



American
CRAFT SPIRITS
ASSOCIATION

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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ACSA is grateful to its many volunteers who offer their time, talent and resources to advance the craft spirits industry. We are also thankful to the many committee members not listed on these pages who regularly provide thought leadership to address the concerns of small producers of craft spirits throughout the U.S.

The Year in Review

Who We Are

The American Craft Spirits Association is the only registered national nonprofit trade group representing the U.S. craft spirits industry. Members vote for the 15 democratically elected representatives who make up the Board of Directors, and this Board collectively works to govern the ACSA in a transparent, responsive manner and in accordance with our bylaws. We invite you to read this 2024 Annual Report and let us know what you think. Your insight is critical as we move forward as an organization and as an industry.

Member Owned

Membership in ACSA is open to anyone, although Voting Members must be independent licensed distillers with a valid DSP, subscribe to ACSA's Code of Ethics, have no more than 50% of the DSP owned (directly or indirectly) by a producer of distilled spirits whose combined annual production of distilled spirits from all sources exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond, and annually produce fewer than 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond (the amount on which excise taxes are paid).

In case terms, 750,000 proof gallons is 315,451 9-liter cases (12 750 ml bottles) of 100-proof spirit. A DSP may not be a Voting Member if another producer of distilled spirits whose combined annual production of distilled spirits from all sources exceeds 750,000 proof gallons removed from bond and directly or indirectly holds an ownership interest of greater than 50% of the DSP.



2024 Craft Spirits Data Project

In September, ACSA and Park Street revealed that craft spirits sales were in decline for the first time in recent history. That was according to the latest edition of the Craft Spirits Data Project (CSDP), an ongoing, joint effort between ACSA and its hand-picked partner, Park Street.

In 2023, the U.S. craft spirits category performed in line with the larger spirits market, experiencing its first decline since the creation of the report in 2016. The craft spirits category represented 13.5 million cases (versus 14 million in 2022) and \$7.8 billion in sales for the year, representing a volume decrease of 3.6% and value decrease of 1.1%.

As a whole, craft spirits sales remain nearly evenly split between the home state (48.1%) and other states (51.9%) in 2023. However, post-pandemic, craft spirits sales in the home state have increased share of total craft spirit sales (+1.4pp) while sales outside the home state have decreased as a percentage of total craft sales (-1.3pp).

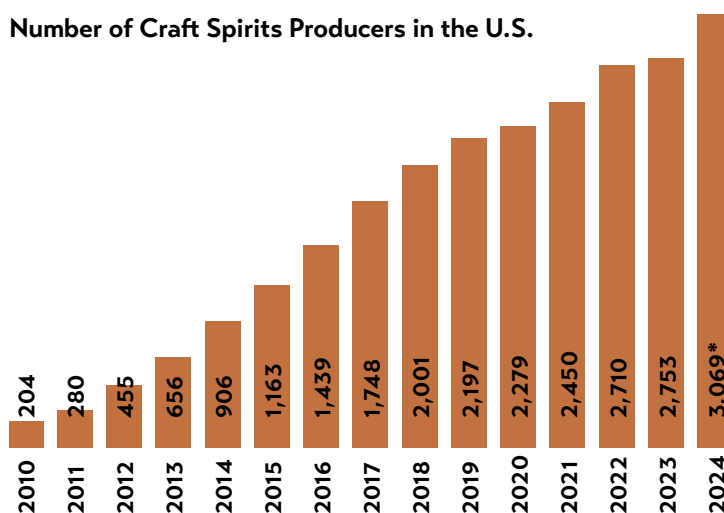
Large craft producers shifted resources to focus on sales in their respective home states as well as exports. Medium-sized craft producers lead growth on nearly all fronts as this segment is the fastest growing within craft spirits. Small craft producers focused primarily on increasing home state sales, with this channel gaining share of sales accordingly.

Despite economic headwinds, craft producers continue to reinvest in their businesses, though at a slower rate in 2023. The average amount invested by a craft producer declined from \$337,000 in 2021 to \$310,000 in 2023. However, the total investment by all craft producers continues to increase, reaching \$885 million in 2023.

While the craft spirits industry has demonstrated resilience, the road to sustained growth and profitability demands continued innovation and collaboration. Moreover, it demands strong grassroots advocacy at both the state and national level.

