

Freedom From Smoking (FFS®)

National Evaluation Report FY25

July 2024 – June 2025

Executive Summary

Key Findings

Facilitator Overview Training (FOT)

- ❖ In FY25, July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, 251 individuals participated in FOT and passed the final quiz to become officially trained and certified facilitators, with an average quiz score of 89%.
- ❖ 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 128 Group Clinics were held in 25 states; most were available to community members for free.
- ❖ The FFS® Plus completion rate was 36% (n=560) out of 1,562 total registrations in FY25.
- ❖ Most of FFS Plus® net orders (n=1281) were made by corporations (88%, n=1124).
- ❖ Although only some FFS® Plus users completed all the surveys, program satisfaction and benefit were highly rated, with higher satisfaction rates compared to FY24 reporting. 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 course accessibility, through strategies such as translating course materials and providing closed captioning on video components, can increase participation in and make the FOT more accessible.
- ❖ Incorporating a variety of learning opportunities, such as group discussions, scenarios, and hands-on activities, can make the course more dynamic and engaging for participants.

FFS® Programs (Group Clinics & FFS® Plus)

- ❖ FFS® Plus users reported wanting additional support beyond the program.
- ❖ FFS® Plus can benefit from some changes to better evaluate the program. While session specific pre- and post-surveys are insightful to capture session level learning, a required program level pre- and post-survey can measure users' progress (change in habits) and program effectiveness more accurately. Gating sessions may also help avoid completion of FFS® Plus in 1 day, allowing for changes in smoking habits to be practiced and sustained, leading to higher quit rates. An additional 90-day follow-up survey can help to further assess the long-term impact of the program (i.e., to see if participants stay quit).
- ❖ A unique ID linked to individual FFS® Plus users can better track responses, progress, and change in tobacco use across one or multiple iterations of the program.
- ❖ Group Clinic participant data is lacking; pre-post data collection can help gather information such as number of participants, their demographics, satisfaction, and outcomes which can lead to evaluation of program implementation, engagement, and impact.

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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 and shared by the Lung Association in FY25 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025).

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

FFS® Facilitator Training

Course Completers, Continuing, and Recertified Facilitators

As of June 30, 2025, there were a total of 1877 active Freedom From Smoking® facilitators. Over three quarters of participants (76%, n=1433) were continuing facilitators in the program. **There were nearly as many newly trained facilitators (13%, n=251) as there were recertified facilitators (10%, n=193).**

	FY25 Total	Monthly Average
Newly trained facilitators	251	21
Continuing facilitators	1433	119
Recertified facilitators	193	16
Total active facilitators	1877	156

Data Sources:

FY25 FFS FOT Course Completers

FY25 FFS Newly Trained FFS Facilitators

FY25 FFS Recertification

Facilitator Training Quiz Results

To become an officially trained facilitator, participants must pass a final quiz. Additionally, facilitators must retake the training and quiz every three years to maintain active facilitator status. **Two hundred and seventy-one (271) unique individuals took the quiz.** For individuals who completed the quiz multiple times, their most recent score was used for this analysis. **The average quiz score was 89%.**

