



FORT BRAGG COMMUNITIES IN ACTION: 3-E-4 PHOTOVOICE SUMMARY REPORT **2024**



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The entities associated with this report do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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Abstract

The Mendocino County Tobacco Prevention Program (MCTPP) is the Local Lead Agency (LLA) for the county. The LLA is one of 61 LLAs in California receiving funding from the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP), a branch of the California Department of Public Health, which leads statewide and local health programs, services and activities that promote an environment free of tobacco.

In the summer of 2024, MCTPP, Teen Action Network and the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians partnered to host a youth photovoice training. The purpose of the training is to showcase Tobacco Produce Waste (TPW) issues in Downtown Fort Bragg. Youth photovoice trainees and their adult allies collected photos in the community and wrote impact statements regarding their findings. From that time, MCTPP has led efforts to educate and inform about the benefits of a Single-Use Plastic Ban Ordinance in unincorporated Mendocino County. The Draft ordinance is currently being reviewed by the Public Health Director and County Counsel.

Keywords: advocacy | youth | photovoice | policy | smoking

INTRODUCTION

Aim and Outcome

To limit youth access to tobacco products and TPW in their communities, MCTPP set the following objective:

By June 30, 2025, at least 1 jurisdiction in Mendocino County will adopt and implement a policy to eliminate the sale and distribution of classes of tobacco products, or product packaging, that demonstrably contribute to tobacco product pollution, create single-use plastic waste, or create e-waste. Policies may include, but are not limited to: cigarette filters, cigarette pack waste, plastic cigar tips, cigar packaging sleeves, chew canisters, single use electronic cigarettes, and single use nicotine cartridges.

Background

Mendocino County borders the Pacific Ocean on California's North Coast. The county is located halfway between San Francisco and the Oregon border, and boasts redwood forests, wineries, breweries, and remote, untouched coastline. According to the U.S Census, Mendocino County has a population of about 89,108.¹ Within the county, there are four incorporated cities (Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, and Willits) and numerous unincorporated areas in Mendocino County. Unincorporated communities are not part of an incorporated city or town, and do not have their own municipal government. Due to its abundant forests and wildlife, the protection of the environment is upmost importance in this region. A common polluter to land and water system is the waste caused by tobacco waste. Cigarettes are considered “Single-Use Plastics” which are a global environmental threat because only 10% of plastic waste is recycled.² The rest sits in dumps or breaks down in the environment, adding to the growing problem of microplastics.² As a result, cigarette butts are one of the most pervasive single-use plastic products on Earth. In fact, every minute, people dispose of 8.5 million cigarette butts.² At the time of this publication, there are no Single-Use Plastic Ban Ordinances in any municipality in Mendocino County.

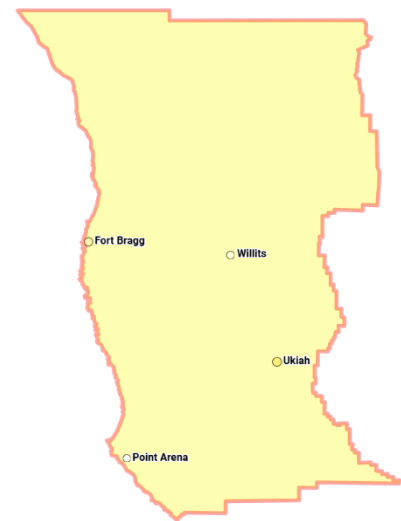


Figure 1: Incorporated cities of Mendocino County



*Picture taken in Fort Bragg
Summer 2024. Courtesy of
Vanessa Jimenez, MCTPP staff*

Data on the release of chemicals found in TPW into water or air are not well characterized, and thus more research is needed regarding their full environmental contamination potential and ecotoxicity. Researchers advocate that upstream solutions to address TPW are the most efficient, economical, and effective in reducing TPW and its impacts.⁷ Logically, if no tobacco products were sold in a jurisdiction, then the amount of TPW would surely decrease. As a result, the jurisdiction's streets and waterways pollution would decrease significantly just by eliminating the sales prohibitions of single-use plastics including filtered cigarettes.⁷ However, solutions such as enacting sales restrictions may be very difficult in many jurisdictions due to misunderstandings among policymakers and community members as well as the political influence of the tobacco industry. That is why active involvement and education from the communities' youngest members is key to shifting the societal norms, policies and attitude regarding tobacco usage.

