



MARYLAND  
**MMCC**

Natalie M. LaPrade  
**Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission**

## ***Request for Grant Applications***

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC) is seeking grant applications from any educational institution, educational organization, or business development organization to provide training and assistance to small, minority, and women business owners and entrepreneurs seeking to become licensed as medical cannabis growers, processors, or dispensaries in the State.

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**Grant ID Number:** **MMCC 19-111**

**Issue Date:** **August 21, 2018**

**Title:** **Medical Cannabis Educational and Business Development Training Program**

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**Letter of Intent Due:** **Wednesday, September 5, 2018 by 5:00 pm (ET)**

**Application Due:** **Wednesday, September 26, 2018 by 5:00 pm (ET)**

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Single Point of Contact:

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Applications are to be sent **by email** to:  
[MMCC.grants@maryland.gov](mailto:MMCC.grants@maryland.gov)

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## **I. ABOUT THE MARYLAND MEDICAL CANNABIS COMMISSION**

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission is an independent commission within the Maryland Department of Health responsible for developing policies, procedures, guidelines, and regulations to implement programs to make medical cannabis available to qualifying patients in a safe and effective manner. MMCC oversees all licensing, registration, inspection, and testing measures pertaining to Maryland's medical cannabis program and provides relevant program information to patients and caregivers, providers, growers, processors, dispensaries, and independent testing laboratories.

MMCC's mission is to implement a successful and consumer-friendly medical cannabis industry in the State and to provide affordable and adequate access to medical cannabis. Central to this mission is promoting diversity and the participation of diverse groups in the medical cannabis industry, including small, minority-, and women-owned businesses.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

The Educational and Business Development Grant Program was established by the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission Reform Act, enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in 2018. The General Assembly established the grant program to provide training and assistance to small, minority, and women business owners and entrepreneurs interested in becoming licensed as a medical cannabis grower, processor, or dispensary. The grant program is funded by the Natalie M. LaPrade Commission Fund, a special, nonlapsing fund primarily subsidized by fees collected by MMCC from medical cannabis licensees and registrants.

MMCC anticipates issuing up to 5 awards for up to \$45,000 per award in Fiscal Year 2019. Each award will be for a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of six (6) months. Since the program is intended to educate and train businesses and individuals interested in becoming a licensed medical cannabis grower, processor, or dispensary, the project timeline must be prior to the due date for submission of medical cannabis grower and processor license applications in the first quarter of 2019 (anticipated).

Applications for grant awards will be accepted on or before September 26, 2018, in advance of the next application period for medical cannabis grower and processor licenses. Grant award announcements are anticipated to be provided by November 30, 2018.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to reduce barriers to entry into the medical cannabis industry faced by small, minority-, and women-owned businesses. The grant program is one manner in which MMCC is actively seeking to encourage and promote participation by diverse groups in the Maryland medical cannabis industry. The medical cannabis industry is associated with high capitalization and operating costs, yet traditional financing options and federal business programs that promote minority business ownership continue to be largely unavailable, creating barriers to entry. This grant program is an attempt to help bridge the gap for minorities and women to mitigate future disparities.

#### IV. KEY COMPONENTS AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Objective</b>	The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission plans to fund up to 5 grant applicants for up to \$45,000 per award to develop and implement an educational and business development training program for small, minority, and women business owners and entrepreneurs interested in becoming a licensed medical cannabis grower, processor, or dispensary.
<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grant Announcement Published: August 21, 2018</li><li>• Conference Call for Applicants (optional, but strongly encouraged): August 30, 2018 at 10:00 am (ET) Dial-in Number is 1-866-792-3105 Conference code is 3140169743</li><li>• Letter of Intent due by: Wednesday, September 5, 2018 by 5:00 pm (ET)</li><li>• Application Deadline: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 by 5:00 pm (ET)</li><li>• Anticipated Announcement of Award(s): November 2018</li></ul>
<b>Grant Period</b>	3-6 months – starting December 2018
<b>Available Grant Funds</b>	\$45,000 for a single award

*Note: Grant tasks/due dates are tentative and subject to change at the discretion of MMCC, after discussion with the grantee.*

#### V. APPLICATION REQUEST

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission is issuing this Announcement for Grant Applications to award grant funding to any educational institution, educational organization, or business development organization, to provide training and assistance to small, minority, and women business owners and entrepreneurs seeking to become licensed as medical cannabis growers, processors, or dispensaries in the State.

