

INNOVATING AND INSPIRING ACTION TO SAVE LIVES

OUR IMPACT TO END VAPING,
SMOKING AND NICOTINE ADDICTION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



On the cover: Vaping: Know the truth Art Challenge

In its first full year, our national youth vaping prevention curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth* inspired nicotine-free lives by giving young people the facts about e-cigarette use and providing resources to quit with *This is Quitting*. The curriculum, developed by Truth Initiative and Kaiser Permanente in collaboration with the American Heart Association and available to schools at no cost by leading social impact education innovator EVERFI, also inspired works of art.

More than 200 students submitted artwork to the Vaping: Know the truth Art Challenge, which **truth** and EVERFI launched in March 2021. The contest invited students between 13 and 19 years old from across the country to use facts they had learned from *Vaping: Know the truth* about the environmental hazards of e-cigarette use as inspiration to create their submission.

Featured on the cover is the submission from the grand prize winner: 11th grade student Charles C. from Pennsylvania, who received a \$5,500 college tuition scholarship and will have his artwork featured on **truth** merchandise. Charles told **truth** that he was inspired by learning about the “damage vaping has on our oceans and water-based ecosystems.” Four runner-up winners each received a \$1,125 college tuition scholarship.

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LETTER FROM CEO & PRESIDENT ROBIN KOVAL



We are confident in our mission to achieve a culture in which young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine because our work over the past year proves it is possible. In 2021, we engaged more people than ever through our public education efforts, community-level and youth activism programs, innovative and evidence-proven quit tools, and the field-leading research and analysis that drives everything we do. Our **truth**[®] branded efforts have made the important connection between the youth vaping epidemic and the youth mental health crisis by exposing the fact that the very thing many young people are turning to alleviate their stress, anxiety, and depression — nicotine and vaping — can make their symptoms worse. We've provided not only the facts but real solutions to young people coping with nicotine dependence and, as of April 2022, helped over 440,000 young people begin their journey to quit e-cigarettes with our first-of-its-kind, evidence proven quit vaping program This is Quitting[®] from

truth. We also reached millions of adult smokers with our digital tobacco cessation programs the EX[®] Program and BecomeAnEX[®]. Most notably, our EX Program is now available to more than 9.7 million people through employers, health insurers, and healthcare providers, including major companies such as Conduent, BAE Systems, and B. Braun Medical, as well as through Medicaid plans in four states.

We recruited and trained young leaders to act in their communities and engaged decision makers at every level. And now we have the data to show our collective efforts are making an impact on the youth e-cigarette epidemic with our own peer-reviewed research that shows awareness of the **truth** campaign is significantly associated with increases in anti-vaping knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Just as Truth Initiative has played a critical role in helping to drive down the youth smoking rate from 23% in 2000 to an all-time low of 2.3% in 2021 (according to 2021

Monitoring the Future data), we are taking on youth vaping and nicotine use in all forms.

These gains to inspire lives free from smoking, vaping, and nicotine require constant innovation and we are proud that Fast Company has once again named us to their annual list of the World's Most Innovative Companies. Some of our significant highlights from the past year include:

- Our groundbreaking **truth** campaign, *It's Messing with Our Heads*, included the creation of a fake vaping company called **Depression Stick!** to boldly raise awareness of the fact that nicotine can worsen symptoms of **anxiety** and **depression**. *Breath of Stress Air*, the campaign's expansion effort, busts the fantasy that vaping nicotine is a stress reliever and continues to call out the tobacco industry's ongoing attempts to distort public perception about the health effects of vaping.
- **truth** public education and prevention efforts, which fully integrate This is Quitting, catapulted enrollment, as research published in JAMA in 2021 demonstrated the program's effectiveness. A randomized **clinical trial** found that This is Quitting increased quit rates among young adults aged 18-24 by nearly 40% compared to a control group.
- Our Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute® continued to lead on the most pressing issues in our field with 29 peer-reviewed articles and 14 comments submitted to federal agencies in 2021 in support of our tobacco control priorities.
- We launched the Truth Initiative® Impact Series – convenings of diverse partners in public health, parents, teachers, and policy makers for thought-provoking conversation about tobacco control – and hosted four events on a range of topics, including one on the collision of the youth mental health crisis and vaping epidemic that took center stage at The Atlantic Festival with Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy.
- The Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program has now helped 138 community colleges, minority-serving institutions including HBCUs and predominantly Black institutions, women's colleges, and college systems adopt tobacco-free campus policies, protecting 1.2 million students, faculty, and staff.
- As of April 2022, more than 386,556 students have actively engaged in our national youth vaping prevention curriculum, *Vaping: Know the truth*, since it launched in late 2020.

We are proud of the impact we are making to save lives as reflected in the theme of this year's report: *Innovating and inspiring action to save lives: Our impact to end youth vaping, smoking and nicotine addiction*. None of our achievements would be possible without our hardworking staff, Board of Directors, and vital partners. We are closer to a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past and will continue to innovate and inspire action until our lifesaving mission is achieved.



Robin Koval, CEO and President



**YOUTH & YOUNG
ADULT PUBLIC
EDUCATION**

Inspiring a new
generation with the truth



Our **truth** brand has approximately 70% awareness among our target audience and continues to grow its reach with young people. We have expanded the brand beyond our award-winning **truth** public education campaign — the longest-running and most successful national tobacco prevention campaign for youth and young adults — to include free tools and resources designed to protect and empower young people, including This is Quitting from **truth** and our digital, peer-to-peer curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth*. Through these tools, resources, and public education and prevention efforts, **truth** delivers the facts about smoking, vaping, and nicotine use, exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, and helps young people make informed choices and influence their peers to do the same.

We know these efforts are making an impact. Our own peer-reviewed research shows that awareness of the **truth** campaign is significantly associated with increases in anti-vaping knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. With youth vaping remaining at epidemic levels — more than 2 million high school and middle school students use e-cigarettes — we remain committed to accelerating the momentum.

Young people know and trust the truth brand, which has approximately 70% awareness among the target audience.

IT'S MESSING WITH OUR HEADS

With *It's Messing with Our Heads* campaign from **truth**, we are educating young people that nicotine can worsen symptoms of anxiety and depression and underscoring the mental health impact of popular e-cigarette products like Puff Bar, JUUL, and Vuse. As part of the campaign, **truth** created Depression Stick!, a fake product that literally re-positions e-cigarettes in culture to what they really should be called. The Wall Street Journal broke the news about the multi-platform campaign along with our corresponding white paper, "[Colliding Crises: Youth Mental Health and Nicotine Use](#)," that detailed the body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence connecting nicotine and mental health effects. Depression Stick! went on to reach a massive audience with influencer unboxings, TikTok, Hulu, storefront takeovers, a Times Square billboard, and a launch spot during "NBC's Sunday Night Football."



