

ALCOHOL

Prevalence , Consequences, and Perceptions and Social Norms

Introduction

The Nebraska State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) facilitated the 2025 Nebraska Epidemiological Profile through SAMHSA discretionary funds awarded through the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) grant. The profile provides an overview of substance use and misuse and associated consequences, as well as an overview of mental health conditions in Nebraska.

The 2025 profile is a four-part document consisting of summarized findings on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and illicit drugs, and mental health conditions. Each part of the profile can be used independently or together as a whole. Data is presented on the prevalence of substance use and misuse behaviors and mental health conditions, consequences of substance misuse, and perceptions of substance use and misuse.

The data presented in the profile were sourced from either publicly available datasets or Nebraska DHHS-wide data systems. This includes data from state, regional, and national surveys. Given the nature of the data, limitations to be considered include different timeframes for data due to varying data collection periods and data may not always be representative of the actual population of the state or nation depending on reporting requirements. Each page of the profile includes the data sources and years used to obtain the presented data. More information on data sources can be found in the sources page at the end of each profile.

Several conventions were used to present and analyze the data across multiple sources. Pending data availability, indicators are presented for three age groups: adolescents (12-17 years or grades 9-12, depending on the data source), young adults (18-25 years or 19-25 years, depending on the data source), and adults (18 years and above or 26 years and above, depending on the data source).

Data for Nebraska, the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), and the U.S., as well as between demographic groups within Nebraska were compared for statistically significant differences using group margins of error where possible. Statistically significant differences indicate that the difference between groups is likely real and not due to random chance, while margins of error show how much that difference could vary among individuals in the compared groups. If the margins of error for compared groups have little overlap, the groups can be considered truly different.



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This profile is intended to encourage discussion and inspire future actions to improve the health and wellness of Nebraskans.

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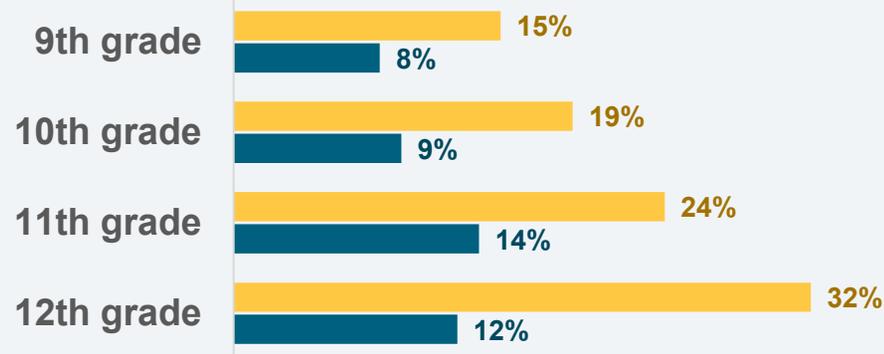
Prevalence

High School Students

Half as many high school students in Nebraska reported having at least **one alcoholic drink in the past month** as high school students across the U.S. in 2023.

11%
in Nebraska
22%
in the U.S.

In 2023, **students across the U.S.** were significantly more likely to **drink alcohol** with each grade level. This difference was not present for **Nebraska students.**



Significantly fewer high school students **in Nebraska** reported **trying alcohol before turning 13** compared to peers **in the United States** in 2023.



About half of Nebraska teens obtained their alcohol by **someone giving it to them** in 2023.

51%
in Nebraska
42%
in the U.S.

Female students were more likely to report they obtained their alcohol by someone giving it to them than **male students** in 2023.

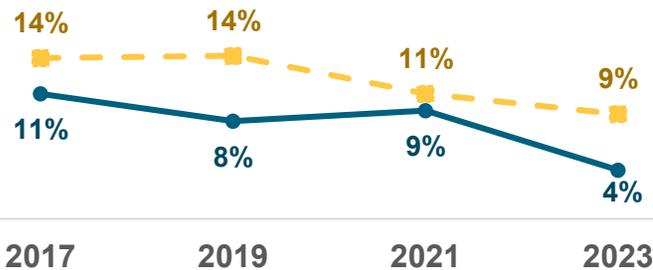
62% Female **40%** Male

The CDC defines binge drinking as having five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women on one occasion.



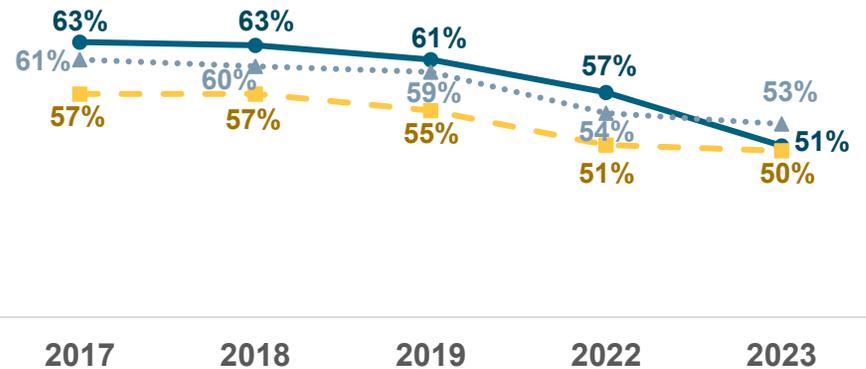
Binge drinking rates have significantly declined from 2017 to 2023 in **Nebraska** and across the **U.S.**

In 2023, half as many high school students in Nebraska reported current **binge drinking** than their peers across the U.S., which was significantly lower.



Young Adults

Current alcohol use among young adults significantly decreased in **Nebraska, the Midwest, and the U.S.** from 2017 to 2023.



The number of young adults who **binge drink** in **Nebraska, the Midwest and across the U.S.** significantly decreased from 2017 to 2023.



NOTE: Current alcohol use is defined as having at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days.

SOURCES: CDC 2024, NSDUH 2017-2023, YRBS 2017-2023

Adults

Current alcohol use among adults significantly decreased in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and **the U.S.** from 2017 to 2023.



Significantly **more adults in Nebraska drank alcohol** in 2023 as compared to adults in the United States. 

In 2023, one in four adults in Nebraska reported **binge drinking**, which was the 8th highest estimate among U.S. states. 

| NE | MW | U.S. |
|-----|-----|------|
| 25% | 25% | 23% |

6% of adults in Nebraska reported **heavy drinking** in 2023 (the same as their peers across the U.S.).

NOTES: Current alcohol use is defined as having at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days. The CDC defines heavy drinking as having 15 or more drinks in a week for men and having 8 or more drinks in a week for women.

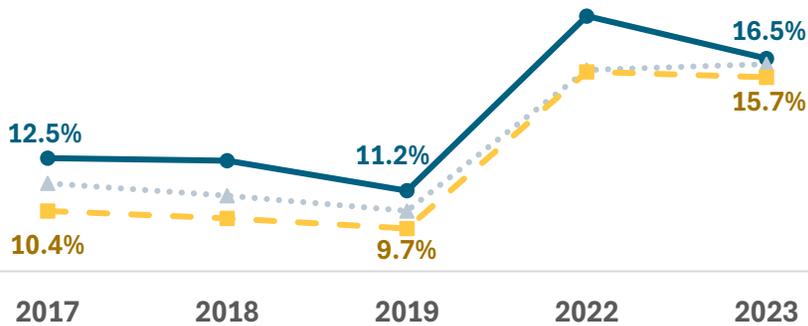
SOURCES: BRFSS 2023, NSDUH 2017-2023

Consequences

Alcohol Use Disorder

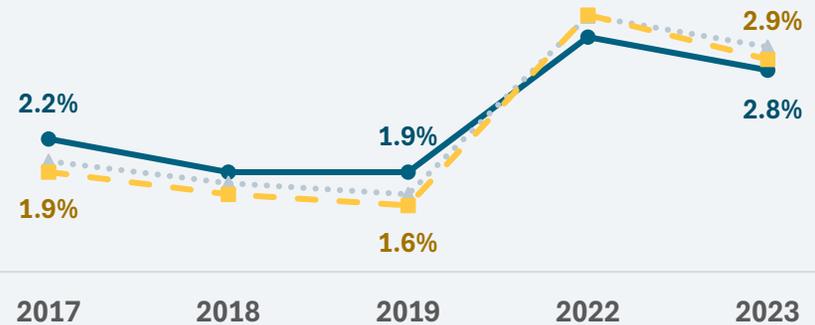
is a chronic relapsing brain disorder characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences.

While the number of **adolescents** who reported having an alcohol use disorder increased from 2017 to 2023 in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **U.S.**, these increases were statistically significant only for adolescents in the Midwest and the U.S.



 **Significantly more adults in Nebraska, the Midwest, and the U.S. reported having an alcohol use disorder in 2023 compared to 2017.**

Across all age groups, **Nebraska residents** reported alcohol use disorders at similar levels to their peers in the **Midwest** and the **United States** in 2023.



The number of **young adults** who reported having an alcohol use disorder in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **U.S.** increased overall from 2017 to 2023. However, these increases were statistically significant only for those in the Midwest and the U.S.



Alcohol-Attributable Deaths

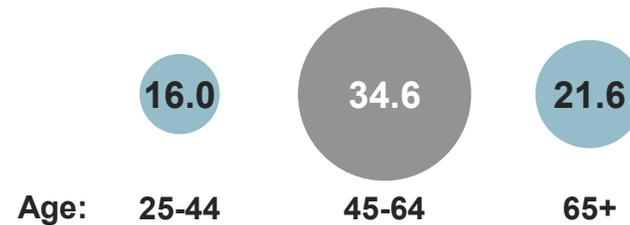
Alcohol-attributable deaths refer to deaths caused by alcohol use.

The age-adjusted rate of **alcohol-attributable deaths** in **Nebraska** continues to be significantly higher than **national** rates. 

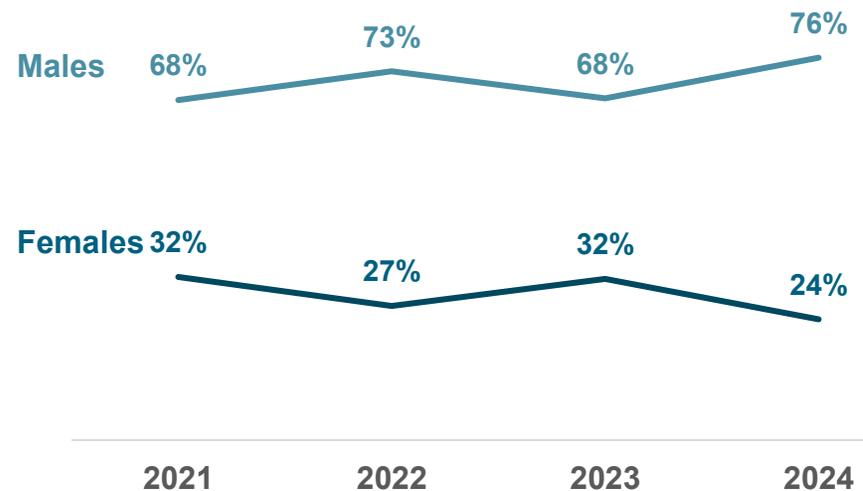


In 2020, **Nebraska** and **national** rates significantly increased, but have remained relatively stable since then.

From 2023 to 2024, the highest prevalence of alcohol-attributable deaths (per 100,000 people) in Nebraska was among those aged **45 to 64 years**.



The proportion of alcohol-related deaths for **males** has increased since 2021.

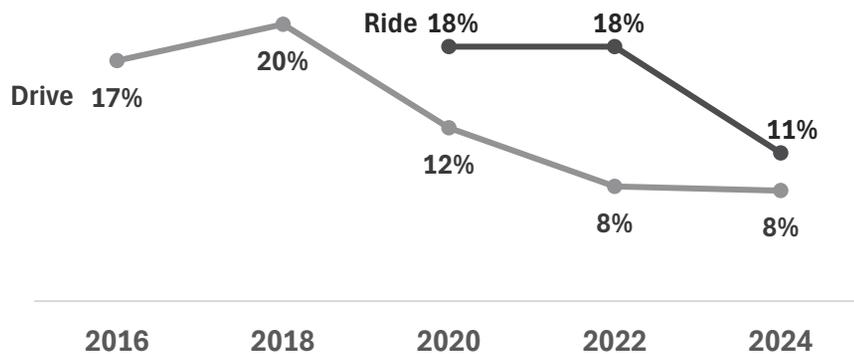


NOTE: Age-adjusted rates were calculated per 100,000 population.

