

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

CROO NEWS

January 5, 2023

Welcome to the weekly newsletter of the Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office! "CROO News" provides updates on the cannabis program, as well as resources for applicants, license holders, and advocates. All information provided is publicly available, but now it's all in one place.

Follow the CROO on social media for updates and information between issues.

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Welcome Erin Johnson as the New Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office

November 28, 2022 - Governor JB Pritzker announced Erin A. Johnson will serve as the state's Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer. She replaces Danielle Perry, who previously served as the CROO.

"Erin Johnson's commitment to equity will serve Illinois well as she takes the reins as the state's Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "From serving as the Chief of Staff at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice to working as Associate General Counsel and Chief Diversity Officer, Erin has the experience, education, and expertise to thrive in this role while advancing cannabis equity throughout Illinois. I can think of no better person than Erin to serve as our Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer and I wish her all the best in this new position."

Prior to joining the administration, Johnson served as an Associate Corporate Counsel at Amazon, Chief of Staff at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Associate General Counsel and Chief Diversity Officer in the office of former Governor Bruce Rauner, and Litigation Associate at SmithAmundsen in Chicago. In addition, she taught 7th and 8th grade math for two years in Philadelphia as a part of the Teach for America program. She received a B.A. in History from Dartmouth College, an M.S. in Education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a J.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds bar admissions in Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Northern District of Illinois.

The state's Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office is a part of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and is responsible for coordinating with numerous state agencies to direct the regulation and taxation of Illinois' cannabis industry. This work is done to ensure Illinois' social equity goals are met through expungements, community reinvestment, and the diversification of the state's cannabis industry.

[Press Release](#)

Timeline for Next Cannabis Dispensary License Lottery

December 21, 2022 - Following extensive conversations with lawmakers and other stakeholders, the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) has announced the timeline for the next round of cannabis dispensary licenses. Applications for the lottery will be accepted starting in January. Those interested in applying should review the rules, a mock application, a proposed timeline, and other relevant documents available now on the Department's [Adult Use Cannabis program webpage](#). This follows the release of 192 conditional dispensary licenses earlier this year, all to social equity applicants.

"Illinois is committed to having the most accessible and equitable cannabis industry in the nation, and we look forward to issuing additional social equity licenses and cementing our status as a national leader," **said Gov. JB Pritzker**. "My administration will continue working to ensure the industry reflects the diversity of our great state, and I wish to thank all stakeholders for their hard work on this process to ensure that happens."

IDFPR will begin accepting applications for 55 additional conditional cannabis dispensary licenses on Monday, January 30, 2023. The 55 licenses will be distributed across the 17 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Regions. All applications will be submitted online through the [Department's website](#).

Applicants must register as a business and provide certain basic information, such as the name of their organization, list of principal officers, contact information, and a \$250 fee. During the license lottery process, principal officers cannot be included on more than one lottery entry and applicants cannot have more than one lottery entry across all 17 regions.

While the rules for the lottery process do provide flexibility on timing, IDFPR currently anticipates accepting applications for two weeks, through Tuesday, February 14, 2023. IDFPR will then publish a list of lottery participants by Tuesday, February 21, 2023. After a period for applicants to contest the list of lottery participants, IDFPR may publish an updated list based on any necessary corrections and contestations. As soon as possible after the final participant list is published, IDFPR will conduct a lottery with the Illinois Lottery and publish the certified results after the lottery has concluded.

Each applicant drawn for an opportunity for a conditional license will have 45 calendar days to prove certain social equity eligibility criteria, including proving it is 51% or more owned or controlled by one or more individuals who each meet the combination of a certain set of criteria. That criteria may be found here, along with a helpful guide of acceptable documents.

IDFPR will have 60 calendar days after the lottery to ensure the 55 applicants selected in the lottery meet the criteria detailed above. Applicants selected in the lottery will be provided an opportunity to provide supplemental information to satisfy these criteria. If an applicant selected in the lottery does not provide the supplemental information, the conditional license will be

offered to the next applicant drawn in that BLS Region. The applicant must then meet the social equity eligibility criteria.

