



Image: ANSR staff and partners, Minneapolis, April 2024

# ASSOCIATION FOR NONSMOKERS-MN 2024 REPORT



The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota

[www.ansrmn.org](http://www.ansrmn.org)

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# ASSOCIATION FOR NONSMOKERS-MN

## Mission Statement

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of commercial tobacco, nicotine, and other drug use in Minnesota.

Our core commitments are:

- to protect young Minnesotans from a lifetime of addiction;
- to ensure that all Minnesotans can breathe clean, smoke-free air everywhere; and
- to reduce health inequities and other disparities in relation to commercial tobacco, nicotine, alcohol and other drugs.

### Contact Information

2395 University Ave W, Ste 310  
Saint Paul, MN 55114

Phone: 651-646-3005

[www.ansrmn.org](http://www.ansrmn.org)

## Land Acknowledgement

The Association for Nonsmokers-MN (ANSR) is located in Saint Paul, MN, the traditional homeland of the Dakota people. We acknowledge that the land we currently occupy comes from a legacy of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced removal caused by U.S. law and policy applied to Indigenous communities.

When referring to tobacco in this report, we are referring to commercial tobacco products and not tobacco used for sacred purposes by Indigenous communities.

## Statement on Racial and Health Equity

ANSR is committed to ensuring that health and equity are considered in every aspect and element of our work. These are not just words to us. They inform our daily actions, including continually striving to uplift voices of Black and Indigenous people and people of color. We do not tolerate racism, xenophobia, or violence of any kind and continue to review and ensure that our internal policies are equitable. We remain committed to working in solidarity with our partners to end racism, be anti-racist allies, and stop racially-motivated violence.

Sources: <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>  
<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/health-equity-public-health-law-center>

# 2024 BOARD MEMBERS



**Jeanne Weigum**  
*President*



**Bernie Hesse**  
*Vice President*



**Mary Bergaas**  
*Treasurer*



**Gene Nichols**  
*Secretary*



**Jean Forster, Ph.D.**  
*Director at Large*



**Deb Hennrikus,**  
**Ph.D.**



**Martha Hewett**



**Natalie Johnson Lee**



**Lisa Marshall, MS,**  
**RD, LD**



**Monique Muggli, JD**



**Paul Pentel, MD**



**Ephraim Olani**

# OUR PARTNERS

ANSR succeeds with the dedication and help of our partners. Thank you to our many community partners who work side-by-side with us as we protect Minnesotans from the harms of commercial tobacco, nicotine, and other drug use. Your contributions are invaluable and essential to this work!

## ANSR's Year in Photos



# LIVE SMOKE FREE

Minnesota property owners, managers, multi-unit housing residents, and local health departments know and trust the Live Smoke Free (LSF) program to deliver comprehensive smoke-free housing resources and assistance. LSF is the go-to source for all things smoke-free housing in the metro area.

## More Residents are Protected from Secondhand Smoke

### Live Smoke Free:

- Partnered with five local health departments through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership of the Minnesota Department of Health to help property owners, managers, and multi-unit housing residents address secondhand smoke. Minnesota ended the year with 5,452 smoke-free housing policies, protecting approximately 415,107 Minnesotans from secondhand smoke in their homes.
- Conducted four listening sessions with Minneapolis multiunit housing residents to get input on smoke-free housing policies, including their enforcement;
- Provided technical assistance to MDH State-Wide Health Improvement Program, SHIP, grantees working on smoke-free housing strategies throughout the Twin Cities metro area;
- Hosted virtual, quarterly “Smoke-Free Housing Sharing Meetings” for grantees statewide working on smoke-free housing policies.

In 2024, Minnesota had

**5452**

smoke-free housing policies,  
protecting approximately

**415,107** residents.



Above: Jaclyn Frank and Alex Eberhart at the Minneapolis Renter's Right and Resource Fair, November 2024.

## Sharing Policy Options with Community Members

Live Smoke Free continued exploring ordinances and regulations on smoke-free housing policies with funding from a Commercial Tobacco Free Communities grant of the Minnesota Department of Health. LSF engaged community members and decision makers in conversations about regulatory options including in a presentation to the Roseville City Council.



