

## **City of Newton 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. The Massachusetts Cannabis Control Committee (CCC) 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 Newton's current cannabis business permitting program, the City of Newton adopts a set of policies to further promote equity for new social equity applicants seeking to establish businesses in Newton.

### **Applicability**

The CCC Social Equity program provides 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 Newton defines qualifying social equity applicants under Newton'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 by the CCC.

### **The City of Newton Cannabis Social Equity Policies include:**

1. To encourage greater participation by social equity applicants in Newton'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.
2. The City of Newton 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.
3. The City of Newton will provide permitting technical assistance for social equity and economic empowerment applicants navigating the City of Newton's cannabis permitting process. The Planning and Development Department will create a website with guidance and resources for applicants. A municipal contact will be listed on the City website and will work closely with social equity applicants in the permitting process from initial inquiry through the special permit and building permit process.
4. The City of Newton will continue to allow cannabis delivery operator and courier uses by right with no cap on the number allowed, which helps to open up availability of these business types to social equity applicants. 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.

5. Wherever possible, the City of Newton will reduce financial barriers and expedite the permitting for social equity and economic empowerment applicants. Throughout the City of Newton's special permit process, the Planning and Development Department will endeavor to streamline permitting for these applicants.