



# Rhode Island Tobacco Control Program

## Reducing Secondhand Smoke Exposure Where People Live



### BACKGROUND

There is no safe level of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure. The home remains the major source of exposure for children. Elderly and those with health conditions such as asthma, heart and lung disease are particularly vulnerable. In multi-unit buildings, cigarette smoke drifts from apartment to apartment under doorways, through outlets and ventilation systems. No ventilation system can completely eliminate tobacco smoke.

Public Housing Authorities (PHA) across the US and in RI are increasingly adopting smoke-free policies to protect residents, staff and visitors from the harmful effects of smoke. In RI, there are 22 of the 25 PHA's with a no smoking policy that includes apartment dwellings covering about 9000 units. Private affordable buildings are also adopting policies.

### GOAL

The Rhode Island Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program (TCP) goal areas aligns with the CDC ; to prevent youth initiation, identify and eliminate disparities, promote cessation services and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke where people live, develop and work.

The TCP launched the Live Smoke Free program in 2011 in partnership with Health Resources in Action (HRiA) to provide group and individual technical assistance for property management groups and municipalities. HUD , Rhode Island Housing and public health advocates support these policies.

### BENEFITS OF A SMOKE-FREE BUILDING POLICY

- Reduce secondhand smoke exposure where people live
- Improve air quality for residents, staff, visitors and pets
- Reduce smoking among residents and staff
- Reduce and prevent the risk of fires caused by cigarettes
- Lower operating costs associated with unit turnovers, painting, fires and water damage
- May reduce insurance premiums
- Increase the number of smoke-free buildings and units
- Creates a positive social norm

### The Monetary Impact

Costs to Rehabilitate a Unit Where Smoking is Prohibited vs. a Unit Where Smoking is Allowed

	Non-Smoking	Light Smoking	Heavy Smoking
General Cleaning	\$240	\$500	\$720
Paint	\$170	\$225	\$480
Flooring	\$50	\$950	\$1,425
Appliances	\$60	\$75	\$490
Bathroom	\$40	\$60	\$400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$560</b>	<b>\$1,810</b>	<b>\$3,515</b>

Data reflects surveys from housing authorities and subsidized housing facilities in New England. Collected and reported by Smoke-Free Housing New England, 2009.



### STEPS TOWARD A SMOKE FREE BUILDING

#### STEP 1: GAIN SUPPORT & FORM A WORK GROUP

Gather information about secondhand smoke, the building environment (litter, cigarette receptacle locations), sample policies, connect with peers that have a policy, and gain agency consensus to move toward implementation. Form an inclusive implementation team for the project that includes residents and resident councils.

#### STEP 2: DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Develop a plan that includes communication strategies with time lines. Understand the internal decision and rule-making process, present the plan to decision makers, staff and residents for approval and support. Survey staff and residents, share results and promote available cessation services. Set a policy implementation date. Spring is best.

#### STEP 3: PROMOTE CESSATION SERVICES

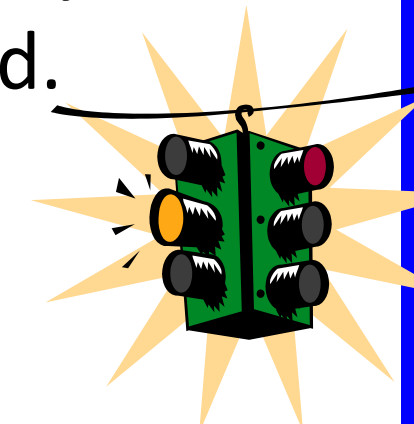
Promote cessation services and encourage smokers to contact their health care provider. Post the quit line number 1-800-QUIT-NOW where it will be seen often. Track cessation participation and the number of smokers who quit as a result of the policy. Move cigarette receptacles away from the outside doorways, windows balconies and mulch.

#### STEP 4: EDUCATE RESIDENTS & STAFF

Host a meeting to share survey results and policy provisions. Finalize policy draft with clear enforcement steps, set the policy effective date for Spring, continue to promote cessation services, communicate policy effective date in multiple ways (newsletter, flyer and meetings). Organize a cigarette litter clean up – make it fun and inclusive.

