Utah Wellbeing Project: 2026 Survey Results Report on Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment

By Nicolas Holden, Britton Miller, and Dr. Courtney Flint
Department of Environment & Society, Utah State University
November 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

USU's Utah Wellbeing Project partners with cities and towns in Utah to understand perspectives on wellbeing. In spring 2026, leaders and staff from 57 Utah cities and towns advertised the Utah Wellbeing Survey to their adult residents. Reports on survey findings are intended to support local planning and help leaders and regional service providers keep their fingers on the pulse of local wellbeing perceptions and concerns. Project analysis also informs regional and statewide initiatives to improve the wellbeing of Utahns. It's in that spirit that we offer this report related to substance use and treatment concerns for service providers and others working in this arena.

Substance Use and Treatment in Utah

Substance use, along with access to associated treatment resources, are pressing issues nationally and locally. Substance use can involve legal substances or illegal substances (the latter are also referred to as illicit substances). Substance use negatively affects people and communities (Denton et al., 2025). According to national survey data from 2024, more than 73 million Americans aged 12 or older report illicit drug use, but only about 10 million reported receiving treatment (Denton et al., 2025). Substance use and corresponding treatment regimens change with location, so Utah requires its own unique conversation (Denton et al., 2025). Since 2019, the Utah Department of Health and Human Services and its Office of Substance Use and Mental Health have provided annual data about clients who are admitted to service programs and the care they receive. In Utah, counts of admissions and distinct clients dropped in 2025 compared to previous years. However, thousands of Utahns still received treatment; 21,143 individuals were admitted, and 14,608 individuals were identified as distinct clients (SUMH, 2026). In Utah, alcohol has increased as a primary presenting substance since 2019 and has overtaken methamphetamine as the primary drug of treatment (SUMH, 2026). In 2025, admissions service types involved mostly outpatient care (40%) and detoxification (30%), while fewer people received intensive outpatient (18%) and residential care (11%) (SUMH, 2026).

Related Questions from the Utah Wellbeing Survey

To better understand Utahns' concerns, the Utah Wellbeing Survey has asked about substance use concern since 2021 and concern about access to substance use treatment since 2024. Specifically, the survey asks: "As you look to the future of [City Name], how much of a concern are the following issues?" with "Substance Use" and "Access to Substance Use Treatment" as listed issues among 25 total issues. Four response options are available to respondents: "Not a concern," "Slight concern," "Moderate concern," and "Major concern." Responses to open questions are also collected as part of the survey, and a brief overview of comments mentioning substance use and access to substance use treatment is included later in this report.

II. SURVEY FINDINGS ON CONCERN ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

Statewide Averages

The following table and graph show average Substance Use concern levels from all responses to the 2026 Wellbeing Survey providing a non-missing answer (valid responses only) showing 49% of respondents were not concerned, while 26.7% had moderate and major concerns.

Table 1. Statewide averages on concern about Substance Use (valid responses only).

Concern about Substance Use	Count	Percent
Not a concern	4,620	49.0%
Slight concern	2,300	24.4%
Moderate concern	1,527	16.2%
Major concern	989	10.5%
Total	**9,436**	**100.0%**
Moderate + Major concern	**2,516**	**26.7%**

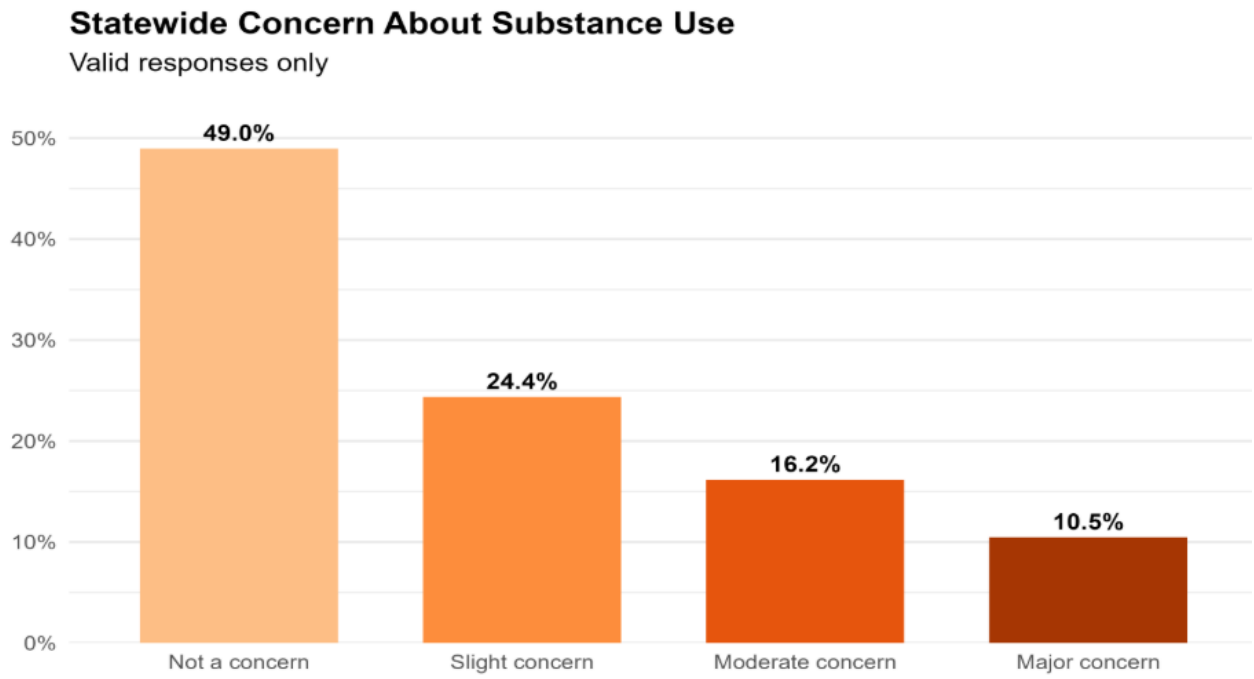


Figure 1. Bar graph showing statewide concern about Substance Use (valid responses only).

