

**Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
Division of Public Health
Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN) Program**

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)
Request for Waiver – February 2013
NITC 7-104: Web Domain Name Standard (Proposed)**

Contact Information:

Greg Votava DHHS Webmaster (402) 471-4612 Greg.Votava@nebraska.gov	Jeff Soukup TFN Program Manager (402) 471-1807 Jeff.Soukup@nebraska.gov	Monica Pribil TFN Program Coordinator (402) 471-0777 Monica.Pribil@nebraska.gov
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Description of the Issue:

In March 2012, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report: “Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults.” Among other things, the report stated that “Almost no one starts smoking after age 25. Nearly 9 out of 10 smokers started by age 18 and 99% started by age 26.” The report recommends that “Prevention efforts must focus on young adults, ages 18 through 25, too.”

The DHHS Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN) program knows from past focus groups and surveys that the Internet and social media are excellent ways to reach the 18 to 25 year-old population. Attached is information that was prepared by Mike Losee, Director of Healthcare Marketing, Snitily Carr. (Snitily Carr is the media contractor for the TFN program.) In the document, Mr. Losee notes that “the most successful youth engagement groups across the country have applied CDC (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) best practices without showing overt ties to governmental agencies.”

In an August 2012 Web-based survey of young Nebraskans, aged 18 to 25, TFN asked for feedback regarding creative concepts to reach the population as well as information about the population’s media consumption and preferences. The creative concept features the tagline “What’s Tobacco Costing You?”

The majority of participants reported using a laptop computer, smartphone and desktop computer to access the Internet. Over a third on the participants spent more than four hours a day online. On a daily basis, nearly 80% of respondents visit a Website, 74% do an Internet search and 70% read or post to Facebook.

Based on these and other results, we know that this age group is best reached by providing information, data and resources online. The overall goal of this effort is to prevent young adults from using tobacco products.

Description of the Agency's Preferred Solution, Including a Listing of the Specific Requirement(s) for Which a Waiver is Requested

The DHHS Tobacco Free Nebraska program would like to build a micro Website targeting 18 to 25 year-old young adults and secure a non-governmental domain name to more effectively promote the Website and campaign to the population.

The domain name we would like to secure is: TobaccoCostsYou.org, in addition to .net and .com extensions for the domain name.

The TobaccoCostsYou.org address would redirect to a ne.gov site that would be housed on the DHHS servers. It's anticipated that the microsite will be in existence for a span of two to five years.

Any Additional Information and Justification Showing Good Cause for the Requested Waiver

- Information & Recommendations from Mike Losee, Snitily Carr.
- Rationale for Not Using the DHHS or TFN Logo(s) on Materials.
- What's Tobacco Costing You? Creative Concept.

Requests should be submitted via email to: ocio.nitc@nebraska.gov

From Mike Losee, Snitily Carr
9/27/12

- While online is the key way to connect with and engage the 18-25 demographic, we have to be cautious how we deliver the message. One of the main challenges of delivery is the perception 18-25 year olds have of institutions of authority and government.
- This age demographic is the most communication savvy in history, and they are prone to tune-out messaging from groups they believe are trying to control, sell or sway them. In addition, they have constantly been exposed to the “don’t do this” or “this is bad for you” type of messaging traditionally associated with institutions of authority. In their mind, they have heard it all before. As such this audience has been conditioned to ignore or suspect government-sponsored messaging. (At best they ignore it, and at worse, they may rebel against it.)
- The tobacco industry has capitalized on the rebellious nature of this age demographic, successfully positioning its products as cool, empowering and individualistic, leaving the governmental messages seeming preachy and controlling.
- Prevention success has been made, however, by turning the tables on the tobacco industry and prompting rebellion against big tobacco. Part of this success, is attributed to peer-to-peer type of communication verses coming from authority. The most successful youth engagement groups across the country have applied CDC best practices without showing overt ties to governmental agencies.
- Overall, successful marketers of products, services and organizations targeting this demographic have had to adjust their strategy to adapt to this savvy group so they don’t come across as “salesy”, “preachy”, etc.
- The “cool factor” is still valid with this group...which is why many College and Universities have moved from institutional websites, URL’s and outreach, to more peer-to-peer type outreach via student blogs, social media, vanity URL’s, and websites unique from the institutional site.
- Having a major component of our 18-25 outreach (web component) tightly associated with an institution of authority (via DHHS wrapper or within DHHS website) may limit our ability to connect with this group. While our messaging will not be preachy or overtly health-conscious like traditional public health messages, the fact that it’s tied to government could have an effect on response.

Rationale for Not Using the DHHS or TFN Logo(s) on Materials

The national Tobacco Control Network (TCN) is comprised of tobacco control program staff from each state, territory, and D.C. Among other things, TCN fosters collaboration and communication among state programs. One of the ways that's accomplished is through a "Help Your Peers" function where questions can be asked and feedback is provided from similar programs across the country.

In October 2010, Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN) asked the Network through "Help Your Peers" to provide rationale regarding not including governmental logos on tobacco counter-marketing campaigns that are designed to achieve behavior change rather than name recognition. Below are the responses received, including feedback that was provided at a TFN sponsored focus group.

- The use of the TFN logo and information (which included the DHHS name and reference) was not popular on any of the creative treatments. Some didn't like what it stood for; while others didn't think it fit or thought it was a lot of information all together in the corner. (Nebraska Tobacco Quitline Creative Testing – April 2009)
- From Alabama ... We do not print the official Alabama Department of Public Health seal on our materials. We have heard (informally) that some groups lose interest if they know it's a government program -- especially youth. So, for the most part, we use the words "Alabama Department of Public Health" and/or "ADPH" in a special font and in a smaller point size on most of our materials.
- From Utah ... In a March 2010 focus group, the Utah Department of Health tested some taglines with smokers interested in quitting. Participants were shown the following taglines and asked to select the one they most prefer:
 1. "For free and confidential help quitting, call 1-888-567-TRUTH. (Brought to you by the Utah Department of Health.)"
 2. "For free and confidential help quitting, call 1-888-567-TRUTH. (Brought to you by the Utah Tobacco Quit Line.)"
 3. "For free and confidential help quitting, call 1-888-567-TRUTH. (Brought to you by The Truth.)"

In response to this question, none of the participants selected option #1. Approximately three-fifths of participants said they preferred #2 and two-fifths of participants preferred #3.

Verbal comments from the focus group participants said they didn't want government intrusion into their lives.

- From Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth ... I would strongly recommend against including any logos (governmental or otherwise) on campaigns that are not directly aligned with the messages supporting the campaign, or with the audience the campaign is directed toward. This becomes even more critical if the focus audience of the campaign is youth. Misaligned logos simply weaken the authority of the campaign's brand, and thus weaken the messages associated with it.

**WHAT'S
TOBACCO
COSTING
YOU?**

Cigarettes and chew aren't cheap.
Kick tobacco out and spend your hard-
earned cash on something better.

QuitNow.ne.gov

Tobacco Free Nebraska - Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services - Division of Public Health

The QuitNow.ne.gov address is provided as a placeholder. It will be replaced with TobaccoCostsYou.org if the waiver is granted.