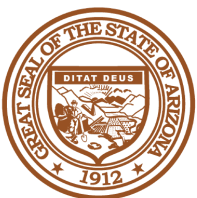


Arizona Governor's Youth Commission

Final Report



2021-22



The Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith
and Family



[BeSeenBeHeard.AZ.gov](https://www.BeseenBeHeard.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 a 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 on available resources for preventing teen substance use and abuse.



**GOVERNOR'S YOUTH COMMISSION
2021 – 2022**

Aarav Dugar

Arizona College Preparatory
Maricopa

Delaney Dickey

Vista Grande High School
Pinal

Isaac Kan

Desert Vista High School
Maricopa

Aidan Lin

Brophy College Preparatory
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Elizabeth Bartolino

Phoenix Country Day School
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Kamila Barrios

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Angela Holman

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Phoenix Country Day School
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Kendell Young

Seton Catholic Preparatory
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Bijan Razaghi

Scottsdale Christian Academy
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Franky Sandoval

Yuma Catholic High School
Yuma

Landon Rigg

Blue Ridge High School
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Brianna Hadfield

Willcox High School
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Gabriel Sauls

Desert Vista High School
Maricopa

Lily Dalsin

BASIS Ahwatukee
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Brooke Horne

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Catherine Griffith

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Sedona Red Rock High School
Yavapai

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Pima

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Morenci High School
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Catalina Foothills High School
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Sonya Colattur
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Catalina Foothills High School
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Suhani Patel
Paradise Valley High School
Maricopa

Toby Chang
BASIS Prescott
Yavapai

Tyler Lewis
Morenci High School
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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 2021-22 year, GYC members completed 5,319 hours of service across the state of Arizona and solicited an additional 38,915 hours from fellow students, friends, and family members.



Commission Workgroup Reports

Distracted Driving Workgroup

The 2021-22 GYC 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 developed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about the dangers and negative effects of driving while distracted. Additionally, the Workgroup created a survey to aid in assessing distracted driving behaviors and habits among Arizona teens. Information collected from the survey 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)

- YouTube analytics show that the majority of viewers were using Android and IOS 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.
- Peer-to-peer education and awareness strategies show to have worked well based on the impressions from the PSA. From this data, ADOT should utilize the Distracted Driving Workgroup to tailor current materials, and develop future campaigns about distracted driving to include teens and increase outreach efforts to Arizona high school students.

Distracted Driving Workgroup 2022-23

- Project engagement was challenging throughout the school year. Looking into other means of reaching Arizona students on more popular platforms, such as Instagram or Snapchat, rather than a Google Form, may result in a larger number of responses. In addition, the use of a continued and heavy social media presence by both the members of the Distracted Driving Workgroup, and through the GYC itself may exhibit greater outreach of the project.
- Create partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) that are already working to prevent distracted driving in teens. The capability of the GYC is limited and partnering with trusted CBOs will help amplify outreach efforts. The increase in outreach efforts will lead to an increase in response rates that will give more reliable data around the attitudes and behaviors of distracted driving in Arizona teens.

Through these recommendations provided by the 2021-2022 Distracted Driving Workgroup, Arizona organizations can tailor outreach efforts for Arizona teens that will increase awareness of the dangers and negative effects of driving while distracted. The effectiveness of the increase in awareness will decrease the distracted driving casualties among Arizona teens.

Domestic Violence Workgroup

Domestic violence is an issue affecting Arizonans in all communities, regardless of age, race, gender, economic status, religion, nationality, or educational background. The 2021-22 Domestic Violence Workgroup planned a Hygiene Product Drive for domestic violence shelters across the state in order to support organizations that provide advocacy efforts, services, and assistance to domestic violence victims *and* their family members. Additionally, Workgroup members raised awareness of the warning signs and red flags of an unhealthy relationship through the statewide #LightingAZPurple campaign. Through continued efforts that support victims *and* families that have experienced domestic violence, we can strengthen Arizona communities and #EndDVinAZ.

Recommendations:

- In Navajo County, many community members were not able to donate to the shelter. Outreach to other counties and communities to help collect supplies specific to Navajo County could provide larger donation numbers.
- One of the struggles commissioners faced during this project was school approval, which in some cases took longer than expected; we recommend preparing for the time it might take for schools to approve drives, an estimated 2-4 weeks.
- Commissioners should look into school-based partnerships that are already established in order to streamline the approval process for schools to share messages.
- Expand partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and host multiple drives throughout the year. Partnering with trusted CBOs will help amplify awareness of the available resources within each county while continuing to support local organizations through critically needed items.
- While conducting the drive, commissioners realized the efficiency of the donation collection could be improved. One area of opportunity includes creating a list of needs that is readily available online so community members can identify what the greatest need of that given shelter is.

Through the 2021-22 Domestic Violence Workgroup efforts, approximately \$3,101.84 worth of resources were collected and distributed to domestic violence shelters across the state in an effort to support and uplift victims and families throughout Arizona. These items will prove critical in supporting Arizona families and communities. This contribution will hopefully go beyond simply raising awareness and will directly impact the livelihoods of those affected by domestic violence.

Education Workgroup

High school students face many challenges throughout their time in the education system. To identify and respond to these specific difficulties and provide student-specific perspectives, the 2021-22 Education Workgroup partnered with the [Northern Arizona University \(NAU\)'s Nizhoni Academy](#) to develop a survey that assessed college readiness among 9th-12th grade high school students in Arizona. The survey addressed multiple factors, including barriers to postsecondary education, fear/anxiety surrounding the college application process and what it entails, and what students wish they knew about the college application process before they began. Survey results aided in recommendations that will serve to better inform Arizona's high school students, educators, and government officials on the gaps and barriers to post-secondary education.

