

Tobacco Harm Reduction 101

New Jersey 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 Garden State. This information also includes data on youth use, impacts of e-cigarettes and analyses of existing tobacco monies.

Key Points:

- In 2023, 662,530 New Jersey adults (9.1 percent) were currently smoking. This is a 12.5 percent decrease from 2022 and represents 90,753 fewer adults smoking.
- Among all smoking adults in New Jersey in 2023, 8.8 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 39.8 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 33.6 percent were 45 to 64 years old, and 17.8 percent were 65 years or older.
- Among all adults earning \$25,000 or less in 2023, 16.1 percent were currently smoking compared to 7.3 percent of adults earning \$50,000 or more.
- Among all smoking adults in New Jersey in 2023, 61.9 percent were White, 17.1 percent were Hispanic, 14 percent were Black, 3.8 percent were Asian, 2 percent were adults who identified as “Other,” and 1.3 percent were Multiracial.
- In 2023, 458,675 New Jersey adults (6.3 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 3.3 percent increase from 2022 and represents 16,845 additional adults vaping.
- Among all vaping adults in New Jersey in 2023, 28.4 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 51 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 17.6 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 2.9 percent were 65 years or older.
- In 2023, for every one New Jersey high school student who was smoking, more than 55 adults were currently using cigarettes.
- In 2023, for every one New Jersey high school student who was vaping, more than five 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 New Jersey adults aged 18 to 24 years old decreased by 64.2 percent.
- E-cigarette use has remained stable among New Jersey young adults. Between 2022 and 2023, e-cigarette use among 18- to 24-year-olds increased by only 8.5 percent.
- Cigarette excise taxes in New Jersey disproportionately impact low income and low education persons, while failing to significantly reduce smoking rates among that class.
- Among New Jersey adults earning \$25,000 or less, smoking rates decreased on average by 1.3 percent annually between 2003 and 2023, while rates among adults earning \$50,000 or more decreased by 3.8 percent during the same period.
- In 2023, low-income adults were 2.2 times more likely to smoke than high income earners.
- In 2023, among New Jersey adults who did not graduate high school, 17 percent were currently smoking, while only 4.2 percent of college graduates were smoking.
- In 2023, adults lacking a high school diploma were four times more likely to smoke than college graduates.
- New Jersey 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 less than \$0.01 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 662,530 adults (or 9.1 percent of New Jerseyans) were currently smoking. This is a 12.5 percent decrease from 2022 when 10.4 percent reported current cigarette use. There were 90,753 fewer adults smoking in 2023 compared to 2022.

In 2023 (among all New Jersey adults), 6.9 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 11.3 percent of 25–44-year-olds, 9.3 percent of 45–64-year-olds, and 7 percent of adults aged 65 years or older were currently smoking combustible cigarettes. Among all smoking adults in 2023, 8.8 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 39.8 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 33.6 percent were 45 to 64 years old, and 17.8 percent were 65 years or older.

Between 2022 and 2023, smoking rates decreased among 25–44-year-olds by 11 percent, and among 45–64-year-olds by 27.6 percent. Smoking rates increased among 18- to 24-year-olds by 56.8 percent, and among adults aged 65 years or older by 4.5 percent.

Among all adults earning \$25,000 annually or less in 2023, 16.1 percent reported currently smoking, compared to 7.3 percent of adults who earned \$50,000 or more per year. Low-income adults were 2.2 times more likely to smoke.

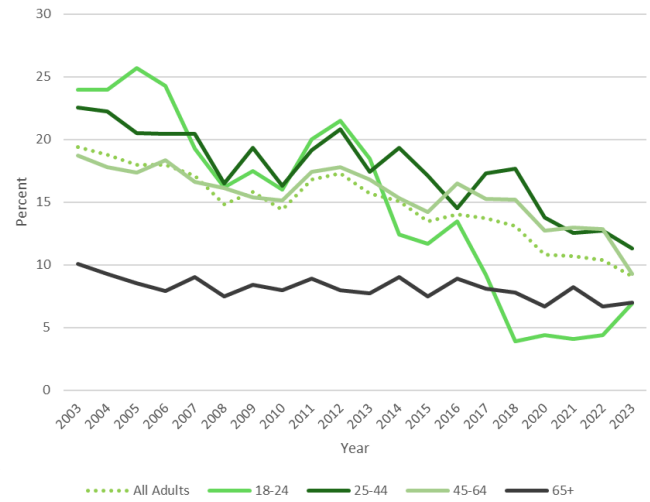
In New Jersey, adults identifying as “Other” reported smoking at a greater percentage of their identified race at 11.2 percent. This is compared to 10.8 percent of White adults, 10.3 percent of Black adults, 7.7 percent of Multiracial adults, 7.3 percent of Hispanic adults, and 3.3 percent of Asian adults.

