

CHICAGO BUSINESS & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

A centralized guide for FBA households, entrepreneurs, and neighborhoods across the city

CITY OF CHICAGO

- **City of Chicago**

The central hub for all municipal services, ordinances, and city programs, including licensing, housing, planning, and public safety.

- **Introductory Guide to City Services**

- **Chicago City Council & Ward Offices**

Legislative body made up of 50 alderpersons, each representing a ward and serving as the primary link between residents and city services, zoning, and local legislation.

- **Chicago Equity Dashboard**

A data tool that tracks racial and neighborhood disparities across health, housing, education, and other indicators so policymakers and residents can monitor progress on equity commitments.

- **Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)**

Provides programs, advocacy, and technical assistance to ensure Chicagoans with disabilities can access housing, transportation, employment, and city services.

CHICAGO INITIATIVES

- **Chicago \$1.25B Housing and Development Bond Allocation**

A multi-year city bond package that finances affordable housing, preservation, and neighborhood development projects across Chicago, with a focus on historically disinvested communities.

- **Chicago Community Wealth Building Initiative**

A city-backed effort to support worker cooperatives, community land trusts, and other shared-ownership models that keep wealth rooted in historically marginalized neighborhoods.

- **Chicago Housing and Development Bond Strategic Plan 2024-2028**

The City's roadmap for how bond dollars will be targeted, prioritizing specific housing, preservation, and development investments over a five-year period.

- **Executive Order 2024-1: Black Reparation Agenda**

A directive signed by Mayor Brandon Johnson on June 17, 2024, establishing a formal Reparations Task Force to study the impact of slavery and systemic anti-Black racism in Chicago and develop a comprehensive Black Reparations Agenda with policy recommendations.

- **Missing Middle Infill Housing (Vacant Lots)**

A city initiative that supports building smaller-scale, multi-unit homes on vacant lots to create more affordable, “missing middle” housing options in existing neighborhoods.

- **We Will Chicago (Citywide Plan)**

A 10-year, citywide planning initiative that sets long-term goals around housing, transportation, arts and culture, environment, and equity, built through neighborhood-based engagement.

- **We Will Chicago 10 Year Citywide Plan**
- **We Will Chicago Implementation Starter Guide**
- **Acknowledging Chicago’s Historical Inequities**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- **Allies for Community Business (A4CB)**

Provides loans, grants, and free business coaching for small businesses and startups across Chicago, with a focus on historically disinvested neighborhoods.

- **Chicago Business Licensing (BACP Licensing Portal)**

The city’s main portal for securing business licenses, zoning approval, and related permits required to operate legally in Chicago.

- **Chicago Urban League: Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation**

Supports Black-owned businesses with coaching, training, and technical assistance, including help with business planning, contracts, and access to capital.

- **Cook County Small Business Resources**

County-level portal connecting entrepreneurs to technical assistance, grants, procurement opportunities, and advisory support in Cook County.

- **Creative Worker Resources (City of Chicago / DCASE)**

A resource hub for artists and creative workers offering grants, relief funds, and support programs for Chicago’s creative sector.

- **Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP)**

Regulates businesses and public vehicles, protects consumers, and offers training, counseling, and compliance support for entrepreneurs citywide.

- **BACP Entrepreneur Certificate Program**
- **BACP Business Education and Resources**
- **BACP Small Business Advocacy**
- **BACP YouTube Channel**

- **Department of Planning and Development (DPD)**

Oversees land use, zoning, corridor plans, and development incentives to guide neighborhood revitalization and investment across Chicago.

- **DPD Small Business Development**
- **DPD Business Improvement District Program**
- **DPD Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF)**
- **DPD Small Community Development Grant**
- **DPD Medium Community Development Grant**
- **DPD Local Industrial Retention Initiative (LIRI)**
- **DPD Sustainable Development Policy**
- **City Plans**
 - **79th Street Corridor Plan**
 - **South Shore Corridor Plan**
 - **95th Street Corridor Plan**
 - **Industrial Corridor Plan**

- **Entrepreneurs Academy**

Training initiative that provides structured education, coaching, and tools to help aspiring and early-stage business owners build strong fundamentals.

- **HIRE360**

A workforce and business development collaborative that connects underrepresented contractors and workers to major construction projects, apprenticeships, and capital.

- **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**

State agency that supports business growth, workforce development, and community investment through grants, incentives, and technical assistance.

