

Iowa and North Carolina Reduce Secondhand Smoke Exposure through Partnerships with Property Owners & Local Health Departments

The purpose of this case study is to share state, local, and private partner engagement strategies to implement smoke-free multi-family housing policies.

Overview and Background

Smoke-free housing policies reduce multi-family housing residents' exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) and are associated with greater use of medications that assist in cessation among current smokers and lower rates of relapse among former smokers.¹ SHS is a mixture of smoke from the tip of a lit cigarette and mainstream smoke exhaled by a person smoking, containing more than 7,000 chemicals. At least 250 of those chemicals are known to be harmful and more than 50 are known to cause cancer.² Smoke in apartment buildings will travel where air can be exchanged; no ventilation system or other engineering measure can fully remove the health risks of indoor smoke exposure.³ Public health agencies are partnering with housing providers to eliminate SHS exposure in the home, which has the added benefit of promoting a smoke-free lifestyle.

For property managers and owners, smoke-free housing policies are a savvy business decision. Nationally, implementing smoke-free housing policies in subsidized housing alone would result in an estimated annual savings of \$310 million in healthcare costs related to SHS exposure, \$134 million in renovation expenses, and \$53 million in smoking-attributable fire losses, totaling \$497 million per year.⁴ Implementing smoke-free policies in market-rate housing would expand the cost savings even further, benefitting private and public multi-family housing businesses and residents. Given the multiple levels of benefits, 38 states plus D.C. have a dedicated smoke-free housing program, with state public health departments at the forefront of pursuing this tobacco control policy initiative in partnership with local public health agencies and housing providers.⁵

Through the [Smoke Free Homes program](#), the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has facilitated cross-sector partnerships to build and strengthen environmental protective factors to reduce SHS exposure in low-income housing. IDPH led the efforts in Iowa by engaging local health departments and public health agencies, property managers, and national policy advisors to implement their smoke-free housing initiative. In 2009, IDPH began collecting qualitative data through low-income housing assessments conducted by the local community partners they fund. Information gathered informed the materials IDPH developed to share with property owners and managers. These products and materials, including a [smoke-free housing registry](#), are available on the program website.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) received funding from a federal program in 2011 that served as the launch pad for [North Carolina's smoke-free housing efforts](#). A legal specialist within NCDHHS helped guide the state's smoke-free housing initiative, connecting the department with state trade associations and local housing authorities. The relationships that state health officials cultivated put the staff in front of the trade association members and affordable housing audiences at annual conferences, thereby increasing the spread of public health messaging related to reducing home SHS exposure. This resulted in housing providers, such as a large housing corporation in North Carolina, adopting smoke-free policies that affected thousands of units and residents in properties across the state.

Key Elements

State health department leadership in both Iowa and North Carolina developed a collaborative network of partnerships at the state and local levels that included trade associations, housing authorities, property owners and managers, and other public health agencies. Building relationships with key influencers and decision makers from a state level encouraged acceptance of the smoke-free living concept within the multi-family housing industry and increased the number of properties that committed to adopting smoke-free policies. Collaborating with local public health partners amplified the reach of the smoke-free housing message and technical assistance delivery to local housing providers across each state.

Key strategies state health department leadership deployed to achieve success included engaging stakeholders in the policy development process, educating them about the impact of tobacco on health, and communicating the benefits of the policy that protect the safety of residents as well as the investment of the property, while reducing some of the property owner's annual operating costs. With the financial bottom line a top priority, property managers and owners are more likely to adopt smoke-free housing policies after learning that such policies can reduce costs like unit turnovers and insurance premiums due to the reduction in smoke damage and smoking-related fires. In addition, learning that free help is available from public health partners removes another barrier. A property manager in Iowa reported hundreds of dollars saved in turnover costs per unit (including time it would otherwise take to rehabilitate smoke damage) after implementing a smoke-free policy. The manager also received a 20 percent reduction in the property's insurance premium due to fewer claims submitted. The collective impact of implementing smoke-free policies across the multi-family housing industry has significant potential for cost-savings and health promotion.

