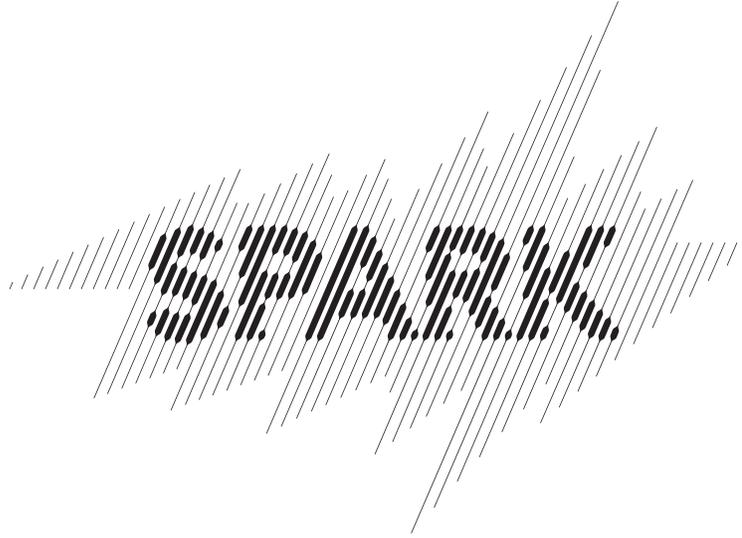


Advocacy Guide

Fall 2014



ABOUT SPARK

A Wisconsin-wide, state-supported program, Spark helps college campuses pass tobacco-free policies and educate campus communities that tobacco in all its forms is a threat. Spark empowers young adults by giving them a platform and an opportunity to be advocates on their campus.

Spark believes that:

- Smoke-free isn't enough. All tobacco needs to be off our campuses.
- We can protect our campuses, towns, cities, friends and families from tobacco's toll.
- We are the key to supporting efforts to continue funding for a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program here in Wisconsin.
- By speaking the truth about tobacco to students on campus, to city and state government leaders, to our peers and to other community groups, we can make a difference.

WHAT ADVOCACY MEANS

There is a fine line between lobbying and advocacy. Spark is funded by the state of Wisconsin, which means we aren't allowed to lobby. But that doesn't mean we can't get a lot done — we just need to be mindful of how we deliver our message.

Actions considered advocacy:

- Meeting with a legislator to discuss a social problem, without mentioning a specific proposal.
- Providing a legislator with educational materials about a specific piece of legislation, without calling for specific action on the legislation.
- Responding to a request from a legislative committee for information about a specific piece of legislation.
- Tracking activities of legislators, including votes, positions taken, contributions accepted, etc.
- Talking to the media about your issue.
- Advocating for better enforcement of existing laws.
- Conducting public education campaigns.
- Producing and distributing research reports or studies that provide non-partisan analysis on policy issues, including specific legislative issues.
- Advocating for the enactment and enforcement of private or voluntary policies.
- A newsletter to your members providing info about a specific piece of legislation, but not a specific call to action.

Visit www.tobwis.org for more advocacy examples.

Communication is considered lobbying if it:

- Reflects a view and encourages a specific action for a specific piece of legislation.

For example:

- It would be considered lobbying to ask whomever you are speaking with to vote a certain way or take a specific action on a specific piece of legislation.
- It is not lobbying to sit in your Senator's office and discuss a specific piece of legislation, as long as you don't push for a specific action on that legislation.
- It is not lobbying to sit in the same office and discuss your position on a policy issue as long as the discussion is not about a specific bill.

PLANNING AN ACTIVISM EVENT

One of the most important parts of being an activist is taking action. Events are one of the best ways to share our message and educate the campus community. These events need to be well thought out and well executed. We need to make sure that our message is heard loud and clear if we want to make a difference.

Here is a checklist to get you on your way. Once you have answers to these questions, you should keep coming back to them as you plan your event to be sure that each step along the way is the right one.

Activism event checklist:

- Whom do you want to reach with your message to achieve change?
- What is the best way to communicate with your audience?
- What is the key message you want the audience to remember?
- What are problems that you could run into?
- Who can work with you?

LOOKING FOR SOME EXAMPLES?

Here are a few ideas to get you started, but don't limit yourself to these options — be creative and don't be afraid to think big.

Sample activism events:

- Have a Spark table on campus where students can trade in their tobacco products for a cold turkey sandwich. You could get sandwiches donated from the cafeteria, local sandwich shops or cafes.
- Do a sidewalk chalking of the Spark logo. Take a picture and post it to the Spark Facebook page and list its location.
- At a booth on campus, have students, staff and faculty write why they support a tobacco-free campus on a whiteboard. Take pictures of each person with their reason and post it to your social media pages.

