



CANNABIS SOCIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE CITY OF SALINAS

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Contact:

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SECTION I: SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This RFP solicits proposals from consultants and firms to secure funding from grants in order to complete a comprehensive Cannabis Equity assessment (“Study”) of the cannabis industry in the City of Salinas. The City is looking for an experienced contractor who can provide this data collection and analysis through an equity lens, including but not limited to disaggregating existing data and data collected to identify disproportionate impacts by racial, ethnic, and economic demographics. It will be paramount that the selected responder has a keen understanding of the unique challenges facing those communities most affected by the War on Drugs and is dedicated to a strategy using social equity tools to analyze data and inform policy recommendations to support the City’s efforts to increase equity and participation by equity members in the City’s cannabis industry. The ideal contractor will also understand the grant application process and the capacity to carry out the study once funding is secured. The selected consultant will engage city staff and stakeholders, community members, and partner organizations, focusing particularly on listening to and reflecting the needs of traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations in the regulated cannabis industry.

It is the City’s intent to enter into an Agreement for Services for the final negotiated scope of work, fees, and schedule. The desired timeframe for completion of the comprehensive action plan and educational materials is six to eight months.

CITY OF SALINAS

Today, Salinas is a compact urban community within a unique agricultural setting. Unlike the vaguely defined boundaries and sprawl that characterize so much of urban California, the highly productive agricultural lands surrounding Salinas create a distinct urban/agricultural edge that serves as a reminder of the source of the area's economic well-being. The City lies at the north end of the Salinas Valley, known as "The Salad Bowl of the World," and is the processing and shipping point for lettuce, broccoli, mushrooms, and strawberries, along with numerous other crops. With its mild climate and fertile soil, Salinas has become the processing and shipping point for one of the world's largest agricultural centers.

Over the past seventy years, the community of Salinas has undergone extensive change. Once a small agricultural community of 14,000 persons in 1950, Salinas has expanded to become the largest city in the County with a population of over 163,540 in 2023. As of the 2021 census, 79.8 % of the Salinas population is Hispanic or Latino, 27.7% White, 8.5 % Two or more races, 5.8 % Asian, 1.4 % Black, and 0.9% American Indian. With 66.75% of the population Spanish speaking and 28.47% of the population English speaking only.

Pursuant to Chapter 16B and the California Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA), the City of Salinas developed regulations relating to the acceptance and processing of permits for commercial cannabis businesses (which were approved by the City Council on May 17, 2016) and began accepting applications for medical commercial cannabis businesses in June 2016. [Article VII](#) of the Salinas Municipal Code outline the regulation of cannabis activity in the City of Salinas as well as measures that promote the development of businesses in the commercial cannabis industry.

SECTION II: CONTEXT WITH CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposal for the Cannabis Social Equity Assessment is to be consistent with the City of Salinas Strategic Plan.

[City of Salinas Strategic Plan 2022-2025:](#)

- Economic Development: Support and engage small, large, and entrepreneurial business. Promote Salinas as a desired destination for business.
- Effective and Culturally Responsive Government: Establish an Equity Plan. Provide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training for policymakers. Make government services more accessible and culturally responsive for non-English speaking residents.

CITY OF SALINAS COMMERCIAL CANNABIS BUSINESS OVERVIEW

The City of Salinas regulates the establishment and the operation of a limited number of commercial cannabis businesses, including cultivation, dispensaries, manufacturing, distribution, and delivery services. The regulations pertaining to Commercial Cannabis Businesses can be found in Chapter 5, Article VII of the Salinas Municipal Code. Permits are awarded competitively, and applications are only accepted during specified permitting rounds. Commercial Cannabis Permits are required for any business that engages in the Cultivation, Manufacturing, Distribution (except as described under Administrative Permits), Dispensing, and/or Delivery of cannabis or cannabis products. Testing Facilities and small distribution businesses must obtain an Administrative Permit in lieu of a Commercial Cannabis Permit.

