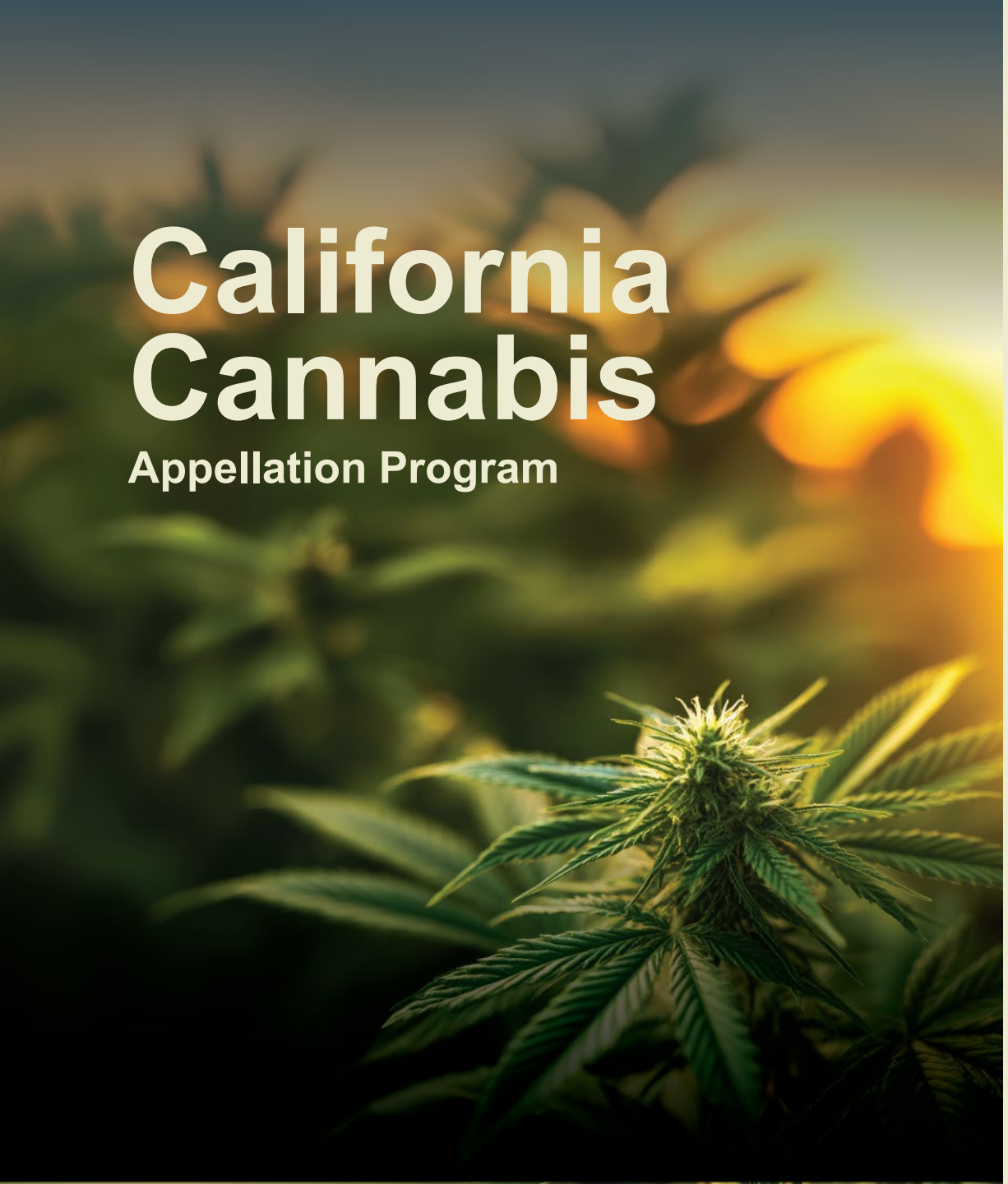


Program Overview & Petition Process

Introductory Webinar
November 12 & 13, 2026

cdfa | The Office of Agricultural Resilience & SUSTAINABILITY

This program is administered for California Cannabis Growers.
Led by The Office of Agricultural Resilience & Sustainability (OARS),
a part of the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA).

Agenda

1. **What CAP Is & Why It Matters**
2. **Who Can Petition**
3. **What A Petition Includes**
4. **Review Process & Fees**
5. **Using An Appellation After Approval**
6. **Support, Next Steps & Q&A**

What You'll Leave With

A clear picture of whether your area could qualify, what a petition takes, what it costs, and where to get help.

