

Taking Actions on Alcohol Issues: What you can do.

In order to generate actions that yield results in reducing youth access and underage drinking, parents and other adults need to begin by understanding the issue. Additionally, community groups and professionals that work with alcohol-related problems affecting youth, need to look at the contributing factors that generate problems. Contributing factors include laws, ordinances, environmental conditions, policies, and practices.

Individual Actions include:

- Love as a parent, not as a friend.
- Set rules – voice them, follow them.
- Never buy alcohol for kids because you think it's safer.
- Don't be swayed by what other parents are doing.
- Curfews work – enforce them.
- Limit alcohol at your own parties – kids are watching.
- Never look the other way when alcohol is being used by underage youth.
- If you think your child is drinking, they probably are – address it now.
- Face it – as a parent, you will be the bad guy sometimes.
- Refuse to provide or ignore the use of alcohol by people under 21 in your home or on your property.

Change conditions, policies and practices at community events and festivals:

- Locate hospitality/beer tents away from family-oriented activities.
- Limit serving cup size to 10 or 12 ounces.
- Train all servers who are selling alcohol.
- Only use servers who are over 21.
- Set a limit of one drink per person, per purchase.
- Limit the hours of alcohol sales.
- Support a firm policy on how to handle intoxicated individuals.
- Make sure that servers do not drink.
- Require a photo ID from anyone who appears under 30.
- Publicize your alcohol policies frequently – before and during your community event.

Change conditions, policies and practices among alcohol licensees:

- Make sure employees are clear on the types of ID your store accepts.
- Establish procedures for checking ID.
- Establish seller/server rights and responsibilities, including the right to refuse sales or service.
- Train new employees within five days of hire on state laws and consequences related to alcohol sales and service.
- Conduct your own compliance checks.
- If possible, use security cameras.

- Provide visible support for your employees in their effort to prevent illegal sales. Actively monitor new employees.

Change conditions, policies and practices in schools and other youth organizations:

- Establish, promote and consistently enforce school policies regarding alcohol and other drug use in school, on school property, at school sponsored events and in the community.
- Work with media outlets (radio, television, newspapers) to communicate your alcohol and other drug policies so that youth and adults understand expectations.
- Support law enforcement in their effort to consistently enforce “zero tolerance” laws for drivers under 21.
- Implement media literacy programs to make youth more sophisticated about the manipulative techniques of advertisers.

Change conditions, policies and practices with law enforcement:

- Encourage involvement with community groups that are trying to change environmental conditions, community policies and practices that allow youth to drink.
- Apply appropriate sanctions to violating alcohol merchants, youth who use false identification to purchase alcohol, and adults who provide alcohol to youth.
- Serve as a community advocate and spokesperson for what you see happening with youth and alcohol.
- Make vigorous use of compliance checks.

Change conditions, policies and practices on college and university campuses:

- Require parental notification on all alcohol-related student offenses.
- Require mandatory alcohol assessment for students involved in alcohol-related violations.
- Train all health/medical professionals that work with this population to conduct brief interventions to screen for alcohol addiction.
- Provide events and venues that provide students the opportunity to socialize in an alcohol-free environment.
- Work to reduce or eliminate “high-risk” drink promotions within the larger campus community (“beat the clock bladder busters,” “women drink free” promotions, extended happy hours and extreme discounted drink prices).
- Support the ability to track beer kegs sold through local alcohol licensees.
- Evaluate the way alcohol is promoted, purchased, and served at fraternity and sorority parties. Take actions that support the low-risk, legal use of alcohol for people over 21.
- Ensure the ability to track beer kegs.
- Eliminate alcohol beverage industry sponsorship.

