

# Freedom From Smoking (FFS®) FY24 Evaluation Report

## Executive Summary

Prepared by the **Research & Evaluation Group** at Public Health Management Corporation for the American Lung Association

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The American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking (FFS®) program is an evidence-based tobacco and nicotine cessation program, offered in small group clinics around the country and an online self-paced program.

This report details findings from FFS® Facilitator data, FFS® Clinic forms, and FFS® Plus data collected by the American Lung Association in FY24 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024).

## Key Findings

### Facilitator Overview Training (FOT)

- ❖ In FY24, 371 individuals participated in FOT and passed the final quiz to become officially trained and certified facilitators, with an average quiz score of 91%.
- ❖ FOT participants reported much higher levels of confidence in their knowledge and their communication skills after completing the course.

### FFS® Programs (Group Clinics & FFS® Plus)

- ❖ Over 100 Group Clinics were held in 25 states; most were available to community members for free.
- ❖ The FFS® Plus completion rate was 37.5% (n=623) out of 1,661 total registration in FY24.
- ❖ Most of FFS Plus® net orders (N=2334) were made by corporations (87%, n=2036).
- ❖ Although only a small percentage of FFS® Plus users completed the surveys, the satisfaction and benefit from the program were highly rated. Responses indicate that most participants completed the program with a high motivation to quit, and many reported not using tobacco products by the end of the program.

## Recommendations

### FOT

- ❖ Improving the accessibility of the course, through strategies such as translating course materials and providing closed captioning on video components, could increase participation in FOT.
- ❖ Incorporating a variety of learning opportunities, such as group discussions, scenarios, and hands-on activities, could make the course more dynamic and engaging for participants.

### FFS® Programs (Group Clinics & FFS® Plus)

- ❖ FFS® Plus users may need additional support beyond the program, and the program can benefit from some changes to increase retention and survey engagement rates.
- ❖ FFS® Plus surveys are essential for the evaluation of the program. Requiring the first and final sets of pre-surveys will track users' progress and program effectiveness more accurately. An additional 90-day follow-up survey would help to further assess the long-term impact of the program.
- ❖ FFS® Plus users should have a unique ID linked to their survey responses to better track users' progress and change in tobacco use.
- ❖ Group Clinic participant data is lacking. Additional information, such as number of participants, their demographics, satisfaction and outcomes, is needed to evaluate impact or implementation.

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Prepared by the Research & Evaluation Group at Public Health Management Corporation for the American Lung Association

September 2025

## About this Report

The American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking (FFS®) program is an evidence-based tobacco and nicotine cessation program that has been implemented for over 40 years. Currently, FFS® is offered in various formats, which include:

- In-person or virtual, small group sessions (8 sessions over 7 weeks; FFS® Group Clinic)
- Online, self-paced format with live phone and chat support (FFS® Plus)
- Self-help guide (workbook)

Additionally, FFS® offers a Facilitator Overview Training (FOT) for public health professionals, healthcare workers, or anyone with an interest in supporting others in going tobacco-free. Facilitators must complete three online training modules, one live Skill Building Workshop, and a course evaluation to earn their three-year certification.

This report includes findings on FFS® FOT, FFS® group clinics, and FFS® Plus using data collected by the Lung Association in FY24 (July 1st, 2023 through June 30th, 2024) and shared with the evaluators.

## FFS® Facilitator Training

### Course Completers, Continuing, and Recertified Facilitators

Between July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a total of 701 facilitators were trained through Freedom From Smoking® programming. **Nearly half of participants were newly trained facilitators (49%, n=342). There were nearly as many recertified facilitators (25%, n=178) as there were continuing facilitators (26%, n=181).**

	FY24 Total	Monthly Average
Newly trained facilitators	342	28
Continuing facilitators	181	15
Recertified facilitators	178	15
Total trained facilitators	701	58

Data Sources and Date Ranges:

FY24 FFS FOT Course Completers (7/11/2023 – 6/28/2024)

