

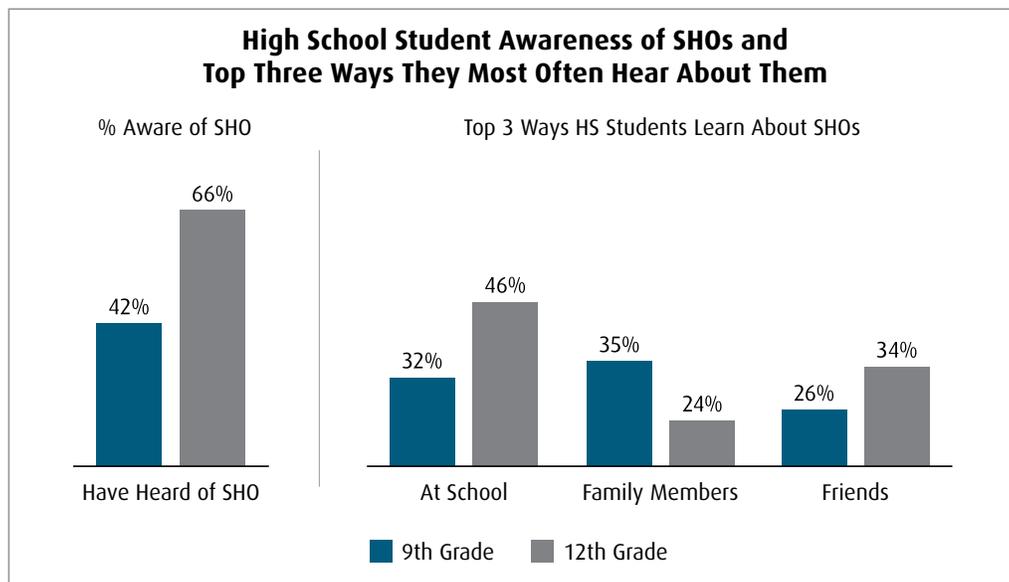


# SOCIAL HOST ORDINANCE IMPACT EVALUATION: PHASE II FINDINGS 2013 ISSUE BRIEFING

## KEY FINDINGS

### High School Student Data

**Youth are Aware of Social Host Ordinances.** Based on data collected in three Ventura County high schools, youth are aware of the local ordinances and hear about them most often at school, and/or from family members and friends. About 15% of high school students also report hearing about social host laws online.



More than one-third of all high school students surveyed thought that making people pay a fine is a good way to prevent underage drinking parties.

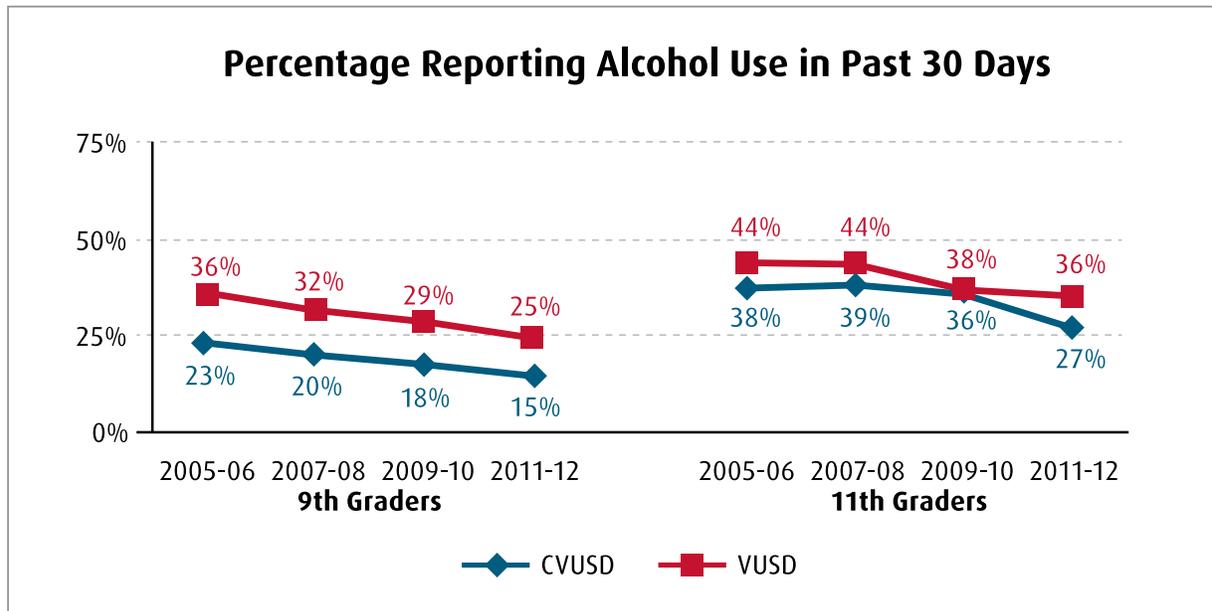
**Many have Direct Experience with SHOs.** Almost 10% of 9th graders and 15% of 12th graders reported having been at a party where a fine was issued. One in five 9th graders and one-third of 12th graders reported that they knew someone who had received a SHO fine.