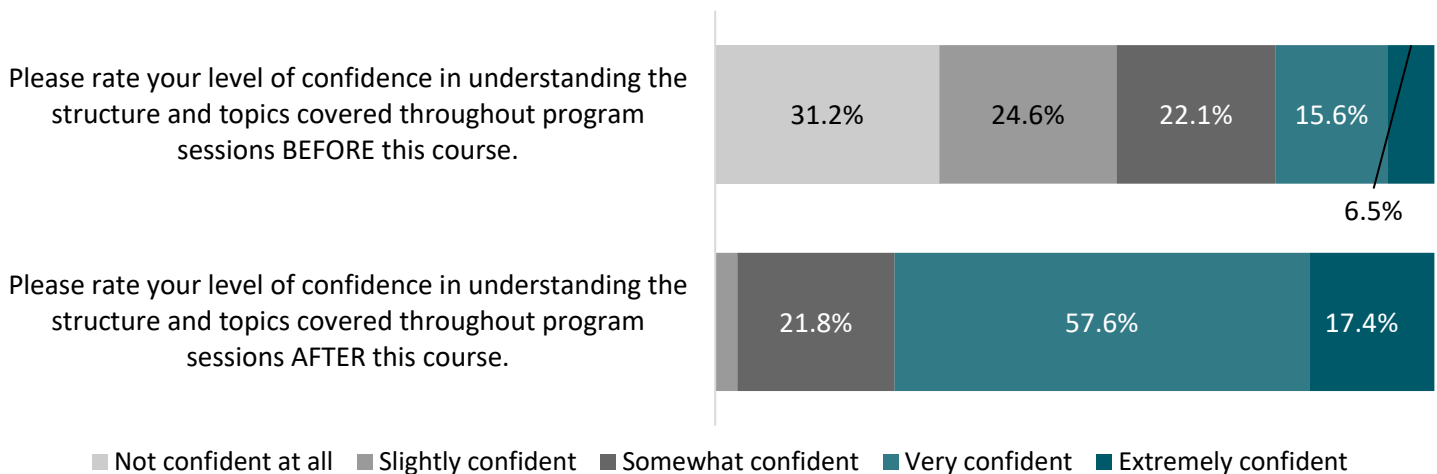
Question	% Correct
True or False? The best way to present things that will be absorbed into long-term memory is to use communication methods that allow the learner to DO something.	100%
True or False? Open-ended questions can be answered with one word, leaving very little room to explore ambivalence or evoke change talk.	96%
Freedom From Smoking group sessions are categorized as:	78%
True or False? Three major concepts that will come up throughout the group program will be stress management, relapse prevention, and the grief cycle.	92%
True or False? The amount of nicotine absorbed from smokeless tobacco is three to four times the amount delivered by a cigarette.	98%
Long-acting FDA-approved quit medications include:	90%
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:	57%
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.	98%
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 FreedomFromSmoking@Lung.org .	96%

Post-Training Course Evaluation Results: Understanding & Communicating

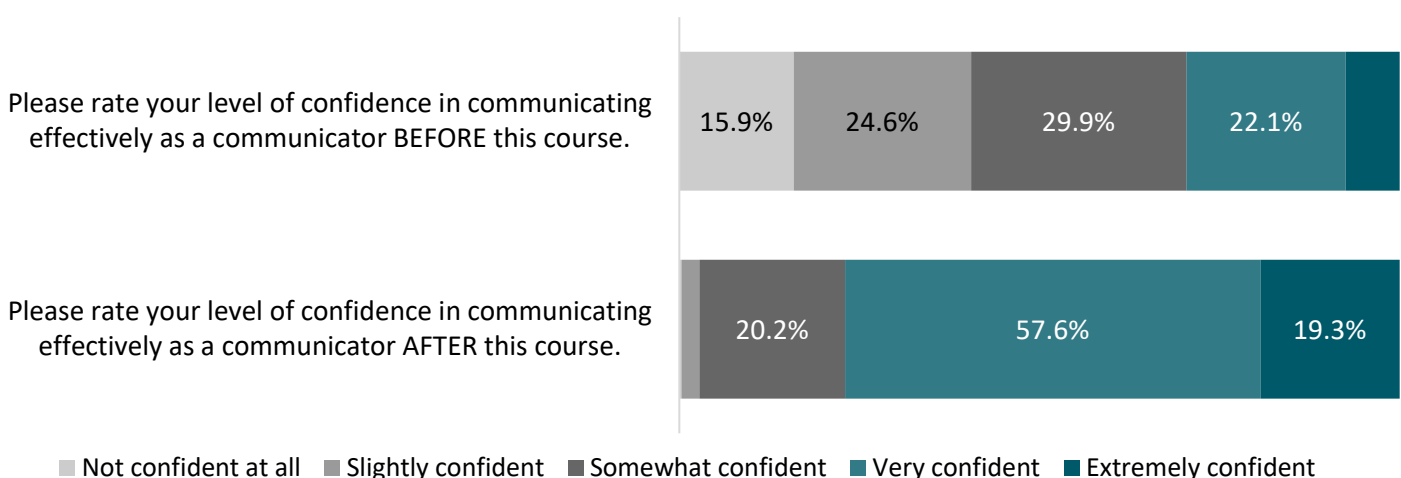
Following the completion of the FSS® FOT, participants were asked to provide feedback through a course evaluation survey. The eight-question survey asked participants to rate their levels of confidence in understanding and communication before and after the program as well as their attitudes on the quality 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 anonymous feedback from 321 respondents.

