

US CANNABIS INDUSTRY SALARIES

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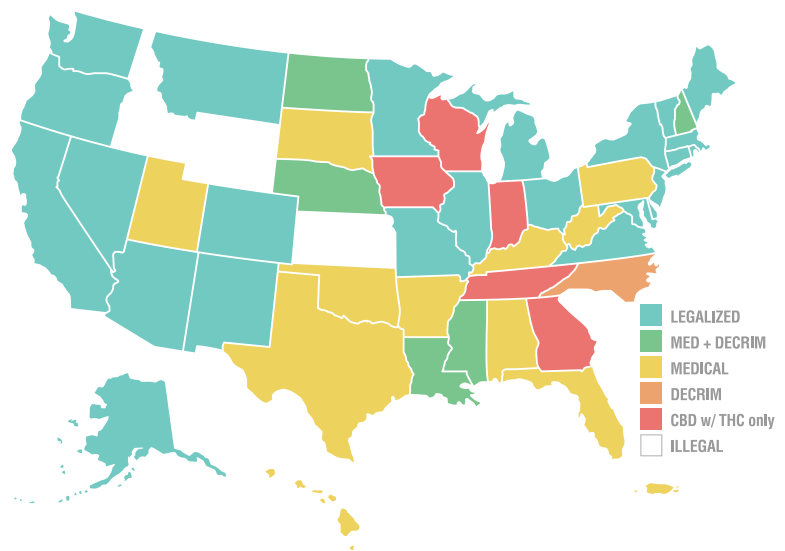
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Welcome.

This guide empowers employers and job seekers with high-fidelity salary benchmarks and critical insights, from cross-functional skill sets to the impacts of shifting federal regulations.

The Careers in Cannabis team synthesizes proprietary platform data, government records, and direct industry interviews to decode the current cannabis labor market.

By interpreting regional demand and the move toward industry professionalization, we provide the strategic clarity needed to optimize compensation, navigate growth, and secure a competitive edge.



The largest industry-focused network of job seekers and companies, Careers in Cannabis matches skill sets of a frontline workforce with the increasing demand from employers. With over one million applications submitted into the industry and 250,000 complete candidate profiles across every regulated market, CareersinCannabis.com is far more than a job board.

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Salary Guide – Arizona

AZ

Director of Retail Ops	\$100–135k
Director of Cultivation	\$105–145k
Director of Extraction	\$100–140k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$80–110k	<i>mostly stable; limited upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$52–68k	<i>flat to slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable; minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$65–90k	<i>stable; slight compression at upper band</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$20–26/hr	<i>stable; skilled premium remains</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat to slight compression</i>

2026 AZ market baseline

Stable, mature adult-use market
 Sales plateau following early adult-use expansion
 Retail wages largely steady across frontline roles
 Operational efficiency prioritized amid competitive pricing pressure

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$290M
Q1 2025	~\$275M
Q2 2025	~\$285M
Q3 2025	~\$280M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
 Cultivation compensation stable with slight compression at upper levels
 Processing roles steady with minimal upward movement
 Executive compensation stable within structured operator bands

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, ADHS*

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Salary Guide – California

CA

Director of Retail Ops	\$115–165k
Director of Cultivation	\$120–175k
Director of Extraction	\$120–170k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$95–130k	<i>slight increase; upper band strengthened</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$60–80k	<i>moderate increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$18–21/hr	<i>slight increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$70–95k	<i>mild increase at top end</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$18–23/hr	<i>slight upper band increase</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$18–22/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–30/hr	<i>stable; specialized skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$19–23/hr	<i>modest increase</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$18–21/hr	<i>flat to slight compression</i>

2026 CA market baseline

Retail margin tightening
 Operator consolidation
 Wage stabilization rather than aggressive growth
 Slight upward pressure in skilled management + tech roles
 Entry-level roles largely flat with small inflation-driven drift

