

A photograph of the Massachusetts State House, featuring a large, ornate golden dome and a classical portico with white columns. The building is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there is a black wrought-iron fence and stone steps leading up to the entrance. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

Lobbying for Senate Bill S 1123

Contents

Introduction Letter from BU XCC Team.....	3
<u>Planning a Successful Lobby Day</u>	4
Lobby Day Plan Checklist.....	4
Lobby Day Plan Timeline.....	5
<u>Lobby Day Information</u>	6
For Lobby Day Participants.....	6
Senate Bill S1123 Fact Sheet	7
Senate Bill S1123: Information for Legislators	8
Recommendations for Further Legislation	9
Sample Letter/Email to Send to Elected Official to Set Up Appointment.....	10
<u>After Lobby Day</u>	11
How to Effectively Utilize Social Media to Advocate	11
Developing and Maintaining Ongoing Relationships with Legislators and their Aides.....	12
Sample Follow-Up Phone Call/Voicemail to Elected Official	12
Sample Follow-Up Letter/Email to Elected Official.....	13
Long-Term Advocacy.....	14
<u>Sources</u>	14

Introduction Letter from BU XCC Team

Dear Lobbyist,

Thank you very much for your interest in lobbying for Massachusetts Senate Bill S 1123. We would like to take a moment to introduce ourselves. We are a group of five Boston University students taking a course titled XCC 433: Social Equity in the Cannabis Industry. Our team decided to take on a group project to see how the cannabis industry can be improved. Throughout the course, we studied the current application system, looking specifically at Social Equity applicants and Economic Empowerment applicants.

Social Equity Applicants and Economic Empowerment applicants, simply put, are people who have been at a disadvantage in the cannabis industry. They are individuals in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs, and are typically underrepresented groups like women and people of color who have a hard time entering the cannabis industry.

In our research, we found Massachusetts Senate Bill S 1123. You will learn more about the bill in the contents of this packet, but Senate Bill S 1123 clarifies and funds the Social Equity Program. The bill will help these applicants to receive needed training and technical assistance.

We hope that this lobbying packet will be a useful tool in passing this bill. We encourage you to use it as a guideline to talk with your legislators and help make long-due improvements in the cannabis industry.

Thank you very much, and if you have any further questions please go to our [website](#) for more information and to send us inquiries.

Sincerely,
Mara Lynch
Samuel Lyons
Rusty Gorelick
Sierra Hansen
Haadiya Cheema

Planning a Successful Lobby Day

Lobby Day Plan Checklist

Before A Visit To The Statehouse

- ☐ Determine the format of your lobbying
 - Will it be a reception that elected officials attend? Will participants go to elected officials' offices? Will participants set up their own appointments or will a leader organize appointments for everyone?
- ☐ Send appointment letters by fax, mail, or e-mail to elected officials
- ☐ Fax, physically mail, or e-mail at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled lobby day to maximize success at booking appointments with elected officials
- ☐ Follow up with a phone call after seven days to ensure that the elected official received the information/request for an appointment
- ☐ Establish a meeting location for your group where everyone will meet before going to the state house
- ☐ Assemble a lobby day information packet for volunteers
 - Include a schedule for the day, maps of the building and area, a letter to give the elected official, a page or two with a summary of the bill with talking points, and a sample thank you letter to the legislators
- ☐ Prepare a brief 20-30 minute training session on lobbying for volunteers

