

BIPOC WOMEN IN CANNABIS



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The sense of being overlooked or undervalued in the cannabis industry is shared among women of color, but heightened for Black women, making inclusivity resonate more with them.

Despite their challenges, women of color in cannabis find solace in unison and resilience in the inherent strength they develop as they overcome hurdles that their male or white counterparts do not encounter. This may include sexual harassment, racially charged discrimination, and internal self-esteem struggles.

The shared experiences of marginalization, along with the brutality invoked by the decades-long 'War on Drugs,' has led to a stronger sense of community among BIPOC women. However, it is noted that women of all races involved in this study have dealt with bullying from one another, but the overarching theme of unity tends to dominate.



As a Black woman in the cannabis industry, I find I am one of very few women of color who are making strides in the industry.

People of color and women in particular are being left out of the green boom.

This is an opportunity to address and correct that oversight.

CEO, CA



BIPOC WOMEN IN CANNABIS

Black women in cannabis are more likely to identify as Lesbian than White, Hispanic or Asian women.

This presents a unique challenge for black women in the space who often face a trifecta of challenges at the intersectionality of race, gender as well as sexuality.

Considering that LGBTQIA+ women tend to experience sexual harassment and self-esteem issues at higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts, it's likely these problems are amplified for Black women. Facing every day knowing you will have to work that much harder to thrive can be a daunting and overwhelming notion.

SEXUAL IDENTITY	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Heterosexual	67%	68%	71%	76%
Bisexual	17%	13%	10%	9%
Lesbian	3%	10%	3%	2%



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OF
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ROLES OF BIPOC WOMEN IN CANNABIS

While access to opportunities and funding may be reduced for communities of color, a large number of the BIPOC women who responded to this survey identified as ancillary business owners.

In fact, Black women were more likely to state they were owner/founders versus full or part-time employees.

Black respondents are significantly less likely than white, Hispanic or Asian women to work full-time for plant-touching, and more likely to be a business owner of an ancillary business.

Asian respondents are significantly more likely than white or Black respondents to work in adult-use cannabis, and significantly more likely than white and Hispanic respondents to work in hemp.

Hispanic respondents are significantly more likely than white, Black and Asian respondents to work in medical use.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Full-time Plant Touching	30%	19%	33%	33%
Business Owner Ancillary	22%	44%	22%	24%

INDUSTRY SECTOR

Adult use	61%	53%	64%	74%
Medical use	63%	55%	73%	58%
Hemp	36%	41%	36%	56%

Q5. What is your employment status in the cannabis/CBD/hemp industry? Choose all that apply.

Q6. In which of the following sectors of the cannabis industry do you (or your company) operate? Check all that apply.



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- 03 Research & Analysis**
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- 04 Data Collection**
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IN MY WORDS...

*What I think is really interesting, even as I navigate through this space, **when you find other people of color, it's almost like finding a needle in a haystack.***

There's just not that many of us.

And if they are, it's also validating like, do you actually own majority equity in the business or are you a partner with someone?

As a woman in cannabis, it's also paying attention to women who are further marginalized because they're a woman of color, or a part of the LGBTQ community or may have a disability and tightening our Alliance as women across the board in order to really support each other.

CEO & FOUNDER, MA

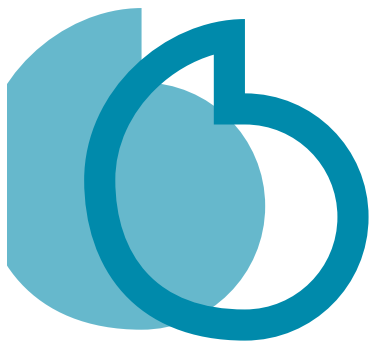
I think that it's beautiful now that we're having so many substantial conversations about race, that people will understand what anti-racism is, instead of 'not seeing color'.

