

# ALA State of Tobacco Control Annual Report Talking Points

## Background

The ALA [“State of Tobacco Control”](#) report is an annual report released every January which evaluates state and federal tobacco control policies and assigns letter grades “A” through “F” based on various tobacco control measures that have been proven to prevent and reduce tobacco use and, as a result, save lives. State grades are determined by comparing state and federal tobacco control policies to targets based on the most current recognized criteria for effective tobacco control measures. The sources for the targets and the basis of the evaluation criteria for each category are described [here](#). An “A” grade is considered excellent in tobacco control policies and an “F” grade is considered inadequate in tobacco control policies. Grades for state report cards are based on the following five areas:

- [Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding](#)
- [Smokefree Air Laws](#)
- [Tobacco Excise Taxes](#)
- [Access to Cessation Services](#)
- [Flavored Tobacco Product Laws](#)

## Purpose

The ALA grades are intended to be used for legislative education and advocacy. **The grades do not solely reflect the work of state health agency tobacco control programs.** Despite this, tobacco control program staff and health agency leadership may be asked questions or face criticism for state grades upon their release. Below are some talking points program managers and other staff can use in navigating these conversations.

## Talking Points

- The ALA State of Tobacco Control grades are an assessment of current state tobacco control policies and are not solely a reflection of the work of state tobacco control programs and their partners.
- The intention of the state report cards is to encourage legislators to take action and improve state tobacco control measures.
- Tobacco control program managers and staff can use the reports to build and maintain relationships with regional and local ALA teams; these relationships can improve transparency upon the annual release of the grades and connect advocates to legislators.
- State tobacco control programs can contact their regional/local ALA representatives to learn more about the report methodology and how to best leverage reports in their jurisdiction.

**TCN is seeking to highlight success stories of states which have leveraged the ALA State of Tobacco Control report cards. Please email [tcn@astho.org](mailto:tcn@astho.org) with your success story.**