It is important to note that smoking is still the single greatest avoidable cause of disease and death in the United States.³ Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke (SHS) can have immediate adverse effects and can cause coronary heart disease and lung cancer. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to SHS.³ Exposure to SHS can have immediate health consequences to children, including eye, nose, and throat irritation, and can cause asthma attacks and breathing problems for people with chronic lung disease.⁴ Children exposed to SHS are more likely to suffer from bronchitis, asthma attacks, eye irritation, coughing, ear infections, pneumonia, and colds.⁴ Fortunately, California has one of the lowest prevalence of smokers amongst other U.S. states. In 2022, the adult smoking prevalence was 9.7% in California compared to 14.0% nationally.⁵ Mendocino County's current smoking rate is 15% which is lower than the neighboring Counties of Trinity (24.7%) and Lake (25.5%).⁶ Beyond SHS exposure, Tobacco Product Waste (TPW) is a significant environmental concern.

Studies have shown that people of color commonly experience biased structural practices and social conditions, discrimination, poverty, and stress, which can increase commercial tobacco use.⁸ That is why It is important for youth in diverse racial and ethnic groups to be educated and become advocates for their communities. The youth photovoice training, is an prime example of youth focused efforts to advocate for local health equity and social justice.

Evaluation Methods and Design

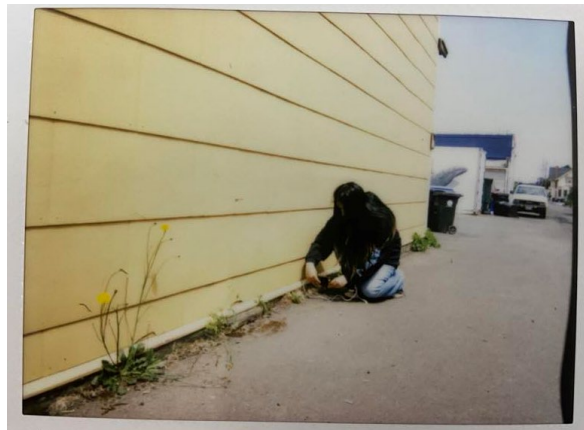
Photovoice is an established method developed initially by health promotion researchers.⁹ It is a research method that uses photography to help people record, reflect, and share their experiences, needs, and concerns. Participants are co-researchers because they take photographs and interpret their meaning for the researchers. This differs from traditional research where the point-of-view often lies solely with the researcher. The goal of photovoice is to empower people to take action for social change, and to include their voices in policy discussions.



Picture 1: Youth Photovoice trainees tools used.

For this photovoice project, participants were recruited by MCTPP in collaboration with Teen Action Network and the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians. Appendix A shows the flyer that was used as a recruitment tool and the link: <https://surveyanalytics.com/t/AI0LrZOzBq> shows the registration survey that was used to collect information from the participants prior to the start of the training. A total of three (3) youth participants and two (2) adult allies were provided with training on how to conduct a photovoice. They also participated in a mobile photography workshop prior to conducting the photovoice. The Photovoice workshop took place on July 13, 2024 in Fort Bragg, CA. Fort Bragg was chosen because it is within the target jurisdiction and where the Teen Action Network and the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians operate and have established trust with youth. All youth participants were members of the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians.

Participants attended the workshop where the project was explained and they received a “goody” bag which contained a pen, notebook and lens wipes for the smart phone (see picture 1). This training was led by the External Evaluator and MCTPP staff. Participants were then driven to downtown Fort Bragg where they used their smart phones to capture images of what they saw. The participants expressed their perspectives on, and feelings around their images that were taken. In small groups, the students critically discussed the meaning behind their photos by using the mnemonic “SHOWeD,” which stands for: What do you **See** here? What is really **Happening**? How does this relate to **Our** lives? **Why** does this problem or strength exist? What can we **Do** about it?



Picture 2: A Youth Photovoice trainee takes a picture of TPW in Downtown Fort Bragg.

Appendix B shows the Photography Discussion Card Handout that was used to structure the photovoice discussion. Appendix C depicts the Photovoice Workshop Agenda. Appendix D shows the PowerPoint presentation that were used for the training. Participants then selected their top images to submit for the photovoice project and were then told to create a written caption and an audio for their selected photos. The youth were informed that the written and audio captions would be attached to their photos and could be used during a future public exhibit and/or presented at City Council. The audio captions were made using the student's own cellphone recording application. Audio files were then airdropped or sent via text to the evaluator for final reporting. The results of the photovoice submissions are displayed in the results section.

Finally, it was important for the adult allies to make the photovoice training a positive experience for the youth participants so during the training, participants were provided with interactive activities such as (stress balls, drawing activities, goody bag decorating etc.) so that they could retain the attention and interest during the training. The perceived quality of the training is documented in the results section.

