NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA FACILITIES

Where to begin:

- Please go to the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission website. This site provides information on current regulations as well as guidance to help you through the licensing process.: [https://mass-cannabis-control.com](https://mass-cannabis-control.com)

- Stop by the Mayor’s office and request a letter of non-opposition from the city.

- Having your own legal counsel is strongly advised to navigate the complicated permitting process. Work with the Mayor’s office to identify potential counsel.

- The City Council adopted a zoning ordinance and map amendment for this use on June 8, 2018. The amendment and maps are posted on the city’s website on the Zoning Board of Appeals page.

- When you have reviewed all of the above, have selected a site, and are ready to move forward, please contact someone in the Community Development Department to request an appointment to discuss the application process.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT CONTACTS:

Principal Planner, Mike O’Hara
978-829-1891
MOHara@fitchburgma.gov

Economic Development Director, Mary Jo Bohart
978-829-1896
MBohart@fitchburgma.gov

Revised 7.5.2018
Section 181.65 - MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS

181.651 Regulation. G.L. c. 94G authorizes a system of state licensing for businesses engaging in the cultivation, testing, processing and manufacturing, and retail sales of non-medical marijuana, collectively referred to as Marijuana Establishments (MEs). G.L. c. 94G §3 allows cities to adopt ordinances that impose reasonable safeguards on the operation of non-medical marijuana establishments, provided they are not unreasonably impracticable and are not in conflict with the law. The special permit and site plan review requirements set forth in this Section shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other licensing and permitting requirements imposed by any other federal, state, or local law.

181.652 Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to allow state-licensed MEs to exist in the City of Fitchburg in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations and impose reasonable safeguards to govern the time, place and manner of ME operations and any business dealing in Marijuana Accessories in such a way as to ensure public health, safety, well-being, and reduce undue impacts on the natural environment as it relates to cultivation, processing and manufacturing subject to the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance, M.G.L. c. 40A, M.G.L. c. 94G and any other applicable law. Therefore, this ordinance may permit MEs in locations suitable for lawful MEs where there is access to regional roadways, where they may be readily monitored by law enforcement for health and public safety purposes, and to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties, residential neighborhoods, historic districts, schools, playgrounds and other locations where minors congregate by regulating the siting, design, placement, operation security, and removal of MEs.

This Section is intended to coexist with the existing Section 181.64 regarding MMDs and MMMs.

181.653 Definitions. Where not expressly defined in the Zoning Ordinance, terms used in this Zoning Ordinance referring to non-medical use marijuana shall be interpreted as defined in G.L., c. 94G, as the same may be amended from time to time, and regulations issued by the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). The following definitions, consistent with this expressed intent, shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this section:

1. "Marijuana Products", products that have been manufactured and contain marijuana or an extract from marijuana, including concentrated forms of marijuana and products composed of marijuana and other ingredients that are intended for non-medical use or consumption, including edible products, beverages, topical products, ointments, oils and tinctures.
2. "Marijuana Establishment" (ME), a Marijuana Cultivator, Independent testing laboratory, Marijuana Product Manufacturer, Marijuana Retailer or any other type of licensed non-medical marijuana-related business.
3. "Marijuana Cultivator" (MC), an entity licensed to cultivate, process and package non-medical marijuana, to deliver non-medical marijuana to ME's and to transfer marijuana to other ME's, but not to consumers. A Craft Marijuana Cultivator Cooperative performing a similar function shall be included within the definition of a MC.

4. "Marijuana Product Manufacturer" (MPM), an entity licensed to obtain, manufacture, process and package non-medical marijuana and marijuana products, to deliver non-medical marijuana and marijuana products to ME's and to transfer non-medical marijuana and marijuana products to other ME's, but not to consumers. A Craft Marijuana Cultivator Cooperative performing a similar function shall be included within the definition of a MPM.

5. "Marijuana Retailer" (MR), an entity licensed to purchase and deliver non-medical marijuana and marijuana products from ME's and to deliver, sell or otherwise transfer non-medical marijuana and marijuana products to ME's and to consumers.

6. "Independent testing laboratory", a laboratory that is licensed by the CCC and is:
   (i) accredited to the most current International Organization for Standardization 17025 by a third-party accrediting body that is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation mutual recognition arrangement or that is otherwise approved by the CCC;
   (ii) independent financially from any medical marijuana treatment center or any licensee or ME for which it conducts a test; and (iii) qualified to test marijuana in compliance with regulations promulgated by the CCC pursuant to G.L. c. 94G.

7. "Experienced Operator," any MMD or MMM facilities, as defined by Section 181.64 of the Zoning Ordinance, having already received a special permit and site plan review approval by the City, prior to the passage of Section 181.65 of this Ordinance, which remain in good standing without violation of any ordinance, statute, or condition of their special permit.

8. "Moral Character" means the degree to which a person's history demonstrates honesty, fairness and respect for the rights of others and for conformance to the law, which may include consideration of whether an individual has:
   a. Ever had a professional license denied, suspended or revoked;
   b. Ever had a business license denied, suspended or revoked;
   c. Ever had a marijuana-related business license denied, suspended, revoked, or placed on administrative hold, or was subjected to a fine for violation of a marijuana-related zoning ordinance;
   d. Ever had a business temporarily or permanently closed for failure to comply with any tax, health, building, fire, zoning or safety law;
   e. Ever had an administrative, civil or criminal finding of delinquency for failure to file or failure to pay employment, sales, property or use taxes;
   f. Ever been convicted of a felony, sex offense, or other offense involving violence, distribution of controlled substances, excluding marijuana-related possession offenses, or other moral turpitude;
   g. Within the previous sixty months been convicted of a misdemeanor or other offense involving the distribution of controlled substances, or driving under the influence of alcohol or other substance (DUI, OUI) convictions.

181.654 Prohibitions and Limitations.
181.6541 It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a ME without obtaining a special permit and undergoing site plan approval pursuant to the requirements of this Ordinance, except as provided for an Experienced Operator.
181.6542 An Experienced Operator may operate a ME of the same type as the medical marijuana facility for which they have been granted a special permit and approved site plan review by the City without obtaining a new special permit, provided that the Experienced Operator must receive site plan approval for the new use as a ME, that the ME is located in the same facility for which the Experienced Operator received the prior special permit and site plan approval, and that the gross square footage of such facility is not increased by more than ten (10%) percent.

