

ANNUAL SYNAR REPORT

42 U.S.C. 300x-26

OMB № 0930-0222

FFY 2026

State: Louisiana

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INTRODUCTION

The Annual Synar Report (ASR) format provides the means for states to comply with the reporting provisions of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x-26) and the Tobacco Regulation for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) (45 C.F.R. 96.130 (e)).

How the Synar report helps the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

In accordance with the tobacco regulations, states are required to provide detailed information on progress made in enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access laws (FFY 2025 Compliance Progress) and future plans to ensure compliance with the Synar requirements to reduce youth and young adult tobacco access rates (FFY 2026 Intended Use Plan). These data are required by 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and will be used by the Secretary to evaluate state compliance with the statute. Part of the mission of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is to assist states¹ by supporting Synar activities and providing technical assistance helpful in determining the type of enforcement measures and control strategies that are most effective. This information is helpful to CSAP in improving technical assistance resources and expertise on enforcement efforts and tobacco control program support activities, including state Synar program support services, through an enhanced technical assistance program involving conferences and workshops, development of training materials and guidance documents, and onsite technical assistance consultation.

How the Synar report can help states

The information gathered for the Synar report can help states describe and analyze substate needs for program enhancements. These data can also be used to report to the state legislature and other state and local organizations on progress made to date in enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access laws when aggregated statistical data from state Synar reports can demonstrate to the Secretary the national progress in reducing youth and young adult tobacco access problems. This information will also provide Congress with a better understanding of state progress in implementing Synar, including state difficulties and successes in enforcing retailer compliance

¹The term “state” is used to refer to all the states and territories required to comply with Synar as part of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program requirements (42 U.S.C. 300x-64 and 45 C.F.R. 96.121).

with youth and young adult tobacco access laws.

Getting assistance in completing the Synar report

If you have questions about programmatic issues, you may call CSAP's Division of Primary Prevention at (240) 276-2550 and ask for your respective State Project Officer, or contact your State Project Officer directly by telephone or email. If you have questions about fiscal or grants management issues, you may call your Grants Management Specialist in the Office of Financial Resources, Division of Grants Management, at (240) 276-1422.

Where and when to submit the Synar report

The ASR must be received by SAMHSA no later than December 31, 2025 and must be submitted in the format specified by these instructions. Use of the approved format will avoid delays in the review and approval process. The chief executive officer (or an authorized designee) of the applicant organization must sign page one of the ASR certifying that the state has complied with all reporting requirements.

The state must upload one copy of the ASR using the online WebBGAS (Block Grant Application System). In addition, the following items must be uploaded to WebBGAS:

- FFY 2026 Synar Survey Results: States that use the Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) must upload one copy of *SSES Tables 1–8* (in Excel) to WebBGAS. **Please note that, in the FFY 2026 ASR, SSES will generate Tables 6, 7, and 8, which are based on the optional microdata on product type, retail outlet type, and whether identification was requested. If your state does not submit these optional data, Tables 6, 7, and 8 will be blank. Tables 6, 7, and 8 are generated for the convenience of the state, and states are not required to submit completed versions of Tables 6, 7, or 8.** States that do not use SSES must upload one copy of ASR Forms 1, 4, and 5, and Forms 2 and 3, if applicable, (in Excel), as well as a database with the raw inspection data to WebBGAS.
- Synar Inspection Form: States must upload one blank copy of the inspection form used to record the result of each Synar inspection.
- Synar Inspection Protocol: States must upload a copy of the protocol used to train inspection teams on conducting and reporting the results of the Synar inspections. This document should be different than the Appendix C attached to the Annual Synar Report.
- A scanned copy of the signed Funding Agreements/Certifications

Each state SSA Director has been emailed a login ID and password to log onto the Synar section of the WebBGAS site.

FFY 2026: FUNDING AGREEMENTS/CERTIFICATIONS

The following form must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or an authorized designee and submitted with this application. Documentation authorizing a designee must be attached to the application.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES ACT AND SYNAR AMENDMENT

42 U.S.C. 300x-26 requires each state to submit an annual report of its progress in meeting the requirements of the Synar Amendment and its implementing regulation (45 C.F.R. 96.130) to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. By signing below, the chief executive officer (or an authorized designee) of the applicant organization certifies that the state has complied with these reporting requirements and the certifications as set forth below.

SYNAR SURVEY SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

The state certifies that the Synar survey sampling methodology on file with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and submitted with the Annual Synar Report for FFY 2026 is up-to-date and approved by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

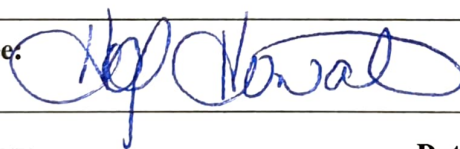
SYNAR SURVEY INSPECTION PROTOCOL

The state certifies that the Synar Survey Inspection Protocol on file with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and submitted with the Annual Synar Report for FFY 2026 is up-to-date and approved by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

State: Louisiana

Name of Chief Executive Officer or Designee: Holly Howat, Ph.D.

Signature of CEO or Designee:



Title: Interim Assistant Secretary

Date Signed:

12/23/2025

If signed by a designee, a copy of the designation must be attached.

SECTION I: FFY 2025 (Compliance Progress)**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT ACCESS LAWS, ACTIVITIES, AND ENFORCEMENT**

42 U.S.C. 300x-26 requires the states to report information regarding the sale/distribution of tobacco products to individuals under age 21.

1. Please indicate any changes or additions to the state tobacco statute(s) relating to youth and young adult access since the last reporting year. If any changes were made to the state law(s) since the last reporting year, please upload a copy of the state law to WebBGAS. (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26).

a. Has there been a change in the minimum sale age for tobacco products?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, current minimum age: ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

b. Have there been any changes in state law that impact the state's protocol for conducting Synar inspections?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, indicate change. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Changed to require that law enforcement conduct inspections of tobacco outlets

☐ Changed to make it illegal for youth and young adults to possess, purchase or receive tobacco

☐ Changed to require ID to purchase tobacco

☐ Changed definition of tobacco products

☐ Other change(s) (Please describe.) _____

c. Have there been any changes in state law that impact the following?

Licensing of tobacco vendors ☐ Yes ☒ No

Penalties for sales to minors ☐ Yes ☒ No

Vending machines ☐ Yes ☒ No

Added product

categories to youth and young adult access law ☐ Yes ☒ No

2. Describe how the Annual Synar Report (see 45 C.F.R. 96.130(e)) was made public within the state prior to submission of the ASR. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Placed on file for public review

☒ Posted on a state agency Web site (Please provide exact Web address and the date when the FFY 2026 ASR was posted to this Web address.)

Web address: <https://www.ldh.la.gov/resources?cat=&d=0&y=0&s=0&q=synar>

Date published: 12/29/2026

☐ Notice published in a newspaper or newsletter

- ☐ Public hearing
- ☐ Announced in a news release, a press conference, or discussed in a media interview
- ☐ Distributed for review as part of the SABG application process
- ☐ Distributed through the public library system
- ☐ Published in an annual register
- ☐ Other *(Please describe.)* _____

3. Identify the following agency or agencies *(see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130).*

a. The state agency(ies) designated by the Governor for oversight of the Synar requirements:

LA Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

b. The state agency(ies) responsible for conducting random, unannounced Synar inspections:

LA Department of Revenue, Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (OATC)

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

c. The state agency(ies) responsible for enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access law(s):

LA Department of Revenue, Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (OATC)

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. Identify the following agencies and describe their relationship with the agency responsible for the oversight of the Synar requirements.

a. Identify the state agency responsible for tobacco prevention activities (the agency that receives the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Tobacco Control Program funding).

