

Tobacco & Vaping 101:

Alaska 2024

Lawmakers are often bombarded with misinformation on the products used by adults in their state. This annual analysis provides up-to-date data on the adults who use cigarettes and e-cigarette products in the Last Frontier. This information also includes data on youth use, impacts of e-cigarettes and analyses of existing tobacco monies.

Key Points:

- In 2022, an estimated 85,573 adults (15.9 percent) were currently smoking. This is a seven percent decrease from 2021 and represents 6,045 fewer adults smoking.
- In 2022 (among all Alaska adults), 9.9 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 19.2 percent of 25–44-year-olds, 19 percent of 45–64-year-olds, and 8.8 percent of adults aged 65 years or older were currently smoking combustible cigarettes.
- Among all adults earning \$25,000 or less in 2022, 37.3 percent were currently smoking compared to only 8.7 percent of adults earning \$50,000 or more.
- Among all smoking adults in Alaska in 2022, 49.2 percent were White, 28.9 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native, 11.5 percent were Multiracial (non-Hispanic), 4.7 percent were Hispanic, 3.1 percent were Black, and 2.7 percent were Asian.
- In 2022, 37,880 Alaska adults (6.8 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 9.7 percent increase from 2021 and represents 3,574 additional adults vaping.
- Among all vaping adults in Alaska in 2022, 33.8 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 47.1 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 15.7 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 3.4 percent were 65 years or older.
- In 2021, for every one U.S. high school student who was smoking, more than 63 adults were currently using cigarettes.
- In 2021, for every one U.S. high school student who was vaping, more than six adults were currently using e-cigarettes.
- The introduction of e-cigarettes has not led to increases in cigarette smoking, but rather, correlates with significant declines in smoking rates among young adults.
- Between 2018 and 2022, smoking rates among Alaska adults aged 18 to 24 years old decreased by 41.4 percent.
- Cigarette excise taxes in Alaska disproportionately impact low income and low educated persons, while failing to significantly reduce smoking rates among that class.
- The percentage of Alaska adults earning \$25,000 or less that were smoking decreased by 9.8 percent between 2002 and 2022, while the percent of adults earning \$50,000 or more that were smoking decreased by 56.1 percent during the same period.
- Among Alaska adults who did not graduate high school, smoking rates decreased by 24.9 percent, and rates among adults with a college degree decreased by 55.2 percent.
- Alaska woefully underfunds programs to prevent youth use of tobacco and/or vapor products and help adults quit smoking, while simultaneously receiving millions of dollars from the pockets of the adults who smoke. In 2022, for every \$1 the state received in tobacco monies, it spent \$0.15 on tobacco control efforts.

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Adult Combustible Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use

In 2022, according to data from the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 85,573 adults (or 15.9 percent of Alaskans) were currently smoking. This is a seven percent decrease from 2021 when 17.1 percent reported current cigarette use. There were 6,045 fewer adults smoking in 2022 compared to 2021.

In 2022 (among all Alaska adults), 9.9 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 19.2 percent of 25–44-year-olds, 19 percent of 45–64-year-olds, and 8.8 percent of adults aged 65 years or older were currently smoking combustible cigarettes.

