

# Tobacco Harm Reduction 101

## Alaska 2025

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 2023, 88,359 Alaska adults (15.3 percent) were currently smoking. This is a 3.8 percent decrease from 2022 and represents 3,036 fewer adults smoking.
- Among all smoking adults in Alaska in 2023, 6.4 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 41.6 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 39.2 percent were 45 to 64 years old, and 12.8 percent were 65 years or older.
- Among all adults earning \$25,000 or less in 2023, 36.6 percent were currently smoking compared to 9 percent of adults earning \$50,000 or more.
- Among all smoking adults in Alaska in 2023, 46.6 percent were White, 29 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native, 11.9 percent were Multiracial, 4.9 percent were Hispanic, 3.1 percent were Black, 2.4 percent were Asian, and 2.1 percent were adults identifying as “Other.”
- In 2023, 59,137 Alaska adults (10.6 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 55.9 percent increase from 2022 and represents 21,133 additional adults vaping.
- Among all vaping adults in Alaska in 2023, 26.7 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 53.7 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 16.1 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 3.5 percent were 65 years or older.
- In 2023, for every one Alaska high school student who was smoking, more 33 adults were currently using cigarettes.
- In 2023, for every one Alaska high school student who was vaping, more than eight 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 2007 and 2023, smoking rates among Alaska adults aged 18 to 24 years old decreased by 66.4 percent.
- E-cigarette use has declined among Alaska young adults. Between 2022 and 2023, e-cigarette use among 18- to 24-year-olds decreased by 15.2 percent.
- Cigarette excise taxes in Alaska disproportionately impact low income and low education persons, while failing to significantly reduce smoking rates among that class.
- Among Alaska adults earning \$25,000 or less, smoking rates increased on average by 0.3 percent annually between 2003 and 2023, while rates among adults earning \$50,000 or more decreased by 2.4 percent during the same period.
- In 2023, low-income adults were 4.1 times more likely to smoke than high income earners.
- In 2023, among Alaska adults who did not graduate high school, 35.3 percent were currently smoking, while only 9 percent of college graduates were smoking.
- In 2023, adults lacking a high school diploma were 6.8 times more likely to smoke than college graduates.
- 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 2023, for every \$1 the state received in tobacco monies, it spent only \$0.11 on tobacco control efforts.

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### Adult Combustible & E-Cigarette Use

In 2023, according to data from the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 88,359 adults (or 15.3 percent of Alaskans) were currently smoking. This is a 3.8 percent decrease from 2022 when 15.9 percent reported current cigarette use. There were 3,036 fewer adults smoking in 2023 compared to 2022.

In 2023 (among all Alaska adults), 7.8 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 17.4 percent of 25–44-year-olds, 19.6 percent of 45–64-year-olds, and 9.8 percent of adults aged 65 years or older were currently smoking combustible cigarettes. Among all smoking adults in 2023, 6.4 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 41.6 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 39.2 percent were 45 to 64 years old, and 12.8 percent were 65 years or older.

Between 2022 and 2023, smoking rates among 18- to 24-year-olds decreased by 21.2 percent and among 25–44-year-olds by 9.4 percent. Smoking rates increased among 45–64-year-olds by 3.2 percent and among adults aged 65 years or older by 11.4 percent.

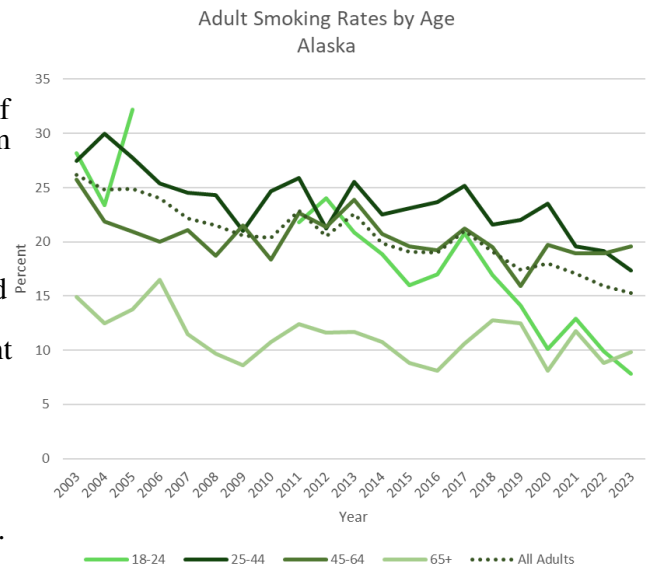
Among all adults earning \$25,000 annually or less in 2023, more than one-third (36.6 percent) reported currently smoking, compared to 9 percent of adults who earned \$50,000 or more per year. Low-income adults were 4.1 times more likely to smoke.

