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CITY OF CHICAGO CELEBRATES BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM GRADUATES

Over 100 graduates of the Entrepreneur Certificate Program were recognized for their program completion and success as current and future business owners.

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) hosted a graduation ceremony celebrating the graduates of the free BACP Entrepreneur Certificate Program. The graduation ceremony, held at the South Shore Cultural Center, honored the hard work, dedication, and accomplishments of the graduates who have successfully completed the program. The program is designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of essential business concepts, including business licensing, operations, marketing, and financial planning. To learn more, visit Chicago.gov/BACPCertificate.

"I am immensely proud of the more than 100 graduates of the BACP Entrepreneur Certificate Program," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Their dedication to mastering essential business concepts and their commitment to entrepreneurship exemplify the innovation and resilience that will drive our city's economic future."

Over 100 graduates participated in the ceremony which featured inspiring speeches from previous graduates, including Rachel Diaz, Owner of Borinken Cakes and John Michaels, Founder of Blaque Millennium Kitchens, sharing their business journeys and the profound impact the program has had on their business knowledge and financial well-being.

"Today's graduates represent the future of business excellence in the City of Chicago," said **BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer**. "Their commitment to learning and growth is inspiring, and I am excited to see the positive impact they will have in their respective industries and communities."

Since the program launched over a decade ago, hundreds of Chicago entrepreneurs and business owners have successfully completed the program. Earlier this year, BACP redesigned the program to make completing the program easier, quicker, and more efficient. Part of the redesign included launching a new program portal giving the participant full access to progress and completion details. After completing six webinars within six months in designated webinar categories, graduates are eligible to apply for a loan through the Entrepreneur Loan Program with BACP's partner bank, CIBC Bank USA. The long-standing program was created to support startup or early-stage small businesses that have completed a CIBC Bank USA-approved entrepreneur training program with important working capital.

"Congratulations to the graduates of the BACP Entrepreneur Certificate Program," said **Miguel Gomez, managing director and sales manager for CIBC's US Community Development team**.

“Your commitment to entrepreneurship is inspiring, and, along with the BACP, we look forward to continuing to support you on your journey as you build and expand your businesses.”

The graduation ceremony concluded with the presentation of certificates and a celebratory reception, allowing graduates, their families, and supporters to commemorate this significant achievement.

For current and future small business owners looking for support, BACP offers essential resources for all small business owners as they navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. For more information on BACP’s programs and services, visit [Chicago.gov/BACP](https://chicago.gov/BACP).

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