



# CANNABIS CONVERSATIONS

An exploration of cannabis and hemp topics from multiple perspectives: medical, historical, social equity, ecological and more.

## Featuring:

**What to Know About THC, CBD, and Your ZZZ's**

**Expunging & Sealing Cannabis Records: The first in a 13-part "Everything you need to know" series**

**Cannabis Beverages: The latest innovation**

## Contributors:

**RISE | Green Thumb | Curaleaf | High minded Events**

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We're continuing the conversation! Watch for the next Reader Cannabis Conversations on May 27, 2021

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## GROWING FOR GOOD with Green Thumb

Everything you need to know about expunging and sealing cannabis records in Illinois

Featuring Dina Rollman, SVP of Government & Regulatory Affairs at Green Thumb and Brandon Williams, Supervising Attorney at Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA).

**Q:** Before we get started, can you explain to readers why Green Thumb is presenting this new 13-part series on expungement and record-sealing in Illinois, and why you've asked Cabrini Green Legal Aid to help kick it off?

**Dina Rollman:** The Green Thumb team is very conscious of the fact that our business is built on a plant that plays a significant role in the racist impact of the war on drugs. A major component of the drug war continues to be that cannabis laws are enforced at much higher rates in minority and marginalized communities, despite the fact that all communities tend to use cannabis at about the same rate.

That said, we have made it a company priority to do our part to reverse the harms caused by the war on drugs. The first step in that process is to eliminate the barriers caused by a criminal record that results in part from living in communities where drug laws are enforced at disproportionate rates. The goal of this series is to educate and build awareness around the expungement and record-sealing mechanisms available in Illinois and to elevate the voices who are really doing great work in this space, like CGLA. We're not the experts and don't pretend to be, which is why we are so grateful to Brandon Williams, who is an expert, for being here to help us launch this Q&A series.

**Q:** Brandon, welcome, can you tell us a little bit about the work you do in this space?

**Brandon Williams:** Thanks, yes—I'm the supervising attorney for the criminal records program at Cabrini Green Legal Aid. There are over 44,000 collateral consequences to having a criminal record in Illinois. A cannabis record can create barriers to education, housing, employment, banking—you name it. That's why CGLA provides legal assistance to individuals negatively impacted by the criminal justice system, including help getting records cleared or expunged.



**Q:** What is the difference between expunging and sealing a record, and how long does the entire process take?

**BW:** There is a distinction. Expungement is for non-convictions, and sealing is for convictions. An expunged record is erased completely, so nobody has access to it, and the law enforcement records are destroyed. Sealing hides your record from public view, essentially. If you get a case sealed, the only people who have access to it are law enforcement, or employers who are authorized by law to run fingerprint-based background checks.

It depends on what county you live in, but you normally can get your records expunged or sealed within 60-90 days. You file a petition, submit your paperwork, get your hearing date, have a hearing,

have the order entered, etc. There's a major backlog in Chicago right now, though.

**Q:** What is the very first step a person should take to begin the expungement or record-sealing process and how much money will it cost?

**BW:** First head to NewLeafIllinois.org to get connected to one of the 20 nonprofits that provide free legal representation. The next step will be to pull your RAP sheet—in Chicago, you'll have to go to the police department headquarters and pay \$16 for your Chicago RAP sheet and Illinois State Police report. If you want to go to a private entity, you can get fingerprinted at an agency, such as Livescan, and get your state police report and possibly your FBI report. That can cost around \$60.

**Q:** What are some of the other ways Green Thumb is working to help folks clear their records?

**DR:** Well, CGLA was kind enough to take the time to train about 30 of our in-house attorneys and outside counsel volunteers to be able to assist individuals going through the process. What really motivated this series, though, is that we regularly support expungement and record-sealing initiatives and events. The challenge is that a lot of people leave these events frustrated because they arrive thinking they can show up to one event and walk away at the end of the day with a clear record. The fact of the matter, unfortunately, is that it's not a one-and-done process. The more we can expose the entire process and resources available, the more we can maximize the impact we have in all of the other initiatives we take on.

**Q:** What can we expect in next week's Q&A?

**DR:** The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act "automatically" expunged a number of cannabis non-convictions and convictions. We want to understand, and help readers understand, which records have been cleared and how they are supposed to know whether records have actually been removed.

Coming up: Automatic Expungement: Did the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act automatically expunge my cannabis record?



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## What to Know About THC, CBD and Your ZZZ's

**Insomnia and other sleep problems may be improved with cannabis.**

The past year has given us more reasons than ever to lose sleep.

If you're up in the middle of the night staring at the ceiling, worrying or unable to relax, you're not alone. Of course, there are many products, methods, and drugs that promise to improve sleep, but they often are not the healthiest options. There is, however, a natural remedy that you might consider: **cannabis for sleep.**

Cannabis may help you fall asleep, and it may relieve the pain and anxiety that could be keeping you awake. Silas Wonderling, PharmD, a pharmacist and general manager of the RISE Dispensary in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, sees a medical marijuana patient for the first time, he always asks about the quality of their sleep.

"When a new patient comes in, I usually try to start with the sleep cycle," he says. "Whatever medical issues people have, helping them out at night can be a real game-changer."

At RISE, Wonderling often helps people who are ready to stop taking prescription sleep aids and are interested in trying cannabis. "Our job in the dispensary is to help you find the most ideal product for you," Wonderling says. "We want to make the trial-and-error process of finding the right product as quick as possible."

### The Science of How Cannabis Affects Sleep

The research on cannabis and sleep is ongoing, but we know one thing for sure: **Cannabis has been shown to help people fall asleep.** To understand how cannabis affects sleep, look to cannabinoids, the active compounds in cannabis, including CBD and THC.

CBD facilitates sleep by mimicking a cannabinoid we naturally produce in our bodies: anandamide, sometimes called the "bliss molecule" for its ability to promote calm, Wonderling says.

THC, which is responsible for the psychoactive effects of marijuana—the high—has been shown to help people fall asleep, even at low doses. The real power of cannabis for sleep might be its ability to ease symptoms of conditions that keep people awake at night, Wonderling says, such as anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic pain.

### The Best Cannabis Strains for Sleep

When Wonderling meets a new patient, he first asks if the patient is comfortable using THC and potentially experiencing a high. CBD-only products may help with sleep, but a product with a combination of both THC and CBD is usually most effective.

For people without a lot of cannabis experience, Wonderling recommends starting with a low dose of a product that's balanced in its THC and CBD content. You'll want to find a strain with indica effects, meaning it's more likely to promote calm and relaxation, rather than sativa, which can be energizing.

For people looking to get to sleep, Wonderling often recommends tinctures, a concentrated liquid cannabis preparation that the user drops under the tongue. In general, if you choose edibles for sleep, look for a product expressly formulated for sleep. Keep in mind, it can be difficult to predict when edibles will kick in."

"We can help you figure out if cannabis might be useful for you and how to incorporate it into your lifestyle."

# RISE

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