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Office of Cannabis Management

THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CANNABIS MANAGEMENT AND NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR LAUNCH CANNABIS RESPONSIBLE WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAM

*Free Courses Ensure Safety and Responsibility Across the Supply Chain
for Workers and Consumers*

*New York State Cannabis Regulations Require All Employees to Complete
Trainings Within 30 Days of Hire*

ALBANY, NY ---[The New York State Office of Cannabis Management \(OCM\)](#) and the [New York State Department of Labor \(NYSDOL\)](#) today announced the launch of [the Responsible Workforce Training Program](#), a critical initiative aimed at providing comprehensive safety education to workers in the cannabis industry. New York is the first state to require and develop Cannabis Product Safety and Responsibility and Cannabis Workforce Responsibility courses related to the health, safety, and employment standards for all cannabis workforce participants. These courses, in addition to training on implicit bias, cultural competency, and licensee specific trainings, represent a significant step toward building a workforce empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of the New York cannabis industry.

[New York State adult-use cannabis regulations](#) require that all persons performing activities under a licensed cannabis business complete Responsible Workforce Training within 30 days of the employee's start date.

[The Responsible Workforce Training](#) consists of four required components including:

- **Cannabis Product Safety and Responsibility:** An hour long free online course focusing on protecting health and safety in the regulated cannabis industry. The course educates participants on key facts about cannabis products and New York State regulations that impact daily cannabis operations.
- **Cannabis Workforce Responsibility:** 40-minute free online course highlighting labor standards, worker rights, and workplace health and safety.
- **License Education:** At least two hours of training provided by a licensee that is intended to assist in training employees on the specific activities specified by their license. This training may include a combination of on-the-job training and written instructional materials offered by the licensee.
- **Implicit Bias or Cultural Competency Training:** At least one hour of training intended to identify and address unconscious prejudices that may influence decision-making and behavior. Cultural competency training focuses on understanding and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds to improve interactions.

“I’ve spent many hours on site with cannabusinesses and their staff, as well as with communities across our State, so I know how critical occupational safety is to workers in the industry. The health, safety, and well-being of workers is non-negotiable—especially as the industry continues to develop,” said **Felicia A. B. Reid, Acting Executive Director of the New York State Office of Cannabis Management**. “In collaboration with DOL, the Responsible Workforce Training provides vital resources that not only promote workplace safety but also ensure the industry remains responsible, transparent, and aligned with New York’s high standards of workforce protection and public health.”

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said, “It is imperative that we protect all workers and consumers as we continue to safely cultivate our cannabis industry. These trainings will ensure that cannabis workers have the knowledge and skills to safely deliver quality services consumers have come to expect from businesses across the economic spectrum throughout New York State.”

“We can’t have a successful cannabis industry without investing in its workforce,” said **Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union**. “In developing the first-in-the-nation Responsible Workforce Training, New York is placing the safety and well-being of workers at the forefront, and is demonstrating the essential role cannabis workers play in ensuring the safety of consumers.”

“The launch of the Responsible Workforce Training acknowledges the importance of New York’s cannabis workers who are supporting the industry throughout the supply chain by providing them with resources to help them and their employers succeed,” said **John R. Durso, President of Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW**. “As the union representing cannabis workers in New

York, we applaud the partnership between the OCM and DOL to educate workers about their rights on the job, including regulations regarding health and safety, as there is a direct link between worker knowledge and workplace safety, and consumer safety and awareness. We look forward to working with the OCM to ensure these vital trainings continue to evolve as New York's market matures.”

The Responsible Workforce Training program empowers workers with valuable information on product safety, labor standards, and best practices, fostering a culture of responsibility and compliance across the entire supply chain. By offering these trainings at no cost, New York State is actively supporting businesses and workers, eliminating financial barriers to education, and ensuring equitable access to crucial resources that protect both workers and consumers. This program not only enhances workplace safety but also reinforces New York State's commitment to creating a fair, accountable, and sustainable cannabis industry.

New York State is currently home to 343 legal, adult-use dispensaries. Find a full list by visiting the [OCM website](#). For more information on The Responsible Workforce Training program visit cannabis.ny.gov/workforce.

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