



# ILLINOIS

## Social Norm (SONOR)

### ► AT-A-GLANCE

#### ► Project Characteristics

Collaborative (public and private)

#### ► Program Areas

Youth Programs  
Alcohol and Other Drugs

#### ► Targeted Populations

College Students

#### ► Type of Jurisdiction

Illinois College Campuses

#### ► Jurisdiction Size

40,000

#### ► Funding

163 Funds: \$8,600  
State Funds: \$20,160  
The Great Plains Group:  
\$10,000

#### ► Contact

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## Problem Identification

According to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), 16-24 year olds comprise only 15.52 percent of the licensed drivers in Illinois; however, they are involved in 38.85 percent of all fatal alcohol-related crashes. Alcohol use and abuse is a serious problem on Illinois college campuses. One contributing factor is alcohol serving establishments' flexibility on how old patrons must be to enter, from one college campus to another. At Eastern Illinois University (EIU), a youth must be 21 years old to enter. Just 50 miles north of EIU is the University of Illinois' (U of I) main campus where students can enter alcohol serving establishments on campus at age 19. Another factor affecting under age drinking on college campuses may be perceptions and misperceptions about the social acceptability of drinking on college campuses.

## Goals and Objectives

*SONOR*, the name of a registered students' organizations on three Illinois campuses, focuses on engaging students to prevent substance abuse and reduce the number and severity of alcohol-related traffic crashes involving students.

The project's objectives are to:

- Reach 40,000 college students per year;
- Use the social norms marketing approach to correct perceptions and misperceptions about the social acceptability of underage drinking and driving on college campuses; and
- Provide college students with information on the perils of alcohol use and abuse that resonates with their peers.

## Strategies and Activities

*SONOR* implemented the following strategies to achieve its goals:

- Formed a student group with faculty and staff advisors; however, primary responsibility is with the students. Each *SONOR* chapter is a registered student organization set up as a nonprofit corporation.
- Assigned students to the roles of president, vice president, director of marketing, graphic designer, and project manager.
- Organized two meetings per week in addition to special project meetings for mailings, information blitzes, and university functions.



- Used institution-specific social norming messages in student-created marketing materials.
- Targeted the entire EIU campus in its first year to gain an identity, and then focused marketing efforts primarily on freshmen in the following years.
- Collaborated with the Great Plains Group (an advertising, marketing, and public relations company) that provided funding.

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## Results

In 2003, an administrative evaluation of the *SONOR* program yielded these findings:

- There are many benefits associated with the unique business/university partnership. For example, student members develop a business-like demeanor, have high expectations and commitment, and develop competencies in marketing and social norms.
- Slogans and messages associated with various social norms campaigns are easy for the campus community to remember and have a high visual appeal.
- Marketing materials are often mistaken for professional quality work rather than student work.
- University administration views *SONOR* as a key element in the campaign against underage drinking and points to it as a successful and visible effort.
- There were no alcohol-related student fatalities on the EIU campus during the *SONOR* project.
- Two additional *SONOR* chapters were formed: one at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU-C), with an enrollment of 25,000, and at Bradley University, a private school in Peoria with 6,000 students enrolled. The programs will be evaluated this year and in succeeding years to see if the public/private campus can be successfully adapted.
- There are challenges involving location of the *SONOR* chapters within the institution (for example, whether the chapter should be housed in Student Affairs or the College of Education).