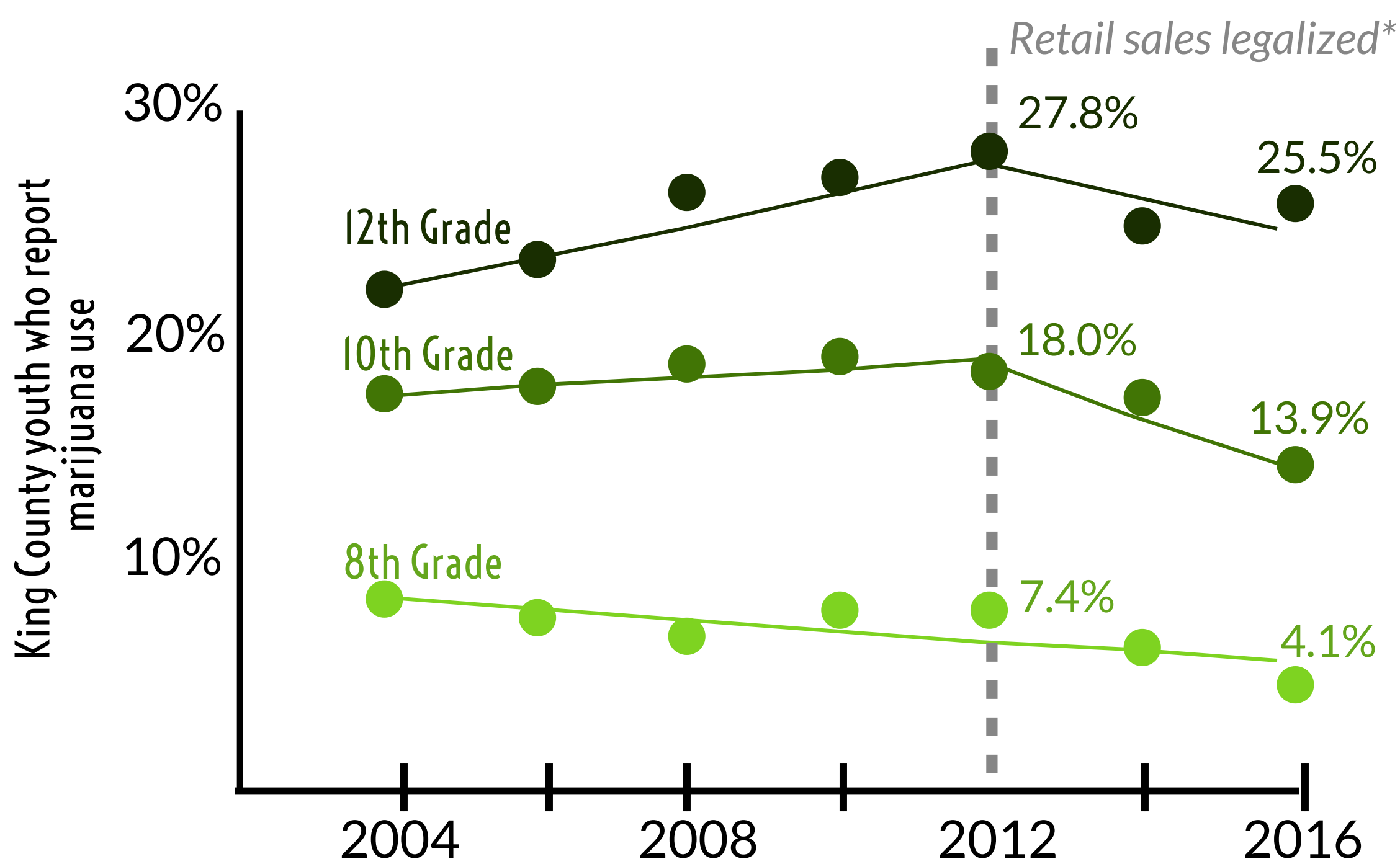


# YOUTH MARIJUANA USE

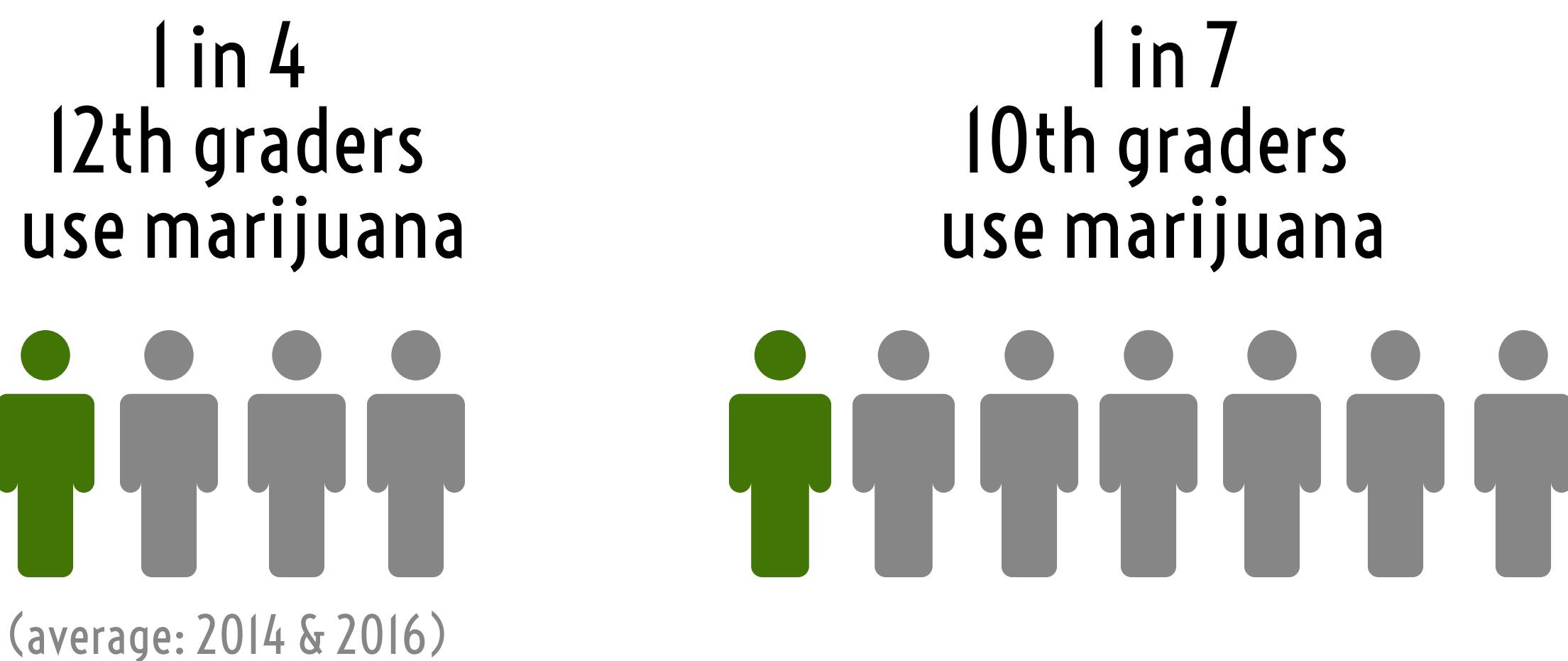
## King County, Washington

For 10th & 12th graders, youth marijuana use declined after 2012



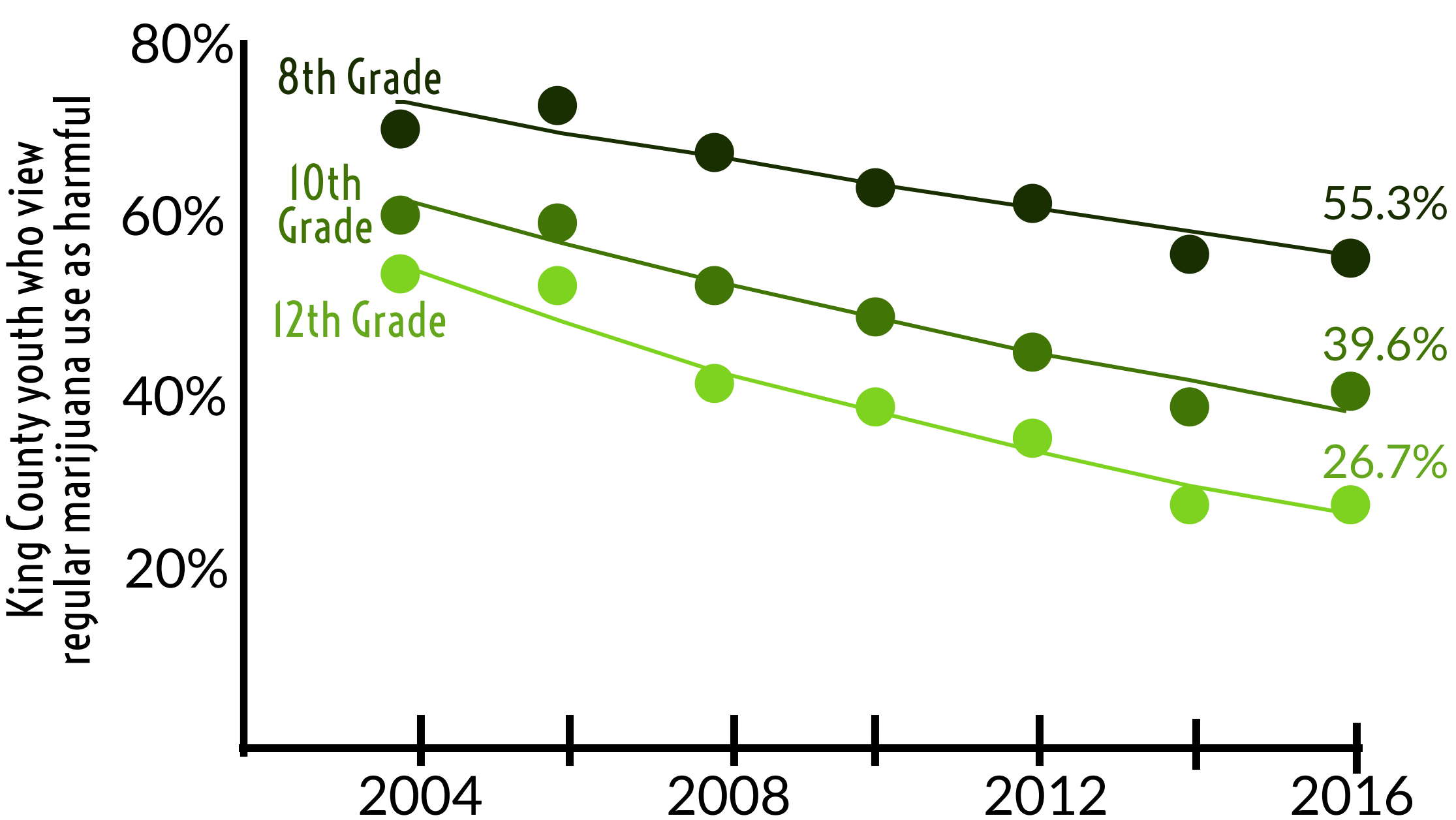
\*Interpret with caution: there is no evidence of a CAUSAL relationship between legalization of retail marijuana and the decrease in youth marijuana use.

However, rates of youth marijuana use in King County still raise concerns



### Youth perceptions of harm from marijuana conflict with known risks

Fewer youth believe regular marijuana use is harmful



