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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 tobacco use in Minnesota. Our core commitments are to reduce the number of young smokers and to continuously advocate for the rights and health of nonsmokers. In 1975, ANSR helped pass the nation's first comprehensive state clean indoor air legislation.

## Contact Information

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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.

# BOARD MEMBERS



**Jeanne Weigum,**  
*President*



**Paul Pentel, M.D.,**  
*Vice President*



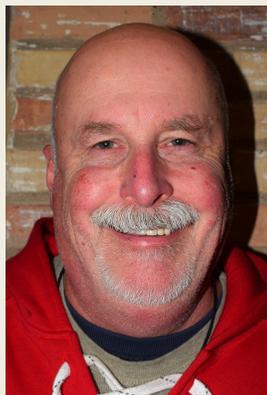
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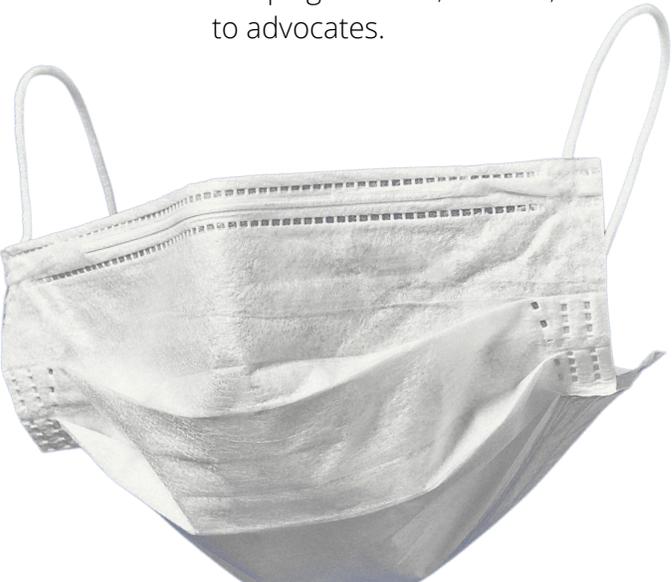


**Deb Hennrikus,**  
*Ph.D.*

# COVID-19 & WORK DURING A PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic substantially affected the normal, day-to-day operations at the Association for Nonsmokers-MN (ANSR) in 2020. While many tobacco prevention policies and projects were shifted or put on hold, ANSR staff and partners tapped into creative community organizing and engagement efforts to continue policy change at the local, state and federal level. Below are a few examples:

- An infographic on the links between COVID-19 and tobacco;
- An infographic on how to safely conduct compliance checks during a pandemic (see pg. 10);
- Sent electronic coffee gift cards to partners prior to meetings;
- Partners and staff distributed care packages with masks, hand sanitizers, and thermometers; and
- Distributed SWAG bags with campaign t-shirts, trinkets, and treats to advocates.



## Commercial Tobacco Use & COVID-19

**Commercial Tobacco Use and COVID-19**  
Smoking and vaping commercial tobacco cause damage to the structure and function of vital organs and systems in the body. Smoking commercial tobacco weakens a person's ability to protect their body and recover from viruses like COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.<sup>1,2</sup>

**People with tobacco-related health conditions are at greater risk of severe COVID-19 illness.<sup>3</sup>**  
Such conditions include:  
• Lung diseases  
• Diabetes  
• COPD  
Young people who smoked, vaped or did both were more likely to experience COVID-19 symptoms and receive COVID-19 tests compared to nonsmokers.<sup>4</sup>

**Why are people with tobacco-related health conditions at greater risk of severe COVID-19 injuries?<sup>5</sup>**  
COVID-19 makes it harder for the heart to work. COVID-19 causes flare-ups of chronic lung diseases. COVID-19 affects the respiratory tract, which can increase the risk of asthma attacks. COVID-19 weakens the immune system's ability to fight and recover.