SOURCE: CDC WONDER 2018-2024

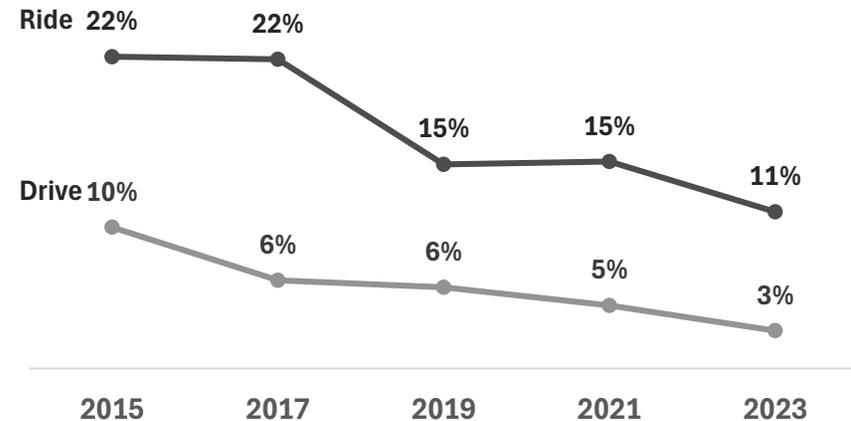
Alcohol-Impaired Driving

The number of **young adults** in Nebraska who reported **alcohol-impaired driving in the past year** has significantly decreased since 2018.



In 2024, **11% of Nebraska young adults** reported riding in a vehicle driven by someone who was under the influence of alcohol.

The number of **high school students** in Nebraska who reported **alcohol-impaired driving and riding in a vehicle driven by someone who was under the influence of alcohol** has significantly declined since 2015.



NOTE: Riding in a vehicle driven by someone who was under the influence of alcohol was asked starting with the 2020 NYAOS/NYARBS administration.

SOURCES: NYAOS/NYARBS 2016-2024, YRBS 2015-2023

Alcohol-Related Fatal Vehicular Crashes

Of the 227 fatal vehicular crashes that occurred in **Nebraska** in 2023, 31% involved an alcohol-impaired driver. This was similar to the **national** rate of 30%.

Among the persons in **fatal crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver** in 2023 in **Nebraska**, the two age groups that were most likely to be involved were those aged **16-20** and **25-34 years**.



Among the persons involved in fatal crashes in **Nebraska** during 2023, most were **male (86%)**.



NOTE: A driver is considered to be alcohol impaired when their blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.08% or higher.

SOURCE: FARS 2013-2023

Arrests for Alcohol-Related Crimes

The number of arrests for alcohol-related crimes **decreased from 2016 to 2022** and **increased from 2022 to 2024**.

This was most apparent in the arrests of **adults** (people who were 18 and older), but the same was true for arrests involving **youth** (people who were younger than 18).



27% of people arrested for alcohol-related crimes were **female** in 2024.



73% of people arrested for alcohol-related crimes were **male** in 2024.

NOTE: Alcohol-related crimes comprised DUIs, drunkenness, and liquor law violations.

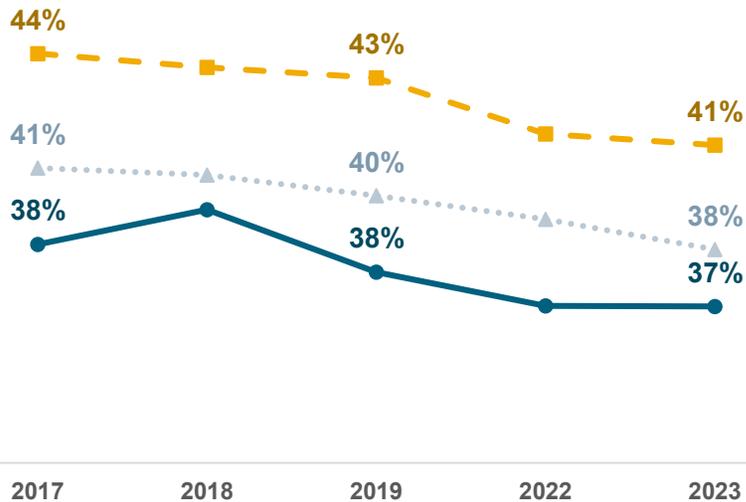
SOURCE: Nebraska Crime Commission 2016-2024

Perceptions & Social Norms

Adolescents



In 2023, **37%** of **adolescents** in **Nebraska** perceived great risk of harm from **binge drinking** once or twice a week, which was similar to adolescents in the **Midwest** but significantly lower than **adolescents across the U.S.**

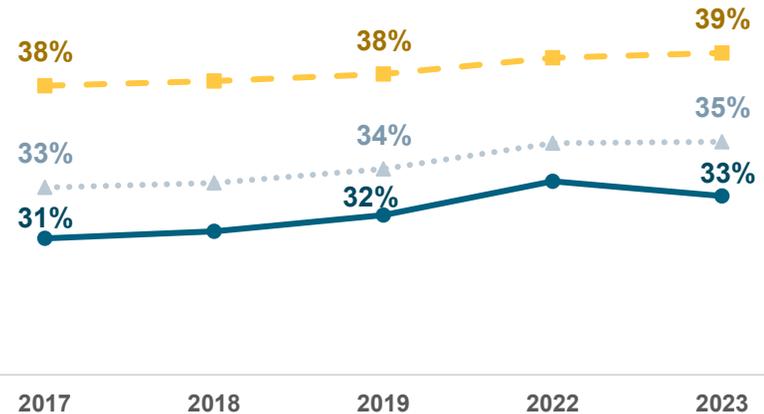


Overall, adolescents' **perception of great risk of harm** from binge drinking has not changed significantly over time.

Young Adults

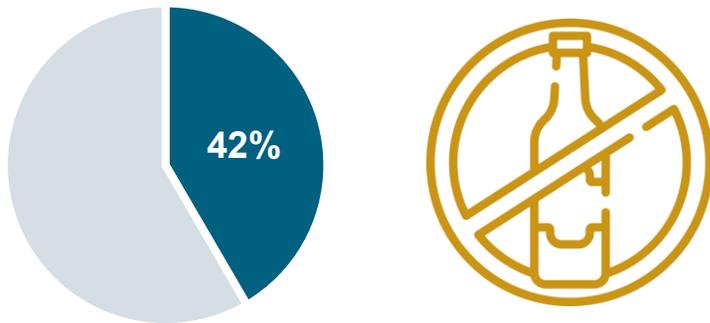


In 2023, **33%** of **young adults** in **Nebraska** perceived great risk of harm from **binge drinking** once or twice a week, which was similar to peers in the **Midwest** but significantly lower than **peers across the U.S.**



Overall, young adults' **perception of great risk of harm** from binge drinking has remained consistent over time.

In 2024, **42%** of young adults in Nebraska reported it was wrong or very wrong for **individuals 18-20 years of age to have one or two drinks of alcohol.**



In 2024, **76%** of young adults in Nebraska reported it was wrong or very wrong for **individuals 21 years and older to provide alcohol for people under 21 years.**



Adults

In 2023, **89%** of adults in Nebraska reported they thought it was wrong or very wrong for **individuals 21 years and older to provide alcohol for people under 21 years.** This is a slight decrease since 2021 which was **92%**.



In 2023, more adults in Nebraska thought it was wrong or very wrong for **individuals under the age of 18 to have one or two drinks compared to individuals aged 18-20.**

74%
Under age 18
50%
18-20 years

Adults in Nebraska and the Midwest were significantly less likely to perceive great risk of harm from **binge drinking** once or twice a week compared to adults across the United States in 2023.



| NE | MW | U.S. |
|-----|-----|------|
| 40% | 41% | 46% |



In 2023, **54%** of adults in Nebraska reported they thought it was wrong or very wrong for **individuals aged 21 and older to binge drink.**

In 2023, **74%** of parents in Nebraska reported they had **talked about alcohol with their children who were under the age of 21.**



In 2023, **10%** of parents in Nebraska indicated they had **provided alcohol to their children who were under the age of 21.**



Sources

| Data Set | Data Source | Years | Age Range |
|---|--|----------------------|---|
| Arrests by Arrest Offense and Arrestee Age | Nebraska Crime Commission (NCC) | 2014-2024 | All ages |
| Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2015-2023 | 18 years and above |
| CDC WONDER: Multiple Cause of Death | National Center for Health Statistics | 2014-2024 | All ages |
| Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration | 2013-2023 | All ages |
| National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | 2017-2019, 2022-2023 | 12 years and above |
| Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) | University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research | 2014-2023 | 19 years and above |
| Nebraska Young Adult Alcohol Opinion Survey (NYAAOS)/Nebraska Young Adult Risk Behavior Survey (NYARBS) | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health | 2016-2024 | 19-25 years |
| Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2011-2023 | 9 th -12 th grade |

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NOTE: NSDUH estimates were not available for 2020-2021 due to the impact of the Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on survey methodology.

TOBACCO

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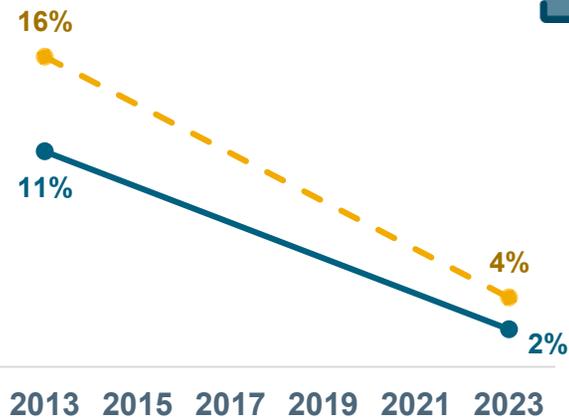
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Prevalence

Youth Cigarette Use

Current cigarette use among **Nebraska** high school students declined significantly from 2013 to 2023, similar to the **national** trend.

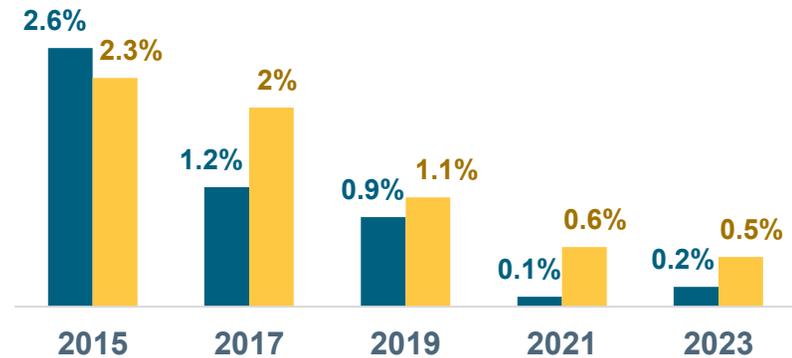


In 2023, **4%** of **Nebraska** high school students reported trying cigarettes **before age 13**, similar to the **5%** who reported this **nationally**.

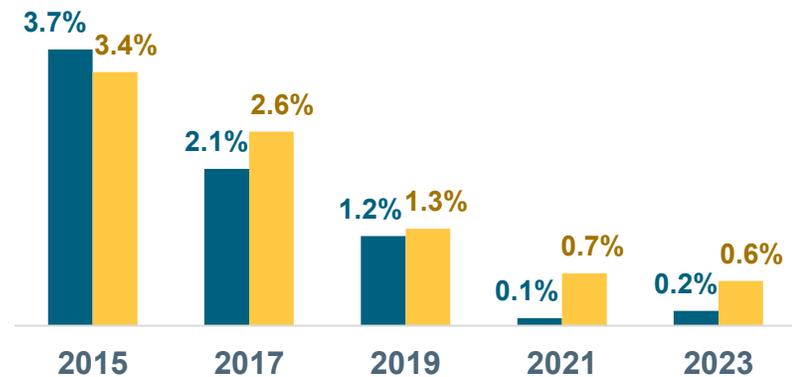


At the **state** and **national** levels, significantly fewer high school students smoked cigarettes **frequently** (at least 20 out of the last 30 days) or **daily** since 2015.

