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## Illinois Department of Agriculture Issues Next Round of Craft Grow Licenses

*100% of new licenses issued to Social Equity Applicants; issuance closes current application round*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) today awarded 48 Craft Grow licenses, successfully completing the licensing round that began in December of 2021. The list of today’s awardees is available on the Department’s Adult Use Cannabis [webpage](#). As of June 1, 2022, the Department of Agriculture has awarded a total of 341 adult use cannabis licenses for craft growers, infusers, and transporters under the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

Of the newly issued 48 Craft Grow Licenses, 42% (20) are majority Black-owned, 36% (17) are majority White-owned, 8% (4) are majority Hispanic-Owned, and 8% are owned by a partnership group. Six percent of awardees did not provide that information. One hundred percent of new licenses were issued to [Social Equity Applicants](#).

“Illinois’ cannabis industry started out with businesses with owners who all looked the same, but with each new set of licenses, we come closer and closer to realizing our vision for a truly diverse industry,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “I’m especially pleased that 100 percent of these craft grow licensees come from a social equity background, and I look forward to many more businesses opening their doors and creating even more good jobs.”

Since 2021, the Department has issued 88 craft grow licenses, 54 infuser licenses, 189 transporter licenses, and approved 10 community colleges to participate in Community College Cannabis Vocational Training Pilot Program. These are in addition to the 21 existing Early Approval Adult Use Cultivation Centers, previously approved under the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program.

“The Department is thrilled to announce the issuance of these licenses,” **said Department of Agriculture Director, Jerry Costello II**. “These licensees now join those licensed by the Department last year to form the foundation of the legal cannabis industry in Illinois, and together will generate thousands of well-paying jobs across the state as they come online. Our team has remained highly focused on its core mission of developing a well-regulated and equitable industry. With now a second cohort of 100% social equity licensees, we’re proud to say that we have taken the first steps toward fulfilling the vision of the Cannabis Regulation and

Tax Act passed by the Legislature. The Department looks forward to working with these licensees over the next weeks and months as the industry grows and matures.”

“Writing the social equity components as well as creating new levels of ownership was no easy task when we set out to legalize adult use cannabis in Illinois, but today we see some of that hard work pay off and our dreams come to fruition with the issuing of the craft grow licenses,” **said Representative Sonya Harper (D-Chicago), Chair of the House Agriculture & Conservation Committee and Chair of the Joint Illinois Legislative Black Caucus.** “We imagined smaller cultivators being able to compete on their own level in this new marketplace and saw creating this license as one more way to lower the barriers to owning a cannabis business.”

Diversity in the cannabis industry has been a top priority since the law’s inception. It’s important we give people disproportionately impacted by the harmful War on Drugs strong footing in the industry,” **said State Senator Cristina Castro (D-Elgin), Co-Chair of the Joint Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus.** “That’s why I’m pleased to see 100% of these recent Craft Grow Licenses go to social equity applicants—we’re showing that Illinois takes equity and diversity seriously.”

“As the cannabis industry continues to grow and expand in Illinois, it’s critical that no community is left behind when it comes to jobs, investment and ownership access,” **said State Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria).** “The issuance of these new craft grower licenses marks an ongoing commitment to ensure this process is done fairly and equitably.”

“It is good to see forward progress! It has been a difficult process and I congratulate the latest license winners. And while we may call them ‘license winners,’ the reality is that they didn’t ‘win’ those licenses. They ‘earned those licenses through blood, sweat and tears over a couple of years,” **said State Representative La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago).** “Now, the real work begins. We must ensure that these fledgling businesses have the resources to compete with folks who’ve been in business for years. The real, long-term goal of cannabis legalization was never about licenses. It was about healing communities devastated by a racist War on Drugs. If that’s the real goal here, our work is just beginning.”

“I am pleased to see these licenses begin to get into the hands of the people we had in mind when we began this journey so many years ago,” **said State Representative Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago).** “We have seen the way litigation has impacted the pace of licensing in every state, so I am thankful to see that we are able to move forward and allow this diverse group of entrepreneurs to make their mark on Illinois’ cannabis industry.”

Through a separate program administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the State of Illinois offers low-interest loans to qualified licensed companies through its Social Equity Cannabis Loan Program. The first round of social equity license applicants are expected to finalize loan agreements directly with DCEO’s partner lending institutions in the coming weeks. The next phase of the loan program will be launched in the near future. Additional information about the Social Equity Cannabis Loan Program can be found [here](#).

DCEO also funds free licensing and post-licensing technical assistance through their partners at Oakton Community College, The Trep School, the Women's Business Development Center, and the University of Illinois Chicago Law School. Additional information on these resources and how to access them can be found [here](#).

The full list of licensees is available on the department's [website](#).

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