



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 15, 2022

**CONTACT:**

Elisa Sledzinska

312.744.1973

[Elisa.Sledzinska@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Elisa.Sledzinska@cityofchicago.org)

**UPCOMING BACP SMALL BUSINESS EXPO WILL TAKE PLACE IN-PERSON**

*The free expo returns offering business resources, workshops, and networking in-person*

**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 return to an in-person event to be held on Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Kennedy-King College. The expo will feature an opportunity to connect with industry experts and government agencies in the exhibitor hall, educational workshops presented by local business service organizations, an inspiring keynote address, and a networking hour to meet with other current and aspiring business owners. Nearly two years after the last in-person expo, BACP is eager to welcome back business owners and entrepreneurs as the City plans an equitable and sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This expo will provide Chicago's small businesses with the resources they need to contribute to our growing economy and the neighborhoods they reside in," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I thank BACP for continuing to put on this important event, which will allow small business owners to connect with one another and advance in their respective industries, as well as further reinforce the fact that our small businesses are at the backbone of our city."

"Small businesses are the key to advancing Chicago's economy, and we must support them by offering programs and resources they need to launch or expand," said Kenneth J. Meyer, BACP Commissioner. "There are benefits of in-person events such as brand building and networking to make connections. We have seen measurable success with our remote expos, but I look forward to the expo returning to Kennedy-King College, the site of our last expo. This in-person expo is our homecoming."

The expo will provide business owners and entrepreneurs with a forum to get expert advice and learn new business strategies. During the expo, nearly 30 government and non-profit agencies essential to entrepreneurship will be onsite to provide important services and resources, including City business licensing experts. 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. Garnered as a top expo for Chicago's business community, pre-pandemic attendance drew in crowds of over 300 attendees. The

upcoming expo at Kennedy-King College is made possible through a partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago.

The keynote speaker will be Jonatan Rodriguez, Chief Marketing Officer for El Encanto Products, Inc. El Encanto Products, Inc. is a Hispanic, family-owned wholesale grocer distributor. The company was founded in 2009 and Jonatan has been involved since then. As a first-generation college graduate, with a degree in Marketing, he has utilized his education and ingenuity to bring a new perspective to the grocery industry. In 2019, at the age of 20, Jonatan created an all-natural fruit juice brand, Encanto Juice, which can be found across Chicagoland and the Midwest. El Encanto Products, Inc. carries over 2,000 products and services to grocery stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, and more in 11 states across the Midwest region.

“El Encanto Products, Inc. was created in Chicago, an idea that came to fruition when my family emigrated from Mexico and found haven in this City,” said Jonatan Rodriguez, Chief Marketing Officer, El Encanto Products, Inc. “I am proud to share the story of my career, our company and the resources and support that helped us along the way.”

Sponsored by Western Union, the BACP Remote 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.

“Western Union has been a proud sponsor of the expo series for over 6 years,” said Mario Hernández, Director of Public Affairs, Western Union. “I am thrilled the expo will be back in-person and encourage business owners and entrepreneurs to take advantage of this free resource, especially our immigrant community which is vital to our small business economy.”

The Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> expo will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Kennedy-King College, located at 740 West 63rd Street (U 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.

Jonatan Rodriguez, Chief Marketing Officer, El Encanto Products, Inc.

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

From Idea to True Income: Business Planning 101

*Presented by Greater Southwest Development Corporation*

Capital Options for Business Owners

*Presented by the Women's Business Development Center*

Mobile App Awareness to Grow Your Business  
*Presented by SCORE Chicago*

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.

The expo is part of a series of free BACP Small Business Expos. The expo is part of the City's effort to support neighborhood businesses and economic development by leveraging local business support resources.

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

###