

VANGST
2019 REPORT

Cannabis Industry

SALARY GUIDE



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Your Guide to Hiring Competitively in the Cannabis Industry

The cannabis industry is in a state of **constant growth**.

Professionals from across the workforce are taking note of the unique opportunities available, and cannabis businesses are competing to secure top talent. With over 33 states and Washington, D.C. allowing adult-use and/or medical cannabis across the U.S. (not including low THC), an industry-wide salary guide is more important than ever.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average cost of a bad hire can equal 30% of that individual's annual earnings.¹ If you hire an ill-equipped manager at \$50,000, replacing and re-sourcing the proper hire will cost you \$15,000 in lost time and resources. How do you ensure you're making the right hire? **Securing the right talent means developing a comprehensive vetting process, offering competitive compensation and setting your employees up for success.** The 2019 Vangst Salary Guide is a benchmark tool that provides valuable salary information for cannabis-specific positions so you can hire competitively as the industry continues to grow.

While pay is an important factor in the candidate's decision-making process, it is no longer enough to attract and retain the best of the best. Setting your new hires up for success requires not only comprehensive training and onboarding programs, but includes crafting a positive employee engagement experience as well.

Did you know companies that have a higher employee engagement report **16% greater profitability** and **37% lower absenteeism**? Positive employee experiences also lead to an **18% increase in productivity** and **65% reduction in turnover**.²

As the cannabis industry continues to legitimize and draw in top talent, businesses must remain competitive by offering benefits, compensation packages and employee engagement experiences equal to or greater than long-established industries. The cannabis industry has always paved its own path—will your business help lead the way?

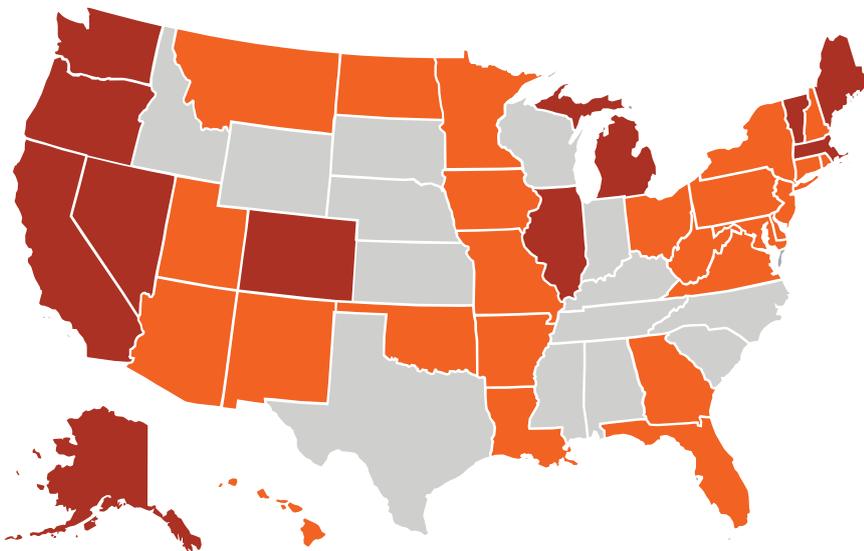


Map of Legalization

Cannabis legalization is on the rise both nationwide and around the world. In 2019, 23 states considered legislation that would legalize commercial sales, adult-use or possession of cannabis (although not all measures passed).³

If you're a job seeker interested in finding out how to join the cannabis industry in your state, check out our state requirements tool:

STATE REQUIREMENTS



■ Adult-Use+Med
 ■ Medical Only
 ■ Not Legal

Countries that have legalized the medical use of cannabis include:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Argentina |  Jamaica |
|  Australia |  Lithuania |
|  Canada |  Luxembourg |
|  Chile |  Netherlands |
|  Colombia |  New Zealand |
|  Croatia |  North Macedonia |
|  Cyprus |  Norway |
|  Ecuador |  Peru |
|  Germany |  Poland |
|  Greece |  Switzerland |
|  Israel |  Thailand |
|  Italy | |

Uruguay and Canada have legalized the consumption and sale of adult-use cannabis nationwide.