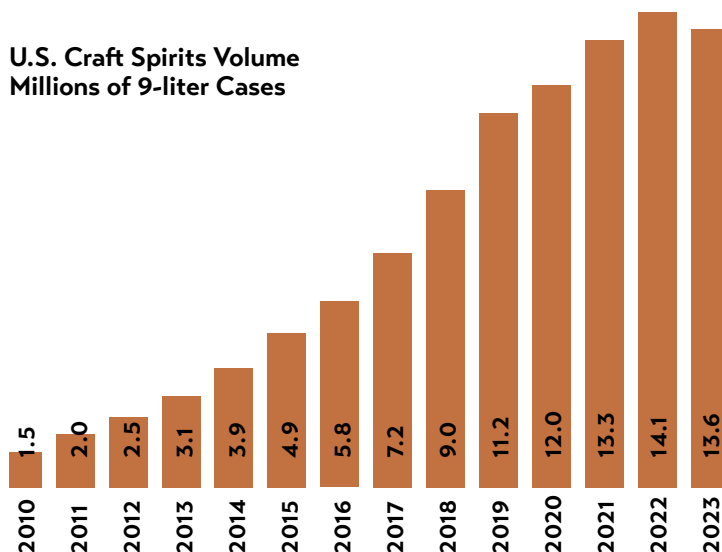
To view the complete report, visit americancraftspirits.org.

Number of Craft Spirits Producers in the U.S.

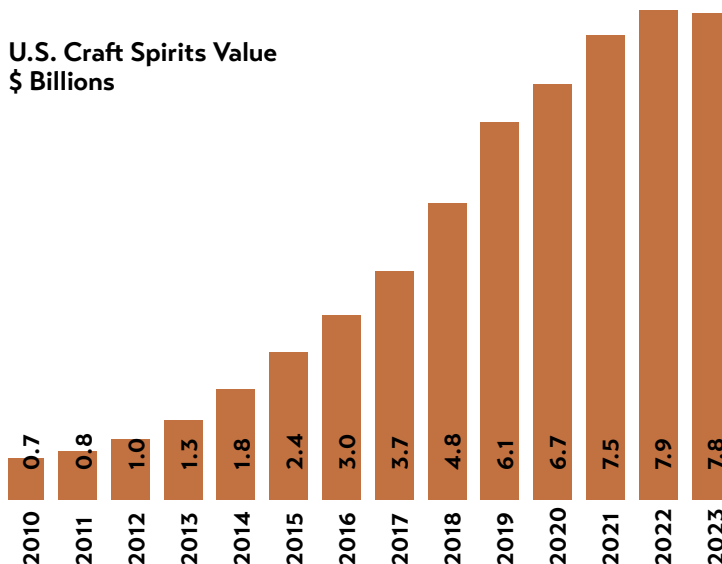


*As of August 2024

U.S. Craft Spirits Volume
Millions of 9-liter Cases



U.S. Craft Spirits Value
\$ Billions



Advocacy

Craft Spirits Producers Return to Washington, D.C.

In September, more than 40 craft spirits producers from across the United States convened in Washington, D.C., for ACSA's Legislative Fly-In. This gathering aimed to address pressing federal legislative and regulatory challenges impacting small distillers amid significant industry headwinds.

Craft producers met with their U.S. Senators, Representatives and regulators to address a number of issues, including:

- Helping American craft distillers by ensuring regulations are not overly burdensome to small business manufacturers
- Maintaining and expanding tax incentives for America's small craft distillers to remain competitive
- Enhancing market access by allowing spirits to be shipped through the U.S. Postal Service in states in which DtC is allowed
- Ensuring that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) remains open and has adequate funding to provide vital services to craft distillers
- Ensuring that the federal agencies tasked with updating the U.S. Dietary Guidelines have appropriate authority, are transparent and use clear preponderance of current scientific evidence

"We're beyond pleased with the reception we received from the Congressional offices," says ACSA CEO Margie A.S. Lehrman. "We remain steadfast in our desire to fight on behalf of American craft spirits. We have lots of things to change and [the Fly-In] continues our steps forward."

Some notable guests were on-hand to greet the group of craft spirits producers before they kicked off their Capitol Hill visits. Among those were Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT); Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR); William McBride, senior VP for tax and economic policy at the Tax Foundation; Andrew Desiderio, senior Congressional reporter at Punch Bowl News; and Michelle Korsmo, president and CEO of the National Restaurant Association.

The group also convened at TTB's offices for a dialogue with the regulatory agency's top officials on key issues for small spirits producers; gathered at Cotton & Reed, a D.C.-based rum distillery, for a welcome reception; and many attending distillers poured their spirits for Congressional staffers and elected officials at the Rayburn House Office Building.



