

Views on Smoke-Free Policies

2011 survey of residents living in income based housing in
Cottonwood, Jackson, and Redwood counties

Family Services Network – Start Noticing, a coalition working to eliminate the harmful effects of tobacco use and exposure, especially among vulnerable youth, through community engagement, education, and policy implementation, received a Tobacco-Free Communities grant from the Minnesota Department of Health. Start Noticing contracted with Wilder Research to conduct research and evaluation as a part of this grant, including studying issues related to current tobacco use practices and policies, as well as attitudes about tobacco use practices and policies. This summary provides results of surveys conducted in the fall of 2011 with residents living in income based housing in Cottonwood, Jackson, and Redwood counties.

Study results will inform Start Noticing’s ongoing efforts to engage and educate its communities to promote smoke-free policies that protect vulnerable populations. Six key informant interviews were also conducted with managers or owners of income based housing. While findings differ across counties and demographic sub-groups, this summary highlights combined data due to the small sample size. Please refer to the last page of this report for more information about study methods and demographics of study participants.

Overall perceptions

The study found strong support for smoke-free policies from owners or managers of income based housing and moderate support from residents. Of those who responded to the survey:

- Most residents (71%) do not allow anyone to smoke in their homes.
- Only about half (46%) of residents who are smokers themselves allow smoking in their apartment.
- All managers and owners recognize the health benefits of implementing smoke-free policies and also believe smoke-free policies would be financially beneficial because there would be less property damage related to smoking.

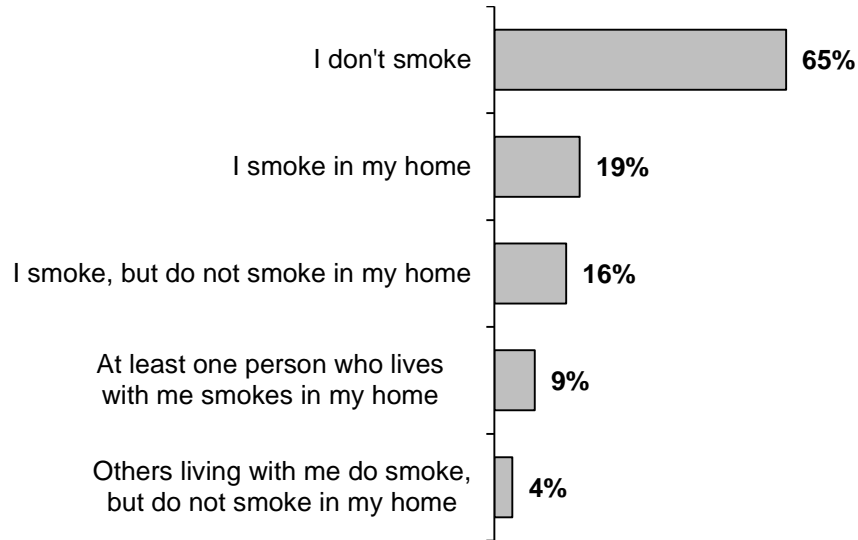
Potential issues to address when introducing smoke-free policies in income based housing in Cottonwood, Jackson, and Redwood counties include:

- Managers and owners are concerned residents’ guests may not comply with the smoke-free policies.
- Managers and owners are concerned with occupancy rates.

