

Working with Students to Address Alcohol at Public Events



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Working with Students to Address Alcohol at Public Events



Many factors contribute to alcohol, tobacco and other drug related problems in a community. Some are very concrete, such as many of the factors related to access and availability; while others are very abstract such as community norms. Coalitions often struggle to find concrete ways to address community norms regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. This toolkit has been designed to help coalitions impact community norms, as well as underage access to alcohol, by ensuring public events are health-promoting normative environments for recreational and leisure time in their community. The activities in this kit also provide effective means to engage students in your coalition's efforts.

The Presence of Alcohol at Public Events

Public events, such as concerts, community festivals and sporting games, too often support and encourage heavy use of alcohol. With beer tents, signage and sponsorships, alcohol can easily overshadow the purpose of these events and become the main attraction.

Alcohol at these events can contribute to community problems such as:

- Public Intoxication
- Inappropriate Conduct
- Violence and Crime
- Vandalism
- Increased Youth Alcohol Access
- Underage Consumption
- Impaired Driving and Car Crashes

In addition, youth are particularly at risk for involvement in alcohol-related problems at public events. Factors that increase the access and availability of alcohol to underage youth at these events include:

- Large number of youth who are unmonitored by adults
- Difficulty managing large groups
- High volume of customers – low volume of servers
- Inexperienced vendors or servers (working from temporary alcohol permits)
- Inconsistent ID checking
- No designated areas for sales and consumption, with barriers to support underage enforcement

Addressing Alcohol at Public Events: An Environmental Approach

Environmental prevention is based in the public health model, which stems from the premise that to affect health-related behaviors, prevention efforts must address the host, agent, and environment. In preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, the host is the individual; the agent is alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; and the environment is the given community.

Many prevention approaches have had limited success because they only address one (the host) of those three entities. The agent and the environment are unaffected, creating a dynamic in which individuals are expected to make healthy prevention choices in an environment that may support and encourage alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.

The Ohio Center for Coalition Excellence utilizes the CAMP approach to environmental prevention, which groups the key strategies into the following four categories to impact:

C – Community Norms

A – Access and Availability

M – Media Messages

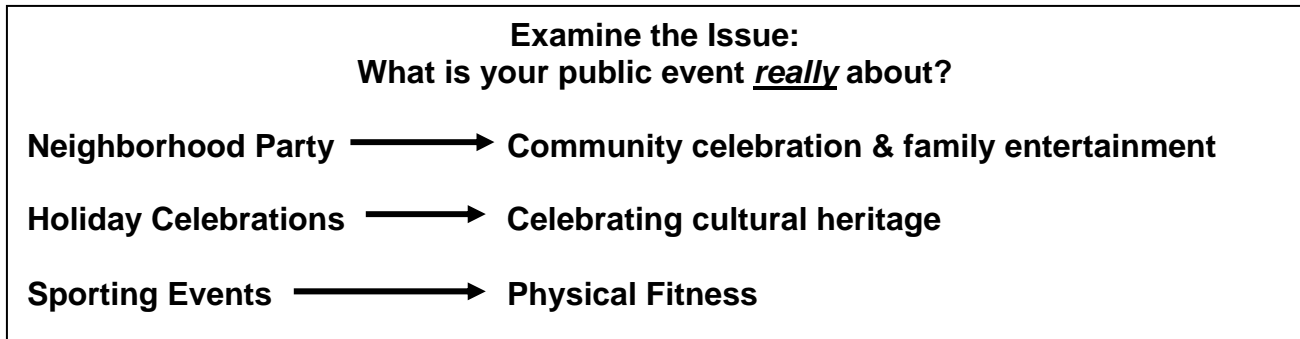
P – Policy and Enforcement

Community Norms

Public events can play a dual role in community norms by both setting and reflecting them. As alcohol takes on a larger role at public events, the norms of that event itself shift and the use of alcohol is more and more reinforced at that event. However, since a community's public events are often opportunities to celebrate the community and its identity, then as alcohol becomes a larger part of these events, the community becomes more identified with alcohol. The sooner coalitions can intervene and break this cycle, the easier it is to reclaim these special events and to redefine the community's identity.

Coalitions can impact community norms by ensuring health-promoting normative environments for recreational and leisure time in their community. For example, in 2007 it was proposed to allow alcohol sales at the Ohio State Fair. The Ohio State Fair has long been a standard-bearer as an alcohol-free event attended by thousands of Ohioans each year. Community groups and individual Ohioans successfully protested the proposal to allow alcohol sales at the fair, thereby meeting the following three strategies: limiting availability, preserving an alcohol-free event, and maintaining the social norm that alcohol consumption is not appropriate at the Ohio State Fair.

