



**Virginia ABC Education and Prevention  
Project Sticker Shock  
Planning Guide**

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# Overview

Alcohol is the most widely abused substance among youth in the United States. One way to address this issue is to prevent youth from obtaining alcohol in the first place. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 72% of underage drinkers did not pay for the alcohol the last time they drank and the most common source of alcohol for these youth was an unrelated person aged 21 or older. Giving alcohol to youth is considered social providing. Underage drinkers may also purchase the alcohol themselves with the use of a fake ID.

Project Sticker Shock is a community awareness and education program that aims to prevent minors from obtaining alcohol from adults 21 and older or using a fake ID to purchase alcohol. In Virginia, these offenses are Class 1 misdemeanors and are punishable by fines of up to \$2,500, and/or one year in jail and the loss of a driver's license for up to one year. This program encourages partnership between community organizations, youth, retail establishments, law enforcement, local media and other community members. During a Project Sticker Shock event, participants place stickers and window clings that warn about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors and using a fake ID to purchase alcohol on cases and coolers of alcohol at local retailers. The overarching goal is to change the attitudes and perceptions of adults who think social providing of alcohol to minors is okay or acceptable. The sticker and window cling provide a message – educating adults and youth about the legal consequences and raising awareness of this issue among those living in the surrounding community.

This Planning Guide was designed to assist in the implementation of a successful Project Sticker Shock event by establishing a 10-step action plan and timeline to follow. In addition, the accompanying attachments and frequently asked questions will provide support for completing each step and solving any issues that may arise.

# Process

Project Sticker Shock events can be executed by any age group of youth and any type of organization, such as community coalitions, prevention groups, law enforcement agencies and community service boards. A lead contact from the organization serves as the coordinator of the event and is responsible for organizing and collaborating with interested youth and adults.

On average, one Project Sticker Shock event takes between six to nine weeks to implement. This includes all aspects of planning, recruiting a team, partnering with alcohol retailers, receiving event supplies, involving the media and completing an evaluation. It is recommended that Project Sticker Shock events be reoccurring and held around high-risk times when underage drinking or social providing is more likely to happen. This may include football season, holidays, spring and summer breaks, graduation or prom.

Each participating organization is required to develop and implement a strong media advocacy plan. Project Sticker Shock cannot be effective without media involvement, as it will help publicize efforts and further spread the message. Promotion on social media and coverage in the local news of events can increase visibility and produce impact beyond the reach of placing stickers and window clings.

Below are examples of the stickers and window clings used during Project Sticker Shock events. Depending on community need, organizations can request stickers in English or Spanish.



**Sticker and Window Cling (English)**



**Sticker and Window Cling (Spanish)**

## Action Plan Steps

The following step-by-step action plan will provide the outline you need to hold a Project Sticker Shock event. These steps may be adapted to meet your community's needs.

1. **Recruit the event team:** The planning and event team includes youth, parents, community leaders and any other key players in making your event a success.
2. **Secure permission:** You are required to obtain and keep written parental permission for each youth participant, as well as one for all adults which serves as a media release. An example permission form can be found on page 8.
3. **Plan for the event:** Meet with your team and begin work on the event by discussing logistics, responsibilities, deadlines, invitees and future collaboration.
4. **Partner with retailers:** Build partnerships with local alcohol retailers and receive consent to host the event in their establishments. An example store participation letter can be found on page 9 and an example store consent form can be found on page 10.
5. **Register the event:** Use the online registration form and be sure to have the number of supplies needed and an estimated number of participating youth, adults and retailers.
6. **Involve media in the event:** Develop a media advocacy plan that includes a news conference for your event and an information packet to send to a variety of outlets. A media advocacy plan template and related documents can be found on pages 11-15.
7. **Conduct pre-event training:** Prepare your team beforehand with a training that covers the event schedule, sticker and window cling placement and speaking with the media.
8. **Hold the event:** Manage any issues that arise, monitor the news conference, make sure photographs are being taken, keep track of the number of participants and have fun.
9. **Complete the evaluation:** Use the online final report form and facilitate a post-event debriefing with your team to discuss accomplishments and improvements.
10. **Celebrate your success:** Show your appreciation by rewarding participants and give recognition to participating stores and event attendees.

