



Rhode Rules for Rhode Island Campaign Fact Sheet

About the Campaign

- Rhode Rules for Rhode Island is a public health awareness campaign aiming to educate and inform Rhode Island residents about the Social Host Law, which states it is illegal to buy, provide, supply alcohol, or provide a place to consume alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. The campaign also raises awareness of the health and social consequences of underage drinking, including impacting brain development and decision making skills.
- The campaign was launched by six Rhode Island Prevention Coalitions (Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) funded by the Partnerships for Success Grant. Rhode Island Regional Prevention Coalitions are partnerships comprised of dedicated members and partners working together to provide substance use prevention strategies, mental health resources, and advocate for policies that support healthy and safe communities. Coalition members are youth, parents, elected officials, health care providers, faith leaders, local businesses, law enforcement, educational leaders, youth-serving organizations, and treatment providers. Seven Regional coalitions connect 36 local coalitions across the state.

What is the Social Hosting Law?

- Rhode Island is one of the majority of states that maintain a Social Host Law. The law states it is illegal to permit” an underage person to consume alcohol.
- “Permit” is defined as “to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage by any form of conduct, that would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given.”
- In essence, this means it is illegal for adults to buy, provide, supply alcohol or provide a place to consume alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. Adults are also held responsible even if they don’t know youth are consuming alcohol on their property.

What are the Consequences of Breaking the Law?

- First offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$350 and a maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed six months.
- Second offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$750 and maximum fine of \$1,000 and/or a prison sentence not to exceed one year.

- Third and subsequent offenses are a felony punishable by minimum fine of \$1,000 and maximum fine of \$2,500 and/or a prison sentence not to exceed 3 years.
- For 18 to 21 year-olds, there may be a civil penalty of not more than \$500 and required attendance at an educational program approved by the Department of Health designed to recognize the dangers of underage drinking as well as completion of up to 30 hours of community service.

What's at Risk for Youth and Communities?

- Per a recent survey conducted in Rhode Island, 59% of young adults aged 18-20 who reported consuming alcohol say they get their alcohol from a friend or relative who is over 21 and 35% say they get their alcohol from a parent or guardian¹.
- While underage drinking can seem harmless, especially if an adult is monitoring the young adult, we know that early exposure to alcohol can have short- and long-term effects on youth, including impacting brain development. Brains do not fully form and mature until around the age of 24.
- Youth who engage with alcohol use underage are also at higher risk for future substance misuse struggles and disorders.
- Youth who drink under the age of 21 can also experience increased anxiety and depression after drinking.
- Drinking alcohol underage can lower inhibitions and increase the chances that children will engage in risky behavior or do something that they will regret.

What should Rhode Island Adults do to Protect Youth?

- Rhode Island adults should agree to never buy, provide, or supply youth under the age of 21 with alcohol.
- Adults should also encourage other adults within their communities to follow the Social Host Law. Make a pact to never provide alcohol to someone under the age of 21, even if the youth will be supervised in your own home.

How can Prevention Partners get Involved?

1. Download our [Partner Toolkit](#) to access social media messages, graphics, and posters, that you can download and share across your digital platforms.
2. Follow the campaign on social media and share/retweet content on your organization's platforms:
 - a. [Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SocialHostRI](https://www.facebook.com/SocialHostRI)
 - b. [Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/socialhostri/](https://www.instagram.com/socialhostri/)
 - c. [Twitter: https://twitter.com/SocialHostRI](https://twitter.com/SocialHostRI)
3. Share campaign posters and stickers by contacting a Partnerships for Success coordinator. The coordinator can provide you with posters and stickers to share with your community.

¹ 2020 Rhode Island Young Adult Survey. Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals. April 8, 2021.

Funder

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