

Social Equity Program 2025 Orientation

Empowering Communities. Building Futures. Navigating the Regulated Cannabis Industry Together.

Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission
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Program Guidelines and Expectations

General Program Information

Program Description

The Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission (Commission)'s Social Equity Program (SEP) is a free, statewide technical assistance and training program designed to provide education, skill-based training, and tools for success in the regulated cannabis industry.

The SEP prioritizes individuals and communities most impacted by the War on Drugs, marijuana prohibition, disproportionate arrests, and incarceration. Participants gain access to educational and professional development opportunities across four pathways:

- Entrepreneurship
- Leadership and Executive Development Workforce Development (Entry-Level and Managerial/Executive)
- Entry/Reentry
- Integrated Business Solutions

Participants are also eligible for exclusive program benefits, including:

- Waived application fees for licensure through the Commission;
- Waived METRC (seed-to-sale tracking system) program fees;
- 50% reduction in annual license fees;
- Exclusive access to Delivery and Social Consumption license types;
- Pre-Certification for all license types;
- Eligibility to apply for financial assistance through the Executive Office of Economic Development's Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund; and
- Access to EquityWorks Career Hub, the Commission's centralized platform designed to support professional growth, inclusive hiring, and networking within Massachusetts' regulated cannabis industry.



Expectations and Goals

Attendance Policy

While full participation is highly encouraged, completing the SEP curriculum is not a requirement to retain access to program benefits.

- Recordings of previously offered courses will be available via TalentLMS, the Commission's online Learning Management System.
- Instructors will host at least one live virtual session per course to review key concepts and engage with participants. Live sessions will be recorded and uploaded to TalentLMS for those unable to attend.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- Participants are encouraged to complete all assigned coursework to maximize the value of the program.
- While quizzes and activities are not graded, they serve as important tools to reinforce learning and track participant comprehension.
- All participants are expected to complete course evaluations after each course to provide valuable feedback that will aid in continuous program improvement.

Communication Protocols

- Participants should communicate with the Course Instructors via TalentLMS unless otherwise directed.
- While SEP participation may occasionally draw media interest, engaging with the media is voluntary. For guidance or questions regarding media requests, contact the Commission's Press Secretary at Press@CCCMass.com.
- All official course materials (presentations, handouts, assignments, evaluations) are hosted exclusively on the Commission's SEP learning platform at <https://socialequityprogram.talentlms.com>. Participants are required to create a TalentLMS account to access and complete courses.

Electronic Device and Recording Policy

- Personal video or audio recordings during class sessions are prohibited unless explicitly authorized by the Course Instructor or the Commission.



- Instructors and/or the Commission will record sessions as needed to ensure participants have access to all course content.
- Participants with accommodation needs may request exceptions to this policy.

Accommodations

Participants who require accommodations to fully engage in the program should contact the Director of Equity Programming and Community Outreach, Silea Williams, at Silea.Williams@CCCMass.com.

Program Goals

The SEP seeks to:

- Reduce barriers to entry into the legal cannabis industry;
- Provide professional training, technical assistance, and mentorship for individuals disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition; and
- Promote a sustainable, equitable, and reparative approach to economic development in the Massachusetts cannabis marketplace.

Please note: The SEP is not a licensure program, and participation does not guarantee license approval. The Commission does not reserve or set aside licenses for SEP participants. The SEP is designed to support individuals navigating the licensing process and building successful businesses and careers.

Program Follow-Up

To assess long-term impact and support ongoing development, the Commission will coordinate voluntary follow-up outreach with participants **three to 12 months** after program completion.

Required Materials

- Reliable access to the internet
- A device capable of accessing TalentLMS (desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone)
- A valid email address that will be used for program registration and ongoing communication



Required Text

935 CMR 500.000: Adult Use of Marijuana Regulations

Participants are expected to familiarize themselves with the Commission's regulations governing the adult use of marijuana, as codified in 935 CMR 500.000. This document outlines key provisions relating to licensure, operational compliance, public health and safety, and the Commonwealth's equity mandates.

