

Background

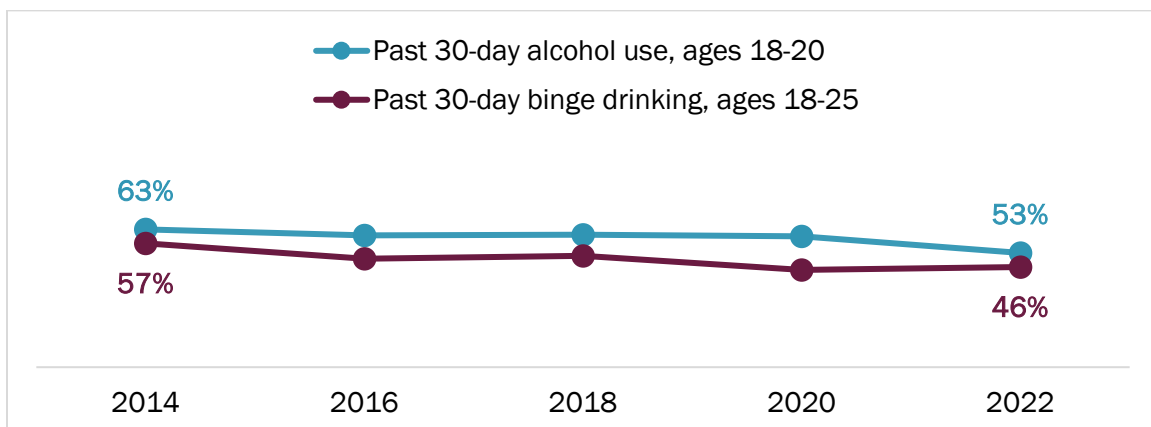
The 2022 Vermont Young Adult Survey (YAS) was conducted from March 7 through May 16 by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). This online survey was also conducted in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020, and focuses on substance use and perceptions related to substance use among Vermont residents aged 18 to 25. This brief report presents selected findings from the 2022 survey, along with selected comparisons to data from previous years. More details regarding the YAS methods, along with a detailed set of findings, are available through the link provided at the end of this document.

Key Findings

Alcohol Use

- The percent of young adults reporting any use of alcohol in the past 30 days dropped significantly, from 75% in 2020 to 70% percent in 2022.
- The percent of underage young adults (ages 18-20) reporting any use of alcohol also dropped significantly from 60% in 2020 to 53% percent in 2022, and has decreased significantly since 2014.
- There was no significant change in the percent of young adults reporting binge drinking in the past 30 days from 2020 (45%) to 2022 (46%), however binge drinking among young adults has decreased significantly since 2014.

Past 30-day alcohol use among 18-20 year olds and binge drinking among all young adults have decreased significantly ($p < .05$) from 2014-2022

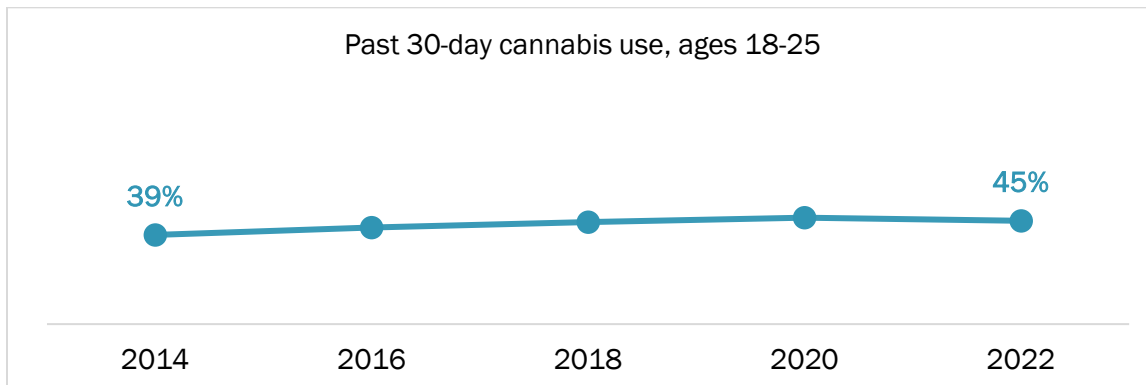


- Rates of both any alcohol use and binge drinking were significantly lower among underage persons (ages 18-20) than those aged 21 to 25.
- Full-time college students were more likely to report any alcohol use as well as binge drinking than other college age young adults.

Cannabis Use

- There was no significant change in the percent of young adults reporting past 30-day cannabis use from 2020 (46%) to 2022 (45%). Young adult cannabis use has increased significantly since 2014.