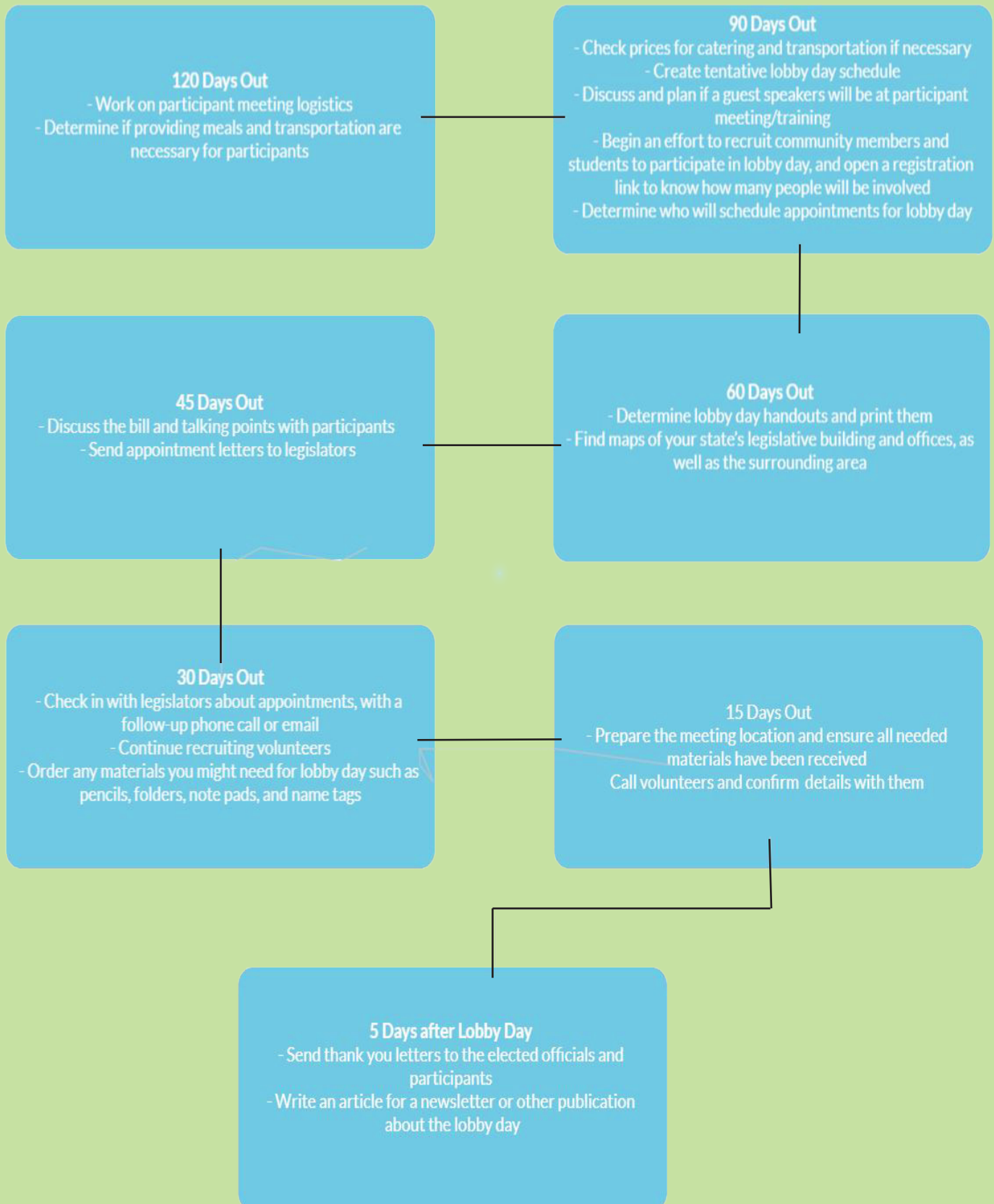
On Lobby Day

- ☐ Set up a table or station for volunteers to sign in and receive their information packets and to sign out when they are finished
- ☐ Ensure all volunteers know which elected officials they are talking to and where their office/meeting is located
- ☐ Have a contact location and phone number with a person always on duty to help anyone with directions or questions

After Lobby Day

- ☐ Send thank you letters to participants
- ☐ Send evaluations to participants to see how to improve your lobby day in the future

Lobby Day Plan Timeline



Lobby Day Information

For Lobby Day Participants

Lobby Day Tips

During the Visit

- Begin by introducing yourself.
- Find common ground with your legislator. For example, if they've voted in support of marijuana laws, thank them and ask about their experience with marijuana legislation.
- Do not be afraid to ask for explanations when you don't understand something.
- Have legislators clarify their position on the issue.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up. Look up the answer at the time if possible, or say you will research an answer and get back to them.
- Thank the legislator as you leave

After the Visit

- Write a thank you letter or email to the legislators you spoke with.
- Maintain ongoing communication with legislators and their staff through letters, calls, and visits.

Lobby Day Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Explain why what you're lobbying for is necessary and important to you
- Ask why the legislator voted a certain way in the past
- Remain open to counter arguments and know how to appropriately respond to them
- Talk with legislators on the opposite side of the issue
- Give the legislator or their staff the **Bill Fact Sheet, Information for Legislators, and Recommendations for Further Action**

Don't

- Threaten, pressure, or beg legislators
- Be argumentative and put a legislator on the defensive
- Be too wordy; you will lose the attention of who you're talking to
- Be afraid to take a stand on the issue
- Be offended if a legislator can't personally meet with you and directs you to their staff

How to Use Personal Testimony to Lobby

- Tell why you care about this policy, use anecdotes if applicable
- Consider how this policy will personally help you or people you know
- Back up your personal stories with facts
- Remember your audience; who are you speaking to? What are your goals? How can you find common ground?

Senate Bill S1123 Fact Sheet

Defines the Social Equity Program

1.

“Social Equity Program” a program administered by the Commission to provide training and technical assistance to eligible applicants and licensees. This program includes a Social Equity fund established and administered by the Commission. The purposes of the fund shall include but shall not be limited to training and technical assistance to municipalities and residents interested in participating in the cannabis industry and technical assistance for existing Social Equity Program licensees.”