The following sections are especially relevant to SEP participants:

Key Regulatory Sections to Review:

- **500.002 – Definitions:**
Provides definitions of critical terms, including SEP, Economic Empowerment Applicant, Control, Licensee, Delivery License, and others essential for understanding program and licensing eligibility.
- **500.050 – Licensure Requirements:**
Details the application process, license types, application components, and required background checks. SEP participants should pay close attention to guidance related to license eligibility and required disclosures.
- **500.101 – Priority Review:**
Explains the criteria for obtaining priority and expedited review for Economic Empowerment Applicants and SEP participants.
- **500.102 – Social Equity Program:**
Defines the SEP's purpose, eligibility criteria, and structure. This section underscores the Commission's commitment to promoting equitable participation in the cannabis industry and outlines the benefits available to participants.
- **500.103 – Fees:**
Outlines the fees associated with licensure and operations. SEP participants should note the waiver or reduction of specific fees available under the program, such as application fees, METRC fees, and annual licensing fees.
- **500.104 – License Types:**
Describes each marijuana establishment license type including Retail, Cultivation, Product



Manufacturing, Delivery, and Social Consumption. SEP participants may apply for all license types but have exclusive access to Delivery and Social Consumption license types for a limited time.

- **500.105 – General Operational Requirements:**

SEP participants exploring entrepreneurship should understand operational requirements, including those related to recordkeeping, employee training, transportation, and consumer safety.

- **500.141 – Compliance and Enforcement:**

Important for understanding how the Commission conducts inspections, audits, and disciplinary actions.

Access to the Regulations:

The full and most up-to-date version of the regulations can be found on the Commission’s website: [935 CMR 500.000 – Adult Use of Marijuana Regulations](#)

Participants are encouraged to regularly review updates and notices of regulatory amendments as the Commission’s policies evolve.

Learning Opportunities | Program Curriculum Overview

The SEP offers four tailored learning tracks to meet participants where they are in their cannabis industry journey. Each track combines core business development courses with specialized training to support specific career or business goals. All training is available through the Commission’s online learning platform and may include live virtual sessions, pre-recorded content, and supplemental materials.

Curricula Overview and Learning Tracks:

Essential Curriculum

The Essential Curriculum serves as the foundational learning pathway for all program participants. It introduces the structure of the regulated cannabis industry, core concepts of cannabis entrepreneurship, and the municipal and licensing processes required to operate in Massachusetts. This pathway builds baseline knowledge to support informed engagement in any of the program’s four learning tracks.



Participants will first complete the Essential Curriculum Path, which includes:

- Introduction to the Regulated Cannabis Industry
- Introduction to the Cannabis Plant
- Business Plan Creation and Development
- Building Equity: Crafting Diversity Plans
- Navigating the Municipal Process
- Host Community Agreement (HCA) Fundamentals

Business Development and Expansion Pathway

The Business Development and Expansion Pathway builds upon the essential curriculum by offering advanced content focused on launching, funding, operating, and sustaining a cannabis business. Participants will explore topics such as capital raising, compliance, workforce planning, brand development, and long-term operational success, empowering them to scale their vision into a viable and sustainable enterprise.

The Business Development and Expansion Pathway includes:

- Financial Empowerment and Predatory Lending
- Raising Capital in the Cannabis Industry
- Accounting & Taxes for Cannabis Businesses
- Impactful Cannabis: Positive Impact Plans
- Application & Licensing Process (Retail and Delivery)
- Application & Licensing Process (Product Manufacturing and Cultivation)
- Branding, Marketing, and Advertising
- Sustaining Operations
- Agent Recruitment, Training, Workforce Diversity

Learning Tracks

Entrepreneurship Track: Pathways to Ownership

This track supports participants pursuing licensure and ownership of a Marijuana Establishment. The Entrepreneurship Track includes both required business development coursework and license-type specific operational training.