# Action Plan Timeline

Below you will find a sample timeline for implementing a Project Sticker Shock event. Use this timeline as a guide to ensure all steps are followed successfully and deadlines are met.

## **Week One**

- Recruit your planning and event team
  - Identify sources for interested youth and adults
  - Introduce your organization
  - Explain Project Sticker Shock
  - Discuss the purpose and importance of your event
  - Define expectations of participants
  - Obtain contact information from participants
  - Establish a time and place to hold your first team meeting

## **Week Two**

- Secure permission from participants and local officials
  - Request written parental permission for each youth participant
  - Request permission/media release forms from all adult participants
  - Contact local officials to inform them and ensure local laws are followed
- Plan for the event with your team
  - Set a date
  - Decide which cities or counties to focus on
  - Decide how many alcohol retailers you aim to partner with
  - Create a budget for the event
  - Establish actionable steps for all participants and assign responsibilities
  - Invite government officials, law enforcement agencies and other community leaders to attend the event
  - Schedule subsequent meetings for the team to collaborate on tasks

## **Week Three**

- Partner with local alcohol retailers
  - Visit the [Virginia ABC website](#) to locate off-premises licensees
  - Send letters or speak with each store manager to invite them to participate
  - Decide how you will follow up if you don't receive an immediate answer
  - Schedule a date and time to visit each participating store prior to the event
  - Observe the store layout to determine the number of stickers and clings needed
  - Have each store complete a consent form and leave a copy

## **Week Four**

- Register your event and order supplies
  - Use the online [event registration form](#)
  - Have an estimated number of participating youth, adults and alcohol retailers
  - Know the number of stickers and window clings needed for the event
  - Only order the number of supplies needed for the event
  - Submit separate orders for multiple events
  - Supplies are shipped free of charge to a mailing address of your choice
  - Delivery of supplies may take up to four weeks

- Develop a media advocacy plan
  - Create a targeted media list (radio, television, newspaper, etc.)
  - Plan a news conference for your event at a convenient location or at one of the stores
  - Assign responsibilities and deadlines to your team

### **Week Five**

- Confirm that each store has turned in a consent form and remind stores of the event
- Create a media information packet that includes a media advisory and press release
- Contact each media source and discuss your event to see if they will promote it
- Use social media to promote your event

### **Week Six**

- Conduct a pre-event training for your team
  - Create an event schedule for visiting each store
  - Organize smaller groups if needed and assign each group to a set of stores
  - Ensure there is adequate adult supervision in each group
  - Review how to appropriately place stickers and window clings in stores
  - Confirm that all participating youth and adults have turned in a permission form
  - Designate a meeting place for the event day and set a time to distribute supplies
  - Prepare participants for speaking to the media and distribute fact sheets
- Send out your media advisory to local newspapers and stations two weeks in advance

### **Week Seven**

- Follow up with media contacts to confirm coverage of your event
- Follow up with invitees to confirm their attendance at your event
- Make sure adult leaders are prepared with all contact information needed
- Distribute supplies to groups as needed
- Assist participants with practicing for media interaction and speeches
- Send out your detailed press release to media outlets three to five days before your event

### **Week Eight**

- Hold your Project Sticker Shock event
  - Manage inquiries and problems concerning the event and participants
  - Make sure groups are assembled and have your contact information
  - Take photographs throughout to share on social media and with local news outlets
  - Keep track of the number of participating stores, youth and adults to report
- Complete the evaluation
  - Use the online [final report form](#)
  - Have the total number of participating youth, adults and alcohol retailers
  - Be prepared with the number of stickers and window clings leftover from the event
  - Compile and submit all photos, media coverage and social media posts
  - Share any feedback or comments that your team has

### **Week Nine**

- Celebrate your success
  - Show your appreciation by rewarding participants
  - Give participating stores recognition
  - Prepare and distribute thank-you notes to all other attendees
  - Gather your team to discuss holding your next Project Sticker Shock event

## Frequently Asked Questions

Even if you follow a comprehensive action plan and timeline for your Project Sticker Shock event, problems may arise that you should be prepared to handle. Based on experiences, here are some of the questions and situations that could occur and possible solutions to consider.

