



Five Women-Owned Small Businesses Awarded 'Fund Her Future' Grants from Block Advisors by H&R Block to Support Growth, Drive Change

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The winners represent the diverse, purpose-driven small businesses today's women entrepreneurs are bringing to market

KANSAS CITY, Mo., July 09, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Block Advisors](#) by [H&R Block](#) today announced the five women-owned small businesses winners of the 'Fund Her Future' grant program, which awarded a combined total of \$100,000 in grants and a year of Block Advisors services, including bookkeeping, payroll, tax preparation, and business formation.

"While we have surpassed our goal to help 500,000 small business owners by 2025, we specifically launched this grant to empower women small business owners who are often underrepresented," said Jamil Khan, Chief Strategy and Small Business Officer at H&R Block. "The response was overwhelming, with thousands of applications from talented women founders who represent the diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences of women entrepreneurs across the nation."

Grand prize grant winner, **Heather Jiang** founded [Allégorie](#) in 2019 to provide leather alternatives through plant-based fashion accessories, ultimately helping to reduce food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Based in New York City, the company repurposes discarded fruits and recycled plastic into durable, stylish bags, backpacks and wallets, bringing innovative sustainability practices to the fashion and food industries. Jiang will receive a \$50,000 grant and a suite of small business services from Block Advisors.

"Knowing that our customers keep coming back over the years and love our products is what gets me out of bed," said Heather Jiang. "Fund Her Future will help us unlock our scalability potential and increase Allégorie's awareness so we can reach more customers and expand our sustainability impact."

The four honorable mentions, each receiving a \$12,500 grant and a year of small business services from Block Advisors, include:

- **Erica Cole** | [No Limbits](#) based in Richmond, VA: As someone with a limb difference, Erica created her company to provide stylish but functional options for those with different mobility, sensory, and functional needs.
- **Ashley Ugarte** | [Hijita](#) based in Austin, TX: Using regenerative and agroforestry practices in her small-batch chocolate company, Ashley, a first-generation American, shares her rich Mexican heritage and passion for chocolate with her customers.
- **Addie Gundry** | [Pluie](#) based in Keller, TX: As a new mom, Addie experienced firsthand the challenges of changing diapers in unhygienic public bathrooms, so she created a patent-protected self-sanitizing changing station.
- **Ameka Coleman** | [Strands of Faith](#) based in Pearl, MS: A former healthcare professional, Ameka started her company after noticing many healthcare patients lacked access to non-toxic haircare products that celebrated their textured hair.

More than 6,000 applicants submitted to the grant program. Narrowing down the winners from the thousands of exceptional submissions was a rigorous process handled by a selection committee comprised of more than 40 H&R Block associates, including members of H&R Block's Women's Network Belonging Group. The five winners stood out for their entrepreneurial tenacity and history of community connection, well-developed plan to leverage the grant to grow their business, and intent to create positive change in the world, amongst other factors.

The five winners representing several industries—including fashion, food, haircare and wellness—will partner with Block Advisors over a 12-month period, receiving grant funding and access to a suite of [tax preparation](#) and business services from Block Advisors, including [business formation](#), [bookkeeping](#), [payroll](#), and [Beneficial Ownership reporting](#).

"We look forward to witnessing how addressing business challenges with additional resources and support can result in significant change," said Khan. "It's an honor to join these women entrepreneurs on their journey toward intentional growth and help them realize their aspirations for business expansion."

To learn more about Block Advisors, visit www.BlockAdvisors.com and visit www.BlockAdvisors.com/FundHerFutureGrant for more information on the 'Fund Her Future' grant program.

About H&R Block

H&R Block, Inc. (NYSE: HRB) provides help and inspires confidence in its clients and communities everywhere through global [tax preparation](#) services, [financial products](#), and [small-business solutions](#). The company blends digital innovation with human expertise and care as it helps people get the best outcome at tax time and also be better with money using its mobile banking app, [Spruce](#). Through [Block Advisors](#) and [Wave](#), the company helps small-business owners thrive with year-round bookkeeping, payroll, advisory, and payment processing solutions. For more information, visit [H&R Block News](#).

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