Since its launch, the campaign has received 560 million views and 4.2 million engagements on social media, and 1.8 million visits to [thetruth.com](#). We are continuing to expose the connections between nicotine use and mental health with the next chapter of our *It's Messing with Our Heads* effort called *Breath of Stress Air*. This latest installment busts the myth that vaping nicotine is a stress reliever and reveals the truth that it can be a stress multiplier. The campaign launched during "NCAA March Madness" and has received widespread press coverage including a feature segment on NBC's digital and broadcast news properties — "NBC Now" and the "TODAY" show — reaching millions of viewers including the youth and young adult audience through its SnapChat "Stay Tuned" program. The effort will continue through Summer 2022.



INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO QUIT

The **truth** brand is amplifying and supporting a growing movement among young people to quit vaping via promotion of our evidence proven This Is Quitting program. Our efforts, employing both social media influencers and real stories from young people who are on their quitting journey, continue to result in growth of This Is Quitting with over 440,000 sign-ups as of April 2022. Following our highly successful campaign *Quit Together*, which featured social media influencers and e-cigarette users Victoria Annunziato (aka King Victober), Tosha, and Jerry Purpdrank inviting young people – including their combined 11.3 million followers – to “quit together” using This is Quitting, we continue to show what quitting e-cigarettes really looks like for young people.



“I feel a lot more in control of my life now that I’ve quit vaping,”

– Julius



“Without vaping, I feel extremely optimistic and hopeful for my future.”

– Mady



“The best thing about quitting vaping nicotine is that I feel like myself again.”

– Parker

We launched a powerful testimonial series called “Quitters” that highlights the stories of young people using This is Quitting on their journey to stop vaping for good. The series, which now includes eight episodes, is an honest and authentic look into the real-life experiences of a diverse group of young people and offers an inspirational and empathetic message for others to begin their quitting journeys.



THE IMPACT OF THE TRUTH CAMPAIGN

The **truth** campaign continues to work. Peer-reviewed research conducted by the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute shows that:

- Young people with strong **truth** brand awareness and loyalty had 19% lower odds of vaping and 25% lower odds of intending to vape a year and half later, according to research published in [**BMC Public Health**](#).
- Young people who had seen **truth** vaping prevention campaigns were more likely to have accurate e-cigarette knowledge, believe that e-cigarettes were harmful and socially unacceptable, and hold anti-tobacco industry attitudes [**compared to those unaware of the campaign**](#).
- **truth** [**has been broadly effective among important demographic groups**](#) — including young Black Americans, those with lower incomes, and those who live in rural areas — who have been historically targeted by the tobacco industry and are at higher risk of tobacco use.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Strategic partnerships are an important part of our work to influence culture. In 2021, we collaborated with major forces in pop culture and produced original content with leading and innovative youth-focused brands and creators. Here are just a few.



Teen Vogue

We sponsored Teen Vogue's 2021 Summit and Block Party in Los Angeles, where our Youth Board Liaison Giana Darville participated in a conversation about mental health and community healing, highlighting how Big Tobacco exploits certain groups. The panel, "[Putting Ourselves First: Mental Wellness and Community Healing](#)," was moderated by Teen Vogue Executive Editor Danielle Kwateng.



The Onion

Our collaborations with The Onion included a [hilarious article](#) about the launch of Depression Stick! and a [parody video](#) that took Philip Morris International to task for their "greenwashing" public relations effort around environmental issues, "Our World is Not an Ashtray."



Whistle Sports

A collaboration with Whistle Sports on three episodes of their YouTube series "No Days Off" featured an [18-year-old skateboarder](#), who previously vaped and decided to quit after the mental and physical effects began impacting his performance, and a [17-year-old member of the U.S. Soccer Youth National Team](#) and a [16-year-old baseball player](#) who discussed their love of sports and their decision not to use nicotine.



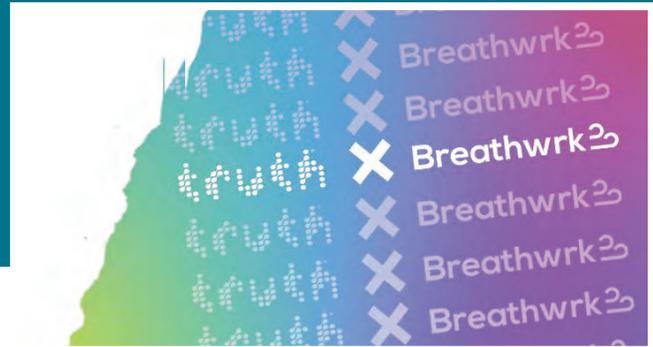
Awesomeness TV

We launched several integrations with [Awesomeness TV for Season 2 of its show "Next Influencer,"](#) which follows a group of content creators competing in a series of challenges to prove they have what it takes to become the next big influencer.



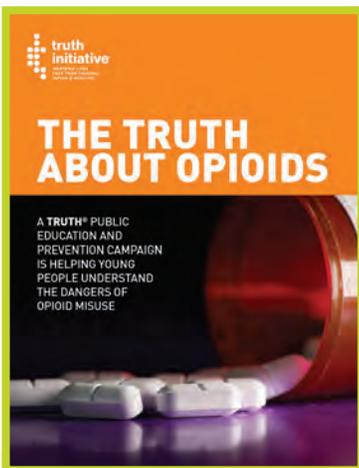
truth x Gaming

We partnered with The Game Awards to create a custom ad with a top professional gamer to share a message around vaping and stress and how it can impact gaming performance. We also launched a new custom series with IGN called “Game Prep,” in which we helped prepare players to beat three top games from 2021. The show’s host, a former smoker, shared information around the mental and physical effects of vaping nicotine and how they can impact gaming performance.



truth x Breathwrk

We began a collaboration with the wellness app Breathwrk and created three custom **truth** breathing exercises designed to help relieve anxiety, strengthen lungs, and ease cravings while trying to quit vaping. We have used these breathing exercises as a resource in *This is Quitting* and as part of our activism efforts to give people tools to reclaim their breath from the forces and impacts of addiction. As part of our most recent *Breath of Stress Air* effort, Breathwrk is offering a free six-month full membership to those who enroll in *xt* the text message quitting program, *This is Quitting* from **truth**.



THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS

The Truth About Opioids, our ongoing effort to contribute youth prevention and education expertise to combatting America’s opioid misuse epidemic, reached an important milestone in 2021 with the publication of peer-reviewed research showing its effectiveness.

The Emmy award-winning campaign successfully increased knowledge of the fact that opioid dependence can happen after just five days, decreased stigma, and increased the likelihood to seek and share opioid-related information in young people, according to research published in the [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#). Findings show that the nationally recognized **truth** campaign can successfully be adapted to spread the word about opioid misuse, and that public education about opioids delivered at a national level could positively impact millions of young people.



RESEARCH & POLICY

Ground-breaking research,
grounded in science



29

**Peer-reviewed
articles published**

12

Reports released

14

**Comments to
federal agencies**

Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute provides field-leading research and policy analyses that advance the science, inform policy, and drive the public conversation around tobacco use and the industry behind it. In 2021, we published 29 peer-reviewed articles in leading academic journals – such as Nicotine & Tobacco Research, JAMA Open, Tobacco Control, and the American Journal of Public Health, among many more. We also released 12 Truth Initiative research reports and submitted 14 comments to federal agencies in support of our tobacco control priorities. This work was covered in major media outlets including USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Associated Press, U.S. News & World Report, and HealthDay, just to name a few.

