



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 22, 2021

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES OVER \$20 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SUPPORT
BUSINESS AND NONPROFIT RECOVERY**

Grants ranging from \$5,000-10,000 will provide critical financial relief for small businesses and nonprofits to recover from COVID-19 economic impact

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced today a \$20M Chi Biz Strong Grant Program for small business and nonprofit relief and a new \$2M Outdoor Dining Grant Program to provide for grants to support equipment for outdoor dining. These grant programs will help promote an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by providing critical financial relief to small businesses and nonprofits across the city in both the neighborhoods and the downtown area. The grant will support Chicago small businesses and nonprofits under \$3M in revenue. The grant program is part of the Chi Biz Strong Initiative, a bold plan to jumpstart growth and build a recovery that is rapid, equitable, and enduring. These grant programs build on the success of over \$100 million in City pandemic relief funding for businesses across Chicago's neighborhoods and central business district —the largest amount of relief funding provided by any US city.

"These grants are an investment and commitment to our small businesses and nonprofits who are critical drivers of vitality in our neighborhoods and downtown," said Mayor Lightfoot. "By extending year-end lifelines of flexible funds to thousands of grantees, we will increase economic opportunity in the surrounding areas and promote critical nonprofit services and programs. Furthermore, supporting our businesses is essential to ensuring a strong, post-pandemic comeback for our entire city."

The \$20M Chi Biz Strong Grant Program will disburse grants for \$5,000 to \$10,000 to businesses and nonprofits across Chicago that have experienced revenue losses or expense increases tied to the pandemic, depending on the business or nonprofit size.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

The \$2M Outdoor Dining Program will disburse grants of \$5,000 to small restaurants and bars (under \$3M in revenue) to support the purchase of outdoor furniture, pandemic-related signage, and personal protective equipment.

“It is essential that the City of Chicago does all that it can to help and protect Chicago’s business and nonprofit community,” said BACP Acting Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. “These grant programs put financial relief into the hands of Chicago’s most-impacted local entrepreneurs and organizations so that we can reinvigorate communities on our road to recovery.”

“The grants will provide Chicago’s small businesses and nonprofits organizations with financial relief that is essential to our city’s success and recovery,” said Emma Mitts, 37th Ward Alderman and Chairwoman of the Committee on License and Consumer Protection. “This investment is the foundation for growth and wealth on the West and South Sides, and indeed for all Chicago.”

Businesses with revenue under \$3M for both grant programs are eligible and businesses that have not received prior government relief funds will be prioritized. Businesses citywide will be eligible for the grant funding with 50-percent of available funding prioritized for businesses in Low and Moderate Income (LMI) communities, to combat underlying disparities intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, and 50-percent to other neighborhoods.

A subset of the \$20M Chi Biz Strong grants will be applied toward nonprofits or 501(C)3 organizations, with revenue under \$3M, and the City will devote at least 25-percent of nonprofit grants to organizations with under \$1M in revenue. This program will prioritize organizations that have not received prior government relief funds and are not active Delegate Agencies with the City of Chicago. 80-percent of funding will be prioritized for organizations with physical locations and services provided in LMI communities, to combat underlying disparities intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and 20-percent to other geographies.

“This grant will help our small businesses survive and then thrive in 2021 and beyond, and so A4CB is pleased to help the City distribute these dollars quickly,” said Brad McConnell, CEO of Allies for Community Business (A4CB).

“The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce commends Mayor Lightfoot and the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection for providing more needed relief for small businesses that are working to recover from the pandemic and economic crisis,” said Jack Lavin, President & CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Applications are open through Friday, November 12, 2021, at 11:59 PM. To apply, visit Chicago.gov/ChiBizStrongGrant. Grants will be awarded in December to ensure that businesses and nonprofits receive this much-needed relief as quickly as possible.

The City of Chicago will host informational webinars on the following dates to assist applicants in preparing their application:

- October 26 at 1:00 PM in English for For-Profit Businesses
- October 26 at 4:00 PM in English for Non-Profit Organizations
- October 27 at 10:00 AM in Spanish for For-Profit Organizations
- October 27 at 12:00 PM in Spanish for Non-Profit Organizations
- October 28 at 10:00 AM in Mandarin for For-Profit/Non-Profit

To register and learn more, visit Chicago.gov/ChiBizStrongGrant. The webinars will be recorded and available for later viewing at YouTube.com/ChicagoBACP.

In addition to the over \$22M in relief to be provided through the Chi Biz Strong Grant Program and Outdoor Dining Program, the City is making over \$2M in financial relief available to creative workers through its latest arts recovery initiative. Like many industries, Chicago's creative workforce saw an unprecedented strain on the arts and culture community during the COVID-19 pandemic. To support artists, creative workers, and their families, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) launched the Chicago Creative Worker Assistance Program, which will be open through Wednesday, November 10 at 5:00 PM. The program will provide grants from \$2,000-5,000 to low- and moderate-income artists and creative workers who are residents of Chicago and have lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more and apply, visit ChicagoCulturalGrants.org

The Chi Biz Strong Grant is funded under the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). The Outdoor Dining Grant Program is funded under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES Act. The programs are administered by BACP with support from Allies for Community Business, which will also assist organizations that would like help completing the application. To streamline the process for applicants, the Chi Biz Strong Grants and Outdoor Dining Grant Program will be available through a single application. The grant administrators will review applications for eligibility and begin distributing grants in December.

The Chi Biz Strong Grant Program is a component of the Chi Biz Strong Initiative, a bold plan to jumpstart growth and build a recovery that is rapid, equitable, and enduring. The Chi Biz Strong ordinance passed the Chicago City Council this summer



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



and delivers far-reaching and meaningful support to businesses and workers including financial relief, overhauling City business policies, and targeting worker protections.

For more information about eligibility requirements and to start the application process for the Chi Biz Strong Grant and Outdoor Dining Grant Programs, please visit Chicago.gov/ChiBizStrongGrant.

###