



TOWN OF SOUTHWICK CANNABIS EQUITY POLICY

2024

Purpose and Scope

In August 2022, an Act Relative to Equity in the Cannabis Industry was signed into law, and updated in October, 2023. The law requires host municipalities to establish initial policies to promote equity in the cannabis industry through various means, all aimed at increasing participation by social equity applicants in local cannabis ecosystems. Based on cannabis social equity best practices, guidance from the Cannabis Control Commission (“CCC”), and the Town of Southwick’s current cannabis business permitting processes, the Town of Southwick adopts this Policy to support people from communities disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement.

Applicability

The CCC Social Equity program provides training and technical assistance to applicant who have been disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs, marijuana prohibition, arrests, and incarceration and who meet certain income and residency requirements. The Town of Southwick defines qualifying social equity applicants under Southwick’s 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.

Policy

The Town of Southwick shall:

1. Provide permitting technical assistance for social equity and economic empowerment applicants navigating the Town’s cannabis permitting process. The Town of Southwick will dedicate an area on its website with guidance and resources for all applicants.
2. Designate a municipal contact to work closely with social equity applicants in the permitting process from initial inquiry through the special permit and building permit process.
3. Wherever possible, reduce financial barriers and expedite the permitting for social equity and economic empowerment applicants.
4. Throughout the Town’s special permit process, the Town departments shall endeavor to streamline permitting for these applicants.
5. Consider a waiver or reduction of fees associated with the Town’s Host Community Agreement (“HCA”) approval process and/or special permit approval process, as allowable by bylaw or statute.
6. Include the most up to date local cannabis bylaws and regulations on the Town website.