



Tobacco Control Network

Needs Assessment

May 2005

Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium

**Tobacco Control Network
Needs Assessment**

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this needs assessment project was to provide the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC) with adequate information to develop and maintain professional and technical services for the Tobacco Control Network (TCN), which consists of state tobacco control program managers and staff from each state, territory, and the District of Columbia.

The needs assessor interviewed two key informants for the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium, consisting of the Managing Director and the Senior Manager, Training and Program Support to create the survey items. The key informants provided suggestions on specific category of questions for the survey. After the interviews were conducted, the needs assessor created a suggested list of 40 questions and emailed them to the key informants for feedback. The questions were also emailed to the officers of the Tobacco Control Network for piloting. Piloting the survey resulted in deleting and adding certain questions, as well as changing the wording of certain items for better clarity. The survey was once again sent to the key informants for approval and preparation for *Zoomerang*.

A total of 150 Tobacco Control Network members were emailed a website link to *Zoomerang*, for the web-based needs assessment survey. The *Zoomerang* survey was active between March 29 and April 11, 2005. By the last day of the active survey, 62 responses were received, for a 41% response rate. Responses were received from 43 states and territories, as well as from the District of Columbia. Data were collected on the web and were only accessible with a password.

The TCN Survey consisted of 40 items, with three items containing a matrix for multiple questions. Eleven of the items were open-ended questions for respondents to provide a suggestion, opinion, or specific need (Appendix A). The survey took about 15 minutes or less to complete. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could refuse to answer any of the items. By completing the survey, respondents agreed to participate. Survey results were kept confidential, and were compiled and reported in aggregate form. Individual responses could not be identified.

Of the 62 respondents to the survey, 32 were state program managers (52%) and 30 were staff members (48%). Most of the respondents (71%) had more than five years experience in tobacco control, with a total of 22 (67%) program managers and 23 staff members (77%) having more than five years experience in the field.

After reviewing the data analysis results from the needs assessment survey, a number of conclusions about the survey have emerged. One major theme is the **lack of awareness** about the Tobacco Control Network, along with its services, programs, and activities. Most survey respondents were somewhat aware of the TCN. A majority of the members either have not contacted their regional representative or don't know who their regional representative is. This may explain why most respondents felt that their membership in the TCN is only somewhat beneficial rather than very beneficial.

Another theme that emerged was a **lack of participation**. The *Help Your Peers* program is used by respondents about once a quarter, which is about the same frequency as the regional conference calls. However, survey respondents felt that the Help Your Peers program, along with email alerts were cited as very important communication resources. Participation in the regional conference calls is occasional, even though most respondents, especially state tobacco program managers, felt the conference calls are pertinent to their jobs.

The last theme that emerged from the needs assessment survey was a **lack of usefulness**. While there is a lack of awareness of the TCN, when asked about what the purpose of the TCN should be, most respondents cited peer assistance, communication, and training. Communication also included email alerts and the e-newsletter. These findings suggest that there is a great potential for the usefulness of the TCN. Addressing the training needs among state tobacco program managers and their staff will increase the value and usefulness of the TCN.

Two major areas of recommendations emerge from the need assessment conclusions. Those include increasing **awareness and promotion** of TCN services, programs, and activities through better visibility and ensuring that the services, programs, and activities offered by the TCN are **useful** to the state tobacco program managers and their staff. These recommendations contribute to the need to increase participation and membership in the Tobacco Control Network.

One of the most pertinent services provided by the TCN is professional and technical training. The major strength of the TCN is its connection with TTAC, which has access to a pool of tobacco control experts and consultants. Survey respondents repeatedly suggested they need professional and technical training on a variety of topics and issues. The needs assessor suggests that the TCN take advantage of its connection with TTAC in providing those trainings.

In addition to training needs, all services, programs, and activities offered by the TCN need to be perceived as useful by the membership. Survey respondents have cited which training topics would be the most useful to them. The needs assessor suggests making sure that the training topics cited in the survey are addressed.

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**Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium
Tobacco Control Network
Needs Assessment
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Purpose

The purpose of this needs assessment project was to provide the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC) with adequate information to develop and maintain professional and technical services for the Tobacco Control Network (TCN), which consists of state tobacco control managers and staff from each state, territory, and the District of Columbia.

Introduction and History

The Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC) is an independent project dedicated to assisting state and local partners in building and growing highly effective tobacco control programs. TTAC contributes to the development of the public health workforce by building capacity to achieve effective tobacco prevention and control programs and policies on the state, local, and community level. TTAC carries out this mission by developing, implementing, and evaluating programs that increase knowledge and skills, strengthen leadership competencies, increase organizational support and strengthen partnerships between state and local tobacco control organizations and professionals. TTAC is strategically located at the Rollins School of Public Health, allowing access to faculty experts with a wealth of public health knowledge.

