



Merchant Education Protocols

Be Prepared

- Review your speaking points so you are familiar with the material; it may be helpful to practice what you are going to say.
- It is strongly recommended that you visit merchants in pairs—with a colleague, friend or fellow health advocate.
- Teens should have an adult in the vicinity in case of difficult questions.
- Always remember to be friendly, brief and considerate.
- Often the owner or store manager is busy, so ask if there is a better time to come back to speak with him/her.
- When possible follow up by returning to the store during the time they indicated they would be available.

Talk with Your Merchants

- Have a 3-5 minute introduction planned. Include your name, the name of your project and your project goals. Remember, most of the information is in the cover letter and membership packet, so you don't want to overwhelm the retailer with details.
- If possible, congratulate the retailer on having done well on the recent Youth Purchase Survey or Advertising Survey. Remember, you want to make sure the retailer feels their efforts on behalf of limiting youth access to tobacco are being appreciated.
- If you live, go to school, shop or work in the neighborhood, be sure to tell the merchant. It is more effective when storeowners or managers receive feedback from community members.
- Explain that you are leaving a membership packet for his/her review. Let him/her know that someone from the project is willing to answer any questions he/she may have.
- Remember the store manager is probably busy and has little time to go over the materials in detail. Be respectful of this while at the same time explaining to him/her that the project is important.
- Hand delivering materials helps build strong relationships with your retailers and shows them that this project is important enough for a face-to-face visit.
- Share the names of community groups that support your activities and merchants that have joined the campaign with the retailer.
- You don't want to antagonize or attack the store manager/owner.
- If he/she does get upset or starts asking you questions that you are uncomfortable answering, politely let him/her know that most of the answers that he/she might have will be answered in the membership packet.
- Be polite and friendly—if he/she is making you angry, or you see that he/she is getting upset, leave the materials and politely walk away.
- Always thank the retailer for his/her time and willingness to speak with you.