LA Department of Health, Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health

b. Has the responsible agency changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

c. Describe the coordination and collaboration that occur between the agency responsible for tobacco prevention and the agency responsible for oversight of the Synar requirements. (Check all that apply.) The two agencies

☐ Are the same

- ☐ Have a formal written memorandum of agreement
- ☐ Have an informal partnership
- ☒ Conduct joint planning activities
- ☒ Combine resources
- ☐ Have other collaborative arrangement(s) *(Please describe.)* _____
- ☐ No relationship

d. Does a state agency contract with the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products (FDA/CTP) to enforce the youth and young adult access and advertising restrictions in the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No (if no, go to Question 5)

e. If yes, identify the state agency responsible for enforcing the youth and young adult access and advertising restrictions in the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (the agency that is under contract to the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products (FDA/CTP)).

f. Has the responsible agency changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

g. Describe the coordination and collaboration that occur between the agency contracted with the FDA to enforce federal youth and young adult tobacco access laws and the agency responsible for oversight of the Synar requirements. (Check all that apply.) The two agencies:

- ☐ Are the same
- ☐ Have a formal written memorandum of agreement
- ☐ Have an informal partnership
- ☐ Conduct joint planning activities
- ☐ Combine resources
- ☐ Have other collaborative arrangement(s) *(Please describe.)* _____
- ☒ No relationship

h. Does the state use data from the FDA enforcement inspections for Synar survey reporting?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

5. Please answer the following questions regarding the state's activities to enforce the state's youth and young adult access to tobacco law(s) in FFY 2025 (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130(e)).

a. Which one of the following describes the enforcement of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws carried out in your state? (Check one category only.)

- ☐ Enforcement is conducted exclusively by local law enforcement agencies.
- ☒ Enforcement is conducted exclusively by state agency(ies).
- ☐ Enforcement is conducted by both local *and* state agencies.

b. The following items concern penalties imposed for all violations of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws by **LOCAL AND/OR STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES** (this does not include enforcement of local laws or federal youth and young adult tobacco access laws). Please fill in the number requested. If state law does not allow for an item, please mark "NA" (not applicable). If a response for an item is unknown, please mark "UNK." The chart must be filled in completely.

PENALTY	OWNERS	CLERKS	TOTAL
Number of <u>citations issued</u>	40	40	80
Number of <u>finest assessed</u>	37	27	64
Number of <u>permits/licenses suspended</u>	UNK		UNK
Number of <u>permits/licenses revoked</u>	UNK		UNK
Other (Please describe.)			

OATC provided OBH with the final disposition of violations that occurred during the FFY 2025 Annual Synar Report. 40 outlets were found to be in violation during the FFY 2025 ASR. A citation was issued to both the Store Clerk/Server and Store/Business Owner. All clerks who sell or serve alcohol or tobacco products must complete the Responsible Vendor Training Program within 45 days of hire. Those Clerks who are trained and certified as a Responsible Vendor receive a Responsible Vendor Card. OATC handles all administrative citations issued to both "certified" Responsible Vendor (RV) clerks and store owners. Below is a summary of fines assessed and other dispositions as a result of the FFY 2025 Annual Synar Report by Owners and Clerks:

Owners	
Sanction	Count
Fine with/without Court Cost	6
Hearing Waived. Fine paid prior to hearing.	31
Unkown	2
Withdrawn	1

Clerks	
Sanction	Count
Criminal Summons	4
Fine with/without Court Cost	7
Hearing Waived. Fine paid prior to hearing.	20
Unknown	9

- c. **Are citations or warnings issued to retailers or clerks who sell tobacco to minors for inspections that are part of the Synar survey?**

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If “Yes” to 5c, please describe the state’s procedure for minimizing risk of bias to the survey results from retailers alerting each other to the presence of the survey teams:

Risk of bias is minimized by: (1) multiple inspection teams conducting compliance checks, so an area is completed before area retailers can communicate with each other; (2) OATC conducting tobacco, alcohol compliance checks on an ongoing basis throughout the year, providing a year-round enforcement presence; and (3) OATC does not issue a citation at the time of a compliance check. Citations are issued at the end of the day or within 24 hours of a compliance check.

From July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, OATC conducted 5,505 tobacco compliance checks (723 of these tobacco compliance checks were conducted for the FFY 2025 Annual Synar Report). OATC also conducted 9,785 alcohol compliance checks and 560 Hemp compliance checks during this time period.

- d. **Which one of the following best describes the level of enforcement of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws carried out in your state? (Check one category only.)**

- ☐ Enforcement is conducted only at those outlets randomly selected for the Synar survey.
- ☐ Enforcement is conducted only at a subset of outlets not randomly selected for the Synar survey.
- ☒ Enforcement is conducted at a combination of outlets randomly selected for the Synar survey and outlets not randomly selected for the Synar survey.

- e. **Did every tobacco outlet in the state receive at least one compliance check that included enforcement of the state youth and young adult tobacco access law(s) in the last year?**

☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

- f. **What additional activities are conducted in your state to support enforcement and compliance with state youth and young adult tobacco access law(s)? (Check all that apply and briefly describe each activity in the text boxes below each activity.)**

☒ Merchant education and/or training

A Synar Contractor was funded in 10 of the OBH administrative regions in the state. An important role of the Synar Contractor has been to train and supervise youth/young adult volunteers to conduct unconsummated compliance checks. A total of 4,512 unconsummated compliance checks were conducted July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025:

443 in Region 1

403 in Region 2

480 in Region 3

438 in Region 4

406 in Region 5

429 in Region 6

401 in Region 7

711 in Region 8

400 in Region 9

401 in Region 10

Of the unconsummated 4,512 compliance checks, 3,804 merchants were unwilling to sell and 156 merchants were willing to sell. In addition, 109 merchants were closed at the time of the visit, 168 merchants were out of business, and 193 merchants were marked as “other”.

During unconsummated compliance checks these merchants were provided Thank You and No Thank You cards, educational cards, and certificates as appropriate. Each merchant, where an unconsummated compliance check was conducted, was also provided an educational packet including written materials, window decals, and stickers regarding the current laws and goals of the Synar Amendment.

Since 2014, OBH has convened a Synar Workgroup to update merchant education materials. Most recently, Tobacco 21 information was included to reflect the recent change in Louisiana’s Youth Tobacco Access Law. In addition to the Tobacco 21 material, we will continue to provide other Synar related materials to include: Report a Violation Handout, Novelty Tobacco Product Flyer, and License Orientation Verification Flyer.

- ☒ Incentives for merchants who are in compliance (e.g., nonenforcement compliance checks in which compliant retailers are given positive reinforcement and noncompliant retailers are warned about youth and young adult access laws)

During unconsummated compliance checks conducted by Synar contractors, merchants were provided Thank You and No Thank You cards, educational cards, and certificates as rewards or reminders. During routine, consummated compliance checks conducted by agents of the Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control, merchants who are found in violation were issued administrative and criminal citations by mail. Those that were found to be compliant with the law received a letter of appreciation by mail signed by the Commissioner of the Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control.