Yet, White adults made up a significantly larger percentage of New Jersey’s total adult smoking population. In 2023, White adults accounted for 61.9 percent of New Jersey’s current smoking population, compared to adults identifying as “Other,” who made up 2 percent. Hispanic adults accounted for 17.1 percent, Black adults made up 14 percent, Asian adults accounted for 3.8 percent, and Multiracial adults made up 1.3 percent of New Jersey’s adult smoking population in 2023.

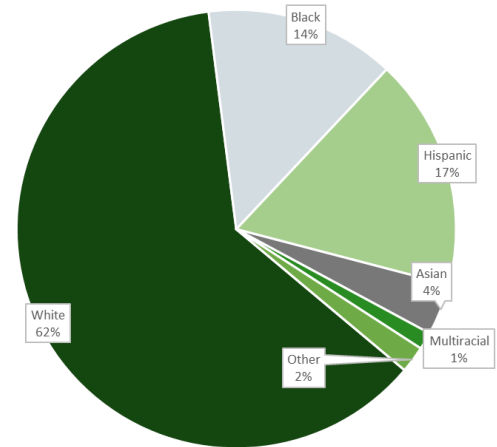
In 2023, an estimated 458,675 New Jersey adults (or 6.3 percent) were currently using e-cigarettes. This is a 3.3 percent increase from 2022 when 6.1 percent reported current e-cigarette use. There were an estimated 16,845 additional adults vaping in 2023 compared to 2022. There has been a 70.3 percent increase in adults vaping between 2016 and 2023. Further, there were an additional 203,330 New Jersey adults vaping in 2023 compared to 2016.

Among New Jersey adults currently using e-cigarettes in 2023, 28.4 percent were 18 to 24 years old, 51 percent were 25 to 44 years old, 17.6 percent were 45 to 64 years old and 2.9 percent were 65 years or older. Among adult e-cigarette users in New Jersey in 2023, 71.6 percent were 25 years or older.

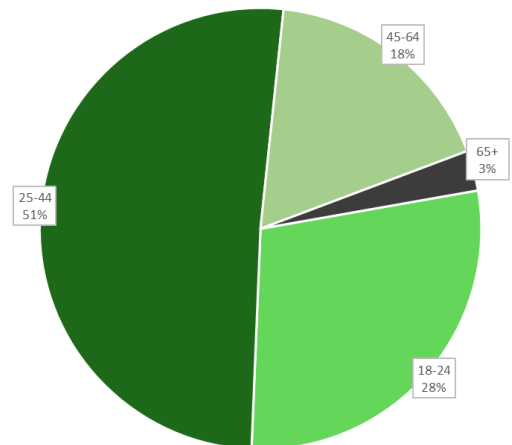
Adult Smoking Rates by Age
New Jersey



Percent of Adults Who Smoke, by Race
New Jersey 2023



Percent of Adults Who Vape, by Age
New Jersey 2023



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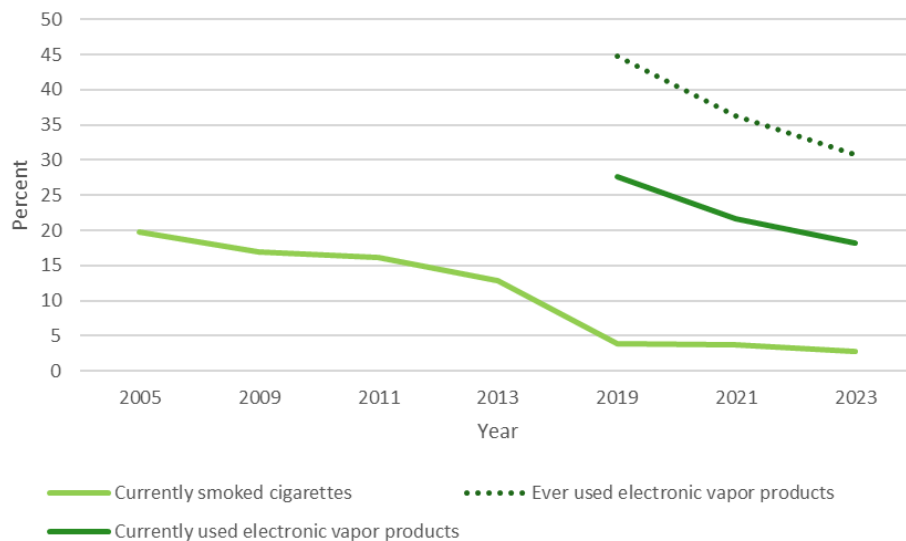
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Youth Combustible Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use