ACSA Applauds Passage of New York DtC Law

In August, ACSA joined the New York Distillers Guild in applauding Gov. Kathy Hochul for signing Senate bill 2852-A which made New York the latest state to allow certain distilled spirits manufacturers to ship their products via direct-to-consumer (DtC) shipping.

S.2852/A.3132A made New York the ninth state and district to pass DtC legislation for small distillers, following North Dakota, Nebraska, Arizona, D.C., Kentucky, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Under the legislation, craft distilleries within New York will permanently be allowed to ship DtC. Additionally, small out-of-state distillers that already enjoy the privilege of interstate DtC will have the ability to obtain a license to ship their products to New York consumers (pending the rulemaking process). The law includes adequate safeguards to ensure it is received by adult consumers only.

While DtC is a critical piece of the puzzle in the push to modernize the craft spirits marketplace, it is part of a larger set of needs, including self-distribution privileges and improved trade practices. ACSA is actively working with state guilds to support market access efforts.





Advancing DtC Opportunities

ACSA remains steadfast in its mission to modernize the spirits marketplace by championing expanded market access, including the ability for distillers to ship spirits directly to consumers (DtC). The October release of the 2024 Direct-to-Consumer Spirits Shipping Report—from global tax compliance technology leader Sovos and ACSA—highlighted continued high demand among craft spirits enthusiasts who wish to legally purchase their preferred beverages through DtC shipping.

The latest report found that the desire for buying craft spirits legally via DtC shipping is held by an overwhelming majority of regular craft spirit drinkers (85%), an increase from 2022 (80%).

“When it comes to craft spirits, there are more choices than ever before—but very few ways for consumers to access them due to antiquated and limited shipping laws,” said Margie A.S. Lehrman, CEO of ACSA. “As consumers increasingly seek more convenient ways to make their purchases, states will need to give spirits producers the tools they need to meet and expand their customer base. It is time to modify and modernize regulations to align with consumer demands for choice and convenience, and create open and fair competition for this innovative industry.”

To download the full report, visit dtcspiritsreport.com.

ACSA Applauds TTB’s Ruling on American Single Malt Whiskey

In December, the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) announced its final rule designating American Single Malt Whiskey as its own category, the culmination of a multi-year effort spearheaded by the nation’s independent spirits producers.

“As an independent craft spirits producer of American single malt, we applaud TTB for its final ruling,” says Kelly Woodcock, partner and general manager at Westward Whiskey (Portland, Oregon), president of ACSA’s Board of Directors and founding member of the American Single Malt Whiskey Commission (ASMWC). “This will be a game changer in the way we are able to market our products, both at home and abroad. American single malt is expensive and challenging to make and this designation helps consumers better understand why.”

“Recognizing American single malt whiskey as its own standard of identity offers the country’s small craft spirits producers a means to further differentiate themselves in the crowded marketplace,” says Margie A.S. Lehrman, CEO of ACSA. “Thanks to the efforts of countless ACSA volunteer members, along with the tireless work of the American Single Malt Whiskey Commission and allied members of the trade, TTB makes clear the distinctiveness of single malt whiskeys produced by the nation’s small, independent spirits manufacturers.”

The adopted criteria for American single malt whiskey specify that the product be a type of whisky that is mashed, distilled, and aged in the United States; is distilled entirely at one U.S. distillery; is distilled to a proof of 160 or less; is distilled from a fermented mash of 100 percent malted barley; is stored in oak barrels (used, uncharred new, or charred new) with a maximum capacity of 700 liters; and is bottled at not less than 80° proof. In addition, the criteria allow for the use of caramel coloring as long as its use is disclosed on the product label. The regulation will also allow the use of the term “Straight” for an American single malt whiskey that is aged for at least two years.



Election: Woodcock, Pollock and Kanof Lead Board of Directors

In April, ACSA announced the election of five new members to our Board of Directors, along with a new slate of officers.

Kelly Woodcock of Westward Whiskey (OR) was elected President of the Board of Directors. Amber Pollock of Backwards Distilling Co. (WY) was elected Vice President and Jeff Kanof of Copperworks Distilling Co. (WA) was elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

The newly elected Board Members include Tom Bard of The Bard Distillery (KY), Greg Eidam of Sugarlands Distilling Co. (TN), Adam Polonski of Lost Lantern Whiskey (VT), Phil Steger of Brother Justus Whiskey Co. (MN) and Olivia Stewart of Oxbow Rum Distillery (LA).

