



RIO SALADO COLLEGE

A MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Rio Salado College Alcohol and Other Drug Programs (AOD) Biennial Review 2026



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Background information

[Program Inventory](#)

[Maricopa Community College District \(MCCCD\) Program Standards](#)

[Policy Inventory](#)

[Alcohol-Free Campus Facilities](#)

[Nonalcoholic Beverages Promoted at Events](#)

[Description of the AOD program elements](#)

[Pro-Health Messages Publicized on Campus](#)

[Faculty Encouraged to Engage in Higher Level Contact with Students](#)

[Student Leadership Promotes Positive, Healthy Norms](#)

[Alcohol-Free Events](#)

[Summary of AOD program strengths and weaknesses](#)

[Policies distributed to students and employees](#)

[AOD Policy - Procedures for Distributing Annual AOD Notification to Students and Employees.](#)

Appendices

[Appendix A. Administrative Regulations](#)

[Appendix B. Staff Policy Manual](#)

[Appendix C. Annual Disclosure Letter on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention](#)

[Higher Education Opportunity Act Disclosure Letter sent to all staff and students Annually](#)

Background information

The Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations ([34 CFR Part 86](#)) of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA) require an institution of higher education (IHE) to certify it has adopted and implemented programs to prevent the abuse of alcohol and use or distribution of illicit drugs by students and employees both on its premises and as a part of any of its activities. At a minimum, each institution of higher education must annually distribute the following in writing to all students and employees:

- Standards of conduct that clearly prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees
- A description of the legal sanctions under local, state, or federal law for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol
- A description of any drug or alcohol counseling, treatment, rehabilitation, or re-entry programs that are available to students or employees
- A clear statement that the institution will impose sanctions on students and employees and a description of those sanctions, up to and including expulsion or termination of employment and referral for prosecution, for violations of the standards of conduct

A copy of this information is made available on [Rio Salado College's Student Consumer Information page](#).

The law further requires that the institution conduct a biennial review of its program with the following objectives: (1) determining the effectiveness of the policy and implementing changes to the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) program if they are needed, and (2) to ensure that the sanctions developed are enforced consistently.

The biennial review must also include a determination as to: (1) the number of drug and alcohol-related violations and fatalities occurring on the campus or as part of their activities that are reported to campus officials, and (2) the number and type of sanctions imposed on students or employees as a result of such violations or fatalities.

Rio Salado College, part of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), acknowledges its legal obligation to conduct a biennial review of compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and conducted an administrative review to determine if the college fulfills the requirements of the aforementioned federal regulations.

Program Inventory

The Director for Institutional Integrity & Compliance convened a committee to conduct a review and document its findings in this report. The members of the review committee include:

Dean, Institutional Effectiveness – Karol Schmidt, JD, Ed.D

Associate Dean, Conduct and Community Standards – O. Tafari Osayande, Ph.D.

Director, Institutional Integrity & Compliance – Ramsey Itani

Faculty Chair, Counseling and Personal Development – Melanie Abts, Ed.D., LAC, DCC

Faculty Chair, Addiction Studies and Behavioral Sciences - Patricia Scalzo, Psy.D.

Director of Human Resources – Anna Flores

The intent of this document is to:

Meet the legal requirement of conducting a biennial review. Review and summarize the programs and activities related to alcohol and drug prevention since the last biennial review of 2024.

Maricopa Community College District (MCCCD) Program Standards

Per [*Administrative Regulation 2.4.7, Abuse-Free Environment*](#), the MCCCD is committed to establishing a preventative substance-abuse program at each college designed to positively affect the problems of irresponsible use of alcohol and the use and abuse of illegal substances. A focus of the program will be on education of the campus community and assistance to individuals.

1. Identify a key individual, at each college, to provide emergency services and/or to contact and work with outside agencies that provide drug and alcohol counseling, treatment or rehabilitation programs that may be available to students and employees.
2. Support disciplinary action for misconduct and the enforcement of state laws governing the use of alcohol and the use, abuse, possession, or distribution of controlled substances or illegal drugs.
3. Establish a preventative substance abuse program at each college designed to positively affect the problems of irresponsible use of alcohol and the use/abuse of illegal substances.

During this biennial review, the committee confirmed the aforementioned goals for this program are being achieved.

