



Office of Cannabis Management

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CONTACTS:

Press@ocm.ny.gov

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CANNABIS MANAGEMENT RELEASES “LISTEN AND LEARN” REPORT HIGHLIGHTING WHAT OCM HEARD FROM COMMUNITIES ABOUT CANNABIS EDUCATION

Statewide Findings from 450+ New Yorkers Across 23 Listening Sessions Highlight Need for Clear, Honest Conversations Between Young People and Trusted Adults

Findings from 11 Counties Reveal Youth + Parent/Trusted Adult Demand for Honest, Fact-Based Cannabis Information

Report Informs Future Public Health and Education Efforts Across New York

The [New York State Office of Cannabis Management \(OCM\)](#) today released its [Listen and Learn Report](#), a comprehensive look at how young people across New York are learning about cannabis, what they want to know, and how trusted adults such as parents, family members, guardians, teachers and mentors can better engage in meaningful, informed conversations. The report reflects insights gathered from **23 listening sessions conducted in partnership with 19 community-based organizations**, engaging **over 450 participants** across New York State, including **300 youth ages 11 to 17 and 144 trusted adults**.

Findings show that while young people are actively seeking information about cannabis, many face barriers to open, judgment-free conversations. Mental health emerged as a central theme, appearing in **85% of youth discussions**, while both youth and adults expressed a need for clearer, fact-based education around cannabis use, health impacts, and legal guidelines.

“This report reflects exactly what we set out to do—listen,” said **John Kagia, Acting Executive Director of the New York State Office of Cannabis Management**. “What we heard is clear: young people want honest, fact-based information, and trusted adults want the tools to have those conversations. This work helps ensure our policies and public education efforts are grounded in real experiences and real needs.”

The report also highlights that **nearly 60% of youth identified parents or caregivers as their most trusted source of information**, while many adults reported feeling unprepared or lacking confidence in discussing cannabis. This gap demonstrates the importance of accessible, accurate education resources for both youth and adults.

“As New York continues to build a responsible cannabis market, education is essential to protecting public health, especially for young people,” **said Dr. June Chin, Chief Medical Officer at the New York State Office of Cannabis Management**. “This report reinforces the need for clear, science-based information that helps families understand cannabis, reduces misinformation, and supports safer decision-making. It will directly guide how we shape our public health and communications efforts, ensuring our messaging is accurate, accessible, and responsive to what young people and trusted adults are actually asking for and experiencing.”

“This report is rooted in a simple but important idea: if we want young people to make informed decisions, we need to start by listening to them,” **said Lyla Hunt, Director of Public Health and Education, New York State Office of Cannabis Management**. “What we heard throughout these conversations was a clear desire for honest, fact-based information delivered without judgment. Young people and trusted adults alike told us they want tools, campaigns, and resources that support real conversations about cannabis. These findings will help shape how New York approaches cannabis education moving forward, with public health and community voices at the center.”

“Many think that being a faith-based organization/church insulates the families from most of the challenges that are in our communities, not so! I found it necessary to have these listening sessions which included community persons and their children but also parishioners and their children. Our children need to hear and understand that their parents care, are informed and want them to not only make good decisions but want to be a part of the decision-making process, **said Bishop Dr. H. Bernard Alex, Ministries of Victory Temple/Ministries Outside the Walls, Syracuse, New York**. “The sessions were engaging, informative and built a much-needed bridge for additional conversations to occur. It was truly a safe space and the parents shared that it was needed, and long overdue. We pray for our children yes, but we also must TALK with them and build a rapport so that when they need the RIGHT information, they know the RIGHT People to talk to and hopefully they know the right people are RIGHT in their own home!”

“The cannabis awareness event was truly an enlightening experience for my community and youth mentees,” **said Tyrone Gardner, C.E.O of M.O.T.M.4.L Inc**. It clarified that it is very important to educate them because it’s not just about telling them not to smoke cannabis but about educating them on responsible use and avoiding abuse. Then maybe they won’t make the wrong choices that could change or end their life.”

The [Listen and Learn Report](#) will directly inform OCM’s public health campaigns, youth engagement strategies, and educational resources—serving as a foundation for how the agency approaches cannabis education and communication statewide. By centering the voices of young people and trusted adults, these findings will shape messaging that is responsive,

culturally relevant, and designed to meet New Yorkers where they are, with clear, credible, and actionable information.

**To read the full Listen and Learn Report, visit <https://cannabis.ny.gov/listen-learn-report>.
To view Listen and Learn graphics, visit <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjCUS5o>.**

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[The New York State Office of Cannabis Management \(OCM\)](#) is committed to protecting public health and ensuring New Yorkers have access to accurate, evidence-based information about cannabis. Through education, outreach, and consumer protection initiatives, OCM promotes safer use practices, supports harm-reduction strategies, and strengthens New Yorkers' understanding of the regulated cannabis marketplace.

Learn more through the OCM Cannabis Education Library [here](#).

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