"This improved process provides increased accessibility and opportunity to individuals who, either directly or in the communities they call home, were harmed by the failed war on drugs," said **Mario Treto, Jr., Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation**. "We look forward to applying the lessons learned from our first round of conditional dispensary licenses to better the means of welcoming more entrepreneurs to the most equitable cannabis program in the country."

All updates and additional information will be found on [IDFPR's Adult Use Cannabis Program webpage](#).

Press Release

The Cannabis Research Institute is Coming to Chicago

December 15, 2022 - The City of Chicago, State of Illinois, and the Discovery Partners Institute today announced the launch of the Cannabis Research Institute, a first-of-its-kind center in the Midwest that will further boost Illinois' global standing as a science hub.

The CRI will be a joint effort by the State and City housed within DPI, which is part of the University of Illinois System, to provide a robust body of research and data to advance public knowledge on scientific and socio-economic impacts of cannabis usage and production.

The arrangement will allow the new institute to leverage DPI's offices, personnel, and resources in Chicago. With a scheduled rollout of the CRI in the next few months, DPI has begun a search for an executive director.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to not only promote Chicago as the center for highly-demanded cannabis research but expand the breadth of knowledge and science needed to shape policy," said Chicago **Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot**. "Our city is the perfect location, as we're home to an impressive hub of innovation and world-class research universities and institutions. Leveraging and coordinating our city's resources to create a top-tier cannabis research center will make waves in this new industry and set the precedent on cannabis research nationally."

Chicago is an ideal location for cannabis research, with its world-class academic and medical institutions and a deep bench of innovators. The CRI will be the premier research institute that seeks to promote equity and a desire to have an evidence-based, research-driven cannabis marketplace.

“I am thrilled to announce the launch of the Cannabis Research Institute – a national first, creating actionable research to inform data-driven policymaking and advance public knowledge on the impacts of cannabis,” said **Governor JB Pritzker**. “I can think of no better place than Illinois for this endeavor. We are the heart of the Midwest and at the very forefront of cannabis legalization – all while dismantling the long-lasting effects of the War on Drugs on our communities.”

The CRI will foster partnerships and collaborations with diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago, to ensure that research on cannabis will inform regulation and policy to protect public health and safety; stimulate medical, scientific, and technology advancement; and address societal questions about the impacts of new markets and policies.

To accomplish this, DPI will assemble and lead a research team that brings together research institutions, government agencies, businesses, and communities.

The CRI will also prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion by creating an entry point into the cannabis industry for people of color through research opportunities (research jobs and research ideation), shared best practices for industry participants (both cultivation and distribution), jobs and internships, partnering with historically Black colleges and universities for research opportunities, supporting research and training with the Illinois Vocational Cannabis Program (operated by the City Colleges of Chicago and other Illinois Community Colleges), and hosting local education sessions in under-served neighborhoods.

The CRI is working closely with the Cannabis Regulatory Oversight Officer, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and other regulatory agencies.

[Press Release](#)

Pritzker Administration Makes \$8.75 Million in Forgivable Loans Available for Social Equity Cannabis Licensees

November 10, 2022 - *New Direct Forgivable Loan Program fully financed by the State will provide immediate capital*

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced that \$8.75 million in Direct Forgivable Loans fully financed by the State will be made available to all conditionally-approved social equity

loan applicants in order to provide immediate access to capital. Pending the completion of a simplified documentation process, forgivable loan amounts between \$50,000-\$500,000 will be released immediately

The Cannabis Social Equity Loan Program is a first-of-its-kind program that launched in the summer of 2021 with the goal of providing low-interest loans to social equity licensees through a partnership with lending institutions. Program participants have encountered significant delays in receiving capital through financial institutions due to the complexities of navigating a new industry that remains illegal under federal law, as well as institutions' fiduciary, regulatory responsibilities and underwriting standards that are set independent of the program.

In response to feedback from participants, and out of an unwavering commitment to increasing equity in the cannabis industry, DCEO's new Direct Forgivable Loan Program will make funding from the state available to all eligible program participants regardless of their original loan application status with a lending partner. Interested participants can continue to pursue funding through the original loan program, while also receiving the new Direct Forgivable Loan.

