



Sonoma County **Local Cannabis Equity Program Manual**

Section 1. Purpose

In 2021 Sonoma County contracted with Humboldt State University’s California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) to perform a comprehensive analysis of the impact of cannabis criminalization and poverty on the County of Sonoma. This analysis, known as the Sonoma County Cannabis Equity Assessment (CEA) (2021) established that certain persons in the county have been substantially and adversely affected by poverty and the criminalization of cannabis.

Many rural communities in California have a history of entrenched local poverty and economic hardship.¹ These communities were impacted significantly by the criminalization of cannabis, including SoCo communities as illustrated on page 25 of the CEA. According to the Sonoma County Cannabis Equity Assessment (2021), targeted, data-driven, and well-funded equity programs can help communities and populations, especially ancillary cannabis businesses, into a legal and sustainable economic future.

The purpose of this manual is to describe program participation qualifications for the Sonoma County Cannabis Local Equity Program (LCEP). The LCEP is informed by findings in the CEA, which itself will be revised and updated periodically as the program matures in alignment with program participation and outcomes achieved .

Additionally, this manual provides programmatic examples of services offered by other California jurisdiction’s State funded Local Equity Cannabis programs. The jurisdictions are outlined in the following order in Appendix A (pg. 13):

1. The City of Oakland
2. The City of Los Angeles
3. The City and County of San Francisco
4. Humboldt County
5. Mendocino County
6. The City of Sacramento
7. The City of Long Beach

Section 2. Program Eligibility

The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development’s (GO-Biz) Cannabis Equity Grant (CEG) outlines that local jurisdictions will be aiding equity applicants and licensees to

¹ <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Cannabis/PDFs/Cannabis-Equity-Assessment/>, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/cannabis-program/>



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build a business in the regulated market. Accordingly, individuals and not business entities are the only ones eligible to apply to the Local Cannabis Equity Program. Eligibility criteria for the program is:

Program Eligibility	
Tier A Eligibility Criteria	
Those who meet one or more of the below Tier A eligibility criteria will be considered for state funding and state funded services.	
Conviction history	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who was arrested and/or convicted of the sale, possession, use, manufacture, or cultivation of cannabis (including as a juvenile) or been subject to asset forfeiture between 1996 and 2016.
Family conviction	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County, with a parent, sibling, child, or a guardian/member of immediate household who was arrested for or convicted of the sale, possession, use, manufacture, or cultivation of cannabis (including as a juvenile).
Low income status	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County whose household income is at or below the “Low Income 80% AMI” level based on the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) State and Local Program income limits (ILs) for Sonoma County ² .
Residency consideration	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who has resided in the County for the ten years between 2011-2021. The County reserves the right to make this a mandatory requirement.
Veteran status	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who can demonstrate veteran status.

² For an outline of the relevant Sonoma County income limits, please see the following link:
<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CDC/Housing-and-Neighborhood-Investment/Income-and-Rent-Limits/>



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Residency in area of high arrest	<p>Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County that has lived for at least five years in a census tract identified in the Cannabis Equity Assessment as having high rates of drug/cannabis arrests.</p> <p>The following census tracts were outlined in the Cannabis Equity Assessment as having high rates of drug / cannabis arrests: 1530.02, 1531.02, 1531.03, 1531.04, 1532, 1514.02, 1542.01, 1537.04, 1503.05. Census tracts that border the aforementioned tracts might also be considered for inclusion in eligibility.</p>
Tier B Eligibility Criteria	
The following eligibility criteria is only applicable if the applicant meets at least 1 criteria in Tier A :	
Size of operation ³	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County that has “small scale” cultivation as defined by Sonoma County’s ministerial (zoning) permit criteria ⁴ .
School district enrollment	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County that is legal guardian of children enrolled in a Sonoma County School District for at least five (5) consecutive years prior to application.
Prop 215 and SB 420 compliance	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County that can demonstrate compliance with Proposition 215 and SB 420. Documentation is inclusive of but not limited to a Seller’s Permit, Collective Agreement, and Tax payments.
Wildfire Damage	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who have been directly impacted (i.e., damage to/loss of home or business) by wildfires in the County.
Participation in PRP	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who previously participated in the cannabis Penalty Relief Program (PRP).

