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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2018

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MAYOR EMANUEL, BACP LAUNCH NEW BUSINESS LICENSE CLOCK TO TRACK AVERAGE TIME TO GET LICENSED

First of Mayor's 2018 small business reforms increases transparency, supports and informs business owners

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) today launched a new [Business License Clock](#) on the BACP homepage as part of an effort to continue to expand support for business owners, cut red tape and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in every part of the city. The first of Mayor Emanuel's 2018 small business reform initiatives announced last week, this new license Clock is part of the City's commitment to transparency and features, among other metrics, average time to issue a business license.

"Our commitment to supporting economic development in every community of the city means that we must give new tools for entrepreneurs to plan and grow their businesses, while ensuring that we are providing the best possible services to business owners," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "We are committed to making the processes for business owners as smooth and straightforward as possible, as part of our ongoing efforts to help businesses thrive in Chicago."

The Clock is featured prominently on the BACP website, and allows prospective business owners and curious Chicagoans to learn that 65 percent of licenses were issued within one day in April. Licenses that don't require inspections, which include most general retail stores, are typically issued immediately or the following day. This is part of the City's promise to support Chicago's new and growing business owners.

Additionally, the License Clock tracks the average number of days to issue all business licenses, 22.6 days in April. This number represents the average for all business licenses, including more complex processes including for liquor, tobacco and child care centers. More complex licenses often require multiple inspections, background checks and legally required public notice time.

"Small businesses are the pillars of our community and we are very proud of the quality services we provide," said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. "Through the Mayor's reforms, licenses can be applied for online, fees have been reduced for 10,000 businesses, and nearly two-thirds of our licenses are issued within one day. While we are pleased with our progress, this Clock will push us to continuously do better."

The License Clock, and the corresponding metrics, will be updated by the fifth of each month, and will incorporate data from the preceding month. Clicking on the numbers on the home page will let you track the preceding six months and gain insight into other metrics that BACP will be tracking, including:

- **Average Time to Issue Retail Food Licenses:** Retail Food Licenses include restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores, and bakeries and require health inspections and consultations, zoning checks, and inter-departmental coordination. In April, non-liquor retail food licenses were issued in an average of 27.3 days. Much progress has been made to reduce this number, including the Department of Public Health's Restaurant Startup Guide, which has helped restaurants open an average of 45 days earlier. There is more that can be done, however, and through added transparency, BACP is pledging to lower the time to issue retail food licenses.
- **BACP Processing Time for Hospitality Licenses:** The Hospitality category, which includes liquor licenses, have their own unique licensing process as required by law. Each license must be posted to the public for 35 days, and then the Local Liquor Commissioner has 65 days to approve or deny the license. While there are many factors that go into issuing time, the City is tracking BACP processing time as part of our commitment to get you in and out of City Hall as quickly as possible. In April, BACP processing time for Hospitality licenses averaged 17.3 days.

Last week, Mayor Emanuel unveiled a package of new [small business reforms](#) that will reduce costs for businesses, simplify the licensing process, increase transparency, support start-up and innovative businesses, and reduce the burden of inspections for all businesses. These reforms build on the Emanuel administration's efforts over the past seven years to cut red tape, increase support resources for businesses, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in every part of the city. The City is also launching an outreach campaign to inform businesses about initiatives that are investing tens of millions of dollars directly into neighborhood businesses throughout the city, including the [Neighborhood Opportunity Fund](#) and Retail Thrive Zones initiatives. Earlier this year, BACP welcomed Kenya Merritt as the City's [Chief Small Business Officer](#) to lead the City's efforts to help businesses in every corner of the city get the resources they need to launch and grow.

Since 2011, BACP, in collaboration with city departments, community organizations and small business owners, has spearheaded initiatives that help Chicago's small businesses grow and create jobs in communities across the city. This new License Clock enhances the City's effort to support neighborhood businesses and economic development.

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