Hiring Trends



As the industry continues to grow, so do the opportunities for job seekers. From our internal data, we recorded a 79% increase from 2018 to 2019 in total available job opportunities. Cannabis is projected to hit a job-creation rate of 110% in just three years from 2017 to 2020.⁴ By 2021, the cannabis industry is expected to create 414,000 jobs in the U.S.⁵

Although only medically legal, Florida, Oklahoma and Arizona are quickly taking their stake of the market by hiring competitively and aggressively.

Cannabis is shifting towards offering more contingent roles, a trend that's picking up across the entire U.S. workforce. Trimming, packaging and harvesting roles are popular contingent gigs for cannabis businesses, although competition for securing this talent is tough due to the increased opportunities of contingent work from companies like Uber and Lyft. *On-demand talent, also known as seasonal employees or freelancers, are projected to make up about 40% of the average company's workforce by 2020, both in and outside of the cannabis industry.*⁶

Although opportunities are continually increasing in cannabis, there is still hesitancy with job seekers joining the industry. While the federal government has generally left compliant states alone in 2019, job seekers are still waiting for full federal legalization to make the switch.

Candidates with board licensure, such as CPAs and lawyers are also reluctant to join the industry in fear of losing their licenses, making it difficult for companies to recruit top talent in these fields. While some state boards chose to address the issue and

dispel the hesitation, there is still uncertainty surrounding licensed professions.

In addition, plant-touching businesses are navigating sticky situations with matching federally-backed retirement and health insurance plans—something job seekers are taking into consideration with compensation negotiations. If the [SAFE Banking Act](#) passes, many of the cannabis banking fears will dissipate.

Reluctance isn't the only hiring issue facing cannabis. Employee retention is a pain point for cannabis businesses, particularly in hourly positions like budtending and harvesting. *To decrease staffing turnover in cannabis, companies must offer attractive benefits, develop a positive corporate culture and pay fair, livable wages.*

While there is still some reluctance from the workforce to make the switch, there are plenty of forward thinkers ready to write history and shape the future of the industry.

*An estimated **211,000 full-time employees** make up the legal cannabis industry in 2019.⁷*

Industry Trends

Cannabis is already one of the most talked-about industries in the U.S. With constant financial growth and increasing public acceptance for both adult-use and medical purposes—cannabis is becoming impossible to ignore. In 2019, the industry saw a 35% increase in total economic impact from 2018.⁸ With nine states adding medical and/or adult-use cannabis to their 2020 ballot and 66% of Americans supporting the federal legalization for adult-use cannabis—the future of cannabis looks bright.



Economic

Total economic impact of the cannabis industry will range from **\$39.2 billion to \$48 billion** in 2019—about a 35% increase over 2018.⁸



The SAFE Banking Act was introduced in 2019 with the hopes of **creating protections** for banks that provide financial services to legitimate cannabis-related businesses.²

Legality

Currently, 11 states and D.C. allow adult use and/or medical cannabis. 22 states allow only medical cannabis, and 13 states allow low THC medicinal cannabis use.



Adult-use on the ballot for 2020:

Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, New Jersey, North Dakota, New York

Medical on the ballot for 2020:

Idaho, Mississippi, Nebraska, South Dakota¹⁰

Consumption Trends

13% of Americans identify as “current users.”

22.1% of Americans ages 18–25 and 7.9% over 26 have used cannabis in the past month.¹¹



The CBD market is booming.

The CBD oil market size will increase to \$3.86 billion by 2025, from \$270 million in 2018, at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 39.5% during the forecast period.¹²

A recent study found **first-time cannabis consumers increased by 140%** with Baby Boomers and women as the fastest growing segments.¹¹



The need for safe spaces to consume cannabis are vital to legal states. **Social consumption venues and events are becoming more popular** in states that allow public consumption spaces.¹³

The convenience of **cannabis delivery and in-store pick-up are gaining popularity** for both adult-use consumers and medical patients, especially those with limited mobility.



According to a recent poll, **66% of Americans support the federal legalization** of adult-use cannabis.¹⁴



While many dispensaries still categorize their products by indica or sativa, some companies are starting to adopt a more **comprehensive effects-reporting** approach that involves terpene and cannabinoid profiles.

