

# MATCHING POLICIES TO PROBLEMS

What can communities do to reduce alcohol-related harms?

## The Iowa Alcohol Context

As one of 18 alcohol control states, Iowa has a unique alcohol regulatory environment. Iowa also has a distinctive alcohol culture that results in one of the highest binge drinking rates in the country. Fortunately, state and local policies can help reduce excessive alcohol consumption and its harm to communities and families.

## State Policies

Within this health and regulatory context, effective state-level alcohol control policies include:

- **Excise Taxes & Minimum Unit Pricing:** Price control is an effective mechanism to reduce excess alcohol consumption. Iowa's excise tax has not been increased since the mid-1980s.
- **Dram Shop Liability:** Alcohol establishments are subjected to greater legal liability when overserved customers cause injury, such as car crashes or property damage. Iowa has only limited dram shop liability.
- **Limiting Days and Hours of Sale:** Limiting alcohol retailers' hours of operation improves community safety. Alcohol is currently available from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. every day in Iowa.

## Local Policies

Cities and counties have their own policy tools to minimize the negative impacts of alcohol consumption on individuals, families, and communities. These include:

- **Conditional Use Permits:** Extremely customizable permitting for high-risk local businesses or areas.
- **Nuisance Ordinances:** Enable neighborhood-level management of noise and disturbances.
- **Alcohol Advertising Ordinances:** Protect vulnerable populations from harmful advertising.
- **Enforcement:** Bar checks can identify alcohol retailers chronically serving alcohol to minors.
- **Screening & Intervention:** Brief screening tools to connect people to public health services.
- **Responsible Beverage Service Training:** Train servers on how to detect and reduce excess consumption.

Scan here to learn more about alcohol policy!

