

City of Portland Cannabis Program



Vision for Portland's Cannabis Future



GUIDING PORTLAND'S CANNABIS POLICIES:

- Equity & Community Involvement
- Sustainable, Regional Cannabis
- Sensible Regulation

Cannabis has been used by people for thousands of years. By the late 1800s, cannabis tinctures were found in stores around Europe and the United States. But by the 1930s, a few dozen states had outlawed cannabis, with Federal prohibition to follow in 1937.

Between that time and today, the enforcement, prosecution, and stigmatization of cannabis has been felt most by communities of color. The "War on Drugs" has not only taken away economic opportunity from these communities, but it has ruined lives and separated families.

The Cannabis Program recognizes our unique role, as a government office, in helping to address those historical wrongs which still affect people today, and by regulating businesses sensibly. This understanding must be woven into the fabric of our operations, our staff, our advocacy, and our decision-making.

As the cannabis industry continues evolving, we believe supporting equitable policies, finding ways to help those communities impacted by cannabis prohibition, and providing pathways for businesses to meet regulations and stay compliant is the best way to ensure Portland's cannabis business community creates local jobs, remains safe and supports public health and safety, employs a diverse workforce, invests in their staff and their communities, and provides consumers with safe, legal options to buy and consume cannabis.

Here are just a few ways we can begin (and have begun) accomplishing those goals in the coming months and years.

EQUITY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Portland recognizes the harm caused by cannabis prohibition to underrepresented communities, particularly communities of color.

We also know that the benefits of legal cannabis are not being shared equitably.

Further, we understand those communities need to meaningfully contribute to how Portland's cannabis regulations are developed and function.



A group of about a dozen people, sitting in a semi-circle, discussing the City of Portland's 2019 Cannabis Social Equity Grants at a listening session on April 1, 2019.

TODAY, WE ARE:

- **Convening a cannabis public involvement body (Cannabis Policy Oversight Team) with an explicit focus on equity.** Members are both within and outside the cannabis industry and offer recommendations to our bureau on how Portland can reach more equitable outcomes with our cannabis policies.
- **Facilitating grant funding to expunge old charges and clear records, train workers, and lower barriers to entry into the cannabis industry for communities of color.** Our program is facilitating the City of Portland's 2019 Cannabis Social Equity Grants. This funding will support record-clearing and expungement, small business support, workforce development, and re-entry housing. Our program will also provide ongoing assistance to grant applicants, especially those that may not have a history of being funded, to make sure they have the tools and information to compete for city grant funding in the future.
- **Keeping fees lower for businesses impacted by cannabis prohibition.** Our Social Equity Program lowers license fees for businesses whose owners or staff have a cannabis conviction, for small businesses, and for businesses that use contractors from Oregon's Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, and Emerging

Small Business list. We need to expand these efforts as we see the impacts of past policy changes and learn more about what works and what doesn't.

- **Regularly meeting with cannabis business owners, consultants, and activists.** We need feedback on how Portland can do better to support businesses and those most impacted by cannabis prohibition, particularly communities of color.
- **Taking a leadership role with Portland's local cannabis tax to make its uses more transparent and public.** We created portlandoregon.gov/CannabisTax with information about the City's cannabis tax, and created a 6-page report outlining its history, decision points, and more.
- **Ensuring staff from our Commissioner-In-Charge's office are accessible.** People should have a connection with bureau staff and elected officials, both to hear new policy suggestions and to hold City staff and programs accountable.
- **Sharing information about cannabis information, even if it's not from us.** We recently created social media guidelines to help staff understand what to share and when to share it: we want to be a resource, and use our communications and social media channels not just to share about what we're doing, but about news, events, legislation, and other cannabis-related information.

WE COMMIT TO:

- **Strengthening our existing Social Equity efforts.** We want to offer even more help to those communities that were and are impacted by cannabis prohibition. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Expanding the impact of our Social Equity Program
 - Empowering our public advisory body charged with recommending equitable cannabis outcomes and policies
 - Continuing to facilitate the City's cannabis Social Equity Grants process

- **Supporting women in the cannabis industry.** Pay disparities exist between men and women across industries. As a new and emerging business community, the cannabis industry and its regulators should support and lift up women-owned businesses and decision-makers.
- **Coordinating the cannabis social equity work of the City.** Elements of the City’s overall restorative justice and social equity work that relate to cannabis have been initiated and coordinated by different Offices and Bureaus. We commit to identifying and creating better structures and strategies for management and use of the City’s social equity efforts as they intersect with cannabis.
- **Continuing to view cannabis policy decisions through an equity lens.** We will work to ensure the benefits of legal cannabis are reaching all communities, particularly those communities most negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition.
- **Ensuring that public involvement mechanisms are supported.** This includes outreach, education, and communication before, during, and after decisions are made, and making sure Portland’s cannabis public advisory body, the Cannabis Policy Oversight Team, is self-determining in the structure of the group, reporting, and setting the group’s agendas.

