluations, psychological evaluations, and psychosexual evaluations were administered by 50 providers to assess youth needs, which may include substance use, and provide recommendations.

Thirty providers delivered substance use interventions, including the following:

- Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA) (individual, family, and group, evidence-based)
- Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BFST) (evidence-based)

- Family therapy for substance use
- Family Centered Treatment (FCT) (evidence-based)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT) (evidence-based)
- Group therapy for substance use
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST) (evidence-based)
- Relapse prevention for substance use
- Seven Challenges (evidence-based)
- Seven Challenges Brief (evidence-based)
- Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Treatment (SAIOP) (evidence-based)
- Therapy for substance use
- Transitional living programs

Additional services available through the RSC model that may also impact substance use include:
- 3rd Millenium Classrooms Curriculum
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
- Anger management
- Clinical groups
- Community Stabilization (crisis intervention)
- Comprehensive relapse prevention which addresses substance use and youth with sexualized behaviors
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Family therapy
- Intensive Care Coordination (ICC; evidence-based)
- Intensive in-home services
- Life skills
- Mentoring
- Outpatient therapy
- Reentry case management
- Substance use case management
- Therapeutic group homes
- Transitional Living Programs (TLPs)
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) (evidence-based)

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV)'s mission is to safeguard lives and secure identities, serving the motoring public and support industry partners.

The DMV Highway Safety Office (HSO) supports this mission by reducing crashes, injuries, fatalities, and associated costs by identifying transportation safety issues. DMV HSO provides federal funds to subgrantees that manage youth programs addressing alcohol and/or drug prevention using intervention communications and outreach efforts. All federal funds provided are for a fiscal year that runs from Oct. 1-Sept. 30. Thus, data available in this report refers to DMV's federal fiscal year 2025.

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles spent or provided $2,725,196 for youth substance abuse prevention projects managed by various organizations (see activities and initiatives). Additionally,

$8,554,278 in total was spent on total prevention activities more generally. These were funded using NHTSA federal funding categories of FAST Act 405d or BIL 154 transfer funds.

Youth Access and Drug Education
Youth prevention projects funded by federal funds distributed and monitored by DMV HSO included organizations below:

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving – MADD
- DRIVE SMART Virginia
- Hanover Cares Coalition
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Students Against Destructive Decisions – SADD, INC.
- Substance Abuse Free Environment, INC.
- Washington Regional Alcohol Program – WRAP
- Virginia Department of State Police – Youth of Virginia Speak Out
- Virginia Association of Driver Education and Traffic Safety
- Henrico Too Smart 2 Start
- Virginia High School League
- Commission of VA Alcohol Safety Action Program*

**Includes substance use treatment*

Virginia Department of Social Services

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is one of the largest state agencies in the Commonwealth. VDSS oversees and partners with more than 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) as well as faith-based and non-profit organizations to ensure people and especially families receive the assistance they need to thrive.

VDSS' mission is to decrease in scale and severity the substance use epidemic, especially the opioid epidemic, across the Commonwealth. While VDSS does not collect spending in terms of substance use prevention, youth prevention and prevention more generally are addressed through screening and referral services on a large scale. Kinship navigation also plays a major role in youth substance use prevention. By providing youth with supportive and well-supported environments, the likelihood that they will go on to develop a substance use disorder decreases, a possibility made more likely by their parents or guardians dealing with substance use disorders of their own. To combat substance use across the Commonwealth, VDSS has erected six pillars of action in tandem with their Theory of Change, listed below:

- Prevent substance use - Prevent substance exposure and use and the resulting harmful effects when a substance use disorder exists within a family.
  - Support priority populations and best practices
  - Deliver evidence-based services
- Build knowledge and awareness around substance use - Ensure VDSS workforce has basic knowledge on addiction, its impact on Virginia families, and recommended approaches to eliminating the effects of SUD.
  - Provide workforce training
  - Promote resources and best practices
- Quality assessment and screening - Implement evidence-based substance use disorder screening throughout all VDSS programs that touch children and families.
  - Implement evidence-based screening tool

    - Monitor screening and assessment usage
- Connect families to services - Link families affected by addiction to high-quality, affordable services.
    - Provide treatment referrals to substance using individuals
    - Increase interagency partnerships
- Community collaboration - Support and promote community coalitions to improve community responses to addiction.
    - Build the capacity of existing coalitions and develop new organizations
- Promote Recovery - Work to alleviate challenges that face those in recovery and reduce the stigma associated with substance use disorder.
    - Develop a wide range of recovery support services
    - Support the well-being of recovering families

In fiscal year 2026, VDSS spent approximately $700,000 across programs that touched substance use prevention.

Caregiver Support, Community Support
Each department at VDSS employs some form of substance use prevention or reduction programming or policy, elaborated below.

Community and Volunteer Services (CVS) contains the majority of substance use prevention initiatives. This includes jumpstarting Parent Mentor Program (PMP), in which parents with lived experience help other parents struggling with substance use. CVS interfaces with the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) to procure funds for programs like Kinship Navigation that combat and especially prevent substance use within families.

Benefits: Of the many benefits programs offered by VDSS, medical assistance is most relevant to substance use, and it provides access to substance use services to individuals ranging from children and youth to seniors.

Family Services: Within the Division of Family Services, VDSS has the Parent Advisory Council, which is a council that includes parents with lived experience with child welfare involvement and oftentimes substance use. The goal is to include parents with lived experience in crafting programs and policies in the child welfare space, especially as they relate to circumstances when substance use is a factor within families.

Specific actions taken in VDSS to prevent substance use and combat substance use are listed below.

Substance Use Training: Built the VDSS Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Recovery Ally Hub in partnership with VCU Rams in Recovery. The Hub is an online library of resources and trainings to address substance use from an individual to a community and ultimately state level. We are currently in the process of adding Invitation to Change (ITC) training to our list of training offerings.

Kinship Navigation: Secured Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) funding for Kinship Navigation to continue to assist families affected by substance use. Funding is particularly important to provide youth with a supportive and well-resourced environment to prevent substance use.

Policy to Support Families: VDSS is the state administrator of The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First). Family First is one of the most significant changes to federal child welfare funding in almost 40 years. Family First allows for federal funds to be used for **evidence-based** and **trauma-**

informed services. Children who are at risk of entering foster care, as well as their families, will now have the ability to access these federal funds to support these services, through their local departments of social services, to keep their families intact and prevent removal through foster care. Federally funded prevention services include Mental Health Prevention and Treatment Services Substance Use Disorder Prevention and Treatment Services, and In-Home Parent Skill-Based Programs

Improving Culture of Substance Use Prevention: Accelerated culture shift around substance use at VDSS and LDSS (staff training, offices supportive of recovery work). Example training topics include the role of trauma in addiction, the stigma of addiction, REVIVE!/naloxone training, MAT and available treatments, and evidence-based screening and treatment.

