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Volume 2, Issue 2

IACSUB
ILLINOIS ASSESSMENT OF COLLEGE SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORS

# DATA BRIEF

## Cannabis Use & Behaviors

Volume 2, Issue 2

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- **Where are students using? (p.3)** Review of data regarding where students are using cannabis.
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- **What type and why? (p.4)** Review of data regarding the types of cannabis students use and why they use cannabis.
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- **Intentions to change and perceived use by others (p.6)**

**and more, plus summary.**


# 2026 IACSUB Findings on Cannabis Use in Higher Education

The Illinois Assessment of College Substance Use Behaviors (IACSUB) drew information from 470 participants spanning nine colleges and universities across the state of Illinois. The purpose of the survey was to identify substance use behaviors among college students, such as frequency, location, and reasons for use. With new data, stakeholders will be able to identify substance use challenges in higher education and their related communities. Students were asked questions pertaining to alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, as well as other drugs.

This brief will address cannabis use of college students from many angles, including: frequency of use, where students are using cannabis, the consequences of cannabis use, how students are obtaining cannabis, and why they choose to use it.

The main behaviors data address how students use it, intentions to change usage, and general attitudes about the drug. In addition, students' perceptions of the cannabis culture and CBD at their school were assessed.

## Cannabis Frequency usage during a 30-day period

When asked to indicate cannabis use in the last month, 29.46% (*n*=38) of participants indicated using more than 20 days, 25.58% (*n*=33) of participants indicated that they did not use, and 15.5% (*n*=20) of participants indicated using 1 day. A total of 129 participants responded to this survey question.

*Figure 2.1*

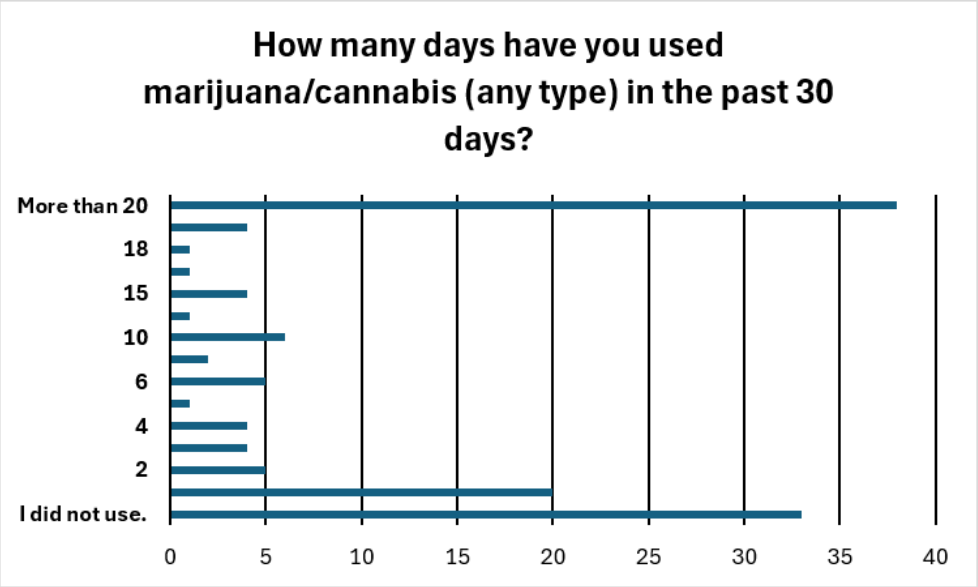
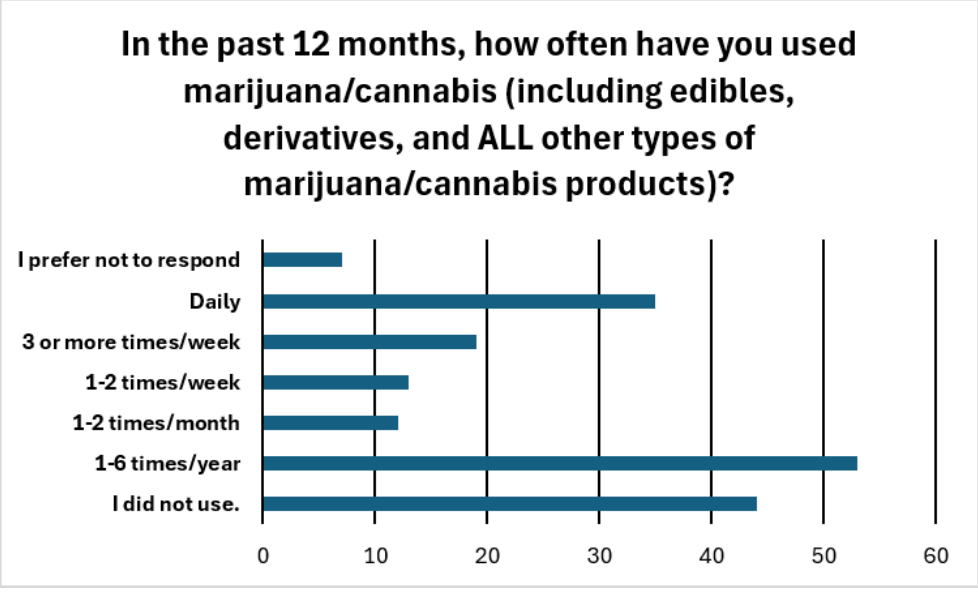



