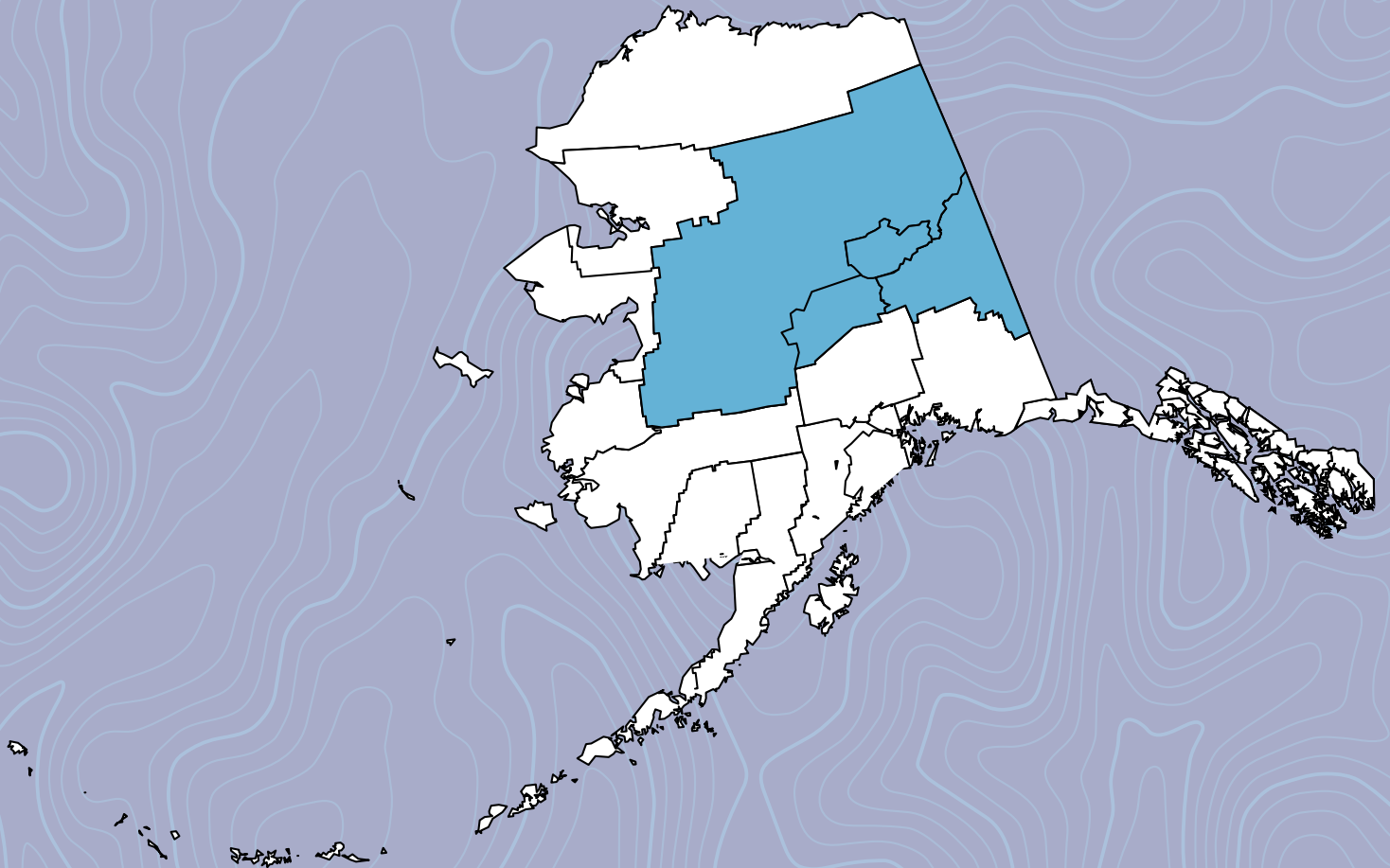


# ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL REGIONAL PROFILE: **INTERIOR**



**FY2022**

# Tobacco Prevention and Control Regional Profile: Interior Region

December 2022

Produced by the Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program through a contract with Program Design and Evaluation Services, Multnomah County Health Department and Oregon Public Health Division.

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# Purpose

## ***Why tobacco prevention and control matters***

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified reducing tobacco use as one of the most important “winnable battles” in public health. A winnable battle is a priority with large impacts on health and known, effective strategies to address the priority.<sup>1</sup>
- Tobacco use can lead to death earlier than expected, as well as millions of dollars in avoidable medical care costs.
- Quitting the use of all tobacco products is the best thing that Alaska tobacco users can do to improve their health and the health of those around them.

## ***How tobacco prevention and control works***

The CDC offers guidance to states about how to reduce tobacco use and related health concerns through tobacco prevention and control programs, described in *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, 2014*.<sup>2</sup> These best practices include comprehensive, sustained statewide tobacco control interventions that have been shown to reduce smoking rates, tobacco-related deaths, and diseases caused by smoking.

The State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program is designed as recommended in CDC’s best practices, with the following program components:<sup>3</sup> state and community interventions; mass-reach health communication interventions; cessation interventions; surveillance and evaluation; and infrastructure, administration, and management. Within this structure, the program uses multiple interventions shown to work: a free telephone line to help people quit tobacco use with coaching and nicotine replacement therapy; a marketing campaign designed to prevent and reduce tobacco use; and grants that promote tobacco-free policies in communities, schools, and health care organizations. These program elements combine to address the goals of the TPC Program:

1. prevent youth from starting tobacco use
2. protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke
3. promote quitting for tobacco users
4. identify and eliminate differences in tobacco use and related health problems between groups of people (sometimes called “inequities”)

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Winnable Battles*  
[https://www.cdc.gov/about/resources/pdf/WBGeneralFAQs\\_102010.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/about/resources/pdf/WBGeneralFAQs_102010.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. CDC *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014*.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best\\_practices/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/index.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program, *FY2019 Annual Report*  
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/publications.aspx>

## ***How to use this report***

TPC compiles regional profiles because tobacco use, and factors related to tobacco use may vary considerably by region. Programs that are planned based on good information about community settings and the people who live there may be more effective than programs planned based on statewide information alone. Program planners should use data from this report in combination with other sources, including the knowledge of people from communities they are seeking to serve.

This report summarizes available information that is meaningful for planning tobacco prevention and control efforts for individuals, communities, and the systems that serve them. Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report specifically align with goals of the TPC Program.

- **Section 1. Region Overview:** Describes the region, including the communities, schools and people who live there.
- **Section 2. Measures of Tobacco Use:** Describes the current use of different tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, vaping products) among adults and youth.
- **Section 3. Preventing Youth Use:** Shows that different groups of young people face higher or lower chances of using tobacco, and possible reasons for those differences; describes what policies are in place to prevent youth from starting to use.
- **Section 4. Helping People Quit:** Describes the percentage of adult tobacco users who are trying to quit and who have successfully quit.
- **Section 5. Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke:** Shows the percentage of adults and youth who are exposed to secondhand smoke and describes what policies are in place that protect people from exposure.
- **Appendices:** Technical documentation is provided to give additional detail about the information provided in this report. Information for all Alaska regions is included. Appendices are available as a separate report alongside regional reports posted on the TPC Program website. Appendix A includes tables of data for all regions and the state, with specific language from survey questions. Appendix B describes some of the analytical methods in detail (including how race and other variables are determined). Appendix C provides more detail about the data sources.

# Methods

## Data sources

This report includes information from three primary Alaska public health data sources. These sources are summarized in Table 1, and more information is included in the Appendix.

**Table 1:** Summary of key data sources used for this report

<b>Data Source (Abbreviation for report)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey <b>(AK YRBS)</b>	<p>YRBS data are collected from students in grades 9-12 using anonymous and voluntary school-based questionnaires. The survey is conducted in the spring of odd-numbered years and participation requires parental consent. The YRBS includes questions about tobacco use and related factors. Statewide estimates are from a sample of traditional high schools across the state; regional estimates are based on all participating traditional high schools in the region. Data from alternative schools and correctional schools are not included in this report. The 2021 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was canceled due to the challenges Alaska school districts and schools faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the most recent YRBS data is from 2019. The next Alaska YRBS is scheduled for the 2022-2023 school year.</p> <p>In 2019, four of the Interior Region’s ten school districts participated: Denali Borough Schools, Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools, Iditarod Area Schools, Tanana Schools.</p>
Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System <b>(AK BRFSS)</b>	<p>BRFSS data are collected from adults ages 18 and older through an anonymous telephone survey. It is coordinated and sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and implemented in all states. BRFSS provides annual representative data in Alaska about adult health behaviors, preventative health practices, and chronic conditions.</p> <p>Alaska has historically added multiple questions about tobacco use to the state’s survey. Data on tobacco product use are from related questions, which were asked of all respondents; estimates are reported for each available year between 2011-2020. Data on secondhand smoke and some quitting variables are from questions that were asked of a subset of respondents who received the dedicated tobacco questionnaire, some questions were asked on alternating or limited years; generally, the 3 most recent years of available data are combined (for example, 2018-2020) to provide enough data for regional-level reporting.</p>
Alaska Database for Policies on Tobacco <b>(ADAPT)</b>	<p>The Alaska TPC Program collects and maintains information on tobacco-related policies using the ADAPT database. Policies monitored include smokefree tribal resolutions, community ordinances, multi-unit housing policies, healthcare policies, K-12 school district policies, secondary education policies, and taxes. Policies are evaluated and scored in comparison to a model policy, by policy type.</p> <p>K-12 policies were systematically updated outside of ADAPT in June 2022. Other local policy information in this report was current in ADAPT as of June 2022.</p>

In addition to the primary data sources listed in Table 1, which appear in multiple sections of this report, other data sources that are referenced only once are cited as they appear in the text (for example, population data and Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line data). For all data sources in this report, people who report being American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) are described using the term “Alaska Native” because this reflects the majority of that population; further detail about how race is collected and reported for each dataset is available in the Appendix.

## Analytic approaches

*Survey estimates.* A great deal of this report relies on data collected through surveys. These data are referred to as “estimates” because we have responses from only a sample of the population and not the whole population. We match respondent characteristics such as age, gender, and race to known characteristics of the state population, and statistically adjust the estimates to represent the true population. Sometimes this is called “weighting” the data. For example, more women than men usually participate in surveys, so more survey respondents are women although the actual populations of women and men are about equal in size. Since women often report different information on surveys than men, statistical processes are used to create estimates that balance the answers from women and men equally when reporting on the whole population.

*Confidence intervals.* Our report uses 95% confidence intervals, especially when describing results from survey data. Confidence intervals show a range that is likely to contain the true value for the population; we can be 95% sure (95 out of 100 times) that the range of the interval contains the “true value” of the indicator being measured. Confidence intervals also help to compare whether results from one group are significantly different from another group: when confidence intervals for two estimates in the same data system do not overlap, those two estimates are “significantly” different from one another – meaning we can be reasonably sure there is a true difference. In this report, confidence intervals are shown visually in different ways: as shaded areas around lines in trend graphs, as “whiskers” around the estimates in bar graphs, and as a numeric range in tables. Although they look different, they mean the same thing.

Larger samples typically have smaller, more precise confidence intervals. Figures in this report that show trends in tobacco product use for the state and region show confidence intervals for state-level data only, in order to make the figures easier to view; regional confidence intervals will always be wider or larger. The confidence intervals for regional data are included in the technical appendix tables for this report. Whenever regional estimates are statistically different from the state based on formal statistical comparisons, that is noted in the text describing the data or figure. Although differences between the state and region may look large, they are not statistically significant unless noted in the text – in other words, they may be just chance differences.

*Suppression of small numbers.* Estimates from surveys with small numbers are suppressed based on guidelines from the State of Alaska. For BRFSS, a minimum denominator of 50 unweighted respondents is required for reporting; for YRBS, a minimum of 100 is required. Estimates considered statistically unstable may be flagged when the relative standard error is >30% and flagged “very unstable” when the relative standard error is >50%. Estimates may be suppressed when the unweighted count in the numerator is <5.

*Rounded estimates for subgroups.* Survey data shown in figures or tables within the main body of this report are rounded to whole numbers. This is because survey estimates for smaller numbers of people in subgroups often have wider confidence intervals, so rounded estimates are one way of showing that subgroup estimates are less precise than estimates for the whole population. All estimates (including for subgroups) are reported to one decimal place, with confidence intervals, in the Appendix.

