

The BlackPRint Chicago Campaign Rallies Support for Black-Owned Businesses During National Black Business Month

The BlackPRint Chicago Campaign brought together Chicago's Black business community and elected officials to gain more support & recognition.

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Christi Love 312-451-3796

Christi@withaneyep.com



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IL State Rep Will Davis

In a stirring display of unity and purpose, The BlackPRint Chicago Campaign brought together Chicago's Black business community for a pivotal National Black Business Month press conference. The event, which took place at the West Austin Development Center, was not just a celebration; it was a call to action, urging visitors who arrived for the Democratic National Convention to support Black-owned businesses in Chicago and encourage

residents to continue to shop locally.

Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs, IL State Representative LaShawn K. Ford, IL State Representative Will Davis, and Alderman Emma Mitts stood at the forefront of the press conference, lending their voices and support to the campaign.

Illinois State Treasurer Frerichs shared information about his office's programs that help business owners find lost money and acquire funding. The programs highlighted were Business Invest - [SCALE-UP](#), Advancing Equity in Banking Commission, [Illinois Unclaimed Property](#), and [CASTUS](#) A Cleveland Avenue Fund.

"When I came into the office, I looked at the financial institutions we work with, and they did not look like the people who voted for me; we have investment programs, linked deposit programs, and we wanted to do something differently. We wanted to make sure we were investing in banks that complied with CRA (Community Reinvestment Act)," shared Illinois State Treasurer Frerichs. "We wanted to invest in banks who were investing in communities throughout the city of

Chicago, and that's why we put \$25 million in Great Lakes Credit Union and, as of February (2024), another \$55 million because we know those are the institutions that are going to loan money to Black Owned Businesses in the state of Illinois."

State Representative LaShawn K. Ford, representing several Black businesses in his District, urged all those who came to attend the Democratic National Convention to support Black enterprises intentionally. He also hosted a Salute to African Americans during the convention, celebrating the past to shape the future.

"This isn't just about acknowledging Black Business Month," Ford stated.

"It's about ensuring that Black entrepreneurs are included in the economic opportunities that come with hosting an event as significant as the DNC in our city."

At the event, George Daniels, a revered business and entertainment community figure, received a special letter recognizing his decades as a Black business leader. The event opened with a presentation by Alderman Emma Mitts, who delivered the letter from Mayor Brandon Johnson's office honoring Daniels for his decades of dedication and mentorship. The letter highlighted him as a beacon of Black entrepreneurship, inspiring those who will follow in his footsteps.

Tamera Fair, representing the West Austin Development Center and co-author of *The Purple Turtle: Modi's Magical Adventures*, passionately discussed the importance of community support in sustaining Black businesses. "Our businesses are more than just places to shop; they are the lifeblood of our communities," Fair emphasized, calling on everyone to invest their dollars in Black-owned establishments.

Momentum Coffee, a community partner of The BlackPrint Chicago Campaign since its inception, was acknowledged for its innovative approach to combating food insecurity through its Food Incubator Program. Their work exemplifies the campaign's mission to promote Black-owned food and beverage businesses.

The gathering brought together a diverse group of Black entrepreneurs from various sectors. This event was more than just a meeting or unity; it was a testament to Chicago's Black business



Front Row: George Daniels, Ald. Emma Mitts, Nikki Bravo, Tracy Powell, Tonia Evans, Tamera Fair, and Cherita Logan

owners' strength and Chicago's creativity.

State Representatives LaShawn K. Ford and Will Davis presented a resolution honoring the campaign and the businesses in attendance. This gesture officially honors these entrepreneurs' invaluable contributions to Chicago's economic and cultural landscape.

The message of the press conference was clear: with the Democratic National Convention in the market, it is time for visitors and locals to champion Black-owned businesses. By shopping locally and supporting these businesses, the DNC's economic benefits can be more equitably distributed, ensuring that the prosperity it brings touches every corner of Chicago.

The BlackPRint Chicago Campaign, launched in August 2022 by With an Eye PR, remains steadfast in its mission. It drives forward the narrative of Black excellence and entrepreneurship during National Black Business Month and as a year-round commitment to building a more equitable future. The campaign encourages Black business owners to work with the community to circulate dollars and resources back to the neighborhoods where they come from, reside, and run their businesses.

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Christi Love

With an Eye PR

+1 312-451-3796

Christi@withaneyep.com

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