License-type Specific Modules (select one based on business interest):

- ***Retail | Cultivation | Product Manufacturing | Delivery | Social Consumption (TBD)***

Each sub-track includes:

- Cannabis Business Compliance
- Facility Design
- Security and Working with Law Enforcement
- Testing Process
- Post Licensure Operations

Core Track: Leadership and Executive Development Pathway

This track is tailored for participants seeking leadership, executive, or managerial roles in the cannabis industry. Participants gain professional development and industry readiness through a combination of career coaching and foundational training.

Leadership and Executive Development Courses:

- Exploring Executive and Leadership Cannabis Career Opportunities
- Mastering Leadership for Cannabis Professionals
- Resume and Interview Prep for Cannabis Careers
- Career Preparation and Workforce Readiness
- Fostering Workplace Respect and Inclusion

Entry/Reentry Track: Pathways to Employment

Designed for participants seeking entry-level roles or reentry into the workforce, this track emphasizes foundational industry knowledge, job readiness, and advancement support.

Entry/Reentry Track Courses:

- Entry-level Opportunities in Cannabis
- Agent Advancement Training and Growth
- Resume and Interview Prep for Cannabis Careers
- Career Preparation and Workforce Readiness
- Cannabis Business Compliance Fundamentals
- Fostering Workplace Respect and Inclusion



Integrated Business Solutions (Ancillary Track) Support Pathway

This track supports entrepreneurs and professionals offering products or services that support licensed cannabis establishments. It is ideal for individuals who are not pursuing licensure or employment within a Marijuana Establishment but want to contribute to the cannabis ecosystem.

Integrated Business Solutions Support Pathway Courses:

- Starting an Integrated Business Solution and Compliance
- Raising Capital for Integrated Business Solutions
- Interacting with Cannabis Establishments for Integrated Business Solutions
- Branding, Marketing, and Advertising for Integrated Business Solutions
- Opportunities for Integrated Business Solutions

Skills-based Trainings

Participants may supplement their learning with optional hands-on, industry-specific training aligned to their area of interest:

- Cultivation
- Product Manufacturing
- Retail
- Delivery
- Testing
- Social Consumption (TBD)

Advanced Course Curriculum: Strategic Leadership and Organizational Growth

Participants demonstrating business readiness or seeking to grow existing operations may also enroll in advanced courses designed to build strategic capacity and long-term sustainability. Advanced courses include:

Organizational and Strategic Leadership

- Budgeting, Money Management, and Projections
- Raising Capital Strategies
- Target the Right Investors
- Mock Investor Meeting (How to Negotiate so Everyone Wins)



Organizational Mastery

- Organizational Breakthroughs: Tackling Barriers to Financial and Strategic Growth
- A Sustainable Organization and Human Resources Structuring
- Understanding and Developing Culture
- Finding Your Lane and Leveling Up Your Business
- Developing Your Staff
- Creating Brand Awareness

TalentLMS Learner Guide

Following the Orientation Seminar, all approved program participants will receive a follow-up email containing their unique login credentials and instructions for accessing TalentLMS.

Please Note: Access to the TalentLMS platform is exclusively provided to approved SEP participants. Your login credentials are confidential and may not be shared or transferred to others under any circumstances. Sharing credentials may result in revocation of access.

Navigating Your Dashboard

Once you log in, you will be directed to your Learner Dashboard, which provides a comprehensive view of your course activity.

