



CULTIVATING PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

PURPOSE

Ensuring the continuation of your smoke-free multi-unit housing work

OUTCOMES

- Connect with other smoke-free multi-unit housing programs
- Create online resources to continue program services with reduced funding
- Seek additional funding when possible
- Evaluate your program and successes
- Consider using public policy strategies as sustainable change for increasing the number of smoke-free multi-unit housing policies

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Program evaluation & sustainability strategies should be incorporated into the original design of your program. Unfortunately, programs without this foresight often attempt to create evaluation and sustainability strategies as funding or programmatic cycles end. This leads to challenges because necessary data has not been tracked and relationships have not been established to allow for successful evaluation and sustainability.

These strategies might be overlooked in program planning because it seems pessimistic to plan for a project's end. In reality, planning for evaluation and sustainability is a smart strategy that will benefit your program and the smoke-free multi-unit housing movement as a whole.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND SMOKE-FREE HOUSING

The role of public health in smoke-free housing

If you work in a local or state health department, you can feel confident that you can work on voluntary smoke-free multi-unit housing policies without violating lobbying restrictions. Working directly with property managers on voluntary smoke-free policies does not require lobbying and should be permitted even for organizations that have restrictions against working on public policy initiatives.

Many state and local health departments around the country have staff that work directly on smoke-free multi-unit housing policies. However, in order to be the most effective, it is best to designate staff members who can become experts on the issue and become involved in the housing industry as much as possible. If staff have too many other projects and duties, it will be difficult for them to build and maintain the necessary relationships and attend local events. If there is no capacity within your organization to commit to the project, consider contracting with a local community or advocacy organization to do the work.

Contracting with a community organization has the added benefit of partnering with people who may have existing relationships in the housing industry and who know the local population well. That does not mean that you will not have the ability to provide input into the focus and strategies used in the project. Work closely with the contracting organization and provide guidance for policy direction. Community organizations will also likely appreciate assistance in creating project materials and a web site.

KEY TERMS:

DISPARATE POPULATIONS:

Groups of people who are dissimilar from the majority—usually in income and health. In public health contexts this usually refers to groups that are poor in income and health and often face inequities when seeking solutions for their health problems. Also known as priority populations.

DISCLOSURE ORDINANCE: *An ordinance that would require managers to make renters aware of smoking and nonsmoking policies before the renter signs a lease.*

RENT CONTROL: *Laws that set a maximum amount that a property manager can charge to rent a unit. Rent control is intended to protect renters from excessive rent increases by mandating gradual price increases. Sometimes called rent leveling or rent stabilization.*

When writing grants or requesting funds, several specific facts can support a strong case for the need for a solid smoke-free housing program:

- Smoke-free housing is the next step in tobacco control;
- In many communities, housing is one of the last indoor places in which people are exposed to secondhand smoke; and
- Disparate populations are often the ones who suffer the most.

The next step in tobacco control

Tobacco control and public health advocates around the country have worked for many years to adopt smoke-free laws that require workplaces

*CASE STUDY:***MINNESOTA'S
COMMITMENT TO
FUNDING SMOKE-FREE
MULTI-UNIT HOUSING
PROGRAMS**

The Association for Nonsmokers — Minnesota (ANSR), a statewide nonprofit tobacco control organization and parent organization of the Live Smoke Free multi-unit housing program, began working on smoke-free housing policies in the mid-1990's with minimal funding. In 2007, through a competitive grant process, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) awarded funds to ANSR and a few other community groups to work on smoke-free multi-unit housing through the Tobacco-Free Communities grant program. This work provided the catalyst for other tobacco control and health organizations in Minnesota, such as ClearWay Minnesota and BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota, to include smoke-free multi-unit housing work as an option for their local tobacco prevention grantees. It also led MDH to encourage its Statewide Health Improvement Program 1.0 grantees to work on smoke-free multi-housing policies. By 2012, MDH required all local health department recipients of the Statewide Health Improvement Program 2.0 grant funds to work on smoke-free housing policies, bringing the total to approximately 20 programs at nonprofits, local health departments, and tribal reservations funded to work on smoke-free housing policies through grant programs at MDH.

