



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **City of Oakland**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 7, 2022

Oakland Launches Inaugural “Equity Week” to Spotlight Local Cannabis Equity Businesses

From November 14 – 18, local dispensaries to offer special deals on cannabis products made by Oaklanders negatively impacted by the War on Drugs

Oakland, CA – In 2017 the City of Oakland made history by becoming the first jurisdiction in the country to launch a Cannabis Equity Program, which helps those disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs enter the cannabis industry and build local businesses. Cannabis products made by equity operators have suffered from a lack of consumer awareness and marketing, which in turn has discouraged retailers from carrying equity brands with adequate shelf space and visibility on online menus.

Now, in an effort to raise awareness of Equity businesses and help them survive and thrive, Oakland is launching its inaugural Equity Week celebration November 14-18.

During Equity Week, select Oakland dispensaries will be offering special deals on products from Oakland Equity brands. See below for a profile of the business owners of each participating equity brand, and quotes about what the City’s equity program means to them.

Business Owners – Brands	Dispensaries
Rachade Crawford – Da Bomb	Ivy Hill
Alicia Holcombe – MAAT Apothecary	Nug Store
Anthony Jenkins – Next Level	Oakanna
Ron Leggett – Chiefing	Root’d in the 510
Marshaun Marsh – Conscious Mindz	Rosemary Jane
John Sanders & Daniel Won – Dolo Rolling Co.	
Jesse Phalen & Rachel Tatusko – Happy Trails	

Since the legalization of the adult use of cannabis, it has been difficult for self-funded local businesses, particularly for Oaklanders coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. With limited access to capital, a combination of high taxes and complex regulations have forced many to leave the industry or work in

the unregulated market, opening the door for highly-funded corporations to move into Oakland's cannabis market.

“When you buy from an Equity brand, you are buying excellent cannabis products while helping your fellow Oaklanders,” said Greg Minor, Assistant to the City Administrator and manager of the Special Activity Permits Division. “Oakland has a deeply rooted history of supporting its own and social justice. Equity cannabis is the next chapter in our story.”

For more information about the equity business owners and deals at participating equity week dispensaries, visit <https://www.makegreengo.com/pages/equity-week>.

Background on Oakland's Cannabis Equity Program

In 2017, the Oakland City Council enacted the first cannabis equity program in the country to promote equitable ownership and employment opportunities in the cannabis industry, to decrease disparities in life outcomes for marginalized communities of color, and to address the disproportionate impacts of the war on drugs in those communities.

The City of Oakland's strategies to date have included prioritized permitting for equity applicants, exemption from application and permit fees, free legal and technical assistance, the purchase of a shared kitchen to advance manufacturing opportunities, and financial assistance via the Equity Loan and Grant Programs.

To date the City of Oakland has locally authorized more than 190 unique equity applicants for a State cannabis license and disbursed more than \$7 million dollars in grants and loans to equity applicants, with African Americans representing more than 80 percent of grant and loan recipients.

The City of Oakland has funded grants and loans to Oakland equity applicants by re-investing local cannabis tax revenues and through State grants from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz) and the Department of Cannabis Control. The City Council determined that access to capital was needed to assist historically marginalized cannabis operators given the lack of personal wealth in low-income communities and federal restrictions on banking.

To qualify as an Oakland equity applicant, a business entity must be at least 50 percent controlled by an Oakland resident who makes less than 80 percent of the average median income and either has a cannabis conviction arising out of Oakland or has lived in Oakland police beats with the highest levels of cannabis enforcement for 10 of the last 20 years.

More information on the City's cannabis equity program is available here: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/equity-program>. More information on the City's grant and loans programs for cannabis equity applicants is available here: <https://www.elevateimpactoakland.com/>.

Background on Participating Equity Brands

Ron Leggett, dba Chiefing

Ron is a first-generation urban Native American, born in Oakland, who was forced to leave his career as a firefighter following a career-ending injury. He now takes that passion for helping the community and applies it to Chiefing, a cannabis company that makes only the highest quality pre-rolls and flower.

