

WRITTEN QUOTE CONTRACT:

Boston Cannabis Empowerment Week



Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion
Chief Segun Idowu
EV00011894

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion (OEOI) is soliciting competitive quotes from vendors who can design and deliver a weeklong series of interactive, introductory modules on cannabis legalization, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and the cannabis licensing process for residents of the City of Boston and/or those who intend to operate a cannabis business in the City of Boston.

WQC SCHEDULE:

EVENT	DATE
WQC Issue Date	02/06/2023
Bid Due Date	03/06/2023

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Shekia Scott | Shekia.Scott@Boston.gov

To access this WQC and related documents, visit boston.gov/procurement, click “Find” in the “Events” section, and search Event ID **EV00011894**.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Prohibition and the War on Drugs had and continues to have devastating and lasting effects on Americans, specifically those levied with marijuana charges, those of Black and African American descent, other people of color, and those who lack financial resources. Drug offenses remain the leading cause of arrest in the nation even as many states decriminalize and legalize. According to Drug Policy Alliance Drug War Statistics, in 2020 there were 1,155,610 arrests in the U.S. for drug law violations, 350,149 solely for marijuana with the majority of those for personal possession alone. On average, every 90 seconds, someone is arrested for a marijuana offense. According to Massachusetts Crime Statistics, 63.9% of all drug law violations were for possession alone.

On November 8, 2016, 53.7% of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and 62.6% of the voters in the City of Boston approved ballot question number 4 to legalize recreational marijuana.

The law requires the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) to adopt procedures and policies to promote and encourage full participation in the marijuana industry by people from communities that have been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement and to positively impact those communities. The law also requires the CCC to prioritize review and licensing decisions for applicants for retail, manufacturing, or cultivation licenses who “demonstrate experience in or business practices that promote economic empowerment in communities disproportionately impacted by high rates of arrest and incarceration for offenses under [the Controlled Substances Act].” M.G.L. c 94C

In April 2018 and then June 2018 the CCC introduced its Economic Empowerment and Social Equity programs to meet state mandates and enact equity in the industry.

On November 20, 2018, the Commonwealth realized its first legal purchase of recreational marijuana.

On November 20, 2019, Boston City Council filed An Ordinance Establishing Equitable Regulation of the Cannabis Industry in the City of Boston (hereinafter “Ordinance”), which created the Boston Cannabis Board, Boston Equity Program,

and Boston Equity Fund. The Ordinance sets forth eligibility criteria for the Equity Program with the intent of counteracting the devastating impacts of the “War on Drugs”, which disproportionately affected residents of color - particularly people of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian descent, living in the Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan neighborhoods of Boston. Additionally, out of 52 licensed retail cannabis establishments, at least half of Boston’s cannabis establishments must be owned by an equity licensee, fulfilling a 1:1 equity ratio set forth in the Ordinance.

However, as of January 12, 2023, out of 1,400 applications approved by the CCC, only 280 submitted were from Social Equity Participants and 102 were submitted by Economic Empowerment applicants. To date of 488 total approvals from the CCC authorizing businesses to commence operations only 57 (29, and 28 respectively), have been for Social Equity Participants and Economic Empowerment applicants.

Furthermore, Massachusetts’ robust and well-regulated industry supports 27,212 jobs and is continuously growing. Unfortunately, as of December 8, 2022, out of the 53,340 total agent applications received by the CCC, only 6.0% identified as Black; African American, 1.9% Asian, 8.4% Hispanic; Latino; and or Spanish, and 0.1% as American Indian; Alaska Native.

In order to stay in line with our true intent of counteracting the devastating impacts of the “War on Drugs”, for those most disproportionately affected in Boston and the state at large, we must increase resources of education and ease barriers to entry. We need all partners and helping hands on deck to actualize this goal.

We look forward to receiving your proposal.¹

Questions regarding this written quote contract should be directed to Shekia Scott, Cannabis Business Manager, via email at Shekia.Scott@boston.gov.

¹ This WQC is open to any vendor who would like to respond, and the City encourages participation from small, local, minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses. To support equality of opportunity for these businesses, we also encourage respondents to solicit for the subcontracting of goods and services from certified businesses. The City’s [directory of certified businesses](#) is available online.

II. GOALS

The ultimate goal is to counteract the devastating impacts of the “War on Drugs”, for those most disproportionately affected.

This project has the following goals:

1. Reduce barriers to entry in the commercial cannabis industry;
2. Expand the knowledge of the general public regarding the licensing process and its separate city and state components;
3. Provide professional services and mentoring for current and inspiring cannabis owners;
4. Raise awareness of the entrepreneurial and workforce opportunities that the cannabis industry provides;
5. Identify resources and programming available specifically to those disproportionately impacted by prohibition, the War on Drugs, & law enforcement;
6. Increase the number of equity applicants/licensees in the City of Boston.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor must design and deliver a week-long series of interactive, introductory modules on cannabis legalization, entrepreneurship, and the cannabis licensing process for residents of the City of Boston and/or those who intend to operate a cannabis business in the City of Boston. The series should be presented in a mixed methodology, blended teaching style that incorporates personal preferences, individual personalities, and specific interests. Presentation methods should include but are not limited to tactile or hands-on learning, open discussions, group activities, games, and lectures.