Study Limitations

There four (4) major limitations of the photovoice research design for this activity were: 1) Some people distrust cameras or don't like taking or being in photos, 2) Understanding – some 'get' the concept of Photovoice more quickly than others and, 3) No Photovoice exhibit has been scheduled to date and 4) the photovoice project is limited in that it did not measure impact at the individual or policy level. For instance, it is unknown if the photovoice project inspired individuals to consider quitting smoking or even for smokers to be mindful of their cigarette litter. These challenges were overcome by providing mobile photography training prior to conducting the photovoice to instill more confidence in capturing images and providing in-depth training on what TPW is and the basics of photovoice. Lastly, staff turnover and budget modification have delayed the establishment of the Youth Photovoice Exhibit to measure individual or policy change level success. Informing the community and policy makers about the findings is crucial to informing policy changes.

Implementation and Results

Early intervention and evaluation activities conducted through years 1-6 determined the location, timing and strategies of future program efforts. Figure 1 provides an overview of the project timeline and includes key intervention and evaluation activities.

Figure 1: Key Intervention and Evaluation Activities in Chronological Order

and Evaluation Activities in Chronological Order

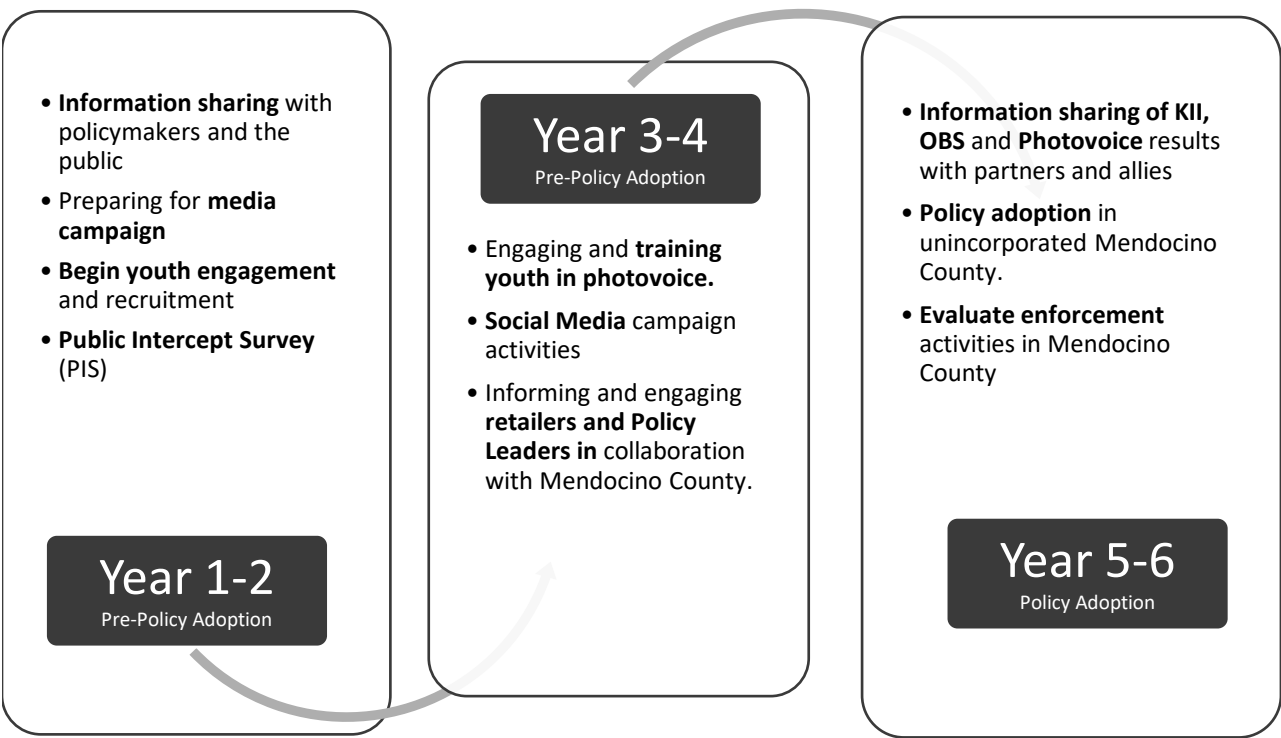


Table 1. Process Evaluation Outcomes of the Photovoice Training

The following table depicts how participants felt about the training activity measured across 5 topic areas: Objectives met, training was useful, gained new skills, understanding of new skills, and plans for future skill implementation. Most participants strongly agreed (66.67%) that the objectives of the training were met, and strongly agreed (66.67%) that the training was useful to them. Lastly, most participants agree that they gained new skills or knowledge because of the training. For future trainings, MCTPP and Evaluator will work together to include ways in which trainees can use what they learned outside of the training. Additionally, more pilot testing of the survey is needed to assess whether changes in the survey language are needed to better reach youth participants.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Overall
The objectives of this session were met.	4 66.67%	2 33.33%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
This training session was useful to my work.	4 66.67%	1 16.67%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
I gained new skills or knowledge as a result of this training.	2 33.33%	4 66.67%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
I know how I can apply what I learned.	3 50%	2 33.33%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
I plan to use what I learned.	3 50%	3 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%