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$1.06B
Q1 2025	~\$1.09B
Q2 2025	~\$993M
Q3 2025	~\$939M

Notables since 2025

Retail management wages strengthened
 Processing roles ticked up modestly
 Entry cultivation + packaging relatively stable
 Executive compensation largely stable; selective upward pressure in experienced leadership roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, CA Dept. of Tax & Fee Administration, CA Dept. of Cannabis Control*

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Salary Guide – Colorado

CO

Director of Retail Ops	\$95–130k
Director of Cultivation	\$100–140k
Director of Extraction	\$100–135k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$70–105k	<i>stable to slight compression</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$48–62k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat; limited upward pressure</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$60–80k	<i>slight compression at upper band</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$19–25/hr	<i>stable; specialized skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat to slight compression</i>

2026 CO market baseline

Highly mature, saturated market
Ongoing wholesale + retail price compression
Retail wages largely flat across frontline roles
Management compensation stable but not expanding
Operational efficiency prioritized over growth hiring

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$350M
Q1 2025	~\$330M
Q2 2025	~\$325M
Q3 2025	~\$315M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
Cultivation compensation slightly compressed at upper ranges
Processing roles stable with minimal upward movement
Executive compensation steady amid limited expansion activity

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, ColoradoCannabis.gov*

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Salary Guide – Connecticut

CT

Director of Retail Ops	\$120–165k
Director of Cultivation	\$125–175k
Director of Extraction	\$120–170k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$95–130k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$60–80k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$18–22/hr	<i>stable to slight increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable; experienced operators at premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$17–21/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$17–20/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–29/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$18–23/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$17–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 CT market baseline

Emerging but steadily expanding adult-use market
 Retail footprint increasing across key regions
 Retail wages trending modestly upward in management roles
 Cultivation + processing compensation stable

LEGAL STATE SALES

Q4 2024 ~\$85M
 Q1 2025 ~\$92M
 Q2 2025 ~\$98M
 Q3 2025 ~\$105M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased year-over-year
 Budtender wages stable with minor inflation adjustment
 Processing roles slightly up at mid-range
 Executive compensation strengthened during expansion period

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, data.ct.gov*

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Salary Guide – Florida

FL

Director of Retail Ops	\$105–140k
Director of Cultivation	\$110–150k
Director of Extraction	\$105–145k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable; common standardized pay</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$52–68k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable; limited upward movement</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable; large-scale operators use structured bands</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$20–27/hr	<i>stable; internal promotion pipelines common</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 FL market baseline

Large, vertically integrated medical-only market
 Stable patient enrollment with moderated growth rate
 Retail wages structured + standardized across MSOs
 Operational scale drives efficiency over wage expansion

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$520M
Q1 2025	~\$510M
Q2 2025	~\$495M
Q3 2025	~\$500M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
 Cultivation and processing roles stable across major operators
 Executive compensation steady within vertically integrated structure
 Minimal inflation-driven adjustment across frontline roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, Headset.io*

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Salary Guide – Illinois

IL

Director of Retail Ops	\$110–155k
Director of Cultivation	\$120–165k
Director of Extraction	\$115–160k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$90–125k	<i>stable; small-operator driven</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$60–75k	<i>mostly stable; slight upward drift</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$18–21/hr	<i>slight increase at upper band</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$75–100k	<i>stable; experienced leaders at premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$18–22/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$18–21/hr	<i>flat to slight increase</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–28/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$19–23/hr	<i>modest upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$18–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 IL market baseline

Strong per-capita sales performance
 Consistent out-of-state consumer demand
 Retail wages stable with selective upward pressure in mgmt roles
 Cultivation + processing compensation steady
 Operational discipline prioritized amid competitive pricing

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$505M
Q1 2025	~\$480M
Q2 2025	~\$495M
Q3 2025	~\$510M

Notables since 2025

Retail management wages strengthened modestly
 Budtender wages largely stable with minor inflation-driven increase
 Processing roles slightly up at mid-range
 Executive compensation steady with mild upward pressure

