

Vermont Social Equity Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes—September 16, 2021

Deneka Scott calls meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

Attendees

Advisory Committee Members:

- Nader Hasim
- Ashley Reynolds
- Xusana Davis

VT Cannabis Board:

- Julie Hulburd
- Nellie Marvel
- David Scherr

NACB:

- Gina Kranwinkel
- Geoffrey Gallegos
- Deneka Scott

4 members of public

Minutes recorded by Meggan Hau.

Deneka Scott noted that Gina Kranwinkel circulated edited minutes from the Monday, September 13 call. Minutes will be approved on Monday, September 20.

There were no public comments to review this week.

The Sub-Committee moves on to the discussion guide/deck shared on screen. Geoffrey Gallegos starts the conversation with determining social equity candidate parameters and requirements which include Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) criteria, low-income candidates, and opportunity zones.

Notable comment(s):

*Ashley Reynolds- In section C of the DIA criteria regarding 75% or more of children in the area receiving free and reduced lunch, I don't understand the algorithm because with children in public school, 100% of the children in public school qualify for federal free lunch. That is not necessarily indicative of poverty.

*Gina Kranwinkel- I agree and have been speaking to people about this. This is in the H414 proposal, and the next slides are evidence that we have gone through to help shape our recommendation based on evidence we found. I know during Covid, people received free lunch so we won't be able to use this statistic.

*Geoffrey Gallegos- Maybe free lunch criteria will not help us decide DIA criteria.

*Ashley Reynolds- I like how the low-income candidate definition is worded, but with the 'high enforcement of cannabis-related laws' part, what are we using to deem that or provide evidence on that?

It was noted that all subcommittees agreed to including low-income candidates in the Social Equity criteria.

*Gina Kranwinkel- It is our recommendation that concentrating on a DIA as Opportunity Zones (done by census tract) would be the best.

*Ashley Reynolds- The given definition of this is good. None of these are surprising towns to me without looking at the background data. Are we assuming those towns and counties are opting into retail sales? Do we know?

*Gina Kranwinkel- The town does not need to opt in. Anyone residing in these areas can be considered Social Equity. They will be entitled to whatever resources we have, and will be able to operate anywhere in the state of Vermont. These communities need the most assistance to lower the barrier of entry.

*Xusana Davis- I agree.

*Nader Hasim- I support that as well.

The NACB Sub-Committee moderator Gina Kranwinkel moves the discussion to define what an 'Impacted Family' would look like as criteria of a SE candidate.

Geoffrey Gallegos shared an example from Denver Marijuana Code- Relationship to the impacted individual: parent, legal guardian, sibling, spouse, child, or minor in their guardianship.

Notable Comment(s):

*Xusana Davis- I like this. It's tight enough, and I'm wondering if Legal Guardian could include grandparents. We could add 'Or proof of guardianship.' Documentation to prove that they are the ones always signing forms for school or routinely paying for things (record of paying for necessities).

*Julie Huldur- In terms of providing proof, could this include individuals who may have been in the foster care system, which offers little documentation?

*Ashley Reynolds- Foster care is an excellent addition. This is inclusive enough. Although there are a couple of rabbit holes we could go down once we do research on foster parents.

*Nader Hasim- I support the language along with the additions we've discussed.

Based on Monday's call and today's call, the subcommittee would like to have a Social Equity applicant meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Lives in an Opportunity Zone
- Member of BIPOC/minority race/ethnicity
- Impact of cannabis prohibition
 - o Have personally been arrested, convicted, or incarcerated for a nonviolent cannabis offense (misdemeanor or felony), or
 - o Are a member of an impacted family
 - AND
 - o Must have lived in VT for one year before submitting application

Notable Comment(s):

*Nader Hasim- I like this definition and residency requirement.

*Xusana Davis- I do too. I like how we built the third one as well.

*Ashley Reynolds- had to leave but will provide input on a separate call.

