



**CALIFORNIA TOBACCO
ENDGAME CENTER FOR
ORGANIZING AND ENGAGEMENT**
A project of the American Heart Association®

Organizing a Campaign to End Tobacco Sales

**CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT
FOR LOCAL TOBACCO
PREVENTION COALITIONS
AND ADVOCATES**



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Organizing a Campaign to End Tobacco Sales

Welcome to the *Organizing a Campaign to End Tobacco Sales Toolkit*! This toolkit is designed to provide local tobacco prevention coalitions with practical resources, tools and helpful suggestions for organizing and carrying out a policy campaign to end the sale of tobacco in their communities. These include ways to empower your coalition, and educate decision-makers about the continued threats posed by the Tobacco Industry and its products to community health and well-being. Enclosed you will find a range of customizable templates that you can use to build a successful campaign.



Campaign Timeline – The campaign timeline shows the major activities associated with each phase and the specific actions and target dates.



Key Messages to Build Support – Examples of key messages you can use when talking to the public, decision-makers, and the media to gain support for your issue.



Organization Support Letter – These are formal letters to enable groups and organizations to publicly demonstrate their support for the campaign. These letters are then presented to decision-makers to showcase the strength and power of the community.



Palm Card – Serves as a concise informational tool to educate and mobilize your community.



Door Hanger – Door hangers are a highly effective communication tool for a campaign to end tobacco sales.



Sign-Up Sheet – Enables you to gather contact information from individuals and organizations who might be interested in supporting your cause. After developing your outreach contact list, this is where your organizing journey begins!



Pledge Form – Secure your support! Use this tool to give individuals and organizations the opportunity to make their support public, and specify their unique abilities and capacity to help your campaign.



Supporter Tracker – Helps you organize all the information you've gathered about your supporters so you can make decisions about the best ways to deploy the talented people and organizations in your coalition.



Media Alert/Press Release – Helps you effectively communicate campaign milestones to the press and attract wider attention to your campaign.



Letters to the Editor – Helps you reach a larger audience and can create an impression of widespread support for your campaign objectives.



Social Media – Social media is a valuable tool to help you reach your audience directly. View some examples to get your message out to your community.



SO YOU WANT TO END TOBACCO SALES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

From Tobacco Control to the Tobacco Endgame

Amidst the backdrop of California's tremendous success in passing tobacco policies at the local and state level is a paradigm shift that moves from a "tobacco control" framework to one that focuses on ending the tobacco epidemic, or the "endgame."

The California Tobacco Prevention Program (CTPP) has developed a vision and mission statements, and goals and objectives relating to tobacco-free communities, tobacco use and cessation, and countering tobacco industry influence. These elements are based on the work of program partners throughout the past 30 years and are the next step in the evolution of Endgame. For more information, visit www.tcspartners.org.

CTPP's 3 goals to help
implement this vision include:

GOAL 1

Eliminate the tobacco industry's influence in California.

End California's role in financially sustaining the tobacco industry, remove the industry's ability to market to Californians, undo the tobacco industry's influence in past policy decisions, and stop its further interference in California's laws.

GOAL 2

Make all California communities tobacco-free. Ensure that all California communities are free from the sale of tobacco products, free from tobacco waste, and free from exposure to second-hand smoke.

GOAL 3

End the tobacco use epidemic in California. Empower Californians who use tobacco to quit, and vigorously counter industry strategies to retain current customers or addict replacement customers.



Eliminating the sale of tobacco does not apply to traditional tobacco such as tobacco plants grown or harvested and used by American Indians and Alaska Natives for ceremonial or medicinal purposes.

Eliminating the Sale of Tobacco Is One Key Endgame Policy

Eliminating the sale of tobacco, like other tobacco policies, addresses the reality that smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in California, accounting for approximately 40,000 deaths annually. As discussed here, a policy to eliminate tobacco sales would include all commercial tobacco products such as cigarettes, electronic/vaping devices, shisha, cigars, chewing tobacco/pouches, and tobacco wrap.

Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases, and diabetes are among the top 10 leading causes of death in California, and all are associated with tobacco use. In California, **annual healthcare costs directly caused by smoking exceed \$13 billion annually**, with smoking-related Medi-Cal costs amounting to \$3.58 billion and smoking-caused productivity losses surpassing \$10 billion.¹



Why It's Time to Take Tobacco Products Off Stores' Shelves

The tobacco industry is always evolving in response to new laws and regulations and often finds loopholes to skirt these policies. For example, tobacco companies are hard at work devising new ways to get around local, state, and federal laws governing flavored product sales. **They've already started selling "concept" flavors in California – using phrases like "crisp green" and "oasis blue" to describe how their product tastes, but without explicitly referring to a specific flavor.**

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in California, accounting for **approximately 40,000 deaths annually**¹