Drug Screening: Drafting drug screening recommendations that reflect the importance of understanding drug screening results as one of many tools. These screening recommendations especially took drug screening into account as it relates to child welfare assessments.

Lived Experience Workgroup: Established a Lived Experience (LEx) workgroup that aims to incorporate the perspectives of people with lived experience with substance use into the design of programs and policies that seek to address substance use, among other issues.

SPEAKOUT: VDSS organizes Strong Positive Educated Advocates Keen on Understanding the Truth (SPEAKOUT). SPEAKOUT is a diverse group of youth and alumni from Virginia's foster care system advocating for change by giving input on foster care regulations, policy, guidance, and practice concerns, while also building advocacy and leadership skills. Substance use is deeply implicated in these critical conversations and these youth are making a big difference in a space that is personal to them.

Treatment Atlas: Developed the Treatment Atlas in partnership with Shatterproof, a free and confidential resource to find and compare treatment programs.

Opioid Impact Registry: Developed the Opioid Impact Registry in partnership with Virginia 2-1-1.

Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) empowers Virginia's youth to make healthy choices by reducing and preventing youth tobacco and nicotine use, substance use, and childhood obesity. VFHY funds youth substance use prevention grants, state-wide substance use prevention marketing campaigns, youth substance use prevention research, and the Champions for Youth Summit.

VFHY is primarily funded by a small share of Virginia's annual payments from the nation's major tobacco manufacturers through the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). In the last several years, VFHY has received additional non-MSA funding as part of the state budget and through competitive grants. These include funding from the ENDS Settlement Fund for VFHY's work in youth vaping prevention, Commonwealth Opioid Abatement and Remediation (COAR) funds for VFHY's work in supporting the First Lady's *It Only Takes One* fentanyl awareness campaign, and General Fund dollars for VFHY's work in youth cannabis prevention. Since 2023, VFHY has received funding from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority's (VOAA) competitive state grant funding process. VFHY has also received a small amount of federal pass-through funding from partners like the Virginia

Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for youth tobacco and substance prevention use work.

In fiscal year 2026, VFHY invested a total of $7,968,000 in youth substance use prevention efforts, including $3,218,000 in programmatic grants and $4,750,000 in prevention marketing.

Youth Access and Drug Education

VFHY funds 65 youth-serving organizations like schools, community services boards and community nonprofits to provide evidence-based substance use prevention programming to young people across the Commonwealth. These programs inform students about the dangers of drugs, teach drug refusal skills and empower youth to make healthy decisions. In fiscal year 2026, 37,635 youth successfully completed evidence-based substance use prevention programming. The following evidence-based programs were provided:

- Al's Pals
- All Stars
- Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST)
- CATCH My Breath
- Positive Action
- Rise Above
- Strengthening Families (6-11)
- Strengthening Families (10-14)
- Too Good for Drugs
- You and Me, Together Vape-Free

VFHY also developed and makes available the following lessons free of charge to any classroom across the state: **www.vfhy.org/prevention-lessons**.

- Danger of Fentanyl Lesson (High School)
- Danger of Fentanyl Lesson (Middle School)
- Nicotine Products Prevention Module (6th -12th grades)
- Nicotine Products Prevention Lessons (K-5th grades)

In 2026, VFHY hosted its third Champions for Youth Summit in Reston, Virginia, bringing together more than 420 prevention professionals for three days of learning, collaboration, and connection. Sessions and keynotes explored trends in substance use and obesity prevention, with a special focus on the growing influence of social media and screen time on youth well-being. Attendees were united by a shared goal: empowering young people to make healthy choices and thrive.

VFHY also developed and implements the followings substance use prevention marketing campaigns statewide:

- **Behind the Haze**: This campaign delivers educational messaging about the harmful chemicals found in vapor, the health consequences of vaping, and their link to nicotine addiction.
- **Unfazed**: This campaign uses straightforward, relevant facts and an empathetic tone to empower teens to avoid using marijuana and cannabis products.
- **Deadly Dose**: This campaign gives young people the information they need to know about the dangers of fentanyl-laced drugs to stay safe and save lives.

In fiscal year 2026:

- 37,635 Virginia youth successfully completed an evidence-based substance use prevention or cessation program across more than 2,200 Virginia classrooms. This represents more than 336,500 hours of evidence based, in-person prevention education received by Virginia youth.

- 21,000 Virginia youth successfully completed VFHY's Nicotine Products Prevention Lesson or Dangers of Fentanyl Lesson across more than 844 Viriginia classrooms. This represents more than 21,000 hours of in-person prevention education received by Virginia youth.
- Through performance tracking of campaign messaging, VFHY can report reaching at least 1 million unique youth (13-17) and young adults (18-24) of an overall audience of 1.3 million with a frequency of four to six times per unique individual.

Virginia State Police

The Department of State Police is a law enforcement agency dedicated to preserving law and order, and enforcing criminal, traffic, and regulatory laws. The Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO) Program operates under the Bureau of Field Operations and is responsible for developing and delivering educational programs that focus on advancing youth traffic safety and the prevention of motor vehicle crashes among young drivers ages 15-19. YOVASO's mission is to empower Virginia's youth to lead peer-to-peer driver and passenger safety programs that engage fellow students and community partners with the goal to save young lives. YOVASO's peer-to-peer programs are designed to change knowledge and beliefs, modify attitudes, teach new skills and garner buy-in and support for Virginia's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Law, and Virginia's Zero Tolerance and impaired driving laws. By giving teens guided responsibility for addressing their risks, they are better able to influence a safe driving culture in their schools and communities and increase teen acceptance for Zero Tolerance and other traffic laws. YOVASO uses evidenced-based, service-learning principles for its peer-to-peer traffic safety programs and engages youth through interactive experiences, virtual learning lessons, educational projects, and social media messaging and contests.

YOVASO spent a total of $316,861.00 in alcohol prevention funding during fiscal year 2026, through the following federal Highway Safety Grants awarded via the DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office (VAHSO) grant program. Note that DMV follows the federal fiscal year from Oct. 1 – Sept. 30.