Through the first four weeks of September 2019—after the deluge of **vape-related illnesses and deaths** were reported—**flower sales were up 25%** compared to the first four weeks of September 2018.¹⁵

Hot Jobs in the Industry



Cultivation Technicians

Cannabis consumption is rising, and the plants can only grow as fast as the cultivators can tend to them. Cannabis businesses add cultivation technicians to their team as demand and plant counts increase. Experienced cultivation technicians that understand plant science are in high demand for businesses that value quality over quantity.



Trimmers

Machine trimmers haven't taken over every business just yet. Some companies and consumers still value the delicate nature of hand-trimming. With increasing plant yields, trimmers are in high demand.



Packagers

As companies add new locations, expand product offerings and adjust to the frequently changing labeling laws, packaging roles become available to help maintain production levels. Packaging automation is becoming more popular for larger operations, but for now, packagers are still necessary for many businesses.



Budtenders

Dispensaries are expanding their locations and seeing higher traffic as interest in cannabis increases. Budtenders are a vital part of the customer experience as they are the face of the business. However, budtenders have one of the highest turnover rates in cannabis, so company culture and attractive benefits are more important than ever for retaining cannabis talent.



Brand Ambassadors

Brand ambassadors are no stranger to consumer-facing businesses, and cannabis is no exception. Demand for brand ambassadors is on the rise as the market becomes oversaturated with new products.



Administrative and Corporate Roles

Established businesses are hiring for traditional corporate roles like COOs and CFOs and are building out marketing and tech teams to compete in today's market.



Director of Cultivation

Grow operations are looking for educated and experienced Directors of Cultivation to lead grows ranging in size from a couple hundred plants to hundreds of acres. Now that the legal cannabis industry is becoming more established, competition for Directors of Cultivation with years of direct cannabis experience is high.



Sales Reps

While cannabis may sell itself, ancillary products like vapes, edibles, technology platforms and everything in between are relying on sales representatives to get their products in front of millions of consumers.



Delivery Drivers

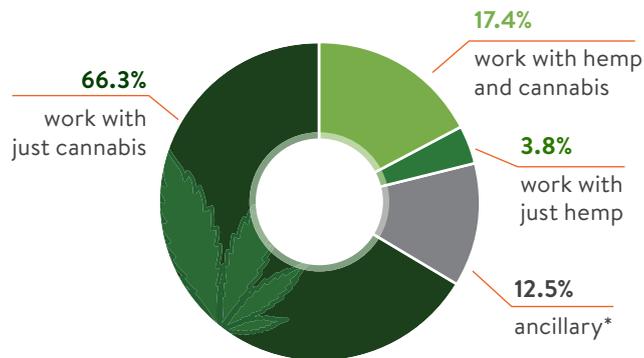
In states where cannabis delivery is legal (or soon to be legal), delivery driver opportunities are in high demand.

Survey Participation Methodology

To collect the data for the 2019 Cannabis Industry Salary Guide, we sent a survey to cannabis businesses across the industry. All survey responses were cross-checked by hand to confirm legitimacy.

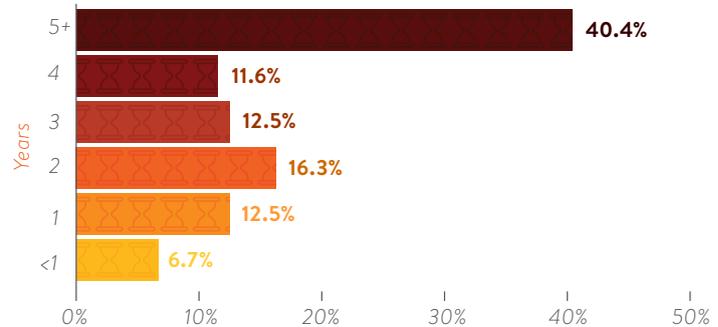
For 2019, we revamped our salary guide to include 12 additional jobs and deeper insights on benefits and hiring trends. We surveyed cannabis industry leaders from across the U.S. in retail, cultivation, lab & extraction and manufacturing sectors of the industry to make this our most comprehensive salary guide yet. In addition, we've consolidated our internal data with the survey responses to ensure we're reporting the most accurate information possible.