**Social behaviors such as sharing e-cigarettes or vaping devices can increase transmission of COVID-19.<sup>5</sup>**  
Youth who vape or use both e-cigarettes and cigarettes are more likely to be tested for COVID-19 are five to seven times more likely to test positive than nonsmokers.<sup>5</sup>

**quit partner.** Free help to quit your way.  
Quit Partner offers many free support options and resources to help people quit smoking, vaping or using other commercial tobacco products in a way that works best for them. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [www.QuitPartnerMN.com](http://www.QuitPartnerMN.com).

**References:**  
1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Smoking and Tobacco Use: Health Effects.  
2. Minnesota Department of Health (2020). About Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).  
3. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Groups at Higher Risk for Severe Illness.  
4. Stanford University Medical Center (2020). Vaping Linked to COVID-19 Risk in Teens and Young Adults, Study Finds.  
5. Catch My Breath (2020). Vaping, Lung Health, and Infectious Diseases [PowerPoint].

Funded by the Minnesota Department of Health Tobacco-Free Communities Grant Program.

**ANSR**  
The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota  
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651-646-9005 | [www.ansrmn.org](http://www.ansrmn.org)  
(September 2020)

The "Commercial Tobacco Use and COVID-19" infographic highlights the intersection between tobacco use and COVID-19. It was widely shared with partners, coalition members, and community members.

## Partners

ANSR partners are key stakeholders in advocating for policy change. The pandemic posed many challenges for ANSR partners to regularly meet (whether in person or virtually), engage community members, conduct compliance checks, and participate in learning opportunities offered by other entities. ANSR recognized the importance of meeting each partner where they're at and provided assistance and time extensions where it was needed. We continue to check in regularly with partners to see how we can support them.

# LIVE SMOKE FREE

For more than 14 years, Live Smoke Free (LSF) has advocated for smoke-free living opportunities at the local, state, and national levels. It has supported thousands of building owners, managers, residents, and tobacco control professionals to successfully implement and maintain smoke-free policies in their communities. 2020 brought challenges to LSF's work. In Minnesota, along with many other states across the country, governors asked residents to stay home to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Increased time at home, led to increased exposure to secondhand smoke and increased conflict between neighbors and management. LSF fielded 140 calls from both management and residents wondering what steps they could take.

LSF continued to provide direct technical assistance to property owners and managers through Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) subcontracts with Dakota, Hennepin, and Saint Paul-Ramsey counties, as well as the cities of Minneapolis and Bloomington (including Edina and Richfield). LSF met or exceeded all policy goals and helped lead various smoke-free housing advocacy initiatives within those contract service areas, including educational workshops, implementation tool development, and stakeholder engagement. Through this work LSF led innovative work in Hennepin County promoting cessation resources to property managers and supported the City of St. Paul to implement a Smoke-Free Disclosure Policy for condos.

Beyond direct assistance to properties, LSF provided technical assistance to SHIP grantees working on smoke-free housing strategies throughout the Twin Cities metro area. As part of this technical assistance, LSF hosted virtual, bi-monthly "Smoke-Free Housing Sharing Meetings" for grantees statewide working on smoke-free housing efforts.

## Resource Highlight

LSF created new materials and broadly shared the latest research on COVID-19, smoking, and secondhand smoke. Find the materials [here](#).

LSF also continued to lead and support national efforts to promote compliance and enforcement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Smoke-Free Public Housing rule with their Clean Air for All (CAFA) program. Clean Air for All, a partnership between LSF and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), collaborated with various partners to provide resources, technical assistance, and a variety of training opportunities to public housing agencies. Although 2020 was a challenging year for CAFA work, a notable event was a webinar featuring Dr. Brian King from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which drew almost 300 attendees nationwide. Clean Air for All received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

**For more information about CAFA's work, visit [smokefreepublichousingproject.org](https://smokefreepublichousingproject.org).**

*LSF's Smoke-Free Housing Recommendations for Renters During COVID-19 Infographic. Review the full infographic [here](#).*

**Smoke-Free Housing Recommendations for Renters During COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a new illness that affects the respiratory system (chest and lungs). Smoking can compromise the immune system, which makes people at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (CDC). In general, smoking, vaping, and exposure to secondhand smoke may cause lung inflammation. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

**In light of the increased importance of clean indoor air, Live Smoke Free recommends:**

- If you are unsure about where smoking is or is not allowed, check your lease or ask your property manager.
- Report secondhand smoke infiltration in your apartment.
- If your building does not have a smoke-free policy, your property manager may be able to assist you in finding ways to mitigate secondhand smoke or consider adopting a smoke-free policy when the time is right.

