

COMMUNITY FRAMES

The Bigger Picture



Project Extra Mile has developed science-based, topic-specific guides to encourage youth leadership on efforts to prevent underage alcohol use. Youth have an uncanny ability to lead on the effort to prevent youth alcohol consumption, and it has been Project Extra Mile's philosophy that their leadership is critical to the overall community effort.

The Community Frames are intended to assist adult sponsors who work with youth on the underage drinking issue whether directly through school-based programs, such as a SADD chapter or indirectly through a church youth group. The documents will help frame best-practice, evidence-based strategies in such a way that will assist adults to empower youth toward action and leadership on the underage drinking issue.

FRAME COMPONENTS

1. **Background** includes information on a specific area of the underage drinking issue.
2. **Fact Links** describe why the topic area is important to the larger underage drinking issue based on key research and facts.
3. **Goals** give purpose to the strategies listed.
4. **Strategy Ideas** are recommended ways in which young people can take action and address the issue. Each strategy is population-based and focused on the larger environment versus the individual person.
5. **Experts' Corner** explains what the experts have to say about the particular topic area.
6. **Media Advocacy** gives specific ways to generate public awareness about the effort.

Underage drinking is a national public health problem of staggering size. Despite being a state with a small and primarily rural population, Nebraska ranked fifth among states based on the percentage of alcohol consumed underage. In 2009, one-fourth (25.6 percent) of the alcohol sold in Nebraska was consumed by youth, amounting to a total of \$150 million in sales¹.

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs², and is responsible for more than 4,700 annual deaths among underage youth³. About 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.⁴

According to the 2010-2012 Nebraska Young Adult Alcohol Opinion Survey, 69.1 percent of 19 to 25 year olds reported using alcohol in the past month and 47.3 percent reported binge drinking the past month.

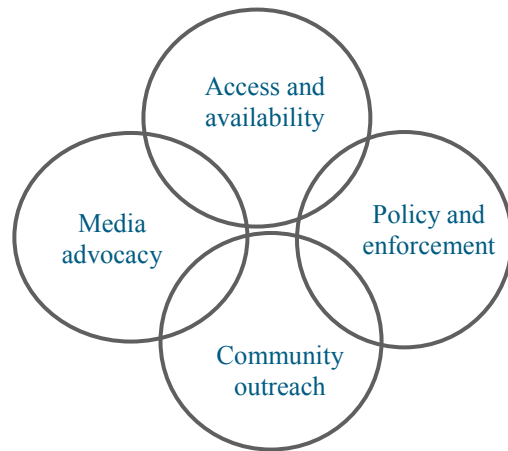
Nebraskans in their late teens and early 20's are the most likely to binge drink, to drive after drinking, to die or be injured in an alcohol-involved crash, to be arrested for DUI or other alcohol-related offenses, and to receive treatment for substance abuse⁵. Underage drinking cost the citizens of Nebraska a total of \$423 million in 2010. These costs are associated with medical costs, work lost costs, and pain and suffering costs¹.

A number of factors contribute to underage drinking, including price, physical availability, promotion, enforcement and regulation.

PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING

Environmental vs. Individual

Some call it environmental prevention; others would say it is simply changing the landscape of the community in which people live. Environmental prevention strategies focus on policy changes versus individual behavior and looks to the social and economic conditions that contribute to underage drinking. The environmental prevention approach looks for long-term solutions, such as increasing taxes, and is often driven by grassroots community organizing initiatives. Underage consumption is truly a public health issue.



*Environmental prevention:
Changing the landscape and social
norms around underage alcohol use.*



4,700 DEATHS
3.7 MILLION
alcohol related events
\$62 BILLION
in societal costs
(UDETC, 2010)

Consequences of Underage Drinking:

- Risky Sexual Behavior
- Alcohol Related Injury
- Suicide/Homicide
- Alcohol Poisoning
- Death

EMPOWERING YOUTH

The issue of underage drinking should not fall solely on the shoulders of young people but rather squarely at the feet of the adults in the community. The problem will not be solved with pencils, posters, and brochures. Adults create the world in which kids live and grow. One of the best ways to effectively reduce alcohol consumption is by going to the source.

We encourage youth leadership and empowerment in order to create longstanding change in communities. Youth have the undeniable ability to capture the attention of elected officials and other policy makers. Their voice is extremely powerful in creating standards of positive public policy and improved public health.

¹ Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, 2010
² United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2007
³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012
⁴ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2005
⁵ Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, 2010