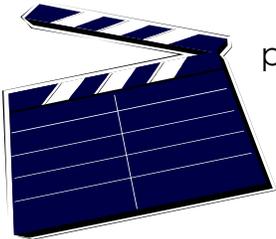


Film Subsidies Made Simple

What are film tax subsidies?



State public funds (i.e. taxpayers' money) are given to film production companies in the form of tax breaks to entice them to make movies in those states, hopefully bringing in added revenue. California's film tax subsidy (up to \$100 million per year) went into effect in 2009 to counteract other states that were poaching film productions from the traditional center of movies in Hollywood, CA.

How do film tax subsidies relate to youth smoking?

Last year, states handed out an estimated \$830 million for movies with smoking, most rated PG-13. Teens are a huge audience for movie makers and more than **1.3 million** are smokers who started smoking because of the tobacco use they saw on screen. Eventually, about **400,000** of those youth will die because of it.

States also spent \$719 million to fight smoking this year. Taxpayers care about youth smoking prevention. And polls show that a large majority of adults favor making youth-rated movies smoke free.

What will happen when the public finds out those state governments are spending **more** of taxpayer money on films that push smoking than on programs that help youth resist?



What action is recommended?

State subsidies make taxpayers important participants in the film industry whether they know it or not. Changes to existing film subsidy programs can reform these incentives to protect young audiences from exposure to tobacco imagery.

Proposed changes to film subsidy programs:

1) *Make youth-rated films with smoking ineligible for subsidies*

Youth-rated films with smoking should not receive public subsidies. Exceptions would be for films where tobacco depictions accurately reflect health consequences of tobacco use or are necessary to show the smoking of an actual historical person who smoked. This provision can be adapted to conform to the way the state awards tax benefits.

2) Certify no payoffs for any film with tobacco depictions

All state programs should require the applicant (usually a film's producer) to officially declare that no one associated with the film received anything from tobacco companies for featuring tobacco use.

What can you do?

Get local coalitions or individuals to sign letters to the state film commission.

Identify opportunities to put this issue out in public: letters to the editor, op-ed articles in major papers, comments on web news.

Request a list of the production companies and film projects awarded benefits and currently eligible from the tax subsidy program's administrators. If these offices prove unresponsive, groups in may consider seeking this information under the Freedom of Information Act. This step can also be presented as an issue with the media and public.



More info?

The actual subsidy report is at www.escholarship.org/uc/item/8nc8422j.

Advocacy can reference the US National Cancer Institute, Institute of Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics' publication *Tobacco, A Pediatric Disease* and the Smoke Free Movie site www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu.