

# TACKLING TOBACCO, THE UNITED WAY

## Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

### AT A GLANCE

The United Way of Southern Maine is a private non-profit organization where communities come together to help children, individuals, and families in ways that create a brighter future for all. The United Way of Southern Maine is currently working towards their Thrive2027 initiative, three 10-year goals to improve education, financial stability, and health for every person in Southern Maine.

### PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death. Over 17% of adults in Maine are smokers and the incidence of tobacco related cancers in Maine is significantly higher than the U.S. rate. With vaping and e-cigarette use continuing to grow among Maine Youth. According to the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 45% of Maine youth have "ever used" e-cigarettes and 29% "currently use" e-cigarettes; both of these numbers have increased over the past two years. Implementing public health initiatives to promote healthy smoke-free lifestyles is an ongoing concern in the world of public health, but by working to create and improve tobacco policies enables more smoke-free spaces that many community members can utilize.

### APPROACH

The City of Portland Tobacco Prevention team worked with leadership at the United Way of Southern Maine's campus to improve upon its current tobacco policy. Working with the United Way to pass a tobacco policy was high priority for The City of Portland's Tobacco Prevention Team. When considering the overlapping work of both entities and sharing mutual community goals, strengthening the tobacco policy was imperative.

### RESULTS

The City of Portland's Tobacco Prevention Team worked with leadership at the United Way of Southern Maine's campus to improve upon its current tobacco policy. The updated tobacco-free policy instilled a more comprehensive understanding of what tobacco products are prohibited on the campus. The policy also uses language that addresses e-cigarettes and marijuana to ensure that the United Way campus is a smoke-free place for everyone to enjoy!



United Way  
of Southern Maine



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