## Limitations

*Local area data.* Stakeholders working in tobacco control within local communities would likely be interested in more specific data about borough or census areas, cities, and villages. Most surveys do not have enough respondents to report local-level results. This report was designed to provide as much data as possible at the regional level, while maintaining high data quality. Some data may be available at a local level but not included in this report, because of concerns about confidentiality. For example, individual school data may be available and examined in partnership with school administrators, but it is not published in this report because it could contain identifiable information.

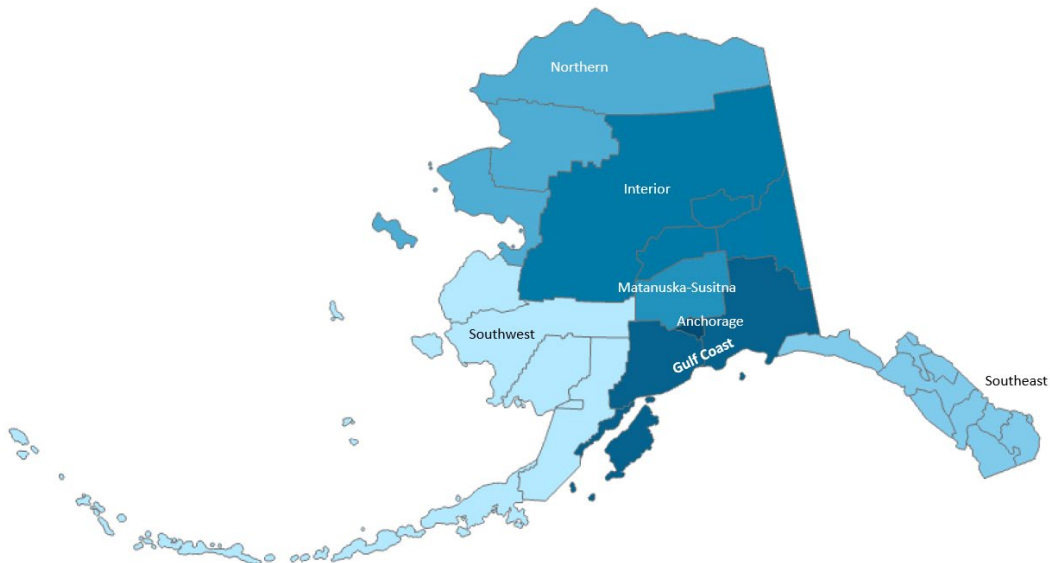
*YRBS regional data.* Official state estimates for YRBS data are based on a scientifically selected statewide sample of schools and students. Regional data include a combination of the scientific statewide sample, and schools in districts that volunteered to participate as part of a local sample. For this reason, regional estimates may not be generalizable to all students in the region.



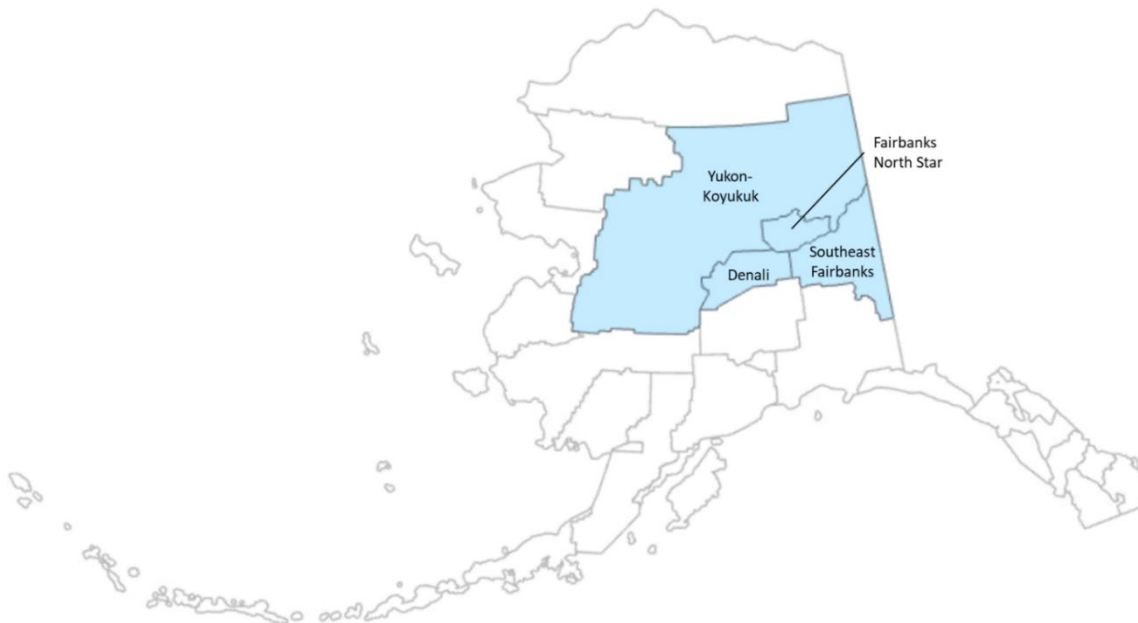
## Section 1. Region Overview

This report includes information about the Interior Public Health Region. This region is made up of the Denali Borough, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area, and the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area.

**Figure 1:** Alaska has seven Public Health Regions.



**Figure 2:** There are four Borough and Census Areas in the Interior Region.



**Table 2 series:** There are some differences in populations by subregion in the Interior Region.

Geographic area	Total number	Percentage per population	Number of households
State of Alaska	734,323		255,173
Interior Region	111,306	15% of state	41,069
Denali Borough	1,655	1% of region	726
Fairbanks North Star Borough	97,515	88% of region	36,199
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	6,881	6% of region	2,287
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	5,255	5% of region	1,857

**Table 2b:** Age distribution of people in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	% Adult	Median age
State of Alaska	74%	36.0
Interior Region	75%	35.0
Denali Borough	80%	43.1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	75%	34.6
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	74%	38.1
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	71%	37.4

**Table 2c:** Race/ethnicity of people in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	Alaska Native	Black	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	Hispanic*
State of Alaska	19%	5%	8%	2%	66%	7%
Interior Region	14%	6%	5%	1%	74%	7%
Denali Borough	8%	3%	6%	0%	83%	4%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	11%	6%	5%	1%	76%	7%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	15%	3%	3%	1%	77%	7%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	70%	2%	1%	0%	27%	3%

\*Hispanic ethnicity can be any race

**Table 2d:** Economic factors affecting people in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	Unemployment March 2022	Poverty 2020
State of Alaska	5%	10%
Interior Region	5%	8%
Denali Borough	15%	6%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	4%	7%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	4%	12%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	11%	21%

Sources: Table 2a, 2b, 2c, and unemployment in 2d: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; Table 2d poverty from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2016-2020, and 2020 federal poverty guidelines for Alaska. For more detail, see technical appendix for this report.

About 111,306 people lived in the Interior Region of Alaska in 2021, making up 15% of the state's population.

- A majority of the people and households in this region are in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (Table 2a).

- The median age in the region is approximately equal to the statewide population; people in the Fairbanks North Star Borough are younger than the state, and people in the Denali Borough are older than the state population (Table 2b).
- The percentage of the population that is Alaska Native varies widely between each of the region's borough or census areas, ranging from 8-70%. The Alaska Native population is lower than the state in the Denali, Fairbanks North Star, and Southeast Fairbanks subregions. A majority (70%) of people in Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area are Alaska Native. A majority (more than 70%) of people in Denali, Fairbanks North Star, and Southeast Fairbanks subregions are White race (Table 2c).
- For the Interior Region, unemployment was similar to the statewide percentage; within the region, unemployment was greater in the Denali and Yukon-Koyukuk subregions than in the Fairbanks North Star and Southeast Fairbanks subregions (Table 2d).
- Within the region, poverty was greater in the Southeast Fairbanks and Yukon-Koyukuk subregions than in the Denali and Fairbanks North Star subregions (Table 2d).

## ***Alaska Native Communities***

A variety of entities play a role in tobacco prevention and control in Alaska Native communities, establishing public policies, organizational rules, and practices for delivering services. There are 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska,<sup>4</sup> but unlike other tribes in the United States, Alaska Native tribes do not have a land base (e.g., reservations).<sup>5</sup> Instead, Alaska Native land ownership and governance occur through separate entities.

*Alaska Native Regional Corporations* were established when the US Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. ANCSA provided for the establishment of 12 regional corporations, owned by Alaska Native shareholders, to manage their lands. Each of the 12 regions also has an Alaska Native regional non-profit organization that provides social services and health care for Alaska Native people. These tribal healthcare systems play an important role in tobacco prevention and helping people quit.

Alaska's Public Health Regions do not align with Alaska Native regional corporations, so some corporations span across multiple public health regions. The Interior region overlaps with the following two ANCSA Alaska Native Regional Corporations and their related non-profit Alaska Native associations.<sup>6</sup>

- Ahtna, Incorporated; Copper River Native Association
- Doyon, Limited; Tanana Chiefs' Conference

*Alaska Native village corporations* are owned by Alaska Native Tribe shareholders from specific communities, managing those lands and passing community policies for the people in these areas. Actions can include tribal resolutions or local taxes. Tribal resolutions express the consensus positions of the tribe as an entity. Resolutions can be passed by tribal governments to implement policies within a tribe, or to indicate support for a broader political priority, such as the recent passage of Alaska's smokefree air law.

- There are about 40 federally recognized tribes in the Interior Region.

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<sup>4</sup> Federal Register Vol 85, No 20. January 30, 2020. Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 85 FR 5462. Document 2020-01707. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-01-30/pdf/2020-01707.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> With one exception: Metlakatla Indian Community's Annette Island Reserve was established as the only Indian reservation in Alaska, as the community opted out of ANCSA.

<sup>6</sup> Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Corporations, ANCSA Information. Retrieved from <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/corporations/ancsainformation.aspx>

## School Districts

**Table 3.** School district enrollment and student population varies within the Interior Region.

Geographic Area	Number students in grades K-12	% Alaska Native students (K-12)	Total high school students (grades 9-12)
State of Alaska	127,509	21%	48,652
Interior Region Schools	27,229	13%	10,220
Alaska Gateway Schools	387	57%	145
Delta/Greely Schools	879	2%	303
Denali Borough Schools	1,003	6%	397
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	12,199	8%	4,433
Galena City Schools	7,276	12%	2,646
Iditarod Area Schools	288	50%	79
Nenana City Schools	1,633	13%	725
Tanana Schools	26	92%	10
Yukon Flats Schools	206	98%	77
Yukon-Koyukuk Schools	3,332	23%	1,405

Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development: Assessment and Accountability, <http://education.alaska.gov/stats/> Enrollment is for October 1, 2021. Student race is based on self-identification according to five mutually exclusive categories, including American Indian/Alaska Native <https://education.alaska.gov/tls/Assessments/naep/orientation/l1s10006.htm>.

School systems play an important role in providing tobacco prevention education, establishing and enforcing policies that keep youth from using tobacco, implementing interventions for youth who experiment with tobacco, and limiting adults from modeling tobacco use behaviors and exposing others to secondhand smoke.

About 27,229 students were enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the ten Interior Region school districts during October 2021, making up about 21% of Alaska’s student population.

- About half of the region’s students were enrolled in Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools, 27% were in Galena City Schools, 12% in Yukon-Koyukuk Schools and 0.1-6% were in each of the other seven districts.
- The percentage of Alaska Native students varied by school district, from less than 10% in the Delta/Greely Schools, Denali Borough Schools, and Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools to over 90% in Tanana and Yukon Flats Schools.
- High school students, who are more likely to use tobacco or nicotine products than younger students, make up between 27-44% of the total student population in each school district in the region.