City-Level Data by ULCT Cluster

For analysis, the Utah Wellbeing Project groups cities and towns based on their cluster designation from the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT). This figure shows each city and town that participated in the survey, organized by ULCT cluster, with Substance Use concern percentages for each response option.

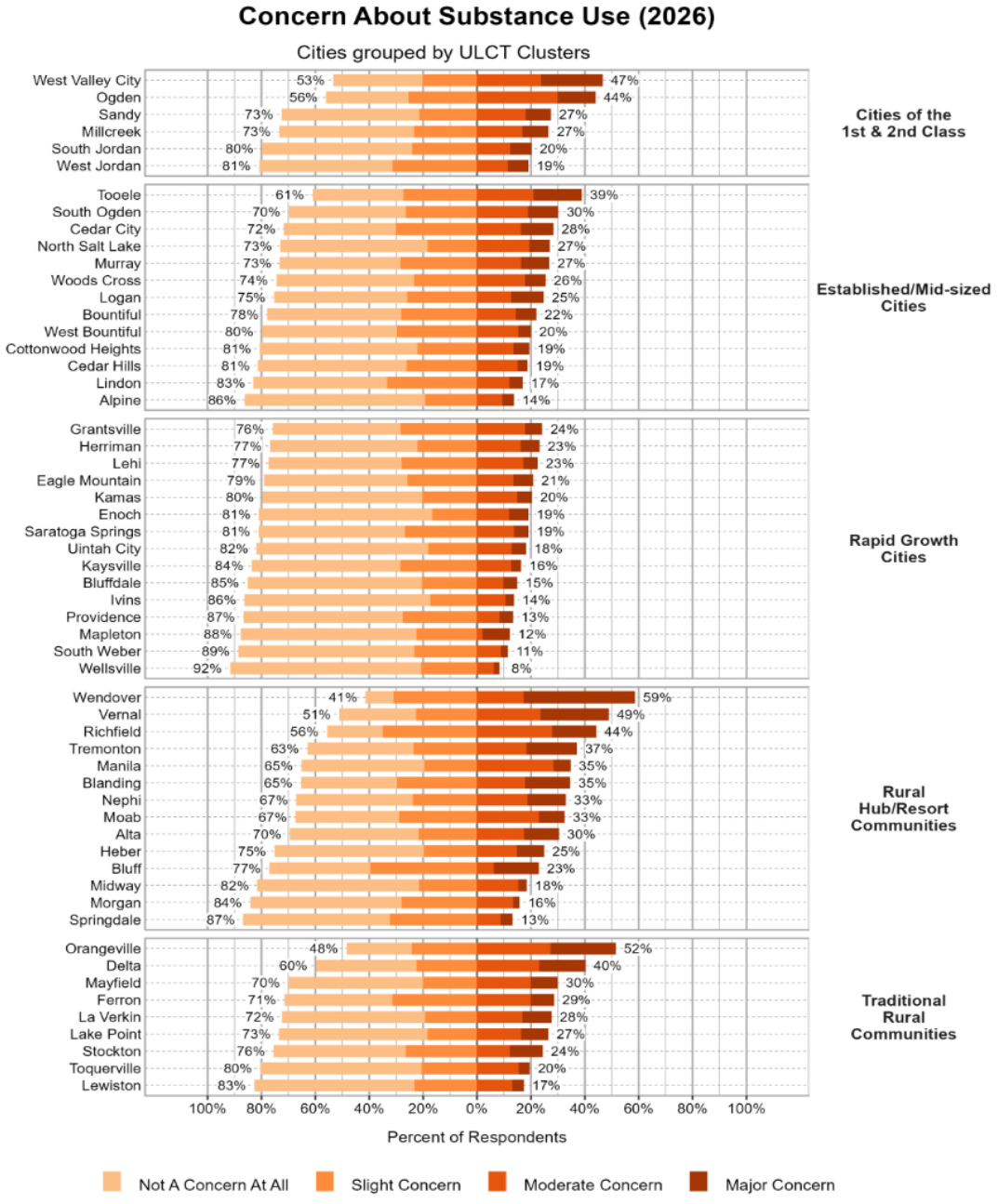


Figure 2. All 57 cities and their concern percentages about Substance Use, organized by ULCT Cluster (Cities of the 1st and 2nd Class, Established/Mid-sized Cities, Rapid Growth Cities, Rural Hub/Resort Communities, and Traditional Rural Communities).