**Take it Outside**

- If you smoke, smoke outside to help protect the health of everyone in your home and everyone in your apartment community.
- Secondhand smoke travels through vents, electrical outlets, doors and windows through shared walls from other units.

**Get free help to quit, cut back, or manage your cravings**

- Now may be a good time to think about cutting down on or quitting smoking. Quitting improves your health no matter how long you have smoked. Quitting boosts your immune system and helps your body repair itself in many ways.
- The most effective way to quit for good is to use FDA-approved medicines and coaching support

**quit partner**

# MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

# 122

**Candidate responses  
for a specific  
funding and tobacco  
prevention policy  
questionnaire**

# 156

**Meetings, forums,  
and documented  
interactions with  
candidates**

## **Candidate Outreach Effort**

ANSR helped lead the candidate outreach effort for the Minnesotans for Smoke-Free Generation Coalition (MSFG) ahead of the November 2020 Election. The results from candidate outreach efforts helped inform coalition members and ANSR MN to conduct one-to-one meetings with newly elected lawmakers to find chief authors and co-authors for key funding and tobacco prevention legislation.

Early into the 2021 Legislative Session, between January and February; ANSR advocates and staff conducted 15 one-to-one meetings with lawmakers, which contributed to 40 co-authors of three bills related to ending the sales of flavored tobacco products and funding tobacco prevention and treatment; and one Chief Author to ending flavored tobacco products sales.

## **Menthol Coalition**

ANSR and NorthPoint Health and Wellness relaunched the Menthol Coalition in October. The group was active in initiatives to regulate the sale of menthol tobacco in St. Paul and Minneapolis and hopes to be equally influential in state-level work to end the sale of all flavored tobacco, including menthol, throughout Minnesota.

The coalition is composed of health and community organizations in Minnesota committed to reducing the harm caused by menthol-flavored cigarettes and other tobacco products. Members include churches, youth-serving organizations, health groups, and advocacy organizations serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.



*Representative Cedrick Frazier (DFL) authored HF 904, a bill to end the sale of menthol and flavored tobacco products.*



*Youth members gave testimony about the tobacco industry's targeting of youth during legislative hearings. A student showed legislators a vape device shaped like a lipstick.*



*Governor Tim Walz signed Tobacco 21 into law on May 16.  
(Photo Source: Governor Tim Walz Facebook)*

# POINT OF SALE

## Tobacco 21 (T21)

Work continued on raising the tobacco sales age to 21 with a number of Metro communities passing ordinances. Hastings, Lakeville, Farmington, Eagan, South Saint Paul, New Hope, Osseo, Brooklyn Park, White Bear Township, Maplewood, and Dakota County passed a strong ordinance that raised the age to purchase all tobacco products from 18 to 21.

Minnesota became the 25th state to pass a statewide T21 policy, following the FDA which was effective January 2020. Minnesota Governor Walz signed T21 into law, effective Aug 1, 2020.

The T21 bill passed during the 2020 legislative session, raised the age to purchase tobacco to 21. The bill did not include penalties for Purchase Use and Possession (PUP) and strengthened penalties for retailers :

- \$300 for a 1st violation
- \$600 for the 2nd violation within 36 months;
- \$1,000 for a 3rd or subsequent violation within 36 months; and
- Upon the 3rd or subsequent violation within 36 months of the first violation, a suspension of the retailer's license of at least seven days will be required and the retailer's license may be revoked.

## Menthol and Other Flavors

Communities in the Metro also worked to protect youth and BIPOC neighbors by restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol.

