



Tribal cannabis stores hit record expansion across the US

By **Matthew Klas**

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Sovereign Native American tribes continue to develop cannabis retail businesses, with a record number of cannabis stores opening in 2025. As of April 30, there are 93 tribally owned cannabis retail outlets in 10 states.

With 19 tribes owning 26 stores, Washington has the most tribally owned cannabis retail operations of any state. Minnesota and California, each with 17 stores, are tied for second. Between May 2025 and April, the number of cannabis retail outlets owned by tribes rose by 19%, driven primarily by 11 stores opening in Minnesota.

Native American tribes in Minnesota played an important role in the early development of the market. In addition to Minnesota, new tribally owned stores opened in California, Michigan, Nevada, New York and Washington in the past year.

While the average store is approximately 4,000 square feet, tribally owned retail outlets range in size from small modular structures to grand destinations exceeding 10,000 square feet. Throughout the United States, 67 tribes own cannabis retail stores, an increase of 12% since May 2025. That means that about 12% of the 575 federally recognized tribes throughout the U.S. own cannabis retail operations. With 19 new stores, 2025 saw the highest number of new tribally owned cannabis retail openings in a single calendar year. Of the 67 tribes with cannabis retail operations, 79% also own casinos.

The cannabis stores are often located near the tribes' gaming properties, with over a third in close walking distance of a casino. Cannabis stores near a casino can benefit from increased visitation and proximity to complementary facilities such as parking, and they can help the casino generate incremental gaming revenue.

Native American tribes are sovereign, and their marijuana laws sometimes differ from the state law applicable outside their jurisdictions. In some cases, tribal marijuana laws are more restrictive. For example, adult-use cannabis sales are illegal in the Navajo Nation, even on land within the borders of Arizona and New Mexico, where recreational cannabis can otherwise be purchased and used under state law.

By contrast, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians legalized cannabis on tribal land and sells it through the Great Smoky Cannabis Co., the only legal marijuana store within the borders of North Carolina. Outside of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' reservation in North Carolina, cannabis remains illegal.

Tribes may also license and regulate cannabis businesses rather than owning them. Many tribes own cannabis businesses other than retail stores, including cultivation operations, manufacturing facilities and testing labs. Although states sometimes restrict vertical integration in the cannabis industry, tribes can choose to create operations that grow, manufacture, test, package and sell products all on tribal lands.

In several states, the tribal and state governments have entered compacts – agreements between governments setting out how cannabis will be regulated. Minnesota and Washington are two examples of states with tribal cannabis compacts. In both states, tribes participate in the state market, buying and selling from state-licensed businesses.

In Minnesota, it is increasingly common for tribes to open dispensaries off-reservation pursuant to their compact agreements with the state government. The Red Lake Nation opened a new branch of its NativeCare stores in West St. Paul in March. Similarly, the White Earth Nation opened Waabigwan Mashkiki locations in Moorhead, St. Cloud and East Grand Forks and is developing another off-reservation store in Chanhassen.

With its strong growth in the past 12 months, Minnesota now has the same number of tribally owned cannabis retail outlets as California, a state with nearly 10 times as many federally recognized tribes and the largest cannabis market in the U.S. So far, California has not entered cannabis compacts with tribes.

Cannabis has played an important role for tribal economies in recent years. These businesses help create jobs, diversify tribal economies, generate tax revenue and assert the sovereignty of tribal governments. They can also benefit non-tribal communities by supplying safe, tested products to areas where state-licensed stores do not exist. In addition, tribally owned cannabis businesses can help supply unmet demand in the period between adult-use legalization and state licensing, as in Minnesota or New York, bridging the gap between legalizing cannabis and licensing retail stores.

More growth can be expected in the coming months as the market continues to develop in Minnesota and other states and additional tribes across the country explore opening cannabis businesses.

