



# CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD



ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

## VOLUME 4, ISSUE X

This issue reports the progress made on preventing youth alcohol and substance use between April 2021 - Month 2025

## CYCP GOAL

All Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically Safe and Healthy

## ALEXANDRIA SPOTLIGHT

This issue shines the spotlight on Alexandria's **Respect Campaign**, a series of short videos created by Alexandria City High School (ACHS) students. SAPCA and the Mayor's Campaign to End Bullying launched the Campaign in recognition of National Substance Use Prevention Month and National Bullying Prevention Month.

The videos feature students defining what respect means to them, sharing ways to show respect, and highlighting how substance use impacts their school and community. The Campaign invites social media followers to share these videos, along with their own definitions of respect and suggestions for how to show respect for ourselves, others, our schools, and our community.

This series was created in response to concerns about youth safety and substance use and complements several video series previously created by the ACHS TV and Media Production program, including, **"A Bully Free Alexandria: It Starts With Me and You,"** and three multi-media prevention campaigns encouraging youth to be substance free, which can be accessed on **SAPCA's YouTube channel**.

Watch all the videos in the series [here!](#)



## RESULT

All Alexandria youth choose to be alcohol-free

## WHY THIS MATTERS



As you'll see in the charts below, most of Alexandria's youth do not use drugs or alcohol, a trend that we have seen decline over the last decade. However, most adults who have a substance use disorder started using substances during their teen and young adult years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). A few of the key risk factors include: childhood trauma and adversity, genetics, favorable parental attitudes, poor parental monitoring, family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity, peers who use substances, lack of school connectedness, and mental health issues (CDC).

Underage drinking is dangerous. Alcohol use among youth is strongly correlated with violence, unwanted and risky sexual behavior, poor school performance, suicide, injury or death, fractured relationships, health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders, diminished overall health and well-

being, using other drugs, and other harmful behaviors (Hingson and Kenkel, 2004). Research also suggests that adolescent drinking can inflict permanent damage on the developing brain (Brown and Tapert, 2004).

Youth alcohol use is preventable. Parents, schools, and communities play pivotal roles in fostering environments that support healthy choices. Parents can lead by example, maintain open communication, set clear expectations, and educate their children about the risks associated with substance use. Schools can integrate comprehensive prevention programs that not only inform but also empower students to make responsible decisions. Community initiatives, such as after-school programs, mentorship opportunities, and public awareness campaigns, can create a network of support that reinforces the message that living substance-free is a shared value. Together, we can create a culture where young people feel empowered to choose health and well-being, knowing that their community stands behind them.

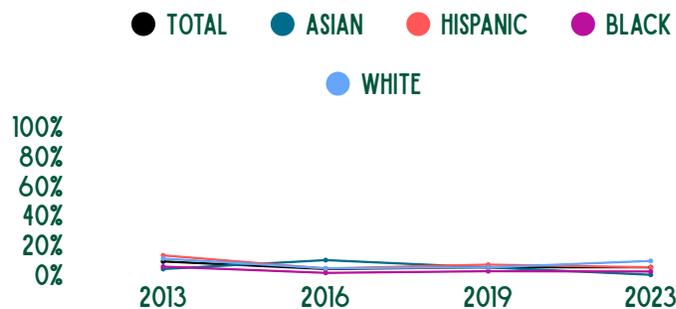
## HOW WE ARE DOING

### PAST 30-DAY CIGARETTE USE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

SOURCE: YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, 10 & 12 GRADERS, 2013-2023

**CURRENT TOTAL:**  
5%

**DISPARITY RATIO:**  
4.27

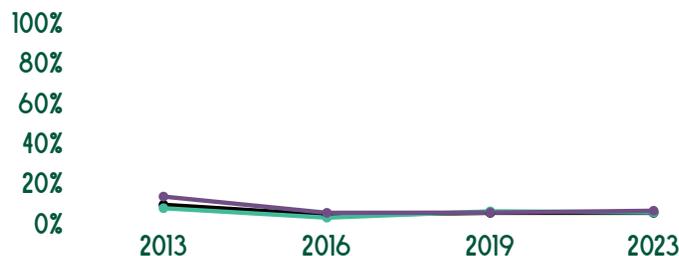


	2013	2023
TOTAL	9%	6%
ASIAN	4%	0%
HISPANIC	13%	5%
BLACK	6%	2%
WHITE	11%	9%

### PAST 30-DAY CIGARETTE USE BY GENDER

● TOTAL ● FEMALE ● MALE

**DISPARITY RATIO:**  
1.16



	2013	2023
TOTAL	9%	6%
FEMALE	7%	5%
MALE	13%	6%

**Trends:** In 2023, one in twenty youth reported recently using cigarettes, a decrease by 44% since 2013. When looking at the data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, however, large gaps exist. Compared to Black youth, White youth are 4.27 times more likely to smoke cigarettes. Male youth are 1.16 times more likely to report cigarette use than female youth.