- Fridley restricted the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol to adult-only tobacco shops;
- New Hope restricted the sale of fruit- and candy-flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops; and
- Edina ended the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol. Edina immediately faced litigation by RJ Reynolds.

## Other Initiatives

- St. Louis Park ended the sale of all e-cigarettes and vaping-related devices, with no exemption for adult-only stores.
- Golden Valley further restricted the areas of their city where tobacco can be sold. The new restriction also includes distance requirements between stores that sell tobacco and from youth-oriented facilities.

*Advocates gathered after the Saint Louis Park City Council passed the ordinance to prohibit all e-cigarettes and vape products.*



## Youth Vaping Surveys

In the spring and summer of 2020, when the world was on lockdown, ANSR partnered with youth from Mounds View High School to create two convenience surveys on youth vaping trends and perceptions. Vaping among high school students exploded in recent years, wiping out a decade of progress and reversing declining tobacco use rates among youth. COVID-19 abruptly altered teen's lives often leaving them isolated, frustrated, and without the traditional structures of school, church, and organized sports. Did that impact youth vaping rates? A group of Mounds View High School students wanted to know. They developed a confidential online survey and promoted it through their friends, youth groups, and adult leaders.

**620**

**Total responses between the spring and summer surveys**

**13**

**MN counties represented in the survey; majority of responses from Ramsey County**

### ***Survey Findings***

- Students reported vaping more during the early stages of COVID-19 and fewer of them wanted to quit.
- Respondents perceived that their peers were vaping more than they had previously.
- Most youths get their vape products from other youth but many reported purchasing their vape products from retail outlets.
- Youth felt that stress and uncertainty were major reasons for vaping.
- Many youth who vape nicotine also vape marijuana.

The conversation around youth vaping has declined as students were no longer in school or public settings as often. But it is important to recognize that youth are still vaping at high rates, even at home and that the youth vaping epidemic hasn't declined.

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

During 2020, ANSR staff responded to almost 100 requests for assistance from MDH grantees for community education, policy, systems, and environmental change planning, strategizing, and implementation, and tobacco-free policies for housing, outdoor air, businesses, and county grounds.

## Stop Sales to Minors Training

In response to the Minnesota legislature passing the Tobacco 21 law, the Technical Assistance team updated our free online retailer training, Stop Sales to Minors, to reflect the changing laws. This training was originally developed and launched in July 2016 but due to several changes to federal and Minnesota state laws since the training was first launched, the existing 2016 version was outdated in a span of a few short years.

ANSR staff worked on updating the content of all the sections of the training. With a short turnaround time between the law passing in May 2020 and being implemented in August 2020, ANSR worked in partnership with the Public Health Law Center, the Department of Human Services-Behavioral Health Division, and the Minnesota Department of Health. The training went live in August 2020 for use by tobacco retailers across the state. Since the launch of the new version in August 2020, there have been 216 participants in the training.

Visit the updated Stop Sales to Minors training [here](#).

## What is ANSR's role in Technical Assistance?

With funding from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), ANSR staff provided technical assistance to MDH Tobacco-Free Communities and SHIP grantees, and city and school staff working to reduce tobacco industry influences and increase the number of tobacco-free spaces.

**250**

**Responses to requests from MDH grantees for assistance**

**4,408**

**Tobacco vendors notified across the state on the changes to Federal and State tobacco laws in 2020, updated Stop Sales to Minors training, and free signage for stores.**

**NO SALE**



**The Sale of all Tobacco Products, Including Electronic Delivery Devices, to Persons Under 21 Is Prohibited and subject to penalty.**

IDs will be checked by vendor.

MINNESOTA STATUTES 144.4167, 609.685, 609.6855, 461.22

*ANSR distributed signage and educational materials across the state.*

# TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH RECREATION

With ANSR resources, Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation advocates for tobacco-free parks policy across Minnesota by providing training materials for advocates and decision-makers and by maintaining a database of all tobacco-free parks policies.

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

## NORTH SUBURBAN TOBACCO COMPLIANCE PROJECT (NSTCP)

North Suburban Tobacco Compliance Project (NSTCP) offers law enforcement, decision-makers, retailers, and communities a proven and comprehensive method to ensure youth don't have access to tobacco at the point of sale.