This raises concerns because it may predict future use and conflicts with known risks for youth<sup>1</sup>

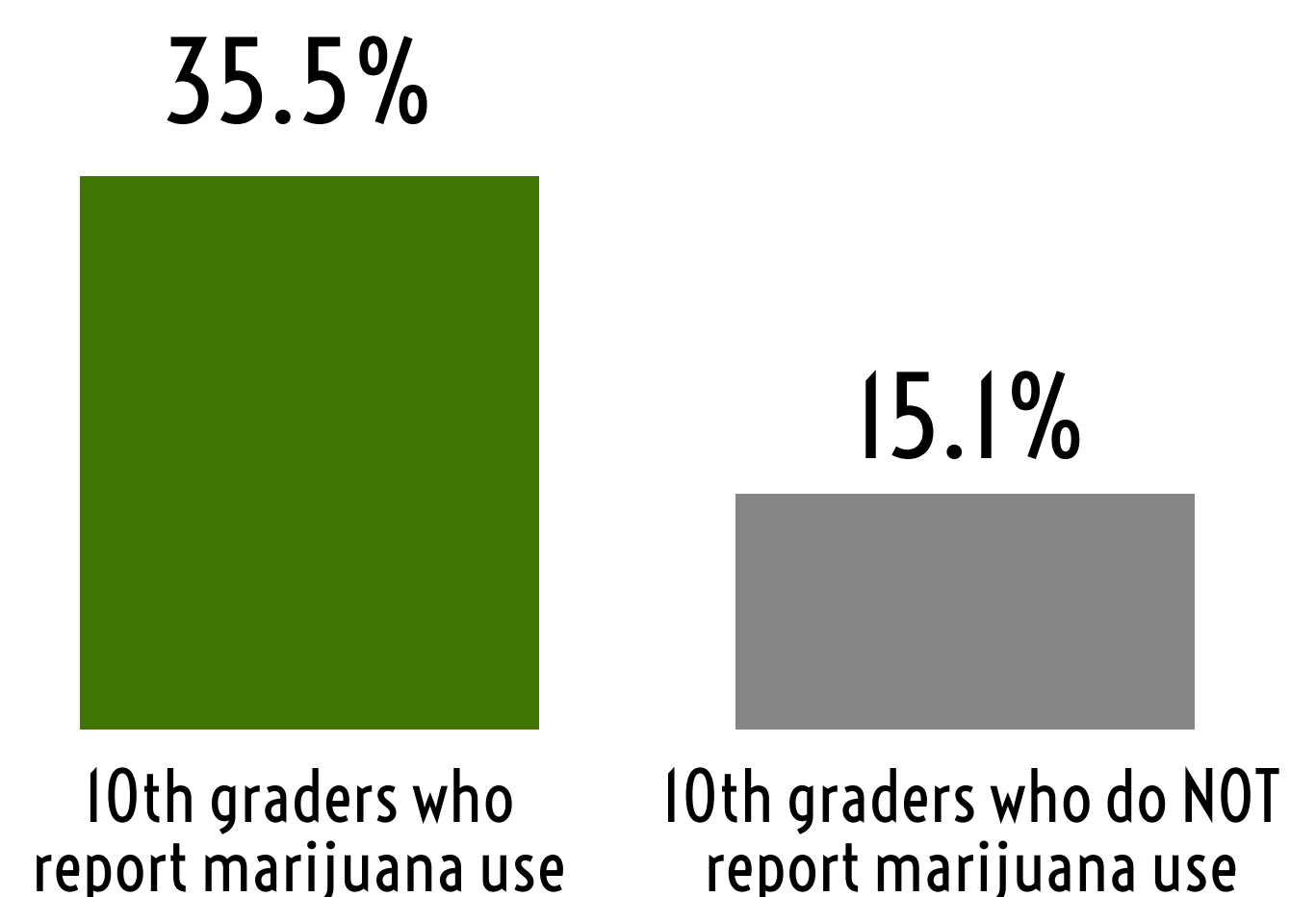
- This report focuses on King County-specific data from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS)
- Results presented show associations within the data set, not causal relationships
- HYS defines "marijuana use" as one or more times in the last 30 days, and "regular" use as one to two times a week
- HYS asked youth about their perception of harm from regular use for "people," not "kids your age"