³ Note that a 10 acre minimum parcel size for cultivation is in effect per Ordinance No. 6245.

⁴ Sonoma County’s ministerial (zoning) permit criteria can be accessed through the following link:
<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Cannabis/Permits/Cultivation/>



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Shift in Land Use Requirements	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who was cultivating on land zoned Agricultural Residential (AG) or Rural Residential (RR) when cannabis ordinance no. 6189 was passed, effectively banning cultivation on those parcels; or on a parcel under 10 acres in size when the minimal parcel size was raised per ordinance no. 6245.
Participation in Foster Care System	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who were a part of the foster care system.
Drug Diversion Program Completion	Any individual seeking support or services to participate in the legal cannabis industry in Sonoma County who have completed drug diversion programs. This qualification will be considered only if at least one other eligibility criteria is met.

In order to determine and categorize which individual applicants are most in need of support, a score will be determined for each equity applicant based on the number of eligibility criteria the applicant meets. Each qualification will have an assigned value that will be determined by how direct the impact was. Tier A criteria will be scored at two points each and Tier B criteria will be scored at one point each. The county reserves the right to adjust eligibility criteria and scoring method as needed to reflect current needs and trends in the county. The score will support prioritization of services for equity applicants. The goal of the applicant scoring system is to ensure that those most impacted by cannabis criminalization and poverty have priority access to local equity program funding.

Sonoma County will take into consideration the following applicant types when determining available services:

- Applicants that have already received their license
- Applicants that are facing barriers to entry in receiving their license
- Applicants that are not yet in the permitting process but are planning to start

Section 3. Program Access

To ensure that applicants who are eligible for the Sonoma County Local Equity Program have adequate opportunity to benefit from the program, options to foster ongoing support may include:



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Program Access	
Prioritization	Consider a prioritized permit process for equity applicants. Equity Businesses can receive priority application review, allowing them to move quicker through the application process.
Ratios	Consider mandating a requisite number/percentage of equity applicants during permitting.
Incubation Program	Consider a robust incubation program for equity applicants to learn from more experienced cannabis businesses. Incubators can help equity applicants/licensees become independent and successful at the end of their incubation period. Service examples include providing physical space, administrative support, capital, links to potential investors and funding sources, and access to training, expert advisors, coaching, mentorship, and networking.
Equity Applicant Incentives	Consider providing additional scoring for equity applicants who cultivate other crops and/or participate in recognized sustainable certification programs.
Untaxed Compassionate Products	Consider not taxing products that are donated to Compassionate Access Programs.

Sonoma County will notify the community about the Local Equity Program and all information pertaining to it through the following avenues:

- Information on the Sonoma County’s Cannabis Program website⁵.
- News releases and other media outreach.
- Social media campaigns.
- Local industry groups.
- Through community partners selected by the County.

Sonoma County may determine other avenues to ensure that the community is aware of the Local Equity Program and is able to access information about applying for funds. The County would like to encourage existing cannabis businesses/operations to create space for new licenses.

⁵ <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Cannabis-Program/>



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Sonoma County will address feedback from communities and populations eligible for the Local Equity Program in the following ways:

- Written e-comment.
- Opportunities to speak with County Administrator’s Office staff.
- Listening sessions.
- Surveys.

Section 4. Services

Services to be provided by the Sonoma County Cannabis Local Equity Program may include one or more of the services listed in the below tables. The availability and scope of services will depend on need and the availability of funds from grants or other sources.

The County of Sonoma intends to provide a majority of services via direct funding assistance to equity applicants and licensees to assist them in entering and succeeding in the legal cannabis industry⁶. Direct funding is intended to offset non-County costs associated with completing each phase of the cannabis business license application and permitting process. The cost of projects funded by the equity program may not exceed funding left available per applicant. Wherever possible, Sonoma County will align services with funding requirements and recommendations from the State of California.

