

### What is Tobacco 21?

Tobacco 21 is a national campaign taking a local approach to raising the tobacco sales age from 18 to 21 years of age. Established in 1996, Tobacco 21 and the Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation strive to reduce smoking and tobacco use through a preventive effort locally and on the state level all over the United States and American territories such as Guam. More than 485 cities and 18 states, including Ohio, have already raised the age.<sup>1</sup>



### What Does Tobacco 21 Do?

More than 95 percent of smokers started smoking before the age of 21, and having their first cigarette before the age of 18 makes someone twice as likely to be a lifelong smoker. 350 teens become regular smokers each day in the U.S. On average, kids try smoking for the first time at age 13.7, and they primarily get their cigarettes from 18- to 20-year-old peers. Tobacco 21 laws disrupt the social availability of all nicotine products to young people. But this intervention requires strict enforcement to succeed.<sup>2</sup>

### How Can Coalitions Support and Use Tobacco 21?

**Spread the word.** Ohio enacted Tobacco 21 legislation which will take effect on October 17th, 2019. That law raises the minimum sales age for tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to 21 and creates consequences for retailers who violate these laws. The Tobacco 21 toolkit at <https://tobacco21.org/t21-toolkit/> contains fact sheets, model policies, and other resources to help you educate communities.



## Tobacco 21 & Your Coalition

**Correct misperceptions.** E-cigarette companies say that their products are intended to help smokers quit smoking combustible cigarettes, but most e-cigarette companies are owned by Big Tobacco companies. E-cigarette companies also target youth with kid-friendly flavors and ads on social media. Flavored e-cigarettes attract kids, and the nicotine gets them addicted. Even the terms that e-cigarette companies prefer, like “vapes” and “vaping,” are designed to make their products seem less harmful by comparing them to water vapor rather than to cigarettes.

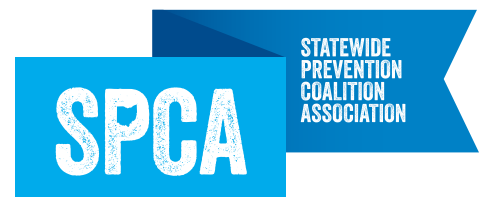
**Advocate.** You can advocate for your community to require licenses for e-cigarette retailers, to ban e-cigarette flavors, and to enact zoning laws that restrict the number, location, and advertising of e-cigarette retailers. Now that e-cigarettes are taxed, they’ll have to register with tax collectors. That gives you the opportunity to find out who is in your area. Then, you can collect further data on your own, such as what products they’re selling, what kind of signage do they have, and whether they check IDs before sales.

## About Us

This fact sheet was created by Prevention Action Alliance with support from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. It was created to support the Statewide Prevention Coalition Association, a network of more than 60 community coalitions dedicated to preventing substance misuse and promoting mental health wellness. Together, we share solutions, support, and show solidarity with each other.

Learn more at [preventionactionalliance.org/spca](https://preventionactionalliance.org/spca).

Prevention  
Action Alliance



1. “Tobacco 21 state laws in order of enactment and their date of implementation.” Tobacco 21. <https://tobacco21.org/>. Accessed 17 Sep. 2019.
2. “Tobacco 21 Fact Sheet.” Tobacco 21. <https://tobacco21.org/tobacco-21-fact-sheet/>. Accessed 17 Sep. 2019.

