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**MAYOR ADAMS, DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES ANNOUNCE  
NEW INITIATIVE TO EQUITABLY GROW CANNABIS INDUSTRY IN NYC**

*First-of-Its-Kind Initiative Provides Business Assistance to Justice-Involved New Yorkers Ahead  
of State Opening Cannabis Retail License Applications*

*Applicants Encouraged to Call 888-SBS-4NYC or Visit [Cannabis NYC Online](#) for Assistance*

**NEW YORK** — New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Kevin D. Kim today announced the launch of [Cannabis NYC](#), a first-of-its-kind initiative and suite of services to support the equitable growth of the cannabis industry in New York City — a key pillar of Mayor Adams’ [Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery](#). Housed at SBS, Cannabis NYC will support cannabis entrepreneurs and their workers as the industry develops. The initiative will work with industry stakeholders to create good jobs, successful small businesses, and sustainable economic opportunities, while also addressing the harms of cannabis prohibition. Cannabis NYC services will also include the city’s first-ever technical assistance for cannabis license applicants, as well as other business services to take entrepreneurs beyond licensing to a thriving operation.

“Today, we light up our economy and launch Cannabis NYC — a first-of-its-kind initiative to support equitable growth of the cannabis industry in New York City,” said **Mayor Adams**. “The regulated adult-use cannabis industry is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our underserved communities that have, for too long, faced disproportionate rates of drug-related incarceration to get in on the industry on the ground floor. Cannabis NYC will plant the seeds for the economy of tomorrow by helping New Yorkers apply for licenses and understand how to open and successfully run a business, while simultaneously rolling equity into our economy by giving those who have been justice-involved and those with a cannabis conviction a chance to succeed. This is about creating good jobs, successful small businesses, and finally delivering equity to communities harmed by the ‘War on Drugs.’”

“Whether you’re interested in opening up a cannabis dispensary or in the many other business and employment opportunities that will soon be available, Cannabis NYC is ready to help you get to work,” said **Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**. “With a meaningful focus on equity, Cannabis NYC will help push our city toward a

robust economic recovery with new and high-paying jobs and hundreds of millions in revenue to be reinvested in those communities most harmed by the ‘War on Drugs’ and the current pandemic.”

“Cannabis NYC is ready to help New Yorkers succeed in this budding industry,” said **SBS Commissioner Kim**. “New York City and state will work hand-in-hand to deliver on our shared social equity goals, support the transition of legacy operators to the legal market, and turn the page on the ‘War on Drugs.’”

“For generations, communities of color across our city have experienced the compounding social and economic impacts of the ‘War on Drugs.’ The end of prohibition and the emerging New York cannabis industry opens avenues for change and prosperity,” said **Mayor's Office of Equity Commissioner Sideya Sherman**. “Getting started is the first step. With Cannabis NYC, New Yorkers now have a one-stop shop for navigating the licensing process, access to no-cost services, and ongoing support as the industry continues to evolve. We're excited for this new chapter and what it means for those individuals and communities most harmed.”

“New York City Economic Development Corporation is proud to work with our city and state partners to create an equitable adult-use cannabis industry in New York,” said **New York City Economic Development Corporation President and CEO Andrew Kimball**. “Cannabis NYC will help businesses and our local economies through job creation, while prioritizing investment in communities of color and supporting those who have been most adversely impacted by cannabis enforcement.”

Today’s announcement comes ahead of the opening of the state’s first-ever cannabis retail dispensary license application later this week and advances a key plank of Mayor Adams’ economic recovery plan, which calls for a partnership with state and local leaders to build the nation’s most equitable cannabis industry.”

“This administration is committed to putting equity at the center of the new legal cannabis market, which is why the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice is committed to working with our partners at SBS to educate New Yorkers along the public safety continuum on participating in the industry,” said **Deanna Logan, director, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice**. “We look forward to working in partnership with our sister agencies to remedy some of the negative impact of past cannabis policy.”

“The introduction of legal cannabis sales and consumption in New York brings in a new era of fairness and equity with welcomed economic and social opportunity for all,” said **Ariel Palitz, executive director, Office of Nightlife at the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment**.

The first phase of Cannabis NYC will focus on ensuring that justice involved New Yorkers are able to apply for and secure retail licenses from the state. As legal cannabis businesses open their doors in the coming years, the initiative will expand to include a broad suite of business and technical support services tailored to the industry, as well as networking opportunities and efforts to establish Cannabis NYC as a global brand. The city is also exploring how to best connect cannabis entrepreneurs who may struggle to access traditional business capital with financial support.

Not only will Cannabis NYC boost the city's economy and provide New Yorkers with new job opportunities, but it will also do so while addressing the harm done to Black and Brown communities during cannabis prohibition. The expected size of New York City's emerging regulated adult-use cannabis will be historic, with estimates of up to \$1.3 billion in sales by 2023, and between 19,000-24,000 jobs created over the next three years.

Over the next month, New York State's Office of Cannabis Management will accept applications for [Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary \(CAURD\)](#) licenses to be distributed to qualifying businesses owned by justice-involved individuals or their parent, legal guardian, child, spouse, or dependent. CAURD licensees will be positioned to be the first legal cannabis retailers open in the state, setting an equitable foundation for the adult-use cannabis market from the outset.

