THE POLICY PROCESS: STEP 3

SET POLICY GOALS AND CREATE ACTION PLAN

The goal of Policy Step 3 is to clarify the policy goal, determine what resources are needed to achieve these goals, and develop an action plan to carry out the policy goal.

To set your policy goal, it is important to consider the specific problem being addressed and have a clear understanding of the decision-making entity that can adopt the policy. For most, the policy goal will be implementing a tobacco-free campus policy. A model 100% comprehensive tobacco-free policy for community colleges is available in Appendix 5, a model 100% comprehensive tobacco-free policy for private colleges is available in Appendix 6 and a model policy for use by UNC-system schools is available in Appendix 4. Key elements of a comprehensive tobacco-free policy are provided in Policy Step 4 below. The discussion in this section provides guidance on clarifying your policy goal, assessing your resources to carry out a policy campaign, and developing an action plan to do the work.

Clarify the Policy — Develop a Policy Action Statement

Developing a policy action statement may be challenging to some, but having a clear understanding of the tobacco-related problem you are trying to address is helpful. The key ingredient in stating the problem is developing a policy action statement. The policy action statement is a condensed (about 25 words) statement that:

- States the actual problem to be addressed — a brief description of the problem.
- States the policy solution — names the actual policy.
- States what the policy will do — briefly describes the impacts.
- States who will benefit from the policy — identifies who will be positively impacted.
- States the policy makers who can make it happen — identifies the "targets" who ultimately adopt the policy.

The value of this statement is in bringing clarity to the coalition as it struggles with selecting the specific policy and identifying the entity that can make it happen. This process is particularly important if the coalition is working on the policy at the behest of campus administration, where the decision maker has expressed support. But even if the administration backs a policy, the extent of that support and the specifics of the policy may still require discussion and negotiation. Once developed, it should be written on chart paper and posted at all meetings where work on the policy campaign is occurring. The statement also serves as a roadmap when the coalition is months into the campaign and wondering "what and why are we doing this again?"

The example in the textbox "Policy Action Statement: Example of On-Campus Policy" describes a policy that meets the above criteria. Here we see a policy statement that reflects the tobacco-free campus policy. Later in this section, we will discuss an off-campus policy statement that focuses on restricting tobacco marketing and promotions. Although the statement is relatively short, it provides information that will serve to guide the coalition during the policy campaign. These short statements set up and clarify much of the coalition work required to carry out the policy campaign.

POLICY ACTION STATEMENT: EXAMPLE OF ON-CAMPUS POLICY

University decision makers will adopt and implement the North Carolina model tobacco-free campus policy, reducing the negative impacts of tobacco on students, faculty, campus personnel and visitors.

Assess Resources

When conducting a policy campaign, your greatest resources are the people in the coalition and those they can mobilize to support the policy. As mentioned above, the resources available to carry out a policy campaign are partly a function of the energy and effort that has been invested in supporting and building the capacity of the coalition. Although it is not uncommon for staff to feel they are all alone and doing "the work" by themselves, it doesn't have to be this way. By paying attention to the needs of the group early in the process, you can reduce the likelihood that the coalition coordinator will feel isolated and increase the number of people helping in the campaign.

The resources required to carry out the policy campaign fall into the following categories and depend on your type of coalition:

1. Coalition membership resources
2. "Key messenger" resources
3. Financial resources
4. Staff resources (if applicable)

1. *Coalition membership resources:* The importance of building a strong coalition with the right people, who understand their roles, responsibilities and tasks, was addressed in Policy Step 2. These are the key resources required to get the work done. Examples of the types of tasks coalition members can engage in include:

- Planning — developing a concrete plan to get the work done.
- Researching — determining best practices to support your policy goals.
- Collecting data — using the data you collected as part of your assessment to build support for your policy.
- Writing — crafting talking points, creating a short policy action statement or issue brief.
- Community mobilizing — reaching out to other individuals and groups who would potentially support the policy.
- Public speaking — educating campus and community groups through presentations on the problem and policy solutions.
- Media advocacy — developing press statements, media bites, interacting with local media outlets to pitch policy, writing op-eds or guest editorials, etc.

2. *"Key messenger" resources:* "Key messengers" are people who can help educate decision makers. For example, influential alumni may be the most direct route to the campus Athletic Director. Or at the community level, the police chief may be in the best position to influence the city manager about the value of a potential tobacco policy. These people may or may not be on your coalition, but it is crucial that they can influence the decision makers identified in your policy action statement. Sometimes they are well-connected stakeholders who support your issue, sometimes they are the organization heads that have the ear of one or more of the decision makers, and other times they are students, residents or relatives. Determining who is an "influencer" is part of the policy process. This determination is called a "power analysis" and is discussed in Policy Step 7.

Key messengers can also be reflected as explicit support from organizations and entities that are well-perceived by the decision makers, students or general community. The support of such groups exerts direct pressure on decision makers to adopt the policy or builds support among the broader constituency of students and community, which in turn puts indirect pressure on decision makers.

