

THE COMMUNITY'S ROLE IN PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING AND SOCIAL HOSTING

Prevention Action Alliance

Lifetime Prevention | Lifetime Wellness

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING

Underage drinking is illegal and dangerous. Alcohol use during adolescence interferes with brain development and increases the risk of alcohol use disorder.¹ Teens who drink are more likely to face academic struggles, legal trouble, social issues, and physical or sexual violence.^{1,2} Alcohol contributes to thousands of youth deaths each year, including car crashes, overdoses, and suicides.¹

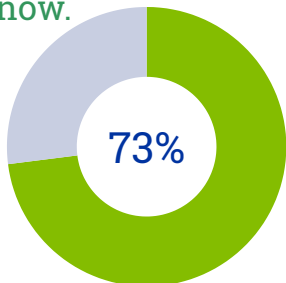


Alcohol is the most used drug among adolescents.³

- 10.4 million people ages 12–20 drank alcohol in the past year
- 5.1 million drank in the past month
- 2.9 million reported binge drinking
- 576,000 reported heavy alcohol use⁴



Most underage drinkers get alcohol from people they know.



- In Ohio, 73% of adolescents reported obtaining alcohol without having to pay for it.
- This includes 32% who received it from a parent or a friend's parent.⁵

[1] [Underage Drinking in the United States \(ages 12 to 20\) | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#).

[2] [About Underage Drinking | Alcohol Use | CDC](#)

[3] [Substance Use in Adolescence | HHS Office of Population Affairs](#)

[4] [Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#)

[5] [Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey - OHYES! Entire State Report for 2023-2024](#)

[6] [Providing Alcohol for Underage Youth: What Messages Should We Be Sending Parents? - PMC](#)

[7] [Ohio Alcohol Law for Parents and Students | Ohio Investigative Unit](#)

WHAT IS SOCIAL HOSTING?

Social hosting is when adults provide alcohol to minors, often at parties. It's illegal across the U.S. and is linked to serious health and safety risks for teens. It also undermines the adult-teen relationship and encourages risky behavior.⁶

Is it ever legal to provide alcohol to minors?

In Ohio, it is illegal to serve or allow alcohol consumption by anyone under 21 on your property, unless they consume alcohol in the presence of their parent, legal guardian, or spouse who is over 21, the consumption is part of a religious service or prescribed for medical treatment by a doctor. Penalties for violating Ohio Alcohol Law can include fines, jail time, and civil liability for any harm caused by underage drinking.⁷



THE ROLE COMMUNITIES PLAY IN PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING

The norms and attitudes of the community can greatly impact underage drinking behaviors. When alcohol is widely available, accessible, and visible, it can change how young people view drinking and normalize underage drinking behavior. Coalitions, schools, and local organizations can make a significant impact by implementing prevention strategies that address retail and social access, as well as changing community norms surrounding alcohol use.^{8,9}

What can communities do?

Provide Alternative Activities

- Offer substance-free recreational and social opportunities so youth can engage in safe, positive experiences in their free time.

Enact Social Host Laws

- Pass local social host ordinances that hold adults accountable if they provide alcohol to anyone under 21.

Educate Community Members

- Implement school-based prevention programs that teach developmentally appropriate information about alcohol and build personal, social, and resistance skills.
- Provide parent education programs that equip families with the skills to have effective, open conversations with youth about alcohol.

Limit Alcohol Advertising

- Restrict alcohol marketing, especially near schools, community centers, and youth sporting events, where ads can create a positive view of alcohol consumption for teens.

Hold Businesses Accountable

- Collaborate with law enforcement to perform compliance checks, cite non-compliant businesses, and consider a “reward and remind” program to encourage businesses not to sell alcohol to underage customers.

Take an Environmental Approach

- Support policies that change the broader environment, like zoning laws that limit the number of alcohol retailers in an area, and taxes on alcohol that reduce youth access and generate funding for prevention programs.



[8] [Strategies to Prevent Underage Drinking - PMC](#)
[9] [Exploring the influence of local alcohol availability on drinking norms and practices: A qualitative scoping review - Dimova - 2023 - Drug and Alcohol Review - Wiley Online Library](#)

