

Local, State, and National Data Sources

LOCAL AND STATE SOURCES

HEALTH DATA

Many state and local agencies collect health data, including data on substance use (e.g., rates of prescription drug misuse and abuse), the consequences of use (e.g., hospital data on overdoses), and, in some cases, why people use alcohol and drugs (e.g., community health surveys that measure attitudes toward use).

Local, County, and State Health Departments

Health departments, especially those with state offices of vital statistics and divisions of maternal and child health, collect and/or store a range of data, including information on health conditions in the community and causes of disability and disease. Some health departments also conduct periodic health needs assessments.

Did You Know . . . Local health departments are often well-connected to health-related agencies across the community and are likely to know about recent and/or current data collection efforts.

Hospitals

Hospital records, including hospital admission and discharge records, emergency room and emergency medical services records, and trauma registries, can reveal patterns of alcohol- and drug-related illnesses and injuries, as well as other injury and violence patterns.

Did You Know... Hospital records can provide information on specific drugs that may be creating a problem for community youth.

Community-Based Coalitions and Agencies

Local chapters of organizations and groups such as the United Way and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) may have collected data in the past, either from existing sources or using new instruments.

Did You Know . . . These agencies can provide insight into how well past prevention efforts were received.

Treatment Providers

Agencies or clinics that provide treatment to people with alcohol or drug problems may be able to tell you which substance(s) are appearing most frequently, shifting trends, and which populations are seeking treatment.

Did You Know . . . Treatment providers are often one of the first people to know about emerging issues or changing drug patterns.

Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Companies

“Trip reports” or “run logs” are maintained by emergency medical services and ambulance companies every time they transport a patient. These may include information on whether the incident involved alcohol or drugs.

Did You Know . . . Ambulances are first on the scene, so ambulance companies have information on where substance-related events occur.

Medical Examiner or Coroner’s Office

Most states require a medical examiner or coroner’s report for each person whose death resulted from violence or injury. These reports often contain the results of tests administered to determine if the deceased used drugs or alcohol at the time of death.

Did You Know. . . All states have a medical examiner’s office. Some also have district or county offices.

STUDENT DATA

Student data related to substance use typically includes data that describe student behavior (e.g., rates of binge drinking), consequences of use (e.g., school suspensions), and factors that contribute to or protect against substance use (e.g., school drug and alcohol policies). These data are collected by a variety of sources.

Schools

Schools maintain records on discipline (e.g., detention, suspension, and expulsion), attendance/tardiness, grades, and use of special/supplemental services. You may be able to obtain individual disciplinary records coded by incident (e.g., substance use, violence). You should also be able to obtain aggregated attendance records or grades.

Did You Know. . . Remember that school records only capture incidents that take place on school property, during school hours.

School Districts and State Departments of Education

Many districts and states administer student health surveys that ask adolescents about risky and healthy behaviors, including substance use and other issues related to student health, such as stressors, suicide, violence and safety, sexual behavior, dietary behavior, and physical activity.

Did You Know . . . The drug and alcohol policies and practices of school districts and state departments of education may shed light on possible factors that are contributing to substance use and abuse.

CRIME AND ACCIDENT DATA

These data can help you understand the consequences of substance use, and also map the locations where substance use is occurring. Crime statistics can reveal both the number and types of substance-related crimes occurring in a community, as well as the police department's response to these crimes. Accident reports may shed light on numbers of drivers operating under the influence.

Local and State Law Enforcement Agencies

Information available from these agencies can include:

- Arrests for alcohol or drug possession
- Liquor law violations
- Arrests for the sale of drugs
- Drunk driving arrests

- Arrests for drunkenness
- Arrests for teen violence
- Rapes
- Personal and property crimes
- Homicides
- Vandalism
- Domestic violence
- Aggravated assaults
- Curfew violations
- Disorderly conduct

Did You Know . . . Since local law enforcement agencies are often required to provide arrests and convictions to their state, you can usually get this information directly from the state agency.

Department or Bureau of Motor Vehicles (DMV/BMV)

State DMV/BMV's keep records on all drivers who received a citation for operating or driving under the influence of alcohol.

Did You Know . . . For communities that border other states, try checking the neighboring state's DMV/BMV to find out about citations given to residents in your state.

Courts or Justice Department

In most states, the Administrative Office of the Courts publish court statistics annually that include convictions for various crimes. Such reports may contain information, disaggregated by district or county, on cases that involved drug-or alcohol-related crimes.

Did You Know . . . Local and state juvenile justice systems have data specific to youth crimes.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic data describe the composition of a community. You can use these data to determine whether your community has certain risk factors that tend to be associated with substance abuse, such as poverty, high crime rates, and fluctuations in population and where these risk factors are most prevalent.

Government Agencies

Town, county, and tribal administrative offices regularly collect demographic data that can include the age, gender, and ethnicity of community members. They may also have data on employment status, income level, and home ownership, all factors related to substance use.

Did You Know . . . You can sometimes access these data through at own's or county's website.