"It is a tremendous honor to be leading the ACSA Board of Directors as president, and it is a responsibility that I do not take lightly," said

Woodcock. "As we usher in ACSA's second decade as a leading industry trade association, I look forward to serving our growing craft spirits community and building on the organization's remarkable accomplishments thus far. We've certainly got our work cut out for us, but I'm excited to be working alongside such an esteemed group of fellow Board Members to make great things happen for our vibrant industry."



Kelly Woodcock



Jeff Kanof



Amber Pollock

Craft Spirits Classroom: Quenching Your Thirst for Knowledge

In collaboration with the Education Committee, ACSA continued to build upon our foundation of educational programming by hosting 10 webinars in 2024. Some of this year's most popular webinars included:

- Making a Mark with Amaro
- Innovations in Gin
- RTD Roundtable

These and all of our webinars are free to ACSA members. To see upcoming webinars and access archived webinars, visit americancraftspirits.org/education/webinars.



ACSA Past President and Government Affairs Chair Testifies to TTB

In February, the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) hosted a virtual public listening session to gather feedback from the alcohol beverage industry. Representing ACSA, Past President and Government Affairs Chair Becky Harris of Catoctin Creek Distilling Co. testified, cautioning TTB about the potential negative impact of mandatory nutrition and allergen labeling on small craft distilleries.

After consulting with ACSA members, Harris emphasized that labeling should remain voluntary and suggested potential exemptions for small producers who create a diverse range of innovative products each year. ACSA formalized these positions in written comments submitted in March as part of the advanced notice of public rulemaking.

11th Annual Distillers' Convention and Vendor Trade Show

In late February, ACSA welcomed more than 1,300 registered members of the craft spirits community to Denver for an unforgettable gathering at our 11th Annual Distillers' Convention and Vendor Trade Show. Amidst the backdrop of Colorado's dynamic spirits scene, we moved mountains to help our members succeed.

The record number of attendees and exhibitors immersed themselves in insightful educational sessions; navigated through a bustling trade show floor; witnessed the awards presentations for our Judging of Craft Spirits and Craft Spirits Packaging Awards; reconnected and forged new friendships at an array of networking events; and much more!

Trade Show

Our trade show floor was buzzing with energy as more than 150 exhibitors—including 40 first-time vendors—displayed their latest offerings and products designed for producers of craft spirits. We also expanded our educational offerings to the trade show floor with meetups and a series of Ask the Expert and Trade-show Talks in four salons.

Education

Our educational programming offered invaluable strategies for success. The agenda featured more than 50 sessions covering a wide range of topics for everyone from a novice to the most seasoned attendees. The three main tracks included sessions on technical/production, sales/marketing and business/compliance. Our best-attended session was a panel on premiumization trends driving craft spirits packaging innovations.

Our agenda also included the TTB Bootcamp in which a panel from the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau covered permits, formulas and labeling. Prior to the convention, we also held our popular 1.5-day Distillery 101 class.

Town Hall

At lunch on the final day of the convention, ACSA CEO Margie A.S. Lehrman presided over a town hall meeting. Attendees heard from a wide range of ACSA board members, committee chairs, advisors and partners who provided updates on ACSA's strategic plan, the Craft Spirits Data Project, education initiatives, ACSA's PAC, potential legislation affecting craft spirits producers and much more.

PAC Reception

During a reception at Ironton Distillery & Crafthouse for members of ACSA's PAC, we toasted to bolstering the business landscape for craft spirits producers. Our guests speakers included Colorado House Speaker Julie McCluskie and Senate President Steve Fenberg. Special thanks to our guest speakers and to Ironton for hosting the event!

Networking and Social Events

Throughout the course of the convention, we offered numerous opportunities for attendees and exhibitors to network over drinks, hors d'oeuvres, singing and dancing. Prior to the convention, we offered two distillery tours, which featured visits to Leopold Bros., The Family Jones, Ironton Distillery & Crafthouse, Laws Whiskey House, Bear Creek Distillery, Spirit Hound Distillers, Root Shoot Malting, Boulder Spirits, Talnua Distillery and Copper Sky Distillery.

We partnered with the Colorado Distillers Guild for a happy hour in the exhibit hall where more than 15 Colorado distilleries poured spirits and cocktails. We hosted our opening reception at Puttshack, where attendees enjoyed drinks, food and indoor mini golf.

