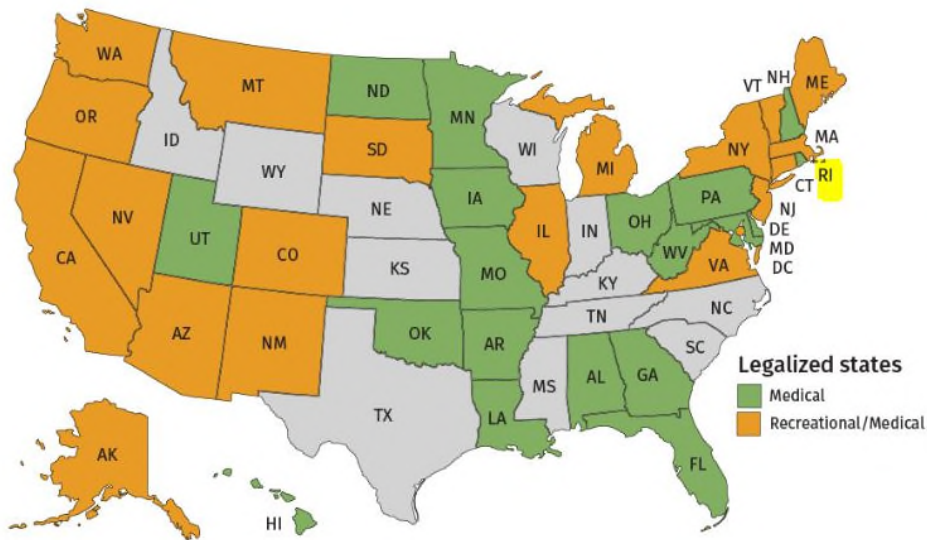


RHODE ISLAND BECOMES THE 19TH STATE TO LEGALIZE RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA



By: [Richard M. Blau](#), Regulated Products Section Chair

Rhode Island became the 19th U.S. state to legalize adult-use recreational cannabis. Governor Dan McKee signed the bill into law on May 25, 2022, after state lawmakers passed the legislation the day prior.

With the bill's passage, 24 new retail licenses will be issued in six geographic areas of the state, joining the existing nine medicinal marijuana retail outlets that are already active or in the works across the state. The state will set aside 25% of new retail licenses for "social equity applicants," including individuals "disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs." Another quarter of licenses will be designated for worker-owned cooperatives.

Cities can opt out of the adult-use program, with the exception of those that already have medical marijuana dispensaries.

Existing medical marijuana operators will be able to obtain hybrid adult-use licenses on December 1, 2022, with sales expected to launch on that date. Each retail operator will be required to pay a \$125,000 fee that will go toward a social equity fund, per report.

The new law also places a two-year moratorium on new cultivation licenses, limiting growing operations for the recreational market to medical cannabis cultivators that are in good standing with the state. Currently, there are 60 medical cannabis cultivators in Rhode Island.

Marijuana products will be taxed at 10% in addition to the state tax rate of 7%, plus a 3% local tax.