

# Assessing Oregon's Alcohol Retail Environment

March 2026



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# How alcohol marketing and availability shape health in Oregon

Excessive alcohol use drives many of Oregon’s most pressing health and social challenges. It can lead to problems such as alcohol poisoning, motor vehicle crashes and violence. It also increases the risk of cancer and chronic disease, like heart disease, liver disease and high blood pressure.

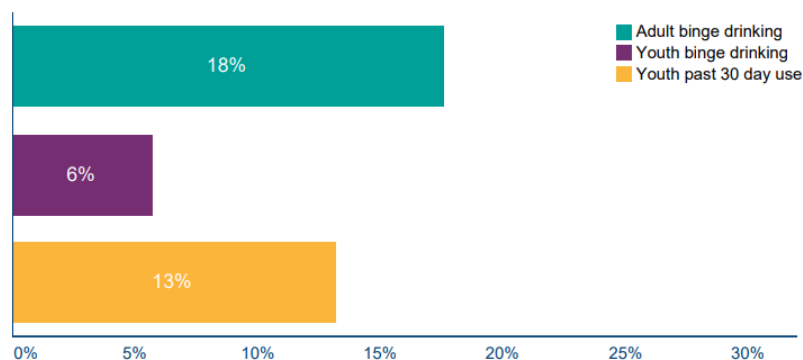
Excessive alcohol use is associated with various social and mental health concerns, such as depression, memory issues and relationship problems.<sup>1</sup>

Excessive alcohol use is defined as:

- Binge drinking (four or more drinks for women, or five or more drinks for men, in one setting or occasion)
- Heavy drinking (eight or more drinks for women, or 15 or more drinks for men, per week)
- Any drinking during pregnancy
- Any drinking by people under the age of 21

Excessive alcohol use is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of preventable death in Oregon <sup>2</sup> and is responsible for over 2,500 deaths annually.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Alcohol use among Oregon adults (2023)<sup>7</sup> and youth\* (2024)<sup>8</sup>**



\*Oregon 11<sup>th</sup> graders, 2024 Student Health Survey

# The four “P”s of marketing

The four “P”s of marketing—product, promotion, place and price—are all strategies used by the alcohol industry to recruit new customers and encourage alcohol sales and consumption. The industry is constantly innovating new **products** with rapidly expanding options that include co-branded and flavored alcoholic beverages with high alcohol content. These products are often available in bright colored packaging and a variety of flavors, making them especially appealing to youth. These products are also readily available in many communities, including **places** where youth spend time, such as grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations. Alcoholic beverages are regularly available at low **prices**, making them more accessible for price-sensitive consumers like youth. Lastly, alcoholic beverages are **promoted** heavily, using celebrities and themes appealing to youth like sexuality, humor, fame and popularity. Price discounts, such as coupons or multi-buy discounts, reduce already low prices, ensuring that price-sensitive consumers like youth can find alcoholic beverages that fit within their budget.<sup>4</sup>

1,147 94%

Store assessments completed

Of tobacco retailers also sold alcoholic beverages

## Disparities in alcohol availability

There are currently 12,738 alcohol retail outlets across Oregon.<sup>4</sup> When there are higher numbers of alcohol retailers in an area, people may be more likely to experience community harms. Higher concentrations of alcohol retail outlets in communities are connected to social harms, including injuries, violence, property damage, alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking. Differences in alcohol availability can help explain why alcohol-related harms affect some communities more than others. Some of these differences are due to laws or policies that affect the availability of alcohol, such as zoning and licensing laws. In addition, increased exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing makes excessive alcohol consumption more likely, resulting in many health and safety problems.<sup>6</sup>

# Background

To better understand the retail environment in Oregon, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP) and Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention and Education Program (ADPEP) conducted statewide Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Assessments (TARA). The assessment examined tobacco and alcohol advertising, marketing and promotion in a sample of tobacco retailers across the state. The sample was based on Oregon’s list of Tobacco Retail Licensees with age-restricted locations removed from the list. To collect accurate data, OHA trained and partnered with a variety of local health department staff, nonprofit organizations and community volunteers to use a standard assessment tool. The retail assessment findings provide a snapshot of the alcohol industry’s presence across Oregon and shed light on the ways the alcohol industry targets people in Oregon, particularly youth.<sup>7,8</sup>

