

# Vermont Tobacco Control Program Community Prevention Summary - 2015

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## Program Goals

The Vermont Department of Health Tobacco Control Program is aligned with [Vermont's Tobacco Control State Plan](#) and its five primary goals to reduce tobacco-related mortality, disease, and disability:

1. Prevent initiation of tobacco use among youth.
2. Reduce cigarette smoking & tobacco use among youth.
3. Reduce cigarette smoking & tobacco use among adults.
4. Reduce prevalence of other tobacco use.
5. Reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

## Investing in Tobacco Prevention

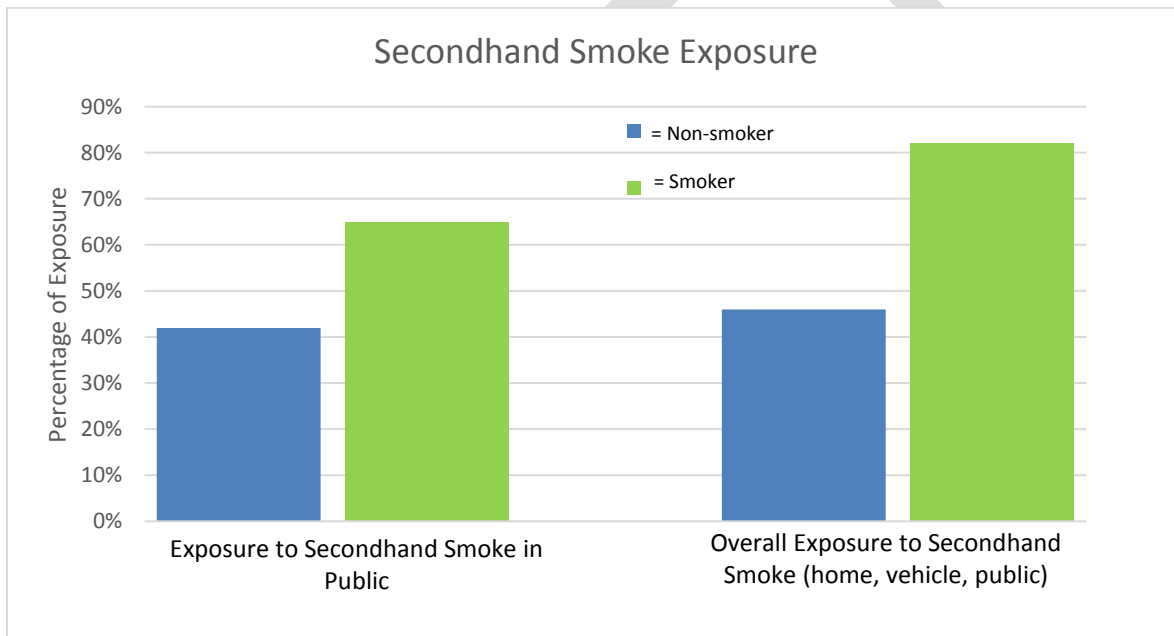
The Tobacco Control Program assists community-based organizations and coalitions to address all five goals. In State Fiscal Year 2015 (FY2015), the Health Department invested \$760,000 of Vermont's Master Settlement Agreement dollars into local communities by funding 17 community coalitions at levels ranging from \$42,500-\$45,000. With additional support from the Health Department's 12 District Offices, youth groups, and other public, private, and nonprofit partners, these coalitions successfully promoted smoke-free environments, educated about the retail environment impact on tobacco use, and amplified the Health Department's mass reach communication campaigns.

The Tobacco Control Program also provides regular technical assistance to build community capacity for prevention. The Program hosted 24 technical assistance calls and three in-person trainings, in addition to one-on-one assistance from program staff. These trainings were used to guide coalitions in their community prevention efforts.