IDPH and NCDHHS leaders leveraged existing state resources, such as their state quitlines, to promote available cessation support to property managers and residents who became motivated by the policy change to attempt quitting smoking. Some property managers partnered with public health agencies to extend their offerings and provide on-site cessation classes for residents. Providing support for residents throughout the policy adoption and implementation processes was an essential component for both Iowa and North Carolina to support residents in the transition to a smoke-free environment. This led to an extension of public health services to new populations and beyond the primary benefit of the smoke-free housing initiative.

Implementing a smoke-free housing program that addresses property management needs. Influencing policy adoption requires public health leaders to understand smoke-free housing from a property management perspective. Key points of interest for property managers and owners are the legality, liability, and financial impact of smoke-free policies. Understanding these concerns and priorities helped state health department leadership gauge housing providers' readiness for change.

Early on, NCDHHS leaders assessed that many housing providers were in various stages of considering going smoke-free, prompting staff to tailor messaging to normalize smoke-free housing policies and highlight benefits. As property management companies developed interest in adopting smoke-free policies, staff successfully engaged stakeholders through community meetings to discuss going smoke-free and what types of policies would best suit each community's needs. Similarly, a local partner in Iowa assessed property managers' interest in smoke-free living through conversations and prioritized time used to relationship-build with decision makers who appeared to be strong leads for smoke-free

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conversions. The local partner described this as a sales approach, except instead of selling a product, they focused on presenting the benefits and cost-savings of implementing a smoke-free policy.

Once property managers became interested in going smoke-free, NCDHHS further adapted program services to meet management companies' needs. For example, a large management company in North Carolina got in touch with NCDHHS through a local health department. Within 24 hours, a NCDHHS team member responded to the company's request for assistance by helping them develop documents, speak to residents, and obtain flyers and door hangers to distribute. In return, the management company representative agreed to serve as a spokesperson for the initiative, traveling across the state to speak to other property managers about the successful experience of going smoke-free. The management company representative spoke about how the company could not have taken on the smoke-free transition without the help and support of NCDHHS. The partnership saved the company time, helped overturn site managers' perception that the policy would result in losing residents, provided smoking cessation support to interested residents and staff, and equipped management with the data and information needed to respond to resident and staff inquiries.

Identifying opportunities to address health equity. Lower income populations have higher smoking rates than the general population and are more likely to be exposed to SHS at home.⁶ Smoke-free housing protects low-income populations from the health burden of SHS exposure at home, reducing disease and associated healthcare costs. Health equity for future generations is bolstered by smoke-free policies' protection of children, who often do not choose their living environment. Smoke-free policies also promote broader equity in health outcomes by providing an opportunity to connect low-income residents with cessation resources and related health services. In addition, smoke-free housing eliminates the hazard of smoking-related fires, which threaten the building structure and human lives.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) [strong encouragement](#) of smoke-free policies and [proposed rule](#) mandating smoke-free policies in all public housing has increased visibility of smoke-free housing as a health equity tactic. While some providers of subsidized housing may fear displacement of residents who do not comply with the no-smoking rule, partners shared that it is rare to reach the point of eviction and that there are ways to encourage compliance. Giving ample notice to residents before the policy goes into effect and consistently communicating about the policy helps residents understand where smoking is and is not allowed. This involves property management staff communicating in partnership with public health leaders who can provide additional education regarding the benefits of the policy, thus highlighting the positive aspects of the policy change. Another way to incorporate support for residents is to provide referrals to cessation resources throughout every stage of the policy adoption and implementation process. In addition, though program staff recommend a property-wide policy as the highest smoke-free policy standard, some property managers may opt to establish a designated smoking area away from the flow of foot traffic and buildings to support resident compliance and safety. Communicating that smoke-free policies create a safe and healthy environment emphasizes to residents the reasons for the change and underscores the health equity achieved by protecting priority populations living in multi-family housing.