In Alaska, American Indian or Alaska Native adults reported smoking at a greater percentage of their identified race at 32.4 percent. This is compared to 24 percent of adults identifying as “Other,” 23.4 percent of Multiracial adults, 13.9 percent of Black adults, 11.7 percent of White adults, 11.2 percent of Hispanic adults, and 6.4 percent of Asian adults.

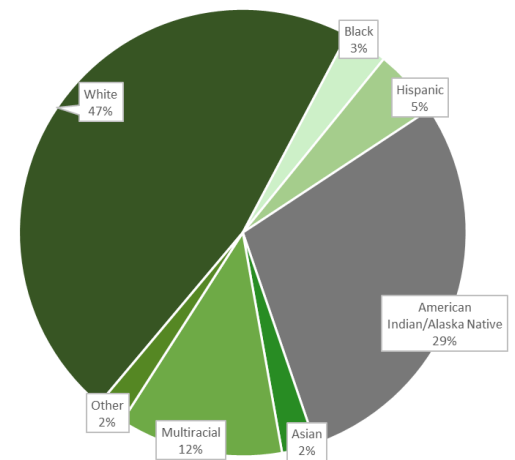
Yet, White adults made up a significantly larger percentage of Alaska’s total adult smoking population. In 2023, White adults accounted for 46.6 percent of the Alaska’s current smoking population, compared to American Indian/Alaska Native adults, who made up 29 percent. Multiracial adults accounted for 11.9 percent, Hispanic adults made up 4.9 percent, Black adults accounted for 3.1 percent, Asian adults made up 2.4 percent, and adults identifying as “Other” accounted for 2.1 percent of Alaska’s adult smoking population in 2023.

In 2023, an estimated 59,137 Alaska adults (or 10.6 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 55.9 percent increase from 2022 when 6.8 percent reported current e-cigarette use. There were an estimated 21,133 additional adults vaping in 2023 compared to 2022. Additionally, there has been a 158.5 percent increase in adults vaping between 2016 and 2023. Further, there were an additional 36,365 Alaska adults vaping in 2023 compared to 2016.

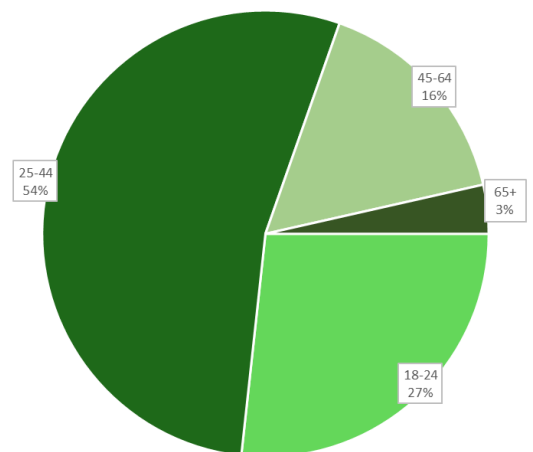
Among Alaska adults currently using e-cigarettes in 2023, 26.7 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 53.7 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 16.1 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 3.5 percent of current e-cigarette users in Alaska in 2023 were 65 years or older. Among adult e-cigarette users in Alaska in 2023, 73.3 percent were 25 years or older.



