

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

December 7, 2021

**CONTACT:**

Emily Sabo (203) 915-4561, emilysabo@ufcw919.org

**Top Connecticut Unions: New Cannabis Business Standards Strong Step to Support Good-Paying Jobs in Industry**

*Unions for 13,000 Connecticut Frontline Workers Welcomes Social Equity Council’s Plan to Ensure Connecticut’s Cannabis Industry Is on the Right Path Towards Advancement and Equity*

**HARTFORD, CT** – Today, [**United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)**](http://www.ufcw.org/about), the **union for over 13,000 Connecticut frontline workers**, applauded **new labor standards** that **businesses must meet** to **qualify** for a **license** to operate in the [state’s new legal cannabis industry](https://www.ufcw.org/top-connecticut-unions-applaud-passage-of-cannabis-bill-as-industry-expands-in-northeast-helps-create-new-jobs/). This comes just months after Governor Lamont and legislative leaders made history by making Connecticut the [19th state to legalize adult-use cannabis](https://www.npr.org/2021/06/22/1009191053/connecticut-has-become-the-latest-state-to-legalize-marijuana-for-recreational-u) and embrace the economic potential the industry offers.

[**UFCW Local 371**](https://ufcw371.org/) and [**UFCW Local 919**](https://ufcw919.org/) have been [leading voices](https://ufcw919.org/cannabis-division/) in the push to **strengthen Connecticut cannabis jobs** as the industry expands across the state. Experts say the Connecticut adult-use marijuana market could [generate $250 million in sales](https://mjbizdaily.com/prospects-for-adult-use-cannabis-legalization-loom-large-in-connecticut/) in the first full year and [$725 million in the fourth year](https://mjbizdaily.com/connecticut-senate-passes-adult-use-marijuana-bill-house-up-next/#:~:text=The%20Connecticut%20Senate%2C%20by%20a,legislative%20session%20ends%20on%20Wednesday.).

**Connecticut’s new cannabis labor standards announced today** by the [Social Equity Council,](https://portal.ct.gov/socialequitycouncil/?language=en_US) a panel created to ensure the state’s new industry supports good jobs for communities most in need, confirmed that for a Connecticut cannabis business to obtain a license they must:

* Utilize Connecticut-based workforce training programs to support the startup of new businesses and establish a robust cannabis workforce development pipeline
* Demonstrate that a majority of a company’s workforce features individuals who:
	+ Reside in a Disproportionately Impacted Area, have been directly historically adversely impacted by the war on drugs, and/or are a member of a racial minority or other underserved population
* Establish a workforce training program offering a robust suite of core services to every training participant
* Verify that the company plans to continuously invest in hiring new workers and upskilling existing workers with additional skills needed to advance their careers in the industry
* Provide a clear outline of career pathways within the organization and commitment to work with employees to develop a career progression plan upon being hired
* Demonstrate a clear understanding of what federal, state, and private investments will be leveraged to subsidize tuition and/or industry-recognized credential costs for prospective or current employees participating in cannabis workforce training programs.

**UFCW Local 371 President Ronald Petronella**and **UFCW Local 919 President Mark Espinosa:**

“Connecticut working families need an economy that puts them first and these new labor standards are a strong step to support thousands of good-paying cannabis jobs our communities need. Today's action by the Social Equity Council to set high standards for Connecticut cannabis businesses will prioritize worker safety, create new career pathways, and help to speed our economic recovery as the pandemic continues.

“As the unions for thousands of Connecticut frontline workers, we are proud to offer a partnership with employers who are aligned with our goals to create a cannabis industry where both businesses and workers can succeed as we continue to build a 21st century economy.”

**BACKGROUND**:

**UFCW has been a leading voice for cannabis workers in states across the country** for more than a decade, with its [Cannabis Workers Rising](https://www.facebook.com/CannabisWorkers) campaign helping advance the development and stabilization of the emerging cannabis industry and supports good jobs in Connecticut and nationwide.

As part of our efforts, UFCW is committed to setting the standards nationally for the cannabis industry through crafting and supporting targeted legislative efforts, leading the way in industry coalitions, and ensuring that cannabis jobs mean living wage jobs, pathways to advancement, and equity, especially for marginalized communities.

###

*UFCW Local 371 and UFCW Local 919 are part of UFCW International, which is the largest private sector union in the United States. UFCW International represents 1.3 million professionals and their families in healthcare, grocery stores, meatpacking, food processing, retail shops and other industries. Our members serve our communities in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico. Learn more about the UFCW at*[*ufcw.org*](http://www.ufcw.org/)*.*