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are great when you want to comment on something that's been in the news or you want to bring attention to an issue. You get to control what's being said and your letter gets read by lots of people. Good LTEs:

- Are 250 words or less.
- Stay positive by sticking to the message without responding to attacks.
- Tell a local story that talks more about people than statistics.
- Don't use too many technical terms.

THE THREE COMPONENTS OF A GOOD LETTER:

The lead

Keep your opening paragraph short and punchy, like these two examples:

- "Tobacco-free college campuses create a healthier and greener environment for students, faculty and staff."
- "New tobacco products are flavored and packaged to look like candy."

The body

Use the bulk of the letter to repeat your primary message. The goal of a letter is to repeat the central message, not attack critics. Spark's primary messages are:

- Wisconsin college campuses should be tobacco-free.
- The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program saves Wisconsin lives and health care costs.
- New flavored tobacco products may look harmless, but they can have serious health consequences. There's no safe level of tobacco use.

The conclusion

Start by repeating the positive message and end with a call to action.

- "A lot of good has been done to prevent young adults from smoking cigarettes. But other deadly products such as snus, hookah, e-cigarettes and mini-cigars have moved in. Funding for tobacco prevention and control programs in Wisconsin is important. Please share your successful tobacco-free campus efforts with your campus community and legislators."

Sample LTE

Dear Editor,

It's always hard to say goodbye to summer, but as I get ready to return to campus, I find there are a lot of things to look forward to. Among them are things like seeing old friends (and making new ones) and catching lunch at the Memorial Union.

However, one thing I'm not looking forward to this year is being exposed to secondhand smoke and tobacco products on campus. One of the things I did NOT miss this summer was walking through clouds of secondhand smoke while going to and from class.

It's time for our school to adopt a tobacco-free campus policy. Such a policy would provide students, faculty, and staff with a cleaner and healthier environment and allow freshmen to start their college experience in a positive way.

Since all forms of tobacco are harmful, our campus should adopt a comprehensive tobacco-free policy. The policy would improve health and also give tobacco users on campus a good reason to quit.

By establishing a tobacco-free policy, administration and student government would show that they care about student health as well as academic achievement.

If you're interested in making our campus tobacco-free, contact the student involvement office or visit our website at www.sparkwi.org.

Students and staff that use tobacco products can call 1-800-QUIT NOW for free help.

Sincerely,
(Your name)
(Your address)

PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are used to promote local events or to draw attention to the local angle of a national or state-wide story. A press release is not the story, but rather a prompt to draw reporter interest and a tool that allows you to frame the issue in their mind.

The six steps to writing a great press release:

- Write an attention-grabbing headline.
- Summarize the who, what, when, where, and why in your first sentence.
- Double-space your release.
- Use strong quotes.
- Use only basic facts.
- Include the name and phone number of the person available for additional comment.

Press release checklist:

- Start with:
For Immediate Release
DATE
Contact: NAME
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX
- Is the release on letterhead?
- Does the release contain a website address for more information?
- Do you have quotes from key leaders? Have you cleared them with those being quoted?
- Is the headline short?
- Did you check spelling?
- Is ### at the end? It means "the end."
- Who is sending the press release?
- Who is making follow-up phone calls to the media?
- Is the release marked for immediate release?
- Is the contact person's name and phone number listed at the top?
- Does the first paragraph explain who, what, when, where, why?
- Are there other media conflicts (like another major event)?

Sample press release

Spark
(Your headquarters address)
For Immediate Release
(Date)
Contact: (Your name)
Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Students Organize to Reduce Tobacco Use on Campus

MADISON, WI - On Saturday, April 2, students will be holding an event at the Memorial Union to discuss ideas about how to reduce tobacco usage on campus. Use of smokeless and other tobacco products is on the rise in Madison. Student leader John Doe said, "We're not allowed to smoke in campus buildings, but that hasn't stopped people from using other tobacco products on campus. We're here to figure out how to limit that by making some rule changes."

These dedicated students are members of a tobacco prevention group called "Spark." Members are working with the campus community to reduce tobacco's presence on their campus.

"It's really important that people realize these products are deadly. I've heard a lot of people around campus talking about how they quit smoking and started using pouches, mini-cigars or things like that," said another student leader Jane Doe. "They need to realize they are still doing damage to their bodies. If we could get rid of tobacco products on campus, we'd be doing a lot of people a lot of good."

The event will include a brainstorming session followed by an action-planning meeting where students will detail the steps they plan to take to limit tobacco products on campus. Spark members are quick to point out that they are not against tobacco users, but rather the companies that produce deadly tobacco products. "We're not here to demonize tobacco users. We understand that addiction is a tough thing to overcome. We just want to help people lead healthier lives by reducing tobacco's impact on our generation," added Jane Doe.

