

Benedict's Supply LLC Jersey City Community Impact Plan

Benedict Supply LLC (hereinafter “Benedict Supply” or the “Company”) is pleased to present this Community Impact Plan in connection with its application to the Cannabis Control Board of Jersey City for a class 5 retailer license to operate at 3523 Kennedy Boulevard in Jersey City. This plan demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our cannabis business and retail dispensary operations will have a positive impact on Jersey City, including a positive economic impact and community outreach initiatives. This community impact plan should be viewed as a working document that will be revised and expanded upon as the needs of the community change. We intend to be a long-standing member of the community with an ongoing positive impact.

Benedict's Supply's Community Mission: To be upstanding members of our immediate community surrounding 3523 Kennedy Boulevard such that local officials can count on our business to pitch in wherever needed, in addition to having a positive impact on the Jersey City community at large, especially focused on reversing the harms caused by the war on drugs.

City-Wide Community Impact: For All Jersey City Residents

1. **Economic Development:** Starting with a jobs program and expanding further, our goal is to invest in growing the local economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all residents.
 - a. **Job Fairs & Resume Clinics:** After we receive full licensure, Benedict's Supply will host a local job fair at our site, 3523 Kennedy Boulevard, open to all local employers and job seekers. All hiring businesses must commit to hiring Jersey City applicants at any level of employment (not just entry level). We will also post all open jobs on the Hudson County Community College Career Spark page, and conduct classroom visits to the cannabis students, and when possible (from a regulatory compliance standpoint), conduct onsite tours for students. We have privately met with Floyd Jeter and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to discuss a hiring pipeline and we also attended two of the most recent cannabis job fairs in Jersey City (hosted by Cannademix / Hudson Community College on 11/10/22 and the Jersey City Office of Diversity and Inclusion on 10/12/22. We will continue to attend and participate in local third-party cannabis career fairs.
 - b. **Industry Training and Education for Job Candidates:** Benedict's Supply has already enrolled as a corporate client of Green Flower Education, an established and university-trusted cannabis training platform, to train all store employees. Our executive team is enrolled in a certificate program. As we open, we will be building a robust onboarding and new hire training program for all employees.
 - c. **Sponsor a Microbusiness:** According to the ACLU,¹ one of the biggest barriers of entry for social equity applicants in New Jersey is the initial application fees associated with a highly regulated industry. Benedict's Supply is currently looking to partner with one Jersey

City based microbusiness that needs assistance with the Jersey City application fees and the initial yearly fee. We intend to sponsor one business in the hopes of making the difference between local entrepreneurs opening a cannabis retail store vs. not opening one. In this effort, we hope to build generational wealth among local Jersey City residents within a business owned by, and staffed with, Jersey City residents.

2. Expungement Clinics: Benedict's Supply will educate customers and community members (through signage) on ways they can expunge any nonviolent cannabis related criminal records through free programs such as <https://www.vljnj.org/release>. On October 10, 2022, we hosted an expungement clinic at our previous offices at 1010 Summit Avenue in an effort to localize our expungement sponsorship services. We attended both the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Cannademix / Hudson Community College expungement clinic / career fairs, and we will continue to support local expungement efforts on an ongoing basis.
3. Stop the Cycle: It is imperative that lower-income communities who endured the most of aggressive cannabis prohibition are the focus of our community impact plan. We believe in engaging communities from the youth, giving individuals access to programs that will help them thrive. Sarah Russell has a history of youth program involvement, volunteering with organizations such as NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship) and Girl Scouts of America. Benedict's Supply will focus our efforts working with local Jersey City Youth Programs such as:
 - ABC Inc Kidz, Teen Prevention and Cannabis Education: This organization provides youth activities to grammar school children ages 5-14 and high school students ages 15-18 from low income and working poor families who are residents of Jersey City, New Jersey. This program assists with broader family needs that may be discovered during programming. In addition to ongoing seasonal volunteering, we will be working together to supplement their Girls Empowerment Program to develop a pool of women leaders and pair them with various workshops for girls. We have committed \$3,000 toward the above

¹ https://www.aclu-nj.org/sites/default/files/aclu-nj_crc_public_comment_final.pdf

programming in addition to the man hours to implement such programs and fundraise as needed.

