

# Commissioner Questions and Research Department Answers

Review and Assessment of the Massachusetts Adult- and  
Medical-use Cannabis Industries

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Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission

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## I. Executive Summary

The Industry Report serves to assess both the medical-use and adult-use cannabis industries in Massachusetts using available data from November 2018 through April 2024, except where otherwise noted. As of the date of publication, 700 licensees have been approved to commence operations across the Commonwealth, including 201 with RMD/MTC designation. Adult-use cannabis market sales have totaled \$7,086,854,133.61, and medical-use market sales have totaled \$1,379,535,470.98. Please note: the Commission only maintains medical-use cannabis sales data after December 2018, following the transition of the Medical Use of Marijuana Program from DPH and their required use of the agency's seed-to-sale system of record, Metrc. The demographics of the industry remain predominantly white and male but show increasing racial/ethnic and gender diversity among employees over time. Additionally, the number of registered medical patients nears 100,000 with patterns emerging in patients' reported diagnoses by age group.

This report utilizes data from multiple sources to construct a broad overview of the progress and current state of the adult-use and medical-use markets. The seed-to-sale tracking system provides descriptive data of cannabis licensees, cultivation, products, and sales. Internal records of medical patients and industry employees from the Massachusetts Cannabis Industry Portal (MassCIP) provide registration and demographic breakdowns of industry owners and employees, and of medical patients. To contextualize results, we include literature reviews on the history of cannabis, the cannabis industry, and public health and safety for the industry, consumers, and general public.

Following the Public Meeting presentation of the Report on February 25, 2025, Commissioners were instructed to submit all report questions to the Research Department from February 25 – March 11. Received Commissioner questions with Research Department answers are presented below.

**The full report can be accessed on the Commission website and via the following link:**

<https://masscannabiscontrol.com/document/review-and-assessment-of-the-massachusetts-adult-and-medical-use-cannabis-industries/>

**The presentation of the report on February 25, 2025, can be access via the following link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYtnDcC093g>

## II. Questions and Answers

**Disclaimer:** These are the expressed responses from the expertise of the Research Department, and do not necessarily represent the opinions or other views of the Commission, the Board of five appointed Commissioners, or other Commission departments.



**Question 1: To date, how many legislative reports have been completed and what were their timelines?**

**Answer 1:** Since April 2018 and the hiring of the Director of Research (currently the Chief of Research) to direct the legislative research mandate pursuant to [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17](#), the Research Department has completed 13 legislative reports to date, including annual mandates and one-time mandates. All reports and their dates of publishing are listed on our Commission webpage, [Research - Cannabis Control Commission Massachusetts](#), and in Table 1 [List of Commission Legislative and Special Reports] in Section III below the Q&A.

**Question 2: How are legislative reports constructed?**

**Answer 2:** Legislative report construction varies to some degree by the type of report. For example, the Industry Report requires data from the Commission (extracted from Metrc, MassCIP, and other sources), while the International Cannabis Policy Study (ICPS) Report uses a dataset acquired via contract with the University of Waterloo. For all reports, the Research Department will acquire and analyze the data, draft the report internally, and send interdepartmental review timelines to Department Heads to plan collaboration. Reports generally consist of sections covering background, methods, data and analysis, and conclusions and recommendations (“considerations”).

**Question 3: In addition to the Research Team, what other departments collaborate on these types of reports?**

**Answer 3:** Interdepartmental collaboration also varies by report. For example, the Industry Report requires collaboration with the IT Department to obtain internal Commission data, extracted from Metrc, MassCIP, and other sources. The Industry Report requires information on processes from other departments as well – such as understanding the license application process via the Licensing Department. The ICPS Report, by contrast, is primarily prepared internally by the Research Department, as we use a dataset acquired via contract with the University of Waterloo. For all reports, once a report is drafted, it is sent to Department Heads for content review and feedback, then to Communications for formatting, the Executive Director for final approval, and then to Commissioners for review 8 weeks prior to presentation at a public meeting.

**Question 4: Does the Research Team depend on other departments to ascertain information or collect data?**

**Answer 4:** Yes – the Research Department does not currently house any data. All data for all our published reports are acquired either via the Open Data Catalog, requests to IT or other departments, or



from external sources (e.g., ICPS data from the University of Waterloo).

**Question 5: From a research team’s perspective, what were the key data points or findings between the inaugural report and this report that most surprised, raised caution or impressed the research team?**

**Answer 5:** There are multiple important findings in the recent report that are essential to consider as the Commission continues to review regulation in an evolving legalization landscape.