Specifically, the vendor will be responsible for creating the following deliverables which are to include but are not limited to:

- A module on prohibition, the War on Drugs, and the legislative history of the legalization of cannabis in Massachusetts:
 - The ongoing and various impact of prohibition & War on Drugs;
 - The need & importance of equity & reparative justice in the cannabis industry;
 - State & City legislation due to legalization; and
 - How to create and adhere to a strong diversity and positive impact plans.

- A module on the various license types available from the Cannabis Control Commission (hereinafter “CCC”):
 - License caps and license limits.

- A module on the City of Boston licensing and Host Community Agreements (hereinafter “HCA”) process to include but not limited to:
 - The Boston Cannabis Board process;
 - Zoning Board of Appeal process;
 - Community meeting requirements (both City of Boston and CCC);
 - What is an HCA and why is it necessary;
 - Important clauses in the HCA; and
 - Boston Equity Program, eligibility criteria, and program resources available to equity applicants/licensees;

- A module on the CCC licensing process to include but not limited to:
 - An overview of the CCC application process and what applicants can expect after they are granted an HCA;
 - Identification of process overlap;
 - Equity Programs, eligibility criteria and resources available to applicants/licensees.

- A module on corporate structure and how to create a corporation to include but not limited to:
 - Which corporate structure is best for your business;
 - How to file your business with the state and City of Boston; and
 - Fees and expectations.

- A module on financing to include but not limited to:
 - The financial needs of cannabis businesses by license type;
 - Banking for the cannabis industry; and
 - What to consider when taking on investors.

- A module on site control to include but not limited to:
 - Zoning requirements & buffer zones;
 - The difference between a lease and letter of intent (hereinafter “LOI”);
 - Common terminology and what should be included in cannabis business lease;
 - Location selection- what to consider before signing a lease;
 - Best practices for drafting and/or negotiating lease and LOI; and
 - Permits and site materials.

- A module on Standard Operating Procedures (hereinafter “SOP”) for all license types offered by the CCC to include but not limited to:
 - CCC requirements for SOP;
 - Best practices for operational requirements; and
 - How to draft your own SOP.

- A module on provisional & final licensure.
- A module highlighting ancillary opportunities and benefits.

The vendor must offer the entire series or at least 3 days of the series in a cannabis cultivation facility, manufacturing facility, or retail store. The vendor should also consider a location for at least one day where participants can have access to technology such as computers or other interactive learning devices.

All bids must be inclusive of services and provide:

- Access to all functions within the outlined scope of work (no additional fees);
- Any implementation, service, site, administrative, or training fees;
- Access to wifi and presentation equipment, materials, and space;
- Marketing and outreach materials as well as promotion on all platforms & in-person;
- Food, beverages, and other refreshments. No alcoholic beverages, infused foods, or infused beverages will be permitted.
 - Lunch must be provided on Saturday & Sunday of the series.
- Transportation options to and from the learning facility.
- Translation services and ADA accessibility.

Required Documents and Attachments: Proposal narrative, not to exceed 8 pages (11pt, Calibri, single-spaced):

Experience and qualifications in 3 pages or less:

- Explain what specific qualifications you have that demonstrate your capacity to deliver this information session series.
- What experience do you have in the cannabis industry?
- What experience do you bring and how have they been successful?
- Resumes for all team members who will be engaged in this work. Resumes will not be counted towards your narrative page limit.

Service delivery plan and timeline of activities: In 5 pages or less describe the following:

- The specific approach, methods, and tools you would use to complete the scope of work.
- Sample of the modules to be provided to participants including time, lesson plan, worksheets, etc.
- Outreach and marketing methodology.

- The resources you would utilize and partners or sub-consultants you would utilize including details of any anticipated special guest, speakers, or educators, including names, titles, and contact information.
- Line item budget, including hourly rate(s) for individual(s) involved in service delivery, or proposed fee schedule based on deliverables.
- Contact information for two references who have worked with you on similar projects.

Disclosures: Please disclose whether you or your company has an interest in any cannabis business that is currently seeking, intends to seek, or has approval from the City of Boston or any of its agencies.

Additional Important Information:

The week-long series will take place in person only and will provide no hybrid option. All presented materials will be available to the public via the City of Boston's website following the in-person series.

The anticipated start date of the contract is in March 2023; subject to the City of Boston contracting and Purchase Order approval.

Approved and awarded contracts are subject to annual City of Boston funding.

*Please note the City of Boston is tax-exempt.

WQC Budget Amount : \$45,000

In the event that the Written Quote Contract requires clarification, modification, or correction, OEOI shall communicate such clarification, modification, or correction via email prior to the deadline.

IV. TIMELINE

The table below shows the preliminary WQC schedule. Dates are subject to change. For the most updated information, please visit boston.gov/procurement/.

EVENT	DATE
WQC Released	02/06/2023
WQC Webinar	02/15/2023
Deadline for Proposals	03/06/2023
Contractor Selected	03/20/2023

All times are in Eastern Time

EVENT	DATE
Contract Commencement	03/27/2023
Deadline for Final Plan	04/03/2023
Series Must Be Completed By/Before	06/01/2023

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