**Implementing Tobacco-Free Policies**

**Help set those around you up for success – implement a comprehensive tobacco-free policy to help with tobacco control efforts.**

The most impactful step an organization can take to prevent tobacco addiction among its attendees is to implement a comprehensive tobacco-free policy. When applied fairly and consistently, such a policy not only discourages tobacco use but also empowers individuals to make healthier choices.

A truly comprehensive approach should go beyond treating commercial tobacco and vape use as disciplinary issues. Instead, it should be recognized as a serious, lifelong health and wellness concern—one that requires a coordinated response from the entire organization and the surrounding community. By adopting a comprehensive tobacco-free policy, your organization communicates a clear message: protecting health and addressing tobacco use are top priorities.

Establishing community partnerships to support this effort doesn’t have to be difficult. Your organization may already have connections that can be leveraged. Potential community partners include:

* Local public health departments
* Schools and educational institutions
* Healthcare providers and clinics
* Youth organizations (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H)
* Faith-based groups
* Coalitions focused on substance misuse prevention
* Local government and city councils
* Nonprofits focused on health equity and chronic disease prevention

Collaborating with these groups can strengthen your tobacco-free efforts and ensure a sustainable, community-wide impact.

View our [Policy Implementation Checklist](file:///Users/bergenlindner/Downloads/Policy%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf) to get an idea of where to begin!

Already have policy and want to see how it scores compared to model policies? Check out our rubrics below or reach out to DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us

* [Worksite Policy Evaluation Guide](file:///Users/bergenlindner/Downloads/Worksite%20Policy%20Evaluation%20Guide.pdf)
* [Rodeo Policy Evaluation Guide](file:///Users/bergenlindner/Downloads/Rodeo%20Policy%20Evaluation%20Guide.pdf)
* [Postsecondary Policy Evaluation Guide](file:///Users/bergenlindner/Downloads/Postsecondary%20Policy%20Evaluation%20Guide.pdf)
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**Benefits of School Policies & Engaging Youth**

 **Benefits of Tobacco-Free Policies in Schools**

Schools are more than just educational institutions—they are central to shaping healthy habits in youth. Adopting tobacco-free policies offers multiple benefits:

**Health & Safety**

* Protects students, staff, and visitors from the harms of secondhand smoke.
* Reduces the risk of addiction by limiting youth exposure to tobacco.
* Decreases fire hazards caused by smoking materials.

 **Stronger Prevention Messaging**

* Reinforces classroom lessons with consistent, real-world anti-tobacco messages.
* Helps youth understand that tobacco use is not a “normal” behavior.
* Offers positive adult role models who lead by example.

 **Legal & Community Benefits**

* Minimizes liability for schools by eliminating tobacco use on campus.
* Fosters a healthy, safe school climate that supports student success and well-being.

 **The Power of Youth Engagement**

According to the CDC, youth are key allies in the movement toward tobacco-free communities. Their involvement brings unique strengths:

 **Motivators & Mobilizers**

* Youth inspire peers and rally others more effectively than adults.
* Many are personally motivated by family loss, health struggles, or anger at industry manipulation.

 **Creative & Insightful**

* Youth understand youth—their insights help shape relevant, effective policies.
* Their fresh ideas and perspectives add creativity and innovation to outreach and advocacy.

 **Effective Advocates**

* Young voices get noticed by media and policymakers.
* They add authenticity and credibility to campaigns and messages.

 **Strategic Allies**

* Youth can expose tobacco industry tactics, helping others see through marketing strategies.
* They bring energy, passion, and genuine concern to the movement—often volunteering their time to protect their future.

 **Make a Change – Start with a Plan**

Whether you're a student, educator, parent, or community leader—anyone can spark change. Work together to:

* Implement strong tobacco-free policies in schools
* Engage and empower youth as partners
* Promote a healthier, tobacco-free future