- The decreasing total sales in the medical market suggest that MTCs may need additional Commission support to remain profitable.
- The varying distributions of reported potency and contaminant results between ITLs merit further analysis – there could be several factors influencing these, ranging from changes in scientific advancements on best practices to standardized policies and procedures, to differences between cultivators' and ITLs' procedures.
- The differing demographics for General and Senior-level Agent registrations suggest that, while there has been progress towards increasing diversity among General agents, it is important to monitor hiring and promotion into the Senior levels, which have more ability to create generational wealth.
- The price decreases across all product types may help bring remaining consumers over from the unregulated market. However, while the unregulated market will struggle with decreased prices, lower prices in the regulated market also mean licensed MEs can have a harder time making profit.
- The large variation in market saturation between counties means that conversations about market saturation would be most beneficial at the region/county/city or even census-tract level, rather than at the state level. It will likely never be accurate to describe the market across the entire Commonwealth as uniformly over- or under-saturated.

**Question 6: Per statute language, it is my understanding the Research Department should provide “recommendations” to the Commission. Why does the report state “considerations” instead?**

**Answer 6:** Pursuant to [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17B](#), “*the commission shall annually report on the results of its research agenda and, when appropriate, make recommendations for further research or policy changes.*” Upon preparing the [first Commission Research Report](#), senior leadership decided to use softer wording for “recommendations,” thus, we have since used the terminology “considerations.” If Commission leadership and the Board (i.e. the Commissioners) agree, the Research Department will use “recommendations” terminology in future reports.



**Question 7:** For this report, you mentioned during your presentation it was delayed since December 2023. Please share what were the specific causes of the delays from Dec. 2023 – Feb. 2025.

**Answer 7:** There were several different reasons for the delays. The Research Department is understaffed because we did not receive the funding needed in recent years to hire more staff as anticipated to meet departmental and Commission needs. We also began requesting data in 2022 and received data intermittently. For example, we first received testing data in December 2023, and this data required significant time to understand and analyze. It is important to note that this data is coming from Metrc, which is an inventory management system and is not used as a research data repository. As a result, this data requires a lot of cleaning and work from the Data Department to be used for any quantitative analysis. Additionally, varying interdepartmental communication issues both during the content review process and preceding the presentation required additional mitigation that extended previous timelines.

**Question 8:** Are there any scientific concerns to the report regarding the delays?

**Answer 8:** We have to finish drafting the report (including completing data analyses) before sending the report to other departments for content review, then to Communications for formatting review, and then to the Executive Director for approval. After a report is fully reviewed by all departments and the Executive Director, the Board (i.e., the Commissioners) has eight weeks to review and ask questions prior to its presentation and publication.

There will always be a “data cutoff” in the report – a date by which we stop accepting new data in order to finish analyses and draft the report. This means that, even without delays, the data in the published report will always be *at least* a few months old by the time the report is published, and older for analyses that are difficult or time-consuming (and therefore required an earlier cutoff). Any delay to the report timeline means the data in the report will be more out of date when the report is published. We can minimize the interval between a report’s data cutoff and the publication date by adhering to Research Department standard operating procedures and report timelines.

**Question 9:** How can we prevent delays in the future?

**Answer 9:** There are multiple ways the Commission and Board alike can help prevent future delays, including the primary concern of adequate staffing levels in alignment with job duties and functions. Other mechanisms include the following:



- Departments must follow their own and each other’s standard operating procedures, adhere to communicated deadlines, and fully review requests to ensure timely task completion. It is essential for Department Heads to respond promptly (and within timelines) to communications and requests. If tasks cannot be completed in the proposed timeline, it is essential for Department Heads to promptly communicate this and work collaboratively on a feasible timeline.
- It is also important not to make further content edits after the content of a report has been finalized.
- Fully staffing the Research Department to complete the robust research agenda pursuant to [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17](#), as well as other Commission research needs, would also be beneficial.
- Overall, the Executive Director, Board (i.e., the Commissioners), and Commission leadership’s support and collaboration are essential to allow the Research Department to complete mandated research responsibilities, and to ensure research is objective and accurate.

