



MCRUD's Policy on Interacting with the Alcohol Industry

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The mission of the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking is to provide leadership on state and national issues and assist individuals, grassroots groups, and organizations to reduce underage drinking locally.

MCRUD believes that the independence of coalitions and organizations to pursue the goal of reducing underage drinking is of primary importance. The Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking believes, and research suggests, that financial or in-kind contributions from the alcohol industry influences the actions and policy decisions taken by local groups regarding underage drinking prevention. Therefore, careful consideration must be taken in deciding how MCRUD will interact with the alcohol industry.

For clarity, representatives of alcohol manufacturers, distributors, retailers or trade groups who are offering a donation are herein referred to as "alcohol industry."

The Steering Committee of the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking establishes as policy the following:

1. The Steering Committee for the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking will not accept monetary donations, or in-kind donations of products or services, from the alcohol industry.
2. The Steering Committee for the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking will not have a voting member who represents the alcohol industry.
3. If your Community Coalition does not have a policy for interacting with the alcohol industry, the Steering Committee for the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking recommends that your Community Coalition or local group develop a policy. The following points may assist your Coalition in this process:
 - If your Community Coalition or local group decides to accept donations or in-kind contributions from the alcohol industry, consider the nature of the donated items, services, or contributions, and the audience to which the items may appeal or are targeted. It is not appropriate to accept donated items which advertise alcohol products and can reach an under 21 audience. Examples may include frisbees, ball caps, shirts, or other items which young people are likely to use or wear.

- Consider with which tier of the alcohol industry your Coalition is interacting. Each of the three tiers represents a different segment of the alcohol industry and may have different motivations regarding working with a Community Coalition.
 - Be sure that the alcohol industry has a clear understanding of your Coalition goals.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry has been an active member of the Coalition in the past. Being active with the Coalition in the past may indicate a commitment to the Coalition, and an understanding of its goals. A sudden offer of support or donations to the Coalition may indicate a focus on the alcohol industry's goals as opposed to the Coalition's goals.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry is willing to work within their industry or with its own trade group to encourage research based and effective policies and practices which could reduce underage alcohol use.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry is offering assistance with local activities, or if they are offering brochures or programs developed by their corporate office. An interest in assisting with local activities may suggest an understanding of the same concerns which the Coalition has identified. It would suggest an interest in local matters. An offer of corporate resources can be accomplished by the alcohol industry without a commitment or understanding of the Coalition's goals.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry is local and if it is a member of the community. Individuals not residing locally may not have the same understanding or interests as those who work and live in a community.
 - Consider whether the industry has been involved in the past with other civic or community events. Being active within the community would suggest a sincere concern for the community which they serve. If there has been no other civic or community involvement, there may not be a clear understanding of the community's goals as they relate to reducing underage drinking.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry is working with the local school district. Again, history of working with the schools may indicate an understanding of local concerns and a sincere interest in the health and well-being of young people.
 - Consider the reputation of the alcohol industry in the community. Things to consider may include how the employees of the alcohol industry are received in the community and how the alcohol industry interacts with other non-alcohol related businesses in the community.
 - Consider whether the alcohol industry has an office or is located in the city or county of the Coalition. A connection to a community other than a business relationship could indicate an understanding of local concerns and the Coalitions' goals.
 - As a Coalition, discuss in advance the guidelines for the amount or type of credit the alcohol industry expects and will receive for any donation or other involvement.
 - Give options to the alcohol industry for assisting the Coalition in reaching other goals.
 - Examples may include:
 - If the Coalition has concerns regarding alcohol server training, suggest that the alcohol industry sponsor the trainings.
 - If the Coalition has concerns regarding point-of-sale advertising that may appeal to minors, suggest that the alcohol industry work within their industry with retailers to remove the advertisements.
 - Use these items as discussion-starters and/or a start to your own list of concerns or issues that will need to be addressed.
4. This policy does not exclude any member of the public, or representatives of the alcohol industry, from attending and participating in MCRUD monthly steering committee meetings.