- **DCEO Grants**
- **DCEO Assistance for Individuals**
- **DCEO Assistance for Businesses**
- **DCEO Assistance for Communities**
- **Small Business Capital and Infrastructure Grant Program**

- **Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR)**

State agency that handles business tax registration, filing, and compliance, including sales, use, and withholding taxes for Illinois businesses.

- **Illinois Secretary of State (Business Services)**

Manages business entity registration, annual reports, and corporate records for companies formed or operating in Illinois.

- **O'Hare Airport Concessions & Business Opportunities**

Programs and portals that connect local and minority-owned businesses to retail, food, and service contracts within O'Hare International Airport.

- **Peerless Business Credit Scan**

Online tool that helps business owners quickly assess their business credit profile and readiness for financing.

- **SCORE Chicago**

Volunteer-based mentoring and workshop network that offers free or low-cost coaching, templates, and training to new and existing small businesses in the region.

- **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**

Federal agency providing loans, guarantees, disaster assistance, counseling, and federal contracting support for small businesses.

- **SBA 10 Steps to Start Your Business**
- **SBA Plan Your Business**
- **SBA Launch Your Business**
- **SBA Manage Your Business**
- **SBA Grow Your Business**
- **SBA Loans/Find Lenders**
- **SBA Grants**
- **SBA Resource Partners**
- **SBA 7(a) Working Capital Pilot (WCP) Program Guide**
- **SBA Small Business Development Center**
- **SBA Learning Platform**

- **UChicago Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

University of Chicago's hub for entrepreneurship, offering accelerators, coaching, funding connections, and innovation programs for founders.

- **Verizon Small Business Development / Digital Ready**

Corporate-backed platform offering training, grants, and digital skills tools designed to help small businesses grow and modernize their operations.

- **Women's Business Development Center (WBDC)**

Chicago-based nonprofit offering training, counseling, and access to capital for women and minority entrepreneurs, including certification support and government contracting help.

- **WBDC Direct Lending Program**

BUSINESS FUNDING & CAPITAL

- **Chicago Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF)**

City of Chicago grant program that uses fees from downtown development to fund small business, retail, and cultural projects along eligible commercial corridors on the South, West, and Southwest Sides.

- **Comcast RISE**

Corporate program that periodically provides marketing, technology resources, and grants to small businesses, with a focus on diverse-owned and underrepresented entrepreneurs.

- **Founders First**

Growth-focused accelerator and funding platform that offers revenue-based financing, training, and advisory support to diverse, women, and veteran-led small businesses.

- **Hello Alice**

Online platform that partners with corporations and foundations to offer recurring grant opportunities, business funding challenges, and tools for small business owners nationwide.

- **U.S. Bank Diverse Business Resources**

Bank-led hub of lending products, credit options, and advisory services tailored for diverse-owned small businesses, including access to capital and financial education.

- **WomensNet**

National grantmaker offering recurring micro-grants to women-owned businesses at various stages, with a simple application process and flexible use of funds.

HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY

- **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA)**

Regional fair housing coalition that works to eliminate housing discrimination, advance fair housing policy, and promote inclusive communities.

- **Chicago Bungalow Association**

Nonprofit that helps owners of historic Chicago bungalows and vintage homes with grants, technical help, and energy-efficiency improvements, particularly in working-class neighborhoods.

- **Chicago Coalition for the Homeless**

Provides legal aid, advocacy, and outreach to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including support for youth, families, and people in shelters or temporary housing.

- **Chicago Housing Trust**

City-affiliated entity that creates and stewards long-term affordable homeownership opportunities, often through shared-equity models.

- **Participating Loan Officers**
- **Recommended Attorneys**

- **City of Chicago Department of Buildings**

Enforces building codes, issues permits, and maintains safety standards for residential and commercial structures within city limits.

- **City of Chicago Department of Housing (DOH)**

Oversees affordable housing production, preservation, and assistance programs, including bond-funded development, infill housing, and home repair initiatives.

- **Building Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing Program**
- **Chicago Neighborhood Rebuild Pilot Program**
- **City Lots for Working Families**
- **City of Chicago Resources: Developers**
- **Home Repair Program**
- **Micro Market Recovery Program (MMRP)**
- **TaxSmart: Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC)**
- **Troubled Buildings Initiative (TBI)**

- **City of Chicago Zoning and Land Use Map**

An interactive tool that shows how every parcel in the city is zoned and designated for use, helping residents, developers, and businesses understand what can be built or operated in specific locations.

