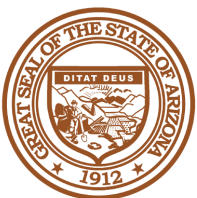


# Arizona Governor's Youth Commission

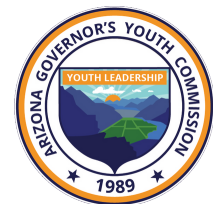
Final Report



# 2022-2023



The Governor's Office  
of Youth, Faith  
and Family



[gyc.AZ.gov](http://gyc.AZ.gov)

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## Commission Purpose and Structure

Established in 1989, the Governor's Youth Commission (GYC) is a diverse body of high school students from across Arizona. Commissioners work to identify and address the greatest challenges facing Arizona youth through innovative community impact projects and establishing connections with young leaders across the state. The GYC is committed to empowering generations of civically engaged and service-oriented leaders to create a brighter future for Arizona. Commissioners are selected based on their leadership, communication abilities, and demonstrated commitment to their school and community.

The GYC achieves its mission through five workgroups:

- **Distracted Driving Workgroup**  
The Distracted Driving Workgroup aims to combat distracted driving by raising awareness about its impact and educating peers on safe driving practices.
- **Domestic Violence Workgroup**  
The Domestic Violence Workgroup aims to raise awareness of the warning signs and red flags of an unhealthy relationship and connect Arizona teens with resources and support.
- **Education Workgroup**  
The Education Workgroup works in collaboration with community partners and youth statewide to identify gaps and barriers within the education system to better inform Arizona high school students, teachers, and government officials on pathways to success.
- **Mental Health Workgroup**  
The Mental Health Workgroup aims to gather resources on suicide prevention and mental health services to support Arizona high school students and their families.
- **Substance Abuse Workgroup**  
The Substance Abuse Workgroup aims to spread awareness of available resources for preventing teen substance use and abuse.



**Governor's Youth Commission  
2022 – 2023**

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## Commissioners Serving Their Communities

To empower generations of civically engaged and service-oriented leaders in Arizona, GYC members take part in opportunities to serve their local communities, while additionally engaging other students, friends, and family members to join them. During the 2022-2023 year, GYC members completed 5,286 hours of service across the state of Arizona and solicited an additional 19,245 hours from fellow students, friends, and family members.



## Commission Workgroup Reports

### Distracted Driving Workgroup

The 2022-2023 Distracted Driving Workgroup worked to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving among high school students. Distractions such as phones, friends, radios, and visual happenings, can quickly take the attention of teenage drivers and lead to possibly life-threatening situations. Workgroup members created a public awareness campaign that brings to light how negative driving habits have personally impacted individuals within their local communities, provides information and resources to learn about how to practice safe driving habits, and shareable fliers for Arizonans to download and get involved. Information collected from website analytics was used to create recommendations on how to tailor outreach efforts to teens in order to increase awareness of distracted driving behavior and decrease the number of distracted driving casualties among Arizona teens.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)***

- Website analytics show that the majority of visitors were using mobile operating systems. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) should tailor current and future teen-related campaign assets to include materials that are best fit to be seen on mobile devices to increase outreach efforts to Arizona teens.
- Website analytics show that peer-to-peer education and awareness strategies worked best to reach the target audience of Arizona high school teens. ADOT should tailor current materials and/or when developing future campaigns around preventing distracted driving to include members of the GYC Distracted Driving Workgroup in order to increase the reach of new Arizona teen drivers.
- Creating short-form marketing assets to amplify messaging on popular teen-based social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok will aid in increasing outreach to more Arizona youth.

#### ***Distracted Driving Workgroup 2022-23***

- Increase awareness of DriveSafeAZ.org and its resources by continuing to utilize the established QR code on marketing materials.
- Collaborate with the 2023-2024 Substance Abuse Workgroup for a possible anti-drinking and driving project.
- Utilize website analytics and search engine optimization for potential improvements on reaching more Arizonans through targeted marketing strategies.
- Build on established partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) who are already working to prevent distracted driving in teens to amplify audience reach.

Through these recommendations provided by the 2022-2023 Distracted Driving Workgroup, Arizona organizations can tailor outreach efforts for Arizona teens that will increase awareness

of the dangers and adverse effects of driving while distracted. The effectiveness of the increased awareness will decrease distracted driving casualties among Arizona teens.

### **Domestic Violence Workgroup**

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate; it is an issue affecting Arizonans in all communities, regardless of age, race, gender, economic status, religion, nationality, or educational background. To increase awareness about recognizing the red flags in relationships, the 2022-2023 Domestic Violence Workgroup partnered with BLOOM365 to host two community outreach events where 30 attendees had the opportunity to hear from Teen Survivor Speakers, learn more about the available resources for preventing teen dating and domestic violence, as well as explore the multitude of ways to support individuals impacted by teen dating and domestic violence.

In addition, the workgroup conducted a Hygiene Product Drive for domestic violence shelters across the state to support organizations that provide advocacy efforts, services, and assistance to domestic violence victims and their family members. Through this effort, approximately \$21,155.52 worth of resources were collected from 50 donation sites that benefited eight domestic violence shelters across three counties. This contribution will aid in raising awareness of community needs at a local level, and positively impact the livelihoods of individuals affected by domestic violence.

Lastly, members successfully worked to submit and receive a proclamation from Governor Katie Hobbs' recognizing February 2023 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, highlighting Arizona's commitment to continue to provide training and outreach to community members, schools, and families about healthy relationships among young people.