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, ADHS*

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Salary Guide – Massachusetts

MA

Director of Retail Ops	\$115–160k
Director of Cultivation	\$120–170k
Director of Extraction	\$115–165k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$95–130k	<i>stable; upward pressure in strong operators</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$60–78k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$18–22/hr	<i>stable with minor inflation-driven increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$75–100k	<i>stable; premium for experienced operators</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$17–21/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$17–20/hr	<i>flat to slight compression</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–29/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$18–23/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$17–20/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 MA market baseline

Mature, highly competitive retail environment
Ongoing wholesale + retail price compression
Retail wages largely stable across frontline roles
Leadership compensation steady with limited upward expansion
Operational efficiency prioritized amid margin pressure

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$455M
Q1 2025	~\$430M
Q2 2025	~\$445M
Q3 2025	~\$460M

Notables since 2025

Retail management wages stable year-over-year
Budtender wages largely unchanged with slight inflation adjustment
Cultivation + processing roles mostly flat
Executive compensation steady with minimal movement

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, MCC*

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Salary Guide – Maryland

MD

Director of Retail Ops	\$120–165k
Director of Cultivation	\$125–175k
Director of Extraction	\$120–170k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$95–130k	<i>upward pressure during growth phase</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$60–78k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$17–21/hr	<i>stable to slight increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable; experienced operators at premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$17–21/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$17–20/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–28/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$18–23/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$17–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 MD market baseline

Strong adult-use market expansion post-launch
 Retail growth driving management wage pressure
 Cultivation and processing roles stable with modest upward drift
 Increasing competition but strong per-store revenue

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$300M
Q1 2025	~\$320M
Q2 2025	~\$335M
Q3 2025	~\$345M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased year-over-year
 Budtender wages stable with minor inflation adjustment
 Processing roles slightly up at mid-range
 Executive compensation strengthened in expansion phase

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, mmcc.maryland.gov*

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Salary Guide – Maine

ME

Director of Retail Ops	\$95–125k
Director of Cultivation	\$100–135k
Director of Extraction	\$95–130k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>	CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager \$70–95k	<i>stable; small-operator driven</i>
	Dispensary Manager \$45–60k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i> \$15–18/hr	<i>stable; minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager \$60–85k	<i>stable; limited large-scale facilities</i>
	Cultivation Associate \$15–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production \$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician \$19–24/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate \$16–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate \$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 ME market baseline

Small but stable adult-use market
 Seasonal tourism impacts quarterly performance
 Retail wages largely steady across frontline roles
 Management compensation stable with limited expansion

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$62M
Q1 2025	~\$58M
Q2 2025	~\$65M
Q3 2025	~\$68M

Notables since 2025

Cultivation + processing compensation stable
 Executive compensation steady within small-market structure
 Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™.*

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Salary Guide – Michican

MI

Director of Retail Ops	\$100–135k
Director of Cultivation	\$105–145k
Director of Extraction	\$105–140k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable to slight compression</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$50–65k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$16–19/hr	<i>flat to slight decrease in some markets</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$65–85k	<i>slight compression at upper band</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$16–19/hr	<i>flat to slight compression</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$20–26/hr	<i>stable; skilled premium remains</i>
	Processing Associate	\$17–21/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$16–18/hr	<i>flat; automation limiting wage growth</i>

2026 MI market baseline

High-volume but heavily price-compressed market
 Wholesale oversupply impacting margins
 Retail wages largely stabilized with limited upward movement
 Management compensation holding steady but not accelerating
 Operational efficiency prioritized over headcount expansion

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$770M
Q1 2025	~\$780M
Q2 2025	~\$770M
Q3 2025	~\$760M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages largely flat vs prior year
 Cultivation and post-harvest wages slightly compressed at top end
 Processing wages stable with minimal upward movement
 Executive compensation steady but not expanding

