

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A step-by-step guide to implementing an effective smoke-free housing policy

Step 1

CHECK OUT THE BUILDING SUCCESS WEBSITE at www.buildingsuccesssmokefree.org for helpful tips and suggestions to get your smoke-free plan underway.

Step 2

GATHER AND REVIEW YOUR TOOLS:

- **Implementation Guide:** Use this guide to review strategies and select action steps you can take in support of adopting and maintaining a successful smoke-free policy.
- **Action Plan:** Use this tool to record the action steps you chose from this guide and monitor your progress in completing them.
- **Quit Smoking Resources Guide:** Use this guide to learn more about best practices and tools to support smoking cessation.

Step 3

REVIEW THE ACTION STEPS in this guide, grouped by strategy, and select the steps that will best support your smoke-free policy.

Step 4

ADD YOUR ACTION STEPS TO YOUR ACTION PLAN to create your customized implementation roadmap.

Step 5

REVIEW YOUR ACTION PLAN REGULARLY, make modifications as necessary, and add new action steps as needed.

This resource is intended to help implement a new smoke-free housing policy, as well as to help improve or refine an existing policy.

ACTION STEPS

This guide outlines six implementation strategies that will form the basis of your smoke-free housing plan:

- 1 Resident Engagement
- 2 Staff Education & Training
- 3 Supporting Smoking Cessation
- 4 Community Partnerships
- 5 Helping Smokers Adhere to the Policy
- 6 Effective Enforcement

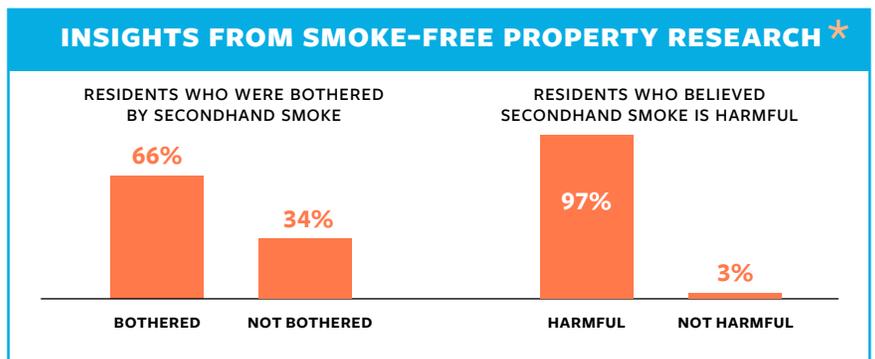
Because they will take more time and will shape your next steps, we recommend prioritizing Resident Engagement and Staff Education & Training strategies, then incorporating the other four strategies in the order that makes the most sense for your community.

Under each of the six implementation strategies are a set of specific action steps for you to consider. These are practical options that are based on recommendations and information shared from property managers and residents at properties that have had success with smoke-free housing implementation. The action steps in **bold** (see below) have proven to be most effective. Select your preferred action steps and add to your Action Plan document. This will become your new smoke-free housing roadmap. Choose one or two steps from each strategy.

PRIORITY

1. Resident Engagement

Resident engagement is foundational to adopting an effective smoke-free housing policy and should inform all of your implementation steps. Involve residents in your planning, communication, implementation, and adherence efforts.



Communicate

- Begin discussions with residents as early as possible. It can take time to understand their views and concerns and build support for the policy.**
- Inform residents that the reason for the smoke-free policy is to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke.**
- Surveyed residents from smoke-free properties report that information shared about their property's smoke-free policy was inadequate. So ask your residents if they are getting enough information about the policy.**
- Share information about the policy by: Hosting community meetings and using flyers, newsletters, emails, and/or phone calls to spread the word.**
- Ensure that residents understand the smoke-free rules and how they will be enforced.**
- Make sure residents know that smokers DO NOT need to quit smoking; they just need to follow the smoke-free policy. Emphasize that “smoke-free” DOES NOT mean “smoker-free.”**
- Distribute information to residents about the smoke-free policy. You can use the [Resident Information Sheet template](#) found on the Building Success website to get started.
- Remind residents of the smoke-free policy when new or renewal leases are signed.
- Resident engagement is not a one-time effort. Engage residents about the policy on an ongoing basis.

Get residents on board

- Talk with residents (smokers and non-smokers) to understand their concerns and preferences.**
- Educate residents on how secondhand smoke can travel. Use a secondhand smoke monitor (if available) to help demonstrate.**
- Engage resident leaders to help champion the smoke-free policy. Involve them in resident engagement efforts, such as strategizing ways to share information with other residents.
- Get residents to support fellow residents in adhering to the policy. For example, residents can share tips on how to cut down on smoking, or even watch children when parents leave the home to smoke.

Address concerns

- Encourage feedback from residents about how the policy is working. Listen carefully to concerns about any aspects of the policy to help shape the plan and foster communication.**
- Consider ways to resolve concerns about the policy, especially among smokers. Educate residents about the reasons for the smoke-free policy and why it is going into effect.
- Offer a chance to discuss problems via one-on-one meetings.