Achievements Thus Far in Ending Tobacco Sales

Two Californian cities have made significant strides in removing tobacco from retail shelves. On June 4, 2019, the Beverly Hills City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to prohibit the sale of nearly all tobacco products within the city. Following suit, on February 4, 2020, the Manhattan Beach City Council approved an ordinance ending the sale of nearly all tobacco products and electronic smoking devices within city limits. Both laws took effect in 2021. For more information, review [*"Retailer Experiences with Tobacco Sales Bans: Lessons From Two Early Adopter Jurisdictions."*](#)

What You Can Do

Build support with residents, community leaders, and community-based organizations. Building your supporter base is instrumental to showing power and unity. You can demonstrate community support to decision-makers by organizing a letter of support from health experts, and local tobacco retailers, and/or collecting support postcards from residents of the community. Be mindful of opposition that can come in the form of tobacco retailers and/or organizations or decision-makers who believe eliminating tobacco sales is not equitable. When advancing tobacco policies, remember to consider the availability of culturally tailored tobacco cessation support in the community.

For more information, contact the Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement, at organizingtoendtobacco@heart.org or visit our website at organizingtoendtobacco.org

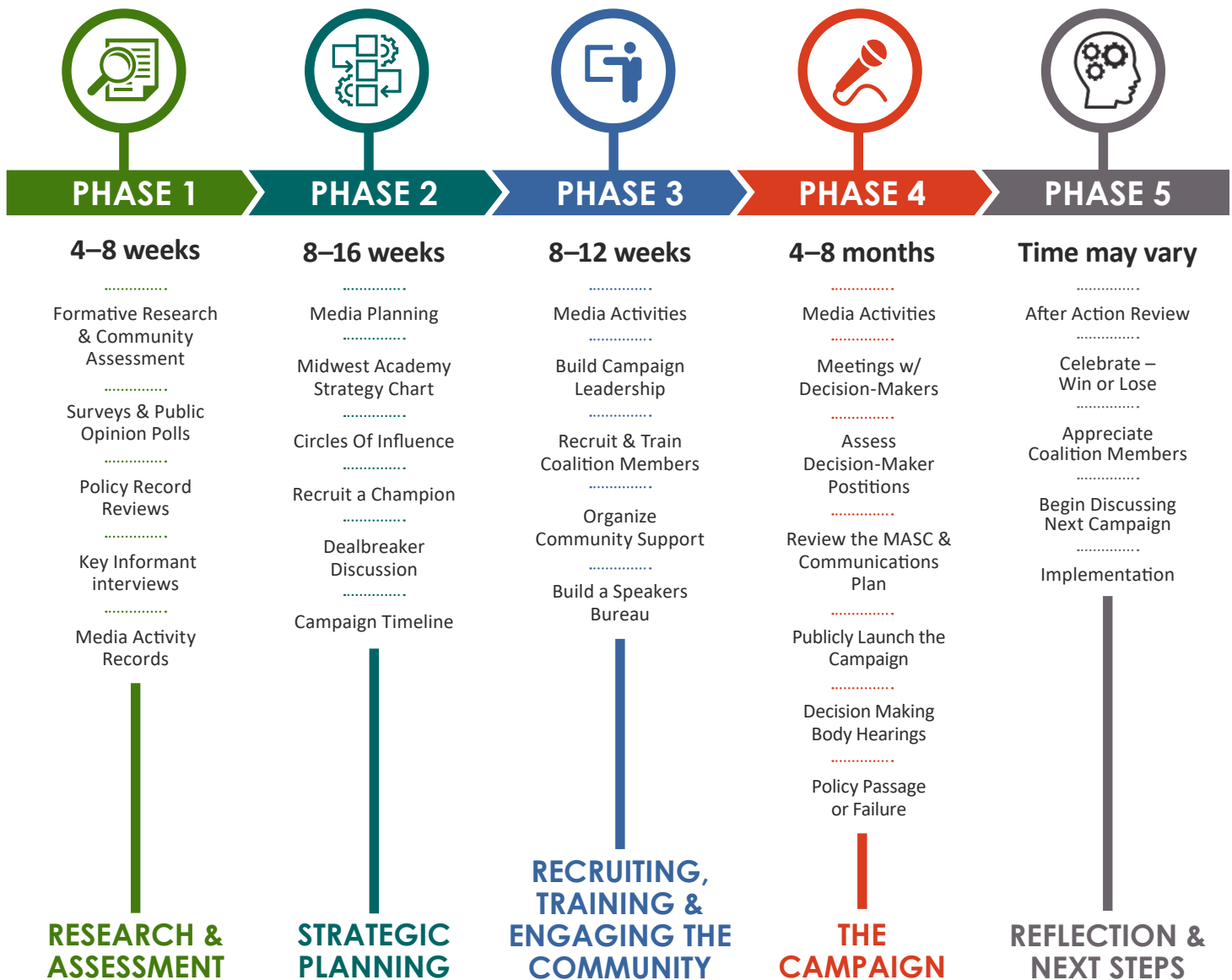
REFERENCES:

1. California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program. Local Lead Agency Campaign to End Commercial Tobacco. Sacramento, CA, 2021
2. Welwien RA, Stupplebeen DA, Vuong TD, et al Perspectives of licensed tobacco retailers on tobacco sales bans in Manhattan Beach and Beverly Hills, California Tobacco Control 2022;31:e213-e214.



