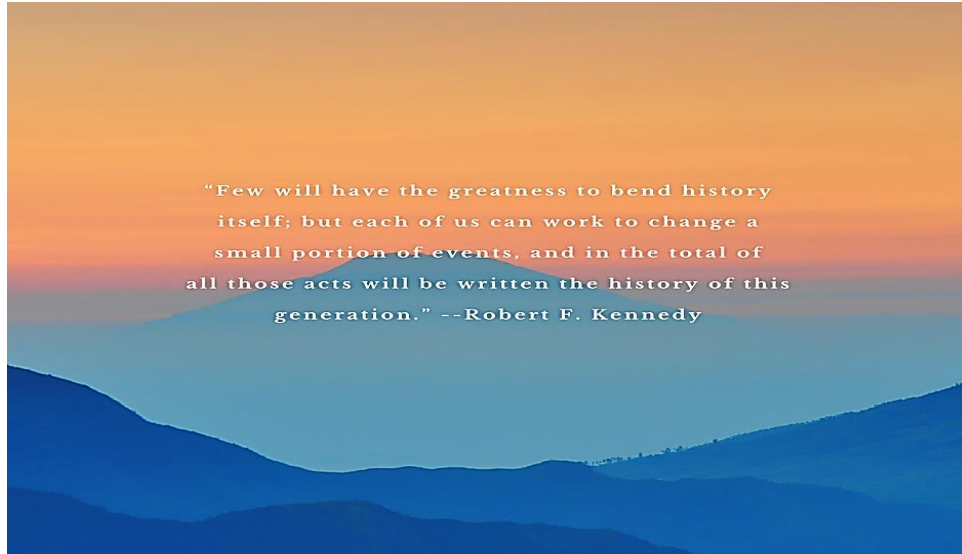


# Vermont Tobacco Control Program Community Prevention Summary - 2016

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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 2016 (FY2016), the Health Department invested \$717,500 of Vermont's Master Settlement Agreement dollars into local communities by funding 16 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's impact on tobacco use, and amplified the Health Department's mass reach communication campaigns.

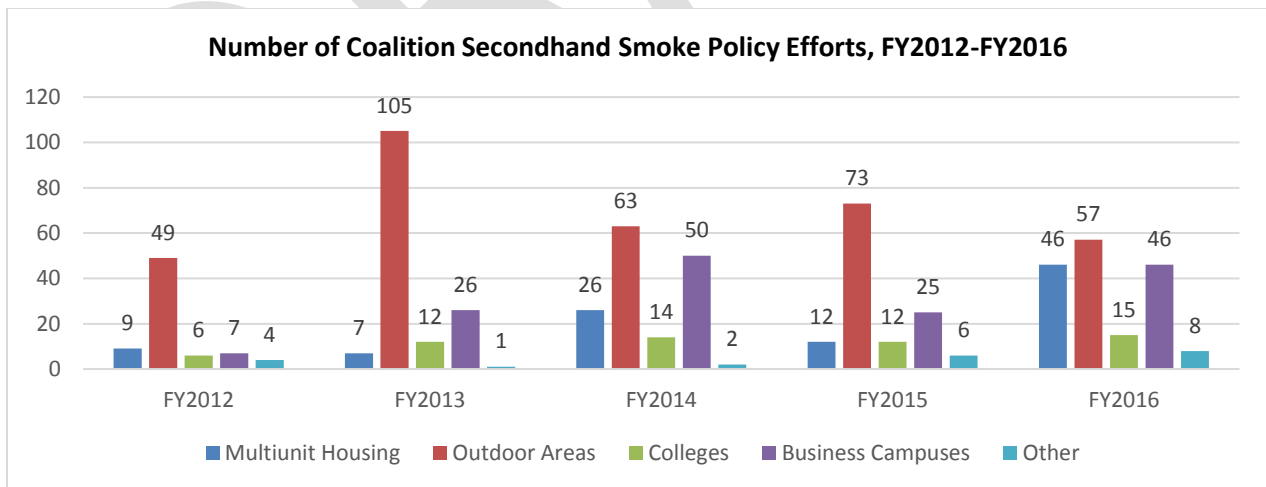
The Tobacco Control Program also provided regular technical assistance to build community capacity for prevention. The Program hosted 17 technical assistance calls and two in-person trainings, in addition to one-on-one assistance from program staff. These trainings were used to guide coalitions in their community prevention efforts.

Type of Training	Number of Trainings Offered		Percent Coalitions Completing Required Trainings		Percent Coalitions Completing More Than Required	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
In-Person Training	3	2	90%	93.75%	-	-
Technical Assistance Call	21	17	100%	100%	81%	31%

## 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. Data from the 2014 Vermont Adult Tobacco survey states that 42% of non-smokers and 65% of smokers reported being exposed to secondhand smoke in a public place, while 46% of non-smokers and 82% of smokers reported being exposed to second hand smoke overall (home, vehicle, or public place).<sup>1</sup> This highlights both the potential health impact to non-smokers as well as the outsized impact on smokers. It also showcases just how important cessation efforts are in reducing second hand smoke exposure for all parties.

