



Maryland

Office of Social Equity

The Office of Social Equity and Maryland Cannabis Administration Announce Details of Free Technical Assistance Available for Social Equity Cannabis License Applicants

Linthicum Heights, MD – The Office of Social Equity (“OSE”), the Maryland Cannabis Administration (“MCA”), and the Maryland Department of Commerce (“Commerce”) today announced the details of the Technical Assistance program to be made available to Social Equity Applicants for the Fall 2023 Cannabis Licensing Application Round. This technical assistance includes informational events designed to empower applicants by providing valuable insights, guidance, and networking opportunities to help navigate the licensing process.

"We believe in the power of knowledge, support, and collaboration. Our upcoming technical assistance events are more than just informational sessions; they are a testament to our commitment to empowering social equity license applicants," **said Office of Social Equity Executive Director Audrey Johnson**. "Together, we'll navigate the licensing process, opening doors to opportunities that will shape Maryland's cannabis industry for the better."

The informational events will feature brief presentations by key leaders from the Office of Social Equity and the Maryland Cannabis Administration reviewing the social equity verification and license application timeline and processes, recently announced Friday, September 8, 2023. Each event will present a subject matter expert session focused on specific topics addressing the most pressing concerns of social equity applicants. Here's a glimpse of what attendees can expect:

Subject Matter Expert Sessions

- Business Formation and Structure
- Partnership Deals
- Finance and Taxes
- Raising Capital and Investors 101

In addition to the Office of Social Equity and the Maryland Cannabis Administration informational events, the Maryland Department of Commerce today announced the eligibility criteria for the next round of funding through the Cannabis Business Assistance Fund (CBAF): the [Social Equity License Application Assistance Reimbursement Grant](#). While cannabis business license applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the technical resources available at no cost through the Office of Social Equity and the Maryland Cannabis Administration prior to utilizing this program, the Cannabis Business Assistance Fund can help offset the cost of accountants, attorneys and other providers of technical assistance. Under the program, social equity applicants who complete a cannabis license application can be reimbursed up to 50% of eligible application preparation costs with the maximum grant being \$5,000. Eligible expenses include consultant or advisory fees associated with writing a business plan, an operational plan and a detailed diversity plan; advisory costs on forming the business and determining its structure; and language translation costs incurred in completing the application. Additional information about this reimbursement grant program can be found by visiting the [Cannabis Business Assistance Fund webpage](#).

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with experts, seeking answers to their specific questions and concerns, and time and space to participate in facilitated networking by license application type (cultivate, process or distribute) or technical assistance needs (business formation, partnerships, budget/finance, and raising capital).

These informational events are a testament to Maryland's commitment to fostering a diverse and equitable cannabis industry. By providing social equity applicants with the knowledge, resources and connections they need, the Office of Social Equity and the Maryland Cannabis Administration aim to empower individuals and communities to thrive in this burgeoning industry.

Schedule of Technical Assistance Informational Events

Date	Time	Location
October 9, 2023	6:30 – 8:30 P.M.	Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
October 16, 2023	5:00 – 7:00 P.M.	Prince George’s Community College, Largo, MD
October 23, 2023	5:00 – 7:00 P.M.	Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD
October 30, 2023	1:00 – 3:00 P.M.	Live Virtual Session
November 6, 2023	5:00 – 7:00 P.M.	Bowie State University, Bowie, MD

For event details and registration information, please visit ose.maryland.gov.

About the Office of Social Equity

The Office of Social Equity, an independent agency established by the Cannabis Reform Act of 2023, is charged with providing resources and support for historically disadvantaged individuals and businesses seeking to enter the adult-use cannabis market. The vital responsibilities of the office include implementing technical assistance programs for qualifying social equity applicants and licensees, reviewing regulations and laws through an economic equity and social justice lens, and supporting key programs including the Community Repair and Reinvestment Fund and the Cannabis Business Assistance Fund. The mission of the Office of Social Equity is to provide resources and

support for historically disadvantaged individuals and businesses seeking to enter the Maryland adult-use cannabis industry.

About the Maryland Cannabis Administration

The Maryland Cannabis Administration is responsible for regulating the state's medical cannabis program and overseeing the implementation of policies related to cannabis cultivation, processing, and distribution. MCA is committed to ensuring a fair and transparent cannabis industry in Maryland.

About the Cannabis Business Assistance Fund

The Cannabis Business Assistance Loan/Grant Fund (CBAF) is a financing resource operated by the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce), to provide grants and loans for small businesses, including small, minority-owned and small women-owned businesses entering the adult-use cannabis industry. CBAF also provides grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for cannabis-related programs and to business development organizations, including incubators, to train and assist small businesses, including minority and women business owners and entrepreneurs, seeking to become licensed to participate in the adult-use cannabis industry.

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