Campaign Timeline

A campaign timeline is a key tool to plan and guide activities over the life of the campaign, whatever that time period may be. The timeline shows the major activities associated with each phase and the specific actions and target dates. The duration for each phase is an estimate – it could be shorter or longer depending on a variety of factors. As campaigns can take twists and turns, it will be necessary to review and revise the timeline and incorporate new information that may change the order or timing or certain activities.





KEY MESSAGES TO BUILD SUPPORT



When communicating to the public, a decision-maker, or the press, a set of clear talking points is a great way to ensure that your coalition is delivering a consistent message. Tailor each message to your audience and keep in mind that they will likely only remember one or two key things so only provide necessary details. Stick to the most important points, practice message discipline, use local data/statistics, and use personal stories to make your message memorable. For additional talking points and message materials, visit endtobaccoca.ash.org.

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

The tobacco industry has killed millions of Americans and harmed tens of millions more, all while targeting kids and historically disenfranchised communities, driving up healthcare costs, and poisoning the environment with toxic waste. In California, both state and local governments have the power to end the sales of all tobacco products.

We have a public health crisis on our hands. Research shows that easy retail availability makes it harder for people to quit using tobacco. We must protect our most vulnerable residents from the adverse health impacts caused by these deadly products.

The tobacco industry has continued to evolve, making their products more appealing and easily accessible. It is critical to act now to end the commercial tobacco epidemic.

There is an urgent need to end the sale of tobacco products. Products causing far less harm than tobacco products are regularly removed from the market due to safety concerns.

Smoking is widely recognized as the leading preventable cause of death in the world. We must protect our community members against the lifelong, deadly impacts of commercial tobacco in this city.

Products that kill when used as intended should not continue to be sold. Commercial tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death. Research shows that more than half of US adults support ending the sale of all tobacco products.

ELEVATOR SPEECH:

An elevator speech is a brief message (approximately 30 seconds) that introduces yourself and your coalition/organization/campaign while getting across a couple of key points. It includes a brief introduction, an overview of the coalition's mission, the problem your coalition is seeking to address, the solution, and a call to action. The elevator speech is a great way to make a connection with someone and build support for the cause.

SAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECH:

Hello, I'm [name] and am a part of the [name of coalition]. We are working to end the sales of tobacco products to create a stronger and healthier community. I lost my father to tobacco-related disease because tobacco is the only product that, when used as intended, kills the user. The tobacco industry continues to target kids and historically disenfranchised communities proving they value profit over people. In California, both state and local governments have the power to end the sales of all tobacco products. You can demonstrate your commitment to ending this epidemic in our community by signing this letter of support to end the sales of tobacco products in our county.



ORGANIZATION SUPPORT LETTER



Gathering letters of support for your campaign will demonstrate the coalition's cadre of reputable organizations that represent a broad array of community interests and advocacy groups, and will lend credibility to your effort. Also, obtaining a letters of support may be the first step in deepening your relationship with organizations who can be called upon in the future to support the campaign in other ways such as providing public comments at public meetings, attending coalition events or engaging in other supportive ways.

To begin the process, use the supporter tracker, identify each of the organizations that have pledged to support the campaign. Send an email to each of the contacts at the supportive organizations asking them to consider signing the sample letter of support on behalf of their organization.

Be sure to note that they are welcome to make changes to the letter as they see fit and remind them to include their organization's logo/letterhead.

NOTE: Efforts to gather support letters should be carried out by non-CTPP funded coalition members and not by projects funded by the California Tobacco Prevention Program that are strictly prohibited from lobbying. For further guidance, see CTPP's [Allowed Policy Activities](#).



TEMPLATE:



CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
EDITABLE
TEMPLATE

Dear **[NAME]**: 2

On behalf of **[COALITION NAME]**, I am writing to bring your attention to an important issue: a health crisis in our community fueled by the sale of tobacco products.

Products that kill when used as intended should not continue to be sold. Commercial tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death.

3 **[Add paragraph about your organization and area-specific knowledge of the need for this policy]**

4 Tobacco companies are hard at work devising new ways to get around local, state, and federal laws that try to protect our residents and continue to evolve by making their products more appealing and easily accessible. A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control shows that more than half of US adults support ending the sale of all tobacco products. It is critical to act now to end the commercial tobacco epidemic.