Coalitions continued to make progress locally though providing education and community engagement that over time contributed to more smoke-free multiunit housing, colleges, business campuses, and public outdoor areas. In 2016, smoke-free spaces began to include e-cigarettes in their smoke-free policies. 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 work of coalitions to achieve these goals.



- **Dog-gone-lit:** Coalitions statewide educated individuals about secondhand smoke effects on pets. The Winooski Coalition for a Safe and Peaceful Community and Rutland Area Prevention Coalition shared brochures with the Humane Society and kennels/pet daycare facilities that highlight the harms of

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

secondhand smoke and promote healthy air around pets. Catamount Pet Supply and the Eastwood Animal Clinic have adopted smoke-free signage, display pet safe brochures and 802Quits resources.

- **Smoke-free public events span Vermont:** Public events throughout the state received coalition support in the form of smoke-free signage, 802 Quits materials, partnerships with youth groups and coalitions, educational materials, as well as any additional help requested. Coalitions have taken a multifaceted approach to increase the number of smoke-free public events across the state. The Windsor Autumn Moon Festival made a commitment to move from an event with smoke-free zones to a 100% smoke-free event. The Windsor Color Run was also established as a smoke-free event. There has also been a push for the Hartland Farmer's market to create and implement an organizational smoke-free policy.
- **Smoke free parks proliferate and e-liminate:** There was an increase in local parks implementing smoke-free policies and also an expansion of existing smoke-free park ordinances which include language on e-cigarettes. Timing, patience and strong community partnerships by tobacco coalitions contributed to these successes. In Manchester, after 7 years of coalition effort, all three town-owned parks (Adams Park, Factory Point Green, and the Dana Thomson Recreation Park) became smoke-free on May 31<sup>st</sup>. In Winooski, three city parks (Landry, West Allen, and Meyers' Memorial Pool) became smoke-free with assistance from a youth advocacy group at the Winooski School district. The partnership with the youth group highlighted the strength of a school-community-city working together for a common goal. The Deerfield Valley Community Partnership also used student leaders to champion its Town Hill park initiative, which resulted in smoke-free signs being approved for three areas (Town Hill Park, Town Hill Playground, and the Jacksonville Municipal Center). In addition to these successes, a collaboration between the Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition, and the Enosburg Falls Our Voices Xposed (OVX) youth group led to e-cigarettes being added to the smoking ban in two Enosburg Falls parks (Lincoln and Maple).
- **Multiunit housing owners go tobacco free:** In April, Windham-Windsor Housing Trust instituted a non-smoking policy for all its properties. The Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition provided support in the form of 36 smoke-free property signs, and a commitment to work together to address compliance concerns. In a continued effort from 2015, the Healthworks O.N.E coalition had success getting the two largest multiunit housing landlords in the area to implement tobacco and e-cigarette free by June 2016. While coalitions focused heavily on getting owners of multiunit housing to commit to being tobacco/smoke-free, they also used schools and community events as an avenue to educate students and community members on the benefits of smoke-free multiunit housing. The Rutland High School Health Fair School facilitated conversations with about 300 students and faculty about tobacco use prevention, treatment, secondhand smoke exposure, and smoke-free housing.
- **The "Buttler" did it:** Coalitions, community members and youth groups also address cigarette butt litter. In Downtown Montpelier, Central Vermont New Directions acquired 6 "buttlers" (small containers attached to street signs for smokers to deposit their butts instead of throwing them on the ground). The need for "buttlers", and the decision to install them, arose from a presentation to the Montpelier business Association with survey data that showed a high level of community concern about the dangers and nuisance of cigarette butt litter. A partnership with Montpelier Alive and the Trash Tramps

from the Montpelier Senior Activity Center developed, and this led to installation of the 6 “buttlers” in high litter areas across town. Not only did these “buttlers” help reduce butt litter, but as they were also equipped with the 802 Quits logo and number, they help promote cessation. A Butt Litter Clean Up Extravaganza was held in St. Albans City’s downtown Taylor Park where volunteers picked up 4,570 butts in the park, reducing butt litter and highlighting the significance of this issue.