I've been in Oakland all my life. Both my parents were relocated to Oakland as part of the 1956 Indian Relocation Act, so I identify as a first generation urban Native American because I was born in Oakland and not on the reservation like my mom or my dad. Originally I was a firefighter and did 13 years in the fire department, then I ripped my shoulder up one night and the doctor said I'd never fight fire again. That was some of the hardest news I ever had in my life. I loved going to work every day and riding the fire truck and actually had a lot of depression around after I couldn't fight fire anymore. Through that depression, I resorted to trying weed and it really helped. Now, I'm working in cannabis not only because I love it, but because I was able to use it as a platform to get me through a lot of stuff that's gone on in my life. It totally relaxes me, it allows me to be more in tune with the things that are around me spiritually, and I want to spread that message.

Being the first Equity Native American in Oakland means a lot to me. It's really an honor, but there's a lot of responsibility that goes with it as well. I always carry my family and my culture with me.

Rachade Crawford, dba Da Bomb

Da Bomb is a family business co-founded by Rachade Crawford and his mother. Da Bomb makes pre-rolls as strong as the Town they hail from.

I love my city. Oakland always supports Oakland. My mom got interested in getting a cannabis license in Oakland through the Equity program. Historically people of color haven't had the opportunities to jump into businesses, and she saw cannabis as a way of providing jobs to people, improving the community, before these big, large cigarette and tobacco companies jump in the game.

I actually began to work in cannabis and I love it. It's a family business. There's my mother, me, and I have a daughter I'm hoping gets into the family industry. I'd love to have this business built for her to walk into and then help make flourish and hopefully help other people.

I love my family, I love my city — Oakland always supports Oakland — and we're building Da Bomb for everyone.

Marshaun Marsh, dba Conscious Mindz

A cannabis arrest limited Marshaun's ability to find traditional employment, but the Oakland native can't be stopped that easily. His cannabis delivery and lifestyle company Conscious Mindz is dedicated to providing a positive impact to the community while delivering the best pre-rolls, flower, concentrates, and vapes Oakland has to offer.

[The cannabis arrest] caused a lot of disturbance in my life because when I moved back with a BA from Morehouse, I couldn't get a job. I had

interviews at JetBlue, at mortgage jobs, but I would never pass the background check because of my cannabis arrests.

So how I hear about the Equity program is my girlfriend and I were sitting around, and she calls a service to deliver weed. I'm like, what's going on? The guy says it's legal, and he gives me this lady's number. She explained that yes, there's this program out here in Oakland with all these parameters.

I knew exactly what to do from day one. It was all about meeting people, getting people comfortable with you, getting a product out there, teaming up with the right people. Everybody said it was going to be hard, but in the first week I had three clients. You just have to have that "go out there and get it" mentality.

That's an ongoing challenge, but we're still seeing a lot of success. I really attribute that to good relationships. You gotta have energy. People gotta see a spark in you.

John Sanders and Daniel Won dba Dolo Rolling Co.

Although they come from different walks of life, John and Daniel have connected deeply through a shared passion for cannabis. Dolo Brands is an Oakland-based cannabis lifestyle brand that celebrates the positive cultural and life-enriching aspects of the cannabis plant.

John: When Daniel and I met, we really connected on that level, on the level of cannabis being a source of positivity and bringing people together. Cannabis is for the people, and that's being lost as all these corporations are moving in. So we wanted to make Dolo into a community that was centered around creativity and inclusion. Especially as a Black man, I've seen how much damage the War on Drugs has caused, and I truly believe in the positive impact of the plant. We're proud to be an Equity brand, and we want to show Equity is about the people, the culture.

Jesse Phalen and Rachel Tatusko dba Happy Trails

As the son of a single-mother muralist in Oakland, Jesse was always aware of the connection between art and cannabis. Now, he and his business partner Rachel are growing Happy Trails into a premium flower and bubble hash-infused pre-roll company that brings that artistic spirit to life.

Jesse: "When my mom moved us to Oakland and I eventually grew up, I continued to see the benefits of cannabis, but it wasn't until I started working at Harborside in 2008 that I realized this isn't just a recreation thing. It's about changing lives.

Jesse: "A lot of times Equity people are given this opportunity but they just don't have the resources to make it happen, so I hope as we grow that we can also become a resource to others."

Rachel: "I'd really love to be able to work on the other brands and both create jobs and support the community. Hopefully we can grow Happy Trails into something much bigger than us."