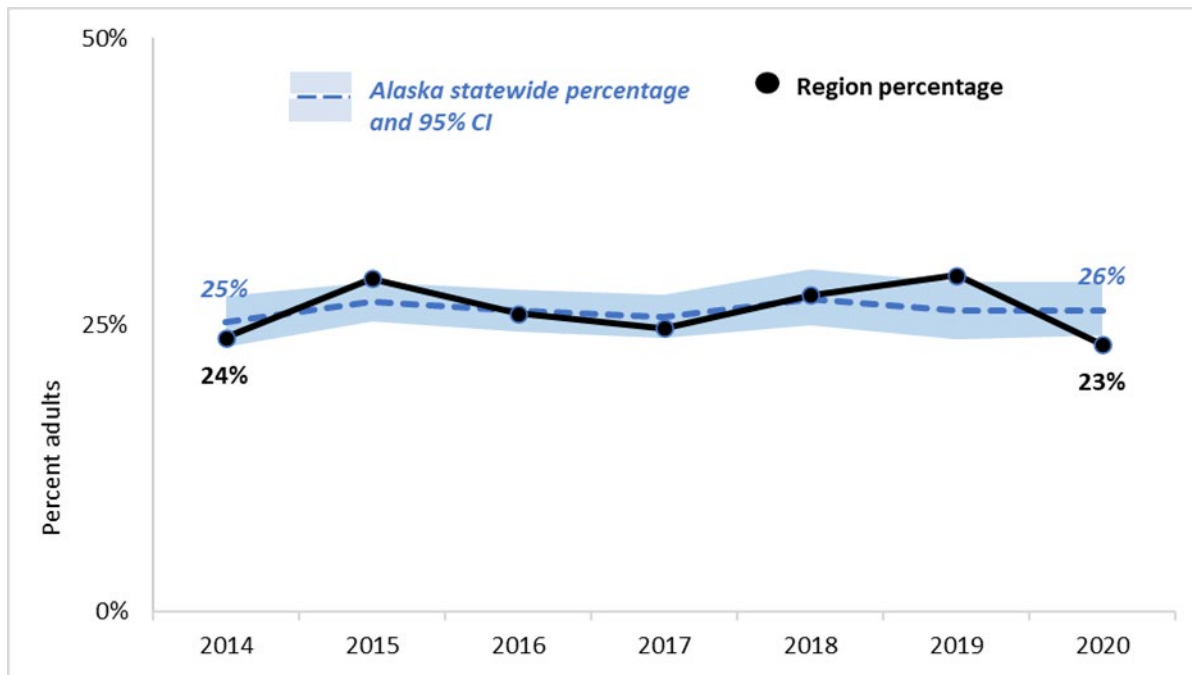
## Section 2. Tobacco Use

This section of the report describes tobacco and nicotine product use among adults and youth in the Interior Region and statewide.

### Adult Tobacco Use

#### Current use of any tobacco products

**Figure 3.** The percentage of adults who use any tobacco or nicotine product did not significantly change during the last 7 years in the Interior Region.



Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alaska statewide	25%	27%	26%	26%	28%	26%	26%
Interior Region	24%	29%	26%	25%	29%	29%	23%

Source: AK BRFSS. Includes the percentage of adults who used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (including iqmik), or electronic vapor products in the past 30 days.

Reducing the use of any tobacco or nicotine product among adults is an important priority in the State of Alaska. The specific *Healthy Alaskans 2030*<sup>7</sup> priority indicator that is monitored to assess progress is: *Reduce the percentage of adults who currently smoke cigarettes or use electronic vapor products or smokeless tobacco.*

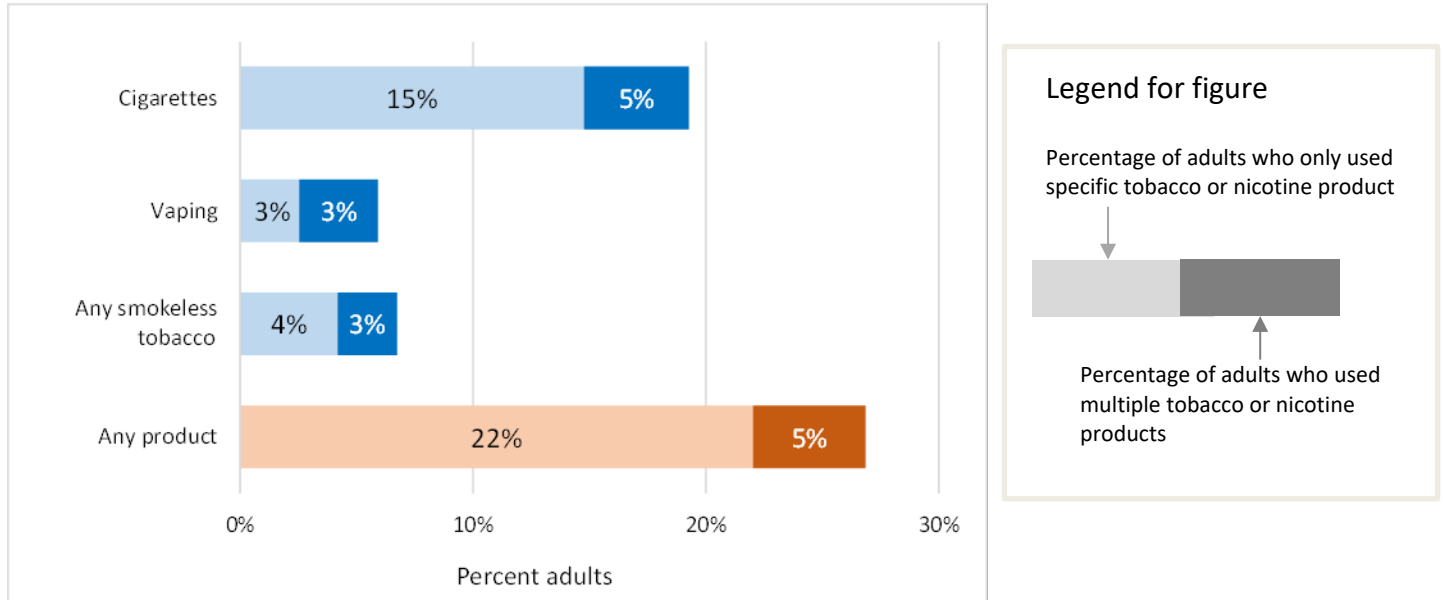
- Between 2014 and 2020, the percentage of adults statewide who currently use any tobacco or nicotine product remained stable. In 2020, 26% of adults statewide currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine.
- Between 2014 and 2020 the percentage of adults who use tobacco or nicotine in the Interior Region was also stable and was not significantly different from the statewide percentage. In 2020, 23% of adults in the Interior Region used tobacco or nicotine.

<sup>7</sup> For more information about Healthy Alaskans 2030, see <https://www.healthyalaskans.org/>

- Based on the most recent three-year average of adults who use tobacco or nicotine, there are more than 22,300 adults in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to using these products.

### Current use of specific tobacco products

**Figure 4.** Cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco product among adults in the Interior Region. Adults who vape are the most likely to also use other tobacco products.



Product type	Only one product used	Used multiple products	Used alone or in combination*	% who used every day in past 30 days, among adults (not shown in figure above)
Cigarettes	15%	5%	19%	14%
Vaping products	3%	3%	6%	2%
Any smokeless tobacco	4%	3%	7%	4%
<b>Any tobacco product</b>	22%	5%	<b>27%</b>	—

Source: AK BRFSS, 2018-2020. Everyday use for any tobacco product was not calculated.

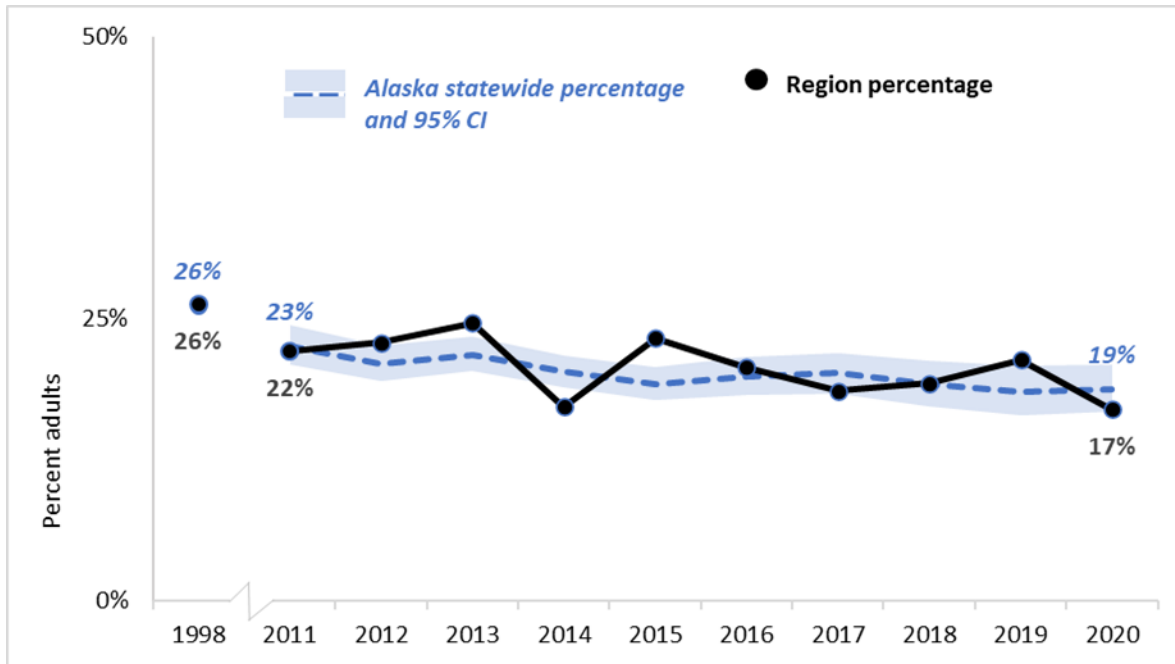
\*numbers may not match sum of “one product” and “multiple product” values due to rounding

In the Interior Region, 27% of adults currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine product in 2018-2020.

- Cigarettes are the most commonly used product. 19% of Interior Region adults smoked cigarettes. Fewer adults used electronic vaping products like e-cigarettes (6%) and smokeless tobacco (7%).
- The majority of Interior Region adults who smoked cigarettes used only those tobacco products. About half of adults who used smokeless tobacco or vaping products were also using other tobacco products.
- Most Interior Region adults who used cigarettes and smokeless tobacco used them every day. Less than half of adults who used vaping products did so every day.

## Cigarette smoking

**Figure 5.** The percentage of adults who smoke cigarettes decreased statewide during the past 10 years and also decreased significantly in the Interior Region during that time.



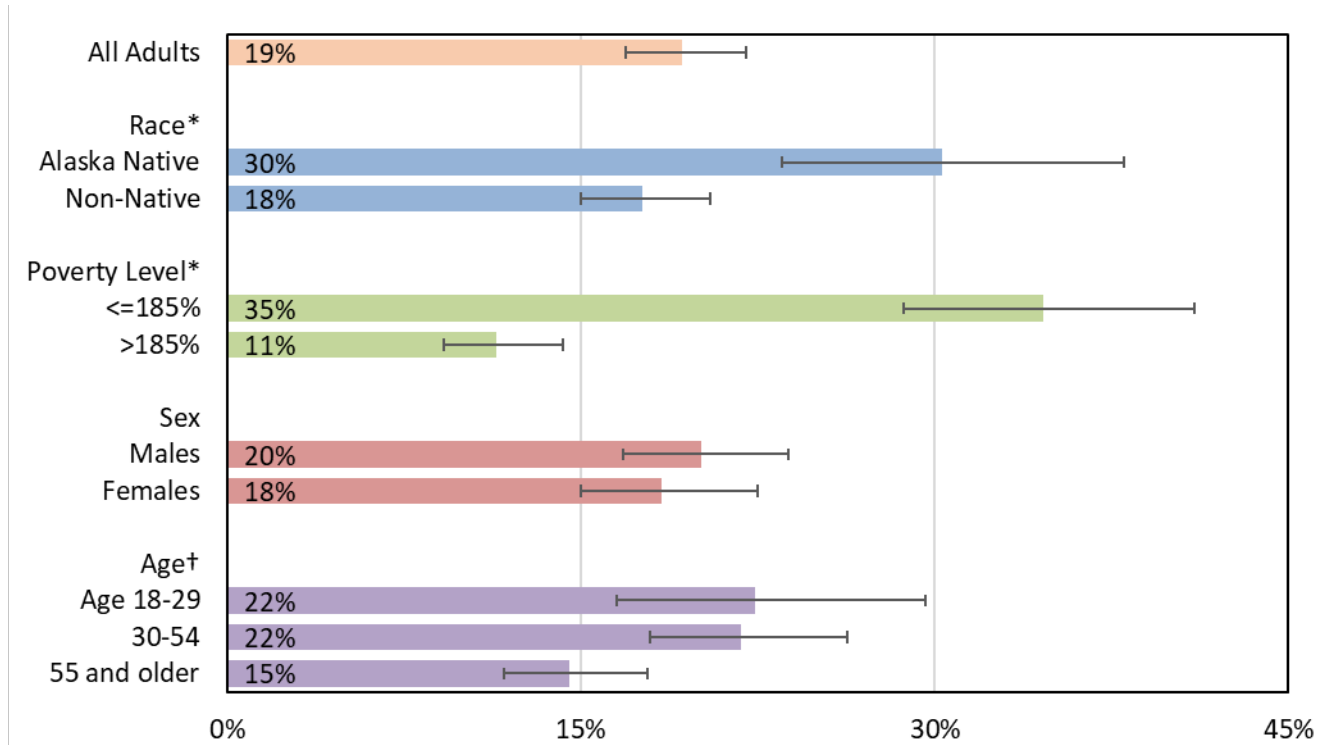
Year	1998	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alaska Statewide	26%	23%	21%	22%	20%	19%	20%	20%	20%	19%	19%
Interior Region	26%	22%	23%	25%	17%	23%	21%	19%	19%	21%	17%

Source: AK BRFSS

- Adult smoking declined significantly since the start of Alaska’s tobacco prevention and control efforts. Statewide, adult smoking declined from 26% in 1998 to 19% in 2020.
- In the Interior Region, 26% of adults were smoking in 1998, and 17% were smoking in 2020. Adult smoking in the Interior Region decreased significantly during the past 10 years, from 22% in 2011 to 17% in 2020.
- The percentage of adults who smoked in the Interior Region between 2011 and 2020 is not significantly different from statewide.
- Based on the most recent three-year average of adults who smoke, there are more than 16,000 adults in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to smoking cigarettes.



