

Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021



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Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021

Prepared by the

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health

TOBACCO FREE NEBRASKA PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

Overall Landscape

Results from the *Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021* showed remarkable progresses in adopting smoke-free policies at multi-unit properties. The following is a summary of the major findings from this survey.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2021</u>	<i>p</i> value
Comprehensive smoke-free policy reported	46%	68%	< 0.00001*
Partial smoke-free policy reported	11%	12%	0.67
No smoke-free policy reported	44%	20%	< 0.00001*
Smoke-free policy included in the lease (Among these with smoke-free policies)	NA	84%	NA
Desired to adopt a smoke-free policy (Among these with NO smoke-free policies)	NA	36%	NA
Smoke-free policy decisions made by owner	71%	51%	< 0.00001*
Agreed that implementing a smoke-free policy in multi-unit housing is legal	57%	77%	< 0.00001*
Strongly agreed or agreed that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult	76%	68%	0.057

*denotes the difference is statistically significant.

Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of multi-unit properties with a comprehensive smoke-free policy and the percentage of respondents indicating that smoke-free policy is legal increased

significantly. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents suggesting that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult decreased.

In addition to the topics noted above, benefits and obstacles remained consistent over time. The top benefits included “reduced risk of fire” (91%), “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units” (80%), “lower maintenance cost” (71%), or “positive impact on tenant health” (70%). Enforcement was still reported as the biggest obstacle to implementing a smoke-free policy (59%).

Multi-Unit Properties Serving Low-Income Residents

A question on Section 8 Housing^a was newly introduced in the 2021 survey to evaluate secondhand smoke exposure in the population with low socioeconomic status. The major findings are shown in Table 2. Compared to multi-unit properties that did not accept Section 8 vouchers:

- The landscape of smoke-free policies at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing was similar to those that did not.
- Owners/managers of multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers were more likely to strongly agree/agree that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult.
- Owners/managers of multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers were more likely to indicate enforcement as the biggest obstacle in adoption of smoke-free policies.
 - But less likely to report “tenant complain” as the biggest obstacle (11% vs. 21%, $p = 0.049$)
- Economic benefits, such as “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units”, seem to be an influencing factor in the decision to adopt a smoke-free policy at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing:
 - A remarkably higher percentage of those accepting Section 8 Housing indicated “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units” as a major benefit (90% vs. 73%, $p = 0.0003$).
 - The percentage of owners/managers of multi-unit properties reported “lower maintenance cost” as a benefit is 74% among those accepting Section 8 housing vouchers, and 69% in those that did not ($p > 0.05$, *Non-significant*).
 - The percentage of owners/managers of multi-unit properties reported “adds value to the rental unit” as a benefit is 64% among those accepting Section 8 housing vouchers, and 56% in those that did not ($p > 0.05$, *Non-significant*).

^a Section 8 Housing is a federal program for assisting very low-income families, elderly, and the disabled to afford housing in the private market through a voucher program.



Table 2. Summary of smoke-free policies at multi-unit housing properties accepting Section 8 Housing vs. those that did not				
		<u>Section 8</u>	<u>Not Section 8</u>	<i>p</i> value
Landscape	Comprehensive smoke-free policy reported	67%	68%	> 0.05
	Partial smoke-free policy reported	13%	12%	> 0.05
	No smoke-free policy reported	20%	19%	> 0.05
Decisions were made by	Owners	44%	57%	> 0.05
	Managers	9%	5%	> 0.05
	Both managers and owners	38%	29%	> 0.05
	Other	10%	9%	> 0.05
Desired to adopt a smoke-free policy (Among those with NO smoke-free policy)		31%	41%	> 0.05
Enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult.	Strongly agree/ Agree	78%	63%	0.007*
	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	10%	20%	0.002*
Indicated this as the biggest obstacle	Enforcement	68%	53%	0.016*
	Tenant complaint	11%	21%	0.049*
Indicated this as a benefit of smoke-free policies	Reduced risk of fire	91%	91%	> 0.05
	Reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units	90%	73%	0.0003*
	Adds value to the rental unit	64%	56%	> 0.05
	Lower maintenance costs	74%	69%	> 0.05

*denotes the difference is statistically significant.

2021 Nebraska Multi-Unit Properties Smoke-Free Policy Map

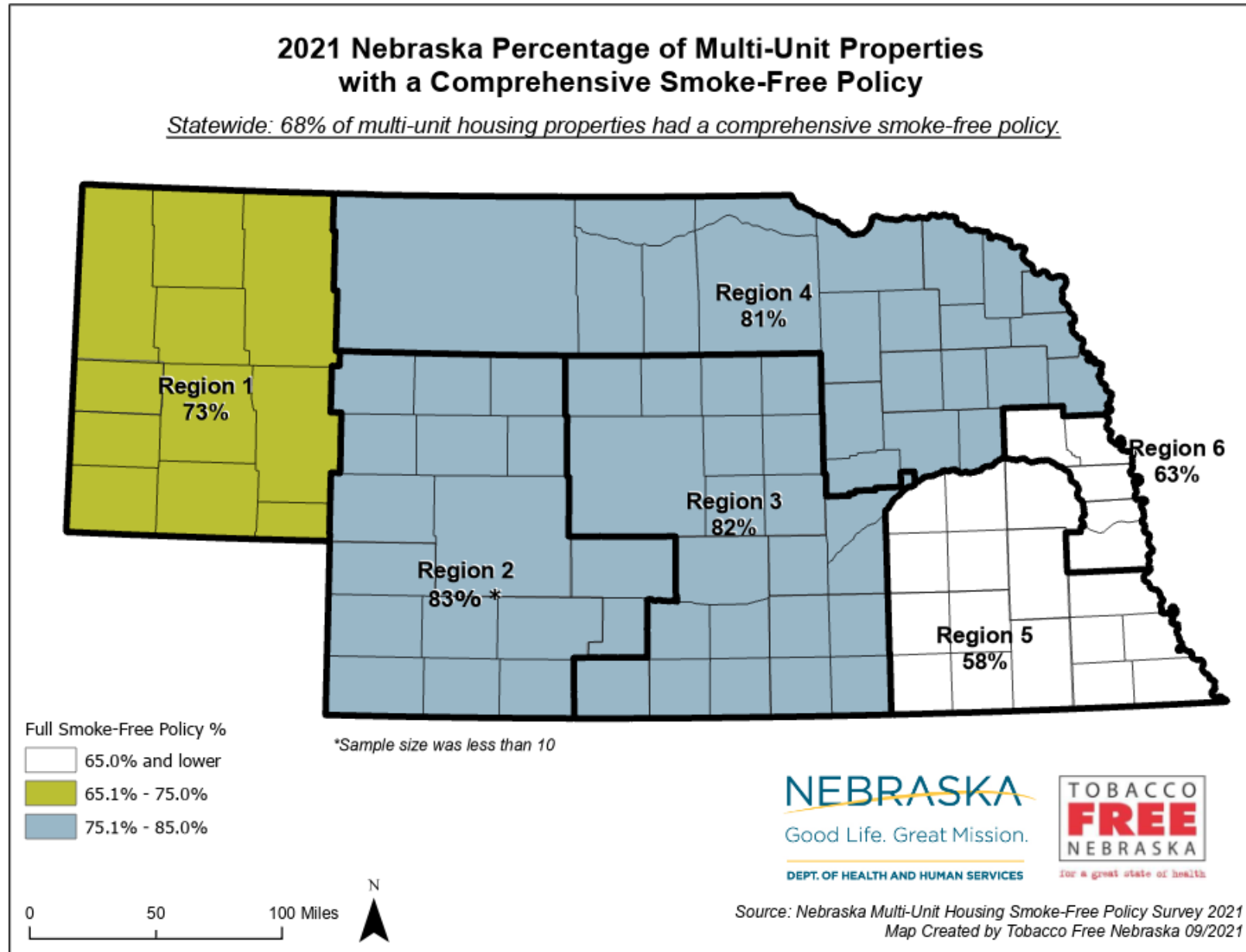
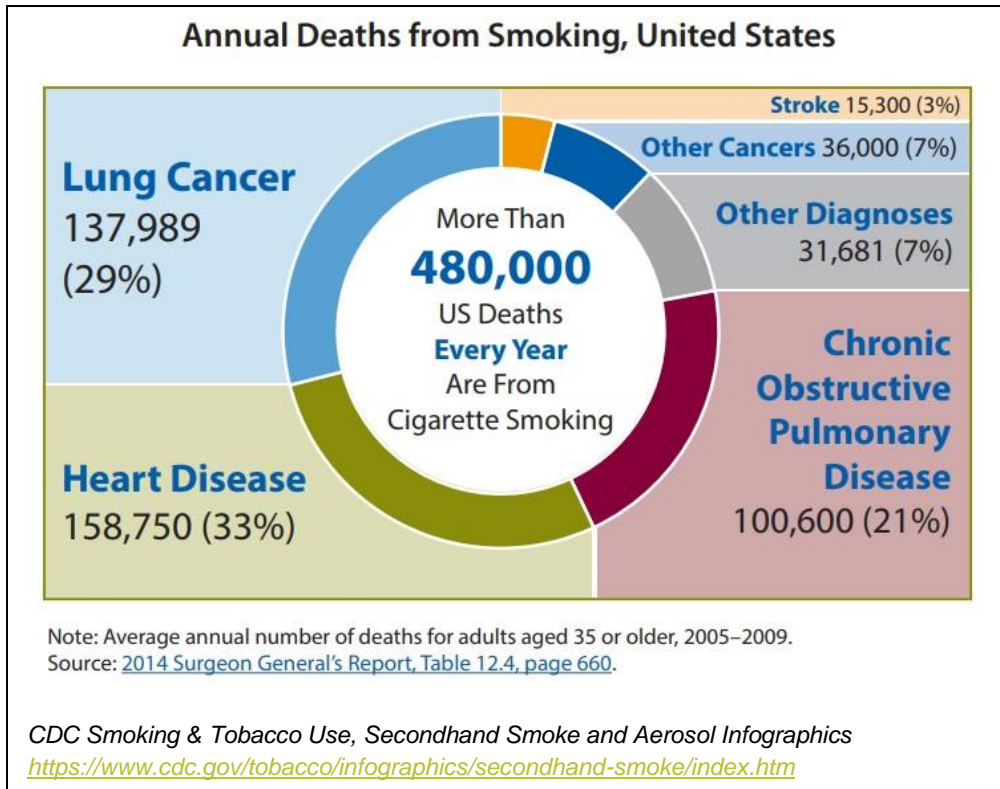