SECTION III: PROPOSED PROJECT & SCOPE OF SERVICES

Responses to this RFP are free to expound upon or suggest modifications to the scope of work and the City welcomes such creative expressions as the Consultant might determine consistent with the goal of the study. The scope of work for this project is outlined below. This scope is not intended to be all inclusive but, instead, generally demonstrative of services to be provided.

The City of Salinas Cannabis Equity Assessment provides a data-informed look at the historical impacts of poverty and the criminalization of cannabis on the community. The assessment includes policy recommendations to guide the creation of a local cannabis equity program alongside recommendations on community investment of cannabis revenue on neighborhoods most harmed by the “War on Drugs”.

Scope of Services

Phase 1:

The Consultant will assist the City in identifying potential grants for the development of a data-driven Cannabis Equity Assessment (“Study”). Historically, the State of California through the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) has funded the development

of Cannabis Equity Assessments and it is expected that the State may issue a Notice of Funding Availability later in 2023. In addition to this potential funding source, the Consultant will identify other potential grants. The Consultant will prepare a standard grant proposal for Salinas based on the requirements of GO-Biz funding. City staff as needed may modify this grant proposal for other funding opportunities that come along.

Phase 2:

If successful in securing funding, the Consultant will complete a data-informed Cannabis Equity Assessment (“Study”) using geo-spatial analysis. The City may proceed with Phase 2 even if grant funding is not secured should City Council designate additional funding toward the Project. The goal of the Study is to measure the success of and identify growth opportunities for equity in the cannabis industry and to inform public policy pertaining to land use, fiscal/economic, and other regulations through an equity lens. The Study also will present demographic and historic data on neighborhoods in Salinas most impacted by the criminalization of cannabis and will identify community needs and service gaps for strategic investment in community programming, facilities, and infrastructure. The Study should be completed within 6-9 months of an executed contract.

The Study will outline recommendations in two areas: 1) how to promote equitable ownership and employment opportunities in cannabis and 2) how to make strategic investment of cannabis revenue to mitigate the harm on communities disproportionately impacted by criminalization of cannabis and poverty based on data.

The Study should address the following questions:

- a) What population and which neighborhoods have been most harmed by criminalization of cannabis and poverty.
- b) What is the state of equity in the cannabis industry in Salinas and how is it measured?
- c) What does an equitable cannabis industry mean and how can it be achieved?
- d) What are the components of a successful equity program both in terms of economic development and community investment.
- e) What are the appropriate equity metrics for analyzing the success of an equity program and what should the benchmarks be to address disparities and inequities?
- f) What are the barriers and mitigation strategies to participation in the Salinas cannabis industry?
- g) Based on the literature and case studies and given the legal and regulatory parameters within which the City must operate, what alternate directions should the city explore to achieve greater equity in the cannabis industry in Salinas? What changes should be made to current city policies and regulations to increase the number of equity participants?

In making recommendations, the Consultant shall also perform the following:

1. Develop a geo-spatial map that shows impacts of criminalization of cannabis and poverty by census tract.
2. Reach out to local non-profits and staff to identify service needs and gaps in impacted neighborhoods.
3. Engage staff, cannabis business owners and potential applicants who have yet to apply for a cannabis permit to gain insights and develop a realistic understanding of the Salinas cannabis industry's current environment, context, and culture.
4. Identify opportunities and make recommendations on strategic neighborhood investments based on best practices and recommendations found in various City plans including the Council's Strategic Plan; Alisal Vibrancy Plan; Chinatown Revitalization Plan; Parks, Rec, and Libraries Master Plan; and Community Alliance for Safety and Peace Strategic Plan.
5. Conduct a community survey regarding proposed strategic investments reaching at least 500 individuals.
6. Identify opportunities and make recommendations for changes to policies, procedures, and practices to achieve greater equity in the Salinas cannabis industry.
7. Provide periodic progress reports to the Community Development Department.
8. Provide a detailed briefing on the study results to the Cannabis Subcommittee and City Council.
9. Document all data, findings, and recommendations and provide to the city, along with the Study.

