



2024 Substance Use Monitoring Report: Key Findings and Trends

Public Safety Committee | Item 4
Dr. Octavio Rodriguez Ferreira, Principal Criminal Justice Researcher
November 21, 2025

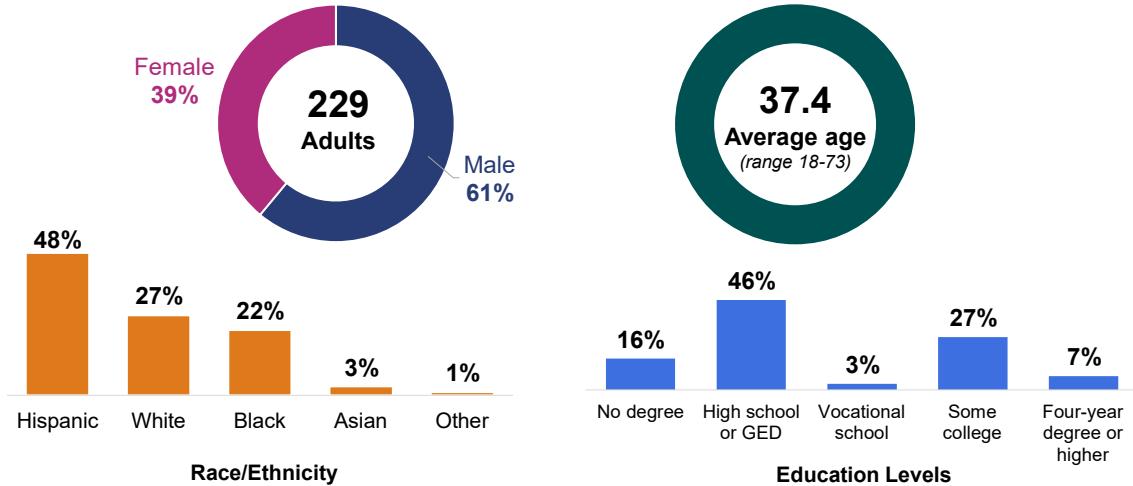
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Background

- Funded by National Institute of Justice since 1987
- Solely supported with local funds since 2004
- Interviews with adults and juveniles booked into local detention facilities
- Urinalysis identifies recent drug use
- Serves as platform for other research
- Provides key data for variety of stakeholders

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2024 Sample Mostly Hispanic, Male, 37 y/o, with High-School or Higher

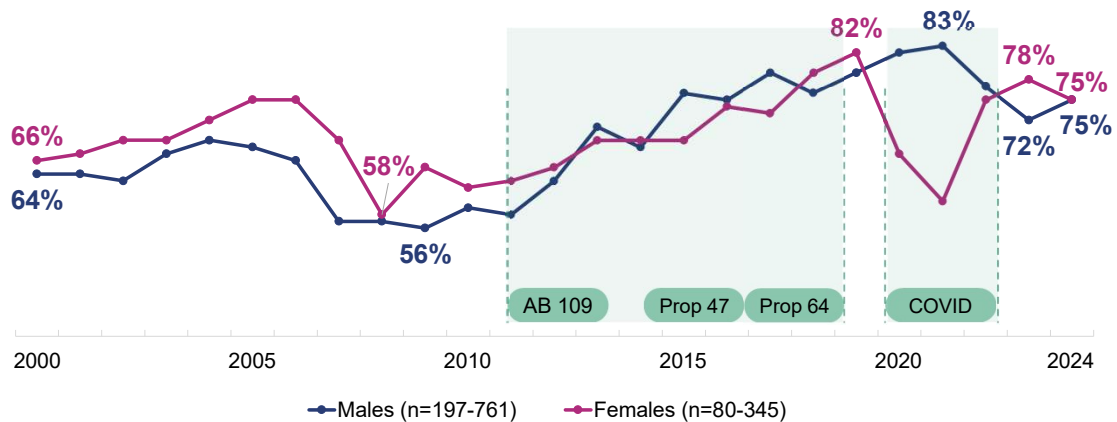


Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Legislative and Policy Changes Coincide With Major Trends

Percentage of Respondents Testing Positive for Any Substance, by Sex (2000–2024)



Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Drug Use Patterns Vary by Substance

Substance	Ever Tried	Average age 1 st Tried	Used Last Year (Of Those Who Tried)	Average Number of Days Used Past 30	"Very Easy" to Obtain
Marijuana	88%	15.0	60%	17.2	75%
Meth	63%	21.5	76%	18.7	44%
Powder Cocaine	53%	20.7	32%	6.7	39%
Rock Cocaine	27%	23.0	52%	3.5	57%
Heroin	26%	24.0	29%	13.9	37%

