

Our first request for a social equity fee waiver was denied because I needed to prove the relationship between siblings with birth certificates which was not previously required last time I applied. As a result I did not adequately prepare enough time to gather those before the permit expired, so we paid in full after being told it would be refunded if we qualified. There was never any mention that the funding had ran out, the message was get the documents and re-apply. If birth certificates are required it should be included on the list of required documents.

Is it possible to request this fee waiver prior to our permit renewal? It seems unfair for those whose licenses expire later in the year if the funding is running out before they have an opportunity to apply.

Or be put in a queue when the next round of funding opens up, or have this applied to next years renewal? Something has to change, otherwise those with licenses that expire at the end of the year will never be funded.

Or grant a partial waiver, would it be better to share amongst qualifying participants instead of some getting a full waiver while others get nothing?

Also, it would be amazing if our licenses didn't expire in the middle of the growing season, or we could request a new expiration date that made more sense with our growing operation and the season.

Why allow fee waivers requests to be submitted at all if the funding ran out? I feel like I have become a private investigator in order to recover the documents needed to qualify for the social equity fee waivers. It is no simple task to request and re-cover decades old arrest records, birth certificates from estranged family members. Only to result in a false hope of qualifying for non-existent funding.

How is this fair to those whose licenses expire later in the year?

How is this fair to those who have no way to locally qualify even though they actually would if given the opportunity?

Our local equity verification office is only funded to administer the grants, not continue a verification program. So there is no way currently to be locally verified as an equity applicant if you didn't get in on the first round of funding. The second round of funding is already earmarked for those in the un-awarded but qualified que. So there really is no hope to become local equity qualified. Consider granting funds for counties to continue the local verification process, regardless of a grant round being open. There is no official social equity certification other than an email from the grant agency saying you qualify. There are many other benefits to getting social equity verified, some dispensaries and brands only want to work with equity partners.

Changing the percent to 51% is a seriously disappointing change to the criteria. It might as well say 100% for those in 50/50 partnerships, married couples, profit shares, and the like. No one is in a 49/51% partnership. So unless both partners qualify 100% you really don't qualify. Why do you keep moving the goal post? This also in direct conflict with our local equity qualifications (that originally aligned with the DCC's criteria). This 1% change causes a cascading domino effect not in favor of the applicant.

Other factors beyond a narrow window of census data should be determining criteria for qualifying neighborhoods.

Although I grew up in rural Humboldt County, the targeted police brutality against the war on drugs in the city is very much similar to what we experienced. This isn't a rural verses urban problem, communities of color and low income were targeted for dealing the weed, just as Southern Humboldt county was targeted for growing the weed. They didn't always result in arrests, more often it was asset seizure that continued the funding for the drug war. The terror was real and damaging to generations of families in both urban and rural environments.

I was personally escorted by gunpoint by the DEA while they were raiding a neighboring parcel at age 12. No Arrest record.

My father was a missing person for 5 years before his remains were recovered and is still an unsolved homicide. There is no arrest record.

My friends and I routinely hid from helicopters with men dangling from them with weapons and binoculars, while walking home from the bus stops as to not draw attention to the land.

I was detained, pulled over, searched numerous times over non-existent traffic infractions. No arrest.

My home was searched and I was detained when my boyfriend in college was arrested for transporting 5 marijuana plants and had a K-9 unit pull behind him at a construction stop. No traffic violation, just the dog barking allowed him to be pulled over, searched, arrested and his home searched. We were handcuffed, separated and verbally berated and threatened. He ended up with a felony conviction that was reduced to a misdemeanor after 5 years probation.

I am a survivor of the War on Drugs. We suffered severe targeted military style enforcement on our properties, in our homes and community for decades directly related to the prohibition of cannabis by CAMP and Operation Green Sweep.

Sincerely,

Casandra Taliaferro  
Skyline Farms  
Humboldt County