### **Recommendations:**

- Coordinate community outreach events in conjunction with awareness months (i.e. Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month is recognized during the month of February and National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is annually recognized during the first week of May).
- Be conscious of the target demographic when selecting dates and locations for events; work with your school administration to host community outreach events during assemblies or after-hours to increase attendee turnout; conduct a hygiene product drive in the fall/early spring to avoid conflicts with vacation breaks.
- Continue to expand partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) to host additional drives and events throughout the year. Partnering with trusted CBOs will help amplify events/drive awareness while supporting local organizations by providing critical items necessary for victims who have experienced abuse.



## Education Workgroup

Using recommendations from the 2021-2022 Education Workgroup, the 2022-2023 Education Workgroup focused their efforts on raising awareness on the importance of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as well as alternatives to post-secondary education throughout Arizona high schools. To do so, the workgroup consolidated resources from across Arizona to develop statewide and region-specific fliers about opportunities for one-on-one FAFSA assistance, connecting to trade/vocational schools, and additional information to better prepare Arizona high school students to make a decision that is best fit for them and a career they're passionate about. These efforts aided in recommendations that will serve to create thriving Arizona communities for generations to come.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***Arizona Board of Regents***

- Partner with the GYC Education Workgroup to achieve the statewide FAFSA completion goal of 52% through the [Arizona FAFSA Challenge](#).

#### ***2023-2024 Education Workgroup***

- Utilize crafted video interviews with parents, former high school students, and college counselors and expand them to include FAFSA Advisors.
- Host in-person informational resource fairs with organizations included in the fliers to increase awareness of available opportunities to students.
- Increase promotion of the fliers around when the FAFSA opens (usually October 1st) utilizing different mediums of outreach (i.e. social media advertisements).
- Expand partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) to help amplify awareness of the available resources within each county while continuing to support local organizations.

Through these recommendations from the 2022-2023 Education Workgroup, Arizona high school students will be better informed of available, local resources that assist in the process of achieving a post-secondary education, as well as other opportunities for students that decide otherwise.

## Mental Health Workgroup

Using recommendations from the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Mental Health Workgroups, the 2022-2023 Mental Health Workgroup developed a [Yellow Ribbon Club Toolkit](#) for students and school administrations to establish and maintain a [Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program®](#) in Arizona high school across the state. The previous Mental Health Workgroups identified the critical need for creating a safe space at school for teens to discuss their mental health challenges, as well as connecting to resources that can help improve their mental well-being during a time of crisis as this negatively affects their classroom performance. By creating safe

spaces for students to voice their mental health struggles, and connect to available, life-saving resources and services, Arizona communities can support building strong foundations needed to prevent death by suicide among Arizona teens.

### **Recommendations:**

- Utilize the created social media posts and interviews to increase awareness of the toolkit.
- Utilize the school contact sheet to follow up on the implementation of clubs using the toolkit;
- Focus targeting outreach on rural communities.
- Build partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) who are already working to prevent youth/teen suicide by making suicide prevention accessible by removing the barriers to help to increase awareness of local resources.

Through these recommendations from the 2022-2023 Mental Health Workgroup, Arizona high school students can support peer-to-peer outreach, awareness, education, and prevention strategies that help create safe spaces to build strong foundations around voicing their mental health struggles. These efforts will lead to reducing the stigma surrounding talking about when teens are struggling with their mental health, help connect those in need to available, life-saving resources and services, and ultimately reduce the number of deaths by suicide among Arizona teens.

### **Substance Abuse Workgroup**

Using recommendations from the 2021-2022 Substance Abuse Workgroup, the 2022-2023 Substance Abuse Workgroup focused its efforts to expand the established [one-stop-shop](#) of early prevention-focused resources for teens to offer additional resources around [harm reduction strategies for teens](#) and [general substance misuse and abuse information for parents](#). The new Linktree, now available in both English and Spanish, is more user-friendly, making it easier to navigate the county-specific information and resources, ensuring Arizonans of all ages are able to connect to local and culturally competent services that best fit their needs. From February 2023 to May 2023, the site received 140 views and 93 clicks from three counties with harm reduction strategies for teens showing the most activity. These efforts aided in creating a statewide needs assessment to identify counties/regions that require additional targeted outreach to increase awareness about the available substance misuse and abuse resources in Linktree.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)***

- Linktree analytics support a critical need for an Arizona-specific statewide substance abuse prevention and resource guide for teens. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) should be the designated agency to house the information in the Linktree in order to increase reach to Arizona teens.

### ***2023-2024 Substance Abuse Workgroup***

- Continue to monitor Linktree analytics to track general reach and the provided resource effectiveness; utilize social media advertisements to target Arizona communities not yet listed as being site visitors.
- Finalize the decided-on project earlier in the term to limit running into problems during the distribution and promotional stages.
- Take advantage of the pre-existing relationship established with GOYFF staff member Staff Sergeant Deborah Stoks, Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist with the Arizona National Guard CounterDrug Taskforce, to discuss potential collaboration during Red Ribbon Week, recognized the last week of October, and National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, held on the last Saturday of the months of April and October.

With substance abuse threatening the safety of communities across the state, recommendations from the 2022-2023 Substance Abuse Workgroup will assist in improving the efficacy of future measures on how best to combat teen substance misuse and abuse, inciting positive change within local communities.