- FY25 Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO) Peer-to-Peer Program – Alcohol
  - Awarded $354,324.00
  - Spent $145,987.00 for period July 1, 2025 – Sept. 30, 2025
- FY26: Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO) Peer-to-Peer Program – Alcohol
  - Awarded $410,076.00
  - o Spent $170,874.00 to date for period Oct. 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026

Additionally, there was a $60,000 grant from State Farm and over $10,000 in community donations. These funds were used to purchase a new distracted/impaired driving simulator, maintenance and equipment repairs on nine other simulators, and funding for educational programs and materials. YOVASO and VSP now have ten distracted/impaired driving simulators to promote safe driving at school and community events.
$7,250.00 in donations to support school-sanctioned, alcohol and drug-free after-prom parties and awarded $9,000.00 in grants (nine schools received a $1,000 grant) to schools that applied and qualified for the grants.

Youth Access and Drug Education

YOVASO implemented the following programming:

Peer-to-Peer and School/Youth Group Programming: Provided educational programming, peer leadership training, and peer-to-peer educational initiatives for 150 schools and youth groups in the Commonwealth during fiscal year 2026, with a potential reach of 150,000 based on student enrollment. Participating schools provided peer-to-peer club activities, educational programming,

interactive safe driving experiences, contests and competitions, personal story speakers, and a variety of in-school and social media messaging.

Drug and Alcohol-Free After-Prom Grants: Provided $1,000 grants to nine high schools in Virginia in spring 2026 to help fund school-sanctioned drug and alcohol free after prom parties for students on prom night. The total spending was $9,000.00. Schools receiving grants reported zero serious injuries or fatal crashes on prom night.

Project GPS: Get Places Safely Educational Campaign: Sponsored a spring semester 2026 educational campaign, called “Project GPS: Get Places Safely,” for schools and youth groups. The campaign focused on reducing crash risks among drivers during the high-risk spring/summer months, with an emphasis on prom and graduation celebratory periods when drug and alcohol use typically increase. Fifty-nine schools and youth groups participated through peer led activities and programs, reaching over 40,000 youth.

Distracted/Impaired Driving Simulator. VSP troopers and YOVASO provided the distracted driving simulators program to 109 schools/community events reaching over 15,000 students with real-life experience on the dangers of distracted and impaired driving. The most recent post-simulator event surveys show that 95% of student respondents agree that driving under the influence is very dangerous and 100% of the teachers rated the program’s impact on their students as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good.’

Distracted/Impaired Driving Simulator: VSP troopers and YOVASO provided the distracted/impaired driving simulators and ScanEd: Physics of a Crash programs to 102 schools/community events reaching close to 8,500 students with a real-life experience on the dangers of distracted and impaired driving. The most recent post-simulator event surveys show that 94% of student respondents agree that driving under the influence is very dangerous and 100% of the teachers rated the program’s impact on their students as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good.’

Jingle Your Way to a Safe Holiday Contest: Sponsored a Christmas/New Year’s holiday school and social media campaign in December 2025 called, “Jingle Your Way to a Safe Holiday.” Students developed a short song or tune reminding their peers to buckle up, slow down, and celebrate the holidays without using drugs and alcohol. YOVASO selected the top tunes submitted by students for placement on social media platforms and the public voted on the top three winners in the high school and middle school divisions. The winning jingle was posted on social media platforms and sent out in a statewide media release. YOVASO also shared the rest of the submitted jingles across social media throughout the holidays. The tunes received 2,775 engagements on Facebook. School clubs marched in local parades with the “Jingle Your Way to a Safe Holiday” banner and floats decorated with safety messages. Halifax County High School sang their jingle at the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond.

Drive for Change Educational Campaign: Sponsored a fall semester education campaign called “Drive for Change” for schools and youth groups that ran Sept. 15 – Nov. 14, 2025. The peer-to-peer campaign focused on encouraging teens to buckle up and slow down and emphasized Zero Tolerance and the dangers of impaired driving. Seventy-two schools and youth groups participated, reaching over 67,644 youth. Seat belt use at participating schools increased an average of 5% from pre-campaign to post-campaign.

Prom Safe Driving Ad: In partnership with WDBJ, YOVASO produced and ran an ad on TV platforms showcasing YOVASO students promoting safe driving behaviors during the

prom/graduation season. The ad ran February-May and received 933.54K impressions and 54.78k completed views.

Summer Leadership Retreat: Provided a four-day, three-night peer leadership development conference for high school students and club sponsors in the Commonwealth in July 2025. The conference had 155 attendees representing 56 high schools in the Commonwealth. Various workshops and hands-on activities regarding the dangers of drug and alcohol use while driving were provided. Highlights included a mock crash presentation from Project IMPACT, distracted driving simulator experiences, car maintenance stations, personal speaker stories, and safety demonstrations. Throughout the week, students also built positive relationships with Virginia State Police personnel and engaged in meaningful interactions and team activities with troopers. Ninety-three percent of students gave the retreat an excellent or above average rating and 99% said the retreat was educational and provided them with new information on safe and responsible driving and passenger safety.

B.R.A.K.E.S. Proactive Teen Driving School: Provided a two-day, five-session defensive driving school for licensed teen drivers in Virginia in partnership with B.R.A.K.E.S. at the Richmond Raceway. A total of 171 students completed the program with hands-on training in off-road recovery, panic stop, car recovery and control, crash avoidance/slalom, and distracted driving prevention. Additionally,196 parents were in attendance, making total attendance 367.

Summer Safe Driving Ad: In partnership with WFXR, YOVASO produced and ran a safe driving music video that ran on social media and audio-streaming platforms in summer 2025 (June through August) to reach young drivers during the high-risk summer vacation period. The ads received 82,870K impressions on radio apps with a 94.13% video completion rate. The ad also had 1.5 million impressions on social media with an 11% click rate.

Statewide Youth Advisory Council (YAC) : Trained and worked with 20 students from 16 high schools across the Commonwealth to serve as statewide leaders for safe teen driving and passenger safety. The students helped plan the Summer Leadership Retreat and educational campaigns, developed messaging for social media and campaign materials; filmed PSAs on safe driving and passenger safety, served as youth leaders/mentors for the summer retreat, and promoted young driver and passenger safety in their schools and communities.

Peer Leadership Training: Trained over 138 high and middle school students across the Commonwealth representing. 121 schools completed peer-led programs during the fiscal year.

Gaps in Overall Youth Substance Use Prevention Efforts

VOSAP members' efforts, considered together with national and state youth substance use trends reveal gaps.

One emerging threat is difficulty in obtaining timely, representative youth substance use data. States and local governments, nonprofits and coalitions all depend on such data to track emerging threats, respond to problems, create strong grant proposals and allocate resources most efficiently. Representative data is particularly crucial, as it allows policy makers to generalize the percentage of

youth in the country or in a state who have exhibited a given behavioral health or substance use behavior.

