



**Biennial Review of Rochester Institute of Technology's Alcohol and Other Drug
Programs and Policies**

2023–2025

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I. Introduction

The Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations (EDGAR, part 86) require that, as a condition for receiving funds or any other form of financial assistance under any federal program, an institution of higher education (IHE) must certify that it has adopted and implemented a program “to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees.”

Developing a program that complies with the regulations requires an IHE to:

1. Annually notify each employee and student, in writing, of standards of conduct; a description of appropriate sanctions for violation of federal, state, and local law and campus policy; a description of health risks associated with (Alcohol and Other Drug) AOD use; and a description of available treatment programs.
2. Develop a sound method for distributing annual notification information to every student and employee each year.
3. Prepare a biennial report on the effectiveness of its AOD programs and the consistency of sanction enforcement.
4. Maintain its biennial review report on file that is made available by the U.S. Department of Education upon request.

RIT utilizes a comprehensive framework to address alcohol and other drug use by implementing the following strategies: policy, education, coalitions/collaboration, social life, academics, enforcement, intervention, and data/assessment.

II. Alcohol and Other Substances University-Wide Task Force

The Alcohol and Other Substances University-Wide Task Force is composed of individuals from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and Public Safety. Key informants serve on the task force to assist in the tracking of current alcohol and other substance concerns. The programming aspects of alcohol and other substances awareness, education, and prevention efforts are the responsibility of the Health Promotion office.

The mission and charge of the Alcohol and Other Substances University-Wide Task Force are as follows:

Mission:

The AOD Task Force will comprehensively address harm associated with alcohol and substance use and actively monitor trends from a University-wide perspective. This group will ensure that RIT policies are up to date and relevant as new information and changes to NYS law come into effect.

Charge:

- Review current trends on campus and in the surrounding area as they relate to alcohol and other substances
- Biennial policy review for students, faculty, and staff
- Review of resources available for students, faculty, and staff
- Review transports to the hospital that are alcohol- or other substance-related
- Identify high-risk times of year for all community members
- Discuss a comprehensive, university-wide approach to prevention, education, and enforcement

Key informants include students, representatives from Student Government, Conduct, Public Safety, Clubs and Organizations (including Fraternity and Sorority Life), Athletics, and Residential Life.

University/Department Representation
Health Promotion
Public Safety
The Center for Residence Life
Center for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution
Human Resources
Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD)
NTID Athlete Development
Intercollegiate Athletics
Student Government Representative
Center for Campus Life including Fraternity and Sorority Affairs

III. Procedures for Distributing Alcohol and Other Drug Notification to Students and Employees

Each year RIT takes a multidimensional approach to disseminating information on policies and services related to alcohol and other drugs for employees and students. RIT's Better Me program strives to educate employees on health and wellness-related programs and services, and the Wellness area within Student Affairs provides resources, information, services, and courses for students. Better Me and Wellness regularly distribute materials via email to employees and students.

The [Annual Security & Fire Safety Report](#) is made available to the university community and visitors each fall and distributed to employees and students via RIT Message Center.

This annual publication includes:

- drug and alcohol laws and policies
- active bystander information

- crime statistics and other resources

Additionally, students are sent an electronic link to the student Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy (D18.1) each fall as well as an educational email providing them with resources on alcohol education, cannabis education, and other substance education.

Human Resources has online links to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources that are updated annually, as well as links to the current Faculty/Staff Alcohol and Drug Policy (C 15.2). Employees are also sent an informational e-mail providing information about the drug-free workplace statement. A copy of the e-mail can be found in Appendix V. Employees are directed to the Human Resources website for more information and/or to view the complete Biennial Review of Alcohol and Other Drug Programs and Policies documents. [Faculty/Staff Alcohol and Drug Policy](#)

Other resources include:

RIT's Biennial Review of Alcohol and Other Drug Policies and Programs

<https://www.rit.edu/fa/humanresources/content/procedures>

RIT Division of Student Affairs

<https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/>

RIT Human Resources

<https://www.rit.edu/humanresources/>

Programs and Services for Students and Employees (locations and contacts)

