



Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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Collaborative Enforcement Efforts Bring Massachusetts District Attorneys into the Statewide EUDL Plan

Since the inception of the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program, Massachusetts has funded local law enforcement, state alcohol enforcement, and college communities in an effort to change perceptions related to underage drinking and encourage a comprehensive enforcement approach to combating the problem.

Massachusetts Highway Safety Division (HSD) Director, Sheila Burgess, and her staff have been leaders in building community support and awareness of the importance of addressing underage alcohol problems using the broadest degree of community support possible. In 2009, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), HSD, took a bold step in addressing underage alcohol problems by bringing a group of new partners to the table. Berkshire County District Attorney David Capeless led the path for this new partnership through his work with coalitions across the county in an ongoing campaign against underage drinking. Always on the lookout for new partners and creative ways to address underage drinking, Ms. Burgess's recognition of the effect district attorneys could have with EUDL efforts prompted her to develop an Application for Grant Funding targeted at district attorneys across the State, hoping to generate the same level of commitment demonstrated in Berkshire County.

The AGF was well received, and five proposals were submitted to EOPSS for funding of up to \$17,000 for each applicant. Funds were for each office to use for conference activities and to bring together not only law enforcement and court personnel, but also school personnel, coaches, athletic directors, health service providers, and youth service providers to increase their knowledge and readiness to work collaboratively to develop a uniform response to incidents of underage drinking in the county. The four successful applicants included:

- Attorney William R. Keating, Norfolk County
- Attorney Timothy R. Cruz, Plymouth County
- Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr., Middle District of Worcester County
- Attorney David F. Capeless, Berkshire County

Although each proposal was unique to the needs of their county, they all recognized the importance of the district attorney's office assuming a leadership role in both the education of the community and the opportunity to nudge law enforcement to embrace their important role in curbing underage alcohol use by aggressively enforcing the laws. The conferences gave key representatives from across the county the opportunity to network and recognize potential partnerships outside of their expertise.

This is the UDETC's first Success Story highlighting a targeted partnership with the district attorneys' office. It shares how Massachusetts recognized an opportunity to expand its collaborative network to keep underage drinking a priority issue while building a regional, hands-on approach to address the problem.

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