NSTCP recruits, trains and maintains youth buyers for participating communities. All youth are trained and follow a specific protocol. Each student receives compensation for their time.

Compliance checks are normally conducted face-to-face and in a team setting. However, due to the pandemic, tobacco compliance checks in 2020 were paused to prevent the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Eight of sixteen cities completed one round of tobacco compliance checks. Thus having an overall compliance rate was not possible due to incomplete data.

*"Checking IDs during COVID-19" was created by ANSR and distributed to all Ramsey County tobacco retailers and across the state. "COVID-19 and Compliance Checks Protocol" is another ANSR resource that sets a baseline protocol to determine the safest way possible to conduct compliance checks.*

**COVID-19 & Compliance Check Protocol**  
How to conduct tobacco compliance checks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Prior to Compliance Checks**  
*(Use best judgment based on city or county's COVID-19 case numbers)*

- Identify Young Person**
  - Between ages 17-20 years old
  - Need guardian permission for those under 18 years of age
  - Have young person sign waiver to release liability in case infected while working with us
- COVID-19 Screening**
  - Ask young person and staff (team) to notify licensing authority conducting checks if have any COVID-19 symptoms
  - Ask team if taken any fever

**During Compliance Checks**

- Masks, Sanitizers, and Social Distancing**
  - Provide masks to all staff and customers
  - Keep 6ft distance when possible
  - Touch and sanitize vehicle
  - Any masks used should be discarded
  - Staff should wear masks at all times
- Checking IDs**
  - HEIGHT**: Check the height on the ID
  - EYES**: Check eye shape and color
  - HAIRLINE**: Compare forehead height and hairline
  - EARS**: Compare shape and position
  - OPTIONAL REQUEST**: The Executive Order allows a person to temporarily remove their face covering when asked to do so to verify their identity. However, businesses are encouraged to use other means of identification that do not require a person to remove their face covering to the extent possible.
  - ASK QUESTIONS**: Confirm key information off ID

**After Compliance Checks**

- Follow Up**
  - All vehicles
  - Failed compliance checks reported to licensing authority
  - Young person compensated for time.

**Questions? Contact Minnesota Prevention Resource Center at [info@mprc.org](mailto:info@mprc.org)**  
Funding Provided by the MN Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division  
Based on "Coping During Covid" from the Vermont Department of Liquor and Lottery

Visit community or coalition logo here

## **NSTCP Virtual Training Session**

NSTCP held a virtual training session for enforcement agencies to discuss and determine the safest way possible to conduct compliance checks. Ultimately, some cities did not complete enforcement checks. This was alarming now that young people were using more tobacco products. Tax revenue coming into the state also increased. The Star Tribune reported in November 2020, "State revenue from the so-called 'sin taxes' was nearly \$37 million more than predicted in July through September. Tobacco tax dollars alone were \$20 million more than anticipated, and collections from some types of gambling, like pull tabs and bingo, were double what was expected."

NSTCP traditionally holds one in-person, scheduled tobacco vendor training per year. The training is open to all vendors in participating cities and is offered at no cost to the vendor.

**NSTCP promotes the free, online vendor training Stop Sales to Minors developed by ANSR. Training is available at [www.stopsalestominors.org](http://www.stopsalestominors.org).**



# REGIONAL PREVENTION COORDINATOR (RPC)

Regional Prevention Coordinators (RPC) 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 the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division.

The metro-based RPC is actively working with fifteen coalitions and communities on one or more of the following: organizational development, data collection, and community assessment, member engagement and outreach, strategic planning, strategy selection, and implementation, evaluation, and sustainability planning. The RPC fulfilled ninety-five technical assistance requests and facilitated eight professional development training in 2020. ANSR is host to the Region 7 RPC, which serves the Twin Cities metro area, including Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.



*Kijrsten Anderson, Region 7 RPC*

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

# MINNESOTA PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER (MPRC)

Minnesota Prevention Resource Center is funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division. It connects substance abuse prevention professionals and community partners to quality information and training they need to effectively prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse.