I welcome these conversations and I hope that larger corporations really have these serious conversations and make them part of their company ethos – so that it's not just a gift for a woman, or a space for a black woman, and that you recognize that this woman actually deserves this role and should be given this role.

So yeah, I think we're, we're at a pivotal moment and I really am just praying that this goes as well.

FOUNDER, MD





IN MY WORDS...

I think the scary part for me was admitting to my dad, who happens to have African American strong values.

We don't drink or smoke, and now [I want to] become a legal drug dealer, essentially. And I don't want to go to law school.

So for me it was this moment of, okay, I have to find my true North.

I went to public schools, I saw my friends getting in trouble for having marijuana. And I heard the stories about how lives have been ruined because of the same plant.

And then you had folks moving in who are going to benefit from it because they have the financial means, where the folks in the city weren't really paying attention.

CEO & FOUNDER, MA

I had a company that hired me and wanted me to be their black representative, basically.

That's what they told me. You don't have to do much at all. I mean, we'll pay your salary and everything. And I was like, well, okay, but what would I be doing?

When they started telling me about the photo op, I was like, Oh, I got it then, so you want to pay me a salary to be the black face in your company and a woman by the way. Oh.

And I was even told that I articulated well.

I promise you if I did not sign an NDA, I would blurt out their name right now. You know exactly who they are. Everybody knows.

Have those conversations.

Call out these companies when we can. Find out before we start investing in them, before we start buying their products.

We want to know - how are you giving back to the community? What are you doing in the community? You know, that's important. Are you writing sponsorship, scholarships? Are you taking on interns? You know, are you investing while you're building and growing in my neighborhood?

Or are you just calling around seeing who you can get to be the black face on your team? That's not good.

VP & COO, AZ





IN MY WORDS...

I believe that the companies in the cannabis space, especially the larger companies, all the way down to the smaller companies really need to examine their management team.

It's common for companies to write diversity, equity and inclusion on their website, but don't have a plan for it. Or their management team does not represent diversity at all.

We have to start adding black and Brown people on our team.

There are companies out here who can have a subcommittee or create a diversity, equity and inclusion committee, [but] when you're looking out there, you don't see it.



VP & COO, AZ

I'm a producer. Let's produce together, and don't marginalize who I am or minimize who I am.

And when you cut a deal with your white counterpart, cut that same deal with me. I don't want the little shimmy off the bottom. I want to be equal. And I think equality.

And so, when we talk about equality and equity, there's two different worlds, two different conversations, and we need to get that together.

The equality part is that if you are having a conversation and if you're cutting a deal and you're giving a 20% equity share with your white counterpart and that's your starting point, I want that same starting point.

Don't drop me below because I'm a female or a woman, and then as an African-American woman I'm dropped even lower because my worth is just as much.

CEO, FL



CONSUMPTION FOR BIPOC WOMEN

The majority of women surveyed reported they consume cannabis for medicinal purposes versus recreation, with the specific ailments being treated mostly evenly split among racial groups.

However, there were some anomalies. For example, Hispanic respondents are significantly more likely to choose Mental Health conditions as a purpose for medical cannabis consumption than Black respondents. While Asian respondents are significantly less likely than white, Black or Hispanic respondents to choose Chronic pain/inflammation relief.

Despite these nuances, the data clearly indicates a shared experience among most survey participants: this plant has helped them thrive. This notion should strengthen the bonds between the women of cannabis and remind them that despite their differences, they're more alike than they may even know.

	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
General emotional health or wellness such as stress relief, patience, etc.	77%	73%	79%	64%
Mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, etc.	60%	50%	71%	66%
Chronic pain or inflammation relief	56%	57%	59%	33%
General physical health or wellness such as digestion, skin care, etc.	44%	40%	51%	44%
Illness treatment such as epilepsy, cancer, etc.	9%	10%	7%	6%
Withdrawal symptoms from smoking or drugs	5%	2%	4%	6%

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CONSUMPTION FOR BIPOC WOMEN

Non-medical cannabis consumption was also prevalent among survey participants, with subtle differences in motivations between races.