### Youth marijuana use can increase risks for:

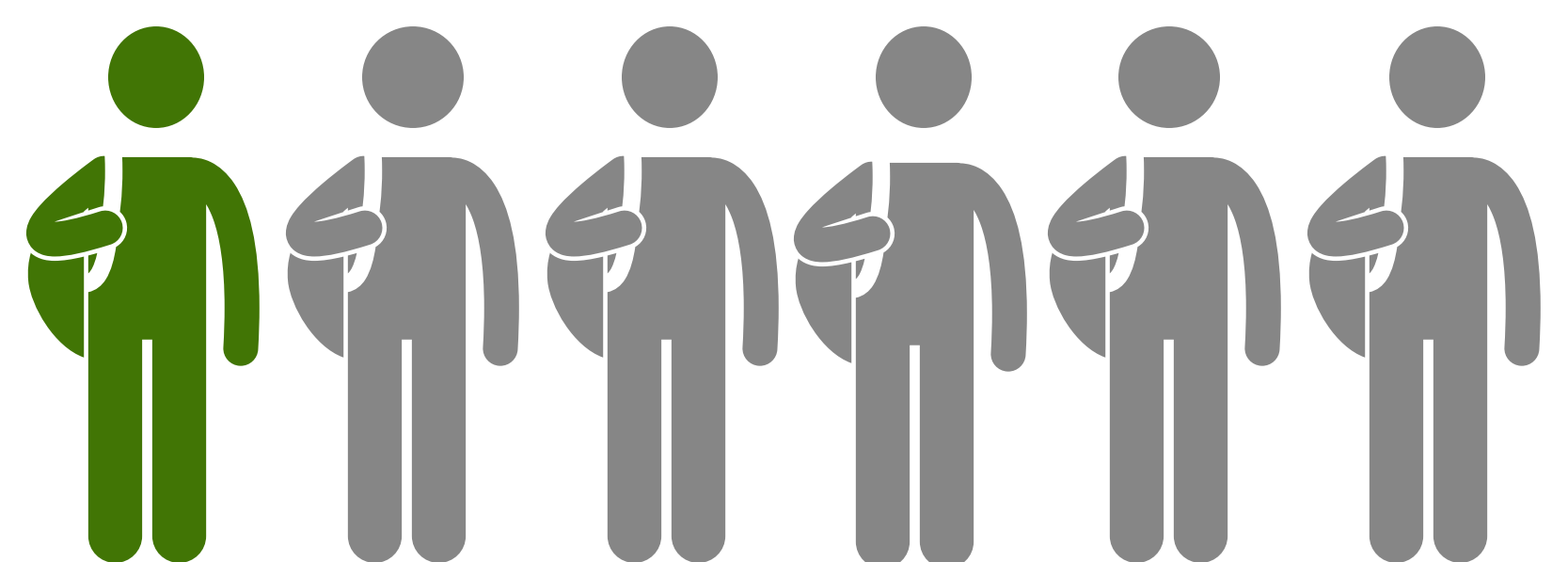
Changes in the developing brain, including...

- Negative impacts on memory, attention, and the ability to think clearly<sup>2,3</sup>
- Poorer school performance<sup>2,3</sup>

Percent at academic risk [grades C or below] (2016)



- Addiction: among youth who start using marijuana before age 18, 1 in 6 can become addicted<sup>2</sup>



- Mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and psychosis<sup>2,3</sup>