Current tobacco smoke practices and policies

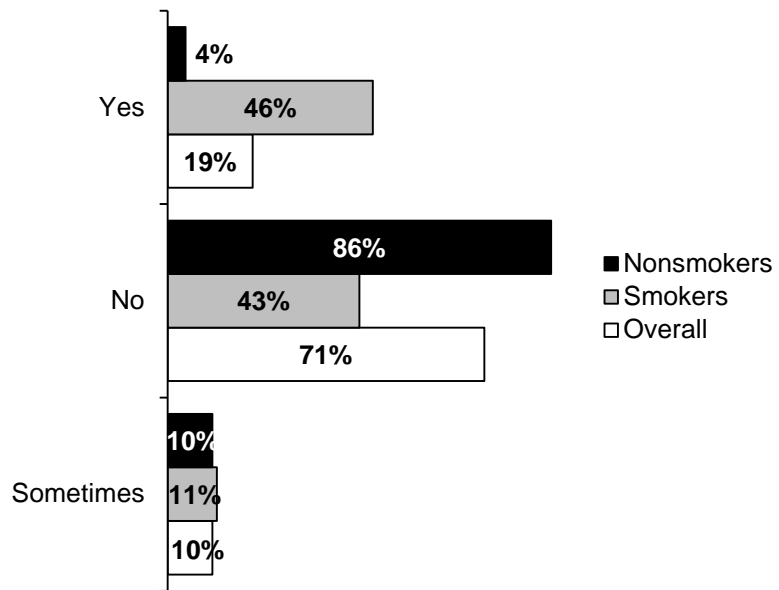
As illustrated in Table 1, the majority of income based housing residents do not smoke at all (65%). Of the respondents who do smoke (35%), slightly over half smoke in their homes.

1. Current smoking activity in home (n=80)



The majority of respondents (71%) report they do not let other people, including guests, smoke in their home. About half of smokers don't let others smoke in their home (46%). Please see Table 2.

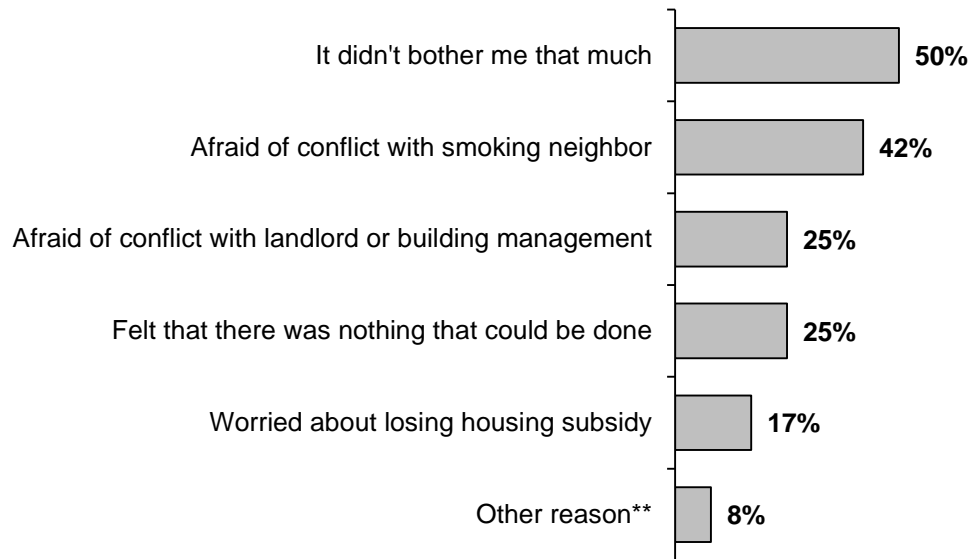
2. "Do you allow anyone to smoke in your home, including guests?" (n=79)



Respondents were asked if they had ever talked to their landlord or building manager about tobacco smoke entering their home. Of those who responded, slightly over one-third replied yes (36%). While a few report their landlord or building manager did “nothing” to address their concerns, respondents also mention the offending smokers were moved to another apartment unit or they themselves were offered the choice of moving to another apartment unit. Of those who said they did not talk to their landlord or manager about unwanted tobacco smoke entering their home, half (50%) said it was because it didn’t bother them much and nearly half (42%) said they did not talk to their landlord because they were afraid of conflict with a smoking neighbor. See Table 3.

Owners and managers also report that other actions, such as speaking directly to offending residents, issuing warning notices, and disinfecting and cleaning common areas weekly, were common approaches to minimizing bothersome tobacco smoke odors.

