

# Smokefree Event TOOLKIT

Creating safer, healthier and more accessible events



Brought to you by the Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network,  
a project of the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, INC.

**“Surveys at the Klamath Tribes Annual Restoration Celebration Powwow revealed a community desire to reduce secondhand smoke exposure and create a healthier environment for all participants. With help from the Powwow coordinators and the Tribal Council, we limited commercial tobacco use to designated smoking areas away from the arena and other high-traffic areas. The policy was well received and represents a huge step for us on our way to a 100 percent commercial smokefree policy!**

**We used everything in this toolkit as we planned and executed the event. It has nuggets of gold throughout—from the talking points that helped all coordinators and volunteers speak consistently about the new policy, to the template news release, emcee script and flyers that helped us communicate the policy to all attendees and vendors.**

**If you are planning a smokefree powwow or event, this toolkit is a great resource. If you want to advocate for an event to go smokefree or are curious about the benefits of smokefree events, there’s something here for you, too.**

**Thank you for your interest in creating healthier communities!”**

Christa Runnels

Tobacco Prevention & Education Program Coordinator  
The Klamath Tribes

**Dear Smokefree Event Coordinator,**

Thank you for your leadership in working to create smokefree spaces, powwows and other events. The work you are doing is profoundly important for the health and vitality of our community.

For many Native people, the use of traditional tobacco is sacred. Smoking cigarettes, on the other hand, is addictive and is the leading cause of preventable death, disease and disability. In addition, exposure to secondhand smoke can cause serious illness and lead to death.

For American Indians and Alaska Natives, smoking is an especially significant problem. In Oregon, we are twice as likely to smoke as non-Native Oregon adults. Nearly half of American Indian/Alaska Native adults are exposed to secondhand smoke in a typical week compared to 39 percent of all Oregon adults.

Perhaps most troubling is that our children are following in our footsteps, creating another generation harmed by commercial tobacco addiction and disease. Seventeen percent of American Indian/Alaska Native 8th graders smoke compared to only 10 percent of overall Oregon 8th graders. As parents/guardians, older brothers and sisters, family members, and community members, we set the standard as role models and the use of commercial tobacco products around youth has a negative effect on their lifestyle choices.

Planning smokefree events is an important step in reducing the negative impacts of commercial tobacco on our community. Smokefree events promote our health and culture, and show our next generation that smoking is not the norm.

There are other reasons why creating smokefree spaces are so important in Indian Country. Historical trauma has resulted in higher rates of substance abuse, addiction and other destructive behavior patterns that have been passed on for generations. Smokefree events can help us break that cycle.

Smokefree events also draw the important distinction between traditional and commercial tobacco, helping to ensure our traditional use of tobacco remains sacred.

Creating a smokefree event will take leadership, collaboration and clear communication. This guide is designed to walk you through the steps, ensuring your event is healthy, safe and successful.

I am proud that there are people like you doing this important work in our community and I express my gratitude for your leadership.