Submit questions in the Teams Q&A panel at any time. We'll answer them at the end.

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Who We Are

California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA)

To safeguard a resilient food system and promote an equitable marketplace, cultivating a California grown food supply that is globally recognized for innovation, quality, and sustainability.

Office of Agricultural Resilience & Sustainability (OARS)

To use the best available science and knowledge from the agricultural community to design and implement practical solutions to California's natural resource challenges that improve the environmental and economic sustainability of producing nutritious food, fiber, and energy.

Today’s Presenters

Eric Duran

Environmental Scientist

CDFA Office of Agricultural Resilience & Sustainability

Fran Bean

Senior Environmental Scientist

CDFA Office of Agricultural Resilience & Sustainability

What is the Cannabis Appellations Program?

CAP offers an opportunity for licensed cannabis cultivators to create and preserve geographic areas known for specific cannabis cultivation standards, practices, and cultivars.

How the Protection Works

The program will establish geographical indication protections for approved cannabis appellations of origin. This protection primarily serves to prevent products from using an appellation of origin on the label unless **100% of the cannabis was cultivated within and according to the standards, practices, and cultivars** of the appellation of origin.

For Cultivators

This provides an important tool for cultivators to protect the reputation and cannabis cultivation culture of their community or region.

For California

It also serves as a benefit for the State to strengthen the reputation, legitimacy, and culture of the licensed cannabis industry.

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Background

2016	**Proposition 64**	Voters create California's licensed adult-use market and direct CDFA to establish appellations of origin.
2019	**SB 67**	Limits appellations to cannabis planted in the ground and grown in full sun, without structures or artificial light.
2021	**Regulations Adopted**	CDFA sets program rules after workshops, listening sessions, and public rulemaking. Some key requirements are withdrawn following the consolidation of state cannabis agencies.
2022–26	**Coordination With DCC**	CDFA works with the new Department of Cannabis Control to resolve the withdrawn requirements.
2025	**Rule Update**	Recordkeeping requirements are adopted.
2026	**Trademark Transition**	Rulemaking on the trademark transition is pending.
2027	**Program Opens**	CDFA begins accepting petitions on January 12, 2027.

Why Appellations Matter

Protect the Name

Protects the name of a place recognized for its cannabis cultivation.

Preserve Local Tradition

Keeps regional farming traditions, standards, and cultivars alive.

Build Value Together

Gives growers a shared identity, with potential for added value.

Inform Buyers

Tells consumers where and how their cannabis was grown.



Geographic Indications Around The World



Wine

Napa Valley, France, and around the world



Bourbon

United States



Tequila

Mexico



Coffee

Colombia and around the world



Feta Cheese

Greece. Protected in the EU, used generically elsewhere.

The Lesson from Feta

Without protection, a place name can become a generic term anyone can use.

California Leads

California is the only U.S. state with a statutory appellation of origin framework for cannabis (Bus. & Prof. Code § 26063).

Who Can Petition



Licensed Cultivators

At least three licensed cultivators, each a separate business, actively growing in the proposed area.



In the Ground, Full Sun

Planted in the ground in full sun. No greenhouses, hoop houses, or other structures, and no artificial light in the canopy.*



Defined by Geography

The boundary follows geographic features, not a single county or city line. Your area may be larger than you think.

Not eligible: indoor and greenhouse cannabis cannot carry an appellation, regardless of where it is grown.

*The canopy is the area where mature (flowering) plants are grown. The full-sun requirement applies to every cultivator who uses an appellation.

What a Petition Must Show

1 The Name Is Already In Use

Show how the name has been used for this area, backed by independent sources.

2 The Area Is Unique

Show that overlapping features such as soil, climate, elevation, or watershed create a unique area, and that they differ outside the boundary.

3 Geography Shapes the Cannabis

Show how at least one feature causes a specific quality or characteristic in the cannabis.

4 Appellation-specific Requirements

Define the standards, practices, and cultivars every grower using the appellation must meet.



What Goes Into a Petition

Every petition to establish an appellation includes these sections.

