

RCW 43.330.540 Cannabis social equity technical assistance grant program. (1) The cannabis social equity technical assistance grant program is established and is to be administered by the department.

(2) (a) The cannabis social equity technical assistance grant program must award grants to:

(i) Cannabis license applicants who are social equity applicants as defined in RCW 69.50.335 submitting social equity plans as defined in RCW 69.50.101; and

(ii) Cannabis licensees holding a license issued after April 1, 2023, and before July 1, 2024, who meet the social equity applicant criteria under RCW 69.50.335.

(b) Grant recipients under this subsection (2) must demonstrate completion of their project within 12 months of receiving a grant, unless a grant recipient requests, and the department approves, additional time to complete the project.

(3) The department must award grants primarily based on the strength of the social equity plans submitted by cannabis license applicants and cannabis licensees holding a license issued after April 1, 2023, and before July 1, 2024, but may also consider additional criteria if deemed necessary or appropriate by the department. Technical assistance activities eligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

(a) Assistance navigating the cannabis licensure process;

(b) Cannabis-business specific education and business plan development;

(c) Regulatory compliance training;

(d) Financial management training and assistance in seeking financing;

(e) Strengthening a social equity plan as defined in RCW 69.50.101; and

(f) Connecting social equity applicants with established industry members and tribal cannabis enterprises and programs for mentoring and other forms of support.

(4) The department may contract to establish a roster of mentors who are available to support and advise social equity applicants and current licensees who meet the social equity applicant criteria under RCW 69.50.335. Contractors under this section must:

(a) Have knowledge and experience demonstrating their ability to effectively advise eligible applicants and licensees in navigating the state's licensing and regulatory framework or on producing and processing cannabis;

(b) Be a business that is at least 51 percent minority or woman-owned; and

(c) Meet department reporting and invoicing requirements.

(5) Funding for the cannabis social equity technical assistance grant program must be provided under RCW 69.50.540. Additionally, the department may solicit, receive, and expend private contributions to support the grant program.

(6) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

(7) For the purposes of this section, "cannabis" has the meaning provided under RCW 69.50.101. [2023 c 220 s 1; 2022 c 16 s 36; 2021 c 169 s 1; 2020 c 236 s 3.]

Intent—Finding—2022 c 16: See note following RCW 69.50.101.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 236: See note following RCW 69.50.335.