**Question 10: You also mentioned Research serves as an independent function of the Commission. With the current agency structure, is that actually the case? If not, what more can the Board do to ensure your department functions independently? \*Note: Board refers to the 5 appointed Commissioners.**

**Answer 10:** Research, by design, needs to be objective to be useful, especially to provide policy makers with experienced [past] or expected [projected for future] effects of legalization, so Commission leadership and the Board (i.e., the Commissioners) can make effective, evidence-based policy decisions. It is important for the Commission and Legislature to ensure the Research Department has the support needed both to work independently and to collaborate with other departments to understand the nuances of Commission processes. To this end, the Board could support the Research Department by ensuring the independence of research processes from regulatory processes.

**Question 11: The CCC is committed to ongoing research about the industry but were there any topics from this report that the research team would prioritize and be most interested in exploring further as a follow-up between reports?**

**Answer 11:** Sustainability of the medical program is a top priority, especially as this is an issue impacting medical marijuana programs nationwide, and one that we are focusing on in our upcoming Clinical Therapeutics specialty update, due to be published January 2026. It would also be beneficial to work directly with staff in the Testing and Data Departments to conduct additional analyses of available testing data. We would also support the Commission contracting with a third-party vendor with economic expertise for a more expansive analysis of sales and market saturation.



In addition, continued monitoring of industry participation trends will be integral to understanding representation in the industry, particularly among Senior-level positions. Our results suggest that the industry was predominantly white and male in mid-2023, although trends over time revealed increased representation of female agents and Agents of Color both in Senior-level and General positions. However, this data was recent to July 31, 2023. It will be important in the next Industry Report to examine how regulatory changes that have taken place since then may or may not have influenced participation trends.

**Question 12: How does the apparent bell curve of Commence Operation Licenses and Application Submissions on page 27 support or align with the data the report shares on Market Saturation? Are there other issues to highlight the trend including continuing lack of capital, regulatory compliance or other issues? Is it helpful to look at number of alcohol retailers per 100K residents?**

**Answer 12:** This question appears to refer to Figure IV.2 Commence Operations, by Year. This figure shows a slowing rate of new applications being submitted, which could reflect a number of reasons. For example, it could be that most people who wanted to apply for a license have done so, and/or that real or perceived market saturation may be deterring new applications, among other causes. The number of licenses with Commence Operations status over time is harder to interpret, as (to our knowledge) license closures are not fully reconciled in this data. Data that reconciles closures would provide helpful additional context for the information on market saturation – for example, if MEs have begun to close in greater numbers, and if MEs in more saturated areas are more likely to close, then that would support market saturation being an issue of concern. There are certainly other issues that it would be useful to highlight; it could be beneficial to conduct a formal survey of licensees to review issues that they cite. Additionally, because alcohol is federally legal, is more widely consumed, is not used medicinally, and has been a regulated market for a few centuries (except for a brief prohibition), it may be difficult to glean insight by comparing alcohol retailer saturation to cannabis. It would be more helpful to hire a vendor with expertise in economic analysis to examine our sales and Marijuana Establishment data, and to conduct a more formal analysis of market saturation.

**Question 13: In considering Consumer Demand, the report highlights changes in sales between Washington and Oregon with a focus on changes occurring along the state border after Oregon entered the legal adult use market. Do we know how long it took for there to be noticeable changes in the marketplace between those two states? Now that Massachusetts has four newer states entering the legal marketplace along our borders, is there an opportunity to do a similar analysis for Massachusetts? Is additional data needed beyond simply sales figures?**

**Answer 13:** There are dashboards available on both the [WA Liquor and Cannabis Board](#) and [OR Liquor and Cannabis Commission](#) websites that show cannabis market sales over time. We can see that OR



adult-use cannabis sales started in January 2017, and year-over-year growth in WA sales slowed down in 2017-2018 compared to previous years. This suggests that the early OR market may have quickly captured some sales from the WA market. However, it would require a more thorough analysis of sales in WA establishments nearer to and further from the OR border to establish causality. It would also be expected for sales in WA to grow more slowly over time, even without the introduction of a competing market.

With regards to whether similar analyses are possible in Massachusetts: One [study](#) from WA estimates elasticity of supply using administrative sales data like this report, but crucially this study also uses the Banking, Entrepreneurship, Regulation and Tax (BERT) survey, which was administered to cannabis producers and retailers in WA, to estimate demand. Without a similar survey of MA producers and retailers, estimating this demand from a business standpoint would be challenging. The International Cannabis Policy Study (ICPS) contains data on purchasing trends that may be helpful in estimating in- and out-of-state purchasing trends from a consumer standpoint.