Increase smoke-free visibility throughout the property

- Post signage on the property alerting residents, visitors, and vendors that the property is smoke-free.
- Post the smoke-free policy on your property website.
- Provide residents with property management contact information for questions about the smoke-free policy.
- Place signage requesting respect for neighbors and their potential exposure to secondhand smoke.

Provide encouragement

- Host an event to celebrate the community effort to support the smoke-free policy.
- Distribute notices of support and appreciation to residents.

Support policy adherence

- (If possible) visit locations where smokers gather to discuss concerns.
- Seek feedback from residents to establish and maintain a good place where residents can smoke outdoors.

PRIORITY

2. Staff Education & Training

During the planning period, develop and conduct smoke-free policy training so staff members know how to effectively enforce and share information about the policy.

Provide training and information

- Check out HUD's [Change is in the Air](#) or [Implementing HUD's Smoke-Free Policy in Public Housing](#) guidebooks for material to include in your training. Training should include clear guidance on:
 - The reason for the smoke-free policy (to prevent secondhand smoke exposure)
 - The health benefits of the smoke-free policy
 - Which staff roles are responsible for enforcement
 - How to include policy violation checks during routine work and maintenance
 - How to respond to resident reports of possible violations
 - What evidence and documentation of a violation is required
- Share examples of experiences at other properties implementing smoke-free policies with staff. You can find information about what we learned from properties that have gone smoke-free on the [Building Success website](#).

Train staff on enforcement plans

- Create a smoke-free policy how-to guide for staff. This should include tips on how to handle common policy violations.
- If you choose to use a secondhand smoke monitor, train staff on how to use it to educate residents on how secondhand smoke can travel. Be sure staff know how the monitor works, how to interpret readings, and appropriate ways to use it at the property. Check out the [Secondhand Smoke Monitor Tipsheet on the Building Success website](#) for ideas.
- Decide what evidence and documentation will be required for a violation notice.
- Develop a plan for responding to resident complaints, and train staff how to respond.
- Develop a plan for how to check for policy violations, and train staff how to check.
- Review your enforcement policy with staff. Revise if needed.
- Provide ongoing guidance for staff on enforcement.

Obtain staff feedback

- Provide opportunities for staff to role play interactions with residents, practicing different ways to enforce the policy.
- Brainstorm with staff and/or management about ways to address ongoing resident concerns.
- Confer with staff or management about their concerns.

Provide ongoing training

- Conduct regular updates and briefings with staff about the smoke-free policy.
- Ensure that staff training on the smoke-free policy is built into annual training initiatives.
- Ensure that all new staff are trained on the smoke-free policy.

After your initial work with resident engagement and educating and training staff, you can apply the ideas you have learned from that process by selecting from the remaining set of four implementation strategies. From each remaining strategy, select the specific action steps that address the needs of your residents now. Revisit at a later date to refine your plan.

3. Supporting Smoking Cessation

Going smoke-free is an ideal opportunity for many smokers to take action! Support smokers who may want help to quit.



Identify available resources

- Advise residents on where they can access smoking cessation assistance and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). You can use our [Building Success Quit Smoking Resources Guide](#) on the Building Success website for a list of cessation treatment options.
- Check out the North American Quitline Consortium (NAQC) map at www.naquitline.org/page/mappage to see what cessation resources are offered in your state. Or call the Smokers' Quitline at 1-800-QuitNow.
- Develop a list of smoking cessation resources to:
 - Distribute to all residents
 - Share with those who may want help to quit smoking. You can use the [Building Success Quit Smoking Resources Guide](#) to get started.
- Help residents find information on cessation support offered from local organizations like community health centers, physicians, pharmacists, or dentists.

Encourage staff and residents

- Offer smoking cessation tips and tools to smokers for whom a smoke-free housing policy may provide motivation to quit.
- Encourage positive progress among residents. For example, provide acknowledgments or rewards for successfully quitting smoking and thanks to those who successfully adhere to the smoke-free policy—for example with a community party or shoutout in the property newsletter.
- Encourage residents to support other residents who are trying to quit.
- Congratulate and acknowledge staff who quit and encourage staff to support one another.

4. Community Partnerships

Community partners can advise during planning, educate residents during implementation, and help support smoking cessation.

INSIGHTS FROM SMOKE-FREE PROPERTY RESEARCH*

PROPERTY MANAGERS AT RESIDENCES THAT WENT SMOKE-FREE REPORTED THAT GETTING SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS WAS A KEY PART OF THEIR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

Identify resources for information and support

- Seek assistance and advice from community partners on your smoke-free policy strategy; for example, reach out to local legal-aid groups and obtain feedback on your policy.
- Find community partners who can help support training and enforcement.
- Identify local organizations that can provide assistance or resources; for example, consider inviting the fire department to speak with residents about fire risk from smoking.
- Collaborate with community partners to engage residents in adhering to the smoke-free policy; for example, get written materials from the [American Lung Association](#) or ask a local tobacco or community health expert to speak with residents about secondhand smoke exposure.
- Get your local partners to visit and hold discussions with residents to support engagement.
- Reach out to organizations like the [American Lung Association](#), [American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation](#), or your local or state health department for information and assistance. Visit these organizations' websites for graphics and printed information to distribute to residents and/or post around the property.
- Help residents find information on cessation support offered from local organizations like community health centers, hospitals, and health or public health departments.
- Recommend that residents consult with their healthcare providers to receive individual smoking cessation support.
- Consult with other property managers/staff for further tips and strategies.

