

Cannabis Application Questions

UPDATED November 6, 2024

New Questions

Payment

1. How will payment be accepted?

*Answer: Payment for the application review fee (\$2,563) must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 7, 2024. The City will accept payments in the following ways:
By phone: 707-778-4350, option 3 (Mon-Thurs, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
In person: 11 English Street, Petaluma, CA 94952 (Mon-Thurs, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)*

*A transaction fee of 2.5% will apply to credit card transactions.
Please include a copy of your payment receipt with your application.*

2. If my application is rejected because it is deemed incomplete, will my application fee be reimbursed? **No.**

Application – Links, additional information

3. Will the City accept applications provided via Dropbox or Google Drive link?

Answer: Yes, if the application file is too large to send via email, applicants may send a link to a secure Dropbox or Google Drive location where the application can be accessed. The link should be sent to econdev@cityofpetaluma.org.

4. Will the City view supplemental materials via links embedded in the main application document? Or should all materials be provided in .pdf or Word document format?

Answer: Supplemental materials should be integrated into the application packet as a .pdf or Word document, rather than included as a link. The exception to this is when referring to digital media such as a website or social media account.

5. Can I submit an application by the deadline that is missing information and then subsequently provide that information after the application deadline? **No. We will only review materials submitted by 5pm, November 7, 2024.**

Location

6. Can I submit an application without identifying a location for my proposed retail business? **No. If we receive an application without an appropriate location with landlord approval, your application will be deemed incomplete. Note, however, that we will accept multiple applications identifying the same location.**

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Previously shared Questions

Application Process

7. Is there an official application form or should we just provide our own written document with all the required information outlined in attachment for the City of Petaluma?

Answer: The application is responding to the posted questions, signing the acknowledgement form, and sending via email to econdev@cityofpetaluma.org by 5 p.m., November 7, 2024.

8. We just became aware of the fact that Petaluma is accepting licenses for cannabis retail and was wondering if it is still too late to apply?

Answer: Applications are due by 5:00 p.m., November 7, 2024.

9. Are there any templates for the application/application documents?

Answer: No. See Q#1 above.

10. Please confirm that the Site Plan and Security Plan **will not** be a part of the Invitation to Apply Responses. **Answer: Correct--the Site Plan and Security Plan will not be required for the Application but will be required during the permitting process for selected applicants.**

11. For proof of property control, would a letter of intent (LOI) be sufficient? Does the LOI need to have a wet signature, or is a DocuSigned version acceptable? **Answer: Yes, an LOI is sufficient and a DocuSigned version is acceptable.**

12. Should attachments 1 through 6 for the Invitation to Apply responses be submitted as a single PDF file or as multiple separate files? **Answer: A single .pdf is preferable.**

13. Please let me know if I should use the Attachment 2 questions or if there is a form from the City that I should use to apply for a retail license. Additionally, I would like to know when the review process will take place as I have found a location that I feel meets the City requirements and I would like to secure the lease. Can you provide any insight as to the timeline of review and approval? I appreciate your response.

Answer: Please answer all questions in Attachment 2 and sign the acknowledgement form. Applications are due to econdev@cityofpetaluma.org no later than November 7, 2024. The 3 eligible applicants selected will be offered the opportunity to apply for the license itself. We are working towards selecting up to 3 successful applicants by the end of this year.

City Cannabis Ordinance

14. What is the City's definition of an "owner"? Does it follow the DCC definition?

Answer: "Owners" as defined by Section 26001 of the Business and Professions Code includes:

- a. "any person with an aggregate ownership interest of 20 percent or more...";**
- b. the chief executive officer of a nonprofit or other entity;**
- c. a member of the board of directors of a nonprofit; and**

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d. an individual who will be participating in the direction, control, or management of the person applying for a license.