In 2021, we continued to help establish the science base necessary to combat the youth e-cigarette epidemic and fill important knowledge gaps that made us sought-after thought leaders. To expand the reach of this work, we launched the Truth Initiative Impact Series, a recurring convening that brings together key stakeholders and experts to engage in thought-provoking conversations. We hosted four Impact Series events on a range of topics, including one on the collision of the youth mental health crisis and vaping epidemic that took center stage at The Atlantic Festival. In addition, our ongoing, rigorous evaluation of all our programs ensures that our efforts to make tobacco use and nicotine addiction a thing of the past are working.

RESEARCH & RESOURCES ON FLAVORED PRODUCTS

The national policy landscape around flavors remains in flux. Partial restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes keep many product types widely available across the country. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has begun the rulemaking process to eliminate [the sale of menthol cigarettes and all flavored cigars](#), but the rule will have more hurdles to clear before it is final. During these pivotal times for flavor policies, we are providing important resources that underscore the urgent need for comprehensive federal action to eliminate all flavored tobacco products. This work also helps inform the efforts of many states and localities that are taking action on flavored products in the absence of comprehensive federal regulation.

Our extensive research and analysis on flavored tobacco products and policies have found:

- Sales restrictions on all flavored tobacco products, including all types of menthol products, are gaining momentum at the local and state level. According to our [quarterly report](#) that tracks local flavor policies across the country, by the end of December 2021, 353 localities and three Native American tribes placed some type of restriction on flavored tobacco products and, of those, 100 have fully comprehensive policies on menthol products.
- In the first comprehensive review to look at the outcomes of flavor and menthol tobacco restrictions implemented locally, our [research published in Nicotine & Tobacco Research shows](#) that local policies are effective: Local policies restricting flavored tobacco products successfully reduced product availability and youth and adult use of products like flavored e-cigarettes and menthol cigarettes compared to areas without such policies.

353

**localities and three
Native American tribes**

have placed some type
of restriction on flavored
tobacco products



- In the [first study to link e-cigarette and future cigar use](#), our research found young people who used JUUL or other e-cigarettes had more than 3 times the odds of going on to use cigars, little cigars, or cigarillos within two years compared to those who had never vaped. Current e-cigarette users also had more than three times greater odds of initiating use of flavored cigars, little cigars, or cigarillos compared to non-flavored products, indicating that flavors play a key role in transitioning users from e-cigarettes to combustible tobacco products.
- Our research found that makers of the popular disposable e-cigarette brand BIDI® Stick [unveiled nearly a dozen new flavor names as direct translations from its previous flavors](#) in an apparent effort designed to subvert future restriction on the sale of flavored disposable e-cigarettes. The new “concept” flavors are vague non-characterizing descriptions on packaging such as Arctic, Solar, and Gold that communicate a flavor profile without a specific flavor designation.
- Young people living in areas of Washington, D.C., with lower incomes, higher proportions of racial/ethnic minorities, and higher smoking rates had more than seven times higher odds of being exposed to flavored tobacco marketing, according to a Truth Initiative study [published in Annals of Behavioral Medicine](#). Tobacco stores in D.C. neighborhoods with higher percentages of Black residents had more marketing for flavored tobacco products — especially for flavored cigars — compared to neighborhoods with lower percentages of Black residents,

ORAL NICOTINE POUCHES AND LOZENGES

Oral nicotine pouches and lozenges come in many flavors and are quickly gaining popularity and raising public health concerns. A Truth Initiative analysis of direct mail advertisements found that [oral nicotine products](#) are frequently marketed as tobacco-free alternatives to smoking, claims that could imply lower-risk and are not authorized by the FDA.





DECODING SYNTHETIC NICOTINE

The makers of the disposable e-cigarette Puff Bar, which the [FDA ordered to stop selling its flavored e-cigarette products in July 2020](#), announced in 2021 that they were returning to the market with synthetic nicotine (nicotine that was created in a laboratory and not derived from tobacco). In addition to Puff Bar, oral nicotine products Bidi Pouches, NIIN, and Rush are a few other new products that claim they are made with synthetic nicotine. These new products, which come in flavors that are proven to attract youth, have not been through the required regulatory review and approval processes and some companies appeared to be proceeding as if they are exempted from FDA regulation altogether.

While it was initially unclear whether these products would be regulated as tobacco products or drugs, the law has now clarified that synthetic nicotine products must be regulated by the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products in the same way that tobacco-derived nicotine products are regulated. Truth Initiative and its partners sent a letter to the FDA's acting commissioner about Puff Bar's reentry to the market with its claim of new synthetic nicotine products and called on the agency to immediately demand that Puff Bar products be removed from the market or face enforcement action.

TOBACCO IN POP CULTURE

We broke new ground in our coverage of tobacco in entertainment and pop culture by including for the first time tobacco imagery in music videos, movies, and binge-watched shows in Truth Initiative's fourth annual report looking at tobacco imagery in entertainment. Our "[While You Were Streaming: Nicotine on Demand](#)" report once again analyzed tobacco imagery across the 15 most popular streaming and broadcast shows among 15- to 24-year-olds and for the first time included data on those that were frequently binge-watched as well as the year's chart-topping movies and music videos. The report finds that content popular with youth frequently depicts tobacco, including in 60% of young people's favorite shows, 64% of top binge-watched shows, 23% of music videos for top 2020 Billboard songs, and 38% of top newly released movies – including 10 youth-rated films. The top shows alone are responsible for exposing an estimated 27 million young people to tobacco imagery in 2020. The continued prevalence of tobacco products and images across screens is an urgent youth public health



issue as detailed in the Truth Initiative study published in Preventive Medicine in 2021 finding that exposure to tobacco imagery through episodic programming [can triple a young person's odds of starting to vape.](#)



TOBACCO INDUSTRY INFLUENCE

Truth Initiative monitors tobacco industry strategies and researches and analyzes their impact to inform the public and policy makers.

In 2021, we highlighted evolving ways that Big Tobacco continues its campaign to transform its image with non-combustible tobacco products and claims that they can be part of the “public health solution” to end smoking (see sidebar “Harm reduction”). Our research exposes the tobacco industry’s efforts to overhaul its reputation as it recruits a new generation of tobacco users.

- Popular e-cigarette maker JUUL spent upwards of \$75 million over two years on ads promoting their corporate social responsibility mission, [vastly exceeding their \\$30 million investment in underage use prevention efforts](#), according to a study by Truth Initiative and the National Opinion Research Center published in [Tobacco Control](#).
- [Misplaced trust in tobacco companies](#) is linked with odds of vaping in young people. Young people had higher odds of using e-cigarettes if they believe that tobacco companies are honest about the harm presented by vapes, according to research [published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence](#).