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DATA APPENDIX

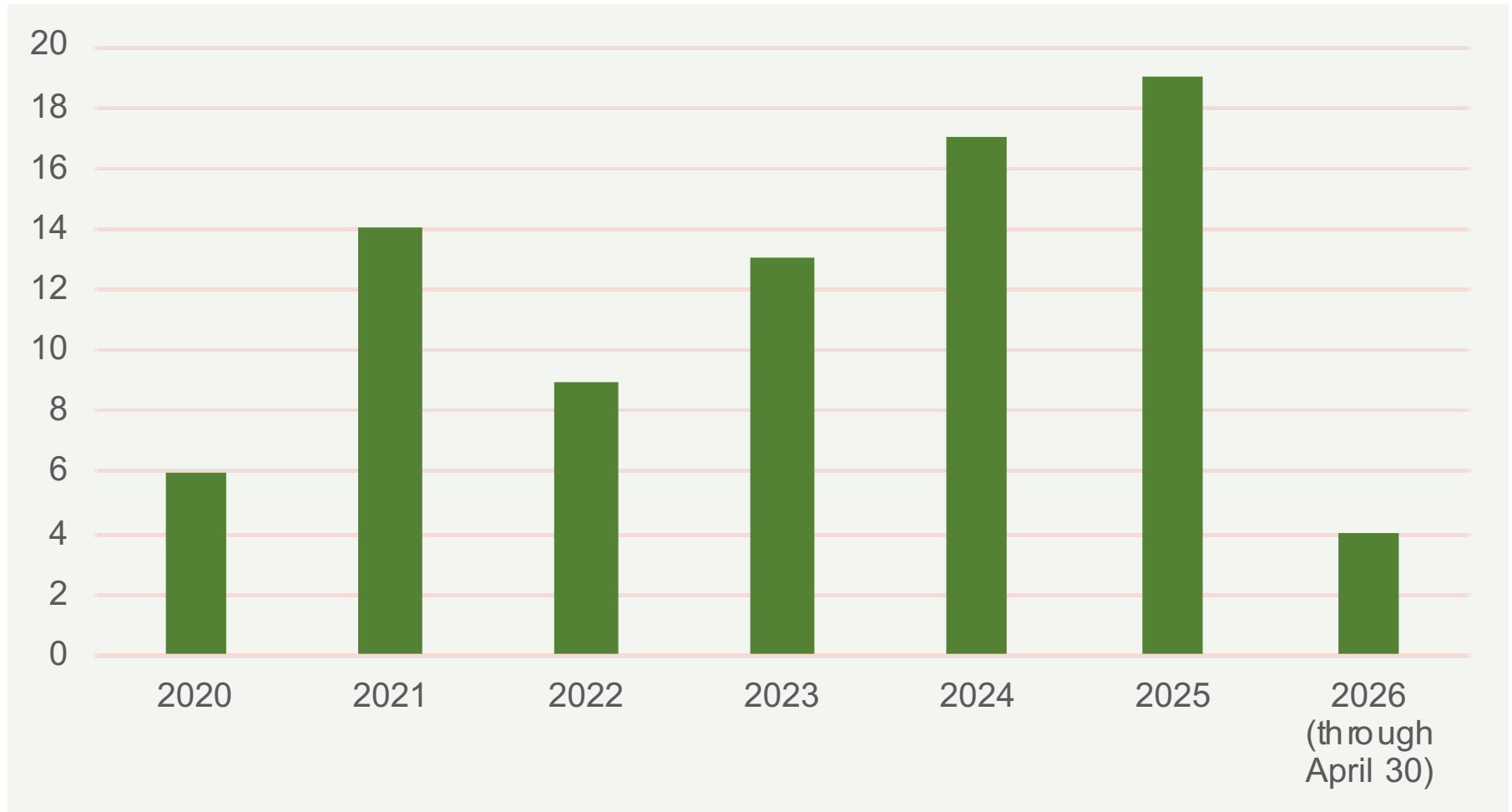
Tribally Owned Cannabis Retail Outlets by State

State	Dispensaries	Tribes	Avg. Sq. Ft.	Recreational and Medical	Recreational Only	Medical Only	Near Casino	Stand Alone
Alaska	1	1	NA	-	1	-	-	1
California	17	14	4,130	11	6	-	9	8
Michigan	7	5	3,760	2	5	-	2	5
Minnesota	17	9	2,867	3	14	-	9	8
Nevada	10	9	4,344	8	2	-	-	10
New Mexico	2	2	5,000	1	1	-	-	2
New York	9	4	3,075	-	9	-	3	6
North Carolina	1	1	10,000	1	-	-	-	1
South Dakota	3	3	3,750	-	-	3	2	1
Washington	26	19	4,045	9	17	-	8	18
Total	93	67	3,963	35	55	3	33	60

Source: KlasRobinson Q.E.D.



Tribally Owned Cannabis Retail Openings by Year



Source: *KlasRobinson Q.E.D.*

