

AGENCY

The **Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC)** is an independent political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. ABC is responsible for wholesale and retail operations of distilled spirits, regulation of the commonwealth’s alcohol-related laws, licensing, and alcohol education and prevention. For purposes of working with the executive branch, ABC maintains a direct line of communication with the Secretariat of Public Safety and Homeland Security.

WET and DRY COUNTIES

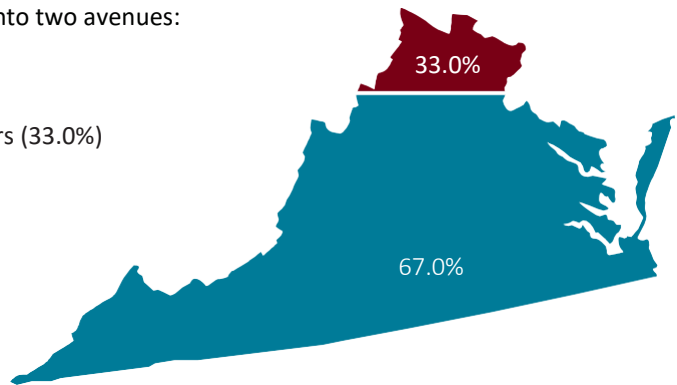
Effective July 1, 2020, all Virginia jurisdictions are wet. Qualified voters in a jurisdiction can petition the circuit court to ask that a referendum be held regarding the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages by ABC-licensed restaurants within that jurisdiction.

Population 21 and over (Estimate) (2020) **6.4 million**

NET PROFIT

VA distributes its net profit into two avenues:

- General Fund (67.0%)
- Appropriation Act Transfers (33.0%)
Figures from 2020




HISTORY

Virginia ABC has existed since 1934, when the new state department opened its first four ABC stores in Richmond on May 15. In 1936, the General Assembly granted full police powers to the department’s designated agents to enforce laws against bootlegging and moonshining. Local and federal officials had originally performed those enforcement functions, but more help was needed. In 2018, Virginia ABC transitioned from a traditional state government agency to an authority, which provides more flexibility and efficiency as a retailer, wholesaler, and regulator of distilled spirits.

ENFORCEMENT

Virginia ABC’s nearly 100 special agents are alcohol law educators and regulators, working directly with approximately 19,000 licensed businesses to address non-compliance issues and reduce criminal activities involving alcohol. These agents also initiate public safety investigations following incidents at licensed establishments, which involve assisting and cooperating with other law enforcement agencies, civic leagues, residents, businesses, and community stakeholders. All ABC special agents are sworn Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services certified law enforcement officers within the bureau, which is accredited through the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission. ABC’s Bureau of Law Enforcement also includes licensing, compliance, and records management.

\$211,960,922
FY2020 Net Profit



Since its organization in 1934, Virginia ABC has contributed more than \$11.4 billion to the state in the form of profits and taxes.

Figures are from 2020

DISTRIBUTION

Spirits are only sold in state operated ABC stores. Spirits, mixers and a selection of Virginia wines are shipped statewide from a central warehouse in Richmond. Virginia ABC ships to its stores where individuals and licensed restaurants may purchase from the store of their choosing. Virginia ABC operates on a bailment system, where the agency is not charged for the product until it is shipped out of the warehouse.

Beer and wine are handled through private distributors who generally deliver products to the retailers. Retail to retail or retail to restaurant sales are not allowed.

Does jurisdiction allow direct shipping of wine?



Tax per standard drink:

SPIRITS: \$0.111

WINE: \$0.059

BEER: \$0.024

OUTLETS AND GROCERY STORES

Virginia has control of spirits at wholesale and retail. It has over 392 state operated retail stores.

- Virginia does not have policies that regulate the density of off-premise outlets in a neighborhood/precinct/condensed area
- Jurisdiction does not allow the sale of spirits in convenience stores
- Servers must be 18 years old and older to serve beer at on-premise outlets, and employees at off-premise outlets have no minimum age specified to sell beer
- The sale of beer and wine are permitted in grocery stores
- Sunday sales are allowed
- Keg registration is required
- For every 100,000 residents ages 21 and older, there are 6.1 spirits outlets
- Beverage service training is voluntary in the state

**VIRGINIA
ALCOHOLIC
BEVERAGE
CONTROL
AUTHORITY
IN ACTION**



YOUTH ALCOHOL and DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROJECT

YADAPP is an annual youth leadership program that empowers teens to become involved in keeping their schools and community's alcohol and drug-free through the implementation of youth-led action plans. As many as 375 adults and teens from across the commonwealth participate in the year-long prevention partnership.

HIGHER EDUCATION ALCOHOL & DRUG STRATEGIC UNIFIED PREVENTION

The mission of HEADS UP is to inform and equip individuals to effectively promote healthy decision-making and advocate for substance misuse education and prevention programming on college campuses. HEADS UP provides a series of free online training, resources and materials to increase knowledge of substance misuse and high-risk drinking among college faculty, staff, students and their parents. Additionally, HEADS UP builds the capacity of student leaders on college campuses to hold substance misuse education or awareness events. During fiscal year 2020, approximately 71% of all higher education institutions in Virginia engaged in this program. There were 3,583 downloads of resources and an estimated reach of 6,783 students through the use of HEADS UP promotional materials at campus events.

RESPONSIBLE SELLERS and SERVERS: VIRGINIA'S PROGRAM (RSVP) and MANAGER'S ALCOHOL RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING (MART)

These programs designed for licensees and their employees are held regionally and via online training. Virginia ABC special agents conduct the classes to help those who sell and serve alcohol become more responsible and to better understand ABC laws, rules and regulations. During fiscal year 2020, ABC conducted 46 RSVP classroom programs and 569 participants received the training, and 2,734 took RSVP training online. Additionally, there were nine MART classroom programs and 64 participants, and 824 took MART training online.

DEFINITIONS

Control systems -- jurisdictions that directly control the distribution and sale of beverage alcohol in their borders.

Three-tier system -- the method of alcohol distribution developed after Prohibition in the United States. Producers/manufacturers (first tier) can sell products only to wholesalers/distributors (second tier) who then sell to retailers (third tier).

Revenue Per Capita -- revenue per person.

Wet and dry counties -- Wet jurisdictions are those that permit the sale of spirits, wine, or beer for on-premise and off-premise consumption. Dry jurisdictions prohibit some or all alcohol sales, whether on- or off-premise.

Sources: University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center Demographics Research Group, 2020 Virginia Population Estimates, Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority, State Alcohol Tax Rates (December 2017).