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**YEAR-ROUND SIDEWALK CAFÉ PERMITS EXTEND PATIO SEASON FOR 1,200 CHICAGO RESTAURANTS**

*Mayor's small business reforms aimed at simplifying licensing process*

Chicago City Council today approved Mayor Emanuel's ordinance that extends the city's outdoor patio use year-round. The new ordinance is among the first in a series of small business reforms aimed to give new tools for entrepreneurs to plan and grow their businesses, cut red tape, improve transparency and encourage innovation in every part of the city. These reforms are based on feedback from the small business community and through the Chicago Mayoral Business Council launched in March.

"Our goal is to make changes to our business regulations that support growth – whether that's reducing the costs for starting a new business or letting eateries open up the sidewalk café on a December day," Mayor Emanuel said. "These initiatives are designed to remove obstacles for business owners."

The ordinance makes the current sidewalk café permit valid year-round, allowing owners the flexibility to operate when Chicago weather allows instead of the current nine-month period that runs from March 1 to December 1. The new period will still begin March 1 but will now last until the end of February the following year. The new permitting structure allows the more than 1,200 restaurant owners with sidewalk cafes to increase their profit season without increasing their permit cost and maintain their service footprint year round. The change will apply immediately to the more than 900 sidewalk café permits already issued in 2018 and any that will be issued over the remainder of this year.

This new initiative is part of the Mayor's Small Business Reforms and ongoing commitment to make small business growth a priority of his administration, highlighted by the following accomplishments:

- Numerous license fees have been reduced, benefitting 10,000 business owners.
- License Reform has cut the total number of business licenses from 117 to 40.
- Inspection Streamlining has reduced the number of inspections for more than 2,000 businesses and helped businesses open an average of 30 days faster.
- The Restaurant Startup Program has more than doubled health inspection passage rates and helped participating restaurants open an average of 45 days earlier.
- Today more than 70 delegate agencies bring indispensable business support to the neighborhoods.

- More than \$11 million has been invested in 108 South and West Side businesses through the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund and Retail Thrive Zones programs.

In addition to the recently announced small business initiatives, the City is also planning to continue to invest millions of dollars directly into hundreds of businesses on the South and West Sides through the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund and Retail Thrive Zones Initiative. In March, Mayor Emanuel announced the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund will make an additional \$6 million available as grants to small businesses through a financing plan approved by City Council. Since the program was created in 2016, \$6.4 million in proceeds has been awarded to 57 small businesses in two funding rounds. A third application round for the \$6 million made available by City Council could be announced later this year.

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