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OVER 70 CHICAGO BUSINESS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS WILL RECEIVE FUNDING TO DELIVER NO-COST BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO START-UP ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

The hyper-local support is part of the Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDC) grant program designed to support and strengthen the small business ecosystem

CHICAGO –Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced the grantees of the BACP Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDC) grant program. Participants of the \$3.3 million NBDC program will deliver highly specialized business programs and services that help entrepreneurs start, and business owners grow or sustain their small businesses, as well as assist their program peers to build their respective capacities. The long-standing program provides funding to nonprofit local business service organizations, such as economic development corporations and chambers of commerce, to deliver free and confidential business assistance programs that benefit communities in every corner of the city. The goal of the NBDC program is to strengthen the small business ecosystem while also addressing the racial and ethnic wealth gap in Chicago. The program ensures alignment with the ever-evolving needs of the diverse business community of the city.

"The NBDC grants program is just one example of the many ways the City of Chicago is working to support our small business community as they continue to recover from the aftermath of the pandemic," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Through professional development opportunities, technical training, and ongoing support, this program will help small businesses across Chicago build capacity, grow sustainably, and make our economy that much more resilient."

"Chicago is a city with a strong, engaged business community and this program enhances our efforts to connect with small business needs," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "I encourage start-ups and established businesses to tap into their local NBDC. The no-cost programs and services can assist from business idea, launch and expansion."

The NBDC program is designed to drive collaboration and coordination among grantees to reach small business owners and entrepreneurs, especially Black, Latinx, women, immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs. Business assistance programs play a critical role in enabling community wealth building by supporting residents in exercising ownership, acquiring assets, getting access to fair capital, creating inclusive, living wage jobs; and being empowered and equipped to play a critical role in the revitalization of their neighborhood. As such, the NBDC program will align its resources to promote equitable and inclusive growth and recovery across the entire city of Chicago, with a focus on the most underserved and underinvested communities.

This year, BACP awarded 18 new grantees to the program which further reinforced efforts of providing business resources in every corner of Chicago. The new 2023/2024 BACP Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDCs) Program delegate agencies include:

- Allies for Community Business, Inc.
- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Calumet Area Industrial Commission
- Center for Changing Lives
- Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Inc.
- Greater Chatham Initiative, Inc
- Industrial Council of Near West Chicago DBA The Hatchery Chicago
- Jefferson Park Chamber of Commerce
- Lawndale Business Renaissance Association
- Lawndale Christian Development Corporation
- Little Village Community Foundation Corp.
- New Covenant Community Development Corporation
- Northalsted Area Merchants Association
- River North Association, Ltd.
- Service Corps of Retired Executives Association (SCORE)
- Story & Reach Initiatives, Inc.
- Woodlawn Chamber of Commerce
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

NBDC grantees will work in partnership with BACP to provide entrepreneurs, business owners, and NBDC peers, with expert consultation, training and resources to help address common challenges and support key City priorities. NBDCs have a strong neighborhood network and coordinate efforts with local aldermen, the City, and other community partners. NBDCs have specialized program types dedicated to assisting start-up entrepreneurs and current business owners during every phase of their journey. NBDCs will also serve as conduits for sharing BACP business-related information to the business community. For the full list of NBDC grantees, please visit [Chicago.gov/NBDC](https://chicago.gov/NBDC).

“We are proud to be able to further expand our reach to low-income immigrant and refugee communities through the Neighborhood Business Development Center program,” said Dennis Mondero, Executive Director, Chinese Mutual Aid Association. “As a community-based organization, we value the resources the City of Chicago offers to support our efforts. As a grantee of this program, we look forward to creating opportunities of entrepreneurship and wealth building within Asian American community.”

“As a grantee of the program, we are excited to grow our network and provide more onsite training, classes, and counseling to Chicago’s current and future business owners,” said Andrew Fogaty, Executive Director, 36Squared Business Incubator. “We not only have personal counseling available, but we also have physical space for entrepreneurs to launch and grow their business. The Neighborhood Business Development Center program creates great opportunities and possibilities for the business community and city.”

NBDCs can help start-up entrepreneurs, and existing business owners, with information about a particular neighborhood, getting a new small business started, connecting businesses to financial resources, networking opportunities, connecting to the local community, and more. For more information about the NBDC program, please visit [Chicago.gov/NBDC](https://chicago.gov/NBDC).

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