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, MICRA*

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Salary Guide – Missouri

MO

Director of Retail Ops	\$105–140k
Director of Cultivation	\$110–150k
Director of Extraction	\$105–145k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$85–115k	<i>moderate upward pressure in growth phase</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$55–72k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable to slight increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable; premium for experienced operators</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$21–27/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$17–22/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$16–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 MO market baseline

Strong adult-use growth trajectory
 Expanding statewide retail footprint
 Retail management wages trending modestly upward
 Cultivation + processing compensation stable, minor increases

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$315M
Q1 2025	~\$325M
Q2 2025	~\$340M
Q3 2025	~\$350M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased modestly year-over-year
 Budtender wages stable, slight inflation-driven adjustment
 Processing roles slightly up at mid-range
 Executive compensation strengthened in active growth environment

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, MDHSS*

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Salary Guide – Montana

MT

Director of Retail Ops	\$95–125k
Director of Cultivation	\$100–135k
Director of Extraction	\$95–130k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable; limited upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$45–60k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$14–17/hr	<i>stable; minimal movement</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$60–85k	<i>stable; small-facility leadership premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$14–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$14–17/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$18–23/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate	\$15–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$14–16/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 MT market baseline

Small but stable adult-use market
 Seasonal tourism impacts quarterly revenue performance
 Management compensation stable, limited upward acceleration
 Executive compensation aligned; small-market operational scale

LEGAL STATE SALES

Q4 2024 ~\$72M
 Q1 2025 ~\$68M
 Q2 2025 ~\$74M
 Q3 2025 ~\$76M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
 Cultivation and processing compensation stable
 Executive compensation steady within small-market structure
 Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, MT Dept of Revenue*

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Salary Guide – New Jersey

NJ

Director of Retail Ops	\$120–165k
Director of Cultivation	\$125–175k
Director of Extraction	\$120–170k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$95–130k	<i>moderate upward pressure; expansion</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$62–80k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$18–22/hr	<i>stable to slight increase</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable; premium for experienced operators</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$17–21/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$17–20/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$22–29/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$18–23/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$17–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 NJ market baseline

Strong per-store revenue performance
 Retail expansion continuing across key metro areas
 Retail wages trending slightly upward in management roles
 Cultivation and processing compensation largely stable

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$240M
Q1 2025	~\$250M
Q2 2025	~\$265M
Q3 2025	~\$275M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased modestly year-over-year
 Budtender wages stable with slight metro premium
 Processing roles saw minor upward adjustment
 Executive compensation strengthened during expansion period

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, NJ CRC*

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Salary Guide – New Mexico

NM

Director of Retail Ops	\$100–135k
Director of Cultivation	\$105–145k
Director of Extraction	\$100–140k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable to slight upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$50–65k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable; minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$65–90k	<i>stable; premium for experienced operators</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$20–26/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 NM market baseline

Steady adult-use growth trajectory
Cross-border demand supporting sales performance
Executive compensation aligned with mid-scale market expansion

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
Cultivation and processing compensation stable
Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$115M
Q1 2025	~\$120M
Q2 2025	~\$125M
Q3 2025	~\$130M

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, NMRLD CROP*

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Salary Guide – Nevada

NV

Director of Retail Ops	\$100–135k
Director of Cultivation	\$105–145k
Director of Extraction	\$100–140k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$80–110k	<i>stable to slight upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$50–65k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable; minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$65–90k	<i>stable; premium for experienced operators</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$20–26/hr	<i>stable; specialty skills valued</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 NV market baseline

Steady adult-use growth trajectory
 Cross-border demand supporting sales performance
 Executive compensation aligned; mid-scale market expansion

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
 Cultivation + processing compensation stable
 Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$265M
Q1 2025	~\$255M
Q2 2025	~\$270M
Q3 2025	~\$280M