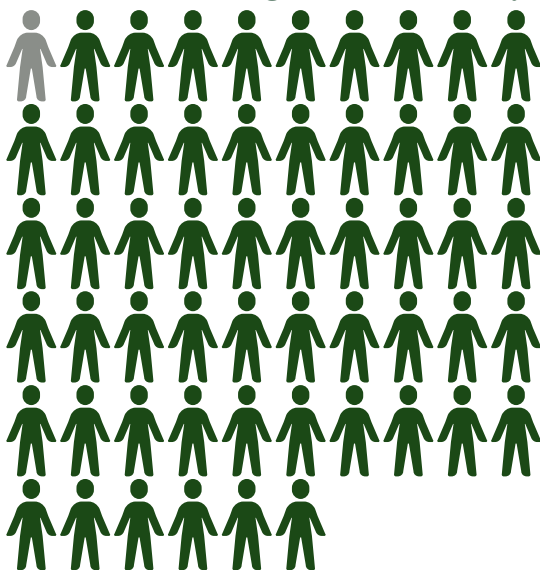
Youth smoking rates are at historic lows in the Garden State. In 2023, 2.8 percent of high school students reported currently smoking cigarettes, or having used the product on at least one occasion in the 30 days prior. In 2023, approximately 11,922 New Jersey high school students were smoking, compared to an estimated 662,530 New Jersey adults aged 18 and over who were currently smoking. For every one high school student smoking in 2023 in New Jersey, more than 55 adults were currently smoking.

Youth vaping continues to decline in the Garden State. In 2023, 30.7 percent of New Jersey high school students reported ever using an e-cigarette, and 18.2 percent reported current use. Between 2019 and 2023, ever-use of e-cigarettes decreased by 31.3 percent, while current use declined by 34.1 percent. In 2023, approximately 77,496 New Jersey high school students were vaping, compared to 458,675 New Jersey adults aged 18 and over who were currently vaping. For every one high schooler vaping in 2023 in New Jersey, more than five adults were using e-cigarettes.

High School Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use
New Jersey





Youth to Adult Smoking Ratio New Jersey 2023



Youth to Adult Vaping Ratio New Jersey 2023



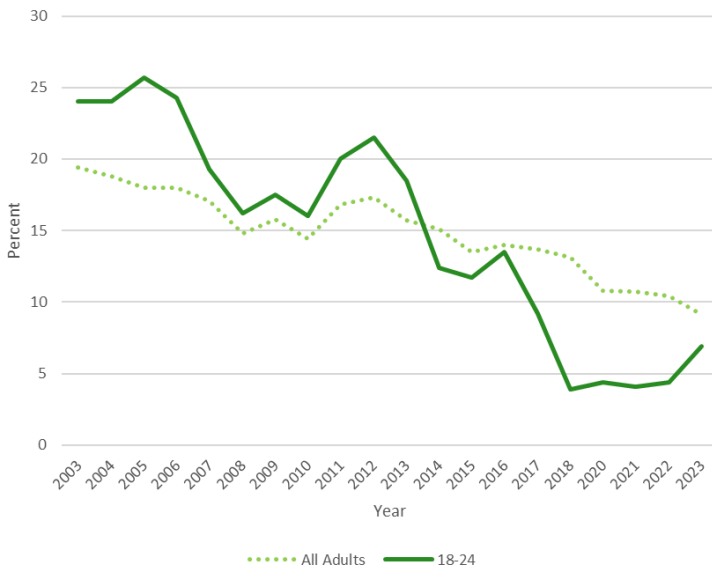
Key

-  = High School Student
-  = Adult

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Young Adult Smoking Rates
New Jersey



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, when 19.3 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were currently smoking. Between 2007 and 2023, smoking rates among young adults in the Garden State decreased by 64.2 percent. Comparatively, among all New Jersey adults, smoking rates decreased by 46.9 percent during the same period.

E-cigarette use has also remained stable among young New Jersey adults. In 2023, 15.3 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were currently using e-cigarettes, which was an 8.5 percent increase 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