The Tobacco Control Network (TCN) was formed in 1994 to facilitate information sharing between the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-funded ASSIST Program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-funded IMPACT program, and other national partners. With the creation of the National Tobacco Control Program in 1999, in which the CDC provided funding to all state health departments for tobacco control programs, the TCN reorganized to work with state agencies, focusing on tobacco control issues including policy, fostering collaboration, and improving communication among state programs. Officers, who are elected at the TCN Annual meeting during the annual National Tobacco Conference, coordinate Network activities.

Data Collection Methodology

A total of 150 Tobacco Control Network members were emailed a website link to *Zoomerang*, for the web-based needs assessment survey. The *Zoomerang* survey was active between March 29 and April 11, 2005. By the last day of the active survey, 62 responses were received, for a 41% response rate. Responses were received from 43 states and territories, as well as from the District of Columbia. Data were collected on the web and were only accessible with a password.

A research assistant for the TTAC entered the questions on to *Zoomerang* and activated the survey during the approved time frame. The Senior Manager, Training and Program Support for TTAC (serving as the TCN Coordinator) emailed the survey link to the Tobacco Control Network requesting their participation. The research assistant monitored survey activity and results. Survey results are compiled by the *Zoomerang*

website. After the survey became inactive, the needs assessor collected the survey results for interpretation and report writing.

Data Collection Instrument

The TCN Survey consisted of 40 items, with three items containing a matrix for multiple questions. Eleven of the items were open-ended questions for respondents to provide a suggestion, opinion, or specific need (Appendix A). The survey took about 15 minutes or less to complete. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could refuse to answer any of the items. By completing the survey, respondents agreed to participate. Survey results were kept confidential, and were compiled and reported in aggregate form. Individual responses could not be identifiable. The table below illustrates the main categories of the survey and the number of questions for each.

Table 1. Main categories of the Tobacco Control Network needs assessment survey

Category	Tobacco Control Network	Regional Conference Calls	TCN Meetings	Tobacco Free Press	State Program Manager Items	Total
Number of Items	15	5	1	8	11	40

The needs assessor interviewed two key informants for the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium, consisting of the Managing Director and the Senior Manager, Training and Program Support to create the survey items. The key informants provided suggestions on specific category of questions for the survey. After the interviews were conducted, the needs assessor created a suggested list of 40 questions and emailed them to the key informants for feedback. The questions were also emailed to the officers of the Tobacco Control Network for piloting. Piloting the survey resulted in deleting and adding certain questions, as well as changing the wording of certain items for better clarity. The survey was once again sent to the key informants for approval and preparation for *Zoomerang*.

Data Analysis

Below are the results from major needs assessment survey items. These items were presented for discussion at the TCN officers' meeting, held during the 2005 National Tobacco Conference in Chicago. Data analysis tables present results from both program managers and other staff for comparison purposes. Percentages have been rounded for simplicity purposes.

Demographics

Of the 62 respondents to the needs assessment survey, 32 were state program managers (52%) and 30 were staff members (48%). Most of the respondents (71%) had more than five years experience in tobacco control. A total of 22 (67%) of program managers had more than five years experience in tobacco control. In addition, 23 (77%) of other staff members had more than five years experience in tobacco control.

Tobacco Control Network Items

These items related to general topics within the TCN, including membership participation in activities and defining the Network.

Purpose of the Tobacco Control Network

In accordance with the intended theme of the TCN, the two top choices for the purpose of the Network were peer assistance and communication among program managers. Table 2 illustrates these findings.

Table 2. Which of the following should be the purpose of the Tobacco Control Network?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Peer assistance	29 (91%)	25 (83%)	54 (87%)
Communication	30 (94%)	22 (73%)	52 (84%)
Professional Train.	23 (72%)	19 (63%)	42 (68%)
Email updates	25 (78%)	22 (73%)	47 (76%)
Electronic Newsletter	25 (78%)	17 (57%)	42 (68%)

Benefits of TCN Membership

A majority of the respondents felt that membership in the TCN was at least somewhat beneficial. Program managers were more likely to perceive benefits from TCN membership. Table 3 illustrates these findings.

Table 3. How beneficial do you consider your membership in the Tobacco Control Network?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Very beneficial	10 (31%)	7 (23%)	17 (28%)
Somewhat beneficial	19 (59%)	16 (53%)	25 (57%)
Not very beneficial	2 (6%)	5 (17%)	7 (11%)
Not at all beneficial	0	2 (7%)	2 (3%)

State Tobacco Program Managers' Awareness of TCN

According to the survey results, most of the respondents perceived that state program managers were only somewhat aware of the TCN. State tobacco control staff was more likely to believe that program managers were aware of the TCN, while over half of the program managers (56%) were not very aware or not aware at all. Table 4 illustrates these findings.

