



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES FIRST ROUND OF INNOVATION LOAN FUND PROJECTS

*City Departments Proposed Projects that Improve Service Delivery,
Increase Revenue Gains and Create Efficiencies*

CHICAGO - Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the first round of winning Innovation Loan Fund proposals submitted by City Departments that will improve cost savings, revenue gains, and service delivery in the Department of Finance, BACP and the Department of Buildings. The Innovation Loan Fund is a new tool created during the 2012 budget process to incentivize and encourage City Departments to be innovative and entrepreneurial in thinking about how City government can function more efficiently on behalf of the taxpayers.

"As a City we must constantly push the envelope, and strive for more innovative solutions so we can deliver the highest quality service possible. The Innovation Loan Fund will encourage Department employees at every level of City government to submit their ideas on how we can run this city more effectively and cost efficiently," said Mayor Emanuel.

The following proposals were selected and will receive a total of \$2 million from the \$20 million set aside for the projects:

- **Walk-In Payment Location Options - Dept. of Finance**

- **Loan Amount: \$600,000 - Paid back in five years**

Today, the convenience of walk-in payments is provided through only five city-owned and operated payment sites. By developing a payment channel for use with third-parties that could access our central cashiering system in real-time, the number of walk-in payment locations would multiply a hundred fold. This would create convenient payment locations for residents, in places such as grocery stores or currency exchanges. The benefits of this project are the following:

- Service to residents would improve due to the increase in walk-in payment locations, there would also be reduced traffic at current locations.
- The City has a consolidated cashiering and revenue reporting ability. Many other municipalities, such as Cook County, have separate cashiering and revenue reporting systems. Implementing this project expands the City's ability to accept



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real-time payments, while having the ability to generate and provide revenue reporting at a consolidated level.

- **Centralized Online Payment Center – Dept. of Finance**
Loan Amount: \$450,000 – Paid back in five years

Today, if a resident wants to make a payment via the web, they have to search and navigate through various department web pages to locate web-based payment pages. This decentralized approach can be a difficult and confusing for a resident. It also ends up undermining the opportunity for the City to receive an immediate payment. The goal of this project is to develop a consolidated approach for web-based payments to simplify and improve the customer experience. The benefits of this project are the following:

- By making it easier for residents to make web-payments, the City will increase revenue while reducing transaction costs that would be incurred if the payments were made through mail-in or kiosks.

- **Private Sign Google Map Project – BACP**

Loan Amount: \$754,000 – Paid back in five years

Private Benefit signs are any signs that delineate the area of the public way for private use, including loading zone signs, valet parking signs, driveway signs, taxicab signs, trolley stands, and any other signage that benefits businesses. The City does not have a current, accurate listing of all private benefit signs in the City. The billing records to the private entities benefiting from the signs contain numerous errors and outdated information, causing billing losses.

The Private Benefit Sign Innovation Fund project seeks to connect billing and costs for signs to the Private Entities that benefit from the signage. Under the project, BACP, CDOT, and Finance will connect signage with the current business owner and establish a protocol for maintaining all private benefit signs through the Department of Finance’s billing function. This will enable the City to bill the correct business, and therefore, recoup currently largely unrealized revenue from private benefit signs.

This ILF project will create an online Google map of all current private benefit signs and uses, and then link the signs to the private entity that should be paying for the sign. A new protocol will be established for maintaining all signs through the Department of Finance billing function. The benefits of this project are the following:

- While modernizing the current City processes, this will also enable the public and application developers to see and use the same data that the City uses for its signage billing. This creates another mutually beneficial private/public partnership.



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- There will be cost savings through the elimination of the need for CDOT's "Suntrack" billing system.
- Accurate billing information will result in increased revenue by as much as \$6.5 million over five years. It will also allow the ability to place "holds" on licensees who do not pay for their signs, preventing business from getting a "free" sign.
- **Automated Inspection Scheduling System - Department of Buildings**
Loan Amount: \$240,000 - Paid back in three years

Announced by Mayor Emanuel on June 13, 2012, this Innovation Loan Fund proposal will fund the establishment of the Buildings Automated Inspection Scheduling System (BAISS) to automate and streamline the current Department of Buildings inspection scheduling process. BAISS will convert the existing manual process to an automated system utilizing a voice and web-based customer interface.

"In City government we must think creatively to maximize the use of every tax dollar and the Innovation Loan Fund is doing just that. Utilizing this fund will allow the Department of Finance to expand web based payment options, ultimately supporting our goals to increase efficiency and improve services," said Amer Ahmad, Comptroller.

The Innovation Loan Fund is managed and directed by the Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

After each application is reviewed by OBM to ensure it meets all of the requirements, they must be approved by an Oversight Committee that includes several members including an Alderman, the City's Chief Financial Officer, the Chief of Policy and Planning, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Innovation Delivery and the Comptroller. In addition to voting on loan requests, the Oversight Committee reviews progress reports provided by OBM.

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