

### **Step 6, Section 9 of Cannabis Control Board Application**

“A workforce development and job creation plan, which may include information on the applicant’s history of job creation and planned job creation at the proposed cannabis establishment or cannabis distributor; education, training and resources to be made available for employees; any relevant certifications, and an optional diversity plan”

The aim of Neon Heights’ Workforce Development Plan (“WDP”) is to increase employment in the Jersey City community, develop job skills and address inequality in employment in the Jersey City region. The WDP includes training, recruiting, and retention strategies. Our executive team will be responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the WDP on a regular basis.

#### **A. History of Job Creation**

Neon Heights is the first startup venture of the company’s CEO, Alexandria Alcala. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Neon Heights is taking active steps to develop its workforce in anticipation of receiving its state and local dispensary licenses. For example, Neon Heights recently sponsored Cannademix’s job and career fair at Hudson County Community College. Neon Heights was the only minority-woman owned conditional license holder exhibiting at the event. At the job fair, Neon Heights collected resumes and used the opportunity to hear what potential dispensary employee candidates are looking for in employers.

Since forming Neon Heights, our CEO, Alexandria Alcala, obtained a cannabis provider certification from Raritan Valley Community College. In order to obtain this certification, Alexandria had to complete a course taught by Sarah Trent who is an attorney and CEO and Founder of Valley Wellness that addressed: (1) NJ’s regulatory provisions of both medical and adult use cannabis; (2) the basics of the plant cycle and available products; (3) handling of medical cannabis products; (4) the Endocannabinoid system; (5) how to counsel medical cannabis patients; and (6) how to assist adult use consumers.

As detailed below, Neon Heights has developed plans and procedures to quickly scale its business and create good paying jobs for the residents of Jersey City and surrounding municipalities.

#### **B. Planned Job Creation and Diversity**

Neon Heights intends on hiring up to 17 employees when operational and will expand thereafter as necessary in order to staff the dispensary’s needs. All employees will be required to submit to the requisite training and to hold the Cannabis Business Identification Card issued by the State. The WDP calls for recruiting and developing a staff that is diverse and talented. Our business model anticipates starting salaries that are competitive, and eventually meet the criteria for a living wage in our metropolitan area – especially if we are successful in scaling up our business. Managers, workers with specialized skills, and executives will be paid wages commensurate with their skills and experience in the marketplace. Jobs to be created at the facility include:

- **Chief Executive Officer:** Our CEO is the primary representative of Neon Heights to regulators, law enforcement, and the public and provides direction and leadership in the company's mission, vision, values, and strategy. The CEO implements and manages the strategic services, goals and objectives of the organization. It is also an important role of the CEO to set an example of professionalism and respect for others in all areas of operations. Lastly, the CEO will ensure that all dispensary operations are conducted in an efficient, safe and environmentally friendly manner.
- **Chief Operation Officer:** Our COO will report to the CEO and is responsible for implementing the Security Plan, the Inventory Control Plan, and the Record Keeping Plan by managing designees who will be responsible for a subset of tasks. The COO will also be responsible for capital raises, leading sales and marketing initiatives and securing supply agreements with licensed vendors. Further, the COO will facilitate improvements to plans, products, and systems within the company in response to employee, customer, and regulating authority feedback.
- **Bookkeeper/Record Keeping Manager:** The Bookkeeper/Record Keeping Manager reports to the Accountant and is responsible for the company's bookkeeping, complying with record-related regulations and implementing tasks in the Record Keeping Plan. Records are maintained to provide operational information to company managers, advisors, and owners for decision-making purposes, and to provide information in case of insurance, criminal, or regulating authority investigations.
- **Accountant:** Neon Heights has engaged Renata Serban at Citrin Cooperman to assist with its accounting, reporting and tax needs. Citrin Cooperman speaks the language of the cannabis industry with a dedicated cannabis sector practice. This group within the company is well-versed in the regulatory environment and has strong relationships with important industry contacts. They have specialists to assist with tax planning and compliance, setting up internal controls, and preparing for audits, just to name a few of their services. Their client experience is broad — from consulting on pre-licensing applicants, to cultivators, dispensaries, product manufacturers, all the way up to investment holding companies.
- **Payroll & HR:** Neon Heights will engage Panacea, a hemp and medical and adult-use cannabis service provider. Panacea specializes in managing payroll and navigating employee taxes. Panacea also offers a portfolio of managed services from the most complex time tracking and detailed scheduling to background checks and benefits management.
- **Graphic Designer:** The designer will be responsible for infographics and marketing collateral and assets to feed to the Inventory Manager
- **Security Consultants:** Security- Sapphire Risk Advisory Group, LLC. Neon Heights intends on working with Sapphire Risk Advisory Group, LLC to write the security plan, help create standard operating procedures and create a physical overlay on CAD drawings in accordance with State Regulations and Local Ordinances. Sapphire Risk

Advisory Group, LLC will contract a local third-party company with expertise in cannabis safety and security compliance to enact the proposed equipment and physical buildout of that plan and overlay.

