

The Drug Free Communities (DFC) Program At a Glance

- The DFC program has been a central, bipartisan component of our nation's demand reduction strategy since its passage in 1998 because it recognizes that the drug issue must be dealt with in every home town in America.
- Housed in the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), it provides the funding necessary for communities to identify and respond to local drug and alcohol use problems.
- The DFC program recognizes that in order to be sustainable over time it must have community buy-in. In order to be eligible to apply for a DFC grant, a local coalition must:
 - be in existence for 6 months prior to applying;
 - have community-wide data for planning, implementation and evaluation;
 - target the entire community with effective strategies; and
 - have community wide involvement to reduce youth drug, alcohol and tobacco use, which must include:
 - Youth
 - Parents
 - Businesses
 - Media
 - Schools
 - Youth-serving organizations
 - Religious or fraternal organizations
 - Law Enforcement
 - Civic and volunteer groups
 - Health care professionals
 - State, local or tribal agencies
 - Other organizations involved in reducing substance misuse
- The DFC program is a worthy investment of scarce federal resources:
 - Tiny investments of federal funds – \$125,000 per year per grantee for up to 10 years – provide maximum return on investment.
 - DFC grantees have reduced drug use and misuse in communities throughout the country to levels lower than national averages because they are organized, data driven and take a comprehensive, multi-sector approach to solving and addressing drug issues.
 - DFC coalitions are singularly situated to deal with drug trends, such as methamphetamine, opioids, fentanyl, and other synthetic drugs because they have the necessary infrastructure in place to effectively address all drug related issues within their communities.

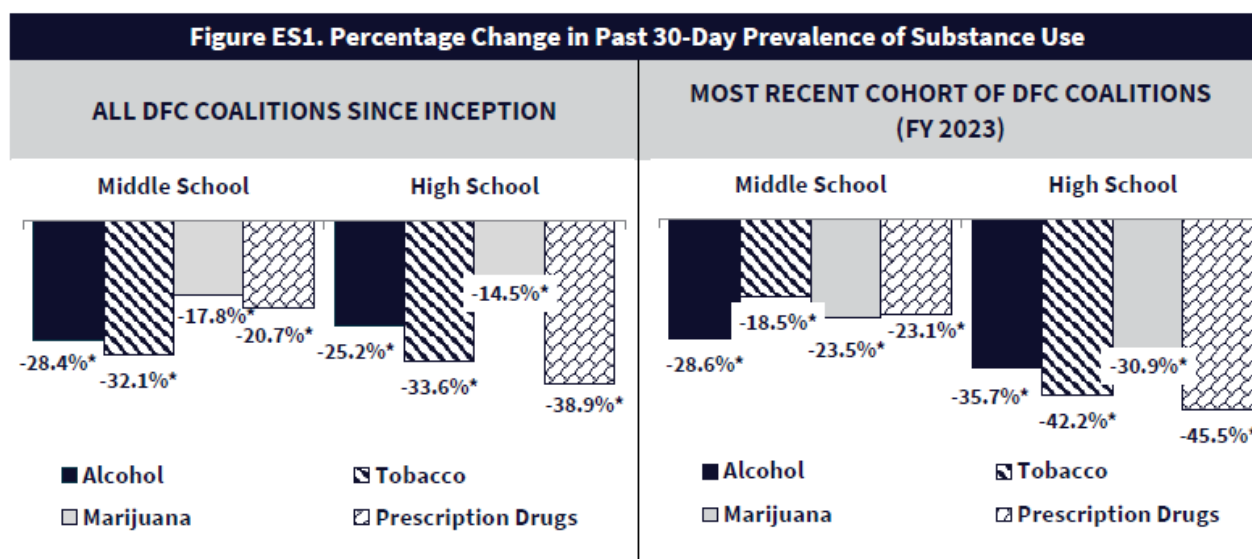
National Evaluation of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program

The DFC grant program takes a comprehensive, multi-sector and data driven approach to prevent and reduce youth substance use in communities throughout the United States. ONDCP recently released the latest findings for its National Evaluation of the DFC Program.

The Findings From the October 2024 Report:

Rates of Substance Use are Dropping in DFC Communities:

- Prevalence of past 30-day use declined significantly across all substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana) and school levels (middle and high school) between DFC coalition s' first and most recent data reports.



Source: DFC 2002–2024 core measures data. Only coalitions who have at least two core measures reports included with change evaluated based on the difference between first report and most recent report for each coalition.

Note: * indicates $p < .05$

- Given the polydrug epidemic plaguing our nation, there is a great need for more community capacity to effectively prevent substance use before it starts. Very little emphasis has been placed on prevention to address stopping the pathway to addiction, overdose, and deaths, despite both its effectiveness and cost effectiveness. DFC grantees are capable of producing major reductions in youth substance use rates in underserved communities that desperately need this community coalition infrastructure to comprehensively address their local substance use crises, with a very minimal investment of scarce federal resources.
- The most recent update of the national, independent evaluation of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) program (September 2025), conducted by ICF International, proves the program is effective. From first report to most recent report for the FY 2023 grant recipients, rates of substance use for all grantees have declined significantly in DFC communities: among high school students, past 30-day use rates for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs have declined by 35.7%, 42.2%, 30.9%, and 45.5% respectively.