

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey



2015 Highlights

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

About the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of an epidemiological surveillance system that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established in 1990 to monitor the prevalence of health-risk behaviors among youth. The survey was first implemented in Alaska in 1995. The YRBS is a biennial, anonymous, and voluntary survey of students in grades 9 - 12 in public traditional high schools (excluding boarding, correspondence, home study, alternative, and correctional schools). As of 2009, a statewide survey of Alaska alternative high schools has also been conducted. Alternative schools are identified by the Department of Education & Early Development (EED) as serving at-risk students who benefit from nontraditional school settings and programs. The Alaska YRBS is a joint project between EED and the Department of Health and Social Services, in cooperation with the CDC. The YRBS asks students to self-report health behaviors across a range of areas that directly lead to morbidity and mortality among youth and adults. Student participation requires written parental consent.

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2015 Highlights

This report provides a brief summary of select 2015 YRBS results for Alaska traditional and alternative high school students and U.S. traditional high school students. It also includes a selection of comparisons for U.S. and Alaska traditional high school students and Alaska traditional and alternative high school students, as well as short- and long-term trends for Alaska traditional and alternative high school students.

2015 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Sample

In 2015, 43 schools from 17 school districts were chosen for the statewide traditional high school YRBS sample. These schools were randomly selected by the CDC taking into account school size. In addition, Alaska school districts could elect to conduct a local YRBS, which collected school district-level data. Districts could survey traditional and alternative high school students. In 2015, 29 school districts participated in the local traditional high school YRBS—14 of which also participated in the statewide sample. Several districts also opted to conduct surveys in alternative high schools. Overall, 31 of 54 Alaska school districts participated in the YRBS in some capacity in 2015.



For more information about the Alaska YRBS go to:
dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Comparisons, 2015

Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in U.S. and Alaska Traditional High Schools (grades 9-12)

	U.S. Traditional High School Students	Alaska Traditional High School Students	Alaska students were at:
Rarely or never wore a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else	6.1%	9.4%	●
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times during the past 30 days	20.0%	14.3%	●
Texted or emailed while driving during the past 30 days (among students who drove a car or other vehicle)	41.5%	35.1%	↔
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at/on their way to or from school on at least one of the past 30 days	5.6%	8.8%	●
In a physical fight during the past year	22.6%	20.1%	↔
Carried a weapon on school property on at least one of the past 30 days	4.1%	8.2%	●
 Experienced physical dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)	9.6%	9.5%	↔
 Felt so sad/hopeless, daily for two weeks in a row, they stopped doing usual activities during the past year	29.9%	33.6%	↔
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year	17.7%	20.1%	↔
Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year	8.6%	10.7%	↔
Smoked cigarettes on at least one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	10.8%	11.1%	↔
Ever used e-cigarettes	44.9%	36.1%	●
Used e-cigarettes one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	24.1%	17.7%	●
Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	32.8%	22.0%	●
 Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours on one or more of the past 30 days (binge drinking)	17.7%	12.5%	●
Used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	21.7%	19.0%	↔
Ever took prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription	16.8%	14.6%	↔
Ever had sexual intercourse	41.2%	35.9%	↔
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	56.9%	61.9%	↔
Used both a condom during and birth control pills; an IUD or implant; or a shot, patch, or birth control ring before last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	8.8%	16.2%	●
 Were overweight	16.0%	16.7%	↔
 Were obese	13.9%	14.0%	↔
Drank soda one or more times per day during the past 7 days	20.4%	18.8%	↔
 Were physically active for at least 60 minutes on each of the past 7 days	27.1%	20.9%	●
Played video or computer games, or used a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day on an average school day	41.7%	34.3%	●

* Statistical significance based on comparison of 95% confidence intervals

 Healthy Alaskans 2020 (HA2020) health indicator.

Statistical Significance*

● less risk ● greater risk ↔ equal risk

Summary of 2015 Alaska Traditional High School Student Results*

Safety

- Among Alaska students who ride a bicycle, helmet use is higher (35.4%) than in the U.S. (18.6%).
- Among students who drive a car or other vehicle, the percentage who drive while drinking does not differ between Alaska (5.6%) and the U.S. (7.8%), though Alaska's numbers have significantly increased since 2013.
- Riding with a driver who had been drinking has decreased since 2007 and is lower than in the U.S.
- At 35.1%, texting or emailing while driving (among students who drive a car or other vehicle) is not significantly different in Alaska compared to the U.S.