- **General Manager:** The General Manager (“GM”) will be responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for workflow, hiring and firing, setting employee schedules, delegating work, and producing and filing reports. The GM shall recruit, hire, and staff the dispensary by recruiting top talent with a diverse set of skills among candidates; coach, develop and maximize the success of all associates; ensure onboarding and continued training and education is delivered. The GM shall also direct workforce management activities as well as direct inventory activities resolving all discrepancies in accordance with NJ Cannabis Laws. The GM shall oversee operational execution, ensuring all policies and procedures are being followed and ensure that security policies and practices are being followed. To ensure ongoing compliance with all NJ Cannabis Law, the GM shall develop and drive proactive internal compliance controls and processes and ensure all employees are up to date on regulatory changes. For reporting purposes, the GM shall ensure that all required renewals, reports, and audits are executed on time.
- **Assistant Manager:** The Assistant General Manager (“AGM”) will be responsible for assisting the General Manager with workflow, scheduling weekly management meetings, and creating agendas for management meetings. The assistant manager will also support the Facility Manager, Inventory Manager and Technology Manager.
- **Facility Manager:** Under the direction of the CEO, the Facility Manager is responsible for carrying out the bulk of the responsibilities identified in the Security Plan and managing Security Receptionists.
- **Inventory Manager:** The Inventory Manager will oversee ordering, receiving, and managing inventory. Responsibilities include uploading, storing, and organizing certificates of authenticity (lab reports), manifests, and invoices. They will also make sure all packaging and labeling is compliant and up to date. They will work with our Technology Manager and a contracted graphic design team to transcribe product and batch-specific information onto our menus, website, social media, and all other consumer and Customer Experience Specialist’ infographic channels.
- **Technology Manager:** The Technology Manager (“ITM”) will be responsible for all training, troubleshooting and management of METRC, the adopted EICS, and third-party software. The Technology Manager shall ensure that all inventory is accurately captured on digital platforms. The Technology Manager shall also be responsible for management of security protocols, namely setting up access for all secured areas and preparing security procedures with the GM. Additionally, the Technology Manager shall assist with maintaining website compliance and assist with advertising and marketing avenues to ensure that emails, push notifications and branding efforts remain compliant with NJ Cannabis Laws.

- **Customer Experience Specialists:** Customer Experience Specialists will be responsible for assisting customers, fulfilling orders, and checking customers out at cashier stations. Customer Experience Specialists shall guide customers through sales transactions while offering advice and knowledge as needed or requested. Customer Experience Specialists shall also ensure the sales floor is stocked, displays and menus are up-to-date and accurate, and the sales gallery is well maintained. Customer Experience Specialists will receive ongoing general and product-specific cannabis education.
- **Security Receptionist:** The Security Receptionist shall welcome all customers to the Facility in the secured welcome area, verify proper identification, document customer eligibility for purchasing product, and grant eligible customers access into the sales gallery. The Security Receptionist will ensure that the security area is clean and coordinate questions and issue with the appropriate department personnel.

**Recruiting:** We deliberately chose Jersey City to live and operate in as it is the most diverse city in the country- lending itself to a diverse workforce automatically.

- **Audit job ads -** We will evaluate existing recruitment ads to develop strategies to speak to a broader range of candidates and be more inclusive in the language used to appeal to individuals from different backgrounds.
- **Work with The Office of Diversity and Inclusion:** Neon Heights has reached out to The Office of Diversity and Inclusion to collaborate on ways to have Jersey City's diversity represented in our workforce.
- **Exhibit at Career and Job Fairs in Jersey City:** As previously mentioned, Neon Heights exhibited at The Cannademix Job Fair at Hudson County Community College on November 11th where we collected over 40 resumes and spoke to scores of hopeful candidates- mostly from Jersey City about what they look for in a workplace.
- **Place advertisements in locations where diverse candidates will find them -** Rather than relying on a small number of cannabis-related job sites, we will place recruitment ads with diverse media sources, job boards and other locations to reach a broader audience/
- **New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission Resources-** Reach out to one of the nine listed accredited educational institutions on The CRC website to recruit their alumni
- **Cannabis Staffing Platform Vangst and Indeed -** Where founder Alexandria Alcala was recruited

**Interview and Hiring Process:** Neon Heights is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate under any circumstances with respect to a potential candidate's age, disability, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy status, marital status, sexual orientation (including gender-related identity), medical condition, gender identity or expression, military or veteran status, race, color, creed, religion or sex, or any other protected class under federal, state or local law. Neon Heights will implement strategic outreach initiatives to recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of society by building relationships with vendors, service providers, and charitable organizations that share in our diversity objectives. Additionally, we will emphasize

hiring individuals from socio-economic disadvantaged communities, individuals disproportionately impacted by enforcement of drug laws (i.e. individuals with criminal and/or juvenile records stemming from cannabis charges), and people with disabilities.

