

# Objective 2: Strengthen Capacity for Ending the Commercial Tobacco Epidemic

Strengthening capacity for ending the commercial tobacco epidemic includes developing and maintaining resources, services, and outreach devoted to priority populations that have benefitted the least from the progress in tobacco prevention to date. As successful tobacco prevention efforts undoubtedly reduce the number of people addicted to tobacco, they also ultimately impact tax revenue generated from tobacco purchases. While a reduction in tobacco purchases is a positive impact, there must be a plan for sustaining dwindling tobacco tax revenues that are allocated to public health and tobacco prevention programs. In addition to funding, building capacity in tobacco control requires recruiting and training strong leaders and dedicated tobacco control advocates who work toward ending the tobacco epidemic. Strategies for sustaining an existing tobacco control workforce and recruiting and developing new leaders is integral to strengthening capacity for ending the tobacco epidemic in California.

## Key Concepts

Achieving health equity to end the tobacco epidemic and strengthening capacity to serve California's diverse populations requires:

- Investing greater resources and more funding wherever people are not afforded an equal opportunity to be healthy.
- A commitment to developing a more diverse tobacco prevention workforce, including a new generation of leaders.
- Active partnerships with groups that have been marginalized due to racism, homophobia, transphobia, socioeconomic status, and other forms of bias and exclusion.
- Greater focus on the root causes of disparities and implementing programs designed to address them.

## Key Themes

- Increase and sustain funding for tobacco endgame efforts.
- Increase diversity of the tobacco prevention workforce.
- Develop the next generation of leaders.



# Strategies

## Policy

- Build and maintain capacity by ensuring equity and transparency in tobacco taxation and allocation of revenues.
- Ensure that all tobacco products are taxed equitably by creating parity among tax rates.
- Guarantee that tobacco prevention is prioritized appropriately in the distribution of tax revenue by demanding greater transparency in how tobacco tax funds are allocated.

## Education

- Provide mentorship and skills development opportunities to encourage youth to consider careers in tobacco prevention, especially for youth from priority populations.
- Promote innovation through peer modeling by sharing lessons learned and improving data transparency and access.
- Offer trainings to coalition members and the public about civil service to engage more people in tobacco control efforts at the city, county, and state level.

## Research

- Ensure that there is a diverse pipeline of those who wish to pursue careers in tobacco prevention research and tobacco prevention advocacy, especially for those from priority populations.
- Improve the collaboration between California doctorate-granting research institutions, California State Universities, and California Community Colleges serving students from priority populations, exposing them to and including them in tobacco-related research projects.
- Build capacity and develop a more diverse new generation of tobacco prevention researchers who will be better prepared to address health disparities and promote health equity in their communities.

## Action

- Widely promote career development and job opportunities to local tobacco prevention coalitions, youth advocates, local colleges, and internship and fellowship programs to expand access to diverse candidates.
- Increase diversity in tobacco prevention organizations via initiatives that are organization-wide and informed by evidence-based best practices.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate activities designed to ensure the tobacco prevention workforce reflects the communities it serves.
- Engage in strategic succession planning; approach turnover as an opportunity to increase diversity and develop future leaders.
- Develop organizational operations that include career and skills development opportunities and offer mentorships to help young people to move into tobacco prevention and research careers.
- Engage local coalitions to help recruit for open positions and increase applicant pool diversity.



## Partnerships

- Improve coordination and collaboration between state agencies, Local Lead Agencies, Local Educational Agencies, Tribal communities and governments, community organizations, school districts, coalitions, universities, and other tobacco prevention partners to increase opportunities for capacity building in tobacco prevention.
- Expand coalitions to include non-traditional partners such as economic development organizations, employers and business groups, labor unions, faith-based communities, social justice and equity groups, environmental advocates, and community planners.
- Ensure that all agencies and partner organizations have broad access to high-quality training and technical assistance.
- Partner with universities to increase the pipeline of future tobacco prevention researchers.
- Collaborate with Tribes to help advance their priorities for prevention of commercial tobacco use. Successful collaboration begins with:
  - Recognizing that each tribe is sovereign and unique, and each has its own needs and priorities.
  - Focusing first on relationship building.
  - Allowing Tribal communities to set initial goals and defer to Tribal community members for decisions and priorities for commercial tobacco prevention.
  - Respecting traditional tobacco as a cultural and religious practice.

## Funding

- Require internship programs and succession action-planning components in Requests for Proposals (RFP) and Requests for Application (RFA).
- Consider incentives or stipends to encourage participation in tobacco prevention efforts, including travel reimbursements, internships, and community engagement grants.
- Provide funding and resources that help build the readiness of Tribes to work on tobacco use prevention and cessation efforts.

