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CITY OF CHICAGO TO HOST LATINO SMALL BUSINESS EXPO
AT WEST SIDE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
More than 30 government and nonprofit agencies will offer resources and networking opportunities to entrepreneurs and established businesses

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the City of Chicago's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and the Office of New Americans (ONA) will host the second annual Latino Small Businesses Expo on Saturday, May 11th, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Arturo Velazquez Technical Institute, 2800 S. Western Ave., Chicago.

The Latino Small Business Expo is part of the City's New American Small Business Series. The expos provide valuable business information at neighborhood locations within targeted communities and are geared toward small business growth and expansion.

"Chicago is a partner to small businesses; small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the lifeblood of our neighborhoods, accounting for nearly half of Chicago's jobs," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "At this second Latino Business Expo, we welcome the launch of the La Idea Business Pitch Competition and we congratulate those entering this competition."

During the expo, Latino entrepreneurs and business owners will consult, network and gather information available in Spanish and English from more than 30 government and nonprofit agencies. The agencies will provide information about licensing, taxes, finance, business planning and much more.

BACP and ONA launched this series to focus on immigrant communities and offer services in their native languages. Outreach and business opportunities are crucial for business development in Chicago as New Americans living in Chicago are 50 percent more likely to start a business.

"Immigrants have played an enormous role in building Chicago into the incredible city that it is today," said BACP's Chief Small Business Officer Roxanne Nava. "It is important that we reach out to our immigrant communities to make certain they have the small businesses resources and tools to continue to prosper."

During the expo, the launch of the La Idea Business Pitch Competition will allow entrepreneurs in the U.S. with a business partnership in Latin America to pitch their business or idea to a panel of expert judges for the chance of winning up to $50,000 in cash, as well as in-kind business support services and visibility.

At 1 p.m., Accion Chicago will present La Idea en Acción, a free business advising event featuring a panel of professionals in financing, taxes, business planning, import and export. During the panel, the La Idea Competition Director, Maria F. Almeida will share with Chicago entrepreneurs how they can become involved in the La Idea program, and enter the La Idea Business Pitch Competition, where United States businesses with partnerships in Latin America compete for cash prizes and business support services. The event is free for all who wish to attend. The Panel of Experts portion of the expo will be in Spanish.

The New American Small Business Series is made up of four quarterly expos, which are sponsored by Western Union. The expos are free and open to the public and offer business education, resources on financing, licensing process, tax laws and provide an opportunity to network with important stakeholders in the community.

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About Accion:

Accion Chicago is a member of the Accion U.S. Network, the largest micro- and small business-lending network in the United States. The network's five members have collectively made more than 45,000 loans totaling more than $350 million. Globally, Accion is a pioneer in microfinance, reaching millions of individuals through its international network of partners. Accion has been serving the City of Chicago's small businesses since 1994, and has lent more than $23 million in loans to nearly 3,000 businesses in Illinois and Northwest Indiana. For more information visit www.accionchicago.org.