

# Massachusetts Jumping Jim Crow for Cannabis: A Call for Racial Justice in the Cannabis Industry

## Unveiling the Systemic Barriers to Equity in Cannabis Legalization

In the wake of cannabis legalization across numerous states, Massachusetts has emerged as a leader in the industry. However, despite the promise of a more just and equitable system, the state's cannabis industry has been plagued by persistent racial disparities. The 2021 Cannabis Control Commission Racial Equity Impact Report, titled "Massachusetts Jumping Jim Crow for Cannabis," has shed a glaring light on these systemic barriers, demanding urgent action to address the issue.



### Massachusetts Jumping Jim Crow for Cannabis: 133 Years of Jim Crow and Black Face: Many Phases and Many Different Faces Now Showing Its Face in the Cannabis Space

by Maur B Stringer

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
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Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 142 pages  
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**A Deep Dive into Racial Disparities**

The report meticulously documents the stark disparities faced by people of color in the Massachusetts cannabis industry. From licensing and permitting to business ownership and employment, the barriers are pervasive and deeply ingrained. The report highlights the following key findings:

- **Licensing and Permitting:** People of color are significantly underrepresented among cannabis business owners in Massachusetts. Despite comprising over 40% of the state's population, they hold only 7% of cannabis business licenses.
- **Business Ownership:** The vast majority of cannabis businesses in Massachusetts are owned by white individuals. Only a handful of businesses are owned by people of color, limiting their access to the economic benefits of the industry.
- **Employment:** The cannabis industry workforce in Massachusetts is predominantly white. People of color are underrepresented in both entry-level and managerial positions, perpetuating systemic barriers to upward mobility.
- **Criminal Justice Reform:** The report exposes the disproportionate impact of cannabis criminalization on communities of color. While Black and Latinx people make up a small fraction of cannabis users, they are disproportionately arrested, charged, and convicted for cannabis-related offenses.

## **The Persistence of Segregation**

The report draws parallels between the systemic racism faced by Black communities in the Jim Crow era and the current barriers faced by people of color in the cannabis industry. The term "Jumping Jim Crow" refers to the

racist caricature that reinforced negative stereotypes and perpetuated segregation. Just as Jim Crow laws maintained the separation of Black and white communities, the report argues that systemic racism in the cannabis industry creates a similar form of segregation, limiting opportunities for people of color.

## **A Call to Action**

The report's findings present a stark challenge to policymakers, industry leaders, and advocates alike. It calls for transformative action to dismantle the systemic barriers that hinder racial equity in the cannabis industry. The report recommends several key steps:

- **Prioritize Social Equity:** Establish clear and enforceable social equity policies that prioritize licensing and financial support for businesses owned by people of color.
- **Address Criminal Justice Disparities:** Decriminalize cannabis possession and expunge low-level cannabis convictions, particularly for communities of color.
- **Invest in Communities of Color:** Provide grants and technical assistance to businesses and organizations that support economic empowerment in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization.
- **Promote Workforce Diversity:** Implement mandatory diversity and inclusion initiatives within the cannabis industry, ensuring that people of color have fair access to employment and career advancement.
- **Establish Accountability:** Create independent oversight mechanisms to monitor progress towards racial equity and hold stakeholders

accountable for addressing systemic barriers.

"Massachusetts Jumping Jim Crow for Cannabis" is a groundbreaking report that exposes the deeply rooted systemic racism that permeates the state's cannabis industry. It is a wake-up call for policymakers, industry leaders, and advocates to confront these barriers head-on and work towards creating a more just and equitable system. By prioritizing social equity, addressing criminal justice disparities, investing in communities of color, promoting workforce diversity, and establishing accountability, we can dismantle the legacy of Jim Crow in the cannabis industry and ensure that everyone has a fair chance to participate in and benefit from this growing industry.

**To Free Download your copy of the report, please visit:**

**<https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-cannabis-control-racial-equity-impact-report/download>**



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