

Outcome Evaluation



In California Tobacco Control, the term Outcome Evaluation (which is distinguished here with a capital “O”) is used to refer evaluation activities that include acceptable measures to gauge a project’s efforts towards meeting its objectives. Examples of appropriate outcome measures include decreased tobacco litter, fewer smoking incidences, and reduction in illegal tobacco sales.

Beyond just the passage of a policy or the addition of coalition members, the Outcome measure must be something observable that demonstrates the implementation of the objective. It is crucial that the Outcome is consistent with the goal specified in the objective. This is why a strong and well-crafted SMART objective is a prerequisite to writing an effective evaluation plan. Outcome measures often (but not always) compare conditions several points in time to demonstrate change from before to after program efforts.

Common Outcome Evaluation Measures

Certain data are more acceptable than others as Outcome Evaluation measures for objectives. The table below list commonly used outcome measures specific to different topics for objectives that require Outcome Evaluation:

| Common Policy Objectives | Acceptable Outcome Measures | Less Robust Outcome Measures | Unacceptable Outcome Measures |
|---|--|--|--|
| Flavored tobacco | Store observations | Calling stores, self-reported retailer survey | Policy record review counting policies |
| Minimum price, pack volume | Observation of prices, pack sizes, discounting offers | Calling stores, self-reported retailer survey | Policy record review counting policies |
| Smokefree outdoor dining, bars, service areas, recreational, non-recreational public areas | Observation of signage, tobacco litter count, number of people smoking/ vaping | California Adult Tobacco Survey secondhand smoke awareness questions | Policy record review counting policies, key informant interviews with managers/ staff of restaurants, parks, chamber of commerce |
| Smokefree multi-unit housing | Observation of signage, tobacco litter, number of people smoking/vaping | Number of complaints (to managers or to health dept.) about SHS or litter, policy record/document review measuring signed leases or addendums with smoke-free language | |

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|---|--|--|--|
| Tobacco Retail License | Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Survey, Young Adult Electronic Purchase Survey, store observation | California Student Tobacco Survey self-reporting purchasing cigarettes from a store, number of licenses purchased, number of citations issued for violations | Policy record review counting policies |
| Tobacco Retailer Density, Zoning | Density mapping | | Policy record review counting policies |
| Tobacco-free pharmacies and health care campuses | Observation | Interviews or surveys with pharmacies or health care providers | Policy record review counting policies |
| Behavioral health cessation treatment program | | California Smokers' Helpline call reports, self-reported surveys of post treatment quit rates (completion, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year) | Number of participants who received cessation services |