

Engaging Retailers in Your Substance Prevention Work

Date: September 25, 2025

Learning Objectives

- Identify Strategies to Engage Retailers in Prevention
- Review the Purpose and Use of Conducting an Environmental Scan
- Learn the Importance of Retailer Training and Collaboration
- Review Activities Youth can be involved
- Hear Local Success Stories from CT Coalition Coordinators
- Access Local Retailer Licenses Look Up

Retailer Types in Connecticut

- **Adult Use Cannabis- Retailer:** **Retailers** are licensed to purchase cannabis from producers, cultivators, micro-cultivators, product manufacturers and food and beverage manufacturers and to sell cannabis to consumers and research programs. A licensed retailer may sell cannabis and cannabis products to adult consumers over 21 years of age.
- **Liquor Permits:** Sells alcoholic beverages
 - **Most Popular Permits**
 - [Off-Premise](#) (package stores, grocery stores, [mobile caterers](#), and gift basket)
 - [On-Premise](#) (restaurants, cafes, bars, clubs, etc.)
 - [Manufacturer](#) (breweries, wineries, cideries, distilleries, and meaderies)
 - [Wholesaler/Warehouse](#)
 - [Non-Commercial Temporary](#) (for fundraising)
 - **Other Permits**
 - [Brand Label Registration](#)
 - [Cafe-Tobacco Bar](#) (for existing smoke shops)
 - Farmer's Market (for manufacturers)
 - [Festival](#)
 - [Shippers](#)
 - Off-Site Tasting (for wineries)
 - [Outdoor Open Air](#)
 - [Out-of-State Retailer](#)
 - [Temporary Auctioneer](#)
 - [Transporter](#) (commercial, freight, boats, and livery)

Medical Marijuana

Medical Marijuana Dispensary Facility Backer
Medical Marijuana Dispensary Facility Employee
Medical Marijuana Dispensary Facility License
Medical Marijuana Dispensary License
Medical Marijuana Dispensary Technician
Medical Marijuana Producer Backer
Medical Marijuana Producer Brand Registration
Medical Marijuana Producer License
Medical Marijuana Production Facility Employee

Tobacco

Cigarette Distributors
Cigarette Dealers
Tobacco Distributors

Why Engage and Collaborate with Retailers?

Collaboration between substance prevention programs and merchants is crucial because it:

- **Increases prevention partnerships:** By including retailers in your coalition sector representation.
- **Reduces access and availability:** By limiting access to minors, prevention programs can decrease substance use rates among youth.
- **Promotes responsible practices:** Training and education assist retailers operate in a way that minimizes harm to the community.
- **Increases public awareness:** Joint efforts can raise awareness about the risks associated with substance use, impacting attitudes and behaviors.

By working together, communities can create a healthier environment for everyone, particularly young people.

In summary, collaborating with merchants is a powerful strategy for substance prevention, involving retailers in efforts to reduce access, educate the public, and create a safer community environment.



Engaging Retailers

Strategies

Strategies Overview

Education and
Training

Policy
Implementation

Community
Partnerships

Incentives and
Recognition

Data Collection
and Analysis

Collaboration
with Other
Stakeholders

Addressing
Socio-Economic
Factors

Strategies For Engaging Retailers

Education and Training:

- Provide retailers with information about laws, local data, and best practices on selling regulated substances such as Alcohol, Cannabis, THC products, e-cigarettes, and Tobacco.
- Host or Co-Sponsor trainings such as TIPS for servers.

Policy Implementation:

- Work with local authorities to implement and enforce policies that restrict sale of substances to minors and promote responsible consumption. This may include enforcing age requirements, restricting advertising, signage, and regulations related to retail placement. Key partnership in this area include Police, Health Department, Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreation.

Community Partnerships:

- Foster partnerships between retailers, community organizations, and prevention programs to create a supportive environment for responsible consumption. This can involve organizing community events, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and providing resources for those struggling with substance use.

Communication and Outreach:

- Develop effective communication strategies to engage retailers and the community about the risks of substance abuse and the importance of prevention efforts. This can involve using public service announcements, social media campaigns, and community forums.

Strategies for Engaging Retailers

Incentives and Recognition:

- Offer incentives to retailers who demonstrate commitment to responsible sales and prevention practices. This can include recognition programs, awards, and discounts on licenses or permits.

Data Collection and Analysis:

- Monitor sales data and community feedback to identify trends and patterns in substance abuse and inform prevention efforts. This can help to target prevention resources effectively and measure the impact of interventions.
- Conduct Environmental Scans of retailers in the community to collect information on product placement, marketing, illegal products being sold.

Addressing Socio-Economic and Disparity Factors:

- Recognize that substance misuse is often linked to socio-economic and social determinants of health factors such as poverty, stress, health care issues. Collaborate with community organizations to address these factors and create a more supportive environment for individuals and families.
- Map density of retailers in your community such as particular zip codes or neighborhoods and disparities of access, marketing, sales, proximity to community hubs such as schools and parks, and impacts upon sub-group populations to focus strategies and partnerships.

Collaboration with Other Stakeholders:

- Work with other stakeholders such as parents, schools, and health organizations to create a cohesive system of prevention. This can involve sharing information, coordinating activities, and working towards common goals.

Staff Training and Collaboration

Collaborating and providing training to retailers is a strategy to both engage retailers in your prevention efforts and to build sellers knowledge on responsible sales, laws, preventing underage sales, and building relationships with a key community partner.

Highlight retailers who commit to being a coalition and community partner in preventing underage sales and illegally sold products.

- **Alcohol Merchant and Retail Training:** Provide training on topics such as responsible serving, recognizing intoxication, and preventing underage sales. On-Premise and Off-Premise training options. Offered in person, online or hybrid formats. Not required in CT. Examples TIPS, LIQUORexam, 360training.
- **Tobacco:** [DMHAS TPEP](#)- Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement Program, CT Clearinghouse online Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes Education Course, online training and education sources.
- **ENDS:** Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and vapor product retailers must take an online education course at initial licensure and renewals. [The course](#) is available on CT Clearinghouse.
- **Cannabis:** Focus areas include compliance, product knowledge, Customer Services, Security, Health and Safety. [DMHAS Cannabis Education and Prevention Program](#), [Be in the Know Campaign](#), RBHAO resources.

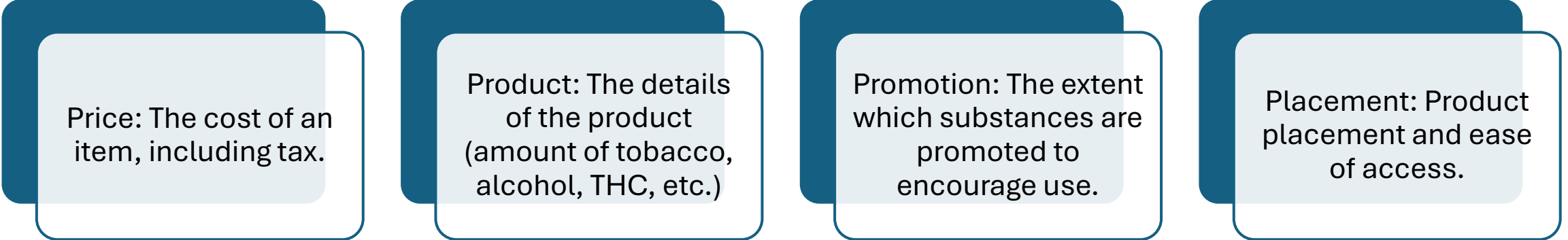
Environmental Scans: A place to start the conversation.

Environmental scanning in the community, particularly in relation to substances like alcohol or cannabis, is a systematic process of observing and documenting factors that influence the use and availability of these substances, aiming to identify risk factors and inform strategies for reducing negative impacts.

There are different models on conducting environmental scans. CADCA's model involves examining the 4P's: Price, Product, Promotion, and Placement, as well as other relevant factors such as advertising, media, and policies.

By analyzing the collected data, the coalition can identify strategies to reduce substance misuse such as managing access, raising awareness, and compliance with laws.

Engaging retailers in best practices regarding advertising, placement, access, compliance with laws and regulations can decrease access and sales to youth and build community partnerships.



The diagram illustrates the 4P's model for environmental scanning. It consists of four light blue rounded rectangular boxes arranged horizontally, each with a dark blue header bar. Each box contains text describing one of the 4P's: Price, Product, Promotion, and Placement.

Price: The cost of an item, including tax.

Product: The details of the product (amount of tobacco, alcohol, THC, etc.)

Promotion: The extent which substances are promoted to encourage use.

Placement: Product placement and ease of access.

Environmental Scan Checklists:

Several checklists exist to
conduct environmental scans
and by substance.