## Youth alcohol use in Oregon

In 2024, more than one in ten Oregon 11<sup>th</sup> graders used alcohol within the past 30 days, with nearly 6% reporting binge drinking [Figure 1, [Alcohol use among adults and youth](#)].<sup>8</sup> Alcohol is a factor in the deaths of thousands of people younger than age 21 in the United States each year, including motor vehicle crashes, accidental injuries and suicides.<sup>9</sup>

Early initiation and use of alcohol can increase the likeliness that youth will engage in a variety of risky behaviors that can lead to injuries and other health issues later in life.<sup>10</sup>



*Exterior alcohol product ads promoting popular youth appealing drinks such as White Claw, Twisted Tea, and Truly | Taken in Clackamas County and Marion County during 2025 TARA*

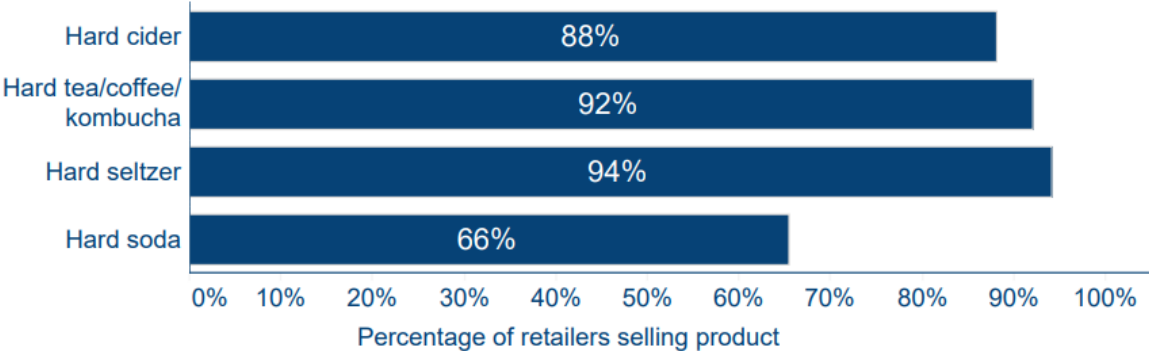
# Key data highlights

Major data themes align with the 4 “P”s of marketing:

## Product

Alcohol was available at a large majority of tobacco retailers assessed (94%) in a variety of product categories ([Appendix B, Product availability](#)). Flavored alcoholic beverages like hard seltzer and hard cider were also readily available ([Figure 2, Availability of flavored alcohol](#)).

**Figure 2: Availability of flavored alcohol**

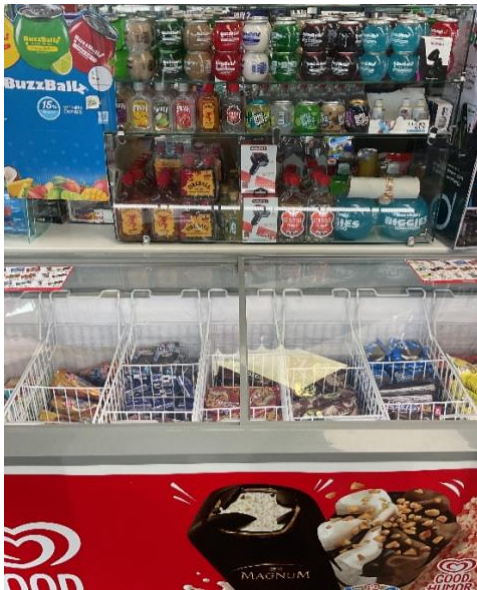


Of note, 73% of retailers selling alcohol sold co-branded alcoholic beverages. Co-branded alcoholic beverages are alcoholic drinks that share the same or similar brand name, logo or packaging as a non-alcoholic beverage. Examples include Hard Mountain Dew, Spiked Simply Lemonade or Topo Chico Hard Seltzer.

In addition to being available in fun packaging and a variety of flavors, co-branded alcoholic beverages can be particularly appealing to youth who are already familiar with the brands’ non-alcoholic products.

## Place

Convenience stores or gas stations made up 74% of the stores assessed across the state ([Appendix A, Store type](#)). Youth are known to visit these types of stores regularly. According to the Oregon Youth Survey, 77% of youth (ages 15-18) have visited a convenience store in the past seven days.<sup>11</sup>



*Popular alcoholic drinks placed near ice cream and toys for kids | Taken in Marion County during 2025 TARA*

## Price

The price of alcohol is one of the biggest determinants of consumption for youth and adults.<sup>12</sup> Increasingly popular ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages are large in volume and often contain multiple standard alcoholic drinks in a single container. These products are inexpensive, come in a variety of flavors and are sold in the types of stores that people frequent every day. As an example, Twisted Tea (5% ABV) contains approximately two standard alcoholic drinks in one 24-oz container ([Figure 3, Standard alcoholic drink examples](#)).

