

County of San Diego
Community Survey
Findings

Central Region

October 2025



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Overview and Methodology

The 2025 County of San Diego Community Survey Findings Central Region Report summarizes the perceptions of a non-random sample¹ of 396 adults, age 18 and older, who live in the Central Region of San Diego County and participated in the most recent community survey conducted between July 7 and August 8, 2025. The survey was conducted by the Center for Community Research (CCR) in partnership with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Behavioral Health Services.

This year's survey reflects both a new data collection approach and redesigned survey content. Findings are specific to 2025 and are not directly comparable to previous survey administrations. The 2025 survey offers a snapshot of community perceptions, awareness, and engagement regarding substance use prevention, treatment, harm reduction, stigma, and overall community well-being.

Purpose: The San Diego County Prevention System uses the Community Survey to:

- **Collect Community Input:** Gather input from adult residents across all six HHSA regions
- **Understand Public Perspectives:** Explore public perspectives on alcohol and other drug use, stigma, service access, and prevention priorities
- **Guide Prevention Efforts:** Inform prevention strategies, community engagement, and campaigns

Survey Administration: The 2025 survey was administered using a hybrid approach that combined both online and in-person data collection methods. Online responses were gathered through a survey panel, while Regional Prevention Providers conducted in-person data collection to reach community members who may be underrepresented in online samples. Regional Prevention Providers administered the survey using paper surveys, which were completed on-site at community locations. This approach helped capture diverse perspectives and ensure broad community reach.

Key features of the 2025 survey administration included:

- **Eligibility:** Adults 18 years and older residing in San Diego County
- **Languages:** Surveys offered in English and Spanish
- **Countywide Distribution:** A total of 2,340 surveys were collected, with about 60% (n=1,441) from the online panel and 40% (n=899) collected in person.
- **Sample Goal:** A minimum of 150 in-person surveys collected in each of the six regions
- **In-Person Data Collection Sites:** Surveys were conducted in public locations intentionally chosen to reflect the county's diversity, summarized in **Appendix A**.
- **Training:** Regional Prevention Providers received training on survey administration, engagement techniques, and data collection protocols

Report Structure: This report summarizes countywide findings and regional perspectives from the 2025 Community Survey. Results are organized into four sections: Awareness and Knowledge of Resources; Perception of Stigma for Help Seeking; Prevention Resource Availability and Community Needs; and Community Involvement Awareness and Interest. Findings are intended to inform prevention planning, equitable service delivery, and system improvements. **Tables 1-3** display the number of surveys collected per region, the number of surveys collected in each language, and respondent demographics.

Table 1. Number of Surveys Analyzed by Region

| Region | Total Surveys Analyzed |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| North Inland | 441 |
| North Coastal | 361 |
| North Central | 409 |
| Central | 396 |
| East | 347 |
| South | 386 |
| Countywide Total | 2,340 |

¹ Respondents were intentionally recruited through diverse community locations and an online panel to capture a broad range of perspectives; findings are not statistically generalizable but provide meaningful community input.

Table 2. Countywide Surveys Completed by Language

| Survey Language | % (n=2,340) |
|-----------------|----------------|
| English | 97% |
| Spanish | 3% |

Regional Demographics

Table 3. Respondent Demographics

| Gender | % (n=393) |
|---|--------------|
| Female | 57% |
| Male | 41% |
| Transgender | 1% |
| Other | 0% |
| Prefer not to answer | 0% |
| Age | % (n=396) |
| 18-20 | 5% |
| 21-25 | 11% |
| 26-35 | 27% |
| 36-45 | 23% |
| 46-55 | 13% |
| 56-65 | 12% |
| 66 or older | 9% |
| Ethnicity | % (n=392) |
| Hispanic | 37% |
| Non-Hispanic | 60% |
| Prefer not to answer | 3% |
| Race* | % (n=381) |
| White | 50% |
| Black | 19% |
| Asian | 12% |
| Two or more races | 9% |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 2% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 1% |
| Other | 0% |
| Prefer not to answer | 5% |
| Housing Status | % (n=387) |
| Stable housing (rent or own with low risk of eviction) | 81% |
| Unstable housing (couch surfing, living with friends or family temporarily) | 8% |
| Homeless (unsheltered) | 5% |
| Using public shelters or housing services | 4% |
| Prefer not to answer | 3% |

