



Asian/Pacific Islander


The Story of Asian/Pacific Islander





A tobacco executive was quoted calling Asian/Pacific Islander community “a potential gold mine” because Asian/Pacific Islanders are “predisposed” to smoking, insinuating all people who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander are clones, that they are all exactly alike.¹ While we know that’s not true, we do know that Big Tobacco is predisposed to greed. Because of this, Big Tobacco is particularly aggressive in its advertising to Asian/Pacific Islander communities, placing more advertising on billboards and inside stores in urban neighborhoods where people predominantly identify as Asian American.² And while Lunar New Years are symbolic of new beginnings, occasions to celebrate culture and ancestors – tobacco companies see them as opportunities to prey on Asian/Pacific Islander communities, feigning support to promote their harmful products.

Though the overall smoking rate for people who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander is at less than 10%, the lowest of all compared populations, gender and ethnicity also play a role. For example, for Asian/Pacific Islander men, the smoking rate is just over 16%.³ And Big Tobacco prices its products lower for Pacific Islander communities than for Asian communities.⁴ Pacific Islander youth also have higher smoking and tobacco use rates than among Asian youth.⁵

There is good news for the next generation – Asian/Pacific Islander communities have seen the largest percentage drops of youth smoking over the past 15 years.⁶ The numbers are going in the right direction, but the fight isn't over until that number is zero.

The Proof is in the Data

Indicator	Asian/Pacific Islander	General Population
Adult Tobacco Use		
1. Adult Cigarette Use: Adult cigarette smoking prevalence <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	11.4%	11.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 		
2. Adult Cigarette Use: Adult cigarette smoking prevalence	7.4% 	11.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 		
3. Change in Adult Cigarette Use: Rate of change in adult cigarette smoking, 2014 to 2017	-22.1%	-11.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. California Health Interview Survey, 2013-14. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 		
4. Change in Adult Cigarette Use: Rate of change in adult cigarette smoking, 2014 to 2017 <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	-29.2%	-11.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. California Health Interview Survey, 2013-14. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 		
5. Adult Tobacco Use: Adult tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products)	13.3%	14.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health. 		
6. Adult Tobacco Use: Adult tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products) <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	19.0%	14.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health. 		
Youth Tobacco Use		
7. Youth Cigarette Use: Youth cigarette smoking prevalence <i>Pacific Islander (without Asian)</i>	2.6%	2.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 		

8.	Youth Cigarette Use: Youth cigarette smoking prevalence <i>Asian (without Pacific Islander)</i>	0.8%		2.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
9.	Youth Cigarette Use: Youth cigarette smoking prevalence <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Boys</i>	1.1%		2.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
10.	Change in Youth Cigarette Use: Rate of change in youth cigarette smoking, 2016 to 2018 <i>Asian (without Pacific Islander)</i>	-50.0%		-53.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. California Student Tobacco Survey, 2015-16. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
11.	Change in Youth Cigarette Use: Rate of change in youth cigarette smoking, 2016 to 2018 <i>Pacific Islander (without Asian)</i>	-43.5%		-53.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. California Student Tobacco Survey, 2015-16. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
12.	Change in Youth Cigarette Use: Rate of change in youth cigarette smoking, 2016 to 2018 <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Boys</i>	-42.1%		-53.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. California Student Tobacco Survey, 2015-16. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
13.	Youth Tobacco Use: Youth tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products) <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	7.7%		12.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
14.	Youth Tobacco Use: Youth tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products) <i>Asian (without Pacific Islander)</i>	7.0%		12.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				
15.	Youth Tobacco Use: Youth tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products) <i>Pacific Islander (without Asian)</i>	17.1%		12.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego. 				

Availability of Tobacco & Tobacco Industry Influence

16.	Cheapest Cigarettes: Average price for the cheapest pack of cigarettes <i>Asian (without Pacific Islander)</i>	\$4.69		\$4.58
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program. American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau. 				
17.	Cheapest Cigarettes: Average price for the cheapest pack of cigarettes <i>Pacific Islander (without Asian)</i>	\$4.48		\$4.58

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

18. **Flavored Little Cigar Price: Average price for a single flavored little cigar/cigarillo** \$1.03 \$0.97
Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

19. **Flavored Little Cigar Price: Average price for a single flavored little cigar/cigarillo** \$0.96 \$0.97
Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

