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## United Way of Lane County

3171 Gateway Loop  
Springfield, OR 97477  
tel 541.741.6000  
fax 541.726.4150

[unitedwaylane.org](http://unitedwaylane.org)



### United Way of Lane County's Tobacco-Free Policy Experience

United Way of Lane County recognizes that the places where we live, work and play need to provide healthy, tobacco-free options so individuals can avoid chronic disease and live healthy lives. With each of our employees spending over 2,000 hours per year on the job, it's vital that our workplace encourages a healthy environment and promotes healthy choices. Given the unfortunate fact that tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of death in our community and the dangers associated with second hand smoke exposure, adopting and enforcing a tobacco and smoke-free campus policy has been a key component of promoting and contributing to a healthier community. Our policy helps ensure that employees, volunteers, clients, visitors, and vendors have opportunities to succeed in a healthy and safe environment.

United Way of Lane County adopted a tobacco-free campus policy in September 2013 to ensure a tobacco-free environment through positive and educational messaging that promotes the long term health and safety of employees and the public. The basis for the policy decision was rooted in the findings of the Lane County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and identified priorities of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). It was clear that a tobacco-free policy would support the collaborative efforts to create a healthier community and help support individuals in our community in their efforts to avoid or quit using tobacco products. Both the first and second CHIPs have included a focus on tobacco prevention with a goal to increase the tobacco-free environments in our community and address the main drivers of tobacco use. As a core CHIP partner, United Way is dedicated to advancing the priorities of the CHIP and improving individual and population health.

Implementing a tobacco-free campus policy has shown that United Way cares about each individual that enters the building, has reduced the triggers that act as barriers to people quitting, reduced how socially acceptable tobacco use is perceived to be, provided people who wanted to quit or who have quit the opportunity to be effective, and made the air cleaner and the campus more welcoming. As a testimony to the impact of United Way's tobacco-free campus policy, two of our current employees used to smoke cigarettes, and like the majority of people who use tobacco, they wanted to quit. By passing a tobacco-free campus policy we were able to provide a healthy environment for our employees and support them in making healthy decisions and breaking free from their addiction to nicotine.

In the Spring of 2017, almost four years after adopting our tobacco-free policy, United Way's Wellness Committee conducted an internal assessment of the organization's existing wellness efforts. The assessment highlighted United Way's written policy creating a tobacco-free workplace, actively enforcing the written policy, and displaying signage with information about the tobacco-free campus. Staff commented that the organization's tobacco-free policy promotes a culture of health and wellness for them and the community partners that regularly come to the building.

United Way of Lane County, like many organizations in the community, wants everyone in Lane County to be able to live, learn, work, and play in places that support their desires to be healthy and thriving. We recognize that one of our responsibilities includes providing healthy environments for the members of this community. We are proud to say that our campus is tobacco-free so people can be better supported in making healthy choices. We encourage other organizations to join the pack of leaders across the community and go tobacco-free!