

# Social Host Ordinance

A Community Solution to Reduce Underage Drinking



Brown County  
Chemical  
Health  
Action Team

## What is a social host ordinance?

A social host ordinance makes it unlawful for individuals (social hosts) to provide a place for underage drinking to occur on a premises under the host's control. The host is held responsible regardless of who provided the alcohol. An ordinance violation is a misdemeanor offense with a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

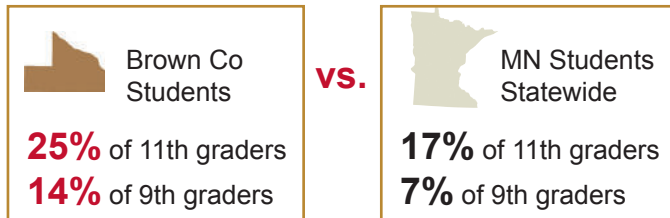
Studies indicate that social host ordinances are among the most effective and recommended ways to reduce underage drinking.



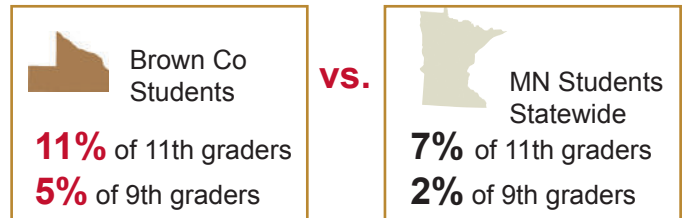
## UNDERAGE DRINKING IN BROWN COUNTY IS LEADING TO SERIOUS HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSEQUENCES FOR EVERYONE.

According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey, our Brown County youth consume more alcohol and binge drink at higher rates compared to other counties in the state.

### Percentage of students drinking one or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage in the last 30 days



### Percentage of students binge drinking (4 or more drinks in a row for females or 5 or more for males) within one setting



Brown County youth regularly have the opportunity to drink alcohol at house parties and there are major negative consequences.

**63%** of students in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade said house parties are occurring where youth under 21 are drinking alcohol a few times a month on the weekends

“ The majority of house parties are happening in the country. ”

— Brown County student survey comment

### Fights, abuse, injury, illness, death

Brown County students say they have seen youth under 21 experience all of these as a result of drinking alcohol at house parties:



- ✓ Verbal fights
- ✓ Physical Fights
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Blacking out
- ✓ Alcohol poisoning
- ✓ Physical injury
- ✓ Verbal or emotional abuse
- ✓ Sexual Assault
- ✓ Property damage
- ✓ Traffic/car crash
- ✓ Getting an underage citation
- ✓ Getting arrested
- ✓ Death

(over)

# Q&A on Social Host Ordinances



A social host ordinance shifts the responsibility from only holding *youth* accountable, to holding *adults* accountable if they provide a place where underage drinking occurs.

## Why propose an ordinance in Brown County?

A social host ordinance reduces the harms associated with underage drinking in our community in the riskiest setting where it occurs — home parties.

Four cities in Brown County already have social host ordinances — Comfrey, New Ulm, Sleepy Eye and Springfield. The proposed ordinance would apply to the rest of the county.

## How does a social host ordinance work?

A social host ordinance acts to deter adults from serving as social hosts for underage youth. This reduces underage drinking and the associated harms. It sends a clear message to youth and adults that the health and safety of our youth is paramount to the vitality of Brown County.

## What impact does a social host ordinance have?

A social host ordinance:

- Helps reduce underage access to alcohol.
- Reduces the harms associated with underage drinking, including fights, abuse, injury, illness, death and more.
- Provides another tool for law enforcement to use in keeping our neighborhoods and youth safe.
- Encourages a consistent message to youth, from all caring adults in the community, about the importance of choosing not to drink alcohol before age 21.

## When you used alcohol during the last 30 days, how did you get it?

(Includes only those who said they used alcohol in the last 30 days)	8th Grade		9th Grade		10th Grade	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
I got alcohol from my parents	50%	53%	17%	29%	23%	31%
I took alcohol from my home	50%	20%	33%	14%	8%	15%
I got alcohol from friends	0%	13%	17%	29%	23%	62%

Source: 2022 Minnesota Student Survey, Brown County data



**65%** of adults said that alcohol use among those under age 21 is a moderate or serious problem, according to the 2022 Brown County Community Health Survey.

## What other counties are saying:

“ Blue Earth County’s Social Host Ordinance has definitely decreased the amount of large-scale gatherings involving persons under the age of 21 consuming alcohol since it was developed in 2011. Having the ordinance in place is an important enforcement tool for my deputies when they are called to underage social gatherings. ”

— Blue Earth County Sheriff

## TAKE ACTION AND GET INVOLVED

To get involved, find more information and learn what you can do to support a proposed social host ordinance for Brown County:

Visit our web page:

[heartofnewulm.com/addiction-substance-use](http://heartofnewulm.com/addiction-substance-use)

Contact the Brown County Chemical Health Action Team via email:

[Jennifer.Maurer@allina.com](mailto:Jennifer.Maurer@allina.com)