# Risks of youth marijuana use, continued:

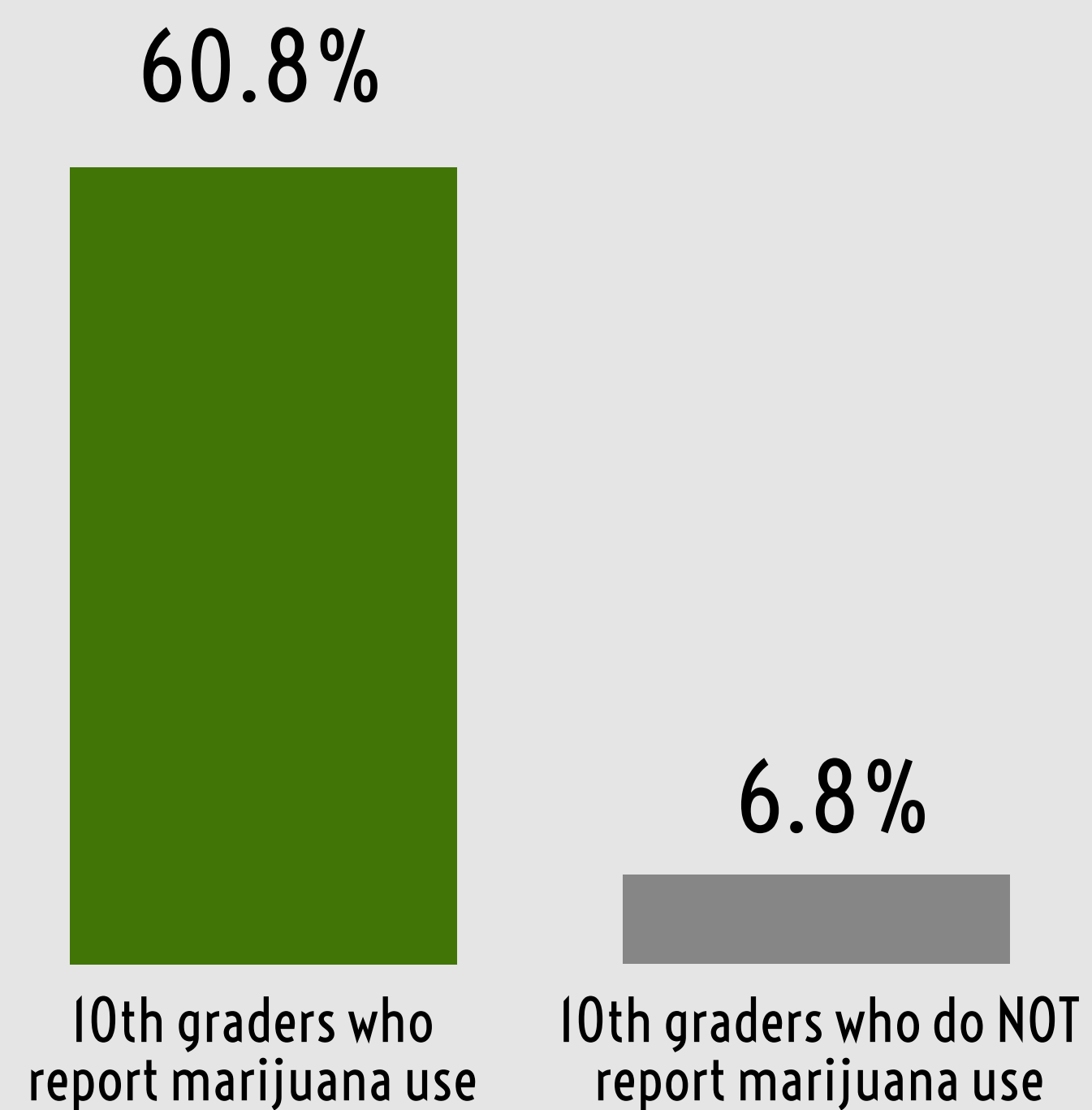
## Criminal justice system involvement:

- In Washington, marijuana is still illegal for anyone under 21
- Under federal law, cultivation, sale, and possession of marijuana are illegal
- Youth of color are especially at risk: research demonstrates disproportionate incarceration rates, even in states where retail marijuana is legal for adults <sup>4</sup>

## Motor vehicle crash risk:

- Marijuana impacts the skills required for safe driving, particularly when combined with alcohol <sup>2</sup>
- 36% of 10th graders who reported marijuana use drove within three hours of using marijuana (2016)
- 61% of 10th graders who reported marijuana use rode in a car with a driver who had used marijuana (2016)

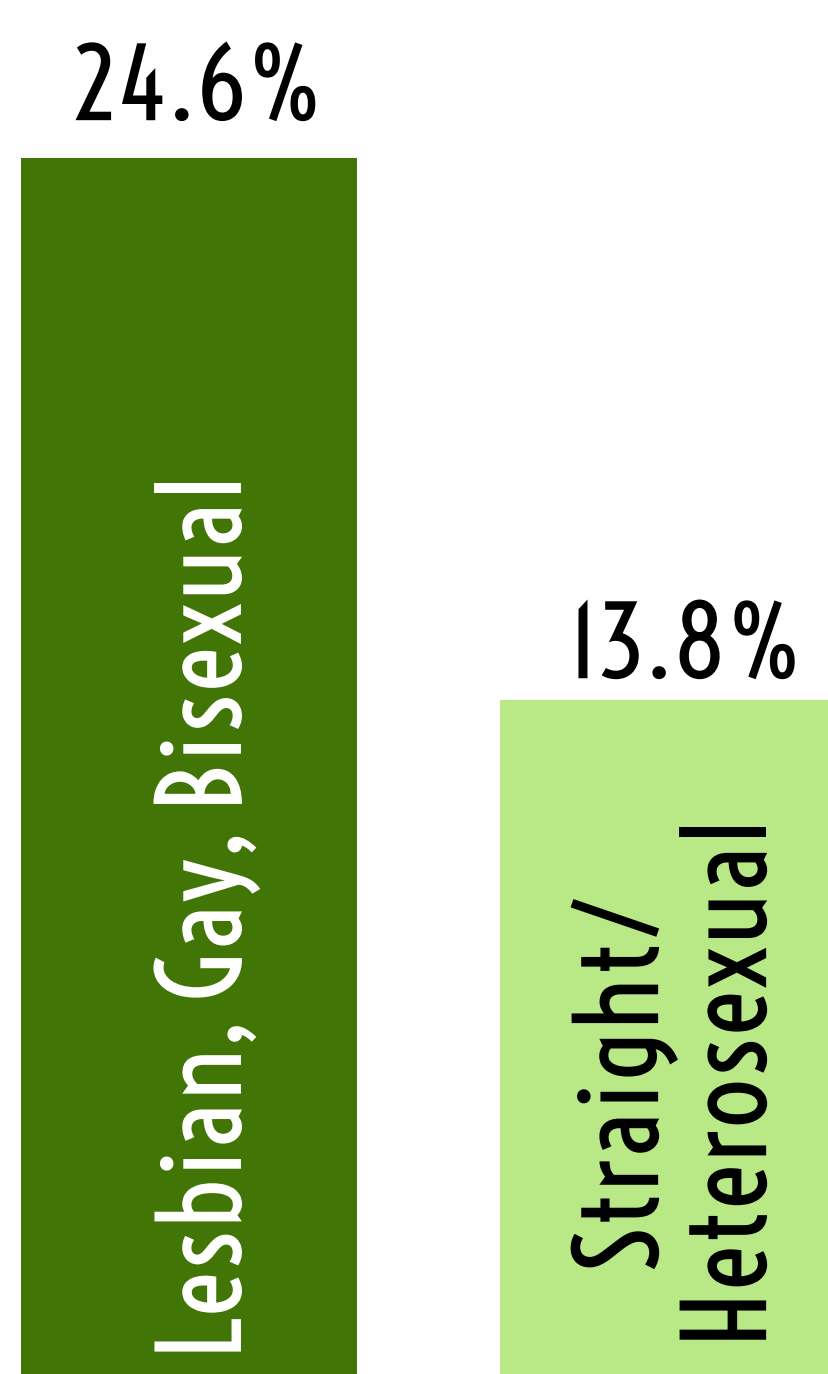
Percent who rode in a car with a driver who had used marijuana (2016)