Referring residents to community resources. Smoke-free policies provide a unique opportunity to bring public health initiatives into communities that might not otherwise have direct contact with these resources. Partners working on smoke-free housing in both Iowa and North Carolina heavily promoted quitlines and emphasized this as a resource-efficient way to talk with interested residents and staff about smoking cessation, as the policy can provide an opportunity for people who smoke to make an

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attempt to quit. The representative of a large management company in North Carolina reiterated this point in sharing that many residents and employees cited the smoke-free policy as a motivation to quit. Public health departments have also offered counseling programs and on-site cessation classes, though uptake of these programs by residents has been minimal. Other recommendations to support residents through the policy change include providing nicotine replacement therapy, incorporating health education about the benefits of smoke-free living into the announcement of the policy, and offering presentations on cessation to share information and give residents a space to reflect about the policy change and prospect of quitting.

"I wasn't worried about 10 percent turnover compared to a 30 percent increase in insurance premiums [if I didn't go smoke-free]."

—Property Manager, Market-Rate Multi-Family Housing

In this process, it is important to distinguish the message of the smoke-free policy from the promotion of smoking cessation, as one local partner in North Carolina experienced. It is recommended to focus on the primary message first—that is, the reasons for going smoke-free—and that cessation resources be offered secondarily. This message of compassion and resource-sharing communicates to residents the option for cessation but does not purport it as a requirement, an important distinction to make in encouraging acceptance of and compliance with the rule change. Partners recommended offering cessation resources on an on-going basis throughout the execution of the policy and beyond.

Addressing the business case in implementation of public health policies. Knowing that property managers and owners are driven to manage their bottom line and liability, NCDHHS found that property managers responded favorably to messages that smoke-free policies are legal to implement and can contribute lower turnover and insurance costs. A property manager of a privately-owned, smoke-free community in Iowa corroborated these benefits and shared that property managers will find that going smoke-free attracts more residents, in contrast to the common misconception that smoke-free policies result in lost business. After a smoking-related fire at a property that cost two million dollars in damage, the manager adopted a smoke-free policy and found added benefit in the property's insurance rate decreasing 20 percent due to fewer claims. In addition, the manager tracked reduced cost in cleaning units, as smoke-damaged units require significantly more repairs, including replacing carpet and painting over browned walls and ceilings. Avoiding smoke damage resulted in hundreds of dollars saved, increasing the property's net income and overall property value.

In North Carolina, the large property management company that went smoke-free with its entire portfolio of market-rate and affordable housing observed that the policy has only benefitted business. Occupancy has strengthened since policy implementation and site managers report that many potential residents seek their properties because they are smoke-free. The company predicts long-term maintenance savings due to reduced turnover costs. Knowing these anecdotal outcomes for property management companies is essential to preparing state health officials with an understanding of the business benefits of smoke-free policies and communicating these to property managers and owners.

Increasing state capacity through local health department support. State health department leadership found that involving local partners helped bridge a statewide public health initiative and the unique, influential factors in local communities. Local health departments and other local partners are critical in delivering and maintaining the message about smoke-free housing policies, especially in rural communities, and can distribute resources, such as signage, on behalf of a state health department. In

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Iowa, the state health department served as a clearinghouse and convener for smoke-free housing efforts by maintaining a [website](#) and [registry](#) of smoke-free communities and providing training and technical assistance when requested by local partners. In addition, IDPH strategically incorporated the promotion of quitline resources across the state, training local partners annually on communicating about and making referrals to the quitline, resulting in a consistent message by all partners across the state. NCDHHS modeled a similar approach, coordinating resource- and information-sharing that local partners adapt and implement in their communities.

