



**Section 6:**  
**POLICY IMPLEMENTATION  
AND ENFORCEMENT**

## EFFECTIVE TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS POLICIES REQUIRE STRONG IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT PLANS

**Hurrah! Your hard work to get a tobacco-free campus policy passed has come to fruition! Pat yourself and your team on the back! Celebrate! But don't think your task is complete.**

Even though your policy has been adopted, there is still much to be done for the policy to work. In order to have a smooth policy implementation, it is important to think about how the policy will be implemented as it is being

developed. It is a good idea to have a couple of people on your team responsible for creating implementation strategies while you are working on passage of the policy. It is never too soon to start to think about how a policy will be carried out.

If there is one thing that is the key to a successful policy implementation, it is communication. One of the main reasons that policies run into problems is that people are not aware of the policy or

do not understand it. It is your job to make sure that everyone on campus – and even your campus neighbors – understands the new policy.

A positive side to the amount of time that it can take to get a policy passed is that the debate regarding the proposal educates the campus community. The discussion is essential to providing information about the issue. Policies that have been passed quickly (e.g. an administrator decides that this will be the new policy without any public input or discussion) are usually less successful than those that have endured a spirited debate.

Here are a few helpful hints as you begin to plan your tobacco-free campus policy implementation:

- Set an implementation date that will allow sufficient time for people to prepare for implementation. Many colleges have used the beginning of a school year or a semester to implement a policy. This gives ample time to inform the public about the new policy before it is actually implemented. One recommendation is to allow at least six months between policy passage and implementation. The Wake Forest School of Medicine has developed an [implementation timeline](#) that outlines a month-by-month plan for launching your policy.
- Educate everyone about the policy well in advance of the implementation date.
  - Create an informative, user-friendly web page about the policy, its adoption, and its implementation. Here are great examples from the [University of Kentucky](#), [University of Michigan](#) and [Arizona State University](#).
  - Use all of the tools of communication available, such as social media, newsletters, the campus newspaper, and announcements in publications at athletic events, commencement exercises, and other campus activities to publicize and promote cooperation with the policy.
  - Include information about the policy and enforcement (including sanctions) in the school's catalogue, student and faculty handbooks, etc.
  - Encourage the [administration to send a letter](#) or email to the entire campus or at a minimum, include information about the policy in preparation materials sent to students and faculty at the start of the term.
  - Inform the surrounding community about the upcoming policy change. This is especially important if your campus is in an urban area with nearby residents and businesses.



*Please note that the term "tobacco" in this document refers to commercially produced tobacco products only and never the traditional tobacco of our Northern Plains American Indians.*

- Place a letter-to-the-editor in the local newspaper, explaining the policy and its rationale.
- Develop a campus map noting areas where tobacco use is prohibited.
- Ask student government to help get the word out to students.
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to take pride in the new policy. Provide materials such as these [informational flyers](#) they can use to promote and explain the policy.
- Enlist support of campus and community law enforcement agencies that work sporting events and other events on campus to support and help enforce the policy.
- Post signs. This is a *major* component of compliance. Frame the message positively. People are more likely to obey the policy when they understand why it's in place and what is required of them to comply. One message that works is “Welcome to our tobacco-free (or smoke-free) campus.”
  - Prominently post tobacco-free signs/decals at all entrances to buildings, campus grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities and fields, and in vehicles, in addition to postings near high-traffic areas like restrooms, loading areas, stairwells, and lounges.
  - Use portable signage, table tents, etc., to ensure visitor compliance at campus events (concerts, conferences, athletic events, etc.).
- Award recognition to those who support and help implement the policy.



## Enforcement

It has been said that a policy without enforcement is not worth the paper it is written on. An essential element for any smoke-free policy implementation is enforcement. Sometimes people shy away from enforcement because they don't want to become the “smoking police.” Many years of experience with tobacco-free policy implementation has clearly shown that most policies are self-enforcing especially when people are aware of the policy. Of course there will be some resistance and the policy will not be universally loved; but if the policy is publicized and carried out like other campus policies, there is not likely to be any serious problem with compliance.