*Right: Alex Eberhart and Morgan Hamernik share information with community members at the Bloomington Farmer's Market in August 2024.*

## New Law Protects Residents in Multi-Unit Housing

The new Minnesota law prohibiting cannabis smoking/vaping in multi-unit housing including on patios and balconies is a significant development for clean healthy air. The legislature moved the law's original implementation date of March 1, 2025, to July 1, 2024. Multifamily housing includes cooperatives, groups of townhouses with four or more dwelling units, or any building with one or more dwelling units intended for residence. Smoking or vaping medical cannabis flower or medical cannabinoid products is exempt.

It is unclear who will enforce this provision and how it will be done, though more clarity is anticipated from the Office of Cannabis Management's ongoing rulemaking process over the coming months. LSF recommends that properties proactively include cannabis in their property's smoke-free policy to streamline enforcement. To reflect these changes, LSF updated its common area signage to incorporate the cannabis multi-unit housing provision. Secondhand cannabis smoke in multi-unit housing is a significant concern for housing providers and residents and LSF is maximizing limited resources to help protect Minnesotans from this growing threat to clean air.

*LSF signage has been updated to reflect the new state law, which took effect July 2, 2024.*



# MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

## Minnesota Congressional Delegation

Thanks to funding from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, we continued to engage with members of Congress, including Rep. Angie Craig, Rep. Betty McCollum, Rep. Ilham Omar, Rep. Dean Phillips and Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith regarding action on tobacco at the federal level. ANSR staff leveraged long-term relationships with lawmakers' district office staff to secure lawmaker signatures on several important letters.

## State Outreach

ANSR engaged Minnesota lawmakers to further the tobacco prevention agenda of the statewide coalition Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG). We held dozens of lawmaker meetings, engaged constituents to reach out to their lawmakers and played a leading role in organizing the coalition's annual Day at the Capitol. Around 230 public health advocates, students, healthcare professionals and others gathered to call on their legislators to support the coalition's work.

We engaged lawmakers face to-face at the MN Capitol. Groups including East African tobacco control advocates, youth, and pastors and congregants from Black churches across the metro visited the Capitol to meet with lawmakers at mini Day at the Capitol events.

ANSR tracked and advocated for or against several pieces of legislation in partnership with the Coalition during the 2024 session. Legislation included bills to:

### ***End the Sale of All Flavored Commercial Tobacco Products***

While the bill to end the sale of menthol and all other flavored commercial tobacco products did not pass, we made significant progress. We had two successful hearings in the Minnesota House and the issue was in play until the last weeks of session.

## ***Prohibit the Sale of Flavored Cannabis that is burned, inhaled, or vaped***

We worked with lawmakers to introduce language to complement our flavored tobacco policy proposals. Flavored cannabis presents a hurdle for passing flavored tobacco policy. Flavored cannabis was prohibited in the cannabis bill as it passed the House and Senate but restrictions on flavored cannabis were removed during the conference committee process. The restrictions we supported did not pass in 2024.

## ***Moist Snuff Modification***

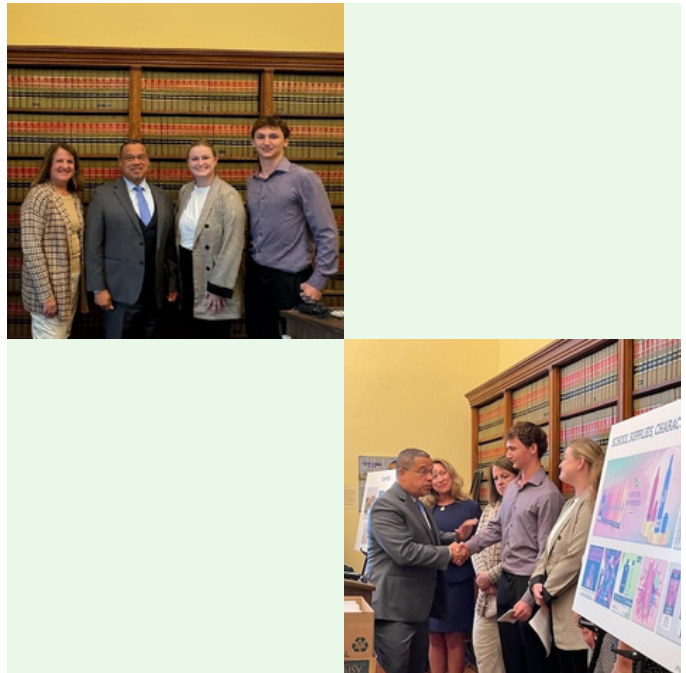
This “in the weeds” issue came up in the last weeks of session and ANSR worked to modify or defeat it. The language added ‘or similar product containing nicotine’ to the moist snuff definition in state law. The intent was to capture new oral nicotine products, synthetic or naturally derived. It does not impact or change any tobacco product taxation or regulation. Language was included and passed in a final large omnibus bill.

