Web-Based Solutions for Managing Florida’s Tobacco-Free Partnerships

Introduction

In an effort to enhance and improve Web-based services to the 67 Florida Tobacco Partnerships, the Florida Tobacco Control Clearinghouse (FTCC) developed a Web-enabled knowledge management system that provides each community partnership with the ability to manage their information and publish a Web page for public consumption in real time. The Florida Tobacco Partnership Management System (FTPMS) is an integrated system that includes site administration that is pass-code protected and allows the partnership access to Directory, Calendar, Information Alerts, Chats/Boards, Publications, Meeting Attendance, Links, and Workplan databases. Each partnership populates individual databases with partnership-specific information that is then automatically published on their partnership Web site. The Workplan provides each Tobacco Prevention coordinator (TPC) with an online system for creating and updating, in real time, the strategies, target measures, action steps, action step categories, tasks, and budgets needed to accomplish the goals of their partnership.

The advantages of a uniform, efficient, cost-effective, and timely way to document, present, and distribute information are enormous, both at the local and state levels. Using leading-edge technology, the FTPMS employs the full power of the Web for information-communication. This article will discuss the process of designing and developing the FTPMS and how it streamlines management activities for each partnership.
Visitors can enter the partnerships section via the Division of Health Awareness and Tobacco (DHAT) or FTCC Web sites by selecting “Local Partnerships” on the menu bar (1, 2). Once they reach the desired Community Partnership start page, they can see the TPC’s name and contact information, along with that of the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Coordinator, Partnership Chair, and SWAT Representative. Demographic information shows the county’s population and the number of youth within that total.

From this page, the public may view the partnership’s various information pages that are created from the following FTPMS databases (3):

- Directory
- Calendar
- Information Alerts
- Chats/Boards
- Publications
- Links
- Workplan

www.ftcc.fsu.edu or accessible from www.state.fl.us/tobacco
**Site Administration (4)**

The TPC for each county access site administration via their public Web site page. At the bottom of the public Web site is a button for site administration that when selected produces a screen for entering a username and password. After the TPC enters his or her username and password, a screen appears listing all the databases that make up the FTPMS. The TPC then selects individual databases for creating and editing data.

**FTPMS Databases (5)**

The following is a list that describes and defines the various databases that create the FTPMS:

**Directory (6)**

The Directory database includes all the individuals and organizations involved with or pertinent to the community partnership. The data fields include the following:

- Name
- Organization
- Title
- Address
- County
- Phone
- Suncom
- Fax
- E-mail
- Committees
- Position Code
- Tobacco Partnership
- Tobacco Region
- Confidentiality
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Information Alerts (7)

This database is designed to provide important and time-sensitive information. Data fields include the following:
- Status (active status allows the item to be published on the partnership Web page)
- Headline
- URL (to provide links to additional information available on the Web)
- Brief Summary (a short description about the article)
- Full Article (if additional info is not available on the Web this field allows you to provide full-text information)

Calendar (8)

The Calendar database provides a mechanism for publishing partnership planned activities and other important events. Sixty days of activities at a time are published on the front page of the Web site. Data fields include the following:
- Event
- URL
- Description
- Where
- When
- Scope
- Audience
- Directions
- Contact
- Type of event (regional, national, local)

Chats/Boards (9)

The FTPMS offers bulletin board and chat room capability. Partnership coordinators may request customized chats/boards. Bulletin boards allow
users to post and e-mail messages to subscribed individuals with threaded responses.

**Publications (10)**

The Publications database provides a comprehensive listing of all the publications that a partnership has developed. The majority of materials are available in full text. The FTCC provides document scanning services. Data fields include:
- Title
- Author
- Publication year
- Developer
- URL
- Availability
- Format
- Grade level

**Meetings (11)**

The Meetings database allows TPCs to track who has attended their partnership or SWAT meetings. The list of potential attendees is drawn from the directory database. The system pulls the list of all the individuals and allows the coordinator to select who attended the meeting as well as provides a section for adding special guests. Data fields include:
- Name
- Meeting type
- Meeting date

**Links (12)**

The Links database lets the TPC submit the URL of Web sites that they feel are important to share with their community.
Partnership Management System

Data fields include
- Category
- Title
- URL
- Abstract

Workplan (13)

The Workplan provides each TPC with an online system for planning, budgeting, and evaluating their activities for the year.

The Workplan database is the key element of the FTPMS. DHAT has six goals that must be met by each partnership. Annually each partnership creates and submits a workplan online to meet those goals. Each Workplan includes strategies for each goal and action steps that will be taken to meet the goal. The action step is then followed by a specific activity type such as
- community awareness
- community-based education
- community-based youth cessation
- compliance checks
- decision maker
- education for tobacco youth offenders
- environmental tobacco smoke
- retailer and community education on tobacco laws
- school-based cessation
- school-based education
- youth empowerment
- partnership meeting
- SWAT meeting

Specific information about each activity type is collected. DHAT approves each Workplan electronically and the revision/approval process is integrated into the system (14).
Also integrated in the system is an evaluation component for each activity that serves as statewide evaluation data for DHAT.

Each activity has a specific set of data that is collected for evaluation. For example, the School-Based Education Activity Description (15) includes
- Grade Levels
- Curriculum
- Completion Date.

Accessibility/Availability Activity (16) includes headings such as
- Did a policy change occur?
- Policy Change Description
- Number of Youth Providing Service
- Number of Retailers Reached.

All of the evaluation activities include the following:
- Summary
- Successes
- Challenges.
Partnership Management System

Reporting (17, 18, 19)

The FTPMS includes reporting capabilities and allows the TPC to generate predefined reports. Examples of reports include the
- Full Workplan
- Evaluation Report
- Approval Status (to determine what has and hasn’t been approved in their annual Workplan).

Planning Committee

Developing a comprehensive and integrated required the participation of various stakeholder groups. The group consisted of five community partnership coordinators (one from each of Florida’s five regions), nine OTC staff (5 regional, 1 SWAT, 1 Evaluation, 1 Education, and 1 Administration), and three FTCC staff. Work group meetings and phone conferences covered the functionality, structure, and data fields for each database within the system.

How Has the System Been Received?

Community partnership coordinators are finding the Workplan segment of the Website very useful. They can outline plans for their prevention programs and track progress.
Reactions

“I think the FTPMS system is great. Very user friendly. I discussed the system at one of our partnership meetings and some of the members have looked at Bay County information on line and thought it was great. In fact, one member pulled up the FY 00-01 workplan for a training session that is being planned. Being able to enter our workplan on line and then report on the progress through the evaluation screen saves time and effort. No more lengthy and cumbersome quarterly reports.

“The training you have provided has been on-target, easily understood, and interesting. I have been able to come back to the office and implement what I learned. Thanks for all your hard work.”

Julia R. Ruschmann
Tobacco Prevention Coordinator
Bay County Health Department

“I have found the FTPMS system to be very ‘user friendly. The screens are easy to navigate, and data input is a breeze’.”

The support staff has been outstanding. They quickly respond to questions and correct user mistakes promptly. I am very pleased to work with FTPMS.

Zann Geiger
Liberty TPC

Future plans for the system include incorporating a detailed budgeting module which will help coordinators track what money has been spent or encumbered.

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