Sincerely,

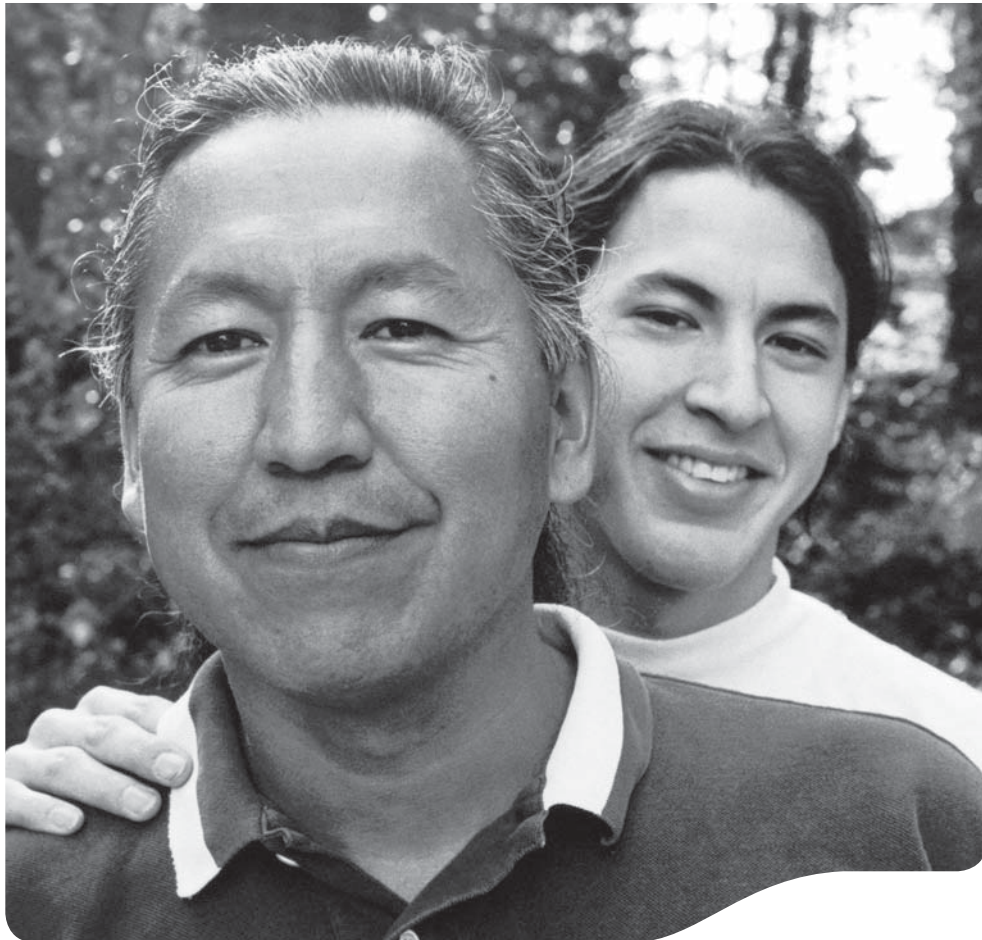
Amanda L. Wright

Tobacco Prevention & Education Program Coordinator  
Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, INC. (NARA)



TWO

# Communication and Advertising





**Thank you for your leadership!** By planning and executing a smokefree event, you are taking an important step in reducing the negative impact of commercial tobacco on our community.

This section of the toolkit is designed to make the process of marketing, advertising and promoting your smokefree powwow or other event easy, and ensuring that your event is healthy, safe and successful.

## Why Plan a Smokefree Event?

The positives of smokefree events are endless. Benefits to our community include:

- Protecting our community members from the deadly effects of **secondhand smoke exposure**.
- Ensuring that events are **more accessible** for all, especially our elders or others who live with or are recovering from asthma, cancer and other chronic diseases that require them to avoid secondhand smoke.
- Supporting people who have made the difficult decision to **quit smoking** by providing the reinforcement they need to succeed.
- Reducing the **toll of commercial tobacco on Indian Country**—American Indian/Alaska Natives are twice as likely to smoke as overall Oregon adults.
- Helping to break the **cycle of addiction and substance abuse** that has been passed on for generations due to historical trauma.
- Drawing the important distinction between **traditional and commercial tobacco**, helping to ensure traditional use of tobacco remains sacred.
- Providing good **role modeling for our youth**, demonstrating that **smoking is not the norm** and helping them avoid peer pressure and the **tobacco industry's marketing**.
  - A key determinant of youth smoking risk is parental use of commercial tobacco.
  - Natural American Spirits, an RJ Reynolds brand of cigarettes, clearly targets American Indians with the image of an American Indian smoking a pipe on the front of the package.

Also, our community wants clean air events. A recent survey at two Oregon powwows found that an overwhelming majority of smokers and nonsmokers support policies that govern the use of commercial tobacco at events.

