

2023

# Career Guide

From cultivators and processors to retail and compliance, this career guide offers something for everyone interested in pursuing a career in cannabis.



Our mission is to promote and support social equity in New York's adult-use cannabis market by providing quality workforce development and legal education.

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## Introduction

The cannabis industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, with more and more states legalizing the use of cannabis for adult-use purposes. New York's adult-use industry was born with the passage of the Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA) in 2021.

As a result, new jobs are coming online across New York, spanning the different industry verticals such as cultivation, processing, compliance, delivery, and retail. Each vertical plays a crucial role in the regulated cannabis market, and each requires employees with unique skills and qualifications.

In this career guide, we will explore the different types of jobs available within each vertical of the cannabis industry and what it takes to excel in each of these roles.

Whether you are looking for a career change or just exploring new opportunities, New York's cannabis industry offers a variety of exciting and rewarding job prospects.

\*Please be advised that the career guide provided is subject to updates and revisions as New York State regulations are updated and communicated by the NYS Office of Cannabis Management and other relevant agencies and organizations. As the laws and regulations regarding cannabis in New York State are constantly evolving, it is important to stay informed about any changes that may affect the industry and the job market. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to check back regularly on our resource page on [cannabisworkforce.org](https://cannabisworkforce.org) for updated materials related to the cannabis industry in New York State.



# Transferable Skills

Many individuals interested in working in cannabis may not realize they have relevant experience from jobs in other industries. These are often called transferable skills, as they can be applied in different industries. Transferable skills in demand by cannabis employers include:

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

The cannabis industry requires professionals who can provide excellent customer service to clients. Individuals who have experience in customer service can bring their skills in communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships to excel in roles such as budtender, dispensary manager, or customer service representative.

## SALES AND MARKETING

Cannabis products are in high demand, and businesses need professionals who can promote and sell their products effectively. Individuals who have experience in sales and marketing can bring their skills in advertising, product positioning, and persuasion to excel in roles such as sales representative, marketing specialist, or brand ambassador.

## MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION

The cannabis industry also requires professionals who can carry out and oversee the manufacturing and production of cannabis products. Individuals with experience in manufacturing can bring their skills in quality control, production planning, and supply chain management to excel in roles such as production manager, cultivation technician, or extractor.

## COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION

The cannabis industry is highly regulated, and businesses need professionals who can ensure that they are operating within the legal framework. Individuals who have experience in compliance and regulation can bring their skills in risk management, auditing, and legal compliance to excel in roles such as compliance manager or regulatory specialist.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

With ongoing advancements in the cannabis industry, there is a growing need for professionals who can conduct research and development to improve the quality and efficacy of cannabis products. Individuals who have experience in research and development can bring their skills in data analysis, experimentation, and innovation to excel in roles such as product development specialist or research scientist.



# Legacy Transferable Skills

Legacy cannabis operators, with their experience in the unregulated or "legacy" market, possess a variety of transferable skills that can be valuable for starting a career in the regulated cannabis industry. Here are some examples:

## CASH MANAGEMENT

Legacy operators in the cannabis industry often have a solid understanding of money management and running a profitable business. They are accustomed to managing finances, handling cash flow, budgeting, and navigating the complexities of operating in a cash-intensive industry. These skills are essential for success in the regulated market, where financial management and compliance with regulations are critical.

## PROCUREMENT & LOGISTICS

Legacy operators often have practical expertise in logistics, delivery, inventory management, and procurement processes. They have experience in coordinating the movement of cannabis products, managing supply chains, and optimizing inventory levels. This skill set is valuable in the regulated market, where compliance, traceability, and efficient operations are crucial.

## PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE & EXPERTISE

Legacy operators often have a deep understanding of cannabis products, strains, cultivation methods, and extraction techniques. This knowledge can be beneficial in the regulated market, where quality control, compliance with product standards, and product differentiation are required.

## ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Running a successful cannabis operation requires effective team building and leadership. Legacy operators have experience in building and leading teams, establishing organizational management and reporting structure, and running organizations within the dynamic and evolving cannabis market. They understand the importance of creating a positive work environment, motivating employees, and fostering a strong company culture.

## BRANDING & MARKETING

Legacy cannabis operators are familiar with the importance of branding and marketing in a competitive market. They have likely developed strategies to differentiate their products, establish customer loyalty, and create a unique brand identity. This knowledge can be applied to the regulated market, where building a recognizable brand and effectively marketing cannabis products within the constraints of regulations is essential for success.

