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TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY RECOMMENDS HELPING EMPLOYEES QUIT TOBACCO

Good for business. Great for health.



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Pensacola, FL. – Tobacco Free Florida in Escambia County helps your business adopt tobacco free wellness policies for free.

While it is common knowledge that smoking is bad for the smoker, not many consider the effect this addiction has on local businesses. In Florida alone, the annual direct costs to the economy attributable to smoking exceed of \$19.6 billion, including: workplace productivity losses of \$4.4 billion; premature death losses of \$7.9 billion; and direct medical expenditures of \$7.2 billion.ⁱ Between both the additional healthcare costs and losses in productivity, an employee who smokes could cost a business more than \$6,000 every year.ⁱⁱ For each employee that quits, a business can save as much as \$2,000 per year through reduced insurance cost.ⁱⁱⁱ

Tobacco/nicotine dependence is a chronic and relapsing condition. More than 70 percent of smokers want to quit, but few will succeed without help. Tobacco use treatment doubles quitting success rates.

In Escambia County, local Tobacco Free Florida staff have worked for over a decade to support the tobacco free worksite initiative. Staff can provide technical assistance, print materials, and link employees to cessation resources free of charge.

Employers such as the Area Housing Commission-Public Housing Authority have drawn success from such services in Escambia County. Serving over 50 employees, The Area Housing Commission has seen major success in increased productivity and successful quit rates since going completely tobacco free in May of 2018. Housing manager Andrew Dale, states, “we are thankful for the signage and free technical assistance provided by the staff of Tobacco Free Florida in Escambia County.” continuing to note that “this service has been invaluable”.

Tobacco Free Florida recommends that employers implement a worksite model, which includes the following three principles:

- Provide employees with access to proven successful tobacco cessation medications and counseling.
- Create a supportive workplace environment that makes it easier for your employees to quit.
- Evaluate your progress and success and adapt your plan accordingly.

With the use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) expanding in recent years, it is important to note that these products are not an FDA approved cessation aid. “The use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) products is not a recommended method of tobacco cessation,” said Dr. Vanessa Phillips, Tobacco Prevention Specialist for Escambia County Florida. “We can assist your business in shaping a policy that provides approved, free, and convenient cessation options for your employees. Let’s start the New Year off right.”

Tobacco Free Florida’s Quit Your Way program makes it easier than ever for tobacco users to access evidence-based, free tools and services to help them quit tobacco. For more information, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway.

People can also access Tobacco Free Florida’s online Cost Calculator to find out how much money they could save by quitting smoking at tobaccofreeflorida.com/calculator.

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About Tobacco Free Worksites

The department works to ensure businesses have a seamless process when protecting themselves and their employees by incorporating tobacco free workplace policies. If your business is considering or needing more information about the adoption of tobacco free business policies, technical assistance is available to you, free of charge.

We are here to help you. To learn more about the tobacco free worksite initiatives, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/business.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://PublicHealthAccreditationBoard.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

About Tobacco Free Florida

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 236,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

ⁱ Penn State. "Potential Costs and Benefits of Smoking Cessation for Florida." 30 April 2010. Web. 1 March 2011. <http://www.lungusa.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/reports-resources/cessation-economic-benefits/reports/SmokingCessationTheEconomicBenefits.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Berman, Micah, Crane, Rob, Seiber, Eric, Munur, Mehmet. Estimating the cost of a smoking employee. *British Medical Journal*. 2014;176(12):1792-1798. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.6530.

ⁱⁱⁱ Berman, Micah, Crane, Rob, Seiber, Eric, Munur, Mehmet. Estimating the cost of a smoking employee. *British Medical Journal*. 2014;176(12):1792-1798. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.6530.