

This is the second in a series of policy briefs issued by Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems.

Using The Alcohol Cost Calculator to Assess State Costs of Alcohol Problems

Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems developed The Alcohol Cost Calculator in 2003 to help U.S. employers calculate losses that result directly from untreated alcohol problems among their employees and see the benefits of improving treatment options.

Ensuring Solutions has used The Calculator to develop a state-by-state guide to determine the number of working people and their families in each state who have alcohol use disorders, and to see how much untreated alcohol problems cost their communities. These new prevalence and cost estimates of problem drinking can alert leaders and policymakers to the need to improve access to alcohol treatment, curb health care costs and increase productivity. By addressing alcohol treatment needs, states can save money and keep workers on the job and productive.

"The Alcohol Cost Calculator makes it possible to quantify what employers and employees already know anecdotally. Treating alcohol problems is an important way for employers to get the greatest possible value in their health care purchasing," said Becky Chernoff, president of the National Business Coalition on Health.

To use the free calculator for a given geographic area, at <http://www.alcoholcostcalculator.org>, select the category "Other." Enter the number of people who are currently employed full- or part-time in the area and press "Enter." The Calculator immediately produces a report.

For example, if a state had 2,000,000 individuals employed, of those employees, it would likely have 136,000 problem drinkers and 254,320 employees' family members who are problem drinkers. Statewide, the cost of alcohol-related health care is \$531,524,000 annually. The Calculator can also be used by smaller communities. Regional, statewide, county and metropolitan estimates of the number of workers are produced monthly by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics at <http://www.bls.gov>.

"The Calculator has been a great tool, and we want to bring it to the Chamber of Commerce for their monthly brown bag luncheons because it's been really effective and gets people talking," reports Trish Stanionis, executive director of The Effort, a Sacramento treatment center.

See the reverse side of this brief for a state-by-state summary of the costs of untreated problem drinking.

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ALCOHOL PROBLEMS EXACT HIGH COSTS ON STATES

State	Total Employees	Problem Drinkers	Problem Drinkers Among Family Members	Alcohol-Related Health Care Costs (in dollars)
Alabama	2,152,600	146,377	273,725	572,079,281
Alaska	344,900	23,453	43,857	91,661,314
Arizona	2,667,400	181,383	339,187	708,893,559
Arkansas	1,303,800	88,658	165,791	346,500,496
California	17,360,600	1,198,881	2,241,907	4,685,543,517
Colorado	2,471,000	168,028	314,212	656,697,902
Connecticut	1,781,000	121,108	226,472	473,322,122
Delaware	419,200	28,506	53,305	111,407,430
Dist. of Columbia	3100,000	21,080	39,420	82,386,220
Florida	8,050,300	547,420	1,023,676	2,139,463,829
Georgia	4,385,800	298,234	557,698	1,165,578,980
Hawaii	605,300	41,160	76,970	160,865,739
Idaho	690,200	46,934	87,766	183,428,932
Illinois	6,403,900	435,465	814,320	1,701,913,272
Indiana	3,203,500	217,838	407,357	851,368,567
Iowa	1,642,200	111,670	208,822	436,434,356
Kansas	1,473,600	100,205	187,383	391,626,883
Kentucky	1,985,900	135,041	252,527	527,776,756
Louisiana	2,043,300	138,944	259,826	543,031,495
Maine	690,800	46,974	87,842	183,588,390
Maryland	2,924,800	198,886	371,918	777,300,698
Massachusetts	3,446,800	234,382	438,295	916,028,462
Michigan	5,125,500	348,534	651,759	1,362,163,131
Minnesota	2,927,100	199,043	372,210	777,911,950
Mississippi	1,330,300	90,460	169,161	353,543,189
Missouri	2,985,000	202,980	379,573	793,299,570
Montana	477,400	32,463	60,706	126,874,779
Nebraska	982,700	66,824	124,960	261,164,317
Nevada	1,115,400	75,847	141,834	296,430,935
New Hampshire	713,700	48,532	90,754	189,674,339
New Jersey	4,418,900	300,485	561,907	1,174,375,702
New Mexico	900,700	61,248	114,533	239,371,833
New York	9,378,400	637,731	1,192,557	2,492,422,341
North Carolina	4,157,400	282,703	528,655	1,104,878,939
North Dakota	348,300	23,684	44,290	92,564,905
Ohio	5,883,100	400,051	748,095	1,563,504,422
Oklahoma	1,725,500	117,354	219,453	458,652,060
Oregon	1,852,600	125,977	235,577	492,350,681
Pennsylvania	6,177,300	420,056	785,505	1,641,691,603
Rhode Island	574,300	39,052	73,028	152,627,117
South Carolina	2,030,500	138,074	258,198	539,629,741
South Dakota	421,600	28,669	53,611	112,045,259
Tennessee	2,912,200	198,030	370,315	773,952,096
Texas	10,991,500	747,422	1,397,679	2,921,123,023
Utah	1,206,900	82,069	153,469	320,748,158
Vermont	353,300	24,024	44,926	93,893,715
Virginia	3,789,500	257,686	481,873	1,007,105,099
Washington	3,100,200	210,814	394,221	823,915,352
West Virginia	802,900	54,597	102,097	213,380,310
Wisconsin	3,099,500	210,766	394,132	825,729,319
Wyoming	276,300	18,788	35,134	73,430,041

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Working with policymakers, employers and concerned citizens, Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems at The George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC, provides research-based information and tools to help curb the avoidable health care and other costs associated with alcohol use. The project works to improve access to treatment for Americans who need it. It is supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. For more information, please visit the Ensuring Solutions Website at www.ensuringsolutions.org.