

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a plaid shirt, stands against a dark background. A thick plume of white smoke or steam rises from his chest, partially obscuring his face. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue-green tint.



Rural Communities

The Story of Rural Communities

Rural communities are full of hardworking people who value strength and independence. Tobacco companies understand this, so they package and advertise their deadly products to play to values of self-reliance and resiliency with images such as cowboys, hunters and racecar drivers. Big Tobacco aggressively markets cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products, like chew, in rural areas, taking advantage of weaker tobacco retail licensing laws in rural communities.¹ This has contributed to increased smokeless tobacco use rates among high school males in rural areas, exceeding the national average.²

Because of these practices, rural counties have some of the highest smoking rates in California,³ and rural residents start smoking at an earlier age.⁴ Rural counties also suffer higher rates of lung cancer,⁵ and smoking causes 80-90% of lung cancer cases. That's why it's more important than ever to ensure rural communities are truly free from Big Tobacco's deadly, addictive products.

The Proof is in the Data

Indicator	Rural Communities	General Population
Adult Tobacco Use		
1. Adult Cigarette Use: Adult cigarette smoking prevalence	14.9% 	11.0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 		
2. Change in Adult Cigarette Use: Rate of change in adult cigarette smoking, 2014 to 2017	8.0%	-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. 		
3. Adult Tobacco Use: Adult tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products)	25.6% 	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		
4. Youth Cigarette Use: Youth cigarette smoking prevalence	3.1%	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. 		
5. Youth Tobacco Use: Youth tobacco use prevalence (e.g. cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other vaping products, other tobacco products)	13.3%	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		
6. Cheapest Cigarettes: Average price for the cheapest pack of cigarettes	\$4.43	\$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. 		
7. Flavored Little Cigar Price: Average price for a single flavored little cigar/cigarillo	\$0.97	\$0.97
<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. 		
8. Tobacco Retail Licensing: Proportion of population protected by a strong tobacco retail licensing law	33.5%	36.9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		

9. Tobacco Stores: Density of stores selling tobacco per 100,000 residents

93.0



79.6

- 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.

10. Flavored Tobacco: Proportion of stores that sell flavored non-cigarette tobacco products

83.2%

81.8%

- 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.

11. Menthol Cigarettes: Proportion of stores that sell menthol cigarettes

93.1%

92.2%

- 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.

12. Tobacco Advertising: Proportion of stores that keep 90% of their storefront free from any advertising

41.7%

37.0%

- 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

13. Adult Secondhand Tobacco Exposure: Proportion of adults exposed to secondhand smoke

44.5%

45.3%

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

14. Smoke-free Multi-unit Housing: Proportion of population protected by a smoke-free multi-unit housing law

24.6%

29.0%

- 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.

15. Smoke-free Homes: Proportion of adults with smoke-free homes

87.4%

86.6%

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

Cessation

16. Quitting: Proportion of smokers who tried quitting in the last 12 months

52.8%

58.4%

- California Health Interview Survey, 2016-17. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

References

1. Health Equity Report Card, 2017, Indicator: Proportion of each priority population group protected by a strong Tobacco Retail Licensing Law.
2. [Elizabeth T. Couch, Ellen Darius, Margaret M. Walsh, Benjamin W. Chaffee, Smokeless Tobacco Decision-Making Among Rural Adolescent Males in California, Journal of Community Health,](#)
3. [California Facts and Figures 2016, October 2016, California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program](#)
4. [Cutting Tobacco's Rural Roots, Tobacco Use in Rural Communities, 2012, American Lung Association.](#)
5. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, July 6, 2017, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](#)