

# 2024/25 Tobacco Grant Program - Application

## 2. Agency Profile

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**Agency Name**

County of Mendocino

**Division/Section/Department**

Public Health Department - Community Wellness

**County**

Mendocino County

**Entity Type**

Public Agency

**Agency Type**

Public Health

**Does agency have authority to enforce state tobacco laws or local tobacco ordinances covering retail establishments?**

Yes

## 3. Submitter Information

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**First Name**

Vanessa

**Last Name**

Jimenez

**Job Title**

Program Specialist II

**Classification/Contact Role**

Agency Staff Member

**Street Address 1**

1120 S. Dora Street

**City**

Ukiah

**Zipcode (5 or 9 digits w/dash)**

95482

**Phone Number**

(707) 472-2776

**Email Address**

jimenezva@mendocinocounty.gov

**Confirm Email Address**

jimenezva@mendocinocounty.gov

## 4. Alternate Agency Contact

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**First Name**

Thao

**Last Name**

Phi

**Classification/Contact Role**

Agency Staff Member

**Street Address 1**

1120 S. Dora Street

**City**

Ukiah

**Zipcode (5 or 9 digits w/dash)**

95482

**Phone Number**

(707) 472-2732

**Email Address**

phit@mendocinocounty.gov

**Confirm Email Address**

phit@mendocinocounty.gov

**Do you have additional alternative contact for your agency?**

Yes

**5. Alternate Agency Contacts 2**

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**First Name**

Jenine

**Last Name**

Miller

**Classification/Contact Role**

Agency Staff Member

**Zipcode (5 or 9 digits w/dash)**

95482

**Email Address**

millerje@mendocinocounty.gov

**Confirm Email Address**

millerje@mendocinocounty.gov

**6. Project Summary**

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**Funding Requested**

795,544.00

**Funding Duration**

36 months

**Planned Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY)**

07/01/2025

**Summary of Proposed Project.**

Mendocino County Public Health Department (PH), Community Wellness Division (CW) houses the California Tobacco Control Program and the local Tobacco Retail License Program (TRL). PH administers the local TRL Program for unincorporated Mendocino County and supports jurisdictions in developing and implementing local tobacco control policies, including tobacco retail policies. The proposed activities aim to conduct enforcement operations county-wide and allow PH to expand by partnering with the City of Ukiah and the City of Willits to educate retailers about tobacco state and local laws and enforce tobacco laws. PH will enter into a contract with the City of Ukiah and the City of Willits to work in partnership with code enforcement/compliance officers and conduct minor decoy operations, compliance checks and inspections of tobacco retailers. Funds from this grant will allow for the expansion of such activities and together provide retailer education, training, and diversion for retailers violating state tobacco laws in their jurisdiction. PH staff will conduct enforcement operations, retailer compliance inspections, and provide retailer training and education in Mendocino County.

**7. Partnering Agencies**

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**Will your agency have other local agencies, departments, or contractors involved to complete any of the proposed activities?**

Yes

**8. Partner Agency and Roles**

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**Partner Agency 1**

City of Ukiah

**Partner Agency Roles in Project**

Funds from this award will create the opportunity to enter into a partnership with the City of Ukiah to increase the ability of local staff to make substantive efforts with retailer compliance and enforcing state tobacco laws and local ordinances, including the statewide flavor ban through retailer inspections, education and enforcement operations in their jurisdiction. The City of Ukiah will participate in the scope of activities proposed for the project period ending June 30, 2028.

**Please upload this partner agency's signed Letter of Commitment (PDF).**

[City of Ukiah Letter of Commitment .pdf](#)

**Do you have additional partnering agencies to add?**

Yes

**9. Additional Partner Agency and Roles (Partner 2)**

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**Partner Agency 2**

City of Willits

**Partner Agency Roles in Project**

The City of Willits will support Mendocino County Public Health Department enforce state tobacco laws and local ordinances, including the statewide flavor ban and single-use products through retailer compliance and licensing checks, retailer training and education as well as minor decoy enforcement operations to help reduce the sales rate to those under 21, in their jurisdiction. The City of Willits will participate in the scope of activities proposed for the project period ending June 30, 2028.