# Some youth are more at risk of using marijuana than others

## Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth report use rates at nearly double that of straight youth

Percent of 10th graders by sexual orientation who report marijuana use (2016)



Because HYS does not collect information on gender identity, use rates are unknown for youth who are transgender or nonconforming

The high rate of marijuana use by lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth compared to straight youth may reflect multiple risk factors:

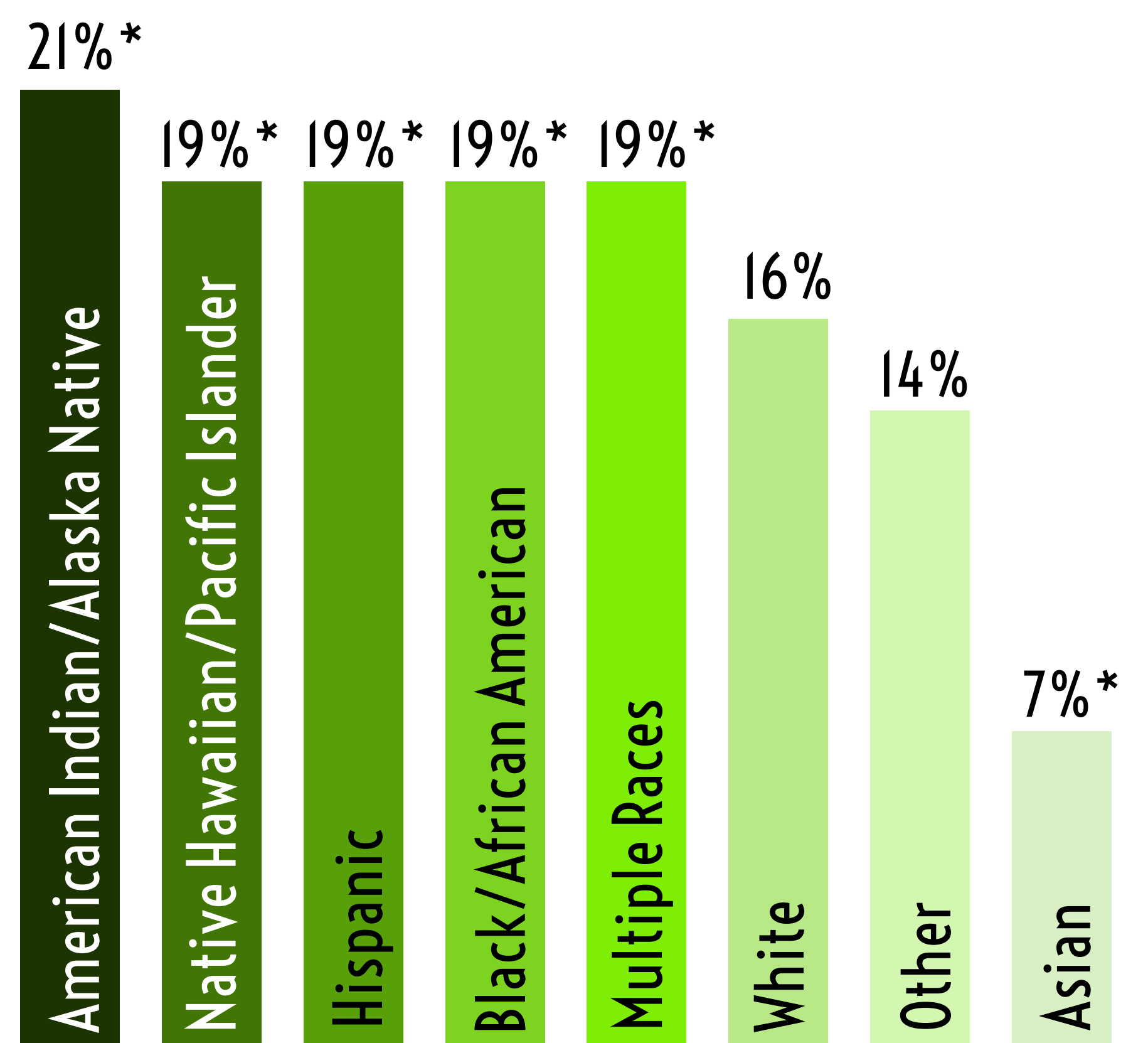
- Youth in this group may face industry targeting, unaccepting families, hostile school environments, and homelessness
- Bullying is also an important risk factor, highlighting an issue that impacts mental health and education - youth who report being bullied for their perceived sexual orientation (regardless of actual sexual orientation) are twice as likely to report marijuana use <sup>5</sup>
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth face higher rates of self-harm, suicide, and substance use and report using marijuana to self-medicate <sup>6</sup>

# Marijuana use varies by race and ethnicity

## Understanding youth marijuana use by race and ethnicity is complex:

- HYS sample sizes for American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth are too small to ensure precise estimates of marijuana use rates - actual use in these communities may be higher or lower
- King County's Asian population is diverse, and many sources confirm disparities within the broad category of "Asian" - further exploration is needed to understand marijuana use within specific Asian communities, as well as other aggregated categories of race or ethnicity