We must continue to fight the tobacco industry's deceptive tactics that skirt our law to hook our family, friends, and neighbors on nicotine by:

- *Issue #1* 5
- *Issue #2*

The cost of tobacco use to human life is significant – causing the deaths of some 40,000 Californians per year. That's why it's time to finish the fight, because as long as the tobacco industry is allowed to sell its deadly products in California, the tobacco epidemic will continue.

It is for these reasons **[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]** is urging action by the **[GOVT BODY]** to address the threat of tobacco sales in our community.

Sincerely,
<INSERT SIGNATURE BLOCK>

1. **WRITE ON YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LETTERHEAD**

2. Insert the name of your target decision-maker

3. It is important to **encourage your coalition members to express their support** for the policy using their organization's unique expertise. They may ultimately decline to add their own content, but providing the option can help supporting organizations feel more bought-in to your campaign.

4. **Provide some background**, as well as any relevant data, on the tobacco product your coalition is trying to take off store shelves. This is just an example about new "concept flavors" tobacco companies are using to get around state law – but you can plug details about any product here.

5. Include more details about the issue, ways to address it, and how it will improve the quality of life in your community here.



PALM CARD



The palm card can be a valuable asset in your campaign, especially when you are on-the-go and need a quick way to get your message out. You might keep a stash of palm cards in your car or your bag just in case you find yourself at a community event or local gathering. Palm cards can also be an effective tool in door-to-door outreach.

These small, handheld cards offer a direct and tangible way of conveying your strongest message to potential supporters. Use your logo, an eye-catching image, or a clever slogan on the front to grab peoples' attention. On the back, include key statistics and facts about your campaign. You can even include a QR code that takes the user to an online version of your supporter pledge.

EXAMPLE

CREATIVE IMAGE

(e.g. silhouette of kids with obscured faces using e-cigarettes or other tobacco products, clouds of smoke or vapor, images of fruit to represent flavors)

SLOGAN

(e.g. Don't Let Tobacco Companies Hook Our Kids!)

DESIGN NOTE:

The front of your palm card should include two key pieces: the name of your coalition, and 5-7 words that describe the purpose and goal of your campaign. Include an eye-catching image or graphic to create visual interest that draws your audience in.



COALITION NAME


(e.g. Families to End the Sale of [INSERT TOBACCO PRODUCT])

FRONT

Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable death, taking the lives of nearly 40,000 Californians every year. Products that kill when used as intended should not continue to be sold. The tobacco industry continues to evolve, making their products more appealing and easily accessible to hook our family, friends, and neighbors. **It is critical to act now to end the commercial tobacco epidemic.**

By working with us to end the sale of tobacco products, **YOU** can help protect kids in our community from the dangers of nicotine addiction.

Scan the QR code to join our campaign!



TO GENERATE A QR CODE, search "Free QR Code Generator" in a search engine or click the link below.

QR CODE GENERATOR

BACK

PRINTING SPECIFICATIONS

For printing palm cards, we recommend the following size: 4"x6"



ENDING TOBACCO SALES DOOR HANGER



Door hangers are a highly effective communication tool for the campaign to end tobacco sales in your community. Door hangers offer a tangible way to reach residents because they are easily spotted and most will read it while taking it off their doorknob. You want your door hanger to be eye-catching and easy to read, using shorter sentences and bullet points whenever possible. Include a call-to-action, which could be joining a future meeting or scanning a QR code directing them to take a survey.

EXAMPLE



PRINTING SPECIFICATIONS

For door hangers, we recommend the following size: 4.25"x11.25"

DOOR HANDLE HOLE

Be sure to leave plenty of space on both sides of the door hanger for the doorhandle cutout.



SIGN-UP SHEET



The sign-up sheet is your doorway into organizing a successful campaign. Keep a box of pens handy, and use this tool at tabling events and community gatherings to collect basic information from people who are interested in getting involved with your coalition. Back at your desk, start entering the data from your sign-up sheets into your supporter tracker. Then, follow up with interested individuals and organizations to secure signed pledge forms.

The sign-up sheet will also give you a head start building a stable list of volunteers who can help with letter-writing, calling and texting outreach, making public comments during local government meetings, and a host of other activities.

[CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
THE EXCEL
TEMPLATE](#)

CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet titled "Example Sign-Up Sheet". The ribbon includes File, Home, Insert, Draw, Page Layout, Formulas, Data, Review, View, Automate, Developer, Help, and Acrobat. The Data ribbon is active, showing options like Get & Transform Data, Queries & Connections, Data Types, Sort & Filter, and Data Tools. The spreadsheet content includes a header for "COALITION NAME" with a logo and slogan, followed by a table with columns: Date, Name, Email, Phone, Organization Name, Individual, Organization, and Volunteer Availability. The table contains two rows of sample data.

