

Summary Reports Capture Strategies from Projects across the State

What can be learned from reading a Final Evaluation Report (FER)? Well, sometimes quite a lot. Especially when the report includes enough description about what was attempted, for what purpose, which methods were employed, and what was learned in the process. And from a whole bunch of FERS on the same topic, it is possible to compare the differing conditions encountered and strategies used to combat them.



That's just what the TC Evaluation Center is doing -- compiling intervention strategies, barriers, evaluation processes and recommendations from all of the FERS written on a particular issue like outdoor areas or tobacco retail licensing. By comparing final evaluation reports from programs across the state, we can identify conditions that facilitated policy adoption, countervailing factors, and outreach strategies that seemed to have the most success. Most importantly, we are able to collect the best learning from project efforts by looking at the recommendations section for advice about aspects to be aware of and how best to proceed in the future.

So far, two of these summary reports have been completed, one on smoke-free policies in outdoor areas (2.2.16) and the other on tobacco litter in public places (1.4.1). There are a number of well-known factors that facilitate successful policy work such as: making good use of coalitions, partner organizations and young people; developing champions and being knowledgeable about the political environment; and collecting local data to demonstrate public support. But there are also a whole host of more unique pieces of wisdom in these summary reports (too many to choose more than just a few here):

A variety of unusual attention-getting activities were successful in attracting media attention and increasing public awareness.



- The Santa Barbara County LLA launched a "No Butts Left Behind" campaign which included sponsoring a float in a local parade and festival as well as a coordinated media campaign which produced a deluge of ads and bus and mall boards, resulting in a decrease in tobacco litter of 64-95%.
- Stanislaus County held a community-wide event at the Costa Fields Baseball Park where the team mascots of the San Francisco Giants and the Modesto Nuts joined the "Tobacco Strikes Out" celebration.
- By tabling at the county fair, the Del Norte LLA was able to capture public input in the form of petitions which they later used to negotiate with the fair board about adopting a smoke-free policy.
- Monterey County got the local TV station "interested enough to follow them around to city council meetings" where they presented local officials with the outcomes of surveys and beach clean-ups. They found that framing the need for smoke-free beaches as an environmental issue resonated with the community and helped attract partner organizations like the Tide Pool Association, the



Ocean Conservancy and the Surfriders Association to the effort.

The reports also documented the value of collecting local data which could be used to convince elected officials to adopt policies.

- The Nevada County LLA operates in a more conservative political climate where concerns about



individual rights and protecting business interests often quash attempts at passing smoke-free policies. ("It sounds great...but it's taking away freedom.") But with local data, the project was able to show sufficient public support -- even from nearby business owners -- to allay the concerns of the city council involved."

One report from Orange County "articulated the strategy of placing survey questions in the order most likely to elicit strongly positive responses: If people were asked if cigarette litter was a problem prior to the question 'Would you support a smoke-free park/beach law?' the percentage of support was much higher because the respondent had a reason to support the smoke-free venue. Without that anchor of litter, people were more apt to think of government infringement (banning smoking) rather than the problems of tobacco usage in recreational areas and their impact on the environment and health."

- Recognizing the psychology of the "academic mindset when they designed their [smoke-free college campus] campaign," San Diego County coalition members "set the stage by assessing tobacco control policies at the county's two- and four-year colleges and releasing the dismal results to the media. 'Educators are inherently competitive 'grade-grubbers' and were extremely motivated to seek good grades for their campus in competition with other campuses. This was an effective motivational tool for working with educators."



Those are just a few examples of the useful ideas you can glean from reading these summary reports. So if your project plans to work on these topics in the 2010-2013 contract period, it might be a good idea to stop at the [TCEC website](#) first to read about what other projects have done before you. In the next few months, summary reports on tobacco retail licensing and multi-unit housing objectives will also become available.

And just remember that in order for TCEC to be able to extract valuable examples from your final evaluation reports, it's important to include enough detail and explanation about the strategies your project employed and the rationale behind each piece of your plan! Stay tuned for the release of more summary reports on other topics compiled from the information in your 2010 FERS....

Photos by Microsoft, Maxwell GS, Robin Kipke, Darin Barry and Allan Ferguson