



Department of
Cannabis Control
CALIFORNIA

Department of Cannabis Control Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026 - 2031

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Director's Message

Five years ago, the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) was established with a mission to create a safe, sustainable, and equitable cannabis industry for all Californians. Since then, we have worked alongside licensees, local governments, community organizations, state partners, and the public to strengthen California's legal cannabis system and support the communities it serves.

Over the past five years, DCC has made important progress in protecting public health and safety, supporting licensed businesses and jobs, advancing equity goals, promoting environmental stewardship, and building partnerships throughout California. These accomplishments reflect the dedication of our employees and the collaboration of stakeholders across the state.

At the same time, we recognize that our work is far from complete. California's cannabis industry continues to evolve, and we operate in a unique environment where a significant share of cannabis consumption still occurs outside the regulated market. Like other regulatory agencies, our responsibility is to protect consumers, youth, communities, workers, and the environment. Achieving those goals requires building a legal market that consumers trust, can access, and choose to participate in.

Our Strategic Plan for 2026–2031 provides a roadmap for the Department's next chapter. Developed through a collaborative process involving executive leadership, employees across the Department, and external stakeholders, the plan establishes five priorities that will guide our work over the next five years.



The first four priorities reflect our focus on strengthening the legal market through: Trusted and Safe Products; Sustained Pressure on the Illicit Market; Access and Awareness: Empowering Consumers and Communities; and Reduced Friction for Licensees Without Compromising Consumer Trust and Safety. Together, these priorities are intended to help more Californians participate in the regulated market so that the protections established by law can reach as many consumers and communities as possible.

The fifth priority, Organizational Culture, recognizes that none of this work is possible without an engaged, innovative, and high-performing workforce. Investing in our people, fostering collaboration, and encouraging continuous improvement are essential to fulfilling our mission and adapting to the challenges ahead.

This Strategic Plan reflects both the foundation we have built and our aspirations for the future. It provides a framework for aligning our efforts, measuring our progress, and remaining responsive to the changing needs of California's cannabis market and the people we serve.

As we mark five years as a Department, I want to thank our employees, licensees, local partners, stakeholders, and communities for their continued engagement and support. California has long been a leader in cannabis, and by working together, we can continue building a market that is safe, sustainable, equitable, and worthy of the trust Californians place in it.



About DCC

DCC was established on July 12, 2021, with the passage of Assembly Bill 141 (Chapter 70, Statutes of 2021). This legislation consolidated California's three cannabis licensing programs (established in 2016) into a single department to centralize and streamline California's commercial cannabis regulatory oversight. DCC licenses and regulates commercial cannabis activity within California. This includes:



The growing of cannabis plants



The manufacturing of cannabis goods



The transportation, distribution and tracking of cannabis goods



The testing of cannabis goods



The sale of cannabis goods



The permitting of events where cannabis is sold



Mission, Vision, and Value

Mission

The Department (DCC) advances and facilitates a well-regulated, legal market that benefits all Californians.

Vision

California has a safe, sustainable, and equitable cannabis market that serves as an example for the world.

Values

- Integrity: We work for the public benefit, and we safeguard public trust. We honor the work we do and hold it in high regard.
- Fairness: We create standards and practices that are equitable, practical, and consistent.
- Innovation: We foster an environment of curiosity, creativity, and scientific understanding. We are bold, futuristic, and responsive to change.
- Knowledge: We value competency, professional excellence, and continuous learning.
- Collaboration: We are approachable and responsive. We value engagement and diversity of thought. We establish and maintain partnerships that balance our ideas and support our values.
- Support: We are resilient, kind, and respectful, both individually and as a community.



Strategic Priorities

Our Strategic Plan is centered around five priorities that will guide DCC's work over the next five years. Four priorities align with the pillars that have helped focus our efforts and guide decision-making across the department, while a fifth priority reinforces our commitment to fostering a positive, engaged, and high-performing organizational culture.





Trusted and Safe Products

DCC ensures that cannabis products in California are subject to testing and regulatory oversight designed to reduce risk and build confidence in the legal market.