In partnership with Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Truth Initiative conducted a national survey of registered voters ages 18 and older about their views of the tobacco industry and tobacco use for the series [“The American public’s opinion of Big Tobacco.”](#) The surveys found that despite industry efforts general distrust of the industry remains high:

- Eight in 10 adults are concerned about the use of flavors to attract youth to vaping, including most current and former e-cigarette users
- The majority of adults surveyed want nonprofits to reject Big Tobacco money, a finding that supports our effort *Stop the Influence: Reject Big Tobacco and Vape Money* (see page 28)
- 70% of young adults believed that the industry does not tell the truth about the addictiveness of their products

HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction – the principle of providing evidence-based, lower harm alternatives for those who do not quit harmful substances – is a proven public health strategy. 2021 saw contentious debates over harm reduction and the role it should play for smokers as the tobacco industry continued trying to coopt the term as part of its business strategy to expand its user base and grow the total market for nicotine products.

In our [in-depth statement](#) on harm reduction, we state that a genuine harm reduction approach requires a measured and careful deployment of nicotine alternatives that are tightly focused on helping smokers who otherwise would not quit smoking cigarettes.

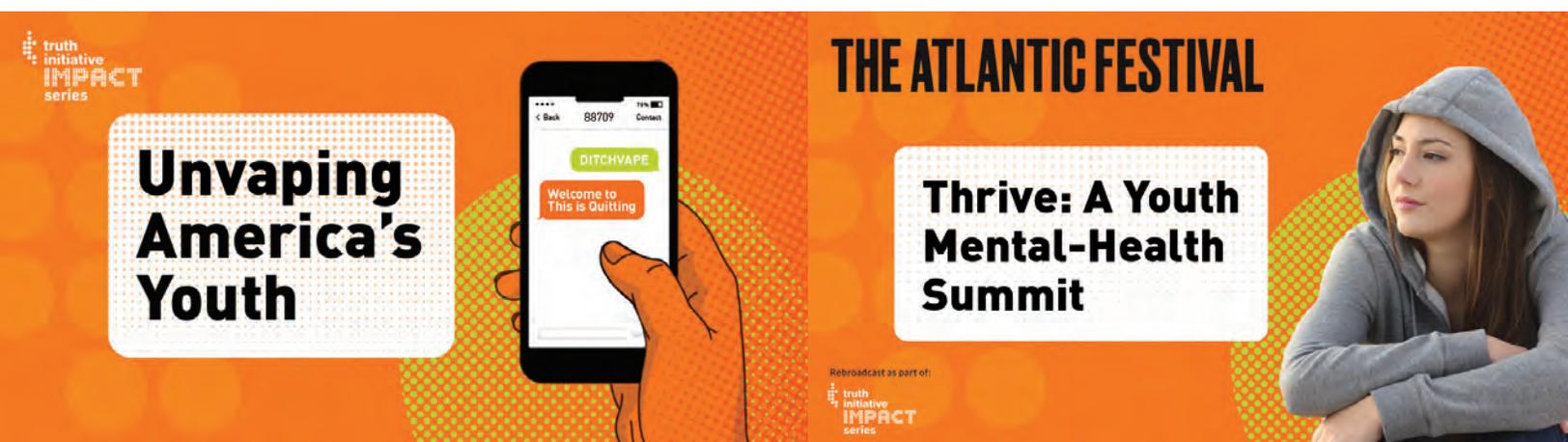
TRUTH INITIATIVE IMPACT SERIES

This year we launched the **Truth Initiative Impact Series**, a recurring event that brings together key stakeholders and experts to engage in thought-provoking conversations about ways we can innovate and inspire action to achieve a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine. The series aims to convene diverse partners in tobacco control and other public health organizations, parents, teachers, and policy makers who can benefit from Truth Initiative's work. We hosted four events as part of the Impact Series in 2021, including:

- **Not Buying It: The Tobacco Industry's Rebrand** tackled the conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health, highlighting the need for corporate and nonprofit leaders to reject funding and collaboration with Big Tobacco. The session featured Carol McGruder, founding member and co-chair of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council; Dr. Bronwyn King, CEO of Tobacco Free Portfolios; Dr. Karen Evans-Reeves, Research Fellow with the Tobacco Control Research Group; and Stephen Hamill, Vice President of Policy, Advocacy and Communication at Vital Strategies.



- Unvaping America's Youth** explored our holistic approach to reverse the epidemic, featuring real-life stories from former vapers who shared what it's like to vape and quit e-cigarettes today. Jamie Ducharme, author of the book [“Big Vape: The Incendiary Rise of Juul,”](#) led the discussion featuring public health experts and prevention advocates including Dr. Rachel Boykan, professor of pediatrics at the Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook, and Meredith Berkman, co-founder of Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes. Dr. Amanda Graham, Chief of Innovations at Truth Initiative, spotlighted clinical trial results [published in JAMA Internal Medicine](#) that demonstrate the effectiveness of the free and anonymous text message program This is Quitting.
- Thrive: A Youth Mental-Health Summit** drew awareness to the connection between nicotine use and the worsening youth mental health crisis. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and former vaper turned activist Daniel Ament joined Truth Initiative CEO and President Robin Koval to highlight well-established research that shows nicotine both harms developing brains and can negatively affect mental health by worsening symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Vaping: Know the Truth - Empowering Students with the Facts on E-cigarettes & Tools to Quit** spotlighted the free, national youth vaping prevention curriculum developed by Truth Initiative and Kaiser Permanente in collaboration with the American Heart Association to help combat the youth e-cigarette epidemic. Moderated by Anya Kamenetz, NPR's education correspondent, the discussion featured Dr. David Grossman, interim senior vice president of social and community health for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc. & Hospitals; Kim-Jamy Nguyen, EVERFI's Director of Texas District Partnerships; and Joshua Grant, content coordinator for health and physical education at the West Virginia Department of Education to illustrate how the youth vaping prevention curriculum equips educators to fight the vaping epidemic in support of their students' mental health and well-being.





TOBACCO AND THE ENVIRONMENT

E-cigarettes not only pose [substantial health risks](#) to youth and young adults, they also present a significant environmental threat. Truth Initiative zeroed in on the way vaping can endanger the health of the environment in the report [“A Toxic, Plastic Problem: E-cigarette Waste and the Environment”](#) and companion fact sheet [“Tobacco and the Environment.”](#)

Our research indicates a pressing need for more education on the harms of cigarette and e-cigarette waste and how to safely dispose of it. Almost half of young people don’t know what to do with used e-cigarette pods and disposable devices. When adults are aware of the environmental hazards of filtered cigarettes, they are [more likely to support policies designed to reduce cigarette waste.](#)



2021 HIGHLIGHTS: A SELECTION OF PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Truth Initiative focused on some of the most important topics in tobacco control with the publication of 29 peer-reviewed research articles in the last year, including:

“Quitting e-cigarettes” – *Preventive Medicine Reports*

“Educating the public and lawmakers about tobacco industry interference” – *Tobacco Induced Diseases*

“E-cigarette use among youths and young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic” – *American Journal of Public Health*

