



## How the Tobacco Industry Targets the Hispanic/Latino Community

Tobacco products are one of the most heavily marketed consumer products in the United States. The tobacco industry advertises and promotes their products disproportionately to specific racial and ethnic minority communities — especially low-income communities with higher Hispanic and African American populations.

The tobacco industry aims to engage with the Hispanic/Latino population through branding, financial contributions, and target advertising. Big Tobacco financially supports primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities in Hispanic/Latino communities. This makes them seem supportive of the health of these communities however, this money is extremely damaging to their futures.

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among Hispanic/Latino populations in California, and smoking causes 80-90% of lung cancer cases. (<https://bit.ly/3dU9Zkm>)

In addition, Big Tobacco routinely discounts flavored cigars and cigarillos in Hispanic dominated neighborhoods to reach and hook more users.

## Tobacco & Our Youth

There has been a growing epidemic of tobacco usage among the youth and young adults. There has been some progress made, but there is still a large number of young people using tobacco. According to a 2019 fact sheet published by the Tobacco Free Kids, one in four Hispanic high school students are current users of any tobacco product, with 23.2 percent of Hispanic high school students currently using e-cigarettes.

A 2015 National Survey of Drug Use and Health found that 80.9 percent of Hispanic youth smokers (ages 12-17) prefer Marlboro, Newport, and Camel. All three brands are heavily advertised throughout the media.

Studies have shown that the younger a child is when they start using tobacco, the more likely they will retain a nicotine addiction. Because smoking reduces lung function and growth, teens who smoke today may never have lungs that grow to full capacity even as adults.

- Every day, more than 1,200 people in this country die due to smoking. For each of those deaths, at least two youth or young adults become regular smokers each day. Almost 90% of those replacement smokers smoke their first cigarette by age 18. (<https://bit.ly/2BvM7Gx>)

The youth are vulnerable and sensitive to their surroundings whether it be at home, school, friends, or through the media they consume. Making matters worse, there are now more ways to access tobacco than ever before — fruit flavored e-cigarettes, candy and more. Youth are exposed to tobacco in their social circles, in the communities they live, in the movies they watch, the video games they play, and more. Tobacco has become an aspect of “fitting in” for young teens and for many that means giving into tobacco because their friends are doing it.

## Preventing Tobacco Use & Addiction

It is important to recognize the negative effects and heavy impact tobacco has on our communities. When it comes to protecting our the Hispanic/Latino communities, and especially our youth, implementing strategies and interventions to prevent and cease tobacco use is critical. These strategies include community organizing and advocacy, initiating mass media awareness campaigns, increasing tobacco prices, enforcing smoke-free laws and policies, carrying out evidence-based school programs, and sustaining community-wide efforts.

We hope you will join **VIVE** in our fight to reduce tobacco use, access, and secondhand smoke exposure in San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties.



## References

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