

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

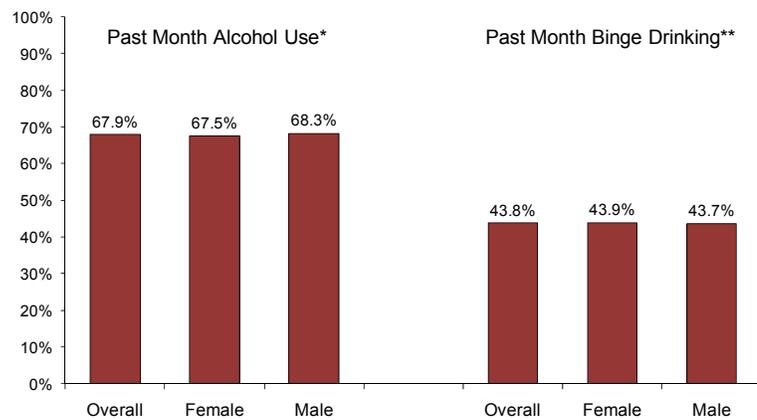
Alcohol is the most commonly used substance in Nebraska, and rates of underage drinking, binge drinking, and alcohol impaired driving continue to be higher than the rest of the United States. Alcohol misuse within Nebraska places an enormous strain on the healthcare system, the criminal justice system, and the substance abuse treatment system. While this is cause for concern among people of all ages in Nebraska, it is particularly concerning for young adults who tend to be the most likely age group to use alcohol and suffer from the negative consequences associated with alcohol misuse.

While some data on alcohol use and alcohol impaired driving among young adults in Nebraska are available, they are limited, largely unavailable at a sub-state level (e.g., county or multi-county level), and virtually no data are available on the attitudes and perceptions related to alcohol among young adults. As a result, the Nebraska Young Adult Alcohol Opinion Survey was administered by mail to 19-25 year olds in Nebraska between December 2009 and March 2010. A total of 3,466 young adults completed the survey, and results were weighted to represent young adults statewide.

Alcohol Use among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska

- Approximately two-thirds (67.9%) of 19-25 year old young adults in Nebraska, an estimated 116,000 persons, reported drinking alcohol within the past month while more than 2 in every 5 (43.8%), an estimated 75,000 persons, reported binge drinking within the past month (Figure 1). Within this report, binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks for men/four or more drinks for women within a couple of hours.
- Among past month alcohol users, nearly two-thirds (64.8%) reported binge drinking during the past month, indicating that the majority of 19-25 year old drinkers in Nebraska binge drink.
- Females and males were equally likely to drink alcohol (Figure 1), 21-25 years olds were about twice as likely as 19-20 year olds to drink and binge drink, those living within urban areas of Nebraska were more likely than those living in rural areas to drink and binge drink, and young adults 19-22 years old enrolled in school full time were more likely than their non-full-time student peers to consume alcohol and binge drink.

Figure 1: Past Month Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska



*Percentage who reported having at least one alcoholic beverage during the 30 days preceding the survey

**Percentage who reported having five or more drinks for men/four or more drinks for women within a couple of hours on at least one of the 30 days preceding the survey

Alcohol Impaired Driving among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska

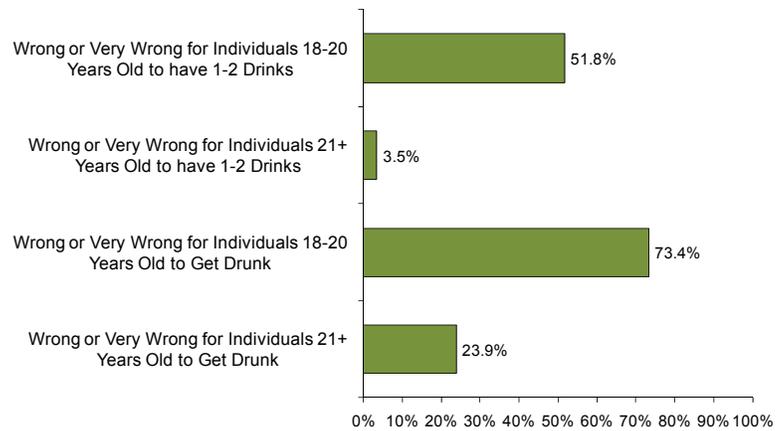
- About 3 in every 10 (30.3%) 19-25 year old young adults in Nebraska, an estimated 52,000 persons, reported that they drove a vehicle under the influence of alcohol during the past year.
- Approximately 1 in every 12 (8.4%) 19-25 year old young adults in Nebraska, an estimated 14,000 persons, reported that they drove shortly after binge drinking during the past month.
- Overall, about 1 in every 5 (18.4%) past month binge drinkers reported driving after binge drinking during the past month. This percentage was 1.7 times higher for males compared to females, and, as binge drinking frequency increased, past month driving after binge drinking increased sharply.

