



# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY (SEE)

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY (SEE)

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 in entering and thriving in the new cannabis market. OCM's equity 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 41 years of New York State arrest data obtained from the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). New York was the marijuana arrest capital of the country and data-driven approach allowed the SEE Team to identify which New York communities were subject to disproportionate policing and arrest rates far exceeding those of areas elsewhere in the state. A map of these CDIs and an explanation of our methodology can be found on the website at [cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted](https://cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted).

## INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT SEE APPLICANTS AND LICENSEES:

### TECHNICAL 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 multiple grant opportunities, which will include funding opportunities for groups that have been providing and will continue to provide license application and curing support to SEE applicants in past and upcoming license application windows.

### CANNABIS HUB & INCUBATOR PROGRAM (CHIP)

The **Cannabis Hub and Incubation Program (CHIP)** launched in October 2023 signifies a pivotal Office initiative to advance 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 maintaining operational compliance to fostering ongoing growth within the industry. CHIP Centers will provide regionally located business services, business development, training, education, workforce development, and incubation space.

### CHIP ACADEMY

One of the programs within CHIP, known as CHIP 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, CHIP Academy serves as a vital resource hub for licensees navigating the complexities of the industry. Through targeted educational programs and training modules, CHIP Academy empowers licensees with the requisite knowledge and skills to navigate their early post-licensure journey effectively. CHIP Academy is open to all licensees in the cannabis industry, inviting participants beyond SEE licensees to benefit from its educational and training initiatives.

## 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. The retail accelerator will likely be a regular part of OCM’s ongoing support services and will be available to retail equity licensees.

## CANNABIS COMPLIANCE TRAINING & MENTORSHIP (CCTM) PROGRAM

The **Cannabis Compliance Training and Mentorship (CCTM) Program** stands as 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 trainees, including traditional agricultural operators and 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 industry. By focusing on mentorship and technical training, the CCTM program aimed to expand and diversify the pipeline of cultivators and processors preparing to partake in the cannabis market.

## SEE LABEL FOR CANNABIS BUSINESSES

As laid out in the SEE Plan, it is a goal of OCM to create a NYS SEE label for cannabis businesses across the supply chain. The SEE label campaign is a collaborative marketing initiative meant to be a badge of pride for operators that will drive consumers to purchase products cultivated, processed, and/or sold by social and economic equity brands. This initiative will further legitimize SEE brands, build awareness, enable SEE licensees to take advantage of the growing market demand for cannabis locally grown and produced, and ultimately fulfill the Office’s mission to advance the growth of SEE licensees.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The SEE Team has been dedicated to engaging communities through comprehensive resources and targeted outreach programs. Working closely with the External Affairs teams, the SEE Team spearheaded a series of equity community roundtables. These roundtables served as a platform for gathering valuable insights from various community groups representing key demographics. Other community engagement initiatives across the state 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. Only through listening to the needs of the community, can the Office develop policy, programs and services to adequately address those needs. We continue to enhance our community engagement efforts by developing structured communication channels, participating in more public-facing events, and conducting needs assessments analyses.

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