

# Ventura County Social Host Ordinance Impact Evaluation: Phase I Findings

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## BACKGROUND

It is well known that binge drinking among youth is a serious problem not only in Ventura County, but across the country. Numerous studies indicate that there are significant consequences associated with binge drinking, including threats to long-term cognitive and physical development, increased risk of traffic crashes, sexual assault, other types of violence, and even death. These problems affect entire communities as well as individual young people.



In 2004, Ventura County was one of 13 counties in California selected for a three-year State Incentive Grant (SIG) based on its ability to effectively plan and use science-based, environmental strategies to attain measurable outcomes related to binge drinking prevention. Specifically, California's SIG program was intended to use evidence-based, environmental prevention strategies to reduce binge drinking and related problems among 12–25 year olds.

“Because of the Social Host Ordinance underage parties appear more controlled and not as large.”

– Law Enforcement

A significant accomplishment of the Ventura County SIG initiative was the passage and implementation of a Countywide Social Host Ordinance (SHO) and ordinances within each of the 10 municipalities comprising Ventura County.

Additionally, a formal resolution was added to the Countywide Ordinance to permit enforcement of the SHO on federal land housed within the west end of Ventura County. Since September 2007, Ventura County has had essentially seamless coverage and enforcement of the ordinance, with some variation in local provisions, amount of fines, and intensity of use.

## OVERVIEW

### Why conduct an impact evaluation?

In 2009, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) Department collaborated with EVALCORP to design and conduct a Social Host Ordinance impact evaluation to expand on previous process and outcome evaluation studies that had focused on the policy design and implementation processes. VCBH was interested in learning about the longer-term impacts of the ordinances. Also, repeated inquiries from other cities and counties within and outside of California about outcomes had created a strong need for further evaluation (i.e., to document the differences that the ordinances were making now that they had been in place for a couple of years).

### What did the study consist of?

This poster summarizes findings from Phase I of a two-part impact evaluation. The purpose of Phase I was to begin collecting evidence about the impacts of SHOs in three jurisdictions in Ventura County. Phase II of the evaluation will include additional indicators and evidence from other stakeholder groups such as youth and parents.

## TARGET JURISDICTIONS

### How were the three cities selected?

Three jurisdictions were examined as part of the evaluation: Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and San Buenaventura (Ventura). These cities were identified based on the following criteria:

1. Level of fine associated with the ordinances
2. Geographic location within Ventura County
3. History of enforcement

	Camarillo	Thousand Oaks	Ventura
Level of initial fine	\$500	\$2,500	\$1,000
Geographic location	Central	East	West
History of enforcement	✓	✓	✓

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

### What tools were used for planning and data collection?

#### Logic Model

- ▶ Graphic representation of relationships between SHO goals and expected outcomes

#### Document Reviews

- ▶ Comparison of ordinances

#### Enforcement Data

- ▶ Number of SHO violations
- ▶ Age and gender of hosts
- ▶ Size of parties

#### Impact Data Indicators

- ▶ Law enforcement party disturbance calls
- ▶ CHKS data on alcohol use, drinking and driving and perceived difficulty obtaining alcohol
- ▶ VCMC alcohol-related ER visits
- ▶ CHP-SWITRS data on collisions, injuries and deaths involving underage persons driving under the influence



#### Patrol Survey

- ▶ Administered to 91 law enforcement officers with authority to issue SHO citations in the three target cities

#### Key Informant Interviews

- ▶ Conducted with city officials regarding the SHO fine and appeal process in each jurisdiction

## PROMISING FINDINGS & IMPACTS

### What are the results of SHO efforts in Ventura County so far?

SHO Indicator	Selected Findings
Passage and Implementation	SHOs in all 10 municipalities, a countywide SHO covering unincorporated areas, and a formal resolution to include federal land
SHO Violation Citations	Over 350 SHO citations issued to date in Ventura County
Characteristics of Violators	At least half of the hosts were under 21 and the percent of male hosts has decreased over time
Size of Party	Percent of hosts receiving citations for large parties with over 50 attendees has decreased since 2007
Repeat Offenders	Only 5-6% of violators were repeat offenders
Effectiveness	3 out of 4 officers agreed the SHO is an effective tool for reducing underage drinking parties
Negative Impacts	Over 90% of officers reported there have been no negative impacts resulting from the SHOs
Collection of Fines	30-69% of SHO fines have been collected

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