**Question 14: What data does your team have for testing and what data do you still need?**

**Answer 14:** We have the dataset provided to us by the IT Department for this report, and the data on the Open Data Catalog. We understand IT and Enforcement are working on making more data available soon. In the interim, more than up-to-date data, it would be highly beneficial for Research staff to collaborate directly with Data and Testing staff to review changes in policy and/or practices and the data infrastructure to ensure this data can be used for quantitative analysis. Multiple teams are needed to achieve a holistic understanding of the data.

**Question 15: Why were the testing data months limited in scope?**

**Answer 15:** The testing data is limited in scope because it is the dataset the IT Department was able to provide to Research at the time of reporting.

**Question 16: What changes were made to the report regarding testing? Do these changes concern you?**

**Answer 16:** Content changes were limited to the Considerations section and were made at the request of the Legal Department prior to publishing. While we appreciate their concerns, it is essential that departments adhere to timelines, standard operating procedures, and statutory responsibilities pursuant to [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17](#).

**Question 17: What does your team deem as critical regulatory changes for testing?**



**Answer 17:** See the Considerations section. In general, it is essential to monitor testing data proactively and regularly to catch potential regulatory concerns as early as possible. It is also important to evaluate contaminants and pesticides that the Commission *is* and *is not* requiring testing for on an ongoing basis, as it is critical that the Commission follows the larger science and policy literature on best scientific or regulatory practices to best ensure consumer and patient safety.

**Question 18:** On pages, 59 and 62, you show testing results in density plots that are concerning. Is there a more direct way to test if there is data manipulation?

**Answer 18:** Yes. An interdepartmental group of Research, Data, and Testing staff could investigate these patterns. This staff-level interdepartmental collaboration is crucial for understanding the different aspects of policy changes, practices, data infrastructure, and analyses.

**Question 19:** THC and THCA results appear to be increasing while TYM fail rates appear to be decreasing. Is there a scientific rationale for these changes? What can the Commission do to ensure accuracy in testing results?

**Answer 19:** Both of these are certain to have multiple causes. It is likely that consumer demand contributed to increases in THC/THCA, even if there were other causes. It is also plausible that some cultivators are improving their processes to minimize contaminants and receive passing TYM results with greater frequency. This is addressed, to some extent, in the Considerations section; while the Commission could increase standardization in testing procedures and requirements, a state-run lab and a robust off-the-shelf testing program are ideal to establish whether labeled values are accurate and ensure fidelity of the enforcement of Commission policies. It is also essential for the Commission to closely monitor ITLs' reporting of results – outside of any fraud or manipulation concerns, there can be variations in how ITLs report their results that do not affect enforcement but do impede quantitative analysis.

**Question 20:** On page 67, you specifically referenced heavy metals, but this data is not located in the report. Why not? Does the Commission collect this data and if so will this be in the 2027 industry report?

**Answer 20:** We will include this data in a future report when it is available for analysis. For this report, we only had the testing data for THC, THCA, and TYM provided to us by the IT Department.

**Question 21:** Does the research team have specific scientific recommendations surrounding TYM thresholds/ action limits?



**Answer 21:** As with all testing standards, we would recommend reviewing this limit, as the scientific understanding may have changed since this action limit was chosen. It is essential to monitor research and seek out experts in the testing space (industry, regulatory, and academic scientists and stakeholders alike) to assess if this should be updated. There are additional potential approaches to monitoring and regulating microbial contaminants that are also worth consideration, such as:

- Would it be helpful to set a stricter threshold for medical products than for adult-use products?
- Should the Commission mandate any additional species-specific tests?
- For any species-specific test, such as *Aspergillus*, where cost may be burdensome but the result would be vital information for vulnerable patients and consumers, should we add labels saying this test has not been conducted, so that consumers who are immunocompromised or otherwise at risk are fully informed?

**Question 22: Would Research work collaboratively with CIE and Commissioners on a holistic review of the testing regulations?**

**Answer 22:** Absolutely! Additionally, it is critical that Research staff be able to collaborate directly with Testing staff. Staff often have the most expertise in these areas, and communicating through a hierarchy between departments can inhibit collaboration.

**Question 23: What data does the research team have compiled on equity and SEP?**

**Answer 23:** The Research Department compiled a list of key statutory and regulatory social equity provisions that impact equity in the industry and SEP [see Table 2. *Massachusetts Equity Provisions—Statutory and Regulatory (Current as of March 2023)* in Section III of the Q&A].

