



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2012

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHAIRMAN AUSTIN'S PROPOSED
ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING NEW MBE/WBE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

Offers Five Percent MBE/WBE Credit to Big Firms that Agree to Mentor Protégés

Today, City Council approved an ordinance introduced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and City Council Budget Committee Chairman Carrie Austin; the ordinance will help encourage mentorships and foster improved economic opportunity for MBE and WBE businesses throughout Chicago.

"This innovative program will be another tool that we can use to promote opportunity for minority- and women-owned businesses in Chicago," said Mayor Emanuel. "Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and encouraging their growth and independence is central to our economic development strategy for the city. This is a great ordinance that will help these businesses become self-sufficient and competitive."

The program will work by offering five percentage points of MBE or WBE credit for contractors that agree to take on a mentor/protégé relationship with an MBE or WBE firm. The relationship will be memorialized in writing, approved by Chief Procurement Officer Jamie Rhee, and aimed toward enabling the protégé firm to grow into self-sufficiency and profitability.

"This program will help level the playing field for minority- and women-owned businesses in Chicago and help them advance toward their goals of being competitive job creators in the city," said Chairman Austin. "By incentivizing large firms to take on a mentor relationship, this program will foster opportunity throughout our city's neighborhoods and communities." This announcement is the latest in a series of efforts made by Mayor Emanuel to increase opportunity for MBEs/WBEs. Additional announcements have included the Diversity Credit Program, the Small Business Initiative, and the Graduation Phase-out Program for MBEs/WBEs.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

- The **Graduation Phase-out Program** allows M/WBEs that have exceeded the program's size standards to continue to participate for a period of three years to gradually exit the program, with 75% credit allowed in year one, 50% in year two, and 25% in year three.
- The **Small Business Initiative** encourages small businesses to participate in City-funded construction projects. The program is exclusive to small businesses and is limited to construction projects that are under \$3 million in total cost
- The **Diversity Credit Program** allows private sector firms who also bid on public work to obtain up to five percent M/WBE utilization credit on a City contract for work performed by a certified firm on one or more of the prime's private sector contracts.

###