*Figure 2.2*



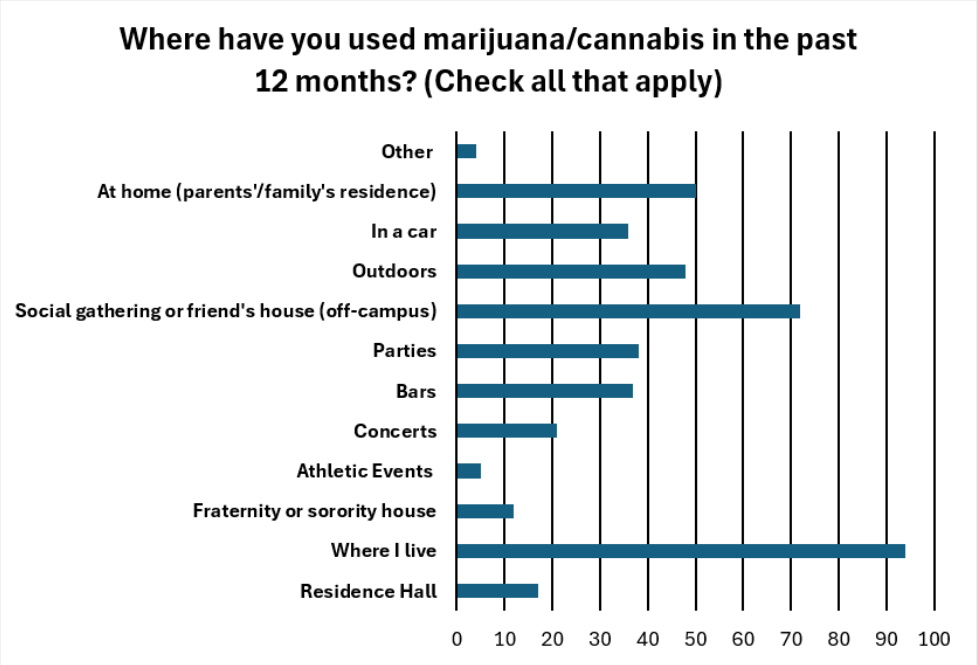

## Cannabis Frequency usage during a 12-month period

When asked to indicate cannabis use in the last year, 28.96% (*n*=53) of participants indicated using between one and six times, 24.04% (*n*=44) of participants indicated that they did not use, and 19.13% (*n*=35) indicated that they were daily users. A total of 183 participants responded to this survey question.

## Where are students using Cannabis?

When asked to indicate where they were using cannabis, 21.66% (*n*=94) indicated that they used where they live and 16.59% (*n*=72) indicated that they had used at social gatherings or at friend's houses off campus. A total of 434 selections were recorded for this survey question and participants could check all that apply.

*Figure 2.3*

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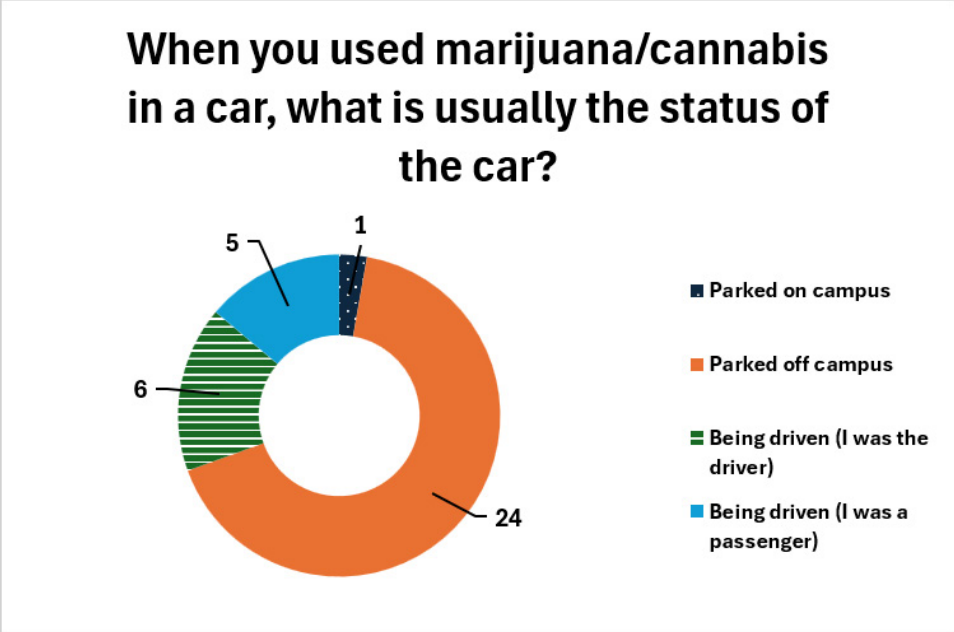



## When you used marijuana/cannabis in a car, what is usually the status of the car?

A total of 66.67% (*n*=24) of participants indicated that they had used cannabis in vehicles while they were parked off campus. A total of 36 participants responded to this survey question.

