

# Tobacco Vendor Education Best Practice Recommendations from CEI CMHA Region County Prevention Coalitions

## **When Developing Store Policy**

1. Require that IDs are requested and checked for all customers appearing to be younger than 40 years of age.
2. Accept only government-issued, valid, photo ID
3. Require that ID be handed to the clerk to check for alteration or signs of false identification.
4. Require trained staff to handle sales of age-restricted products.
5. Provide written protocol for staff to follow when refusing out of state, non-government issued or questionable identification.
6. Record in a store log, underage purchase attempts and actions taken by the clerk to refuse the sale. Discuss the situations at staff meetings and during regular management meetings.
7. Determine if local law enforcement will be contacted when an underage teen tries to purchase age-restricted products.

## **Training of Volunteers/Assistants/Etc.**

1. When training volunteers/assistants, ensure they know what they are supposed to be doing.
  - a. Go through the protocol and materials ahead of time
  - b. Have them shadow DYTURs on several visits – do a few visits together, then allow them to take the lead while the DYTUR supervises the activity.
  - c. Provide the full retailer list to all individuals conducting vendor education. This way, if the trainers see a retailer that is not on their list, they can see if someone else is providing education, and if not, add the retailer to the overall list.
2. Youth usually have a sense of comfort providing education to the vendors they visited the previous year – if possible plan to allow for this.
  - a. Vendor Ed using youth is a great way for youth to develop leadership skills.
  - b. Sending Youth in pairs makes the process less intimidating.
3. Always ask for the owner or manager for the most effective visit.
  - a. Give vendor education to clerks only when the others are unavailable.
4. Keep the visit short and focused.
  - a. Be prepared to give a brief overview of what is contained within the folders.
  - b. Recipients of vendor education are busy people – do not deter them from their primary job functions.
5. Focus your presentation around youth safety.
  - a. Most people can buy in to this concept
  - b. If met with hostile behavior from retailers, cut the visit short, stay friendly, and exit the establishment.
6. If possible, encourage law enforcement participation in vendor education.
  - a. This is especially important when visiting troubled or difficult vendors – vendors tend to respond with respect for law enforcement officers.
7. Target vendor education to those retailers who are chronic sellers, baseline violators, and/or Synar sellers.

## **Training of Vendors**

1. Train all employees on procedures for sale of age restricted products and the consequences of violations for the clerk, store, customer, and community.

2. Provide DOB signs, train the clerk, and test their ability to calculate age.
3. Provide education on how to “Read the Red” for a vertical Michigan ID.
4. Provide electronic age verification at the register (information is available).
5. Provide written consequences for sales of age-restricted products to a minor.
6. Review store policies and train all staff upon hire and every 6-months thereafter; use real situations to help clerks practice refusal skills.
7. Train to refuse sales and train to support those efforts.
8. Send staff to Clerk Trainings, if available.
9. Weigh the pros and cons of offering individual vs. group vendor education.

### **Support Tools/ Materials**

1. Have the large DOB sign available with sticker backing.
  - a. Pre-plan for education being provided to larger stores and provide additional small stickers.
  - b. Post signs upon entry that explain store policy.
2. Create a checklist for vendors – make an easy to follow sheet providing an overview of the education/stickers for their ease and understanding.
3. Use age verification aids at checkout – calendars, DOB signs, register prompts, and electronic age verification machines.
4. Conduct “Secret Shopper” programs that recognize and reward employees for following written store procedures.
5. Offer incentives for individuals providing vendor education.
6. Create identification badges for vendor educators.
  - a. Laminate a badge that can be pinned to individuals’ shirts that say “Prevention Educator” with the coalition logo.
7. In the vendor education packets, consider including the following:
  - a. Quit-Tobacco Help phone number/ 211
  - b. Copies of all Local and State laws related to the store.
  - c. Affordable Health Insurance information.
  - d. Vendor Education training schedule.
  - e. Business cards for contact organization/person.
  - f. Model clerk training protocol.
  - g. Model clerk and manager signed agreements.
  - h. Vertical license info/ enhanced driver’s license information.

### **Other**

1. Keep tobacco displays behind the counter.
2. No smoking paraphernalia should be sold to anyone under the age of 18.
3. Do not sell candy cigarettes or tobacco look-alike products.
4. Do not sell single cigarettes or cigars.
5. Limit tobacco promotional materials to the product area display.
6. Report all suspected sales to a minor to local law enforcement.