### **How do I get youth to participant in the event?**

Contact possible sources for interested youth such as: teen working groups or coalitions, school service clubs or athletic teams, 4-H clubs, YMCAs or YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy and Girl Scouts of America and faith groups. When explaining the event to youth, be energetic and avoid lecturing. Emphasize the benefit of gaining valuable experience and having a positive impact on the community.

Provide an appropriate incentive to entice the youth to participate:

- Have their efforts recognized by the school board.
- Have food available before and/or after the event.
- Offer community service hours.
- Offer transportation to and from the event.
- Offer giveaways including tee shirts, hats, sunglasses, key chains, water bottles, etc.
- Offer to possibly be a reference or write a letter of recommendation.

### **How many youth do I need for the event?**

It is advisable that you plan for approximately 5 to 20 youth from each community, depending on the size and number of alcohol retailers who have volunteered to participate in the event. You may want to divide the youth into groups with adult leaders that cover certain areas of your community simultaneously. If you are coordinating the event in more than one community, you will want to plan accordingly and have a similarly sized group for each community.

### **How do I get local government officials, law enforcement agencies and other community leaders to attend and participate in the event?**

Do not wait until the last minute to get them involved. In your initial presentation to the invitees, stress the importance of the event and that there will be media coverage. Remind them that alcohol is one of the most common contributors to injury, death and criminal activity among youth. The enforcement of laws regulating the availability of alcohol to youth is critical, but only one-step in the process of reducing underage drinking.

Public support from local leaders is important as it raises awareness of the issue and sets an example of commitment to changing community attitudes and perceptions. Additionally, recognizing such leaders for their work in prevention and giving them the opportunity to speak at the event to voice support is another way to ensure their attendance.

### **How do I get media to cover the event?**

Take the initiative to pick up the phone and call. Know the individuals you are calling and what geographical area they cover. When you make contact, be sure to provide appropriate, timely, clear and inclusive information. After the initial contact, follow up and call back if you said you would. If you tell them you will send additional information, promptly send it. If you tell them that you will keep them informed, keep them informed. Also, do not limit your efforts to what has been done before. Creativity is by far the most important factor in putting together a successful news conference. Brainstorm with your event team on how to make it more engaging and enticing.

The news conference should be designed so that the reporters and other observers will walk away knowing exactly what your overarching goal and message are. Guide the media's attention in such a way that the environmental implications of the problem, not just the individual implications, are the primary focus. Place emphasis on shaping attitudes, effecting policy and building community activism.

**What if the media does not show up?**

Make sure to arrive at the location or store early so that you can call to remind the media of the event. Provide specific instructions on how to get to the establishment. If the media does not show up, continue the event as planned and take plenty of photos. After the event, you should deliver your prepared media information packet along with a few photos to the contact.

**What if the media asks inappropriate or intimidating questions?**

One mistake people often make in media interviews is that they prepare for them as for a regular conversation – when one person asks a question and another person answers it. However, every interview question provides you with numerous strategic options. If you prepared for the interview and have determined the main point of the interview and associated story, you can advance your goals and highlight the most important issues regardless of the questions. The best way to control the news conference is to create the news you want covered.

Prior to the event, select youth that feel comfortable with speaking to the media. Help them fully understand the message or the point of the interview. Role-play asking questions and eliciting appropriate responses. Practice polite responses to requests for interviews with anyone who does not want to be interviewed. On the day of the event, suggest that the reporter interview the selected youth. Remember to monitor the conversations. Make sure that you or another adult leader can hear and see the youth being interviewed. Feel free to politely interrupt the reporter to ask that an intimidating question be rephrased, and that any inappropriate or embarrassing answers be deleted or "off the record."