# What type of Cannabis products are student using?

The most common form of cannabis products used by Illinois college/university students according to this survey were edibles, smoking, and vaping. Out of a total of 655 responses received for this survey question, 15.88% (*n*=104) of responses indicated using edibles, 15.11% (*n*=99) of responses indicated smoking, and 12.98% (*n*=85) of responses indicated vaping.

*Figure 2.5*

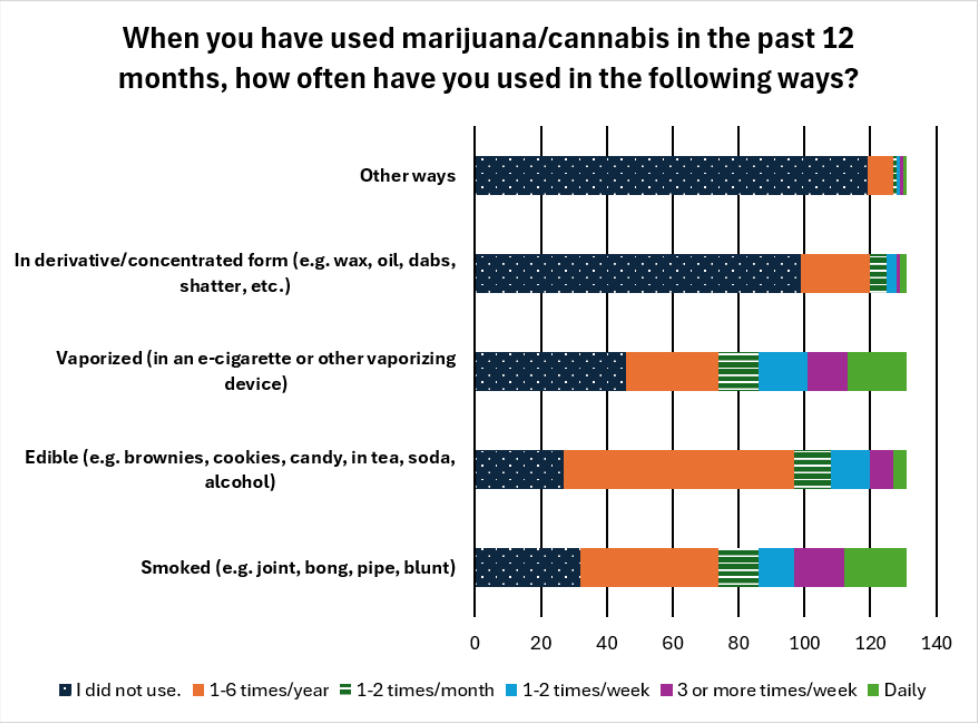
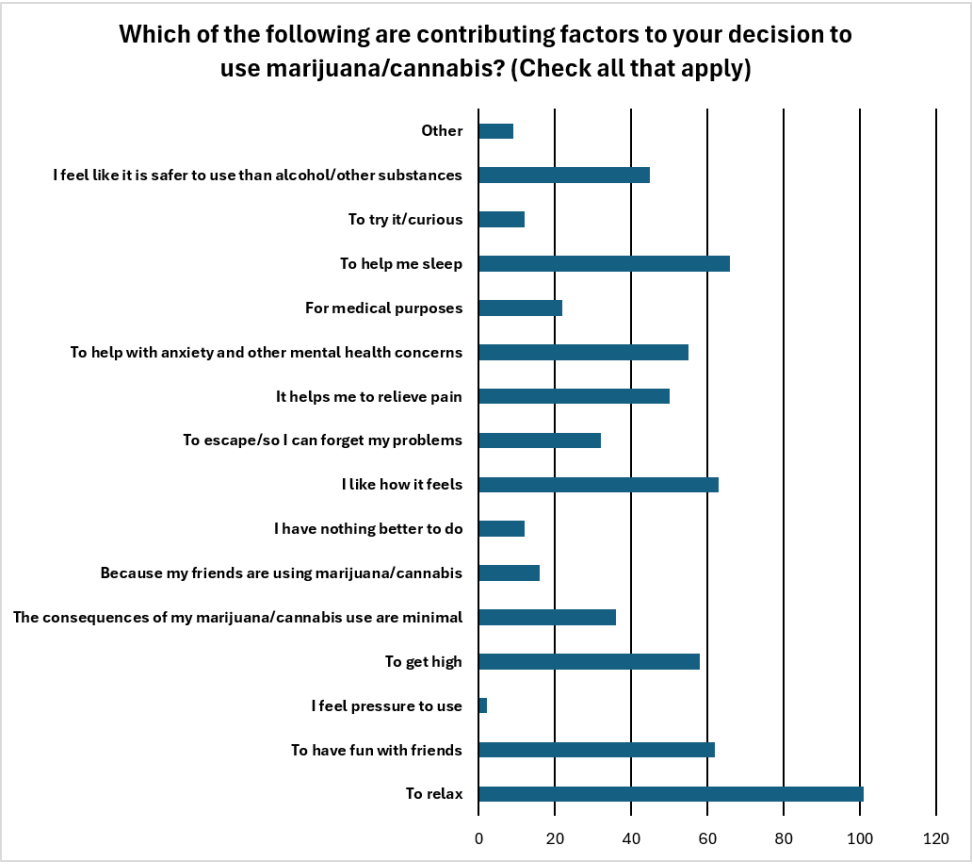



