

2025

Council Market Outlook

Working Group

Phase 1 – Wrap Up



Welcome!



Scan the QR code to access the welcome packet
from our Kick-Off Event.

Brandon L. McGee, Jr.

*Chief Executive Officer,
Social Equity Council*



12/24/25 Agenda

10:00 AM	Opening Remarks
10:15 AM	Working Group Overview
10:40 AM	Committee Chair Remarks
11:20 AM	Closing Remarks

Who is the Social Equity Council?

- Established in 2021 by the Responsible and Equitable Regulation of Adult -Use Cannabis Act
- Promotes economic equity by supporting Social Equity Entrepreneurs (SEEs)
- Reinvests in communities Disproportionately Impacted by the War on Drugs
- Funded by licensing fees and a dedicated portion of state cannabis tax revenue
- The Council addresses barriers to entry, expands opportunity, and fosters long -term participation in Connecticut's cannabis industry

Council Members

Andréa Comer, Chair
*Office of the State
Treasurer designee*

Kyle Abercrombie
*Department of Economic and
Community Development designee*

Tina Beamon
*Office of the
Governor Appointee*

Corrie Betts
*House Minority
Leader Appointee*

Fanita Borges
*Office of the
Governor Appointee*

Greg Davis
*Speaker of the
House Appointee*

Avery Gaddis
*Senate Minority
Leader Appointee*

Andrea K. Hawkins
*Office of the Governor
Appointee*

**Michael A.
Jefferson, Esq.**
*Senate President
Appointee*

Council Members Continued

Daniel Karpowitz

*Office of Policy &
Management designee*

Melvin Medina

*Black and Puerto Rican Caucus
(BPRC) Chair Appointee*

Ojala Naeem

*House Majority
Leader Appointee*

**Charles Venator
Santiago, Ph.D.**

*Puerto Rican and Latino
Caucus (PRLC) Appointee*

Edwin Shirley

*Senate Majority
Leader Appointee*

**Shirley Skyers-
Thomas**

*Department of Consumer
Protection designee*

Kelli Vallieres, Ph.D.

Governor's Appointee

Kevin E. Walton, Sr.

Governor's Appointee

Andréa Comer

*Assistant Connecticut State Treasurer &
Chief of Staff, Connecticut State Treasurer*



The Working Group

Divided into Three Specialized Subcommittees

**Marketplace
Subcommittee**

**Municipal Relations
Subcommittee**

**Youth Champions
Subcommittee**

GOAL: To drive thoughtful policy development and strategic insight informed by these subcommittees.

What Occurred in these Meetings?

- Co-Chairs facilitated individual subcommittee meetings
- Subcommittees were comprised of stakeholders who filled out interest forms, and who were identified by the co -chairs for their areas of expertise
- The Council shared preliminary research to help provide a launching pad for conversation backed by data
- Each subcommittee had various meeting both with members and Council staff
- These meetings addressed concerns from community members on how cannabis is impacting our youth, industry wide bottlenecks, and municipal perspectives on the benefits and challenges from the adult -use industry
- These meetings also provided potential solutions and recommendations to address each subcommittees unique charge

Nikole Burnes

Marketplace Cannabis
Co-chair

*Executive Director,
CT Cannabis Chamber of Commerce*



Marketplace -Cannabis Recommendations

Financial Sector Support

- Grant and Loan Programs for Social Equity Businesses
- Regularly Produce lists of financial support available for Cannabusinesses

Regulatory Updates:

- Update advertising provisions
- Allow flexibility in EJV's to raise capital
- Support market development

Social Equity/Business Sustainability:

- Track SEE challenges and business patterns
- Expand technical assistance programs
- Policy changes informed by feedback channels

Workforce:

- Partner with educational institutions to create pathways/trainings
- Support more fiscally sustainable staffing models

Public Education/Market Legitimacy:

- Public Awareness campaign detailing regulated vs unregulated market
- Collaborate with allied industries



Chris DiPentima

Marketplace Non-Cannabis
Co-chair

*President & CEO,
Connecticut Business Industry Association
(CBIA)*



Marketplace -Non Cannabis Recommendations

Develop Long-Term Workforce Support

- Ongoing mentorship support following training programs
- Wrap-around services for people in programs

