



## The 2025 Council Market Outlook Working Group – Recommendation Template

### **Relevant Statute:**

[Sec. 21a-421bb. Prohibitions re advertisement of cannabis and cannabis products. Registration of cannabis brand names.,](#)

[Sec. 21a-420n. Cultivator license.](#)

[Sec. 21a-421g. Workforce training program for cannabis industry.](#)

### **Common Themes Addressed by Subcommittee Members:**

#### **1. Financial Constraints and Banking Access:**

- a. High costs for operators, difficulties securing funding, burdensome fees, and a need for grant or loan programs.
- b. Limited banking options for cannabis businesses and the value of knowing which banks will work with them.
- c. Social equity ownership and loan requirements make raising capital extremely difficult for compliance.

#### **2. Regulatory and Structural Barriers**

- a. Marketing and advertising restrictions make it hard for legal businesses to build brand identity or attract/retain customers.
- b. Constraints around product offerings, packaging, potency, and high taxes compared to other states, and limitations imposed by statutes and regulatory agencies.

#### **3. Social Equity and Business Sustainability:**

- a. The importance of supporting social equity entrepreneurs, tracking business closures, and ensuring long-term participation.
- b. Calls to make regulations more flexible to help smaller operators and level the playing field.
- c. Ownership structure and mandate have become challenging to allow social equity owners to thrive.

#### **4. Workforce Issues:**

- a. Challenges around required hiring, training standards (especially for pharmacists and dispensary technicians), and efforts to develop a qualified cannabis workforce.
- 5. Public Education and Market Legitimacy:**
- a. Public campaigns to distinguish legal, regulated cannabis from the illicit market and to educate consumers about safety and regulation.
  - b. The need to show regulators and the public how social equity applicants comply and how rules affect their survival.
  - c. Illegal stores undercutting prices, regulations, and legality impact the regulated industry.

**Recommendations based on Common Themes and Relevant Statute:**

**1. Financial Constraints and Banking Access**

- a. Develop and expand grant and low-interest loan programs for social-equity cannabis businesses to alleviate start-up and operating costs.
- b. Create an equity loan program that effectively utilizes state-controlled cannabis dollars to support equity applicants and promote the benefits of the cannabis industry.
- c. Publish and regularly update a vetted list of banks willing to serve cannabis businesses.
- d. Advocate for state-backed financial resources or credit unions tailored to the cannabis sector.

**2. Regulatory and Structural Barriers**

- a. Increase potency levels to compete with interstate competition and improve commercial viability.
- b. Allow distinctive packaging to reinforce brand recognition, ensure product quality, and safety.
- c. Allow universal product availability for adult-use retailers currently sold out of state, online, and in grey/black markets, including lotions, creams, balms, lozenges, high-quality concentrates, tinctures, capsules, and more.
- d. Allowing businesses to promote their brands to build awareness and establish trust in a crowded marketplace.
- e. Change billboard and discount restrictions to be more in line with neighboring states and consistent with the alcohol or gambling industries.
- f. Revisit licensing, ownership rules, and EJV structures to allow reasonable flexibility for capital raising and operational stability, including, but not limited to, a change of ownership after 3 years, subjecting future owners to the requirements associated with their business.

**3. Social Equity and Business Sustainability**

- a. Track and analyze the rate of closures among social equity businesses to identify patterns and inform support programs.
- b. Ensure that policy changes address the unique challenges faced by new and smaller businesses and include feedback channels for continuous improvement.

- c. Expand technical assistance, mentorship, and accelerator programs for social equity applicants.

**4. Workforce Issues**

- a. Partner with educational institutions and workforce agencies to build cannabis career pathways, focusing on entry-level and specialized roles funded by the SEC or other agencies.
- b. Advocate for reviewed requirements for highly paid roles (e.g., pharmacists in hybrid retailers) to allow more sustainable staffing models.

**5. Public Education and Market Legitimacy**

- a. Launch a public awareness campaign distinguishing the legal cannabis market from illegal/unregulated operators, highlighting safety, product testing, and consumer protections.
- b. Collaborate with allied industries (e.g., insurance, trades) to further educate and involve the business community in supporting cannabis.