Table 4. In your opinion, how aware are state program managers of the Tobacco Control Network activities?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Very Aware	0	4 (13%)	4 (13%)
Somewhat aware	13 (41%)	19 (63%)	32 (53%)
Not very aware	17 (53%)	3 (10%)	20 (33%)
Not at all aware	1 (3%)	3 (10%)	4 (7%)

Contact with Regional Representative

Only about a quarter of the total respondents had contacted their regional representative within the past year, and a larger number of respondents did not know who their regional representative is. Table 5 illustrates these findings.

Table 5. Within the last year, have you contacted your regional Tobacco Control Network representative to discuss a tobacco control issue?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Yes	11 (34%)	3 (10%)	14 (23%)
No	9 (28%)	14 (47%)	23 (38%)
Do not know representative	12 (38%)	12 (40%)	24 (39%)

Visibility of Tobacco Control Network

An open-ended item asked respondents for one suggestion to increase visibility of the Tobacco Control Network among program managers. Three major themes emerged from this question, including 1) CDC involvement, 2) Communication, and 3) Peer to Peer support. Below is the list of major suggestions within those themes:

CDC Involvement:

- At CDC Program Managers' meeting, introduce the Tobacco Control Network, have a TCN presentation, and host a reception for the TCN.
- Office on Smoking and Health officers should encourage member participation.

Communication:

- TCN email updates
- Cooperative work on major issues
- Member contact list and a list serv system
- TCN's vision, mission, goals, and objectives should be in the newsletter

Peer to Peer Support:

- Share activities among the leadership
- Build connections and share experiences
- Provide services, assistance, and useful products for tobacco control

- Provide support for new managers through the mentoring program and by preparing a job information packet.

Participation in the Tobacco Control Network Activities

Among a list of TCN activities, the *Help Your Peers* program and quarterly regional conference calls were cited as the most frequently used. Table 6 illustrates these findings.

Table 6. What activities have you participated in as a member of the Tobacco Control Network? [Check all that apply]

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
<i>Help Your Peers</i>	24 (75%)	18 (60%)	42 (81%)
Quarterly regional conference calls	22 (69%)	14 (47%)	36 (69%)
<i>Tobacco Free Press</i>	19 (59%)	14 (47%)	33 (63%)
Email alerts	16 (50%)	10 (33%)	26 (50%)
Annual business meeting	19 (59%)	7 (23%)	26 (50%)
Resource Council	8 (25%)	2 (7%)	10 (19%)

Help Your Peers Program Participation

The *Help Your Peers* program serves as a means to assist state program managers with questions they may have related to tobacco control. When certain questions are deemed important or interesting to the entire Network, TTAC places those questions in an archive link on their website. Unfortunately, most of the respondents indicated that they do not use this vital service. Table 7 illustrates these findings.

Table 7. How often have you sent an email to the Tobacco Control Network's *Help Your Peers* for feedback on a state tobacco control issue?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Never	11 (34%)	15 (50%)	26 (43%)
Once a quarter	12 (38%)	5 (17%)	17 (28%)
Once a month	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
Once a week	0	0	0
Other	8 (25%)	8 (27%)	16 (26%)

Important Communication Resources

When asked about important communication resources, the *Help Your Peers* program and e-mail alerts received the most responses under the **Very Important** category. Receiving the most responses under the category of **Somewhat Important** was the *Tobacco Free Press* e-newsletter. The Likert scale ranged from Very Important to Not at all Important. Tables 8 and 9 illustrate these findings.

Table 8. How important are each of the following Tobacco Control Network communication resources to you?

Very Important			
	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
<i>Help Your Peers</i>	16 (50%)	14 (47%)	30 (48%)
Email alerts	16 (50%)	11 (37%)	27 (44%)
Quarterly Regional Conference Calls	9 (28%)	8 (27%)	17 (27%)
<i>Tobacco Free Press</i>	9 (28%)	5 (17%)	14 (23%)
Membership Directory	17 (53%)	6 (20%)	23 (37%)
TCN Website	10 (31%)	5 (17%)	15 (25%)

Table 9. How important are each of the following Tobacco Control Network communication resources to you?