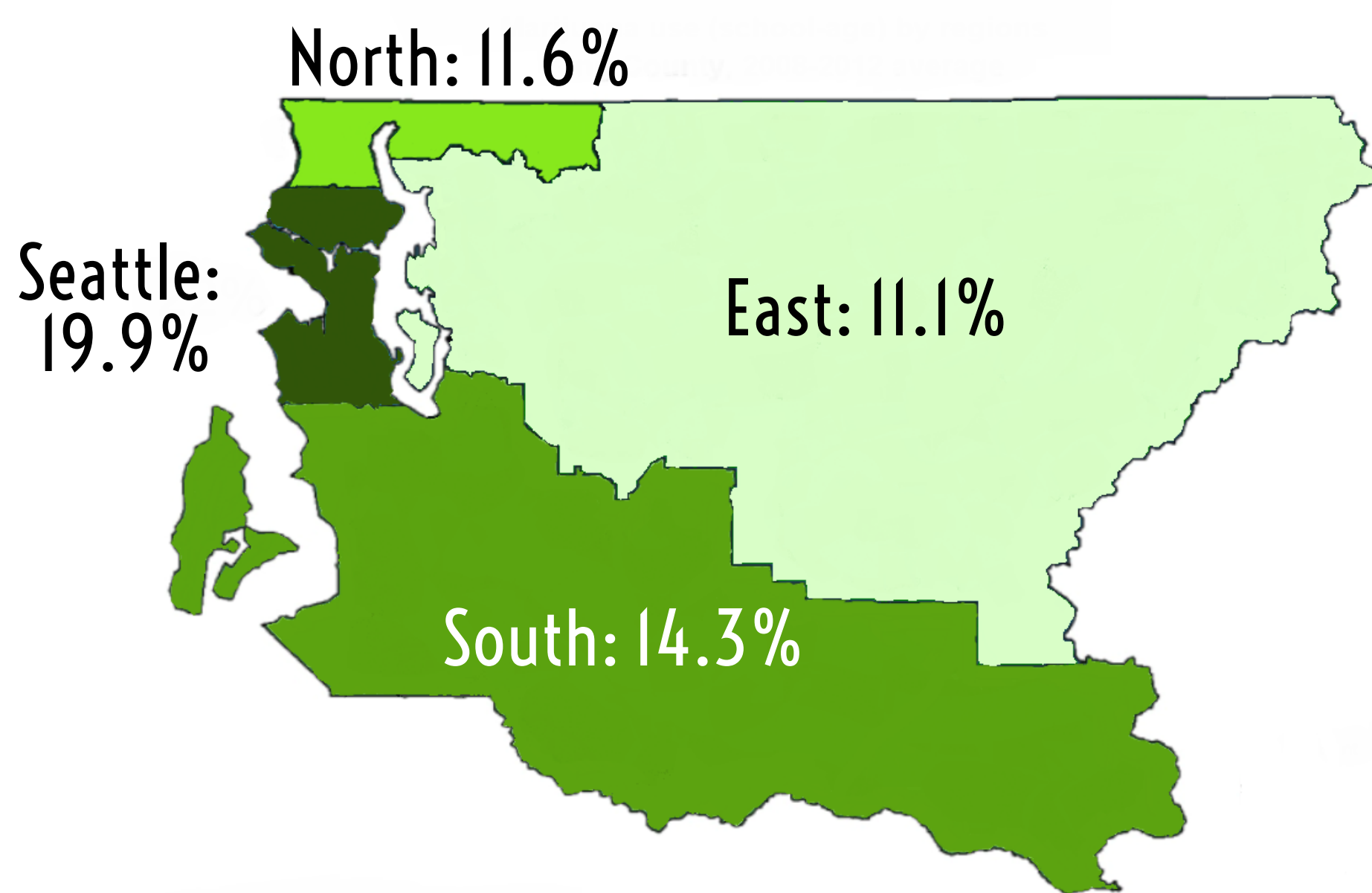
Marijuana use (8th, 10th, 12th grades combined) by race/ethnicity (average: 2014 & 2016)



\*significantly different from the King County average of 15%

## Youth in Seattle report significantly higher use rates than youth in other King County regions

Percent of 10th graders by region who report marijuana use (2016)

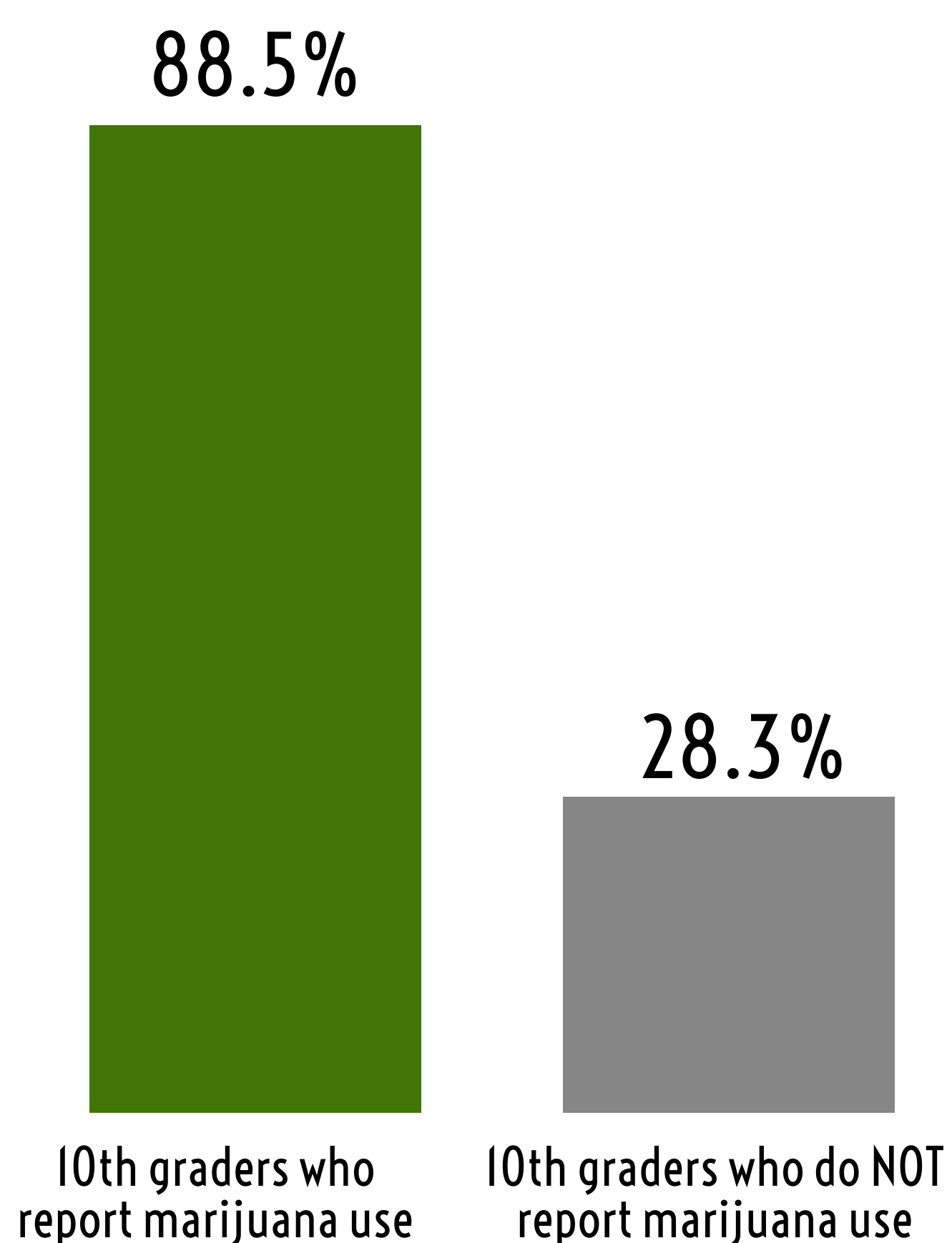


## Risk factors that may contribute to youth marijuana use vary by place:

- Fewer students in Seattle and South King County perceive regular marijuana use as harmful, and more students report having easy access to marijuana
- More students in Seattle report having at least one best friend who uses, and more students in South King County report living with a marijuana user

