



News
(/nj-business-news/)

Events
(/events)

Power Lists
(/power-list-methodology/)

Leads & Data Center
(/data-center)

Conversations
(/njbizconversations/)

Advertise
(/advertise/)

Digital Edition
(https://njbiz-nj.newsmemory.com/)



How do New Jerseyans feel about the legal cannabis market as well as breweries? A new Stockton University poll found out. - PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

Stockton poll examines NJ's feelings on dispensaries, breweries (updated)

Matthew Fazelpoor (https://njbiz.com/author/mfazelpoor/) // April 25, 2023

Stockton University is out with a new poll April 25 offering insight to how New Jerseyans feel about the infancy of the legal cannabis market as well as breweries here in the Garden State.

The poll of 660 adult New Jersey residents found that since recreational marijuana became legal in the state just over a year ago (<https://njbiz.com/almost-a-year-in-industry-leaders-take-stock-of-adult-use-cannabis-business/>), about one-third of those polled said they have used it or other cannabis products during that time—with most users happy to patronize a legal dispensary.

Some other toplines of the cannabis segment found:

- **47%** of users consumed it for recreational purposes, **39%** did so for both recreational and medical purposes, and only **13%** used it strictly for medicinal purposes
- **69%** bought products from a licensed dispensary, with **86%** saying they were satisfied or very satisfied; **43%** cited safety, **23%** liked the quality
- Only **7%** approved of the price of legal cannabis in New Jersey—which is among the most expensive in the country
- Among the **30%** who bought cannabis from non-licensed dealers, **18%** did so because prices at dispensaries were too high; however, the main reason cited for buying marijuana on the street was due to lack of a nearby dispensary

Since adult-use legalization, the levels of support for or against dispensaries operating in respondents' towns has changed very little.

A slim majority of 53% supported dispensaries selling recreational cannabis where they live, down slightly from 56% in an April 2022 Stockton Poll, while 39% oppose local dispensaries, up from 36% a year ago.

Alyssa Maurice, research associate for the **William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy** (<https://stockton.edu/hughes-center/index.html>) at Stockton, which conducted the poll, said the survey also offered a glimpse into some of the demographic characteristics of cannabis users in New Jersey.

- Men (**37%**) were more likely than women (**28%**) to have consumed marijuana
- People under 50 were more likely to have used cannabis in the past year, including **43%** of 18-to-29-year-olds and **41%** in the 30-49 age bracket; only **17%** of senior citizens say they consumed it, including half buying it strictly for medical use
- Among races and ethnicities, Blacks and African Americans had the highest usage (**39%**), followed by whites (**33%**) and Hispanic/Latinos (**29%**)
- There were no differences in usage between various regions of the state or among those with or without a college degree
- Along political lines, Democrats (**38%**) were more likely to consume cannabis than Republicans (**24%**) or independents (**32%**)

Nearly two-thirds (65%) said they support requiring cannabis lounges (<https://njbiz.com/crc-seeks-public-feedback-on-draft-rules-for-cannabis-consumption-lounges/>) to be connected to and run by licensed dispensaries, while 23% opposed that regulation. However, 54% opposed the state ban on these lounges selling food.

The poll was evenly split on whether patrons of such lounges should also be able to use alcohol or tobacco – 45% supported versus 44% opposed.

A brewing disconnect

On the brewery front, 29% of respondents said they have visited one in the past year.

The poll showed strong opposition to the state's regulations on breweries (<https://njbiz.com/some-nj-microbreweries-bitter-over-new-state-rules/>), which limit them to holding just 25 "special events" per year and prohibit the sale of food.

On that subject, 61% opposed those regulations, with just 26% supporting them and 13% unsure. A large majority of respondents (78%) supported allowing breweries to sell food, while 16% opposed the idea and 6% were unsure.

"These numbers represent a conflict between state regulators trying to level the playing field and consumers demanding that the market provide what they want," said John Froomjian, director of the Hughes Center.

In response to the poll, Eric Orlando, executive director of the Brewers Guild of New Jersey (<https://www.brewersguildnj.com/>), released a statement, saying that the numbers speak for themselves.

"New Jerseyans overwhelmingly oppose the unfair and non-sensical restrictions on Garden State breweries, which are strangling what should be a thriving industry," said Orlando. "While the vast majority of those surveyed supported breweries, only 29% have actually visited such an establishment – clearly indicating that these onerous restrictions are holding back brewery success and growth."

Orlando added that while overall liquor license reform may be controversial, he said this poll shows it is obvious that New Jerseyans support lifting "these ridiculous restrictions on breweries."

"That's why our state Legislature must immediately consider S3038/A4630 – common-sense, bipartisan legislation to remove these limitations. The unfair constraints have already cost breweries numerous business opportunities, with some locations down as much as 40% in revenue since last July alone," Orlando continued. "Some breweries have already shuttered, and others are currently up for sale. Without the passage of legislation in the next two months, these restrictions will be reimposed by the state for another year. If that transpires, we will sadly witness permanent damage to an industry New Jersey residents support and want to see succeed for years to come."

Orlando closed his statement by noting that New Jerseyans have spoken loud and clear, and that voters will be watching.

"Supporting breweries is a winning issue for our economy, our workforce, our tourism industry, and all our communities," Orlando said.

Editor's note: This story was updated at 11:43 a.m. ET April 26, 2023, to include a statement from the Brewers Guild of New Jersey.

Joining forces

Cape May Brewing Co. announced April 25 it is acquiring fellow New Jersey craft brewer Flying Fish Brewing Co. [Click here to read the story.](https://njbiz.com/nj-brewers-craft-a-deal-cape-may-brewing-acquires-flying-fish/)