15. Does the existing delivery license count toward the two delivery licenses being granted under the 2024 ordinance? **Answer: No, the City's ordinance allows for two delivery-only cannabis licenses and three retail storefront licenses.**
16. Is there any legislation proposing Cannabis Event Permits for city events? **Answer: There is not legislation proposing cannabis event permits within the City limits.**

Eligibility

11. Is this application window open to just cannabis businesses/businesses already operating Sonoma County, or all of California?
Answer: There is no requirement to operate in Sonoma County or California.
12. Is there a minimum amount of time that a business owner should be the operator of a cannabis business/business before applying for a Petaluma license?
Answer: No
13. Are there limitations to applicants who have prior convictions? **Answer: Petaluma commercial cannabis applicants may be disqualified as a result of criminal convictions that substantially relate to the qualifications, functions, or duties of the business or profession including, but not limited, to felony convictions involving fraud, deceit, or embezzlement or a criminal conviction for the sale or provision of illegal controlled substances to a minor. Applicants are responsible for paying the cost of background checks.**
14. Is an applicant allowed to apply multiple times with different partnerships/ companies?
Answer: Yes.

LiveScan

15. Does one need to make an appointment with the Petaluma Police Department to complete a criminal background check, or just show up during regular business hours?
Answer: Yes, appointments for Live Scans at Petaluma Police Department need to be made with the Records Division staff to ensure a technician will be present to conduct the LiveScan/Criminal History Check. Please call 707-778-4462 to schedule an appointment. A form can be filled out in advance but will need to be verified with current ID in person at the time of fingerprinting.

Additional Live Scan locations can be found at <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>

Those who perform Live Scans at alternate locations are required to submit any documentation of completion.

16. Is there a document such as a Live Scan form that one can pre-fill out and have ready?
Answer: Yes.

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17. Do all owners need to complete the live scan service form in person, or can one person complete all forms? (I understand that each owner must be live scanned; this is for the pre-application requirement.)

Answer: Only owners as defined by Business and Professions Code Section 26001 need to apply for live scans for the initial application process. A form can be filled out in advance but will need to be verified with current ID in person at the time of fingerprinting.

18. Is the City looking for all principals in line with the state to be background checked, i.e., 20%+ ownership or having management responsibilities regardless of ownership?

Answer: Yes, only “owners” as defined by Section 26001 of the Business and Professions Code will be deemed “principals”. This definition includes:

a. “any person with an aggregate ownership interest of 20 percent or more...”;

b. the chief executive officer of a nonprofit or other entity;

c. a member of the board of directors of a nonprofit; and

d. an individual who will be participating in the direction, control, or management of the person applying for a license.

19. May the live scan be completed at live scan locations other than the Police Department?

Yes, additional Live Scan locations can be found at

<https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>

20. Do you have to go to the Police Department in person for the LiveScan? In many jurisdictions, a verified mobile technician is allowed to perform the LiveScan for applicants who live at a long distance. **Answer: No, you do not need to go to the Petaluma Police Department in person for the LiveScan. The City will accept Live Scans from other certified locations, a list of which can be found at <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>**

Location

21. I was reviewing the cannabis regulations and zoning ordinances to see if a cannabis retailer is allowed to change locations (assuming the new location would be in approved zoning and meets all separation requirements)? If so, at what point are they able to move location?

Answer: If the location changes, the operator doesn’t necessarily lose their status as one of the “selected 3”. But rather, they would need to go back through the license process to ensure the location, security plan, etc. meet our requirements.

22. Please elaborate on the limitations of the map (linked on web page). The map states that ‘parcels zoned BP or I and falling outside the required buffer areas’ does this mean that they are restricted and no cannabis businesses are allowed in BP or I or it is allowed? Also, does that then mean that the rest of the city is zoned for cannabis business or only parcels zoned C1 or C2? **Answer: Cannabis retail is allowed in parcels zoned BP, I, C1 and C2. We have corrected the map [here](#) to remove the reference to only BP and I.**

23. Which definitions of sensitive uses should be referenced in the municipal code? The glossary?

Answer: Footnote 16 of Table 4.4 of the Petaluma Implementing Zoning Ordinance, cut and pasted below, provides the buffer zones for cannabis retail stores.

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Cannabis retail locations need to be located at least:

- 600 feet from schools or childcare centers;
- 200 feet from parks, youth centers, or a City library; and
- 100 feet from residential districts to the business premises.

16 Use must comply with the following buffers and be located: at least 600 feet from a public or private school or childcare center; at least 200 feet from parks, youth centers, or a City library; and 100 feet from residential districts as measured from the boundaries of a licensed cannabis business premises, as defined in Business and Professions Code Section 26001(af), as amended from time to time, and as permitted pursuant to an annual commercial cannabis retail sales permit issued by the City, and the property line of a use subject to a buffer pursuant to Chapter 4 of this code. Compliance of a use with applicable buffers shall be determined at the time a commercial cannabis retail sales permit is initially applied for and awarded for the use.

