



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**THE CANNABIS RESEARCH INSTITUTE IS COMING TO CHICAGO**

*A first in the Midwest, the new center will be operated by the Discovery Partners  
Institute*

**CHICAGO** — The City of Chicago, State of Illinois, and the Discovery Partners Institute today announced the launch of the Cannabis Research Institute, a first-of-its-kind center in the Midwest that will further boost Illinois' global standing as a science hub.

The CRI will be a joint effort by the State and City housed within DPI, which is part of the University of Illinois System, to provide a robust body of research and data to advance public knowledge on scientific and socio-economic impacts of cannabis usage and production.

The arrangement will allow the new institute to leverage DPI's offices, personnel, and resources in Chicago. With a scheduled rollout of the CRI in the next few months, DPI has begun a search for an executive director.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to not only promote Chicago as the center for highly-demanded cannabis research but expand the breadth of knowledge and science needed to shape policy," said Chicago **Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot**. "Our city is the perfect location, as we're home to an impressive hub of innovation and world-class research universities and institutions. Leveraging and coordinating our city's resources to create a top-tier cannabis research center will make waves in this new industry and set the precedent on cannabis research nationally."

Chicago is an ideal location for cannabis research, with its world-class academic and medical institutions and a deep bench of innovators. The CRI will be the premier research institute that seeks to promote equity and a desire to have an evidence-based, research-driven cannabis marketplace.

"I am thrilled to announce the launch of the Cannabis Research Institute — a national first, creating actionable research to inform data-driven policymaking and advance public knowledge on the impacts of cannabis," said **Governor JB Pritzker**. "I can think of no better place than Illinois for this endeavor. We are the heart of the Midwest



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and at the very forefront of cannabis legalization — all while dismantling the long-lasting effects of the War on Drugs on our communities.”

Despite overwhelming public support for medicinal and recreational cannabis legalization, cannabis remains illegal at the federal level, and the federal government maintains restrictive policies and regulations on research into the health, harm, or benefits of cannabis products.

As a result, research on the health effects of cannabis has been limited in the United States, depriving patients, health care professionals, consumers, and policymakers the evidence they need to make sound decisions regarding its use.

The CRI will foster partnerships and collaborations with diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago, to ensure that research on cannabis will inform regulation and policy to protect public health and safety; stimulate medical, scientific, and technology advancement; and address societal questions about the impacts of new markets and policies.

To accomplish this, DPI will assemble and lead a research team that brings together research institutions, government agencies, businesses, and communities.

“We now have years of experience building research teams across disciplines and across institutions,” said **Bill Jackson**, executive director of DPI. “We’re excited to forge new territory and partnerships, conducting research that will make our city safer and healthier — and our society more equitable.”

Future research will be broad and cover topics on social equity impacts, medicinal and health effects, and agricultural crop management practices. Example topics include societal and community impacts of cannabis legalization; demographic gap analysis of medical cannabis programs; effectiveness of cannabis and cannabinoids on medical conditions, such as relieving anxiety and reducing inflammation; public health impacts of legalizing recreational cannabis use; and plant varietal improvement in controlled environmental conditions.

The CRI will also prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion by creating an entry point into the cannabis industry for people of color through research opportunities (research jobs and research ideation), shared best practices for industry participants (both cultivation and distribution), jobs and internships, partnering with historically Black colleges and universities for research opportunities, supporting research and training with the Illinois Vocational Cannabis Program (operated by the City Colleges of Chicago and other Illinois Community Colleges), and hosting local education sessions in under-served neighborhoods.



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The CRI is working closely with the Cannabis Regulatory Oversight Officer, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and other regulatory agencies.

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