

## Equity Work Plan

- Contract with a research institution on a robust study of barriers to entry and meaningful participation, including an examination of why certified economic empowerment applicants haven't applied.
  - ✓ *The Commission is in the process of preparing a procurement, utilizing an existing statewide contract, to identify a research partner. This project will be led by our Director of Research, Dr. Julie Johnson.*
- Review the geographic diversity of Social Equity Program applicants throughout the Commonwealth and adjust outreach accordingly.
  - ✓ *The Commission, as it reviews applications for the Social Equity Program, is identifying regions of the Commonwealth that are underrepresented by applications and will begin planning and advertising outreach events accordingly. This project will be led by our Director of Community Outreach, Shekia Scott.*

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- Collect data on ancillary businesses, including vendors used by Commission licensees, and include it in all reports on participation in the industry.
  - ❑ *The Commission will develop an RFP process to assist the Research Department in developing an on-going study to assess ancillary businesses in the cannabis industry with contractual collaboration with researchers with expertise in business and economics. This project will be led by our Director of Research, Dr. Julie Johnson.*
- Create regulations allowing shared-use cultivation and shared-use manufacturing space for certain groups of applicants or licensees, to address the barriers to entry poised by securing real estate, facility design, and local approval processes.
  - ❑ *The Commission has begun research regarding different analogous models, including tenant brewer licenses in the Commonwealth, and Type S cannabis licenses in California, in order to develop policy recommendations. Given the current schedule for regulatory changes, staff will complete its research and as appropriate, propose recommendations for the Fall 2019.*

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- Consider whether the Commission has the authority to revisit existing priority status and create new priority status(es) based on the Commission's mission statement and current data examining participation in the legal marijuana industry in Massachusetts.
  - ✓ *Commission staff has conducted a legal analysis regarding the ability to revisit or initiate a new priority status. This evaluation has been shared with the Commission.*
- Create a single-packet or abbreviated application process for economic empowerment applicants and equity program participants that takes place before the local approval process, specifically before the negotiation of a host community agreement.
  - ❑ *The Commission has explored the ability to consider certain elements of a complete marijuana establishment application, including background check and business plans, and conduct a preliminary evaluation. This would entail developing a new, separate application for Pre-Approval, which would ultimately require Commission consideration and approval. Given the current schedule for regulatory changes, staff will propose recommendations for the Fall 2019.*

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- Issue formal recommendations to the Legislature addressing the creation of grant programs or interest-free loan programs for equity program participants.
  - ❑ *The Commission, through the Chairman, has begun to evaluate various models for such a program and pursue strategies relative to identifying sources of funds as well as program requirements. This project has been led by Chairman Hoffman.*
- Consider requiring retailers to source a certain amount or percentage of products from equity program participants or microbusinesses or craft co-ops.
  - ❑ *The Commission will evaluate the legality of such a requirement, as well as other, similar models, including Colombia. This project will be led by our legal staff.*

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- Devote a small amount of staff time and resources to facilitating conversations among regulators in jurisdictions with cannabis equity programs, focusing on topics including but not limited to:
  - Consistent data collection
  - Best practices for developing curricula and selecting technical assistance providers
  - Preventing predatory practices aimed at equity program participants
  - Working with the state's existing certification and resources for disadvantaged business enterprises
  
- ✓ *The Commission has long enjoyed productive dialogue with other jurisdictions, and will continue to explore opportunities for collaboration. In specific reaction to equity programs, the Commission will expand these efforts to include municipal interactions within the Commonwealth, as well as across the country. This project is shared amongst staff, but specifically includes the Director of Community Outreach, Shekia Scott, Commissioners, and the Executive Director.*

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- Issue recommendations to, or collaborate directly with, the Legislature regarding community trusts or other models for affordable commercial space for small businesses sharing space and costs.
  - ❑ *The Commission will research the viability of a community trust or other similar model for shared space and return with recommendations for the Commission's consideration. This project will be shared by the Commission's legal and government affairs staff.*
- Consider re-evaluating the income limit for equity program participants.
  - ✓ *The Commission ought to reconsider any income threshold for the Social Equity Program, and may consider other modifications or updates during the upcoming regulatory review. This project will be led by our legal staff, in consultation with our Director of Community Outreach.*

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- Engage with licensees on progress toward their diversity plans and positive impact plans before renewal, perhaps quarterly.
  - ❑ *The Commission, given the data available through MassCIP and now leveraged through the open data platform, can provide licensees with periodic updates (ex. 6 months) regarding the demographics of their agent registrations. Similarly, investigators will plan to inquire during routine inspections regarding the progress of positive impact plans. This project will be led by our investigative team.*
- Provide more detailed information and data about compliance on the Commission website, with the goal to minimize the need to hire consultants to interpret regulations and requirements.
  - ❑ *The Commission will continue to evaluate the design and layout of our website, especially for ease of navigation and accessibility of content. With the transfer of the medical use of marijuana program, as well as the introduction of an open data platform, the Commission ought to consider a comprehensive review of all materials. This project will be led by our Communications Department.*