



**Drug-Free Communities Support Program National Evaluation**

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

— JULY 2020 —



A REPORT BY THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

# DFC National Evaluation Annual Report

I am enthusiastic to share with you the 2020 Drug-Free Communities National Evaluation. DFC coalitions are on the front lines of delivering innovative solutions to reduce youth substance use, and this year's report makes that clear. DFC funded coalitions are found in small and large communities nationwide. They are building capacity and mobilizing communities to prevent youth substance use. In fact, since 2005, 51% of the U.S. population has lived in a community with a DFC coalition.

The data in this year's report demonstrates the commitment of our DFC coalitions to produce meaningful results in communities across the country. DFC coalitions reported a decrease in youth use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and the misuse of prescription drugs. This means more middle school and high school youth are choosing not to use these substances in DFC funded communities.

There are also several promising practices that were identified by our DFC coalitions. I am particularly encouraged by the increase in youth participation through the development of youth coalitions. These groups of young people, who work together to plan and implement activities related to the mission of the full coalition, are having a positive impact. This approach exemplifies that coalitions can achieve greater involvement, education, and awareness by including youth voices in the process.

Additionally, we know that 86% of coalitions report there is an increased need to address issues related to opioids in their local community. At 58%, there's also an increase in the number of coalitions that cite vaping as a growing concern, up 11 percentage points over the previous year. To address these concerns, DFC coalitions are developing innovative local solutions to build capacity and address these challenges.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to our DFC coalitions for all their dedication and commitment to building a better and brighter future for our youth!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Carroll".

**James W. Carroll, Director**

The Office of National Drug Control Policy

## DFC FUNDING

**2,700+** GRANTS AWARDED

To nearly **1,900** communities, in all 50 States, Territories, and Tribal Communities since 1998.



Since 2005, **51%** of the U.S. population has lived in a community with a DFC coalition.

## FY 2018 DFC COMMUNITY REACH

In 2019...



**724\*** DFC COALITIONS

\*421 Years 1 thru 5 · 303 Years 6 thru 10



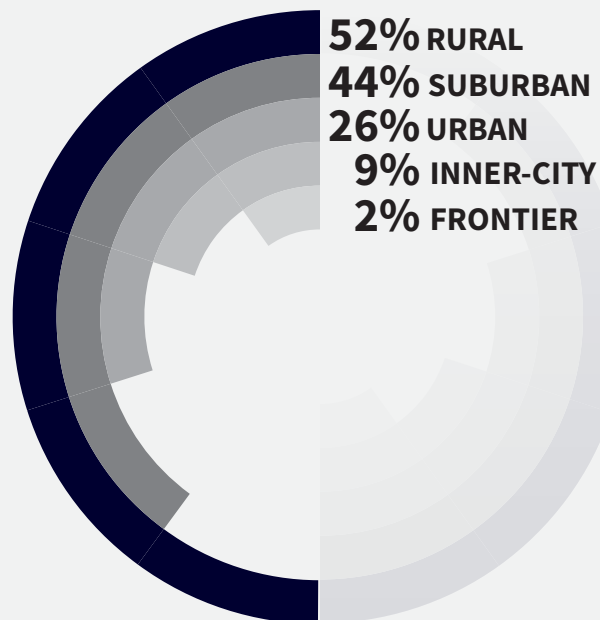
**2.4M**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS



**3.4M**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS

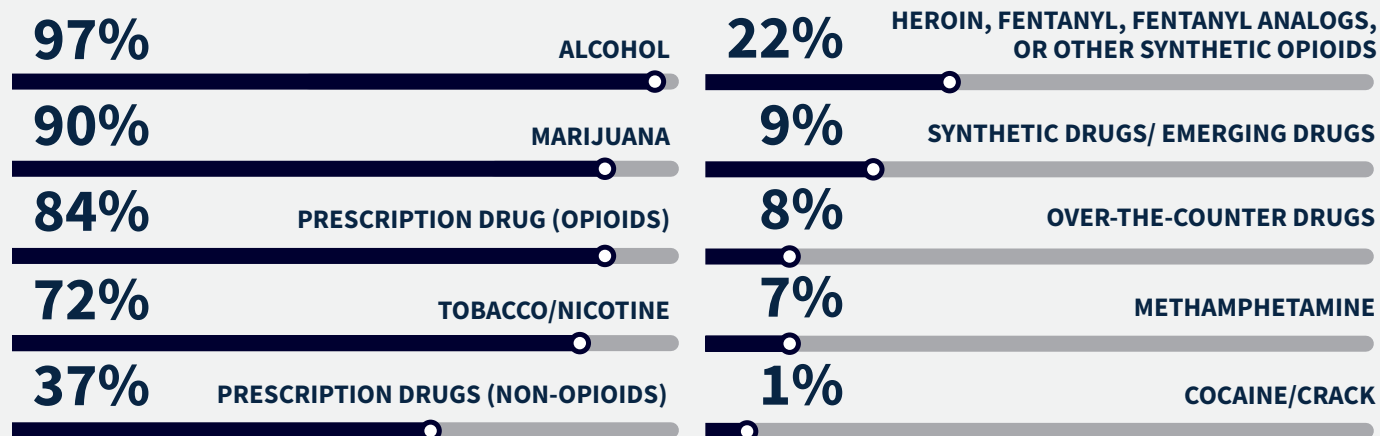
## COMMUNITY SERVED

DFC coalitions are asked to identify the type of geographic setting(s) they serve with their prevention efforts. Among the DFC coalitions reporting in February 2020, coalitions self-reported serving:



## TARGETED SUBSTANCES

DFC coalitions select up to five substances they target in their communities. The percent of coalitions who reported focusing on each of the following substances in 2019 are shown below:



## TOP 5 COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND RISK FACTORS

Protective factors are characteristics that decrease the likelihood of substance use and its associated harms. Conversely, risk factors are characteristics that may increase the likelihood of substance use and its associated harms, or increase the difficulty of mitigating these dangers. DFC coalitions are encouraged to identify local protective and risk factors existing within their communities to assess where to focus their prevention efforts.

### COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

(% OF DFC COALITIONS SELECTING FACTOR)

73%

PRO-SOCIAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

69%

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEER GROUP

65%

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

63%

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRO-SOCIAL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

61%

RECOGNITION/ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF EFFORTS

### COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

(% OF DFC COALITIONS SELECTING FACTOR)

89%

PERCEIVED ACCEPTABILITY (OR LACK OF DISAPPROVAL) OF SUBSTANCE USE

84%

AVAILABILITY OF SUBSTANCES THAT CAN BE MISUSED

77%

YOUTH HAVE FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUBSTANCE USE/MISUSE

69%

PARENTS LACK ABILITY/CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK TO THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

60%

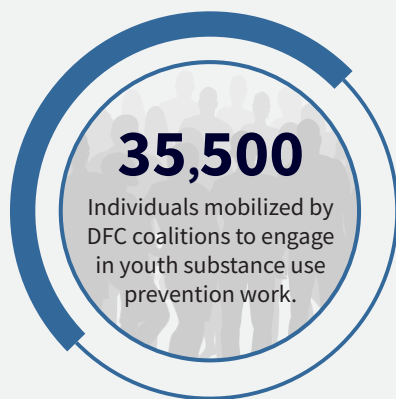
EARLY INITIATION OF THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR



DFC coalitions are building capacity and mobilizing the community to address youth substance use.

## SECTOR MEMBERSHIP/ENGAGEMENT

DFC coalitions were asked to indicate the involvement, on average, of active members from each sector in coalition activities. Involvement was rated on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating 'very low' involvement, 3 indicating 'medium' involvement, and 5 indicating 'very high' involvement.



## CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

DFC coalitions engaged in a range of activities to build their capacity to serve their communities. The top three activities were:



## SCHOOL SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

- DFC coalitions reported strong collaboration with School sector members, often partnering on data collection and substance use prevention topics, youth programming, and staff/teacher professional development in prevention topics.
- School districts served as a primary link between the DFC coalitions and parents.