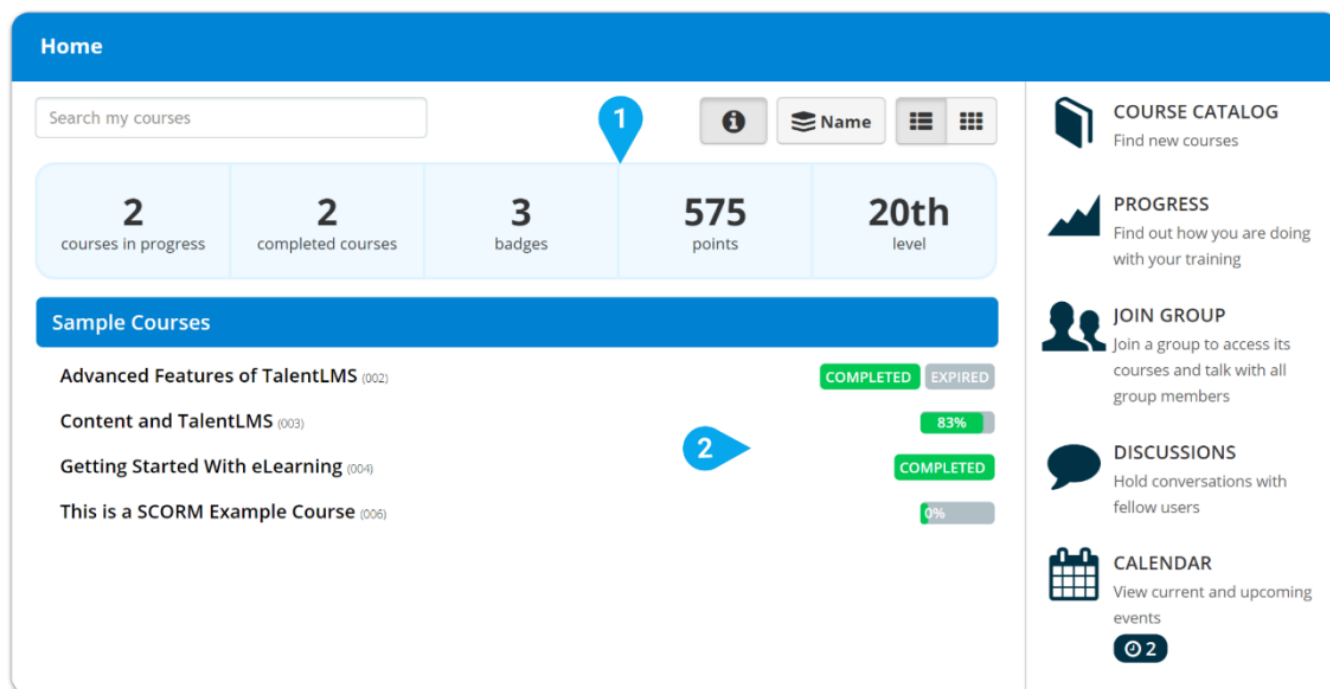
Key features include:

1. Progress Tracker and Gamification (if enabled):
Located at the top of the screen, this shows your progress through courses and any badges or points earned through learning activities.
2. Course Overview and Labels:
Each course is listed on your dashboard, with labels that help you filter your view (e.g., "In Progress," "Completed," or "Not Started"). Click on a label to display only the courses that match that status.
3. Accessing a Course:
To begin or resume a course, simply click the course title. Your progress will be saved automatically, and you may return at any time to complete unfinished modules.



Support and Troubleshooting

If you encounter any issues accessing your account or navigating the platform, please contact the Commission's Equity Programming and Community Outreach team at Equity@CCCMass.com for assistance.



Course View and Course Catalog Guide

- When you select a course in TalentLMS, you will either land on the **Course Summary Page** (if enabled) or be taken directly into the **Course View Mode**, resuming from your last completed unit.
- At the top of the page, you'll find navigation and tracking tools, including:
 - **Forward/Back Arrows:** Move between course units.
 - **Course Progress Tracker:** Monitor your advancement through the content.
 - **Course Info:** View general information and requirements for completion.