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, ADHS*

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Salary Guide – New York

NY

Director of Retail Ops	\$125–175k
Director of Cultivation	\$130–185k
Director of Extraction	\$125–170k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$100–140k	<i>upward pressure, rapid retail expansion</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$65–85k	<i>moderate increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$19–23/hr	<i>slight increase in metro markets</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$85–115k	<i>upward pressure in licensed facilities</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$19–23/hr	<i>stable to slight increase</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$18–22/hr	<i>mostly stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$23–30/hr	<i>stable; skilled operators in demand</i>
	Processing Associate	\$19–24/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$18–22/hr	<i>stable</i>

2026 NY market baseline

Rapid adult-use market expansion
Continued licensing growth increasing retail footprint
Retail wages trending upward in metro areas
Emerging price compression as supply expands

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$320M
Q1 2025	~\$355M
Q2 2025	~\$410M
Q3 2025	~\$465M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased meaningfully year-over-year
Budtender wages edged upward in NYC metro region
Cultivation and processing roles stabilized after early-launch volatility
Executive compensation strengthened in expansion phase

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Headset.io*

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Salary Guide – Ohio

OH

Director of Retail Ops	\$105–140k
Director of Cultivation	\$110–150k
Director of Extraction	\$105–145k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$85–115k	<i>upward pressure for adult-use</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$55–72k	<i>slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable to slight increase post adult-use</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable; small-facility leadership premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$21–27/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate	\$17–22/hr	<i>slight upward movement</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$16–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>

2026 OH market baseline

Newly expanded adult-use market
 Strong early growth in retail revenue
 Retail management wages trending modestly upward
 Cultivation + processing compensation stable, or increases

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$220M
Q1 2025	~\$260M
Q2 2025	~\$295M
Q3 2025	~\$315M

Notables since 2025

Retail leadership wages increased following adult-use launch
 Budtender wages adjusted upward modestly
 Processing roles slightly up at mid-range
 Executive compensation strengthened in early expansion environment

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, Ohio Dept of Commerce*

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Salary Guide – Oregon

OR

Director of Retail Ops	\$95–125k
Director of Cultivation	\$100–135k
Director of Extraction	\$95–130k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$75–100k	<i>stable; limited upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$45–60k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable, minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$60–85k	<i>stable; small-facility leadership premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$19–24/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

2026 OR market baseline

Small but steadily expanding adult-use market
 Limited retail density supporting stable per-store revenue
 Management compensation stable; limited upward acceleration
 Executive compensation aligned with small-market scale

LEGAL STATE SALES

Q4 2024 ~\$235M
 Q1 2025 ~\$225M
 Q2 2025 ~\$230M
 Q3 2025 ~\$220M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
 Cultivation and processing compensation stable
 Executive compensation steady within small-market structure
 Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, OLCC*

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Salary Guide – Vermont

VT

Director of Retail Ops	\$95–125k
Director of Cultivation	\$100–135k
Director of Extraction	\$95–130k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable; limited upward pressure</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$45–60k	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Budtender <i>(hourly)</i>	\$15–18/hr	<i>stable, minor inflation-driven adjustment</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$60–85k	<i>stable; small-facility leadership premium</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$15–18/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$15–18/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$19–24/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate	\$16–19/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$15–17/hr	<i>flat</i>

Lorem ipsum

2026 VT market baseline

Small but steadily expanding adult-use market
Limited retail density supporting stable per-store revenue
Management compensation stable; limited upward acceleration
Executive compensation aligned with small-market scale

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$38M
Q1 2025	~\$36M
Q2 2025	~\$40M
Q3 2025	~\$42M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
Cultivation and processing compensation stable
Executive compensation steady within small-market structure
Minimal inflation-driven movement across frontline roles

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, Vermont CCB*

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Salary Guide – Washington

WA

Director of Retail Ops	\$115–155k
Director of Cultivation	\$120–165k
Director of Extraction	\$115–160k