FY24 Continuing Facilitators 7.10.2024 (7/11/2023 – 6/28/2024)

FY24 FFS Recert Facilitators (7/11/2023 – 6/26/2024)

## Facilitator Training Quiz Results

To complete the program, participants must pass a final quiz to become officially trained facilitators. Additionally, facilitators must retake the training and quiz every three years to maintain active facilitator status. **371 unique individuals took the quiz.** For any individuals who completed the quiz multiple times, their most recent score was used for analysis. **The average quiz score was 91%.**

Question	% Correct
True or False? The best way to present things that will be absorbed into long-term memory is to use communication methods that allow the learner to DO something.	99%
True or False? Open-ended questions can be answered with one word, leaving very little room to explore ambivalence or evoke change talk.	98%
Freedom From Smoking group sessions are categorized as:	85%
True or False? Three major concepts that will come up throughout the group program will be stress management, relapse prevention, and the grief cycle.	95%
True or False? The amount of nicotine absorbed from smokeless tobacco is three to four times the amount delivered by a cigarette.	99%
Long-acting FDA-approved quit medications include:	84%
True or False? When a group program participant is considering using a quit medication, the facilitator can work with them directly in moving forward with one of the options without getting their primary care physician involved, especially if the product they choose is available over the counter and does not require a prescription.	85%
In the case of low enrollment for your group program, you can refer your participant to:	66%
True or False? Each participant enrolled in your group program must be provided with their own Freedom From Smoking Participant Workbook, which includes activities to personalize their quit plan through all eight sessions of the program.	99%
True or False? If you have questions regarding Freedom From Smoking, about hosting your own group program or about the resources available through the American Lung Association, you can email <a href="mailto:FreedomFromSmoking@Lung.org">FreedomFromSmoking@Lung.org</a> .	98%

**67 individuals attempted the final quiz more than once.** Among these individuals, only 3 attempted the quiz three or more times. **The average quiz grade among their first attempts was 71%, while the average quiz grade on their final attempt rose to 91%.**

Data Source and Date Range:

FFS Facilitator Overview Training-Final Quiz-grades (7/5/2023 – 6/30/2024)

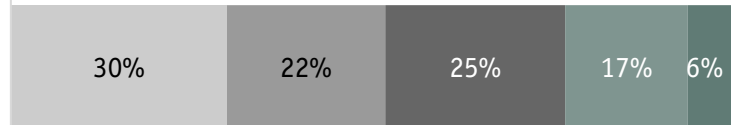
## Post-training Course Evaluation Results: Understanding & Communicating

Following the completion of the FSS® FOT, participants were asked to provide feedback through a course evaluation survey. The eight-question survey asked participants to rate their levels of confidence in understanding and communication before and after the program as well as their attitudes on the quality of the program. Additionally, participants were asked to share anything they found valuable about the course or ways in which it could improve its effectiveness. The data included 815 respondents who shared their feedback anonymously.

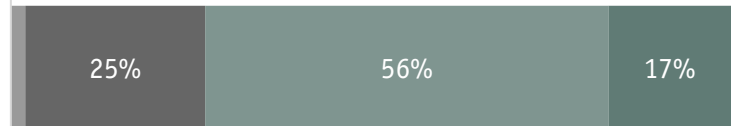
**More respondents reported higher levels of confidence in their knowledge and their communication skills after the completing the course.**

When asked to rate their level of **confidence in understanding the structure and topics of the course** before participating, about 22% (n=182) of respondents reported they felt “very confident” or “extremely confident.” **Following the completion of the course, about 72% (n=592) of respondents reported high levels of confidence in understanding course-related topics.**

Please rate your level of confidence in understanding the structure and topics covered throughout program sessions **BEFORE** this course.



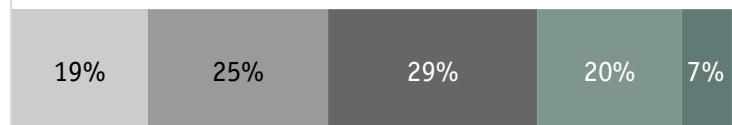
Please rate your level of confidence in understanding the structure and topics covered throughout program sessions **AFTER** this course.