To address and mitigate barriers of entering the legal market, the following assistance will be offered:

1. Financial	
1.	Direct payment of fees on the applicant’s behalf for Pre-Application Meetings of up to four hours with Sonoma County Cannabis Program staff.
2.	Assistance with application fees for a Zoning, Minor Use, and Conditional Use Permit application for a period not to exceed three (3) years.
3.	Assistance with fees for studies required as part of the land use application such as cultural studies, hydrology reports, biology reports, etc.
4.	Assistance to cover costs of agencies and/or professionals who offer cannabis business support including but not limited to business planning, loan application preparation,

⁶ Any and all financial assistance relevant to the Sonoma County Cannabis Equity Program is made available through grant funding provided by the State of California. Grant funding will only be available until funds are exhausted, or until the State mandated expiration of the equity grant program, whichever occurs sooner.



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	site location services, human resource management, legal assistance, capital procurement services, bookkeeping and accounting practices and systems, for Sonoma-based cannabis businesses.
5.	Direct grants to applicants for the purpose of complying with permits or license requirements for any local jurisdiction in Sonoma County and/or the State of California.
6.	<p>Direct grants to applicants, not to exceed \$10,000.00 per grant, for purposes of assuring compliance with regulatory requirements of the County or California permits or licenses that mitigate adverse environmental effects of cannabis cultivation or other activities including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water storage for irrigation during forbearance periods of surface water diversion required by state or local regulations. ● Installation of solar electrical systems to replace diesel or gasoline generator power for off-grid cannabis facilities where connecting to the grid is economically infeasible. ● Rent for said facilities where the above activity is occurring and when cultivation of cannabis activities are permitted by the owner. ● Funds to cover fire suppression and compliance, such as water tanks. ● Funds to cover trainings and certifications for best management practices such as pesticide use, etc.

The following services are anticipated to address and mitigate administrative or technical barriers of entry into the legal cannabis market:

2. Administrative/Technical	
1.	Assistance to cover fees to agencies and/or professionals who provide technical assistance for the formation of an incorporated cooperative composed of members that are cannabis equity program applicants or licensees.
2.	Provide technical assistance to assist those with past cannabis convictions to get their records expunged, if not previously expunged.
3.	Provide technical assistance to assist equity applicants with the state licensing process.



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These next services help equity applicants with establishing trust and confidence with participating in the legal cannabis market:

3. Outreach and Education	
1.	Conduct outreach and education efforts for residents in low-income housing to encourage those individuals to apply for licenses and enter the legal industry. An example of outreach may include hosting listening sessions.
2.	Create outreach materials that are clear, concise, and accessible to those with limited literacy. Including creating materials in multiple languages.

The last collection of services will be focused on assisting equity applicants with developing adequate business acumen for thriving in the legal cannabis market:

4. Business Acumen	
1.	Training for equity participants and their employees in licensed cannabis operations in Sonoma County.
2.	Provide training/support for business owners to understand workforce rules and regulations (view section below).

Section 5. Additional Services for Cannabis Businesses

If it is determined that there is funding available and an existing need from equity applicants and equity licensees, the County of Sonoma may explore the following additional services for inclusion in the Local Equity Program through a future program revision.

Recommendations are divided into the following categories listed in priority order: Manufacturing/Productions, Agriculture/Cultivation, and Retail. The County will explore ways to partner with the local community college to connect equity applicants and licensees with training and education opportunities.

Additional Services	
1.Manufacturing/Production	



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1.	Access to business planning (business startup strategy: how to build and manage a detailed startup business plan that can scale up and include facilities, marketing, tax and regulation, payroll, human resources hiring and supervision, and teamwork).
2.	Access to incubator programs such as manufacturing hubs that can hire, cross train and job share positions between small entrepreneurs. Incubation hubs will provide (1) mentorship in business skills; (2) technical assistance; (3) a reporting system to monitor and ensure neither equity licensee nor business mistreat the other; and (4) a system that allows equity licensees and businesses to anonymously provide suggestions and complaints about the existing program.
3.	Training to learn how to use METRC, the state’s track and trace system used to track commercial cannabis activity and movement across the distribution chain.

