

Columbia County Tobacco Retail Snapshot

Assessing Oregon's retail environment

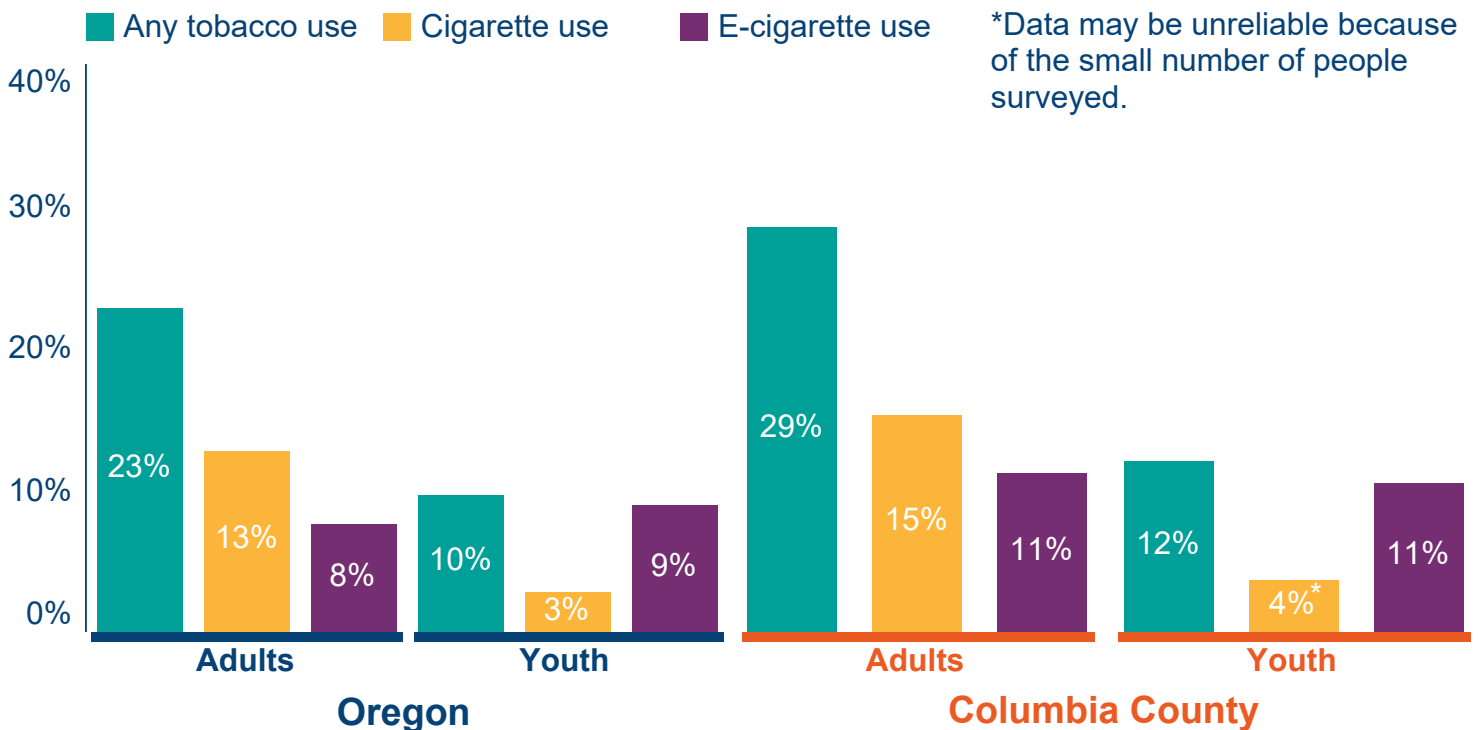
Research has shown that exposure to tobacco advertising and promotions prompts smoking initiation, encourages tobacco use and undermines quit attempts.¹

In early 2025, local health department staff, nonprofits, and volunteers visited tobacco retailers across Oregon to collect data on the types of products available and how they are marketed and promoted. Retailers included places where youth shop, like grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations.