**How many stickers do I need for the event?**

This depends on how many alcohol retailers agree to participate in the event. Once a store agrees to participate, schedule a date and time for a team member to visit the store and observe the store's layout. Make note of where the beer coolers are located and how large the inventory is. This will help you in making an estimate of the number of stickers and window clings needed. Remember that stickers will only be placed on alcohol that is easily accessible unless the store allows otherwise. Ask store management if they have any specific requests, expectations or restrictions about where or how stickers should be applied. Offer to leave additional stickers with the store manager if they wish to place them on new stock.

Please only order the number of supplies needed for the event, as quantities are limited. If you plan to hold multiple events over several months, you must submit separate orders. An average convenience store uses about 60-120 stickers and 5-10 window clings.

**How long will it take the event supplies to be delivered?**

Plan ahead since delivery may take up to four weeks. You will be sent a confirmation email with a tracking number once the supply order has shipped. Please reach out to the Education and Prevention Section via email or phone in advance if there is an issue with your delivery.

**Can I use the Project Sticker Shock logo to order promotional items or print supplies?**

Virginia ABC does not permit the use of the Project Sticker Shock logo for designing promotional materials or for printing stickers and window clings. This is to ensure consistency of the program and effectiveness of tracking events while adhering to current Virginia law.

# Sample Permission/Media Release Form

(Organization Letterhead)

## Dear Participant:

Project Sticker Shock is a statewide effort coordinated by Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to enforce underage drinking laws and reduce social providing of alcohol and its related problems through environmental change. *(Name of organization)* is participating in this by holding an awareness event that aims to prevent adults 21 and older from purchasing alcohol and providing it to minors.

During the event, youth participants will place stickers and window clings that warn about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors and using a fake ID to purchase alcohol on cases and coolers of alcohol at local stores. All event participants must have a completed permission/media release form to be eligible.

It is important that all minors obtain parental permission to participate in this event because it entails handling packages of alcoholic beverages in each store. At any time during the event, local news outlets may take photos and videos or ask participants about Project Sticker Shock. Adult chaperones will be on hand at all times to provide guidance and support for all participants. If you have any questions, please contact the event coordinator: *(Name, phone number and email address of event coordinator)*.

## Participant Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## Participation Agreement:

1. I acknowledge and accept the responsibilities of participating in Project Sticker Shock.
2. I understand that the event involves participants placing stickers on cases of alcoholic beverages at licensed alcohol retailers.
3. I understand that there will be adult supervision at each store to ensure that procedures are followed correctly and reasonable safety precautions are taken.
4. I give permission and release for any photographs or electronic images of myself to be captured and associated with Project Sticker Shock.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian (if younger than 18 years old)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Sample Store Participation Letter

*(Organization Letterhead)*

*(Date)*

*(Store name)*

*(Store address)*

*(Town, state, zip code)*

Dear *(Name of store/owner/manager)*:

Research shows that alcohol is the most widely abused substance among youth in the United States. One way to address this issue is to prevent youth from obtaining alcohol in the first place. The majority of youth do not pay for the alcohol they drink and their most common source of alcohol is an unrelated person aged 21 or older. This is called social providing of alcohol to minors. Minors may also purchase alcohol themselves with a fake ID. Underage drinking is dangerous because it negatively affects brain development and increases the risk of assault, legal problems, other drug abuse and death.

However, illegal sales can be prevented! You have a unique opportunity to work with concerned individuals to reduce underage drinking and social providing of alcohol. We are inviting local licensees to partner with *(Name of organization)* and Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority for a Project Sticker Shock event being held in *(City/county)* on *(Date of event)*. This event aims to reach adults age 21 and older who purchase alcohol for minors and underage drinkers who use fake IDs. During the event, stickers and window clings that warn about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors and using a fake ID to purchase alcohol are placed on cases and refrigerators of alcohol in participating stores. Groups of youth, accompanied by an adult chaperone, will visit each store at an agreed upon time on the scheduled event date to place the stickers and window clings.

We never place stickers on bottles or cans and are careful not to cover brand names, bar codes or expiration dates on the packaging. We only put stickers on alcohol that is on display, not in back rooms or storage areas. Depending on the size of the store, this process will take 10-20 minutes. If you prefer that employees place the stickers and window clings on their own, we will be happy to deliver the appropriate number to you.

