

# Panelists Say Cannabis Tourism Begins with Education, Good Partnerships

**Galloway, N.J.** - Education and good partnerships will be crucial as New Jersey's hospitality and tourism industry begins to integrate recreational cannabis and hemp into their operations, speakers said at a webinar Wednesday. But it will take time to provide safe, legal and profitable events and services.

"I really got the message that education is critical to getting this off the ground safely and responsibly," said Michael Chait, president of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce, which co-sponsored the webinar with the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism (LIGHT) at Stockton University.

Amanda Hoover, a reporter for nj.com and NJ Cannabis Insider moderated the webinar and presented questions. Panelists, representing a variety of operations in different states, were:

- Rob Mejia: Adjunct faculty in Cannabis Studies at Stockton University and president of Our Community Harvest: A Cannabis Education Company.
  - Brian Applegarth: California Cannabis Tourism Association.
  - Cintia Morales: Co-founder and Director of Education and Outreach, Higher Ed.
- H Mejia: There are so many prohibitions about where you can't, that the short answer for now is in a private home. You can't do it on any state or federal-owned site, including housing. Things like consumption lounges are down the road.

Q; Who is the typical user?

Morales: For many people this is their first time. A great way to start is with a guide, education about the products. About 75% of our tours are new people and you want to introduce it in a safe space. The type of experience they have is important.

Applegarth: A survey we partnered on in 2019 showed 29% of the active leisure travel audience was cannabis motivated and wanted the ability to access cannabis-related services –

not smokers – the first choices were edibles, drinkables and topicals. Smoking was last. They are foodies and into nature, wine.

Yusefzadeh: Most food offered now is sweets or candy. We want to create foods that fit into life. Our plan would be a resort B&B where you could stay with us and not have to drive home.

Mejia: The market for CBD has been popular and you don't get high. But education will be key so people know what to expect with food and how it can affect the body.

Morales: People react differently. You start with micro-doses. We had to learn how to control our samples.

Q: Is there any tourism that has not worked? What is working?

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**Stockton University**

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