**Youth Support SHOs.** More than one-third (35-40%) of all high school students surveyed thought that making people pay a fine is a good way to prevent underage drinking parties.

Social Host Ordinances (SHOs) in Ventura County are local laws with civil penalties (fines) providing law enforcement a tool for addressing underage drinking in home party settings, and to deter those who may host a loud or unruly party. In September 2007, Ventura County became one of the first counties in the nation to have seamless coverage of SHOs across all municipalities, including the unincorporated areas of the County. In 2009, a Phase I evaluation focused primarily on law enforcement in several municipalities, and their views and experiences with administrative penalties in connection with disturbance calls with underage drinking. More recently, EVALCORP Research & Consulting conducted a follow-up Phase II evaluation to examine longer-term, local impacts of implementation and enforcement efforts since Social Host policies were adopted in 2006 and 2007.

## Alcohol-Related Trend Data

**Past 30-Day Alcohol Use is Decreasing.** According to CHKS survey data collected from 9th and 11th grade students in Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD), Ventura Unified School District (VUSD), and also statewide, past 30-day alcohol use is on the decline. Most recent data available (2011-12) indicate that between 15%-25% of 9th graders and 27%-36% of 11th graders in the districts studied reported having any alcohol in the past 30 days, which is notably lower than in 2005-06.



**It's Not as Easy to Obtain Alcohol.** Most 9th and 11th grade students report that alcohol is “fairly easy” or “very easy” to obtain; however, the percentage of students who say this appears to be decreasing over time in both CVUSD and VUSD (i.e., as measured by CHKS data). In contrast, this indicator has remained relatively stable statewide.

**Party Size is Decreasing.** Available enforcement data indicate that the size of parties where underage drinking occurs may be decreasing over time, as large parties with over 50 guests have been trending down since the adoption of the SHOs.

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## Enforcement Data

- The number of SHO citations issued in Thousand Oaks has remained fairly constant over time, with an average of 17 per year, and a total of 101 SHO citations since passage in 2006.
- To date, a total of 96 SHO citations have been issued in the City of Ventura since 2007, with an average of 17 violations per year.
- The rate of party disturbance calls as a percentage of all calls for service increased very slightly in both jurisdictions since 2005, possibly as a result of SHO public awareness campaigns.
- In the jurisdiction for which re-offense data were available, just 3% of the SHO offenders who received a citation were cited a second time over the six-year span.
- 66% of law enforcement surveyed reported that there are never instances where they are reluctant to issue citations.
- 60% said the level of the penalty was just right.
- 70% reported no negative impacts resulting from the SHOs.

## Collection of Fines

Substantial sums have been collected as a result of SHO citations.

- In Ventura, \$55,476 has been collected since the ordinance was passed in June, 2007. Of the 96 citations written to date, 78% have been paid in full.
- In Thousand Oaks, \$122,343 has been collected since the ordinance was passed in May, 2006. Of the 101 citations written to date, 95% have been paid in full, are currently being paid-off via installments, or were worked off via community service option (available for minors only).

**Fines collected to date:**  
**Ventura: \$55,476**  
**Thousand Oaks: \$122,343**

## Media/Community Awareness

Along with implementation of the SHOs came strategies for public awareness and educational outreach. Information obtained from interviews indicate that VCBH aimed to enhance the public's awareness through the development of campaigns including print-ads, billboards, online ads, brochures, flyers, posters, and door-hangers. In addition to media placements, a variety of print materials have been provided by VCBH to other county-funded prevention contactors working on underage drinking prevention, and to other partners (e.g., law enforcement) for distribution. Information regarding the local ordinances is also available through the Ventura County Limits website.

VCBH also secured a number of radio spots that featured SHO-related information (60-second spots were run on nine local stations). In addition, messages about SHO are conveyed regularly via programs implemented by partner agencies, including Straight Up's Reality Parties and Ventura County Sheriff's Office Parent Project. In Thousand Oaks, senior law enforcement personnel have made a concerted effort to talk directly to adolescents and parents about the SHO and other issues related to prevention. They estimate that they have presented information to about 12,000 students and 2,000 parents in the past year through partnerships with CVUSD, Straight Up, and other community groups. In Ventura, law enforcement indicated that both parents and minors are aware of what the Social Host law is: "The word has gotten out that there are steep ramifications."