Anthony Jenkins, dba Next Level Edibles

Anthony was struggling with depression and anxiety before discovering the healing benefits of cannabis. Marrying this desire to help others with his passion for baking, Anthony and his brother have built Next Level into an Oakland-based cannabis company that elevates the world's perception of edibles.

Growing up, I worked hard to get into a great school, then worked hard to graduate from that great school. Got the great job that they told me to. You know what happened? 2007 happened and everybody got laid off.

So after I lost that job I got really depressed, saw a specialist, and I started taking anti-anxiety medicine and antidepressants on a regular basis. But I didn't like the way I was feeling, I didn't feel like I was emotionally connected to life anymore.

After a while I remembered being younger and how when I smoked cannabis it helped with those negative feelings. So I thought, maybe I should use cannabis because cannabis never had these other effects. I did some research and found out about edibles and learned that edibles last four times as long as smoking. So I can have one dose and it can last my whole day at work.

I'm also a baker; show me anything and I can make it from scratch.

I still get some of that pushback with some of my family members, but I feel like we wouldn't be this far if God didn't intend for us to succeed. So many businesses have folded and so I feel blessed to be here and feel like that's a sign from God that I'm doing good work and I'm on the right path.

Alicia Holcombe, dba Maat Apothecary

MAAT Apothecary is a woman-owned, Oakland-based, cannabis wellness brand that supports social equity and restorative justice implementation. Famous for her delicious and immune-boosting cannabis Infused Spiced Honey, Alicia Holcombe is dedicated to helping Oaklanders heal their minds, bodies and spirits with cannabis.

My dad's from Alabama and my grandmother was a medicine carrier. She was making topicals, liniments, balms and salves and things like that from different herbs and roots, including cannabis. That's one of the reasons I like working with honey now, I consider it a continuation of that history. Honey is so comforting and natural, especially with elders and newer people who are entering into the cannabis space and might be curious.

So it can definitely be frustrating to spend hours in civic meetings and try to be a part of the process. But it's also my role to help ensure that justice is a part of the mix of everything that's happening in this new blooming industry.

I love having fun, but it's something deeper to be able to use cannabis to spiritually be able to calm myself after something difficult happens, and I want that for everyone.

Oakland's newest Equity Cannabis Dispensary: Root'd in the 510

Root'd in the 510, a unique retail and entertainment destination at 4444 Telegraph Avenue in Oakland's Temescal District, opened its 4,500-square-foot cannabis dispensary in the summer of 2022.

Founded by Rickey McCullough and a team of industry experts and passionate cannabis pioneers, the business has prioritized hiring locally for the 20 positions on payroll at launch. The majority of the employees are Oakland residents and many call Temescal home. The founders focused recruitment on individuals needing a second chance.

In 2018, Rickey McCullough was featured in a [New York Times article](#) upon being awarded a license to open a dispensary through the City of Oakland's Cannabis License Equity Program. The Equity Program was created to support community members who had been disproportionately impacted under oppressive drug legislation, prior to legalization. McCullough's family was impacted more than most. Two decades ago, the [City of Oakland demolished the home owned by his great aunt](#) after seizing it for being the alleged site of cannabis sales. The City's Equity Program shows just how dramatically local policies on cannabis have changed.

"The City of Oakland has been an enthusiastic and helpful partner throughout the whole process," said McCullough. "Dispensary co-operator Daniel Chung and I are excited about being able to directly give back to the local community by hiring locally and partnering with neighborhood businesses."

The new visitors Root'd will attract to the area are sure to enjoy the incredible variety of other local businesses, including more than 80 restaurants and cafes, many independently owned. This collaborative approach has garnered strong support from the Temescal Telegraph Business Improvement District (BID) since initial permit application by the founders. "We are happy to celebrate the opening of such a unique destination retail business and are excited about the increase in visitors to our vibrant commercial district, which will benefit and complement our established Temescal businesses and the whole community," said Katie Larson, Temescal Telegraph BID Executive Director.

In addition to local support, the dispensary's refined, yet modern look caught the attention of *Architectural Digest* as detailed in "[Inside 12 of the Country's Most Stylish Cannabis Dispensaries](#)" in 2021. This once boring warehouse has been given a gorgeous transformation by McBride Architects that fits in wonderfully with the neighborhood.

To learn more about Root'd visit our website www.rootd510.com

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