Violence

- Bullying on school property (22.8%) and cyberbullying (17.7%) are not significantly different from the U.S.
- The percentage of Alaska students who didn't go to school because they felt unsafe has increased over the short and long term.
- More Alaska students carry a weapon on school property than do U.S. students.

Suicide and Mental Health

- The percentage of Alaska students who feel sad or hopeless has increased over the short and long term.
- Both the prevalence of students who seriously consider suicide and students who attempt suicide are not significantly different from the U.S.
- The percentage of Alaska students who seriously consider suicide has risen significantly since 2013, while the U.S. trend has not changed significantly during this time.
- When the suicide measures are stratified by sex, males in Alaska have significantly higher percentages who seriously consider, plan, and attempt suicide as compared to U.S. males. There is no difference between Alaska and U.S. females.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Lower percentages of Alaska students report ever drinking (54.4%), currently drinking (22.0%), or binge drinking (12.5%) alcohol as compared to the U.S.
- There is no significant difference between Alaska and the U.S. relative to the percentage of students who have ever used or currently use marijuana (Alaska: 38.8% ever; 19.0% current). Ever use of marijuana has decreased since 2007, but current use has not.
- At 7.5%, lifetime (ever) use of spice, or synthetic marijuana, is not significantly different in Alaska compared to the U.S. 

Tobacco

- Current use of chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip (11.7%) is higher than in the U.S. (7.3%).
- Since 2007, there has been a decrease in the percentage of Alaska students who have ever tried cigarettes (32.5% in 2015).
- Long-term decreases are also seen among students who currently smoke cigarettes (11.1%), who smoke frequently (3.7%), and who smoke daily (2.6%).
- Since 2013, however, there have not been significant changes in any of the cigarette use measures.
- Alaska students are less likely to have ever used (36.1%) or currently use (17.7%) e-cigarettes as compared to the U.S. (44.9% ever use, 24.1% current use) 

Sexual Activity

- Among students who are sexually active, a higher percentage of Alaska students use both a condom and another form of birth control as compared to their U.S. counterparts.
- Since 2007, there have been significant declines in the percentages of Alaska students who have ever had sexual intercourse (35.9% in 2015), are currently sexually active (25.6%), or have had intercourse with four or more partners (8.8%).

Weight Status, Physical Activity and Nutrition

- There are no significant differences in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Alaska compared to the U.S., and trends since 2007 show no significant changes in either of Alaska's measures.
- Since 2007, there's been a decline in the percentage of Alaska students who drink soda one or more times per day.
- Since 2007, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of Alaska students who play video or computer games, or use a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day (34.3% in 2015).
- Compared to U.S. students, a significantly lower percentage of Alaska students are physically active for 60 minutes per day every day.

* Trends noted as increases or declines and comparisons noted as greater or less risk are statistically significant, $p < .05$.

Estimates not listed are included elsewhere in the report.

See page 7 for trend table.

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Comparisons, 2015

Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in Alaska Traditional and Alternative High Schools (grades 9-12)

	Alaska Traditional High School Students	Alaska Alternative High School Students	Alaska Alternative High School Students were at:
Rarely or never wore a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else	9.4%	10.9%	↔
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times during the past 30 days	14.3%	21.5%	●
Texted or emailed while driving during the past 30 days (among students who drove a car or other vehicle)	35.1%	38.8%	↔
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at/on their way to or from school on at least one of the past 30 days	8.8%	8.3%	↔
In a physical fight during the past year	20.1%	29.8%	●
Carried a weapon on school property on at least one of the past 30 days	8.2%	13.0%	●
 Experienced physical dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)	9.5%	17.0%	●
 Felt so sad/hopeless, daily for two weeks in a row, they stopped doing usual activities during the past year	33.6%	44.6%	●
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year	20.1%	28.0%	●
Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year	10.7%	19.7%	●
Smoked cigarettes on at least one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	11.1%	45.3%	●
Ever used e-cigarettes	36.1%	70.7%	●
Used e-cigarettes one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	17.7%	42.2%	●
Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	22.0%	41.8%	●
 Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours on one or more of the past 30 days (binge drinking)	12.5%	27.7%	●
Used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	19.0%	49.7%	●
Ever took prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription	14.6%	37.4%	●
Ever had sexual intercourse	35.9%	75.3%	●
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	61.9%	39.4%	●
Used both a condom during and birth control pills; an IUD or implant; or a shot, patch, or birth control ring before last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	16.2%	8.6%	●
 Were overweight	16.7%	19.8%	↔
 Were obese	14.0%	22.7%	●
Drank soda one or more times per day during the past 7 days	18.8%	22.1%	↔
 Were physically active for at least 60 minutes on each of the past 7 days	20.9%	15.9%	●
Played video or computer games, or used a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day on an average school day	34.3%	35.9%	↔

* Statistical significance based on comparison of 95% confidence intervals

 Healthy Alaskans 2020 (HA2020) health indicator.

