The West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration (WVABCA) is a revenue generating state agency under the West Virginia Department of Revenue. The WVABCA’s mission is to regulate and control the manufacture, sale, distribution, transportation, storage and consumption of alcohol while assuring the greatest degree of personal freedom consistent with the health, safety and welfare of every West Virginian. The WVABCA’s core functions are; enforcing the laws and regulations, performing all licensing functions and operating a wholesale Distribution Center in a cost efficient manner.

State law allows local jurisdictions to hold public referendums and/or approve local laws or regulations on alcohol sales.

There are counties and municipalities in the state that remain dry. Dry applies to off premises sales of spirits and wine.

The WVABCA was created in 1935. In 1981, the state privatized wine sales. In 1990, a law was passed to discontinue all retail sales of alcohol by the state, but it retained the distribution of liquor. Two hundred and fourteen state liquor stores were bid out to allow the private sector to purchase retail liquor outlet stores in assigned market zones in 1990 and 1991. Every ten years the Retail Liquor Licensing Board (RLLB) reviews the market zones and the existing number of retail liquor outlet stores in the state to direct the WVABCA to proceed with the rebid. There are currently 178 retail liquor outlet stores in West Virginia that were obtained through a bidding process and who also pay annual license fees. These licenses will expire June 30, 2020.

The Enforcement Division is committed to enforcing state laws pertaining to the sale, purchase, transportation, manufacture, consumption, and possession of alcoholic beverages.

Some of the duties of the Enforcement Division include:

- Initial inspection for licensing purposes
- Background checks on applicants for a WVABCA license
- Inspections of Class A and Class B licensed establishments
- Inspections to ensure that premises are properly licensed
- Responding to complaints received from the public regarding violations
- Underage alcohol compliance checks

WV distributes its net revenue into one avenue:

- General Fund (100%)

From 2003 through 2017, the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration has contributed more than $270 million to the state.
In West Virginia, the WVABCA conducts wholesale sale of spirits, while the retail sale of spirits is privately owned and provided by 178 retail liquor outlet stores. Wine reaches the retail market through suppliers and distributors with approved and registered products not assigned to a specific territory. Beer is under a franchise system with specific franchise agreements detailing geographic and brand requirements.


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