



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2026

CONTACTS:

Press@ocm.ny.gov

**THIS 4/20, NEW YORK HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY IMPACT PLANS DRIVING
LOCAL INVESTMENT ACROSS THE STATE**

*Licensed Operators Turn Responsibility Into Action Through Community Partnerships
and Local Commitments*

As New Yorkers mark 4/20, [the New York State Office of Cannabis Management \(OCM\)](#) is highlighting how the state’s legal cannabis market delivers impact beyond retail sales through [Community Impact Plans](#). Required as part of licensure, Community Impact Plans outline how cannabis businesses will invest in and support the communities where they operate — advancing food distribution initiatives, youth activities, community programs, environmental sustainability efforts, education initiatives, and university partnerships that create meaningful local benefit.

“4/20 is often seen as a cultural moment, but in New York it is also a reflection of how far our regulated market has come,” **said John Kagia, Acting Executive Director of the New York State Office of Cannabis Management.** “Community Impact Plans demonstrate what responsible legalization looks like, licensed operators actively investing in their communities and helping drive positive, measurable outcomes.”

“Community impact is about connection and responsibility” **said Simone Washington, Chief Equity Officer at OCM.** “When licensees partner with local schools, workforce programs, nonprofits, and neighborhood organizations, they are strengthening the communities where they live and work. These plans ensure that legalization translates into opportunity, engagement, and long-term benefit.”

Community Impact Plans help ensure that as cannabis businesses grow, they grow alongside their communities, creating jobs, supporting youth development, strengthening local workforce pathways, protecting the environment, and partnering with schools and community organizations. From SUNY Orange’s hands-on Cannabis Cultivation Microcredential program in partnership with Arthur Brownsey of Chickidoo Hempstead Farm, to East Leaf Dispensary’s

work addressing food insecurity in Buffalo, to Happy Tree Dispensary's community-centered education efforts in Newburgh and By Any Other Name's partnerships and financial literacy initiatives in Brooklyn, these commitments reflect how licensed operators are turning intention into action and investing in meaningful, locally driven outcomes across New York State.

"As a 2014 SUNY Orange alum with generational ties to the institution, this partnership is deeply personal. We have a small family farm in Middletown, and from the very beginning, my goal was to grow cannabis and hemp through a legitimate and respected framework. At the time, accredited hands-on training in cannabis didn't really exist. Being able to now invest in real experiential learning at SUNY Orange and work alongside trusted institutions is my way of giving back. For me, it's now about creating credible pathways for the next generation and strengthening our local industry the right way," **said Arthur Brownsey, owner and full-time operator of Chickidoo Hempstead Farm.**

"Community impact starts with intention. Happy Tree is rooted in our community using education, events, and open dialogue to shift the narrative around cannabis and break down the long-standing stigma. Through workshops and conversations, we create safe, inclusive spaces for connection and learning. As we grow, we remain committed to fostering an environment where all cannabis consumers, businesses, and organizations can thrive, while building a more informed and empowered future. We are truly grateful to be highlighted by OCM as part of its efforts to recognize impact across the industry." **said Tiffany Bennett- McPhail, Founder & CEO of Happy Tree Dispensary in Newburgh, New York**

"Food insecurity is a critical issue in Buffalo, NY. Rising costs and limited access to supermarkets exacerbate this crisis. Community work around this issue reflects the values we want our business to stand for- compassion, responsibility and action. Working alongside organizations already doing important work helped guide us in how to give back thoughtfully and effectively. Our goal is to continue growing our partnerships and expand our efforts to support food insecurity in meaningful, lasting ways." **said Gina Miller, Owner of East Leaf Dispensary in Buffalo, New York**

"By Any Other Name is committed to educating the Brooklyn community on the responsible use of cannabis and its benefits, while partnering with Brooklyn Community Board 2, our local BID FAB Fulton, and The Brooklyn Bank, a nonprofit organization, to provide valuable resources, including financial literacy, that equip residents with the tools to survive and thrive in today's economy." **said Ted Crawford, Co-Owner of By Any Other Dispensary in Brooklyn, New York**

To date, there are now more than **631 legal dispensaries** open for business across New York State, reflecting continued growth in access for consumers and opportunities for licensed operators. When New Yorkers shop at their local licensed dispensary, they are choosing regulated, tested products and supporting a market structured to reinvest in communities across the state.

A full list of New York's licensed, operational adult-use cannabis retailers is [available here](#).

###

[The New York State Office of Cannabis Management \(OCM\)](#) oversees the State's medical, adult-use, and cannabinoid hemp programs. Guided by its core pillars — **public health and safety, social and economic equity, community reinvestment, environmental sustainability, and consumer education** — the Office works to advance a regulated cannabis marketplace rooted in transparency, and opportunity. OCM is committed to building a fair, sustainable, and responsible cannabis industry that benefits all New Yorkers.

Follow @nys_cannabis on social media for updates.