**Figure 6.** In the Interior Region, the percentage of adults who currently smoke cigarettes varies by race, poverty level, and age group.



Source: AK BRFSS, 2018-2020

\* Significant difference between or among subgroups

† Significant contrasts between ages 18-29 and 55 and older, ages 30-54 and 55 and older

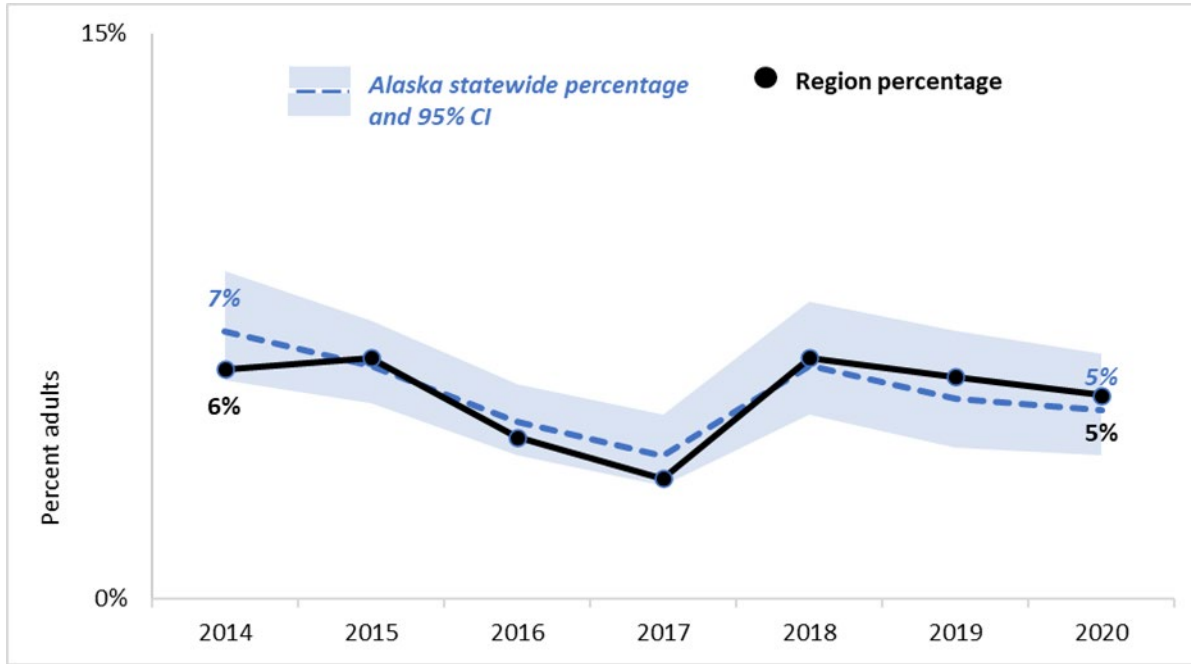
Within the Interior Region during 2018-2020, cigarette smoking was:

- Higher among Alaska Native people than among non-Native people (30% vs. 18%)
- Higher among people earning less than 185% of the poverty level than those earning more than 185% of the poverty level (35% vs. 11%)
- Similar among males and females (20% and 18%)
- Similar among adults 18-29 and adults 30-54 (22% for both), and higher among adults 18-29 than adults 55 and older (22% vs. 15%)
- Higher among adults 30-54 than adults 55 and older (22% vs. 15%)

## Electronic vapor product use

Electronic vapor products include e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods. These products are battery-powered, and usually contain nicotine and flavors such as fruit, mint, or candy.

**Figure 7:** The percentage of adults who use electronic vapor products has not changed significantly during the past 7 years statewide; use did not change significantly in the Interior Region.

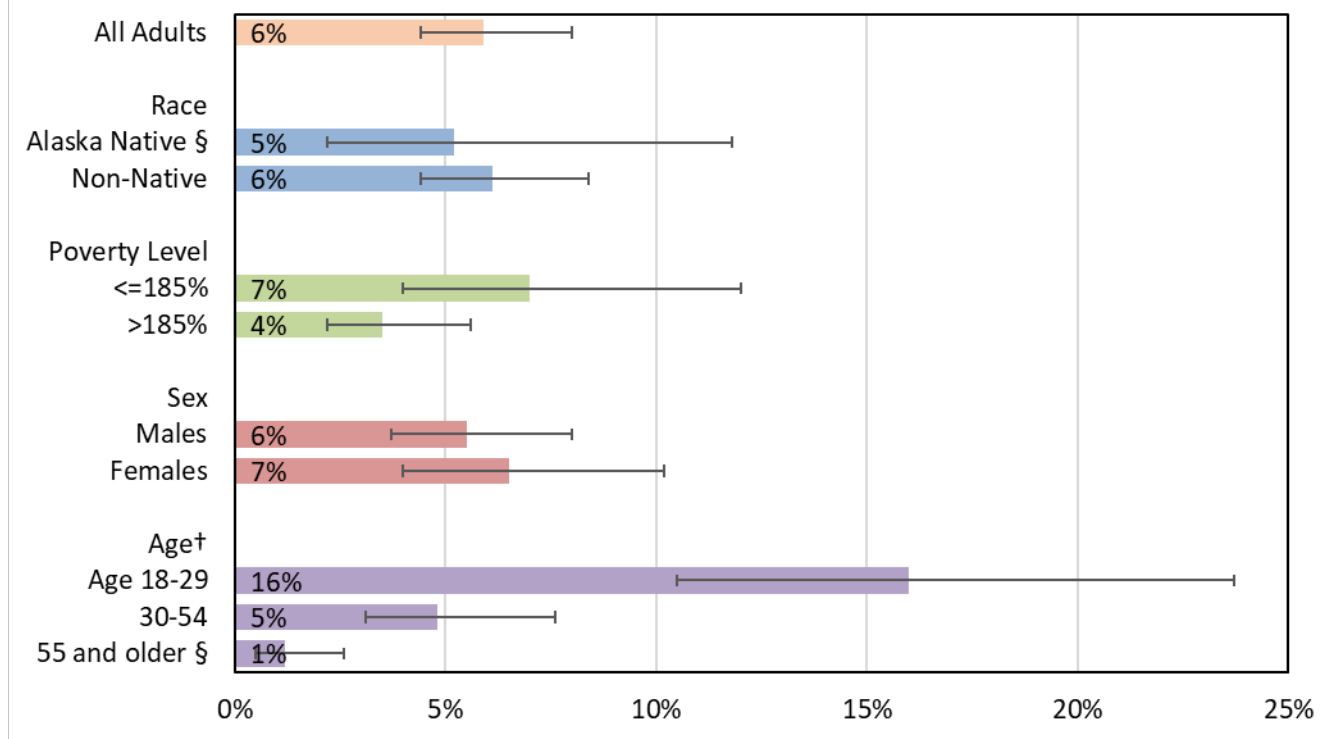


Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alaska statewide	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Interior Region	6%	6%	4%	3%	6%	6%	5%

Source: AK BRFSS. Electronic vapor product use was asked consistently on the BRFSS beginning in 2014.

- Use of electronic vapor products (such as e-cigarettes) has not changed significantly during the past seven years statewide, from 7% in 2014 to 5% in 2020.
- In the Interior Region, 6% of adults used electronic vapor products in 2014 and 5% in 2020. This regional change is not statistically significant.
- For all recent years, the percentage of adults who use electronic vapor products in the Interior Region has been similar to the state; differences between the region and state are not statistically significant.
- Based on the most recent three-year average of adults who use electronic vapor products, there are more than 4,900 adults in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to vaping.

**Figure 8:** In the Interior Region, the percentage of adults who currently use e-cigarettes varies by age group.



Source: AK BRFSS, 2018-2020

† Significant contrasts between ages 18-29 and 30-54, ages 18-29 and 55 and older, ages 30-54 and 55 and older  
 § Interpret this estimate with caution. See Appendix for additional detail.

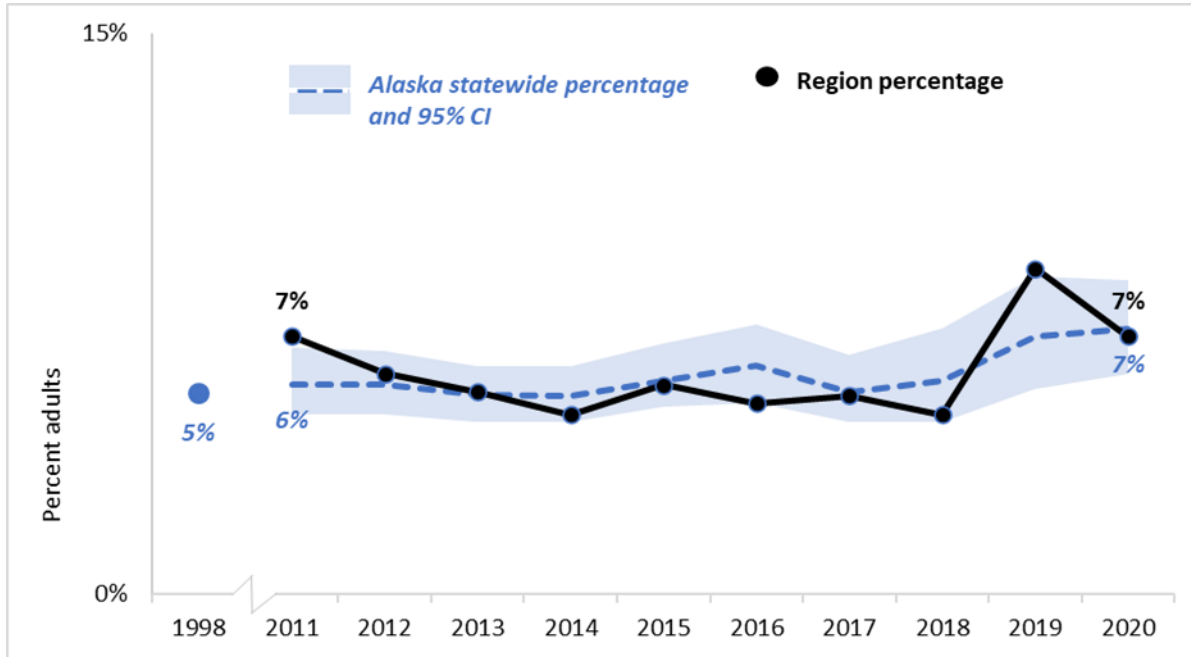
Within the Interior Region during 2018-2020, e-cigarette use was:

- Similar among Alaska Native people and non-Native people (5% and 6%)
- Similar among people earning less than 185% of the poverty level and those earning more than 185% of the poverty level (7% and 4%)
- Similar among males and females (6% and 7%)
- Higher among adults 18-29 than adults 30-54 (16% vs. 5%), and higher among adults 18-29 than adults 55 and older (16% vs. 1%)
- Higher among adults 30-54 than adults 55 and older (5% vs. 1%)

## Smokeless tobacco use

Smokeless tobacco includes commercial products like chew, dip, snus, snuff, and dissolvable tobacco products. People in some regions of Alaska also use a unique traditional smokeless tobacco form called “iqmik” or “blackbull”, which is a mixture of tobacco leaf and punk ash.