Served	Resource	Services	Location	Contact Info
Students	Student Health Center	Medical care, medication, info, and referrals.	August Center	585.475.2255 Website
Students	Counseling & Psychological Services	Mental health care, psychiatric services, info and referrals	Hale-Andrews Student Life Center	585.475.2261 Website
Students	Health Promotion	Educational programming and early intervention.	Campus Center	Website
Students	Center for Student Conduct	Student accountability and growth, policy education and training	Student Alumni Union	585.475.5662 Website
Students & Employees	RIT Public Safety	Safety, security and emergency response	Grace Watson Hall	585.475.3333 Website
Employees	Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	Support and referral services for employees and families.		1.800.327.2255 breehealth.com

Served	Resource	Services	Location	Contact Info
Employees	Human Resources	People, development and benefits	Eastman Hall (Bldg 1)	585.475.2424 Website

IV. RIT Policies (Policy Inventories)

RIT has a number of policies and programs in place to maintain and promote a healthy community. Each is described in this section, including a link to the policy.

A. Policies for Students

1. ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS POLICY (RIT POLICY D18.1)

Policy D18.1 provides students with an overview of responsibilities, legal terms, and potential responses for violations. See the full policy:

<https://www.rit.edu/policies/d181>

- Student Rights and Responsibilities:
<https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/rights-responsibilities/student-rights>

2. C15.0 POLICY ON UNIVERSITY EVENTS WITH ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Adopted through RIT's shared governance process, effective July 1, 2017. Reviewed and reaffirmed Dec. 20, 2022. See the full policy: <https://www.rit.edu/policies/c150#scope>

This policy includes an event registration form.

3. STUDENT-ATHLETE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS EDUCATION AND TESTING PROGRAM

While not a policy, RIT's Center for Intercollegiate Athletics has devised a program that aims to provide a drug- and alcohol-free environment for intercollegiate athletic programs. This policy was reviewed and revamped to better align with NCAA policy during the summer and fall of 2022, implemented in spring of 2023:

https://ritathletics.com/documents/2023/2/21/CIA_Drug_and_Alcohol_-_Updated_February_2023.pdf

4. RIT HOUSING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

RIT Housing Guidelines highlight expectations regarding alcohol and other drugs (13.02): <https://www.rit.edu/housing/2025-2026-terms-conditions#13-compliance-with-laws>

B. Policies for Employees

1. FACULTY/STAFF ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY (RIT POLICY C15.2)

Policy C15.2 provides employees with definitions regarding alcohol and drug use in the workplace, procedures for alleged violations of the policy, and information on support services available. Full policy: www.rit.edu/policies/c152

C. Policies for Both Students and Employees

1. C16.0 TOBACCO-RESTRICTED UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy C16.0 applies to all students, faculty, staff, administrators, vendors, and visitors while on RIT-managed properties located in the United States.

Full policy: www.rit.edu/policies/c160

2. POLICIES LIBRARY

Faculty, Staff, Students and visitors can find RIT policies on several websites:

Alcohol and Drug Policies

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c152>

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c160>

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d181>

RIT Governance Policy Library

<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/policies/governance>

Drug-Free Schools

https://www.rit.edu/fa/grms/compliance/statutes/drug_free_1989.html

Consumer Information/Right to Know

<https://www.rit.edu/fa/compliance/content/consumer-information#heoa2248>

V. RIT Programs (Program Inventories)

A. Programs for Students

Each year, RIT offers a number of educational programs targeting a broad spectrum of wellness issues including alcohol and other substances.

Health Promotion continues to implement a comprehensive alcohol and cannabis education university-wide campaign, called Party PAWS. This program is continually reviewed and expanded to remain up to date with new research, changes to federal and state laws, and cultural shifts. These data-informed programs are tailored to our community.

