

Two More Executives Ousted from NY's Office of Cannabis Management

Two high-ranking officials at New York's Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) were dismissed last week, marking significant changes within the struggling regulatory agency. The departures are part of an ongoing overhaul following a state-ordered review.

Key Officials Depart

Mary Adelaja, the OCM's chief diversity officer and manager of executive operations, and Nicole Triplett, the chief of staff and counsel, were both let go on June 13. Triplett had only joined the office in March. Neither Adelaja nor Triplett responded to interview requests, but former OCM spokesperson Aaron Ghitelman confirmed that the two were not willing departures.

"They were asked to leave by the new acting executive director and the governor's office," said Ghitelman, who himself left the OCM in March. He noted that such exits are not unusual during a comprehensive agency overhaul.

Reasons for the Overhaul

The shakeup comes in the wake of lawsuits, industry complaints, and a sluggish rollout of the state's legal cannabis marketplace. [In response to these issues, Governor Kathy Hochul ordered an assessment of the OCM in March, led by Office of General Services Commissioner Jeanette Moy.](#)

Moy's review identified inefficiencies, mismanagement, and an unclear organizational hierarchy among other deep-seated problems within the OCM. As a consequence, Governor Hochul announced that Chris Alexander, who had led the agency since 2021, would not continue after his term ends in September. Alexander subsequently submitted his two-week notice, and on June 10, Hochul appointed Felicia A. B. Reid as the acting executive director.

Adelaja and Triplett were dismissed just three days after Reid's appointment.

Impact of the Departures

Adelaja was a key figure in the OCM, responsible for the strategic plan for diversity and inclusion and its integration into the agency's social equity initiatives. She was also the OCM's representative on the state's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Council. Adelaja had been with the OCM since its inception in late 2021, bringing experience from her previous role at the Department of Homeland Security.

Triplett, in her short tenure, managed agency-wide strategic alignment and worked closely with Alexander. Her professional background includes positions at Meta, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the U.S. Congress House Judiciary Committee.

Future Outlook

The leadership changes at the OCM highlight ongoing efforts to address the agency's challenges and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of New York's cannabis regulatory framework. With new leadership in place, the agency aims to navigate the complex landscape of cannabis legalization and market rollout, while ensuring equitable opportunities and robust management practices.

The recent dismissals and restructuring underscore the commitment to reforming the OCM and addressing the criticisms that have plagued the agency since its inception. As New York continues to develop its legal cannabis market, the impact of these changes will be closely watched by industry stakeholders and policymakers alike.

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