3. *Financial resources:* Carrying out a policy campaign does not have to be expensive. This is largely because most of the tasks associated with carrying out the campaign are coalition member resources. However, one area that can cost money is the use of paid media. Some coalitions choose to buy newspaper and radio ad space to educate the student body, staff and community on the issues associated with tobacco use and the policy campaign. We suggest using "earned media" as much as possible. Earned media refers to free publicity that the coalition receives through news media sources, such as television, radio, newspapers and online news sites as well as social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). It is generated because the coalition did something to create "news." The key to receiving unpaid publicity lies in understanding what makes news, and shaping campaign activities so that each milestone or event in the campaign's history can become a media event or generate a news story (Jernigan & Waters,

Table 3. Key Considerations for Adopting a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

Selected Policy Action Statement	Coalition Considerations to Optimize Success	Constituents, Allies and Opponents of Strategy	Decision Makers (who can make strategy happen)	Action Steps
Conduct this analysis for each policy the coalition intends to pursue	• Policy clarity • Sufficient human resources • Clarity on budget needs for policy work • Coalition organizational structure appropriate for policy work • Absence of internal issues causing conflict	• Who is impacted? • Who can help? • Who opposes and why?	• Primary target • Power to influence • Others who can influence targets	Develop a detailed list of action steps that will lead to adoption of and compliance with the policy.
University Board of Governors (Trustees) will adopt and implement the North Carolina model tobacco-free campus policy reducing the negative tobacco impacts on students, faculty and campus personnel	• Is the coalition comfortable with the model policy language? • Is there enough data to demonstrate the issues associated with tobacco use on campus? • Has this been tried before and what were the results? • Is there sufficient staff and/or volunteer time to plan and implement this? • Does the coalition need a dedicated sub-committee to see this policy adopted and implemented? • Does the coalition have credibility with the campus administration? • Is there any initial support for the policy?	• Has there been an issue that can provide a compelling example of the problem? • Who is affected by smoking on campus? • Is campus law enforcement in support of a tobacco-free campus policy? • What is the position of the student body association? • What does the faculty think about this policy? • Is there support off-campus for this policy? If yes, by whom?	Primary target: University/college Board of Trustees or Chancellors What power can be tapped to influence target: • Concerned students • University leaders may be willing to promote policy • Effective use of media Secondary targets: • Parents of students who want a tobacco-free campus • University housing director? • Campus police chief	• Conduct assessments • Build coalition • Set policy goals and create action plan • *Develop the policy language* • Make the case • Initiate media advocacy • Mobilize support for identified policy from individuals and organizations • Prepare for and present to decision makers • Plan for implementation, compliance and sustainability • Evaluate policy impact

2009). Policy Step 6 provides a discussion on using media and the importance of media advocacy in moving the policy forward.

Paid staff time can be a major expense to consider when carrying out a campaign. The coalition coordinator position is usually held by someone paid specifically to do the work. Although it is possible to run a policy campaign with only volunteer member support, it is more difficult.

4. *Staff resources:* Staff is the glue that helps hold the coalition together and provides guidance on most aspects of the campaign. It is important to clarify staff roles and coalition member roles early in the life of a coalition. Doing so will help avoid the tendency for coalitions to become too heavily dependent on a few key staff members "doing all the work." Experience has shown that coalition policy work is most successful when the members take ownership of carrying out the many tasks associated with moving the work forward. Some of the staff roles include:

- Overseeing coalition capacity building.
- Guiding the coalition planning process.
- Tracking the activities associated with seeing policy adopted and implemented.
- Incorporating best-practice science to guide policy selection.
- Motivating the membership.
- Ensuring consistency in messaging about the work.
- Providing fiscal and program accountability to the entity giving resources.
- Problem-solving challenges with the group.

- Assisting the coalition leadership to facilitate meetings and sub-committees.
- Ensuring congruity between the interests and activities of the coalition and those of the funder or fiscal agent, which is often the university.

Ensuring someone assumes each of these and other roles is essential to the work of the group proceeding in a manner that optimizes the likelihood that a tobacco-free campus policy is adopted.

The extent to which each of these resources is needed depends on the specific policy campaign in play, as well as the type of coalition structure being utilized. The most efficient way to understand the resources required is to develop a robust action plan. A key considerations template available for your use in Appendix 11

This section includes a set of considerations for adopting a tobacco-free campus policy and an example of a partially completed action plan reflecting the policy steps discussed thus far. Your action plan will differ and should be developed to respond to your unique circumstances and available resources. Table 3 highlights the key considerations necessary for each policy the coalition intends to pursue. A key considerations template is available for your use in Appendix 11.

Develop Your Action Plan

Action plans make concrete "who will do what by when" and also help create accountability. The following chart is a simple-to-use action planning template; each component is described below (see Table 4). A simple action plan template is available for your use in Appendix 12.

Action Steps: Develop a detailed list of action steps that will lead to passing a tobacco-free policy on campus.

