

# Culture Summary

- While the marriage rate ticked up slightly again between 2014 and 2015, the 10-year change (2005 to 2015) was a drop of 6.4 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women. This follows a decades-long pattern of declining marriage rates. “Marriage has long been a part of the American dream. People have an innate understanding that healthy marriages build healthy lives and families. But the declining marriage rate shows that the dream is fading,” writes Derek McCoy.
- Just under one-quarter of 12th graders reported current drug use in 2016, an increase of 13.5 percent since 2006. “Three main areas of concern are marijuana, opioids, and access to mental health/substance treatment,” writes Christian Thurstone, MD. “Since 1999, the rate of people dying from opioid overdose has quadrupled.”
- Good news on abstinence: From 2005 to 2015, the percentage of 12th graders who had ever had sex decreased by 5 percentage points. “The 10-year decline in the percentage of high school students who have had sex should be a cause for modest hope. This year’s rate is lower than at any other point in the history of this indicator going back to 1991,” explains Judy Romea.

## Culture Indicators

	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG TRACK
Marriage Rate (p. 14)		○
Divorce Rate (p. 16)	●	
Total Fertility Rate (p. 18)		○
Single-Parent Households (p. 20)		○
Teen Drug Use (p. 22)		○
Abstinence Among High Schoolers (p. 24)	●	
Abortion Rate (p. 26)	●	
Religious Attendance (p. 28)		○
Volunteering (p. 30)		○
Violent Crime Rate (p. 32)	●	

- Weekly religious attendance declined 2.1 percentage points between 2006 and 2016, continuing a gradual slide in recent decades. “The long-term decline in church attendance should trouble even those who are not personally religious,” writes John Stonestreet. As the scholarly research shows, “the benefits of regular church attendance...are virtually impossible to dispute.”