This concern is especially salient in Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System (YBSS). For most recent data in 2023, only **39 states participated in the high school survey**, down from 45 states in the previous survey from 2021. This marks the lowest number of participating states since 2001 when only 37 states participated. Virginia has maintained representative data in its 2023 Virginia Youth Survey and boasted an impressive 99% school response rate across 78 public schools. However, as some school districts either opt out or gather their own data separately, it risks fracturing collective efforts at preventing youth substance use.

In 2025, a sudden **loss of health-related funding at the national level** affected several organizations, which place an increased burden on local community efforts tackling substance use prevention and related behavioral health outcomes. To support communities, future VOSAP efforts can identify duplicative resources and streamline collaboration to better reach those in need.

A lack of funding exclusive to youth prevention in many organizations led to difficulty in precisely reporting spending on youth prevention efforts. In these cases, youth substance use prevention activities are embedded within initiatives that might target caregivers or other community members more generally, while addressing risk and protective factors important for preventing youth substance use (e.g., parental support, mental health and trauma support). Likewise, organizations collect and report on youth substance use prevention efforts and measures in different ways. For example, some report youth prevention efforts in age groups up to 18-years-old, while others report youth prevention efforts in age groups up to 22-years-old. The VOSAP Collaborative sought to address these gaps by documenting these exceptions where they occur, such that a consistency across the group may emerge, resulting in meaningful comparisons from year to year. More clarifications will continue to be developed to serve this goal as VOSAP members report data each year.

Another area for improvement is better documenting the varied programs, toolkits, resources and events for youth substance use prevention in a central location for prevention professionals and community members. While each VOSAP member organization is best equipped to connect Virginians with its own opportunities, a central reference organizing these and communicating the important basics for understanding best practices in prevention would be most useful for members of the public. Along these lines, the VOSAP Collaborative will be gathering a list of all available youth marijuana prevention resources in preparation for the coming retail marijuana market in July 2027.

Focuses for Fiscal Year 2027 and Unmet Needs

The following organizations identified focuses for fiscal year 2027 and any unmet substance use prevention needs, described below.

Virginia ABC

Virginia ABC's Community Health & Engagement Division will continue its work to provide data, research, evidence-based programming, strategic resources and genuine partnership in order to ensure Virginians are able to make informed choices. One focus for fiscal year 2027 is to strengthen the procedure for stakeholders to advocate with regard to their expertise and concerns surrounding alcohol policy. Additionally, Virginia ABC will work to ensure that retail tobacco establishments go through the required permitting process, which includes employee training on age restrictions.

Virginia Cannabis Control Authority

In fiscal year 2027, the Virginia CCA will continue its mission, with the following strategic focuses.

- Administer a patient-oriented medical cannabis program that prioritizes safety, security, and controlled accessibility.
- Improve public understanding of cannabis through current, evidence-based, and practical information.
- Provide expert advice to and collaborate with state and local partners regarding cannabis legislation, policy, law enforcement, and public health initiatives.
- Prepare to administer a retail market that prioritizes consumer safety, security, and accessibility.

In anticipation of a cannabis retail market, the CCA has funding in fiscal year 2027 for a youth-focused prevention campaign and responsible use cannabis consumer campaign. The CCA has applied for a DMV grant to increase safe driving campaign efforts alongside the upcoming retail market.

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

DBHDS will continue our upstream approach that was started last year focusing on decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors. **Figure 14** below shows the prioritized risk and protective factors mapped across prioritized problem areas.

DBHDS will also continue to implement strategies across the four key Socio-Ecologic domains: Individual (positive attitudes and beliefs, healthy stress management skills), Interpersonal (healthy relationships), Community (connected communities and schools), and Societal (policies and environments that promote healthy behaviors).

Figure 14. DBHDS OBHW 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Behavioral Health Outcome Shared Risk and Protective Factor Mapping

Shared Risk and Protective Factor Mapping

	General Impact on Substance Use Outcomes	A Alcohol	C Cannabis	G Gambling	M Mental Health & Suicide	O Opioids	S Stimulants	T Tobacco	V Vaping
Parent & Family Management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Ease of Access		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Healthy Coping Skills, Emotional Regulation and Resilience	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Perceptions of Risk		x	x	x		x	x	x	
Social Isolation	x	x	x		x	x	x		
Social Supports	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Strong Community Partnerships & Coalitions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Trusted Adults, Peers, and Mentors	x	x	x		x	x		x	x

Additional focus for this upcoming year will be centered around the impending retail cannabis market. This includes increasing awareness of best practices that are public health supported, educating youth and parents, and creating a comprehensive strategic plan specific to cannabis prevention that aligns with our current approach.

From our Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report, 80% of CSBs reported that their communities still lack awareness about the extent or consequences of substance use and misuse. Staffing shortages, funding limitations, and competing schedules were also identified as issues impacting participation and overall reach, particularly as it relates to community coalitions.

DBHDS addresses some of these by shifting the focus to risk and protective factors moving forward. This allows multiple problem areas to be addressed with the same strategy. We are also wrapping up a salary study that the workforce will be able to use to advocate for themselves within their agencies. In fiscal year 2027, we will be conducting a community readiness survey specific to cannabis and problem gambling to assess the work that has been done in that space in the previous 5 years. Results from that will identify gaps and inform our work in those spaces moving forward.

Our priority substances include alcohol, opioids, tobacco, cannabis, vaping, and stimulants. We also prioritize gambling prevention, suicide prevention, and mental health promotion.

Virginia Department of Education

The priority focus of VDOE in the upcoming fiscal year will be to continue the work on opioid and fentanyl awareness and prevention, with an additional focus on cannabis use, and the dangers of Kratom. The expansion of Botvin LST in Virginia as a research-validated substance abuse prevention program will continue to be promoted as a way to target the major social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use, to include opioids, fentanyl, and cannabis, and other risky behaviors. Instructional support will be provided by the Health Instructional Specialist to those divisions that need support on how this program can be integrated into or augment existing division health curriculum.

The VDOE has also prioritized the development of videos focused on the understanding of the risks of opioid use and to promote multiprong support for students in terms of awareness and prevention of opioids and other substances. The videos are intended to be an additional resource to be used by

schools to augment classroom instruction or to be used as part of a comprehensive counseling tool. Three videos were completed in 2025 and an additional three videos are being completed this project year.

- The VDOE is working with developers to create modules on the topic of neuroscience of addiction and the teenage brain. Complete with teacher guides, these interactive modules will be available to high school students via health classes to further support substance use prevention education. Three interactive modules were completed in 2025, and three additional modules are being completed this project year.
- The VDOE has selected a consultant to develop additional virtual instructional resources to support instruction on opioid and substance awareness and prevention. Division support on the use of the products will be conducted virtually and through conferences.