Guarantees that 2% of Cannabis Establishment application, license and renewal fees will go to funding the Social Equity Program through the Social Equity Fund

2.

“A schedule of application, license and renewal fees in an amount necessary to pay for all regulation and enforcement costs of the commission including, but not limited to, the Social Equity Program; provided that 2% of the funds generated by said fees shall go directly to funding the Social Equity program through the Social Equity Fund; provided further however that fees may be relative to the volume of business conducted or to be conducted by the marijuana establishment”

Mandates the CCC to enact programs to encourage and empower participation in the Cannabis industry by individuals from communities that have previously been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcements

3.

“Procedures and policies to promote and encourage full participation in the regulated marijuana industry by people from communities that have previously been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement and to positively impact those communities with services which shall include but shall not be limited to educational seminars, workforce development trainings, local employment opportunities, expungement clinics, outreach and re-entry assistance;”

Senate Bill S1123: Information for Legislators

What is Bill S1123?

Bill S1123 is a bill that will clarify and fund the Social Equity Program, a program that creates educational, developmental and other programs for people from communities that were disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition enforcement.

What is the Social Equity Fund?

The Social Equity Fund is the funding mechanism for the Social Equity Program. It will be funded by 2% of Cannabis Establishment application, license, and renewal fees.

How will the Fund be Used?

The fund will be administered by the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission, but municipalities with their own social equity programs will be able to use money from the fund.

What is the Social Equity Program?

The Social Equity Program is a program administered by the Commission to provide training and technical assistance to eligible applicants and licensees. These services will include educational seminars, workforce development trainings, local employment opportunities, expungement clinics, outreach and re-entry assistance.

Why Should the Massachusetts Legislature Pass this Bill?

While this bill will not undo the harm done to communities by aggressive enforcement of Cannabis laws, it is an important first step in repairing the damage. This bill will provide valuable resources to communities that need it.

What More Can be Done?

There are many programs that have been successful in other states, and programs that have been asked for by the community. Increasing funding and access to funds for impacted communities is an important first step. Please see our recommendations for further legislation.

Recommendations for Further Legislation

Capital Budget Solutions

- Grant Program with public-private partnerships
 - California's Bureau of Cannabis Control awarded \$10 million in grant funding 10 cities
 - Eaze in California provided \$50k grants to 10 applicants after they completed a 10-week education program and these applicants were members of underrepresented communities (people of color, women, the LGBTQ community, and those incarcerated or negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition)
- Allow social equity applicants to forego renting a building for the whole application process
 - Prevents applicants from going into severe debt before even starting their business
- Loan program that mirrors Small Business Association loans
 - The CCC would work with the lenders to provide cannabis-related businesses with low-risk loans in order for them to access capital
- Provide no-interest loans and ask for payment only once businesses are operating
 - City of Oakland Cannabis Equity Loan Program provides 0% interest four-year loans to Oakland Verified Equity Applicants

Zoning Solutions

- Modify Bill H.3519 to stipulate that the CCC keeps control of the regulation of cannabis, but zoning laws are relaxed to emulate that of traditional agricultural operations

Cultural Solutions

- Reach out to Social Equity applicants to see what they need in order to start businesses
 - Applicant data available through the CCC
- Give first-priority status to people directly impacted by the War On Drugs (example: the business owner themselves or a family member was sent to jail)
- Free expungement day for cannabis chargers
 - Pair public defenders or lawyers working pro-bono with people affected by the War on Drugs to help people with cannabis charges expunge those charges from their records
- Mentoring system involving general application dispensaries mentoring Social Equity applicants
 - Allow general applicants' Positive Impact Plans to include monthly donations to the Social Equity Fund

Social Equity Fund Solutions

- Make 0.5% of the tax of each dispensary sale go straight to the social equity fund without raising the price on cannabis (can allocate another 0.5% to the CCC if this works)
 - Allows for a stream of money going into the fund instead of only relying on small percentages of license renewals and application fees
- Create a law requiring general applicant dispensaries to carry products from Social Equity manufacturing businesses

Sample Letter/Email to Send to Elected Official to Set Up Appointment

Dear [NAME],

I am writing to you today to request a meeting where we can discuss the reasons why you should vote to pass Bill S.1123.

My constituents and I strongly recommend that you vote to pass Bill S.1123 and to advocate for further reform to social equity in the Massachusetts recreational cannabis industry. Passing Bill S.1123 will provide a tangible foundation for reform that will begin to repair the relationships between disadvantaged communities and the state that fractured due to the War on Drugs. Thanks to the sacrifices made by those who went to jail with disproportionately harsh sentences for trying to feed their families, adults in the state of Massachusetts can now consume cannabis recreationally. Yet the people who sold small amounts of cannabis on the street and went to jail look a lot different compared to the people who run legal dispensaries, which move a lot more product than a street dealer ever could.

