



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT ON LICENSING

- Meet with your contacts in the police department or Sheriff's Department as soon as possible, and definitely before any meetings with city council members or city council meetings.
 - Your goal is to find out where they stand on the issue and what questions and concerns they have.
 - Also talk to them about estimated costs of enforcing a licensing program, using the cost worksheet developed by Kelly Gordon. Develop cost estimates for a variety of options including police youth decoy operations to check all stores once a year, twice a year or more and paying for overtime versus incorporating it into the daily workload.
 - If you are meeting with them before an impending city council meeting, find out if you can, whether someone from the police department plans to speak at the meeting, if so who, and what they will be saying.
 - If it is a different person that will be speaking at the city council meeting, try to meet with them before the meeting to talk to them in person and find out what their position is and discuss the issue. Even if your contact says that they will talk to the police chief or Captain or whoever for you, it is best to try to talk to the person directly yourself.
- Keep in touch with the law enforcement agency and engage in an ongoing dialogue.
- Provide your law enforcement contacts with educational and informational materials on licensing on a regular basis to keep them informed and engage in discussion on the issue, and to keep them updated on the progress you are making in working with their city.
- If the law enforcement agency has been helpful or cooperative, be sure to publicly thank them and praise their efforts to the city council and other city officials in meetings and public testimony. Also, thank them directly in person or in writing.
- Keep a record of things like dates and times you met with law enforcement, technical assistance you provided, other resources such as youth decoys and training in conducting enforcement operations. These come in handy as a proof of the history of your work to tackle the youth smoking problem in that city. You can use this information to produce a written chronology for the city council that shows you have been working on this problem for years and didn't just appear out of the sky one day with the bright idea of licensing tobacco retailers.
- Often law enforcement personnel are not allowed, or are uncomfortable with, expressing their opinion on licensing publicly at a city council meeting. However, you can obtain their opinion through conducting law enforcement surveys on enforcement of sales to minor's laws, including finding out how many times a year they conduct enforcement operations and how many citations they've issued. Also add a question about what they think the most effective strategies are to reduce sales to minors, and include licensing tobacco retailers as one option e.g. "Rate the following enforcement strategies in terms of their effectiveness in reducing youth sales to minors on a scale of one to five: merchant education, the licensing tobacco retailers, merchant fines, etc." You can then use this information to let city officials know with what priority their law enforcement agency rates tobacco retailer licensing.