

# Assessing Oregon's Tobacco Retail Environment

March 2026



# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Why tobacco point-of-sale matters.....	3
Background.....	5
Data highlights.....	6
Product.....	6
Place.....	7
Price.....	8
Promotion.....	9
Countering tobacco marketing and advertising through policy.....	10
Limit proximity and density of tobacco retailers.....	10
Prohibit discounts on tobacco products.....	10
Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products.....	10
Close tobacco prevention loopholes.....	11
Plan for a future without Big Tobacco.....	11
Other strategies for making progress.....	12
Methods.....	13
Appendices.....	14
Appendix A: Store type.....	14
Appendix B: Product availability.....	15
Appendix C: Flavors availability.....	15
Appendix D: Price promotions.....	16
Appendix E: Cheapest average advertised price.....	16
Appendix F: Youth appeal.....	17
Appendix G: Exterior advertisements.....	18
Citations.....	19

# Why tobacco point-of-sale matters

The tobacco industry spends nearly \$90 million promoting their products in Oregon stores, keeping deadly and addictive tobacco products cheap and visible.<sup>1</sup> With sweet flavors, steep discounts and targeted advertising, Big Tobacco entices kids to start using and keep people who currently use tobacco hooked.

In 2025, there are over 3,500 tobacco retailers across the state of Oregon. This includes convenience stores, gas stations, grocery stores, pharmacies, vape shops, tobacco shops, liquor stores and bars and restaurants. These stores are often saturated with advertising for tobacco products inside and out. Large product displays dominate the space behind check-out counters. Colorful product displays appear beside candy and toys. This is no accident. Tobacco companies dictate placement, pricing, promotion and inventory requirements for their products in stores through contracts with the retailers.<sup>2</sup>

Several successful statewide policies, including raising the legal age of sale to 21 and implementing tobacco retailer licensing, have helped drive down the rate of illegal sales to underage youth. Since the start of Oregon's statewide Tobacco Retail Licensing program in 2022, retailer sales to underage youth have decreased each year and are now down to 11% across the state.<sup>3</sup>

## Disparities in tobacco use

Tobacco retailers cluster in lower-income neighborhoods and where more residents are people of color. When there are more tobacco retailers in a community, people are more likely to see tobacco ads and product displays behind counters. Exposure to tobacco industry marketing makes it more likely that young people will find harmful tobacco products attractive and makes it harder for people to quit, driving disparities in tobacco use.

The tobacco industry continues to find ways to reach youth and adults alike through the retail environment. Sweet, candy, fruity and minty flavors appeal to youth, encouraging them to try tobacco products. Flavors mask the unpleasant taste and harshness of tobacco, making tobacco products easier to start and harder to quit. A national study showed that 80% of youth who have ever used a tobacco product started with a flavored product.<sup>4</sup>

While Oregon raised the tobacco tax in 2021, tobacco companies are intent on keeping prices low for consumers by offering coupons and steep discounts on their products in retail stores. Lower price points make tobacco products more accessible for youth. Coupons and discounts also lead youth to move from experimenting with tobacco products to using them regularly.<sup>5</sup>

### Youth tobacco and nicotine use in Oregon

In Oregon in 2024, nearly one in ten 11th graders used at least one tobacco product, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, chew, hookah or nicotine pouches. E-cigarettes or “vapes” are the most popular product among youth, used by 9% of Oregon 11th graders in 2024.<sup>8</sup>

Nationally, 88% of youth who used e-cigarettes use flavored e-cigarettes.<sup>9</sup>

Tobacco companies use retailers as a vehicle to target their marketing to specific populations, including youth, rural communities, LGBTQIA2S+ communities and specific racial and ethnic groups. For example, for decades tobacco companies have marketed menthol cigarettes specifically to Black and African American communities. These campaigns concentrate advertising and promotions in predominately African American neighborhoods and exploit cultural hallmarks and stereotypes.<sup>6,7</sup>

Big Tobacco is constantly innovating with new products to hook a new generation. One such example is seen in the way tobacco companies have expanded the sale and marketing of oral nicotine pouches tremendously in recent years. Oral nicotine pouches have quickly become the second most commonly used tobacco product among youth<sup>9,10</sup> and under current Oregon law, these products are not regulated.



Exterior tobacco product ads | Taken in North Central Public Health District during 2025 Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Assessment (TARA)

# 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 a statewide Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Assessment (TARA). The assessment examined tobacco availability, advertising, marketing and promotion in a sample of tobacco retailers across the state. A workgroup composed of TPEP and ADPEP staff informed the assessment questions. The representative sample

was based on Oregon’s list of Tobacco Retail Licensees, with adult only locations removed from the list. To collect accurate data, OHA trained and partnered with teams 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 tobacco industry’s presence across Oregon and shed light on how the industry targets people in Oregon, particularly youth. See [Methods](#) to learn more information.