Statistical Significance*

● less risk ● greater risk ↔ equal risk

Summary of 2015 Alaska Alternative High School Student Results*

Safety

- Among students who drive a car or other vehicle, the percentage of alternative high school students in Alaska who drive while drinking (10.5%) is significantly higher than that of the state's traditional high school students (5.6%).
- Similarly, there is a higher prevalence of students in Alaska alternative schools who rode with someone who has been drinking. The risk, however, has significantly declined since 2009.
- Texting or emailing while driving (among students who drive a car or other vehicle) is not significantly different from Alaska traditional high school students.

Violence

- Alternative high school students are no more likely than traditional high school students to be bullied on school property (20.4%) or be cyberbullied (19.8%).
- There is not a significant difference in the percentages of Alaska alternative and traditional high school students who stay away from school because they feel unsafe.
- More alternative high school students carry a weapon on school property than do traditional high school students.

Suicide and Mental Health

- Compared to Alaska traditional high school students, significantly higher percentages of alternative high school students seriously consider (28.0%), plan (22.4%), or attempt suicide (19.7%), and make a suicide attempt resulting in injury (7.1%).
- Since 2009, there has been an increase in the percentages of alternative high school students who feel sad or hopeless, seriously consider suicide, plan a suicide attempt, attempt suicide, and make a suicide attempt resulting in injury.

Tobacco

- Since 2009, there has been a decrease in the percentage of alternative high school students who have ever tried cigarettes (77.1% in 2015).
- Similar long-term decreases are seen among students in alternative schools who currently smoke cigarettes (45.3%), who smoke frequently (21.7%), and who smoke daily (15.7%).
- However, each of these cigarette smoking behaviors remains more prevalent among Alaska alternative high school students than among traditional high school students.
- Compared to traditional high school students, alternative high school students are more likely to have ever used or currently use e-cigarettes. 

* Trends noted as increases or declines and comparisons noted as greater or less risk are statistically significant, $p < .05$.

Estimates not listed are included elsewhere in the report.

See page 8 for trend table.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Greater percentages of Alaska alternative high school students report ever drinking (77.1%), currently drinking (41.8%), or binge drinking (27.7%) alcohol as compared to students in traditional high schools. The long-term trends, however, show that these behaviors are becoming less prevalent.
- Marijuana measures for ever use (78.7%) and current use (49.7%) are higher among Alaska alternative high school students than traditional high school students.
- At 29.5%, lifetime (ever) use of spice, or synthetic marijuana, is significantly higher than among traditional high school students. 

Sexual Activity

- Compared to Alaska traditional high school students, significantly higher percentages of alternative high school students report ever having sexual intercourse (75.3% in 2015), current sexual activity (54.6%), or having had intercourse with four or more partners (37.2%).
- There have, however, been significant declines in these three measures since 2009.
- Among those who are sexually active, a lower percentage of alternative high school students use both a condom and another form of birth control compared to traditional high school students.

Weight Status, Physical Activity and Nutrition

- The percentage of overweight has increased since 2013 and more alternative high school students are obese than are traditional high school students.
- Both short- and long-term trends indicate a decline in the percentage of alternative school students who drink soda one or more times per day.
- Since 2009, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of Alaska alternative high school students who play video or computer games, or use a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day (35.9% in 2015).
- Compared to Alaska traditional high school students, a significantly lower percentage of alternative high school students are physically active for 60 minutes per day every day.

Student Connectedness

- A greater percentage of alternative school students believe that their teachers care about them and give them a lot of encouragement (73.3%), as compared to traditional school students (62.1%).

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Traditional High School Trends, 2007-2015, 2013-2015 Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in Traditional High Schools (grades 9-12)

