

# REV CLINICS EXPANDS ASPIRE PROGRAM WITH CREATION OF \$4 MILLION FUND FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CANNABIS LICENSE HOLDERS AND MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES IN CAMBRIDGE

*To kick off the fund, Economic Empowerment license holders Leah Samura and Ivelise Rivera will each receive \$100,000 in grants to put toward their adult-use cannabis retail businesses in Cambridge*

CAMBRIDGE, June 24, 2021 – [Revolutionary Clinics](#), one of the state’s leading providers of medical marijuana, today announced it will expand its Aspire program by establishing a \$4 million grant fund that will be evenly distributed between Economic Empowerment (EE) license holders in the cannabis space and other minority-owned businesses in Cambridge. The fund’s creation, to occur upon the conclusion of Cambridge’s moratorium on adult-use conversions by medical cannabis operators in September, will be prefaced by a pair of \$100,000 grants to cannabis entrepreneurs Leah Samura, CEO and co-owner of Yamba Boutique, an adult-use retailer set to open in Harvard Square, and Ivelise Rivera, owner and partner of Nuestra, LLC, an adult-use retailer coming to East Cambridge. The expansion of Aspire comes on the heels of the findings of [a national study of cannabis equity programs by The Initiative](#), which found that funding and wrap-around services are the most needed forms of support to get EE cannabis business open.

The \$4 million fund builds on Rev’s long-time financial support of equity license holders, including through its Aspire program. In just over a year, Rev’s Aspire program helped three Economic Empowerment and Social Equity license holders (Caroline’s Cannabis, a recreational marijuana operator in Uxbridge and the state’s first woman-owned shop; Haverhill Stem LLC, a recreational marijuana operator in Haverhill; and Pure Oasis, Massachusetts’ first Economic Empowerment-owned recreational marijuana operator, which opened Boston’s first retail store) successfully open their doors. The enhanced Aspire program will include non-equity and non-debt funding, training, mentorship, sales data, compliance advice, standard operating procedures, and other support services.

By opening the Aspire program beyond cannabis, Rev aims to foster a more representative business community in Cambridge. Because the barriers to entry facing EE license holders are also experienced by minority operators in many other industries, there is substantial overlap in the need for funding, mentoring, and business services. Grants will be open to minority-owned businesses in the following categories: new or existing restaurants; new or existing service providers; new or existing non-profits or incubators focused on minority entrepreneurship; those seeking funding to open, maintain, grow, or expand a business in Cambridge; and those seeking funding to stay open or reopen due to COVID-19 related loss of business.

Eligibility for grants will be determined by financial need or demonstration of how receiving assistance would generate growth, and how success would benefit others in the community (e.g., job creation). One million dollars will be allocated upon the fund's launch with \$500,000 distributed annually for six years. The fund will be independently administered by Cambridge residents.

“Rev is proud to build a robust grant program for Cambridge’s minority-owned businesses using evidence gleaned from The Initiative’s national study as to what gets businesses open and set up for long-term success,” said Keith Cooper, CEO of Revolutionary Clinics. “We have heard time and time again that the hardest challenge for EE license holders to overcome is accessing capital, but this challenge is not limited to cannabis. Businesses across Cambridge require funding and wrap-around services, so we want to meet that need head on with this program.”

Although the fund will be officially activated in September, the initial grants to Samura and Rivera will be allotted in the next 30 days.

Samura was one of the first recipients of the Cannabis Control Commission’s certified Economic Empowerment status in 2018. She is also the co-creator of Purient Bedroom Cannabis, the first cannabis infused lubricant sold on the East Coast, found in over 50 retail dispensaries throughout Massachusetts.

“My mission is to not only open the first 100 percent local, black owned marijuana retail store in Harvard Square, but also to help other women of color find their place in the industry,” said Samura. “This grant will help me accomplish that mission. I am very grateful for Revolutionary Clinics for their support.”

Alongside her daughter, Renata Caines, Ivelise Rivera is also pursuing retail locations in Newton and Somerville. Rivera currently serves as the Vice Board Chair for the Madison Park Development Corporation, which develops affordable and high-quality housing for low and moderate-income families in Roxbury, South End, and Mattapan.

"We will be using this grant to strengthen our company’s mission of positive community impact,” said Rivera. “This grant will allow me to focus 100 percent of my attention to the business, to continuously expand our industry education, deepen our career pathway programming, and connect with the surrounding communities at a greater capacity. These days we hear a lot of cannabis executives using the words ‘a rising tide lifts all ships’ but those are just words. Without mentorship and financing the EE ships cannot rise. It is time for more than words. Rev Clinics is showing with the Aspire grants that they are walking the walk, and I am going to walk beside them.”

Concurrent to the Aspire program, the newly launched [Green Industry Funded Training \(GIFT\) mentorship program](#), led by Leah Daniels of Alchemy League, received a \$10,000 contribution from Rev at its launch event in April. GIFT is designed to educate, mentor, and advise entrepreneurs in the cannabis industry, and stimulate growth in Economic Empowerment businesses, helping to achieve the equity objectives of legalization. Rev Clinics has also been advising Leah Daniels and her team since March of 2020, helping to bring GIFT from a concept

to reality. Currently, Alchemy League's senior management is engaged in three months of intensive training at Rev Clinics in preparation of the store's impending opening.

Rev has three dispensary locations, two in Cambridge and one in Somerville, and operates a wholesale arm for adult use cannabis. Revolutionary Farms, the moniker of their cultivation facility, is one of the largest and most advanced cultivation operations in the state. With the moratorium on adult-use conversion set to expire in Cambridge, Rev will be hiring 50 full-time employees in anticipation of the new customer base. Rev has set an objective of hiring 50 percent local and minority candidates for these positions.

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ABOUT [REVOLUTIONARY CLINICS](https://www.revolutionaryclinics.org) – Revolutionary Clinics is harnessing the positive power of the emerging cannabis industry to raise the standard for alternative care and generate economic opportunity across Massachusetts. At its three registered marijuana dispensaries in Cambridge and Somerville, Revolutionary Clinics provides the highest quality medical marijuana products and the very best in patient care, and was named best medical dispensary in the state by its peers in 2019. Its state-of-the-art cultivation facility is located in Fitchburg, Mass. Revolutionary Clinics employs more than 375 colleagues across its manufacturing and retail operations and generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenue for Massachusetts' communities in 2019. Through its corporate social responsibility program, *Cannabis with a Conscience*, Revolutionary Clinics joins with a range of partners in supporting healthy lives and vulnerable populations, advancing community revitalization efforts through philanthropy and public-private partnerships, and promoting diversity within the cannabis industry. Learn more at <https://www.revolutionaryclinics.org/csr/>