



June 2015

In most states, retailers must obtain a license in order to sell tobacco products. Oregon does not require tobacco retailer licensure, so a list of tobacco retailers was created from various sources. There were 53 tobacco retailers in the four Eastern Multnomah County cities. A random sample of 44 retailers was selected to be assessed in this study.

Tobacco Retailers by City	
City	Number of tobacco retailers
Fairview	3
Gresham	36
Troutdale	10
Wood Village	4
Total	53

## The Selling of Tobacco in the Cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, and Wood Village

All Multnomah County residents deserve neighborhoods that promote their health. Since tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death, it is important to understand the tobacco environment in the county. An assessment was conducted of retail stores in Multnomah County that sold tobacco. This summary includes findings for the four cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, and Wood Village. (A report on the findings for all of Multnomah County is also available.)

In these four cities, more than half (55%) of the tobacco retailers were convenience stores, followed by grocery stores (16%), mass merchandisers (11%) and pharmacies (9%). Over a third (37%) of tobacco retailers were located within 1000 feet of a school.

Tobacco distributors pay some stores to display tobacco advertising, often dictating where the advertisements are placed. Most (68%) retailers in the four cities had outside advertisements for tobacco which can be seen by shoppers as well as some youth and adults who do not shop at the store. Youth are more likely to be exposed to advertising when it is placed near products they are purchasing. Among the stores in the four cities, 23% displayed tobacco within 12 inches of products sold to youth (toys, candy, slushy/soda machine, or ice cream). Ads were placed within three feet of the floor – where young children are likely to see them – in 16% of stores.

Studies have shown that adolescents who are exposed to tobacco advertising and promotional activities are more likely to start smoking. Nationally, the tobacco industry spends nearly \$10 billion in advertising and promotional activities each year, and the bulk of this promotion occurs in retail stores.

Almost all tobacco retailers in the four cities (98%) sold cigarettes, including all convenience stores, and most retailers also sold little cigars, electronic cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco.

The most popular types of tobacco were commonly available with flavorings. For example, among stores that sold electronic cigarettes, 62% sold electronic cigarettes with flavorings. Among stores that sold cigarettes, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, blunt wraps or hookah, all except a couple stores sold that product with added flavorings.



Self-service display of e-cigarette liquid in flavors such as DA Kool, Menthol, Hypnotic Mist, Apple Pie, Cinnamon Danish, and Blueberry.

## Partners in this Study

Multnomah County was awarded a grant from the Oregon Health Authority through a competitive RFP: Strategies for Policy and Environmental Change (SPaRC)–Tobacco Free. This grant-funded study was a collaboration among the Multnomah County Health Department and five members of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance:

- Asian Health & Service Center
- Center for Intercultural Organizing
- Oregon Latino Health Coalition
- Upstream Public Health
- Urban League of Portland

Partners on this grant are concerned about preventing tobacco and nicotine use among our county’s youth. The vast majority (90%) of adult smokers started using tobacco when they were under 18 years old.



Candy, gum, cigarettes, and electronic cigarettes for sale.

The tobacco industry uses in-store price promotions as a way to boost sales, and almost three-quarters (73%) of stores that sold cigarettes offered some kind of price discount.

Possible law violations were observed in a few stores in the four cities. Self-service displays of tobacco products were found in two stores where state law requires tobacco sales to be vendor-assisted. Oregon law requires tobacco retailers to display a sign indicating that no sales to minors are allowed, and five stores (11%) did not display such a sign.

### Percentage of tobacco retailers that sold specific products: Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, and Wood Village

Cigarettes	98%
Little cigars	91%
Electronic cigarettes	84%
Smokeless tobacco	84%
Blunt wraps	27%
Large cigars	27%
Hookah or shisha	9%

## Cigars? Cigarettes?

Federal law does not allow flavorings in cigarettes except for menthol. Some youth smoke little cigars, which often contain other flavorings that can appeal to youth. Federal law also does not allow cigarettes to be sold in packs of less than 20 cigarettes, as a way to increase the price barrier to smoke tobacco. That law does not apply to little cigars, and most (83%) stores that sold little cigars allowed them to be purchased as singles. The most common price for one little cigar was 79 cents. Some store clerks said that the flavored little cigars are popular among young adults.

## Contact

Olivia Quiroz, Senior Policy Specialist  
Multnomah County Health Department  
Community Wellness and Prevention Program  
olivia.quiroz@multco.us