Outcomes

Iowa and North Carolina's statewide smoke-free multi-family housing efforts have improved the environmental air quality for residents living in multi-family housing. These comprehensive policies have also expanded infrastructure and systems to improve health by engaging a variety of partners and protecting children and adults from SHS exposure while supporting the success of the multi-family housing industry.

Improvements in resident health and safety. Smoke-free policies in multi-family housing normalize a smoke-free lifestyle, encouraging residents to keep SHS out of the home and prompting those who smoke to consider quitting. In addition to reducing exposure to harmful SHS, smoke-free policies also support a safe environment. With smoking-related fires contributing to a significant portion of residential fire deaths (19% in 2011), eliminating the risk of fires caused by smoking materials reduces the cost of property damage and human life lost or injured.⁷ Allowing smoking in multi-family housing is not only a public health issue, but a public safety issue and a liability concern for property management, as the property manager in Iowa learned from a multi-million dollar adverse experience. The reduced number of insurance claims the manager submitted after going smoke-free are evidence of a safer community resulting from the policy. A smoke-free policy benefits residents who currently live in the community and leaves a legacy for future residents while protecting the physical property from smoke and fire damage, further sustaining the infrastructure investment.

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Stronger local and statewide partnership networks. State health department leadership has the opportunity to lead coordinated statewide smoke-free housing efforts. At the state and local level, sharing resources and relationships with key influencers in the multi-family housing industry amplifies the effort by relaying the message at a macro-level as well as locally in specific communities. For example, NCDHHS engaged large property management companies to influence policy adoption across all properties in the company's portfolio and coordinated with local tobacco control programs to provide on-site support for community meetings. Additionally, North Carolina state officials conducted a statewide survey in conjunction with a local university that provided a baseline assessment of properties' smoke-free status that local partners used to inform outreach. Coordination by NCDHHS with local partners exemplifies top-down and bottom-up communication, with tobacco control program leads in each region hearing the same message and sharing resources and information with one another.

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to increase the statewide availability of smoke-free housing. This work offers an added benefit for public health to build relationships with the business community. Through smoke-free housing programs, public health leaders can instill confidence in property management professionals about the benefits of going smoke-free and support them in taking steps to implement

policies. The cross-sector partnership that smoke-free housing work requires is a necessary cornerstone of the future of public health and sets a model for expanding collaborations with other sectors.

Successful multi-family housing providers. In addition to the positive outcomes for public health, smoke-free housing benefits housing providers. Property managers in Iowa and North Carolina recognized smoke-free policies as advantageous for business. The many economic benefits the property manager in Iowa enjoyed were shared by North Carolina property managers. Through a series of [success stories](#), North Carolina property managers and owners from affordable, market-rate, supportive, and public housing segments shared that going smoke-free allowed them to reduce fire risk, protect the health of residents (especially children), and save money by avoiding smoke damage and possible fire casualties. In addition, smoke-free housing policies did not create additional burden on property managers as occupancy rates remained strong after policy implementation and the cost and time to manage the policy was the same as any other rule. The large property management company in North Carolina that transitioned their entire portfolio to smoke-free experienced the expected occupancy and cost-savings boost, but also set their company apart from the rest by being a maverick in the industry, which attracted media attention. The results of the policy are overall positive; residents—especially those with children—are happy with the policy and employees are pleased to avoid secondhand smoke at work. The benefits of cost savings, resident and staff support, and peace of mind with regard to safety make smoke-free policies a multi-layered positive business opportunity for multi-family housing providers.

Spread and Sustainability

Successful and sustainable smoke-free housing efforts are achieved through incremental changes and partnerships, according to North Carolina state officials who implemented the program. Smoke-free housing work can be low-cost and have high reach when done strategically, such as by attending trade association activities and presenting at housing conferences. Meeting decision makers where they are makes it easier to speak with appropriate audiences and align the benefits of smoke-free housing with their motives to run a successful business.