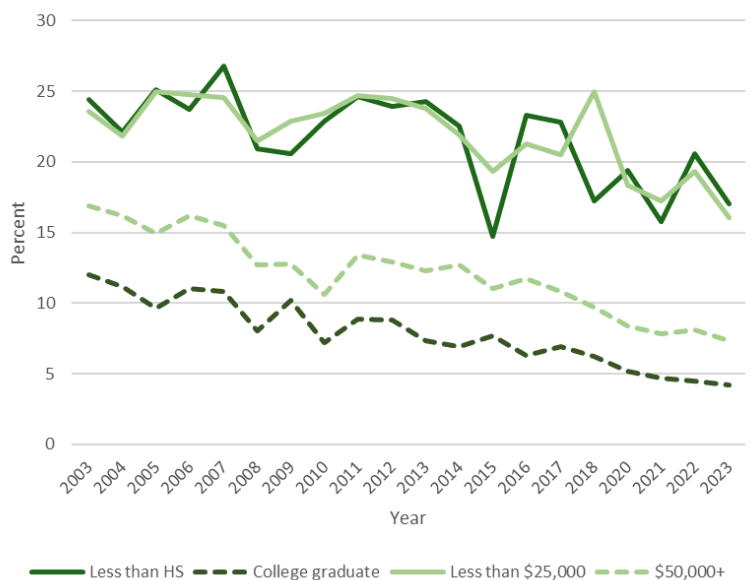
New Jersey currently imposes a \$2.70-per-pack state cigarette excise tax. Lawmakers often justify excise taxes on cigarettes to deter persons from using combustible cigarettes. These taxes not only disproportionately harm lower income and lower educated adults; the taxes also fail to significantly reduce smoking rates among those persons.

Among New Jersey adults earning \$25,000 or less, smoking rates decreased on average by 1.3 percent annually between 2003 and 2023, while rates among adults earning \$50,000 or more decreased by 3.8 percent during the same period. In 2023, low-income adults were 2.2 times more likely to smoke than high income earners.

Among New Jerseyans who did not graduate high school, 17 percent were currently smoking in 2023, compared to 4.2 percent of college graduates who were smoking. In 2023, adults lacking a high school diploma were four 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.

Adult Smoking Rates by Education and Income
New Jersey



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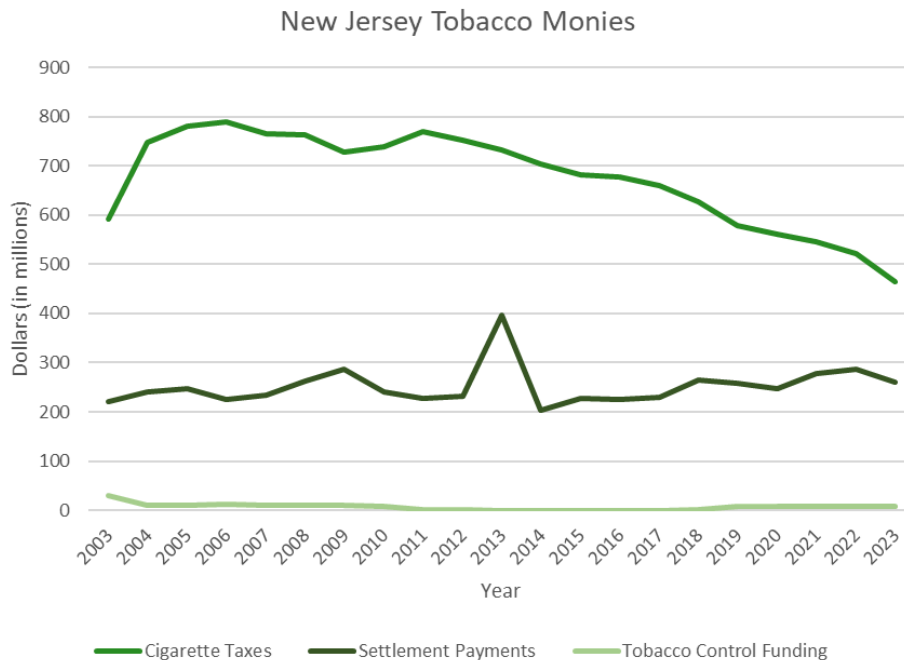
Tobacco Monies

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 Garden State collected \$456.1 million in state excise tax revenue from combustible cigarettes. This was a 10.8 percent decrease from 2022's \$521.2 million, or \$56.1 million less. Between 2003 and 2023, New Jersey collected more than \$14.1 billion in cigarette taxes.

Since the 2000s, New Jersey collected annual payments from tobacco manufacturers based on the percentage of cigarettes and tobacco products sold in the state in that year, after successfully suing manufacturers for smoking-related health care costs. New Jersey collected \$259.7 million in settlement payments in 2023, a 9.3 percent decrease from 2022's \$286.2 million, or \$26.5 million less. Since 2003, the Garden State collected more than \$5.2 billion in tobacco settlement payments.

While New Jersey collected \$724.8 million in tobacco-related monies in 2023, the state allocated only \$7.1 million in state funding towards tobacco control programs, including cessation, education, and youth prevention efforts, which was a 4.1 percent decrease in funding from 2022, or \$300,000 less. This amounts to 1.5 percent of taxes and 2.7 percent of settlement payments. In 2023, for every \$1 the state received in tobacco monies, it spent less than \$0.01 on tobacco control efforts. Between 2003 and 2023, New Jersey collected more than \$19.4 billion tobacco monies, yet spent only \$140.7 million (or 0.7 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>.