



Technology & Community Organizing in Santa Barbara

You know those challenges you face with your local county website? The Santa Barbara coalition faced them too. The existing county tobacco control website was too big, too static, and technically owned by the Board of Supervisors, creating a conflict of interest as the coalition started to work on a countywide smokefree parks and beaches campaign. On top of that, the coalition wondered how to go further and how to use the website not just to get information out to the community,



but to really engage coalition members in the campaign.

What's the solution for Santa Barbara's Donna Beal, MPH, CHES? Contact the Center for a campaign website. She said, "The whole website template and all of its many features have helped us engage our community members."

For example, when someone signs up through the website's "Join Now" feature, they are automatically set up to receive email updates from Donna letting them know when the next board or parks commission meeting will be taking place and how they can help. The website has given coalition and community members a chance to write their Supervisors and parks commissioners and browse the latest campaign updates, coalition PSA's and man on the street interviews.

"And best of all, the website set up process was easy," said Donna.

Did you see your county's [State of Tobacco Control grades](#) from the American Lung Association in California last week? Have your elected officials seen them?

The Center is here to help you pass policies and improve the grades for cities in your county.

Taking the FDA Training on the Road to San Diego

Last October, the Center co-hosted a webinar with the Technical Assistance Legal Center (TALC) on the new FDA law to explain the provisions of the law and the impact on local policies here in California. While attendance was great for the webinar, many people working on local tobacco control issues in California were unable to attend because of the CX process, grant deadlines and other pressing activities. In the San Diego region most of the competitive grantees in the region wanted this information but missed the webinar.

The solution? An in-person policy training from the Center! On December 9, the Center's Policy Coordinator, Justin Garrett, traveled to San Diego to discuss the new FDA law and share the perspective of the Center and TALC about how local coalitions in California might take advantage of it. Not only did the grant-funded staff

The website has also given the coalition a place to feature and promote their social media in order to reach out to an even broader audience. Using Facebook (and linking to it on the webpage), the coalition is able to encourage a dialogue that can't be found on a website alone. Using both tools hand in hand, the coalition has gained members and those members are able to stay up to date with the latest campaign information and activities.

The website and Facebook links are now on every email signature and on every factsheet. They are also mentioned at every meeting with Supervisors, and are featured on a small leave behind contact card.

Though the coalition has seen success using the website, Donna cautions that those looking to start a website should, "create a master plan that divvy's up website responsibilities." She also mentions, "...update the site regularly and be ready to filter down what coalition member want on the site to what is important, clear and informative."

Check out the Santa Barbara Coalition's website here:

www.center4tobaccopolicy.org/santabarbara

To find out about a website for your coalition, contact Erin Archer at earcher@alac.org



www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2009/06/22/politics/politicalhotsheet/entry5104008.shtml

who missed the webinar get to hear it, but also other community coalition members who may be involved in future campaigns

on these topics.

As with all Center trainings, the training was tailored to the needs of the coalition. The San Diego coalition has been very interested in electronic cigarettes and so a short presentation on e-cigarettes and the policy options to deal with them was added to the end of the FDA law presentation.

The training was fun and gave participants a lot of opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts on the impact of these products and policies in their communities. It helped to lay the groundwork of knowledge on local policy options related to the FDA law and e-cigarettes. "Justin made the complex topic of the new FDA legislation into an easily understood presentation. Our coalition members appreciated the information he provided regarding local policy implications for their own campaigns," stated Gena Knutson, Chair of San Diego's Tobacco Control Coalition.

Some cities in the region may act on these new policy opportunities and when they do, the Center will be available to conduct additional trainings on specific policies that the coalitions are targeting. The Center can also lead strategy chart sessions for specific campaigns as well as train on messaging and public speaking to prepare for city council hearings.

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing assists local Prop 99 funded projects throughout the state meet policy objectives using proven community organizing strategies, and serves as a statewide and local tobacco policy resource. The Center is a project of the American Lung Association in California and is funded by the California Tobacco Control Program.

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