

American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Fund Recommendation Cover Sheet

Please submit this document with any recommendations for funding from Rhode Island's allocation of federal fiscal recovery funds available through the American Rescue Plan Act. This information will be made available to the public along with any detailed documents submitted that describe the proposal. It is encouraged that such documents identify clear goals and objectives and quantifiable metrics.

This is not a formal request for funds, and submission of recommendations does not guarantee a response, public hearing, or appropriation from the General Assembly.

Name of Lead Agency: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Additional agencies making recommendation (if applicable): *See Footnote

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Brief Project Description (attachments should contain details)

Funding for the RI Tobacco Control Program for evidence-based tobacco control, prevention, and cessation programs

Total request: \$ 3.2 million

One-time or Recurring Expense? Recurring

ARPA Eligibility Category (check all that apply) – See link for further information

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/arpa/commdocs/Treasury%20-%20Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf>

- Respond to the public health emergency and its economic impacts ✓
- Premium pay to eligible workers _____
- Government services/state revenue replacement _____
- Water/sewer/broadband infrastructure _____

*American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Rhode Island, Oasis International - Providence, RI, Preventing Tobacco Addiction/Tobacco 21, Rhode Island & Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of the Oncology, Rhode Island Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts, Rhode Island Kids Count, Rhode Island Medical Society, Rhode Island Pharmacist Association, Rhode Island Public Health Institute



January 14, 2022

Recommendation for ARPA Investment

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding provides Rhode Island with an opportunity to make vital investments in public health and reduce health disparities. The Tobacco Control Program at the Department of Health has been woefully underfunded for more than a decade. In this time, we have witnessed youth use of electronic cigarettes skyrocket into an epidemic. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a wide range of notable impacts on public health. Tobacco use was no exception – last year the Federal Trade Commission reported the first increase in annual cigarette sales in 20 years.ⁱ

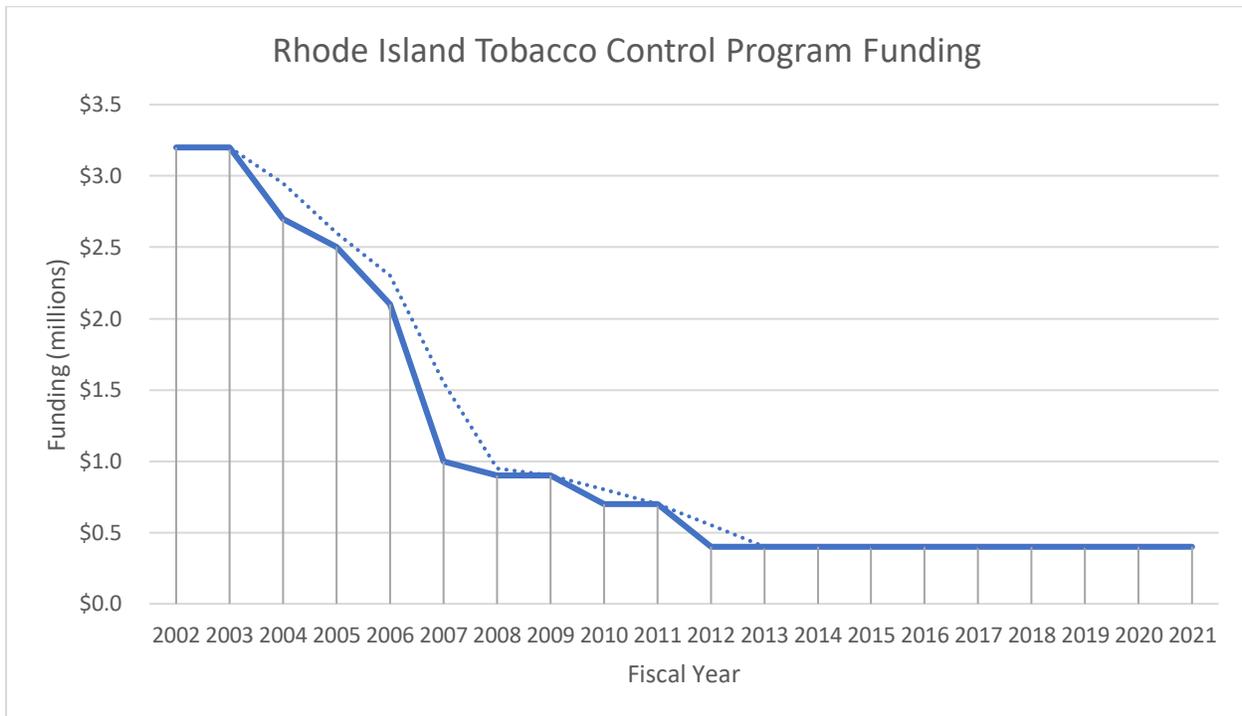
The burden of tobacco use (including electronic cigarettes) in our state remains high. Yet investments in vital prevention, cessation and control programs are chronically low. **Our state currently invests a mere \$395,337 in Rhode Island’s Tobacco Control Program, which is only 3.1% of the \$12.8 million the CDC recommends that Rhode Island spend to combat the health and economic consequences of tobacco. It is also less than 1% of the overall tobacco tax revenue collected by our state. This low level of investment is simply unacceptable. We can and must do more to address tobacco addiction in Rhode Island.**

We respectfully request that Rhode Island dedicate at least \$3.2 million to the tobacco control program for evidence-based tobacco control, prevention, and cessation programs that help people who use tobacco to quit and prevent children from ever starting.