Rooted in harm reduction philosophy, all alcohol and cannabis educational programs provide an opportunity to explore research about these substances and what use looks like on our campus. Educational content explores ways to make lower-risk, responsible choices. The consumption of alcohol by individuals under age 21 is prohibited by the RIT Code of Conduct and New York State law. Additionally, cannabis is prohibited on campus, remains illegal at the federal level, and is prohibited by the RIT Code of Conduct.

Our comprehensive approach to alcohol and cannabis prevention and intervention focuses on early introduction of education and skill-building through Party PAWS, introducing students to key information that helps them identify practical strategies to reduce harm and seek help or resources when needed. Additionally, we strive to correct misperceptions that many students hold about college alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and other drug use to reduce harmful consequences. Our goal is to support our students in achieving their personal, professional, and academic potential as well as build lifelong skills that support their wellness.

Party PAWS Overview

Party PAWS is a comprehensive education and awareness program created to help students of the RIT community better understand alcohol and cannabis use. The program provides relatable, reliable education to help students make informed and responsible decisions if they choose to consume.

Pause to check in with yourself before consuming more.

Assess what's happening—take some time to take it all in.

Why are you choosing to have another? Avoid consuming mindlessly.

Solve for the situation. Make an informed decision about what to do next.

Party PAWS content is implemented through several communications and in-person strategies. Content is shared prior to and throughout high-risk weekends/times of the semester and periodically throughout the academic year.

Our Wellness Peer Educators facilitate programs related to harm reduction strategies for alcohol and other drugs and our Health Promotion staff facilitate programs around risk management, harm reduction, substance use, Good Samaritan Protocol, and resources available on campus. The full campaign and education areas covered can be found at: www.rit.edu/studentlife/party-paws.

Students also have access to our **Balancing Alcohol and Substance Use to Improve College Success (BASICS) program**. BASICS is a service used by students to explore alcohol and other substance use. The program uses a harm reduction approach designed to:

- Promote a non-judgmental environment to help students explore their alcohol/substance use
- Reduce risky behavior and harmful consequences of alcohol/substance use
- Identify changes that could help students reduce their risk
- Provide important information and skills for risk reduction as it relates to alcohol/substance use

Furthermore, students have access to additional clinical and behavioral health support for substance use concerns in the Student Health Center and Counseling and Psychological Services. Unique to RIT is a dedicated department for students within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD) who provides dedicated education and counseling around substance use for students within that community. Additional information can be found at <https://www.rit.edu/ntid/saisd>

A review of 2023-2025 programming and additional training can be found in Appendix I.

B. Programs for Employees

All regular employees are eligible for the RIT Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The employee's spouse/partner and eligible children are also covered under the EAP.

The EAP is confidential and provided at no charge to eligible employees. RIT offers this benefit, through Bree Health®, as part of the employee benefits program:

Employees and eligible family members can trust the Bree Health (formerly NexGen) employee assistance program services to address their total well-being by providing barrier-free access to mental health and virtual life services.

Employees receive up to six sessions of support, per issue, per year, for wellness needs such as stress, anxiety, meditation, career development, relationships, and more.

Violations of RIT's drug-free workplace policy may result in corrective action under applicable university policies, as outlined in the enforcement section below. Where

appropriate, the University may require an employee to satisfactorily participate in a substance use education, treatment, or rehabilitation program, which may include referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as a condition of continued employment.

Additionally, RIT promotes the health and well-being of employees through the Better Me wellness initiative by offering fitness classes, preventive screenings, nutrition counseling, one-on-one coaching and group programs. Additional information can be found at <https://www.rit.edu/betterme/>

VI. Process/Structures for Maintaining Consistency in Enforcement

RIT is committed to the core value of “Integrity and Ethics,” as written in policy P04.0 Core Values. The spirit of this value is maintaining consistency in enforcement of university policies, including policies related to alcohol and other drugs.

Per D.18.1, RIT strives to diligently follow all local, state, and federal laws. Students and student organizations are subject to local, state, and federal laws regarding alcohol and drug use, and the university will not protect individuals or groups from law enforcement with respect to drugs and alcohol use or abuse.