*"[Our coalition] provides a 'tip of the month' that is disseminated by our superintendent throughout all of the school's parent newsletters – these tips are created by our project coordinator in conjunction with guidance from our leadership team."*

— Year 3 coalition

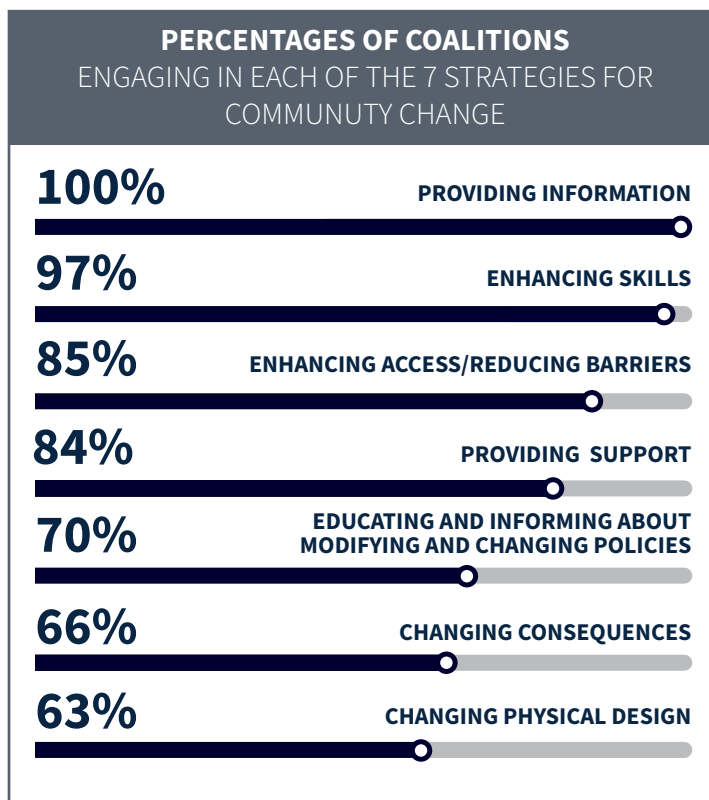


# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION



A majority of DFC coalitions engaged in a mix of strategies, with **MORE THAN HALF (62%)** implementing at least one activity from at least six or all seven strategies.

A primary purpose of collaboration across sectors that traditionally work independently is leveraging skills and resources in planning and implementing prevention strategies to develop local solutions to local problems. To assess what DFC coalitions are doing, 41 unique prevention activities have been identified and organized by the Seven Strategies for Community Change. Below are the percentages of DFC coalitions who reported engaging in at least one activity within each of the seven strategies.



*"The coalition highlights an adult or youth member every month in our e-Newsletter for their work in prevention. They are given questions to answer on the importance of prevention and tips they have for other adults and their peers."*

— Year 6 coalition

*"We held two very successful, city-wide events that connected thousands of people to resources and increased public awareness of prevention and recovery. We had performances by people in recovery, free food vendors, and many different tables and activities than we ever had in past years."*

— Year 5 coalition

*"The coalition met with local elected officials and the State Governor's office to educate them about the dangers of passing a proposed state law that intended to increase alcohol sales at restaurants and bars. The law was defeated on the floor of the state assembly."*

— Year 6 coalition

## MOST COMMON ACTIVITY BY PREVENTION STRATEGY

SOCIAL NETWORKING

YOUTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

REDUCING HOME AND SOCIAL ACCESS

ALTERNATIVE/DRUG FREE SOCIAL EVENTS

SCHOOL POLICIES: DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT

IDENTIFYING PHYSICAL DESIGN PROBLEMS



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

# CORE MEASURES FINDINGS

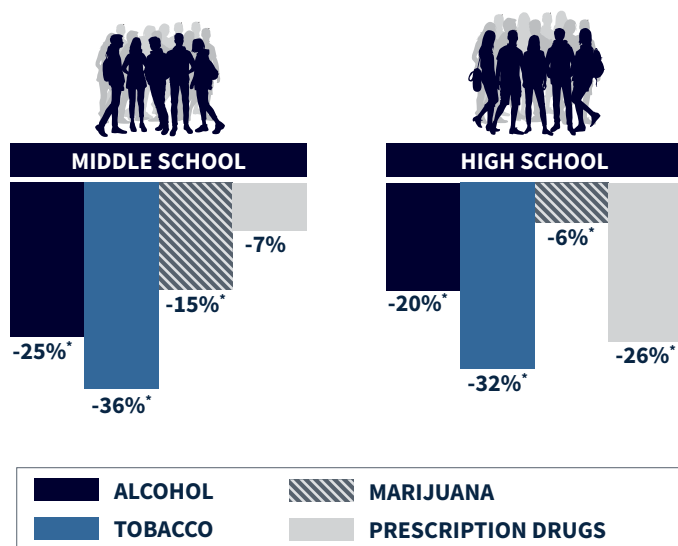
DFC coalitions are required to collect and submit new core measures data every two years. Data are collected through surveys of youth with questions on past 30-day use, perception of risk, perception of peer disapproval, and perception of parental disapproval for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and the misuse of prescription drugs. Through this data collection, DFC coalitions are able to measure trends among youth in their communities.

## PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PAST 30-DAY USE



DFC coalitions reported that substance use/misuse **DECLINED** for youth living in DFC-funded communities.

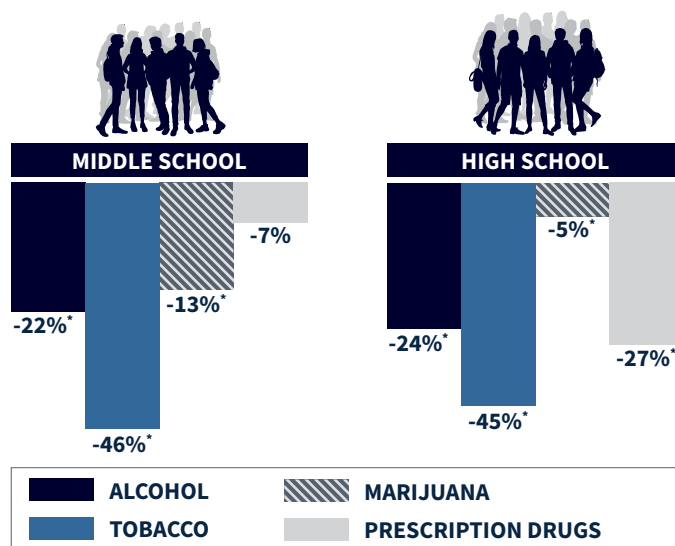
### ALL DFC GRANT RECIPIENTS SINCE INCEPTION



\*  $p < .05$

\*Note: Less than 3% of middle school youth report misuse of prescription drugs (no change over time).

### FY 2018 DFC GRANT RECIPIENTS



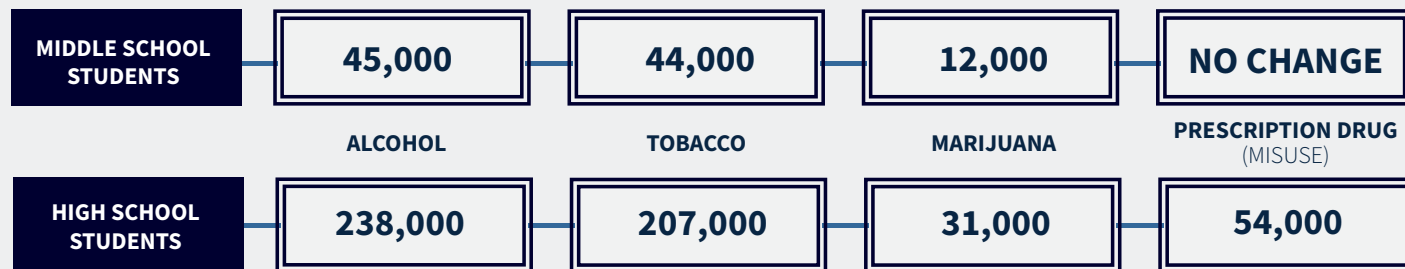
\*  $p < .05$

## IMPACT



Coalitions significantly **INCREASED** the number of youth **CHOOSING NOT TO USE SUBSTANCES**.

The significant changes associated with having a FY 2018 DFC coalition in the community translated to thousands of additional youth making the choice **NOT** to use a given substance.





# CORE MEASURE FINDINGS BY SUBSTANCE

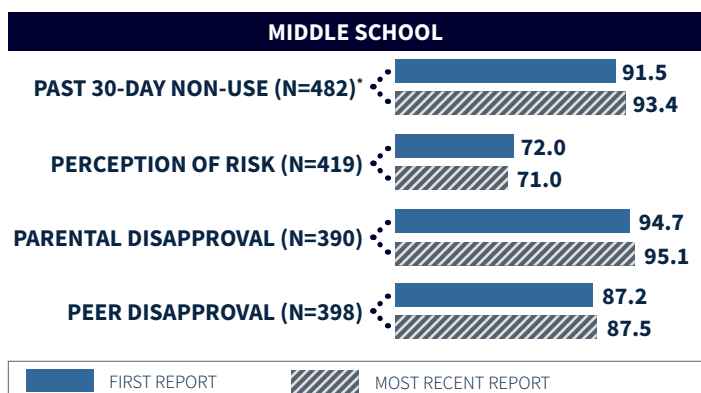
Core Measures data are analyzed for change over time from the first report to the most recent report. Results from the FY 2018 cohort of DFC coalitions are highlighted here. More detailed findings, including results on analyses with all DFC since grant inception, can be found in the full evaluation report.

## ALCOHOL CORE MEASURES

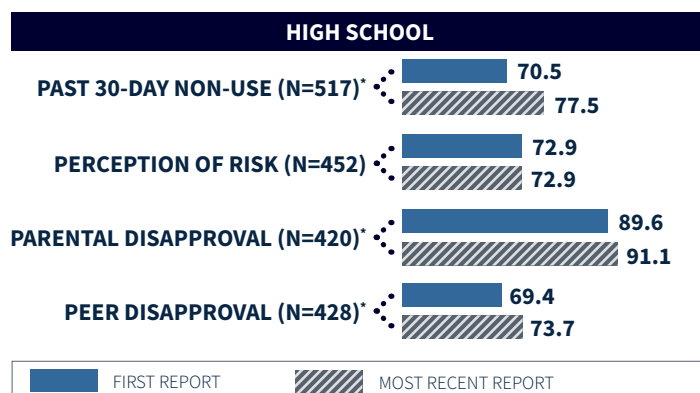
### KEY FINDINGS:

- Past 30-day non-use increased significantly among middle school and high school youth.
- There were significant increases in perceptions of parental disapproval and peer disapproval among high school youth.
- Perception of peer disapproval was higher for middle school youth than for high school youth.

### ALCOHOL: CHANGE OVER TIME



\*  $p < .05$



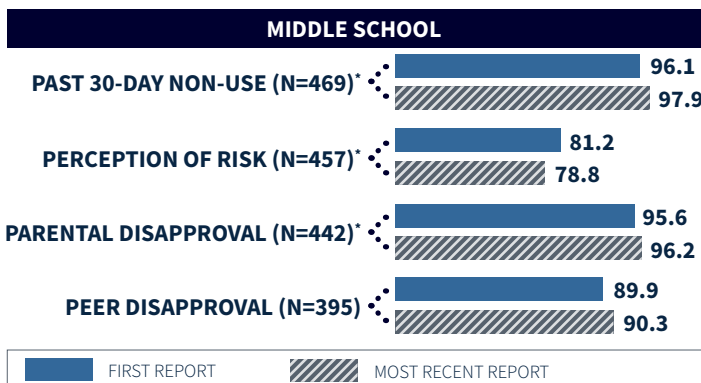
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## TOBACCO CORE MEASURES

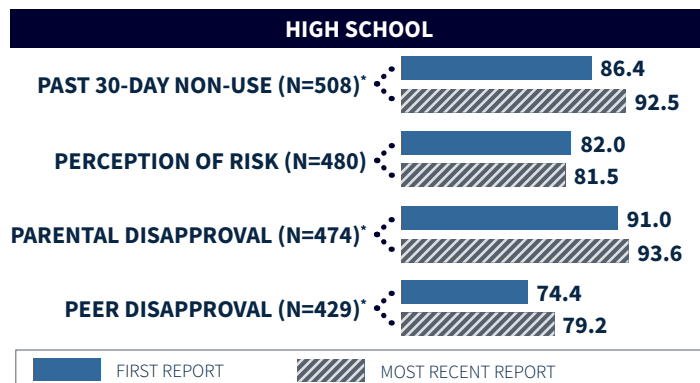
### KEY FINDINGS:

- Past 30-day non-use increased significantly among middle school and high school youth.
- Perception of risk was high among both middle school and high school youth, but decreased significantly among middle school youth.
- Parental disapproval increased significantly for middle school and high school youth. Peer disapproval increased significantly among high school youth.
- For both middle school and high school youth, perception of parental disapproval was higher than perception of peer disapproval.

