

# Living Policies Tool

## The Leader Team Meeting

**The following is a script for the leader team meeting that you can read aloud or use to guide your conversation with the team.** Be sure to adjust the script so that it's comfortable for you and appropriate for your group.

### Purpose of the Meeting

When we did the Leader Awareness and Planning Tool together, we looked at the standards or policies that guide our organization. Now we need to make some decisions about our standards related to alcohol use so we can communicate these expectations clearly to our members. Our goal today is to make decisions together about the rules we want the members of our organization to follow when we use alcohol.

### Assess and Address Risks for Legal Consequences

We all know there are laws and rules we are expected to follow as students at this college/university. These include the following:

- No one under 21 years of age can possess or consume alcohol (state law, all states).
- No one can provide to, sell to, or purchase alcohol for anyone who is under 21 years of age (state law, all states).
- No one can sell alcohol to anyone without a license (state law, all states).
- No one can drive with a blood alcohol concentration over .08 (state law, all states).
- No one can be intoxicated in public; those who are incapacitated by alcohol or other drugs in public can be placed in protective custody (city or town ordinance).
- No one can disturb the peace, urinate in public or on private property, vandalize property, assault another person, make an unwanted sexual advance on another person, or have sex with someone without the other person's conscious consent (state law or city or town ordinance).
- Students at this college/university must follow federal, state, and local laws related to alcohol use (school policy, national organization policies).
- Students may be prohibited from using alcohol in certain parts of the campus without a permit (school policy).

Our organization's members may be doing some of these things, which makes them vulnerable to legal and judicial consequences. But we need to make sure that **our organization** is not enabling or allowing our members to break any of these laws or policies as a result of our organization's practices, rituals, traditions, or activities. When we do this, we put our members at risk and make our organization vulnerable to legal consequences such as lawsuits and criminal charges or our school's judicial process.

- **The first thing we'll do is assess whether the things our organization does contribute or lead to law or policy violations.**

*(Distribute the "Our Legal Vulnerabilities" sheet and complete it with your leader team.)*

- **The next thing we'll do is identify the things that our members do that put them—or us—at risk.**

*(Distribute the "This Needs to Stop" sheet and complete it with your leader team.)*

- **The last thing we'll do is create a set of standards about using alcohol that we want everyone in our organization to follow.**

*(Distribute the "Our Living Policies" sheet.)* We'll use our ideas from the "Our Legal Vulnerabilities" and "This Needs to Stop" sheets to create Living Policies that we want every member of our group to follow when they use alcohol. Our Living Policies will align with existing state and local laws and policies, but they'll describe specific standards of behavior for when our group's members use alcohol. For example, a Living Policy might say: "Members of our organization do **not** hit on someone who is too drunk to give consent." *(Complete the "Our Living Policies" sheet with your leader team.)*

## Share Assignments and Conclude the Meeting

Thanks for a great meeting. We got a lot done that will help to make our organization safer and help to protect us from legal consequences.

I need your help to accomplish the following two goals at our next full membership meeting:

1. Make sure our members understand their—and our—legal risks when we don't follow the laws, policies, and rules of our state and city/town, as well as those of our school. At the meeting, we'll review with our members the most important of these laws and policies, including the policies we just developed for our organization. Before the meeting, I need some of you to help research the key laws/policies and associated penalties. At the meeting, you'll help me present this information to the group. We'll use the "Laws and Consequences" sheet to pull together this information. *(Distribute the "Laws and Consequences" sheet and assign specific laws/policies to members of your leader team. Tell members who will be looking up information on laws/policies when you need them to send you the information they've gathered.)*
2. Communicate the standards that all members of our organization will be held accountable to every time they drink alcohol. During the group meeting, we'll give everyone a copy of the "Our Living Policies" sheet that we just filled in. When we're talking about our group's policies at the meeting, I'll need you to speak up and share your perspective on why we all need to follow these standards. It would also be great if you could share how you have fun without having to go to the extreme. Thanks.