

the 420 TIMES™

the magazine of medical marijuana and natural healing

THE HOW TO ISSUE

**THIS
FOR
THAT** Anxiety

How To:
Become An
Activist


How To
GET A JOB
In Medical
Marijuana

HOW TO BUY A
BONG





How To **GET A JOB** In Medical Marijuana



Imagine that you're not only surrounded by marijuana all day, but you're getting paid to work with it.

Imagine a school where "higher education" isn't just an academic phrase, it's an accurate description.

Imagine a job where "drug testing" involves making sure that employees know the difference between indica and sativa strains of cannabis.

It sounds like a stoner's dream. But for an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 lucky folks in one of the 15 medical marijuana states, it's a daily reality.

It's A Growing Industry

The average medical patient has contact with people in a number of different positions in the industry on a regular basis. There's the doctor who writes your recommendation, and the staff in the dispensary where you buy your medicine, and...well, that's about it, actually.

But that scenario oversimplifies a much larger picture. There's support staff in the doctor's office, some with professional titles or licenses (Nurse Practitioner, Physician's Assistant) and some not (office manager, data entry). When you visit a dispensary, you mostly notice the budtender who helps you choose your medicine, but there are also office staff, security people, couriers, and so on.

And where does all that cannabis come from? There are growers, plant tenders, trimmers, and more security people. Alongside of that effort comes the people who own and work in retail hydroponic shops, gardening stores, and head shops. Behind them, their suppliers who blow glass, develop fertilizers and nutrients, and design and manufacture hardware like grow lights, tents, fans, and filters.

There are support industries behind all of these, especially attorneys and insurance, but also things like graphic design, realtors, IT staff, marketing, sales, and human resources.

And then there's media: the folks who create medical marijuana-oriented books, videos, websites and magazines...web designers, artists, photographers, publishers, and even the odd writer here and there.

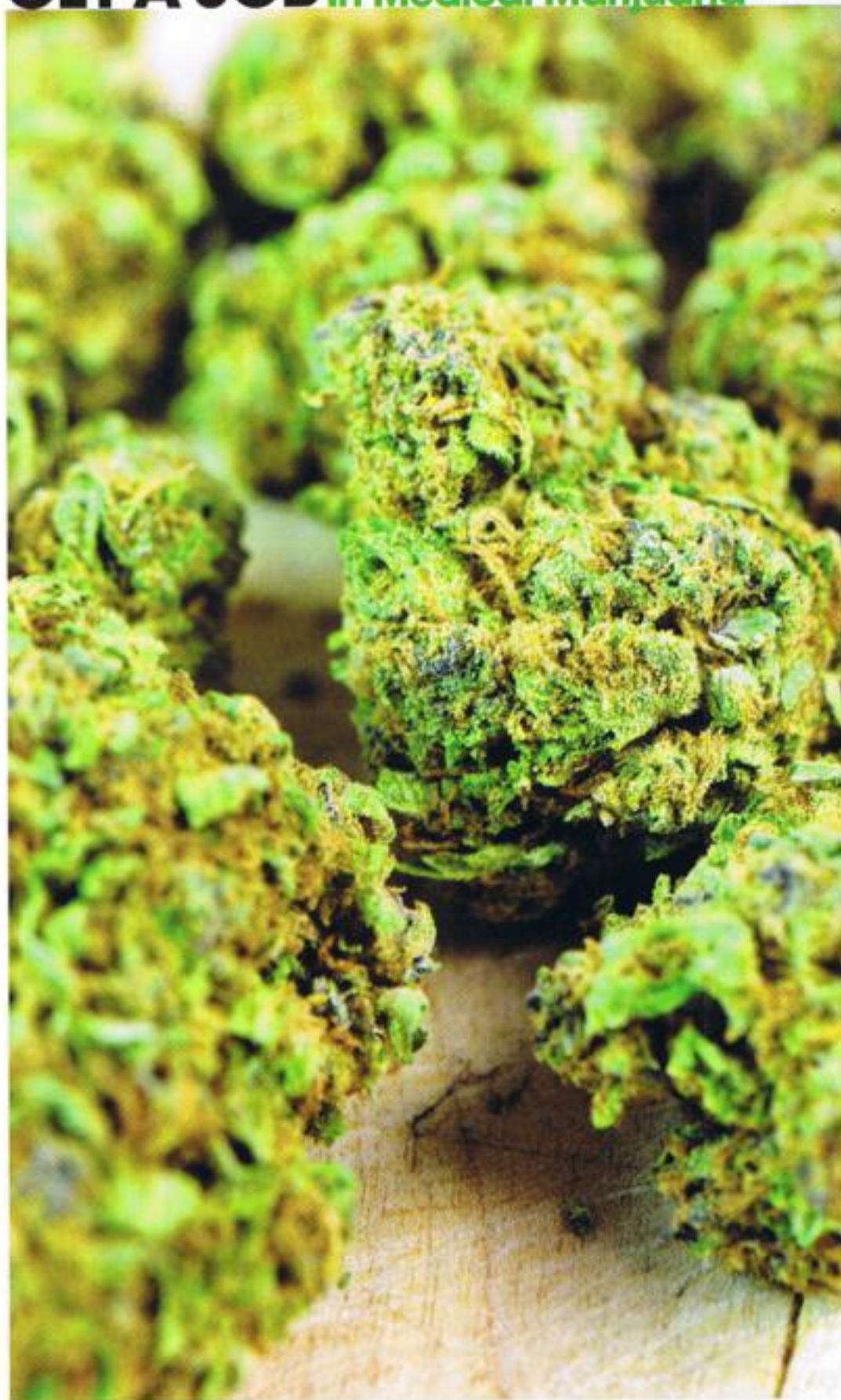
You've Got To Be Carefully Taught

There aren't many people who will run off to medical school after hearing about this kind of opportunity, perhaps, or those who will sign up for engineering school just to learn how to design grow lights. But there are enough people excited enough by the very idea of a medical marijuana industry that some far-sighted ones have started training people for it.

