



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ServSafe Alcohol First Classroom-Based Responsible Alcohol Service Certification Program to Receive Affirmative Defense Approval in Iowa**

*In-Person Classes Available Statewide from Iowa Restaurant Association*

**West Des Moines, Iowa – January 9, 2025** – ServSafe Alcohol, a nationally recognized program developed by the hospitality industry, has become the first classroom-based training in Iowa approved to provide affirmative defense protections to businesses whose employees complete the certification.

Affirmative defense shields a business from civil prosecution in cases of sale-to-minor (18-20 years old) violations, as long as the employee responsible has successfully completed ServSafe Alcohol training and passed the certification exam. While the business may avoid prosecution, the employee remains legally accountable and may face fines for the infraction.

“This approval represents a significant step forward for Iowa’s hospitality industry,” said Jessica Dunker, president and CEO of the Iowa Restaurant Association. “ServSafe Alcohol provides employees with the skills and knowledge they need to serve responsibly, while also offering businesses an important layer of protection through affirmative defense.”

The approval follows legislation enacted last year, which expanded eligibility for affirmative defense protections beyond the state’s Iowa Program for Alcohol Compliance Training (I-PACT).

The ServSafe Alcohol program is designed to address real-world challenges in alcohol service, including age verification and handling potential situations unique to restaurants and bars. The four-hour course culminates in a nationally recognized certification exam, which must be renewed every three years.

Affirmative defense protections are limited to once every four years per business and require employees to be certified prior to any violation.

Effective immediately, in-person ServSafe Alcohol courses offered by the Iowa Restaurant Association grant access to these protections. Classes, are available in both English and Spanish, and are being offered statewide for only \$10 per person, made possible by grant funding from the Iowa Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau.

For class schedules, more information, or to bring a class to your community visit [www.restaurantiowa.com/servsafe-alcohol](http://www.restaurantiowa.com/servsafe-alcohol).

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**About the Iowa Restaurant Association**

The Iowa Restaurant Association is an advocacy organization supporting Iowa’s restaurant and bar industry with educational and promotional programs across the state.

**Media Contact:**

Emilee Zimmerman  
Marketing & Communications Manager  
[ezimmerman@restaurantiowa.com](mailto:ezimmerman@restaurantiowa.com)  
515-276-1454