including restaurants and bars to be 100% smoke free. These laws are important to the nation's public health, and the advocacy efforts have led to successful policy change in 23 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington D.C. These laws, along with local laws in other states, protect nearly 50% of the U.S. population.¹

The work on these laws isn't finished, but it is well established. In states that have smoke-free workplace laws, multi-unit housing can be the next venue on which to focus efforts. A voluntary smoke-free housing movement can happen simultaneously with a smoke-free workplace movement in states that are still working on smoke-free workplace laws. In Minnesota, substantive funding of smoke-free housing programs began in 2007, the same year that the state's smoke-free workplace law (updated to include bars and restaurants) was introduced, adopted, and implemented. The smoke-free housing initiative did not hinder progress of the smoke-free workplace movement because it was perceived as a movement done in partnership with property owners, not done to them. In a time of heightened public awareness about smoke-free environments and concerns about strong resistance to mandated change, the voluntary policy adoption approach was less controversial than a mandated approach.

Government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), recognize multi-unit housing as an important venue in which people need protection from secondhand smoke. The Surgeon General's report "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke" concludes that "the only way to fully protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of secondhand smoke is through 100% smoke-free environments."² The Surgeon General's "Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes" states that "the risk for [secondhand smoke] exposure extends beyond the immediate family. Smokers living in multifamily residences (such as apartment and condominium complexes) can affect not only family members, but other residents as well."³

HUD has released several documents describ-

ing the benefits of smoke-free housing including “Leading Our Nation to Healthier Homes: The Healthy Homes Strategic Plan”⁴ and notices to public housing authorities and participating buildings of the Multifamily Rental Assistance Programs that strongly encourage those managers to adopt smoke-free policies.⁵ You can use the information and conclusions from these organizations to demonstrate that smoke-free multi-unit housing is the next step in tobacco control.

Few indoor places still allow smoking

In areas that have comprehensive or nearly comprehensive smoke-free public places laws, housing may be one of the last indoor places where smoking is allowed. Approximately 21,884 municipalities in the country are covered by a 100% smoke-free provision in at least one major indoor public area such as workplaces, restaurants, and/or bars. This means that nearly 80% of the U.S. population is covered by indoor smoke-free laws in at least some of their local public environments.¹ It makes little sense to stop tobacco control work short of protecting people from involuntary secondhand smoke exposure in their own home; especially when that might be one of the few places in which they are exposed.² People also tend to spend more time in their home than in any other location.⁶

Disparate populations suffer most often

In many geographic areas, specifically crowded urban areas, rental units (subsidized or market-rate) within multi-unit buildings are the only readily accessible type of housing. When this limited housing stock is coupled with financial restriction, purchasing a single family home (and thus gaining complete control over secondhand smoke exposure from others) is often out-of-reach for low-income persons. Therefore, these populations are often disparately exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes at higher rates than the general population.^{7,8}

In addition, these populations often have chronic health conditions that are made worse by exposure to secondhand smoke. They may also have little access to healthcare in order to receive treatment for those health conditions. Unfortunately, finances and the need for a specific kind of housing facility may be barriers to moving to a new home in order to stop the smoke exposure.

Many grant programs are now focusing on protecting disparate populations due to the higher rate of illness and death related to health inequities among those populations. Incorporating a smoke-free housing component in your work can demonstrate a quick and effective way to reach those populations.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT WOULD POTENTIALLY FUND SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING WORK

- Federal, state and local public health agencies;
- National voluntary health organizations (and state chapters) such as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association;
- Nonprofit tobacco control foundations;
- Disparity, social justice, and quality-of-life organizations;
- National foundations;
- Asthma awareness organizations; and
- Healthy housing/indoor air quality organizations.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUSTAIN THE WORK

If your organization can no longer work directly on smoke-free policies, the smoke-free housing movement can still continue if you have built enough momentum that will allow property managers to adopt smoke-free policies without a funded tobacco control partner. The movement will be slower without a funded partner, but progress is still possible.

Creating norm change and building momentum can't happen unless you lay the groundwork and employ several strategies ahead of time in order to sustain the work. Managers will need places to find resources and renters will need to continue to see the importance of asking for smoke-free environments. You can plan to meet those needs by partnering with the housing industry and with government agencies while your program still has funds.