#### STEP 5: IMPLEMENT THE POLICY & POST SIGNS

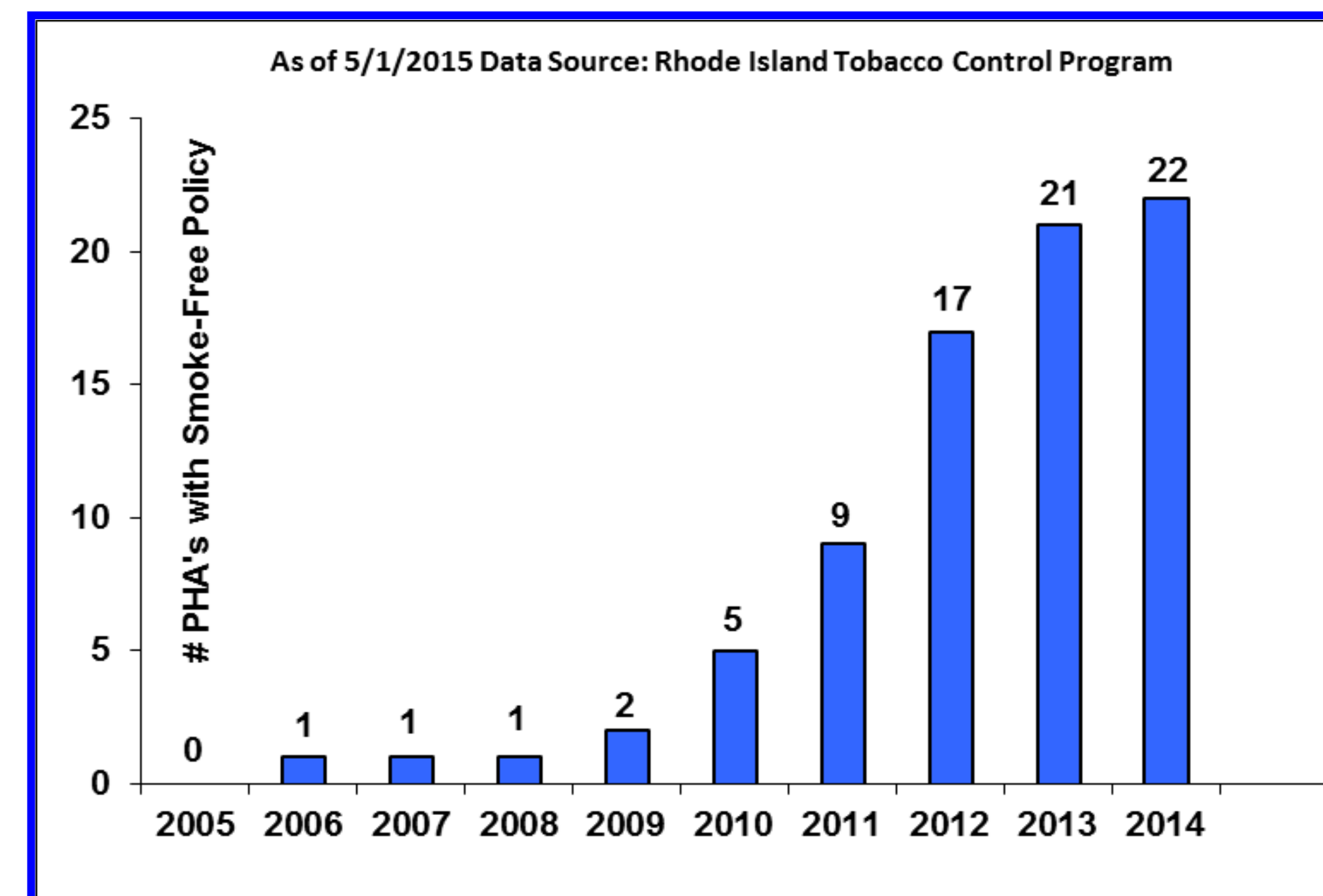
Post "No Smoking" and designated smoking signs. Ensure designated areas are maintained and well lit. Clearly state the no smoking policy effective date and enforcement steps in the lease or lease addendum. Post the policy on your agency website and places where it will be noticed.



#### STEP 6: ENFORCE THE NO SMOKING POLICY

Enforce the policy and document non-compliance as you would other building rules. Document and track all complaints and smoking violations. Continue to educate residents about the dangers of secondhand smoke and promote cessation. Evaluate the policy effectiveness (survey, focus groups, resident meetings post policy). Talk to your peers about how they handle compliance barriers.

### RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES WITH A NO SMOKING POLICY N=25



### LESSONS LEARNED

- **MAKE THE CASE FOR A POLICY** - Survey residents to learn about residents' opinions and any support or challenges that might be associated with the policy implementation and quitting tobacco. Share survey results during an in-person meeting. Talk to your peers about compliance strategies.
- **INCLUSION** - Include residents and staff throughout the policy process. Residents and staff may have useful suggestions for the policy provisions and resources.
- **COMMUNICATION** - Take time to educate residents and staff about secondhand smoke, benefits of a policy and the policy provisions throughout the process in multiple ways.
- **SOCIAL CHANGE** - Change is incremental. You might want 100% smoke-free or tobacco free grounds but, you might have to compromise on having a time limited-designated outdoor smoking area in the early phases of a policy.
- **CESSATION** - A policy does not mean residents have to quit. Just take it outside. Quitting is hard and it may take several attempts for a successful quit. Connect residents with their health care provider.

### RESOURCES

For more information about the Live Smoke Free Program and no cost workshops contact Benvinda Santos, Tobacco Control Program at 222-7464.

To download Smoke Free Housing Toolkits, Fact Sheets and publications visit [www.livesmokefree.ri.gov](http://www.livesmokefree.ri.gov)

Facebook.com/livesmokefreeri

For cessation services call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669) or visit [www.quitnowri.com](http://www.quitnowri.com)