



## Maryland Cannabis Administration Announces Creation of Social Equity Verification Portal

**Linthicum Heights, MD** - The Maryland Cannabis Administration today announced the creation of the Social Equity Verification Portal for individuals interested in pursuing a cannabis business license. The portal will assist prospective applicants with confirming their social equity status before the license application round opens later this year.

The Social Equity Verification Portal is scheduled to open on Friday, September 8.

“Our goal with establishing this verification tool is to ensure that every person who may be interested in a cannabis business license knows before the application period opens whether they are eligible to apply,” **said Maryland Cannabis Administration Acting Director Will Tilburg**. “We are excited to offer this verification tool, free of charge, to all prospective applicants.”

The first round of licensing for standard and micro cannabis growers, processors, and dispensaries will be exclusive to social equity applicants. The Social Equity Verification Portal will instruct individuals on the social equity applicant eligibility requirements and allow them to verify their eligibility as a social equity applicant before the application period opens later this fall.

Under the Cannabis Reform Act, a social equity applicant is defined as an applicant with 65% or greater ownership or control held by individuals who have lived in a disproportionately impacted area for at least five of the past 10 years, attended a public school in a disproportionately impacted area for at least five years, or attended a four-year institution of higher education in Maryland where at least 40 percent of the individuals who attend the institution of higher education are eligible for a Pell Grant, for at least two years.

Earlier today, the Office of Social Equity published data identifying ZIP codes and public schools in Maryland that are within a disproportionately impacted area. In addition, the Office of Social Equity identified the University of Baltimore, Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University, the University of Maryland - Eastern Shore, and Washington Adventist University as the four-year institutions of higher education with at least 40% Pell Grant eligibility. More information on the Office of Social Equity and the qualifying geographic areas and institutions of higher education may be found at [ose.maryland.gov](https://ose.maryland.gov).

“In partnership with the Maryland Cannabis Administration, the Office of Social Equity paves a pioneering path toward inclusivity,” **said Office of Social Equity Executive Director Audrey**

**Johnson.** This collaboration underscores the shared commitment to nurture a diverse cannabis landscape, rectify historical imbalances and ensure equal access.”

The Social Equity Verification Portal will be open for a period of 60 days, closing on Tuesday, November 7.

For more information, including how to access the Social Equity Verification Portal beginning on September 8, visit [cannabis.maryland.gov](https://cannabis.maryland.gov).