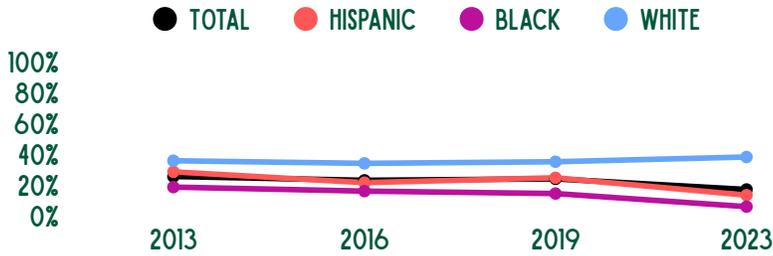
## HOW WE ARE DOING CONTINUED

### PAST 30-DAY ALCOHOL USE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

SOURCE: YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, 10 & 12 GRADERS, 2013-2023

**CURRENT TOTAL:**  
17%

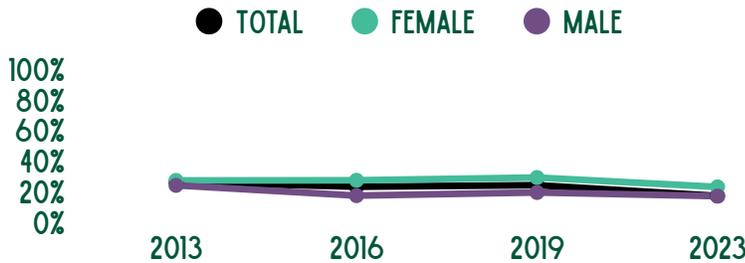
**DISPARITY RATIO:**  
6.24



	2013	2023
TOTAL	26%	21%
HISPANIC	29%	14%
BLACK	19%	6%
WHITE	36%	38%

### PAST 30-DAY ALCOHOL USE BY GENDER

**DISPARITY RATIO:**  
1.36



	2013	2023
TOTAL	26%	21%
FEMALE	27%	23%
MALE	24%	17%

**Trends:** In 2023, 17% of youth reported using alcohol in the past 30 days a decrease by 35% since 2013. Compared to Black youth, White youth are 6.24 times as likely to drink alcohol. The ratio has increased since 2013.

Female youth are, on average, 1.36 times more likely to report alcohol use than male youth. The disparity ratio between genders has widened for alcohol use.

## STRATEGIES

1. Enhance connections to and bonding with adults, peers and organizations in the community
2. Provide youth with information about substance use and raise awareness about the impacts of substance use
3. Modify access to alcohol
4. Provide healthy alternative to use

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Progress with preventing substance use among youth:

2 Strategies      5 Action Steps      100% are in progress

## CHAMPION



## PARTNERS

SAPCA has 30 members from various sectors including government, business, faith-based, law enforcement, health, media, and nonprofit. You can find a list of them [here](#).

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



### PROVIDE YOUTH WITH INFORMATION ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT ITS IMPACTS

#### Youth-Led Prevention and Public Awareness

- Launched **four multi-media prevention campaigns** in collaboration with the Alexandria City High School TV and Media Production Program, including the Respect campaign and three campaigns featuring youth promoting the benefits of living alcohol and drug-free lifestyles:
  - "I don't drink because..."
  - "I don't vape because..."
  - "I don't use marijuana because..."
- Engaged over 2,800 students in an annual prevention campaign with poster contests, a City proclamation, and virtual community circles to unite the community against substance use. The winning poster contest designs are also displayed at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.
- Co-hosted three Youth Speak Up events with ACAP and CYFCC. During these events, high school students discuss issues they are facing and youth and adults discuss solutions to address these issues.

#### Education and Outreach in Schools

- Delivered in-school presentations on the health, legal, and social consequences of alcohol use to a total of 7,768 students.

#### Culturally Responsive and Community-Informed Strategies

- Collaborated with Latino-serving organizations to better understand family attitudes about youth alcohol use and co-develop a targeted prevention campaign for the Latino community.
- Created and shared "Top 10 Things Youth and Adults Should Know about Marijuana Legalization in Virginia" in response to the legalization of marijuana use for adults to highlight the health and legal consequences of marijuana use.
- In collaboration with the Opioid Work Group, created and shared "Think you know about fentanyl? Think again" messaging materials to highlight the dangers of fentanyl and counterfeit (fake) pills.