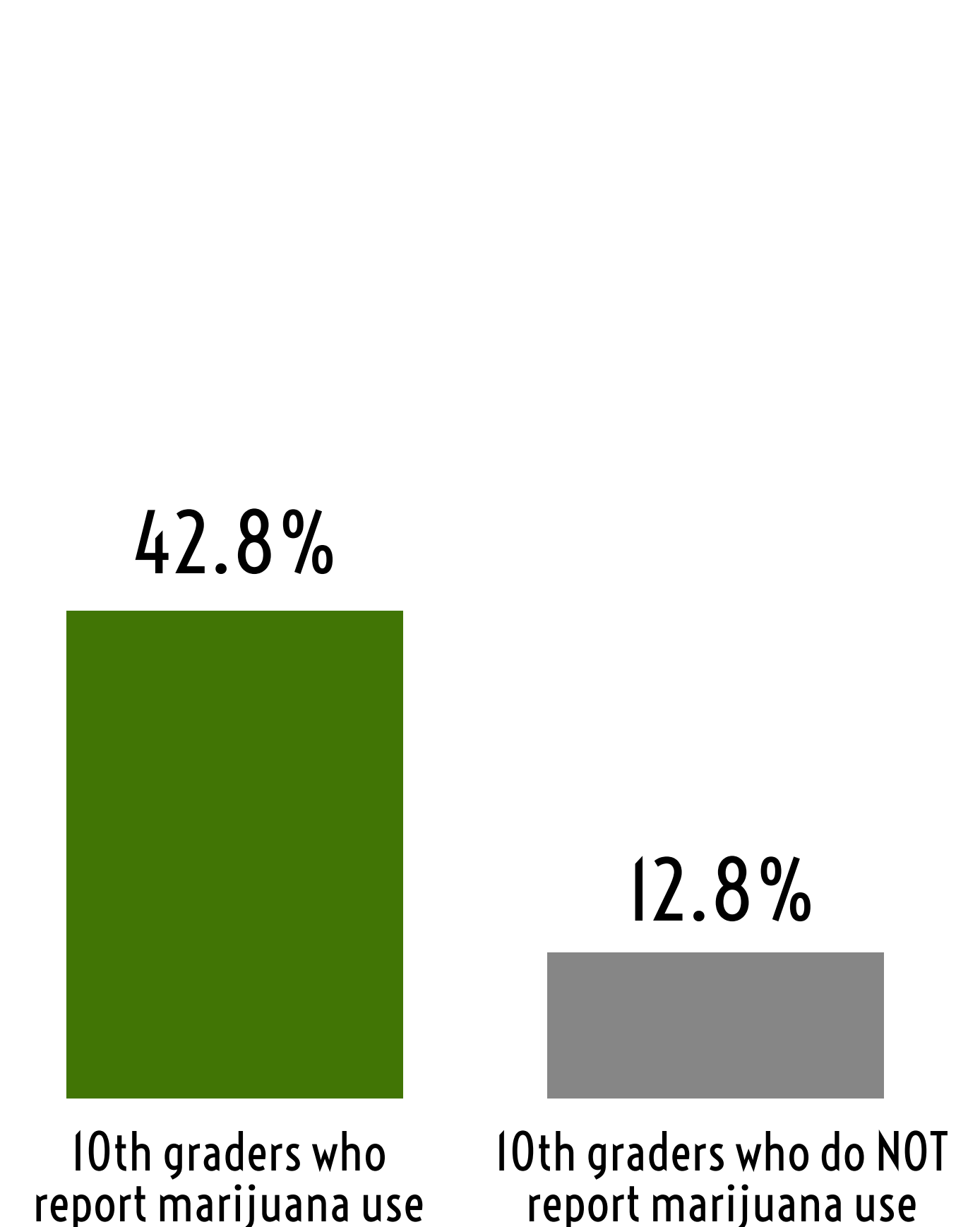
## Youth with a best friend who uses are more likely to use

Percent who have at least one best friend who uses marijuana (2016)

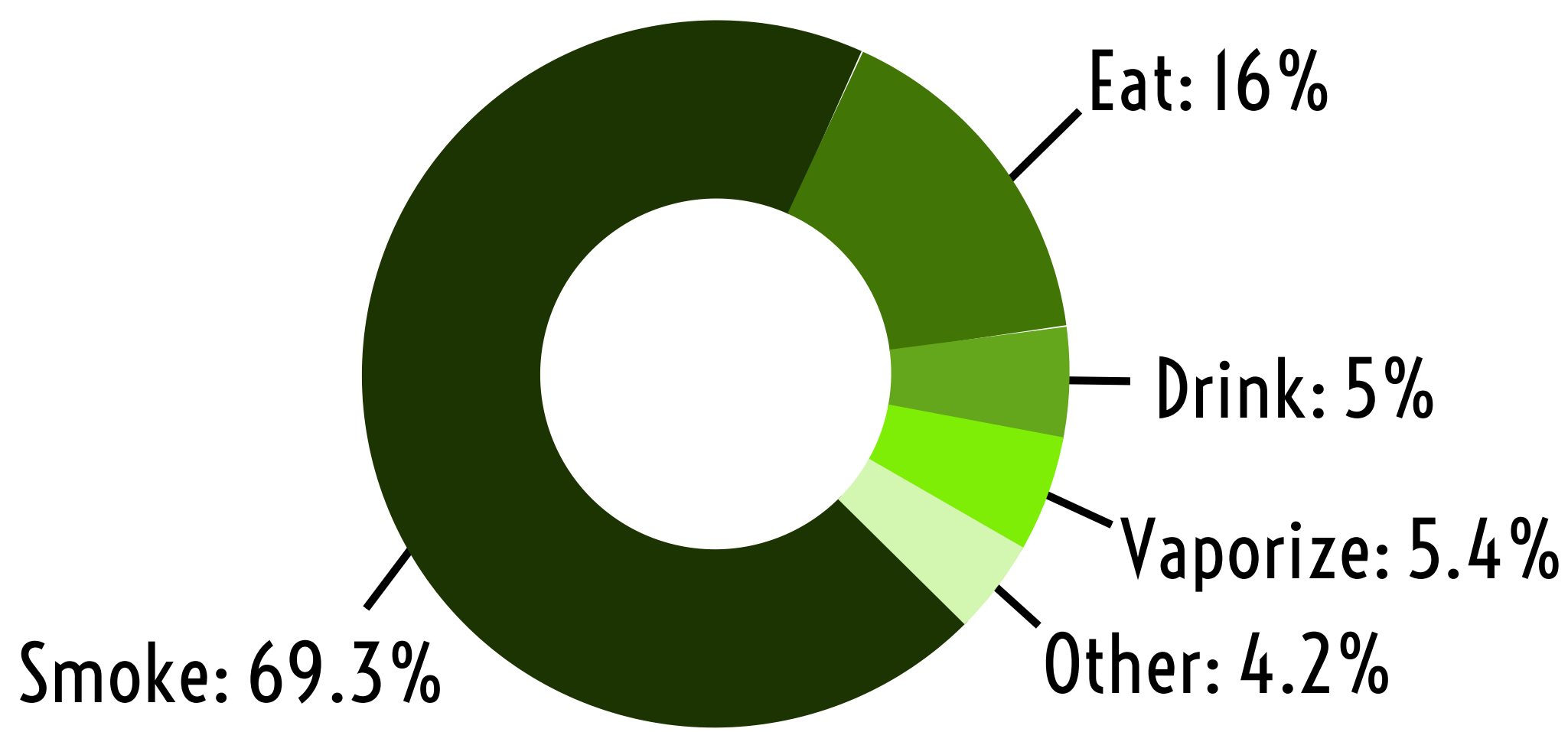


## Youth living with someone who uses are more likely to use

Percent who live with someone who uses marijuana (2016)



