

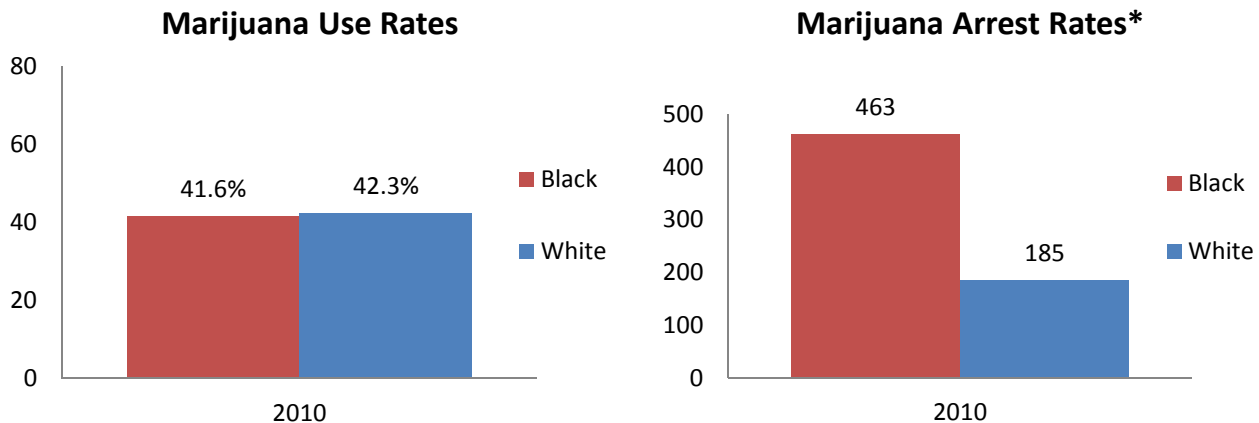


Backgrounder

Washington's Marijuana Laws Are Not Enforced Fairly

Washington's marijuana laws are enforced disproportionately against African Americans.

- In Washington, a black adult is roughly three times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white adult despite the fact white Washingtonians use marijuana at a slightly higher rate.¹



*Misdemeanor marijuana possession arrests per one hundred thousand adults of the same race. Arrest data provided by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; population data from census estimates for 2010 Adults (3,971,324 white, 184,951 black). Rate calculation was conducted using the following formula: # of arrests/(population/100,000).

- If an arrest results in incarceration or charges requiring court appearances, the individual may miss work and suffer long-term employment consequences.²
- A criminal conviction can carry numerous legal consequences including loss of employment,³ loss of housing,⁴ loss of voting rights,⁵ loss of federal financial aid for college,⁶ seizure and forfeiture of property,⁷ termination of child visitation rights,⁸ and deportation for legal immigrants.⁹

¹ Washington State Department of Social & Health Services, *Tobacco, Alcohol, & Other Drug Abuse Trends in Washington State 2010 Report*, p. 62 (2010), available at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/dbhr/2010%20Trends%20Report%20links.pdf>.

² See Bruce Western, *The Impact of Incarceration on Wage Mobility and Inequality*, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Aug. 2002), pp. 526-546; see also Bruce Western, Jeffrey Kling & David Weiman, *The Labor Market Consequences of Incarceration, Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2001), pp. 410-427; John Hagan & Ronit Dinovitzer, *Collateral Consequences of Imprisonment for Children, Communities, and Prisoners*, *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 26 (1999), pp. 121-162.

³ *In re Orr*, *Empl. Sec. Comm'r* Dec.2d 795 (1987).

⁴ R.C.W. 59.18.130; 42 U.S.C. §1437f(d)(1)(B)(iii).

⁵ R.C.W. 29A.08.520.

⁶ 20 U.S.C. §1091(r).

⁷ R.C.W. 69.50.505; 21 U.S.C. §881

⁸ *State on Behalf of Hendrix v. Waters*, 89 Wn. App. 921, 951 P.2d 317 (1998).

⁹ U.S.C. §1227(a)(2)(B)(i).