	INDUSTRY AVERAGE WAGE <i>as of Feb 2026</i>		CHANGES <i>since 2025</i>
RETAIL	Dispensary General Manager	\$85–115k	<i>mostly stable</i>
	Dispensary Manager	\$55–72k	<i>flat or slight increase</i>
	Budtender <i>pre-tips</i>	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable; minimal change</i>
CULTIVATION	Cultivation Manager	\$70–95k	<i>stable</i>
	Cultivation Associate	\$16–20/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Post Harvest Production	\$16–19/hr	<i>flat</i>
PROCESSING	Extraction Technician	\$21–27/hr	<i>stable; limited specialty hiring</i>
	Processing Associate	\$17–22/hr	<i>mostly flat</i>
	Packaging Associate	\$16–19/hr	<i>stable; minimal change</i>

2026 WA market baseline

Mature, high-volume adult-use market
Ongoing wholesale + retail price compression
Management compensation stable but not accelerating
Operational efficiency prioritized over expansion hiring

LEGAL STATE SALES	
Q4 2024	~\$305M
Q1 2025	~\$295M
Q2 2025	~\$300M
Q3 2025	~\$290M

Notables since 2025

Retail wages largely unchanged year-over-year
Cultivation compensation stable with slight upper-range compression
Processing roles steady with minimal upward movement
Stable executive compensation + market conditions with minimal change

DATA SOURCES *engin™ analytics, Glassdoor™, Indeed™, ZipRecruiter™, Vangst™, ADHS*

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Trends impacting cannabis job seekers in 2026

To gain comprehensive insights into the cannabis job market, the engin sciences team analyses data from a variety of sources, including the engin platform's proprietary data sets.

Here are glimpses of what to look for.

TREND	IMPACT	SOURCES
The hemp cliff realignment	A significant contraction in the hemp-derived THC market (threatened by a 95% reduction in product legality) is driving a talent migration toward licensed state-legal operators .	Federal P.L. 119-37 (total THC 0.4mg cap); Womble Bond Dickinson (market collapse projections)
Post-280e financial maturation	Rescheduling to Schedule III allows for full deduction of operating expenses (rent, payroll), triggering a surge in benefits-heavy hiring (401ks, insurance) as companies prioritize retention.	IRS Code Section 280E updates; FlowerHire (2026 industry forecast)
Ag-tech + automation integration	To combat price compression, operators are replacing manual labor with automated environmental controls and mechanized processing, creating high demand for automation engineers .	Flowhub (efficiency metrics); Velosio (P&L modeling for automated operations)
Ai-driven recruitment protocols	Human resources departments are adopting autonomous agents to screen for specialized skills, though new state-level AI bias laws (like TRAIGA) require new roles for AI compliance auditors .	Texas Responsible AI Governance Act (TRAIGA); EEOC enforcement guidelines for 2026
Tribal-state compact expansion	Sovereign nations (especially in NY and MN) are leading market growth through unique compacts, prioritizing roles for inter-governmental regulatory liaisons .	Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management (state-tribal compacts); MMJDaily (tribal supply chain reports)

Job seekers and employers should focus on the transition from a volatile growth sector to a standardized, tech-driven economy. The primary catalyst this year is the convergence of federal hemp cliff regulations and the expected fiscal relief from 280E rescheduling.

These trends reflect the evolving cannabis industry, highlighting areas job seekers are wise to focus on for adapting to new opportunities and demands and for considering transferable skills.

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Regional hiring challenges + successes

Job markets across the US cannabis industry in 2026

Noteworthy insights about how cannabis hiring differs across key job markets.

