



Guide to Tobacco-Free Parks

Every Change Starts with A Question

Who are the decision makers?

Most counties or cities have a Parks and Recreation Board which advises the local council. For the policy to be passed on to your local council, it will usually have to be endorsed by the Parks and Recreation Board. Once the Parks Board supports the policy, it will be passed on to your local Council or Commissioners. If they support it, the policy goes into effect.

How do you target decision makers?

When you present before any board, it is a great idea to have visuals. If you have done a cleanup in your park, put all the cigarette butts you have collected into one jar. You would be surprised how many you can get. A power point presentation might be appropriate as well.

Additionally, local politicians love to see public support for policies. You should survey the public or collect petition signatures to show public support for your policy.

How do you organize your message?

When preparing your message, think about what issues would be important to your policy makers. Use these issues to frame your message in a way that appeals to your community's values and needs.

Who can you partner with?

There are probably many different organizations you can partner with in your local community. Consider working with other youth advocacy groups, health clubs at your high school, local health departments or service clubs like Rotary and Kiwanis. Some counties may have specific coalitions devoted to tobacco prevention. Try to get the support of a diverse group of people, ranging from health experts, to community members, to park managers.

Freeze!

"This is the tobacco-police... put your cigarette down!"

There are better ways to get people to comply with a tobacco-free policy than to recruit the tobacco police.

Here are some tips to make sure the word gets out about your policy:

∞ Do surveys

Ask questions like, "Are you aware that our parks are now tobacco-free?"

∞ Put up signs

Visible signage is an easy way to communicate the policy.

∞ Pass out cards

At public events, pass out cards which detail your tobacco free policy. You can even attach lollipops or other incentives to the cards!

∞ Get Media Attention

An event announcing the policy with local politicians would be a great way to get the word out. Writing a letter to the editor to your local paper would also help inform the public.

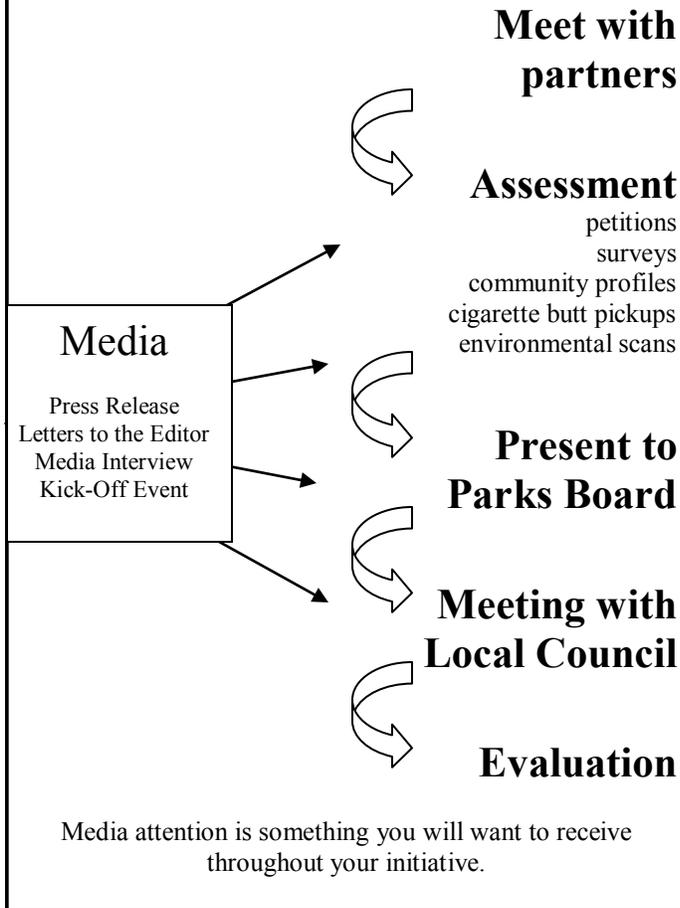


Getting Started

Putting Your Plan Into Action

Process at a Glance

A Guide to Tobacco Free Parks



Know Your Community:

Bringing Out the Detective in You

Each county has its own way to get policies changed. The first step in the process is determining how change happens in your community. To find this out, try investigating online, or putting in a call or e-mail to someone on your parks board or local government.



Next, plan your presentation. Make sure your presentation is wide-ranging (think about discussing economics, the environment, or role modeling). Find out about any rules or time limits regarding speaking to your officials. Remember that park boards and local governments may all have different requirements. Invite supporters to attend public meetings regarding the policy.

Mission: Accomplished

Now What?

Passed your policy? Evaluate its success by doing another environmental scan to see if there has been a decrease in tobacco use. If the policy is not being followed, continue using the compliance tips; you could put up more signs or hand out cards. Doing an evaluation is a great way to learn what effect the policy has had on the community.

To get ideas to help with your effort, talk with other groups that have already gone through the process. Don't reinvent the wheel!

