

Costs of Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse/Abuse

November 2025

Prevalence of substance use and abuse in the United States¹

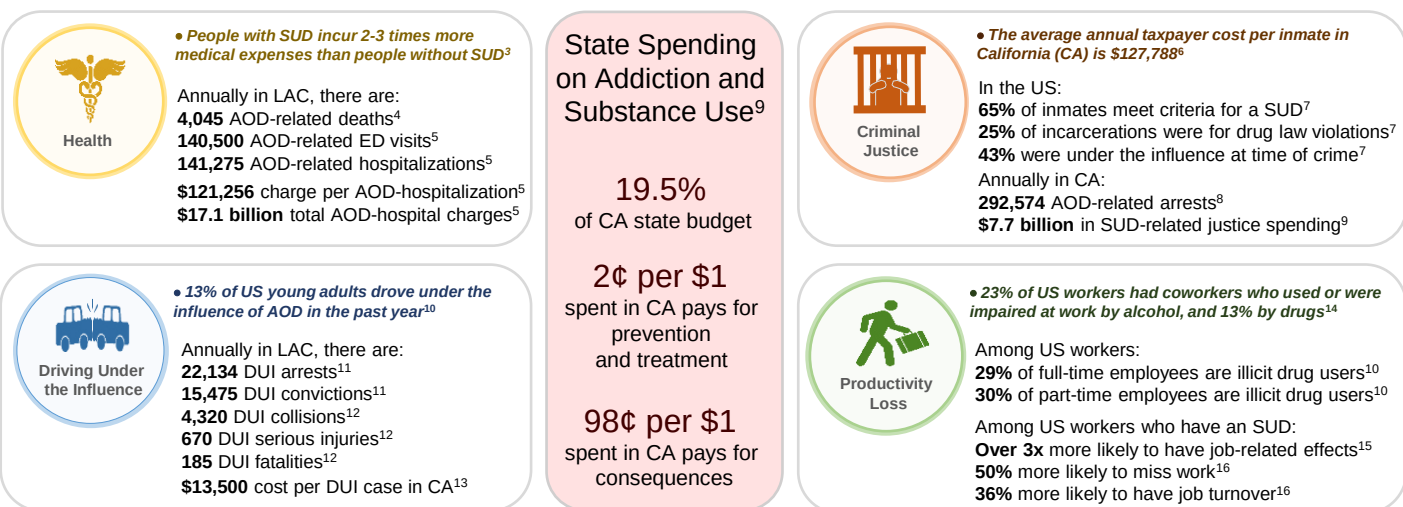
Age group (years)	Alcohol		Rx		Illicit Drugs			Overall
	Binge drinking ^a	Alcohol use disorder ^b	Rx opioid misuse ^b	Marijuana use ^a	Cocaine use ^b	Illicit drug use ^b	Drug use disorder ^b	
Youth (12-17)	3.5%	3.0%	1.5%	6.0%	0.3%	15.1%	6.6%	7.8%
Young Adult (18-25)	26.7%	14.4%	2.6%	24.1%	2.3%	38.1%	17.8%	25.9%
Adult (26+)	21.0%	9.7%	2.8%	15.1%	1.5%	24.8%	8.9%	16.4%
Total (12+)	20.1%	9.7%	2.6%	15.4%	1.5%	25.5%	9.8%	16.8%

Percents are for year 2024. Rx opioid: Prescription pain relievers. Binge drinking: 5 or more drinks (for male) or 4 or more drinks (for female) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

Substance use disorder based on DSM-5 criteria for drug or alcohol use disorder. Drug use includes use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine; or any use of prescription pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, or sedatives. ^a In the past month ^b In the past year

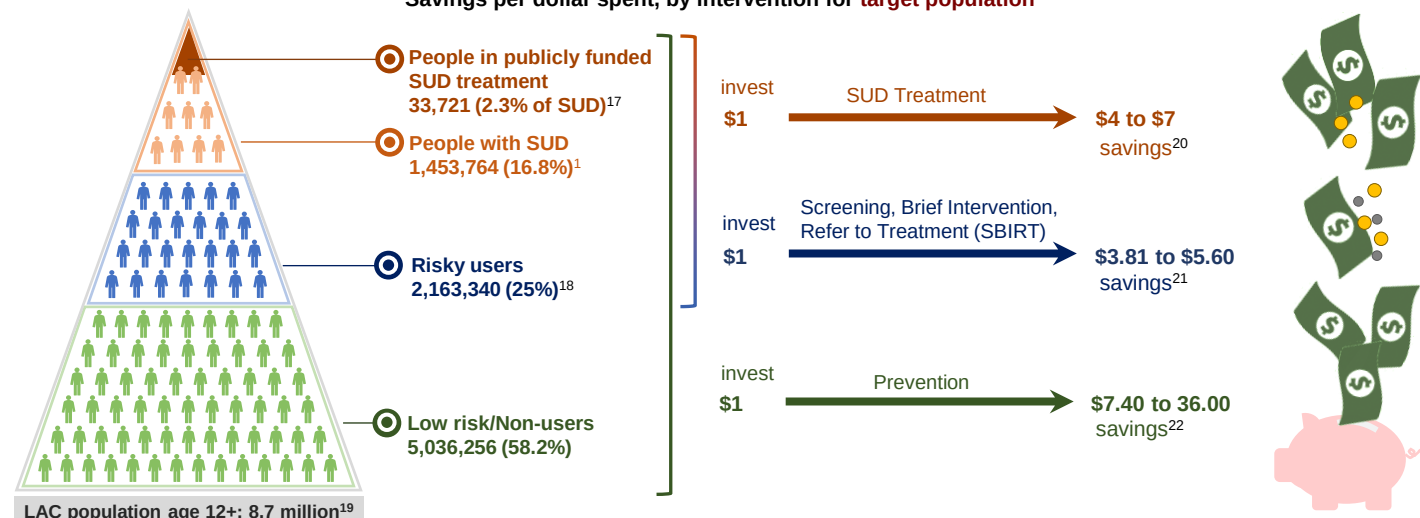
Alcohol and other drug (AOD) use results in a heavy **disease** and **economic** burden

