

# Social Equity Newsletter

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## **New York cannabis in 2021 in review: Marijuana industry finally gets rolling**

March 31 marked an end to recreational cannabis prohibition in the Empire State, and the beginning of the painstaking task of establishing what will likely become one of the nation's largest regulated marijuana markets. That the law explicitly sets social equity goals demonstrates the legislature's progressive intent,

said Jacob Plowden, New York state coordinator for Students for Sensible Drug Policy.

For example, MRTA sets a target of giving 50% of its licenses to social equity applicants, which includes people negatively affected by the 50-year war on drugs. It also establishes the position of chief equity officer — currently filled by Jason Starr — within the Office of Cannabis Management.

Also, New York's legacy market is already well-established, and an active grey market has emerged since the state legalized cannabis, said Gandelman, the owner and CEO of Cortland-based Main Street Farms, which grows and sells hemp, vegetables, and other products. If state officials take too long to establish a legal market, the illegal market could prevail, he said.

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# Featured articles

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## **Cannabis is a Once-A-Generation Opportunity for New York, Let's Not Waste It**

### **Building Small Business**

The MRTA is built around ensuring social equity, requiring that half of all licenses go to people from BIPOC communities, women, veterans, and distressed farmers. While corporate cannabis is already in New York, and will have a role in the industry, the MRTA prioritizes small businesses, and all signs point to the CCB maintaining that precedent. According to leaders from the NY Cannabis Growers & Processors Association, the state's largest trade federation, "the goal is to create hundreds of millionaires, instead of a few billionaires."



### **Gotham Gazette**

## **Equity applicants express concern over NY's emerging legal marijuana industry**

Bronx businesswoman Nicole N'Diaye quickly realized New York's 2014 legalization of medical cannabis offered few opportunities for entrepreneurs of color. "It was almost \$220,000 to get the license, which no minority I know could afford," recalled N'Diaye, a Black woman who opted for a less competitive 2018 license for cultivating hemp and CBD. The experience left her among the leery regarding the state's recreational adult-use cannabis licensing application process.

### **Daily News**

## **Behind The Social And Economic Equity in Cannabis Legalization**

According to ACLU.org, data conducted from the company's analysis finds that racial bias was a consistent factor in the data trend of marijuana arrests. "88% of arrests were made for simply having marijuana", ( "The War On Marijuana" ) out of the total amount of 8.2 million recorded marijuana-related arrests throughout the early 2000's. It was deduced from this piece of data that, "Despite roughly equal usage rates", Black people are over 3 times more likely than whites to be arrested for marijuana possession

### **Cannabis Talk 101**

## **NY Assembly majority leader on cannabis regulations, next session priorities**

According to the Rockefeller Institute tracker, about 400 municipalities in New York state have opted to block marijuana dispensaries and/or consumption sites as the Dec. 31 deadline to do so gets closer. "Absolutely. I did anticipate that there would be some municipalities and elected representatives who, one, don't understand the plant, and two, don't understand it to the extent that their constituencies may understand it," Peoples-Stokes said. "There is an option for constituents, should they choose, to do a citizen referendum to change the thought-processes of their local representatives." Said Crystal Peoples-Stokes

### **State of Politics**

## **Links & Resources**

### **Cannabis Accounting 101: Intro to Accounting for Social Equity Operators**