- ☒ Community education regarding youth and young adult access laws

The Office of Behavioral Health is the single state authority for the treatment and prevention of substance abuse (NASADAD) as well as being the agency responsible for Synar implementation. OBH used SAPT Block Grant funds to

contract with primary prevention providers. These contractors provided services in the programmatic areas of Information Dissemination, Education, Alternative Activities, Problem Identification and Referral, Community-based Process and Environmental Strategies. All contractors were required to address the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATODs).

☒ Media use to publicize compliance inspection results

The Office of Behavioral Health posts the results of the Annual Synar Reports on its website. The FFY 2026 Report and other Annual Synar Reports may be viewed at: <https://www.ldh.la.gov/resources?cat=&d=0&y=0&s=0&q=synar>

☒ Community mobilization to increase support for retailer compliance with youth and young adult access laws

Since FFY 1997, regional Synar contractors have been funded in each of the 10 regions in the state. These contractors actively participated in Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions as well as Tobacco Free Living (TFL) Coalition Meetings, serving as an expert in limiting youth access to tobacco products.

☐ Other activities (*Please list.*) _____

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SYNAR SURVEY METHODS AND RESULTS

The following questions pertain to the survey methodology and results of the Synar survey used by the state to meet the requirements of the Synar Regulation in FFY 2025 (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130).

6. Has the sampling methodology changed from the previous year?

☐ Yes ☒ No

The state is required to have an approved up-to-date description of the Synar sampling methodology on file with CSAP. Please submit a copy of your Synar Survey Sampling Methodology (Appendix B). If the sampling methodology changed from the previous reporting year, these changes must be reflected in the methodology submitted.

a. If yes, describe how and when this change was communicated to SAMHSA

7. Please answer the following questions regarding the state's annual random, unannounced inspections of tobacco outlets (see 45 C.F.R. 96.130(d)(2)).

a. Did the state use the optional Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) to analyze the Synar survey data?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, upload a copy of SSES tables 1–8 (in Excel) to WebBGAS. Then go to Question 8. If No, continue to Question 7b.

b. Report the weighted and unweighted Retailer Violation Rate (RVR) estimates, the standard error, accuracy rate (number of eligible outlets divided by the total number of sampled outlets), and completion rate (number of eligible outlets inspected divided by the total number of eligible outlets).

Unweighted RVR 8.0%

Weighted RVR 7.9%

Standard error (s.e.) of the (weighted) RVR 1.2%

Fill in the blanks to calculate the right limit of the right-sided 95% confidence interval.

7.9% + (1.645 × 1.2%) = 9.8%
RVR Estimate plus (1.645 times Standard Error) equals Right Limit

Accuracy rate 98.9%

Completion rate 93.6%

c. **Fill out Form 1 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5).** *(Required regardless of the sample design.)*

d. **How were the (weighted) RVR estimate and its standard error obtained?**
(Check the one that applies.)

☒ Form 2 (Optional) in Appendix A (Forms 1–5) *(Attach completed Form 2.)*

☐ Other *(Please specify. Provide formulas and calculations or attach and explain the program code and output with description of all variable names.)*

e. **If stratification was used, did any strata in the sample contain only one outlet or cluster this year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ No stratification

If Yes, explain how this situation was dealt with in variance estimation.

f. **Was a cluster sample design used?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, fill out and attach Form 3 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5), and answer the following question.

If No, go to Question 7g.

Were any certainty primary sampling units selected this year?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, explain how the certainty clusters were dealt with in variance estimation.

g. **Report the following outlet sample sizes for the Synar survey.**

	Sample Size
Effective sample size (sample size needed to meet the SAMHSA precision requirement assuming simple random sampling)	456
Target sample size (the product of the effective sample size and the design effect)	456
Original sample size (inflated sample size of the target sample to counter the sample attrition due to ineligibility and noncompletion)	487
Eligible sample size (number of outlets found to be eligible in the sample)	482
Final sample size (number of eligible outlets in the sample for which an inspection was completed)	451

h. **Fill out Form 4 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5).**

8. Did the state's Synar survey use a list frame?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, answer the following questions about its coverage.

a. The calendar year of the latest Sampling frame coverage study: 2024

b. Percent coverage from the latest Sampling frame coverage study: 95.9%

c. Was a new study conducted in this reporting period?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, please complete Appendix D (List Sampling Frame Coverage Study) and submit it with the Annual Synar Report.

d. The calendar year of the next coverage study planned: 2027

9. Has the Synar survey inspection protocol changed from the previous year?

☐ Yes ☒ No

The state is required to have an approved up-to-date description of the Synar inspection protocol on file with CSAP. Please submit a copy of your Synar Survey Inspection Protocol (Appendix C). If the inspection protocol changed from the previous year, these changes must be reflected in the protocol submitted.

a. If Yes, describe how and when this change was communicated to SAMHSA

b. Provide the inspection period: From 8/1/2025 **to** 9/15/2025
MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY

c. Provide the number of youth and young adult inspectors used in the current inspection year:

39

NOTE: If the state uses SSES, please ensure that the number reported in 9b matches that reported in SSES Table 4, or explain any difference.

d. Fill out and attach Form 5 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5). (Not required if the state used SSES to analyze the Synar survey data.)

SECTION II: FFY 2026 (Intended Use):

Public Law 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 of the Public Health Service Act and 45 C.F.R. 96.130 (e) (4, 5) require that the states provide information on future plans to ensure compliance with the Synar requirements to reduce youth and young adult tobacco access.

1. In the upcoming year, does the state anticipate any changes in:

Synar sampling methodology ☐ Yes ☒ No

Synar inspection protocol ☐ Yes ☒ No

If changes are made in either the Synar sampling methodology or the Synar inspection protocol, the state is required to obtain approval from CSAP prior to implementation of the change and file an updated Synar Survey Sampling Methodology (Appendix B) or an updated Synar Survey Inspection Protocol (Appendix C), as appropriate.

2. Please describe the state's plans to maintain and/or reduce the target rate for Synar inspections to be completed in FFY 2026. Include a brief description of plans for law enforcement efforts to enforce youth and young adult tobacco access laws, activities that support law enforcement efforts to enforce youth and young adult tobacco access laws, and any anticipated changes in youth and young adult tobacco access legislation or regulation in the state.

ENFORCEMENT

Tobacco Licensing: Merchants are required to register for tobacco permits and may lose the ability to sell tobacco products if they are found non-compliant with tobacco laws. A list of outlets selling tobacco, but not on the Tobacco License List, identified during the Coverage Study will be sent to OATC for investigation. In addition, community volunteers participating in local merchant education and local enforcement will be encouraged to contact OATC if they believe that an outlet is selling tobacco without a license, or is selling tobacco to youth.

Field Agent Training: Many of the OATC supervisors and the field agents conducting compliance checks are new hires. Therefore, OBH will continue to conduct a competency-based face-to-face training with all supervisors and agents prior to the annual Synar inspections. The training will include: (1) update on tobacco and public health; (2) highlights from the recent ASR; (3) continuing challenges; (4) selecting the Synar sample; (5) collecting Synar data; (6) monitoring ASR data collection; and (7) a practice discussion. Training will emphasize the Synar Inspection Protocol and the Synar Data Collection form, as most of the compliance checks that agents conduct during the year will be based on different procedures.

Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (OATC) Synar Survey/Consummated Compliance Checks: OATC will conduct approximately 1,000 consummated compliance checks for the Annual Synar Survey. The outlets for these tobacco compliance checks will be selected from the State's Tobacco License List using stratified random sampling. The specific procedures described in Appendix C will be followed for recruiting and training youth inspectors, training field agents, inspection methodology, and data collection. Citations will be issued to all outlets found in violation. Letters of appreciation will be mailed to those merchants that are found to be in compliance.

MERCHANT EDUCATION

Revising Merchant Education Materials: Since 2014, OBH has convened a Synar Workgroup to update merchant education materials. Most recently, Tobacco 21 information was included to reflect the recent change in Louisiana’s Youth Tobacco Access Law. In addition to the Tobacco 21 material, we will continue to provide other Synar related materials to include: Report a Violation Handout, Novelty Tobacco Product Flyer, and License Orientation Verification Flyer.

Community-based Unconsummated Compliance Checks: As a way to educate tobacco merchants, each of the 10 Regions/LGEs of the State will fund a Synar Contractor that will train and supervise youth volunteers to conduct unconsummated compliance checks. Statewide, there will be 4000 unconsummated compliance checks to include the following: cigarette purchase attempts, smokeless tobacco purchase attempts, and cigar purchase attempts. During unconsummated compliance checks, merchants will be provided Thank You and No Thank You cards, educational cards, and certificates as appropriate. Each merchant, where an unconsummated compliance check is conducted, will also be given an educational packet including written materials, window decals, and stickers regarding the current laws and goals of the Synar Amendment.

Targeted Education & Enforcement to High-Risk Regions: The FFY 2026 Synar data in this report show that four regions are above the state average of 7.9%:

Region 1 – 10.2%

Region 4 – 9.2%

Region 7 – 11.8%

Region 10 – 25.0%

Merchant education efforts will be targeted to the high-risk regions. In addition, we will work with local law enforcement in the high-risk regions to conduct additional enforcement activities, beyond the activities currently conducted by OATC, the state agency.

As anticipated, the RVR with the new young adult operatives ages 18-20 was slightly higher at 10.0% than the RVR with youth operatives ages 16-17 at 3.9% (see table below of RVR stratified by age group of operatives). Merchant education efforts will emphasize OATC enforcement of Tobacco 21.

RVR by Operative Age Group		Violation		Total
		No	Yes	
Age Group	16 - 17	Count	146	6
		% within Age Group	96.1%	3.9%
	18 - 20	Count	269	30
		% within Age Group	90.0%	10.0%
Total	Count		415	36
	% within Age Group		92.0%	8.0%

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION & MEDIA ADVOCACY

Regional Synar coalitions in each of the 10 regions will actively participate in Regional Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition as well as Tobacco Free Living (TFL) Coalition Meetings, serving as experts in limiting youth access to tobacco products. OBH will conduct periodic meetings with block grant funded staff in Regions/LGE for communication, planning, coordination, problem-solving, and sharing lessons learned. A portion of each monthly meeting will be used to discuss and develop strategies for building community support, using media to communicate norms and awareness, and using media to reinforce community tobacco prevention and control efforts, including publicizing retailers in compliance. Special attention will be directed at upcoming tobacco-related legislation and understanding more about the effect of state preemption on local communities' options for addressing local underage tobacco use.

3. Describe any challenges the state faces in complying with the Synar regulation. (Check all that apply and describe each challenge in the text box below it.)

- ☒ Limited resources for law enforcement of youth and young adult access laws

Limited Number of OATC Staff: During the last few years, OATC has gone through a substantial re-organization. There has been a significant decrease in OATC's workforce. At the time of the FFY 2026 Annual Synar Report, there were 25 OATC enforcement agents including directors, special agents in charge and field agents. There are ten (10) less staff than during the FFY 2025 Annual Synar Report.

- ☐ Limited resources for activities to support enforcement and compliance with youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limitations in the state youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limited public support for enforcement of youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limitations on completeness/accuracy of list of tobacco outlets

- ☐ Limited expertise in survey methodology

- ☐ Laws/regulations limiting the use of minors in tobacco inspections

- ☐ Difficulties recruiting youth and young adult inspectors

- ☒ Issues regarding the balance of inspections conducted by youth inspectors age 15 and under

Inspections for FFY 2026 were not balanced by age. Of the 451 completed inspections, 10.9% were conducted by 16-year-olds, 22.8% were conducted by 17-year-olds, 21.5% were conducted by 18-year-olds, 35.0% were conducted by 19-year-olds, and only 9.8% were conducted by 20-year-olds. The state will continue to work with OATC to balance the age of youth and young adult inspectors.

- ☐ Issues regarding the balance of inspections conducted by one gender of youth and young adult inspectors

- ☒ Geographic, demographic, and logistical considerations in conducting inspections

Geographic Variation: RVR across the state varies by region. This variation is reviewed each year to target merchant education activities.

Rurality: The large rural populations make it logistically challenging to conduct compliance checks. The effect of rurality is heightened due to the limited number of OATC agents.

- ☐ Cultural factors (e.g., language barriers, young people purchasing for their elders)

- ☐ Issues regarding sources of tobacco under tribal jurisdiction

- ☐ Other challenges (*Please list.*) _____

APPENDIX A: FORMS 1–5

FORM 1 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar Survey data.)

Summary of Synar Inspection Results by Stratum													
State: <u>Louisiana</u>													
FFY: <u>2026</u>													
(1)		(2)			(3)			(4)			(5)		
STRATUM		NUMBER OF OUTLETS IN SAMPLING FRAME			ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE OUTLETS IN POPULATION			NUMBER OF OUTLETS INSPECTED			NO. OF OUTLETS FOUND IN VIOLATION DURING INSPECTIONS		
(a) Row #	(b) Stratum Name	(a) Over-the-Counter (OTC)	(b) Vending Machines (VM)	(c) Total Outlets (2a+2b)	(a) Over-the-Counter (OTC)	(b) Vending Machines (VM)	(c) Total Outlets (3a+3b)	(a) Over-the-Counter (OTC)	(b) Vending Machines (VM)	(c) Total Outlets (4a+4b)	(a) Over-the-Counter (OTC)	(b) Vending Machines (VM)	(c) Total Outlets (5a+5b)
1	Region 1	792	766	822	30	29	795	46	3	49	4	1	5
2	Region 2	469	469	862	24	24	493	61	1	62	2	0	2
3	Region 3	844	831	623	18	17	848	43	1	44	3	0	3
4	Region 4	501	501	935	122	122	623	63	2	65	6	0	6
5	Region 5	902	889	484	33	33	921	32	0	32	2	0	2
6	Region 6	466	452	444	18	18	470	31	0	31	1	0	1
7	Region 7	439	439	768	5	5	444	50	0	51	6	0	6
8	Region 8	745	745	501	23	23	768	33	1	34	1	0	1
9	Region 9	499	499	727	2	2	501	51	0	51	2	0	2
10	Region 10	715	715	493	12	12	727	32	0	32	8	0	8
TOTALS		6,352	6,286	6,659	307	304	6,591	442	8	451	35	1	36

RECORD COLUMN TOTALS ON LAST LINE (LAST PAGE ONLY IF MULTIPLE PAGES ARE NEEDED).