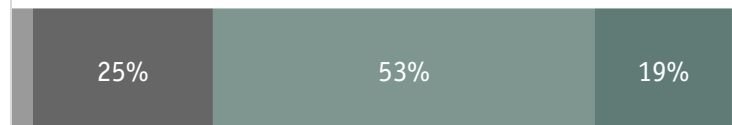
■ Not confident at all ■ Slightly confident ■ Somewhat confident ■ Very confident ■ Extremely confident

When asked to rate their level of **confidence in effectively communicating as a facilitator** before participating in the course, about 27% (n=223) of respondents reported they felt “very confident” or “extremely confident.” **Following the completion of the course, about 71% (n=582) of respondents reported high levels of confidence in their communication as a facilitator.**

Please rate your level of confidence in communicating effectively as a communicator **BEFORE** this course.



Please rate your level of confidence in communicating effectively as a communicator **AFTER** this course.



■ Not confident at all ■ Slightly confident ■ Somewhat confident ■ Very confident ■ Extremely confident

Data Source and Date Range:  
FSS FOT Course Evaluation (no dates provided in data set)

Three additional questions were asked on the evaluation survey. **Nearly all respondents agreed with the following statements about the course:**

This course effectively explained the 7 FDA-approved quit medications and how to talk to program participants about them.



The resources linked and available within the Facilitator Overview Training course complement each other and the Freedom From Smoking® curriculum.



I would recommend this course for others wishing to become trained as Freedom From Smoking® Facilitators.



■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

## Post-training Course Evaluation: Value Themes

When asked, **"Is there anything else you would like to share regarding what you found most valuable about this course or would like to recommend to improve its effectiveness?"**, survey respondents shared a variety of insights.

**Many respondents reported high satisfaction with the course, its content, its structure, and its approach.**

"Excellent course that provides a clear structure and the detailed guidance required to actually become a program facilitator. Not comparable to any other available course."

"I found the attitude and commitment to empathic and compassionate communication to be very uplifting."

"I love the forward thinking positive focus on creating a healthier, happier future rather than scare tactics or shaming."

"This course presented material in a way that was clear and easy to understand. Much of the information was new to me, so I am looking forward to the live training session to reinforce the content and increase my confidence in facilitating this program."

Data Source and Date Range:  
FFS FOT Course Evaluation (no dates provided in data set)

## Post-training Course Evaluation: Recommendation Themes

Some general themes of recommendations shared by respondents include:

### Improving accessibility of course materials

- Including closed captioning on modules and videos
- Making course materials available for download
- Translating course materials in multiple languages

### Offering more opportunities for learning and knowledge retention

- Developing more group discussions, scenarios, hands-on activities
- Incorporating additional knowledge checks throughout modules
- Allowing multiple attempts on course quizzes

### Providing more information on various course-related topics

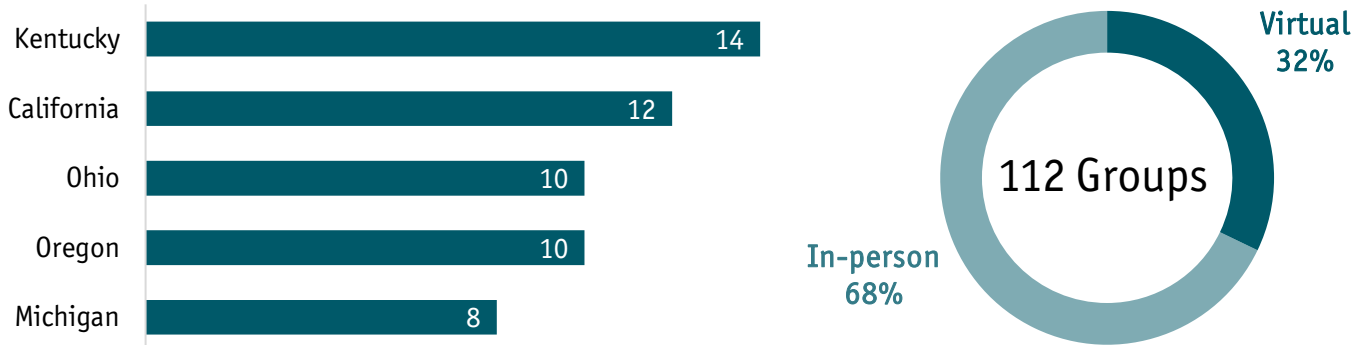
- Vaping
- Quit medications
- Non-smoking nicotine products