### TOBACCO: CHANGE OVER TIME



\*  $p < .05$



\*  $p < .05$



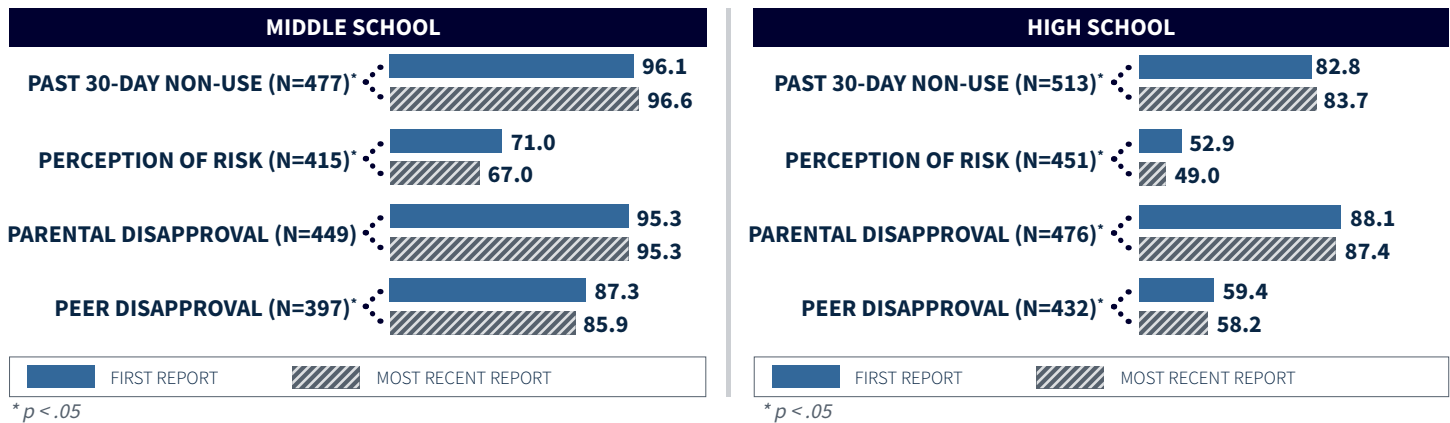
# CORE MEASURE FINDINGS BY SUBSTANCE

## MARIJUANA CORE MEASURES

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Past 30-day non-use increased significantly among middle school and high school youth.
- Perception of risk, perception of peer disapproval, and perception of parental disapproval were all high among middle school youth, but decreased significantly for both perception of risk and perception of peer disapproval.
- Perception of parental disapproval was higher than both perception of risk and perception of peer disapproval among high school youth. There were significant decreases in all three measures among high school youth.

### MARIJUANA: CHANGE OVER TIME

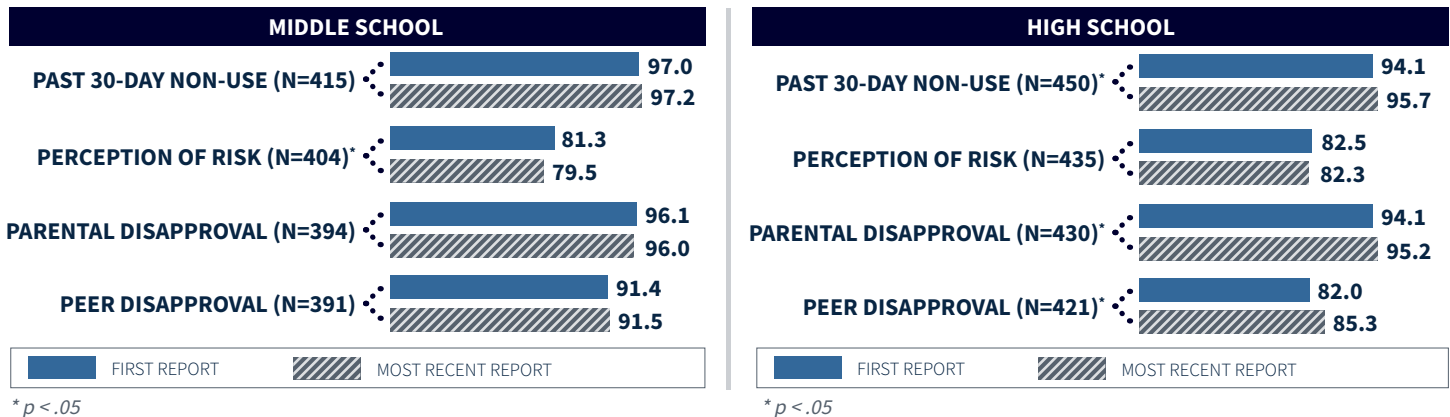


## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (MISUSE) CORE MEASURES

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Past 30-day non-misuse was quite high for both age groups, and further increased significantly for high school youth.
- Perceptions of risk, peer disapproval, and parent disapproval were high in both age groups.
- Perception of peer and parental disapproval both increased significantly among high school youth.
- While high, perception of risk decreased significantly among middle school youth. Perception of peer and parental disapproval remained unchanged among middle school youth.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (MISUSE): CHANGE OVER TIME

