

Alabama's answers:

- a) The tobacco control staff person should make his or herself known in a non-threatening way for example, attend functions in the community that you are trying to reach. The leaders in the community need to feel like you care and that you are there for them. There are Tobacco Control Coordinators here (TCC) in Alabama that have built relationships with other coalitions so when they need support or help the other coalition is willing to return the favor. A couple of TCCs have found that joining coalitions that have a different scope can be beneficial because the members want to get involved. Here there is a coordinator who is part of such a coalition with members who she can call on to volunteer for example getting surveys completed that tell what a decision maker's stance is on smoke-free policies. Invite and include people that do not look like you or just in public health. Also, if you find that you had someone that was coming to your coalition meeting on a regular basis and they are not coming, contact them to find out why they are not coming any longer because you value your input. Send coalition members minutes to keep them informed if they could not make the meeting.
- b) Depending on the organization perhaps you can get them to sign an endorsement, resolution or place signage to let decision makers know that they support smoke-free policy. Ask the partner if they would not mind writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. Sometimes people cannot make the coalition meeting, but they are willing to be a spokesperson when it comes time to talk to council members. For example a physician that works with members of the community may feel comfortable providing medical testimony. Keep track of those that are interested or in support by keeping their names in a database for future activities.
- c) Using data specific to the community you are serving such as air quality monitoring information or opinion poll results are two strategies that can be presented to decision makers. This will cut down on them having the argument that tobacco issues do not apply to them because it is not from their city or town. It helps to know your community so using the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Ordinance Development Planning Form is a helpful tool in figuring that out.
- d) You can utilize coalition members to educate community leaders and decision makers. Schedule a face-to-face meeting with the person so they do not feel like they are being put on the spot or vice versa. Getting on the agenda of other coalitions or civic organizations that the decision makers are a part of and educating them they may feel less threatened. Attending functions that community leaders are participating in will give the tobacco control representative the chance to have a casual conversation which can give that person an idea of what kind of person will have to work with. When the subject of tobacco control is brought up then you have some idea of how to present the information.
- e) Working through your natural network helps. In departments of Public Health there are many programs. Discussing what other programs' missions and goals can help facilitate tying in tobacco control mission and policy with theirs. It really would be beneficial to work with other Chronic Disease programs since tobacco use increases the risk of heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer.
- f) Conduct an opinion poll in the rural community that you have selected. This will show the decision maker what percent of their constituents are for or against a policy. You might have to become creative in the small communities when conducting opinion polls during a community

event such as a flu clinic or local community fair. Identify people that are important to the decision maker who is for smoke free policy and would not mind caring the message. A good strategy to help with this would be Supercharging Your Grassroots Organizing by C.B. Pearson.