Percent of Adults Who Smoke, by Race  
Alaska 2023



Percent of Adults Who Vape, by Age  
Alaska 2023



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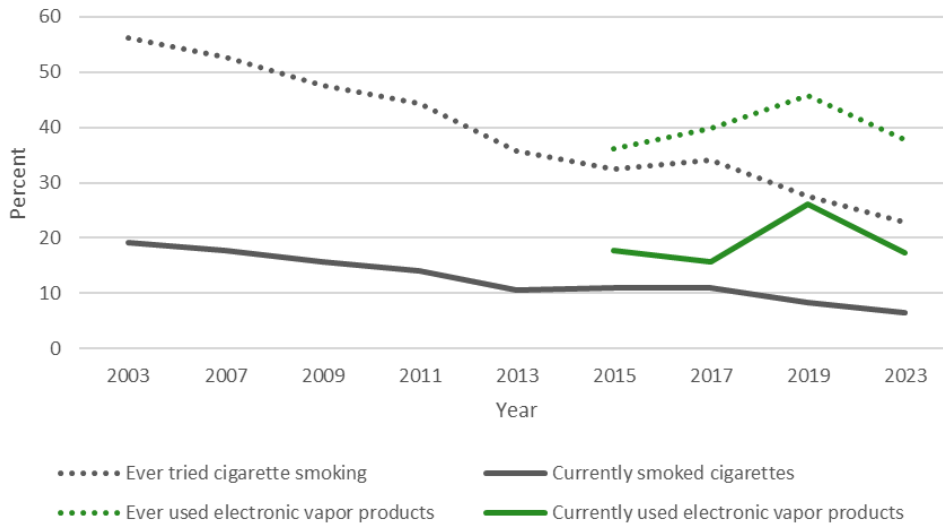
## Alaska 2025

### Youth Combustible Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use

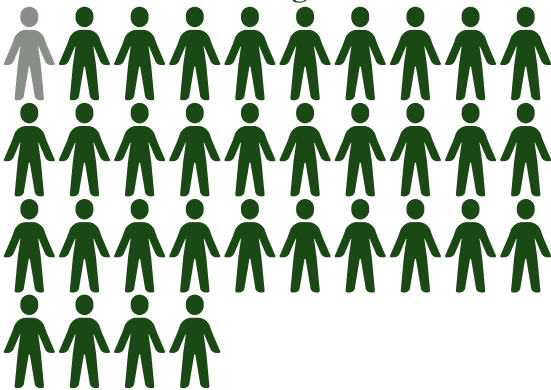
Youth smoking rates are at historic lows in the Last Frontier. In 2023, 22.8 percent of high school students reported ever trying combustible cigarettes, while 6.5 percent reported currently smoking, or having used the product on at least one occasion in the 30 days prior. In 2023, approximately 2,568 Alaska high school students were smoking, compared to an estimated 85,359 Alaska adults aged 18 and over who were currently smoking. For every one high schooler student smoking in 2023 in Alaska, more than 33 adults were currently smoking.

Youth vaping continues to decline in the Last Frontier. In 2023, 37.8 percent of Alaska high school students reported ever using an e-cigarette, and 17.3 percent reported current use. Between 2019 and 2023, ever-use of e-cigarettes decreased by 17.5 percent, while current use declined by 33.7 percent. In 2023, approximately 6,834 Alaska high school students were vaping, compared to 59,137 Alaska adults aged 18 and over who were currently vaping. For every one high schooler vaping in 2023 in Alaska, more than eight adults were using e-cigarettes.