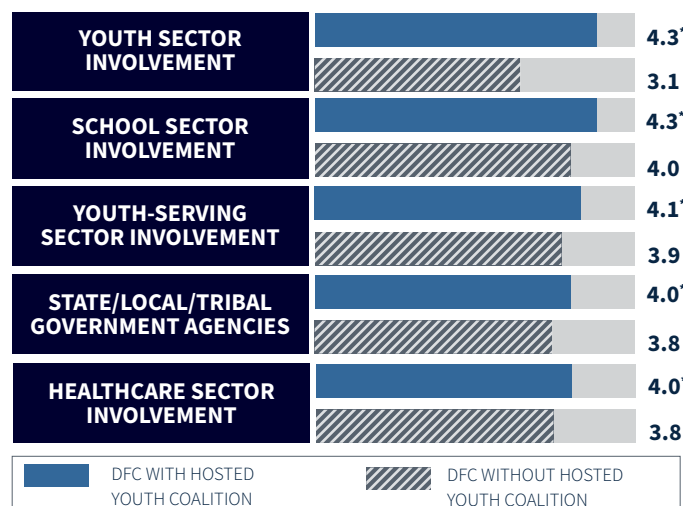
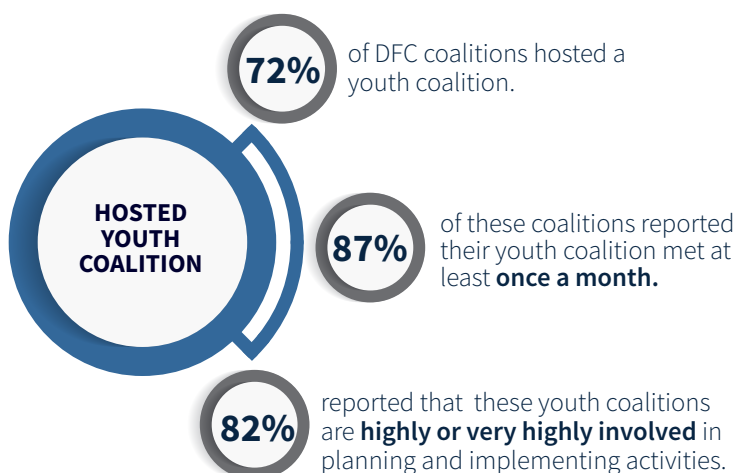


# PROMISING PRACTICES: HOSTING A YOUTH COALITION

DFC coalitions are a strong example of working with youth to provide opportunities for positive youth contributions and development, rather than solely doing things *for* or *to* youth in their communities. A youth coalition is a group of youth who work together to plan and implement activities related to the mission of the full coalition. Youth coalitions generally meet independently with youth serving in key leadership roles, while an adult coalition member is present as a mentor or leader.



Most DFC coalitions (72%) hosted a youth coalition which was associated with having **HIGHER INVOLVEMENT** in the Youth, School, Youth-Serving, Healthcare, and State/ Local/Tribal Government sectors.



\*  $p < .05$



DFC coalitions hosting a Youth Coalition were **MORE LIKELY** than those not hosting to engage in certain activities, across a broad range of Implementation Strategies.

Below are the percentage point differences between DFC coalitions hosting a Youth Coalition, versus DFC coalitions not hosting a Youth Coalition, who reported engaging in certain activities. DFC coalitions hosting a Youth Coalition were more likely to engage in:

- +20 Alternative/Drug-Free Social Events:** Drug-free parties, other alternative events supported by the coalition
- +19 Youth Education and Training Programs:** Sessions focusing on providing information and skills to youth
- +15 Parent Education and Training Programs:** Sessions directed to parents on drug awareness, prevention strategies, parenting skills, etc.
- +12 Recognition Programs:** Businesses receiving recognition for compliance with local ordinances (e.g., passing compliance checks)
- +12 Strengthening Enforcement:** (e.g., DUI checkpoints, shoulder tap, open container laws)
- +11 Community Member Education and Training Programs:** Sessions on drug awareness, cultural competence, etc., directed to community members (e.g., supporting DUI, law enforcement, landlords)