Data Source and Date Range:  
FFS FOT Course Evaluation (no dates provided in data set)

## FFS® Program Implementation

### FFS® Group Clinics

In FY24 there were **112 FFS® Group Clinics** held. Each FFS® group clinic includes eight sessions lasting seven weeks. FFS® group clinics were held in 25 states, both virtually and in-person. The states with the greatest number of group clinics held were **Kentucky (n=14)** and **California (n=12)**.



Out of 112 total groups held, **76 were held in person** and **36 were virtual**.

Most FFS® groups were offered for free (84%) but some required a fee ranging from \$10 to \$150, with an average of \$53. Additionally, most groups held were public (85%).

Note: Data on the number of participants in each group was not available to R&E Group. To learn more about the reach and retention of these groups, it is recommended that facilitators report attendance tracking of participants.

### FFS® Plus: Purchasers and Users

During FY24, 390 FFS® Plus orders were made, mostly by individuals (n=298), and some by corporations (n=92). However, orders made through corporate accounts made up most of the total net subscriptions ordered (n= 2036/2334).

FFS® Plus orders were made in 42 states, with the top five being Wisconsin, Illinois, Texas, California, and Pennsylvania. Six orders were made from other countries: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Croatia, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates.

**Although not everyone with FFS® Plus subscription was enrolled, close to half of users made progress.**



Data Sources and Date Range:

FY24 FFS Report a Clinic Form (7/13/2023-6/24/2024)

FY24 FFS Plus Purchasers (07/01/2023 - 06/29/2024)

FY24 FFS Plus Users (07/01/2023 - 6/18/2024)

## FFS® Plus: Implementation

FFS® Plus encompasses nine comprehensive online sessions or modules, each tailored to address different aspects of nicotine addiction and cessation. These modules provide valuable insights into understanding nicotine dependency, developing effective coping strategies, and building a personalized quit plan.

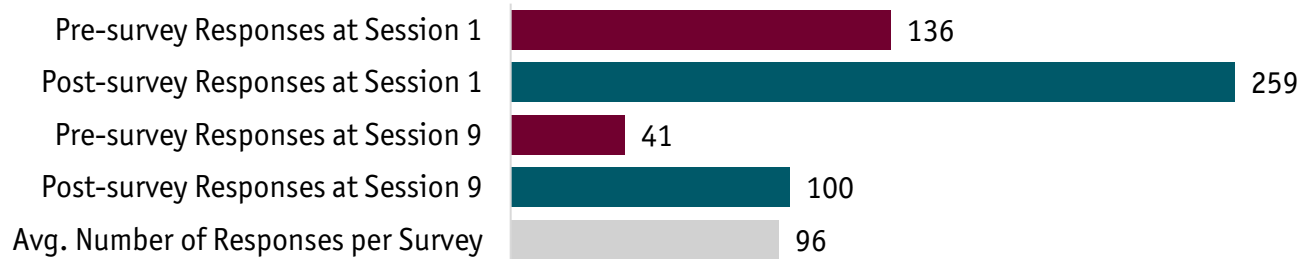
In FY24, 1,661 FFS® Plus users were registered, and 623 of them completed the course within the same year.



While the average time to complete the course among FY24 completers was five days, **more than half completed in one day** (n=399), and the maximum number of days was 36.

