

Connecticut Department of Public Health

Tobacco Control Program | May 2024

TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS FACT SHEET

Best-Practice

Smoke-free policies are a best-practice and have been shown to reduce exposure to [secondhand smoke](#), reduce tobacco use, increase quitting, reduce youth and young adult initiation of tobacco, and reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality.¹ More comprehensive policies offer greater protections including protections from aerosol,² smokeless commercial tobacco products, and other substances like cannabis. Tobacco prevention experts refer to the most comprehensive policy as a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy, which would include commercial combustible, [smokeless](#), and [electronic vapor](#) products.



Rationale

Tobacco-free campus policies promote health and wellbeing for the entire campus community. Comprehensive policies not only reduce negative health impacts associated with exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosol, but they support many individuals who want to quit, could improve mental health,³ and decrease littered commercial tobacco waste.⁴

In Connecticut, the rate of current tobacco use is highest among young adults. One in five adults aged 18-34 use cigarettes, electronic vapor products, or smokeless tobacco some days or every day.⁵ Policies that protect this age group where they live, learn, and work will support decreased initiation and use of commercial tobacco and promote quitting.

College and University Landscape

- In 2011, The American College Health Association released a position statement, promoting tobacco-free environments.⁶
- As of January 1, 2024, at least 2,600 U.S. colleges and university campuses have smoke-free policies. Over 83% are tobacco-free.⁷
- In Connecticut, there are at least 12 colleges and universities with smoke-free protections, and of those, more than half have a comprehensive smoke, vape, and tobacco-free policy.⁷

Enrollment Impact

- There is no evidence that tobacco-free campus policies have a negative impact on enrollment. In 2015, authors of an analysis conducted among North Carolina private colleges, universities, and public community colleges concluded that 100% tobacco-free policy adoption did not have an impact on student enrollment or applications.⁸

- High school students in Connecticut and in many other states enrolling in college are accustomed to Clean Air Laws that protect them from secondhand smoke, aerosol, and commercial tobacco in K-12 schools, at school sporting events, and in their communities⁹.
- Many colleges and universities promote their tobacco-free campus environment with signage, dedicated website pages, FAQs, handouts, and in new student orientation to celebrate a healthy campus community. [Check out Southern Connecticut State University's website.](#)

Adoption, Implementation, and Enforcement Resources

- **Convene a group that will be tasked with exploring a tobacco-free campus policy.** Include students, conduct surveys and environmental scans, and ensure decision-makers, tobacco users, faculty, human resources, campus security, and other impacted groups are part of the process. [Read more tips.](#)
- **Communicate about the policy and give your community time to adjust.** Post signs, create reminder cards, ensure cessation support, and incorporate messaging into orientation, handbooks, and syllabi. [Find implementation resources.](#)
- **Discuss how you will handle policy violations and consistently educate and enforce them.** Rely on the community to work together to communicate friendly, social reminders. Over time, campus norms will change and individuals will understand where commercial tobacco use is not allowed. [Review more enforcement tips](#) and our [Living and Learning Tobacco Free Toolkit](#).
- **Southern Connecticut State University is providing tobacco-free campus technical assistance to all colleges, universities, and post-secondary schools in Connecticut.** To receive free support, email DPHTobacco@CT.gov to get connected.

References

- ¹Guide to Community Preventive Services. Tobacco Use: Smoke-Free Policies. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-smoke-free-policies.html>. Page last updated: November 3, 2018
- ²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke: Outcome Indicators for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2017. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2017.
- ³Marynak K, VanFrank B, Tetlow S, et al. Tobacco Cessation Interventions and Smoke-Free Policies in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities — United States, 2016. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2018;67:519–523. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6718a3>.
- ⁴Public Health Law Center. Policy Tools for Minimizing Public Health and Environmental Effects of Cigarette Waste. Tobacco Control Legal Consortium. 2013.
- ⁵State of Connecticut Department of Public Health; Connecticut Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, 2022.
- ⁶The American College Health Association. Position Statement on Tobacco on College and University Campuses. ACHA Guidelines. November 2011.
- ⁷American NonSmokers' Rights Foundation. SmokeFree and Tobacco-Free U.S. and Tribal Colleges and Universities. January 1 2024.
- ⁸Miller KD, Yu D, Lee JG, Ranney LM, Simons DJ, Goldstein AO. Impact of the adoption of tobacco-free campus policies on student enrollment at colleges and universities, North Carolina, 2001-2010. J Am Coll Health. 2015;63(4):230-6. doi: 10.1080/07448481.2015.1015023. PMID: 25692457.
- ⁹American NonSmokers' Rights Foundation. Interactive SmokeFree Maps. February 1 2024N.

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