



NJBAC Welcomes First Group of Instructors for the Cannabis Training Academy

January 17, 2024 (Trenton, NJ) - The NJ Business Action Center (NJ BAC), which operates within the Department of State, has selected its first group of Cannabis Training Academy (NJ CTA) instructors to assist in building out New Jersey’s cannabis technical assistance program.

Set to launch in 2024, the CTA will provide individuals, particularly those from underserved communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition and those that reside in designated Impact Zones, with the proper information and education to pursue an adult-use cannabis operator's license. The program also will help individuals determine whether the cannabis industry is right fit for their business aspirations. Enrolled students will have access to reliable information from trusted sources that either work or teach in or consult to the New Jersey cannabis industry.

“We look forward to launching the Cannabis Training Academy in 2024. This program will build upon the work happening throughout state government to create a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse cannabis industry,” **said Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**, who leads the New Jersey Department of State in her capacity as Secretary of State.

“Our goal is to provide key support to Jersey-owned, Jersey-local, entrepreneurs who are interested in pursuing a recreational cannabis license through this virtual technical assistance program,” **said NJBAC Executive Director, Melanie Willoughby**. “We are proud to provide resources and support to budding cannabis entrepreneurs and current local operators who are striving to make a positive impact in their communities.”

“The New Jersey cannabis community is an important partner to build out this academy,” **added Penni Wild, NJBAC Deputy Executive Director.** “More than 250 people formally expressed interest in applying to be a CTA instructor. After three months of screening, vetting and interviews, the first 25 instructors have been selected to help us initiate and launch this first-of-its kind cannabis technical assistance program in New Jersey.”

“Each of our selected instructors bring years of experience, success, some painful lessons learned, and deep insight to budding entrepreneurs who are interested in stepping into the Garden State’s cannabis industry,” **added CTA Executive Director Tauhid Chappell.** “Many have personally written and submitted applications for, and have succeeded in winning, cannabis licenses in New Jersey and/or other states too. This wealth of knowledge gives us confidence that prospective CTA students will be getting the most relevant, on-the-ground, guidance and wisdom from those who’ve been through the exact process and know what it takes to enter and thrive in this industry.”

From June to November 2023 the Cannabis Training Academy team conducted their CTA Instructor hiring journey. Following initial outreach and promotion of the CTA Instructor role, the team screened resumes and applications, organized and conducted in-depth interviews, and then selected their first cohort of instructors for the program. Initial outreach enabled 250 people to express interest in applying for the CTA Instructor role. More than 200 people began or completed their instructor application and uploaded their resume for interview consideration. More than 150 people’s applications were deemed fully complete to move into interview consideration, and of those 150 people, 64 people were selected for final interviews. Over 8 weeks between October and November the CTA team interviewed 64 prospective CTA Instructors. From those interviews, 25 people were selected as final instructors.

The selected 25 CTA Instructors, and their designated courses, are:

- [Rosemarie Moyeno Matos](#) – Gaining Municipal Proof of Local Support
- [Chuck Latini](#) – Understanding Zoning Approvals and Site Plans
- [Stephanie Thomas](#) - Real Estate Considerations
- [Cecilia Oyediran](#) – Understanding The Application Scoring Criteria and Application Fees, Writing Your Personal History & Entity Disclosure Forms and Submitting A Successful Application

- [Chirali Patel](#) – Understanding and Drafting Business Plan and Management Profiles, Writing A Regulatory Compliance Plan, Preparing your Conditional Application Submission, and Understanding the Conditional Conversion Application Process
- [Lauren Rudick](#) – Crafting and Understanding Business Formation Documents, Understanding Management Service Agreements ("MSA") and Financial Source Agreements ("FSA"), and Understanding Vendor Contractor Agreements
- [Jessica Velazquez](#) – Understanding Cannabis Taxation
- [Dharshini Casinathen](#) – Describing Your Business, Drafting Mission Statement & Value Propositions, Organizing A Qualified Team, Describing Your Products and Services, Writing An Executive Summary
- [Devan McLaren](#) – Creating A Financial Forecasting Plan
- [James E. Jackson III](#) – Preparing to Obtain Liability Insurance
- [Patricia Walker](#) – Understanding Your Business and Financial Plan, Preparing An Operating Plan, Describing Your Business Experience
- [Hugh Giordano](#) – Understanding Labor Peace Agreements
- [Daniel Pierre](#) – Understanding Collective Bargaining Agreements
- [Tahir Johnson](#) – Creating A Workforce Development and Job Creation Plan and Creating A Community Impact, Social Responsibility and Research Statement
- [Marie Montmarquet](#) – Creating A Safety and Security Plan and Drafting Standard Operating Procedures for Delivery
- [Tim Weigand](#) – Creating Your Environmental Impact Plan
- [Monica Werkheiser](#) – Understanding The Fundamentals of Standard Operating Procedures, and Drafting SOPs for Adverse Event Reporting, Quality Assurance/Control and Recall
- [Kindalyn Thompson](#) – Drafting SOPs for Packaging and Labeling, Inventory Control, Storage, Diversion Prevention, Recordkeeping and Waste Disposal/Sanitation
- [Jason Gully](#) – Drafting SOPs for Cultivation
- [Kevin Serwatowski](#) - Drafting SOPs for Manufacturing
- [Charles Smith](#) – Drafting SOPs for Wholesale
- [Sequoah Turner](#) – Drafting SOPs for Distribution
- [Suzan Nickelson](#) – Drafting SOPs for Dispensing
- [Renata Serban](#) – Drafting SOPs for Accounting & Tax Compliance
- [Anita Bear](#) – Drafting SOPs for Age Verification, Secure Transport of Cannabis and Reporting of Test Results for Cannabis

Additionally, the CTA Instructor and Mentor Director [Precious Osagie Erese](#) will be teaching the Qualification Courses, the CTA Executive Director [Tauhid Chappell](#) will be teaching the History of U.S. Cannabis Prohibition and the History of New Jersey's Medical & Adult Use Cannabis

Legalization courses, and Veridis Quo LLC founder, and consultant to the CTA, [Jessica Gonzalez](#), will be teaching the Introduction to the CREAMM Act, the Introduction to CRC Regulations, and the Introduction to the Notice of Application Acceptance courses.

Announced in late 2022, the no-cost CTA will provide online courses to New Jersey residents aged 21 and above interested in obtaining an adult-use cannabis license. General students will be able to access the first three levels of online instruction to understand how to establish a compliant New Jersey business, the laws and regulations that shape New Jersey's cannabis market, and an overview of the cannabis license application portal.

To gain access to the rest of the levels and course materials, eligible students must qualify as Impact Zone applicants – as in, general students will need to attest they currently live in an Impact Zone, plan to locate their future cannabis business inside of an Impact Zone and/or plan to hire future employees that live in Impact Zones. More information on [Impact Zones](#) can be [found here](#).

About the New Jersey Business Action Center

The New Jersey Business Action Center serves as the State's liaison to the business community, offering free information, services, and resources across various areas such as business registration, financial programs, regulatory compliance, property selection, workforce training, and more. NJBAC, a division of the Department of State, comprises multiple offices, including Business Advocacy, Export Promotion, Small Business Advocacy, State Planning, and the Cannabis Training Academy. Access to NJBAC services is available through NJ DOS - NJ Business Action Center or Business.NJ.gov: Your first stop for doing business in NJ or by calling 1-800-JERSEY-7.
