

Cannabis Control Commission Launches First-in-the-Nation Social Equity Program

Request for Qualifications seeking vendor partners issued

For Immediate Release:

June 28, 2018

Boston—The Cannabis Control Commission has introduced a first-in-the-nation Social Equity Program that is designed to create sustainable pathways to the adult-use cannabis industry for people disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition.

Applicants who qualify will receive ongoing technical assistance and exclusive training from selected vendors as well as certain fee waivers. On Wednesday, the Commission issued a [Request for Qualifications](#) (RFQ) to identify partners who will develop curricula and provide in-person training to participants who fall under four program tracks based on areas of interest and skill level.

The four program tracks are:

- Entrepreneur (those seeking licensure and ownership);
- Core (those interested in cannabis careers at the managerial and executive level);
- Re-Entry and Entry-Level (those re-entering society or those entering the workforce); and
- Ancillary (those with existing skills directly transferable to supporting cannabis businesses).

The RFQ seeks vendors with expertise in accounting and sales forecasting; business plan creation and operational development; farming best practices; fundraising; management, recruitment and employee training; cannabis industry best practices; navigating the licensing/certification processes; navigation of municipal processes; tax prediction and legal compliance; understanding and navigating law; and trade skills. Responses must be submitted by 5 p.m. on July 25, 2018.

“As the Commonwealth moves rapidly toward the beginning of adult-use cannabis sales, we are obligated by both the law and our values to ensure that the communities previously targeted by the War on Drugs have a fair shot to participate in this market,” Commissioner Shaleen Title said. “Now that the equity program is in place, I look forward to a wide range of vendors providing deserving applicants with skills, connections, and resources to help them thrive in the cannabis industry.”

State law requires the Commission to adopt procedures and policies to encourage full participation by the identified individuals and to positively impact their communities. The Social Equity Program follows another Commission initiative aimed at redressing harms to populations that have been arrested and incarcerated for previous drug laws. Earlier this year, the Commission also certified 123 applicants with Economic Empowerment priority status, which allows them to apply early for a marijuana establishment license and receive Commission review before other applicants.

Additionally, a legislative mandate requires the Commission to conduct a study on minorities, women, and veteran business enterprises within Massachusetts’ cannabis industry. If barriers to entry are

identified, the Commission is instructed to create training programs designed to achieve meaningful participation by disproportionately impacted communities.

For more information about the Social Equity Program, call Director of Community Outreach Shekia Scott at 617-701-8400, visit <https://mass-cannabis-control.com/social-equity-programs/> or follow [@MA_Cannabis](#) on Twitter.

###