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**CHICAGO LAUNCHES VENUE LICENSING TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESSES INTERESTED IN  
SHOWCASING LIVE MUSIC, THEATER AND OTHER PERFORMING ARTS**

*Toolkit Modernizes Application Process for Entrepreneurs and Organizations and  
Provides Clarity Across City Departments and Regulations*

The City of Chicago today announces the launch of the [Venue Licensing Toolkit](#) – a new resource available to entrepreneurs and organizations interested in presenting music, theater or other entertainment at permanent venues such as cultural centers, theaters, clubs, bars or movie theaters. The Toolkit modernizes the licensure application process by organizing requisite information from multiple City agencies into one centralized location for applicants seeking licensure for shows and events.

“Chicago’s celebrated art venues are known across the country and across the globe, and are a critical piece of our neighborhood and economic development,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “This resource will facilitate the growth of our already thriving arts community with safe, legal and revenue-generating arts events and performances. We have seen the powerful impact that arts and music hubs have had among our neighborhoods, and we will work with our arts and entertainment partners to continue enriching our communities with the valuable arts experiences that Chicagoans have come to know.”

The new Toolkit serves as a step by step roadmap and harnesses requisite information into a shared resource, with flowcharts, quick links and FAQs to assist in the process. Under the former system, applicants were required to access various regulations and steps by multiple city agencies and separate sites. The centralized center will help applicants make informed decisions and expeditiously navigate the required appointments, inspections and deadlines.

“The vitality of Chicago’s next generation of artists and creative entrepreneurs depends on access to arts infrastructure including venues to present their work,” said Michelle T. Boone, Commissioner for the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. “We have already seen the tremendous impact that arts and music hubs have had on communities like Uptown, Washington Park and Pilsen. The Venue Licensing Toolkit will further support this development and our broader Chicago Cultural Plan by optimizing city policies and regulations and attracting and retaining artists and creative professionals.”

The Toolkit assists applicants in securing two different license types:

- **A Public Place of Amusement (PPA) License:** is required to produce, present or conduct any type of amusement. Venues charging an admission fee or minimum purchase requirement for any type of entertainment or amusement require a PPA. Venues with a capacity of 100 or more people that offer any entertainment or amusement require a PPA, regardless of whether an admission fee or minimum purchase requirement is charged. In addition, a PPA is required if the venue is rented out or used by other entities for holding events or other amusements.
- **The Performing Arts Venue (PAV) License:** a special class of PPA license – was created to accommodate Chicago’s smaller theaters. This license is required for any establishment providing live theatrical or other live cultural performances in a venue with an aggregate maximum capacity of 500 of all performance spaces in the building. The aggregate maximum capacity may be up to 1000 (of all assembly spaces) if the theater is incidental to the use of a building that is primarily a church, school or other charitable organization. A PAV license holder cannot provide live music.

Ensuring applicants ease and access in obtaining licenses is particularly important. Chicago attracts new events and concerts each year, in addition to recurring neighborhood and community festivals. The vast majority of these require licensure to take place, as nearly 85 percent of neighborhood festivals have a music performance, and more than 1,800 music acts took the stage during 2014 festivals.

According to [2010 figures](#) from Americans for the Arts, nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences contributed \$2.2 billion in annual direct economic activity to the City of Chicago, and events spending by arts and culture audiences totaled \$989.8 million, excluding the cost of the admission. This number is larger when accounting for for-profit clubs and music venues. With the ease provided by the Toolkit, the numbers of permits granted and revenue boosting events across neighborhoods are expected to increase.

The Venue Licensing Toolkit, available at [cityofchicago.org/VenueLicensingToolkit](http://cityofchicago.org/VenueLicensingToolkit), is an citywide initiative of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events’ (DCASE) Music Industry Program, and was created in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection (BACP) and its Small Business Center, the Chicago Fire Department, the Chicago Department of Buildings (DOB), the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Food Protection Program, the Department of Planning and Development and its Zoning Ordinance Administration, the Department of Finance (DOF), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Chicago Police Department.

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