Working with Festival Organizers to Change the Drinking Culture in “Event City” Oshkosh, Wisconsin

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As required by the Alcohol Policy 18 Conference, I/we have signed a disclosure statement and note the following conflict(s) of interest:

None
Learning Objectives

● Engage coalition members in nontraditional ways
● Create a festival assessment scan tool
● Conduct, score, and evaluate festival scans
● Craft policies that festival organizers support
● Develop festival champions
● Change the alcohol environment at community festivals
What is re:TH!NK?

- **Mission:** Through effective community collaboration, we create an environment that enables healthy lifestyle choices and deters substance abuse in order to improve the quality of life for all Winnebago County Residents.

- **5 Teams + Leadership Council**
  - Alcohol Action
  - Active Communities
  - Healthy Food and Beverages
  - Social and Place Connectedness
  - Youth Coalition
re:TH!NK Alcohol Action Team

- **Goals**
  - Reduce underage drinking
  - Reduce binge drinking
  - Promote a healthy culture around alcohol consumption

- **Focus Area:** Work with festival organizers to establish evidence-based practices that minimize binge drinking and reduce access to alcohol by minors at festivals and events
  - 1000’s of events held annually
  - Location
Alcohol Culture in Wisconsin:
Who is involved with the re:TH!NK Alcohol Action Team?
Festival Guidelines Process

- Scans
- Develop Report
- 1:1 Meetings
- Guidelines/Incremental Changes
- Conduct 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th year scans
- Policies
Environmental Scan Process

- Observed serving and selling of alcohol unannounced at 12 community festivals in Winnebago County

  - Examples
    - Country USA (150,000+ people)
    - Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture (600,000+ people)
    - Carpfest (200+ people)
    - Docktoberfest (300+ people)
Scanning Tool Specifics

The four practices that prevent and reduce underage drinking

- ID checks at the entrance to serving area
- Wristbands to identify attendees age 21 or older
- A secure perimeter around the serving area
- Distinguishable cups that allow for easy identification of alcoholic vs nonalcoholic beverages
Scanning Tool Specifics

The seven policies and practices that prevent and reduce excessive (binge) drinking

- Limiting the number of beverages that can be purchased at a time
- Servings sized appropriately
- No discount alcohol pricing
- No sales to obviously intoxicated individuals
- Prohibiting servers from drinking
- Ending alcohol sales one hour before closing
- Food and nonalcoholic beverages available
Events Scanned Summary

- Scores ranged from 47-71
- Oshkosh events had higher scores than those in the rural parts of the county
- Scans completed earlier in the day had higher scores than those scanned in the evening
Interesting Observations and Recurrences - Positives

- All events offered food and nonalcoholic beverages
- Many events...
  - Didn’t sell pitchers of beer (60 ounces, 5-12 ounce beers)
  - Rarely had bartenders selling to intoxicated people
  - Used wristbands or tickets
  - Had a bartender intensely looking at IDs
  - Used original containers and distinguishable cups
  - Rarely had discounts on alcoholic beverages
Interesting Observations and Recurrences - Negatives

- All events sold alcohol until the end of the night
- People do...
  - Slip off their wristbands and give them to others
  - Bring in their own beer even if it is prohibited
  - Have common approval of parents drinking heavily in front of their kids
- Many events do not...
  - Limit cup size
  - Limit how many alcoholic beverages one can buy at a time
  - Have a restricted area for alcohol sales and consumption
  - Prohibit their bartenders from drinking while working
1:1s with Festival Organizers

- Meeting individually with festival organizers
- Reached out in non confrontational way
- Neutral environment
- Keep agenda simple
Lessons Learned

- Reassess scanning tool at end of first few events
- When two people want to scan together, have them each fill out separate form
- Have scanning tool available to fill out on phone
- Send in scanners at peak times
- Work with law enforcement when possible
- Have a coalition member or two attend the 1:1s
Where We Are Now and Next Steps

- Had 1:1s with 3 festival organizers; 3 more are scheduled
- Invited excited festival organizers to join our coalition
- Sharing community resource packet with municipalities, who approve the special Class B Liquor Licenses, to share with event organizers
- Conducting environmental scans again at same festivals to compare data
Any questions?

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