

# 2025-2026 GRANTEE GUIDE



Thank you for your interest in applying for a Virginia ABC Alcohol Education and Prevention Grant. This document is intended to assist you through the application process.

As you prepare your application for this grant cycle, be sure to take into consideration the current circumstances which may impact the implementation of the proposed project. We encourage you to consider the best way to reach your audience(s) while remaining flexible should circumstances change over the course of the grant cycle.

## ABOUT VIRGINIA ABC ALCOHOL EDUCATION & PREVENTION

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control (Virginia ABC) [Community Health and Engagement \(CH&E\)](#) develops and implements statewide alcohol education and prevention programming based on current data and trends. CH&E offers programming and resources for elementary, middle and high schools, institutions of higher education, adults 21 and older, licensees, older adults, other state agencies, community coalitions and non-profit organizations.

The mission of Virginia ABC CH&E is to strengthen the capacity of communities across Virginia by providing data, research, evidence-based programming, strategic resources and genuine partnership in order to ensure Virginians are able to make informed choices and Virginia ABC values community health and engagement.

We believe that communities can be formed in a variety of settings and that community leaders can regularly and more effectively impact their community. Therefore, we offer prevention education, strategic planning knowledge, leadership skill building, resources, subject matter experts and partnerships to build capacity and preparedness.

We believe that a multi-faceted approach to alcohol education and prevention is more effective and should include individuals, families, licensees and communities.

## ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM

We seek to fund evidence-based programs with a long-lasting impact and utilize partnerships between organizations. It is also desirable that the grant project will further build capacity to promote positive changes in the community. Strong Applications must address at least one of the following focus areas:

- Underage drinking prevention
- Social providing or social hosting prevention
- High-risk drinking prevention

Note that the word “prevention” appears within each of the focus areas. Applications with an intervention or treatment focus for those diagnosed with substance use disorders will **not** qualify. **Please review the Resources Section to help you develop the strongest application possible.**

Grant requests are limited to a maximum of \$10,000. We reserve the right to partially fund proposals or grant fewer awards or more awards than expected.

We prefer to fund the parts of a project that build capacity, provide education and/or programmatically address the focus area. One-time events and/or celebrations such as after-prom parties that do not have specific learning objectives that can be evaluated are not likely to be funded. All expenses should be directly related to the goal(s) identified in the application.

Applicants will be notified of grant award approval or denial via email by April 25. It is possible that you will be contacted earlier in April with a list of questions and application modifications.

## **GRANT TIMELINE**

The grant cycle begins July 1, 2025 and ends when the Final Report is due on May 15, 2026. All proposed activities should occur and be able to be reported on during this timeframe.

- Application due - March 1 by 5 p.m.
- Award/Denial notification - April 25 via email
- Grant Agreement due - June 15 by 5 p.m.
- Interim Progress Report due - December 10 by 5 p.m.
- Final Report due - May 15 by 5 p.m.

## **GENERAL TIPS**

- Start the grant application preparation early to allow time to thoroughly research community needs, gather data and meet with partners to draft the application and collect mandatory Partnership Agreement Letters.
- Be sure to proofread the application before submitting. Even consider asking a colleague to review the application to be sure the proposal is clear and feasible.
- Follow the link on the Virginia ABC Education and Prevention Grant webpage to submit an application.
- The application is web-based but allows for saving and resuming.
- It is recommended you review this guide and develop the answers to the project proposal sections in a separate document and then copy and paste into the web application.
- Additional attachments, aside from those requested, will not be considered.

## **RESOURCES TO DEVELOP A STRONG APPLICATION**

### **STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK**

Virginia ABC Community Health & Engagement is guided by the [Strategic Prevention Framework developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(or SAMHSA\)](#). The Strategic Prevention

Framework (or SPF) is a five-step planning process that communities can follow to deliver effective prevention practices. We encourage you to also use the SPF as it is an outcomes-based process of gathering and using data to guide all prevention decisions. The grant application incorporates the SPF components. We will review the SPF steps briefly. For more information, please visit SAMHSA online at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

The five steps and two guiding principles of the SPF offer prevention planners a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the substance misuse and related behavioral health problems facing their states and communities. The SPF includes these five steps:

1. **Assessment:** Identify local prevention needs based on data (e.g., What is the problem?)
2. **Capacity:** Build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs (e.g., What do you have to work with?)
3. **Planning:** Find out what works to address prevention needs and how to do it well (e.g., What should you do and how should you do it?)
4. **Implementation:** Deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended (e.g., How can you put your plan into action?)
5. **Evaluation:** Examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices (e.g., Is your plan succeeding?)

The SPF is also guided by two cross-cutting principles that should be integrated into each of the steps that comprise it:

- **Cultural competence** - The ability of an individual or organization to understand and interact effectively with people who have different values, lifestyles, and traditions based on their distinctive heritage and social relationships.
- **Sustainability** - The process of building an adaptive and effective system that achieves and maintains desired long-term results.