**Figure 9:** The percentage of adults who use smokeless tobacco increased statewide during the past 10 years but did not significantly change in the Interior Region during that time.

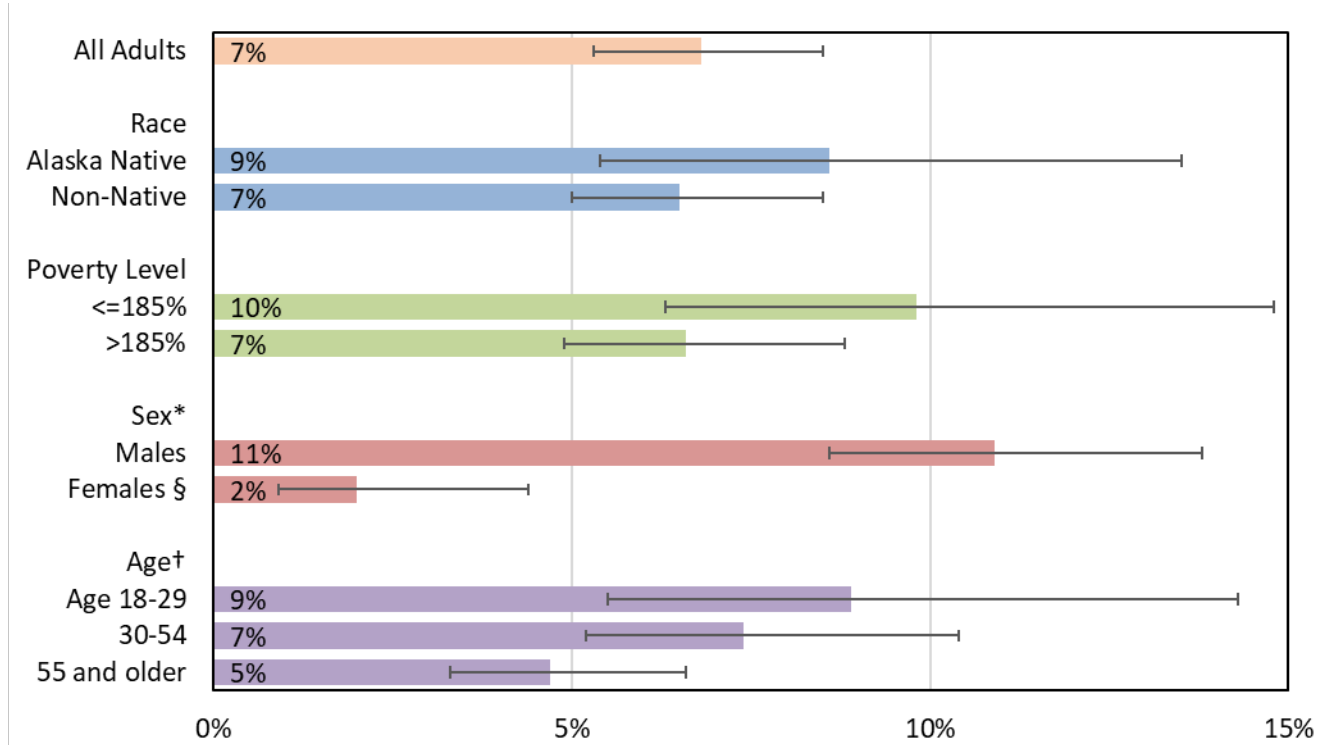


Year	1998	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alaska statewide	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	7%	7%
Interior Region	--	7%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	9%	7%

Source: AK BRFSS. Regional estimates are reported from 2011 because small numbers of surveys during early years do not allow for regional estimates.

- Statewide, smokeless tobacco use (including chew, dip, snus, snuff, and iqmik) among Alaska adults has increased in the past ten years, from 6% in 2011 to 7% in 2020.
- The percentage of adults who used smokeless tobacco has not changed greatly over time in the Interior Region: 7% used in both 2011 and 2020.
- For 2011-2020, the percentage of adults who use smokeless tobacco in the Interior Region has been similar to the state; differences between the region and state are not statistically significant.
- Based on the most recent three-year average of adults who use smokeless tobacco, there are more than 5,600 adults in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to using smokeless tobacco.

**Figure 10:** In the Interior Region, the percentage of adults who currently use smokeless tobacco varies by sex and age group.



Source: AK BRFSS, 2018-2020

\* Significant difference between or among subgroups

† Significant contrasts between ages 18-29 and 55 and older

§ Interpret this estimate with caution. See Appendix for additional detail.

Within the Interior Region during 2018-2020, smokeless tobacco use was:

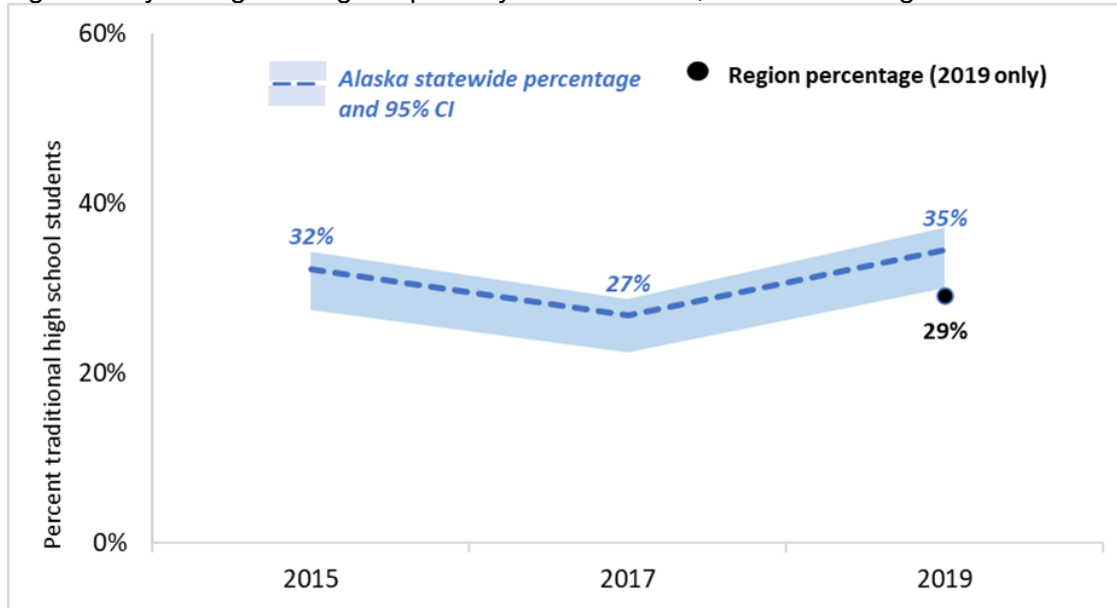
- Similar among Alaska Native people and non-Native people (9% and 7%)
- Similar among people earning less than 185% of the poverty level and those earning more than 185% of the poverty level (10% and 7%)
- Higher among males than females (11% vs. 2%)
- Similar among adults 18-29 and adults 30-54 (9% and 7%), and higher among adults 18-29 than adults 55 and older (9% vs. 5%)
- Similar among adults ages 30-54 and adults ages 55 and older (7% and 5%)

## Youth Tobacco Use

In the following charts, statewide YRBS data are reported for all available years and regional data are only reported for 2019. Statewide data are based on a sample designed to represent traditional high school students across the state, while regional data are limited to schools that voluntarily participate in the YRBS. Due to variations in school district, school, and student participation over time, differences in regional data from year to year may be driven more by changes in survey participation than by real changes in tobacco use among students. For this reason, data trends are presented for statewide but not regional estimates.

### Current use of any tobacco products

**Figure 11.** The percentage of high school students who currently use any tobacco or nicotine product did not significantly change during the past 5 years in Alaska; the Interior Region was similar to the state in 2019.



Year	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	32%	27%	35%
Interior Region	--	--	29%

Source: AK YRBS. Includes the percentage of students who used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (including iqmik), electronic vapor products, or cigars in the past 30 days. Questions about electronic vapor product use were added to the Alaska YRBS in 2015. JUUL was added to these questions in 2019.

Reducing the use of any tobacco or nicotine product among youth is an important priority in the State of Alaska. The *Healthy Alaskans 2030*<sup>8</sup> priority indicator that is monitored to assess progress is: *Reduce the percentage of adolescents who have used electronic vapor products, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or other tobacco products in the last 30 days.*

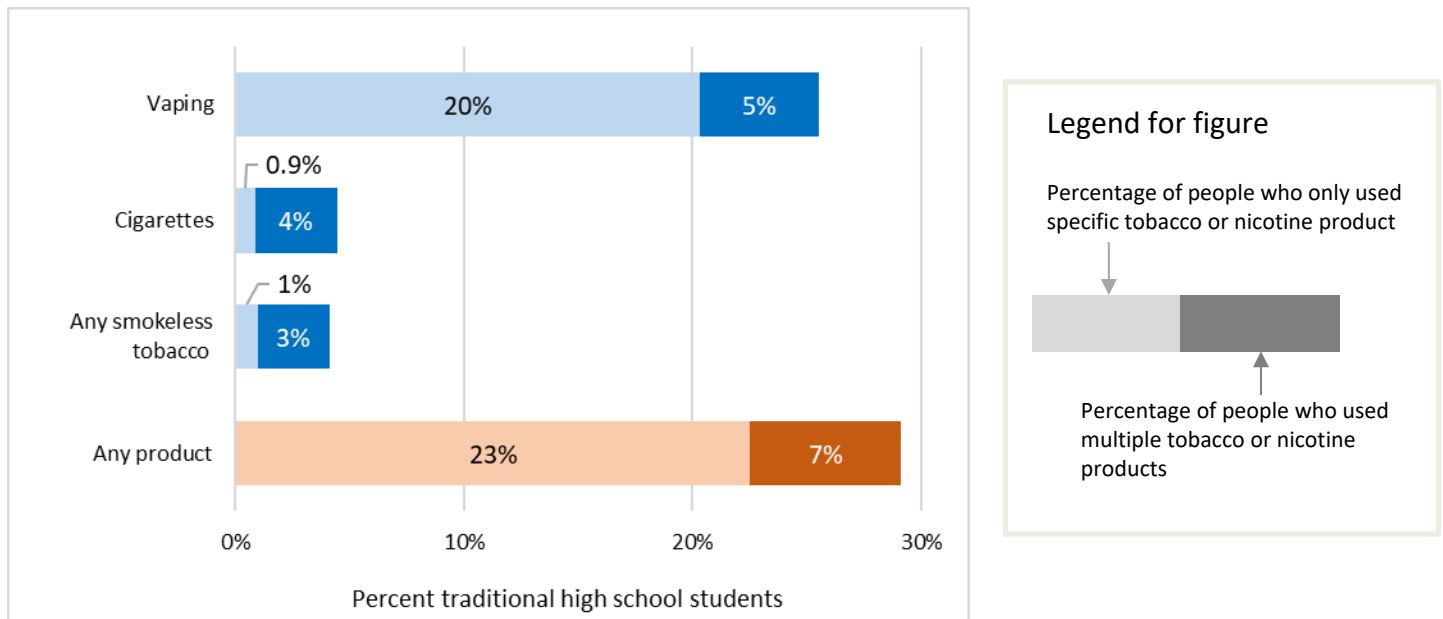
- This measure is reported beginning in 2015, the first year that questions about e-cigarettes were added to the Alaska YRBS.
- Between 2015 and 2019, the percentage of high school students who currently used any tobacco or nicotine product statewide varied, but the change over time is non-significant.
- In the Interior Region, 29% of students currently used a tobacco or nicotine product in 2019, which is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 35%.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about Healthy Alaskans 2030, see <https://www.healthyalaskans.org/>

- Based on the most recent percentage of students who use tobacco or nicotine products, there are more than 2,200 students in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to using these products.

## Current use of specific tobacco products

**Figure 12.** E-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco products among high school students in the Interior Region in 2019. Students who vape are the most likely to use those tobacco products exclusively.



Product type	Only one product used	Used multiple products	Used alone or in combination*	% who used 20+ of past 30 days, among high school students (not shown in figure above)
Vaping products	20%	5%	26%	6%
Cigarettes	0.9%	4%	4%	1%
Any smokeless tobacco	1%	3%	4%	1%
<b>Any tobacco product</b>	23%	7%	29%	--

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region. 20-day use for any tobacco product was not calculated.

\*numbers may not match sum of “one product” and “multiple product” values due to rounding

In the Interior Region, 29% of high school students currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine product in 2019.