Date	Name	Email	Phone	Organization Name	Individual	Organization	Volunteer Availability
10/15/23	Jane Doe	janedoe@email.com	(123) 456-0000	Acme Corporation	✓		<input type="checkbox"/> Mon <input type="checkbox"/> Tues <input type="checkbox"/> Weds <input type="checkbox"/> Thurs <input type="checkbox"/> Fri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Sun
10/18/2023	John Smith	johnsmith@email.com	(987) 654-3210	Initech		✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Mon <input type="checkbox"/> Tues <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weds <input type="checkbox"/> Thurs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fri <input type="checkbox"/> Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Sun
							<input type="checkbox"/> Mon <input type="checkbox"/> Tues <input type="checkbox"/> Weds <input type="checkbox"/> Thurs <input type="checkbox"/> Fri <input type="checkbox"/> Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Sun
							<input type="checkbox"/> Mon <input type="checkbox"/> Tues <input type="checkbox"/> Weds <input type="checkbox"/> Thurs <input type="checkbox"/> Fri <input type="checkbox"/> Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Sun

INSERT BRANDING HERE Instructions for Google Sheets & Excel: Save logo file to computer desktop > click "Insert" > click "Images" or "Pictures" > click "Browse" or "This Device" > Select Image and click "Insert"



SUPPORTER PLEDGE FORM



The [Supporter Pledge Form](#) is one of the most useful tools in organizing a campaign because it gives you an opportunity to gather information about your supporters – from their name and contact information to their availability to volunteer on weekends. A supporter pledge form should be straightforward: briefly summarize the issue, include a call to action, and collect as much information as you can!

Use the remaining space to ask supporters to provide their contact details such as their name, email address, and phone number. You can also

include questions to help gather insight about each supporter's unique skills as well as their interest in and availability to volunteer. This information allows you to keep a detailed account of your supporters and their availability in your *Supporter Tracker* to efficiently collect and organize relevant information, making it easier to engage with your supporters to build a dedicated community around your cause.

BRANDING Insert Your Coalition Name/Branding

INCLUDE YOUR CALL TO ACTION IN THE HEADER. Make it clear to your audience why they should sign this pledge.

CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE:



COALITION NAME
YOUR SLOGAN

END THE SALE OF TOBACCO IN YOUR COMMUNITY – JOIN OUR COALITION

Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable death, **taking the lives of nearly 40,000 Californians** every year.

The tobacco industry has killed millions of Americans and harmed tens of millions more, all while targeting kids and historically disenfranchised communities, driving up healthcare costs, and poisoning the environment with toxic waste. In California, both state and local governments have the power to end the sales of all tobacco products.

Join your community members and leaders who support policies to save lives and protect public healthy by ending the sale of [INSERT TOBACCO PRODUCT].

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Address (optional): _____

Zip Code (required): _____

Phone (required): _____

Email (required): _____

Do we have permission to list your organization as a Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities member in coalition-related materials, advertisements, website, and/or social media posts, as appropriate? **Yes / No**

We need your help! Are you interested in volunteering your time for campaign activities? **Yes / No**

What skills or experience do you currently possess that you might volunteer to support this campaign?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Other than English language speaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media Advocacy (LTE, Op Ed, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Engagement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grassroots Organizing (door knocking, phone calls) | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition Building/Recruitment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

As a member of Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities, I support the mission of the coalition and pledge my participation at coalition meetings, subcommittees, coalition sponsored-events, evaluation activities, etc.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

References:

Jewett, C., Baumgaertner, E. (2023, January 11). R.J. Reynolds Pivots to New Cigarette Pitches as Flavor Ban Takes Effect. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/11/health/cigarettes-flavor-ban-california.html>

Before you jump into data collection, **introduce your campaign and policy** you are asking your audience to support.

DISCLAIMER: One of the most important pieces of a supporter pledge is the disclaimer. Make sure signers are aware of how their support might be used by your campaign in the future.

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE



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TO ACCESS
THE EXCEL
TEMPLATE

SUPPORTER TRACKER

The purpose of the supporter tracker is distinctly different from that of the sign-up sheet in at least one significant way: where the sign-up sheet is meant to collect information from potential supporters, the supporter tracker is designed to help you organize any entity that has already confirmed their support for your cause. Collecting detailed information about each supporter will help you make decisions about how and when to deploy the diverse and talented people and organizations who have joined your campaign.

Use the [Supporter Pledge Form](#) in this toolkit to help you gather information about your supporters, then transfer that information into this spreadsheet so you'll be able to access these datapoints wherever you go!

CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE

Contact Date	Entity	Name	Email
10/18/2023	Individual	Jane Doe	janedoe@gmail.com
10/18/2023	Organization	John Smith	johnsmith@email.com

1. INSERT BRANDING HERE

Instructions for Google Sheets & Excel: Save logo file to computer desktop > click "Insert" > click "Images" or "Pictures" > click "Browse or "This Device" > Select Image and click "Insert"

2. ENTITY

Use this column to help you organize your supporters into their broadest categories, e.g., **non-traditional, individual, organization** or **decision-maker**.



MEDIA ALERT

Ending Tobacco Sales



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TEMPLATE**

The media alert serves as a powerful tool for capturing public attention and engaging local media and press in your cause. There are a number of key moments when a media alert could be helpful. New data or a fresh study that supports your argument, a compelling human interest story, or a major landmark or victory in the policymaking process are all opportunities to engage local press. Landing your story in the local press helps raise awareness in your community and among policymakers.

Crafting an effective media strategy requires careful planning and consideration. A timely and well-crafted media alert can help you expose Big Tobacco's deceptive practices and harmful products, shedding light on the issue. However, it is essential to be cautious as it can also alert tobacco companies to your campaign, potentially complicating your efforts.

A media alert provides basic, essential information about your event, clearly listing **WHO** will be attending, **WHAT** will be happening, **WHEN** your event is occurring, and **WHERE** the press should go.

TEMPLATE:



COALITION NAME 1
YOUR SLOGAN

[DATE]

[MEDIA CONTACT NAME, EMAIL, PHONE] 2

***Councilmembers, Public Health Coalition Hold Press Conference
Ahead of [CITY/COUNTY GOVERNMENT] 3
Vote to End the Sale of TOBACCO PRODUCTS***

WATCH LIVESTREAM HERE 4

[CITY NAME] – The [LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODY] is set to vote tomorrow 5
afternoon on a landmark policy that would [POLICY GOAL]. This comes at a time 6
when local residents are asking our public and local government leaders to finally
act to protect public health by making policy consistent with the messaging about
the dangers of tobacco use. [COALITION NAME] will host a press conference
outside city hall ahead of the vote, urging city leaders to protect children and
historically disenfranchised members of our community from the health risks of
these deadly products.

“Smoking tobacco is widely recognized as the leading preventable cause of death
in the world. These products are lethal and the tobacco industry continues
to target our youth and vulnerable residents. We have a duty to protect our
community members against the lifelong, deadly impacts of tobacco in this city.”

1. YOUR CAMPAIGN LOGO

2. It is important to **provide contact information for someone inside your campaign** who can answer any questions the media might have.

3. **HEADLINE:** This is the first thing a reporter or news director will see, so make sure it includes breaking news. It's also a good place to work in who will be at your event, or any major visual elements that might be interesting to a journalist.

4. Are you alerting the media to a key hearing or vote on a policy? **Providing the link to a city or county livestream where your coalition can be seen and heard** offering public comment or testimony can be helpful to earn coverage on your issue.

5. **TIMELINE:** always send out your media alert at least one day – a full 24 hours – before your event. This gives local media enough time to consider your event in their daily planning meetings.

6. **Think about including a compelling statistic or data point** in your opening paragraph to highlight the urgency of your coalition's efforts.

(CONT'D)

- 7 **VISUALS :**
Large infographics about the dangers of e-cigarette and other flavored tobacco use, costume character “Ciggy Butts” will join the press conference

WHO:

- 8 Councilmember _____
[Apartment Resident Name], [Title]
9 Health Professional [Name], [Title]
[Parent Name], [CITY/COMMUNITY]

WHAT:

Press conference urging the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODY] to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco products and to support new local products ending the sale of tobacco products.

WHEN:

[Date]

WHERE:

[Address]

11

7. **Visuals are a big draw for local media.** This is your opportunity to get creative! Think of ways to visualize your issue or campaign, whether it's large infographics on poster board, someone dressed up in costume, bringing in props (e.g. vapes, packs of cigarettes and other tobacco products), etc.
8. It's always good to **invite your coalition's champion(s)** on the policymaking body to lead your press conference.
9. **Public health experts** who are affiliated with trusted organizations are helpful to lend further credibility to your issue. **A ‘human element’ is also key to a good news story.** If available, highlight the voice of someone who has been impacted by the negative effects of tobacco use. This is a good way to show your community as well as policymakers what will continue to happen if they fail to act.
10. **Include the street address for the location of your media event.** Be as specific as you can to make it as easy as possible for reporters to find you. Include parking information and key landmarks as necessary.
11. Three hashtags mark the end of the media alert.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor (LTE) are a powerful and free way to communicate with decision-makers and your community. Lawmakers are very interested in what voters are saying in the local press, so don't be shy about submitting a letter to the editor to educate your community, praise tobacco retailers that have already stopped selling commercial tobacco products from their stores, highlight their will to act, or simply to draw attention to the fact that the people in their community care about this issue – and they should care too!

