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Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Releases 2016 Arizona Youth Survey Results

***Responses of Over 57,000 8th, 10th and 12th grade Students Across State Reveal
Levels of Violence and Drug Use Among Arizona Youth***

Phoenix, AZ, Tuesday, December 20, 2016 – Today, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) released the results of a statewide survey that included more than 57,000 8th, 10th and 12th grade students from all 15 counties across Arizona. The AYS is the primary vehicle used in Arizona to collect data and provide one of the most in depth and comprehensive looks at youth risks and behaviors in Arizona.

“The 2016 AYS is a key data set for policymakers to review year-over-year and trending results of efforts to help Arizona youth make the most of their high school years,” said Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “While 8th grade data points appear to be trending in a positive direction, we still have work to do to maintain positive decisions among Arizona youth as grade cohorts progress through 10th and 12th grades.”

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), in collaboration with Arizona State University’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy and NORC at the University of Chicago, conducted the *2016 Arizona Youth Survey* to assess health risk behavior and measure the prevalence of substance abuse—including alcohol, tobacco and other dangerous drugs—behavior among Arizona 8th, 10th and 12th graders. The survey also includes questions concerning other risky behavior such as bullying, violence and gambling.

“One of the primary goals of policing is to prevent crime and disorder,” said Chandler Police Chief Sean Duggan. “The Arizona Youth Survey Report helps us achieve that goal by providing critical information we can use to identify, predict and mitigate risk factors facing our youth.”

Data Highlights from the 2016 Arizona Youth Survey:

School Safety

In the 12 months prior to completing the survey:

- Nearly 40 percent of students reported seeing bullying on school property at least once.
- 42.2 percent of 8th graders reported being bullied, followed by 31 percent of 10th graders and 22.7 percent of 12th graders.
- Among 12th grade youth, the rates of witnessing bullying dropped 30 percent.

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- Most students feel safe at school (about 80 percent) and have multiple pro-social friends, however more than half report negative experiences at home with family.
- Among respondents, younger female youth felt unsafe more than younger male youth.

Youth Drug Use

Overall, there was a statewide decrease in alcohol and cigarette use among respondents. Youth who reported drug or alcohol use listed the sources from which they received alcohol, marijuana or Rx drugs. Friends were the biggest source for both marijuana and Rx drugs. Youth, across all grades, appear to most often obtain alcohol at parties. Other common sources include home, and giving someone money to purchase it for them.

30-Day and Lifetime Alcohol use

- In 2016, 22.4 percent of youth drank alcohol in the past 30 days compared to 24.1 percent in 2014.
- 30-day use is more prevalent among 12th graders, but overall alcohol use decreased across grades.

30-Day and Lifetime Marijuana use

- After alcohol, marijuana was the next highest reported substance used across all grades.
- 30-day marijuana use has increased slightly since 2014 (14.2 percent in 2016, compared to 13.6 percent in 2014).
- 19.7 percent of 12th graders reported driving while using marijuana in the past 30 days.

30-Day and Lifetime Cigarette and E-Cigarettes use

- E-Cigarettes were the second most tried substance in a youth's lifetime.
- While 29.0 percent of students have drunk alcohol in their lifetime, 22.4 percent have smoked an E-Cigarette. This percentage is greater than the 14.7 percent who have tried traditional cigarette smoking or the 14.3 percent who smoked marijuana.
- 22.4 percent of 8th graders, 30.6 percent of 10th graders and 36.8 percent of 12th graders reported using E-cigarettes in their lifetime.

30-Day and Lifetime Rx drug use

- After alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco, Rx drugs are the most used substance by youth.
- 30 day Rx drug use was reported to be at its lowest level for each grade in the past 10 years.

Gang Involvement

- Gang involvement is among the highest risk factors, if not the highest, for students in all grade levels.
- 19.5 percent of 8th graders, 17.0 percent of 10th graders, and 13.1 percent of 12th graders reported thinking it would be cool to belong to a gang.
- Friendship appeared to be the primary reason for 8th grade youth joining a gang (24.2 percent), with making money holding the top position for 10th and 12th graders (20.9 percent and 25.4 percent, respectively).

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“The Arizona Youth Survey is an invaluable tool for those of us who work in the field of prevention,” stated Yavapai County Attorney Shelia Polk. “It helps us identify factors that put our youth at their most vulnerable and assists in designing programs to help every child succeed. I am delighted to see the steady progress we have made across the state in declining youth use rates of alcohol. It concerns me that we haven’t seen a similar decline in kids using marijuana. It is disturbing that more than half of our high school seniors think there is no harm in trying marijuana.”

Survey results indicate that a continuum of prevention should be in place that begins at a young age and continues through the high school years. “The Arizona Youth Survey provides critical insight for Arizona government, non-profits and coalitions to more effectively address high risk adolescent behaviors across Arizona,” stated Debbie Moak, Director of the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family.

The *2016 Arizona Youth Survey* was administered in each of Arizona’s 15 counties representing a total sample of 57,170 valid survey respondents statewide. State and county profile reports are available on ACJC’s webpage.

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Created in 1982, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. The ACJC serves as a resource and service organization for Arizona’s criminal justice community on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs and victim assistance to criminal history, and crime laboratory enhancements.