## ***Deceptive Vapor Products Sale Prohibition***

ANSR did not play an active role in passing this bill which prohibits marketing, promotion, advertisement, distribution, or sale of a vapor product that imitates a product that is not a vapor product, including food, school supplies, product based on character, personality, or celebrity. We played an active role in implementation and enforcement through our support for the Attorney General’s office.

Attorney General Keith Ellison held a press conference on August 29 to announce his office sent warning letters to over 5,000 Minnesota tobacco retailers, urging them to stop selling unauthorized and illegal vapor products. That includes nicotine products not approved by the FDA and products that fall under Minnesota’s new deceptive vapor products law.

Molly Schmidtke, who leads ANSR’s tobacco marketing project, Project WATCH, spoke at the news conference about industry marketing tactics and the use of interesting flavors to attract kids. A chemical health prevention specialist and an ANSR Student Action Team member also spoke at the news conference.



*Above: ANSR staff and partners meet with Attorney General Keith Ellison following a news conference.*

# POINT OF SALE

## License Caps, Flavors, Price Discounting, Minimum Price

*Many Twin Cities Metro cities helped protect their residents by passing policies limiting the availability and appeal of commercial tobacco, including ending the sale of flavored products, imposing licensing caps to reduce the number of retailers in their city, ending the use of tobacco coupons and in-store promotions, and setting minimum prices for tobacco products.*

**Minneapolis** prohibited price promotions and the redemption of coupons for all commercial tobacco and vaping products, set a \$15 minimum price on cigarettes and other commercial tobacco products, increased penalties for retailers who violate the ordinance, and ended the sampling loophole for new tobacco product shops.

**New Brighton** capped the number of tobacco product shop licenses at four, set a 1,000-foot distance requirement between tobacco retailers and youth-oriented facilities, aligned ordinance language with federal and state minimums and adjusted penalties for violations.

**Arden Hills** updated its commercial tobacco ordinance policy by capping the number of licenses issued at six, prohibiting the issuance of a tobacco license to a standalone tobacco shop, increasing fees for violations: 1st Violation old: \$600, New \$1,000: 2nd Violation w/in 36 months: old \$1,200, New \$2,000 plus a 3-day license suspension: 3rd violation w/in 26 months: old \$2,000 and not less than 7-day suspension, New \$2,000 plus 7-day suspension: 4th violation within 36 months: Revocation.



ANSR staff, partners, and Student Action Team members celebrate the ordinance passage in Vadnais Heights in 2024.

**Vadnais Heights** ends the sale of flavored tobacco products, becoming the 12<sup>th</sup> city in MN. The ordinance, effective January 6, 2026, prohibits the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol, fruit, and candy flavors. The ordinance capped the total number of tobacco licenses at six, increased penalties for tobacco shops that violate the ordinance, and removed penalties for youth for attempted purchase, use, and possession.

## **ANSR Continues Student Action Team Growth**

High School students from suburban Ramsey County public high schools educate peers and advocate for change. 20+ students attended monthly meetings and took on action opportunities to reduce youth access and the appeal of nicotine products and promoted “My Life My Quit,” a teen cessation program. Students were key messengers at the school, local and state level. Youth created a campaign in Roseville Area High School, were key organizers and messengers in Vadnais Heights and New Brighton policy initiatives. They met with state legislators at the MSFG Day at the Capitol and educated 200+ middle schoolers through classroom presentations/discussions.



*Student Action Team members lead a discussion at Chippewa Middle School.*

Wash Escapes the Vape (WETV) is a dynamic group of about 15 dedicated students at Washington Technology Magnet School in St. Paul, MN. This youth-led initiative is guided by ANSR staff and a Health Educator from the school-based health clinic. Funded by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health’s Youth E-Cigarette Prevention and Cessation Initiative, WETV focuses on empowering students to become leaders in tobacco prevention and cessation.

WETV students are supporting developing their school’s cessation program, an initiative that aims to provide culturally appropriate counseling and materials to quit vaping and using nicotine. By collaborating with school mental health staff, the program seeks to seamlessly integrate with existing support services, maximizing its reach and effectiveness.

