

Somercor Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) Helpful Links

There are many programs and services available to small businesses in Chicago. This list is by no means exhaustive, and Somercor does not endorse any outside agencies. We provide this list as a courtesy. If you are seeking resources or financial support for your small business, please contact the respective organization or program directly.

The following programs and organizations may offer incentives, rebates, or support for renewable energy or energy efficient projects:

- [The Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency](#)
 - [ComEd Incentives](#)
 - [Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Natural Gas Savings Programs](#)
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The following organizations can offer resources to early stage and existing small businesses:

- The [City of Chicago's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) ("BACP") offers assistance at the [Chicago Small Business Center in City Hall](#). Aspiring and current entrepreneurs can obtain valuable business planning, legal, and financial advice at the Small Business Center free of charge. BACP is the government agency that regulates and licenses most businesses in Chicago, so consulting their Small Business Center regarding zoning and other legal restrictions and licensing processes is an essential part of starting any new business venture in Chicago.
- Chicago [Neighborhood Business Development Centers](#) ("NBDCs") are local chambers of commerce and business organizations that have a strong neighborhood network and coordinate efforts with local aldermen, the City of Chicago, and other community partners. NBDCs can help businesses with start-up efforts, access to business financial resources, and business-to-business networking, among other services.
- The [Illinois Small Business Development Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago](#) assists pre-venture, start-ups, and established businesses with management, marketing, and financial counseling. They also provide assistance with business and marketing plan preparation, securing capital, improving business skills, accessing international trade opportunities, and other business management needs.

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- The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (“SBA”) offers online resources to help entrepreneurs [compose an effective business plan](#). Additional business planning assistance can be obtained at any of the Small Business Development Centers — all of which are recognized partners of the SBA — mentioned on this page and at the City’s Small Business Center. Click [here](#) for a 30-minute online course on [“How to Write a Business Plan”](#) produced by the SBA.
- The [Women’s Business Development Center](#) offers various workshops, seminars, business coaching, and financial assistance for female-owned businesses.
- The [Chicago Urban League Entrepreneurship Center](#) offers business classes, information exchange forums, corporate mentoring, financial assistance, and an alumni network for African-American owned businesses.
- The [Jewish Vocational Service Duman Entrepreneurship Center](#), a Small Business Development Center, offers entrepreneurial training, business assistance, mentoring, and access to capital.
- The [Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago \(ICNC\)](#) provides support with business planning, financial management, debt and equity financing, industrial retention, business expansion and relocation, and worker placement and training. ICNC also assists companies in accessing grants and incentive programs.

We are always happy to connect small businesses with relevant resources. If you would like to suggest a resource that is not listed here, please e-mail sbif@somercor.com.