

# Tobacco Product Advertising and Availability at the Point-of-Sale in New Jersey: A Brief Review

June 2026

## BACKGROUND

The tobacco industry continues to invest billions of dollars annually in the United States marketing its products at the point-of-sale using targeted marketing strategies toward vulnerable populations.<sup>1</sup> In addition, tobacco companies have initiated and increased expenditures in marketing efforts of non-cigarette tobacco products such as cigarillos, e-cigarettes, and nicotine pouches.<sup>2,3</sup> Exposure to tobacco advertising at the point-of-sale is linked to higher levels of youth tobacco susceptibility and use and requires continued monitoring.<sup>3-6</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

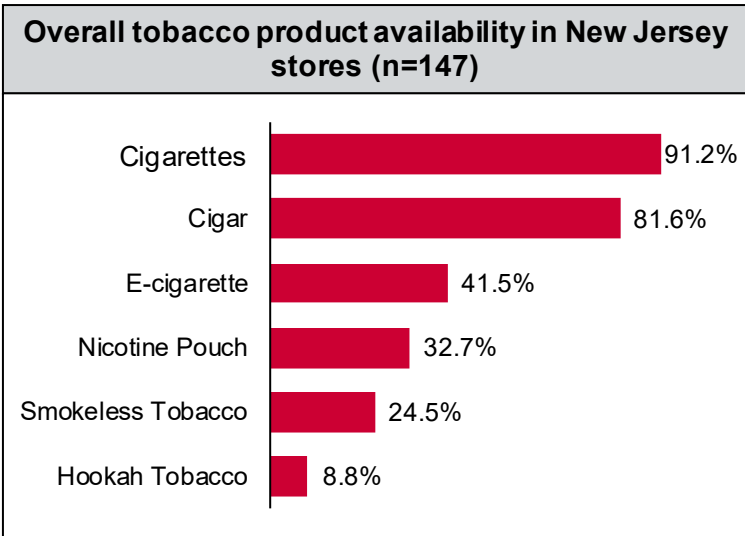
This project collected repeated tobacco point-of-sale data from stores (n=147) surrounding a representative sample of New Jersey high schools (n=41) in urban and non-urban locations between 2015 and 2025. Urban districts were defined as municipalities with more than 10,000 residents per square mile<sup>7</sup> and schools with more than 50% non-white enrollment.<sup>8</sup> Using a Qualtrics survey on a smartphone device, trained auditors collected detailed information on the prevalence of advertisements and availability for each of the tobacco products monitored in this project (i.e., cigarettes, cigars/cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, tobacco-free nicotine pouches, and hookah tobacco). This brief describes overall tobacco product availability and presence of tobacco product advertisements both inside and outside stores. It also describes differences by store type (i.e., chain and non-chain convenience stores, liquor stores, drug stores, gas station kiosks, dollar stores, and other types of stores) and district type (urban vs. non-urban school districts). Finally, this brief describes store compliance with tobacco laws.

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**Suggested citation: Roberts K, Ackerman C, Jordan-Tse H, Schroth K, Pacek L, Hrywna M. Tobacco Product Advertising and Availability at the Point-of-Sale: A Brief Review. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies; June 2026.**

# RESULTS

## Tobacco Product Availability, 2025



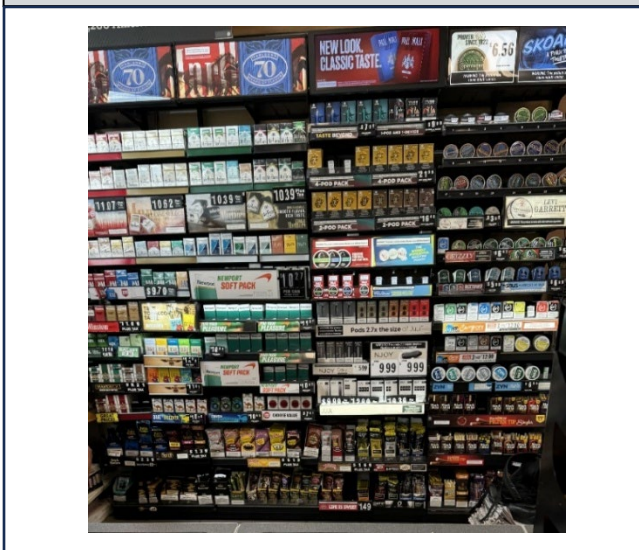
- Cigarettes (91.2%) remain the most commonly available tobacco product across all store types (see figure to left).
- Menthol cigarettes were sold in 99.3% of stores that sold cigarettes.
- All stores that sold cigars sold flavored varieties.
- Despite New Jersey's flavored e-cigarette ban, 31.3% of stores sold flavored e-cigarettes; however, flavored e-cigarette availability decreased from 42.2% in 2024 to 31.3% in 2025.
- Nicotine pouch availability surpassed that of smokeless tobacco (32.7% vs. 24.5%)