Somewhat Important			
	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
<i>Tobacco Free Press</i>	17 (53%)	14 (47%)	31 (50%)
Email alerts	7 (22%)	10 (33%)	17 (27%)
Quarterly Regional Conference Calls	8 (25%)	9 (30%)	17 (27%)
<i>Help Your Peers</i>	7 (22%)	10 (33%)	17 (27%)
Membership Directory	8 (25%)	10 (33%)	18 (29%)
TCN Website	12 (38%)	5 (17%)	17 (27%)

Ways to Increase Participation in the Tobacco Control Network

Among a list of four items, respondents were asked to check ways that the Tobacco Control Network could increase participation and membership. Respondents could check all that apply. Among the four ways listed, providing useful services for program managers was deemed the most popular way to increase participation in the TCN. Table 10 shows the frequencies for the four items listed.

Table 10. In which of the following ways do you think the Tobacco Control Network could increase participation and membership? [Check all that apply]

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Offer services and resources that tobacco control managers can use	27 (84%)	20 (67%)	47 (77%)
Increase awareness among tobacco control managers and directors	24 (75%)	18 (60%)	42 (69%)
Increase visibility of Tobacco Control Network	21 (66%)	15 (50%)	36 (59%)
Develop a logo for the Tobacco Control Network	8 (25%)	2 (7%)	10 (16%)

Regional Conference Calls

TCN regional conference calls feature presentations on specific tobacco control policy issues, updates on regional issues, and announcements about regional events. The following items were in reference to those calls.

Participation in Regional Conference Calls

Most of the respondents have participated in regional conference calls either frequently or occasionally. Program managers were more likely to participate in the calls. Table 11 illustrates these findings.

Table 11. How often have you participated in the Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Frequently	9 (28%)	5 (17%)	14 (23%)
Occasionally	11 (34%)	7 (23%)	18 (29%)
Rarely	6 (19%)	8 (27%)	14 (23%)
Never	6 (19%)	10 (33%)	16 (26%)

Pertinence of Regional Conference Calls

Most respondents, both program managers and staff, believed that the regional conference calls were pertinent to their jobs. Table 12 illustrates these findings.

Table 12. Are the Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls pertinent to your job?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Yes	18 (56%)	12 (40%)	30 (51%)
No	0	2 (7%)	2 (3%)
Neutral	7 (22%)	5 (17%)	12 (20%)
Do not know	6 (19%)	9 (30%)	15 (25%)

Frequency of Regional Conference Calls

Respondents were asked how often the regional conference calls should be conducted. Most agreed that they should only be conducted quarterly. Table 13 illustrates these findings.

Table 13. What should be the frequency of the Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Quarterly	19 (59%)	14 (47%)	33 (59%)
Bi-monthly	7 (22%)	7 (23%)	14 (25%)
Monthly	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	3 (5%)
Other	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	6 (11%)

Regional Conference Call Topics

Respondents were asked to name one issue or topic that they think would be appropriate to feature on a TCN regional conference call. Six major themes emerged from the suggestions. They include the following:

- State updates related to policy, initiatives, and accomplishments
- Budgeting and funding
- Utilizing local and community groups
- Excise tax and border issues
- Management and documentation issues
- Advocacy

Tobacco Control Network Meeting

One item examined an interest in conducting a face-to-face training meeting related to statewide smoke-free legislation. There was an overwhelming interest in meeting about this topic, since more and more states are passing smoke-free legislation. Table 14 illustrates these findings.

Table 14. With more states enacting statewide smoke-free legislation, do you think it would be helpful for program managers to meet and share ideas and strategies to discuss implementation, enforcement, and sustainability of newly enacted state laws?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Yes	25 (78%)	24 (80)	49 (80%)
No	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	3 (5%)
Neutral	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	7 (11%)
Do not know	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)

Tobacco Free Press

The following items were related to the bi-monthly e-newsletter, the Tobacco Free Press, that is emailed to the TCN and national partners.

Purpose of the Tobacco Free Press

Respondents were asked to choose from a prepared list what the purpose of the *Tobacco Free Press* (TFP) Respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the three purposes listed, with summarizing pertinent issues indicated as the major purpose of the TFP. Table 15 illustrates these findings.

Table 15. Which of the following do you think should be the purpose of the *Tobacco Free Press*? [Check all that apply]

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Summarize pertinent tobacco control issues and stories from across the country	30 (94%)	24 (80%)	54 (98%)
List important dates and upcoming conferences	29 (91%)	19 (63%)	48 (87%)
Publish tobacco control resources	28 (88%)	17 (57%)	45 (82%)

Usefulness of Tobacco Free Press

Most respondents found the *Tobacco Free Press* to be somewhat useful. Table 16 illustrates all of the results from this item.