SECTION IV SCOPE OF WORK AND FEE PROPOSAL FORMAT

Please provide your proposal no later than Friday, May 12, 2023 by 11:59 pm, with your response organized in accordance with this section and the order presented below.

1. Cover Letter

- Proposal summary
- Name, title and telephone number of the consultant's designated lead contact person for communications pertaining to this proposal.
- A description of the firm, including relevant work experience.
- Background and experience in performing equity studies, particularly those looking at equity as it relates to the cannabis industry and/or governmental entities.
- Background and experience in equity issues and/or serving underserved communities, including but not limited to racial equity and economic justice work experience.

2. Project Team

- Organizational chart illustrating team members assigned to the project and their respective roles.
- Description of team members and subconsultants assigned to the project and their respective roles and responsibilities. It is expected that once the work begins, the project team will remain in place until the work is completed. Please include statements regarding the length of commitment of the proposed staff if they are not available for the duration of this project.
- A brief biography or resume of each team member.

3. Approach to Scope of Work including Tasks and Deliverables

- A narrative describing the approach and work plan identifying major tasks to be completed and estimated time frame for each task.
- Information on proposed methodology and data gathering and how these methods can achieve the Study's goals.
- A description of actions taken by the firm to reduce implicit bias and implement cultural competency for employees and principals.
- A description of the firm's commitment to racial equity or a racial equity/equity statement, including but not limited to a statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the firm and its work.
- In addition to the specific qualifications requested above, identify and/or recommend any additional or innovative services provided by your firm that may be related to or helpful to a comprehensive equity study of this nature.
- Any additional suggestions Consultant believes would be valuable to include in this effort and any recommendation for further clarifying the scope of work and the usefulness of the product.

4. Cost Proposal and Fee Schedule

- A detailed cost proposal in matrix form including the hourly rates and time commitments for all team members and sub-consultants by task for the project.
- Denote any proposed optional tasks.
- Firm and subconsultant fee schedules.
- A sample invoice and billing backup.

5. Project Schedule

- Include timeframe for completion of tasks, including milestone dates for primary deliverables
- For project management purposes, the schedule should indicate frequency of meetings with City staff, as well as, the duration and number of other proposed meetings, including community, Commission, and City Council.

Additional Information

The City reserves the right to request and to require substantially more extensive and detailed information during any subsequent contract negotiations.

SECTION V: SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received electronically by the due date will be evaluated by the City. Only information which is received in response to the RFP or any subsequent interview or information request will be evaluated. The City will evaluate the responses of each proposal in several critical areas, including:

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of work and Consultant's proposed methodology and familiarity with applicable practices and methodologies for the proposed work.

- Adequate technical, financial, and staffing resources for completion of the scope of work within the proposed time schedule.
- Demonstrated qualification of the project leader and assurance of his or her principal involvement in the project through completion.
- Availability and capacity to move the project forward and the flexibility to adjust quickly to changes in a complex community environment.
- Organization, presentation, and content of proposal, in conformance to the specified RFP format.

Scoring

Responses will be evaluated against the Submission Requirements.

The rating and raking evaluation will be weighted as follows:

Criteria	Points
Demonstrated project understanding and scope of work approach	20
Firm qualifications and experience (including examples of similar projects)	20
Team member qualifications and experience	20
Capacity and track record of delivering projects on time and within budget	20
DEI – Includes a racial equity/DEI statement of commitment	10
Completeness of response and quality of submittal	10
Total	100

Top rated proposals may be invited to an oral interview.