All sessions except session 8, have a pre- and post-survey. Pre-surveys ask users about the frequency and amount of their nicotine use, while post-surveys ask about satisfaction and benefit. Both pre- and post-survey responses decreased throughout the program sessions. The reduction of survey responses over time made data analysis challenging. More specifically, the **responses to pre-surveys were reduced to 30% (n=41) by session 8, and the post-survey were reduced to 38% (n=100)**. Additionally, the lack of a unique user ID per FFS® Plus user prevented the possibility of creating a matched sample to compare beginning and end survey responses effectively.

Completion of **pre-surveys** is much lower than that of **post-surveys**, and by session 9, it was 57% lower than the average number of responses per survey.



Given the average number of survey responses (96), the survey completion rate based on the number of course completions (n=623) is 15%; and based on the number of enrollments (n=1,661), it is approximately 6%. The low survey completion rates are likely due to the large number of surveys included in the program. It may be sufficient to ask participants for their frequency and amount of nicotine product use once at enrollment, once at the end of the program, and possibly again at 90-day follow-up.

## FFS® Plus: Satisfaction

The majority of FFS® Plus users who participated in each session post-survey indicated their overall satisfaction with each session. **At least 92% reported being very or somewhat satisfied with each session.**

The rating of session-specific goals varied, with the top-rated session being #6 and the lowest being #1. While the program is helpful at providing users with new strategies to quit and overcome urges, improvements could be made to better engage users in the first session and increase their motivation.

	Definitely	Somewhat	Not Really	n
Did Session 1 increase or renew your motivation to quit tobacco use?	34%	50%	16%	259
Did Session 2 increase your understanding of nicotine dependence?	43%	47%	10%	186
Did Session 2 increase your awareness of different quit-tobacco medications?	50%	39%	11%	186
Did Session 3 provide you with new skills and activities to manage stress?	41%	51%	8%	134
Did Session 4 increase your confidence in making a quit plan?	33%	59%	8%	156
Did Session 5 provide you with new strategies to increase your chances of staying quit after Quit Day?	53%	38%	9%	79
Did Session 6 provide you with new strategies to help you overcome the urge to smoke/vape/chew?	65%	25%	10%	103
Did Session 7 provide you with effective strategies to help you recover from a slip or relapse after Quit Day?	56%	38%	5%	78

