

The Madam Walker Legacy Center (MWLC) and Natalie Achonwa of the Indiana Fever Announce Entrepreneur Grants to Women in Business Now Available

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indianapolis, Indiana – August 28, 2020 – Today, the MWLC and Indiana Fever star, Natalie Achonwa invite female start-up entrepreneurs, who've been in business for two years or less, to apply for women in business grants.

Joyce Rogers, MWLC Board Chairperson stated "the MWLC is elated to partner with Natalie Achonwa of the Indiana Fever. To continue the entrepreneurial legacy of Madam C.J. Walker, by recognizing female business owners is in keeping with Madam Walker's creed, *each one teach one.*"

Ms. Achonwa is a recipient of the WNBA's 2020 Dawn Staley Community Leadership award in which she received a \$10,000 grant to donate to the charity of her choice. Recognizing the iconic history of Madam C.J. Walker she selected the MWLC as her partner to promote the legacy of education and entrepreneurship to female business owners.

"Lately I've been conflicted with this whole intersection between race and sex. I typically use my platform to speak about the disadvantages and discrimination that all women face in the workforce, whether in sport or any other profession. But with this award I specifically wanted to focus on how I could help black women in my community. Through my research, I've realized that black women are starting businesses at the highest rate of any racial group, yet there is still a huge inconsistency when it comes to access to capital. Minority women are either being denied loans or paying a much higher interest rate than their white counterparts." said Fever veteran Natalie Achonwa. "I was ecstatic when I heard the Madam Walker Legacy Center was about to launch a new program focused on helping new business owners. Partnering with MWLC and focusing on black woman entrepreneurs, directly aligned with the vision I had for this award donation. I hope this grant program and Madam Walker's legacy continue to encourage more women to push the boundaries and become entrepreneurs.

The MWLC aligned this initiative to meet Ms. Achonwa's goal to empower women business owners. **Four (4) female start-up entrepreneurs from Indiana, who've been in business for two years or less, will be selected to receive a \$2,500 grant and in-depth business development training.** Development training will be provided by the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council, a nationally recognized minority business development organization. Upon completion, these entrepreneurs will be paired with mentors to ensure the continued opportunity for success.

"The Mid-States MSDC is excited to partner with the Madam Walker Legacy Center to deliver programming for Black women businesses," said Carolyn E. Mosby, President/CEO of the Mid-States MSDC. "Women businesses are leading the rise of Black-Owned companies in the U.S. according to statistics and ensuring that Black, women owned businesses are positioned for success it critical to economic vitality."

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply August 28 through September 30, 2020. A two (2) minute "elevator pitch" video presentation, is requested to be submitted on the MWLC website www.madamwalkerlegacycenter.com. Entries will be evaluated by a committee. Finalists selected will be featured virtually this Fall.

The MWLC mission is to engage diverse audiences and promote creativity in philanthropic, entrepreneurial, and artistic expression. By participating in this grant award, the MWLC continues the legacy of Madam C.J. Walker in her commitment to education, entrepreneurship and community.

To learn more about the MWLC, visit the website at www.madamwalkerlegacycenter.com.

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