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Introduction

Cigarette smoking harms almost every single organ of our body. It is closely related to cardiovascular diseases (such as high blood pressure, cardiac arrest, and stroke), respiratory diseases (such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD), and more. Smoking can diminish overall health and dramatically increase the risk of cancer almost anywhere in the body. In fact, cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.¹




These harms are not limited within smokers. Non-smokers exposed to the smoke created by the burning ends of cigarettes or the smoke exhaled by someone who is smoking can be affected as well. This is also known as secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and chemical compounds. Hundreds of these are toxic and at least 70 are carcinogenic, including


1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Let's Make the Next Generation Tobacco-Free: Your Guide to the 50th Anniversary Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2016 Jan 11].

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006 [accessed 2017 Jan 11].

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010 [accessed 2017 Jan 11].

Benzene, Butane, Ammonia, Toluene, Cadmium, and Hydrogen Cyanide.⁴ Exposure to secondhand smoke, even briefly, can be harmful.^{3,4} In fact, since 1964, about 2,500,000 non-smokers have died from health problems caused by secondhand smoke exposure.⁴ For adults, exposure to secondhand smoke can hurt the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, and increase the risk of stroke.^{2,4,5} For children, the health impacts are even more significant, because young kids are still developing and they are more sensitive to the toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke. It is shown that children who spend one hour in a very smoky room inhale enough toxic chemicals to equal smoking 10 cigarettes.⁶ The consequences of secondhand smoke exposure



Secondhand smoke and the **harmful** chemicals in it are known causes of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS, ear infections,** and **asthma attacks** in infants and children. They are also known causes of **HEART DISEASE, stroke,** and **lung cancer** in adult nonsmokers. 

Secondhand smoke and the harmful chemicals in it are known causes of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, respiratory infections, ear infections, and asthma attacks in infants and children. They are also known causes of heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer in adult nonsmokers.

CDC Smoking & Tobacco Use, *Secondhand Smoke and Aerosol Infographics*
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/infographics/secondhand-smoke/index.htm>

can be very severe in children. For example, children exposed to secondhand smoke have weaker lungs and higher risks for bronchitis, pneumonia, and ear infections; breathing in secondhand smoke can trigger asthma attacks; being exposed to secondhand smoke is closely correlated to unexpected deaths (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, SIDS) among infants.^{2,4,5} In the United States, about two out of

five children are exposed to secondhand smoke, and that rate is even higher in Black or African American children - seven out of ten Black or African American children are exposed to secondhand smoke.⁷

4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2017 Jan 11].

5. Tsai J, Homa DM, Gentzke AS, Mahoney M et al. *Exposure to Secondhand Smoke Among Nonsmokers—United States, 1988-2014*. *MMWR* 2018;67(48): 1342-46 [accessed 2021 Feb 2].

6. *Nationwide Children's Hospital*, available at <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/helping-hands/second-hand-smoke>

7. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. *Vital signs: disparities in nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke — United States, 1999–2012*. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2015;64 (04):103-108.

More and more people have realized the harms of cigarette smoking, as well as secondhand smoke. Every person deserves to breathe smoke-free air and their desire to not being exposed to secondhand smoke should be respected. As of December 2020, twenty eight (28) states and the District of Columbia had comprehensive smoke-free laws protecting people from secondhand smoke at workplaces and public areas, including bars and restaurants.⁸ The state of Nebraska passed Clean Indoor Air Act in 2008 and required indoor workplaces in Nebraska to be smoke-free as of June 1, 2009. The law was expanded to include electronic smoking devices which went into effect on November 14, 2020.

IS SMOKING A PROTECTED RIGHT?

No. The U.S. constitution does not extend special protection to smokers. Smoking is not a specially protected liberty right under the due process clause of the constitution. The fundamental right to privacy does not apply to smoking. Smokers are not a specially protected category of people under the equal protection clause of the constitution.

ARE SMOKE-FREE HOUSING POLICIES LEGAL?

Yes. Property owners, whether public or private, may restrict smoking on their properties. “No smoking” rules for apartment units fall into the same legal category as “no pets” or “no loud noise” rules. They are policies that reduce property damage and protect tenants’ right of use and enjoyment of their apartments.

Samantha K. Graff, Tobacco control legal consortium, There is no constitutional right to smoke: 2008 (2nd edition, 2008).

The home is becoming the main place many children and adults are exposed to secondhand smoke.⁹ As mentioned, the Surgeon General concluded that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure.^{2,4} Therefore, being exposed to secondhand smoke even only at home is still much harmful. Thus, it is important to implement smoke-free policies at homes, especially at multi-unit housing properties (e.g., apartments, condominiums, townhouses, duplexes, and quadruplexes).

8. American Lung Association <https://www.lung.org/policy-advocacy/tobacco/smokefree-environments/smokefree-air-laws>

The 28 states are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

9. Walton K, Gentzke AS, Murphy-Hoefer R, Kenemer B, Neff LJ. Exposure to Secondhand Smoke in Homes and Vehicles Among US Youths, United States, 2011-2019. *Preventing Chronic Disease* 2020(17) [accessed 2021 Feb 2].

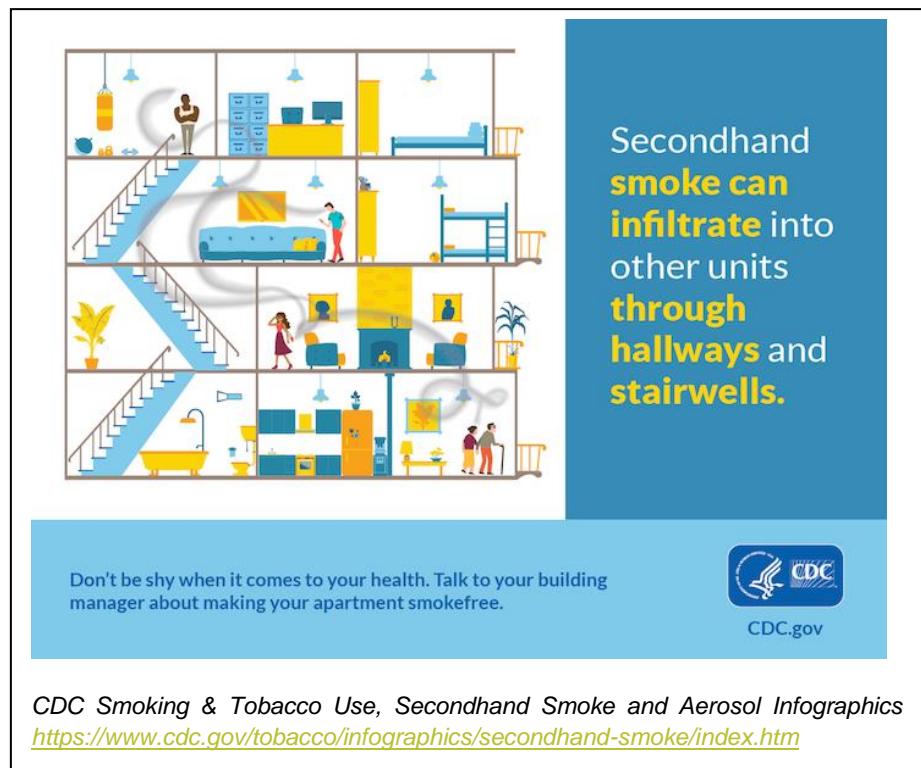
10. King BA, Babb SD, Tynan MA, Gerzoff RB. National and state estimates of secondhand smoke infiltration among U.S. multiunit housing residents. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* 2013a;15(7):1316–21 [accessed 2021 Feb 2].

In the United States, about one in four people live in multi-unit housing properties. There is no way for nonsmokers to escape from secondhand smoke if someone else smokes in the same building. Secondhand smoke can travel through not only doorways, ventilation systems, plumbing, but also electric lines, and cracks in walls. Efforts to clean the air using air purifiers/fresheners/fans, opening windows, or ventilating buildings cannot remove secondhand smoke. In fact, heating, air conditioner, and ventilation systems can help distribute secondhand smoke throughout the whole building.¹⁰ Thus, implementing smoke-free policies for the entire building are critical for eliminating secondhand smoking exposure, improving air quality, protecting the public health and welfare, and reducing smoking in youth and adults.

The population of low socioeconomic status tend to be disproportionately affected by smoking. According to the 2019 Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, the smoking prevalence among the population with annual household income less than \$15,000 was almost

double of that among the overall population (26.2% vs. 14.7%). In addition, low-income families are three times as likely to be exposed as wealthier families. Secondhand smoke may particularly affect low-income residents of multi-unit subsidized public housing who may not be able to afford to move.¹¹

To assess the extent of smoke-free policies at multi-unit housing properties and perceived benefits/obstacles, Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN) launched this survey. The results will help TFN better understand the progresses of smoke-free policies at multi-unit housing properties since last survey in 2011. This survey also opens up the communication channel for further technical support.