181.6543 A separate special permit is required for each different ME detailed in section 181.653, above, or in the case of an Experienced Operator, a separate site plan review.

181.6544 As defined in G.L. c. 94G, the number of MRs shall be limited to the amount specified by City ordinance Section 56-3, as the same may be amended from time to time. No special permit may be granted for a MR which results in a violation of this limit.

181.6545 A ME may only be involved in the use permitted by its definition. MRs may only be located in buildings containing other retail, commercial, residential, industrial, or any other uses, including other types of MEs, if the MR is separated by full walls from any and all other uses.

181.6546 Independent Testing Facilities may be permitted under special permit by the Planning Board in the Industrial (I), Light Industrial (LI), Central Business (CBD), Commercial & Automotive (C&A) and Neighborhood Business (NBD) Zoning Districts. MRs may be permitted under special permit by the Planning Board in the Commercial and Automotive (C&A), Neighborhood Business (NBD), Central Business (CBD), Industrial (I) or Light Industrial (LI) zoning districts in accordance with 181.313 of the Table of Principal Uses, with the exception that no special permit may be granted for any MR located in that portion of the contiguous Central Business Zoning District that includes Main Street which lies to the north of the railroad track dissecting said specific zone and west of the intersection of Holt Street and Summer Street until the intersection of Main Street and Prospect Street. On-site or social consumption, so called, is prohibited as a use. All other MEs may be permitted under special permit by the Planning Board in the Industrial and Light Industrial Zoning Districts.

181.6547 MEs shall be prohibited as an Accessory Use or Home Occupation in all zoning districts. No ME shall be permitted to have drive-up or walk-up facilities as described in Section 181.3246 of this Zoning Ordinance.

181.6548 No marijuana or Marijuana Product shall be smoked, eaten, ingested, consumed or otherwise used within the premises of any ME.

181.6549 No ME may be operated in a mobile facility or outside of a fully enclosed building or structure, excepting deliveries to off-site MRs and home deliveries to consumers permitted or licensed by applicable state and local regulations.
181.65410 No ME may be operated in such a manner as to cause or create a public nuisance to abutters or to the surrounding area, or which creates any hazard, including but not limited to, fire, explosion, fumes, gas, smoke, odors, obnoxious dust, vapors, offensive noise or vibration, flashes, glare, objectionable effluent or electrical interference, which may impair the normal use and peaceful enjoyment of any property, structure or dwelling in the area.

181.65411 The issuance of a special permit and site plan review pursuant to this chapter does not create an exception, defense, or immunity to any person or entity in regard to any potential criminal liability the person or entity may have for the production, distribution, or possession of marijuana.

181.65412 There shall be no use variances issued for any ME.

**181.655 Application.**

In addition to the materials required under Section 181.93. (Special Permits) and Section 181.94 (Site Plan Review) of this Ordinance, the applicant shall submit the following:

1. All materials required under Section 181.645 of this Zoning Ordinance for an MMD or MMM facility, with the exceptions that any reference within Section 181.645 to the Department of Public Health or regulations issued thereby shall be interpreted to refer to the CCC and its regulations, or any of the state regulation or statute applicable to the ME.
2. Proof of approval from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the proposed ME by submitting copies of all required registrations, licenses and permits issued to the applicant by the state and any of its agencies for the proposed ME.
3. The name, address, email address, and phone number of all designated Managers of the ME, together with a criminal background check of such Managers and other evidence of Moral Character.
4. Proof that the detailed security plan, operation and management plan, and emergency response plans have been submitted to the Fitchburg Police Department and the Department of Planning and Community Development for comment and review at the same time or prior to the submission of the application, and any comment or response received by the applicant.
5. Proof that the applicant provided notification in writing at the same time or prior to the submission of the application to all property owners and operators of the uses listed under 181.656(5) within three hundred (300) feet of its proposed location and use, to provide them with the opportunity to comment to the Planning Board, as well as any and all comment or response received by the applicant.
6. Evidence demonstrating that the ME will be operated in a responsible manner that does not materially adversely affect the public health, safety or the general welfare of the City or the immediate neighborhood where the ME is located. This may include but shall not be limited to evidence of Moral Character.

181.6551 Upon receipt of a completed application, the Planning Board shall refer copies of the application to the Building Department, Fire Department, Police Department, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works.
These boards/departments shall review the application and shall submit their written recommendations. Failure to make recommendations within 30 days of referral of the application shall be deemed lack opposition.

181.6552 After notice and public hearing and consideration of application materials, consultant reviews, public comments, and the recommendations of other municipal boards and departments, the Planning Board may act upon the application for special permit and approval of site plan.

181.6553 In instances where any portion of a project involves a special permit application to or site plan review by the Planning Board for any ME, the Planning Board shall serve as the special permit granting authority for all other special permits required in connection with such project.

**181.656 Special Permit Criteria and Findings**

A MR, MC, MPM or Independent Testing Facility may be permitted pursuant to a Special Permit and Site Plan Review granted by the Planning Board. In granting a special permit for a MR, MC, MPM or Independent Testing Facility, in addition to the general criteria for a special permit in Section 181.93 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board must also make the following findings:

1. If the special permit is for a MR, that the MR is located in the Commercial & Automotive (C&A), Medical Services (MSD), Neighborhood Business (NBD), Central Business (CBD), Industrial (I) or Light Industrial (LI) zoning districts, excluding the Central Business District which encompasses Main Street; or if the special permit is for an Independent Testing Facility, that the Independent Testing Facility is located in the Industrial (I), Light Industrial (LI), Central Business (CBD) Commercial & Automotive (C&A) or Neighborhood Business (NBD) Zoning District; or if the special permit is for any other ME, that the ME is located in the Industrial or Light Industrial zoning districts in accordance with 181.313 of the Table of Principal Uses.

