



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST SMALL BUSINESS EXPO OF 2023 OFFERS RESOURCES FOR CHICAGO BUSINESS OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

The free expo will feature exhibitors, workshops, and networking to help launch and expand a business in Chicago

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced the first BACP Small Business Expo of 2023 will take place on Saturday, March 11th from 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Kennedy-King College. The free expo will kick-off with a breakfast networking hour and offer resources from nonprofit and government agencies, workshops, and a keynote address by Chrishon Lampley, founder of Love Cork Screw, an award-winning wine brand. Now in their 15th year, the BACP Small Business Expos are part of the City's effort to support neighborhood business growth and economic development by offering free business resources to help current and future business owners.

"Each year, hundreds of small businesses benefit from the resources provided at the BACP Small Business Expo," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Local small businesses are vital to our economy and to our mission of neighborhood revitalization. I'm proud to continue protecting and supporting these important businesses through the Expo and our ongoing efforts to ensure a fair and vibrant marketplace across Chicago."

The expo will offer free resources to business owners and entrepreneurs, with the opportunity to network, consult, gather information and receive expert advice on topics such as licensing, financing, marketing, and business planning. Over 25 government and non-profit agencies will be onsite to offer one-on-one guidance. Additionally, City of Chicago business licensing consultants will be on hand to walk through the steps of obtaining a business license or make an appointment for additional counseling at City Hall.

"The Small Business Expo is where ideas and action intersect for current and future entrepreneurs," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "The expo fosters small business growth and expansion by offering expo attendees free technical assistance and resources."

Also available to attendees will be free professional headshots to be used for marketing materials, along with consumer protection information, financial resources, Chicago labor laws compliance information, and a tax clinic. The keynote speaker will be Chrishon Lampley, founder of Love Cork Screw, an award-winning, Chicago-based, woman-owned and operated wine brand. Lampley knows firsthand how to turn a passion project into a revenue generating business, with inclusivity and sustainability at the helm. Lampley's story is one of resilience and determination, but also of compassion and community-building.

“I look forward to sharing my entrepreneurial story, from starting a business as a minority woman, to learning the key factors in expansion concepts,” said Chrishon Lampley, founder of Love Cork Screw. “I want expo attendees to learn new business strategies that blend social impact and business passion.”

The upcoming expo is sponsored by Western Union, Chase Bank, and Wintrust Bank, and in partnership with City of Chicago Colleges and the Chicago Treasurer’s Office.

“The Small Business Expo accelerates economic growth by investing in current and future business owners,” said Mario Hernandez, Director of Public Affairs at Western Union. “Western Union supports Chicago’s small business community, including immigrant-owned businesses, by sponsoring the BACP Small Business Expo so resources are easily accessible at the local level.”

The Saturday, March 11th expo will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Kennedy-King College, located at 740 West 63rd Street (U Building). The schedule is as follows:

Registration and Expo Opens: 8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m.

Attendees can visit exhibitors, get expert advice, and receive free professional headshots.

Welcome and Networking Breakfast: 9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

Attendees can participate in a breakfast networking session sponsored by the Chicago Treasurer’s Office

Exhibitor Hall Reopens: 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Attendees can visit exhibitors, get expert advice, and receive free professional headshots.

Keynote Speaker: 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Chrishon Lampley, Owner, Love Cork Screw

Workshops: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Power of Capital

Presented by Chase Bank, Minority Entrepreneur Program

Entrepreneurial Support: Where to Find it and How to Make it Work for You

Presented by Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC), a Chicago Business Center

Marketing in the 21st Century

Presented by Score Chicago

Exhibitor Hall Reopens: 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

Attendees can visit exhibitors, get expert advice, and receive free professional headshots.

To register for the BACP Small Business Expo, visit Chicago.gov/BizExpo. For more information call (312) 744-2086 or email BACPoutreach@cityofchicago.org. For information about BACP, visit Chicago.gov/BACP.

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