

### Mission:

To create a community consensus that underage alcohol use is illegal, unhealthy, and unacceptable.

### Contact Us

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## Background

There's no other product quite like alcohol. Unlike the sales of soda or shoes, the sale of alcohol causes physical and social harms to individuals and communities. Studies show that increasing the availability of alcohol results in increased consumption and related harms.

The physical availability of alcohol refers to the accessibility or convenience of obtaining and consuming these products. Research shows when alcohol is too readily available the negative effects pile up, including making access to alcohol easier by youth and therefore, increasing underage drinking and the related consequences.

Companies and businesses that make money from alcohol sales will say that what they sell is legal and already heavily regulated. While it is true that what they sell is a regulated product, there have been efforts over the years to relax those regulations, making availability and access to alcohol easier. These deregulation efforts include: increasing the days and hours that alcohol can be sold, expanding retail availability, where and what types of alcohol can be sold, and attempts to decrease the minimum legal drinking age. These changes create environments that make access to alcohol easier for kids.



- Studies show that increasing availability of alcohol results in increased consumption of alcohol and alcohol-related illness and death.<sup>1</sup>
- “When all other factors were controlled, higher initial levels of drinking and excessive drinking were observed among youths residing in zip codes with higher alcohol outlet densities ...”<sup>2</sup>
- High levels of neighborhood alcohol outlet density also correlate to higher levels of youth violence.<sup>3</sup>
- “Changing the conditions of availability—for example, ...restricting the hours and days of alcohol sales...can help prevent or reduce problems.”<sup>4</sup>
- Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) laws are effective, relatively easy to implement and enforce, and, although underage youth can still obtain alcohol through other means, generally are beneficial to society, saving the lives of up to 1,000 young people each year.<sup>5</sup>

## FACT Links

**ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PREVENT YOUTH DRINKING IS TO LIMIT HOW AND WHERE ALCOHOL IS SOLD.**

<sup>1</sup>Shults et al. 2001; Wagenaar and Wolfson 1995; Wechsler and Nelson 2010

<sup>2</sup>Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, 2010.

<sup>3</sup>Journal of Adolescent Health, 2008

<sup>4</sup>American Journal of Community Psychology, 2010

<sup>5</sup>Dept. of Health and Human Services, Publication No. (SMA) 99-3298, 1999

## Goals

To **expose attempts to loosen liquor regulations** that encourage youth and excessive consumption.

To **reduce youth access** to alcohol by changing the environment in which young people live.

To **challenge the status quo of the adult world** on the underage drinking issue.

## Strategy Ideas

**Assess alcohol availability** in the community, with special attention to density near schools and youth venues.

**Find out** the rate of alcohol-related problems (sales to minors, procuring, DWI, alcohol-related violence) in your community.

**Develop a plan** to control alcohol availability based on what community findings and facts show.

**Build support** for limiting alcohol availability by working with businesses, law enforcement, the community and policymakers.

**Conduct activities** to show the link between alcohol availability and the rate and kind of alcohol-related problems.

**Measure and report** what happens once a plan to reduce the availability of alcohol to youth is implemented.

More info at [projectextramile.org/community-frames/community-frames-physical-availability](http://projectextramile.org/community-frames/community-frames-physical-availability)

The strategy ideas are based on the latest research on alcohol availability. These are merely suggestions. Be creative.

**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.**

## Experts'

- **United States Surgeon General**  
In the Surgeon General's *Call to Action*, community members are encouraged to change how they think about alcohol and advocate for thoroughly enforcing regulations about alcohol sales.<sup>1</sup>
- **Strategizer 55: Regulating Alcohol Outlet Density**  
"One of the most effective approaches for reducing excessive drinking and its many health and social consequences is to limit the physical availability of alcohol. . . . State and local public health departments, in particular, have an important opportunity to demonstrate leadership in reducing the consequences resulting from alcohol outlet density . . . ."<sup>2</sup>
- **World Health Organization**  
In 2010, the WHO (a United Nations Organization) included in its *Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol* a list of policy options and interventions that included regulating the days and hours of sale of alcohol and regulating the number and location of on- and off-premise alcohol outlets.<sup>3</sup>
- **American Society of Addiction Medicine**  
For more than 20 years, the American Society of Addiction Medicine has supported eliminating the sale of alcoholic beverages by gasoline retailers and adjusting taxes on beer and wine to equate them with those for distilled spirits.<sup>4</sup>

RESEARCH

<sup>1</sup> Surgeon General Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America. *Strategizer 55*, 2011

<sup>3</sup> WHO *Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol*, 2010

<sup>4</sup> American Medical Association *Policy and Resource Guide: Alcohol Use and Adolescents*, 2006

# Media Advocacy

is the *strategic* use of the media to advance a social or policy goal.

## Goals

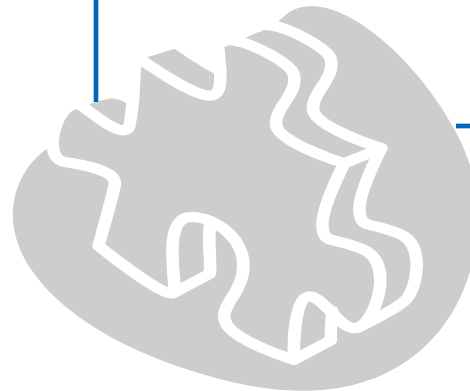
- Change public opinion
- Promote public awareness
- Mobilize public to action
- Change laws or standards

## Getting Started

1. **RESEARCH** your issue
2. **Craft TAGLINES** around your issue
3. **Create MEDIA SOUND BITES**
4. **Choose an interesting SPOKESPERSON**

*MEDIA ADVOCACY is a piece of a larger puzzle aimed at changing community norms, policies and practices.*

*More information is available online at [www.projectextramile.org](http://www.projectextramile.org) or contact Project Extra Mile for expert advice.*



*You have the ability to shape the public's attitudes and perceptions to build a social movement through media advocacy efforts.*

## Media Ops

<b>Submit letters to the editor</b>	Usually less than 300 words, letters to the editor are an opportunity to respond to recent events (i.e. an alcohol-related crash), extend appreciation and comment on issues.
<b>Write op-ed pieces</b>	Opposite the Opinion Page in a newspaper, op-eds usually are longer (500-700 words) providing more length to share a point of view strategically to shift the community discussion. A good idea is to seek permission from the editor of the editorial pages before submitting an article.
<b>Record 30-second Public Service Announcements</b>	Requires permission from local radio station. Often stations are receptive because they have to donate a set amount of air time to community efforts. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) do take preparation. They should not exceed 30 seconds and should focus around a heightened time of year where underage drinking is more frequent (i.e. graduation, holiday season, back to school).
<b>Hold news conferences</b>	News conferences are for special occasions where you invite the media to one location. They are commonly used to make announcements or give a call-to-action. Visual props and handouts are a must. Press conference organizers should be thoughtful about spokespersons and timing. They should not last longer than 20 minutes with Q & A.
<b>Promote on social media sites</b>	Facebook and Twitter provide an easy and real-time connection to media sources and direct contact with broad audiences. It's important to stay current, to be accurate and to stay mindful of messaging.