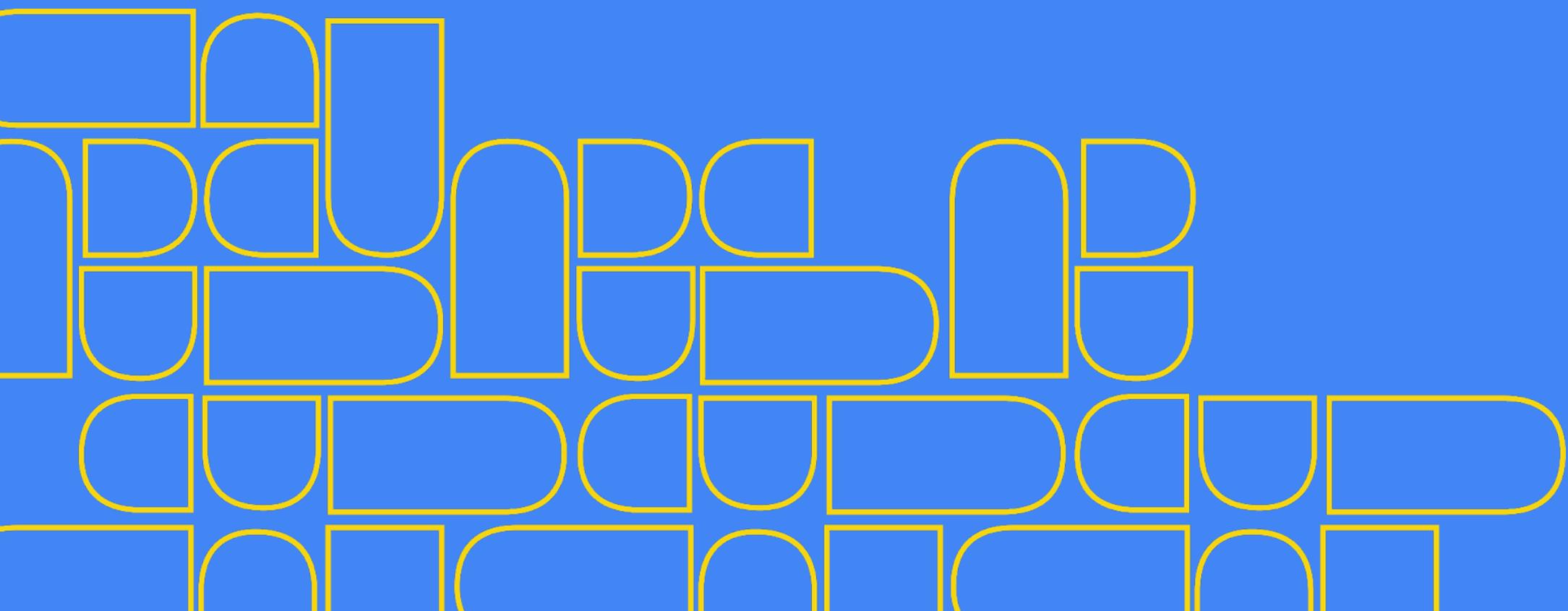


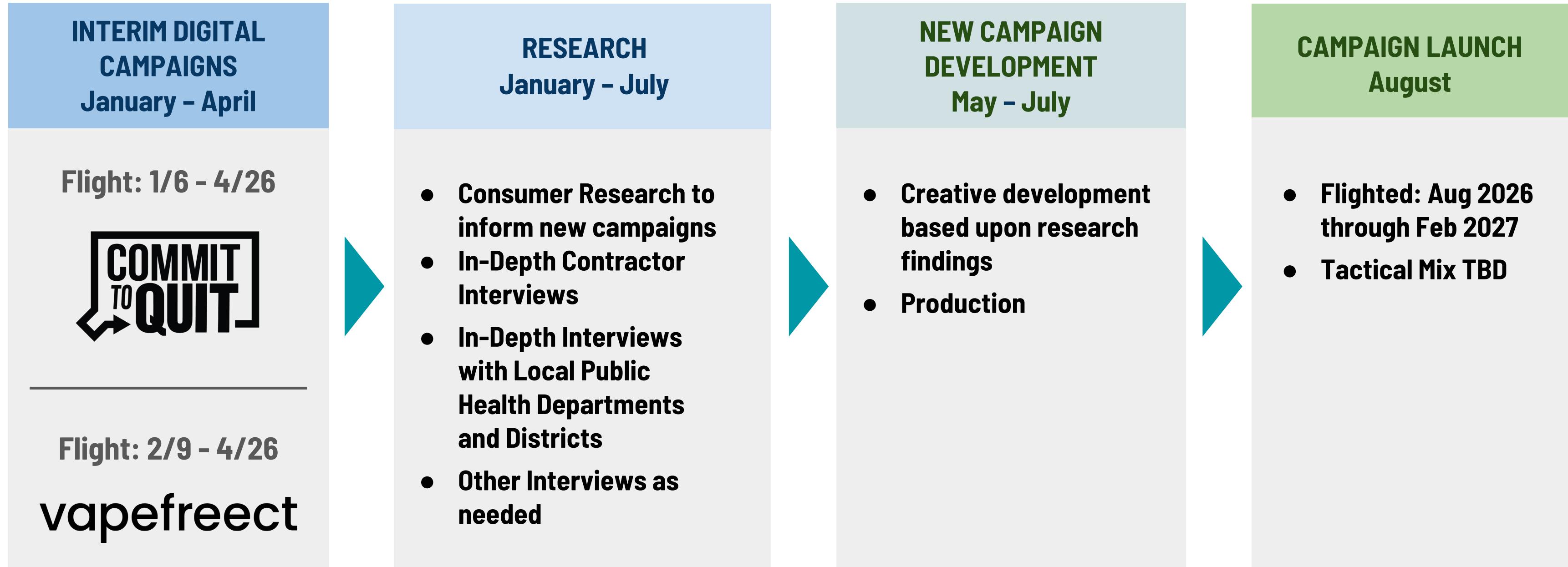
DECKER X CT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH | TOBACCO AND HEALTH TRUST FUND

Tobacco Control Program - Marketing Update

January 28, 2026



2026 TIMELINE



INTERIM CAMPAIGNS



SUMMARY

- **Target Audience:**
 - CT residents age 25-64 with emphasis on at-risk populations - e.g. areas with high concentrations of household income <\$75,000
- **Leveraged existing creative assets from prior agency in order to get into market quicker**
- **Channels**
 - Social media static and video ads (Facebook and Instagram)
 - Static display banners
 - **Introduced new tactic: Google Performance Max**
 - Allows advertisers to leverage their entire Google ads inventory within a single campaign
 - Expands reach allowing for a wider target audience
 - Proven to drive conversions, not just clicks





RESULTS

(Highlights 1/6 - 1/23/26)