Min Max

Table 2. Process Evaluation Outcomes of the Photovoice Training

The following table depicts how participants felt about the quality and usefulness of the training activity measured across 6 topic areas: handouts, information on TPW, presenters, room/location, quality of food, and overall rating for today's session. Most participants (83.33%) believed that the presenter, room/location, and quality of food were excellent. However, some participants (66.67%) stated that the information on TPW was good. For future trainings, MCTPP and Evaluator will work together to strengthen the categories that could use improvement such as provide more handouts that have more information on TPW.

Please rate the quality and usefulness of each of the following:

Statement	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Overall
Handouts	4 66.67%	2 33.33%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
Information on tobacco product waste	2 33.33%	4 66.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
Presenters	5 83.33%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
Room/location	5 83.33%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
Quality of food	5 83.33%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%
Overall rating for today's session	5 83.33%	1 16.67%	0 0%	0 0%	6 100%

Min Max

Outcome Evaluation of Photovoice Training

The following three (3) photovoice submissions were selected by the youth participants to be included in future discussions with local policy leaders and community members. The photos are not in any order and reflect 100% the individual thoughts and feelings of youth participants. The results were provided to the Project Director and will be shared during meetings and presentation with coalition members, as well as county and community partners.



July 13, 2024, Youth Photovoice trainees in Downtown Fort Bragg, CA

Photovoice Submission #1



Propaganda Freedom

"The reason I took this picture was because of the amount of advertisement/propaganda. Not only was the amount of ads surprising but also disappointing. The ads were right next to play machines and mini rides for children. It was also by an ice cream shop. While I was surprised the smoke shop was right next to a kids play area. It goes to show how much tobacco companies advertise towards young adults/kids."



- Mikaela, Age 18

Photovoice Submission #2



Cheap Cigarettes

"The picture I took is a store that sells tobacco products. Everything in the store is bad for you and could also kill you. This 'mall' has toy machines for kids. Why is there a cigarette shop next to a spot that should be safe for kids? This could encourage kids to smoke."



- Marizol, Age 15

Photovoice Submission #3



Destruction

"It's really upsetting when I come across something like this. When cigarettes are left lying around, they can be ingested by wildlife or a little kid. It is very dangerous and irresponsible. This is also very bad for the soil. The nicotine can harm the soil and can kill the plants and does more damage than we think."



- Olivia, Age 15


Conclusions

The youth discovered two (2) overarching themes from the content of their photos: Tobacco influence on youth, and TPW in the environment. In terms of tobacco influence on youth, students took photos of how youth tobacco product advertising is rampant in the community (Photovoice #1 and #2). For instance, students became aware that a tobacco store is located near toy machines. Furthermore, they noticed that there were numerous propaganda ads where children can see them. Lastly, participants took photos of how TPW degrade the aesthetic beauty of Fort Bragg (Photovoice #3). For instance, participants captured images of littered cigarette butts located where people and their pets walk. It was surprising to the youth participants how many cigarettes butts they came across in Downtown Fort Bragg.

There exists an exciting opportunity to invite community members and policy makers to attend a photovoice exhibit where the youth participants can share their experiences and photographs to inform policy change. Photovoice participants could inform key policymakers about the concerns addressed in the photos, which resulted in 2 major outcomes. The public awareness could be used for advocating for new policies to be adopted such as Single-Use Plastic Ban or Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL) ordinance.

In summary, the photovoice project provided a platform for Native American youth to become aware of the tobacco industry's advertising tactics and TPW pollution. Although the photovoice project has not resulted in a tobacco-free Fort Bragg community, it has the potential to produce positive changes.