MARKET TYPE	TALENT DYNAMIC	KEY HIRING PRIORITY	INFRASTRUCTURE / COST
URBAN	Large, diverse pool but high turnover .	Digital marketing + specialized retail tech.	High COL; developed transit + training.
RURAL	Small, local pool; low job competition .	Automation + engineering to offset labor scarcity.	Low COL; limited/remote infrastructure.
TRIBAL / NATIVE	Community-driven; varies by local sovereignty.	Regulatory strategy for inter-tribal/state compacts.	Lower COL; housing challenges.
TOURIST	Seasonal needs ; high churn rates.	Hospitality-led service + consumer education.	Expensive hubs; high retail presence.
SUBURBAN	Hybrid talent pool; moderate competition.	Operational excellence within zoning limits.	Moderate COL; stable resident base.

*For **hiring companies**, cannabis industry recruitment varies widely by location — **urban areas** offer a deep talent pool but face high competition and turnover, while **rural markets** provide stability but struggle with specialized hiring and infrastructure.*

*For **job seekers**, opportunities depend on the setting — **suburban and tribal markets** offer a mix of accessibility and regulation, while **tourist-driven hubs** create seasonal demand with potential for high-paying, short-term roles.*

*In 2025, compliance was frequently considered a **consultant role**. In 2026, it has become an **internal necessity** integrated into every manager's JD.*

***The Hemp factor.** Suburban and urban markets are currently competing with **grey market** hemp-derived beverages. Hiring for brand ambassadors who can explain the licensed Delta-9 difference is a new 2026 priority.*

*With **280E impact** on tax burdens eased, competitive benefits (401k/Insurance) are **the #1 differentiator for retaining talent** in urban and suburban markets.*

SOURCES Vangst 2026 Jobs Report; MJBizDaily; Flowhub 2026 Statistics

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The 280E ripple effect

With the president's 2025 Executive Order directing the reclassification of cannabis to Schedule III, the "280E tax wall" may be finally crumbling. For years, cannabis companies paid effective tax rates of 60–70%, leaving zero room for competitive benefits. As these tax savings unlock, the 2026 talent market should see a massive redistribution of recovered revenue.

TAX DIVIDEND REDISTRIBUTION

Where is the 280E windfall going? It's not just hitting the bottom line; but is also being utilized for talent retention.

Benefits parity

Historically, 280E prohibited deducting "ordinary and necessary" expenses like payroll and insurance. In 2026, 15% of employers have already signaled plans to increase company matching as a primary enrollment driver.

The 401(k) boom

Experts anticipate a surge in first-time 401(k) adoption. Without the 280E burden, companies are finally able to claim the tax credits and deductions associated with retirement plan administrative costs.

EMPLOYER BENCHMARKS *reinvesting recovery*

Health + wellness

Forward-thinking MSOs are already funneling roughly 20–25% of tax-recovered cash into enhanced health premiums and Health Savings Account (HSA) contributions.

Retirement readiness

Startup retirement plan credits are now being used by operators to offset thousands in administrative fees, bringing cannabis benefits closer to standard Fortune 500 benchmarks.

The job seekers' cash is king era

The 2023–2024 "equity burn" changed the candidate mindset. In 2026, job seekers are prioritizing stability over speculative stock options.

Stability over speculation

While cannabis equities have seen a slight recovery due to institutional interest, candidate demand has shifted toward cash-heavy offers and guaranteed benefits.

Total rewards shift

Candidates are now weighing total rewards (401k match + health + base salary) over high-equity/low-cash offers that dominated the previous decade.

The year's key factors

Tax relief

Removal of 280E allows deductions for rent, marketing, and standard payroll, which can overnight improve a retailer's cash flow by millions.

Market growth

US cannabis revenue is projected to grow significantly as operators move from survival mode to expansion mode with the newfound 280E relief.

"A Schedule III reclassification would end the onerous burden of 280E taxation. That will free up capital for expansion, fueling the creation of as many as 100,000 new cannabis jobs."

