

News Release

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Webster County Selected for Substance Abuse Prevention Grant

Project to reduce youth binge drinking and underage alcohol use

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has selected Webster County to participate in an \$8.1 million federal grant to reduce youth binge drinking and underage alcohol use, and the problems associated with both. The Iowa Partnerships for Success (IPFS) Grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Webster County was among 12 counties identified by IDPH as “highest need” in regards to underage alcohol use and youth binge drinking and funded through a Request for Proposal process.

According to Fort Dodge Police Chief, Kevin Doty, “Webster County being selected for this Substance Abuse Grant is a good thing for the youth of Webster County. Underage and binge drinking are issues that need to be addressed. With education being a big component of this grant, instruction in our schools will be provided to attempt to address these issues with our youth. Education will give them the tools to use before they are presented with a situation where they will have to make a choice about their use of alcohol. I think having a strong Social Host ordinance as an additional component of this grant helps send the message, if you are allowing this behavior by hosting a party, you could end up in court. It is not ok for our youth to drink. A Social Host ordinance also gives parents an out if their children ask them to host a party.”

“If we sit by and say it will not happen here; it is a rite of passage, we could have a tragic incident take place where young people are hurt or killed and then it will be too late. What will you think when officers come to your home to give you the news that no parent or family member ever wants to hear? To do nothing and not support this effort is failing our young people that look up to us for guidance. If we keep one of our young people from being hurt or killed, I think the grant program will have been a success,” said Chief Doty, of the Fort Dodge Police Department.

“Alcohol is the substance most frequently used by youth in Iowa and across the nation,” said Julie Hibben, the IPFS Project Director. “Webster County’s participation will not only benefit its youth directly, but will also help increase the health and safety of all county residents.”

According to the 2013-2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.40 percent of Iowans aged 12-17 had consumed more than five drinks of alcohol in one sitting during the past month. This is significantly higher than the national rate of 6.16 percent. In addition, 35.83 percent of Iowans aged 12-17 felt that five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice a week was a great risk. The risk perception rate for Iowans aged 12-17 was 3.26 percent lower than the national rate of 39.09 percent, suggesting that alcohol use is not deemed to be as high of a risk by Iowans aged 12-17 as it is by other Americans of the same age group.

For more information on the Iowa Partnerships for Success Grant, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/substance-abuse/programs/ipfs>. For information on Webster County’s project, visit cfrhelps.org.

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