At our hospitality suite, we tasted many of the spirits that received medals in our Judging of Craft Spirits competition. We also joined in as our fellow attendees belted out tunes during a spirited karaoke session, adding an extra layer of camaraderie to the evening's festivities.

And on the final evening of the convention, we enjoyed a concert by award-winning honky-tonk singer Casey Prestwood at The Globe Hall.



ACSA Announces 2024 Craft Spirits Tasting & Packaging Awards Medalists

At our convention in February, ACSA announced the winners of its 10th Annual Judging of American Craft Spirits and Fourth Annual Craft Spirits Packaging Awards. During an awards luncheon, **ACSA proudly bestowed the blind-tasting competition's ultimate honor, the Best in Show award, to Garrison Brothers Distillery for its Cowboy Bourbon.** In addition to Best in Show and the Best of Class distinctions, the judging panel awarded 55 gold, 107 silver and 92 bronze medals.

The Fourth Annual Craft Spirits Packaging Awards awarded 27 medals, and **Botanery Barn Distillery captured Best in Show for its Revivalist Garden Gin.**

In the Judging of American Craft Spirits, awards entries were submitted in seven main categories: whiskey, gin, rum, vodka & grain spirits, brandy, distilled specialty spirits, and ready to drink (RTD). The Best of Class distinctions, the highest honor in each of the seven judging categories, were awarded to a mix of both established, award-winning distilleries and younger newcomers. These winning distilleries were presented with hand-carved barrel heads courtesy of Thousand Oaks Barrel Co.

ACSA would like to thank its Judging of American Craft Spirits competition partners, which include Iron-ton Distillery & Crafthouse, LibDib and Sojourner Imports, as well as our panel of judges along with judging co-chairs Colton Weinstein and Jeff Wuslich. ACSA would also like to thank the Glass Packaging Institute for sponsoring the Craft Spirits Packaging Awards.

10th Annual Judging of American Craft Spirits – Best of Class Recipients

Whiskey: Cowboy Bourbon, Garrison Brothers Distillery (TX)

Brandy: Chi Rho Peach Brandy, Salvation Spirits Distillery (TX)

Gin: Gin with Notes of Lavender and Hibiscus, Fraser Valley Distilling (CO)

RTD: Teller Classic Hard Tea, Safe House Distilling Co. (NM)

Rum: 5 Year Expedition Rum, Still 630 (MO)

DSS: Absinthe Verte, As Above, So Below Distillery (NM)

Vodka: Potato Vodka, 10th Mountain Whiskey & Spirit Co. (CO)

Innovation Award: Warming Hut, Hinterhaus Distilling (CA)

Fourth Annual Craft Spirits Packaging Awards Gold Medal Winners

Portfolio: Greenhouse Spirits (TX)

Whiskey: Dragon's Milk Origin Small Batch Bourbon Whiskey; New Holland Distilling Co. (MI)

Brandy: 10th Mountain Brandy; 10th Mountain Whiskey & Spirit Co (CO)

Gin: Lighthouse Gin; Lighthouse Distillery/Foley Family Wine (CA)

Gin: Mr. Pickles Pacific Northwest Gin; Wolf Spirit Distillery (OR)

Gin: Revivalist Garden Gin; Botanery Barn Distillery (PA)

RTD: Milk Can Moonshine Strubarb Pie; Backwards Distilling Co. (WY)

Rum: 504 Coffee; Happy Raptor Distilling (LA)

DSS: Pastis 12/12 (Marseille, France)

Vodka: North Grove Vodka; Hinterhaus Distilling (CA)



Second Annual American Craft Spirits Festival

In November, 40 craft spirits producers from around the country came together in Chicago to share over 100 unique spirits at the second annual American Craft Spirits Festival. Held at Binny's Beverage Depot's Lincoln Park event space, the festival offered local consumers and select trade members an exclusive chance to explore the latest in American craft distilling. Guests sampled a range of artisanal spirits, from bold bourbons to creative gins, all crafted with care and innovation.

As a special takeaway, each attendee received the festival's official cocktail book, filled with unique recipes from participating distilleries and curated by the editors of *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine. We extend a heartfelt thanks to our participating distilleries, event chair Dan Farber, our generous sponsors, everyone who attended, and, of course, Binny's for hosting us.





CRAFT SPIRITS Magazine Enters Sixth Year

CRAFT SPIRITS magazine celebrated a milestone birthday over the summer, marking five years since the first issue was published in August 2019. The fifth anniversary year also saw the debut of some new features that the editors plan to turn into annual traditions. In the May/June issue, the magazine published its inaugural Best American Bars list, showcasing the top on-premise venues for craft spirits across the country—as nominated by ACSA members and the greater craft spirits community.