Percent Concerned and Relative Rankings Among Participating Cities and Towns

In Figure 3, points represent points of intersection between the vertical axis showing the proportion of residents with moderate and major concern about Substance Use and the horizontal axis showing the rank order position of Substance Use concern for each city out of all 25 issues (e.g. a ranking of one is the city's top concern). The ten cities with the highest proportions of respondents indicating moderate or major concerns about Substance Use are labeled, and the dotted lines are median percentages. Relatively speaking, Orangeville ranked Substance Use the highest among all issues (ranking of 10), while Wendover had the highest percentage of respondents with moderate and major concerns (59%).

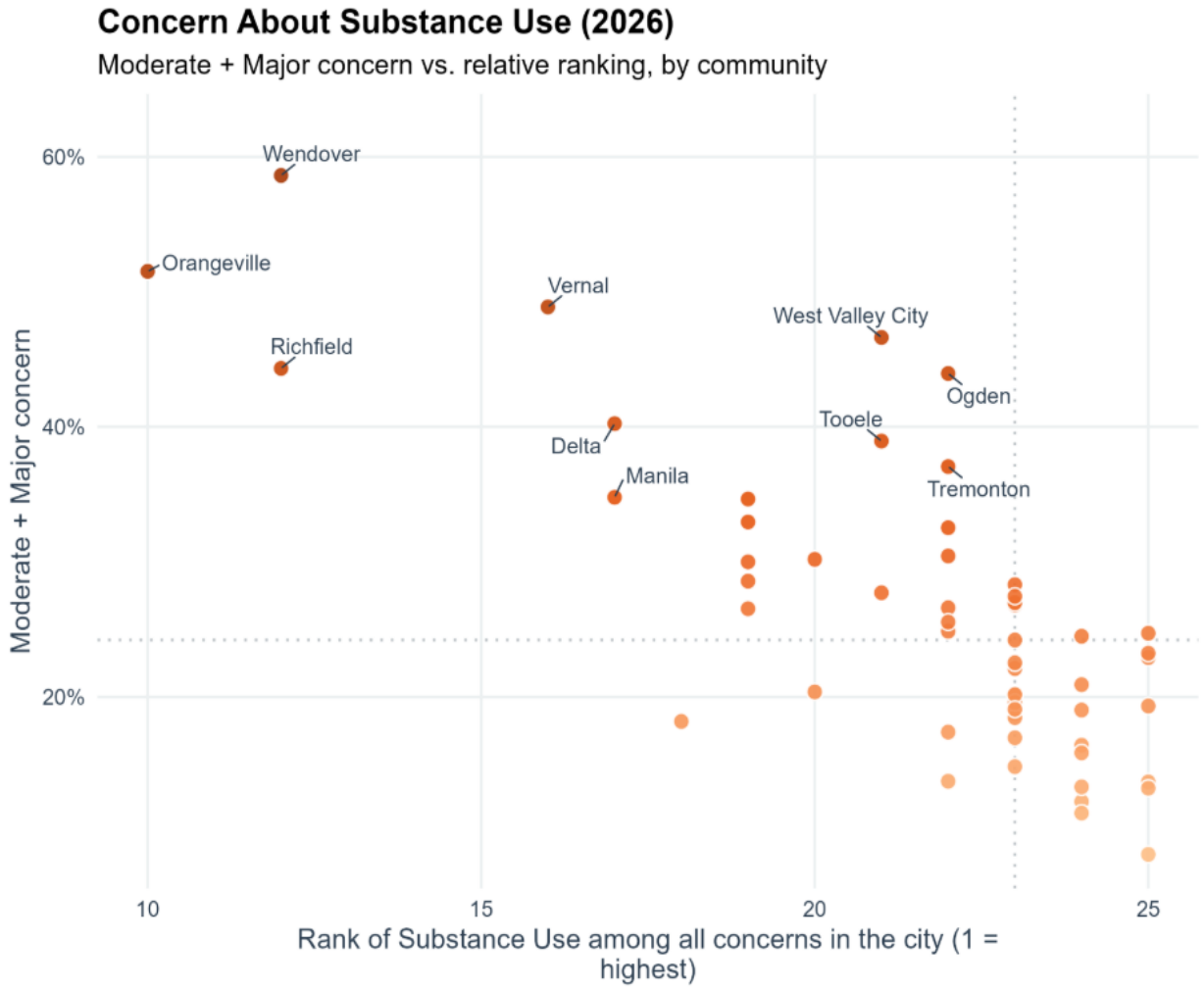


Figure 3. Cities' moderate and major concerns about Substance Use versus where Substance Use ranked among all concerns.

III. SURVEY FINDINGS ON CONCERN ABOUT ACCESS TO SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

Statewide Averages

The following table and graph show average Access to Substance Use concern levels from all responses to the 2026 Wellbeing Survey with a non-missing answer (valid responses only) showing 57.6% of respondents were not concerned, while 22.2% had moderate and major concerns.

Table 2. Statewide averages on concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment (valid responses only).

Concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment	Count	Percent
Not a concern	5,438	57.6%
Slight concern	1,899	20.1%
Moderate concern	1,335	14.2%
Major concern	762	8.1%
Total	**9,434**	**100.0%**
Moderate + Major concern	**2,097**	**22.2%**

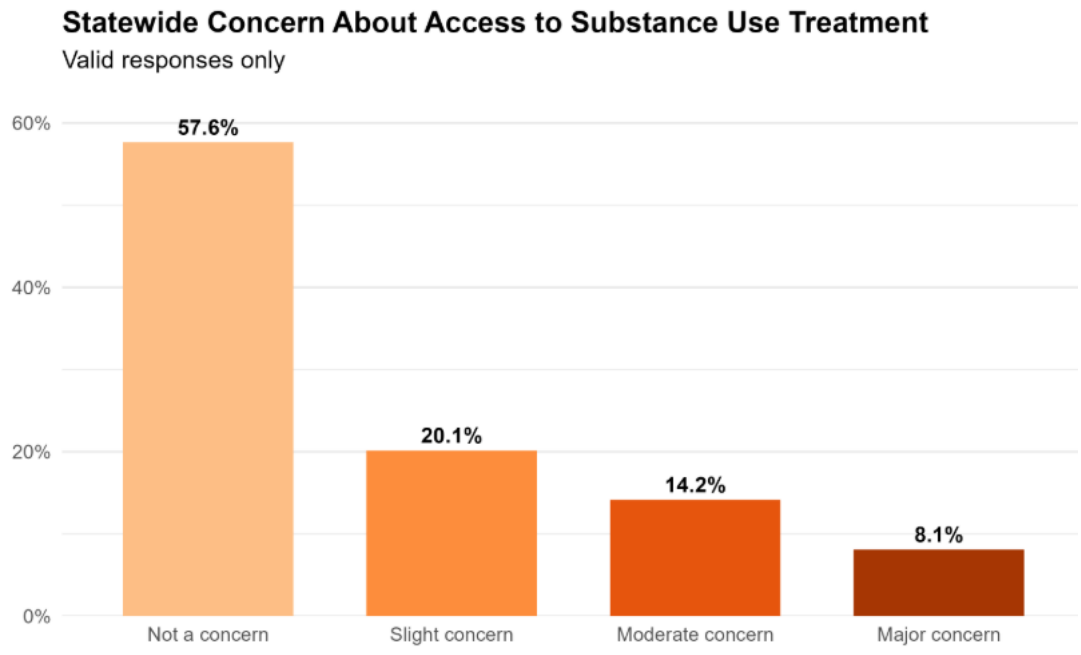


Figure 4. Bar graph showing statewide concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment (valid responses only).

City-Level Data by ULCT Cluster

For analysis, the Utah Wellbeing Project groups cities and towns based on their cluster designation from the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT). This figure shows each city and town that participated in the survey, organized by ULCT cluster, with concern about Substance Use Treatment percentages for each response option.

