

New Solutions Campaign

Promoting Fair & Effective Criminal Justice • Strengthening Families & Communities

Legalizing, taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol for adults has worked in eight other states and the District of Columbia. It will work in New Jersey.

Eight states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Washington) and the District of Columbia have now legalized marijuana. The first four states that legalized have demonstrated significant data on the benefits of marijuana legalization.

Tax revenue

Colorado collected \$78 million in taxes on legal marijuana in the first full year of legalization (June 1, 2014, to May 31, 2015) and \$129 million in the second year (June 1, 2015, to May 31, 2016). The tax revenue was used to fund school construction and other state programs.

Washington State collected \$78 million in tax revenue in its first year of legal marijuana sales (July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015) and \$220 million in its second year (July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016). The tax revenue was used to fund substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, youth and adult drug education, community health care services and academic research on the effects of legalization.

Oregon's program began after Colorado's and Washington's but the state Legislative Revenue Office predicts \$31 million per year in tax revenue. The revenue is slated to fund schools, mental health and drug treatment and law enforcement.

Alaska predicts \$12 million annual tax revenue from sales of legal marijuana.

Youth use of marijuana

Concerns about an increase in youth use of marijuana have proven unfounded. While marijuana use rates fluctuate, data from Colorado and Washington show that the legalization of marijuana had little to no effect on the overall rate of youth use of marijuana. Rates of use overall remained stable and some age and grade groups saw drops in youth use rates after legalization.

Road safety

Just as in all other states, it remains illegal to drive while impaired in the states that have legalized marijuana. In Colorado and Washington, the total number of arrests for driving under the influence, including alcohol and other drugs, actually declined after legalization. Traffic fatality rates have remained consistent after legalization. Oregon and Alaska provide limited data to date, but traffic fatality rates have also remained stable since legalization.

Reduction in arrests

Arrests in all states and the District of Columbia have plummeted for marijuana possession, cultivation and distribution since legalization. This reduction in arrests has saved the states millions of dollars and prevented the criminalization of thousands of people.

Sponsored by

Drug Policy Alliance | 16 West Front Street, Suite 101A, Trenton, NJ 08608
nj@drugpolicy.org | 609.396.8613 voice | 609.396.9478 fax | @DrugPolicy_NJ

