



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMALL BUSINESS EXPO TO OFFER WIDE-RANGE OF BUSINESS RESOURCES

The free expo will feature exhibitors, workshops, and networking to help business owners and entrepreneurs launch and expand in Chicago

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), along with sponsor Western Union, announced the free BACP Small Business Expo will take place on Saturday, September 17th from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Truman College, McKeon Building, in Chicago’s Uptown neighborhood. The expo will feature resources from nonprofit and government agencies, workshops presented by local business service organizations, and a networking hour to meet and connect with other current and aspiring business owners. A keynote address by entrepreneur Corey Gilkey, will leave attendees with tangible takeaways to pursue their dreams of business ownership.

“I am thrilled that our city, through BACP, is able to offer this incredible opportunity so many entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “As our small businesses continue grow and multiply, they are able to further strengthen and diversify our recovering economy. Moreover, by supporting our local businesses, we are able to revitalize our neighborhoods and drive the long-term, sustainable development that is necessary for the future prosperity of our city.”

The expo will offer free resources to business owners and entrepreneurs, with the opportunity to network, consult, gather information and expert advice on topics such as licensing, financing, and business planning. Over 25 government and non-profit agencies will be onsite to offer one-on-one guidance. Additionally, City of Chicago business licensing consultants will be on hand to help attendees apply or renew for a business license, walk through the steps of obtaining a business license, or make an appointment for additional counseling at City Hall.

“I encourage current and emerging business owners to come out and take advantage of the free resources,” said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. “Our Small Business Expos provide valuable professional resources for attendees no matter where they are in the business journey. The access to such information in one location is unparalleled.”

Also available to attendees will be free professional headshots to be used for marketing materials, along with sales pitch training, consumer protection information, financial resources, Chicago labor laws compliance information, and a tax clinic. The upcoming expo at Truman College is made possible through a partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago.

The keynote speaker will be Corey Gilkey, a charismatic and experienced entrepreneurial leader. He is the founder of Leaders1354, Focusgroup Inc., and additional business ventures with social missions. His upcoming projects intersect creativity, passion, and community to address housing, hospitality, and fashion. He actively works to carry forward the values of community empowerment through the creation of leadership opportunities, mentorship, artistry, and innovation.

“Our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become,” said Corey Gilkey. “I look forward to sharing the driving forces behind my entrepreneur mindset.”

Sponsored by Western Union, the BACP Small Business Expo provides free, expert advice to entrepreneurs on every stage of their journey on topics including licensing, marketing, financing, and business planning. The expo is part of the City’s effort to support neighborhood businesses and economic development by leveraging local business support resources.

“Small businesses are drivers of economic growth through local job creation and revitalization of communities and cities,” said Mario Hernandez, Director of Public Affairs at Western Union. “Western Union supports their entrepreneurial spirit by sponsoring the BACP Small Business Expo to provide current and future business owners, including immigrant entrepreneurs, the resources they need to thrive.”

The Saturday, September 17th expo will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Truman College, located at 1145 W. Wilson Ave. (McKeon Building). The schedule is as follows:

Exhibitor Hall: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Attendees can visit exhibitors, get expert advice, and receive free professional headshots.

Keynote Speaker: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Conversation with Corey Gilkey

Workshops: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Steps to Start a Small Business

Presented by Uptown United and Uptown Chamber of Commerce

Show Me the Money - SBA Loan Programs for Small Businesses

Presented by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Networking Hour: 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Attendees can participate in a one-hour networking session on building and growing a business, sponsored by City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin.

To register for the free BACP Small Business Expo, visit Chicago.gov/BizExpo. For more information call (312) 744-2086 or email BACPoutreach@cityofchicago.org. For information about BACP, visit Chicago.gov/BACP.

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