

Establishing and working with a stakeholder advisory committee

Establishing and receiving advice from an advisory committee could be a useful way to plan for and implement a smoke-free policy in your building. An advisory committee is a group of stakeholders and/or primarily residents, who meet to give you their knowledge, opinions and ideas.

The involvement of a stakeholder advisory committee depends on a variety of factors, including:

- size of your building and number of residents – the larger the property, the more beneficial it may be to form an advisory committee;
- your knowledge about what stakeholders think about implementing a smoke-free policy – the less knowledge you have about stakeholder views, the more beneficial it may be to form an advisory committee; and,
- the amount of agreement or disagreement about implementing a smoke-free policy – the more disagreement that exists, the more beneficial it may be to form an advisory committee.

Who to involve

An advisory committee typically works best with five to 10 members. Any more and the conversation becomes too lengthy. Assess your situation and see if you can gain a good representation of the stakeholders with no more than 10 members.

Recruit:

- a representation of all the stakeholders in the building – consider such characteristics as age, years living in the building, mobility, income, family size, number of visitors;
- those who agree and disagree – recruit supporters and doubters to gain better advice (doubters can identify the challenges you will face and need to address); and,
- staff. For those managing seniors or assisted-living facilities, try to include front-line staff whose work environment would be affected by the policy as well as property managers.

Process of forming the advisory committee

1. Clearly define and write down the terms of reference for the advisory committee (the purpose, the role, the responsibilities, the activities and the amount of time required to serve on the committee).
2. Identify those you feel need to be involved to give you a wide perspective.
3. Talk to each individual in person, giving them the written committee terms of reference.

4. Hold the first 'get acquainted' meeting of the advisory committee.
 - a. Provide refreshments.
 - b. Have each person introduce themselves and explain why they wish to be on the committee.
 - c. Explain about the interest in a smoke-free policy in your building.
 - d. Explain the committee terms of reference.
 - e. Hold a question and answer time.
5. Establish the meeting schedule.
6. Hold meetings as needed to gain advice from the committee members. Always tell the committee how and when you plan to use the advice.
7. When the committee disbands, give small gifts of appreciation.

Advisory committee members expect:

- *to feel welcome at committee meetings;*
- *to have a clearly defined purpose, role and expectations;*
- *to receive a thorough orientation;*
- *to feel needed and wanted, and that they make a valuable contribution;*
- *an organizing group to get and keep things going;*
- *to have specific topics to give input about;*
- *to be kept active and receive communications; and,*
- *to have a clearly defined time that the committee will end.*

Sample advisory committee terms of reference

Name: <Your building> Advisory Committee for a Smoke-Free Policy

Purpose: To advise the <organizing group such as landlords, property manager or staff> about matters related to developing and implementing a smoke-free policy in the building.

Role and activities: Committee members are asked to read materials, attend meetings, give their opinions and ideas about specific topics, and talk with other residents to gain ideas.

Time commitment: The committee will meet every second Thursday from 7–8 p.m.

Responsibilities: Committee members are expected to read materials and be prepared for meetings, to attend meetings, and to give their knowledge, opinions and ideas. Committee members will understand that the organizing group will listen carefully and consider their input; however, the organizing group will be responsible for making decisions.