<b>Project Length:</b>	3-6 months
<b>Letter of Intent Requested by:</b>	Wednesday, September 5, 2018, by 5:00 pm (ET)
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	Wednesday, September 26, 2018, by 5:00 pm (ET)
<b>Maximum Award Amount:</b>	\$45,000
<b>Maximum Number of Awards:</b>	5
<b>Eligibility:</b>	The applicant organization must be qualified and capable of carrying out the intended project and proposed uses of requested funds. MMCC may grant funds to any entity permitted under State law, provided the funds are used to train and assist small, minority, and women business owners and

entrepreneurs seeking to become licensed as a medical cannabis grower, processor, or dispensary.

A Letter of Intent (LOI) from applicants is due by Wednesday, September 5, 2018, 5 pm (ET), via email to [MMCC.grants@maryland.gov](mailto:MMCC.grants@maryland.gov). This will help MMCC to anticipate the number and type of applications it might receive. The LOI should be limited to one page and identify: 1) the organization(s) involved in the project and their role(s); 2) a brief description of the proposed project; and 3) project objective(s). An applicant may adjust or change items/concepts outlined in its LOI upon submission of its application. A list of organizations that have submitted Letters of Intent will be posted on the MMCC website for those interested in collaboration or partnership among interested organizations unless an organization's LOI expressly states that it is not interested in collaboration or partnership.

This grant solicitation is not subject to the State's procurement policies and procedures. By submitting an application in response to this grant solicitation, the applicant acknowledges that MMCC's grant application and review process and award determination are not subject to protest.

## **VI. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS**

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to meet, at minimum, the following qualifications:

- Knowledge and the ability to explain State laws and regulations governing the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Program, with an emphasis on the licensing process and the diversity aspects of the licensing application. (See Health-General Article §§13-3301, et seq, and COMAR 10.62).
- Knowledge and experience with creating and implementing educational and business development training programs.
- Demonstrated capacity to implement all project elements and begin the medical cannabis educational and business development training program in advance of the next application period for medical cannabis grower and processor licenses.
- Demonstration of infrastructure, training space, phone, computers, network, and data capabilities.
- Proof of partnership with any participating organizations.
- Ability to collect, track, analyze, and report on key performance measures.
- Commitment to providing a Certificate of Completion to participants who successfully complete the training program.
- Demonstrated commitment to report on implementation progress and develop a project summary as a final deliverable at the conclusion of the grant.

## **VII. STAFFING AND PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS**

The applicant organization must describe its staffing model for the project under Section VIII (Application Requirements) APPENDIX B. Staff must have demonstrated qualifications to

provide professional training and technical assistance. Under Section VIII (Application Requirements) APPENDIX E, detailed resumes should be submitted for all management, supervisory, and other personnel to be assigned to the grant. Resumes should be structured to emphasize relevant qualifications and experience of these individuals in successfully completing projects of a similar size and scope to those required by this RFA.

The applicant organization, and its staff, must have demonstrated experience providing comparable materials and services. Resumes should set forth any professional licensing experience and medical cannabis or similar industry experience. Resumes should also indicate any experience working specifically with minorities, women, veterans, or other disproportionately impacted communities.

## **VIII. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The information below must be provided as part of the application.

The applicant shall describe its approach and plans for accomplishing the work outlined in the Scope of Work section (See Section A, Scope of Work and Strategy, immediately below). The applicant must set forth its understanding of the requirements of this RFA and its ability to successfully complete the grant requirements.

MMCC seeks applicants to develop a face-to-face and remote learning curriculum as well as provide professional training, technical assistance, mentoring, and associated materials and services, for individuals seeking assistance with entry into the medical cannabis industry as a licensed grower, processor, or dispensary. Applicants must demonstrate a reputation for providing services in a manner that is professional, unbiased, and independent. Positive references must be available from private or public-sector clients for the specific services solicited.

Strategic Approach. The applicant shall set forth its overall strategic approach and plans to meet the requirements of the RFA in a narrative format. This narrative should convince MMCC that the applicant understands the objectives that the grant application is intended to meet, the nature of the required work, and the level of effort necessary to successfully complete the grant. It should convey that the applicant's detailed plans and approach proposed to complete the Scope of Work are realistic, attainable, and appropriate and that the applicant's proposal will lead to successful grant completion.