However, for data, we are only aware of and have access to Marijuana Establishment data on the Open Data catalog, and data on Agent demographics, roles, and seniority provided by IT. The Research Department has also previously conducted analyses for the Equity Programming and Community Outreach Department, but the data analyzed for those purposes are different from the Agent SEP data infrastructure that is needed. This infrastructure is needed to readily analyze the impact and effectiveness of equity provisions, such as assessing how many SEP participants are active Agents in the Massachusetts cannabis industries.

**Question 24: Why was there an omission of equity programming data in the report?**

**Answer 24:** This is because neither the Marijuana Establishments dataset nor the agent registrations



dataset that were available to us contained direct SEP data. An analysis of equity programming would require the datasets to have information or metrics allowing us to assess (1) the number of Agents and license owners that are/were SEP participants and (2) their progression through the industry (e.g., did an agent move from an entry-level to senior-level position within the industry after SEP participation). Additionally, to our knowledge, we do not yet have a mechanism to stratify individual agents from agent registrations. This infrastructure is crucial to establish first so we can analyze data at the level of the individual agent, such as Agent's SEP participation.

**Question 25: What data does the Research team need to collect to determine equity impact and effectiveness?**

**Answer 25:** We need the data outlined in the regulations to ensure we can track individual agents over time and to be able to look at career trajectories by different demographics, whether it be EEA, SEP, or DBE. We need datasets identifying which agents and license owners are SEP participants, as well as data on business performance, so we can review the relative performance by licensees who meet equity criteria (SEP participants, DBEs, etc.) and be able to compare to all other licensee types without such qualifiers. What is needed for data to determine equity impact and effectiveness is also detailed in the regulations 935 CMR 500.050(11)(f)1, 935 CMR 500.050(11)(4), and 935 CMR 500.050(11)(i). Regulations include the need for additional qualitative measures for SEP goals, success, and financial feasibility for participation in industry. To assess these metrics for SEP, research needs these measures for both SEP and non-SEP licensees with commence operations.

**Question 26: Based on the report's collection of statistics of senior level and non-senior level positions, how can the Board help increase agents at the senior level position? \*Note: Board refers to the 5 appointed Commissioners.**

**Answer 26:** We would need to conduct more analyses to understand what can be done to increase seniority among specific cohorts, such as SEP participants. The first thing we need is data tracking individual agents (vs. registrations) over time. We need to look not only at hiring patterns, but also at promotions and career trajectories within the industry, which may not necessarily be within our capabilities as the Commission does not supervise industry hiring or promotion practices.

**Question 27: Should the report be more inclusive of American Indian and Alaskan Native populations?**

**Answer 27:** We would like to include all demographic groups in the Commonwealth, especially subsamples known to be disproportionately impacted by the enforcement of drug policy. However, sample size can be a limitation. For example, if there are only three individuals of a specific



demographic in a population of 1,000, then comparing those three individuals to other, much larger demographic groups can be misleading.

We believe that the inclusion of Native Americans in the Commission's equity mission would allow Commission policies to be more inclusive to all affected cohorts. Although the issues Native Americans face, historically and in entering the cannabis industry, seem to follow different pathways than Black/African American and Hispanic cohorts, this cohort is impacted in complex and disproportionate ways which warrants concern, further assessment, and potentially support unique to this cohort specifically in MA's cannabis industry. For interested Commissioners, we previously conducted a literature synthesis on this topic and can provide at request.

**Question 28: Based on the report, only 2.5% of agents refer to themselves as veterans and only 1.1% as farmers. What can we do as an agency to further assess why these numbers are so low?**

**Answer 28:** The best way to understand quantitative data is to supplement quantitative data with qualitative data, such as surveys, focus groups, and/or key stakeholder interviews. It may be helpful for the Commission to explore interviewing veterans and farmers both inside and outside the industry to understand motives and barriers to industry entry.

**Question 29: In regard to the medical program, what data does the Commission currently collect? What data are we not currently collecting that we should be?**

**Answer 29:** To our knowledge, the data currently available includes sales and licensing data on the Open Data Catalog, and numbers for patients, caregivers, and MTCs reported monthly in public meetings. We would defer to Commission leadership and relevant departments on other data collected by the Commission about the medical program.

It is important to also note here that the Research Department, in collaboration with the Constituent Services Department, drafted a medical patient survey in September 2023. This survey, currently still in draft form and not yet funded, would collect data on both operations and use patterns to both understand how the Commission can improve the program for our patients and better understand their unique patient needs.

It is also important to emphasize that building data *infrastructure* is just as important as collecting data, because data that is collected may be structured and stored in a manner that does not readily allow for analysis. For example, changes in license ownership are reported to the commission, but to our knowledge there is not a centralized dataset containing license ownership information over time. Thus, this data is collected but cannot be readily analyzed.



