

Vermont's
TOBACCO & NICOTINE

YOUTH PREVENTION INITIATIVE

ADVISOR RESOURCE GUIDE

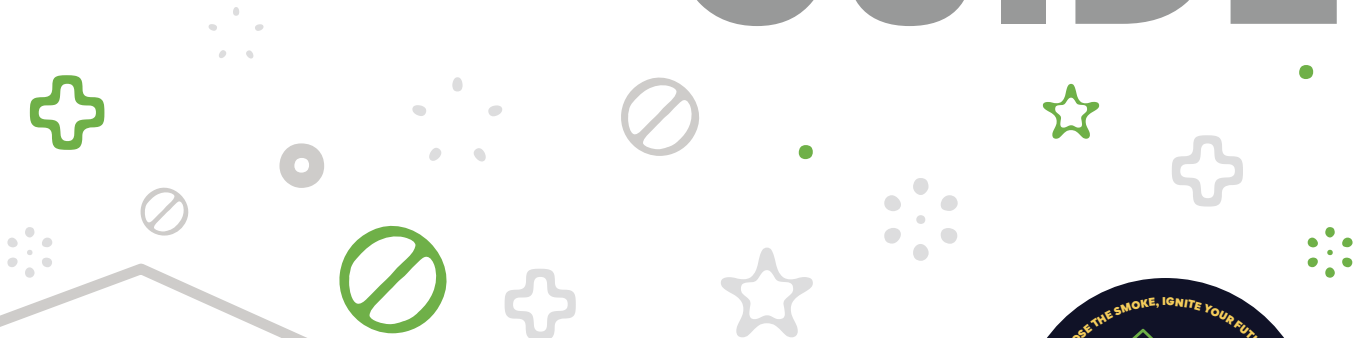


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“ Youth empowerment is about **ALLOWING YOUTH A LEGITIMATE VOICE** in the system. From meaningful participation by youth in their own litigation, to influencing local and national policy, youth empowerment is about **PROVIDING FOR YOUTH’S ACTUAL NEEDS, NOT JUST ADULT CONCEPTIONS** of those needs.

-National Association of Counsel of Children



ABOUT OVX

BACKGROUND

Over the past two decades, the Vermont Department of Health Tobacco Control Program has partnered with the Agency of Education to support local high school chapters of Our Voices Xposed (OVX) and middle school chapters of Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT), helping to end tobacco's influence on youth.

VKAT was retired in 2024 to unite all Vermont youth under one brand: Our Voices Xposed (OVX), which emphasizes the vital role of youth voice in tobacco and nicotine prevention efforts around the state.

OVX is based on the Positive Youth Development framework that recognizes the individual strengths of Vermont youth and provides skill building opportunities to prepare young leaders. With the guidance of adult advisors and community partners, OVX youth work to educate and inform their school peers, community members and local and state decision makers on the manipulative and deceptive marketing tactics tobacco and vape companies use to target youth.

WHAT OVX YOUTH DO

- Play meaningful roles in improving the health of their communities.
- Educate on the tobacco and vape industry's deceptive advertising and price discounting to hook new customers.
- Deliver the facts about the negative health effects and social consequences of smoking, vaping and nicotine use to increase awareness of and support for tobacco policies designed to protect youth.
- Inform local and state decision makers on tobacco and nicotine related issues, as seen and experienced firsthand.

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

- Nicotine is harmful to developing brains; younger users are more likely to become addicted, have more difficulty quitting and may be at higher risk for addiction to other substances in the future.¹
- New and emerging flavored tobacco products that are not FDA-approved are flooding the market and accessible to youth.²
- Youth and young adults perceive flavored tobacco products as more appealing, better tasting and less harmful than non-flavored tobacco products. Flavors, especially sweet and fruit flavors, play a role in influencing tobacco use or experimentation in youth and young adults.³
- Teens who first try tobacco using a vape are four times more likely to try cigarettes, compared to teens who don't vape, and teens who first try tobacco using a vape are three times more likely to be current cigarette smokers within two years.
- Many e-cigarette brands now are marketed with "tobacco-free nicotine" or "synthetic nicotine," a claim that can imply lower risk and increase purchase intentions among teen users.
- E-cigarettes are often falsely promoted as "reduced risk," "smoke-free," "socially acceptable" consumer products.
- During the last 30 days, 16% of Vermont high schoolers have used an e-cigarette product. Of those who vaped, 30% used it every day.
- LGBTQ+ students are significantly more likely than heterosexual/cisgender students to use an e-cigarette during the past 30 days.



