

# Illinois Cannabis Expansion: Pritzker Administration Grants New Conditional Licenses

Illinois takes another step forward in its commitment to equity and diversity within the cannabis industry as Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) announce the issuance of 35 additional Conditional Adult Use Dispensing Organization Licenses to applicants from the Social Equity Criteria Lottery (SECL). Conducted in July 2023, all 35 selected applicants met the social equity criteria under the SECL's administrative rules.

## Prioritizing Equity

Governor Pritzker emphasizes the significance of prioritizing equity in the cannabis sector, highlighting the importance of creating jobs and opportunities in communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs. The issuance of these licenses is seen as a critical step towards ensuring Illinois maintains its position as a leader in equitable cannabis industry practices nationwide.

## Conditional License Period

Recipients of the conditional licenses now have 365 days to establish their dispensaries and obtain final approval from IDFPR for their Adult Use Cannabis Dispensing Organization License. Additionally, applicants have the option to apply for a 180-day extension of their conditional license, providing them with the necessary time to meet all requirements. Sales of adult-use cannabis can only commence upon receiving the full license from IDFPR.

## Continued Support from IDFPR

IDFPR Secretary Mario Treto, Jr., expresses pride in the department's efforts to ensure that the dispensary licensure process reflects the diversity of Illinois. IDFPR remains committed to providing support and guidance to the newly licensed conditional applicants, facilitating their journey towards full licensure and integration into the equitable cannabis industry.

## Next Steps

While 35 applicants have been awarded conditional licenses, an additional 13 licenses are expected to be issued soon, bringing the total to 48 new conditional licensees. For regions where conditional licenses were not granted, IDFPR will reach out to the next selected applicants from the July 2023 lottery, ensuring that the social equity applicant criteria are met for each licensee.

## Growing Industry

With 202 adult-use cannabis dispensaries currently operating in Illinois, including 92 social equity dispensaries, the state continues to expand its cannabis market while upholding its commitment to equity. Moreover, 108 applicants from the 2022 social equity lotteries are actively working towards obtaining full dispensary licenses, indicating a thriving and inclusive industry landscape.

## **Future Initiatives**

In addition to ongoing licensing processes, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has recently concluded the acceptance of applications for Direct Forgivable Loans for conditional dispensary license holders. Updates on loan recipients and future opportunities will be provided by DCEO, further supporting the growth and sustainability of Illinois' equitable cannabis industry.

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