

Cannabis Fact Sheet

Last Updated February 5, 2018

Under Minnesota's current cannabis laws:

- Only plant matter, under 42.5 grams, is considered “decriminalized.”¹
- Possession of any amount of cannabis concentrate, or other processed product, is a felony, even though the Minnesota legislature made a value judgment that cannabis oil is preferable and is the only form in which patients obtain medical cannabis.²
- Possession of more than 2/3rds of a cup of bong water is a felony.³
- Minnesota courts do not allow defendants to raise medical necessity defenses in cannabis-related court cases.⁴
- Law enforcement made nearly 9,000 cannabis-related arrests in Minnesota in 2016, accounting for approximately 50% of all narcotics related arrests in Minnesota;⁵
- In Minnesota, black people are 6.4 times more likely than white people to be arrested for cannabis possession, despite similar use rates.⁶
- The direct and collateral costs associated with a marijuana possession arrest include hefty legal fees, treatment costs, lost income, eviction from public housing, emotional stress, and a variety of other financial and human costs; the estimated lifetime cost of a felony-level possession arrest ranges from \$40-75 thousand dollars.⁷

Why legalize?

- Under initial estimates, Minnesota has the potential to create over \$100 million in additional tax revenue with the legalization of adult-use cannabis.⁸
- Minnesota is currently missing out on a multi-billion-dollar industry⁹ which has created hundreds of thousands of jobs in legal states.¹⁰
- Current laws criminalize over 500,000 adults in Minnesota¹¹ for simply consuming a relatively safe plant.
- Minnesota spends at least tens of millions of dollars arresting and prosecuting cannabis crimes; these funds are better used to prevent violent crime and investigate crimes against people.
- Over half of Minnesotans support legalization according to a straw poll at the Minnesota State Fair in 2017¹²; on a national level, over 60% support adult use legalization.¹³
- Cannabis is safer than alcohol; there are no deaths directly attributed to cannabis.¹⁴ Additionally, researchers have been unable to give animals enough cannabis to induce death.
- The rate of lethal prescription painkiller deaths decreased by 25% in states allowing medical cannabis.¹⁵ Adult use would increase access for patients struggling in Minnesota's arbitrarily restrictive medical cannabis program.

¹ Minn. Stat. 152.027 Subd. 4 with “Small Amount” defined by Minn. Stat. 152.01 Subd. 16

² Minn. Stat. 152.22 Subd. 6

³ Minn. Stat. 152.01 Subd. 16

⁴ State v. Hanson, 468 N.W.2d 77, (Minn. App. 1997); State v. Theil, 846 N.W.2d 605 (Minn. App. 2014)

⁵ State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety. (2016). *Uniform Crime Report*

⁶ Simms, N., Ph.D. (2014). *Collateral Costs: Racial Disparities and Injustice in Minnesota's Marijuana Laws* (Publication). Saint Paul, MN: Minnesota 2020

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Initial projection by Sensible Minnesota based on sales revenue for CO (2014-2017), OR (2016-2017), and WA (2014-2017)

⁹ Borchardt, D. (2017). *Marijuana Sales Totaled \$6.7 Billion in 2016*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/debraborchardt/2017/01/03/marijuana-sales-totaled-6-7-billion-in-2016/#35647a6e75e3>

¹⁰ Marijuana Business Daily (2016), *Exclusive estimates: CA will account for half of retail marijuana sales stemming from election*. Retrieved from: <https://mjbizdaily.com/exclusive-estimates-ca-will-account-half-retail-marijuana-sales-stemming-election/>

¹¹ National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Model-Based Prevalence Estimates (50 States and the District of Columbia) (2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHsaePercents2016/NSDUHsaePercents2016.pdf>

¹² London, A. (2017). *Is Minnesota on the Fast Track to Legalization?* Retrieved from: <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2017/09/is-minnesota-on-the-fast-track-to-legalization/>

¹³ Geiger, A. (2018). *About six-in-ten Americans support marijuana legalization*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/05/americans-support-marijuana-legalization/>

¹⁴ Drug Enforcement Administration. (n.d.) *Drug Fact Sheet: Marijuana*. Retrieved from: https://www.dea.gov/druginfo/drug_data_sheets/Marijuana.pdf

¹⁵ Bachhuber, M. A., Saloner, B., Cunningham, C. O., & Barry, C. L. (2014). Medical Cannabis Laws and Opioid Analgesic Overdose Mortality in the United States, 1999-2010. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174(10), 1668. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2014.4005