11. CDC Best Practices User Guides-Health Equity in Tobacco Prevention and Control. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/guides/pdfs/bp-health-equity.pdf> Page 10

Methodology

The Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey was conducted in 2011 and 2021. This report presents results from the 2021 survey. The questionnaire used in 2021 was modified based on the 2011 version, but largely unchanged to allow for valid comparisons between the two administrations. A question on Section 8 Housing was introduced in 2021 to evaluate secondhand smoke in the population with low socioeconomic status.

A list of potential managers/owners of Nebraska multi-unit housing properties was acquired through Data Axle based on self-reported Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. The list contained 4,941 of multi-unit housing properties, with 4,999 mailing addresses and 6,473 email records. More than one mailing addresses or email addresses can be affiliated with each multi-unit property. An email with the link to the online survey built on the platform of Survey Monkey, two email reminders, a postcard with a URL and QR code to the online survey, and a survey packet with a paper questionnaire and return envelope were sent out to the target population consecutively.

A total of 861 responses were received. These exclusion criteria were implemented: recipients not owning or managing multi-unit housing properties, recipients being a public housing authority, duplicated responses from the same property, or those returned with no responses. Owners who did not manage their own properties were excluded as well to eliminate duplications between managers and owners connected to the same property. In total, 274 qualified responses were analyzed and presented in this report.

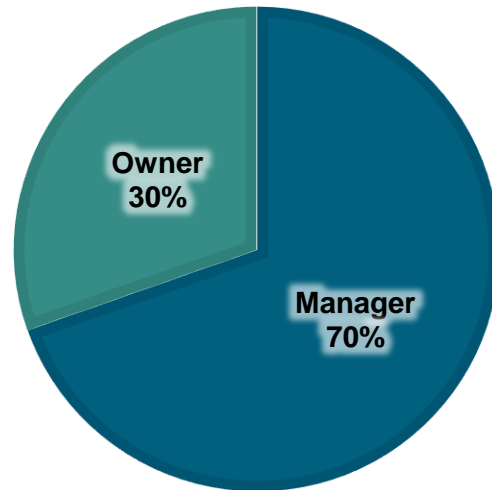


Results

Smoking Policies at Multi-Unit Housing Properties

Profile of Respondents

Figure 1. Are you the owner or manager of the multi-unit housing property?

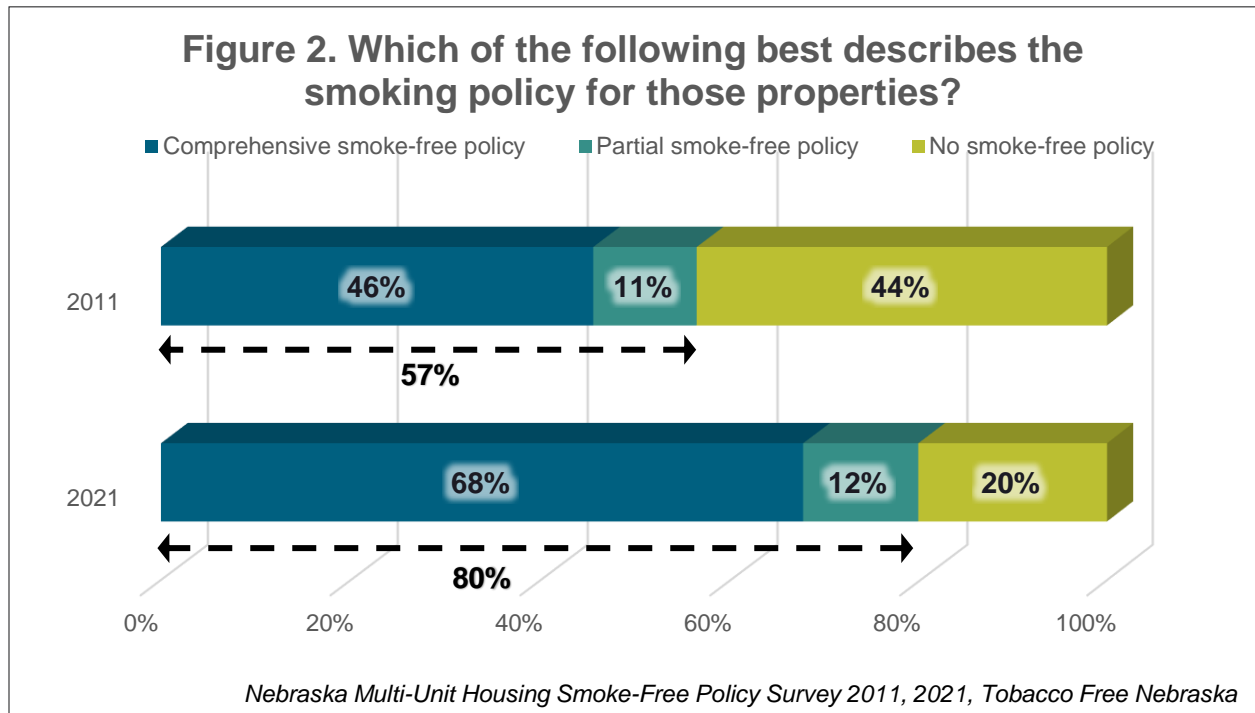


**Owners who do not manage their properties were excluded
Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska*

About one-third of the respondents were owners managing their own multi-unit housing properties and two-thirds of the respondents were multi-unit housing property managers.



Landscape of Smoking Policy at Multi-Unit Housing Properties (2011 vs. 2021)

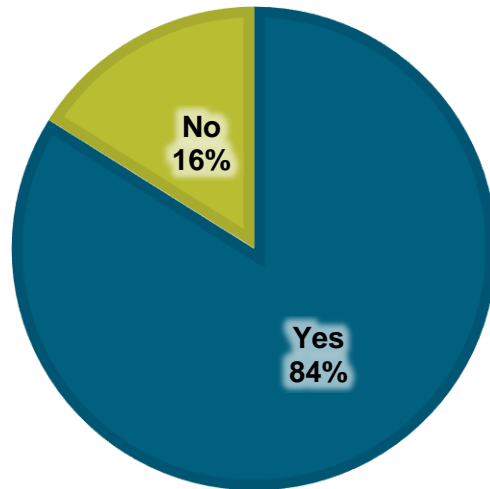


The percentage of multi-unit housing properties that had a comprehensive smoke-free policy in place significantly increased from 46% in 2011 to 68% in 2021 ($p < 0.00001$), while the percentage of those with no smoke-free policy decreased from 44% in 2011 to 20% in 2021 ($p < 0.00001$). Interestingly, the percentage of multi-unit housing properties with a partial smoke-free policy remained relatively stable (11%, 2011; 12%, 2021). These data suggest that an increased number of multi-unit housing properties at Nebraska have adopted comprehensive smoke-free policies in the past 10 years.



Inclusion of Smoke-Free Policy in Lease Agreement

Figure 3. (If you have a smoke-free policy) Is a smoke-free policy included in your lease agreement?

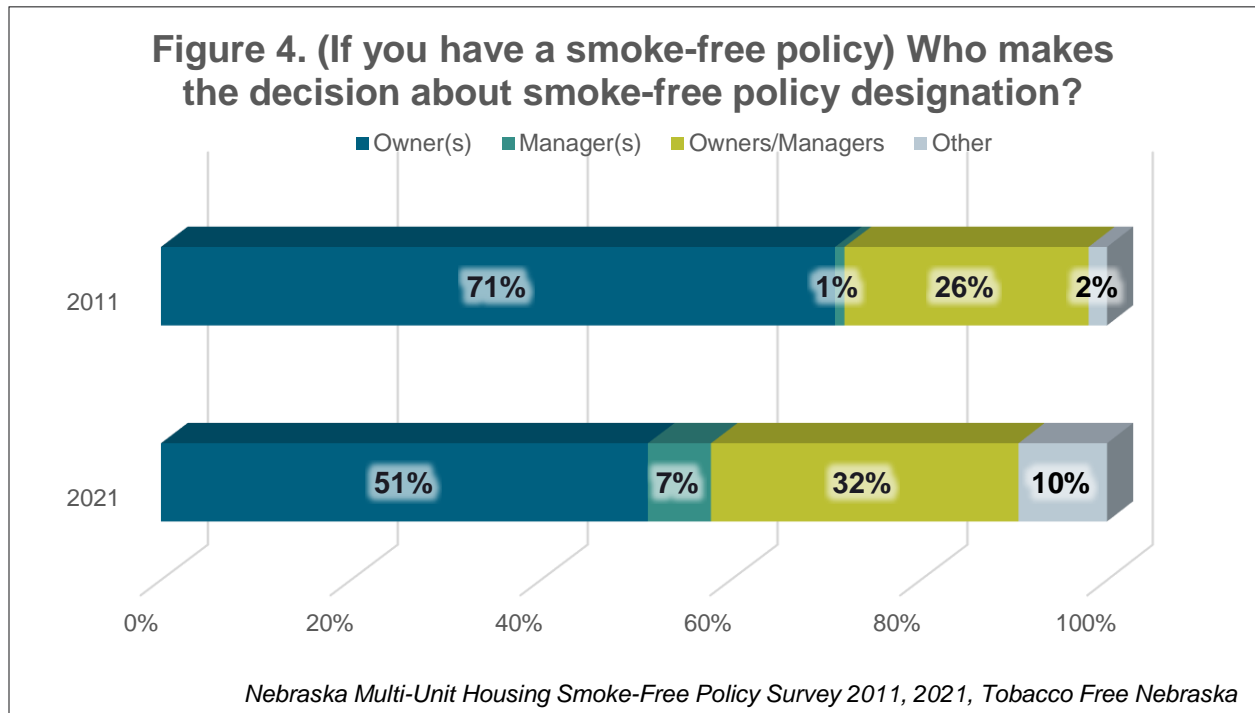


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Among the multi-unit housing properties with a full/partial smoke-free policy, most included the smoke-free policy in their lease agreements (84%)