*(Name of organization)* and Virginia ABC recognize your desire to sell alcohol responsibly and would like to acknowledge your establishment as a cooperating partner in this effort. To prepare youth and media coverage for the event, we need you to respond. If you have any questions, or to confirm your participation in this event, please contact the event coordinator: *(Name, phone number and email address of event coordinator)*.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope you will join us in this statewide effort to enforce Virginia's underage drinking laws and prevent social providing of alcohol. With your help, we can take action to stop alcohol-related tragedies from happening and make our community safer for everyone.

Sincerely,

*(Signature of event coordinator)*

*(Name and title of event coordinator)*

*(Name of organization)*

# Sample Store Consent/Information Form

(Organization Letterhead)

**Dear (Name of store/owner/manager):**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in (Name of organization)'s local Project Sticker Shock event, a community awareness effort to enforce Virginia's underage drinking laws and reduce social providing of alcohol to minors. All participating stores must have a completed consent form to be eligible.

**Store Information:**

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Store Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ABC License #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How many stickers are needed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many window clings are needed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do any of the supplies need to be in Spanish? If yes, how many of each?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Event Information:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Activities:**

- A group of youth and adults will visit your store at an agreed upon time that is most convenient.
- Stickers will be placed on cases of alcoholic beverages, never on bottles.
- Removable window clings will be placed on refrigerator and/or exit doors.
- The group will act responsibly while being respectful of your store, its staff and property.
- Stores can, at any time, ask the group to leave should the need present itself.
- Local news outlets may visit your establishment to report and promote our partnership efforts.
- Additional stickers may be left with store management to be placed on new inventory.

**Participation Agreement:**

1. I acknowledge and accept the responsibilities of participating in Project Sticker Shock as a licensee.
2. I understand that the event involves participants, minors and adults, placing stickers on cases of alcoholic beverages and removable window clings on refrigerator and/or exit doors.
3. I give consent to provide media with this store location and name as a participating partner and to release any media coverage taken at this store location.
4. Should I not be available during the event, I will inform all store employees about event activities and ensure that they allow the group to proceed with placing stickers and window clings.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Store Contact**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Media Advocacy Plan Template

**Issue:** Provide brief context and situational analysis, describe the importance and purpose. What is the issue? Who are those affected? What are the main causes? What is the impact? How can it be solved? What evidence can support your definition of the issue?

**Aim:** Define the overall goal that you want to achieve, state what you will use the media for. Are you trying to motivate the community to take action? Are you advocating for a policy or law? Are you trying to bring attention to a certain issue? Are you trying to inform the community of important facts?

**Target Audience:** Select the group you want to reach, narrow your audience and be clear. Do you want to reach the general public, policymakers or people who are undecided about the issue? Who has the power to make changes happen? What are their defining characteristics and values?

**Key Message:** Design the message you want to get out to your target audience, be compelling and humanize the issue. Why should your audience care about this issue? What supports your message? What piece of information is most important? What specific action do you want the audience to take?

**Objective #1:** Create SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound) objectives to guide your plan activities and strategies, ensure that these objectives contribute to your aim.

**Objective #2:** What steps do you need to take? What are the best ways to reach your audience? What is the media source most trusted by your audience? What content do you need to create for your audience? Who is involved? When will this happen? How will you measure progress and success?

Media Source	Contact Information	Activities	Timeframe	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed

# Sample Media Advisory

*(Organization Letterhead)*

## **MEDIA ADVISORY: NEWS CONFERENCE FOR PROJECT STICKER SHOCK EVENT**

*(Date)*

*(Name of media editor/news director/reporter)*

*(Name of media source)*

**WHO:** *(Name of organization)*

**WHAT:** News conference to kick off the youth-led Project Sticker Shock event in *(City/county)*. This statewide effort is underwritten by Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to enforce underage drinking laws and reduce social providing of alcohol.

