

# Mendocino County Cannabis Local Equity Program Manual V3. 10/7/2020

## **Purpose of Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions –**

### **Administered by The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)**

The purpose of the Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions is to advance economic justice for populations and communities impacted by cannabis prohibition and the War on Drugs (WoD) by providing support to local jurisdictions as they promote equity in California and eliminate barriers to enter the newly regulated cannabis industry for equity program applicants and licensees. By issuing these grants to local jurisdictions, The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) aims to advance the well-being of populations and communities that have been negatively or disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition and the WoD.

The term “equity” recognizes that because different individuals or groups have different histories and circumstances, they have different needs and unequal starting points. Using an equity approach, individuals and groups receive different resources, opportunities, support, or treatment based on their specific needs. By providing what each individual or group needs, they can have equitable or fair outcomes.

Local jurisdictions can help further the purpose and intent of Proposition 64, the Control, Regulate, and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA) by fostering equitable access to licensure and employment in the regulated cannabis industry, ensuring that persons most harmed by cannabis criminalization and poverty are offered assistance to enter the multibillion-dollar cannabis industry as entrepreneurs or as employees with high-quality, well-paying jobs, and ensuring the cannabis industry is representative of the state’s population.

## **Mendocino County’s Cannabis Equity Program**

The Mendocino County Cannabis Equity Assessment (2020) established that Mendocino has been hit hard by the criminalization of cannabis, and a targeted, data-driven and well-funded equity program can help certain populations and neighborhoods, particularly small growers and those impacted from past policies that may be left behind, into a legal, sustainable economic future.

The purpose of this manual is to describe the qualifications for, and services to be provided by, the Mendocino County Cannabis Local Equity Program (LEP).

## **A. Qualifications**

1. **Program Eligibility:** A local equity applicant must be eligible for a cannabis related application, permit, and/or license to operate a cannabis business in unincorporated Mendocino County, whose activities are specific to cultivation, nurseries, processing, manufacturing, laboratory analysis, distribution or retail of cannabis; have a household income as defined as "very low income" or "extremely low income" for Mendocino County in the [2020 State Income Limits](#) produced by the California Department of Housing and Community Development and meet one of the following qualifications within Mendocino County’s LEP to become eligible for consideration for funding in all service categories offered:
  - a. Have lived within a 5-mile radius of the location of raids conducted by the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP) program;

# Mendocino County Cannabis Local Equity Program Manual V3. 10/7/2020

- b. Have a parent, sibling or child who was arrested for or convicted of the sale, possession, use, manufacture or cultivation of cannabis (including as a juvenile);
- c. Any individual who has obtained or applied for a cannabis permit in Mendocino County, or who has worked in or currently works in the cannabis industry, and was arrested and/or convicted of a non-violent cannabis-related offense, or was subject to asset forfeiture arising from a cannabis-related event;
- d. Are a person who experienced sexual assault, exploitation, domestic violence, and/or human trafficking while participating in the cannabis industry;
- e. Have become homeless or suffered a loss of housing as a result of cannabis enforcement.

## B. Services

Services to be provided by the Mendocino County Cannabis Equity Program may include, depending on need and the availability of funds from grants or other sources:

### Grants

1. Grant Fee waiver of County fees for cannabis-related permits, including fees for Application Assistance Meetings of up to four hours, with the Cannabis Program of the Department of Planning & Building Services;
2. Grants for purposes of assuring compliance with regulatory requirements of local or state permits or licenses that mitigate adverse environmental effects of cannabis cultivation. This includes categories such as regulatory compliance, capital improvement, fixtures or equipment to address the following activities including, but not limited to:
  - 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. Road remediation, watershed mitigation, culverts or infrastructure needed to meet state or local regulations.
3. Grants for the purpose of employment skill training for eligible equity participants employed or seeking employment in licensed cannabis operations in Mendocino County

### Direct Technical Assistance

**“Direct 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 to successfully operate in, the regulated cannabis marketplace. Direct technical assistance includes:

One-on-one consulting and training, including direct interactions in group settings, to provide equity applicants and licensees the technical knowledge and expertise necessary to facilitate business ownership and employment in the cannabis industry.

# Mendocino County

## Cannabis Local Equity Program Manual

### V3. 10/7/2020

Small business support services, professional mentorship services, training and education regarding state cannabis licensing and regulatory requirements, manufacturing assistance, financial management, and business resilience such as emergency preparedness.

#### **Direct Technical Assistance is provided as follows:**

1. Direct Technical Assistance for Cannabis and Small Business Development Assistance including business planning, loan application preparation, site location services, human resource management, capital procurement services, bookkeeping and accounting practices and systems, etc.
2. Direct Technical Assistance regarding legal regulations for Cannabis Cooperative associations pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 26220 -26231.2, and educational information regarding the process of forming Cannabis cooperatives.

## C. Program Administration

1. No more than ten percent (10%) of any funding from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development Cannabis Local Equity Program Grant Funds may be utilized for program administration;
2. Principal Administration and Coordination of Services shall be performed by the Mendocino County Department of Planning & Building Services - Cannabis Program Division or a contractor selected through the County's procurement process.
3. Mendocino County Department of Planning and & Building Services shall promulgate any policies, procedures, grant funding caps per category, grant agreements/execution deadlines, application windows, and forms necessary for program administration.
4. Mendocino County Department of Planning & Building Services shall monitor and report on all program services provided through the LEP, as directed by the State grant agreement.
5. Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services or contractor(s) selected in the County's procurement process may be designated to receive and process applications to determine eligibility and grant funding of equity program participants.

## D. Provision of Services

1. Staff in the Mendocino County Department of Planning & Building Services- Cannabis Program or Administration Services contractor selected in the County's procurement process shall serve as the liaison between equity applicants/licensees who receive grant funding and the selected agency(ies) that provides an eligible service. Agencies include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Technical Assistance Service Contractor selected in the County's procurement process
  - b. Mendocino County Departments
2. Mendocino County Department of Planning & Building Services may enter into a contract agreement in line with the County's procurement process with qualifying internal or external agencies/vendors capable of providing the services described in SB 1294, business and professional codes and Mendocino County Local Equity

# Mendocino County Cannabis Local Equity Program Manual V3. 10/7/2020

Program Manual. These services may include:

- a. Direct Technical Assistance Services
- b. Assistance in Administration of the Local Equity Program

## E. Budget Allocation

Available program funds shall be allocated for Program Services specified in Section B., above, as follows:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Grants                                      | 80% |
| Direct Technical Assistance (not to exceed) | 10% |
| Administration (not to exceed)              | 10% |