2. The applicant has demonstrated that the ME has or will meet all of the permitting requirements of all applicable agencies within the Commonwealth and is or will be in compliance with all applicable state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to G.L. c. 94G, §12 General Marijuana Establishment Operation.

3. The applicant has entered into an approved Host Community Agreement under which the applicant pays a host fee or Impact Fee to the City with the Mayor of the City of Fitchburg.

4. The grant of the special permit will not exceed the limitation on permitted MRs set forth in Section 181.6544.

5. The ME is located at least three hundred (300) feet distant of a pre-existing public or private school providing education in kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12, a vocational school, a public or private college, junior college, university or dormitory, a licensed child care facility, a library, a playground, a public park, a youth center, a public swimming pool, a video arcade facility, any facility in which minors commonly congregate, or any residence, including commercial residences such as hotels, motels, lodging houses, etc. The distance under this section is measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the property line of the protected uses to the nearest point of the structure of the proposed ME.

   a. The distance requirement may be reduced by the Planning Board provided that the
applicant demonstrates, by clear and convincing evidence, that 1) the ME will employ adequate measures to prevent product diversion to minors, and 2) the ME is adequately buffered, and 3) the Planning Board determines that a shorter distance will suffice to accomplish the objectives set forth under §181.652.

6. The applicant has satisfied all of the conditions and requirements of this section and other applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance and any applicable city ordinances.

7. The facility provides adequate security measures to ensure that there are not direct threats to the health or safety of employees, staff, or members of the public and that storage and location of cultivation is adequately secured.

8. The facility will not place an undue burden on public safety services of the City as may be adequately established to the satisfaction of the Planning Board, which shall consider the facility's lighting, whether or not all of the facility is visible from a public way, whether or not the parking is contiguous with the facility or the parking arrangements are capable of being monitored by the applicant or the City, and whether or not the facility is or can be set up to promote the effective monitoring by Police Department patrols, as well as any other factors affecting public safety.

9. The facility meets all criteria required for a Special Permit for an MMD or MMM under Section 181.645 of this Zoning Ordinance, with the exceptions that
   a. Any reference within Section 181.645 to the Department of Public Health or regulations issued thereby shall be interpreted to refer to the CCC and its regulations, or any other state regulation or statute applicable to the ME; and
   b. Location in an area which does not have reasonable access to medical marijuana pursuant to Section 181.644(a) shall not be required.

10. The applicant has demonstrated, by substantial evidence of Moral Character and other evidence, that it will operate the ME in conformity with all applicable municipal ordinances, state laws and regulations and that its policies and procedures are designed to prevent violation of such laws, particularly including but not limited to Section 181.654 above.

181.657 Site Plan Review/Special Permit Conditions
The Planning Board shall conduct site plan review and shall impose conditions reasonably appropriate to improve site design, traffic flow, public safety, protect water quality, air quality, and significant environmental resources, preserve the character of the surrounding area and otherwise serve the purpose of this section. In addition to any specific conditions applicable to the applicant's ME, the following conditions shall be included in any site plan review or special permit granted under this Ordinance:

1. All conditions applicable to MMDs and MMMs under Section 181.646 of this Zoning Ordinance shall be applied to an ME, with the exceptions that
   a. Any reference within Section 181.646 to the Department of Public Health or regulations issued thereby shall be interpreted to refer to the CCC and its regulations, or any other state regulation or statute applicable to the ME;
   b. Hours of operation shall be set forth within the special permit, and shall generally be consistent with those for package stores licensed under G.L. c. 138.
   c. The provisions regarding signage contained in Section 181.646(f) and (g) shall not be included; and
d. The provisions revoking a special permit for cultivation or dispensing of marijuana for non-medical purposes in Section 181.646(p) shall not be applicable.

2. All business signage shall be subject to the requirements to be promulgated by the CCC and the requirements of Section 181.53 of this Zoning Ordinance.

3. The ME shall not violate any provision of the Zoning Ordinance, including but not limited to Section 181.654 above.

4. Display of marijuana, Marijuana Products and Marijuana Accessories shall be limited to an area which is accessible only by persons aged twenty-one (21) years or older, and the applicant shall establish such controls and monitoring as are necessary to ensure that this area is not accessed by persons under the age of twenty-one (21) years.

5. The ME shall regularly verify to the City its efforts to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the public, and to limit undue impacts on the natural environment, by the use of high efficiency equipment to limit energy and water usage demand, by the purchase of renewable energy credits, by the use of LED lighting equipment, by the prohibition or limitation of pesticides, insecticides and similar chemicals, and by any other methods designed to further this purpose.

   a. The Planning Board may impose specific conditions relating to the preservation or improvement of public safety, including but not limited to lighting, visibility, surveillance, security cameras, parking arrangements, and accessibility for police patrol.

6. ME shall be operated in a responsible manner that does not materially adversely affect the public health, safety or the general welfare of the City or the immediate neighborhood where the ME is located.

7. The applicant has entered into an approved Host Community Agreement under which the applicant pays a host fee or Impact Fee to the City with the Mayor of the City of Fitchburg.

181.6581 Termination and Modification

181.6581 A special permit or site plan approval may be terminated due to violation of any of its conditions. In addition, a special permit or site plan approval shall terminate upon:

1. Failure of the permit holder to commence operations at the ME within twelve (12) months of the date of approval; or

2. Transfer of ownership of the ME without approval of the Planning Board. For these purposes, transfer of ownership shall include any reallocation of ownership or change in business structure which results in a change of its designated representatives or responsible individuals; or

3. Termination of the Host Community Agreement or failure to pay a host fee or Impact Fee under the Agreement to the City.

181.6582 A special permit or site plan approval may be modified by the Planning Board after public hearing. No modification is permitted for a change of location; a special permit holder must submit a new application for a change in location. Any changes in the application materials from the original materials must be submitted with a request for modification. No transfer of ownership, except a transfer to an affiliated entity, shall be permitted for two years after the date of approval of the special permit or site plan review unless required due to the death or disability
of an owner. If the special permit holder requests approval of a transfer of ownership, then the holder must submit proof:

1. That the new owner will operate the ME in accordance with the terms of the special permit, as shown by evidence of Moral Character and other substantial evidence; and
2. That all amounts due under the Host Community Agreement have been timely paid and no taxes, fines, penalties, fees, or other charges due to the City are currently unpaid.