**WHEN:** *(Exact date of your news conference and time you want press to arrive)*

**WHERE:** *(Name and address of your news conference location)*

**WHY:** Youth leaders from *(Name of group, organization, school, etc.)* will join *(Names of other attendees)* to launch this community awareness event that aims to reach adults age 21 and older who purchase alcohol for minors and underage drinkers who use fake IDs.

*(Name of organization)* asks that you send a representative to cover this event.

Thank you for your attention regarding this matter.

For more information on the event, please contact:

*(Name of event coordinator)*

*(Title of event coordinator)*

*(Phone number of event coordinator)*

*(Email address of event coordinator)*

# Sample Press Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

(Name of event coordinator)

(Name of organization)

(Phone number of event coordinator)

(Email of event coordinator)



## **‘Project Sticker Shock’ To Target Underage Drinking Local Youth Launch Event to Educate Alcohol Retailers and Consumers**

(City/county) – Youth leaders from (Name of group, organization, school, etc.) and (Name of organization) are working together to raise community awareness about Virginia laws and prevent underage drinking. Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among youth and is easy to get through family members and unrelated adults. This is why several concerned groups are joining forces in Project Sticker Shock, a statewide effort underwritten by Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to educate the public and change attitudes about purchasing alcohol for anyone under 21.

The Project Sticker Shock event will launch on (Date of event) in (Names of cities and counties). Local youth will visit participating alcohol retailers accompanied by law enforcement to place stickers that say it is illegal to purchase alcohol for minors and use a fake ID on cases of alcoholic beverages. In Virginia, these offenses are Class 1 misdemeanors and can result in fines of up to \$2,500, and/or one year in jail and the loss of a driver's license for up to a year. Over (Number of stickers) will be placed to serve as a reminder that community members do not support adults who may provide alcohol to underage youth.

“Adults need to set a better example for kids,” said (Name), youth participant. “By posting these warning stickers in stores throughout the community, adults will be reminded that giving alcohol to minors – and underage drinking – is not the norm. Underage drinking prevention is everyone’s responsibility and we must change our attitudes for the better.”

Organizations participating in the event include (Names of all participating stores, law enforcement agencies and other partners). They aim to create a safer and healthier community by combating the problem of underage drinking.

"I am so excited and honored to be a part of this important event," said local police chief (Name). "Together, we are working to raise awareness of the dangers of underage drinking, the impacts of alcohol on brain development in young adults, and the legal consequences for providing alcohol to minors. We hope this event will highlight and encourage partnership between community organizations, youth, retail establishments, law enforcement, and other community members to reduce underage drinking in our community."

The Project Sticker Shock event hopes to cause adults to think twice before making it any easier for youth to access alcohol and to remind underage drinkers that using a fake ID is a criminal offense. For more information about this statewide effort, visit [www.abc.virginia.gov/pss](http://www.abc.virginia.gov/pss).

(Short biography and background of organization)

###

# Sample News Conference Agenda

## Project Sticker Shock News Conference Agenda

*(Name of organization)*

*(Date)*

*(Time)*

*(Location)*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
9:30	Welcome/Opening Remarks: <i>Name &amp; Title of person(s)</i> <i>Affiliation</i>
9:35	Supportive Remarks from Youth Speakers: <i>Name of youth(s)</i> <i>Affiliation</i>
9:40	Introduction of Special Guests: <i>Owner/manager of store;</i> <i>Mayor; Law enforcement officers;</i> <i>City Council members;</i> <i>State government representatives;</i> <i>Parent; School board member; etc.</i>
9:45	Presentation of Awards (Optional): <i>Presenter's Name(s) Recipient's Name(s)</i>
9:50	Questions and Answers
10:00	Application of Stickers