Note: There are some records with unknown outlet type. Therefore, the overall counts may not equal the sum of OTC and VM counts.

FORM 2 (Optional) Appropriate for stratified simple or systematic random sampling designs.

Calculation of Weighted Retailer Violation Rate										
										State: <u>Louisiana</u>
										FFY: <u>2026</u>
(1) Stratum Name	(2) N Number of Outlets in Sampling Frame	(3) n Original Sample Size	(4) n1 Number of Sample Outlets Found Eligible	(5) n2 Number of Outlets Inspected	(6) x Number of Outlets Found in Violation	(7) p=x/n2 Stratum Retailer Violation Rate	(8) N'=N(n1/n) Estimated Number of Eligible Outlets in Population	(9) w=N'/Total Column 8 Relative Stratum Weight	(10) pw Stratum Contribution to State Weighted RVR	(11) s.e. Standard Error of Stratum RVR
1	822	60	58	49	5	0.10	794.60	0.12	0.01	0.04
2	862	63	62	62	2	0.03	848.32	0.13	0.00	0.02
3	623	46	46	44	3	0.07	623.00	0.09	0.01	0.04
4	935	68	67	65	6	0.09	921.25	0.14	0.01	0.04
5	484	35	34	32	2	0.06	470.17	0.07	0.00	0.04
6	444	33	33	31	1	0.03	444.00	0.07	0.00	0.03
7	768	56	56	51	6	0.12	768.00	0.12	0.01	0.05
8	501	37	37	34	1	0.03	501.00	0.08	0.00	0.03
9	727	53	53	51	2	0.04	727.00	0.11	0.00	0.03
10	493	36	36	32	8	0.25	493.00	0.07	0.02	0.08
Total	6,659	487	482	451	36					

N - number of outlets in sampling frame
 n - original sample size (number of outlets in the original sample)
 n1 - number of sample outlets that were found to be eligible
 n2 - number of eligible outlets that were inspected
 x - number of inspected outlets that were found in violation
 p - stratum retailer violation rate ($p=x/n2$)
 N' - estimated number of eligible outlets in population ($N'=N*n1/n$)
 w - relative stratum weight ($w=N'/\text{Total Column 8}$)
 pw - stratum contribution to the weighted RVR
 s.e. - standard error of the stratum RVR

FORM 4 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar Survey data)

Inspection Tallies by Reason of Ineligibility or Noncompletion State: Louisiana FFY: 2026			
(1) INELIGIBLE		(2) ELIGIBLE	
Reason for Ineligibility	(a) Counts	Reason for Noncompletion	(a) Counts
Out of business	11	In operation but closed at time of visit	3
Does not sell tobacco products	11	Unsafe to access	2
Inaccessible by youth or young adult	5	Presence of police	0
Private club or private residence	1	Youth or young adult inspector knows salesperson	0
Temporary closure	3	Moved to new location	0
Unlocatable	0	Drive-thru only/youth or young adult inspector has no driver's license	0
Wholesale only/Carton sale only	0	Tobacco out of stock	0
Vending machine broken	0	Ran out of time	0
Duplicate	0	Other noncompletion reason(s) (<i>Describe.</i>)	0
Other ineligibility reason(s) (<i>Describe.</i>)	0		
Total	31	Total	5

FORM 5 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar survey data)

Synar Survey Inspector Characteristics		
State: <u>Louisiana</u>		
FFY: <u>2026</u>		
	(1) Attempted Buys	(2) Successful Buys
Male		
15 years	0	0
16 years	0	0
17 years	51	5
18 years	44	2
19 years	40	6
20 years	32	
Male Subtotal	167	10
Female		
15 years	0	0
16 years	49	4
17 years	52	0
18 years	53	3
19 years	118	17
20 years	12	2
Female Subtotal	284	26
Other	0	0
Total	451	36

APPENDIX B: SYNAR SURVEY SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

State: Louisiana
FFY: 2026

1. What type of sampling frame is used?

- ☒ List frame (*Go to Question 2.*)
☐ Area frame (*Go to Question 3.*)
☐ List-assisted area frame (*Go to Question 2.*)

2. List all sources of the list frame. Indicate the type of source from the list below. Provide a brief description of the frame source. Explain how the lists are updated (method), including how new outlets are identified and added to the frame. In addition, explain how often the lists are updated (cycle). (After completing this question, go to Question 4.)

Use the corresponding number to indicate Type of Source in the table below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 – Statewide commercial business list | 4 – Statewide retail license/permit list |
| 2 – Local commercial business list | 5 – Statewide liquor license/permit list |
| 3 – Statewide tobacco license/permit list | 6 – Other |

Name of Frame Source	Type of Source	Description	Updating Method and Cycle
State Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control, Tobacco License List	3	All tobacco outlets in Louisiana that sell tobacco at retail or otherwise distribute tobacco products to consumers	ATC continuously removes nonrenewed permits from the list and updates the list with new permits. ATC removes all tobacco outlets that possess an AG License is issued to those outlets where individuals under the age of 21 are prohibited from being on the premises.

3. If an area frame is used, describe how area sampling units are defined and formed.

a. Is any area left out in the formation of the area frame?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, what percentage of the state's population is not covered by the area frame?
_____ %

4. Federal regulation requires that vending machines be inspected as part of the Synar survey. Are vending machines included in the Synar survey?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If No, please indicate the reason(s) they are not included in the Synar survey. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ State law bans vending machines.
☐ State law bans vending machines from locations accessible to youth and young adults.

- ☐ State has a contract with the FDA and is actively enforcing the vending machine requirements of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.
- ☐ Other (*Please describe.*) _____

If Yes, please indicate how likely it is that vending machines will be sampled.

- ☐ Vending machines are sampled separately to ensure vending machines are included in the sample
- ☐ Vending machines are sampled together with over the counter outlets, so it is possible that no vending machines were sampled, however they are included in the sampling frame and have a non-zero probability of selection
- ☐ Other reasons (*Please describe.*) _____

5. Which category below best describes the sample design? (Check only one.)

- ☐ **Census** (*STOP HERE: Appendix B is complete.*)

Unstratified statewide sample:

- ☐ Simple random sample (*Go to Question 9.*)
- ☐ Systematic random sample (*Go to Question 6.*)
- ☐ Single-stage cluster sample (*Go to Question 8.*)
- ☐ Multistage cluster sample (*Go to Question 8.*)

Stratified sample:

- ☒ Simple random sample (*Go to Question 7.*)
- ☐ Systematic random sample (*Go to Question 6.*)
- ☐ Single-stage cluster sample (*Go to Question 7.*)
- ☐ Multistage cluster sample (*Go to Question 7.*)
- ☐ **Other** (*Please describe and go to Question 9.*) _____

6. Describe the systematic sampling methods. (After completing Question 6, go to Question 7 if stratification is used. Otherwise go to Question 9.)

7. Provide the following information about stratification.

a. Provide a full description of the strata that are created.

Louisiana is divided into 10 geographic regions shown in the map below. These 10 administrative regions comprise the strata.



b. Is clustering used within the stratified sample?

☐ Yes (Go to Question 8.)

☒ No (Go to Question 9.)

8. Provide the following information about clustering.

a. Provide a full description of how clusters are formed. (If multistage clusters are used, give definitions of clusters at each stage.)

b. Specify the sampling method (simple random, systematic, or probability proportional to size sampling) for each stage of sampling and describe how the method(s) is (are) implemented.

