Wesley McWhite III

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION (NJ-CRC)

Wesley McWhite III was appointed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2021 as the first Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJ-CRC). In this position, he develops policies, partnerships, and practices that promote fairness, equity, and diversity within the agency and the broader New Jersey cannabis industry. His efforts are centered on fostering relationships with underrepresented communities, creating opportunities for diverse businesses to engage, and collaborating with various state government agencies, such as the New Jersey Business Action Center (NJBAC) and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA). Together, they aim to improve technical assistance and support for business development.

Wesley has played a crucial role in community equity initiatives, including support for expungement clinics and broader criminal justice efforts related to cannabis. These initiatives aim to promote restorative justice and economic inclusion for communities that have been disproportionately affected by the failed war on drugs. In addition to his work in New Jersey, he is the Co-Chair of the Cannabis Regulators Association's Economic and Equity Committee. In this role, he plays a key part in developing national best practices for cannabis equity policy, supporting the establishment of new adult-use markets, and promoting innovative regulatory strategies that focus on inclusion and economic opportunity.

Before joining the Commission, Wesley worked as the Development Director and Policy Manager at the Hyacinth Foundation, where he led efforts to advocate for equitable access to medications and health policy. Earlier in his career, he served as an outreach coordinator with Volunteers of America Delaware Valley, where he helped develop sustainable service models for individuals seeking supportive housing.