Type of Training	Number of Trainings Offered	Percent Completing Trainings	Coalitions Required	Percent Completing More than Required
In-Person Training	3	90%		--
Technical Assistance Call	24	100%		81%

## Protecting Vermonters from Secondhand Smoke

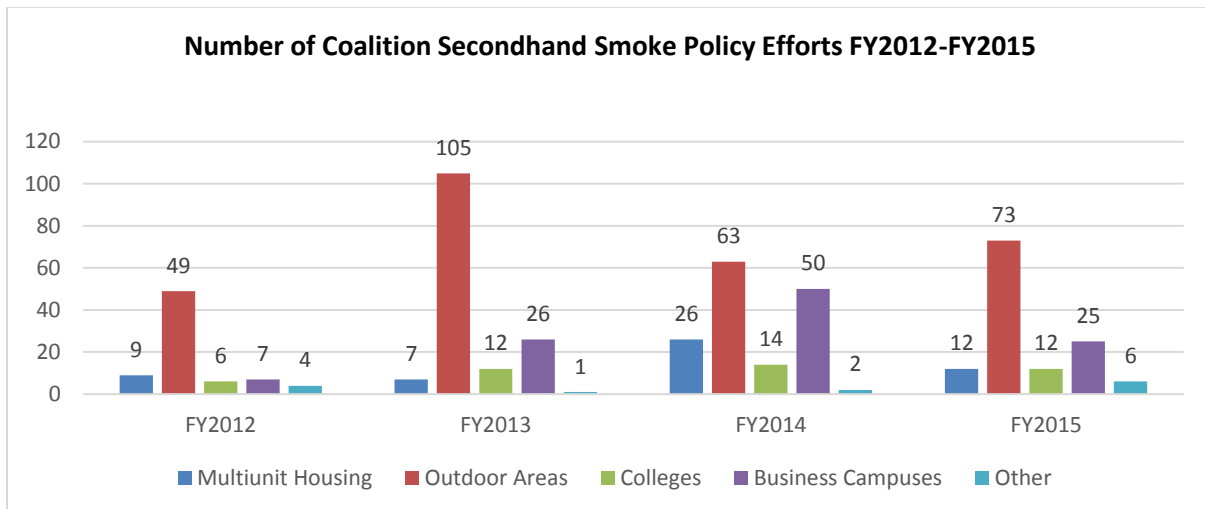
The [2014 U.S. Surgeon General Report](#) on tobacco states that tobacco affects every organ system in the body, and new evidence shows that smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke causes arthritis, two new types of cancer (liver and colorectal), type 2 diabetes, stroke, and other serious health impacts. The graph below highlights the potential health impact to non-smokers as well as the impact on smokers, showing how important cessation efforts are in reducing secondhand smoke exposure for all parties.



Data from 2014 Vermont Adult Tobacco Survey.<sup>1</sup>

Building upon the 2009 accomplishment of a statewide comprehensive clean indoor air act, coalitions continued to make progress providing education and community engagement that contributed to more smoke-free multiunit housing, colleges, business campuses, and public outdoor areas with an increased focus on including e-cigarettes in smoke-free spaces. In addition to reducing the health risks associated with secondhand smoke, smoke-free spaces help smokers quit by showing a commitment to keeping tobacco-free lifestyles the norm and reducing triggers. The stories below provide a look inside the expansive coalition efforts towards these goals.

<sup>1</sup> 2014 Vermont Adult Tobacco Survey



- Not for profit, not for smoking:** A few non-profits moved towards, or achieved, smoke-free campuses. Turning Point of Windham County received signage and policy examples which led to their board to approve a smoke-free campus (including vaping/e-cigarettes). While no written policy is in place yet, signage has been put up, and they continue to transition towards implementing this policy. In addition, support was provided to the Counseling Services of Addison County in their move toward a smoke-free campus, as required by grant expectations. Smoke-free healthcare campuses showcase the idea that “quitting is part of an overall recovery path.”
- Smoke-free public events span Vermont:** In 2015, the trend toward smoke-free events continued to grow with coalition support in the form of signage, 802 Quits materials, partnerships with youth groups, educational materials, and any additional help requested. Events included the Great American Smoke Out and National Kick Butts Day. Other Vermont smoke-free events included Youth Appreciation Day in Bennington, Newport’s Hike, Bike and Paddle event, Lyndonville’s Chamber of Commerce Street Festival, the Maple Leaf Marathon, Park-a-Palooza, and Windsor’s Autumn Moon Festival.
- Smoke-free beaches, parks, and more:** Throughout the state there was an increase in the number of public recreation and downtown areas that implemented smoke-free policies. Examples include Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area in Middlesex, which became a smoke-free beach and the passage of a smoke-free ordinance at parks in Montpelier. The coalition serving the Montpelier area is also working towards a smoke-free downtown. After 5 years of effort by the Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community, local OVX and VKAT youth groups, and public advocates, the City of Burlington implemented a smoke-free Church Street Marketplace policy in December 2015. It is the largest smoke-free public marketplace in Vermont.
- Continued progress towards smoke-free multi-unit housing:** Community coalitions used education, communication, and positive reinforcement to increase the number of smoke-free multi-unit housing options across the state. Windham and Windsor Housing Trust had 59 smoke-free housing units available with plans to add more smoke-free units. With support from the Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital Coalition, Rural Edge worked towards implementing a 100% smoke free housing

