



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 25, 2019

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL AND WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO ANNOUNCE LAUNCH OF CHIBIZHUB
WEB PLATFORM FOR SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and World Business Chicago (WBC) today announced the official launch of ChiBizHub, an innovative new web platform that connects expert service providers to Chicago's fast-growing business community. ChiBizHub is a one-stop, collaborative online platform to help new and existing Chicago businesses accelerate their growth.

"Chicago is full of the most innovative and hard-working business owners in the world," said Mayor Emanuel. "This initiative provides another tool for business owners to grow their business, which are economic engines in Chicago's 77 neighborhoods."

From connecting individuals with the resources they need to launch a new business to helping business owners identify capital partners to grow their business and navigate business licensing requirements, ChiBizHub brings together a wide-variety of creditable and well-researched resource partners and information to support business success in Chicago.

Working with a variety of stakeholders and small business experts, the ChiBizHub network developed the online platform and identified Chicago-based organizations or "resource partners" to sign up to join this platform before its launch today. ChiBizHub resource partners collectively provide access to a wide variety of direct services, including legal counseling, accessing capital, and accounting, hiring and other administrative services. Through this web platform, business owners can directly contact resource partners for assistance, and work with ChiBizHub's team to identify the right provider based on need, location, industry, and stage of business.

"ChiBizHub ensures that Chicago's small- and medium-sized businesses can access the necessary tools for their companies to thrive," said Andrea Zopp, president and CEO of World Business Chicago. "By connecting them to resource providers, ChiBizHub creates a collaborative community that allows businesses to accelerate their growth."

Mayor Emanuel and Andrea Zopp announced the launch of the ChiBizHub platform at a 10,000 Small Businesses (10KSB) program event. In 2011, Mayor Emanuel, the City Colleges of Chicago and Goldman Sachs partnered to bring 10KSB to Chicago and the first business

education classes were held in January 2012. Participants in the 10KSB program complete more than 100 instructional hours with the curriculum that covers accounting, human resources, negotiation and marketing, among other topics.

In seven years, the program has served over 660 businesses, supporting more than 8,000 jobs.

To develop the technology behind the ChiBizHub site, the City of Chicago leveraged SourceLink®, a digital platform provider with nationwide experience. To date, SourceLink® has assisted over 100 communities, from Seattle to San Juan, in building an infrastructure that sparks and sustains entrepreneurship.

“Entrepreneurs need different things, some need investors, others need counselors. Some require a different kind of industry expertise based on their region’s expertise and market. But all entrepreneurs need connections to help them build business—and create jobs,” said Rob Williams, director of SourceLink®.

“This is exactly the kind of help that business owners need the most,” said Kenya Merritt, the city’s Chief Small Business Officer. “ChiBizHub can connect them with the knowledge they need to launch, grow and succeed. And not only is the information they get right on target, it’s free.”

The ChiBizHub platform is a free service for Chicago’s business community. Initial funding for ChiBizHub was received from the Chicago Community Trust, the City of Chicago, and the Office of the Chicago City Treasurer. Accion, CRF USA, and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection were part of the advisory group in the development of ChiBizHub. Peoples Gas is the inaugural sponsor.

To join this rapidly growing entrepreneurial network, not-for-profit service providers can register today at www.chibizhub.com.

###

About World Business Chicago

World Business Chicago is a public-private, non-profit partnership that drives inclusive economic growth and job creation, supports business, and promotes Chicago as a leading global city.

About SourceLink®

SourceLink provides research and development to help communities strengthen their entrepreneurial ecosystems. As the nation’s premier resource for powering entrepreneurs, SourceLink helps build vibrant communities and promotes economic growth by stimulating small business success. SourceLink has successfully engaged with more than 100 communities nationwide, and that number continues to grow. Affiliated networks include Baltimore SourceLink, Colmena66 in Puerto Rico, IASourceLink in Iowa, KCSourceLink in Kansas City, NetWork Kansas, Dallas B.R.A.I.N., and more. SourceLink founders include the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, University of Missouri–Kansas City and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Find out more at www.joinsourcelink.com