To advance the state's ambitious equity goals and help New Yorkers interested in applying for CAURD licenses, Cannabis NYC will provide:

- **Application Support:** Answer questions about CAURD application requirements, hold educational webinars, and work with license applicants to complete the application during the month-long application period from August 25, 2022 – September 26, 2022.
  - **Support Beyond the License:** Connect aspiring cannabis entrepreneurs to no-cost services, along with technical assistance, to support successful businesses.
- **Long-Term Industry Support:** Expand programming as the industry grows to connect New Yorkers to good jobs and build strong businesses in the cannabis industry, as well as ancillary industries that do not “touch the plant.”

New Yorkers can learn more about Cannabis NYC [online](#) or by calling 888-SBS-4NYC (888-727-4692).

“I applaud Mayor Adams and his administration for establishing this initiative,” said **New York State Senator Diane Savino**. “Building on our work in Albany, creating the medical cannabis program, and now the birth of adult use will be complicated for many. It is vitally important that we help entrepreneurs navigate the process and stand up the legal regulated market and send the message that we will not ignore the illicit market.”

“When New York legalized marijuana, we wanted to do it right,” said **New York State Senator Brad Hoylman**. “The long-awaited rollout of our restorative and community justice-based cannabis licensing program will prioritize communities of color and help fund public schools. I applaud Mayor Adams and Commissioner Kim for establishing Cannabis NYC to help businesses through this exciting new process. I look forward to all marijuana sold in our state being legal and properly licensed, come from New York growers, and taxed accordingly.”

“The passage of the MRTA was a historic step toward justice and repairing the harm inflicted on communities of color by decades of inequitable drug enforcement,” said **New York State Senator Jamaal Bailey**. “I’m grateful that Cannabis NYC will build on the progress made at the state level by prioritizing opportunities for disproportionately impacted communities to participate in the new legal industry while taking important steps to invest in local economies,

create job opportunities, and reduce barriers to access for entrepreneurs and small businesses. New Yorkers will have a critical resource in Cannabis NYC as we continue to build an equitable legal cannabis industry and level the playing field for those most impacted by the war on drugs.”

“It’s great that Mayor Adams and Small Business Services Commissioner Kim are doing real ground-level work to help set up sound local businesses in the new adult-use cannabis field, especially for people who were harmed by our previous criminalization of cannabis,” said **New York State Assemblymember Richard Gottfried**. “This commonsense approach should be a model for other localities.”

“I’ve witnessed my family members be arrested and prosecuted for a plant my white counterparts used recreationally without repercussion,” said **New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson**. “It is time to right the wrongs of our failed drug enforcement system and create clear and easy pathways for the most negatively impacted groups to profit from cannabis. I support the mayor’s decision to launch Cannabis NYC, as a way to ensure Black and Brown groups own part of the emerging commercial cannabis industry.”

“I am proud of the progress our state continues to make in advancing our social equity agenda for legacy families that were most impacted by the marijuana prohibition,” said **New York State Assemblymember Stefani Zinerman**. “Earlier this year, we passed a budget that includes \$50 million to support the Cannabis Management Program that assists socially and economically disadvantaged individuals with establishing retail cannabis dispensaries. It’s great to have my hometown and the state’s largest municipality as true partners in this work. I look forward to working with Mayor Adams and Commissioner Kim to connect local entrepreneurs and cannabis practitioners to the new Cannabis NYC program. We have an opportunity to empower the next generation of cannabis entrepreneurs to create new sources of employment on the local level and economic freedom and healing in the 56<sup>th</sup> Assembly District and throughout five boroughs. This initiative will continue supporting our city’s and state’s recovery from the ravages of the pandemic that makes New York City a leader in building an equitable and sustainable cannabis industry.”

“I commend Mayor Adams for not just seeing the potential economic opportunities of the cannabis industry, but also making equity an important pillar of that industry’s growth in New York City,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “Although the disproportionate impacts of drug-related crimes we’ve experienced within our Black and Brown communities can’t be erased, Cannabis NYC will help to correct some of those generational wrongs. Whether it’s for a cannabis business or other industries, we should all be thinking of ways to bridge the inequities too many people in our communities face when starting a small business. The only way to build bigger and more sustainable communities is to provide equal opportunities to all.”

“Once underground, the cannabis industry is coming into the light, and it is important that our borough take full advantage of the social and economic benefits to our communities,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “The legalization of cannabis is an opportunity for us to undo the damage caused by years of disproportionate mass incarceration and prosecution of Black and Hispanic New Yorkers who have suffered under unfair drug laws and

policies for years. I want to thank Mayor Adams, New York City Small Business Services Commissioner Kim, and all of the advocates for prioritizing equity and justice with the creation of Cannabis NYC and I look forward to working with them in ensuring the Bronx is a part of this important initiative.”

