

Healthy Youth Survey Data Biography

This data biography includes information about who created this data, and how, where, when, and why it was collected. We (the Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation Unit at Public Health – Seattle & King County) created it to help you understand where the data we analyze and share comes from and its strengths and limitations. If you have any further questions, we would be happy to provide more information or direct you to relevant resources! You can reach us at data.request@kingcounty.gov.

Who collects the data?

The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) is a collaborative effort between the Washington State Department of Health, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board. Technical support is provided by a contractor, Looking Glass Analytics.

Who owns the data?

Data are owned by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and access to the data set is through a data sharing agreement with DOH. Each school district has control over how their district-level data are presented and released.

How is the data collected?

Data are collected through an anonymous and voluntary survey that students answer on their own. Until 2018, all surveys were administered in school, on paper. In 2021, the survey was offered in both online and paper formats. Students complete the survey during one class period and the surveys are sent to an external contractor for processing.

Who is included and excluded from the data?

Public school districts choose whether to participate in the survey. The survey includes students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 enrolled in public schools across Washington. School districts with small enrollments (fewer than 150 students enrolled in grades 6, 8, 10, or 12) may also include grades 7, 9, and 11. Prior to 2021, students who are not physically present at school on the day of the survey were excluded.

Previously, HYS was offered in English and Spanish. In 2021, it was expanded to Vietnamese, Russian, and Ukrainian. Additionally, the 2021 online format option was made accessible for visually-impaired students.

Students who attend private school or are homeschooled do not participate in HYS.

Why is the data collected?

Data are collected to provide information about health risk behaviors among adolescents in Washington. Findings from HYS are used by local public health departments, Washington State DOH, community organizations and school districts to guide policy and programs that serve youth.

How often is this data collected?

Students have participated in HYS since 2002, and local county data is available starting in 2004. It is administered every two years, in even years through 2018. In 2020, survey administration was postponed until fall 2021, and going forward it will be administered in odd years.

What else is important to know about this data?

- To improve our ability to report estimates for small populations, PHSKC typically combines data from 2 survey years. The change in survey mode (paper vs. online) in 2021 may have implications on whether we can combine data from 2018 and earlier with data from 2021 and later.
- To ensure that the data we share better represent King County students, we use weighting when analyzing these data. Weighting is a statistical process used to adjust any demographic (e.g. grade or gender) imbalances between survey respondents and the broader population that they represent (for example, students in King County). This way, results will be generalizable to all King County students, not just those who participate in HYS. This is a common approach used by nearly all large-scale population-based surveys. You can learn more about weighting [here](#).
- Questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity were added in 2016 and 2018 respectively for grades 8, 10 and 12. Since its addition, the sexual orientation question has been an optional question except for the 2016 survey when it was a core question on one of the forms.

Where can I learn more about this data?

- Read more about the HYS here: <https://www.askhys.net/>
- See HYS questionnaires since 2010: <https://www.askhys.net/Survey>
- Review the PHSKC Community Health Indicators (CHI) dashboard, which summarizes some key data from HYS: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/community-health-indicators.aspx>
- Summary data and cross tabulations at the state, educational service district (ESD), or county level are available at <https://www.askhys.net/>
 - Fact Sheets: <https://www.askhys.net/FactSheets>
 - Cross tabulations: <https://www.askhys.net/Analyzer>

About data privacy and security

The Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation Unit takes data security and the privacy of all individuals represented in our data very seriously. Data are stored in a secure environment. For data sets that are not publicly available, only authorized staff are able to access them. Each data set has privacy guidelines to prevent sharing any information that may be identifiable – for example, not sharing (sometimes called suppressing) numbers when they are very small.

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