Decision Maker about Smoke-Free Policy

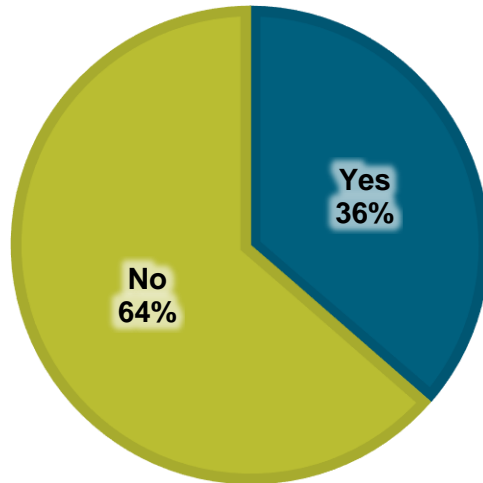


Among the multi-unit housing properties with a full/partial smoke-free policy, about half of those decisions were made by owners (51%), 7% by managers, 32% by owners/managers, and 10% by other. It is interesting that in 2011 a much higher percentage of decisions on smoke-free policy were made by owners (2011, 71%; 2021, 51%; $p < 0.00001$). It seems managers and other parties are more frequently making the decision on smoke-free policies than previously, but owners are still the major policy makers.



Desire to Adopt a Smoke-Free Policy

Figure 5. (If none of the properties are required to be smoke-free indoors) Is your company currently considering or planning to adopt a smoke-free policy for your multi-unit housing?



Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

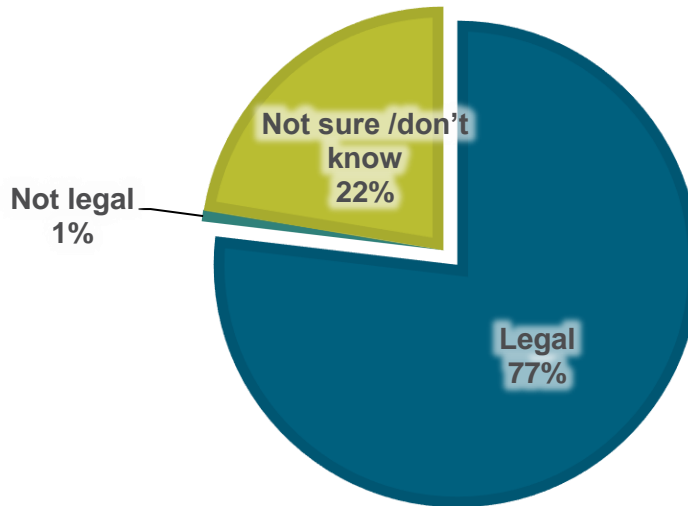
About two out of five respondents whose multi-unit properties do not have a smoke-free policy indicated that they are interested in adopting a smoke-free policy.



Perceptions of Smoke-Free Policy

Perception in Whether Implementing a Smoke-Free Policy Is Legal

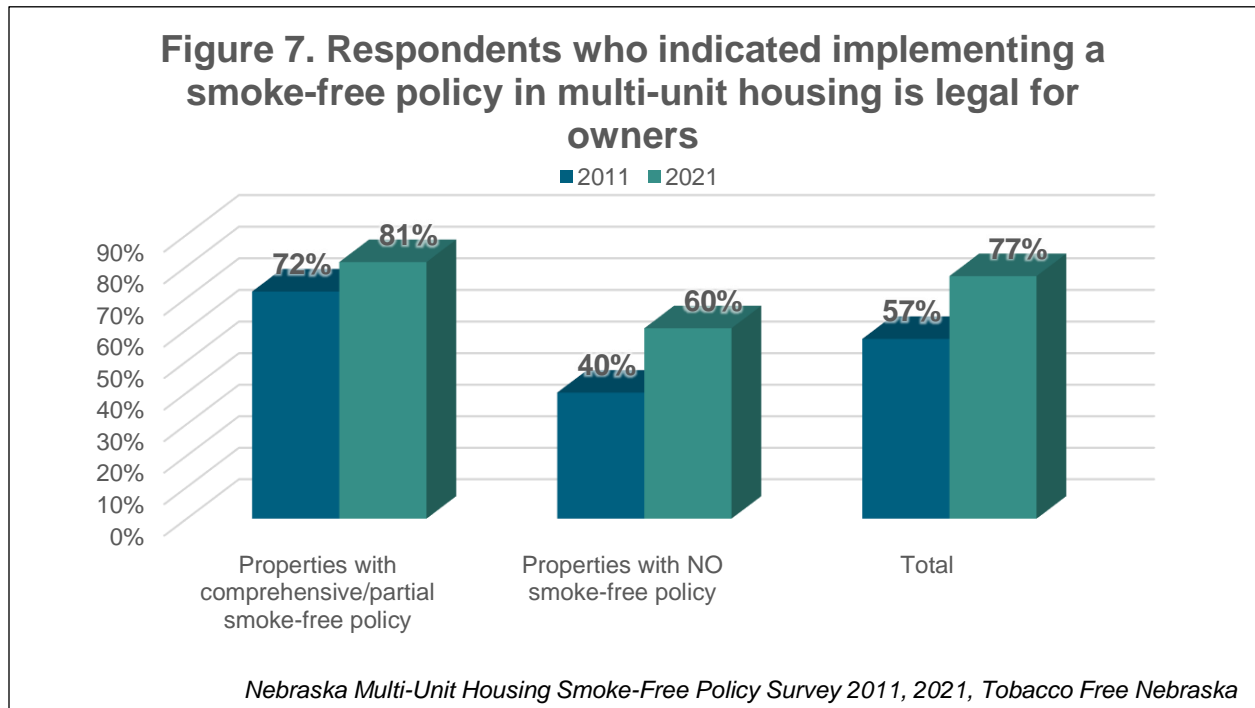
Figure 6. Do you think implementing a smoke-free policy in multi-unit housing is legal for owners?



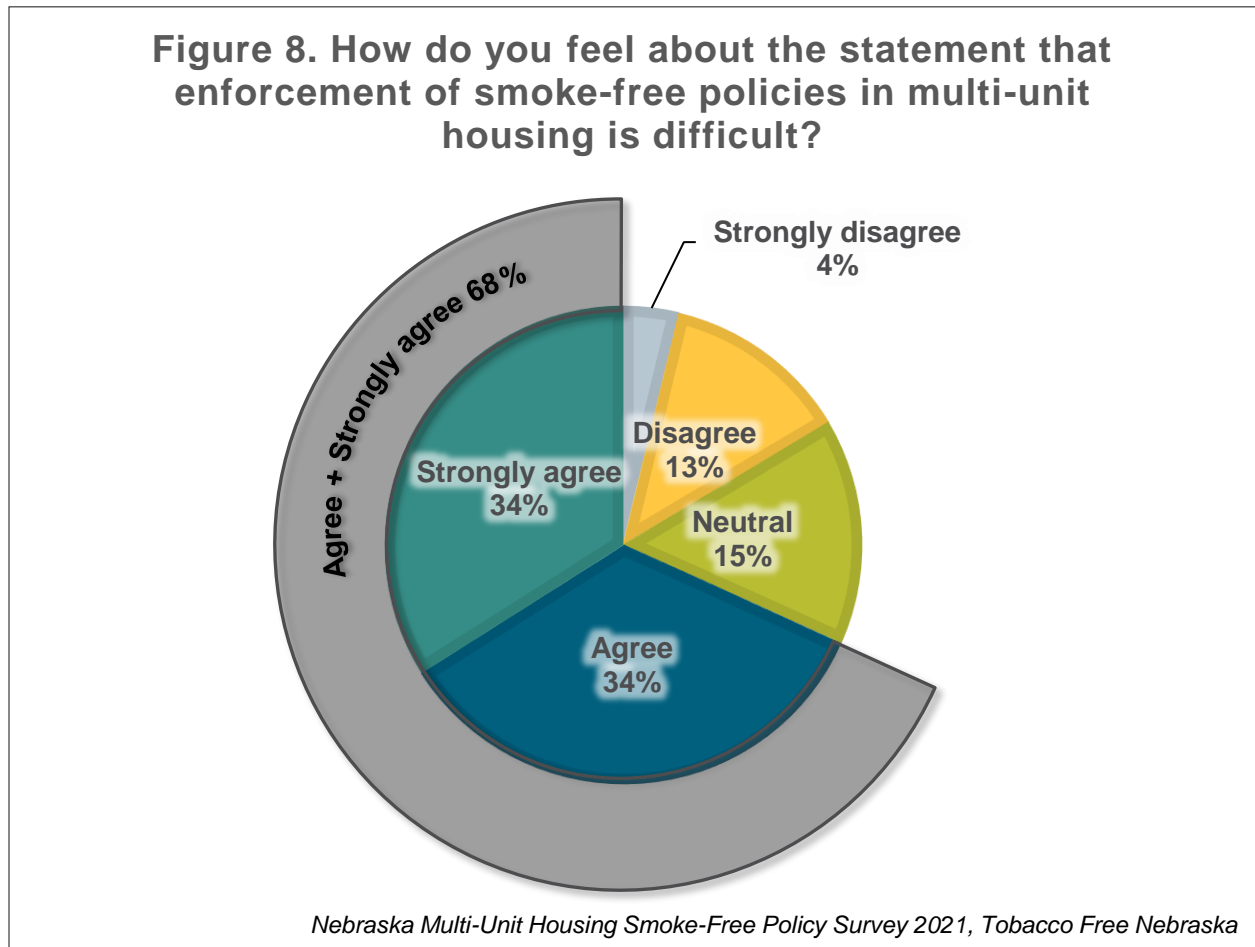
Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

The majority of those surveyed indicated implementing a smoke-free policy in multi-unit housing is legal for owner (77%), while 22% of the respondents reported "Not sure/don't know". Only 1% of the participants thought it is not legal.



