

Guidance for Community Outreach

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

An important requirement in the application process for licensure as an adult use Marijuana Establishment is the Community Outreach Meeting. Community outreach and engagement can be done successfully by being informed and prepared to share information about a proposed Marijuana Establishment.

This guidance will provide information on the requirements of conducting a compliant meeting as required under the adult use of marijuana regulations, 935 CMR 500.101.

Application Basics

The application is broken into three packets:

- Application of Intent,
- Background Check, and
- Management and Operations Profile.

An applicant may file the packets in whatever order it wishes, but the application will not be deemed complete until all three packets have been filed and each one is determined to be complete. The Community Outreach Meeting must be documented in the Application of Intent packet.

Timing of Community Outreach Meeting

The Community Outreach Meeting must be conducted within six months prior to filing the Application of Intent. For example, if an applicant files its Application of Intent on November 1,



2018, the Community Outreach Meeting must have occurred after May 1, 2018.

Where to Hold the Meeting

It is difficult to predict how many people will attend a Community Outreach Meeting, so applicants may wish to find a large assembly space by checking with city or town hall, local schools, or other places of assembly. Any space used should be accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Notice: An applicant must ensure that the meeting notice includes the time, place, and subject matter of the meeting and the proposed address of the marijuana establishment. A Community Outreach Meeting public notice template is available on masscannabiscontrol.com/public-documents/.

At least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting, the notice must be:

- published in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town (please make sure to check the newspaper's publishing deadlines to make sure you give yourself sufficient time);
- filed with the town or city clerk, the planning board, the contracting authority for the municipality, and local licensing authority for adult use of Cannabis, if applicable; and
- mailed to abutters of the proposed address of the Marijuana Establishment, owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, and to the abutters within 300 feet of the property line of the petitioner as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list, notwithstanding that the land of any such owner is located in another city or town (the town or city clerk may be able to assist with the abutters list).

Conducting the Meeting

The purpose of the Community Outreach Meeting is to explain the proposed Marijuana Establishment use and provide information about potential impacts to the neighborhood and community as a whole.

Applicants should consider asking a respected community member to run the meeting as a neutral facilitator, such as a town moderator, other municipal official, or community leader. The applicant may wish to consider doing a presentation of their proposal first, including all the essential information discussed below, then allowing an opportunity for the public to ask questions. It may be helpful to have visuals for the audience, such as pictures of the location as it



is currently and how it would look once completed, and enough information regarding security measures to provide reassurance without compromising the security plan.

Essential Information for the Community Outreach Meeting

An applicant will need to have the following information gathered prior to the meeting:

- Location of the proposed Marijuana Establishment.
- What type(s) of Marijuana Establishment will be sited at the location?
- Is the proposed Marijuana Establishment allowed under current zoning bylaws/ordinances or is a zoning amendment required to allow it to go there?
- Is the proposed Marijuana Establishment allowed by right or does it require local zoning permitting? What permits are required?
- Is there a local licensing regulation pertaining to Marijuana Establishments?
- Is there a local Board of Health regulation pertaining to Marijuana Establishments?
- Does the proposed location comply with the 500-foot buffer zone from existing public or private school buildings (K-12)? Do local bylaws or ordinance create a smaller buffer zone?
- If the applicant is moving into an existing building or building a new one, will its premises comply with the security requirements set forth in 935 CMR 500?
- What steps will be taken by the Marijuana Establishment to prevent diversion to minors?
- Information demonstrating how the applicant intends to ensure that the location will not constitute a nuisance to the community as defined by law.
- A plan for how the Marijuana Establishment will positively impact the community. If the applicant is a marijuana retailer, be aware of whether the municipality has passed the local tax option and prepared to answer questions.
- Be familiar with the Host Community Agreement requirements and be prepared to answer questions about them.

