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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND COOK COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT PRECKWINKLE
ANNOUNCE RECIPROCAL CERTIFICATION FOR MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED
BUSINESSES**

*New Program Will Spur Job Creation by Allowing Businesses to Save Time and Money While
Eliminating Bureaucracy*

CHICAGO - Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle today announced a reciprocal certification program the two governments have agreed upon, which will create crucial jobs in women- and minority-owned businesses in Chicago and Cook County. The new program will allow small minority- and women-owned businesses to be certified by just one government, and have that certification accepted by both entities.

"I am committed to finding additional ways to collaborate with President Preckwinkle and the County government, particularly on important issues such as these, which create jobs and opportunity in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "The reforms we are



proposing today are commonsense changes that will cut through bureaucracy and make processes easier and more efficient for business owners.”

"The new certification process offers one-stop shopping for minority and women owned businesses - another way county and city government are working together to streamline processes and provide opportunity in challenging economic times," President Preckwinkle said. "We are always searching for creative ways to empower small businesses and help level the playing field, and our office is also committed to ensuring the program is fair, honest and open."

Previously, a business certified by Cook County would not have that certification recognized by Chicago. This reciprocal certification program will allow each government to recognize the other’s certification, reducing the burden on businesses. Both programs will now cost a onetime fee of \$250, will utilize the same application, and will certify the companies for a period of three years. Additionally, non-construction contracts will have no personal net worth requirements. The changes will require Cook County Board approval.

These changes will dramatically streamline the processes and increase the opportunity for minority- and women-owned businesses in the area, by relaxing the financial burden and by standardizing processes so businesses do not have to simultaneously deal with two distinct systems, with two different sets of regulations.

Today’s announcement comes as an outgrowth of the ongoing City/County Collaboration and is a recommendation of the City’s Supplier Diversity Task Force, chaired by John Rogers of Ariel Capital. The Task Force has been meeting consistently since late 2011, focused on finding new ways to promote diversity in the business community.

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