– Karson Humiston, CEO, Vangst

SOURCES Vangst Cannabis Industry Salary Guide / US Cannabis Jobs Report; Fox Rothschild Tax & Policy Analysis; ADP 2026 Retirement & HR Trends; Key HR Compliance Trends for 2026; Leading Retirement Solutions (LRS) Forecast

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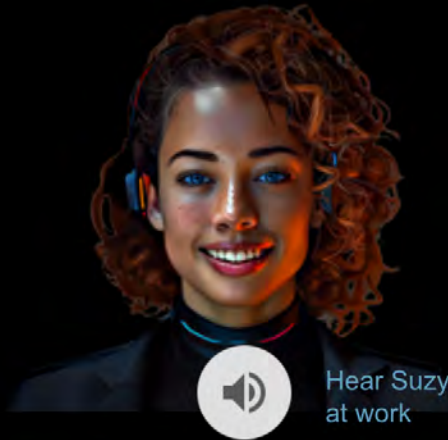
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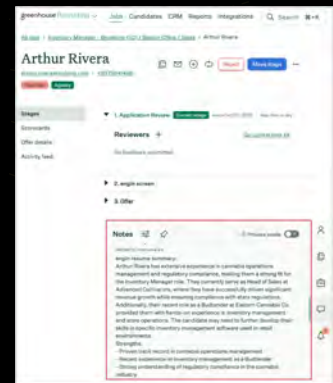
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Navigating your career horizon

The cannabis industry has transitioned into a phase of rigorous professionalization, refining roles nonexistent five years ago while stabilizing for upcoming growth cycles. Today's pros are wise to focus on operational resilience, cross-functional skill sets, and strategic agility.

Industry roles that have reached maturity

Cannabis extraction technician

Specializing in the high-efficiency separation of cannabinoids, focusing on process automation and cost-reduction that's essential for maintaining margins in competitive markets.

Edibles manufacturing specialist

Responsible for precision-infused products. Requirements emphasize industrial-scale consistency and strict adherence to evolving safety and quality assurance protocols.

Cannabis formulation specialist

Experts focused on product efficacy and shelf-life stability. These roles are now critical for brands seeking to differentiate through standardized, reliable consumer experiences.

...and strategic roles for today and beyond

Cannabis regulatory + compliance strategist

As federal uncertainty persists, businesses require specialists to navigate interstate complexities and contingency planning to ensure long-term license security.

Cannabis operational data analyst

With a focus on profitability, these analysts interpret market contraction and expansion, using data to optimize inventory levels and protect the bottom line.

Resource efficiency manager

Moving beyond general sustainability, these managers implement methods to reduce utility overhead and waste, making cultivation both eco-friendly and more profitable.

The sector's maturity continues to offer significant opportunities for those who can adapt to market fluctuations. Today's success is defined by the ability to balance innovation with fiscal discipline.

Building for efficiency

Focused on operational longevity, the industry is leveraging technology to transform cultivation and production into a sustainable, professionalized sector. Key emerging tech includes:

Targeted cannabis formulations

Innovations in nano-emulsification have improved onset time and flavor. This category remains a key growth area for brands looking to compete with traditional alcohol and functional drinks.

Standardized cannabis beverages

Implementing evolving blockchain tech can enhance traceability in the cannabis supply chain, ensuring product authenticity and safety from cultivation to consumer.

Pharmaceutical-grade research

The industry continues to move toward clinical-grade standards, preparing for a future of prescriptive formulations and deeper integration with healthcare systems.

Precision cultivation with AI

AI-driven systems are increasingly being utilized to minimize resource waste, predict crop outcomes, ensure consistent quality, and significantly lowering production costs.

Verified supply chain transparency

Modern tracking technology enhances traceability, ensuring product authenticity and safety—a requirement for gaining consumer trust and meeting federal standards.

Refined extraction methods

Continuous innovation in extraction allows for the recovery of a broader spectrum of terpenes and cannabinoids, catering to a sophisticated market that values purity and profile integrity.

Ongoing advancements are making the industry sturdier, safer, and more efficient. In the complex landscape, the move toward professionalized operations is creating new high-impact careers.

Position yourself for the long term. Be ready.

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