

342.18 LICENSE SELECTION CRITERIA.

Subdivision 1. **Market stability.** The office shall issue the necessary number of licenses in order to ensure the sufficient supply of cannabis flower and cannabis products to meet demand, provide market stability, ensure a competitive market, and limit the sale of unregulated cannabis flower and cannabis products.

Subd. 2. **Vertical integration prohibited; exceptions.** (a) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the office shall not issue licenses to a single applicant that would result in the applicant being vertically integrated in violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(b) Nothing in this section prohibits or limits the issuance of microbusiness licenses or mezzobusiness licenses, or the issuance of both lower-potency hemp edible manufacturer and lower-potency hemp edible retailer licenses to the same person or entity.

Subd. 3. **Application score; license priority.** (a) The office shall award points to each completed application for a license to operate a cannabis business in the following categories:

(1) status as a social equity applicant or as an applicant who is substantially similar to a social equity applicant as described in paragraph (c);

(2) status as a veteran or retired national guard applicant who does not meet the definition of social equity applicant;

(3) security and record keeping;

(4) employee training plan;

(5) business plan and financial situation;

(6) labor and employment practices;

(7) knowledge and experience; and

(8) environmental plan.

(b) The office may award additional points to an application if the license holder would expand service to an underrepresented market, including but not limited to participation in the medical cannabis program.

(c) The office shall establish application materials permitting individual applicants to demonstrate the impact that cannabis prohibition has had on that applicant, including but not limited to the arrest or imprisonment of the applicant or a member of the applicant's immediate family, and the office may award points to such applicants in the same manner as points are awarded to social equity applicants.

(d) The office shall establish policies and guidelines, which must be made available to the public, regarding the number of points available in each category and the basis for awarding those points. Status as a social equity applicant must account for at least 20 percent of the total available points. In determining the number of points to award to a cooperative or business applying as a social equity applicant, the office shall consider the number or ownership percentage of cooperative members, officers, directors, managers, and general partners who qualify as social equity applicants.

(e) Consistent with the goals identified in subdivision 1, the office shall issue licenses in each license category, giving priority to applicants who receive the highest score under paragraphs (a) and (b). If there

are insufficient licenses available for entities that receive identical scores, the office shall utilize a lottery to randomly select license recipients from among those entities.

History: *2023 c 63 art 1 s 18*