Next topic of discussion was what supporting documentations for SE candidates is needed/required.

Notable Comment(s):

*David Scherr- Someone who had record expunged can go to court and get a court approved document.

*Nader Hasim- I have a proof of residency question with regard to a signed lease agreement. There are a lot of living situations where people may not have a signed lease agreement, as they may have roommate and that person has lease agreement. Something to think of as we go through this.

*Gina Kranwinkel- We can specify in (C) a signed affidavit of living situation if it is a case of roommate and/or an apartment with whoever you are living with or a landlord.

*Deneka Scott- Could we do what a school district does?

*Geoffrey Gallegos- With regard to expungement, will applications become a matter of public record?

- David Scherr- There are parts that would be public, and parts that won't. We will have to define that.

*Nader Hasim- We could also use proof of utility bills to add to supporting documentation.

*Xusana Davis- I agree. It's important to allow enough pathway. We need to think creatively to make it more inclusive.

*Deneka Scott- I would add a recent tax return to that and bank statement.

*Julie- In my school district, a public aid card is allowed as proof of residency.

NACB moderator Gina Kranwinkel proposed an idea of creating special licenses for delivery for Social Equity candidates only.

Notable Comment(s):

*Gina Kranwinkel- Delivery licenses as a business, Massachusetts has structured it that way. They require multiple automobiles, body cam, dash cams, two people at all times. This is extensive and expensive. A courier delivery license would allow delivering on behalf of dispensaries using cars we can make exclusively for Social Equity licensees. My recommendation is courier delivery license which just allows for an easier ability to start as it's much more low cost.

*Nader- I support that courier license. How would it be received in legislature? If you balance it by saying it prevents people from smoking and driving, that could mitigate any apprehension. But I support the courier license.

*Xusana Davis- I agree. I like this approach.

Gina Kranwinkel proposed another license idea to the subcommittee group: Co-op license

*Xusana Davis- That's an interesting proposal. We'd have to do it right in the sense that the infrastructure is in place to support a co-op model. We need to envision what it looks like and set it up for a success.

*Nader Hasim- I also support that, and I think Xusana brings up some good points. I like the idea and support it.

Next steps:

Gina and Xusana have a call offline to determine criteria on what that could look like. Address foster care situations.

Discuss SE candidate criteria we recommend.

Update Supporting documents slide and look into school districts as to what they require for residency.

Discuss co-op idea

Public Comment Period:

Gina Kranwinkel opened the floor for public comment at 3:50 PM.

Notable Comment(s):

*Geoffrey Pizzetello- VT Growers Assoc.

We would encourage not postponing or staggering license of courier license if you go that route. Allow as much access as possible. Regarding delivery, we deliver cannabis now. Medical dispensaries do that. Courier license of Massachusetts should not require brick and mortar. Need to give them the ability to access website. Encourage you to address consumption and consumption sites. Avoid recriminalizing this when thinking of equity in the state.

*Mark Hughes- Interracial Market Alliance and Cannabis Coalition- DIA was a term we used in 414 to talk about combination of opportunity zone and 20% discussion as well as 75% free lunch. I encourage folks to take a closer look at numbers for free lunch and correlate to Title I. Also SNAP, we were trying to create a correlation of something that identified areas. We want to improve these areas and revitalize communities as well. In section 989, component community SE program, created to directly address impact and historical overuse of justice response to community. One of four components intersecting area of impact. Full list of criteria in 414 as far as ID verification, proof of residency is in section 986.

As far as courier, be mindful that the arrest rate for black folks went north after taxation and regulation. Cannabis courier piece is an afterthought. Only concern is, police want to get to know you if you're black here in Vermont. It's a perfect storm to consider.

Adjournment:

Following closing thoughts/comments, Gina Kranwinkel adjourns the meeting at 4 pm as there was no longer a quorum after Ashley Reynolds had to leave early.

Next Social Equity Sub-Committee meeting is Monday, September 20 at 3 pm ET.