* Percentages exceed 100 because some respondents selected more than one response

Table 4 below compares the race and ethnicity breakdown for San Diego County from the 2023 San Diego County Demographic Profiles Report with data collected in the San Diego Community Survey - Central Region (2025). Ethnicity is reported as either Hispanic or Not Hispanic/Latino (NH). People of Hispanic ethnicity may be of any race. [To view the full report, please click here.](#)

Table 4. Race and Ethnicity Distribution in San Diego County: 2023 HHS Demographic Profile vs. 2025 San Diego Central Region Community Survey

| Race/Ethnicity | HHS Profile Data (2023) | San Diego Central Region Community Survey Data (2025) |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Hispanic | 34.3% | 37% |
| NH White | 43.2% | 51% |
| NH Asian | 11.9% | 16% |
| NH Black | 4.4% | 26% |
| NH Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.4% | 1% |
| NH American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0.3% | 0% |
| NH Two or More Races | 5.0% | 4% |
| NH Other | 0.5% | 0% |

Results

The following section presents results from the 2025 Community Survey. Each set of results includes the corresponding survey question number. The full survey instrument is provided in Appendix B.

Awareness and Knowledge of Resources

Survey respondents were asked whether they knew how to access information on substance use prevention and treatment. As shown in **Table 5**, over half reported knowing where to find prevention education materials (62%) and how to get information on treatment resources (66%). At the same time, about 39% of respondents were either unsure or did not know where to find prevention information, and 34% were unsure or did not know how to access treatment resources.

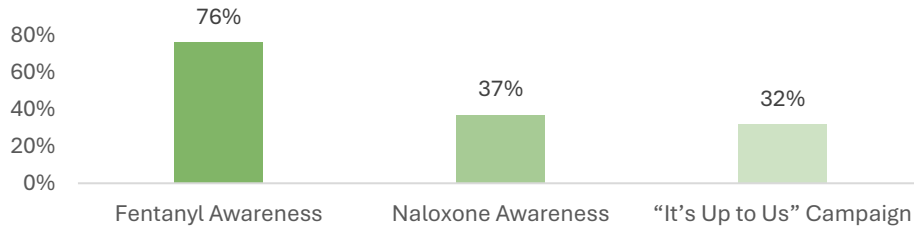
Table 5. Knowledge of Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Resources (Survey Item 1)

| Statement | Yes, agree | No | Unsure |
|--|------------|-----|--------|
| I know where to go to get substance use prevention education information or materials. | 62% | 23% | 16% |
| I know how to get information on substance use treatment resources. | 66% | 22% | 12% |

n=385

Survey respondents were asked which public health messages they had seen or heard in the past year through sources such as billboards, commercials, social media, or written ads. As shown in **Chart 1**, respondents most frequently reported exposure to fentanyl awareness messages (76%), followed by naloxone awareness (37%) and the “It’s Up to Us” campaign (32%).

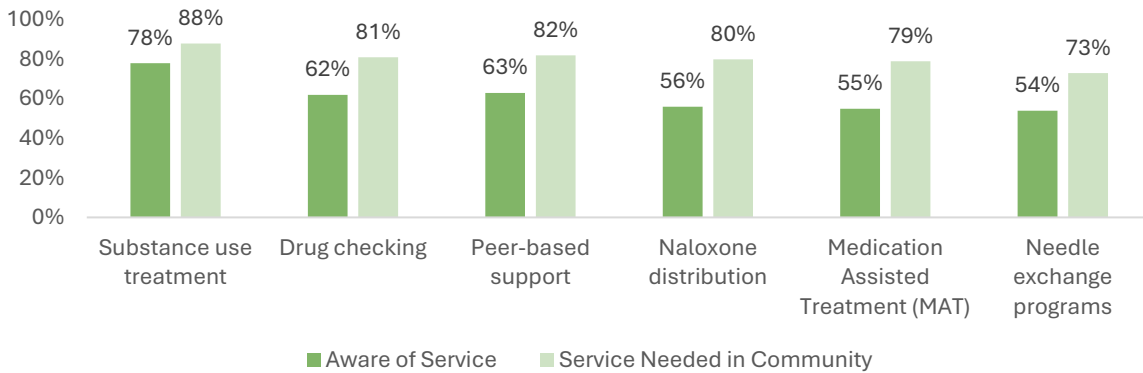
Chart 1: Percentage of Respondents Reporting Exposure to Public Health Campaigns (Survey Item 2)