2,348,594 IMPRESSIONS

- Programmatic Display
- Meta (Facebook/Instagram)
- Google Performance Max

12,909 ENGAGEMENTS

- Clicks: 3,622
- Video Completions: 9,287

284 CONVERSIONS

- Enroll Now Button Clicks: 192
- Click to Call: 92

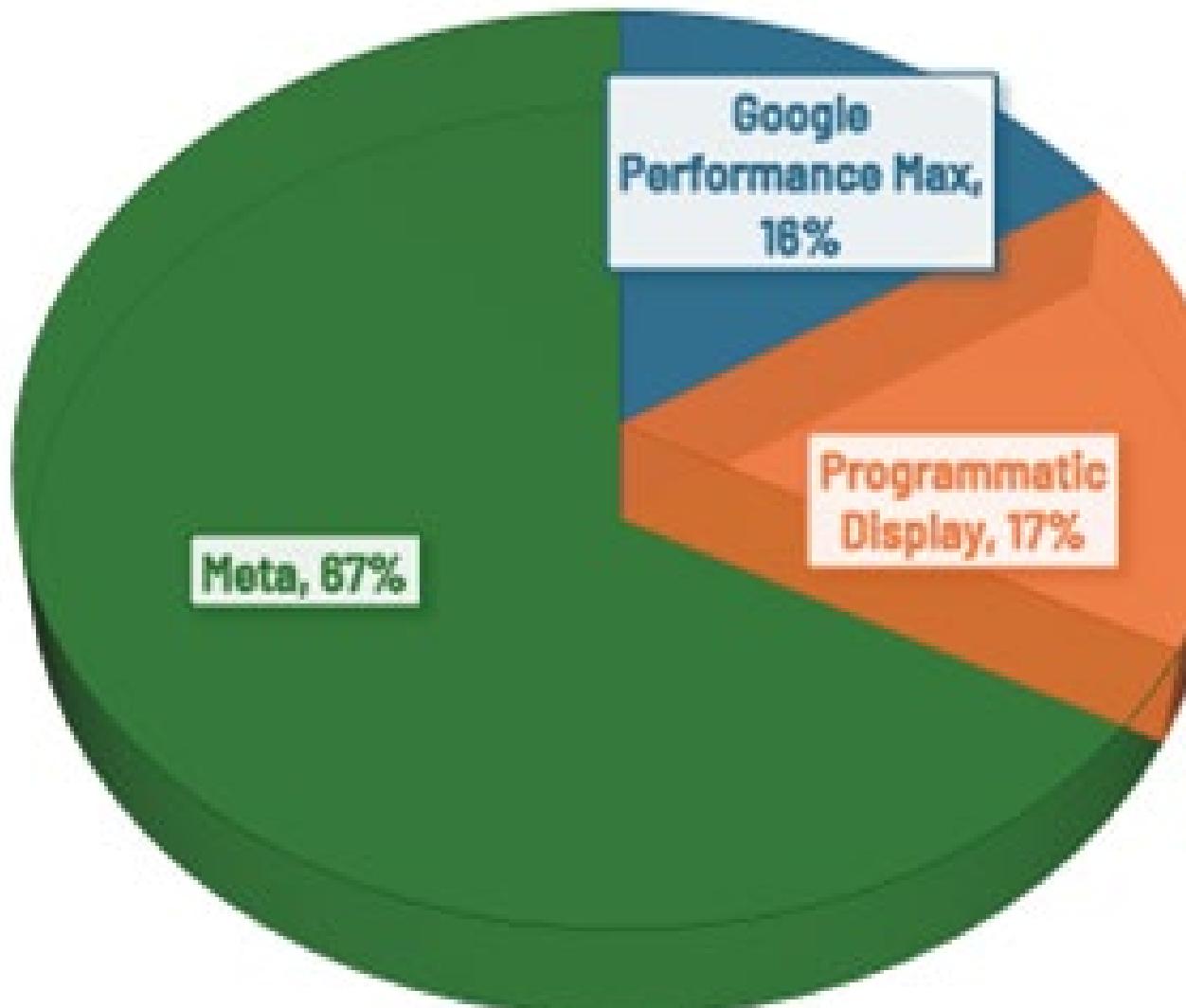


RESULTS

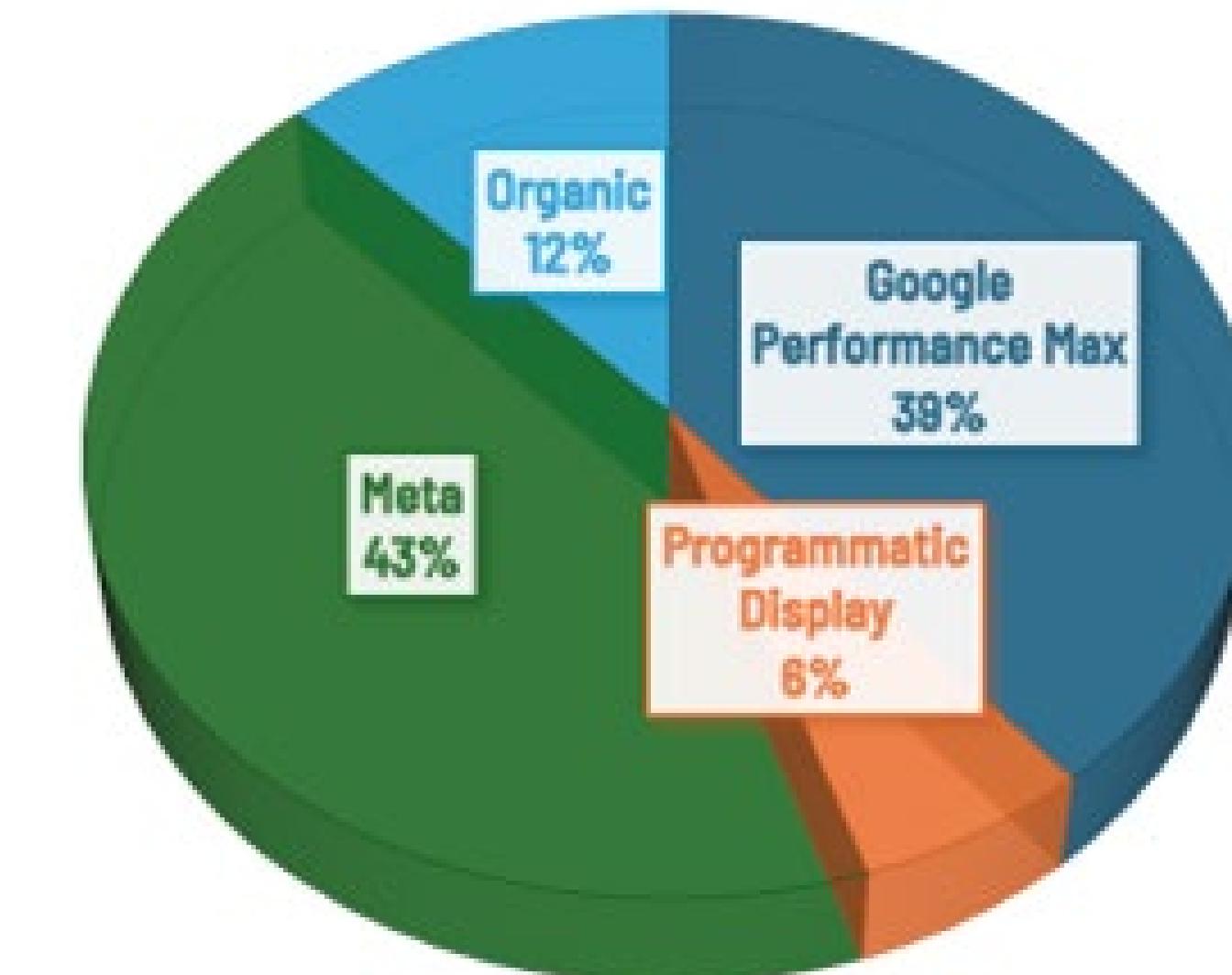
(Highlights 1/6 - 1/23/26)



RESPONSES (CLICKS) BY CHANNEL



CONVERSIONS BY CHANNEL

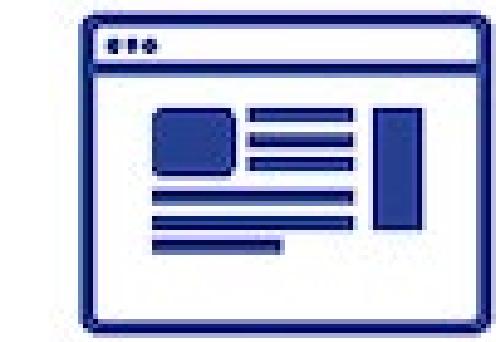




SUMMARY

- **Target Audience Segments**
 - CT Teens Age 13-18
 - CT Young Adults Age 19-25
- **Leveraging existing creative assets from prior agency**
- **Channels:**
 - CT Teens: Instagram, TikTok, Programmatic Display
 - Young Adults: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Programmatic Display
- **Estimated Monthly Impressions: 1,527,000**

vapefreeect



PROGRAMMATIC DISPLAY

RESEARCH



OBJECTIVE:

Engaging teens, parents, and adults statewide to uncover insights that drive stronger nicotine prevention and cessation efforts with effective advertising.

PHASE 1 - 14 VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUPS

Online qualitative discussions with Connecticut teens, parents, young adults and older adults to review and discuss:

- Their attitudes, behaviors, and opinions regarding smoking and vaping.
- Their attitudes and perceptions of anti-smoking/anti-vaping advertising they have seen
- Their attitudes and perceptions of creative messaging stimuli
- Any prior experience with the CT Commit to Quit Program

TEENS AGE 14-18
4 Groups

PARENTS OF TEENS
2 Groups

YOUNG ADULTS AGE 18-25
2 Groups

OLDER ADULTS AGE 35-65
4 Groups

LGBTQIA+ AGE 35-65
2 Groups

For all groups, recruit for a mix of demographics to match Connecticut's current resident mix, including a representation of at-risk populations (minorities, income level, etc.)