### Tobacco product availability by store type in New Jersey, (%)

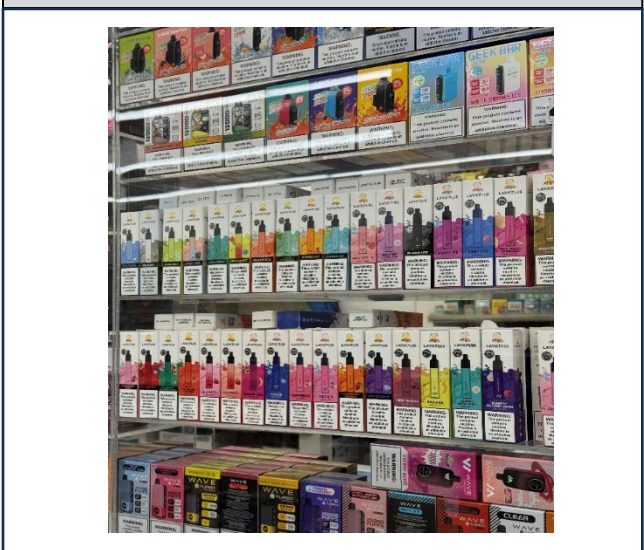
Store Type	# of Stores	Cigarettes	Cigars	E-Cigarettes	Nicotine Pouches	Smokeless Tobacco	Hookah Tobacco
Non-Chain Convenience	72	98.6	90.3	41.7	22.2	11.1	9.7
Chain Convenience	25	96.0	96.0	84.0	84.0	80.0	12.0
Liquor	21	95.2	81.0	28.6	28.6	14.3	0.0
Pharmacy	7	85.7	28.6	0.0	28.6	28.6	0.0
Gas Kiosk	9	66.7	55.6	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dollar	4	100.0	100.0	25.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
Other	9	33.3	33.3	22.2	11.1	11.1	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>

### Tobacco Products as Seen in New Jersey Stores

**“Power wall” in a New Jersey chain convenience store**

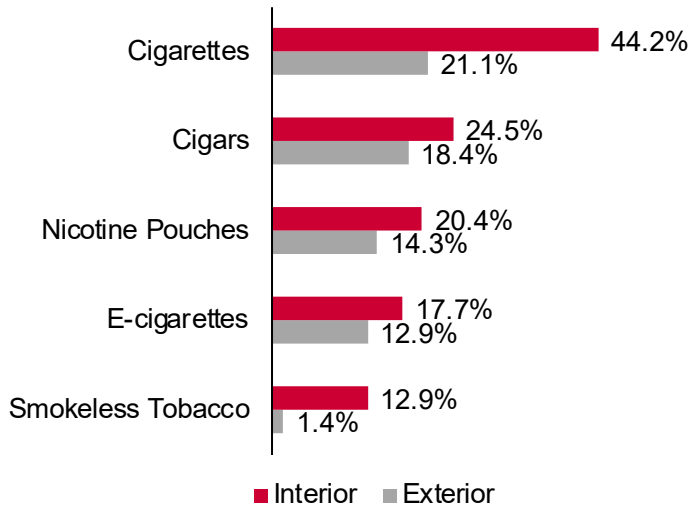


**Disposable vape display in a New Jersey non-chain convenience store**



## Tobacco Product Advertising, 2025

### Interior and exterior tobacco product advertisements in New Jersey stores (n=147)



- Cigarettes were the most commonly advertised tobacco product across all store types (see figure to left).
- Stores in urban districts had a higher prevalence of exterior advertising for menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.
- Stores in non-urban districts had a higher prevalence of non-combustible tobacco product advertising (nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco).
- Flavored e-cigarette advertisements were rare and were not observed in any urban district stores.

### Interior and exterior tobacco product advertising by store type in New Jersey, (%)

Store Type	# of Stores	Cigarette		Cigar		Nicotine Pouch		E-Cigarette		Smokeless Tobacco	
		Interior	Exterior	Interior	Exterior	Interior	Exterior	Interior	Exterior	Interior	Exterior
Non-Chain Convenience	72	43.1	22.2	22.2	20.8	8.3	8.3	11.1	8.3	1.4	0.0
Chain Convenience	25	76.0	52.0	40.0	40.0	76.0	48.0	68.0	48.0	64.0	8.0
Liquor	21	23.8	4.8	23.8	4.8	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pharmacy	7	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gas Kiosk	9	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dollar	4	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Other	9	22.2	0.0	11.1	11.1	0.0	11.1	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>

## Tobacco Product Advertisements as Seen in New Jersey Stores

Flavored cigar advertisement in a New Jersey non-chain convenience store in an urban school district