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

DJJ will continue its mission of protecting the public by preparing court-involved youth to be successful citizens. DJJ engages in continuous review and quality improvement to increase the successful outcomes for court-involved youth. DJJ prioritizes all initiatives to ensure positive outcomes for the youth, families, and communities it serves while using taxpayer resources effectively. This department reinforces its commitment with a commitment to the community through these strategic goals:

- Expand reentry vocational programs, workforce development, and mentoring to provide resources to encourage a positive path of returning to the community.
- Support successful community programs and create new initiatives that will address the current concerns of the Commonwealth.
- Build trust with law enforcement and judicial partners to ensure youth are placed in the best possible, most effective programs.
- Address the concerns highlighted in the 2021 JLARC report, which focused on recidivism for the most serious offenders.
- Create new resources to support victims and families, including those with limited English proficiency or disabilities, who have been impacted by violent crime.

Gaps surrounding youth substance use in this context include parental education about impacts of their own substance abuse on their children. As a future opportunity, all MAT sites in Virginia may be identified to assist in step-down services for residents leaving detention centers. Priority substances include fentanyl and other opioids.

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

As we look ahead, we are planning new mass media campaigns focused on impaired driving that expand beyond the traditional emphasis on alcohol impairment. These efforts will include messaging related to drug-impaired driving reflecting the evolving trends we are seeing in our fatality data.

In addition, we have expanded community engagement activities, particularly in rural areas where roadway safety challenges can be unique. Our approach includes meeting travelers where they are by conducting outreach at VDOT rest areas and other innovative events. We will continue to engage diverse audiences, increase awareness of impaired-driving risks, and reinforce safe driving behaviors across the Commonwealth using countermeasures that work.

- High visibility Enforcement Campaigns that coincide with strong communication campaigns in-house media, paid media, and earned media.
- Peer-to-peer education in academic institutions which include high schools and colleges/universities.
- Collaborating with state agencies.

Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth

VFHY priorities for fiscal year 2027 include preventing youth tobacco and nicotine product use, preventing youth and young adult marijuana/cannabis use, and educating young people about the dangers of fentanyl. In fiscal year 2027, we will fund the third and final year of our current Youth Tobacco Use Prevention grant cycle and release our next RFA. We will also continue supporting grants to implement our Dangers of Fentanyl lessons, with funding from VOAA. VFHY will also continue to support its signature campaigns — Behind the Haze, Unfazed, and Deadly Dose — which aim to protect youth from the dangers of nicotine, marijuana/cannabis, and fentanyl, respectively.

Meeting Summaries

Meeting notes from all fiscal year 2026 VOSAP Collaborative meetings in order from July 2025 to June 2026 are detailed below. Full copies of meeting minutes can be found on the **Commonwealth Calendar.**

August 21, 2025 Discussion Topics

Speaker: Tiffany Eustice of Virginia Department of Health gave a presentation on youth and young adult tobacco cessation efforts. Slides are attached alongside these minutes.

VOSAP Updates

Wyatt is reaching out to everyone individually with their respective sections of the Annual Report and any questions. It will receive additional revisions in September.

One general theme of the report is that compared to national data from the Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, the Virginia Youth Survey shows lower rates of youth substance use. This is for 2023 data, as 2025 data has not been published yet.

There are some trends that while not overt in survey data, may be showing up in Virginia when 2025 data is available. E-cigarette use is down nationally, as youth nicotine pouch use has increased. This corresponds to reports of increased calls to Virginia's poison control centers.

Some ideas were shared for this fiscal year. These included developing a shared calendar of recurring events, campaigns and conferences. Additionally, it was proposed that resources be developed or shared to assist in calculating prevention programs' return on investment.

Group Discussion

Michael Parsons confirmed that the 2025 Virginia Youth Survey has a question relating directly to nicotine pouch use, making it useful for tracking this emerging trend.

Colleen Hughes shared that she is working on some resources for communicating prevention's return on investment and can share more as they are developed.

Virginia ABC News and Updates

Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP) was a success. High school students from across the state came together at Christopher Newport University to develop their

leadership skills and build plans to prevent drug and alcohol use in their skills and communities.

As a part of the **Miss Virginia School Tour** program, Miss Virginia visits elementary schools around the state with a message of healthy decisions and substance use prevention. As a part of the **Power of Parents** program, we distribute handbooks for parents on best practices for having conversations with their teens about alcohol and other drugs. Together with MADD Virginia, we also offer training presentations to groups on the themes of the handbook with Virginia specific data and practical tips, online or in-person.

We have posted **Virginia Alcohol Health & Safety** Community Dashboards on our website, displaying alcohol health and safety data and trends across the state. Additionally, we are establishing a state-wide group to serve as a public resource for alcohol research, data and health behaviors called the Virginia Alcohol Research Consortium. To join, email Matt Santucci (**matthew.santucci@virginiaABC.com**).

Virginia CCA News and Updates

Sakina Weekes has joined the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority as an education and prevention specialist. The CCA also hired other positions including an outreach coordinator and a compliance and enforcement analyst. There is also a new board member.

A practitioner training is currently being developed for cannabis, and the next Safe Driving Campaign is expected to launch in October. There are currently lots of educational resources available at **https://cca.virginia.gov/**.

DBHDS News and Updates

Navigating a new structure with new strategic plan covering July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030. Aiming to address risk/protective factors in a strategic way to best support CSBs. Synar inspections are currently underway. This year, Community Coalitions of Virginia will not be hosting their annual conference but will offer a webinar training series to try and fill the gap.

Mental health conference on trauma-informed care geared towards refugees and immigrants September 15.

DCJS News and Updates

Strengthening Connections Conference will be held Feb. 10-11 at The Crossings.
Usually about 300 attendees, and there are lots of opportunities for state agencies to table.

Various trainings and events are coming up that may be of interest. These include a training on building healthy relationships for youth, Oct. 9 in Fredericksburg, and the First Responder Wellness Conference, Sept. 9-11 in Norfolk.

A full list of trainings is available at **https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/training-events**

VDH News and Updates

Agency updates were shared within presentation slides. Additionally, shared that Stanford's REACH Lab has fantastic free prevention toolkits and resources.

Elle and Jada from the Crater Health District shared that funding was granted to Petersburg and Hopewell for opioid prevention work. They are collaborating with GMU and VSU on a four-to-six-part education series to be used in two prisons in the district. This will include REVIVE training and

overdose awareness. The E-bridges program exists, where if an individual overdoses, they are supported with resources and peer recovery efforts.