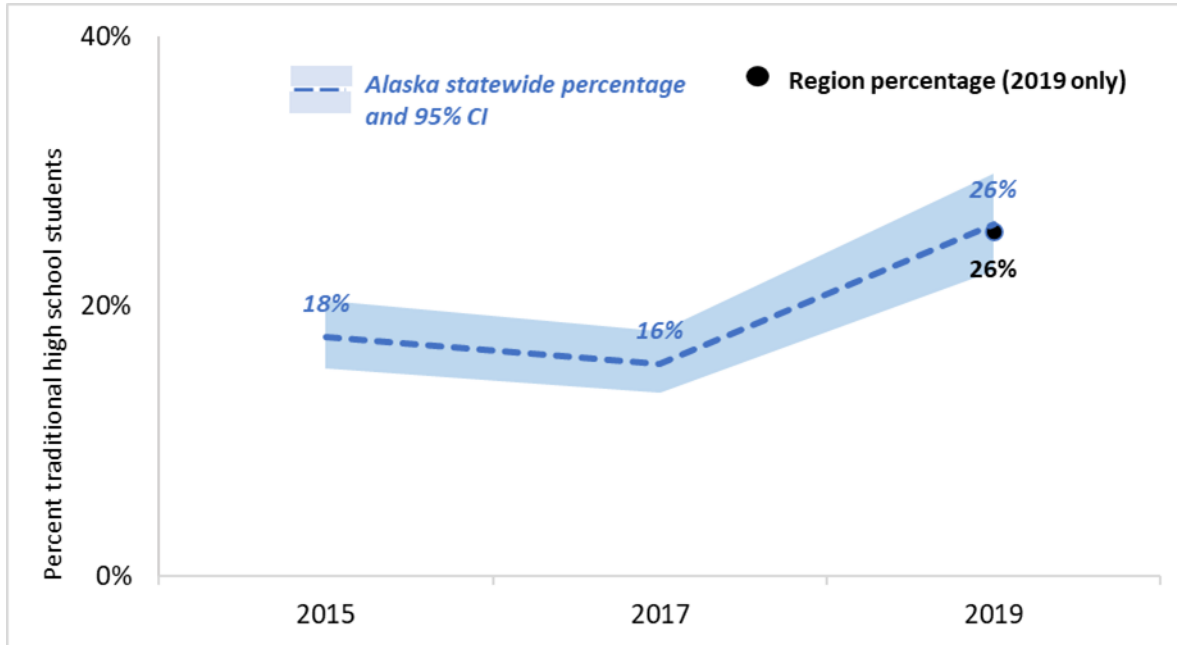
- E-cigarettes were the most commonly used product (26% of all students); fewer students used cigarettes or smokeless tobacco (both 4%).
- Most students who used e-cigarettes used only those products (20% of students vaped only). Most students who used cigarettes or smokeless tobacco were also using other products.
- 4% of students currently used cigars (data available in Appendix). Nearly all of the students surveyed who used cigars also used other tobacco or nicotine products.
- A minority of the students who used tobacco or nicotine products did so on most days.



## Electronic vapor product use

Electronic vapor products include e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods. These products are battery-powered, and usually contain nicotine and flavors such as fruit, mint, or candy.

**Figure 13:** The percentage of high school students who currently use any e-cigarette product increased during the past 5 years in Alaska; the Interior Region was similar to the statewide percentage in 2019.

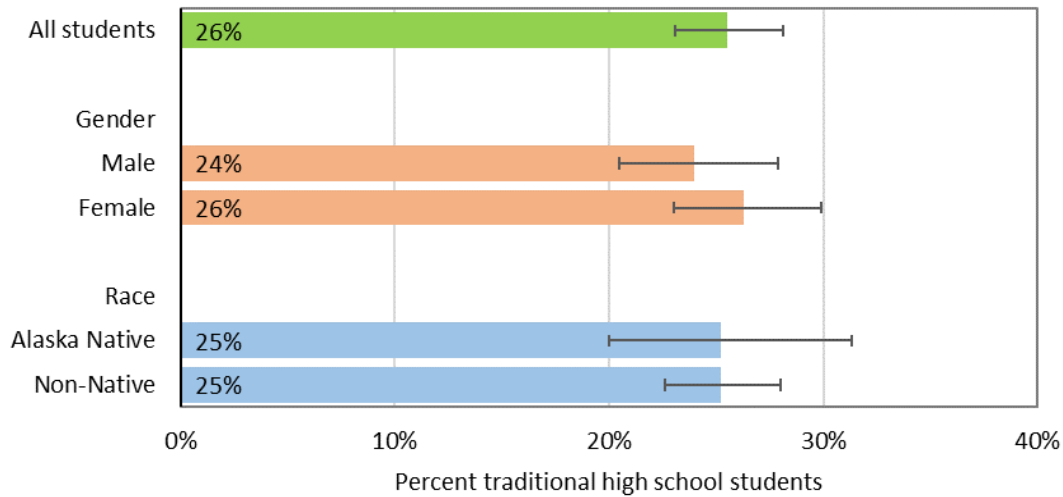


Year	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	18%	16%	26%
Interior Region	--	--	26%

Source: AK YRBS, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region. These questions were added to the Alaska YRBS in 2015. JUUL was added to questions about electronic vapor product use in 2019.

- The percentage of high school students who currently vape increased statewide, from 18% in 2015 to 26% in 2019.
- In the Interior Region, 26% of students currently used an e-cigarette in 2019, which is the same as the state percentage of 26%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students who use e-cigarettes, there are more than 1,900 students in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to vaping.

**Figure 14:** In the Interior Region, the percentage of high school students currently using e-cigarettes is similar among subgroups.



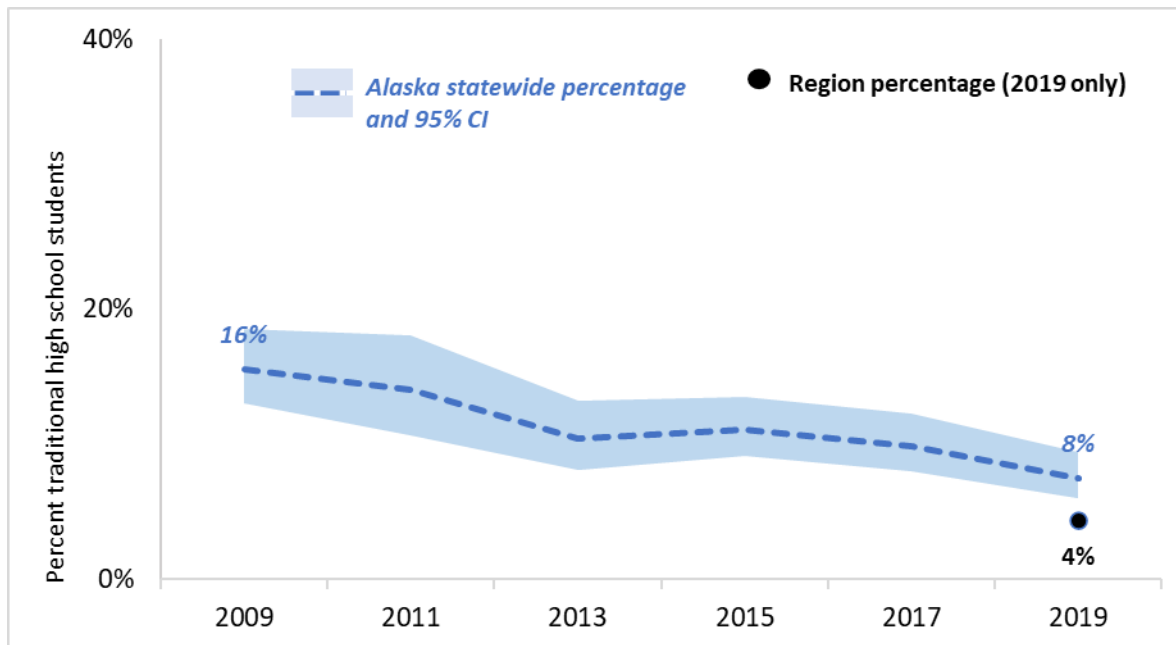
Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Within the Interior Region in 2019, e-cigarette use was not significantly different between groups of high school students:

- 24% among male students and 26% among female students
- 25% among both Alaska Native students and non-Native students

## Cigarette smoking

**Figure 15:** The percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes declined during the past 10 years in Alaska; the Interior Region was not different from the statewide percentage in 2019.

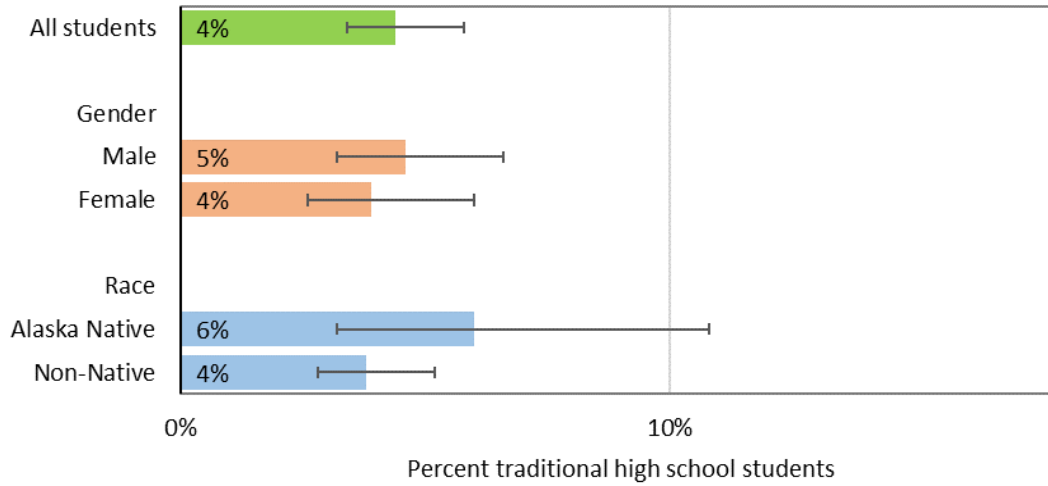


Year	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	16%	14%	10%	11%	10%	8%
Interior Region	--	--	--	--	--	4%

Source: AK YRBS, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

- The percentage of high school students who smoke cigarettes statewide was cut in half during the past ten years, from 16% in 2009 to 8% in 2019.
- In the Interior Region, 4% of students smoked cigarettes in 2019, which is not significantly different from the state percentage of 8%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students who smoke cigarettes, there are more than 300 students in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to smoking.

**Figure 16:** In the Interior Region, the percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes is similar among subgroups.



Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

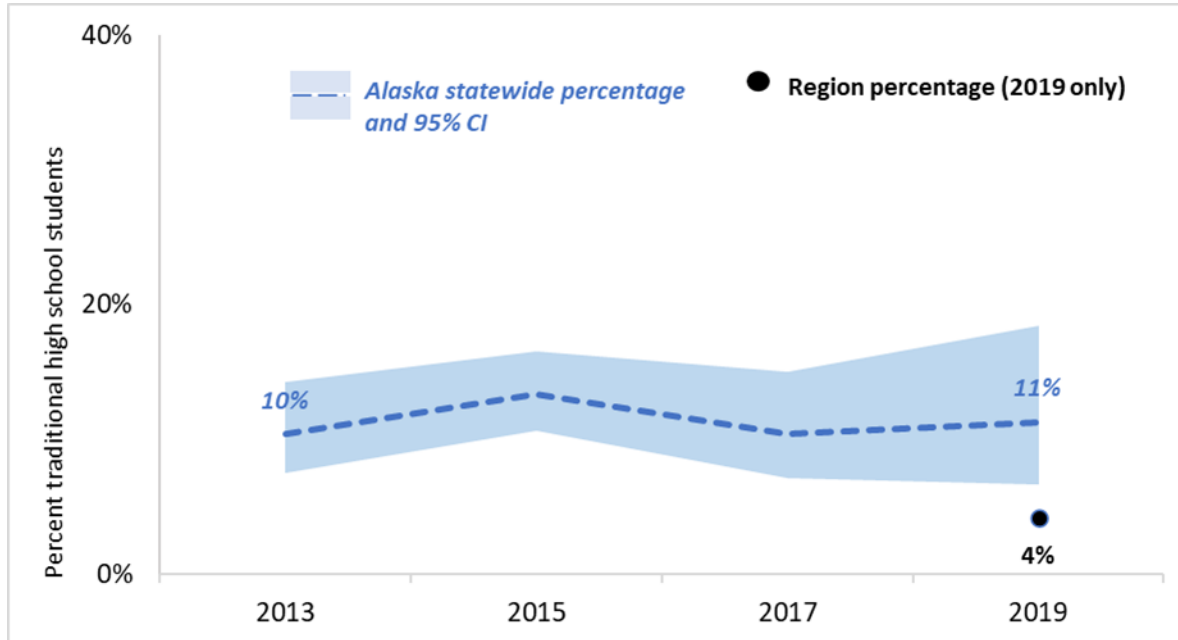
Within the Interior Region in 2019, the percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes was not significantly different between groups of students:

- 5% among male students and 4% among female students
- 6% among Alaska Native students and 4% among non-Native students

## Smokeless tobacco use

Smokeless tobacco includes commercial products like chew, dip, snus, snuff, and dissolvable tobacco products. People in some regions of Alaska also use a unique form of traditional smokeless tobacco called “iqmik” or “blackbull”, which is a mixture of tobacco leaf and punk ash.

