



## What We Do

We are engaging with local community members – including parents, educators, law enforcement and policymakers – to create environmental shifts that reduce alcohol and prescription drug problems on the Westside of Los Angeles. We are pro-community. We want to create change that is powerful, positive and lasting.

## Get Involved

Want to take to part in a meaningful, civic-minded effort that can change your community for the better? Then join us! We're dedicated to finding positive, community-oriented solutions that keep substance use harms to a minimum on the Westside.



WESTSIDE IMPACT PROJECT

# WESTSIDE IMPACT PROJECT

A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS ON THE WESTSIDE



Institute for Public Strategies

The Westside Impact Project is directed by the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS).  
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## About the Westside Impact Project

The Westside Impact Project aims to create a healthier and safer Westside by reducing problems related to alcohol and prescription drug use. We engage community members to assess the scope of existing problems and to advocate for proven, evidence-based solutions that can optimize health, safety and livability on the Westside.

The Project is funded by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, and is being implemented by the Institute for Public Strategies, a Southern California-based non-profit with 25 years of experience helping communities make lasting improvements in health, safety and quality of life.



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SPENDS** **\$9.5 BILLION ANNUALLY** **ON ALCOHOL ISSUES ALONE.**<sup>1</sup>

## What is Environmental Prevention?

The Westside Impact Project utilizes a powerful and sustainable approach to public health and safety problems known as environmental prevention. Unlike traditional, education-based prevention strategies, environmental prevention acknowledges that individuals' behaviors, including the use of substances, are greatly influenced by their surroundings. By modifying the physical, legal, economic and socio-cultural factors that contribute to substance use problems, communities can create widespread, lasting reductions in associated harms.

## Why Alcohol and Prescription Drugs?

Excessive alcohol and prescription drug use are serious public health concerns with major health, economic and social consequences. Binge drinking is the second-leading cause of premature death and disability in LA County<sup>2</sup>; there have been 8,265 drug-related deaths in LA County from 2000-09<sup>3</sup>. Working together, we can understand the specific impact alcohol and drugs are having on the Westside and advocate for strategies that make our neighborhoods safer, healthier and more vital.

## About Our Work: Alcohol

The Westside is a tourist destination, and as such, has one of the highest densities of bars and restaurants in the City of Los Angeles, which has a direct impact on public health and safety. For these reasons, the Westside Impact Project works to implement proven strategies that optimize the retail alcohol environment, which includes interventions that encourage bars, restaurants and liquor stores to engage in responsible business practices. Our end goal is to significantly reduce alcohol-related problems on the Westside, including drunk driving, traffic crashes, injuries and public nuisance activities.



## About Our Work: Prescription Drugs

Our prescription drug work is part of a countywide effort to better understand and address prescription drug misuse. In Los Angeles County, 1 in 20 adults misuse prescription drugs and 1 in 5 teens abuse prescription drugs<sup>4</sup>. Most people access them from family and friends. One of our primary project objectives is to support efforts that would require manufacturers of prescription and non-prescription drugs and sharps to provide a countywide take-back program to collect and dispose of unused and unwanted pharmaceutical and sharps waste from County residents.

## About Our Work: UCLA/Westwood

College drinking, specifically binge or excessive drinking, is a national public health priority. Nearly 60 percent of full-time college students drink once per month and nearly 39 percent binge drink<sup>5</sup>. We are partnering with key stakeholders at UCLA, as well as from surrounding Westwood neighborhoods, to evaluate and implement supplemental evidence-based strategies that can reduce alcohol-related harms on and off campus.

### Sources:

1. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Binge Drinking, March 2014. Retrieved from [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/wwwfiles/ph/hae/ha/binge\\_drinking\\_2014\\_finals.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/wwwfiles/ph/hae/ha/binge_drinking_2014_finals.pdf).
2. Reducing Alcohol Related Harms in Los Angeles County. LA County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, March 2011.
3. Drug Death Data Fact Sheet, LA County Department of Public Health, November 2011.
4. Prescription Drug Misuse, County of Los Angeles Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, 2016.
5. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2015.