VDOE News and Updates

Developed guidelines for parental notification when there is an overdose or suspected overdose in accordance with legislation.

Awarded new funding to train 200 new educators each year on delivering Botvin LifeSkills Training curriculum. Providing Health and Physical Education with video guides and support to help teach the SOLs related to opioid abatement. Will be working on modules for teens (9th-12th grade) on the neuroscience of addiction (and how opioids affect it specifically). Also received funding for recovery schools' technical assistance grants.

A convention is coming up in early November for university professors who teach education students. Currently gathering prevention resources in a one-stop shop for educators.

VDSS News and Updates

VDSS has been promoting, **211 Virginia**, central source for referrals and human service resources. supported by a grant from the Opioid Abatement Authority, the Opioid Reduction Registry is its latest initiative, designed to expand access to opioid-related support services across the Commonwealth. A virtual informational session is taking place August 27 to provide an overview of the registry, its integration into 211 and ways to support these efforts.

Additionally, **Kinship Navigator** assists kinship caregivers by providing resources for financial assistance, legal guidance, and other types of issues caregivers face when raising children in order to provide stability and support in the home.

VFHY News and Updates

Adapted the hour-long high school fentanyl awareness lesson for middle school. Expected to award 35 groups with grant funding to implement a prevention education starting in October. Created to be easy for schools to apply and implement.
The third Champions for Youth Summit will be May 3-5 in Northern Virginia. Topics to include fentanyl, health and wellness, and more.

VSP News and Updates

Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO)'s 2025 Summer Leadership Retreat at JMU was successful. It had 125 students, and evaluation survey results indicated they felt motivated to help their communities after participating in the retreat. The retreat is expected to be the same week and same location in 2026.

A new youth advisory council was selected. These students represent communities across the state. There are also two new distracted driving simulators that schools can request.

Drive for Change campaign is coming up registration opens Aug. 25. The campaign runs Sept. 15 – Oct.14. Focus is on buckling up and slowing down. Those who sign up receive a box with items and resources in order to implement the project in school. Schools have the choice to compete within the project to win $500.

Agency wide, two initiatives are going on right now. The Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign, along with high-volume trooper presence on the roads as we approach Labor Day weekend. Early traffic fatalities data indicate a substantial decrease in 2025.

MADD

MADD Virginia partners with Virginia ABC on the Power of Parents program and is happy to support groups with handbooks and training presentations. MADD also offers Power of Youth program, a complementary program directed at teens.

Partners with national office on Saturation Saturday campaign ahead of Labor Day weekend. Additionally, MADD offers law enforcement awards, where officers making an impact at preventing drunk driving are recognized at an event in December. Last year's event had over 300 attendees.

Radford University

Tiesha Martin shared that she is developing a prevention program for middle-school aged youth and seeking to learn more about the programs and resources offered around the state. She can be reached at **tmartin116@radford.edu**.

November 20, 2025 Discussion Topics

Speaker: Julia Mogren of Virginia Department of Health gave a presentation on substance use trends in Virginia Youth, with a focus on alcohol, cannabis and drug overdoses. Data sources included the Virginia Youth Survey, Hospital Discharge and Death Certificate data. Slides are attached alongside these minutes.

VOSAP Updates

VOSAP Annual Report is set to be reviewed by Virginia ABC Board Friday, Nov. 21. Once approved, it will be submitted to the Legislative Information System and posted on Virginia ABC website.

Wyatt created a collaborative excel document to share events, news, and other opportunities. Please reach out if you need to be added as an editor to that document.

Group Discussion

Group discussed what can be done to ensure that schools continue to participate in Virginia Youth Surveys, as this data is important for prevention. Superintendents do not always have a close relationship with VDH and gathering data can be a time crunch.

DBHDS would like to encourage connecting community coalitions with administrators to advocate for the importance of school participation for local prevention work. DCJS noted that the School Climate Survey can also provide insights for prevention.

State reports on the School Climate Survey can be found here:
https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campussafety/programs/virginia-school-survey-climate-and-working

Division and school level data here:
https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/school-safety-survey/secondary-school-climate-survey

Virginia ABC News and Updates

Alcohol education and prevention grant applications open Jan. 1. Grants of up to $10,000 are awarded to organizations working to prevent underage drinking, social providing/hosting, and high-risk drinking. **Virginia Alcohol Health & Safety Community Dashboards** can help with data for a strong application. See website for more information: **https://www.abc.virginia.gov/education/grants**.

As many teens first try alcohol over the holiday season each year, now is a great time to encourage parents to have important conversations. In collaboration with MADD Virginia, Virginia ABC offers free evidence-based handbooks and training for parents/caregivers as a part of the **Power of Parents** program.

The **Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project** (YADAPP) Conference will take place July 13-17 at Christopher Newport University. At this five-day leadership conference, teams of high school students develop prevention plans they go on to implement during the school year.

Virginia CCA News and Updates

The Virginia Cannabis Control Authority has been conducting a needs assessment on its educational resources. A survey was distributed, and there will be focus groups held after Thanksgiving.

The Safe Driving Campaign is currently happening. Additionally, an optional training resource was developed for health practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, etc. Over 40 people have taken it so far.

VDACS has reached out about collaboration on resources for student resource officers about legal THC products. This was prior to national legislation that closed the 2018 Farm Bill loophole.

DBHDS News and Updates

With a new governor, there may be new priorities for DBHDS. Virginia's Synar rate, or the retailer violation rate for selling tobacco to those under 21, is 9.8%.

DBHDS is planning for its next Young Adult Survey, another useful data source for prevention. A lot of effort goes into making sure it represents all young adults, and not only those attending college.

DCJS News and Updates

DCJS hired a new director for school and campus safety. Data for the 2025 School Climate Survey and final report will be posted online soon.

Strengthening Connections Conference will be held Feb. 10-11, in Glen Allen. It is a smaller event of 250 people. Its focus is on positive leadership and how it affects school climate.

The School Safety Training Forum will be held July 20-22, in Hampton. There has been an increase in requests for training on substance use prevention.

DJJ News and Updates

Rolled out Seven Challenges, the newly developed substance use prevention and treatment program at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center.

VDH News and Updates

Many dashboards have been updated and the cadence for updating them is quicker. The overdose dashboard now contains preliminary 2025 data. We are currently administering the 2025 Virginia Youth Survey.