181.659 Severability.
The provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If any provision, paragraph, sentence, or clause of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person, establishment, or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or application of this Ordinance.

TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF RMD, MMD AND MMM IN SECTION 181.10 TO REMOVE A REQUIREMENT THAT THE OPERATOR BE A NON-PROFIT ENTITY, AS FOLLOWS:

181.10 REGISTERED MARIJUANA DISPENSARY (RMD) - Also known as a Medical Marijuana Treatment Center, is an establishment approved and licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) pursuant to 105 CMR 725.000, owned and operated by an entity registered under 105 CMR 725,100, that acquires, cultivates, possesses, processes (including development of related products such as marijuana-infused products ("MIPs"), tinctures, aerosols, oils, or ointments), transfers, transports, sells, distributes, dispenses, or administers marijuana, products containing marijuana, related supplies, or educational materials to registered qualifying patients OR their personal caregivers. A RMD shall not be eligible as a "non-exempt agricultural use" or as a "non-exempt educational use" and shall only be permitted as allowed in accordance with City of Fitchburg Zoning Ordinance. Further, the following definitions shall apply for the purposes of distinguishing the permitting and regulation of RMD dispensing uses from RMD cultivation uses within this Ordinance:

a) Medical Marijuana Dispensary (MMD) facility - A Registered Marijuana Dispensary that is located off-site from the cultivation/processing facility (and controlled and operated by the same registered and approved entity which operates an affiliated RMD) but which serves only to dispense the processed marijuana, related supplies and educational materials to registered Qualifying Patients or their personal caregivers in accordance with the provisions of MDPH regulations 105 CMR 725.000.

b) Medical Marijuana Manufacturing (MMM) facility - A Registered Marijuana Dispensary that is located off-site from the dispensing facility (and controlled and operated by the same registered and approved entity which operates an affiliated RMD) but which serves only to cultivate and process marijuana, and marijuana infused products in accordance with the provisions of MDPH regulations 105 CMR 725.000.

TO ADD THE FOLLOWING SECTION REGULATING SIGNS
Add 181.5364
181.5364 Signs for Marijuana Establishments

All signs for Marijuana Establishments shall be in conformity with the provisions of G.L. c. 94G and all applicable federal, state and local regulations, including regulations issued by the Cannabis Control Commission. Temporary and promotional signage for Marijuana Establishments are prohibited.

TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SITE PLAN REVIEW BY AMENDING SECTION 181.9414 AS FOLLOWS:

181.9414. Siting, construction or expansion of a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) or Marijuana Establishment (ME),

TO AMEND THE TABLE OF PRINCIPAL USES BY ADDING SECTIONS 181.313D(15), (16) AND (17) and 181.313D(28) AS FOLLOWS:

- D15. All Marijuana Establishments (ME), except for Marijuana Retailers (MR). Update chart with SP FOR LI, and I zones by Planning Board (N for all other districts).
- D17. Independent Testing Laboratory, Update chart with SP in I, LI, CBD, C&A and NBD districts (N for all other districts).
- C29. Marijuana Social Consumption Establishment, N for all districts.

TO AMEND THE PROHIBITED HOME OCCUPATIONS BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING TO SECTION 181.333:
181.333 Prohibited Home Occupations:

- Marijuana Establishment (ME) or similar facility
- Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) or similar facility

Effective June 8, 2018
Application Checklist

The following guidance is provided to assist applicants seeking to be licensed as a Marijuana Establishment under 935 CMR 500.000, which establishes the regulatory requirements for adult-use marijuana in the Commonwealth. This guidance is not legal advice. If you have additional questions regarding the legal requirements for licensure in the Commonwealth, you are encouraged to consult an attorney.

**Business Information**
- Name, DBA, all business names; documentation of MA business registration; and required certificates of good standing;
- Proposed address for Marijuana Establishment, and proof of property interest;
- Contact information for primary point of contact(s) to discuss application issues;
- Names, addresses, and identification (ID) for executives, managers, persons, or entities having direct or indirect authority over management, policies, security operations, or cultivation operations;
- Names of applicant members and close associates (if any);
- Names of persons or entities contributing 10% or more of initial capital to operate;
- Disclosure of interests and potential conflicts of interest in Massachusetts and other jurisdictions;
- Amounts and sources of capital resources;
- Documentation of a bond or escrowed amount sufficient to cover winding down;
- Management and operation plans, as required under the regulations; and
- Plan to positively impact areas of disproportionate impact.

**Municipal Information**
- Documentation of a negotiated Host Community Agreement;
- Community Outreach Meeting notice and information presented; and
- Documentation of compliance or plan to comply with local licensing laws.

**Individual Owner/Manager Information**
For each individual executive, manager, person who have direct or indirect authority over management, policies, security operations or cultivation operations; close associates; and individuals contributing 10% or more capital:
- Notarized CORI Acknowledgment Form;
- Fingerprint authorization; as well as
- For Massachusetts and other jurisdictions, dates and descriptions of past or pending criminal actions; past or pending civil or administrative actions; past disciplinary actions, and denials of licensure pertaining to a marijuana and other businesses.
Operations Information

- Proposed timeline to be operational;
- Proof of liability insurance or plan to obtain insurance;
- Summary of business plan;
- Employee staffing and training plans; and
- Summary of operating plans and procedures that include:
  - Security;
  - Prevention of diversion;
  - Storage of marijuana;
  - Transportation of marijuana, if applicable;
  - Inventory procedures;
  - Procedures for quality control and testing for potential contaminants, if applicable;
  - Personnel policies;
  - Dispensing procedures;
  - Record-keeping procedures;
  - Maintenance of financial records; and
  - Diversity plans.

Questions?
If you have additional questions regarding types of Marijuana Establishments, please contact the Commission at CannabisCommission@State.MA.US or (617) 701-8400.
Guidance on Types of Marijuana Establishment Licenses

The following is not legal advice. Please consult an attorney if you have any questions regarding the law regarding marijuana for adult use.

