



For Immediate Release
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Mini-Grant Opportunities for Youth-Led Tobacco-Use Prevention Projects

TOPEKA, KAN. - The Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition, Inc. (TFKC) and TASK, the statewide youth movement against tobacco, have grant funding from the Kansas Health Foundation to support youth-led tobacco prevention efforts in communities from across the state. To achieve these goals TFKC will engage youth in implementing education and media strategies through mini-grants for up to \$1,250 to be awarded for youth groups statewide.

“The mini-grant funding encourages teens to ask questions and seek answers about the tobacco industry’s marketing and manufacturing practices,” TFKC Executive Director Mary Jayne Hellebust said. “This process will help Kansas teens make reasoned decisions on the importance of avoiding a product that kills 1,200 of its customers every day in the United States.” She also noted: “These youth mini-grant projects will help teens in Kansas design youth-developed media ads and activities that promote their own version about the truth of tobacco use.”

Tobacco use remains a leading public health issue in Kansas. The 2007 Kansas Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 21 percent of Kansas high school students smoke and 16% of boys use smokeless tobacco. Currently only 17.9% of Kansas adults admit to smoking according to the 2008 Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The mini-grant program will encourage creativity in youth-led projects that focus on protecting TASK members and their peers from becoming addicted to cigarettes and tobacco products. One objective is to increase the number of school districts with policies for tobacco free school grounds.

The TASK Web site at www.kstask.org and the TFKC website at www.tobaccofreekansas.org both contain the grant application and submission requirements. The deadline for applications is Friday, December 18th, 2009, with award announcement made by January 15th, 2009. Erica Anderson (eanderson@tobaccofreekansas.org), TFKC Adult and Youth Community Outreach Coordinator, can be contacted for technical support and additional information about the submission process.

About Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

The Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition is a statewide alliance of health, education, parent, youth, law enforcement and other civic organizations and individuals concerned about tobacco use in Kansas. TFKC promotes laws, policies and funding of effective programs that will result in significant reductions in tobacco use and addiction, especially among children and high-risk groups. The coalition’s major goals are to prevent children from beginning a lifelong addiction to tobacco, to help those who want to quit smoking, to protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke and to protect and assist those populations disparately affected by tobacco use. For more information on TFKC please visit www.tobaccofreekansas.org.

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition Officers:

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Linda DeCoursey

Vice-President
James Gardner, MD

Secretary
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TASK is a Kansas' youth-led movement that promotes tobacco free teens and unites communities to create one strong voice speaking out for freedom from tobacco addiction. The Kansas Health Foundation grant has expanded youth-led efforts in Kansas to increase the numbers of Kansas youth committed to showing how tobacco is produced and marketed so that youth can make up their own minds about using any kind of tobacco product. For more information please visit kstask.org.

About the Kansas Health Foundation

The Kansas Health Foundation is a philanthropy dedicated to improving the health of all Kansas. Based in Wichita, the Foundation's assets total over \$528 million with more than 24 million paid out annually in the areas of children's health, leadership, public health and policy. For more information about the Kansas Health Foundation, visit www.kansashealth.org.

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