



Community Spotlight

Bloomington-Normal Keg Registration

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States.¹



Clear links exist between ease of access, alcohol consumption rates, and alcohol-related problems. When alcohol is easy for youth to acquire, consumption increases. Strategies that limit access to alcohol by youth are some of the most powerful and well-documented approaches to reducing underage drinking and related problems.²

As of 2017, thirty-one states and Washington, D.C. had keg registration laws.

Keg registration is an alcohol policy implemented to reduce youth access to alcohol and the social availability of alcohol. Keg registration laws require wholesalers or retailers to attach a tag, sticker, or engrave the keg with an identification number if the keg exceeds a specified capacity (2-8-gallon minimum depending on the State). At the time of purchase, the retailer records identifying information about the purchaser (e.g., name, address, telephone number, driver's license number). A refundable deposit may also be collected for the keg itself, the tapper mechanism used to serve the beer, or both. The deposit is refunded when the keg and/or tapper are returned with the identification number intact. Some communities collect information that may aid law enforcement efforts, such as the location where the keg is to be consumed and the license plate number of the vehicle in which the keg is transported. Some communities also require retailers to provide a warning statement that details the purchaser's responsibilities, legal age of use information, and furnishing and social host education.

As of 2017, thirty-one states and Washington, D.C. had keg registration laws.³ Keg registration is not required by law in the State of Illinois. However, throughout Illinois many communities and municipalities have passed local ordinances requiring keg registration to reduce underage drinking. Bloomington-Normal is one community which passed a local keg registration ordinance. This Community Spotlight highlights how the Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) identified keg registration as a practical option to address underage drinking, how the BNCCC involved stakeholders and addressed challenges to passing an ordinance on keg registration, as well as some lessons learned throughout the process.



The Bloomington-Normal area

is a thriving and vibrant community. Located in the heart of Illinois, over 130,000 people call Bloomington-Normal home. Home to State Farm Insurance and Country Financial, Bloomington-Normal embodies Midwest living at its best. Bloomington-Normal is a wonderful place to live, raise a family, work, and go to school. Notably, Bloomington-Normal is home to four institutions of higher education; Illinois State University (ISU), Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU), Heartland Community College (HCC), and Lincoln College (LC).

In January 2005, the Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) was formed by six people with the mission to reduce high-risk drinking and related consequences among Bloomington-Normal students. Their vision was to have a community that is fun, safe, and diverse, operating in integrity and supporting families of all kinds.⁴

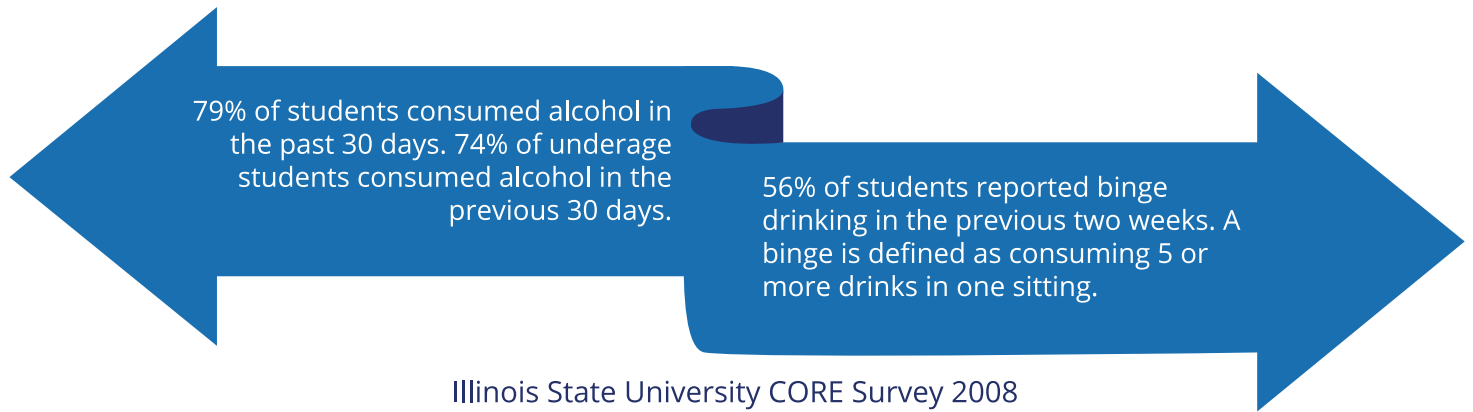
The BNCCC expanded after they received funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services in July 2007. Funding was received to deliver Safety Training to Encourage Profitable Services (STEPS) to alcohol retailers. The goal of STEPS was to train alcohol retail managers and employees to discourage over-consumption and keep intoxicated drivers off the road without reducing profits.⁴ The BNCCC engaged beer distributors and involved the Normal Police Chief in the STEPS training process. Recognizing the importance of involving key stakeholders, the BNCCC focused on expanding membership and identifying key tasks necessary to further assess and address underage drinking on college campuses.