9. Provide the following information about determining the Synar Sample.

a. Was the Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) used to calculate the sample size?

☐ Yes (Respond to part b.)

☒ No (Respond to part c and Question 10c.)

b. SSES Sample Size Calculator used?

☐ State Level (Respond to Question 10a.)

☐ Stratum Level (Respond to Question 10a and 10b.)

- c. Provide the formulas for determining the effective, target, and original outlet sample sizes.

In calculating the **effective sample size** (n_e), we used the following formula:

$$n_e = \frac{1}{\frac{(e/Z)^2}{p(1-p)} + \frac{1}{N}}$$

where n_e is the minimum effective sample size, e is the margin of error set at .0175, Z is the normal deviant, 1.645 corresponding to a 95% one-tailed confidence interval for the non-compliance rate, p is the prevalence rate estimated by the previous year's weighted non-compliance rate, and N is the size of the sampling frame.

The **target sample size** (n_t) is the sample size adjusted for the design effect to account for the stratified random sample design, which is given by:

$$n_t = dn_e$$

where d is the design effect estimated to be 1.0038.

Then, the **original sample size** (n_o) is determined by:

$$n_o = \frac{n_t}{r_e r_c}$$

where r_e is the accuracy rate (eligibility rate) and r_c is the completion rate from the previous year's survey.

The sample is allocated to the 10 different strata using the proportional allocation procedure according to the stratum size of outlets in the population.

$$n_i = n(N_i/N)$$

where n_i is the sample size for the i th stratum, n is the total sample size for Louisiana, N_i is the number of outlets in the i th stratum, and N is the total number of outlets in Louisiana.

10. Provide the following information about sample size calculations for the Synar survey conducted in FFY 2025.

- a. If the state uses the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator to calculate the state level sample size, please provide the following information:

Inputs for Effective Sample Size:

RVR:

Frame Size:

Input for Target Sample Size:

Design Effect:

Inputs for Original Sample Size:

Safety Margin:

Accuracy (Eligibility) Rate:

Completion Rate:

- b. If the state uses the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator to calculate the stratum level sample sizes, please provide the stratum level information:

--

- c. If the state does not use the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator, please provide all inputs required to calculate the effective, target, and original sample sizes as indicated in Question 9.

Calculating the Effective Sample Size (n_e) for one-tailed test at 95%		
Sampling frame size FFY 2026	N	6,659
Margin of error	e	0.0175
Z-score for one-tailed 95% confidence interval	Z	1.645
Weighted RVR FFY 2025	p	.059
Minimum effective sample size FFY 2026	n_e	456

Calculating the Target Sample Size (n_t)		
Design effect	d	1.0
Minimum effective sample size FFY 2026	n_e	456
Target sample size FFY 2026	n_t	456

Calculating the Original Sample Size (n_o)		
Target sample size FFY 2026	n_t	456
Accuracy (eligibility) rate FFY 2025	r_e	0.943
Completion rate FFY 2025	r_c	0.994
Original sample size FFY 2026	n_o	487

APPENDIX C: SYNAR SURVEY INSPECTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

State: Louisiana
FFY: 2026

Note: Upload to WebBGAS a copy of the Synar inspection form under the heading “Synar Inspection Form” and a copy of the protocol used to train inspection teams on conducting and reporting the results of the Synar inspections under the heading “Synar Inspection Protocol.”

1. How does the state Synar survey protocol address the following?

a. Consummated buy attempts?

- ☒ Required
☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:)
☐ Not permitted

b. Youth and young adult inspectors to carry ID?

- ☒ Required
☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:)
☐ Not permitted

c. Adult inspectors to enter the outlet?

- ☒ Required
☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:)
☐ Not permitted

d. Youth and young adult inspectors to be compensated?

- ☒ Required
☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:)
☐ Not permitted

2. Identify the agency(ies) or entity(ies) that actually conduct the random, unannounced Synar inspections of tobacco outlets. (Check all that apply.)

- ☒ Law enforcement agency(ies)
☐ State or local government agency(ies) other than law enforcement
☐ Private contractor(s)
☐ Other

List the agency name(s): Louisiana Department of Revenue, Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (OATC)

3. Are Synar inspections combined with law enforcement efforts (i.e., do law enforcement representatives issue warnings or citations to retailers found in violation of the law at the time of the inspection)?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☒ Never

4. Describe the type of tobacco products that are requested during Synar inspections.

- a. What type of tobacco products are requested during the inspection?

- ☒ Cigarettes
☒ Small Cigars
☒ Cigarillos
☒ Smokeless Tobacco
☒ Electronic Cigarettes/Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)
☐ Other

- b. Describe the protocol for identifying what types of products and what brands of products are requested during an inspection.

The selection of the type of tobacco product attempted is based upon community norms; however, within the constraints of “typical youth purchase”, agents are mindful of the importance of attempting small cigars and smokeless tobacco, in addition to cigarettes.

- 5a. Describe the methods used to recruit, select, and train adult supervisors.

All OATC Agents are Commissioned and Certified Law Enforcement Personnel. Agents are trained in all required law enforcement procedures and also undergo field training within the agency with senior agents, field training personnel, and supervisors. OATC does not have a formal training curriculum for compliance inspections; however, procedures for compliance inspections are outlined in the agency’s Policy and Procedure Manual, and agents are trained in compliance check procedures in the field.

- 5b. Describe the methods used to recruit, select, and train youth and young adult inspectors.

Youth and young adult operatives are recruited by OATC from youth groups, community groups, and agent contacts. The age of youth operatives ranges from 16-20 years old. The youth/young adult is photographed during the screening process to make sure that the youth’s/young adult’s appearance reflects his/her actual age. Youth/young adult operatives are paid for their time at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.

Youth/young adult operatives are trained and supervised by OATC agents. Agents clearly discuss the guidelines for underage operatives with the youth/young adult. In addition to requirements for underage operatives, OATC agents train youth/young adult in the tobacco compliance check protocol. The training of youth/young adult operatives takes place at the time that the youth/young adult is officially recruited, once appropriate release and consent forms have been signed by the operative and his or her parent/guardian (for operatives under 18). In addition to the initial training session, OATC agents review the main points concerning compliance check procedures immediately prior to a compliance check to reinforce fidelity with the inspection protocol guidelines. Guidelines for underage operatives

conducting tobacco compliance checks are shown below.

Guidelines for Youth Operatives

- Must not be deceptively mature in appearance, or disguise or alter appearance.
- Must carry valid identification and state correct age if asked.
- Minors under the age of 18 must have a signed letter of approval from a parent/guardian.
- Operatives are paid for their time.
- Two photos must be taken of the operative **when the operative is hired**; one full face, and **one profile**. **A copy is also made of the operative's driver's license.**

Guidelines for Inspection Protocol

- Youth inspector teamed with two agents or a lead agent and an adult witness; one agent observes in the store; the other observes from the car/van
- One undercover agent enters the store
- Youth enters the store after the agent.
- Youth requests the pre-determined tobacco product.
- Youth pays for the tobacco product (get a receipt if possible)
- If youth is asked for ID, the youth will show legal identification
- If youth is asked age, youth will respond with correct age.
- Youth maintains possession of the tobacco product until an agent can take possession of it.
- Youth exits store and returns to car/van.
- Undercover agent exits store.
- Agent goes into store and gives citations to store and clerk.
- Agent completes the Synar Survey Inspection Form.

