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**MAYOR EMANUEL INITIATES AND HOSTS FIRST EVER BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL BUSINESS
SUMMIT IN CHICAGO TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES FROM CHICAGO'S SMALL BUSINESS
EXPERIENCE**

*Mayor welcomes City Hall staff from 20 cities across the country who want to mimic Chicago's
successful small business strategies*

*Asks each city to follow Chicago's lead and make at least one specific commitment that is actionable by
the end of the year*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel welcomed small business leaders from 20 cities around the United States at the inaugural Big Ideas for Small Business Summit at the Chicago Cultural Center today, a forum focused on fostering innovation in support of small business around the nation. He challenged city leaders to follow Chicago's lead and make a commitment to identify and launch at least one new small business-friendly initiative by the end of the year.

"There is so much potential for small business, which is the backbone of our economy and the leading job creation engine in the United States," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will use this two day summit to learn from each other, explore new ideas, and commit to making our cities better partners to small business. Working together, we will encourage growth and increase opportunity around the nation."

Mayor Emanuel's Innovation Delivery Team, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the National League of Cities (NLC) formed The Big Ideas for Small Business Network as a grassroots effort in 2012. The network includes 20 cities throughout the United States, with more cities interested in getting involved. Network members are committed to improving small business services and regularly discuss challenges they face and best practices they can apply in their own cities.

The Innovation Delivery Team leads a new ideas discussion every month on how cities can better support their small businesses and features current best practices around the country. Past topics have included: Improving access to capital for small business, opening up government contracts to small businesses, facilitating cross-departmental collaboration around city licensing and permitting, and regulating food trucks among others.

“City leaders know that their community’s greatest economic potential rests with small businesses and entrepreneurs,” said Clarence Anthony, Executive Director of the National League of Cities. “From streamlining permitting to opening channels of communication to providing access to capital, local governments are in a prime position to support and help grow small businesses. This summit will give them the tools they need to take action back home.”

The National League of Cities will prepare a report highlighting small business initiatives featured at the Summit and will include commitments made by cities to support small business. The Big Ideas for Small Business Network will track progress along those commitments and will share best practices and lessons learned.

The City of Chicago featured several of its initiatives at the summit, which is making City Hall a better partner to small businesses. Last March, Mayor Emanuel created the Small Business Center in City Hall and appointed Roxanne Nava as the Chief Small Business Officer. Mayor Emanuel continues to streamline small business services to make it easier for owners to get started and succeed. Under his leadership, the City has reduced the number of business licenses from 117 to 49, a 60% decrease, which saved small businesses \$700,000 in the first 6 months of 2013. Additionally, the Mayor created a restaurant start-up program, reducing the time to start a restaurant by 50% and increasing the efficiency of inspection visits.

Mayor Emanuel has also lowered the startup and operating costs for small business owners by starting to phase out the Head Tax, which will save small businesses \$4.8 million in 2013 and has encouraged small business to use online resources to renew their applications. The City continues to cultivate new community partners. Mayor Emanuel launched a new Neighborhood Small Business Strategy to better align requirements of neighborhood Chambers of Commerce with small business needs and partnered with Western Union to launch a series of small business expos. Chicago also established a small business advisory council that will help identify broader small business needs and work on cultivating partners to help close the gap.

While highlighting the City of Chicago’s efforts to make City Hall an active partner to small businesses, Mayor Emanuel encouraged cities to cut red tape, lower costs for business owners and cultivate community partners that help small businesses get started and grow.

Chicago is one of five cities to receive an Innovation Delivery Team grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Since launching in November 2011, the Mayor’s Innovation Delivery Team has spearheaded a business license reform ordinance that reduced the number of license categories by 60 percent, launched the Retrofit Chicago Residential Partnership to help home and apartment building owners save thousands of dollars on their energy bills, and helped design the Small Business Center to serve as a one-stop-shop for small businesses. Part of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Mayors Project, Innovation Delivery Team grants were also awarded to Atlanta, Louisville, Memphis, and New Orleans.

The Big Ideas for Small Business Summit will take place on September 23 and 24 at the Chicago Cultural Center.

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