Please note: the City Zoning code referenced above has a typo. The correct Business and Professions Code Section is [26001\(at\)](#).

(at) "Premises" means the designated structure or structures and land specified in the application that is owned, leased, or otherwise held under the control of the applicant or licensee where the commercial cannabis activity will be or is conducted. The premises shall be a contiguous area and shall only be occupied by one licensee.

Public Disclosure

24. Will the proof of financial documents be kept confidential? As these documents may include sensitive personal and business information, if they will not be kept confidential, what type of documentation is required? Separately, what parts of the application will be disclosable to the public? **Answer: Yes, some documents will be kept confidential**
- Corporate financial records, and corporate proprietary information, including trade secrets, will be treated as exempt from disclosure, kept confidential and not disclosed publicly. (Government Code Section 7927.605)**
 - Personal information, such as owner or employee personal contact information will also be treated as exempt from disclosure, kept confidential and not disclosed publicly, except for information that is publicly available as part of business license applications. (Government Code Section 7927.700)"**

Retail Tax Rate

25. Please confirm the cannabis retail tax rate. The ordinance says up to 10% but doesn't confirm what it's set at. **Answer: The City does not at this time have a special tax for cannabis retail. Retail cannabis sales in Petaluma would be subject to existing state and local taxes. For more info about taxes, visit: <https://www.cdtfa.ca.gov/industry/cannabis/retailers.html>.**

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Safety

26. Exterior windows and doors are required to have bars or grills installed on the interior. All exterior windows and doors are also required to have bollards, retractable or fixed security gates. If the window or door is secured with bars or a grill, is it still required to have a retractable or fixed security gate? **Answer: Selected applicants will work with City staff to finalize their safety plan.**

Scoring Criteria

27. How are aspects of the application requirements (i.e., Business Plan and Operations Application) measured in the scoring system? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria**
28. When deciding the licensees for the 3 dispensaries, will their dispensary locations' proximity to one another be part of the decision process for the final 3 licensees? What weight will that have? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria**
29. Will the existing delivery service and/or the retail location on the border of Petaluma be given preference over other applicants? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
30. Will the city be evaluating potential operators based on their financial responsibility and track record with vendors? How important is it for Petaluma to select businesses that maintain strong, transparent relationships with their partners? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
31. How much emphasis will Petaluma place on the longevity of an operator's team and their experience in running successful dispensary operations? Does the city view stable and experienced staffing as a key factor in awarding licenses? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
32. How will the city encourage cannabis operators to get involved in local initiatives and events? Is there a preference for businesses that already demonstrate community engagement, such as sponsoring events like Peacetown in Sebastopol or the Sonoma City Party? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
33. Will the city of Petaluma encourage or require cannabis operators to offer programs that provide compassionate access to vulnerable populations, such as low-income patients or veterans? Additionally, will there be an expectation for operators to support local nonprofit initiatives? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
34. How important is it to the city of Petaluma that operators contribute to the local economy across the entire supply chain? Does the council see value in businesses that create local jobs in both cultivation and retail, ensuring that the economic benefits stay within Sonoma County? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
35. How important will it be for cannabis operators to implement environmentally conscious practices? Would the council give preference to businesses with proven track records of reducing their environmental impact? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**

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- 36.** Does the city of Petaluma prioritize cannabis operators who take a proactive role in educating the public about wellness, health, and responsible consumption? Would this kind of initiative be encouraged or required from licensees? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
- 37.** How important will the city of Petaluma consider an operator's track record of compliance and leadership within the industry? Will the council prioritize operators who have consistently adhered to strict regulations and have been industry leaders in maintaining operational transparency? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
- 38.** How important will it be for the city to choose a cannabis operator with a proven ability to scale their business? Will the council be assessing applicants on their ability to create sustainable, long-term growth and contribute to the city's overall economic development? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**
- 39.** What type of retail applicant is the City of Petaluma hoping to attract? Someone with years of experience or someone who is local? **Answer: See Attachment 3 of the application packet for scoring criteria.**