



ESSENTIAL CANNABIS

## INSIGHTS

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## BDSA TRACKING NEARLY 50% OF ADULTS AS CANNABIS CONSUMERS IN FULLY LEGAL STATES

BDSA's Consumer tracking reveals strong growth in cannabis consumption and adoption across the United States. BDSA's eighth round of Consumer Insights work in the U.S., conducted Spring 2021, shows 43% of adults in fully legal states are now cannabis Consumers, having partaken of some form of cannabis product during the past six months. Across all fully legal states, the percent of adult Consumers increased by 11 percentage points between the first quarters of 2018 versus 2021—with a similar decrease in Rejecters, those who say they do not consume cannabis and are not open to doing so, broad acceptance is growing and inevitable.

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### Percentage Point Change in Consumer/Acceptor/Rejecter Distribution Spring 2021 vs. Spring 2018

	Consumer	Acceptor	Rejecter
Fully-legal states	+11	-1	-11
Illinois	+22	-13	-9
New York	+19	-16	-3
California	+15	-4	-11
Colorado	+12	1	-12

Source: BDSA Consumer Insights, Spring 2021 and Spring 2018

**CANNABIS CONSUMPTION VS. BEVERAGE ALCOHOL**

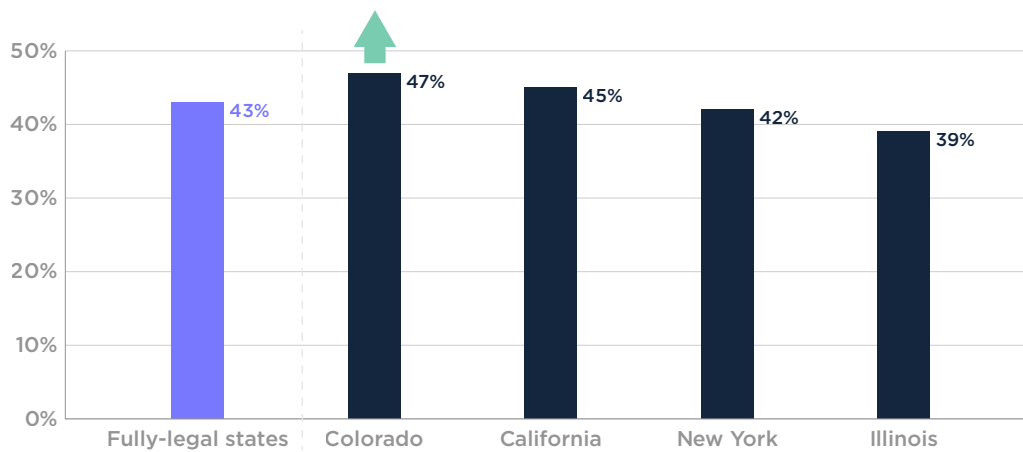
As cannabis consumption rises, rates in some states are rapidly closing on those of alcohol. According to the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NDSUH), alcohol is consumed by 60%-70% of those 18 and older. 70% reported drinking within the past year, 55% within the past month. That parallel with the tremendous alcoholic beverages market (about \$1.5 trillion globally) is driving current intense interest in the newly legal cannabis business from traditional consumer product makers—though most have thus far been reluctant to act precipitously sans movement on legalization at the national level.

**CANNABIS CONSUMPTION GROWING IN ALL US MARKETS, DESPITE STAGE OF REGULATION AND MARKET MATURITY**

Significantly, the universe of cannabis Consumers is continuing to grow even in the most mature legal cannabis markets in the U.S. In Colorado, 47% of all adults identified as Consumers in Spring 2021, versus 35% two years previous. Legal cannabis sales in Colorado were nearly \$2.2 billion in 2020. California, which began adult-use sales in 2018, saw Consumers rise to 45% of all adults in the first half of 2021. California cannabis sales reached nearly \$3.5 billion in 2020.

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**Percent of Past Six-Month Cannabis Consumers, by Market Spring 2021**



- Consumers** Have consumed cannabis/cannabis products in the past six months
- Acceptors** Would consider using cannabis/cannabis products in the future
- Rejecters** Would NOT consider using cannabis/cannabis products in the future

Note: Arrow indicates over-index vs. all fully-legal states (index of 105 or above, i.e., at least 5% more likely than average)  
 Source: BDSA Consumer Insights, Spring 2021

The base of Consumers in less-mature legal cannabis markets, such as Illinois (39% of adults in Spring 2021) and New York (42%), also see staggering growth. The percentage of Consumers in those markets rose by 22 and 19 percentage points, respectively, over the past two years. Illinois launched adult-use in January 2020 and passed \$1 billion in legal (medical and adult-use) sales last year. New York, home to a relatively small (\$111 million in 2020) medical program at present, should see its first adult-use sales in 2022 and is expected to join the “Billion Dollar Club” in 2023.

#### NON-CONSUMERS NEED INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND ACCESS

Among U.S. cannabis Consumers, there is a fairly even split between recent adopters and long-term consumers. About 50% have been consuming cannabis for one to two years (with 43% consuming for more than two years).

Among Acceptors, those who would consider consuming in the future, medical factors and education are some of the highest-ranked reasons for potentially becoming Consumers. Acceptors are and will continue to be a growth driver for legal market sales. Acceptors would be likely to consume if:

- **MEDICAL:**

- 46% would consider it with a doctor’s recommendation
- 37% if they became ill and learned cannabis would help
- 28% if they could receive the health benefits of cannabis without becoming high

- **EDUCATION/GUIDANCE:**

- 22% want more information about how to select products
- 21% are unsure of and what direction on the right dosage
- 18% better understanding how long the effects of cannabis last

- **KEY BARRIERS TO CONSUMPTION FOR ACCEPTORS INCLUDED:**

- 36% Does not fit lifestyle
- 28% do not like how it makes them feel
- 21% have legal concerns
- 15% health concerns
- 15% do not have access

**Illinois launched adult-use in January 2020 and passed \$1 billion in legal (medical and adult-use) sales last year**

For Rejecters, key obstacles to adoption include:

- Does not fit lifestyle (53%),
- Health concerns (31%),
- Does not seem beneficial (29%),
- Worried about effects/reaction (22%), and
- Legal concerns (16%).

But, with legalization, comes greater acceptance of cannabis—and the majority of the U.S. is in favor of at least some form of legalization. In fully legal states, 84% support legalization in some form and 56% support full legalization. Across all U.S. adults, support for full legalization has grown by 11 percentage points over the past four years, reaching 51% in Spring 2021.