Policy Inventory

Alcohol-Free Campus Facilities

All campus spaces, facilities, and locations are alcohol and drug-free in accordance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, Public Law 101-226, and comply with all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to controlled substances, including alcohol.

Rio Salado College offers indoor and outdoor public lounge spaces, a café serving breakfast and lunch, a fitness center open to all staff, a quiet room for staff use, and a lactation room open to students and staff, the Knowledge Commons, which includes the Library, Tutoring Services, and the Computer Lab, as well as a garden space open to the community.

Several college services, such as Testing, Tutoring Services, the Library, and the Computer Lab are available for students beyond normal business hours. Specific extended hours depend upon the time of year, normal college calendar hours, and/or special college events. All public spaces are open to students, and the campus is staffed with College Safety personnel during these times.

Nonalcoholic Beverages Promoted at Events

Rio Salado College is dedicated to entirely alcohol-free events and activities for students. No campus/college events promote alcohol or other drugs.

As stated in the Abuse-Free Environment Administrative Regulation, [AR 2.4.7](#), Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) closely aligns with the Drug-Free School and Communities Act of 1989 and other relevant substance abuse laws. As a college of the MCCCD, Rio Salado College upholds all federal, state, and district laws and policies limiting or restricting drug and alcohol use and abuse on campus. See Appendix A for Administrative Regulation 2.4.7, Abuse-Free Environment.

Alcohol Availability

Alcohol is Restricted on Campus

- ***Administrative Regulation 4.13: Use of Alcoholic Beverages*** prohibits the use of District funds to purchase alcoholic beverages or services related to them except in small amounts to be used in cooking for the District's culinary programs. Additionally, it

generally prohibits the presence of alcoholic beverages on premises owned by the District, or those leased or rented by the institution. It permits a few, narrow exceptions to that latter prohibition. The exceptions are not available to the general population of District employees or officials. See Appendix A for [Administrative Regulation 4.13](#), Alcoholic Beverages – Usage Regulation.

Alcohol Use is Prohibited in Public Places

- Rio Salado College maintains a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free campus. No alcohol is permitted in public spaces or elsewhere on campus. Delivery or use of kegs or other common containers is prohibited on campus. Rio Salado College prohibits alcohol on campus in any form. The college is primarily an online institution, so there are no student dormitories on campus.

Alcohol Advertising on Campus is Banned or Limited

- Rio Salado College campus prohibits advertisements of alcohol or alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol Industry Sponsorship for On-Campus Events is Banned or Limited

- There are no on-campus events which are sponsored by the alcohol industry.

Alcohol Promotions with Special Appeal to Underage Drinkers is Banned or Limited

- Rio Salado College does not participate in promotions related to drinking, underage or otherwise. Our campus and sites are located in neighborhood settings, and for the most part are not in the vicinity of bars.

Alcohol Promotions That Show Drinking in High-Risk Contexts is Banned or Limited

- Rio Salado College does not participate in promotions related to drinking.

Pro-Health Messages That Counterbalance Alcohol Advertising are Required

- Rio Salado College maintains a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free campus.

Description of the AOD program elements

MCCCD is committed to establishing a preventative substance abuse program at each college, designed to positively affect the problems of irresponsible use of alcohol and the use and abuse of illegal substances. A focus of the program will be on education of the campus community and assistance to individuals.

Pro-Health Messages Publicized on Campus

Rio Salado College uses a variety of multimedia tools to increase awareness and engagement in alcohol-free activities and community events including social media and web promotions, fliers, posters, press releases, events listings, emails, newsletters, and community outreach. College departments work with students, district, and community stakeholders to develop and share communications.

The college social media platforms and blog, which includes a search engine, chronicle most of the college's communication and publicity efforts. Student emails, posters and fliers, and the college website are the primary ways in which the college shares news.

Maricopa BreatheEasy is a healthy-living initiative sponsored by the MCCCCD. Its goal is to provide information and support to Maricopa students, faculty members and staff in support of the elimination of tobacco products from all district property. Effective July 1, 2012, all District properties were made smoke and tobacco-free, extending the smoke-free environment of its buildings to the boundaries of district property. We recognize that this requires behavior change on the part of some students, faculty members, and staff. The district helps those who are affected through a variety of means, including classes and smoking cessation programs.