Daily use



Frequent use



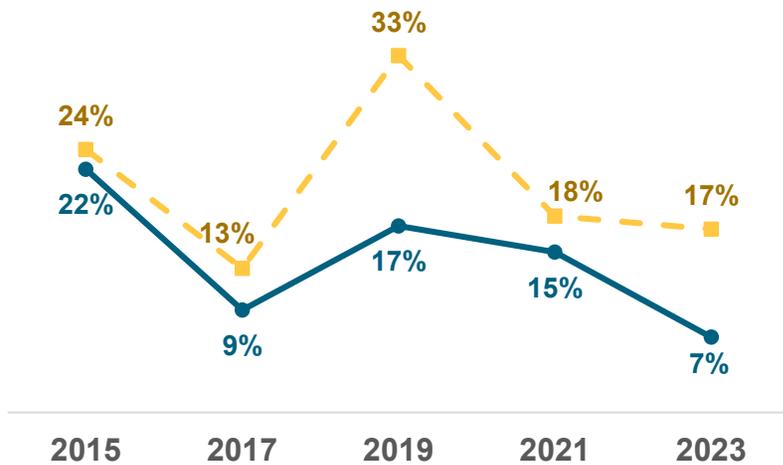
NOTE: Current cigarette use is defined as having smoked on at least one day during the past 30 days.

SOURCE: YRBS 2013-2023

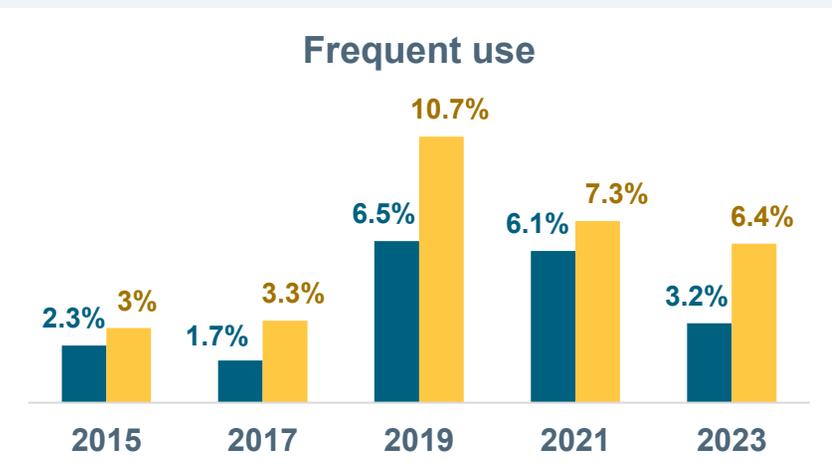
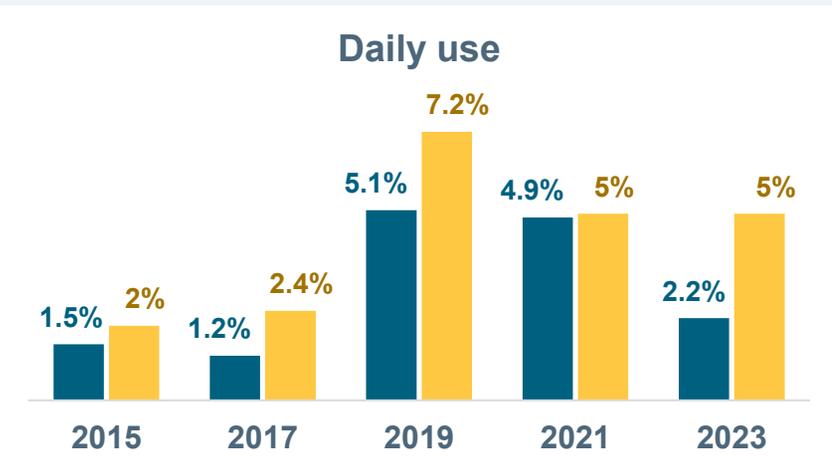
Youth Electronic Vapor Product Use

Current electronic vapor product use among **Nebraska** high school students was significantly lower than the **national** percentage in 2023.

Overall, electronic vapor product use has significantly decreased on a state and national level since 2015, despite a sharp increase in 2019.



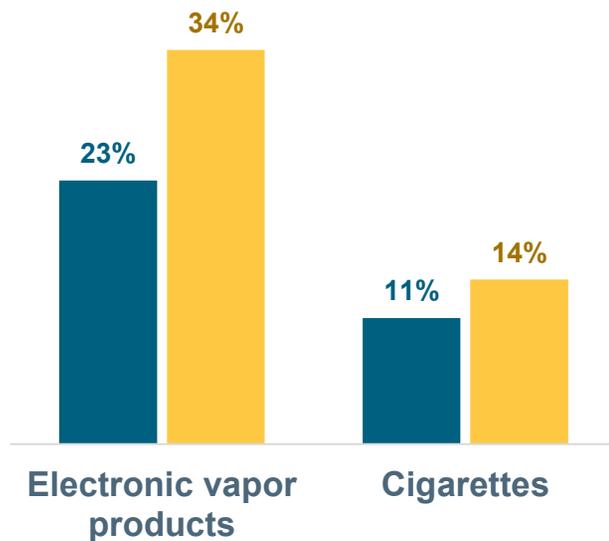
On the **state** and **national** levels, use of **electronic vapor products daily or frequently** (at least 20 out of the last 30 days) peaked in 2019 and then declined. However, usage at both the **state** and **national** levels significantly increased from 2015 to 2023.



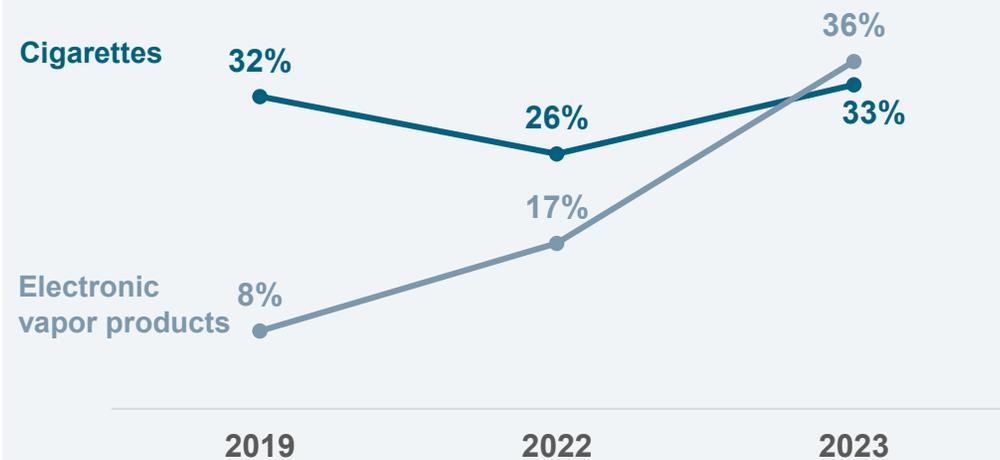
NOTE: Current electronic vapor product use is defined as having used an electronic vapor product on at least one day during the past 30 days.
SOURCE: YRBS 2015-2023

Significantly more high school students have tried **electronic vapor products** compared to **cigarettes** in their lifetime across **state** and **national** levels in 2023.

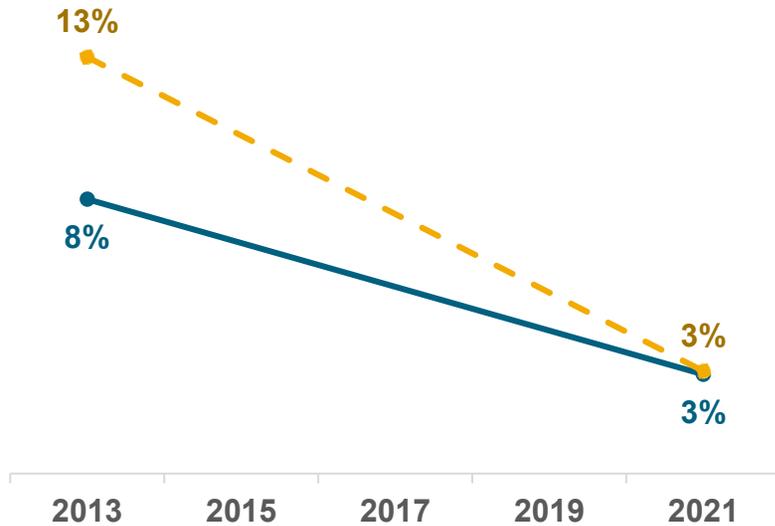
However, Nebraska students **were significantly less likely to have ever tried electronic vapor products** compared to their peers nationally.



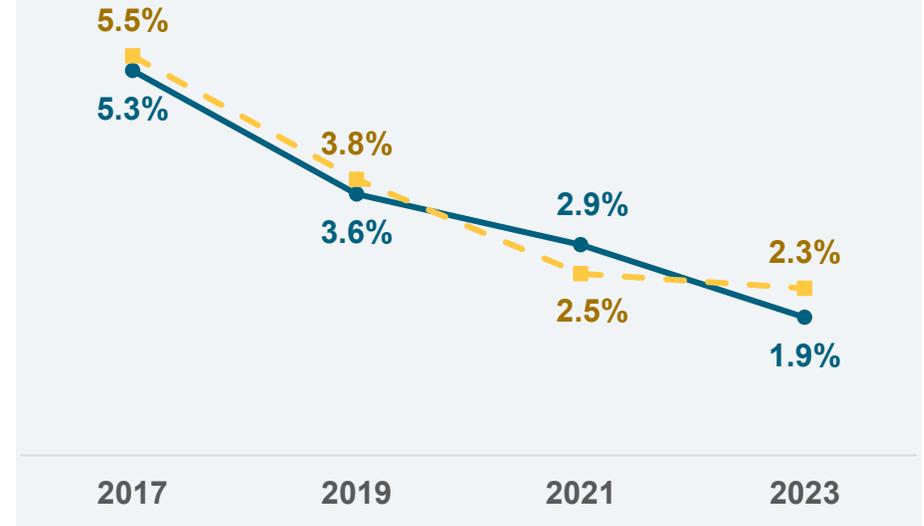
In 2023, one in three high school students in Nebraska had **smoked cigarettes** before turning 13 years old, consistent with prior years. Meanwhile, the number of students who **used electronic vapor products** before age 13 has increased fourfold since 2019. 



Current cigar use among **Nebraska** high school students has **significantly declined** since 2013, similar to the **national** trend.



Use of smokeless tobacco products such as chewing tobacco and snuff **significantly decreased** across the **state** and **nation** from 2017 to 2023.



NOTE: Current cigar use is defined as having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least one day during the past 30 days. Estimates for Nebraska high school students were available up to 2021 only.

SOURCE: YRBS 2013-2023

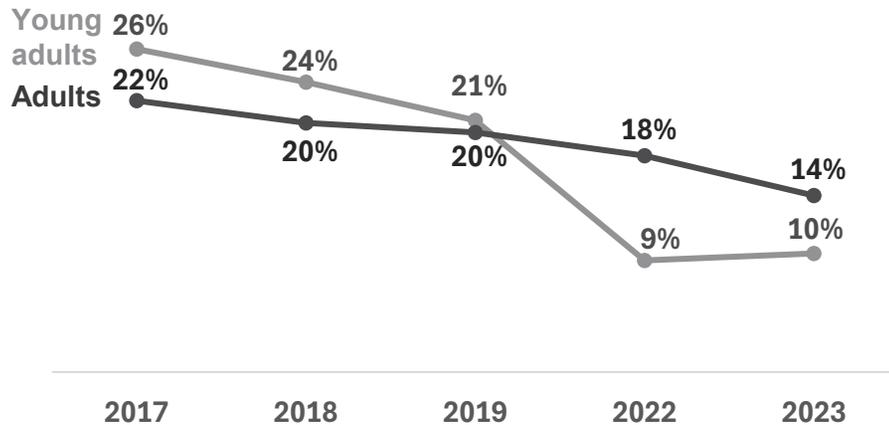
Young Adult & Adult Tobacco Use

15%

of young adults in **Nebraska** used tobacco products in 2023, similar to the **Midwestern** and **national** rates (17%, 16%).

