

Mendocino County Cannabis Equity Assessment

Purpose of Assessment

- Utilizes secondary data to document Mendocino's history with the prohibition and criminalization of cannabis, and its impact on the community
- Provides recommendations to guide the county as it develops its Local Equity Plan
- The goal of the assessment and plan is to assure that individuals who were adversely impacted by the criminalization of cannabis have access to assistance in entering the legal cannabis industry.

Mendocino's History

- Mendocino was at the epicenter of the war on cannabis cultivators in California beginning in the late 1970s.
- Paramilitary-style cannabis eradication had adverse effects on residents involved in cannabis production.
- After the passage of Proposition 215 Mendocino County engaged in efforts to accommodate and regulate medical cannabis markets.
- The state and federal context around cannabis continued to morph and shift as Mendocino County worked to integrate the cannabis industry into the local economy.
- Post 2018, Mendocino County has skilled cannabis cultivators who desire to be a part of a long-term, sustainable industry but who lack access to capital and banking and expertise in navigating the complex regulatory framework surrounding the now-legal cannabis industry.

Assessment Recommendations

- Eligibility factors for the equity program should be focused on specific targeted populations most harmed by the criminalization of cannabis.
- Ensure that equity participants have adequate opportunity to take advantage of the program.
- Create specific services that mitigate barriers to entering the legal market including: lack of access to capital, business space, technical support and regulatory compliance assistance.
- Cannabis operators should provide equitable employment opportunities including hiring those with past non-violent convictions, local residents, and historically-disadvantaged populations.
- Update the equity assessment next year and every three years.
- Create a data tracking and evaluation plan to monitor and share progress of the equity program, monitor and share trends in the emerging legal cannabis industry, and identify areas for course correction.
- Assist equity participants with opportunities to market and network with other cannabis businesses participating in equity programs across the state.