Table 16. How useful do you find the *Tobacco Free Press*?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Somewhat useful	18 (56%)	14 (47%)	32 (63%)
Very useful	8 (25%)	6 (20%)	14 (27%)
Not very useful	0	3 (10%)	3 (6%)
Not useful at all	2 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (4%)

Tobacco Free Press Sections Useful to Job

When asked which among the ten sections of the *Tobacco Free Press* are useful to their jobs, respondents cited the sections on secondhand smoke, legislative/policy, and cessation as the most useful, with youth use prevention and disparities not far behind. Respondents could check all items that apply. Table 17 illustrates these findings.

Table 17. Which of the following Tobacco Free Press sections are useful to your job? [Check all that apply]

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Secondhand smoke	26 (81%)	22 (73%)	48 (92%)
Legislative/Policy	24 (75%)	17 (57%)	41 (79%)
Cessation	25 (78%)	16 (53%)	41 (79%)
Tobacco use prevention	21 (66%)	16 (53%)	37 (71%)
Disparities	20 (63%)	17 (57%)	37 (71%)
Useful resources	19 (59%)	13 (43%)	32 (62%)
Surveillance	20 (63%)	11 (37%)	31 (60%)
Funding issues	19 (59%)	11 (37%)	30 (58%)
College/university tobacco control activities	19 (59%)	10 (33%)	29 (56%)
Important dates	17 (53%)	10 (33%)	27 (52%)

Perception of Content of Tobacco Free Press

When asked how respondents perceive the information they read in the *Tobacco Free Press*, the content was perceived to be both new information and credible information that can be confirmed from other sources. Table 18 illustrates these findings.

Table 18. Which of the following best describes your perception of the content in the Tobacco Free Press?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Credible information that can be confirmed from other sources	10 (31%)	10 (33%)	20 (42%)
New information	9 (28%)	9 (30%)	18 (38%)
Repetitive information received from other sources	5 (16%)	3 (10%)	8 (17%)
Old information	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (4%)

Forwarding the Tobacco Free Press to Colleagues

According to the survey results, most program managers have forwarded the *Tobacco Free Press* either frequently or occasionally. Other staff members were less likely to do so. Table 19 illustrates these findings.

Table 19. How often do you forward the Tobacco Free Press to colleagues or local contractors?

	Managers (32)	Other Staff (30)	Total Respondents
Frequently	13 (41%)	2 (7%)	15 (29%)
Occasionally	7 (22%)	10 (33%)	17 (33%)
Rarely	4 (13%)	9 (30%)	13 (25%)
Never	3 (9%)	3 (10%)	6 (12%)

State Program Managers

The following items were asked only of state tobacco program managers and were related to their professional and training needs.

The Tobacco Control Network Mentoring Program

The TCN mentoring program has been an informal means of connecting new program managers with an experienced program manager outside of their own health department. Most of the program managers have not participated in the mentoring program. Table 20 illustrates these findings.

Table 20. Have you ever participated in the mentoring program for new program managers?

	Managers (32)
No	23 (74%)
Yes, as a mentor	5 (16%)
Yes, as a mentee	1 (3%)
Not sure	2 (6%)

Usefulness of Mentoring Program

Among a list of five items, program managers were asked to check which areas they thought would be useful to the development of new program managers. Respondents could check all that apply. The areas of program management tips and support in sharing information with peers were checked the most among the list. Table 21 illustrates these findings.

Table 21. In which of the following areas would the mentoring program be useful to the development of new program managers? [Check all that apply]

	Managers (32)
Program management tips	25 (78%)
Support in sharing information with peers	23 (73%)
Introduction to the TCN	20 (63%)
Orientation to tobacco control	17 (53%)
Resources for TCN activities	15 (47%)

Priority Training Areas

Program managers were asked which training topics listed would be helpful to their program. Out of a list of 13 different training areas, five areas were most often chosen for training. Within this particular item, program managers were also asked to check which method of training would be the most efficient for them. The top training choice for all the items listed was a **regional workshop**. Below is the list of training areas chosen in descending order:

- Program manager leadership training
- Community asset building
- Young adult prevention
- Secondhand smoke
- Cessation
- Legislation/Policy
- Youth prevention
- Addressing diversity and disparities
- Communications/media campaigns
- College campus tobacco control
- Mobilizing coalitions and grassroots groups
- Building partnerships
- Grant writing

Technical Assistance Needs

Program managers were asked to describe a technical assistance need that would help them be a more effective program manager. This was an open-ended question. Four themes emerged from the responses: 1) Planning, 2) Time and budget limits, 3) Quit-line and secondhand smoke issues, and 4) Evaluation. Below is the list of major suggestions within those themes:

Planning:

- Developing long-range plans
- Rule-making process
- Program planning
- Hiring staff and learning to function in a bureaucracy
- Maintaining an expandable infrastructure
- Stress management