RECENT CHANGES

MORE FLEXIBILITY, MORE OPPORTUNITIES, MORE ENGAGEMENT

Does OVX need to be a standalone group?

It can but doesn't need to be. You can be a standalone group or integrate OVX issues and activities into another youth or community group. We encourage you to be creative and innovative and do what works best for your school and community. If integrating the activities provided for OVX by the Vermont Tobacco Control Program into an existing youth/student organization, club or program works best, please do that. You may also partner with other schools or community partners in your region. Co-branding is also an option.

Do we have to use the OVX brand to identify our chapter?

You are not required to use the OVX name to identify your group. Please reference the Vermont Tobacco Control Program and/or the OVX program when using the materials within other groups. The objective is to increase awareness and understanding of how influential and damaging the tobacco and vape industry is to youth and to the communities they live in.

What are the expectations and requirements of OVX Advisors?

Regardless of the source funding, everyone registered with the Vermont Department of Health as an OVX chapter (standalone or integrated) will adhere to the same guidelines and deliverables. All advisors agree to:

- Attend and participate in advisor informational sessions (October and January).
- Attend the OVX Youth Leadership Summit and Youth Statehouse Rally with youth.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with youth. This can be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly and may vary depending on school day scheduling.
- Integrate tobacco and nicotine education into meetings and group activities.
- Host at least three "Day of Action and Awareness" events within your school or community each school year.
- Respond promptly to Vermont Department of Health or Agency of Education communications regarding OVX activities.
- Submit Quarterly Reports on time. Reports are due December 1, 2024, March 1, 2025 and June 1, 2025. This quick and easy process helps the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education collect important information and track prevention activities around the state.

How many youth are needed to form an OVX chapter?

There is no minimum member requirement for the middle or high school chapters of OVX. We encourage you to actively recruit students to join at the beginning of the school year, and welcome new students who express interest in tobacco and nicotine prevention throughout the year. If you would like some ideas on recruitment activities, please download our OVX Activity Guide.



MEANINGFULLY ENGAGING WITH YOUTH

SUPPORT YOUTH VOICE

Youth voice cannot happen without scaffolding and sharing power. It is a process that builds slowly and takes practice. Young people are not used to freely giving their voice and opinion, and having it heard and regarded. It is important to build trust and show youth that their voices matter. Over time, youth will start to share freely. If adults continue to hold power in the room, the youth will continue to feel incapable, dependent and/or disregarded.⁴

SUPPORT AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Provided By [The CDC Best Practice User's Guide](#)

After years of steady declines in youth tobacco use, the number of students using tobacco products has sharply increased, coinciding with the emergence of e-cigarettes. In 2018, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among middle and high school students. Despite claims that their tactics are aimed at adult smokers, tobacco companies continue to use themes and packaging that appeal to youth and promote their products in places visited by young people. Because we cannot end the tobacco epidemic without preventing initiation among young people, it is critical that programs engage youth in tobacco control efforts. Youth can be powerful allies to help communicate the impact of tobacco use on young people, implement effective tobacco control strategies and shift social norms around tobacco use in their communities. Youth are essential partners for an effective, comprehensive Tobacco Control Program because they:

- **Project a powerful voice** - Youth can use their credibility with peers and the public to educate the community about how to reduce protobacco influences and shift social norms around tobacco use.
- **Expose tobacco industry tactics** - Young people can be effective partners in exposing the tobacco industry's manipulative tactics to recruit youth as replacement smokers.
- **Offer energy and enthusiasm** - Youth bring energy to activities and events that can increase awareness and advance tobacco control goals.
- **Provide generational insight** - Youth can offer important insights about their peers. Involving youth helps programs design effective tobacco control strategies that respond to youth's actual experiences.
- **Bring new perspectives and innovative ideas** - Young people naturally challenge the traditional attitudes that may limit how adults think and act. They can add innovation and creativity to any program, making it more attractive to other youth and community leaders. Their novel ideas for tobacco control strategies can help push efforts forward.
- **Mobilize their peers** - Youth can play a vital role in reaching other youth. They can mobilize their peers for activities, strengthening and expanding tobacco control efforts.
- **Become the next generation of tobacco control leaders** - Offering leadership opportunities encourages youth to stay involved in tobacco control over the long term. Some young people may continue this work by devoting their careers to building healthier communities.

The CDC Practices Users Guide: [Youth Engagement in Tobacco Prevention and Control](#) highlights youth as powerful allies in communicating the impact of tobacco use on young people, implementing effective tobacco control strategies, and shifting social norms around tobacco use in their schools and communities.⁵



SHARE DECISION-MAKING POWER WITH YOUTH

Roger Hart's '[Ladder of Youth Participation](#)' highlights eight levels of youth participation and decision-making power. It is a useful tool that challenges us to reflect on the level of participation that is wanted, needed and possible and identifies barriers to meaningful participation and how they can be overcome. In Hart's model, the top rung is achieved when adults and youth share decision-making as partners and work together (in synergy).

HART'S LADDER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION



YOUNG PEOPLE & ADULTS **SHARE DECISION-MAKING POWER**

YOUNG PEOPLE **LEAD & INITIATE ACTION**

ADULT-INITIATED, **SHARED DECISIONS** WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUNG PEOPLE **CONSULTED & INFORMED**

YOUNG PEOPLE **ASSIGNED & INFORMED**

YOUNG PEOPLE **TOKENIZED**

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE **DECORATION**

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE **MANIPULATED**



EMPOWER YOUTH

Vermont Afterschool's [Youth-Led Clubs and Activities Planning Guide](#) advises and guides those planning to support youth empowerment work in their schools and communities.

The guide advises that working with youth may involve different triggers or power dynamics than working with adults. Know your youth, when support will be most needed, and what is the best support for each individual youth. It may take time for some youth to change their thinking and assert their influence. Understanding and utilizing their skills and strengths toward goals will show youth the power and influence they already have and encourage them to hone those skills. They may need scaffolding, practice, and modeling empowerment. We must remember their experiences with adults holding power and, as mentors, we must share power and model empowerment in our interactions with youth to support their growth.⁴

OUR 4-PHASE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

- 1 | AWARENESS** of the interests and skills the youth bring to the table.
- 2 | VISIONING** how those interests can come together as a club and draw other students.
- 3 | TRANSFORMATION** of their schools, programs and communities by bringing the club to life.
- 4 | GROWTH** in their program and its leaders by making the process of supporting youth-led clubs and activities a regular part of the program's routine for designing activities.⁴

ADDITIONAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) created the [Rural Youth Engagement Toolkit](#) for young people, coalitions, community-serving organizations, religious organizations and any other group that seeks to meaningfully engage rural youth to address substance misuse issues in their communities and achieve positive community change through comprehensive strategies with a focus on policy and advocacy.

EDUCATING & ENGAGING YOUTH IN PREVENTION EFFORTS

Educating and engaging youth on how and why the tobacco industry targets them and allowing them to educate others in their community is a powerful strategy to counter Big Tobacco's influence.

The Health Department recognizes the following resources developed by various working partners as comprehensive and effective vaping prevention education. While there are other curricula and resources to address vape use among youth, we advise schools to be cautious and review the source of a curriculum. It is NOT best practice to use tobacco or vape industry-sponsored prevention programming or resources. Additional tobacco and nicotine prevention curriculum resources for school and community use can be found in the [Addressing Vaping in Vermont Schools Toolkit](#).