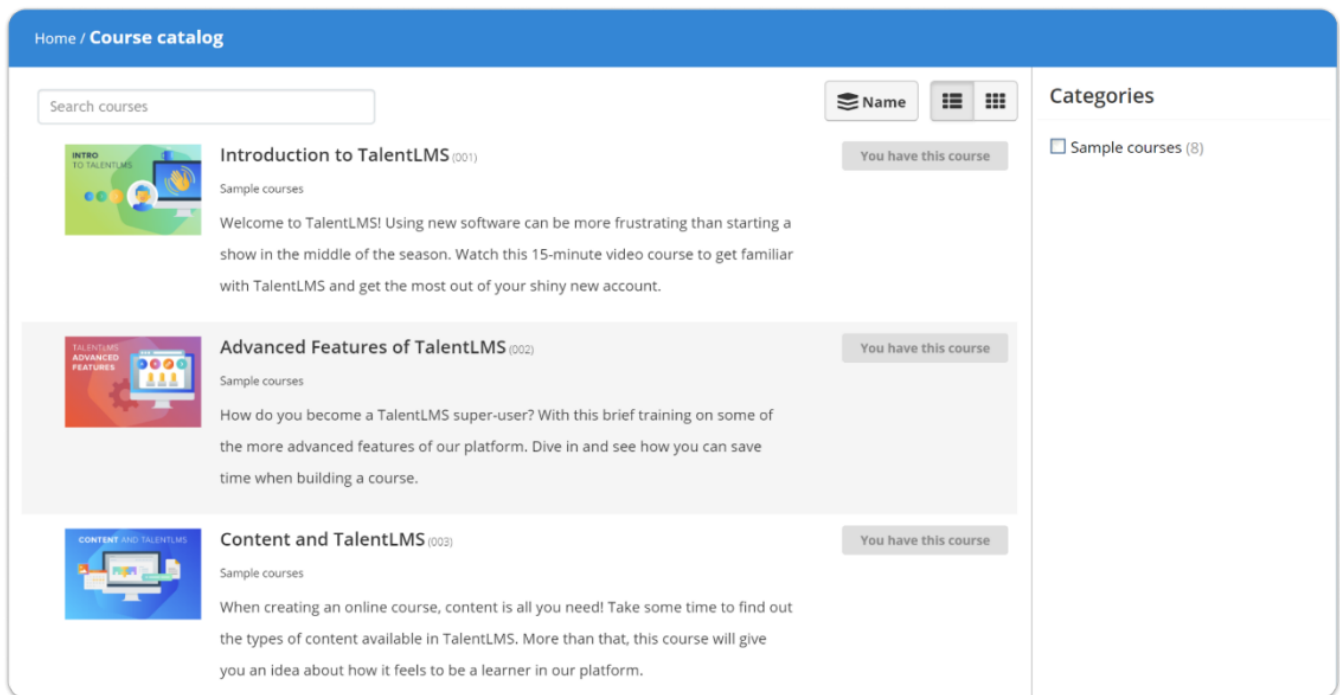
How to Complete Units

Each unit may require different actions for completion:



1. **Interaction-based Completion:** You may be prompted to click a button, answer a question, or allow a minimum amount of time to pass before proceeding.
2. **Course Flow Rules:** Some courses follow a **sequential order**, meaning each unit must be completed before the next becomes accessible.
3. **Course Completion Requirements:** Each course may have its own criteria, such as completing all units or passing a final test. Once a course is completed, you will see a **confirmation popup** with suggested next steps.

Tip: You can always return to a completed course to revisit materials for continued learning and review.



Course Catalog

The **Course Catalog** provides an organized overview of all courses available to you in TalentLMS. Use this area to explore additional learning opportunities aligned with your track or personal interests. **Features of the Course Catalog include:**

