Success Story:
Making healthier living more accessible through technical assistance and training

The start: Addressing new opportunities to reduce tobacco use

In 2001, the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement made it possible for states and communities to fund comprehensive programs to educate the public about the dangers of tobacco use, prevent tobacco use, and promote quitting among smokers. Recognizing the urgency for both new and established programs to demonstrate success in a short time frame, Legacy (formerly the American Legacy Foundation), American Cancer Society (ACS), and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) founded the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC) at Emory University. TTAC brought together subject matter experts to deliver high-quality and timely technical assistance, information, resources, and training to these newly funded local and state initiatives around the country.

A changing landscape: Hitting the nail on the head

Since the beginning of Legacy funding, TTAC has received major contracts and grants from federal, state, and local organizations to manage professional networks and online learning communities; support state and local coalition building and advocacy activities; create interactive online toolkits and resources; and onsite and distance training and technical assistance (TAT).

Legacy has remained a key supporter and collaborator with TTAC since 2002 to build effective tobacco prevention and control programs and policies throughout the nation.

Amber Bullock, Legacy’s Executive Vice President of Program Development, points out a key lesson learned over the course of the Legacy-TTAC collaboration:

“Knowledge without skill building produces very limited results. In other words, knowledge and tools aren’t enough; we all know how to use a hammer in theory, but direct training and coaching from an expert with specialized skills during the first attempt and beyond are needed in order to squarely hit the nail on the head – and continue to do so as the backdrop changes. The same can be said for establishing public health programs and accelerating successes.”

Legacy Board Chair, Jonathan E. Fielding presents the 2014 Emory Centers’ National Partners Leadership Award to Amber T. Bullock, Executive Vice President of Program Development at Legacy; Ms. Bullock was recognized for her commitment to collaboration in the Legacy-TTAC partnership.
Decades of evidence from tobacco control programs and policies are serving as a springboard for addressing the rising burden of diabetes and other emerging public health concerns, and this has happened at Emory University under a new brand, the Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance.

Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance Executive Director, Dr. Linelle Blais, comments, “In 2009, we established the Diabetes Training and Technical Assistance Center (DTTAC), adapting the TTAC model to address the increasing problem of diabetes prevention and control, thanks to funding from the CDC’s Office of Diabetes Translation, and led the building of a nationwide workforce of lifestyle coaches for the National Diabetes Prevention Program. Our staff’s capacity-building services now span beyond tobacco and diabetes, including all public health issues, risk factors, and professional competencies.”

The Emory Centers’ experience and tools are being sought after to facilitate integration efforts across chronic disease; coalition/collaboration building and management; improve competency and knowledge; and address priority population needs—the same topics that TTAC was able to address, in large part, thanks to the support of Legacy.

Of key interest to both Legacy and the Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance is sustainability of community programming, and as national organizations, scalability and replication of outcomes are key opportunities for expanding the reach of public health resources.

As TAT providers, the Emory Centers and Legacy will continue to:

* Prioritize efforts to reach groups that are most vulnerable to tobacco use and tobacco industry targeting;

* Strive for cultural competence in our interactions with clients and communities and in the development of services and programs;

* Take advantage of the use of social and informational media tools to disseminate evidence on what works in tobacco control to all communities; and

* Increase efforts to work with non-traditional public health partners in order to reach people in the places they live, work, play, and receive services in their communities.
How can training and technical assistance help you make your community healthier? Contact the Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance to find out, or browse the Emory Centers website for tobacco control information and innovative resources that have resulted from collaborations with Legacy and other partners over the past twelve years. The following resources were developed and made freely available through support from Legacy:

- **Tobacco 101** - This user-friendly, self-guided web-based tutorial provides the information and resources necessary to understand the problems related to tobacco use and strategies that effectively reduce tobacco use.

- **Reaching Higher Ground: A guide for preventing, preparing for, and transforming conflict for tobacco control coalitions** - The guide is intended to help coalition members and leaders to address conflict in ways that produce strong relationships, effective and powerful coalitions and creative solutions.

- **Addressing Tobacco Pricing Policies: A Toolkit for Tobacco Control Program Managers** - Recognizing that every state and territory has its own unique political culture and environment, this kit contains a collection of tools that will provide tobacco control program professionals practical support to strengthen tobacco pricing policy.

- **Logic Model Essentials and Fundamentals of Evaluation distance learning courses** - Participants learn and apply the core concepts of program planning and evaluation, and have access to valuable resources and evaluation experts who provide feedback during the learning process.

- **Special supplement of the journal Health Promotion Practice, “Training and Technical Assistance Lessons Learned to Sustain Social Norm Changes in Tobacco Control.”** - The November 2011 theme issue highlighted thoughtful perspectives on technical assistance practices that can serve as examples to sustain the movement toward a healthier, tobacco-free society.

At the Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance, we strive to create collaborative work environments that foster creativity, inclusiveness, innovation, continuous learning, and the celebration of achievements. After years of providing quality technical assistance, we know that many different paths exist to achieve common outcomes. Our goal is to work in partnership with our colleagues to assess needs, fill gaps, and provide viable solutions to overcome challenges. We work openly, with a sense of urgency, in the spirit of respect, collaboration and trust; with enthusiasm and commitment to public health principles and the highest ethical standards.