



April 2026



Happy April Rural Partners!

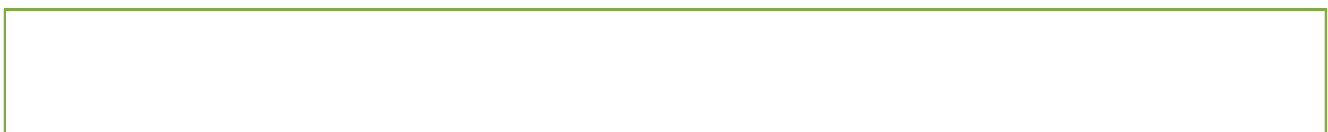
We know lasting progress is centered in shared vision, commitment, and local action. We hope your project activities are coming into full spring swing as the weather turns warmer (and even hot in some places!) and the pace of local community events picks up. Remember, RISE is here to offer insights and guidance on a variety of topics, including campaign execution, public comments, general plan work, and more!

With care,

Shelly, JoAnn, & Sue



Upcoming Events



2026 RISE Up Leadership Academy



Empowering change in rural communities



Virtual via Zoom

April 8 & 9, 2026
10:00 - 11:30 AM



[REGISTER HERE](#)

This training is for you if...

- You are Local Lead Agency or Competitive Grantee staff serving a rural community
- You have never given public comment before an elected body

Topics Include

- Identifying your local jurisdiction process for public comment
- Elements of an effective public comment
- Practicing comments with peers
- **Capstone Project:** giving public comment at your local jurisdiction & reporting back at Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW) May 19, 2026

Registration Deadline

April 1, 2026

Questions?

sbrantley@healthcollaborative.org
530.345.2483 x 216

!REGISTRATION CLOSING TOMORROW!

2026 RISE Up Leadership Academy, April 8 & 9, 2026, 10:00AM - 11:30AM

before a local elected body, like at a board of supervisors or city council meeting. Registration closes April 1st—no fooling!

[Register](#)



!! New name!!

**Rural Tobacco & Nicotine Treatment Cessation Discussion Group
(Bimonthly)**

First Monday of every other month

April 6, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 854 6565 2523

Passcode: 265859

Phone in: 669-444-9171

Informal discussion group hosted by RISE for all things cessation in our rural communities. Contact [JoAnn Saccato](#) for more information and with your topic ideas.



Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW)

Third Tuesday of the month

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Topics / Guests

Topic or guest ideas? Contact jsaccato@healthcollaborative.org

The Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW) is a monthly workgroup hosted by RISE for rural projects to learn, share information, network, celebrate wins, and brainstorm challenges. Invitation only. Contact [Shelly Brantley](#).



RISE Office Hours: Urban and Suburban Projects

Third Thursday of the month
Thursday, April 16, 2026
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 893 3587 8656

Passcode: 527327

Phone in: 669-444-9171

****NOTE: If you have difficulty getting into the Zoom room, use the Meeting ID and Passcode (above) in your own Zoom account/app.****

Rural News & Successes

NEWLY RELEASED: Interpretive Qualitative Study in California's Rural North Explores Social and Structural Drivers of Nicotine and Tobacco Use in Young Adults

Rural inequities exist and while most users of tobacco and nicotine products begin their use in adolescence, research surrounding the drivers of rural young people who use is scant. These drivers are explored in a recent study published in the *Journal of Critical Public Health*, [Drivers of Rural Inequities in Nicotine and Tobacco Use: A qualitative study of emerging and early established adults in California's North State in the USA](#).

Lead author, Tamar M. J. Antin, DrPH, MAA, Director of the [Center for Critical Public Health](#), Senior Scientist at the [Institute for Scientific Analysis](#), and a recipient of [Tobacco Related Disease Research Program \(TRDRP\)](#) research funding, has focused her research work in the rural north to better understand drivers and conditions that lead to rural disparities in nicotine and tobacco use.