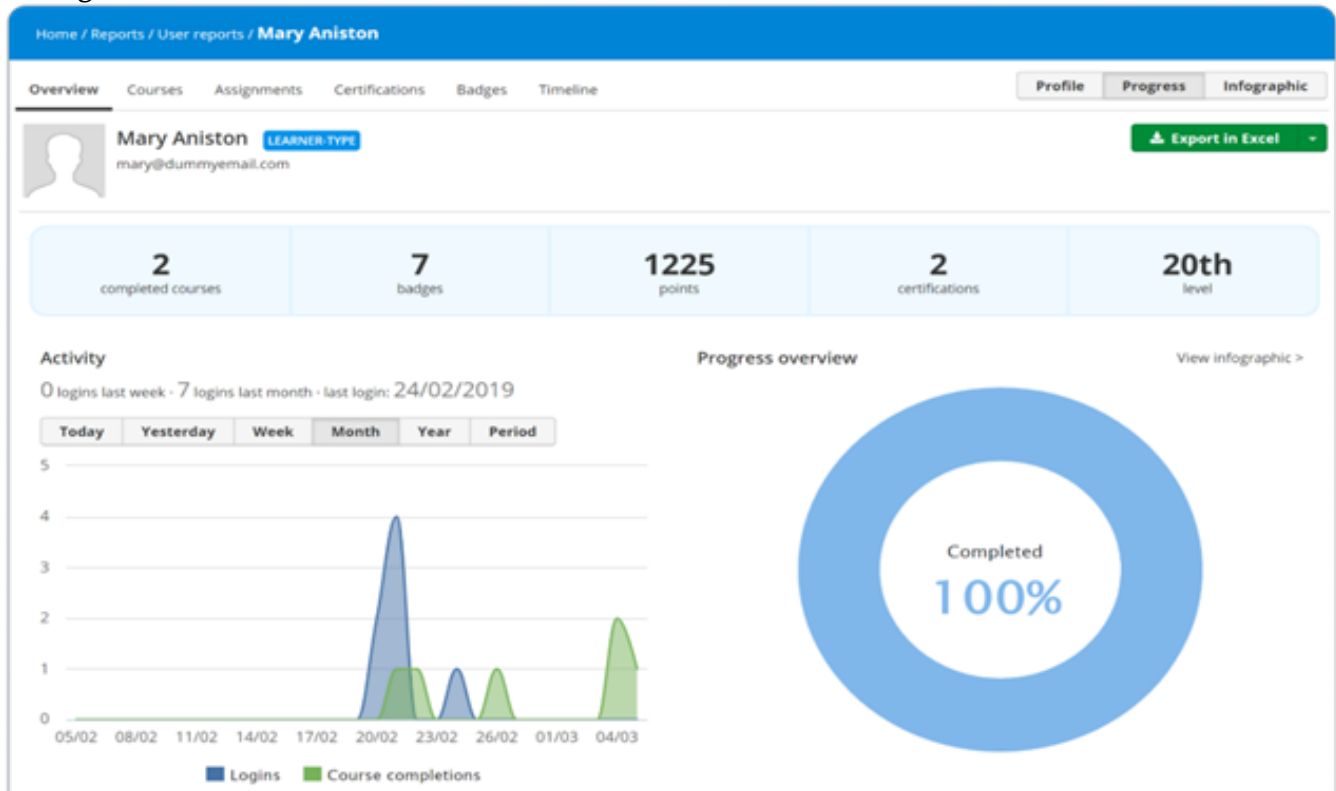
- **Search Function:** Quickly find specific courses by keyword.



- **Category Filters:** Browse courses grouped by track or topic (e.g., Business Development, Workforce Readiness, Skills-Based Training).
- **Self-Enrollment:** You may register for optional or supplementary courses directly from the catalog.
- **Request Information:** For locked courses or advanced curriculum, you can request more information from the Equity Programming and Community Outreach team.
- **Reminder:** Course access is limited to approved program participants. Your login and access to content are individualized and non-transferable.

Tracking Your Progress

TalentLMS provides helpful tools to monitor your progress and recognize your learning achievements throughout the SEP.



Progress Dashboard

By clicking the **“Progress”** link from your TalentLMS menu, you’ll access a full overview of your learning journey, including:

Courses Tab: View all courses you’re currently enrolled in and track their completion status in real time.

Timeline Tab: See a chronological log of your activity within the platform, such as when you enrolled in a course, completed a unit, passed a quiz, or earned a certification.

Certifications (if enabled): Any digital certificates earned through course completion will be displayed here. You can download and save these for your personal records.

Badges (if enabled): Badges recognize progress and engagement milestones, providing an added layer of motivation and achievement.

Infographic: By clicking the **Infographic** button, you can view a personalized visual summary of your course activity, progress, and accomplishments within the platform.

Tip: Regularly reviewing your progress can help you stay on track with your learning goals and identify which courses or units still need your attention.