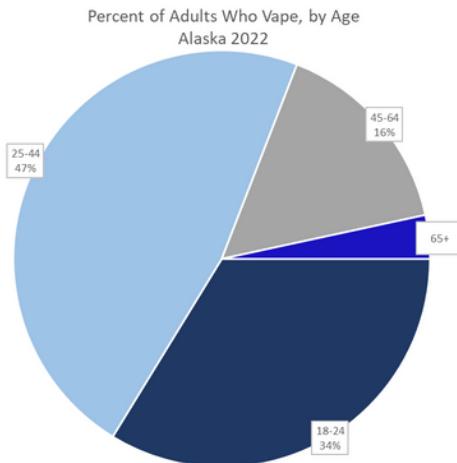
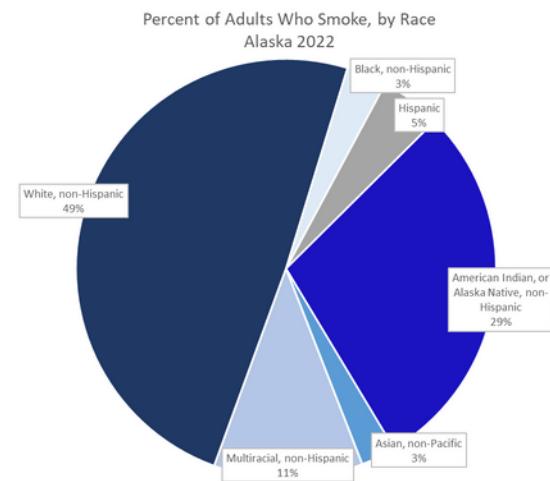
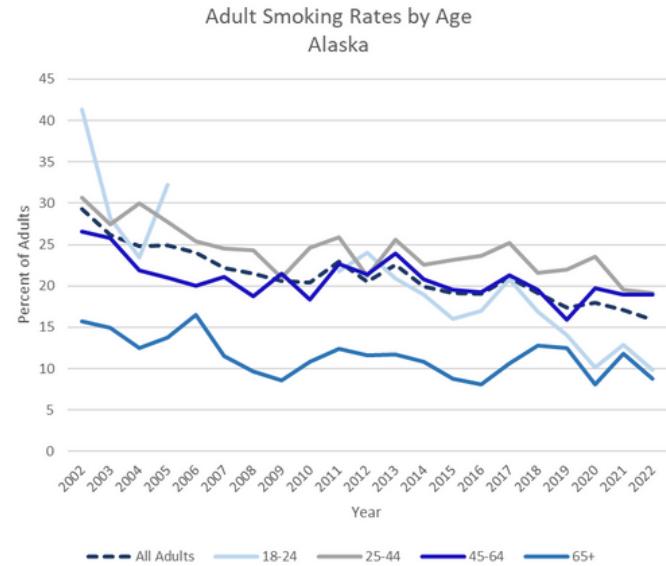
Among all adults earning \$25,000 annually or less in 2022, more than one-third (37.3 percent) reported currently smoking, compared to only 8.7 percent of adults who earned \$50,000 or more per year.

In Alaska, American Indian/Native Alaska adults reported smoking at a greater percentage of their identified race at 31 percent. This is compared to 22.5 percent of Multiracial (non-Hispanic) adults, 15.4 percent of Black adults, 12.9 percent of White adults, 12.3 percent of Hispanic adults, and seven percent of Asian adults.

Yet, White adults made up a significantly larger percentage of Alaska's total adult smoking population. In 2022, White adults accounted for 49.2 percent of Alaska's current smoking population, compared to American Indian/Native Alaska adults, who made up 28.9 percent. Multiracial (non-Hispanic) adults made up 11.5 percent, Hispanic adults accounted for 4.7 percent, Black adults made up 3.1 percent, and Asian adults accounted for 2.7 percent of Alaska's adult smoking population in 2022.

In 2022, an estimated 37,880 Alaska adults (or 6.8 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 9.7 percent increase from 2021 when 6.2 percent reported current e-cigarette use. There were an estimated 3,574 additional adults vaping in 2022 compared to 2021.

Among Alaska adults currently using e-cigarettes in 2022, 33.8 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 47.1 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 15.7 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 3.4 percent of current e-cigarette users in Alaska in 2022 were 65 years or older. Among adult e-cigarette users in Alaska in 2022, 66.2 percent were 25 years or older.



