



*January 2026*



Warm Greetings Rural Partners,

As we return from holiday gatherings and begin reporting, we are also setting an intention to bask in the goodness and stillness of winter energies—a time for reflection and planting seeds for the new year. In the midst of a concerted effort of national chaos and destruction of our trusted systems of health research, education and prevention, the ability to move forward with positive visions of tobacco prevention in California may have been startled, but we all moved forward in our work. We are inspired by you and all your efforts and this month, we offer a reflection of the RISE project efforts and successes in 2025.

In optimism and care,

Shelly, JoAnn, & Sue



## Upcoming Events



### Rural Initiatives Workgroup (RIW)

*Third Tuesday of the month*

**REMINDER: No meeting in January**

Tuesday, February 17, 2026  
3:00 - 4:30 PM

Topics / Guests

TBD

Topic or guest ideas? Contact [jsaccato@healthcollaborative.org](mailto:jsaccato@healthcollaborative.org)

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*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*

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 8763130 5788

Passcode: 374332

Phone in: 669-444-9171

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*Drop in office hours for urban and suburban projects working in rural jurisdictions.*

*Contact [JoAnn Saccato](#) to receive an Outlook calendar invite.*



**Rural Tobacco Cessation Discussion Group  
(Bimonthly)**

*First Monday of the month every other month*

**February 2, 2026**

**2:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 854 6565 2523

Passcode: 265859

Phone in: 669-444-9171

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*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.*

# ***RISE 2025 Activities***

**Educational Materials Released**



## Strategic Educational Materials for Rural Prevention Success

2025 was a busy year for RISE! We hope these tools support your project in your policy and/or upstream prevention work:

- **March:** General Plan Verbal Public Comment Guide. (See [March RISE News](#))
- **April:** California Rural Use Quit Line Fact Sheet. ([Access the document](#))
- **May:** Tobacco Retail License Matrix update released. (See [May RISE News](#))
- **October:** General Plans Public Comment Toolkit - Tobacco Product Waste section released. (See [November RISE News](#))
- **December:** Reducing the Impact of Tobacco on Rural California Communities: A Policy Platform 2025 Update was released with new priorities including the centering of tobacco treatment in rural policy work. ([Access the document](#))

## Trainings, Panels & Presentations



## A Busy Year of Rural Elevation, Engagement, and Education

RISE was involved with numerous local, regional, statewide, and nationwide trainings and presentations. Some were featured in previous issues of RISE News (noted with link), while others may have quietly slipped by. Here's a quick recap:

- **January:** RISE presents on rural disparities as part of a three-agency presentation to TEROG on the state of rural tobacco prevention efforts. (See [February RISE News](#))
- **April:** RISE Up Leadership Academy convened a cohort of new tobacco prevention staff to learn about personal and group leadership, social norm change, rural tobacco marketing, and successful rural tobacco policy strategies. The academy culminated with a capstone project of organizing and training for the 2025 I&E Days Rural Caucus meeting. (See [June RISE News](#))
- **August:** RISE Project Director, Shelly Brantley, along with other rural projects, presented at the 2025 National Conference on Tobacco or Health (NCTOH). From amplifying the rural voice to strategically framing rural tobacco messaging to implementing healthy retail initiatives, rural voices, needs, and successes were heard and acknowledged. (See [September RISE News](#)) From this event, RISE gathered and facilitated the first discussion of a national rural tobacco prevention discussion/learning group. The first call revealed the good fortune, resources and experiences we have in California that can be an inspiration for nationwide rural tobacco and nicotine prevention efforts.

[September RISE News](#)

- **October:** The first section of the General Plans Public Comment Toolkit was released with a walk-through training on how to use the document. The training was co-facilitated by RISE staff, JoAnn Saccato, and RISE consultant, Amanda Simpson, and the Public Health Law Center's Carolina Saavedra. [Watch the training](#) and [access the toolkit](#).
- **December:** RISE's rural policy platform, Reducing the Impact of Tobacco on Rural California Communities: A Policy Platform 2025 was released with a training on the changes and uses of the document ([Watch the training](#) and [access the platform](#).)

## Advancing Rural Tobacco Prevention Summit



## Advancing Rural Tobacco Prevention: A Thought Leaders' Summit

Held near Mount Shasta on November 6-7, 2025, RISE and TRDRP hosted a convening of tobacco prevention and treatment leaders for the express purpose of learning the current landscape of rural tobacco and nicotine prevention and treatment to brainstorm best

A summit brief is under development by the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) and RISE.

***Want your project or community's work featured in a future issue of RISE News?***

Contact [JoAnn](#).

### *Trending Tidbits*



**California Rural Tobacco  
Projects Rock it in 2025!**

**We celebrate you!**



### **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.

[Request Technical Assistance](#)

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