Students created videos that focus on the dangers of vaping, offer strategies for young people to fight back against the tobacco industry, and promote the services at their school Health Start Clinic.

## **Dedication to Building Public Health Professionals**

Two undergraduate student interns helped with updating materials, peer education, and community outreach. ANSR also partnered with undergrad classes at Saint Catherine University and the U of M Public Health programs. Students participated in action opportunities, created social media posts, gathered postcards for decision makers, and helped with compliance checks.

## ANSR at Local and National Conferences

### MDH EPIC Youth Summit

ANSR youth joined young advocates representing all of the MDH Youth E-cigarette Prevention and Cessation Initiative (YEPCI) grantees.

### Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Advocacy Summit

Molly Schmidtke presented at The Advocating for Equity Where We Live, Work, and Play Summit in Washington, D.C.. SOPHE, a coalition of public health and advocacy professionals, organized the conference.

### Clearing the Air Institute

Clearing the Air Institute focused on smokefree air and gaps in protections, and features information on smokefree workplaces, secondhand smoke, multi-unit housing, casinos, and colleges. Jackie Siewert presented on the history of smoke-free housing in Minnesota and the shift from voluntary to public policy.

### American Public Health Association

Molly Schmidtke presented a session titled "What Influences Local Policy Makers to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco?" at the APHA conference.



*ANSR staff and student advocates attend the EPIC Youth Summit.*



*ANSR staff attend the Clearing the Air Institute in October 2024.*

### Other Conferences attended by ANSR staff include:

- Minnesota School Boards Association
- Minnesota School Behavioral Health Conference
- Minnesota School Counselors Association Conference
- Return to First Medicines Conference
- National Tribal Tobacco Conference
- Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference (read more on pg. 15)

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ANSR fielded approximately **160 TA requests** (proactive and reactive), conducted **21 TA trainings** (presentations, etc) and created or updated approximately **120 different materials**.

ANSR in partnership with the Public Health Law Center created *Commercial Tobacco Retail Licensing Enforcement Best Practices and Inspections Checklist for Minnesota Communities*.

This publication includes information on:

- Pre-enactment or amendment of an ordinance;
- Enforcement-related provisions included in an ordinance; and
- Post-enactment and ongoing support for retailers.

## **ANSR's Role in Technical Assistance**

Funded by Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), ANSR staff provides technical assistance to MDH Commercial Tobacco-Free Communities, Youth E-Cigarette Prevention & Cessation Initiative, and Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, SHIP, grantees and city and school staff working to reduce tobacco industry influences and increase the number of commercial tobacco-free spaces.



# TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH RECREATION

The Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation program continued to provide training materials for stakeholders by maintaining a database of all commercial tobacco-free parks policies in 2024.

**For more information, visit:**  
**[tobaccofreeparks.org](https://tobaccofreeparks.org)**

# NORTH SUBURBAN TOBACCO COMPLIANCE PROJECT

The North Suburban Tobacco Compliance Project (NSTCP) offers suburban Ramsey County law enforcement, decision-makers, retailers, and proven and comprehensive method to ensure youth cannot access commercial tobacco at the point of sale. NSTCP recruits, trains and maintains buyers under the age of 21 for participating communities. Young people follow a protocol and are compensated for their time.

Compliance checks are conducted face-to-face as young people under the age of 21 attempt to purchase commercial tobacco products. 91.8 % of NSTCP retailers passed the youth access compliance checks, compared to 93% in 2023. Some communities require annual training for their clerks. ANSR promotes Stop the Sales to Minors and Our Watch (FDA) for free training materials for retailers.

*ANSR continued to promote trainings and materials to boost retailer compliance, including the Stop the Sales to Minors online retailer training and This is Our Watch training materials from the FDA.*



## Congratulate and Educate

ANSR continued to partner with the Department of Human Services to coordinate the Congratulate and Educate program in 2024. The program provides resources to licencing authorities to conduct educational tobacco compliance checks. The checks reward those who pass with a certificate congratulating them on their compliance. No penalties are assessed. ANSR worked with 70 participants in 2024.