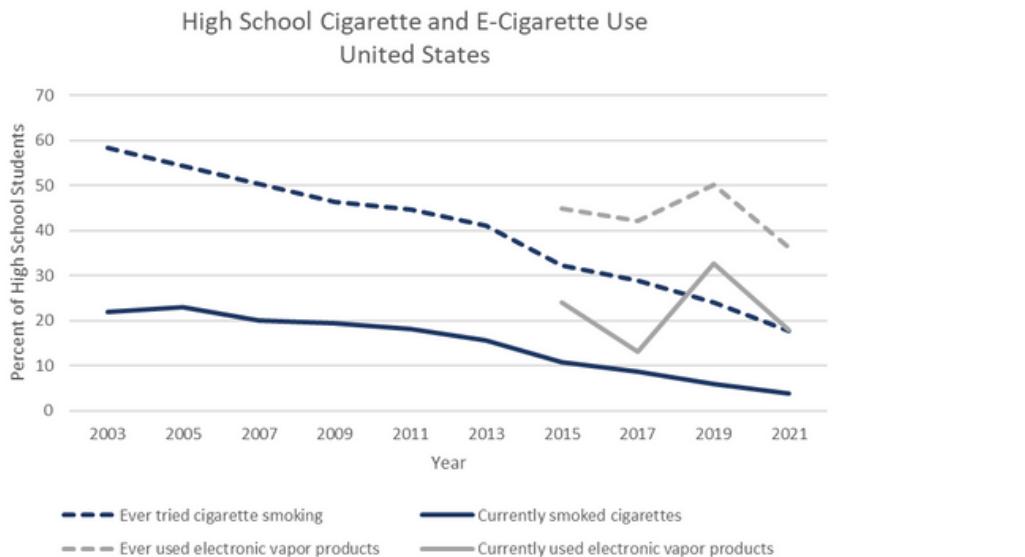
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Youth Combustible Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use

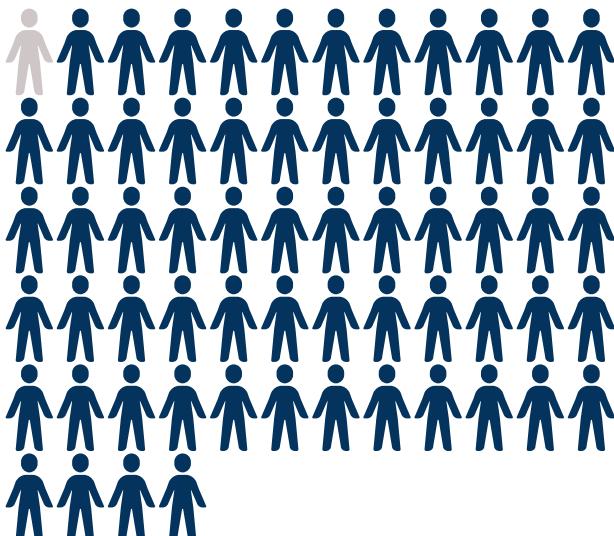
Alaska did not participate in the CDC's 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. But youth smoking rates are at historic lows in the United States. In 2021, 17.8 percent of U.S. high school students reported ever trying combustible cigarettes, while 3.9 percent reported currently smoking, or having used the product on at least one occasion in the 30 days prior. In 2021, approximately 586,474 U.S. high school students were smoking, compared to an estimated 37.3 million U.S. adults aged 18 and over who were currently smoking. For every one high schooler student smoking in 2021 in the United States, more than 63 adults were currently smoking.

Youth vaping peaked in the U.S. in 2019 when more than half (50.1 percent) of U.S. high school students reported having ever used an e-cigarette and nearly one-third (32.7 percent) reported current use. Between 2019 and 2021, lifetime e-cigarette use among U.S. high schoolers declined by 27.7 percent to 36.2 percent of students. Current use decreased by 45 percent to 18 percent of U.S. high school students. In 2021, approximately 2.8 million U.S. high school students were vaping, compared to 17.4 million U.S. adults aged 18 and over who were currently vaping. For every one high schooler vaping in 2021 in the United States, more than six adults were using e-cigarettes.



