

## The Leaf Joint's Workforce Development and Job Creation Plan

The goals of Leaf Joint LLC (“Leaf Joint, “we,” “us,” or “our”) Workforce Development Plan (“WDP”) are to increase employment in the Jersey City community, develop job skills and address inequality in employment in the region. The WDP includes training, recruiting, and retention strategies. Our executive team will be responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the WDP on a regular basis.

### **A. History of Job Creation**

With over 20 years of several successful start-ups in Jersey City, our executive team is a proven force in job creation. Our Chief Operations Officer, *Charmaine DeJesus*, is a small business owner with wide-ranging training and experience in the areas of childcare, business management, marketing and sales. Charmaine is a dynamic and performance-driven business professional with high integrity, strong work ethic and great leadership skills. As a meticulous and resourceful business manager for over 20 years, she has successfully lead productive teams, controlled budgets, networked to drive growth initiatives and maximize productivity.

After graduating college, Charmaine started Kidz Kastle ELC, Inc. in Jersey City, which owns **highly regulated** childcare centers that are contracted and licensed with the State of New Jersey. As owner, Charmaine recruits and hires employees, ensures that the childcare centers strictly comply with state policies and procedures and runs the overall business. With the success of Kidz Kastle, Charmaine formed the Learning Tree and Lori’s Little Helpers, which also run and operate childcare centers in the Jersey City area.

Leaf Joint’s CEO, *David Jefferson*, also Jersey City native, attended Jersey City State College majoring in Criminal Justice. He went on to join the Management-Trainee Program for Sears Department Stores in their Loss Prevention Department. He was eventually promoted in 1994 as the Loss Prevention Manager for the Sears Livingston NJ store, and then went on to hold various senior positions throughout the company: from an LP Manager at Sears (Jersey City) in 1995, to its Operations Manager in 2000. He then attended and completed the New Jersey Department of Correction Police training Academy, moving on to working at Mountainview Correction Facility.

In 2001, David also founded Kidz Kastle ELC with Charmaine and his wife *Pamela Jones* – who is the third owner of the Leaf Joint, and worked in retail and management for many large retailers including Macy’s, Tops Appliances City, Circuit City and P.C. Richard’s & Sons; the couple eventually went on to expand their childcare business to: *House of Tots Family Child Care Provider, Cradle to Crayons learnings Center, The Wonder Years Learning Center, Early Rise Academy, Early Rise Academy Annex, and Creative Minds Learning Center* – all located in Jersey City. All of these highly regulated facilities are successfully up and running through the present.

In addition, and on a personal note, Pamela and David licensed their home as a “Resource Home” by the New Jersey Office of Licensing. As a result, they provided foster services for over 100 children from Jersey City over the years – providing a safe home with nutritional meals until later returned to their biological or other families. They eventually adopted two children born in Jersey City that were a part of the foster system.

David, Pamela and Charmaine are currently operating the Leaf Joint's CBD business out of the proposed Class 5 Retail cannabis location, which has already been a local success.

## **B. Planned Job Creation and Diversity**

**Job Creation:** As a microbusiness, Leaf Joint is limited to hiring up to **10 employees** (fulltime and part time) to work on the premises. All employees will be required to submit to the requisite training and to hold the Cannabis Business Identification Card issued by the State. The WDP calls for recruiting and developing a staff that is diverse and talented. Our business model anticipates starting salaries that are competitive, and eventually meet the criteria for a living wage in our metropolitan area – especially if we are successful in scaling up from a microbusiness. Managers, workers with specialized skills, and executives will be paid wages commensurate with their skills and experience in the marketplace. Jobs to be created at the facility include:

**CEO:** Our CEO is the primary representative of Leaf Joint to regulators, law enforcement, and the public and provides direction and leadership in the company's mission, vision, values, and strategy. The CEO implements and manages the strategic services, goals and objectives of the organization. It is also an important role of the CEO to set an example of professionalism and respect for others in all areas of operations. Lastly, the CEO will ensure that all extraction operations are conducted in an efficient, safe and environmentally friendly manner.

**Chief Operation Officer:** Our COO will report to the CEO and are responsible for implementing the Security Plan, the Inventory Control Plan, and the Record Keeping Plan by managing designees who will be responsible for a subset of tasks. The COO will also be responsible for capital raises, leading sales and marketing initiatives and securing supply agreements with licensed vendors. Further, the COO will facilitate improvements to plans, products, and systems within the company in response to employee, customer, and regulating authority feedback.

**Accountant:** The corporate Accountant will be responsible for finances and accounting, as well as overseeing activities carried out by the COO.

**General Manager:** The General Manager is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the business. The General Manager will ensure strategic goals are met by setting operational policies, creating and maintaining budgets, managing employees, and more. Additionally, the General Manager will be responsible for carrying out tasks specified in the Inventory Control Plan. In consultation with the COO, the General Manager will recommend changes and amendments to the Inventory Control Plan on an annual basis.

**Sales Manager:** The Sales Manager will be responsible for executing on sales initiatives and developing revenue streams for Leaf Joint.

**Bookkeeper/Record Keeping Manager:** The Bookkeeper/Record Keeping Manager reports to the Accountant and is responsible for the company's bookkeeping, complying with record-related regulations and implementing tasks in the Record Keeping Plan. Records are maintained to provide operational information to company managers, advisors, and owners for decision-making

purposes, and to provide information in case of insurance, criminal, or regulating authority investigations.