**Figure 17:** The percentage of high school students who currently use smokeless tobacco remained stable during the past 7 years in Alaska; the Interior Region was lower than the statewide percentage in 2019.

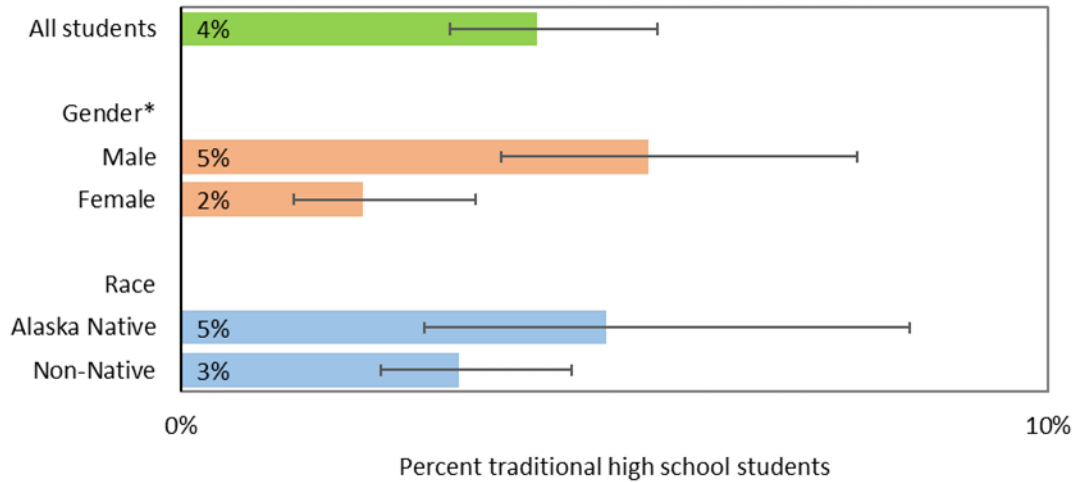


Year	2013	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	10%	13%	10%	11%
Interior Region	--	--	--	4%

Source: AK YRBS, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

- Smokeless tobacco products include chew, dip, snus, snuff, and iqmik. Data are shown from 2013 because this was the year iqmik was added to the questions about smokeless tobacco use.
- The percentage of high school students who use smokeless tobacco products remained stable statewide during the past seven years, from 10% in 2013 to 11% in 2019.
- In the Interior Region, 4% of students used smokeless tobacco in 2019, which was significantly lower than the statewide percentage of 11%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students using smokeless tobacco, there are more than 300 students in the Interior Region who are at risk for poor health outcomes due to using smokeless tobacco

**Figure 18:** In the Interior Region, the percentage of high school students who currently use smokeless tobacco varies by gender.



\* Significant difference among subgroups

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Within the Interior Region in 2019, smokeless tobacco use among groups of high school students was:

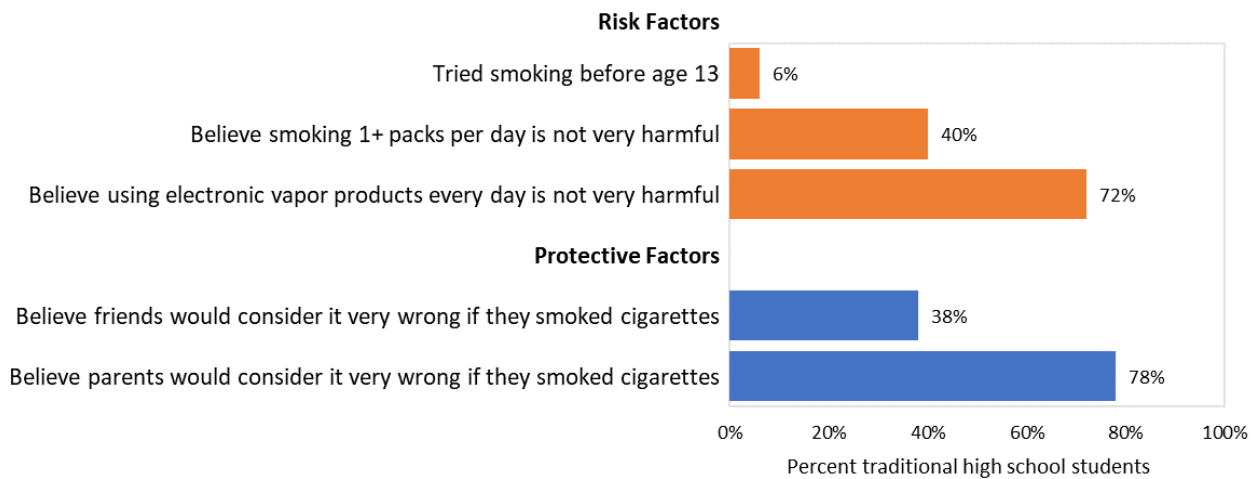
- Higher among male students than female students (5% vs. 2%)
- Not significantly different between Alaska Native and non-Native students (5% and 3%)

## Section 3. Preventing Youth Use

### Risk and Protective Factors

*Risk factors* are measures associated with increased chances that youth will use tobacco. *Protective factors* are measures associated with reduced chances that youth will use tobacco. Prevention programs are often designed to decrease risk factors and enhance protective factors.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 19:** In the Interior Region, both risk and protective factors for tobacco use are relatively common among high school students.



Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Risk factors among Interior Region high school students include:

- 6% of Interior Region students first tried smoking a cigarette before age 13. This is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 7%.
- 40% of the region's students think that smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day poses no risk or only slight risk to their health. This is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 43%.
- Most students think that using e-cigarettes every day is not very harmful (72%). This is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 73%.

Protective factors among Interior Region high school students include:

- Less than half of Interior Region students think their friends would consider it very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes (38%), significantly lower than the statewide percentage of 46%.
- Most of the region's students (78%) reported that their parents would consider it very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes. This is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 77%.

<sup>9</sup> For more on risk and protective factors, see this U.S. interagency website on youth prevention <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>

## Youth Lifetime Tobacco Use

**Table 4:** Many high school students in the Interior Region have tried using tobacco products.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Ever tried vaping products	43%	46%
Ever tried cigarette smoking	23%	28%

Source: AK YRBS 2019, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

About half of high school students in the Interior Region have tried vaping products, and many have tried cigarette smoking. These findings are similar to the state.

- 43% of Interior Region students have tried using e-cigarettes at least once.
- 23% of the region's students have tried smoking cigarettes at least once.

## Tobacco Taxes

Tobacco price increases, including taxes, are proven to reduce both adult and underage smoking; increasing the price of tobacco products is especially effective in preventing youth from starting to use them.<sup>10</sup>

Alaska's statewide tobacco tax includes:

- \$2.00 for a pack of 20 cigarettes
- 75% of wholesale price of other tobacco products, including cigars and chewing tobacco.

There is currently no statewide tax on e-cigarettes products.

Municipalities and boroughs are also allowed to apply local taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco or nicotine products. Based on information available in May 2020:

- Fairbanks has a cigarette tax of 8%, and an 8% tax on the wholesale price of other tobacco products; e-cigarettes are not included.
- Fairbanks North Star Borough has a cigarette tax of 8% and an 8% tax on the wholesale price of other tobacco products; e-cigarettes are not included.
- North Pole has a cigarette tax of 10%, and a 10% tax on the wholesale price of other tobacco products including e-cigarettes.

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<sup>10</sup> Community Guide to Preventive Services Task Force Tobacco Use: Interventions to Increase the Unit Price for Tobacco Products. Recommended (strong evidence), November 2012. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-interventions-increase-unit-price-tobacco>



## School Policies

Policies that restrict tobacco use on school properties have multiple benefits: they protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke, limit student access to tobacco products and opportunities to use them and restrict adult modeling and normalization of tobacco use.

Model policies restrict use of all types of tobacco or nicotine products, by all types of people – including students, staff, and visitors – on school grounds, and at school events held in other locations. Policies should be visibly promoted through signs and communications and should outline supportive interventions for anyone who breaks the rules. Finally, resources should be in place to ensure the rules are enforced.

### *Definitions of school policy ratings:*

- **Comprehensive policy** contains at least 90% of the model policy elements.
- **Strong policy** contains at least 80% of the model policy elements.
- **Fair policy** contains at least 70% of the model policy elements.
- **Incomplete policy** contains fewer than 70% of the model policy elements.

### **K-12 School district policies**

*Note: related information on adult attitudes about smoking and tobacco use on school property is included in Section 5 of this report, Table 11 and Table 12.*

**Table 5.** School districts in the Interior Region has established a comprehensive tobacco policy.

<b>School district</b>	<b>Current policy status</b>	<b>K-12 enrollment</b>
Alaska Gateway Schools	Comprehensive	389
Denali Borough Schools	Comprehensive	960
Iditarod Area Schools	Comprehensive	315
Nenana City Schools	Comprehensive	1,411
Tanana Schools	Comprehensive	33
Yukon-Koyukuk Schools	Comprehensive	1,933
Delta/Greely Schools	Strong	781
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	Strong	13,139
Yukon Flats Schools	Strong	210
Galena City Schools	Incomplete	5,155

Source: ADAPT, 2022.

Among the Interior Region’s ten school districts, all ten have adopted policies:

- Six have policies rated as comprehensive, closely mirroring the model policy.
- Three have policies rated as strong, with many elements of the model policy in place.
- One has an incomplete policy, missing key elements from the model policy such as specifying specific types of tobacco or nicotine products that are included, specifying that the policy applies to staff and visitors as well as students, and prohibiting smoking or tobacco use in all location under the control of the organization.

In the Interior Region, few high school students use tobacco on school property.

**Table 6:** High school students who used tobacco on school property in past 30 days

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Cigarettes	2%	2%
Smokeless tobacco (excluding iqmik)	2%	3%
Iqmik	1%	5%
Any: cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or iqmik	4%	8%

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region  
Percentages shown are among all traditional high school students.

Few high school students in the Interior Region said they used tobacco products on school property during the past 30 days. These results are not significantly different from statewide.

- 2% of Interior Region students smoked cigarettes on school property.
- 2% of the region’s students used smokeless tobacco (excluding iqmik) on school property.
- 1% of students used iqmik on school property.
- 4% of students used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or iqmik on school property.
- No information is currently available about student use of e-cigarettes on school property.

### **Colleges, technical and vocational training schools**

In the Interior Region, one post-secondary educational institution has adopted a policy that restricts tobacco use on their campus.

- The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) has adopted a strong policy that restricts both tobacco and e-cigarette use on campus.

## Section 4. Helping People Quit

### Quitting Indicators

In the Interior Region, many adults are trying to quit smoking.

**Table 7a:** Quit attempts, *among people who smoke*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
Tried to quit in the past year	54%	58%

**Table 7b:** Successful recent quitting, *among people who smoked within the past year*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
Quit for 3+ months in the past year, at time of survey	13%	9%

**Table 7c:** Successful long-term quitting, *among people ages 25+ who were ever smokers*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
“Quit Ratio” – lifetime smokers who are now non-smokers	59%	59%

Source: AK BRFSS, 2018-2020 for quit attempts and quit ratio; AK BRFSS Supplemental file for recent quitting

Most adults in the Interior Region who ever started smoking have already quit, and most of those who still smoke are trying to quit.

- More than half of Interior Region adults who currently smoke cigarettes tried to quit in the past year, not significantly different from the statewide estimate (54% and 58%).
- Among the region’s adults who smoked cigarettes within the past year, about 13% have quit successfully, not significantly different from the statewide estimate (9%).
- Among adults who have ever smoked, more than half have quit successfully for the long-term, the same as the statewide estimate (59% for both).

