

Expanding Smokefree Communities

Community Profiles:

Mesquite, Nevada

Community Overview

Through education and community outreach, the **Smokefree Mesquite Coalition** in Nevada is working to protect the health and safety of Mesquite residents and employees by reducing their exposure to hazardous secondhand smoke.

Health Equity Focus

A third of Mesquite's workforce is currently exposed to secondhand smoke on a daily basis, as are a large percentage of the city's residents, youth, and visitors. By reducing the burden of exposure to secondhand smoke in workplaces and public places, fewer people will be exposed to secondhand smoke, thus improving the community's health outcomes.

Community Demographics

Mesquite is a geographically-isolated, rural community located an hour and a half outside of Las Vegas. According to the 2010 Census figures for Mesquite, the town has a population of 15,276; however, local city data places the population at 18,770.^{1,2}

On average, Mesquite's population is older with a median age of 50.6, compared to 37.2 for state/U.S.^{3,4} A large number of Mesquite residents are retired and approximately 30% of the population is considered "seasonal or part-timers."^{5,6} Only 28% (1,252) of the total families in Mesquite (4,444) have children, which is much lower than the state average (46%).⁷ Mesquite's population is primarily comprised of Whites (Non-Hispanic) and Hispanic/Latinos⁸ with the majority of Mesquite's Hispanic/Latino population (96%) being Mexican.⁹ The median household income in Mesquite is \$44,221, which is slightly lower than the state (\$55,726). This may be somewhat attributable to the higher retiree population in Mesquite, living on a fixed income. 83.3% of Mesquite residents have a high school diploma and 15.7% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.¹⁰

Burden of Tobacco Use – The Challenge

Adult & Youth Smoking Rates

In Nevada, 22.8% of the adult population currently smokes,¹¹ which in 2011 was tied for the 16th highest smoking rate in the nation.¹² No city-specific smoking data is available for Mesquite; however, based on the statewide smoking rate, between 3,254 and 3,998 Mesquite residents may smoke.¹³ According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), in 2009, 17% of Nevadan youth reported current cigarette use and 6.4% of Nevadan youth reported frequent cigarette use, compared to 19.2% and 7.6% for U.S. youth, respectively.¹⁴ 12.1% of middle school and 11.3% of high school students in Nevada reported smoking a whole cigarette before age 13.¹⁵

Smoking Related Death and Disease

Smoking-related deaths among Nevadan adults 35+ have been causally linked to three main disease categories: cardiovascular disease 29.3%, cancer 40.1%, and respiratory disease 30.6%.¹⁶

Secondhand Smoke Exposure in the Workplace: A Health Equity Issue

There are approximately 6,065 Mesquite residents currently in the workforce.¹⁷ 42% of Mesquite’s workers are employed in the entertainment or food service whereas under 10% of the US population is employed in the entertainment or food service industry, distinguishing the city’s workforce composition from the US in general.¹⁸

The Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act (NCIAA), which was passed by a majority of Nevada voters in 2006, made grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants, some bars, schools, child care facilities, retail shops, video arcades, and movie theaters smokefree. Although the NCIAA increased the percentage of Nevadans protected from harmful secondhand smoke exposure, the exemption of casino gaming areas left a significant number of people unprotected. Since the largest employers in Mesquite are three major casinos that employ more than 2,100 workers, this means that more than a third of Mesquite’s workforce are currently being exposed to secondhand smoke on a daily basis, not including workers employed in the town’s three smaller gaming establishments, two tobacco shops, and four hotel/motels in the city that also leave employers and visitors unprotected.

Advancing Health Equity through Tobacco-Free Living – The Solution

In June the American Lung Association in Nevada received a sub-award from the American Lung Association National Headquarters under *Expanding Smokefree Communities*, Community Transformation Grants program, to educate Mesquite residents and businesses about the benefits of smokefree environments with the goal of improving health equity in populations disproportionately impacted by tobacco-related health disparities.

Taking on this charge, the American Lung Association in Nevada is working in partnership with the volunteers of the Smokefree Mesquite Coalition to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in Mesquite workplaces and public places. The Mesquite Community Leadership Team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors who have combined their resources and talent to make tobacco-free living a reality in Mesquite. These members include representation from the following organizations:

- Southern Nevada Health District
- United Healthcare
- 10-E PR
- Mesa View Hospital
- Mesquite Water Board
- Paragon Healthcare
- American Heart Association
- Primex Plastics
- Mesquite Residents

If you would like to find out more or get involved with the educational efforts underway in Mesquite, please contact the American Lung Association in Nevada at (702) 431-6333 or visit www.SmokeFreeMesquite.com.

¹ US Census, 2010

² City of Mesquite Master Plan- Population Element, May 2012: Population estimate arrived at from *City Housing Unit Counts, Person Per Household numbers, and calculated vacancy rates*

³ US Census, American Community Survey data from Mesquite 2006-2010

⁴ US Census Bureau’s American FactFinder, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

⁵ US Census, 2010 data for Mesquite; 2011 data for Nevada and US

⁶ City of Mesquite Master Plan: Population Element, May 2012

⁷ City of Mesquite Master Plan: Population Element, May 2012

⁸ US Census, American Community Survey data from Mesquite 2006-2010

⁹ US Census, American Community Survey data from Mesquite 2006-2010

¹⁰ US Census, 2010

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

¹² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

¹³ Based on population range of 15,276 (2010 US Census) and 18,770 (City of Mesquite)

¹⁴ University of Nevada School of Medicine and the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition, *Trends in Tobacco Use, Health Impacts, and Economic Costs in Nevada*, March 2012

¹⁵ University of Nevada School of Medicine and the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition, *Trends in Tobacco Use, Health Impacts, and Economic Costs in Nevada*, March 2012

¹⁶ Nevada State Health Division, *The Burden of Tobacco in Nevada 2012*

¹⁷ US Census, American Community Survey data from Mesquite 2006-2010

¹⁸ US Census, American Community Survey data from Mesquite 2006-2010