[Prevention First Cannabis Environmental Scan Toolkit](#)

- Forms Included: Environmental Scan Checklist, Parent Permission Slip, Dispensary Location Checklist, On-Premise Location Checklist, Physical Advertisement Scan Tool, Media Scan

[CADCA Community Event Environmental Scan Tool](#)

- Alcohol Example. Community event includes gatherings such as parades, concerts, festivals for how alcohol is restricted.

[Epiphany Community Services Vaping Environmental Scan Sample](#)

Steps:

- Define the scope: setting/location
- Use or adapt a checklist
- Prepare and train the individuals who will conduct the scan
- Conduct the scan to collect data and information
- Analyze the data
- Develop and Implement actions plans based on the results
- Re-evaluate

Compliance Checks

In Connecticut, compliance checks for alcohol sales involve undercover minors attempting to purchase alcohol, and if successful, the establishment faces penalties. These checks are a key part of the state's efforts to prevent underage drinking and ensure businesses are adhering to liquor control laws.

How Compliance Checks Work:

- **Undercover Minors:** Trained volunteers, often minors, attempt to purchase alcohol from licensed businesses.
- **Law Enforcement Supervision:** Law enforcement officers closely monitor the situation.
- **Penalties for Violations:** If a minor successfully purchases alcohol, the business can face penalties, including fines or license suspensions.
- For those who pass compliance checks that is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate those retailers.

Importance of Compliance Checks

Preventing Underage Alcohol Sales and Access:

- Compliance checks help deter businesses from selling alcohol to minors, reducing the risk of underage drinking and its associated health and safety problems.

Ensuring Business Compliance:

- These checks are a way for the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection to monitor compliance with liquor control laws.

Maintaining Public Safety:

- By ensuring that businesses don't sell to minors, compliance checks contribute to the overall safety and well-being of the community.

CT Alcohol Delivery and To-Go

- Before completing a delivery, drivers are required to check the customer's license/ID. Third-party delivery apps usually require the driver to scan the customer's ID. If the ID is detected as fraudulent or the customer is underage, the driver must return the product to the merchant.
- Delivery companies, such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, Grubhub, and Instacart, must hold an [in-state transporter's permit](#) through the Liquor Control Division. Before accepting orders with alcohol, drivers must complete a training compliance module through the third party's app.
- [State law requires](#) to-go drink orders from restaurants and cafes to be placed in a sealed container and accompanied by a food order from that location. Alcohol delivered from package stores must be sealed in the original packaging.
- For all alcohol deliveries, the deliver must be 21 years of age or older, verify the ID, must deliver the alcohol in person- cannot be left unattended, and cannot be delivered to restricted locations such as schools, college campus such as to a dorm, correctional or healthcare facilities, or temporary addresses such as a locker or storage unit.
- Local ordinances can also further restrict deliveries, so it is important to know any municipal regulations.
- Regulations can often be updated or change, so be sure to check for up to date information.

Department of Consumer Protection Liquor Control Division and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Role of Planning and Zoning

State Laws and Municipal Zoning Regulations Pertaining to Retailers

- Distance to certain areas such as from schools and parks
- Limiting the number of new permits by substance type
- Labeling/Signage requirements in advertising or in municipal areas such as parks, beaches, schools, and workplaces
- Cannabis Dispensaries: Zoning can decide to not permit dispensaries, restrict hours of operation, require signage, and determine proximity to certain institutions such as houses of worship, schools, and healthcare facilities such as hospitals.
- Concentration of retailers by census tracks or zip codes
- # of package store permits by town population.
 - *Under Section 30-14a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department of Consumer Protection may issue one (1) package store permit for every 2,500 residents of a town as determined by the most recently completed decennial census.*

Contact your local zoning members or body to find out specifics in your community.

Retailer Policies and Practices

- Age verification compliance
- No sale policies for underage purchases
- Signage and promotional materials that adhere to laws and that do not target youth.
- Training employees on compliance /ID verification
- Adhering to planning and zoning regulations
- Partnering with local prevention coalitions and community organizations

Youth Involvement:

Youth Engagement refers to the intentional and meaningful engagement of youth in all parts of a campaign or program, from ideas and design to implementation and evaluation. This happens by creating an environment where youth voices are heard without stigma or judgement.

Meaningful youth engagement integrates the experiences and ideas of young people into program design while also building on their skills and strengths.

Youth Led Participatory
Research and Evaluation

Advocacy

Promoting Positive
Relationships with Retailers

Youth Led Research

Participatory Action Research: Youth can be trained to conduct research and evaluations, including monitoring retail environments for illegal advertising or sales to minors.

Insights into youth behavior: They can offer valuable perspectives on how young people access substances, where they obtain them, and how retail environments influence their choices.

Developing solutions: By investigating these issues, youth can help identify effective prevention strategies, such as developing counter-advertising campaigns or advocating for policy changes that restrict underage access.

Advocacy

Raising Awareness

Youth can lead campaigns to educate retailers about the importance of preventing underage sales and the legal consequences of non-compliance.

Collaborating with Law Enforcement

Youth can participate in compliance checks in partnership with law enforcement agencies.

Influencing Policy

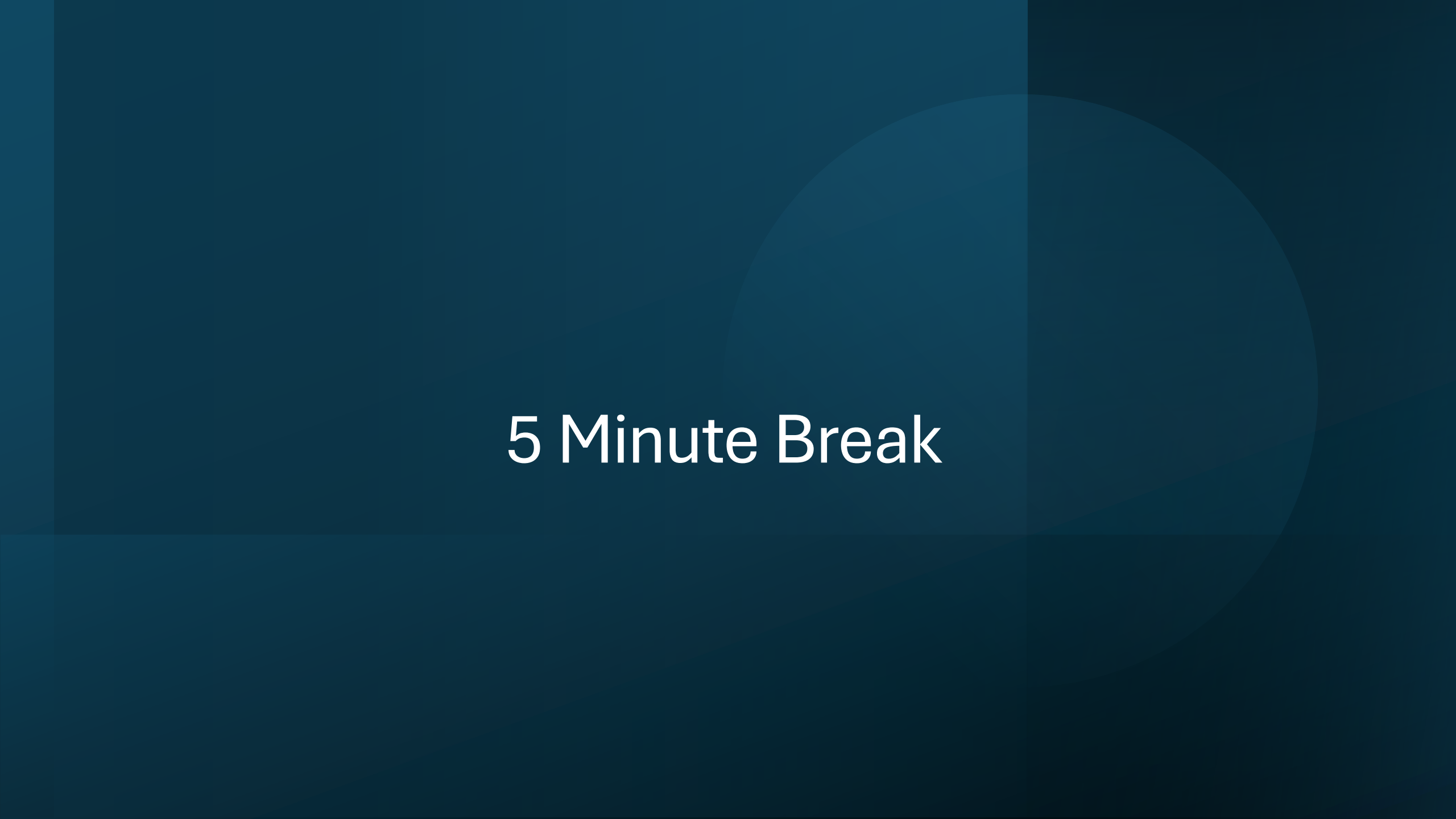
Youth can advocate for stronger local laws and policies regarding retailer licensing, sales age verification, and restrictions on product placement or promotions aimed at young people.