The Marijuana Acts and the draft regulations create different kinds of marijuana establishments. Unlike a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (“RMD”) (also known as a “medical marijuana treatment center”), which is required to cultivate, process and retail its own marijuana and marijuana products for medical use, an adult use Marijuana Establishment may opt only to participate in a particular part of the industry, such as cultivation. All Marijuana Establishments are subject to strict, comprehensive state regulations and inspections by Commission agents. All Marijuana Establishments are required to enter into host community agreements with the municipality in which they are located (there is more detail on host community agreements below). Only marijuana retailers are subject to the local marijuana tax created under the 2017 Act. One business may hold three licenses in each category, with certain exceptions.

Marijuana Cultivators
A Marijuana Cultivator may cultivate, process and package marijuana, to transfer and deliver marijuana products to marijuana establishments, but not to consumers. A Craft Marijuana Cooperative, which will be discussed in further detail below, is a type of Marijuana Cultivator. Cultivators may select what tier they will be in, which will affect their application and licensing fees. The following options are available, but no licensee may have a total canopy of more than 100,000 square feet.

Canopy means an area to be calculated in square feet and measured using clearly identifiable boundaries of all areas(s) that will contain mature plants at any point in time, including all of the space(s) within the boundaries, canopy may be noncontiguous, but each unique area included in the total canopy calculations shall be separated by an identifiable boundary which include, but are not limited to: interior walls, shelves, greenhouse walls, hoop house walls, garden benches, hedge rows, fencing, garden beds, or garden plots. If mature plants are being cultivated using a shelving system, the surface area of each level shall be included in the total canopy calculation.

Tiers of Marijuana Cultivator
Each licensee (except a craft marijuana cooperative) may have three licenses, but the total canopy authorized by the licenses added together may not exceed 100,000 square feet.

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<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
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<td>up to 5,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5,001 to 10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>10,001 to 20,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>20,001 to 30,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>30,001 to 40,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>40,001 to 50,000 sq. ft.</td>
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<td>50,001 to 60,000 sq. ft.</td>
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<td>90,001 to 100,000 sq. ft.</td>
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Tier Management

Expansion: A Marijuana Cultivator may submit an application to change the tier in which it is classified. A Marijuana Cultivator may change tiers to either expand or reduce production. If a Marijuana Cultivator is applying to expand production, it must demonstrate that while cultivating at the top of its production tier, it has sold 85% of its product consistently over the six months preceding the application for expanded production.

Relegation: At the time of license renewal process for Marijuana Cultivators, the Commission will review the records of the Marijuana Cultivator during the six months prior to the application for renewal. The Commission may reduce the licensee’s maximum canopy to a lower tier if the licensee sold less than 70% of what it produced.

Craft Marijuana Cooperative

A Craft Marijuana Cooperative is a type of Marijuana Cultivator which may cultivate, obtain, manufacture, process, package and brand marijuana and marijuana products to deliver marijuana to Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers, and must consist of:

- Massachusetts residents who have formed a limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or a cooperative corporation;
- A business may only have one Craft Marijuana Cooperative license;
- Members of a Craft Marijuana Cooperative may not have a controlling interest in any other marijuana establishment;
- A Craft Marijuana Cooperative is not limited to a particular number of cultivation locations, but is limited to a total canopy of 100,000 square feet and three locations for activities authorized for marijuana product manufacturers;
- One member of the Craft Marijuana Cooperative must have filed a Schedule F tax form (reporting farm income) in the past five years.
- The Craft Marijuana Cooperative must operate according to the seven cooperative principles published by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995.

Marijuana Product Manufacturer

A Marijuana Product Manufacturer is an entity authorized to obtain, manufacture, process and package marijuana and marijuana products, to deliver marijuana and marijuana products to Marijuana Establishments and to transfer marijuana and marijuana products to other Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers.

Marijuana Retailer

A Marijuana Retailer is an entity authorized to purchase and deliver marijuana and marijuana products from Marijuana Establishments and to sell or otherwise transfer marijuana and marijuana products to Marijuana Establishments and to consumers.

Please note that similar to marijuana for medical use, edible marijuana products for adult use shall not be considered food and therefore Marijuana Retailers would not be subject to inspection by local Boards of Health under 105 CMR 590 unless local regulations requiring such inspections are promulgated.
A Marijuana Retailer provides a retail location which may be accessed by consumers 21 years of age or older or, if the retailer is co-located with a RMD by individuals who are registered qualifying patients with the Medical Use of Marijuana Program with a registration card.

**Marijuana Transporter**
A Marijuana Transporter is an entity that may only transport marijuana or marijuana products when such transportation is not already authorized under a Marijuana Establishment license if it is licensed as a Marijuana Transporter:

- **Third Party Transporter**: An entity registered to do business in Massachusetts that does not hold another Marijuana Establishment license pursuant to 935 CMR 500.050 and is not registered as a registered marijuana dispensary pursuant to 105 CMR 725.000.
- **Existing Licensee Transporter**: A Marijuana Establishment that wishes to contract with other marijuana establishments to transport their marijuana and marijuana products to other marijuana establishments.

**Marijuana Research Facility**
A Marijuana Research Facility is an academic institution, non-profit corporation or domestic corporation or entity authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A Marijuana Research Facility may cultivate, purchase or otherwise acquire marijuana for the purpose of conducting research regarding marijuana and marijuana products. Any research involving humans must be authorized by an Institutional Review Board. A Marijuana Research Facility may not sell marijuana it has cultivated.

**Laboratories**

- **Independent Testing Laboratory**: An Independent Testing Laboratory is an entity that does not hold any other type of marijuana establishment license and is properly accredited to perform tests in compliance with the stringent requirements of the Department of Public Health protocols for testing marijuana and marijuana products.

- **Standards Testing Laboratory**: A Standards Testing Laboratory is an entity that would otherwise qualify to be an Independent Testing Laboratory but instead performs blind tests to verify the results of an Independent Testing Laboratory at the request of the Commission.