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

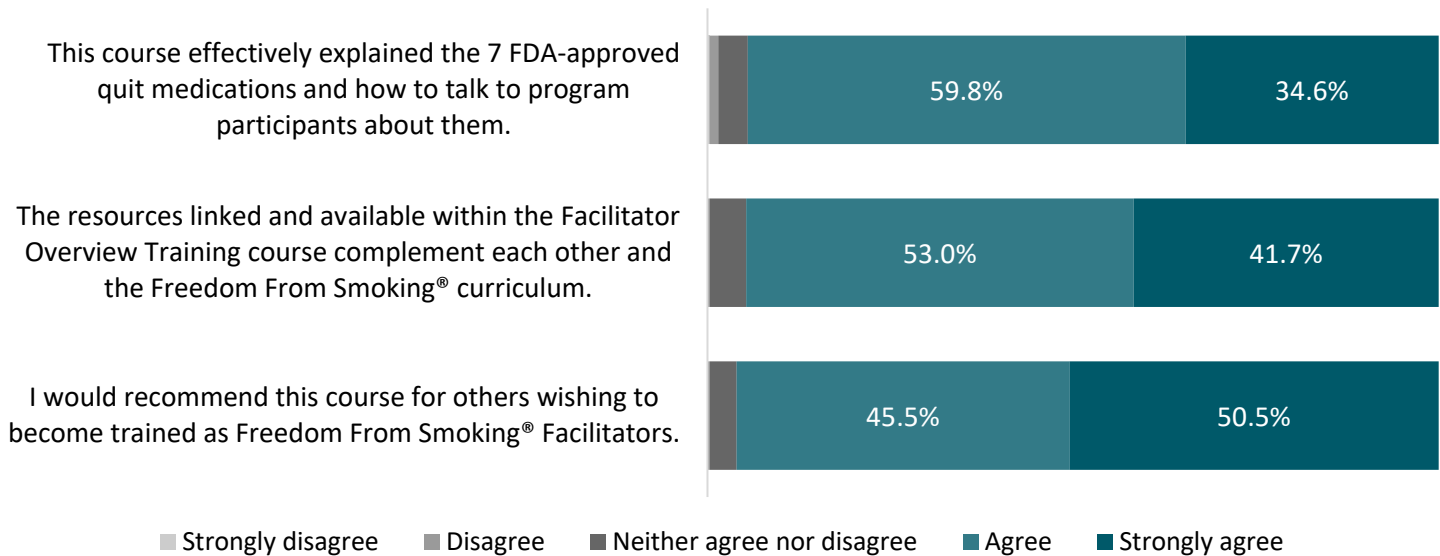
When asked to rate their level of **confidence in understanding the structure and topics of the course** before participating, 22.1% (n=71) of respondents reported high levels of confidence - specifically “very confident” (15.6%) or “extremely confident” (6.5%). **Following the completion of the course, 75.0% (n=241) of respondents reported high levels of confidence in understanding course-related topics.**



When asked to rate their level of **confidence in effectively communicating as a facilitator** before participating in the course, 29.6% (n=95) of respondents reported they felt “very confident” (22.1%) or “extremely confident” (7.5%). **Following the completion of the course, 76.9% (n=247) of respondents reported high levels of confidence in their communication as a facilitator.**



Three additional questions were asked on the evaluation survey. **Nearly all respondents (n=321) agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the course:**



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.

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

"The audio, visual, and interactive components of this program helped me to learn and retain the information."

"The marketing materials and information about recruitment and retention of participants are great!"

Post-Training Course Evaluation: Recommendation Themes

Some general themes of recommendations shared by respondents include:

Improving online user experience and navigation

- Providing additional guidance or technical support for users navigating online course materials
 - FAQ, video or image walkthrough of platform highlighting key features
- More consistency across content and course materials, including modules and quizzes

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, roleplaying, hands-on activities
- Incorporating additional knowledge checks throughout modules
- Allowing multiple attempts on course quizzes