*Figure 2.6*




# Why are students using Cannabis?

When asked to indicate contributing factors that led to their decision to use cannabis, 15.76% (*n*=101) of participants indicated that they did so "To relax". Another 10.3% (*n*=66) of participants answered "To help me sleep" and 9.83% (*n*=63) of participants said "I like how it feels". A total of 641 selections were recorded for this survey question and participants could select all factors that applied.

## Consequences related to using Cannabis

When asked to indicate experiences that students had as a result of using cannabis, 39.29% (*n*=66) of participants indicated that they had "Felt in a fog, sluggish, tired, or dazed the morning after using", 19.64% (*n*=33) of participants indicated that they "Needed to use more marijuana/cannabis because of an increased tolerance", and 19.05% (*n*=32) of participants indicated that they had "Attended class after using marijuana/cannabis". A total of 168 participants responded to this survey question.

*Figure 2.7*

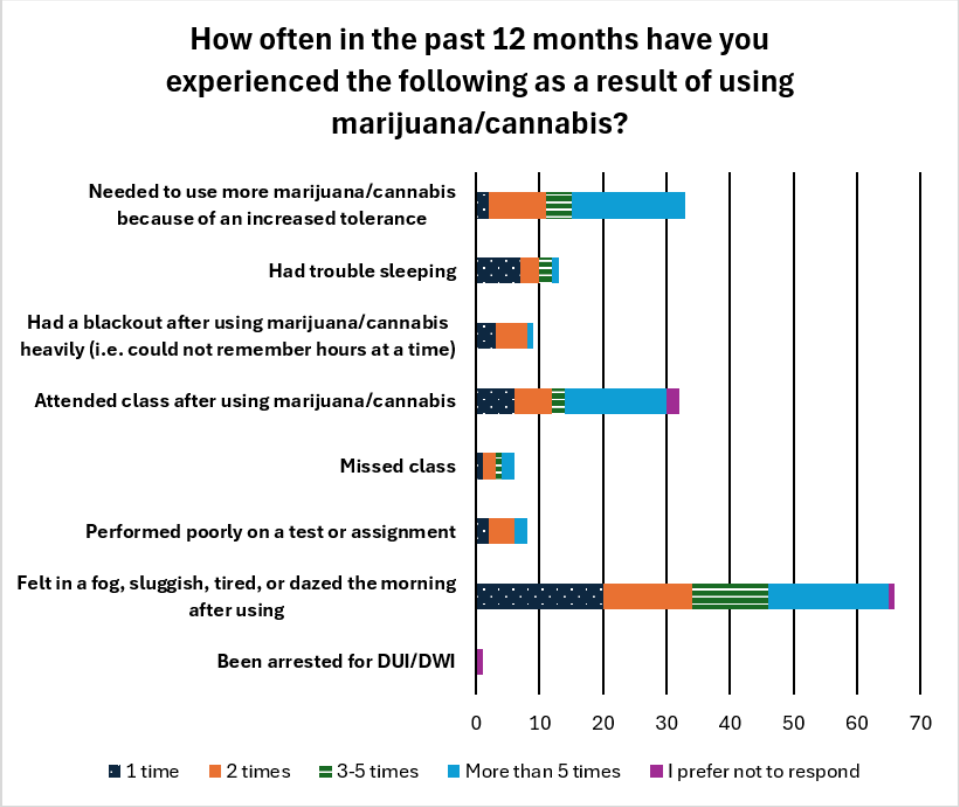
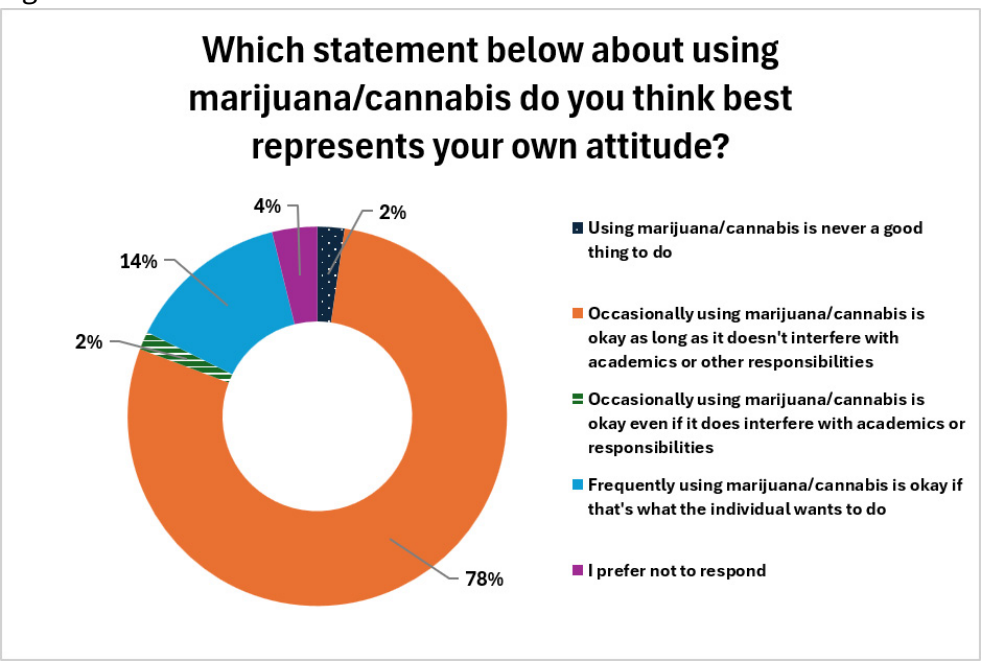



