

Tobacco's Toll in Virginia

- Kids under 18 who become new daily smokers each year: 10,800
- Virginia kids alive today who will die early from smoking: 152,000
- Packs of cigarettes bought or smoked by kids each year: 21.2 million
- Adults who die from their own smoking each year: 9,300
- Annual health-care costs statewide from smoking: \$2.08 billion
- Residents' annual state and federal tax burden from smoking-related government spending: \$576 per household

Tobacco-Use Facts

- Almost 90% of adult smokers start before the age of 18.
- Adolescents can become nicotine dependent in as little as a few weeks by taking just a few drags on a cigarette every other day.
- About one-third of young people who become regular smokers will eventually die of smoking-related illnesses.
- Tobacco use kills more Americans every year than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides, drugs and fires...combined.

The Virginia General Assembly, as a result of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), established the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation in 1999.

The MSA was negotiated between the nation's tobacco manufacturers and the attorneys general of 46 states who jointly filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers. As a result, Virginia is expected to receive approximately \$4 billion over 25 years, of which the VTSF receives 10% to lead a statewide effort to reduce and prevent the use of tobacco by youth in Virginia. The VTSF is meeting its mission through multifaceted efforts including statewide community programs and education, a youth-targeted marketing and advertising campaign, innovative research and enforcement of Virginia's tobacco-access laws.

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*Empowering the Youth of Virginia to Choose
Not to Use Tobacco Products*



Did you know that 10,800 kids become new smokers in Virginia every year?

Alarming facts like these are among the many reasons why the state General Assembly formed the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation (VTSF) in order to combat youth tobacco use. The VTSF promotes healthy living habits and reduces the numbers of future adult smokers through a comprehensive statewide approach, including:

PROGRAMS

The VTSF provides evidence-based instructional programs in communities statewide, educating youths about the benefits of leading tobacco-free lifestyles. Every year, the VTSF directly serves about 65,000 children across the Commonwealth, providing around \$4.2 million in funding to about 100 grantees statewide. Program grant recipients include public schools, nonprofits, faith-based organizations and community groups.



MARKETING

Based on the most extensive youth marketing research ever conducted in Virginia, the VTSF's popular marketing campaign maintains a 70%+ awareness rate among teens. VTSF marketing reaches youths through a variety of means including: award-winning radio and TV ads; street marketing; Web sites (ydouthink.com, ystreet.org); and urban initiatives aimed at reducing tobacco use and violence.

RESEARCH

Issuing about \$1.7 million annually to state universities, the VTSF underwrites cutting-edge research into youth tobacco-use and prevention issues. Grantees and collaborative partners have included the College of William and Mary, George Mason University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia State University, Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia.

ENFORCEMENT

The VTSF funds 360 retailer compliance checks per month during which agents from the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conduct test purchases to see if retailers will sell tobacco products to underage buyers. From 1998 to 2008, the noncompliance rate has plummeted from 27% to 10.8%.



Virginia Youth Tobacco Survey

Working in conjunction with the CDC, VTSF commissions a survey to assess youth tobacco use in Virginia every two years. Youth smoking has dropped significantly in the Commonwealth since 2001, but the problem persists.