Applicants will differentiate themselves by demonstrating to MMCC that the applicant understands the medical cannabis industry, and has an approach, contacts and experience providing comparable services in the industry or a related industry. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria set by MMCC, adherence to the submission requirements, proven ability to develop and deliver effective training and technical assistance services, experience working with impacted communities, and proven commitment to diversity and social equity.

### **SECTION A. SCOPE OF WORK AND STRATEGY (Section A should not exceed 5 pages of narrative, plus additional pages for the required appendices in Section B):**

1. Detail the development of a project plan comprised of a training curriculum that addresses at least one of the following categories needed to assist eligible applicants in understanding how to complete an effective licensing application and prepare for entry into the

medical cannabis industry. Please note that regardless of category selection, each grantee must address the overall medical cannabis licensing process and regulations as part of its curriculum, which must include instruction on how to apply for a license, the licensing fees, capitalization requirements, and the diversity and social equity features of the new licensing applications. The curriculum categories are:

**Category 1. Medical Cannabis Licensing and Applications**

- I. The overall medical cannabis licensing process and regulations.
- II. Application guidance/troubleshooting and tips for writing an effective application.
- III. Resources available for individuals interested in applying for a medical cannabis license.
- IV. Barriers to entering the medical cannabis industry such as identifying or raising funds or capital.
- V. Legal compliance.

**Category 2. Medical Cannabis Business Operations**

- I. The overall medical cannabis licensing process and regulations.
- II. Business plan creation and operational development.
- III. Business operations and management.
- IV. Marketing and medical cannabis industry networking.
- V. Medical cannabis industry best practices.
- VI. Financing, banking, accounting, and taxes.

2. Describe how the applicant organization plans to implement the required project plan that is based on at least one of the curriculum categories listed above. This section should include a detailed description of the scope, breadth, and plans/approach. Relevant information would include:

- I. The type of training for each topic (eg. Instructor-led, computer-based training, Webinar).
- II. How long the development of the curriculum will take, overall duration of the curriculum broken down in terms of number of sessions, teaching hours, and months, and the number of courses necessary to adequately train a participant.
- III. The content to be learned, including clear, definable standards of what the training program participant should know and be able to do once the program concludes.
- IV. Training syllabus, curriculum outlines.
- V. Type of training materials (presentations, handouts, user guides).
- VI. The location and area of your training site or your plan to procure space and appropriate equipment. Detail any spacing and equipment needs or limitations. (State-wide)
- VII. Referral sources for training participants.
- VIII. The type and extent of stakeholder involvement with respect to the project.
- IX. Any other relevant information that may assist MMCC in understanding the applicant's implementation of the project plan.
- X. Project plan that includes all of the above.

**SECTION B. APPENDICES**

The applicant must submit the following required attachments with the application:

**APPENDIX A - PAST & PRESENT EXPERIENCE** Provide up to 5 examples of your experience with providing similar educational and business development trainings and/or technical assistance relating to the subject areas of your curriculum. Identify all areas of expertise. Specify if this experience is directly tied to the medical cannabis industry.

**APPENDIX B – STAFFING AND PERSONNEL** Identify the project manager and any other key staff who will routinely work with program participants. Briefly describe the relevant experience of each of those individuals. Describe your plan to obtain additional staff members, if needed, and whether you will be relying on any partnering organizations.

**APPENDIX C - TIMELINE** Present a timeline to meet the deliverables in the Scope of Work, with the identification of project objectives and outcomes that are clear, verifiable, and in line with project goals.

**APPENDIX D - BUDGET** Provide a budget for the grant period that specifies the amount of funding needed for the salaries of personnel and any other expenditures. The budget may include start-up costs for expenditures the grantee expects to incur if the grantee anticipates experiencing some financial hardship by waiting to be reimbursed. All budgets shall include a detailed budget narrative with written justification for each line item, linking it to program activities.

Required budget line items:

*Start up costs.*

*Salary.*

*Equipment.*

***Rent and associated utilities.*** The prorated amount of rent associated with the training program activities.

***Phone and Internet service.*** The total amount associated with phone and Internet service.

*Training.*

***Marketing.*** Costs associated with purchase/production, printing, and distribution of marketing materials to promote and implement the training program.

***Office Supplies.*** Costs associated with postage, paper, and other general office supplies.

***Travel.*** Costs for personnel to conduct off-site activities, including partner meetings and training. The unit cost should be a per trip average across all estimated travel costs, including taxi, train/metro, parking, mileage and/or tolls. Mileage may not exceed the State's approved rate for mileage reimbursement at the time of travel. No out-of-state travel is allowed and overnight travel is anticipated to be limited.