PHASE 2 - QUANTITATIVE ONLINE SURVEY - CREATIVE TESTING:

Test new creative concepts to understand:

- Appeal of messages and delivery
- Relevance
- Clarity of messages and calls to action
- Anticipated impact on consumer behavior

N=2,400 RESPONDENTS

- Mix of demographics
- Mix of smoking and vaping attitudes and behaviors, including rejection
- n=400 Teens 14-18 (with parental permission to complete survey)
- n=400 Parents of Teens
- n=400 Young Adults 19-25
- n=1,200 Older Adults 35-65

Robust sample to ensure reliable sub-groups of race/ethnicity and LGBTQ+





IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS - CONTRACTORS

COMPLETED INTERVIEWS:



PENDING INTERVIEWS (FEB/MAR):





FARMINGTON VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

Summary

FVHD is a local public health district serving ten municipalities, responsible for a wide-reaching portfolio of tobacco, vaping, and cannabis prevention initiatives.

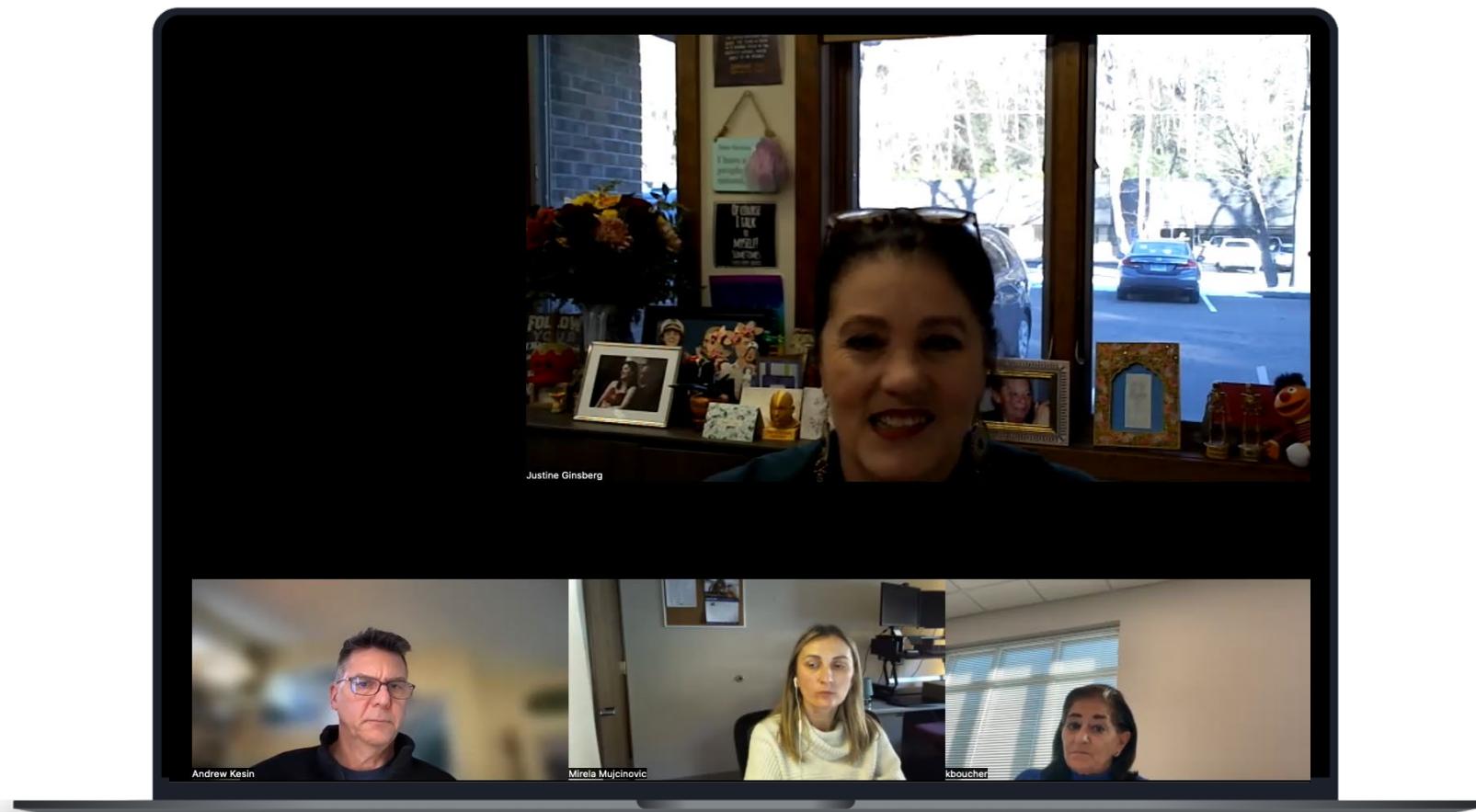


What we hoped to learn

We met with **Justine Ginsberg, Community Health Coordinator**, to better understand how tobacco and vaping behaviors show up in community settings—and how FVHD's hands-on work with youth, schools, healthcare providers, and families reveals motivations, resistance points, and communication gaps.