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR ADVISORS AND YOUTH

OVX [Educational and Action-Oriented Modules for Youth](#) is a new resource the Tobacco Control Program provides to assist advisors and those interested in integrating more educational components into group meetings. These modules contain lesson plans, which can be modified to meet the needs of your group, and are intended to:

- Be used by advisors working with youth ages 12-18.
- Cover topics that youth are concerned about mental health, the environment, social justice and public health.
- Include educational information, short lesson plans, activities and additional resources for those interested in going deeper.

The [Take Down Tobacco Training Program](#) offers a comprehensive youth advocacy training program for middle and high school students. It equips them with skills to create change in their communities and fight for the first tobacco-free generation. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids sponsors this free online training. The available courses are:

- **Take Down Tobacco 101:** Learn the basics about the impact of tobacco use, how the tobacco industry targets kids and communities and the proven solutions that can win the fight against tobacco.
- **The Rise of Vaping:** Learn about the rise of the youth e-cigarette epidemic. Get all the facts about the harmful effects of e-cigarettes and how the tobacco industry targets kids with high-nicotine-flavored vapes.
- **Messaging Matters:** Learn how to use your experiences and how tobacco has affected you, your family and your community to develop relatable, concise messages that will resonate with your target audiences and engage your community.
- **Mastering the Media:** Learn how to leverage the news media to communicate your advocacy message to your community. This course offers tactics and advice to effectively work with local news media outlets to amplify tobacco control policies and other important issues you care about.
- **Informing Decision-Makers:** Learn how to use your own personal experiences and how tobacco has affected you, your family and your community to develop relatable, concise messages that will resonate with your target audiences and urge action in your community.
- **Activities that Take Down Tobacco:** Identify the key components of impactful advocacy events and activities, learn how to use your creativity to create successful, innovative activities and find examples of activities that #TakeDownTobacco.

Stanford Medicine's [Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) contains many resources, including the new [You and Me, Together Vape-Free curriculum](#). This is a theory-based and evidence-informed curriculum created by the Stanford Reach Lab in collaboration with their Youth Action Board and educators from across the U.S. This free resource contains six lessons, each providing activities, online quiz games and worksheets. In addition to the presentations, resources and other materials are provided to address key factors associated with youth vaping, including changing adolescents' attitudes toward and misperceptions about vape products; increasing refusal skills to the lure of flavors, marketing and social media; reducing stress and depression, which have been linked to tobacco and nicotine initiation and use; improving coping; and decreasing intentions and actual use of all vaping products.

[Earth Day Toolkit](#), created by the California Youth Advocacy Network, is an excellent resource for learning more about the destructive cycle of commercial tobacco and how to use this information to engage and educate community members on strategies to eliminate tobacco waste and secondhand smoke from our environment.



EDUCATING & ENGAGING YOUTH IN TOBACCO PREVENTION EFFORTS

[The OVX Activity Guide](#) has creative, fun, engaging activities for your next school or community event. These activities have been sourced from youth tobacco prevention programs around the United States and include step-by-step instructions and the necessary materials. Also included is a section on Day of Action and Awareness events. These are unique opportunities you can use to educate on the harms of tobacco/nicotine use and the manipulative and deceptive marketing tactics tobacco and vape companies use to target specific populations.

[Unhyped](#) is Vermont's vaping prevention education campaign designed specifically for youth ages 12-17. Key messaging increases knowledge about the health consequences of vaping any substance and corrects common misconceptions, separating the truth from the hype.

[CounterBalance](#) educates Vermont parents/guardians, teachers and youth influencers about the dangerous impact of flavored tobacco and deceptive tobacco industry marketing on young people in our state. As tobacco marketing has evolved, so has CounterBalance. Today, in addition to emphasizing concerns about the unlawful sale of colorful and enticingly flavored vape products, including disposable devices, CounterBalance addresses discounting and couponing that appeal to young consumers and the toxic waste disposal that harms our environment. The site also offers Vermont-related data and informational resources.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

[Nic Sick: The Dangers of Youth Vaping](#) A documentary featuring teens talking with authenticity about their struggles to overcome vape addiction.

