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**NEW, NATIONAL REPORT BY LIVING CITIES AND THE CITI FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS  
CHICAGO'S INCLUSIVE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES**

*National Procurement Implementation Guide outlines steps cities can take to close the racial gaps that can exist in local contracting*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Procurement Services (DPS) announced the release of *Culture, Collaboration and Capital: Leveraging Procurement for Economic Equity*, a guide of powerful and actionable steps cities can take to close the racial gaps that often exist in local contracting. The guide was issued by the Living Cities and the Citi Foundation, and features Chicago and four other cities that participated in a 18-month City Accelerator, a national program to find innovative, effective, locally-tailored strategies to leverage public purchasing power to develop firms owned by people of color.

"This report acknowledges what we already knew – that the City of Chicago is a national leader in running efficient and accountable procurement processes," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel, "We want to ensure that access to opportunities is fair and transparent so that those who do business with the city reflect the city's rich diversity."

The Inclusive Procurement Cohort focused on making it easier to anticipate and compete for city contracts, addressing capital access for business owners of color, and providing supportive services that assist in business growth. By sharing the successful approaches these five cities developed, *Culture, Collaboration and Capital: Leveraging Procurement for Economic Equity* seeks to accelerate the pace of procurement innovation in other cities nationwide.

Several key Chicago procurement initiatives were featured in the guide, including Diversity Credit, Mentor/Protégé, Small Business Initiative, Mid-Sized Business Initiative, Quarterly Buying Plan, social media, and the roster of workshops focused on procurement, certification and compliance topics.

"It is urgent that we dismantle the barriers that continue to stifle entrepreneurship, particularly among people of color who we increasingly need to be the business-builders of tomorrow," said CEO of Living Cities Ben Hecht. "We need to see more public sector leaders driving systems change and investing in the development entrepreneurs of color and removing the obstacles to their success."

“The work done by cities participating in City Accelerator illustrates the many innovative ways that municipal government can partner with local business to help them grow and create jobs,” said President of the Citi Foundation Brandee McHale. “The momentum behind this work shows that these cities are committed to being partners in helping small and diverse businesses grow and we look forward to seeing what’s next.”

Chicago was selected to participate in the City Accelerator program because of the innovative solutions that had been developed to help support the local business community as part of the Procurement Reform Task Force (PRTF). The PRTF was formed to develop recommendations to make procurement and contract management at the City and its Sister Agencies more uniform, efficient, and cost effective, while increasing accountability. The PRTF made 31 recommendations which will increase transparency for the public, reduce administrative burden, increase competition, and lower barriers to entry for our small local businesses and save taxpayer money. To date, the PRTF has issued seven quarterly reports and two Annual Reports on the progress of the Findings & Recommendations, available at [www.cityofchicago.org/prtf](http://www.cityofchicago.org/prtf).

Today’s announcement is the latest in a series of efforts to improve the City’s procurement process, and are a result of the Mayor’s commitment to creating a competitive, fair, and transparent procurement services for the City of Chicago. To learn more about local, small M/WBE, and employment programs implemented under Mayor Emanuel, visit: [www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dps/supp\\_info/process\\_improvements.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dps/supp_info/process_improvements.html)

To view *Culture, Collaboration and Capital: Leveraging Procurement for Economic Equity*, visit: [www.governing.com/cityaccelerator](http://www.governing.com/cityaccelerator)

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#### **About The Inclusive Procurement Cohort**

*The Inclusive Procurement Cohort is the fourth cohort of the City Accelerator. The City Accelerator, an initiative of Living Cities and the Citi Foundation, works within and across cities to advance and promote the spread of promising innovations that will have a significant impact in the lives of residents. Past cohorts have focused on issues like infrastructure financing or resident engagement.*

#### **About Living Cities**

*Founded in 1991, Living Cities is a racial economic justice organization focused on closing the racial income and wealth gaps by helping cities and investors across the nation drive innovative approaches to their practices, policies and processes.*

#### **About the Citi Foundation**

*The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. For more information, visit [www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com).*