

BORN TO BREATHE TOBACCO FACT SHEETS



American Indian traditional use of tobacco is for ceremonial or religious reasons, which creates an important distinction between traditional and commercial use.¹



The tobacco industry preys on these traditions, funding powwows and promoting brands like Natural American Spirit. They appropriate American Indian cultures to sell their deadly products, not to show meaningful support for American Indian communities.¹

Traditional Tobacco

Traditional tobacco is a medicine, which can be used in a prescribed way to promote physical, spiritual, emotional, and community well-being. It may be used as an offering to the Creator or to another person, place, or being. A gift of traditional tobacco is a sign of respect and may be offered when asking for help, guidance, or protection. Traditional tobacco is sometimes used directly for healing in traditional medicine.²

The care and respect involved in the preparation and use of traditional tobacco are part of centuries of tradition that connects today's youth, adults, and elders with those of generations ago. Continued use of traditional tobacco supports a good life and a healthy community today and for future generations to come.²



Commercial Tobacco

Commercial tobacco is manufactured by companies who mass-produce tobacco for recreational/habitual use and sold for profit. It contains thousands of chemicals and produces 7,000 chemical compounds when burned, many of which are carcinogenic, cause heart and other diseases, and premature death.³

Tobacco Companies exploit the cultural significance of tobacco in indigenous communities.⁴

A recent congressional investigation found that the e-cigarette manufacturer JUUL targeted at least **8** American Indian tribes with price discounts and referral program pitches in an effort to promote its products.⁴

American Indians/Alaskan Natives use tobacco more than any other racial or ethnic group in the U.S.⁴

More than **1 in 5**



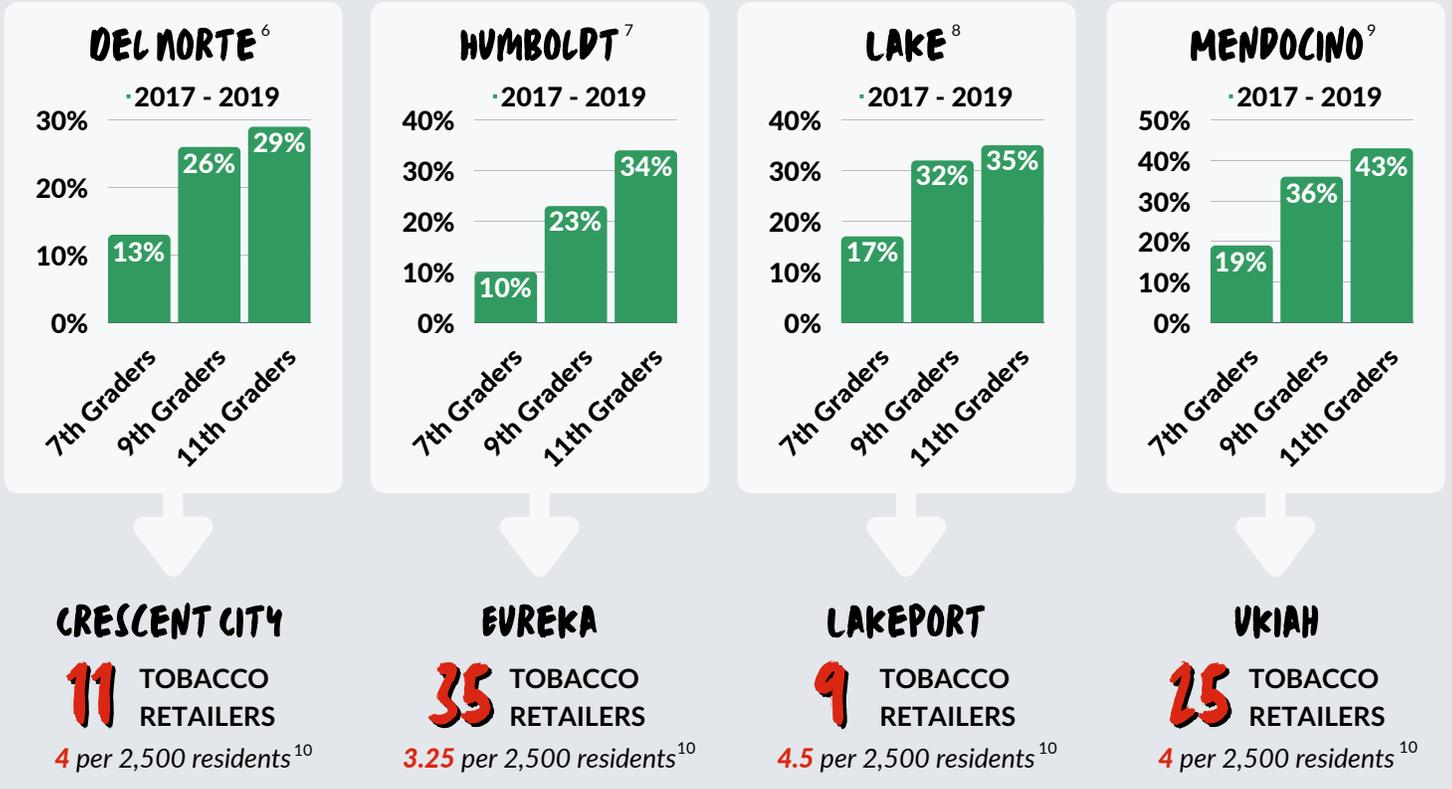
American Indian/Alaskan Native adults currently smoke cigarettes⁴

Out of the **10** leading causes of **death** among American Indian/Alaskan Native, **6** of them have been linked to **smoking commercial tobacco**.³

Local Statistics

Exposure to tobacco marketing in stores increases tobacco experimentation and use by youth and is more powerful than peer pressure. Middle school youth exposed to tobacco products in a retail setting multiple times per week are twice as likely to start smoking.⁵

YOUTH THAT HAVE EVER TRIED E-CIGARETTES.



Call To Action

- Smart tobacco policies can help create an environment where community leaders and families feel empowered to reject the culture of tobacco use and choose healthier, tobacco-free futures.
- Local retail licensing policies can reduce youth access to tobacco by banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products, address retail density, tobacco displays and advertising proximity to youth friendly areas, and tobacco free pharmacies.
- Ask communities to pass smoke free policies to protect community spaces such as fairs, rodeos, and shared living spaces such as apartment complexes.
- Smokefree outdoor air laws can protect rural Californians from the secondhand smoke they want to avoid.



1. <https://tobaccofreeca.com/story-of-inequity/american-indian/>
2. <http://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/tobacco-and-tradition/traditional-tobacco-use/>
3. <https://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/tobacco-and-tradition/commercial-tobacco/>
4. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/targeted-communities/tobacco-use-american-indianalaska-native-community>
5. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0072.pdf>
6. https://data.calschls.org/resources/Del_Norte_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf
7. https://data.calschls.org/resources/Humboldt_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf
8. https://data.calschls.org/resources/Lake_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf
9. https://data.calschls.org/resources/Mendocino_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf
10. <https://cthat.org/>

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