

Outcome Evaluation



In California Tobacco Control, the term Outcome Evaluation (which is distinguished here with a capital “O”) is used to refer evaluation activities that include acceptable measures to gauge a project’s efforts towards meeting its objectives. Examples of appropriate outcome measures include decreased tobacco litter, fewer smoking incidences, and reduction in illegal tobacco sales.

Beyond just the passage of a policy or the addition of coalition members, the Outcome measure must be something observable that demonstrates the implementation of the objective. It is crucial that the Outcome is consistent with the goal specified in the objective. This is why a strong and well-crafted SMART objective is a prerequisite to writing an effective evaluation plan. Outcome measures often (but not always) compare conditions several points in time to demonstrate change from before to after program efforts.

Common Outcome Evaluation Measures

Certain data are more acceptable than others as Outcome Evaluation measures for objectives. The table below list commonly used outcome measures specific to different topics for objectives that require Outcome Evaluation:

Common Policy Objectives	Acceptable Outcome Measures	Less Robust Outcome Measures	Unacceptable Outcome Measures
Flavored tobacco	Store observations	Calling stores, self-reported retailer survey	Policy record review counting policies
Minimum price, pack volume	Observation of prices, pack sizes, discounting offers	Calling stores, self-reported retailer survey	Policy record review counting policies
Smokefree outdoor dining, bars, service areas, recreational, non-recreational public areas	Observation of signage, tobacco litter count, number of people smoking/ vaping	California Adult Tobacco Survey secondhand smoke awareness questions	Policy record review counting policies, key informant interviews with managers/ staff of restaurants, parks, chamber of commerce
Smokefree multi-unit housing	Observation of signage, tobacco litter, number of people smoking/vaping	Number of complaints (to managers or to health dept.) about SHS or litter, policy record/document review measuring signed leases or addendums with smoke-free language	

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Tobacco Retail License	Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey, Young Adult Electronic Purchase Survey, store observation	California Student Tobacco Survey self-reporting purchasing cigarettes from a store, number of licenses purchased, number of citations issued for violations	Policy record review counting policies
Tobacco Retailer Density, Zoning	Density mapping		Policy record review counting policies
Tobacco-free pharmacies and health care campuses	Observation	Interviews or surveys with pharmacies or health care providers	Policy record review counting policies
Behavioral health cessation treatment program		California Smokers' Helpline call reports, self-reported surveys of post treatment quit rates (completion, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year)	Number of participants who received cessation services