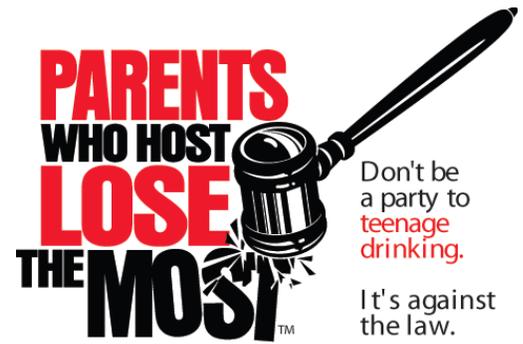


## What communities & coalitions need to know?



### Local program components are:

**1. A public information campaign to either support or shape strong community norms against providing alcohol to youth.**

Effective public information campaigns occur simultaneously on several levels. Community public information campaigns will rely on well designed and attractive materials provided to each group. Materials include information packets, Fact sheets and cards to use as bill or payroll stuffers, window clings and similar promotional materials. Materials are provided without charge, but coalitions are responsible for mailing or other distribution costs.

**2. Media advocacy to support and shape community norms against providing, purchasing or pouring alcohol for youth.**

Media advocacy is strategic involvement with the media to highlight the proposed solution to a community problem. The number of alcohol-related stories in both print and on the air offer imaginative citizens plenty of opportunities to raise concerns in the media.

**3. Alcohol age compliance checks and/or party patrols:**

Law enforcement requires resources to enforce the law and then community support for the enforcement action. Community funding for this enforcement effort will be available for both alcohol age compliance checks and subsequent Party Patrols through the Wisconsin CARD (Comprehensive Alcohol ReDuction Program) program operated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The CARD grant funds the officer overtime required for these labor intensive underage drinking projects.

### Why would a community want to implement this project?

These are effective, financially sustainable approaches with significant support and assistance available to communities that adopt the program this year. Wisconsin law places responsibility for alcohol control and the resulting alcohol environment squarely on local government, but few Wisconsin communities fully exploit that authority.

This project allows community coalitions to articulate a positive healthy community standard and support for local police enforcement. Wisconsin law is clear; providing, purchasing or pouring alcohol to underage youth is illegal. Underage drinking isn't inevitable and reducing youth access to alcohol certainly reduces underage drinking. It is important to reduce both commercial and noncommercial access to youth to reduce

underage drinking and federal funding distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation can support law enforcement in this area.

Wisconsin communities are at a turning point; families and communities understand the importance of preventing and reducing underage drinking, law enforcement agencies apply for enforcement (CARD) funds from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and community coalitions apply for materials and training from the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth.

Together, these agencies assume most community costs for Parents Who Host Lose the Most: Don't be a Party to Underage Drinking. Local printing, mailing and similar distribution costs must be covered locally.

### **How can we start?**

In January a series of training sessions in each CESA district and on the web provide information to community coalitions and others on the elements of the program and the application process. A web-based training with downloadable support documents will be available in January.

In January, police or sheriff departments should contact the Wisconsin Department of Transportation about filing a CARD grant application. Community coalitions should make general plans for their public information and media advocacy campaigns then complete their Application and Materials Request for submission no later than February 6, 2009.

### **Are free materials and the CARD grant only available for existing coalitions?**

All coalitions are eligible, but it may be hard to pull a new group together that quickly. Most communities have one or more safety or anti-drug groups that could implement this campaign with some dedicated volunteer assistance. Build on what exists in your community and you build on the experiences of others.

CARD grants go directly to the police departments; community coalitions can't apply for or receive CARD funding. Many coalitions provide support for police activities funded by CARD grants. It is a great opportunity for communities to build better relations with law enforcement for a safer community.

### **Are PTA and school groups the most effective way to implement this community effort?**

The research shows effective efforts to prevent and reduce underage drinking require a community effort. Community change happens in the community, not just in the school yard. Schools and educators are a very important part, but we want to change community norms and standards. School based groups should partner with a community group if they want to undertake this project. Together, they would be unstoppable!

**How long does the project operate?**

Community applicants should begin planning immediately, plan to kick off the effort in late March and April, peaking in May and wrapping up as the school year ends in late May or June. In general it is a 4 to 6 month volunteer community commitment.

**Do we know this will work?**

There are no magic bullets in efforts to prevent and reduce underage drinking. We know that when alcohol is less available to youth, fewer youth drink. Research has shown that, if repeated, this campaign reduced both the number of youth knowing of alcohol parties in the community and reduced the number of parents who knew other parents that served alcohol to youth. It has been labeled a “Promising Program” by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Most important changes require an effort over time, quitting smoking, exercising, raising reading scores or deterring juvenile crime all take lots of effort over a number of years. This project allows us to focus our efforts where other communities and states have succeeded.

Everyone, every family, every legally aged sibling, every adult of any age has the power to prevent and reduce underage drinking just by saying – not here, not ever. This project helps build and strengthen resolve to take that stand. It also encourages those who want to prevent and reduce underage drinking to call the authorities when they see underage drinking in their community. And finally, it applies legal sanctions to individual who illegally sell alcohol to youth.