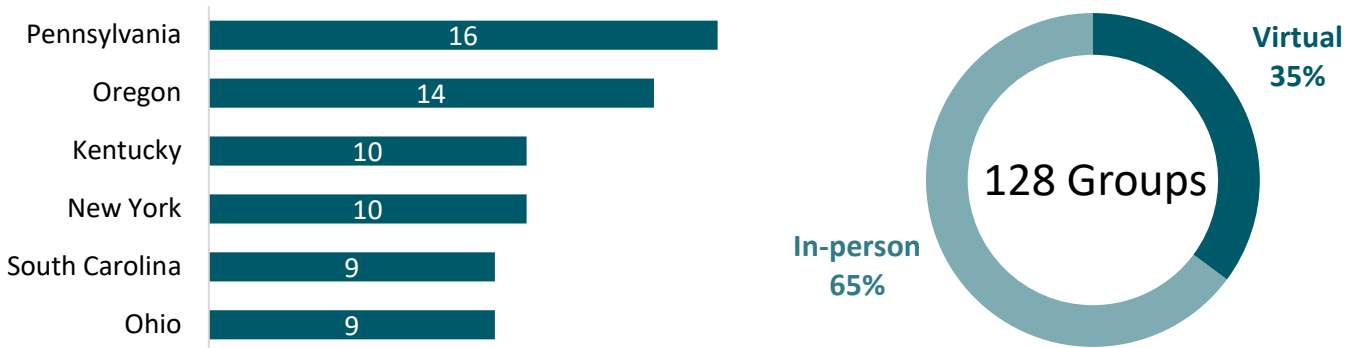
Providing more information and resources on various course-related topics

- Non-smoking nicotine products
- Vaping
- Quit medications

FFS® Program Implementation

FFS® Group Clinics

In FY25 there were **128 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 **Pennsylvania (n=16) and Oregon (n=14)**.



Out of 128 total groups held, **83 (65%) were held in-person and 45 (35%) were virtual**.

Most FFS® groups were offered for free (84%), but some required a fee ranging from \$15 to \$60, with an average of \$32. Additionally, most groups held were public (84%).

Note: Data on the number of participants in each group was not available to R&E Group. To learn more about the reach, retention, and outcomes of these groups, standardized data collection is recommended.

FFS® Plus: Purchasers and Users

During FY25, 206 FFS® Plus orders were made, mostly by individuals (n=156), and some by corporations (n=50). However, users registered through corporate accounts (n=1125) made up most of the total net subscriptions ordered (n=1281).

FFS® Plus orders were made in 37 states, with the top five being: California (n=14), Illinois (n=12), Pennsylvania (n=11), Tennessee (n=11), and Virginia (n=10). Nine orders were made from other countries, including: Canada, England, Spain, United Arab Emirates, and Wales.

Although not everyone with FFS® Plus subscription was enrolled, close to half of users (n=482) made at least 50% progress through the course.



Data Sources:

FY25 FFS Promote a Clinic Submission Form

FY25 FFS Plus Purchasers

FY25 FFS Plus Users

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 FY25, a total of 1562 FFS® Plus users were registered, and 560 of them completed the course within the same year.

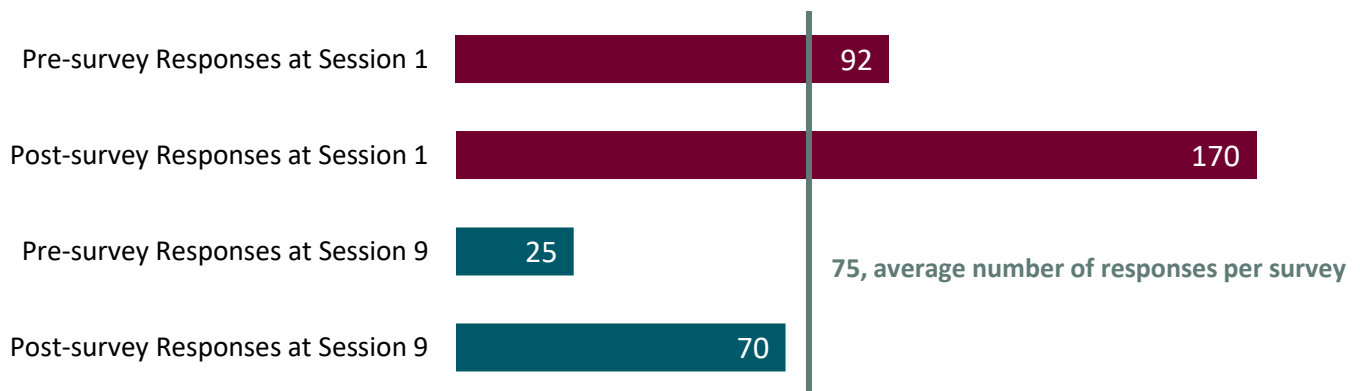


While the average time to complete the course among FY25 completers was 13 days, **nearly a third of users completed in one day** (n=169). The maximum number of days was 160.