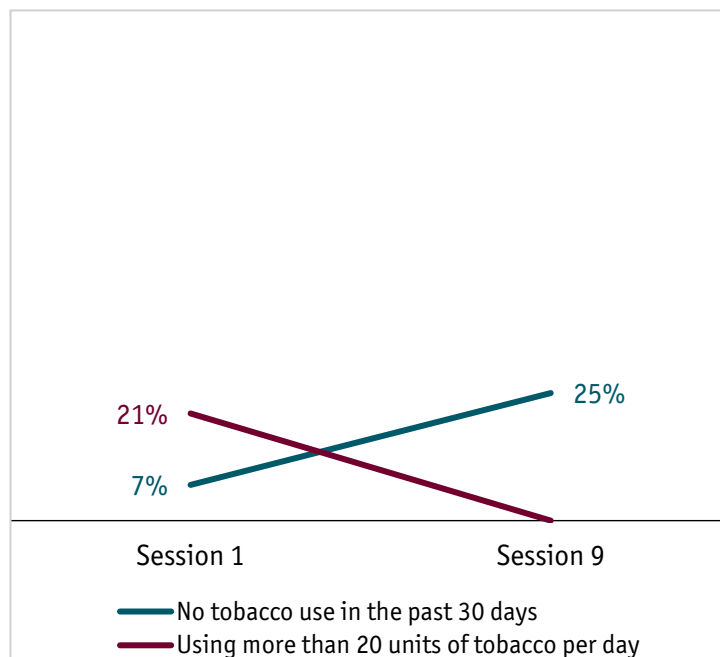
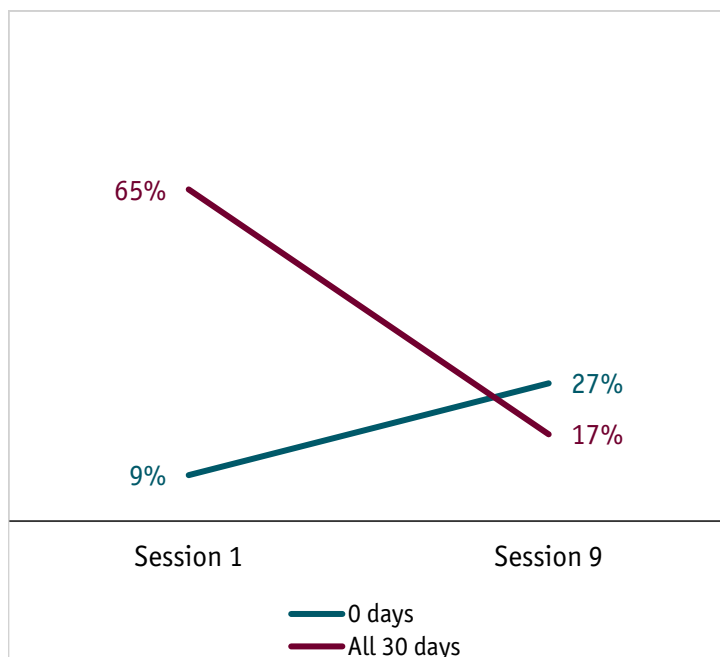
Lastly, users were asked what other resources they needed to meet the goal of each session. Most said that the information provided through the session were sufficient, and some indicated needing additional support. Common themes include coping with stress, wanting to be physically active and live a healthy lifestyle, needing a support system, and medication.

## FFS® Plus: Outcomes

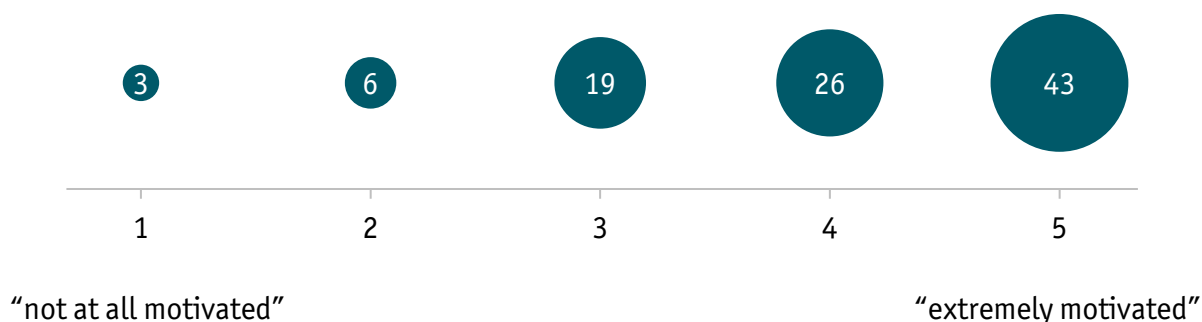
Although only 41 users completed the final pre-survey (session 9) compared to 136 users in the first pre-survey (session 1), changes in reported frequency and amount of tobacco used can be observed.

The percent of users who reported **using a tobacco product for 0 days in the last 30 days increased from 9% to 27%**, whereas **using tobacco all 30 days decreased from 65% (n=136) to 17% (n=41)**.

Similarly, the percent of users reporting **using more than 20 units of a tobacco product per day decreased from 21% (n=136) to 0% (n=41)** and **users who reported not using a tobacco product in the past 30 day increased from 7% to 25%**.