The November/December issue featured the first-ever STIR Report, a spotlight of all things Significant, Trending, Innovative and Revelatory throughout the industry. With insights spanning sales, raw materials, production, government affairs and more, the STIR Report focuses on the key developments shaping the craft spirits landscape.

Also in 2024, the magazine renewed its commitment to all facets of that landscape by premiering a food department, which explores the intersection between the distilling world and the culinary realm. The new area of focus debuted with a cover story on integrating food into distillery operations in the July/August issue.

Other key features throughout 2024 included cover stories on the emerging low-and-no-alcohol spirits segment and the vibrant craft amaro category, as well as a deep dive into the art of whiskey blending, in the words of some of the masters of the craft. And, for the fourth straight year, *CRAFT SPIRITS* magazine presented the medalists of the latest Craft Spirits Packaging Awards in the March/April edition.



Staff Retreat in Philadelphia

In late May, ACSA staff (joined by media sales consultant Annette Schnur and STEPUP Foundation program manager Sharli Ward) traveled to Philadelphia for a team retreat. Our mission was clear: to explore innovative ways to better serve our vibrant community. Amidst our productive sessions, we also enjoyed a walking tour of Philly's food scene and took a delightful break at Philadelphia Distilling, where we toured the distillery and savored sips of gin and cocktails.



Board Retreat in Tucson

In late January, our Board of Directors began high level discussions during a retreat in Tucson, Arizona, where members focused on the efficient use of resources to advocate for greater market access. The discussions continued in September during a second retreat in Washington, D.C., where outgoing and incoming directors collaborated on a working draft of a consumer bill of rights, an advocacy tool intended to debut in 2025.

STEPUP Foundation Celebrates Milestones

In February, the Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals (STEPUP Foundation) held its second graduation ceremony, this time recognizing interns Ashley Grayson and Amy Salter in a gathering at The Family Jones Spirit House in Denver. Inaugural interns Erin Lee and Yakntoro “Yaki” Udoumoh and 2024 interns Alexcia Pugh and Erica Paul also attended. Both mentors and DSP hosts from 2023 and 2024 joined the celebration.

In 2024, Pugh and Paul spent time at Baltimore-based Sagamore Spirit Distillery; Rochester, New York-based Black Button Distilling; Bloomington, Indiana-based Cardinal Spirits; and Dallas-based Republic National Distributing Co.

STEPUP is especially grateful to 2024 mentors Melinda Maddox of Old Elk Distillery and Johnny Jeffery of Feiba Peveli LLC.

Also in 2024, STEPUP opened applications for its 2025 internship program. They are proud to announce the addition of Keyah Boyd as 2025 Intern, Mentor Sydney Jones of Heaven Hill, and Corsair Artisan Distillery as Host Distillery.

The STEPUP internship program has primarily been funded through Cornerstone Partners and other major donors in the past. STEPUP is excited to unveil its new online donation platform on its website, making it easier than ever for individuals to contribute. This new system allows for donations of any size, ensuring that everyday supporters can now easily contribute to the Foundation’s vital mission. To learn more or pledge support, visit stepupinternship.org/donors.



ACSA Statement of Financial Activities 2024

				From 2023	From 2023
	(\$) 2023	(\$) 2024	(\$) 2024 Budget	(\$) CHANGE	(%) CHANGE
INCOME					
MEMBERSHIP / SPONSORSHIP	521,970	604,016	667,314	82,046	14
PROGRAM INCOME	853,313	1,029,955	1,016,577	176,641	17
TOTAL INCOME	1,375,284	1,633,970	1,683,891	258,687	16
EXPENSES					
PROGRAM EXPENSES	731,127	934,353	1,074,730	203,225	22
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	590,031	585,970	592,454	(4,060)	(1)
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,321,158	1,520,323	1,667,184	199,165	15
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENSES	54,126	113,647	16,707	59,522	(110)

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our annual sponsors, whose generous support enables us to move the craft spirits industry forward.

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Malkin Law

MGP

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Shopware
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Thousand Oaks Barrel Co.
Ultra Pure, LLC (Signature Spirits)
West Virginia Great Barrel Co.
Whalen Insurance





A Toast to 2025


We are eager to band together to continue to modernize the craft spirits industry. Our mission to elevate and advocate for the community of craft spirits producers has never been more important. Together, we will secure a profitable economic climate, ripe with American innovation.


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