Promoting Positive Relationships with Retailers

Recognizing Responsible Retailers: Youth can develop programs to acknowledge and celebrate retailers who consistently demonstrate responsible sales practices.

Building Partnerships: They can facilitate dialogue between community organizations, law enforcement, and retailers to foster collaboration on prevention efforts.

Youth-Friendly Environments: Youth can help create positive and safe environments around retail outlets, for example, through mentoring programs or community clean-up initiatives



5 Minute Break

Local Highlights

Ingrid Gillespie: Director of Prevention.
Liberations Programs Inc.

Daniella Arias: Program Coordinator.
Liberations Programs, Inc.

Stamford Prevention Council

Education and Awareness for Specific
Bodegas, Retailer Zoning.

**Carolyn Wilson: Senior Health Program
Coordinator.** Ledge Light Health District,
Groton Alliance for Substance Use
Prevention (GASP):

Retailer Training/Tools, and Compliance

Retailer Engagement

Tobacco and Alcohol Retailers in Stamford

What are we doing?

Sept 25th 2025

Stamford Prevention Council: Who We Are

Stamford
Prevention
Council

Our Mission

Preventing and reducing youth substance misuse through positive youth and community development.

Our Members

Presently, Stamford Prevention Council has over 65 members representing 20+ number of agencies.

Our Approach

- Data driven, action-oriented council.
- We use the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF).
- Bimonthly meetings to help coordinate of our work.
- We have work groups to conduct our work.

www.stamfordpreventioncouncil.org





Zoning changes in Stamford: How it started

Responded to frequent questions and comments:

- Why are there so many smoke shops? They are everywhere!
- Kids are getting marijuana from the cannabis dispensaries
- Kids can get alcohol from the bodegas – package stores
- It's easy for kids to get vapes

Sound familiar?

These questions reflect concerns on access which is one of risk factors associated with Stamford youth use of marijuana, alcohol and nicotine via vaping.

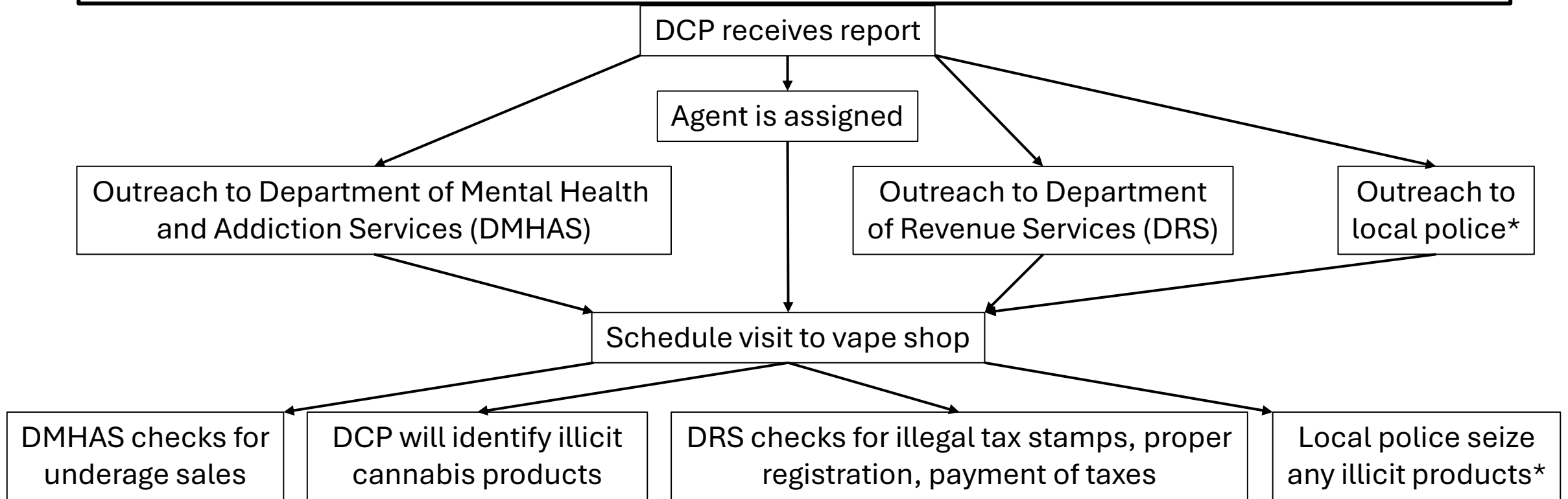


Zoning changes in Stamford: Our next steps

To answer those questions, our strategies included:

- Presentation from DCP on cannabis regulations – determined access was not from cannabis dispensaries. (Flow chart – Next slide)
 - Access was from smoke shops (supported by KIIIs)
 - Quantifying the number of smoke shops via mapping
-

Process following reporting of a vape/smoke shop to Department of Consumer Protection (DCP)

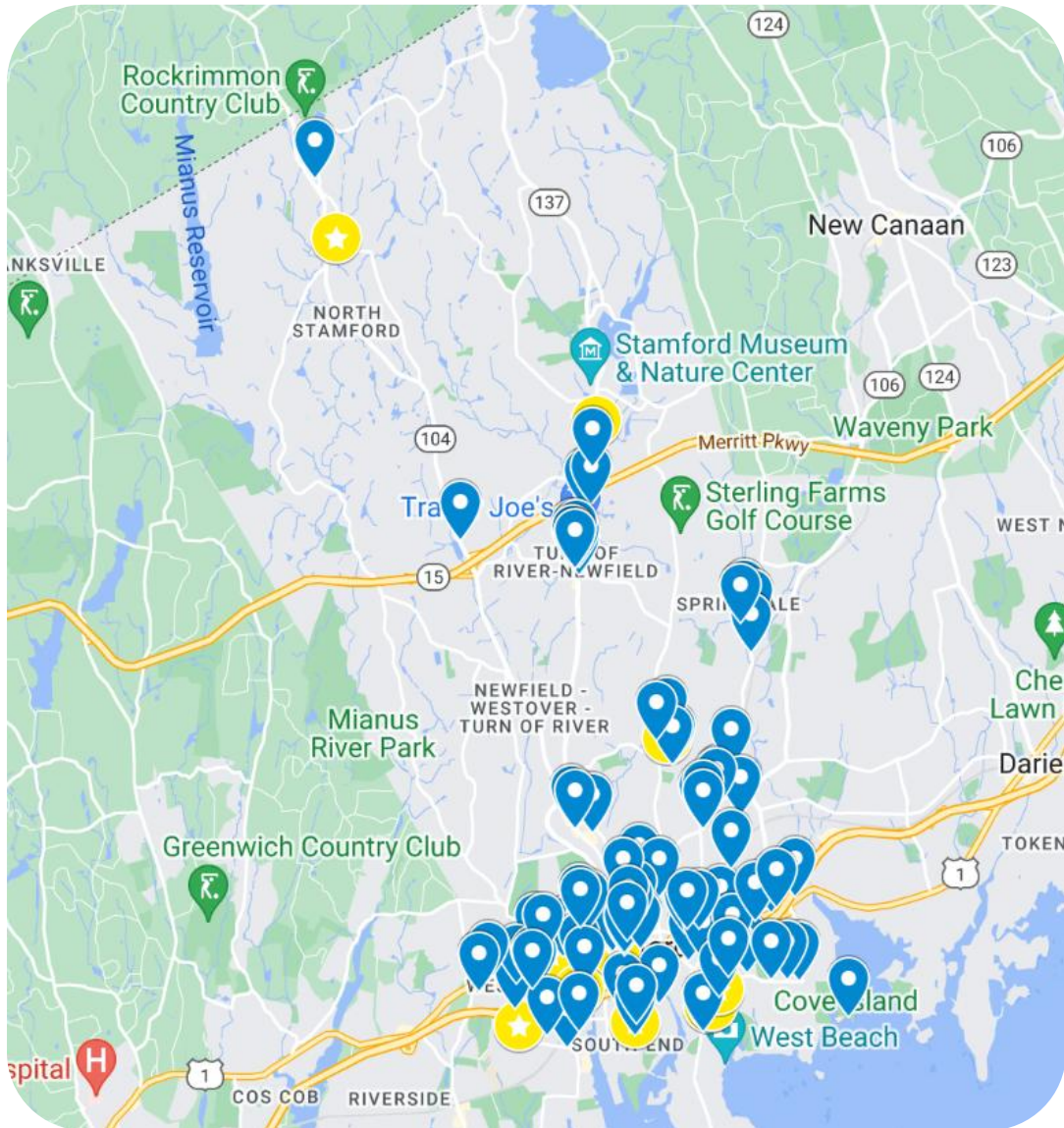


Illicit practices by vape shops can be reported to the DCP on their website at Dcp.drugcontrol@ct.gov or by phone at (860) 713-6065. It would be helpful to include the name of the shop, address, and a description or any photos of the products you believe to be illicit

*In rare instances where local police do not want to participate, DCP will go alone, tell them to take the illicit product down, and then follow up to make sure they returned or destroyed the product and do not have it back up for sale.

