



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, April 20, 2022

# City of San Diego to Host Listening Sessions for Input on Cannabis Equity

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS AIMED AT UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ENTRY INTO THE LOCAL REGULATED CANNABIS MARKET

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego is hosting a [series of community meetings](#) to ask residents to help identify barriers and constraints they have encountered in entering the legal cannabis market. The City is seeking recommendations to promote more equitable and inclusionary ownership patterns for cannabis businesses and ways to increase economic benefits for all San Diegans.

The City's [Cannabis Business Division](#) and [Office of Race and Equity](#) will host eight in-person listening sessions to receive direct input from San Diegans and community organizations disproportionately impacted by past state and federal drug enforcement policies.

**“The City of San Diego is committed to equitable ownership and employment opportunities in our rapidly growing cannabis industry, especially for communities disproportionately impacted by a lack of financial resources caused by systemic racism that was exacerbated by the War on Drugs,” said Chief Race and Equity Officer Kim Desmond. “Identifying the barriers will be key to ensuring equitable access for legal cannabis business ownership and employment opportunities.”**

The in-person listening sessions will take place at public libraries, community centers and other publicly available meeting spaces to make it easier for residents to participate. Spanish translation and interpretation services will be provided.

The listening sessions are part of a [cannabis equity assessment funded by a \\$75,000 Cannabis Equity Grant](#) from the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) in partnership with the Bureau of Cannabis Control through the Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions.

**“Ensuring equal access to San Diego’s evolving cannabis market and providing economic, educational and legal support to our communities who have been historically left behind will be the primary goal in developing the City’s first cannabis equity assessment and program,” said Cannabis Business Division Deputy Director Lara Gates. “I look forward to working with our residents in developing a comprehensive assessment and an equity program for San Diegans who have been disproportionately affected by the War on Drugs.”**

With the passage of Prop. 64 in 2016, the City adopted regulations for cannabis businesses, including [retail outlets, and production and testing facilities](#). In 2020, the City also formed the Cannabis Business Division within the Development Services Department. The Division develops and manages the City's cannabis program by issuing permits and regulating cannabis businesses conforming with San Diego Municipal Code requirements.

To view a calendar of upcoming listening sessions and to register for each event, visit [sandiego.gov/listening-sessions](https://sandiego.gov/listening-sessions).

###