From the businesses we surveyed:

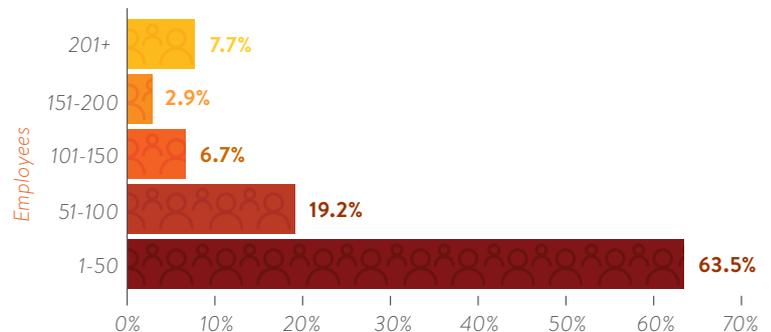


*Ancillary businesses are not plant touching. Ancillary data is not included in the salary averages, only the benefits data.

From the businesses we surveyed, the **company age** ranges are:



From the businesses we surveyed, the **company size** ranges are:



Vertical Overview

The cannabis industry focuses on four main sectors—cultivation, lab/extraction, manufacturing and retail. Businesses that own all areas of their production are called vertically integrated cannabis businesses. We chose to focus on these four segments of the industry because they include the most cannabis-specific roles.

We excluded salary information for ancillary companies and positions, such as marketing and web development, where salary data is already available and doesn't deviate significantly from other industries.

Cannabis verticals **work synergistically to streamline the seed to sale process.**



1. Cultivation

The cannabis plant starts in cultivation facilities, where horticulturists grow the cannabis seeds, clones or tissue cultures to maturation. Once the plant is mature, the harvesting team cuts down the plant and prepares the cannabis flowers for the lab and manufacturing facilities or the end consumer. Third party testing facilities monitor the potency and concentration of compounds to ensure the product is safe for consumption.



2. Lab/Extraction

For businesses that make concentrates, edibles or other products from cannabis extraction, the plant moves to the extraction facilities where extraction technicians remove cannabinoids from the flower to make into concentrates, edibles or other various products. In the extraction process, the terpenes are stripped and artificially added later in the process.



3. Manufacturing

Once the cannabis product is ready for packaging, the product moves to the manufacturing facilities where packagers carefully measure out exact weights and label for sale.

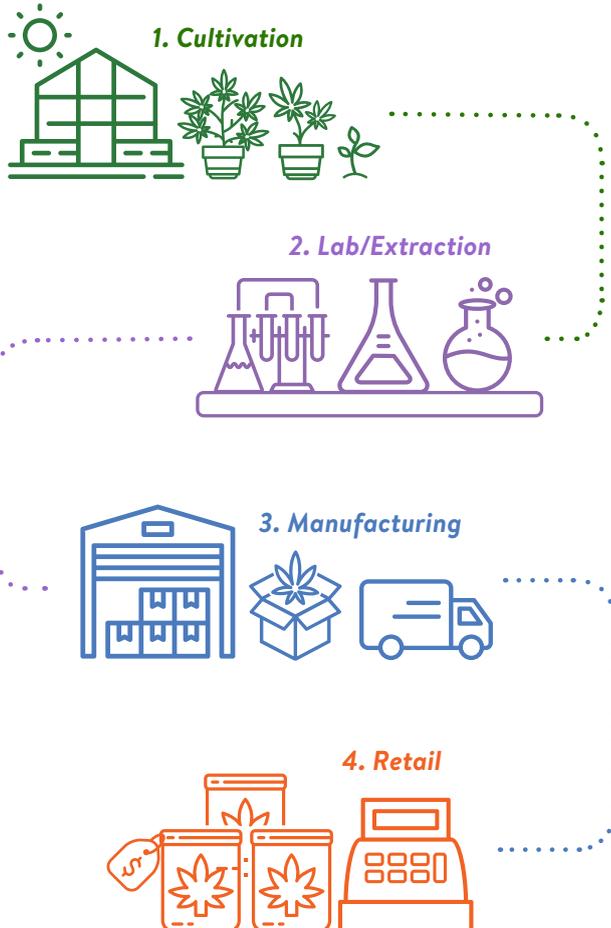


4. Retail

After the product passes the lab and manufacturing inspection, the finished goods land on the retail shelves for budtenders to complete the transactional process.