**Figure 3: Standard alcoholic drink examples**



A standard drink size depends on its alcohol by volume (ABV) content. One standard drink contains approximately 0.6 fluid ounces of pure alcohol.

The average cheapest advertised price of a 24oz Twisted Tea across the sample was \$3.94, which equates to less than \$2 per standard alcoholic drink.



## Promotion

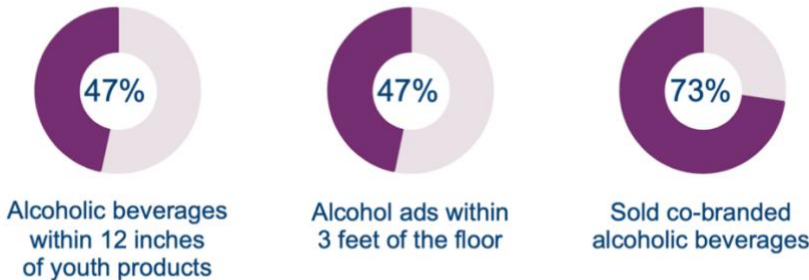
Increased exposure to advertising can increase drinking intentions, consumption and harmful drinking. Research shows that alcohol is more heavily advertised in neighborhoods with more youth of color than in mostly white neighborhoods.<sup>13</sup> Data collectors observed alcohol advertising outside 73% of the retailers surveyed.



A higher density of retailers results in more advertising and promotion of alcohol products | Taken in Marion County during 2025 TARA

Product placement within the store also has the potential to increase youth exposure to alcohol products and advertising. For example, nearly half of all alcohol retailers stocked alcohol within 12 inches of youth friendly products, like candy or toys. Almost half (47%) of stores that sold alcohol had alcoholic beverages advertised within three feet of the floor (Figure 4, Percentage of stores using common marketing strategies that appeal to youth). This height often puts products right at kids' eye-level.

**Figure 4: Percentage of stores using common marketing strategies that appeal to youth**



# Countering alcohol marketing and advertising through policy

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There are a number of ways the state and local communities can change the way alcohol is promoted and sold in the retail environment. These include:

## Limit access and density

Communities can take steps to limit access to alcohol and reduce excessive alcohol use by changing the rules for when and where alcohol can be sold.<sup>6</sup> The concentration of alcohol retail outlets in a given area is called alcohol outlet density. Alcohol outlet density can be regulated at the local level through zoning and business licensing laws. Limiting the hours or days when alcohol can be sold is another tool that can be applied to bars, restaurants, retail stores or liquor stores. Learn more about alcohol outlet density in Oregon at <https://oregonalcoholmaps.com/overview>.

## Increase the price of alcohol

Increasing the price of alcohol by raising alcohol taxes is an effective strategy for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.<sup>12</sup> Other strategies to increase prices include setting minimum unit prices or restricting the redemption of coupons or other discounts. Dedicating a portion of new revenues generated by price increases to effective prevention and treatment programs could further amplify reductions in excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

## Maintain state control

The Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC) is the agency responsible for regulating the sale and service of distilled spirits in Oregon. State control establishes a structured market and determines the pricing and availability of distilled spirit products. Through this structure, the OLCC generates significant non-tax revenue that is distributed to state and local programs, including schools and public health programs. The repeal of a state control model (known as privatization) commonly leads to an increase in the number of alcohol retail outlets and increased alcohol consumption.<sup>14</sup>

## Learn about and get involved in the regulatory landscape

Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) determine how the OLCC interprets and implements state alcohol laws. The process of developing or modifying OARs is called rulemaking. Rules related to alcohol include licensing requirements, service permits, minor access and possession, host liability and delivery regulations. Individuals and communities can participate in the rulemaking process by submitting public comments on rules, petitioning for new or improved rules or serving on a Rules Advisory Committee. Learn more at <https://www.oregon.gov/olcc/Pages/rulemaking.aspx>.

