

TO: Members of the La Crosse Common Council
Hon. Tim Kabat, Mayor

FROM: La Crosse Festivals, Inc. Board of Directors
Angie Coenen, 2017 President

DATE: 3-23-17

RE: Ordinance to create Section 4-19

We have become aware of the proposed ordinance to be considered by the Common Council this spring regarding restrictions on sale, service and dispensing of alcohol beverages.

Like many others, La Crosse Festivals, Inc. recognizes the challenges facing our community regarding overconsumption of alcohol. That is why our organization and other festivals put in place numerous checks to ensure our patrons have a safe and enjoyable experience at our events. Examples include:

- Professional security on site to ensure patrons are of legal age to consume and to monitor patrons to prevent overconsumption
- Licensed bartenders as supervisors for volunteer groups
- Bartender training (prior to the festival and at start of each shift) for volunteer organizations

Our experience with managing thousands of patrons over more than 50 years has shown that monitoring and managing behaviors is an effective approach to this issue, especially when you consider that police calls to our festival grounds for alcohol-related incidents are nearly non-existent.

We have reviewed the language that is a part of the proposed ordinance and have numerous concerns with the language, and the unintended consequences related to it. These include:

- Prohibiting “all-you-can-drink” for one price will eliminate several tasting events in the community – many of which are fundraisers for non-profit organizations. Impacted events include Between the Bluff’s Beer, Wine, & Cheese Festival and the Northside Craft Beer Night.
- The ordinance language regarding best practices reaches far beyond state and local law regarding beverage volumes, bartender licensing, and pricing. We believe it is unproductive and creates unnecessary confusion to publish best practices that financially and logistically are not feasible.
- Old Style Oktoberfest which is proudly brewed in La Crosse once again, would be discouraged at local events as it is only available in a 16oz can.

While the proposed ordinance may be well intentioned, it will have a series of unintended negative impacts on the La Crosse community and local festivals in particular. Therefore, La Crosse Festivals opposes the Ordinance to create Section 4-19 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding restrictions on sale, service and dispensing of alcohol beverages.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this issue and the proposed ordinance. We are willing participants in any collaborative, meaningful discussion to curb binge drinking while allowing local festivals to operate successfully.

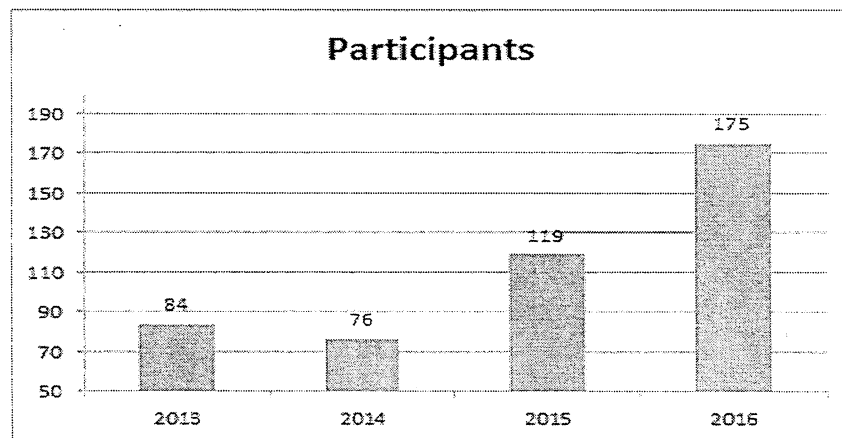
Oktoberfest Volunteer Server Training: Across the Years

The Changing the Culture of Risky Drinking Behavior Coalition has provided training for volunteers who serve alcohol at Oktoberfest each year since 2013. This training takes place shortly before the festival begins each year and is facilitated by Keith Lease and officers from the La Crosse Police Department. This event is promoted by Oktoberfest and in exchange, volunteers receive an admission button. Each training lasts one hour and there are 3-4 trainings for participants to select from to attend. Participants can also choose to complete pre-post evaluations which provide an important insight into their experience. This report compares the data collected from these evaluations across all four years.

The number of participants increased significantly from 84 in 2013 to 175 in 2016. These participants consistently reported an increase in confidence in their ability to be a responsible beverage server after attending the training. This increased knowledge and confidence of participants is especially significant because fewer participants have ever been employed as a bartender or attended a responsible beverage server training. Therefore, in order to ensure that responsible serving practices are used by Oktoberfest volunteers, they require training. This training provides an opportunity for participants to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence and past participants consistently report they are “very satisfied” with the training.

Participants:

- **The number of participants increased significantly between 2014 and 2016** (76 participants in 2014 and 175 in 2016, an average of 114 participants attended).
- The number of evaluations collected increased significantly between 2014 and 2016 (71 in 2014 and 133 in 2016, an average of 99 evaluations collected).



Demographics and characteristics:

- An average 56% of participants were female.
- An average 44% of participants were male.
- Participants were 18 years and older with the largest age group consisting of 38-47 year olds (average of 28% of participants).

- An average 26% of participants have been employed as a bartender before. This number decreased steadily between 2014 and 2016 (32% in 2012, 23% in 2014).
- An average 59% of participants previously served alcohol at a community festival.
- An average 42% of participants previously attended a responsible beverage training.

As a result of the training, more people were confident that they could identify someone who had too much to drink.

- An average of 66% of participants reported prior to training that they were “very sure” that they could identify someone who had too much to drink.
- An average of 89% reported this after the training.

As a result of the training, more people were confident that they could cut off someone if they felt they were over-intoxicated.

- An average of 69% of participants reported prior to training that they were “very sure” they could cut someone off who they felt were over-intoxicated.
- An average of 80% reported this after the training.

Attendees indicated that drinking was slightly more of a problem in the community than at festivals at pre and post.

- An average of 40% of participants reported that drinking at festivals was “somewhat” of a problem.
- An average of 44% of participants reported that drinking in the community was “somewhat” of a problem.

Overall satisfaction with the training was very positive.

- An average 88% of participants were “very satisfied” with the training.
- An average 10% of participants were “somewhat satisfied” with the training.