From seed to sale, each cannabis vertical touches the plant to ensure a fully compliant and high-quality product makes its way to consumers.

Vertical Overview



From the businesses we surveyed:



How to Read the Data

Salaries differ for various reasons, including location, prior education and years of experience. To make the data as comprehensive and actionable as possible, we divided the ranges into three percentiles: 25%, 50% and 75%.

We compiled the data regardless of location and chose to include cost of living information on the next page for medical or adult-use states so employers can calculate the average change of salary for their location.

25th Percentile

The 25th percentile represents the salary averaged between the lowest data point and the 50th percentile. Salaries in the 25th percentile are often entry-level salaries for candidates with little to no direct experience in the role. Wages in the 25th percentile may represent markets with low candidate competition due to an influx of applicants.

50th Percentile

The 50th percentile is an average of all data points. The 50th percentile reflects the average salary of a candidate with a few years of applicable experience and the necessary skills to complete most duties before hiring. This salary often reflects a market where competition is moderate.

75th Percentile

The 75th percentile represents the salary averaged between the highest data point and the 50th percentile. Candidates with strong expertise and directly relevant educational backgrounds fall into the 75th percentile. Competition for this talent is high across all markets.

	25th	50th	75th
VP of Retail	\$80,000	\$104,000	\$152,000
Director of Retail	\$76,700	\$98,300	\$124,200

Adjusted Salaries

This is a general guide for calculating the change in salary based on the cost of living for a specific area. The percentages below are not cannabis specific, but can serve as a useful tool for generalized cost of living information, especially when entering a new market. We chose to only include data points from medical or adult-use states.¹⁶



Alaska

Anchorage: +13.9%
Fairbanks: +21.7%

Arizona

Phoenix: +20.4%
Tucson: +22.6%

Arkansas

Fayetteville: -21.5%
Little Rock: -11.5%

California

Los Angeles: +42.6%
San Francisco: +62.6%

Colorado

Denver: +5.7%
Boulder: +36.9%

Connecticut

Hartford: +25.4%
New Haven: +26.8%

D.C.

+59.6%

Delaware

Wilmington: +15%
Newark: +15%

Florida

Miami: +14.7%
Jacksonville: -3.5%

Georgia

Atlanta: +2.5%
Savannah: -7.5%

Hawaii

Honolulu: +75.3%
Kailua Kona: +69.3%

Illinois

Chicago: +16.7%
Rockford: -9.2%

Iowa

Cedar Rapids: -7.2%
Des Moines: -7.2%

Louisiana

Baton Rouge: -1.1%
New Orleans: -7.3%

Maine

Portland: +12.0%
Bangor: +1.1%

Maryland

Baltimore: +21.1%
Silver Spring: +59.6%

Massachusetts

Boston: +39.5%
Springfield: +23.1%

Michigan

Detroit: -2.1%
Ann Arbor: -5.8%

Minnesota

Minneapolis: +12.7%
Duluth: +2.7%

Missouri

Kansas City: -12.6%
St. Louis: -3.2%

Montana

Billings: -17.3%
Bozeman: -57.3%

Nevada

Las Vegas: -1.9%
Reno: +2.0%

New Hampshire

Manchester: +20.1%
Nashua: +22.8%

New Jersey

Jersey City: +83.0%
Trenton: +23.9%

New Mexico

Albuquerque: -3.0%
Santa Fe: +14.9%

New York

New York City: +83.0%
Buffalo: -0.9%

North Dakota

Fargo: +2.7%
Bismarck: -17.3%

Ohio

Cincinnati: -13.2%
Cleveland: +0.2%

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City: -9.6%
Tulsa: -10.8%

Oregon

Portland: +10.8%
Eugene: +10.8%

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia: +25.1%
Pittsburgh: -3.2%