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 73% (n=25) by session 9, and the post-survey were reduced to 59% (n=70).**

Additionally, the lack of a unique user ID per FFS® Plus user prevented the possibility of creating a matched sample to compare pre-post outcomes effectively (i.e., change in 30-day tobacco/nicotine use, outcomes stratified by course completion time, etc.).

Completion of pre-surveys is much lower than that of post-surveys, and by session 9, it was 67% lower than the average number of responses per survey.



Given the average number of survey responses (75), the survey completion rate was 13% based on the number of course completions (n=560); and about 5% based on the number of enrollments (n=1562).

Like most voluntary self-paced program, retention is a challenge. Low survey completion rates are likely due to high attrition, survey fatigue (having to complete pre- and post- surveys for each session), and not having required surveys/questions. It may be sufficient to ask participants for their product use (i.e., 30-day use, daily use) once at enrollment (before session 1), once at the end of the program (after session 9), 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 95% reported being very or somewhat satisfied with each session. The top-rated sessions were 3 and 7, and the lowest rated session was 9.**

In addition to satisfaction, respondents shared their attitudes about session-specific goals, including awareness, understanding, and confidence. **After Session 5, nearly all respondents (98.3%, n=61) reported that the session “definitely” provided them with new strategies to increase their chances of quitting nicotine use.**

	Definitely	Somewhat	Not Really	n
Did Session 1 increase or renew your motivation to quit tobacco use?	35.3%	53.4%	11.3%	133
Did Session 2 increase your understanding of nicotine dependence?	51.2%	41.5%	7.3%	82
Did Session 2 increase your awareness of different quit-tobacco medications?	56.0%	37.4%	6.6%	91
Did Session 3 provide you with new skills and activities to manage stress?	52.2%	44.8%	3.0%	67
Did Session 4 increase your confidence in making a quit plan?	42.7%	49.5%	7.8%	103
Did Session 5 provide you with new strategies to increase your chances of staying quit after Quit Day?	63.9%	34.4%	1.7%	61
Did Session 6 provide you with new strategies to help you overcome the urge to smoke/vape/chew?	60.4%	35.4%	4.2%	48
Did Session 7 provide you with effective strategies to help you recover from a slip or relapse after Quit Day?	63.3%	34.7%	2.0%	49

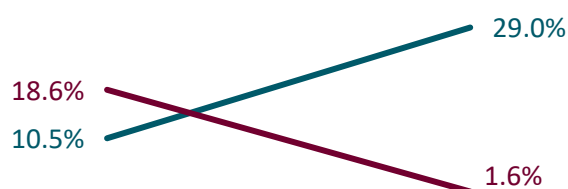
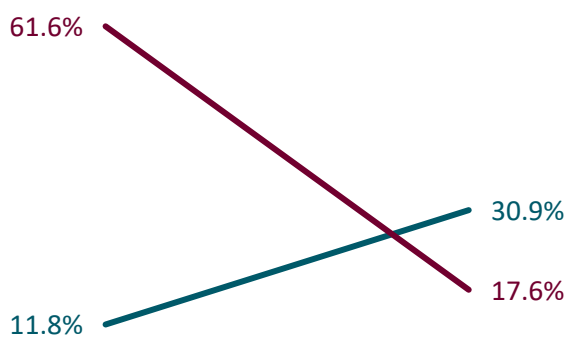
Lastly, users were asked what other resources they needed to meet the goal of each session. Most said that the information provided through the session were sufficient, and some indicated needing additional support. Common themes include coping with stress, wanting to be physically active and live a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

FFS® Plus: Outcomes

Although only 25 users completed the final pre-survey (Session 9) compared to 92 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 11.8% (n=27) to 30.9% (n=21), whereas **using tobacco all 30 days** decreased from 61.6% (n=141) to 17.6% (n=12).

The percent of users who reported **using more than 20 units of a tobacco product per day** decreased from 18.6% (n=39) to 1.6% (n=1) and **users who reported not using any tobacco products** increased slightly from 10.5% (n=22) to 29.0% (n=18).