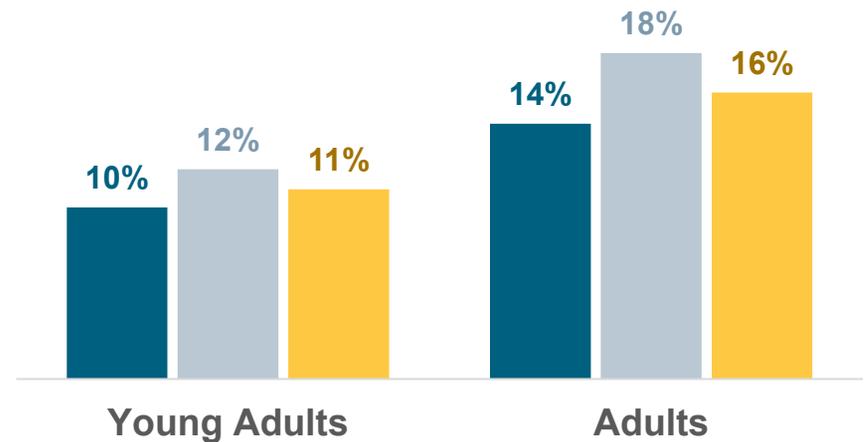


Cigarette smoking has significantly declined among **young adults** and **adults** in Nebraska since 2017.



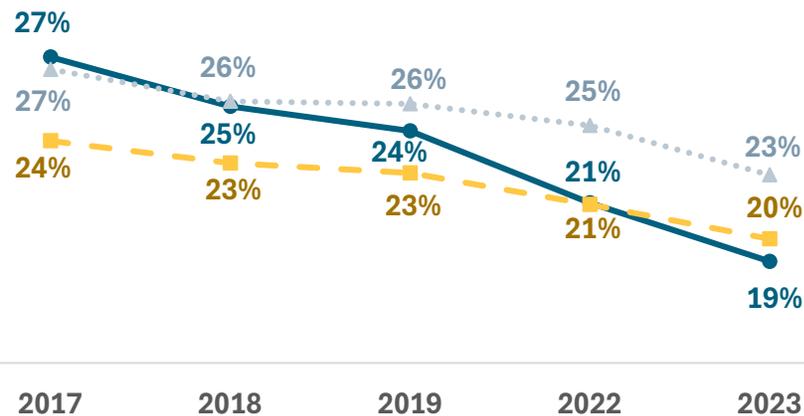
In 2023, young adults in **Nebraska** smoked cigarettes at similar rates to peers in the **Midwest** and **U.S.**

Meanwhile, adults in **Nebraska** smoked cigarettes at statistically significantly lower rates than adults in the **Midwest** but at similar rates to adults in the **U.S.**

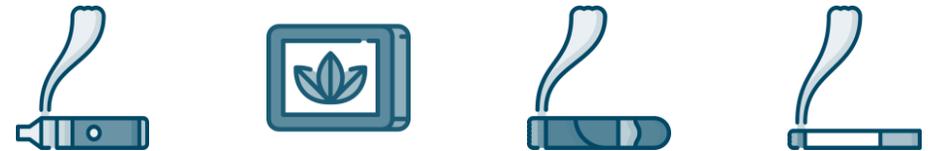


Adult Tobacco Use

Tobacco product use has significantly decreased from 2017 to 2023. **Nebraska** adults were also significantly less likely than their **Midwest** peers to use tobacco products but similar to adults **nationally**.



7% of **Nebraska** adults used nicotine vaping products in 2023, on par with **Midwestern** and **national** levels (7%, 7%).



14% of **Nebraska** adults smoked cigarettes in 2023, which was significantly lower than peers in the **Midwest** (18%), but similar to adults across **the U.S.** (16%).

Consequences

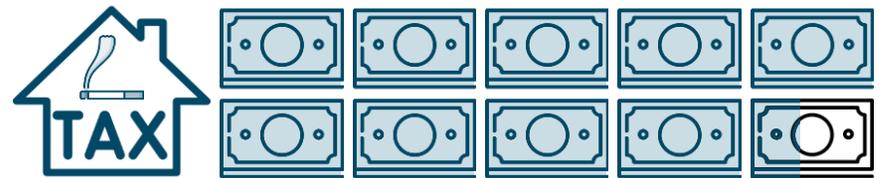
The Costs of Smoking

Smoking-related illnesses cost Nebraskans **\$924 million** annually.

Every year, Nebraska spends **\$941 in taxes per household** for smoking-related government costs.

\$651.9 Million

Amount Nebraska businesses lose in productivity annually due to smoking.



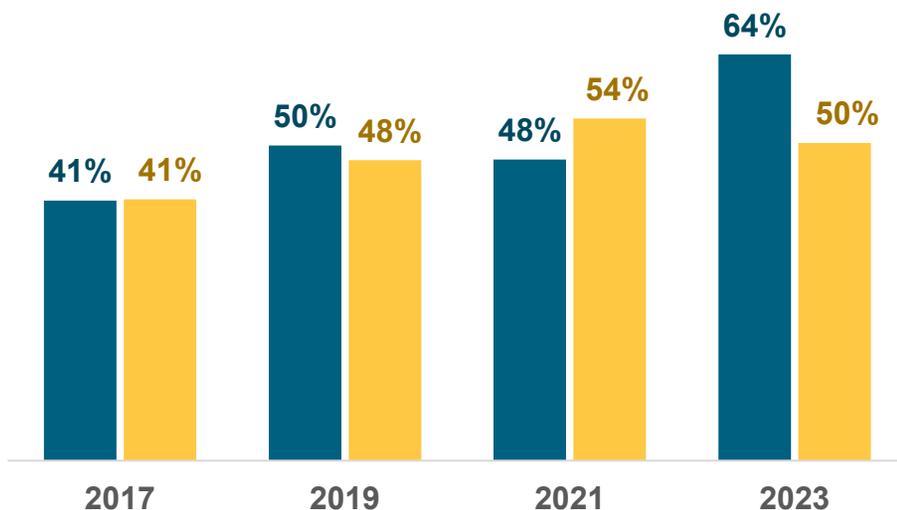
The smoking-attributable mortality rate estimates the number of deaths associated with tobacco use for adults 35 years and older in Nebraska.

| Disease | Total Deaths 2019-2023 | Smoking-Attributable Mortality | Attributable Fraction |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cancer | 10,320 | 5,016 | 48.6% |
| Coronary Heart Disease | 9,633 | 2,339 | 24.3% |
| Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) | 4,974 | 3,932 | 79.1% |
| Diabetes | 2,829 | 382 | 13.5% |
| Pneumonia/Flu | 1,374 | 325 | 23.7% |

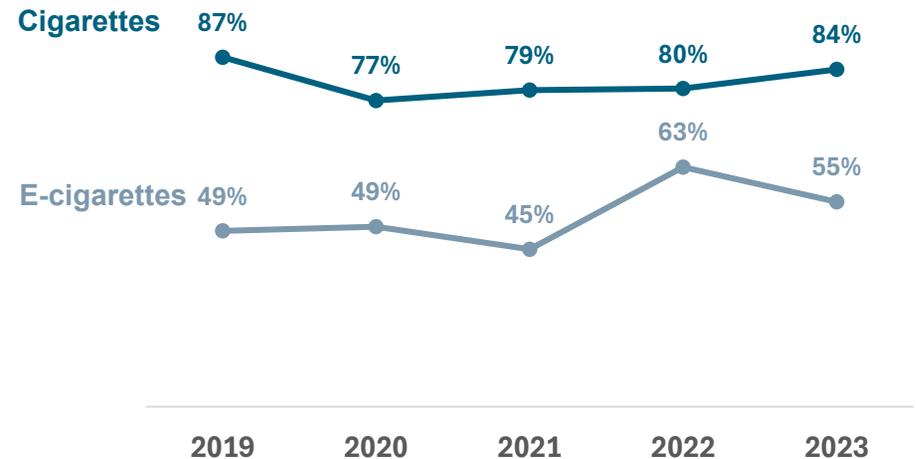
Quitting Tobacco Use

Approximately
2 out of 3

(64%) Nebraska high school tobacco users attempted to quit using all tobacco products in 2023. Overall, attempts to quit were significantly higher than in 2017 for both **Nebraska** and the **U.S.**

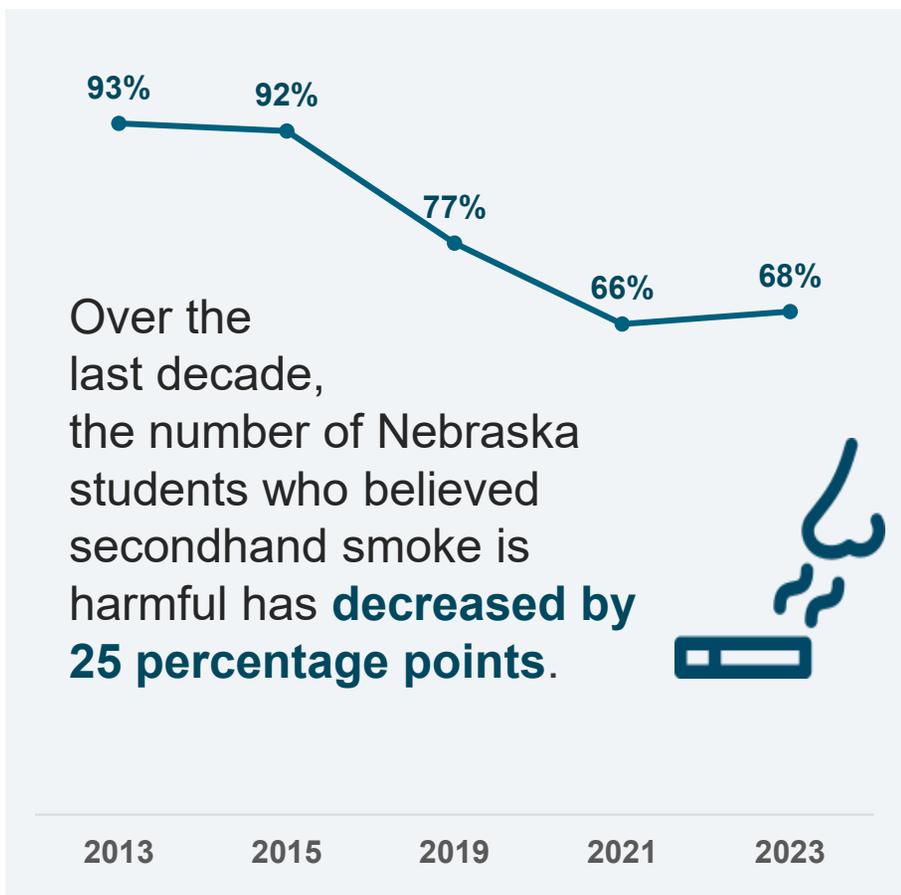


Most adult cigarette smokers have **attempted to quit smoking cigarettes** at some point, with 84% having ever tried to quit in 2023. About half of e-cigarette smokers have **ever tried to quit using e-cigarettes**, peaking in 2022 before decreasing to 55% in 2023.

