

Mayor Adams Announces Steps to Welcome Equitable Cannabis Economy to New York City

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New \$4.8 Million Investment in Executive Budget Will Help Support Community Outreach and Technical Assistance for Businesses

Multiagency Effort Will Prioritize Most Impacted Neighborhoods, Placing Equity at Center of Industry

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced major new steps to welcome the cannabis industry to New York City, with an emphasis on promoting equity. Mayor Adams is proposing a \$4.8 million investment in the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) executive budget to promote the growth of the industry, which will fund a multiagency community outreach effort, as well as technical assistance for businesses navigating the licensing process. The new investments — which will focus on the communities most impacted by the ‘war on drugs’ — come as the city prepares for an influx of new licensed dispensaries and other businesses.

“The cannabis industry could be a major boon to our economic recovery — creating new jobs, building wealth in historically underserved communities, and increasing state and local tax revenue,” said **Mayor Adams**. “With a new regulated adult-use cannabis market on the immediate horizon, now is the time for our city to make proactive investments to ensure the people disproportionately impacted by the criminalization of these substances can reap the benefits of the new industry.”

The new investments deliver on a plank of Mayor Adams’ “[Renew, Rebuild, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery](#),” which calls for a partnership with state and local leaders to build the nation’s most equitable cannabis industry. The adult-use cannabis industry is expected to generate nearly \$1.3 billion in sales in its first year and support between 19,000 and 24,000 jobs within three years. This presents a major opportunity to jumpstart New York City’s economic recovery, while addressing some of the longstanding inequities exacerbated during the pandemic.

The multiagency effort will include targeted outreach and resources from the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS), the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ). In the coming months, these agencies will work in partnership to begin identifying stakeholders in impacted communities, launching a public education tour to educate people about the new process, promoting an educational media campaign, and assessing the needs of interested parties so they can better tailor their services and programs to assist those interested in participating in the industry. Additionally, EDC is prepared to offer assistance to entrepreneurs seeking to access the financing and real estate required to start and grow their businesses.

"We have a real opportunity to develop a thriving and truly equitable cannabis industry in the five boroughs," said **Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer**. "As we work in close partnership with our city and state partners to design programming and policy, we will make sure that qualifying entrepreneurs interested in entering this industry have the supports and technical assistance they need to navigate the licensing process and launch successful businesses."

New York state officially legalized the sale and consumption of adult-use cannabis in March 2021 through the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA). After the passage of the law, Governor Kathy Hochul created the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and appointed members to the Cannabis Control Board (CCB), both of which oversee the promulgation of regulations relating to the cannabis industry, and the issuance of licenses for those looking to participate in the industry. Recognizing the disproportionate harm the criminalization of cannabis has inflicted on Black and Brown communities, the MRTA has set a goal of awarding half of all licenses to social and economic equity applicants.

"This investment delivers critical resources that will allow SBS to reach communities disproportionately impacted by the criminalization of cannabis, and provide New Yorkers with the tools, education, and support needed to meaningfully participate in this industry," said **New York City Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin D. Kim**. "Ensuring small businesses are at the center of the regulated cannabis industry will fuel our city's recovery and advance economic equity."

"Mayor Adams is committed to ensuring that communities and individuals most negatively impacted by criminalization can now benefit from the entrepreneurial

opportunities and jobs of the newly legal cannabis industry,” said **New York City Economic Development Corporation President and CEO Andrew Kimball**. “As we learn from the experiences of other states, NYCEDC and our partners across New York City will work together to ensure equitable access to necessary financing and real estate for these pioneering entrepreneurs.”

“New York City has long been at the forefront of cannabis reform. This investment by the administration is expanding access to economic opportunities for small businesses while promoting equity and addressing the negative impacts of previous cannabis enforcement,” said **Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice Director Deanna Logan**. “We look forward to working with our partners across the city to ensure that the individuals who have disproportionately experienced the negative impact of cannabis criminalization have the resources and support they need to participate in the new industry.”

