

One Housing Authority – One Tobacco Policy

Clatsop County Tobacco Prevention and Education Program

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Summary:

In order to lessen the impact of second hand smoke and create consistency for residence and staff in NW Housing Authority (NOHA) properties, NOHA is working towards adopting a single policy to span all properties. This policy change benefits the residents of 374 units, 15 staff and visitors by reducing their exposure to second hand smoke and associated litter while on NOHA property.

Challenge:

Towards the end of 2012 NOHA was working towards creating one tobacco policy for all of their properties in Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia counties. The goal was to create one policy that would work appropriately for all properties, and all residents. All properties were low income, some catered to families, some with disabilities, and some to seniors. Smoking rates in all three counties are higher than state averages (Tillamook 23%, Clatsop 20%, and Columbia 19% vs 16% for Oregon average. However, the Housing Authority residents' tobacco use rates are estimated to be closer to 35%.

In January of 2013 the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners began a lengthy process of transferring management responsibilities for the Clatsop County Housing Authority (CCHA) over to NOHA. NOHA also contracted with an additional independent low income property owner to manage that property as well. This meant that the number of properties almost doubled and, and the number of separate tobacco policies grew as well.

Solution:

NOHA accepted the technical assistance offered by Clatsop County's Tobacco Prevention and Education Program to craft an over-arching policy for all properties whether owned by NOHA or just managed by NOHA. An assessment was conducted for all new properties, and included speaking with some residence about recently filed complaints. NOHA has chosen to pursue 100% tobacco free indoors, smoking in designated shelters only if available (properties with large percentage of disabled persons), and if not then no smoking within 25 feet of doors, windows or vents (For most properties 25 feet would put them onto city or neighboring property).

Implementation:

As of the time of this writing the lead property manager who was assigned the task of writing the final draft of the policy left the organization so the project is on hold until a new property manager supervisor can be brought on board. The policy project has the full support of the Executive Director, and he would like to have buy-in of all property managers prior to presenting the new policy to his board for adoption.