

## Underage Drinking Fact Sheet

### Overview

Alcohol is the most widely used substance by 12 to 20 year olds. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 26.3 percent of 12 to 20 year olds (representing 10 million youth) reported drinking alcohol in the past month. This compares to 5.6 million youth ages 12 to 20 reporting past month use of illicit drugs.<sup>1</sup>

State, federal and local efforts over the past decade to reduce underage drinking through evidence-based educational programs and environmental changes have resulted in a decrease in underage drinking. Since 2000, past-month use of alcohol among 12<sup>th</sup> graders has decreased 10 percentage points while drinking among 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders has decreased 13.8 percentage points and 9.7 percentage points, respectively.<sup>2</sup> However, to maintain and accelerate this progress, it is important the federal government, States and local communities continue to implement comprehensive and coordinated prevention and treatment services.

### Underage Drinking Quick Facts<sup>10</sup>

➤ **Alcohol Use Among 12-20 Year Olds as a Percentage of Total Users (Past Month):**

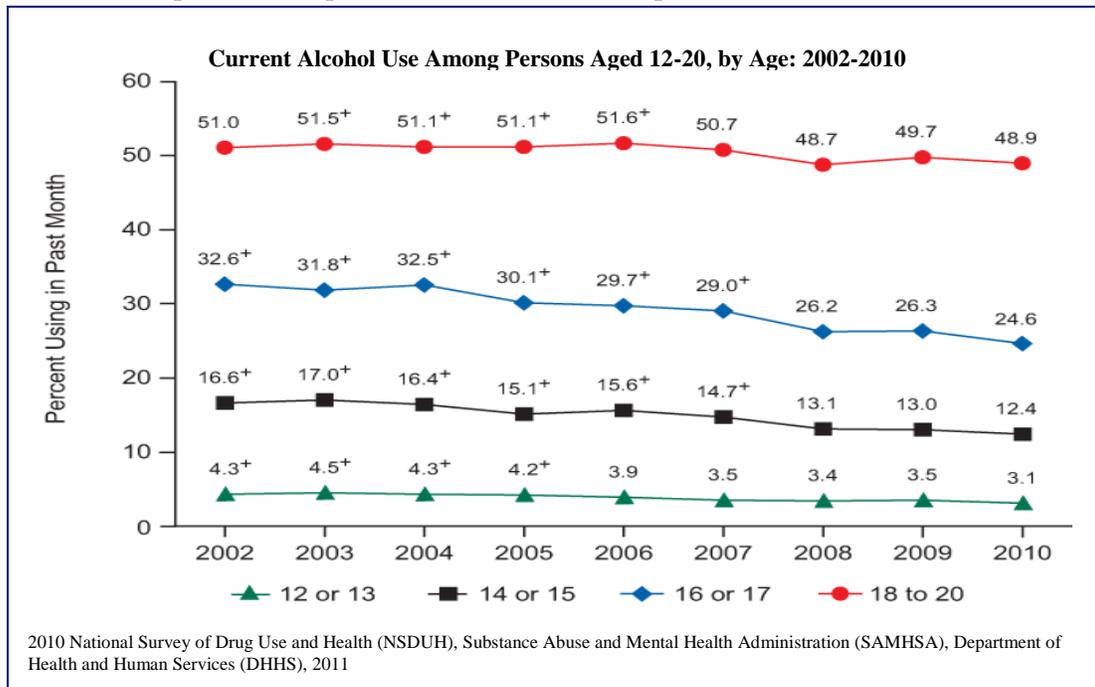
**By Sex:**  
 Male 55.5%  
 Female 44.5%

**By Race:**  
 White 64.8%  
 Black 11.5%  
 Hispanic 18.7%  
 Asian 2.4%  
 Native Am. .5%  
 Mixed Race 1.9%

**By Use Category:**  
 Current Use 15.7%  
 Binge Drinking 64.7%  
 Heavy Use 19.6%

➤ **Alcohol Use as a Percentage of All 12-20 Year Olds in Each Region (Past Month):**