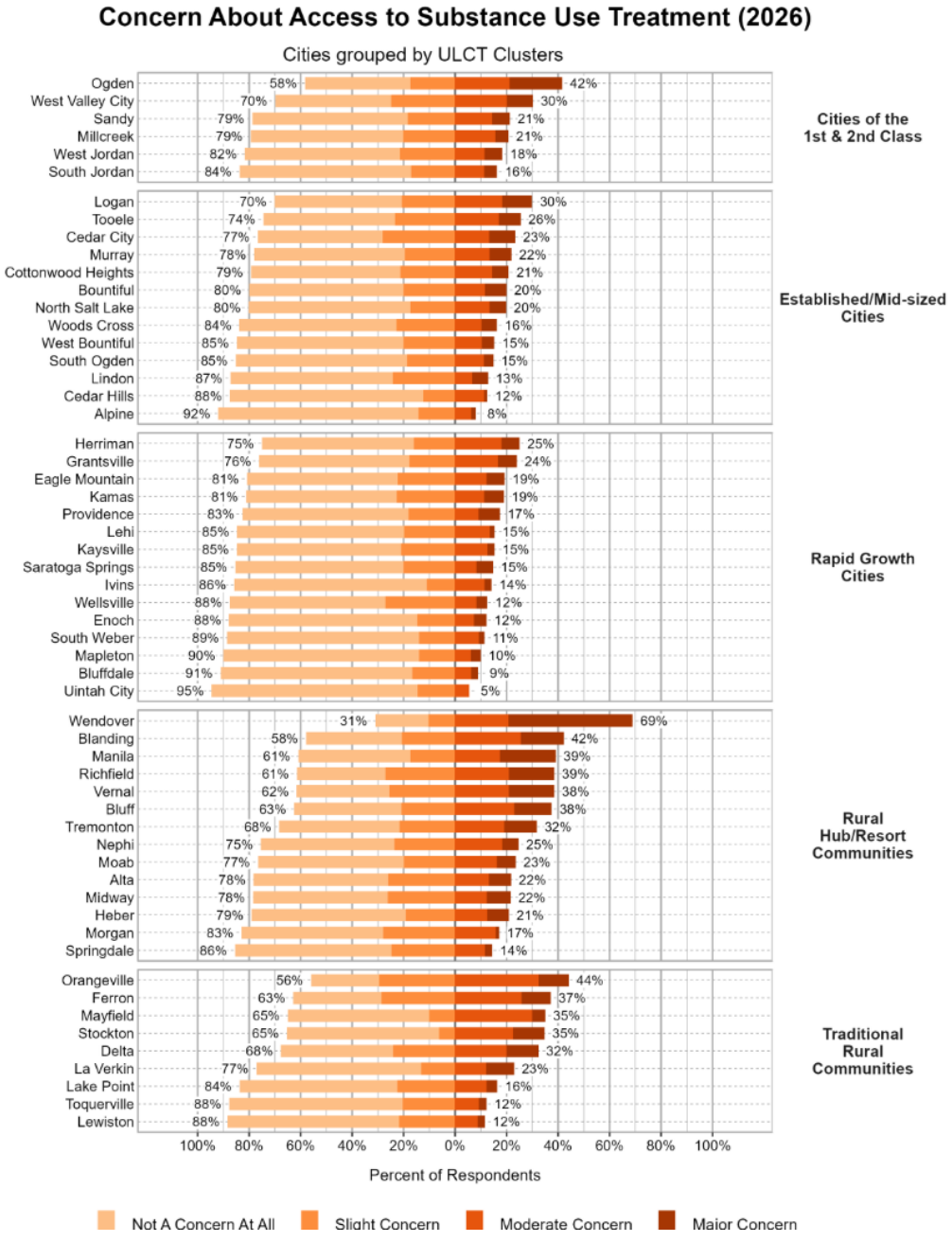


Figure 5. All 57 cities and their concern percentages about Access to Substance Use Treatment, organized by ULCT Cluster (Cities of the 1st and 2nd Class, Established/Mid-sized Cities, Rapid Growth Cities, Rural Hub/Resort Communities, and Traditional Rural Communities).

Relative Rankings

In Figure 6, points represent the intersection between the vertical axis showing the proportion of residents with moderate and major concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment and the horizontal axis showing the rank order position of Access to Substance Use Treatment concern for each city out of all 25 issues (e.g. a ranking of one is the city's top concern). The ten cities with the highest proportions of respondents indicating moderate or major concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment are labeled, and the dotted lines are median percentages. Relatively speaking, Wendover ranked Access to Substance Use Treatment the highest (ranking of 7**)** and had the highest percentage of respondents indicating moderate and major concern levels (69%).

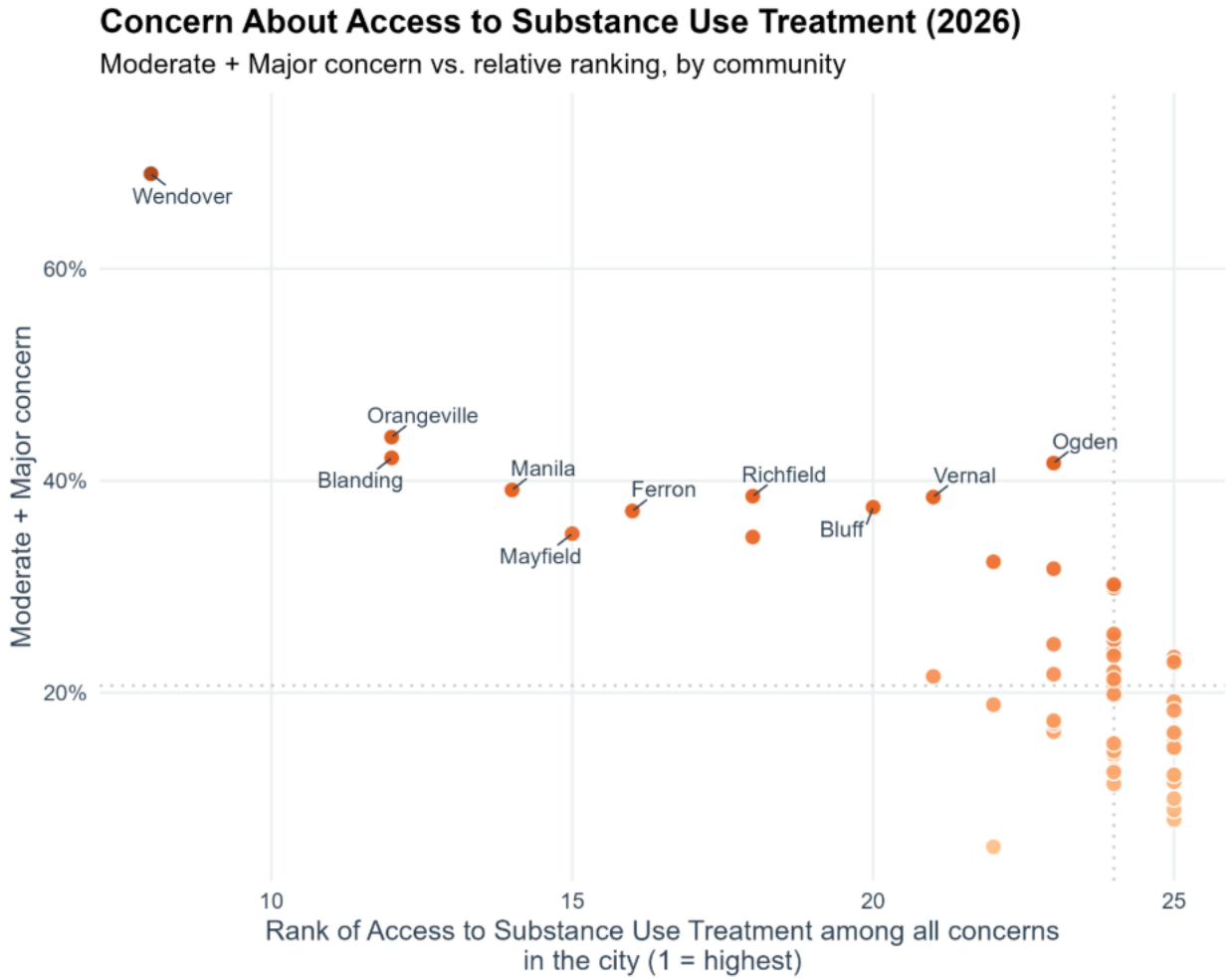


Figure 6. Cities' moderate and major concerns about Access to Substance Use Treatment versus where Access to Substance Use Treatment ranked among all concerns.