## **EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES**

The planning phase of the Strategic Prevention Framework encourages use of an evidence-based program or best practice to implement. Evidence-based means that the program or practice has undergone rigorous evaluation and demonstrates positive outcomes. A best practice is a broader category, including labels of “emerging” or “promising” practices which have some scientific research or data showing positive outcomes but haven’t been tested or reviewed to the degree of an evidence-based program or practice. Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development maintains a searchable database of evidence-based programs for alcohol prevention and other topics [here](#). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism provides resources to identify evidence-based interventions and strategies on their [website](#). For evidence-based programs and practices specific to colleges and universities, the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism provides a great resource called the [College Alcohol Intervention Matrix](#), or College AIM.

In general, effective alcohol prevention practices tend to build capacity within the community, intervene across multiple sessions for an adequate “dose” of prevention, provide strong support to program facilitators, and are culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate. These are only a few major references for evidence-based programming, but they are not all-inclusive. We encourage you to research evidence-based programs and best practices to help inform proposed prevention projects.

## **PROGRAM RECCOMENDATIONS**

[Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development](#) is a project that identifies, recommends, and disseminate programs for youth, families and communities that, based on scientific evaluations, have strong evidence of effectiveness. While we do not require these programs to be apart of grant applicants' proposal's we strongly encourage use of these program as they have strong evidence in preventing alcohol misuse. To learn more about these programs visit the website [here](#) and filter the programs by program outcomes, target population and program specifics.

## **EVALUATION**

The evaluation of the proposed project is an important aspect of the application and should be thoughtfully considered. Evaluation encourages us to examine the effectiveness of a program, including which activities take place, who conducts the activities and who is reached as a result. The metrics chosen to evaluate the project should directly relate to the project goal(s), indicating if the goals were accomplished and/or what could be improved in the future.

## **COMPLETING THE APPLICATION**

**[ACCESS GRANT APPLICATION HERE](#)**

### **PROJECT MANAGER INFORMATION SECTION**

Provide the contact information for the individual who will serve as the main contact for the duration of the grant cycle. It is important to provide a secondary contact. This secondary contact should be a supervisor or other representative who is involved with or aware of the details of the proposed project.

### **ORGANIZATION INFORMATION SECTION**

Provide the organizational information requested in the application, being sure to include website and social media links if available.

Organizations eligible to apply include, but are not limited to, community coalitions, law enforcement, nonprofits, schools, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations and prevention-related groups.

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL SECTION**

We recommend you draft the answers to this section in a separate document in order to easily copy and paste the content into the online application. It is important this section contains clear and concise information – be sure to proofread and ensure you've answered questions completely.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

Please provide a short summary (100 words or less) of the proposed project. This short recap will be used for summary reports and quick reference when reviewing. It should provide a succinct indication of the major goal(s) and activities of the proposed project.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

In this section identify the intended audience(s) of the project being sure to be as specific as possible.

For instance, if you plan to conduct a [Project Sticker Shock](#) event, while the goal is to prevent underage drinking, the target audience is adults over 21 years of age as they are receiving the messaging from the program.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

Please indicate the county(ies)/city(ies) the proposed project will reach.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Needs Assessment section should answer the following questions:

- why is this project needed?
- what data shows the project is needed?
- will the evidence-based practices you plan to use specifically address the identified need or problem?

Use statewide or local data that portrays the problem your organization wants to solve. Make sure the data you provide specifically addresses the target audience(s) you've identified. Only use credible sources for data and be certain to cite sources. Creating a solid needs assessment is very important because the data and problem(s) you identify will help guide the other steps of the project.

If you have received a Virginia ABC Alcohol Education and Prevention Grant in the recent past and are proposing a project with a similar target audience, be sure to include data collected from the previous project(s) which indicate a continued need for these prevention efforts. *Keep in mind, if data does not indicate an impact from previously funded projects, you will need to make adjustments to the current approach or provide justification for continuing the program.*

Sources for local and statewide data:

[Virginia Youth Survey](#)

[Safe School Information Resource \(SSIR\)](#)

[DHBDS/OMNI Regional State Data](#)

[Campus Safety and Security](#)

[DMV Highway Safety](#)

[Virginia ABC Enforcement Quarterly Reports](#)

[Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#)

## **PROJECT GOAL(S)**

In this section, outline the specific goal(s) the proposed project will aim to achieve. Goals should be SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based.

An example of a strong goal would be - *Reduce alcohol violations within the freshman class by 10% during the 2024-2025 academic year.*

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Project Description should provide a complete overview of the project from start to finish in a narrative format (500 words or less). The grant review committee should be able to understand the project with complete certainty after reading the description.

Include planned activities and how the activities incorporate the selected evidence-based practices and will utilize collaborative efforts. Focus on quality succinct information that highlights the key areas of the project.