**Region:**  
 Northeast 30.7%  
 Midwest 26.4%  
 West 25.6%  
 South 24.6%



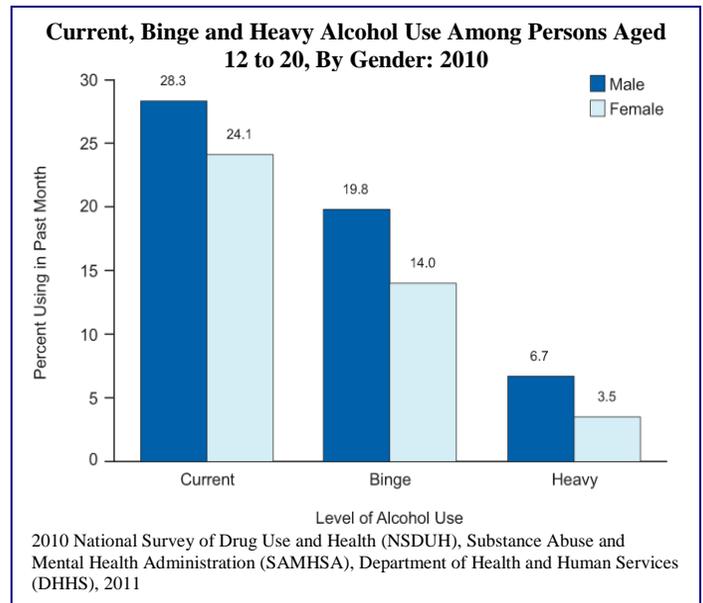
### Personal Effects of Underage Drinking

Research shows underage drinking has a range of negative health effects, which:

- Result in the deaths of approximately 5,000 young people a year<sup>3</sup>
- May affect adolescent development by upsetting the hormonal balances necessary for normal bone, muscle and organ development<sup>4</sup>
- May result in negative cognitive outcomes such as anxiety and depressive disorders can result from underage drinking<sup>5</sup>

In addition, individuals who begin drinking before the age of 15 are more likely to:

- Report symptoms of alcohol dependence<sup>6</sup>
- Develop other substance abuse problems<sup>7</sup>
- Engage in risky sexual behavior<sup>8</sup>
- Experience academic failure<sup>9</sup>



## Economic Effects of Underage Drinking

Research has shown underage drinking has negative economic consequences for the country. In 2010, underage drinking cost<sup>11</sup>:

- \$35 billion due to drinking related youth violence
- \$9.9 billion due to drinking related youth traffic accidents
- \$5.2 billion due to drinking related high-risk youth sex
- \$5.1 billion due to drinking related youth property crime
- \$2.6 billion due to youth alcohol treatment
- \$2.1 billion due to drinking related youth injuries
- \$1.3 billion due to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) among mothers 15-20
- \$657 million due to alcohol poisonings and psychoses

These costs amounted to \$62 billion in 2010, with alcohol-related violence accounting for a large proportion of these costs.

## Underage Drinking Prevention Funding

States leverage funds from the federal government to supplement their own funding sources in their prevention efforts against underage drinking. The main federal grant programs available to States for this purpose are the 20 percent prevention set-aside in the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) and its spinoff grant called Partnerships for Success and the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Grants.

State substance abuse agencies are the managers of the publicly funded substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery systems. They manage the SAPT Block Grant, SPF SIG grant, Partnerships for Success grant and may manage the EUDL grant. Each State also has a substance abuse prevention representative that is a member of The National Prevention Network (NPN), a component group of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD). NPN provides a national information and communication system for prevention, and works to ensure the provision of high quality and effective alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse prevention services in each State.

States have developed a variety of programs to address the issue of underage drinking through prevention campaigns and enforcement efforts, such as:

- *Vermont* leverages the SAPT Block Grant and EUDL Grant to fund programs like the Community-Based Prevention Initiative (community-based coalitions that prevent and reduce underage drinking and substance abuse), the 1-866-ITSAKE fake I.D. reporting number, ParentUpVT.org (family prevention tools and resource links) and the START (Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team) program, a taskforce which improves law enforcement's responses to underage drinking. Underage alcohol use and binge drinking were also priorities for Vermont's past SPF SIG Grant (2006-2011). All of these programs are supported by the State substance abuse agency (SSA) in Vermont. The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey of high school students showed that from 2001 to 2011: alcohol use before age 13 declined from 26 percent to 15 percent; lifetime use declined from 75 percent to 60 percent; and binge drinking within the last 30 days declined from 29 percent to 21 percent.