*Figure 2.8*




## Own attitude toward Cannabis

When asked to indicate their attitude toward cannabis use, 78% (*n*=102) of participants thought that using cannabis was okay as long as it did not interfere with academics or other responsibilities. A total of 130 participants responded to this survey question.

## Intentions to change?

When asked to indicate which statement best fits their intentions to change the way they use marijuana/cannabis, 60% (*n*=78) of participants said that they saw no need to change their marijuana/cannabis use, and 25% (*n*=32) of participants said that they are currently trying to use marijuana/cannabis less often and/or quit. A total of 130 participants responded to this survey question.

*Figure 2.9*

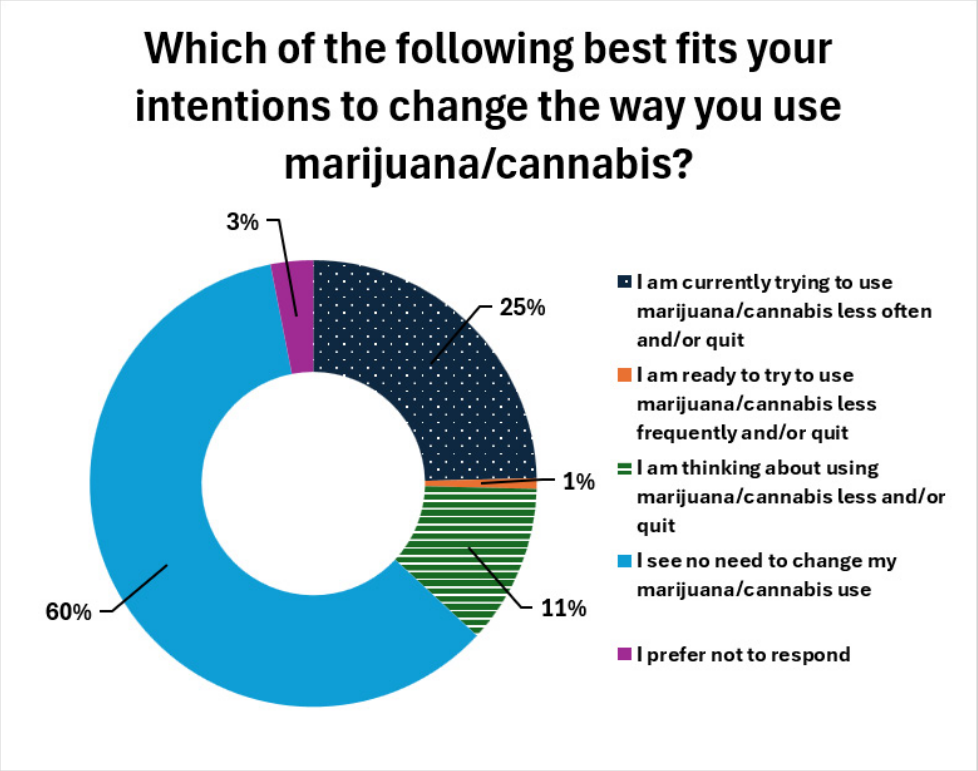
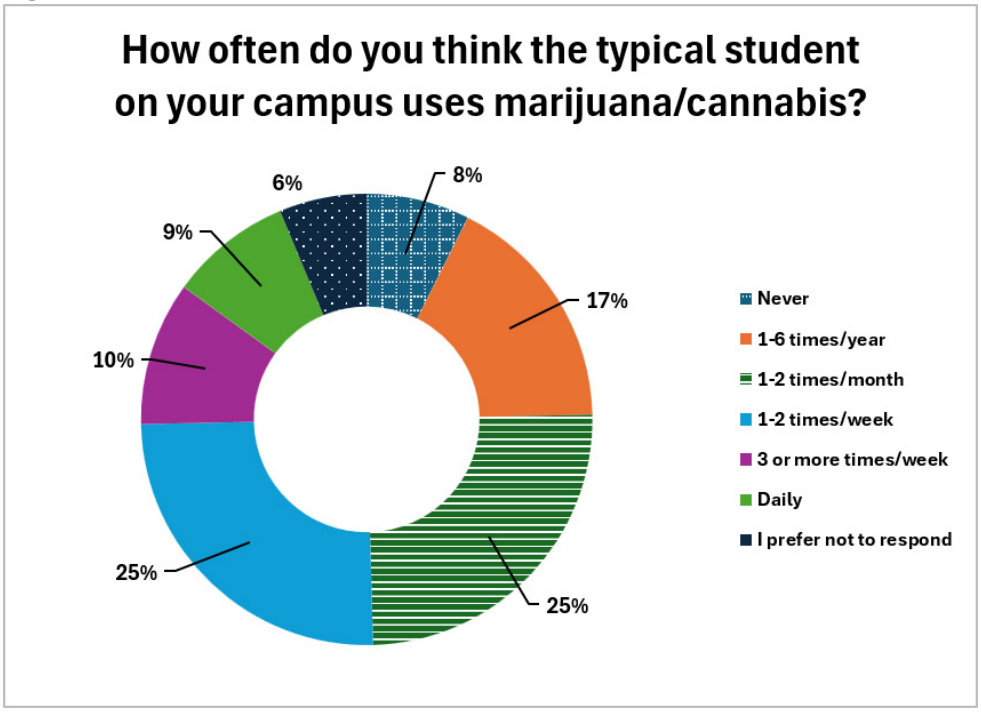