Youth to Adult Smoking Ratio

United States 2021

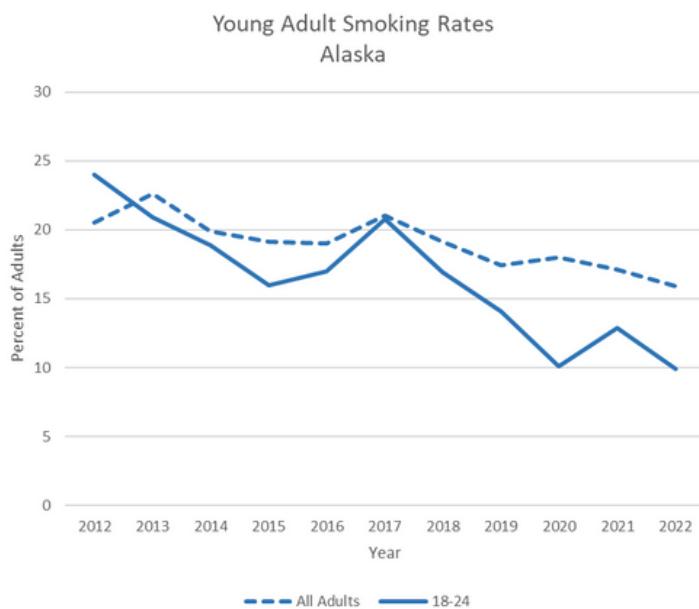


Youth to Adult Vaping Ratio

United States 2021



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Young Adult Cigarette Use

The introduction of e-cigarettes has not led to increases in young adult cigarette smoking, but rather, correlates with significant declines.

In 2012, e-cigarettes were available in every major U.S. market. That same year, 24 percent of Alaskans aged 18 to 24 years old were currently smoking. In 2018, public health purported a so-called “youth vaping epidemic,” and 16.9 percent of young adults in the Last Frontier were smoking. Between 2012 and 2018, young adult smoking rates declined by 29.6 percent. Further, since 2018, young adult smoking rates have decreased another 41.4 percent, with average annual declines of 10.1 percent.

In 2016 (among 18- to 24-year-olds), 17 percent and 4.8 percent were currently using combustible cigarettes and e-cigarettes, respectively. Between 2016 and 2022, current cigarette use among young adults decreased by 41.8 percent while vapor product use increased by 283 percent.

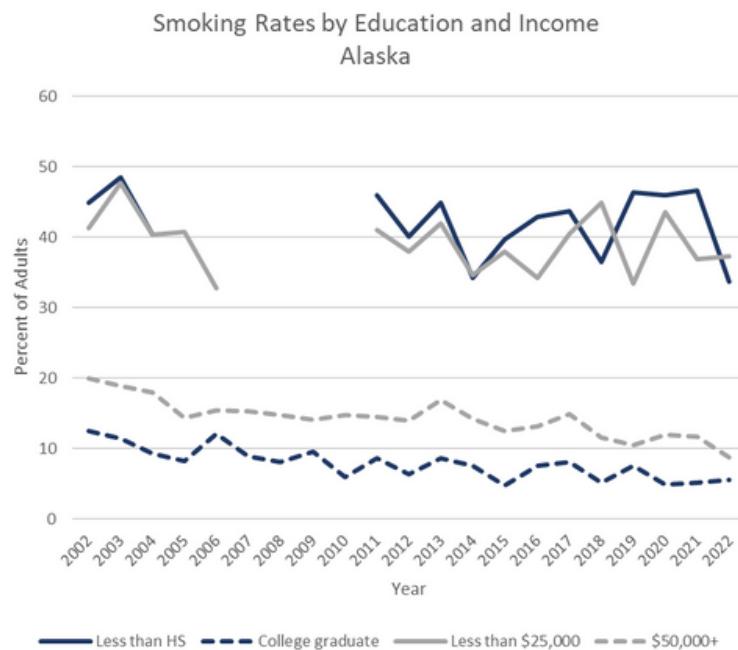
Given the epic lows in young adult smoking rates, lawmakers must refrain from policies that restrict access to alternatives to smoking.

Effects of Cigarette Excise Taxes

Alaska last increased its state cigarette excise tax in 2007 from \$1.80 to \$2.00-per-pack. Lawmakers often justify excise taxes on cigarettes to deter persons from using combustible cigarettes. These taxes not only disproportionately harm lower income and lower educated adults, the taxes also fail to significantly reduce smoking rates among those persons.

The percent of Alaska adults earning \$25,000 or less that were smoking decreased by 9.8 percent between 2002 and 2022, while the percent of adults earning \$50,000 or more that were smoking decreased by 56.1 percent during the same period. Among Alaskans who did not graduate high school, smoking rates decreased by 24.9 percent, and rates among adults with a college degree decreased by 55.2 percent.

