

2023

KEY VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) supports medical and adult use legalization and regulation of controlled substances to the extent consistent with public health and community safety and in accordance with the following principles:

AVOIDING CRIMINALIZATION IN ENFORCEMENT

Criminalization, which only leads to the harm we have seen from the drug war, should not be used as a tool to enforce any residual unregulated drug market activities or regulatory violations. Participation in the regulated market should come with as few barriers as possible to minimize criminal justice involvement

CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY AND REPARATIVE JUSTICE

Legal regulation of marijuana and other drugs should include efforts to repair the intergenerational devastation that racially and ethnically marginalized communities have faced in the United States and abroad from the war on drugs. Legal regulation should include automatic record expungement for drug-related convictions and proactive measures to prevent unjust exclusion from full market participation, such as reservation of business licenses for small manufacturers and redirection of tax revenues toward historically dispossessed communities. A regulated market should also provide equitable access to medically necessary and recreational drugs: this means rectifying the massive underrepresentation of people of color in clinical trials for psychedelic treatment and in medical marijuana programs.

RESPECTING THE ROLE OF DRUGS IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

Regulatory policies should create access for individuals to use drugs for a variety of reasons, including for pleasure, healing, spirituality, and cultural practices.

ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFER SUPPLY, HARM REDUCTION SERVICES, AND VOLUNTARY TREATMENT

A successful regulated drug market should create a safer supply of drugs, eliminating contaminants and standardizing ingredients and potency: this would reduce the likelihood of accidental overdoses and promote community safety. Legal regulation should also increase access to voluntary, holistic harm reduction and addiction services for people who seek support or treatment.

EVIDENCE-CENTERED, PEER-DRIVEN PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION ON SAFER SUBSTANCE USE

Legal regulation should allow for honest conversations about drugs, their effects, and associated risks. People, especially young people, should be connected with accurate information about drugs so they can make informed decisions and know what to do in the case of a drug-related incident.

CREATING EQUITABLE MARKETS THAT BENEFIT COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMERS

A legally regulated drug market should provide economic opportunities to historically marginalized communities. The production and sale of legal drugs should remain free from large commercial

interests. Regulatory policies should explore different business structures, such as public benefit corporations and nonprofit cooperatives, to bolster individual and community well-being and lower barriers to entry for those that lack the capital to compete with established businesses. Wealthy corporations in established industries, such as alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceutical producers, should be limited from market participation to the greatest degree possible.

COLLABORATING WITH PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS IN THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

All drug policies should be formed in collaboration with people who use drugs. Without the insight and expertise of people with lived experience, policymakers may overlook crucial barriers to access or implement models that do not address the harms of the war on drugs.