



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: *Sirita Wright*
Office of Social Equity
Email: sirita.wright@maryland.gov

Maryland Office of Social Equity Announces Distribution of Technical Assistance Grants and Launch of Online Community Platform

*\$14,000 grants and new Slack community to support eligible businesses in
the cannabis industry*

LINTHICUM HEIGHTS, MD (October 23, 2024) - The Office of Social Equity (OSE) today announced the distribution of Technical Assistance Grants and the launch of a new online community platform to support eligible businesses in the State's cannabis industry. These initiatives will provide substantial economic support to recipients, promote equality, ensure compliance, and foster collaboration within the growing cannabis sector.

"These Technical Assistance Grants and our new online community platform represent our commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and compliant cannabis industry in Maryland," **said Maryland Office of Social Equity Executive Director Audrey Johnson**. "By providing targeted financial assistance, emphasizing responsible fund management, and creating a space for collaboration, we're not just supporting businesses – we're fostering an ecosystem of accountability, equal opportunity, and shared success."

Key Highlights:

1. **Substantial Economic Support:** Eligible businesses will receive \$14,000 each for technical assistance, targeted for critical areas such as educational programming, financial management, legal support, real estate services, and regulatory compliance.
2. **Responsible Fund Management and Accountability:** The grant agreement includes robust oversight mechanisms to ensure proper use of public funds, including specific use restrictions, detailed reporting requirements, and provisions for audits.
3. **Promoting Equality and Compliance:** The program emphasizes non-discrimination policies and strict adherence to applicable laws, reflecting a commitment to fairness in economic development initiatives.
4. **Launch of Online Community Platform:** A new private Slack community exclusively for social equity cannabis licensees selected in the lotteries held earlier this year, facilitating connection, collaboration, and information sharing.

Recipients must complete all grant objectives within a 12-month period and submit comprehensive final reports, demonstrating the administration's commitment to transparency and fiscal responsibility.

"We are pleased to work with our partners at the Office of Social Equity to provide eligible businesses in the cannabis industry another tool to help them succeed," **said Maryland Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson**. "These grants and the online community platform created to foster collaboration and sharing best practices will ensure Maryland continues to lead the way in creating positive change throughout the industry."

The distribution of these grants and the launch of the Slack community align with the State's broader initiative to create a fair and inclusive cannabis industry. These efforts build upon a series of informational events held last fall, which provided valuable insights and networking opportunities for social equity license applicants.

"We're thrilled to introduce our private Slack community for social equity cannabis licensees," added Johnson. "This platform will allow our licensees to build connections, collaborate, and share valuable information in a supportive environment. It's another example of how we're working to provide meaningful support and drive progress in the industry. We're excited about this new tool and its potential to enhance our licensees' success."

The Slack community will feature dedicated channels for various topics, including regulatory updates, best practices, and networking opportunities.

For more information about the Technical Assistance Grants, the new Slack community, or the Office of Social Equity, please contact info.ose@maryland.gov.

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