- **Clear Path Relief Program (CPR)**

A city program that helps qualifying homeowners and small landlords address certain municipal debt or code-related burdens so they can stabilize and retain their properties.

- **Community Investment Corporation (CIC)**

Nonprofit lender that finances the purchase and rehab of multi-family and mixed-use buildings, with a focus on preserving affordable rental housing in Chicago neighborhoods.

- [**Property Management Training**](#)
- [**Properties for Sale**](#)
- [**Loan Options**](#)
- **Connect to Cook (Cook County GIS)**
An interactive mapping tool that lets residents and businesses explore parcel data, zoning, taxing districts, and other land information across Cook County.
- **Cook County Assessor's Office**
Determines the assessed value of properties for tax purposes and provides tools for researching assessments and filing appeals.
- **Cook County Building & Construction (Building & Zoning)**
Regulates building permits, inspections, and construction standards for properties in unincorporated Cook County and some suburban areas.
- **Cook County Clerk's Office**
Maintains official land records, deeds, and related documents, and offers searchable databases for property ownership and recorded instruments.
 - [**Cook County Clerk's Office: Property Search**](#)
 - [**Cook County Clerk's Office: Record of Deeds Search**](#)
- **Cook County Courts: Civil, Law, Chancery, Domestic Relations**
Online portals and court divisions where residents can track property-related cases, foreclosure proceedings, and other civil matters.
- **Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA)**
Acquires vacant, abandoned, or foreclosed properties and transfers them to responsible developers and community partners to promote affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization.
- **Cook County Property Tax Portal**
Online tool that consolidates parcel-level data including PINs, ownership, assessments, and tax history for properties across the county.
- **Cook County Treasurer's Office**
Manages property tax billing, collection, payment plans, and refunds, with online access to tax histories and payment status.
 - [**Cook County Treasurer: Tax Overview**](#)
- **Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago**
Regional bank supporting member financial institutions with funding and grant programs that help finance affordable housing and community development projects.

- **Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA)**

State agency that finances affordable housing, down-payment assistance, and rental support programs for residents across Illinois.

- - **Homeownership Counseling**

- **Jewish Free Loan Chicago**

Community-based lender providing interest-free loans for housing, emergencies, small business, and education to qualifying residents in the Chicago area.

- **Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS)**

Offers homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention counseling, affordable mortgage products, and neighborhood stabilization work across many Chicago communities.

- **Rocket Mortgage: Affordable Housing Resources**

National lender's resource hub for first-time and low- to moderate-income homebuyers, offering educational tools and access to mortgage products.

- **The Resurrection Project (TRP)**

Community-based nonprofit focused on affordable housing, financial coaching, and community development, primarily on the Southwest Side but serving residents citywide.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD Institute)**

Research and training center at DePaul University that promotes asset-based approaches to community building, focusing on local strengths rather than deficits.

- **Chicagoland Opportunity Zones Consortium**

Regional partnership helping communities and investors use federal Opportunity Zone incentives to support equitable development in designated tracts.

- **Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF)**

Community development financial institution offering flexible financing for commercial real estate, small businesses, and community facilities in low- to moderate-income Chicago neighborhoods.

- **Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives (CNI)**

Nonprofit developer that partners with communities to deliver mixed-use projects, retail, and industrial redevelopment, with a focus on job creation and neighborhood assets.

- **Cook County Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

Federal block grant funds administered by the County to support housing rehab, infrastructure, and community programs in eligible municipalities.

- **Opportunity Finance Network (OFN)**

National network of CDFIs that expands access to fair, responsible financing for underserved communities and small businesses.

- **Southside Builders Association**

Trade and advocacy group that supports small and minority-owned construction businesses on Chicago's South Side with networking, contracting opportunities, and best practices.

- **UIC Neighborhoods Initiative**

University of Illinois Chicago program that partners with nearby communities on planning, participatory research, and local development projects.

- **West Side United**

Collaborative initiative led by West Side hospitals and community partners to address health inequities, economic development, and neighborhood investment on Chicago's West Side.

EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & REENTRY

- **Cara Collective**

Offers job readiness training, coaching, and transitional employment for people experiencing homelessness or long-term unemployment, with corporate and nonprofit partners across the city.

- **Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (ChiCookWorks)**

Coordinates the public workforce system for Chicago and Cook County, connecting residents to training, job search assistance, and employer programs.

- **Ladder Up**

Provides free tax preparation, FAFSA help, and financial coaching for low-to-moderate income individuals and families, helping residents maximize refunds and access credits.