Lastly, when asked "After Session 9, how motivated are you to live life free of all tobacco product use, with 1 being 'not at all motivated' and 5 being 'extremely motivated'? **Most respondents (69%) indicated being motivated to quit at the end of the program (N=100).**

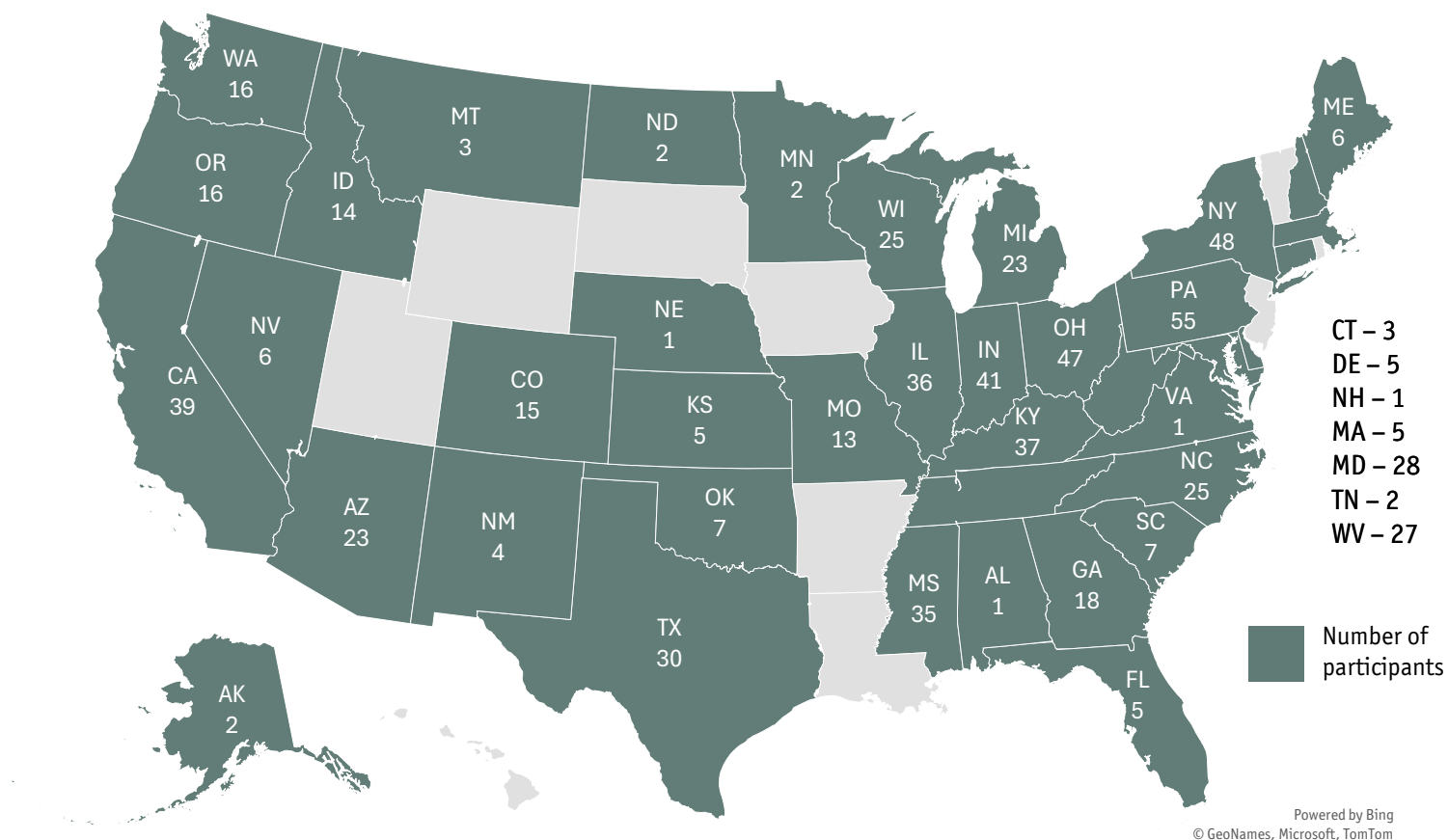


## Recommendations FY24

- ❖ Based on Facilitator's Post-training Course Evaluation responses, consider expanding information/resources on other nicotine products.
- ❖ Future evaluation reports can include the number of facilitators eligible for recertification. If relatively few facilitators choose to recertify, it may be appropriate to interview third-year facilitators. Gathering perspectives on intent to recertify and program barriers could ultimately support programmatic changes to improve certified facilitator retention.
- ❖ Asking about tobacco and nicotine use in the past 30-days (at every session) is ineffective when program sessions occur more frequently than 30 days. For example, 64% of FFS® Plus users completed the program in 1 day (n=399) and Group Clinic participants completed sessions weekly. A possible solution is to slow down progression through the program or measure individuals quit journey with another metric.
- ❖ To improve the response rate on FFS® Plus surveys, which are essential for the evaluation of the program, several strategies could be implemented, for example:
  - Reducing the number of surveys throughout the program
  - Asking pre-survey questions only at enrollment and program completion (to compare frequency and amount of tobacco product use before and after program)
  - Consolidating the satisfaction (post) surveys into one survey at the end
  - Require first and final session surveys
  - An additional 90-day follow-up survey can help assess the long-term impact of the program.
- ❖ FFS® Plus users should have a unique ID linked to their survey responses to match survey responses across the program (i.e., change in tobacco use). This would also allow us to exclude certain survey responses based on length of participation. For example, users who completed the program in one day should not be included in analysis sample when examining change in tobacco product use before and after the program.
