

October, 2008

Best Practices for On-Premise Alcohol Beverage Licensees

The Best Practices for On-Premise Alcohol Beverage Licensees Work Group is a joint project of RRF and the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association. Its objective is to (1) identify consensus Best Practices for licensed alcohol beverage establishments to prevent sales to underage and intoxicated customers; and (2) develop a plan to promulgate these Best Practices among retailers and their suppliers, regulators and law enforcement and public health agencies. As with all RRF projects, a wide range of stakeholder perspectives and experiences are represented in the Work Group.

Background: In 2000, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, an agency within SAMHSA, commissioned a study on the state-of-the-art of underage sales prevention. The resulting *Report on Best Practices for Responsible Retailing*¹ ("*CSAP Report*") offered three innovations:

1. It identified the constituent parts of a system of responsible retailing, covering hiring, training, supervision, point-of-sales protocols and resources, and employee policies
2. It emphasized the importance of managerial systems: indeed, almost every Best Practice identified in the *CSAP Report* is a task that would be performed by the manager
3. It called upon public and private stakeholders to assist licensees in identifying and implementing Best Practices and to work cooperatively to address the problems of underage access and use, following principles of Community Policing.

In 2003, at the 1st national meeting of the Responsible Retailing Forum (RRF), participants charged RRF with developing and evaluating a model that operationalized the recommendations of the *CSAP Report*. The model—whose Phase 2 pilot studies are summarized on the RRF web site²—has shown significant promise as a quality improvement process for retailers to improve age-verification performance and enhance cooperation and communication among licensees, regulators, law enforcement and other stakeholders.

The *CSAP Report*, however, had focused upon the practices of retailers—large chains as well as owner-operated stores—selling for off-premise use. The *CSAP Report* does not adequately address the unique challenges of on-premise licensees. For establishments that serve alcohol, preventing underage sales and use is not so simple as a single clerk checking an ID for age and authenticity. These establishments have multiple individuals involved in checking IDs and in pouring and serving alcoholic beverages. Beverages legally served to an adult may be given to or shared with underage companions. And on-premise establishments must also prevent over-service and be attentive to customers whose intoxication represents a danger to themselves and others.

Accordingly, RRF will establish a work group whose purpose is to expand the *CSAP Report* to identify and promulgate Best Practices for Responsible Retailing for establishments that serve alcohol beverages for on-premise consumption.

Process for producing the report:

- The kick-off meeting for the BP Report Work Group was held on the morning of April 23, 2008, as a break-out session of the 6th national RRF in Pittsburgh, PA. The meeting examined issues that need to be addressed, proposed a framework for examining these issues, and identified additional participants who should be brought into the process.
- A 1-day meeting was held on October 6th in Alexandria, VA hosted by the National Beer Wholesalers Association. The meeting reviewed a survey instrument and data collection plan to identify the current practices of server training programs (both private and state programs), proprietary programs of large chains, and recommendations / requirements propounded by states and associations. Survey responses will be placed into a matrix.
- After data collection, the Work Group will review the matrix and develop a draft report that will be prepared for 2009 meetings of RRF and NABCA. Strategies for implementing the Best Practices will be developed in those 2009 meetings.

Participants: A core committee, consisting of 4 . 6 individuals, will be responsible for producing the draft reports. Additionally, RRF will provide for one (or more) academic researcher with experience in server training and/or on-premise sales to minors as a participant in the Work Group and a consultant to the core committee. Since many RRF participants are important stakeholders in their own professional and industry associations, it is possible that some of the work of the Work Group can be embedded into meetings of those organizations / associations.

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¹ downloadable on www.rforum.org under Reports.

² downloadable on www.rforum.org on the home page.