Rio Salado College uses multiple outlets to promote all district wide employee Wellness Programs through *Wellness Maricopa Website*, *the Maricopan*, posters, campus intranets, and social media. *Wellness Maricopa* is a collaborative effort of individuals within MCCCCD committed to the philosophy of empowering through organizational wellness.

Employees are encouraged to participate in healthy lifestyle programs such as:

- Aetna Resources for Living: Provides quality mental health and substance use disorder care including in network and out-of-network; inpatient and outpatient assessment and treatment; different levels of individual and group care; crisis intervention; and treatment follow-up. Online resources include Recovery Coaches on a variety of topics such as depression, addiction, and mental wellbeing.
- Fitness @Rio: Employees have access to the Rio Fitness Center and Rio Fitness Classes.
- Dash with Rio: Rio's annual 5k fun run welcomes all ages and abilities to join in a fun morning that supports our students with all proceeds going to student scholarships.
- Maintain Don't Gain Challenge: Challenging our employees to meet their fitness goals during November and December.
- Eligible participants (employees enrolled in an MCCCCD Medical plan) can earn up to \$600 per year (up to \$150 quarterly) by using [Personify Health](#) for customized engagement

opportunities. The Personify Health Platform is used to manage well-being needs and for earning all future Wellness Incentive Credits.

Rio Salado College conducted quarterly brown bag webinars in 2025 focusing on a variety of topics including substance use prevention and awareness, driving while under the influence, and situational awareness. Additionally, the Department of Public Safety collaborated with the Department of Institutional Integrity and Compliance to publish monthly newsletters that cover a variety of topics related to substance use and prevention to raise awareness to students and staff.

Faculty Encouraged to Engage in Higher Level Contact with Students

Rio Salado College is a service-oriented, primarily online, institution. All faculty and staff are encouraged to reach out to students within twenty-four hours of receiving contact. In addition, faculty who teach in-person programs have set “office hours” before and/or after classes to meet with students. In addition, staff members at each site are available during regular business hours to assist students.

Student Leadership Promotes Positive, Healthy Norms

The Office of Student Life at Rio Salado College promotes a balanced and active lifestyle through various events and activities. On a broad scale, Student Life promotes engagement and leadership opportunities through district-wide activities, including retreats. On a college level, Rio Salado College student groups such as Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the National Society of Leadership & Success promote student success (academic, career, personal) and provide fellowship, service, and leadership opportunities. All Student Life educational activities prohibit drug and alcohol use.

Alcohol-Free Events

Rio Salado College provides regular, ongoing promotional support for alcohol-free events hosted by the college and community partners, which are generally free and open to the public. Examples include:

- **Cultural Events**
 - Annual Asian American History Month celebrations
 - Annual Black History Month celebrations

- Annual Pride Month celebrations
- Annual Native American Month celebrations
- Annual Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations
- International Education Week Events
- **Networking/Socializing/Staff Appreciation Events**
 - Book Club
 - Innovation Think Tank (ITT) Monthly Meetings
 - Annual Employee Awards and Recognition Event
 - Staff Senate Representation Brown Bags
 - Retirement Celebrations
 - Annual Ice Cream Social
 - Employee Coffee Chat
 - World Cup Spirit Day
- **Town Hall Discussions**
 - Annual MLK Day Celebrations
 - Constitution Day/Month Celebrations
 - Employee Democracy Forum
 - Data Bytes Brown Bag sessions
 - Public Safety Brown Bag Webinars
 - Strategies for Success: A Civic Cipher Chat for Students and Instructors
 - Voting Resource Fair
 - Maricopa Women's History Month
 - Lunch and Learn Alcohol Awareness Month Webinar
- **PTK, NSLS and Other Student Life & Leadership Events and Activities**
 - National Society of Leadership (NSLS) Orientations
 - NSLS Leadership Training Day
 - NSLS service events – Student-centered skills presentations
 - PTK NLC Donation Drive
 - Student Public Policy Forum
 - Rotaract Induction Ceremony
 - Let's Taco 'Bout It: Veterans Appreciation and Stories of Resilience
 - Student Life and Leadership Open House
- **Graduation and Induction Ceremonies**
 - College Commencement