Lawmakers should refrain from enacting further increases in cigarette taxes given their disproportionate effect on low-income and low-educated persons, while failing to reduce smoking rates.



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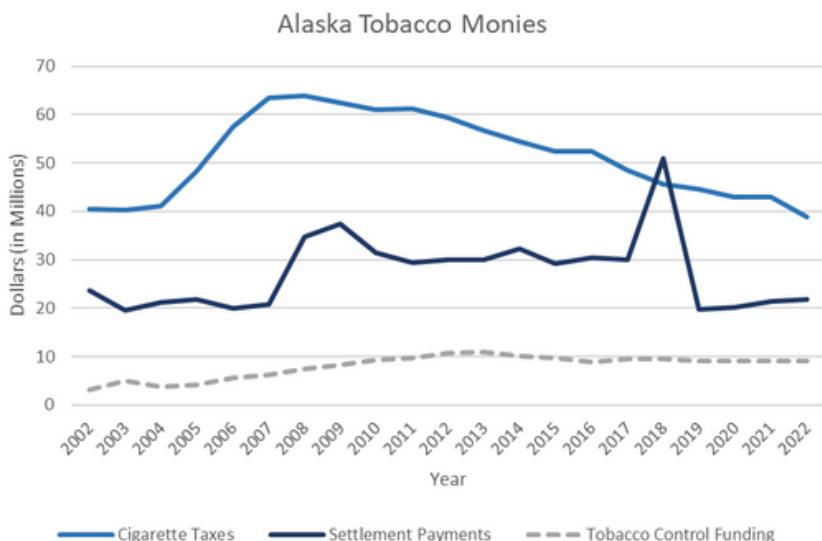
Tobacco Monies

Each year, states receive billions of dollars borne out of the lungs of persons who smoke. This revenue includes excise cigarette taxes and settlement payments. Yet, each year, states spend minuscule amounts of tobacco-related monies on programs to help adults quit smoking and prevent youth use.

In 2022, the Last Frontier collected \$38.9 million in state excise tax revenue from combustible cigarettes. This was a 9.3 percent decrease from 2021's \$42.9 million, or \$4 million less. Between 2002 and 2022, Alaska collected nearly \$1 billion in cigarette taxes.

Since 2000, Alaska has collected annual payments from tobacco manufacturers based on the percentage of cigarettes and tobacco products sold in the state in that year. Alaska collected \$21.9 million in settlement payments in 2022, a 2.3 percent increase from 2021's \$21.4 million, or an additional \$500,000. Since 2002, the Last Frontier collected more than \$576 million in tobacco settlement payments.

While Alaska collected an estimated \$60.8 million in tobacco-related monies in 2022, the state allocated only \$9.1 million in state funding towards tobacco control programs, including cessation, education, and youth prevention efforts, which was a 0 percent change in funding from 2021's \$9.1 million. This amounts to 23.4 percent of taxes and 41.6 percent of settlement payments. In 2022, for every \$1 the state received in tobacco monies, it spent only \$0.15 on tobacco control efforts.



References

1. Data on adult smoking rates comes from the Centers for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey including sections on "Demographics - Race," "Tobacco Use - All Categories," and "E-Cigarette Use." Accessed November, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.
2. Data on race and age was compiled using population data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>) and Demographic data from the CDC to cross reference the racial population. Then, data from Smoking and Race, and E-Cigarettes and Age, was used to determine the percent of adults who were smoking in 2022.
3. Data on youth tobacco and vapor product use comes from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, accessed in November, 2023. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/surveys/nyts/index.htm.
4. Data on tax information comes from Orzechowski and Walker, "The Tax Burden on Tobacco Historical Compilation Volume 57, 2022. Print.
5. Data on tobacco settlement payments is from Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, "Actual Annual Tobacco Settlement Payments Received by the States, 1998-2022." Accessed November, 2023. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0365.pdf>.
6. Data on tobacco control funding is from Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, "Appendix A: A History of Spending for State Tobacco Prevention Programs," Accessed November, 2023. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0209.pdf>.