SECTION VI: PROPOSAL DUE DATE, DELIVERY AND AWARD

Proposed Selection Schedule

Request for Proposals Released: April 12, 2023

Deadline for Submitting Written Questions: April 21, 2023

City’s Response to Written Questions: May 1, 2023

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: May 12, 2023 by 11:59 pm

Tentative Interview Dates (if necessary): Week of June 5th

Notification of Recommendation for Selection: Week of June 10th or sooner

Final Selection to City Council for Consideration (if necessary): June 20, 2023

Delivery

Completed RFP responses are to be submitted electronically by emailing File Transfer Protocol (FTP) instructions or a link to a cloud-sharing folder to Michael Gomez, Economic Development Analyst at michaelgo@ci.salinas.ca.us prior to the designated submission date and time stated above. The City will not be accepting paper proposals.

Award of Contract

Depending on the contract amount, the item may be scheduled for consideration before the Salinas City Council on June 20, 2023. If the City Manager is able to approve the contract under the City's purchasing requirements, then the award can be made shortly after contract negotiations conclude.

Contact Information

Any questions regarding this RFP may be emailed to michaelgo@ci.salinas.ca.us or faxed to (831) 758-7387 by April 21, 2023. All submitted questions and responses will be provided via email as an addendum on May 1, 2023 after the close of the question period. No questions regarding this RFP will be answered over the phone. All addendums shall become part of this RFP. A signed copy of any addendum shall be included in the proposal.

CONDITIONS OF REQUEST

General Conditions

The City reserves the right to cancel or reject all or a portion or portions of the Request for Proposals without notice. Further, the City makes no representations that any agreement will be awarded to any organization submitting a proposal. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to this request or any addenda thereto. Any changes to the proposal requirements will be made by written addendum.

Liability of Costs and Responsibility

The City shall not be liable for any costs incurred in response to this Request for Proposals. All costs shall be borne by the person or organization responding to the request. The person or organization responding to the request shall hold the City harmless from any and all liability, claim or expense whatsoever incurred by or on behalf of that person or organization. All submitted material becomes the property of the City of Salinas.

The selected proposer will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the proposal whether they possess them within their organization. The selected proposer will be the sole point of contact regarding contractual matters or other liabilities, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the contract.

Public Nature of Proposal Material

Responses to this Request for Proposals become the exclusive property of the City. At such times as a formal recommendation to award an agreement to one proposer is made to the awarding authority, all submittals received in response to this Request for Proposals become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those elements in each submittal which are defined by the proposer as business or trade secrets and plainly marked as “Confidential,” “Trade Secret,” or “Proprietary”, unless disclosure is required under the California Public Records Act or other applicable law. Any submittal which contains language purporting to render all or significant portions of the proposal “Confidential,” “Trade Secret,” or “Proprietary,” shall be regarded as non-responsive.

Although the California Public Records Act recognizes that certain confidential trade secret information may be protected from disclosure, the City may not be in a position to establish that the information that a proposer submits is a trade secret. If a request is made for information marked “Confidential,” “Trade Secret,” or “Proprietary,” the City will provide the proposer who submitted the information with reasonable notice to allow the proposer to seek protection from disclosure by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Validity

The proposer agrees to be bound by its proposal for a period of ninety (90) days commencing from the date proposals are due, during which time the City may request clarification or correction of the proposal for the purpose of evaluation. Amendments or clarifications shall not affect the remainder of the proposal, but only the portion so amended or clarified.

Permits and Licenses

Proposer, and all of proposer’s subcontractors, at its and/or their sole expense, shall obtain and maintain during the term of any agreement, all appropriate permits, certificates and licenses including, but not limited to, a City Business License, which will be required in connection with the performance of services hereunder.

Oral and Written Explanations

The City will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the review process or after the award. Oral explanations given during the review process and after award become binding only when confirmed in writing by an authorized City official. Written responses to question(s) asked by one proposer will be provided to all proposers who received this Request for Proposals.

Proposer’s Representative

The person signing the proposal must be a legal representative of the firm authorized to bind the firm to an agreement in the event of the award.

Insurance

General liability, automobile, professional liability, and workers' compensation insurance are required if selected.

Professional Services Agreement

The selected firm must enter into a written agreement for the services using the City's standard Professional Services Agreement (the "Agreement"), a copy of which accompanies this RFP (see attachment).