[The Earth is Not Disposable: Nicotine Vape Waste](#) The California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN) created this informational video highlighting the environmental impact of nicotine vape waste and single-use plastic e-cigarette products.

[Tobacco and the Environment](#) A deeper look into how the tobacco industry and its products negatively impact the environment.

[Tobacco as a social justice issue: The UpRISE story](#). Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. The impacts of tobacco use show up more in specific populations that are intentionally targeted by the tobacco and vape industry. On top of the inequitable burden of death and disease on communities, the industry causes irreversible harm to the environment, manipulates government and skirts laws designed to reduce its impact—making tobacco not only an issue of health but one of social justice.

[Black Lives / Black Lungs](#) is a documentary by Lincoln Mondy that explores the history, marketing tactics and impact of the tobacco industry targeting African Americans with menthol tobacco products. Lincoln says the project, featuring experts and activists across the country, is part of his efforts to “turn my anger into action” and inspire viewers to do the same.

[Cigarette in Soil Experiment - 1 YEAR Time Lapse Video](#). A photographer left three cigarettes in a mason jar filled with soil for an entire year, taking a timelapse video to show what happens to them.

[Big Vape: The Rise and Fall of JUUL](#). In this Netflix docuseries, a scrappy electronic cigarette startup becomes a multibillion-dollar company until an epidemic causes its success to go up in smoke.



EDUCATIONAL & INFORMATIVE WEBSITES

Gather information and data only from reputable websites. The websites listed below and others referenced in this toolkit are great places to start. If you have questions about the source's reliability or the accuracy of the data, please contact the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov.

The [Truth Initiative](#) is America's largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to a future where [commercial tobacco](#) and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past. Their mission is to achieve a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine.

The [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) is one of the leading advocacy organizations working to reduce tobacco use and its deadly consequences in the United States and around the world.

[Vaping Prevention and Education Resource Center](#) resources from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include lesson plans, activity sheets, videos and educational information for middle and high school educators to help inform students about the health consequences associated with vaping.

[Keep It Sacred - National Native Network](#) strives to decrease cancer-related health disparities among American Indian and Alaska Native communities and promote the roles of traditional tobacco and other traditional medicines and ways of living, improving public health while protecting tribal sovereignty and resiliency.

[The Real Cost Campaign](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides the most accurate, up-to-date information about the harmful effects of tobacco use so youth know the real cost of smoking, vaping and other tobacco use.

STATEWIDE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

OVX Youth Leadership Summit: We understand the important role youth play in creating lasting, positive changes in tobacco prevention and control in their schools and communities. We also understand the importance of equipping youth with the information and tools necessary to do this work.

In collaboration with the newly formed Vermont Tobacco Control Youth Leadership Council, we have worked to create an engaging, fun, and practical experience for OVX student members and advisors that will accelerate tobacco prevention and protections for Vermont youth.

This annual event, led by trained facilitators, is open to OVX members and other interested youth, youth group, or students in grade 5-12 within Vermont. Youth will learn leadership skills and how to craft their story and use their voice to affect change. The OVX Youth Leadership Summit is typically held in the last week of October or the first week of November at a centrally located venue within the state. Registration is free with lunch included. Pre-registration is required.

OVX Youth Statehouse Rally - The Annual OVX Youth Statehouse Rally, held each February in Montpelier, provides youth with a platform to educate and inform key decision-makers and fellow Vermonters about tobacco and nicotine-related issues, as seen and experienced firsthand.

This annual event is open to any interested youth, youth group, or school grades 5-12 within Vermont. Registration is free, but pre-registration is required.

Vermont Tobacco Control Youth Leadership Council was formed in 2024 to bring youth and youth voice to the forefront of tobacco prevention efforts within the state. Twelve council members assist in essential decisions on youth engagement strategies, areas of focus, and statewide activities for the Our Voices Xposed (OVX) youth initiative program.

Council members serve a one-year term working alongside Vermont Department of Health staff and tobacco prevention community grantees to envision and create positive change in their schools and communities. For more information on the council or information on applying (applications are accepted each spring), please visit [CounterBalanceVT.com](https://www.counterbalancevt.com).