- HSE graduation
- Adult ACE graduation ceremony
- NAEHS Induction Ceremony
- PTK Induction Ceremonies
- NSLS Induction Ceremonies
- Dental Pinning Ceremony
- Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- **Partner Events**
 - Workforce Needs Panel and City of Tempe Panel
 - Tempe Chamber and Senator Ruben Gallego Briefing
 - ASU Middle East Music Ensemble
 - Hear the Sounds of the Phoenix Symphony Live at Rio

Summary of AOD program strengths and weaknesses

The following program strengths were identified by the Biennial Review Committee:

- Policies maintain compliance with the Drug Free School and Campuses Act
- Rio Salado College has a visible presence of campus police at its various locations
- Prevention program information is provided in two courses required for degree seeking students (FYE101 & FYE103). Substance use prevention is part of a reflective student assignment within these courses.
- Student code of conduct includes clear statements regarding disciplinary sanctions for violations drug and alcohol policies on and off campus
- Substance use policies are covered within the student handbook for healthcare programs and align with MCCCCD Code of Conduct policies
- MCCCCD offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Aetna, which makes available free counseling services to full and part time employees
- MCCCCD's healthcare provider, Banner/Aetna, works with employees in need of additional healthcare services for needs beyond EAP

The following program weaknesses were identified by the Biennial Review Committee:

- Challenging to identify students with alcohol and drug issues in asynchronous online environment
- Opportunities to more strongly promote existing resources to assist students and employees with alcohol and drug issues

The following recommendation was made on behalf of the Biennial Review Committee:

- Gather staff and student feedback regarding awareness of existing resources for alcohol and drug issues
- Connect with more community partners that can offer support to students residing outside the greater Phoenix area
- Review end of course surveys from FYE for effectiveness in raising awareness

Policies distributed to students and employees

AOD Policy - Procedures for Distributing Annual AOD Notification to Students and Employees.

- New employees are referred to the Employee Handbook online for their reference which outlines:
 - standards of conduct
 - a list of applicable legal sanctions under federal, state, or local laws for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, which can be found on the [Maricopa County Community College District website Administrative Regulation 2.4.7](#)
 - a description of the health risks associated with the abuse of alcohol or use of illicit drugs, which can be found on the Maricopa County Community College District
 - a list of alcohol programs that are available to employees and students
 - a clear statement that the IHE will impose disciplinary sanctions on students and employees for violations of the standards of conduct, which can be found on the [Maricopa County Community College District website Administrative Regulation 2.4.7](#)
- All MCCCCD staff and students are provided a notification letter every 365 days (See Appendix C.)

The following statistics reflect criminal activity, Student Code of Conduct Violations, and referrals to internal/external sources at all of Rio Salado College's locations and facilities.

2024

- Drug Abuse Violation Arrests - Three (3) reported
 - One (1) Drug Abuse Violation Arrest at Rio Salado Avondale location: 420 N. Central Ave. Avondale, AZ 85323
 - Two (2) Drug Abuse Violation Arrests at Rio Salado Northern location: 1715 W.

Northern Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85021

- Employee Violations Related to Alcohol or Drugs - One (1) reported
- No Student Code of Conduct violations related to alcohol and drugs were reported

2025

- Employee Violations Related to Alcohol or Drugs - One (1) reported
- No Student Code of Conduct violations related to alcohol and drugs were reported

Appendices

Appendix A. Administrative Regulations

- [Administrative Regulation 2.4.7.](#) – Abuse-Free Environment
- [Administrative Regulation 4.13](#) – Alcohol Beverages –Usage Regulation
- [Administrative Regulation 4.14](#) – Motor Vehicle Usage
- [Administrative Regulation 2.5.2](#) – Student Code of Conduct

Appendix B. Staff Policy Manual

(May require employee login credentials)

- [Staff Policy Manual – Policy A-4](#) – Employment Standards
- [Staff Policy Manual – Policy A-18](#) – Drug Free Workplace
- [Staff Policy Manual – Policy C-4](#) – Progressive Discipline

Appendix C. Annual Disclosure Letter on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention

Higher Education Opportunity Act Disclosure Letter sent to all staff and students Annually

Statement On Drug-Free Campuses

In accordance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is distributing this notification to all students and employees to inform them of MCCCD's comprehensive program to prevent the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol. This notification summarizes MCCCD's programs, resources, policies, and standards of conduct; discusses health risks; highlights treatment options; and provides an overview of sanctions.

