

Increasing Smoke-Free Housing in Lewiston, Maine



Katie Lauze worked for Healthy Androscoggin (HA) as an intern in 2009, and as a Health Promotion Coordinator in 2012. Katie became a landlord in the town of Lewiston, ME in May 2023. The apartment building she bought has a lot of smoke damage. Katie's plan is to repair the smoke damage to the apartment and create a smoke-free policy in her lease agreement.

Katie remembered that HA offered technical assistance with smoke-free policy language and signage for landlords in Androscoggin County through their Maine Prevention Network grant funded by the Maine CDC.

With technical assistance from HA, Katie was able to create a smoke-free policy for her apartment to prevent further damage from smoke whether it be from tobacco and cannabis. Along with a smoke-free policy came signage that Katie can put in the front lobby of the apartment and on the outside stairwell to effectively communicate the policy.



Katie's apartment in Lewiston, ME.

Katie's apartment houses two families with small children and two elderly tenants. Now that they have a smoke-free policy this better ensures they will be living in a smoke-free home, especially after Katie gets the smoke damage repaired.

Nicotine in thirdhand smoke forms cancer-causing substances, which are then inhaled, absorbed or ingested by tenants.⁽¹⁾ Exposure to these substances can also increase the risk of respiratory illness. Most tenants want smoke-free housing. It is important for landlords to have smoke-free housing, not only because it is healthier but it's also cheaper to maintain and easier to find tenants for. A smoker's unit is 400% more costly to turn-over due to smoke-damage and costs an average of \$5,000 to replace smoke damaged building materials.⁽²⁾