COMMUNITY & STATEHOUSE EVENT GUIDANCE

The OVX program strives to engage youth who are concerned about the impacts of the tobacco industry's web of misinformation and deception. Education and information are powerful strategies to help teens break free from tobacco and nicotine's influence.

Community events and the Annual OVX Youth Statehouse Rally, which will be held in February in Montpelier, provide youth with a platform to educate and inform key decision-makers and fellow Vermonters about tobacco and nicotine-related issues, as seen and experienced firsthand.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS & THE STATEHOUSE RALLY

Here are some helpful resources we advise you to review with youth involved in your program.

- [Advocacy Toolkit](#) - CADCA's Guide to Educating Legislators.
- [Vermont Youth Advocacy](#) - An American Heart Association Resource.
- [Advocacy Training](#) - The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids online youth advocacy training.
- [Youth Advocacy Interview with Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale](#) – A Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community youth training resource.

EDUCATING VERSES LOBBYING

Youth need to understand their focus at these events is educating key decision-makers, community members and peers on the dangers associated with tobacco and nicotine use and highlighting how these products are negatively impacting students, schools and communities.

THE FOLLOWING COULD BE CONSIDERED LOBBYING

- Asking policymakers to support legislation
- Giving legislators a “call to action”

EXAMPLES OF LOBBYING LANGUAGE

- Support/do not support
- Oppose
- Vote no/vote for/vote against



MEETING RESOURCES

ICEBREAKERS & GROUP ACTIVITIES

[Team Building Activity Guide](#), created by Iowa Students for Tobacco Education and Prevention (ISTEP), provides icebreakers and activities that can be used throughout the school year at chapter meetings. As chapter members build closer connections and grow common interests among one another, this will naturally increase chapter member retention. The goals of participating in the activities are to:

- Keep current members engaged
- Increase chapter bonding
- Recruit new members

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

We often receive requests for meeting agendas and activities. Although our goal is to promote creativity and innovation among advisors and to allow them to do what works best for the young people in their school community, we have developed a sample agenda for those who prefer a more structured approach to their meetings.

10 MINS CHECK-IN & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Youth Leadership Summit information
- Earth Day cleanup event

5 MINS ICEBREAKER OR GROUP ACTIVITY

- Three Words

25 MINS ACTION ITEMS

- The Earth is Not Disposable (Video)
- Group discussion

5 MINS WRAP-UP & QUESTIONS

NEXT MEETING

- Date, time, location
- Topics and or activities on the agenda



EARNED MEDIA & PUBLICITY 101

Media has the power to influence our behavior and attitudes. We are exposed to a mind-boggling amount of information every day. It is important now more than ever to have well-organized events and press releases to boost the visibility of your group's tobacco control and prevention efforts.

Earned media is free, local media coverage/reporting of your group's activities. Consider contacting community newspapers, local radio stations, or community access television stations, or posting your event/story to social media and blogs.

YOUR ROLE IN EARNED MEDIA

Event Planning

When planning an event, you and your youth chapter members should think about what makes a compelling story. News is current and interesting for most of the community or about the community. That will attract media interest. Determining what the story might look or sound like in a news article or on the radio can help organizers develop a better event.

- Is the event/idea relevant to the local community?
- Is it timely, and can it be linked to ongoing news or areas of interest in the community?
- Is there a tobacco community grantee in the area to help garner earned media?
- What is the visual story for photographers and newspaper/television media?
- Who should be the spokesperson for the event?
- What will that person say?

Event Timing

Event timing is important when trying to garner earned media. Events that happen in the mid- to late-morning on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays will attract more attention from the media. Doing the event mid-week gives the media enough time to assemble the story and avoid the weekend rush.

Leveraging Local Connection

If you have contacts in your community with the media, you can reach out to provide a more personal connection to the potential story. Local outlets like hearing from their community members by phone or email. This personal connection will carry more clout than contact coming from the Tobacco Program.



