Tobacco Retail Licensing in Placer County
Brief Evaluation Report

Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program
Sarah Hagen, Program Supervisor
11484 B Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-7141
http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/public-health/tobacco-prevention-program
shagen@placer.ca.gov

Report Authors:
Cassie Call, Program Coordinator
April Holland, Program Evaluator

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Aim and Outcome
During the 2014 to 2017 scope of work, the Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program (PCTPP) set out to complete the following objective:

*By June 30, 2017, at least two jurisdictions in Placer County (Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, Auburn, Colfax or Unincorporated Placer County) will adopt a tobacco retail licensing policy that earmarks a portion of the license fee for enforcement activities. This is a non-primary objective addressing the Community of Excellence Indicator 3.2.1.*

The PCTPP did not meet the objective of two jurisdictions in Placer County adopting a tobacco retail licensing policy. However, the PCTPP was able to present to two City Councils about the tobacco retail licensing policy, which marked the first time the program has received an opportunity to give elected officials in the county a presentation on tobacco-related issues.

Background
Placer County is located in Northeast California with an estimated population of 375,391 residents as of 2015 (Holland, 2017, p. 13). From 2000-2015, the largest age group in Placer County was ages 0-19 years old, which encompassed 25-29% of the total population (Holland, 2017, p. 15). In the “Placer County Community Themes and Strengths Survey,” 80.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the community is a good place to raise children (Placer County Public Health Division, 2016).

In recent years, tobacco usage by teens (particularly e-cigarettes) has become an area of concern. In Placer County, over 88% of tobacco retail stores surveyed in the 2016 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Survey sold electronic nicotine delivery devices, which are commonly referred to as e-cigarettes (Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2017). The 2016 California Student Tobacco Survey revealed that 23% of youth in Northern California used tobacco products in the past 30 days. This is significantly higher than the statewide youth tobacco usage rate of 13%. (Note: Northern California comprises of 27 counties, including Placer County. Data specific to Placer County is not available) (Holland, 2017, p. 104). The Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community survey found that there are 283 youth per store that sells tobacco product in Placer County, compared to the statewide rate of 267 youth per store (Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2017). One tactic for decreasing youth tobacco rates is to instate tobacco retail licensing (TRL) policies, which help decrease the accessibility of tobacco for youth. To date, no jurisdictions in Placer County have implemented a TRL policy.

During the creation of the 2014-2017 work plan, the former Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program (PCTPP) Program Coordinator wanted to focus the PCTPP efforts on tobacco retailers...
in the county. The former PCTPP Program Coordinator thought that TRL policies would be a beneficial start to work with tobacco retailers, and knew that no jurisdictions at the time adopted a TRL policy. The Placer Partnership for Public Health (PPPH) supported this endeavor and provided many suggestions for the intervention and evaluation activities in the work plan.

**Evaluation Methods and Design**

The key process evaluation activities were the: Observation data survey, Public Opinion Poll, Key informant interviews of community members, and Media activity record (see Figure 1).

The observation data survey was a random sample of 212 tobacco retailers in Placer County. The Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) provided the survey tool. Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program (PCTPP) staff were cross-trained and utilized the survey to gather observational data on the tobacco retail landscape with a focus on flavors, price, storefront advertising, alcohol, and nutrition. The observation data occurred in Year 2 in 1 wave. The TCEC staff conducted statistical analysis and distributed the results to the PCTPP. Data results were utilized in press releases and educational materials.

The public opinion poll was a survey created by PCTPP staff which was placed in three physical locations throughout Placer County and distributed via the Placer County Public Health Division distribution list. The physical locations were the Placer County Vital Health and Statistics Department, the Placer County Clerk Office, and the Rocklin Public Library. The physical locations were selected based on previous relationships and willingness to post the survey to community members. Approximately 103 community members participated in the survey, which occurred in Year 3 in 1 wave. Data were analyzed via frequency counts and distributed to community stakeholders upon request.

The key informant interviews with a convenience sample of 5 community members assessed their knowledge and opinion on the increased purchase age for tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old, youth accessibility for tobacco products, and tobacco retail licensing policies. Questions were created by the PCTPP staff with guidance from the TCEC. The key informant interviews were gathered in Year 3 in 1 wave and information was distributed to the community via a summary report reviewing the content analysis.

The media activity record was completed in Year 3 in 1 wave. PCTPP staff created the outline for the media activity record. The media activity record reviewed the four media platforms utilized for the youth anti-tobacco media campaign. A cost analysis was completed using the metrics received and the information was distributed in a summary report.
In the 2014-2017 scope of work, there was one outcome evaluation activity. The key informant interviews with key decision makers was completed in Year 3 in 1 wave to determine the reasons for adopting or not adopting a tobacco retail licensing policy. The sample size was 5 community stakeholders, and questions were created by PCTPP staff. The information was analyzed via content analysis and used to guide the next work plan for the PCTPP (see Appendix A).