Alcohol and other drug use in LAC costs **billions** annually in tangible costs²



Investments in prevention, screening, and treatment yield substantial **cost savings**

Savings per dollar spent, by intervention for **target population**



For substance use disorder treatment in LAC, call at 844-804-7500, or visit [Service & Bed Availability Tool \(SBAT\)](#)

For more information on substance use disorders in LAC, visit <http://ph.lacounty.gov/sapc>.

For more information regarding this data brief, please contact Tina Kim, PhD at tkim@ph.lacounty.gov

SAPC Data Brief

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References and Notes

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2024 National Survey of Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables.

- In 2024, an estimated 16.8% of the US population aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder (SUD).
- Young adults aged 18-25 years had the highest prevalence of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and use disorder among all age groups.
- An estimated 1,453,764 people aged 12+ in Los Angeles County (LAC) population needed SUD treatment, based on the 2024 US SUD prevalence (16.8%) and the average annual population aged 12 or older in LAC for 2020-2024.

2. Fact sheet prepared by Ted R. Miller. Total Direct and Indirect Costs of SUD in LAC. Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. 2012.

- Tangible costs of SUD, including medical, wage and household work, public services, property damage, and motor vehicle crash costs, amounted to nearly \$13 billion (\$9.5 billion for alcohol and \$3.4 billion for illicit drugs) in LAC in 2012.

3. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. Addiction Medicine: Closing the Gap Between Science and Practice. 2012.

- People with SUD incur 2-3 times more medical expenses over their lifetimes compared to people who do not have an SUD.

4. Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology (OHAE), Los Angeles Department of Public Health. Drug or alcohol induced underlying cause of death. OHAE-Generated Death Files. 2020-2024. Data as of 6/3/2025.

- On average from 2020-2024 in LAC, there were 4,045 deaths each year that listed an AOD-related underlying cause of death on their death certificates, accounting for 5.3% of all deaths. Note: AOD includes all drugs, including for therapeutic use.

5. Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). Emergency Department and Inpatient Discharge Data Set. California Department of Public Health.

- On average from 2019-2023 in LAC, there were 140,500 ED visits, and 141,275 hospitalizations that listed an AOD-related condition as the principal or other diagnosis or external cause of injury each year. Note: AOD includes all drugs, including for therapeutic use.
- The mean charge per AOD-related hospitalization in 2019-2023 was \$121,256, totaling about \$17.1 billion each year. All costs were adjusted for inflation to 2024 US dollars.

6. Legislative Analyst's Office. The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor. How much does it cost to incarcerate an inmate? California's Annual Costs to Incarcerate an Inmate in Prison. September 2025.

- The average annual cost to incarcerate an inmate in California prisons was \$127,788 in the 2025-2026 enacted budget. This includes expenditures for security, inmate health care, facility operations and records, administration, inmate food and activities, rehabilitation programs, and other costs.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of these costs are for security and inmate health care, while 4% were for rehabilitation programs.
- The average annual cost increased by about \$78,900 (161%) since 2010-2011. The higher costs in 2025-2026 were driven by court orders related to health care and employee compensation.

7. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University. Behind Bars II: Substance abuse and America's prison population. 2010.

- Among inmates incarcerated at federal or state prison or county jails in the US, 65% meet medical criteria for an SUD; 25% were incarcerated for drug law violations, including possession or use, trafficking, or other unspecified substance offenses; and 43% were under the influence of AOD at the time of the crime.

8. California Department of Justice. Open Justice. Arrests Statistics. Los Angeles County Arrests. Crime in California 2024.

- On average from 2020 to 2024 in California, there were a total of 292,574 AOD-related arrests each year, of which 21,779 were for felony offenses (narcotics, marijuana, dangerous drug, and other drug law violations), and 270,795 were for misdemeanor offenses (driving under the influence, drunk, and drug offenses).
- On average from 2020 to 2024 in LAC, there were a total of 4,403 felony offenses, accounting for about 20% of the state total.

9. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University. Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets. 2009.

- Substance use and addiction accounts for about 19.5% of the California state budget. In 2005, \$7.7 billion, or 82.2% of the total justice (adult corrections, juvenile justice, judiciary) spending in California was related to substance abuse. Government spending for substance abuse for prevention and treatment was 339 million (1.7%), compared to the \$19.5 billion (98%) in spending on its consequences in California.

10. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Detailed tables. Tables 8.30B, 1.24B.

- In 2024, 12.6% of US young adults aged 21-25 reported driving under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs in the past year.
- In 2024, among US adults aged 18+ years, 29.1% full-time employees and 29.5% part-time employees reported using illicit drugs in the past year. Past year illicit drug use was highest among young adults aged 18-25 years at 42.0% of full-time employees and 37.8% of part-time employees.

11. California Department of Motor Vehicles. 32nd Annual Report of the California DUI Management Information System. 2025.

- In LAC, on average from 2017-2021, there were 22,134 arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI). About 67% of DUI arrests were convicted. There were an average of 15,475 DUI convictions per year from arrests in 2017-2020.

12. Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley. 2025.

- On average from 2020-2024 in LAC, 4,320 traffic collisions (10.3% of all collisions), 670 serious injuries from traffic collisions (16.2% of all serious injuries from traffic collisions), and 185 traffic fatalities (23.2% of all traffic fatalities) involved alcohol or drug(s) each year.

13. California Highway Patrol (CHP). Impaired Driver Enforcement Programs. Accessed 11/17/2025.

- According to CHP, DUI cases can cost about \$13,500. DUI costs include vehicle towing and storage (\$187); booking, fingerprinting, jail costs (\$156); fines (\$468); penalties (\$780); attorney and legal fees (\$2,557); car insurance increases (\$8,652); DUI victim funding (\$100); driver license reinstatement (\$100); and DUI classes (\$500).

14. Frone MR. Workplace Substance Use Climate: Prevalence and Distribution in the U.S. Workforce. J Subst Use. 2012;71(1):72-83. doi:10.3109/14659891.2010.531630

- Nearly a quarter (23%) of the US adult workforce reported being exposed to a coworker who had used or was impaired by alcohol during the workday in the past year. About 13% were exposed to coworker who was impaired or using illicit drugs during the workday in the past year.

15. Lambrechts MC, Vandersmissen L, Godderis L. Alcohol and other drug use among Belgian workers and job-related consequences. Occup Environ Med. 2019;76(9):652-659. doi:10.1136/oemed-2019-105690

- Workers with an alcohol use disorder were 3.6 times more likely, and workers with an illicit drug use disorder were 5.8 times more likely to have job-related effects (tardiness, absenteeism, loss of productivity, workplace injuries, and traffic incidents during commute, conflicts with coworkers, and sanctions by employers).

16. Goplerud E, Hodge S, Benham T. A Substance Use Cost Calculator for US Employers With an Emphasis on Prescription Pain Medication Misuse. J Occup Environ Med. 2017;59(11):1063-1071. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000001157

- Workers with SUD miss 50% more work compared to their peers, and 36% are more likely to report having more than one employer in the previous year.
- Workers in recovery who reported having received SUD treatment some time in the past and have not had an SUD in the past year missed fewer workdays compared to the general workforce.

17. Los Angeles County Participant Reporting System (LACPRS) and Sage data. Substance Abuse Prevention and Control. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

- On average from FY1920-FY2324, there were 33,721 clients each fiscal year admitted to publicly funded SUD treatment programs in LAC.

18. Rawson R. California's Forum on Integration: Integrating Substance Use Disorder Services and Primary Care: Overview and Rationale. UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs. Dec 8, 2010. Estimated from slide 3.

- An estimated 20-25% of the US population use alcohol or drugs in a risky manner, but do not meet criteria for a SUD. Population estimates for risky users and nonusers are rounded.

19. County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department, Information Technology Service, Urban Research-GIS Section. Population and Poverty Estimates of Los Angeles County Tract-City Splits by Age, Sex and Race-Ethnicity.

- The population aged 12 or older in LAC from 2020-2024 was 8,653,360.

20. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Principles of drug addiction treatment: a research-based guide. 3rd edition. National Institutes of Health. US Department of Health and Human Services. January 2018.

- Drug treatment in the community returns \$4 to \$7 in benefits to society for every \$1 spent.

21. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Health Resources and Services Administration, Center for Integrated Health Solutions. SBIRT: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment Opportunities for Implementation and Points for Consideration and Fleming et al. Benefit-cost analysis of brief physician advice with problem drinkers in primary care settings. Med Care. 2000;38(1):7-18. doi:10.1097/00005650-200001000-00003

- Alcohol and other drug screening and brief intervention returns between \$3.81 to \$5.60 in health care cost savings for every \$1 invested.

22. Miller T, Hendrie D. Substance Abuse Prevention Dollars and Cents: A Cost-Benefit Analysis, DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008.

- School-based prevention programs returns \$7.40 to \$36.00 in savings for every \$1 invested.

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