Additional Services

2.Agriculture/Cultivation

1.	Access to business planning, low-cost loans or investment sources that can assist smaller, often multi-generational family farmers with the costs of legalization, so that income can be spent on hiring, training, growing wages and benefits of a variety of jobs-from farm management to bookkeeping.
2.	Support for reasonable regulations and zoning that promote and incentivize employers to build good business and workforce development practices.
3.	Access to standard human resource methods: hiring and orientation, training in proper and regulated land use for farm and field workers, hiring and supervision processes, setting job benchmarks and performance standards, evaluating performance for promotion or wage scale increases.
4.	Access to business and HR tools: developing HR manuals and procedures, how to frame up a request for a consultant scope, interview and select the right consultant or consultant firm, how to manage a consultant scope.
5.	Developing, securing, and increasing farm management skills in agricultural, biology, and land management.



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6.	Access to agricultural extension services to help with the science of plant biology from a medicinal and commercial standpoint, and help feed local graduates in biology and environmental sciences into the industry-much like the timber industry has done.
7.	Training on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and standards.

Additional Services

3. Retail

1.	Access to comprehensive business and marketing strategies that connect cannabis retail to tourism, related workforce development (hiring, training, presentation, customer service, job readiness, and supervisory skills).
2.	Access, training, or mentorship in general business supervisory, customer service, workplace norms, and software skills.
3.	Evaluate the specific need and content for a program that certifies front line positions (bud tending, security, track and trace, manufacturing, and packaging personnel).

Section 6. Program Administration

Sonoma County intends to seek available funding from the State of California for the Local Equity Program as is outlined in Senate Bill 1294 (Bradford), referred to as the California Cannabis Equity Act. SB 1294 created a fund for local jurisdictions with cannabis equity programs to apply for funding to assist local equity applicants and local equity licensees gain entry to and successfully operate in the state's regulated cannabis marketplace.

If funding is received from the State, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors will explore local funding that can supplement these efforts - the Board has agreed to provide an initial \$100,000 from local cannabis tax revenues, contingent upon the County receiving funding from the State. The use of local funding for the Local Equity Program will remain at the discretion of the County.

Program Administration



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1.	No more than ten percent (10%) of any funding from the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) Local Equity Program Grant Funds may be utilized for program administration.
2.	Principal administration and coordination of services shall be performed by the County Administrator’s Office or other designated entity determined by the Board of Supervisors.
3.	The County Administrator’s Office or other designated entity determined by the Board of Supervisors shall receive and process all applications to determine eligibility of equity program participants.
4.	The County Administrator’s Office or other designated entity determined by the Board of Supervisors shall monitor and report on all program services provided through the LEP, at least annually and more frequently as directed by the Board of Supervisors, state law, or regulation.

Local jurisdictions that have been previously awarded a Cannabis Equity Grant from GO-Biz are eligible to apply for a subsequent grant only if:

- The jurisdiction has expended at least 50 percent (50%) of any grant funds awarded more than 12 months ago and;
- Expended at least 80 percent (80%) of any grant funds awarded more than 18 months ago.

Section 7. Provision of Services

Staff in the County Administrator’s Office serve as the liaison between equity licensees/permitted operators who receive grant funding and the selected agency that provides an eligible service.

Provision of Services	
Involved agencies may include but are not limited to:	
1.	Small business development organizations
2.	Permit Sonoma
3.	Department of Health Services



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4.	Workforce development agencies
5.	Law Enforcement Agencies
6.	County Counsel

Section 8. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

For the purposes of understanding the impacts of the adult-use cannabis industry, Sonoma County will track data on general and equity applicants. The purpose of collecting data on an ongoing basis is to measure the success of the local cannabis equity program.

