

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS
Tobacco Use Prevention

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.

“THROUGH OUR FEDERAL GRANT, WE ARE PROVIDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENTS, WHICH HELP TOBACCO USERS QUIT AND PROTECT EVERYONE FROM SECONDHAND SMOKE.”

—Shannon Jones, Acting Director,
Austin/Travis County Health and Human
Services Department

Community Overview

Travis County, Texas, which includes the city of Austin, is tackling tobacco use throughout the community. In Travis County, a community of 1,024,266 residents, the adult smoking rate is 9.9%. Smoking is particularly prevalent among young adults in the county, as 39% of Travis County residents aged 18-29 years are smokers.



In addition to tobacco use prevention efforts aimed at Travis County's entire population, some initiatives target high-risk groups such as certain racial and ethnic groups; young adults; low-income and medically underserved populations; and people affected by mental illnesses, substance abuse, or disabilities. East Travis County is one example of a target community that has significantly lower socioeconomic status statistics than other areas in the county and experiences higher rates of tobacco-related morbidity and mortality.

Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, Travis County has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease tobacco use, Travis County:

- Supported the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CMTA) to establish a tobacco-free campus as well as smoke-free metro rail stations and bus transfer stations. Additionally, CMTA is working to establish tobacco-free bus stops. More than 60,000 commuters will benefit from smoke-free transportation.
- Developed the public education initiative *Live Tobacco-Free Austin* to raise awareness of the burden of tobacco use in Austin, promote cessation services, and support tobacco-free policies. To date, this effort has reached more than 1.7 million residents.





Community Successes *(continued)*

- Supported Austin Travis County Integral Care, the mental health and substance abuse authority in Travis County, to transition all 36 outpatient clinic sites to become tobacco-free.
- Supported Huston-Tillotson University to establish a tobacco-free campus and to implement a sustainable smoking cessation program, which is available to the university's more than 850 faculty and students.
- Collaborated with the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Humana Inc., a health insurance company, to provide more than 100 business owners and operators with information on how to implement tobacco-free workplaces. As a result, several business owners have approved new tobacco-free workplace requirements that will benefit more than 4,000 employees, customers, and visitors.

(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

Tobacco Cessation Resources Now Available to All Travis County Residents

Travis County is collaborating with health care providers to encourage tobacco users to make successful quit attempts. In partnership with the Seton Family of Hospitals, Travis County established a community tobacco cessation resource center that provides nicotine-replacement therapy and free smoking cessation education based on the Mayo Clinic model for treating tobacco use and dependence. These resources are available for all residents in the county as well as for local businesses and organizations. Additionally, the Seton Family of Hospitals is partnering with local health care facilities to ensure that all patients are screened for tobacco use and interest in quitting, and that those interested in quitting are referred to appropriate cessation resources.

"I LEARNED THAT BY CUTTING A STRAW IN HALF AND PUTTING COTTON ON THE END, I COULD SIMULATE THE PHYSICAL ACT OF SMOKING. I ALSO LEARNED THAT CRAVINGS LAST ONLY THREE MINUTES, SO IF I COULD KEEP MYSELF BUSY FOR THREE MINUTES, THEN I COULD BEAT MY CRAVING."

— Miriam, Travis County resident

Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of Travis County's leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- American Cancer Society, High Plains Division
- American Heart Association
- Austin Independent School District
- Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department
- Austin Travis County Integral Care
- Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Catholic Charities of Central Texas
- City of Austin Human Resources Department
- City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department
- CommUnityCare (Federally Qualified Health Center)
- Keep Austin Beautiful
- Lance Armstrong Foundation
- Mayor's Fitness Council
- Michael and Susan Dell Foundation
- Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin
- Seton Family of Hospitals
- St. David's Community Health Foundation
- University of Texas School of Public Health—Austin Campus

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.livetobaccofreeaustin.org/.