

# tobacco *free*

## LANCASTER COUNTY

### HIGHLIGHTS 2019

The Tobacco Free Lancaster County (TFLC) coalition exists to protect the public's health by eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, preventing youth from starting to use tobacco, providing tobacco education to all populations, and encouraging people to quit.

### Tobacco-related information

People who die each year in the U.S. from smoking-related illnesses+	480,000
Nebraska adults who die each year from their own smoking+	2,500
Annual health care costs in Nebraska directly caused by smoking+	\$795 million
Adult smoking rate in Lancaster County^	16.9%
Youth smoking rate in Lancaster County*	4.4%
Percent of Lancaster County high school students who used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days*	27.4%

+The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids ^2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey \*2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (grades 9-12)

TFLC was chartered in 1992 and has representation from more than 20 organizations.

To become involved in the TFLC coalition, please call  
402-441-8045 or email [info@tobaccofreelancastercounty.org](mailto:info@tobaccofreelancastercounty.org).  
[tobaccofreelancastercounty.org](http://tobaccofreelancastercounty.org) • Like us on Facebook: @tflcne

## Community Partners

American Cancer Society  
American Heart Association  
Asian Community and Cultural Center  
AIRE Nebraska  
Boys and Girls Club of Lincoln  
Bluestem Health  
Bryan Health  
Building and Safety  
CHI Health  
Community Volunteers  
El Centro De Las Americas  
Great Place Properties  
Health Education Inc.  
Lancaster County Medical Society

Lancaster County Sheriff's Office  
Lincoln - Lancaster County Health  
Department  
Lincoln Fire and Rescue  
Lincoln Housing Authority  
Lincoln Medical Education Partnership  
LNK TV Health  
Lincoln Lutheran Middle and High School  
Lincoln Parks and Recreation  
Lincoln Police Department  
Lincoln Public Schools  
Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition  
Neighborworks  
No Limits Nebraska

Norris Public Schools  
Northeast YMCA CLC's  
OutNebraska  
The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska  
Region V Systems  
Safe Kids Lincoln-Lancaster County  
The Salvation Army  
SCIP  
Tobacco Free Nebraska  
University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
UNL LGTBQ+ Resource Center  
Workwell Inc.

Funding provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Tobacco Free Nebraska program as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

## Tobacco and smoke-free policies

- Eighty-four businesses in Lancaster County have been identified as having smoke-free/tobacco-free campuses.
- LLCHD received four complaint calls regarding drifting secondhand smoke at the entrances to businesses. These calls show that community members expect to be able to enter public spaces without walking through dangerous secondhand smoke. This positive change in cultural norms is a big win for public health!
- LLCHD received six complaint calls regarding secondhand smoke filtering into adjacent apartments. Information on the benefits of



smoke-free housing and how to address this concern was provided to each caller.

- To reduce secondhand smoke exposure, the coalition educates and encourages multi-unit residential property owners to develop smoke-free housing policies. The Tobacco Free Lancaster County Smoke-Free Housing Registry garnered an additional 600+ units in 2019. See the Smoke-Free Housing Registry map at [tobaccofreelancastercounty.org/smoke-free-rental-housing/](http://tobaccofreelancastercounty.org/smoke-free-rental-housing/)
- 9,885 rental units in Lincoln are identified as smoke-free.

## Tobacco cessation efforts

- The Tobacco Free Lancaster County Coalition and 40 partners across the state participated in Nebraska Tobacco Cessation Week November 18-22, 2019. We ran a social media campaign, as well as radio advertisements that reached thousands of listeners in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Events were also hosted in collaboration with Community Health Endowment of Lincoln.
- During the Great American Smokeout on November 21, 2019, TFLC partnered with Southeast Community College to host a tabletop event promoting Quitline and cessation resources as well as tobacco and electronic cigarette information.
- The LLCHD Health Educators provided 10 Behavioral Health presentations at The Bridge Behavioral Health and St. Monica's. These efforts reached approximately 150 adults with tobacco cessation information and resources.



## El Centro de las Americas

- TFLC held a Community Conversation in June to educate Hispanic families about the dangers of using tobacco and e-cigarette products, especially around children. Participants were encouraged to stop using tobacco and e-cigarettes and to ban use in their homes and vehicles.
  - El Centro hosted a "Mobile Guatemalan Consulate" at El Centro. The event was used to educate participants about tobacco health risks and provide free signs for smoke-free homes and vehicles.
  - El Centro held the first annual Latino Festival. Over 1,000 people attended the event, which included a health fair that offered information about the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline and more.
  - TFLC engaged clients at the El Centro Christmas event, which included a health fair and distribution of presents to families. TFLC also provided tobacco cessation and education resources.