**Question 30:** Despite the challenges in assessing the unregulated market as indicated in the report, can data sources be used to identify the prevalence of the unregulated market between communities? What data sources are critical to that assessment?

**Answer 30:** Yes – the annual [International Cannabis Policy Study](#) (ICPS) conducted by Dr. David Hammond at the University of Waterloo includes extensive and detailed questions about respondents’ cannabis consumption and sourcing. We could use this data, as well as our in-house sales data, to estimate the size of the unregulated market, and general regional differences across the Commonwealth. However, the ICPS’s sample size would likely not allow us to compare the size of the unregulated market between communities. Further, producing unregulated market size estimates for regions, counties, cities or census tracts from a monetary standpoint would require regulated sales data at a corresponding level. To estimate the size of the unregulated market in Worcester, for example, would require analyzing sales data from Worcester only.

### III. Tables

**Table 1.** List of Commission Legislative and Special Reports.

Commission Research Reports, c.55 and M.G.L mandate agenda items where applicable	Data and Description of Report
<p><a href="#"><u>1. A Baseline Review and Assessment of Cannabis Use and Public Safety Part 1: Operating under the Influence of Cannabis: Literature Review and Preliminary Data in Massachusetts. [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</u></a></p>	<p><b>JANUARY 2019:</b> This report included a(n): (1) Assessment of incidents of impaired driving in the Commonwealth using data from the Massachusetts State Police, a survey of Massachusetts Chiefs of Police, and relevant data from the Public Awareness Campaign focus groups; (2) Assessment of resources available for public safety, and (3) State of the science, a comprehensive review of the literature to understand how to detect cannabinoids and cannabis impairment.</p>



<p><b><u>2. A Baseline Review and Assessment of Cannabis Use and Public Safety Part 2: 94C Violations and Social Equity: Literature Review and Preliminary Data in Massachusetts [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</u></b></p>	<p><b>APRIL 2019:</b> This report included a(n): (1) Comprehensive assessment of incidents of M. G.L.c. 94C violations in the Commonwealth, including: (1) G.L. c. 94C, § 32C (Cultivate/Manufacture Class D Substance); (2) M.G.L. c. 94C, § 32C (Distribute or Intent to Distribute Class D Substance); (3) G.L. c. 94C, § 34 (Cannabis Possession (&gt;1 ounce until 7/2017 and &gt;2 ounces after 7/2017)); and (4) M.G.L. c. 94C, § 32L (Cannabis Possession (&lt;1 ounce until 7/2017 and &lt;2 ounces after 7/2017)), and review of Public Awareness Data relating to knowledge of cannabis provisions in the Commonwealth. This report also includes a review of the literature regarding social equity and arrests, a review of the social equity provisions in the Commonwealth and closes with (4) Policy Considerations for the Commonwealth to consider.</p>
<p><b><u>3. A Baseline Review and Assessment of Cannabis Use and Youth: Literature Review and Preliminary Data in Massachusetts. [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</u></b></p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 2019:</b> This report included a(n): (1) Assessment of youth cannabis use behaviors and risk/protective factors associated with cannabis use behaviors from 2007-2017 in the Commonwealth using the Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, (YRBS); (2) Review of the literature on youth cannabis use behaviors and associated topics; (3) Public health framework, (4) Prevention framework; and ending with (5) Policy Considerations for the Commonwealth.</p>
<p>4. Special Report: A Baseline Review and Assessment of the Massachusetts Cannabis Industry’s Required Positive Impact Plans.</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 2019:</b> Collaboration with Summer Rappaport Institute Fellow and Boston University Student, Jessica Hamilton, this report assessed the first full year of Positive Impact Plans (PIPs) submitted to the Commission and associated data, including: Key Stakeholder Interviews with Commissioners and Social Equity Program (SEP) applicant applications and survey data, and ending with Policy Considerations for the Commonwealth to consider.</p>