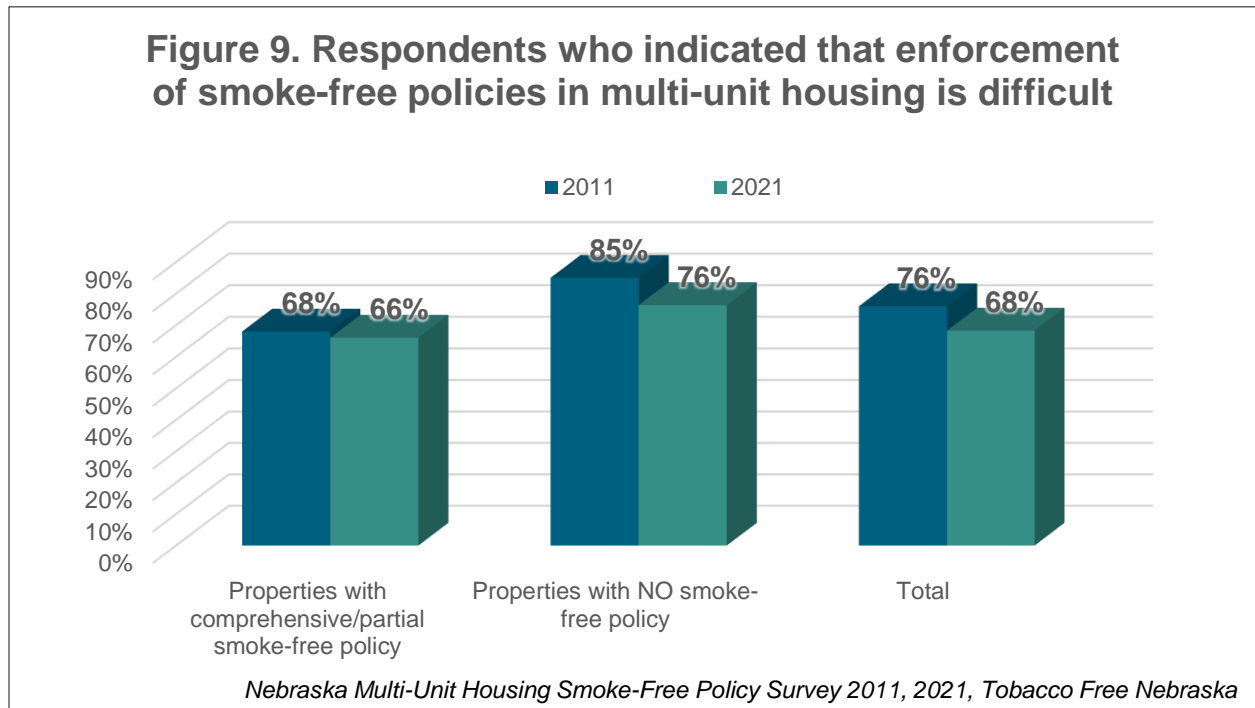
Perception in Whether Implementing a Smoke-Free Policy Is Legal (2011 vs. 2021)

Compared to 2011, the percentage of respondents who indicated implementing a smoke-free policy in multi-unit housing is legal increased remarkably (57%, 2011; 77%, 2021; $p < 0.00001$). This upward trend was also observed in owners/managers whose properties have a smoke-free policy (72%, 2011; 80%, 2021; $p = 0.04$). The biggest increase was identified among those whose properties do not have a smoke-free policy (40%, 2011; 60%, 2021; $p = 0.02$). The data suggest that public awareness of the legality of smoke-free policies increased significantly over the last 10 years.

Perception in Whether Enforcement of Smoke-Free Policies Is Difficult

Over two-thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult, while 15% were neutral, and 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. There is an opportunity to provide technical support and resources to assist the owners/managers of multi-unit housing properties to address enforcement concerns and challenges.



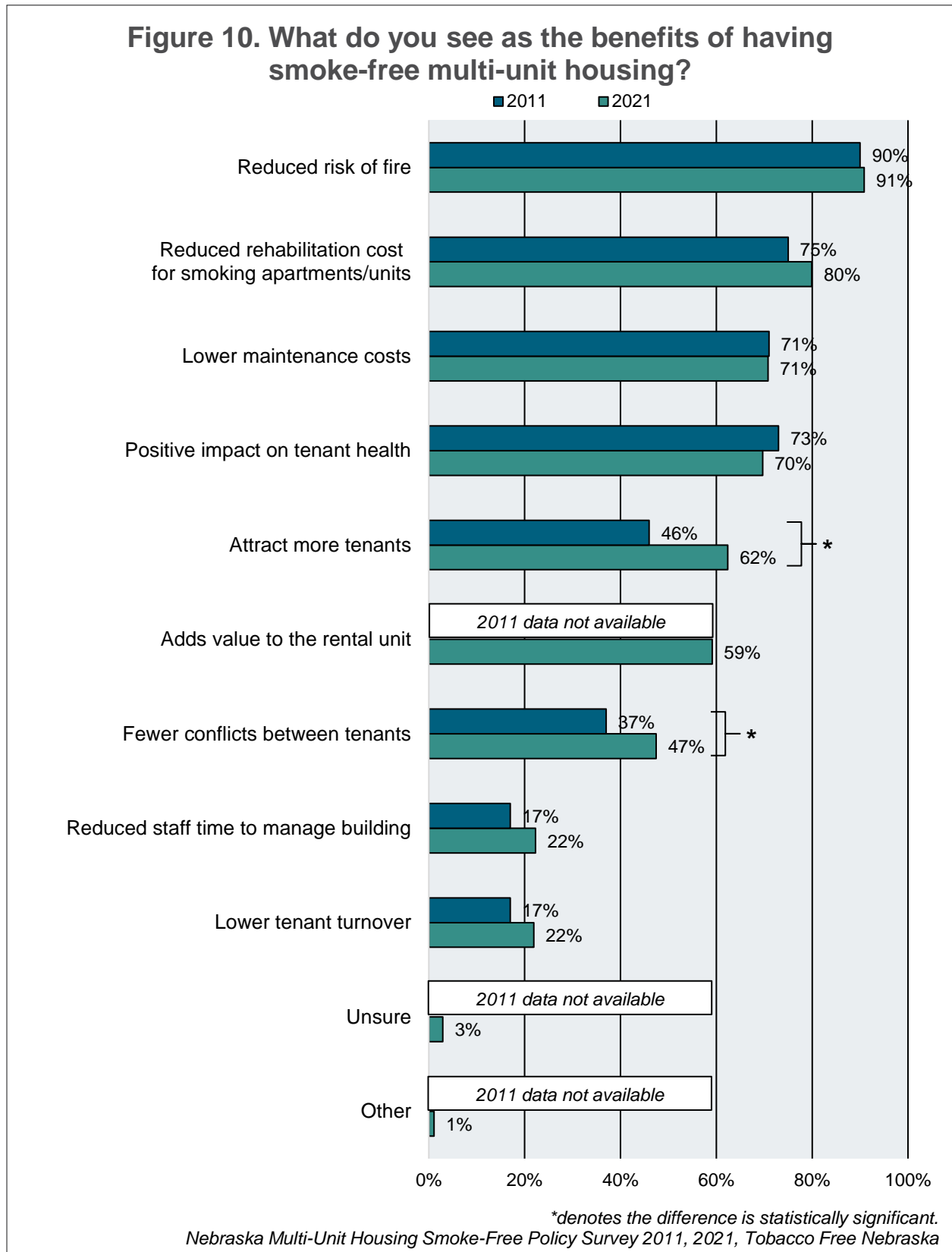
Perception in Whether Enforcement of Smoke-Free Policies Is Difficult (2011 vs. 2021)

The comparisons in Figure 9 revealed that in 2021 likely fewer participants felt or thought the enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult ($p = 0.06$). A non-significant decrease was observed among owners/managers whose properties do not have a smoke-free policy (2011, 85%; 2021 76%; $p = 0.2$), which may be worthy of further investigation in subsequent studies. On the other hand, that percentage remained stable among those whose properties have a smoke-free policy.

The perceptions on the legality and difficulty of implementing a smoke-free policy indicated a possibly positive progress, especially among the owners/managers whose properties do not have a smoke-free policy yet. This shift could indicate a potential increase of multi-unit properties adopting a smoke-free policy down the road.