“New York City is putting economic justice front and center with these first wave investments in equitable cannabis business development and outreach programming,” said **Lindsay Greene, president and CEO, Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation; and member, 2018 New York City Task Force on Cannabis Legalization**. “These strategic investments are maximizing the chances we can learn from other mistakes and channel the expected wealth from cannabis into communities previously criminalized and those most in need of economic opportunities.”

“Building out New York’s cannabis industry is a team effort, and it’s wonderful to have New York City Mayor Eric Adams on board with our efforts to center social equity and job creation,” said **Tremaine Wright, chair, Cannabis Control Board**. “Governor Kathy Hochul has provided the full support of the state government to help us create this industry. Municipal governments will be integral partners as we get this industry off and running, and it’s great to see this investment coming from the largest municipal government in the state.”

“We are working to build the most robust, equitable and thoughtful cannabis industry in the nation, and we deeply appreciate the support of this administration as we do so,” said **Chris Alexander, executive director, Office of Cannabis Management**. “New York City has been a cultural capital for cannabis for decades, Governor Kathy Hochul has been a champion at the state level, and I appreciate Mayor Adams’ championing us

at the city level by establishing multi-agency efforts to make sure New York City also becomes the business capital for cannabis too.”

“I am pleased that New York City is providing resources to support the development of a cannabis industry in New York City rooted in principles of equity and reinvestment in communities disproportionately impacted by the drug war,” said **New York State Senator Liz Krueger**. “I look forward to working with Mayor Adams and the New York State Office of Cannabis Management in their efforts to ensure that the goals of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act are fulfilled.”

“The war on drugs unleashed severe damage and ruined many lives — particularly in communities of color,” said **New York State Senator James Sanders Jr.** “We must ensure that companies that profit the most from the legalization of cannabis will contribute part of their profits back into the communities most harmed by the war on drugs.”

“In 2014 I was proud to lead the way on bringing medical cannabis to New York State and in 2021 worked with my colleagues to expand it and finally bring New York into the legal adult use arena,” said **New York State Senator Diane Savino**. “We stand on the threshold of being the model for the nation and that will become reality with innovative ideas like the ones coming from the Adams administration.”

“For many years, our communities have been impacted by discrimination and poverty. Now that the cannabis industry will be opening in New York State, we must ensure that those same communities that were marginalized are the first to benefit from what they were condemned for,” said **New York State Senator Luis Sepúlveda**. “With the inflow of hundreds of millions of dollars and the creation of thousands of jobs, our communities should be the ones to lead the industry and receive its benefits in social, education and health projects.”

“This year, New Yorkers who celebrate 4/20 won't have to do so in fear of criminal repercussions,” said **New York State Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**. “The war on drugs perpetuated Jim Crow laws, and the arrest and incarceration of Black New Yorkers at alarming and disproportionate rates. This \$4.8 million investment will ensure that equity is at the center of the cannabis industry. As chair of the state's subcommittee on Minority and Women-owned businesses, I look forward to partnering with the city to ensure that small, minority business owners get

their fair share. Through this program, we can restore some of what was wrongly taken from our communities.”

“For decades, marijuana arrests have disproportionately affected Black and Brown communities,” said **New York State Assemblymember Kenny Burgos**. “This has contributed to mass incarceration and financial instability. Bringing the cannabis industry to New York City will help accelerate our local economy and significantly help the areas that were the most negatively impacted, especially in my home borough of the Bronx.”

“As we continue to proceed on the path towards a recreational cannabis economy in New York that was set out in the Legislature's MRTA law, I am pleased to see New York City stepping up to support people and communities who were most harmed by the prohibition period,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz**. “The MRTA law describes a nation-leading approach to help restore economic success and vitality to those with the greatest need, setting a goal of half of all commercial sales permits going towards for social and economic equity applicants. Mayor Adams' proposal to invest nearly \$5 million to support these applicants is much-needed and will help our state reach the aspirational justice goals that we deserve.”

“I am happy to express my support for Mayor Adams' plan to invest in New York City's cannabis industry because it addresses important historical inequities in the way cannabis was criminalized in our city,” said **New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson**. “Under this new plan, communities disproportionately affected by the war on drugs will be paid reparations through the new business opportunities and jobs that the industry will bring.”

