

## Tobacco 21

As of January 2023, 41 states have passed laws raising the age of sale for all tobacco products from 18 years of age to 21. Missouri has not aligned state law with federal standards to prevent retailers from selling tobacco products to youth. The federal law requires states to maintain compliance with age 21 or risk losing 10% of their Mental Health and Substance Use grant funds.

### Community Role

Communities have a critical role to play in reducing the deadly toll of tobacco and preventing youth from ever picking up the habit. Missouri allows for communities to offset the cost to the State of compliance checks. Cities such as Springfield and Joplin already have model policies in place to check for illegal sales to minors and checking retailers for illegal sales.

#### *EACH YEAR IN MISSOURI...*

**2,200 KIDS BECOME DAILY SMOKERS EACH YEAR.**

**11,000 RESIDENTS DIE EACH YEAR FROM TOBACCO.**

### Overview of Policy

Tobacco 21 policy includes all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes; prohibiting sales to under 21; requiring retailers to verify age of purchaser; requires retailer signage that sales to under 21 are prohibited; identifying an enforcement agency and protocol; creating a tobacco retail licensing program; allocating funding to cover enforcement costs from nominal license fee; places penalties on the tobacco retailer, not the youth; establishes a minimum number of annual compliance checks for every retailer; developing a civil rather than criminal penalty structure.

### Core Components

Age of Sale Laws	A part of the CDC’s comprehensive tobacco control guidance intended to protect youth from initiating tobacco products by restricting retailers from selling to individuals under the age of 21.
Retailer License for Nicotine and Tobacco Retailers	To enforce age restriction laws, holding each retailer to the same standards. A retail license is needed for all nicotine and tobacco product retailers. Missouri is one of only 12 states that does not license retailers at a state level to know who is selling.
Conducting Annual Compliance Checks	Each retailer should be checked annually to ensure compliance with the law by using an underage decoy to make a buy attempt.
Penalize Retailers for Illegal Sales	The federal law places penalties for violations on the retailer for illegal sales to persons under age 21. Currently, Missouri does not place a penalty on the retailer, but rather on the low wage salesclerks and the youth.
Suspending or Revoking Sales Privileges for Repeat Violators	Age restriction policies work by stopping the fraction of rogue retailers who continue to violate the law on selling nicotine and tobacco products to underage persons