*"We have tremendously increased our youth involvement in the schools and the community. We have trained our youth to prepare them for presentations and peer to peer youth education in the schools. We place a heavy focus on the at-risk population of youth in the community through the local after school program. There we were able to educate elementary, middle, and high school students on the effects of substance use"*

— Year 4 coalition

## PROMISING PRACTICES: HOSTING A YOUTH COALITION

# PROMISING PRACTICES: PREVENTING YOUTH VAPING

DFC coalitions reported using a wide variety of strategies and activities to address youth e-cigarette use. The most commonly utilized strategies were **Educating and Informing about Modifying and Changing Policies** (including school policies), **Providing Information**, and **Enhancing Skills**. Numerous coalitions also mentioned utilizing local data, building capacity, and working closely with youth to strengthen their vaping response.



**OVER 58%** of DFC coalitions mentioned addressing vaping in their progress report. This is an increase of 11 percentage points over the previous year.

*“The Youth Action Team engaged teens in a ‘No Vape November’ observational data collection activity wherein youth collected photos and screenshots to demonstrate the prevalence of advertising and promotion of vaping products to youth. Over 300 images were collected and are currently being used by the youth team to create a “Don’t Let History Repeat Itself” campaign, demonstrating how young people are being targeted by the e-cig/vaping industry in ways that mirror the tobacco industry in the 20th century.”*

— Year 4 coalition



## COMMON APPROACHES INCLUDE:

### EDUCATING AND INFORMING ABOUT MODIFYING AND CHANGING POLICIES

- DFC coalitions educated about school policies related to tobacco free campuses, restorative justice for substance-related offences, and vaping cessation programs.
- DFC coalition members educated and informed about local and state laws such as tobacco free parks, tobacco outlet density and location restrictions, tobacco retail licenses, and bans of specific products and/or devices.



### DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

- DFC coalitions reported that local data helped them rethink their coalition's priorities and redirect resources to address the rise in vaping.
- Data also helped coalition members determine specific problem areas to target (such as ease of vaping in schools, ease of access to cartridges, and lack of parental disapproval for vaping).



### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Youth developed products such as PSAs, letters to the editor, print media and social media advertisements.
- Youth served as educators and taught peers, near-peers, and school staff about the dangers of e-cigarettes.
- Youth frequently played a key role in **Educating and Informing about Modifying and Changing Policy**.





# PROMISING PRACTICES: ADDRESSING OPIOID USE



DFC coalitions are **LEADING THE WAY** in helping communities to address opioids.

DFC coalitions are encouraged to focus on building capacity to identify local problems and address them with local solutions. One way to understand the extent to which DFC coalitions are meeting this goal is to examine how they address new substance challenges that arise in their communities. During recent years, many DFC coalitions reported needing to address the increase in issues related to opioids in their local community.

## OPIOIDS ARE A TOP CONCERN:

**86%** of DFC coalitions targeted heroin, prescription opioid drugs, or both (named as a top 5 targeted substance).



## INCREASING COLLABORATION

- DFC coalitions have strategically grown membership and planned activities to increase collaboration with less-represented sectors, including the Religious/Fraternal sector.
- DFC coalitions reported working on partnerships with physicians, addiction counselors, real estate agents, and funeral home directors to address opioids. These efforts included understanding the importance of proper disposal of prescription drugs.
- DFC coalitions provided opportunities such as trainings, summits, public service announcements, and door knocker campaigns to educate their communities about the opioid crisis and strategies for prevention and treatment.

## COMMON STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

### EDUCATING AND TRAINING THE COMMUNITY

- Many DFC coalitions have hosted and collaborated on events to educate their community about the opioid crisis and strategies for prevention and treatment.
- DFC coalitions also implemented skill-building trainings on related topics such as naloxone use.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK AND DISPOSAL PROGRAMS

- DFC coalitions provided information regarding the steps they have taken to encourage safe prescription drug disposal practices.
- DFC coalitions also reported hosting and participating in prescription drug take-back events on multiple days and at multiple locations.



*“We hold an opioid conference for families, local officials, and prevention professionals that provides folks with evidence-based strategies that are already bearing successful results: drop boxes, take back days, disposal bags, prescriber education, and policy changes at schools and in the workplace.”*

— Year 9 coalition