policy, and Essex CHIPS identified and contacted multi-unit housing properties in their community. To support this effort, the Tobacco Control Program hosted its second Smoke-Free Housing Summit with a broad representation of community organizations that shared information and discussed policy. Coalitions also utilized ad campaigns to reinforce their past successes including Brattleboro Coalition that recognized landlords of smoke-free housing. This multi-faceted approach of education and support has helped coalitions protect Vermonters from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

- **University of Vermont goes tobacco-free:** Vermont's largest postsecondary institution, the University of Vermont, went tobacco-free on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Efforts by [Tobacco-Free UVM](#) helped establish an official university policy. Students, faculty, and contractors were educated about the policy through communications and signage and offered free quitting resources. Additionally, coalitions worked with other schools including CCV, NECI, and Lyndon and Castleton State Colleges to reduce secondhand smoke exposure through a variety of smoking restrictions.

### Protecting Vermont's Kids from Industry Marketing

The tobacco industry spends [\\$19 million](#)<sup>2</sup> in Vermont annually to market its products- approximately \$19,000 per tobacco retailer. Around 90% of advertising dollars are spent at point-of-sale; a strategy used by tobacco companies to target youth. To decrease youth tobacco initiation and use rates, coalitions have been working on addressing industry marketing, tobacco retailer location, the placement of cigarillos and flavored tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and youth access to tobacco.

**Vermont Kids make a stand:** Through partnerships with local schools and community coalitions, the Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) and Our Voices Xposed (OVX) youth were empowered to educate community members on the dangers of tobacco.

They assisted with the [Counter Balance](#) campaign, conducting retailer audits, and shared the relevant data with community members. The youth groups also supported smoke-free events, educated members of the Vermont legislature, and promoted the need for healthy communities. Shennelle Bailey spoke at a statewide press conference regarding data from the Counter Balance Initiative. She stated, *"We all need to prevent youth from being diverted from their dreams by an industry that sees them solely as a source of future profits."* Shennelle is an



example of how youth partnerships with coalitions, schools, and community members, can be a driving force towards a smoke-free Vermont can be.

- **Educating about e-cigarettes, cigarillos, and flavors that target youth:** As the tobacco industry has increased focus on promoting e-cigarettes, cigarillos, and other flavored tobacco products, coalitions

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<sup>2</sup> Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids - <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/microsites/statereport2016/vermont.html>

have worked to counter these strategies which target youth. To increase awareness and combat the impact of tobacco advertising, coalitions used the [Counter Balance campaign](#), [Counter Tools](#), and partnerships with local schools and organizations to educate community members and local decision makers.

- **Pharmacies set the tone:** In 2015, tobacco coalitions focused on using data, earned media, and partnerships with local pharmacies to educate about the impact of tobacco advertising. Examples include drafting a letter to the regional manager of Rite-Aid about e-cigarette and nicotine replacement therapy; sharing broadcasting ads thanking the Putney Pharmacy for committing to restrict the sales of tobacco products; interviewing a Rutland Pharmacy that has adopted a smoke-free business policy; and a partnership with the Greater Falls Pharmacy which led to the creation of a video that was posted online and widely viewed.

### **Amplifying Mass Reach Campaigns: Earned Media**

The Health Department is adapting to the rapidly changing world of media and mass reach health communications and provided a new approach to statewide anti-tobacco media campaigns. For community groups, this meant further developing local media and engagement efforts including social and earned media.