Partnering with the housing industry

As you meet people in the housing industry and build relationships, think about how a particular organization might be able to help sustain your work. Perhaps staff of a housing nonprofit could be trained on working with managers to adopt smoke-free policies, or maybe another organization will keep your program materials on hand to distribute. One of the easiest requests is to ask if an organization would be willing to put information about smoke-free housing on their web site. You can assist them in writing information that is timeless so that their staff won't need to update it often. Work with your local housing trade associations (see Chapter 5) to get information on their web sites since that is already a credible place in which managers will look for resources.

Partnering with rental search services

As more and more rental search services begin to offer a way for renters to quickly find smoke-free buildings, renters will continue to demand smoke-free living environments and that will contribute to social norm change in your community. Encouraging rental search services to offer a

smoke-free building listing also ensures that renters will have a way to find smoke-free buildings even if your program can no longer offer a listing. For more information on working with rental search services, read the Chapter 5 "Reaching Out to the Multi-Unit Housing Industry."



Partnering with government agencies

The housing industry is a credible source for both renters and managers to seek information, but it's not the only credible source. You can work with your local, regional, or state government agencies and encourage them to provide resources in their offices and on their web sites.



In many states, the Attorney General produces a Landlord/Tenant Law guidebook that is available to all managers and renters (in some places, it is required that managers have the guidebook on hand for all renters to receive). Meet with your Attorney General's office and ask that information about smoke-free housing be included in the guidebook. Even if there are no laws in your state requiring multi-unit housing to be smoke free, your Attorney General may be willing to include information about the dangers of secondhand smoke and smoke migration in multi-unit buildings as well as information on what renters can do if they suffer from secondhand smoke exposure.

Encourage your local or state health department as well as local units of government (e.g., cities, counties, parishes, etc.) to put smoke-free housing resources on their web sites. This could include fact sheets, legal information, downloadable "smoke-free building" signs, and a listing of smoke-free buildings in the area. If you are working with a municipality that inspects or licenses multi-unit housing, ask if their staff would be willing to find out if buildings are smoke free during the inspection or on a license application. The staff can report that information to the municipality's webmaster so that the listing of smoke-free buildings is continually kept up to date. To learn more about creating resources such as these, read the Chapter 3 "Building Your Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing Program."



WHAT CAN YOUR PROGRAM DO RIGHT NOW?

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, you should include plans for ongoing evaluation and sustainability from the beginning of your project's efforts and work on sustainable tactics throughout the life of your program. Those tactics don't have to be expensive or time consuming. Maintaining a web site, writing media stories and an evaluation report, and finding ways to advocate for your program are inexpensive and easy things that you can do in order to sustain your work. No matter what strategies you use, put testimonials from owners, managers, renters, and partners in your evaluation and sustainability materials in order to give voice to the people who are impacted by your program.



Maintain a web site

An online presence is inexpensive and easy to maintain. Typically, a web site costs about \$30 per year to purchase a domain name/URL and \$10 per month to host the web site on a company's server. If you work for a large agency, you might be able to have a section on your organization's existing web site and/or access to internal servers. If that's the case, you might be able to maintain an online presence for free!

Your web site has the potential to reach a very large audience and it can be optimized so that it's found in web searches by people in your region (your webmaster may be able to optimize your web site without additional costs). You can post all of your materials and the steps to adopting a smoke-free policy on your web site so that rent-

CASE STUDY:

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE MINNESOTA MULTI-HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Live Smoke Free has been partnering with the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association (MHA) since 2000. Initially, MHA served on an advisory committee facilitated by Live Smoke Free that was developed to research the issue of secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing. Later, Live Smoke Free joined MHA as a paid vendor member and has presented and exhibited at many MHA events.

MHA has provided several of Live Smoke Free's resources to their members over the years. In particular, MHA offers Live Smoke Free's smoke-free lease addenda documents for members to download. MHA also requested that Live Smoke Free create a fact sheet that managers can use to announce the smoke-free policy change to their residents.

Those two documents are only a small portion of the resources that Live Smoke Free has to offer, but having them on MHA's web site allows for a wider distribution of information. As long as Live Smoke Free is in operation, the documents give managers a sampling of resources and may encourage managers to call Live Smoke Free. If Live Smoke Free ever ceases operation, at least a few documents will still be available for managers to download through MHA.

