



America's Black Forum Episode Synopsis

Episode Number: 21-03
Week of October 11, 2021

This week on **America's Black Forum**:

The Racial Disparity in the Legal Cannabis Industry

It's no secret, black entrepreneurs haven't been able to partake in the mushrooming marijuana industry. It's projected cannabis sales could reach \$70 billion dollars by 2028. Blacks seeking to go into business as growers or retailers face a host of hurdles. Many states bar convicted drug felons from the industry, while others have set high investment requirements. The disparities have become such a source of consternation for some lawmakers and industry leaders that some states are taking steps to boost minorities in the competitive licensing process. **Wanda James is the founder and CEO of Simply Pure** Dispensary and is the first Black woman to own a dispensary in the U.S. Wanda knows all too well the issues fought by Black entrepreneurs attempting to break into the industry.

Are Black Farmers Finally Getting the Help they Need?

Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University, Kentucky State University and more than 15 other HBCUs have received land grants that will boost agricultural research efforts at their institutions. **Tuskegee University president Dr. Charlotte Morris** welcomes the investment. In return, the U.S. Department of Agriculture hopes their work will help assist thousands of struggling Black farmers in the U.S. For many farmers like **Barbara James-Norman and Denise Greer Jamerson**, the USDA's help on any level may be a little too late for some Black farmers.

Black Art at its Best

Founded in 2019 by **Patricia Andrews-Kennan, Pigment International Black Arts Organization**, is a multi-media arts platform that evangelizes for Black art, curation, investment and innovation. The organization uses arts journalism to advance the Black contemporary aesthetic in the visual arts; and honor the history and relevance of Black Art projects and creators of Black Art. Pigment Int'l. serves as a connector for emerging artists, collectors, curators, investors, and other stakeholders. They create customized programming that sparks dialogue and inspires broader creativity. They also are the publishers of Pigment Magazine and founders of Black Fine Art Month, a celebration recognized in October as a celebration of the Black Fine Art ecosystem.