Attitudes and Perceptions Related to Alcohol among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska

- Nearly all (96.4%) perceived some risk from binge drinking once or twice a week though only one-third (32.1%) saw great risk from this behavior.

- Both moderate alcohol use (having one or two drinks) and getting drunk were seen as much more wrong for persons just under the legal drinking age (18-20 year olds) compared to those at or above the legal drinking age (21 and older) (Figure 2). These results suggest that, among young adults, underage drinking is seen as far less acceptable than legal age drinking; however, half (48.2%) still condoned drinking among 18-20 years olds (by indicating that it is only a little wrong or not at all wrong for 18-20 year olds to have one or two drinks).

Figure 2: Social Norms Related to Underage and Legal Age Drinking Behaviors* among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska



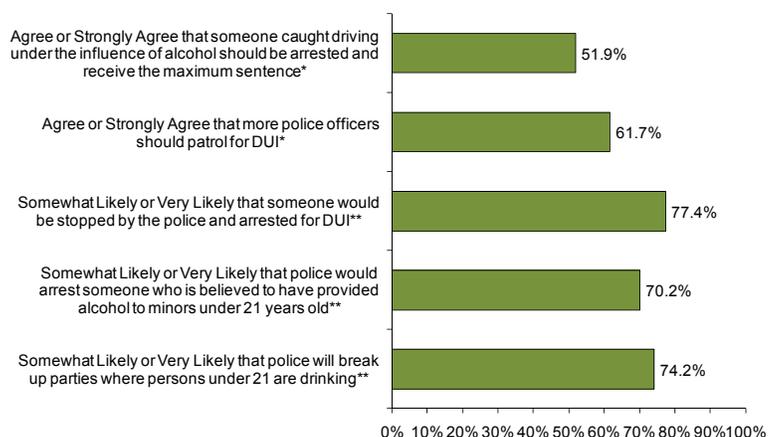
*Percentage reporting how wrong they think different drinking behaviors are based the following scale: Very Wrong, Wrong, A Little Wrong, Not at all Wrong.

- The vast majority (80.3%) reported that it is wrong or very wrong for someone 21 and older to provide alcohol to minors under 21 years old.
- Young adults were very supportive of responsible beverage service training, though most felt that it was not occurring in their community. Nearly all (92.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that bartenders and wait staff should be taught how to serve alcohol responsibly. However, most reported that it is somewhat likely or very likely that a drunken adult (21 or older) would be served an alcoholic drink if they asked for one in a local bar or restaurant (88.6%) and would be sold an alcoholic beverage if they tried to buy one in a local convenience store (84.2%).

- Among those who bought or tried to buy alcohol during the 30 days preceding the survey and did not believe the person selling them the alcohol personally knew if they were old enough to buy, approximately 1 in every 6 (15.4%) reported that their ID was not checked at their last purchase attempt. Even though the majority of respondents reporting attempted or actual alcohol purchases were of legal age to purchase alcohol, failure to check an ID opens the door to underage sales and penalties to the retailer and individual seller.

- Young adults indicated that they are generally supportive of alcohol enforcement and, for the most part felt that it was occurring in their community (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Attitudes and Perceptions related to Alcohol Enforcement among 19-25 year olds in Nebraska



*Based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

**Based on the following scale: Very Likely, Somewhat Likely, Not Very Likely, Not at all Likely