CASE STUDY:**PORTLAND-VANCOUVER METRO AREA SMOKE-FREE HOUSING PROJECT**

The Portland-Vancouver Metro Area Smoke-Free Housing Project of Oregon and Washington was a six-year program. The program involved three partner agencies—the American Lung Association in Oregon; the Multnomah County Health Department in Portland, Oregon; and Clark County Public Health in Vancouver, Washington. As the program ended, the partnering agencies sought to analyze the program’s strategies and evaluate the program’s successes. A result of this analysis was an academic article published in the peer-reviewed journal *Preventing Chronic Disease*.¹¹ The program also wrote a 23-page formal evaluation report that featured data collected by the partnering agencies to track progress on the program’s activities and goals.¹²

ers and managers can still find the resources they need even if your program is no longer operating. While web sites work best when they are updated often, many web sites can provide good, necessary resources to the community without being updated regularly.

Write your story

Your program may be funded for a number of years, so don’t wait for your funding to end before you write about what you’ve accomplished. It can be difficult to go back in time to evaluate an ad campaign or to recall lessons learned. There are many ways to document and share your progress.

You can write and submit articles to academic journals discussing your project’s research, promotional campaigns, and program evaluation. You can also write press releases that update the community on the successes of your program (some smoke-free multi-unit housing programs write an annual press release to announce how many new smoke-free building policies were adopted throughout the year). Many local media outlets want to report on how local organizations are helping the community.

You can also write a formal evaluation report about your program. You can do this as the project ends, as one of your funding sources ends, or as certain initiatives and promotional campaigns end. You may be able to write an evaluation report in-house, though you may want to consider hiring an evaluator who can do the analysis and the writing for you.

If time constraints prevent you from writing articles or a formal evaluation report, keep an internal activity log. An activity log can be a simple bulleted list that your staff update weekly or monthly to track progress. Track the number of contacts with managers and renters, the number of smoke-free policies adopted, the type and number of materials distributed, and events attended. A simple activity log can help you write an article or formal evaluation report in the future.

Promote your program successes

Be your program’s best supporter! Funders and the community at large should be reminded about what your program is doing and why the work is important. Educate the legislature, department heads, and foundation boards that control your grants about the successes you have had. Meet with community members and leaders early and

often so that they are informed and educated on the smoke-free housing issue.

Capture stories of how your work helped improve the health of renters and the financial bottom line of property managers. Ask renters to describe health changes they have experienced after a smoke-free policy has been implemented. Ask property managers to document the cost savings from no longer needing to clean smoky units during turnover.

PUBLIC POLICY AS SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Most smoke-free multi-unit housing programs around the country are working on voluntary policy strategies because these strategies work, and they are less controversial than public policies. However, public policies do have their place in every movement. Public policy can be seen as a more sustainable change since it is more difficult to overturn an ordinance than a voluntary building policy (remember that ordinances can still be overturned and the consequences to a reversal would be very long lasting).

Most municipalities are not ready for an ordinance requiring that all multi-unit housing be smoke free, but may be interested in public policy options that are not as controversial or difficult. If you would like to implement a public policy strategy, conduct research and assessments to see which public policy option would be appropriate and well-received in your community. Several national organizations provide readiness assessment tools.¹¹

Disclosure

A disclosure ordinance would require managers to make renters aware of smoking and nonsmoking policies before the renter signs a lease. Managers might have to disclose the policy in writing and get a signature from the renter as an acknowledgement of understanding. In some cases, managers may have to provide information about the health risks of secondhand smoke exposure and provide a map of the building to show where

smoking residents live.

Policy implemented in:

- Oregon¹²
- Duluth, Minnesota¹³
- Maine¹⁴
- Oakland, California¹⁵
- Multiple counties and cities in California¹⁶

Benefits:

- It will have a broad-based educational effect without mandating policy adoption;
- Renters and managers might become educated on secondhand smoke and their options for smoke-free policies; and
- Some renters might choose to not live in a building once they learn that smoking is allowed; thus preventing some renters from being exposed to secondhand smoke.

