

Who will Back Me Up?

&

How can they help me?



Tools to Build Support



Think of ways you can share what you have learned and gain support for your goal. How can you utilize the contacts you already have at school, work, home, extra-curricular activities, or other areas of your life? Here are a few suggestions and tools:

- **Community Event:** You may be able to reserve a booth or walk around a community event and talk to residents about tobacco prevention and your issue and goal. Ask people to sign a petition, or write a letter of support. Display the pictures you collected from the store assessment and demonstrate how tobacco products are marketed towards youth. Community events may include a festival, fair, farmer's market, PTA meeting, community expo, athletic event, or neighborhood gathering.
- **Presentations to Community Groups:** Share what you have found with community members and ask for their support in reaching your goal.
- **Letters of Support:** Develop a list of people who will support your policy idea, such as youth groups, teams/coaches, school staff, families, day care providers, and health professionals. Use sample letters and talking points provided by the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) staff and ask people to make it their own. Collect the letters and include copies of them for policy makers in your presentation packets.
- **Petition:** Gather signatures of people who support stronger youth access to tobacco laws. Use the sample petition provided by ANSR staff and gather signatures at school, work, and community events. Present copies of the petition to policy makers in your presentation packet. A petition will be most effective if it is paired with letters of support or other tools.
- **Online Organizing:** Use email, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other online networks to ask for support from your peers. Include a sample letter of support and ask people to add their touches and send it back to you. It is best to connect with people who live, work, or play in your community, though you can also ask for support from others.

You can also use the **media** to help build support. Talk to your advisor and someone from ANSR about the messages your group will use when working with media. It is best to have one or two members of your group who are trained and prepared to speak with the media, especially if you are attending an event or meeting where a reporter wants to learn about your issue. Everyone in your group should be prepared to direct the media to those members.

- **Letter to the Editor (LTE):** Submit a letter to your local newspaper about your group, your goals, and why taking action on stronger youth access laws is important.
- **School Newspaper:** Contribute an LTE or a longer article to your school newspaper. Talk about your group and the importance of the issue. Since the school newspaper is read by other community members, you could ask readers to submit letters of support to your group.
- **Pitching a story:** Newspapers, TV, and radio stations are often looking for interesting stories, especially when young people are creating positive change in their communities. Work with ANSR to draft a press release to pitch your story to local media.



How Will We Gather Support?

Student Name: _____

Support Tool	Notes/Details	Who is Responsible?	Deadline
Community Event #1			
Community Event #2			
Letters of Support			
Petition			
Online Network			
Letter-to-the-Editor			
School Newspaper			
Presentation to Community Group			
Media Pitch			



Who Will Agree with Making the Park Areas Tobacco Free?

Student Name: _____

Think of at least five people you know who you could talk to about supporting your efforts. They could be **parents, relatives, neighbors, teachers, school staff, coaches, youth group leaders, church members, your family doctor, or anyone else** you know in your town who believes in protecting youth from the harms of tobacco.

Name	Phone number/Email address	What are they willing to do?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sign a petition <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter of support <input type="checkbox"/> Call decision makers <input type="checkbox"/> Attend the city council meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sign a petition <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter of support <input type="checkbox"/> Call decision makers <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a city council meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sign a petition <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter of support <input type="checkbox"/> Call decision makers <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a city council meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

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		<input type="checkbox"/> Sign a petition <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter of support <input type="checkbox"/> Call decision makers <input type="checkbox"/> Attend the city council meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Other:





Steps to Take During a Tobacco Litter Clean-up

1. **Bring your camera!** Taking photos of your clean-up is a great way to show the media and policy makers how big of a problem tobacco use in parks is.
2. Be sure everyone **always wears vinyl gloves!** Tobacco litter can be hazardous; protect your group by telling everyone to keep their gloves on.
3. Give each group member a **plastic zippered bag** to collect litter in. Remind the group that they are looking for tobacco-related litter. This includes cigarette butts/filters, whole cigarettes, cigarette packaging, spit tobacco packaging, and other tobacco products.
4. Set a **time limit** on the clean-up. It should only take about 20-30 minutes to get the data you need.
5. Ask each group member to **report their findings to one person** who will record all of the data on the "Cigarette Litter Collection Data" sheet. If necessary, every group member can write some basic information such as the date and location of the litter collection on their zippered bag with a permanent marker so that one person can tally up the total results later.
6. Put all of the litter (or zippered bags filled with litter) into the plastic container and screw the top on tight. Be sure each group member throws away their gloves and empty bags into a trash container.
7. Be sure every group member **washes their hands!** Gloves help to protect against bacteria and other health hazards, but the best defense is washing your hands with soap and water.
8. **DO NOT** open the top on the litter container! Cigarette litter really STINKS! Keep the container lid tightly closed. Also avoid keeping the container in your room, locker, car, or other small enclosed area. Even a sealed lid could allow the odor to leak out. Although it's litter, secondhand smoke toxins still exist. The best place to keep the container is in a ventilated garage or workshop, or to give it to your adult advisor.
9. When presenting your litter to the Park Board or City Council, **be prepared to talk about where your group picked up cigarette litter** (listing specific parks is helpful), how long the clean-up lasted, how many pieces of litter were picked up, and where in the parks the litter was found (near playgrounds, on trails, etc.).



