

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

June 7, 2023

**CONTACTS:**

Jeffrey Gordon / [JGordon@DASNY.org](mailto:JGordon@DASNY.org) / 518-894-4007 / DASNY

Trivette Knowles / [Trivette.Knowles@ocm.ny.gov](mailto:Trivette.Knowles@ocm.ny.gov) / 929-466-2485 / OCM

Aaron Ghitelman / [Aaron.Ghitelman@ocm.ny.gov](mailto:Aaron.Ghitelman@ocm.ny.gov) / 518-728-9570 / OCM

**NEW YORK STATE ANNOUNCES IMPORTANT STRIDES IN CANNABIS MARKET ROLLOUT, WITH LONG ISLAND AND SYRACUSE SET TO OPEN THEIR FIRST DISPENSARIES, PROGRAM CHANGES TO GET STORES OPEN FASTER ACROSS STATE**

*Dispensaries in Farmingdale and Syracuse Set to Open in June*

*New Initiatives Announced to Support Cannabis Entrepreneurs Changes to State Program will Lower Costs, Streamline Processes for Justice-Impacted Licensees*

*Entrepreneurs Taking Advantage of Unique Opportunity to Launch Retail Dispensaries with Cannabis Deliveries*

*Cannabis Control Board Set to Grant First Licenses to Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary Applicants in Finger Lakes Region at June 15 Board Meeting*

Today, New York's Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) announced that two more adult-use cannabis dispensaries will open in Farmingdale and in Syracuse within next three weeks. These represent the first Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensaries (CAURD) to open in the Long Island and Central New York regions.

These shops will join New York's 12 existing licensed dispensaries; nine are brick-and-mortar storefronts, and the other three are delivery-only operations that will eventually **become** permanent locations.

"We're thrilled to be opening multiple new, legal cannabis dispensaries in regions of New York State where we currently have none, and it is a point of pride that these locations are operated by CAURD licensees, who were disproportionately harmed during the era of cannabis prohibition in the State," said **Chris Alexander, Executive Director of New York's Office of Cannabis Management**. "We're very proud to support these small businesses in their efforts to establish and grow New York's legal cannabis industry, and we are adapting our nation-leading program every day to meet the needs of cannabis entrepreneurs as we race to expand the legal market in New York."

Long Island's first dispensary will open at Industry Court located in Deer Park, and will be operated by the Budding Industry Group, LLC, owned by Anthony Traina, Amber

Bennett, Lisa Ripi, Leslie Rodriguez, and Samuel Jurist. For a period of five years, Traina owned LI Bully Squad Inc., a dog breeding company in Suffolk County.

Central New York's first adult-use dispensary, operated by the Flynnstoned Corporation and owned by Michael A. Flynn, will open on Walton Street in Syracuse. Flynn has owned and operated The Roofing Guys, a residential roofing contracting business in Syracuse, for 17 years.

CAURD licenses are a foundation of the New York State Seeding Opportunity Initiative. Through the Seeding Opportunity Initiative, New York's first legal adult-use retail dispensaries are operated by those most impacted by the unjust enforcement during cannabis prohibition, or by nonprofit organizations whose services include support for the formerly incarcerated. All adult-use licensed dispensaries exclusively sell cannabis products grown by farmers in New York State.

*New Initiatives Announced to Support Cannabis Entrepreneurs Changes to State Program will Lower Costs, Streamline Processes for Justice-Impacted Licensees*

In April 2022, Governor Hochul proposed, and the Legislature enacted, a first-of-its-kind New York State Cannabis Social Equity Investment Fund (Fund) to provide much-needed start-up capital for justice-involved cannabis dispensary licensees. The \$200 million fund was initially seeded with \$50 million in State funds, to be later repaid from tax revenue generated by cannabis sales, with the remaining \$150 million in meant to be raised by DASNY from the private market, a process that remains ongoing.

This program was designed to offer CAURD licensees capital assistance with opening dispensaries, and now, after some programmatic changes in Fall 2022, the Fund offers the opportunity for licensees to either select a location identified by DASNY or bring their own.