Challenges:

- It may not result in any managers choosing to adopt a smoke-free policy;
- It is hard to assess the effectiveness of disclosure and whether or not managers are following the law; and
- If renters move into a building knowing that secondhand smoke exposure is possible (either because they don't think that exposure can happen to them or because they have few housing options) but they get sick from being exposed to smoke, they may encounter difficulty in bringing a lawsuit claiming that the exposure to the secondhand smoke was a nuisance. The manager or a judge might decide that the renter assumed the risk of exposure by moving in after the disclosure. Although this outcome is a possibility, it has not occurred so far with the existing disclosure ordinances.

Nuisance

Nuisance laws define acts which cause offence, annoyance, trouble or injury. Secondhand smoke

exposure as a nuisance is usually open to interpretation by a judge depending on the amount of secondhand smoke to which someone is exposed. However, state and/or local nuisance or clean indoor air laws can be changed to specifically include secondhand smoke as a legally-defined nuisance.

Policy implemented in:

- Utah¹⁷
- Belmont, CA¹⁸

Benefits:

- It will have a broad-based effect without mandating policy adoption;
- Renters and managers might become educated on secondhand smoke and their options for smoke-free policies; and
- Renters who are exposed to secondhand smoke will have another option to help them find relief.

Challenges:

- It may not result in any managers choosing to

adopt a smoke-free policy;

- It is a “one-person-at-a-time” solution rather than helping a large population at once; and
- It may be costly for renters to bring a complaint to court.

Laws confirming authority

State laws could confirm and clarify the existing authority that property owners have to adopt smoke-free policies.

In 2011, California signed into law SB332 which put that authority into writing. California Senator Alex Padilla authored the bill and said it was needed because of confusion over the power that managers had to deal with smoking.¹⁹

Policy implemented in:

- California²⁰

Benefits:

- It will have a broad-based effect without mandating policy adoption; and
- Renters and managers might become

In addition to encouraging property managers to adopt smoke-free policies, consider public policy options as an additional approach to creating more smoke-free environments in multi-unit housing.



educated on secondhand smoke and their options for smoke-free policies.

Challenges:

- It doesn't really change anything; it only confirms authority that already exists; and
- It might result in some controversy and counter efforts if people wrongly assume that the law will mandate that all apartment buildings go smoke free or that the law will be used to evict long-term residents in rent-controlled buildings.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

Through the LIHTC program, new low-income buildings and low-income buildings undergoing renovations apply for the tax credit through a point-based system. Points are earned for amenities such as building near mass transit and implementing green initiatives. A smoke-free policy can be included as an amenity that can earn some points for the application. State housing finance agencies are usually in charge of administering the LIHTC program.

Policy implemented in:

- Minnesota²¹
- Maine²²
- California²³

Benefits:

- It has a potentially broad-based effect; that depends on how many developers and managers apply for the credit;
- It encourages smoke-free policies in low-income properties; and
- There is little political risk for supportive politicians because it does not require buildings to adopt smoke-free policies.

Challenges:

- It may not result in any managers choosing to adopt a smoke-free policy as smoke-free policies are often given a value of one point, which is sometimes not enough of an incentive.

Fee benefits

Municipalities can offer a financial incentive or waive fees for properties that go smoke free. This could include licensing or inspection fees. Some municipalities that have apartment manager coalition meetings might have a fee to join and could waive that fee for smoke-free properties.

Benefits:

- It is not a mandate;
- Municipalities are involved and have some "buy in" to the smoke-free housing movement; and
- Managers can save money which might incentivize them to adopt a policy.

Challenges:

- Though it is an incentive, it may not result in any managers choosing to adopt a smoke-free policy.

Mandating smoke-free policies

Requires all or a certain percentage of units to be smoke free at all properties in a municipality.

Policy implemented in:

- Select counties and cities in California¹⁷

Benefits:

- It affects every apartment property in the municipality (it could also include owner-occupied multi-unit properties); and
- It protects most renters from secondhand smoke exposure (if the policy does not cover owner-occupied multi-unit properties, anyone renting in those buildings may not be protected).

WHAT INFORMATION DO SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING PROGRAMS TRACK?

