

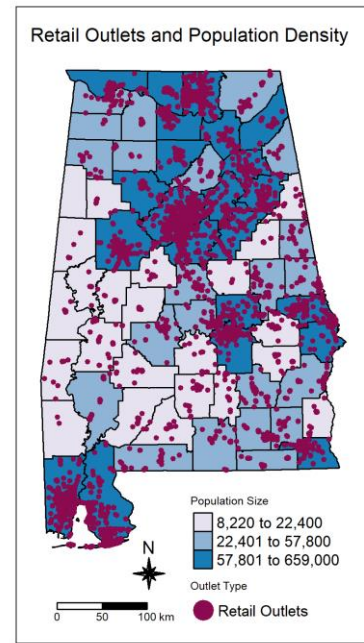


A BLUEPRINT FOR MEASURING & MONITORING ALCOHOL OUTLETS IN ALABAMA

Kelsey Van Selous, Dr Shawn Dorius, and Dr Cassandra Dorius
December, 2022

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Iowa State University's Public Science Collaborative (PSC) partnered with the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC), the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA), and Alabama's Direct Communications (DC) to better understand the landscape of alcohol outlets in Alabama. Motivating this collaboration was the opportunity to better leverage state and local data to inform alcohol risk education and prevention efforts across the state. The role of PSC in this collaboration was to clean and classify Alabama alcohol license data, create measures of alcohol outlet density to enable statewide monitoring and evaluation, create measures of alcohol outlet density for the city of Montgomery, and develop strategic recommendations for future directions in expanding Alabama's alcohol outlet monitoring and impact assessment capacity.



WHY MEASURE ALCOHOL OUTLETS IN ALABAMA?

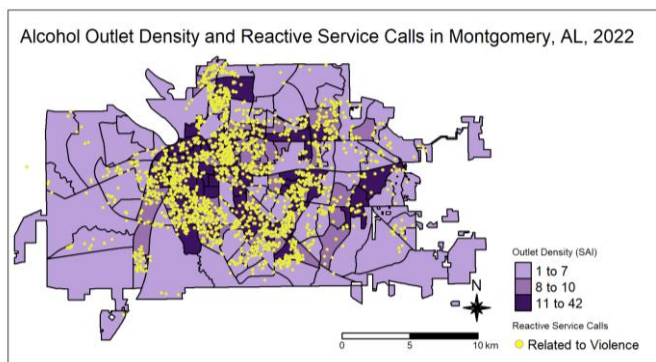
The measurement of alcohol outlet densities (AOD) helps to identify areas with high concentrations of businesses selling alcohol, such as bars, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, and liquor stores, within close proximity to each other. Monitoring AODs allows community leaders to assess local access and availability of alcohol, and identify areas that may benefit from interventions to reduce excessive drinking and its connected harms, such as chronic illness, violence, automobile crashes, property damage, and cancer. Some of the most effective and evidence-based strategies to reduce community-level alcohol harm include regulation of the location and proximity of alcohol outlets to other alcohol retailers through changes to liquor or zoning laws, limiting the types or number of licenses, increasing alcohol tax, or reducing hours or days of sale. For these reasons, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommends communities measure and monitor AODs to inform alcohol health and safety policy.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TECHNICAL REPORT:

Our analysis of Alabama alcohol retail licensing data shows that (see technical report for full details):





- Baldwin County consistently bests other counties in the state for the number of alcohol licenses and outlets. Baldwin also ranks high in other outlet density measures, including outlets per person and square mile.
- Birmingham, Mobile, Huntsville, Montgomery, & Tuscaloosa are the top five cities for the largest number of retail licenses and alcohol outlets.
- Wetumpka has the highest number of retail licenses and alcohol outlets per person.

- In Montgomery, violence-related service calls are concentrated in neighborhoods with a high density of alcohol outlets. This was especially true in the city center and along the highway 231 corridor.
- Off-premise outlet density, which includes liquor stores, gas stations, and grocery stores, is highest in the southwestern part of the state, which suggests a higher risk of underage drinking and unsupervised alcohol consumption occurring in homes or during events.
- Intoxicated-driver automobile crashes, including those involving a fatality, are highest in counties with a high density of alcohol outlets.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROJECT CONTINUATION

The Public Science Collaborative recommends the Alabama Mapping Project Team:

	Retain historical alcohol licensing data. This will enable monitoring of changes in alcohol outlet density and community health and safety over time.
	Connect with local police departments and community groups. Local police departments can be a valuable resource for data collection, validation, and monitoring in areas with high AODS and poor health and safety. Community organizations can help design locally tailored interventions.
	Create and publish an interactive dashboard. Publicly available, interactive dashboards allow stakeholders to 'drill down' into the data and find areas of concern. Dashboards also make it easy to keep the data current and usable for many groups. The project team may consider adding schools, parks, and other 'sensitive areas' where youth are at risk of high alcohol exposure. Alcohol violation data will enable precision interventions that identify chronic offenders of state liquor sales laws.
	Further investigate the data infrastructure. Our analysis indicates that places like Baldwin County and the cities of Wedowee and Montgomery, for example, warrant further investigation, given the high level of alcohol exposure in those areas. In the case of Montgomery, a high concentration of alcohol outlets was linked to high-density violence-related service calls.

SUMMARY

Alabama would benefit from further monitoring, assessment, and investigation of alcohol outlets. The accompanying report takes a deeper dive into the Alabama alcohol data infrastructure to illustrate the variety of analytics and insights that can be gleaned from the state's licensing and complementary datasets. For questions or additional information about the report, data tools described, or the Public Science Collaborative, please reach out to the principal investigator of this study, Dr. Shawn Dorius, at sdorius@iastate.edu.



Shawn Dorius, PhD
Iowa State University
Public Science Collaborative