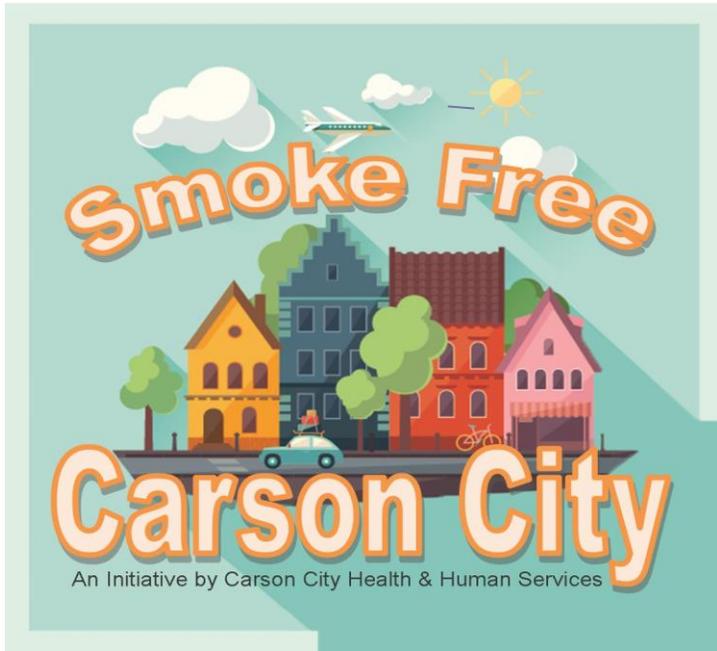


# Protecting the Health of Tenants in Carson City

## NEVADA



### Summary:

In 2015, Carson City Health and Human Services (CCHHS) received a substantial number of complaints from concerned residents living in multi-unit housing (MUH). Many residents complained of safety and health concerns due to the occurrence of smoking inside apartments. As CCHHS investigated, it became apparent there was limited or no housing with smoke-free policies available in Carson City. In response, CCHHS created the Smoke-Free Carson City initiative, designed to promote a smoke-free community and enhance the lives of residents. This initiative provided education and assistance to MUH property managers and landlords on smoke-free tobacco policies. To date, over 900 housing units are smoke-free in Carson City.

### Issue:

Carson City has a population of 42,017, with approximately 7,895 adults who smoke.<sup>1</sup>

About 20% of adults in MUH use combustible tobacco products, which are a source of secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>2</sup>

80 million people in the US live in MUH and are affected by secondhand smoke.<sup>2</sup>

The Surgeon General's report on "Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke" indicates secondhand smoke is identified as a public health concern, and no level of secondhand smoke exposure is safe.<sup>3</sup> When CCHHS initially determined secondhand smoke concerns were filed by citizens living in MUH, all complaints were turned over to the neighboring county, 30 miles away. This prompted CCHHS to begin the efforts and establish tools to provide to individual living communities. In addition, a survey conducted by Partnership Carson City, a local coalition, had also revealed that 80% of survey participants would favor smoke-free [MUH] buildings. This identified and supported a need for the Smoke-Free Carson City Initiative.



## Intervention and Results

**Meetings and Collaborations:** In person meetings with managers, owners, and property managers seemed to have a better outcome than calling them.

**Collaborating with property management companies and local real estate associations allowed CCHHS to reach more properties and decision makers with education and tools, such as surveys, to affect more complexes and units in Carson City.**

**Owner/Manager Toolkits:** Included information on the overall benefits of smoke-free MUH. The toolkit addressed common concerns and questions property managers or owners have regarding adopting a smoke-free policy.

**Tenant Toolkits:** Were developed and provided to tenants about the benefits of smoke-free policies, commonly asked questions, tips, and letter templates on how to request smoke-free housing.

**Survey of Tenants:** 132 tenants in 4 MUH complexes were surveyed. 52.5% stated that tobacco smoke bothers them or makes them sick and 76.5% stated that they would like to live in a smoke-free building.

**Multiunit Housing Educational Summit:** An educational summit was held for owners and managers in collaboration with the sheriff, fire, and code enforcement agencies to provide information on improving safety in their complexes. The first summit had 15 attendees.

**Signage** was provided to various complexes to remind residents of the smoke-free policies of their MUH communities.

## Success & Sustainability

After boots on the ground efforts and collaboration with property management companies and the local real estate association, CCHHS determined which multi-unit housing complexes were willing to take a leap and implement smoke-free policies. Although many owners and managers seemed hesitant to pursue these policies at first, it soon became apparent that there was a high demand for smoke-free MUH. Many complexes shifted into the smoke-free policy by implementing the policy as soon as new units became available. CCHHS will continue to meet with property managers and owners in-person and provide the necessary education, tools, and technical assistance to survey respondents in an effort to provide safe and healthy living environments for Carson City tenants.

Whether you are a tenant interested looking for a smoke-free apartment or a landlord/property manager interested in establishing a smoke-free policy, please contact Sandra Wartgow at CCHHS: 775-283-7201 or visit the Get Health Carson City website: <http://gethealthcarsoncity.org/tobacco-free-housing/>



### References:

1. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Nevada, 2016.
2. Medical Law Perspectives. Tobacco Use and Involuntary Secondhand Smoke Exposure High in Multiunit Housing.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General.*

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