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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW ONLINE TOOLS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

*New Small Business Center Site Now Available in both English and Spanish;
Site Selector Site Will Help Business Owners Search for Everything from Commercial Properties to
Zoning Requirements and Available Incentives*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today two online tools to help small business owners access critical services that will help them get started and grow. The first is a website for the Small Business Center (SBC), available in English and Spanish that will serve as a one stop shop for entrepreneurs and business owners. The second, which was completed in conjunction with World Business Chicago, is a new and improved Site Selector tool to help small businesses search for commercial sites available for lease or sale. Both sites were developed in cooperation with the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team and following consultations with businesses and the Mayor's Small Business Advisory Council.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and I am committed to making City Hall a partner to these job creators," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "These new online tools will help Chicago's small business owners access the resources they need to not only open their doors in Chicago, but succeed."

The new SBC website, which can be accessed [HERE](#), allows business owners to access important information in a customer-friendly layout and includes the following features:

- Financial assistance tool – Helps direct businesses to the appropriate resources based on their needs. It also contains information about workshops and an updated directory of financing opportunities including microloans, traditional loans, grants, and tax credits
- Interactive map with services across the city – The map helps small business owners find supportive services in their neighborhood, including Neighborhood Business Development Centers, Alderman Offices, and Illinois Small Business Development Centers.
- Business Licensing Factsheets for individual license categories – For the first time, business owners will find fact sheets explaining the business license types, the cost of each license, and which inspections will be necessary for common license types.

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The Site Selector tool, which can be accessed [HERE](#), is a free service for small business owners looking for commercial and industrial space in Chicago. The tool also helps brokers and property owners promote available properties in the city. Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDC) will work with local property owners to identify properties in their communities that are for lease though not listed with a broker and will post availability on Site Selector. Posting and searching for listings are both free.

“Site Selector is great for potential business owners looking for properties. Not only does it help locate available properties, it includes a lot of information like the properties zoning which is critical to making a good choice,” said Dan Stratis Vice President & Managing Broker, @properties Commercial.

Listings are sourced by the NBDCs and 120 independent Chicago brokers, and maintained by the Small Business Center. To date, there are 757 retail listings and 405 office space listings.

“Site Selector has helped us develop new relationships with brokers and owner and we work together to promote our available sites,” said Roger Sosa, Back of the Yards Neighborhood Association.

Site Selector was developed by World Business Chicago, the city’s economic development arm responsible for business attraction, expansion, and retention. Initially unveiled in beta in 2011, today’s launch marks Site Selector’s emergence as a full-featured product supporting the site location needs of businesses both large and small.

“Site Selector allows users to utilize map layers including industrial corridors, universities, City-owned property, and incentives, in order to visualize the location that would best meet their needs,” said World Business Chicago President & CEO Jeff Malehorn. “This is a unique and easily accessible resource that businesses can use as a first step in the site selection process.”

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 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.

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