Standards Of Conduct

It is the goal and policy of MCCCD to provide a drug-free environment for all college students and employees. To achieve this goal and to comply with federal law, MCCCD prohibits the unlawful sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, and use of controlled substances on MCCCD property or as part of any of its programs and/or activities. Students, faculty, staff and visitors of any MCCCD campus are advised to become familiar with federal, state and local laws regarding alcohol and other drugs in accordance with the campus location. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors on any MCCCD campus must: 1) abide by MCCCD policies regarding alcohol abuse and illicit drugs; 2) abide by local, state and federal laws regarding alcohol, drugs, and controlled substances; and 3) act to reduce the risks associated with

the use and abuse of these substances. MCCCDC students and employees are subject to all applicable drug and alcohol policies including, but not limited to:

[AR 2.4.7 – Abuse-Free Environment](#)

[AR 4.13 – Use of Alcoholic Beverages](#)

See also the **Auxiliary Services** section for [Tobacco-Free Environment](#) and the

Appendices/Student Section [Medical Marijuana Act](#) of the Administrative Regulations.

Possession or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs on MCCCDC campus is prohibited. Pursuant to federal law, cannabis (marijuana) use is prohibited on MCCCDC property, even for those who have a medical marijuana card.

The MCCCDC Public Safety Department actively enforces laws pertaining to underage drinking, public consumption of alcohol, the furnishing of alcohol to underage individuals, and other alcohol laws.

For more information about the Maricopa County Community College District DAAPP content, contact the [MCCCDC Public Safety Department](#).

Disciplinary Sanctions, Educational Interventions, and Administrative Actions

Students

Students who violate the college drug or alcohol policy are subject to disciplinary sanctions, educational interventions and/or administrative actions. Disciplinary sanctions include expulsion or suspension. Educational interventions may include the requirement to participate in individual or group learning sessions, community service experiences and/or risk assessments addressing alcohol or other drug abuse. Administrative actions may include warnings, probation, interim suspension, or completion of a drug or alcohol education or rehabilitation program. Violators may also be referred for prosecution.

Employees

Sanctions will be imposed on an employee who violates college drug or alcohol policies, which may include progressive discipline, a written reprimand, suspension, demotion, or termination of employment. Sanctions may also include the requirement that the employee complete a drug or alcohol education or rehabilitation program. Violators may be referred for prosecution.

Legal Sanctions

Relevant Arizona Revised Statutes include [A.R.S. Title 4 Alcoholic Beverages](#), [A.R.S. Title 13 Criminal Code](#), and [A.R.S. Title 36 Public Health and Safety](#). Sanctions under state laws for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol are serious and can range from civil sanctions to criminal convictions including fines and imprisonment. [Arizona Criminal Sentencing Charts and Authorities](#).

It is unlawful for any person knowingly or intentionally to possess a controlled substance unless such substance was obtained directly or pursuant to a valid prescription or order from a practitioner.

Federal penalties include, but are not limited to fines and/or imprisonment. Federal controlled substance convictions also can lead to forfeiture of both real and personal property; the denial of federal benefits, such as grants and student loans; and the denial of federally provided or supported professional and commercial licensures. The seriousness of the offense and the penalty imposed generally depends on the type and amount of the drugs involved. [Provisions of the federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. § 801, et seq.](#)

Additional offenses and penalties can be reviewed at the [Department of Justice Diversion Control Division](#).

Health Risks

The use, misuse, and abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs can cause a variety of health consequences. For more details regarding drugs with addictive potential, including their health effects and risk for substance use disorder, see the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

Resources

Drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programs are available for students through MCCCCD community partnerships at each local campus, the Maricopa County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resource [website](#) and for employees through the [Employee Assistance Program](#).



The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCCD) is an EEO institution and an equal opportunity employer of protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or national origin. A lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in the career and technical education programs of the District. The Maricopa County Community College District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities. For Title IX/504 concerns, call the following number to reach the appointed coordinator: 480-731-8499. For additional information, as well as a listing of all coordinators within the Maricopa College system, visit <http://www.maricopa.edu/non-discrimination>.