- Stop the Stigma with Seniors Program. We believe one of the biggest contributors to the ongoing injustices caused by the cannabis plant is the stigma associated with its use. We also believe that often, under the guidance of doctors, prescription medicines with an extensive list of side effects can be replaced with gentle cannabis products. We want to educate and empower the generation with the longest history of stigmatizing the plant. We are currently working closely with the Western Slope neighborhood association as well as exploring some of the below listed local Senior-focused organizations to develop a program targeted to cannabis education for seniors: Some of the local organizations we are exploring include:
 - Jersey City Health and Human Services Department of Senior Affairs
 - AngelaCARES Inc
 - Helen Clark Ziangas

4. Cannabis-related research and consumer educational activities: We will be taking a two-prong approach to cannabis research and education:
 - Industry Research: Each member of the executive team has completed or is in the process of completing cannabis education which includes adverse effects of cannabis and responsible use. In addition, Benedict's Supply will collaborate with Hudson County Community College (HCCC) to advance research in the cannabis field and provide additional cannabis field training for all employees.
 - Consumer Education: Sarah Russell founded Benedict's Supply to be a wellness company. In established cannabis markets, the breadth of safe and available cannabis products is widespread. From beverages, to pills, to patches it is possible to find a consumption method, dose, and strain that will help with specific needs without individuals needing to be locked to the couch after a harsh smoke. Benedict's Supply is committed to finding healthy and affordable products and educating the community about those products on an ongoing basis. We intend to hold our suppliers accountable to the same values we hold.

Local Community Initiatives: The Heights

1. Community Outreach: Originally Benedict's Supply leased property located at 1010 Summit Avenue which was initially included in the extended cannabis zone. We hosted our first community event and expungement workshop led by expungement expert and attorney Daryl Smith on October 10, 2022. The event included refreshments and expungement information and was free to the public. Flyers for the event were posted on our office windows at 1010 Summit Ave,

as well as at the local surrounding businesses including Deli and Grocery (1024 Summit Ave), Flash Lube (1026 Summit Ave), Jay's Barbershop (1008 Summit Ave), and Casa Cubana restaurant (1007 Charles St). Additionally, it was distributed by email to the Athletes for a Better Community professional staff for distribution and 50 flyers were handed out in person. In the November 2022 council meeting, it was determined that 1010 Summit Avenue was removed from the extended zone and began to search for another property.

As such we found 3523 Kennedy Boulevard and after all required zoning letters were obtained, and we signed a lease. Our first community meeting was with the local Western Slope Neighborhood Association President, Ricardo Bobe, and Vice President, Patrick Ambrossi, to discuss ways that Benedicts Supply can partner with our immediate neighborhood. After meeting with these leaders, they invited us to a neighborhood association meeting on January 31, 2023. We met with the community, and we have incorporated their feedback into this plan. We are working together to coordinate Q&A sessions at various upcoming Neighborhood Association meetings to address any questions from local residents on an ongoing basis.

2. Green Spaces for Wellness. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation² more than three in ten adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder since May 2020 and it is the Company's belief that having access to green space to be outside and come together as a community is a key way to combat anxiety and depression. Sarah Russell, the founding owner of Benedict's Supply, has been a longtime advocate of local green spaces and believes in fresh air and plants of all kinds as therapy. Sarah has volunteered her time as a junior park ranger at the Flat Rock Brook Nature Center and led environmental clubs during her school years.
 - a. Leonard Gordon Park. Less than a mile from 3523 Kennedy Blvd, this park has 5.7 acres of wooded trails, gazebo, play area and sponsored community events. Benedict's Supply plans to work with the Leonard Gordon Park conservancy to identify areas of need be it funds or volunteer hours for planting, care, or community events. Sarah has personally contributed to recent fundraiser campaigns and the company will remain involved going forward. At this time, the park is undergoing a renovation and the Conservancy has asked for help restoring their beloved bear and bison sculptures and Benedict's Supply will be helping to sponsor this as a first step.
 - b. Community Garden. The neighborhood is working on opening a new community garden and our team at Benedict's Supply is committed to helping with this effort on an as needed basis. We are waiting from directives from the community to understand how we can be of service.
 - c. Volunteer Hours. Benedict's Supply will allot all employees up to 10 paid volunteer hours a year to volunteer planting, cleaning, or maintaining local green spaces. For example, if team members left work to volunteer for Big Dig to plant flowers around Jersey City, they would get paid for those hours.