36

store assessments completed in Columbia County

Tobacco use among adults² (2023) and youth³ (2024)



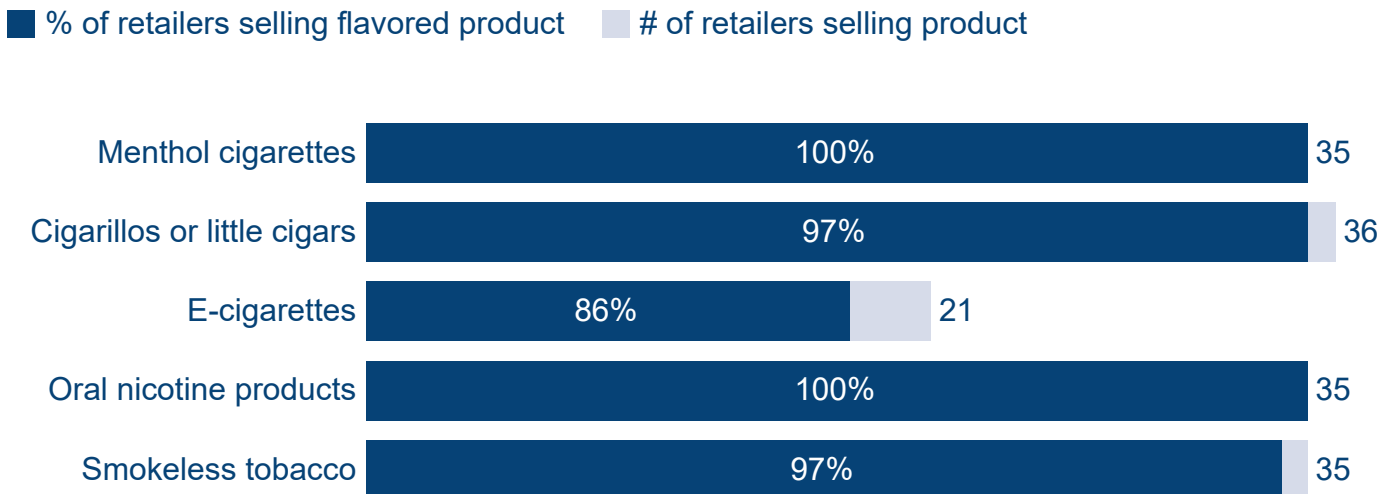
March 2026

Learn more about commercial tobacco prevention at smokefreeoregon.com.



Youth Appeal: Columbia County

Percentage of tobacco retailers selling flavored products



Findings illustrate the ways the tobacco industry intentionally markets products in ways that appeal to youth.

Tobacco companies use colorful packaging, sometimes imitating packaging of popular candy brands. The retail environment often features tobacco product advertisements at children's eye level and products placed near candy, toys or other youth friendly products. Tobacco can even be purchased for less than \$1, cheaper than almost anything else in the store.

Common marketing strategies that target youth



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Price and Promotion: Columbia County

The tobacco industry spends nearly \$91 million per year on marketing in Oregon.

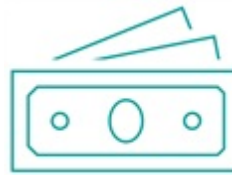
Increasing the price of cigarettes and other tobacco products is one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use and increase smoking cessation.⁴

The tobacco industry uses much of their marketing budget to counteract price increases with promotions, such as multi-pack discounts or coupons. Oral nicotine products, like Zyn, are often priced lower than other tobacco products, making them especially appealing to youth and other price-sensitive shoppers.



41%

Retailers had exterior advertising of tobacco products

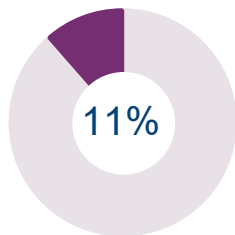


\$5.43

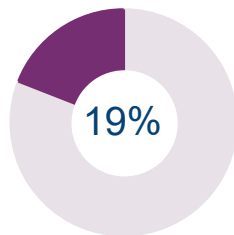
Cheapest average advertised price of Zyn

Tobacco products with price promotions

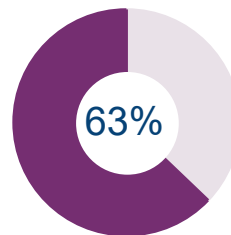
72% of tobacco retailers had a price promotion for any tobacco or nicotine product



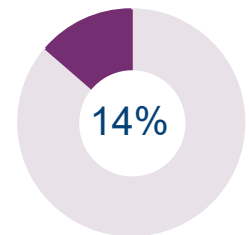
Oral nicotine products



E-cigarettes



Cigarettes



Menthol cigarettes

Countering Tobacco Marketing and Advertising

Recommendations

Limit proximity and density

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

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.

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. 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.

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.

Other Options

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. 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, CA, Boston, MA and others across the country are beginning to implement these solutions, and Oregon can help lead the way.

Citations

1. Paynter J, Edwards R. The impact of tobacco promotion at the point of sale: a systematic review. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2009;11(1):25–35. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntn002.
2. Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). 2023. Oregon Health Authority; 2023.
3. Oregon Student Health Survey. 2024. Oregon Health Authority; 2024.
4. Hill S, Amos A, Clifford D, et al. Impact of tobacco control interventions on socioeconomic inequalities in smoking: review of the evidence. *Tob Control.* 2014;23:e89–e97.