



2025
PROSPECTUS
SBAC
Empowerment
Foundation



**BUILDING
EMPOWERED
COMMUNITIES**





SBAC EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

OUR VISION

Building empowered communities through small business ownership

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods. 77 to be exact. Each with its own unique character. However, some of these neighborhoods – once famous for their local shopping, specialty services, and entertainment – have faced significant economic challenges. Pullman and Roseland on the South Side, and Humboldt and Garfield Park on the West Side are prime examples of areas that have undergone various changes in their demographic and socioeconomic structure due to migration and immigration. SBAC Empower aims to support neighborhoods in need and address their economic challenges and believes that growing jobs and wages in these neighborhoods is the key to change.

OUR MISSION

At SBAC Empower, we are committed to providing mentorship and access to support services through local programming that assists small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in under-served communities including minorities, women, veterans, unemployed individuals, or those with limited financial means. Our objective is to guide participants through a clear roadmap to success, enabling them to attain sustainability in their respective industries while providing value to their local communities.

OUR HISTORY

SBAC Empower was founded as a 501(c)(3) NFP in 2017 and as a sister organization to the Small Business Advocacy Council (SBAC). Our goal is to assist small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in disadvantaged communities by providing education, mentorship, and access to support services and programs on local and national levels. We have an active Board, one full-time staff member and 30 volunteer mentors. To date, we have assisted nearly 90 business owners in disadvantaged communities.

*"You don't build a business, you build people, then people build the business."
– Zig Ziglar*

EMPOWER MENTOR PROGRAM



SBAC Empower's mentoring program supports entrepreneurs and small business owners. We pair knowledgeable mentors with startup and early-stage business owners to help navigate small businesses' challenges. It takes a village to start a business, and Empower's deep network of experts is available to all the mentees in the program. Working with local chambers of commerce and locally run community development corporations in economically challenged neighborhoods, we identify and recruit small business owners who want a mentor to assist them with their business.

While aspiring entrepreneurs begin with a big dream and lots of enthusiasm, they have little knowledge of the potential challenges ahead. Our entrepreneurs learn from someone who has been in their shoes, knows the questions to ask to overcome those challenges, and is willing to share – warts and all. The Mentor does more than help create financial plans and set goals; the Mentor holds the new entrepreneurs accountable and becomes a respected sounding board for unexpected problems that may arise.



Our Mentor Program pairs new business owners, or Mentees, with experienced business owners who serve as Mentors. Our Mentors are successful small business owners and/or managers provided through our sister organization, the SBAC. They are 100% committed to helping Mentees – challenging them and, encouraging them to address uncomfortable issues and be open to new ideas.

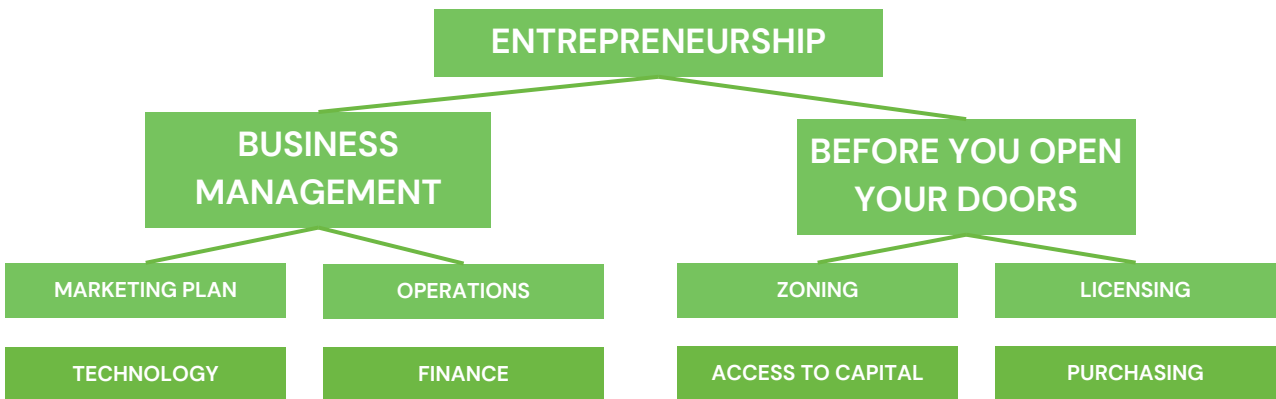
Mentors and Mentees meet monthly. The Mentee drives the agenda, and the Mentor provides guidance and challenges, helps the Mentee focus on critical issues, and provides accountability. Mentees learn from someone who has been in their shoes, is a supportive friend, and is willing to share successes and failures.

Empower Workshops

Empower believes in continued education and ensuring that our small business owners have all the knowledge to succeed. In 2022, SBAC Empower initiated a series of educational workshops for entrepreneurs and/or small business owners, providing crucial information to know before opening a business. Specific workshops on trademarks, facilities management, financial literacy, marketing strategy, business plan and technology have been implemented into our chamber cohort series to prepare them for the work ahead of success.

CURATED WORKSHOPS

Input from our chambers and stakeholders is critical in tailoring specific workshops based on feedback from their members and community. This feedback drives the activities, resource allocation and evaluation of outcomes.