Session 1

Session 9

Session 1

Session 9

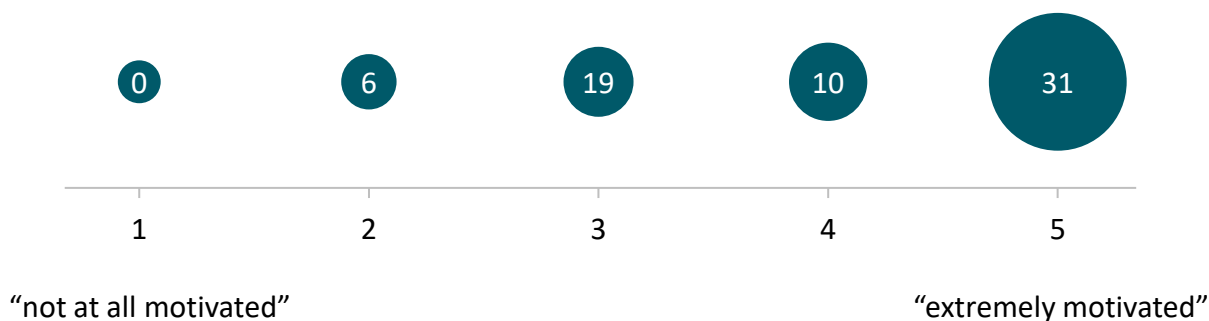
— 0 days

— All 30 days

— No tobacco use in the past 30 days

— Using more than 20 units of tobacco per day

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'”? **Over half of respondents (57.4%) indicated being extremely motivated to quit at the end of the program (n=31).**



“not at all motivated”

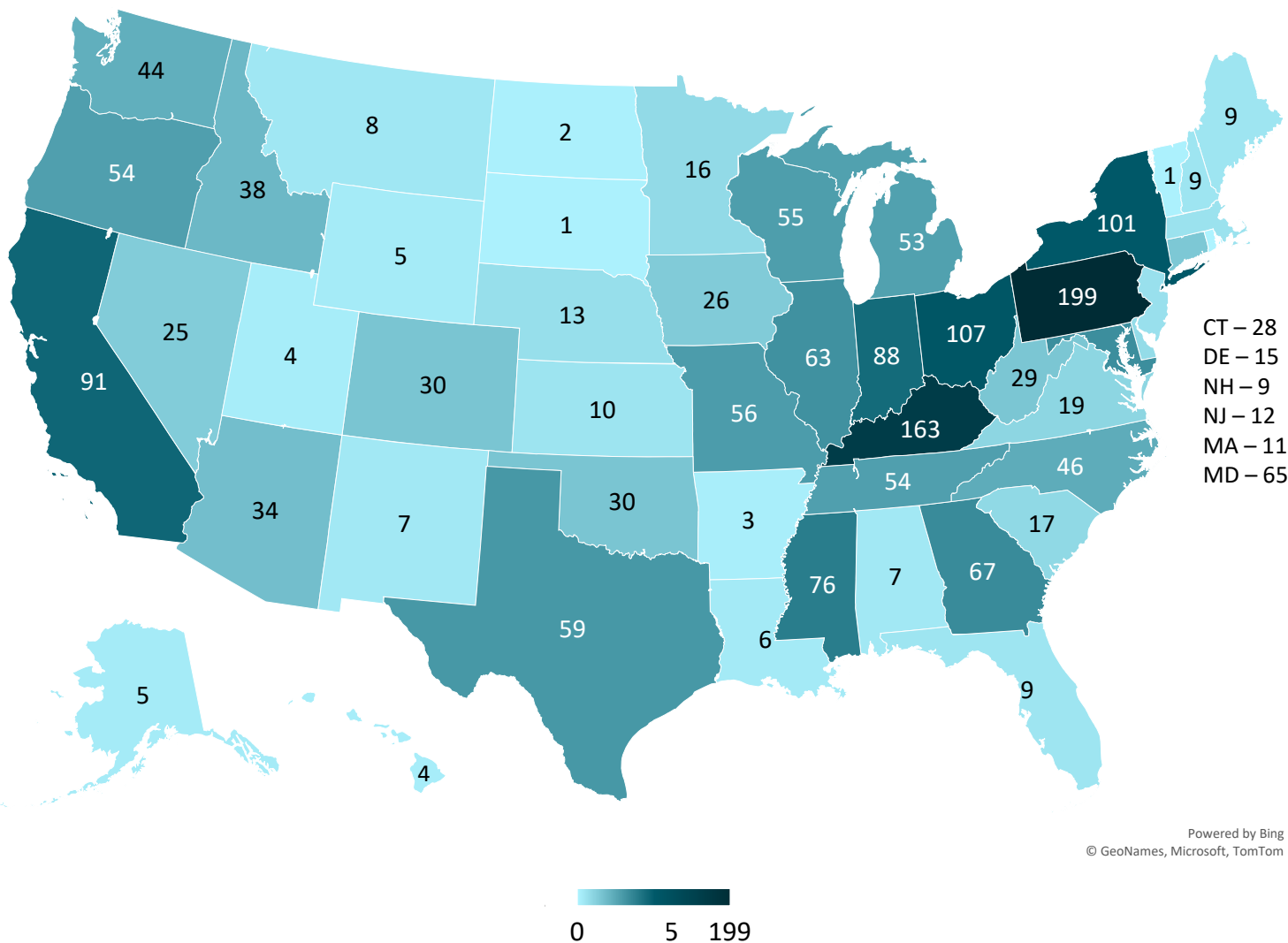
“extremely motivated”