---

**1,147** Tobacco retailer assessments made up the statewide sample for analysis

---



*“Powerwall” of tobacco products and discreet vape disguised as a car key | Taken in North Central Public Health District and Columbia County during 2025 TARA*

# Data highlights

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

**Figure 1: The Four “P”s of tobacco marketing from ChangeLab Solution’s Point of Sale Playbook <sup>11</sup>**



## Product

Tobacco products were widely available across the state ([Appendix B, Product availability](#)). While a total of 744 stores sold e-cigarettes, 95% of these retailers sold flavored e-cigarettes ([Appendix C, Flavors availability](#)). According to the 2024 National Youth Tobacco Survey, more than eight out of ten current e-cigarette users (88%) use flavored e-cigarettes.<sup>12</sup>

88%

of youth e-cigarette users used flavored e-cigarette according to the NYTS

95%

of assessed tobacco retailers who sold e-cigarettes in Oregon sold flavored e-cigarettes

Meanwhile, retailers sold menthol cigarettes at 1,104 of the assessed stores. Menthol makes tobacco products easier to start and harder to quit. Concerningly, tobacco companies have targeted marketing to African Americans and other marginalized groups across the country for decades, contributing to disparities in tobacco use and related harm.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, flavored versions of all other tobacco products were widely available (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Percentage of tobacco retailers selling flavored products**



## Place

Convenience stores or gas stations made up 74% of the stores assessed across the state. 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>14</sup> About 3% of retailers selling tobacco within the sample were identified as drug stores or pharmacies, despite the known health risks of tobacco ([Appendix A, Store type](#)).

# Price

Increasing the price of cigarettes and other tobacco products is one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use and increase smoking cessation.<sup>15</sup> The impact of price on behavior is especially true among youth, who are generally the most price sensitive. Notably, Zyn’s average cheapest advertised price was \$5.60, making it the lowest cost of any other tobacco or nicotine product with collected pricing data for comparison ([Appendix E, Cheapest average advertised price](#)). This low price is especially concerning given the rise in popularity of oral nicotine pouches among youth. The assessment also reflected extremely low prices of cigarillos/little cigars. A total of 156 retailers sold these products for less than \$1, likely cheaper than almost any other product in the store. Packaging these products in small pack sizes allows tobacco manufacturers and retailers to sell these products at such low prices. In fact, 85% of retailers that sold cigarillos/little cigars offered these products as singles.

More than one in two retailers selling cigarettes featured price promotions. Price promotions were also prevalent for e-cigarettes (47%) and oral nicotine products (43%) ([Appendix D, Price promotions](#)). The tobacco industry uses much of their marketing budget towards product promotions that counteract price increases, like multi-pack discounts or coupons.

**Figure 4: Tobacco products with price promotions**

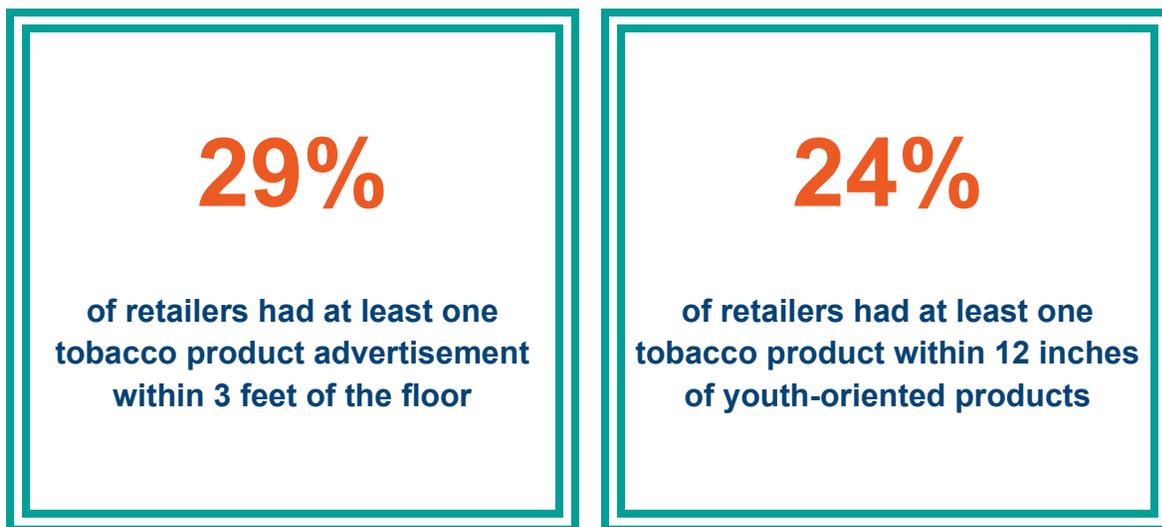


# Promotion

Exposure to tobacco advertising and marketing is associated with increased tobacco use, including youth tobacco initiation.<sup>16</sup> Data collectors identified exterior cigarette advertising in more than half of assessed stores (52%), making cigarettes the product most advertised outside of the store ([Appendix G, Exterior advertisements](#)). Exterior advertising for oral nicotine products was close behind (44%), pointing to their growing popularity in recent years.

