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**BACP “EMPOWER HOUR: CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMISSIONER” LAUNCHES TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE IN CHICAGO’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

*Monthly remote chat to highlight a business owner success story and inspire future entrepreneurs*

**CHICAGO** – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced the launch of “Empower Hour: Conversation with the Commissioner.” The free webinar series will occur monthly and feature Chicago business owners sharing their success and setbacks and their role in shaping Chicago’s business community. Conversations will feature the BACP Commissioner and a prominent business owner in a candid interaction that allows for open and productive dialogue. The first Empower Hour will take place on Thursday, June 16 at 2:00 p.m.

“The conversation with Chicago’s business owners will offer a glimpse into how they launched, and the lessons learned along the way,” said Kenneth J. Meyer, BACP Commissioner. “The videoconference conversations are a comfortable setting for guests and attendees to have a sincere and beneficial conversations.”

The first guest will be Angela Barnes, co-owner of Nobody’s Darling Bar located in Andersonville. The Black-owned and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+)-owned and James Beard award semifinalist bar opened in May 2021. Barnes and co-owner, Renauda Riddle envisioning a safe space for LGBTQ+ people to enjoy lively music while sipping on delectable craft cocktails. As part of their commitment to support the LGBTQ+ business community, Nobody’s Darling sources ingredients from Black- and LGBTQ+-owned businesses, including spirits used in their cocktails. The collaborative efforts showcase the power of uplifting businesses.

The June Empower Hour conversation will also touch on issues relevant topics to LGBTQ+ business owners, including workplace inclusion and access to capital. Chicago has long been at the forefront of the LGBTQ+ rights movement and a recent LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index by Out Leadership states that the Illinois economy may have grown 3% because of its inclusive approach.

“I am thrilled to talk about the purpose behind cultivating a space that welcomes everyone,” said Angela Barnes, co-owner of Nobody’s Darling Bar. “It’s important current

and future business owners hear stories that are relatable and ignite them to turn their passion into a business.”

Empower Hour will provide key takeaways for business owners and entrepreneurs as they launch or expand their business in Chicago. Conversations will include fascinating and timely topics on entrepreneurship, industry trends and opportunities. The conversation will conclude with the opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

To register to attend the upcoming Empower Hour, visit [Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation](https://chicago.gov/BusinessEducation). For questions, call (312) 744-2086 or email [BACPoutreach@cityofchicago.org](mailto:BACPoutreach@cityofchicago.org).

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