Local public health infrastructure. Even with limited resources, state health departments can support the local public health infrastructure to contribute to smoke-free housing efforts. In Johnson County, Iowa, a single tobacco control staff person successfully manages local smoke-free housing efforts by assessing property managers' interest levels and devoting resources where there is commitment. The work can also overlap with other priorities, such as tobacco prevention and cessation education, helping to maximize productivity. State partners recognized that local partners are the glue that holds smoke-free housing work together, as they understand the specific needs within the community and can connect property managers with appropriate local contacts. For example, a local partner in Iowa met the needs of diverse clients by assessing an opportunity to serve non-English speaking property managers and residents. The partner tapped into this market by offering interpreters and providing translated materials. This local infrastructure makes it possible to understand and identify local needs to ensure the reach to all potential service recipients.

Local public health infrastructure also ties naturally into existing relationships with local housing authorities. Partners on the local level referenced collaborating with colleagues who already provide services in multi-family housing communities to join forces and carry the message alongside other public health topics. Local partners have a foot in the door that gives them access to key stakeholders and allows them to meet unique needs.

Incorporating successful strategies in state strategic plans. A successful smoke-free housing program begins with research to understand the smoke-free housing issue, the status of the state housing market, and what other markets are doing on this front to get a sense of the landscape and different approaches. Officials at IDPH received training and program design guidance from Minnesota's [Live Smoke Free](#) program to create the Iowa initiative, leveraging a wealth of [tools](#) including a manual for program development and a webinar series. IDPH also leveraged technical assistance from the [Tobacco Control Legal Consortium](#) to develop sample lease language and answers to questions relating to legal

SPOTLIGHT: Spread and Sustainability

Creating long-lasting change in multi-family housing communities requires a combination of individual technical assistance to properties while working on a systems level to influence social norm change in the multi-family housing industry.

Key factors of sustainable efforts:

- *Maintain a program website or social media page to sustain a presence of the initiative, including tools for property managers and information for residents*
 - *Maximize state and local efforts by reaching large audiences of multi-family housing professionals at trade association events and housing conferences*
 - *Increase the number of smoke-free communities by targeting entire management company portfolios for transition to smoke-free*
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situations. Starting program development with strategic research and consultation guided by the state health department rooted the initiatives in Iowa and North Carolina with a strong foundation.

Once the program infrastructure was established, partners in both states found that strategies that focus on systems change rather than a one-by-one approach can streamline efforts and increase reach to the intended audience. For example, targeting decision makers in North Carolina through trade associations and housing conferences provided access to a wide array of housing providers. Participating in trade association events increased visibility and supported on-going relationship building with property management professionals. Local partners in Iowa shared that meeting property management professionals where they are and through mediums they prefer, such as lunch and learns, is a promising strategy. These types of activities are low-intensity and cost-efficient and are a source for identifying property management professionals that want technical assistance to adopt smoke-free policies. Investing in efforts that support a consistent presence with multi-family housing industry leaders across the state is key to building trust and rapport that will lead to smoke-free communities.

Leveraging other statewide initiatives. Partnering with other public health efforts can amplify the smoke-free housing message while offering service recipients a diverse menu of options to promote health comprehensively. Local and state program staff in Iowa and North Carolina partnered with internal and external programs such as Healthy Homes, internal chronic disease prevention, and substance abuse treatment, as well as residential programs for people with special needs. Through these partnerships, staff brought smoke-free housing to the table as a unique opportunity to expand the scope of these health-focused programs. Partnerships with other agencies of housing industry interest, such as housing lawyers, fair housing organizations, and tenants' rights groups, were also leveraged to bring new perspectives to the smoke-free housing initiative and enhance credibility of health department partners with multi-family housing decision makers. In addition, partners from NCDHHS noted that the broader tobacco control initiatives within a state, such as comprehensive clean indoor air policies in hospitals, restaurants, and bars, established a norm for smoke-free environments that made housing providers more amenable to implementing a similar policy.