By leveraging these transferable skills, legacy cannabis operators can position themselves for success in the regulated market.

# Veteran Transferable Skills

Veterans bring a unique set of transferable skills to the cannabis industry, particularly in areas such as operations, machinery, record keeping, security, and compliance. Here's an overview of how these skills can be valuable:

## OPERATIONS & MACHINERY

Veterans often possess experience in operating and maintaining complex machinery and equipment, which can be highly applicable in the cannabis industry. Cultivation facilities, extraction labs, and manufacturing operations all require efficient and safe machinery operation. Veterans with experience in equipment maintenance, troubleshooting, and operational efficiency can contribute to the smooth functioning of a regulated cannabis business.

## RECORD KEEPING

Veterans are typically accustomed to maintaining meticulous records and adhering to strict protocols. This skill is highly transferable to the cannabis industry, where detailed record keeping is essential for compliance with regulations and maintaining transparency. Veterans can leverage their experience to ensure accurate documentation of inventory, product testing, security protocols, and other crucial aspects of a regulated cannabis operation.

## SECURITY PROTOCOLS

Military training emphasizes adherence to protocols, guidelines, and standard operating procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of personnel. Veterans bring a strong sense of discipline and an understanding of the importance of compliance with rules and regulations. In the cannabis industry, where compliance with laws, regulations, and safety protocols is crucial, veterans can contribute by promoting a culture of compliance, implementing robust standard operating procedures, and prioritizing the well-being of employees and consumers.



# Age and Education

Age and educational requirements for jobs in the cannabis industry vary depending on the specific role and the location of the job. Here are some general guidelines for age and educational requirements for jobs in the cannabis industry:

## AGE REQUIREMENTS

The legalization of adult-use cannabis use and possession in New York State has established 18 years as the minimum age requirement for working in the cannabis industry. While some roles within the industry may have additional age requirements, such as those involving the sale of cannabis products which requires the individual to be 21, all individuals seeking employment in the industry must be at least 18 years of age. It is important for job seekers to be aware of this age requirement when considering positions within the industry.

## DID YOU KNOW?

A significant portion of the available jobs in the cannabis industry are entry-level.

## EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The educational requirements for jobs in the cannabis industry also vary depending on the specific role. Some entry-level positions in the industry may not require a formal education or high school diploma. Others may require a college degree or specialized training. Here are some examples of educational requirements for different roles in the cannabis industry:

**Cultivation Technician:** Some employers may require a high school diploma or equivalent, while others may prefer candidates with a degree in horticulture or a related field.

**Laboratory Technician:** Many employers require candidates to have a degree in chemistry, biology, or a related field.

**Compliance Specialist:** A degree in law, business, or a related field may be preferred for this role.

**Sales Representative:** While a college degree is not always required for sales roles, some employers may prefer candidates with a degree in marketing, business, or a related field.

**Distribution Driver:** Entry-level, employers may not require a formal education.

**Product Development Specialist:** Many employers require candidates to have a degree in science, such as chemistry or biology.

**Dispatcher:** Entry-level, employers may not require a formal education.

**Security Officer:** Entry-level, employers may not require a formal education. Some previous experience or training may be required.

# Cultivation Jobs

Cultivation is a critical vertical in the cannabis industry, with a range of job opportunities available for those interested in working with cannabis plants. Entry-level positions, such as cultivation technician and harvest technician, require a high school diploma or equivalent and typically do not require prior experience. More advanced roles, such as head grower and master grower, require a Bachelor's or advanced degree in horticulture or a related field, along with several years of experience in similar roles. Other specialized roles within cultivation, such as integrated pest management (IPM) specialist, require specific degrees in agriculture or biology, along with experience in a related field.