Rhode Island

Providence: +20.7%
Newport: +24.7%

Utah

Salt Lake City: -17.3%
St. George: -21.9%

Vermont

Burlington: -6.9%
Essex: +15.9%

Virginia

Norfolk: +4.7%
Richmond: -0.8%

Washington

Seattle: +18.8%
Spokane: -4.3%

West Virginia

Charleston: -5.9%
Huntington: -11.1%

Cultivation Overview

Cultivation operations are the facilities where cannabis plants grow to maturation. Common positions in cultivation include Director of Cultivation, Grow Manager, Grower/Horticulturist and Trimmer.



The Director of Cultivation is responsible for overseeing operations of all cultivation facilities, managing cultivation agents, establishing standard operating procedures and meeting production goals.



The Grow Manager, often referred to as the Cultivation Manager, is primarily responsible for assisting in the oversight of the cultivation facility including propagation, vegetation and flower.



The Grower/Horticulturist is responsible for the cleaning, upkeep and sanitation of the cultivation facility. Similar titles include Harvest Manager, Cultivation Technician and Horticulturist.



Trimmers/Post Harvesters are responsible for hand trimming flower from plants in a quick and efficient manner while ensuring quality cannabis leaves the cultivation facility. This is typically an hourly position.

Cultivation Salaries

	PERCENTILES		
	25th	50th	75th
 Director of Cultivation	\$59,800	\$87,100	\$118,600
 Grow Manager	\$43,400	\$61,800	\$93,400
 Grower/ Horticulturist	\$13.10/hour	\$14.60/hour	\$19.80/hour
 Trimmers/ Post Harvesters	\$11.40/hour	\$13.90/hour	\$16.90/hour

Lab/Extraction Overview

Lab/extraction operations are the facilities where cannabis testing and extraction take place. Common positions in lab/extraction include Director of Extraction, Extraction Manager, Quality Manager, Compliance Manager and Chemist.



The Director of Extraction, also known as the Lab Director, owns the development of post-harvest processes, performs chemical analysis for the determination of harvest timing, post-harvest processing and tailoring of extraction operating procedures to meet business needs.



The Extraction Manager is responsible for the supervision of the entire extraction team as well as the intake department. Similar titles include Lab Manager, Lab Team Lead and Lab Supervisor.



The Quality Manager oversees product and environmental testing, internal product release, product recall, product returns and product labeling in accordance with state regulations and the organization's internal procedures and processes.



The Compliance Manager is primarily responsible for researching and interpreting regulatory compliance across the entire cannabis supply chain including cultivation, manufacturing and retail.



The Chemist, also known as the Lab Analyst, is responsible for preparing equipment and plant materials for extraction, operating extraction equipment and the ongoing maintenance of lab materials.

Lab/Extraction Salaries

	PERCENTILES		
	25th	50th	75th
 Director of Extraction	\$75,000	\$92,500	\$119,500
 Extraction Manager	\$51,500	\$67,000	\$96,000
 Quality Manager	\$51,500	\$68,000	\$89,000
 Compliance Manager	\$49,500	\$69,000	\$122,000
 Chemist	\$51,600	\$63,200	\$83,500

Manufacturing Overview

Manufacturing operations package and prepare cannabis products for sale. Common positions in manufacturing include VP of Manufacturing, Production Supervisor, Product Technician, Edibles Specialist and Packager.



The VP of Manufacturing is primarily responsible for ensuring projects start and finish on time by overseeing product development of quality goods.



The Production Supervisor is a management role that oversees a team of product and inventory employees to ensure timely delivery of products to wholesale and dispensary customers. Similar titles include Warehouse Manager and Facility Manager.



The Edibles Specialist oversees the kitchen and maintains high standards for product development, formulation, dosing, finished product and cleanliness while managing the production team.



Production Technicians are responsible for running equipment and performing tasks to produce new products. Similar titles include Production Associate and Warehouse Associate.



Packagers, also known as Gramers, are primarily hourly positions that are responsible for accurate packaging of cannabis product into pre-weighed containers and pre-rolled joints.