As the coordinator in charge of marketing and promoting your event, hosting a smokefree event will also **prevent mixed messages**. Instead of trying to explain a complex designated smoking area policy, a 100 percent smokefree policy is clear, direct and more easily communicated.

### **What's Your Role?**

Your goal is to clearly communicate to all involved—other planners, volunteers, vendors, advertisers and participants—the details of the smokefree policy, why a smokefree event is beneficial, and what they can do to make sure the policy is successful. As the person overseeing all communication, that means you should include the language in the talking points on page 27 as a guide for all communication, whether it be in conversation, on the website, in radio announcements, in advertisements or in printed materials such as the event flyers and banners. It is also important to talk about the event as smokefree from the beginning stages of planning, helping to prevent any confusion, misunderstandings or incidents. Since the majority of the population does not smoke, and most people prefer smokefree places, promoting your event as smokefree can be an excellent way to bring in new audiences and increase attendance.

### **What Does a Smokefree Event Mean?**

A smokefree event means that all participants—organizers, volunteers, vendors and attendees—will refrain from smoking cigarettes, cigars and other commercial tobacco products during the entire event and on all event grounds. Commercial tobacco refers to products for recreational and habitual use that large tobacco companies manufacture and sell for a profit.

By contrast, ceremonial tobacco is the original, gifted and sacred tobacco that some Native tribes use strictly for spiritual, cultural and ceremonial use. It ensures the continuance of the Native way of life and is not banned in a smokefree event.

***“Powwows are a celebration of culture and should be smokefree to acknowledge that addiction is not a part of that culture. We should be modeling for our future generations the importance of who we are as a people. And the more that our people smoke, the higher rates of disease and death our community will experience, and with that comes a loss of our way of life.”***



## **Top 10 Ways To Communicate a Smokefree Policy**

Planning powwows and other events takes a lot of time and dedication. Adding the smokefree element is doable and can happen in steps. These 10 tips are listed in order from essential things to start you out, to those that add extra detail and benefit.

1. If nothing else, include “this event is alcohol, drug and commercial tobacco-free” in all materials.
2. Signage, signage, signage! Post the flyers that communicate the smokefree policy in high traffic areas such as the lines for the bathrooms and food.
3. Advertise and promote your event as smokefree using the flyer template in this toolkit.
4. Make sure all event coordinators and volunteers are familiar with the talking points so that everyone communicates the policy clearly.
5. Give the emcee, arena director or whip man/woman the script outline in this section so that they can announce the smokefree policy during breaks and other down times.
6. Post the Frequently Asked Questions and Fact Sheet online and have them available at the event for those who seek additional information about the policy.
7. Use the web copy provided to post information about the smokefree policy on the event’s website or on the websites of community partners and sponsors.
8. Use the radio script provided to promote the smokefree policy in planned radio announcements.
9. Use the press release provided to announce to the local media that the event will be smokefree.
10. Use the newsletter template provided to submit articles in local newsletters announcing the smokefree policy; provide the template and ask all partners, volunteers and partners to publish it in their communication channels.

## What is in this section?

This section is for the event planner(s) in charge of the event's communication, promotion and marketing.

In this section you will find:

