



Cannabis: The Path To Equity in Canada

Legalization was one step towards cannabis equity, but there's a lot of work to be done.

Cannabis equity is about justice and fairness in cannabis law, policy and industry. It means addressing the unjust history of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) communities being unfairly targeted and arrested for cannabis possession as well as ensuring fair access to opportunities in the legal cannabis industry, from cultivation, to sales, to consulting.

Unjust enforcement + unfair legalization system = **an inequitable market**

Black and Indigenous people are arrested for cannabis possession **3-9x** more often than white people (even though rates of use are similar)¹.



This means BIPOC are **unfairly burdened** with the consequences of criminal records², such as:



Limited educational and employment opportunities



Difficulty accessing housing and other supports



Difficulty accessing loans/credit



Fewer opportunities to build professional networks

These consequences make it **extremely difficult** for BIPOC to get into the legal cannabis market.

Federal and provincial governments put in strict requirements for anyone who wants to produce legal cannabis or open/work for a cannabis retail store, including:



No criminal record

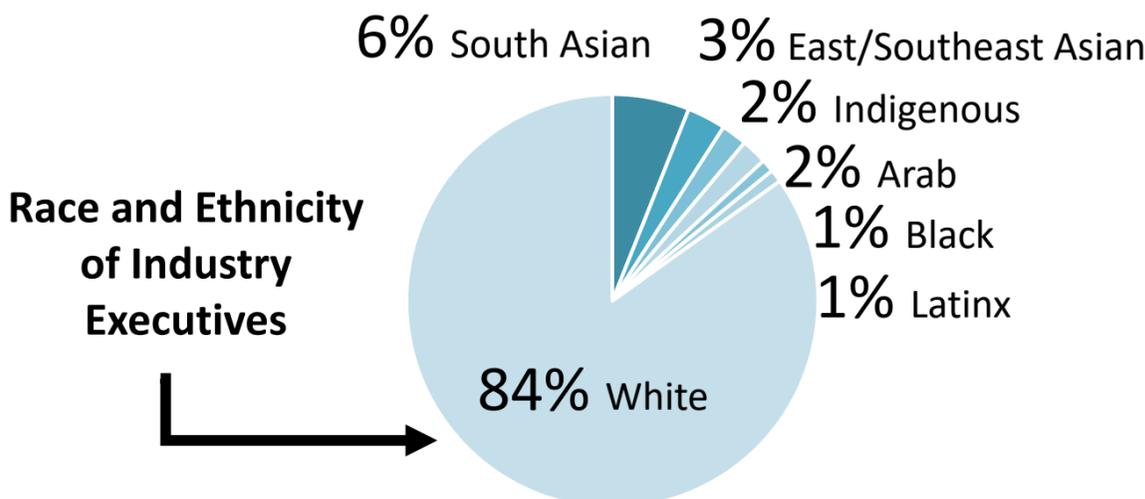


Extensive fees (licensing, legal, etc.)



Huge up-front investment

Data shows **BIPOC have been left out** of Canada's legal market³.



How Do We Fix It?

We can take action as individuals and communities to promote inclusive businesses and an equitable cannabis marketplace.



Be an advocate

- Educate yourself and others on these issues
- Support businesses that support BIPOC staff and customers

Cannabis record suspensions are available (but more work is needed)

- If you know someone with a prior conviction, help them access the [Cannabis Record Suspension](#) (CRS) program
- Petition your MP/MPP to replace the CRS program with full removals of minor-possession offenses.



Policies/programs to get BIPOC into the market

- Governments at all levels must create special programs to help BIPOC access improved education and employment opportunities as well as fair loans to support up-front costs

Invest cannabis tax revenue in communities

- Learn how cannabis revenue is being spent in your community; support fair inclusion and spending for BIPOC Canadians



Learn More About Cannabis Equity in Canada

[Campaign for Cannabis Amnesty](#)

[Podcast: Cannabis Equity in Canada](#)

[Policy Brief: How Diverse is Canada's Legal Cannabis Industry?](#)

[TEDx Talk: The Untapped Promise of Cannabis Legalization](#)

¹ Browne, R. (2018), [Black and Indigenous people are overrepresented in Canada's weed arrests](#)

² Curtis et al. (2013), [Alcohol, Drug, and Criminal History Restrictions in Public Housing](#)

³ CDPE (2020), [How Diverse is Canada's Legal Cannabis Industry?](#)