Manufacturing Salaries

		PERCENTILES		
		25th	50th	75th
	VP of Manufacturing	\$107,000	\$134,000	\$167,000
	Production Supervisor	\$44,200	\$54,900	\$77,500
	Edibles Specialist	\$35,300	\$41,000	\$63,000
	Production Technicians	\$15.10/hour	\$17.25/hour	\$26.75/hour
	Packagers	\$12.40/hour	\$14.80/hour	\$17.70/hour

Retail Overview

Retail operations are adult-use and/or medical dispensary locations accessible to patients and/or consumers. Common positions in retail include VP of Retail, Director of Retail, Dispensary Store Manager, Visual Merchandiser and Budtender.



The Vice President of Retail Operations develops and establishes long and short-range strategic objectives for the retail organization and includes compliance, budgets, business plans, expansion and policy management. This position is also responsible for the retail operation's profit & loss and inventory management.



The Director of Retail Operations provides strategic leadership and direction to retail store teams and ensures each store is equipped with the right infrastructure, policies and standard operating procedures to deliver a positive customer experience.



The Merchandise Planner is responsible for achieving sales and inventory plans in retail stores that meet financial targets and company objectives.



The General Manager is responsible for overseeing all activities related to the operation of a singular dispensary and manages the team of budtenders and dispensary staff.



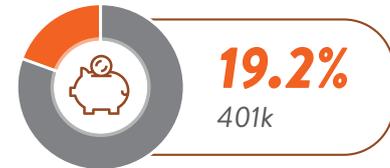
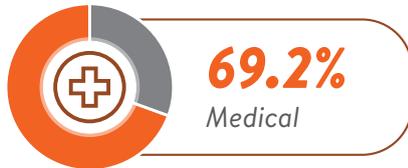
Budtenders assist the customer or patient in the retail and/or medical purchasing process. This position is often referred to as "Sales Associate" and is an hourly position.

Retail Salaries

	PERCENTILES		
	25th	50th	75th
 VP of Retail	\$80,000	\$104,000	\$152,000
 Director of Retail	\$76,700	\$98,300	\$124,200
 Merchandise Planner	\$63,000	\$71,100	\$95,500
 General Manager	\$35,000	\$56,000	\$90,600
 Budtender	\$12.50/hour	\$14.90/hour	\$18/hour

Benefits Overview

Companies are starting to offer more benefits—dental and vision increased by almost 15% from 2018 and the number of companies who offered no benefits decreased by 7.5%. Compared to the national average, the cannabis industry is quickly catching up and even exceeding the national average in dental, vision and 401(k) plan offerings.



Future of the Industry

Cannabis jobs, salaries and benefits are on the rise for 2020. The industry is still in its growth stage and will likely continue to expand as more states and countries legalize cannabis. With over 200,000 cannabis jobs created in 2019, the industry is no doubt providing economic opportunities across the U.S. and world.

As the cannabis industry continues to grow, our guides will evolve to include additional relevant positions and applicable industry insights. This valuable industry resource would not be possible without the help of cannabis businesses across the U.S. *We want to sincerely thank the companies that took the time to contribute to this resource that helps shape the future of cannabis.*

As legalization continues to expand across the U.S. and world, it's incredibly important for the industry to have access to valuable resources like the cannabis salary guide. We need your help in ensuring this resource remains accurate and available for all. Please help us expand our data and shape the face of the industry by participating in future salary guides [here](#).

If you'd like to chat with our team of cannabis industry talent experts to streamline your workforce solutions and develop a strategic workforce plan, contact us below.

CONTACT US



If you're a job seeker interested in joining the cannabis industry, we invite you to view all available full-time opportunities [here](#) or check out our contingent gigs platform, [Vangst GIGS](#).

We wish you the best in growing your team or career in this budding industry!

Cannabis is Growing

Are You?

Vangst is the cannabis industry's leading hiring resource. We match pre-screened, experienced candidates with opportunities in cannabis around the globe. We're on a mission to build the cannabis industry through people, and since launching in 2016, have successfully matched thousands of candidates with jobs at leading cannabis businesses.

LEARN MORE