#### ACPS reporting, SY2023-24

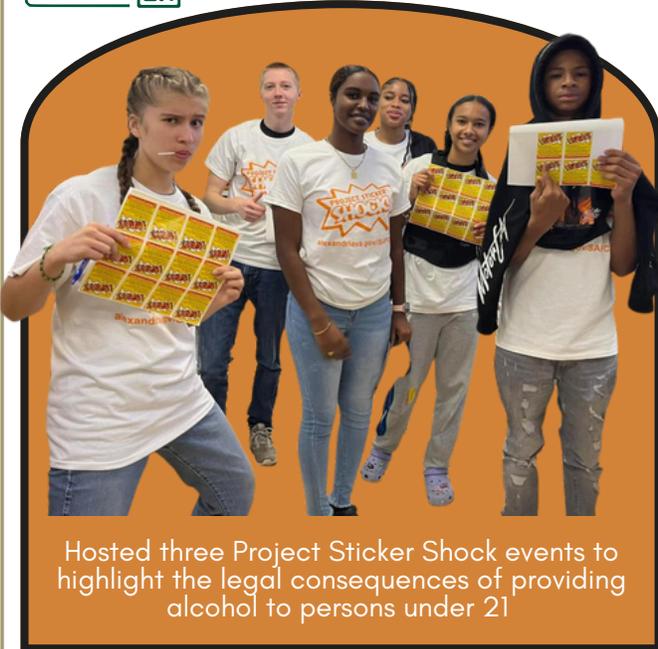
- Implemented "You're Speaking My Language," ACPS' culturally responsive, division-wide substance abuse prevention campaign, designed to engage families and partners across Alexandria's multicultural communities.



## WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



### MODIFY ACCESS TO DRUGS & ALCOHOL



Hosted three Project Sticker Shock events to highlight the legal consequences of providing alcohol to persons under 21



Hosted two Take Down Tobacco Day events to promote the COUNTER ACT campaign. This statewide campaign supports merchants to comply with all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to tobacco sales to minors

The Alexandria Police Department conducted three alcohol compliance checks. All retailers that pass compliance checks received a congratulatory letter and are featured in local newspaper ads.



### PROVIDE HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO USE

Co-hosted a total of eight positive alternative activities for Alexandria youth, including:

- Three teen nights, two pool nights, one youth soccer tournament and two teen appreciation events



## HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?

27,091  
YOUTH  
ENGAGED



1,025 DRUG  
DISPOSAL KITS  
DISTRIBUTED

3,651 MEDICATION  
LOCKBOXES  
DISTRIBUTED



3,603 PARENT  
HANDBOOKS  
DISTRIBUTED



9,459 LBS. OF  
MEDICATION COLLECTED  
FOR SAFE DISPOSAL



2,906 VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



## HOW WELL HAVE WE DONE IT?

AMONG THE STUDENTS WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN IN-SCHOOL  
PRESENTATIONS BETWEEN 2021-2025:

On average, **84%** strongly agreed  
or agreed with the statement:



“ I LEARNED AT LEAST  
ONE THING THAT WAS  
NEW TODAY ”

On average,  
**81%** strongly  
agreed or agreed  
with the statement:



“ THIS PRESENTATION  
PROVIDED INFORMATION  
AND IDEAS THAT ARE  
HELPFUL TO ME ”

## IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

### AMONG THE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN IN-SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS BETWEEN 2021-2025:

On average,  
**94%**  
strongly agreed or agreed  
with the statement:

“ IT IS UNSAFE TO DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANY DRUG, INCLUDING ALCOHOL, CANNABIS, AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION ”

On average,  
**86%**  
strongly agreed or agreed  
with the statement:

“ IF ASKED TO TRY DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, I WOULD BE COMFORTABLE SAYING 'NO' IN AN ASSERTIVE MANNER. ”

On average,  
**79%**  
strongly agreed or agreed  
with the statement:

“ WAITING UNTIL I AM OF LEGAL AGE TO TRY OR USE ALCOHOL IS IMPORTANT TO ME AND MY HEALTH ”



On average,  
**82% OF RETAILERS**  
participating in alcohol  
compliance checks passed.



## RESOURCES

- **Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria's** website
- **Youth Alcohol Use Prevention Campaign:** Watch this video series created by Alexandria City High School students that encourage youth to be alcohol free
- **Help Spread the Word - 2022 Young Adult Survey:** This statewide survey, open to Virginia residents ages 18-25, collects input about young adults' experiences and opinions on mental health and substance use. Results will inform local efforts to meet the needs of Alexandria's young adults
- **Tips for Communicating with Teens | Consejos para comunicarse con su adolescente**
- **Alexandria Youth Speak Up Event:** A recap of the lessons learned and the summary of the December 2021 Youth Speak Up event
- **Wellness Resource Guide:** Information about coping with stress in a healthy way
- **Family Dinner Toolkit:** A toolkit about how parents and kids can make family meals count
- **Family Conversation Starters:** Talk About It Cards support families to get to know each other better by sharing experiences, feelings, and beliefs