Expand Entrepreneurship Support in DIAs

- Micro-grant programs for DIA & reentry populations
- Business services technical assistance

Strengthen Reentry Employment Pathways

- Educate employers on fair-chance hiring
- Reentry employment programs

Scale Youth Internship Initiatives

- Work based credit programs for high schoolers
- Funding to high school career pathway programs

Build Community Trust

- Co-design programs with communities
- Listening sessions to gather community needs directly



**Arunan
Arulampalam**
Municipal Relations Co-chair

*Mayor,
City of Hartford*



Mayor Vincent Cervoni

Municipal Relations Co-chair

*Mayor,
Town of Wallingford*



Municipal Subcommittee Recommendations

Improve information on 3% Municipal Sales tax as well as promote equity focused collaborative use of revenues

- Provide data to support understanding and potential benefits of adult-use cannabis for tax purposes

Protect Public Health and support methods to address illicit market

Address public perception and support youth protection in a community centered manner

Strengthen state/municipal zoning alignment



Eddie Brown

Youth Champions Co-chair

*Managing Director,
Hartford Communities that Care*



John Torres

Youth Champions Co-chair

*Executive Director,
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders*



Youth Champions Subcommittee Recommendations

Create tiered funding system to:

- Supports grass roots organizations
- Supports organizations with proven track record of community engagement
- Flexible accountability measures for grant programs

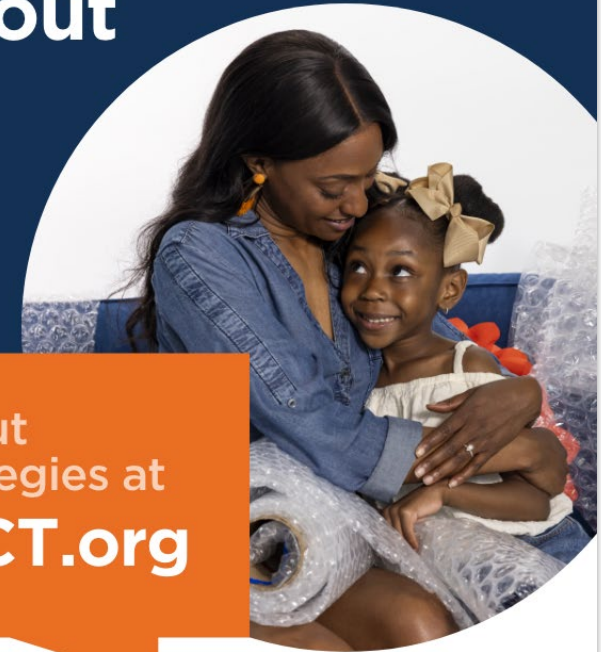
Allocate Funding to:

- Mental health programs
- Create a pipeline into legal cannabis jobs
- Responsible cannabis use education (including parent/guardian education)

Policy Recommendations:

- Empower municipalities with tools to regulate smoke shops
- Mandate data collection of non-punitive school discipline data related to cannabis use

Talk to the youth in
your life about
substance
misuse.



Learn about
Prevention Strategies at
PreventionCT.org



Questions

1. How do you see these subcommittees working together moving forward?

2. What would you like your subcommittee to focus on or tackle in the next phase?

3. What's one thing you learned that could benefit another subcommittee?

Next Steps / Phase 2

- The Council will synthesize recommendations to identify overlapping goals or priorities to utilize internally for policy development
- Connect with SEC Legislative Committee and Legislators to share synthesized recommendations from Phase 1
- Conduct additional meetings for each subcommittee and outreach for new members
- Schedule cross-subcommittee meetings to facilitate collaboration on shared policy recommendations
- Produce a report on the impact of the working group for communities and the legislature by 2027

Thank You!

Scan the QR code to take our survey and let us know if you would like to be a part of Phase 2 of the Working Group.



Social Equity Council



@socialequitycouncil



portal.ct.gov/socialequitycouncil/



@socialequitycouncil



SEC@ct.gov