



The International Town & Gown Association and Responsible Retailing Forum Join Forces to Enhance Alcohol Responsibility in College Communities

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Waltham, Massachusetts—Recognizing the problem of underage and abusive drinking among college students, the International Town & Gown Association (ITGA) and the Responsible Retailing Forum (RRForum) today announced a new strategic partnership for promoting responsible alcohol sales in college and university communities. The new program will be based on RRForum’s successful efforts to help alcohol beverage licensees comply with laws barring alcohol sales to underage and intoxicated customers, and to enhance cooperation among alcohol producers, distributors, and licensees, law enforcement and licensing commissions, and other public health and safety stakeholders seeking to address alcohol-related problems in the community.

Developed under a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) award from the National Institutes of Health, and expanded through a Department of Justice research grant, the RRForum model achieved significant increases in ID-checking for both alcohol retailers and on-premises serving establishment in a four-state, 16-community research study. Importantly, the program for ITGA members will also measure the prevalence of service to obviously intoxicated customers in on-premises drinking establishments and provide online training to waitstaff and bartenders in over-service refusal skills.

“Alcohol is a major issue for our members,” said ITGA President David Lossing. “The problem is not just underage and excessive drinking that harms our students, but safety and quality-of-life issues that impact entire communities and tax their resources. We are delighted that, working with RRForum, we will be able to bring an effective, research-based approach to address these problems.”

This spring, ITGA will issue a RFP to invite member communities to participate in pilot projects in the 2016–17 academic year that starts next fall. Participating ITGA communities will adapt the RRForum model to match local laws and community norms, and identify additional alcohol-related issues in the community that can be addressed by the program by bringing together a consortium of community stakeholders.

RRForum President Brad Krevor noted that campus community issues have been on his organization’s radar for several years. “All of our organization’s research sponsors and partners—state alcohol regulators and licensing commissions; alcohol law enforcement agencies; retailers and their industry partners; and public health and prevention—have cited alcohol-related problems in and around public and private institutions of higher education have been a principal concern. We now have there an opportunity to bring these public and private stakeholders together to address those problems collaboratively.”

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The ITGA—RRForum alliance will be a principal focus of both the upcoming RRForum national meeting (Boston, April 20-21) and of ITGA's annual conference (Chicago, June 5 – 8). "The ITGA was founded on the value of collaboration and partnership as a way to address challenging town and gown quality-of-life issues," said Beth Bagwell, ITGA's Executive Director. "Our alliance with the RRForum integrates research-based practices with a new level of community collaboration that promises to bring an exciting dimension to our work."

The International Town & Gown Association is nation's premier resource for addressing the challenges, emerging issues, and opportunities that impact institutions of higher education and the communities in which they reside. ITGA strengthens town/gown partnerships by providing a network of professionals and resources and by identifying and sharing leading practices, innovative solutions, and professional development opportunities for municipal and university communities. To learn more about ITGA, please contact ITGA's Executive Director, Beth Bagwell at beth@itga.org.

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