

# Local Governments: Registering for Accela for Zoning Compliance Certification

Local governments serve a critical role in the cannabis licensing process, serving as a near-final approval check on cannabis and hemp businesses nearing the awarding of a state license for operations. As part of the application process, applicants are required in state law to obtain a local government’s certification of zoning compliance. Once an application has been vetted by OCM, is selected for proceeding in the application process, and secures a site location, OCM will notify local governments of the request for zoning compliance certification. This notification and certification process will occur through the licensing software system, [Accela \(https://aca-prod.accela.com/MDH/Default.aspx\)](https://aca-prod.accela.com/MDH/Default.aspx). This guide is designed to help local units of government register for their own Accela account.

Local units of government will have 30 days to respond to a request for zoning compliance certification per Minnesota Statutes, section 342.13. By registering for an account prior to an entity submitting an application to OCM, those 30 days can be maximized for review of the application materials.

## Who Needs to Create an Accela Account

All city and county governments should create an Accela account in preparation of requests for certification of compliance for cannabis businesses. Townships with relevant zoning authority should create an Accela account in preparation of requests for certification of compliance for cannabis businesses. Each unit of local government needs to identify one person to create an account for their locality’s jurisdiction – the local Accela account manager. This identified person should match the “Point of Contact” submitted in the “Local Unit of Government Cannabis Licensing Contact and Delegation Form.”

## Getting Started

Please visit the [Accela Portal \(https://aca-prod.accela.com/MDH/Default.aspx\)](https://aca-prod.accela.com/MDH/Default.aspx) and select “Register for an Account” in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

## Completing the Required Fields

See graphic on the right for example.

Field	Action
Username	Please set your username to match whichever local government you are representing, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Of [Blank]</li> <li>• [Blank] Township</li> <li>• [Blank] County</li> </ul>
Email	The account should be managed by the person identified by the locality to monitor and respond to the requests for zoning compliance certification on behalf of the local unit of government. The email submitted can be the identified person’s government email or a shared government team email to allow for the relevant office at the locality to receive the notification.
Password	Your password must be 8-20 characters and contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 special character</li> <li>• At least 1 upper-case letter</li> <li>• At least 1 number</li> </ul>
Security Question	Select a security question and answer that can be shared by everyone who will need to access the Accela Portal within your organization.
Terms of Service	<b>Check the box to agree to the Terms of Services and continue to the second page.</b>
Contact Details	Fill in the required fields to best match your organization's contact information, such as the same address as your administrative building. List the same email you used on the first page under this section.
Submit	<b>Upon completion, please press submit.</b>

## Login Information

### STEP 1 OF 2: ACCOUNT DETAILS

\* Required Fields

USERNAME:\*  
janedoe1

E-MAIL ADDRESS:\*  
jane.doe@local.gov

PASSWORD:\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

TYPE PASSWORD AGAIN:\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

ENTER SECURITY QUESTION:\*  
What was your favorite food as a child? × ▼

ANSWER:\*  
Hot Dish

I have read, understand, and agree to the [Terms of Service](#)

CONTINUE

BACK

Once you successfully register for an Accela account, and once the rulemaking process is completed later in 2025, OCM will use the system to share notifications and application materials per Minnesota Statutes, sections 342.13 and 342.14, and the local unit of government will complete the zoning compliance certification process within the portal.

If you have any questions or if there are any staffing changes, and the point of contact and Accela account manager needs to be updated for a locality, please reach out to [cannabis.info@state.mn.us](mailto:cannabis.info@state.mn.us) to coordinate making this change.

## Considerations

**Local Retail Registration:** Per state law, licensees seeking to conduct retail sales are also required to obtain a local retail registration. This process is distinct from the certification of zoning process and will not occur through the Accela portal. Please review Minnesota Statutes section 342.22 and OCM's guidance for more information about the local retail registration process. See pages 19-22 of [A Guide for Local Governments: Adult Use Cannabis \(PDF\) \(https://mn.gov/ocm/lgg\)](https://mn.gov/ocm/lgg).

**Local Approval for Early Cultivation:** This account will not be used for the process of local approval for early cultivation under Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 121, Article 2, section 151. There is a distinct approval process for early cultivation, and for more information, please review OCM's guidance for more information. See Page 9 and the appendix of [A Guide for Local Governments: Adult Use Cannabis \(PDF\) \(https://mn.gov/ocm/lgg\)](https://mn.gov/ocm/lgg).

**Municipal Cannabis Stores:** State law allows local units of government to apply for and operate a municipal cannabis store. The application and licensing process for municipal cannabis stores will be available in the future after the rulemaking process is completed and general licensing is launched. If a local unit of government is planning to apply for a license to operate a municipal cannabis store, they will be required to apply through the Accela portal. The account for the application must be a different account than the account the local unit of government operates to conduct the zoning compliance certification process.

## Notice of Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

The person or persons who manage and access these accounts on behalf of the local unit of government may have access to nonpublic data on applicants. These data are shared under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.05, subdivision 9 and section 342.13. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13.03, subd. 4, the local unit of government agrees to treat all data accessed related to an application with the same classification as the classification assigned by OCM. The person or persons identified who manage and access these accounts agree to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

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This document is available in alternative formats to people with disabilities by emailing [cannabis.info@state.mn.us](mailto:cannabis.info@state.mn.us).