Outreach and invites to community members and stakeholders resulted in a robust membership that at one time, surpassed 35 members. The BNCCC membership engaged support from the universities, colleges, local government, law enforcement, public school districts, health service providers, social service agencies, and business community. Working together, members worked to assess underage and high-risk drinking behaviors using community data and school survey data.

While gathering data, the BNCCC found that nearly 28,000 college students lived and learned at the four different institutions of higher education in the Bloomington-Normal area.⁵ In 2008 the BNCCC began collecting data about students' alcohol consumption. Data from the 2008 CORE Survey of ISU, IWU, and HCC students was analyzed, as well as data from a 2008 survey of Bloomington-Normal students, at all four institutions, administered by the BNCCC. The CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey is administered on a statewide basis across 2- and 4-year college campuses throughout Illinois. The Core Survey establishes the current incidence and prevalence of alcohol and other drugs on college campuses, negative consequences associated with use, the relationship of alcohol and other drug use to campus climate issues, students' perceptions of others' use, beliefs regarding use, experiences of secondhand effects of others' use, experiences of physical and sexual violence, and perceptions of risk related to use.⁶



During data analysis, the BNCCC identified some data points that were of concern.



Although the data pointed to underage-drinking and binge-drinking being of concern, it wasn't until the BNCCC started looking at law enforcement data that keg registration started to gain attention.

Data collected throughout 2008 from the Bloomington Police Department and Normal Police Department provided the following information:



While underage youth were accessing alcohol in both communities, the Bloomington Police and Normal Police noted many of the tickets written were at parties involving kegs. Keg parties were a problem and a concern for both communities. While law enforcement had the ability to continue ticketing underage youth for possession and consumption, there was little the communities could do to track and convict those who purchased the kegs and were providing alcohol to those who were underage.

Residents in both communities were feeling the impact of keg parties, too. Community members in the areas surrounding the college campuses reported a multitude of problems: noise disturbances, property damage, public urination, and vomiting on their property. Keg parties were costly to the community and were draining law enforcement and community resources.

The BNCCC examined different ways to address underage drinking and binge drinking. The BNCCC focused on addressing youth access to alcohol and limiting the social availability of alcohol. The BNCCC was also committed to reducing over-consumption of alcohol by those who were of the legal age to drink. In 2008 the BNCCC unanimously selected keg registration as the ordinance they would begin working on. The BNCCC identified several key points to support the selection of a local keg registration ordinance.⁷

Keg registration is proactive.

Keg registration works to prevent problems rather than send law enforcement to clean up existing problems.



Keg registration offers the opportunity to educate.

The purchaser signs an adult responsibility form at the time of sale that includes the rules for purchase and possession.



Keg registration reduces irresponsible sales of alcohol.

A retailer cannot sell a keg until they obtain an adult responsibility form. Thus, retailers can play a part in reducing underage drinking, too.

Using local data to make the case for keg registration, the BNCCC approached the Bloomington City Council and gained support from several council members. Many members of the Bloomington City Council did not realize the extent of the problem. Bob Rogers, Alcohol Education Coordinator at Illinois Wesleyan University, noted, "There was a lot of things hitting the media about underage drinking which energized us to start working on keg registration." Bob also remembered, "I'll never forget a City Council member asking where the data was from." When the BNCCC presented the Council with pictures and data sources and informed them this was, in fact, their own community, Bob noted, "They were shocked."

The BNCCC fully understood passing a local keg registration ordinance would need to be supported by both communities and would take time and patience. Having the support of both communities would decrease the number of residents who simply went "next door" to purchase kegs. Many on the committee recognized the challenges of passing a local ordinance in side-by-side communities. Darcy Greder, Associate Dean of Students at Illinois Wesleyan University, noted, "One council won't commit to doing anything unless they know that the other council is going to pass the ordinance too." It was important for the BNCCC to identify the steps and process each municipality used to pass a local ordinance. Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, InTouch Coordinator at Chestnut Health Systems, observed, "It's important to know your community and how they are set-up. For Bloomington, there is a liquor commission, and everything has to go through them first, while Normal has a town council who does it all; there are no separate committees."

Understanding a little more about how each community passed a local ordinance, the BNCCC focused on building support for the ordinance and working with advocates and key stakeholders.

The BNCCC found advocates from all parts of the community. Property managers were supportive of keeping students and property safe and worked with the BNCCC to distribute a Community Standards Guide that students picked up with their apartment keys for off-campus housing. The Bloomington and Normal Community Standards Guide was signed by a member of the Normal Town Council, Bloomington City Council, and President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Neighbors Association of Normal. The Community Standards Guide educated student residents on being a responsible neighbor, reminded students they are held to their respective Student Code of Conduct by their university and college, and provided information on legal responsibilities when hosting parties.



