Lowell Police Awarded Grant to Combat Underage Drinking

The Lowell Police Department (LPD) was recently awarded a $15,000 grant to combat underage drinking. The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security’s Highway Safety Division (EOPSS/HSD) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is providing $490,960.53 in funding to 72 Massachusetts communities this year.

Grant funding will be used to fund compliance checks and party patrols. Compliance checks involve random checks on bars and liquor stores in the City to ensure they require proper identification in order to purchase alcohol. Party patrols are conducted in areas where underage house parties are common, especially around the campus of UMass Lowell. Officers will work with the UMass Police Department to identify parties, check for underage drinking, and maintain order.

Although much progress has been made in the last two decades, alcohol-related crashes are all too common among young people. According to NHTSA, in 2013, 29% of young drivers 15 to 20 years old who were killed in crashes had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .01 or higher. Of those young drivers who had tested positive for alcohol, 82% of them had BACs of .08 or higher. NHTSA estimates that minimum drinking-age laws (21 years old) have saved 29,834 lives nationwide since 1975.

The LPD recognizes that underage drinking plays a significant role in leading to motor vehicle crashes caused by impaired driving. The department has used this grant in the past to curb underage drinking in Lowell and will continue to do so with this year’s funding. The ultimate goal is to avoid highly preventable tragedies by reducing underage drinking and drunk driving.

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