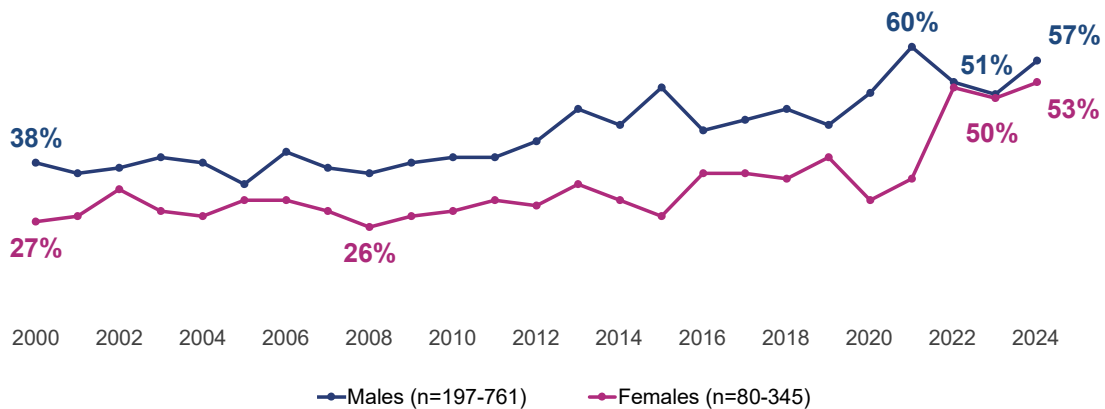
Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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More Than Half Test Positive for Marijuana, Female Rate Nearly Doubling Since 2000

Percentage of Respondents Testing Positive for Marijuana, by Sex (2000–2024)

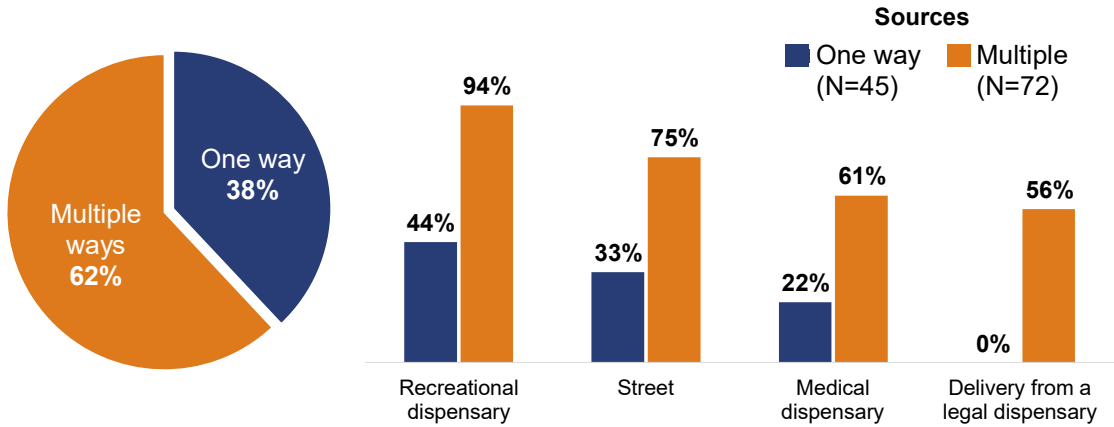


Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Despite the Popularity of Legal Marijuana Sources, Street Purchases Remain Common



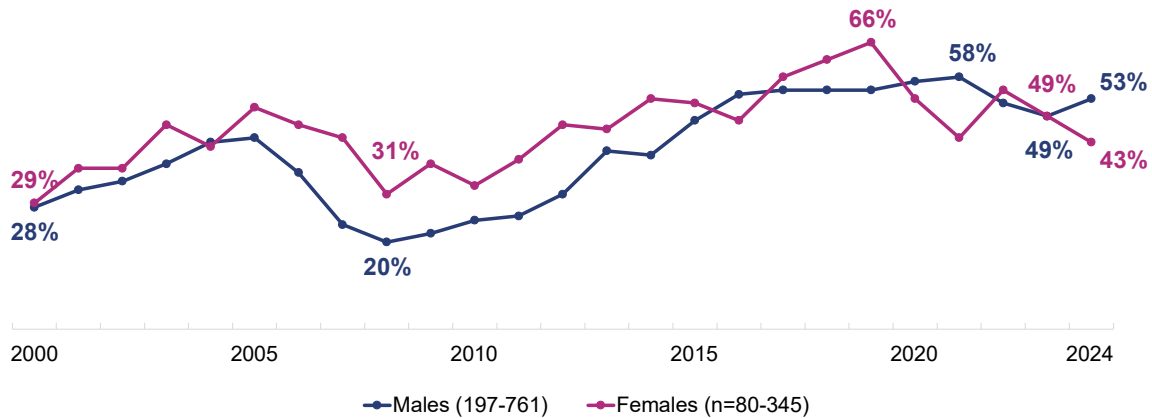
Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Half of Respondents Positive for Meth in 2024, Higher Rates Among Males

Percentage of Respondents Testing Positive for Meth, by Sex (2000–2024)



Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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How Often and How Much do Respondents Consume?