For more information on Spark, contact the student involvement office or visit www.sparkwi.org.

###

MEETING WITH LEADERS

Getting in front of legislators, community leaders or campus officials is critical to instigating change in tobacco prevention and control policy. Speaking with them is a huge opportunity to get your message out. Here are some do's and don'ts for having a successful meeting with an official:

Do:

- Identify yourself and whom you represent every time you make contact.
- Know the issue or the status of the legislation being discussed.
- Be brief (10 minutes or less) and say thank you.
- Be specific and practical. Relate arguments to situations in the legislator's home district.
- Talk with legislators even if their positions differ from yours.
- Be honest. NEVER lie. Acknowledge opposing arguments.
- Leave behind a one-page fact sheet summarizing your main points. Highlight important facts and arguments. Include your name, address and telephone number so you can be reached if there are any questions.

Don't:

- Arrive with a crowd or back legislators into a corner.
- Overwhelm them with too much information or jargon.
- Get into lengthy arguments.
- Be afraid to say you don't know. If you are unsure about something, offer to find out and send the information soon.
- Confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
- Expect legislators to be specialists. Their schedules and the number of bills they deal with make them generalists.

PROVIDING TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE

A new budget for Wisconsin is released every two years. As part of the budget process, the Joint Finance Committee holds hearings across the state to get public input, which it uses to provide budget recommendations to the State Legislature. Strong, consistent communication to this group gives us a better chance to continue reducing tobacco's impact on young adults.

The most important part of your testimony is the message and personal story you tell.

STEPS TO ADDRESSING THE COMMITTEE

Greet everyone

A greeting to the "Chairperson and Members of the Committee" and an introduction of who you are and where you live.

Say why you are there

An explanation about why the issue of tobacco prevention and control is important to you.

Provide a story

A brief story about how this issue has personally affected you.

Repeat why you are there

A summary and solution.

Close

A thank you for being able to share your thoughts.

Other good advice:

- It's best to speak in the first person when addressing the committee because telling your own story is more powerful than telling someone else's.
- Use your real voice. Think about how you would tell your story to your best friend. Your everyday language will sound authentic and sincere.
- Paint a picture. Use words that create an image. Include telling details. "I'm friends with students who gave up cigarettes only to get sucked back in with other tobacco products. They're still doing permanent damage to their bodies but they can't help it because they are addicted" is better than "I have friends who are still addicted to tobacco products."
- Use great quotes. Think short, powerful sound bites. "I've never been a tobacco user, but I'm sick of seeing my friends hurt themselves."
- End happy and show a solution. Legislators want to solve problems and make things better. "I see every day with my own eyes the impact tobacco prevention funding has on my campus — with continued funding we can carry on our efforts to reduce the harms of tobacco."
- Bring 20 copies of your testimony, written or oral, to the hearing.

Additional advice for written testimony:

- Keep your testimony to one page.
- Use your organization's letterhead if your testimony is educational and you are writing as a representative.
- Include a photograph. Try to show the person highlighted in your story in their environment.
- If you are providing spoken testimony, your written testimony does not have to be exactly the same. However, you should focus on the same key points or messages.
- If unable to attend the hearing, provide your written testimony to the Spark Coordinator.
- Include your home address.
- Send a copy of your testimony to your legislators with a note about your submission. If one of your legislators is on the Joint Finance Committee, include a note thanking them for their attention.

Sample oral testimony

Good morning Chairperson and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is (your name). I live in (your city) and am a student at (your school).

I am here to speak about the importance of Spark, an organization funded by the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program.

When I was young, both of my parents smoked. Over the years, two things have happened. I developed asthma, and my parents both quit smoking. It seems in society today that people don't quit doing something that is potentially dangerous until something bad happens to either themselves, or someone they love. This is exactly what happened in my case. Getting diagnosed with asthma was motivation for my parents to quit using tobacco products. Instead of waiting until something bad happens, why not just prevent the behavior in the first place? This realization was one of the things that made me want to join our tobacco-free campus committee.

As part of this committee, I have been working a lot with publicizing the fact that we are implementing a tobacco-free campus. I have been promoting this change by making posters, talking with students, faculty and staff about the topic, and writing articles. The majority of our committee's tobacco-free campus activities wouldn't be possible without Spark. Spark has helped us by continually providing support and information that has been very helpful in the process of becoming a tobacco-free campus.

I am so thankful that tobacco prevention and control programs such as Spark exist because they generate awareness of our efforts and make our activities more effective. When our tobacco-free campus policy goes into effect, it will encourage students, faculty and staff to refrain from using tobacco products both on and off campus. Overall, this policy will create a much healthier environment to work, learn and live in.

Thank you for the chance to speak to you today.



**AMERICAN
LUNG
ASSOCIATION**
IN WISCONSIN