- **Give it the old college try:** Several coalitions worked with colleges across the state to further protect students, staff and visitors from secondhand smoke exposure. When Central Vermont New Directions/Community Connections coalition reached out to Norwich University to discuss tobacco policy they learned that Norwich was moving towards a health insurance premium credit for those employees who were either tobacco-free or actively enrolled in a cessation program. Such health insurance premium credit programs help reduce secondhand smoke exposure and has opened the door for further discussions related to a campus-wide tobacco policy at Norwich. Coalitions have also been reinforcing bonds with schools such as Champlain College, and forged new ones with schools such as Middlebury College. Due in a large part to several years of coalition smoke-free policy education efforts with their local state funded colleges, the Health Commissioner, the Tobacco Program Manager and the Tobacco-Free College Campus Initiative Statewide Coordinator were invited to present the benefits of one comprehensive tobacco-free policy covering all state-funded college campuses to the Vermont State College Board of Trustees. In May, the Board agreed to investigate implementation of a [tobacco-free campus policy](#) by 2019.

## Protecting Vermont’s Kids from Industry Marketing

The tobacco industry spends \$17.2<sup>2</sup> million in Vermont annually to market its products with the majority, around 90% of this, being spent on point of sale advertising. Tobacco marketing is more influential than peer pressure on youth smoking, and 90%<sup>3</sup> of new tobacco users are under age 18. To counter the industry’s influence, coalitions have been working on addressing industry marketing, tobacco retailer location, cigarillos and flavored tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and youth access to tobacco – all of which contribute to youth tobacco initiation.

- **Vermont’s Kids educate their peers:** Through partnerships with local schools and community coalitions, the VKAT and OVX youth take the fight against big tobacco into their own hands by using a variety of tactics to educate their peers and increase awareness about the problems associated with tobacco usage. Four OVX youth designed and implemented a presentation to 85 Milton middle school Health Class students. They talked about cigarette ingredients, tobacco ads, and e-cigarettes, and students filled out exit cards with any questions they had about tobacco. The OVX members answered these questions and sent the answers back to the health teacher. Two Milton high school students who attended the Above the Influence retreat, worked with the middle school’s student council to create a segment for “Yellow Jacket TV “at the High School, and a radio show at the middle school. The purpose

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<sup>2</sup> Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids - [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts\\_issues/toll\\_us/vermont](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/vermont)

<sup>3</sup> CDC Youth and Tobacco Use Fact Sheet - [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/)

of both the TV segment and the radio show was to debunk myths about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and to discuss other topics from the Youth Behavioral Risk Survey, as well as more general topics that students might be interested in.

- **Girls! We run the world:** Vermont youth are a bright spot in the fight for a tobacco-free state, not only as members of VKAT and OVX, but also as individuals, and members of non-affiliated groups working for tobacco prevention in Vermont. The Girl Empowerment group in Swanton is helping lead prevention efforts in their region. “The Health Project” is made up of approximately 10 girls aged 9-12 who are working in collaboration with Franklin County Caring Communities to champion local causes related to tobacco prevention. One way that they are doing this is through a tobacco and alcohol *Photo Voice Project*. By taking pictures of alcohol and tobacco ads they see in their communities, and then sharing them on Facebook, local select board and town trustees, they are increasing awareness and educating the public about the prevalence of these ads. The project highlights the effect and impact these ads have on all community members including youth. The Health Project girls also chose to move Swanton towards a smoke-free park/recreation ordinance, rather than only having smoke-free signs posted in local park/recreation areas. The work that The Health Project has done, and continues to do, showcases just how big an impact young people can have when they are given the ability and direction to enact change in their communities and the State.
- **You’re a star:** In partnership with the Brattleboro Prevention Coalition, the Vermont Kids Against Tobacco students of Brattleboro Area Middle School developed a system recognizing local retailers who were helping to reduce youth exposure to tobacco products and marketing. This “Star Store Project”, which was put in place as a response to the town of Brattleboro not revising their window signage ordinance, recognizes local retailers by awarding them either Gold, Silver, or Bronze “Star Store Certificates” depending on their level of commitment to reducing youth exposure to tobacco products and marketing. Retailers who choose not to sell any tobacco products receive Gold Star Certificates, those who choose not to advertise their tobacco products receive a Silver Star Certificate, and those who choose not to advertise tobacco products on the outside of their businesses receive a Bronze Star certificate. This program was such a success that the Health Connections of the Upper Valley coalition is adopting its own version of the Star Retailer Program idea for its area. Coalitions collaborate with their local community partners to reinforce prevention efforts, learn from and share ideas with one another, and are essential in orchestrating impactful prevention campaigns.

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

With the influence the tobacco industry seizes through their own mass reach marketing campaigns, it is becoming increasingly important for coalitions and their partners to focus on utilizing earned media to counter this strategy.