**Please upload this partner agency's signed Letter of Commitment (PDF).**

[City of Willits Letter of Commitment.pdf](#)

**Do you have additional partnering agencies to add?**

No

**14. Problem Statement**

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## Geographic Areas Covered by Project

Mendocino County (pop. 91,145) lies 120 miles North of San Francisco on the Pacific coast. The county's rugged terrain covers 3,500 sq. miles and has 4 incorporated cities and several sizable unincorporated townships. Ukiah is the largest incorporated city with a pop. 16,496. The remainder of residents live in rural communities pocketed between vast wilderness, one-third of which are along the coastline. Willits is located at the center 23 miles north of Ukiah with a population of 4,968.

**Total Population within Project Area (Resource for data: <https://cthat.org/>)**

91145

**Population % Under Age 21 within Project Area (Resource for data: <https://cthat.org/>)**

24.2

**Retailers within Project Area (Resource for data: <https://cthat.org/>)**

116

**Retailers within 1,000 Feet of Schools (within Project Area) - Resource for data: <https://cthat.org/>**

30

**Local Ordinance for Flavored Tobacco?**

Yes

**Have prosecutors or public attorneys in the project area filed cases against retailers in past two years?**

No

## Problem Statement Narrative

The California Youth Tobacco Survey (CYTS) 2023 data shows tobacco product use by middle and high school students in California is higher than the average use. CYTS data shows that in Mendocino County approximately 16.4% of middle and high school students reported using tobacco products in the last 30 days. 32.2% of these students have used vapes, 13.3% currently use vape products, and 10.5% have used cigarettes. CYTS data shows that 82.3% of students reported trying vapes as their first tobacco product. 24.6% of students report buying vapes themselves and 35.7% of students reported asking someone to buy vape(s) for them. There are 116 licensed tobacco retailers in Mendocino County which comes to 1.3 per 1,000 population. 10 of these retailers are within 500 feet of a school and 30 are within 1,000 feet of a school (cthat.org). Funds from this grant will allow Mendocino County Public Health to enforce state law and local tobacco ordinances and conduct regular tobacco minor decoy operations and undercover buys county-wide to help reduce the number of illegal sales to minors and address the statewide flavor ban.

## 15. Goals and Objectives

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### Activity Area

Retailer Inspections  
Minor Decoy Operations  
Undercover Buys  
Retailer Education  
Enforcement Officer Education

## 16. Retailer Inspections

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**Number of tobacco retailers that will be inspected per year**

116

**Will inspections address flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

**Additional details regarding retail inspections planned**

Funds from this grant will allow for the expansion of compliance checks in all of Mendocino County. Retailer inspections will be conducted in person to ensure compliance and that retailers are up to date with current tobacco state laws and local ordinances. As part of the visits training on applicable laws will be provided on site or offered as follow-up training. Corrective action recommendations will be provided to help retailers achieve compliance. For non-compliant retailers, a verbal warning will be issued during the first site visit and a notification that a second follow-up visit will occur. Follow-up visits will be conducted to reassess compliance and provide further assistance.

## 17. Minor Decoy Operations

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**Number of minor decoy operations planned per year**

232

**Number of tobacco retailers targeted for operations**

116

**Will operations address retail flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

**Additional details regarding minor decoy operations planned**

Funds from this grant will allow Mendocino County to conduct enforcement operations to enforce state tobacco laws and local ordinances to reduce illegal sales of tobacco products to minors and the sale of single-vape products. PH staff will recruit, hire, and train young adults under the age of 20 for minor decoy operations. Two decoy operations will be conducted in all 116 tobacco retailers per grant year. In the City of Ukiah and City of Willits, decoy operations will be conducted in collaboration with Code Enforcement officers. Mendocino County Public Health staff will ensure officers receive appropriate training for such activities. A data tracking sheet and backup documentation for all decoy operations will be maintained and updated.

