



Instrument ESSENTIALS for Multi-unit Housing Objectives

TOPIC

The aim of multi-unit housing objectives, is to prevent or limit secondhand smoke/vapor from tobacco, vape and marijuana products in individual units and common areas. Exposure can come through direct proximity; drift in through doors, windows and shared ventilation systems; and leave residue on walls, carpets and drapes.

Tobacco control projects are encouraged to address this problem a legislated policy (adopted by the city council or board of supervisors covering the entire jurisdiction). Voluntary policies adopted by individual MUH housing owners or manager don't cover enough of the population as a payoff for the effort and can be subject to the whims of change by the management.

Note: Funded by federal money, Public Housing Authorities are not subject to local city or county policies. Instead, they operate according to their own set of rules defined by Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. They do have the power, however, to enact local level policies they adopt as long as they do not conflict with HUD or Congressional guidelines. Each agency controls all of the public housing in the region. Therefore, it can be worthwhile to pursue voluntary policies with them.

TERMINOLOGY

- × Multi-unit housing (MUH): A term used by tobacco control and the housing industry. It includes apartments, condominiums, duplexes as well as college dormitories and other group housing situations.
- × Multi-family dwellings or multi-family housing or smoke-free apartments: Terms used by renters and the general public. Also smoke-free units, smoke-free buildings, smoke-free complexes, non-smoking apartments, smoke-free homes.
- × Public Housing Authority: Low rent public housing that is owned and managed by public housing authorities and funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD has required that all PHAs adopt a smoke-free policy prohibiting smoking in all indoor areas, including individual units, and within 25 feet of indoor areas.
- × Smoke: When talking about **smoke**, be sure to explain you mean smoke or vapor from tobacco, marijuana or vape products.
- × Secondhand smoke: Be sure to define as: "The smoke or vapor that drifts from someone else's use of tobacco, vape or marijuana products."
- × Thirdhand smoke: Residual nicotine and other chemicals left on indoor surfaces by smoke or vapor.

USES OF EVALUATION

Observations are used to:

- a. Persuade decisionmakers of the need for a policy by documenting the extent of the problem (pre-intervention)
- b. Confirm compliance once a policy is adopted and implemented by comparing conditions before and after policy adoption

Measures

- The number (and location) of people smoking or vaping in shared common areas (e.g., pool, mailboxes, in/near laundry rooms, parking lots, walkways, near playground)
- The presence of drifting smoke or vapor (observed by smell)
- The presence (and location) of tobacco/vape product litter
- The presence (and location) of 'no smoking' signage
- The number (and wording) of signed leases with 'no smoking/vaping' provisions – e.g., smoke-free units, including patios and balconies; warnings and consequences for smoking/vaping

Tenant Surveys are used to:

- a. Persuade decisionmakers of the need for a policy by documenting the extent of the problem or the level of support for a smoke-free policy (pre-intervention)
- b. Measure the need for tenant education and/or readiness for mobilization

Measures

- Knowledge about the harms of second and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Amount of tenant support for smoke-free units/areas
- Frequency of tenant exposure to secondhand/thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Effect of secondhand/thirdhand smoke/vapor on health
- Frequency of tenant complaints to management about secondhand smoke/vapor
- How complaints about secondhand/thirdhand smoke/vapor have been resolved
- Interest/preference for smoke-free units/buildings/complexes
- Knowledge of existing or potential smoke-free policy
- How rigorously policy is enforced
- Where smoking/vaping is allowed
- Demographic questions about ethnicity, income or other low SES measures; #/% of households with young children or people with health problems made worse by smoke/vapor; #/% households with someone who smokes/vapes

Tenant Focus Groups are used to:

- a. Inform project strategies, policy options and wording, how to frame the need for a policy
- b. Confirm the policy is being enforced, identify strengths/weaknesses of

Measures

- Knowledge about the harms of secondhand and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Their feelings and experiences with secondhand smoke in their complex
- Effect of secondhand/thirdhand smoke/vapor on health
- How complaints about secondhand/thirdhand smoke/vapor have been handled
- Their desire for smoke-free housing (and preferred configurations)

(Once the policy has been implemented)

- Whether/where smoking/vaping is allowed
- Whether tenants still experience drifting smoke or see tobacco litter
- Whether tenants signed a smoke-free lease agreement
- How well the policy is working/being enforced
- How policy infringements are handled

Owner/manager key informant interviews are used to:

- a. Assess the need for owner/manager education re: the harms and costs of secondhand and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- b. Inform project timing and strategies for policies
- c. Understand hesitancy or opposition to smoke-free housing policy
- d. Formulate the most amenable policy options
- e. (Once policy is implemented) Find out how well the policy is working

Measures

- Knowledge of the harms of secondhand and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Support or opposition for voluntary or legislated policy
- Advantages/disadvantages of having smoke-free units/complexes
- Identify existing smoke-free policies (where smoking is allowed, how enforced, etc.)
- Average cost to maintain & refurbish a smoke-free unit vs. one where smokers lived
- Awareness of cost savings (from insurance + maintenance)
- How well the policy is working
- Need for technical assistance, 'no smoking' signage, marketing

Owner/manager surveys are used to:

- a. Assess the need for owner/manager education
- b. Inform project timing and strategies for policies
- c. Understand readiness and/or support or opposition for smoke-free housing policy
- d. Formulate most amenable policy options
- e. Demonstrate industry willingness for legislated policy to lawmakers

Measures

- # & type of existing smoke-free policies
- Support or opposition for voluntary or legislated policy
- Perceived advantages/disadvantages of having smoke-free units/complexes
- Average cost to refurbish unit of smokers vs. non-smokers
- Awareness of harms of secondhand and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Awareness of cost savings
- Size & type of complex
- Demographics of tenant population
- % tenants that are smokers
- Marketing avenues used to advertise available units

Local apartment/housing association interviews or surveys are used to:

- a. Assess the need for owner/manager education
- b. Measure possible support or opposition from residents for policies (if the association is made up of tenant owners. Housing industry associations consist of apartment or other MUH owners and managers.)
- c. Inform project strategies and timing by identifying industry perceptions about smoke-free housing (e.g., understand industry trends and concerns in order to frame the options and need for policies more persuasively)

Measures

- # & type of existing smoke-free policies
- Perceived advantages/disadvantages of having smoke-free units/complexes
- Average cost to refurbish unit of smokers vs. non-smokers
- Industry awareness of the harms of secondhand and thirdhand smoke/vapor
- Industry awareness of cost savings
- Desirability of smoke-free units/complexes
- Marketing avenues industry uses to advertise available units
- Most convincing arguments for smoke-free housing
- Industry support or opposition for legislated smoke-free housing policy
- Likely opponents
- Technical assistance needs