<p>5. Special Report: Evaluation the Impact of Cannabis Legalization in Massachusetts: State of the Data</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 2019:</b> Collaboration and contract with UMass Amherst, Jennifer Whitehill, PhD, and Kimberley Geissler, PhD, this report comprehensively assessed the available datasets in Massachusetts to help the Department isolate resources to fulfill the robust research agenda including Considerations for research in following years and specific dataset procurements requiring Institutional Review Board review.</p>
<p><u><a href="#">6. A Preliminary Assessment of the Massachusetts Cannabis Industry: Literature Review and Preliminary Data in Massachusetts [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</a></u></p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY 2020:</b> This report included preliminary insight into the first year of the Massachusetts Cannabis Industry and state of the science in regard to early legal cannabis markets (first 12 months).</p>
<p><u><a href="#">7. Massachusetts Public Awareness Campaign, More About Marijuana Effectiveness: Summary and Effectiveness [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</a></u></p>	<p><b>JUNE 2020:</b> The Department assessed the Massachusetts #MoreAboutMJ Public Awareness Campaign (“Campaign”), scientific impetus, and effectiveness using data from the Campaign, which included focus groups and pre-and-post Campaign implementation surveys.</p>
<p><u><a href="#">8. Feasibility of Alternative Cannabis Tax Schemes: A Legislative Report &amp; Recommendation for Massachusetts [St. 2017, c. 55 § 63]</a></u></p>	<p><b>JULY 2020:</b> The Department in collaboration with Chief Operating Officer, Department of Revenue, and KPMG LLC., assessed the feasibility of alternative tax schemes on cannabis and cannabis products, including by weight, volume and tetrahydrocannabinol potency in the Commonwealth.</p>



<p><b><u>9. A Baseline Review and Assessment of Adult and Emerging Adult Cannabis Use: High-Level Findings from the International Cannabis Policy Study (2018-2019) and Literature Review [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17 (a) (b)]</u></b></p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 2020:</b> The Department in collaboration with Dr. Hammond, University of Waterloo, assessed emerging adult (16-20) and adult (<math>\geq 21</math>) cannabis use and related behaviors from 2018-2019, including: cannabis use, mode of consumption, source of cannabis, ease of cannabis access, driving and riding behaviors, and perceptions of cannabis.</p>
<p><b><u>10. Identifying Disproportionately Impacted Areas by Cannabis Prohibition in Massachusetts. Worcester, MA. March 2021.</u></b></p>	<p><b>MARCH 2021:</b> The Department in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts (University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of Massachusetts Lowell), and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, assessed disproportionately impacted areas (DIAs) by the “War on Drugs” in Massachusetts.</p>
<p><b><u>11. High Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) Cannabis and Effects on the Human Body—More Research Needed. A Legislative Report and Considerations for Research and Policy. Worcester, MA: Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission [St. 2017, c. 55, § 30 (f)]</u></b></p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 2021:</b> The Department assessed effects of high potency tetrahydrocannabinol cannabis on the human body and made a series of recommendations based on the current state of science.</p>
<p><b><u>12. Cannabis Use Trends in Massachusetts, Findings from the International Cannabis Policy Study, 2019-2020. Worcester, MA: Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17]</u></b></p>	<p><b>JULY 2022:</b> The Department assessed International Cannabis Policy Study (ICPS) data from 2019-2020 to fulfil the research mandate pursuant to G. L. c. 94G, § 17].</p>



<p>13. Review and Assessment of the Massachusetts Adult- and Medical-Use Cannabis Industries [M. G. L. c. 94G, § 17(a) (b)]</p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY 2025:</b> The Department assessed Commission industry and agent data from 2018-2024 to fulfil the research mandate pursuant to G. L. c. 94G, § 17(iv) and (v)].</p>
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**Table 2.** Massachusetts Equity Provisions—Legislative and Regulatory (Current as of March 2023)

Provision	Legislative or Regulatory	Description
<p><b>Legislative mandate to promote equitable participation</b></p>	<p>Legislative <a href="#"><u>M.G.L. c. 94G, §§ 4(a)(xxviii) – 4(a) ½(iv)</u></a></p>	<p>Legislation requires the regulatory body for legal cannabis (Cannabis Control Commission “Commission”) to develop regulations which include, “procedures and policies to promote and encourage full participation in the regulated marijuana industry by people from communities that have previously been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement and to positively impact those communities.”</p>
<p><b>Past cannabis conviction does not exclude industry participation</b></p>	<p>Legislative <a href="#"><u>M. G. L. c. 94G, §§ (4)(a)(xxviii) – (a) ½(iii)</u></a></p>	<p>Legislation states that “a prior conviction solely for a marijuana-related offense or for a violation...shall not disqualify an individual or otherwise affect eligibility for employment or licensure in connection with a marijuana establishment, unless the offense involved the distribution of a controlled substance, including marijuana, to a minor.”</p>