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2007-2015 Long-term Trend	2013-2015 Recent Trend
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times during the past 30 days	23.5%	21.3%	18.6%	13.1%	14.3%	●	↔
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at/on their way to or from school on at least one of the past 30 days	5.5%	6.0%	4.7%	6.2%	8.8%	●	●
Were bullied on school property during the past year	--	20.7%	23.0%	20.7%	22.8%	↔	↔
In a physical fight during the past year	29.2%	27.8%	23.7%	22.7%	20.1%	●	↔
Carried a weapon on school property on at least one of the past 30 days	8.4%	7.8%	5.7%	6.1%	8.2%	↔	↔
 Experienced physical dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)	--	--	--	9.1%	9.5%	--	↔
 Felt so sad/hopeless, daily for two weeks in a row, they stopped doing usual activities during the past year	26.9%	25.2%	25.9%	27.2%	33.6%	●	●
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year	16.5%	13.9%	14.5%	16.2%	20.1%	↔	●
Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year	10.7%	8.5%	8.7%	8.4%	10.7%	↔	↔
Smoked cigarettes on at least one of the past 30 days (current use)	17.8%	15.7%	14.1%	10.6%	11.1%	●	↔
Was in the same room as someone smoking cigarettes on one or more of the past 7 days	46.1%	39.7%	35.6%	31.1%	32.8%	●	↔
Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	39.7%	33.2%	28.6%	22.5%	22.0%	●	↔
 Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours on one or more of the past 30 days (binge drinking)	25.8%	21.7%	16.7%	12.8%	12.5%	●	↔
Used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	20.5%	22.7%	21.2%	19.7%	19.0%	↔	↔
Ever had sexual intercourse	45.1%	43.5%	38.3%	38.6%	35.9%	●	↔
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	60.8%	62.2%	59.6%	60.4%	61.9%	↔	↔
 Were overweight	16.1%	14.4%	14.4%	13.7%	16.7%	↔	↔
 Were obese	11.0%	11.9%	11.5%	12.4%	14.0%	↔	↔
Drank soda one or more times per day during the past 7 days	21.8%	20.1%	17.6%	15.8%	18.8%	●	↔
 Were physically active for at least 60 minutes on each of the past 7 days	18.7%	20.2%	21.3%	20.9%	20.9%	↔	↔
Played video or computer games, or used a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day on an average school day	23.4%	23.6%	29.8%	33.5%	34.3%	●	↔

* Significance of long-term trend based on logistic regression model controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade, $p < .05$; significance of 2013-2015 difference based on t-tests, $p < .05$.

 Healthy Alaskans 2020 (HA2020) health indicator.

Statistical Significance*

● trend shows decreasing risk ● trend shows increasing risk ↔ trend shows no change in risk

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Alternative High School Trends, 2009-2015, 2013-2015

Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in Alternative High Schools (grades 9-12)

	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009-2015 Long-term Trend	2013-2015 Recent Trend
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times during the past 30 days	29.9%	28.1%	20.5%	21.5%	●	↔
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at/on their way to or from school on at least one of the past 30 days	7.3%	6.6%	8.8%	8.3%	↔	↔
Were bullied on school property during the past year	14.8%	16.8%	16.1%	20.4%	●	●
In a physical fight during the past year	45.7%	43.5%	35.1%	29.8%	●	●
Carried a weapon on school property on at least one of the past 30 days	10.6%	9.4%	9.2%	13.0%	↔	●
 Experienced physical dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)	--	--	14.7%	17.0%	--	↔
 Felt so sad/hopeless, daily for two weeks in a row, they stopped doing usual activities during the past year	37.5%	37.9%	39.8%	44.6%	●	↔
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year	18.1%	21.2%	24.8%	28.0%	●	↔
Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year	11.3%	13.2%	14.8%	19.7%	●	●
Smoked cigarettes on at least one of the past 30 days (current use)	58.0%	47.7%	49.5%	45.3%	●	↔
Was in the same room as someone smoking cigarettes on one or more of the past 7 days	70.5%	65.0%	58.7%	58.9%	●	↔
Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days (current use)	57.0%	49.1%	46.1%	41.8%	●	↔
 Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours on one or more of the past 30 days (binge drinking)	42.7%	37.9%	34.8%	27.7%	●	●
Used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)	50.5%	47.6%	49.5%	49.7%	↔	↔
Ever had sexual intercourse	82.2%	80.4%	78.4%	75.3%	●	↔
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)	46.0%	46.9%	38.9%	39.4%	●	↔
 Were overweight	18.3%	15.8%	15.7%	19.8%	↔	●
 Were obese	19.0%	18.1%	22.3%	22.7%	↔	↔
Drank soda one or more times per day during the past 7 days	30.7%	30.6%	29.4%	22.1%	●	●
 Were physically active for at least 60 minutes on each of the past 7 days	15.2%	20.8%	17.2%	15.9%	↔	↔
Played video or computer games, or used a computer for something other than school work, for three or more hours per day on an average school day	24.7%	30.2%	38.2%	35.9%	↔	↔

* Significance of long-term trend based on logistic regression model controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade, $p < .05$; significance of 2013-2015 difference based on t-tests, $p < .05$.