**Microbusiness**
A Microbusiness is a co-located Tier 1 Marijuana Cultivator, and/or Marijuana Product Manufacturer limited to purchase 2,000 pounds of marijuana from other Marijuana Establishments in one year.

A Microbusiness licensee shall not have an ownership stake in any other Marijuana Establishment and a majority of its executives or members must have been residents of Massachusetts for no less than 12 months prior to application is eligible to apply for a Microbusiness license.

Application fees and license fees for Marijuana Microbusinesses shall be set at 50% of the combined sum of the application fees and license fees for cultivation and/or, manufacturing.
Social Consumption & Delivery
Regulations regarding licenses for social consumption and delivery to consumers have been delayed for further study. The Commission anticipates drafting regulations regarding licenses for this category in February 2019. In the meantime, municipalities wishing to authorize social consumption in their community must follow the ballot process established in G.L. c.94G §3(b) for the election in November 2018.

Please note that legislation has been filed to clarify the ballot process (Bill H.4284, which may be reviewed at https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/H4284) and this guidance will be updated if the legislation is enacted.

Questions? If you have additional questions, please contact the Commission at (617) 701-8400 or CannabisCommission@State.MA.US.
Licensure as a Marijuana Establishment

The following guidance is provided to assist applicants seeking to be licensed as a Marijuana Establishment under 935 CMR 500.000, which establishes the regulatory requirements for adult-use marijuana in the Commonwealth. This guidance is not legal advice. If you have additional questions regarding the legal requirements for licensure in the Commonwealth, you are encouraged to consult an attorney.

Applications
The Cannabis Control Commission regulations, 935 CMR 500.000, provide for the issuance of licenses for different kinds of Marijuana Establishments. The license application process for certified priority applicants as either Economic Empowerment Priority Applicants under 935 CMR 500.101(1)(e) or RMD Priority Applicants under 935 CMR 500.101(2), opens on April 17, 2018. Priority applicants may apply for any type of marijuana establishment license.

The application process for applicants who are not certified priority applicants will be scheduled based on the license type as follows:

May 1, 2018
- Marijuana Cultivator: an entity licensed to cultivate, process and package marijuana, and to transfer marijuana to other Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers;
- Microbusinesses: a colocated Marijuana Establishment that can be either a Tier 1 Marijuana Cultivator or Product Manufacturer or both, in compliance with the operating procedures for each license. A Microbusiness that is a Marijuana Product Manufacturer may purchase no more than 2,000 pounds of marijuana per year from other Marijuana Establishments.
- Craft Marijuana Cooperative: a Marijuana Cultivator comprised of residents of the Commonwealth and organized as a limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or cooperative corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth. A cooperative is licensed to cultivate, obtain, manufacture, process, package and brand cannabis or marijuana products to transport this product to Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers.
- Independent Testing Laboratory: a laboratory that is licensed by the Commission and is:
  - accredited to the International Organization for Standardization 17025 (ISO/IEC 17025: 2017) by a third-party accrediting body that is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Accrediting Cooperation mutual recognition arrangement or that is otherwise approved by the Commission;
  - independent financially from any Medical Marijuana Treatment Center (RMD), Marijuana Establishment or licensee for which it conducts a test; and qualified to test cannabis or marijuana in compliance with 935 CMR 500.160 and M.G.L. c. 94C, § 34.
- Research Facility: an entity licensed to engage in research projects by the Commission.
June 1, 2018

- Marijuana Retailer: an entity licensed to purchase and transport cannabis or marijuana product from Marijuana Establishments and to sell or otherwise transfer this product to Marijuana Establishments and to consumers. Retailers are prohibited from delivering cannabis or marijuana products to consumers; and from offering cannabis or marijuana products for the purposes of on-site social consumption on the premises of a Marijuana Establishment.

- Marijuana Product Manufacturer: an entity licensed to obtain, manufacture, process and package cannabis or marijuana products and to transfer these products to other Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers.

- Marijuana Transporter: an entity, not otherwise licensed by the Commission, that is licensed to purchase, obtain, and possess cannabis or marijuana product solely for the purpose of transporting, temporary storage, sale and distribution to Marijuana Establishments, but not to consumers.

How do I start?
All applications will be available for completion online through the Cannabis Control Commission’s licensing portal. As with any application, a good place to start is getting an overview of what information you will need to complete the application, and then collecting the information.

The Commission has intentionally broken up the application into three sections, or what we refer to as “packets.” The packets may be completed on a rolling basis. As such, applicants have the opportunity to open an application and save it so that they may work on the application over a period of time. Before the Commission will consider a license application, all three packets must be determined to be complete by the Commission. The applicant will be notified by the Commission when each packet is determined to be complete.

Applicants should be prepared to complete an open application within one year of starting the application. The Commission reserves the right to administratively close applications that remain open beyond one year.

What information do I need to submit an application to be licensed?
The Commission has established a compliance-based licensing process with no limit on the total number of licenses for Marijuana Establishments that the Commission may issue. As such, applicants for licensure are not competing against each other to obtain a license. Rather, each applicant is required to submit the same information, and each application will be evaluated on whether the information complies with the requirements set forth in the Commission’s regulations, 935 CMR 500.000.

Each of the three packets that make up the Marijuana Establishment license application require different pieces of information that are intended to provide the Commission with relevant facts about the applicant(s) and the Marijuana Establishment the applicant(s) plan to operate. The Commission’s regulations seek to capture business information that has likely been part of an applicants’ thought process as they’ve considered operating a business. It is the Commission’s hope that applicants that are thoughtful in collecting and submitting the information needed to apply for a license will setting themselves up for long-term success.
Certain applicants may be eligible for assistance preparing the license application through the Commission’s Social Equity Program established in 935 CMR 500.105(17). Additional information about the eligibility criteria to participate in the Social Equity Program may be found in the document Guidance: Summary of Equity Provisions.

