

# Substance Spotlight: Alcohol

## What is Alcohol Prevention From a Town Perspective?

**The good news** is towns can play a significant role in preventing and decreasing alcohol misuse. This can be addressed through municipal plans and regulations. Examples include language in the town plan supporting health and wellness initiatives; alcohol free parks and events, and ordinance language limiting the number and location of alcohol retailers.

### Did you know?

*Alcohol remains the most used substance among young people ages 12+ in the Vermont. 57% of VT high school students that drank alcohol in the last 30-days report binge-drinking.*

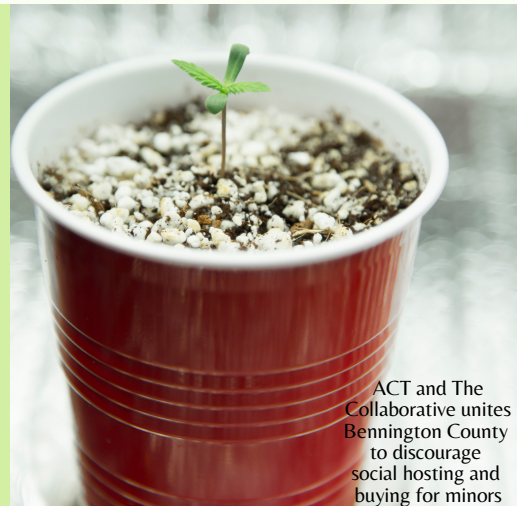


### Vermont's Craft Culture

Vermont's abundance of craft alcohol brewers has attracted international attention to the unique Vermont brand and generates jobs in local communities. Vermont is considered one of the healthiest states in the nation, and residents can embrace the experience of craft brews together with health and safety by drinking moderately and designating sober drivers for social outings. Towns can take steps to ensure events where alcohol is served is planned with health and wellness in mind by promoting alcohol-free zones for young people and the recovery community; and by encouraging adults to drink responsibly.

### What is Social Hosting?

A social host is an adult who, with or without knowledge, hosts underage drinking on property they own, lease, or otherwise control (*Dills, 2010*). The goal of social hosting laws is to decrease youth alcohol access and misuse and to deter underage drinking parties. A social host ordinance can impose civil and/or criminal penalties for those in violation. Currently in VT, those who purchase alcohol for minors are subject to a \$2000 fine and up to two years in jail.



ACT and The Collaborative unites Bennington County to discourage social hosting and buying for minors

**Leadership Challenge:** which of these will your town adopt first to support the health and well-being of community members?

Action Step	Outcome
Adopt policies or ordinances that address social hosting and limit consumption of alcohol in public spaces and events.	Encourages healthy community engagement, reduces youth use, and supports the recovery community.
Town/public events should include health and wellness sectors. Event organizers are encouraged to promote alcohol-free areas.	This helps reduce subliminal messaging to youth that alcohol "has" to be part of events and festivals. Alcohol-free areas support people in recovery.
Collaborate with local Substance-Use Prevention Organizations and the Vermont Division of Liquor Control to ensure licensees meet Vermont regulations.	Alcohol retailers, bars, and restaurants are first in line in preventing underage persons access to alcohol. Positive recognition supports retailers and their role in reducing alcohol misuse.
Consider the number and density of alcohol retailers and their proximity to schools, parks and recreation areas, and treatment facilities.	Reduces youth exposure to alcohol advertising messages.
Review town plan and zoning policies to include language that supports alcohol prevention, treatment, recovery, and recovery housing.	Supports diverse, safe housing options.
Ensure signage ordinance adheres to content-neutral language best practices. Signage may be restricted based on size, location, type (color, design), number.	This protects the first amendment while allowing for an open dialogue about reducing alcohol promotional messages to young people and supporting those in recovery.

