

Technical Assistance Ecosystem

Advancing Health and Racial Equity for a Stronger Colorado

FY27-29

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Important Note: In this document, tobacco refers specifically to the use of manufactured, commercial tobacco products sold for profit — and not the sacred, medicinal, and traditional use of tobacco by American Indian people and other groups.

[State of Colorado Accessibility Statement and Support](#)

Introduction

Whether you work in a local public health agency or a community-based organization, or serve as a consulting partner, you play an important role in helping Coloradans overcome tobacco and nicotine addiction.

You are not in this alone.

As an Amendment 35 and Proposition EE-funded grantee or statewide partner, you're part of a powerful network of professionals who are working to end commercial tobacco/nicotine product use and exposure to secondhand smoke and vape in Colorado. Across the state, there are agencies and individuals by your side – people with great passion and experience, deep commitment, and a shared vision.

The TA Ecosystem includes three critical partners:

1. STEPP grantees
2. TA providers (statewide TA provision & project-specific partners)
3. STEPP staff

Together, we are making tobacco control history. Positive change in one community can create momentum that impacts the entire state. Conversely, changes that negatively impact one community can threaten our collective progress. The Colorado 2030 Tobacco Education, Prevention, & Cessation Strategic Plan identifies priority populations who have benefited least from our efforts to date, including American Indian/Alaska Natives, rural communities, LGBTQ+ people, Black/African American Coloradans, Hispanic/Latino men, Medicaid members, and people living with a behavioral health condition.

As Colorado's tobacco control movement, our collective strength is greater than the sum of our parts, working together to end tobacco/nicotine addiction in Colorado.

Overview

STEPP's approach to training and technical assistance (TA) is rooted in a commitment to building relationships throughout the TA Ecosystem: between grantees, TA providers, and STEPP staff. We center on developing a deep understanding of each Colorado community's unique needs and provide the highest quality workforce development for local public health and community-based organizations to:

- Meet the bold aims, goals, and strategies outlined in the Colorado 2030 Tobacco Education, Prevention, & Cessation Strategic Plan.
- Conduct the required capacity-building activities in the Community Tobacco/Nicotine Initiatives Framework for Local Public Health Agencies Framework
- Implement the selected evidence-based strategies from the Framework.
- We embrace cultural humility, open and respectful dialogue, and foster a culture of continuous learning. Together, we work in concert to eliminate tobacco/nicotine-related disparities and improve health outcomes for all Coloradans.

STEPP's role is to drive the statewide tobacco/nicotine control movement by staying abreast of the national tobacco/nicotine control landscape and the state's current context, setting direction, and providing clear guidance to enable evidence-based programming.

TA providers translate research and evidence-based strategies into community practice, creating tools and resources to support equitable implementation of tobacco/nicotine control strategies by local grantees.

STEPP grantees provide education and support of community mobilization efforts that facilitate and promote local policy and environmental change.

[Visit the Community Tobacco/Nicotine Initiatives Framework for Local Public Health Agencies](#)

[Visit the Colorado 2030 Tobacco Education, Prevention, & Cessation Strategic Plan](#)

Grantees

Grantees throughout Colorado have been contracted by STEPP to work on local policy and health systems change, tobacco/nicotine cessation, and youth prevention. STEPP grantees are at the forefront of advancing Coloradans' understanding of the burden of commercial tobacco/nicotine's burden, educating their communities on how to take action, and supporting communities in the eventual adoption of local, evidence-based policies.

Grantees' Roles and Responsibilities Include:

- Working closely with STEPP's contracted TA providers to facilitate and promote their work.
- Assessing and educating on the impact of tobacco/nicotine on their community.
- Completing the Practicing Cultural Humility online training modules.
- Identifying and working to address tobacco/nicotine-related disparities.
- Working to facilitate and promote local policy and systems change.
- Local community engagement and effective coalition building.
- Using the available template media campaigns.
- Participating in training and TA designed to increase their capacity.
- Aligning their work with CDC Best Practices and STEPP's goal-area requirements.
- Co-developing Implementation Plans with TA providers.
- Reporting progress on their Implementation Plan.

[Review and complete the Practicing Cultural Humility online series](#)

State Tobacco Education & Prevention Partnership (STEPP)

STEPP staff members have dual roles. Each person serves as a State Subject Matter Expert (SME) and as a Project Officer (PO). All STEPP staff and TA providers work closely to coordinate the guidance they provide to grantees.

STEPP Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

STEPP staff members serve as state experts focused on a particular aspect of tobacco/nicotine control. Subject Matter Experts' deep and specialized knowledge guides the work of the grant program, informs the strategic plan, the core framework for local public health and community organization grantees, and all STEPP solicitations, e.g., RFAs and RFPs for innovative projects to build the evidence base. Each STEPP Subject Matter Expert has a TA provider counterpart, who delivers ongoing training and technical assistance to grantees.

- SMEs are very familiar with best practices for tobacco/nicotine control, both within and outside of Colorado, and identify how to apply national resources to inform the effectiveness of state and local efforts and operational systems.
- SMEs identify and communicate opportunities to align local and state-wide efforts that support tobacco/nicotine control. They use Colorado and national data, evidence-based practices and public health literature to shape STEPP's program priorities.
- SMEs can provide knowledge and expertise both on tobacco/nicotine-specific topics, such as secondhand smoke and/or vape, and cessation, as well as more general topics like communications and data/surveillance, but are not assigned to provide TA with specific grantees on an ongoing basis.
- When needed, grantees may be referred by their project officer to an SME for additional guidance or support.

