



What is a model ordinance?

An “Ordinance” is a legal term for a municipal policy. A Model Ordinance is a piece of sample policy designed to be used as a starting point for municipalities across the country to build from. Model policies are examples of what is possible, and intended to be tailored to fit the needs of each community. The Model Ordinance is intended to serve as a resource for counties and municipalities seeking to create equity programs as their towns or cities license the commercial production, manufacturing, distribution and sale of cannabis in states that have legalized these activities.

The intent of this Model Ordinance is to maximize the ability for communities of color that were disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition to benefit from the new industry as owners, investors, managers and employees. The Model Ordinance specifically provides priority licensing, access to capital, and technical assistance for confirmed equity applicants, as well as general applicants incubating a cannabis business owned by an equity applicant. We also recommend social impact studies which calculate the total cost of the war on drugs on our communities, and better inform community reinvestment decisions.

Who drafted this language?

The Model Ordinance was drafted by a team of attorneys and drug policy reform advocates from the Minority Cannabis Business Association (MCBA), the National Cannabis Industry Association (NCIA) and the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) with input contributed by attendees at MCBA’s Annual Policy Summit. The robust and participatory crafting process was explained in a short video produced by MCBA during their Annual Policy Summit held in Oakland, California. Previous locations have included Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia, with the 2019 summit planned for a return to D.C. on April 7th 2019. <https://vimeo.com/315783007/29702c0198>

How do I get started using this to organize my community?

Find a champion of Cannabis Justice on your local city council and ask them to introduce this policy at their next meeting. Then work with your champion to find a suitable time and place for a public forum on cannabis equity and how it can benefit your community. From there you can find the cannabis equity experts in your state and begin the process of drafting your policy to meet the needs of your community!