Comparison of Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment Concerns

Statewide

Statewide averages of concern about Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment are compared here. Only valid survey responses are included in the table below. Moderate and major concern about Substance Use was slightly higher than moderate and major concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment, while more respondents did not view Access to Substance Use Treatment as a concern than those who did not view Substance Use as a concern.

Table 3. Statewide concern about Substance Use vs. Access to Substance Use Treatment.

Response	Substance Use	Access to Substance Use Treatment
Not a concern	49.0%	57.6%
Slight concern	24.4%	20.1%
Moderate concern	16.2%	14.2%
Major concern	10.5%	8.1%

Comparisons By City

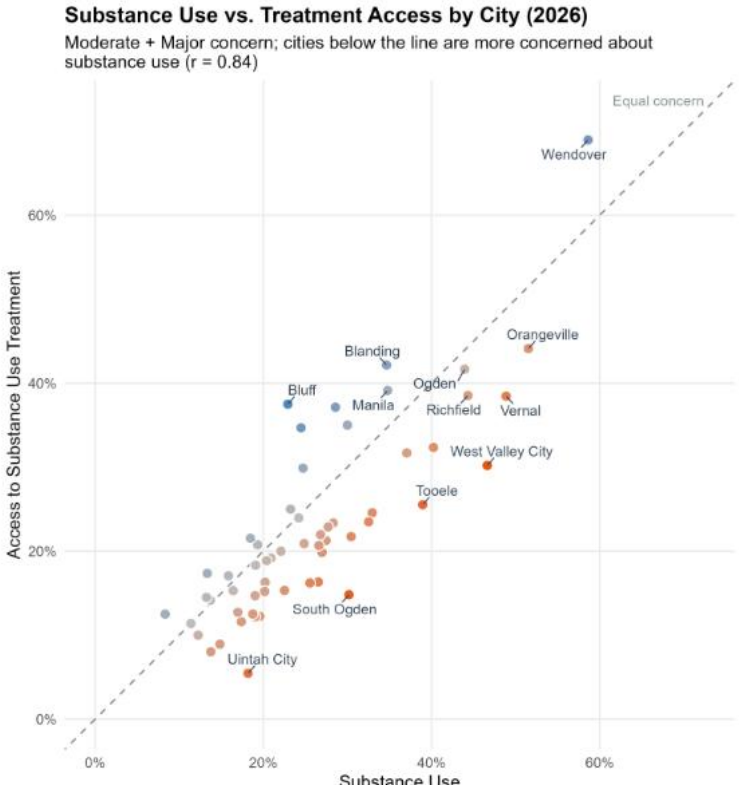


Figure 7. Moderate and major concerns about Access to Substance Use Treatment plotted against moderate and major concerns about Substance Use.

On the figure above, the percentages of respondents indicating moderate or major concern about Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment are plotted together for each city or town. The dotted diagonal line is a benchmark representing equal concern levels between the two variables. Cities above the line had more responses indicating concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment, while cities below the line had more responses indicating concern about Substance Use.

IV. SURVEY FINDINGS ON CHANGE OVER TIME

The Utah Wellbeing Survey was conducted in different assemblages of communities over multiple years. As mentioned above, concern about Substance Use has been asked since 2021 and concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment has been asked since 2024. Only two cities were surveyed in 2023, so that year is left out of the statewide trends shown below.

Statewide Trend Over Time for Concerns about Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment

The chart and tables below show how responses regarding these topics have changed over time. Statewide, moderate and major concern about Substance Use dropped 19.9% from 2021 to 2026. For Access to Substance Use Treatment, concerns slightly rose 0.7% from 2024 to 2026. These are aggregate statewide figures, as participating cities and towns and respondents differed from year to year.