6. Are there specific legal or procedural requirements instituted by the state to address the issue of youth and young adult inspectors' immunity when conducting inspections?

a. Legal

☒ Yes ☐ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

Youth/young adult inspectors' immunity when conducting inspections is subject to the same legal requirements as immunity in other law enforcement efforts --- the youth/young adult inspectors are immune if inspections are done in the scope of the operations. Compliance checks are conducted by law enforcement personnel as law enforcement undercover operations. OATC follows all laws pertaining to undercover operations; therefore, the youth/young adult inspectors are cooperating individuals immune to prosecution due to the nature of the agreement with law enforcement.

b. Procedural

☒ Yes ☐ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

OATC Policy outlines what can and cannot be done by operatives. Youth/young adult operatives are regarded in the same manner as a confidential informant and in all cases the utmost effort is given to prevent appearance and testimony by them in court. Undercover agents witness the sale and testify to the offense

7. Are there specific legal or procedural requirements instituted by the state to address the issue of the safety of youth and young adult inspectors during all aspects of the Synar inspection process?

a. Legal

☐ Yes ☒ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

b. Procedural

☒ Yes ☐ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

OATC Policy requires that one commissioned OATC agent and one other commissioned agent or authorized OATC representative accompany youth/young adult operatives during compliance inspections and at no time is a youth/young adult operative allowed to complete an inspection of an outlet that has been deemed unsafe or inappropriate (i.e. operative knows the salesclerk).

8. Are there any other legal or procedural requirements the state has regarding how inspections are to be conducted (e.g., age of youth and young adult inspector, time of inspections, training that must occur)?

a. Legal

☐ Yes ☒ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

b. Procedural

☒ Yes ☐ No

(If Yes, please describe.)

OATC Policy pertaining to the conduct of inspections has been formulated using the State's legal guidelines established for law enforcement agencies.

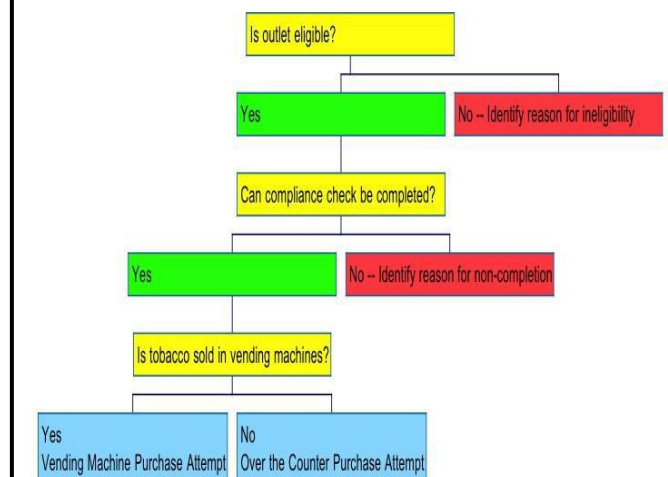
NOTE: Details about the Inspection Methodology, Database Entry Form, Data Collection Procedures, and Monitoring Procedures follow.

Inspection Methodology. At the point of inspection, the outlet name and address is verified. If the outlet is out of business, does not sell tobacco products, is a private facility not accessible to the public, is temporarily closed, is not located at the address, or is an adult club, the outlet is coded ineligible and the specific reason for ineligibility identified (I code). If the outlet is in operation but closed at the time of 3 separate visits, is judged unsafe to access, or the youth/young adult inspector knows the salesperson, the outlet is coded non-complete and the specific reason for non-completion is identified (N code).

Eligible outlets are inspected. One commissioned OATC agent and one other commissioned agent or authorized OATC representative accompany the youth/young adult during attempts to purchase tobacco. One agent observes the sale, and the second stands by as backup and to record the data about the context of the attempt and results. Identification carried by youth/young adult must be valid. If the youth/young adult has identification on his or her person, the youth/young adult must provide the identification if asked by the clerk. If the clerk instead asks for the youth's/young adult's age, the youth/young adult must advise the clerk of their correct age.

When attempts to purchase tobacco are successful, the agent(s) mails citations and summons in accordance with the State of Louisiana Alcohol and Tobacco Control Law. OATC agents enter the information on iPad tablets in a Google Form immediately following each inspection.

Figure 1. Synar inspection process



This data is then forwarded to the Office for Behavioral Health for verification and analysis.

Figure 2. Google Form/Louisiana Synar Form data collection for Synar inspection process

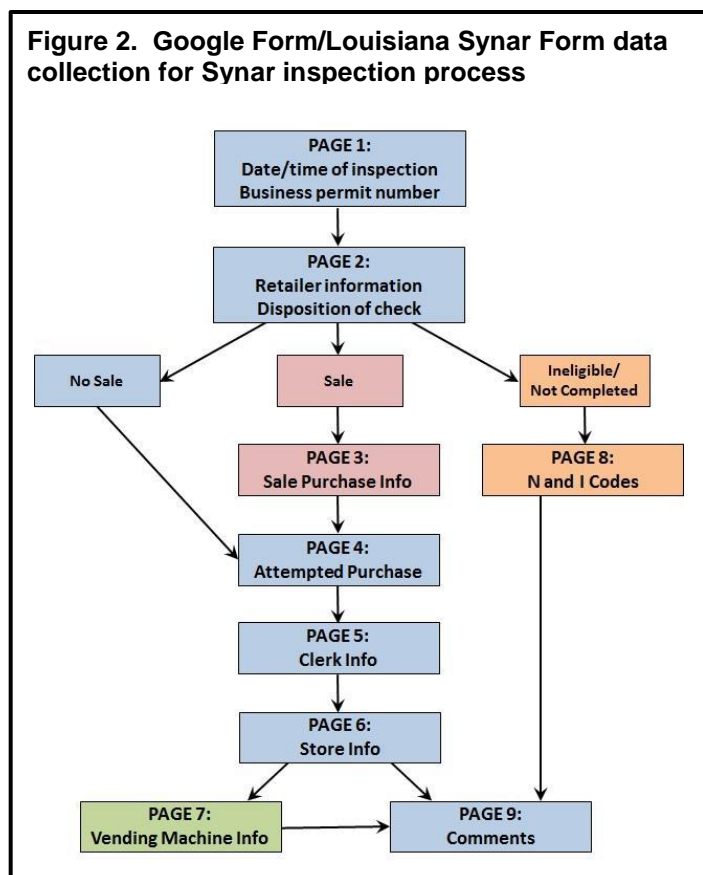


Figure 1 provides details about the inspection process.

Developing Database Entry Form.