Joining a Group in TalentLMS

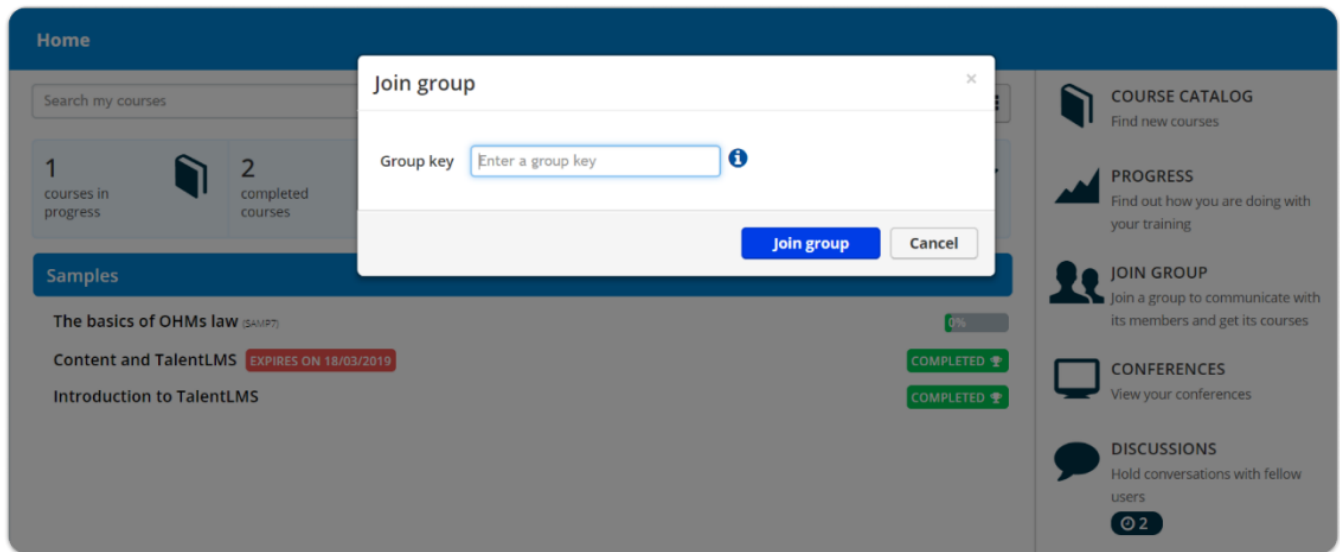
As part of your learning experience, you may be invited to join a **TalentLMS group**. Groups are used to provide access to specialized course bundles or track-specific learning communities.

Steps to Join a Group:

1. Log in to your TalentLMS account.
2. Navigate to the **“Join Group”** section.
3. Enter the **Group Key** exactly as provided.
4. Once accepted, you will be automatically enrolled in the associated group courses and materials.

Note: Group enrollment may be required for specialized tracks, advanced curriculum, or live seminar series. Please only use the Group Key provided directly to you.





Discussions in TalentLMS

The **Discussions** feature allows you to engage in dialogue with instructors, staff, and fellow participants directly within TalentLMS. It offers a simplified, user-friendly version of a traditional forum to foster collaboration, peer support, and knowledge sharing.

How Discussions Work

You can participate in two ways:

1. **Reply to a Comment:**

Respond directly to someone else's comment to create a threaded conversation. This helps maintain context and flow in topic-specific discussions.

2. **Post a New Comment:**

Reply to the original post or start a new comment to introduce a new idea or question related to the discussion topic.

Tip: Use the Discussions feature to ask course-related questions, share resources, or reflect on what you've learned. Engaging respectfully and constructively enhances the learning experience for everyone.

Reminder: Please keep all communication professional and aligned with the program's values of equity, inclusion, and respect.



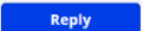
Home / Discussions / **Feedback for Improvement**

 P. Painter **ADMINISTRATOR** • A few moments ago
Feedback for Improvement
Welcome to the first discussion topic! Please leave your comments to improve our content.

 E. Smith • just now
Awesome e-learning experience! Keep up the good work!
 1

 P. Painter **ADMINISTRATOR** • just now
Thank you for your nice words!
 0



 Reply



 Select attachment  Reply

Conferences in TalentLMS

Instructors may schedule live virtual conferences as part of your SEP learning experience. These sessions provide opportunities for real-time interaction, including presentations, guest speakers, Q&A, and collaborative discussions.