- **Safer Foundation**

Provides employment, education, and supportive services for people with arrest and conviction records, helping with job placement and reentry support.

WELLNESS & COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **ACCESS Community Health Network**

A large network of community health centers across Chicago offering primary care, behavioral health, women's health, and chronic disease management regardless of insurance status.

- **Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)**

City health department responsible for public health policy, community health initiatives, environmental health, and health data for Chicago residents.

- [**Healthy Chicago Strategic Plan 2025**](#)
- [**Healthy Chicago Strategic Plan 2025 Factsheet**](#)
- [**Partnership for Healthy Chicago Member Organization**](#)
- **Friend Health**
Federally qualified health center with clinics on the South Side, providing primary care, pediatrics, behavioral health, and support services for uninsured and underinsured residents.
- **Sinai Chicago**
Hospital and clinic system serving primarily the West and Southwest Sides, with acute care, trauma services, and community health programs focused on health equity.

FOOD & BASIC NEEDS

- **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago**
Offers citywide services including emergency food, rental and utility assistance, case management, senior services, and family support.
- **Greater Chicago Food Depository**
Cook County's food bank, supplying pantries, shelters, and meal programs across Chicago, and connecting residents to SNAP and other benefits.
- **Nourishing Hope (formerly Lakeview Pantry)**
Provides free groceries, prepared meals, and mental health counseling at multiple sites and through online ordering and delivery for Chicago residents.

YOUTH & EDUCATION

- **After School Matters**
Citywide program offering paid apprenticeships, internships, and enrichment programs for Chicago teens in the arts, sports, STEM, and communications.
- **Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**
The nation's third-largest school district, serving students across the city and implementing strategic plans such as "Together, We Rise" and the Black Student Success Plan to address equity gaps.
 - [**Chicago Public Schools Black Student Success Plan**](#)
 - [**CPS Together We Rise 5 Year Strategic Plan**](#)

- **Chicago Scholars**

Supports first-generation and under-resourced CPS students through college access, mentoring, and career development, from high school through college graduation.

- **Chicago Youth Centers (CYC)**

Operates neighborhood-based centers offering after-school programs, early childhood education, and youth development supports in multiple Chicago communities.

- **CycleBreakers**

A Chicago-area youth organization focused on mentoring, leadership development, and life-skills training to help young people “break cycles” of violence and instability.

- **Mikva Challenge**

Engages youth in civic leadership through action civics, youth councils, and policy projects, with strong CPS and community partnerships.

- **My Block My Hood My City**

Chicago nonprofit that exposes youth to new experiences, supports residents during crises, and leads neighborhood beautification and mutual aid efforts across the city.

- **My CHI. My Future.**

City initiative that connects young people to out-of-school programs, jobs, and positive activities through a coordinated platform of youth opportunities.

- **Youth Job Center**

Chicago-based nonprofit that provides job readiness training, placement, and career pathways for young people facing barriers to employment.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- **Bright Star Community Outreach**

Bronzeville-based ministry and nonprofit providing trauma counseling, violence prevention, youth programming, and family support through its community center and partnerships.

- **BUILD Chicago**

West Side-based organization offering violence prevention, street outreach, after-school programs, and mental health support for youth in some of Chicago’s most heavily policed neighborhoods.

- **Chicago CRED**

Combines street outreach, life coaching, education, and job training to reduce gun violence and create alternative paths for young adults most at risk.

- **READI Chicago (Heartland Alliance)**

Provides intensive outreach, paid transitional employment, cognitive behavioral therapy, and wraparound support to men most at risk of gun violence involvement.

LEGAL PROTECTION

- **Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**

Focuses on racial equity through legal representation and advocacy in housing, education, voting rights, and economic justice, including small business support.

- **Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS)**

Coordinates pro bono lawyers to provide free legal help in civil matters to low-income Chicagoans, including housing, family law, and consumer issues.

- **Legal Aid Chicago**

Offers free civil legal services to low-income residents in areas like housing, consumer issues, public benefits, education, and domestic violence.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)**

Regional transit agency that operates Chicago's bus and rail system, including major expansion projects such as the Red Line Extension and related transit-oriented development planning.

- **CTA Transit-Supportive Development Plan**

- **CTA/Red Line Extension**

- **Plan Overview**

- **103rd Street**

- **111th Street**

- **Michigan Avenue (115th)**

- **130th Street**