- **A Ray of Hope-Digital Media shines bright:** While there was still a great deal of success utilizing print media 2016 saw digital media, with social media in particular, become an integral part of the campaign for a tobacco-free Vermont. The Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community included an e-newsletter distributed to a list of 665 subscribers, in addition to an insert in the July issue of the North

Avenue newspaper. This article which shared local counter tools audit data and included a discussion on the impact of tobacco products/placements, and the benefits of reducing them, used these dual resources to reach a wider audience, and highlights the multifaceted media approach that coalitions use. The Greater Falls Connection coalition released a video PSA for Smoke-Free events featuring Ray Massucco, producer of Roots on the River Festival which is a smoke-free event. This PSA garnered 3,279 Facebook views, 1,190 YouTube views, and the Facebook video had 49 shares, likes, and comments. Coalitions use digital media in various forms, including Video PSA's, to build on and showcase their efforts and thus expand their reach and viewership on social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube. Social Media has also been integral for coalitions across the state to promote cessation classes, [802Quits](#), the [Counter Balance](#) campaign.

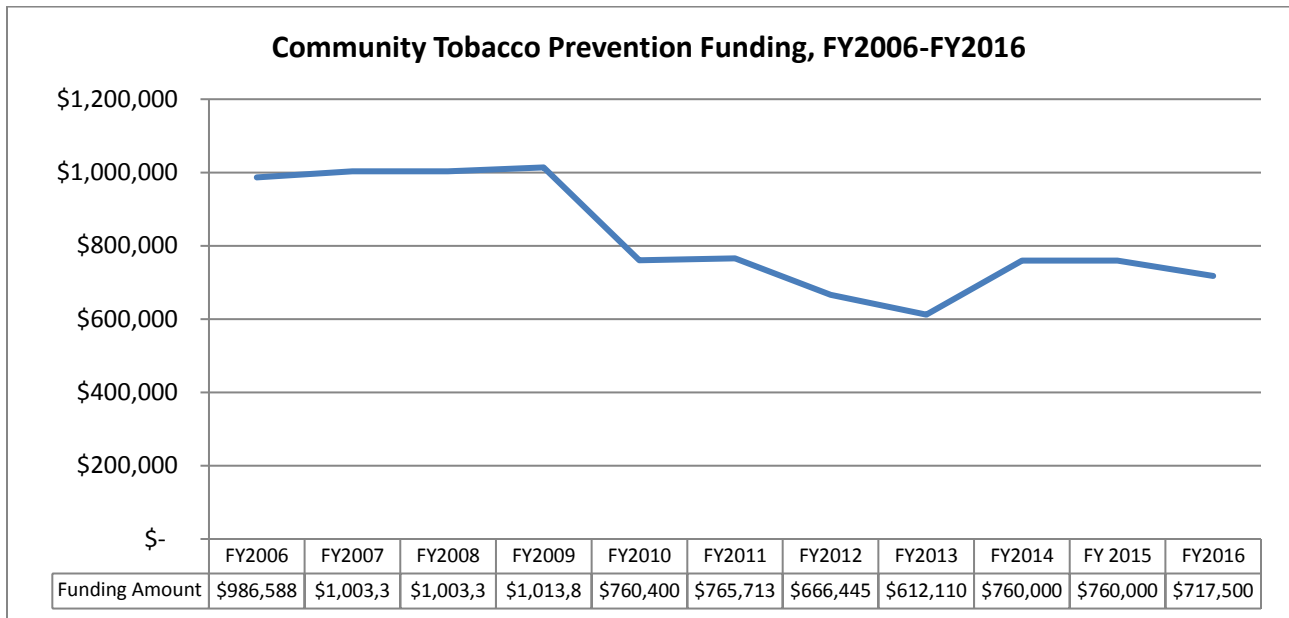
- **Tobacco gets a spot at the table:** In 2016 coalitions across the state utilized tabling, and a presence at local events and businesses to spread the message of programs such as [802Quits](#), and the [Counter Balance](#) campaign, as well as to promote general awareness about the dangers of tobacco use, and to educate the community about their work. In Burlington 802Quits materials and resources were distributed by tabling at the Burlington Police Department's Community BBQ, Burlington Kids day, and the Spectrum Youth Conference, and in Essex cessation materials were distributed around town and at meetings of 12-step program groups in town. Both occurrences provide an example of community-tailored methods coalitions are using to educate and help community members access needed resources.
- The Community Connections coalition sponsored the [insert name of town] Mountaineer's baseball game providing information on secondhand smoke and cessation, a Tobacco Free Pharmacy promotional banner was placed at the entrance to the park, the [insert name of town] tobacco-free pharmacies (including Montpelier Pharmacy) were recognized over the announcement system and youth distributed balls with a "Be Smoke Free Near Me!" message on them. The work of the Richford OVX also provides another lesson on how a sporting event can be utilized to push back against the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure. The Richford OVX youth developed messages educating the community on the dangers of secondhand smoke which appeared in the local Softball "programs". These activities showcase the multidimensional focus of community coalitions and their partners in prevention, the many benefits of having a presence at local events, and the various tactics that are used to effectively spread the messages of tobacco coalitions and their community partners.

### **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 the funds that they have available for this purpose while increasing their overall funding levels.



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