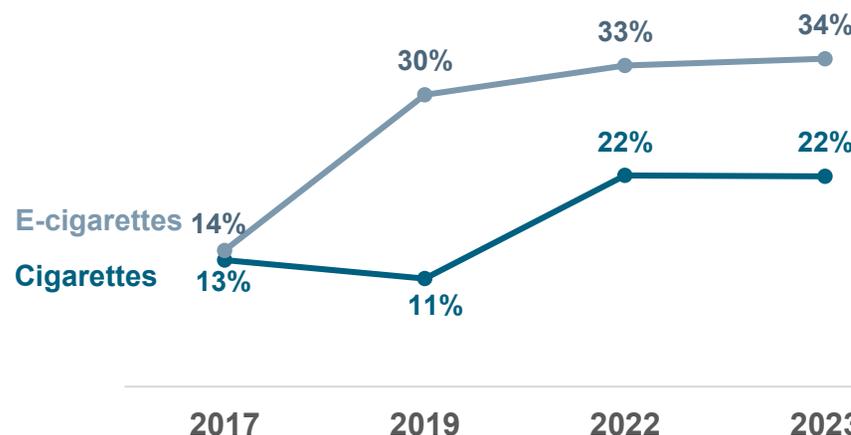


Perceptions & Social Norms

Youth



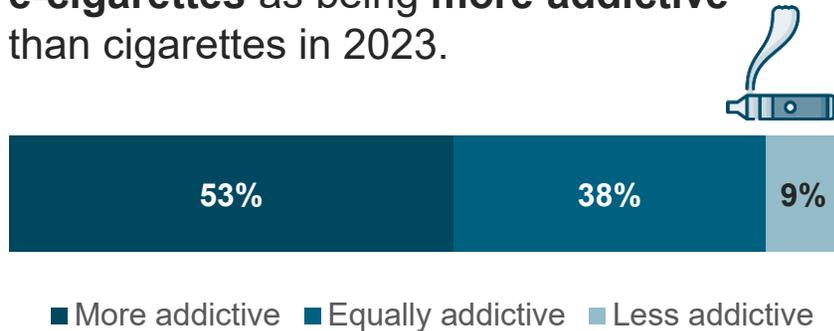
Compared to **cigarettes**, considerably more Nebraska students thought young people who smoked **e-cigarettes have more friends.**



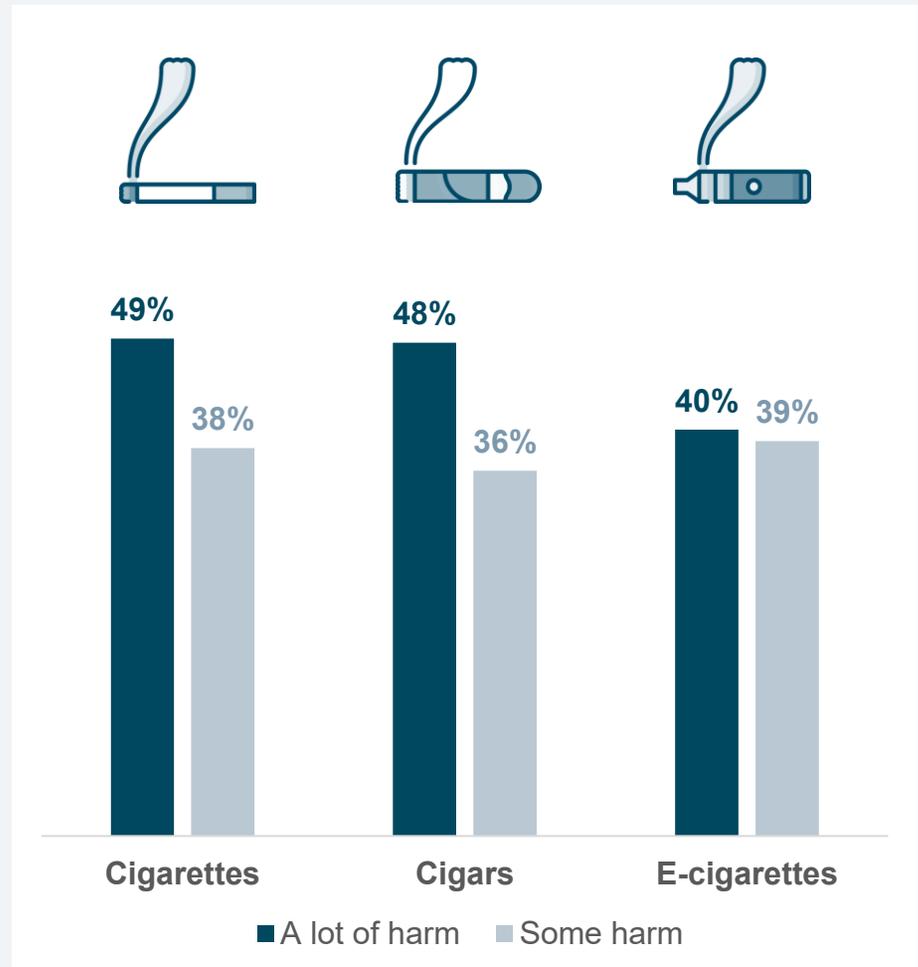
NOTE: Data for belief in the harmfulness of secondhand smoke was not collected in 2017.

SOURCE: YTS 2013-2023

Over half of Nebraska students viewed **e-cigarettes** as being **more addictive** than cigarettes in 2023.



In 2023, Nebraska students considered **cigarettes** and **cigars** as more harmful than e-cigarettes, but this difference was not statistically significant.

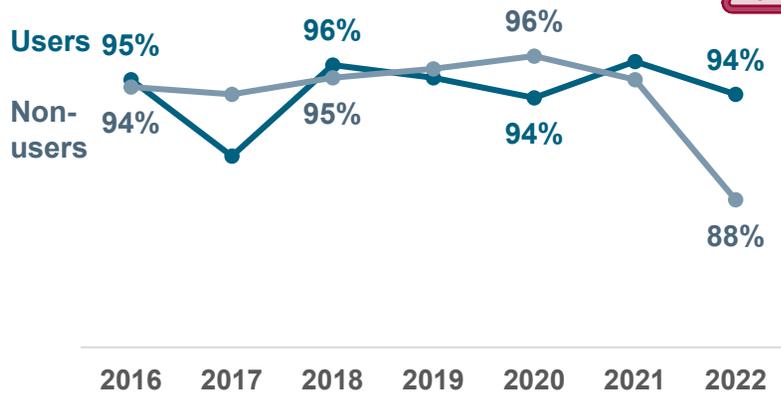


88%

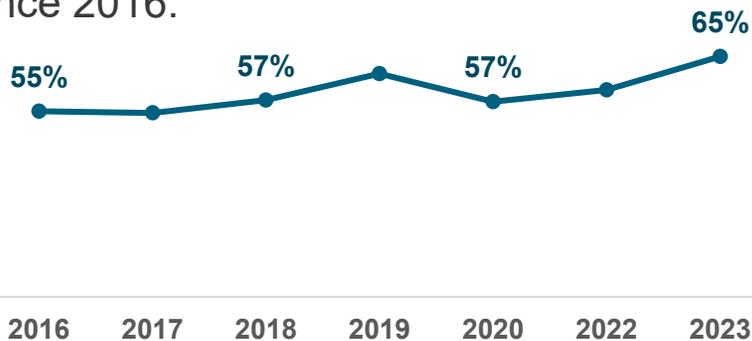
of Nebraska youth agreed that “all tobacco products are dangerous” in 2023, consistent with levels from the past decade.

Adults

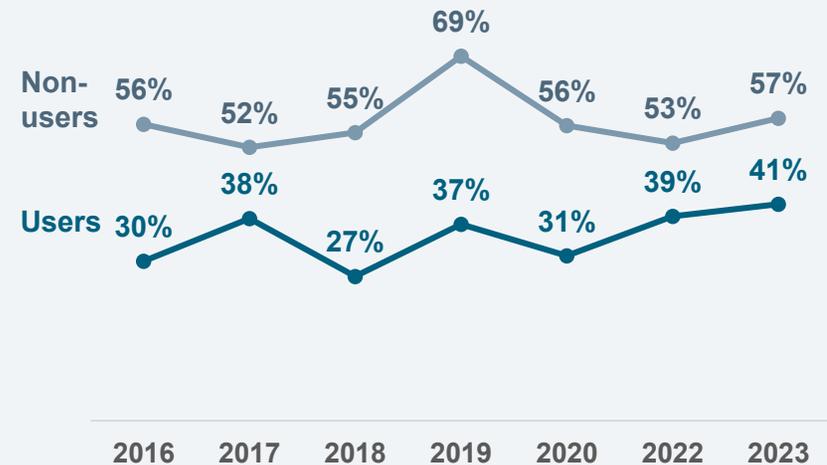
Nebraska tobacco users' perception of harm from inhaling secondhand smoke stayed relatively consistent since 2016, but non-users' perception of harm fell.



Two out of three Nebraska adults thought tobacco use was a **serious problem for teenagers** in 2023, the highest percentage since 2016.



52% of adults in Nebraska thought **tobacco use was a problem in the community** in 2023, which has been consistent over time. **Non-tobacco users** were more likely than **tobacco users** to hold this view, but the number of tobacco users who held this view increased overall from 2016 to 2023.



Sources

| Data Set | Data Source | Years | Age Range |
|--|--|----------------------|---|
| Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2015-2023 | 18 years and above |
| Deaths and Estimates of Smoking-Attributable Mortality (SAM) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2019-2023 | 35 years and above |
| National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | 2017-2019, 2022-2023 | 12 years and above |
| Nebraska Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) | University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research | 2016-2020, 2022-2023 | 18 years and above |
| Nebraska Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) | University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research | 2013-2023 | 6 th -12 th grade |
| The Toll of Tobacco in Nebraska | Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids | 2024 | All ages |
| Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2011-2023 | 9 th -12 th grade |

Most icons made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

NOTE: NSDUH estimates were not available for 2020-2021 due to the impact of the Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on survey methodology.

MARIJUANA & ILLICIT DRUGS

Prevalence, Consequences, and Perceptions and Social Norms

Introduction

The Nebraska State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) facilitated the 2025 Nebraska Epidemiological Profile through SAMHSA discretionary funds awarded through the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) grant. The profile provides an overview of substance use and misuse and associated consequences, as well as an overview of mental health conditions in Nebraska.

The 2025 profile is a four-part document consisting of summarized findings on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and illicit drugs, and mental health conditions. Each part of the profile can be used independently or together as a whole. Data is presented on the prevalence of substance use and misuse behaviors and mental health conditions, consequences of substance misuse, and perceptions of substance use and misuse.

The data presented in the profile were sourced from either publicly available datasets or Nebraska DHHS-wide data systems. This includes data from state, regional, and national surveys. Given the nature of the data, limitations to be considered include different timeframes for data due to varying data collection periods and data may not always be representative of the actual population of the state or nation depending on reporting requirements. Each page of the profile includes the data sources and years used to obtain the presented data. More information on data sources can be found in the sources page at the end of each profile.

Several conventions were used to present and analyze the data across multiple sources. Pending data availability, indicators are presented for three age groups: adolescents (12-17 years or grades 9-12, depending on the data source), young adults (18-25 years or 19-25 years, depending on the data source), and adults (18 years and above or 26 years and above, depending on the data source).

Data for Nebraska, the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), and the U.S., as well as between demographic groups within Nebraska were compared for statistically significant differences using group margins of error where possible. Statistically significant differences indicate that the difference between groups is likely real and not due to random chance, while margins of error show how much that difference could vary among individuals in the compared groups. If the margins of error for compared groups have little overlap, the groups can be considered truly different.



Magenta alert symbols (like the one shown on the left) identify indicators where there was a worsening trend over time, or where Nebraska residents performed worse than their peers in the U.S.

As with previous epidemiological profiles, the primary goal of this profile is to serve as a resource for local communities, coalitions, stakeholders, and behavioral and public health professionals that are involved in substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion. The profile was designed to be practical and useful to Nebraska residents in instances such as grant writing, strategic planning, and evaluation activities.

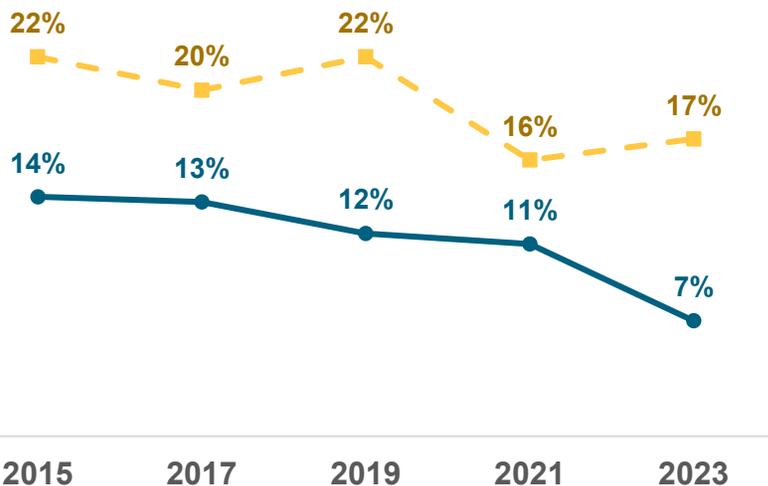
This profile is intended to encourage discussion and inspire future actions to improve the health and wellness of Nebraskans.

