

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS)

Overview

Washington State has been administering the school-based Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) biennially since 2002. The survey measures health behaviors and risk/protective factors that contribute to the health and safety of adolescents in Washington State. Approximately 215,000 students from all 39 counties participated in the 2023 HYS. The survey is available to school at no cost, schools are responsible for producing information materials for parents and staff time.

The Washington State Health Care Authority's (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) uses the survey data for almost every aspect of the statewide Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI), including:

- Risk assessments and rankings to identify the highest risk communities in each county;
- Data for CPWI community-level assessments, planning, and tracking progress on outcomes in their strategic plans;
- Evaluating CPWI's progress in reducing substance use, mental health problems, problem gambling/gaming, and the risk factors that predict those problems.

DBHR also uses the survey data for:

- Reporting on Results Washington measures;
- Surveillance of cannabis use among adolescents for reporting related to Initiative 502 (RCW 69.50) which legalized the recreational use of cannabis for adults 21 and older;
- Assessing the co-occurrence of substance use and mental health problems to guide strategic planning;

- Understanding the impacts of health disparities on health behaviors and risk/protective factors.;
- Reporting requirements for federally funded, prevention-oriented projects;
- Guiding strategic planning of prevention and intervention programs.

Results are disseminated through www.AskHYS.net.

Eligibility requirements

The HYS is administered every two years to students in grades 6-12.

- From 2002 through 2018, the HYS was administered in even years; starting in 2021, following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is administered in odd years.
- Prior to 2014, it was administered only in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. In 2014, eligibility was extended to grades 7, 9, and 11 in small school districts, where the low number of students limits the quality of the data.
- Tribal schools and online/virtual schools are also eligible to participate, and private schools may participate upon request.

Authority and budget

Prior to Initiative 502, the survey was a voluntary collaboration of the agencies listed in the "Partners" section of this fact sheet. However, Initiative 502 (RCW 69.50.540) authorizes the use of \$300,000 from cannabis tax revenue to fund the survey per State Fiscal Year. It also requires HCA to collaborate with the listed partner agencies to manage the survey.

Partners

Administration of the survey is a collaborative effort among HCA's DBHR, the Department of Health (DOH); the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB); and the current contractor, Looking Glass Analytics, Inc.

Representatives of these organizations serve as members of the Healthy Youth Survey Planning Committee, which guides the survey development, implementation, and dissemination of findings.

2025 HYS

- The next HYS administration is planned for Fall 2025. This will be the second fully electronic survey administration, with no paper-and-pencil option available.
- As was done in 2023, schools that are unable to administer the survey in person (e.g., virtual, online, and other alternative learning experiences) will be allowed to administer the survey remotely in 2025 in a synchronous, classroom-like setting.

Changes and updates for 2025 include:

- Modernization of some language embedded in the risk and protective factor scales with input from experts at the University of Washington Social Development Research Group (e.g., shifting from “parents and guardians” to “caregivers”);
- An updated disability status question;
- Streamlining and modernizing a subset of substance use related questions;
- Adding questions on emerging priorities, such as problem gambling/gaming.

For more information

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<https://www.askhys.net>