



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

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Pritzker Administration Launches Technical Assistance Programs for Social Equity Applicants Seeking Cannabis Licenses

Low-interest loans now available for social equity applicants

(CHICAGO) - The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced a new initiative to support social equity applicants seeking to enter the cannabis industry. Following a competitive selection process, DCEO announced it will provide three partner organizations \$500,000 to offer technical assistance – in the form of mentoring and coaching on important topics such as business planning, finances, compliance, and industry best practices – across the state: Teague International Corporation, Chicago NORML and Oakton Community College. DCEO has also posted an application that allows social equity applicants for dispensary, infuser, craft grower, and transporter licenses to apply for low interest loans to support the costs of starting up and running a cannabis business.

“The Pritzker administration is committed to ensuring this new cannabis industry is fair and equitable, with multiple points of entry for people who live in communities that were hit hardest by the failed war on drugs,” said Toi Hutchinson, Senior Advisor to Governor Pritzker for Cannabis Control. “By providing technical assistance and low-interest loans to social equity applicants, the administration is removing some of the hurdles.”

Technical assistance will be available to social equity applicants interested in the craft grower, infuser, and transportation licenses before the March 16, 2020 application due date.

“For too long, Illinoisans who live in communities that were destroyed by misguided policies have been left behind. As the state launches this new industry, DCEO is providing specialized assistance to social equity applicants so they will be able to fully reap the benefits of legalized cannabis,” said Erin Guthrie, DCEO Director.

DCEO’s partners will offer the following forms of assistance:

- Teague will host a series of deep dive seminars across the state before the deadline where applicants can receive mentoring and instruction on starting a business and entering the cannabis industry. The first of these seminars will be taking place from February 27th – 29th. Attendees will be able to follow-up for one-on-one counseling.

- Oakton Community College will build upon its current cannabis education program by partnering with the Cannabis Business Alliance of Illinois to offer a series of forum-style presentations, small group workshops, and one-on-one counseling at its campuses in Des Plaines and Skokie. A schedule and sign-up form can be viewed [here](#).
- Chicago NORML will create a series of online webinars focused on five topics: staffing and employment practices, legal compliance, tax planning and compliance, cannabis industry best practices, and diversity planning and community engagement.

These services will be funded by \$500,000 from the Cannabis Business Development Fund, created by the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act. The fund is primarily supported through the licensing fees of the first round of dispensaries and cultivators, among other sources.

More information and a frequently updated schedule of seminars and workshops can be viewed [here](#). Social equity applicants can access the low-interest loan application [here](#). Technical assistance and low-interest loans will only be available for social equity applicants.

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