



# City of Haverhill

## Cannabis Social Equity Policies

### **Purpose and Scope**

On August 11, 2022, Governor Charlie Baker signed S. 3096, An Act Relative to Equity in the Cannabis Industry, into law. The new law requires host municipalities to establish initial policies to promote Equity in the cannabis industry no later than July 1, 2023, or be subject to monetary penalties. On June 29, 2023, the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission (“CCC”) issued guidance on how to create a model Social Equity policy that encourages cities and towns in Massachusetts to consider incentives for increased participation by Social Equity applicants in their local cannabis ecosystem.

Based on cannabis Social Equity best practices, guidance from the CCC, and lessons learned from the City of Haverhill’s current cannabis business permitting program, the City of Haverhill adopts a set of policies to further promote Equity for new Social Equity applicants seeking to establish businesses in Haverhill.

### **Applicability**

The [CCC’s Social Equity programs](#) provide training and technical assistance to applicants who have been disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs, marijuana prohibition, arrests, and incarceration and who meet certain income and residency requirements. The City of Haverhill defines qualifying Social Equity applicants under Haverhill’s Cannabis Social Equity Policies as those that have been certified as eligible to participate in the CCC Social Equity Program or are Certified Economic Empowerment Priority Applicants according to the CCC.

### **The City of Haverhill Cannabis Social Equity Policies:**

To encourage greater participation by Social Equity applicants in Haverhill’s cannabis industry, when a Host Community Agreement (HCA) becomes available for new businesses, there will be an exclusive period of six months limiting the availability of the HCA to qualifying Social Equity and Economic Empowerment applicants. After the six-month period, 50% of the available licenses, but no less than 1, shall be reserved for social equity applicants. An evaluation form will be made available that scores components of an application. The evaluation form will include consideration of equity in the overall evaluation score, which will comprise not less than 25 percent of the total evaluation score. This equity component will include: (i) whether a

License Applicant is pre-verified as a Social Equity Business by the Commission; (ii) whether the License Applicant is a Social Equity Program Participant; (iii) whether the License Applicant is an Economic Empowerment Priority Applicant; (iv) whether the License Applicant has a prior Marijuana related criminal conviction; (v) whether the License Applicant is part of an Area of Disproportionate Impact, as identified by the Commission; or (vi) a majority of the License Applicant entity is comprised of individuals from Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, or Native American or indigenous descent.

1. The City of Haverhill will enhance marketing and outreach to potential Social Equity applicants by promoting available HCAs to the Cannabis Control Commissions' Social Equity program, promoting on the City's website and Social media, and enhanced business outreach as part of the City's Economic Development program.
2. The City of Haverhill will provide permitting technical assistance for Social Equity and Economic Empowerment applicants navigating the City of Haverhill's cannabis permitting process. The City's Economic Development and Planning Department will create a website with guidance and resources for applicants and a list of all required permits, including necessary forms. A municipal contact will be listed on the City's website and will work closely with Social Equity applicants in the permitting process from initial inquiry through the special permit and building permit process.
3. Under the state program, Social Equity and Economic Empowerment applicants are eligible for exclusive access to Delivery Licenses, including Marijuana Courier Marijuana and Delivery Operator licenses, for at least a three-year period from April 1, 2022 to April 1, 2025.
4. Wherever possible, the City of Haverhill will reduce financial barriers and expedite the permitting for Social Equity and Economic Empowerment applicants. Throughout the City of Haverhill's special permit process, the City will endeavor to streamline permitting for these applicants.
5. The City of Haverhill has updated its municipal website pages regarding its adult retail and medical cannabis approval process and centralized all information on one page, including a list of all documentation required by a Host Community's local approval process in downloadable form, in order to be user friendly and transparent.
6. Although an applicant may be granted priority review, the applicant is in no way entitled to a marijuana license from the City, and priority review is not a promise or guarantee the City will enter into a Host Community Agreement with said applicant.