

## ABOUT THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM

Drug and alcohol education is viewed by the Council on Chemical Abuse and the Berks County Judicial Court System as an important element in the prevention and intervention of chemical use and abuse. Through the Underage Drinking Program, we hope to educate youth about the negative consequences of drug and alcohol use.

The Underage Drinking Program is available to the Magisterial District Judges and the Community Youth Aid Panel at their discretion. The Council believes these educational sessions can provide many long-term benefits to the youth. We hope the Underage Drinking Program will act as a deterrent and, if necessary, an intervention in the youth's use of alcohol and/or drugs. We believe the program can offer youth a 'second chance' to examine their chemical use and/or abuse and allow them to reconsider engaging in self-destructive behaviors in the future.

The Underage Drinking Program has been developed and implemented by the Council on Chemical Abuse in conjunction with the Berks County Court of Common Pleas and the Twenty-third Judicial District of Pennsylvania.

The Council on Chemical Abuse serves as the coordinating agency for publicly supported drug and alcohol programming in Berks County. These services are made possible through the Berks County Board of Commissioners, tax dollars received from federal, state and local governments through the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs (Pennsylvania Department of Health), the United Way of Berks County, and private monies received from client fees and private/corporate contributions.

Revised 12/09

## FOR PARENTS: SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE USING ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS

- Withdrawn, depressed, tired, and careless about personal grooming.
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping patterns.
- Difficult time concentrating or remembering things.
- Grades have slipped and/or school attendance is irregular.
- Lost interest in hobbies, sports, and other activities of interest.

## PURCHASE, CONSUMPTION, POSSESSION OR TRANSPORTATION OF LIQUOR OR MALT OR BREWED BEVERAGES BY A MINOR - Section 6308 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code (Title 18)

A person commits a summary offense if he/she, being less than 21 years of age, attempts to purchase, purchases, consumes, possesses or knowingly and intentionally transports any liquor or malt or brewed beverages.

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Subsequent
<u>Penalty</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Offenses</u>
<b>Fine</b>	0-\$300	0-\$500	0-\$500
<b>Jail</b>	0-90 days	0-90 days	0-90 days
<b>License</b>			
<b>Suspension</b>	90 days	1 year	2 years



**Council on  
Chemical Abuse**  
Concilio de Abuso de Sustancias Químicas

For further information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs contact the Council on Chemical Abuse at 610-376-8669, e-mail us at [drugfree@councilonchemicalabuse.org](mailto:drugfree@councilonchemicalabuse.org) or visit our website at [www.councilonchemicalabuse.org](http://www.councilonchemicalabuse.org)

## Council on Chemical Abuse

## THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM OF BERKS COUNTY



## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH YOUTH AND PARENTS

### Mailing Address:

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Reading, PA 19601  
Phone: 610-685-4490

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[udp@councilonchemicalabuse.org](mailto:udp@councilonchemicalabuse.org)

PLEASE NOTE THAT CLASS LOCATIONS VARY

## **WHAT IS THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM?**

The Underage Drinking Program is designed to offer drug and alcohol education as a diversion for youth charged with underage drinking or related offenses. It is a voluntary program that allows the youth charged with these offenses to access education relevant to their risk-taking behaviors. Upon successful completion of the program, the Magisterial District Judge may consider lessening the penalty for the summary offense. The Underage Drinking Program promotes education and is not a drug and alcohol treatment program.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM?**

The purpose of the Underage Drinking Program is to provide...

- AN OPPORTUNITY for the needed education and intervention to hopefully reduce the chances of future issues with the legal system.
- AN OPPORTUNITY for youth to learn about the effects that alcohol and other drugs can have on their lives physically, emotionally, socially, and legally.
- AN OPPORTUNITY for early identification of possible drug and alcohol abuse.
- AN OPPORTUNITY for the youth's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to gain the information and support needed to intervene and assume an active role in assisting those youth with any alcohol or drug problem.

## **WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM?**

The Underage Drinking Program is designed for any youth charged with underage drinking or related offenses who has not previously been enrolled in the program.

## **HOW DO I GET INVOLVED WITH THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM?**

Currently, the Underage Drinking Program accepts referrals from Magisterial District Judges and the Community Youth Aid Panel. The referring agent will complete a referral form and send a copy to the Underage Drinking Program. When the referral is received, the Program will send the youth a certified letter instructing the youth to return a signed Program Agreement and the non-refundable service fee within 72 hours. Upon reception of the service fee, the youth is eligible to schedule his/her sessions. This can be done by e-mailing or calling the Underage Drinking Program

## **WHAT DOES THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM CONSIST OF?**

The Underage Drinking Program consists of 12 hours of drug and alcohol education for the youth. An additional two (2) hour Parent Session is also required for the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of any youth participants cited when under 18 years of age. The sessions for the youth include such topics as:

- ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS AND THEIR EFFECTS
- ALCOHOL AND THE LAW
- PEER PRESSURE AND SELF-ESTEEM
- DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

## **WHAT DOES THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM COST?**

The non-refundable service fee for the program is \$65.00 and is payable by check or money order. The fee must be submitted before the youth is eligible to schedule his/her classes. This fee is considerably less than the maximum fine for underage drinking or related offenses.

## **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARENT IN THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM?**

For Underage Drinking Program participants cited when under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must attend a parent session. The two (2) hour Parent Session will provide an overview of the information covered in the educational sessions. During the Parent Session, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given the opportunity to schedule a review session with the youth and the Class Instructor upon completion of the educational sessions. The review session will provide an opportunity to discuss the youth's involvement in the course and allow the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ask any questions.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM IS COMPLETED?**

Upon successful completion of the Underage Drinking Program, the referring office will be notified of the participant's compliance with the program requirements. Compliance with the Program Agreement is mandatory for successful completion. Noncompliant participants are returned to the referring office for further disposition.