- 2a. Talking Points:** These are for your use in communicating about the smokefree event. Think of these not as exact words to memorize but rather as ideas to communicate authentically and consistently, whether it be on the website, in conversation or in printed materials. The messages in bold are the essential messages that should be delivered in every interaction. The additional messages are to help you customize your communication based on your audience's beliefs, needs, level of understanding, etc.
- 2b. Sample Web Copy:** If there is a website for your powwow or other event, or if partners and/or sponsors are willing to post information about the event on their website, it's important to include information about the event being smokefree.
- 2c. Media Release Template:** Customize this release for distribution to your local media to promote the event as smokefree.
- 2d. Sample Newsletter Copy:** As you plan your promotions for the event, consider writing an article for publication in community partners' and sponsors' newsletters about the new smokefree policy.
- 2e. Sample Radio Script:** If you are receiving or paying for radio announcements, include this language at the end of your announcement about the powwow or other event.
- 2f. Sample Script for Emcee, Arena Director or Whip Man/Woman:** He/she is an invaluable resource for communicating the event's smokefree policy. During breaks or other down times, ask him/her to announce and remind participants that the event is smokefree.
- 2g. Pre-Event Flyer:** For your use when promoting your smokefree event. Please note that this flyer uses "commercial tobacco-free" language instead of "smokefree" as this term is more often used in this context.
- 2h. Event Flyer:** For distribution and display at the event to explain the smokefree policy. Please note that this flyer uses "commercial tobacco-free" language instead of "smokefree" as this term is more often used in this context.

## 2a. Talking points

**We are dedicated to creating a safe and healthy community. That is why this event is smokefree in addition to being alcohol and drug free. The use of traditional tobacco is still allowed.**

### *Additional messages*

- Commercial tobacco refers to products for recreational and habitual use that large tobacco companies manufacture and sell for a profit.
- Traditional tobacco is the original, gifted and sacred tobacco of some Native tribes that is strictly for spiritual, cultural and ceremonial use. It ensures the continuance of the Native way of life.

**Smokefree events protect our community from the deadly effects of secondhand smoke, demonstrate to youth that smoking is not the norm and support those who have chosen to quit.**

### *Additional messages*

Smokefree events:

- Are **more accessible** for all, especially our elders or others who live with or are recovering from asthma, cancer and other chronic diseases that require them to avoid secondhand smoke.
- Reduce the **toll of commercial tobacco on Indian Country**—American Indian/Alaska Natives are twice as likely to smoke as overall Oregon adults.
- Help break the **cycle of addiction and substance abuse** that has been passed on for generations due to historical trauma.
- Draw the important distinction between **traditional and commercial tobacco**, helping to ensure traditional use of tobacco remains sacred.

**Please help us keep this event smokefree. Together we can reduce the toll of commercial tobacco on our community.**

### *Additional messages*

- **For volunteers/planners:** Please help clearly communicate the event's smokefree policy.
- **For vendors:** Please refrain from smoking and help us enforce this policy by displaying the provided smokefree signage at your vendor booth. Smokefree events not only protect the health of all participants, they ensure that everyone—nonsmokers and smokers alike—can access and enjoy all parts of the event and the venue.
- **For participants:** Please help us make this a successful event by refraining from smoking during the event and on all event grounds.

## 2b. Sample web copy

 [template online](#)

[Event] is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy event for all participants. That is why this event is smokefree in addition to being alcohol and drug free. The traditional use of traditional tobacco is allowed.

Smokefree events protect our community from the deadly effects of secondhand smoke, demonstrate to youth that smoking is not the norm, and support those who have chosen to quit.

Please refrain from smoking at the event or on event grounds. Together we can reduce the toll of commercial tobacco on our community by taking the important step to go smokefree.

## 2c. Media release template

 [template online](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Insert logo if available]

[Contact Information]

[Date]

[City], Ore.—The [Event] planning committee is proud to announce that this year's powwow [or other event type] will be 100 percent smokefree. Smoking commercial tobacco will be prohibited during the entire event on all event grounds. The use of traditional tobacco will be allowed.

Commercial tobacco refers to products for recreational and habitual use that large tobacco companies manufacture and sell for a profit. By contrast, ceremonial tobacco is the original, gifted and sacred tobacco that some Native tribes use strictly for spiritual, cultural and ceremonial use. It ensures the continuance of the Native way of life and is not banned in a smokefree event.