**Sales Representative (i.e. Budtenders):** Sales Representatives are responsible for greeting and directing customers, selling cannabis items, answering customers' questions, routine cleaning of the workplace, stocking displays, and counting inventory.

**Security Manager:** Under the direction of the CEO, the Security Manager is responsible for carrying out the bulk of the responsibilities identified in the Security Plan and managing Security Officers.

**Security Personnel:** Security Personnel report to the Security Manager and assist in maintaining the safety and security of the staff, products, and the facility.

Leaf Joint is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate under any circumstances with respect to a potential candidate's age, disability, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy status, marital status, sexual orientation (including gender-related identity), medical condition, gender identity or expression, military or veteran status, race, color, creed, religion or sex, or any other protected class under federal, state or local law. Leaf Joint will implement strategic outreach initiatives to recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of society by building relationships with vendors, service providers, and charitable organizations that share in our diversity objectives. Additionally, we will emphasize hiring individuals from socio-economic disadvantaged communities, individuals disproportionately impacted by enforcement of drug laws, and people with disabilities.

**Recruiting and Advertising Best Practices:** Leaf Joint will follow these steps as its action plan for recruiting a diverse workforce:

- **Audit job ads** - We will evaluate existing recruitment ads to develop strategies to speak to a broader range of candidates and be more inclusive in the language used to appeal to individuals from different backgrounds.
- **Place advertisements in locations where diverse candidates will find them** - Rather than relying on a small number of cannabis-related job sites, we will place recruitment ads with diverse media sources, job boards and other locations to reach a broader audience, such as: (1) in community newspapers and news websites run by communities of color; (2) on job boards, websites, social media accounts and in-person job or community events hosted by organizations that serve communities of color; (3) with professional associations (i.e., the National Forum for Black Public Administrators), affinity groups within professional associations (i.e., Latinos and Planning Division, American Planning Association), networks of professionals of color (Environmental Professionals of Color local chapter); and (4) with organizational partners that represent and serve communities of color. We will also partner with minority-serving institutions in the area to develop recruitment plans.
- **Encourage diverse employees to distribute job advertisements** - We will reach out to some of the employees already on our team who are part of varied demographics and

encourage them to share job ads with their networks and give them the tools they need to promote the company.

- **Create policies that appeal to diverse candidates** - We will be flexible regarding time off and scheduling policies to include more religious holidays, community events, etc. We will verbally encourage an acceptance of varied cultures and backgrounds and take actions that show we mean what we say, such as showing support for local non-profit organizations recommended by our own employees.
- **Use blind resumes** - We will use a system when evaluating candidates in which we remove all personal information on resumes, such as information like names, schools, date of birth, specific locations, to reduce conscious or unconscious bias.
- **Partnerships** – We will partner with minority-serving institutions in the area to development recruitment plans.
- **Job Fairs** – We will attend job fairs that the local community, junior and 4-year colleges that primarily serve underrepresented populations.

### **Interview and Hiring Process**

**The Interview:** All applicants will be asked to submit to an interview and we will aim to incorporate diversity related interview questions, such as sharing an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences, and how you've worked to understand perspectives of others.

**Employee Retention:** Employees from defined Impact Zones, like all of our employees, will receive appropriate training so that they can be successful at the job they are hired for. A concerted effort will be made to welcome a new employee to the team as well as hosting opportunities for other employees to get to know each other. We will also integrate the following to our onboarding process: (1) Discussion on organization culture and norms (i.e., expectations for how to represent the our company with the public, communication norms, any expectations on appearance and time); (2) Overview of racial equity work, organization functions, and how decisions are made in Leaf Joint; (3) Connection with a “buddy” or informal mentor to help learn more about what to expect when working for our company; and (4) Connection to activities and networks like affinity groups, lunch and learn sessions, employee gatherings based on their interests.

**Contracts With Diverse Groups:** We will seek to contract with diverse businesses and vendors to acquire goods and services for our company.

**Mentoring, Training and Professional Development Programs for Diverse Groups:** We will work with local organizations to develop mentoring, training and development programs for employees from Impact Zones.

### **Disabled Employee Plan**

*Hiring:* As companies are increasingly competing for talent, individuals with disabilities are being recognized as a source of engaged, committed employees. Companies that succeed in incorporating candidates with disabilities have seen 28 percent higher revenue and two times higher net income, according to an Accenture 2018 white paper on accessibility.

The following plan outlines best practices from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that we intend to adopt – and especially if we are able to eventually hire more employees and achieve our goal of scaling up from a microbusiness after one full year or more of operations after obtaining licensure – to promote the hiring, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities within our company:

*Reasonable Accommodations:* In accordance with the ADA, as amended, and New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, we will provide reasonable accommodations to applicants with a disability or qualified employees with a disability so that they can perform their essential job duties.

*Supported Employment:* Individualized services will include, but are not limited to, training and systematic instruction, job coaching, benefit support, travel training, and other workplace support services as we would for all other employees, including potential services not specifically related to job-skill training that enable a disabled individual to be successful in integrating into the job setting.

*Job Coaching:* We will aim to assist the employee in training for the specific skills of the job. During the coaching phase, other supports would also be given, such as travel training, social skills, confidence building, identifying natural supports as needed et al., all designed to help make the transition into the job a successful one. The eventual goal is to fade away from job coaching to enable the participant to perform all aspects of the job independently.

*Follow-Along:* These visits are provided by the job coach at a minimum of one visit to the job site per month to continue ongoing training and performance improvement.