VDOE News and Updates

New program manager for Opioid Abatement Education Plan, funded through Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA)

Engaged in evidence-based educational prevention programming for elementary, middle and high school. Currently have trained 87 teachers to use Botvin LifeSkills, with funding for 200. Initially focused on Health and PE teachers, but expanding to SROs, nurses, etc. Over 11,000 students will be receiving Botvin LifeSkills lessons this year. Working to create new modules on online learning centers on additional high-level, informative topics for professionals across Virginia.

State Driver's Education curriculum is constantly being updated. Added pieces on cannabis, interacting with the police, created instructional guides on opioids.

VFHY News and Updates

The 2026 **Champions for Youth Summit** will be held May 4-6, in Reston. Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth offering another round of **Dangers of Fentanyl Activation Grants**, and any organization that works with kids can apply. The Dangers of Fentanyl lessons for middle and high school remain free for download online in English and Spanish.

VSP News and Updates

Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO)'s fall campaign just ended, with 79 schools participating. The campaign reached over 60,000 students.

Currently holding jingle contest for middle and high school students. The jingles must be holiday-themed and address traffic safety in no more than 30 seconds. Winners can receive up to $500. Two new campaigns are coming up: One from January to March and another in the Spring. The Spring campaign's name is still being determined, and we're gathering free materials and resources. Participation is free for middle schools and high schools.

Youth Summer Leadership retreat will be held July 16-19 at JMU. It is open to any rising 9th grade students through graduating 12th grade students, and costs $15 per person.

February 19, 2026 Discussion Topics

Speaker: Brianna Bonat of the Virginia CCA presented on the Safe Driving Campaign in addition to updates on cannabis legislation. The presentation slides are attached alongside these minutes.

VOSAP Updates

Community Coalitions of Virginia puts together a useful bill tracker to monitor legislation related to prevention. A few bills that stand out relate to establishing a retail marijuana market, Virginia ABC permitting tobacco product retailers and legislation related to alcohol and marijuana underage consumption/possession.

In the coming weeks, Wyatt will send out a draft of VOSAP's Annal Report Survey for feedback. The structure of the report will be roughly similar to years past, with continual improvements to make it more digestible.

Virginia ABC News and Updates

Alcohol Education & Prevention Grant Application period closes March 1. Groups can receive up to $10,000 for projects addressing underage drinking, social hosting/providing, or high-risk drinking.

The enrollment period for the 2026 Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (**YADAPP**) Kickoff Conference opens April 1. The week-long leadership substance use prevention conference is a unique opportunity for high school students to network with other students around the state and develop a prevention plan they work to accomplish in their school communities. The event is July 13-17, 2026, at Christopher Newport University.

The **Virginia Higher Education Substance Use Advisory Committee** (VHESUAC) is organizing a virtual training for campus professionals on April 21, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. It will be led by Dr. Jason Kilmer and will cover motivational interviewing. Email **christopher.young@virginiaABC.com** for more details.

Virginia ABC is hosting the **Virginia Alcohol Research Consortium Summit** on April 20, 2026. It is a free, one day event for Virginia alcohol researchers and health and safety stakeholders. The goal is to promote in-state networking and collaboration as well as discuss alcohol health and safety, consumption and behavioral trends.

Virginia CCA News and Updates

Please see presentation slides for updates and results from the Safe Driving Campaign that is underway. Presentation also connected to resources including partner toolkits, where organizations can add their own logos.

A dashboard for medical marijuana program data is now live on the CCA website. Additionally, a webinar for schools is being planned in collaboration with Department of Agriculture, April 14 at 2:00 p.m. The webinar will go over the sort of cannabis products being found, what to do when confiscating products, signs of student use, etc.

Starting to plan listening sessions from various stakeholder groups as a part of the transition to a retail market.

DBHDS News and Updates

Hiring for some new positions, where experience with prevention work and ACEs is preferred.

CSBs and schools are being trained on a high school curriculum for problem gaming and gambling prevention for youth. A new media campaign, Beyond the Bet, addressing gambling prevention is in progress.

The bi-annual Young Adult Survey (ages 18-25) is happening now, through April. Previous data available on VASIS.

DCJS News and Updates

The Office for Safer Communities and Youth Services has been exploring causes of youth entering the justice system. A judge survey has found that judges would like to see youth have alternative options first and that truancy is a big contributing issue.

Three to four funding opportunities are coming up in June, including Operation Ceasefire, Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention, and Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grants. There

are also plans to roll out funding opportunities for non-profits hosting summer camps for youth in 2027.

The Center for School and Campus Safety recently hosted the Strengthening Connections conference for K-12 educators, which focused on mental health. A second conference for educators, July 20-22, will cover a wider range of school safety topics. Additionally, the 2026 School Climate Survey is currently running, in which students in grades 9-12 and all staff are surveyed. VOSAP members interested in adding a question of interest to the survey should reach out.

VDH News and Updates

The Tobacco Control Program's one-year CDC grant was extended through April 2026. As this funding source comes to an end, a state budget amendment was submitted, and other funding opportunities are being explored. Quit Now Virginia and Vape Free VA are leading tools offered for helping tobacco and nicotine users quit. Consider signing up for the Tobacco Control Program's newsletter by emailing **tiffany.eustice@vdh.virginia.gov**.

The Crater Health District has received a grant from VSU to fund two additional full-time staff. Ideal candidates would have lived experience. Two harm reduction stations were donated to Crater Health stocking items like feminine hygiene products, naloxone, etc. Staff have been active in the community on STI prevention initiatives and are excited to partner with VSU and expand their team. A community wellness fair is planned for April 11 at Petersburg High School. The Team is also working on a Peer Recovery Specialist Network.

VDOE News and Updates

Health and Physical Activity Institute will take place, July 12-15 at JMU. Preconference will be on July 12, led by VADETS.

Every second Tuesday of the month, Driver Education at VDOE hosts webinars which are later posted online, typically at 9:00 a.m. The link for these webinars can be found on the VDOE website.

VDMV News and Updates

Highway Safety Grant application still open. Registration will open soon for Highway Safety Summit, which is May 19-21. The next Impaired driving stakeholder meeting will be held on virtually on March 6.

VDSS News and Updates

Work is being done to expand 211 Virginia, such that its database promotes a broad network of substance use treatment facilities. These treatment atlases are expected to be a seamless user experience around summer/early fall.

VFHY News and Updates

VFHY has expanded its fentanyl prevention lessons to cover middle school and high school, as well as in English and Spanish. All are free.

Thirty-five grants are being awarded, and there is an effort to apply for more funding to reach as many as 50 grants.