As your coalition considers your community's various events, it is important to first identify the intended purpose of each event. Much like the example with the Ohio State Fair above, if your coalition can speak to the original intent and purpose of the event, alcohol can be more easily de-emphasized, or even eliminated.



Questions to consider about community norms for your public events:

- Does your community feel that everything is just fine the way it is?
- Is alcohol sold at most festivals?
- Is alcohol the “main attraction” for many adults?
- What are the expectations around your community festival or other public events?

Considerations for change:

- Increase focus on intent of events
- Keep focus on youth health and safety

Access and Availability

Accessing alcohol is not a difficult maneuver, even for those far below the legal drinking age of 21. Alcohol outlets are plentiful, the staff at those establishments can be lax about checking identification, and fake IDs are all too common.

Public events such as community festivals where alcohol is prevalent can provide another environment where underage drinkers can easily access alcohol. These events can also be places where already intoxicated adults continue to be served. Contributing to this problem is the fact that alcohol vendors at these events often have volunteers or temporary employees working the booth. These volunteers and temps rarely receive the training needed to ensure appropriate sales. In addition, many festivals do not provide alcohol containment areas which are limited to adults over age 21.

When coalitions decide to address alcohol problems arising from community events, they need to first assess the level of access and availability at their community’s various events. If any events are posing a problem, the group will then need to decide if they want to work with a goal of increasing restrictions on alcohol at that event or work to eliminate the presence at that event.

Questions to consider about access and availability for your public events:

- Are there a large number of locations that sell alcohol at the events?
- Are vendors checking ID with every sale?
- Are there wristbands or other means of identifying persons 21 and older?
- How is alcohol sold (# per sale, size of container, tickets, etc)?

Considerations for change:

- Identification required
- Wrist banding legal drinkers
- Distinct cups for alcohol only
- Specific beer size containers (12oz.)
- Increase level of containment if alcohol will still be part of the event.

Containment Area Options	
<u>Non-Contained Area</u>	Purchase and walk around with alcohol
<u>Semi-Contained Area</u>	Purchase and consume in a limited area such as “beer garden” but no barriers
<u>Fully-Contained Area</u>	Enclosed area for purchase and consumption, must be 21 years of age to enter, can not leave with alcohol

Media Messages

Media messages not only impact the individual but they also play a key role in establishing community norms. Therefore, impacting media messages impacts both individuals and a key environmental influence. For example, eliminating tobacco advertising on television in the 1970s contributed significantly to a change in the public’s perception of smoking.

Reducing the marketing and promotion of alcohol to underage, high-risk, and intoxicated people can have a significant impact on substance abuse within a community. Therefore, it is important for coalitions to address high risk messages about alcohol, as well as the level of message saturation, at their public events. As a strategy, such action can provide a clear target for coalition efforts as well as a concrete “win” when efforts are successful.

Questions to consider about media messages for your public events:

- Are any community events sponsored by the alcohol industry?
- If so, do radio and newspaper ads publicize the alcohol sponsor?
- Are alcohol banners, signs, umbrellas, etc. visible at any festivals?

Considerations for change:

- No main alcohol sponsors for events
- Limit alcohol signage to sales area only
- Only appropriate signage (does not market to youth)
- Reduce use of alcohol logos on ads in partnership with community events

Policy and Enforcement

Though myriad laws exist to address alcohol issues within communities, sometimes laws and local policies need to be revised. And, as times change, new policies and laws may be needed to keep up

with the times. In addition, enforcement of existing laws can sometimes be uneven. Communities can affect alcohol problems at their public events by advocating for new policies or revisions to existing policies, and by partnering with law enforcement to address barriers to enforcement at public events.

The first step in this strategy is often reviewing existing laws and policies to determine if they are appropriate and sufficient to the community. Key partners for coalitions to include in this process are law enforcement representatives, municipal leaders, and the gatekeepers involved in the planning and implementation of each public event.

Questions to consider about policy and enforcement for your public events:

- Does the city/event have policies about alcohol sponsorship?
- Does the city/event have written policies on server training?
- Does law enforcement look for underage sales of underage consumption?

Considerations for change:

- Limit number of beverages per sale (1-2)
- Ending sales 1 hour before close of any events
- Mandatory server training
- Uniformed and undercover law enforcement
- Security 10/1,000 ratio
- Spot check drinkers
- Documentation of problems
- Limit number of alcohol vendors

Getting Started

Before your group begins to work on this issue, it is important to consider how to engage more sectors of your community in the effort. If your coalition has had a difficult time engaging students in your efforts, this project can be a great opportunity to do so. Following this section, we have provided some thoughts on how to engage students in this project.

