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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY COUNCIL POISED TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL \$6 MILLION
TO FUND NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS INVESTMENTS ON SOUTH, WEST SIDES OF
CHICAGO**

Neighborhood Opportunity Fund continues to leverage large downtown developments to fund neighborhood businesses and support commercial growth

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that City Council will next week consider a measure that would authorize an additional \$6 million in funding for the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, which generates funds from downtown development projects to support commercial corridor growth on Chicago's South, Southwest and West sides. Since the program was created, \$6.4 million has been awarded to 57 businesses.

"The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund was created to ensure that, as one part of Chicago grows, we all benefit from that growth – because we are one Chicago with one future," said Mayor Emanuel. "Small business investments on the South, Southwest and West sides of the City catalyze positive economic change that creates jobs, provides needed services to neighborhoods and transforms buildings that have been closed for decades into spaces that create a sense of community."

Pending approval by City Council, the \$6 million that would become available to small businesses would total nearly as much as the first two rounds of awarded funding combined. The inaugural class of Neighborhood Opportunity Fund winners was announced in June 2017, in which \$3.2 million in funding was awarded to 32 businesses, selected from among the more than 700 applications received by the City. The second round of funding awarded \$3.2 million to 25 businesses, selected from more than 800 applicants.

The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, created by Mayor Emanuel through reforms to the City's Zoning Code in 2016, is financed by voluntary contributions from downtown construction projects. The payments are in exchange for density bonuses that allow developers to exceed zoning limits for a specific development site.

Small businesses may apply for grants from the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund; approval criteria involve a proposal's ability to have a measurable, catalytic impact on a community or commercial corridor, based on the availability of similar goods or services and project feasibility, among other factors. Project eligibility is limited to commercial streets in low-to-moderate income areas.

Eligible costs for Neighborhood Opportunity Fund grants include property acquisition and rehabilitation, small business training and local hiring subsidies Up to 65 percent of a small business' eligible project costs can be covered through the program. Grants that exceed \$250,000 require City Council approval. The program is administered by the Department of Planning and Development. A complete list of projects and more information is available at www.neighborhoodopportunityfund.com.

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