

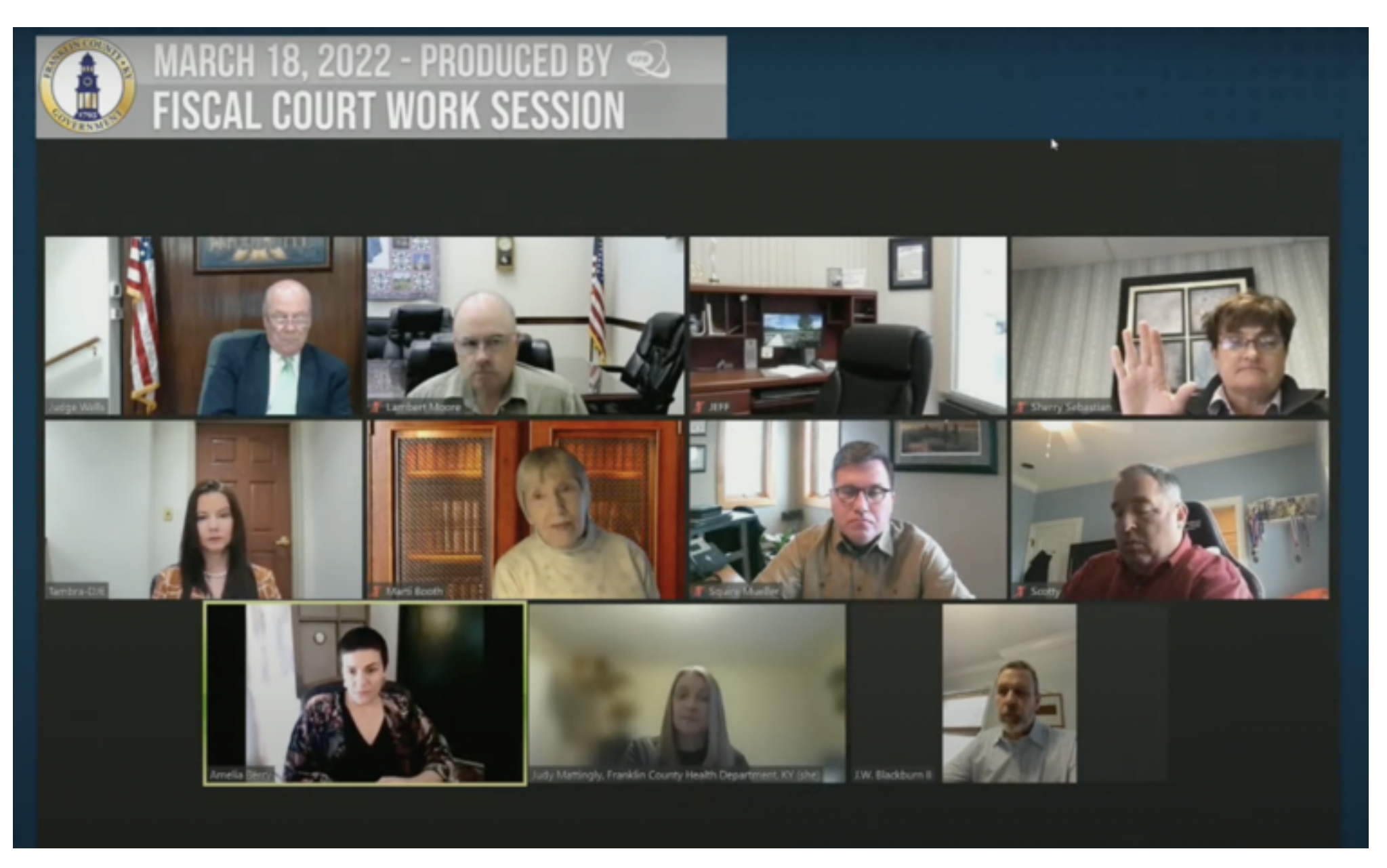
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County Health Department presents YES Card initiative to fiscal court

Mar 21, 2022 Updated Mar 21, 2022



The Franklin County Fiscal Court listening to Just Say Yes Project Coordinator Amelia Berry explain their 'YES Card'.

The Franklin County Health Department gave a presentation about its YES Card, part of the health department's Just Say Yes youth wellness and substance use prevention initiative, to the Franklin County Fiscal Court at Friday's meeting.

The YES Card is a \$400 gift card, funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), that can be used at local Frankfort and Franklin County businesses, including Broadway Clay, City of Frankfort Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites, Frankfort Independent Schools activities and athletics, Kentucky Dance Academy and Yes Arts. It is a digital gift card, but can be printed out to be used at different locations.

The initiative's intention is to provide kids with activities outside of school in order to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol and drugs. The first cards were sent out in September 2020 and the program runs through 2024.

Amelia Berry, Just Say Yes coordinator, said the program has the potential to mitigate the current drug epidemic, as well as help distinguish Frankfort among other cities in the area.

"We believe that this kind of approach, in the long run, it's not only gonna help us chart a course out of the current drug crisis that we're mired in, but it also can put Frankfort on the map as a vibrant city, a place that's among the best in the region to raise a family," she said.

Data from the 2020 Franklin County Youth Survey, presented by Berry, shows ninth- and 10th graders who do organized out-of-school time activities once a week or more are 2.3 times less likely to vape daily, 3.4 times less likely to have been drunk in the past 30 days, and two times less likely to have used cannabis.

Third District Magistrate Michael Mueller pointed out that keeping kids preoccupied lessened their potential to participate in risky activities. This also decreases the likelihood of them developing harmful habits down the road.

"Statistics show if we can keep kids busy, they'll get into less trouble, and we'll have less problems years later. I think this is a phenomenal program," he said.

Currently, the YES Card is a pilot program with 300 participants from Frankfort High School ninth graders and Second Street School sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Students from Bondurant and Elkhorn middle schools are also eligible to be part of the program, however they require a referral from the Wanda Joyce Robinson Foundation or their school's Family Resource & Youth Services Center.

Second District Magistrate J.W. Blackburn asked whether the program would be expanded to include all of the Franklin County schools, to which Berry said that had been part of the plan since the beginning.

"The sustainability planning is really getting underway in earnest as we speak. The hope from the outset has been to expand, not only to middle schoolers in Franklin County Schools, but really to all school-age children in Franklin County," she said.

However, since it is an expensive program, more sustainable funding sources would be needed. Berry said they are looking at combining different funding avenues in order to keep the program running after CDC funds end in 2024.

"Long term, this is not something that can fully be supported by grants, whether that's federal, state or otherwise. So we really see the long term future of this being supported by a combination of private foundation funding, state and federal grants, public funding at each level, and really also engaging the private sector here in Franklin County in an organized and strategic way."

More information about the Just Say Yes program and the YES Card can be found at <https://fchd.org/just-say-yes-ky/>.

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Yes

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