A total of \$8.75 million will be available through the new Direct Forgivable Loan Program. The

following loan amounts are available per participant based on the business type:

- **Craft Growers:** \$500,000
- **Infusers:** \$250,000
- **Transporters:** \$50,000

The new Direct Forgivable Loan Program fully financed by the State offers funding for all eligible program participants upon the submission of required documentation. Because DCEO has already received significant documentation from program participants, the additional documentation requirements for a direct forgivable loan are minimal to allow for prompt disbursement of funds. The forgivable loan has an 18-month grace period with no payments or interest accrued to provide businesses with flexibility.

Any additional information will be posted to the [Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity website](#)

[Press Release](#)

All First Round Conditional Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary Licenses have been issued

August 19, 2022 - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) issued the 3 remaining Conditional Adult

Use Dispensing Organization Licenses to applicants selected in lotteries held in the summer of 2021. These awardees join the 182 conditional licenses issued by the Department in July, bringing the total number of issued licenses to 185. All businesses qualify as **Social Equity Applicants** under the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

The awardee list available below identifies the current holders of a Conditional Adult Use Dispensing Organization License (“Conditional License”) in the BLS Region in which that Conditional License was issued. This list will be updated as more Conditional Licenses are issued.

Please note that a Conditional License does not authorize the Conditional Licensee to engage in the sale of cannabis until the Conditional Licensee is issued an Adult Use Dispensing Organization pursuant to Section 15-36 of the [Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act](#) . See [410 ILCS 705/15-25\(f\)](#); [410 ILCS 705/15-35 \(e\)](#); and [410 ILCS 705/15-35.10\(e\)](#).

Of the businesses selected through the lottery, 41% are majority Black-owned, 7% are majority White-owned, and 4% are majority Latino-owned, while 38% of awardees did not disclose the race of their owners.

At this time, only three of the 185 conditional adult use dispensary licenses remain to be issued by IDFPR. The Department is waiting for additional or updated documents from entities that did not receive conditional licenses today. IDFPR anticipates processing the remaining conditional licenses as quickly as possible over the coming weeks once those documents are received and approved.

The businesses awarded Conditional Licenses will have 180 days to select a physical storefront location and obtain the full Adult Use Dispensing Organization License. A full overview with next steps for the process is available below.

If a Conditional Licensee is unable to find a suitable physical location within the 180-day period, they may request an extension of 180 days. Once issued an Adult Use Dispensing Organization License, a business may begin purchasing and dispensing adult use cannabis.

[Press release](#)

[Next Steps](#)

[Awardees](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Location Guidance](#)

[IDFPR Website](#)

Resources

Get Help with New Leaf Legal Aid

We are funding a statewide network of free legal advocates to help, called [New Leaf Illinois](#) – and you can contact them to help navigate your expungement eligibility for free.

Even if your criminal record does not involve cannabis, New Leaf may still be able to help. Fill out the form below and a member of the New Leaf team will get in touch with you.

[2 Year Impact & FAQs](#)

[Contact New Leaf](#)

Technical Assistance for License Holders and Applicants

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity subsidizes technical assistance for license holders and applicants for cannabis licenses. Learn more on DCEO's website, linked [here](#). You can also learn more about the technical assistance providers by following the links below.

The Trep School

Live webinars, individual consulting, and brief advising.

[Contact](#)

Oakton Community College

Cannabis industry certificates, workshops, and business support.

[Courses](#)

[Contact](#)

Find a full list of webinars hosted by technical assistance partners in the "Events" section of this email.

Resources for Conditional Dispensary Licensees

Find resources for Conditional License holders during the conditional licensing period below and on the [IDFPR website](#).

[Email IDFPR](#)

Informational Bulletins

[Next Steps](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Zoning](#)

[PO Fingerprinting](#)

Conditional Period Forms

[Proposed PO Application](#)

[Notice of Proper Zoning Form](#)

Free Medical Patient Card Application Assistance

The Department of Public Health (IDPH) has partnered with local health departments to provide assistance to qualifying patients with completing their applications, including renewal application and extensions, for the Medical Cannabis Registry Program.