Completion of an annual demographic questionnaire will be voluntary and will be aligned with the demographic questionnaire developed by the State of California. Applicants and existing operators will be encouraged to participate so that the County can assure that equity funding is being awarded to populations of highest need. Recommended metrics are as follows and conform to the County’s discretion:

Program Monitoring and Evaluation	
Recommended Metrics	
Number of equity applicants to apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Types of drug-related offenses 2. Income status 3. Race Ethnicity 4. Gender 5. Sexual Identity 6. Residency Status 7. Ownership Structure
Workforce characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total number of employees 2. Number of local employees 3. Employment status (full-time, part-time, etc.)
Equity program-specific data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of applicants eligible for equity program 2. Associated permit types 3. Number and types of services provided to equity applicants 4. Number of equity program applicants to receive licenses/permits.



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Number of equity program applicants starting ancillary businesses 6. Feedback from participants to understand the impact of receiving funds on their socioeconomic status or ability to stay in Sonoma
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Appendix A. Review of Peer Jurisdiction’s Local Equity Programs

The following appendix presents a snapshot of services and programs offered by peer jurisdictions in the State of California. The information in this appendix is updated as of November 2021.

Section 1. City of Oakland

*City of Oakland Grant Program (Elevate Impact)*⁷

To receive grant funds, equity applicants must complete a grant application and undergo a business verification process. Grant amounts are disbursed in tiers that are designed for equity applicants to build sustainable businesses. If an equity applicant meets the requirements of all five grant tiers, they will be eligible to receive a maximum grant amount of \$90,000, as summarized below:

City of Oakland Grant Program			
Tier	Purpose	Tier Amount	Combined Amount
Tier 1	Establish the Business	\$5,000	\$5,000
Tier 2	Become Compliant	\$10,000	\$15,000
Tier 3	Open the Business	\$15,000	\$30,000
Tier 4 ⁸	Start Operations	\$20,000	\$50,000

⁷ <https://www.elevateimpactoakland.com/grant-program-overview/>

⁸ Tiers 4 and 5 are only available to businesses that are 100% owned by equity qualified individuals or businesses that match the City’s grant amount with an equal-sized loan, investment or grant from a third-party. Applicants must have already received grants totaling the \$50,000 before applying for Tier 5.



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Tier 5	Expand the Business	\$40,000	\$90,000
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City of Oakland GRASS (Gaining Resources to Achieve Sustainable Success) Program

To help Oakland’s Equity Grant recipients build long-term sustainable and successful businesses, Oakland offers a business coaching program modeled after programs implemented by other capital providers such as micro-lenders and equity investors who seek to ensure growth and that success is achieved by the entrepreneurs they funded.

City of Oakland Technical Assistance Program

Make Green Go is the City’s consultant assigned to provide technical assistance with establishing a compliant cannabis business. Technical assistance consists of workshops, consultations, and online training for Equity Applicants in all phases.

WORKSHOPS:

- Compliance Workshops
- Subject Matter Experts

CONSULTATIONS:

- Business Coaching
- Document Review
- Business Plan Review
- Compliance Related Topics

COURSES:

- Entrepreneurship Training
- Business Plan Development
- State of California Licensing Information

RESOURCES:

- Sample Plans & Templates
- Start-Up Advice
- Industry Research
- Legal Resources
- Sales & Marketing
- Funding Sources

City of Oakland Shared Use Manufacturing Facilities



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The City of Oakland advances opportunities for equity manufacturers by sponsoring two separate shared-use manufacturing facilities for a one-year period through grant funds received from the Bureau of Cannabis Control (BCC). These facilities will provide equity applicants with both compliant locations to manufacture products and support in distributing products to retailers.

City of Oakland Legal Assistance Program

The City of Oakland provides equity operators and applicants with limited, no-cost legal services to advise equity businesses on matters including but not limited to licensing, regular compliance, business formation, raising capital, contracts, commercial leasing, and dispute resolution.

