



Cannabis Social Equity Program Newsletter

Happy New Year!

Thank you again for participating in Round 3 of the Cannabis Social Equity Direct Forgivable Loan (DFL) Program. We're excited to share key updates since our [October 2025 newsletter](#), as we move closer to the finish line of this historic funding round.

You may have questions about what happens next: When will you receive an update? When will decisions be made? Don't worry, we've outlined the next steps in the process below...

Warm regards,

Cannabis Loan & Grants Team
Office of Economic Equity & Empowerment

Cannabis Social Equity Program DFL Round 3 Winter Update – January 2026

Where We Are Now?

Since the application window closed on September 25, 2025, our team at the Office of Economic Equity & Empowerment (OE3) has been hard at work completing a multi-step review process. As of January 2026:

1. Program Intake and Deficiency Review: **Completed** ✓
2. Legal Review: **Final stages wrapping up**
3. Financial Review: **Final stages wrapping up**

Thank you to all applicants who responded promptly to deficiency notices and provided supplemental documentation; doing so allowed us to keep the review process moving forward in a timely fashion.

What's Next??

We're preparing for loan award notifications to begin going out this quarter! Applicants will be notified of approval or denial via email, and award announcements will follow with a press release from the Department.

Please continue monitoring your inbox (and spam/junk folder) for updates!

We Want Your Feedback!

We're asking all Round 3 applicants to complete a short post-application survey. Your feedback will be instrumental in helping us identify gaps or areas of improvement for future program rounds. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, depending on your responses.

[Start Survey](#)

Survey Deadline: Friday, February 13, 2026, 5:00 PM CST

Round 3 Timeline at a Glance

Phase	Timeline
Application Window	August 11 – September 25, 2025
Intake & Deficiency Review	September – October 2025
Legal & Financial Review	November 2025 – January 2026
Loan Award Notifications	February – March 2026

Questions?

Contact us via email: ceo.CannabisLoan@illinois.gov

We appreciate your continued patience as we complete this final leg of the process!

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newsletter!**

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