

AC4C

ALLIANCE OF COALITIONS
FOR CHANGE

AGE OF SELLER Iowa Alcohol Laws

Should kids be selling alcohol?

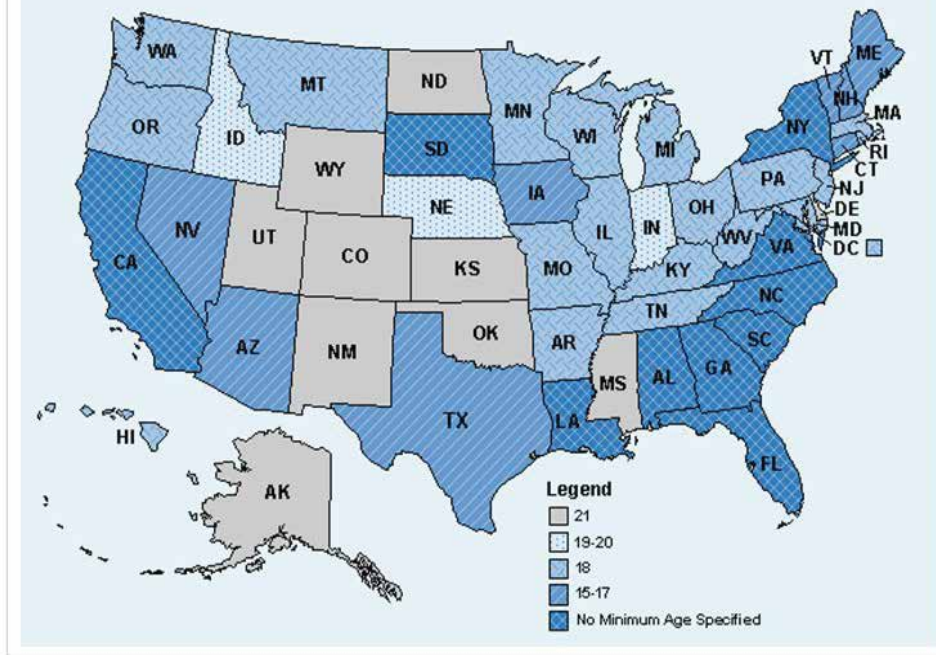
Having someone as young as 16 be in charge of liquor and alcohol sales, certainly puts that person in a uniquely vulnerable position to sell to their underage peers. Teens at this age can be uncomfortable refusing an underage sale, especially if that potential buyer is a friend or peer at school. We also know that the brain is not considered fully developed until the age of 25, especially the prefrontal cortex, which allows someone to make rational decisions regardless of peer pressure. Youth tend to act on emotion when facing a decision, which can be a liability when it comes to selling alcohol.

The Issue

- Iowa is the only state in the entire Midwest and one of the few in the nation that allows 16 year olds to sell alcohol for off-premise consumption (gas stations, liquor stores, grocery stores).
- The rest of the states require the age to be at least 18.
- Some states require a supervisor or older clerk to approve the sale.
- All Iowa restaurants and bars have this law and practice already—hiring 16 year olds, but having someone 18 years or older serve the alcohol. We want to see 16 and 17 year olds working, just not selling the alcohol.
- The evidence shows that having a clerk or bartender be 21 reduces underage drinking. Nebraska's minimum age of seller is age 19 for both on and off premise. North Dakota is age 21 for both. Raising the age of seller for off premise from age 16 to 18 in Iowa would be a good step. There could be exceptions for cases of hardship.

For more information:
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Minimum Age To Sell Beer for Off-Premises Consumption as of January 1, 2015



South Dakota's age to sell is 21 for hard liquor and wine. It is also age 21 for beer if the store sells 50% or more beer, if not, no minimum age is specified.