

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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ND receives \$350,000 to enforce underage drinking laws

BISMARCK, N.D. – The federal Department of Justice has awarded the North Dakota Department of Human Services \$350,000 through the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Block Grant Program. The annual federal grant helps states address youth alcohol access issues through prevention, education, and enforcement efforts.

“This grant is an important part of statewide prevention efforts. It helps us support communities and parents in their efforts to prevent underage drinking and keep our youth safe,” said Carol K. Olson, Executive Director of the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

Olson said the grant award is similar to the amount received last year. In the past, funds have been provided to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and local law enforcement to pay for overtime hours related to party patrols, off-sale activities, and other underage drinking enforcement efforts. In addition, funds have supported the underage drinking prevention media campaigns spearheaded by the Office of the First Lady. The department has also used funds to co-sponsor with the Department of Public Instruction the Roughrider Prevention Conference, which brings educators and community members together to impact underage drinking locally.

JoAnne Hoesel, the director of the department’s Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, said that this latest grant funding will also be used to help support several new initiatives. These include a newly created North Dakota Youth Advisory Council, which gives young people a voice in identifying ways to reduce underage drinking among peers, and a public awareness campaign, which is being developed with the Attorney General’s Office to educate people about the consequences of hosting or enabling underage drinking. The department is also exploring using funding to provide earlier intervention services for juveniles following a first or second offense for alcohol possession and consumption.

For information about substance abuse prevention efforts, please contact the N.D. Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services at 701-328-8920.

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