3. "Did you NOT talk to your landlord or manager about unwanted tobacco smoke entering your home because..."* (n=12)

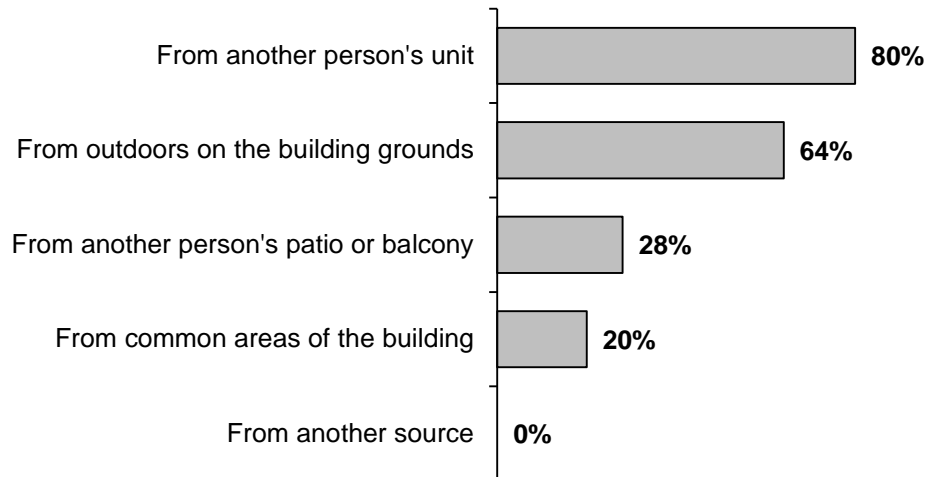


*Respondents were asked to check all that apply.

Attitudes about tobacco smoke practices and policies

Residents' responses showed moderate support for smoke-free policies. Over half (59%) of income based residents report being bothered "a lot" or "a little" by tobacco smoke entering their homes. Respondents who had secondhand smoke come into their apartment most frequently believed the smoke came from another person's unit (Table 4). One-fifth of respondents believe the tobacco smoke came from common areas of the building, such as entrances, hallways, and laundry rooms (even though smoking in common areas is currently prohibited by the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act). Owners and managers note that residents' guests, in particular, are frequent violators of this policy.

4. "When tobacco smoke entered your home from somewhere else in or around the building, where do you believe it came from..."* (n=25)



Study methods

Adult residents (18+) from income based housing in Cottonwood, Jackson, and Redwood counties were invited to complete surveys about tobacco smoke practices and policies. Start Noticing mailed survey packets to residents and followed up with reminder notices two weeks later. Residents were also invited to complete the survey over the phone. Start Noticing provided a drawing for a \$75 grocery gift card in each county as incentive for participation. The surveys were mailed to 385 residents and 80 responses were completed. Interviewers from Start Noticing also conducted semi-structured phone interviews with two owners or managers of income based housing authorities from each county.

Wilder Research provided consultation, developed and modified data collection instruments, oversaw the data collection process, provided data entry, analysis, and reporting.

Demographics

5. Income based housing respondents' county of residence (n=80)

Cottonwood	Jackson	Redwood
44%	16%	20%

6. Respondent demographics

Gender	n=79	Household size	n=78
Female	86%	1	63%
Male	13%	2	28%
Age	n=78	3-4	4%
18-25	9%	5+	4%
26-64	55%	Length of time lived in current home	n=80
65+	36%	6 months or less	11%
Race/Ethnicity*	n=79	7-12 months	18%
Caucasian	87%	1-2 years	11%
Of Color	13%	3-4 years	18%
African/African American/Black	5%	5+ years	43%
American Indian/Native American	8%	Number of children five years or younger	n=80
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	No children	80%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	1 child	18%
Other	0%	2 children	3%

**Wilder
Research**
Information. Insight. Impact.

451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org



AMHERST H.
WILDER
FOUNDATION
ESTABLISHED 1906
Here for good.

This research and publication has been made possible by funding from the Minnesota Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program through its Tobacco-Free Communities grant program.

For more information: This summary presents highlights from surveys conducted in 2011 in Cottonwood, Jackson, and Redwood County. For more information about this report, contact Denise Huynh at Wilder Research, 651-280-2012.

Author: Denise Huynh, March 2012