OVX BRAND STANDARDS & DESIGN GUIDELINES

LOGOS



COLORS & FONT



HEX: #131729
CMYK: 87, 80, 53, 69
RGB: 19, 23, 41



HEX: #F5CD5C
CMYK: 4, 18, 75, 0
RGB: 245, 205, 92



HEX: #70B047
CMYK: 62, 9, 97, 0
RGB: 112, 176, 71

ARIAL BLACK

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmno**pqr**stuvwxyz

ARIAL REGULAR

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmno**pqr**stuvwxyz

ARIAL ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmno**pqr**stuvwxyz

BEST PRACTICES

- Full color logo should be used whenever possible. Black logo is used when printing in black and white. White logo should be used when the background is dark and the full-color logo is not legible.
- Logo should be used consistently and never altered. Please do not change the color, alter the shape, stretch or crop the logo.
- Logo must never be smaller than 0.8 inches in width. When co-branding, the co-branded logo should not be closer than 0.5 inches to the OVX logo.

FILE FORMATS USAGE

EPS (CMYK): For digital, offset printing and embroidery. This version should be sent to vendors.

JPG (RGB): For digital or in-house documents such as MS word or PowerPoint.

PNG (RGB): For digital or in-house documents when you need a logo with a transparent background.



BRAND STANDARDS

Brand standards are a set of guidelines that give creative work an identity. These guidelines include colors; photography and graphic elements; logo specifications; fonts, and messaging tone and themes. They establish and distinguish the OVX brand in the marketplace.

COLORS

Select a color or hue of a main color from the OVX brand. Depending on the design platform, color themes are available under the Design tab to help give creations a consistent look and feel.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Images tell a story. They often communicate better than words, and images are processed more rapidly by the brain. Assume copyright laws exist on all images and graphic elements you find on the Internet. There are free image and graphic design sites, such as Canva.com. However, using your own high-quality photographs and video footage is recommended.

They'll be more realistic/authentic. Be sure to have written consent from all participants. And consider what's in the background Set a tone with your photographs. Substance use is serious. If you're referencing addiction, your photo should look and feel somber. If the subject is youth leadership, the photos can look inspirational, capturing OVX energy and enthusiasm.

LOGOS

A logo gives a brand personality. The OVX logo was designed by Vermont youth groups in 2019. These are available for use by those associated with this program. Please do not alter the logo in any way.

FONT

Select a typeface that complements your brand. Make sure it is easy to read and pleasing. Use various font sizes. Mix serifs and sans serifs. Create contrast. Use fonts in the same family.

MESSAGING

Do you know your audience? Your message must be relatable, relevant and include a call to action. What do you want your audience to think, feel and do? Use plain language. Be concise. Check your facts.



DESIGN RULES

Not everyone can be the star

Decide what is the most important information and make it the first thing people notice.

Keep Related Information together

Ensure all relevant details are grouped. This can include an image and text or a headline and support copy. You wouldn't write an address with the street address, in one corner and the city and state somewhere else. Your content should be cohesive and organized.

There really is a limit

More is not better when it comes to fonts, colors, exclamation points, or bold letters. We aren't after the storage locker look; we want the Martha Stewart closet.

Guide the Reader's Eye

Good design guides the reader's eyes. Make sure important information is easy to find and follow naturally. If people search for what they need, they might give up or be less engaged.

Stretching is for muscles ... not graphics

Don't stretch photos, logos or illustrations out of shape. Would you want to see your nose to be double its width in a photo? Be kind to your graphics—maintain proportions. (Simple solution—hold down the SHIFT key when resizing.)



original



don't do this



do this

STAY CONNECTED

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE VERMONT TOBACCO CONTROL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

This monthly publication is filled with information on new and emerging products, nationwide trends, prevention resources for schools and youth-serving organizations, upcoming trainings, and so much more! To be added to the monthly Our Voices Xposed (OVX) youth engagement distribution list, please contact the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov and place OVX newsletter in the subject line.

CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL OFFICE OF HEALTH

There are 12 [Offices of Local Health](#) located around the state to serve Vermont communities. The school liaison in your local office partners with schools and school districts to support health and wellness-related work. School liaisons can share resources and collaborate with school teams on vaping-related best practices, policy development, and assessments.