While it continues to pursue the raising of \$150 million in private capital, DASNY has announced changes to the Fund structure and options to offer greater flexibility to licensees, with the goal of hastening the opening of dispensaries.

At a meeting of CAURD licensees in New York City yesterday, State officials outlined the following changes to the program; many of these are based on direct feedback from CAURD licensees:

- 1. Much greater flexibility regarding locations and more information up front:**
  1. DASNY will now begin identifying new locations that may better fit some CAURD licensees' business models, including offering smaller sites with lower rents and renovation costs.
  2. DASNY also will cap buildout expenses at \$1.3 million in NYC and \$1.1 for Upstate (there were previously no caps), which narrows the pool of possible locations to those that require comparatively less work, and therefore can be opened faster.

3. DASNY is revamping the design and construction process to provide even more detailed cost and design information before the licensee commits to a site.
2. **Providing Additional Capital through a \$5 million CAURD Capital Loan Program:**
  1. CAURD licensees who have been able to secure their own location will now be eligible to apply for an up to \$100,000 low-interest loan from DASNY (anticipated at 5%) to cover costs associated with the build-outs of dispensaries.
  2. Once a CAURD licensee building their own dispensary gets their permanent license, finances the build out, and then opens, the Fund will provide a “reimbursement” loan proceeds to cover up to \$100,000 in capital costs.
3. **A new search tool is launched:**
  1. DASNY is committed to streamlining the process for CAURD licensees who are looking to secure their own retail dispensary location without Fund support.
  2. A search tool will soon be available that will allow licensees to determine if their proposed location meets OCM regulations regarding proximity to schools, churches, and other dispensaries.
  3. This will help licensees more quickly determine if sites of interest to them are eligible and available.

The Cannabis Control Board will convene to vote on issuing the first licenses in the Finger Lakes region at a Board Meeting on June 15, 2023.

*Entrepreneurs Taking Advantage of Unique Opportunity to Launch Retail Dispensaries with Cannabis Deliveries*

In [December 2022](#), OCM announced that all CAURD licensees could begin business operations by offering delivery services by bicycles, scooters, and motor vehicles as they worked to secure a permanent retail location. This approach was implemented to assist in jump-starting New York State’s cannabis market and to provide support for the CAURD entrepreneurs.

Since adaptation, three temporary delivery-only dispensaries have commenced operations, with two more expected to open in the next **three** weeks.

The following licensed dispensaries offer cannabis delivery sales as they build permanent storefronts:

- [Legacy Dispensers](#), Albany, Owned by Matt Robinson
- [Elevate ADK](#), Plattsburgh, Owned by Adam Hainer

- [The Cannabis Place](#), Queens, Owned by Osbert Orduña (a service-disabled veteran)

The following licensed dispensaries are expected to begin cannabis delivery sales in the next two weeks:

- Stage One Cannabis, Rensselaer, Owned by Joshua Mirsky
- Half Island Flavors LLC, The Bronx, Owned by Richard Montero

*Cannabis Control Board Set to Grant First Licenses to Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary Applicants in Finger Lakes Region on June 15*

Shortly after the application period for the CAURD licenses closed on September 26, 2022, a lawsuit was filed against OCM, claiming the eligibility criteria of the CAURD regulations violated the “dormant commerce” clause by discriminating against individuals who are not from New York State. This lawsuit resulted in an injunction preventing the Cannabis Control Board (CCB) from issuing CAURD licenses in five geographic regions across the State. In a March 2023 decision, the injunction was lifted for four of the five State’s geographic regions, leaving only the Finger Lakes region enjoined. The lawsuit has now been settled, and pursuant to the settlement, OCM can continue with the CAURD program and present applicants for licenses from the Finger Lakes region to the Cannabis Control Board, which is the entity that issues the licenses.

In addition to the Cannabis Control Board meeting scheduled for June 15, there will be a Cannabis Advisory Board meeting on June 13.