

Preventing Sexual Violence in Arizona

Strengthening Communities to Stop Sexual Violence BEFORE it Occurs



The Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) is using an innovative approach to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence across the state. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **Rape Prevention and Education (RPE)** program, the AZDHS Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Program (SVPEP) works with community agencies to develop and implement innovative and tailored approaches to **stop sexual violence BEFORE it occurs**. For more than a decade, Arizona has collaborated with communities to provide prevention education on rape and other forms of sexual violence to students, professionals, and community members across the state.

WHAT IS ARIZONA DOING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Currently, five agencies representing three counties across Arizona receive RPE funds through AZDHS to support a variety of programs aimed at preventing sexual violence before it occurs, otherwise known as **primary prevention**. These agencies direct their efforts toward all Arizona residents, and specifically students in elementary through high school, college students, women, medical and legal professionals, law enforcement personnel, Latino and Native American youth, and staff and owners of alcohol-serving establishments. One such effort is the **Arizona Safer Bars Alliance (ASBA)**, a unique program established in 2012 that uses a multi-session curriculum to train alcohol serving staff on **bystander interventions**. The project unites bar owners, employees, customers, and community members by helping them recognize the difference between flirting and sexual harassment, and appropriately respond to situations in which a person is at risk for becoming a perpetrator or victim of sexual aggression or violence

WHY IS ARIZONA WORKING TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Among young adults in Arizona:

22%

report having witnessed someone acting in a sexually violent or harassing manner

58%

of those who witnessed sexually violent or harassing behavior said that they did nothing to stop it

29%

of those who did nothing to stop sexually violent or harassing behavior said they were not sure what to do to stop it

The CDC RPE program has been strengthening our communities and striving to reduce the burden of sexual violence since 1994. CDC provides RPE funding to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

WHAT IMPACT IS THE RPE PROGRAM INTENDED TO HAVE IN ARIZONA?

The Arizona RPE program aims to prevent sexual violence by promoting **non-violent social norms, attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices**.



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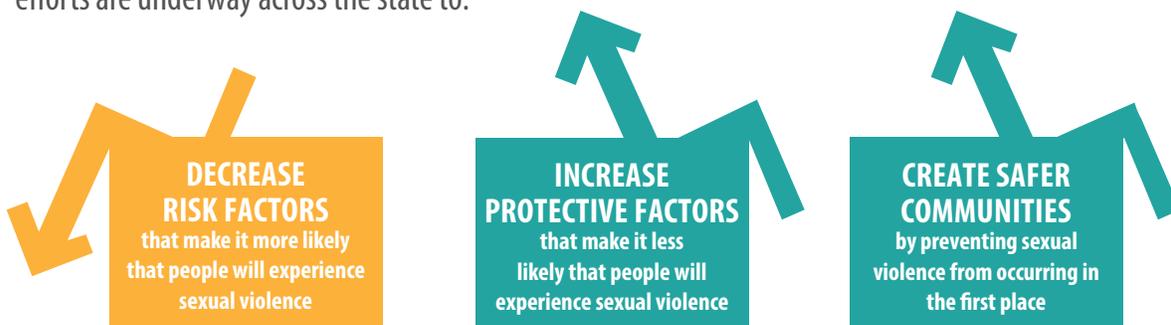
WHAT IF YOU COULD EMPOWER COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

That's exactly what Arizona is doing with funding it receives through **CDC's RPE program**. Through a comprehensive statewide sexual violence prevention **needs assessment** in 2007, Arizona identified a common desire to **train bartenders and other staff at alcohol-serving establishments** on effective ways to prevent sexual violence. In 2009, AZDHS provided funding to community partners in Flagstaff and Tucson to independently develop and implement their own sexual violence prevention training for bar staff. Recognizing the need for a statewide program, AZDHS embarked on a comprehensive and inclusive process to identify the critical components to include in a bystander intervention program for bar staff. As a result, the **Arizona Safer Bars Alliance** was formed in 2012.

The Arizona Safer Bars Alliance works with community partners who reach out to alcohol-serving establishments to explain the program and offer a five-hour **bystander training** for bar owners, managers, employees, patrons, and members of the community including police officers, sexual violence prevention experts, and the State Department of Liquor Licenses and Control. The bystander training program focuses on helping people **recognize sexually aggressive behavior and intervene** to stop the behavior before it escalates into sexual assault. Training materials include a written manual and videos on bystander effect, interpretation of body language, and intervention opportunities. Bars that volunteer to participate in the program and train at least 70 percent of their staff become accredited by the Arizona Safer Bars Alliance. Accredited bars often receive **positive media coverage**, as well as program materials including posters, flyers, and window signs indicating participation in the Arizona Safer Bars Alliance. Bar staff who serve as trainers receive a tee shirt featuring one of the program's taglines, **"BE playful, BE funny, BE charming, BEHAVE!"** By showing their support for the program in these various ways, participating bars are shifting the social norms in their establishments and communities to confirm that **preventing sexual violence is a priority**.

How will we know if this approach is working? AZDHS is currently working with the **University of Arizona** to conduct a **comprehensive evaluation** of the Arizona Safer Bars Alliance bystander training program. Preliminary findings from the pilot trainings are promising. In 2013, pre- and post-survey results from two bars in Flagstaff demonstrated statistically-significant **positive changes** in bar staff intent to intervene as active bystanders following pilot training. Participant responses on the post-survey indicated bar staff were **less likely to ignore it, or wait for someone else to intervene**, when they saw a person buying an excessive number of drinks for another person. Other improvements included greater confidence to **safely intervene** if they witnessed someone exhibiting warning signs such as paying unwanted attention to another person or isolating a person from his or her friends.

What does this mean for Arizona? Thanks to funding from the CDC RPE program, efforts are underway across the state to:



For additional information or to locate contact information for the state RPE program, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/states.html>