## 19. Undercover Buy Operations

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**Number of undercover buy operations planned per year**

39

**Number of tobacco retailers targeted for operations**

116

**Will operations address retail flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

**Additional details regarding undercover buy operations planned**

Undercover buy operations will be conducted to ensure retailer compliance with state law and local tobacco ordinances. PH staff will conduct undercover buys to check for violations of flavored tobacco products or single-use vape products in Mendocino County. In the course of the 3-year grant, all retailers will be targeted at least once.

## 20. Retailer Education

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**Type of Educational Activity**

On-site Education  
Retailer Classes

**Number of retailers to receive educational materials per year**

116

**Number of retailers to receive education on-site per year**

116

**Will on-site retailer education address retail flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

**Number of participants from retailers to complete classes per year**

1

**Will retailer education classes address retail flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

**Are any of the classes offered as part of a merchant diversion program?**

No

### **Additional details regarding educational activities**

As part of the visits, training on applicable laws will be provided at the time of the retailer site visit or offered as follow-up training per the store owner or manager's request. Retailer training program education materials include state and county tobacco laws, employee training, acceptable ID, and development of store policies. PH staff will provide resources aimed to increase retailer compliance with prohibitions on tobacco sales to minors and the statewide flavor ban. PH staff will also provide training and enforcement on an anticipated local ordinance in Mendocino County addressing tobacco product waste. Funding is needed to conduct compliance checks and inspections and expand retailer education and training activities countywide.

## **21. Enforcement Officer Education**

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### **Number of officers to receive tobacco education per year**

2

### **Will officer education address retail flavor ban (state law or local ordinance)?**

Yes

### **Additional details regarding enforcement officer education planned**

Enforcement officers will receive retailer education resources and the Young Adult Tobacco Purchase Surveys (YATPS) Protocol training.

## **22. Prosecution**

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### **Please describe prosecution activities planned.**

In the past years, Mendocino County has not had a retailer violation progress to the level of the District Attorney's Office, though in Willits we are currently needing to take a recurring violation forward after various correctional attempts.

## **25. Project Personnel**

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### **Does the applicant agency have personnel that will perform grant activities?**

Yes

## **26. Project Personnel 1**

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### **Personnel Classification/Rank**

Program Specialist II

### **Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?"**

Straight Time

### **Percentage of Straight Time Planned (%)**

100%

### **Personnel Duties**

Retailer Inspections  
Minor Decoy Operations  
Undercover Buy Operations  
Retailer Education  
Enforcement Officer Education

### **Additional details regarding personnel duties planned**

The Program Specialist (PS) will carry out program activities to meet the proposed goals and objectives of the Tobacco Grant Program. The PS proposed duties include maintaining knowledge of state and county tobacco laws to address underage sales to minors and the statewide flavor ban. PS will update and prepare retailer education materials for tobacco retailers. Education may be provided on-site or offered as a follow-up. PS will conduct tobacco retailer compliance and license inspections. Coordinate minor decoy operations in Mendocino County, and train minor decoys and enforcement officers. Oversee subcontract with other agencies supporting Mendocino County enforcement activities. Maintain backup documentation and track data.

### **Are there additional personnel that will perform project activities?**

Yes

## 27. Project Personnel 2

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### Personnel Classification/Rank

Sr. Program Specialist

### Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?

Straight Time

### Percentage of Straight Time (%)

25%

### Personnel Duties

Minor Decoy Operations  
Undercover Buy Operations  
Retailer Education  
Retailer Inspections  
Enforcement Officer Education

### Additional details regarding personnel duties planned

The Sr. Program Specialist will support the Tobacco Grant Program goals and objectives. PS will assist in retailer inspections, provide retailer education, and training to code enforcement officers and organize activities to integrate personnel, minor decoys/undercover buys training, and other resources and information to carry out important tobacco-related enforcement operations and retailer training in Mendocino County.

### Are there additional personnel that will perform project activities?

Yes

## 28. Project Personnel 3

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### Personnel Classification/Rank

Program Manager

### Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?

Straight Time

### Percentage of Straight Time (%)

10%

### Personnel Duties

Other - Write In: Program Oversight

### Additional details regarding personnel duties planned

Tobacco Grant Program oversight, training, data collating and analysis, quarterly grant reporting, and tracking budget expenses.