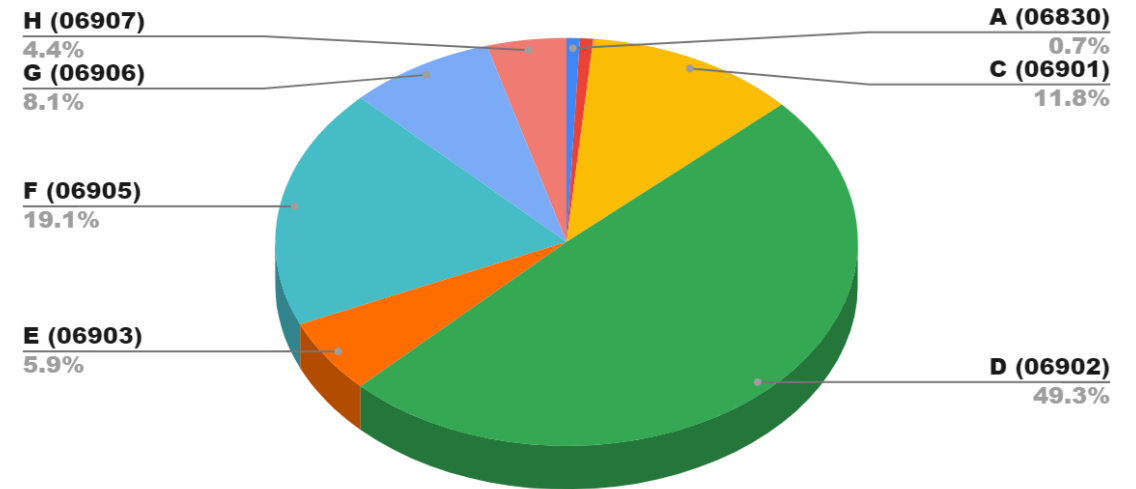
Note: Policies and practices associated with every department which has local implications

Stamford Smoke Shops

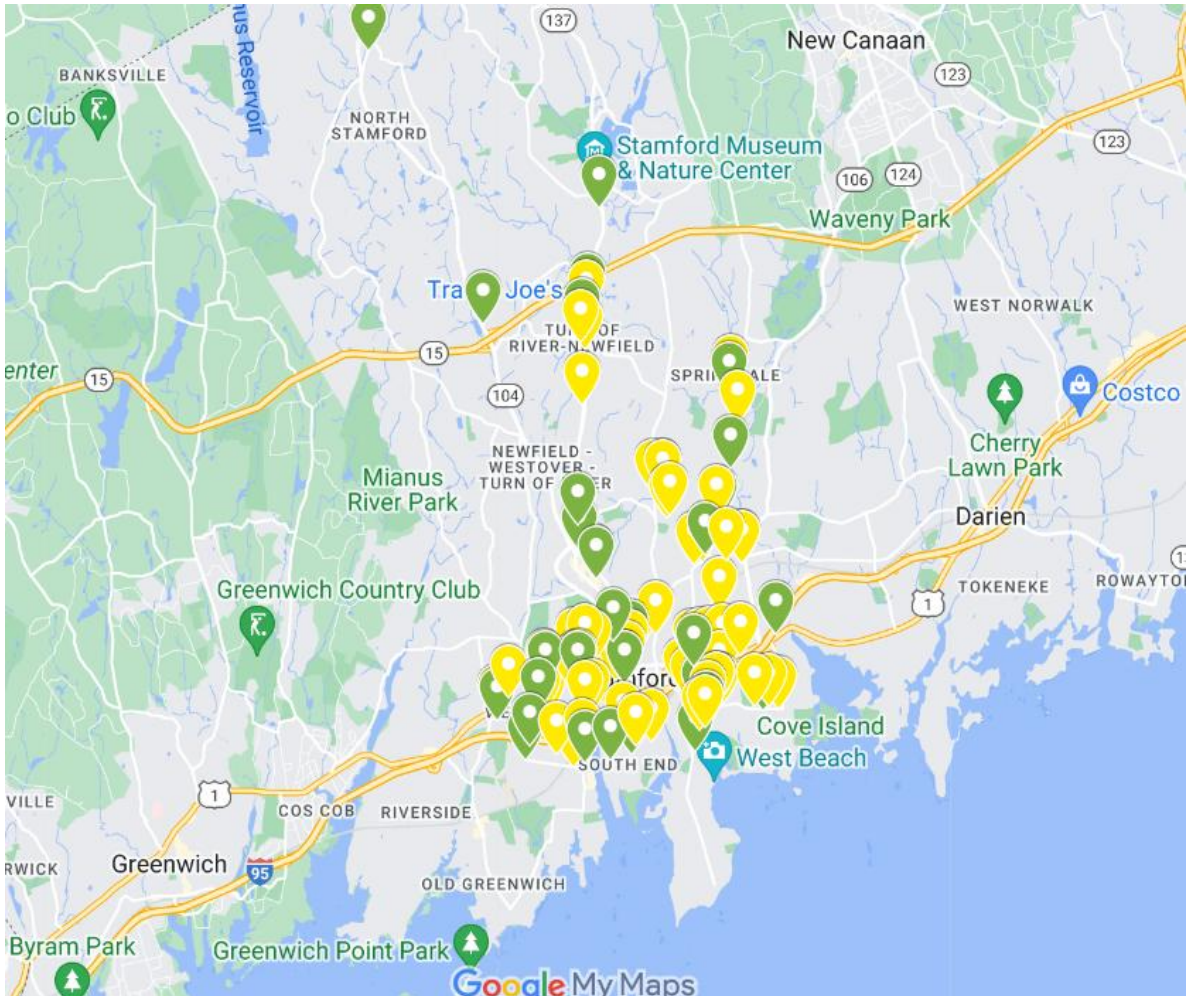


ZIP Code	# of Vape Smoke in ZIP Code
A (06830)	1
B (06896)	1
C (06901)	16
D (06902)	67
E (06903)	8
F (06905)	26
G (06906)	11
H (06907)	6

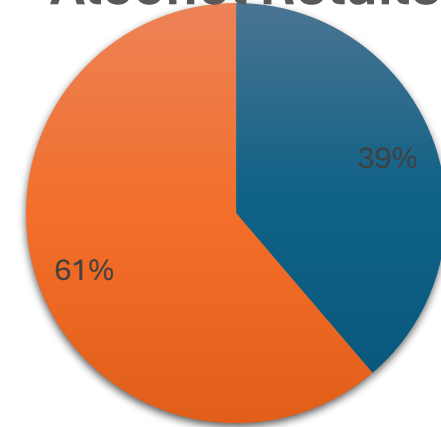
of Smoke Shops in ZIP Code vs. ZIP Code



Alcohol and Vape Retailers

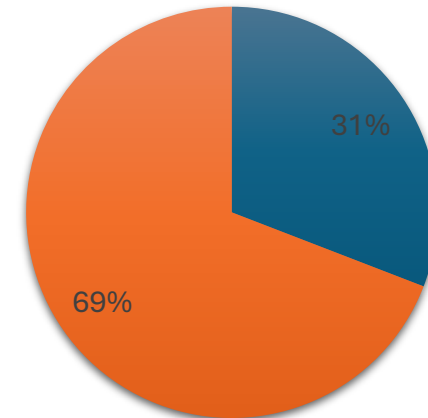


Alcohol Retailers



■ Zip code 06902 ■ City of Stamford

Vape Retailers



■ Zip Code 06902 ■ City of Stamford

We got to know zoning

- We invited zoning to present on how zoning works with respect to smoke shop locations and densities
- They presented and became a regular update. They are active members of the council.



Cannabis & Smoke Shop Regulations Timeline

City of Stamford Zoning Changes



Key Regulatory Changes Overview

Cannabis Dispensaries

Major Changes:

- Reduced from 5 to 4 permitted locations
- 500 feet minimum distance from parks and beaches
- 1,000 feet minimum from community centers
- Prohibited adjacent to residential districts
- Permitted in Downtown zoning district

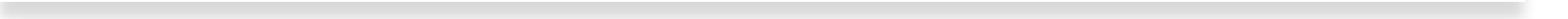
Smoke Shops & Tobacco Stores

Major Changes:

- 1,000 feet from parks, beaches, community centers
- Reduced number of permitted zoning districts
- Special permit required if 10%+ retail area (was 50%)
- Enhanced age verification requirements
- Stricter advertising and signage rules

Zoning Restrictions: Gap



- Gap is the Cap...
- 

Example: Educating the SPC members

Signage: One-Page Handout

Sign DO's and DON'T's

Do I need a permit for a sign?
Yes, for most signs you do need a permit.

