

# AFTER PASSING THE POLICY: WHAT'S NEXT?

## Policy Implementation and Enforcement

Once a tobacco control ordinance has been adopted, the next challenge is making sure that the responsible agencies implement and enforce it. This guide provides tips and tools to help your tobacco control coalition hold local officials accountable. The key elements of an effective policy implementation and enforcement effort are:

- (1) Research how the policy should be implemented in order to be effective.
- (2) Renew relationships with elected officials and staff developed during the campaign to pass the policy and develop new relationships with staff involved in implementing the policy.
- (3) Enlist the public as an ally in the implementation and enforcement effort by increasing public awareness of the policy.
- (4) Evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation and enforcement effort.

### KNOW HOW THE POLICY SHOULD WORK

Knowing how the policy should work allows you to compare what is actually happening in your city or county with a model of effective implementation. You may have tried some of the steps listed below during the adoption stage of your campaign. However, you may need to dig deeper to get the clearest picture of what's happening and the latest model of how your policy should work:

- Find where your policy is located in the city or county code, and understand how its placement in the code may determine which agency implements it.
- Have a clear understanding of the language in the final version of your ordinance (this is particularly important if your champion had to make compromises at the last minute).
- Determine who needs to be involved in each step of implementing and enforcing the ordinance.
- Review TALC's model ordinances.
- Research how other cities or counties have implemented similar policies.
- Think about how your tobacco control program can help implement the policy, for example, by providing sample language for signage, cessation services, training for city or county staff, and by providing youth for on-going "stings" or youth purchase surveys.



### CONTINUE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY OFFICIALS

It is critical to maintain the relationships with elected officials and city or county staff that your coalition developed during the campaign. In addition, you will need to build new relationships with staff involved in policy implementation such as police, code enforcement, parks and recreation, housing authority, etc.

Giving public recognition to elected officials and key staff for passing the policy is an effective way to maintain these important relationships and may take several forms:

- Present plaques or certificates to policy champions at city council, board of supervisor, or coalition meetings.
- Acknowledge supporters at an annual event or press conference celebrating the anniversary of the policy's adoption.
- Recognize supporters in press releases, newsletters, print ads and websites.

# AFTER PASSING THE POLICY Continued...

To build new relationships with policy implementation staff, you can use the same approach you used in the campaign to pass the policy:

- Use existing contacts with tobacco control advocates, elected officials, and city or county staff to open doors with policy implementation staff.
- Connect with non-traditional partners in fields like alcohol control or substance abuse who may already have established relationships with policy implementation staff.

You should also keep in contact with community advocates after the ordinance has passed:

- Conduct a debrief of the campaign to assess strengths and weaknesses so that you can all learn how to do it better.
- Have a celebration so that supporters can celebrate the success.
- Set up occasional meetings to check in and discuss implementation efforts.
- Send occasional emails to coalition members to let them know the status of the ordinance implementation.
- Ask coalition members if they have contacts or connections in the next community you select for a campaign.

## EDUCATE AND INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

Many tobacco control policies are self-enforcing or rely on complaints from an informed public to trigger enforcement efforts. Therefore, informing the community and stakeholders about the new policy will help ensure that it is implemented. Sometimes, local officials will even pay for an outreach campaign to educate residents. Tactics to consider include:

- Hold a media event.
- Sponsor a community forum in cooperation with the city or county that passed the ordinance.
- Speak at organizational meetings and events held around the city.
- Place newspaper ads.
- Write and organize a letter-writing campaign to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Insert notices in gas or electric bills.
- Conduct a media event or distribute press releases on the anniversary of the ordinance.

Other times it may be difficult to convince public agencies to even pay for signs. In those cases, you may need to be more forceful in your efforts to hold decision makers accountable. Involve community members in these efforts. If the city does not implement the ordinance, consider other activities:

- Hold a press conference in conjunction with partner organizations demanding implementation.
- Write letters to the editor demanding action.
- Submit an Op-Ed by a respected community leader arguing for implementation.
- Conduct additional park clean-ups or youth purchase surveys to demonstrate the problem is not getting better.
- Meet one-on-one with your champion on the board/council about this problem.

## EVALUATE THE POLICY

The ability to gather data to measure policy results will depend in large part on cooperation from elected officials and staff. Therefore, maintaining the key relationships developed throughout the campaign is crucial for evaluation. Examples of policy results that could be included in a policy evaluation include:

- Rate of illegal tobacco sales to minors following adoption of a tobacco retailer license ordinance
- The number, size and location of signs notifying the public about an outdoor smoking ban
- Number of public complaints received over time.
- Number of calls to the Helpline or registrations in local tobacco cessation programs
- Amount of cigarette litter found in parks or play areas
- Amount of time between policy adoption and implementation

Use the evaluation results to leverage greater enforcement if necessary, or as the basis for publicizing the policy's success. This data will also help you in future campaigns.



*In some cases a city or county may not implement or enforce the ordinance effectively. In these situations, you may need to use stronger tactics to bring attention to the lack of implementation. This may become more like a policy campaign.*