Time and Budget Limits:

- How to do more with fewer resources
- How to use resources with so little time
- Determining priorities among shrinking budgets
- Time management skills

Quit-line and Secondhand Smoke:

- Secondhand smoke interventions
- Promoting awareness in the medical community
- Smoke-free workplace: development and promotion
- Current quit-line data
- Selling ideas:
 - Quitting tobacco take practice
 - Tobacco is not a stand-alone issue
 - Tobacco integrates with chronic disease programs

Evaluation:

- Program assessment and evaluation (OSH and CDC reporting requirements)
- Evaluation of tobacco control interventions

Training Challenges

Program managers were asked to list any training challenges they are experiencing with their staff, their collaborative partners, their grantees and/or their contractors. This was also an open-ended question. There were a wide variety of responses. Below are the major areas that were listed by program managers:

- Conducting needs assessments
- Dealing with different levels of expertise among staff (new vs. seasoned staff)
- Meeting a variety of training needs for program staff and collation members
- Increasing tribal participation in trainings
- Having limited training opportunities and resources
- Having a high turnover of staff, and having to repeat trainings
- Little or no funding to attend training and conferences
- Having little time for new staff orientations
- Needing effective and efficient new staff training
- A lack of depth in existing training

Conclusions

After reviewing the data analysis results from the needs assessment survey, a number of conclusions about the survey have emerged. One major theme is the **lack of awareness** about the Tobacco Control Network, along with its services, programs, and activities. Most survey respondents were somewhat aware of the TCN. A majority of the members either have not contacted their regional representative or don't know who their regional representative is. This may explain why most respondents felt that their membership in the TCN is somewhat beneficial.

Another theme that emerged was a **lack of participation**. The *Help Your Peers* program is used by respondents about once a quarter, which is about the same frequency as the regional conference calls. However, survey respondents felt that the Help Your Peers program, along with email alerts were cited as very important communication resources. Participation in the regional conference calls is occasional, even though most respondents, especially state tobacco program managers, felt the conference calls are pertinent to their jobs.

Mentoring programs are seen as a useful tool in training new staff within all professions. Most state tobacco program managers felt that providing program management tips and sharing information with peers would be areas where the mentoring program would be the most useful in the development of new program managers. Unfortunately, most program managers do not participate in the mentoring program.

The last theme that emerged from the needs assessment survey was a **lack of usefulness**. While there is a lack of awareness of the TCN, when asked about what the purpose of the TCN should be, most respondents cited peer assistance, communication, and training. Communication also included email alerts and the e-newsletter. These findings suggest that there is a great potential for the usefulness of the TCN. Addressing the training needs among state tobacco program managers and their staff will increase the value and usefulness of the TCN. A number of training categories and specific needs are featured here.

State tobacco program managers have crucial training needs that should be addressed. Regional workshops were cited as the most favored method of training for project managers. Major training areas include leadership training, collaborating with grassroots groups, community asset building, tobacco use prevention among young adults and on college campuses, legislation/policy, and tobacco use cessation. Also cited as a major topic for regional training related to implementation, enforcement, and sustainability of newly enacted state some-free legislation.

Regional conference calls were cited as an appropriate venue for discussions on training issues related to state policies, funding, taxes, using community groups, management issues, and advocacy.

Technical training needs also emerged from the survey. The areas of planning, time and budget restraints, secondhand smoke, cessation, and evaluation are congruent with the major areas of concern mentioned earlier.

Training challenges mentioned by survey respondents seem to offer a more detailed presentation of training needs already mentioned, which serves as a means of reinforcing their importance. The training challenges focus on needs assessment, and little or no opportunities to attend training or conferences either because of time or budget restraints. Also mentioned as a training challenge was an inability to effectively and efficiently train a variety of expertise among staff, especially with a seemingly constant staff turnover.

Most respondents found the *Tobacco Free Press* somewhat useful, but there is a potential for the TFP to be much more useful. The TFP is seen by respondents to be a communication tool that should summarize pertinent tobacco control issues and stories from across the country. Also mentioned was having the TFP list important dates and upcoming conferences, as well as providing useful resources. Sections of the TFP that were found to be most useful to respondents were the sections that addressed secondhand smoke, legislation/policy, and cessation. The TFP is valued as a credible source of new information, and the editor of this e-newsletter should take advantage of that perception.

In summary, the main areas to be addressed by this needs assessment pertain to awareness, participation, and usefulness.

Recommendations

Two major areas of recommendations emerge from the need assessment conclusions. Those include increasing **awareness and promotion** of TCN services, programs, and activities through better visibility and ensuring that the services, programs, and activities offered by the TCN are **useful** to the state tobacco program managers and their staff. These recommendations contribute to the need to increase participation and membership in the Tobacco Control Network.