- Number of smoke-free policies adopted;
- Number of housing units in a building;
- Number of renters living in a building;
- Date of smoke-free policy adoption;
- Copy of smoke-free policy language;
- Stage of policy adoption process for those managers/buildings the program has worked with;
- Number and content of contacts with managers;
- Number of materials distributed;
- Amount of earned and paid media conducted;
- Number of renter complaints;
- Web site visit statistics; and
- Technical assistance given to grantees and other tobacco prevention contractors and agencies.

Challenges:

- The law could face significant opposition from the public and the housing industry; you risk alienating the housing industry and losing the hard won trust you built; and
- It will likely consume a lot of your program's time and energy to get the ordinance passed; in this same time period, you could have worked on voluntary policies that protect the same number or greater numbers of people.

EVALUATING YOUR WORK

Evaluation should be a key part of your program. Continuous evaluation helps you adjust and redirect your efforts, if necessary, in order to be as effective as possible. Tracking your progress allows you to report your successes to your department heads and grant funders. It also provides you with data that will help you apply for a new grant or a renewal of your current grant.

Ways to measure success

- Assess the stock of smoke-free housing before your outreach to managers begins and after your program has ended in order to see how much you have increased the availability of smoke-free housing;
- ⊗ • Keep track of how many materials and other resources you provide to managers so that you can assess how many managers you educated about the issue;
 - Document if community partners have your materials on their web sites or available to their clients so that you can show sustainability through partnerships; and
 - Track a building's process through the stages of policy change (as described in Chapter 6, "Working with Multi-Unit Housing Owners and Managers to Adopt Smoke-Free Policies"). Even if a building does not adopt a smoke-free policy, you can demonstrate that you educated the manager and moved the building through a few of the
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stages. This means that there is potential for the building to go smoke free in the future.

Gather data

Collecting data throughout the life of your program makes evaluation much easier. There are many types of data that you might be interested in tracking, but be sure that at a minimum you track the number of policies your program helps to pass or promote. This is the most likely piece of information that your colleagues and funders will request. Track the number of managers and renters with whom you have contact. Policy successes may take some time to materialize since it takes several months for a policy to go into effect. Tracking your number of contacts and documenting movement toward policy adoption provides data for process evaluation.



You can ask managers to conduct a post-policy survey in smoke-free buildings to determine how the policy is being accepted among residents. Recognize that the same renters who filled out

a pre-policy survey may not be the same renters who fill out a post-policy survey since renters may have moved in and out of the building. For that reason, the survey will still give you good information, but should not be seen as a rigorous scientific project. You can also survey managers to see if your services were helpful. This will provide you with information that you can share with funders about how your services are impacting the community. To implement this survey, you can simply email a manager after you have worked with him/her to adopt a policy and ask him/her to fill out a survey and email it back to you (you can also set up a different email address if you think managers wouldn't feel comfortable emailing the survey back to you). Let the manager know that his/her responses are important to illustrating the importance of your work and to improving your service to other managers.

Community surveys and polls research

Conducting community-wide surveys of renters or managers can give you a broad snapshot in time

HOW WILL SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING ADVOCATES KNOW IF THEY'VE "TIPPED THE SCALES" AND MADE A SMOKE-FREE HOUSING NORM CHANGE?

*"For me it would be when 50.1% of all the multi-unit housing in Colorado has a policy. And if the Census Bureau is correct, that would mean about 250,000 buildings."*²⁴

-Pete Bialick, President of GASP (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution) of Colorado, 2/20/12

*"I feel the scales tipped when the phone calls from residents asking me for help dried up. I think the market now offers enough choices for smoke-free living that residents no longer feel stuck in their current housing situation."*²⁵

-Theresa Cross, Clark County Public Health, Vancouver, Washington. 2/21/12

of opinions and attitudes toward secondhand smoke exposure and smoke-free policies. If you have the capacity to conduct similar research a few times over several years in the same community, you will have data that will allow you to compare those attitudes over time. If your program was operational during some of those surveys you may be able to infer the impact that your program had on the community.

Surveys can be conducted in rural, suburban, and metropolitan areas. You will have to decide the best methodology for conducting the survey in your area (phone, email, mail, etc.), but a professional survey firm or a research department at a university can provide you with some consultations. Carefully think through the questions that you ask on the survey and how you might use

the responses that you receive. Consider using questions on existing tobacco control surveys so that you can compare data more easily. If you're unsure about the purpose and use of particular questions, that is probably an indicator that the questions might not be necessary.

