



APPLICATION PROCEDURE TO OPERATE A COMMERCIAL CANNABIS BUSINESS IN BLYTHE

The application process to operate a Commercial Cannabis Business (“CCB”) in Blythe opened on July 1, 2018. Applications are available at the Administration Office located in City Hall and on the City’s website: www.cityofblythe.ca.gov. Please review City of Blythe Cannabis Ordinances and all other information on the City of Blythe’s website. After review, should you have questions please contact Interim City Manager Mallory Crecelius by email at msutterfield@cityofblythe.ca.gov or by calling (760)922-6161.

This document outlines the application process, required materials, and other information necessary to operate a CCB in Blythe. Applications will be received on an on-going basis. Once an application is submitted it will be treated as the final package, no amendments or changes to the application will be allowed unless permitted by City staff. This application process is adopted pursuant to Resolution No. 2017-033.

BEFORE YOU APPLY:

- Review the information to learn about the application process and which documents you will need.
- Review the application in its entirety to ensure that it is complete and accurate.
- Review the information regarding the commercial cannabis business permit application on the webpage: www.cityofblythe.ca.gov which includes the following information:
 - Local regulations governing Blythe CCB’s: Blythe Municipal Code (“BMC”) Chapters 5.12.40, and 5.12.200.
 - Background authorization form and Live Scan
 - Additional application information: Ordinance No. 883-17 and 885-17.
 - State laws governing CCB’s: The California Department of Justice Guidelines for the Security and Non-Diversion of Marijuana Grown for Medical Use and Senate Bill 420 (Medical Marijuana Program Act).
 - Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MAUCRSA)
 - Title 5.10 of the Blythe Municipal Code
 - Local Zoning Ordinance Section 17.63E of Chapter 17 of the Blythe Municipal Code
 - Frequently Asked Questions

- (1) **Application Process: Evaluation and Ranking:** The selection process shall consist of the following Four Phases:

Phase 1: Preliminary determination of eligibility. \$3,807*

Phase 2: Initial ranking. \$1,243*

Phase 3: Second ranking. \$1,286, Plus \$2,200 per owner background fee*

Phase 4: Interview Panel’s Final Recommendation to City Council. \$1,749*

For more information, see Evaluation and Selection Process below.

* Fees subject to change every July 1st. Please contact staff for an updated fee schedule.

- (2) **Criminal History Check:** As part of Phase 1 of the Application Process each principal/owner must undergo a criminal background check demonstrating that they do not provide “good cause” for denial per

BMC Section 5.10.290 (m). The Live Scan Fee will be **\$144.00*** and the background check fee shall be **\$2,200**. The application for the Live Scan will be available on the City website or at the Administration Office in City Hall. The Live Scan shall be completed by the Blythe Police Department. Please provide proof of completing your background form and/or Live Scan form by providing proof of a receipt with your application. This process will be required to meet the minimum threshold qualifications pursuant to BMC Section 5.10.290 (m). Principals who do not meet criminal history eligibility requirements will be disqualified.

- (3) Applicants will be required to obtain a **“Zoning Verification Letter”** from the Planner or designee in the Planning Division in City Hall, located at 235 North Broadway to ensure that the location proposal the applicant is applying for meets locational requirements prior to submitting their CCB application. Sites with proposed zone changes to an allowed zone will be eligible for an approved zoning verification letter. The review process typically takes approximately ten (10) working days and will cost **\$126.00*** The “Zoning Verification Letter” will need to be included with the application package. Please note the issuance of a “Zoning Verification Letter” does not mean the written evidence of permission given by the City of Blythe or any of its officials to operate a CCB, nor does it not mean “permit” within the meaning of the Permit Streamlining Act, nor does it constitute an entitlement under the Zoning or Building Code. A regulatory permit for regulating a CCB does not constitute a permit that runs with the land on which the CCB is established. Request for Zoning Verification Letters require a written request from the Planning Division and will not be completed over the counter since it may require additional research and review.
- (4) **Application:** Applicants must submit one (1) complete comprehensive and signed copy of the Blythe Commercial Cannabis Business Form, and all attachments, if any, along with a flash drive containing one comprehensive and signed copy of the application in a pdf format, and payment of **\$3,807*** for the initial application. Applications will be received on an on-going basis. Payment must be made by a certified check, cashier’s check, cash or money order made payable to the City of Blythe. Please note Application Fees are non-refundable. A complete application will consist of the following information:
- a. The Blythe Commercial Cannabis Business Form;
 - b. Background Authorization Form and Proof of Live Scan for each of the Principals;
 - c. Zoning Verification Letter;
 - d. All the information about the CCB to be evaluated in Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 which is described in the Application and Evaluation Process section below in this procedure. The only information that can be submitted after the initial application is proof of property ownership or lease agreement. However, any change in location will require a new “Zoning Verification Letter” and must be submitted with the application package prior to your interview in Phase 3 of the selection process. Please note that should you choose to submit a different location prior to Phase 3 you can only do so if your initial proposed site was approved as part of your original application package.;
 - e. Indemnification Agreement.
- (5) Amendments to the Application:** Applicants will not be allowed to make amendments to their application or to supplement their application, except as otherwise specifically permitted in these procedures or authorized in writing by the City. During Phase 1, applicants will be notified if any of the Principals are ineligible and will not move forward in the application process. However, in some cases the City may move forward in the application process to other phases should it anticipate that the Live Scan or background check may be delayed to expedite the application process in a timely manner. In this case Applicants wishing to move forward in the process acknowledge by signing the application that they agree to these terms and should they be disqualified because of a background or a Live Scan disqualification they will not be eligible for a refund of any fees collected resulting from the modification of this procedure.
- (6) Payment of Application Fees:** The individual designated as the CCB contact on the application will be notified by e-mail as to whether the application is advancing to Phase 2 and, subsequently, to

