



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 5, 2023

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SMALL BUSINESS EXPO TO SERVE AS HUB FOR RESOURCES AND COLLABORATION FOR CHICAGO'S SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The free upcoming expo to fuel growth, innovation, and youth entrepreneurship

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced the BACP Small Business Expo will take place on Saturday, September 30th from 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Malcolm X College. The free expo celebrates the spirit of entrepreneurship, fosters innovation, and provides invaluable resources for current and future small business owners. The free expo will kick-off with breakfast networking and offer resources from nonprofit and government agencies, workshops, and a keynote address by Kim Lewis, CEO and Co-Founder of CurlMix, a natural hair care company. Additionally, as the last expo of 2023, the event will include extensive resources and an enterprising workshop for the next generation of business leaders at the 'Chi Youthpreneur Corner.' To register and learn more, visit Chicago.gov/BizExpo.

"The Small Business Expo celebrates the vitality of our city's small businesses and this year it will recognize the potential of our youth to shape the business landscape of tomorrow," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Chicago shines brighter when our small businesses and youth join forces to ignite new opportunities and drive positive change. In partnership with BACP, my administration will always champion our talented and diverse business community."

A new highlight of the expo will be the 'Chi Youthpreneur Corner,' an engaging space designed to inspire, educate, and connect young minds eager to venture into the business world. This corner will feature youth-targeted business organizations and an interactive workshop on startup fundamentals.

"The BACP Small Business Expo brings together the city's vibrant entrepreneurial community," said **BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer**. "This expo is about providing essential resources and knowledge for starting and growing a business in Chicago. Also, we're introducing an exciting new element—the Chi Youthpreneur Corner—dedicated to nurturing the dreams of young business leaders."

The expo caters to new and established entrepreneurs and young innovators alike with free resources, networking, and insights into licensing, financing, marketing, and business planning. Over 25 government and non-profit agencies will provide personalized guidance, including City of Chicago business licensing consultants. Attendees will also have access to free headshots, consumer protection information, Chicago labor law compliance information, and financial resources including a tax clinic.

The keynote speaker will be Kim Lewis, Co-Founder of CurlMix, a Chicago-based, Black-owned and operated natural hair care company. As a thought leader and advocate for natural hair care, Kim serves as an inspiration for both consumers and fellow entrepreneurs. Her story is a testament to the transformative power of authenticity, innovation, and the relentless pursuit of one's passion.

“Through CurlMix, I’ve witnessed the incredible power of self-care and self-love that comes with nurturing our hair the way nature intended,” said **Kim Lewis, Co-Founder of CurlMix**. “As the Small Business Expo Keynote Speaker, I’m excited to share my journey of entrepreneurship, and the importance of staying true to your values.”

The Saturday, September 30th expo will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Malcolm X College, located at 1900 West Jackson Blvd. The expo schedule:

Registration and Expo Opens: 8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m.

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

Welcome and Networking Breakfast: 9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

Attendees can participate in a breakfast networking session sponsored by the Chicago Treasurer’s Office

Exhibitor Hall Reopens: 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

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

Keynote Speaker: 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Kim Lewis, CEO and Co-Founder of CurlMix

Workshops: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

When Should I Consider Taking on Debt

Presented by Wintrust Bank

Starting a Business 101

Presented by Allies for Community Business

ChatGPT and More: Boost Small Business Marketing with Generative AI

Presented by Score Chicago

Chi Youthpreneur: Business Basics

Presented by Terrell Allen, TSA Media

Exhibitor Hall Reopens: 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

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

In partnership with City of Chicago Colleges and the Chicago Treasurer’s Office, the upcoming expo is sponsored by Chase Bank, CIBC Bank, Western Union, and Wintrust Bank.

“As a dedicated sponsor of the Small Business Expo, Western Union is invested in fueling the dreams and ambitions of entrepreneurs,” said **Mario Hernández, Director of Public Affairs at Western Union**. “We are honored to support the expo and stand beside the small business community, including immigrant entrepreneurs, who enrich our communities with their resilience and innovation.”

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

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