“Identifying message themes to prevent e-cigarette use among youth and young adults” – *Preventive Medicine*

“Cigarette filter knowledge and support for a litter tax increase among U.S. adults” – *Tobacco Control*

“A longitudinal analysis of e-cigarette use and cigar, little cigar, or cigarillo initiation among youth and youth adults: 2017–2019” – *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*

“Policy support for prohibiting cigarette and e-cigarette use in multiunit housing among a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults” – *American Journal of Health Promotion*

“Evaluation of the implementation and impact of flavored tobacco sales restriction policies in U.S. localities: a systematic review of the scientific literature” – *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*

“Associations of e-cigarette industry beliefs and e-cigarette use and susceptibility among youth and young adults in the United States” – *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*

“Testing funding disclosure strategies for e-cigarette influencer posts on Instagram: A randomized experiment” – *Addictive Behaviors*

“Exploring the discursive function of hashtags: A semantic network analysis of JUUL-related Instagram messages” – *Social Media and Society*

“Inequitable distribution of flavored tobacco marketing by neighborhood characteristics: further evidence for targeted marketing” – *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*

“An examination of the association between state tobacco control spending and the demand for electronic cigarettes by high school students” – *Tobacco Control*

“The EVALI outbreak and tobacco sales in the United States, 2014–2020” – *Tobacco Control*

“Classifying the comprehensiveness of flavored tobacco policies” – *Tobacco Control*

“Oral nicotine marketing claims in direct mail advertising” – *Tobacco Control*



**COMMUNITY
& YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT**

Online, on the ground, and
on campuses nationwide



Our Community and Youth Engagement programs promote education and change at the community level; inspire, educate, and mobilize young leaders; and develop creative partnerships with aligned groups and organizations. We support young people to take action in their communities, especially in communities of color and among other populations who have a long history of being targeted by the tobacco industry.

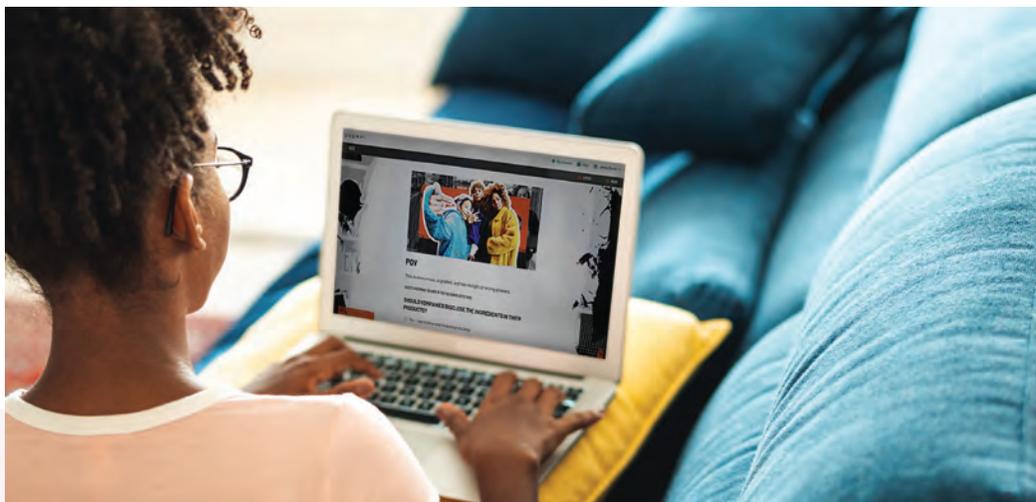
In 2021, our work has included the continuation of our highly successful tobacco-free campus program, the evolution of our youth organizing activities in the digital space, and the growth of our national youth vaping prevention curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth*, available to schools and communities across the country at no cost.

386K+
 students engaged to
 learn the facts about
 e-cigarette use and
 nicotine addiction

VAPING: KNOW THE TRUTH

More than 300,000 students and thousands of schools have actively engaged with our national **truth** branded youth vaping prevention curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth*. Created with Kaiser Permanente and in collaboration with the American Heart Association, our curriculum is available to schools and the public at large at no cost through the leading social impact education innovator, EVERFI. The digital, self-led, peer-to-peer interactive course gives young people the facts about e-cigarette use to empower them to never start vaping or to quit through our This is Quitting youth vaping cessation program.

In 2021, through a nationwide satellite media tour and presentations at conferences across the country, we shared *Vaping: Know the truth* to a total audience of more than 9.6 million people — including school administrators, teachers, nurses, counselors, tobacco use prevention specialists, health educators, community coalition members, and the National Association of Attorneys General. More than 386,556 students have actively engaged in the self-administered, interactive, digital course that also connected students who need quit support with This is Quitting.





TOBACCO/VAPE-FREE COLLEGE PROGRAM

As part of a national movement among students, faculty, and administrators to address smoking, vaping, and nicotine use at college campuses and a continued commitment to address tobacco as a social justice issue, the Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program provides grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible institutions to institute a tobacco-free campus policy. In 2021, the Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program brought the program total to 138 grantees who have adopted tobacco and vape-free policies protecting more than 1.2 million students, faculty, and staff each year.

Since 2015, the Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program has awarded more than \$2.5 million in funding to 205 community colleges, minority-serving institutions including HBCUs and predominantly black institutions, women's colleges, and college systems. This roster includes 59 HBCUs and eight PBIs. With 99% of smokers starting before age 26 and the youth vaping epidemic continuing, college campuses are critical to preventing young adults from starting tobacco use, aiding current smokers and vapers in quitting, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke for all.

138
grantees

have adopted tobacco and vape-free policies

1.2M
students, faculty and staff members

are protected with tobacco and vape-free policies

2021 CLASS: TRUTH AMBASSADORS

The 2021 class of **truth** Ambassadors included 12 young leaders from across the country who led local projects to engage their peers and inspire tobacco-free communities.

These young leaders, some of whom were continuing their engagement with Truth Initiative after previously serving as Truth Initiative interns and college leaders, are important voices for tobacco control. In 2021, they engaged in more than 30 virtual meetings with members of Congress, speaking alongside FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock and Senator Dick Durbin about the vaping crisis.

The yearlong immersive leadership program is designed to educate and train a group of 18- to 25-year-olds on the public health impact of tobacco and e-cigarettes, the importance of community and youth engagement, and tobacco policy and advocacy. The program helps them develop leadership and community activism skills while providing guidance and financial support to create and promote community projects.

2021 AMBASSADOR PROJECTS

2021 **truth** Ambassadors engaged their peers in a range of community projects, including several that connected smoking, vaping, and nicotine addiction with mental health.



Kristen Reid and Briana Brooks

Kristen Reid and Briana Brooks of Oakwood University partnered to create a safe space for students at Oakwood University to relieve stress and promote wellness. Briana created a block party where students could do plant therapy, yoga, and painting, and ask judgement-free questions about nicotine use. Kristen created a Friendship Bench on campus to encourage student-to-student conversations about mental health and facilitate peer-to-peer support networks.



