A LETTER FROM MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON

Dear Chicagoan,



Small businesses are the heart of our neighborhoods. They anchor our commercial corridors, create local jobs, and give each community its distinct character. That is why I am proud to share the findings of the **2025 Chicago Small Business Ecosystem Report**, shaped by the voices of entrepreneurs who work every day to build something meaningful in our city. This report reflects the dedicated work of Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDCs), a long-standing program supported by the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP). NBDCs provide hands-on, trusted support to help business owners start, grow, and thrive.

During interactive roundtables held in 2025, my administration held direct conversations with NBDCs and small business owners. Clear patterns emerged and these insights directly shaped my administration's Cut the Tape for Small Business initiative, a cross-departmental effort to simplify how entrepreneurs interact with City government and remove unnecessary barriers to doing business here in Chicago. Cut The Tape for Small Business is comprised of nine goals directly inspired from these interactive roundtables. The nine goals are designed to streamline and simplify regulatory processes and licensing for new businesses, enhance transparency, and increase access to small business education and resources. Together, this initiative makes Chicago a more welcoming environment for new and innovative businesses to start up and thrive.

None of this progress would be possible without the strength of our partnerships. The collaboration between City government, community-based organizations, and entrepreneurs themselves remains one of our greatest assets. It is proof that when we work together, listen closely, and act on what we hear, we can build a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous economy for everyone who calls Chicago home.

I want to thank every small business owner who shared input and every partner organization who does this work on the ground each day. This report will shape our city's future success.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brandon Johnson