To contact your local school liaison, please visit the [Vermont Department of Health](#) Local Health website.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on OVX, assistance implementing a chapter in your community, or integrating activities into an existing group, please contact the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov.

TO LEARN MORE

To learn more or to get involved in tobacco prevention in your community, visit CounterBalanceVT.com



CONNECT WITH OUR TOBACCO PREVENTION COMMUNITY PARTNERS (GRANTEES)

[Winooski Partnership for Prevention](#)

In addition to its local work, the Winooski Partnership for Prevention is the designated FY25 statewide local policy lead, providing technical assistance in point-of-sale policy, with a focus on buffer zones around schools and adding conditions to local tobacco licenses.

[The Collaborative](#)

The Collaborative supports local tobacco and nicotine prevention and treatment services across both Bennington County and Windsor County. As the FY25 statewide lead for secondhand smoke policy, The Collaborative will lead both vape disposal and secondhand smoke education and policy initiatives at a statewide level.

[Abenaki Circle of Courage](#)

A new tobacco grant partner, the Abenaki Circle of Courage, represents the St. Francis/Sokoki Band of Missisquoi Bay. Their work will strengthen historical knowledge of Indigenous communities' sacred and ceremonial uses of tobacco through a cultural education program. The Circle of Courage will also support treatment of commercial tobacco use through art therapy services and incorporating sacred tobacco education at its youth summer camp.

[Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition](#)

The Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition is based within the Northwestern Medical Center. The coalition focuses on policy, systems and environmental change strategies to support local tobacco and nicotine treatment and prevention throughout the two counties.

[Windham County Prevention Partnership](#)

Windham County Prevention Partnership is a long-standing collaboration between Building a Positive Community, Deerfield Valley Community Partnership and West River Valley Thrives. The organization will lead tobacco treatment and prevention strategies throughout the Windham County region.

[Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community](#)

The Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community is a substance use prevention coalition that serves Vermont's largest city. This grant will support the partnership's tobacco and nicotine prevention and treatment efforts for individuals and on a systemic level.

[Healthy Lamoille Valley](#)

Serving a primarily rural area of the state, including all of Lamoille County and parts of Caledonia, Orleans and Washington Counties, Healthy Lamoille Valley will draw on its six years of experience to continue local-oriented tobacco-related prevention and treatment efforts.

[University of Vermont Center on Behavior & Health](#)

The Vermont Center on Behavior and Health is an interdisciplinary research center committed to investigating relationships between personal behavior patterns (e.g., lifestyle) and risk for chronic disease and premature death. Its work has historically focused on health disparities, particularly among the socioeconomically disadvantaged, where these risk factors are overrepresented. The Center will use this grant funding to focus on improving smoking treatment services for people who are pregnant.

[Public Health Response to Research](#)

Public Health Response to Research Ltd. is a newly formed benefit corporation in Vermont. The organization will work to decrease population harm from nicotine and tobacco use through creative communication strategies. Director Rolf Parker-Houghton served as tobacco program coordinator for Building a Positive Community.

[Learn more about our partners](#)

The Tobacco Control Program collaborates with the following community-based organizations to reach populations that are especially vulnerable to the health impacts of tobacco or experience above average rates of tobacco use:

[VT Afterschool](#)

[Outright VT](#)

[NAACP Windham County](#)



ENDNOTES

1 Nicotine and The Young Brain: <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/harmful-effects-tobacco/nicotine-and-young-brain>

2 Flavored Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/flavored-tobacco-use-among-youth-and-young-adults>

3 U.S. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS): <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/>

4 Vermont Afterschool Youth Led Clubs and Activities Planning Guide: <https://vermontafterschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Youth-Led-Clubs-and-Activities-Planning-Guide-2022.pdf>

5 CDC Best Practices Users Guide: Youth Engagement in Tobacco Prevention and Control Users Guide, https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/e/1037/files/2011/11/UG_YouthEngagement_2019.pdf

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