When asked about ways to increase the visibility of the TCN, survey respondents suggested gaining involvement by the CDC, better communication, and peer-to-peer support. Survey respondents suggested that project officers within the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health should encourage member participation, as well as featuring the TCN at CDC/OSH functions.

Better communication would increase the visibility and subsequent awareness of the TCN. Survey respondents suggested creating a TCN list serv system for timely updates and announcements. TCN officers should prepare formal statements related to the TCN's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. This information should be disseminated throughout all TCN communication tools.

Visibility is also enhanced through peer-to-peer support. Available resources, services, useful products, professional advice, and mentoring are areas where such support is greatly needed. The needs assessor suggests greatly increasing the availability and promotion of peer-to-peer support.

All services, programs, and activities offered by the TCN need to be perceived as useful by the membership. When asked about ways the TCN could increase participation and membership, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents suggested that the TCN offer services and resources that state tobacco program managers can use. Survey respondents have cited which training topics would be the most useful to them.

One of the most pertinent services provided by the TCN is professional and technical training. The major strength of the TCN is its connection with TTAC, which has access to a pool of tobacco control experts and consultants. Survey respondents repeatedly suggested they need professional and technical training on a variety of topics and issues. The needs assessor suggests that the TCN take advantage of its connection with TTAC in providing those trainings. The needs assessor suggests making sure that the training topics cited in the survey are addressed.

Appendix A Tobacco Control Network Needs Assessment Survey

Dear State Tobacco Control Program Managers:

The Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium, in partnership with the Tobacco Control Network (TCN) officers, is conducting a needs assessment for the Tobacco Control Network membership. The information gathered will provide valuable information to assist in setting priorities and determine a strategic direction and planning for the Tobacco Control Network. Your input is crucial.

The attached questionnaire consists of 40 items and takes about 15 minutes to complete. Participation in the survey study is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any of the items. Please complete the survey by Wednesday, April 6.

The survey results will be kept confidential and compiled and reported in aggregate form. Individual responses will not be identifiable. By completing the attached questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Susan Butler at 404-727-9660 / sbutl03@sph.emory.edu or Jessica Lowy at jlowy@sph.emory.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Directions:

Unless otherwise noted, please choose **one** response for each item.

1. How many years experience do you have in tobacco control?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - More than 5 years

2. Are you the Program Manager for your state?
 - Yes
 - No

Tobacco Control Network

The questions in this section relate to general topics within the Tobacco Control Network, including membership activities and your involvement.

3. Which of the following should be the purpose of the Tobacco Control Network? [Check all that apply]
 - Communication among state program managers
 - Peer assistance
 - Professional training
 - Email updates
 - Electronic Newsletter
 - Other, please specify

4. Do you think the name, Tobacco Control Network, adequately reflects the mission and role of the organization?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Neutral
 - Do not know

5. How beneficial do you consider your membership in the Tobacco Control Network?
 - Very beneficial
 - Somewhat beneficial
 - Not very beneficial
 - Not at all beneficial

6. In which of the following ways do you think the Tobacco Control Network could increase participation and membership? [Check all that apply]
 - Increase awareness among tobacco control managers and directors
 - Increase visibility of Tobacco Control Network
 - Develop a logo for the network
 - Offer services and resources that tobacco control managers can use
 - Other, please specify

7. Name one suggestion for increasing visibility of the Tobacco Control Network among program managers:

8. How important is it that the Tobacco Control Network have a logo?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not very important
 - Not at all important

9. What activities have you participated in as a member of the Tobacco Control Network? [Check all that apply]
 - Quarterly regional conference calls
 - Resource council
 - Help Your Peers*
 - Tobacco Free Press*
 - Email alerts
 - Annual Tobacco Control Network officers' business meeting

10. In your opinion, how aware are state program managers of the Tobacco Control Network activities?
 - Very aware
 - Somewhat aware
 - Not very aware
 - Not at all aware

11. Have you contacted your regional Tobacco Control Network representative to discuss a tobacco control issue within the last year?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know who my regional representative is.

12. How often have you sent an email to the Tobacco Control Network *Help Your Peers* for feedback on a state tobacco control issue?

- Never
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Other, please specify

13. How important is each of the following Tobacco Control Network communication resources to you?

Resource	Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important	N/A unaware
Quarterly Regional Conference Calls						
<i>Tobacco Free Press</i>						
<i>Help Your Peers</i>						
Email Alerts						
Membership Directory						
TCN Website						

14. If you have used a Tobacco Control Network resource not listed above, please include here and comment on its importance to you.

