

A Success Story

Breathe Freely: Smoke Free Public Housing in Goldsboro, NC

“The HACG is proud to be a leader in Smoke Free Housing in North Carolina, and is diligently working with housing authorities across the state to provide them with resources and advice about complying with the new HUD rule. The HACG is dedicated to providing a healthier environment for its residents, and is grateful for the work of its community partners in the effort.”

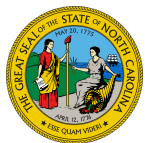
**Anthony Goodson, CEO,
HACG**

Summary: The Housing Authority City of Goldsboro (HACG) is leading the smoke-free effort for public housing authorities (PHAs) in NC by providing training materials for smoke-free housing to PHAs across the state, to ensure a healthier living environment for public housing residents, staff members and vendors.

Challenge: While the HACG previously had a policy moving smoking to 10-feet from buildings, the damaging effects from smoking remained an unresolved problem across its properties. The effects of secondhand smoke and maintenance costs due to smoking were a problem for HACG staff, and residents as well. There were some complaints ten feet was not enough distance to protect the housing units from secondhand smoke. Maintenance staff would spend hours picking up cigarette butts and repairing damage caused by smoking.

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) passed a rule requiring all public housing to implement a smoke free policy that includes cigarettes, cigars, and pipes by July 2018. This rule includes a distance of at least 25 feet from buildings, and does not include electronic cigarettes or smokeless tobacco.

Solution: To comply with the new HUD rule and ensure healthier living environments for residents, HACG decided to implement a 100% tobacco and smoke-free property policy across all its properties and offices. They also took the HUD rule a step further to include lit and inhaled tobacco, electronic cigarettes, K-2/Spice, marijuana, and smokeless tobacco. Due to the construction and maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of a designated smoking area, HACG decided not to provide one. This was disappointing for some residents and HACG staff, but it eliminated potential safety issues such as slips/trips/falls or fire hazards.



NC DEPARTMENT OF
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SMOKE FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING NORTH CAROLINA



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Results: HACG began the planning process before the HUD rule was released. The HACG Board of Commissioners were very supportive of the rule. HACG successfully implemented its tobacco/smoke free policy in all its developments effective January 1, 2017.

A large part of the smoke-free housing process for HACG was ensuring their residents understood the positive benefits of a smoke and tobacco-free environment. HACG also ensured their residents understood that smoke free does not mean 'smoker-free.' The HACG worked with community partners to provide resources for residents who were interested in smoking cessation. The primary partner for the HACG in this effort was the Wayne County Health Department, who is providing smoking cessation classes for residents to improve health habits and provided signage around the properties to remind residents of the smoke free policy.

Lessons Learned: "One of the biggest challenges we have in implementing the smoke-free rule is with people who are visiting our properties either as guests of the tenants, or as vendors and contractors working on site, said Jaqueline Kannan of HACG. "The signage is helping with this, but more time is needed before everyone is aware of the smoke-free policy on HACG properties."

Other lessons learn associated with implementing a 100% tobacco/smoke free policy include informing employees and vendors who are also on the property. HACG successfully informed staff of the new policy change, but had a more difficult time informing vendors that their property was now tobacco and smoke free.

Another challenge involved residents smoking in the street, since HACG technically doesn't own the street. To overcome this issue HACG worked with the City of Goldsboro to develop a contract and plan allowing HACG to enforce the policy in the street.

