Prepare for a Change

Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing:
Guidance for Property Owners and Managers

☐ **Engage your Residents**

We advise giving your residents a short survey to get their feedback on the topic of smoke-free policies. Visit our website for a Sample Tenant Survey and Cover Letter. You may also decide to hold a resident meeting to discuss the issue.

☐ **Consider your Policy Options**

Will you have a 100 percent smoke-free campus? Will you ban smoking within some number of feet from the building? Will you create designated outdoor smoking areas that are accessible to persons with disabilities? If you create designated areas, make sure they are in places that will keep smoke away from non-smoking residents. Your decision will be influenced by the lay-out of your property, your budget, and the input of your residents. Will you "grandfather" existing smoking residents? Experienced property managers recommend against "grandfathering" due to the potential for confusion in enforcement and resentment among residents.

☐ **Provide Plenty of Advance Notice**

Review applicable state laws and your lease agreement to determine how much notice to provide. Consider giving at least several months' notice to allow residents a chance to adjust to the new policy. On our website, you will find a sample letter to send to residents to notify them of the change in policy. You will also find a sample flyer explaining the health benefits of smoke-free policies and how residents can access free resources to quit smoking.

☐ **Educate Residents and Staff**

Organize both staff and resident meetings to discuss the upcoming policy change, answer questions, and allow people a chance to voice their support or concerns. Explain why smoke-free policies are important to protect the health and safety of all residents. Provide information about smoking cessation resources, especially the free North Carolina Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Your local health department may be able to help provide you with materials and assistance to educate residents.