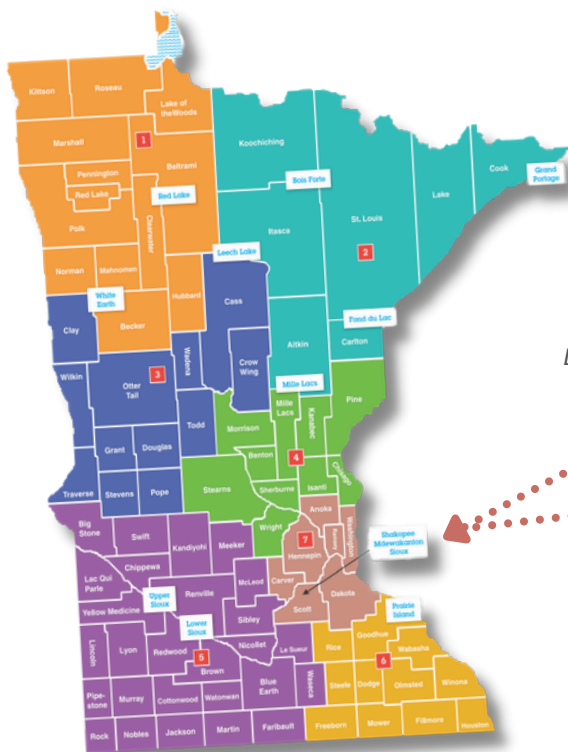
# REGIONAL PREVENTION COORDINATORS

ANSR hosts the metro area Regional Prevention Coordinators (RPCs) to provide resources, consultation, training and technical assistance to local community coalitions, agencies and other community members to support the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse (ATOD). The program is funded by DHS.

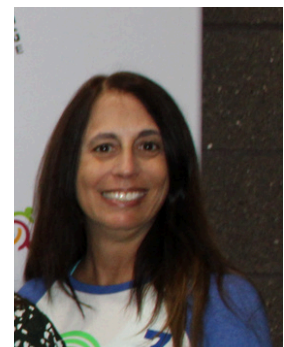
RPCs provide technical support to grantees including organizational development, data collection, community assessment, member engagement and outreach, strategic planning, strategy selection, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability planning.

## ANSR RPCs in 2024:

- The Region 7 RPC served the Twin Cities metro area including Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.
- The Region 8 RPC served Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, including North Point Health and Wellness, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and Austin and Faribault SUP Coalitions.



David Olson-Iverson, Region 8 RPC



Sheila Watercott, Region 7 RPC

Learn more about RPCs at [rpcmn.org](http://rpcmn.org).

# MINNESOTA PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER

Minnesota Prevention Resource Center (MPRC) is funded by the Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Administration. It connects substance misuse prevention professionals and community partners to quality information and training needed to effectively prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse. Project staff assist community partners in accessing research, interpreting findings for practical application, and identifying resources.

MPRC, in collaboration with the Minnesota ATOD Regional Prevention Coordinators, hosted six virtual webinars/training opportunities, reaching over 800 prevention professionals, and hosted eight in-person training sessions. MPRC also released monthly MN Prev newsletters (distributed to over 1,500 recipients) and responded to multiple technical assistance requests.

**Learn more about MPRC at  
[www.mnprc.org](http://www.mnprc.org).**

## Prevention Program Sharing Conference

ANSR's Minnesota Prevention Resource Center organized the the 50th annual Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference at River's Edge Convention Center in Saint Cloud, MN in October.

The conference brought together public health professionals, educators, students, researchers, and others who are engaged in substance misuse prevention across the state to share ideas and learn from each other.

To celebrate 50 years of Program Sharing, the conference featured special sessions, including A Peace of My Mind multimedia project by John Noltner and a musical performance by Thomas X.

ANSR staff gave four presentations.



**50** MINNESOTA PREVENTION  
PROGRAM SHARING  
CONFERENCE  
TH ANNUAL

# PROJECT WATCH

Project WATCH, funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, collects and analyzes tobacco industry marketing tactics and shares the results through a monthly newsletter and regular presentations.

The findings are used to inform policy decisions, create social media campaigns for the Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) statewide coalition, publish articles in peer-reviewed journals, and presented at state and national conferences.