SME Primary Responsibilities:

- Provides specialized knowledge and expertise.
- Focused on a particular aspect of tobacco/nicotine control.
- Works closely with their TA provider counterpart to align training and technical assistance with STEPP guidance.
- Connects with grantees when needed through their project officer.

STEPP Project Officer (POs) Duties

STEPP staff also have project officer duties. POs are the **main point of contact** for grantees and provide STEPP oversight of the grantee's contract and budget. PO duties include conducting regular contract monitoring meetings with the grantees they support. Grantees should reach out to their project officer for any questions related to their contract or budget.

- POs answer grantees' questions, build an understanding of their unique needs, and help them to solve problems.
- POs support grantees in overcoming their barriers to success and connect grantees to resources as needed, including STEPP's contracted TA providers, STEPP subject matter experts, data, and other tools and materials.
- If a grantee experiences a change of staff within their own agency, the PO helps to ensure their agency's work can continue by helping to onboard and inform new, incoming staff.

[Locate all grantees' project officer assignments with the STEPP External Contact List](#)

Project Officer Primary Responsibilities:

- Main STEPP point of contact for grantees.
- Provides initial onboarding to the STEPP grant.
- Contract monitoring, including: monitoring work progress, reviewing grantee reporting, and conducting grantee performance evaluations.
- Connects grantees to the appropriate TA Providers for technical assistance, and to other available state and national resources.

Training & Technical Assistance Providers (TA)

In addition to STEPP staff, grantees work with the program's TA providers, organizations funded by STEPP, to provide training and technical assistance to grantees for comprehensive tobacco/nicotine programming, such as centering authentic community engagement, supporting local-level policy and systems change, access to culturally relevant cessation support, and evaluation, to name a few.

This is a proactive, intensive role, with TA providers actively engaging grantees throughout the grant cycle. Intensive TA builds grantees' knowledge, skills, and abilities through training and customized, one-to-one support. Grantees then put strategies into action, with fidelity.

The objective is to enable grantees to replicate what they have learned and ultimately support meaningful community change and sustaining successes.

[Visit the list of TA providers on Tobacco Free CO, including summaries of their work and examples of the support they provide](#)

TA Provider Primary Responsibilities:

- Provide ongoing technical assistance for grantees, both remotely and in-person in grantee communities.
- Conduct topic-specific training for grantees at both a group (i.e., regional) and individual level.
- Coordinate with STEPP, fellow TA providers, and other statewide partners to support grantees and ensure a seamless provision of services.
- Develop and maintain resources such as templated tobacco/nicotine control media campaigns and other resources created for STEPP grantees.
- Provide ongoing training and one-to-one technical assistance for grantees.
- Build grantees' capacity through new knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Develop specialized tools/resources for grantees.

Statewide technical assistance is provided for grantees in the following subject areas, as well as for the required capacity-building activities:

Type of TA/Specialty	TA Provider
Health Equity and Social Justice	New TA provider to be announced in FY27
Centering Authentic Community Engagement	Policy + Systems Change Network, Center for Public Health Practice, Colorado School of Public Health
Program Evaluation & Quarterly Progress Reports	Community Epidemiology & Program Evaluation Group (CEPEG)
Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing Policy	Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE)
Tobacco Product Waste Diversion	Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. (PSI)
Commercial Tobacco Treatment, Cessation & Health Systems Change	Behavioral Health & Wellness Program, University of Colorado
Tobacco-Free Schools Policy and Second Chance Alternative to Suspension Program	Action For Healthy Kids
Templated Media Campaigns & Communications to Support Policy	Sukle Advertising & Design, Inline Media
Youth Engagement, Adult/Youth Partnership	UpRISE
Required Capacity-Building Activities	See the TA provider page on TobaccoFreeCO.org/grantee

*The Center for Black Health & Equity provides training and technical assistance that focuses on all STEPP priority populations. The Center will also connect grantees to the national network of sibling agencies as appropriate.

Although they provide intensive, ongoing technical assistance around specific subject areas, TA providers do have some limitations on the amount of support they can provide to each grantee. Their respective scopes of work assume a certain level of support for all grantees working on A35 and Prop EE-funded activities. On occasion, grantees may submit requests that go beyond the services TA providers offer.

Below are examples of the types of TA requests TA providers may/may not be able to address:

Example of TA Provided	Example of TA Not Provided
Help you to identify which ads to use.	Develop a custom ad campaign for you and your community.
Train your coalition in how to present your policy to City Council.	Make a presentation to your City Council.
Provide an overview of the legality of policy options you are considering.	Provide legal representation for a grantee organization or individual.
Help you to develop relationships with school districts.	Provide direct training for school districts and maintain those relationships for you.

Project-specific TA Providers

STEPP contracts with some organizations to implement a particular tobacco/nicotine control program. These project-specific program providers only provide TA to grantees on these specific projects, rather than TA to build overall goal-area capacity.

Project-specific TA Provider Primary Responsibilities:

- Implement a particular tobacco/nicotine control program
- Provide focused, program-specific TA to grantees

Project or Program	Program Provider
Colorado Medicaid Benefits Promotion	STEPP
Strong Start	University of Colorado Cancer Center
Marijuana*	CDPHE, Retail Marijuana Prevention Program (RMEP)

*Grantees may address marijuana use if appropriate within the course of their normal tobacco/nicotine control work. Technical assistance is available through CDPHE's Retail Marijuana Prevention Program (RMEP), which is not funded through STEPP.