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MAYOR EMANUEL TO ANNOUNCE NEW BUDGET PROPOSAL TO MAKE CITY HALL A BETTER PARTNER TO SMALL BUSINESSES

*New Small Business Center will Serve as One-Stop-Shop for Chicago's Small Business Owners;
Chicago will Appoint First-Ever Chief Small Business Officer*

Mayor Emanuel will host a roundtable discussion with small business owners later today where he will announce a 2013 budget initiative to create a Small Business Center that will lead to the City providing better, more efficient services to Chicago's small business owners. The Small Business Center will operate within the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) to act as a full-service, one-stop-shop for small business owners. The Mayor will also appoint the City's first Chief Small Business Officer to lead the Small Business Center and serve as an advocate for Chicago's small businesses in City Hall.

"Small businesses should be focused on their customers, not City Hall," Mayor Emanuel said. "My 2013 budget proposal will overhaul the way we work with small business to make sure that City Hall serves as a partner to the city's job creators, not an obstacle."

The Mayor's budget proposal will restructure the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Business Assistance Center by turning it into a one-stop-shop for business owners, offering end-to-end case management and access to counseling and financial assistance.

"Chicago's small business owners should not have to pay extra for an expeditor to help them navigate the City bureaucracy," said BACP Commissioner Rosemary Krimbel, "Under these new reforms, the staff of the Small Business Center will act as internal expeditors for small business owners and help them through the start-up process every step of the way."

Mayor Emanuel's proposal establishes the role of Chief Small Business Officer to oversee the Small Business Center. As Mayor Emanuel's point person on small business issues, the new Chief Small Business Officer will be part of the leadership team at BACP and will work closely with all City departments to improve the delivery of services to Chicago's small business owners.

"Having an advocate that connects the dots across departments to make the city more business friendly will be really helpful," said Melinda Kelly, Executive Director of the Chatham Business Association, "Small businesses are the economic growth engine of the city and a dedicated advocate

will be great for the city.”

“The Mayor has shown that a clear focus on small business is imperative during these tough economic times,” added Nilda Esparza, Executive Director of the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, “The creation of a Small Business Center shows that Mayor Emanuel understands it is small business owners that contribute to our local economy and strengthen the City of Chicago.”

Today’s roundtable discussion will be the third community conversation the Mayor has been hosting to discuss ideas for the 2013 budget with residents across the city. Last week, the Mayor hosted a discussion at Cocula Mexican Restaurant with local Latino business owners, residents, and community organizers to discuss the issues affecting them and how they can be addressed in the 2013 budget. He also held a roundtable with local families at the Metropolitan Family Services.

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