- **The Interview:** All applicants will be asked to submit to an interview and we will aim to incorporate diversity related interview questions, such as sharing an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences, and how you have worked to understand perspectives of others.
- **Hiring:** Neon Heights General Manager will select and interview candidates that will need the approval of the Chief Operating and Chief Executive Officers for final approval. These candidates will undergo all employment eligibility requirements set-forth by The New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission. The Jersey City Cannabis Board, and all other governing bodies.

### **C. Education, Training, and Resources to be Made Available:**

Neon Heights will use one of the nine accredited curriculums on the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission Website to train employees. We will use Oaksterdam University, our seasoned GM and COO, and vendor representatives to conduct ongoing training to stay abreast of cannabis, products, compliance, and workplace updates.

- **Education :** Neon Heights will utilize one of the 9 Professional Training Programs listed on the Cannabis Regulatory Commission website (i.e. Raritan Valley Community College Medical Cannabis Training, Mercer County, Community College Medical Cannabis Training, Bergen Community College Advanced Dispensary Associate Program, Atlantic Cape Community College Medical Cannabis Dispensary Training, Stockton University Cannabis Studies Certificate, Passaic County Community College Medical Cannabis Certificate Program, Middlesex County Community College Dispensaries Training Certificate, Rowan College of South Jersey Dispensary Training, and William Paterson University Certificates). to educate our personnel. Additionally, we will be using Oaksterdam University (<https://oaksterdamuniversity.com/>) to provide our staff ongoing education concerning the cannabis industry. With more than 50,000 alumni worldwide, Oaksterdam is the most recognized name in cannabis education and its cross-disciplinary curriculum covers the most recent developments in the cannabis industry.
- **Employee Training:** All employees, no matter their background and skillset, will receive appropriate training so that they can be successful at the job they are hired for. A concerted effort will be made to welcome a new employee to the team as well as hosting opportunities for other employees to get to know each other. We will also integrate the following to our onboarding and training processes: (1) Discussion on organization culture and norms (i.e., expectations for how to represent the our company with the public, communication norms, any expectations on appearance and time); (2) Overview of racial equity work, organization functions, and how decisions are made in

Neon Heights; (3) Connection with a “buddy” or informal mentor to help learn more about what to expect when working for our company; (4) Connection to activities and networks like affinity groups, lunch and learn sessions, employee gatherings based on their interests; and (5) we will work with local organizations to develop mentoring, training and development programs for employees from Impact Zones. Ongoing training will involve providing employees product-specific information. For example, our inventory manager/buyer will furnish staff with vendor information during morning team meetings and via other means such as updated training documents and emails. Regarding compliance, our General Manager will provide our staff with daily guidance about applicable state and local regulations and internal processes and procedures.

### **Disabled Employee Plan**

- **Hiring:** As companies are increasingly competing for talent, individuals with disabilities are being recognized as a source of engaged, committed employees. Companies that succeed in incorporating candidates with disabilities have seen 28 percent higher revenue and two times higher net income, according to an Accenture 2018 white paper on accessibility. The following plan outlines best practices from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that we intend to adopt –especially if we are able to eventually hire more employees and achieve our goal of scaling up from a microbusiness after one full year or more of operations after obtaining licensure – to promote the hiring, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities within our company:
- **Reasonable Accommodations:** Independent of our goal to hire qualified employees with disabilities, and in accordance with the ADA and New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, we shall provide reasonable accommodations to applicants with a disability or qualified employees with a disability so that they can perform their essential job duties.
- **Supported Employment:** Individualized services will include, but are not limited to, training and systematic instruction, job coaching, benefit support, travel training, and other workplace support services as we would for all other employees, including potential services not specifically related to job-skill training that enable a disabled individual to be successful in integrating into the job setting.
- **Job Coaching:** We will aim to assist the employee in training for the specific skills of the job. During the coaching phase, other supports would also be given, such as travel training, social skills, confidence building, identifying natural supports as needed all designed to help make the transition into the job a successful one. The eventual goal is to fade away from job coaching to enable the participant to perform all aspects of the job independently.
- **Follow-Along:** These visits are provided by the job coach at a minimum of one visit to the job site per month to continue ongoing training and performance improvement.

### **Additional Measures for Diversity and Inclusion in the Workforce:**

- **Encourage diverse employees to distribute job advertisements** - We will reach out to some of the employees already on our team who are part of varied demographics and encourage them to share job ads with their networks and give them the tools they need to promote the company. Likewise, we will ask employees from less diverse communities to distribute job advertisements through their diverse networks.
- **Create policies that appeal to diverse candidates** - We will be flexible regarding time off and scheduling policies to include more religious holidays, community events, etc. We will insist upon acceptance of varied cultures and backgrounds and take actions that show we mean what we say, such as showing support for local non-profit organizations recommended by our own employees.
- **Partnerships** – We will partner with minority-serving institutions in the area to develop recruitment plans.