# Sample Fact Sheet/Talking Points

1. Underage drinking is a serious public health problem. Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among youth and is easy for youth to get.
  - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that youth ages 12 through 20 drink 11% of all alcohol consumed.
  - b. Based on the 2015 and 2017 Virginia Youth Survey, 51% of high school students have drunk alcohol at some point and almost 25% report currently drinking alcohol.
  - c. Based on the findings from the 2019 Monitoring the Future Survey, 83% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students said it was fairly easy or very easy to get alcohol as a minor.
2. One of the most common ways youth get alcohol is to have someone age 21 or older purchase it for them. Adults send mixed messages about the acceptability of alcohol use and underage drinking. They play a big role in shaping youth attitudes toward drinking.
  - a. Based on findings from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 72% of underage drinkers did not pay for the alcohol the last time they drank.
  - b. According to the 2015 Virginia Youth Survey, approximately 44% of high school students said that they usually get the alcohol they drink by someone giving it to them.
  - c. According to the 2017 Virginia Youth Survey, only 41% of high school students said that they have talked about alcohol and other drugs with their parents or other family members in the past year.
3. The drinking age is 21 for a reason – alcohol is a factor in many preventable youth homicides and suicides, and increases the risk of physical and sexual assault, legal problems, other drug abuse, risky sexual behavior and heavy drinking later in life. Research also shows that underage drinking negatively affects brain development.
  - a. According to the National Institutes on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, nearly 30% of youth have had at least one drink by age 15.
  - b. Based on the 2017 Virginia Youth Survey, nearly 15% of high school students had their first drink before the age of 13.
  - c. These youth are five times more likely to develop alcohol use disorder compared to those who begin drinking at or after age 21.
4. The consequences of underage drinking affect everyone – regardless of age or drinking status. We all feel the effects of the aggressive behavior, property damage, injuries, violence and deaths that can result from underage drinking. This is not simply a problem for some families – it is a statewide concern and touches all members of the community.
  - a. In 2013, underage drinking cost the citizens of Virginia \$1 billion. These costs include medical care, work loss, and pain and suffering associated with the problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth.
  - b. This translates to over \$1,000 per year for each youth in Virginia or around \$3.25 per drink consumed underage.
5. Youth who drink should be held responsible for that decision. However, adults are the ones who promote and model alcohol use. It is adults who buy the overwhelming majority of all alcohol and who profit from the sale of alcohol. It is not fair to hold youth solely responsible.
6. This is a good time of year to heighten awareness of problems related to underage drinking, but the law is always there, and adults are supplying minors with alcohol all year round.
7. As a parent, I do not want my child drinking, and I certainly do not want other parents purchasing alcohol for my child or allowing my child to drink in their house.
8. Retail stores make a profit from selling alcohol. This event allows them to help prevent problems by trying to reach those adults who purchase alcohol and give it to underage youth illegally.

## Additional Resources

### **Virginia ABC Bureau of Law Enforcement Regional Offices**

[www.abc.virginia.gov/enforcement](http://www.abc.virginia.gov/enforcement)

Virginia ABC Bureau of Law Enforcement agents support, provide resources for and participate in many community prevention events throughout Virginia.

### **Virginia Rules**

<https://virginiarules.org>

Virginia Rules educates middle and high school students about laws in Virginia to help them make sound decisions and become active citizens of their schools and communities.

### **Virginia Youth Survey (VYS)**

[www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey)

The VYS is administered every odd year in randomly selected public schools to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability.

### **Monitoring the Future (MTF)**

[www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org)

MTF is an ongoing national study of behaviors, attitudes, and values of American secondary students, college students and young adults.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Gateway to Health Communication**

[www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication](http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication)

CDC has several tools for developing health communication and social marketing campaigns, and templates that save time and make outreach more successful.

### **Community Tool Box**

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en>

The Community Tool Box provides step-by-step guidance for assessing community needs and resources, engaging stakeholders, action planning, conducting an evaluation and more.

### **National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens (NIDA)**

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teens>

NIDA provides videos, games and blog posts that help youth explore what happens to the brain and body when drugs are used.

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)**

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

NIAAA supports and conducts research on the impact of alcohol use on human health and well-being. It is the largest funder of alcohol research in the world.

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

SAMHSA provides resources for strategic, evidence-based planning and resources for communities to utilize in substance abuse prevention efforts.

### **National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)**

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

NCSSLE helps schools and communities address issues such as harassment, violence and substance abuse through educational resources and technical assistance.