n=348

As shown in **Chart 2**, respondents indicated both their awareness of substance use–related services and whether they believe these services are needed in their community. Results highlight relatively high awareness and strong perceived need across all service types. Awareness was highest for substance use treatment (78%), while the strongest perceived need was for substance use treatment (88%). Services such as peer-based support (82%), drug checking (81%), and naloxone distribution (80%) were also identified as important community needs, despite somewhat lower awareness of these services.

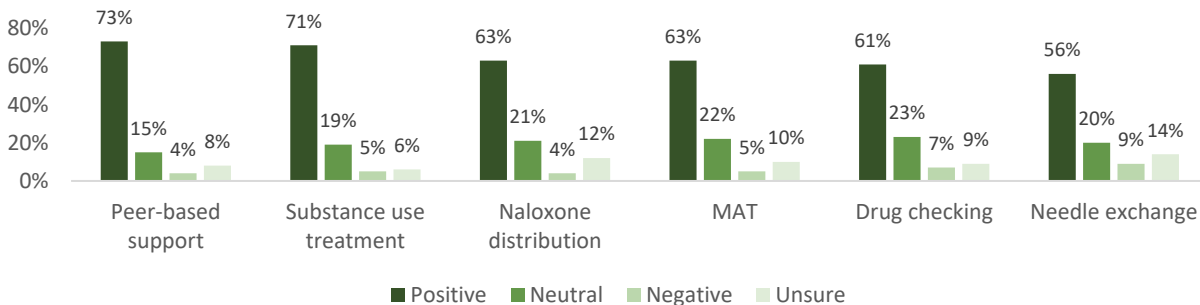
Chart 2: Awareness of and Perceived Need for Services (Survey Item 3)



n=348

Survey respondents were asked to share how they view different approaches for addressing substance use in their community. As shown in **Chart 3**, most respondents reported positive perceptions across all services. Peer-based support (73%) and substance use treatment (71%) received the highest positive ratings, followed by naloxone distribution (63%), Medication Assisted Treatment (63%), and drug checking (61%).

Chart 3: Perceptions of Services and Approaches (Survey Item 4)

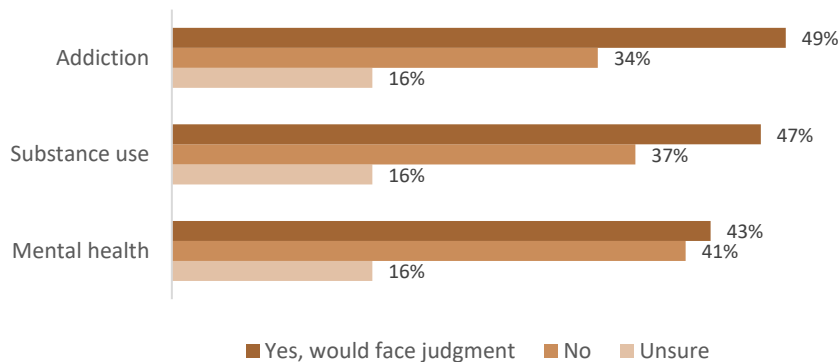


n=388

Perception of Stigma for Help Seeking

Survey respondents were asked whether they think someone seeking help in their community would face negative judgment for substance use, addiction, or mental health challenges. As shown in **Chart 4**, 49% felt that individuals seeking help for substance use would face judgment, and 47% felt the same for addiction. Views on mental health were mixed, with 43% perceiving judgment and 41% indicating they did not believe judgment would occur.

Chart 4: Perceptions of Whether People Seeking Help Would Face Negative Judgment (Survey Item 5)



n=388

Prevention Resource Availability and Community Needs

Survey respondents were asked which substance use prevention resources are available in their area. As shown in **Table 6**, the most frequently reported resources were awareness campaigns (56%), community events (43%), and recreational or extracurricular activities promoting healthy lifestyles (39%).