The SEOW partnered with Partners for Insightful Evaluation and the Methodology and Evaluation Research Core Facility at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to develop the 2025 profile. For additional information on the profile, please contact Jobert Tiendrebeogo, DBH Epidemiologist at Jobert.Tiendrebeogo@nebraska.gov

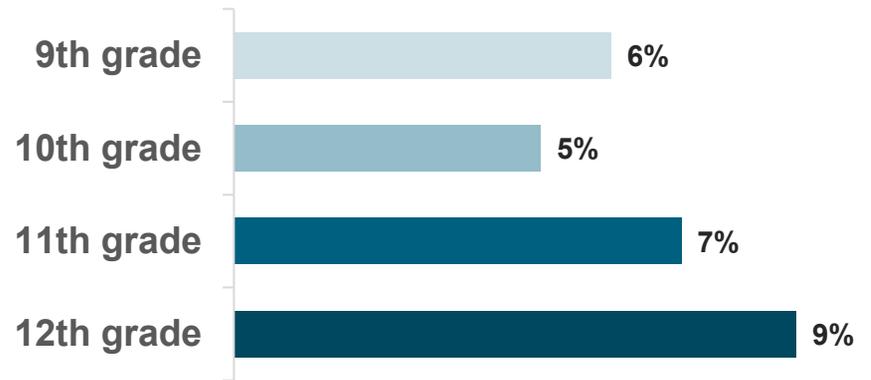
Prevalence

High School Students

Nebraska high school students continue to report **significantly lower** marijuana usage[^] than peers **nationwide**. Additionally, marijuana usage for Nebraska students has **significantly decreased** since 2015.



In 2023, **12th grade students** were most likely to report current marijuana usage, but this difference was not statistically significant.



In 2023, the number of students in Nebraska who reported that they had tried marijuana **before turning 13** was similar to fellow students in the U.S.

3%
in Nebraska
5%
in the U.S.

Overall, the number of students who reported this behavior has **significantly decreased** at the **state** and **national** levels since 2003.



Male (8%) and **female (6%)** students were **about equally likely** to report current marijuana usage in 2023.

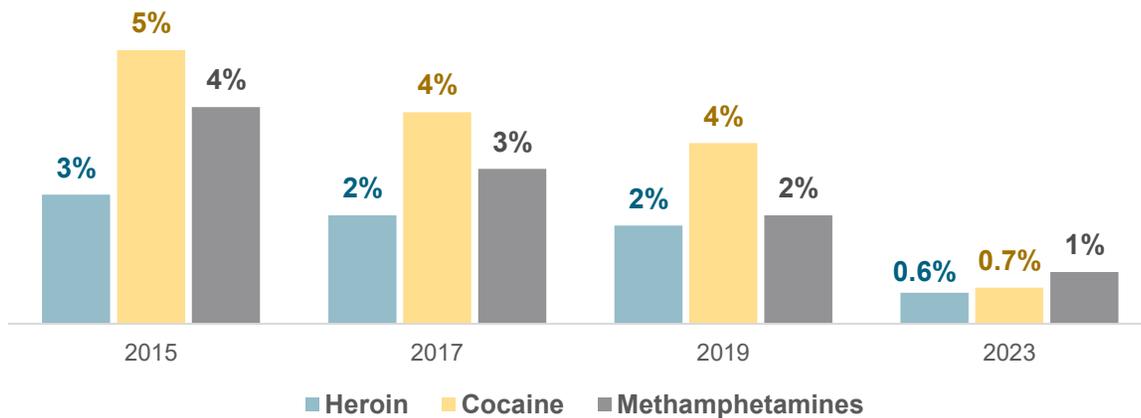
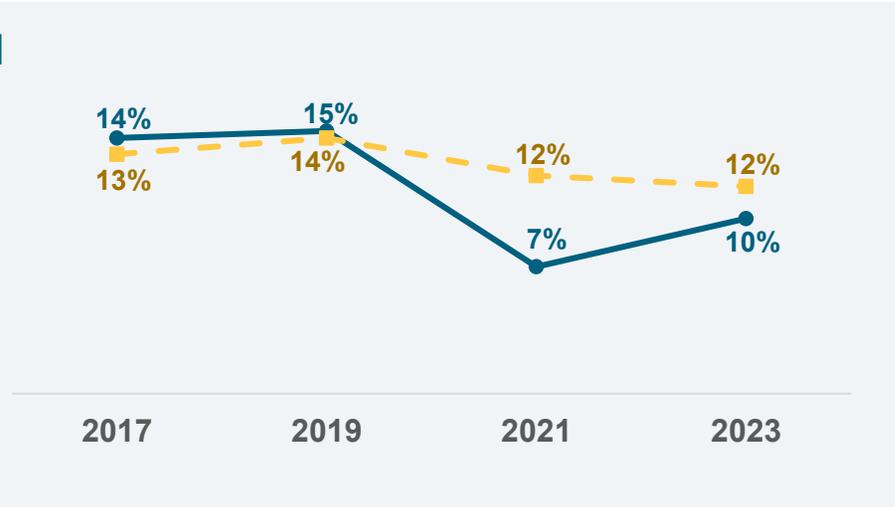
NOTE: [^]Recreational marijuana use remains illegal in Nebraska.

Current marijuana use is defined as having used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days.

SOURCE: YRBS 2015-2023



In 2023, **10% of Nebraska high school students** reported having ever used prescription pain medication without a doctor's prescription, similar to the **12% of high school students nationally**. Additionally, the number of Nebraska students who reported this behavior significantly decreased from 2019 to 2023.

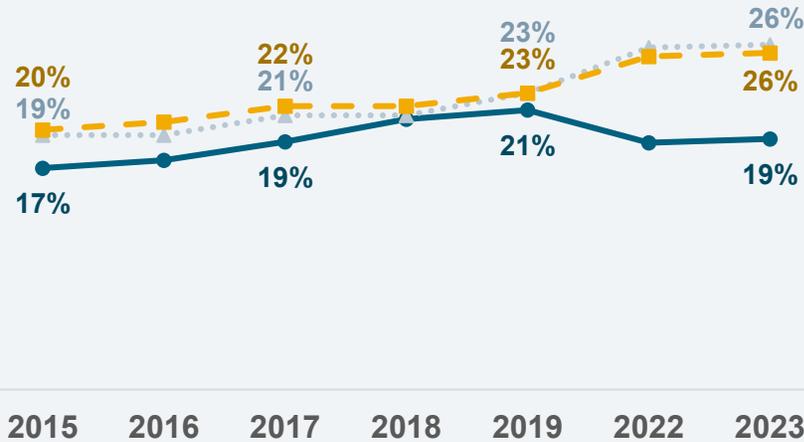


The percentages of **Nebraska high school students** who reported ever using illicit drugs has decreased since 2015. Specifically, lifetime methamphetamine use **significantly decreased** from 2015 to 2023.



Young Adults

In 2022 and 2023, **significantly fewer young adults in Nebraska** reported using marijuana in the past 30 days than their peers in the **Midwest** and **United States**.



Pain reliever misuse in the past year in **Nebraska significantly decreased** from 2016 (8%) to 2023 (2%), similar to Midwestern and national percentages.



Nebraska young adults in 2023 reported **using illicit drugs** (excluding marijuana) at similar levels to peers in the Midwest and across the United States.

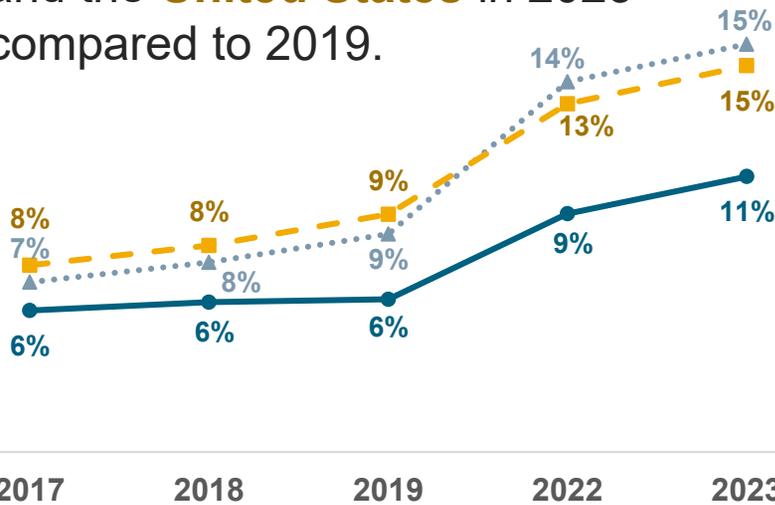
| NE | MW | U.S. |
|------|------|------|
| 3.7% | 4.2% | 4.2% |

Cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine use among young adults showed decreasing trends at the **state**, **regional**, and **national** levels since 2019.

| | | 2019 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Cocaine | NE | 5.9% | 3.7% | 3.0% |
| | Mid | 5.1% | 3.6% | 3.4% |
| | U.S. | 5.5% | 3.7% | 3.4% |
| Heroin | NE | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| | Mid | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| | U.S. | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| Methamphetamine | NE | 1.0% | 0.8% | 0.6% |
| | Mid | 0.9% | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| | U.S. | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.4% |

Adults

Significantly more adults reported current marijuana usage in the past 30 days in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **United States** in 2023 compared to 2019. 



 In 2023, **3%** of **adults in Nebraska** reported **misusing pain relievers** in the past year, consistent with percentages from the past six years.

 Nebraska's rates were similar to those of the **Midwest (3%)** and **U.S. (3%)**.

3% of **adults in Nebraska** reported using **illicit drugs** (excluding marijuana) in 2023, which was similar to percentages across the **Midwest (3%)** and **U.S. (3%)**.  

The percentage of adults who reported **using cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines in the past year** remained consistent since 2019 across the **state, Midwest, and country**.

| | | 2019 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Cocaine | NE | 1.1% | 1.3% | 1.4% |
| | Mid | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.7% |
| | U.S. | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.8% |
| Heroin | NE | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.3% |
| | Mid | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.3% |
| | U.S. | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.4% |
| Methamphetamine | NE | 0.6% | 1.3% | 1.1% |
| | Mid | 0.8% | 1.2% | 1.1% |
| | U.S. | 0.8% | 1.1% | 1.1% |

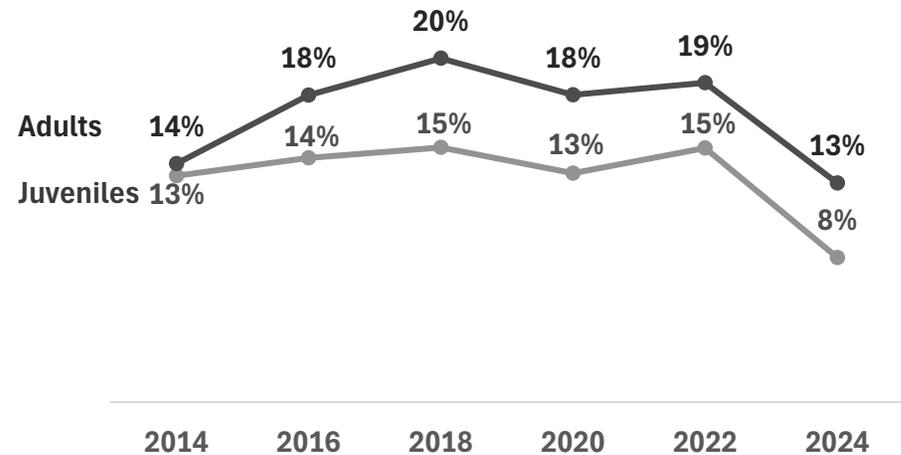
Consequences

Since 2019, illicit drug use disorder has **at least doubled** among adolescents, young adults and adults. This trend can be seen across **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **United States**.



| | | 2019 | 2023 |
|--------------|------|------|-------|
| Adolescents | NE | 2.7% | 6.5% |
| | Mid | 3.3% | 7.1% |
| | U.S. | 3.2% | 7.0% |
| Young Adults | NE | 7.0% | 14.8% |
| | Mid | 7.6% | 18.5% |
| | U.S. | 7.5% | 18.3% |
| Adults | NE | 1.8% | 7.2% |
| | Mid | 2.2% | 8.6% |
| | U.S. | 2.3% | 8.6% |

The number of **adults** and **juveniles** who were **arrested for drug-related violations** in Nebraska in 2024 were the lowest in the past decade.