## SAPT 20 percent Set-Aside<sup>12</sup>

Federal statute requires States to direct at least twenty percent of the SAPT Block Grant toward substance abuse prevention services. In 21 States, the prevention set-aside represents 75 percent or more of the State agency's substance abuse prevention budget. It funds primary substance abuse prevention services which can include environmental strategies, information dissemination, providing alternative activities and problem identification and referral.

### **Funding Levels for SAPT Block Grant (in millions)**

<b>FY2010:</b>	<b>\$1798.5</b>
<b>FY2011:</b>	<b>\$1782.7</b>
<b>FY2012:</b>	<b>\$1800.2</b>

## SPF SIG/Partnerships for Success<sup>13</sup>

The State Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) is awarded to States and Territories on a competitive basis, using data to determine local need. SPF SIG funds are used to implement a five-step process to promote youth development and reduce risk-taking behaviors to prevent the onset and reduce the progression of substance abuse (including underage drinking), and build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the State and local level.

Partnerships for Success, a spin-off grant of SPF SIG, is designed to help States and Territories reduce substance abuse by addressing gaps in their current prevention services and enabling them to reach out to specific populations.

### **Funding Levels (in millions)**

<b>FY2010:</b>	<b>\$111.6</b>
<b>FY2011:</b>	<b>\$110.0</b>
<b>FY2012:</b>	<b>\$109.8</b>

- *South Carolina* leverages funds from both EUDL and the SAPT Block Grant to fund their nationally recognized Alcohol Enforcement Teams (AETs), which implement evidence-based environmental strategies to reduce underage drinking in all judicial circuits of the State. The AETs are instrumental in the local implementation of the State’s fiscal year 2009 SPF SIG, demonstrating a powerful synergy of the EUDL, Block Grant and SPF SIG funding streams—all managed by the SSA. The AETs’ consistent enforcement on retail access has driven the underage compliance check buy rate down to 12.5 percent in fiscal year 2011 from the 20.3 percent rate from before the AETs expanded statewide.
- *Rhode Island* uses its EUDL grant to effect population level reductions in underage drinking and to reduce youth access to alcohol through policy, awareness, and enforcement strategies. To obtain these goals the State:
  - Conducts the Alcohol Purchase Survey;
  - Supports a Statewide Advisory/Policy Committee, which advises the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals of policies and laws of underage drinking;
  - Provides training/technical assistance to law enforcement;
  - Funds a Youth Advisory Committee, which works on policy and media advocacy at State and local levels;
  - Develops evidence-based initiatives designed to result in changes to policy and procedures and the reduction of the incidence of alcohol use by children in the local communities; and
  - Engages in public education and media campaigns to increase public awareness of the consequences of underage alcohol use, discourage procurement of alcohol for youth and increase awareness of laws and public policies addressing access to and use of alcohol by children and youth.

**EUDL Grants**<sup>14</sup>  
 The Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) grant program supports and enhances efforts by States and local jurisdictions to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors and the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors. State and local programs funded by EUDL can include fake I.D. reporting systems, public education and media campaigns and training for police officers in proper party dispersal techniques.

The EUDL program has historically funded a block grant and a discretionary grant. Funding for the EUDL program was cut by \$15.8 million (76 percent) in fiscal year 2012.

**Funding Levels (in millions)**

<b>FY2010:</b>	<b>\$25.0</b>
<b>FY2011:</b>	<b>\$20.8</b>
<b>FY2012:</b>	<b>\$5.0</b>

According to the 2009 report of the Rhode Island Statewide Epidemiology and Outcomes Workgroup, 38 percent of high school students reported any drinking in the 2007-2008 school year, a decrease from the 51 percent that reported any drinking in the 1999-2000 school year.