SENSIBLE REGULATION

One benefit of a legal, regulated cannabis industry is that it's grown, processed, and sold safely and in compliance with City and State requirements.

We also know the cannabis industry was asked to join our business community very quickly, and are asked to meet a standard of regulation that other industries aren't, in part because of cannabis' Federal status. To that end, smart and thoughtful short- and long-term planning is needed.



People standing on either side of a wood and glass counter at a cannabis retailer, viewing and discussing cannabis and cannabis products.

TODAY, WE ARE:

- **Destigmatizing cannabis use and business activity.** Cannabis is legal in Oregon. Our program respects differences of opinion, while strongly and unequivocally supporting legal cannabis, refuting misinformation, and pushing back against prohibition-era talking points and assumptions about cannabis that are rooted in racism, classism, and scare tactics.
- **Requiring annual inspections, coordinating with regulatory partners, and upholding licensing requirements.** Our full-time staff are able to stay responsive, keep licensing processing times low, and remain available not only for regular in-the-field inspections to ensure businesses are compliance, but to respond to new information as we receive it from the community or regulatory partners
- **Identifying how City policies outside of our program affect cannabis businesses and the public.** The impacts of cannabis regulation and the work to repair the damage done by cannabis prohibition covers many offices, programs, and bureaus. We commit to helping find out where efforts can be coordinated, and where information and assistance can be made easier.

- **Making regulations and processes as clear, consistent, and easy to follow as possible.** If we're asking cannabis business to meet certain requirements, it's our responsibility to make them understandable and accessible, and to offer guidance.
- **Accessible to concerns, complaints, and requests for information with a staff-answered cannabis hotline, email inbox, social media, and website.** This will ensure people get quick and timely answers to cannabis-related questions and concerns, and position our staff to respond to community concerns quickly and thoroughly.
- **Producing communications, guides, and graphics for new and current business owners.** We want business owners to have the opportunity to understand the regulatory process from beginning to end, making it easier to plan and budget. This citywide Cannabis Industry Guide was released in mid-2019.
- **Making clear our desire to end Federal cannabis prohibition.** Having consistency on cannabis regulations at the Federal level, including banking flexibility and 280E tax reform, will make it more likely that business owners are able to – and choose to – participate in the legal and regulated cannabis marketplace.
- **Making changes to our policies and guidelines as we learn more.** Portland City Code 14B.130, which gives the Cannabis Program regulatory authority, has been changed multiple times since its adoption by Portland City Council in 2015. The Cannabis Program's Administrative Guidelines have, too; and we continue to change as we evaluate new information and see the impacts of policies on the ground.

WE COMMIT TO:

- **Avoiding unnecessary costs to business owners.** The City's Cannabis Program has and will lower fees to ensure we are focusing only on its most critical functions.
- **Developing new staff capacity with cannabis industry and business community expertise.** Government programs should reflect the communities they serve. Our program will develop

internal capacity with industry, community, advocacy, and other relevant experience that goes beyond administration and policymaking.

- **Training for better data collection and analytics.** Our bureau is growing capacity to help gather data and identify where we have data gaps. This will provide the City opportunities to spot trends, identify data gaps, and make sure Portland has meaningful metrics to gauge how well our cannabis rules are working and make adjustments as needed
- **Beginning the move to online systems of cannabis licensing and payments.** This will make the time and effort spent by business owners and staff alike more efficient and easier to track.
- **Anticipating the need for availability of industrial lands with informed zoning and business use requirements.** We are beginning to see the impacts a newly-regulated cannabis industry has on available industrial lands, particularly in prime locations with access to rail, water, highways, and other infrastructure.
- **Examining how Portland's rules and regulations may restrict access, and working to make changes.** Our public advisory body has identified the need to explore how participating in the legal and regulated cannabis industry is made more difficult by regulations that could potentially be changed, while still ensuring businesses are safe and compliant with local and State rules.

SUSTAINABLE, REGIONAL CANNABIS

Portland believes in supporting businesses that give back to the community, that are active in their neighborhoods, that pay living wages, and that work collaboratively with neighbors and other businesses.

Portland also welcomes business communities that create opportunity without harming workers or the planet. We will support cannabis that is grown and processed sustainably, without adversely impacting the climate, wildlife, or workers.



A group of people facing a person holding a computer, participating in The Green Hop Academy, funded in part by the City of Portland's 2017-18 local cannabis tax revenue through a competitive grants process.