***Indirect Costs.*** Applicants must limit indirect costs to 10% of total budget.

**APPENDIX E – RESUMES** The applicant shall provide resumes of staff who will be assigned to the project.

**APPENDIX F – REFERENCES** The applicant shall provide references from up to 3 organizations for which the applicant has provided services similar to the work contemplated by this RFA. Beginning and ending dates should be given for each similar project. A description of the project should be given and should demonstrate how the work on a completed project relates to the ability to contribute to successfully providing the services required by this RFA. With respect to each similar project, the applicant should include the name and address of each reference together with a person to contact for a reference check and a telephone number.

The narrative for Section A should use Times New Roman 12-point font and have 1-inch page margins. The appendices should each be submitted as a PDF document or Excel sheet with the appendices clearly numbered and marked in the title of the documents.

## **IX. TERMS OF THE GRANT**

*Applicants are required to acknowledge the terms of the grant in their grant application.*

### **A. Project Timeframe**

The grant begins on or about **December 2018 for at least 3 months but not more than 6 months after the grant award date.**

### **B. Funding Amount**

Up to \$45,000 for a single award.

### **C. Proposal and Change in Scope Request**

All responses, assertions, and commitments made in the proposal, including any amendments to the proposal, will be part of the grant agreement. Fulfillment of project objectives and deliverables are expected. If a grantee wishes to make changes to the project (including project plan, staff model, and budget proposal) that differs from what is stated in their application, a change of scope request with justification must be submitted in writing by the grantee to MMCC for consideration. MMCC will approve requests at its discretion.

### **D. Evaluation Process and Criteria**

MMCC will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each application and make final selections based on the criteria contained in this document. MMCC will consider each proposed project on its own merits along multiple dimensions. First and foremost, the applicant organization must be eligible to apply and determined to be capable of carrying out the intended project and proposed uses of requested funds. MMCC will take into account the:

- Stated purpose and scope of the project, its goals and objectives;
- Proposed timeline for project completion;
- Appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed project plan;
- Anticipated deliverables, including services and products that will result from project activities and accomplishments;
- Quality of proposed progress and outcomes measures;
- Integrity of the budget plan and corollary budget justification; and
- Applicant organization's prior track record in regard to medical cannabis education or training or with similar programs.

### **E. Grant Monitoring**

As a condition of receiving grant funds, grantees must agree to participate in MMCC's monitoring of the project. Grantees will be required to participate in monthly monitoring calls during the grant period. The purpose of the monthly calls will be to monitor the applicant organization's progress against goals, address applicant questions or concerns, and generally provide for open communication between the applicant organization and MMCC. Grantees must also submit a written project and fiscal progress update at the

midpoint of the grant period to show their progress toward project goals as well as the final deliverable project summary produced under the grant as a condition of midpoint and final payment of MMCC grant funds. To facilitate project monitoring, grantees must also provide training evaluations from participants which must be submitted to MMCC by email at [ChristiL.Megna@maryland.gov](mailto:ChristiL.Megna@maryland.gov).

Termination of the grant may occur if the grantee is unable to show progress in developing and implementing the educational and training program under the grant.

#### **F. Final Deliverable**

Develop a project summary as a final deliverable at the conclusion of the grant.

#### **G. Payment**

Payment will occur three times: at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of the grant. One-fourth of the grant funds will be disbursed at the beginning of the grant period to be used for start-up costs for expenditures the grantee expects to incur. One-fourth of the grant funds will be disbursed at the midpoint, and the remaining one-half of the funds will be disbursed at the conclusion of the grant. MMCC will disburse funds at the midpoint and conclusion of the grant for services rendered only upon MMCC's receipt of a completed detailed invoice, including supporting documentation, as well as submission of the written project and fiscal progress update and the final project summary, respectively. The invoices must include a description of the completed tasks, the date(s) of services performed, the time period the invoice covers, and any supporting documentation as necessary for the requested funds. Receipts for items costing \$100 or more must be submitted to receive reimbursement. All documentation must be to the satisfaction of MMCC for reimbursement approval.