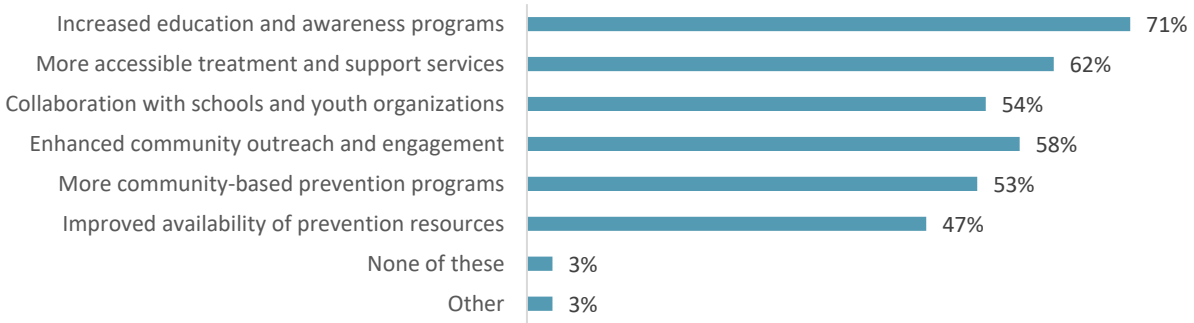
Table 6. Available Prevention Resources Reported by Respondents (Survey Item 6)

| Resource | % Available |
|--|-------------|
| Awareness campaigns | 56% |
| Community events promoting substance-free living | 43% |
| Recreational/extracurricular activities | 39% |
| School-based prevention education | 38% |
| Peer mentoring and leadership training | 35% |
| After-school programs | 35% |
| Community workshops | 32% |
| Partnerships with schools, businesses, orgs | 32% |
| Community coalitions | 28% |
| None of these | 11% |

n=370

Survey respondents were asked how substance use prevention could be improved to enhance safety in their community. As shown in **Chart 5**, the most frequently selected strategies were increased education and awareness programs (71%) and more accessible treatment and support services (62%).

Chart 5: Ways to Improve Substance Use Prevention (Survey Item 7)

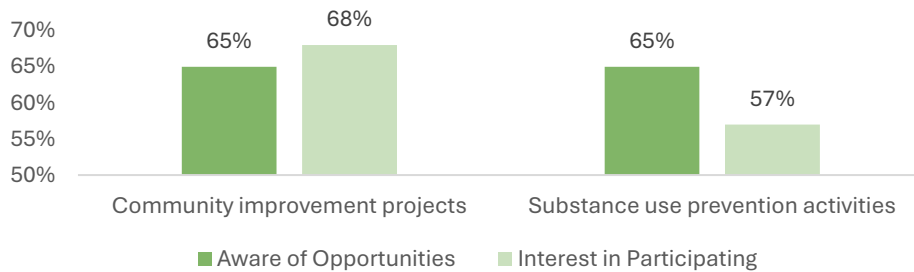


n=372

Community Involvement Awareness and Interest

Survey respondents were asked whether they are aware of opportunities and whether they are interested in participating in community improvement projects or substance use prevention activities. As shown in **Chart 6**, about two-thirds of respondents were aware of both community improvement and substance use prevention opportunities (65% each). Community improvement projects generated somewhat higher interest (68%) than substance use prevention efforts (57%), suggesting participants may feel more connected to broader community initiatives.

Chart 6: Awareness of and Interest in Prevention Opportunities (Survey Item 8)



n=371

Survey respondents were asked which types of community activities they are interested in participating in. As shown in **Table 7**, the most common interests included health and wellness programs (49%) and volunteering with social services such as shelters or food banks (45%).

Table 7. Specific Community Activities of Interest (Survey Item 9)

| Activity | % Interested |
|--|--------------|
| Health and wellness programs | 49% |
| Volunteering with social services | 45% |
| Supporting educational programs on substance use | 30% |
| Community safety initiatives | 28% |
| Town or community planning meetings | 28% |
| School-based prevention programs | 28% |
| Attending/organizing prevention events | 24% |
| Joining a community coalition | 23% |
| None of these | 18% |
| Other | 1% |

n=373

Appendices

Appendix A: Distribution of In-Person Survey Location Types

Table A1 below summarizes the types of community locations where Regional Prevention Providers collected in-person surveys, reflecting efforts to engage residents across diverse and accessible settings.