There are a number of “enforcement” bodies regarding alcohol and other drugs, the primary being the Public Safety Department. Additionally, the Center for Residence Life assists Public Safety in enforcement of these policies as they relate to students living in University-managed residential units. The Center for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution is the guiding department that adjudicates alleged violations of the alcohol and other drugs policy for students and is responsible for assigning disciplinary statuses consistently. Annually, training is conducted for staff (including student para-professional staff) to educate on current policies, enforcement, and consistency.

For the Public Safety Department, internal department policies and procedures provide supervisors and officers with guidelines when enforcement action is required. Descriptions of how alcohol and drug policies are enforced are as follows:

RIT community members can report drug and alcohol policy violations to Public Safety by calling 585-475-3333, texting 585-205-8333, using the TigerSafe app, or Public Safety Confidential Tipline. If a person is found to be in violation of the alcohol and other drug policy on campus, an investigation begins, is documented, and is forwarded to either Student Conduct (students) or Human Resources (faculty/staff). Non campus members accused of drug and alcohol policy violations are banned from RIT if there is preponderance of evidence to do so. [TigerSafeConfidential Tipline](#)

- When alcohol is found in an underage student’s residence hall room, the student is asked to pour the alcohol down the drain with a Public Safety officer as a witness. A statement of fact is written and attached to the incident report. Efforts are made to determine where the

alcohol was obtained and appropriate action is taken, including notification to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and/or the New York State Liquor Authority when a local retail establishment is identified.

- When illegal drugs, or the suspicion of illegal drug use is investigated, a thorough investigation commences and confiscated drugs are turned over to the MCSO. Efforts are made to determine where the drugs were obtained and this information is shared with MCSO. If it appears drug sales are occurring on campus, a thorough investigation ensues and local law enforcement is advised. All documentation is shared with law enforcement as well as RIT's Center for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (students), and Human Resources (faculty/staff) for appropriate disposition.
- Public Safety patrols campus grounds where community members reported obtaining illegal drugs. The same process is followed as above when community members are found to be in possession of illegal drugs and alcohol (when minors are involved).

The following numbers of students were referred to RIT's Conduct Office for liquor law and drug law violations (as defined by the U.S. Department of Education) in residential areas on campus. This information can also be found online at (<https://www.rit.edu/publicsafety/sites/rit.edu.publicsafety/files/documents/2025AnnualSecurityReport.pdf>)
<https://www.rit.edu/publicsafety/sites/rit.edu.publicsafety/files/documents/2025AnnualSecurityReport.pdf>

Academic Year	Reported Offense	Reported Offenses On campus
2022	Liquor Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	60
	Drug Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	51
2023	Liquor Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	70

	Drug Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	37
2024	Liquor Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	63
	Drug Law Violations Referred For Disciplinary Action	25

VII. Current Projects

A. Review of data from RIT Wellbeing and WISHES survey

The task force will review the most recent student data to better understand students' engagement with alcohol and other drugs and to reassess educational and policy strategies.

B. Continue work on Party PAWS to include up-to-date information on cannabis education and lower-risk, responsible consumption.

VIII. Discussion

A. RIT's Alcohol and Other Drug Program: Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

RIT's recently adopted Strategic Framework emphasizes the importance of the wellbeing of our students, employees, and community. This framework establishes a strong foundation for alcohol and other drug policy and programming. A copy of the framework can be found at (<https://www.rit.edu/strategicframework>)
<https://www.rit.edu/strategicframework>

RIT remains committed to developing proactive educational programs for students. The expansion of the Health Promotion team (director, associate director, two health promotion specialists and a team of wellness peer educators) allows RIT to better align prevention and education efforts and ensure students receive and engage in AOD prevention education throughout their time at RIT.

Weaknesses

As a result of leadership changes within the Health Promotion department, the task force was not as active as in previous years. Beginning the 2026–2027 academic year, the task force will meet more often.

Additional efforts are needed to continue the action plan related to RIT's Tobacco-Restricted University Policy.