Mary Louise Long

To reach youth who have either recently quit nicotine or are struggling to quit, Mary promoted the importance of self-care to her target audience at the Arizona State University Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). Students attended and participated in a skincare workshop where they could make their own face masks and learn about the harms of tobacco use. Her presentation will continue to be shared annually during ASU's PRSSA chapter meetings to ensure that young adults are given the facts about the effects of nicotine use.



Xavier Lynum

Xavier chose to combine gaming and impactful conversations to create a nonjudgmental and safe atmosphere where individuals can thrive. He wanted to inspire his target audience – members of the gaming community who are predominantly male – to open up and have discussions that will make a positive impact on their mental health.



TRUTH ACTIVISM CAMPAIGNS

Stop the Influence

In collaboration with our youth activists, we launched *Stop the Influence*, a social justice campaign aimed at 1) exposing Big Tobacco's use of financial support and charitable contributions to protect its business interests and 2) calling on organizations to reject funding from tobacco and vape companies.

In 2021, *Stop the Influence: Reject Big Tobacco and Vape Money* — a joint effort with the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council, Black Women's Health Imperative, and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids — recruited 39 organizations to sign our pledge to reject funding from or any form of partnership with tobacco and vaping companies. Greenpeace USA, Kaiser Permanente, and the Catholic Health Association of the United States are among the youth-serving, environmental, social and racial justice, and public health organizations; college and university leaders; faith groups; and cultural institutions organized to expose the tobacco industry's donations for what they are: another public relations tactic.

TRUTH IMPACT SCHOLARSHIP

Five young tobacco control activists received the 2021 **truth** Impact Scholarship for speaking out about the harms of e-cigarettes. The winners of the \$3,000 scholarship were Pascal Bakari, Jake Warn, Ellie Burmeister, Alyson Yee, and Xavier Lynum.



A young person with curly hair and glasses is looking down at a smartphone. The image has a green tint. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

INNOVATIONS TO QUIT SMOKING AND VAPING

**Digital cessation
programs that save lives**



Our tobacco cessation programs are reaching more people than ever, from 13-year-old e-cigarette users to longtime adult smokers in their 60s and everyone in between. More than 440,000 teens and young adults have enrolled in our free quit vaping text message program, This is Quitting, as of April 2022. Each day, 300-500 young people join This is Quitting thanks to powerful **truth** campaign messaging and strategic partnerships with states, health plans, and other youth-serving organizations. The EX Program, our enterprise digital tobacco cessation program, now reaches more than 9.7 million U.S. adults through employers, health systems, and health plans. Our free digital cessation intervention — BecomeAnEX — continues to support thousands of tobacco users on their quitting journey and remains at the center of a National Institute of Health funded research portfolio to advance the science of tobacco cessation. We disseminated our work in dozens of webinars, invited presentations, and peer-reviewed publications to advance the science on how digital programs can help people of all ages live tobacco- and nicotine-free lives.

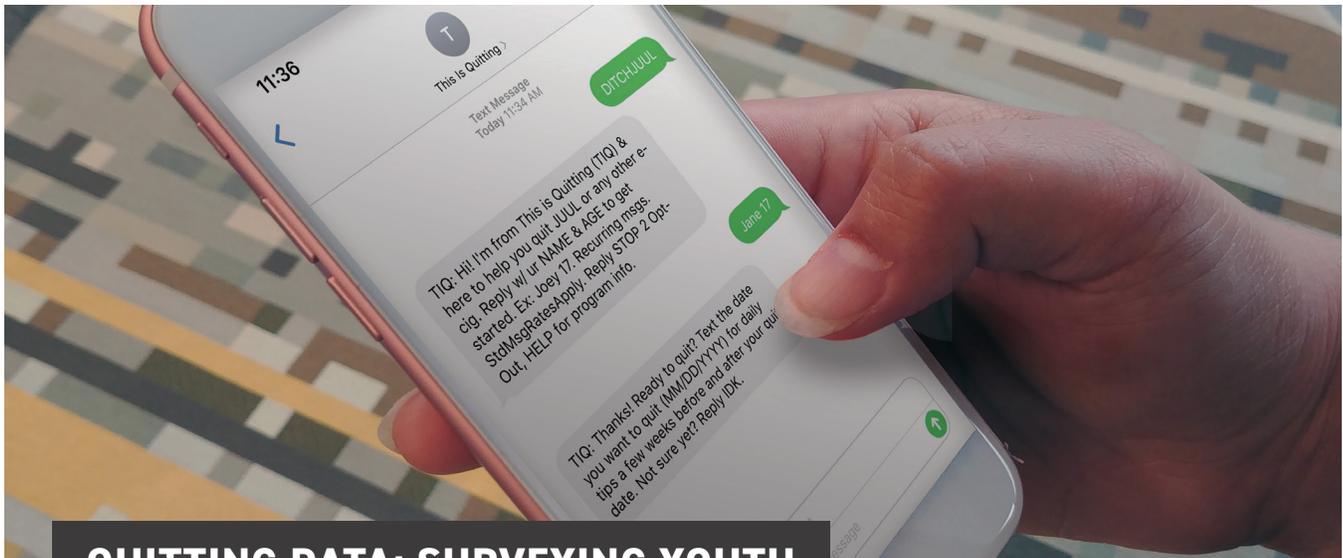
440K+ **teens and young adults have enrolled in our free quit vaping text message program, This is Quitting**

THIS IS QUITTING

Launched in January 2019, This is Quitting provides young people with tailored guidance, evidence based cognitive and behavioral coping strategies, and support from peers to help them quit. In 2021, we published results from the first randomized clinical trial of a vaping cessation intervention, showing that young adult e-cigarette users who used [This is Quitting](#) were 40% more likely to quit compared to a control group. These findings were published in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#). Importantly, the trial found that This is Quitting was effective



across key subgroups of users at greater risk for vaping, including racial and ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, those who reported higher levels of nicotine dependence, and those who screened positive for anxiety and depression. These results come at a time when e-cigarette use among young people remains at epidemic levels, and public health organizations have called for rapid research on vaping cessation.



QUITTING DATA: SURVEYING YOUTH

Our research published in Preventive Medicine Reports [found that more than half \(54.2%\)](#) of the current e-cigarette users between 15 and 36 years old who were surveyed intended to quit vaping. One-third reported a past-year quit attempt and 15% said they intended to quit in the next month. The study also found that quit attempts were associated with higher levels of perceived harm from e-cigarettes. Young people who had attempted to quit vaping in the past year had higher levels of harm perceptions than those who had not attempted to quit, and those with higher harm perceptions were more than three times the odds of intending to quit vaping in the next month. A separate Truth Initiative study, published in [Tobacco Control](#), also found a link between intentions to quit and harm perceptions. Among current e-cigarette users, those who perceived risk of lung injury from vaping had twice the odds of intending to quit vaping compared to those with lower risk perceptions. These data underscore the need for easy-to-access quit vaping programs to engage young people in the process of quitting.