- ✓ **Petitioner and license information**
- ✓ **General description of the area**
- ✓ **Evidence of name use from independent sources**
- ✓ **Legacy, history, reputation, and economic importance of cannabis in the area**
- ✓ **Check for conflicts with existing names in the cannabis market and DCC labeling rules**
- ✓ **Maps and a written boundary description**
- ✓ **Geographic features that affect cannabis in the area**
- ✓ **How those features cause a specific quality in the cannabis**
- ✓ **Standards, practices, and cultivars, with recordkeeping requirements**

Check your draft against the Petition Self-Assessment Guide. Any “no” answer means CDFA will ask for more information.

Standards, Practices & Cultivars

Define at least one of each, plus how growers will show they comply. Requirements must be achievable for growers in the area.

Standards

1. Measurable characteristics

or

2. Recognized program certification

Examples

Cannabinoid content, terpene profile, OCal certification

Practices

1. Required or prohibited cultivation methods

or

2. Required or prohibited methods of conducting commercial cannabis activity

Examples

No-till, dry farming, on-site composting, direct-to-consumer sales

Cultivars

1. Allowed or prohibited varieties (a petition can allow all)

or

2. Genetic testing requirements and seed or plant preservation rules

Examples

Heritage cultivar list, seed preservation, cultivar identity certification

Recordkeeping

For each requirement, the petition must include the specific records growers must keep to show compliance.

Already Certified?

An existing certification such as OCal or Sun+Earth can serve as a standard, and your records may already cover it.

How Petitions Are Reviewed

1 Administrative Review

CDFA checks the petition for completeness.

- Submit the petition with the $2,850 submission fee.
- If incomplete: 180 days to provide what's missing.
- If complete: 120 days to pay the $14,250 proposal fee.

2 Technical Review

Cannabis, agriculture, and geography experts at Cal Poly Humboldt review the technical portions: boundaries, causal link, and standards, practices, and cultivars. They send CDFA a recommendation.

3 Public Review

CDFA publishes the proposal and notifies cultivators in the area. 90-day comment period, with extensions possible.

Final Decision

CDFA makes the final determination based on the technical review recommendation, public comments, and its own assessment of the petition. CDFA then issues a Notice of Final Decision. If approved, CDFA notifies stakeholders and licensees in the area.

Timing

Varies. A complete petition with prompt fee payment could take about 4 to 5 months, including the 90-day public review.

How To Submit

Email or mail your petition. Large supporting files can go through CDFA's SharePoint. Details in the petition guidance.

Petition Fees

	Establish	Amend
Submission Fee Due when you file	$2,850	$1,425
Proposal Fee Due once CDFA finds the petition complete	$14,250	$7,125
Total	$17,100	$8,550

$1,710

per member when ten members share a new petition

Fees are per petition, not per member. Members split them however they choose, so more members means a smaller share.

Payment: Check mailed to CDFA headquarters. Full payment guidance is in the CAP Petition Guide online.

After Approval: Using An Appellation

To use the appellation, a cultivator must:

1. Grow 100% of the cannabis in the product within the appellation, in the ground and in full sun.
2. Meet the appellation's standards, practices, and cultivars, and keep the required records.
3. File a Notice of Use with CDFA every three years.

How Protection Works

CDFA protects the name. It does not certify growers or products, and there is no CDFA seal.

DCC enforces the protections against misuse of the name.

If someone misuses the name, the appellation community can file a complaint, and the product can be traced through track and trace and the required records.

Any licensed cultivator in the appellation can use it, whether or not they were part of the original petition.

Support & Resources

Self-Assessment Guide

Check your petition draft section by section before you submit.

CAP Webpage

www.cdfa.ca.gov/oars/cap for regulations, guides, and webinar recordings.

Office Hours

Monthly Q&A sessions with CDFA staff, starting February 2027.

Regional Workshops

CDFA is planning regional workshops across the state on program rules and petition development. We welcome input and assistance from organizations willing to help coordinate them.

Contact CDFA

CannabisAg@cdfa.ca.gov

Next Steps

CDFA Timeline

November 12 & 13, 2026
Introductory webinars (recorded)

January 12, 2027
Program opens to petitions

February 2027
Monthly office hours begin

What You Can Do Now

1. Download the Petition Self-Assessment Guide.
2. Talk with licensed neighbors who share your soil, climate, watershed, etc.
3. Start collecting evidence of how your area's name has been used.
4. Join the CAP mailing list for workshop and office hour dates.



Questions?

CannabisAG@cdfa.ca.gov

The recording and slides will be posted on the CAP webpage.

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