Objective 2: Strengthen capacity for tobacco control

Bolster Capacity for Tobacco Control

The struggle to end the tobacco epidemic is a **fight for health equity**. California has made impressive strides in reducing overall tobacco use, but some communities still suffer from **higher rates of tobacco use and tobacco-related disease**. Social justice demands that more resources, services, and outreach are devoted to communities that have benefitted the least from the progress in tobacco control to date. Serving these **priority populations** will require more resources, a greater ability to reach out to underserved communities, and **increased capacity** for tobacco control.

Key Concepts: Strengthening Capacity

Achieving health equity requires:
- Investing greater resources and more funding wherever people are not afforded an equal opportunity to be healthy
- Commitment to developing a more diverse tobacco control workforce, including a diverse new generation of leaders
- More active partnerships with groups that have been marginalized due to racism, socioeconomic status, and other forms of bias and exclusion
- Greater focus on the root causes of disparities and programs designed to address them

Strategies

Increase diversity of the tobacco control workforce

Develop, implement, and evaluate activities designed to ensure the tobacco control workforce reflects the communities it serves

Increase diversity via initiatives that are organization-wide and informed by best practices

Actively evaluate efforts to increase diversity and regularly assess progress

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Develop the next generation of leaders

Engage in strategic succession planning: approach turnover as an opportunity to increase diversity and develop future leaders

Provide mentorship and skills development opportunities to encourage youth to consider careers in tobacco control

Engage local coalitions to help recruit for open positions and increase applicant pool diversity

Strengthen partnerships with state, regional, local, and Tribal entities

Improve coordination and collaboration between state agencies, Local Lead Agencies, Local Educational Agencies, Tribal communities and governments, community organizations, school districts, coalitions, and other tobacco control partners

Ensure that all agencies and partner organizations have broad access to high-quality training and technical assistance

Improve access to data among all stakeholders: for example, tobacco and cannabis retailer licensing data should be broadly accessible, and sales data should be available to researchers and state and local agencies to evaluate policy impacts

Engage non-traditional partners

In addition to health departments, healthcare organizations, social service organizations, and universities, coalitions should engage economic development organizations, employers and business groups, labor unions, faith-based communities, social justice and equity groups, environmental advocates, and community planners

Agencies and coalitions should consider incentives to encourage participation, including travel reimbursements, internships, and community engagement grants

Collaborate with Tribes to advance commercial tobacco control

Recognize that each tribe is sovereign and unique, and each has its own needs and priorities

Focus first on relationship building

Allow tribal communities to set initial goals

Respect traditional tobacco as a cultural and religious practice

Follow the money

Ensure that tobacco products are taxed appropriately, that tobacco taxes are equitable, and that reporting is transparent

Make certain that prevention is prioritized in the distribution of unallocated tobacco tax revenues

Protect state and local authority

Closely monitor the federal government's actions with regard to tobacco control to ensure they do not preempt state action or encroach on local authority

Counter encroachment through public education, the mobilization of coalitions in opposition, and legal action

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