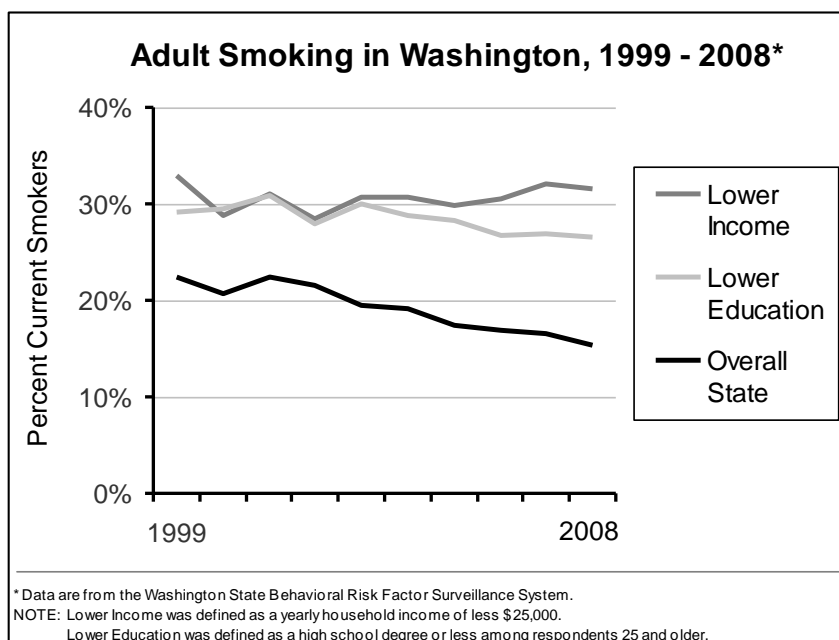


Adult Tobacco Use in Washington

- Since the start of the comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, adult smoking in Washington has steadily declined, from 22.4 percent in 1999 to a new low of 15.3 percent in 2008.
- The more-than-30-percent drop in adult smoking translates to about 295,000 fewer smokers and \$2.8 billion saved in future health care costs for Washington.
 - The drop also translates to an estimated 98,000 early tobacco-related deaths prevented.
- In the last year the smoking rate dropped significantly from 16.5 percent in 2007 to 15.3 percent in 2008.
- Washington is a recognized leader in tobacco prevention and control. In a state-by-state ranking, Washington has the sixth lowest smoking rate in 2008. Before the tobacco program began, Washington was ranked 20th in the nation.
 - The top 10 states, in order, beginning with the lowest rate: **(1)** Utah, **(2)** California, **(3)** New Jersey, **(4)** Maryland, **(5)** Hawaii, **(6)** Washington, **(7)** Arizona, Connecticut (tied), **(9)** Massachusetts, **(10)** Oregon.
- Washington's smoking rate of 15.3 percent remains well below the national median of 18.4 percent.
- The state reached its 10-year goal of reducing the adult smoking rate to 16.5 percent by 2010 ahead of schedule. As a result, the state established a new goal of reducing the adult smoking rate to 14 percent or less by 2013.
- There are still an estimated 770,000 adults who smoke in Washington, the majority of whom come from either low income (less than \$25,000 per year) or lower educational (a high school diploma or less) backgrounds.



- Smoking among adults with a household income less than \$25,000 a year is 31 percent. Since 1999 the greatest reductions in smoking rates have been seen among those with an income of \$50,000 or more.
 - The smoking rate among people with a household income greater than \$50,000 a year is 10 percent.
- Smoking among adults with a high school education or less is 27 percent. Since 1999 the greatest reductions in smoking rates have been among those with a college degree or more.
- Smoking rates also differ dramatically among racial, ethnic, and sexual minority groups. Compared to whites, smoking rates on average are significantly higher among African Americans; American Indians/Alaska Natives; and lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.
- The Department of Health has also made progress in reducing the number of youth who smoke. Since the program began in 2000, the youth rate has dropped by about 50 percent overall and there are 65,000 fewer youth smoking.
- The Department of Health uses a comprehensive survey called the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to collect a variety of health-related information, including tobacco use. BRFSS is a telephone survey of randomly selected adults. The 2008 survey involved about 22,000 adults in Washington.

Outreach to People with Low Income, Less Education

- In June the state launched the multi-media “Dear Me” campaign, featuring real people who smoke from around Washington writing a letter to themselves about their tobacco addiction and struggle to quit.
- The state’s Web site devoted to helping people quit tobacco — www.Quitline.com — was redesigned to better meet the needs of people with low income and lower education levels.
 - Visitors can view the “Dear Me” videos, watch a “Behind the letter” video that goes into greater detail about the person interviewed, write their own letter, and read letters submitted by other tobacco users.
 - Other quit tools include videos of quit coaches talking about what happens when people call the quit line, an interactive quit plan, quizzes designed to test knowledge of the quit process, and information and videos of quit coaches in Spanish.
- All Washington residents are eligible for support from the toll-free Washington State Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW, 1-877-2NO-FUME in Spanish.)
 - More than 125,000 Washington residents have called the quit line for free information, counseling, a personalized quit plan, local quitting resources, and quit kits.
 - Washington residents on Medicaid are eligible for additional support to help them quit, including a prescription medication, if appropriate.

The Work Ahead

- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the nation. Tobacco-related diseases kill about 7,500 people every year in Washington, and about 45 youth start smoking each day.
- Each year the tobacco industry spends more than \$165 million in Washington to hook smokers.