



San Diego County's Guide To Submitting A Cannabis Facility License Application PHASE I



Cannabis Application Process: PHASE I Flow Chart



**1.
SUBMIT
APPLICATION
AND FORM**

Submit the Phase I application and SD County At-Risk Form.

**2.
PRELIMINARY
CONSULTATION**

Attend an in-office consultation with Cannabis Licensing.

**3.
PAY FEE**

Pay for Phase I application fee.

**4.
SITE VISIT**

Cannabis Licensing will conduct a site visit of the proposed facility location.

**5.
FOLLOW UP
CONSULTATION**

Cannabis Licensing will schedule a follow up consultation with the applicant to discuss next steps.

**6.
COMPLETE
APPLICATION**

Proposed cannabis facility verified. Cannabis Licensing Phase Verified Stamp issued. Proceed to Phase II.



INTRODUCTION

Phase I is the first step in the County's three-phase licensing process for cannabis facilities. This phase focuses on verification of eligibility for applicants and the proposed facility location. Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed facility location meet the requirements established by the County.

Can I Submit All Three Phases of the Application At Once?

Applicant(s) are required to start with Phase I. The application process is structured into three distinct phases to make the process more manageable, and to help reduce up front cost. All three phases of the application process must be completed in consecutive order and each phase approved by the Department prior to license issuance.

When Can I Start the Next Step in the Application Process?

Applicants shall obtain a stamp of approval from Cannabis Licensing. They will then be notified to submit documents for Phase II of the application.

Do I Need to Pay to Apply?

Yes. Each phase has a separate fee that is due at the start of each phase. Payments can be made at 5510 Overland Ave, Suite 110 (1st floor), San Diego, CA 92123, or online.

How the Review Process Works

Submit Application and Form

Complete and submit the Cannabis Facility License Phase I Application and the San Diego County At-Risk Form to Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov. Staff will contact applicants to schedule a Preliminary Consultation.

Preliminary Consultation

The consultation will be conducted in person at 5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 210, San Diego, CA 92123. Please note, consultations may take up to two hours, and staff may take up to two weeks to review the application details. Submit payment for the Phase I application fee.

Zoning, Setbacks and Buffer Verification

Staff will arrange an onsite zoning, setback and buffer verification after the Preliminary Consultation. A written notification with verification results will be provided to the applicant. A follow up consultation may be required.



Choosing a License Type

What are the 7 Authorized Cannabis Activities in San Diego County?

- Storefront, Non-Storefront Retail & Consumption Lounge
- Distribution
- Cultivation
- Manufacturing
- Microbusiness
- Testing Laboratory
- Temporary Cannabis Event



Storefront Retail, Non-Storefront Retail & Consumption Lounge

A Storefront Retail License authorizes the licensee to sell cannabis and cannabis products both in-person and via delivery, while a Non-Storefront License is closed to the public and can only provide cannabis and cannabis products to customers via delivery. Licensed cannabis retailers may operate between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. All consumption at lounges must occur indoors and out of public view. Alcohol and tobacco are prohibited. Non-cannabis food and beverage sales require additional permits. Consumption lounges are only allowed to operate in conjunction with a storefront retail license. There are two types of consumption lounge licenses:

Type A:

The consumption or ingestion of cannabis and cannabis-containing products only.

Type B:

The smoking or inhalation of cannabis or cannabis-containing products, in addition to the activities authorized under a Type A license.

Distribution

A Distribution License authorizes the licensee to engage in the distribution of cannabis and cannabis products. All licensed distributors must comply with state Business and Professions Code.

Cultivation

A Cultivation License authorizes the licensee to plant, grow, harvest, dry, cure, grade, and trim cannabis. There are different types of cultivation permits such as indoor, outdoor, or mixed-light. Cultivators must also follow regulations on water use, odor control, and pesticide use.

Manufacturing

A Manufacturing License authorizes the licensee to compound, blend, extract, infuse, package, label, or otherwise prepare cannabis products.

Testing Laboratory

A Testing Laboratory License authorizes facilities to perform testing of cannabis and cannabis products. In addition, testing laboratories must remain independent from all other commercial cannabis activities to ensure unbiased results.

Temporary Cannabis Event

A Temporary Cannabis Event License authorizes the on-site sale and/or consumption of cannabis and cannabis products at an event with limited duration. Event licensees must comply with County requirements such as obtaining an event permit, organizer permit and vendor permits.



Socially Equitable Cannabis Program Applicant

The Socially Equitable Cannabis Program (Cannabis Program) was directed by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on January 27, 2021. The Cannabis Program will allow for a suite of commercial cannabis operations in the unincorporated area of the County including retail, cultivation, manufacturing, distribution, testing, microbusinesses, and temporary events.

The County is committed to the development of a Cannabis Program that facilitates greater equity in business ownership and employment in the regulated cannabis market by reducing the barriers to entry for those who have been negatively or disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization.