*Figure 2.10*




## How often do students think others are using Cannabis on campus?

When asked to indicate how often they thought others were using cannabis on campus, 25% (*n*=112) of participants indicated 1-2 times/week. Another 25% (*n*=111) of participants indicated 1-2 times/month. A total of 446 participants responded to this survey question.

## Do you have a marijuana/cannabis prescription or medical card?

When asked to indicate whether or not they had a marijuana/cannabis prescription or medical card, 90% (*n*=163) of participants said that they did not. A total of 181 participants responded to this survey question.

*Figure 2.11*

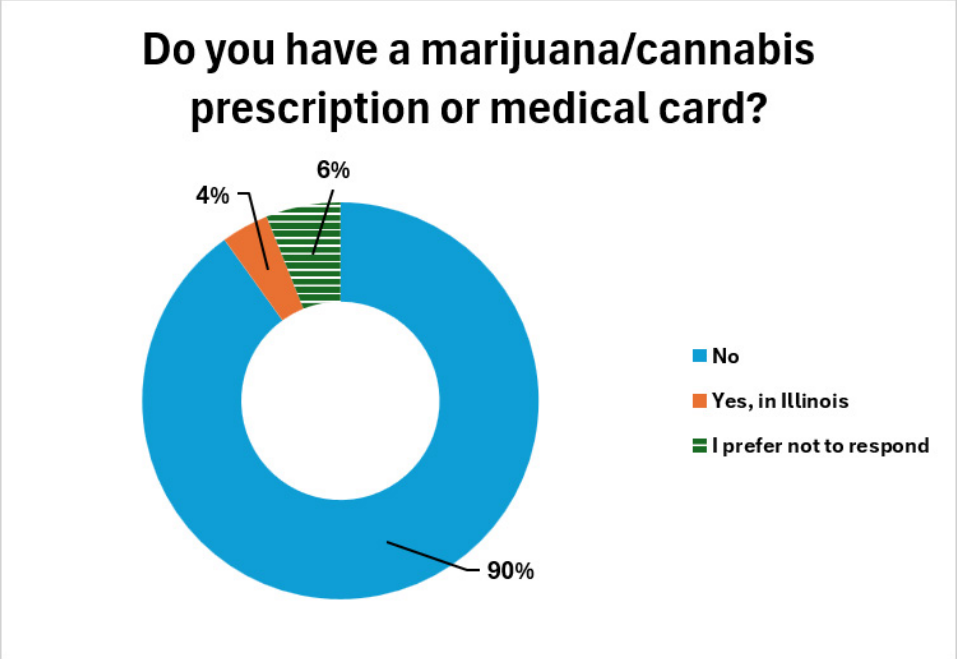
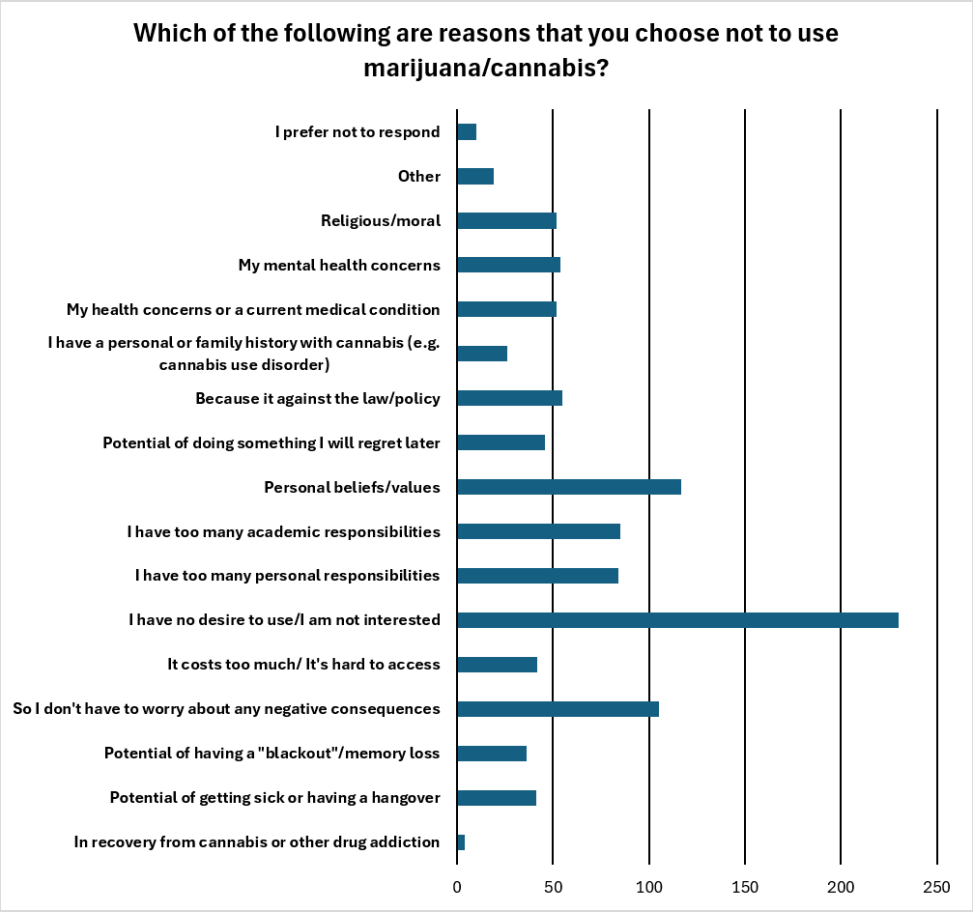



*Figure 2.12*




## Why do students choose not to use cannabis?

When asked to indicate why they choose not to use marijuana/cannabis products, 21.74% (*n*=230) of participants indicated they had no desire to use or were simply not interested, 11.06% (*n*=117) of participants answered that it was due to personal beliefs/values, and 9.92% (*n*=105) said they did not use because they do not want to worry about any negative consequences. A total of 1,058 responses were recorded for this survey question and participants could select as many reasons as applied to them.

## CBD use in past month

When asked to indicate CBD use in the past year, 88% (*n*=390) of participants indicated that they had not used CBD products in this time frame. A total of 446 participants responded to this survey question.