Local hospital directors also advocated for the efforts of the BNCCC. In spring of 2008 the hospital directors and Emergency Services Medical Directors, sent letters to the university and college administrators, including executive vice presidents and presidents. The letter expressed concerns they had regarding the number of alcohol-related emergency department visits by college-age individuals. The letters endorsed the efforts of the BNCCC and called for support to work together to ensure students' safety.

While key stakeholders and advocates were helping the BNCCC gain momentum, awareness, and support of a local keg registration ordinance, efforts were also underway to identify barriers and challenges to passing the ordinance. As the BNCCC prepared to testify at council meetings and meet with stakeholders, members noted the importance of being well prepared for addressing opposition to the proposed ordinance. The BNCCC identified several key barriers they might encounter and prepared responses ahead of time.

There will be strong opposition from retailers.

- The BNCCC surveyed retailers and found there were not concerns with implementing a keg registration ordinance.
- The adult responsibility form would be quick, easy, and paid for by the BNCCC for the first two years.

Underage youth may drink more beer in bottles/cans, or drink other types of alcohol if kegs are restricted.

- Alcohol in bottles and cans is not usually as cheap as a keg of beer, especially for multiple servings.
- Youth are sensitive to price and research shows as the price of alcohol goes up, consumption goes down.

Adult responsibility forms contain private information and won't be kept confidential.

- Although adult responsibility forms will be kept on file with the retailer, they will only be able to be accessed by law enforcement.

The BNCCC began the process of drafting a keg registration ordinance by reviewing the keg registration ordinance passed in nearby Champaign, IL. After creating a draft of the ordinance, the BNCCC worked with the city attorney from Bloomington and the Town of Normal's deputy corporation counsel to make requested revisions. After all modifications were made the ordinance went to the Bloomington Liquor Commission, who after review, sent the ordinance to the Bloomington City Council for a vote. At the same time the ordinance was sent to the Normal Town Council.

After drafting an ordinance, it is important to continue efforts to share information about the ordinance and build support. As the BNCCC waited for the keg registration ordinance to move through both the Normal Town Council and Bloomington City Council they learned the art of patience. Kerri Calvert, Health Promotion Coordinator at Illinois State University, noted, "Working within any municipality, especially two, to create legislation takes time. It's important to be persistent. There will be times when people will disagree with you, but it's important to remember the goals, timelines, and the data that supports the need for the ordinance."

Keg registration passed in the Town of Normal on March 16, 2009 and the City of Bloomington on July 27, 2009. Keg registration took effect, in both communities, on August 1, 2009.

While passing keg registration was not a quick process, the BNCCC approached each step with care, consideration, and their goal in mind. The BNCCC was successful in achieving their goal of creating a safe, low-risk, fun environment for 28,000 college students and helping them get a good start on their future.

While the thought of passing a local alcohol ordinance may be overwhelming for many communities, the lessons learned from the BNCCC highlight the need for patience, persistence, and partnerships. Having an identified process provides a framework for the responsibilities coalitions must engage in to move forward with alcohol ordinance efforts. Listed below are key steps that can support coalitions working on alcohol ordinance initiatives.



Learn the Process

The process for local legislation varies from community to community, so familiarize yourself with how things work in your community.



Network

Identify stakeholders, champions, and those who might support your efforts. Continually work to identify who else you should be networking with.



Understand the Opposition

It is important to understand why there is opposition to the ordinance. Prepare to address concerns with information, data, facts, and talking points ahead of any events.



Secure Community Support

Securing community support includes testifying at council meetings, engaging council members, and informing other individuals, groups, and organizations of your efforts to build support.



Share Information

Plan to get the word out about your coalition's ordinance. Contact media outlets, including television and radio, to let them know about your efforts.



Draft the Ordinance

Use an appropriate legislative format and even if your coalition won't be drafting the final ordinance language, you will still need to provide input about best practices and advocate for your ideas.



Educate and Enforce

Passing an ordinance doesn't mean it will be well-enforced. Develop a plan around enforcement efforts and educate law enforcement on the importance of the ordinance.

Thanks to Darcy Greder, Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, Bob Rogers, and Kerri Calvert for allowing the Alcohol Policy Resource Center to take a walk down memory lane with you. From the initial interview, to providing resources and answering numerous questions and emails, we are thankful for your assistance and allowing us to learn from the process you lived and breathed for many months. Thank you for being a part of making Bloomington-Normal a wonderful place to work, live, visit, and go to school.

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2007.
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3. Alcohol Policy Information System. Retail Sales: Keg Registration. Web. May 2018.
4. Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) "About Us". 2011. Web. <http://bnccc.org/about-us/>
5. Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) "A Snapshot of College Drinking in Bloomington Normal". 2008 CORE Survey of ISU, ISU and HCC students (CORE Institute, ISU) and 2009 survey of BN student at all 4 institutions by the BNCCC.
6. Illinois Higher Education Center (IHEC) at Eastern Illinois University. Illinois Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey. Web. May 2018.
7. Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee (BNCCC) "Central BNCCC Message". Handout

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