- *New York’s* SSA oversees efforts at broader and more effective enforcement of underage drinking laws, media campaigns and educational programs. These programs are funded by leveraging the EUDL grant and a fiscal year 2009 SPF SIG grant. New York State youth alcohol and drug use trends for the decade between 1999 and 2009 were very positive. Current alcohol use by high school students decreased significantly from 50 percent to 41 percent, binge drinking declined from 29 percent to 24 percent and early alcohol use (before age 13) also decreased significantly from 27 percent to 21 percent.<sup>15</sup> Since the beginning of 2011, compliance check efforts by law enforcement agencies funded by the EUDL grant have shown a 92 percent compliance rate for off-premise alcohol retailers (e.g., liquor stores) and an 86 percent compliance rate for on-premise establishments (e.g., restaurants, bars).
- *Iowa* has seen a 17 percentage point drop in past month alcohol use by 11<sup>th</sup> grade students between 1999 and 2010 (from 49 percent to 32 percent according to the Iowa Youth Survey). Even with the downward trend, Iowa teens continue to use alcohol at a similar rate as teens nationally. The Iowa SSA administers the SAPT Block Grant Prevention Funding to provide evidence-based educational programs and environmental strategies and also receives funding from a fiscal year 2009 SPF SIG grant, for which Iowa has made preventing underage drinking a priority. The SSA collaborates with the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) which administers the EUDL grant funding. The grant provides support for law enforcement training and retailer compliance checks along with other environmental strategies and the development of I-Alert, Under 21 Can’t be Done, an alcohol policy web site for businesses.

- *Washington State*, through its Reducing Underage Drinking (RUaD) program (includes a 27 agency/association member Statewide Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking), provides State-level leadership to reduce underage drinking by leveraging resources to strengthen communities, analyzing and disseminating impact data to the public, implementing social host laws and ordinances, reducing alcohol advertising and educating the public about the dangers of underage drinking. Washington funds RUaD through a EUDL grant and the SAPT Block Grant. Between 1990 and 2010, drinking among 8<sup>th</sup> graders declined by over 50 percent, from 29 to 14 percent. In 2010, 11,000 fewer youth drank alcohol in the State compared to 2008.

## Summary

Prevention services and law enforcement strategies are integral parts of the effort to reduce underage drinking. The evidence of their effectiveness is seen in the results of recent surveys that show sustained, long-term declines in youth alcohol use. These services and strategies include training for law enforcement officials, increased rates of compliance checks of alcohol retailers as well as school and community evidence-based prevention programs. These efforts must be sustained. While the number of teens choosing to consume alcohol has been declining, overall numbers are still too high and without continued action to prevent underage drinking, the downward trend could reverse. Past-month alcohol use among high school seniors is at 40 percent, and overall there are still 10 million teens reporting alcohol use.<sup>16</sup> Prevention services have proven their effectiveness at reducing alcohol use among teens. However, in the past seven fiscal years (2005-2012) substance abuse prevention funding has been reduced by 47 percent. These funding streams are fundamental to States' efforts to reduce underage drinking.

## Sources

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- <sup>2</sup> Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2012). *Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2011*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Table 7. <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-overview2011.pdf> (Accessed 26 March 2012).
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- <sup>5</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. "The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking." Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2007. Page 25-6
- <sup>6</sup> "The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking," Page 12
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 11
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 11
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, 11
- <sup>10</sup> 2010 National Survey of Drug Use and Health
- <sup>11</sup> Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, *Underage Drinking Costs*, <http://www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp>, (Accessed 27 October 2011)
- <sup>12</sup> NASADAD, "Fact Sheet: Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant." Last modified June 2009. [http://nasadad.org/resource.php?base\\_id=1756](http://nasadad.org/resource.php?base_id=1756).
- <sup>13</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness." Last modified November 2011. <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention/spf.aspx>
- <sup>14</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs." <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=17>.
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- <sup>16</sup> Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (December 14, 2011). "Marijuana use continues to rise among U.S. teens, while alcohol use hits historic lows." University of Michigan News Service: Ann Arbor, MI. Retrieved 2/6/2012 from <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org>



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