

# From Negotiating Drug Deals on the Street to Negotiating Equity and Inclusion in the Cannabis Industry

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For Immediate Release:

From Negotiating Drug Deals on the Street to Negotiating Equity and Inclusion in the Cannabis Industry

On October 8, 2020 at 1:30 pm est., the Cannabis Trade Federation (CTF) announced the adoption of wide-ranging Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies set forth by the DEI Task Force. Included in the announcement was Author/Entrepreneur Tracey D.

Syphax, a formerly impacted individual turned successful entrepreneur, survivor of the war on drugs and member of the DEI Task Force.



Tracey Syphax

Three (3) additional members of the twenty-seven (27) member DEI Task Force joined CTF Board Chair and Interim CEO Cristian Sederberg for the announcement. CEO of 1906, Peter Barsoom; Task Force Chair Linda Mercado Greene; Judge Shelli Williams Hayes; and Dr. Patricia Frye were

also participants in the press conference. The DEI Task Force was launched in May 2019. The Task Force is comprised of a diverse and experienced collection of leaders who bring a combination of industry, political, policy, and operational experience to the organization.

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Today we moved a step closer to a more inclusive cannabis industry”

*Tracey D. Syphax*

During the August 11th 2020 Board meeting, the CTF

approved the adoption of two (2) expansive proposals around diversity, equity, and inclusion policies — an industry first. CTF's Board approved new policy & programmatic platform as well as an assessment tool to measure each member's companies' progress in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. The new programs — a Policy Platform and a Member Assessment Tool — were developed in collaboration with CTF's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force.

The Policy Platform offers CTF members an expansive list of recommendations around Economic Development & Workforce, Ownership, Government Policy, Community Partnerships, and Criminal Justice Reform. The Member Assessment Tool will serve as a benchmarking mechanism to measure progress on DEI practices for CTF members and will be utilized as an accountability and transparency tool. Both programs will be a requirement for membership in CTF.

"As a formerly impacted person who advocates for a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect those who are mostly impacted by our criminal justice system; I was honored when CTF's CEO Neal Levine contacted me about joining the task force to help shape the cannabis industry to include fair economic opportunities for generations to come. Today we moved a step closer to a more inclusive cannabis industry." ~Tracey D. Syphax, Author of From The Block To The Boardroom

Mr. Syphax was named one of the top 25 Most Influential African Americans in the State of New Jersey in 2016 by the South Jersey Journal. He is a 2014 President Obama White House "Champion of Change" for his tireless work in reentry and employment for formerly incarcerated individuals. Mr. Syphax was pardoned in 2018 by then NJ Governor Chris Christie for decades-old drug charges. He released his award-winning memoir "From the Block to The Boardroom" in 2012 and uses his platform to teach and encourage entrepreneurial training for formerly impacted individuals.

"Over a year ago, we gathered to form the DEI Task Force. We were tasked with developing a strategy to diversify the cannabis industry and ensure that the communities we represent, support, and lead, which have been targets of decades of punitive and prohibitionist policies, can meaningfully participate AND have equal footing as states continue to legalize cannabis and the momentum grows at the federal level. Working with the Raben Group, we are proud of the adoption of these two programs. CTF is leading the ever-growing cannabis industry to be on the right side of history." ~Linda Mercado Greene, DEI Task Force Chair.

The DEI Task Force will continue working closely with CTF members to guide and implement the Task Force's recommendations and begin establishing the process behind the Member Assessment Tool to ensure accountability and transparency.

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