## Quitting Resources

Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line provides quitting support including counseling and medication. All Alaska adults can get services all day, every day, by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or enrolling online at [alaskaquitline.com](http://alaskaquitline.com). Some communities and health systems also have programs to support quitting. For more information about regional resources, visit <http://alaskaquitline.com/resources-and-quit-materials/>.

In the Interior Region, many adults have received advice and support to quit using tobacco.

**Table 8a:** Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line (ATQL), *among people who smoke*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
<i>People who smoke</i> who are aware of the ATQL	92%	85%
Number of people who received help from the ATQL in the past year	258	2,086
Estimated percentage of current adult smokers who called the ATQL in the past year**	2%	2%

**Table 8b:** Healthcare Provider Support

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
Advised to quit by a healthcare provider, <i>among people who smoke</i>	33%	41%
Advised to quit by a healthcare provider, <i>among people who smoke <u>and</u> who had a healthcare visit in past year</i>	62%	69%

Source: Quitline awareness and advice are from AK BRFSS 2018-2020; quitline utilization and percent who called are from Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line Annual Report, FY2021 (July 2020-June 2021).

\*\*Calculated as the number of people who received services, divided by the estimated number of adults who smoke cigarettes (population age 18 or older multiplied by the regional or state prevalence of cigarette smoking).

Resources are available to help people in the Interior Region quit tobacco.

- Most Interior Region adults who smoke cigarettes are aware of Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line, significantly higher than the statewide percentage (92% vs. 85%).
- 258 of the region’s adults got help from Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line during the past year. This is 2% of the estimated number of adults who smoke in the region.
- About one-third of adults who smoke said that their healthcare provider advised them to quit, significantly lower than the statewide estimate (33% vs. 41%).
- More than half of adults who smoke and who had a healthcare visit in the past year said that their healthcare provider advised them to quit, not significantly different from the statewide estimate (62% and 69%).

## Section 5. Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

### Secondhand Smoke Exposure

In the Interior Region, some students and adults are still exposed to smoke from other people's smoked tobacco products (secondhand smoke, or SHS).

**Table 9a:** Youth SHS exposure

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Students were in the same room with someone who was smoking in the past week	23%	27%

**Table 9b:** Adult SHS exposure at home

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
One+ people who smoke in the home including self, <i>all adults</i>	33%	31%
Adult home SHS exposure, <i>all adults</i>	9%	7%
Adult home SHS exposure, <i>among those who rent their home</i>	10%	9%
Smoke drift into home, <i>among those in multi-unit housing</i>	22%	20%

**Table 9c:** Adult SHS exposure at work

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Adults exposed to SHS at work, <i>among adults who work**</i>	5%	6%
Exposed to SHS in work entryways, <i>among adults who work**</i>	19%	20%

Source: Youth measure from AK YRBS 2019, statewide percentages are from the state sample of traditional high schools, regional percentages are from all participating traditional high schools in the region. Adult measures from AK BRFSS 2017-2019.

\*\*Alaska implemented a statewide clean indoor air law in 2018, and adult data reported here were collected prior to that law.

In the Interior Region, most adults reported no secondhand smoke exposure in homes and workplaces, however more youth reported exposure. These findings are similar to statewide.

- 23% of Interior Region high school students were in the same room with someone who was smoking a tobacco product in the past week.
- 33% of Interior Region adults live with one or more people who smokes including themselves.
- 9% of the region's adults overall were exposed to secondhand smoke at home. Among those who rent their home, 10% of adults were exposed.
- Among those in multi-unit housing, 22% of adults experienced smoke drifting into their home.
- Among adults who work, 5% were exposed to secondhand smoke at work and 19% were exposed to secondhand smoke in work entryways.

## Secondhand Smoke Rules

In the Interior Region, most adults are protected by rules to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke at home and at work.

**Table 10a:** Home rules

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
Smoking is not allowed in the home	91%	91%
<i>Among those who rent</i> , landlord has rules about smoking on the property	41%	48%

**Table 10b:** Workplace rules

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>State of Alaska</b>
Smoking is not allowed in work areas, <i>among adults who work indoors</i>	88%	87%
Perception that smoking is allowed in indoor work areas, in their community	4%	3%

Source: AK BRFSS 2018-2020. Question about perception not asked in 2018.

In the Interior Region, most private homes and workplaces have a smoking ban. These findings are not significantly different from statewide.

- 91% of Interior Region adults said that smoking is not allowed inside their home.
- Among the region's adults who rent, two-fifths said that their landlord has rules about smoking on the property (41%).
- Most adults who work indoors said that smoking was not allowed in their workplace (88%). Alaska's statewide law protecting indoor workers from secondhand smoke was implemented during July 2018, and future survey reports should show closer to 100% of indoor workers reporting they are protected from secondhand smoke at work.
- 4% of adults perceive that smoking is allowed in indoor work areas in their community.

## Secondhand Smoke Attitudes

In the Interior Region, most adults believe that secondhand smoke is harmful, and support rules that protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke.

**Table 11a:** Attitudes about harm

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Agree secondhand smoke is very/somewhat harmful to people's health	93%	92%
Prefer to spend time where people are not smoking	81%	85%

**Table 11b:** Knowledge of harm

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer	79%	79%
Secondhand smoke causes heart disease	67%	70%
Secondhand smoke causes respiratory problems in children	90%	92%
Secondhand smoke causes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	35%	39%

**Table 11c:** Support rules that protect people from secondhand smoke

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Agree/strongly agree people should be protected from secondhand smoke	90%	91%

**Table 11d:** Agree tobacco use should not be allowed at schools

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
On school grounds during school hours	96%	95%
On school grounds after school hours	88%	90%
At school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds	82%	82%

**Table 11e:** Agree tobacco use should not be allowed in healthcare settings

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
On hospital grounds, such as on walkways and outside building entrances	89%	86%
On health clinic grounds, such as on walkways and outside building entrances	89%	87%

Source: AK BRFSS 2018-2020.

In the Interior Region, most adults support rules that protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke.

- Most adults in the Interior Region agree that secondhand smoke is harmful (93%), similar to the statewide estimate (92%).
- Most also prefer to spend time where people are not smoking (81%), significantly lower than the statewide estimate (85%).
- 79% of the region's adults think secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, 90% think it causes respiratory problems in children, and 35% think it causes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), similar to the state, all three measures are not significantly different from statewide estimates (79%, 92%, and 39%, respectively). 67% think secondhand smoke causes heart disease, significantly lower than the statewide estimate (70%).

- A majority of adults agree that people should be protected from secondhand smoke in general (90%), similar to statewide (92%).
- Nearly all adults say that tobacco use should not be allowed on school grounds during school hours (96%). Most also agree that tobacco use should not be allowed after school hours (88%) or at school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds (82%). All three measures are similar to statewide estimates (95%, 90%, and 82%, respectively).
- Most adults support rules that do not allow tobacco use on hospital grounds and health clinic grounds (89% for both). Both measures are similar to statewide estimates (86% and 87%, respectively).



## Secondhand Smoke Norms

“Norms” are values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations for behavior that are shared by most people in a group, such as a community. The following are indicators of perceived pro- or anti-tobacco community norms.

In the Interior Region, some adults report seeing smoking in school settings, and more report seeing it in healthcare settings.

**Table 12a:** Report seeing tobacco use in school settings, *among adults who have visited them*

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Inside school but after school hours	2%	3%
Outside on school grounds during school hours	19%	17%
Outside on school grounds after school hours	26%	24%
At school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds	20%	19%

**Table 12b:** Report seeing tobacco use in healthcare settings, *among adults who have visited them*

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
On hospital grounds	39%	55%
On health clinic grounds	37%	40%

**Table 12c:** Report seeing tobacco use in community settings, *all adults*

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Saw smoking in indoor work areas	5%	4%
Saw smoking in bars	8%	6%

**Table 12d:** Aware of local tobacco prevention activities, *all adults*

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Interior Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Aware of a local group doing tobacco prevention in their community	36%	45%

Source: AK BRFSS 2016- 2018 for in school settings, 2017-2018 in healthcare settings, and 2019-2020 in community settings.

In the Interior Region, despite strong support for rules restricting smoking and protecting people from secondhand smoke (see prior section), many people still report seeing tobacco use in school and healthcare settings.

- Relatively few Interior Region adults have seen someone using tobacco inside schools (2%). Somewhat more have seen tobacco use outside on school grounds during school hours (19%), outside on school grounds but after school hours (26%), or at school-sponsored events including those not on school grounds (20%). All four measures are similar to statewide estimates (3%, 17%, 24%, and 19%, respectively).
- 39% of the region’s adults who visited a hospital in the past year have seen someone using tobacco there, significantly lower than the statewide estimate (55%). Over a third have seen tobacco use on health clinic grounds (37%), similar to the statewide estimate (40%).
- Relatively few adults have seen someone smoking in indoor work areas (5%) and in bars (8%), similar to statewide estimates (4% and 6%, respectively).
- Almost half of adults said they know about a local group working on tobacco prevention in their community (36%), significantly lower than the statewide estimate (45%).

## Secondhand Smoke Policies

Alaska has a statewide law that bans smoking and use of electronic vaping products (“e-cigarettes”) in enclosed public places and workplaces, including buses and taxis, stores, bars, and restaurants (Alaska Statute 18.35.301<sup>11</sup>, enacted July 17, 2018). Tribal governments, local municipalities, and organizations can pass policies that build on this statewide law but cannot remove or weaken the state law.

The Alaska TPC Program collects information on a variety of local smokefree policies, including tobacco free tribal resolutions, community ordinances, multi-unit housing policies, and healthcare policies.<sup>12</sup> Each of these policies are evaluated in comparison to a relevant model policy, scored based on how many model policy elements are included, and categorized as defined below.

### *Policy Strength Definitions:*

- **Comprehensive policy** contains at least 90% of the model policy elements.
- **Strong policy** contains at least 80% of the model policy elements.
- **Fair policy** contains at least 70% of the model policy elements.
- **Incomplete policy** contains fewer than 70% of the model policy elements.

### **Tribal Resolutions**

There are about 40 tribes in the Interior Region. As of May 2020, 11 tribes have tobacco-free or smokefree tribal resolutions on record. This is more than a quarter of the tribes in the region.

- Ten are tobacco-free policies
- One is a smokefree policy
- Three of these policies include e-cigarettes

### **Multi-Unit Housing Policies**

Policies that ban smoking in multi-unit housing, such as apartment buildings, duplexes, and public housing complexes, can protect families from secondhand smoke exposure within their homes, “drift” between units, and smoke residue left by former residents.

Model housing policies include:

- Prohibitions on all types of smoking and tobacco use, including e-cigarettes and marijuana, within indoor spaces and all outdoor spaces of the property
- Specific definition for “residents” that includes anyone living or staying in the property
- Statement that the policy applies to all current and new residents, guests, visitors, employees, contractors, volunteers, and vendors
- Requirement for posting “no smoking” signs, and for management to communicate the policy to employees and residents
- Inclusion of the policy within lease agreements
- Statement of penalties for violations

Based on information available in ADAPT (see ‘Methods’ section) during May 2020, one multi-unit housing property in the Interior Region has a smokefree addendum or policy in their lease:

- The Moore Street Apartments policy is rated as incomplete because it lacks definitions, specificity, “no smoking” signage, and/or enforcement.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#18.35.301>

<sup>12</sup> Information about tobacco-related policies can be shared by emailing [tobacco@alaska.gov](mailto:tobacco@alaska.gov)

## Healthcare Policies

Healthcare facilities exist to promote the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve. Policies that restrict smoking on healthcare campuses can protect people from exposure, including those who are vulnerable due to medical conditions.

Model healthcare policies include:

- Prohibiting all types of tobacco use, including e-cigarettes in all organization-controlled indoor and outdoor spaces, parking lots, vehicles, and sidewalks, by all employees, clients, patients, visitors, and vendors
- Prohibiting the sale, advertising, and transportation of tobacco products on organization-controlled properties and vehicles
- Requirements to post the policies
- Definitions of policy violations, clear penalties relevant to the individual (e.g., visitors, employees), and procedures for enforcement
- Identification of resources to help with quitting tobacco available to employees, patients, visitors, and vendors

**Table 13:** In the Interior Region, two healthcare facilities have policies to limit tobacco use on their campuses.

Healthcare Facility	Current Policy Status
Railbelt Mental Health and Addictions	Comprehensive
Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)	Strong

Source: ADAPT, May 2020.

In the Interior Region, two healthcare facilities have adopted policies.

- One is a comprehensive policy.
- One is a strong policy.