How do I get a permit for a sign?
Start your sign application on the City's Website:
<https://stamfordct.portal.opengov.com/projectTemplate/13>

I put up a sign without a permit. What can I do?
You should contact the City's Building Department at ZoningEnforcement@StamfordCT.com and talk to a Zoning Enforcement Officer to discuss options. These may include legalizing the sign and removing or changing the sign to make them conforming to the regulations.

What are the penalties for a sign without a permit?
A sign without a permit is considered a zoning violation. The fine for zoning violations is \$150 per violation per day, i.e., if you have three illegal signs, the daily fine would be \$450, until the violation is corrected.

Where can I find the City's sign regulations?
Stamford's sign regulations can be found in Section 11. Of the City's Zoning Regulations which are available online at: <https://www.stamfordct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/39627/638700178185930000>. In Downtown, additional regulations apply, which can be found in the Architectural Design Review Regulations in Section 5.A. of the Zoning Regulations:

What type of signs are not allowed in Stamford?
Among others, the following types of signs are prohibited:

Flashing signs	Signs advertising cannabis or tobacco products
Signs with exposed tubes or bulbs or LEDs	Signs that simulate traffic signs or may distract drivers
Signs with moving parts	Signs that are moving

How big can signs be?
The sign area depends on the zoning district a store is located in. In Downtown, the size of a sign that can be mounted on a wall cannot exceed 1.5 square feet per each lineal foot of building frontage. Signs painted or affixed to windows cannot cover more than ten percent of the window area.

Who can answer my questions about signs?
Contact Zoning Enforcement at ZoningEnforcement@StamfordCT.gov or (203) 977-4711.

Examples of Prohibited Signage

No open or exposed lights / LEDs – No flashing or moving lights

Exceeds 10% of window area

No advertising of smoke / tobacco products and paraphernalia

Questions addressed

- Do I need a permit for a sign?
- How do I get a permit for a sign?
- I put up a sign without a permit. What can I do?
- What are the penalties for a sign without a permit?
- Where can I find the City's sign regulations?
- What type of signs are not allowed in Stamford?
- How big can signs be?
- Who can answer my questions about signs?

Examples of prohibited signage are also provided

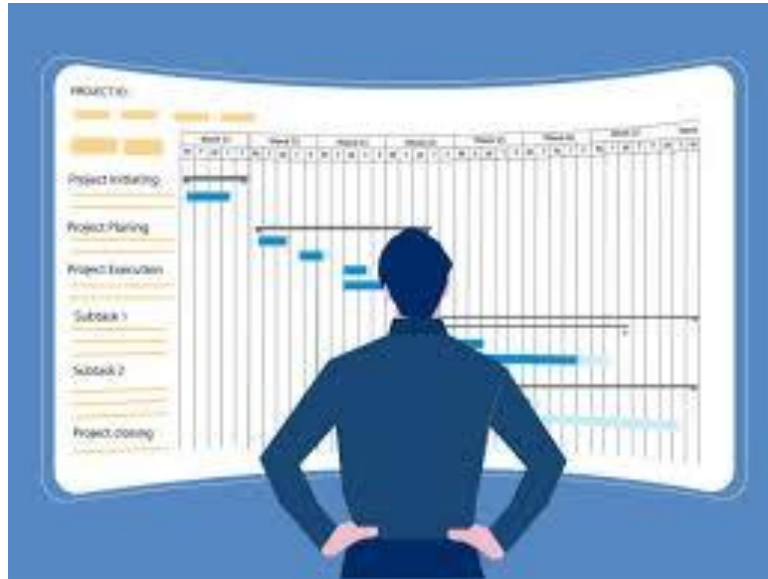
Alcohol Retailers: Regulations

What we have learned

- No mandated education
- Local zoning: Liquor vs package stores.
 - Remonstrance Process – Gaps
- Density: Statewide cap but exploring local zoning.

How do we track retailer compliance?

Underage sales and illegal THC



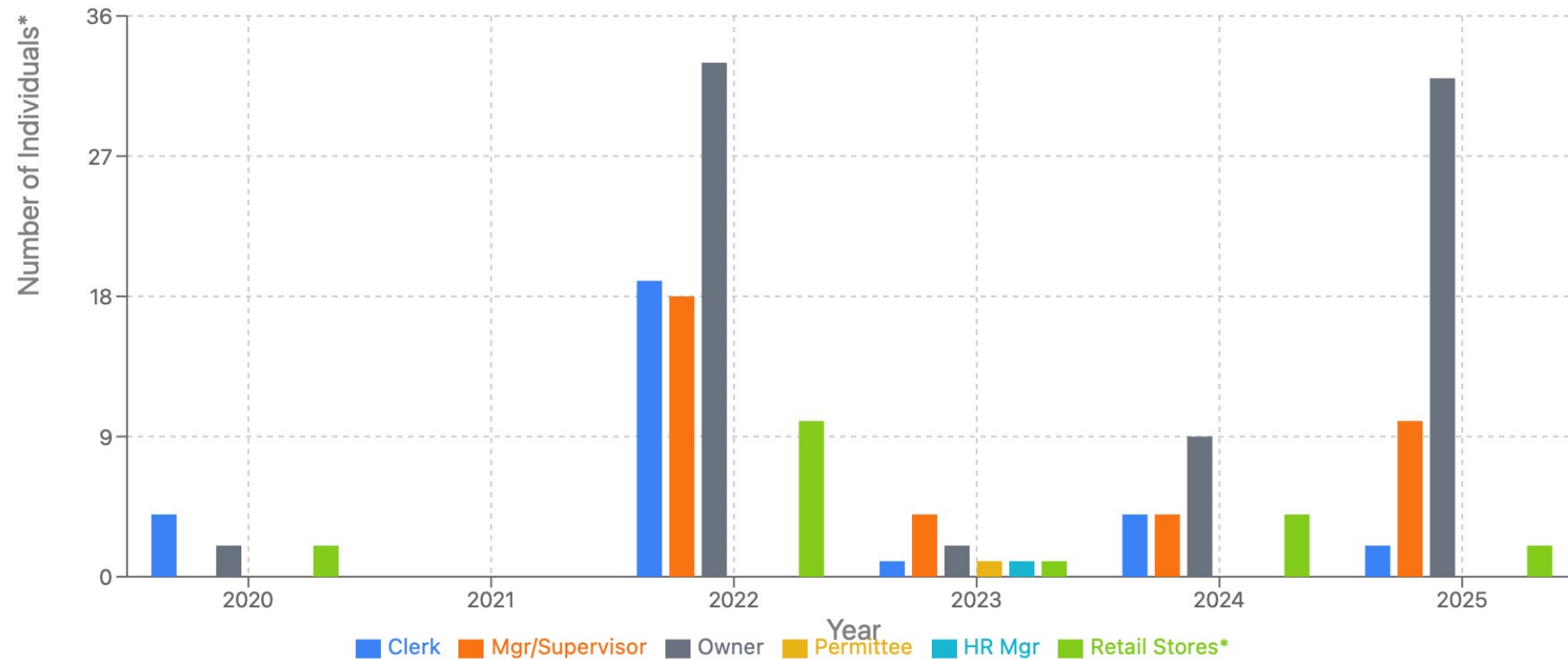
Retailer checklists Tobacco and Alcohol



Tracking: Retailer Education

Completion of Tobacco Retailer Online Training, 2020 – 2025

Updated through May 19, 2025



*Number of retail stores whose clerks completed the training



Engaging Retailers in Groton CT

Our Practical Application of
#Project21

Coalition Background History and Experience

- Founded in 1999, Local Prevention Council – 26 Years!
- Former DFC grantee 2001-2011
- Former DMHAS Partnerships for Success grantee (Underage drinking and Rx drugs)
- Former DMHAS CSC grantee (Cannabis and Rx Drugs)
- Current DMHAS PCC Part B Grantee (Underage Drinking)



