

ABOUT THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM

Drug and alcohol education is viewed by the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA) 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. COCA 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 COCA 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 private monies received from client fees and private/corporate contributions, tax dollars received from federal, state and local governments through the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and the Berks County Board of Commissioners.

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- Withdrawn, depressed, tired, and careless about personal grooming.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, is drunk in public, and/or attempts to purchase, purchases, consumes, possesses or knowingly and intentionally transports any liquor or malt or brewed beverages.

	1 st	2 nd	Subsequent
Penalty	Offense	Offense	Offenses
Fine	0-\$500	0-\$1,000	0-\$1,000
Jail	0-90 days	0-90 days	0-90 days
License Suspension	90 days	0-1 year	2 years



For further information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs education please contact us at (610) 376-8669, drugfree@cocaberks.org, or visit our website.



The Underage Drinking Program of Berks County

An Opportunity for Both Youth and Parents



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UDP@cocaberks.org
www.cocaberks.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 and Community Youth Aid Panel 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 the following:

- **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 Coordinator will send the youth a certified letter instructing the youth to submit a program agreement and the non-refundable service fee within 10 days. Upon receiving the signed program agreement and service fee, the youth is enrolled in the next available class.

WHAT DOES THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM CONSIST OF?

The Underage Drinking Program consists of 12 hours of drug and alcohol education for the youth. 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

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.

WHAT DOES THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PROGRAM COST?

The non-refundable service fee for the program is \$65.00 and is payable by cash, check or money order made payable to Underage Drinking Program of Berks County. The fee must be submitted and received before the youth is enrolled in a class. 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 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 completion of the Underage Drinking Program, the referring office will be notified of the participant's outcome. Compliance with the Program Agreement is mandatory for successful outcome. Noncompliant participants are returned to the referring office for further disposition.