15. Please list any comments or suggestions that you have for the Tobacco Control Network.

Regional Conference Calls

Tobacco Control Network Regional Conference Calls feature presentations on the specific tobacco control policy issues, updates on regional issues and regional events. The following questions are in reference to these calls.

16. How often have you participated in the quarterly Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls?

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

17. What should be the frequency of the Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls?

- Quarterly
- Bi-monthly
- Monthly
- Other, please specify

18. Do you feel that the conference calls are facilitated in a way that provides participation by all participants?
- Yes
 - No
 - Neutral
 - Do not know
19. Are the quarterly Tobacco Control Network regional conference calls pertinent to your job?
- Yes
 - No
 - Neutral
 - Do not know
20. Name one issue or topic you think would be appropriate to feature on a quarterly Tobacco Control Network regional conference call:

Tobacco Control Networking Meeting

The following question is related to potential TCN member trainings.

21. With more states enacting statewide smoke-free legislation, do you think it would be helpful for program managers to meet and share ideas and strategies to discuss implementation, enforcement, and sustainability of the newly enacted state laws?
- Yes
 - No
 - Neutral
 - Do not know

Tobacco Free Press

The following questions are related to the bi-monthly e-newsletter, the *Tobacco Free Press*.

22. Which of the following do you think should be the purpose of the *Tobacco Free Press*?
[Check all that apply]
- Summarize pertinent tobacco control issues and stories from across the country
 - List important dates and upcoming conferences
 - Publish tobacco control resources
 - Other, please specify
23. How useful do you find the *Tobacco Free Press*?
- Very useful
 - Somewhat useful
 - Not very useful
 - Not useful at all
24. When you read the *Tobacco Free Press*, which of the following applies to you?
- Skim the titles only, reading no text
 - Skim a few sections for highlights
 - Read titles and text of one or two sections of interest
 - Read the entire e-newsletter from start to finish

25. What do you think about the overall length of the *Tobacco Free Press*?
- Much too long
 - Somewhat too long
 - Exactly the right length
 - Too short
 - Neutral
26. Which of the following *Tobacco Free Press* sections is most useful to your job?
- Secondhand Smoke
 - Cessation
 - Youth tobacco use prevention
 - Disparities
 - Legislation/Policy
 - Surveillance
 - College/university tobacco control activities
 - Funding issues
 - Useful resources
 - Important dates
 - Other, please specify
27. What information not currently provided by the *Tobacco Free Press* would you like to see included?
28. Which of the following best describes your perception of the content in the *Tobacco Free Press*?
- New information
 - Old information
 - Repetitive information received from other sources
 - Credible information that confirms information from other sources
29. How often do you forward the *Tobacco Free Press* to colleagues or local contractors?
- Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never

State Program Managers

The following questions are for state program managers. All others may scroll to the end and submit the survey. Thank you for your participation.

30. In the past, the TCN has conducted conference call symposiums on an as-needed basis for program managers. Each call focuses on a specific issue and calls use various formats, such as speakers or guided discussion. Please name an issue or topic you think would be appropriate to feature on such a call:
31. Name one state or national tobacco control issue that is currently of concern to you:

32. Describe technical assistance needs that would help you be a more effective program manager:

33. Describe products, tools, or resources that would be useful to you in doing your job that is not currently developed or available (written document, software, hardware, project planning system, etc.).

34/35. Please check the training topics below that would be helpful to your program, and which methods of training that would be most efficient for you.

Topic	Face-to-face meetings	One-on-one telephone calls	Group tele-conference calls	Regional workshops	Statewide workshops	No training needed
Cessation						
Youth prevention						
Secondhand smoke						
Addressing Diversity and Disparities						
Young Adult Prevention						
College Campus Tobacco Control						
Legislation/Policy						
Communications/ Media Campaigns						
Grant Writing						
Mobilizing Coalitions and Grassroots Groups						
Building Partnerships						
Community Asset Building						
Program Manager Leadership Training						

36. If there is a topic not listed above, please include it and comment on which training method would be most efficient for you.

37. List your top three (3) current training needs:

38. Describe any training challenges you are experiencing with your staff, your collaborative partners, your grantees, and/or your contractors?

39. The TCN mentoring program has been an informal means of connecting new program managers with an established manager outside of their own health department. Have you ever participated in the mentoring program for new program managers?

Yes, as a mentor

Yes, as a mentee

No

Not sure

40. In which of the following areas would the mentoring program be useful to the development of new program managers? [Check all that apply]

Introduction to the TCN

Orientation to tobacco control

Tips for program management

Resource for TCN activities

Support in sharing information with peers

Do not know