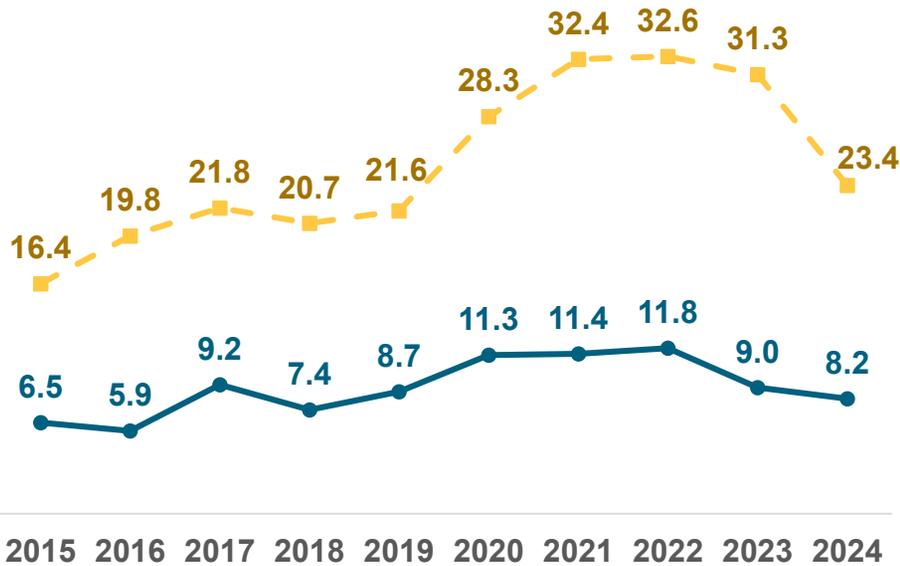


NOTE: Illicit drug use disorder is defined as meeting DSM-IV criteria for either dependence or abuse for one or more of the following illicit drugs: marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine, or prescription psychotherapeutic drugs that were misused (i.e., stimulants, tranquilizers or sedatives, and pain relievers).

Drug-related violations include drug possession and drug sale/manufacturing.

SOURCES: NSDUH 2019-2023, Nebraska Crime Commission 2014-2024

Drug overdose mortality rates[^] increased overall between 2015 and 2022, with the mortality rate peaking in **Nebraska** between 2020 and 2022. In 2024, Nebraska's overdose mortality rate was one-third of the **national** rate.

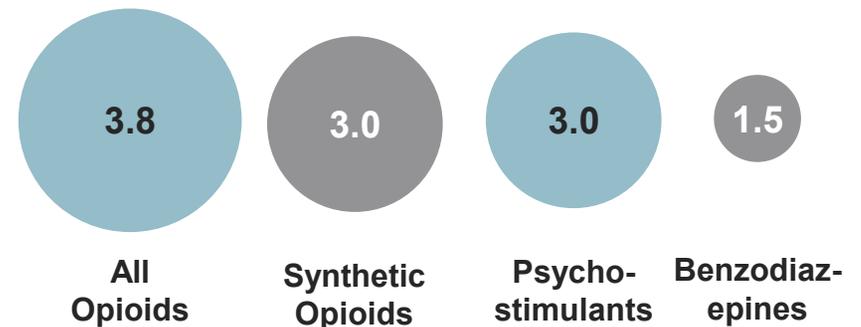


From 2023 to 2024, the overdose mortality rate for **men** in Nebraska was significantly higher compared to **women**.

5.9
Female
11.2
Male

The age groups with the highest overdose mortality rates in Nebraska from 2023 to 2024 were **25- to 44-year-olds** (13.6) and **45- to 64-year-olds** (14.0).

Fatal overdoses in Nebraska by substance per 100,000 people from 2023 to 2024



Of the 327 fatal drug overdoses in Nebraska from 2023 to 2024, **84% were unintentional**.

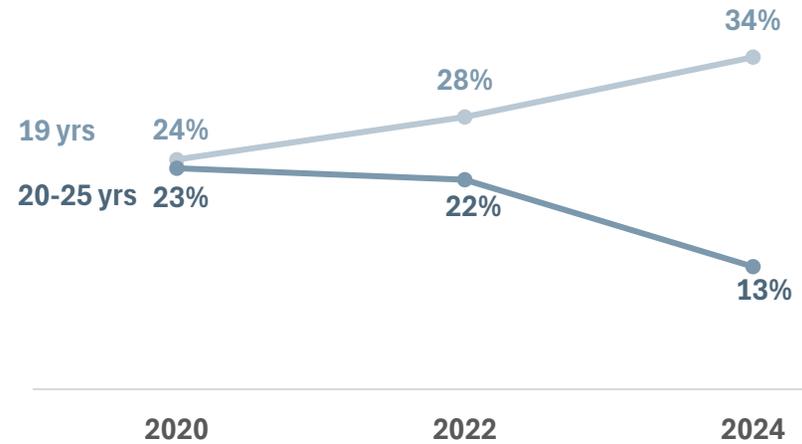
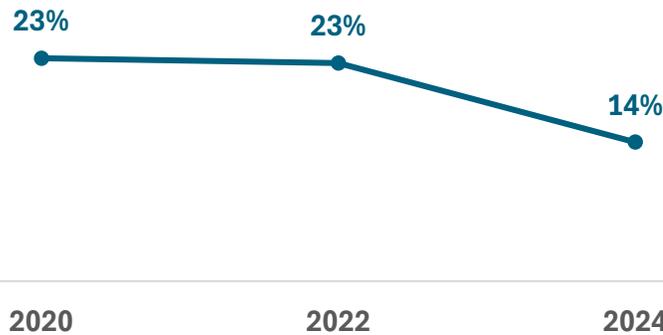
NOTE: [^]Age-adjusted rates were calculated per 100,000 population.

SOURCE: CDC WONDER 2015-2024

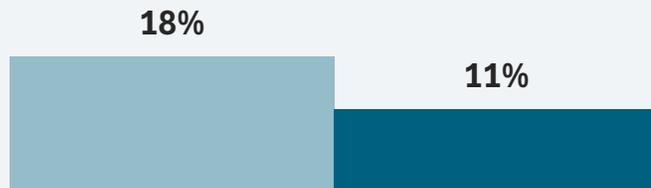
Nebraska young adult rates of **driving under the influence of marijuana** significantly decreased from 2022 to 2024.



Among young adults in 2024, **19-year-olds** reported driving under the influence of marijuana in the past year at **significantly higher rates** than **20 to 25-year-olds**.



Males who were 19 to 25 years old were **significantly more likely** than **females** to drive under the influence of marijuana in 2024.



Hispanic people were **significantly more likely** than **non-Hispanic** people to drive under the influence of marijuana in 2024.



Perceptions & Social Norms

Perception of great risk from smoking marijuana once a month significantly decreased from 2016 to 2023 for adolescents and adults across **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **United States**. Young adults in Nebraska did not experience a significant decrease, unlike peers in the Midwest and U.S.

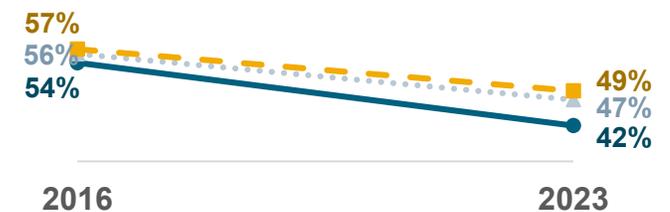
| | | 2016 | 2023 | |
|--------------|------|------|------|---|
| Adolescents | NE | 28% | 20% | ⚠ |
| | Mid | 26% | 19% | |
| | U.S. | 27% | 21% | |
| Young Adults | NE | 14% | 11% | |
| | Mid | 13% | 9% | |
| | U.S. | 14% | 11% | |
| Adults | NE | 28% | 22% | ⚠ |
| | Mid | 28% | 18% | |
| | U.S. | 31% | 22% | |

In 2023, significantly more Nebraska adults thought it was **wrong or very wrong for people under the age of 18 to use marijuana** (88%) compared to those aged 18 to 20 (71%) and 21 and older (53%).

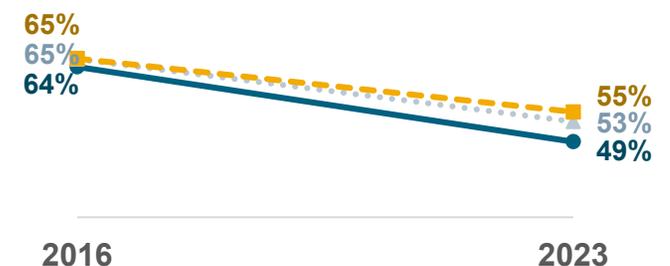
Adolescents

The perceived risk of using **cocaine** once a month, along with the perceived risk of trying **heroin** once or twice among adolescents has **significantly decreased** since 2016 in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **United States**.

Cocaine



Heroin

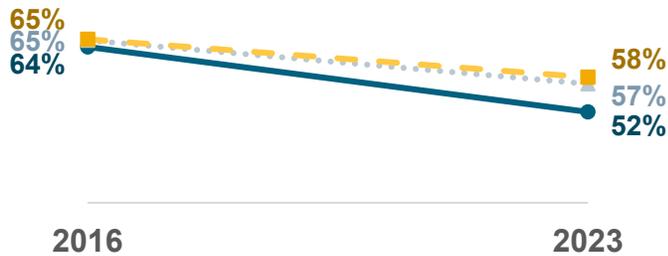


Young Adults

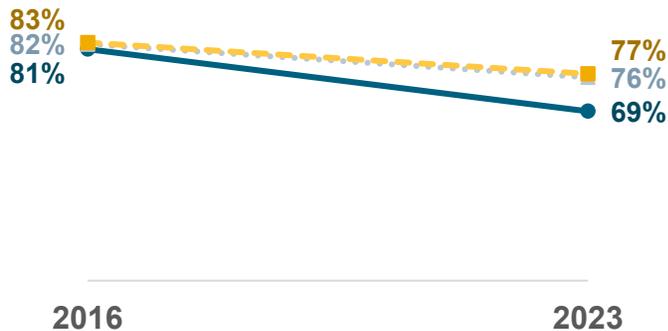


The **perceived risk** of using **cocaine** once a month, along with the perceived risk of trying **heroin** once or twice among young adults **has significantly decreased** since 2016 in **Nebraska**, the **Midwest**, and the **United States**.

Cocaine



Heroin



Adults

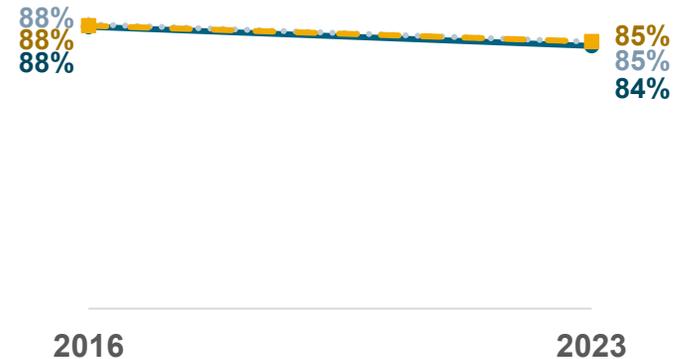


Since 2016, the **perceived risk** of using **cocaine** once a month has **significantly decreased** among all adults. Perceived risk of trying **heroin** once or twice has significantly decreased among adults in the **Midwest** and **United States**, but not **Nebraska**.