Journal of Critical Public Health, Online First (2020)

Research Paper

Drivers of rural inequities in nicotine and tobacco use: A qualitative study of emerging and early established adults in California's North State in the USA

Tamar Antin¹, Emile Sanders¹, Elaina Peterkin¹, Sharon Lippeman-Kreeda^{1,2}, Geoffrey Hunt^{1,3}, Shelly Banthey⁴, and Rachelle Annechino¹

¹ Center for Critical Public Health @ the Institute for Scientific Analysis, Alameda, California, USA; ² Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, California, USA; ³ Center for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus, Denmark; ⁴ Rural Initiatives Strengthening Equity Program of the California Health Collaborative, Chico, California, USA

* Corresponding author: Tamar Antin, tamar@criticalpublichealth.org

Rural inequities throughout the United States (US) experience inequities related to nicotine and tobacco use, including heavier and more frequent smoking, compared to people living in urban areas. These inequities are evident in rural northern California, where the prevalence of smoking among adults is double that of the state average. To understand the social and structural drivers underlying these tobacco-related inequities, we conducted a qualitative study with 27 rural emerging and early established adults in California's north-central and northeastern counties, who all had current or past experience with nicotine and tobacco products. From a purpose and snowball-sampled analysis of the narrative data, we interpreted six themes related to the social and structural determinants of nicotine and tobacco use for younger rural adults in our sample: rural landings, rural migration of smoking, stigmatization of smoking initiation, pleasure, and harm reduction and competing needs. We contextualize these themes within the broader literature to illustrate the unique messages and roles of nicotine and tobacco use within the lives of rural, younger adults. By attending to their social and structural pressures, public health can more effectively receive alternative approaches to tobacco prevention and treatment that simultaneously support overall health equity for rural adults.

Introduction

The prevalence of smoking in the United States (US) has decreased during the past few decades (Young et al. 2019), but this decrease has not been experienced equally. One neglected population in tobacco research is rural adults, who experience substantial inequities related to nicotine and tobacco (NT) use

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Read the
Research Paper

2026 Brown Act Modernization Act

Opportunities for Community Engagement

This document is intended to help rural tobacco prevention projects understand recent changes to the 2026 Brown Act Modernization Act that may support their policy adoption work. It is not exhaustive of changes, requirements, and exceptions to the 2026 Brown Act Modernization Act (Modernization Act). Clarifying questions may need to be brought to your local elected body's legal counsel. As well, you can reach out to RISE and the Public Health Law Center for support. Full text of the Brown Act Modernization Act can be found here: [SB 707](#).

History

Through the Ralph M. Brown Act of 1953, California requires, with specific exceptions, that all meetings of a legislative body be open and public, and that all persons be permitted to attend and participate. At the time of its inception, meetings needed to be noticed and held in a public physical space. In 1988, teleconferencing exceptions were added allowing remote participation by elected officials and the public under certain conditions and with strict notification protocols and quorum requirements. In 2021, during the COVID pandemic emergency, and because of expanded available technology, the Brown Act was amended to allow local agencies to hold remote virtual meetings with less constrictions and expanded technology requirements, including two-way telephonic or an audio-visual platform, so participation could take place while ensuring public health and safety. To further enhance public participation with currently available technology, the Brown Act Modernization Act of 2025/26 (SB 707), became effective January, 2026, with some provisions becoming effective July 1, 2026.

Is Your Community Impacted?

