Public Opinion Survey on Tobacco Use in Outdoor Dining Areas
Survey Specifications and Training Guide

PURPOSE OF SPECIFICATIONS AND TRAINING GUIDE
This guide explains how to use the public opinion survey entitled “What Is Your Opinion about Tobacco Use at Restaurants?” The guide can be helpful in planning the data collection as well as in training data collectors who will use this survey. The document explains:
1. Sampling considerations – how you might go about choosing your sample for collecting the survey data
2. The purpose of each question – why it is useful to ask and what the data can tell your campaign
3. The meaning of each question and its response choices – how data collectors can clarify questions or response choices for survey respondents
4. Possible customizations – how to customize this survey tool

END USE STRATEGIZING
Purpose of This Data Collection: This public opinion survey is designed to collect process data from restaurant patrons (or people nearby) about tobacco use in outdoor dining areas in order to inform your program’s education and intervention activities for objectives addressing CX Indicator# 2.2.6.

Target Audience of the Results: Restaurant owners/managers and/or city council members—those who you hope to persuade to adopt either a voluntary or citywide/countywide non-smoking policy for outdoor dining areas

Source of the Data: Patrons of restaurants with outdoor dining areas and perhaps people nearby (if in outdoor malls/promenade areas)

Cultural Considerations: The characteristics of your source population will depend on which types of restaurants are included in your sample. Not all restaurant patrons may possess proficient English language skills or be familiar with issues of secondhand smoke, so the wording has been chosen with that in mind. Survey may need to be translated, depending on population.

Attention Span: Brief (3-5 minutes). Because diners aren’t likely to want to spend more than a few minutes to participate in your survey, it’s important to keep it as brief as possible and ask only those questions that will help your program get a policy adopted.

What You Want to Find Out
- Patrons’ knowledge of the hazards of secondhand smoke (even while outdoors)
- Their opinions/preferences about smoking and smoke-free policies related to outdoor dining areas of restaurants
- Their behaviors/reactions to someone smoking in an outdoor dining area
- Demographic identifier data (age, ethnicity, zipcode, children, gender?)
- Tobacco use status
- How often they eat at restaurants

Prep Work: Research any previous work on this type of policy objective in this or nearby jurisdictions. Learn what was effective and what didn’t work. Conduct a key informant interview with a representative of the local restaurant association or business bureau to get a sense of the level of support for outdoor nonsmoking policies (optional). Get a list of all restaurants in your target area. Screen out those without an outdoor dining area.
COLLECTING DATA
To determine your sample, you may want to start with a list of restaurants operating in the area/city/county, define the type of establishments you will include (e.g. fast food and/or fine dining), establish a sample size that will be sufficiently convincing to your target audience, screen out restaurants that don’t have outside dining areas, and then select restaurants to include in your sample. Depending on your project’s objective, the sample may be a census sample (i.e., all restaurants in the city/county with outdoor dining areas), a random sample (i.e., a randomly chosen subset of the total restaurant population), a purposive sample (e.g., restaurants just in a particular part of town or those of a particular type), or a convenience sample (of restaurants that happen to be open at the time or those nearest a particular location). A random sample will most likely lend your data greater credibility. Using this method to select participants for your survey (e.g., a person at every fourth table) can help you avoid a selection bias (choosing people who look approachable or of a particular ethnicity or socioeconomic status). It’s important that you ask a true mix of people to participate so that your data is more representative of all patrons and their opinions.

The survey is designed to be self-administered so you can ask people to participate and then hand them a clipboard with the survey and a pen/pencil. In this way, you can get a larger part of your sample in a short period of time. Plus, if respondents need clarification about a question or response choice, you are on hand to provide it.

In an attempt to make this survey as user-friendly as possible with diverse populations, a number of culturally competent strategies were used in designing this survey. Tobacco control terms were replaced with words more generally understood by the general public, with questions and statements written primarily in an “active” voice. The survey was then tested with several readability calculators. The survey vocabulary was then modified further to make it as easily understood as possible, especially for people whose first language may not be English. Currently, most of the questions are rated at an “easy to understand” level and a few at an “average” level. The next step will be to field test the survey.

QUESTION SPECIFICATIONS AND TRAINING/ANALYSIS GUIDE
Identifying Information – In order to manage the quality control over your data, it’s important to record the date, day of the week, time and location of the data collection site. Also, instruct data collectors to record their initials in the top right space so if there are any problems or questions, you know who to talk to.