Continued state health agency and partner commitment. Collaborating across state and local levels has proven successful in both Iowa and North Carolina due to sustained funding, solid infrastructure, and consistent communication between agencies. For example, the model that NCDHHS employs in funding and supporting regional health departments keeps local partners engaged. The state provides technical assistance to local communities and the support of a media director to assist with communications. With close and regular contact with local health departments, NCDHHS provides local communities with funding to promote tobacco-free policies while keeping a bird's eye view of statewide activities and sharing recommendations across local agencies.

Next Steps

Though early adopters have enjoyed the benefits of going smoke-free, influencing smoke-free policy adoption in many multi-family housing communities takes time, with some management companies needing more convincing. As more properties become smoke-free, those thinking about making the change see and hear about the benefits reaped by their colleagues managing smoke-free communities and become more comfortable with the concept. There are many opportunities to expand smoke-free housing programs to target different levels of the housing industry while continuing to build and maintain relationships with housing providers that have not yet come on board.

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Expand to address new areas of smoke-free housing policy change. Beyond targeting property managers and owners, state and local health departments can adopt additional strategies to influence policy adoption on a broader systems level. For example, NCDHHS shared their success advocating for their [low-income housing tax credit program](#) (a unique funding application that provides a tax credit to developers who build housing to serve specific populations that meet maximum income requirements) to include incentives for developers to incorporate smoke-free policies in their plans. Including incentives in this funding stream makes it desirable to implement a no-smoking rule and initiates the policy from the inception of the property, while adding to the health equity benefit of creating a smoke-free environment for lower-income populations. Additionally, the encouragement and proposed rule from HUD opens conversation not only with public housing communities that would be affected, but also other housing providers who may serve similar populations or see HUD's action as an indicator of the future of the housing industry. The model of tax credits for smoke-free policies and HUD's influence over smoke-free public housing are excellent examples and conversation-starters to use with housing providers.

Evaluate smoke-free housing implementation strategies. Assessing the impact of smoke-free housing initiatives, especially with limited resources, can be streamlined by tracking the number of properties with a smoke-free policy at program inception and beyond. For example, the large scale survey NCDHHS conducted in the early stages of the program provided a baseline measurement of the number of existing and interested smoke-free properties. NCDHHS now uses a tracking tool to monitor a list of properties that are smoke-free or have interest. IDPH also tracks smoke-free properties and has also contracted an evaluator to gain insight from both property managers and residents on the effects of smoke-free policy adoption and implementation. These different monitoring mechanisms, led by the state health department, allow partners to evaluate smoke-free housing work on statewide and local levels to inform analysis of progress and opportunities to refine and further develop the program.

Lessons Learned

Partners in Iowa and North Carolina have made tremendous efforts at the state and local levels to implement smoke-free housing policies. State and local partners have worked together to develop creative strategies to achieve success through strong partnerships with traditional and non-traditional organizations.

The key lessons learned in creating successful smoke-free housing programs include:

1. Understand the housing industry
2. Build upon strong local and state health agency partnerships
3. Leverage non-traditional partners
4. Make the business case for smoke-free housing policies
5. Engage property management and residents throughout the process

"Seeing smoke-free signs on properties is exciting... It contributes to the social norms-building in the community that tobacco use is not a norm anymore."

—Health Educator, Johnson County Public Health

These lessons learned are explained in more detail below. The public health leaders interviewed highlighted their programming as an iterative process with many phases, learning from successes and

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challenges along the way. Their results are a collective effort of multiple stakeholders at the state, local, and community levels coming together as architects for change.

Understand the local housing industry. State and local partners in Iowa and North Carolina described the varying types of housing providers they have interfaced with in their smoke-free housing work. Gaining an understanding of these different providers in the industry, from market-rate to affordable and public housing, can help identify who the interested and accessible housing providers are on a local level. For example, partners in Iowa found that many properties under large management companies were not easily able to adopt smoke-free policies given that their corporate headquarters and decision makers were based out of state. Targeting locally-based housing providers offered more opportunity. This challenge also points to the future possibility of partnering across state lines to target systems-level change for housing providers with portfolios that span multiple states. In addition, partners found it important to understand the interest of property managers from the market-rate versus affordable segments of the housing market. Tailoring messaging to the priorities and styles of these different segments proved helpful. Ultimately, understanding the housing industry helps public health officials find a gateway to providing the support and assistance housing providers need to undertake adoption of smoke-free policies.