#Project 21

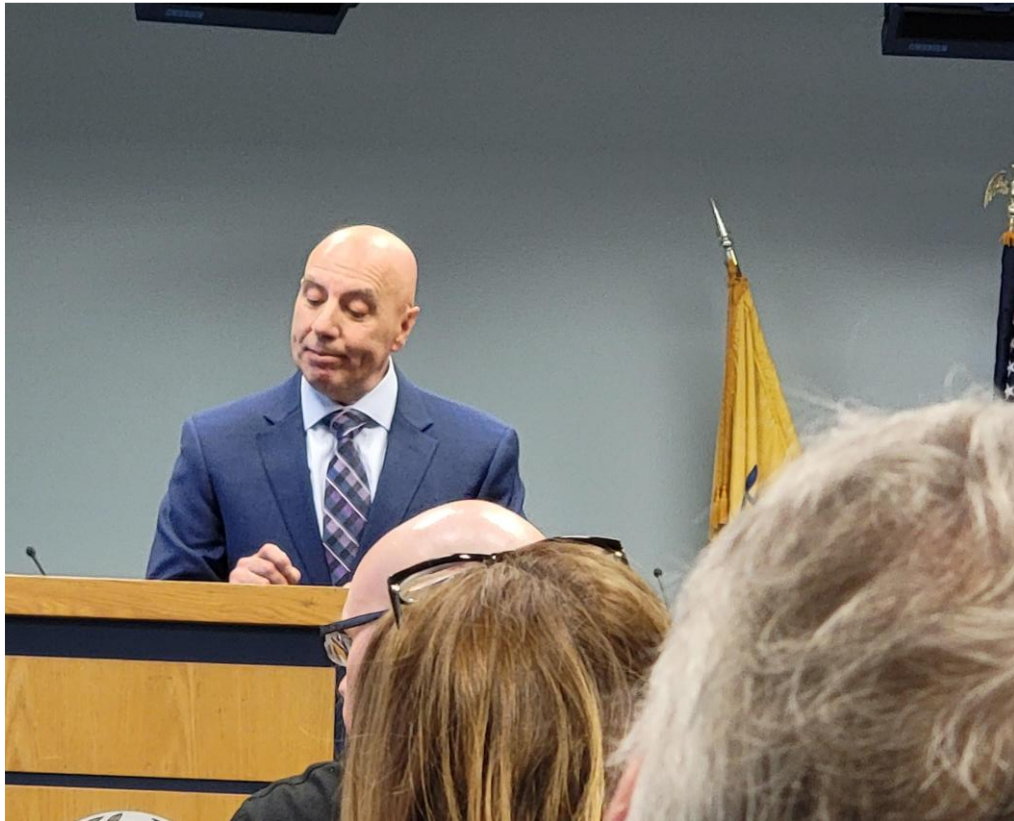
- GASP created in 2019, evolved into a casual collaboration with Stonington and Ledyard
- Original Plan: Use of LPC funds to offer Responsible Beverage Service Training and provide materials to establishments/retailers
- Initiative was sustained and evolved over time with funding and risk factor focus
- Now funded by PCC Part B and focuses on Groton/West Mystic





Retailer Summits

- Mixed results on Retailer Summits
- Partnership with Groton Town PD
- Success required DCP LC to attend
- Q&A opportunity about compliance
- Resource distribution



ID Scanners- A tool, not a perfect solution!

- Sourced: Tokenworks in NY
- Pro: Can read military IDs
- Con: Does not *detect* fakes-- limitations for use-- must explain to users
- Cost: \$800+ with accessories, bulk discounts
- Provided to those who failed compliance or those who request one; based on supply
- Problem solving: Introduced during pandemic for curbside service/delivery
- Success story: During a compliance check, a bar used one and did not sell to a minor as a result.



UV Lights

- The little flashlight that could!
- Sourced on Amazon
- Used for checking IDs, looking for holograms/ghost images
- Affordable, useful, sustainable with batteries



ID Checking Guide

- Distributed to retailers with other resources
- Pro: Tangible tool- brings awareness to changes in license design and security features
- Pro: Appreciated by businesses
- Con: New issue every year
- Con: Costly to purchase annually



TIPs Passports- Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training

- Incredible resource for businesses
- \$40 value for branded training
- 360 Training, learning management system
- Difficult to see through without oversight from manager
- High turnover rate in the industry
- Business Insurance- Benefit?
- Promotion opportunity: Chamber of Commerce
- Opportunity for policy? Some States/Businesses require...



#Project 21

A community partnership to prevent underage drinking

KNOW THE RISKS

YOUTH WHO DRINK ALCOHOL ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE:

- School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities
- Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while intoxicated
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Disruption of normal growth and sexual development
- Physical and sexual assault
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide
- Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning
- Use of other drugs
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects
- Death from alcohol poisoning

Early initiation of drinking is associated with development of an alcohol use disorder later in life.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

ALCOHOL IS THE MOST COMMONLY USED SUBSTANCE BY YOUTH

Preventing underage drinking requires community-based efforts to monitor the activities of youth and decrease youth access to alcohol.

Prevention tips for parents, families and caregivers:

- Pledge to never provide alcohol to anyone under 21
- Know where your teens are and who is supervising
- Talk to them about your rules and expectations around alcohol
- Talk about the risks of drinking while intoxicated
- Let them know they can call you if they are in a bad situation
- Keep alcohol stored securely
- Express how choices made now can affect their future

PARENTS: KNOW THE LAW!

CT Social Host Law:
No person having possession of, or exercising dominion and control over, any dwelling unit or private property shall knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence, permit any minor (under 21) to possess alcoholic liquor in such dwelling unit or on such private property, or fail to make reasonable efforts to halt such possession."

One way to reduce underage drinking is to make sure that all sellers/servers have responsible beverage server training like "TIPS" (Training and Intervention Procedures).

Visit www.gettips.com to learn more.

The Groton Alliance for Substance use Prevention is offering FREE TIPS vouchers for local businesses.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND FAMILIES
www.bethewall.com
www.asklistenlearn.org
www.drugabuse.gov/family-checkup
www.drugfree.org

CONNECT WITH US
@Groton_Prevents

CLAIM A FREE TIPS E-VOUCHER:
Call GASP: (860) 446-3062

dmhas
GASP
LLHD
Local Postal Customer

#Project 21

A community partnership to prevent underage drinking and promote health and safety

SAFETY TIPS FOR BARTENDERS, SERVERS AND CLERKS

- GET TRAINED** — Take a class or online course about responsible beverage sales and service. Ask your employer, distributor, or GASP for resources.
- ALWAYS ASK FOR ID** — Don't make assumptions about age. Check ID for dates and distinguishing marks. Ask questions if needed. Most customers will understand and respect your policy.
- BE PREPARED FOR DIFFICULT SITUATIONS** — Have a non-judgmental, standard response for anyone underage or intoxicated looking to be served. Ask your manager or another employee for help if needed.
- PRIORITIZE SAFETY** — Selling or serving alcohol comes with specific responsibilities enforceable by law. Being careful in your role protects individuals and the community.
- REMEMBER YOUR RIGHTS** — You have the right to refuse sales or service to anyone who is underage or intoxicated. Use an Age Statement Form (available from Liquor Control) when age is in question.
- ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS** — Use good judgement when selling or serving alcohol. Follow employer policies and State laws. Shortcuts on health and safety measures can be a liability to you and your employer.

#Project21 initiative resources are provided by Groton Alliance for Substance use Prevention (GASP), a program of Ledge Light Health District and made possible with funding from the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Prevention in CT Communities (PCC) grant part B, focused on underage drinking prevention. GASP is proud to be the Local Prevention Council serving Groton since 1999.

Join us at @Groton_Prevents Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest YouTube, TikTok and Threads

dmhas
GASP
LLHD

#Project 21

A community partnership to prevent underage drinking and promote health and safety

PREVENTION TIPS FOR MANAGERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS:

- CREATE INTERNAL POLICIES** — Set clear guidelines for health and safety. This may include include ID checks, not selling/serving intoxicated people, having emergency plans and promoting safe rides.
- PREPARE EMPLOYEES FOR TOUGH CONVERSATIONS** — Help your staff know what to say and who to ask for help if there is a problem with a customer. Show them support in difficult situations.
- PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS** — Check with your insurance provider about their requirements for Responsible Beverage Service training.
- BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT EXPECTATIONS** — Have employees sign an agreement about your policies and associated laws and regulations.
- EXPECT AND PREPARE FOR COMPLIANCE CHECKS** — Unannounced compliance checks are a common environmental strategy for prevention. They are coordinated by law enforcement and can happen anytime.
- SEEK OUT PREVENTION RESOURCES** — Ask your distributor or GASP for free resources to help bartenders, servers or clerks prevent underage sales and service.

#Project21 initiative resources are provided by Groton Alliance for Substance use Prevention (GASP), a program of Ledge Light Health District and made possible with funding from the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Prevention in CT Communities (PCC) grant part B, focused on underage drinking prevention. GASP is proud to be the Local Prevention Council serving Groton since 1999.

Join us at @Groton_Prevents Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest YouTube, TikTok and Threads

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GASP
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#Project 21

A community partnership to prevent underage drinking

@Groton_Prevents

How does GASP monitor Retail Availability in Groton?