Section 2. City of Los Angeles

[City of Los Angeles SEED Program](#)⁹ (Partnership between City of LA Department of Cannabis Regulation and Elevate Impact LA)

In April of 2021, the City of Los Angeles established the Social Equity Entrepreneur Development Grant Program (SEED). This program utilizes funding from the Cannabis Equity Grant for Local Jurisdictions (CEG) to provide financial assistance to verified Social Equity Individual Applicants.

Through SEED 2.0, verified Social Equity Individual Applicants may apply to receive a financial grant of \$10,000 available in two disbursements upon meeting the following licensing milestones:

- i. \$5,000 when DCR deems the Pre-Application eligible for further processing; and
- ii. \$5,000 when the Applicant is eligible for a Notice of Local Compliance Underway.

City of Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation; Application Processing

Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation provides Social Equity Applicants the following when certain criteria requirements¹⁰ are met:

- Priority access to retail and delivery Licenses
- Priority License Application Processing
- Priority License Renewal Processing

City of Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation; Business, Licensing, and Compliance Assistance

⁹ <https://cannabis.lacity.org/social-equity-program/program-benefit-and-resources/seed-grant-program>

¹⁰ Requirements can be found here: <https://cannabis.lacity.org/application-processing>



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The Department of Cannabis Regulation selected five vendors to provide targeted programming to Social Equity entrepreneurs interested in launching a commercial cannabis business in Los Angeles. This online programming will cover: State and Local licensing Requirement, Commercial Cannabis Regulations, Cannabis Specific Business Development and Workforce Development, General Business Development, Cannabis Technology Business Development Services Education. (Online webinars/programming)

City of Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation; Fee Deferral Program

The Department of Cannabis Regulation is currently working to establish requirements to participate in the Program. Participation in the Fee Deferral Program may be subject to the availability of resources.

City of Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation; Pro Bono Legal Services

The goal of this referral resource is to promote fair and equitable participation in the licensed commercial cannabis industry, and to foster a level playing field as it relates to access to legal counsel and help deter predatory practices targeting the social equity community.

Section 3. City and County of San Francisco

[San Francisco Equity Program¹¹](#)

Equity Applicants¹² do not have to pay the \$5,000 permit fee. They can also benefit from an incubator¹³ partnership that provides rent free space for 3 years or technical assistance to run their business.

Section 4. Humboldt County

[Humboldt County Project Trellis¹⁴](#)

The Project Trellis Local Equity Program provides direct grants to equity applicants for the following services

- i. Application assistance meetings.
- ii. Deposits and permitting fees.

¹¹ <https://officeofcannabis.sfgov.org/equity>

¹² Eligibility criteria for San Francisco's Equity Program can be found here:
<https://officeofcannabis.sfgov.org/equity/applicant>

¹³ See the following link for San Francisco's incubation requirements: <https://officeofcannabis.sfgov.org/node/2697>

¹⁴ <https://www.gohumco.com/195/Project-Trellis>



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- iii. Sealing and annual registration of scales used in cannabis licensed businesses, or fees associated with Pesticide Applicator requirements.
- iv. Amounts up to \$10,000 towards equity applicant or licensee's annual fees
- v. Direct payments on the applicant's behalf of fees to agencies and/or professionals offering technical assistance for the formation of an incorporated cooperative. Cost of project may not exceed \$10,000 or funds remaining.
- vi. Direct grants, not to applicants, not to exceed \$10,000 per grant, for purposes of assuring compliance with regulatory requirements of the Jurisdiction or California permits or licenses, mitigating adverse environmental effects or ensuring financial solvency. Funds can be used for, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Water storage for irrigation during forbearance periods of surface water diversion required by state or local regulations.
 - b. Remediation and relocation of cannabis facilities located within streamside setbacks required by state or local regulation.
 - c. Installation of solar electrical systems to replace diesel or gasoline generator power for off-grid cannabis facilities where connecting to the grid is economically infeasible.
 - d. Rent for facilities where the above activity is occurring with documented consent of facility owner(s) of the cannabis cultivation and related activities.
- vii. Direct payment on the applicant's behalf of fees to agencies and/or professionals who offer cannabis small business development assistance, including but not limited to business planning, loan application preparation, site location services, human resource management, capital procurement services, bookkeeping and accounting practices and systems, for Humboldt County-based cannabis businesses. Cost of project may not exceed \$10,000 or funds remaining.
- viii. Direct payment on the applicant's behalf of fees for employment skill training for eligible equity participants and employees of their licensed cannabis operations in their jurisdiction.