Key Insights

- Mental health is a primary driver of nicotine use, especially among youth.
- Non-punitive, supportive approaches outperform fear or discipline-based tactics.
- Destigmatizing mental health conversations is essential to prevention.
- Peer-to-peer engagement drives credibility and impact with youth audiences.
- Assumptions about “low-risk” or affluent communities obscure real needs.





WHEELER CLINIC

Summary

Wheeler Clinic is a statewide behavioral health and wellness organization providing integrated medical, behavioral health, and prevention services. Through its Tobacco Control Program, Wheeler leads the True To You (T2U) coalition, which serves LGBTQIA+ youth, young adults, and adults.

What we hoped to learn

We met with **Holly Giardina, Quality Manager**, to better understand how Wheeler's coalition-driven work—particularly through the LGBTQIA+ focused T2U initiative—translates into real-world engagement, message testing, and community behavior change.

Key Insights

- Authenticity and peer credibility are essential for reaching LGBTQIA+ and Black Adult Audiences.
- Mental health is tightly intertwined with tobacco use in these communities.
- Social and digital channels are effective for reach, but not sufficient on their own.
- Provider-based outreach remains a weak link.
- Community-driven, grassroots structures offer the greatest long-term potential – Pride events, coalitions, etc.



Wheeler

Innovative Care. Positive Change.





SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Summary

SCSU operates a comprehensive tobacco-control program integrating policy, prevention education, peer delivery models, campus events, and cessation resource promotion.



What we hoped to learn

We met with **Victoria Adams, Tobacco Control Program Coordinator**, to better understand how young adults actually behave, communicate, and make decisions about nicotine use within a campus environment—and how SCSU's expansive program intersects with those behaviors.

Key Insights

- Peer-to-peer education is one of the most effective tools for youth prevention and cessation.
- Schools are critical access points—but logistics limit depth and frequency.
- The current cessation landscape feels overwhelming to students.
- Relatable, factual messaging outperforms prohibition-based approaches.
- Sustained engagement requires incentives and usability, not just awareness.





PENDING INTERVIEWS (February – March)

Summary

A proposed set of in-depth interviews with select Connecticut public health departments and districts to complement contractor interviews and ground the statewide Tobacco Control Media Campaign in the lived realities of communities across the state. The health departments and districts below represent four priority populations—Native American, Urban, Rural, and Suburban—each with distinct drivers of tobacco use, vaping behavior, access barriers, and cessation needs.

NATIVE AMERICAN POPULATIONS

- Ledge Light Health District
- Uncas Health District
- Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Health Department
- Mohegan Tribal Health Department

RURAL POPULATIONS

- Torrington Area Health District

SUBURBAN POPULATIONS

- Farmington Valley Health District (completed under Contractor interviews)

URBAN POPULATIONS

- Hartford Health & Human Services
- Middletown Health Department
- New Haven Health Department



ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS

CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (CIAC)

Summary

CIAC is the governing body for interscholastic athletics in Connecticut, reaching more than 250,000 middle and high school students annually through athletic events, academic programs, and a robust digital and social ecosystem. CIAC expressed interest in partnering with CTDPH to promote anti-vaping and anti-smoking messaging through trusted, student-centered channels.

What we hoped to learn

We met with **Chris Cobb (CIAC)** to explore partnership opportunities that could extend tobacco and vaping prevention messaging into athletic and academic environments—leveraging CIAC’s events, student networks, and digital reach to engage youth in authentic, performance-oriented ways.

Key Insights

- Student athletes represent a highly influential peer audience.
- Peer-to-peer engagement is especially powerful within athletic culture.
- Events offer high-impact, real-world touchpoints.
- Student-generated content has strong potential for organic and paid media.
- Performance framing is a natural entry point for prevention messaging.



THANK YOU