Accessing Conferences

- If you are invited to a live session, a “Conferences” option will appear on your TalentLMS dashboard.
- If no conferences are currently scheduled, the option will not be visible.

Once available, the Conferences section will display a list of upcoming sessions. Each listing includes the session title, scheduled date and time, and instructor.



The “Join” button becomes active only when the designated start time arrives. You will not be able to access the session before then.

What to Expect During a Conference

- Live instruction and deeper dives into course material
- Special topics or guest speaker sessions
- Interactive Q&A and engagement with instructors or staff
- Opportunities to network and collaborate with other participants

Note: Attendance is encouraged but not mandatory unless otherwise stated. Most conferences will be recorded and uploaded to TalentLMS for on-demand access.

The screenshot displays the TalentLMS Home dashboard. At the top, a blue header bar contains the word "Home". Below this, a search bar is labeled "Search my courses". To the right of the search bar are icons for information, a list view, and a grid view. The dashboard features five summary cards: "2 courses in progress", "2 completed courses", "3 badges", "575 points", and "20th level". Below these cards is a section titled "Sample Courses" with a list of four courses: "Advanced Features of TalentLMS (002)", "Content and TalentLMS (003)", "Getting Started With eLearning (004)", and "This is a SCORM Example Course (006)". Each course has a progress bar and a status label: "COMPLETED" (green) or "EXPIRED" (grey). To the right of the dashboard is a sidebar with navigation links: "COURSE CATALOG" (Find new courses), "PROGRESS" (Find out how you are doing with your training), "JOIN GROUP" (Join a group to access its courses and talk with all group members), "CONFERENCES" (View your conferences, with a blue notification bubble containing the number 1), "DISCUSSIONS" (Hold conversations with fellow users), and "CALENDAR" (View current and upcoming events, with a blue notification bubble containing the number 3).

EquityWorks Career Hub

As part of our continued commitment to equitable participation in the cannabis industry, the Commission proudly offers the **EquityWorks Career Hub**, a dedicated employment and career-readiness platform.



The **EquityWorks Career Hub** connects SEP participants with licensed Marijuana Establishments and ancillary service providers seeking diverse, skilled talent across Massachusetts. Whether you are just starting your career, looking to advance, or seeking new opportunities in the cannabis space, this platform is built to support you.

Key Features:

- A virtual job board featuring cannabis industry opportunities
- Tools to build your resume and prepare for interviews
- Resources to match your skills with open roles
- Direct access to employers committed to equity and inclusion

[Visit the EquityWorks Career Hub](https://masscannabiscontrol.com/equity/equityworks/): <https://masscannabiscontrol.com/equity/equityworks/>

For ongoing program updates, announcements, additional resources, and detailed information about eligibility, benefits, and application timelines, we encourage you to regularly visit the Commission's **Equity Programs webpage**.

This page serves as a hub for:

- Opportunities through the SEP
- Public meeting presentations and reports
- Resources and FAQs
- Archived newsletters and important announcements

[Explore the Equity Programs page](https://masscannabiscontrol.com/equity/): <https://masscannabiscontrol.com/equity/>

Stay informed, stay connected, and stay empowered throughout your journey.

A Message from the Equity Programming and Community Outreach Team

Welcome to the SEP. As you begin, or continue, your journey, we want you to know that you are not alone. We recognize the history that brought us to this point and the resilience it takes to move forward.

This program is more than education; it's an investment in your potential, your community, and an equitable future for all. Whether you are seeking entrepreneurship, employment, leadership, or



integrated business support within Massachusetts' regulated cannabis industry, the Commission and the Equity Programming and Community Outreach Department are here to support you.

Equity Programming | Equity@CCCMass.com



Meet the Team



Silea Williams,
Director of Equity Programming
& Community Outreach



Darrus Sands,
Manager of Equity Programming
and Strategic Partnerships



Steven Carosello,
Manager of Community Outreach

