

The Impact of Underage Drinking

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is a series of information pages designed to provide general information about some of the consequences of underage drinking.

According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, alcohol continues to be the most widely used drug among Illinois youth. Survey results show that in the past year more students drink alcohol than use cigarettes, inhalants, and marijuana combined.

Underage drinking is the focus of the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success program. Through this program, communities in Illinois are provided with resources to prevent the onset and reduce the progression of underage drinking and its related problems.



The Costs to Communities and Society

Underage drinking costs the citizens of the United States \$57-62 billion each year. The impact to Illinois citizens is \$2.8 billion. These expenses are related to medical care, work loss, criminal justice, and property damage, among others, due to injuries, high-risk sex, violence, traffic crashes and other consequences of youth alcohol use.

Three-quarters of the total cost of underage alcohol use is related to binge drinking. Violence (homicide, suicide, aggravated assault) and traffic crashes attributable to underage alcohol use represent the largest costs for the state and nation. These expenditures are mostly imposed on those other than young drinkers through, for example, publicly funded programs, insurance premiums and claims, and pain and suffering to family members and victims.

PROBLEMS AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH UNDERAGE DRINKING

Underage alcohol-related problems cost U.S. society an average of \$4,680 per underage drinker or \$2,210 per U.S. resident ages 14-20. In Illinois, this translates to \$2,283 per year for each youth, or \$3.94 per drink consumed by underage drinkers which is significantly less than the taxes collected per drink (\$.85-\$.90).



YEARLY COSTS TO ILLINOIS (2013)

PROBLEM	COST
Medical	\$223 million
Youth violence (medical care, property loss, criminal justice)	\$2 billion
Youth traffic crashes (medical care, property damage, traffic delays)	\$283 million
High-risk sex (ages 14-20) (unplanned pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other STDs)	\$199 million
Property and public order crime	\$9 million
Youth injury	\$120 million
Poisonings and psychoses	\$33 million
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (mothers 15-20) (injuries, medical care, lost work, quality of life)	\$70 million
Youth alcohol treatment	\$44 million

REFERENCE SOURCES

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