



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHICAGO SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANTEES ANNOUNCED, PROGRAM  
DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN CHICAGO'S SMALL BUSINESSES TO BETTER ACCESS  
CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES**

*Grantees will provide community level targeted support to prepare small businesses to compete for public and private sector contracts*

**CHICAGO** – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced the awardees of the Encouraging Diversity, Growth, and Equity (EDGE) Supplier Development Program Grant. The Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) and the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (IHCC), with support from Build Bronzeville, Greater Chatham Initiative, Little Village Chamber of Commerce, and Logan Square Chamber of Commerce, were selected to provide capacity-building supplier development programming to help support small business owners interested in contracting with the City of Chicago, as well as opportunities to become suppliers for municipalities and corporations. The program will also provide targeted support and resources to assist firms who are generally selected as subcontractors on how to become prime contractors on City funded projects.

"Small businesses in all neighborhoods play a crucial role in our economy, bringing diverse perspectives, innovation, and talent," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Through the EDGE Chicago Supplier Development Program, we will continue to expand opportunities for these pillars of industry, and community, to contract with government and create a strong, inclusive local economy that uplifts small business and vendors."

"In order to build a thriving and inclusive city, we must provide opportunities for Chicago small businesses to participate in city contracting," said **BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer**. "The EDGE Chicago Supplier Development Program will empower businesses to succeed and foster economic growth that benefits all Chicagoans."

These organizations will work together to design culturally relevant programming and have strong relationships at the community level to connect individual small businesses with relevant opportunities. They will also play an integral part in assuring small businesses are informed and prepared for contracting opportunities. In all aspects of the program, the grantees will strengthen small business' skills and knowledge within contracting, specifically as it relates to accessing capital, financial management, estimating and bidding, business planning, and more.

"The EDGE Chicago Supplier Development Program is a game-changer for minority and women-owned businesses, and we are excited to grow and expand our programs to support more suppliers," said **Jaime di Paulo, President and CEO of Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**.

“The program demonstrates the city's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity in contracting opportunities.”

“We look forward to combining our expertise with the goals of the EDGE Chicago Supplier Development Program,” said **Emilia DiMenco, President and CEO of Women’s Business Development Center**. “Together, we can create a city where every entrepreneur, regardless of their background, has a chance to thrive and contribute to our shared prosperity.”

“Greater Chatham Initiative is excited about participating in the EDGE Program”, said **Nedra Sims Fears, Executive Director of Greater Chatham Initiative**. “We welcome the opportunity to continue our support of minority and women-owned businesses as we collectively focus on enhancing the economic impact in our communities.”

Through its EDGE Program, BACP supports and advocates for Chicago’s small business ecosystem by creating robust initiatives and programs that target businesses with limited or no experience contracting with the City of Chicago to increase their participation in economic development and government contracting.

Businesses interested in assistance offered by the program, can apply by visiting the BACP EDGE Chicago Supplier Development Program [online application](#). For assistance with the application, please email [edge@cityofchicago.org](mailto:edge@cityofchicago.org).

For more information about the program, visit [Chicago.gov/EDGE](https://chicago.gov/EDGE).

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