## CULTIVATION TECHNICIAN

As a key member of the cultivation team, the technician is responsible for monitoring and maintaining cannabis plants throughout their growth cycle.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## MASTER GROWER

The master grower is responsible for designing and executing a successful cultivation strategy to maximize crop yield and quality.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## HARVEST TECHNICIAN

As an essential member of the cultivation team, the harvest technician is responsible for trimming and packaging harvested cannabis plants.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## IPM SPECIALIST

The integrated pest management (IPM) specialist is responsible for implementing a comprehensive pest management strategy to prevent and control pests in the cultivation facility.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**





# Manufacturing and Processing Jobs

The manufacturing and processing vertical of the cannabis industry plays a vital role in producing and preparing cannabis products for distribution. Jobs in this vertical require a range of skills, education, and experience levels. Entry-level positions, such as packaging technician, require a high school diploma or equivalent and typically do not require prior experience. More advanced roles, such as laboratory technician and quality control manager, require a Bachelor's degree in chemistry, biology, or a related field, along with several years of experience in similar roles. Specialized positions, such as edibles chef and extraction technician, require specific degrees or equivalent experience in a related field.

## EXTRACTION TECHNICIAN

This role involves extracting cannabinoids from the plant material using various methods such as CO2 extraction, ethanol extraction, and hydrocarbon extraction.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER

The quality control manager is responsible for developing and overseeing quality control procedures to ensure that cannabis products meet regulatory requirements and are of the highest quality.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Laboratory technicians are responsible for testing and analyzing cannabis products for quality control and regulatory compliance.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## PACKAGING TECHNICIAN

Packaging technicians are responsible for preparing and packaging cannabis products for distribution.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## EDIBLES CHEF

Edibles chefs are responsible for creating delicious and high-quality cannabis-infused food and beverage products.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**



# Distribution Jobs

Distribution jobs in the cannabis industry involve transporting and managing the movement of cannabis products between facilities. Distribution driver positions require a high school diploma or equivalent, along with 2-3 years of driving experience. Higher-level roles, such as warehouse manager, logistics coordinator, and compliance specialist, require a Bachelor's degree in business or law, respectively, along with several years of relevant experience. Sales representatives need a Bachelor's degree in business or a related field, along with 3-5 years of sales experience.

## DISTRIBUTION DRIVER

The distribution driver is responsible for transporting cannabis products between facilities in a safe and timely manner.

### ENTRY-LEVEL

## COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST

The compliance specialist ensures that distribution operations follow legal and regulatory guidelines.

### DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE

## WAREHOUSE MANAGER

The warehouse manager oversees daily operations in the distribution warehouse, including inventory management, staff management, and logistics.

### DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE

## SALES REPRESENTATIVE

The sales representative develops and maintains relationships with clients, increasing sales of cannabis products.

### DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE

## LOGISTICS COORDINATOR

The logistics coordinator manages the movement of cannabis products between facilities, ensuring timely and efficient delivery.

### DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE



# Retail Jobs

Retail jobs in the cannabis industry involve customer-facing roles such as budtender, as well as management and support roles such as dispensary manager, compliance specialist, and security officer. Budtenders need a high school diploma or equivalent, while higher-level positions, such as dispensary manager and compliance specialist, require a Bachelor's degree in business or law, respectively. Experience requirements for these roles range from entry-level to several years of retail management or compliance experience. Inventory control specialists and security officers may need a high school diploma or equivalent, with some experience in a related field preferred.

## **BUDTENDER / SALES REP / RETAIL AGENT**

As the face of the dispensary, the budtender provides excellent customer service and product recommendations to patients and adult-use customers.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## **DISPENSARY MANAGER / RETAIL MANAGER**

The dispensary manager oversees daily operations, manages inventory and staff, and ensures that the dispensary operates in compliance with state and local regulations.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## **INVENTORY CONTROL SPECIALIST**

The inventory control specialist is responsible for managing inventory levels, ordering products, and ensuring that products are accurately tracked in the dispensary's database.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## **COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST**

The compliance specialist ensures that distribution operations follow legal and regulatory guidelines.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## **SECURITY OFFICER**

The security officer is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure dispensary environment, ensuring the safety of patients, employees, and the dispensary's products.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

# Delivery Jobs

Delivery drivers need a high school diploma or equivalent, along with 2-3 years of driving experience. Dispatcher positions require a high school diploma or equivalent, along with 1-2 years of dispatch experience. Higher-level roles, such as operations manager and compliance specialist, require a Bachelor's degree in business or law, respectively, along with several years of relevant experience. Customer service representative roles require a high school diploma or equivalent, along with 1-2 years of customer service experience.