Since FFY 2005, an electronic system created in EpiInfo has been used for data entry of sampled outlets for Synar inspections. This OmniForm was developed to improve accuracy and timeliness of the survey results, and to reduce agent burden. At the time, OATC staff officers and focus groups with the regional supervisors supported the move from collecting data on paper forms to electronic forms on laptops. In 2016, taking advantage of the availability of iPads for all OATC agents in the field, the OmniForm was converted to online Google Forms to further enhance accuracy and timeliness of data collection and to further reduce agent burden. The online Google Form (i.e., Louisiana Synar Form), which includes required fields, specified

field formats, drop-down response lists, and response-based skip patterns, was tested by OATC headquarters staff, headquarters technical support, and supervisors. Following minor revisions based on beta testing, the final online Louisiana Synar Form was implemented in May 2016 for FFY 2017 data collection. Training on use of the Louisiana Synar Form was provided to OATC headquarters staff (via telephone), who in turn provided training to the field agents. An instruction manual was also provided to OATC headquarters staff and state OBH staff on how to access and manage the data collected, which are stored in an Excel spreadsheet in Google Drive cloud service. The Louisiana Synar Form data collection flow, shown in **Figure 2**, follows the Synar inspection process. Screen shots of the Louisiana Synar Form pages are shown in **Figures 3a-3j**.

Figure 3a. Online Google Form, page 1

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Date and Time of Compliance Check *

MM DD YYYY Time
/ / 2016 : AM ▼

10 Digit Permit Number *

Your answer

NEXT

Page 1 of 9

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Figure 3b. Online Google Form, page 2

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Retailer's Information

Operative ID # *

Maximum 11 digits

Your answer

Ranking Agent # *

Maximum 3 digits

Your answer

2nd Agent #/ Witness #

Your answer

Type of Retailer: *

Choose ▼

Disposition of Check

Eligible and Complete *

Choose ▼

BACK

NEXT

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Figure 3c. Online Google Form, page 3

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Sale Purchase Information

Name of Item Sold *

Your answer

Price of Item *

Enter price of item if a sale was made (xx.xx)

Your answer

BACK NEXT

Page 3 of 9

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Figure 3d. Online Google Form, page 4

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Attempted Purchase

IF PURCHASE IS ATTEMPTED (If No sale or Sale was checked in the last section), COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FIELDS

How Outlet Sells Tobacco: *

Check all that apply

☐ Direct face to face exchange

☐ Self-service display

☐ Vending Machine (attempt purchase)

Type of Purchase Attempt *

Check one option only

☐ Direct face to face exchange

☐ Self-service display

☐ Vending Machine

Type of Tobacco Attempted *

Check one option only

Choose

Clerk Asked for ID?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Figure 3e. Online Google Form, page 5

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Sales Clerk Information

Salesclerk Gender *

☐ Female

☐ Male

Salesclerk Age *

☐ Under 21

☐ 21-29

☐ 30+

Salesclerk Race *

☐ African-American

☐ Asian

☐ Caucasian

☐ Hispanic

☐ Middle-Eastern

☐ Other

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Figure 3f. Online Google Form, page 6

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Store Observation

Vending machines present? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Warning Signs/Age ID Device

Warning signs posted? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Age ID Device at POS? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Do not know

Tobacco Ads Outside and Inside Store

Any exterior tobacco ads 3 feet or lower? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Any interior tobacco ads within 6 inches of candy? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Novel Tobacco Products Visibly for Sale?

E-Cigarettes ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Dissolvable tobacco? (strips, sticks, orbs) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Snus? (sachets) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Little cigars/tip cigars? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Blunts/blunt wraps? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Figure 3g. Online Google Form, page 7

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Vending machine information

Complete only if vending machines are present

Have locking device? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Require special tokens? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

In view of an adult? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

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NEXT

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Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Figure 3h. Online Google Form, page 8

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

* Required

Ineligible or Not Completed

Select N Code or I Code *

Choose



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Figure 3i. Online Google Form, page 8 – drop-down response list

Choose

- N1 - In operation, but closed at time of visit
- N2 - Unsafe to access
- N3 - Presence of police
- N4 - Youth inspector knows saleperson
- N5 - Moved to new location but not inspected
- N6 - Drive thru only/youth inspector has no drivers license
- N7 - Tobacco out of stock
- N8 - Run out of time
- N9 - Other noncompletion
- I1 - Out of business
- I2 - Does not sell tobacco products
- I3 - Inaccessible by youth
- I4 - Private club or private residence
- I5 - Temporary closure
- I6 - Unlocatable
- I7 - Wholesale only/Carton sale only
- I8 - Vending machine broken
- I9 - Duplicate
- I10 - Other ineligibility

Figure 3j. Online Google Form, page 9

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control - Louisiana Synar Form

Comments

Your answer

BACK SUBMIT

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Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Data Collection Procedures. Information about process of entering data, compliance check procedures, tobacco purchase attempts, and compliance with Federal procedures is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Data collection procedures

Software

- Google Forms will be used for the online Louisiana Synar Form.

Entering data and preventing loss of work

- The master list of outlets for your region includes all the outlets for your compliance checks.
- Use your copy of the master list to plan your compliance checks for the day.
- Enter the data for each compliance check to your Louisiana Synar Form and “Submit”.

Compliance check procedures

- Every outlet must have identifying information completed (permit number and type of retailer are required fields on the Louisiana Synar Form).
- Enter the permit number from the master log; if the outlet has a new permit number, enter the new number on the form.
- If you attempt to purchase tobacco, you must complete the tobacco purchase page.
- If the outlet is not eligible, or you could not complete the compliance check, you must indicate the reason for ineligibility or non-completion (N or I codes).
- Add comments, if you wish.

Tobacco purchase attempts

- Restaurants with bars are included in tobacco purchase attempts.
- All tobacco purchase sections are completed for every purchase attempt, except the vending machines section, which is only completed for vending machine attempts.
- If the outlet has a vending machine, you must attempt to purchase at the vending machine.
 - The youth/young adult should be asked for change to purchase cigarettes from a clerk.
 - The clerk’s gender, age, and race are entered in the salesclerk gender, age, race section.
 - Identify the vending machine characteristics on the form.

Compliance With Federal Procedures

- Use 16-, 17-, 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds, females and males: aim for checks to be 10% 16-year-old females, 10% 16-year-old males, 10% 17-year-old-females, 10% 17-year-old males, 10% 18-year-old females, 10% 18-year-old males, 10% 19-year-old females, 10% 19-year-old males, 10% 20-year-old females, and 10% 20-year-old males.
- Conduct compliance checks mornings, afternoons, and evenings, weekdays and weekends.

Monitoring Data Collection. Three layers of monitoring are developed to ensure accuracy of the data. Each agent checks the form before submitting the data through the online Google Form. Then, the data are reviewed by the OATC program manager at headquarters. Finally, the State Synar Coordinator reviews the data before sending to the Synar Principal Investigator.

Following the data collection period, an analytic dataset is created and logical consistency checks are used to further verify the data. Inconsistencies are resolved in consultation with OATC staff. Variables in the analytic dataset are indicated in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Variables in analytic dataset

General information

- Date and time of inspection
- Permit number
- Retailer name
- Retailer address
- Youth/young adult operative
- Gender and age of youth/young adult operative
- Adult agent(s)
- Type of outlet

Disposition

- Disposition (i.e., eligible and complete, ineligible, not completed)
- Reason for ineligibility or non-completion (for ineligible or non-complete outlets)

Purchase attempt

- How outlet sells tobacco
- Type of purchase attempt
- Type of tobacco attempted
- Name and price of tobacco purchased (for violations only)
- Whether the minor's identification was requested
- Gender, age, and race of sales clerk
- Characteristics of vending machines (for vending machine attempts only)
- Posting of warning signs
- Age ID device at POS
- Novel tobacco products visibly for sale
- Citation number (for violations only)
- Responsible Vendor Card Number
- Whether clerk has been working less than 3 months