Cass County Health Department

331 S. Main
Virginia, IL 62691

Contact: Delaney Sieving

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

There is no charge for this assistance, however, costs associated with registration fees and other requirements (i.e., passport photo, etc.) are the responsibility of the applicant. Learn more on IDPH's website, linked [here](#).

Clark County Health Department

997 N. York St.
P.O. Box 266
Martinsville, IL
62442

Contact: Cathy Hayden

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Coles County Health Department

825 18th St.
Charleston, IL
61920

Contact: Diana Stenger (ext. 235)

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Clinton County Health Department

930 Fairfax St.
Carlyle, IL 62231

Contact: Sean Eifert

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

DeKalb County Health Department

2550 N. Annie Glidden Rd.
DeKalb, IL 60115

Contact: MCPP Program

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Egyptian County Health Department

1412 U.S. 45 North
Eldorado, IL 62930

Contact: Jamie Byrd

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Ford County Health Department

235 N. Taft St.
Paxton, IL 60957

Contact: Lana Sample

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Franklin-Williamson County Health Department

8160 Express Dr.
Marion, IL 60957

Contact: Kevin Kaytor

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Fulton County Health Department

700 E. Oak St.
Canton, IL 61520

Contact: Katie Lynn

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Jasper County
Health
Department**

106 E. Edwards St.
Newton, IL 62448

Contact: Deborah
Riddle

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Kendall County
Health
Department**

811 W. John St.
Yorkville, IL 60560

[Call](#)

**Lee County
Health
Department**

309 S. Galena
Ste. 100
Dixon, IL 61021

Contact: Becky
Morris

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Logan County
Health
Department**

109 3rd St.
P.O. Box 508
Lincoln, IL 62656

Contact: Kara A.
Davis

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Madison County
Health
Department**

101 E. Edwardsville
Rd.
Wood River, IL
62095

Contact: Toni
Corona

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Ogle County
Health
Department**

907 W. Pines Rd.
Oregon, IL 61061

Contact: Kyle
Auman

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Rock Island
County Health
Department**

2112 25th Ave.
Rock Island, IL
61201

Contact: Brenda
Cook

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

**Winnebago
County Health
Department**

555 N. Court St.
P.O. Box 4009
Rockford, IL 61110

[Call](#)

[Email](#)

Know Your Rights

Wondering what's allowed in Illinois? Unlike the age you can legally use, some of the rules vary based on where you are, who's around you, the form of cannabis, and owner permission.

Learn the facts and nuances that can help you make responsible choices and stay out of legal trouble below.

[Learn more](#)

Key facts:

- You must be **at least 21 years old** to legally, use, possess, and buy recreational cannabis.
- Illinois residents **can possess up to 30 grams** (about an ounce) of cannabis flower.
- Smoking, vaping, or consuming **cannabis is illegal in vehicles & public spaces.**

- Individuals cannot legally sell any amount of cannabis to anyone.
- By federal law, it is illegal to travel across state borders with any amount of cannabis.

Get Your Questions Answered

<p>CROO</p> <p>Please direct program feedback and requests to the address below.</p> <p>Contact CROO</p>	<p>IDOA</p> <p>Please direct questions about IDOA licenses to the address below.</p> <p>Contact IDOA</p>	<p>IDPH</p> <p>Please direct questions about the medical cannabis patient program to the address below.</p> <p>Contact IDPH</p>	<p>ISP</p> <p>Please direct questions about cannabis control to the address below.</p> <p>Contact ISP</p>
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About CROO Working Groups

The CROO hosts monthly, public working group meetings on medical cannabis patient needs and emerging policy. All meeting information will be posted in "CROO News," but you can also reach out to FPR.CROO@Illinois.gov to be notified of meeting changes as they occur.

If you have not already, please complete the topic survey for the working group you are interested in joining so we can tailor the meetings to the group's interests. Surveys are linked below.

Medical Cannabis Patient Working Group

Recurs: 1st Wednesday each month
Time: 6pm to 7:30pm
About: Discuss patient issues and medical program developments

Policy & Advocacy Working Group

Recurs: 2nd Wednesday each month
Time: 2pm to 3:30pm
About: Discuss emerging cannabis policy topics in Illinois and nationally

Events