Where products are displayed in the store may also increase youth exposure to tobacco products and ads. Concerningly, nearly one in five e-cigarette retailers had youth friendly products, like candy or toys, within 12” of an e-cigarette display. Similarly, 20% of e-cigarette retailers had advertisements within three feet of the floor ([Appendix F, Youth appeal](#)). This height often puts products right at kids’ eye-level.

**Figure 3: Common placement strategies that target youth**



# Countering tobacco marketing and advertising through policy

---

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

## Limit proximity and density of tobacco retailers

Cities and counties can cap the number of tobacco retailers in an area, require a minimum distance between retailers or prohibit locations near schools or other areas youth frequent.<sup>17</sup>

## Prohibit discounts on tobacco products

Cities and counties can prohibit discounts on tobacco products to keep prices high, the most effective way to reduce tobacco consumption.<sup>15</sup> Policy options include prohibiting the distribution and use of coupons (e.g., buy one get one free), and implementing minimum prices for each type of tobacco product.

## Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products

Flavored tobacco is attractive to kids and masks the harsh taste and feel of tobacco products. State and local policies that restrict flavors, including menthol, would make tobacco products less appealing to youth and improve health equity.<sup>7</sup>

## Close tobacco prevention loopholes

The evolving nicotine product landscape and tobacco industry's predatory marketing practices entices youth to become addicted, lifelong customers. Removing loopholes in laws, like those for synthetic nicotine as well as nicotine analogs, will protect Oregon youth.<sup>18</sup>

## Plan for a future without Big Tobacco

Many new, innovative policies aim to eliminate the influence of commercial tobacco in our communities. These policies reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes, particularly in under-resourced communities with greater exposure to tobacco product marketing and product availability.<sup>19</sup> Local and statewide policies include phasing out existing tobacco licenses to limit the number of tobacco retailers and banning the sale of filtered cigarettes and cigars. Communities like Manhattan Beach, California, Boston, Massachusetts and others across the country are beginning to implement these solutions, and Oregon can help lead the way.

To learn more about commercial tobacco prevention and to connect with your local Tobacco Prevention and Education Program Coordinator, visit [smokefreeoregon.com](http://smokefreeoregon.com)

# Other strategies for making progress

## Share store assessment data

The act of collecting and sharing store assessment data can be a catalyst for change. Research has shown that counties across the country who have conducted store assessments were six times more likely to have adopted a point-of-sale policy compared to those who had not.<sup>20</sup>

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.

## Map the tobacco retailers in your community to help tell a story

Research shows that higher tobacco retailer density is associated with higher smoking rates.<sup>21</sup> Tobacco retailer density is defined as the concentration of retailers in a given geographic area. Knowing the number of tobacco retailers in a community and where they are located can help to find patterns, tell stories and support programs and policies. For example, mapping the location of tobacco retailers in relation to schools can help illustrate the fact that youth are heavily exposed to tobacco marketing. Mapping where those tobacco retailers are located can also help determine what policy options might have the most impact on the tobacco retail environment and the least unintended consequences on health disparities.

Incorporating information on retailer density and location into communication materials is useful for connecting the dots between the retail environment and its impact on tobacco use. Pairing these data with additional data sources like state and local compliance data and school health surveys can also help paint a fuller picture of the problem. FrameWorks Institute's brief, [Justice in the Air: Framing Tobacco-Related Health Disparities](#), offers insights from social science research on how to effectively frame the drivers of disparities that contribute to disproportionate tobacco use, exposure and health harms.<sup>22</sup>

# Methods

Prior to drawing the sample, retailers were removed by keywords in order to exclude age restricted locations, such as bars, liquor stores and tobacco shops. 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 which 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”. 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.