Packet 1: Application of Intent
The Application of Intent packet is intended to provide the Commission with information about the Marijuana Establishment, including:

- **Who is the marijuana-establishment applicant?**
  - The applicant may be an individual or several individuals. Individuals required to be named in the application include executives, managers, and close associates, as well as any person or entity who will contribute 10% or more of the initial capital to operate the Marijuana Establishment. The list must include any individual with direct or indirect authority over business policies, cultivation operations or security operations because these are individuals the Commission is likely to interact with over the term of the license. Individuals listed on the application also must disclose their individual interest in any Marijuana Establishment application for licensure or licensee, as well as their past or present business interests, including marijuana-related business interests, in other states.

- **How is the business organized?**
  - Applicants must provide proof that the business is registered to do business in Massachusetts. Certificates providing proof of business incorporation may be requested online from the Corporations Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at [http://www.sec.state.ma.us](http://www.sec.state.ma.us). Please note that as part of the third packet, or the Management and Operations Profile, applicants will need to provide a copy of the articles or organization and bylaws, as well as certificates of good standing from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and the Corporations Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office.

- **How will the Marijuana Establishment be funded?**
  - Applicants are required to document the amounts and sources of capital that will be used to fund the Marijuana Establishment, and certify that all funds used to invest in or finance the Marijuana Establishment were or will be lawfully obtained. They are not required to provide proof of a specific amount of available funding to operate the establishment.
  - Applicants must also show access to adequate funding to dismantle and wind down a Marijuana Establishment. This may be shown by providing proof of a financial guarantee bond or other escrowed amount of money. Massachusetts does not require a financial guarantee bond or escrow funds in a specific amount. However, the applicant will be required to explain why the amount is adequate to dismantle and wind down the particular Marijuana Establishment.

**Notice:** Documents provided to the Commission must not contain banking account numbers.
• Where will the Marijuana Establishment be located?
  o Applicants must provide proof that they have a legal interest in the property where the
    establishment will be located. This property interest may be shown by providing any of the
    following:
    • a copy of the title to the property;
    • a copy of a lease;
    • an option to purchase the site;
    • a copy of a legally enforceable agreement to give title to the property; or
    • other binding permission to use the premises.
  o In addition, applicants must provide certain documentation that indicates a working relationship,
    including a host-community agreement, between the applicant and the community in which the
    Marijuana Establishment is proposed. The required documentation includes:
    • a single-page certification form, available on the Commission’s website, showing that a
      host-community agreement has been reached between the municipality and the applicant;
    • a single-page certification form showing that the applicant has conducted a community-
      outreach meeting within the six months before submitting the application; and
    • a description by the applicant of plans to ensure that the Marijuana Establishment is or
      will be compliant with the community’s local laws, including codes, ordinances or by-
      laws.

• What other important information is needed?
  o One of the Commission’s priorities as the regulatory agency with responsibility for Marijuana
    Establishments is having an ongoing positive impact on communities.
    • Plan for Areas of Disproportionate Impact: Accordingly, applicants are required to
      provide a plan to positively impact areas of disproportionate impact. An “area of
      disproportionate impact” is defined as “a geographic area, identified by the Commission,
      which has had historically high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to
      marijuana crimes.”
  o In addition, certain categories of license must provide other information specific to that license
    as part of the Application of Intent. This includes:
    • Microbusinesses: applicants must provide evidence that a majority of its executives have
      resided within the Commonwealth for a period of 12 consecutive months prior to
      application; and
    • Craft Cooperatives: evidence that all of its members have established residency within
      the Commonwealth for a period of 12 consecutive months prior to application; evidence
      of the cooperative’s organization as a limited liability company or a limited liability
      partnership, or a cooperative cooperation under the laws of the Commonwealth; evidence
      that at least one member of the cooperative filed a Schedule F income tax form within the
      past five years; and evidence that the cooperative is organized consistent with the Seven
      Cooperative Principles established by the International Cooperative Alliance.
Packet 2: Background Check

The Commission is required to make a determination of suitability for licensure for each applicant. As part of the suitability determination, the Commission will perform a review, for each individual listed on the application, of the individual’s background. Background checks will include, but not be limited to, a review of Massachusetts’ and national criminal database records; Massachusetts’ and national civil database records, including professional and occupational records; involvement in other marijuana-related businesses; and actions taken against any license or registration. Applicants are not required to provide information about any conviction that has been sealed or expunged by court order.

Individuals listed on the application for licensure are required to provide a notarized Massachusetts CORI Acknowledgment Form as well as authorization to obtain a full set of fingerprints. Individuals listed on the application will be notified of the process for providing a full set of fingerprints after the completed form is received. In addition, each individual listed on the application must tell the Commission about the individual’s involvement, and the involvement of an entity owned or controlled in whole or in part by the individual, in criminal or civil actions, including:

- A description of any criminal action, whether felony or misdemeanor, that resulted in a conviction, guilty plea, plea of nolo contendere or admission of sufficient facts, in any jurisdiction, Massachusetts or otherwise;
- A description of any civil action, including actions related to a professional, occupational, or fraudulent practice, in any jurisdiction;
- A description of any administrative action, including actions related to a medical or adult-use marijuana operation, in any jurisdiction;
- A description of disciplinary action taken in any jurisdiction against a license, registration, or certification held by the entity or individual, such as a suspension or revocation;
- A description of any license denial in any jurisdiction; and
- A description of any action taken against a license to prescribe or distribute controlled substances, if applicable.

Notice: A complete description of the required background-check information is set forth in 935 CMR 500.101(1)(b)3.

Packet 3: Management and Operations Profile

The Management and Operations Profile packet is intended to provide the Commission with a snapshot of the applicants’ approach to operating the Marijuana Establishment. The information required as part of this packet is an indicator that the applicant understands the legal requirements, including the Commission’s regulations, and is able to operate in a lawful manner.

What, if any, specific business documents do I need to provide?

Applicants for licensure must provide a copy of the articles of organization and bylaws; a certificate of good standing from the Corporations Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office; and a certificate of good standing or certificate of tax compliance from the Department of Revenue. The Commission also requires
applicants to submit a summary of their business plan, including staffing and training plans, and a timeline for opening the establishment.

