

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

CANNABIS DEPARTMENT

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January 2023, County of Mendocino Cannabis Department (MCD) Update

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The County of Mendocino Cannabis Department (MCD) Has Moved to Willits

On November 14, 2022, the County of Mendocino Cannabis Department (MCD) moved from 579 Low Gap Road in Ukiah, California to the Willits Justice Center (WJC), located in the City of Willits.

New location!

Willits Justice Center (WJC)

125 East Commercial Street, 2nd Floor
Willits, California 95490

Same phone number!

707-234-6680

Same email addresses!

MCDPOD@mendocinocounty.org

For application, permitting, and cannabis planning related questions and communications.

CannabisProgram@mendocinocounty.org

For general inquiries and grant related questions and communications.

New MCD counter hours effective as of December 6, 2022!

Monday	By appointment only.
Tuesday	9:00 am – noon & 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Wednesday	9:00 am – noon & 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Thursday	9:00 am – noon & 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Friday	By appointment only.

MCD Staffing

In October 2021, when the Board of Supervisors transitioned the Cannabis Program from a division of Planning and Building Services to the County of Mendocino Cannabis Department (MCD), the Board also approved a staffing plan for twenty-two fulltime employees. By September 2022, the MCD had reached maximum occupancy at its Ukiah offices. The recent move to the Willits Justice Center provides the office space necessary to actively recruit and hire new staff.

Year	Month	Staff Person	Position
2018	July	1. Nicholas Duncan	Planner II
2019	February	2. Gabriella Eaton	Planner II
2021	March	3. Kristin Nevedal	Director
	November	4. William Riley	Program Administrator
	December	5. Diana De Los Santos	Planner I
2022	February	6. Audrey Gardner	Department Analyst
	April	7. Angelina Lane	Planner Tech II
	May	8. Tarah Rhine	Planner Cartographer
		9. Kasie Miller	Planner Tech I
		10. David Strock	Planner Tech I

	July	11. Gregory Withrow	Planner II
	September	12. Heidi Cremelle	Administrative Assistant
		13. Elora Babbini	Chief Planner
November	14. Trish Tracy	Staff Assistant III	
Actively Recruiting	15. Vacant	Program Manager	
	16. Vacant	Senior Planner	
	17. Vacant	Office Services Supervisor	
	18. Vacant	Department Analyst (underfill Planner II)	
	19. Vacant	Planner I/II	
	20. Vacant	Planner I/II	
	21. Vacant	Administrative Assistant	
	22. Vacant	Staff Assistant III	

Accela Application Management Platform

On December 6, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a three-year agreement with Carahsoft, an Accela software and services provider. The Department is currently working with Carahsoft to implement the software which will provide application and permit tracking accessible by both the department and the public, a public facing electronic application portal, a project management platform for department staff, an electronic field inspection application, an automated notification system to assist permit holders with maintaining annual permits, and an electronic shopping cart that will expand payment options for applicants.

Application Review Update

MCD staff continues to process renewal applications, modification applications, and transfer applications. Currently a number of issued permits have expired yet no renewal application has been received. In an effort to ensure annual permits are renewed the department has sent notices to permit holders with expired permits, permits that are about to expire, and to applicants with permits that expire within 60- or 90-days. MCD staff has also been directed to complete the review any Appendix G Checklist submission previously assigned to the planner.

Application review, for applications not previously issued, will begin in the first quarter of 2023, and will be prioritized based on when the local applicant's state issued provisional license is scheduled to expire. The following tables provide additional information regarding issued permits, application statuses, and the MCD's plan for reviewing applications not previously issued.

Description	Active AG Numbers	Deprioritized AG Numbers
Total Active AG Numbers	841	414
Issued Permits	241	83

Applications	600	331
• Complete Applications	309	141
• In Good Standing Portal	119	51
• Incomplete 2021/2022 Portal Applications	172	139
Vegetation Modification Reviews		
• Applications Under Review	35	17
• Permit Holders	Unknown	Unknown

Sensitive Species Habitat Review – Referrals to CDFW	Active AG Numbers
Number of Referrals	125
• Initial Referrals	113
• Re-Referrals	12
Common CDFW Comment Responses	
• Requested Bio Surveys	56
• Requested Site Visits	8
Timeline of Work Conducted	
• MCD Sent First Referral	1/27/2021
• First Response Received from CDFW	3/25/2022
• CDFW Suspension of Referral Services	7/28/2022
• Last Response Received	10/5/2022
Appendix G Checklist	
• Complete Checklists Received	46
• Complete Checklists Assigned for Review	4

In Good Standing Portal

In Good Standing Applications	122
De-prioritized In Good Standing Applications	51
• Delinquent taxes	37
• DCC Compliance issues	42
In Good Standing Portal Submissions (as of January 11, 2023)	72
• Number of Unique* Applications Submitted	58
• Number of submissions deprioritized and not reviewed	6
• Complete Applications	1

*Some applicants have submitted more than one time. The term "unique" is meant to clarify that 58 individual applicants have submitted applications, 13 of which have been submitted more than once.