## DELIVERY DRIVER

The delivery driver is responsible for safely and efficiently delivering cannabis products to customers. They must have a clean driving record and a valid driver's license.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## DISPATCHER

The dispatcher manages delivery schedules and coordinates with drivers to ensure timely and efficient deliveries.

**ENTRY-LEVEL**

## COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST

The compliance specialist ensures that distribution operations follow legal and regulatory guidelines.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

The customer service representative provides assistance to customers for issues they might have and provides product recommendations to patients and adult-use customers.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**

## OPERATIONS MANAGER

The operations manager oversees daily delivery operations and manages delivery teams.

**DEGREE / PRIOR EXPERIENCE**



# Ancillary Jobs

Ancillary jobs in the cannabis industry refer to roles that support the core operations of cannabis businesses but are not directly involved in the cultivation, manufacturing, or retailing of cannabis products. These jobs encompass a range of functions and play a crucial role in the industry's growth and success. Here are some examples of ancillary jobs in the cannabis industry:

## SECURITY SPECIALIST

Cannabis businesses often require robust security measures due to regulatory compliance, high-value inventory, and cash transactions. Security specialists play a crucial role in implementing comprehensive security systems, protocols, and monitoring services to protect facilities, employees, and products from theft, vandalism, or unauthorized access.

## CANNABIS EDUCATOR

With the expansion of the cannabis industry, there is a growing need for knowledgeable professionals to educate consumers, medical professionals, and industry stakeholders about cannabis products, usage methods, potential benefits, and responsible consumption. Cannabis educators may work in dispensaries, clinics, or educational institutions, providing accurate and evidence-based information.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SCIENTIST

Research and development scientists work on advancing cannabis-related knowledge and product innovation. They conduct scientific research, analyze data, and collaborate with cross-functional teams to develop new cannabis strains, extraction methods, delivery systems, and novel product formulations. Their work contributes to the expansion and improvement of the industry's offerings.

## MARKETING & BRANDING SPECIALIST

As the cannabis industry becomes more competitive, marketing and branding professionals are in demand. They help businesses develop effective marketing strategies, build brand identities, execute digital and traditional advertising campaigns, manage social media presence, and engage with customers to create brand loyalty.

## COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Compliance officers ensure that cannabis businesses adhere to all applicable regulations and guidelines. They develop and implement compliance programs, conduct internal audits, monitor processes, and educate employees on compliance protocols. Compliance officers play a vital role in mitigating risks, maintaining transparency, and upholding legal and regulatory standards.

## PACKAGING & LABELING SPECIALIST

Compliance with packaging and labeling regulations is a vital aspect of the cannabis industry. Packaging and labeling specialists ensure that cannabis products meet all legal requirements, including child-resistant packaging, accurate product information, warning labels, and proper dosage instructions. They play a crucial role in maintaining consumer safety and compliance with industry standards.

# Ancillary Jobs

## SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

Given the environmental impact of cannabis cultivation and manufacturing, sustainability managers focus on implementing eco-friendly practices. They develop and oversee initiatives related to energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, and sustainable packaging. Sustainability managers help cannabis businesses reduce their ecological footprint and improve their environmental stewardship.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Given the unique waste disposal challenges faced by cannabis businesses, waste management consultants provide guidance on proper waste handling, recycling, and disposal methods. They ensure compliance with regulations related to cannabis waste and help businesses implement environmentally friendly waste management practices.

## EVENT PLANNER

Cannabis event planners specialize in organizing and coordinating cannabis industry events, conferences, trade shows, and product launches. They manage logistics, secure venues, coordinate exhibitors, speakers, and sponsors, and ensure a seamless and engaging experience for attendees.

## LEGAL CONSULTANT

Cannabis legal consultants offer legal guidance and support to cannabis businesses. They assist with regulatory compliance, licensing applications, contract drafting and negotiation, intellectual property protection, and legal risk management. Cannabis legal consultants ensure that businesses operate within the boundaries of the law and navigate the legal complexities of the industry.

## FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANT

Cannabis accountants provide specialized accounting and financial services to cannabis businesses. They navigate the unique challenges of cannabis industry taxation, compliance, and financial reporting. Cannabis accountants assist with bookkeeping, financial analysis, tax planning, and ensuring adherence to relevant financial regulations.

