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NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK SPOTLIGHTS CONTRIBUTIONS OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Business support and resources reaffirm ongoing commitment to Chicago's business owners and entrepreneurs.

CHICAGO –Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced recent business support enhancements and initiatives ahead of National Small Business Week (NSBW). This year, NSBW takes place April 28th to May 4th and recognizes the hard work, ingenuity, and contributions to the economy of small business owners. NSBW, sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), acknowledges the critical contributions of entrepreneurs and small business owners.

"This National Small Business Week, we celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit that drives Chicago's economic vitality," said Mayor Brandon Johnson. "Our commitment to enhancing support and providing resources to small businesses underscores our dedication to nurturing the resilience and growth of every local business owner in our great city. And by providing targeted initiatives and programs, we empower them to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace."

"National Small Business Week celebrates the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "Chicago's small businesses contribute to the vitality of commercial corridors and I'm proud of the city's resources and support to ensure their lasting success and resilience."

BACP recent efforts include:

- **Empowering businesses with detailed license application information online:** BACP's website now features easy to read, comprehensive guidance on how to obtain a business license including pages featuring required documents and application steps.
- **Increasing transparency by displaying live in-person service wait times at the Small Business Center:** Businesses can now see live in-person service wait times at the Small Business Center online. The live-updated readout provides businesses with the predictability they need when coming to the Center for licensing services. Wait times are also displayed on a screen in the Small Business Center. See live wait times on the "Visit Us" button at Chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing.
- **Enhancing predictability by displaying live on-line license application wait times:** Businesses applying for their license online are now provided with a real-time license application wait time estimate upon initially submitting their application. This new feature provides greater transparency and predictability by displaying the average amount of time it will take for the applicant to hear back from the BACP representative reviewing their application.
- **Offering a remote queuing system for in-person visits to the Small Business Center:** Businesses can now get a place in line to meet with a business consultant at the Small

Business Center from the comfort of their phone or computer. Services tickets are also provided onsite. To get in line, visit [Chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing](https://www.chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing).

- **Celebrating business ownership:** A selfie station has been placed outside of the Small Business Center to serve as a creative and engaging way to celebrate the accomplishments of business owners. BACP encourages newly licensed businesses to share their selfie photos on social media and tag @ChicagoBACP. BACP shares photos to encourage participation, boost visibility, and build community among small business owners.
- **Hosting webinars:** BACP will conduct webinars to provide in-depth information on various business topics, offering a platform for Q&A sessions.
- **Partnering with business advocacy groups:** BACP will continue its collaboration with organizations like the SBA and Neighborhood Business Development Centers to amplify the reach of business educational materials and initiatives.
- **Utilizing social media:** Throughout the week, BACP will share consumer protection tips on its social media platforms using #NSBW2024 to build awareness.
- **Launching the BACP Social Media Toolkit webpage:** The webpage is a resource for BACP partners and the public to help share resources and information about Chicago's business education programs. Graphics and flyers, along with sample text, can be used to help cross-promote BACP's most popular programs. Learn more by visiting [Chicago.gov/BACPSocial](https://www.chicago.gov/BACPSocial).
- **Highlighting the Shop Local Chicago campaign:** The campaign outlines the benefits of shopping local such as the shopping experience, workforce contribution, and local economy boost. Learn more about the ongoing campaign by visiting [Chicago.gov/ShopLocal](https://www.chicago.gov/ShopLocal).

"As the SBA celebrates more than 60 years of National Small Business Week, we're proud to join BACP in recognizing the tenacity of Chicago's diverse entrepreneurs who power Chicago's economy and contribute to economic growth at a local, regional and national level," said White House-appointed SBA Great Lakes Regional Administrator Geri Aglipay. "Given the record 17 million-plus new small business applications led by women and minorities in the last four years under President Biden, the SBA's Regional and Illinois District Offices' longtime partnership with BACP and the City of Chicago help catalyze and sustain neighborhood growth and wealth-building for Chicago's entrepreneurs. Small businesses make Chicago, the Great Lakes region and America more innovative and globally competitive."

"As a dedicated BACP partner and Neighborhood Business Development Center, we recognize National Small Business Week as an invaluable opportunity to honor the resilience and ingenuity of entrepreneurs," said Jennifer Aguilar, Executive Director, Little Village Chamber of Commerce. "This week, we stand alongside small businesses, offering unwavering support and essential resources to fuel their growth and success."

In recognition of NSBW, BACP will hold educational webinars. To learn more and to register for a webinar, visit [Chicago.gov/BACPWebinars](https://www.chicago.gov/BACPWebinars).

- Tuesday, April 30th at 10:00 a.m.: Business Licensing 101 presented by BACP.
- Wednesday, May 1st at 3:00 p.m.: City Inspections - Ask Questions, Get Answers presented by the City of Chicago.
- Thursday, May 2nd at 10:00 a.m.: Access Capital to Buy or Renovate Your Small presented by SomerCor.
- Friday, May 3rd at 9:30 a.m.: Building on America's Small Business Boom presented by the U.S. SBA.

BACP ensures a fair and vibrant marketplace for businesses, workers, and consumers in the City of Chicago. BACP licenses businesses and public vehicles, regulates business activity, protects consumers from fraud, enforces Chicago's labor laws, partners with business service organizations, and provides education and resources for businesses. Learn more about by visiting [Chicago.gov/BACP](https://www.chicago.gov/BACP).