

# ACTION KIT

## REDUCING ALCOHOL MARKETING TO YOUTH

### WHY WE ARE CONCERNED

#### WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING?

**Alcohol is the #1 drug of choice for children and teens, and some are drinking heavily.** One in every four 12th graders (26%), one in every five 10th graders (20%) and one in every ten 8th graders (9%) reported having five or more drinks in a row in the last two weeks. Youth who drink this much are risking alcohol poisoning, traffic crashes, school failure, and alcoholism. (Washington 2006 Healthy Youth Survey -HYS)

**Alcohol has a greater impact on the developing teen brain.** Alcohol impairs the areas that control motor coordination, impulse control, memory, and judgment. Kids who drink are at greater risk for school failure and dropping out. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-SAMHSA)

**Drinking is a fatal attraction for teens.** Beer and other alcoholic drinks are implicated in the three top causes of teen deaths: accidents (including traffic fatalities and drowning), homicide, and suicide (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-SAMHSA).

**Alcohol kills more kids than all other drugs combined.** (SAMHSA)

**Teen drinking increases the risk of STDs and pregnancy.** Teens who drink are seven times more likely to engage in sex, and twice as likely to have sex with four or more partners than those who do not. Such behavior can result in an increased risk of AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse)

**Underage drinking can lead to addiction.** Kids who drink before age 15 are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol problems as adults. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

**Providing alcohol at home does not keep teens safe.** Teens can overdose on alcohol at home and, along with their parents, be held liable for property damage, assault, injuries, and deaths that result from underage drinking at their home.

**The good news is that parents are the #1 influence on their kids.** The key reason kids give for not drinking is that they don't want to disappoint their parents (Monitoring the Future survey). Parents can protect their kids from drinking by:

- Not accepting alcohol as a rite of passage to adulthood
- Setting clear rules about not drinking
- Helping their children deal with peer pressure
- Being a good role model by showing that you don't need a drink to relax or celebrate
- Talking with them early and often about the ways alcohol can harm them, and being a good listener
- Staying involved in their lives

## WHY RESTRICT ALCOHOL ADVERTISING IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Alcohol advertisements often portray alcohol as enhancing economic success, fun, attractiveness to the opposite sex, athletic skill, and social popularity. Such messages are misleading and fail to mention the risks associated with alcohol use. Alcohol ad restrictions reduce the exposure to alcohol ads promoting unrealistic messages about alcohol use.
- Parents can, to some degree, control their children's exposure to alcohol ads within their home but a large amount of advertising occurs in public spaces. Restrictions on alcohol advertising in public areas allow communities to have some control over young people's exposure to alcohol messages outside the home.
- Communities that restrict alcohol advertisers send a message to young people that underage alcohol use is not tolerated by the community. Restricting alcohol advertising in public places may help change community norms regarding alcohol use.

Excerpted from University of Minnesota <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policy/adrstrct.shtm>

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## WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES?

Environmental strategies, such as limiting alcohol ads on store fronts, protesting ads that appeal to youth or promote irresponsible behavior, and banning beer gardens at family events, are designed to change the community conditions that promote alcohol and other drug use. Decisions we make about using alcohol or other drugs are powerfully shaped by our environment, including the messages and images delivered by the media. Our behavior is also influenced by what we think is acceptable in our communities, and by how available alcohol or other drugs are.

Environmental strategies may be implemented to accomplish any or all of the following:

- Change public perceptions and attitudes
- Improve and enforce laws and regulations
- Decrease the availability or access to alcohol and other drugs
- Address other factors affecting public health and safety

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING WHAT TO DO?

It's important not to think of any environmental strategy in a vacuum. They work best in combination. Keep these key points in mind as you design your plan:

- Consider norms, regulations, and availability as important parts of your comprehensive package.
- Choose any one of them to begin with; it will be your entry point into a systems consideration of all three.

## FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL ADVERTISING IN WASHINGTON STATE

- The number of alcohol ads seen on TV in Washington State tripled between 2001 and 2005 (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth).
- Over \$900 million was spent in each of Washington's three television markets during 2005, totaling \$2.74 billion, or \$7.5 million per day (CAMY). \$7.5 million per day is 16 times the annual budget of the Washington State Division of Alcohol Substance Abuse, which administers drug prevention and treatment programs. (Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse).
- Sponsorships, internet advertising, point-of-sale materials, product placement, brand-logo items, and other marketing brought the total alcohol promotional expenditures to \$6 billion in 2005. (Federal Trade Commission, Self-Regulation in the Alcohol Industry, Appendix B: Alcohol Advertising Expenditures, iii.)
- Market research also shows that youth (ages 12-20) were more likely than adults to see alcohol advertising due to the program placement of these ads (CAMY).
- Between 2001 and 2005, youth exposure to alcohol advertising on television in the U.S. increased by 41%. Much of this increase resulted from the rise in distilled spirits advertising on television from 1,973 ads in 2001 to 46,854 ads in 2005. (Source: Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, Still Growing After All These Years: Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising on Television, 2001–2005).

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**Table: Alcohol Advertising on Television 2001-2005, Local Markets**

**Seattle-Tacoma Alcohol Ads and Dollars**  
[camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=819](http://camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=819)

**Spokane Alcohol Ads and Dollars**  
[camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=881](http://camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=881)

**Yakima/Tri-Cities Alcohol Ads and Dollars**  
[camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=810](http://camy.org/tvtool2005/index.php?MarketID=810)

Year	Alcohol Ads	Alcohol Advertising Dollars	Year	Alcohol Ads	Alcohol Advertising Dollars	Year	Alcohol Ads	Alcohol Advertising Dollars
2001	58,257	\$642,830,876	2001	57,070	\$640,195,986	2001	56,241	\$640,027,053
2002	89,632	\$818,646,343	2002	89,161	\$815,749,592	2002	87,168	\$815,471,035
2003	88,934	\$721,701,962	2003	88,676	\$719,462,645	2003	86,466	\$719,206,085
2004	123,049	\$859,425,141	2004	123,066	\$858,627,703	2004	122,209	\$858,549,313
2005	155,144	\$915,045,083	2005	154,190	\$912,786,710	2005	153,525	\$912,680,867

- Greater exposure to alcohol ads contributes to an increase in drinking among underage youth. For each additional ad a young person saw (above the monthly youth average of 23), he or she drank 1% more. For each additional dollar per capita spent on alcohol ads in a local market (above the national average of \$6.80 per capita), young people drank 3% more. (Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth," Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 160 (2006): 18-24.)
- From 2001 though 2003, youth in the United States were 96 times more likely per capita to see an ad promoting alcohol than an industry ad discouraging underage drinking. In fact, compared to underage youth, adults age 21 and over were nearly twice as likely per capita to see advertising discouraging underage drinking (CAMY).