

Assessing the Political Environment

A Checklist

The checklist is best completed prior to working on the strategy chart. It will require several people taking responsibility and spending the time necessary to collect the information. The assessment process is a good opportunity to involve all active members of the campaign committee in important research in preparation for determining the campaign’s strategy and tactics.

- A. Investigate public opinion
 - Interview key opinion leaders
 - develop a questionnaire
 - elected officials
 - non-profit organizations
 - healthcare
 - business
 - education
 - community service
 - government
 - law
 - other
 - Survey the public at large
 - develop a questionnaire
 - conduct surveys on the street
 - check community’s voting record on tobacco ballot measures

- B. Document how your government works
 - Determine the structure of your local government
 - elections by district or at large
 - mayor/board Chair—elected or rotating
 - city attorney/county counsel-status
 - role/power of city manager/County Exec Officer
 - council committees w/ responsibility for our issues
 - how to propose an ordinance;
 - council procedures for passing an ordinance
 - The electoral process
 - who are the elected officials and what positions do they hold, including committee assignments
 - terms of elected officials
 - next elections (including primaries) for elected officials, election dates
 - election results in last two election cycles

- C. Research backgrounds of key policy makers
 - Identify key decision makers
 - history of public service

- current position; contact information including names of staff responsible for our issues, etc.
- community and business affiliations
- political supporters
- personal information
- issue interests, voting record

- Check resources for decision maker information
 - websites of policy makers, cities/counties
 - campaign disclosure documents
 - registrar of voters
 - personal conversations and contacts
 - California State Association of Counties CSAC website: <http://www.csac.com>; League of California Cities: <http://www.cacities.org>

D. Determine sufficiency of local data

- Know what local data is available
 - inventory all local tobacco control policies in municipal or county code
 - locate most recent youth purchase survey data
 - survey local enforcement practices for tobacco control policies from local police, sheriff, food and drug branch
 - compliance information re: signage, SSD, other policies
 - local smoking rates
 - local impact of potential Synar Amendment alcohol and drug treatment program cuts

E. Assess potential of tobacco control policy campaign

- List of organizations to approach for support
- Locate each organization on map of Council/Supervisorial district
- "Who you know" exercise to determine who has personal connections to policy makers
- Number of active campaign committee members >10
- Active campaign committee members include
 - organizations/individuals who can lobby
 - committee chair can lobby and is recognized community leader
- Campaign committee members have experience in community organizing for policy change
- Inventory resources available from active members
 - donated staff
 - meeting rooms
 - printing, copying
 - money
 - reputation, contacts
- Strengths and weaknesses of policy goal

F. Assess strength of your opponents

- List organizations/individuals likely to oppose
 - why will each organization/individual oppose?
 - how much will the new policy cost them?
- How powerful are the opposing organizations/individuals?
 - who do they know/influence?