Phase 3. A payment of **\$1,243*** will be due before Phase 2 and a payment of **\$1,286*** will be due before Phase 3 including a secondary background fee of **\$2,200 per owner**. As part of Phase 4 all eligible Applicants as determined by the Ordinance or by resolution will be presented to City Council and must pay a fee of **\$1,749*** to move forward for final consideration. Deadlines for these payments will be included in the e-mail notification to the primary contact person.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The evaluation and selection process shall consist of the following four phases:

➤ **Phase 1: Determination of Eligibility and Application**

- Each Principal must undergo a criminal history check demonstrating compliance with the eligibility requirements of BMC Section 5.10.070 (d) and 5.10.290(m).
- Applications must be complete to be considered. Applications will be considered complete only if they include all information required for Phases 1, 2 and 3.
- Proposed location of business.
- Execute an agreement indemnifying the City from liability.

➤ **Phase 2: Initial Ranking (1,500 Points)**

- Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Proposed Location of business (300 Points)
 - Business Plan (400 Points)
 - Neighborhood Compatibility Plan (300 Points)
 - Safety and Security Plan (300 Points)
 - Labor and Employment Plan (200 Points)
- Those applicants who scored a minimum of 80% in Phase 2 will move on to Phase 3.

➤ **Phase 3: Second Ranking (2,500 Points)**

- All applications who score at least 80% in Phase 2, will be interviewed and evaluated by the Selection Committee based on the criteria listed below.
- Prior to the scheduling of the interviews in Phase 3 each of the applicants will be required to have their proposed site inspected by the assigned City designee to ascertain current conditions of the facility.
- The second ranking will be scored based on the following criteria:
 - Final Location (proof of ownership or a signed and notarized statement from the Property Owner (550 Points)
 - Business Plan (350 Points)
 - Community Benefits (150 Points)
 - Enhanced Product Safety (150 Points)
 - Environmental Benefits (150 Points)
 - Labor & Employment (150 Points)
 - Local Enterprise (150 Points)
 - Neighborhood Compatibility Plan (150 Points)
 - Qualifications of Principals (450)
 - Safety and Security Plan (250 Points)
- After all the applicants from Phase 3 scores have been tabulated they will be combined with Phase 2 to establish a new ranking of the top applicants. The top applicants for each category as determined by the procedures shall move onto Phase 4 of the selection process for further consideration.

➤ **Phase 4: City Manager's Recommendations and City Council's Final Approval**

Phase 4 Steps to be followed:

1. Selection Committee’s final review and evaluation.
2. City Manager presents final rankings and recommendation report to City Council.
3. City Council Approves Final recommendations.

After the completion of the application interviews in Phase 3 and prior to the Selection Committees final review and evaluation, the City reserves the right to request and obtain additional information from any candidate who submitted a proposal. Upon the completion of the final review process, the Selection Committee will tabulate its final scores of the all applicants who were interviewed in Phase 3. The City Manager will present to the City Council the final ranking along with his/her recommendation in which the City Council may award up to the amount permitted by the Ordinance or Council Resolution pursuant to BMC Section 5.10.80 The City Council reserves the right to award a lesser number of permits, or to award no permits at all. Only those applicants on the final list will be eligible to be issued a permit from the initial permit process. The top Applicants which are being recommended by the City Manager for consideration to the City Council should be prepared to attend a City Council meeting in Blythe to provide a public presentation before the Mayor and City Council introducing their team and providing an overview of their proposal if requested by the City Manager.

- Please note that being awarded a CCB does not constitute a land use entitlement and does not waive or remove the requirements of applying for and receiving permits for all construction including electrical, plumbing, fire, planning permits or reviews, and any other permits, licenses, or reviews as may be necessary by the relevant departments or governmental entities in charge of said permits. Nor does it guarantee that the plans submitted via the CCB application process meet the standards or requirements in Chapter 17.63 E or any other permit requirement from other city departments or agencies.