Cigarette Litter Collection Data Sheet on Back

[illegible][illegible]



Community Tobacco Survey

Please tell us what you think about tobacco-free recreational places for our community by answering the following questions.

Tobacco use should be prohibited in the following places:

(For each place, circle the number on the scale that best describes how you feel).

1. Parks	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
2. Playgrounds	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
3. Outdoor sports facilities	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
4. Skateboard/bike parks	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
5. Hiking/biking trails	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
6. Picnic grounds	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
7. Golf courses	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
8. Beaches	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
9. Boat launch/fishing pier	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree
10. Campgrounds	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	strongly agree

How often does someone from your family visit [community's name] park locations?

☐ Once a week

☐ Once a month

☐ Once a year

Where do you live?

☐ In [community's name]

☐ Within 20 miles of [community's name]

☐ Over 20 miles from [community's name]

What is your age?

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-17

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-39

☐ 40-50

☐ 51+

Are you a...

(check all that apply)

☐ Parent

☐ Youth leader/coach

☐ Youth sports participant

☐ Former smoker

☐ Grandparent

☐ Youth sports official

☐ Smoker

☐ Non-smoker



Talking Points for Letters of Support about Tobacco-Free Policies for Park Property

Comprehensive tobacco-free policies for community park systems cover the entire park system, including parks, all athletic facilities, trails, etc. as these policies promote the health of residents by protecting them from secondhand smoke and tobacco litter. Comprehensive policies also make no exception for certain events; instead they apply at all times the park system is being used.

Should you prefer that your community adopt a comprehensive tobacco-free policy that covers the entire park system, the following talking points address comprehensive policies:

- As a citizen of [community name], you support a policy that creates tobacco-free recreational environments for **all** community members using park land, recreational facilities, trails and open space owned by the city.
- Youth and families who attend adult softball games, use trails, beaches, and picnic shelters, or attend community events in parks deserve to have their health protected by a tobacco-free policy as well as those at playgrounds and youth athletic events.
- A policy that prohibits tobacco use on **all** park land, facilities, and open space owned by the community is easier for everyone to understand.
- A tobacco-free policy for city-owned recreational facilities provides consistency for recreation facilities in the community, since school district facilities are already tobacco free.
- By having policies, we can ensure that coaches, parents and other role models do not smoke or use other forms of tobacco during recreational events.
- By having policies that create tobacco-free spaces, the community is sending youth the message that tobacco use is an unacceptable behavior during all recreation and sports activities.
- The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's report on secondhand smoke exposure concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. A tobacco-free policy for [community name] park land would protect **all** residents from secondhand smoke.
- A tobacco-free park policy also protects toddlers and pets from discarded cigarette butts tossed near playground or beach areas.

Sample Letters of Support

From a community member:

[Insert date]

Dear *[Park Board or City Council Members]*:

I am writing to express support for tobacco-free parks for our community. By supporting a tobacco-free policy, the *[Park Board or City Council]* can send a clear message that we care about the health of the kids in our community and want them to make positive lifestyle decisions. A tobacco-free policy will also ensure that coaches and parents can be positive role models by not using tobacco in recreational areas.

Tobacco use not only exposes participants and spectators to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, but it is also a nuisance and safety concern. The litter caused by tobacco use diminishes the beauty of the city's park areas and can be accidentally ingested by young children. In addition, our city parks should be places where we can go to improve our health and fitness or just relax. Of course, allowing tobacco use in our parks is nothing but detrimental to our health.

[Insert personal experiences].

I encourage you to make all city-owned parks and recreation facilities tobacco free.

Thank you,

Jane Brown
Concerned Community Member

From a principal or school:

[Insert date]

Dear *[Park Board or City Council Members]*:

I am writing in support of tobacco-free park and recreational areas in the city of Yourtown. A tobacco-free policy sends a clear message that we care about the health of the community, especially our youth.

[Yourtown elementary school] is in close proximity to *[XYZ Park]*. Many of our students and families use this park area. Since our school district already prohibits tobacco use at our buildings and grounds, including the playground and athletic fields, a city-wide policy will create a consistent tobacco-free policy for all park and recreational facilities in our community.

