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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ISSUES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR GOOD FOOD FUND AND EARLY-STAGE FOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROGRAMS

Two programs aimed to support small food businesses and food entrepreneurs in communities with inequitable food access

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Good Food Fund and the Early-Stage Food Incubator Programs. The purpose of these two programs is to provide support for food entrepreneurs in communities with inequitable food access, where the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing disparities within the food industry. The Good Food Fund and the Early-Stage Food Incubator programs were designed after intensive community engagement with the Food Equity Council and seek to help expand, enhance, and restore the food industry using an equity and community-based approach.

“All Chicagoans deserve access to high quality, local, nourishing, and most importantly, delicious foods,” **said Mayor Brandon Johnson.** “Through the Good Food Fund and the Early-Stage Food Incubator Program, we can better support our local food businesses and entrepreneurs as they help Chicago grow as the primary food hub in the country while also filling in the gap by providing access to communities that are experiencing food insecurity.”

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated inequitable food access in communities with historic disinvestment. The Good Food Fund and the Early-Stage Incubator Program are designed to fill in this gap within the food ecosystem by providing access to capital as well as technical assistance to help regenerate the food industry. The goals of both programs are to: increase access to culturally relevant and nourishing food on the South and West sides, increase business ownership and jobs in the food industry, create stronger and more sustainable local food economies and increase local sourcing and supply of locally grown and regionally produced foods.



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“The City is committed to increasing access to affordable food and supporting food entrepreneurs across all neighborhoods,” **said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer.** “Through the Good Food Fund RFP and the Early-Stage Food Incubator RFP, BACP will work with the selected delegate agencies to provide community-level assistance to local small food businesses and entrepreneurs. Through sector-specific support, we can focus on equity and innovation strategies that will transform communities, increase jobs, and sustain businesses.”

These programs were designed alongside the [Food Equity Council](#), a private-public partnership dedicated to transforming Chicago’s food system into one that is just and equitable. The BIPOC food business workgroup, one of the 4 workgroups of the Food Equity Council, is committed to exploring ways that the City can support BIPOC Food Businesses, with a focus on access to capital.

“With the launch of the Good Food Fund, Chicago is addressing the disparities and reducing the barriers faced by food businesses in communities that have been historically disinvested,” **said Camille Kerr, Founder and Principle of Upside Down Consulting and Co-Lead of the BIPOC Food Business Workgroup of the Food Equity Council.** “We are so excited to see how accessible, community-centered capital will help facilitate South and West side food entrepreneurs to bring food, innovation, and joy to their communities.”

Good Food Fund RFP (\$7 Million): The City will award one organization the opportunity to design and manage a \$5 million fund. The fund will provide sub-grants to businesses across the food ecosystem (production, distribution, processing, retail) in communities with inequitable food access. The remaining \$2 million will fund the administration of the Good Food Fund and the operations required to offer highly-specialized food industry-specific coaching for two years. In addition, the chosen delegate agency will develop an advisory board which will provide input on the eligibility criteria for fund recipients and support with community outreach. The chosen delegate agency will also be encouraged to grow the fund to ensure sustainability. The [RFP](#) submissions must be completed by September 25, 2023, at 12:00PM (noon). Those interested in learning more about this opportunity can [register](#) for the pre-submittal conference on September 6, 2023, at 10:00AM.

Early-Stage Food Incubator RFP (\$2 Million): The City expects to award 4-6 community-based organizations funds for innovative food incubator programs. Participants will design custom programs that offer a range of technical assistance and capacity building support, such as: mentorship/apprenticeship programs, food stall rentals, kitchen and commercial space, retail pop-ups, co-working or office space and more. Selected organizations will receive a one-year award of \$300,000 to



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\$400,000. The [RFP](#) submissions must be completed by October 10, 2023, at 12:00PM (noon). Those interested in learning more about this opportunity can [register](#) for the pre-submittal conference on September 6, 2023, at 11:00AM.

The pre-submittal conferences are optional, but highly encouraged.

The Good Food Fund and the Early-Stage Food Incubator Programs are both a part of the Chicago Recovery Plan, the City's plan to create an equity-based investment strategy to catalyze a sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chicago Recovery Plan invests holistically in communities and industries hardest hit by the pandemic to support equitable economic recovery across the city.

To learn more about BACP's Recovery Plan efforts, please visit Chicago.gov/BACPrecoveryplan.

To learn more about Chicago's Food Equity Council, please visit: Chicago.gov/ChicagoFoodEquityCouncil

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