 Healthy Alaskans 2020 (HA2020) health indicator.

Statistical Significance*

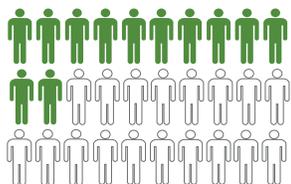
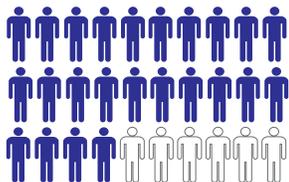
● trend shows decreasing risk ● trend shows increasing risk ↔ trend shows no change in risk

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The 2015 Alaska YRBS shows the health risks and resiliency of Alaska high school students. Consider the following, in an average classroom of 30 traditional high school students:

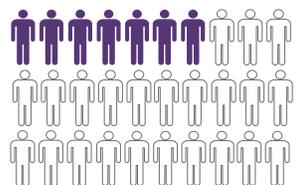
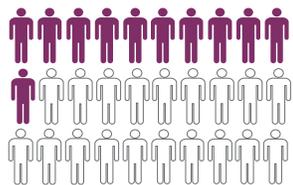
Risks

24 do not get 60 minutes of daily physical activity



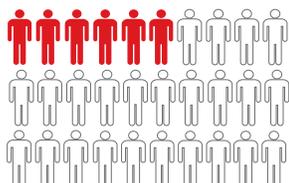
12 have tried marijuana (ever)

11 text or email while driving*



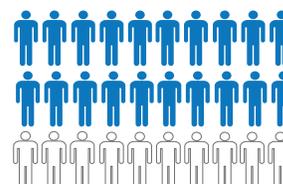
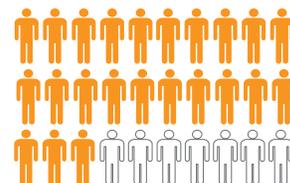
7 are bullied on school property

6 have seriously considered suicide



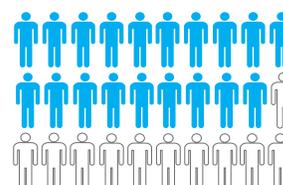
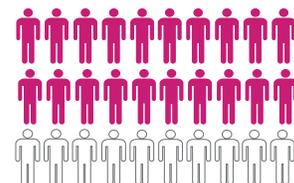
Protective Factors

23 have not consumed alcohol in the past 30 days



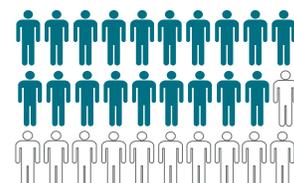
20 have never tried cigarette smoking

20 get mostly A's and B's in school



19 have never had sexual intercourse

19 agree that their teachers care about and encourage them



* Among students who drive a car or other vehicle.

For more information about the Alaska YRBS go to:
dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx

Healthy Alaskans 2020

Of the 25 Healthy Alaskans 2020 leading health indicators, eight are YRBS measures. These measures assess overweight, obesity, physical activity, tobacco use status (exclusive of e-cigarettes), alcohol abuse (consumed ≥ 5 alcoholic drinks within 2 hours), social support (having ≥ 3 non-parent adults from whom they feel comfortable seeking help), mental health (feeling so sad/helpless every day for at least 2 weeks), and interpersonal violence (ever hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend). Of these, the YRBS indicated significant declines in the tobacco use and alcohol abuse measures from 2007-2015 among Alaska traditional high school students, while mental health measures worsened. More information and current Healthy Alaskans 2020 reports are posted at: <http://hss.state.ak.us/ha2020/25LHI.htm>



Accessing Survey Data

For more detailed 2015 Alaska YRBS results, please use the following link to access the full set of YRBS tables and graphs: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbsresults.aspx>.

AK-IBIS & InstantAtlas Health Maps

Alaska YRBS data are also available by year, sex, race/ethnicity, and geographic region through the Alaska Indicator-Based Information System (AK-IBIS), a database and query system, and InstantAtlas Health Maps, a geographic information system. For health topics pages, indicator reports, and YRBS datasets, visit the AK-IBIS website: <http://ibis.dhss.alaska.gov/>.



For customizable YRBS maps, visit the InstantAtlas Health Maps website: <http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/InfoCenter/Pages/ia/instantatlas.aspx>.



Supporters of the 2015 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

Alaska Division of Public Health

Alaska Division of Behavioral Health

Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice

Alaska's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

United Way of Mat-Su

**For more information about the Alaska YRBS go to:
dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx**

October 2016