School Districts and State Departments of Education

Districts and state departments of education collect demographic data related to the school-aged population, including the percentage of students at a school participating in federal free- and reduced-price lunch programs (an indicator of how many students come from low-income families) and in English Language Learner programs.

Did You Know . . . The Department of Education may go by a different name in your state (e.g., the Office of Public Instruction).

LAWS AND POLICIES

A close look at existing laws, policies, and business practices can reveal alot about a community's readiness to address substance use and related issues.

Liquor Licensing Agencies

Local or state liquor licensing agencies have information on current alcohol laws and on the number and location of alcohol outlets in a community, as well as on the number and location of liquor licenses issued and revoked each year. Some states also have alcohol beverage control boards that might collect this information.

Did You Know... In some states, the licensing agency is an independent entity. In others, it may be housed in the office of public safety or be part of the substance abuse prevention division.

Local, County, and State Health Departments

Health departments can be a useful source of information on policies, ordinances, and procedures related to substance abuse.

Did You Know . . . Health departments may also know about current alcohol and drug-related prevention efforts in the community or the effectiveness of past efforts.

Government Agencies

Local government offices will have information on ordinances specific to the community, tribe, or jurisdiction. Information on specific state laws and statutes can often be found at the Office of the Secretary of State.

Did You Know . . . State and tribal libraries are also a good resource for information on laws, policies, and practices.

NATIONAL SOURCES

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

<https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>

This ongoing, state-based survey collects data among adults on the prevalence of chronic diseases and conditions, access to healthcare, and health-risk behaviors including heavy and binge drinking. BRFSS results are available at the national and state levels, and at select local levels (e.g., city results are available for larger municipalities and metro areas).

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

<https://www.bjs.gov>

This national system collects arrest data, including data on drug and alcohol crimes, by police jurisdiction, regionally, statewide, and nationally.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

<https://www.bia.gov>

The American Indian Population and Labor Force Report (within the Document Library) provides a variety of national demographic, social, economic and health data.

Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)

<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/97>

This public health surveillance system uses a national sample of patients to monitor drug-related hospital emergency departments visits and drug-related deaths investigated by medical examiners and coroners. As of 2013, DAWN is no longer collecting new data.

Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS)

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/research-data/fatality-analysis-reporting-system-fars>

Operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, this system collects information on deaths resulting from motor vehicle collisions, including data on several aspects of the crash, including the event, the vehicle(s) and driver(s), and each person involved.

FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr>

Available data include national crime estimates (including arrests for drug-and alcohol-related crimes), state crime estimates, and city and county crime counts (for cities with populations over 10,000 and counties with populations over 25,000). Data are provided by law enforcement agencies that voluntarily participate in the UCR Program.

Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/surveillance/gyts/en/>

The World Health Organization's GYTS is a school-based survey designed to enhance the capacity of countries to monitor tobacco use among youth and to guide the implementation and evaluation of tobacco prevention and control programs. It is

one of four surveys included in the Global Tobacco Surveillance System. GYTS includes data on the Pacific Jurisdictions.

Indian Health Service (IHS)

<https://www.ihs.gov/>

A part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HIS is responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The HIS Fact Sheets contain general overview information on the HIS and on specific health care topics concerning American Indians and Alaska Native people.

Monitoring the Future (MTF)

www.monitoringthefuture.org

This national survey looks at the behaviors, attitudes, and values of young people. It collects information on the incidence and prevalence of substance use, as well as other related issues, including perceived harm, disapproval of use, and perceived availability.

National Congress of American Indians

www.ncai.org

This is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal government and communities. Tribal data on education, health, and human services can be found in the Policy Issues section of the site.

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

<https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm>

This annual survey looks primarily at the incidence, prevalence, and risk factors of alcohol and drug use among different age groups. Regional and state data are also available.

STEPS Survey

<http://www.who.int/chp/countries/en/>

The World Health Organization's STEPS survey is a chronic disease risk factor surveillance system. It includes data on the Pacific Jurisdictions.

Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)

<http://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/webt/information.htm>

TEDS contains data on the demographic and substance abuse characteristics of admissions at many state treatment facilities.

Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set (UHDDS)

Developed by the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics, the UHDDS provides guidelines for collecting data from hospitals. While the state office managing the database varies by state, all databases are standardized according to the UHDDS guidelines and can be compared at the local, state and national levels. You may be able to request a summary of the data that your local hospital provides for the UHDDS and compare it to state and national rates; your local hospital can direct you to the correct state office.

U.S. Census

<https://www.census.gov>

The U.S. Census Bureau website provides demographic data for communities (by census tract), counties, regions, states, and nationwide. Data categories include age, gender, ethnicity, education, and income.

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

The YRBSS assesses teenagers' incidence and prevalence of substance use, as well as other health issues, including sexual activity, vehicle safety, weapons, violence, and suicide. This survey uses a national sample of students in grades 9–12. Some state and local data are also available.

From the Prevention Solutions@EDC online course: [Go Get It! Finding Existing Data to Inform Your Prevention Efforts.](#)