We collect data from Groton Youth and Community Surveys and from Compliance Checks.

In 2022, we asked Groton youth and adults about their behaviors, attitudes and perceptions about alcohol and other drugs. Here is what residents had to say about 'Retail Availability' of alcohol:

YOUTH	ADULTS
12% of Groton youth surveyed reported drinking at a restaurant	9 out of 10 Groton adults think establishments should be fined for selling or serving alcohol to minors.
1 in 10 Fitch HS seniors reported buying alcohol at a store or a bar.	84% of Groton adults think establishments should require seller/server training
87% of Groton youth think ID checking is important to prevent teens from drinking alcohol	8 out of 10 Groton adults think that establishments that sell or serve alcohol should use an ID scanner to verify age

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Groton Alliance for Substance use Prevention

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A community partnership to prevent underage drinking

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What we learned from Compliance Checks:

GASP sponsored compliance checks in off premise establishments (package stores/retail outlets) in 2019, 2020 and 2022. Out of a total of 49 visits, there was a 38% failure rate.

In 2023, compliance checks were conducted in 10 on premise establishments (bars and restaurants) and 50% failed compliance.

The #1 cause of failing a compliance check was NOT asking for ID.

How establishments that sell or serve alcohol can help prevent underage drinking:

- Create written policies about preventing underage sales and service
- Make ID Checks mandatory regardless of a customers appearance
- Require employees to have Responsible Beverage Service training or provide it for them upon hire

For more information about #Project21 contact Carolyn Wilson at GASP 860-446-3062 or cwilson@llhd.org

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#Project 21

A community partnership to prevent underage drinking and promote health and safety in Groton, CT

ISSUE BRIEF: Retail Availability & Underage Drinking

What is Retail Availability?

Retail Availability is a community-level risk factor for underage drinking, referring to the accessibility of alcohol by minors (those under age 21) in bars, restaurants, grocery, and package stores.

Why is GASP focused on Retail Availability?

In 2021, Retail Availability was identified as a priority risk factor for underage drinking in Groton. Support for this focus came from a comprehensive needs assessment.

How is GASP addressing Retail Availability?

Our #Project21 initiative has 3 areas of focus:

Establishment Education and Outreach

- Correspond with establishment owners and employees
- Conduct establishment outreach visits
- Provide prevention resources, tools and training
- Host educational events for local establishments
- Assess and respond to the needs of local establishments

Underage Drinking Prevention Policy Promotion

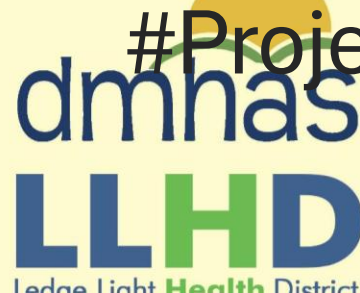
- Identify and advocate for policies that can reduce underage drinking
- Research possible local ordinances
- Identify sustainable prevention practices
- Consult with prevention policy experts
- Evaluate local strategies using outcome data

Enforcement and Surveillance of Laws, Regulations and Compliance

- Convene with key stakeholders
- Enhance state and local partnerships
- Fund enforcement and surveillance activities
- Collect data on progress and barriers towards compliance
- Create goals for improved compliance and safety

For more information about #Project21 contact Carolyn Wilson at GASP

GASP
Groton Alliance for Substance use Prevention



#Project21 Materials



#Project 21

ID Checking Guide

ID checking is important for underage drinking prevention. ID checking policies can protect businesses, employees and community members!

Remember AT: Ask, Look, Touch

ASK — Ask for ID and check it properly. If the person refuses, ask for their address and birthday. If they refuse, ask for a photo of ID if needed.

LOOK — Check the most commonly altered areas first: birthdate, expiration date, photo and "under 21 until" date. Complete the photo to the person. Use a blacklight to check for ghost images and holograms. Cross reference out of State IDs with an ID Checking Guide.

TOUCH — Always have the patron remove the ID from their wallet. Hold the ID and feel for irregular lamination and thickness, bumps, cuts, shifts, holes or uneven edges.

You have the right to refuse sales to anyone you believe is under 21, using a fake ID or intoxicated. Use an Age Statement Form (CT DCP Liquor Control) along with checking ID if you question a patron's age. Keep these forms on file.

To sell or serve alcohol, you must be 18. Need a refresher on the guidelines of your establishment's liquor permit? Consult your Quick Reference Guide

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#Project 21 Community Assessment



How does GASP monitor Retail Availability in Groton?

We collect data from Groton Youth and Community Surveys and from Compliance Checks.

In 2024, we asked Groton youth and adults about their behaviors, attitudes and perceptions about alcohol and other drugs. Here is what residents had to say about 'Retail Availability' of alcohol:



YOUTH

10% of Groton youth
reported drinking at a restaurant

6% of Groton youth
reported buying alcohol at a store or a bar

88% of Groton youth
think ID checking is important to prevent teens
from drinking alcohol

ADULTS

98% of Groton adults
think establishments should be fined for selling or
serving alcohol to minors.

87% of Groton adults
think establishments should require seller/server training

84% Groton adults
think that establishments that sell or serve alcohol
should use an ID scanner to verify age



What we learned from Compliance Checks:

GASP sponsored compliance checks in off premise establishments (package stores/retail outlets) in 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2024. Out of a total of 59 visits, there was a **39%** failure rate.

In 2023, compliance checks were conducted in 10 on premise establishments (bars and restaurants) and **50%** failed compliance.

The #1 cause of failing a compliance check was NOT asking for ID.



How establishments that sell or serve alcohol can help prevent underage drinking:

- ▶ Create written policies about preventing underage sales and service
- ▶ Make ID Checks mandatory regardless of a customers appearance
- ▶ Require employees to have Responsible Beverage Service training or provide it for them upon hire

For more information about #Project21 contact

Carolyn Wilson at GASP

860-446-3062 or cwilson@llhd.org



ID Checking Card

- Ask
- Look
- Touch



- Special material that doesn't get ruined if wet-great for a bar!
- Began as a laminated square

#Project 21 ID Checking Guide

ID checking is important for underage drinking prevention. ID checking policies can protect businesses, employees and community members!

Remember **ALT**: **A**sk, **L**ook, **T**ouch

ASK

- Ask for ID so you can check it properly
- Quiz the patron on their address and birthday
- Ask for a second piece of ID if needed

LOOK

- Check the most commonly altered areas first: birthdate, expiration date, photo and "under 21 until" date
- Compare the photo to the person
- Use a blacklight to check for ghost images and holograms
- Cross reference out of State IDs with an ID Checking Guide

TOUCH

- Always have the patron remove the ID from their wallet.
- Hold the ID and feel for irregular lamination and thickness, bumps, cuts, slits, holes or uneven edges

You have the right to refuse sales to anyone you believe is under 21, using a fake ID or intoxicated. Use an Age Statement Form (CT DCP Liquor Control) along with checking ID if you question a patron's age. Keep these forms on site.



To sell or serve alcohol, you must be 18.

Need a refresher on the guidelines of your establishment's liquor permit? Consult your **Quick Reference Guide** available on the CT Department of Consumer Protection Liquor Control Division website.

Support #Project21 @Groton Prevents



CONNECTICUT
Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

Rack Card: Owners/Managers v. Employees



#Project 21
A community partnership to prevent underage drinking and promote health and safety

PREVENTION TIPS FOR MANAGERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS:

- **CREATE INTERNAL POLICIES** — Set clear guidelines for health and safety. This may include ID checks, not selling/serving intoxicated people, having emergency plans and promoting safe rides.
- **PREPARE EMPLOYEES FOR TOUGH CONVERSATIONS** — Help your staff know what to say and who to ask for help if there is a problem with a customer. Show them support in difficult situations.
- **PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS** — Check with your insurance provider about their requirements for Responsible Beverage Service training.
- **BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT EXPECTATIONS** — Have employees sign an agreement about your policies and associated laws and regulations.
- **EXPECT AND PREPARE FOR COMPLIANCE CHECKS** — Unannounced compliance checks are a common environmental strategy for prevention. They are coordinated by law enforcement and can happen anytime.
- **SEEK OUT PREVENTION RESOURCES** — Ask your distributor or GASP for free resources to help bartenders, servers or clerks prevent underage sales and service.