Tobacco Control Funding in Rhode Island

Research shows that the more states spend on comprehensive tobacco control programs, the greater the reductions in smoking.ⁱⁱ For example, one study found that Washington State saved more than \$5.00 in tobacco-related hospitalization costs for every \$1.00 spent during the first 10 years of its program.ⁱⁱⁱ The 2014 Surgeon General’s report concluded that long-term investment is critical: “Experience also shows that the longer the states invest in comprehensive tobacco control programs, the greater and faster the impact.”^{iv} That’s why it’s deeply concerning to see funding for the Tobacco Control Program in Rhode Island continue to spiral downward from the 2002 historic high of \$3.2 million. Rhode Island has increased our state’s cigarette excise tax 7 times over this same time span,^v and we’re projected to collect nearly \$160,000,000 in cigarette excise taxes for FY 2022.^{vi} At the current

funding level of \$395,337 – Rhode Island is investing less than 1% of tobacco tax revenue in programs proven to prevent youth initiation and help people who use tobacco quit for good. This low level of investment is simply unacceptable.



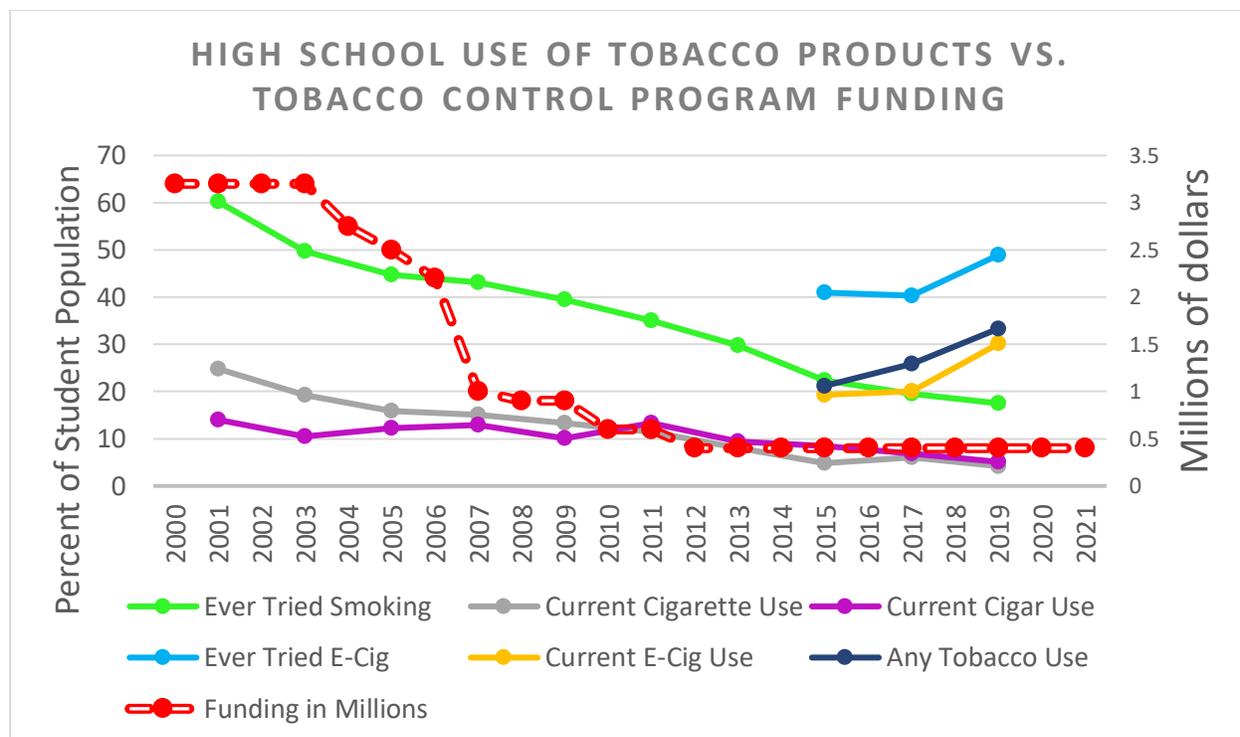
Our organizations have been consistent proponents regarding the importance of this funding, and we believe with the promising projections from the recent Revenue Estimating Conference and the relief that our state has received from the American Rescue Plan Act, this year is an opportune time to restore Rhode Island’s commitment to protecting our youth from the dangers of tobacco use and assisting adults in quitting by funding the Tobacco Control Program at the historic high of \$3.2 million. At this critical moment with people focused on protecting their respiratory health, we must do everything in our power to keep our communities healthy and safe, which means building a strong public health infrastructure including an adequately funded, comprehensive tobacco control program. Long after the pandemic passes, people deserve to live full, healthy lives free from the ills of tobacco use.