IX. Summary and Conclusion

RIT uses a comprehensive approach when addressing alcohol and other drug use on campus, focusing on policy, education, coalitions/collaboration, social life, academics, enforcement, intervention, and data/assessment. RIT follows evidence-informed recommendations to ensure that RIT students, faculty, and staff are provided with information and resources that promote a safe and healthy environment; one that attempts to mitigate risk as it pertains to alcohol and other drug use.

Additional future goals and initiatives regarding alcohol and other drug education are currently being developed. Because alcohol and other drug issues continue to evolve, new strategies are needed, and RIT's plan will be expanded as appropriate.

RIT will continue to develop, evaluate, assess, and pursue evidence-based and promising practices that help create a safe and healthy environment for the entire RIT community.

Appendix I
Programs for Students

Program facilitated by Wellness Peer Educators:

Party PAWS	Party PAWS - General	1. By the completion of the program, students will be able to explain the goal of the Party PAWS campaign. 2. By the completion of the program, students will be able to locate the Party PAWS website.
Party PAWS	Sober Curious	1. Aims to promote sober behavior, provide health alternatives to drinking alcohol, and promote sober culture through the facilitation of weekend events, and activity journal 2. Increase awareness of resources 3. Create a community for sobriety to thrive.
Party PAWS	Responsible Cannabis Use	1. By the completion of the program, students will be able to correctly identify the "universal symbol" for cannabis products in NYS. 2. By the completion of the program, students will be able to list one resource where they can look up legal dispensaries in NYS
Party PAWS	Know Your Edible	1. By the completion of the program, students will be able to describe an appropriate serving size of edibles for a first-time user. 2. By the completion of the program, students will be able to state how long it may take someone to feel the effects of an edible.
Party PAWS	Blood Alcohol Content	1. By the end of the program, students will be able to define Blood Alcohol Content. 2. By the end of the program, students will be able to list at least two factors that affect Blood Alcohol Content. 3. By the end of the program, students will be able to recognize various body responses to amounts of alcohol consumed.
Party PAWS	Good Samaritan Policy	1. By the end of the program, students will be able to explain what the Good Samaritan Policy is.

Party PAWS	The Pour	1. By the completion of the program, students will be able to list at least three harm reduction strategies. 2. By the completion of the program, students will be able to explain how many ounces are in a serving of liquor, wine, and beer. 3. By the completion of the program, students will be able to list at least two signs that someone is experiencing alcohol poisoning.
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Appendix II

Outcomes for Conduct Violations

Tier 1

Alcohol and Cannabis Education workshop (ABC's of BAC, THC, CBD)

Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe University Policies and NYS laws about alcohol and substance use, parties, and bystander interventions.
2. Identify and discuss low, moderate, and high-risk drinking and cannabis situations and what to do in those situations.
3. Describe campus norms and how alcohol and substance use can affect the community.
4. Articulate personal, academic and/or career goals and personal values and describe how their alcohol use may impact those goals and values.

Tier 2

Balancing Alcohol and Substance Use to Improve College Success
(BASICS) (two-session model).

Balancing Alcohol and Substance Use to Improve College Success (BASICS)

BASICS is a service used by students to explore alcohol and other substance use. The program uses a harm reduction approach designed to:

- Promote a nonjudgmental environment to help students explore their alcohol/substance use
- Reduce risky behavior and harmful consequences of alcohol/substance use
- Identify changes that could help students reduce their risk
- Provide important information and skills for risk reduction as it relates to alcohol/substance use

BASICS involves two sessions with a trained BASICS facilitator:

- **Session I**—Students will learn about the program, reflect on and explore their current usage, discuss current harm reduction strategies in place and be provided information on how to access a web-based questionnaire (personalized feedback report).
- **Session II**—Students receive a personalized feedback report about their use of alcohol and other drugs, and the facilitator and student explore what their responses look like in real life. We discuss if they would like to do anything differently, identify other harm reduction strategies, discuss support systems, and explore interest and confidence in ability to change any behaviors. Lastly, we provide additional resources if they would like to continue the conversation