1,077

tobacco industry  
emails collected

50

direct mailing  
marketing pieces  
collected



*These advertisements show examples of various industry marketing tactics documented and analyzed by Project WATCH in 2024.*

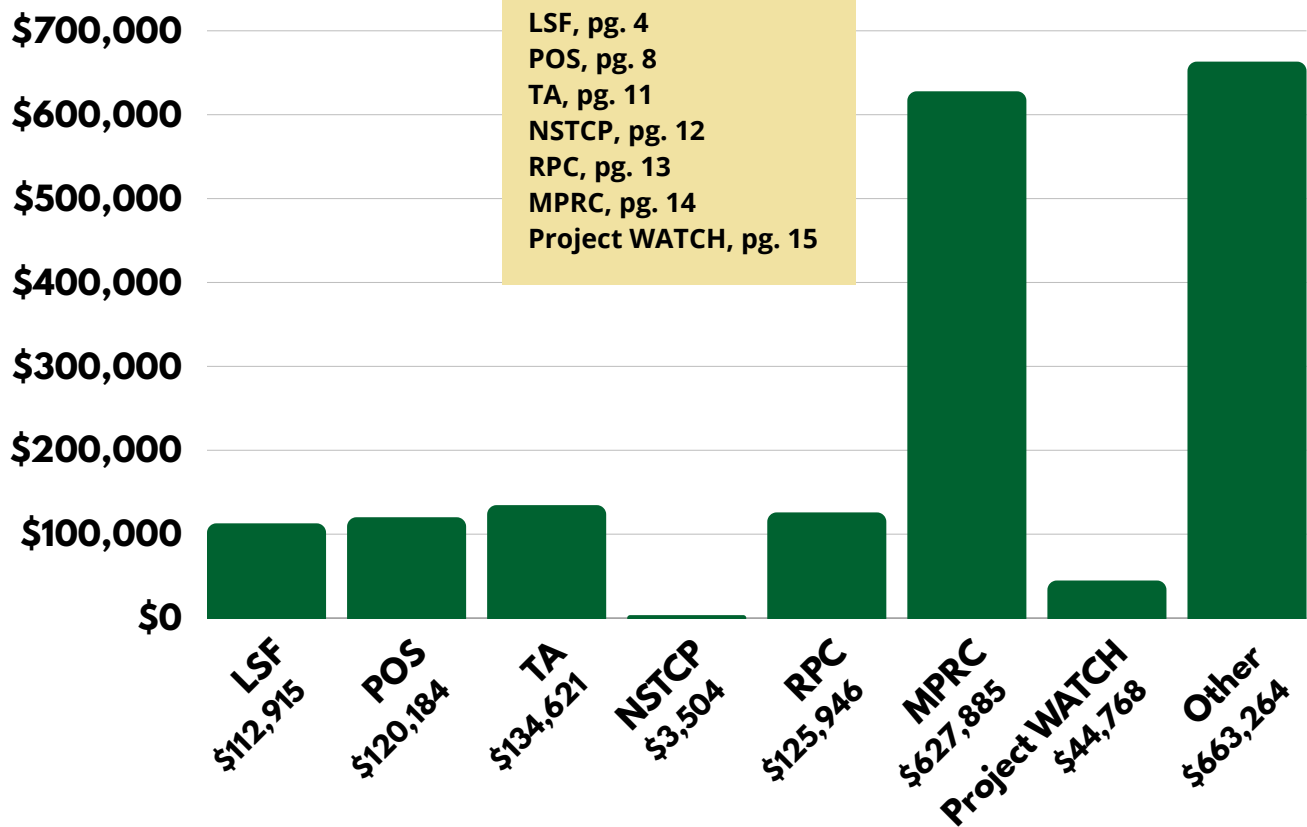
# FINANCIAL HEALTH

The accounting firm Harrington, Langer and Associates audited ANSR's 2024 financials. The result of the audit was an unqualified opinion.

## EXPENSES FOR 2024

<b>Fundraising Expenses</b> <b>\$8666</b>	<b>Management Expenses</b> <b>\$138,361</b>	<b>Program Expenses</b> <b>\$1,833,087</b>
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### Program Expenses



A complete set of 2024 financial statements can be found at [ansrmn.org](http://ansrmn.org).

# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Center for Prevention  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Dakota County Public Health  
Hennepin County SHIP  
Minneapolis Health Department SHIP  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Minnesota Department of Human Services  
St. Paul - Ramsey County Public Health SHIP  
Tobacco-Free Alliance  
Our generous individual donors



## The Last Garage Sale

ANSR held its final garage sale in 2024. The event brought the community together over hidden treasures and the common line of “when will the tobacco industry have to have a bake sale?” The annual plant sale and other fundraising opportunities will continue on.

*We appreciate the generosity of all of our members who make donations, large and small. Thank you. We could not do this work without you!*



The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota

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