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**LACBA Partners with City of Los Angeles to Create Cannabis Pro Bono Panel**

*Los Angeles, California – March 10, 2021* – The Los Angeles County Bar Association’s (LACBA) Cannabis Law Section and the City of Los Angeles (City) are proud to announce their joint partnership, “Cannabis Pro Bono Panel,” which began matching panelists last week. The panel will provide pro bono cannabis related legal referrals to select individuals verified through the City's Social Equity Program.

The Social Equity Program is designed to acknowledge and address the disparate enforcement of cannabis prohibition in past decades. In order to promote equitable ownership in the cannabis industry, individuals with past cannabis arrests, and those who lived in low-income areas with disproportionately high arrest rates, verified by the City as Social Equity Individual Applicants, may receive priority when applying for a City license to operate a commercial cannabis business.

"On December 2, 2020, the Department of Cannabis Regulation completed identifying 200 Social Equity Program applicants eligible for further processing in Phase 3 Retail Round 1, and with its conclusion, the City of Los Angeles now boasts the nation’s largest cohort of Social Equity Individual Applicants to have access to cannabis retail license and business ownership opportunities," stated Department of Cannabis Regulation Executive Director Cat Packer. "This partnership, and the valuable insight of these attorneys will provide these applicants with the additional assistance and support they need to progress through the licensing process."

LACBA President Tamila C. Jensen commented on the joint venture: “Over a year ago, LACBA responded to the emerging needs of California lawyers by creating its Cannabis Law Section. During this time, the Section has been providing legal education, monitoring legal developments, and facilitating virtual professional networking opportunities to its members. As the Section evolves, it has created the Cannabis Pro Bono Panel to assist business owners. We are extremely excited to partner with the City of Los Angeles and it’s Social Equity Program.”

Many of the Social Equity Individual Applicants are first-time business owners and require assistance to navigate the complexities of new business arrangements and the City’s licensing process. Social Equity Individual Applicants may also worry that they are being taken advantage of by sophisticated investors, landlords or business partners, or that their business arrangements do not comply with the City’s requirements for ownership and voting rights.

Attorneys interested in participating on this panel can visit the [panel information page](#). The scope of assistance is limited to 7-10 hours and will provide much-needed assistance to the social equity community.

**About the Los Angeles County Bar Association**

LACBA was founded in 1878 and is one of the largest voluntary metropolitan bar associations in the country. LACBA serves attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals through 28 sections, committees, networking events, live and on-demand CLE programs, and pro bono opportunities, as well as public service and informational resources. Last year alone, LACBA members helped over 8,000 people and provided more than \$2 million in pro bono services.

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