“We are dedicated to providing a safe and healthy community,” said [Name], [role/title with event]. “Commercial tobacco use is one of the most significant health risks facing American Indians and Alaska Natives. Making [event] smokefree helps reduce secondhand smoke exposure, demonstrates to our children that smoking is not the norm, and supports those of us who have successfully quit smoking or are trying to quit. Most people prefer smokefree spaces, and this creates a more welcoming and accessible event—especially for young people or people with health conditions that are impacted by secondhand smoke.”

“We applaud the [Event] committee for their leadership in reducing commercial tobacco use,” said [Name (an influential community member if possible or someone from the Native American Rehabilitation Center of the Northwest)], [role/title]. “In addition to the obvious health benefits, smokefree events draw the important distinction between traditional and commercial tobacco, ensuring that traditional use of tobacco remains sacred and helping break the cycle of addiction and substance abuse that has been passed on for generations.”

Smokefree environments are especially important in Indian Country. American Indian/Alaska Natives are twice as likely to smoke as all Oregon adults and 46 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native adults are exposed to secondhand smoke in a typical week, compared to just 39 percent of all Oregon adults. Twenty-one percent of American Indian and Alaska Native youth in 11th grade in Oregon report smoking, compared to 17 percent of all 11th grade Oregonians. Two out of every five Native American and Alaska Natives die from commercial tobacco-related illnesses each year; this is higher than deaths related to alcohol, illicit drug use, motor vehicle accidents and suicide combined.

### **Resources**

Smokefree policies are proven to help people quit. The Oregon Quit Line provides free advice, information and materials to help smokers quit for good. Call 800-QUIT-NOW. The Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest (NARA) provides culturally appropriate education, physical and mental health services as well as substance abuse treatment to American Indians, Alaska Natives and other vulnerable people. Call 503-230-9875 or visit [www.naranorthwest.org](http://www.naranorthwest.org).

### **About [Event]**

[Insert standard language about your event including the date, time, location and contact information of the main coordinator.]

## 2d. Sample newsletter copy

 [template online](#)

[Event] is coming up on [Date] at [Location]. [Add other event details as needed.]

Because we are dedicated to providing a safe and healthy event for all participants, this year's event will be 100 percent smokefree in addition to being alcohol and drug free. The use of traditional tobacco is allowed.

We have decided to adopt a smokefree policy to protect our community from the deadly effects of secondhand smoke, demonstrate to youth that smoking is not the norm and support those who have chosen to quit.

We hope you will share in our efforts to bring about awareness of this policy and what it means for our community, and that you will refrain from smoking at the event or on event grounds.

Thank you for your support! Together we can reduce the toll of commercial tobacco on our community by taking the important step to go smokefree.

## 2e. Sample radio script for donated airtime

 [template online](#)

[Event] is proud to be smokefree for the health of our community. Please don't smoke commercial tobacco on event grounds. Thank you.

## 2f. Sample script for the emcee, arena director, and whip man/woman:

 [template online](#)

Because we are dedicated to providing a safe and healthy event for all participants, this [Event] is smokefree in addition to being alcohol and drug free. If you are a smoker, we ask that you please show respect for those who are not and refrain from smoking on event grounds. If you have any questions, please ask the event staff. We thank you for your support.

## 2g. Flyer template 1

 [template online](#)



[Image]

Please join us for the  
[Event] on [Dates] at  
[Location].

Because of our community's desire for clean air events, and for the health and safety of all involved, we are excited to announce that the **event will be commercial tobacco-free.**

For more information about the event, contact [Name] at [Contact information] or visit [Website, if applicable].

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This event is alcohol, drug and commercial tobacco-free. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items or your travel expenses.

## 2h. Flyer template 2

 [template online](#)



This event is commercial tobacco-free for the health and safety of all involved.

Please refrain from smoking during the event and on event grounds.

For more information, contact [name] at [contact information]



This event is commercial tobacco-free for the health and safety of all involved.

Please refrain from smoking during the event and on event grounds.

For more information, contact [name] at [contact information]