### Are there additional personnel that will perform project activities?

Yes

## 29. Project Personnel 4

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### Personnel Classification/Rank

Staff Assistant

### Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?

Straight Time

### Percentage of Straight Time (%)

19%

## Personnel Duties

Minor Decoy Operations

### Additional details regarding personnel duties planned

Staff assistant(s) to serve as a minor decoy for enforcement operations.

### Are there additional personnel that will perform project activities?

No

## 30. Project Personnel 5

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### Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?

Straight Time

### Additional details regarding personnel duties planned

### Are there additional personnel that will perform project activities?

No

## 31. Project Personnel 6

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### Will operations by this personnel be done on overtime, straight time, or both?

Straight Time

## 32. Project Budget

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Please submit the Budget Detail document (Excel file).

[MCPH - tobacco-grant-budget-detail-sheet- 062724.xlsx](#)

### Does your Budget Detail include expenses listed in Section B (Other Operating Expenses and Equipment)?

Yes

**Budget Narrative: Please provide justification for each expense listed within Section B of the Budget Detail Sheet (Operating Expenses and Equipment)".**

Section A is for personnel costs associated with DOJ personnel.

Section B is costs for minor decoy operations (buy money), minor decoy equipment, and subcontracts for cities doing enforcement activities. There are also costs budgeted for travel to conduct retail compliance and education visits as well as minor decoy and undercover buy operations. Training expenses will cover travel and registration expenses for approved tobacco-related training.

Section C is for indirect costs.

### Line item(s) on Budget Detail that correspond with this activity - Retail Inspections

Program Specialist x2  
Contract with Local Law Enforcement Agency  
Local Mileage

### Line item(s) on Budget Detail that correspond with this activity - Minor Decoy

Program Specialist x2  
Contract with Local Law Enforcement Agency  
Staff Assistant (Minor Decoys)  
Buy Money  
Video/Audio Recording Devices  
Local Mileage



**Line item(s) on Budget Detail that correspond with this activity - Undercover Buys**

Program Specialist x2  
Contract with Local Law Enforcement Agency  
Staff Assistant  
Buy Money  
Local Mileage

**Line item(s) on Budget Detail that correspond with this activity - Retailer Education**

Program Specialist x2  
Contract with Local Law Enforcement Agency  
Local Mileage

**Line item(s) on Budget Detail that correspond with this activity - Enforcement Officer Education**

Program Specialist x2  
Program Manager  
Local Mileage

**33. Grant History And Community Support**

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**Has your agency had a prior grant or does it have a current grant through the Tobacco Grant Program?**

Yes

**Prior Award(s) Comparison: Describe any interaction between proposed activities and those awarded under any prior grant.**

Mendocino County Public Health Department (PH) received funding in the amount of \$459,210 for the previous award term: December 1, 2021-June 30, 2025. FY 22-25 has allowed PH to provide public education outreach and establish systems for retail compliance observing the number of retailers and identifying the number of problematic retailers. This grant will allow PH to expand retailer compliance efforts with law enforcement and partner agencies targeting potential problematic retailers. Additionally, PH would like to conduct undercover buys and minor decoy enforcement operations to decrease illegal sales of flavored tobacco products and sales to minors in all jurisdictions.

FY21/22 - \$0  
FY22/23 - \$148,056.  
FY23/24 - \$152,111.  
FY24/25 - \$159,043.

**Prior Grant Successes/Challenges: Describe the agency's previous award(s) including successes and challenges. Provide evidence of the impact of the agency's previous actions performed as part of the previous grant award(s).**

Activities were challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff turnover, and a repetitive re-learning cycle. Despite these challenges, we began to see success through increased public outreach education, retailer site visits, and training. Beginning Summer 2023, we observed educational efforts improved tobacco retailers' compliance. We have conducted 183 retailer education visits, 56 store retailer inspection/license checks, and have found 5 sites failed to display a valid license, and 2 stores selling flavored tobacco products. Ukiah and Willits have requested partnerships to support further enforcement in the incorporated area as it has been reported that tobacco retailers are selling to minors and shelving flavored tobacco products.

**34. Certifications And Signature**

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**Authorized signature**

Jenine Miller