20. **Tobacco Retail Licensing: Proportion of population protected by a strong tobacco retail licensing law** 34.5% 36.9%
Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Policy Evaluation Tracking System, December 2018. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

21. **Tobacco Retail Licensing: Proportion of population protected by a strong tobacco retail licensing law** 40.9% 36.9%
Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- Policy Evaluation Tracking System, December 2018. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

22. **Tobacco Stores: Density of stores selling tobacco per 100,000 residents** 77.5 79.6
Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- California Cigarette and Tobacco Products Retailer Licensees, October 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

23. **Tobacco Stores: Density of stores selling tobacco per 100,000 residents** 58.4  79.6
Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- California Cigarette and Tobacco Products Retailer Licensees, October 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

24. **Flavored Tobacco: Proportion of stores that sell flavored non-cigarette tobacco products** 79.1% 81.8%
Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

25. **Flavored Tobacco: Proportion of stores that sell flavored non-cigarette tobacco products** 85.6% 81.8%
Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

26. **Menthol Cigarettes: Proportion of stores that sell menthol cigarettes** 93.0% 92.2%
Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

27. **Menthol Cigarettes: Proportion of stores that sell menthol cigarettes** 93.1% 92.2%

Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

28. **Tobacco Advertising: Proportion of stores that keep 90% of their storefront free from any advertising** 40.1% 37.0%

Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

29. **Tobacco Advertising: Proportion of stores that keep 90% of their storefront free from any advertising** 33.4% 37.0%

Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, 2016. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2011-2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

Secondhand Smoke

30. **Adult Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of adults exposed to secondhand smoke** 45.8% 45.3%

- California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health.

31. **Adult Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of adults exposed to secondhand smoke** 51.8% 45.3%

Asian/Pacific Islander Men

- California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health.

32. **Youth Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of youth exposed to secondhand smoke or vape** 44.5% 46.8%

Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego.

33. **Youth Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of youth exposed to secondhand smoke or vape** 46.5% 46.8%

Asian/Pacific Islander Boys

- California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego.

34. **Youth Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of youth exposed to secondhand smoke or vape** 53.1%  46.8%

Pacific Islander (without Asian)

- California Student Tobacco Survey, 2017-18. San Diego, CA: Center for Research and Intervention in Tobacco Control, University of California, San Diego.

35. **Smoke-free Multi-unit Housing: Proportion of population protected by a smoke-free multi-unit housing law** 39.5% 29.0%

Asian (without Pacific Islander)

- Policy Evaluation Tracking System, December 2018. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

36.	Smoke-free Multi-unit Housing: Proportion of population protected by a smoke-free multi-unit housing law <i>Pacific Islander (without Asian)</i>	35.5%	29.0%
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- Policy Evaluation Tracking System, December 2018. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program.
- American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Decennial Census, 2010. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau.

37.	Smoke-free Homes: Proportion of adults with smoke-free homes	85.8%	86.6%
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- California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health.

38.	Smoke-free Homes: Proportion of adults with smoke-free homes <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	85.0%	86.6%
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- California Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health.

Cessation

39.	California Smokers' Helpline Enrollees: Proportion of California Smokers' Helpline enrollees	8.8%	9.9%
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of smokers are Asian/Pacific Islander

- California Smokers' Helpline Caller Intake Reports, 2018. San Diego, CA: California Smokers' Helpline, University of California, San Diego.
- California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

40.	Quitting: Proportion of smokers who tried quitting in the last 12 months	58.8%	58.4%
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- California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

41.	Quitting: Proportion of smokers who tried quitting in the last 12 months <i>Asian/Pacific Islander Men</i>	59.6%	58.4%
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- California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

References

1. [M E Muggli, R W Pollay, R Lew, A M Joseph, Targeting of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by the tobacco industry: results from the Minnesota Tobacco Document Depository, 2002, Tobacco Control](#)
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/asian-americans/index.htm>
3. 2017 Story of Inequity, Indicator: Prevalence of adult cigarette smoking by priority population group.
4. 2017 Story of Inequity, Indicator: Average price for the cheapest pack of cigarettes by priority population and, Indicator: Average price for a single of the leading brand of flavored little cigar/cigarillo by priority population group.
5. 2017 Story of Inequity, Indicator: Prevalence of youth cigarette smoking by priority population group and, Indicator: Prevalence of youth tobacco use by priority population group, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products.
6. 2017 Story of Inequity, Indicator: Rate of change in youth cigarette smoking prevalence by priority population group, 2002 to 2016.