Those who reported using meth in the past 30 days reported usage patterns.



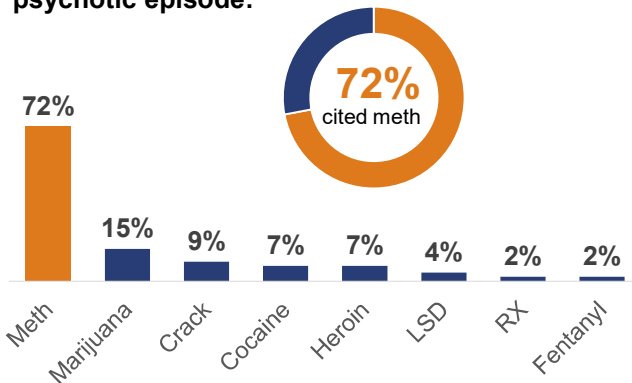
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Source: SANDAG, 2024

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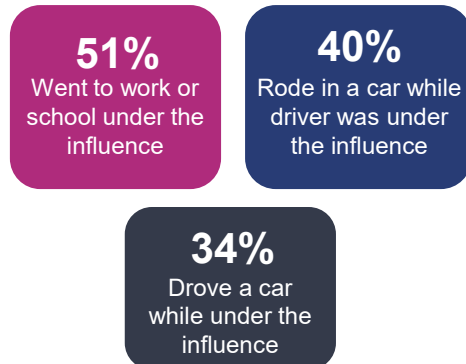
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Self-Reported Health and Behavioral Risks

Of those who reported a drug-induced psychotic episode:



Risky behaviors in the last 12 months:

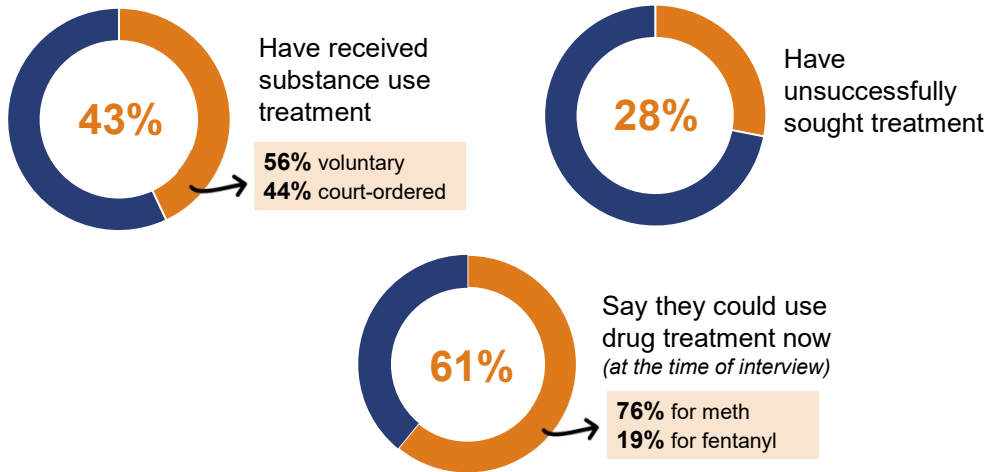


Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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About Two in Five of Those who Tested Positive for Meth Have Received Treatment



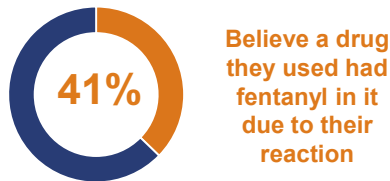
Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
 Source: SANDAG, 2024

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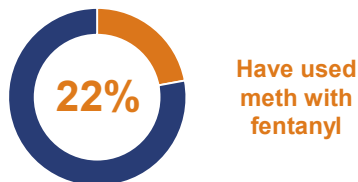
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Fentanyl and Meth Are More Commonly Being Used Together

Of those who reported prior meth use...