Consider using an external reviewer who can provide a fresh perspective on whether the Project Description is easy to follow.

It is important this narrative include the following:

- Identification of who will implement described activities and tasks (including partnerships)
- Timeline of activities
- Expenditures

## **EVIDENCE OF IMPACT**

In this section, provide scientific evidence and/or promising practice case studies of success to substantiate the anticipated impact of the project and its objectives. This section should include citations and references as evidence of the anticipated impact.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnering with other organizations is an important component of this grant. We recommend a diverse set of partners. Due to the importance of these partnerships, we require detailed “Partnership Agreement Letters” instead of less specific “Letters of Support” that generally affirm agreement with your organization’s mission or a current positive professional relationship.

Partnership Agreement Letters are mandatory from organizations that will directly participate in the proposed grant project, provide in-kind donations and/or those you will need to make the project a success. Letters must specifically state how the organization plans to partner with your organization on the proposed project. For instance, if you are applying for a grant that involves working with students in local schools you would need a Partnership Agreement Letter from the applicable superintendent or principal(s) with agreed upon dates, scope and details about access to students. The letters must be on the organizations’ official letterhead and include the date and supporter’s signature. Emails, letters from previous projects or applications or generic letters of support from partnering organizations do not qualify.

Please note that the content of these letters is more important than the quantity. We would rather receive an application with two very specific Partnership Agreement Letters that detail how the individual organizations will participate in the project rather than a multitude of letters that are generic or general.

## **FINANCING SECTION**

We prefer to fund the parts of a project that build capacity, provide education and/or programmatically address the focus area. One-time events and/or celebrations such as after-prom parties that do not have specific learning objectives that can be evaluated are not as likely to be funded. All expenses should be directly related to a prevention strategy listed in the Project Proposal. Requested grant funds are limited to \$10,000.

Funds may be used for program planning, development, implementation and coordination costs including:

- Instructional materials and supplies such as online educational platform subscriptions, publications, brochures and workbooks
- Speaker or trainer presentation fees or contracts
- Printing, postage and media services including advertising
- Overtime law enforcement efforts (**Please note: this is the ONLY exception we will allow to the personnel salaries, stipends, and consultants rule**)
- Purchases of food or beverage to be used during prevention program (not to exceed 10 percent of the grant request and must meet the state’s per diem rate)
- Promotional items appropriate for the target audience and the related prevention strategy
  - These items must include appropriate, actionable messaging and should be intended to provide education and promote substance use prevention
- Equipment specifically used for prevention efforts (examples: Table clothes, tables, Speakers, microphones)

Funds may NOT be used for:

- Personnel salaries, FICA and fringe benefits
- Operating expenses, such as rent, utilities, phone and internet
- Stipends for personnel and consultant fees
- Indirect cost or general conference attendance expenditures
- Travel expenses, such as mileage, air fare, transportation services and lodging
- Gift cards, scholarships, or other direct cash prizes or incentives
- Supplies and other expenses not directly related to the project

In this section you will be required to download an excel spreadsheet which you will save to your computer to complete. You will then be asked to upload this completed spreadsheet into the submission form.

## **[DOWNLOAD FINANCIAL SPREADSHEET HERE](#)**

The spreadsheet is divided into two sections: “Grant Funding Requested” and “In-Kind or Other Funding Sources.”

In the first section, please detail all expenditures requested to be funded by the Virginia ABC Alcohol Education and Prevention Grant. Please be as specific as possible and ensure the proposed expenses are directly related to the project goals.

In the second section, please list all in-kind donations or funding from other grants/donations (expected or confirmed) that will DIRECTLY support the proposed project. For example, if your local newspaper has donated ad space for the project, list the newspaper as the donation source and provide the estimated dollar amount of this donation.

## **EVALUATION & SUSTAINABILITY SECTION**

How will this project be evaluated? The evaluation plan should answer:

- Who is collecting and compiling data and who is the target audience?
- What tools are being used, what data is being collected and what objectives or goals are being measured?
- Why are you collecting data? What will you do with the results?

- Where and when do you plan to administer an evaluation?

In this narrative style section please be sure to detail the evaluation method (pre/post-tests, survey, interviews, etc.) and the indicators you will use to judge success. Evaluation methods should be able to illustrate if the project has had an impact on the local/regional needs specified in the needs assessment section and if the project goal(s) was reached.

If you have drafts or examples of proposed evaluation tools, you can submit them in your application, as well.

Our goal is to support projects which have a long-lasting impact on their communities. Please explain in the sustainability section how you plan to sustain the proposed project beyond this grant cycle.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you have any questions while preparing the application, please contact us.

Virginia ABC Community Health and Engagement

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Email: [education@VirginiaABC.com](mailto:education@VirginiaABC.com)

Webpage: <https://www.abc.virginia.gov/education>

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