It is important to establish a clear procedure and enforce the policy in a non-discriminatory way from the very beginning. Compliance with smoke-free policies is generally not a problem if you are well prepared, but there may be a short period of adjustment as people become aware of the new policy and how to comply.

Many schools focus on education and referral to cessation services as their primary enforcement tool. The [University of California](#) system recently went tobacco-free and this was their approach. However, they do have provisions for violators to be “subject to corrective action under the Student Code of Conduct, Human Resources and Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures, other applicable university regulations or policies, vendor contracts and citations and fines.” The [Seattle-King County College Toolkit](#) provides examples of enforcement plans from several colleges and community colleges across the country.

The University of Kentucky trained supervisors, faculty, administrators, and student leaders on their policy and how to approach violators. In a recent article in *Nursing Clinics of North America*, the authors noted that their approach was to “create a culture of policy compliance so that enforcing the tobacco-free rules is everyone’s job” (Hahn, et. al., 2012). The training included a script which is highlighted in a brief [video](#).

A recent article in the *Journal of College Health* discussed whether campuses should even implement a tobacco-free policy without a strong enforcement plan (Fennell, 2012). Fennell argues that a policy “without a clearly defined and actionable enforcement component...serve[s] little purpose.” He suggests that a warning and fine structure be put into place with the collected fines going to student and employee health services.

Sanctions for violating policies vary greatly. Some colleges focus on education and persuasion whereas some have outlined fines, letters of reprimand and mandatory enrollment in a smoking/tobacco use cessation course at the violator’s expense. Detailed examples of policies can be found at Americans for [Non-Smokers Rights](#). A few examples of fairly strong policies can be found from [Belmont University](#) (TN) and [Pratt Community College](#) (KS).

The [Tobacco Control Legal Consortium](#) (TCLC) outlines many of the policy and enforcement considerations that should be discussed as a campus policy is developed. One of the issues they raise is that of enforcement authorities. Due to the nature of many post-secondary campuses, there may be different internal and external agencies with enforcement authority such as private security companies, campus law enforcement, local police and other governmental agencies. TCLC advises that it is essential for coordination to occur among the various enforcement agencies and that enforcement procedures be consistent across the entire campus. A useful tool to have in your enforcement kit is a clear map of the campus which shows where tobacco use is not allowed. This can be provided to law enforcement as well as faculty, staff, and students.

The [Tobacco-Free College Campus Initiative](#) offers some great tips to help plan how you will enforce a tobacco-free policy:

- Assemble a team responsible for overseeing policy implementation and compliance – the earlier the better.
- Develop a plan setting forth how compliance will be achieved and measured.
- Photograph high tobacco use areas (“hot spots”) both before and following implementation to provide visual evidence of less tobacco use (and to highlight trouble spots).
- Enlist the institution’s leadership to explain the policy and set expectations for compliance.
- Educate and obtain input from campus governance groups prior to and following policy adoption and implementation.
- Enlist union representatives in the process, from development of the policy to adoption and implementation (not providing them with veto power but inviting their input).
- Amend, as needed, vendor contracts and bid processes to reflect the dictates of the policy and requirements for compliance.
- Enlist the institution’s human resources arm in orienting candidates for employment about the policy and expectations for compliance.
- Train supervisors in conducting face-to-face meetings with staff about the policy before it is adopted, and then (at least) annually thereafter.

- Train student advisors, coaches, and other personnel responsible for working with students on how to educate about the policy before it goes into effect.
- Post prominent, strategically-located signage before and after implementation.

The take-away message is that in order to have a strong policy that has a high rate of compliance, everyone on your campus needs to know about it. Communication is essential!

### **What's Next?**

The next section will discuss how schools can support tobacco users and make a dent in the problem of tobacco use and addiction on your campus. We'll talk about some of the best practices or proven methods that have worked in other places to help your college reduce the harm that tobacco causes.