Tobacco use not only exposes participants and spectators to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, but it is also a nuisance and safety concern. We strive to teach our students the value of a clean, healthy community by not littering, and the tobacco-free policy will help reduce litter and support the healthy message that we teach. Tobacco use in a park setting also sends a negative message to our youth that tobacco use is an acceptable behavior within our community.

I support *[name of youth group asking for a policy]* students and encourage you to prohibit tobacco use at all city-owned parks and recreation facilities.

Thank you for considering a tobacco-free policy.

Thank you,

John Doe
[Principal of XYZ school]



Sample Petition

**We support a tobacco-free policy for [city name] park property
for the following reasons:**

- Children model adult behavior and a tobacco-free policy can help change the perception that using tobacco is an acceptable or desirable behavior.
- Consistent tobacco use policies at schools, parks and other settings are important, for creating healthy environments and encouraging healthy behavior in children.
- Discarded cigarette butts pollute our parks; pose a fire hazard; and pose a risk of ingestion by toddlers and animals.
- Secondhand smoke is dangerous to breathe. It harms the hearts and lungs of all creatures.

Name

Zip Code

Phone/Email

1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____

I, the undersigned, witnessed the above individuals sign this petition.

Name (print)

Signature

Date



Sample Letters-to-the-Editor on Tobacco-Free Parks (Youth-Oriented)

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter

- Be short and to-the-point (100-125 words).
- Be clear that you want tobacco-free parks in your community.
- Share a short story or example that explains why you want tobacco-free parks.
- If you are a member of a group working on tobacco-free parks, state what your group is doing in the community and what your goal is.
- Sign the letter, and include your address and phone number. The newspaper editor will not print your street address or phone number, but he or she will contact you to confirm you wrote the letter.

Sample #1

[Date]

Dear Editor:

I really like to use our city parks and recreational areas. My favorite activity is to _____. Our city parks were created as a healthy place for residents and especially youth to improve their fitness or just relax. I'd like to see our parks become healthier by making them tobacco free. Since allowing a harmful substance like tobacco use directly contradicts the purpose of park areas, it would make perfect sense for us to make our parks and other athletic areas tobacco free!

Sincerely,
[Your Name, Address, Phone Number]

Sample #2

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Everyone knows that secondhand smoke is harmful indoors. But did you know that secondhand smoke can be harmful outdoors as well? Anytime you smell secondhand smoke, you are breathing it in. So, if you are sitting on bleachers outside watching a game, or sitting on a beach or at a picnic table, and you smell someone's tobacco smoke, you are breathing it in. This has happened to me before at [give example].

Everyone deserves the right to breathe clean air, especially in our beautiful city parks, which are established to promote health and nature.

Sincerely,
[Your Name, Address, Phone Number]

Sample #3

[Date]

Dear Editor:

As a young person, there are many role models that I look up to. Some of them are famous people, but many of them, including my parents, teachers, and other adults, live right here in our community. I also know that I am a role model for younger kids. I want to be the best role model I can, and one way I can do that is by leading a healthy lifestyle. I think our community members could become much better role models by providing more tobacco-free areas, especially in our parks, playgrounds, and _____. These are healthy areas where we all go to have fun, get exercise, and relax. Litter from cigarettes and people smoking in the parks send a negative role-modeling message to kids. We should change that to focus on all being healthier role models.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Address, Phone Number]

Sample #4

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Have you noticed how many cigarette butts and other tobacco litter is in our city parks and on our beaches? This really bothers me. I am very concerned about the environment, and I know that it takes many years for cigarette butts to decompose. During that time, toddlers, pets, birds and even fish can pick them up and swallow them, which is very dangerous. I don't think people should smoke in our city parks and other recreational areas, because they are being careless about our environment.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Address, Phone Number]

General Talking Points for Creating your Own Letter

- As a citizen of the city of [City Name], you support a policy that creates tobacco-free recreational areas for **all** community members using park land, recreational facilities, and open space owned by the city.
- A policy that prohibits tobacco use on **all** park land, facilities, and open space owned by the city is easier for everyone to understand.
- The purpose of a city park system should be to provide a healthy environment for residents to improve their fitness or just relax. Allowing tobacco use, which is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, is a direct contradiction to the purpose of park areas.
- A tobacco-free policy for city-owned recreational facilities provides consistency for recreation facilities in the community, since the [City Name] School District facilities are already tobacco free.
- By having policies, we can ensure that coaches, parents and other role models do not smoke or use tobacco products during recreational events, even adult events, especially when impressionable youth are watching.
- By having policies that create tobacco-free spaces, the community is sending youth the message that tobacco use is an unacceptable behavior.
- A tobacco-free policy for **all** [City Name] park land would protect **all** residents from secondhand smoke, and toddlers and pets from discarded cigarette butts tossed near playground areas.
- Discarded cigarette butts also diminish the beauty of [City Name] parks.