VFHY is excited to announce a new round of three-year Tobacco Use Prevention funding. Release of RFP will be Monday, Aug. 28, and two funding categories are available. Youth Development will fund tobacco nicotine and vaping prevention or cessation instruction. VFHY will provide organizations up

to $53,000 per year for 3 years (up to $159,000 total). Community Innovation will fund the development of new and innovative strategies to reduce tobacco-, nicotine-, and vaping-related youth health disparities. VFHY will provide organizations up to $33,000 per year for three years (up to $99,000 total).

The third Champions for Youth Summit will be held May 4-6 in Reston. Topics are cross-cutting issues affecting youth, and about 400-500 prevention professionals will be in attendance.

VNG News and Updates

Hoping to get more staff across the state to support coalitions. Collaborating with organizations on a human trafficking education event in Farmville.

VSP News and Updates

YOVASO's Summer Leadership Routine will take place July 16-19 at JMU. The theme this year is Carnival. The cost is $15 per student, and registration opens on Feb. 27.

The spring campaign, beginning March 9, has new theme, Project GPS, or Get Places Safely. YOVASO will once again be awarding grants for after-prom events. Additionally distracted and impaired driving simulators will open March 1.

May 21, 2026 Discussion Topics

Speaker: Robin Shepherd and Jennifer Vedder of VDOE presented on legislative updates to Driver Education and Health Education Standards of Learning (SOLs). The presentation slides are attached alongside these minutes.

VOSAP Updates

Wyatt Anderson brought up some current events with implications for youth substance use prevention, including the veto of Virginia' retail marijuana bill, legislation relating to education and training for sellers of nicotine products, and the first flavored vape products authorized by the FDA.

Wyatt discussed the VOSAP Annual Report and the submission process, including the kinds of data included in the report and asked for any additional feedback. The group discussed resharing areas identified initially gaps, so they can be better addressed in the report, considering the wide range of organizations involved. Wyatt will resend the document collecting report responses by June 1. Responses should be submitted by July 15 so that a timely draft of the report can be prepared.

Virginia ABC News and Updates

The enrollment period for the 2026 Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP) Kickoff Conference closes June 1. The week-long leadership substance use prevention conference is a unique opportunity for high school students to network with other students around the state and develop a prevention plan they work to accomplish in their school communities. The event is July 13-17, 2026, at Christopher Newport University.

Online training for sellers of tobacco products are being prepared as a part of HB308 and SB620.

Virginia CCA News and Updates

The Safe Diving Campaign is ongoing. The VCCA did a social media tour to spread awareness about the myths of driving and cannabis. They partnered with VCU and George Mason and are updating various FAQ documents on the website, particularly information for teachers.

DBHDS News and Updates

Currently working on updating tobacco retailer training modules from when they were first developed. DBHDS has identified a Learning Management System, and Colleen will reach out to Virginia ABC for collaboration.

Problem Gaming and Gambling – Beyond your Beat campaign is ongoing for high school. Local CBSs can train teachers.

Data collection for the Young Adult survey has just closed, and it received over 6,000 submissions.

DCJS News and Updates

Closed on a funding opportunity for detention centers, with the goal of additional mental health training for staff working with youth.

Two additional funding opportunities remain available. One involves a summer youth program with a focus on alternative activities as a crime prevention strategy. The second involves training schools on diversion and intervention strategies to keep youth from entering the legal system. Funding for these opportunities goes to a locality, but that funding can pass through to an organization.

A number of DCJS events are approaching:
June 2-4: Violent Crime Conference in Norfolk
July 20: DCJS Annual Summer Conference
September 2: Cognitive Behavioral Theory training for those working with youth. This is not a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy training but a primer to share its principles and importance.
September 3: Multidisciplinary Team Training

DMV News and Updates

April was Districted Driving Awareness month, with an accompanying campaign, “Put the phone away or pay.” May is for seatbelt safety with the “Click it or ticket” campaign.
The next Impaired Driver Stakeholder meeting is June 17. The focus of July will be preventing reckless driving.

VDH News and Updates

Elle Merkle shared news specific to Crater Health District where she works. Partnered with VSU (using Opioid Abatement Authority funding) to find initiatives and staff. Outfitting two mobile units to support the locality

VDOE News and Updates

The Health and Physical Activity Institute is taking place July 13-15 at James Madison University.

For driver education updates, an e-bike safety module is being developed. Additionally, driving safety resources for kids are being collected to add to the website (activities promoting seatbelts, coloring books, etc.). A parent/teen component is being updated with testimonials from parents and siblings. VDOE wants to collect more data on a few counties close to the North Carolina border that have a higher teen crash rate.

DMV News and Updates
Highway Safety Summit May 19-21 in Virginia Beach. Stakeholder meeting on June 12 (virtual). Always looking for new stakeholders

VFHY News and Updates
VFHY anticipates a drop in funding in future years based on the conditions outlined in the Master Settlement Agreement related to declining smoking rates. VFHY has other funding sources, and Virginia has fared far better than most states.

VSP News and Updates
YOVASO Program Director has retired. YOVASO is reaching out to DMV to help get YOVASO clubs engage in areas of the state where impaired driving is more common. The spring project ends next week. YOVASO's Summer Leadership Retreat for high school students is taking place July 16-19 and James Madison University.

Final Summary

Through the review of information submitted for fiscal year 2026, $11,479,014 was spent on youth substance use prevention, with $35,246,428 spent on substance use prevention more generally. To better capture the interconnected nature of youth prevention efforts, reporting organizations considered three focus areas when reporting spending and activities: Youth Access and Drug Education, Caregiver Support and Community Support. Evaluation of this data shows a wide berth of programs and resources to prevent youth substance in the state.

Easy-to-digest data on the scope of all Virginia youth substance use behaviors is limited. The **Virginia Youth Survey** is a valuable tool, though its necessarily broad focus across health behaviors sometimes leave an incomplete picture of rapidly changing trends and developments. In combination with VDH data, national data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Monitoring the Future, the VOSAP Collaborative will continue to refine this report to produce a snapshot of the state of youth substance use.

Future VOSAP efforts will further refine and centralize connections to our overlapping programs, resources, tools and organization events, particularly as it relates to the changing state landscape of a retail cannabis market and additional nicotine retail permitting.

VOSAP Collaborative Contact Information

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority
Community Health & Engagement Division
7450 Freight Way
Mechanicsville, VA 23116

Email: Education@VirginiaABC.com
Phone: (804) 977-7440
Website: www.abc.virginia.gov/education/programs/vosap

VOSAP Meeting Dates

VOSAP meets on a quarterly basis on the third Thursday of the first month of the quarter. Meetings are held at Virginia ABC Headquarters. Meeting dates for fiscal year 2027 are:

- August 20, 2026
- November 19, 2026
- February 18, 2027
- May 20, 2027