



## [Legalize Marijuana in Montana](#)

Marijuana has been driven into people's minds as a harmful drug that can ruin one's life. It's believed to send people down a hole of no motivation, more harmful drugs, major health issues, and laziness. But for the longest time marijuana was used for medicinal purposes and also as a source of fiber until it was put as a Schedule 1 drug under the Controlled Substances Act. After plenty of studies conducted on the effects, it's quite the opposite. Instead, marijuana is extremely beneficial for us and our state. It helps eliminate the black market, create a safe government-regulated weed industry, and it generates more tax money.

Ever since Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act in 1970, marijuana has been kept away from the public's hands. Slowly the states have been acknowledging the benefits of marijuana and have been legalizing it medically and occasionally for recreational use. In Montana, marijuana has only been legalized for medical use, while some interest has existed to legalize it recreationally.

There's still fear surrounding marijuana due to attack ads, politicians, and our parents and or relatives speaking against marijuana. The newest facts, studies, and research surrounding marijuana should be presented to the people instead of providing beliefs from the past. If the public was more informed on marijuana with an updated and educated review, then people would be more accepting to legalization.

The biggest benefit to legalizing marijuana would be the tax money. In this new market with such a high demand, we could add a tax on sales which will benefit the state in many ways. According to Colorado's Department of Revenue, the state has raised over one billion dollars in legal marijuana sales from both recreational and medical use. The Department of Revenue also reported that "the first \$40M of the Retail Marijuana Excise Tax revenue was distributed to the Colorado Department of Education's Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program. Excise tax collections in excess of \$40M, \$2.5M for FY 2015-16, were transferred to the Public School Fund."

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We could really expand our state programs and other projects that could possibly need more funding. Like Colorado, Montana could expand tremendously on its educational programs or even provide more funding to schools that need financial help. This tax money could also be used to improve roads and highways, as some of the roads in Montana are in desperate need of repair.

Another added bonus to having marijuana legalized is having it government-regulated and safe for the public. Now that weed has to meet a certain criteria, it will be safe for the public and they will not have to worry about it being harmful or laced with cocaine or any other psychoactive substance.

People buying marijuana off the black market can now buy it safely from stores and contribute to the state. Also there will be new jobs due to the many businesses opening. It will boost Montana's economy and will allow for more people to work and contribute to the state.

Legalizing helps lower crimes, creates safe weed, brings in a lot of tax money, and it keeps America happy. By keeping it illegal, we are just spending more and more to keep it away from the public's hands. Montana needs to take the steps to legalizing marijuana for recreational use now. It's helpful for the both the state and the people.