# Other strategies for making progress

## Share store assessment data

Data collected through the TARA can be an invaluable for demonstrating exactly where and how alcoholic beverages are being sold. This information is instrumental in formulating solutions to address a community's specific problems. Sharing the data findings with both current stakeholders, potential partners, and decision makers can help raise awareness of the need for change, build readiness and help find new areas of alignment and common ground.

## Find out where alcohol retailers are located

Knowing the number of alcohol outlets in a community and where they are located can help to find patterns, tell stories and support programs and policies. The more alcohol retailers there are in an area, the higher the risk for excessive drinking and its associated health impacts and community harms. Oregon Health Authority has created a map of showing location and concentration of alcohol retailers across Oregon (<https://oregonalcoholmaps.com/overview>). Users can search by community or even a specific street address and find information on the alcohol retail environment in that area. Understanding the concentration of alcohol outlets into communication materials is useful for connecting the dots between the retail environment and its impact on excessive alcohol use. FrameWorks Institute's brief, [Excessive Alcohol Use and Health Equity](#), offers insights from social science research on how to effectively frame public-facing communications on preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms.<sup>15</sup>

# Methods

Prior to drawing the sample, retailers were removed by keywords in order to exclude age restricted locations. Sample size for each county was based on their total number of eligible tobacco retailers. Counties with more than 250 retailers were given a random sample of 20% of the eligible retailers. Counties with 51-250 eligible retailers were given a random sample of 50 retailers. Counties that had 50 retailers or less were required to complete a census. Some counties chose to conduct TARA visits at more retailers than required. Those additional visits were excluded from the statewide analysis. Data collection occurred between January-July 2025.

Data were cleaned prior to analysis to exclude ineligible assessments and duplicate visits. The eligibility criteria included all assessment visits where “Can you visit the store?” and “Is tobacco sold here?” were answered “Yes”. Data for this report is based on the number of eligible tobacco retailers that also sold alcohol. All available store data rather than only complete store data was utilized in the analysis; therefore, the total number of assessments summarized for each variable may vary depending on the amount of data available for the particular assessment variable. Data were weighted by county, allowing counties with larger numbers of assessed retailers to contribute proportionally to statewide estimates.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Store type

Store type	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Convenience store with or without gas	806	74%
Drug store or pharmacy	25	3%
Beer, wine or liquor store	8	<1%
Grocery store	158	11%
Mass merchandiser	96	7%
Tobacco shop	9	<1%
E-cigarette/Vape shop	11	1%
Other store type not listed	34	3%

## Appendix B: Product availability

Product	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Sold beer	1,078	100%
Sold wine	957	91%
Sold malt liquor (unflavored)	655	68%
Sold hard cider	950	88%
Sold hard tea/coffee/kombucha	1,003	92%
Sold hard seltzer	1,012	94%
Sold hard soda	663	66%

# Citations

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/about-alcohol-use/index.html>
- <sup>2</sup> Oregon Vital Records
- <sup>3</sup> [https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH\\_ARDI/default/default.aspx](https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH_ARDI/default/default.aspx)
- <sup>4</sup> Rossheim, M. E., Treffers, R. D., Sparks, A. C., Sparks, M., Tillett, K. K., LoParco, C. R., Trangenstein, P. J., Walters, S. T., Siegel, M., & Jernigan, D. H. (2025). The Evolving Alcohol Landscape: Implications for Public Health and Policy. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs*, 86(3), 323–329. <https://doi.org/10.15288/jsad.24-00339>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/58c67e21e50c40939f02597a160376a3>
- <sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guide for Measuring Alcohol Outlet Density. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2017. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/61301>
- <sup>7</sup> Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023
- <sup>8</sup> Oregon Student Health Survey, 2024
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/alcohol-topics/alcohol-facts-and-statistics/underage-drinking-united-states-ages-12-20>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/underage-drinking/index.html>
- <sup>11</sup> Oregon Youth Survey Online, 2024. Unpublished data.
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/alcohol-excessive-consumption-increasing-alcohol-taxes.html>
- <sup>13</sup> Alaniz ML. Alcohol availability and targeted advertising in racial/ethnic minority communities. *Alcohol Health Res World*. 1998;22(4):286–289. PMID: 15706757; PMCID: PMC6761895.
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- <sup>15</sup> Sweetland J, Blustein Lindholm C. Framing Excessive Alcohol Consumption: Considerations for Framing Alcohol Policy Issues. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute; 2023. Available from: <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/app/uploads/2023/09/FramingExcessiveAlcoholConsumption2023.pdf>