Gus Escamilla is one. He's the founder and CEO of Greenway University, which began in Southern California but two years ago moved their headquarters to Colorado (they still teach classes in California as well as a number of other medical states). In May 2010, Greenway University was approved by the Colorado Department Of Higher Education as an accredited vocational school. It was the first medical marijuana school in the country to accomplish this feat, and at this writing, remains the only one as well.

"One of the things we wanted to do from the get-go was set ourselves apart," Escamilla told *The 420 Times*. "Essentially what we've been able to do is offer 16 courses covering everything you need to know, and all our instructors are approved by the state also." Greenway has an internship program,

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job placement assistance, their own master grower and budtender certifications, and even awards MBA degrees (that's Marijuana Business Administration, in case you were wondering).

Greenway University just opened a 25,000 square foot campus which includes not only a large teaching space but also media production studios. They are planning a complete facility under one roof through renting space to associated companies, such as Herbal Health Systems (a full-service physicians' clinic); a hydroponics superstore; Greenway Nutrients (their own brand, developed in association with their own faculty); executive offices for attorneys, CPAs, and other professionals; and even a cannabis-friendly bank.

Escamilla clearly has his finger on the pulse of the industry. "We were instrumental in getting Lloyds' of London to insure crops", he told us, which is quite a coup. His educated estimate for the state of Colorado is that there are 8,000 to 10,000 people employed directly in the industry, and 20,000 total.

Those In The Ties Vs. Those In The Tie-Dyes

Oaksterdam University, which started in 2007, is quite legit indeed. Faculty members include well-known industry figures like Ed Rosenthal and Chris Conrad. The founder and president is Richard Lee, who's probably more responsible than anyone else for reviving Oakland's downtown and economy in general, as well as making the entire state's medical industry what it is today. You know the famous Supreme Court case, *Gonzales v. Raich*? Robert Raich is an instructor there too. Laurence Lichter is the Dean Of Law.

Dale Sky Jones, the Chancellor, told us that even she "didn't realize how perfect our motto ("the highest quality training for the cannabis industry") was until we had lived it for a few years. It's one of the most phenomenal transitions I've witnessed firsthand. You used to see this clear delineation, but now the diversity walking through our doors is tremendous. The people from the cannabis culture are starting to learn how to work with politics and business, and the business people from other industries are learning to work with – and within – the cannabis industry," Jones said. "It's those in the ties vs. those in the tie-dye."

**RUSH ESTIMATES THAT
THERE ARE CURRENTLY**

12000

**PEOPLE WORKING FULL-TIME IN
CALIFORNIA RIGHT NOW**
(in the Medical Marijuana Industry)

This kind of cross-pollinating isn't just across outlook, it's also across age boundaries. Oaksterdam's students have ranged from 18 to 86. According to Jones, "One lady came to us because her son wanted to go. She not only took the classes but became valedictorian!" As far as jobs, she pointed out that it's not just the obvious growers and dispensary workers, but also "real estate brokers and insurance agents and cleaning services and supplies have become experts...these are things that any mainstream industry would require."

Oaksterdam University has taught 13,000 students since opening, which includes not only their 30,000 square foot Oakland campus but also training in Ann Arbor (Michigan), Los Angeles, and Sebastopol. "We teach best practices, whether for California law or Michigan or Ohio. Individuals most likely to have legal problems get special training in how to interact safely with law enforcement," she told us. "A lot of what you learn isn't just going to help you do things like grow pot, you also learn what not to do. Let us show you how to grow without burning your house down. Learning what's not legal is just as important as what is."

Look For The Union Label

One indication that medical cannabis has become a serious industry is that they're getting organized.

According to Dan Rush, who is Director of Statewide Special Operations and Cannabis Division for the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Local 5, there

are 300 dues-paying members and 400 "about to become dues-paying" in shops where employees have voted to accept the union. This includes including people working in education, cultivation, dispensaries, delivery services, a cannabis cigarette company, a public health company, and a UPS-like transportation company run by ex-military and ex-police officers.

Rush estimates that there are currently 12000 people working full-time in California right now: 4000 are cultivators, self-employed growers, trimmers, small farmers, and food processors; 6,000 dispensary and support workers; 1,500 in testing laboratories; and perhaps 1,000 "floaters off the grid". He also mentioned that the UFCW is starting to organize in other medical states such as Colorado, Arizona, Michigan, and Ohio.

The UFCW is also actively pursuing California state accreditation for apprenticeship standards for the cannabis industry, Rush told The 420 Times. That's serious business too, which according to the state website "creates opportunities for Californians to gain employable lifetime skills and provides employers with a highly skilled and experienced workforce while strengthening California's economy."

And if all that weren't enough, there's also THCJobs.com, a website dedicated towards finding people cannabis-oriented jobs...and in this economy, that's quite an accomplishment. If only the Obama Administration was as interested in creating jobs as they claim to be, rather than raiding and closing dispensaries. We would see a serious, healthy, and long-term expansion in the U.S. economy!