The percentage of respondents who said they consume cannabis as a sleep aid was nearly universal across racial demographics. There were also similar numbers among women choosing the plant for spiritual use or sensory enhancement.

However, Black respondents are significantly less likely to use cannabis to relax or connect with others. Meanwhile, Hispanic respondents were more likely to indicate they consume cannabis to increase productivity, especially when compared with Black respondents. Hispanic women were also more likely to use the plant to focus or get “high.”

	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN
Relaxation	85%	72%	87%	83%
Sleep aid	74%	73%	73%	78%
Recreational use/get “high”	59%	57%	63%	53%
Social /connect with others	58%	46%	63%	64%
Creativity	54%	49%	58%	44%
Productivity	44%	37%	56%	44%
Focus	43%	44%	50%	44%
Sensory enhancement	37%	37%	40%	39%
Spirituality/cultural use	34%	41%	42%	39%

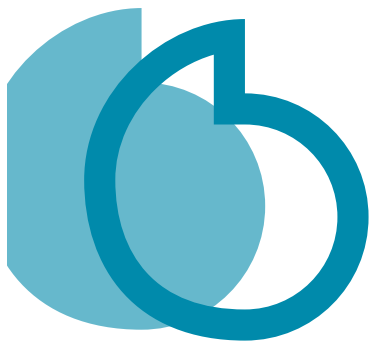
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TODAY

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halalhemp.org/certification





IN MY WORDS...

There are more women that I'm working with than African Americans in [cannabis].

So where are we when it comes to the inclusion?

The women were just like, okay, well, diversity really applies to women and not really women of color. It was always sort of like that lie, you know?

I feel like you guys want to be inclusive, but you're very inclusive about who – as long as the people look like you, or very similar to who you are – that's when it's important. But it's not important on a grand scale.

EVENT PRODUCER, CA

After expungement of seven cannabis related charges, I relocated to the West Coast to embark on my journey into the legal cannabis industry.

My family was separated for 8 months during this transition.

I landed in job as a kitchen tech building a brand and making edibles for a company that then sold to a Canadian company for \$15 million dollars.

I was let go after the merger. I started my own company that educates, offers crafted wellness products and consultation.

FOUNDER/CEO, OR





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IN SUMMARY...

The challenges facing women in cannabis are palpable, but they are compounded in many ways for BIPOC community members.

The daunting issues of racial discrimination, lack of opportunities, and self-esteem struggles make things that much more difficult for women of color. But in a way, these shared experiences also have the power to unite and reverberate a message of change throughout the industry and beyond.

The hardships BIPOC women in cannabis endure mirror larger systemic issues, with many repercussions from the 'War on Drugs' continuing to be felt in Black and Brown communities.

This is where the concept of restorative justice enters the narrative, as our industry must right the wrongs committed in our society since cannabis became illegal in the late 1930s. We have the opportunity to recognize the life-changing harm caused by prohibition, and take action to ensure marginalized people are seen, heard, and supported.



How do you define 'allyship' as it relates to helping empower Women of Color?

JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE CARRIES IT WELL, IT DOESN'T MEAN IT ISN'T HEAVY

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REPORT CHAPTERS

Interested in learning more? Download additional results at womenincannabis.study/study-chapters.

Introduction

Methodology

Who are the Women Working in Cannabis?

Which Roles do they Play in the Industry?

Why Work in Cannabis?

What Relationship Do Women Have with Cannabis?

What are the Barriers to Success?

What Else Holds Women Back?

BIPOC Women in Cannabis

LGBTQIA+ in Cannabis

How do Women Define Success?

We Have the Data, Now What?

Leverage the Power of the Data

Profiles of Women in Cannabis

Contributors

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THANK YOU

WOMEN IN CANNABIS
a Living History

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www.womenincannabis.study