



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS MAYOR EMANUEL’S NEWLY ANNOUNCED  
SMALL BUSINESS CENTER**

(Chicago, Ill.; March 6, 2013) – The [Illinois Restaurant Association \(IRA\)](#), the largest foodservice trade association in Illinois, has announced its support of the Mayor Emanuel’s new Small Business Center, a step-by-step resource for aspiring business owners.

With restaurants responsible for nearly 10 percent of the city’s jobs, the Illinois Restaurant Association believes that this efficient, one-stop-shop will create more opportunities for entrepreneurship, diversity and employment in Chicago.

“Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his team continue to make doing business in Chicago easier,” said Sam Toia, President of the Illinois Restaurant Association. “Opening a business can be very confusing to entrepreneurs. Making the process less complex and providing additional support will drastically improve the entrepreneurial experience in our city.”

The announcement of the Small Business Center comes after last year’s implementation of a highly successful Restaurant Startup Program, which has since facilitated the opening of 200 restaurants. Once a daunting process – obtaining permits and licenses, scheduling inspections, making trips to City Hall, and more – the program has streamlined communication between City departments, eliminating many of the steps and costs involved in opening a new restaurant. Whatever the obstacle, from connecting with an Alderman’s office to overcoming language barriers, the Center’s mission is aimed to benefit business owners who need it the most.

The Illinois Restaurant Association is committed to continuing its work with Mayor Emanuel and the City to continually pave a better path for the future of Chicago's small businesses.

**About the Illinois Restaurant Association**

Founded in 1914, the Illinois Restaurant Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, educating and improving the restaurant industry in Illinois. For more information, visit [www.illinoisrestaurants.org](http://www.illinoisrestaurants.org) or the organization's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels.

**\*Interviews available\***

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