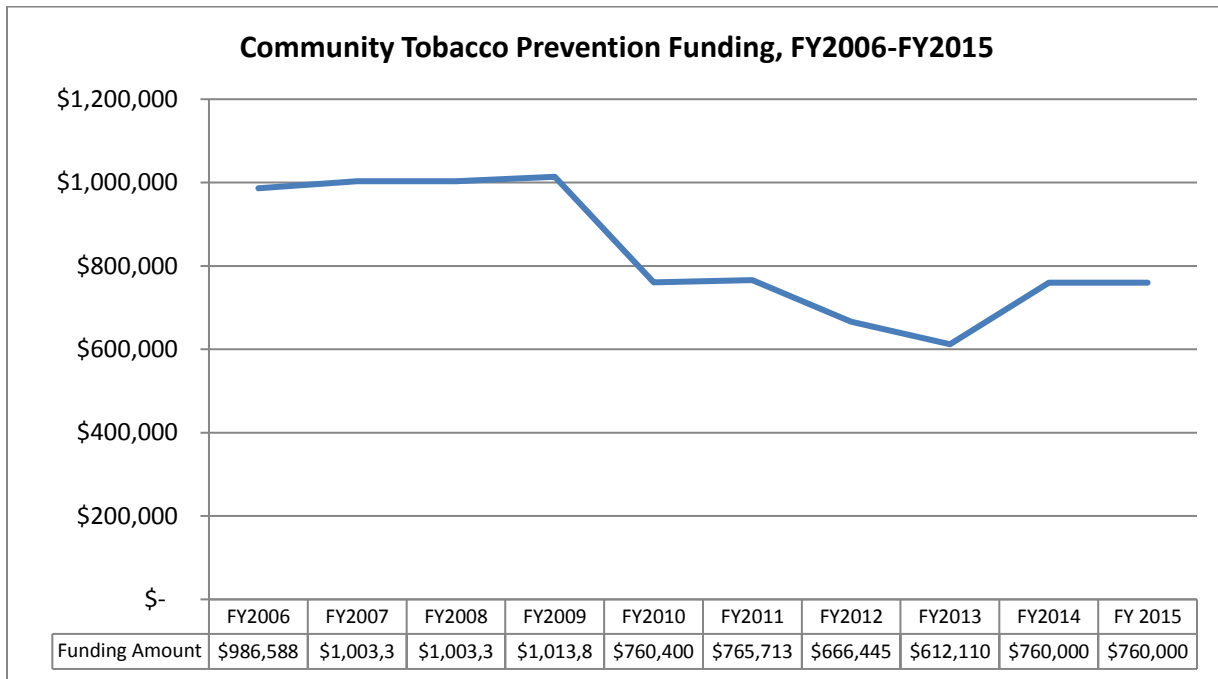
- **The Revolution will be televised (and printed):** Coalitions and their partners have demonstrated their ability to garner earned media such as using local access television to reach a wider audience. The Collaborative's partnership with a local access TV station, the Vermont Department of Health, and the Bennington district office, resulted in the making and airing of a short video titled "Tobacco Industry's Influence in Retail Outlets". This aired to 15,000 +/- Manchester, Bennington and Mountain community homes, and the video was widely shared on the Greater Northshire Access Television's website, CAT TV, VT Access Network, and Facebook pages of local businesses.
- **Extra! Extra! Read all about it:** In addition to using digital media outlets coalitions gained earned media in newspapers and newsletters through letters to the editor, newspaper inserts, and coverage of local events and organizations. On Kick Butts Day, there was a front-page article in the Burlington Free Press, which included pictures from the Kick Butts Day events on Church Street.

### **Continuing Community Prevention**

Funding comprehensive tobacco control programs at or above levels recommended by the CDC is a cost-effective strategy to reduce tobacco prevalence, use, and initiation among adults and youth providing a proven return on investment and declines in smoking-related illness and death, as well as reduced health care costs. Despite significant tobacco tax revenue gains and Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funding support, tobacco prevention and control in Vermont has long been underfunded.

Vermont's community-based efforts for tobacco prevention are funded entirely by MSA dollars. In FY2014 and FY2015, prevention funding was at 75% of FY2009 levels. The Health Department is conducting a

planning process to explore models for community prevention with available funds while increasing its funding levels.



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