**Do I need to show proof of insurance?**
No, applicants do not need to show proof of insurance at the time the application is submitted, although they are not discouraged from doing so if they are able. Applicants do need to tell the Commission about your plan to obtain general liability insurance or otherwise meet the insurance requirements spelled out in 935 CMR 500.105(10). All operational Marijuana Establishments are required to have insurance or, if unable to obtain the minimum coverage, place money in escrow to cover any liabilities.

**Do I need to tell the Commission who I will be employing as part of the application?**
No, applicants do not need to provide the names of anticipated employees at the time of application, although they are not discouraged from doing so if they are able. Applicants do need to provide a staffing plan, which includes a description of the types of jobs or positions that will be held by marijuana agents, and what the qualifications are for these jobs or positions. In addition, applicants need to tell the Commission how they intend to train their employees.

**Do I need to provide internal policies and procedures to the Commission as part of the licensing process?**
- Applicants are required to provide detailed summaries of the policies and procedures that they intend to function under as a Marijuana Establishment. The Commission wants to be sure that applicants have read and understand the regulations that licensees are required to comply with, and that they are prepared to put them into practice. Applicants are required to provide summaries of the following:
  - Security plans and procedures;
  - Plans to prevent the diversion of marijuana products;
  - Plans to store marijuana products;
  - Transportation plans, if applicable, or indicate why it is not applicable;
  - Inventory procedures;
  - Quality control and contaminant testing procedures, as applicable under license type;
  - Personnel policies;
  - Dispensing procedures;
  - Record-keeping procedures;
  - Policies and procedures for maintaining financial records; and
  - Diversity plans to promote equity among women, minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, and people of all gender identities and sexual orientation.
- In addition, certain categories of license must provide other information specific to that license. This includes:
  - Retailers: a description of the retail applicant’s plan to obtain marijuana products from a licensed Marijuana Establishment;
  - Cultivators: an operational plan, including policies and procedures, for the cultivation of marijuana; and
  - Product Manufacturers: descriptions of the types of marijuana products planned for manufacture, methods of production and a sample of any unique identifying mark or branding that the applicant anticipates including on the products.
I am a certified priority applicant. Is there a special process for me?

- The Commission will collect the same information from priority applicants as non-priority applicants. However, the Commission’s regulations identify two categories of applicant who will receive priority review status by the Commission as required by **St. 2017, c. 55, An Act to Ensure Safe Access to Marijuana**: applicants that qualify under 935 CMR 500.101(1)(e) as Economic Empowerment Priority Applicants and applicants that qualify under 935 CMR 500.101(2)(a), as existing Registered Medical Dispensary (“RMD”)Priority Applicants. By law, priority applicants must have applied to the Commission as qualifying for priority status between April 1-April 15, 2018.

If you are a certified priority applicant, the Commission will issue you an identifying number. This number should be used when you file your license application, regardless of when you file it, because it tells the Commission you are a certified priority applicant. As a certified priority applicant, your application will be reviewed by the Commission before applications that are not filed by certified priority applicants, regardless of when you file it. So, retain your identifying number and use it.

How will my application be reviewed?

- Before the Commission will consider whether to grant or deny a license, all three packets must be determined to be complete by the Commission. The individual listed as the contact person for the applicant will receive an email from a representative of the Commission when each packet is determined to be complete, and again when the full application is determined to be complete and time-stamped by the Commission.

Applications for priority applicants will be accepted on April 17, 2018, and reviewed on an alternating basis. Priority applicants will retain their priority review status, even if they wait to apply after the license review process opens to all applicants on May 1, 2018 and June 1, 2018. The review status will remain in effect until the Commission promulgates a regulation or establishes a policy or procedure to the contrary.

Applications submitted by certified priority applicants will be reviewed first, alternating between the two categories of priority applicant, beginning with the first-in-time application from either an Economic Empowerment Priority Applicant or an RMD Priority Applicant and moving on to applications from non-priority applicants when there are no additional priority applications ready for review.

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- How completely the applicant responded to the required criteria in the application;
- The applicant’s compliance or ability to comply with Massachusetts laws and regulations, particularly 935 CMR 500.000; and
- The applicant’s suitability for licensure based on 935 CMR 500.101(1), 500.800 and 500.801, which takes into consideration the suitability of any individual person listed on the application.
A Marijuana Establishment is required to comply with the laws of the municipality in which the applicant wishes to locate. The regulations require that the complete application will also be sent to the municipality in which the Marijuana Establishment will operate its business. The municipality will be asked to respond to the Commission, within 60 days, whether the proposed Marijuana Establishment is in compliance with local bylaws and ordinances, including but not limited to zoning bylaws.

The Commission has 90 days from the date it determines that the application is complete in which to either grant a provisional license or deny a license based upon the application submitted by the applicant. The municipal response occurs within this 90-day period.

Denials of licensure will state the reason for the denial. Provisional licenses will include conditions that the applicant must satisfy to receive a final license. One condition that any applicant receiving a provisional license should be prepared for is an architectural plan review followed by a scheduled physical inspection of the premises on which the Marijuana Establishment will be located by the licensing and inspectional staff of the Commission.

**When may I open for business?**
- Once you receive a final license. Before the issuance of a final license the applicant must provide the Commission with any information not available at the time of initial application requested by the Commission and undergo an inspection. The applicant must also pay the required license fee. Final licenses may be subject to reasonable conditions. The final license must be prominently displayed on the premises of the Marijuana Establishment. A license expires one year from the date of issuance. A license will not be reviewed automatically, and the applicant must apply for renewal.

**When will applications be available?**
- License/Certification Application Timeline
  
  - April 2 at noon:
    - Begin certification application for priority applicants
      - Registered Marijuana Dispensaries Priority Applicants
      - Economic Empowerment Priority Applicants
  - April 17:
    - Begin accepting license applications from certified priority applicants
      - All license types available for priority applicants
  - May 1:
    - Open applications for:
      - Cultivation
      - Microbusiness
      - Craft Cooperatives
      - Independent Testing Labs
      - Lab Agents
June 1:
  - Open applications for:
    - Retail
    - Product Manufacturers
    - Transport

Questions?
If you have additional questions regarding types of Marijuana Establishments, please contact the Commission at CannabisCommission@State.MA.US or (617) 701-8400.