High School Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use  
Alaska



### Youth to Adult Smoking Ratio Alaska 2023



### Youth to Adult Vaping Ratio Alaska 2023



**Key**

- = High School Student
- = Adult

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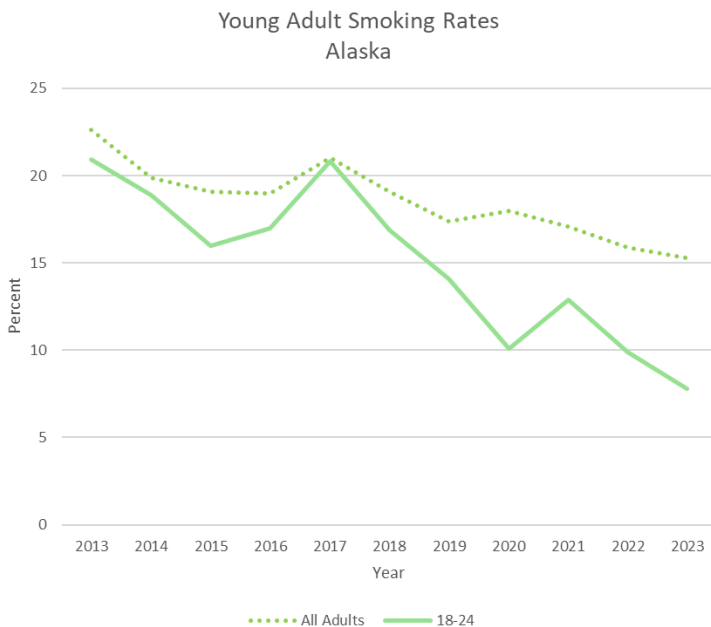
### Young Adult Cigarette Use

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

E-cigarettes first entered the U.S. market in 2007. While Alaska does not have data for 2007, in 2009, 23.2 percent of Alaskans aged 18 to 24 years old were currently smoking. Between 2007 and 2023, smoking rates among young adults in the Last Frontier decreased by 66.4 percent. Comparatively, among all Alaska adults, smoking rates decreased by 25.7 percent during the same period.

E-cigarette use has also decreased among young Alaska adults. In 2023, 15.6 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were currently using e-cigarettes, which was a 15.2 percent decrease from 2022.

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



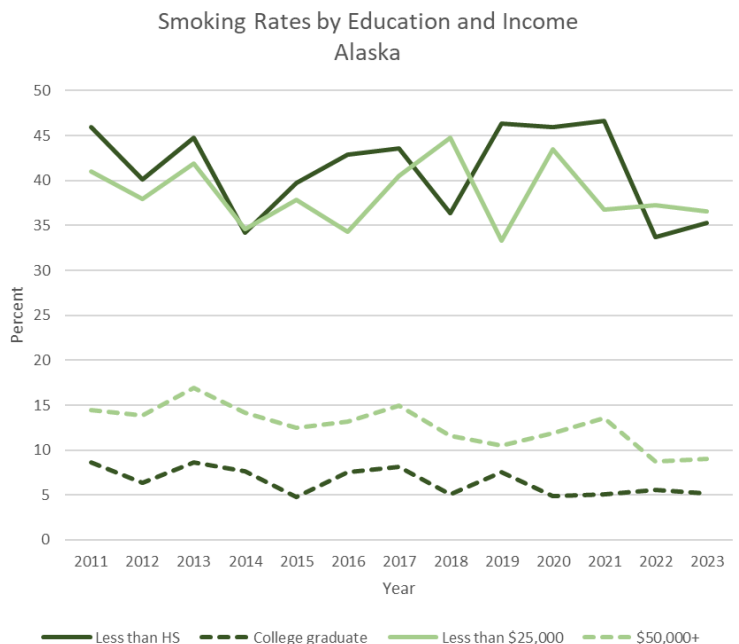
### Effects of Cigarette Excise Taxes

Alaska currently imposes a \$2.00-per-pack state cigarette excise tax. 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.

Among Alaska adults earning \$25,000 or less, smoking rates increased on average by 0.3 percent annually between 2003 and 2023, while rates among adults earning \$50,000 or more decreased by 2.4 percent during the same period. In 2023, low-income adults were 4.1 times more likely to smoke than high income earners.

Among Alaskans who did not graduate high school, 35.3 percent were currently smoking in 2023, compared to 9 percent of college graduates who were smoking. In 2023, adults lacking a high school diploma were 6.8 times more likely to smoke than college graduates.