Below we have outlined a general flow for your coalition's activities to help you get a start on addressing alcohol at a public event. Many additional resources are available in the appendices.

Build Your Case: Make sure to collect the information that supports your goal. **DO THE HOMEWORK.** This may include:

- Completion of a **Community Festival Survey (See Appendix A)**
- Calculating the number of alcohol related problems and arrests
- Collecting photos, stories to supplement your data
- Collect youth perspectives
- Research the history of the event. Who were past sponsors of the event? How was the event promoted?

- Calculate the cost of alcohol-related problems to community agencies such as law enforcement, EMS, fire department
- Review current and past policies for community festival or public event

Identify your objectives: Below is a list of possible objectives for your coalition to consider as you begin to plan your initiative to address alcohol at a public event:

1. Restrict the issuance of licenses at youth and family-related community events.
2. Restrict or prohibit alcohol sponsorship or advertising for community events.
3. Ban the sale of alcohol at events and locations popular with underage youth.
4. Enforce strict conditions for alcohol sales and consumption at events in order to reduce youth access, including one or more of the following:
 - a. Designate restricted drinking sections at special events where young people are not allowed.
 - b. Ban attendants/participants in community events from bringing alcohol.
 - c. Require responsible beverage service management policies and training for workers at public events and require that alcohol servers be at least 21 years of age.
 - d. Limit the cup size and servings of alcohol per person.
 - e. Have alcohol-free nights and/or days at community events.
 - f. Use cups for alcoholic beverages that are easily distinguishable from non-alcoholic beverage cups.
 - g. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before close of community events.
 - h. Sell food and non-alcoholic drinks and provide free water.
5. Prohibit open containers in unsupervised public locations.
6. Enforce alcohol restrictions vigorously for both public events and public places, maintaining the seriousness of these regulations.
7. Establish standard procedures for dealing with intoxicated persons in public areas and at community events.
8. For private parties in public places, require permits contingent on strict stipulations and responsible beverage service guidelines.

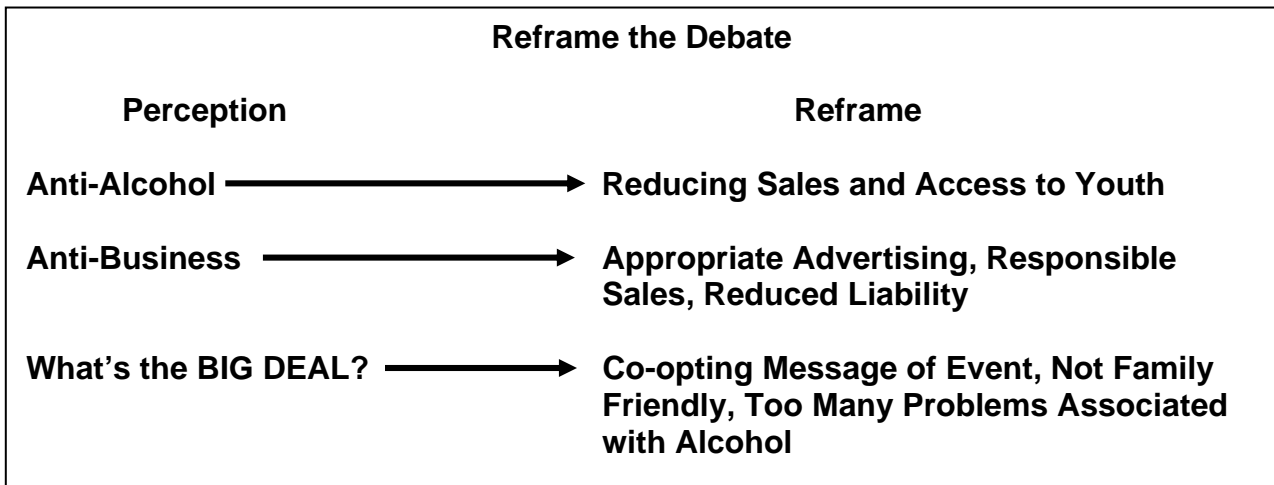
See **Appendix B** for **planning, implementation and evaluation tools** for restricting sales of alcohol at public events.

Connect with Key Players: Form Relationships with key people who are actively involved or potentially involved in making changes to the event, such as:

- Event planners
- Elected officials
- Agency directors
- Local media

For further assistance in connecting with key players, see **Appendix C** on conducting **One-on-Ones**, or personal conversations which help build a working relationship.