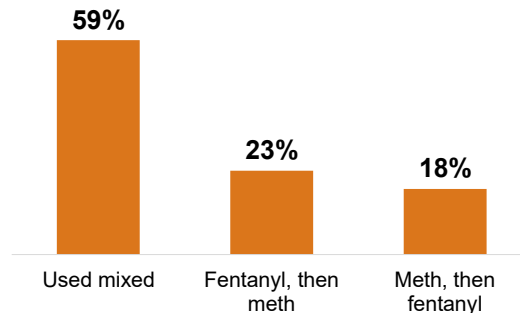


Of those positive for meth ...



How are they used?

...Most users reported mixing both substances



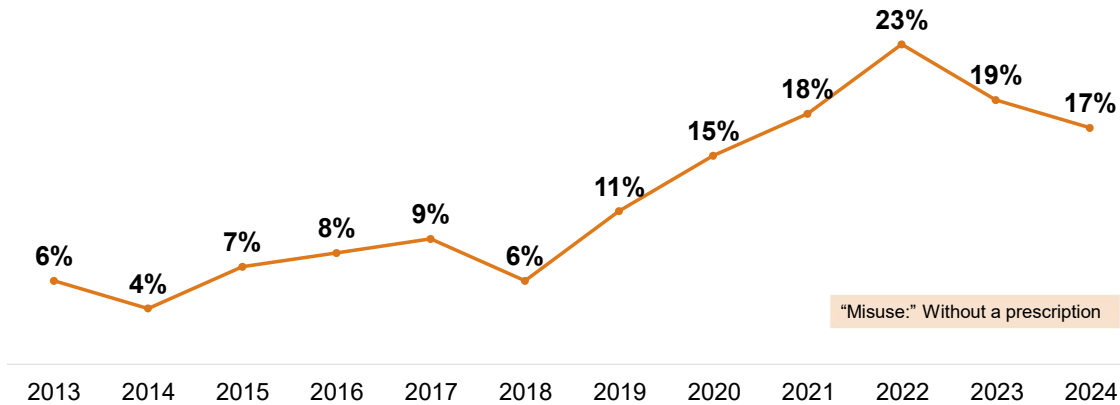
Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
 Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Reported Fentanyl Misuse Shows Slight Decrease Following Peak in 2022

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Fentanyl Misuse (2013-2024)



Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Patterns of Fentanyl Use Among Respondents

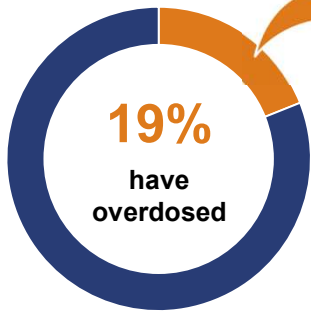
- **65%** of those who tried it reported using it within the last 12 months
- Average age at first use: **35.5**
- Most said they prefer it in **pill form (47%)**, followed by **powder (40%)**
- Of those who used it in the past 30 days:
 - **86%** say it is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain
 - Average number of days used was **13.8**

Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Fentanyl Was the Leading Cause of Overdoses



Most common drug that led to overdose was fentanyl (**44%**)

60% had naloxone administered to them, an average of **3.4** times

Most common administrators were friends (**42%**), fire/EMS (**31%**), law enforcement (**23%**), and family (**19%**)

27% have administered naloxone themselves, an average of **7.1** times

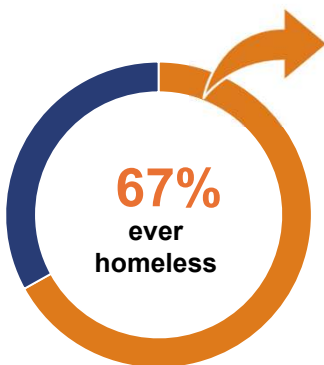
59% say they know how to obtain naloxone if needed

Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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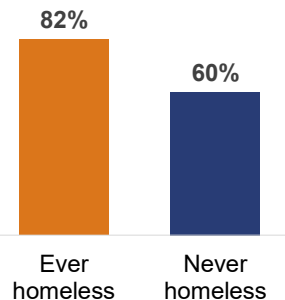
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The Link Between Drug Use, Homelessness and Crime



- **82%** previous arrest
- **59%** positive for meth at the time of interview
- **53%** have been victims of a crime
- **34%** have committed a crime to support drug use habit(s)
- **32%** spent their first night after previous release from jail on the street

Percentage positive for any drug



Note: Cases with missing data are not included.
Source: SANDAG, 2024

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Key Takeaways

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents tested positive for a substance. Males and females tested positive at the same rate.
- About half tested positive for meth. Many reported prior substance use treatment, but also said they could benefit from treatment now.
- Nearly one in five reported misusing fentanyl.
- Nineteen percent (19%) have overdosed, with fentanyl accounting for 44% of cases.
- Most respondents (67%) reported a history of homelessness. This group had higher rates of positive drug tests than those without such histories.

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