

The Key Elements to Starting a Smoke-Free Housing Program

Note that for each element, resources and budgets and other needs should be identified.

1. Identify and Develop Resources

- Research and analyze the legal issues under your state and local laws.
- Develop educational materials for residents and landlords, including brochures, letters, fact sheets, presentations, signs, surveys, etc., with key educational messages.
- Create a Web site with a registry and other educational material.
- Establish a contact list for the housing industry, affected residents, and multiunit housing locally and statewide.
- Continue educational and training opportunities through conferences or conference calls, meetings, and sharing results with others.

2. Develop New Partnerships

- Create a coalition to work on the issue.
- Involve people in the housing industry as stakeholders and include landlord/resident associations, housing authorities, property owners, landlords, etc.
- Make presentations, attend conferences, join associations, and explore other partnerships like green building efforts.
- Create resident coalitions in individual apartments or community-wide.

3. Raise Awareness

- Use paid and earned media to make people aware of your registry and/or Web site.
- Develop good, consistent messaging.
- Write articles for housing publications, print professional materials, use direct mail and print media, newsletters, billboards, radio, banner ads, etc.
- Assess public attitudes and the economic benefits through the use of surveys, polls, and focus groups.
- Work with apartment listing services and the media to list smoke-free/non-smoking properties.
- Develop a consistent protocol for assisting residents and working with the housing industry.

4. Explore Policy Options

- Start with voluntary approaches like public-housing authorities.

- Explore using tax credits as an incentive for new builders.
- Work with local communities to make new construction non-smoking.
- Assess different policy options such as nuisance laws.
- Can any existing state laws or local laws be applied?

“Need to educate before you legislate,” Americans For Nonsmokers’ Rights

Community norms must have changed sufficiently to the point where the community agrees and supports what you are doing.