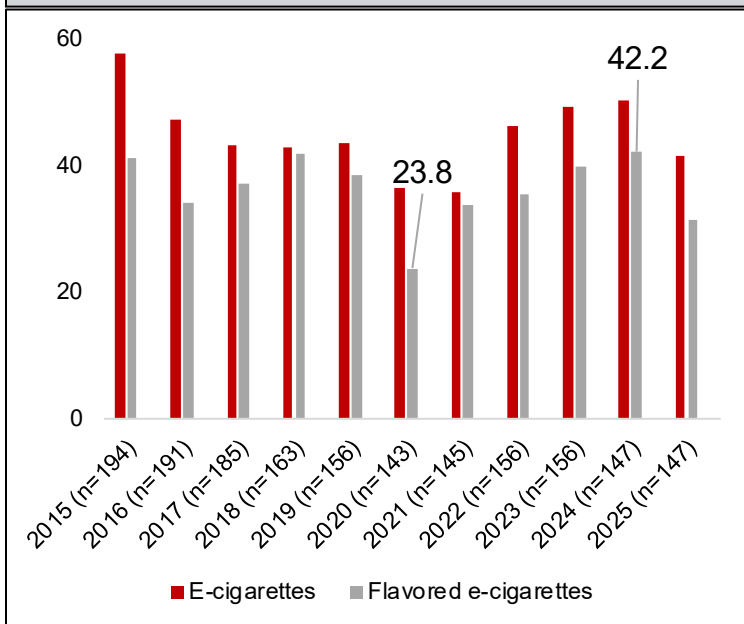


Menthol cigarette advertisement in a New Jersey chain convenience store in an urban school district



## Compliance With Tobacco Regulation and Cessation Laws, 2015-2025

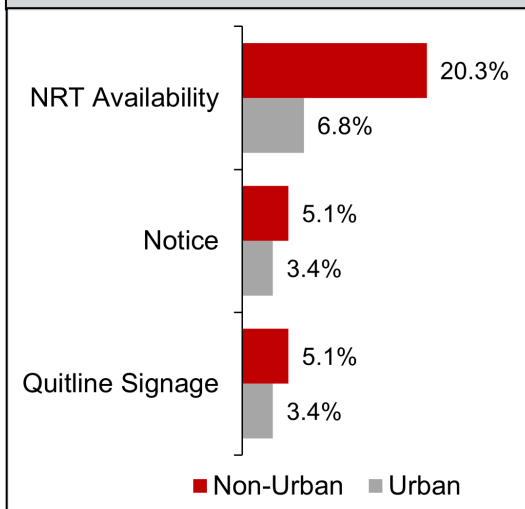
**E-cigarette and flavored e-cigarette availability in New Jersey stores, (%), 2015-2025**



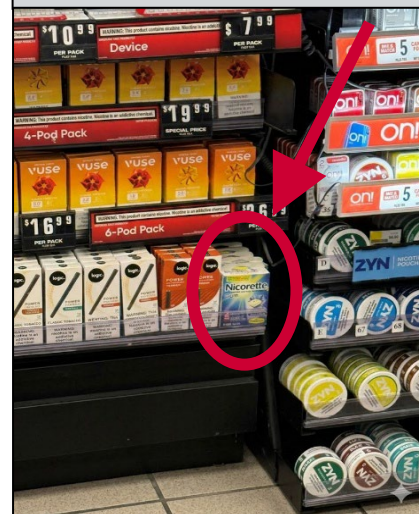
- Although overall e-cigarette availability declined from 2015 to 2025, the availability of flavored e-cigarettes increased from the first year of the ban in 2020 (23.8%) to its highest point in 2024 (42.2%) (see figure to left).
- Although flavored e-cigarette availability declined in 2025, 46 of the 61 (75.4%) stores audited that sold e-cigarettes also sold flavored varieties.
- Flavored e-cigarette and flavored disposable e-cigarettes were available in all store types, except pharmacies and dollar stores. They were both most common in chain convenience (44.0%) and non-chain convenience stores (43.1%).

- NRT was available in 20.3% of stores.
- NRT was three times more available in non-urban districts.
- All of the pharmacies in the sample sold NRT.
- Quitline and NRT availability notices were observed in 5.1% stores.
- Even among compliant stores, NRT availability may go largely unnoticed due to competing diverse, visually dominant power walls, which may limit the law's effects.

**NRT law compliance and NJ Quitline signage in New Jersey stores (n=147) by district type, (%), 2025**



**NRT display in a New Jersey chain convenience store 2025**



**Only 1.3% (2 of 147) stores were in full compliance with both the Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) law and the flavored e-cigarette sales ban.**

## DISCUSSION

Combustible tobacco products remain the most widely available and most advertised tobacco products in cigarette retail stores located near NJ public high schools. Cigarettes were by far the most available and advertised tobacco product across all types of stores. In particular, chain convenience stores often displayed a high number of cigarette ads which may be a function of the relatively larger retail space available in these types of stores. Cigars were the second most available tobacco products, followed by e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, and smokeless tobacco. Advertising followed a similar order but with nicotine pouches and e-cigarettes reversed. Flavored e-cigarette availability declined over the past 10 years but still remain available in almost a third of our sample. NRT products that are required to be sold in tobacco retailers were only found in 20% of stores, and the required NRT availability notice and Quitline signage were only seen in 5.1% of stores.

## CONCLUSION

Advertising for each tobacco product remains low relative to product availability. Nicotine pouches became more available in the past year and are now more common than smokeless tobacco. Illegal flavored e-cigarettes declined in the past year but remain available. Conversely, NRT product availability, NRT signage, and Quitline signage remain uncommon. The current level of compliance with the e-cigarette flavor ban and NRT law suggests a highlighted need for stronger enforcement and targeted education.

## REFERENCES

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