

**City of Greeley, CO**

*SCRAM<sup>®</sup> Makes the Grade to Curb Underage  
Drinking at the University of Northern Colorado*

**“Having to wear SCRAM is  
teaching our students that  
irresponsible drinking is not  
a game anymore.”**

*Bryce Kyburz,  
Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco  
Education Coordinator,  
the University of Northern Colorado*



## The Problem

The City of Greeley is home to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC), with approximately 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Like most college towns, the City has experienced its share of alcohol-related issues involving young adults who are living on their own for the first time and have been tempted by the “extracurricular activities” that are such a common part of campus life.

The City recognized that not only does student drinking affect those who live on campus or in nearby student housing, but it also impacts the community as a whole. “We had a problem with underage drinking. The students’ drunken and disorderly conduct was not only a problem on campus, but it was spilling out into the community,” says Rick Brady, City Attorney. “Even more disturbing was the growing number of cases where these kids would literally drink themselves into the hospital. We knew we had to take serious action.”

Previous attempts to deal with underage drinkers through measures such as home detention or jail were not working, as evidenced by the fact that many students were coming back through the courts several times for alcohol citations. “We figured that most of these kids were sitting in their dorm rooms drinking rather than getting the help they needed,” says Brady. “Plus, our jail was already overcrowded and it was costing taxpayers upwards of \$50/day to lock them up, which wasn’t fair to our citizens.”

## The SCRAM Program

In January 2005, the City turned to SCRAM® (Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitor) as a key component of its revamped program to rein in underage drinking. Its SCRAM program is unique in that it’s run by the City’s Municipal Court Division and is used strictly to monitor 18-21 year-olds.

The City’s underage alcohol program utilizes a four-pronged approach: SCRAM monitoring, parental notification, community service, and alcohol education classes. When a student is cited for an alcohol-related offense (with the majority being minor possession), he or she receives a ticket. Repeat offenders – as well as some first-time offenders (with a BAC of .05 or more, or who are transported to the hospital or detox) – are placed on SCRAM for two weeks. “We figure if the student can get through two weekends without drinking, he or she probably doesn’t have a serious alcohol problem,” says Brady. Students must pay their own SCRAM monitoring to divert the burden off local taxpayers and also make them more accountable for their actions.

Bryce Kyburz, Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Education Coordinator for UNC, concurs. “The two weeks that the student is on SCRAM is like a ‘time out’ from partying so we can assess whether or not there is a true alcohol problem there,” he explains. “We have very few kids who continue drinking while on SCRAM but, if they do, it’s a huge red flag and we’ll work to get them the help they need.”

In addition to SCRAM, a letter is sent home to the students’ parents that explains the citation and its consequences. “We found that bringing the parents into the process has been particularly effective,” says Renie Shovlin, Legal Assistant with the City Attorney’s Office. “Most appreciate knowing what’s going on with their child and we’ve found that this letter has a significant impact on the students. We’ve had some request longer SCRAM monitoring or even jail time – anything other than having us inform their parents.”

Other program components include completing between 15 to 40 hours of community service and taking an alcohol education class at UNC. First-time offenders take a 6-hour class, while repeat offenders or those with a serious violation must take a more comprehensive course. If the student completes all four requirements and does not have a repeat offense, his or her record is wiped clean at one year from the date of plea. “The students know that this could be part of their permanent record and don’t want that,” says Brady. In addition to Municipal Court requirements, repeat offenders may be subject to UNC sanctions such as losing scholarships or being suspended or expelled from school.

## Awareness Deters Drinking

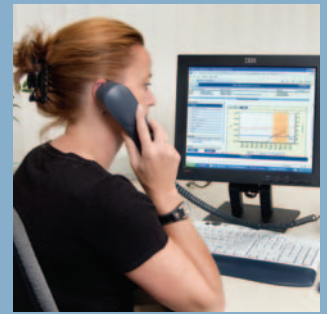
Brady explains that the City’s Municipal Court meets with UNC officials on a monthly basis to discuss student cases and assess progress. “We have a great working relationship with the university,” he says. “In fact, SCRAM is brought up and explained during freshman orientation.”

Another effective drinking deterrent has been the “Party Patrol,” where campus police regularly patrol parties and bust unruly drinkers. “At some of these parties, we’ve ticketed 30-40 kids at a time,” explains George Slack, Senior Officer with the UNC Police Department. “The Party Patrol has really curtailed out-of-control drinking.”

In total, the City’s efforts are working. “The word on the street is, don’t come to Greeley to party,” says Brady. “We don’t know if SCRAM is the entire reason for this, but it’s an important factor. While we don’t think that the students have stopped drinking, we feel they’re drinking smarter and more responsibly.”

## Program Results

Currently, less than 3% of the students who have worn SCRAM have been rearrested for alcohol-related offenses. “We’ve found that the peer pressure component of SCRAM is particularly effective in driving this point home,” says Kyburz. “I’ve had students say they are embarrassed to wear the SCRAM ankle bracelet in front of their friends because it’s very noticeable, is an expense to them, and is also a constant reminder of what they’ve done. Having to wear SCRAM is teaching them that irresponsible drinking is not a game anymore.”



- SCRAM program targets 18-21 year-olds
- Minimum monitoring period – 2 weeks
- Students pay for own SCRAM monitoring
- Combined with parental notification, education classes, and community service
- Less than 3% of students commit repeat drinking offenses
- 70% reduction in student transports to either the hospital or detox (2005-2006)
- Significant reduction in citations for minor possession of alcohol

