

TSET awards Jackson County Health Department \$200,000

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ALTUS, OK—The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) Board of Directors recently awarded \$200,000 to Jackson County Health Department for the first year of a new five-year TSET Healthy Living grant program that took effect July 1.

The five-year community grant program aims to prevent and reduce tobacco use and obesity by working with key public and private sectors within local communities. TSET awarded a Healthy Living grant to Jackson County Health Department to work in partnership with Cities and Governments and Businesses within Jackson County.

“As we move forward with the TSET Healthy Living grant, we will continue to create opportunities in Jackson County that make the healthy choice the easy choice” said Karen Weaver, Regional Director. “We look forward to continuing our work with local business owners, city officials, and community leaders to make that happen.”

The TSET Healthy Living program takes an integrated approach to addressing Oklahoma’s leading causes of death—cancer and cardiovascular disease—by preventing and reducing tobacco use and obesity. In May, the TSET Board of Directors approved the award of \$14 million for 50 community-based Healthy Living grants that will cover 62 counties. Jackson County has had a CX grant from TSET for 11 years. In 2004 the Jackson County Community Health Action Team was awarded the Wave I CX Tobacco Control grant and the CX Physical Activity & Nutrition grant in 2011.

The Healthy Living program builds on lessons learned from more than a decade of TSET community-based grants. The new program was designed with the best research available, previous evaluation results, input from existing grantees, partner organizations, and nationally recognized experts.

“Over the past decade, we have seen measurable results from the work of community grantees, as coalitions of passionate individuals and organizations have worked together to make a difference for today’s youth and future generations of Oklahomans,” said TSET Executive Director Tracey Strader. “Thanks to these and other efforts at the local and state levels, youth smoking has been cut in half, adults smoking is at an all-time low and obesity in our state has leveled off.”

TSET is launching the Healthy Living community grant program as it celebrates the 15th anniversary of a voter-approved state question in 2000 that created the endowment trust. Funded by a portion of the tobacco industry’s payment to the state as part of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, the endowment trust is a long-term strategy to improve health. Only the earnings from the endowment are used to fund grants and programs.

Each year, the tobacco industry makes a settlement payment to Oklahoma and 45 other states as part of the national Master Settlement Agreement. Settlement payments will continue as long as cigarettes are sold nationally. Court documents obtained during state lawsuits against the industry showed that tobacco companies specifically marketed their product to youth under 18, in hopes of getting “replacement smokers.”

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