5. Helping Smokers Adhere to the Policy

Some residents who smoke may not be ready or able to stop smoking, but you can build success by helping them follow your smoke-free policy.



Communicate

- Make sure residents know that smokers DO NOT need to quit smoking; they just need to follow the smoke-free policy. Emphasize “smoke-free” DOES NOT mean “smoker-free.”**
- Review your property’s smoke-free enforcement policy with residents.
- Reinforce your plan:
 - Remind residents of the reason for the policy.
 - Support residents’ adherence.
 - Be clear about enforcement and follow up.
- Use signs to educate guests to the property about the smoke-free policy.
- Add language to your vendor contracts to inform them about the smoke-free policy.

Obtain feedback

- Get advice from other housing providers with smoke-free policies to develop your plans for resident support.
- Hold listening sessions with smokers to better understand what they need to help them follow the policy. Learn what is and is not working.
- Obtain feedback from residents about when/where the smoke-free policy is not being adhered to and ways to improve compliance. Provide an anonymous suggestion box or an open-door policy for email or in-person communications.

Share tips from residents

- Residents may have tips and suggestions that have helped them follow the smoke-free policy. Consider sharing those tips in the property newsletter or regular announcements.

Provide alternatives to smoking indoors

- Talk with residents to find an acceptable place for them to smoke outdoors.
- Work with smokers on policy adherence during the warmer months to allow time for them to adjust to smoking outdoors before winter.
- Provide residents with resources and information on how to use (and where to get) nicotine gum or patches. Distribute and share the [Building Success Quit Smoking Resources Guide](#).
- Post signs to indicate where smoking is and is not allowed.

6. Effective Enforcement

Enforcement of the smoke-free policy is similar to enforcement of other building policies, like noise or pet restrictions. Be consistent, fair, positive, and practical.

INSIGHTS FROM SMOKE-FREE PROPERTY RESEARCH*

SOME RESIDENTS REPORTED UNCERTAINTY IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PROPERTY'S SMOKE-FREE POLICY AND HOW IT WOULD BE ENFORCED.

Adopt an enforcement strategy

- Check to see if your organization has a smoke-free policy enforcement plan. A good enforcement policy will clearly outline each step in the enforcement process, including verbal warnings, first violations, second violations, and potential referral for legal action.

Communicate with staff and residents

- Improve communication with residents by providing clear expectations of what they can expect for smoke-free policy violations.
- Keep residents informed on how they can safely report policy violations.

Communicate with staff and residents — CONTINUED

- Use apartment inspections as brainstorming and problem-solving opportunities. Below are some tips to foster constructive communication when conducting inspections.
- Tips for resident engagement when signs of smoking are present:
 - Ask: “Have you been smoking in your home? What do you need to help you follow the building’s smoke-free policy? Are you interested in quitting?”
 - Help the resident to brainstorm ways they can change their behavior to be able to adhere to the policy.
 - If you choose to use a secondhand smoke monitor, you can demonstrate that smoke is present in the home. Let residents know that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Tips for resident engagement in non-smokers’ homes:
 - Ask: “Have you been noticing secondhand smoke? When is it happening? Have you reported it?”
 - If you choose to use a secondhand smoke monitor, you can measure whether secondhand smoke is present in the home.
- Encourage residents to share how enforcement of the policy could be improved.
- Distribute policy reminders to all residents when there are reports of smoking violations.
- Coordinate with staff to remind them of the benefits of healthy, smoke-free homes.

Identify violations

- Develop strategies for continued enforcement of the smoke-free policy after staff hours (e.g., weekends, evenings, etc.).
- Meet with residents and issue warnings as appropriate.
- Post hallway or building warning notices, when appropriate.
- Issue personal warnings for continued infractions.
- Visit hotspot locations to discuss concerns with smokers. If you choose to use a secondhand smoke monitor, use it to help educate residents on secondhand smoke exposure.
- Seek information about the reasons for violations. Work with the resident to identify and address barriers to policy adherence.
- Document resident violations. Document evidence of the violation, as well as warning letters sent to the resident and their response.

★ *“INSIGHTS FROM SMOKE-FREE PROPERTY RESEARCH” refers to Building Success research involving resident surveys (386 participants), interviews with property managers, and resident focus groups at 12 federally subsidized housing properties adopting smoke-free housing policies. Surveys were completed six months pre-adoption of a smoke-free housing policy. Surveys were administered between May 2019 and May 2020. Read more about the research at <https://buildingsuccesssmokefree.org/building-success-study/>.*

This research was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Healthy Homes grant #MAHHU0041-18.