Health and Economic Costs of Tobacco Use in Rhode Island

Tobacco is an addictive and deadly product. Tobacco use remains the largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body and increases the risk for many types of cancer, heart attack, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, chronic bronchitis and other diseases.^{vii} 13.5% of adults in Rhode Island smoke – and 4.2% of high school students in our state smoke.^{viii} **There are 1,800 lives lost each year in Rhode Island, when you consider cigarette smoking alone.**^{ix} **It is projected that 16,000 kids now under 18 and alive in Rhode Island who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.**^x

Due to sharp increases in youth tobacco use in recent years, largely the result of skyrocketing rates of e-cigarette use, the decades of progress that has been made in reducing tobacco use rates in youth is now in jeopardy. Over 33% of high school students reported currently using tobacco products in 2019,^{xi} with

over 30% reporting that they currently use an e-cigarette, compared to 20% in 2017.^{xii} **As the tobacco industry is evolving, the need for tobacco prevention and control programs has never been greater. It's imperative that programs are adequately funded to protect the next generation from a lifetime of addiction.**



The damage tobacco inflicts upon our state is not limited to death and disease. Annual health care costs from smoking exceed \$640 million in Rhode Island, including \$216.8 million that Rhode Island's Medicaid program spends each year to treat smoking-related diseases.^{xiii} Smoking-caused productivity losses cost our state an additional \$458.9 million annually.^{xiv}

Tobacco and Health Equity

After decades of targeted marketing, tobacco use continues to disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ Rhode Islanders. In 2019, nearly 32% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Rhode Islander High School students had tried smoking cigarettes as compared to 16% of their straight peers.^{xv}

For decades, the tobacco industry has used menthol products to target a wide range of groups: communities of color, youth, LGBTQ+ communities, women, and people with limited incomes. Eleven years after the Tobacco Control Act of 2009 failed to remove menthol tobacco products from the market - there has been no decline in menthol use among Black and Hispanic youth. Menthol cigarette use remains inversely correlated with age and remains popular among Black people who smoke (85%).

Given the wide-ranging impacts of tobacco use in the Ocean State, comprehensive tobacco control programs seek to impact more than just smoking rates and tobacco consumption. Tobacco control programs serve to address broader issues caused by tobacco-related health and social costs by

protecting the state's under-resourced communities and residents who have been marginalized from the ravages of tobacco use, optimizing population health, and minimizing preventable health care expenses, thus laying the foundation for a healthy, productive, and resilient workforce.

As Rhode Island recovers and emerges from the pandemic, it is imperative that we invest in and support policies and programs that will help build a safer, healthier, and more equitable Ocean State. This includes investing in the Tobacco Control Program to drive down tobacco use among youth and adults, and prevent addiction, costly chronic diseases, and serious illnesses among those most at risk.

Together, we can make a difference. Thank you for your consideration.

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Sent by the following Organizations:

- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Rhode Island
- Oasis International – Providence, RI
- Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation/Tobacco 21
- Rhode Island & Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of The Oncology Nursing Society
- Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teacher Association
- Rhode Island Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts
- Rhode Island Kids Count
- Rhode Island Medical Society
- Rhode Island Nurses Association
- Rhode Island Pharmacist Association
- Rhode Island Public Health Institute

ⁱ Federal Trade Commission, *Cigarette Report for 2020, 2021*

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Tobacco Control Program Spending – United States, 2011. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6424a5.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Dille, Julia A., et al., "Program, Policy and Price Interventions for Tobacco Control: Quantifying the Return on Investment of a State Tobacco Control Program," American Journal of Public Health, Published online ahead of print December 15, 2011. See also, Washington State Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Progress Report, March 2011. Washington State Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, News Release, "Thousands of lives saved due to tobacco prevention and control program," November 17, 2010, http://www.doh.wa.gov/Publicat/2010_news/10-183.htm.

^{iv} HHS, 2014.

^v Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. "Cigarette Tax Increases by State Per Year 2000-2021." <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0275.pdf>

^{vi} Rhode Island Office of Management and Budget, Revenue Estimating Conference, 2021.

^{vii} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking. Updated April 28, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/

^{viii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island. Updated December 10, 2021. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/rhode_island

^{ix} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island. Updated December 10, 2021. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/rhode_island

^x Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island. Updated December 10, 2021. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/rhode_island

^{xi} Rhode Island Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019.

^{xii} Rhode Island Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017.

^{xiii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island. Updated May 18, 2021. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/rhode_island

^{xiv} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2020

^{xv} Rhode Island Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019.