THE EX PROGRAM

The EX Program from Truth Initiative broke important new ground in 2021, with dramatic growth in its client base and novel program enhancements. Developed in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, this enterprise offering is now helping more than 9.7 million adults around the nation to quit tobacco, including low income and rural Medicaid members in Nevada, Iowa, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Strategic partnerships include three of the nation's largest health plans, Fortune 50 and 100 companies, and employers in industries like manufacturing, construction, and transportation where tobacco rates are nearly twice the national average.

In 2021, we increased both the accessibility and availability of the EX Program. The EX Program is now available in Spanish across web, live chat coaching, text message, email, and print. We're also collaborating with the University of Maryland and Sheppard Pratt to adapt EX Program for smokers with serious mental illness. Our [partnership](#) with Ohio's Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug



Addiction and Mental Health Services has provided comprehensive cessation services to tobacco users throughout this region of Tobacco Nation.

EX Program clients now have access to real-time information about their members' participation through web-based dashboards. Unanimously well-received by clients, this program enhancement enables them to administer a tobacco cessation benefit more efficiently and engage their members more effectively in this aspect of their wellness. It also increases the efficiency of our team by automating the reporting process for our ever-growing client roster.

For more information on the EX Program, visit theexprogram.com.

BAE SYSTEMS

CONDUENT



B | BRAUN

LAZ
PARKING

Helping more than
9.7 million adults
around the nation
to quit tobacco.



VAPING IN THE WORKPLACE

Truth Initiative research found that vaping in the workplace is ubiquitous, bothersome to many, and triggers the urge to smoke and vape in nearly half of tobacco users. These findings were published in two prestigious journals — the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* and the *American Journal of Health Behavior* — and were also distributed in our [“Vaping in the Workplace”](#) report.

The health risks of vaping in shared workspaces — especially risks to lung health — threaten the safety of employees as they return to in-person work amid COVID-19. The good news is that there is a high level of support for e-cigarette-free workplaces. Most employees (73.5%) supported e-cigarette-free workplaces, including the majority of current e-cigarette users (53.5%).

In addition to comprehensive tobacco-free policies that specifically address e-cigarettes, the research showed that employees and families need help to quit vaping. More than eight in 10 respondents said a workplace that supports quitting e-cigarettes is important to them, with broad support across non-tobacco users as well as smokers, e-cigarette users, and those using both products concurrently. The study also found that roughly half of all employees said they would use a quit vaping program themselves or to help a family member or child quit vaping. Among e-cigarettes users who intended to quit in the next six months, more than 70% said they would use a digital tobacco cessation program. Despite the widespread support, only one-third of workplaces have such cessation programs in place.

Until clean indoor air laws and requirements that include e-cigarettes are universally adopted at the federal, state, and local level, the research underscores that employers should take action to prohibit tobacco use and encourage users to quit to prioritize protecting employee health.

BecomeAnEX

Launched in 2008 in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, our free tobacco cessation solution - BecomeAnEX - remains a powerful public health resource for tobacco users across the U.S. During 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, BecomeAnEX helped roughly 330,000 tobacco users on their journey to a tobacco-free life, roughly the same number of people served across all 51 state quit lines. Our ability to provide evidence-based cessation services to vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic speaks to the strength and importance of digital interventions.

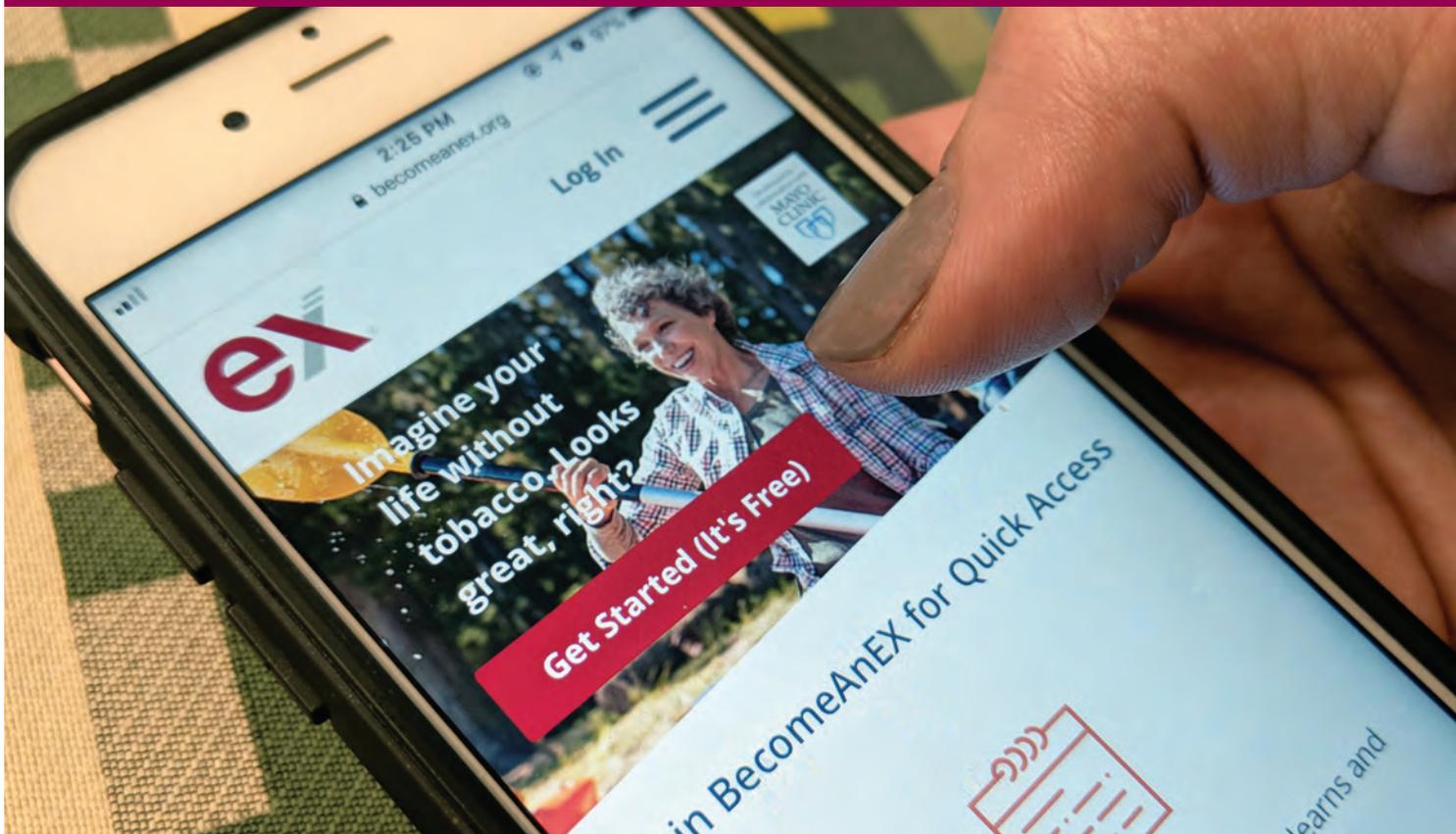
A key element of the program is its online support community, the largest and longest running online



social network dedicated to helping people break free from tobacco addiction. For tobacco users struggling with social isolation, disrupted routines, and economic uncertainty, the EX Community helped members stay on track with the quitting process. EX also served as a powerful source for tobacco users to get the latest scientific information about the links between COVID-19 and tobacco use.

