

FACT SHEET

SERVER/SELLER TRAINING

Is underage alcohol use really a problem?

Underage drinking is an expensive problem in the United States. One researcher for the Journal of Studies on Alcohol estimated that dealing with the consequences of underage drinking cost more than \$62 billion per year.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), underage drinking has been associated with:

- Damage to growing brains
- Alcohol dependence
- Violence
- Dropping out of school
- Drinking and driving
- Riding with drinking drivers
- Unplanned and unsafe sex
- Fatalities and injuries from drowning, burns, falls, homicides, suicides, and crashes

But is it a problem in Illinois?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a lot of information related to alcohol use in the United States. The CDC report titled *High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey* revealed the following facts:

- According to the 2017 self-reports by Illinois students grades 9-12:
 - 57% had at least one drink of alcohol in their life.
 - 27% had at least 1 or more drinks of alcohol in the past 30 days.
 - 12% had at least 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row (binge drinking) in the past 30 days.

According to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) in a report titled *Underage Drinking in Illinois: The Facts...*

- Underage drinking cost the citizens of Illinois 2.8 billion dollars in 2013, or \$2,283 per year for each youth in the state.

Why is the legal drinking age not enough?

While the minimum drinking age of 21 has helped decrease injuries related to youth drinking (saving an estimated 22,804 lives between 1975 and 2002), national surveys indicate that more than 94% of twelfth graders and almost 68% of eighth graders report that alcohol is easy to obtain.

What does server and seller training involve?

The Promoting Retailer Education Program (PREP) is a state-approved training program for those who serve alcoholic drinks or sell alcohol in retail establishments. PREP helps store owners, managers, and sales clerks understand state, city, and business policies related to selling alcohol and the consequences of failing to comply with these policies. PREP also teaches the necessary skills for complying with these policies, such as reading different identification cards or recognizing false identification.

Why is training necessary?

When someone starts working at a business that sells alcohol, there are a lot of things to learn. Remembering the rules about alcohol sales and how to check identification may be difficult in this context. This special training focuses on alcohol issues and highlights their importance, as well as the employee's role and responsibility in following alcohol policies.

Why should training be mandatory?

Individuals and businesses are busy places, and it may be difficult to get them to agree to attend voluntarily. Also, this insures that every business hires trained employees, so that youth cannot find a location where staff are untrained.

Won't youth just get alcohol some other way?

The more businesses involved in server and seller training, the more difficult it will be for youth to find places to buy alcohol. Other methods of obtaining alcohol involve adults who provide or purchase alcohol, which can be addressed with other alcohol control policies.

What are the effects of mandatory server/seller training laws?

Unfortunately, there are not many studies about mandatory server/seller training laws, although several exist regarding evaluating programs. In one study, published by the Journal of Studies on Alcohol, bars that used formal training for employees (this may or may not have been mandatory), had 20% fewer underage sales than those without formal training. In addition, illegal purchases of alcohol are one way that youth access alcohol. Research has shown that limiting access to alcohol decreases underage drinking.