MEL QUINTANA
Hermosa Belmont Cragan Chamber



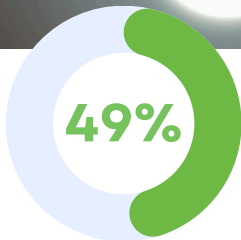
The Empower Program has been a transformative resource for our Chamber of Commerce.

My mentor has been instrumental in guiding us through key milestones—from establishing our board and organizing our first event to navigating the complexities of budget management. I genuinely don't know what we would have done without this program. Beyond the mentorship, Empower has connected us to invaluable resources and a network of passionate individuals dedicated to making a difference.

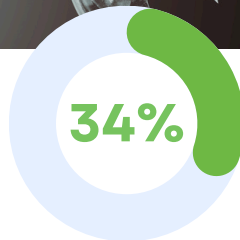
Our Impact

The Empower Difference

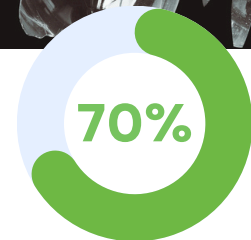
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SURVIVE FOR 5 YEARS



SURVIVE FOR 10 YEARS



SURVIVING > 5 YEARS WITH MENTORING

Our Mentor Program helps create sustainable businesses in neighborhoods that need services, employment opportunities, and growth. Helping small businesses start, grow, and flourish can be a game-changer in a struggling neighborhood. The Chicago neighborhoods we serve deserve a fighting chance. These communities comprise diverse types of businesses, from grocers and fashion retailers to healthcare offices and educational facilities, but they continue to battle to keep their doors open. Our research has found that 49% of new businesses in underserved areas survive for five years, and only 34% survive for ten years. This significantly impacts these communities' economic and socioeconomic status, specifically the workforce and access to valuable resources.



Empower Communities

We are dedicated to assisting entrepreneurs in neighborhoods where the average per capita income is less than that of all Chicagoland. The average of Empower communities is \$28,748 which is 61% below Chicago's city average. Furthermore, our community average is roughly 4% below the poverty level and has an unemployment rate 4.1% higher than that of the city of Chicago as a whole.

Our Mentee identifying demographics are 63% female, 73% Black/African American, 13% Latinx, and 14% not identifying.

With our guidance and partnering with organizations that focus on building a sustainable community, we can pave the way for business growth and a stronger workforce. Our Mentees are making significant strides in key markets, and we continue to advocate for the small business community. With the support of our members and mentors, we are committed to helping our mentees make a positive impact by driving economic freedom in these historic communities.



INITIAL PHASE OF 1-4 YEARS



1-4 EMPLOYEES



RELATIONSHIPS THAT CONTINUE PAST 1 YEAR



STEPHEN BALL
Byline Bank, SVP, Business Banking

I appreciate the opportunity to help small business owners. After 26 years of working with business which are primarily very established, I get to be reminded not only of hardships for the new entrepreneur, but also the advice that remains paramount to getting access to capital. The ability to train a company early in their life cycle is selfishly very satisfying. I feel like I'm making a difference.

A Few Words



JAMES FIELD
Fields of Dreams

Participating in Empower’s mentorship program has been an invaluable experience. Having a mentor who guided me with intentionality through the nonprofit and philanthropic spaces while aligning with my organization’s values and strategy has been transformative. The emphasis on accountability—both for myself and for my nonprofit’s board—has been instrumental in driving sustainable progress. The coaching sessions, resource sharing, and expert feedback have been vital to our startup phase’s success. Within just one year, we launched our first fundraiser, piloted our initial program, and established structural processes that have positioned us for long-term impact. This mentorship has truly been a catalyst for transformative change within our community.”



ANJEL BROWN
Resourceful Friends LLC

My mentor is amazing. He has taught me how to create a culture for my business and then be the culture I have created. This [mentor] program has been very impactful, very instrumental in the growth of Resourceful Friends, LLC. And I really appreciate SBAC [Empower] for this platform and this opportunity.



SHELLEY CARILLO
Beards and Bellas

My mentor Danielle has been instrumental in my growth as an entrepreneur. The mentorship, resources, and actionable insights provided have helped me refine my business strategies and smash goals. I recommend this program to anyone looking to elevate their business.



KAREN JONES
Chocolate Chips Association

My business coach provided me a new view of the vision I originally had of our organization and was a great sounding board of where I wanted to go. Working with a Business Coach allowed me to stretch my wings, and we are now impacting over 300 youth yearly.”

“Starting and growing a business is difficult and even more so in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Having a mentor and friend who can ask the right questions and add accountability and support is a priceless benefit to a small business owner.” – Scott Baskin, Empower CEO



How Can You Help?

BECOME A SPONSOR

A Sponsor believes in our sponsorship footprint is pivotal to the reach Empower can accomplish, as well as the additional resources we can provide our mentees that will guarantee they have the best options at their fingertips to build and grow successful businesses.

EMPOWER BOARD

Become a part of the solution!
Empower's Board is comprised of professionals in Marketing, Banking, Workforce Development, Urban Planning, and more.
Join the board today and help us make a bigger impact.

DONATIONS

With every donation to Empower, our sponsors are strengthening the foundation of these businesses, brick by brick. Click Here to complete your sponsorship form, and our team will follow up with further details of your support.

All funding is used to effectively operate the business in the form of salaries, outside consulting, marketing, and operational expenses. Empower provides an annual Impact Report on its innovative program that can be adopted in other areas outside Chicago.



Reach Out to Us



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