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[https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/new-jersey/#:~:text=As%20shown%20in%20the%20figure%20below%2C%20prior%20to%20the%20pandemic,and%207.5%25%2C%20respectively\).](https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/new-jersey/#:~:text=As%20shown%20in%20the%20figure%20below%2C%20prior%20to%20the%20pandemic,and%207.5%25%2C%20respectively).)

3. Building Neighborhood Community. The Western Slope portion of the Heights is full of homeowners who have deep roots in Jersey City but often have to travel across Central Ave and over to Riverview Park to partake in community initiatives. The neighborhood association is hoping to create new events like a summer BBQ and expand existing events like the Easter Egg hunt and Halloween party to foster a stronger and more localized sense of community. Benedict's Supply plans to engage with neighborhood initiatives on an ongoing basis. We will collaborate with local leaders to communicate, gather volunteers, and sponsor any supplies needed to ensure our community is strong, and that our locals feel invested in the neighborhood.

Current and Past Community Involvement, Social Responsibility and Ties to Jersey City:

Sarah Russell (Founder/CEO): Sarah Russell was born in Englewood, NJ where she still lives today. Her grandparents immigrated to the US and opened their first business (a mechanic shop) in Jersey City in the 1950s. Sarah has frequented Jersey City throughout her life and spends a lot of time in Jersey City today. She is currently working closely alongside Dawn Odom from Athletes for a Better Community (ABC Kidz) to partner in various initiatives from Girls Empowerment programs to cannabis education and Job Creation, to helping with ABCKidz website development. She is also working closely with the office of Diversity and Inclusion on a job candidate pipeline as well as the Western Slope Neighborhood Association to work toward a community goals.

E. De'Vaughn Weaver, Ed.D: is a proud native of Jersey City, NJ. He earned a B.A. from Bloomfield College, an M.S. from New Jersey City University, and his doctorate from Rutgers University. Dr. Weaver has committed his entire professional career to K-16 education, specifically with underserved populations. Over the past 16 years, he has served as community liaison (Jersey City Board of Education), Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program counselor for Hudson County Community College and Senior Counselor for the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program at Rutgers New Brunswick School of Arts & Sciences. As of April 2021, he serves as the Director of the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program at Bloomfield College (Bloomfield, NJ). When Vaughn is not working in his "official" capacities within the Bloomfield College community, he is teaching courses such as the Black Male Identity, the Black Family & a Seminar in Hip-Hop at Rutgers University for the Africana Studies Department. Vaughn earned his Ed.D. in Education, Culture & Society in 2020. Vaughn works diligently as a mentor to young men in the Jersey City and Newark New Jersey areas. He has a love for helping students get into college and ensuring their academic/personal success.

Cannabis Research Statement: The National Institute on Drug Abuse published a paper in 2019 that shows that cannabis use is correlated with short- and long-term cognitive effects. The

short term effect includes impaired memory, altered sense of time, change of mood and cognitive ability. Cannabis also affects long term brain development. When people begin using cannabis as teenagers, the drug may impair thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions. A study from New Zealand, in part conducted by Duke University, shows that people who started smoking cannabis heavily in their teens and had an ongoing cannabis use disorder lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38. The lost mental abilities did not fully return in those who quit cannabis as adults. Those who started smoking cannabis as adults did not show notable IQ declines.

³Additionally, the Drug Abuse The Journal of the American Heart Association published a study in 2016 that shows that the harmful effects of secondhand smoke are much higher with cannabis smoke than tobacco smoke.⁴ The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 9% of U.S. adults between the ages of 50 and 64 and 6% of those 65 years old and older used cannabis over the last two years. Seniors increasingly use cannabis for pain relief to treat several varying ailments. A 2018 survey conducted about seniors using medical cannabis for chronic pain found that up to 65% of senior citizens who used medical cannabis substantially reduced their pain and dependence on opioids. More than 90% of seniors indicated they would recommend medical cannabis to others.

About the Community: According to the US Census Bureau, Jersey City is the second-largest city in New Jersey, with a population totaling 292,449, where over 64% of the population is non-white. Jersey City has a household income of \$70,752 with a poverty rate of 17.2%. Jersey City has recently been named the most diverse city in the United States. The city, and the Heights portion of the city, is a major port of entry for immigrants to the United States and a major employment center for the New York City metropolitan area. Jersey City has demonstrated a robust and growing demographic and cultural diversity, including nationality, religion, race, and domiciliary partnership.

³ Meier MH, Caspi A, Ambler A, et al. Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2012;109(40):E2657-E2664. doi:10.1073/pnas.1206820109.

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27464788/>