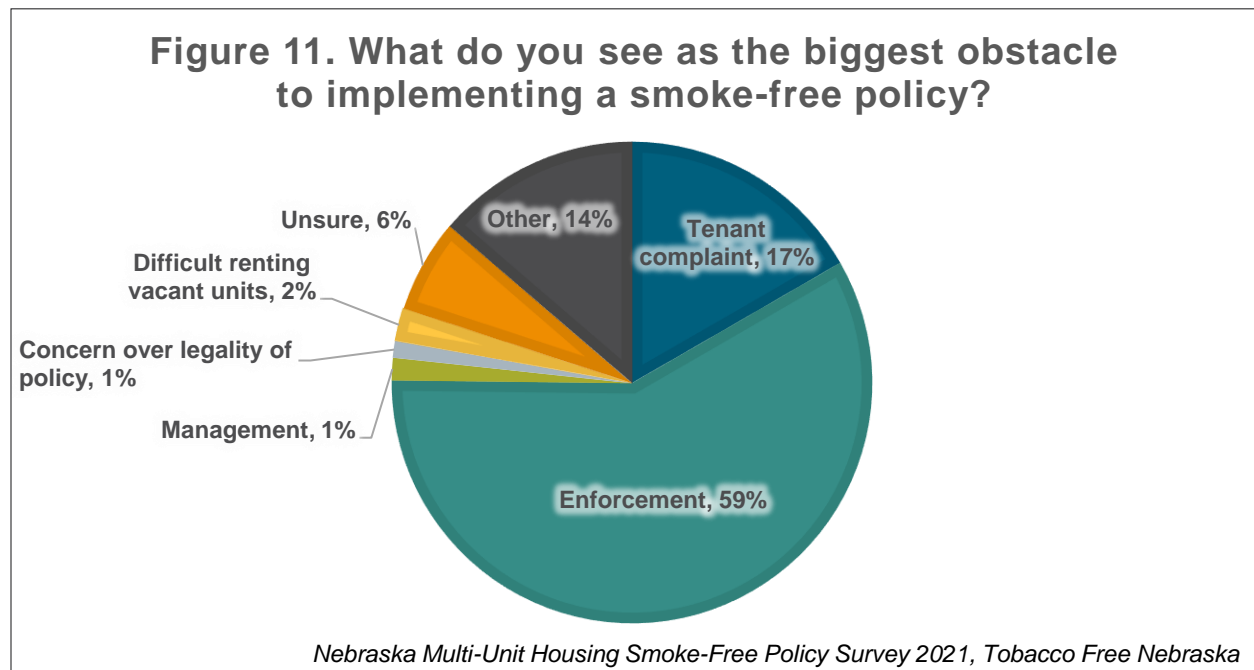


Perception in the Benefits of Smoke-Free Policies (2011 vs. 2021)



When asked “what do you see as the benefits of having smoke-free multi-unit housing”, most participants indicated “reduce risk of fire” (91%), “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units” (80%), “lower maintenance cost” (71%), or “positive impact on tenant health” (70%). The data between 2021 and 2011 are comparable, except that the percentage of those reporting “attract more tenants” (46%, 2011; 62%, 2021; $p = 0.0002$) and “fewer conflicts between tenants” (37%, 2011; 47%, 2021; $p = 0.02$) as benefits of smoke-free multi-unit housing increased remarkably in 2021. (Figure 10)

Perception in the Obstacles of Smoke-Free Policies



The majority of those surveyed reported enforcement as the biggest obstacle to implementing a smoke-free policy (59%), 17% reported tenant complaint, and 14% indicated other unlisted obstacles. Interestingly, a higher percentage of owners/managers of multi-unit properties with no smoke-free policies thought enforcement was the biggest obstacle compared to those with smoke-free policies (76% vs. 66%, data not shown in Figure 11), consistent with the data shown in Figure 9 “Respondents who indicated that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult” (Page 14).

Perception in the Obstacles of Smoke-Free Policies (2011 vs. 2021)

Table 3. Top obstacles to implementing a smoke-free policy ranked by percentage (2011 vs. 2021)		
	2011	2021
Enforcement	1	1
Tenant complaint	2	2
Difficult renting vacant units	3	3
Concern over legality of policy	4	5
Management	5	4

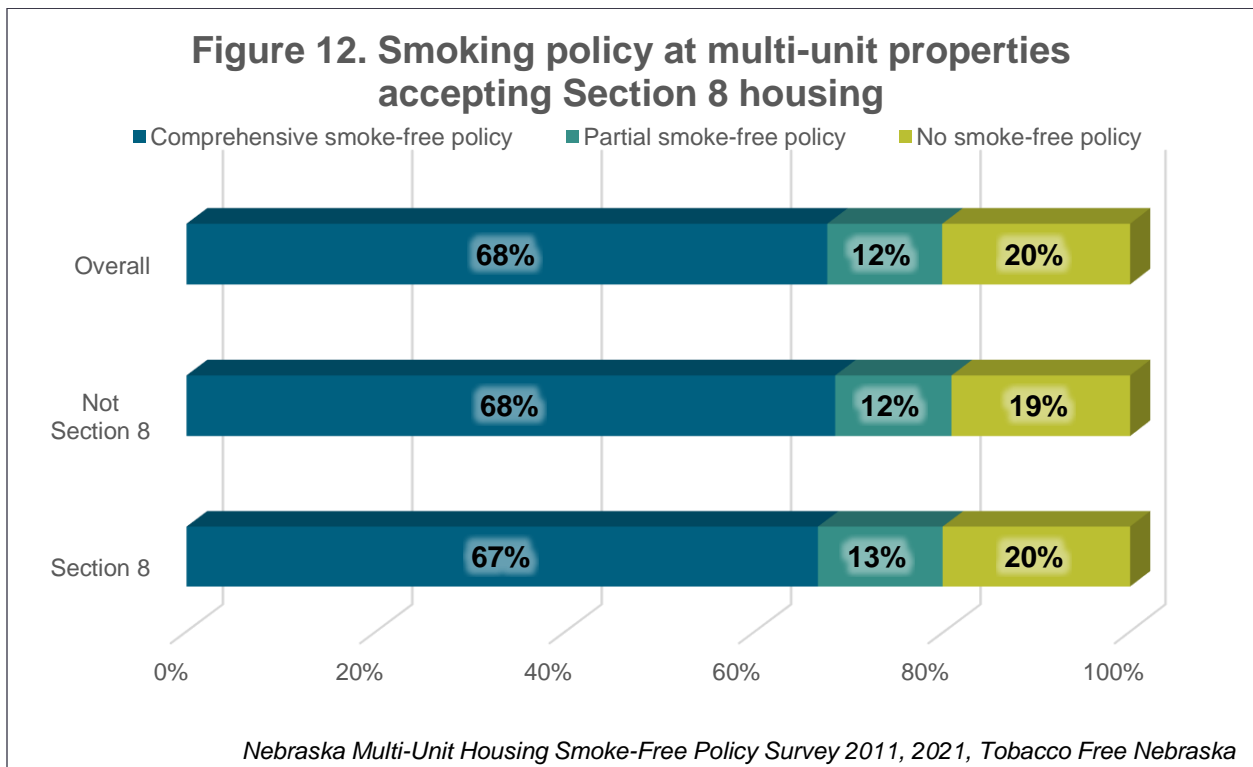
"1" was the most commonly selected obstacle.

Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

Table 3 ranks the major obstacles by percentage as indicated by respondents. In both survey administrations, enforcement was reported by the most respondents, followed by tenant complaint, and difficult renting vacant units. In 2021, fewer participants reported concern over legality of policy as an obstacle than management, which was opposite in 2011. This change was consistent with the result of perceptions on legality of smoke-free policy at multi-unit housing properties – more owners/managers thought it is legal to implement smoke-free policies and less owners/managers felt concerned over legality to adopting smoke-free policies (Figure 7). This question was modified between 2011 and 2021, thus, percentages are not comparable.

Smoking Policies at Multi-Unit Properties Accepting Section 8 Housing

Landscape of Smoking Policy at Multi-Unit Properties Accepting Section 8 Housing



Among the multi-unit housing properties surveyed, 42% indicated they accept Section 8 housing vouchers. It is known that the population of low socioeconomic status is disproportionately affected by smoking and secondhand smoke, but the landscape of smoking policy at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing did not differ much from the overall sample. Among properties accepting Section 8 Housing, 67% reported they had a comprehensive smoke-free policy.



Comparison of Smoke-Free Policy between Multi-Unit Properties Accepting and Not Accepting Section 8 Housing

Figure 13a. Comparison between multi-unit properties accepting/not accepting Section 8 vouchers 2021