## Youth projects

- Sixteen organizations partnered through the Tobacco Free Lancaster County Youth Task Force to host community-wide educational events for Health Education Week and Red Ribbon Week. The theme of Health Education week was “Youth Vaping Awareness and Prevention.” The events ran from October 21-31, 2019.
- During Health Education Week, Lincoln Public Schools, School Community Intervention and Prevention, the Lancaster County Sheriff’s Office, and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department partnered to present a Community Conversation about youth use of e-cigarettes. Over 60 community members attended including youth, parents, school administrators, and partner organizations.
- The Lincoln Lutheran High School Student Council hung signs around campus encouraging students to live drug-free, including e-cigarette free.
- Norris Middle School students created a promotional video about youth use of e-cigarettes.
- Salvation Army students created e-cigarette prevention messages on t-shirts for Health Education Week and Red Ribbon Week as part of after-school programming.
- El Centro de las Americas offered lessons to youth attending Joven Noble meetings at Lefler Middle School and Northeast High School in Lincoln during Red Ribbon Week. Students learned more about e-cigarette risks and how addiction impacts lives.
- Lincoln Public Schools shared youth e-cigarette prevention education online, in health and social studies classes, via morning announcements,

and with staff. They also hosted the Community Conversation at Southeast High School during Health Education Week.

- The Lincoln-Lancaster County Tobacco Prevention Educators presented to 60 health students at Park Middle School about the risks of youth e-cigarette use during Health Education Week.
- Northeast YMCA Community Learning Center students also participated in Health Education Week and Red Ribbon Week. Students in the after-school programs designed t-shirts to educate their peers and families about the issue of youth e-cigarette use.



*Youth at Salvation Army design anti-vaping t-shirts for the 2019 Health Education Week.*

## Tobacco and vapor sales to minors compliance checks

Tobacco and vapor product sales to minors compliance checks are conducted multiple times throughout the year by the Lincoln Police Department, Lancaster County Sheriff’s Office, and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. Sixty-nine attempts to purchase vapor products resulted in four illegal sales by tobacco retailers translating to 94% compliance with the law, the same as 2018. In the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County combined, 263 attempts by minors to purchase cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products resulted in 12 illegal sales by tobacco retailers translating to 95% compliance with the law, up 4% from 2018.

# Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

- The Tobacco Free Lancaster County Coalition launched a new website in August: [tobaccofreelancastercounty.org](http://tobaccofreelancastercounty.org). Visitors can learn more about youth use of e-cigarettes, smoke-free housing, tobacco-free parks, and find information for businesses looking to implement tobacco-free campus policies.
- Staff assessed several of the most popular city parks for adherence to the Play Tobacco Free Park policy instituted in 2012. Compliance as evidenced by cigarette butt litter was significantly better than 2018. The redesigned “Play Tobacco Free” signs were on display across Lincoln. Thank you, Lincoln Parks and Recreation, for helping post the signs. A letter to the editor about this accomplishment was submitted by TFLC Chair, Tiffany Quicke, to the Lincoln Journal Star.
- Staff attended the National Conference on Tobacco or Health in Minneapolis, Minnesota August 27-30. Information was provided on working with special populations, smoke-free housing, tobacco-free campuses, and e-cigarettes.



## Work with media

- TFLC and partners leveraged a community-wide youth e-cigarette use educational campaign during the spring and summer. Media outreach included PSA's played on local and cable stations and several radio stations. Additionally, print advertisements (see below) appeared in



partner newsletters, on local billboards, on Star Tran buses, and at Gateway Mall reaching over 25,000. Finally, digital ads were placed through the Lincoln Journal Star. These ads garnered over 290,850 impressions by the end of June.

- During Health Education and Red Ribbon Weeks, LLCHD staff were interviewed by local news and radio stations four times. An LLCHD staff-written article about youth use of e-cigarettes was published in school parent newsletters by five Lancaster County schools – LPS, Norris, Pius X, Waverly, and Lincoln Lutheran.
- During the summer and fall, there was a nationwide outbreak of e-cigarette and vaping associated lung injury. LLCHD staff were interviewed by local news and radio stations twice about the issue.
- From December-April 2020, LLCHD ran spoken and digital PSAs at Lincoln Lutheran varsity basketball games and Small Fry games (Salvation Army) highlighting the risk of youth use of e-cigarettes.
- The Lincoln City Council voted unanimously December 16 to prohibit e-cigarette use in indoor public places and workspaces. LLCHD staff was interviewed by local news and radio outlets seven times. The updated Lincoln Smoking Regulation Act ordinance went into effect January 1, 2020.
- The TFLC Facebook page ended 2019 with 260 likes, up 56 from last year. A total of 12,531 people were reached during this period, a 15% increase from last report (likely due to more regular posting and a boosted post in December). TFLC website garnered over 600 views in the last 60 days of 2019. The increased views are likely due to promoted content during Nebraska Cessation Week.