## Youth use marijuana in multiple ways, but mostly smoke it



Among 10th graders who reported use (2016)

## Youth mostly get marijuana from friends

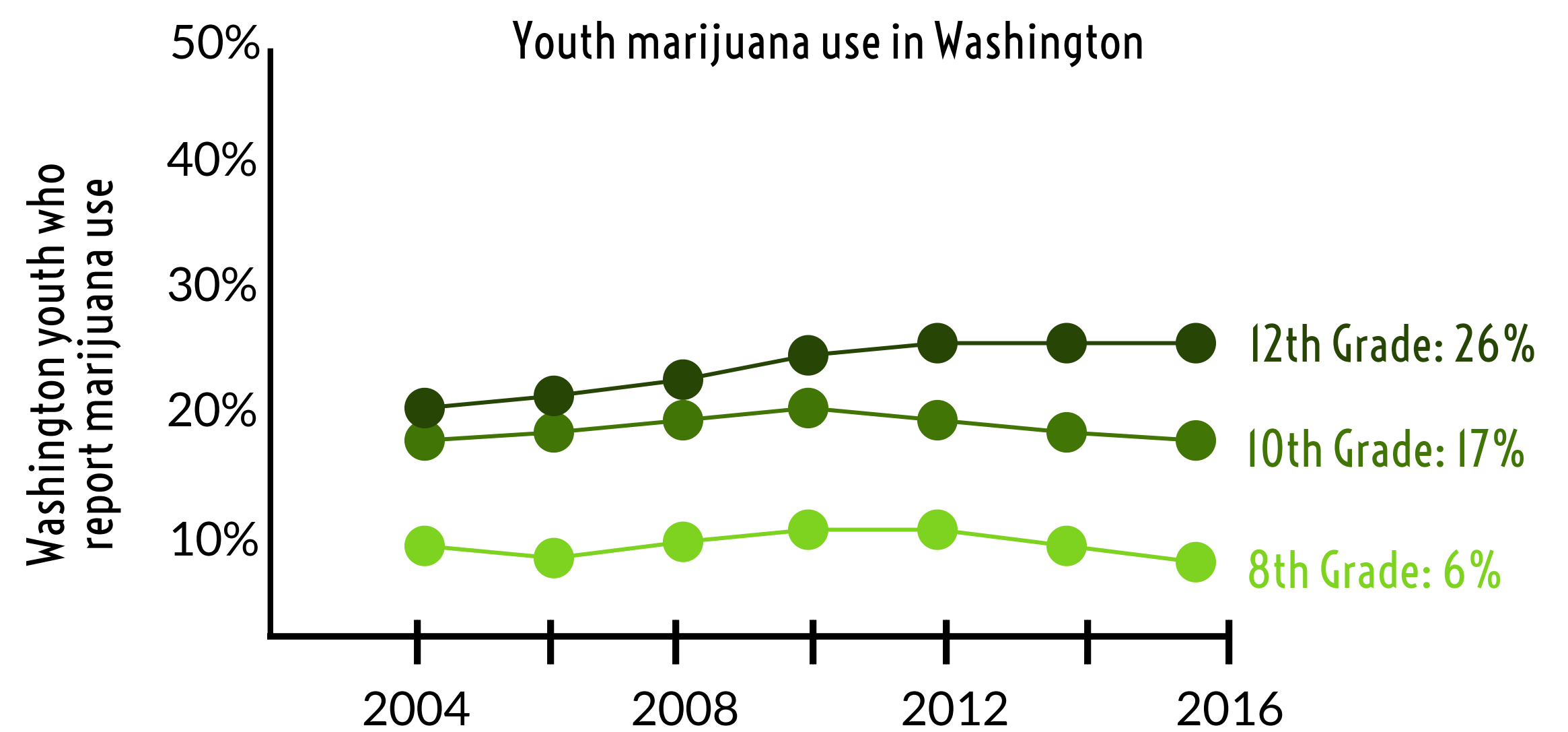
### Youth get marijuana...

1. From friends (63%)
2. By giving money to someone to get it (18%)
3. At a party (17%)
4. Some other way (16%)
5. From home (with or without permission) (11%)

Among 10th graders who reported getting marijuana in the last 30 days, regardless of whether they reported use (2016)  
Respondents could select multiple sources, only top 5 are presented

## In most ways, King County mirrors state and national trends

- In Washington and the United States, as in King County, youth marijuana use has decreased or remained flat over time <sup>7-9</sup>
- The percentage of youth in the state and nation who perceive harm from regular marijuana use has decreased <sup>7-9</sup>



## Data Limitations

Healthy Youth Survey data provides a snapshot of youth marijuana use in King County. Data limitations include:

- ✿ Information is self-reported by public school students who were in school on the day of survey administration. Therefore, the voices of those most at risk for marijuana use may be missing
- ✿ Differences in marijuana use are not analyzed by frequency of use (i.e., regular use versus one-time use)

The King County Youth Marijuana Prevention and Education Program (KC-YMPEP) is funded by the Washington State Department of Health's Dedicated Marijuana Account to reduce underage marijuana initiation and use in King County. This work is guided by a 5-year strategic plan, which was shaped with input from community partners, data from the Healthy Youth Survey, and information from listening sessions with local youth.

Visit [www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/marijuana) for more information or to sign up for our listserv

For more information about HYS, visit [AskHYS.net](http://AskHYS.net)

### REFERENCES

1. SAMHSA: [https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report\\_2418/ShortReport-2418.html](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2418/ShortReport-2418.html)
2. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/marijuana/factsheets/teens.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/factsheets/teens.htm)
3. University of Washington Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute: [learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/adolescents.htm](http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/adolescents.htm)
4. Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice: FBI Uniform Crime 2016 Reports
5. Mental Health America: [http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/bullying-and-gay-youth#\\_ednl](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/bullying-and-gay-youth#_ednl)
6. See the Youth Perspectives on Marijuana Use info sheet for more information on youth marijuana use for self-medication
7. Healthy Youth Survey state data: [www.askhys.net/Docs/HYS%202016%20Analytic%20Report%20Final%2010-24-17.pdf](http://www.askhys.net/Docs/HYS%202016%20Analytic%20Report%20Final%2010-24-17.pdf)
9. Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey national data: [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/monitoring-future-survey-high-school-youth-trends](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/monitoring-future-survey-high-school-youth-trends)
8. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) national data: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/ss6506a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/ss6506a1.htm)