---

# 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 non-menthol or menthol cigarettes	1,131	99%
Sold menthol cigarettes	1,104	98%
Sold Newport menthol cigarettes	937	88%
Sold cigarillos, little cigars or blunts	1,031	90%
Sold e-cigarettes	744	70%
Sold cartridge-based e-cigarettes	620	83%
Sold single disposable e-cigarettes	629	86%
Sold e-liquids in dropper bottles	94	14%
Sold oral nicotine products	1,076	94%
Sold Zyn nicotine pouches	994	94%
Sold chew, dip, snuff or snus	1,061	91%
Sold cans of Grizzly smokeless tobacco pouches	1,009	96%

## Appendix C: Flavors availability

Product	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Sold menthol cigarettes	1,104	98%
Sold flavored cigarillos, little cigars or blunts	989	97%
Sold flavored e-cigarettes	708	95%
Sold flavored oral nicotine products	1,061	99%
Sold flavored chew, dip, snuff or snus	1,029	97%

## Appendix D: Price promotions

Product	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Had cigarette price promotions	529	51%
Had menthol cigarettes price promotions	279	59%
Had cigarillos, little cigars or blunts price promotions	169	20%
Had e-cigarettes price promotions	305	47%
Had oral nicotine product price promotions	373	43%
Had chew, dip, snuff or snus price promotions	333	38%

## Appendix E: Cheapest average advertised price

Product type	Price
Single cigarette pack	\$9.15
Single menthol cigarette pack	\$10.22
Single Newport Menthol cigarette pack	\$12.61
Single disposable e-cigarette	\$15.38
Single can of Zyn oral nicotine pouches (15 pouches)	\$5.60

## Appendix F: Youth appeal

Youth appeal related question	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Non-menthol or menthol cigarette products within 12" of youth products	104	10%
Non-menthol or menthol cigarette product ads within 3 feet of the floor	147	19%
Single cigarillos, little cigars or blunts sold	847	85%
Cigarillos, little cigars or blunts advertised for less than \$1	156	17%
Cigarillos, little cigars or blunts within 12" of youth products	53	5%
Cigarillos, little cigars or blunt product ads within 3 feet of the floor	86	14%
E-cigarettes within 12" of youth products	156	19%
E-cigarette product ads within 3 feet of the floor	105	20%
Oral nicotine products within 12" of youth products	72	7%
Oral nicotine product ads within 3 feet of the floor	110	15%
Chew, dip, snuff or snus products within 12" of youth products	61	6%
Chew, dip, snuff or snus product ads within 3 feet of the floor	58	9%

## Appendix G: Exterior advertisements

Products advertised outside the store	Frequency	Weighted percentage (%)
Cigarettes – non-menthol	350	52%
Cigarettes – menthol	195	28%
Cigarillos, little cigars or blunts	104	14%
Chew, moist or dry snuff, dip or snus	129	16%
E-cigarette products	249	37%
Oral nicotine products	288	44%

# Citations

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/oregon>;  
<https://countertobacco.org/the-war-in-the-store/>
- <sup>2</sup> Reimold AE, Lee JGL, Ribisl KM. Tobacco company agreements with tobacco retailers for price discounts and prime placement of products and advertising: a scoping review. *Tobacco Control* Published Online First: 24 January 2022.
- <sup>3</sup> [2025 Synar Annual Report](#)
- <sup>4</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2464690>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/570320>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0400.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media/pdfs/2024/07/Scientific-Evidence-Brief-Flavored-Tobacco-Products-Including-Menthol-508.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> OR BRFSS Data
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey-nyts>
- <sup>10</sup> [https://tobacomonitoring.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Nicotine-Pouch-Brief\\_1.10.2025.pdf](https://tobacomonitoring.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Nicotine-Pouch-Brief_1.10.2025.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/point-sale-playbook>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey-nyts>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/31/4/569>
- <sup>14</sup> Oregon Youth Survey Online, 2024. Unpublished data.
- <sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012
- <sup>16</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/570320>;
- <sup>17</sup> Hannah G. Lawman, Kevin A. Henry, Annaka Scheeres, Amory Hillengas, Ryan Coffman, Andrew A. Strasser, “Tobacco Retail Licensing and Density 3 Years After

---

License Regulations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2012–2019)”, *American Journal of Public Health* 110, no. 4 (April 1, 2020): pp. 547-553.;

Coxe et al, 2014. Use of tobacco retail permitting to reduce youth access and exposure to tobacco in Santa Clara County, California. *Journal of Preventive Medicine*;

Bright Research Group, San Francisco Tobacco-Free Project, January 2016. Reducing Tobacco Retail Density in San Francisco: A Case Study;

<sup>18</sup>[https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2026/01/Trends%20Report%202025\\_final.pdf](https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2026/01/Trends%20Report%202025_final.pdf)

<sup>19</sup>[https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2023/07/TruthInitiative\\_Gamechanger\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2023/07/TruthInitiative_Gamechanger_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Combs TB, Brosi D, Chaitan V, He E, Luke DA, Henriksen LA. Local Retail Tobacco Environment Regulation: Early Adoption in the United States. *Tob Regul Sci.* 2019 Jan;5(1):76-86. PMID: 38222289; PMCID: PMC10786621.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335519301767>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Justice-in-the-Air-Framing-Tobacco-Related-Health-Disparities\\_FINAL\\_20220307A.pdf](https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Justice-in-the-Air-Framing-Tobacco-Related-Health-Disparities_FINAL_20220307A.pdf)