I am calling on you to join us on the right side of history and to use your position in government to advocate for those affected by racist policies instituted by past government officials. Voting in favor of Bill S.1123 is the first of many steps.

Bill S.1123 will have 2% of every application and license fee payment go into a Social Equity Fund. The fund will build up over time and allow Social Equity Applicants who want to start cannabis businesses to take money from that fund so they can have a fair shot at succeeding in the industry. This bill is a concrete step towards the establishment of Social Equity within the Massachusetts cannabis industry, and passing it is important for all those prospective business owners whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by unfair drug laws.

I would like to meet with you to discuss Bill S.1123 and further solutions the state can institute to make larger steps towards social equity. Please provide me with a date and time that works for you. [Provide days and times that work for you, the lobbyist, if you have a tight schedule.]

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you to take steps towards Social Equity.

Sincerely,
[NAME]

After Lobby Day

How to Effectively Utilize Social Media to Advocate



Facebook

- Use Facebook to plan events, when participants reply “going” it will advertise their attendance to their friends
- Facebook can also be a great resource to share the look and feel of your organization — make sure that your content matches your website!
- Facebook is a good platform for long form content, post videos and articles that exceed other platforms character limits.
- Engage your followers; reply to comments.



Twitter

- Use Twitter for short form content and updates
- Twitter is also a great platform for directly calling out members of the government and other decision makers
- Allow your content to be understood without context so it is easily retweetable
- Engage your followers; reply to comments.



Instagram

- Instagram is great for its stories feature—use this to post timely content and updates
- Instagram ads can reach large groups that tend to be more receptive to advertising than other platforms
- Post pictures of successful events and other visually appealing
- Engage your followers; reply to comments.

Developing and Maintaining Ongoing Relationships with Legislators and their Aides

What does maintaining a relationship mean?

- The legislator and their staff should recognize your name and be willing to return your calls promptly
- You should be the first person the legislator's office thinks of to call when she needs information about your issue
- You should be willing to help the legislator and her staff when they need it, and they should be willing to help your cause/your organization

How do you develop relationships?

- Make an appointment and talk with legislators and their aids
- Don't feel forced to just focus on the lobbying issue. You can talk about movies, music, or your life to be more personal.
- Get an introduction from a mutual acquaintance if possible
- Keep contact after initial meetings.
- Ask for advice from legislators and/or aides and follow the advice. Thank them for it and tell them the results.
- Establish yourself as a reliable source of information
- Attend events where legislators and aides are likely to be present, and talk with them there

Sample Follow-Up Phone Call/Voicemail to Elected Official

Voicemail

Hello [legislator or staffer name], this is First Name Last Name with [Affiliation]. I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Month Day, Year to discuss Senate Bill S 1123, which benefits social equity applicants in the cannabis industry. I would appreciate meeting with you again in the future to discuss this bill and your position on it. You can give me a call back at *phone number* or email me at *email address*. I look forward to hearing from you. Have a nice day.

Phone Call

Hello [legislator or staffer name], this is First Name Last Name with [Affiliation]. I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Month Day, Year to discuss Senate Bill S 1123, which benefits social equity applicants in the cannabis industry. I would appreciate meeting with you again in the future to discuss this bill and your position on it, when are you available?

[Schedule a meeting with legislator/staffer]

Thank you and I look forward to our meeting. If you need to reach me you can give me a call back at *phone number* or email me at *email address*. Have a nice day.

Sample Follow-Up Letter/Email to Elected Official

Date

The Honorable First Name Last Name

U.S. Senate/U.S. House of Representatives/Other Office

Address

Dear Senator/Representative/Appropriate Title Last Name,

I am writing to thank you/your staffer, First Name Last Name of Staffer, for meeting with me and [names of other people if applicable] on Month Day, Year to discuss Senate Bill S 1123.

We discussed how important this bill is for social equity applicants in the cannabis industry as it ensures 2% of cannabis establishment application, license, and renewal fees will go towards funding the Social Equity Program through the Social Equity Fund. It also encourages people from communities who have been disproportionately affected by the prohibition of cannabis to participate in the cannabis industry.

[If you were asked by the lawmaker/staffer to provide any follow-up information include it here.]

I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and [insert names of other group members, if any] and demonstrating your commitment to your constituents. If you have any further questions regarding the bill or any related issues, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

Affiliation

Home Street Address

City, State Zip

Phone Number/Email Address

Long-Term Advocacy

- Look at the history of the issue to see what might occur in the future
- Follow public attitudes on the issue
- Develop short-term and long-term objectives and strategies
- For each objective, develop a plan that includes a timeline
- Make sure your long term goal is realistic
- Be proactive in programs you can advocate for
- Don't wait for a program to be created - create one yourself!
- Remain organized

Sources

<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=--pBgNuwBVg%3D&portalid=0>

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/lobby-decisionmakers/main>