Introduction – This explains to the survey participant what organization you represent, what kind of information you are seeking and why. You can customize this section by adding the name of your city/county and program, but in order to make your position on tobacco less obvious (so you don’t signal a preference for certain answers), use the name of your county health department or the non-profit you work for rather than the name of tobacco control program.

Questions 1-3 ask about dining behaviors. They will be useful in demonstrating how frequently the population eats at restaurants and how smoking in outdoor dining areas affects them.

1. **How many times in the last month did you eat at a restaurant?**
   - [] 0 times
   - [] 1 time
   - [] 2-4 times
   - [] 5 or more times

This is an important question to restaurant owners/managers and policymakers alike because it identifies whether a respondent eats at restaurants—i.e., does their opinion on this topic matter? If they don’t ever eat out, then their comments will not have much influence on decision-makers.
However, since you will probably be collecting data from people who are at or near a restaurant, then most respondents likely eat out at least occasionally.

Before you start collecting data, you will want to decide what types of restaurants you want to include in your sample. Do you want to include “fast food” joints, coffeehouses and sandwich shops or are you just interested in more upscale dining establishments where people tend to take their time over a meal? It’s important to define this not only for your sample, but also so that data collectors can provide clarification to respondents about what your definition of “restaurant” includes when they attempt to answer the question.

Another thing you may have to clarify for respondents is what you mean by “in the last month.” It’s important to define for your data collectors what this means ahead of time. It can either mean the last 30 days OR the previous calendar month. Either definition is valid; you’ll just have to decide to use one definition and then train data collectors to use the same definition consistently if questioned by respondents.

For the response choices, ranges were used rather than leaving the response open-ended because it can sometimes be hard to come up with a specific answer when you’re thinking over a period of time. Providing logical prompts that break down the time into reasonable chunks can make it easier to remember. For example, the “2-4 times” choice may help break down the month into weeks for someone who eats out once a week or every other week. Decision-makers will most likely pay more attention to the opinions of people who eat out fairly frequently.

2. **Have you ever been bothered by tobacco smoke while in an outdoor dining area of a restaurant?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - I’m not sure/have no opinion

This question is the most powerful on the survey. This data will indisputably show restaurant owners and council members the extent to which secondhand smoke in outdoor dining areas is a problem to restaurant patrons. It can be used to try to convince them to adopt a tobacco-free policy for outdoor dining areas.

Although it’s unlikely that someone “isn’t sure” if they’ve ever been bothered by smoke in an outdoor dining area of a restaurant, there may be times when someone is ambivalent about it. In that case, there is a response choice other than “yes” or “no”.

3. **What do you usually do when people are smoking in the outdoor dining area of a restaurant?** (Mark all that apply)
   - Nothing, smoke doesn’t bother me
   - Go to another restaurant
   - Ask to sit inside
   - Move to another table (outside)
   - Complain to the restaurant staff
   - Leave the restaurant earlier than planned
   - Ask the person to stop smoking
   - Other action (specify) _____________________

The emphasis here is on *usually*. What is their typical reaction when they see someone smoking/about to light up in an outdoor dining area as they being seated/are already seated? These responses will be compelling to restaurant owners (and perhaps to city council members) in demonstrating whether (and even to what degree) people are bothered by smoke in outdoor dining areas. If people move or ask someone to stop smoking, you can be sure that the smoke is bothering them. Even more compelling will be answers that show that people are leaving the restaurant earlier or choosing to go to another restaurant entirely. Restaurant owners/managers do not want to see that happen!
Questions 4-7 measure the knowledge and opinions of the public about the dangers of secondhand smoke, the rights of smokers and the role no-smoking policies play in the choices/behaviors of restaurant patrons. Respondents are asked to read each statement and indicate whether they agree or disagree. To avoid indicating a “preferred” position on tobacco use, the statements alternate between wording that frames tobacco use in either a positive or negative way.

Please show if you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by marking one of the choices:

4. As long as you are outside, it is not harmful to your health to sit near someone who is smoking.
   - I agree
   - I disagree
   - I’m not sure/have no opinion

This question measures the need for public education on the dangers of secondhand smoke. If people think that just because they’re outdoors secondhand smoke is not a problem, then they will be less aware of the need for a non-smoking outdoor dining policy and less likely to support efforts to get one. You may have to do some education first and then try to garner enough support to pass a policy.

5. A restaurant would attract more customers by having a no-smoking policy in outdoor dining areas.
   - I agree
   - I disagree
   - I’m not sure/have no opinion

This question is asking respondents about perceptions of public behaviors relating to choice of restaurants. The data could be useful in showing restaurant owners (and policy makers) that the public thinks nonsmoking policies make restaurants more attractive to patrons. That can be a convincing argument for adopting a smoke-free policy.