TIPS FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- These are generally around 200 words, but research and follow the publisher's guidelines for length and directions for submitting.
- Write letters about current issues and respond within a week to stories and editorials to keep it timely and relevant. *The Great American Smokeout* or *Earth Day* are good tie-ins for a tobacco related letter submission.
- Your LTE should oppose or agree with something said in the article and add further information.
- A planned series of letters to the editor can help bring attention to your campaign. Have prepared templates ready to go.

EXAMPLE

Letter to the Editor – Ending Tobacco Sales

Word Count: 150

Re: Response to [Article] featured on [Date]

Dear Editor:

[CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS
CUSTOMIZABLE
TEMPLATE](#)

1. FIRST PARAGRAPH:

Grab the reader's attention. The opening line should reference the issue, or the article you are referencing if you are responding to an earlier piece and state your position. The rest of the paragraph should summarize the issue, capture the reader's attention, and take a stance.

2. SECOND PARAGRAPH:

State why the issue is personally important to you and also why others should care. Bring in data to support your claim if it is available or just emphasize your personal story.

3. FINAL PARAGRAPH:

Summarize issues and key points and provide a call to action

1 Regarding the recent article [Article Title] featured on [Date], we must recognize the tobacco industry continues to threaten decades of progress lowering tobacco use with their aggressive and manipulative marketing tactics. Some local jurisdictions have taken steps to mitigate the public health crisis of tobacco use through ending sales of tobacco products altogether and I applaud these efforts to finally eradicate the source of the tobacco epidemic – the tobacco industry.

2 Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S. and yet the tobacco industry continues to target us with new flavors and products, prioritizing profit over people. I have lost two family members due to tobacco-related diseases and nobody should have to go through what they did.

3 We have a public health crisis on our hands, and the only way to resolve this is to stop selling tobacco products in our communities. We must protect our youth and most vulnerable residents from the adverse health impacts caused by these deadly and highly addictive products.

Name

Title [Resident or other stakeholder]

City, State

Email and Phone Number



ONLINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

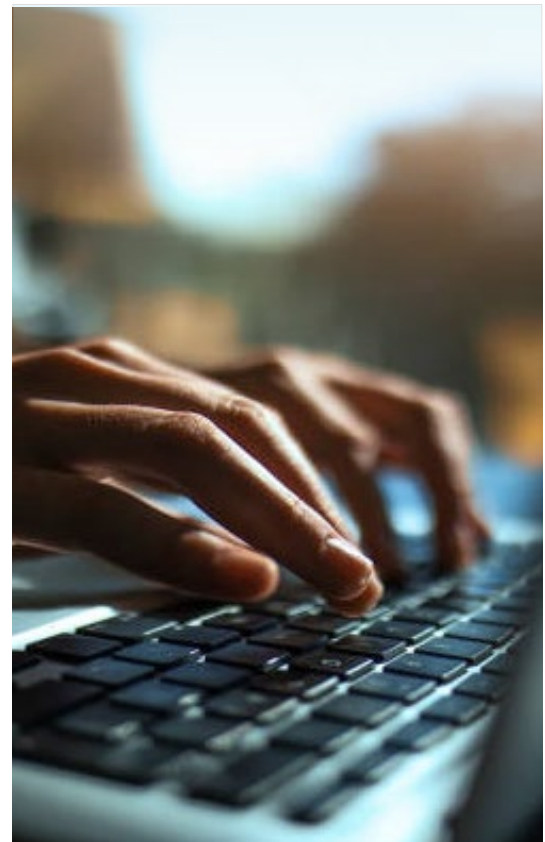
Reach Your Community Where They Are



The internet can be a powerful tool for raising awareness, mobilizing action, and amplifying your voice. Whether you are commenting on online news stories, social media, or letters to the editor, here are some tips to increase your outreach and build public support to end tobacco sales.

5 TIPS TO CONSIDER:

- 1 Your goals and values:** Have a clear understanding of your main message and target audience. These are the principles that guide your work and help you craft compelling and authentic content that aligns with your vision.
- 2 Create Content that educates, Inspires, and Encourages Others to Act:** Humanize your issue with relevant stories and use platform to educate others about the issue and possible solutions.
- 3 Choose Your Social Platforms that will Help You Achieve Your Goals:** You can use different platforms to target specific audiences. Create and/or join social groups specific to your local community or interests, such as Nextdoor or parent groups.
- 4 Consider Online Media Outlets:** Posting and commenting on stories keeps your issue relevant. Consider posting on Patch and submitting letters to editor in your local newspapers.
- 5 Stay Active and Engage Often:** Responding promptly builds relationships and trust with your audience. Post regularly, answer questions, and respond to comments in a timely manner.





