

ALCOHOL ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS

What is an environmental scan and why should we do one?

An environmental scan helps coalitions understand local conditions that influence alcohol use. Scans document how and where alcohol appears in your community, whether in stores, restaurants, or online. The information you gather will guide your coalition's prevention strategies. This data will also serve in helping focus your efforts in taking your prevention efforts and putting them into action to affect change.

1 Identify What You Want to Know

Before you begin, decide what questions you have about your local conditions or area of focus. These often relate to the 4 Ps:

- **Price:** Is alcohol cheaper than water or soda?
- **Product:** Are caffeinated alcoholic drinks being sold?
- **Promotion:** What drink specials or "happy hour" deals are advertised?
- **Placement:** Is alcohol displayed next to non-alcoholic drinks?

Your questions will shape what, where, and how you'll scan.



Build Your Team

Identify the coalition members who will conduct the environmental scans. Diverse sector representation, including law enforcement, youth, and community partners, is key. Pair youth and adults for in-person scans. You can use this step to engage new members and build community relationships.

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3 Plan Your Method

Decide how and where you'll collect data. Create your own scan tool or use a premade one, whether on paper or digitally. Assign teams to locations and review your protocol – when, where, and how to collect data safely and consistently.

Scan the QR Code to Download PAA's Alcohol Environmental Scan Tool!



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Conduct the Scan

When visiting locations, remember to:

- Check safety before entering.
- Inform managers you're doing a community assessment and may take internal-use photos.
 - ▷ You might want to do this ahead of time by sending out a letter or meeting with businesses before you scan.
- Be discreet and respectful. Don't interrupt customers or business.
- Document what you see and note anything unusual or noteworthy.
- Keep in mind that scans are for information, not enforcement.



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Analyze & Share Results

After all scans are completed:

- Compile and review your findings together.
 - ▷ This is an eye-opening exercise to be done with your coalition!
- Identify trends, lessons learned, and next steps.
- Use results to guide policy advocacy, programming needs, and prevention strategies.
- Share insights with coalition partners and community stakeholders to inspire change.