Strategies

- Administer clear and accessible licensing programs that provide legitimate businesses with the opportunity to operate in the regulated market and serve consumers responsibly.
- Maintain a comprehensive compliance program that oversees seed-to-sale activities, including minimum standards for production, handling, and labeling, to uphold product quality and integrity and support confidence in the legal market.
- Strengthen laboratory performance standards and oversight to promote accurate and reliable testing.
- Strengthen efforts to prevent inversion and diversion to ensure fidelity in the legal market and maintain trust in California's regulated cannabis system.





Sustained Pressure on the Illicit Market

DCC is committed to protecting public health and safety, and the integrity of the legal cannabis market by actively disrupting the illicit market. Through coordinated enforcement, strategic resource allocation, and public education, DCC aims to reduce illegal activity and its harmful impacts on licensees and communities.

Strategies

- Apply sustained pressure on the illicit market through coordinated enforcement and regulatory efforts.
- Implement intelligence-led enforcement strategies to disrupt illegal operations effectively.
- Advocate for increased resources to support enforcement and compliance activities.
- Increase public awareness of the harm caused

by the illicit market, including risks to health, safety, the environment, and community well-being.





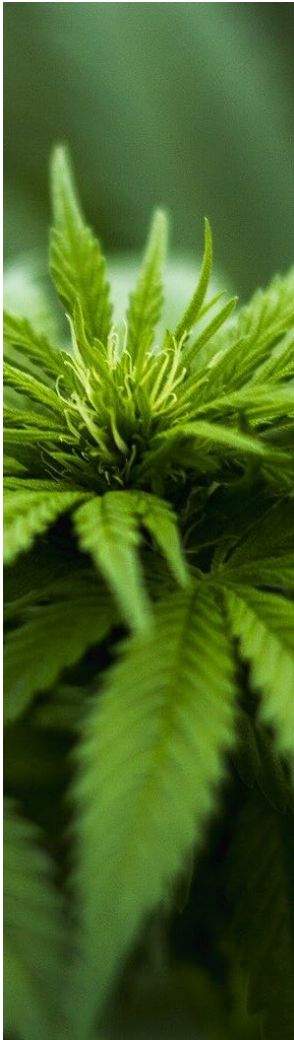
Access and Awareness

DCC promotes responsible access to legal cannabis and empowers consumers with the knowledge to make informed choices. DCC educates consumers and works with local jurisdictions to expand access and reduce barriers to entry.

Strategies

- Increase consumer awareness of where and how to purchase legal cannabis products.
 - Collaborate with local governments to responsibly expand retail access and address local permitting challenges.
 - Highlight the negative impacts of limited retail access on public safety and the legal market.
 - Educate consumers on the risks of illicit cannabis and the benefits of purchasing from licensed sources.
- Promote legal access, responsible consumption, and safe storage.





Reduced Friction for Licensees

DCC is committed to reducing unnecessary burdens on licensees while maintaining high standards for public health and safety. DCC seeks to streamline processes and lower costs to support the legal market.

Strategies

- Identify and implement opportunities to streamline regulatory processes and reduce administrative burdens.
 - Advocate for policies that lower operational costs for licensees without compromising safety or compliance.
 - Enhance digital tools and resources to support licensee compliance and improve service delivery.
 - Foster a regulatory environment that is responsive, efficient, and supportive of innovation.
- Gather feedback from equity operators and small business owners to identify barriers that limit participation in the cannabis industry.
 - Continue efforts to support small business owners and equity licensees, as outlined in [DCC's Equity Action Plan](#).





Organizational Culture

DCC fosters a resilient, inclusive, and innovative organizational culture that supports its mission and values. DCC invests in its people to achieve excellence in public service and leadership.

Strategies

- Recruit and retain talent by supporting professional development, learning opportunities, and work-life balance.
- Cultivate an inclusive, diverse, and collaborative culture where employees feel valued and empowered to contribute.
- Encourage innovation by fostering curiosity, creativity, and appropriate risk-taking.
- Promote transparent, accountable communication to strengthen trust and alignment.
- Enhance performance and continuous

improvement through effective resources, strong feedback loops, and consistent recognition of outstanding work.