To learn more, visit [BecomeAnEX.org](https://www.becomeanex.org).

During 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, BecomeAnEX helped roughly **330,000 tobacco users** on their journey to a tobacco-free life, roughly the same number of people served across all 51 state quit lines.



AWARDS

While we will always measure success by the number of lives saved, we continue to be proud of the top industry awards we receive for our work. Prestigious honors from Fast Company — we were named one of its 10 Most Innovative Not-for-Profit organizations of 2022 — concluded a year that had many recognitions for our creativity, innovation, and efficacy. Below is a selection of awards we received during 2021 and the beginning of 2022.

Fast Company – top 10 Most Innovative Not-for-Profit organizations of 2022

PRWeek 2022 Purpose Awards – finalist in Best in Social Media category for #QuitTogether, and finalist in Best in Influencer Impact category for #QuitTogether

PRWeek 2021 Purpose Awards – finalist in Best Use of Celebrity and/or Influencer’s category for #QuitTogether, finalist in Best Use of Digital/Social Media category for #QuitTogether and finalist for Most Purposeful CEO

PRWeek US Awards – finalist in Best in Nonprofit category for Truth Initiative Tackles Vaping During COVID-19 and finalist in Best in Social Media category for Truth Initiative Tackles Vaping During COVID-19

Fast Company – finalist for World Changing ideas for #Werkitfromhome and finalist for Fast Company Most Innovative Companies

Cynopsis: Best of the Best Awards – finalist in Best of the Best: Social Good Partnership for Profiting off the Pandemic

2021 American Business Awards – won Bronze Stevie Award for Achievement in Workforce Development & Learning



Effe Awards – won Gold in the Disease and Awareness category for “DITCHJUUL”/This is Quitting, won Bronze in David and Goliath category for “Read Between the Lies”, a finalist in Social Media Services/Digital category for “DITCHJUUL”, and a finalist in Product/Service Innovation / Marketing Innovation Solutions category for This is Quitting

David Ogilvy Awards – won Bronze in the Multicultural category for “Read Between the Lies”

Ragan & PR Daily’s Communicators of the Year Awards – honoree for Communications Team of the Year

The Shorty Awards – won silver for Social Hit: Clapback category for “Read Between the Lies”

COMMITMENT TO OUR PEOPLE

Guided by our core values of courage, curiosity, collaboration, and commitment, we are dedicated to being an equitable and inclusive organization that fosters a sense of belonging. We take pride in the diversity of our staff, and constantly work to improve on a culture of inclusion through our hiring practices and vendor partnerships. We ensure that the people we serve see themselves reflected in our work and that we continue to find ways to engage with women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, members of the military and veterans, people with disabilities, and low-income communities.

Our core values are intrinsic in the work we do and how we work together. Throughout 2021, we continued to invest heavily in our employees to foster their growth professionally and personally. Our in-house training and enrichment series Truth yoU, which helps us learn new skills, expand existing ones, and think and act creatively, offered virtual events for all staff members on a range of topics. These included sessions with a wellness expert, seminars on financial literacy and planning, book talks with notable authors, and installments of our career series “How I Got Here,” which feature staff members in discussion with each other about their career journeys and lessons learned along the way. We also organized a two-part implicit bias and allyship training for all employees in 2021 and continued to have robust participation in our organization-wide committees – including our diversity committee, health and wellness committee, and environment and service committee – which contribute to the wellbeing of our workplace and community.





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TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

BALANCE SHEETS

JUNE 30, 2021 AND 2020 (IN THOUSANDS)

ASSETS	2021		2020	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	135,135	\$	120,698
Investments		867,443		727,479
Trades to be settled		75		111
Accrued interest receivable		198		241
Grants receivable		188		176
Prepaid expenses		1,945		902
Property and equipment, net		2,834		3,799
Other assets		278		200
Total	\$	1,008,096	\$	853,606
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Liabilities:				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	11,435	\$	9,542
Deferred revenue		342		196
Refundable advance		3,336		3,508
Loans payable		93,500		63,500
Other liabilities		1,892		916
Deferred rent		3,597		4,096
Total liabilities	\$	114,102	\$	81,758
Net assets without donor restrictions		893,994		771,848
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$	1,008,096	\$	853,606

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2021 AND 2020 (IN THOUSANDS)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	2021		2020	
Sponsored projects and other income	\$	5,609	\$	4,106
Investment income, net of fees		211,005		32,537
Total revenue and support	\$	216,614	\$	36,643
EXPENSES				
Program expenses:				
Counter-marketing and public education	\$	56,115	\$	63,872
Communications		3,674		3,875
Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute		9,026		10,567
Innovations		7,599		7,830
Community and youth engagement		5,470		5,331
Program grants		939		1,630
Other programs		996		1,178
	\$	83,819	\$	94,283
Supporting services:				
General and administrative	\$	10,649	\$	10,982
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	94,468	\$	105,265
Change in net assets	\$	122,146	\$	(68,622)
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS				
Beginning	\$	771,848	\$	840,470
Ending	\$	893,994	\$	771,848

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2021 AND 2020 (IN THOUSANDS)

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	2021		2020	
Change in net assets	\$	122,146	\$	(68,622)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash				
used in operating activities:				
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	\$	(203,013)	\$	(21,104)
Other investment gain		(5,438)		(3,394)
Depreciation		1,093		1,753
Change in interest rate swap agreement		-		(4,927)
Deferred rent		(499)		(451)
Changes in assets and liabilities:				
(Increase) decrease in:				
Trades to be settled		36		242
Accrued interest receivable		43		40
Grants receivable		(12)		71
Prepaid expenses		(1,043)		719
Other assets		(78)		227
Increase (decrease) in:				
Account payable and accrued expenses		1,893		(726)
Deferred revenue		146		114
Refundable advance		(172)		2,986
Other liabilities		976		(655)
Net cash used in operating activities	\$	(83,922)	\$	(93,727)

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2021 AND 2020 (IN THOUSANDS)

CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	2021	2020
Purchase of property and equipment	\$ (128)	\$ (497)
Proceeds from sale of investments	178,181	268,506
Purchases of investments	(109,694)	(179,174)
Net cash provided by investing activities	\$ 68,359	\$ 88,835
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from borrowings	\$ 30,000	\$ 3,500
Net cash provided by financing activities	30,000	3,500
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	\$ 14,437	\$ (1,392)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning	\$ 120,698	\$ 122,090
Ending	\$ 135,135	\$ 120,698
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURES OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION:		
Cash paid for interest	\$ 2,354	\$ 1,921
Cash paid for income taxes	\$ 504	\$ 138

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**truth
initiative**

INSPIRING LIVES
FREE FROM SMOKING,
VAPING & NICOTINE

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