

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Appointment of Wesley McWhite III as Director of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission's Office of Diversity and Inclusion

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced the appointment of Wesley McWhite III as the Director of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The appointment comes a day after the Commission unanimously voted to approve its first set of regulations to govern the new industry and is a further step in advancing the Murphy Administration's commitment to establishing an adult-use cannabis marketplace that prioritizes equity.

"Since Day One, we have said that the legalization of recreational use cannabis for adults in New Jersey must include those that have historically suffered from over-policing and exclusion from business opportunities," **said Governor Murphy**. "I am proud to appoint Wes as the Director of the Office in charge of ensuring that our new adult-use cannabis marketplace is inclusive, diverse, and equitable. I know that he will serve our state honorably. The work of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission is just one example of how our Administration is striving to reverse decades of social and racial inequities and to fight for a stronger and fairer New Jersey."

"The Cannabis Regulatory Commission is thrilled to have the talents and skills of Wes at the helm of our efforts to promote inclusion in the cannabis industry," **said Cannabis Regulatory Commission Chair Dianna Houenou**. "I have no doubt that Wes's experience will further strengthen the Commission's ability to break down barriers for people entering the regulated industry."

"As a Black Gay man, whose family has roots in Trenton spanning generations, I am honored and excited to join the Cannabis Regulatory Commission. The War on Drugs has devastated poor, minority and LGBTQIA communities for too long and we have a responsibility to include those that have been most impacted in this process and industry from the start," **said Wesley "Wes" McWhite III**. "My philosophy for outreach, advocacy, equity and inclusion seeks to expand opportunities like these to underrepresented communities. By bringing my perspective to this dedicated team, I am determined to help get this right for all New Jerseyans. I am so grateful the Governor has entrusted me with this appointment and I am eager to do everything I can for the people of New Jersey."

In this role, McWhite will lead the Office in charge of establishing and administering unified practices and procedures for promoting participation in the medical cannabis and personal use cannabis industries by persons from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. The Office will also conduct advertising and promotional campaigns to increase awareness and industry participation, as well as lead several other initiatives to ensure an equitable marketplace.

McWhite currently serves as Policy Manager for the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation of New Jersey. He previously served the organization as Development Manager and as a Policy and Development Associate. In these roles, McWhite advocated for HIV/AIDS healthcare access and prevention and organized large events to advocate for HIV/AIDS patients. He has also served as a Homeless Outreach Specialist with the Volunteers of America and as Deputy Chief Operating Officer of the New Hope Baptist Church. McWhite holds an Associate of Arts degree from Hudson County Community College.

For a picture of Wesley McWhite III, please click here (</governor/news/news/562021/docs/WesleyMcWhite.jpg>).

Governor Phil Murphy

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[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

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