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- **Proposed Location.** Your application must include the address and a detailed description of the proposed location. (Note that proof of ownership, or a notarized letter of the owner’s willingness to lease will not be given any additional consideration until Phase 3). This section should also describe all sensitive uses described within six hundred (600) feet of the proposed location from the property line of a K-12 school, child daycare center, youth center, parks, places of worship and within 1000 feet of adult day care centers. The CCB must be in the appropriate zoning or have a proposed zone change and meet all the locational requirements as described in BMC Chapter 17.63E and BMC 5.10.290 (o) and BMC 883-17
- **Business Plan.** With as much detail as possible, the Business Plan should describe:
 - Description of day-to-day operations which meet industry best practices for the specific type of permit in which they will be applying for in the City.
 - How the CCB will conform to local and state law. See BMC Sections 5.10.200, and BMC Sections 5.10.290, Ordinance 883-17, and the Attorney General’s Guidelines for the Security and Non-Diversion of Marijuana Grown for Medical Use.
 - Mechanisms for ensuring that the CCB will operate on a Not-for-Profit basis until the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act is fully in effect or until the implementation of the Adult Use Marijuana Act (AUMA) or those requirements stipulated by Chapter 5.10.
 - How medical and retail cannabis will be tracked and monitored to prevent diversion.
 - A schedule for beginning operation, including a narrative outlining any proposed construction and improvements and a timeline for completion.

The Business Plan should include:

- A **budget** for construction, operation, maintenance, compensation of employees, equipment costs, utility costs, and other operation costs. The budget must demonstrate sufficient capital in

place to pay startup costs and at least three months of operating costs, as well as a description of the sources and uses of funds.

Proof of capitalization, in the form of documentation of cash or other liquid assets on hand, Letters of Credit or other equivalent assets.

- A **pro forma** for at least three years of operation.
- **Neighborhood Compatibility Plan.** For the proposed location, your application should address how the CCB, including its exterior areas and surrounding public areas, will be managed, to avoid becoming a nuisance or having impacts on its neighbors and the surrounding community. Furthermore, a site plan (accurate, dimensioned and to-scale) should be included for each potential location.
- **Safety and Security Plan.** For each proposed location, your application should include:
 - A detailed **safety plan.** This plan should describe the fire prevention, suppression, HVAC and alarm systems the facility will have in place. **It should include an assessment of the facility's fire safety by a qualified fire prevention and suppression consultant.** An appropriate plan will have considered all possible fire, hazardous material, and inhalation issues/threats and will have both written and physical mechanisms in place to deal with each specific situation.
 - A detailed **security plan.** This plan should include a description and detailed schematic of the overall facility security. It should have details on operational security, including but not limited to general security policies for the facility, employee specific policies, training, sample written policies, transactional security, visitor security, 3rd party contractor security, and delivery security. In particular, applications should address ingress and egress access, perimeter security, product security (at all hours), internal security measures for access (area specific), types of security systems (alarms and cameras), and security personnel to be employed. **The security plan shall also include an assessment of site security by a qualified security consultant.** Security plans will not be made public.
 - A **floor plan** showing existing conditions. If changes are proposed as part of the project, then a proposed floor plan should also be submitted. The floor plan(s) should be accurate, dimensioned and to-scale (minimum scale of 1/4").
- **Community Benefits.** The application should describe benefits that the CCB would provide to the local community, such as employment for residents of the City, community contributions, or economic incentives to the City.
- **Enhanced Product Safety.** The application should state how the CCB will ensure enhanced consumer safety as required by State or local law.
- **Environmental Benefits.** The application should describe any proposed "green" business practices relating to energy and climate, water conservation, and materials and waste management.
- **Labor & Employment.** The application should describe to what extent the CCB will adhere to heightened pay and benefits standards and practices, including recognition of the collective bargaining rights of employees. Specific practices that are subject to consideration include the following:
 - Providing compensation to and opportunities for continuing education and training of employees/staff (applications should provide proof of the CCB policy and regulations to employees);
 - Providing a "living wage" to facility staff and employees. Wage scale should be provided in writing for all levels of employment at the facility. "Living Wage" shall mean 150% of the minimum wage mandated by California or Federal law, whichever is greater.
- **Local Enterprise.** The application should state the extent to which the CCB will be a locally managed enterprise whose Principals reside within Blythe and/or the County of Riverside.
- **Qualifications of Principals.** The application should include information concerning any special business or professional qualifications or licenses of principals that would add to the number or quality of services that the CCB would provide, especially in areas related to medical cannabis, such as scientific or health care fields.
- **Air Quality Plan.** Must demonstrate the air circulation does not impact the employees' health and welfare nor the surrounding businesses.

The City's Reservation of Right's

The City reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals, with or without any cause or reason. The City may also, modify, postpone, or cancel the request for permit applications without liability, obligation, or commitment to any party, firm, or organization. In addition, the City reserves the right to request and obtain additional information from any candidate submitting a proposal. Late and incomplete proposals WILL BE REJECTED. Furthermore, a proposal RISKS BEING REJECTED for any of the following reasons:

1. Proposal considered not fully responsive to this request for a permit application.
2. Proposal contains excess or extraneous material not called for in the request for permit application.