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



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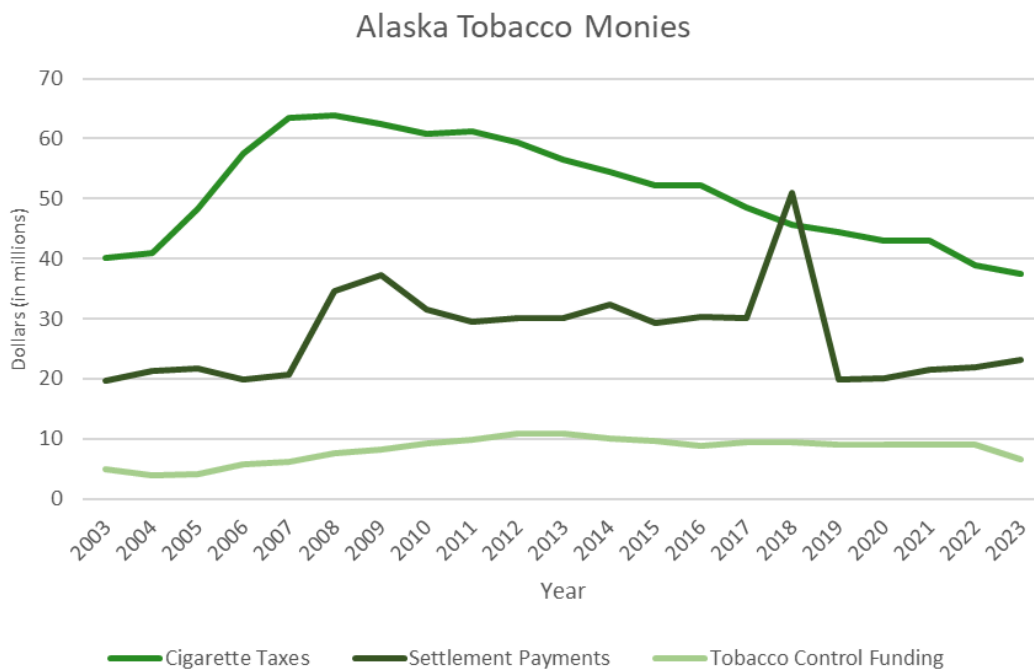
### Tobacco Monies

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 miniscule amounts of tobacco-related monies on programs to help adults quit smoking and prevent youth use.

In 2023, the Last Frontier collected \$37.5 million in state excise tax revenue from combustible cigarettes. This was a 3.6 percent decrease from 2022's \$38.9 million, or \$1.4 million less. Between 2003 and 2023, Alaska collected more than \$1 billion in cigarette taxes.

Since the 2000s, Alaska collected annual payments from tobacco manufacturers based on the percentage of cigarettes and tobacco products sold in the state in that year. Alaska collected \$23.2 million in settlement payments in 2023, a 5.9 percent increase from 2022's \$21.9 million, or an additional \$1.3 million. Since 2003, the Last Frontier collected an estimated \$575.5 million in tobacco settlement payments.

While Alaska collected \$60.7 million in tobacco-related monies in 2023, the state allocated only \$6.5 million in state funding towards tobacco control programs, including cessation, education, and youth prevention efforts, which was a 28.6 percent decrease in funding from 2022, or \$100,000 less. This amounts to 17.3 percent of taxes and 28 percent of settlement payments. In 2023, for every \$1 the state received in tobacco monies, it spent only \$0.11 on tobacco control efforts. Between 2003 and 2023, Alaska collected more than \$1.6 billion tobacco monies, yet spent only \$171.8 million (or 10.4 percent) on tobacco control efforts during the same period.



### 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 August, 2024. <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 2023.
3. Data on youth tobacco and vapor product use comes from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Accessed December, 2024. <https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/>.
4. Data on tax information comes from Orzechowski and Walker, "The Tax Burden on Tobacco Historical Compilation Volume 59, 2024, Print.
5. Data on tobacco settlement payments is from Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, "Actual Annual Tobacco Settlement Payments Received by the States, 1998-2024." Accessed December, 2024. <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/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." Accessed December, 2024, <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0209.pdf>.