“The blossoming cannabis industry offers significant socioeconomic potential for Queens and for New York City,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “That is why my office has been active when it comes to cannabis-related outreach, and I look forward to working with all our partners to ensure the mission of the Cannabis NYC program is realized. It is critical that we build an industry rooted in fairness that prioritizes communities that have long felt the sting of inequitable marijuana enforcement. With these steps announced today, I’m confident our city is taking seriously the importance of doing just that.”

“Mayor Adams’ Cannabis NYC initiative is a step towards restorative justice as the city is investing in marginalized communities that have been disproportionately affected by punitive marijuana laws,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin, chair, Committee on Small Business.** “These services in New York City provide opportunities in an upcoming industry by taking an equitable approach that uplifts individuals and the families of those who have been affected by former marijuana convictions.”

“Not only will Cannabis NYC boost the city’s economy and provide New Yorkers with new job opportunities, but it will do so while addressing the harm done to Black and Brown communities during cannabis prohibition,” said **New York City Councilmember Amanda Farías, chair, Committee on Economic Development.** “The expected size of New York City’s emerging regulated adult-use cannabis will be historic and will not only directly help our city continue to equitably recover, but also help ensure we have a way to secure the future of our economy — both in revenue and jobs. This initiative is personal to my district of the Bronx and I thank Mayor Adams for his attention to those who have been most affected by the past criminality of cannabis in this city and across the country. Cannabis NYC is community forward and centers the needs of communities like mine. Thank you Mayor Eric Adams and Commissioner Kim, I look forward to working together to continue to build the nation’s most equitable cannabis industry right here in New York City for the people of New York City.”

“I applaud Mayor Adams and Commissioner Kim for committing resources that will ensure equity and stability in the emerging cannabis market,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale Brewer.** “The Cannabis NYC Initiative will support entrepreneurs as they navigate the complexities of an evolving industry that could generate over \$1 billion in sales by 2023. This is a unique opportunity to create good paying jobs and bolster our economy.”

“Our city and state are on the frontier of the cannabis industry and a major aspect of that is supporting hiring and entrepreneurship efforts,” said **New York City Councilmember Kamillah Hanks.** “This new initiative will get the ball rolling on ensuring and promoting equity in this blooming industry in New York. Cannabis NYC will work to right the wrongs for so many community members who have fallen victim to the war on drugs while assisting and encouraging a robust new arm of our city’s economic recovery.”

“The state’s legalization of cannabis is a tremendous opportunity for New Yorkers,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez**. “As such, we must ensure our business owners are well equipped with the necessary tools to operate their businesses legally and that our community’s concerns are addressed in the process. The Cannabis NYC initiative will also allow more equitable and attainable opportunities for entrepreneurs and business owners who have been impacted by the Justice system, closing the gap on the disparities faced. I commend the mayor and his administration on this initiative and look forward to working together.”

“The Bronx Cannabis Hub was created to provide New Yorkers most impacted by cannabis prohibition with vetted and reliable cannabis services and education, said **Cristina Buccola, co-founder, The Bronx Cannabis Hub**. “We look forward to working with Mayor Adams, SBS, and Cannabis NYC across our incredible city to deliver on the equity goals of New York’s cannabis program.”

“Building an equitable industry in New York City is no small feat and we are proud to stand in support of Mayor Adams and the Cannabis NYC initiative as it provides tangible resources for those seeking to enter the cannabis industry but have been historically turned away due to lack of access,” said **Kaliko Castille, board president, Minority Cannabis Business Association**.

“As New York’s adult-use cannabis industry kicks into gear, it is crucial we have partners on the local level who share our goal of ensuring that this industry is one that is equitable in opportunities for both ownership and good, union jobs,” said **John R. Durso, president, Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW**. “Mayor Adams’ Cannabis NYC initiative is just that — by supporting workers and entrepreneurs alike, we are making sure that this new and emerging industry is one that will help everyone succeed.”

“The adult-use cannabis industry will be one of the largest generators of wealth in New York at least for the next two decades — and we must ensure that the marketplace provides room for diversity, equity, and inclusion,” said **Jeffrey Garcia, co-founder, Latino Cannabis Association**. “Thank you to Mayor Adams and SBS Commissioner Kim for implementing the Cannabis NYC initiative to help our communities, which have suffered far too long from the impacts of prohibition, to now benefit from legalization.”

“New York City waits for no one, and Mayor Adams and Commissioner Kim have taken cannabis by its root, stem, and leaf,” said **Bertha Lewis, founder and president, The Black Institute**. “Through education, technical assistance and legal oversight they are leading the nation in ensuring that ‘social equity’ is real and working. Cannabis is an industry and not just a nickel bag. New York state could have no better partners than this dynamic duo. This announcement today codifies the New York City commitment to lead and be a model for the nation.”

“The Harlem Business Alliance is dedicated to black economic empowerment,” said **Regina Smith, executive director, Harlem Business Alliance**. “As one of the Black communities most harmed by the federal war on drugs and the state’s Rockefeller laws, we strongly believe that our people must benefit economically from the legalization of the billion-dollar marijuana industry. Without tremendous resources from the city and state — especially startup capital and intensive

culturally-competent, community-based, business development services — this will not happen. HBA is eager to work closely with the Adams administration to ensure that thousands of successful thriving businesses are grown to support the financial backbone of the Black community.”

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