Research can give you a lot of information, but it can also be very costly. Consider the cost-benefit analysis of conducting research to see if it's right for your community. There have been several community research studies done across the county, so you might be able to either use the existing survey instruments to conduct your own research, or you might be able to use the research results of another program if you cannot conduct your own study.



Focusing on sustainable smoke-free policy changes today will ensure a healthier future for multi-unit housing residents tomorrow!

FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

A fair amount of research has been done around smoke-free housing, but continued research is always necessary—it ensures that the movement is employing best practices that will lead to policy change. New research projects might lead to more funding opportunities and it might uncover patterns in successful smoke-free housing programs that will allow for better understanding of sustainability and evaluation strategies. There are currently two research needs arising in the smoke-free multi-unit housing movement. While these issues aren't being widely studied yet, it is possible that programs will start to look heavily at them in the next few years.

Healthcare cost savings

Many government bodies are looking for ways to save on healthcare costs (in some areas, grants are requiring programs to prove that an intervention can save healthcare dollars). While it stands to reason that smoke-free housing policies will save on healthcare costs by eliminating the health risks associated with secondhand smoke exposure in the home, it might be difficult to prove. Most communities have multiple health prevention efforts, and it might be nearly impossible to determine how much of the healthcare cost savings can be attributed to the smoke-free housing movement. It also remains to be seen if one nationwide study can be done, or if local units of government will demand to see local numbers. Programs might not have the financial or staffing capacity to study the local impact on healthcare costs.

Health impact

Several publications and studies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Best Practices, have stated that smoke-free environments help smokers quit and prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. Those benefits lead to a decrease in chronic disease and an increase in improved health. However, there are difficulties in proving that smoke-free housing policies lead to smoking cessation, reduced secondhand smoke exposure, and improved health of a community.

Like the healthcare cost savings research described above, it would be hard to determine whether health improvement was due to the smoke-free housing movement since most communities have multiple health prevention efforts. The health outcomes might vary from building to building depending on the population that lives there. Residents in one building might start with a higher rate of chronic disease or might have other high risk factors than residents of another building. Finally, renters are a fairly transient population—they move quite a bit. An effective health impact study would likely have to conduct longitudinal research amongst a cohort of people, which is one of the most expensive and difficult forms of social science research. It is difficult to study the health impact of an environment if a person's environment changes.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS:

- Smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing protect some of the most vulnerable populations from secondhand smoke exposure.
- In many communities, multi-unit housing is one of the few remaining indoor environments where secondhand smoke is unregulated.
- In recent years, there has been exponential growth in the number of smoke-free multi-unit housing properties in the United States and in the number of agencies supporting the adoption of these policies.
- Regularly collecting data and tracking program progress helps illustrate successes and makes the case for continued program funding.
- Smoke-free multi-unit housing work can be sustained through partnerships with the housing industry, rental search services, and government agencies.
- Creating a website with smoke-free multi-unit housing information is critical to sustaining the policy change movement.
- Public policy options for smoke-free multi-unit housing should be considered in sustainability plans.

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PRACTITIONER'S CHECKLIST:

ARE YOU READY TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING PROGRAM?

- Are you collecting data that quantifies your work with property managers and renters?
- Have you identified partners in the housing industry and in governmental agencies that can help sustain your work?
- Have you identified possible sources of long-term funding?
- Have you created a website for your smoke-free multi-unit housing program?
- Are you tracking your progress and publicizing your successes?
- Do you have a long-range plan for utilizing public policy approaches to sustain smoke-free environments in multi-unit housing?

SAMPLE TOOLS

• *Program websites*

• *Program databases*

RESOURCES

• *CDC's "Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs":*
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/index.htm

• *CDC's Tools for Surveillance and Evaluation of Tobacco Control Programs:*
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tobacco_control_programs/surveillance_evaluation/index.htm

• *HUD's "Leading Our Nation to Healthier Homes: The Healthy Homes Strategic Plan":*
http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/hh_strategic_plan.pdf

• *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes:*
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/healthyhomes/index