**Section 1291.100 Application and Approval Process**

a) Before any entity can offer a responsible vendor program, the entity shall first apply to and receive approval for the program from the Department and pay the applicable fee. The application submission window is the period between August 1st and August 15th of every odd-numbered year. If the date falls on a holiday or weekend in which case the window is extended to the next business day. The application submission window shall close at 5 PM Central Time on the final day on which applications are accepted.

b) All responsible vendor provider approvals will expire on September 30 of each odd-numbered year. Approvals are not subject to renewal. All current responsible vendors must reapply during the application submission window to remain an approved program.

c) Applications for approval shall be submitted on forms provided by the Department and shall include:

1) The first and last name of each responsible vendor trainer currently employed by the program and the following document for each current trainer:

A) A resume and/or a curriculum vitae;

B) A written statement detailing the trainer's relevant experience; and

C) A signed certification from the trainer that they do not hold an ownership interest in a cannabis business establishment, unless the trainer was approved in the 2021 cycle in which case, the Department will allow the trainer to proceed;

2) A general outline of the responsible vendor program;

3) All training materials and curriculum consistent with Section 1291.120;

4) A blank copy of the pre-test and post-test required by Section 1291.120(a)(2);

5) A signed statement from each individual with an ownership interest in the applicant confirming that the individual does not hold an ownership interest in a cannabis business establishment nor is the individual owner an agent, employee, or affiliate of a cannabis business establishment or an affiliated entity of a cannabis business establishment, unless the individual is a member of an applicant which was approved in the 2021 cycle in which case, the Department will allow the an Individual to be approved; and

6) The application fee of $2,000.

d) The application shall be signed by a representative of the entity applying to be a responsible vendor provider certifying that all information contained in the application is true and accurate.

e) All required materials shall be submitted during the application submission window. The Department will not accept applications any other time. Early or late applications will not be accepted.

f) The Department may refuse to issue an approval to any applicant:

1) Who is unqualified to perform the duties required of a provider;

2) Who fails to disclose or makes misrepresentations of any information called for in the application;

3) Who fails to provide all required application materials; or

4) Who does not demonstrate knowledge of the rules and laws for dispensing cannabis in Illinois or demonstrates a misunderstanding of the rules and laws.

5) If an application is submitted in the application window, the Department may inform the applicant of a deficiencies in the application. An applicant may modify their training materials to meet the above requirements for 30 days following the notice. If the applicant is unable or unwilling to modify the training materials, then the Department shall deny the approval. If the Department denies the approval, it shall provide a detailed description of the reasons for the denial.

g) The Department will send approval notices to successful applicants who meet the requirements of this Section. Approved responsible vendor providers may begin offering training upon receipt of the approval notice. Only responsible vendor providers approved by the Department can provide a responsible vendor program.

h) An approval for a responsible vendor provider shall be valid only for the provider named in the application. An approval is not transferable or assignable.

i) A responsible vendor provider may not subcontract or engage with an outside third-party to offer any of its training.

j) If the responsible vendor provider hires new trainers who were not previously disclosed at the time of the provider's original application of subsection (c)(1), the provider shall submit the required information and documents of any new trainers to the Department within five calendar days after hiring the new trainer.

k) The Department may rescind its approval of a responsible vendor provider that allows an individual or entity that has not been disclosed to the Department to offer its training course.

l) The Department shall deny a responsible vendor provider application where the provider or proposed trainer holds an ownership interest in a cannabis business establishment or is the individual owner an agent, employee, or affiliate of a cannabis business establishment or an affiliated entity of a cannabis business establishment.

(Source: Added at 48 Ill. Reg. 13377, effective August 20, 2024)