Grow Community Support and Reframe the Debate: Keep in mind that community residents may not see current ways alcohol is sold, promoted, or consumed at a public event as a problem. For instance if there are no formal complaints; positive media coverage; or the event is seen as a good revenue maker for the city or the event, then it is crucial that you frame your concerns in a way that the community will understand. Focus your efforts on how you want the environment to be different rather than on what you feel is “bad” about the current environment. Mobilizing community support will require getting people to see the issue in a different way. Remember to keep your focus and reframe the debate as needed.



Engaging Students in Planning and Implementation

To be successful, coalitions must have an inclusive and broad-based membership. Therefore, student inclusion is vital to its success. Students should be included in planning and implementing environmental prevention strategies to help resolve alcohol-related problems in the communities in which they live, play, and learn. Youth are stakeholders because they too are affected by alcohol-related problems.

True partnership is the cornerstone of coalitions. Therefore, youth/adult partnerships are vital to success. As you plan your environmental strategy efforts it is crucial that you attain a youth perspective. Gather a diverse cross-section of students and adults from your community and ask them questions about alcohol related problems associated with community events. We suggest a brainstorming session, which would also include solutions to these problems. Ask the group to identify any barriers to the solutions listed and then begin to problem-solve those barriers.

Students should also have the opportunity to take leadership roles in the planning and implementation of environmental prevention strategies. Leadership roles for students make their involvement meaningful to them and also provide your project with important input. Youth should not be involved with the project as tokens, but as true partners and resources. The following continuum provides perspective on the true objective of viewing youth as resources and working in partnership.

A Comparison of Results Across the Spectrum

(When considering youth participation in planning, implementing and evaluating programs or activities.)

<p><u>Young People Viewed As Objects</u></p>	<p><u>Young People Viewed As Recipients</u></p>	<p><u>Young People Viewed As Resources</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adult is in control with no intention of youth involvement. • The objective: Personal growth of young people. • The byproduct: Conformity of young people and acceptance of the program as it is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adult is in control and allows youth involvement. • The objective: Personal growth of young people. • The byproduct: Increased organizational effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Youth/Adult Partnership (Shared Control). • The objective: Increased organizational effectiveness. • The byproduct: Personal growth of young people and adults.

Theory: If we are interested in promoting personal growth and increased organization effectiveness, it is more effective to create genuine experiences wherein people are engaged as resources, seeing personal growth as a byproduct, than by an attempt to produce personal growth as a direct objective.

Research supports that student and adult partnerships have many benefits including:

- Increased ability to achieve positive outcomes
- Clarified mission
- Adults became more responsive to the youth in the community
- Led to reaching out to the community in more diverse ways
- Helped funders to see the organization was serious about youth development
- Perceptions of youth were seen as legitimate and youth are crucial contributors
- Youth involvement increased commitment & energy to the organization
- Adults increased effectiveness & confidence in working with & relating to youth
- Increased community connectedness
- Gave youth the ability to bring attention to their needs and concerns

These benefits can not be appreciated without the resources that adults bring to the partnership such as organizational and administrative experience, guidance, support, institutional power, and access to resources.

Challenges to Getting Students Involved

Students are just as busy and involved as adults. Therefore it can be a challenge to involve students in your prevention activities. Below we have identified some barriers to student involvement and have offered some possible solutions to those barriers.

Barriers to Student Involvement	Possible Solutions to Barriers
Lack of Knowledge	Write a series of articles on alcohol issues/topics that affect teenagers for local and school newspapers. Offer alcohol issues/topics as topics for speech or debate class
Unwillingness to get involved	Provide incentives for involvement like class credit, special privileges, senior projects, fun alcohol free activities to celebrate small successes.
Lack of support network	Ask for parent/student, teacher/student, or coach/athlete involvement on specific short-term projects. Include existing groups in your efforts like athletes, key club, special interest hobby groups, 4-H, etc.
Unclear Roles	Create volunteer jobs descriptions or outline special projects that students can select. Be certain to include their responsibilities and include benefits.
Unique Needs	Do an analysis with the students on what skills and resources are available and what resources are needed to complete the project. Find solutions together on how to access needed resources. Provide training to students in order to build the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete the project. Continually check in with students to evaluate if they have the skills and resources they need. Ensure that assigned projects fit the interests of the students involved.

Addressing Alcohol at Public Events: Additional Roles for Students

Students can be involved at all stages of the planning, implementation and evaluation of your coalition's efforts to address alcohol at public events. Below are some project tasks which youth may be especially helpful with.

