

# 4 Steps to Create Effective Educational Materials



## STEP 1:

### Check for Existing Educational Materials

Visit the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California (TECC) website to avoid duplication.

- I **have** identified an existing material I want to adapt for my audience.
  - Request technical assistance (TA) from TECC by submitting a TA ticket in MatTrack.
- I **have not** identified an existing material that fits my needs.
  - Develop an original material—proceed to Step 2.

## STEP 2:

### Draft Your Educational Material's Content

To meet **CTPP Standards**, educational materials must:<sup>1</sup>

- Be scientifically accurate, current, and include citations with primary sources in a standard format.<sup>2</sup>
- Use messaging based on the most current research available and shown to be effective in discouraging tobacco and nicotine use for the intended audience.
- Comply with ADA requirements for accessibility.<sup>3</sup>
- Avoid offensive, misleading, or stigmatizing content.
- Be free of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Be appropriate for the intended audience's reading level.<sup>4</sup>
- Include funding acknowledgment statement: © [year]. California Department of Public Health. Funded under contract #[XX-XXXXX].

Apply **Health Communication and Equity** best practices:<sup>4</sup>

- Have a defined audience, main message, and a strong call to action.
- Keep your content short and simple. Avoid overwhelming readers with too much information.
- Promote equity! Use familiar language, avoid citing health disparities data without being explicit about the reasons why disparities exist, and use people-first language.

### STEP 3:

#### Design Your Material

- Layout:** List important information first, use headings and subheadings, and end with a strong call to action. Set page margins at 0.5" or more and line spacing at 1.5 or more. Use left-aligned text instead of justifying or centering your text.
- Fonts and Text:** Limit to 2-3 easy-to-read fonts in 12-point size or larger; use upper- and lower-case fonts in body text (ALL CAPS can be hard to read); use call-out boxes or bold text to spark interest.
- Visuals:** Use high-resolution images that are inclusive, resonate with the intended audience, and reinforce your message. Graphics or charts can help readers understand important points.
- Color and Contrast:** Use high-contrast colors (e.g., dark text or graphics over a light-colored background). Include blank space or "white space" to help the reader focus on your message.

### STEP 4:

#### Consumer Test, Finalize, and Submit to TECC<sup>5</sup>

- Consumer test your educational material with a sample of your intended audience, summarize results and, if necessary, revise your material.
- Submit your finalized material and consumer testing summary in MatTrack.

TECC, a project of ETR, offers free support to CTPP-funded projects to help develop culturally appropriate and relevant tobacco and nicotine education materials. At any stage of material development, TECC can provide different types of technical assistance (TA), including content editing, graphic design, and much more.

Visit MatTrack to submit your TA Request. If you need help creating a MatTrack account or have questions, please contact us at [help@tecc.org](mailto:help@tecc.org).

#### Resources

1. CTCP Program Requirements for the Development and Use of Educational, Incentive, and Media Materials (Policy Manual, Section 303).
2. [Rover Citation Help](#)
3. [California Department of Rehabilitation – How to Create Accessible Content](#)
4. [Messages with Impact: A Guide to Develop Clear and Effective Educational Materials](#)
5. [TECC Consumer Testing for Educational Materials](#)

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