

# Few US higher education campuses have gone completely smoke and/or tobacco-free

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Just one in six accredited US colleges and universities have gone completely smoke and/or tobacco free, reveals the first study of its kind, published in the journal *Tobacco Control*.

As smoke-free environments have increased in the US and across the globe, so have smoke-free policies at colleges and universities. But, to date, it's not clear how many, and what proportion of, institutions have gone completely smoke or [tobacco-free](#).

To try and find out, the researchers drew on data from the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation and the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

They calculated the number and proportion of completely smoke-free and tobacco-free accredited institutions in the US that award degrees, and the number and proportion of US college and university students, faculty, and admin staff protected by campus policies and [state laws](#).

They found that while some progress has been

made, only 1 in 6 higher education institutions had gone completely smoke or tobacco free by 2017—equal to 823 institutions, representing 1816 individual campuses.

Four states—the District of Columbia, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming—and six territories, including the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, had no known institutions that were fully protected.

Only three states and two territories had comprehensive policies in place in over half of their accredited, higher education institutions: Iowa (almost 86.5%); Arkansas (just under 62%); and North Dakota (55%); Guam (just under 67%); and the Northern Mariana Islands (100%).

The researchers estimated that 14.9 million full and part time college/[university students](#) (just under 27%) and 8.9 million (25.4%) faculty and admin staff were covered by strict smoke or tobacco free campus policies or state laws.

Despite some progress, efforts to implement comprehensive smoke and tobacco free policies at higher education institutions need to be stepped up, say the researchers.

"Continued success in increasing the adoption of comprehensive smoke free and tobacco free protections at institutions of higher learning will strengthen [smoking](#) prevention among non-smokers, increase quitting among current smokers, and protect youth and young adults from the negative health effects of exposure to secondhand smoke," they conclude.

**More information:** Smoke free and tobacco free colleges and universities in the United States, *Tobacco Control* (2019). [DOI: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054829](#)

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