Success is built upon strong partnerships. Partnerships between state health department leadership and local public health agencies established a strong foundation for a network of support for properties throughout Iowa and North Carolina to implement smoke-free policies. State health department leadership underpinned the partnerships in both states, which extended to local and community partners to implement coordinated smoke-free housing programming. Across all levels, resources and information were shared to equip each piece of the public health chain to respond to opportunities to initiate smoke-free policies in multi-family housing communities. These teams found that extending partnerships to multi-family housing industry leaders was an additional and necessary step to solidify the cross-sector collaboration between public health and housing. Property managers are essential stakeholders to engage from the get-go, as they ultimately implement the policy change within multi-family housing communities and are the bearers of the bottom-line benefits of the process.

Capitalize on non-traditional partners carrying the public health message. Since public health and the housing industry carry different priorities, finding allies who can facilitate introductions or provide credibility for public health stewards is crucial in bridging the gap between these two sectors. Relationship-building with those who are or will become champions of smoke-free housing builds a groundswell of support that extends the buy-in from other housing providers. Non-traditional partners can include substance abuse agencies and residential treatment facilities, trade associations, fair housing groups, tenants' rights organizations, housing lawyers, Healthy Homes programs, fire departments, as well as property management professionals. Residents are also key partners to engage, as their preferences are a key factor in shaping the housing market and can help express the desire for a smoke-free policy to property management.

Know how to make the business case for smoke-free housing implementation and management. Understanding the motives of a property manager or owner makes it possible to bridge the gap between public health and the business side of the multi-family housing industry. Working on smoke-free housing requires an understanding of the reasons for adopting a policy, from the legal aspects to the cost saving benefits and reduced liability risk. Having these talking points in mind allows public health professionals to sync their messaging with what will inspire the property manager or owner to

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action. In the same way, it is important to understand property managers' perceived barriers around adopting smoke-free policies. State and local partners need to anticipate common concerns and identify ways to overcome objections in order to respond appropriately when engaging property management professionals.

Engage property owners and residents early and often. Influencing smoke-free policy adoption takes time. While early adopters will gladly jump on board and enjoy the benefits, there are likely to be skeptics. Maintaining contact with these parties will pay off over time. With more and more properties going smoke-free, additional communities are likely to come on board once they see the success of their counterparts. It is equally useful to build relationships with residents. To support residents, state and local officials in Iowa and North Carolina reinforced that cessation services and other health education resources are key to provide at every stage of the policy adoption process. Providing this support creates a sense of care for residents that helps ease the transition and supports compliance with the smoke-free policy to maintain a home environment free of SHS for residents.

Final Thoughts

Smoke-free housing work presents many opportunities to advance public health by protecting adults and children from SHS at home, supporting thriving multi-family housing businesses, and creating a norm for smoke-free living that extends beyond the initial implementation period. State, local, and community partners have much support from the pioneers across the country who have already initiated smoke-free housing programs. Multi-family housing providers are similarly ready and open to support from public health leaders who can advise them every step of the way on smoke-free policy implementation. State health departments with less experience in this area can leverage existing smoke-free housing program models and adapt resources to their state and local communities. The future of smoke-free housing work presents opportunities for cross-country collaboration with many multi-family housing companies' portfolios spanning multiple states and the proposed smoke-free rule from HUD affecting public housing nationwide. These shared experiences as well as the groundswell of support for smoke-free housing from HUD and other early adopters point toward a bright future for continued expansion of smoke-free living options for residents.

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