Assessing the Political Environment
A Checklist

The checklist is best completed prior to working on the strategy chart. It will require several people taking responsibility and spending the time necessary to collect the information. The assessment process is a good opportunity to involve all active members of the campaign committee in important research in preparation for determining the campaign’s strategy and tactics.

A. Investigate public opinion
   __ Interview key opinion leaders
   __ develop a questionnaire
   __ elected officials
   __ non-profit organizations
   __ healthcare
   __ business
   __ education
   __ community service
   __ government
   __ law
   __ other

   __ Survey the public at large
   __ develop a questionnaire
   __ conduct surveys on the street
   __ check community’s voting record on tobacco ballot measures

B. Document how your government works
   __ Determine the structure of your local government
   __ elections by district or at large
   __ mayor/board Chair—elected or rotating
   __ city attorney/county counsel-status
   __ role/power of city manager/County Exec Officer
   __ council committees w/ responsibility for our issues
   __ how to propose an ordinance;
   __ council procedures for passing an ordinance

   __ The electoral process
   __ who are the elected officials and what positions do they hold, including
     committee assignments
   __ terms of elected officials
   __ next elections (including primaries) for elected officials, election dates
   __ election results in last two election cycles

C. Research backgrounds of key policy makers
   __ Identify key decision makers
   __ history of public service
   __ current position; contact information including names of staff responsible
     for our issues, etc.
   __ community and business affiliations

www.center4tobaccopolicy.org
___ political supporters
___ personal information
___ issue interests, voting record

___ Check resources for decision maker information
___ websites of policy makers, cities/counties
___ campaign disclosure documents
___ registrar of voters
___ personal conversations and contacts

D. Determine sufficiency of local data
___ Know what local data is available
___ inventory all local tobacco control policies in municipal or county code
___ locate most recent youth purchase survey data
___ survey local enforcement practices for tobacco control policies from local police, sheriff, food and drug branch
___ compliance information re: signage, SSD, other policies
___ local smoking rates
___ local impact of potential Synar Amendment alcohol and drug treatment program cuts

E. Assess potential of tobacco control policy campaign
___ List of organizations to approach for support
___ Locate each organization on map of Council/Supervisorial district
___ "Who you know" exercise to determine who has personal connections to policy makers
___ Number of active campaign committee members >10
___ Active campaign committee members include
   ___ organizations/individuals who can lobby
   ___ committee chair can lobby and is recognized community leader
___ Campaign committee members have experience in community organizing for policy change
___ Inventory resources available from active members
   ___ donated staff
   ___ meeting rooms
   ___ printing, copying
   ___ money
   ___ reputation, contacts
___ Strengths and weaknesses of policy goal

F. Assess strength of your opponents
___ List organizations/individuals likely to oppose
   ___ why will each organization/individual oppose?
   ___ how much will the new policy cost them?
___ How powerful are the opposing organizations/individuals?
   ___ who do they know/influence?