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Leafly Jobs Report: Cannabis is the fastest-growing American industry, surpassing 240,000 jobs

Fourth annual report finds industry added 30,000 jobs in 2019, with additional sales and jobs growth expected in 2020

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Today, Leafly released its fourth annual [cannabis industry jobs report](#), which shows that a record-high 243,700 Americans are employed in the legal cannabis industry as of early 2020, with 33,700 jobs added in the last year. The cannabis industry has produced 15% more jobs in 2019, and has seen 100% growth since Leafly began collecting data in early 2017 – making the cannabis industry the fastest-growing job sector in the country.

The sustained job growth in the industry demonstrates the economic power of legalization, as 34 states have legalized medical cannabis and 11 states plus Washington, D.C. have legalized cannabis for adult use. States that moved early to adopt cannabis legalization, like Colorado and Washington, continued to see steady growth as a wider variety of products become available, bringing more customers into the market. The report also shows the burgeoning opportunity beyond the West Coast, with unexpected entrants into the market like Oklahoma creating jobs almost too fast to count.

With federal prohibition still in place, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics refuses to recognize the cannabis industry in its national economic database and document the growth of this burgeoning industry. Leafly began publishing this annual jobs report in 2017 to shed light on cannabis workers and trends, and to show how the industry is a key job creator.

“If the U.S. government doesn’t count your job, in many ways, your job doesn’t count,” said report author and Leafly Senior Editor Bruce Barcott. “We created the Leafly Jobs Report in 2017 to show that the cannabis industry is an unseen economic growth engine. Four years later, that remains true. In 2020, we’re seeing older markets becoming more established, and dramatic expansion and growth in areas across the country – proving legal cannabis is not just a coastal phenomenon anymore. And we expect big things in 2020, with these trends pointing to triple-digit growth in the Midwest, a spike in hiring in newly legalized states, and even more folks becoming comfortable with cannabis and boosting legal dispensary sales.”

Additional key findings from the report include:

- Massachusetts, the East Coast’s first legal adult-use market, saw a 333% growth rate and created more than 10,200 jobs in just the last year. This translates to a \$676 million market in 2019, and could grow to as much as \$700 million in sales by the end of 2020.
- Colorado and Washington, the nation’s two oldest legal markets, both continued to grow at 8% annually, demonstrating that mature markets draw customers away from illicit markets and continue to add new customers like older adults and CBD-curious customers.
- The Rust Belt may need to be renamed the Green Belt soon - Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania doubled the number of legal cannabis jobs in just one year. California and Michigan were hit particularly hard by sunseting laws and new licensing systems, posting the first ever job losses recorded, which moved 8,600 once-legal jobs into the non-legal category.
- Oklahoma’s medical market grew by 221% in 2019, with medical sales tripling to \$350 million. One in 20 Oklahomans now has a registered medical cannabis card, and the industry supports more than 9,400 jobs across the state.
- The decision to allow the sale of cannabis flower to qualified medical patients for the first time drove Florida’s growth by 93% in 2019. Cannabis now employs more than 20,000 people throughout the state. Florida now has the nation’s largest population of registered medical marijuana patients, with more than 300,000 state residents enrolled in the program – and creating a nearly \$800 million dollar market.

The sustained year-over-year growth shown in the report is notable when considering the serious challenges the cannabis industry faced in 2019, including restrictive banking regulations, a financial downturn within the industry, and the EVALI health crisis. While 15% growth in cannabis may be a slow down compared to past years, it would be considered substantial growth for any existing industry.

Methodology

Every legal cannabis state requires some form of mandatory reporting, whether it's license-tracked monthly sales, patient counts, or cannabis worker permits – making accurately counting these jobs difficult, but possible. Leafly's Annual Jobs Report is based on employment estimation methods pioneered by MPG Consulting, Whitney Economics, BDS Analytics, New Frontier Data, Vangst, Headset, and state regulatory agencies. Our data team developed and improved a set of formulas that deliver estimates, which are then adjusted according to what we know about each state's regulatory and economic environment. The Leafly Jobs Report does not count jobs directly tied to hemp growing, production, and CBD products.

The 2020 Jobs Report is the fourth annual report issued by Leafly, and can be read in full [HERE](#). Visit [Leafly.com](https://www.leafly.com) to read previous reports.

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