

## Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

For more than two decades, the United States has benefited from a uniform minimum legal drinking age of 21. This has been one of the most successful public health regulations ever implemented. Thousands of lives have been saved and many tragedies averted. These laws

### *What is EUDL?*

The Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program was established in Fiscal Year 1998. Congress has appropriated \$25 million annually to OJJDP to support block and discretionary grants, evaluation and training, and technical assistance. EUDL supports and enhances enforcement efforts by States, territories and local jurisdictions to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors and the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors. EUDL award grantees are required to collect and report data that measure the results of the program(s) implemented with this grant.

These efforts have shown significant improvement of retail compliance in not selling alcohol to minors; reduction in alcohol-involved traffic deaths; and increased awareness by law enforcement, parents, and judicial interests in the collateral dangers of underage drinking to youth and communities.

are highly effective, but they do require continued vigilance and effort. Through its Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program (EUDL), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, has provided national leadership in ensuring that States and territories have the information, training, and resources needed to enforce these laws.

The EUDL program has been administered by OJJDP for more than 14 years. The goal of the program is to enhance and support the enforcement of underage drinking laws by forging collaborative partnerships. These partnerships not only enable more vigorous and consistent enforcement, but also foster the creation of better laws and policies and the development of more community support. The program has been strengthened by increasing science-based knowledge of strategies and ensuring their implementation in communities. This is accomplished with the help of the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center

that disseminates resources and training to reduce underage drinking and responds to more than 5,446 technical assistance requests each year and connects with communities to share successful approaches.

### **Military Focus**

On military bases and in base communities across the U.S. States and territories, policy changes and increased law enforcement operations have helped to reduce underage drinking and its attendant behaviors, resulting in improved military readiness. OJJDP has administered three EUDL discretionary programs (2006, 2009, and 2012) that focus on military collaborations with adjacent communities. According to 2011 research by Spera and colleagues of a 2006 grant award to five Air Force bases, the following improvements were cited:

- One community (Great Falls, MT) had a significant decline in arrests for possession of alcohol by a minor.
- Two communities (Great Falls, MT, and Tucson, AZ) had a significant decline in the compliance check failure rate of local establishments that sell alcohol.
- Four communities (Great Falls, MT; Honolulu, HI; Phoenix, AZ; and Tucson, AZ) had a significant decline in DUI/DWI arrests.
- Enforcement efforts to reduce access to alcohol by those younger than age 21 increased by 1000 percent.
- Enforcement of impaired driving improved 1500 percent.
- Eighty percent of communities implemented policies to deter underage access and availability.
- Non-alcohol-related activities increased more than threefold. Eighty percent of communities implemented programs and campaigns to reduce binge drinking.
- The EUDL program had an influence on self-reported drinking behaviors in three of the five communities.
- The percentage of Air Force enlisted personnel at risk for a drinking problem decreased 6.6 percent from 2006 to 2008.
- Evidence suggests for the first time that community-level programs using an environmental strategy approach can be successful in targeting military members.

The remaining four Air Force bases engaged in the 2009 and 2012 grant awards are pending completion of program implementation and evaluation. Engagement of airmen in prevention activities to include off-duty volunteerism to assist law enforcement with compliance check operations, educational outreach about alcohol laws and policies, implementation of non-alcohol-related activities, and policy development have contributed to the success of EUDL interventions on and off base installations.

### **EUDL Achievements**

EUDL has facilitated important policy changes that have the potential to accomplish lasting reductions in youth's access to alcohol.

Research partnerships with United States Air Force, ICF International, Wake Forest University, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, CSR, and Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation have produced impressive outcomes. More than 100 Success Stories collected by EUDL from around the country share important policy changes at the State and community levels that have come about through EUDL education. These include the implementation of keg registration and social host ordinances designed to curb underage drinking parties, restrictions on sales of alcohol at public events, banning minors from bars, studying alcohol tax increases, restrictions on alcohol advertising, and a variety of other policies that potentially can improve the alcohol environment in States and communities. In addition, EUDL has helped bring about important enforcement changes that potentially can accomplish lasting reductions in youth access to alcohol through improvements in standard operating procedures; enforcement operations; use of media to advance public safety goals; promotion of interagency collaborations; and collaborations with community coalitions, community leaders, and youth. More than 75 Success Stories collected by EUDL from around the country demonstrate important enforcement achievements in limiting youth access to alcohol and holding adult providers accountable for their role in underage drinking. Among these achievements are compliance check operations, enforcement aimed at reducing social availability, fake ID enforcement, impaired-driving enforcement, management of large-scale community events, and interagency and community collaborations to address underage drinking.

## EUDL Resources

PIRE's UDETC has raised awareness about the importance of the underage drinking laws; provided publications, research, and other services to assist States and communities in their efforts to prevent underage drinking; and promoted the concept of evidence-based environmental approaches to achieve long-term outcomes. A selected number of UDETC resources follow:

- Technical assistance to more than 75,000 individuals through presentations and customized responses.
- More than 46 research-based publications, informational pamphlets and tool kits to assist States and communities in their efforts to enforce underage drinking laws.
- Nine hundred seventy-five onsite evidence-based trainings, including experiential exercises to enhance learning outcomes of law enforcement and community advocates.
- One hundred sixty-five webinars for more than 27,000 participants who ranked their learning above average to excellent.
- More than 5.1 million hits to [www.UDETC.org](http://www.UDETC.org) – a portal to a wide range of resources, publications, and on-demand trainings.
- One hundred thirty-six Resource Alerts to inform more than 8,000 subscribers per issue of the latest research, developments, and resources.
- Three distance-learning opportunities on Conducting Compliance Check Operations, Environmental Strategies, and Party Prevention and Controlled Party Dispersal with 839 participants.
- Twelve National Leadership Conferences and one National EUDL Symposium on sustainability and strategic planning for more than 14,000 participants.
- More than 140 Success Story publications that captured the successful implementation of evidence-based and data-driven activities.
- Rigorous training and technical assistance to OJJDP discretionary projects: Community Trials Initiative, Rural Communities Initiative, College, Military, State Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Implementation Initiative (SASPPII).
- Graduation of 22 Leadership Institute participants trained in collaborative State and local leadership, teaming enforcement, and prevention professionals to lead coalitions in effective underage drinking prevention.
- From 2010 to 2012, production of 25 Internet radio programs to reach parents and other adults.
- Hosts a Youth Advisory Board to plan national youth engagement activities and trainings, and provision of webinars to train youth and youth leaders in advocacy and support for enforcement.
- Availability of a toll-free number 877-335-1287.

## Sustainability

The work of the EUDL program has made a significant contribution to the continued downward trend in preventing youth access to alcohol. The partnerships that have been fostered between law enforcement, the military, government agencies, and communities have brought about healthier environments for our Nation's families and for all of us. Much progress has been made, but much work remains to be done. Continued leadership and use of environmental strategies and education are needed to sustain and further the progress we have made.