Key Findings

Survey results indicate cost as being a primary barrier to post-secondary education for high school students in Arizona. This includes the cost of submitting applications to college, as well as the cost of attending college. Other significant factors that students consider are the location of the school and the affordability of specific college options.

In addition, many responses suggested students were not well informed as to how to complete or access the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). 36.6% of respondents shared that they had never heard of the FAFSA. Our data shows no correlation between FAFSA awareness and students' rural/urban location or demographic. However, there is a correlation between FAFSA awareness and students' grade level. As indicated by the survey, upperclassmen are far more likely to be aware of what the FAFSA is.

Recommendations:

45 students (11.1%) indicated that presentations, counseling, or workshops would be useful resources for college preparation. The Workgroup recommends that Nizhoni Academy should present information in the following areas:

- 59 (14.5%) survey responses indicated an interest in College Preparation, Essays, and the Application Process. The Workgroup believes that due to their similarity, this category of data can be combined with the 16 (3.9%) survey responses indicating interest in finding the right college, bringing this category to the highest number of responses. The Nizhoni Academy should use the above mediums to present information from this category to better inform students on how to apply to college effectively.
- 71 (17.4%) survey responses indicated that information regarding the college experience would be most useful to them during the college application process. This includes information regarding college tours, classes, majors/minors, student life, etc. The Nizhoni Academy can host presentations from college representatives to provide students with this information and/or direct students to websites/resources that offer this information. Additionally, student ambassadors of Nizhoni Academy can give their

personal experiences with college life and offer recommendations to these prospective students.

- 69 (17.0%) survey responses indicated that information about the FAFSA, financial aid, scholarships, and costs would be the most useful during the college application process. Access to information about financial aid options may reduce the impact that cost has on students' ability to obtain a post-secondary education opportunity. The Nizhoni Academy can hold workshops to educate its participants on FAFSA through presentations, guest speakers, and tutorials on how to complete and access the FAFSA. In the same way, information about tuition costs and scholarships can also be presented to students.
- 65 (16.0%) survey responses indicated an interest in career and technical education (CTE) and trade school options. Thus, the Nizhoni Academy can create resources with the above mediums for CTE and trade schools.
- As shown above, data supports the claim of there being a correlation between FAFSA awareness and student grade level - upperclassmen are more likely to know about the FAFSA. The Nizhoni Academy can focus on educating underclassmen on what FAFSA is and how to access and complete it. This can increase the amount of overall awareness of the FAFSA across all high school grade levels.
- The largest category of responses was "Not Sure", which was indicated by 82 (20.1%) of students. The Workgroup does not find this statistic to be significantly useful, although it indicates a general lack of awareness about college resources. This may suggest that students overall need more awareness about college preparation.
- A possible future collaboration with the 2022-23 GYC Education Workgroup and the Nizhoni Academy after the implementation of recommendations to the program, can help provide additional information and insights through a new methodology and outreach focused on successfully reaching 9th-12th grade high school students in Arizona.

Through these recommendations from the 2021-22 Education Workgroup, Arizona high school students will be better informed on the process of how to achieve a post-secondary education as well as other opportunities available for students that decide otherwise. Additionally, Arizona educators and government officials should tailor current and future programs and initiatives around high school education, college applications, and post-secondary education systems based on these recommendations in order to create thriving Arizonans for generations to come.

Mental Health Workgroup

To aid in ongoing efforts to connect Arizona teens to mental health services and support, the 2021-2022 Mental Health Workgroup collaborated with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) to assess the effectiveness of the [Start a Conversation](#) campaign. Workgroup members created a survey to help identify the barriers to outreach efforts, and create recommendations on strategies that the department and other key stakeholders can utilize in present and future campaigns, will help amplify outreach efforts and connect more teens to mental health supports.

Recommendations:

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)

- Acquire feedback from high school-aged youth during the campaign development process
- Conduct post-campaign analysis to gather feedback and make adjustments for future campaigns.

Through these recommendations from the 2021-22 Mental Health Workgroup, ADHS can increase awareness and outreach efforts that effectively reach 9th-12th grade high school students in Arizona. In addition, these recommendations can also be utilized by other state agencies and key stakeholders to improve the cost-effectiveness of messaging in campaigns and outreach efforts to Arizona teens.

Substance Abuse Workgroup

School settings remain a primary source for education around substance abuse prevention, but seem to be playing a smaller and smaller role in educating students on the use and effects of substance abuse. As a result, ignorance of this issue has grown in the last few years. In an effort to spread awareness of the consequences of substance misuse and abuse across Arizona, the GYC Substance Abuse Workgroup created a [Linktree](#) that provides resources to 9th-12th grade Arizona high school students specific to each county across the state. By focusing on early intervention strategies aimed to help teenagers identify signs and exposure of addiction *before* being exposed, personal or otherwise, will raise awareness of the topic. This will directly provide tools to students to combat such a widespread issue and will aid in future Arizonans being free of substance misuse and abuse.

Recommendations:

The 2022-2023 Substance Abuse Workgroup should continue to expand and improve on the Linktree through the following:

- Increase awareness through additional outreach efforts
 - The next workgroup should focus on creating social media graphics to promote the Linktree.
- Upgrade version of Linktree
 - Linktree allows users the opportunity to pay for an upgraded version of the platform. The upgraded version would allow for more data to be captured, including the geographical area of where the Linktree was viewed.
- Continue to analyze and adjust as needed
 - The CTR of the Linktree supports the overwhelming need for this teen-based resource. Analytics of the Linktree should be done on a regular basis to take-off and/or make additions to the links that would benefit members' communities based on the local needs of residents.

With substance abuse threatening the safety of communities across the state, the recommendations from the 2021-2022 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.