**Limitations**

PCTPP staff experienced full turnover during the 2014-2017 scope of work, which made it difficult to know the original intentions for each evaluation activity. Additionally, the key informant interviews and public opinion polls were collected through convenience sampling.

**Figure 1: Key Outcome and Process Evaluation Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Instrument Source</th>
<th>Analysis Method</th>
<th>Timing/Waves</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews of key stakeholders</td>
<td>Determine the reasons for adopting/not adopting a tobacco retail licensing policy</td>
<td>Convenience sample of 5 key stakeholders</td>
<td>PCTPP staff</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>(Year 3, 1 Wave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation data</td>
<td>Gather observational data on the tobacco retail landscape with a focus on flavors, price, storefront advertising, alcohol, and nutrition</td>
<td>Random sample of 212 tobacco retailers</td>
<td>TCEC</td>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
<td>Year 2 (1 Wave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public opinion poll</td>
<td>Collect baseline data of knowledge, attitudes, and perception of the community regarding the retail environment</td>
<td>Convenience sample of 103 community members</td>
<td>PCTPP staff</td>
<td>Frequency count</td>
<td>Year 3 (1 Wave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews of community members</td>
<td>Collect qualitative data of current knowledge and attitudes towards tobacco and youth in Placer County</td>
<td>Convenience sample of 5 community members</td>
<td>PCTPP staff /TCEC</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>(Year 3, 1 Wave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media activity record</td>
<td>Evaluate effectiveness at delivering/disseminating the anti-tobacco message</td>
<td>Cost analysis of 4 media platforms</td>
<td>PCTPP staff</td>
<td>Cost analysis</td>
<td>(Year 3, 1 Wave)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation and Results

Each intervention and evaluation activity provided guidance throughout the 2014-2017 scope of work. Figure 2 outlines the chronological order of the most effective work plan activities.

Figure 2: Intervention and Evaluation Activity Outline

- Develop educational packets
- Research TRL impact
- Create list of tobacco retailers
- Map out tobacco retailers

Year 1
TRL Research

Year 2
Community Champions
- Conduct community presentations
- Identify champions for TRL policies
- Present TRL policies to City Councils

Year 3
Evaluation
- Assess community support for TRL policies
- Conduct media campaign for youth
- Learn about the political environment
- Look to the future for tobacco retail policies

Strategic Planning and Utilization of the Coalition

All intervention activities created a pathway towards the end goal of presenting to City Councils or the Board of Supervisors about tobacco retail licensing (TRL) policies. The Placer Partnership for Public Health (PPPH) was involved in the development of the outreach materials and the TRL presentations that were given to the cities of Rocklin and Lincoln. The Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program (PCTPP) staff started the work plan by developing TRL educational packets and researching the potential impact of a local TRL policy. The PPPH reviewed the documents and provided feedback. PCTPP staff also obtained a GIS map of tobacco retailers in Placer County, which was used in the community presentations to raise awareness about TRL. Police Chiefs from around the county attended these community presentations and became champions for TRL policies in their cities. These Police Chiefs were from the cities of Rocklin and Lincoln, and arranged for the policy proposal to be presented before their respective City Councils. Recommending a TRL ordinance to both Rocklin and Lincoln was the first time that this program had brought a policy proposal to a City Council.
A significant amount of preparatory work was done in order to be fully ready for these presentations. For Lincoln in particular, the city has an extremely conservative political climate and PCTPP staff were aware of multiple City Council members that would oppose the TRL proposal. One member on the PPPH has a political background and was very familiar with the nature of these councilmembers. The PCTPP staff gave PPPH members a preliminary viewing of the City Council presentation, and a significant amount of revisions were made given their feedback. Additionally, the Rocklin Police Chief and Lincoln Police Chief were close partners of the PCTPP and attended the PCTPP community forums. PCTPP staff worked hand-in-hand with these Police Chiefs prior to presenting this information to City Council.

External Roadblocks
Working with the Police Chiefs in both Rocklin and Lincoln was a very successful strategy for getting proposals in front of City Council. PCTPP staff initially tried reaching out City Managers and made minimal progress. PCTPP staff were partners with these Police Chiefs through other Public Health programs, and these established partnerships were very valuable as they both decided to champion the objective. As a result of the partnerships, one presentation was given to each City Council (two presentations total), and though the response was not 100% positive, each City Council requested that the respective Chief prepare additional materials about city staff time, capacity, etc. and return to council for another presentation.