Section 5. Mendocino County

[Mendocino County LEEP: Local Equity Entrepreneur Program¹⁵](#) (Elevate Impact)

Equity applicants are allowed to apply for the following grants:

1. Direct grants of up to \$50,000

¹⁵ <https://elevateimpactmendo.com/>



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LEEP Designees can apply for up to \$50,000 in Direct Grants (disbursed in up to two \$25,000 tranches at the discretion of the grant recipient) for purposes of assuring compliance with regulatory requirements of local or state permits or licenses that mitigate adverse environmental effects of cannabis cultivation. Suggested activities include (but are not limited to):

- Water storage for irrigation during forbearance periods of surface water diversion required by state or local regulations.
- Remediation and relocation of cannabis facilities located within stream side setbacks required by state or local regulation.
- Installation of solar electrical systems to replace diesel or gasoline generator power for off-grid cannabis facilities where connecting to the grid is economically infeasible.
- Road remediation, watershed mitigation, culverts or infrastructure needed to meet state and local regulations.
- Grants for the purpose of employment skill training for eligible equity participants or seeking employment in licensed cannabis operations in Mendocino County.
- General business purposes including: (1) technical assistance or professional services including consultants providing CEQA analysis and Appendix G development, biological studies, bookkeeping, accounting, legal, insurance requirements; (2) business location procurement prior to or during the application process (i.e., rent and/or lease assistance); (3) assistance in required trainings such as Cal OSHA (4) cannabis related tax payments.

2. Fee and permit waiver grants of up to \$7,000

LEEP Designees can apply for a fee waiver for cannabis related County Permits or Licenses. The maximum cumulative amount per grantee is \$7,000 for County cannabis related permits, licenses, and application fees. While you may apply for more than one waiver, no partial fee waivers will be granted. Commercial Cannabis Business Tax true up invoices or quarterly payments are not eligible. LEEP Fee Waiver Grants will be awarded and will be scored on a pass or not approved basis. Incomplete or not approved applications will be encouraged to reapply. Complete applications will be eligible for grant awards as funding allows. Funding will be provided on a first come first served basis.

3. Technical assistance grants of up to \$2,000



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LEEP Designees can apply for up to \$2,000 in Technical Assistance Grants (TA Grants). Technical Assistance refers to support to help cannabis equity applicants and licensees acquire the knowledge and/or skills necessary in order to gain entry to, and operate in, the regulated cannabis marketplace. Direct technical assistance includes:

- One-on-one consulting and group training, to provide equity applicants and licensees the technical knowledge and expertise necessary to facilitate business ownership and employment in the cannabis industry.
- Small business support services, training and education related to state cannabis licensing and regulatory requirements, financial management, and business resilience.

Technical Assistance is defined as:

- Small Business Development Assistance including business planning, grant and loan application preparation, human resources management, capital procurement services, bookkeeping and accounting practices and systems, etc.
- Cannabis Cooperative Associations including understanding legal regulations pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 26220-26231.2, and educational information regarding the process of forming Cannabis cooperatives.