## CONTINUED PREVENTION EFFORTS

While numerous positive findings were evidenced in the current evaluation, local data still indicate a need for continued enforcement of underage drinking laws and sustained prevention efforts. The data below highlight the continued prevalence of underage drinking parties, the dangers that ensue at these parties, and underage impaired driving statistics.

### Underage Drinking at House Parties

- Survey data collected from 18-20 year olds convicted of an impaired driving offense consistently indicate that 3 out of 4 of them had their last drink, before being arrested, at their own or someone else's home. In addition:
  - About half to two-thirds of convicted underage DUI Program participants report that their last drink took place at a house party.
  - 85%-97% (depending on the year examined) confirmed that "other underage drinkers were in attendance."
- About half of all high school students surveyed as part of the evaluation said they had heard about 1-5 parties during the past month where teens were drinking, and 18% reported hearing about 6-10 parties in the past month with drinking teens.
- 12% of 9th graders and 29% of 12th graders surveyed say teens get alcohol from parents with their parents' permission.

### Harmful Behaviors at House Parties

High school students surveyed as part of the current evaluation were asked about events that occurred at the most recent party they had attended where teens were reportedly drinking. Findings indicate that underage drinking parties can foster an environment leading to a series of negative consequences:

- 40% indicated that illegal or prescription drugs were being used in addition to alcohol.
- Over one-third reported that "people were out of control."
- 2 out of 5 indicated that someone had passed out.
- Only 1 in 3 reported that the party was safe for all participants.

### Underage Impaired Driving

Six percent of all impaired drivers sentenced to the County's DUI Program are under 21. Survey data from those underage DUI participants reveal that not all young people who drink at home stay at home:

- Underage County DUI Program participants who leave home parties drive 10 miles on average before being arrested.
- Half of the impaired underage drivers have 1 or more passengers in their cars at time of arrest.
- 1 in 5 of those impaired underage drivers crashed – often sustaining injuries to themselves or others.

These findings shed a negative light on the belief that underage drinking at home is safer than somewhere else. Depending on the setting and supervision, a party in a private home may be quite dangerous for youth and the community.

## SUMMARY

Findings from SHO evaluation studies indicate that positive strides are being made:

- Past 30 day alcohol use among high school students is trending downward
- More young people are aware of SHOs
- Youth support the use of Social Host laws and prevention efforts
- Party size appears to be decreasing
- Law enforcement are enforcing the ordinances and find the law useful in addressing underage drinking
- Very few party hosts (3%) are cited more than once for a SHO violation

**However, prevention efforts must continue and, in some areas, need to be significantly enhanced.**

Adolescents continue to acknowledge that alcohol is generally easy to obtain, and they most often get it from relatives, parents, and friends over 21. Most teens have attended parties where underage drinking occurs by the time they leave high school, and many have witnessed or have participated in a range of high-risk behaviors.

To learn more about Social Host Ordinances and what you can do to address underage drinking, visit [www.venturacountylimits.org/initiative/underage-drinking/social-host-laws](http://www.venturacountylimits.org/initiative/underage-drinking/social-host-laws)

For additional information also see “Ventura County Social Host Ordinance Impact Evaluation: Phase II Findings, EVALCORP, July 2013.”

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation question guiding the study was: “To what extent have Social Host laws reduced underage drinking and related problems which result from parties in private homes in the target communities?”

**Communities.** The cities of Thousand Oaks and Ventura were selected as focal communities for the evaluation based on the level of fine, geographic location, and median household income. Additional characteristics about the target cities and Ventura County as a whole are included in the table below.

Characteristics	Thousand Oaks	Ventura	Ventura County
<b>Date Enacted</b>	May 2006	June 2007	April 2006
<b>Level of SHO Fine</b>	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>Geographic Location in Ventura County</b>	East	West	All
<b>Median Household Income*</b>	\$100,373	\$66,226	\$76,728
<b>Total Population*</b>	128,412	107,734	835,981
<b>Youth Population (ages 15-20)*</b>	11,300	8,834	78,582

\* 2012 estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Data Collection Strategies.** Multiple methods were implemented to collect evaluation data, including:

- High school surveys with over 2,500 youth
- Analyses of relevant alcohol-related trend data and social/media campaign efforts
- SHO enforcement data through 2012
- Patrol Surveys with law enforcement
- Interviews with persons charged with collection of SHO fines
- Place of Last Drink (POLD) survey data from DUI offenders



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