



# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY (SEE)

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Reporting to the Chief Equity Officer, the SEE Team is tasked with fulfilling the promise of the MRTA to redress the harms of marijuana prohibition by ensuring that the new cannabis market is fair and equitable. Through a series of policies, programs and services, the SEE Team supports equity applicants and licensees enter and thrive in the new cannabis market. OCM's equity vision mission and initiatives are laid out in the SEE Plan, which can be found on our website at [cannabis.ny.gov/social-and-economic-equity](https://cannabis.ny.gov/social-and-economic-equity).

## COMMUNITIES DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED (CDI)

The SEE Team analyzed 40 years of New York State arrest data obtained from the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). This first in nation approach to equity allowed the SEE Team to identify which New York communities were subject to disproportionate policing and arrest rates far exceeding that of their neighbors, despite equal use of cannabis. A map of these CDIs and an explanation of our methodology can be found on our website at [cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted](https://cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted).

## INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT SEE APPLICANTS AND LICENSEES:

### THE RETAIL ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

In anticipation of the first wave of equity retail licensees, OCM partnered with cannabis educator, "Our Academy" to provide immersive training and mentorship for equity participants. The accelerator curriculum covered several aspects of opening and operating a retail cannabis business. Participants also received 1:1 mentorship and access to financial and marketing consultants.

### OCM ACADEMY

Launched in November 2023, **OCM Academy** stands as a groundbreaking educational and training initiative aimed at supporting licensees within the New York cannabis industry. With a specific focus on addressing compliance and technical issues such as GMP certification and transitioning to different license types, OCM Academy serves as a vital resource hub for SEE licensees navigating the complexities of the industry. Through targeted educational programs and training modules, OCM Academy empowers licensees with the requisite knowledge and skills to navigate their early post-licensure journey effectively.

### CANNABIS COMPLIANCE TRAINING & MENTORSHIP (CCTM) PROGRAM

The **Cannabis Compliance Training and Mentorship (CCTM) Program** is a cornerstone initiative of the OCM. Aimed at fostering social and economic equity within the New York cannabis industry, this 10-week virtual program was designed to train three distinct cohorts of trainee/mentees, including legacy operators. Under the guidance of licensed cultivators and processors, a total of 241 participants engaged in the mentorship program. The curriculum was developed by the Office in collaboration with esteemed professors from SUNY Morrisville and Cornell University, and professionals (such as accountants and attorneys) with extensive experience in the cannabis domain. By focusing on mentorship and technical training, the CCTM program aimed to not only expand but also diversify the pipeline of cultivators and processors preparing to partake in the cannabis market.

## CANNABIS HUB & INCUBATOR PROGRAM (CHIP)

The **Cannabis Hub and Incubation Program (CHIP)**, launched in October 2023, is a key OCM initiative with the goal of advancing social and economic equity within the New York State cannabis industry. CHIP comprises a diverse range of initiatives designed to support SEE individuals across various facets of their cannabis journey, from pursuing different license types to maintaining operational compliance and fostering ongoing growth within the industry. CHIP Centers will provide regionally located business services, business development, training, education, workforce development, and incubation space.

## APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

The SEE team strategically collaborated with Community-Based Organizations, municipalities, academic institutions, and key community stakeholders, bringing together over 75 Technical Assistance Providers dedicated to streamlining the application process for social and economic equity applicants. The Office is currently developing a grant opportunity, which will include funding opportunities for groups who have been providing and will continue to provide license application and curing support to SEE applicants in past and upcoming license application windows.

## INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT EQUITY IN NYS CANNABIS REGULATIONS & POLICIES:

### EQUITY ROUNDTABLES

The SEE and External Affairs teams spearheaded a series of equity community roundtables from May 2023 to July 2023. These roundtables served as a platform for gathering valuable insights from various community groups representing key demographics. These sessions were facilitated across the state to encourage community stakeholders from each SEE group to actively engage in discussions focused on representation, equity, and strategies to enhance cannabis industry participation among target populations. The engagement of community organizations in recruiting participants for these roundtable sessions ensured inclusivity in the process.

## INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO MEDICAL CANNABIS:

### RO EXPANSION

As mandated by the Cannabis Law and medical cannabis regulations promulgated by the Board, the OCM presented an opportunity to the general public to submit applications for additional medical cannabis registrations as part of our Registered Organization expansion program. The application period, which opened in October 2023 and closed in December 2023, seeks applicants who show medical, cultural and linguistic competency to serve areas of the state identified to be medically unserved and underserved. The Office will review applications and identify new registered organizations in Spring 2024.

Please email [SEE@ocm.ny.gov](mailto:SEE@ocm.ny.gov) if you have any further questions.