“I applaud Mayor Adams's bold and proactive initiative to make New York's cannabis market the most equitable in our nation,” said **New York State Assemblymember Al Taylor**. “For too long, Black and Brown communities have been disproportionately harmed by the criminalization of cannabis. Legalizing the sale and consumption of adult-use cannabis is a game changer, but we must also do everything we can to ensure the communities most affected by the war on drugs will have a seat at the table and reap the many economic benefits this exciting new industry presents. Thank you, Mayor Adams, for leading the way and making the investments necessary to build back New York and its historically underserved communities stronger than ever.”

“The emerging cannabis industry in New York City must be part of our core strategy to recover from the economic devastation caused by the pandemic,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “While we must carefully collaborate on the regulation of the new cannabis market, one thing must be very clear — the communities that have been historically most affected by criminalization must be the ones that most benefit from legalization. This is a phenomenal opportunity to build economic opportunity in the neighborhoods that have borne the weight of unjust policing and enforcement, and I applaud the mayor for ensuring the city’s approach prioritizes equitable investment, grassroots outreach, and technical assistance.”

“Two things are necessary for economic growth: looking to economies of the future and ensuring equity within them. These two qualities are being emphasized by Mayor Adams with his investment in the cannabis economy,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “An important conversation is also being had around righting the wrongs that have occurred in communities of color through the war on drugs. We should look away from criminalization and towards opportunities and rebuilding, which these programs aim to do.”

“Here in Queens, we realize the immense socioeconomic potential the burgeoning cannabis industry offers as we build back better coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning with our inaugural Cannabis Conference on April 20 and continuing with targeted outreach throughout the coming months, I look forward to working with all our partners to ensure that Queens leads when it comes to the city’s cannabis economy,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “It is critical that we build an industry rooted in fairness that prioritizes communities that have long felt the sting of inequitable enforcement. With these steps announced today, I’m confident our city is taking seriously the importance of doing just that.”

“A commitment to cannabis equity is a commitment to racial equity. What we fund is what we prioritize and I am proud to see the Adams administration is allocating \$4.8 million to invest in our city’s emerging economy — cannabis,” said **New York City Councilmember Amanda Farías, chair, Committee on Economic Development**. “I applaud this proactive initiative ensuring we are creating economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. As we focus on an equitable recovery for New York City, it is essential that we create an environment that both fosters new businesses and supports our Black and Brown New Yorkers who have been most affected by mass incarceration, need more access to small business recovery, and the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“It is of critical importance for the city of New York to support and invest in the legalization of marijuana in neighborhoods that were devastated by the war on drugs. We need to be mindful of marginalized communities that have been disproportionately incarcerated because of punitive marijuana laws. Investments in a multi-agency approach for outreach to new dispensaries and businesses will only ease navigating the licensing process,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin, chair, Committee on Small Business.**

“As the adult use of cannabis has been legalized in New York state, we understand the challenges that the emerging industry will face in outreach, education and equity,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez, chair, Committee on Consumer Affairs and Worker Protection.** “We thank Mayor Adams with his proposal of \$4.8 million investment as this will create an opportunity for our economy and people as well as addressing the long standing concerns of our community. I look forward to working with our state and local agencies to create a entirely new, legal industry that protects the rights of consumers and workers.”

“The mayor's new investments will allow community members to find opportunities in the cannabis industry. Minorities have been unfairly targeted even though consumption rates were virtually identical across races,” said **New York City Councilmember Nantasha Williams.** “I look forward to supporting the mayor's initiative and having continuous conversations around restorative justice and social equity to provide support to communities most impacted by marijuana.”

“We are happy to hear of Mayor Adams’ commitment to equity in the cannabis economy, which will give Black and Brown communities a chance to build generational wealth as we heal from the war on drugs and poverty,” said **Wanda Salaman, executive director, Mothers on the Move.** “Marijuana is a plant many of our ancestors traditionally used for healing. We look forward to partnering with the city to make sure those most impacted benefit the most.”

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