Past 30-day cannabis use has increased significantly ($p < .05$) from 2014-2022



- The percent of older respondents (21-25) reporting past-30 cannabis use (48%) was significantly higher than underage young adults (40%).
- In 2022 almost half (46%) of users reported using 20 or more days in the past 30 days. The same has been true each survey year. In 2022, significantly more cannabis users who are underage (ages 18-20) or not in college full time reported using 20 or more days than older respondents and full-time college students.
- A significantly higher percent of young adults who used cannabis in the past 30 days reported consuming it in food in 2022 (43%) compared to 2020 (35%). The most common method of consumption continues to be smoking (86%).
- 29% of young adults in 2022 reported that there is no risk from using cannabis regularly¹.

Tobacco Use and Electronic Vaping Products

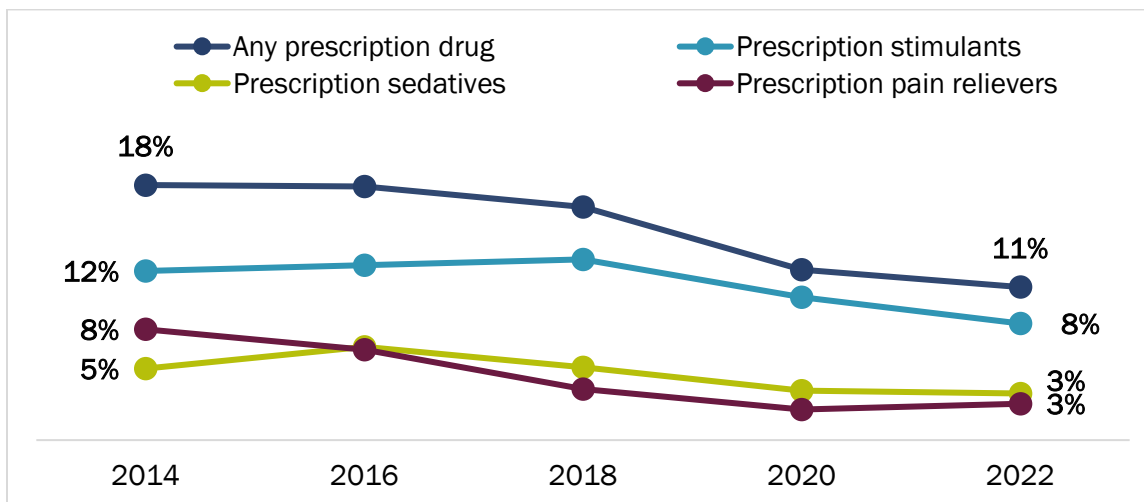
- Use of electronic vaping products containing nicotine within the past 30 days increased significantly from 20% percent in 2020 to 27% in 2022.
- Rates of all types of tobacco and electronic vaping products were significantly higher for males as compared to females.
- The percentage of young adults who perceive that it is easy or somewhat easy for underage persons to obtain cigarettes and electronic vaping devices decreased significantly from 2020 to 2022.

Prescription Drug Misuse

- There were no significant differences in the rates of past year misuse of any category of prescription drugs between 2020 and 2022, though the rates of misuse of all categories of prescription drugs are down significantly since 2014.

¹ The wording of this item changed in 2022 and cannot be compared to previous years.

Past year misuse of prescription drugs has decreased significantly ($p < .05$) from 2014-2022



- About a third of young adults (34%) in 2022 reported that it would be very or somewhat easy to get prescription stimulants without a prescription (2022 was the first year this has been asked).
- 18% of young adults in 2022 reported that it would be very or somewhat easy to get prescription pain relievers without a prescription, which is down significantly from 39% in 2014.

Other Drug Use

- Past year use of heroin increased significantly from 1% in 2020 to 2% in 2022.
- There were no significant changes in past year hallucinogen or cocaine use from 2020 to 2022.
- In 2022, rates of past year cocaine use for young adults ages 21-25 (9%) was significantly higher than for those ages 18-20 (5%).
- 26% of respondents indicated a lack of awareness of dangers from fentanyl being mixed with other drugs.

Emotional Distress

- There were no significant differences in the rates of emotional distress in 2022 as compared to 2020.
- Of those reporting any type of emotional distress, 66% reported that it was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes in substance use due to policy changes

- 71% of young adults reported that the ability to purchase cannabis in stores would not change their use of cannabis (whether or how much used). Of those who reported that their use would change, 65% said they would start to use or increase their use.
- 88% of young adults reported that changes to alcohol policy during COVID-19, such as restaurants and bars selling alcohol “to go” did not change their use of alcohol (whether or how much used). Of those who reported that their use would change, 57% said they started to use or increased their use.

For more information...

A full report of the survey findings can be found at healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/vermontyoungadultsurvey2022report.pdf

Questions regarding the survey or any of the data tables and reports based on the survey data should be directed to Amy Livingston at 802-490-5071, or alivingston@pire.org.

The 2022 Young Adult Survey was conducted for the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use Programs, by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). Funding was provided by the Partnerships for Success grant (also referred to in Vermont as Regional Prevention Partnerships, or RPP) from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The time and willingness of all respondents to participate in the survey is gratefully acknowledged.