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**CITY OF CHICAGO AWARDS \$2 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SUPPORT THE CITY'S
SMALL BUSINESS STOREFRONT ACTIVATION PROGRAM**

*Activations set to Renew Vibrancy and Promote Art and Pop-Up Businesses in
Commercial Corridors*

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E Lightfoot, along with the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), announce 18 local community and economic development organizations — such as chambers of commerce, community development corporations, and other not-for-profit organizations — have been awarded grants to support small businesses in activating vacant storefronts across the city. These grantees will work closely with small business owners, artists, and landlords to provide rapid relief to small businesses by designing and implementing vacant storefront activations on commercial corridors.

"Filling vacant storefronts with enticing and inviting displays and activations will go a long way in our city's continued pandemic recovery," said Mayor Lightfoot. "By supporting our many commercial corridors, we are unlocking the full potential and vitality of our entire city. I congratulate and thank the grantees for working with the City and their communities to foster economic strength throughout our neighborhoods."

"This program will support small businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic and ensure the strong recovery of commercial corridors," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "The activations allow Chicago's artists to create inviting spaces to reimagine vacant storefronts. This program will unite and positively shape economic growth and vitality in our commercial corridors."

Small Business Storefront Activation Program grantees:

- 18th Street Development Corp
- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Chicago Loop Alliance
- East Edgewater Chamber of Commerce
- Far South Community Development Corporation
- Greater Chatham Initiative



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- Greater Englewood Chamber Foundation
- Greater Southwest Development Corp
- Lakeview Roscoe Village Chamber of Commerce
- Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce
- Magnificent Mile Association
- North River Commission
- Northwest Side CDC
- Puerto Rican Cultural Center
- Rogers Park Business Alliance
- South Shore Chamber Community Development Corporation
- Southeast Chicago Chamber
- Uptown United

The COVID-19 pandemic has left significant increases in commercial corridor vacancy rates across the City. Brick and mortar businesses that rely on foot traffic to drive sales were particularly harmed as commercial corridors across the city saw major reductions in economic activity. The grantees have been selected to either design or implement:

- **Interior activations:** Grantees will partner with local small businesses to launch pop-up stores, community markets, and other commercial activations that support local businesses within vacant commercial spaces along key corridors.
- **Window activations:** Grantees will work with local artists to create art displays or artistic signage promoting local businesses in vacant storefront windows.

These activations will strengthen and leverage the economic and social links between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and will draw additional foot traffic to commercial corridors. Storefronts will be activated this fall and will continue through the holiday season into early 2023.

"The Small Business Storefront Activation program is an important part of reclaiming public space and reactivating vacancies in disinvested neighborhoods in Chicago," said Emmanuel Davila, Director of Business Initiatives with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. "It will also intersect cultural production with economic development. We're thrilled to be a part of this and look forward to launching our projects just in time for the holidays!"

"Greater Chatham Initiative is thrilled to participate in the Storefront Activation Program," said Nedra Sims Fears, Executive Director with the Greater Chatham Initiative (GCI). "Around the 79th Street and Cottage Grove intersection, the



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storefront vacancy rate saw an increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Civil Unrest that occurred. GCI is looking forward to improving a stretch along 79th Street for residents and visitors to experience new pop-up stores and curb appeal around the holiday season."

The Small Business Storefront Activation Program is part of the [Chicago Recovery Plan](#), the City's plan to amplify once-in-a-generation federal funding to create an equity-based investment strategy to catalyze a sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chicago Recovery Plan invests holistically in communities and industries hardest hit by the pandemic to support equitable economic recovery across the city.

To learn more about BACP's Recovery Plan efforts, please visit [Chicago.gov/BACPRecoveryPlan](https://chicago.gov/BACPRecoveryPlan).

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