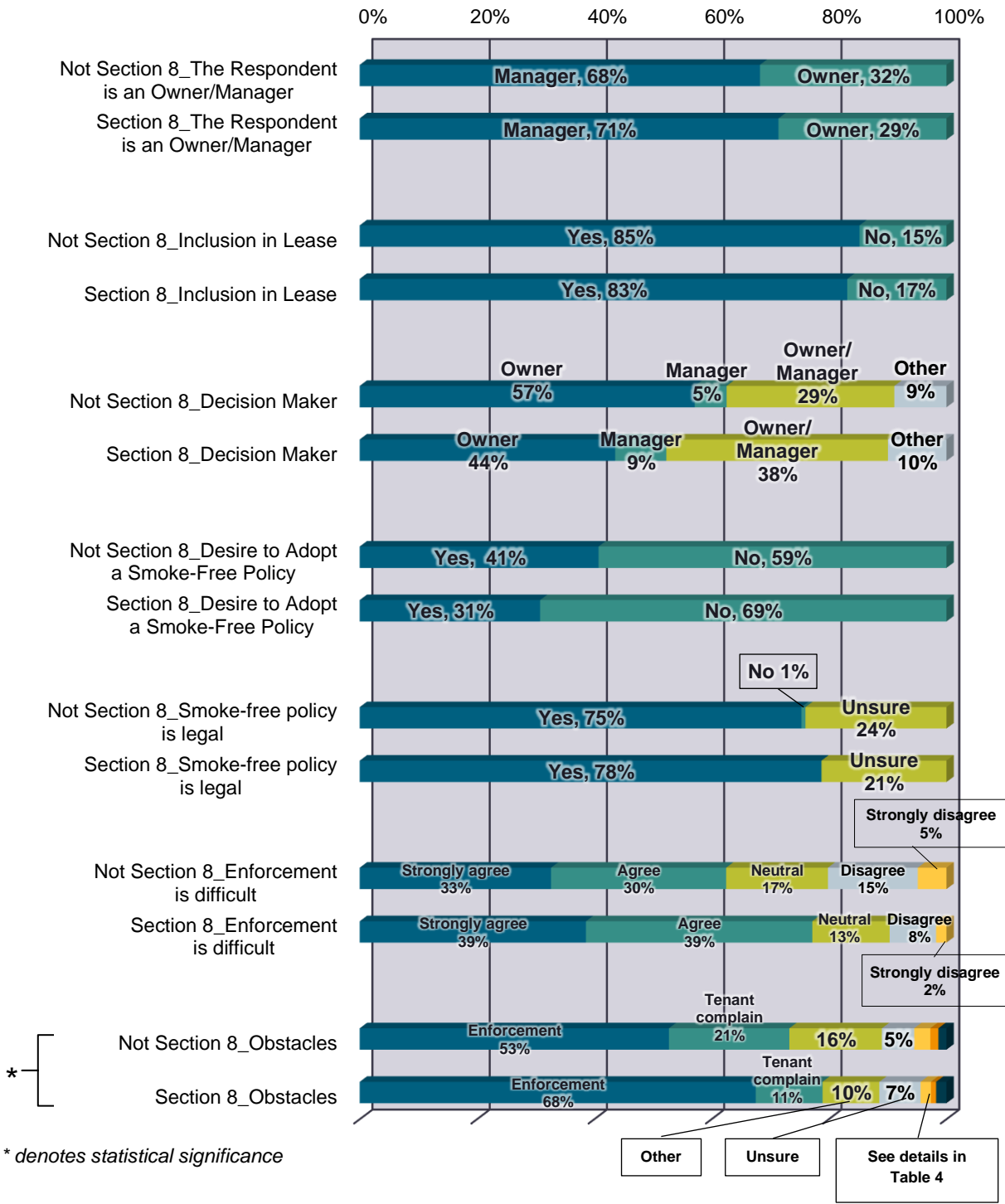


Table 4. Smoke-Free policy at multi-unit housing properties accepting Section 8 Housing vs. those that did not				
		<u>Section 8</u>	<u>Not Section 8</u>	<i>p</i> value
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	Managers	9%	5%	> 0.05
	Both managers and owners	38%	29%	> 0.05
	Other	10%	9%	> 0.05
Desired to adopt a smoke-free policy (Among those with NO smoke-free policy)		31%	41%	> 0.05
Smoke-free policy included in the lease (Among these with smoke-free policies)		83%	85%	> 0.05
Implementing a smoke-free policy in multi-unit housing is	Legal	78%	75%	> 0.05
	Not legal	0%	1%	> 0.05
	Not sure /don't know	21%	24%	> 0.05
Enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult.	Strongly agree	39%	33%	0.007*
	Agree	39%	30%	
	Neutral	13%	17%	> 0.05

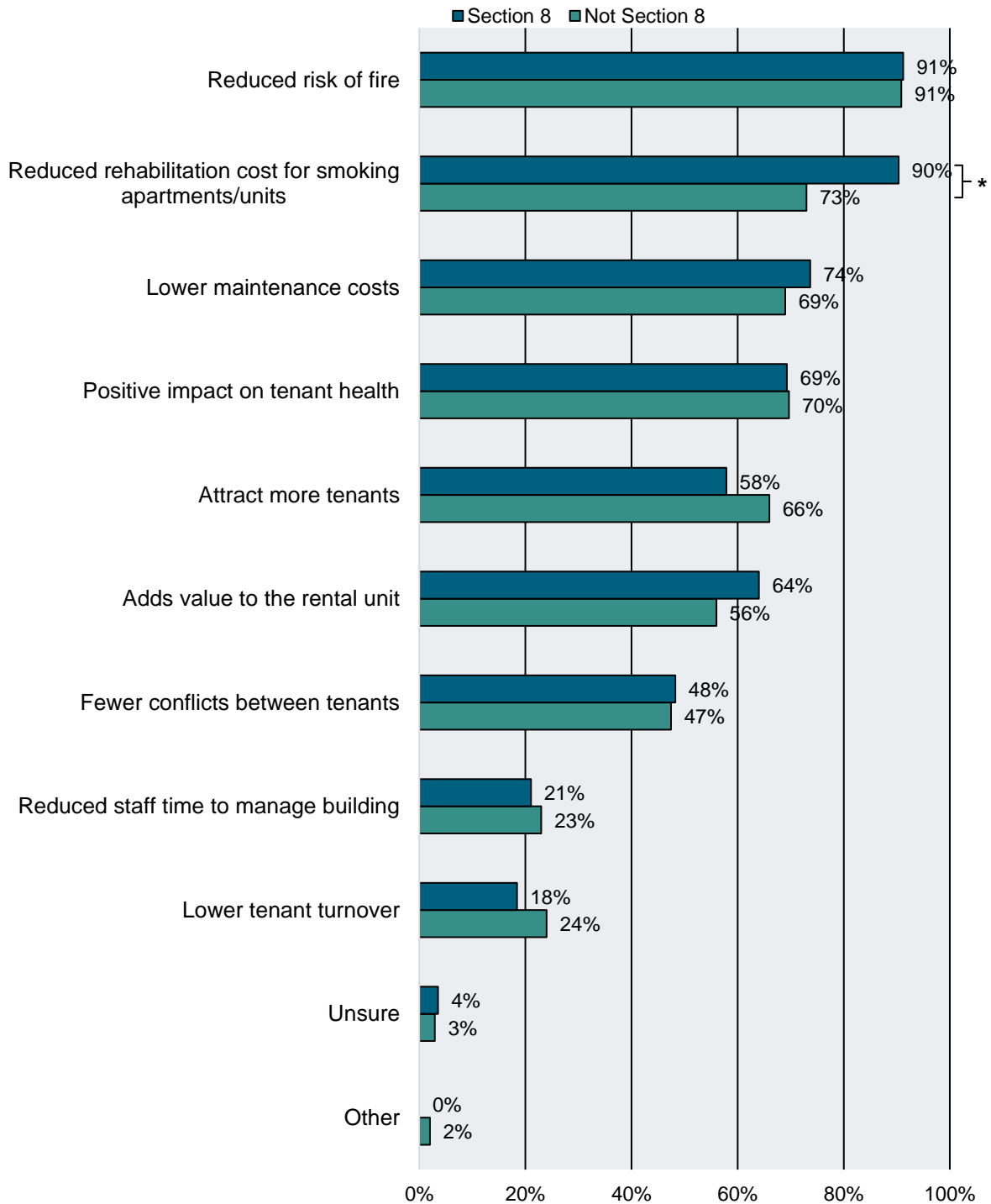
	Disagree	8%	15%	0.002*
	Strongly disagree	2%	5%	
Indicated this as the biggest obstacle	Enforcement	68%	53%	0.016*
	Tenant complaint	11%	21%	0.049*
	Difficult renting vacant units	2%	3%	> 0.05
	Management	1%	1%	> 0.05
	Concern over legality of policy	2%	1%	> 0.05
	Other	10%	16%	> 0.05
	Unsure	7%	5%	> 0.05

*denotes the difference is statistically significant.

Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

Of the participants who completed the survey, slightly less than half (42%) indicated accepting Section 8 vouchers. The landscape of smoke-free policies at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers was similar to those that did not. On the other hand, the majority of owners/managers of multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “the enforcement of a smoke-free policy is difficult”, which is significantly higher than those not accepting Section 8 vouchers (78% vs. 63%, $p = 0.007$). When asked “what is the biggest obstacle in implementing a smoke-free policy”, owners/managers of multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing were more likely to indicate “enforcement” (68% vs. 53%, $p = 0.016$) and less likely to report “tenant complain” (11% vs. 21%, $p = 0.049$) than those not accepting Section 8 Housing. Besides, 31% of owners/managers at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers that had no smoke-free policy indicated a desire to adopt one, while that percentage was 41% among those that did not accept Section 8 vouchers ($p > 0.05$). The comparison of perceptions on benefits of smoke-free policies is shown separately in Figure 13b (page 22).

Figure 13b. Comparison on perceptions of benefits of smoke-free policies between multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 vouchers and those that did not



*denotes the difference is statistically significant.

Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2011, 2021, Tobacco Free Nebraska

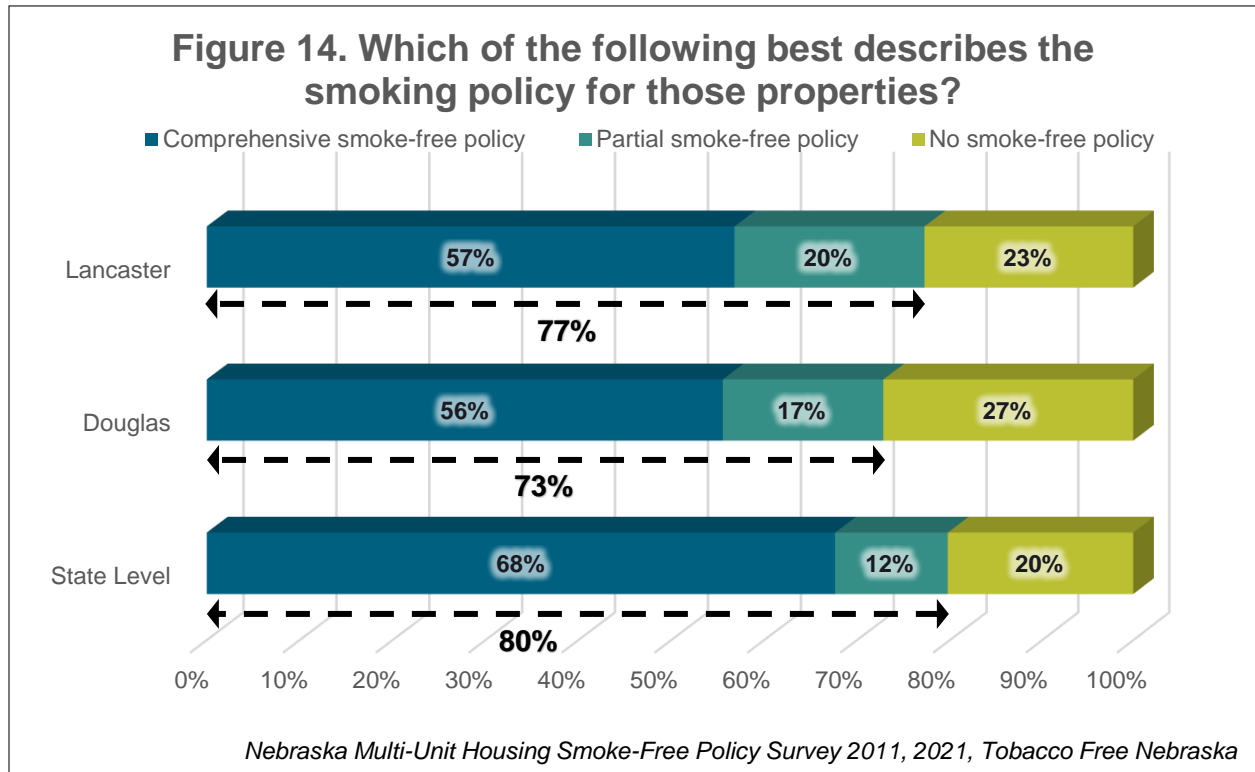


As shown in Figure 13b, most participants with Section 8 Housing indicated “reduce risk of fire” (91%), “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units” (90%), “lower maintenance cost” (74%), or “positive impact on tenant health” (69%) as benefits of smoke-free policies. Economic benefits seem to be influential in the decision of adopting a smoke-free policy among properties accepting Section 8 Housing. For example, a remarkably higher percentage of those accepting Section 8 Housing indicated “reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units” as a major benefit than those who did not accept it (90% vs. 73%, $p = 0.0003$). Similarly, 74% of owners/managers at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 housing vouchers reported “lower maintenance cost” as a benefit, while 69% of owners/managers at multi-unit properties not accepting Section 8 housing vouchers did so ($p > 0.05$, Non-significant). The percentage of owners/managers of multi-unit properties reported “adds value to the rental unit” as a benefit is 64% among those accepting Section 8 housing vouchers, and 56% among those that did not accept Section 8 housing vouchers ($p > 0.05$, Non-significant).



Smoking Policies at Multi-Unit Properties in the Douglas County and Lancaster County

Landscape of Smoking Policy at Multi-Unit Properties in the Douglas County and Lancaster County



Data of Nebraska’s two most populated counties, Douglas County and Lancaster County, were analyzed and reported in the figure above. About 60% of the owners/managers of multi-unit properties at the Douglas County indicated that they have a comprehensive smoke-free policy (56%). A similar result was observed in the Lancaster County – 57% of the respondents reported having a comprehensive smoke-free policy. Interestingly, these percentages are lower than the state level, but still remarkably higher than the state level in 2011 (46%).



Summary and Discussion

This study shows a favorable trend towards the adoption of smoke-free policies by Nebraska multi-unit housing properties. To date, 80% of the multi-unit housing properties surveyed indicated they had a smoke-free policy. Among them, 68% had a comprehensive smoke-free policy. That is a dramatic improvement since 2011, when 57% had a smoke-free policy and 46% had a comprehensive smoke-free policy. A majority of the multi-unit properties included the smoke-free policy in their lease (84%). While owners are still the major decision maker on smoke-free policies, managers are playing more important roles than previously.

Interestingly, almost 40% of the multi-unit properties with no smoke-free policies are actually interested in adopting one. Even though these properties do not have a smoke-free policy yet, some positive changes were observed. For example, compared to 2011, in 2021 more of the respondents whose properties have no smoke-free policies indicated that implementing a smoke-free policy is legal (2011 40%; 2021 60%); less of the respondents whose properties have no smoke-free policies agreed that enforcement is difficult (2011 85%; 2021 76%). It seems that enforcement is still the biggest concern and obstacle for these properties to proceed on smoke-free policies. Owners/managers of multi-unit properties without smoke-free policies were more likely to report that enforcement is difficult compared to those where policies were already in place (76% vs. 66%). Potentially, providing more education and resources to property owners/managers could make them feel more confident about the enforcement of smoke-free policies. Additionally, education on the legality of smoke-free policy could be beneficial as 23% of all respondents were not aware of the legality of implementing smoke-free policies.

This is the first survey on smoke-free policy at Nebraska multi-unit housing properties that includes Section 8 Housing information. The data showed the percentage of multi-unit properties with a smoke-free policy out of these accepting Section 8 Housing did not differ much from those that did not. Owners/managers at properties accepting Section 8 Housing were more likely to strongly agree or agree that enforcement of smoke-free policy is difficult compared to those that did not (78% vs. 63%). Additionally, more owners/managers of multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing selected “Enforcement” as the biggest obstacle (68% vs. 53%). The results also indicated that economic benefits play more important roles in decisions of adopting a smoke-free policy at multi-unit properties accepting Section 8 Housing compared to properties that did not. The data revealed opportunities for tobacco control programs to utilize messages about the economic benefits of smoke-free policies, provide technical assistance for policy implementation, and make available resources to assist with policy awareness and enforcement.



Appendix: Questionnaire



Nebraska Multi-Unit Housing Smoke-Free Policy Survey 2021

Instructions: Please mark an (X) in the box next to your response choice or write down your response in the space provided

Multi-Unit Housing Property

1. Are you the owner or manager of the multi-unit housing property?

- Manager → *Skip to question 3*
- Owner
- None of the above → *Thank you for your willingness to participate, however, we are looking for property managers or owners.*

2. (If Owner) Do you manage your own property?

- Yes
- No → *Thank you for your willingness to participate, however, we are looking for property owners who manage their own property.*

3. How many multi-unit housing properties does your company manage in Nebraska?

Total Number of Multi-Unit Housing Properties

Total Number of Buildings on all Properties

Total Number of Apartments/Units on all Properties

4. Which of the following best describes the smoking policy for those properties?

- All properties are required to be 100% smoke-free indoors (including all units in all buildings)
- Some properties are required to be 100% smoke-free indoors (including all units in all buildings) and some are not required to be 100% smoke-free.
Approximately, what percent of your properties are 100% smoke-free %
- None of the properties are required to be smoke-free indoors → *Skip to question 6*

5. Is a smoke-free policy included in your lease agreement?

Yes→ *Skip to question 7*

No→ *Skip to question 7*

6. (If none of the properties are required to be smoke-free indoors) Is your company currently considering or planning to adopt a smoke-free policy for your multi-unit housing?

Yes

No

7. Who makes the decision about smoke-free policy designation? (*Check only one answer*)

Owner(s)

Manager(s)

Owners/Managers

Other specify: _____

8. Do you accept Section 8 housing?

Yes

No

9. In what city, town, or village of Nebraska is the majority of your property located?

City/town/village: _____

Perceptions about Smoke-Free Policies in Multi-Unit Housing

10. Do you think implementing a smoke-free policy/lease in multi-unit housing is legal for owners?

Legal

Not legal

Not sure /don't know

11. How do you feel about the statement that enforcement of smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing is difficult?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. What do you see as the benefits of having smoke-free multi-unit housing? (*Check all that apply*)

- Reduced risk of fire
- Attract more tenants
- Fewer conflicts between tenants
- Lower maintenance costs
- Reduced rehabilitation cost for smoking apartments/units
- Positive impact on tenant health
- Reduced staff time to manage building
- Lower tenant turnover
- Adds value to the rental unit
- Unsure
- Other specify: _____

13. What do you see as the biggest obstacle to implementing a smoke-free policy? (*Check only one answer*)

- Tenant complaint
- Enforcement
- Management



- Difficult renting vacant units
- Concern over legality of policy
- Unsure
- Other specify: _____

Additional Information

You are invited to request additional information on smoke-free housing policies. For returning this completed survey by **June 7th, 2021**, you may be entered a drawing for one of seven **\$50.00** gift cards.

14. Please select which of the following you would like to be considered for (**Check all that apply**):
- Send me information on implementing smoke-free housing policies.
 - Enter me in the drawing for one of seven \$50 gift cards
 - None

15. Please provide your contact information below:

Disclaimer: This information will be used only for the purposes of tracking the survey, requested follow-up, and drawing the gift cards.

Name				
Company				
Property Name				
Property Address				
City		State		Zip
Tel. #				
Email				
If drawn as a winner of one of the gift cards, indicate which gift card you would prefer. Select only one.				
Gift Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Menards	<input type="checkbox"/> Ace Hardware	<input type="checkbox"/> Bomgaars	

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.





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