*Figure 2.13*

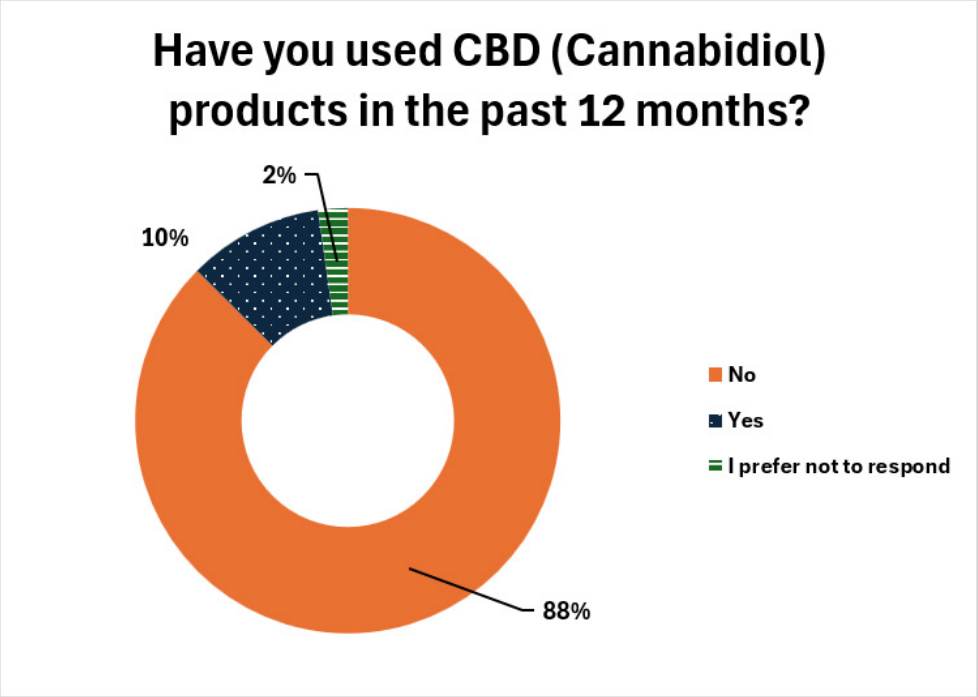
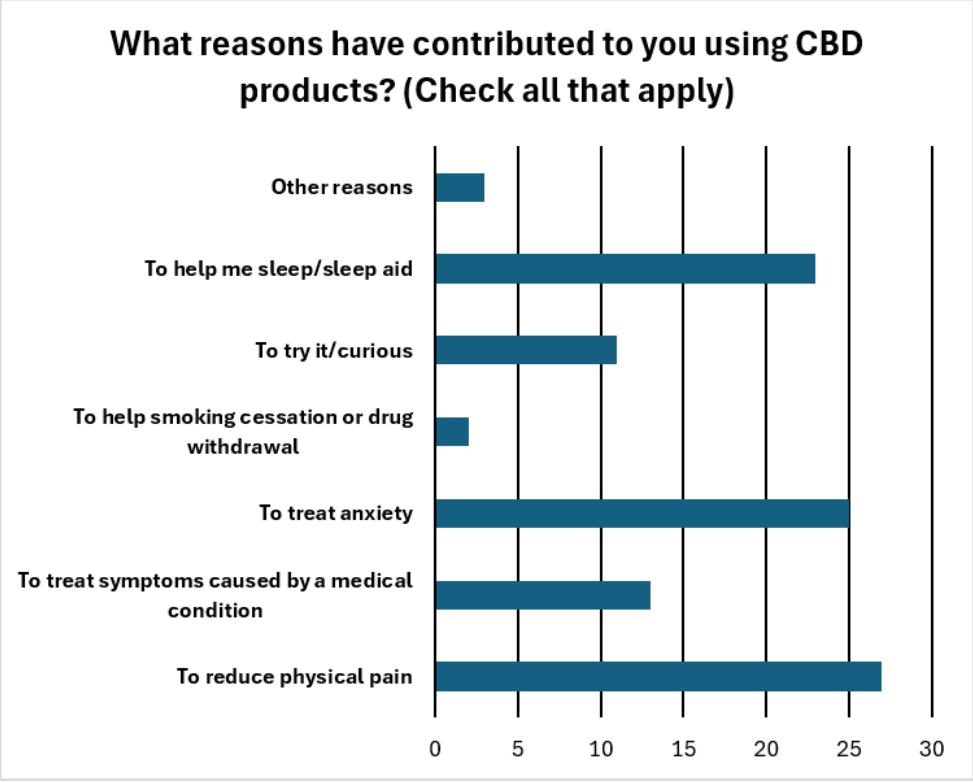



*Figure 2.14*




## Why are students using CBD?

When asked to indicate reasons why they had used CBD products, 25.96% (*n*=27) of participants selected "To reduce physical pain", 24.04% (*n*=25) of participants selected "To treat anxiety", and 22.12% (*n*=23) of participants selected "To help me sleep/sleep aid". A total of 104 participants responded to this survey question.

# SUMMARY

When asked to indicate frequency of use in the past 30 days, the most frequently selected response was more than 20 days in that time frame. When asked about frequency of use during the past year, the most selected answer was 1-6 times/year. The most frequently selected location to use this drug was where the students live.

A total of two thirds of survey question participants disclosed using marijuana/cannabis while parked off campus in a car. The most common ways that students used marijuana were edibles, smoking products, and vaporizers. The most popular reason for students to use marijuana was to relax.

The most commonly selected consequence of marijuana use was that the users felt in a fog, sluggish, tired, or dazed the morning after using. The most common attitude towards marijuana that students had was that using the drug was okay as long as it did not interfere with academics or other responsibilities.

More than half of participants indicated seeing no need to change their marijuana use. A quarter of survey participants thought that the typical student on campus was using 1-2 times per week and another quarter of participants thought it was 1-2 times per month.

Almost no survey participants have a prescription or medical card. When asked why they did not use, the most common reasons were that they had no desire to, due to personal beliefs or values, and so they would not have to worry about negative consequences. The vast majority of participants did not use CBD products in the past 12 months. Those who did use CBD products, did so to treat physical pain, anxiety, and as a sleep aid.

# RESOURCES

Illinois Higher Education Center (2026). Reprint of IACSUB Survey. *Statewide AOD Survey*, 1-78.

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Contact us via email at IHEC@eiu.edu

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