Table A1. In-Person Survey Collection by Location Type

| Location Type | % |
|----------------------|-----|
| Park | 36% |
| Community Event | 28% |
| Residential Area | 25% |
| Food/Social Services | 11% |

n=169

Appendix B: 2025 Community Survey

2025 Community Survey

DIRECTIONS: Thinking of your community (within about 10 miles of where you live), please answer each of the following questions.

Public Health Information and Community Engagement

1. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

| | Yes | No | Unsure |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I know where to go to get substance use prevention education information or materials. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know how to get information on substance use treatment resources. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. In the last year, which of the following public health messages have you seen or heard? (Select all that apply.)

(Things like billboards, commercials, social media, written ads, etc.)

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| It's Up to Us campaign | y |
| Naloxone awareness | y |
| Fentanyl awareness | y |

Awareness and Access to Services

3. Please select whether you are aware of the following services, and if they are needed in the community.

| Service | Aware of Service | Needed in Community |
|--|--|--|
| Substance use treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) <i>(e.g., using medications to treat substance use disorders)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| Naloxone* distribution <i>(*Naloxone is a drug that reverses opioid overdoses)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| Drug checking <i>(e.g., testing drugs for harmful substances)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| Needle exchange programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| Peer-based support <i>(e.g., support from individuals who have lived experience with substance use)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |

Perceptions of Interventions and Stigma

4. How do you view the following approaches for addressing substance use issues in your community?

| Service | Personal Perception | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Unsure |
| Substance use treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Naloxone distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Drug checking | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Needle exchange programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Peer-based support | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do you think someone seeking help in your community would face negative judgment from others for the following?

| | Yes | No | Unsure |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Substance Use | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Addiction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mental Health | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Protective Factors and Safety

6. Which of the following substance use prevention resources are available to you in your area?

- School-based prevention education
- Community workshops
- Awareness campaigns
- After-school programs
- Peer mentoring and leadership training
- Recreational and extracurricular activities promoting healthy lifestyles
- Community coalitions
- Partnerships with schools, local businesses, and organizations
- Community events and activities promoting substance-free living
- None of these

7. How can substance use prevention be improved to enhance safety in your community?

(Select all that apply.)

- Increased education and awareness programs
- More accessible treatment and support services
- Enhanced community outreach and engagement efforts
- Improved availability of prevention resources (e.g., pamphlets, workshops)
- Increased collaboration with schools and youth organizations
- More community-based prevention programs
- Other (please specify): _____
- None of these

8. Please select whether you know about and are interested in the following community and substance use prevention activities.

| Activity Type | Aware of Opportunities | Interested in Participating |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Community Improvement* | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Substance Use Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**Community Improvement can include projects like cleaning parks, improving local facilities, enhancing neighborhood safety, and supporting substance use and harm reduction efforts.*

9. Which community activities are you interested in participating in? (Select all that apply.)

- Joining a community coalition focused on substance prevention
- Health and wellness programs
- Community safety initiatives
- Participating in school-based prevention programs

- Attending or organizing events focused on substance prevention
- Supporting or participating in educational programs about substance use
- Social services volunteering (e.g., shelters, food banks, etc.)
- Town or community planning meetings
- Other (please specify): _____
- None of these

Demographics

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. My housing situation is:

- Homeless (unsheltered)
- Using public shelters or housing services
- Unstable housing (e.g., couch surfing, living with friends or family temporarily)
- Stable housing (rent or own with low risk of eviction)

2. What is your zip code? _____

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your gender? Male Female Transgender Other (please specify): _____

5. What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic
- Prefer not to answer

6. What is your race? (Select all that apply)

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Two or more races
- Other
- Prefer Not to Answer

Appendix C: Recommended Citation

Center for Community Research (October 2025). *County of San Diego Central Region Community Survey Findings 2025*. Prepared for and funded by the County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services.