Cocaine



Heroin



Sources

| Data Set | Data Source | Years | Age Range |
|---|--|----------------------|---|
| Arrests by Arrest Offense and Arrestee Age | Nebraska Crime Commission (NCC) | 2014-2024 | All ages |
| CDC WONDER: Multiple Cause of Death | National Center for Health Statistics | 2014-2024 | All ages |
| National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | 2017-2019, 2022-2023 | 12 years and above |
| Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) | University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research | 2014-2023 | 19 years and above |
| Nebraska Young Adult Alcohol Opinion Survey (NYAAOS)/Nebraska Young Adult Risk Behavior Survey (NYARBS) | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health | 2016-2024 | 19-25 years |
| Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2011-2023 | 9 th -12 th grade |

Most icons made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

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MENTAL HEALTH

Prevalence, Consequences, and Perceptions and Social Norms

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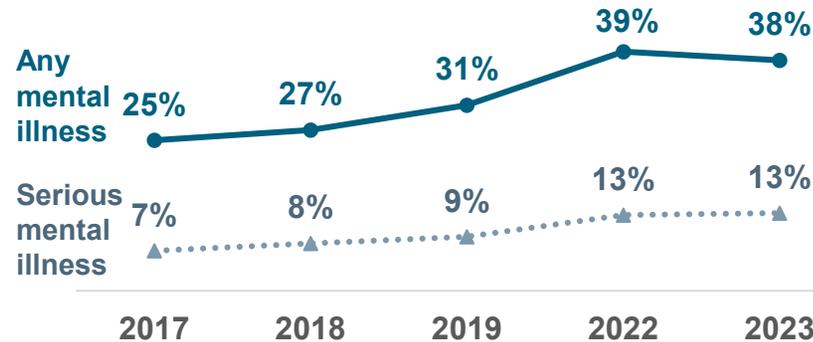
Prevalence

Mental Illness

Young Adults



Significantly more young adults in Nebraska reported experiencing **any mental illness** and **serious mental illness** in 2023 than 2017.



These trends were similar to those of peers in the Midwest and the United States.

| | | 2017 | 2023 |
|---------|------|------|------|
| Any | NE | 25% | 38% |
| | Mid | 25% | 36% |
| | U.S. | 24% | 35% |
| Serious | NE | 7% | 13% |
| | Mid | 7% | 11% |
| | U.S. | 7% | 11% |

Adults



Significantly more adults in Nebraska reported experiencing **any mental illness** and **serious mental illness** in 2023 than 2017.



These trends were similar to those of peers in the Midwest and the United States.

| | | 2017 | 2023 |
|---------|------|------|------|
| Any | NE | 17% | 22% |
| | Mid | 18% | 22% |
| | U.S. | 18% | 21% |
| Serious | NE | 4% | 6% |
| | Mid | 4% | 5% |
| | U.S. | 4% | 5% |

NOTES: Any mental illness is defined as having a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder, other than a developmental or substance use disorder. Serious mental illness is defined as having a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment.

SOURCE: NSDUH 2017-2023

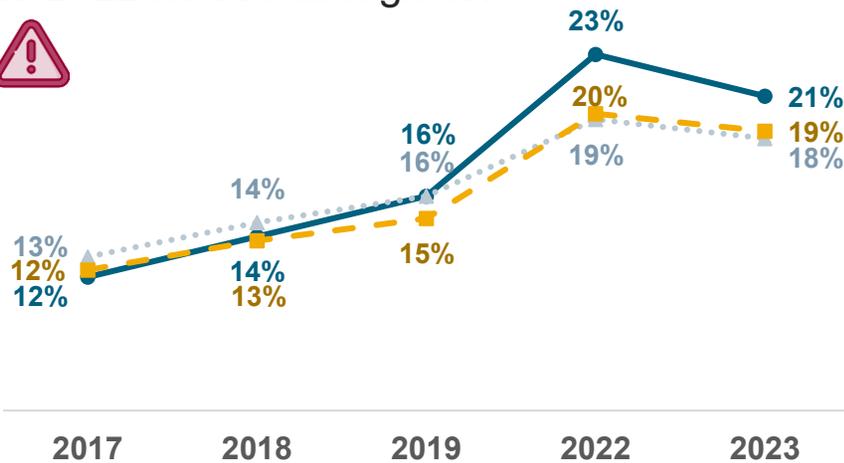
Depression

Young Adults

One in five **Nebraska young adults** reported experiencing a **major depressive episode** in 2023, similar to peers in the **Midwest** and **United States**.



The number of reported major depressive episodes **increased significantly** from 2019 to 2022 across all regions.



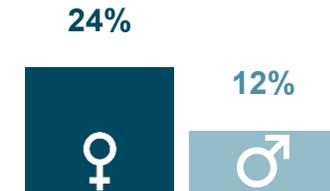
NOTE: A major depressive episode is defined as a period of at least 2 weeks when an individual experiences a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities and had a majority of specified depression symptoms.

^AIAN is short for "American Indian or Alaska Native".

SOURCES: BRFSS 2023, NSDUH 2017-2023

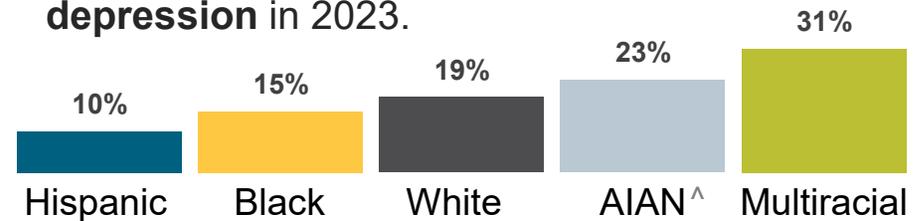
Adults

Twice as many females in Nebraska reported being told they had **depression** as **males** did in 2023.



In 2023, adults in Nebraska with an income of less than \$15,000 were **significantly more likely** to experience some form of **depression**.

Multiracial, non-Hispanic Nebraska residents were **significantly more likely than** White counterparts to have been told they had **depression** in 2023.



8% of **Nebraska adults** reported experiencing a **major depressive episode** in 2023.

Suicidal Ideation

High School Students

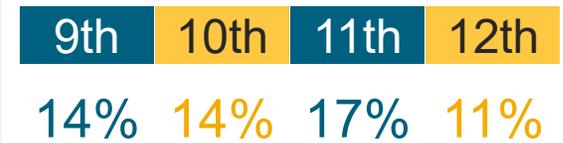
In 2023, **Nebraska high school students** were **significantly less likely to have considered suicide** in the past year compared to peers **nationally**.



In 2023, **17% of female students considered suicide** in the past year compared to **11% of male students**.

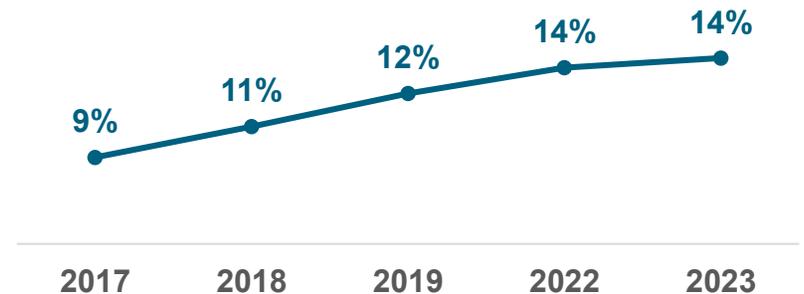


Approximately one in six students in the **11th grade considered suicide** in 2023.



Young Adults

The number of young adults in Nebraska who reported **having serious thoughts about suicide in the past year** significantly increased from 2017 to 2023. These percentages were similar to those of peers in the Midwest and the U.S.



Adults

In 2023, **4% of Nebraska adults** reported having **serious thoughts of suicide**, which was similar to what their peers in the **Midwest** and the **United States** reported.

Suicidal Ideation

High School Students

Nebraska high school students were significantly less likely than **high school students nationally** to plan to attempt suicide in 2023.



In 2023, **female students in Nebraska (10%)** were significantly less likely than **female students across the U.S. (21%)** to plan to attempt suicide.

Nebraska high school students were significantly less likely to report that they had **attempted suicide** in the past year compared to **peers nationally** in 2023.



Young Adults

In 2023, **4%** of **Nebraska young adults** reported making **plans to attempt suicide** in the past year.

In 2023, **2%** of **Nebraska young adults** reported **attempting suicide** in the past year.

Adults

In 2023, **1%** of **Nebraska adults** reported making **plans to attempt suicide**.

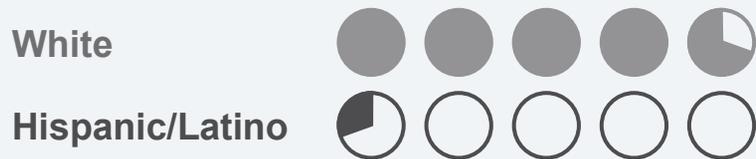
In 2023, **<1%** of **Nebraska adults** reported **attempting suicide**.

These percentages were similar to the rates reported by adults in the **Midwest** and the **United States**.

Suicide Mortality

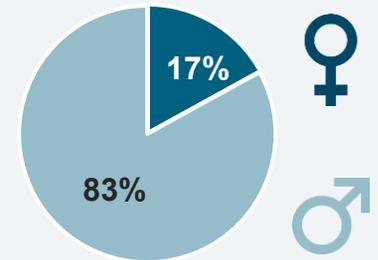
Suicide mortality rate refers to the number of people who died by suicide per 100,000 people.

The suicide mortality rate was **significantly higher** for those of **non-Hispanic White backgrounds (94%)** versus those of **Hispanic or Latino backgrounds (6%)** from 2023-2024.



297
Nebraska residents died by suicide in 2024.

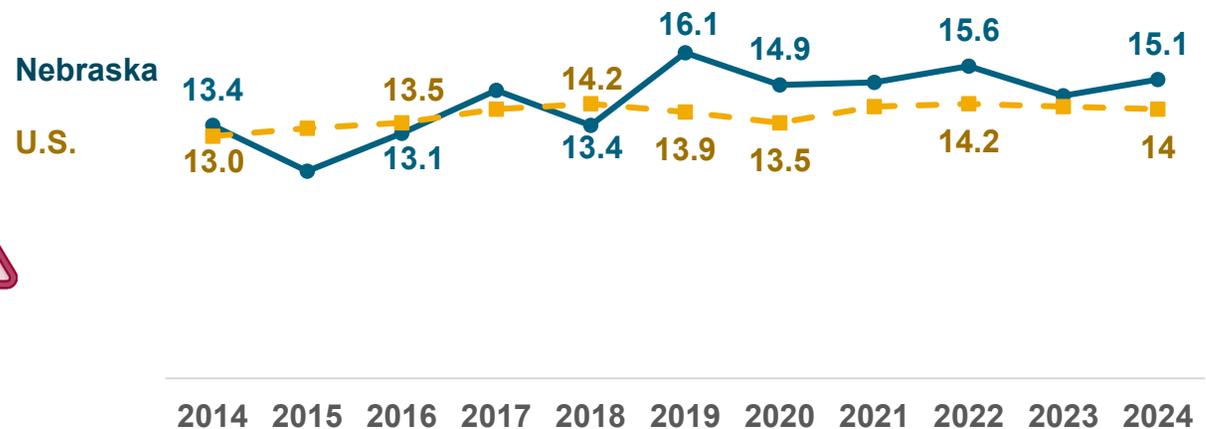
From 2023 to 2024, **males** had a higher mortality rate than **females**.



From 2023 to 2024, the age groups with the **highest suicide mortality rate** were **40- to 64-year-olds** and **20- to 39-year-olds**.



The **age-adjusted mortality rate** (per 100,000 people) for **Nebraskans** declined from a high of 16.1 in 2019 to 15.1 in 2024 but remains higher than the **national** rate.



Sources

| Data Set | Data Source | Years | Age Range |
|--|---|----------------------|---|
| Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2015-2023 | 18 years and above |
| CDC WONDER: Multiple Cause of Death | National Center for Health Statistics | 2014-2024 | All ages |
| National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | 2017-2019, 2022-2023 | 12 years and above |
| Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2011-2023 | 9 th -12 th grade |

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NOTE: NSDUH estimates were not available for 2020-2021 due to the impact of the Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on survey methodology.