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## **ATTACK TOOLKIT PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## Executive Summary

In August 2007, the STAND project of BREATHE California received funding for the ATTACK project from the Public Health Trust, a program of the Public Health Institute, to create, produce, and disseminate a toolkit for countering tobacco industry marketing techniques aimed at young adults, ages 18-25. As part of the toolkit development process, STAND conducted a needs assessment to gather information from agencies working with young adults and/or working on tobacco issues. The needs assessment solicited input in regard to: what agencies do when working with young adults and/or on tobacco issues, what methods are effective when working with young adults and/or on tobacco issues, and what the challenges and barriers of working with young adults and/or on tobacco issues are. The ATTACK project will use the information from the needs assessment when creating a toolkit. Once the toolkit is developed, it will be disseminated to interested agencies and the ATTACK project will offer training and technical assistance on using the toolkit.

### Description of the Needs Assessment

During November and December 2007, the ATTACK project and LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. designed and pilot tested a needs assessment survey that included both qualitative and quantitative questions. In January 2008 the needs assessment was posted online via [www.SurveyMonkey.com](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com) for 12 days. The ATTACK project worked with the BACCHUS Network, a university and community based network focusing on comprehensive health and safety initiatives for young adults, and the California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN), an agency that supports youth and young adults by advocating for a tobacco-free California, to gather contact information of people who work with young adults and/or on tobacco issues. Between the ATTACK project, the BACCHUS Network, and CYAN, STAND collected contact information and emailed the needs assessment to 500 people. A total of 172 individuals responded, a 34 percent response rate.

Survey respondents represented colleges or universities (37%), health services (17%), community-based organizations (14%), local or state governments (13%), prevention providers and other nonprofit organizations (8%) and other organizations. Most of the respondents were experienced working with tobacco related issues (88%) and 78 percent were experienced working with young adults.

### Needs Assessment Findings

The responses to the needs assessment survey revealed several significant findings in regards to working on tobacco issues and working with young adults. Firstly, respondents identified the effectiveness of using cutting edge technology when attempting to engage young adults. Many agencies utilized text messaging, networking websites, and other websites favored by young adults to capture their attention and promote messages. Although technology was mentioned as an effective practice when working with young

adults, it was also mentioned as a challenge for agencies due to difficulties with keeping up-to-date on young adults' trends and interests.

The most successful method for reaching young adults on tobacco related issues was to use other young adults to communicate with the audience (91%), since young adults are more receptive to hearing messages from peers and other people from a similar background. This method had its challenges for some agencies because few young adults: (1) have time to take on additional activities, and (2) view tobacco issues as a priority in their busy lives. Other specific outreach methods involved offering promotional items (73%) and incentives (61%). However, respondents also stated there was a general lack of promotional and incentive items that had been tested with young adults and proven successful.

Using events to reach people about tobacco issues was a method used by 71 percent of the respondents and was listed as both an effective and ineffective method. Respondents acknowledged that for an event to be successful, it is beneficial for it to be in collaboration with other large events, include give-aways and incentives, focus on a few specific items, and be highly graphic. If surveys and brochures are used, they should be short and simple. One barrier associated with participating in events was that often young adults are too busy to stop to obtain information. Other challenges included determining how to engage youth in your message and finding appropriate eye-catching graphics, promotional items, and brochures.

A purpose of conducting this needs assessment survey was to inform the development of a toolkit for agencies working with young adults and/or on tobacco related issues. Respondents identified materials to help agencies be successful when working with young adults on countering tobacco industry marketing, these included: promotional items geared toward young adults (88%), best practices for working with this population (83%), and research on tobacco related issues and young adults (76%). After the toolkit is created and it is ready for dissemination, most (67%) of the respondents reported they would like the toolkit available on a website with downloadable files. In addition, agencies expressed interest in receiving training and technical assistance related to the toolkit via web-based training and teleconferencing or workshops.