Certain updates in the Modernization Act are applicable to what are known as **Eligible Legislative Bodies (ELBs)**. ELBs generally include city councils and county boards of supervisors in jurisdictions with populations of 30,000 or more, city councils located in counties of 600,000 or more, and certain special districts. To learn your county's population, visit: https://www.california-demographics.com/counties_by_population



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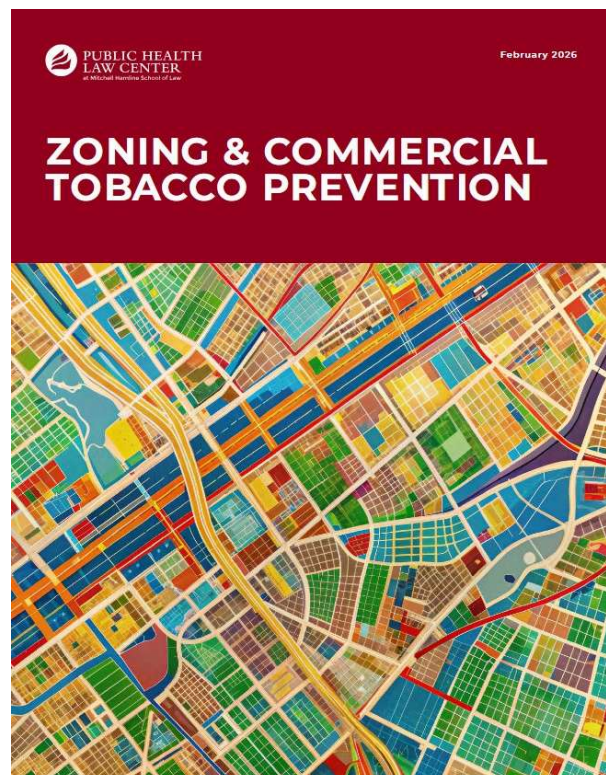
New Resource for Rural Community Engagement Available

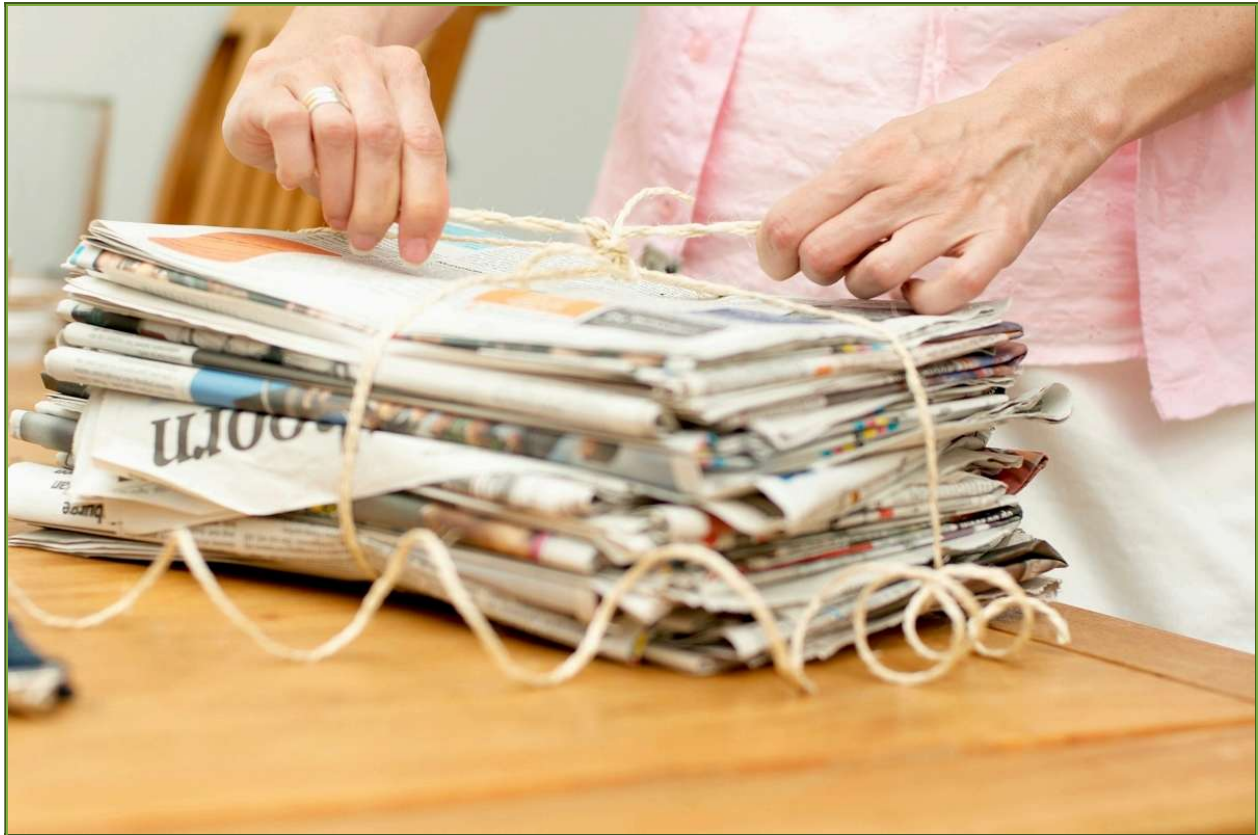
RISE's [2026 Brown Act Modernization Act: Opportunities for Community Engagement](#) educational material is now available on the [RISE Educational Materials](#) page on the [RISE website](#). A brief history of the Brown Act, how to determine if your community is impacted by new requirements, and ways for rural projects to use the changes to engage more community members are included in the document.