Application Processing Timelines

Timeline for DCC Provisional License Renewals	Est. Applications	Est. Number of Weeks	Projected Timeline
July 2023 License Renewals	33	8	January -February 2023
August 2023 License Renewals	17	4	March 2023
September 2023 License Renewals	30	7	April - May 2023

October 2023 License Renewals	6	1	June 2023
November 2023 License Renewals	11	3	June 2023
December 2023 License Renewals	22	5	July - August 2023
January 2024 License Renewals	22	5	August - September 2023
February 2024 License Renewals	14	3	October 2023
March 2024 License Renewals	19	4	November 2023
April 2024 License Renewals	22	5	December 2023 January 2024
May 2024 License Renewals	32	7	January – February 2024
June 2024 License Renewals	28	6	March – April 2024
Subtotals	256	59	1.25 Years

The above numbers are based on the following assumptions: 200 Staff Hours / Application; 11 Full Time Planners plus 20 Contract Planners; and assumes an 80% productivity rate

State Licensing Timelines

The Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) may not renew a provisional license after January 1, 2025, and no provisional license shall be effective after January 1, 2026.

Timelines for Issuing New Provisional Licenses	Application Deadline	Issuance Deadline	Renewal Deadline
New Applications (General) - All new applicants for commercial cannabis licenses with some exceptions	March 30, 2022	June 30, 2022	January 1, 2025
Small Cultivator Exception - Applicants with less than 20,000 sq. ft. of outdoor canopy	June 30, 2022	September 30, 2022	January 1, 2025
Local Equity Applicant Exception - Local equity applicants who meet the requirements of a jurisdiction's local equity program where they operate and would not cause the applicant to hold multiple cultivations licenses that exceed one acre of total canopy for outdoor or 22,000 sq. ft. for mixed-light or indoor	March 31, 2023	June 30, 2023	January 1, 2025

CEQA Progress for New and Renewed Provisional Licenses

New Provisional Licenses & Renewals Until June 30, 2022

If CEQA is not complete

1. Evidence that CEQA compliance is underway.
2. Evidence that compliance with local ordinances is completed or underway.

New Provisional Licenses & Renewals from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

If CEQA is not complete, a determination from the DCC that one of the following requirements has been met:

1. The lead agency is in the process of preparing a site-specific initial study, addendum, or checklist; or
2. The lead agency (local jurisdiction) has made substantial progress during the previous 12-months toward completing project-specific environmental review by drafting, preparing, or circulating for public review an environmental document; or
3. If the DCC is the lead agency, information requested by the DCC of the provisional licensee that demonstrates the furtherance of environmental review; or
4. Information submitted to the DCC by the provisional licensee applicant that demonstrates evidence of substantial progress toward compliance with CEQA during the previous 12-month term

Renewals On or After July 1, 2023

If CEQA is not complete, a determination from the DCC that one of the following requirements has been met:

1. The lead agency for the license has prepared and circulated for public review a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.
2. The lead agency for the license has determined that an environmental impact report (EIR) is required and has either made substantial progress in preparing that EIR, or has a contract or contracts with consultants in place for the preparation of that EIR
3. The lead agency has certified to the DCC that it has conducted a reasonably comprehensive site-specific review and has reviewed, prepared, and deemed complete an initial study, addendum, or checklist which demonstrates consistency with a previously circulated and adopted negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report
4. The lead agency for the license has reviewed, prepared, and deemed complete a notice of exemption, except for ministerial projects not subject to CEQA

Department of Fish and Wildlife Progress – For Cultivation Related Activities

New Provisional Licenses & Renewals Until June 30, 2023

For cultivation activities, any of the following documents:

1. A final Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA); or
2. A draft LSAA signed and returned to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW); or
3. Written verification by the DFW that a LSAA is not needed; or
4. Written verification by DFW that the applicant has submitted a notification as prescribed, submitted payment of applicable fees, and is responsive

Renewals On or After July 1, 2023

For cultivation activities, any of the following documents:

1. A final streambed alteration agreement (LSAA); or
2. A draft LSAA signed and returned to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW); or
3. Written verification by the DFW that a LSAA is not needed.

New License & Provisional Renewal Restrictions

A provisional license shall not be renewed if the DCC is notified of either or both of the following:

1. The State Water Resources Control Board has notified the DCC that the provisional licensee is not in compliance with (a) or (b) of Section 26060.1 or the principles, guidelines, and requirements established pursuant to 13149 of the Water Code.
2. The Department of fish and Wildlife has notified the DCC that the provisional licensee is not in compliance with any final streambed alteration agreement, any conditions set forth in a signed draft streambed alteration agreement, or a condition established pursuant to subdivision (a) or paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) of Business and Professions Code Section 26060.1