# Wages

Current Positions and Contractual Minimum Rates – Grow/Manufacturing:

POSITION	MINIMUM HOURLY RATE
INVENTORY CONTROL TECHNICIAN	\$18.50 - \$21.50
PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN	\$20.00 - \$24.50
CULTIVATION TECHNICIAN	\$19.50 - \$23.50
ANALYTICAL LAB TECH	\$22.50 - \$26.50
MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN	\$21.50 - \$26.50
QUALITY TECHNICIAN	\$24.50 - \$28.50
SANITATION TECHNICIAN	\$17.00 - \$21.00
IPM TECHNICIAN	\$18.50 - \$24.00
EXTRACTION TECHNICIAN	\$19.50 - \$24.50
FULL-TIME PHARMACIST	\$65.50
PART-TIME PHARMACIST	\$60.50
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATE	\$19.00
OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE	\$19.00

The wages shown in this document reflect union wages for NYS and are subject to change.

## NYS OCM



The NYS Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing the cannabis industry in New York State. The OCM is entrusted with implementing and enforcing the Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act. Whether you're looking for adult-use retail dispensaries or medical dispensaries, the OCM provides resources to help you find licensed facilities near you. To stay informed about the cannabis laws and regulations, visit the NYS Office of Cannabis Management's website at: <https://cannabis.ny.gov/>

CANNABIS.NY.GOV



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## DOL CEED



The Cannabis Employment and Education Development (CEED) Unit is a dynamic initiative by the New York State Department of Labor. Created to cater to job seekers and businesses in the adult-use, medical cannabis, and cannabinoid hemp sectors, CEED serves as a vital resource. Whether you're looking to explore employment opportunities or seeking assistance as a business, CEED is here to support you. Discover how CEED can help you embark on a rewarding career or drive your business forward in this exciting industry by visiting their website at: <https://dol.ny.gov/cannabis-workforce-development>

DOL.NY.GOV

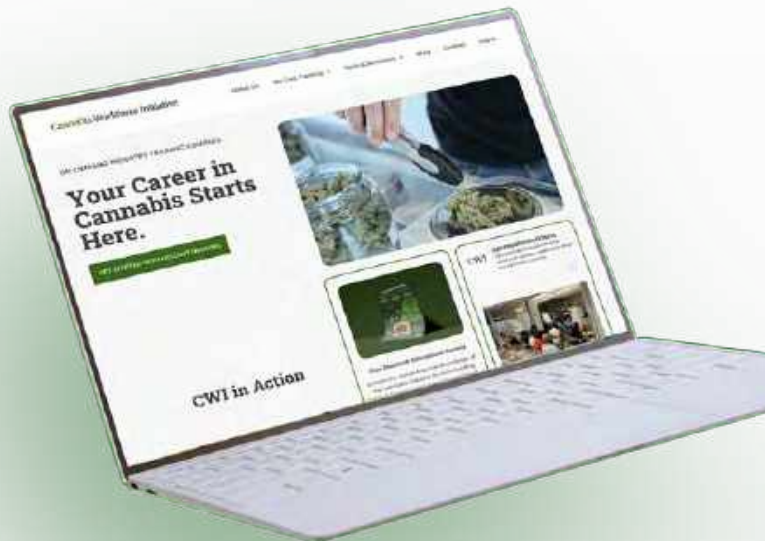


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# More Information

The content of this document has been prepared by Cannabis Workforce Initiative (CWI) based on years of experience and expertise in the cannabis industry. Our intention in creating this document is to engage, educate, and elevate the communities most impacted by cannabis prohibition. CWI is committed to promoting social equity, inclusivity, and diversity within the cannabis industry and strives to provide accurate and informative resources to empower individuals seeking opportunities in this field. While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information presented, it is important to note that the cannabis industry is constantly evolving, and regulations may vary across different jurisdictions. Therefore, it is recommended to seek up-to-date information from local authorities and consult with legal and industry professionals for specific advice and guidance.



CANNABISWORKFORCE.ORG



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For more information on job opportunities in New York’s cannabis industry, please visit us at [cannabisworkforce.org](https://cannabisworkforce.org) and sign up for our email list. CWI offers FREE training and educational resources to give you a better understanding of New York’s cannabis market, processes from seed to sale, jobs throughout the industry, and worker protections under labor and employment laws and New York’s Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA). Whether you're thinking about a career transition or just starting out, CWI’s training programs help job seekers be better prepared for success and will show you different pathways into New York’s budding cannabis industry.