TODAY WE ARE:

- **Providing guidance on spaces for consumers and tourists to safely use cannabis.** Oregon's craft beer and wine industry uses temporary events to share information and products, and to do so safely, legally, and with regulatory guidance. So should Oregon's craft cannabis industry: cannabis consumption ought to take place where it's regulated, keeps cannabis away from kids, and protects the public health and safety of consumers and the community. We continue to advocate for the state to allow for temporary cannabis events and permanent spaces for adults to consume cannabis, and offer guidance on what's legal today.
- **Continuing to be a leader both around the country and around the world.** Portland wants to share our knowledge and best practices with others, as we have in Denver for the international Marijuana Management Symposiums from 2015 through 2019, in Toronto, Canada in 2018, and other events.
- **Protecting legal businesses by addressing the unregulated cannabis market, without perpetuating stigma or re-criminalizing cannabis.** By working to ensure a level playing

field, legal and regulated cannabis businesses can be confident that their businesses' ability to be successful are protected from the unregulated marketplace.

- **Supporting legislative concepts for a clean cannabis certification.** While the Oregon legislature will decide whether to create such a certification in future legislative sessions, the Cannabis Program strongly supports this concept and will look for other ways to promote meaningful sustainability within the cannabis business community.
- **Encouraging local businesses to seek resources and certification to ensure staff are knowledgeable.** Consumers may not have a way to tell whether the information they're receiving is accurate and up-to-date. We support resources and certification programs for Retailers that ensure Portland consumers understand the difference between cannabis products, their effects, and how to safely dose and consume their purchases

WE COMMIT TO:

- **Leading conversations with our public advisory body about sustainable practices.** Portland should incentivize sustainability in cannabis production to align with City goals to reduce carbon emissions by 50% of 1990 levels by 2035. These should be built into the licensing and information-sharing structure of the City's cannabis regulations and policy work.
- **Incentivizing community engagement.** The Cannabis Program will explore license fee discounts or other assistant for businesses who help in their community, be it with graffiti cleanups, adopting a road to clean, or other civic engagement.
- **Anticipating future Federal changes.** This will bring additional growth opportunities to Portland and Oregon, and we want our local marketplaces to be highly competitive across the country if those opportunities exist.
- **Exploring how to provide incentives for businesses to maintain a majority of their funding here at home.** As

cannabis regulations across the country and at the Federal level change, we want our city and our state to be well-positioned to participate in a robust national marketplace. We do not want Oregon cannabis to come from a warehouse in another state; we want it grown, processed, and sold right here at home.

- **Positioning Portland as a world leader in clean, sustainable, and ethical cannabis.** Consumers should seek out Portland to find cannabis of the highest quality and order, and feel confident that their dollars are supporting local businesses who care deeply both for their workers and for biodiversity.



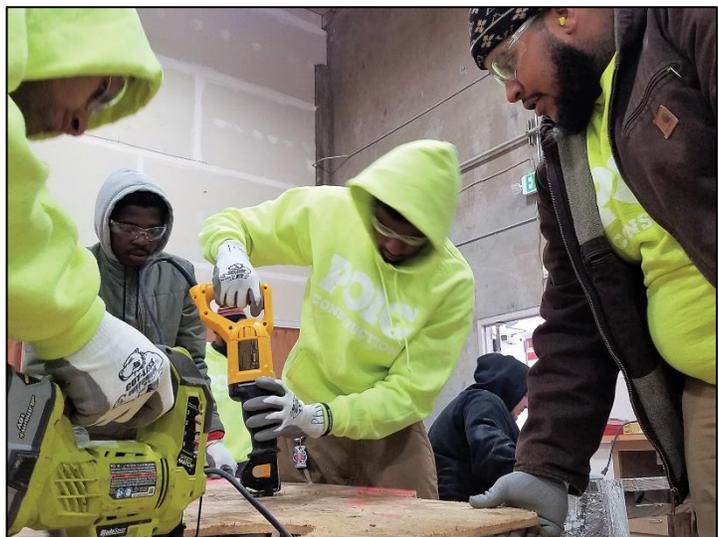
THE FUTURE OF PORTLAND'S CANNABIS POLICIES

The City of Portland's goal: to be a leader in municipal cannabis policy.

We're working to help support those communities most impacted by cannabis prohibition, serve as a policy incubator for ideas and strategies, and create a local environment where consumers want to shop and where businesses get support to stay compliant.

The values and goals above reflect that intent.

As the cannabis landscape continues changing, Portland commits to ensuring that our cannabis business community is competitive, safe, and aligns with the diverse values of our community.



Four people, two holding power tools, cutting plywood as part of the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center + Rosemary Anderson High School apprenticeship program, funded in part by the City of Portland's 2017-18 local cannabis tax revenue through a competitive grants process.