<b>Ownership Restrictions</b>	Legislative <a href="#"><u>M. G. L. c. 94G, §16</u></a>	Legislation states “No licensee shall be granted more than three marijuana retailer licenses, three medical marijuana treatment center licenses, three marijuana product manufacturer licenses or three marijuana cultivator licenses; provided, however, that a licensee may hold three marijuana retailer licenses, three medical marijuana treatment center licenses, three marijuana product manufacturer licenses and three marijuana cultivator licenses.”
<b>Research Requirements</b>	Legislative <a href="#"><u>M. G. L. c., 94G, § 17(a)</u></a>	Legislation requires the Commission develop a research agenda which includes, “ownership and employment trends in the marijuana industry examining participation by racial, ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups, including identification of barriers to participation in the industry.”
<b>Diversity Plan</b>	Regulatory <a href="#"><u>935 CMR 500.101€</u></a>	Regulation requires cannabis establishments to submit, as a part of licensure, a plan “to promote equity among minorities, women, Veterans, people with disabilities, and people of all gender identities and sexual orientation.” Plans must include measures to assess their success.
<b>Positive Impact Plan</b>	Regulatory <a href="#"><u>935 CMR 500.101(1)(a)</u></a>	Regulation requires cannabis establishments to submit, as a part of licensure, a plan to positively affect people or communities which fall into one or more the five groups:



		<p>(1) Past or present residents of defined geographic Areas of Disproportionate Impact [ADI]; (2) Participants in Economic Empowerment Priority program;</p> <p>(3) Participants in Social Equity Program;</p> <p>(4) Massachusetts residents with past drug convictions; and</p> <p>(5) Massachusetts residents with parents or spouses with drug convictions.</p>
<b>Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs)</b>	Regulatory <a href="#">See Definition Section</a>	Regulation defines geographic areas “which has had historically high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to marijuana” in order to encourage participation and inclusion of people in these communities.
<b>Economic Empowerment Priority Review</b>	Regulatory <a href="#">See Regulatory Guidance</a>	<p>This certification gives priority license review, fee waivers, and reductions for certificate holders (n=122 certificate holders). The deadline to apply is over (4/2/2018-4/16/2018).</p> <p>[See Appendices Table XI.5. Economic Empowerment Certification Program (2018) Eligibility for eligibility criteria]</p>
<b>Social Equity Program</b>	Regulatory <a href="#">See Regulatory Guidance</a>	This ongoing program offers comprehensive training and technical assistance, including courses and hands-on assistance for all levels of seniority. A total of 872 participants participated in the program’s first three cohorts. Persons in the program



		also have fee waivers and reductions and receive expedited application review. For specific eligibility criteria see Regulatory Guidance.
<b>Expedited Application Review</b>	Regulatory <a href="#">See Regulatory Guidance</a>	After priority applicants, the Commission reviews expedited applications. These include those applications from Social Equity Participants, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and veteran-owned businesses, ITLs, Outdoor Cultivators, Craft Co-Ops, and Microbusinesses, with certain restrictions.
<b>Disadvantage Business Enterprises (DBE)</b>	Regulatory data collection	The Commission collects self-reported DBE-status for all licensees and grants expedited licensing review for Supplier Diversity Office-certified minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and veteran-owned businesses. See select Open Data here: <a href="https://masscannabiscontrol.com/open-data/">https://masscannabiscontrol.com/open-data/</a>
<b>An Act Relative to Equity in the Cannabis Industry</b>	Legislative Session Laws, Acts 2022, <a href="#">Ch. 180</a>	Under state law, MEs and MTCs must execute HCAs with the municipalities in which they plan to operate.
<b>Municipal Equity Recommendations</b>	Regulatory <a href="#">See Regulatory Guidance</a>	These recommendations were created to assist municipalities in creating equitable cannabis policies to mirror the Social Equity Program established by the Commission.



<p><b>Social Equity Loan Fund</b></p>	<p>Legislative  <a href="#">M. G. L. c., 94G, § 14(a)</a></p>	<p>A fund to encourage the full participation in Massachusetts’ regulated marijuana industry of entrepreneurs from communities with grants and loans, including no-interest loans and forgivable loans, to social equity program participants and economic empowerment priority applicants.</p>
<p><b>Codification of the Social Equity Program</b></p>	<p>Legislative  Session Laws, Acts 2022, <a href="#">Ch. 180</a></p>	<p>The Commission is required to administer a social equity program/  The program offers technical assistance and training, and guidance on how to access funds available through the Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund.</p>