Who Qualifies for the Socially Equitable Cannabis Program?

Verified Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and meet either TIER A or TIER B criteria.

TIER A

Incarcerated for San Diego County arrest or conviction for any crime under the laws of the State of California or United States related to the sale, possession, use, manufacture, or cultivation of Cannabis that occurred prior to November 8, 2016.

TIER B

Deported, Arrested, or Convicted: In San Diego County for any crime under the laws of the State of California or United States related to the sale, possession, use, manufacture, or cultivation of cannabis that occurred prior to November 8, 2016, AND Low Income – 80% or below of the Area Median Income (San Diego County) determined by US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

If I Meet the SECP Criteria Can I Apply to Become a Verified Applicant?

Please contact the Office of Equity and Racial Justice at oeerj@sdcounty.ca.gov.

I Am a Verified SECP Applicant What Do I Need to Submit?

Verified applicants shall submit proof of SECP status. Applicants will be added to a verified list.

Visit the Social Equity Cannabis Program Engage Page for more information at <https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/social-equity-entrepreneur-program>





Cannabis Phase I Preliminary Consultation

The cannabis licensing Phase I Preliminary Consultation is a mandatory component of Phase I for all new cannabis facility applicants. This process is conducted by the San Diego County Cannabis Licensing and Enforcement Program (CLEP).

This includes a comprehensive review to determine whether the applicant(s) meet eligibility requirements to proceed to Phase II of the permitting process. Participation and clearance through this consultation are required before any application may advance to Phase II.

How It Works

Submission:

1. Each applicant will complete the **Cannabis Facility License Phase I Application** and the **San Diego County At-Risk** form. Check the QR Codes.
2. Forms must be submitted to Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Scheduling:

1. Before a consultation can be scheduled, all required forms must be completed and signed by every responsible person listed on the Cannabis Licensing Application, in accordance with SDCCRO Section 21.2510.
2. Phase I Preliminary Consultations are conducted by appointment only. Walk-ins are not accepted. After review of the application, staff will contact applicants to schedule the consultation.
3. Once the appointment is confirmed, applicants will bring all documents pertaining to their license application in person during the scheduled consultation.
4. All consultations will take place at the County Operations Center, located at **5510 Overland Ave, Suite 210, San Diego, CA 92123**. This is the only location where applicants may complete their consultation.

Fees:

There is a fee for the Cannabis Facility License Phase I Application. Please contact Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov for the most up to date fee schedule.

Note: Once the documents are submitted and the Preliminary Consultation is finished, staff will share the results with the applicant. Staff will coordinate with the applicant to schedule the onsite zoning, setbacks and buffer verification.



Zoning, Setbacks and Buffer Verification

Land use buffers and setbacks are mandatory minimum distance requirements that separate cannabis businesses from other cannabis facilities and other sensitive land uses. Additionally, cannabis facilities are only permitted in specific zoning districts. Each zone depends entirely on the type of cannabis activity.

Zoning, setbacks and buffer compliance during Phase I is a crucial step in the verification process. If the proposed site happens to fall within a restricted buffer area, the project may be ineligible and require applicants to choose a new location.

Sensitive Uses To Consider

All cannabis facilities must be located outside of a minimum 600-foot buffer from the following sensitive uses, measured closest property line to closest property line:

- Public & Private Schools
- Child Day Care Facilities
- Video Arcades
- Transitional Kindergartens
- Infant centers & Preschools
- Amusement Park Facilities
- Kindergarten or grades 1 to 12
- Extended Day Care
- Public & Private Youth Recreational Facilities

Outdoor & Mixed-Lighting Cultivation Setback Requirements

Setback from Nearby Homes:

Outdoor and mixed-light cultivation must be located at least 300 feet from established dwellings on adjoining properties. Slope limitations: cannabis cultivation is not allowed on slopes of 25 percent or greater.

Property Line Setback:

Outdoor and mixed-light cultivation areas must be located at least 100 feet from all property lines.

Special Zoning Considerations

Each proposed cannabis location may be subject to an Administrative or Zoning Verification Permit depending on the proposed cannabis business type.

A Special Area Designator is an additional zoning condition which requires a Site Plan Permit. PDS staff recommends consulting with the Zoning Department for further information.

Scheduling Phase I Verification Site Visit

Scheduling:

1. Staff will notify applicants once they are eligible to schedule a buffer verification site visit. Please do not schedule until you have been approved to do so.
2. Buffer Verification site visits are conducted by appointment only. Once approved, the primary applicant must call PDS at (858) 694-2705 or email Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov.
3. After the site visit is confirmed, applicants need to ensure staff have the property owner's consent to perform the onsite verification.
4. Staff will schedule a follow up consultation with the applicant to discuss results and next steps.

Note: Once the proposed location has been chosen and deemed eligible to proceed to Phase II, the location can no longer be changed. Any amendments to the original application shall be submitted in writing and County staff shall be notified immediately. Fees will apply upon a location change.