6. Customers should be able to smoke outdoors at restaurants.
   - I agree
   - I disagree
   - I’m not sure/have no opinion

This question assesses public opinion about whether smokers have the right to smoke in outdoor dining areas. If enough people disagree, this can be compelling data to demonstrate that having smoke-free air to breathe is the greater public good outweighing individual desires to smoke.

7. I prefer to visit restaurants that have non-smoking outdoor dining areas.
   - I agree
   - I disagree
   - I’m not sure/have no opinion

Here, the question is asking about individual behavior in choosing a restaurant. It is even more compelling than question 5 because it indicates actual behavior rather than mere perceptions of public behavior. For this reason, it is likely to be convincing to restauranteurs and decisionmakers.

The remaining questions collect demographic information that will be useful for data analysis in separating out various segments of the population. How can these questions be useful? First of all, they can help you interpret the data—to know who is saying what. If the overall responses don’t show a strong interest in tobacco-free policies, it may help to separate out respondents by different segments of the sample—by age, by gender, by ethnicity, whether they have kids, if they are smokers, etc. Oftentimes, one subgroup (e.g., people with children) will show stronger support for tobacco-free policies than your total sample. So when reporting your data to
decision-makers, you can frame the need for smoke-free policies in terms of how tobacco affects that particular group and cite your strongest data from their responses.

For classification purposes only:

8. What is your home zip code? _____________

This question is asking for the zip code of the respondent’s residence. This will allow you to separate locals (constituents) from visitors. The city council will be more influenced by data from constituents (voters) than by those from outside the city/county.

9. What is your gender? _____________

This question about gender may or may not be useful. However, women typically smoke less than men and therefore their responses may produce more compelling results than men. To be more inclusive of the LGBT community, this question was left open-ended rather than using choice boxes.

10. How old are you?

☐ 18-25 years ☐ 26-49 years ☐ 50-64 years ☐ 65 and older

In thinking about the age ranges that will most likely be useful categories for reporting purposes, some assumptions were made. We thought that there might be differences between the responses of young people (who often are students or single), those of an age where people often settle into careers and/or family-raising, folks who are older but not yet retired and those who are of retirement age. Then again, you may choose to ask this question in an open-ended fashion with no response choices provided at all and create your own age categories for analysis in ways that make sense in your target community.

11. Do you have children under the age of 18?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I’m pregnant

This question is asked because children are very vulnerable to the harmful health effects of secondhand smoke, so if you can show that a percentage of patrons have children, this can be helpful in convincing decision-makers to adopt a smoke-free outdoor dining policy. It may also be useful to determine whether parents are responding differently throughout the survey than the rest of your sample.

12. What is your race/ethnicity?

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Black/African American

☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Indian/Native American

☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Other ________________

If race or ethnicity plays an important role in your city/county or with your council members, this could be useful data for your project to have.

13. Do you currently use tobacco?

☐ Yes, on a regular basis ☐ Yes, but only once in a while

☐ No, but I am a former tobacco user ☐ No, I have never used tobacco

It can be very important for you to know whether someone is a smoker or not, especially if they oppose any restrictions on smoking. Surprisingly, though, many surveys have found that smokers support non-smoking policies even though they themselves smoke. Being able to separate out
smoking status can help you interpret your results, and make a more compelling case to decision-makers.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

If you are working on getting a city/countywide policy adopted, you may want to add a question like this:

**I would be in favor of a citywide tobacco-free policy for outdoor dining areas.**

☐ I agree  ☐ I disagree  ☐ I’m not sure/have no opinion

This question could be inserted after question 7 in the statements section of the survey. It measures the level of public support for tobacco-free outdoor dining areas. If you find there is sufficient support, this data can be used to influence city council members to adopt a policy.

There may be other compelling questions that are important for your program to ask. In thinking about what questions to add, what to delete, and what to keep, just remember to keep the survey brief and to ask only those questions that will help you make your case to decision-makers and demonstrate the need for a tobacco-free outdoor dining policy. If you do alter the survey, pay attention to the logic of the sequencing—the first section asks respondents about their dining behavior and reaction to smoke; the second section consists of belief statements; and the third section collects demographic data. Make sure your new question fits into one of the sections and does not disrupt the momentum up to question 7 which asks about individual preferences/behaviors.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

If you have any further questions about how to use or adapt this survey, feel free to contact the helpful Evaluation Associates at the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) by phone at 530.297.4659 or by email at tobaccoeval@ucdavis.edu.