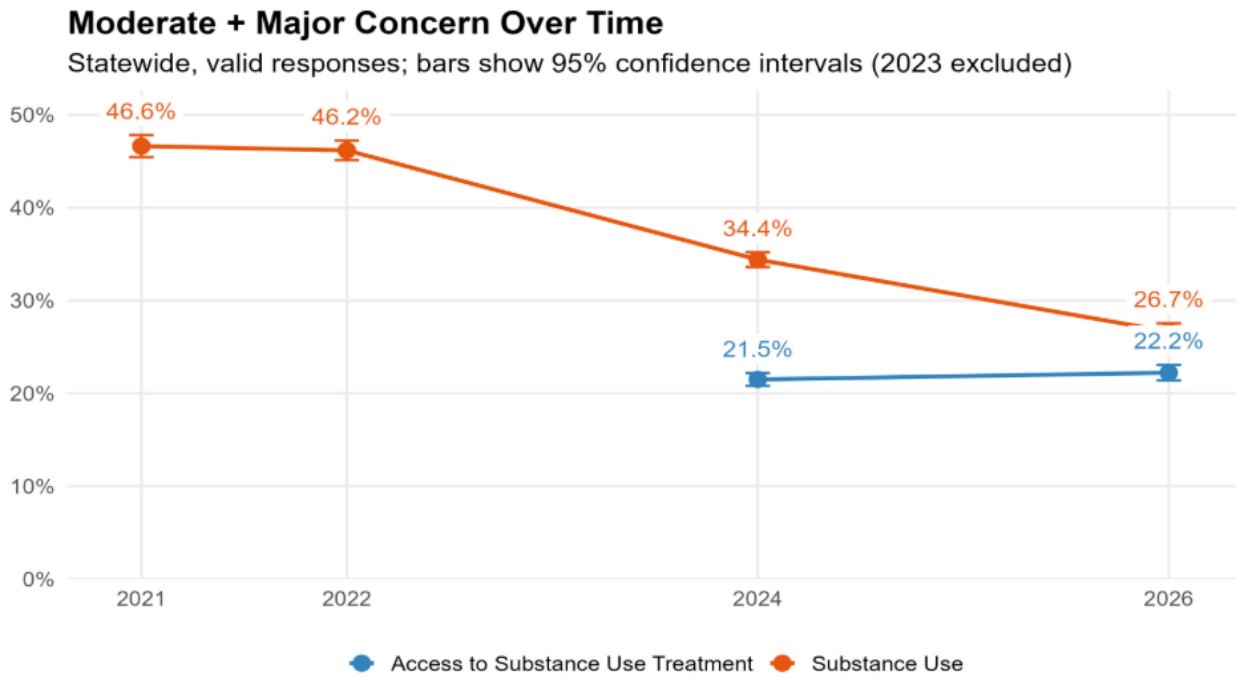


Figure 8. Moderate and major concerns about Substance Use and Access to Substance Use Treatment over time.

Table 4. Statewide concern about Substance Use by Wellbeing Survey year (valid responses only).

Year	Valid responses	Not a concern	Slight concern	Moderate concern	Major concern	Moderate + Major concern
2021	6,843	27.7%	25.7%	24.7%	22.0%	**46.6%**
2022	8,683	26.1%	27.7%	24.1%	22.0%	**46.2%**
2024	13,909	39.3%	26.3%	19.6%	14.8%	**34.4%**
2026	9,436	49.0%	24.4%	16.2%	10.5%	**26.7%**

Table 5. Statewide concern about Access to Substance Use Treatment by Wellbeing Survey year (valid responses only).

Year	Valid responses	Not a concern	Slight concern	Moderate concern	Major concern	Moderate + Major concern
2024	13,922	58.9%	19.6%	13.2%	8.3%	**21.5%**
2026	9,434	57.6%	20.1%	14.2%	8.1%	**22.2%**

City-Level Trends: Substance Use

Table 6 below shows the percent with moderate or major concern in 2024 and 2026 for 32 cities and towns participating in both surveys. Cities are ordered by their percent change in moderate and major Substance Use concern levels since 2024, in descending order.

Table 6. Moderate and major concern about Substance Use (valid responses in parentheses). Change (%) is from 2024 to 2026; * = statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, two-proportion test).

City	2024	2026	% Change Since 2024
Midway	14.4% (125)	18.5% (65)	**+4.1**
Herriman	20.0% (110)	23.2% (99)	**+3.2**
North Salt Lake	24.0% (358)	27.0% (278)	**+3.0**
South Ogden	30.1% (103)	30.2% (53)	**+0.1**
Saratoga Springs	20.5% (346)	19.0% (205)	**-1.5**
Tremonton	40.4% (426)	37.1% (367)	**-3.3**
Cedar Hills	22.4% (304)	18.8% (80)	**-3.6**
Ogden	48.2% (678)	43.9% (157)	**-4.3**
Millcreek	31.7% (259)	26.6% (391)	**-5.1**
South Jordan	25.7% (179)	20.2% (732)	**-5.5**
West Valley City	52.5% (120)	46.6% (148)	**-5.9**
Heber	30.7% (374)	24.9% (177)	**-5.9**
Sandy	33.4% (820)	27.5% (459)	**-6.0***
West Bountiful	26.2% (248)	20.2% (124)	**-6.0**
Alpine	20.1% (348)	13.8% (160)	**-6.4**
Nephi	39.6% (369)	33.0% (176)	**-6.6**
Mapleton	18.9% (148)	12.2% (49)	**-6.7**
Providence	20.5% (176)	13.3% (120)	**-7.1**
Lehi	30.8% (266)	22.5% (111)	**-8.3**
Bountiful	30.6% (170)	22.1% (181)	**-8.5**
Logan	34.4% (601)	24.7% (174)	**-9.7***
Ivins	24.5% (302)	13.7% (219)	**-10.8***
Bluff	33.9% (59)	22.9% (48)	**-11.0**
Wellsville	19.7% (157)	8.3% (48)	**-11.4**
Cottonwood Heights	30.9% (307)	19.3% (207)	**-11.6***
Cedar City	40.1% (629)	28.3% (166)	**-11.8***
Springdale	25.7% (105)	13.2% (68)	**-12.5**
La Verkin	41.0% (105)	27.7% (83)	**-13.2**
Vernal	63.6% (385)	48.9% (847)	**-14.8***
West Jordan	36.0% (247)	19.1% (131)	**-16.9***
Blanding	52.9% (174)	34.7% (101)	**-18.2***
Delta	59.2% (98)	40.2% (169)	**-18.9***

City-Level Trends: Access to Substance Use Treatment

For Access to Substance Use Treatment, 32 cities and towns participated in both the 2024 and 2026 surveys. Three cities had a statistically significant increase in moderate and major concern (Herriman, Midway, and Cottonwood Heights), and Vernal had a statistically significant decrease in moderate and major concern. Table 7 below organizes cities and towns by their percent change in moderate and major concern level since 2024, in descending order.