Table 4: Action Plan Template

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Communications and Media Support Required	Resources Needed	Timeframe (start and end)	Tracking Measures
1.					
2.					
3.					

Remember, each action step should move toward implementing the policy change. The goal here is not about creating a list of events or activities. To determine whether your coalition's plan is experiencing "activity creep" (for example, engaging in activities not directly related to implementing your selected policy), do the "but why?" test for each proposed action. If there is no logical connection between a specific step and the overall policy campaign, then it is an isolated activity, not an action, and should not be included in your action plan. Organizing a cigarette butt pick-up that does not connect back to your policy campaign is an example of activity creep. However, if a cigarette butt pick-up was a media tool to show a negative effect of smoking on campus, it may fit within your action plan.

Responsible Party: For each action step, the coalition should designate a person(s) responsible for completing it. Be realistic about what can be accomplished. When possible, avoid the typical coalition's tendency to assign tasks to the same two or three people. Spread out the involvement, and hold members accountable for completing them. Remember, action steps are interdependent. If members are unwilling to be responsible for actions, the coalition should seriously question whether it has the right members on the coalition and whether the policy can be achieved.

Communications and Media Advocacy Required:

The power of public opinion is one of a coalition's most important resources to encourage decision makers to do what you want. Use it. The old adage, "If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear it, did it make a sound?" is instructive. If your coalition does not take advantage of opportunities to communicate about your issue and your policy solution, policy makers will not respond. Also think about communicating progress to the coalition members themselves; this will keep them motivated and engaged in achieving the work. Detailed information on media advocacy is provided in Policy Step 6 below.

Resources Needed: What do you need to complete this action and move on to the next one? Is the involvement of specific people required? Are there costs involved? Do specific materials need to be developed to complete this action step?

Table 5: Detailed Action Plan

	Policy Steps	Responsible Party	Communications and Media Support Required	Resources Needed	Timeframe	Tracking Measures
1.	Conduct Assessment: Ensure sufficient data to establish a problem that a tobacco-free policy could address	• Coalition staff • Coalition members with access to data that show the impact of tobacco use on campus	• Do poll or story in student newspaper about issues associated with campus tobacco use • Create social media site for students to comment on campus tobacco use	• Membership willingness to collect data identified by coalition as important to making the case for the policy • Examples of environmental scans and other survey instruments • Training on how to implement data collection processes	Months 1-3	Results shared with coalition
2.	Build Coalition	• Coalition staff • Coalition members	• Newspaper story on coalition presence and mission	• Paid and volunteer staff • Written description of coalition	Months 2-4	• Coalition membership roster • Meeting minutes
3.	Set Policy Goals and Create Action Plan	• Coalition staff • Coalition members	• None needed	• Data from assessments • Sample action planning templates	Months 4-5	• Action statement • Completed action plan

POLICY ACTION STATEMENT: EXAMPLE OF OFF-CAMPUS POLICY

City Council will pass a local ordinance restricting the amount of tobacco advertising in convenience store windows, reducing youth exposure to tobacco marketing and promotions.

Timeframe: Set start times and deadlines for completing an action. Because actions are often interdependent, a future step may not be able to occur until ones before it have been completed. Be realistic in your deadlines, but don't let them linger; inaction can be as detrimental as the wrong action.

Tracking Measures: How will the coalition know when the action is completed? How will success be measured? Track your progress, and periodically report back to the coalition on how the group is doing collectively.

Table 5 is an example of what an action plan may look like for the steps discussed thus far. At the end of Policy Step 10 you will find a complete action plan, including each policy step (see Table 9). The action steps in the table above are now carried forward into this more detailed action plan.

Remember, action plans are not static and are not written in stone. Rather, your coalition should view your action plan as a living, breathing document that can be adapted to reflect new realities. Revisions of the plan will be needed as the policy campaign unfolds and events take the coalition in a direction different from that envisioned in the original plan. In many ways, these revisions are good. They suggest that the coalition is adapting to changing situations and circumstances thereby increasing the likelihood of success.

Addressing Other Tobacco Policies

If your coalition decides to address other policy issues beyond implementing a tobacco-free campus policy, the policy statement may need to be focused on the community rather than the campus. The textbox "Policy Action Statement: Example of Off-Campus Policy" provides an example in which the decision maker is the city council and the policy is focused on decreasing advertisements in windows of convenience stores and decreasing tobacco marketing to youth. In this case, the coalition can follow the same steps outlined above, but will focus the attention on the different decision makers and supporters/opponents based on the policy or strategy you have chosen.

Summary of Policy Step 3

At this point you will have:

- ✓ Clarified your policy goal(s)
- ✓ Developed a policy statement
- ✓ Created an action plan.

Clarifying your policy goal is the foundation for your action plan. A well-developed action plan with concrete action steps and clear roles and responsibilities creates a shared vision of the policy to be adopted, and a step-by-step plan specifying who will do what to move the work forward. Getting to this stage requires hard work and commitment from the members of the coalition. However, moving through this process can foster a sense of group accomplishment, and confirms that the group can complete complex tasks.