

# Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

## Planting the Seeds for Tobacco Cessation

### At a Glance

Founded in 2012 and based in Portland, Maine, Garbage to Garden is the beloved curbside compost service that offers urban dwellers, schools and commercial businesses a convenient way to recycle food scraps, including meat, dairy and bones, to be used to renew local soil. In April 2020, the City of Portland's Tobacco Prevention Program partnered with Garbage to Garden to develop an action plan to support a healthier work environment and extend their values of environmental health to their team of employees.

### The Dirt

Although we have seen the number of smokers decrease in the last several decades, tobacco use remains the leading cause of illness and death in the United States. In 2019, a CDC study of U.S. adults yielded that about 19.6% of workers continue to smoke at their workplace. Tobacco use in the workplace imposes a major economic burden on society. In 2019, smoking cost the state of Maine \$811 million in health care costs and \$647 million in productivity loss.

Tobacco use in the workplace is not only costly, it also negatively affects the health of nonsmoking employees. The workplace is a major source of secondhand smoke exposure for adults, and this secondhand smoke exposure has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and lung cancer among adult nonsmokers.

### Time to Start Digging for Solutions!

It is concerning that the health of nonsmoking employees is compromised by the second hand smoke they experience at their workplace. Phoebe Lyttle, Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, knows that healthier workers are a fundamental part of keeping a workplace safe and productive. Phoebe acknowledged the importance and moral obligation of protecting the health of all Garbage to Garden employees, as well promoting a message of community sustainability that aligns with the values of Garbage to Garden.



"We love the vehicle window decals on our pick-up trucks, they look great. We love to learn more about the virtual presentation for smoking cessation training!"

- Phoebe Lyttle, Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator



### The Results

Smoke-free workplace policies are the only way to protect workers from secondhand smoke. There is no amount of cleaning, ventilating or creating separate areas for smokers that negates the effect of secondhand smoke. This led to Garbage to Garden adopting and implementing a best level policy to ensure that they are doing their due diligence to protect the health of all their workers, and demonstrates their commitment to promoting community wellness. But they did not stop there! The leadership team at Garbage to Garden have initiated the beginning stages of developing an Employee Wellness Incentive Program to encourage and reward employees that are proactive about maintaining healthy lifestyles. Included in the employee wellness incentive program are incentives towards tobacco cessation, and one of our favorite evidence-based tools to assist with kicking the habit – the Maine QuitLink!

### Sustaining Success

Our District Tobacco Prevention Partner (DTPP) will continue to sustain success with Garbage to Garden by offering tobacco prevention and cessation resources that will be included in their employee wellness incentive program. We are especially optimistic about the opportunity to offer non-clinical outreach to the leadership team at Garbage to Garden. Moving forward, they will provide tobacco prevention and cessation resources that will be included in their employee wellness incentive program. This could include a reference to the U.S. CDC guidance on best practice interventions for tobacco control.

### For More Information Contact Us At:

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