



WWW.BUCKTOBACCO.ORG

TIP SHEET #8

Creating a Project Structure to Address Tobacco Sponsorship of Professional and College Rodeos

The following **steps toward establishing a rodeo project structure** can help establish a base from which to build community awareness and support for your work to pressure rodeo organizers to adopt a no-tobacco sponsorship policy.

1. Assign a project coordinator to manage the project and to recruit community members to support it.

2. Research your local rodeo. Find out when it is held, who organizes the event, tobacco sponsorship history, etc. Attend all rodeo events, take photographs of any tobacco sponsorship, and obtain a rodeo program. If possible, conduct a survey of rodeo attendees to see what they think about tobacco sponsorship.¹

3. Survey your community, including local businesses and people attending events, regarding their knowledge and attitudes about tobacco sponsorship of rodeos.

4. Find out if there are other rodeos or fairs nearby that have policies restricting smoking, tobacco use, or tobacco sponsorship. To start this process, contact your local health department or tobacco control coalition.^{2 3}

5. Enlist the support of a rodeo insider such as a professional or college cowboy, barrel racer, rodeo queen, rodeo clown, stock contractor, someone who has kids who compete in rodeo, or a longtime rodeo fan who has frequently attended your local rodeo and knows the local rodeo organizers and competitors. Rodeo insiders can assist you with learning the ropes of your local rodeo and can help get your message to the community and to the event decision makers.

- Start by contacting local organizations who may participate in rodeo or have an interest in it, such as local horse breeders or state quarter horse associations⁴ (make sure any group you want to work with does not have any existing tobacco sponsorship). It is likely that a significant amount of education regarding the problem of tobacco sponsorship will be needed. In addition, “Cowboy Ted” Hallisey’s website at www.cowboyted.com provides an insider’s view of rodeo and includes contact information for Cowboy Ted, who is involved in tobacco education for kids and works around the country to support tobacco awareness and healthy lifestyles.

6. Organize a Rodeo Steering Committee. The heart of a successful tobacco-free rodeo movement is the steering committee. The committee’s purpose is to assist the project coordinator in planning, coordinating, and implementing the advocacy activities. Its members can also serve as links to individuals and groups who can promote and/or participate in accomplishing the project’s objectives. Below are some tips for organizing a strong steering committee.

Recruit a diverse membership base. Consider the following potential candidates for your steering committee:⁵

- Rodeo insiders.
- Public sector state and local tobacco control advocates including experts dealing with tobacco sponsorship issues, people with health and demographic data, and members of local tobacco control coalitions that can support your grassroots advocacy activities. Start by contacting your state health department.
- People from health/family focused community-based organizations, public agencies (e.g., social services,

Rodeo insiders can assist you with learning the ropes of your local rodeo and can help get your message to the community and to the event decision makers.

Youth are often the best leaders in advocacy efforts around issues that affect them.

public health nursing), health-related volunteer agencies (e.g. American Lung Association, American Cancer Society, etc.), and local service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Soroptimist, etc.). They may have members who are rodeo event organizers who may be opposed to your efforts, so be sure to research these groups before approaching them.

- Ministers and members of faith-based organizations.
- Private sector health professionals who can serve as medical experts on the effects of tobacco use.
- **Consider incorporating young people into your steering committee.** Youth are often the best leaders in advocacy efforts around issues that affect them. With good training, they can also be extremely effective spokespersons on health issues, because decision makers often enjoy hearing from young people. Some successful anti-tobacco youth advocates have organized their own groups that run in tandem with an adult coalition. Look for youth advocates among youth components of the adult organizations listed above. Other sources include the local chapter of the high school rodeo association,⁶ existing anti-tobacco youth organizations, the local 4-H Club⁷ or Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter,⁸ and children of adult steering committee participants. Consider creating a website to showcase youth activities.⁹
- **If you are targeting a college rodeo,** college students should participate in the steering committee and should lead the planning and implementation of your activities.

Example of a useful project structure:

- It can be very effective to have local projects participate in a coordinated effort. For example, in California, the Buck Tobacco Sponsorship Project funded five local grantees to conduct campaigns to restrict sponsorship of local rodeos. The statewide office provides project coordination, advocacy training, media materials, media advocacy technical assistance, and monthly networking conference calls among the grantees.
- Even if funding is not available to establish a statewide office, local projects can benefit greatly from networking with other groups to share information, keep abreast of current developments, and find other ways to support each other. Your state health department may be able to help you find others working on the issue of tobacco sponsorship.

¹ See the Evaluating Your Rodeo Project and Resources Tip Sheets for more information.

² See the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) website at <http://www.astho.org> for a list of state health departments.

³ See the How to Develop a Policy for your Local Rodeo Tip Sheet for more information about researching existing policies.

⁴ See the Quarter Horse Directory website at <http://www.qhd.com/related> for a list of national, state and local horse associations.

⁵ See sample Recruitment Flyer at http://www.bucktobacco.org/projects/sd/poway_2003-7.pdf.

⁶ See National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA) website at <http://www.nhsra.org> for listing of state associations.

⁷ See <http://www.4-h.org/fourhweb> for links to local 4-H chapters.

⁸ See <http://www.ffa.org> for more information.

⁹ For example, see Fusion, a youth created, youth focused website for young anti-tobacco advocates. This group is a project of the California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN). <http://www.yourfusion.org>