



**THREE WOMEN LEADING BUSINESS FOR THE CITY SET
FOR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS**

*A Candid Conversation between Commissioners, Women Owned Business Enterprises and Small
Business Owners*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2014

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City Commissioners leading business growth and development for the City of Chicago are set to discuss effective ways women owned business enterprises (WBEs) and small businesses can compete for City contracts during a roundtable hosted by the Women's Business Development Center. *A Candid Conversation with City of Chicago Commissioners: Women on the Front Line* will feature Maria Guerra Lapacek, Commissioner of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, Felicia Davis, Commissioner of the Department Of Buildings, and Jamie Rhee, Chief Procurement Officer of the City of Chicago.

The roundtable is set for **Wednesday, May 28, at 10 a.m. in Room 805 at City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St.**, Chicago. The event will be moderated by Roxanne Nava, Chief Small Business Officer of the City of Chicago Small Business Center.

During the roundtable, the women will discuss a range of topics including laws and regulations to consider when your strategy includes doing business in and with the city, programs that support small businesses and supplier diversity, the role of the building commissioner relative to small businesses and their operations, and competing for city contracts.

"In today's competitive environment, women business owners often face challenges their male counterparts don't," said Emilia DiMenco, Women's Business Development Center. "Women don't always have the same opportunities to develop the types of relationships as their male business owners. This roundtable fills a gap and provides an opportunity for women to meet key decision makers, which can help form and deepen relationships with City of Chicago leaders."

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

Maria Guerra Lapacek, Commissioner of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection

Guerra Lapacek has a particular focus on enhancing government efficiency and improving responsiveness to community, business and local elected officials. One of her priorities is for the department to serve as a concierge to Chicago's small businesses.

"Small businesses account for nearly half of Chicago's jobs, and are the backbone of the economy," said BACP Commissioner Maria Guerra Lapacek, of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection. "Many of the City's business are owned by women and we want to make sure they are aware of the resources available that will help them flourish and grow."

Felicia Davis, Commissioner of the Department Of Buildings

As Commissioner, Davis leads efforts to review plans and issue permits efficiently, facilitate new development, promote life safety, and expand economic activity in communities across Chicago. She is responsible for enforcing the building code to support the safety and quality of life for the residents and visitors of the City of Chicago.

"The Department of Buildings is on the frontline for small businesses, issuing building permits and performing inspections throughout the city of Chicago," said Felicia Davis, Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Buildings. "We work hard to streamline our processes and reduce the time to permit, including our online permitting system which allows for 24/7 access, real time approvals and simultaneous reviews."

Jamie Rhee, Chief Procurement Officer of the City of Chicago

Rhee has served as the City of Chicago's Chief Procurement Officer since September 2009 and has worked to implement the transformation of City procurement. The transformation includes reform efforts, such as increased transparency, procurement modernization and new programs designed to strengthen the City's small, minority and women owned business community.

"Under the leadership of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Department of Procurement Services is committed to exploring the best solutions for Chicago's diverse needs," said Jamie Rhee, Chief Procurement Officer of the City of Chicago. "One of our key objectives is to increase the diversity of the businesses that bid on and earn city contracts. A thriving women- and minority-owned business community is essential in our world-class city."

Moderator

Roxanne Nava, Chief Small Business Officer of the City of Chicago Small Business Center (BACP)

As Chief Small Business Officer, Nava advocates for small business owners and entrepreneurs and ensure policies and procedures are implemented in a way that works for small business.

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