SOCIAL MEDIA POST OPTIONS



Social media platforms offer a direct way to reach your audience. It is a tool to connect with others who share your passion for the issue and can serve to mobilize current and new advocates, share updates, and educate the public to gain additional support for your policy issue. Below are some examples how others have used social media to promote ending the sale of commercial tobacco. Coalitions are encouraged to create their own posts and content to make it more personal.

EXAMPLES



TEXT:

#BigBadTobacco intentionally targets and profits from African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander, American Indian, LGBTQ+, and rural communities resulting in addiction, disease, and death. Stop targeting us. #VoicesAgainstTobacco

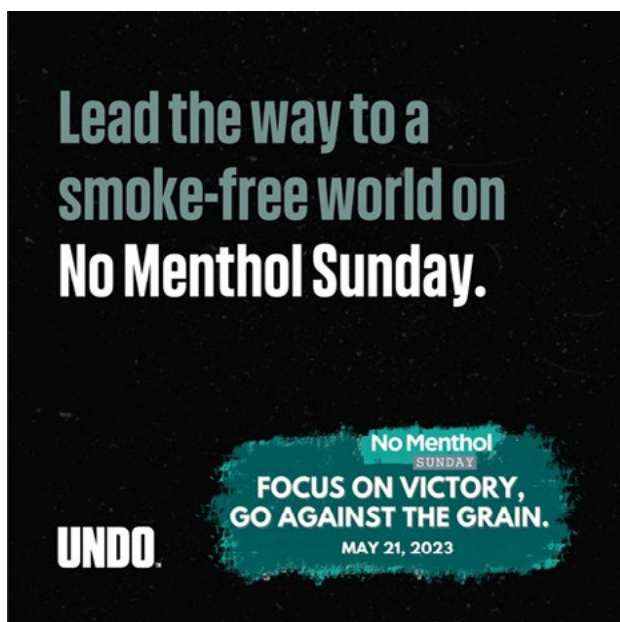
*Tobacco Endgame Center for
Organizing and Engagement,
American Heart Association*

TEXT:

Big Tobacco profits while their products kill 40,000 Californians a year.

UNDO





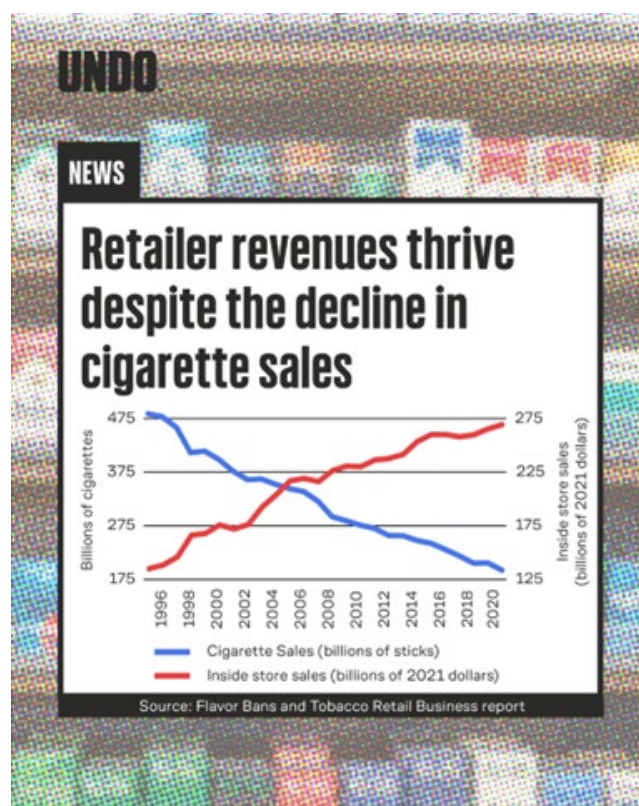
CAPTION:

#NoMentholSunday is an opportunity for Californians to stand up against Big Tobacco's detrimental impact on Black communities. This year's theme, "Focus on Victory, Go Against the Grain," encourages all of us to fight back. Just five months ago, YOU passed a law to ban the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol. Now, let's finish the fight against Big Tobacco! <https://www.nomentholsunday.org/>

UNDO



Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement - American Heart Association



CAPTION:

The proof is in the profits. Retailers continue to rake in the revenue even as cigarette sales decline, despite Big Tobacco's lie that tobacco sales restrictions hurt the economy and small businesses. Retailers make more from selling things people want, like prepared foods and packaged beverages.

Read the research: https://www.tobacconomics.org/research/the-economic-effects-of-cigarette-sales-and-flavor-bans-on-tobacco-retail-businesses/.?utm_source=facebookinstagram&utm_me

UNDO



CAPTION

The tobacco industry depends on young people using their products to make a profit and keep them in business. That's why the Big Tobacco marketing machine works endlessly to target kids with social media ads.

The result of their dirty tactics? Nearly 75% of young people who used social media were exposed to vape ads in the last year alone.

UNDO