- Challenge alcohol sponsorship of youth-oriented public events in your town by making your views known at planning meetings.
- Conduct a **community festival survey** (See **Appendix B**) at the public event. Expose your findings.
- Meet with local law enforcement. Ask what they are doing about underage access to alcohol. Offer to participate in state-approved compliance checks at public events.
- Schedule a meeting with a local leader. Have youth attend the meeting and ask the youth to prepare talking points to convince him or her that passing restrictions on the use of alcohol at public events is a good idea and why it is important to them
- Hold a press conference describing the data collected about the number of alcohol-related problems that occur in the community and how unrestricted sales of alcohol at public events contributes to the problem and how such restrictions can help reduce these problems. Ask a youth representative to give a statement at the press conference as to how the issue affects them and why they would like to see restrictions.
- Work with local media outlets to air PSAs describing the problem caused by unrestricted sales of alcohol at community events and how restrictions can help reduce this problem. Involve youth in the creation of the PSAs and as the spokespeople in the PSAs.
- Write letters to event organizers or sponsors of the public events describing how unrestricted sales of alcohol at public events contributes to problems and how such restrictions can help reduce these problems. Ask youth organizations (Teen Institute, Key Club, 4-H, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc.) and law enforcement to sign on as supporters in the letter.
- Try to get media coverage of the problem. Stage a youth-led rally or an event in or near the problematic public event.
- Work with youth to organize a town hall meeting to talk about the problems related to alcohol at public events and offer solutions to those problems. To get tools to organize your town hall meeting go to **<http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhall/>**.
- Ask a youth and their parent to co-write an "Op-Ed" piece on how alcohol free events are beneficial to the community or how alcohol-related problems at community festivals effect youth and families. Offer solutions.

Sources:

The Marin Institute
www.marininstitute.org

FACE Truth and Clarity on Alcohol
www.faceproject.org

Ohio Center for Coalition Excellence Community Coalition Toolkit
www.Drug-FreeActionAlliance.org

Technical Report, Preventing Underage Drinking: Using Getting to Outcomes with the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework to Achieve Results, RAND Health, 2007

Appendix A:

Community Festival Survey

Appendix B:

Restricting Alcohol at Public Events: Planning & Evaluation Tools (from RAND Health)

Appendix C:

Conducting One on Ones

(from Marin Institute)

Appendix D:

Additional Resources

Additional Resources:

Ohio Center for Coalition Excellence Community Coalition Toolkit

www.Drug-FreeActionAlliance.org

The Marin Institute

www.marininstitute.org

FACE Truth and Clarity on Alcohol

www.faceproject.org

***Technical Report, Preventing Underage Drinking: Using Getting to Outcomes with the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework to Achieve Results*, RAND Health, 2007**

http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR403/

The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies

http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/EnvironStrat/ES_FINAL-04-2008.pdf

Student Engagement Resources:

At The Table

www.atthetable.org

Grounded in the conviction that institutions and communities benefit from the voices of young people, a growing national movement of youth and adults is working to secure a place for youth "at the table" where decisions are made that affect them. AttheTable.org is designed to provide resources and information about how to involve young people in decision-making. Click on Resources, then scroll down for a link to downloadable handouts, articles, worksheets, and other documents.

Ohio Partnership for Youth

www.ebasedprevention.org/opfy

The Ohio Partnership for Youth cultivates cooperative partnerships among youth organizations by promoting community service, prevention, and positive youth development as cornerstones in healthy youth development.

Take it Back!

www.utakeitback.org

Take It Back! is a national youth-led movement to reduce alcohol problems. This site provides excellent information about the movement for youth.

The Texas Network of Youth Services

www.tnoys.org

TNOYS provides some ideas and tips to help your community build effective youth and adult partnerships. In particular is a great document entitled *Making It Work: A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships*.

Youth In Action

www.youthinaction.org

Youth In Action is a youth program from MADD which looks for environmental community-level solutions to underage drinking instead of focusing their attention on their peers. This site has information for youth –led projects as well as how to form a YIA Team.

Youthleadership.com

www.youthleadership.com

Youthleadership.com is a site dedicated to providing current, creative, and dynamic youth leadership education information; and serving as a resource clearinghouse for individuals who work with youth leaders.

Youth Leadership Institute

www.yli.org

Youth Leadership Institute builds communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive social change. YLI designs and implements community-based programs that provide youth with leadership skills in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse prevention, philanthropy, and civic engagement.

Youth to Youth, International

www.youthto youth.net

Youth to Youth is a community-based drug prevention and youth leadership program. The goal of its many projects is harnessing the powerful influence of peer pressure and make it a positive force that encouraged young people to live free of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Their website provides information on conferences, trainings and other resources that support youth leadership in prevention.