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A community partnership to prevent underage drinking and promote health and safety

SAFETY TIPS FOR BARTENDERS, SERVERS AND CLERKS

- **GET TRAINED** — Take a class or online course about responsible beverage sales and service. Ask your employer, distributor, or GASP for resources.
- **ALWAYS ASK FOR ID** — Don't make assumptions about age. Check ID for dates and distinguishing marks. Ask questions if needed. Most customers will understand and respect your policy.
- **BE PREPARED FOR DIFFICULT SITUATIONS** — Have a non-judgmental, standard response for anyone underage or intoxicated looking to be served. Ask your manager or another employee for help if needed.
- **PRIORITIZE SAFETY** — Selling or serving alcohol comes with specific responsibilities enforceable by law. Being careful in your role protects individuals and the community.
- **REMEMBER YOUR RIGHTS** — You have the right to refuse sales or service to anyone who is underage or intoxicated. Use an Age Statement Form (available from Liquor Control) when age is in question.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS** — Use good judgement when selling or serving alcohol. Follow employer policies and State laws. Shortcuts on health and safety measures can be a liability to you and your employer.

Issue Brief: Education about the Initiative



ISSUE BRIEF: *Retail Availability & Underage Drinking*

What is Retail Availability?

Retail Availability is a community-level risk factor for underage drinking, referring to the accessibility of alcohol by minors (those under age 21) in bars, restaurants, grocery, and package stores.

Why is GASP focused on Retail Availability?

In 2021, Retail Availability was identified as a priority risk factor for underage drinking in Groton. Support for this focus came from a comprehensive needs assessment.

How is GASP addressing Retail Availability?

Our **#Project21** initiative has 3 areas of focus:

Establishment Education and Outreach

- Correspond with establishment owners and employees
- Conduct establishment outreach visits
- Provide prevention resources, tools and training
- Host educational events for local establishments
- Assess and respond to the needs of local establishments

Underage Drinking Prevention Policy Promotion

- Identify and advocate for policies that can reduce underage drinking
- Research possible local ordinances
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- Consult with prevention policy experts
- Evaluate local strategies using outcome data

Enforcement and Surveillance of Laws, Regulations and Compliance

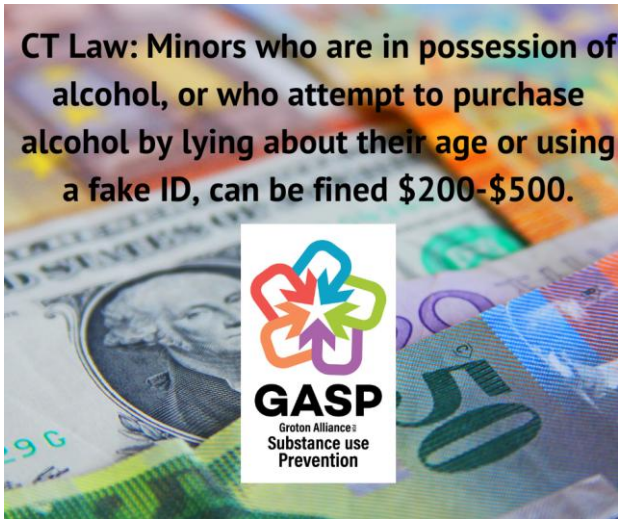
- Convene with key stakeholders
- Enhance state and local partnerships
- Fund enforcement and surveillance activities
- Collect data on progress and barriers towards compliance
- Create goals for improved compliance and safety

For more information about **#Project21** contact
Carolyn Wilson at GASP
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GASP is a program of Ledge Light Health District and funded by the Prevention in Connecticut Communities (PCC) Grant from the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

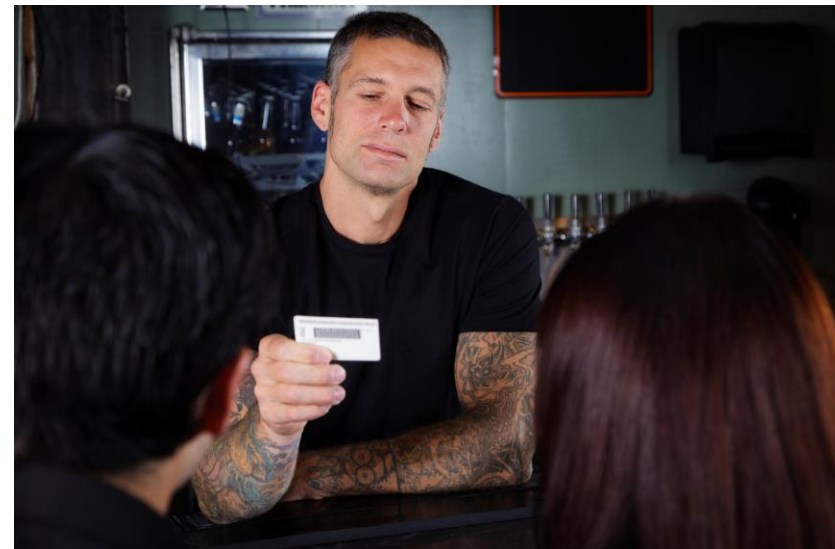


Community Social Norms: Social Media



Protecting Your Business PSA (Police):
<https://youtu.be/dUrccokGwWM>

Celebrity Bartender PSA (Cameo):
<https://youtu.be/t63zOLiqbvk>



Thank you!



FOLLOW GASP ON INSTAGRAM
https://www.instagram.com/groton_prevents/



FOLLOW GASP ON TIK TOK
https://www.tiktok.com/@groton_prevents



FOLLOW GASP ON FACEBOOK
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonPrevents>



Barriers To Engagement

Poll Question:

What are some of the common barriers to engagement with the retailers that you have experienced?

- Lack of retailer participation in the past
- Availability of retailers to actively participate
- Logistical barriers (geography, language)
- Minimal organizational capacity to engage the sector
- Time
- Perceived conflicting goals between your organization and retailers
- Other

Engaging the Sector

The following list includes some of the ways to approach retailers in the community with information about, and invitations to participate in, prevention efforts:

- Create a retailer recruitment flyer and interest form
- Invite retailer employees or owners to attend and speak at community meetings and events
- Host retailer based focus groups on substance use prevention initiatives and for their insight on current trends
- Ask for their insight on workplace policy provisions
- Share how retailers can benefit from coalition membership
- Anticipate and overcome roadblocks
- Recognize retailers that participate in prevention efforts through various communication mechanisms to elevate their community profile.
- Conduct an Environmental Scan
- Create social marketing with retailers as a target audience.
- Offer to host retailer trainings for employees

Included below are different ways to encourage retailers who are already engaged to become more involved in prevention efforts:

- Extend invitations to attend future prevention events and activities
- Maintain relationships by keeping stakeholders informed of prevention activities and progress made
- Plan on a consistent schedule for meetings and activities
- Assist retailers to incorporate prevention messages into their advertising and into signs and posters at the workplace

Identify at least 2 ways in which you think your coalition could further engage this sector in your community coalition work.

Where do I start?

- What data do I have? Should I collect data first?
- Do I have a strong youth group who want to work on a campaign?
- What am I already doing that I would like to expand?
- Build upon coalition members relationships.
- Create conversation points: Introduce the coalition, talk about shared goals that you have such a healthy community, share any local data that you have, create materials in accessible languages, keep cultural competency in mind.
- Consider using an exiting tool or follow a model such as the SPF steps to guide you.

Each organization may start at different place. Work with you have and use your strengths, then you can fill in additional strategies.

Take Aways

Retailers are key partners in prevention

By building relationships with retailers, you can achieve prevention goals

Engage, Elevate, and Educate

Celebrate the retailers in your community who participate and who support your prevention goals

Support others with targeted strategies

Advocate for enforcement of existing laws and regulations

Leverage your strengths and build capacity in new areas

Local Retailer License Lookup

State of Connecticut License Lookup Website

Provides you with contact information for licenses in all communities.

- Business Name
- Address
- Permittee Name
- Type of Credential
- Status of Credential

Includes Relevant Licenses:

- Adult Use Cannabis
- Gaming/Casinos/Online Gambling
- Liquor
- Medical Marijuana

Resources, Learning Extensions, and Sources

- [CT Liquor laws](#)
- [CT Cannabis Laws](#)
- [CT Gambling Laws](#)
- [CT Smoking Laws](#)
- [CT THC Infused Beverages](#)
- [Prevention First: Environmental Scan Tool Kit](#)
- [TTASC Evidenced Based Strategy: Youth Engagement Guide](#)
- [CADCA Community Event Environmental Scan Tool](#)
- [Epiphany Community Services Vaping Environmental Scan Sample](#)
- [DMHAS Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement Program \(TPEP\)](#)
- [DMHAS Cannabis Awareness and Education Program](#)
- [TTASC Business Sector Training Video: 12 Sector Collaboration Series: Business](#)
- [TTASC Training Video: DMHAS Cannabis Education Team: CT Cannabis Landscape Analysis: Examining the Illegal THC Market in Connecticut](#)
- [State of CT License Look Up](#)
- [Engage: CDC Evidenced Based Strategies to Prevent Youth Substance Misuse](#)

Thank you for
attending!

Contact: Jennifer Jacobsen
jacobsen@xsector.com

Evaluation and CEU link: In the
TTASC LMS