Section 6. City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento Cannabis Opportunity Reinvestment and Equity (CORE) Grant Program (Elevate Impact)

General program benefits may include but are not limited to: business plan development, business monitoring, coaching on access to capital, business needs assessment, loan readiness assessment, market assessment, data and research strategies an support, assistance with a legal entity, assistance with criminal records expungement, lease negotiation assistance, small business legal considerations, mentoring, fiscal management, marketing/social media, technical training, employee training, and regulatory compliance. A CORE Program participant shall be entitled to receive the following benefits based on the applicable classification:

Classifications 1, 2, 3 & 5¹⁶: Participants shall receive the following:

- All support services offered under the program
- Priority processing of application(s)
- Waiver of the Business Operating Permit (BOP) fee
- Exclusive access to any future storefront dispensary permits

¹⁶ Please see the following link for a breakdown of the City of Sacramento's Equity Applicant Classifications: <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/City-Manager/Divisions-Programs/Cannabis-Management/Core-Program>



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- Exemption from the Neighborhood Responsibility Plan (NRP) requirement

Classification 4: Participants shall receive the following:

- Qualified and ready CORE participants to host
- Priority processing of application(s)

Sacramento's CORE Program also offers the *CORE Capital Loan Program*¹⁷

Section 7. City of Long Beach

City of Long Beach Cannabis Social Equity Program

Individuals who qualify for the Equity Program and want to open an adult-use cannabis business in Long Beach are eligible to receive benefits and assistance to help navigate the City's cannabis application and licensing process.

To qualify for the Equity Program, individuals must be verified as Equity Applicants by the Office of Cannabis Oversight and then be verified as Equity Businesses by the Business License Division. To qualify as an Equity Business, Equity Applicants must have a minimum of 51% ownership of the entity that will apply for an Adult-Use Cannabis Business License.

Equity Program Benefits¹⁸:

- Application workshops: assistance on how to prepare and submit a complete cannabis business license application and learn strategies on how to increase opportunities for approval at each stage of the application process.
- Fee Waivers^{*19}: All zoning, application, plan check, inspection and other application City fees are waived for Equity Businesses. Fee waivers will cover city costs that Equity Businesses would otherwise incur through the cannabis business license application and permitting process, thus allowing Equity Businesses to conserve resources for other costs associated with opening a cannabis business In Long Beach.
- Direct Grants^{*}: Direct grants are intended to offset non-City costs associated with completing each phase of the cannabis business license application and permitting process. Equity Applicants and Equity Businesses who complete cannabis business

¹⁷ <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/City-Manager/Divisions-Programs/Cannabis-Management/Core-Program/LoanProgram>

¹⁸ <https://www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/cannabis-information/cannabis-social-equity-program/open-an-equity-business/>

¹⁹ *Fee waivers (except for application fees), direct grants and direct technical assistance are made available through grant funding provided by the State of California. Grant funding will only be available until funds are exhausted, or until the State mandated expiration of the equity grant program, whichever occurs sooner.



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licensing direct grant milestones are eligible to receive a grant amount associated with each milestone. The following chart is a breakdown:

City of Long Beach Grant Program	
Cannabis Business Licensing Direct Grant Milestones²⁰	Grant Amount Available
Pre-Application Milestone A: Equity Status Verification Issued before July 23, 2020	\$5,000
Pre-Application Milestone B: Equity Workshop Scheduled or Attended Before July 23, 2020	\$5,000
Milestone #1: Cannabis Business License Application Review	\$100,000
Milestone #2: Completion of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) or Administrative Use Permit (AUP) Process	\$80,000
Milestone #3: Submittal of Facility Architectural Plans	\$85,000
Milestone #4: Issuance of Building Permit	\$80,000
Milestone #5: Final Building Sign-Off or Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy	\$20,000
Milestone #6: Issuance of Cannabis Business License	\$80,000
Total Possible Grant Funding (excluding per-application milestones)	\$445,000

- Expedited application review: Equity Businesses will receive priority application review, allowing them to move quicker through the application process.
- Cultivation tax deferrals: Equity Businesses who applied for an adult-use cannabis cultivation license may pay their first year’s taxes on a monthly payment plan instead of the full payment that is usually required prior to issuance of a cannabis cultivation business license.
- Direct Technical Assistance*: Equity Applicants and Equity Businesses will have access to business consulting services to start, sustain, and grow a viable cannabis business in Long Beach.

²⁰<https://www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/cannabis-information/cannabis-social-equity-program/direct-grants-program/>