



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES \$6.2 MILLION AWARDED TO TOGETHER NOW  
GRANT FUND RECIPIENTS**

*City-backed fund provides relief to Chicago's small businesses as they work to recover from continued COVID-19 impacts and damage sustained during nationwide protests and unrest*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced that the City is awarding \$6.2 million in grant allocations to the Together Now fund applicants. The Together Now fund was launched last month, in partnership with Chicago Community Trust and One Chicago Fund, in an effort to provide assistance to small businesses and not-for-profits in Chicago that have experienced economic distress and significant operational losses due to Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), or have experienced damage from events of nationwide protests and unrest.

“Through the Together Now fund, we’re putting much-needed funds directly into the hands of more than 1,500 of Chicago’s small and locally-owned businesses that were deeply impacted by COVID-19 or the civil unrests last month,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Our small businesses play a large role in contributing to the vibrancy of our city which is why it is essential that we continue to offer them assistance during what may be the most difficult time that many of them face.”

The City received more than 4,000 applications before the online application closed Monday, June 29. The City carefully reviewed each application to ensure it met City criteria, and grants for qualifying applicants were then selected through a lottery system. The fund is comprised of multiple city-backed funding sources including money from the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) and CARES Act funding, as well as corporate and individual donations.

“From an unprecedented public health pandemic to national civil unrest, Chicago’s smallest businesses have faced a one-two punch that has devastated their business and the surrounding communities as well,” said Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar. “With the Together Now fund, we’re building on our efforts to provide our neighborhood business owners and local entrepreneurs with the resources they need to survive. By lifting up our small businesses, we’re ensuring they can continue to hire and build wealth in our neighborhoods.”

The fund directly targeted small businesses that otherwise would not be able to reopen quickly or at all without additional funding, given the loss of revenue due to COVID-19.



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Businesses that have experienced damage from the events related to nationwide unrest and protests were also eligible for infrastructure grants of up to \$10,000 to repair physical infrastructure damage. Businesses that have experienced at least a 25% revenue loss due to COVID-19 were also eligible for grants of up to \$4,000 to cover operating costs that arose as a result of economic losses experienced due to the pandemic.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, Chicago's businesses owners continue to make unprecedented sacrifices as they have stepped up to keep our community safe," said Rosa Escareño, BACP Commissioner. "The Together Now fund is our latest commitment to support our businesses and entrepreneurs as we recover from these unprecedented crises and build a better future, together."

To be eligible for either grant, businesses could not have more than 100 employees and needed to provide all requested documentation. Businesses applying for an infrastructure grant also needed to provide proof of damage, including photos of damage, repair quotes or any other available materials. Each business owner was eligible to apply for up to one infrastructure grant and one operational grant. Certain institutions, such as regional or national chain businesses, including franchises, branch banks and payday loan stores were not eligible.

"Our neighborhood businesses are the beating hearts of our communities," said Alderman Walter Burnett Jr. (27th Ward). "The first step to ensuring Chicago recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 is by supporting its smallest businesses that have been hurting over the past several months, which is why I applaud Mayor Lightfoot for her innovative and important work of the Together Now fund."

To further ensure an equitable grant process, the City made allocations to account for a disproportionate impact felt in particular neighborhoods throughout the city. Black and Latinx business owners are more frequently uninsured or underinsured and living in South and West Side communities that have faced decades of disinvestment, both of which were considered in the decision-making process.

"The RAZE Up Grooming Lounge has proudly served Chicago's West Side for more than four years, however, we've never faced a bigger challenge or fallen on harder times than what we've experienced over the past months due to COVID-19," said Barnett Sizer, owner of RAZE Up Grooming Lounge in the Austin neighborhood. "With these Together Now grants, community businesses like mine can further ensure our doors stay open for our residents and we can continue to serve the neighborhoods we call home."

The award comes after Mayor Lightfoot's announcement of the fund in June, which was established to channel money raised by Chicago's philanthropies, corporations, and individuals to assist businesses that have faced mounting financial pressure due to months of revenue losses from the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund started with an initial City commitment to address immediate needs of small businesses, and also received additional contributions of \$1 million from Jewel-Osco and other donors to assist businesses.



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“Working with the communities we serve underscores our commitment to our customers,” said Mike Withers, President of Jewel-Osco.

The initial round of grants helped more than 1,500 small businesses, with additional recipients to be named through a second round of funding. The second round will focus on awarding grants in community areas that received a disproportionately low number of eligible applicants during the first round.

Recipients of the Together Now grants were notified of their status via email. The program was administered through the support of multiple City Departments, including the Department of Planning and Development and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, as well as administered with the support and partnership of various neighborhood organizations.

For more information about the Together Now grants, please visit [www.chicago.gov/togethernow](http://www.chicago.gov/togethernow) or [cct.org/togethernow](http://cct.org/togethernow).

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