Recommendations FY25

- ❖ 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, 30% of FFS® Plus users completed the program in 1 day (n=169) and Group Clinic participants complete sessions weekly. A possible solution is gating progression through sessions with a wait time or measure individual quit journey with added metrics.
- ❖ 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 at each session
 - Having more detailed required surveys only at enrollment (pre-) and program completion (post-) to compare tobacco use and other behaviors before and after program
 - Consolidating the satisfaction survey after each module into one survey at the end
 - Adding a 90-day follow-up survey to help assess long-term outcomes (stay quit) of the program
- ❖ If FFS® Plus users have a unique account ID linked to their program progress and survey responses, matched analysis of change in tobacco use and the stratification of outcomes based on time to complete the program can be reported. For example, the outcomes of users who completed the program in one day should not be compared to those who go through modules weekly, since tobacco product use outcomes will likely differ.
- ❖ 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 should be reviewed for flow, alignment, typos, and updated guidance.
- ❖ Data collection tools should be reviewed, updated, and streamlined along with updated protocols for facilitators and program participants. Revisions will help increase response rates and allow for more rigorous evaluation.

Appendix A: Total FFS® Facilitators National Map, FY25

During the FY25 data collection period, a total of 1877 facilitators shared where they live. **Facilitators from a total of 49 states participated in the program with Pennsylvania having the most facilitators (n=199).**



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Data Sources:

- FY25 FFS FOT Course Completers
- FY25 FFS Newly Trained FFS Facilitators
- FY25 FFS Recertification

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

States	New Facilitators	Continuing Facilitators	Recertified Facilitators	FY25 Total
Pennsylvania	11	163	25	199
Kentucky	21	120	22	163
Ohio	14	75	18	107
New York	12	84	5	101
California	18	67	6	91
Indiana	9	66	13	88
Mississippi	7	55	14	76
Georgia	8	49	10	67
Maryland	15	46	4	65
Illinois	10	49	4	63
Texas	6	48	5	59
Missouri	8	42	6	56
Wisconsin	6	44	5	55
Oregon	7	41	6	54
Tennessee	8	41	5	54
Michigan	9	36	8	53
North Carolina	5	39	2	46
Washington	4	36	4	44
Idaho	14	23	1	38
Arizona	3	31	0	34
Colorado	5	24	1	30
Oklahoma	8	17	5	30
West Virginia	3	23	3	29
Connecticut	8	20	0	28
Iowa	6	16	4	26
Nevada	0	25	0	25
Virginia	3	13	3	19
South Carolina	3	11	3	17
Minnesota	0	15	1	16
Delaware	2	13	0	15
Nebraska	0	11	2	13
New Jersey	0	11	1	12
Massachusetts	2	9	0	11
Kansas	2	8	0	10
Florida	2	6	1	9
Maine	0	9	0	9
New Hampshire	1	7	1	9
Montana	1	7	0	8
Alabama	5	2	0	7
New Mexico	0	5	2	7
Louisiana	4	2	0	6
Alaska	0	5	0	5

Appendix B: FFS® Facilitators – New, Continuing, and Recertified (cont.)

States	New Facilitators	Continuing Facilitators	Recertified Facilitators	FY25 Total
Wyoming	0	4	1	5
Hawaii	0	4	0	4
Utah	0	4	0	4
Arkansas	1	2	0	3
DC	0	2	1	3
North Dakota	0	1	1	2
South Dakota	0	1	0	1
Vermont	0	1	0	1
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0