Project staff also assist community partners in accessing research, interpreting findings for practical application, and identifying resources.

## Prevention Program Sharing Conference

In October 2020, MPRC hosted Minnesota's 46th Annual Prevention Program Sharing Conference. The two-day virtual conference offered two keynote speakers, workshop sessions, and webinars on a variety of substance use prevention and coalition-building topics for prevention professionals across the state.

### Event Details:

**205**

**People attended  
the conference**

**22**

**Workshops offered**

**9**

**Webinars offered**

To learn more about the conference, visit [www.mnprc.org](http://www.mnprc.org).

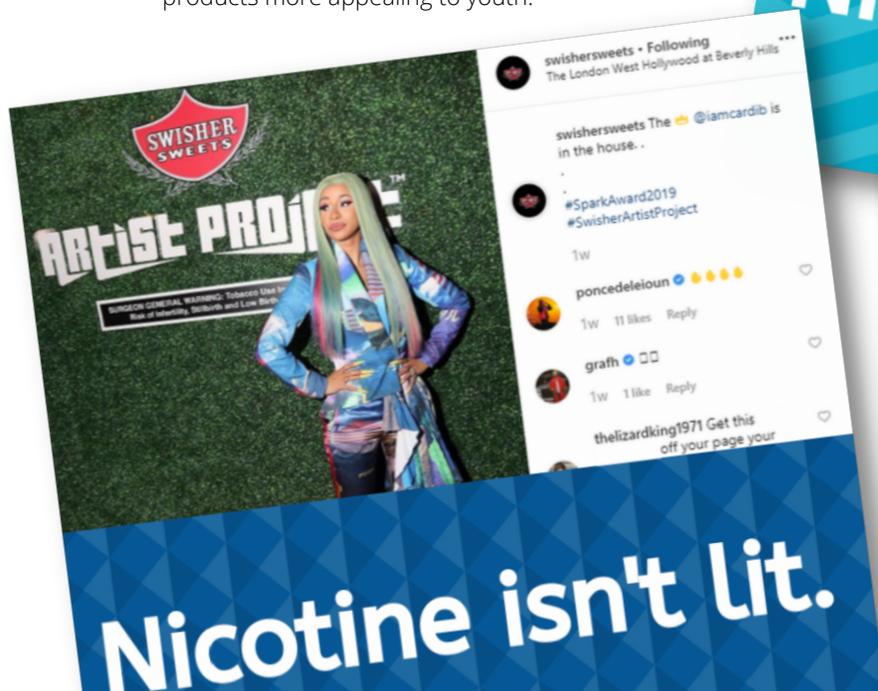


# PROJECT WATCH

Project WATCH, a research program of ANSR, works to expose tobacco industry marketing tactics across the state. The program is funded through a grant from ClearWay Minnesota through June 2020 and was picked up by Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention starting in July 2020 through December 2021. Efforts of this program focus on identifying and tracking marketing tactics by the tobacco industry and inform policy campaigns.

The findings from this program were regularly used to create social media campaigns for the Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) statewide coalition, publish articles in peer-reviewed journals, and presented at national conferences, as well as educate decision-makers on what is coming to people's doorsteps.

Findings from Project WATCH were used to create graphics from the Nicotine Isn't Lit campaign on MSFG's social media. These are examples of the tobacco industry using celebrities to make their products more appealing to youth.



