

Town of Sedgwick

Adult-Use Cannabis Sales

Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ was prepared as a follow-up to the recent town meeting to help Sedgwick residents learn more about the upcoming vote on whether to allow adult-use cannabis retail sales in our town. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your selectboard.

THE BASICS

What exactly is the town voting on?

Sedgwick residents will vote on whether to opt in to Maine's adult-use cannabis program, which would allow licensed cannabis retail stores to operate within town limits. This does not approve any specific store or location. It simply opens the door for the town to participate in the regulated market.

If this passes, what happens next?

Opting in is just the first step. After a successful vote, the town will develop a local cannabis ordinance before any store can gain local approval. That ordinance will spell out the rules for how and where a cannabis business can operate in Sedgwick. Once the ordinance is in place, any business would still need to secure a conditional license from the state Office of Cannabis Policy, receive local authorization from the town under the new ordinance, and then pass state inspections before opening. This is a multi-step process that typically takes many months.

Why does the town need to vote at all?

Under Maine law, municipalities must actively choose to allow adult-use cannabis businesses. Towns that do not vote to opt in remain opted out by default. This vote gives Sedgwick residents direct say in whether to participate.

Can the town reverse its decision later?

Yes. If Sedgwick votes to opt in and residents later want to change course, the town can hold another vote to opt back out. Beyond that, Maine's cannabis licensing structure gives the town ongoing control. State active licenses are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. Renewal requires continued local authorization from the municipality. This means the town has a regular, built-in checkpoint to ensure any licensed business continues to meet local standards.

RULES AND SAFETY

Who can purchase cannabis from a retail store?

Only adults 21 and older. Every customer must present valid photo identification, which is scanned before they are allowed onto the sales floor. No exceptions.

Can people use cannabis at the store or nearby?

No. Maine law makes on-site consumption at a retail cannabis store illegal. Every product sold leaves the store in a sealed, tamper-evident package. There is no sampling, no lounge area, and no gray area on this point. It is also illegal to consume cannabis in any public space. Use is limited to private residences.

Where do the products come from?

Every product sold in a Maine adult-use store must be grown and manufactured entirely within the state by licensed operators. Nothing is imported from out of state.

How do we know the products are safe?

All products must pass independent laboratory testing for pesticides, mold, heavy metals, and potency before they can be sold. Each item carries a Certificate of Analysis. This level of testing does not exist in the unregulated market.

How is inventory tracked?

Maine uses a real-time, state-monitored seed-to-sale tracking system. Every plant and every product is accounted for from the moment it is planted to the moment it is sold. This prevents unauthorized sales and diversion.

FITTING INTO THE COMMUNITY

What would a cannabis store actually look like in Sedgwick?

Any store operating in Sedgwick would be expected to blend in with the character of the town. That means a building whose design and materials fit the aesthetics of the surrounding area, not a flashy commercial storefront. Parking would be set back off the road in a small, appropriately sized lot. The goal is a business that looks like it belongs here, not one that stands out.

What about security and lighting?

State law requires a 24-hour security system, including surveillance cameras covering all entry points and the sales floor. Exterior lighting will be motion-controlled, meaning it activates only when needed rather than blazing all night long. This keeps the property secure without turning it into a brightly lit eyesore for neighbors. The overall approach is to maintain strong security while respecting the quiet, rural feel of the community.

JOBs AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Does the cannabis industry create real jobs?

Yes. Nearly 10,000 people were employed in Maine's cannabis sector by late 2025, working in retail, cultivation, manufacturing, and testing. These are local jobs with local employers.

Would a store in Sedgwick bring jobs to town?

This would not be a large commercial operation. A store in Sedgwick would be a small, locally run business. The expectation is around 2 to 3 full-time positions and 3 to 4 part-time positions, covering roles like management, sales, and compliance. These are jobs that would be filled by people in the area.

How many people actually use legal cannabis in Maine?

In 2025, there were over 4.8 million transactions at licensed adult-use stores statewide. The market serves broad, consistent demand from adults across the state.

CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Will this increase crime in Sedgwick?

There is no evidence that it would. Maine has consistently ranked as one of the safest states in the country, and that has not changed since legal recreational cannabis sales launched in October 2020. According to the Maine State Police “Crime in Maine” reports, violent crime in the state actually decreased in the years following legalization. In 2020, the year retail sales began, overall violent crime dropped 4.9% compared to the prior year. Robberies fell 11.4%, aggravated assaults fell 3.1%, and reported rapes decreased 4.9%. That downward trend continued. The overall crime rate fell from 32.44 per 1,000 people in 2021 to 29.65 in 2023, and dropped again to 28.83 in 2024, marking the fourth consecutive year of decline.

How does Maine compare nationally?

Maine has the lowest violent crime rate in the nation. FBI data for 2024 shows Maine at approximately 100 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, compared to a national average of 359. A 2024 study from Bryant University also found that cannabis legalization in New England correlates with a decrease in non-drug-related crimes in surrounding areas. Licensed stores operate under strict security requirements, including surveillance systems, controlled entry, and 24-hour monitoring.

Does legal cannabis actually replace the black market?

According to the Office of Cannabis Policy’s market survey, approximately 64% of cannabis consumed in Maine now comes from the legal, regulated market. Opting in gives Sedgwick residents access to tested, regulated products rather than leaving demand to be met by unregulated sources.

YOUTH AND MINORS

What about keeping cannabis away from kids?

The 21-and-over age requirement is enforced by mandatory ID scanning at the door. State law imposes significant penalties on any store that sells to a minor. Packaging and labeling rules require child-resistant containers and prohibit marketing that appeals to minors.

COSTS, REVENUE, AND FINANCIAL IMPACT

Does it cost the town anything to opt in?

The costs to the town are minimal and largely recoverable. Expenses related to drafting an ordinance, holding public hearings, and conducting the vote are eligible for reimbursement from the state. Maine's Office of Cannabis Policy will reimburse qualifying municipalities up to \$20,000 for those legal and administrative costs. On top of that, the town can set its own local licensing fees for cannabis businesses, creating a revenue stream that offsets ongoing administrative costs.

What about broader financial benefits?

Cannabis stores create local jobs, and the employees who fill those positions spend money in the community. The state applies a 14% sales tax on adult-use purchases as of January 1, 2026, and that revenue goes into Maine's General Fund, which is then distributed back to towns across the state for services like education, infrastructure, and public safety. Statewide, adult-use sales reached \$246.4 million in 2025.

Will this affect property values?

Research published in the *Journal of Public Policy* and cited by NORML shows that municipalities allowing cannabis businesses have seen average home price increases between 1.6% and 2.7%. There is no evidence of property value decline in towns that have opted in.

Have more questions?

Contact the Sedgwick Selectboard or visit the Maine Office of Cannabis Policy at
www.maine.gov/ocp

Sources: Maine Office of Cannabis Policy, Maine State Police Crime in Maine Reports (2020–2024), FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Maine Revenue Services, NORML, Journal of Public Policy, Bryant University, USAFacts