Appendix A



The poster is for a Youth PhotoVoice Workshop. It features a teal background with yellow starburst graphics. In the top left is the Mendocino County Public Health logo. A red banner across the top reads 'MENDOCINO COUNTY'. Below it, in large orange letters, is 'YOUTH PHOTOVOICE WORKSHOP'. A blue banner below that says 'Give us your best shot!'. To the right, there's an illustration of a purple octopus with a camera on its head and a megaphone. A red circle with a slash over a cigarette is also present. The event details are listed in the center: Saturday, July 13, 2024, at the Seaside Conference Room, 790 South Franklin St., Fort Bragg, CA 95437, from 10AM to 1PM. Lunch is included, and space is limited. The deadline to RSVP is July 5, 2024. A registration link and QR code are provided. The poster also includes sections for 'WHAT IS IT?' and 'WHAT YOU WILL NEED:'. The 'WHAT IS IT?' section asks if the participant is interested in photography and cares about the environment, then lists topics to be learned: cell phone photography techniques, harmful products to the environment, and a walking photography tour of downtown Fort Bragg. The 'WHAT YOU WILL NEED:' section lists requirements: being between ages 13-17, having a cell phone, walking shoes, and parent's permission. Contact information for Nicole Graumann is provided at the bottom right.

public health
MENDOCINO COUNTY

MENDOCINO COUNTY

YOUTH PHOTOVOICE WORKSHOP


Give us your best shot!

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2024

Seaside Conference Room,
790 South Franklin St.
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
10AM - 1PM

Lunch included. **SPACE IS LIMITED.**
Deadline to RSVP is July 5, 2024

Registration link



WHAT IS IT?

Are you interested in photography?
Do you care about the environment?
Then this workshop is for you!
Learn about:

- Cell phone photography techniques
- Harmful products to the environment
- Walking photography tour of downtown Fort Bragg!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Be between ages 13-17
- A cell phone
- Walking shoes
- Parent's permission

Join us for a fun time!
For more info, contact Nicole
graumannn@mendocinocounty.gov

Appendix B

Photography Discussion Card Handout

(Please start with the TPW photo first)

Your name: _____ Your partner's name: _____

Ask your partner the following questions and write down their responses:

1. Why did you take this photograph?
2. What thoughts or emotions come to mind when you see this photo? Did you use any photography skills from the workshop? If so, which ones?
3. If you could name this photograph, what title would you give it?

**Tobacco Product Waste
Photovoice Contest Submission**

Your photograph title: _____

Your name: _____ Date it was taken: _____

Your Age: _____ **Are you a tribal member?** Yes/No/Don't Know

In 5-10 sentences please describe below why you took this photo, what thoughts or emotions come to mind? How does this relate to tobacco product waste and the environment around us:

Appendix C



**Mendocino County
Youth Photovoice Workshop
(Activity 3-E-4)**

Saturday July 13, 2024

**Seaside Conference Room 790
South Franklin St. Fort Bragg, CA 95437
10AM - 1PM**

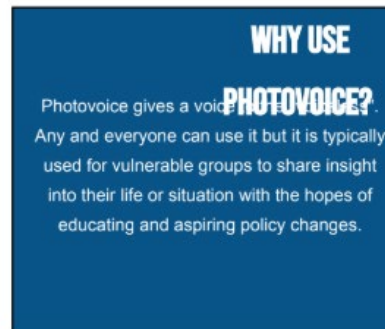


Materials needed by attendees:

- ☐ A cell phone or camera to take pictures
- ☐ Good walking shoes!

#	Activity	Time
1	Light Breakfast Welcome & Introductions	10:00AM - 10:10AM
2	Intro to Photovoice Presentation	10:10AM - 10:25AM
3	All about TPW Presentation	10:25AM - 10:40AM
4	Cell Phone Photography Workshop	10:40AM - 11:00AM
5	Pair in groups to walk in the community for a photography outing	11:00AM - 12:00PM
6	LUNCH BREAK (Will be served in the seaside room)	12:00PM - 12:30PM
7	Photography discussions Writing narrative and audio recording workshop	12:30PM - 1:30PM
8	Post survey Closing/Next steps	12:45PM - 1:00PM

Appendix D

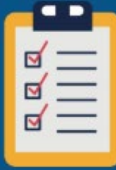


HOW DOES THIS BENEFIT MY COMMUNITY?



Photovoice is advocacy through art. It allows a space for messages to be amplified for the entire community. It takes the problem outside of numbers and statistics and puts into a visual format that is more difficult to dispute or ignore.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BEGIN?



- Photovoice
- A Cell phone
- A Passion for your community

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants/Volunteers bring awareness to the issue and promote local change.

This includes:

- taking photos and writing narratives for community display
- participating in community discussions around the Photovoice project
- being present at meetings and open for discussion and

Ethical Considerations

When taking photos we ask that participants keep the following in mind:

- Consent must be given to use photos within the community or their private property or business
- Avoid dangerous spaces or situations that may harm the reputation or safety of the community
- Ensure all photos that are taken accurately represent what is happening

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