

Cresco Labs Launches First Industry-Defining Incubator Program for Illinois Adult-Use Market Dispensary Applicants

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Program provides actionable, expert guidance to bring inclusivity to Cannabis Industry

CHICAGO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- **Cresco Labs Inc.** ("Cresco Labs" or the "Company") (CSE:CL) (OTCQX:CRLBF), one of the largest vertically integrated multistate cannabis operators in the United States, announced the official kickoff of its community impact incubator program, part of its SEED (Social Equity and Educational Development) initiative, in Illinois today. As the cannabis industry's first comprehensive incubator program, it is designed to provide qualifying social equity applicants with the resources, knowledge, and guidance needed to successfully apply for dispensary licenses in the Illinois cannabis program. Less than one week into the program's first phase, Cresco Labs is currently engaging 35 groups of applicants – totaling 130 participants – looking to establish businesses in the Illinois cannabis space.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20191106006081/en/>

Cresco Labs CEO and Co-Founder Charlie Bachtell announces participants in the Company's first Community Impact Incubator class (Photo: Business Wire)

Phase one of Cresco's SEED incubator program is comprised of seminar-style sessions during

which accepted participants are equipped with key learnings, best practices and one-on-one guidance from some of the most knowledgeable experts in the regulated cannabis industry. The application series covers general processes including developing an application narrative, creating a dispensary business plan, security and floorplan considerations, as well as financial planning. Participants also receive one-on-one mentoring sessions in between

the group meetings. Cresco Labs internal and external pro-bono experts also review and provide feedback to participants' applications before submitted to ensure they're best positioned for success. The company is committed to providing successful phase one participants with financial support for their dispensary application fees.

"There are communities all over the state and country that have been disproportionately affected by the war on drugs," Said Charlie Bachtell, CEO and Co-Founder. "When the conversation shifts from talking about cannabis for helping with symptoms of epilepsy, to cannabis as a commodity that anyone over the age of 21 can legally buy, it's imperative we shift, too. As good stewards of the industry, we want to make it as inclusive as possible and providing a pathway to opportunity is simply the right thing to do."

Once the state awards this round of successful applications, Cresco Labs will select participants to incubate in every stage of the business process—from site selection, to regulation and compliance, as well as operational support to learn how to run their new cannabis businesses.

"One of the most important aspects of SEED is its focus on longevity," said Barrington Rutherford, SVP of Cresco Labs and a Board Member of the Minority Cannabis Business Association. "We want to perpetuate a long-lasting system of change that will result in greater equality and representation through both a macro and micro lens. Though we hope to have a great impact on the industry, it's also important to us that program participants have the tools they need to own and operate a successful cannabis business that both flourishes and gives back to the community in the long term."

In order to be an Illinois Social Equity Applicant, candidates must meet specific criteria as a resident in a Disproportionately Impacted Area or have a past arrest or have been adjudicated delinquent for any eligible expungement.

"Like many other applicants in the program, I've witnessed the devastating impact the war on drugs has had on our community and the people in it," said Alice Carter, a social equity applicant from Chicago Lawn Neighborhood of Chicago. "This is an amazing opportunity to take something that caused so much devastation and despair and turn it in to something positive for areas all over our state. To me, opening my own business means more than personal success; it's about bringing economic growth, empowerment, redevelopment and jobs back to my community. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to learn from and be recognized by one of the most distinguished companies in the industry—and to know they support the success of myself and my community."

The Community Impact Incubator is a key pillar of Cresco Labs social equity initiatives they are activating nationwide. Other focuses of the SEED initiative include collaborating with community organizations and local

agencies to facilitate expungement and support entry into the cannabis industry, as well as developing systematic outreach efforts to veteran, minority- and women-owned businesses to increase the diversity of vendors supporting the cannabis industry.

For more info on Cresco Labs' SEED Incubator Program, visit crescolabs.com/SEED

About Cresco Labs:

Cresco Labs is one of the largest vertically-integrated multi-state cannabis operators in the United States. Cresco is built to become the most important company in the cannabis industry by combining the most strategic geographic footprint with one of the leading distribution platforms in North America. Employing a consumer-packaged goods ("CPG") approach to cannabis, Cresco's house of brands is designed to meet the needs of all consumer segments and includes some of the most recognized and trusted national brands including Cresco, Remedi and Mindy's, a line of edibles created by James Beard Award-winning chef Mindy Segal. Sunnyside*, Cresco's national dispensary brand, is a wellness-focused retailer designed to build trust, education and convenience for both existing and new cannabis consumers. Recognizing that the cannabis industry is poised to become one of the leading job creators in the country, Cresco has launched the industry's first national comprehensive Social Equity and Educational Development (SEED) initiative designed to ensure that all members of society have the skills, knowledge and opportunity to work in and own businesses in the cannabis industry. Learn more about Cresco Labs at www.crescolabs.com.

Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains "forward-looking information" within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities legislation and may also contain statements that may constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking information and forward-looking statements are not representative of historical facts or information or current condition, but instead represent only the Company's beliefs regarding future events, plans or objectives, many of which, by their nature, are inherently uncertain and outside of the Company's control. Generally, such forward-looking information or forward-looking statements can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as, 'may,' 'will,' 'should,' 'could,' 'would,' 'expects,' 'plans,' 'anticipates,' 'believes,' 'estimates,' 'projects,' 'predicts,' 'potential' or 'continue' or the negative of those forms or other comparable terms. The Company's forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause the Company's actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including but not limited to those risks discussed under "Risk Factors" in the company's CSE Listing Statement filed with SEDAR; and

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