#### **H. MMCC Grant Actions**

If it becomes necessary to revise this announcement for grant applications before the due date for applications, amendments will be announced on MMCC's website. MMCC will not be responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in preparing and submitting an application or in performing any other activities relative to this grant announcement. MMCC reserves the right to cancel this announcement for grant applications, to accept, or reject any and all applications (in whole or in part) received in response to this announcement for grant applications, to waive or permit correction of minor irregularities, to request additional information or modification to an application, and to conduct discussions with all qualified or potentially qualified grant applicants in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of MMCC and to accomplish the objectives of this grant announcement.

#### **I. Enforcement Actions**

In the event that MMCC determines that a grantee is not complying with the grant terms, requirements set forth in this application, or proposal assertions and commitments, MMCC may take one or more enforcement actions. These range from actions designed to allow the grantee to take corrective action, such as developing an improvement plan, to penalizing actions against the grantee such as withholding payment or temporarily suspending an award, disallowing costs, recouping payments made, or terminating an

award. Different processes apply depending on the type of enforcement action. If an enforcement action is planned, MMCC will notify the grantee via email and indicate the effect of the action.

#### **J. Distribution of Grantee Educational and Training Materials**

MMCC will not own nor have any propriety interest in the grantee's educational and training materials. However, MMCC may elect to distribute any of the grantee's educational and training materials through its websites and existing social media accounts. These materials may also be made available to local municipalities and programs across the State to distribute to their residents via their communications channels.

### **X. ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

#### **A. Communications**

Applicants are discouraged from communicating directly with any employee of MMCC other than the grant monitor regarding this RFA. Applicants may contact the grant monitor/contact person for this RFA with any inquiries.

#### **B. Open Meetings Law**

MMCC is subject to the Open Meetings Act. Accordingly, the RFA process and responses received as the result of this RFA may be discussed during public meetings. MMCC will make reasonable efforts to protect confidential or proprietary information. To that end, MMCC encourages applicants to identify what it considers to be confidential or proprietary information.

#### **C. Costs**

MMCC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by applicants in responding to this RFA. Costs which are not specifically identified in the applicant's response, and accepted by MMCC as part of the grant, will not be compensated under any grant awarded pursuant to this RFA.

### **XI. HOW TO APPLY**

The MMCC will host a conference call for interested applicants to provide information on the grant program, followed by a Q&A session. The conference call, on Thursday, August 30 at 10:00 am (ET), is optional. The conference call-in number is 1-866-792-3105 and the conference code is 3140169743.

A Letter of Intent (LOI) from the applicant, as detailed in Section V (Application Request), is due by September 5, 2018, 5 pm (ET), via email to [MMCC.grants@maryland.gov](mailto:MMCC.grants@maryland.gov).

Complete an application that meets the requirements as outlined in Section VIII (Application Requirements). This Grant Announcement is available on MMCC's website at:

<http://mmcc.maryland.gov>

Grant applications are due to MMCC by 5:00 pm (ET) on September 29, 2018 and must be submitted via email to [MMCC.grants@maryland.gov](mailto:MMCC.grants@maryland.gov). Provide a single PDF electronic copy of the entire grant application or provide the narrative part of the application in PDF electronic format with the accompanying attachments in PDF or Excel format. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

The application must be comprised of the following:

A cover letter that clearly states the name of the applicant organization, principal address, local address (if applicable, and if different from principal address), website (if applicable), and the name, address, email, fax and telephone number of the applicant's primary contact person. The letter must:

- Provide an executive summary of the applicant's proposal, which identifies the services to be provided;
- Identify the name, title, address, phone number, and email address of the individual serving as the applicant's primary contact; and
- Be signed by an individual authorized to bind the applicant organization.

The application narrative and ATTACHMENTS A through F as described in Section VIII (Application Requirements) of this grant announcement. Unnecessary attachments or other documents not specifically asked for in this RFA should not be submitted.

Late submissions will not be evaluated for a grant award. Submissions received on September 26, 2018 at 5:01 pm (ET) and beyond will not be accepted even if the delay is not caused by the individual or organization submitting the proposal. Applicants may call MMCC at (410) 487-8062 to determine if MMCC is in receipt of their submission. However, only an email receipt confirmation will be considered authoritative if there is a dispute.

All questions regarding this announcement for grant applications should be submitted via email. Applicants may also submit written questions about the grant program at any time. Please email questions to [ChristiL.Megna@maryland.gov](mailto:ChristiL.Megna@maryland.gov). All substantive questions and responses will be posted on MMCC's website at: <http://mmcc.maryland.gov>