

MITA Addresses Arizona's Multi-Million Dollar Social Equity Cannabis License Lottery Now Scheduled for April 8th

The Arizona Department of Health Services plans to announce the 26 social equity license winners by Friday, April 8th.

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Demitri Downing, MITA founder and CEO

Department of Health Services (ADHS) tentatively plans to announce the winners of the 26 social equity cannabis licenses by Friday, April 8th. Over 1,500 applications were submitted for the coveted and valuable licenses estimated to be worth between \$10-20 million each. The department will release the final number of eligible applicants prior to the lottery.

Arizona's [Marijuana Industry Trade Association \(MITA\)](#) has served as a premier source on the social equity ownership program since its inception. MITA founder and CEO Demitri Downing, a former prosecutor and cannabis policy expert,

is available to address the impact of these new dispensary licenses, and what's at stake for the larger business community once distributed.

The social equity program was passed as part of a package of rules under Proposition 207, which legalized adult-use marijuana in the state. In January 2021, when recreational cannabis sales began in Arizona, MITA proactively offered a free, 16-week Social Equity Applicant Mentorship Program to help entrepreneurs navigate the new and diverse opportunities available in the state. When the final licensing rules were released later in September, MITA held a virtual town hall to dissect the social equity requirements and controversial qualifications which have come under scrutiny.

“In a limited licensing market structure, these social equity licenses may be some of the last dispensary permits issued for a long long time, perhaps generations,” explained Downing. “They are powerful and valuable assets in a market place with an unnecessarily and artificially restricted supply chain for cannabis. If I were a winner, I would immediately sell my license for

the potential multi-million dollar valuation. However, no matter what these social equity license winners decide to do, MITA is here to provide guidance and support with open arms for this new generation of business owners, regardless of what they see fit to do with their new found wealth.”

Established in 2016, MITA is Arizona’s first and largest cannabis trade association helping businesses and policy makers network and stay informed to ensure a thriving cannabis economy. In 2021, Arizona took in over \$1.4 billion in cannabis revenue during its first year of recreational sales.

“Social equity is an amorphous concept, but the state has done a herculean task in trying to unravel the intent and objectives of the will of the voters. They deserve to be commended.” Downing said. “If you ask ten people you will get 20 opinions of who is entitled to these licenses but we are beyond that now.”

For more information on MITA, visit mita-az.org/.

About MITA

MITA is a national network where the cannabis business community and the voice of the cannabis consumer intersect. MITA’s mission is to forge a more diverse and fair legal cannabis market where all economic groups and individuals can participate and thrive. The organization’s role is to serve as a consortium for individuals, companies, and policy makers who share a common vision: to foster cannabis industry growth and opportunity. MITA strives for the continued evolution of an industry through education, advocating for transparency, access, and the thoughtful regulation of programs throughout the United States. For information, visit MITA-AZ.org.

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