Table 7. Moderate and major concern percentages about Access to Substance Use Treatment (valid responses in parentheses. Change (%) is from 2024 to 2026; * = statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, two-proportion test).

City	2024	2026	% Change Since 2024
Herriman	11.8% (110)	25.0% (100)	**+13.2***
Midway	8.9% (123)	21.5% (65)	**+12.6***
Cottonwood Heights	12.7% (307)	20.8% (207)	**+8.1***
Providence	10.7% (178)	17.4% (121)	**+6.7**
Blanding	36.2% (174)	42.2% (102)	**+5.9**
Ogden	35.8% (678)	41.7% (156)	**+5.8**
North Salt Lake	14.4% (360)	19.9% (277)	**+5.4**
Tremonton	26.4% (428)	31.7% (366)	**+5.3**
Bluff	32.8% (61)	37.5% (48)	**+4.7**
Bountiful	15.9% (170)	20.0% (180)	**+4.1**
Lehi	11.3% (266)	15.3% (111)	**+4.0**
Cedar Hills	8.6% (303)	12.5% (80)	**+3.9**
Mapleton	6.1% (148)	10.0% (50)	**+3.9**
Saratoga Springs	11.6% (346)	14.7% (204)	**+3.1**
Alpine	5.7% (348)	8.0% (162)	**+2.3**
Sandy	19.1% (820)	21.3% (456)	**+2.1**
Nephi	22.7% (370)	24.6% (175)	**+1.9**
Heber	19.3% (374)	20.9% (177)	**+1.7**
West Bountiful	13.6% (250)	15.2% (125)	**+1.6**
South Ogden	13.5% (104)	14.8% (54)	**+1.4**
Wellsville	11.5% (157)	12.5% (48)	**+1.0**
Millcreek	20.1% (259)	20.7% (392)	**+0.6**
Ivins	13.8% (305)	14.2% (219)	**+0.4**
Logan	30.1% (598)	29.9% (174)	**-0.2**
South Jordan	16.8% (179)	16.3% (730)	**-0.5**
West Jordan	20.0% (245)	18.3% (131)	**-1.7**
Cedar City	29.1% (629)	23.4% (167)	**-5.7**
Springdale	21.0% (105)	14.5% (69)	**-6.5**
La Verkin	29.8% (104)	22.9% (83)	**-6.9**
West Valley City	38.3% (120)	30.2% (149)	**-8.1**
Delta	44.9% (98)	32.4% (170)	**-12.5**
Vernal	54.1% (386)	38.5% (845)	**-15.7***

V. REVIEW OF OPEN COMMENTS

Overview

In the survey's open comment responses, a number of respondents from across the state voiced their concerns about community-level drug and substance use problems and requested action from city/town leadership, including increased monitoring efforts and more consequential enforcement. Many respondents identified specific areas within their cities where drug and substance use is a known issue. Regarding access to treatment, respondents pointed to a need for more widespread and accessible substance use resources, including programs for treatment and education.

VI. RESOURCES FOR SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT

The following resources may be of help in supporting those struggling with substance use.

National

- FindTreatment.gov Confidential resource from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services allowing users to search for treatment facilities in their area.
- 988 Lifeline Confidential lifeline providing care via text, call, live chat, and options for those that are hard-of-hearing or deaf.

Utah

- SAFEUT Confidential system (available 24/7) connecting people with licensed counselors.
- USARA Provides free, non-clinical addiction support in short- and long-term recovery scenarios. Available to individuals, families, and advocates.
- Know your Script Resource from the Utah Department of Health and Human Services that provides education and tools for safe prescription use, storage, and disposal.
- Utah 211 Collaborates with programs in Utah with substance use resources, including detoxification services, support groups, education & prevention efforts, and more.
- Health Extension: Advocacy, Research, and Teaching Initiative (HEART Initiative) USU Extension provides evidence-based health education, resources, and community partnerships; substance use prevention and recovery are topics of focus.

Forthcoming Resource

- Recovery Utah Initiative In September 2026, Utah's Governor Cox signed an executive order to set up a new initiative to align addiction-related response efforts across the state. The initiative also creates a designation for cities and counties to become Recovery-Ready Communities.

REFERENCES

Denton, R., Clarkson, C., Denton, S., Anderson, K., & Madsen, S.R. (2025, November 6). *Substance Use Disorders Among Women: A 2025 Update. Utah Women Stats | Research Snapshot*, (64). Utah Women & Leadership Project. https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/64.pdf

SUMH. (2026). *Data portal | Treatment summary*. Utah Department of Health and Human Services. https://sumh.utah.gov/data-portal-home/