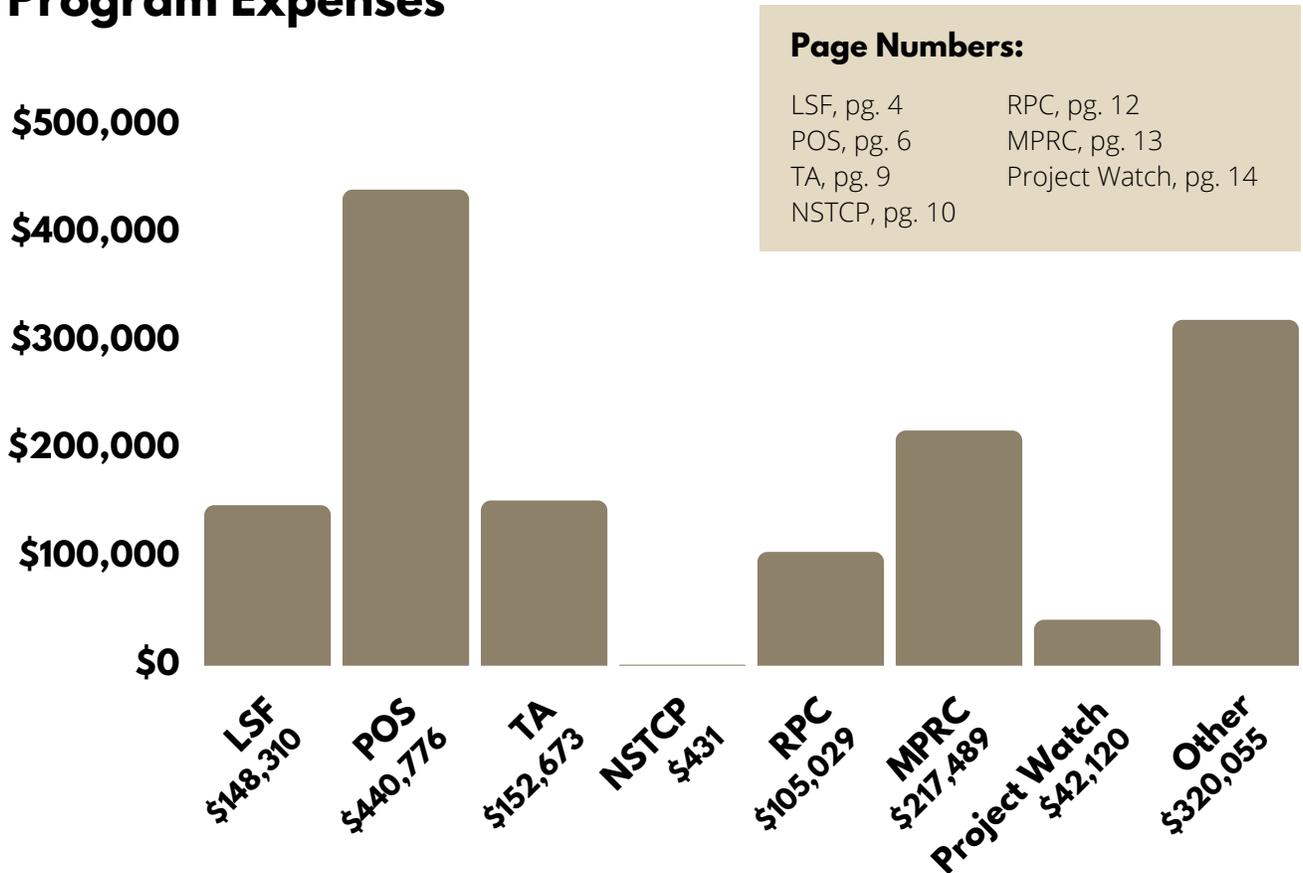
# FINANCIAL HEALTH

The accounting firm Harrington, Langer and Associates audited ANSR's 2020 financials. The result of the audit was an unqualified opinion.

## Expenses for 2020

<b>Fundraising Expenses</b> <b>\$13,850</b>	<b>Management Expenses</b> <b>\$216,369</b>	<b>Program Expenses</b> <b>\$1,426,884</b>
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## Program Expenses



**A complete set of 2020 financial statements can be found on the [ANSR website](#).**

# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Bloomington Public Health  
 Blue Cross Blue Shield  
 Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
 ClearWay MN  
 Dakota County SHIP  
 Hardenbergh Foundation  
 Hennepin County SHIP  
 Minneapolis SHIP  
 Minnesota Department of Health  
 Minnesota Department of Human Services  
 Ramsey County SHIP  
 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
 Tobacco Free Alliance





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