

Tools to Build Support

Think of ways you can share what you have learned and gain support for your goal. How can you utilize the contacts you already have at school, work, home, extra-curricular activities, or other areas of your life? Here are a few suggestions and tools:

- **Community Event:** You may be able to reserve a booth or walk around a community event and talk to residents about tobacco prevention and your issue and goal. Ask people to sign a petition, or write a letter of support. Display the pictures you collected from the store assessment and demonstrate how tobacco products are marketed towards youth. Community events may include a festival, fair, farmer's market, PTA meeting, community expo, athletic event, or neighborhood gathering.
- **Presentations to Community Groups:** Share what you have found with community members and ask for their support in reaching your goal.
- **Letters of Support:** Develop a list of people who will support your policy idea, such as youth groups, teams, coaches, school staff, families, day care providers, and health professionals. Use sample letters and talking points and ask people to make it their own. Collect the letters and give copies of them to policy makers.
- **Petition:** Gather signatures of people who support stronger tobacco prevention laws. Use the sample petition and gather signatures at school, work, and community events. Present copies of the petition to policy makers in your presentation packet. A petition will be most effective if it is paired with letters of support or other tools.
- **Online Organizing:** Use email, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other online networks to ask for support from your peers. Include a sample letter of support and ask people to add their touches and send it back to you. It is best to connect with people who live, work, or play in your community, though you can also ask for support from others.

You can also use the media to help build support. Talk to your advisor about the messages your group will use when working with media. It is best to have one or two members of your group who are trained and prepared to speak with the media, especially if you are attending an event or meeting where a reporter wants to learn about your issue. Everyone in your group should be prepared to direct the media to those members

- **Letter to the Editor (LTE):** Submit a letter to your local newspaper about your group, your goals, and why taking action on stronger tobacco prevention laws is important.
- **School Newspaper:** Contribute an LTE or a longer article to your school newspaper. Talk about your group and the importance of the issue. Since the school newspaper is read by other community members, you could ask readers to submit letters of support to your group.
- **Pitching a story:** Newspapers, TV, and radio stations are often looking for interesting stories, especially when young people are creating positive change in their communities. Draft a press release to pitch your story to local media.