While working with the Police Chiefs was a huge success and enabled the City Council presentations to occur, PCTPP staff ran into a major issue during the winter of 2016 (Year Three) when both Police Chiefs resigned. PCTPP staff attempted to reach out to them each prior to their departure, but had minimal success. However, PCTPP staff were able to speak with the Lincoln Police Chief following his resignation, and he suggested waiting until a new Chief is assigned (rather than working with the interim). The resignation of these Police Chiefs was heartbreaking and really impeded upon the program’s ability to make any further progress with the remainder of the work plan. Additionally, no follow-up presentations were conducted with the City Councils as a result of the Police Chiefs leaving.

Evaluation Overview and Recommendations
The Placer County Public Opinion Poll, the two Key Informant Interviews, the Media Activity Record, and the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community observation data all intended to help move the intervention activities along. However, due to staff turnover and the time periods assigned to the evaluation activities by a former PCTPP staff member and the California Tobacco Control Program, the evaluation activities were not able to be used to their fullest potential.
For example, the two City Councils who received presentations have the “business-first” approach with a focus on quantitative data to support the argument. Unfortunately, there is a lack of quantitative data for youth tobacco and community support in Placer County. The “Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program Public Opinion Poll” was administered in December 2016 (Year 3). Approximately 74% of respondents were in support of tobacco retail licensing policies but as previously mentioned this data collection occurred right as the two police chiefs who supported the TRL cause resigned. Next, the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community data showed a powerful connection between youth and retailers with 283 youth per store that sells tobacco product in Placer County, compared to the statewide rate of 267 youth per store (Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2017). However this data wasn’t released until March 2017, which was too late to be utilized effectively in the work plan. In the future, it is recommended for data gathering to occur early on in the work plan as a way to support the objective instead of using the data retrospectively.

On the positive side, the data was used to guide the future work plan. For example, the key informant interview with key stakeholders confirmed the conservative political climate in Placer County, and provided suggestions for how to approach tobacco related policies with elected officials. The vast majority of the respondents in the key informant interviews agreed that a tobacco retail zoning policy would be better received than a TRL and thought it would be a great objective to focus on in the next work plan. In the 2014-2017 work plan, the PCTPP were able to conduct a youth-oriented anti-tobacco media campaign with carryover funds. To evaluate this media campaign, staff completed a media activity record, which was a cost analysis per media campaign platform. The media activity record found that the media campaign received over 6.9 million impressions and that the cost per impression was less than one cent. This encouraged the PCTPP to continue media campaigns in the upcoming work plan and helped the PCTPP decide which media platforms to utilize. Finally, the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community data will be used in upcoming presentations and educational materials.

Conclusions and Recommendations
The Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program (PCTPP) did not achieve the objective of two jurisdictions adopting tobacco retail licensing (TRL) policies. Police departments will receive monies from the “California Proposition 56 Tobacco Tax Increase” to use towards youth tobacco prevention efforts, so it will be even more of a challenge to convince the key decision makers to adopt a TRL policy. Therefore, it is not likely the PCTPP will work on this Communities of Excellence indicator in the future.
For future tobacco policy work in Placer County, it is recommended for staff to find anti-tobacco champions within city and county government. Without the support of the Police Chiefs in Rocklin and Lincoln, the PCTPP would have never been able to get these presentations in front of such conservative councilmembers. Additionally, it is important to research the political environment before creating tobacco retail policy objectives. For the most part, the political environment in Placer County is conservative with a focus on protecting businesses. The PCTPP staff recognized the continued need for work with tobacco retailers and youth in a conservative environment and will now focus their efforts on tobacco retail zoning policies, which may be more enticing for decision makers in Placer County.
Works Cited


APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Youth Anti-Tobacco Media Campaign

The following image was originally created by the Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program and displayed on 1 digital billboard in Placer County:

![Image of billboard with message: STILL THINK E-CIGARETTES ARE SAFE? THINK AGAIN!]

The Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program worked with media coordinators from the California Tobacco Control Program to place the following images at 4 gas station fillboards and 5 gas station pump toppers in Placer County:

![Images of advertisements with messages: IT'S THE NEXT GENERATION CIGARETTE. FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF ADDICTS.]

The Placer County Tobacco Prevention Program worked with media coordinators from the California Tobacco Control Program to place video advertisements via digital marketing and at 4 movie theaters. Examples of the videos can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLurbAZks39whBuykZGEjNoBoLYW7KnIx