- ❖ Group Clinic participant data is lacking. Additional information, such as number of participants, their outlining required forms to be completed (training and demographics, satisfaction and outcomes, is needed to evaluate impact or implementation.
- ❖ Program materials can be reviewed for flow, alignment, typos, and updated guidance.
- ❖ Data collection tools can be reviewed, updated, and streamlined along with updated protocols for facilitators and program participants which will help increase response rates and allow for more rigorous evaluation.

## Appendix A: Total FFS® Facilitators National Map, FY24

During the FY24 data collection period, 698 participants shared where they live. Facilitators from a total of 42 states participated in the program with Pennsylvania having the most respondents (n=55).



### Data Source and Date Range:

FFS FY24 Continuing Facilitators (7/11/2023-6/26/2024)

FFS Course Completers (7/11/2023-6/26/2024)

FFS FY24 Recertified Facilitators (7/11/2023-6/26/2024)

## Appendix B: FFS® Facilitators – New, Continuing, and Recertified

States	New Facilitators	Continuing Facilitators	Recertified Facilitators	FY24 Total
Pennsylvania	26	15	14	55
New York	35	6	7	48
Ohio	17	14	16	47
Indiana	18	12	11	41
California	20	8	11	39
Kentucky	24	7	6	37
Illinois	14	12	10	36
Mississippi	5	15	15	35
Texas	21	4	5	30
Maryland	19	6	3	28
West Virginia	8	11	8	27
North Carolina	10	6	9	25
Wisconsin	14	6	5	25
Arizona	21	1	1	23
Michigan	5	9	9	23
Georgia	6	6	6	18
Oregon	11	3	2	16
Washington	14	1	1	16
Colorado	9	3	3	15
Idaho	4	5	5	14
Missouri	6	5	2	13
Iowa	3	4	4	11
Tennessee	7	1	1	9
Oklahoma	3	2	2	7
South Carolina	2	2	3	7
Maine	6	0	0	6
Nevada	4	1	1	6
Delaware	1	2	2	5
Florida	2	1	2	5
Kansas	1	2	2	5
Massachusetts	0	2	3	5
New Mexico	0	2	2	4
Connecticut	1	1	1	3
Montana	1	1	1	3
Alaska	0	1	1	2
Minnesota	0	1	1	2
North Dakota	0	1	1	2
Alabama	0	0	1	1
Arkansas	1	0	0	1
Nebraska	1	0	0	1
New Hampshire	1	0	0	1
Virginia	1	0	0	1