[Access the Material](#)

New Publication Offers Strategies for Commercial Tobacco Prevention through Local Zoning Codes

As more and more rural communities look for unique ways to codify tobacco prevention in their communities, the Public Health Law Center released as supportive document, [Zoning and Commercial Tobacco Prevention](#). Intended for a national audience, particularly those communities in states where preemption for local tobacco prevention exists, the document offers strategies to address proximity and caps outside a tobacco retail license. The document also includes pros and cons to this approach.





In the News...

[How Zyn is Taking Over the Cigarette Industry](#): Bloomberg Television, Wall Street Week

[Nicotine pouches are everywhere – except in the trash](#): NBC News

[Everything You Need to Know About Nicotine Pouches](#): The Pharmaceutical Journal

Normalizing Endgame

Last month we featured the [Making Tobacco Industry Elimination Inevitable](#) report, the latest thinking in tobacco

Key tobacco endgame' statements

"A snake that sheds its skin is still a snake. New products, same deadly industry."

"We must move from controlling tobacco to abolishing the industry that profits from addiction and causes disease and death."

"Just as we eliminated leaded gasoline and asbestos, we can and must eliminate the tobacco industry."

"Tobacco endgame is the only option to fully free ourselves from an industry that has repeatedly proven unworthy of our trust and health."

"This isn't about who smokes and who doesn't. We're all victims of an aggressive industry that deliberately engineered addiction."

"Bold political leadership creates space for public demand. Strong public demand creates space for political leadership."

"Health creation for all, not wealth creation for a few."

"The public demands tobacco industry elimination—politicians need to catch up."

"They profit from people until the end, until people make it end."

"Tobacco industry elimination, not accommodation."

"The tobacco endgame isn't radical—it's realistic."

"At what age do you want your children or grandchildren to start smoking? If never, let's end the tobacco industry so they aren't at risk."

"The endgame is about ending supply, not just reducing demand. We need production cessation, not just consumption cessation."

Talking points are key to normalization and this page from the report offers some powerful statements for us to consider in our work.

[See The Full Report](#)

Trending Tidbits



\$100,000 Reward for Hijacked Nicotine Pouches

A truck carrying 378,000 tins of Tucker Carlson's limited-edition ALP "Drifters" was stolen en route to Kentucky. Carlson, a conservative political activist and past Fox Entertainment commentator, used Zyn on a daily basis until a rift with PMI prompted him to launch his own nicotine pouch business in late 2024.



Reminder: RISE is Here to Help!

Need help building your work plan? Reporting? Learning how to engage with community? RISE is here to help with these topics and more. Email [JoAnn](#) or [Shelly](#) for technical assistance or submit a request using the link below.

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